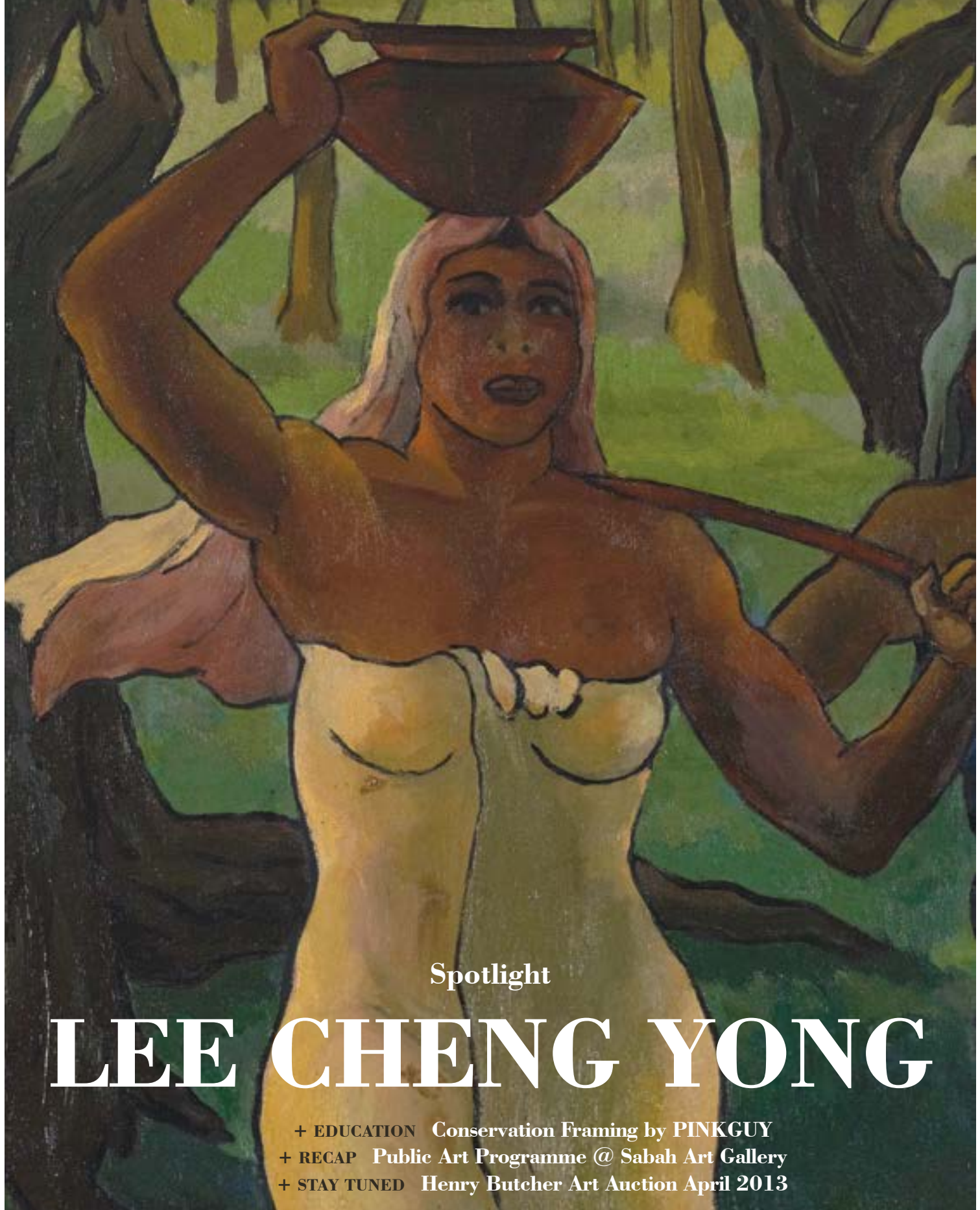


APRIL 2013

IB NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER FROM HENRY BUTCHER ART AUCTIONEERS



Spotlight

LEE CHENG YONG

- + EDUCATION Conservation Framing by PINKGUY
- + RECAP Public Art Programme @ Sabah Art Gallery
- + STAY TUNED Henry Butcher Art Auction April 2013



