

# High-tech cemetery wins design competition

By **ASHLEIGH SIM**  
IN AUSTIN (Texas)

A CEMETERY which lets visitors retrieve urns of the dead using a voice-activated system has won a “Design for Death” competition organised by two Singapore-based foundations.

Architecture students Rangel Karaivanov, 24, and Marta Piaseczynska, 22, won a \$42,000 prize for their entry “Post-Community” – a plinth containing moveable urns that can be placed on top of buildings to save urban space.

The pair, from the University of Applied Arts Vienna in Austria, tried to address the needs of high-density living in the contest, which aimed to address how



**Ms Jae Rhim Lee with her “mushroom death suit”, which won the special jury prize in the eco/green deathcare category of the Design for Death competition in Austin, Texas. ST PHOTO: ASHLEIGH SIM**

“death care” can be improved.

Mr Karaivanov said: “A culture is not only defined by the living but also (by) our ancestors.”

The results of the architecture category were announced on Monday at the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) Interna-

tional Convention and Expo in Austin, Texas. In second place was a mirrored monolith to be displayed as installation art in cities, while in third was a columbarium where glowing urns hang from the roof and trees.

More than 600 entries were received from architects and designers worldwide. The competition was organised by the Lien Foundation and ACM Foundation, in partnership with the NFDA, the industry’s biggest professional global organisation.

Mr Lee Poh Wah, 43, chief executive of the Lien Foundation and competition judge, said: “The designers have interpreted the needs of our generation with sensitivity and empathy.”

Fellow judge Ang Ziqian, 32, ACM Foundation founder, said: “These novel concepts challenge us to redefine the type of death care we need and deserve.”

An earlier stage of the competition encouraging “greener” death care featured ideas including biodegradable caskets and home memorials. A special jury prize in the green category went to United States researcher Jae Rhim Lee, 37, for her “mushroom death suit” which detoxifies decomposing bodies using mushroom spores.

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