

4th-Year Architecture Student Ya-Si Tsai to Represent Taiwan in the Asian Contest of Architectural Rookie' s Award

Campus focus

Tamkang University 4th-year student in Architecture, Ya-Si Tsai, won first place in the Taiwan regional finals of the 2025 Asian Contest of Architectural Rookie' s Award held at National Taipei University of Technology on September 20, earning the honor of representing Taiwan in the upcoming Asian Grand Final in Cambodia later this year. Notably, among all finalists, including Tsai, 7 students from Tamkang' s Department of Architecture entered the final round, accounting for over one-fourth of all finalists, which highlights the department' s exceptional student potential and creative strength.

The Asian Contest of Architectural Rookie' s Award, initiated in 2009 by Korean-Japanese architect Eiichi Lee, aims to encourage architecture and design students across Asia to respond to contemporary regional and cultural issues through creative design. This year' s theme, "Architecture Resilient to Change," invited universities throughout Asia to present diverse proposals based on their own academic design projects.

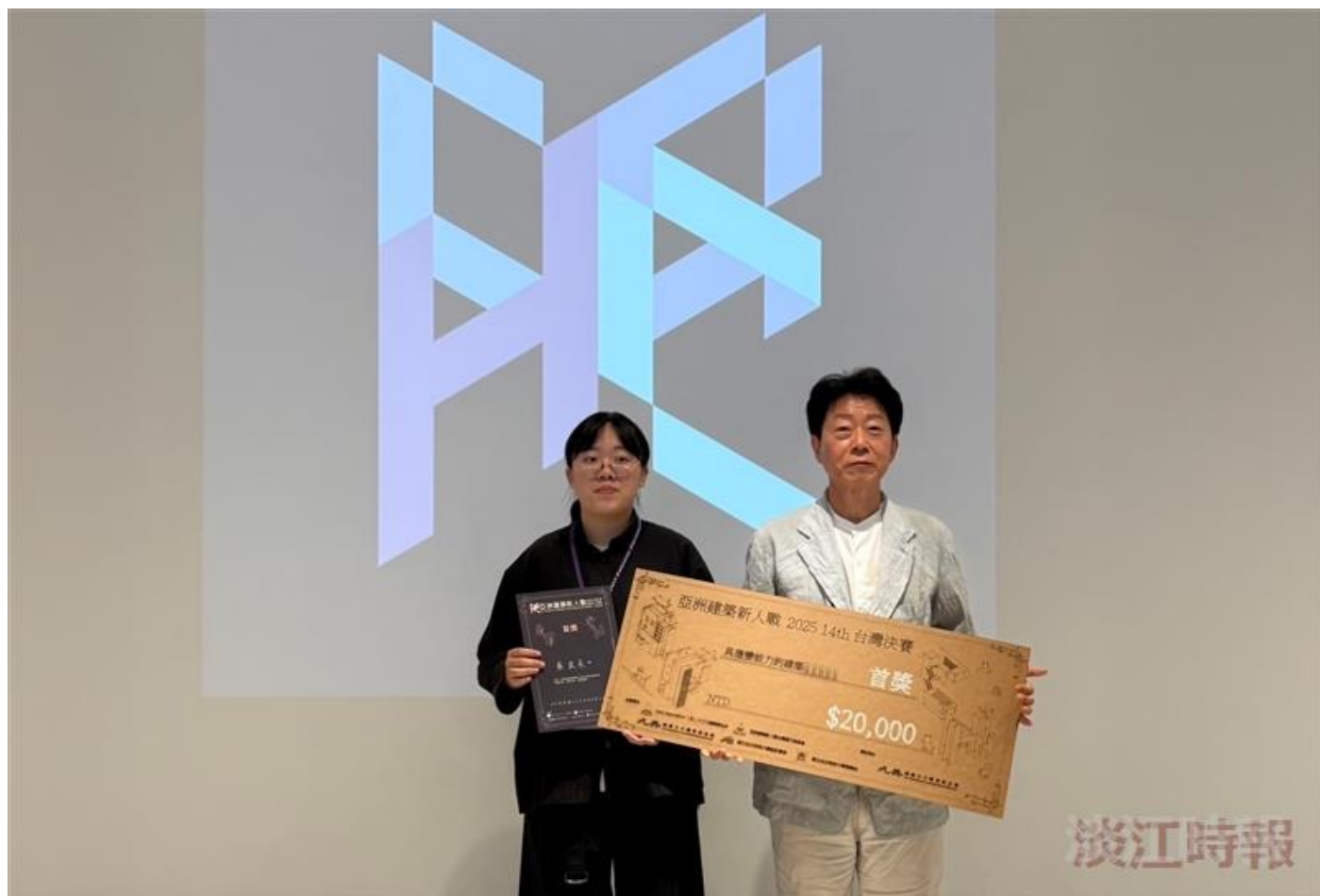
Tsai' s award-winning project, titled "Cyclic Urban Myth — Guerrilla Theater," was a design project completed during her 3rd year under the supervision of Lecturer Shih-Kung Hung from the Department of Architecture. Using Tamsui as the experimental site, she designed a marketplace installation shaped by historical and climatic variables to create dynamic spatial forms. "Each prototype transforms fragments of Tamsui' s history into new narratives, leaving traces of civilization and evoking memory, to be reinterpreted under shifting cultural contexts," Tsai explained. She noted that her inspiration came from photographing along the Tamsui River, and the most challenging part of her process was translating written narratives into architectural form. "Winning first prize was both surprising and deeply rewarding," she added.

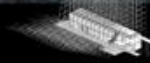
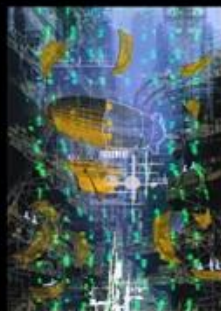
Last year, Tsai received the Special Jury Award from the New Taipei City

Architects Association' s 2024 Student Design Competition. She also participated in the 2025 Hanoi International Workshop, a collaborative housing project between Tamkang University and Japan Women' s University, where her team' s project, "Container of Urban Desire," earned recognition.

Among the 27 finalists from institutions such as Feng Chia University, Tunghai University, National Cheng Kung University, National United University, National Taipei University of Technology, National Kaohsiung University, and National Kinmen University, Tamkang stood out with the top prize and 6 additional finalists: Chun-Tse Nieh and Jimmy in their 3rd year, Hong-Ruei Chen in his 4th year, Chia-Chen Liu, Yi-Hua Wu, and Jia-Qian Lan in their 5th year, further showcasing the department' s competitive excellence.

Professor Hoang-ElI Jheng, who has closely followed the competition over the years, emphasized that this event is one of the most prestigious and credible student architecture contests in Asia. Each year, the competition is hosted in rotation by participating countries, with the host nation selecting a university to organize the event. The contest is open to students of all academic levels—any outstanding work has the chance to be selected, making it "one of the most prestigious and credible student architecture competitions in Asia." The 2025 theme, "Architecture Resilient to Change," aligns closely with the department's teaching direction in recent years. Although each grade level works on different design topics, many projects incorporate issues related to extreme climate events and ecological restoration. He believes that Tamkang students' works are often rigorously challenged within the department, making them highly skilled in using design approaches to respond to environmental issues. "Students who can master both theoretical discussion and practical execution," he noted, "gain the confidence to bring their projects onto the international stage and stand up to global scrutiny."





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