Spotlight

LEE CHENG YONG



TOP
Self-Portrait, oil on canvas, 43cm x 31cm,
collection of Penang State Art Gallery

BOTTOM
House, oil on canvas, 59cm x 49cm,
collection of Penang State Art Gallery

OPPOSITE
Still Life with Jar and Fruit, watercolour on paper,
26cm x 39cm

A versatile and multi-talented artist, Lee Cheng Yong had an incredible flair in art whose talent is in due of much deserved recognition. Throughout his lifetime, he produced an array of works in eclectic styles for instance - landscapes in the manner of Post-Impressionism, portraits in Cubism, sculptures of Rodin-like quality - a remarkable portfolio to encapsulate his knowledge in art.

Born on 26 March 1913 in China, Cheng Yong received his art training in Sin Hwa Art Academy, Shanghai in 1927. Upon his return to Penang in 1932, he held his first solo exhibition at Philomatic Union which garnered much interest from the public as well as local artists. The incidental gathering of fellow artists at his show had later led to the forming of Penang Chinese Art Club in 1935 where Cheng Yong was elected as president.

As an art educator at Chung Ling High School, Cheng Yong was remembered by his students as a highly respected figure. Stern yet helpful, he was willing to share his knowledge and had generously donated painting materials to his students. He had nurtured generations of star students who included Chong Hon Fatt and Chai Chuan Jin.

His successful second solo exhibition held at Chin Kang

Hoay Kuan, Penang in 1960 was well received with astounding reviews by the media. In an article by Times of Malaya, the art critic had described his distinctive style: "A notable feature of Mr. Lee's style is his subdued tonality in the majority of his work especially in most of his twenty landscapes. One wonders how, in spite of the 'dull' colours he is able to show most successfully the brilliance and warm sunshine of the tropics until one discovers that the answer lies in his ingenious juxtapositioning of the darks against the lights, the latter being brought out by his leaving parts of the canvas unpainted." The deliberate untouched areas are one of Cheng Yong's characteristic styles of painting as he was heavily influenced by traditional Chinese painting.

An observation on one of his works is elucidated here for readers to comprehend and appreciate Cheng Yong's method of painting. *In The Woods* illustrates a woman carrying a water cauldron resting on her head with a wooden stick in her left hand, whilst another woman follows suit. Both women

possess muscular physique while retaining gracefulness apparent from the curves of their bodies. The laborious act with basic attire and natural setting is as primeval as the manner in which it is rendered. A theme favoured most by the artist - the female figures - are executed in a striking manner that pays homage to the Tahitian style of Paul Gauguin, a quality that is almost unseen in the works of the likes of Cheong Soo Pieng whose signature style is of elongated limbs and Dato' Chuah Thean Teng's distended forms and tilted heads. A cleverly composed and a well-executed painting - it falls into the art of *Nanyang* - a romanticised look at the Southern Seas paradise of the then unexplored hinterland of Malaya by the hordes of émigré artists from China. Generous layers of earthy tones are applied on board to form this irresistibly captivating piece.

Aside from painting, Cheng Yong was also masterful in murals and sculptures. He was commissioned by Hotel Royal to produce abstract murals for their chain of hotels in nine countries as well as to create sculptures of lion

and a mythical creature 'kilin' in Singapore in 1971. His daughter, Lucy Lee, had given an account to describe his father's fervour for sculptures: "He loved to sculpt and did the sculpture of Tunku Abdul Rahman, his wife, his daughter as well as well-known personalities. His sculptures revealed good understanding in human anatomy. He also produced three large sculptures of the Goddess of Mercy and Buddha. These sculptures were later presented to Buddhist temples by his son."

With such extent of passion and talent for art, Lee Cheng Yong is a name that truly deserves to be remembered as one of the greatest modern masters of Malaysian art. What makes his artworks more unique now is its rarity. Renowned artist Lee Joo For had posed a passionate question in his foreword for the catalogue of Lee Cheng Yong's retrospective exhibition in 1996: "Where are these Lee Cheng Yong artworks now?"



