

Eighty pieces from UOB's art collection paint the passage of Southeast Asia's economic transformation

Singapore, 26 October 2015 – United Overseas Bank (UOB) has opened a selection of its four decade old art collection to the public for the first time. Eighty paintings by emerging and established Southeast Asian artists were curated for a special exhibition to provide a rich, visual commentary of the region's economic and cultural transformation over the last six decades. The retrospective exhibition is part of the bank's 80th year anniversary celebrations.

The exhibition curated by the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), is titled *The UOB Art Collection: Drawing from our past, framing the future*. It weaves the story of Southeast Asia's transformation through different mediums such as Chinese ink, batik art, oil and watercolour painting.

The paintings are by renowned Southeast Asian artists such as Chen Wen Hsi, Georgette Chen, Yusman Aman, Soelardjo and Singapore Cultural Medallion winner Lim Yew Kuan.

UOB's involvement in art started in the 1970s with its collection of paintings by Singapore artists. The bank grew its collection over the years to include works from neighbouring countries as the Bank extended its network across the region. Today, the UOB Art Collection has more than 2,000 pieces of art. This includes the work of winners from the 34-year old UOB Painting of the Year competition which was set up by UOB to help discover and nurture artistic talent across Southeast Asia.

Mr Wee Ee Cheong, Deputy Chairman and CEO, UOB Group, said that supporting art in Southeast Asia is one of the ways in which the Bank demonstrates its deep commitment to the region.

"UOB has always believed in the potential of Southeast Asia. It is our home for the last eight decades and it will play an important part in our future. Through this exhibition, we hope visitors will come away appreciating how much Southeast Asia has progressed socially and economically and be inspired to work together in creating possibilities for our future," said Mr Wee.

NAFA was commissioned by UOB to curate and to stage the exhibition as it has a strong history in the development of Southeast Asian art.

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Dr Bridget Tracy Tan, Director of Institute of Southeast Asian Arts and Art Galleries, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, said NAFA is honoured to be involved in curating and organising the exhibition.

“The UOB Art Collection reflects the impact of cultural, social and economic development on Southeast Asian art forms from the 1960s to recent years. For instance, pieces created in the 1980s by Singapore artists Prabhakara (Jimmy Quek) and Tay Bak Koi as well as Malaysian artists Latiff Mohidin, Khoo Sui Hoe and Tew Nai Tong represent urbanisation and rapid growth in Singapore and Malaysia during that period of time. Their pieces illustrate the transition from old to new, as kampongs and plantations were replaced by roads and public housing in Singapore and rural communities in Malaysia were redeveloped to pave the way for industrialisation,” said Dr Tan.

Beyond regional artists, the UOB Art Collection also holds art pieces from high-profile international artists such as India-based Manjit Bawa and Jogen Chowdhury and Italian sculptor Anna Chiara Spellini.

Admission to *The UOB Art Collection: Drawing from our past, framing our future* is free and is open to the public from Saturday, 17 October 2015 to Wednesday, 18 November 2015 at NAFA Galleries 1 and 2.

– Ends –

About United Overseas Bank

United Overseas Bank Limited (UOB) is a leading bank in Asia with a global network of more than 500 offices in 19 countries and territories in Asia Pacific, Western Europe and North America. Since its incorporation in 1935, UOB has grown organically and through a series of strategic acquisitions. UOB is rated among the world’s top banks: AA1 by Moody’s and AA- by Standard & Poor’s and Fitch Ratings respectively.

In Asia, UOB operates through its head office in Singapore and banking subsidiaries in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, as well as branches and representative offices.

UOB plays an active role in the community, focusing on art, children and education. It has, over more than three decades, held the longest-running art competition in Singapore, the UOB Painting of the Year, which has since been extended across Southeast Asia. In recognition of its contributions to the arts, UOB was conferred the Singapore National Arts Council’s Distinguished Patron of the Arts Award for the tenth consecutive year in 2014. UOB also encourages its employees across the region to be involved in its regular volunteer activities. This includes the annual UOB Heartbeat Run which is held in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

About Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts

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Established in 1938, the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) is Singapore's pioneer arts education institution, well-known for grooming diverse artistic talent. Through research-based practice and experiential learning, NAFA nurtures creative talent who lead at the forefront of both traditional and contemporary art practices. The academy offers full-time diploma and degree programmes across three schools: the School of Art and Design (which offers studies in fine art, design and media, fashion studies and 3D design), the School of Music (which offers classical Western and Chinese music studies) and the School of Arts Management, Dance and Theatre. NAFA has nurtured 13 Cultural Medallion Award recipients and 13 Young Artist Award winners among prominent alumni who play integral roles in the arts and creative fields, in Singapore and abroad.

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