



*(under construction)*

*Frank Sullivan @1970's*

• **Some Reflections**

*by P.G. Lim (Excerpted from the publication “National Art Gallery Malaysia 1958 – 1988”)*

*I feel that any historical record of the National Art Gallery (Malaysia) would not be complete without mentioning the role played by Mr. Frank Sullivan in its establishment. He was our first Prime Minister's Press Secretary and it was mostly due to his indefatigable efforts in promoting Malaysia's artists and their works of art that the Gallery was established.*

*In this, he had, the unflinching support of the then Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman (Malaysia) who gave permission for the Gallery to occupy the Dewan Tunku Abdul Rahman in Jalan Ampang until its own building could be put up. These premises soon proved to be inadequate in terms of space for the display of works of art and for their storage, when the Gallery started to make its own acquisitions and its permanent collection was increased through generous donations of works of art by collectors and foreign donors. The Gallery was to remain in the Dewan for many years until it moved to its present premises in 1984.*

*The Gallery was established on 27 August 1958 and a Working Committee was set up to get it going under the Chairmanship of Tuan Hj. Mubin Sheppard (June 1958 – December 1959), Encik Mohamad Ghazalie Shafie (as he then was) – (Jan 1960 – Feb 1963). Frank Sullivan was its secretary and its moving spirit. The other original members were Encik Kington Loo, Encik Yong Peng Seng, Encik W.M. Enslie and Encik R.J.E. Price. This Working Committee initiated and developed the Gallery for four and a half years until a Board of Trustees was appointed in 1963 to take over its work.*

*The names of its first Board of Trustees make interesting reading. Some of them include Tuan Haji Mubin Sheppard, Dato Loke Wan Tho, Run Run Shaw, Dato J.N. McHugh, Hoessain Enas, Kington Loo, Dol Ramli. Professor Ungku Aziz was the Chairman, I was the Deputy Chairman, and Frank Sullivan was to remain as Secretary until 1971. The Prime Minister inaugurated the first meeting of the newly appointed Board and announced a generous donation of \$250,000 by Mr. Run Run Shaw, the cinema magnate, towards the construction of a permanent Art Gallery in the Lake Gardens. This, said the Tunku, would form the nucleus of a Building Fund.*

*Tunku then presented the Board with a cheque for \$25,000 to enable it to “get off with a good start”. He said that the Working Committee had handed over the Gallery as a going concern with excellent goodwill but with “no funds in the Bank”.*

*In the early days of the Gallery’s establishment patronage of the local arts and artists was dependent on private collectors, who were encouraged if not persuaded, to purchase works of art of local artists to add to the Gallery’s permanent collection. Except for the Nanyang Academy of Art in Singapore, there were few recognized art schools in Malaysia which could provide training in the contemporary arts. Thus many of our leading artists of today were obliged to seek their training in art abroad. Returning home, they found little artistic awareness among the Malaysian public. The establishment of the National Art Gallery provided a stimulus and a focal point for the display of works of art of our local artists.*

*Fortunately for the Gallery, Tunku Abdul Rahman took a great personal interest in its activities. As soon as it was opened, the Gallery plunged into a programme of activities which included exhibitions of works of art of local artists – paintings, ceramics and sculpture, as well as exhibitions of foreign works of art from Japan, France and South East Asia. It was a time of a great flourishing of the arts and the art scene was lively and stimulating. The Chinese, Islamic and European schools of art contended with and influenced each other with resulting benefits to Malaysian art. It was a period of experiment and evolution. Soon public institutions and corporate bodies began to sponsor exhibitions and started their own collections of Malaysian art. We were fortunate indeed to have as patrons of art our first two Prime Ministers, Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Razak who followed in his tradition. To their patronage of the arts most of our outstanding artists of today owe their success.*

*Two notable collections donated to the Gallery deserve mention. They are Dato Loke Wan Tho’s photographs of birds, which the late Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, a former British High Commissioner for South East Asia described as “the finest bird photographers in the world and perhaps the finest in Asia”. There is also the collection of Mr. Lee Kah Yeow valued at \$2 million of Chinese and calligraphic works going back to the Sung Dynasty. Mr. Lee himself is a notable artist of the Chinese School of painting.*

*In the twenty five years of its existence, that which distinguishes the art scene today from that of the 1960’s is the availability in Malaysia of art colleges and Universities providing training in the arts and the consequent evolution of a Malaysian art discovering its Asian roots, but at the same time receptive to development going on within the region and elsewhere.*

*There is a growing awareness of the importance of art in our daily lives as evidenced by the growing number of private galleries of art and institutions sponsoring art exhibitions, affording the products of our affluent society an opportunity to see and acquire works of art with which to grace their homes and offices.*

*Malaysian artists are participating increasingly in international exhibitions, while at home public and financial institutions, by lending their prestige and support, have become the leading patrons of art in this country.*

*Malaysian art has now come of age. This development could not have been accomplished so quickly without the pioneering efforts of the Gallery’s founding fathers. All that now remains is for the Gallery to build a new home on the land which it possesses, for the proper display, storage and conservation of its growing art collection. ---P.G. Lim/ Malaysia 1988*



National Art Gallery Malaysia (1958-1984) @109, Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



LEE Hui Ling @1983

1983, Malaysia

李慧玲@1983



*The National Art Gallery Malaysia was established in 1958. Ms **P.G. Lim** (Tan Sri) a lawyer, was then the first deputy chairman of the Board of Trustees as well as the chairman of the Exhibitions Committee. Apart from being the convener of the first Salon Malaysia (1968) art exhibition, she had been the first permanent representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, and a Malaysian ambassador to Yugoslavia, Belgium and Austria respectively. She had also been a former chairperson of the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, a member of the National Advisory Council, the secretary of the Malaysian Bar Council, an attorney for the Malaysian Trade Union Congress, and the former director of the Kuala Lumpur Regional Arbitration Center, Malaysia. She was a member of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) P.G. Lim knew the origin and development of the Malaysian art scene like the back of her hand. She wrote about the development of Malaysian installation art as she witnessed it. She passed away in Australia in 2013 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WuDh5Chh1Q>*

**林碧颜简介：** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WuDh5Chh1Q> 马来西亚国家艺术馆 1958年成立。林碧颜律师 (Tan Sri Ms P.G.Lim) 是当时第一届国家艺术馆信托委员会副主席兼画展委员会主席，第一届马来西亚沙龙画展会召集人。曾任大马驻联合国第一位常任代表，大马驻南斯拉夫、比利时、奥地利大使，联合国主会与经济委员会主席，国家咨询理事成员，律师公会秘书，职工会律师、国家区域仲裁中心总裁，策略及国际研究院 (ISIS) 成员。林碧颜对马来西亚艺术界的来龙去脉，了如指掌，凭艺术良知基础法律，写出她所见证的马来西亚装置艺术发展。她 2013年在澳洲去世。

- **Young Contemporaries 2000 Malaysia**

*Ms P.G. Lim delivered the following official speech at the presentation of awards of the **Young Contemporaries 2000 Exhibition at the National Art Gallery, Malaysia** on the 30 January 2001.*

*<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WuDh5Chh1Q>*

*[ Since its inception in 1974, the Young Contemporaries Exhibitions (Malaysia) have become a platform for exhibiting and exposing the works of young artists below the age of 35 to the eyes of the general public. More than that they have over the years served to motivate them to develop meaningfully and effectively within the context of modern Malaysian art.*

*This year there was a panel of six judges which included a guest judge – an art lecturer from the University of the Philippines. The panel was headed by Joseph Tan, himself an artist of note and a former part-time director of the Balai Seni( The National Art Gallery Malaysia). A total of 83 works were received out of which 27 are on display and from which the winners have been selected.*

*The Judges' Report draws attention to the fact that the works displayed are dominated by installation and multimedia works; paintings are in a very small minority. This is very evident when one views the works. It is a development upon which globalisation even in art has had a profound impact. The predominance of installations present in this exhibition irrespective of which school of art you may come from is proof enough of that.*

*Installation art is not new, but it is of recent origin. In the 1970's it was a newborn term, and did not rate as a term of specialization until the 1980's. The term used was mixed media; now such works are described as multimedia. For example, the Balai Seni from the very beginning in 1975 has used the term media campuran (mixed media) to describe its prize-winning installation works of the seventies and eighties. In today's catalogue however the term used is simply campuran (mixed) – no less and no more, but we may conclude that they are in fact installations.*

*We may, I think take a little pride to discover that our own young artists of the seventies and eighties were already involved in creating their own three-dimensional works which did not fall into the category of painting or sculpture. Specialisation in installations had not yet begun. But the creative process among our young artists was at work. If you will take a little time to browse through that excellent **Review of the Young Contemporaries Malaysia** ( Imbasan Bakat Muda Sezaman) – from its inception in 1974 to 1997 you will discover to your surprise that at the second Y.C. Exhibition in 1975 the major award was won by Lee Kian Seng (李健省) for his installation Permainan Poker or **Process of playing Poker** then described as Media Campuran (mixed media). But before that he had won an award in 1973 with another installation work called **Mankind** (created in 1972) now in the collection of the Balai Seni.*

*This was in the seventies before installation art had acquired its name as such. Lee Kian Seng whom I would describe as the progenitor or father of installation art in Malaysia was already exploring the limits and dimensions of painting on canvas by his installations. He admits in a newspaper interview that at the time he created them he did not know what to categorise his pieces. **“I only knew I wanted to create something new”** said he. **“Art is about discovering the unknown and an artist should be able to work with many types of media”**.*

*Lee Kian Seng was followed in 1981 – the year when the Y.C. Exhibitions were resumed after a hiatus of some four years by another major award winning installation by Ponirin Amin with his **Alibi Catur Di Pulau Bidung**.. The following year 1982 it was Zacharia Awang who won the major award with his installation work **Al Rahman**. From 1988 onwards both major and minor awards have been given to multi media and installation works. It seems that the entries were dominated by such works. Little wonder then that these developments have culminated – with one exception – in all awards whether major “Jurors” or special mention being won by multi-media and installation works in today’s exhibition.*

*You will find works which involve groupings of objects in three dimensional space which can be walked around or through or handled and felt. The installations are formed of many components and the materials diverse and complex. Sometimes they are presented elegantly sometimes in ways which are ugly or inelegant as in some exhibits in the Royal Academy's hyped up show last year entitled **Apocalypse Beauty and Horror in Contemporary Art**, but they are always challenging. There are in today’s exhibited works ,a melding or the multicultural ethos in our society in which all the cultures are involved as shown by the diversity of expression and which give room for cultural optimism. Installations which in the early days were often regarded as impermanent are now regarded as collectible and worthy of permanent display.*

*I congratulate the Young Artists for having participated in this competition and showing us the level of their achievements. By doing so they are making a positive contribution towards the development and promotion of the visual arts. ]—*

**P.G. Lim** (Dato) @ The National Art Gallery Malaysia 2001-01-30



*(From left) LEE Kian Seng ,P.G.Lim and Wairah Marzuki @ The National Art Gallery Malaysia 2001-01-30.*

*P.G. LIM, Laura FAN, Shoko LEE, Beverly YONG and LEE Hui Ling @ The National Art Gallery Malaysia 2001-01-30.*

(翻译)

2001年1月30日,林碧颜(P.G.Lim)为马来西亚国家艺术馆所主办的2000年〈当代青年〉《Young Contemporary Malaysia 2000》全国艺术公开赛颁奖典礼献词。全文如下:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WuDh5Chh1Q>

“自1974年开办以来,〈当代青年〉全国艺术公开赛已逐步演化成一个向公众人士展示新一代艺术家作品的平台。比赛特别给年龄介于35岁以下的年轻艺术家提供一个可以发挥艺术才华的空间。不但如此,这个项目一直以来都成功地推动了无数国内新秀,以更具意义和效率的创作方式来发展马来西亚现代艺术。

今届的比赛邀请了六位评判小组成员,当中还包括了一名菲律宾国立大学的艺术讲师。评判组长陈湛仁(Joseph Tan Chin Jin)本身也是一位成名艺术家,曾一度兼职国家艺术馆前馆长职位。这届比赛共有83件作品报名参加,其中只有27件入选,而优胜者便由此诞生。

评判小组的点评,让大家意识到参赛作品大多属于装置艺术和多媒体类别,而绘画类明显只占了一小部分。这种趋势说明了全球化所带来的冲击,甚至在艺术发展领域中亦影响深远。在这届的比赛中,不论是哪一门类的艺术领域,都出现了许多装置艺术作品,这就足以证明这一点。

尽管装置艺术并不是什么新颖的艺术门类,但它依然属于近代产物。上世纪七十年代,这门艺术的称号还是首次面世的。截至八十年代为止,它一直未被接纳为一个专有名词,当时所采用的称号为混合媒体,而如今又被称为多媒体。譬如,国家艺术馆早在1975年,便开始采用混合媒体的称号来形容七、八十年代的得奖装置作品。然而,在今天的展览画册上,我们看到的称号就只用了“混合”两个字。无论如何,我们大可以断定,它们实际上就是装置作品无疑。

早在上世纪七十和八十年代,我国年轻艺术家已开始自创既不是绘画也不是雕塑的三次元作品。我认为这一点可以让我们感到自豪。那个年代即使尚未出现专门从事装置创作的艺术家,但是这一类的创作过程当时已默默在我国的年轻艺术家之间盛行。各位如果能费一点时间来翻阅〈回顾马来西亚当代青年艺术家〉(Review of the Young Contemporaries Malaysia 1974 to 1997/National Art Gallery of Malaysia)一书,追溯自1974年开办以来至1997年所产生的年轻艺术家及他们的杰作,或许便会惊讶地发现,在1975年的第二届〈当代青年〉(Young Contemporary)全国公开赛上,李健省(LEE Kian Seng)以他杰出的装置艺术作品〈扑克牌游戏过程〉(Process of Poker Game)荣获大奖。这件作品当时被形容为混合媒体。在这之前,他也曾在1973年间以另一件题名为〈人类〉(1972年创作)的装置作品夺奖。〈人类〉(Mankind)目前被马来西亚国家艺术馆收藏。

