

## UOB invites established and emerging artists to enter the 38<sup>th</sup> UOB Painting of the Year Competition

*The Bank seeks to uncover the next generation of great Southeast Asian artists*



*Previous winners of the UOB Painting of the Year Competition at the 2019 launch ceremony. (Back row from left) Anthony Chua Say Hua, Aaron Gan, Tang Kok Soo, Leo Liu Xuanqi, Namiko Chan, Jamie Teo, Guan Ming. (Seated front row from left) Hong Sek Chern, Abu Jalal bin Sarimon, Valerie Ng, Ho Seok Kee, Keane Tan.*

**Singapore, 6 May 2019** – United Overseas Bank (UOB) today encouraged Southeast Asian artists to push the boundaries of creative expression and to open hearts and minds to new perspectives at the launch of the 38<sup>th</sup> UOB Painting of the Year (POY) competition.

The annual UOB POY competition is the Bank's flagship art programme. It was established in 1982 and is Singapore's longest-running and one of Southeast Asia's most prestigious annual art awards. The UOB POY competition underscores the Bank's commitment to uncover the next generation of great Southeast Asian artists.

Mr Wee Ee Cheong, Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, UOB said artists have influenced the way we see things by transcending languages, culture and time.

“The UOB POY programme has been instrumental to the Bank’s championing of Southeast Asian art and artists over the last four decades. Each year, the competition has uncovered hidden artistic talents among us and given artists a platform from which to share their works with a wider audience. The quality of their artworks has drawn us in and challenged us to see the world through their eyes. This in turn has helped to open our minds to new ideas and to foster stronger community bonds through a better understanding of one another,” Mr Wee said.

### **Opening our eyes to different perspectives**

Over the years, the UOB POY competition has helped many well-known and emerging artists in Singapore, including Singapore Cultural Medallion recipients Mr Anthony Poon and Mr Chua Ek Kay. Two previous winners, Mr Anthony Chua Say Hua and Ms Hong Sek Chern, who are also husband and wife, attended this year’s UOB POY launch and shared their views on how to create pieces of art that challenge perceptions.

Mr Chua, who won the UOB POY Silver award in 2014 in the Established Artist Category, said urban landscapes pique his interest, especially those “with historic architecture such as pre-war shop-houses”. While he works primarily with Chinese ink, he uses non-conventional feather brushes to create unique visual effects, thereby expanding the possibilities of what can be created with ink on paper.

“A crucial lesson I have learnt is to challenge conventions to not only improve my art, but also to open my mind to other possibilities. In the early days, I was still experimenting with new ways of painting in ink and the 2014 UOB POY art award gave my career a boost and brought my art to a wider audience,” Mr Chua said.

Also winner of the Young Artist Award in 2001 by the National Arts Council, he has exhibited internationally in Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, China, Japan, South Korea, Mongolia and the United Kingdom.

Mr Chua’s wife, Ms Hong Sek Chern, winner of the 2007 UOB POY award and 2014 Gold Award in the Established Artist Category, includes art creation as part of her every day routine. Renowned for her interpretation of urban landscapes using Chinese ink, she looks to different sources, such as information and stories she finds online, to spur her creativity.

“I do enjoy the creative aspect of painting. There is interesting subject matter all around us, from what we read to what we see and feel. When I start to paint, it still feels like magic when I see it unfolding in front of me. That feeling never gets tired,” Ms Hong said.

Ms Hong has also received the Young Artist Award from the National Arts Council in 2000. Her paintings are in the collections of major institutions such as the National Gallery Singapore, National Arts Council and the Taipei Fine Art Museum, among others.

### **Connecting with the community**

The 2018 UOB POY (Singapore) winner, Mr Khairulddin bin Abdul Wahab, also shared his experience of the competition at today’s launch.

“The UOB POY competition gave me a chance to not only showcase my art but also to discover my abilities as an artist. It is an ongoing journey to find new ways of expressing myself creatively,” Mr Khairulddin said.

Following his win last year, Mr Khairulddin was given the opportunity to exhibit his art and to speak on a panel session at the inaugural S.E.A. Focus Art Fair, of which UOB was the Lead Partner.

He will also join UOB for a "community art space" project later this month, where he will lead the painting of wall murals at a rental flat void deck within the Nee Soon Group Representation Constituency (GRC). More than 35 UOB volunteers will join the artist to spruce up the community area and to make it a more conducive environment for studying and socialising. The area will also be used by underprivileged students during their free weekly tuition sessions. This community-based activity is part of the Bank's ongoing efforts to give back to the community and to strengthen societal bonds.

### **Call for UOB POY entries**

UOB POY submissions will open from 16 to 18 August 2019 at the Artspace@Helutrans. The competition is open to all Singapore citizens and permanent residents.

The Singapore winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in November, together with the winner of the UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year. This prestigious award will go to the country winner with the most outstanding work in the region.



In addition, the UOB POY country winners in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand will be considered for a month-long residency programme at the renowned Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan.

More competition details can be found at [www.uobpoy.com](http://www.uobpoy.com).

- Ends -

Note to media:

### **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 2,500 artworks, made up primarily of paintings from established and emerging Southeast Asian artists.

UOB also plays an active role in communities across the region, most notably through our long-term commitment to art. As part of this, the Bank has led a wide range of visual arts programmes, partnerships and outreach initiatives across the region.

Our flagship art programme is the UOB POY Competition, which was started in 1982 to recognise Southeast Asia's budding artists and to offer them the opportunity to showcase their works to the wider community. The competition was extended to Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. The latter is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> year of the UOB POY.

The competition has cultivated and advanced the careers of many artists. 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 have 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 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.

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





In 2015, UOB became a founding partner of the National Gallery Singapore. In recognition of the Bank's long-term commitment to art, UOB was presented with the National Arts Council's Distinguished Patron of the Arts Award for the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year in 2018.

**For media queries, please contact:**

Ahfishah Rahman  
Group Strategic Communications and Customer Advocacy  
Email: [Ahfishah.Rahman@UOBgroup.com](mailto:Ahfishah.Rahman@UOBgroup.com)  
Tel: 6359 3981

Prakash Krishnan  
Group Strategic Communications and Customer Advocacy  
Email: [Prakash.Krishnan@UOBgroup.com](mailto:Prakash.Krishnan@UOBgroup.com)  
Tel: 6359 3972

