SLIA Hosts Architect 2008

The Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (SLIA) marked its first annual sessions after celebrating the golden jubilee in September 2007 with Architect 2008. Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka was the chief guest and the guests of honour were Dinesh Gunawardene, Minister of Urban Development, and Sacred Area Development and Ferial Ashraff, Minister of Housing and Common Amenities.

Architect Jayantha Perera, President, Sessions 2007/09, SLIA said, “This event started in 1983, when Architect Surath Wickramasinghe was the President of the SLIA. Our aim for this event is to lay the foundation for the next 50 years of the institute as well as the promotion of architecture in the country. “

Architects who have made immense contributions to the profession, those who have been elected as new members of the Institute, those who have excelled in the construction industry as well as those who have won design awards were recognised in an impressive SLIA ceremony. Architect Surath Wickramasinghe who has done yeoman service to the profession as well as being a past President of the SLIA as well as the founder President of the Construction Industry Chamber was honoured with a Gold Medal at the event. Architect Ulrick Plesner, Managing Partner, Plesner Architects, Israel, was awarded an honourary membership of the SLIA. Design Group 5, which is a registered practice at the SLIA, a leading practice in Sri Lanka and has completed 35 years in the industry, was presented a special award.

The keynote speaker for the occasion was Architect Ulrick Plesner, Managing Partner, Plesner Architects, Israel, who has been working for many years in Sri Lanka, and enjoyed a professional association with Architect Geoffrey Bawa.

The highlight of the session was the National Conference on Architecture. The theme for the conference was ‘Architect the Initiator.’ Emphasis was on the huge cultural and environmental responsibility placed on the architect.

Chief guest at the conference was Rajitha Senaratne, Minister of Construction and Engineering Services while Ajith Nivard Cabraal, Governor of the Central Bank was the guest of honour. The conference was also enlivened by the contributions of both local and internationally renowned architects such as Ashley De Vos, D H

Wijewardane, M M G Samuel, Kishore Trivedi and Suchith Mohotti of India and Georg Zielke of Germany. Christopher De Silva of Studio Times and Rajeev Sethi, who is an Indian artist, also made presentations on the theme of the forum.

The Architect 2008 Exhibition, an exposition of architects' work and trade was held at the BMICH and at the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Convention Centre. A total of 411 stalls – taken up by 260 organisations – showcased the latest variety of both local and imported building materials. The entrance lobby was dedicated to 98 members and practices of the SLIA who displayed their work. Among the participants were 11 foreign companies engaged in the trade of building materials and the manufacturing industry. The exhibition grounds also had information on products and services required for the entire process of building.

Photographs and drawings of the top three houses designed by Architects, selected by the SLIA, were displayed at the exhibition. Also visitors had the opportunity to receive discounts for orders that they placed from stallholders at the exhibition. The SLIA itself had a stall dedicated to providing information on the institute, its publications as well as a career guidance centre comprising of information on the University of Moratuwa and the Colombo School of Architecture.

The event concluded with an Annual General Meeting and Fellowship Night, exclusive for members of the SLIA.

Photo Caption – Archt Jayampathy Herath, Chairman, National Conference, SLIA; Archt Bernard Gomez, Chairman, BAP; Archt Asoka Widanapathirana, Chairman, BOM; Archt Prasanna Silva, Honorary Secretary, SLIA; Archt Jayantha Perera, President, SLIA; Archt Ranjan Nadesapillai, Vice President/Chairman, Exhibition Committee, SLIA; Archt D H Wijewardene, Honorary Secretary, and Archt Harsha Fernando, Chairman, PAB.