

Making Strides in the Field of Architecture

ARCHITECTURE is the art and practice of designing and constructing buildings. It is a complex and broad subject that encompasses several interrelated disciplines such as art, design, science, engineering, business, geography, sociology, and many more. It not only requires a good understanding of the sciences but of the arts as well, combined with an understanding of the current and future needs of the users and various issues in the built environment in general.

At Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT), the Bachelor of Science in Architecture (Hons) programme has been offered since 2014. Those who have completed their SPM or equivalent and who wish to pursue a career in architecture, they can start off with a one-year Foundation in Arts (Track A) subject to passing a Portfolio Interview. Upon completing this level, students will be eligible to join Year 1 of the three-year Bachelor of Science in Architecture (Hons) programme. All in all, it takes four years to obtain a Bachelor's degree qualification in architecture at TAR UMT. After completing their Bachelor's degree and upon meeting the entry requirements, graduates may opt to continue

with the two-year Master of Architecture, a new programme offered at TAR UMT.

The Bachelor of Science in Architecture (Hons) programme is fully accredited and complies with the Board of Architects Malaysia (Lembaga Arkitek Malaysia, 'LAM') Part I requirement. After qualifying for their LAM Part II, which is generally awarded to graduates of accredited Master of Architecture programmes, graduates may register with LAM as a Graduate Architects. The next step to becoming a professional architect is to obtain a minimum of 2 years of practical working experience and pass the professional LAM Part III examination before one can register as a professional architect.

One of the many successful Bachelor's degree graduates in Architecture at TAR UMT is Scarlet Koon Si Qi who is now working as an architectural assistant with Ar Dr Tan Loke Mun, an award-winning architect who is pushing the envelope on sustainable architecture. "I believe that the technical skills that I have learned in my degree are of great help to me in my work as an architectural assistant with Dr Tan. The technical knowledge

and skills such as architectural practice and drafting skills, as well as the design knowledge from the lecturers, have prepared me well for my work. Having a good foundation has really helped me learn faster in the workplace," she said.

"I am grateful for my lecturers who helped me realise my potential in architecture. I am really fortunate to have Ar Lee Chor Wah as my studio master for my first and second year as he really shaped my thinking, understanding, and overall approach towards architecture. He has also given me many opportunities to broaden my horizons and network in the field, by having me emcee for DATUM: KL, an annual international conference by the Malaysian Institute of Architects (PAM), which acts as a platform for discourse and a showcase of exemplary architectural works from around the world, as well as writing for Architecture Asia and Architecture Malaysia magazines. I am also grateful to my studio tutor Mr Fadzil Mohd Ali (affectionately known as Cikgu Fadzil) who guided my coursemates and I in the many different avenues of architecture theory and pushed us to think out of the box in our designs."

When she was asked how she landed a job with such a distinguished architect, she said:

"I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to be the emcee for DATUM: KL 2019. Ar Lee was the convener and Ar Dr Tan was the director. I worked closely with them to ensure the event ran smoothly, and towards the end of the event, Dr Tan congratulated me on a job well done. It was then that I seized the opportunity to enquire about working under him. He interviewed me and I was eventually hired."

Scarlet then continued to wax lyrical about the experience she had at TAR UMT. "I enjoyed being able to spend time in the studio with my coursemates and to have a feeling of camaraderie and togetherness there. We had our own space and time to explore our designs in the studio and also unlimited use of the laser-cutting machines and 3D printers," she said.

Due to her early exposure to writing on architecture as a student in Year 2 of her Bachelor's degree programme under Ar Lee, who was the editor-in-chief for Architecture Asia at the time, it comes as no surprise that she has been writing on architectural works ever since. "I was really fortunate to be able to helm the production of a book entitled New in Old: Chinatown Kuala Lumpur under Atelier

International. I was in charge of the whole production, from sourcing, researching, coordinating, and interviewing, to the final editing. I got to know many of the owners and designers featured in the book as well as the traditional hawkers who are part of the cultural fabric of Petaling Street. I worked with renowned photographer Lin Ho who captured amazing images of Petaling Street and worked with Aw Siew Bee, a graduate architect, and Professor Robert Powell, an architecture critic, where we authored the book in different sections and weaved the story of Petaling Street and - in large - the story of Kuala Lumpur into the book. I had worked on other books with Atelier International, namely Tropical Malaysian House Vol. 2, Terrace Transformations in the Tropics, Blurring Boundaries, and Bamboo Ark 1," she said.

For more information about TAR UMT's built environment programmes, visit TAR UMT's Open Day which will be held at TAR UMT campuses nationwide from 8 - 25 June 2023, 10 am to 5 pm. You can also call 011 1075 8535 or log on to www.tarc.edu.mu.



Scarlet Koon Si Qi, a graduate of TAR UMT who excels in the world of architecture and publications.

