

In Chinese and English

Soul + Form



1979 《Soul & Form 3》•LEE Kian Seng 1979• Dye & resist technique. •(1977-1979)



1979 《Soul & Form 8》 •LEE Kian Seng• Dye & resist technique •(1977-1979)



1979 《Soul & Form 1》•LEE Kian Seng• Dye & resist technique •(1977-1979)



1981 《 Soul & Form - 》 • LEE Kian Seng • Dye & resist technique

Under construction

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Malaysia NEW STRAITS TIMES LIFE & TRAVEL WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2006

An eye for resist and dye



NEW STRAITS TIMES LIFE & TRAVEL WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2006

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EVOLVING: The Soul and Form series

EPHEMERAL: The 1989 work of the old Railway Station in Kuala Lumpur

BACK TO ROOTS: Kian Seng and his Origin works

■ author@ny.com.my

Source: New Straits Times Malaysia 2006-01-25

An eye for resist and dye

From cracked lines and pointillist highlights, to resist and dye innovations, Lee Kian Seng's batik art has truly evolved. OOI KOK CHUEN views his Soul and Form and Origin works.

THE batik story of artist provocateur Lee Kian Seng will finally be seen in full, and told.

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Station.

His erotic female forms appeared in the early '70s works, first with nubile maidens sometimes with tattoos on naked bodies from his House of the Rising Sun (HORS) series, after the catchy 1964 song made famous by The Animals. Here, he combined the floral psychedelia of the Sixties with an art nouveau kind of ornamentation.

His female forms became mysterious and fantasy-erotic later, when he became inspired by Santana's opiated Black Magic Woman. But they have become more like nymphs in pastoral settings a la Boccaccio than seductive vamps.

While he has already extended the picture-making possibilities of what was regarded as a batik-based medium, his next installments of the "Soul and Form" (end-1976-1983) and "Origin" (1986-88) are really phenomenal, blowing the mind away. (In between, there is a short branch-out series depicting the hibiscus).

In discovery terms, it is like cracking the genomic code of humans. Yet batik is just a label, for it really makes up only 20 per cent of what are resist/dyeing paintings.

For these staggering resist-dyeing innovations, he was awarded the Tokyo Creation Awards in 1993, by the Japanese whose prowess in this field is irrefutable.

For if batik doyen Datuk Chuah Thean Teng had transformed a batik craft tradition into the modern pictorial format, it is Kian Seng who pushed it in quantum leaps to the true painterly effects never thought possible.

EVOLVING: The Soul and Form series

The doubting Thomases have charged that he had applied silkscreen for the mock-photographic and mystifying "antique" surface aura. Some others even pointed to his early research in Japanese silkscreens of katazomei and yuzenzomei, and German lithography and dyes.

But no, it is not silkscreen, in any variation or form. Kian Seng would only say that his works are inspired by photography and lithography techniques, besides applying modified tools.

In batik, the control of the wax and the elusive dyes, and the treatment of the materials like cloth (cotton) and even water (with the right purity), are integral. But in Kian Seng's hands, there is no guesswork, no short cuts and no compromise. It has come to that.

He uses some 20 to 30 layers of overlaps, and meticulously paints on the images using wax.

But lest it be thought that techniques are the be-all and end-all, Kian Seng says: "While I invent my own techniques, I am not controlled by them. When things become mechanical, it's like construction."

He confides that he did experiment with the Japanese techniques, but found them too formulaic.

"There's too much grammar, but it's not writing," he insists.

"An artist has to be individualistic, based on humanitarian thinking that is sometimes universal. I

believe in producing works that can last, that can advance some things to people.”

As he has oft intoned: “Artists are closer to contemporary truths than social scientists.”

When viewing his Soul and Form and Origin works, one tends to get too caught up by the sheer sensual textures and tones — the dark, foreboding mystique of Soul and Form, and then the iridescent hues with positive-negative shades of his Origin.

What is important, perhaps more so, is the resonance of the more spiritual message of the transient worldly desires and human value systems.

In his Soul and Form works, he has a nude soft feminine form juxtaposed against Buddhist or Hindu statuary (including the dancing Siva with ominous fireballs of redemption and damnation).

Interestingly, the use of nude female forms has its parallels in the works of his contemporaries, like in Sulaiman Esa’s 1977 print, Waiting For Godot; the late Joseph Tan’s 1968 batik-acrylic Love Me In My Batik; and Datuk Ibrahim Hussein’s 1975 printage/acrylic Hari Ini Kita Dewasa.

The yet earlier pieces are more symbolic, with the use of the boat bangau (ornamented prow) and kerawang (wood carvings) lintel motifs, representing a tradition, identity and cultural roots.

Some works are also infused with Islamic elements, like a visual strains of the azan reverberating from the intricate mocarabes of the cupolas of Nasrid architecture.

The textural frieze gets turned into a colourful fugue in Origin (of life), with a brilliant play of the clam-shells, with its womb-like shape, and stunning symmetry and serrated patterns. The hard, obdurate shells, through the mesmeric kaleidoscopic blend of colours, become something organic like an outer skin.

Unfurled in mock sequential mode, the clams become a lotus, a symbol of purity that has been adopted by Kian Seng as his trademark. At its crudest, it even resembles the sail-like thrusts of the Sydney Opera House.

“I never go for material gain. Although the environment may be against me, not appreciating and not recognising what I do, I don’t play safe. I always go for challenges.”

“Some call me a gambler, doing things without knowing what’s next, but life’s like that.”

That’s Kian Seng, whose life is dedicated to art since he won the third prize in the national Joy of Living competition in 1964, at the age of 16 and who was given his first solo by the Art Council of Malaysia two years later.

(picture) A 'WOW' EFFECT: Kian Seng and Hui Ling unfurling one of his Soul and Farm works

(picture) IN STEP: His 1968 batik artwork of Indian dancers and musicians

(picture) EVOLVING: The Soul and Form Series

(picture) EPHEMERAL: The 1989 work of the old Railway Station in Kuala Lumpur

(picture) BACK TO ROOTS: Kian Seng and his Origin Series.

[Abundant treasures in Penang’s Batik Museum](#) by Ooi Kok Chuen
[Contemporary art practices](#) by Ooi Kok Chuen



LEE HUI LING AND LEE KIAN SENG
Artists

Topic: Batik: A Contemporary Art Form?

