

# Young sharpshooters see the sublime in the everyday

## Huang Lijie

Arts Correspondent

Intense staring happens all the time in a multi-storey carpark and Vanessa Lorraine Chea was doing the same recently.

But unlike most motorists who keep their eyes peeled for an empty parking lot, the 16-year-old Temasek Polytechnic student, who was enroute to lunch on foot, found herself gazing at beauty.

From where she stood, the view of linear carpark railings – horizontal, vertical, straight and curved – stretching into the distance and bathed in light and shadows, held her captive.

She caught the moment on a compact camera which she carries with her and included the photograph in her submission for the City Developments Limited (CDL) Singapore Young Photographer Award competition.

That, and other images of the sublime in the everyday, for example, a silver spoon poking out of a white bowl of plain milk with a single, floating piece of chocolate cereal, snagged her the top prize in the junior category of the contest. The category is open to participants aged 13 to 18.

There are three other categories in the



nationwide photography competition – youth, for participants aged 19 to 25, architecture and themed body of work.

Photography and video producer Charmaine Yap, 23, won in the youth category and Nanyang Academy of Fine Art student Koh Chaik Hong, 20, in the architecture segment. Photographer Bernice Wong, 25, clinched the award for themed body of work with her photo essay on the Lim Chu Kang jetty.

The winners were picked by a nine-member judging panel from more

than 1,500 submissions. The panel comprises industry professionals and veteran photographers such as Mr Lee Tiah Khee, chief photographer of the Chinese daily Lianhe Zaobao, and famed New York-based photographer John Clang.

The biennial contest, started in 2006 by property and hotel group CDL, aims to discover and recognise home-grown photographic talents between the ages of 13 and 25, and nurture an interest in the art form.

For Ms Yap, the win is a cherished

**Top prize winners: Young photographers (from far left) Charmaine Yap, Bernice Wong, Koh Chaik Hong and Vanessa Lorraine Chea.**  
PHOTO: DESMOND FOO

### View it

#### CDL SINGAPORE YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD

**Where:** National Museum of Singapore, 93 Stamford Road  
**When:** Till Sept 7, 10am to 8pm, daily  
**Admission:** Free

affirmation of her abilities as a photographer.

“I had considered taking part in the last competition but I wasn’t confident of my skills then,” she says. “But because of the age limit, this year is my chance and this win means a lot because the judges are all highly respected in their different areas of specialisation.”

The recognition and creative challenge that the contest posed was similarly what spurred student Koh to take part in it a

second time. He participated in the last contest in 2012 and won in the same category of architecture.

While he is familiar with the competition, he did not anticipate the haze earlier this year, which threatened to mar his shots. But he played the situation to his advantage, creating atmospheric, monochromatic photographs of the CDL property Republic Plaza in Raffles Place.

The prize for the youth category is \$5,000, while winners of the other three categories each receives \$3,000. Eight merit award winners are also recognised and given \$1,000 each.

The awards ceremony was held yesterday at the museum with Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Lawrence Wong as guest-of-honour.

The photographs of the winners are on display at the museum for three weeks.

CDL deputy chairman Kwek Leng Joo, 61, who founded the contest and is also a judge for it, says: “The standard of submissions has evolved over the years and the thought process behind the composition of each photograph has become more sublime. When I first came up with this idea of a national photography competition for youth in 2005, I never imagined that we would come this far.”