

News Release

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Thailand artist's evocative artwork depicting hope and harmony wins the 2025 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year Award

*Now in its 44th year, the UOB Painting of the Year competition
has uncovered more than 1,000 artists across the region.*



2025 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year,
“Dua (Pray for a Blessing)” by Ms Jamilah Haji

Singapore, 12 November 2025 – Thailand artist, Ms Jamilah Haji’s artwork, “Dua (Pray for a Blessing)”, which depicts hope and harmony, has clinched the 2025 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year (SEA POY) award. The 35-year-old artist’s masterpiece rose above the outstanding winning pieces from the 2025 UOB POY competitions held in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. Ms Jamilah will compete with the four other UOB POY country winners for a UOB-sponsored overseas art residency programme at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.



Crafted using embroidery on fabric, the artwork features women in prayerful poses, and symbolise a collective wish for renewal and harmony. Their figures are intricately interwoven in dream-like scenes, to create a powerful visual narrative that blends tradition, spirituality, and imagination. The artist drew inspiration from the idea of beauty as a reflection of resilience and used symbolic elements to echo the aspirations of humanity.

The artist said, “In a world overwhelmed by conflict, disease, and inequality, I feel a responsibility as an artist to be a voice for peace and hope. Through my work, I want to remind people not to stop dreaming, to hold on to hope, and to believe in their ability to create change. I drew inspiration from the idea of beauty as a reflection of resilience, using symbolic elements to echo the aspirations of humanity.”

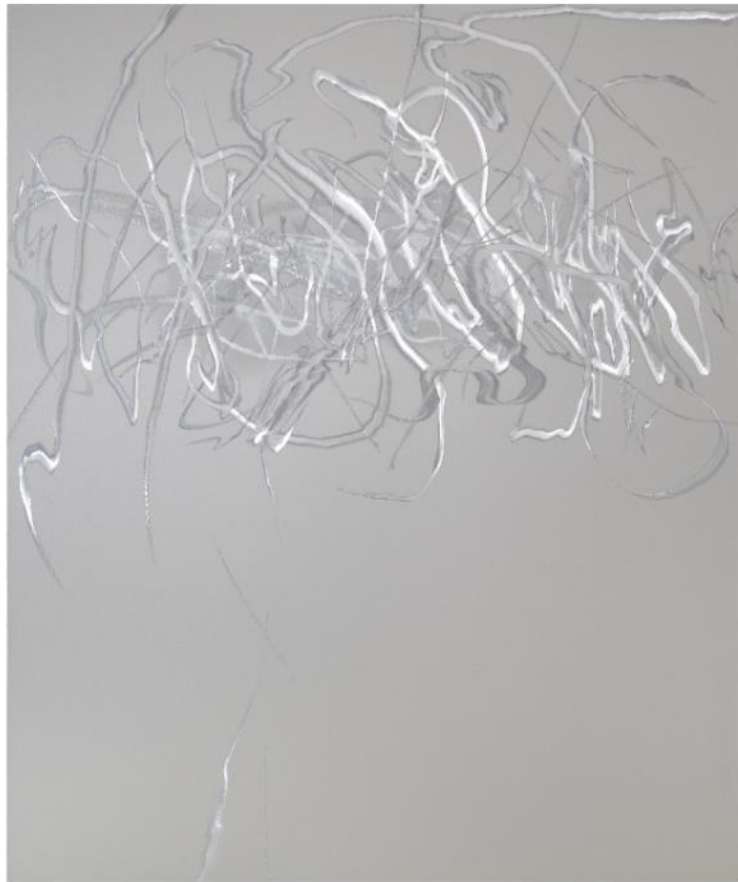
The 2025 Southeast Asian and Singapore winners were announced this evening at the 2025 UOB POY Awards Ceremony and Exhibition, held at National Gallery Singapore. The Awards Ceremony was graced by Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Senior Minister of State for Education, Mr David Neo. The winning artists from Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam attended the ceremony alongside past winners, distinguished guests and members from the arts community.

Mr Wee Ee Cheong, Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, UOB, said, “As UOB marks 90 years, we reaffirm our commitment to grow with businesses and communities across the region. Our footprint across Southeast Asia is more than just about business connectivity - it is also about giving back to the communities we serve, including through our support for art. Through the UOB POY competition, we nurture artistic talent, bring art closer to people and foster closer ties within the art ecosystem through initiatives such as the UOB Artist Alumni Network. Together with our broader corporate social responsibility efforts, we aim to create meaningful and lasting impact for the long term.”