CONSERVATION FRAMING BY PINKGUY

From an art collector point of view, increasing the life and enjoyment of collected pieces is of the utmost importance. Not only to save money on future restoration treatment but also to retain the full value of the art piece. "Prevention is better than cure," so the saying goes. Through careful selection of appropriate framing materials as well as considered frame construction, a safe and protective environment that preserves the collectible object can be achieved, allowing an artwork to be retrieved in its original condition at any date or time. The frame design in itself is an important consideration as it can further enhance the appearance and value of a treasured piece. At PINKGUY, the importance of conservation as well as the aesthetic benefits of stylish framing methods are stressed to collectors and all framing is made towards the aim of protecting objects of fine art, watches, jewelry, artifacts and other collectables for years to come. In 2008, PINKGUY created an innovative frame with the 'elegant diamond signature' in celebration of its 25th anniversary.

Conservation framing involves providing a structurally stable and chemically inert environment that protects an artwork from harmful factors such as air pollution and UV

light, while also minimising the problems caused by possible deterioration due to the release of chemicals from the artwork and its surroundings. The first question to ask oneself when framing is what does the artwork consist of, and what is the most suitable method to preserve this piece of art? Secondly, how to decorate or attractively display the piece to its best advantage?

GENERAL CARING OF ARTWORKS

Artworks of various materials are susceptible to deterioration from light, humidity, temperature, insects, dust and vibration as well as the knocks, chips and tears that come from contact with human beings. It is advisable to open and examine the condition of your artworks every five years or so. Ideally, keep paintings out of direct sunlight, reduce artificial lighting whenever possible and display in an environment where the humidity is between 40% and 60%. Avoid fluctuating changes in humidity and temperature to reduce the possibility of mould growth and insect infestation, while dusting of the surface of a painting with a soft cloth or feather regularly is necessary as dust contains a large amount of airborne mould spores. If the air encourages corrosion, use air conditioning to reduce this

danger. When transporting paintings, consider and compensate on vibration by careful packing and support. Avoid touching the surface of paintings with bare hands as it will speed colour deterioration. Hang paintings on interior walls rather than exterior walls and store them on a clean, dry and pest-free room if not displayed.

THE MOUNTING BOARD

Conservation mounting is one of the vital parts of PINKGUY's innovative framing solutions. As the artwork is in direct contact with the mount, the choice of mounting board is essential in protecting framed works. The floating style of framing is not recommended as mostly glue or doubled sided tape are used. For mounting, PINKGUY uses museum quality rag mat boards - solid core and made from 100% cotton fibre which has proven stable over hundreds of years. They are not only acid free but are designed to absorb acid from the art as well as the environment, a proactive way of preventing degradation. The way an art work is attached to mounting board and mat is also a vital concern. Paper works are 'hinged' to its support rather than dry mounting.

THE BACKING BOARD

A matted artwork is backed for further protection with an acid free corrugated board to protect the work from drastic humidity changes. It is then sealed with black tape, which protects the artwork and preserves the frame. Inappropriate water-based adhesives and tapes can cause severe damage, as the process with water will allow dry-wood termite to penetrate the frame. These adhesives often harden and become brittle, turning orange/brown in colour, causing the artwork to do the same while leaving unsightly marks. 3M Stoppers are placed at corner edge of the frame to prevent direct contact with wall surface and allow air circulation.

THE GLAZING

Using glass or plexiglass to cover an artwork can protect it from damaging elements.

Non-reflective glass or plexiglass prevents glare which is a hindrance to viewing. Museum quality UV-filtering glass and plexiglass are recommended to counteract colour-fading effects of light exposure. Glass is easier to clean and more resistant to scratches but it is heavier, more breakable, sensitive to variations in temperature as well as highly reflective. Plexiglass offers better thermal insulation and is shatterproof. Because of their properties of static electricity, plexiglass should never be used in framing pastels, charcoals or any other powdery pigment surface. Larger art pieces however, should be placed behind plexiglass because it is lighter and safer to use when it comes to works with weight issues. Works on paper should be mounted away from the glass to allow for air circulation. Pastels and chalk drawings should be held at least 5mm to 6mm from the glass, using either 'forward' wood,

Before



Lot 97 ABDUL LATIFF MOHIDIN *Mindscape*, 1983, oil on canvas, 181 cm x 90cm, diptych estimate RM250,000-350,000

Reframed by PINKGUY



Lot 76 HENRY VAN VELTHUYSEN *My Village*, 1939, oil on board, 59cm x 49.5cm estimate RM8,000-12,000



double or triple mounts.

