

UOB invites emerging and established artists to draw on their artistic talents for the 35th UOB Painting of the Year competition

Singapore, 13 June 2016 – United Overseas Bank (UOB) is inviting Southeast Asia’s emerging and established artists to pour out their passion onto canvas and enter the 35th UOB Painting of the Year competition¹, Singapore’s longest-running art contest. The annual competition exemplifies UOB’s long-term support of the art community.

Mr Wee Ee Cheong, Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, UOB, said that at its most fundamental level, art touches the senses and draws the beholder into a relationship, thereby enabling a richer appreciation of art.

“UOB hopes to raise awareness of how art can be more fully experienced by highlighting the importance of sensibility or how the audience can be moved and inspired by it. The UOB Painting of the Year competition also enables us to deepen the relationship of art with the community as we continue to encourage the enterprising spirit and creative mind of artists in the region,” said Mr Wee.

In conjunction with the launch of this year’s competition, UOB is presenting an exhibition titled *Sensibility in Art: Southeast Asia and the local paradigm*. It features a selection of its four-decade old art collection. The 15 paintings include those by renowned pioneer artists such as Cheong Soo Pieng and Anthony Poon, as well as past UOB Painting of the Year winners including Anthony Chua, Lester Lee Ngai Seng and Cristene Chang Hoei.

The paintings were selected by Dr Bridget Tracy Tan, Director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Arts and Art Galleries, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in Singapore.

“The paintings featured in *Sensibility in Art: Southeast Asia and the local paradigm* aim to encourage viewers to appreciate how different elements in art can evoke emotion. Understanding the visual

¹ Please refer to the UOB Painting of the Year fact sheet for competition details

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qualities, such as line, colour and shape, together with some stories for example behind an artwork, actually stimulate our feelings and thoughts about the art as we look at it,” Dr Tan said.

The exhibition will run from 13 June to 26 August 2016 at the UOB Art Gallery, UOB Plaza 1, 80 Raffles Place.

Dr Tan will also be judging this year’s UOB Painting of the Year competition alongside Ms Vera Ong, President of Art Galleries Association of Singapore and Owner of Art-2 Gallery, and Mr Milenko Prvacki, artist and Senior Fellow, LaSalle College of the Arts.

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About UOB and art

The Bank started its annual UOB Painting of the Year competition in Singapore in 1982 and has since extended it to Thailand in 2010 and then Malaysia and Indonesia in 2011. Over the years, the competition has helped to discover and nurture emerging artists and encourage established artists to push their creative boundaries.

As part of the UOB Painting of the Year competition, the Bank started a residency programme with the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in 2009, with the aim of encouraging artists to exchange creative ideas with their peers in the region. Every year, one winner of the UOB Painting of the Year competition is given an opportunity to attend the residency programme as part of the prize.

Winners of this year’s competition will have the opportunity to exhibit their artworks at the UOB Art Gallery. They will also be invited to participate in art exchange workshops overseas and conduct art education activities for UOB employees, and children from beneficiaries supported by the Bank. These activities are part of the UOB’s expanded art programme.

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The competition has cultivated a strong alumnus of artists across the region over the last 34 years. They include Mr Goh Beng Kwan from Singapore, the first winner in 1982 and subsequent recipient of the prestigious Cultural Medallion award from the National Arts Council Singapore. Other well-known artists who won the competition are the late Mr Anthony Poon (in 1983) and Mr Chua Ek Kay (in 1991), who are also recipients of the Singapore Cultural Medallion. Indonesian artist Mr Anggar Prasetyo won the 2015 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year and 2015 UOB Painting of the Year, Indonesia awards with his piece, *Exploitation of Fish*.

UOB is also one of the founding partners of the National Gallery Singapore and the UOB Southeast Asia Gallery holds the most comprehensive Southeast Asian art collection in the world.

About Sensibility

This year, UOB is highlighting the importance of sensibility in art in the 2016 UOB Painting of the Year competition. Sensibility in art relates to emotions and feelings. It also relates to how we draw meaning from looking at an artwork.

The concept of sensibility is not new but against the current sentiments for instantaneous gratification, UOB feels that it is important to cast the spotlight back on our emotions and take time to view an artwork. We are making more apparent that self-awareness is important to the appreciation of art.

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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, 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 and Thailand, 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 eleventh consecutive year in 2015. 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.

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