

## Indonesian artist's intriguing expression of unity in diversity wins 2019 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year

*2019 UOB Painting of the Year (Singapore) awarded to Wong Tze Chau*

**Singapore, 6 November 2019** – United Overseas Bank (UOB) has conferred the 2019 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year (POY) award to Indonesian artist, Mr Anagard for his painting titled *Welcome Perdamaian, Goodbye Kedengkian (Welcome Peace, Goodbye Hostility)*. Mr Anagard's painting was chosen from among the national winners of the 2019 UOB Painting of the Year competitions held in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

Through his painting, the 35-year-old artist examined the themes of tolerance and acceptance amid the differences in culture, ethnicity and faith. He expressed his ideas using a mix of traditional and contemporary styles and melded various life forms and symbols to create an intriguing and thought-provoking piece of art. The panel of judges from the four Southeast Asian countries was also captivated by Mr Anagard's distinctive stencil on aluminum technique, often seen in spray-painted murals, that gave an immersive, three-dimensional effect to his painting.

On winning the 2019 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year award, Mr Anagard said, "Through *Welcome Perdamaian, Goodbye Kedengkian (Welcome Peace, Goodbye Hostility)*, I wanted to share the importance of harmony, unity and peace. I was inspired by a house of prayer known as Rhema Hill (*Bukit Rhema*) situated in Central Java, where people of different countries meet to explore their spiritual selves. The painting draws on the unique architecture of the prayer house with a roof shaped like a head of a dove, itself a symbol of peace. As a practising artist, I am honoured to represent Indonesia at the regional level and to win the 2019 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year award. It has been a fulfilling experience. I look forward to discovering the next phase of my journey as an artist and to continue to push the boundaries of creative art and self-expression."

Mr Wee Ee Cheong, Deputy Chairman and CEO, UOB, said in uncovering and promoting the works of aspiring and established Southeast Asian artists, the UOB POY competition has helped to draw out the power of art to inspire, to open minds and to create new paradigms.

“The spirit of enterprise and innovation that we see in the artists and through their artwork ties in with UOB’s own philosophy and legacy. The way art connects people and cultures and promotes unity in diversity are also qualities that resonate with UOB’s business philosophy, as we draw on the strengths of our teams from across our diverse markets to support our customers as one bank.

Just as we have helped generations of customers prosper and grow by connecting them to opportunities across the region, our vision for art is to be able to nurture future generations of great artists from across Southeast Asia, whose reputation would be global. As such, we aim to see over time the UOB POY competition in all the ASEAN countries where we have a presence.”

The judging panel for the 2019 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year comprised the Chief Judges from each of the four participating countries: Dr Bridget Tracy Tan, Director, Institute of Southeast Asian Arts and Art Galleries Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore; Mr Agung Hujatnikajennong, Independent Curator, Indonesia; Ms Bibi Chew, Multi-disciplinary Artist, Head of Illustration, Malaysian Institute of Art, Malaysia; Assistant Professor Somporn Rodboon, Independent Curator and Writer, Board of Directors, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chiang Mai University, Thailand.

Dr Tan, who is also the Regional Chief Judge, said a highlight this year was the high quality and the immense variety of submissions. “Every year, there are different stories and different ideas. It reflects the vibrant nature of expression in our art makers and this is something to value. This year, we saw strong participation from all four countries, signifying the extent and reach of the 2019 UOB POY competition in attracting high quality submissions. In Singapore, we also recognised the works of five artists as Highly Commended, reflecting the high calibre of submissions.”

“Quality and standards are collectively a different aspect altogether. I believe that when you have a good variety, what stands out in terms of quality of artmaking will become very clear. This is the uniqueness of the UOB POY competition. It can never be judged by a formula. It must be judged by the prevailing times, which keeps it relevant, real and valuable,” Dr Tan said.

The annual UOB POY competition, now in its 38<sup>th</sup> year, is held across four Southeast Asian countries. In Singapore, it is the longest-running art competition and one of Southeast Asia's most recognised annual art awards. The UOB POY competition is also the Bank's flagship art programme and underscores the Bank's commitment to uncover the next generation of great Southeast Asian artists. Over the years, the UOB POY competition has launched the careers of well-known artists in Singapore and the region including winners of the prestigious Singapore Cultural Medallion winners – Mr Goh Beng Kwan, Mr Anthony Poon and Mr Chua Ek Kay.

The winners received their awards at a ceremony held at the Sands Theatre, Marina Bay Sands on 6 November 2019. The Guest of Honour was Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth.

The winning paintings from the 2019 UOB Painting of the Year competition will be exhibited at the UOB Art Gallery, UOB Plaza 1 at 80 Raffles Place. The exhibition will run from 9 November 2019 to 20 February 2020.

