
UAE's Rami Farook is the International Young Design Entrepreneur 2009

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In a first for the United Arab Emirates in the British Council's International Young Creative Entrepreneur programme, Rami Farook has become the International Young Design Entrepreneur (IYDE) 2009 in an awards ceremony hosted in London, UK, in September.

Rami Farook is founder and director of Traffic, a 7,000 sq ft. design store, gallery, and studio in Dubai's Al Barsha, which is used as a venue to exhibit design in a nonconventional way, as well as hosting lectures, workshops, and screenings. The multidisciplinary studio specialises in interior architecture, product design, visual communication, and interactive media.

"In accepting the award I would like to thank God, my parents, my wife and children, and my team at Traffic in Dubai. It is an honour to represent the UAE on a global scale, and I have enjoyed networking and collaborating with the UK's design entrepreneurs, manufacturers, and educators during my recent visit to London," said Farook.

Echoing the comments of Deborah Dawton, CEO of the Design Business Association and a judge for the awards, Farook thanked his fellow finalists for being such remarkable people and stiff competition. He also thanked the British Council for giving all the finalists such a great opportunity through the award programme.

The judges' citation for Farook reads: "Rami's outstanding presentation genuinely impressed the judges, providing them with a real sense of the sector in the UAE and the business opportunities that Rami is already exploiting. Rami is a natural leader, and the judges were particularly taken by his innovative marriage of art and design. He is clearly set to become a key figure in the design scene both locally and internationally."

Farook was awarded the YCE trophy and a prize fund of £5,000 which is to be invested in a design initiative that will further help to develop cultural relations between the UAE and the UK.

Andrew Senior, Head of the British Council's Creative Economy Unit, commented: "Rami is a true creative entrepreneur and a worthy winner. He wasn't trained in design but he has a passion for it and is able to work with and nurture talented designers. Rami marries this with strong commercial sense and market understanding. He's also not afraid of taking risks and those risks seem to be paying off. These are all the hallmarks of a true creative entrepreneur."

Dawton also announced two Jury Special Commendations. Indonesia's Johansen Samsodin was commended for exceptional achievement as a social entrepreneur, while Turkey's Pinar Yar Govsa was commended for her commitment to developing the language of design in a business context.

Last month Farook joined eight other international finalists from India, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Taiwan, Indonesia, Taipei, and Turkey for an all-expense-paid trip to the UK ahead of the awards ceremony. As with previous years, the 2009 programme was developed with UK partners, and took the finalists to London, Glasgow and Belfast to meet leaders of the UK design sector. The ten day tour allowed finalists to learn more about the local design industry, and the British Council organised meetings to introduce them to fellow design entrepreneurs and exemplary initiatives.

The tour provided a tailored introduction to the UK design sector, including meetings with senior industry figures. Their itinerary included meetings with companies such as the Design Council, the Architecture Foundation, Metropolitan Works, SCP, Design-Nation, Studio Troika, Okay Studio, General Public Agency, Helen Hamlyn Centre, and the Aram Gallery.

IYDE is one of a range of *International Young Creative Entrepreneur* (IYCE) awards, designed by the British Council to celebrate the achievements of young entrepreneurs across the creative industries, and make a significant contribution to their ability to access international markets. IYCE includes recognition schemes for entrepreneurship in Fashion, Communications, Screen, Performing Arts, Music, Interactive, Visual Arts and Publishing.

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Photo Caption: Rami Farook accepting the International Young Design Entrepreneur 2009 award

Notes for Editors

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