

Unleashing the power of dreams

CONTRARY to pragmatic inclinations, dreaming isn't a bad thing. In the case of Martin Luther King Jr, his immortal "I have a dream" refrain influenced millions of people.

Whatever the cause, dreams, when shared, have the amazing propensity to spur the human spirit to new heights.

For Ivan Lam, a leading contemporary artist in Malaysia, the power of dreams applies greatly to art, design or even animation. Dreams serve as the catalyst to bigger things and great things happen whenever purposeful action comes into play. If the success stories of Salvador Dali, Jimmy Choo, Saul Bass and Pixar Animation Studios are anything to go by, fortune certainly favours the bold.

While not quite reaching Hollywood proportions yet, Lam's works – some going for more than RM50,000 per piece – are giving him traction in the local and international arts scene.

Having come good on his early promise, Lam now seeks to share his dreams with others.

This burning desire led him to De Institute of Art and Design (DIAND), a specialised school for art, fashion and design at UCSI University.

Working at the right university was important to Lam and UCSI's

emphasis on industry relevance – a feature best reflected in DIAND's new offerings, namely the diplomas in 3D Animation Design, Graphic Design and Fashion Design sealed the deal.

Moving beyond dated white board lectures, Lam spices up classes with personal accounts of his life

as an artist; presenting his ideas with his own blend of panache.

Encouraging students and inspiring colleagues to outdo themselves, while keeping his humble demeanour and approachability, Lam advocates that the prerequisites of success are hard work and discipline as "the rest" can be learnt along the way.

Lam's philosophy is shared by many, and DIAND is unabashedly

demanding when it comes to the discipline and quality of work it expects from its students.

Anchored on industrial relevance, DIAND's programmes provide aspiring designers with avenues to showcase their work.

In addition to grooming students to be the crème de la crème of the creative crop in terms of attitude and inspiration, the new diploma programmes are also designed to help students put together a substantial portfolio by the time they

graduate.

According to Leroy Fong, a DIAND tutor, students are guided to present their portfolio with their own designer's signature. "In this industry, your portfolio represents you. That's the first thing employers look at and, if it does not capture their attention, it is the last thing they will see."

If dreams are the catalyst of great things, then the ability to change is the key for great things to endure.

To ensure its students will ride the waves of change and not be swept away by it, DIAND constantly invites some of the most cutting-edge names in the creative industry to gauge the students' works.

Whether sweet praise or ego-bruising criticism, students are not cocooned from the high expectations of the industry's finest.

Students are also taught that it takes a certain kind of courage to take something that has worked for the industry, for perhaps the last two years, and change it completely, for the better.

■ To find out more about De Institute of Art and Design at UCSI University, contact 03-9101 8882 or e-mail www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry

Alternatively, drop by during its Info Days on June 8 and 9 (9am-5pm).



Lam (left) and Fong (right) of De Institute of Art and Design are firm believers that hands-on experience is key in helping students make their mark in the creative industry.