Bios

At 23, Lee Hui Ling is the youngest KLIB presenter. Hui Ling graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in New York with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Her work, "The Teahouse at Sarah Lawrence College" won the Commencement Artwork competition. She has already had a few solo exhibitions, namely "Little Book of Days" in Kuala Lumpur, and "Pictorial Journal" at Sarah Lawrence. She was awarded the Sarah Lawrence College Board of Trustees Scholarship and the Gaylord Donnelly Family Scholarship. Her first solo art exhibition of Paintings from 1992 to 2001 was at the J W Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She was awarded the Sarah Lawrence College Board of Trustees Scholarship to pursue Liberal Arts studies from September 2001 onwards.



Born in 1948, full time, self-trained, multi-media artist Lee Kian Seng has consistently received recognition at home and abroad. His submission entitled "Joy of Living" won the 3rd Prize in Category B of a 1964 competition organized by the Art Council of Malaysia - when he was just 16. This was followed by a string of national art awards from 1966 through to major exhibitions in the 70s. Kian Seng's principal research area is "Comparative studies in dyeing art", covering technical aspects of etching, silkscreen and lithography. His explorations and innovations in the dye and resist technique (batik) medium won him the Tokyo Creation Award (Overseas Prize) in 1993. He has held 21 solo exhibitions since 1966 and been part of too many joint exhibitions to mention, winning many awards along the way. Lee has been one of the most consistent, productive and dedicated artists on the Malaysian art scene over the past 40 years. Website: www.leekianseng.com

Abstract

In this paper, Lee Hui Ling discusses the emergence of batik as a modern art form and to challenge the limitations, stereotypes and assumptions about batik as a traditional craft. The batik trade and its place in the Western art market will be discussed with regards to comparisons to traditional Western aesthetics. Lee Kian Seng will contribute the visual materials for this presentation.

page 14

source: excerpted from page 14 of the Handbook for Convention Participants KLIB Kuala Lumpur International Batik Convention & Exhibition 2005 Malaysia.

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海外賞

伝統芸術である バティックペインティングの 現代化(マレーシア)

◆表彰理由

元来、その混雑のために芸術品というよりも衣類などの実用品として利用されてきた伝統芸術バティック(ろうけつ染め)を、版画や型染、リトグラフなどの現代的技法を用いた新しい創造力と融合させ、モダンアートにまで高め、世界的に「バティックペインティング」を認知させた。

南アジア諸国にとって、伝統芸術が外国の技術と融合し新たな展開を見せたことは、同地域の発展の可能性と将来への希望を感じさせ、士気の高揚にも大いに貢献している。

Excerpted from the Catalogue of Tokyo Creation Award 1993



【受賞者】
李 健省 殿
(Lee Kian Seng)



東京クリエイション大賞

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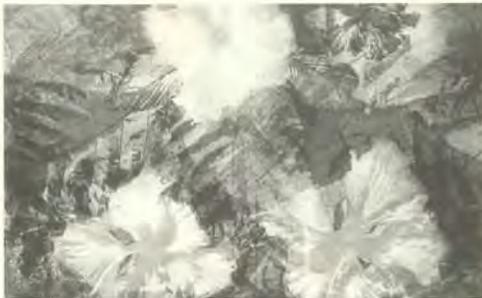
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The Durian Pupa Slaves

TOKYO CREATION AWARD 1993



The Durian Pupa Slaves

◆解説

「バティック」とは、日本でもお馴染みの「ろうけつ染め」のことである。そもそも「色」の意のジャワ語だが、その後語義を以て、現在では技法のみに限らずろうけつ染めによって染められた染織品をも指す。最もポピュラーなのが、ジャワ島特有な有名なインディアン・バティックである。あるいは手織りの技法は、かつて南インドのコマンダム山脈で栄えた

が、その後インド国内ではあまり発達しないままジャワに伝来し、ジャワ古来のデザインと融合してジャワ更紗として栄え込んだと言われる。以来、南アジア諸国でこの「バティック」の技法が取り入れられるようになった。南アジアにおいては、実用品として継承されている伝統芸術である。

そして現在、マレーシアの李健省氏(Mr. Lee Kian Seng)の手により「バティックペインティング」というモダンアートとして脚光を浴びるに至っている。氏は筆で絵画を描き、その後のアーティストとしての活動が認められ、日本の国際交流基金の奨励芸術家として東京芸大および東京版画研究所で型染やリトグラフを研究。版画や型染から靈感を受け、バティックペインティングと学んだ現代的技法との融合により新しい芸術世界を創造したわけである。

この伝統芸術の新しい展開は、南アジア諸島の文化水準の向上の一役を担うと共に、今後の南アジア文化の拡がりや可能性を期待させる。

TOKYO CREATION AWARD 1993

9/25_LEE Kian Seng 李健省_lee_Batik

ART

In the forefront of creativity

Artist Lee Kian Seng has bagged many awards for originality and creativity, his latest being the Tokyo Creation Award Overseas Prize. OOI KOK CHUEN reports...



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ellery pendants set in gold (18K) and silver, weighing approximately 5.25g and 36g respectively.

It is an important development of the function of a sculpture from the monumentality and one using creative space to an everyday wear item, in this case, a ready-to-wear "costume" sculpture.

His "living" sculptures, *Hammer And Nail*, are powerful social statements, yet using only handyman tools.

The works are also "extended" into limited edition prints, and reproduced on t-shirts.

Awards such as the Creation Award are not only recognition for Kian Seng's high standards and self-discipline, but also a great motivation to set new goals and face new challenges.

"Exploring new expressions is a lonely, lonely path, and sometimes takes years," he says.

"An artist has to be sincere and true to himself to produce something that is contemporary and lasting, without material considerations."

"I am happy that there are people out there who realise this too."



STANDING PROUD ... the master and his work

FOR 30 years, Lee Kian Seng has been at the cutting edge of Malaysian art. Whether working in paintings, batik, print-making (lithography) and sculptures, his is a model of consistency, innovation and excellence.

Many a time, the 45-year-old artist has been recognised with awards for originality and creativity.

