

15th
UOB
Painting
of the Year



Message from the Chief Executive Officer of UOB Malaysia

Art has a profound ability to speak to the heart and to tell stories that words alone often cannot. As we recently celebrated 68 years of Merdeka, this year's winning artwork, *Rumah Kita (Our Home)*, offers a timely and beautiful reminder of what brings us together as Malaysians. Drawing inspiration from our beloved King of Fruits, the *durian*, the artist shaped an imperfect, spiky clay form of the fruit to reflect the strength we find in imperfection and the resilience that shapes our shared journey.

The painting of the *durian* sculpture also reminds us that unity, though sometimes challenging, is built on perseverance and a collective spirit. These are the same values that have guided Malaysia's journey, one that UOB has proudly supported for over seven decades. This message of unity and resilience continues to inspire us as we help shape the future of ASEAN. Just like in art, our differences make us stronger and our unity moves us forward.

Over the past 15 years, the UOB Painting of the Year (Malaysia) competition has grown into a meaningful platform for discovering and celebrating the diverse voices of our local art scene. It continues to be a space where creativity meets purpose, and where artists across the nation share their stories with the world.

We are especially heartened by the wide range of participation this year. Artists from all walks of life, including members of the deaf community, have brought unique perspectives that add richness and depth to the tapestry of visual storytelling. Their contributions also reflect the inclusive spirit of this platform, where creativity knows no limits, and every voice has the power to connect, inspire, and transform.

My warmest congratulations to all the winners and participants of this year's competition. Your work not only enriches our cultural landscape but also encourages us to see the world from new perspectives. We look forward to seeing your artistic journeys continue to grow and inspire in the years to come. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our esteemed panel of judges for their thoughtful deliberation and commitment in selecting this year's outstanding artworks.

As you journey through this catalogue, I invite you to take a moment and reflect on the stories of hope, resilience and imagination behind each piece. May they awaken something within you and remind you that through art, we find connection, meaning and the beauty of being human.

Ms Ng Wei Wei

Chief Executive Officer
UOB Malaysia





2025 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA

Established Artist Category

Best of 2025 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA | ESTABLISHED ARTIST CATEGORY



2025 UOB Painting of the Year

Established Artist Category

MALAYSIA

Artist : Nik Mohd Shazmie Bin
Nik Shairozi

Title : *Rumah Kita (Our Home)*

Medium : Acrylic on canvas

Size (cm) : 150 (H) x 110 (W)

Rumah Kita (Our Home) captures the spirit of Malaysian unity through an imperfect, spiky clay form inspired by the durian, Malaysia's most iconic fruit. During durian season, people of all backgrounds gather by the roadside to enjoy the pungent delicacy, creating moments of connections and togetherness.

The painting depicts a sculpture whose jagged, uneven form draws inspiration from both the durian's texture and 1950s brutalist architecture. Brutalism, with its minimalist and utilitarian approach, marked a departure from colonial aesthetics, embracing raw concrete and bold forms as expressions of progress and modernity. This architectural reference aligns with Malaysia's post-colonial aspirations and evolving national identity.

Like the durian - tough on the outside, sweet on the inside, our path to unity is not always smooth, but it is resilient and full of life. The cracks and raw textures speak to the challenges we face, while also highlighting the strength and spirit that drive our progress.

About the artist

Nik Mohd Shazmie is a Malaysian fine artist known for his tragicomic explorations of diversity, society and socio-political critique. A Master's graduate from UiTM Jalan Othman, he has received notable recognition, including winning the Nando's Peri-fy Your Art competitions in 2014 and 2015, and the UOB Painting of the Year (Malaysia) - Gold Award in the Established Artist Category in 2015.

His work has been showcased in both solo and group exhibitions across the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. Shazmie continues to push artistic boundaries by integrating the illusion of 3D elements in 2D paintings, emphasising the interplay of space and depth.





Gold
Established Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist : Paul Nickson Atia
Title : *Gamut Torun, Gamut Tana?*
(*Spirit of Homeland*)
Medium : Mixed media on linen
(Chinese ink, acrylic, oil, graphite
and metallic colour pencil)
Size (cm): 64 (H) x 94 (W)

Gamut Torun, Gamut Tana? (Spirit of Homeland) is a phrase from the Bidayuh-Jagoi dialect, which can also be interpreted as “sense of place”. The artwork draws from an early memory of the artist encountering the Bidayuh written language for the first time in a translated Bible during Sunday classes at St. Paul’s Church in Bau, Sarawak.

