

Singapore Design Week staged its most ambitious edition to date with expanded offerings, design districts and more than 500 creatives participating

Through its theme of 'Better by Design', the festival explored sustainability, social care, the climate crisis, inclusivity and more.



Singapore, 12 October 2023 – Singapore Design Week, one of Asia’s premier design festivals, staged its most ambitious edition yet this September. Organised by DesignSingapore Council (Dsg), this year’s festival saw an expanded range of offerings with over 80 events across the city-state, including three major special commissions by homegrown design trailblazers, three Design Districts, 163 international partners and 214 expert speakers – bringing the total number of designers and creatives involved to more than 500.

Coinciding with Dsg’s 20th anniversary, the theme of this year’s festival was inspired by the council’s motto *Better by Design*. The theme exemplifies what Singapore Design stands for – the desire to always make lives better, that is borne from a strong sense of creative purpose and crafted for positive impact.



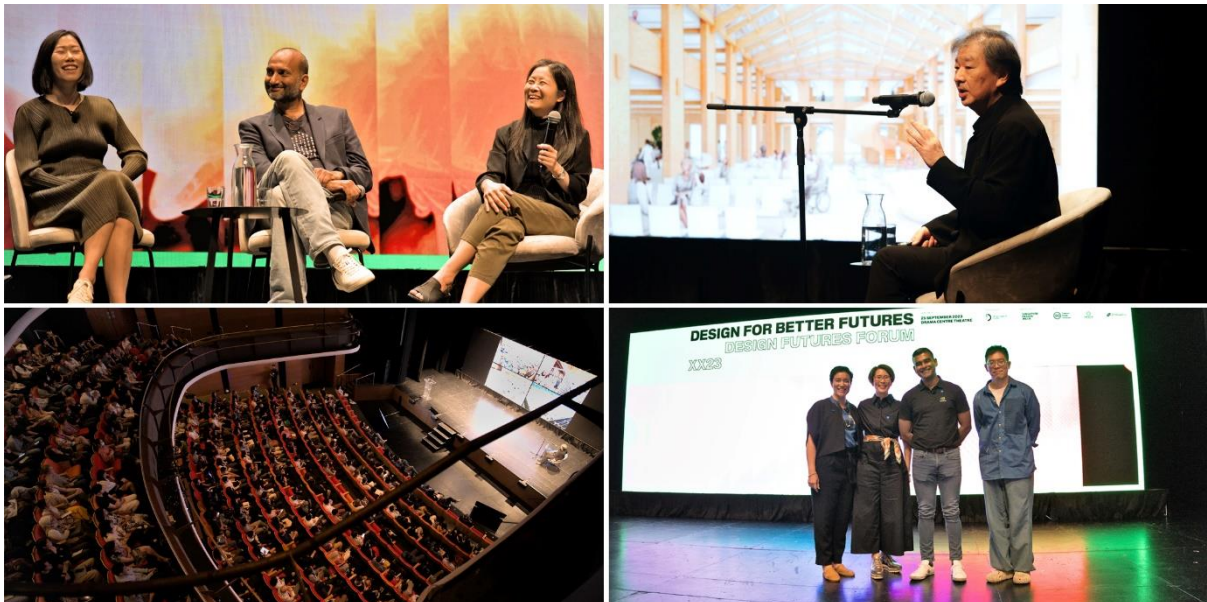
Festival-goers at the inaugural Singapore Design Week Friday Late, a self-guided tour around the Bras Basah.Bugis District.
Photos by Pretty Much Films.

More than 127,000 visitors participated in the 11-day festival held at various locations across the island. A key highlight introduced this year was Design Districts that included the Bras Basah.Bugis Design District, curated by Singaporean designer Jackson Tan, co-founder of BLACK, where the festival commissions by BLACK, Lekker Architects and Kinetic Singapore took centrestage in the district.

The trio of installations drew inspiration from our first learning experiences in a school, playground and the sports field for their distinct settings while exploring ideas, prototypes, and design solutions in innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability. Whether it's cooling building facades inspired by elephant skin and termite mounds at the *Playground of Possibilities*, creative inclusive ideas in games and play at *FI&LD* or transforming common school subjects like Math and Chemistry to provoke an urgent response to tackle climate change at *School of Tomorrow*, the installations offer unique insights into how Singaporean designers are addressing urgent global issues through design.

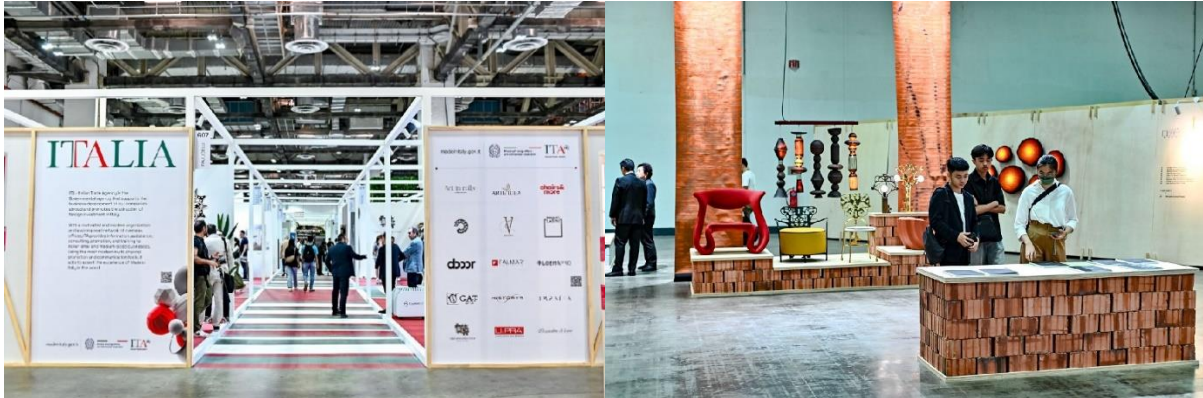
“We received a lot of enthusiastic engagement and positive feedback for the commissioned works. Visitors felt the installations were meaningful as well as fun, bright and inspiring even though the challenges and themes were serious. I hope that we can continue to inspire a wider audience to learn how we can be ‘Better by Design’, and to think about using design in our daily lives to tackle issues,” says Jackson Tan, lead curator of Bras Basah.Bugis Design District