### **Established Artist Category: Mr Wong Tze Chau wins the 2019 UOB Painting of the Year (Singapore) Award**

Singapore artist, Mr Wong Tze Chau, 41, was presented the 2019 UOB POY (Singapore) award for his painting titled *War and Peace*. Through acrylic on cotton canvas, *War and Peace* explores the intrinsic beauty of calligraphy and the potential of language in contemporary art. As a metaphor for the "Oneness of Being", *War and Peace* represents the recurring and almost binary themes of darkness and light that often define humankind. While the Arabic and Hebrew text stand out in contrast, they are also meant to stand for their shared qualities such as the similarity in sounds of the word 'Peace': *salam* in Arabic and *shalom* in Hebrew. Mr Wong hopes to create artworks that appeal visually and challenge thinking at the same time.

### **Emerging Artist Category: 2019 Most Promising Artist of the Year Award (Singapore)**

Mr Casey Tan Jie Wei, 25, won the 2019 Most Promising Artist of the Year Award (Singapore) in the Emerging Artist category for his acrylic on canvas painting titled *The Water is Wide*. *The Water is Wide* takes inspiration from the current events in the world, where the artist sees a reflection of shared humanity and hope in spite of humanitarian disasters. Mr Tan graduated from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore in 2016 with a Diploma in Fine Art. He was also a recipient of Ngee Ann Kongsi scholarship. Through his artworks, he seeks to give the viewer a sense of adventure from familiar experiences.

### **Winners of the 2019 UOB Painting of the Year competition**

#### **Established Artist Category (Regional)**

2019 UOB Southeast Asian Painting of the Year	Mr Anagard, <i>Welcome Perdamaian, Goodbye Kedengkian (Welcome Peace, Goodbye Hostility)</i>
2019 UOB Painting of the Year, Indonesia	Mr Anagard, <i>Welcome Perdamaian, Goodbye Kedengkian (Welcome Peace, Goodbye Hostility)</i>
2019 UOB Painting of the Year, Malaysia	Ms Cheng Yen Pheng, <i>Tug of War: My Homeland</i>
2019 UOB Painting of the Year, Singapore	Mr Wong Tze Chau, <i>War and Peace</i>
2019 UOB Painting of the Year, Thailand	Mr Chaichana Luetrakun, <i>Wastescape</i>

#### **Established Artist Category (Singapore)**

2019 UOB Painting of the Year, Singapore	Mr Wong Tze Chau, <i>War and Peace</i>
Gold Award	Mr Keane Tan Jin Howe, <i>From Early Settlers, to a Newly Envisioned World, Chartered by a Set of Ideals</i>
Silver Award	Mr Gerald Tay Chao Siong, <i>The Elemental Kingdom</i>
Bronze Award	Ms Stefanie Hauger, <i>Stone Stack: Year 8: Struggle, 2019</i>
Highly Commended	Mr Tan Seng Kok, <i>9<sup>th</sup> of August (9/8) #1</i>

Highly Commended	Mr Billy Soh Wee Leong, <i>I Lift Up My Eyes to the Mountains</i>
Highly Commended	Ms Om Mee Ai, <i>N-BIN92</i>

### **Winners of the 2019 Most Promising Artist of the Year**

#### **Emerging Artist Category (Regional)**

2019 Most Promising Artist of the Year, Indonesia	Mr Muhammad Yakin, <i>Human, Human, Human, Copy of Mimetic Desire</i>
2019 Most Promising Artist of the Year, Malaysia	Ms Nurul Asikin binti Roslan, <i>Bunga Moyang (Flower of the Spirits)</i>
2019 Most Promising Artist of the Year, Singapore	Mr Casey Tan Jie Wei, <i>The Water is Wide</i>
2019 Most Promising Artist of the Year, Thailand	Mr Somchai Sidamon, <i>Faces – Reflections of Life No. 2</i>

#### **Emerging Artist Category (Singapore)**

2019 Most Promising Artist of the Year	Mr Casey Tan Jie Wei, <i>The Water is Wide</i>
Gold Award	Ms Vanessa Liem Xi Qian, <i>Through Years and Seconds</i>
Silver Award	Ms He Shu, <i>Golf Lady</i>
Bronze Award	Mr Tan Woon Choor, <i>Another</i>
Highly Commended	Ms Liao Liyao, <i>Five Parks on a Passenger, Passing by a Sunny Morning on a Train</i>

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 plays an active role in communities across the region, most notably through its 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.

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

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 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 past UOB POY winners, 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 National Arts Council's Distinguished Patron of the Arts Award for the 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive year in 2019.

– 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, 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 both Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings. In Asia, UOB operates through its head office in Singapore and banking subsidiaries in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as branches and representative offices across the region.

Over more than eight decades, generations of UOB employees have carried through the entrepreneurial spirit, the focus on long-term value creation and an unwavering commitment to do what is right for our customers and our colleagues.

We believe in being a responsible financial services provider and we are committed to making a difference in the lives of our stakeholders and in the communities in which we operate. Just as we are dedicated to helping our customers manage their finances wisely and to grow their businesses, UOB is steadfast in our support of social development, particularly in the areas of art, children and education.

### **For media queries, please contact:**

Ahfishah Rahman

Group Strategic Communications and Customer Advocacy

Email: [ahfishah.rahman@UOBGroup.com](mailto:ahfishah.rahman@UOBGroup.com)

Tel: 6539 3981

