

MEDIA RELEASE ON BEHALF OF HENRY BUTCHER ART AUCTIONEERS SDN. BHD.

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## 99% SOLD AT HENRY BUTCHER MALAYSIAN & SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART AUCTION

**KUALA LUMPUR:** An enthusiastic crowd of over 500 were present at Henry Butcher Art Auctioneers' fifth sale on 21 April 2013 which concluded with a strong total of RM3,451,140, well beyond the pre-sale estimates of RM1.9 to RM2.7 million. With such positive response, the auction attained outstanding results with 99% lots sold and 72.5% sold above higher estimates.

"We are extremely delighted to witness spirited bidding across the saleroom that contributed to the vibrant atmosphere this afternoon. This is by far the best crowd we have ever seen! HBArt's first endeavour to introduce Southeast Asian art into the market has proven a great success with all 11 Indonesian works sold above the higher estimates. We are also pleased to see new interest from collectors locally as well as from overseas. This new venture to penetrate the regional market is aimed at promoting and presenting Southeast Asian art to Malaysian collectors and Malaysian art to counterparts abroad," commented Mr. Lim Eng Chong, Director of Henry Butcher Art Auctioneers.

The Southeast Asian art segment contributed to the excitement in the bidding room with Sudjono Abdullah's *Market Scene* established the highest record-setting percentage with an outstanding 523.3% above higher estimate, sold at RM37,400. Koempoel Soejatno's *Countryside* dated 1972 fetched a smashing RM17,600. An anonymous telephone bidder won the bid for a nostalgic and desirable piece by Henry van Velthuysen entitled *My Village* executed in 1939 for RM19,800. Dang Xuan Hoa's *My Child* was also sold above the higher estimate at RM11,000 while Chen Wen Hsi's *Swimming Ducks* saw intense bids across the saleroom and phone bidders, finally reaching its peak price of RM88,000.

A diverse group of clients awaited the greatly anticipated gems by Abdul Latiff Mohidin. Entitled *Lanskap 2 (Siri Gelombang)*, the dynamic abstract expressionistic painting derived from the artist's gestural period was viewed by the public eye for the first time. It exceeded its pre-sale estimates with its final bid at RM374,000.

Abdul Latiff Mohidin's *Mindscape* remained the highlight of the sale with its impeccable provenance and a remarkable combination of quality and rarity that sparked strong interest among prospective buyers. The unrivalled masterpiece fetched a buoyant RM396,000 to a room bidder. Also on offer were two immaculate paper works both dated 1965 from the *Pago-Pago* series which continued to gain buyers' attention. The works established new records for the artist as the prices for these rare sketches soared to RM150,600 (lot 35) and RM40,700 (lot 26) respectively. The *Pago-Pago* series is one of the most compelling in Southeast Asian art by the artist whose works were heavily influenced by nature at the time.

With 102 lots on offer, collectors demonstrated particular appetite for *Nanyang* style pictures seen through intense bidding, for instance Tan Choon Ghee's *Tua Pek Kong Temple, Penang* which sold for RM17,600. Another sought-after painting was Lee Cheng Yong's *In The Woods*. The price leaped from an attractive starting offer of RM16,000 to RM25,000 in the first minute and eventually fetched RM49,500 after a fervent battle between two phone bidders which lasted several minutes. Chia Yu Chian's *Still Life with Lemons* was also a well-achiever with its price hammered at RM35,200. A significant artwork by the artist with a completion period of 25 years, it realised a staggering 291% above the higher estimate. Khoo Sui Hoe was represented by two distinctive pieces, a figurative *Highlanders Dance* and a landscape *Cameron Highlands* with both fetching well above higher estimate prices (RM37,400 and RM29,700 respectively).

There was an immense interest for Asia's finest watercolourist Chang Fee Ming's *At Dusk...Nanyang* as it was fervently bid for, which finally fetched RM198,000. The well-executed painting was the artist's second highest world record price at auction. Featured on the front cover of the catalogue, the stellar piece was also accompanied by a heartfelt poem that complemented the artwork. Collectors remained attracted to watercolour paintings as seen through heavy bids for Abdullah Ariff's *The River Ferry* (sold for RM46,200), *Fixing Nets On The Beach* by Yong Mun Sen (RM35,200) and Khaw Sia's 1949 *Temple* (RM14,300).

Director of Henry Butcher Art Auctioneers Datuk Vincent Sim said: "The Chinese ink section also thrived tremendously in this sale. Among the high prices established were for works by Huang Yao (lots 83 and 84), fetching RM41,800 and RM30,800, 248.3% and 242% above higher estimates respectively, as well as *Calligraphy of Zen Poem* by Reverend Dato' Chuk Mor which brought RM12,100, showing demand and growth for Chinese ink painting."

A special section which showcased young Malaysian contemporary artists underscored the continued growth in the breadth and depth in collecting interest. Latif Maulan's *Guli* established a record-setting price

of RM14,300. The hyperrealist painting saw a stream of bids that led the price 138.3% above the higher estimate. Saiful Razman's *Terancang* fetched RM10,450 against pre-sale estimates (RM7,000 to RM8,000) whilst the successful bidding of Najib Ahmad Bamadhaj's *Black Figure Series* at RM2,860 demonstrated strong demand for artworks by young contemporary artists.

Established contemporary artists who have built their reputations on the strength of their unique artistic accomplishments also received tremendous attention by collectors. These artists included Jalaini Abu Hassan with his classic *Beliung Temah Didik* which fetched RM74,800, Kow Leong Kiang's alluring *Malay Girl Series* that was sold for RM28,600 and Ahmad Zakii Anwar's diptych entitled *Rangda*, which experienced an intense battle between room and telephone bidders before eventually realising a whopping RM79,200.

Museum quality pieces in this sale also captured immense interest from prospective collectors with Patrick Ng Kah Onn's *Dancing Couple* which fetched RM44,000 and Lee Joo For's *Untitled* oil on board which sold for RM18,700. Ismail Mustam's first debut at auction with an intriguing oil on plywood work titled *Ribut* achieved a stellar price of RM17,600, an incredible 252% increase against its pre-sale estimates.

Mr. Christopher Tay, General Manager of Henry Butcher Art Auctioneers concluded: "It is a great pleasure to have been able to offer hard-to-come-by pieces, and in some cases career-defining works which were fresh to the market. These artworks ignited strong saleroom competition and sold remarkably well. We have also seen new regional buyers this time around with telephone and absentee bids from abroad."

Henry Butcher Art Auctioneers continue to pursue its objectives of fostering sustainable growth for the Malaysian art industry as well as to encourage art collection and investment in Malaysia while providing a transparent and competitive platform for collectors to buy and sell artworks. The increasing representation of Malaysian art in the regional and international auction houses also marks the beginning of a new and exciting era for Malaysian Art.

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