The judging panel for the 2025 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year (POY) comprised of the Chief Judges from each of the five participating countries: Dr Vichaya Mukdamanee (Singapore Chief Judge), Dr Agung Hujatnikajennong (Indonesia Chief Judge), Ms Intan Rafiza (Malaysia Chief Judge), Mr Amrit Chusuwan (Thailand Chief Judge) and Mr Dang Xuan Hoa (Vietnam Chief Judge).



Abstract artwork using innovative technique wins the top award for 2025 UOB POY (Singapore), Established Artist Category



2025 UOB Painting of the Year (Singapore) Award, Established Artist Category
"Cloud of Unknowing I" by Mr Ian Tee

The artwork by Singaporean artist Mr Ian Tee, clinched the 2025 UOB Painting of the Year (Singapore) Award under the Established Artist Category. Drawing inspiration from calligraphy, the 31-year-old artist replaced traditional ink and brush with industrial tools and materials – grinding and cutting into an aluminum composite panel, to create a bold and raw aesthetic. The artwork explores the shifting interplay of light and shadow through an image that appears to move, as the surface reacts to light at different angles. Inspired by the cloud as a symbol of impermanence and transformation, the artist hopes to illustrate both the energy of movement and the serenity of emptiness through the artwork.

Deeply personal depiction on societal expectations clinches Most Promising Artist of the Year (Singapore) award



2025 Most Promising Artist of the Year (Singapore), Emerging Artist Category –
“Existence is Prison, a Personal Account” by Ms Dayna Lu

Ms Dayna Lu was awarded the 2025 Most Promising Artist of the Year (Singapore) under the Emerging Artist Category for her artwork, *“Existence is Prison, a Personal Account”*. Composed using acrylic on canvas, the artwork depicts an endless sea of individuals confined within identical rooms, dressed in uniforms. Each cell, however, reveals a different emotional landscape to a shared experience of confinement - frustration, despair and longing. The 19-year-old artist drew on her personal experience of burnout as the once-manageable demands of school became overwhelming. Through the artwork, she hopes to convey the inner turmoil of youth as they navigate a structure that demands conformity.

The 2025 UOB POY Regional Winners' Showcase will be held at National Gallery Singapore, UOB Discovery Space from 13 November 2025 to 31 January 2026, open from 10am to 7pm daily. The winning artworks can also be viewed on UOBandArt.com.

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About UOB and Art

UOB's involvement in art started in the 1970s with its collection of paintings by Singapore artists. Today, the UOB Art Collection has more than 2,800 artworks, made up primarily of paintings from established and emerging Southeast Asian artists.

UOB plays an active role in communities across the region, most notably through its long-term commitment to art. As the leading patron of the arts in Asia, the Bank continues to make art accessible to a wider audience through a diverse range of visual art programmes, partnerships and community outreach across the region.

The Bank's flagship art programme is the UOB Painting of the Year competition, which was started in 1982 to recognise Southeast Asian artists and to offer them the opportunity to showcase their works to the wider community. The competition was extended to Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and in 2023, to Vietnam. It is now the longest running art competition in Singapore and one of the most prestigious in Southeast Asia.

Over the past 40 years, the competition has cultivated and advanced the careers of many artists in Singapore. Notable among them are Mr Goh Beng Kwan (1982 winner), and the late Mr Anthony Poon (1983 winner) and Mr Chua Ek Kay (1991 winner), who received the Singapore Cultural Medallion, Singapore's most distinguished art award.

The competition has also recognised talents from across the region through the UOB Southeast Asian POY award. Previous winners include Mr Yong Wee Loon from Singapore in 2024, Ms Pratchaya Charernsook from Thailand in 2023, Mr Chomrawi Suksom from Thailand in 2022, Mr Saiful Razman from Malaysia in 2021, Mr Prabu Perdana from Indonesia in 2020, Mr Anagard from Indonesia in 2019, Mr Suvi Wahyudianto from Indonesia in 2018, Mr Sukit Choosri from Thailand in 2017, Mr Gatot Indrajati from Indonesia in 2016, Mr Anggar Prasetyo from Indonesia in 2015, Mr Antonius Subiyanto from Indonesia in 2014 and Ms Stefanie Hauger from Singapore in 2013.

