



The Visitors Pavilion at the Indianapolis Museum of Art in the US, designed by Marlon Blackwell Architects

# Make a date with Datum: KL

The proudly homegrown International Architectural Design Conference continues its annual tradition of gathering local and international architects to share their thoughts and projects with an appreciative audience

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Unit One Design's Ken Wong (top) and John Ding will be the local architects presenting at Datum: KL 2015

**D**atum:KL, the International Architectural Design Conference with a distinctive difference is back. Scheduled to take place on Aug 14 and 15 at the Plenary Hall of the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, this year's event is expected to be just as exciting as previous instalments.

The conference is a key highlight of the Kuala Lumpur Architecture Festival (KLAF) held under the umbrella of the Malaysian Institute of Architects' PAM Convention 2015.

President of PAM Mohd Zulhemlee An says this year's theme, entitled *Place*, takes off from the compounded energy activated by last year's theme, *Rejuvenation*, which showcased the exploration of place in architecture.

"This year, we have an exciting line-up of speakers — all award winners, carefully selected by our convener to ensure a showcase of interesting works from many parts of the world. Marlon Blackwell and Meryati Johari of Marlon Blackwell Architects' projects are particularly interesting as they work in small community environments and yet design very interesting, avant-garde projects in the town of Fayetteville in Arkansas, US. Johari, being a partner of the firm, is a Malaysian who is now making a name for herself having designed a series of avant-garde homes in the US done in a very modern style.

"The local architects presenting at this year's Datum:KL conference are Unit One Design Sdn Bhd's Ken Wong and John Ding. Their works are tropical contemporary in nature. The designs are very de-



Marlon Blackwell (left) and Meryati Johari of Marlon Blackwell Architects will be sharing their projects at this year's Datum:KL discourse

tailed in terms of how the various components are put together. The composition and entire construction are properly executed in terms of well-thought-out designs incorporating clever spatial planning.

The comprehensive Datum:KL line-up this year will also include international architects such as Eike Roswag of Germany's Ziegert Roswag Seiler Architekten Ingenieure and Jan van Schaik of MvS Architects from Down Under.

The role of architects as place-makers has gained converging interest from a multi-disciplinary perspective. Further exploring this subject which has taken on "diverse tangents" will be Ling Hao of his eponymous architecture firm from Singapore and China's Liu Yichun of Atelier Deshaus.

Massimo Lepore of Tamassociati Architects, Italy, and Ole Smith of Heatherwick Studio, UK, will present their interpretations of the creation of places that have been explored through "the expression of history, memory and nostalgia, the sensitivity of ecology and environment, the optimisation of technology and the forces of capitalism and consumerism", among others.

The contradictions and complexities of place will emerge through this rich presentation. While for some, architecture seeks to "reinforce the identity of places", others may view architecture as related to "creating and re-inventing identities for place".

Other architects who will be sharing their projects with the audience in relation to the subject of place becoming "a tangible representation of that society and culture residing within it as experienced through architecture and urban design" are Rocco Yim of Rocco Design Architects Ltd, Hong Kong and Shingo Masuda of Shingo Masuda + Katsuhisa Otsubo Architects, Japan.

Those attending the discourse on the role of architecture in place-making can bank on another year of thought-provoking insight into this proudly homegrown architectural design conference that has been running annually since 2002. As usual, the organisers are expecting a full house.

"Datum:KL has a very good synergy held concurrently with Archidex whereby thousands of architects, developers and interior designers from Malaysia and across the region gather," comments Datuk Vincent Lim, president of C.I.S Network Sdn Bhd.

Alongside PAM, C.I.S Network is the joint organiser of Archidex, the International Architecture, Interior Design and Building Exhibition, Malaysia — one of the most anticipated architectural trade events in Southeast Asia. ■

Rhombus in Kuala Lumpur epitomises a clever mastery of architecture design on a limited plot of land

