

Curated by **Sarah Abu Bakar**



the painted **RHAPSODY** of **Soh Boon Kiong**

first unveiling solo art exhibition at PINKGUY gallery

PINKGUY gallery would like to invite you to the official launch of our art exhibition:

Date	7 December 2019 (Saturday)
Unveiling Time	4.00 pm
Venue	PINKGUY gallery 51-1 Jalan Telawi 3 Bangsar Baru 59100 Kuala Lumpur (Opposite Bangsar Village II Main Entrance)

We hope you are able to accept this invitation and look forward to have the pleasure of your company.

Alternatively, you can call 03-21662166 to RSVP if you would like to bring more friend to attend *The Painted Rhapsody of Soh Boon Kiong* art exhibition

The art exhibition unveiling ceremony is by invitation only

Artist's statement

“ My paintings are synonymous to big spaces and are usually produced on large canvases - conveying the vastness of the soul, the world and its spirit. They depict the enthusiasm, strength, subtle refinement of the humanity and also reflect the richness of the contemporary world.”

Soh Boon Kiong

Curatorial Remarks

Soh Boon Kiong has been actively showcasing his poetic compositions in Malaysia and internationally since 1990. Presenting his solo show entitled *The Painted Rhapsody of Soh Boon Kiong* in PINKGUY gallery, Bangsar from December 7 until 21, 2019, Soh's latest body of work encapsulates the contemporary worldview and the essence of his life.

Originally intended to be showcased in The Edge Galerie, Mont' Kiara in July 2019, the premature closure of the gallery in May 2019 renders the plan null and void. Undeterred by the setback, Soh continued to produce a new series of elegant abstract paintings – a feast for the eyes.

When the news about The Edge Galerie's fate (and mine) reached the tightly knit art circle, WinSon had graciously offered me any form of alliance. Keeping his proposition in mind, in October 2019, an opportune moment arose.

Soh has been keeping me informed about the progress of his work as a way to stay in touch. During the same time, WinSon had invited me to the launch of his new space. When I proposed the idea of "seeing it through" to Soh, PINKGUY gallery is the obvious choice.

More importantly, I hope the viewers will find peace and harmony within the visual ambiances of Soh Boon Kiong's paintings.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of this, particularly to WinSon for hosting *The Painted Rhapsody of Soh Boon Kiong* in his new prime space.

Sarah Abu Bakar

Symphony of life

Dividing his time between Amagasaki and Kuala Lumpur, Soh Boon Kiong is stimulated by the multicoloured seasons of Japan and the lushness of tropical Malaysia. His creative oeuvre reflects the melodious rhythm of his environs. Immersing himself in the elements, his paintings radiate a kaleidoscope of colours in variable dynamics that ultimately compose a harmonious picture.

Orderly and controlled, Soh's gestural expressions are calculated and organised in time – like an orchestra. His overall composition is highly distinctive – fluid splotches, organic brushstrokes and thoughtful drips mark his canvases in fluorescent orange, pink, and yellow with dark nuances of blue, green and red. Echoing the sounds of life, his paintings illustrate layers of quiet solitude, upbeat stride and then returning to tranquil peacefulness.

Guided by the 19th century French standard sizes for paintings, Soh's ten artworks in *The Painted Rhapsody of Soh Boon Kiong* come in three dimensions: large (193cm by 130cm); medium (130cm by 130cm) and small (116.6cm by 91cm). Such attentiveness to detail reveals Soh's personalities: organised, strategic and practical.

Colourful bliss

Encountering Soh's new body of work for the first time, I am captivated by the application of colours - corresponding light and dark, thin and thick, smooth and rough. Such juxtaposition harmonises his contrasting palette with different form and shape well, resulting in fantastic treatment of space and surface.

For example, "The Fragrance of Mid-Autumn" depicts the rich autumnal colours of fall foliage in shades of yellow, orange, brown, purple, blue, red and magenta. One is able to experience the season and envisage breathing the crisp fresh air just by looking at this painting.