Together with the UOB POY winning artists, UOB also runs art workshops for underprivileged and special needs children regularly. At these workshops, the young learn art techniques from art professionals and award-winning artists.

In recognition of the Bank's long-term commitment to art, UOB was presented with the Singapore National Arts Council's Distinguished Patron of the Arts Award for the 23rd time in 2025.



About UOB

UOB is a leading bank in Asia. Operating through its head office in Singapore and banking subsidiaries in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, UOB has a global network of more than 470 offices in 19 markets in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. Since its incorporation in 1935, UOB has grown organically and through a series of strategic acquisitions. Today, UOB is rated among the world's top banks: Aa1 by Moody's Investors Service and AA- by both S&P Global Ratings and Fitch Ratings.

For nine decades, UOB has adopted a customer-centric approach to create long-term value by staying relevant through its enterprising spirit and doing right by its customers. UOB is focused on building the future of ASEAN – for the people and businesses within, and connecting with, ASEAN.

The Bank connects businesses to opportunities in the region with its unparalleled regional footprint and leverages data and insights to innovate and create personalised banking experiences and solutions catering to each customer's unique needs and evolving preferences. UOB is also committed to help businesses forge a sustainable future, by fostering social inclusiveness, creating positive environmental impact and pursuing economic progress. UOB believes in being a responsible financial services provider and is steadfast in its support of art, social development of children and education, doing right by its communities and stakeholders.

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APPENDIX A: Winners of the 2025 UOB POY competition (Regional)

Established Artist Category (Regional) – UOB POY Award

2025 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year and 2025 UOB Painting of the Year (Thailand)	Ms Jamilah Haji , <i>Dua (Pray for a Blessing)</i>
2025 UOB Painting of the Year (Singapore)	Mr Ian Tee , <i>Cloud of Unknowing I</i>
2025 UOB Painting of the Year (Indonesia)	Mr Eddy Susanto , <i>Kuasa Dalam Setara (Power in Equality)</i>
2025 UOB Painting of the Year (Malaysia)	Mr Nik Mohd Shazmie Bin Nik Shairozi , <i>Rumah Kita (Our Home)</i>
2025 UOB Painting of the Year (Vietnam)	Mr Cao Van Thuc , <i>Temporary Connection</i>

Emerging Artist Category (Regional) – Most Promising Artist of the Year Award

2025 Most Promising Artist of the Year (Singapore)	Ms Dayna Lu , <i>Existence is Prison, a Personal Account</i>
2025 Most Promising Artist of the Year (Indonesia)	Mr Muhammad Shodik , <i>i am here</i>
2025 Most Promising Artist of the Year (Malaysia)	Mr Putra Aqmal Danish Bin Mohd Zuraimi , <i>I Love You, Bearbear</i>
2025 Most Promising Artist of the Year (Thailand)	Ms Tanyapat Manasarakul , <i>Ctrl + Alt + Destruct</i>
2025 Most Promising Artist of the Year (Vietnam)	Mr Nguyen Ngoc Thuan , <i>Self-Portrait, 2025 (A Life Rooted In My Form As a Tree)</i>

APPENDIX B: Winners of the 2025 UOB POY competition (Singapore)

Established Artist Category (Singapore)

2025 UOB Painting of the Year (Singapore)	Mr Ian Tee, <i>Cloud of Unknowing I</i>
Gold Award	Mr Justin Lee, <i>My Tiles and the Yellow Line</i>
Silver Award	Mr Boo Sze Yang, <i>Romance on Hobby Horses – The Gate Keepers</i>
Bronze Award	Ms Junko Tsuji, <i>Vessel of Presence</i>

Emerging Artist Category (Singapore)

2025 Most Promising Artist of the Year (Singapore)	Ms Dayna Lu, <i>Existence is Prison, a Personal Account</i>
Gold Award	Ms Lorain Kok, <i>Map of Stroll Through the Neighbourhood</i>
Silver Award	Ms Tok Oei Kee, <i>Whispers of the Garden</i>
Bronze Award	Mr Mohammad Iqbal Bin Roslan, <i>Transit</i>