Though seemingly insignificant at the time, this moment later resurfaced during the development of the artist’s ongoing 2019 project - ‘Perhimpunan (Assembly)’, a speculative dialogue between The Dayak Man (representing Indigenous identity from Borneo) and The Vitruvian Man (a symbol of the Western worldview), exploring identity, history, spirituality and representation through the lens of a Dayak Bidayuh artist.

The texts in the painting are written in the Gutenberg typeface, a style often seen in early printed Bibles, as a way for the artist to reconnect with his first memory of reading the Bidayuh written language. The memory of the translated Bible and the concept of ‘Gamut (Spirit)’ together form the foundation that informs the artwork.

About the artist

Paul Nickson Atia is a Sarawak-born, Kuala Lumpur-based artist and educator. His work delves into architecture, identity, and cultural narratives through social and historical lenses. His work engages with themes of spirituality, time and modularity.

He has participated in the Southeast Asian Arts Residency at Rimbun Dahan, Kuala Lumpur in 2022, and the Khazanah Nasional Associate Artist Residency Programme at ACME Studios, London in 2024. His work has been exhibited in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.





Silver
Established Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist : Zulaiha Binti Zulkapli
Title : Berteduh Dibawah
Rahmat-Mu
(Covered by Your Grace)
Medium : Oil on canvas
Size (cm): 115 (H) x 165 (W)

In *Berteduh Dibawah Rahmat-Mu (Covered by Your Grace)*, the artist invites viewers into a world shaped not by sound, but by memory and emotion. Deprived of auditory perception, the artist channels a deeply personal experience, one of navigating sudden, silent shifts and longing for the warmth of remembered sounds. The canvas becomes a vessel for recollection, where the whisper of wind and the flight of birds are preserved not in notes, but in color and form.

The artwork portrays the act of seeing and feeling in the absence of hearing. Through expressive brushstrokes and a palette rich with sentiment, the artist captures a yearning for a time and presence that now exist only in memory. Each element of the composition speaks to a silent narrative, one that resonates not through ears, but through the heart. It is a visual symphony of longing, where emotion becomes the language of remembrance.

About the artist

Zulaiha Zulkapli is a deaf artist and a passionate advocate for deaf artists around the world. She expresses memories and abstract themes through her paintings. She currently serves as the president of Deaf Artist Malaysia under the Association of Deaf Artists International.

She has participated in various exhibitions championing deaf artists, including the World Deaf Artist Exchange Exhibition in Korea and Deaf Expression Exhibition at National Art Gallery in Malaysia. Zulaiha is also an accomplished competitor in the Abilympics Drawing Competition, having represented Malaysia internationally in Bordeaux, France.



Best of 2025 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA | ESTABLISHED ARTIST CATEGORY



Bronze
Established Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist : Ong Hieng Fuong
Title : *Di Dusun Durian*
(In the Durian Orchard)
Medium : Oil on canvas
Size (cm): 100 (H) x 120 (W)

Di Dusun Durian (In the Durian Orchard) is a work deeply rooted in the artist's family traditions and memories. Each year after durian season, his extended family gather at the durian orchard established by his great-grandfather several decades ago. This annual reunion includes a thanksgiving ritual to honour the deities for the harvest, both a spiritual act and a cherished moment together as a family. The orchard, rich with memories, embodies the essence of "home" and carries the stories of four generations.

In this work, the artist combines traditional Chinese landscape painting techniques (高远法 or "high-distance method") with tropical elements to depict a durian orchard on a hill.

This artwork is a visual meditation on identity, memory, and how the land we come from shapes who we are.

About the artist

Ong Hieng Fuong is a painter and printmaker from Tanjung Sepat, Selangor. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, China, and holds a Bachelor's degree from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing. His work focuses on Southeast Asian Chinese identity, tropical aesthetics and postcolonial themes such as cultural preservation, history and memory.

He has held solo shows in China and Malaysia, and participated in group exhibitions in ART SG 2024 and Art Jakarta 2024. His accolades include the Central Academy of Fine Arts (China) - Thematic Creation Award in 2023 and 2024, UOB Painting of the Year (Malaysia) - Gold Award in the Established Artist Category in 2019, and Most Promising Artist of the Year Award in the Emerging Artist Category in 2017.