In addition, 230 international designers and experts convened in Singapore over 11 days for SDW’s programmes. They include renowned Japanese architect, Shigeru Ban, who delivered a keynote speech at the Design Futures Forum. The sold-out forum zoomed in on three key areas design can – and must – address when it comes to designing for better futures: sustainability, emerging technologies and systems of care.



The sold-out Design Futures Forum brought business, design, public and social sectors together to discuss key drivers of the future – Sustainability, Emerging Technologies and Systems of Care. Photos by Lumiere Photography Pte. Ltd.

Over at Marina Bay Design District, FIND – Design Fair Asia, led by organisers dmg events and Fiera Milano also returned for its second iteration. The interiors and furniture fair welcomed almost 13,000 visitors from 80 countries over three days. 40 Italian brands participated in the exhibition *Italia Geniale*, celebrating the legacy of Italian craft and design, while leading architect Stefano Boeri designed the Italian Pavilion which also hosted the FIND – Global Summit, curated by design editor Yoko Choy. French architect Arthur Mamou-Mani also joined the festivities, presenting a striking large-scale 3D printed pavilion made from sugar-based PLA (polylactic) at the fair.



From left: *Italia Geniale* and EMERGE@FIND at FIND – Design Fair Asia. Photo courtesy of FIND – Design Fair Asia.

EMERGE@FIND, a Southeast Asian design talent showcase curated by Suzy Annetta, once again proved to be a highlight at FIND. Over 60 designers from Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam presented new works relating to the theme *Craft + Industry: Man + Machine*. Featuring established and emerging names, including Hans Tan from Singapore, Alvin Tjitrowirjo from Indonesia, Anon Pairoit from Thailand, Phùng Thiện Thu Mỹ from Vietnam, the showcase demonstrated the ways in which the new generation of Southeast Asian designers are reimagining traditional craft and material through new technologies.

Lastly, the Orchard Design District presented more than 15 events, including open houses, workshops, exhibitions, retail pop-ups and a sold-out architect tour presented by the local design community and retail brands based in the famed shopping stretch.

“Singapore Design Week is a highlight in our creative calendar and this year’s edition is particularly meaningful. We celebrated the council’s 20th anniversary with the festival theme and boosted our programming with the festival commissions, Design Districts and saw a fantastic turnout of creatives and attendees. We look forward to putting together an even better festival, come 2024!” says Dawn Lim, Executive Director of DesignSingapore Council.

Singapore Design Week will return in September 2024; exact dates will be shared soon.

In the meantime, *Playground of Possibilities* continues until 1 January 2024 while *Future Impact: Homecoming Showcase* runs till 31 October 2023. Both exhibitions are at the National Design Centre.

To find out more about the programmes of SDW 2023, please refer to our full info pack [here](#).

Ongoing highlights

***Playground of Possibilities* at National Design Centre**

Curated by Jackson Tan, Co-founder and Creative Director of BLACK

Open till 1 January 2024



Playground of Possibilities at National Design Centre. Photo by Pretty Much Films.

This showcase spotlights 12 design “stories of possibilities” from Singapore that tackle some of the most pressing challenges we face today with innovative solutions. The collection of playful and interactive installations, showcase four design principles or ‘pals of possibilities’ – Explore, Empathise, Imagine and Adapt – that designers use to tackle problems, transform them into opportunities, and dream up new possibilities.

Future Impact: Homecoming Showcase

Curated by Tony Chambers and Maria Cristina Didero

Open till 31 Oct 2023



Future Impact: Homecoming Showcase at National Design Centre. Photos by Pretty Much Films.

Six of Singapore's most progressive designers revealed their vision for a better tomorrow through the *Future Impact – Homecoming Showcase*. Curated by Tony Chambers and Maria Cristina Didero, it features the works of Tiffany Loy, Nathan Yong, Forest & Whale, Viewport Studio, Gabriel Tan and Studio Juju. From furniture and textiles created by Artificial Intelligence, to graphic posters that examine our relationship with nature, these designers marry cutting-edge technologies and poetic storytelling to shape a brighter and more sustainable future for design and production.

Singapore Design Week 2023

21 September to 1 October 2023

sdw.sg

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Follow for announcements on SDW 2024.



About Singapore Design Week

One of Asia's premier design festivals, Singapore Design Week (SDW) celebrates Singapore's distinctive brand of creativity, exploring design through three defining festival pillars: Design Futures (the design of the future and the future of design), Design Marketplace (lifestyle trends with a spotlight on Southeast Asia) and Design Impact (innovative solutions for a better world). Organised by DesignSingapore Council, SDW is a celebration of creativity and innovation, championing thought leadership and showcasing the best of design from Singapore and beyond.

sdw.sg

About the DesignSingapore Council

The DesignSingapore Council's (Dsg's) vision is for Singapore to be an innovation-driven economy and a loveable city by design. As the national agency that promotes design, our mission is to develop the design sector, help Singapore use design for innovation and growth, and make life better in this UNESCO Creative City of Design. Dsg is a subsidiary of the Singapore Economic Development Board.

designsingapore.org

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