WORKS ON PAPER

Paper works are vulnerable types of pieces to own. Drawings, watercolours, gouaches, pastels, etchings, engravings, lithographs, silkscreens and photographs can all be affected by changes in temperature and humidity, restriction of movement and exposure to light. Paper can become discoloured and brittle causing irreversible damage. It is also highly reactive which is why a protective mat and frame is absolutely crucial.

WORKS ON CANVAS, BOARDS & BATIK

Works on canvas and boards are more forgiving items, lasting longer and not as sensitive as paper. The option of encasing paintings behind glass or acrylic is a personal preference,

although the benefits of protecting a painting from UV light can only increase its lifetime. Any materials that do come into contact with a high value piece of work should be acid free and neutral to prevent any chemical reactions over time. With batik paintings this means lining or supporting the textile on acid free foam core and pinning rather than using any adhesives if it is unstretched. For those that are already stretched, it may be framed just like oil or acrylic paintings although the preference for those that want maximum preservation is to keep contact with other materials at a minimum and encasing it with a UV protective surface (glass or plexiglass) is best for longevity as it is with all forms of art.

STYLE

After considering all the aspects of preservation the question of style comes into play. In designing the style

of the frame, PINKGUY strives to create a continuation and extension of the art in the frame rather than a separate entity. The choice of materials for the frame depends on the individual work of art - as different paintings or works will be brought alive by different materials be it wood, plastic, fabric or metal. At PINKGUY, framing an artwork is akin to creating the art itself where creativity and styling is put on the same footing as preserving the art.

At auction, the condition of the work as well as the visual impact the painting has together with its frame can affect and sway those that are eager to acquire the artwork. PINKGUY's signature frames that incorporate double glass framing and inlay framing are innovative and unique, as well as preservative and has proven to be a big draw for collectors.

PUBLIC ART PROGRAMME @ SABAH ART GALLERY



Henry Butcher Art Auctioneers recently organised its Public Art Programme Art Awareness, Appreciation & Investment in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Our effort to expose and educate art knowledge to a new audience proved to be a success with an enthusiastic crowd of more than fifty attendees present at the Sabah Art Gallery for this session. The Public Art Programme was officially opened by Datu Rosmadi bin Datu Sulai, General Manager of Sabah Cultural Board. Among the four speakers of various roles were Jennifer P. Linggi, Dato' Dr. Tan Chee Khuan, Bingley Sim and Joshua Lim.

Jennifer P. Linggi, Manager and Curator of Sabah Art Gallery, started with a concise and informative message on the development of art in Sabah since the 1940s. In her presentation, Jennifer revealed the names and artworks of significant artists in East Malaysia. These include pioneer artists such as Datuk Mohd Yaman Hj, Ahmad Mus, Tina Rimmer, Simon C. Yew, Benedict Chong, Christianne Goonting to name but a few.

A prominent figure in the advancement of art in Sabah and former director of Sabah Art Gallery, Datuk Mohd Yaman had contributed immensely to the establishment of the state gallery. Born in 1938, Datuk Mohd Yaman received his art education in the UK in the 1960s. Upon returning to Sabah in 1970, he was appointed art lecturer, head of Art Department and Vice Principle at Gaya Teachers Training College until he migrated to the UK in 1974. Datuk Mohd Yaman played numerous important roles such as Chairman of the Gaya Street Cultural Committee, President of Sabah Society, Vice President of the Sabah Environmental Association and many more. His adeptness in design is evident in his paintings of optical and symmetrical art with his understanding in shape, colour and perspective seen through the illusory effect his paintings give.

Modern artists from Sabah consist of Awang Damit Ahmad whose fame is recognised regionally, as well as Matthews Aziz, Jainal Amambing and Muslim Mattajim while the young contemporary artists of Sabah

comprise of art collective Cracko Art Group (CAG) with founder Cracko (real name Crig Roynno Francis) and a growing number of members. CAG's Circus Exhibition was showcased at China House, Penang (2012) and Artemis Gallery, Kuala Lumpur (2013) with works by fifteen contemporary artists from Sabah namely Alex Fong, Anddy Romeo Dulait, April Tsen, Ashly Nandong, Aye Axe, Cracko, Flanagan Bainon, Harold Egn Eswar, Irwan Azman Awang, Kwan @ Aks, Lybby Iliyas, Nofie, J, Taco Joe and ZK Teo.