2025 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA

Emerging Artist Category



Most Promising Artist of the Year

Emerging Artist Category

MALAYSIA

Artist : Putra Aqmal Danish Bin
Mohd Zuraimi

Title : *I Love You, Bearbear*

Medium : Acrylic on cardboard

Size (cm): 126 (H) x 123 (W)

Painted on cardboard, a material often discarded yet essential to those without shelter, this work transforms a humble surface into a powerful symbol of survival and dignity. At its centre is a solitary figure, curled up and clinging to warmth. The posture conveys not only physical vulnerability but also emotional isolation, reminding us that regardless of where we sleep, we all seek love, comfort and dignity.

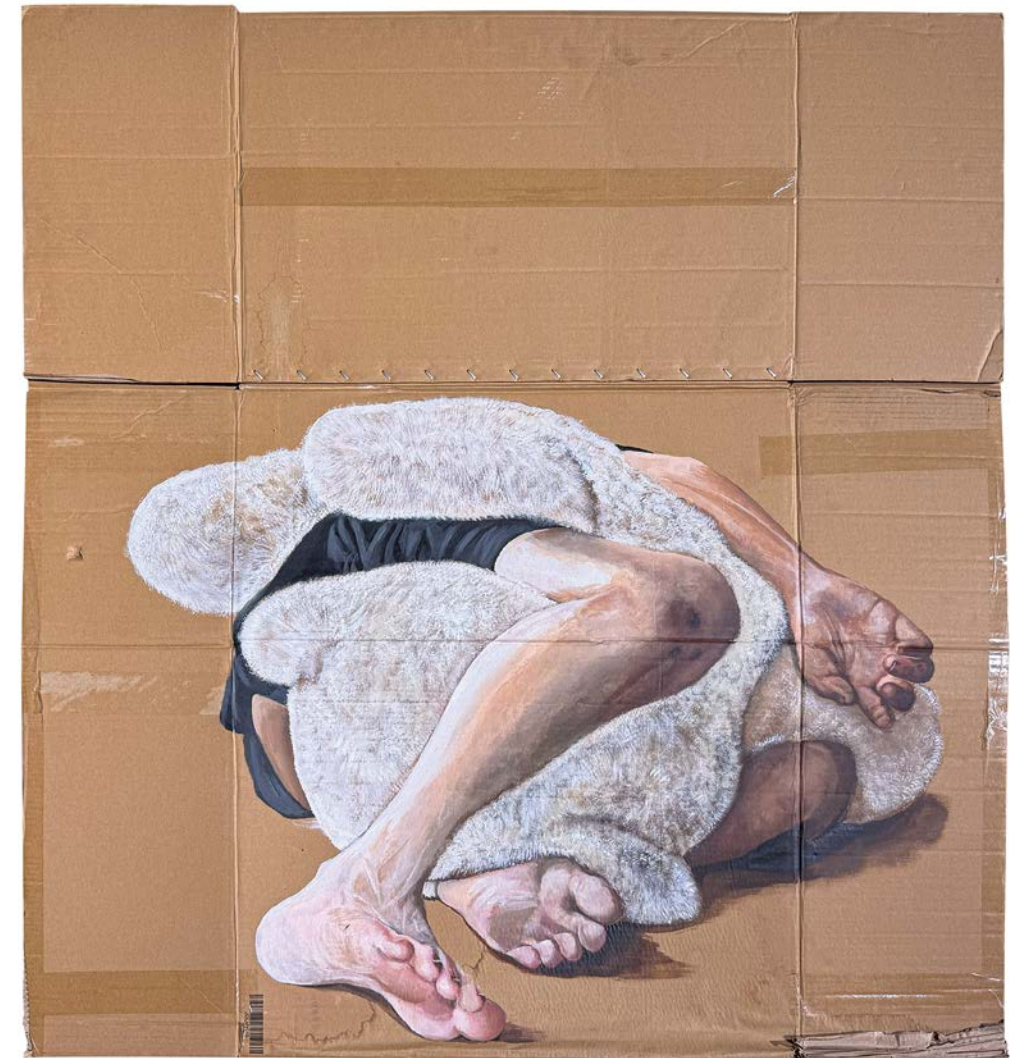
I Love You, Bearbear is a deeply personal piece to the artist. As someone who draws on the street, the artist sees what is often overlooked and listens to stories that the world tends to ignore. This painting is a reflection of that reality, not just the struggle of homelessness, but the aching absence of affection, attention and acceptance that comes with it.