His latest accolade is the Tokyo Creation Award Overseas Prize, presented by the Tokyo Fashion Association of the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Created in 1987, the award, with stringent standards under a selection panel headed by Takemochi Ishii (professor of the Keio Gijyuku University), is a sort of "lifetime achievement award".

Kian Seng received it in Tokyo on Oct 25. It came with a medal, certificate of merit and cash prize of 500,000 yen (about RM12,000).

The only other Malaysian to have won it is cartoonist Lat.

Kian Seng's citation read: "(With) His creativity, original approach with the application of modern techniques, Lee Kian Seng has further developed batik into a modern art and has made known worldwide batik/dyes painting.

"The amalgamation of the traditional art with modern technology he has developed and created and subsequent new developments would certainly demonstrate a potentiality and a future hope for progress in the Southeast Asian countries and make a great contribution to raising the morale of the peoples in the region."

Says Kian Seng: "I'm moved by the honour, and the award is also an honour for Malaysia for it is its environment that inspires me to excel."

For one only self-taught in sculpture, his reinforced concrete sculpture, *The Pair* (1968), showed up his remarkable sensitivity in handling form and materials.

Kian Seng was recently commissioned to do a public sculpture called *Vision 2020* at Public Bank's KL headquarters, Taman Wawasan (Vision Gardens).

In painting, Kian Seng creates a mystical fuge in his *Soul and Form* and later *Origin* series - a result of years of painstaking research into batik (Malaysia, Indonesia, China and Egypt) and innovative dye techniques (Japanese like ukiyo-e and yuzenzomei, and German developments).

His *Soul and Form* series could be traced back to 1972 when he won the major award in the Malaysian landscape national art competition where there were traces of the banguu and the traditional Malay door.

Sources as diverse as the Borobodur, Siva the destroyer, Japanese ukiyo-e erotica, sleek advertising exploitation of women, ethnic crafts and local flora (hibiscus and lotus) complete his backcloth of Asiatic cosmogony.

Often his trademark conch would appear, acting as a unifying force.

The spiritual essence lies somewhere between the flaming desires and shamanistic totems.

In graphic art, Kian Seng's lithographs stand for their rich humanistic symbolism, his yin-yang (positive-negative) dualism, and high technical quality.

His controversial 1977 work - *Of Image, Object, Illusion Off Series Mechanism* (which had the Malaysian flag in reverse) - was arguably one of the first installations in the world, though at that time there was no name to that kind of work.

As it defied categorisation then,

'Artists are closer to contemporary truths than even social scientists.'

Kian Seng epitomises the artist as both creator and thinker. As he once declared: "Artists are closer to contemporary truths than even social scientists."

His life, as well as that of his artist wife, Shoko Kobayashi, is devoted to excellence in art.

Kian Seng began to show flashes of his precocity when he was only 16, winning the third prize in the oil category of the *Joy Of Living* competition organised by the Arts Council of Malaysia in 1964.

In 1968, he bagged a "double" of third prizes in sculpture and in mixed media in the first Salon Malaysia competition, besides winning honourable mention in the batik section.

It won the first prize for the graphic section of the 1977 Open art and graphic print competition.

In sculpture, Kian Seng's monumental works of stainless steel stand in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur, while others like *Mankind* (1972, mild steel plate, 160x220x140cm) and *Resumption And Consumption* (1975, wood, 130x130x15cm) have been collected by the National Art Gallery.

Kian Seng is always setting new frontiers. In 1984, he erected the mild steel sculpture weighing 250kg called *Peace, Harmony And One* as part of the Asean Square Sculpture Symposium in Jakarta.

Three years later, he turned this sculpture into limited-edition jew-

【(剪裁自) Extracted partially from “ In the forefront of creativity ”

In the forefront of creativity by Ooi Kok Chuen The New Straits Times Malaysia, 1993-10-31

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"I am happy that there are people out there who realise this too."】

The New Straits Times Malaysia, 1993-10-31

峇迪與染色手法創新 著名藝術家李健省 榮獲東京創作大獎

張啓華 本報專訪

【吉隆坡十一日訊】現年四十五歲的著名藝術家李健省，最近榮獲東京創作大獎海外獎，成為在藝術領域中首個獲得上述獎項的海外藝術家。該獎項是表彰在環境、工業、文化領域有創造力的人士或企業團體。

李健省是通過現代技術，致力於創新峇迪／染色的表現手法，使之提升及發揮於現代藝術領域，因而獲世界的認同和肯定。

廿五年來致力於峇迪／染色創作研究的李健省，為峇迪賦予新的創作泉源，這無疑為南亞洲甚至世界的未來藝術發展方向與士氣的提高，做出了積極的貢獻。

終極目標，我只有用亞洲的題材，去表現亞洲的情感與意境，把亞洲固有的文化遺產帶到更高藝術境界。」

對李健省而言，擊敗了亞洲一百廿三名提名參賽者，贏得上述創作大獎，不啻對他高水準作品的一種肯定。

同時也釋放了與國際藝壇邁向新的目標與挑戰。

創作手法革新

根據歷史，峇迪與染色是文明的產物和人類共有的文化遺產，它們并不只限於友誼或東南亞的疆域中，在古埃

及、印度、中國等文明古國，已有峇迪／染色的記載。

李健省表示，峇迪／染色的創作，其空間是無限的，引伸至其他的傳統性創作媒介，道理也是一樣。關鍵的問題是如何去开拓它而已。

峇迪／染色除了是李健省的其中一種創作媒介，其他創作媒介是版畫、水彩、版畫、雕塑等。在藝術的廣闊空間里，不論是向傳統介介，李健省的創作手法都是大膽革新，揮灑自如的。

詢及今後會在一個創作領域開拓新聞時，他表示：「新的創作領域是不能預期和刻意去追求的。我所能做的，只有盡我的一切能力。」

「探尋新的創作空間，所走的是一段孤獨與崎嶇之路，有時必須經年累月才有成果。」

榮獲多項殊榮

「藝術家甚至要比社會科學家更接近當代的史實」，這是李健省所一直強調的。他認為，一名藝術家必須忠於自己，不以他種為考慮的情況下，才能創出永垂不朽的作品。

李健省自十八歲開始，就在我國和國際藝壇中嶄露頭角，榮獲國內及國際的多項殊榮。

他於一九七七年以宇宙畫方式創作的「鐵線與鐵釘雕塑系列」，強烈地展示了當代人性最極端的情感與潛在現代人的七種心態，藉此傳達了熱愛和平的訊息，而獲得我國和國際藝壇。



▲李健省在前往東京領獎回國後，和他的其中一幅峇迪／染色作品合影。



▲李健省「2020宏願」雕塑，置於馬來西亞的室蘭園中，並於九月間由首相拿督斯里馬哈迪醫生主持開幕。

Klang artist wins Tokyo award for batik techniques

INTERNATIONAL artist Lee Kian Seng's 20 years in developing traditional batik techniques for modern art has earned him the Tokyo Creation Award.

