

Benson Saw & DesignStream

DesignStream Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia was founded in 2004 by Benson Saw with a strong design mantra - to provide an elegant, perceptive and most importantly, pertinent solution to any spatial challenge. Over the years, the team has constantly proven themselves to be a creative force to be reckon with, successfully completing dozens of home, restaurant and hotel modernisations all across Asia and Europe.

Part of DesignStream's philosophy is to constantly promote spatial interaction and 'dialogue'. CHARCOAL FOR CHILDREN 2019: HANDS-ON! is a special experiential workshop with the children of Bali. Benson and his team, together with dozens of children explored hundreds of possibilities of using off-cut materials as building blocks.

Interview

1. In a short paragraph, please describe yourself

DesignStream is a dynamic group of experienced designers working across residential, commercial, hospitality and creative direction in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. We are a 30 man strong team who lives and breathes design. Over the years, the team has constantly proven themselves to be a creative force to be reckon with, successfully completing dozens of home, restaurant and hotel modernisations all across Asia and Europe.

2. Is there a particular incident during your childhood that steer you in this artistic journey ?

(Nadirah Dali) When I was little, my dad used to take me for long evening drives around our neighbourhood. I would often drift away imagining what some of these homes would look like inside. As I got older, I had a habit of re-imagining and re-decorating spaces in my head, as I watched my favourite tv programmes and movies. From then on, I aspired and worked towards living my dream of being an interior designer.

(Kenneth Fong) In our school days, there is a game called "kepong titik". Basically, we would use two different coloured pen to 'dot' and line our math's exercise book until we form a continuous line to frame (or "kepong") our opponent's dots. As a result of the game, our exercise book are always filled with various amoebic pattern design. In our installation, we come to acknowledge how this simple reminiscence helps us recognize the basic design elements that we already witness from our childhood.

(Janice Kan) I was always making things during my childhood days, my parents particularly my mum used to make me play Lasy blocks (something similar to Lego) and tons of puzzle pieces instead of dolls and Barbie houses even though i cried begging for one.

(Juan Araque) My mom is an artist so the “artistic journey” was part of my childhood as she combined her studies in the university as an artist at the same time she was raising me. I have sparks of moments of me being with her in Uni and being in one of the rooms surrounded by clay sculptures or walking through the corridors of the university and seen people holding papers drawings etc. As a kid I spent tons of afternoons drawing and painting with her. Since then until today home was always full of drawings, art books and art works and brushes, tons of brushes. and though our parents will complain, they don't really punish us.

3. Thank you for being part of 'CHARCOAL FOR CHILDREN'. It is wonderful to see children and working artists interacting together. Why do you participate and support this program ?

Part of DesignStream's philosophy is to constantly promote spatial interaction and 'dialogue'. CHARCOAL FOR CHILDREN 2019: HANDS-ON! is a special experiential workshop with the children of Bali. It is vital to create and cultivate awareness, teaching our future leaders to respect and preserve their surrounding habitat and environment around them. This also gives them the opportunity to share their creativity with others alike; inspiring all around them, including us at DesignStream.

4. What's the idea behind your session ?

The Children of Bali were tasked to sketch their dream homes or towers with charcoal. They then proceeded to let their imaginations go wild. They were given the opportunity to build their designs with recycled kayu jati. This tactile experience brought back the joy of exploration with their hands. The contentment of building something with your hands is second to none. We wanted to remind the Children of Bali to constantly seek this sense of gratification in all they do. It's what drives our passion to design.

5. What do you observe during the session ?

It was a very interesting weekend for us and the children of Bali, to see all of them experimenting, playing, building and exploring with new shapes, forms and structures.

We did not want to interrupt their flow of thought and creative processes. Only stepping in to lend a hand, giving support to their designs.

To our surprise, some individuals started to collaborate together, enhancing and super-sizing their designs. On their own, they realized that by working as a team, they would be able to create a better structure and design, collaboratively.

6. What is the title of your collaborative artwork ? and what it is about ?

We named our installation "Titik-Titik". This installation resembles the most basic form of spatial design - dots, lines, shape, volumes and patterns. We maintained our approach with the most basic form of the initial "Jati" as the base of our installation where it strings a plane of patterns with the "connectors" that holds the structures together. In this installation, the patterns duplicates into a screen that resembles the traditional pattern of Bali heritage.