The artist invites viewers to pause and reflect: "When was the last time you looked at someone society has tried to erase?" Behind every figure on the street, is a soul, just like you and me. And all they need more than anything, is love.

About the artist

Putra Aqmal, also known as Putra Pelukis, is a Malaysian street artist based in Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur. He draws deeply from the lives he encounters daily. His art is shaped by real stories, often unheard of those living on the margins. Through his work, Putra aims to give back, using art as a platform for empathy, awareness, and tangible support for the homeless community.

Putra is known for his emotionally charged portraits and social commentary. At age 19, he gained national attention after presenting two portrait artworks to the Sultan of Brunei, one personally delivered, and the other signed by His Majesty. His story went viral across Brunei and Malaysia, leading to appearances on television, radio, and in print media. Despite working on the streets, Putra believes art is a powerful tool, not just for expression, but for empathy and change.



Best of 2025 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA | **EMERGING ARTIST CATEGORY**



Gold
Emerging Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist : Jazz Tee Yujie
Title : *The Orbit*
Medium : Mixed media on canvas
(Tinted charcoal, graphite,
tissue and colour pencil)
Size (cm) : 145 (H) x 142 (W)

The Orbit explores the dream as a space where the visible world and hidden systems converge. Rather than a personal escape, the dream is framed as a mechanism, one that reflects a deeper rhythm beyond conscious control. Within this space, the subconscious serves as both mirror and guide, revealing symbolic fragments that hint at an unseen order governing the world.

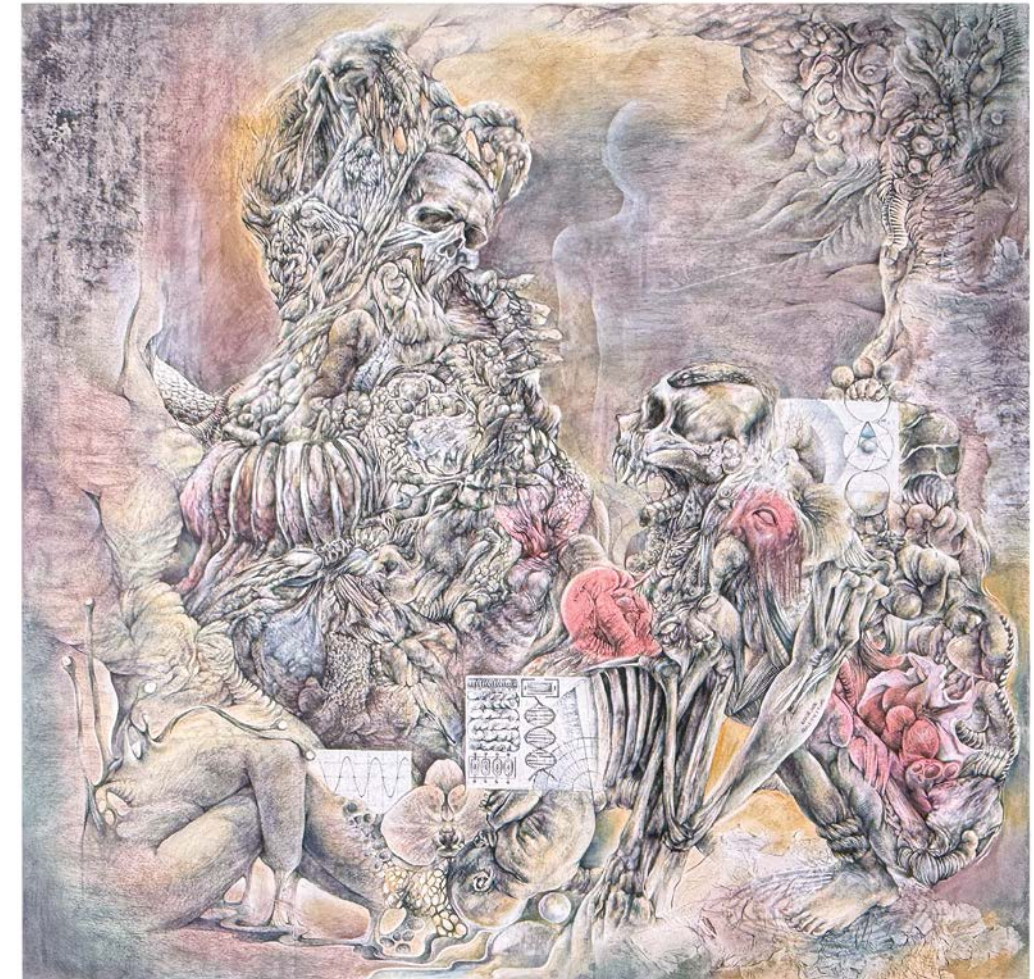
The composition presents a suspended narrative of life and death through recurring forms of a baby and skull. These elements are not opposites, but extensions of a closed cycle, each orbiting the other. Anatomical and organic imagery intersect across fragmented layers, constructed through drawing and partial collage. Materials such as tinted charcoal, graphite, and colour pencil are applied directly onto canvas, with small areas of collage interrupting the surface like temporal shifts. These disruptions echo the tension between chaos and order, a recurring presence within the subconscious world.