The award by the Tokyo Fashion Association of Tokyo Chambers of Commerce and Industry is for remarkable contributions by individuals and organisations in any particular field.

Lee, 45, of Klang is the first artist to win the award.

This year's grand award was for excellence in the field of creation. Lee, a well-known artist who had won many awards and prizes both locally and internationally during his 30-year career, said the award was a recognition for his contributions as a whole.

Lee, who attributed the achievement as an honour for the country, said he was touched. He was presented the award on Oct 25

in Tokyo.

He said although he had won many awards in the past, this was the first one which was awarded for his all-time contributions.

"My other prizes were for particular art pieces so this award is very unique and special," he said.

Lee received a trophy and cash prize.

The silver trophy entitled *Man Looking Towards The Future* was sculptured on a black marble base designed by Mr Taro Okamoto.

He said the award came as a surprise since he was notified about it only in early October.

Lee said the award gave him encouragement to further his experiment using batik dye techniques for modern art.

Besides the batik and dyes, Lee is more popularly known for his sculptures, oil paintings and lithography.



ELEGANT ... Lee admiring his trophy.

The Star Malaysia 1993-11-01

【马来西亚星洲日报张启华专访 1993-11-12

峇迪與染色手法創新 著名藝術家李健省榮獲東京創作大獎

（吉隆坡十一日訊）現年四十五歲的著名藝術家李健省，最近榮獲東京創作大獎（oversea-prize）海外獎，成為在亞洲藝術領域中首個獲得上述獎項的外國藝術家。該獎項是表彰在環境、工業、文化領域有創造力的人士或企業團體。

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廿五年來致力於峇迪／染色創作研究的李健省，為峇迪賦予新的創作泉源，這無疑為南亞洲甚至世界的未來藝術發展方向與士氣的提高，做出了積極的貢獻。

他在受访时对多年来的辛苦耕耘获得肯定感到欣慰。不过他表示：[名誉不是我追求的终极目标，我用世界的题材，以宇宙观的方式处理意境，把世界固有的文化遗产带到更高艺术境界。]

对李健省而言，击败了亚洲一百廿三名提名参赛者，赢得上述创作大奖，不啻是对他高水平作品的一种体认，同时也鞭策与鼓舞着他迈向新的目标与挑战。

创作手法革新

根据史实，峇迪与染色是世界文明的产物和人类共有的文化遗产，它们并不只囿于友族或东南亚的疆域中，在古埃及、印度、中国等文明古国，已有峇迪 / 染色的记载。

李健省表示，峇迪 / 染色的创作，其空间是无限的，引申至其他的传统性创作媒介，道理也是一样，关键的问题是要如何去开拓它而已。

峇迪 / 染色除了是李健省的其中一种创作媒介，其他创作媒介是版画、水彩、油画、雕塑等。在艺术的广阔空间里，不论是何种媒介，李健省的创作手法都是大胆革新、挥洒自如的。

询及今后会在哪一个创作领域开创新局面时，他表示：[新的创作领域是不能预期和刻意去追求的。我所能做的，只有尽我的一切能力。]

[探寻新的创作空间，所走的是一段孤独于崎岖之旅，有时必须经年累月才有结果。]

荣获多项殊荣

[艺术家甚至要比社会科学家更接近当代的史实]，这是李健省所一直强调的。他认为，一名艺术家必须忠于自己，不以物质为考量的情况下，才能创出永垂不朽的作品。李健省自十八岁开始，就在我国和国际艺坛中崭露头角，荣获国内和国际的多项殊荣。他于一九七七年以宇宙观方式处理的[铁钉与铁锤雕塑系列]，强烈地展示了当代人性最深处的感觉与潜在元素，情趣横溢地表现现代人的七种心态，籍此传达了热爱和平的讯息，而震撼我国和国际艺坛。】

(星洲日报: 张启华 1993-11-12)

报道：黄树发
摄影：林凯斯



李健省

防染虽然属工艺领域，不过要将其化为艺术，李健省说：“就像作文章，就语法步步为营，难能有创作；然而一味构思而无技艺底子来呈献也是徒然。”

李健省对“艺术史被篡改”事件是不会像这样一笑置之的。

峇迪 人类的共同遗产

配合吉隆坡国际峇迪年会，李健省将特地展出《自1963年的演化》系列。誉为本地三次元装置艺术的开拓者，他的创作媒介多元，曾获11项国家奖及2项国际奖。防染技术占了他创作总量的四分之一。

防染虽然属工艺领域，不过要将其化为艺术，李健省说：“就像作文章，就语法步步为营，难能有创作；然而一味构思而无技艺底子来呈献也是徒然。”他曾遇一位70高龄的日籍老人，告知他虽从事防染工作多年却苦思不解，李氏是如何创作出如此高难度的作品。“这就是工艺家与艺术家之分。”他说峇迪艺术创作可不是平面填色，简易成作。

“峇迪是人类共同遗产，不要将其政治化。”据他透露，欧阳文凤还会为他撰写成集，挖掘李氏在艺术圈子面对的困境。“装置艺术在本地的发展出现了断层，3间代表性的艺术学院也停滞不前，带动不了艺术潮流。”可惜，李健省至今还未公开其防染超凡技艺。“我正等着相等层次的艺术家将之传授，或在适宜的时机进行交流互相激荡。”



《盲人玩乐》



《峇厘艳色》



《舞乐齐扬》



《魂与形》



时间：2005年12月12日至2006年1月22日
(必须预约)

电话：03-33723351

网页：www.leekfanseng.com

Newsfront

Lee scores big for Malaysia

THE fact that the world-renowned international publisher Waivata Worldwide Tourist Publications, has selected Malaysia for its 'Welcome' series of books, speaks volumes for tourism in the country.

