



14th
UOB
Painting
of the Year





Message from the Chief Executive Officer of UOB Malaysia

Since its launch 14 years ago, the UOB Painting of the Year (Malaysia) art competition has become a notable platform for uncovering the country's new talents as well as showcasing established artists on a regional stage. We are humbled to see how the competition has enriched our cultural landscape, allowing Malaysian artists to raise pressing issues through the medium of art.

Notably, this year's winning artwork, Durio, delved deeply into the theme of the environment. Using striking visuals, the artist invokes important conversations about the delicate balance between humanity and nature. The piece explores the intricate interconnection between flora and fauna in our ecosystem, conveying a powerful message about preservation and the need to protect the environment. This echoes the Bank's commitment to sustainability, and our continuous efforts to raise awareness on green practices.

This year's competition also saw entries that went far beyond traditional paintings, showcasing an impressive range of talent across various media. The breadth of creativity not only highlights our local artists' versatility but also pushes the boundaries of the many ways visual art can be expressed.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to this year's winners, whose remarkable artworks have raised the benchmarks in the local art scene. I would also like to thank our distinguished panel of judges for their time and expertise in selecting the winning pieces, ensuring the continued excellence of this competition.

As you explore this catalogue, immerse yourself in the stories and messages each painting conveys. Art has always been a mirror to society, reflecting its progress and prevailing issues. Let these artworks challenge your perceptions and inspire your imagination as you journey through this collection.

Ng Wei Wei

Chief Executive Officer
UOB Malaysia





2024 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA

Established Artist Category

Best of 2024 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA | ESTABLISHED ARTIST CATEGORY



2024 UOB Painting of the Year
Established Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist: Hasanul Isyraf Idris
Title: Durio
Medium: Guoache on paper
Size (cm): 174 (H) x 173 (W)

Durio presents a captivating glimpse into the interplay between nature and the artist's observation, who spent four years documenting the biodiversity surrounding his retreat studio in Perak. Located at the edge of a rural settlement and nestled between mountainous forests, the studio offers a surreal backdrop where the artist delved into the local ecosystem with the curiosity of an alien observer.

The central focus of the artwork is a series of intricate drawings and paintings, capturing the life cycle of the Durian (scientifically known as Durio) tree, from flowering to the fruit maturation. These detailed depictions also explore the vital role of stingless bees in pollination, and how the bees rely on pollen as a nutrient source.

To deepen his exploration and profound interest in flora and fauna, the artist incorporates technology by using a Scanning Electron Microscope to create high-resolution scans of seeds, leaves and butterfly eggs.

The artwork invites viewers to experience the slow passage of time in this remote environment, encouraging reflection on themes of Anthropocene, self-care and self-awareness. The serene environment evoke a sense of stillness, inviting contemplation on the fleeting nature of existence in the grand design of the universe.

About the artist

Hasanul Isyraf Idris was trained at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Perak, and is currently based in Penang. His practice spans a variety of media, including painting, drawing, installation, video and sculpture. Through his art, he personifies his personal struggles with spaces, experience and phenomena happening around him. He has held solo exhibitions at Richard Koh Fine Art in Singapore, Art Jakarta, and VOLTA New York. His work has also been featured in selected institutional exhibitions at Taitung Art Museum in Taiwan, Halle Saint Pierre in Paris, and 13th Edition of Asia Contemporary Art Week in Dubai.



Best of 2024 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA | ESTABLISHED ARTIST CATEGORY



Gold
Established Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist: Hug Yin Wan
Title: Reflections of Water
Medium: Mixed media on plywood
(Woodcut, mirror, acrylic and oil paint)
Size (cm): 61.5 (H) x 171.5 (W)

Reflections of Water delves into the theme of impermanence, inspired by Bruce Lee's quote about the adaptability and fluidity of water. The artwork uses woodcut techniques to carve repetitive lines on plywood, simulating the flowing forms of water. Hollow sections, embedded with mirrors, reflect both the viewer and their surroundings, creating an interactive experience. The piece symbolises the constant flux of life, where everything like water flows, adapts, and transforms. This work invites viewers to reflect on the impermanent nature of existence and discover their own insights within this "water."