The artwork ultimately reflects an inner cosmology: where what lies beneath perception might shape the rhythm of our waking lives.

About the artist

Jazz Tee Yujie is an emerging artist whose work explores the dream as a portal into the world's hidden order, an unseen system shaping perception and experience. Her drawings investigate the cyclical relationship between the subconscious and a larger universal rhythm.

She has exhibited in "The Beats & The Goods" at Kiara Bay Kuala Lumpur in 2024, and "Whatever" at Galeri Puteh, Kuala Lumpur in 2025. She has received awards including Usaha Tegas Heritage Art Competition - Second Prize (Mixed Media) in 2024 and MR D.I.Y. Art Competition - Outstanding Award in 2025.





Silver
Emerging Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist : Muhammad Arash Bin
Ab Jabbar
Title : *Lucky Scratch, Manifest
Memories*
Medium : Mixed media on canvas
(Acrylic and colour pencil)
Size (cm): 153 (H) x 92 (W)

In *Lucky Scratch, Manifest Memories*, the artist reflects on the essence of creativity rooted in personal history. The banana trees depicted symbolise familial pride, drawn from the artist's mother's pisang goreng (banana fritters) business. To the artist, this subject evokes the thrill of a winning scratch-off ticket, an emblem of entrepreneurial spirit and the shared pursuit of success. The stretchers placed prominently in the foreground, with the artwork receding behind, suggest the hidden narratives that shape our lives. This piece is a tribute to the artist's family legacy, honoring the quiet strength of maternal support and the gratitude for roots that continue to inspire.

About the artist

Arash Jabbar is an artist based in Shah Alam, originally from Johor Bahru. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) in Painting from UiTM Shah Alam. Known for his still life artworks and depictions of everyday objects, his work often carries personal meaning. His current work often experiments with water-based color pencils to explore and express themes of nostalgia and fading memories.



Best of 2025 UOB Painting of the Year

MALAYSIA | **EMERGING ARTIST CATEGORY**



Bronze
Emerging Artist Category
MALAYSIA

Artist : Lee Pei Chyi
Title : *Between Worlds*
Medium : Oil on canvas
Size (cm): 50 (H) x 50 (W)

Between Worlds captures a moment suspended in silence, where reality and imagination gently converge. The faceless figure and her quiet companions, a cat and a small fish, embody the fragility of solitude and the subtle comfort of presence. Through soft gradients and minimalist forms, the work evokes a dreamlike state, existing between light and shadow, absence and connection.

About the artist

Kay Lee is a Kuala Lumpur based artist who works extensively with mixed media. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Oil Painting from Nanjing University of the Arts, and has taught at two international schools.



2025 UOB Painting of the Year
PANEL OF JUDGES

Ms. Intan Rafiza

*Performance Artist & Curator,
National Art Gallery, Malaysia*

Mr. Khairuddin Hori

*Curator
Director and Partner at Chan + Hori Contemporary*

Mr. Kow Leong Kiang

Leading Malaysian Artist



Right By You