这还是七十年代当装置艺术这个名称被正式采纳之前的事。李健省却已经在摸索着油画装置的创作极限与层面,堪称为马来西亚装置艺术之父。他在报章采访中承认自己在创作时,还不知道该如何将作品归类。他表示,“我只知道自己想要创造一件有新鲜感的作品。艺术创作的目的是要发现未知事物;而一个艺术家应该能够创作多种不同媒体的作品。”

继李健省之后,在1981年间,即〈当代青年〉公开赛停办了四年之后又重开的那年,由颇尼林阿敏(Ponirin Amin)创作的装置作品 *Alibi Catur Di Pulau Bidung* 获得了大奖。翌年,大奖则由撒加利亚阿旺(Zacharia Awang)以另一件装置作品 *Al Rahman* 〈阿尔拉曼〉夺得。从1988年起,不论大奖或小奖,都颁给了多媒体和装置作品的艺术家,似乎半数以上的参赛作品

都属这一类。难怪这种趋势终于导致在今届的比赛当中，不论大奖或特别奖，全都被多媒体和装置作品所称霸。

部分作品牵涉了三维空间的物件组合，能让人在其中走动、穿过、操纵或触摸。这些装置由许多部件组成，而所用材料亦多样化且复杂化。有时候，它们展现了幽雅美丽的一面，但有时却恰恰相反，就如去年在皇家学院大肆炒作的〈当代艺术中的末日美丽与恐怖〉艺术展上所展出的作品一样。无论如何，这些作品总是富有挑战性的。今天展出的作品以多种不同的方式表达了各族群的文化精髓，体现了我国社会多元文化道德观的融合。由此可见，我国的文化前景是乐观的。早期的装置一般被认为非永久性，但如今却成了艺术爱好者的珍藏品，且富有永久收藏及展览价值。

我愿恭贺所有参加比赛的青年艺术家，为我们展现了他们各自的成就。这样一来，他们在发展及提升视觉艺术的水平上也就作出了积极的贡献。”---拿督林碧颜，于 2001年 1月 30日。(翻译)

- *For 45 @ 45 exhibition organised by the National Art Gallery Malaysia from 27 September 2003 to 9 February 2004, Ms P. G. Lim selected and interpreted the work <Of ' Image, Object, Illusion ' -Off Series Mechanism> and she wrote as follow,*

*[ My choice is a 1977 installation work <Of ' Image, Object, Illusion ' -Off Series Mechanism> by the multi-talented artist LEE Kian Seng (李健省) .*

*This installation comprises a painting on canvas, a site installation of the Malaysian flag fronting it, a white podium and canvas on floor extended from the wall. The juxtaposition of the two dimensional painting and three dimensional objects of flag and podium in a spatial relationship with lights set to cast shadows of the flag on the canvas on the floor, seem to me to create an interplay of positive and negative yin yang elements.*

*Upon the painting itself which depicts a wall ,the hanging Malaysian flag which is reflected in reverse on the painting (image and illusion). The unexpected appearance of the ubiquitous cockroach (an object?) making its way across the wall in the painting is to my mind, clever handling of a painting problem intended to heighten the three dimensional effect of the work. At the same time by its mocking presence the cockroach is making a statement that it is a fact of life in Malaysia. No getting away from that!. Dates which appear are of the years 1957-signifying Independent and Nationhood. 1967-the decade after and 1977-the year of the work. And then, the ruler on top of the painting appears to be a symbol by which we measure the progress made during those years. This completes the picture.*

*This work described as "Mixed Media" won the top award in an Open Art and Graphic Print Competition . To me-a neutral but interested observer of the art scene, it represents early tentative attempts by the artist to explore the limits and dimensions of painting on canvas which began in 1972 with his **From the Windows of Red** which won a major award, and **Mankind** (of 1972),a minor award (in 1973) followed in 1975 by Permainan Poker or **Process of Playing Poker** (of 1974)-a major award. Fortunately, three of these works are in the collection of the National Art Gallery (Malaysia). His successes bespeak the perspicacity of the National Art Gallery judges of that period to have recognized creativity and new directions in art development towards three dimensional works, for in the seventies, works such as these in the art world defied categorisation . In Malaysia they were variously described as mixed media or multi media or simply being variously described as mixed media or multi-media or simply "campuran". Internationally, Installation art did not acquire its name as such until 1980's.*

*Pioneering works such as those of Lee Kian Seng are of historical importance. We can take a little pride to discover that our own young artists of the seventies were already involved in creating on their own, three-dimensional works which did not fall into the category of painting or sculpture. Lee Kian Seng has said that he did not know how to categorise his pieces, " I only knew I wanted to create something new.*

*by Dato' (Ms)P. G. Lim, August 2003, Malaysia. ]*



*P.G.Lim and LEE Kian Seng.*

(翻译)

林碧颜 2003年8月的文献如下:

[我挑选了一件 1977年的装置作品《*Of 'Image, Object, Illusion' -Off Series Mechanism*》(形象、物体、假象), 作者为多才多艺的艺术家李健省(LEE Kian Seng)。

这件装置包含了一幅挂在墙上的绘画; 前方的空间挂了一面现场装置的马来西亚国旗; 旗下置有一个白色踏级; 墙壁下端开始至踏级的地面上披了一片 16尺x8尺厚度 6mm白色三夹板, 伸延至白色的踏级(12"x20"x24"厚度6 mm)。在我看来, 墙上的二次元绘画与三次元物体的国旗和踏级并置所产生的空间效果, 加上灯光的映照, 使地面和墙上留下国旗的投影, 似乎创造了一种微妙的阴阳交错幻觉。

悬垂着的马来西亚国旗与横向倒转在画布上的国旗图案, 产生出一种形象与假象互相映照的效果。令人感到意外的, 是一只看似普通的蟑螂(物体?)在墙壁的画面上出现并向前移动。我认为作者用了一个极聪明的办法来突显二次元作品的立体效果。蟑螂嘲弄似的出现同时也说明, 这是马来西亚人生活中无可逃避的现实。所标志的日期分别是 1957年, 代表独立建国; 1967年, 代表独立以后的十年发展; 及 1977年, 即作品创作年代。然后, 画面上端的一把尺明显代表我们用以量度这些年来进展的标准。这就完成了一件作品。

这件被形容为混合媒体的作品, 在全国(马来西亚)艺术与版画公开赛中脱颖而出, 赢得艺术项目大奖。作为关心艺术界的一名客观观察员, 我认为这作品代表着李健省早期为挑战绘画的二次元极限所作的初步尝试。他最早的大胆尝试是 1972年创作的〈红色的视窗〉, 并得了大奖(1972年)。紧接着有同年创作的〈人类〉, 得了次奖(1973年)。随后是 1974年创作的〈扑克牌游戏过程〉, 于次年得了大奖(1975年)。这三件作品, 幸好都在马来西亚国家艺术馆的永久收藏中。

李健省的成功, 说明了国家艺术馆当时评判员已深深地洞察到艺术的发展已趋向三次元的新方向。在七十年代的当时, 这一类作品在艺术领域里还是难以归类的。在马来西亚, 它们有时被称为混合媒体或多媒体, 有时又被简化为“混合”。在国际上, 截至八十年代为止, 也尚未出现装置艺术这个名称。

诸如李健省创作之类的开拓性作品, 都具有重大历史意义。让我们感到自豪的是, 早在上世纪七十和八十年代, 我国年轻艺术家竟然已开始自创既不是绘画也不是雕塑的三次元作品。李健省表示, 他当时也不知该如何把自己的作品归类。他曾说过, “我只知道自己想要创造一件有新鲜感的作品。”

--林碧颜(拿督)于2003年8月稿。]



*(left) LEE Hui Ling, LEE Hui Lian, P.G. Lim and Shoko LEE @National Art Gallery Malaysia. 2005-11-17*



*Syed Ahmad Jamal (Datuk)@ Hasnul Jamal Saidon's (standing) one person exhibition @Kuala Lumpur,2008-12-27*

- *(Excerpted from the Notes on the artist by Syed Ahmad Jamal ( Datuk) , Director, National Art Gallery Malaysia from the catalogue ' 3-D works by Lee Kian Seng' published in July 1987. )*

*[LEE Kian Seng was born in 1948 (1947). Although still in his thirties, the artist is well known as a prominent figure in the Malaysian Art scene, having his first one-man show in 1966 while only 18 years old. I remember first meeting the artist, an energetic young man dressed completely in batik, even wearing batik shoes for his one-man Batik paintings show at the Samat Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur in (Malaysia)1969, prior to his first course of studies (tour) in Japan.*

*The artist has been working consistently and active in the Malaysian art scene for not less than 20 years now. He has 12 works (works from 1964 to 1978 only) in the Permanent collection of the National Art Gallery. His works are noted for innovative creativity, aesthetic sensitivity and immaculate craftsmanship.*

*Lee Kian Seng works in a wide range of media – painting, batik, printmaking (lithograph) and sculpture.*

*The artist has been involved in almost every major art exhibition in the country at national-level exhibitions and competition, winning several prizes such as 'Joy of Living' 3<sup>rd</sup> prize in 1964, Best Exhibit*

Prize and 1<sup>st</sup> in Oil in the 10<sup>th</sup> Young Artist Exhibition 1966, 'Salon Malaysia' 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes in sculpture and mixed media and Honourable Mention in Batik in 1968, Major Award in 'Malaysia Landscape' in 1972, Minor Award in 'Man and His World' in 1973, Best Artist Award in 'Young Contemporary' in 1975, National Competition of Painting and Print-making in 1977, Major Awards in Painting and Printmaking. In 1984, Kian Seng represented Malaysia at the ASEAN Sculpture Symposium in Jakarta.

In recognition of his outstanding qualities and devotion to art, Kian Seng was awarded the Japan Foundation Professional Fellowship in 1976 at the age of 28, the first and youngest artist to receive the honour.

Lee Kian Seng's creative versatility has contributed to the enrichment of the Malaysian Art scene. He has represented Malaysia in the Warath Spring Arts Festival, Australia in 1966, 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Triennales of Contemporary World Art in New Delhi in 1967 and 1978, Sao Paulo X Biennale and Malaysian Art touring Australia and New Zealand in 1969, Malaysian Art at 'Expo 70' Osaka, Japan, 'Malaysian Art 1965-1978' Commonwealth Institute, London, 1978, Tokyo Print Biennale in 1979, Contemporary Asia Art, Fukuoka, Japan 1980. ASEAN Exhibition of Painting and Photography 1982, 1983, 1984, 'Treatment of Local Landscape in Modern Malaysian Art 1930-1981', '25 Years of Malaysian Art', 1982, 'National Invitation Show', 1983, 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Art Biennale, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1986.

Kian Seng has been commissioned to do several art works such as the sculptural 'Moon and Rock' and copper bas-relief mural for Merlin Hotel in Cameron Highlands (1974), Commemorative posters for South-East Asian Games 1975 and for the first Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival in 1985.

Some versatile artists tend to spread their talents rather thinly. In the case of Lee Kian Seng he has managed to produce works of a high artistic excellence in everything he does, whether in painting, lithograph or sculpture.

Since 1968, Lee Kian Seng has produced a number of sculptures. The volume may be small, this is the case with every Malaysian artist who produces three-dimensional work. The artist's works do not only satisfy the sense but also provoke the intellect.

<**The Pair, 1968**>, permanent collection of the National Art Gallery, Malaysia) depicting two goats in reinforced cement, made when the artist was twenty years old displays understanding of characteristics of material, sensitivity of handling of form, while positing the closeness of attachment of the two goats. The plasticity and tactile interest and use of positive and negative areas show promise for the young artist. Some young artists who show promise early in life tend to fade prematurely. In the case of Kian Seng he develops from strength to strength.

The organic/biomorphic form of the goat was developed in more stylised manner in <**Unity, 1970**> commissioned for EXPO '70 and purchased by Seibu Railway, Japan for the UNESCO Village in Tokyo. In 'Unity' the human form is made of reinforced concrete and lit from within at night. The work expresses the unity of human beings, in this case the three major racial groups in Malaysia. The artist's works often convey a message with a deep philosophical content. In both 'Goats' and 'Unity' the several formal entities are fused into a unifying singularity.

From the enclosed form of 'Goats' and 'Unity' Lee Kian Seng produced the series on the male and female with <Mankind> and <Male and Female>. <**Mankind, 1972**> is an intelligent interplay of form and space developed from two-dimensioned sheet of steel. The work is in the collection of the National Art Gallery. Another work is 'Male and Female' 1973 that juxtaposes man-made mechanical and natural objects. In this work the objects symbolise the male and female forms in a tight art context.