About the artist
Growing up in a Buddhist family, Hug Yin Wan believes in the concept of impermanence in life, which is reflective in his artwork. He graduated with a Diploma in Fine Art from Dasein Academy of Art in 2015. His works have been showcased in several local galleries, including G13 Gallery, Segaris Art Centre, Taksu Gallery and HOM Art Trans. He won the first prize in Mix Media, Tanjong Heritage Awards in 2015, Grand Prize in Nando's Art Initiative Competition (Fine Art category) in 2015 and Bronze Award under the Established Artist Category for the 2016 UOB Painting of the Year (Malaysia).



Best of 2024 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA | ESTABLISHED ARTIST CATEGORY



Silver
Established Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist: Muhamad Amsyar Bin Ramly
Title: *Langit dan Bumi (Heaven and Earth)*
Medium: Mixed media on canvas
(Soil and acrylic)
Size (cm): 175 (H) x 136 (W)

Langit dan Bumi (Heaven and Earth) is a meditative exploration of spiritual remembrance through the meticulous application of dot mark-making. Utilising the pointillism technique, the painting creates ethereal spaces that shift with the viewer's perspective, evoking a profound sense of mystery and emotion. The controlled spacing and sizing of the dots aim to express fundamental human feelings and connect viewers to the concept of 'zikr,' an Islamic practice of remembering God through repetition. This work seeks to convey the divine beauty and harmony of creation, offering a spiritual representation rather than a literal depiction of nature.

About the artist
Muhamad Amsyar bin Ramly, based in Kuala Lumpur, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts (Honours) from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam in 2015. He has been an active participant in the Malaysian art scene since 2017 with a diverse body of work exploring various styles and media. In 2022, he was honoured with the Malaysian Emerging Artist Award (MEAA), and in 2023, he showcased his first solo exhibition, "Pixels" at Sareng Gallery, Kuala Lumpur.



Best of 2024 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA | ESTABLISHED ARTIST CATEGORY



Bronze
Established Artist Category
MALAYSIA

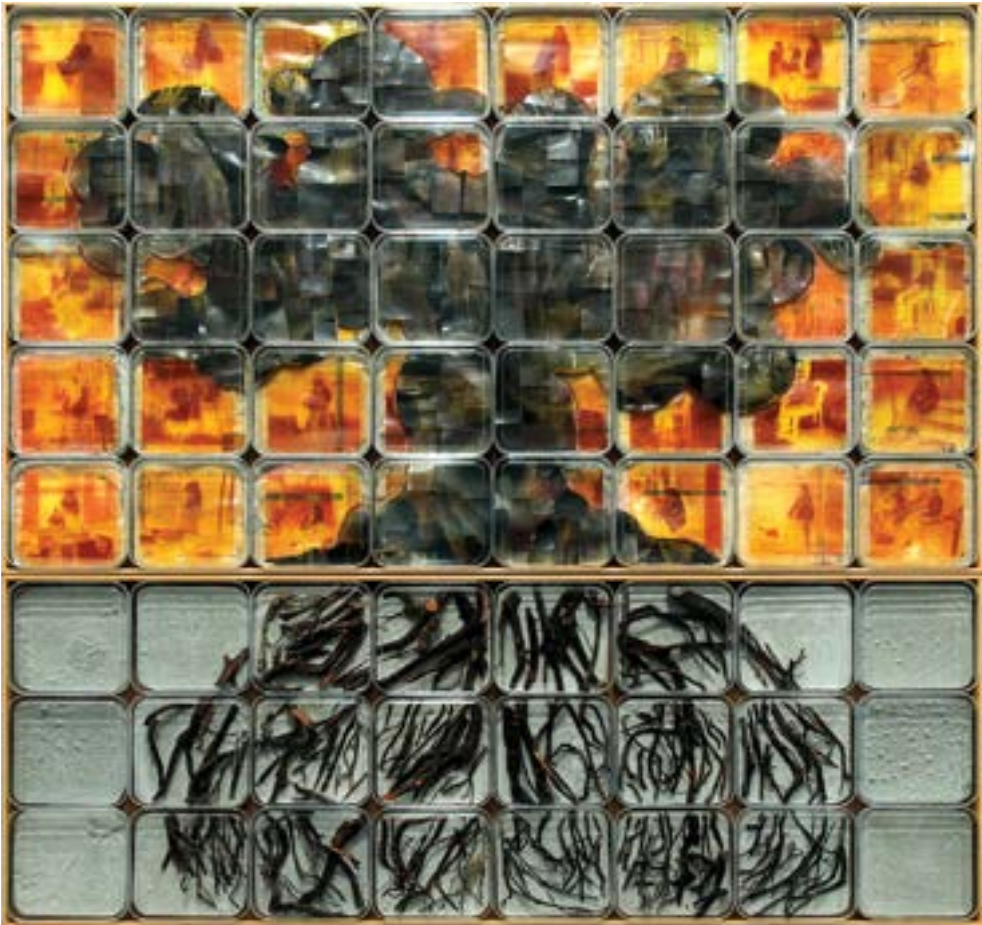
Artist: Mairul Nisa Binti Malek
Title: Perepat (1996)
Medium: Mixed media on wooden box frame
(Film, preserved tree root, collaged archival documents, needle, washed cyanotype, thread and cement)
Size (cm): 147.5 (H) x 145 (W)

