
NEWS RELEASE

The 23rd UOB Painting of the Year Competition and Exhibition

Kit Tan Juat Lee wins UOB POY the second time round. Her winning piece 'The World of Xi You Ji' is, at once, daring and spectacular but still Singaporean in theme and content

It's also a strong year for the Junior Section, with entries of "stunning" quality that embody Singapore's future creativity

17 July 2004, Singapore - In its 23rd year, United Overseas Bank's Painting Of The Year Competition ("UOB POY") attracted a total of 773 entries from 460 participating artists this year.

Junior Section

A record number of 171 entries from 137 budding young artists were received for the Junior Section of the Competition. Of this number, more than 120 or 75 per cent of the participants were taking part in the Competition for the first time.

With astonishing talent that belied their youth – participants were all below 18 years of age – this year's artists so impressed the judges with their submissions that the Junior Section was declared by the panel of judges as the "most breathtaking category and the most difficult to judge". Not least because of the wide age range – the youngest entrant is only three years old – but also because of the stunning quality of the works submitted, said Chief Judge, Professor Robert Ely.

Added the President & CEO of LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, "Their boldness and confidence with colour, and ideas ... lots of ideas ... They stunned the judges into relative silence with collective 'oohs!' and 'ahhs!' as each work appeared before us. Murmurings of 'I wish I could paint like that!' could be heard."

However, in the end, it was **17-year-old Ms Ivy Li Kexin's** controversial '**Two Of A Kind**' that got the judges' nod. "She impressed the judges with her adeptness in handling an adult theme with a level of maturity and skill that one would usually expect to find of artists in the Open Section," remarked Prof Ely. The painting features a woman in a provocative pose and what appear to be two quite different hands – one male, the other female.

As The UOB Most Promising Young Artist this year, Ivy receives S\$1,000 cash and The UOB Most Promising Young Artist Trophy.

Open Section

In the **Open Section**, which attracted 602 entries from 323 participants, it was **Ms Kit Tan Juat Lee**, 49, who walked away with the grand prize of S\$20,000 cash and The UOB Painting Of The Year Trophy for her oil on canvas piece entitled '**The World Of Xi You Ji**'.

This is the second time that Kit has won the UOB POY award (the first was in 1997 for 'Endless Love') and reinforces the objective of the UOB POY in recognising artistic talents.

'The World Of Xi You Ji' – described by the judges as "spectacular" and "beautifully executed" – is based on the classic 16th century Chinese mythological novel, 'Journey To The West' and the rebellious Monkey King.

In Kit's painting, several cheeky 'monkeys' are posed in the style and uniform of a school class photograph, reminiscent of the artist's youth. Each child is happily misbehaving, while the teacher sits demurely, oblivious to the chaos around her.

Having worked on the 119 cm by 149 cm painting for about five months, submitting it for the Competition was an eleventh hour decision, disclosed Kit, a professional artist. "I didn't think about taking part at first but I was very satisfied with the painting when it was finished. So one week before the closing date, I decided to submit the piece," she said.

"In Singapore, it's very difficult to exhibit big pieces unless it's a competition; so I decided to give it a go. Also, within the arts circle, it's a common belief that if you win a competition once, it's unlikely that you'll win again. So winning the UOB POY again was really unexpected. But I'm very happy!"

In the **Photography Medium category**, which was introduced last year, the top prize went to 28-year-old **Mr Francis Ng Teck Yong**, for his entry entitled 'Intimate Space #1'. It had not been an easy decision, said Prof Ely, as the artist had submitted three works which were all equally intriguing and similar in theme.

The first prize in the **Abstract Medium category** was won by **Ms Valerie Ng Lay Peng**, 29, for her oil painting called 'Driftwood Triplicities', while the first prize in the **Representational Medium category** went to **Mr David Chan Kian Wei**, 24, for his oil piece entitled 'How To Bring Gymnastics To A Greater Height'.

Fifty-nine-year-old **Mr Lim Choon Jin** clinched the top prize in the **Traditional Chinese Medium category** with his ink and colour on paper work of art called 'Meaning Being Series II #2/3'.

Each of the four category winners received a cash prize of S\$8,000.

All 16 prize winners in this year's Competition were announced at the Official Opening of The 23rd UOB POY Exhibition held at the Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay today. The Guest-Of-Honour, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Acting Minister for Education, presented the awards to the winners.

For the full results of the Competition, please refer to [Annex I](#).

Response To The Competition

This year's Competition closed on Saturday, 10 July 2004. The detailed breakdown of the 773 entries received from the 460 participants is as follows:

	Number Of Entries
Total	773
<i>comprising</i>	
Open Section	602
• Abstract Medium	167
• Representational Medium	157
• Traditional Chinese Medium	43
• Photography Medium	235

and

Junior Section 171

- Abstract Medium 30
- Representational Medium 140
- Traditional Chinese Medium 1

Judges

A panel of three local and two overseas judges presided over the judging process. They were:

Local Judges

- Professor Robert Ely *FRSA* (Chief Judge)
President & CEO, LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts
- Mr Chua Ek Kay
Artist
- Ms Eng Tow
Artist

Overseas Judges

- Ms Pacita Abad (from the Philippines)
Painter
- Mr Alan Rubenstein (from Australia)
Artist

The 23rd UOB POY Exhibition

All 16 prize-winning and 25 highly-commended works from the Competition are on display at the 23rd UOB POY Exhibition. Reflecting the high standard of this year's entries in the Junior Section, the judges have also selected 12 additional paintings from this Section for display at the Exhibition.

The Exhibition is open to the public and admission is free.

The details of the Exhibition are as follows:

Award-Winning Works

From 18 July to 6 August 2004

At Jendela (Visual Arts Space), Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Solo Exhibition by Mr Luis Lee

The 22nd UOB POY Winner

From 9 to 15 August 2004

At Jendela (Visual Arts Space), Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Exhibition Hours: 11.00 am to 8.30 pm (Mon to Fri)

10.00 am to 8.30 pm (Sat & Sun)

Open on Public Holidays

Highly-Commended Works

From 7 to 15 August 2004

At Tunnel, B1, Walkway to City Hall MRT station

Exhibition Hours: 24 hours

Enclosed: [Annex 1](#) – Results Of The 23rd UOB Painting Of The Year Competition

[Annex 2](#) – About The Judges

**[Annex 3](#) – About The UOB Painting Of The Year Competition And
Exhibition**

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