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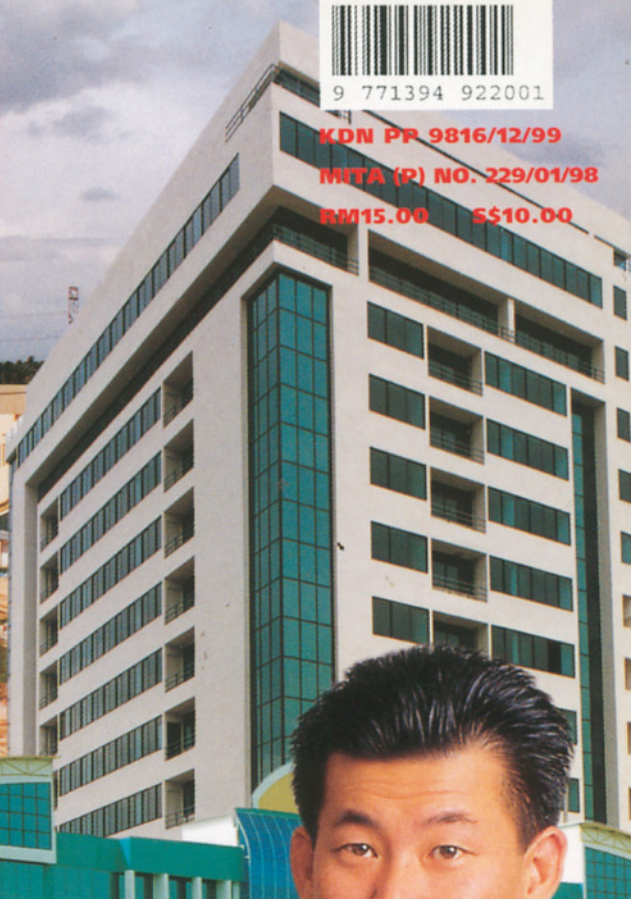
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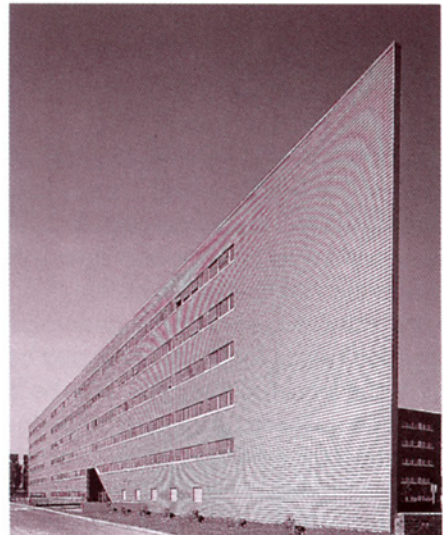
Face to Face

with

Zaini Zainul



Zaini with Tenaga Tower model, a sleek glass prism of the future.



An office building, France.

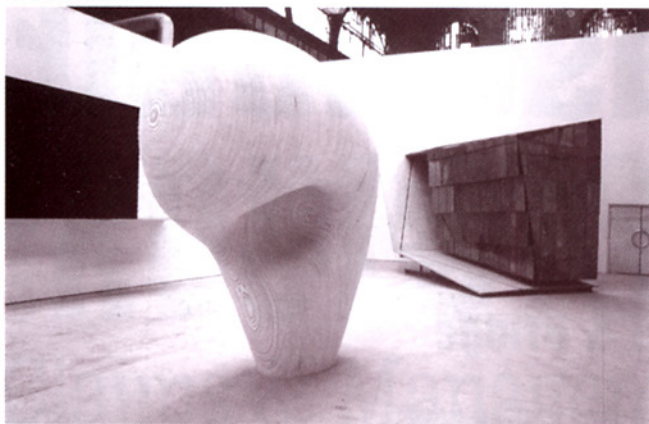
the prodigal son returns. Having spent a third of his life in foreign lands, Zaini Zainul returned to Malaysia in 1996 with a string of awards from his 13-year international stint. While most of us take a lifetime to peak our achievements, the 35-year old Zaini achieved success early.

An "Ivy League" scholar from the Columbia University in New York where he did a Masters in Architecture, Zaini was awarded the Lucille Smyser Lowenfish prize for the best thesis in architecture design. That was just the start. In 1991, he clinched first prize from 673 entries in the "Another Glass House" Competition organised by the Japan Architects, making him the first Malaysian to do so. Some of his notable awards are a commendation in the "Glasgow Tower" competition in 1992; first prize in the "Most Beautiful House in the World" Reggio Emilia competition, Italy in 1992; the grand prize of the Nara/Toto world architecture triennial competition in 1995.

Zaini has also had the distinction of having represented both Malaysia and France in international expositions and awarded the Young Architects Award by the French Government in 1993.