*<Moon and Rock> 1974, is the second environment work after 'Unity', but the first to break away from the enclosed form. Commissioned for the Merlin Hotel, in Cameron Highlands, the work is an interplay of form/surface and space. This is a new direction. It opens the enclosed form, using actual space. The falling water and the reflecting pool enhances the work dimensionally.*

*Another 1974 work is <Poker> which uses elements of painting. The juxtaposition of three-dimensional plastic forms and two-dimensional graphic elements in a spatial relationship creates an interplay of positive and negative elements. This visual/mental tugging is to play an important role in Kian Seng's works. The Ying-Yang in oriental philosophy forms the basic concept of many of the artist's works.*

*Kian Seng bases his works on counteraction and interaction of the Male and Female elements.<Resumption and Consumption, 1975> purchased by the National Art Gallery in 1986, exhibits sophistication in concept, subtly paraphrasing the positive and negative elements dimensionally. The work posits movement of the apples as it appears and disappears from the square columns.*

*Kian Seng feels that artists are closer to contemporary truths than even social scientists. In the mid 70's he produced, in paintings and sculptures, some contemplative and though-provoking works in this context. His <Hammer and Nail series> in 1977 demonstrates powerfully the innermost feelings and underlying elements of contemporary humanity in universal setting, wittily presented in a series of seven situations. The message is powerfully hammered home.*

*As recognition of his achievement in sculpture, Lee Kian Seng was selected to represent Malaysia at the ASEAN Square Sculpture Symposium in Jakarta in 1984. The Symposium is the third in a series which started in Singapore. Sculptors from five other ASEAN countries, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand participated in the symposium.*

*The theme of his sculpture is <Peace, Harmony and One>.*

*.Kian Seng states that Peace in this case is not a counter against war but it denotes harmony between Man and the environment (whether natural or man-made). Harmony is the underlying spirit of most of Kian Seng's works. He emphasises the importance of harmony in a multi-racial society in our daily lives. In making his sculpture in Jakarta, he made use of machine to cut and bend the thick steel plate, thus stressing harmony between art and machine.*

*Lee Kian Seng always responds whenever his services are needed for the cause of art and his fellows artists, even though it means making the long trip from his residence in Klang to Kuala Lumpur, a distance of over thirty kilometres. He is always there with a smile, with bountiful energy and undiminished spirit. On three occasions, on the inauguration night of the Malaysian Artists' Association in 1980, when he created the ice sculpture, Opening of 'Twenty-five years of Malaysian Art' by the first Prime Minister at the National Art Gallery in 1982, and the Opening of the new premises of the National Art Gallery by the Prime Minister in 1984, the artist contributed special features for the important art events.*

*In all his works Lee Kian Seng projects creativity, intellectual content and a high standard of professionalism.] by Syed Ahmad Jamal, Director, National Art Gallery, Malaysia, July 1987*

(翻译)

- 【李健省三次元作品集艺术家备忘录 ( 3-D Works by Lee Kian Seng )。作者: 马来西亚国家艺术馆馆长赛阿末佳马尔 ( Syed Ahmad Jamal ,Dato 1987 )】

李健省生于 1948 (1947)年。尽管四十还未到, 这名艺术家以卓越的形态享誉马来西亚艺术领域。在 1996 年, 当李健省只有十八岁时, 他举办第一次个人画展。我记得第一次会见这为朝气蓬勃的年轻人, 是在 1969年他第一趟游学日本之前, 假吉隆坡沙玛画廊“李健省个人巴迪画展”会上, 当时他穿着整身的巴迪服装, 甚至连脚上的帆布鞋也是巴迪织成的。李健省的创作媒介广阔, 包括绘画, 蜡染。石版画与雕塑。

历年来, 李健省几乎涉及所有马来西亚国家级之主要展览与比赛, 曾赢获许多荣誉。例如 1964年“生活情趣”全国绘画赛获 B组油画第三奖, 1966年夺得“全国青年展”最优秀奖及油画首奖, 1968年夺得“马来西亚沙龙”雕塑第三奖, 混合媒介第三奖及巴迪画荣誉奖, 1972年荣获“马来西亚风景画”全国赛大奖, 1973年荣获“人类及其世界”全国赛次奖, 1975年夺得“现代青年”最优秀作家奖, 1977年荣获“全国绘画与版画赛”绘画大奖与版画大奖。1984年, 受委代表马来西亚国家出席在印尼耶加达举行的东合雕塑论集会。

李健省多才多艺的创作, 丰富及贡献了马来西亚国家艺术。他曾代表马来西亚参加在澳洲举行的“澳洲艺术节”; 1967年与 1978年在印度举行的“当代世界三年一度艺术展”; 1968年在巴西举行的“当代世界双年一度艺术展”; 1969年在澳洲及纽西兰的“马来西亚艺术展”巡回展; 1970年在日本大阪举行的“万国博览会”; 1978年在英国联邦中心举行的马来西亚艺术展”; 1979年在日本的“东京国际版画展”; 1980年,82,83,84年度的“东合艺术展”; 1980年在日本福冈的“现代亚洲艺术展”; 1982年的“1930至 1981年的本地风景的处理”; 1982年的“国家邀请展”; 1986年在孟加拉, 达卡布的“亚洲国际双年展”。

健省曾受委为金马仑高原美轮酒店 ( 1974)制作“月与石”三次元作品与雕塑壁画, 1975年为东南亚运动会与 1985年第一届吉隆坡艺术节设计纪念海报。

有些多面才能艺术家总有才华分散的倾向, 然而对李健省而言, 他都能在绘画, 石版画或雕塑各个领域创出卓越的艺术作品。自 1986年, 李健省已有一些雕塑创作, 这数目可能不算很多。在许多进行三次元创作的马来西亚艺术家来讲, 这是很普遍的现象。惟李健省的创作不只是给观众带来美感上的满足, 也进而刺激及带动观赏者的思维活动。

<The Pair 1968>是以钢骨水泥描述两头山羊, 是他廿岁时的作品。从叙述两只山羊衔接的掌握, 充分显示出他对素材特质的理解及处理形态的敏感性; 作品所发挥的塑性与触觉趣味, 以及正负空间面积的运用, 承诺了这青年艺术家的前途。有些青年画家虽具潜能, 但未老先衰。在李健省的情形, 他的实力持续发展。

山羊的结构与生态 / 形态发展至“一体”的风格。1970年的<Unity>参与 70年代“世界博览”会后, 为西武铁道“联合国村”所购藏。在“一体”里, 人物形态是由钢骨水泥制成, 晚间的灯光来自作品内部。这项作品表达了人类的团结。进而反映马来西亚的三大民族的社会结构。这名艺术家的作品经常以深奥的哲学内涵传达信息。“山羊”与“一体”, 融合多项形式上的本质, 结为一体。从<The Pair 1968>, <Unity>的一体形态, 李健省进而创作 <Mankind>, <Male and Female>雄雌系列。1972年的<Mankind>是一件从二次元铁片制成形态与空间相得益彰的智慧, 现收集在国家艺术馆。1973年的<Male and Female>是人为的机械与天然物体的并置。这艺术家通过天衣无缝的艺术手法, 象征雄雌的形态。

1974年的“月与石”是续“一体”之后的第二件环境艺术，也是拆开“一体组织”的作品。此件作品是受金马仑美轮酒店所委托。“月与石”是形态/平面与空间互相呼应的艺术作品，是新的创作方向。它的实存空间揭开了“一体组织”。下降的水与反射的水池，涨大了作品的容积。

1974年的另一件作品是使用绘画元素的“扑克”（注1）。三次元造型与二次元图案元素在空间的关系里，创造正与负的相互作用。这种视觉溶合精神的牵引，在李健省的作品中扮演着重要的角色。东方的哲学：阴阳，是他许多作品中的基盘理念。

健省把他的创作基础着重在阴阳元素的还击状态与交互作用。1986年马来西亚艺术馆所购藏的1975年度作品“复始与消耗”展现深具内涵的理念，精巧地意译“正负”元素的容积。这件作品呈现苹果在方柱里“出现”与“消失”的动态。

健省觉得着艺术家比社会科学家更接近当代事实。在70年代中期，他推出一些关连沉思与思想挑畔的绘画与雕塑作品。他在1977年以宇宙观的方式处理“铁锤与铁钉”系列，强烈地展示了当代人性最深处的心灵与感觉，妙趣横溢地表现现代人里的七种心态。这个信息震撼我国艺坛。

鉴于李健省在雕塑艺术上的成就，他被委代表大马参加1984年在耶加达举行的“东合雕塑家论集会”。这是该集会的第三届，第一届是在新加坡举行。亚细安五国，文莱，印尼，菲律宾，新加坡及泰国各派出一名代表。李健省是以“和平，和谐，一体”为主题参与此项论集会。

李健省阐明，这里所指的和平，不是指对抗战争而言，确是人与环境（概括天然与人工）的和谐。和谐是李健省作品潜伏着的灵魂。他强调和谐在我们这个多元种族的日常生活里的重要性。他在耶加达的雕塑，以机械切割与弯曲硬厚铁片，强调艺术与机械之间的共通。

每当需要李健省在艺术上的服务或艺术同僚需要他时，他必然有积极的反应，虽然他要从老远的巴生赶到三十公里外的吉隆坡，他老是带着满脸笑容，精力充沛的精神。在三种场所中1980年“马来西亚艺术家协会”成立晚会上，他呈现冰雕杰作；1982年第一任首相主持国家艺术馆“25年马来西亚艺术”开幕礼及1984年首相为新国家艺术馆新馆开幕礼时，李健省亦被邀为这几个重要的艺术事件贡献特色艺术创作。所有李健省的作品，展现了原创性，识者的内涵与高水准的专业素养。

—赛阿末佳马尔（Director of the National Art Gallery Malaysia 1987）

(翻译)

- 李健省注：能够天南地北聊天的良师益友又少了一个，林碧颜于 2013年 5月 8日在澳洲珀斯过世享年 96岁。林碧颜一生热爱艺术也贡献艺术。我们相识 45年。2009年 12月 12日林碧颜邀我参加“林连玉精神奖颁奖典礼”，她是此奖 2名得主之一。在颁奖礼台上她以英语讲话，我则以华语读出找人帮她翻译的讲稿。她当天的感言如下：

“各位尊贵的来宾，女士与男士们。能够长寿见到自己在这国家的工作得到承认令人愉快。我感谢委员会授予我这个荣誉奖项。

林连玉先生为争取保存华人自身的母语而奉献了自己的一生。他为了捍卫华裔子弟的母语教育，而坦然无惧，直言不讳地奋斗，即使触怒了政府，也在所不辞。在法院上，当他挑战政府动议撤消他的公民权时，我为他作出辩护，结果我们还是败诉了。最后，林先生的教师执照甚至被取消。他让我想起了自己的父亲。

1934年，父亲辞去了立法委员会的职务，也是因为当时的英殖民政府拒绝给华裔和印裔子弟提供免费母语基本教育，而巫裔子弟却能享有此特权。当局还直言说，如果他们不接受的话，华人可以返回中国，印度人也可以返回印度。面对这种不公平的待遇，父亲只好拿起文件，无奈地离开了立法委员会。当时，母亲大部分时间一直在保良局当义工。保良局是英政府为了庇护那些被迫卖淫的妇女，和那些从奴役中逃出生天的女孩而设立的。母亲的任務就是教导她们一些谋生技巧，让她们日后能自力更生。我小时候经常伴随母亲到保良局去。就这样，我渐渐地意识到，享有特殊利益的同时，我们也必须负起责任，致力于改善弱势群体和贫困阶层的生活素质。

作为一名律师，我曾利用自己的法律知识，向贫困阶层，和那些对法律一无所知的小民，或无能力支付律师费的组织，如工会等等，伸出援手。我在他们中间奔波，为他们打气，激励他们勇于为自己辩护，让他们觉悟到自身的价值，及培养他们在为自己的权利斗争上所应具备的勇气和力量，指导他们如何通过法律途径，而非诉诸流血和暴力来解决问题。我曾担任马来西亚园丘工人工会，运输工会，和铁路工人工会的法律顾问。

在 1968年，于柔佛州拉美士 (Labis),连同一批印尼伞兵被捕的 13名大马人的案件，也由我介入，为他们提供法律援助。结果我的行为受到各界批评。理由是这 13人是以叛国的罪名被提控的。

我为他们提供法律援助是因为当时受到了美国历史上一名出色的律师 John Adams的原则所激励。(John Adams后来还当选为美国的第二任总统)。1770年，当他为涉嫌屠杀美国波士顿 5名平民的英国军人而辩护时，说了这一番话：“我们的敌人岂不应当受到谅解和公平的对待？你若是拒绝让异议者获得法律保障权的话，那你又怎么能够（以民主制度）建立国家呢？”-----林碧颜 2009年 12月 12日”。

- 2009年 12月 12日在“林连玉精神奖颁奖典礼”林碧颜感言英文原稿；

《…… I thank the Committee for conferring this award on me. Mr. Lim Lean Geok dedicated his life to the preservation of the Chinese vernacular language. He was fearless and outspoken in championing that cause even to the extent of antagonising the government. I defended him in the court when he challenged the government's right to deprive him of his citizenship. We lost the case. Mr. Lim's teaching licence was even revoked.

He reminded me of my father who resigned from the legislative Council in 1934 when the British government refused to grant free vernacular education to the children of Chinese and Indian immigrants, as was given to the Malays. They said, if they didn't like it, the Chinese could go back to China and the Indians to India. My father took up his papers and walked out from the Legislative Council. My mother spent a lot of time at the Po Leong Keok which was established by the British as a refuge for women forced into prostitution and girls escaping from slavery. There she helped to teach them some skills, which would enable them to earn their own living, and to become independent. As a young girl, I used to accompany my mother to the institution and learned that our privilege status came with responsibility to improve the lives of the weak and underprivileged.

As a lawyer, I used my knowledge of the law to help the underprivileged, and those ignorant of the law or too poor to engage lawyers such as the trade unions. I worked among them, to give them the courage to stand on their own, to realise their worth and to have the courage and the strength to fight for their rights through legal means without resorting to blood and violence. I was legal adviser to the National Union of Plantation Workers, the Transport Union, and the Railwaymen's Union.