This colourful hard-cover publication features the length and breadth of Malaysia at its historical, geographical and cultural best, as well as its exciting cuisine and shopping attractions.

Welcome To Malaysia was released to 277 first-class hotels in 10 countries throughout the world last month.

Translating this into terms of potential readership, *Welcome To Malaysia* will be available to some 1.5 million readers worldwide.

Winning the distinction of being on the cover of such an exceptional publication is a 1972 painting of the Sultan Abdul Samad building. The painting is the work of world-renowned Malaysian

artist Lee KianSeng, who was one of the earliest to realise the beauty and value of Malaysian architecture.

The fact that Mr Lee was actively sought by the Australian publisher underscores his distinction.

At age 18 Mr Lee held his first one-man art exhibition. At 28 he became the first and youngest artist to receive the Japan Foundation Professional Fellowship in recognition of his outstanding qualities and devotion to art.

He has also achieved the rare distinction of having 12 works hung in the National Art Gallery's Permanent Collection.

In recognition of his artistic excellence, Waivata Publishers have found it befitting to devote an entire chapter to him.

It is a rare honour indeed, for the artist himself and for the homeland which inspires him to excel — MALAYSIA.



Mr LEE with the publication that features his 1972 painting on its cover

(excerpted from *Welcome to Malaysia* 1989 p.36-38)

Yinze, Hansong & Oni — National representative work of Malaysia at the Asian Sculpture Symposium in Jakarta 1984. Collection of the government of Jakarta. 310 cm x 310 cm x 310 cm. Mild steel plate (at Deson Street, Jakarta).

Original series (Batik & Dye) 1986 (80%)

Lee Kian Seng is one of Malaysia's most prominent artists, having his first one-man show in 1966 while still only 18 years old. For more than 20 years now he has been working consistently and actively within the Malaysian art scene, and has achieved the rare distinction of having 12 works in the Permanent Collection of the National Art Gallery.

Noted for his innovative creativity, aesthetic sensibility and immaculate craftsmanship, he works in a wide range of media. He is as comfortable with painting, batik, and print-making as he is with his extraordinarily beautiful sculptures. In each case he produces works of high artistic excellence.

In recognition of his outstanding qualities and devotion to art, Kian Seng was awarded the Japan Foundation Professional Fellowship in 1976, at the age of 26, the first and youngest artist to receive such an honour. Kian Seng's works transcend cultural barriers, and he seldom stays on one theme for long. He is, however, steeped in Taoist philosophy of Yin and Yang, the eternal origins of unity and interdependence. A modernist in the true sense, he still deeply admires the works of Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci. Kian Seng believes the artist must also be a thinker, and in many ways is closer to contemporary truths than most other people.

According to Kian Seng, "the modern man is my concern. Since I'm a Malaysian working in Malaysia, I use local elements, such as the Malaysian flag. If I were in Japan, I would use the Japanese flag. I project the dilemma of the contemporary man in a universal setting."

Like most artists, Kian Seng started out as a recorder of life around him, and later, as a result of further studies and exposures, moved into other areas. For some time now he has been preoccupied with his Yin-Yang series. The hammer-and-nail presentations, for instance, have become universal symbols of Yin-Yang juxtaposition. One of his best known works is the metal sculpture, *Man and the World*, which stands near the entrance to the National Art Gallery.

Untitled (Batik) 1980, Collection of the Selangor State Museum (Malaysia)

Malaysia's
Modern
Master

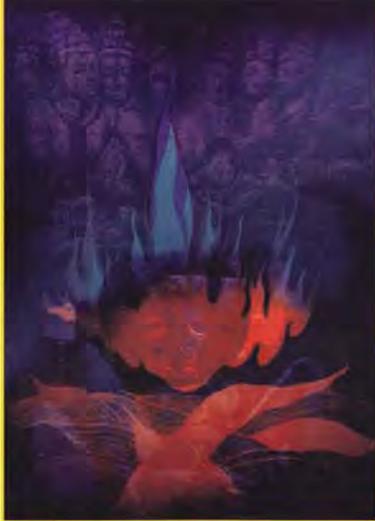


As harmony is essential to the basic concepts of Yin and Yang, so it is to Kian Seng. Everything is "one whole", which exists not in antagonism to each other, but in an effective, creative partnership. Contemplative, provocative works are his concern, as is the subject of peace. As a recognition of his achievement in sculpture, Kian Seng was selected to represent Malaysia at the ASEAN Square Sculpture Symposium in Jakarta in 1984. The theme of his sculpture is "Peace, Harmony and One".



Kian Seng says that Peace in this case is not a counter against war, but denotes harmony between man and the environment (whether natural or man-made). Many of his works emphasise the importance of harmony in a multi-racial society. In making his sculpture in Jakarta, he made use of machine to cut and bend the thick steel plate, thus stressing harmony between art and machine.

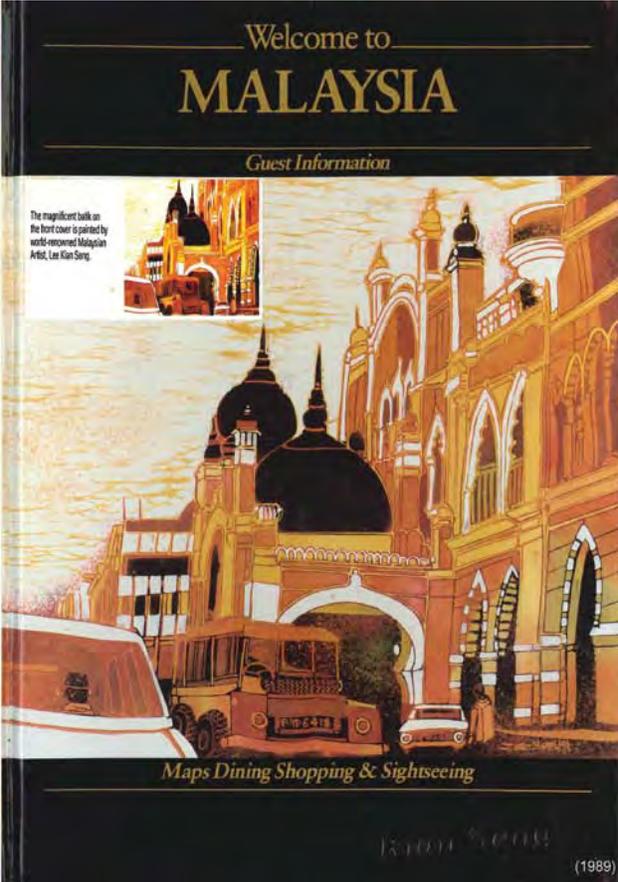
Lee Kian Seng's creative versatility has contributed to the enrichment of the Malaysian art scene. He has represented Malaysia throughout the world, and his energy, undiminished spirit and sheer dedication make him an inspiration to other artists. In all his works he projects creativity, intellectual content and the highest possible standards of professionalism. Not content with his numerous awards, Kian Seng continues to create and recreate, and both live with, and work in, a world dedicated to harmony.