Portraying his oriental soul, Soh's painting is a bridge between cultures. By incorporating Eastern sensibilities with Western artistic technique, Soh creates unique visual sanctuary that relaxes the mind and soul.

"I like to take my time when completing an artwork. I am optimistic about life and it shows in my paintings," explains Soh.

Indeed, Soh's positive outlook on life is aptly interpreted on canvas. Over the years, Soh's artistic style has progressed reflecting the natural evolution in life. From softer pastel hues that characterise gentleness to richer and more intense colours to depict complexity and maturity embody this latest series of work.

In "In Praise of Elegance", Soh combines the best of both elements seen in his past series and presently. Every gesture is premeditated in order to achieve the desired effect. For instance, if the pastel blue blobs are absent, in Soh's mind, this painting is deemed inadequate and does not fulfil its purposes.

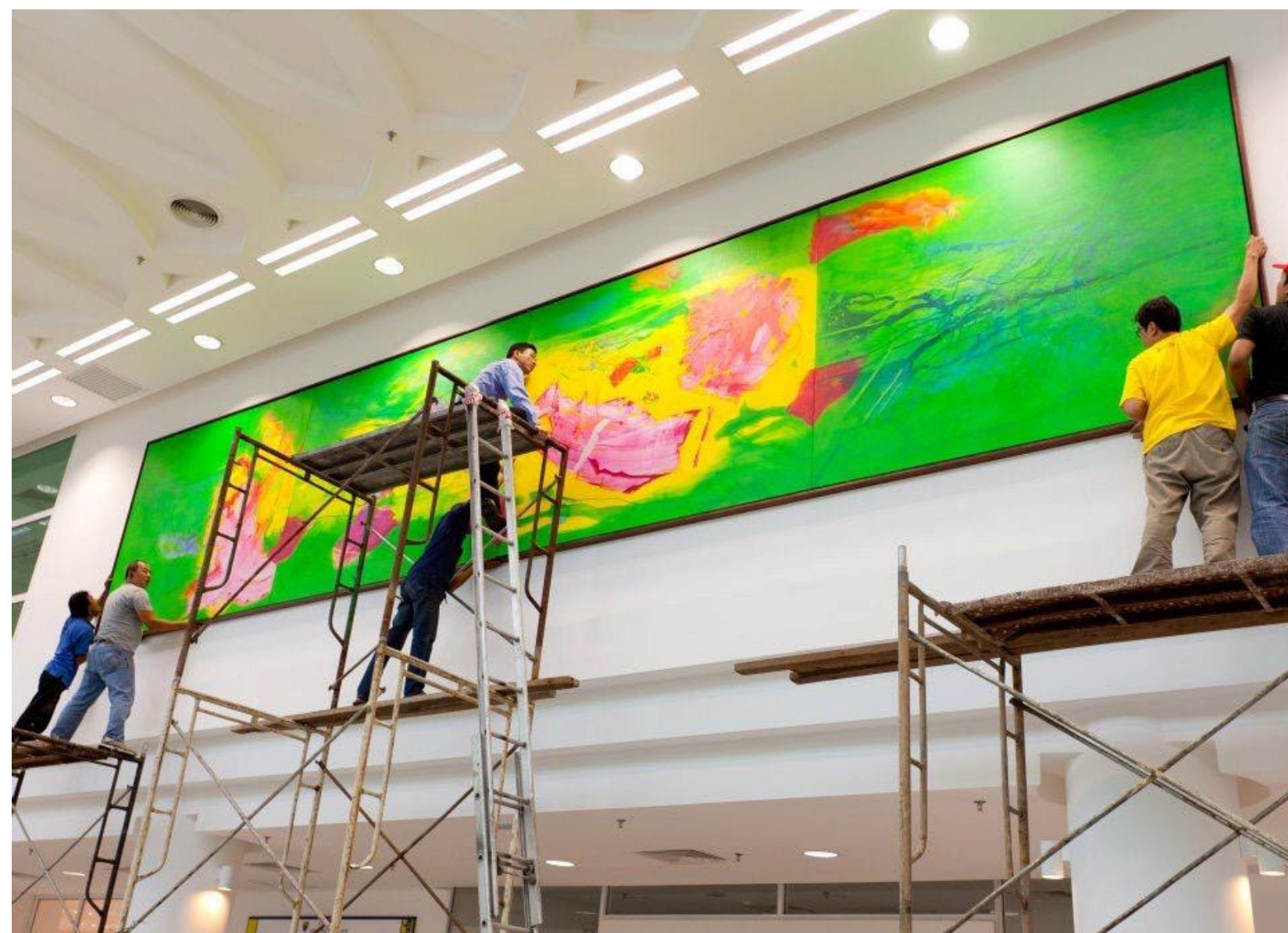
"My paintings may look spontaneous but they are highly organised. Even though I use dark colours in my new series, that does not convey tragedy...," describes Soh.