My action in taking up the cause of the thirteen men who were captured with the Indonesian paratroopers in Labis, Johor in 1968 was criticized on the ground that these men had been guilty of treason. In doing so, I was motivated by the principle enunciated by John Adams, a famous lawyer and the father of a President of the United States who in defending British soldiers accused of killing five civilians in Boston and who could find no locals lawyers to defend them said, 'don't our enemies deserve understanding and justice? How do you build the nation when those you disagree with are denied representation?' -P.G.Lim 2009-12-12. »



(from left) LEE Hui Ling, P.G. Lim and Zanita Anuar, 2007-01-31

- August 2007 : "...We would like, finally, to suggest that there are many intertwining, interconnected and inter-locking 'faces' of modern art in Malaysia, and that these different faces (or interfaces) may put forward contradictory pictures, which eventually have to be acknowledged, and even celebrated and respected (or debated and contested in a civilized way)."  
 ---Excerpted from the book < **Between Generations---50 years across Modern Art in Malaysia** > published in conjunction with the exhibition curated by Beverly Yong and Hasnul J.Saidon in August 2007. The exhibition was organised by University Malaya, University Sains Malaysia, Valentine Willie Fine Art (Malaysia) and Penjana Bebas Malaysia.

January 2008: "...In my meetings with artists and others in the art scene thus far, I have become directed to artists whose works and contributions have been missed out in the existing mainstream narratives of Malaysian art history. Your name ( Lee Kian Seng), in particular, has come out many times as one of the artists in the earlier generations whose work has been missed out and under-recognized." , a regional academician observed.



*O.Young (欧阳文风 / Rev. Dr Ngeo,Boon Lin ) and Lee Kian Seng*

*Goh Beng Lan (吴明兰)*



*Biljana Ciric (比利安娜) , Yap Sau Bin (叶绍斌) and Lee Kian Seng (李健省)*

*John Clark*



*(Excerpted from the book <Between Generations---50 years across Modern Art in Malaysia> published in conjunction with the exhibition curated by Beverly Yong and Hasnul J.Saidon in August 2007. Organisers and Partners: University Malaya, University Sains Malaysia, Valentine Willie Fine Art and Penjana Bebas Malaysia.*

*".....I first caught glimpse of a Lee Kian Seng piece at the old Majestic hotel building, the previous location of the NAG. A three-dimensional work titled "Mankind" (1972) with two sheets of metal plates, bent into an L-shape structure sitting on another larger metal sheet.*

*The structure is based on a simple idea of creating volume (three-dimensional) from a flat plane (two-dimensional), by merely folding and bending the cut-out middle part of a large metal sheet, as with making a complex accordion fold.*

*I later learnt that the original installation would have the two structures sitting on a bed of grass and earth, which came from his studio. The grass was no longer there in early 90's. An interesting idea by the artist to incorporate part of his reality, his environment into the work, as it extends the association of the space and material used beyond the exhibiting site.*

*Such contextual and visual ploys are engaging, as in the simple parody of nails hammered through hammers in Lee's "Hammer and Nail" Series (1977) "the theatricality is part of the charm in Lee's work.*

*In another installation, "Of – 'Image, Object, Illusions' - Off series Mechanism" (1977) restaged in 2003 at the NAG - a play of shadow, illusion and perception; real and painted national flags, a large white canvas extending from the wall to the floor, yet again reminding us of the competitive nature of the space, as occupied by the art object and audience as well.*

*Lee's play with transforming objects, sculptural materials has been innovative. Reviewing his many sculptural works and installations from late 60's to the 70's suggests a keen awareness of spatial relationships and the manipulation of material, and more importantly a consistent probing of the limitation of canvas, gallery wall and space....." --by Yap Sau Bin (Between Generations---50 years across Modern Art in Malaysia).*





1976\_T.K.Sabapathy and Robert Crook collecting materials for the essay "A view of Modern Sculpture in Malaysia" published by the National Art Gallery Malaysia in 1976. Background: Shoko LEE and Sulaiman Esa.



P.G.Lim@1968



( Frank Sullivan .April 30,1971)

*(note: An excerpt of an essay written by Frank Sullivan, Hon. Secretary, Board of Trustees, National Art Gallery Malaysia for an Exhibition Catalogue of LEE Kian Seng published on the 8th of April 1971.)*

One of the most remarkable aspects of the rapid evolution and progress of the fine arts in Malaysia is the wealth of talent continually coming forward from the nation's youth. The emergence of these young artists, with new ones appearing each year, gives rich promise for the future of Malaysian art.

I am particularly pleased to pay tribute to the natural talents of Lee Kian Seng, of Klang, who will be celebrating his 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday in August 1971.

Virtually self-taught – he has only had a few art lessons in school – Kian Seng has already revealed abilities which are astonishing for an artist so young in years.

He first attracted major notice with a large oil study entitled “The beggar and the bird” which was shown in the 7<sup>th</sup> National Art Exhibition in the National Art Gallery Malaysia in August 1964. This painting which has since been acquired for the gallery's permanent collection, was among those selected for the first exhibition of Malaysian art ever to be held in Australia, being presented in Sydney in October 1965.

It is of course impossible to predict the future development of a young artist on the strength of one major work. There is no way of knowing whether or not such an achievement might be, in the language of gold miners, just “A flash in the pan”. The gleam is there, but whether it means a rich lode, still remains to be seen.

Kian Seng has unquestionably lived up to this original spark of promise, for in August 1965 he produced another fine painting. “The joy of living” a graphic and dramatic composition in red and blue, which the National Art Gallery promptly purchased.

I have no hesitation in saying that the “Spark from heaven” which distinguishes a good artist from the ordinary run of men, has fallen on Kian Seng, much to the puzzlement of his family which cannot trace any sign of artistic talent among their forbears for several generations back.

His work which covers a wide variety of media, discloses that Kian Seng also has two other qualities essential for success in art – dedication and industriousness. In fact the tireless explorations and experiments Kian Seng has already made, show that he is quick to learn from any errors.

While still in Malaysia in his teens, the problem of his future development raised an interesting question. Should he, or should he not, be given the opportunity for formal extensive study in a well-known art school? Normally the answer would be “By all means, yes”.

The strength of Kian Seng’s natural artistic endowment, however, as evinced by his efforts then was so great that there was a possible danger of his efflorescence being stifled in the restrictive disciplines of a school.

In my view, which I first stated in 1966, Kian Seng should be given the earliest opportunity of obtaining experience overseas but with the widest freedom possible. He should have the chance to travel, visiting the great galleries, meeting artists, and absorbing the whole world of art, getting the feel through his quick line and able brush. A travel scholarship of two years would in the long run be more profitable and productive allowing free range to his talents.

I expressed this view to a well-known Canadian artist Mr. R. York Wilson, the foremost mural painter in his own country. I showed him the two works I have mentioned and said Kian Seng was anxious to study abroad. Mr. Wilson replied without hesitation, “If he can paint like that without formal training then for heaven’s sake keep him away from the schools, because he is a natural artist. I only wish I had the talents when young that he already has.”

Kian Seng despite his youth is not a man to be deterred by problems. In the past five years he has held no less than ten one-man shows, seven being in Malaysia, one in Thailand and two in Japan. In addition he participated regularly in the annual open shows of both the arts council Malaysia and the National Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur.

In 1968, for instance, he astonished the local art world by coming forward with a splendid sculptural composition in concrete entitled “The pair”, being inspired by a mother-goat and her kid, which won third prize in a nation-wide open competition, “Salon Malaysia” in 1968.

The years 1969 and 1970 were most eventful ones for Lee Kian Seng. He solved the problem, which had been bothering me as to his future career in relation to overseas by deciding to take his chance himself, and going to study in Japan on his own resources, where he remained for two years. During these two years his works were included in Malaysian exhibition touring Australia and New Zealand, and in the Sao Paulo biennale and the “Man and his world” exhibition in Montreal, both in 1970.

Residing in Japan from April 1969, he held two one-man-shows, one in November that year at the Nippon Art Gallery in Tokyo and the second in March 1970 at the Tokyo-American club, both being exhibitions of batik.

At that time Malaysia was taking part in the record-breaking international exhibition, EXPO ’70, at Osaka and Lee Kian Seng was appointed display artist for the Malaysian pavilion, for which he executed three large murals – “Dawn”, “Noon”, and “Dusk” and a 13-ft high, 3-ton sculpture in concrete symbolising art, science and the humanities, displayed in front of the pavilion.

This sculpture was much praised by critics in Japan with the fortunate result that this remarkable illuminated work was acquired by Seibu railways, together with three batiks by the artist, for the permanent collection of the newly built UNESCO village in Tokyo. This was an unique honour for Lee Kian Seng, as his sculpture is the only one in the village.

The results which I expected of exposure of this talented young artist to all the creative elements evoked in all media of expression in modern Japan were striking indeed, not only in his work, but in the very rapid development in maturity of his thought, and also – probably far more important – in a new found determination that, come what may, he would dedicate his whole life, every minute of it, to art.

Although like many artists he has difficulties in expressing his ideas in words – Lee Kian Seng is no lecturer – his mind has far outranged his earlier promise. At present, he is experimenting with a theory of art he has evolved for himself to combine space, time and motion, designed to involve any spectator in a new all-surrounding experience of art.

Where he will go from this point of development no one can yet foresee, probably not even the artist himself, but he is feeling his way forward into the future, full of confidence, undismayed by the deterrent economics of daily life, and determined that he will leave his mark on the art of his time.

Having followed his career from almost his first essay in painting, I personally have no doubt whatever as to his future success, the way may be hard, the difficulties great, but he will overcome, as he has both the gifts and the guts. I predict, given no untoward disaster that his future career gleams with the brightest promise; that far horizon he sees in his mind and heart he will undoubtedly reach. **Frank Sullivan**, National Art Gallery, Malaysia, 8 April 1971

*(note: Excerpted from the forward written by Frank Sullivan, Hon. Secretary, Board of Trustees, National Art Gallery Malaysia for the Exhibition Catalogue published in July 1966 in conjunction with the one person exhibition by LEE Kian Seng presented by the Arts Council Malaysia 17-22, October 1966.)*

One of the most remarkable aspects of the rapid evolution and progress of the fine arts in Malaysia is the wealth of talent continually coming forward from the nation's youth. The emergence of these young artists, with new ones appearing each year, gives rich promise for the future of Malaysian art.

I am particularly pleased to pay tribute to the natural talents of Lee Kian Seng, of Klang, who will be celebrating his 18th birthday in August this year by holding his first one-man show in his home town before being presented by the Arts Council Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur in October.

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He first attracted major notice with a large oil study entitled “The beggar and the bird” which was shown in the 7<sup>th</sup> National Art Exhibition in the National Art Gallery Malaysia in August 1964. This painting which has since been acquired for the gallery's permanent collection, was among those selected for the first exhibition of Malaysian art ever to be held in Australia, being presented in Sydney in October 1965. It is of course impossible to predict the future development of a young artist on the strength of one major work. There is no way of knowing whether or not such an achievement might be, in the language of gold miners, just “A flash in the pan”. The gleam is there, but whether it means a rich lode, still remains to be seen.

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I do not need to wish Kian Seng every success in the future, because I know that whatever happens success will come his way. He has both the gifts and the guts. I do hope, however, that some benevolent authority will enable him to travel extensively so that the vigorous promise of his teenage years will be rewardingly fulfilled.

**FRANK SULLIVAN**, Hon. Secretary, Board of Trustees, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

30<sup>th</sup> July 1966.

A close-up portrait of a woman with dark hair, looking slightly to the left. The lighting is soft, highlighting her facial features. She is wearing a dark-colored top.

# 纪念林碧颜律师

IN MEMORIAM:  
TAN SRI PG LIM

林碧颜追思会  
工委会出版  
13.7.2013  
吉隆坡

林碧颜(1915-2013)出身名门心系草根

# 大马人权斗士林碧颜 · 林友顺

大马首位女大使兼人权律师林碧颜逝世，享年九十八岁。她曾为马共和左翼死囚辩护，跨族群、跨阶层，挽回他们的生命；终生为弱势群体争权益。

上 周末在吉隆坡一所华文小学，数百名前马共游击队员、地下党员、左翼劳工党领袖、华文教育工作者、学者及历史工作者挤满礼堂，共同追思在两个月前于澳洲珀斯逝世的马来西亚第一位女大使兼人权律师林碧颜。



追思会由凤凰友好联谊会、林连玉基金、马来西亚爱国和平基金、二十一世纪联谊会及全国老友联谊会联合会主办，场面肃穆。追思会筹委会主席、劳工党前任领袖陈凯希指林碧颜虽出身名门望族，但一生为贫困及受迫害的人民服务，是人民，特别是律师及女性的典范。他指出，尽管林碧颜是著名律师，后期也受政府派驻联合国出任常任代表，可是她从不爱炫耀本身的成就；她虽然出身名

## 林碧颜小档案

1915年

于英国伦敦出生，祖籍福建安溪，父亲林清渊曾任槟城市议员，母亲何洁贞为圭亚纳籍华裔。1937年毕业于英国剑桥大学法律系，在英国当律师，并积极参与社会运动。51年出任马来亚论坛组织刊物《独立之声》总编辑。55年出任马来亚律师公会秘书，58年成为左派在野党劳工党中委。64年在劳工党旗帜下参选失败，从此离开政坛。1971至79年，先后出任大马驻联合国副常任代表及欧洲多国大使。82年退休后，受委为吉隆坡区域仲裁中心总监。2013年逝世。



