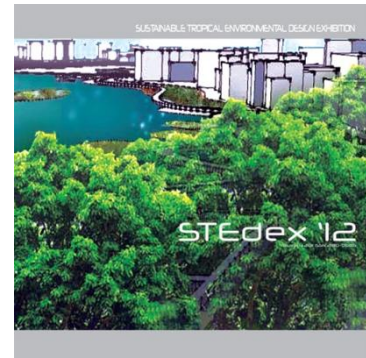


## **Engagement with Nature**

*Sustainable Tropical Environmental Design Exhibition 2012*

<http://www.vlmp.upm.edu.my>



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The landscape is not simply an element but a microcosm of nature in which static and dynamic processes are balanced. In the process a sense of harmony and wellbeing is achieved by unifying the indoor and outdoor environments. The natural factors that contribute to the balance of any environment such as physiography, climate, vegetation, wildlife, etc. are actually very closely related and interdependent. They individually contribute to the ecology of site. The unification of the environment and the symbiotic relationship of factors conspire to create a place of inspiration and relaxation for people. The following projects explore and utilize the power of nature in offering a refreshing antidote to dull and mundane spaces of extremely important learning environment.

In the midst of a busy Metropolitan Centre, the project titles “Rhapsody of Bamboo” engages nature in architectural design of a retreat house located in the Bukit Nenas Reserve. The overall idea is to have a contrasting environment and construction materials vis-à-vis the concrete jungle of skyscrapers in the vicinity. This project stresses on marrying the functional spaces and nature together, physically and visually through unification of outdoor-indoor spaces. It is intentionally design for an exemplary experience to people who appreciates the existence of nature. Consequently, green patches or green spaces can also bring back a magical memory of past experience with nature to certain people. The project on “Dusun Contoh” is one good example where the designer attempts to highlight the historical and nostalgic values of the space through contemporary solutions. The transformation that embraces ecological consideration and protects the natural settings would not only refresh one’s memory of the wondrous era but it also creates a new image to the space. Similarly, the Students’ Center project introduces a more holistic approach where lush greeneries and man-made elements blend as one entity; complementing one another.

Plants are selected for their unique forms, shades of colours and notable characters that would create spatial sensation to users. Trees, shrubs, ground covers and turf are seen as instruments for exterior solar radiation control- one of the challenges that the design must resolve. In addition, the natural topography and its overall ambience serve to alleviate physical and emotional stress thereby could enhance the quality of campus living. Lastly, the final project explores the potential of having outdoor spaces for learning and recreation through interactions of the present spatial elements. The existence of distinct ecosystems is the source of inspiration for ecological application in solving the

site's problems. The design reckons for bolder material explorations without compromising on the complexity of nature with its effective functional capabilities.