Perepat (1996) captures the resilience of the Perepat village community in Sarawak, blending historical and contemporary perspectives. Through a diptych format, the artwork contrasts the scars of labour-intensive work with the educational opportunities now available to the younger generation.

The perepat tree symbolising perseverance, with roots linked to the villagers' labour is presented as a diptych, grid and puzzle to explore interconnectedness and individuality. The artwork also features layered film photos for depth, containers framing delicate materials, and archival documents stitched with red thread to showcase the lifeblood of the economy. The yellow cyanotype mimics firefly light, while cement symbolises the tension between tradition and modernity.

By weaving these narratives together, the artwork invites viewers to honour the sacrifices made by the villagers and to appreciate the shared humanity within diverse communities.

About the artist
Born in Sarawak and currently based in Shah Alam, Mairul Nisa Binti Malek is a visual artist whose work masterfully blends personal narratives with broader socio-political themes, offering profound insights into self-identity across varied contexts. In 2023, she received the UOB Painting of the Year (Malaysia) - Most Promising Artist of the Year award. Mairul has exhibited locally and internationally, with her inaugural solo show in October 2023, organised by Freedom A(r)t Home. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master's Degree in Fine Art and Technology from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, and is now pursuing a PhD in Art and Philosophy in the same institution, while continuing her creative practice.





Highly Commended
Established Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist: Zac Lee
Title: Embrace
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size (cm): 91 (H) x 158 (W)

Embrace depicts a foreground with a solitary figure – its silhouette both youthful and aged, symbolising the fleeting passage of time. The scene captures the bittersweet essence of life’s journey, emphasising that the significance of life lies not in the hurried pace or deliberate steps, but in the shared memories and the moments of connection that transcend time.

About the artist
Zac Lee holds a Diploma in Fine Arts from the Kuala Lumpur College of Art (1990) and Diploma in Illustration from The One Academy of Design (1993). In 2006, he received the Freeman Fellowship at the Vermont Studio Center, USA. He was selected for the Three Shadows Residency in Beijing, China in 2010. He was awarded as the finalist for the Sovereign Asian Art Prize in Hong Kong in 2014, and the Best Theme Award at the Royal Society of Portrait Painter Annual Exhibition London in 2023. Zac has also participated in local and international exhibitions, such as the Asia Week New York in 2015 and 2016.





2024 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA

Emerging Artist Category

Best of 2024 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA | EMERGING ARTIST CATEGORY



Most Promising Artist of the Year
Emerging Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist: Nurul Shahida Binti Ibrahim
Title: Baruh (Lowland)
Medium: Mixed media on jute canvas
(Thread and acrylic)
Size (cm): 126 (H) x 95 (W)

Baruh (Lowland) visualises the harsh reality of life and resilience hidden beneath an idyllic rural landscape. Growing up at the foot of Mount Jerai as the child of a farmer, the artist was surrounded by the beauty of rice fields, green in the growing season and turning golden at harvest. However, beneath this beauty lay profound struggles. The devastation caused by crabs and snails attacking young rice shoots, and the destruction wrought by burung tiak (tree sparrow bird) which ravaged the mature crop like a relentless storm. Although such challenges may be less common in the modern era, the artwork encapsulate a raw and enduring reality of life through the repetitive gird patterns and the interplay of positive and negative spaces in green.

About the artist
Nurul Shahida Binti Ibrahim graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Art and Design from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam in 2012. She won the consolation prize in the Penang Art Open (2012), consolation prize in Art Against AIDS (2023), and the Creative Artist Award in Mr D.I.Y. Art Competition (2024).



