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COVER STORY

Citizen Architect

Evanna Ramly | 23 Feb 2018 00:30



Celebrating Malaysia's rich cultural heritage and lush natural resources, Eleena hopes to spark social change through her award-winning designs

A- A A+

Born in Penang, Dr Eleena Jamil's earliest memories of architecture revolve around her late father. "He was a contractor so I grew up in his office and we would always visit the construction sites together," recalls the founder and principal of Eleena Jamil Architect.

She went on to study architecture in Cardiff University, eventually earning her PhD and qualifying as a Part III Architect before establishing her own firm in 2005.

"At first, I wanted very much to be a doctor but he steered me towards architecture," says Eleena, adding that she has no regrets. "He told me architecture would be good for me. Being a good daughter I went along with it and it turns out he was right. I love running a small company taking on interesting projects that are really hands-on."



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Snippets



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Her most recent is the Urban Brain, a bamboo pavilion in Lebuhraya Pasar Besar, Kuala Lumpur, which was created in collaboration with UNHabitat for the recent World Urban Forum 09 Kuala Lumpur that ran from Feb 7 - 13. She was recruited by Carmelo Ignaccolo, architect and urban designer from the Urban Planning and Design Lab of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

“Their idea, called The Urban Brains, had the aim that people will come to this pavilion and write pledges – what they think of their city or what they hope it will be – on the small coloured circles, hence the name,” she explains. “It’s all about ideas, drawing from the concepts of brains, masses and neurons so we decided to use bamboo for the circular rings that you see on the pavilion.”



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