《星洲日报》

门且曾接受高深教育，可是她从不看轻任何人，也不吹嘘自己。林碧颜是大马第一位派驻联合国的女性副常任代表，这在以穆斯林为众的国

家诚属罕见，她随后也派驻欧洲多国大使。不过，林碧颜最让人称道的，还是她敢于人们所不敢，为被政府对付的异议分子维权，赢得社会尊重。一九五二年，年仅三十七岁的林碧颜协助马共地下党员李明上诉英国枢密院，要求撤销李明因拥有一颗手榴弹而被马来亚法庭判处死刑的裁决。但英国

枢密院以李明非英国公民而拒绝审理此案，当时在英国执业的林碧颜并未因此放弃，她奔走于英国上下议院，成功争取议员的的支持，最终获得露雳苏丹的宽赦，李明的刑罚改为终身监禁，刑满后被遣返中国。六零年代，教总主席林连玉因反对政府强迫华文中文改制，被政府褫夺公民权及教师证，林碧颜挺身而出，担任义务辩护律师，不过辩护失败。林碧颜在零九年接受林连玉基金会颁发的林连玉精神奖时表示，林连玉为争取保持华人的母语而奉献一生，甚至被褫夺公民权与教师证也在所不惜的高尚情操，让她想起了自己的父亲。她的父亲林清渊一九三四年因不满英殖民政府拒绝给华裔和印度裔学生提供免费母语教育，而马来裔学生则享有此特权，愤而辞去立法议员职位。

六八年马来西亚与印尼发生军事冲突，十一名在印尼受训的大马左翼青年与印尼军一起空降大马，结果被接获情报的大马军人逮捕，随后被判死刑。林碧颜毅然为他们提供法律援助，并最后争取到苏丹的宽赦，把死刑改为终身监禁。出席追思会的前死囚黄万友在会上三鞠躬，感谢当年协助他们所有人。林碧颜自认深受美国著名律师约翰·亚当斯(John Adams)的影响，约翰·亚当斯在为涉嫌杀害五名平民的英国军人辩护时发表了经典名言：「为何故人不受到谅解和公平对待？你若不让异议分子获得法律保障，那你怎么能以民主制度建立国家？」这句话也成为她在司法界斗争的指导精神。林碧颜不仅为华裔而斗争，她也成功为以印度裔为主的一万四千名铁道工人争取为公务员。

以林碧颜作为硕士论文研究题材的马华妇女组前任主席周美芬表示，林碧颜的维权行动跨领域、跨族群、跨阶层，这与她的家庭背景及成长过程息息相关。她指出，林碧颜出生在「峇峇娘惹」家庭，接受良好教育，是当时少数受过高等教育的女性，代表了大马独立前后受英国西方教育影响的知识分子。林碧颜出生显赫，一生九十八载，经历两次世界大战、英殖民时代、自治与抗日过程、马来亚独立前后；在个人履历上横跨政治、国策、司法维权、职工会运动与妇女权益多个领域且均有卓越表现。在文化认同上她游走于中国、西方与本土；在人际上周旋于海峡华人、马来与印裔精英分子、华文教育工作者和各族劳工阶层之间；在身份认同上从英王子民转化为马来亚子民，最后安身于马来西亚。时代造就了英雄，英雄也造就了时代。

林连玉基金会

林碧颜追思会：精神永存

Source: *Excerpted from the catalogue of Salon Malaysia 1968~1969*



< **The pair** >

"The Pair" by LEE Kian Seng 1968 /120 x120 x30 cm. Reinforced concrete Permanent Collection of the National Art Gallery, Malaysia

Source: *Excerpted from the catalogue of Salon Malaysia 1968~1969*

**Salon Malaysia-National Open Art Competition and Exhibition, January 24-March 30 1969**

Comment by the Convener P.G.Lim

As the Convenor of Salon Malaysia, in my capacity as Chairman of the Exhibitions Committee, National Art Gallery, first let me express my very warm thanks to the nine-member Panel of Judges for their voluntary and successful services in the very exacting, and in some ways, unenviable, task of selecting works for exhibition and awarding prizes.

I would like to assure the public that very careful thought was given to the nomination of judges, who were chosen to ensure absolute impartiality of judgement and a high standard of selection. Of the Panel of Judges seven were local, two from overseas, the latter being of international reputation. No result can please everyone, but I am most satisfied with the care and meticulous attention given to the selection of the accepted entries, and in particular the prize-winners.

The Judges met in 16 sessions spread over 14 days, devoting no less than 45 hours to appraisal and selection. The Report they have presented, printed in this brochure, is in my opinion both comprehensive and instructive, and should provide helpful guidelines for the future development of our art.

Salon Malaysia is a National Art Competition and Exhibition, jointly sponsored by the National Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur and Malayan Tobacco Company Berhad. Judging of the Competition took place in November 1968.

The Exhibition of accepted works is being held in two venues simultaneously – the National Art Gallery and the Muzium Negara in Kuala Lumpur, beginning on January 24 and concluding on March 30 (1969). The object of the Competition, with \$33,000 in prizes, was to ensure the entry of the best possible works of art. The object of the Exhibition was to enable appraisal of the current standards and quality of art in Malaysia and Singapore. I am glad to say that both these objects have been achieved.

The Competition attracted an all-time record in this region with 1,104 entries from 495 artists. The Panel of Judges accepted for exhibition 575 works by 287 artists – by far the largest assembly of local art ever to be displayed in either Malaysia or Singapore. I hope the public will also consider it is the best exhibition to date. No less than 205 new artists – new, that is, to us – are represented in this double show.

The high rate of acceptance (more than 50 per cent) presented the sponsors with a problem in display, as the National Art Gallery itself has show space sufficient only to exhibit half the accepted works. The solution came through the ready and willing cooperation of the Director of Muzium Negara, Enche Shahrum Yub, who generously offered the use of the Great Hall of the Muzium Negara.

The presentation of the Exhibition in two parts at the same time produced another problem – one of division – as to see the whole Exhibition it is necessary to visit both venues. Broadly speaking, in the National Art Gallery the public will see all the prize-winning works and those of artists with whom they are familiar, while the Muzium will be devoted mainly to the display of works by new artists.

While such a division cannot be exact, nevertheless this arrangement should result in the added interest of comparison and contrast between past achievements and future potential. May I add my feeling of confidence that visitors to the Salon Malaysia Exhibition will feel both proud and pleased with the accomplishments of our artists.

**P.G. Lim**, Chairman of the Exhibitions Committee, Board of Trustees, National Art Gallery Malaysia 1968

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Source: *Excerpted from the catalogue of Salon Malaysia 1968~1969*

**Forward**

The organization of an art competition on a national scale requires at least three vital ingredients; a strong belief in the value of art, a willingness to provide adequate financial support and organisational manpower, and the right quantity and quality.

I am happy that with the generous assistance of Malayan Tobacco Company Berhad, the Board of Trustees, National Art Gallery (Malaysia), has been able to arrange and carry through to its culmination this Competition that has been called Salon Malaysia.

Without the joint resources and willing cooperation of the two parties, a competition on such a scale, for the first time in this country, would have been difficult to achieve.

As Chairman of the Board of Trustees, I note that detailed acknowledgements are made by the Convenor of the Salon Malaysia Committee, Puan P.G. Lim, Deputy Chairman of the Board of Trustees, National Art Gallery (Malaysia). The Report of the Panel of Judges adequately describes and comments on the entries and prize-winners in the several sections.

As a signatory of the Report I stand by all that is stated therein. However, as an individual with a continuing involvement and interest in the development of art on a national scale I feel duty-bound to make a comment in this foreword.

Within the value scales of modern European, Australian or American art the entries are impressive and fully merit the evaluation that they have received, and will receive, when Salon Malaysia goes on tour. Nevertheless, in the sense that Salon Malaysia was international, in so far as it attracted entries from the eight corners of this country and from Singapore as well, the general trends revealed may be taken as being typical of the art world in these countries today.

I conclude that the general value systems that our artists tend to abide by obviously leave considerable scope for the growth of a Malaysian genre of art forms or styles. This is one thing.

Much more important, there seems to be a relative lack of consciousness about social, economic or political tensions that in their national and international aspects compose the matrix of the Malaysian nation. Socially conscious art is one example. Social protest is another. Patriotism or heroism or pessimism are other examples of emotional conditions that our artists and their patrons may yet arrive at their full maturity.

It is good that in this last year of the '60s we have an opportunity to survey ourselves in this collection of the best efforts of our best artists. In reflection we should contemplate the direction in which we might proceed in the '70s.

Professor Ungku A. Aziz, Chairman Board of Trustees, National Art Gallery, Malaysia (20 December 1968)

**Salon Malaysia (1969)-Report of the Panel of Judges**

Chairman, Mr. Gordon Thomson, Deputy Director, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, and its Curator of Asian Art; Deputy Chairman, Mr William Willetts, Curator, Art Museum and Senior Lecturer in Fine Art, University of Singapore; Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz, Chairman, National Art Gallery, Board of Trustees, and Vice-Chancellor, University of Malaya; Enche Kington Loo, Chairman, Arts Council Malaysia; Enche Hisham Albakri, President, Malaysian Institute of Architects; Enche Yong Peng Seng, Member of the Gallery Board of Trustees; Dr. R.S. McCoy, a well-known private collector; Mr. Peter Clague, Malayan Tobacco Company Berhad and Enche Frank Sullivan, Hon. Secretary, National Art Gallery, Board of Trustees.

SALON MALAYSIA ART COMPETITION			
LIST OF PRIZE-WINNING AWARDS			
CATEGORY A: OILS, ACRYLICS and PVA			
<i>First Prize:</i>	-	\$4000.00	CHEONG LAITONG (Selangor)
<i>Second Prize:</i>	-	\$2000.00	JOLLY KOH (Malacca)
<i>Third Prize:</i>	-	\$1000.00	CHEW KIAT LIM (Trengganu)
<i>Honourable Mention:</i>			KHOO SUI HOE (Kedah)
<i>Honourable Mention:</i>	-		ARTHUR YAP (Singapore)
CATEGORY B: BATIK PAINTINGS			
<i>First Prize:</i>	-	\$4000.00	ISMAIL MUSTAM (Selangor)
<i>Second Prize:</i>	-	\$2000.00	TAN THEAN SONG (Kedah)
<i>Third Prize:</i>	-	\$1000.00	CHUAH THEAN TENG (Penang)
<i>Honourable Mention:</i>	-		LEE KIAN SENG (Selangor)
<i>Honourable Mention:</i>	-		SEAH KIM JOO (Singapore)
CATEGORY C: SCULPTURES and RELIEFS			
<i>First Prize:</i>	-	\$4000.00	ANTHONY LAU (Selangor)
<i>Second Prize:</i>	-	\$2000.00	YONG POH SHANG (Selangor)
<i>Third Prize:</i>	-	\$1000.00	LEE KIAN SENG (Selangor)
<i>Honourable Mention:</i>	-		KOK TEIK SENG (Penang)
<i>Honourable Mention:</i>	-		SIM KERN TECK (Singapore)
CATEGORY D: OTHER MEDIA			
<i>First Prize:</i>	-	\$4000.00	JEHAN CHAN (Malacca)
<i>Second Prize:</i>	-	\$2000.00	CHAN SOON YEAN (Singapore)
<i>Third Prize:</i>	-	\$1000.00	LEE KIAN SENG (Singapore)
<i>Honourable Mention:</i>	-		ABDUL LATIFF (Negeri Sembilan)
<i>Honourable Mention:</i>	-		KHOR SEOW HOOI (Singapore)
CATEGORY E: GRAPHIC ART			
<i>First Prize:</i>	-	\$2000.00	GRACE SELVANAYAGAM (Selangor)
<i>Second Prize:</i>	-	\$1000.00	ABDUL LATIFF (Negeri Sembilan)
<i>Third Prize:</i>	-	\$ 500.00	TAY CHEE TOH (Johore)
<i>Honourable Mention:</i>	-		ROSEMARY SANDRA CHIN (Selangor)
<i>Honourable Mention:</i>	-		CHUA SWEE CHU (Malacca)
<i>Special Award</i>	-	\$ 750.00	PHOON POH WAI (Selangor)
<i>Special Award</i>	-	\$ 500.00	YEOH JIN LENG (Selangor)
<i>Special Award</i>	-	\$ 250.00	MUDU MUCHAP (Sarawak)

We, the above, being the Panel of Judges of Salon Malaysia 1968 have pleasure in submitting the following report: Firstly, we wish to congratulate the sponsors of the competition, namely, the National Art Gallery of Malaysia, represented by Enche Frank Sullivan and the Malayan Tobacco Company Berhad, represented by Mr. Peter Clague, on their generous and to our mind highly successful gesture of encouragement towards the art and artists of Malaysia and Singapore, on the efficacy with which they recruited an unprecedented number of entries and on the drive and enthusiasm by which they have brought the organization of the judging of the exhibits to a satisfactory conclusion.

The Panel congratulate the sponsors on the overwhelming response to the invitation, and notes with satisfaction that every section of the artistic community thought it worthwhile to participate. In the case of an exhibition numbering over eleven hundred entries it is, of course, inevitable that much of the work should be lacking in conception and technical execution; nevertheless, the Panel feels that the overall standard in respect of these qualities reached a high level in all five categories of entries, and many works of art of high quality were submitted by artists whose work, we understand, has not been publicly exhibited before.

One of the objectives of Salon Malaysia was to uncover new talent and the Judges have been pleased to learn that many new artists of promise have emerged. The rules drew attention to the presentation of works of art, in particular to questions of framing. It was observed that many pictorial artists handicapped their entries by poor and inappropriate framing. Although costly frames are not always the best, it is clear that some artists would do well to pay more attention to this aspect of presentation.