Best of 2024 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA | EMERGING ARTIST CATEGORY



Gold

Emerging Artist Category

MALAYSIA

Artist: Ahmad Muhamad Bin
Mohamed Kamal

Title: *Reality in Harmony*

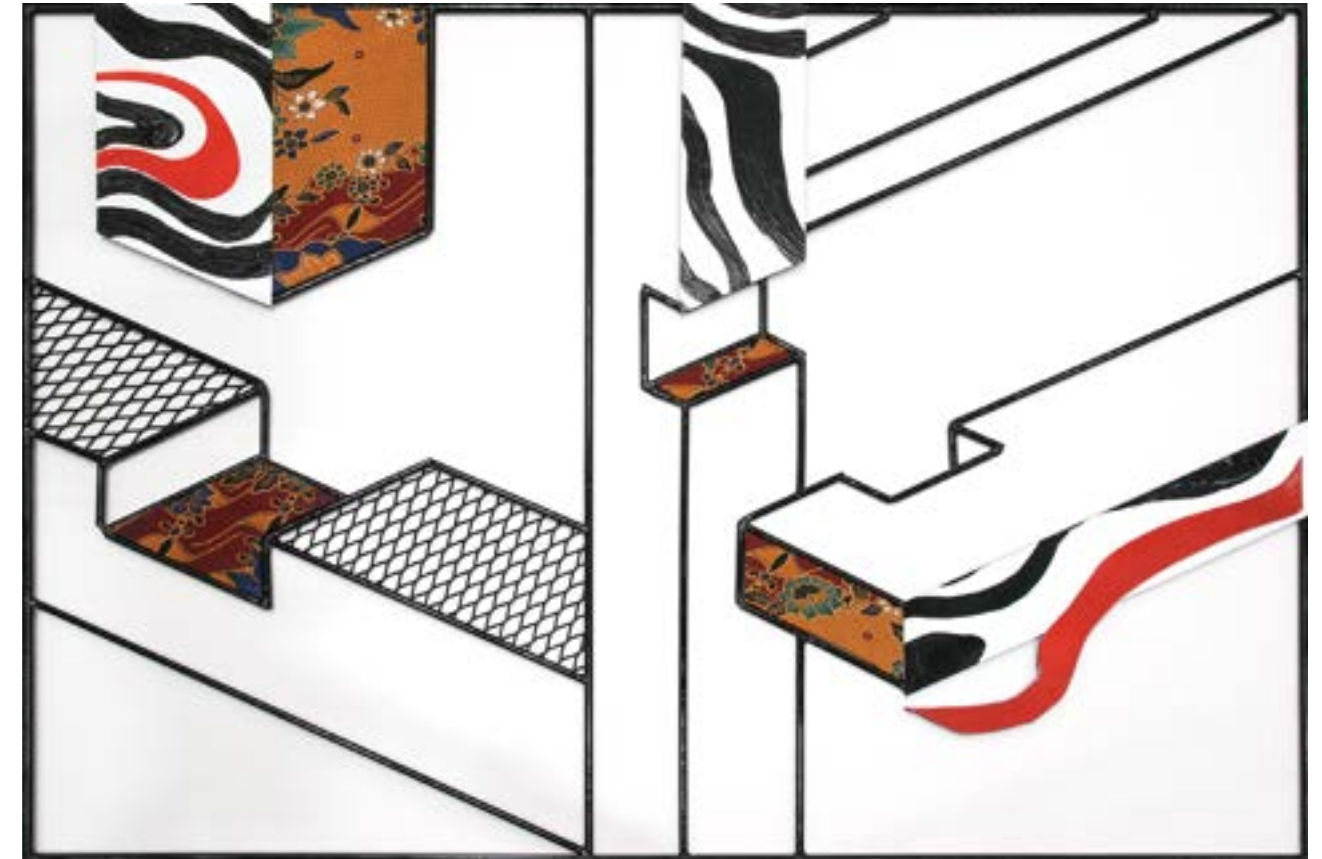
Medium: Mixed media on mild steel
(Industrial paint and fabric)

Size (cm): 86 (H) x 118 (W)

Reality in Harmony is inspired by the art of tanggam (housing joint), the method of assembling wooden frames in its experimental stage. It is characterised by its strong, interlocking components that emphasise durability and unity. By using tanggam (housing joint) as a visual metaphor, the artwork draws a parallel to the family unit as the foundational structure of society, which is gradually disappearing in reality. The combination of batik and line strokes represents the conflicts and challenges faced in fostering positive societal values.