An architect, artist and lecturer, Jennifer holds a BA and Post Graduate Diploma in Architecture from the United Kingdom. After 20 years of living away from home, she returned to Kota Kinabalu and was appointed to manage the Sabah Art Gallery. Besides her initiation and participation in various projects of illustrations, publications and stage design, Jennifer has been taking part in a number of group exhibitions locally and overseas.

Established in 1984, the gallery has moved into its own premise of approximately 3,000

square meters located on a 4 acre site on Jalan Penampang, Kota Kinabalu, of which Jennifer was involved in its design that draws its inspiration from the *wakid* (traditional Kadazan/Dusun basket). The gallery also complies to the Green Building Index requirements which makes it the first environmentally friendly building in Kota Kinabalu. The four storey gallery holds the permanent collection of over 1,500 artworks and has a floor named Yaman Gallery in honour of Datuk Mohd Yaman Hj, Ahmad Mus.

Next to present was Dato' Dr. Tan Chee Khuan, who spoke passionately on ways to appreciate art - for instance the key 8Cs in looking at an artwork - colour, contrast, clarity, composition, confidence, choice, classical and contemporary. Dato' Dr. Tan also touched on the topic of art as an investment by providing some insightful pointers on what to consider when acquiring an artwork such as attaining the right mindset prior to an acquisition which is not to purchase an artwork with a short-term investment in mind but more importantly to be able to live with the artwork in the long run.

Images of works by pioneer artists were projected on screen to give the audience a glimpse of history of Malaysian art. Some of the artists mentioned were the likes of Lee Joo For, Peter Harris, Chia Yu Chian, Abdul Latiff Mohidin to name but a few. An important and informative book titled *Eight Pioneers of Malaysian Art* authored by Dato' Dr. Tan was made available to the public during the talk. The book focuses on the early development of Malaysian art which features the contribution of artists including Abdullah Ariff, Dato' Chuah Thean Teng, Dato' Mohd Hoessein Enas, Dato' Tay Hooi Keat, Kuo Ju Ping, Khaw Sia, Lee Cheng Yong and Yong Mun Sen.

Dato' Dr. Tan pointed out how the works of Malaysian pioneer artists are similar or different to one another. Although the they projected vastly different stylistic and technical qualities - for instance Dato' Chuah Thean Teng's impeccable batik technique and Yong Mun Sen's masterful watercolour

style - parallels can still be drawn in their representation of the idyllic folk life.

A psychiatrist by profession, Dato' Dr. Tan is a philanthropist, art collector, gallery owner and publisher. He is best known for his seminal work on the history of pioneer artists of Malaysia whose many works he has generously donated to the Penang State Art Gallery (PSAG), Museum & Gallery Tuanku Fauziah and various charitable causes. He is currently the Vice Chairman of PSAG committee. A prolific writer and publisher, he has written numerous books on art, art criticism, mental health and superstitions. In 2009, he started his career as an artist with two solo exhibitions. Dato' Dr. Tan is also the founder and Executive Director of The Art Gallery, Penang.

Presenting a collector's point of view, Bingley Sim is an old fashioned investment banker who believes in fundamental values in life. He began buying art in 2004 as alternative investment but had since become a passionate collector. A keen promoter of fundraising art activities, Bingley is an active Rotarian with a passion for food. In 1994, he published a book on *How to Run Your Own Restaurant*.

Bingley took the audience on a journey through his art collection which consists mainly of Malaysian contemporary art. He shared with the crowd his first acquisition, an oil painting by Chong Choong Woon entitled *Shanghai*. He also owns an extensive collection by artist Roslisham Ismail (Ise). Pointed out that one of the gratifications of collecting is when a piece owned is chosen to be featured on publications - Bingley was enthralled when his personal collection of Amron Omar's *Pertarungan* was illustrated on the front cover of *Senikini*, a publication by the National Visual Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur. Among the artworks discussed are works by Noor Mahnun Mohamed, Jalaini Abu Hassan, Stephen Menon, Samsuddin Lappo, Chong Ai Lei, Haslin Ismail, Soh Boon Keong, Mat Ali Mat Som among others.