In the two major categories of painting and sculpture many works of fine quality were submitted, but the Judges would commend particularly the imagination and enterprise shown in the category of graphics in which a wide range of materials and media were exploited, some with outstanding effect. It would probably be true to say that the aesthetic level achieved throughout the graphic class was perceptibly higher than in other categories and gave evidence of a higher degree of professional skill, perhaps the response to the challenge of the media and methods of production. At the same time, the Panel feels that some entries in this section may have been unduly handicapped by lack of access to the proper tools for the job.

As was to be expected from the area in which the concept of batik as a pictorial medium largely originated, the standard of entries submitted in this class was consistently high. For variety of subject matter, brilliant use of colour, and subtlety of style and technique it is to be doubted whether any country in the world could have produced its equal. While the batik entry validated the distinctive use of resist processes for pictorial purposes, the Panel noted a tendency among some artists to rest content with certain well-worn themes in subject matter, and among the works some borderline cases which only dubiously fell within the limits of the batik medium.

In the sculpture entry attention is drawn by the Panel to the great range of styles and degrees of sophistication exhibited, and notes with interest that in many cases the most recent developments in contemporary international sculpture have been considered and assimilated, notably in some of the larger works using brilliant colours and very much reduced forms. However, at the same time it should be pointed out there may be room for improvement in this direction. The best of the sculpture proved to be the works of artists of obvious maturity working in the older accepted traditional conventions and the disparity in quality between the best and the worst work was very wide indeed. In sculpture, as in the graphic section, it seems possible that some of the artists were handicapped by lack of access to proper facilities and the Judges wish to suggest that the attention of the proper authorities should be drawn to this matter.

Use of local themes in a search to establish a characteristic national art is to be expected and encouraged, but, at the same time, the Panel would like to make a distinction between the repetitious use of acceptable subjects and a genuine investigation of the home environment; both were in evidence among the entries. Naturally, the oils and acrylics section attracted the greatest number of the most serious and considered entries of the competition, and again a wide variety of subjects, styles and techniques was offered. The Judges were more receptive to the more adventurous work in this field, and feel confident that the prize winners selected will be accepted as of very high quality.

In the category "Other Media" it was noted that great interest is taken in collage and some very interesting work was produced by the use of this technique. Although great care was taken in defining the categories, a number of works were submitted which would have fitted as easily into another category as that for which they were entered. The Judges exercised their discretion in re-classifying several of these. The division into categories was made with the unanimous approval of the Judges, but it is suggested that if future competitions of this kind are organized consideration might be given to the conclusion of a category for ceramics in which interesting works of art may be expected .

The Judging Panel consisted mainly of laymen as it was felt that the function was in a real sense to relate the artist to the public. It was led by its professional members but not dominated by them, and the work of judgment was accomplished without friction or serious disagreement and to the satisfaction of all members. There were, of course, differences of opinion but these were resolved invariably in acceptable compromises. No one member felt impelled to veto the selection of any of the prize winners. Special awards were made not in the nature of consolation prizes, still less as fourth prizes in their categories, but because they represented aspects of the Competition it was thought important to encourage. The Judges were not aware during the Judgment of the names of any of the artists.

The organization of the Competition so strongly impressed the Judging Panel that it would be improper to conclude this report without some commendation of it. The task was a very heavy one, but the work was accomplished so smoothly that the work of the Judges was relieved of any unnecessary burdens. The Secretary of the National Art Gallery, it is felt necessary to say, has not only long experience in this work, but obviously a special talent for it and is, in addition, animated by a boundless enthusiasm, and he was supported admirably by a staff he has trained and which brought to the work wonderful loyalty, care and skill.

Finally, the electronic equipment used, to our knowledge for the very first time in a competition of this kind, proved itself to be a very important exercise without which the work would have been much more difficult and time-consuming. Moreover, the machine not only speeded the normal process of resolution, but reduced by its impersonality the tensions and dissensions so often associated with this kind of work. We offer our congratulations and thanks to Dr. Li Yuan Liu and Mr. Ong Chee Mun, of the Faculty of Engineering, University of Malaya, and their staff.

From inspecting the full range of entries to this competition the Judges feel that the state of the arts in Malaysia is very healthy indeed, that the talent existing is remarkable and that the standard in general is very gratifying. The high acceptance rate, over 50 per cent, indicates the standard achieved, so much so that the Panel of Judges felt that, in addition to the 18 Prize Awards, there should also be two Honourable Mentions in each of the five categories, and have accordingly made such awards.

< Excerpted from **Young Contemporary in Review 1974-1997** published in December 1999 by the National Art Gallery of Malaysia .Courtesy of National Art Gallery Malaysia and Puan Zanita Anuar >

## **Young Contemporary Malaysia**

### **Past Tense and Future Stance**

*An exposition which is centered upon the issue of the greatness of art is often if not always highly dependent upon notions of art historicity.*

*The element of time, a very crucial factor in legitimizing greatness. While some of us seem to be dwelling too much into the past, some may be too preoccupied with the present, while others just strive for the future.*

*Hence, only the visionary among us actually take into consideration all three dimensions of time, the past, present and the future in the attempt to achieve such greatness. Among them are the founders of the Young Contemporaries Competition and Exhibition of 1974: Johan Ariff, Farid Wardi, (Mohamed)Redza Piyadasa, Mat Yassir Juli, Joseph Tan, Zuraina bt Majid, Ismail Zain and T.K. Sahapathy. These individuals believed in investing in the future of the present young generation, whom they believe will one day make history.*

*The actual idea to initiate this program is inspired by a visit to the Young Contemporaries Exhibition in London in the 60s, as mentioned by Suliman Esa . A panel of individuals were called together to discuss the matter and then, a decision was made in which the National Art Gallery is to invite thirteen of the country's up and coming artists below thirty years of age to compete and win the Major Award of two thousand ringgit.*

*The thirteen artists below the age of thirty who were invited to participate are: Kok Yew Puah, Long Thien Shih, Chong Buck Tee, Siti Zainon Ismail, Tajuddin Hj Ismail, Zulkifli Mohd Dahalan, Shamsudin Daraman, Normah Nordin, Ruzaika Omar, Omar Abdullah, Adman Salleh, Mustaffa Hj Ibrahim and Lim Eng Hooi. Only seven artists accepted the invitation: Siti Zainon Ismail, Tajuddin Hj Ismail, Zulkifli Mohd Dahalan, Normah Nordin, Ruzaika Omar, Adman Salleh, and Mustaffa Hj Ibrahim. The panel of Judges awarded the 1<sup>st</sup> Young Contemporary award to Zulkifli Mohd Dahalan. Zulkifli chose to use the award to travel to India.*

*The event was launched without an official opening ceremony and had attracted 1674 visitors who enjoyed the thirty seven artworks by those who heeded the call for participation.*

*This competition was also held in 1975 with an open invitation to all artists below 30 years of age. A total of 37 artists entered 93 artworks to win the two thousand ringgit prize money and a roundtrip ticket to any ASEAN destination or to India. The panel of judges which included Farid Wardi, Sulaiman Esa, Ismail Zain, Joseph Tan and Syed Ahmad Jamal selected 19 artists to exhibit 29 artworks.*

*Lee Kian Seng was nominated the overall winner. His entries for the competition were Process in Consumption and Resumption, and two other works which the title: Process in Poker Game.*

*This program continued on almost as an the most important annual affair for the young and emerging artists. Aspiring artists were beginning to contemplate entering the prestigious competition while past winners stood behind with full encouragement. Zulkifli Dahalan during his travels in the Middle East, had even dropped a line to wish the next batch of young artist good luck ... "Ya! ya! yu! would like to know about the young contemporaries. Congratulations to the winner".*

*In organizing the event for the year 1976/1977, the National Art Gallery was given ticket sponsorship by the Malaysian Airlines System. The panel of judges which consisted of Farid Wardi, Yeoh Jin Leng and Sulaiman Othman applauded the efforts of Bahruddin Bador for his serious conviction in attaining a unique visual presentation and Zolkeply Maulana for his graphic skill in visually evocating the social mindset of the 'Jeans Generation' of the time.*

*This competition seem to have ceased to exist from 1978 until 1980. This possible explanation to this could be the fact that the organizing institution had to focus their resources and manpower towards other programs including the National Art and Graphic Competition 1977/1978 sponsored by Esso and the Salon Malaysia.*

*In 1981, this competition is held once more, attracting 44 artists to present 151 artworks. The winner this time is Ponirin Amin whose work entitled 'Alibi catur di Pulau Bidong' in the form of a clever fish net and origami files installation, reflected on the harsh reality of human migration. This work became the first Young Contemporaries installation artwork ever collected by the National Art Gallery. Prizes were also made available to award other fine artists who had won minor awards, they were Sharifah Fatimah Syed Zubir, Ruzaika Omar Basaree and Syed Shaharuddin Syed Bakeri. The three month long exhibition attracted up to 2424 visitors.*

### ***Traditional Syntax, Contemporary Context***

*The following years seem to reflect a new found consciousness among the judges of the competition. The judges began to show a clear biasness towards works of art which were uniquely local in spirit and in the use of material, yet answered to all the challenges of existing contemporary contexts.*

*In 1982, the competition rules were amended to allow for artists below the age of 35 to enter. This attracted 78 participants to enter 191 artworks. In the end 97 artworks by 39 artists were shown to the public.*

*The judges this time established the judging criteria which included:*

- 1. the uniqueness of the works within the context of an evolving modern Malaysian art tradition*
- 2. consistency in the artists exploration of ideas*
- 3. maturity in the artist's handling of his chosen idiom*
- 4. the relevance of cultural influences*
- 5. presentation and standards of technical excellence in the handling of medium*

*The judges were unanimous in awarding Zakaria Awang the Major Award for 'Al-Rahman', his truly lyrical and delicate installation which succeeded to synthesize east-west sensibilities and incorporate Islamic elements in a complex yet controlled manner. Minor awards were given to the following artists: Fauzan Hj Omar, Amron Omar and Wan Ramli Wan Ibrahim.*

*Interesting to note that the following year's rules of entry was again amended to allow artists below the age of thirty and not thirty five, to enter. The organizers felt that it was a necessary move to contain the period of development of younger artists before he/she has settled to a more established line of commitment. The panel of jury based their evaluation on the following criteria:*

- 1. originality and innovative quality*
- 2. consistency in the use of chosen idiom*
- 3. understanding in the handling of medium*
- 4. relevance in societal / cultural context*
- 5. presentation*

*The Major Award winner, Mat Zali was said to make a breakthrough with his presentation of the 'Step' series in which he has transposed the banal shoe form to a larger than life art situation representing the vigorous spirit of the youth. The other minor award winners are Muna Musa, Zainal Abidin Musa, Geh Ah Ang and Zakarie Othman. The judges also noted that what was lacking was the sense of discovery in exploring the medium of rattan, wood, clay or other local materials.*

*Malaysian Tobacco Company began to show interest in sponsoring this competition in the year 1984. That was the year when the judges exclaimed that creativity is the essence of art and hence nominated Thangarajoo s/o M.A. Kanniah as the overall winner of the competition. The judges appreciate his 'expressive forms and strong sense of human values opening out, positioning greater potentials.' The artist is the first Malaysian Indian ever to have won this award. The other Minor award winners were Bahaman Hashim, Rafiee Abdul Ghani, Mohd Nasir Bahrudin, Fadilah Abdullah and Zheng Yuan De. The embossed prints entered by Bahaman were so sophisticated that the judges voiced hope that the artist should further develop and enrich the role of printmaking in the Malaysia art scene.*

*The exhibition was held in the new premises of the National Art Gallery at that time which was the former Hotel Majestic building on Jalan Sultan Hishamuddin.*

*The competition in 1985 was sponsored by Esso Malaysia Sdn Bhd which allocated a total of eight thousand ringgit for total prize money to be given to six winners. The judges this time set forth to clarify certain terms such as 'creative', 'innovative', 'exploratory' and 'proficiency' as was required to provide the conceptual framework by which works could be identified. 'Creative' is said to imply certain achievement attained within a given area that can be viewed as being individual and outstanding beyond a point of saturation within the same area. This achievement is arrived at through experiment, awareness and realization.*

*To innovate meant to change, to modify, to transform accepted norms and conventions into something different or new. Exploratory meant an attitude of constantly exerting to review visual effects and expressive possibilities for oneself. Proficiency mean doing something skillfully with full mastery of material and form.*

*The judges unanimously selected Jelaini Abu Hassan as the overall winner. His work is said to be provocatively evoking socio-cultural connotations with a haunting patina of nostalgia. The other minor Award winners are Awang Damit, Azimah Ahmad, Rafiee Abdul Ghani, Kasran Mat Jidin and Ismail Ibrahim.*

*The concept for the following years competitions seem to be organized around themes in conjunction with the International Year of Peace, the theme for the 1986 Young Contemporaries is to explore the ways of understanding the meaning of peace in the visual context.*

*The 1986 overall winner for the first time in history is a woman. Mastura Abdul Rahman was lauded for her serene portrayal of harmonious forms and space. Her sensitive and detailed floor, mat, screen, pottery and religious books only serve to enhance the Malay cultural context. The other minor award winners are Chang Fee Meng, Chua Cheng Khoo, K. Chandran, Mohd Nasir Baharuddin and Romli Mahmud.*

*In 1987, the UNESCO theme for the year again became the theme for the competition. Thus, Shelter for the Homeless became inspiration to many young aspirants to produce plastic expressions for the critical eyes of the judges.*

*The judges were with the opinion that the strong social content afforded by the theme actually provided for interesting works given the wider scope of approach for the artists. Haron Mokhtar was awarded the Major Prize. The judges appreciated his presentation of the local context arranged in a flat space, the negation of three-dimensionality and his incorporation of Eastern perspective. The other memorable entries were the minor award winners which included Wong Hoy Cheong, Mohd Akif Emir, Kungyu Liew, Romli Mahmud and Chang Fee Ming.*

