

Complete design pipeline supports industry transformation

4-7 Mar 2026 • MIFF

KEYNOTE FOR FURNITURE SUCCESS



The Malaysian International Furniture Fair is launching an integrated design ecosystem that connects emerging talent with established manufacturers through three strategic initiatives. The comprehensive approach, anchored by the MIFF Furniture Design Competition 2026, the newly established MIFF FDC CLUB, and the xOrdinary Design Exhibition, aims to support Malaysia’s furniture industry transformation from OEM to ODM and OBM manufacturing.

Taking place at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre and World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur from 4 to 7 March 2026, the fair will showcase these initiatives as part of its commitment to sustainable industry growth. The integrated ecosystem addresses the full talent development cycle, from initial discovery through competition to ongoing collaboration and commercial application.

Design Competition Targets Generation Alpha

Now entering its 16th edition since establishment in 2010, the MIFF Furniture Design Competition 2026 challenges designers under 40 to create bedroom furniture for children aged 5–9. The theme “Playful. Practical. Purposeful: Furniture for Generation Alpha” focuses on designs that balance imagination with practicality for contemporary lifestyles.

“This is about designing for the future consumer,” said Dr Eric Leong, Chief Judge of MIFF FDC. “The competition encourages fresh ideas that not only respond to how children live and learn today but also enhance Malaysia’s design reputation globally.”

Winners will receive cash prizes totalling RM12,000, trophies, and recognition, including awards for Best Mentor and Best Institution. Submissions close on 1 December 2025. The 2025 edition attracted 335 entries from 30 institutions and private firms, demonstrating growing industry relevance.

Year-Round Platform Connects Talent With Manufacturers

Building on the competition’s success, the MIFF FDC CLUB operates as a continuous ecosystem through three strategic pillars: CONNECT for networking, SELECT for curated collaborations, and EDIT for content development. The platform bridges young designers with established manufacturers, offering opportunities from facility tours to prototype development.

At a recent virtual matching session, five young designers were successfully paired with local manufacturers through the SELECT programme. Wong Lilie, 2025 first place winner, collaborated with Amber Office Sdn Bhd, while second place winner Ong Jing Rou partnered with 5R/Smart Top Surface Solution Sdn Bhd. Previous competition winners Aric Neo Yong Yea, Ong Chia Yong, and Lim Li Quan Bryan were matched with Alian Furniture Industries Sdn Bhd, Isella Sofa Design Sdn Bhd, and Yeu Hong Furniture Industries Sdn Bhd respectively.

These collaborations will debut as new product designs at the 2026 fair, granting emerging designers valuable international exposure. A Memorandum of Understanding ceremony between designer-exhibitor pairs and Informa Markets Malaysia was held on 10 October 2025 at MITEC, witnessed by Dato’ Tan Chin Huat, Founder & Chairman of MIFF, Steve Ong, President of Muar Furniture Association, and Dr Eric Leong.

“While MIFF FDC discovers emerging talent, the MIFF FDC CLUB ensures that talent thrives beyond the competition. Together, they form a complete pipeline from creativity to commerce,” said Kelie Lim, General Manager of MIFF.

Independent Creativity Celebrated Through Design Exhibition

Alongside the competition and club initiatives, the fair will feature the fifth edition of xOrdinary Design Exhibition, themed “Happiness”. First curated in 2019, xOrdinary celebrates independent creativity, empowering designers to showcase unconventional ideas and lifestyle concepts that bring joy to everyday living.

The organiser is calling for designers, industry stakeholders and manufacturers to join the MIFF FDC CLUB. The integrated approach directly aligns with the New Industrial Master Plan 2030, supporting Malaysia’s shift toward higher value manufacturing capabilities.