By now, the crowd had begun to be inspired by the new names and artworks being

mentioned. Bingley also reminded the audience that contemporary art collectors may extend their interests in collecting works by modern masters. An example is his personal collection of Chia Yu Chian's *KL Street Scene (Lebuh Pudu)* dated 1985.

Joshua Lim was the next focus of attention with his presentation on collecting "out-of-the-radar artists". His passion for collecting began with watches. He was initially interested in collecting the Conlay artists before he fell head over heels with the watercolour paintings of Chang Fee Ming. He then shows great interest in collecting artworks regionally and shared his views on various channels of accessing Southeast Asian art. Some of the ways include acquiring from the primary market which consists of artists, gallery owners, art dealers, art fairs as well as the secondary market such as auction houses and fellow private collectors. Interaction with artists is crucial to have a thorough understanding of an artwork before an acquisition is made. Attending art related events will also help by meeting people in the art scene and being in the know.

He shared his experience of acquiring artworks by Eko Nugroho when he visited the artist's studio in Yogyakarta. Joshua also revealed a provocative artwork by Vincent Leong entitled *meLayu* (to wither) whose video installation was exhibited in a group exhibition *Tanah Ayer: Malaysian Stories from the Land* at Selasar Sunaryo Art Space in Bandung, 2011. This work was presented with an animated sequence of time-lapse shots of the withering hibiscus (or *bunga raya*, Malaysia's national flower) looped back and fourth and overdubbed with the sound of breathing.

Joshua, "the salary man collector", believes one need not have a deep pocket to collect good art. A collector of cutting edge Malaysian and Southeast Asian Art, Joshua had run artist residency programmes and recently coordinated an exhibition titled *From South China Sea to Mount Agong..* for renowned Asian watercolourist Chang Fee Ming.

The session concluded with an impromptu

participation by artist Raphael Scott Ahbeng who spoke about the importance of art particularly in East Malaysia. Among the many artists who attended the talk were Tina Rimmer, Matthews Aziz and members of the Cracko Art Group. The mother of celebrated contemporary artist Yee I-Lann was also present. HBArt showcased five artworks by Abdul Latiff Mohidin, Datuk Ibrahim Hussein, Kow Leong Kiang, Huang Yao and Arifien Neif to the audience in Sabah.



The Public Art Programme was well received as the crowd mingled with speakers and HBArt staff to enquire more about art as well as the upcoming auction. The event was marked as a great platform for artists, collectors and art enthusiasts to connect as well as to build wider network. Many were looking forward to possible future art events

in Sabah. It was a pleasure working with the Sabah Art Gallery and it was a great honour to meet the audience of Sabah.

Public Art Programme is an educational initiative by Henry Butcher Art Auctioneers aimed to create awareness and educate the public on art knowledge. It serves as a

platform for examining the processes and issues pertinent to art critique and analysis, as well as art collecting and investing, while acting as a catalyst for public discourse and knowledge exchange amongst art enthusiasts and the general public.



KHALIL IBRAHIM | *Fishermen*, 1992, acrylic on canvas, 98.5cm x 127cm, estimate RM28,000 - 40,000

MALAYSIAN & SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART AUCTION

SUNDAY 21 APRIL 2013, 1PM
SIME DARBY CONVENTION CENTRE,
KUALA LUMPUR

Ballroom 3, 1A, Jalan Bukit Kiara 1,
60000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

PENANG PREVIEW

28 - 31 March 2013, 11am - 7pm
a2 Gallery
27 Lorong Bangkok,
10250 Penang, Malaysia.

SINGAPORE PREVIEW

4 - 7 April 2013, 11am - 7pm
Helutrans Artspace
39 Keppel Road #01-05, Tanjung Pagar
Distripark, Singapore 089065.

KUALA LUMPUR FULL VIEWING

11 - 20 April 2013, 11am - 7pm
White Box, MAP@Publika
Level G2-01, Block A5, Dutamas,
1 Jalan Dutamas 1, 50480 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.