*The competition continued in 1988 supported by Esso and with the theme 'Materials and Creativity'. Skill, creativity and innovation were the major criteria in the decision making process of the panel. Quite a few endeavoured to fulfill the principal theme by using local materials such as pandanus leaves, bamboo, wood, tin, batik and other home-made textiles. The organizers achieved the desired: works that challenge the status of oil, acrylic and other Western-based materials in contemporary art.*

*The dramatic and allegorical work entitled 'Tanpa Tajuk' by Zulkifli Yusoff which consisted of black low lying broken bridges and chess pawn pieces, was hailed as 'a strong sociological work which is abstract yet allows for meaning to be released by subtly allegorical signs'.*

*The other impressive winning works were by Tan Chin Kuan, Kung Yu Liew, Leong Chee Siong, Mohd Fauzin Mustaffa and Taufik Abdullah. These artists were impressive for the high level of technical achievement and ambitious scale of production: none were less than 120 cm in length.*

*The next few exhibitions served as an arena for a very interesting competition between two of the more accomplished young artists of the country. The strife and trials of Tan Chin Kuan and Zulkifli Yusoff from 1988 through to 1990 made for interesting observations by art enthusiasts. In 1989, the competition hailed them both as overall winners of the prestigious event.*

*Sixty nine artists entered the competition in that year in which the theme had been 'Literacy'. One of the more innovative entry was the one entitled "Passage to Literacy" submitted by Kungyu Liew, who attempted to collaborate dance / drama performance and multi media (audio visual, light and sound) techniques. And Tumian Jasman's giant Pepsi Cola Drums inscribed with the Malay pantun, surely made the audience re-think about the seduction of commercialism. Still, the judges decided to award two artists, Zulkifli Yusoff and Tan Chin Kuan, the Major Prize as 'their works show continuity in commitment'. The other Minor Prize winners were Chan Chin Huat, Mohd Khalil Amran and Mohd. Azlan Ahmad.*

*The trend towards a thematic setting to the competition continued in 1990. The theme for the year was 'Visit Malaysia 1990'. The artists were faced with the problem of painting a wide range of situations: at one extreme a tropical paradise with happy inhabitants in harmony and at the other end a cynical view of the effects of invading hoards of tourists from East and West upon the values of the local society. The panel was of the opinion that the theme may be less than demanding of the emotional and intellectual capabilities of the young artists, hence the overall standard seem less than satisfactory.*

*The best effort of the year was Tan Chin Kuan's 'Moral means behind Visit Malaysia 1990' which presented a strong visual statement. The artist sheds light on two aspects of tourism – one 'veiling' the popular picture of multi-racial society, the other, the norms and taboos – delivered with iconic significance. The other minor award winners were Ali Mustaffa bin Othman, Chow Chin Chuan, Rohayati Razak, Din Omar and Mohd Azlan Ahmad.*

*The exhibition continued on in 1991 under the theme 'Our Heritage'. Although many of the entries were bigger in size, the standard varied considerably. The panel searched for works which questioned cultural identity, authenticity, within the context of our historical, social and cultural matrix.*

*The Major Award was given to Bayu Utomo Radjikin for his work entitled "Bujang Berani". The panel commented on how his work epitomizes the collision between two contradictory forces and conflicting desires; that of the individual and that of the society. Anugerah Utama diberikan kepada Bayu Utomo Radjikan yang menampilkan "Bujang Berani". This tension reflected the Freudian struggle of the eros and the thanatos. Tan Chin Kuan had not failed to impress the judges that year. His haunting installation entitled "The Sink of Our Heritage" displayed the names of major media institutions like CNN, TV3 and RTM on a white screen which was flanked on both sides by gigantic gold rockets from which were hung black human figures. The other minor prize winners were Mohd Azhar Mana, Din Omar and Ahmad Shukri Mohamed.*

*1992 was the year in which the organizers decided to discontinue the practice of allocating themes for the competition. That year the entries totaled to a record high of four hundred and twenty five, the highest figure ever recorded in the YC history.*

*For that year, the major award winner was Azman Hilmi. His work is said to be reminiscent of Jim Dine as evidenced by his formal usage of common tools such as the hammer, saw, chisel etc. The tools serve as metaphor for the spirit of collectivity and interdependency between different members of society. The five minor award winners were Kow Leong Kiang, Eng Hwee Chu, Pang Ngiap Kang, Puah Chin Kok and Nor Azizan Rahman Paiman.*

### **New Awareness**

*A total of 294 artworks were evaluated in the 1994 Young Contemporaries Competition/ Exhibition.*

*The panel of judges which comprised of Ponirin Amin, Tan Tong, Rehim Harun and chaired by Zainol Abidin Ahmad Shariff discussed the form of the award and the effectiveness of the show in nurturing artistic practise.*

*The panel also reflected on art-marketing as a major motivational factor in the contemporary practice of young Malaysian artists. They also commented on the ambiguity of 'post-modernism' and how it leads to 'the total absence of original creativity'. The young artists seem to be influenced by the guru (mentor) and follow in the guru's footsteps by regurgitating the guru's art.*

*Finally, the judges could not find any work accomplished enough to deserve the major prize but agreed to award minor awards to eleven of the entrants. As a result, the total prize money is equally divided among the eleven. The artists were Chuah Chong Young, Hasnul Jamal Saidon, Khairun Nisah Musa, Noor Azizan Rahman Paiman, Nur Hanim Mohd Kahiruddin, Pang Ngiap Kang, Rosli Zakaria, Shia Yih Yiing, Tan Vooi Yam, Wan Jamarul Wan Abdullah Tani, and Zakaria Shariff.*

*The competition ceased to continue in 1995. nevertheless, when it started again in 1996, the organizers took in consideration the comments made by the 1994 judges and introduced one new element: the travel-study grant award. The Major winner of the 1996 Young Contemporary Competition will be given RM 6000.00 and a travel grant worth RM 3000.00 for research in any ASEAN country. Three minor awards awarded will be worth RM 2000.00 in prize money and RM 3000.00 in the form of a travel grant to any ASEAN country.*

*In 1996, a total of 297 artworks by 222 artists were evaluated. The panel of judges headed by J. Anu proceeded to survey the works by slide review and then to look at the original artworks. The judges considered the relevance of symbols employed like the awareness of the history of media, of contemporary issues in art and the acknowledgement of local history and traditions. There seem to be a penchant for installation works among the budding artists, which were produced in a very crude fashion and neglected the finer points in converting space.*

*The National Art Gallery had agreed to the judges' request for an additional award that year. The minor award winners were Syed Alwi Syed Abu Bakar who impressed the panel with his 'magical' synchronized lights, Faizal Zulkifli for his delightful art video depiction questioning the legitimacy of art education, Sharmiza Abu Hassan for her innovative miniature train coach constructs, and Chan Wei San who painted the dark world of nightmares. The major winner was Nur Hanim Mohd Kharuddin who produced a carefully crafted spell book entitled 'Grimoire'.*

*These artists managed to travel in a group to Philippines where they developed contacts with other Asian artists and returned to Malaysia, to exhibit together in an exhibition entitled Papahayag. This exhibition was officiated by Datuk Syed Ahmad Jamal, the National Art Laureate, at the Creative Centre.*

*The structure of the competition for 1996 changed to allow for artists to enter the competition via four categories: painting, sculpture / installation, print / photography, and multimedia / experimental. In that year also the organizers invited a foreign judge from a country in ASEAN to judge this event alongside three other local judges.*

*The judges decided that it was impractical to categorize entries as it impeded creative exploration and puzzled art judgement. Setiawan Sabana the judge from Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia commented:*

*Is it necessary to limit the young talents artistic productions into boundaries / definitions like this? Is it not more appropriate that the artworks themselves later define their categories / definition?*

*After two days of contemplation, the judges decided that the Major Award should be given to Susyilawati Sulaiman. Her installation work entitled 96 & 97 (Kedai Obat Jenun) revolves on the issue of 'dementia' and the creative 'madness' of the artist. The winner of the painting category is Ong Sing Yeow, winner of the print / photography category is Suhaimi Tohid, winner of the sculpture and installation category is Ahmad Shukri Mohamed and the winner of the multimedia / experimental category is Noor Azizan Rahman Paiman. A special Jury Award was created and presented to Rashidah Salam for her highly engaging mix media collage painting. The winners of the 1997 competition had traveled to the various ASEAN country of their choice and reunited in an exhibition entitled Kembara Tenggara at the new Creative Gallery in 1998. Hence, The National Art Gallery made the decision to spend the next years introspecting and in review of the project, so the project may continue again in the year 2000.*

Several factors which should be taken in consideration when evaluating the program are:

### *1. The Recognition of Emerging Art-Student Artist:*

*Each year the art schools exercise pressure on the art student to participate in the Young Contemporaries. In the 80s there seem a clear competition between the emerging artists of two main art institutions namely the Mara Institute of Technology and the Malaysian Institute of Art. There seem to be a monopoly by the 'leading' art school whose winners were employed by the school to teach the 'winning formula'. Hence, in the early 90s there grew a small population of emerging artists creating works which mimic their teachers.*

*Now that the number of art institutions has increased around Malaysia and art teaching methods become varied, we can only look forward to more unique and extraordinary presentations. The art institution must play a role in allowing their students to engage in the event so as to personally discover their true potential and not act merely as promotional tool to the institution. Every emerging artist should be learning from the process of 'failing and then failing better next time', to use Samuel Beckett's phrase.*

### *2. Cultural Reconstruction:*

*Emerging image makers are often those much anticipated in presenting fresh cultural ideas and messages, in its own way the YC has become the arena to showcase the current generation's interpretation of the present socio-cultural condition of the country. The young artist's voice is often regarded as the voice of the young who is still free of influence and hence will speak with much hope and sincerity. This could be the reason why the judges insist in maintaining the entry level age limit of 30 and not 35 years old.*

*Most artists' idea is never really isolated from the prevailing socio-political condition. The content of the YC artists in the 80s reflect their awareness of the social condition and realities of the country at the time, with the mention of the 'Jeans Generation' and the highlight on the migration complex in the 'Pulau Bidong'. However, in the next few years, the judges of the competition noticed the lack of social content in the entries and at the end of the 80s started creating themes which were to shape the artists content towards a more pronounced nationalist and cultural preservation sensitivity. The themes included, 'peace', 'protection for the homeless', 'literacy', 'visit Malaysia' and 'heritage'. Whether this has been done to propagate a common focus for young artists as compared to the multiplicity of visions, or acted in a way that it limited the creativity and originality of art making, cannot be fully determined. Nonetheless, the artists were allowed free reign again in the mid 1990s to 1997. This could be due to the heightened awareness among the organizers and judges that these young artists should be allowed to participate in a broader global dialogue related to pluralism within or without post-modernist concerns and thus continue cross-cultural exploration in the arts.*

### *3. Media Exploration:*

*The exploration of media by emerging artists has become increasingly important. Each competition becomes the stage for the presentation of new manipulation of forms and translation of contents.*

*Although many believed that on the onset of the 90s, the judges were beginning to marginalize traditional mediums or practices such as oil painting, print and traditional calligraphy, it should be made known that any evaluation of media does not presuppose the greatness of one media / practice over the other, but seek to acknowledge innovative exploration of any media / practice, old and new. Zakari Awang is an example of an artist who succeeded in exploring the possibilities in presenting traditional Islamic calligraphy through his work entitled 'Al Rahman' in 1982 and in 1983 the judges had awarded Geh Ah Ang's ink painting artwork on the same merit. An artist choice of media / practice, whether installation, mix media or multimedia is as equally responsible as 'traditional media / practice' in its potential to incite exploration and re-interpretation of current Malaysia art theory and history.*

*The most important point for re-assessment in the YC is its goal and objectives. Not unlike other mission, vision or policy set by institutions, the program should be evaluated together by past judges, organizers fellow artists, maybe every two years. This is to ensure that the YC does not simply appear as a site for instant endorsement of young practitioners produced according to market trends. Surely, this program should continue as an important 'rite of passage' for both artists and organizers in their experience and journey towards artistic maturity. It is hope that the YC can continue as an 'art laboratory', an ongoing testing process, a place for reinvention.*

Zanita Anuar /Malaysia/ December 1999

*<Note: Selected excerpt from the Symposium "Constructing Cultural Identities in the Context of Globalisation" held in Malaysia in March 2000. Extracted from the "Regionalism in An Era of Global Art"-by Niranjan Rajah, Malaysia>*

### **National Identity**

*".....In the 1971 **National Cultural Congress** (Malaysia) met to reconstruct the terms of a 'national culture' for our newly reconstituted nation. The Malays had asserted their hegemony and laid claim to the economic fruits of the nation, which the earlier liberal approach of the period immediately following independence had failed to deliver. The National Economic Policy (NEP) had been put in place with the aim of reconstructing wealth and opportunity for advancement in favour of the Malays. The National Congress asserted the necessity for Malay prominence in the realm of culture. The Dasar Kebudayaan or 'Foundations of Culture' were drawn up stating the necessity for the predominance of the indigenous cultures of the region, the possibility of incorporating other cultures where appropriate and the importance of Islam. Though this document never gained the force of law its tenets have permeated the official narrative of all Malaysian cultural production, including the visual arts. Today, the urgent assertion for Malay dominance of the 1970's has given way to a more relaxed multiculturalism at home. However, the forces of globalization have usurped the role of national institutions in representing our cultural identity on the world stage."*