Ying Yang series "Soul & Form 8"
(Batik & Dye, 1979) (40P)



Ying Yang series
"Soul & Form 21"
(Batik & Dye, 1981)
85 cm x 213 cm



Welcome to MALAYSIA

Guest Information

The magnificent batik on the front cover is painted by words renowned Malaysian Artist, Lee Kian Seng.

Maps Dining Shopping & Sightseeing

Kian Seng

(1989)

a travel award to attend and exhibit at the prestigious Third Asia Pacific Triennial held at the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane, Australia, she chose her extremely large work, *Prosperity* which features a mountain-like shape amidst a collage of colourful ethnic-styled stripes. To Timah, mountains are not only the spiritual centres described in Malay legends but also symbolise achievement and hope.

Apart from traditional motifs, Timah is also inspired by the Tibetan meditative concept of mandala. In Tibetan Buddhism, a mandala is an imaginary palace contemplated during meditation, and is often illustrated with four gates facing the four corners of the earth. Imagine a colourful concentric plan seen from the top. The mandala influence is most apparent in Timah's *Temple and Medicines* series.

With her numerous awards, successful art exhibitions, intricate works in the National Art Gallery's Permanent collection and more than 30 years of creating art, one would think Timah would be happy to rest on her laurels. Not so for this petite powerhouse. Currently tutored by a local university's art and design school, Timah is keen to learn and share her knowledge and experience with young inquisitive minds.

And her future plans? "To open a batik school and establish Malaysia as a

centre of batik learning. We have a wealth of talent here and they should be nurtured and encouraged."

Timah Chik can be contacted on hel 012-624 9647. — *Ping Long*

LEE KIAN SENG

The Prize Winner and Innovator

At the grand old age of 18, he held his first solo exhibition to critical acclaim. At 28, he became the first Malaysian and the youngest ever artist to receive the Japan Foundation Professional Fellowship in recognition of his outstanding talent and contributions to art. In a career that has spanned almost 40 years, he has received awards – both local and international (too many to list here) – which recognise his innovation and creativity not just in the batik medium, but also in oil painting, sculpture and lithography.

In 1993, he won the prestigious Tokyo Creation Award (Overseas Prize) jointly presented by The Tokyo Fashion Association and Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry to "leaders from all walks of life and all fields". His unique and creative ideas in the exploration of batik dye techniques for modern art, the Japanese admitted, "were far more advanced than ours... by 16 or 17 years at least." He was also the first artist to receive the award.

He is, of course, world-renowned Malaysian artist, Lee Kian Seng.

Lee was born on the island of Kinnam but moved with his family to Singapore when he was five and subsequently settled down in Klang a year later. With the family in financial dire straits during most of his early years, young Lee had nothing but imagination and passion to stoke the fire of artistic fervour burning in him. "I was too poor to pay for the membership fees to the local school's art club, so I painted on my own." One of the best-loved pieces that has remained in Lee's collection (it can be viewed on his web-site), *Klang River* (1959) – painted when he was all of 11 years – bears testament to the huge raw talent that the young Lee had.

In retrospect, not being able to afford his art club's membership fees

1988
"Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad" (1988), produced in conjunction with "Visit Malaysia Year 1988".
Batik / Dye, approximately 72cm x 52cm



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1975
"Spring" (1984)
Batik/Dye on cotton
Approximately 5m x 5m

1970
"Combong Hair" (1970)
Batik/Dye on cotton
Approximately 40cm x 30cm



1980
"Soul from Series" (1980)
Batik/Dye with resist technique
100cm x 70cm

must have been a blessing in disguise. Lack of a formal art education has, in many ways, unshackled the free spirit within, enabling him to explore ideas freely, unencumbered by known schools of style or art movements.

"I have never been constrained by any methods of work nor influenced by any artist... (as) whatever paradigms – Western or Eastern... the ideas overcome essentialism and expression," explained Lee.

To speak only of his batik art is doing the man a great injustice, for his talent and art encompass several media. Hailed as the father of installation art by P.G. Lim, the former Malaysian Ambassador to the United Nations and one of the founding members of the National Art Gallery, Lee has, incredibly, achieved outstanding, awe-inspiring (even) results in every artistic sphere that he chose to dabble in.

To document all of Lee's work, however, would require a lot more pulp. For now, we will have to content with his batik art, which, according to Lee, "only accounts for 20 per cent of my work." Small volume notwithstanding, great beauty and depth permeate Lee's batik works. Visually stunning and exquisitely executed, they are the works of a visionary. An artist once praised by the

National Art Gallery director Datuk Byed Ahmad Jimal for his immaculate craftsmanship, aesthetic sensitivity and innovative spirit, Lee is deeply committed to his craft. After years of painstaking research into batik dye techniques, he produced his *Soul and Form* series – a collection of artwork with subjects as diverse as Borobudur, Japanese *akigao-e* erotica and ethnicity.

Lee's researched dye techniques range from the *katsumet* (Japanese *akigao-e*) and *gunameret*, to various German methods as well.

Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad, which houses the country's Federal Court and Court of Appeal, also seems to be another source of inspiration. Its aesthetic beauty was encapsulated in Lee's *Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad*, which is an extension of the *Klang* series and *Kuala Lumpur* series done in the 60s and early 70s respectively. The piece was done in conjunction with the Visit Malaysia 1989 campaign, though it must be said that the vehicles in it seem to be of another era.