About the artist

Ahmad Muhamad bin Mohamed Kamal holds a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art (Honours) from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam in 2009. He has showcased his artworks in local galleries and won the Special Jury Award at the 2019 Waste Art Competition, and the 2nd Prize in Mixed Media at the 2009 Tanjong Heritage Art Competition.



Best of 2024 UOB Painting of the Year
MALAYSIA | EMERGING ARTIST CATEGORY



Silver
Emerging Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist: Lee Yaw Chu
Title: *A Letter from 1989*
Medium: Mixed media in wooden frame
(Acrylic, paper, printing, plaster and rusting effect)
Size (cm): 85 (H) x 73 (W)

A Letter from 1989 reflects on the fading tradition of letter writing, inspired by a 1989 letter exchanged between the artist's grandmother in Malaysia and her brother in China. After their separation in 1958, letters became their sole means of communication, sustaining their bond over decades.

While today's technology offers instantaneous communication, it often lacks the emotional depth of handwritten letters. The artwork illustrates how letter writing is a profound form of connection which turns into valuable artifacts in the future, representing the lasting impact of personal, written communication.

About the artist
Lee Yaw Chu, inspired by his father's carpentry skills, had a unique upbringing that fostered his passion for art. During secondary school, he studied art and calligraphy, learning that art is a process of observation. He began experimenting with everyday materials, creating new mediums for his work. After spending time in the countryside and working in the city, he focused on exploring human relationships and society. He has also used art as a therapeutic tool for orphans in non-profit events.



Best of 2024 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA | EMERGING ARTIST CATEGORY



Bronze
Emerging Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist: Aer Loo Xin Theng
Title: Sacred Steps
Medium: Mixed media collage on Chinese calligraphy grid paper
(Embossed wrapper, inkjet print and acid free spray adhesive)
Size (cm): 167 (H) x 52.4 (W)

Sacred Steps is a piece that conveys a multifaceted message about societal hierarchies, labour, and human resilience. The boy in this artwork represents the millions of children around the world who engage in laborious tasks, their contributions often unseen and undervalued. His act of assembling shoes becomes a metaphor for the foundational work that supports society, allowing others to ascend the social ladder.

With meticulous transfer of print and square cuttings on Chinese calligraphy paper, the artwork transforms the silent struggles of the boy into a powerful visual narrative, communicating messages that transcend verbal communication. The artwork speaks to the resilience and humility of those in difficult situations and the invisible support they provide to society.

About the artist
Aer Loo Xin Theng is an artist based in Kuala Lumpur. She explores themes of identity, perception, and the human spirit through painting, embroidery, and poetry. Her artistic journey has included meaningful experiences such as completing a residency at Bon Ton Resort, Langkawi. Her artworks had also been featured at Cult Gallery in 2024, The Back Room in 2023 and Artsinsquare Ontario online exhibit in Canada, 2022.





Highly Commended
Emerging Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist: Emily Tan Ching Wen
Title: 百家被 (Baijia Quilt)
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size (cm): 122 (H) x 92 (W)

百家被 (*Baijia Quilt*) is a popular traditional item for Chinese families. As the saying goes, “Gather a hundred family clothes, gather a hundred family blessings”. It is said that when a child reaches the age of 100 days, parents would visit the homes of nearby families, relatives and friends to collect fabrics and make a quilt full of blessings for the child. This is also believed to bring luck while protecting the child against evil and ensuring the child’s safe growth.

This artwork celebrates the generational connection between the artist and her own grandmother through the cultural symbol of the Baijia Quilt. The delicate and meticulous process of crafting this quilt is a tribute to the love and care given by her grandmother during the artist’s childhood.

About the artist
Emily Tan Ching Wen is currently pursuing a Diploma in Fine Arts at the Malaysian Institute of Art. She focuses on oil paint and acrylic, and is also experimenting with different media such as textiles and papers and different art forms such as graffiti art, sculpture, and mural painting. She won the Judges’ Pick Award at the 2024 Mr DIY Art Competition and Best Graffiti Artwork at the 2023 #BreakFree KL Youth Street Arts Festival. She was also voted as one of the Top 10 Bakat Mahasiswa 2023 Art Exhibition organised by the Malaysian Institute of Art.



2024 UOB Painting of the Year
PANEL OF JUDGES

Ms Bibi Chew
*Art Advisor, Academician and
Malaysian Contemporary Artist*

Mr Ahmad Fuad Osman
Malaysian Contemporary Artist

Mr Baktiar Naim
Curator



Right By You