

The 40th UOB Painting of the Year competition calls for artists to push the limits of their imagination and ingenuity

Bank to hold special commemorative exhibition featuring winning artworks from the last four decades

Singapore, 28 April 2021 – UOB is calling for artists in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand to push the limits of their imagination and ingenuity through the 40th UOB Painting of the Year (POY) competition. This year, Singapore's longest-running annual art competition and one of Southeast Asia's most prestigious art awards invites artists to create artworks that showcase their creativity and mastery.

Mr Wee Ee Cheong, Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, UOB, said, “Art has the power to transcend culture, geography and time in lifting the human spirit and unifying minds. This has been most evident during the pandemic. Many around the world who have had to withdraw into their homes, have turned to art as a compelling means of expression, for comfort and to identify with others.

“Over the last four decades of the UOB POY competition, our POY artists have opened eyes and minds to new worlds and encouraged conversations and connections. Their imagination and creativity have helped broaden our world views and fostered a deeper appreciation of other cultures and perspectives. Just as UOB has been supporting the responsible growth of ASEAN’s businesses over the decades, we remain committed to nurturing the next generation of artists as they continue to push the boundaries of creative expression.”

The UOB POY competition has helped to uncover more than 1,000 artists across the region over the last four decades. Many have gone on to define Southeast Asian art including Mr Goh Beng Kwan, Mr Anthony Poon and Mr Chua Ek Kay, who were also recipients of the Singapore Cultural Medallion. The country winner of the 2010 UOB POY (Thailand), Ms Pannaphan Yodmanee, has also gone on to win the distinguished Benesse Prize¹, the official award of the Singapore Biennale, in 2016.

¹ The Benesse Prize was established in 1995 by Benesse Corporation and it was first awarded at the Venice Biennale in the same year. It was created to recognise the artistic endeavours of outstanding artists and support those who embody the corporate philosophy of the Benesse Group, which is “Well-Being.” Since 2016, the Benesse Prize has been the official award of the Singapore Biennale, presented in collaboration with the Singapore Art Museum.

Mr Goh Beng Kwan said, “Winning the UOB Painting of the Year was one of the most important, life changing moments in my career as an artist. As a result of it, I was invited to participate in many local and overseas exhibitions. This gave me the opportunity to develop further as an artist, as well as interact and learn from other Southeast Asian artists. It also led to my artworks gaining tremendous recognition. Winning the award was what encouraged me to be a full-time artist.”

Call for 40th UOB POY competition entries

As with last year, submissions will be received digitally. UOB POY submissions will be open from 29 April 2021 until 31 July 2021. The competition is for citizens and permanent residents across Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. The winners, which include the regional winner of the coveted UOB Southeast Asian POY award for the country winner with the most outstanding work, will be announced at an awards ceremony in November 2021. More competition details can be found at www.UOBandArt.com.

To mark the 40th UOB POY, this year, instead of one country winner, all four country winners will be able to participate in an art residency programme either in Shanghai, China or Fukuoka, Japan. The month-long exchange programme will enable artists to immerse themselves in the art culture of the host country and learn about various approaches to art creation.

Forty years of UOB POY alumni unite in special exhibition

To celebrate the UOB POY 40-year milestone, UOB will host a special commemorative exhibition in the third-quarter of this year. The exhibition will feature 45 winning works, comprising 39 pieces from UOB POY (Singapore) winners and six artworks from UOB Southeast Asian POY winners. Attendees will experience how Southeast Asian art has changed over the years and at the hands of the competition’s art luminaries.

The commemorative exhibition will also hold virtual tours on www.UOBandArt.com. With close to nine in 10 of Singaporeans using online channels as a means to engage with the arts during the COVID-19 pandemic last year², UOB expects the exhibition will draw many into the world of Southeast Asian art.

² *Emerging from the pandemic, a special report*, by the National Arts Council, Singapore, 31 March 2021.
<https://www.nac.gov.sg/dam/jcr:d4e86caa-8c9f-4697-ba86-248a3d5b03ea>

Launch of *Impression+* solo exhibition by Zhang Chunlei

As part of UOB's continued support for past UOB POY winners, Mr Zhang Chunlei, winner of the 2020 UOB POY (Singapore), Established Artist Category will showcase his latest body of work at the UOB Art Gallery.

His solo exhibition, *Impression+*, demonstrates his unique painting technique which involves creating a series of tightly-woven lines and planes as well as portraying famous characters, popular culture icons and landmarks from East and West. A total of 16 works will be featured at the UOB Art Gallery as well as www.UOBandArt.com till 15 June 2021.

– 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 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.

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 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 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 16th consecutive year in 2020.

About UOB

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 Investors Service and AA- by both S&P Global Ratings 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.

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