Universal painter

A multi-talented artist with international presence, Soh has been honing his craft since living and studying in Paris, France between 1988 and 1993. In 1998, he made Amagasaki, Japan his home, building a family of four with his wife and two children. Since then, he has established studios in Japan and Malaysia.

Soh's exposure in different continents has enabled him to converse in five languages: Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin, Japanese, English and French. His flair for linguistics allows him to illustrate a universal language through his visual expressions.

From 2010 to 2014, Soh was a Resident Artist at the prestigious University of Malaya by the invitation of former Vice-Chancellor, Tan Sri Dr. Ghauth Jasmon. During his residency, Soh created colossal paintings that are currently hanging at the lobby of penthouse floor, Wisma R&D, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.



Soh Boon Kiong's painting at the lobby of University of Malaya's Chancellery Building.

In 2018, Soh's painting entitled *The Intermingling Notes* was fleetingly featured in a scene in "Crazy Rich Asians", an American movie starring Michelle Yeoh, Henry Golding, Constance Wu, Ronny Chieng and Ken Jeong.

In the scene "What About Your Cousin Eddie?", Soh's painting adorns the wall of Eddie Cheng's (played by Ronny Chieng) penthouse in Hong Kong. This piece of information may seem insignificant. But for Soh, the experience of signing a consent letter by one of Hollywood's biggest production companies, Warner Bros Pictures, to loan his artwork for "the highest-grossing romantic comedy film in a decade" is an honour that is rarely granted to Malaysian artists.

What comes next for Soh? His future is certainly as bright as his artworks in "*The Painted Rhapsody of Soh Boon Kiong*". And a partnership with PINKGUY gallery will certainly enhance his profile in the Malaysian contemporary art scene.

Sarah Abu Bakar
November 2019

About the Artist

Soh Boon Kiong



- Born 1966** in Kuantan, Malaysia
- 1988 - 1993** Lived and studied in Paris, France
- 2010 - 2014** Invited as Artist in Residence of University of Malaya
- 1998 - 2019** living and working in Amagasaki, Japan and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Solo Art Exhibitions

- 2019** *PINKGUY gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
- 2018** *Beirut Art Fair, Lebanon*
- 2017** *Institut Français, Port Louis, Mauritius*
- 2015** *Formosa Art Show, Taipei, Taiwan*
- 2015** *White Box Gallery of Publika, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
- 2012** *Penthouse, Wisma R & D, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
Maison of Malaysian Art Gallery, Selangor, Malaysia
- 2010** *Museum of Asian Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
Metro Fine Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2008** *Museum of Asian Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
- 2007** *Galeri Tenaga, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia*
- 2005** *Darling Muse Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
- 2004** *Balai Seni Maybank, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
- 2002** *(Opening programme of First French Art Festival in Malaysia), Alliance Françaises, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
- 2001** *Amagasaki Cultural Center, Amagasaki, Japan*
- 2000** *Société Générale Gallery, Singapore*
Kitanozaka Gallery, Kobe, Japan
- 1998** *Elm Quay Fine Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
- 1996** *Metropolitan Gallery of Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
- 1995** *Atelier 10, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
- 1993** *Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*
- 1990** *Empress Place Museum, Singapore*

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