Combong Hair and *Indian Dancers* illustrate Lee's versatility within the realm of batik painting. In these pieces, he set out and succeeded in transforming ordinary scenes into extraordinarily beautiful and lively artwork. *Indian*

Batik Guild Magazine | 41

【 Source: Inaugural Edition Batik Guild Magazine-- Published by Batik Guild Sdn.Bhd.-Malaysia 2004

LEE Kian Seng – The Prize Winner and Innovator story by Ping Long

At the grand old age of 18, he held his first exhibition to critical acclaim. At 28, he became the first Malaysian and the youngest ever artist to receive the Japan Foundation Professional Fellowship (to research on "Comparative study of dyeing-art") in recognition of his outstanding talent and contribution to art. In a career that has spanned almost 40 years, he has received awards-both local and international (too many to list here)-which recognise his innovation and creativity not just in the batik medium, but also in oil painting, sculpture and lithography.

In 1993, he won the prestigious Tokyo Creation Award (Overseas Prize) presented by the Tokyo Fashion Association to "leaders from all walks of life and all fields". His unique and creative ideas in the exploration of batik dye techniques for modern art, the Japanese admitted," were far more advanced than ours...by 16 or 17 years at least." He was also the first artist to receive the award.

He is, of course, world-renowned Malaysian artist, Lee Kian Seng.

Lee was born on the isle of Kimmon but moved with his family to Singapore when he was five and subsequently settled down in Klang (Malaysia) a year later. With the family dire straits during most of his early years, young Lee had nothing but imagination and passion to stoke the fire of artistic fervour burning in him." I was too poor to pay for the membership fees to the local school's art club, so I painted on my own." One of the boyhood pieces that has remained in Lee's collection (it can be viewed on his web-site), Klang River (1959)- painted when he was all of 11 years- bears testament to the huge raw talent that the young Lee had.

In retrospect, not being able to afford his club's membership fees must have been a blessing in disguise. Lack of a formal art education has, in many ways, unshackled the free spirit within, enabling him to explore ideas freely, unencumbered by known schools of styles or art movements.

" I have never been constrained by any methods of work nor influenced by any artist..(of) whatever paradigms- Western or Eastern...the idea overcomes medium and expression," explained Lee.

To speak only of his batik art is doing the man a great injustice, for his talent and art encompass several media. Hailed as the father of installation art by P.G.Lim, the former Malaysian Ambassador to the United Nations and one of the founding members of the National Art Gallery (Malaysia), Lee has, incredibly, achieved outstanding, (awe-inspiring even) results in every artistic sphere that he chose to dabble in.

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An artist once praised by the National Art Gallery director Datuk Syed Ahmad Jamal for his immaculate craftsmanship, aesthetic sensitivity and innovative creativity, Lee is deeply committed to his craft. After years of painstaking research into dye techniques, he produced his Soul and Form series-a collection of artwork with subjects as diverse as Borobodur, Japanese ukiyo-e erotica and ethnicity.

Lee's researched dye techniques range from the katazomei and yuzenzomei, to various German methods (Lithograph) as well.

Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad, which houses the country's Federal Court and Court of Appeal, also seems to be another source of inspiration. Its aesthetic beauty was encapsulated in Lee's Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad, which is an extension of the Klang series and the Kuala Lumpur series done in the 60s and early 70s respectively. The piece was done in conjunction the visit Malaysia 1989 campaign, though it must be said that the vehicles in it seem to be of another era.

Combing Hair and the Indian Dancers illustrate Lee's versatility within the realm of batik painting. In these pieces, he set out and succeeded in transforming ordinary scenes into extraordinarily beautiful and lively artwork. Indian Dancers, against a background of vibrant hues, particularly mesmerises with the performers' graceful figures and expressive hands.

Another painting shown here is **Spring (1973)**, one of Lee's earlier pieces. Covering an impressive expanse of cloth, it shows two mystical flame-haired goddesses, surrounded by a whirlwind of birds, signaling the arrival of spring. Arresting and vivid, the piece transfixes.

In his art, Lee has consistently striven to be revolutionary, more likely to ask 'why not' than 'why'. His growth as an artist has always, as the influential Frank Sullivan, the then Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the National Art Gallery said, "... run simultaneous (ly) with almost every crucial stage in the chronology of Malaysian art history."

To define Lee, therefore, will be an exercise in futility for he is truly in a class of his own.

To find out more about his works, please go to www.leekianseng.com

---Story by **Ping Long**

(note: Batik Guild Magazine is produced for Batik Guild Sdn Bhd by The Writers' Publishing House Sdn.Bhd, Lot A10-3, 3rd Floor, Jalan Selaman 1/1, Fdataran Palma, Jalan Ampang, 68000 Ampang, Selangor, Malaysia. <http://www.writers.com.my> Tel: 4270-2088 Fax: 4270-1933.】



Eastern Sun Lee Kian Seng
1968. Oct. 9.



Art should be a free-flow of one's own will—artist

By HOO BAN KHEE

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Ten years in art and 21-year-old Lee Kian Seng is still looking as "square" as when he was a schoolboy.

With his "porcupine" hair he looks more like a construction labourer than a refined and polished young artist.

Why doesn't he sport a Beatle-hairdo like so many young artists?

Here he let the cat out of the bag.

"I don't wish to look like an artist in order to be an artist.

"I sell my works not by my appearance," he said, equally as stubborn as he is with his hair.

Kian Seng was speaking on the eve of a joint exhibition to be opened by the Sultan of Selangor at the Klang Club, Klang, at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday.

The exhibition will show a collection of his works in the last 10 years with main emphasis on his latest cre-

ation, The Intaglio.

It will also mark his last show here before he leaves for Tokyo for further studies early next year.

Kian Seng has always been a creative and adventurous artist.

With the creation of Intaglio — an oil paint on a curved-out hardboard — he manages to bring painting to a three-dimensioned beauty while still retaining the rhythm beauty of the hardboard.

A total of six such paintings will be shown at the coming exhibition.

Kian Seng also excels in batik but, as other good artists, he is always critical of his own works.