### **Curatorial Hierarchies**

*"In spite of best intentions and the participation of national curators, the narratives of major global art arenas.....are underpinned by the preferences and prejudices of the host nations. At their worst these exhibitions have used their national co-curators as mediators in the extraction of information and resources in a colonial fashion. Indeed, the administration of these expansive and comprehensive exhibitions, curated on the basis of national sections has produced what can be described as **neo-colonial curatorial hierarchies**, with national curators feeding powerful central selection committees to whose unperatives regional 'co-curators' are obliged to comply."*

*The Internet*

*“A region is, of course, a geographically defined area, which involves political, economic, and cultural relations amongst its inhabitants. It is patently clear that in what I shall call the old ‘hard copy’ scenario, a region is defined by its ‘centre’. However, the instantaneous connectivity of today’s computer mediated communications signals the end of any geographically rooted understanding of community, culture, economics and even politics. Indeed, it is possible that, nationality itself will soon be displaced, as various overlapping ‘virtual communities’ emerge with identities and allegiances of their own. While the Internet revolutionizes contact between those who are so far apart that they cannot meet, its greater impact is in the way it heightens communication between those who can. Although the Internet transcends the physicality of location, the people who use it are geographically rooted. Face to face interactions will continue to be important in human relations, and this primordial form of networking is more easily achieved between ‘neighbours’.” .....*

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*Excerpted from the publication of **National Art Gallery Malaysia***

*"In the plenary meeting on August 20 (1971**National Cultural Congress** ), Prof. Ungku A. Aziz proposed that the "Art for Art sake" attitude in Malaysia should be changed to "Art for Society". He stated that artists have been given full freedom to create, and that the country should now pay attention to art as an element in the economic and political development of the nation. The motion was opposed strongly by the artists who protested that this was an attempt to curb artistic activity in the country. The debate lasted nearly two hours which prompted the chairman Tan Sri Nik Ahmad Kamil to decide on voting for a decision. the motion was carried, and the artists left en bloc in protest.( Syed Ahmad Jamal, Malaysian Art 57-87 page 62)*

*" Overtly and covertly, events of May 1969 and the Cultural Congress(1971), and no doubt other related movements, began to shape thinking and practice among artists; they were far too shattering and fundamental to be ignored. Throughout the 1970's, artists began the difficult, painful process of rethinking their positions, and recasting their perceptions of culture, language, race, state/nation and identity. For some , the prospects loomed as intolerable and inhospitable and they chose to migrate; some retreated into temporary or permanent silence; for everyone else, the stakes were too important and consequential not to be involved."*

*“ The passage from Merdeka ( Independent ) in 1957 through the cataclysmic events in May 1969 and to the end of 70’s is a movement from optimism and innocence to the realization that there are dark, violent, divisive and tragic profiles to mankind.” (TK Sabapathy Vision and Idea Relooking Modern Malaysian Art, page71 & 74 Merdeka Makes Art, or Does it? )*

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*<note: Excerpted from the publication **National Art Gallery Malaysia 1958 – 1988**>*

***National Art Gallery Malaysia** --by Datuk Lim Chong Keat*

*On the occasion of celebrating 30 years of the Balai Seni Lukis Negara (National Art Gallery, Malaysia), I am happy to contribute some thought about the state of art and art galleries.*

*Art is of course timeless and began with the origins of man; it should not therefore be regarded in terms of a few decades or in terms of national boundaries. It is understandable, however, for each community or national group to identify relevances in the work of artists contemporaneous to each milieu but, in the end, I believe that art is universal and should be free from narrow strictures of any kind. It should also be free from commercialism and plagiarism, and should at best reflect the personal creative sensibilities of the individual artists. It is almost a matter of luck whether each period and location (provincial, national or regional) would produce a fertile artistic community and a rich crop of art works. In this context, a responsible art gallery can play the necessary role of selection and categorisation of contemporary art. This is nevertheless a controversial function, and undoubtedly, different curators will have different opinions. Variations in discriminations can be overcome without unnecessary rivalry by creating more opportunities for varied exhibitions, giving each critical group a chance to select and organise exhibitions. The most important purpose of especially a publicly supported gallery is to encourage and promote art.*

*In as much as the Balai Seni Lukis Negara is also called the National Art Gallery (Malaysia), it is to be hoped that it would extend its activities beyond the parochial confines of Kuala Lumpur and into other major urban centres in Malaysia. There is already an over-concentration of cultural activities in Kuala Lumpur, and it is probably timely that more effort and budget should be made available in other cities.*

*I also feel that it would be urgent to examine the standards and of art education and the calibre of teachers in Malaysia. This should be paralleled by equivalent critical review of the state of architectural and design schools. It is indeed in schools that achievement of cultural integrity and originality can be nurtured as against trends and tendencies where rampant plagiarism and adaptive opportunism would otherwise thrive.*

*Datuk Lim Chong Keat /Malaysia/July 1988*

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*< Note: Selected excerpt from the Symposium “Constructing Cultural Identities in the Context of Globalisation” held in Malaysia in March 2000.>*

***Artistic Reflections on Globalization*** -by Dr Hans-Jurgen Schwalm

*As a deterrent side of globalisation one might consider the possibility of cultural uniformity and a new ‘accelerated’ presentation of the old hegemony that under the guise of a seemingly equal and worldwide dialogue demonstrates, nevertheless, the dominance of Western art. This pessimism seems to be true, as behind the benevolent fiction of a common discourse easily lurks the wish to missionize the world once again for the one and only belief, that means, from the point of view of the Europeans a belief in a global modern age following Western pattern that skilfully avoid all multacentral tendencies.*

*Speaking today of a crisis in modern age, a loss of this kind of single-minded dynamic is meant that my colleagues and myself understood as autonomous art history. For the European part this intends for example the arrangement in a row of style: from Gothic to Renaissance, from Baroque to Rococo, from Realism to ... etc. In view of an “anything goes” and the post-modern arbitrariness, art lost his ideal of the universal truth of form, an ideal that was more or less constantly renewed by the progress of society.*

*This loss is in my opinion definite, so that the “rhetoric of universality” (Hans Magnus Enzensberger) will fail. The fashionable globalisation, the global expansion might be used in the area of technology, but not in the area of art, in any case no inevitably. mm*

*In the time of enlightenment the analysis and significance was justified by understanding that it possesses a universally accepted aesthetic that would be comprehensible all over the world. Today the universality as a part of the ideal of art has lost its credibility, even in the West. The belief in a worldwide understandable ‘language’ of art, an Esperanto of imaginary expressions is more questionable than ever. Especially in reflection of the global is obvious. However, art is primarily a behaviour of personal autonomy and always has been is still an expression of personal originality and fantasy – as far as art proves its value against the capital demands and strategies of the art market. But this artistic praxis has no more formal leitmotifs justifying its autonomy. The purism, this colourful juxtaposition in contemporary art is the source of a new *Ebenso Stellvertretender Leiter des Referats Bildende Kunst der Ruhrfestspiele.**

*Freedom is that sometimes even expressed in the opposition to the standard of the art market. As art is still an individual expression of artists it is without doubt determined by cultural boundaries, whereas the technical media are able to spread anonymously and globally. It rests a new globalism of cultural (artistic) diversity being in direct opposition to the former universality of Western point of view. The seemingly global is spread up endlessly and, maybe therefore, it exactly offers the possibility of a tensional dialogue. But in presence of the new media this dialogue is extremely flexible and open.*

*Art always was integrative and this network was enforced during the centuries, but the exchange and the many different forms of influences became more and more intense. The digital capitalism of today accelerated the societal processes in an up to now not present way. The awareness of working in a network that constantly intensifies, an accelerating expansion of global modernity leads the artistic forms of expressions to a basic orientation in variety, openness, and new methods to mediate messages, the possibilities are endless. From a technical point of view they might be global, but not from the artistic point of view, as originality, innovation and creativity are bound to an artistic subject, in any case at the moment.*

*Joseph Beuys: In Germany the works of Joseph Beuys form an opposition to the intellectualisation in art.*

*(Note: **Dr Hans-Jürgen Schwalm.** Born in 1955. Academic studies of art history, archaeology, philosophy, and theology at the University of Bochum. Since 1990 representative director of the museum of Recklinghausen: Kunstthalle, Ikonenmuseum, Vestisches Museum.)*

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< Source: New Straits Times, Malaysia March 31, 1994 Health page 36 >

### ***Danger in Art Materials -NYT***

*Hazardous ingredients in some art materials - such as lead in some paints -pose a health risk to children pursuing arts and crafts. Vigilance by parents and teachers is vital as chronic exposure to even low levels of lead could cause irreversible brain damage.*

*Parents and teachers who are otherwise conscientious about checking on the safety of children's recreational activities may not even think that hazards could lurk in a youngster's pursuit of arts and crafts.*

*After all, what adult did not colour and paint as a child, apparently without mishap?*

*But a lack of awareness and vigilance can sometimes result in acute injuries or chronic exposure to a more distant danger.*

*For example, some years ago a kindergarten child who had spilled paint was told by his teacher to clean it up with turpentine. The child, whose clothing became saturated with this toxic solvent, developed a red, scald-like rash over most of his body and within a week was having seizures.*

*Since that incident, a federal law has taken effect requiring safety testing and labelling of arts and crafts materials, and the federal Consumer Products Safety Commission was given the authority to seize products that are deemed dangerous and are not properly labelled to warn consumers of the risk.*

*But unless parents and teachers read labels carefully and follow expert advice to keep all toxic art materials away from children under 12, serious accidents can still occur.*

*For example, just before the Christmas shopping season last year, shipments from the Far East of children's crayons and chalk that contained lead, an illegal ingredient in children's art materials, were seized by U.S. Customs officials and the safety commission.*

*A total of 569,169 retail packages were confiscated because the lead hazard had not been noted on the product labels, which instead declared the products to be "non-toxic" for "for home, office or school".*

*No product containing lead should be used by children because chronic exposure to even low levels of lead can cause irreversible brain damage and retard both physical and mental development. Yet a number of art materials used by adults, including some colours of oil paints and ceramic glazes, contain lead.*

*Until the federal Arts Materials Labelling Act took effect in November 1990, labelling on the potential toxicity of art materials was voluntary. It was up to manufacturers to comply with a safety and labelling standard established in 1940 by the Art and Craft Materials Institute, a trade organisation.*

*Products deemed free of hazards to users young and old were labelled "CP", "AP" or "Health Label (non-toxic)", indicating that they conformed to the institute's safety standard, ASTM D-4236.*

*But if a product contained a potentially toxic substance, it was to bear a "Health Label" with "caution" or "warning" as to the chronic hazard within or "danger" if the product contained an acute hazard.*

*Dr. Michael McCann, an expert on art safety and author of Artists Beware (Lyons & Burford Publishers, 1992), said, "In areas of health, it should not be up to a manufacturer to decide whether or not to put on a warning label on a hazardous product."*

*Furthermore, the Public Interest Research Group, a national consumer advocacy organisation, had found that in many states the art materials used in elementary and high schools were hazardous.*

*The study was conducted with the assistance of the Centre for Safety in the Arts, a New York-based artists' watchdog group. The passage of state laws requiring labelling of hazardous art materials and banning toxic materials from use in elementary schools produced a crazy quilt of laws that led to the passage of a uniform national law in 1988.*

*But a law, while very helpful, does not safety make. The law did not ban outright the use of toxic art materials in elementary schools, but it gave the safety commission the authority to obtain a court injunction to prevent the purchase of any art material that had to carry a cautionary health label for use by children in pre-kindergarten or grades one through six.*

*The law did not forbid elementary schools to use toxic art materials that had been purchased before November three years later, there could be many schools that have such old art materials on hand.*

*Vigilance by safety officials and, more importantly, parents and teachers remains the best guarantee that a child who dons a smock and starts painting a house and family with dog will not end up sick as a result.*

*And once, children reach junior high school, where they can take advanced art courses that often involve the use of hazardous materials, it is up to them and their teachers to see that safety precautions are followed.*

*McCann says a fundamental principle should be, "If you can't do it safely, don't do it."*

*The Centre for Safety in the Arts has developed a long list of products to avoid and safe alternatives for elementary and secondary school use for arts and crafts activities ranging from ceramics, printmaking and painting to photography, photography and woodworking.*

*For example, instead of rubber cement, epoxy, instant glue or solvent-based adhesives, which contain volatile toxins, young children should use glue sticks, double-sided tape or any adhesive, like school pastes and white glues, bearing a "CP" or "AP" label.*

*Older children, however, might use rubber cement with a heptane base instead of the more toxic hexane base. In screenprinting, children of all ages should use water-based inks and in ceramics, they should use only talc-free clays.*

*Young children are advised to finish ceramics with acrylics or tempera instead of glazing or to use only water-based marking pens, not permanent markers.*

*Look for the "CP", "AP" or "Health Label" followed by the word "nontoxic" (not by a warning) on any product purchased for use by young children. Such products are certified as neither acutely or chronically toxic by the Art and Craft Materials Institute.*

*But regardless of how safe the material, children should be taught good work habits from the outset so they will be well-ingrained by the time children are old enough to work with art materials that contain hazardous substances.*

*A smock or special clothes worn only for art work is always advisable. Pens, brushes, crayons and the like should never be put in the mouth. Art materials should be kept away from eating areas and users should not eat or drink anything in the work area.*

*Older children working with hazardous materials should always work in a well-ventilated area and, wherever possible, wear plastic or vinyl gloves. When spraying hazardous chemicals, a face mask and goggles, in addition to gloves, should be worn and, if possible, the spraying should be done outdoors.*

*After finishing an art project, the work surface and hands should be thoroughly washed. Dusts are best vacuumed up. Toxic solvents like turpentine and paint thinner should never be used to cleanse the skin, not even by adult. -NYT*



National Art Gallery Malaysia (1958-1984) @109, Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.