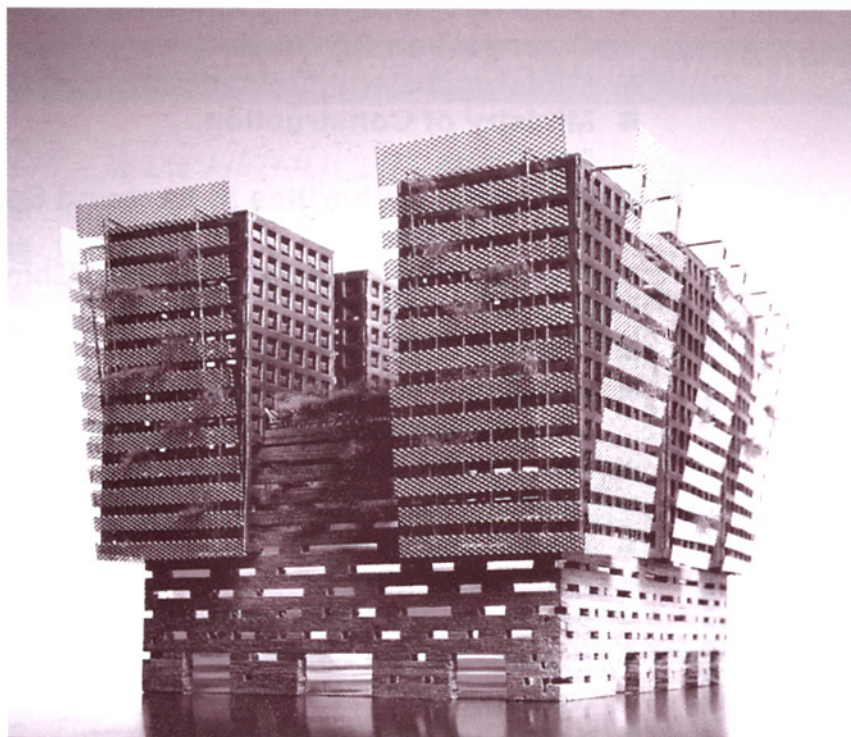
Principal of the Franco-Malaysian architectural partnership, Zaini, Dubus & Richez (ZDR), Penang-born Zaini is an architect who combines sculpture, photography and architecture, quite successfully. Zaini staged his first local exhibition - Beyond Boundaries last year at the PAM Centre. The collection included design proposals, competitions,

Modernist sculpture.



projects under realisation and photocollages from his 1991 fellowship award, Paris Priza, when he visited monuments of 16 countries in 6 months. Zaini is exuberant and passionate about what he does and committed to evolving the architectural scene in Malaysia through exhibitions and forums.

Some of his design works in Malaysia include the Tenaga Tower, YMCA Centre, resort in Terengganu, Malaysia Airline's Millennium Tower, Putrajaya, Technology Resources World Headquarters and in Singapore: French Embassy and Orchard Road Urban Renewal project. His bold and unique designs combine light with innovative forms featuring "see-through" glass facades, futuristic designs embodying local elements and a dichotomy in style fusing the old and modern.



Six towers project, France.

bn: After almost 13 years in America and Europe, what made you decide to come back to Malaysia?

Zaini: We (partners Bertrand Dubus and Thomas Richez) realised that there were quite a lot of projects to develop in South-East Asia so we set up a base in Kuala Lumpur to cover Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and China and I came back to manage ZDR's office in Malaysia.

bn: How different is the profession here compared to Europe?

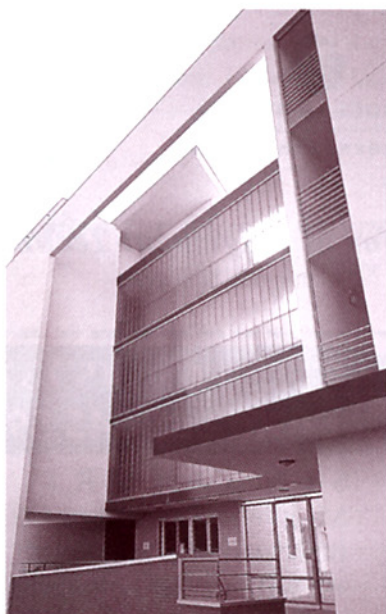
Zaini: It has been an exciting 3 years. Malaysian architecture is moving from a utilitarian form to interesting and challenging forms (Petronas Twin Towers, KL Sentral, KLIA, Telecoms building, etc). In Europe, architects identify themselves

with the buildings they design and Malaysian architects are beginning to be proud of what they're doing now.

The challenge lies in fusing a client's need with your design ideas: the pragmatic with aesthetic. In creating a building, an architect works from a brief. In interpreting that brief lies the true art, for only when it is interpreted correctly that a project can really be successful. It is the responsibility of an architect to spend time assisting his client and the community at large to understand the importance and benefits of good design, about its relationship with the built environment and how the design responses of today will contribute to the legacy we leave for future generations.

bn: What's your ideology?

Zaini: Architecture is a continuation of oneself. Reflecting on my background from America — academic-based, to Europe — fashion-flair and finally in Malaysia — pragmatic - all the three principles are reflected in my designs.



Low-cost apartments, France.