Decorative

He said: "I know there is something wrong with batik paintings. Something, somewhere. I can't tell.

"Perhaps, it is too decorative."

"I hope I would be able to learn, to compare and to improve them when I am in Japan," he said.

He is also one who persistently refuses to bow to other styles and influences.

He said: "Art should be a free-flow of one's own will."

"There is no point of doing anything at all if it is merely a copy-work."

He hoped to put up several shows in Taiwan, Hong Kong while on his way to Japan.

Eastern Sun, October 9, 1968

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EASTERN SUN WEDNESDAY

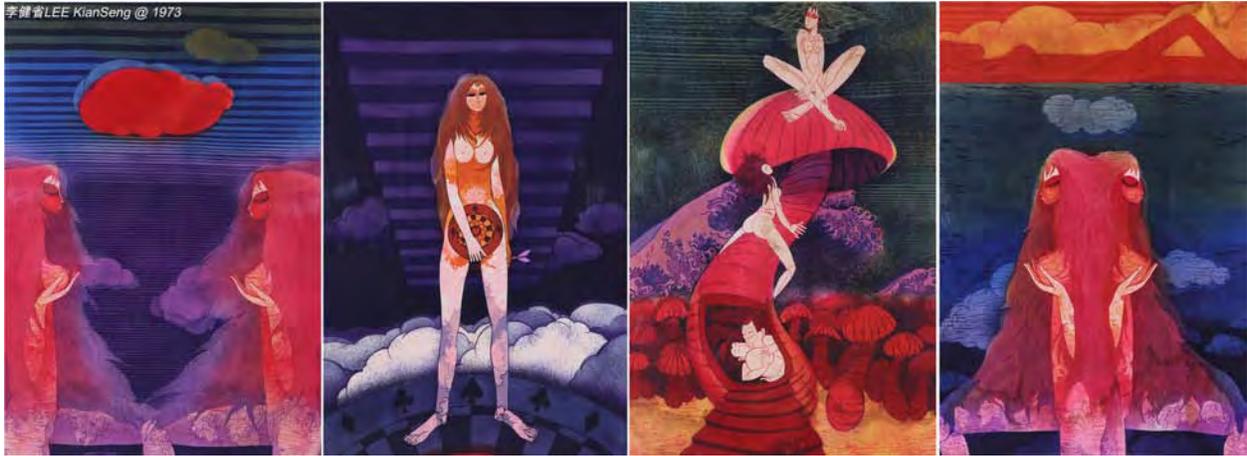


《 Absurd(c)ity 》 @ The National Art Gallery Malaysia 2013-2014. Photo by LEE Hui Ling

(from the catalogue of 《 Absurd(c)ity 》 @ The National Art Gallery Malaysia 2013-2014).

Lee Kian Seng is one of the big names in the Malaysian modern art scene. **“Ying Yang Series: Soul and Form”**, (1973), was produced using the batik-based medium. The work depicts erotic and sensual images of a woman and a man. The contrasting effects between these two images fit in perfectly with the concept of Ying and Yang that underlies this series.

Lahir pada 1948, China; Menetap di Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Born in 1948, China; Lives and works in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



李健省 • LEE Kian Seng • 1973 • Dyes and resist technique • 288 cm x 102 cm
Permanent collection of the National Art Gallery Malaysia.



《 Absurd(c)ity 》 @ The National Art Gallery Malaysia 2013-2014.

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Eastern Sun, October 9, 1968

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EASTERN SUN WEDNESDAY

Newsfront

Lee scores big for Malaysia

THE fact that the world-renowned international publisher Waivata Worldwide Tourist Publications, has selected Malaysia for its 'Welcome' series of books, speaks volumes for tourism in the country.

This colourful hard-cover publication features the length and breadth of Malaysia at its historical, geographical and cultural best, as well as its exciting cuisine and shopping attractions.

Welcome To Malaysia was released to 277 first-class hotels in 10 countries throughout the world last month.

Translating this into terms of potential readership, *Welcome To Malaysia* will be available to some 1.5 million readers worldwide.

Winning the distinction of being on the cover of such an exceptional publication is a 1972 painting of the Sultan Abdul Samad building. The painting is the work of world-renowned Malaysian

artist Lee KianSeng, who was one of the earliest to realise the beauty and value of Malaysian architecture.

The fact that Mr Lee was actively sought by the Australian publisher underscores his distinction.

At age 18 Mr Lee held his first one-man art exhibition. At 28 he became the first and youngest artist to receive the Japan Foundation Professional Fellowship in recognition of his outstanding qualities and devotion to art.

He has also achieved the rare distinction of having 12 works hung in the National Art Gallery's Permanent Collection.

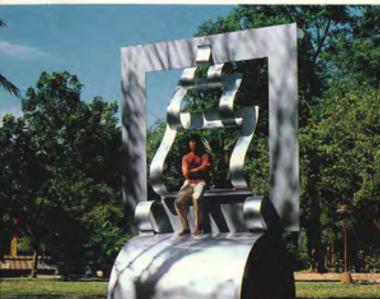
In recognition of his artistic excellence, Waivata Publishers have found it befitting to devote an entire chapter to him.

It is a rare honour indeed, for the artist himself and for the homeland which inspires him to excel — MALAYSIA.



Mr LEE with the publication that features his 1972 painting on its cover

(excerpted from Welcome to Malaysia 1989 p.36-38)



'Peace, Harmony & One' - National representative work of Malaysia at the Asian Sculpture Symposium in Jakarta 1984. Collection of the government of Jakarta. 510 cm x 310 cm x 310 cm. Mild steel plate (at Taman Suropati, Jakarta).

'Origin' series (Batik & Dyes, 1986) (80P)

M M M alaysia's modern Master

Lee Kian Seng is one of Malaysia's most prominent artists, having his first one-man show in 1966 while still only 18 years old. For more than 20 years now he has been working consistently and actively within the Malaysian art scene, and has achieved the rare distinction of having 12 works in the Permanent Collection of the National Art Gallery.

Noted for his innovative creativity, aesthetic sensibility, and immaculate craftsmanship, he works in a wide range of media. He is as comfortable with painting, batik, and print-making as he is with his extraordinarily beautiful sculptures. In each case he produces works of high artistic excellence.

In recognition of his outstanding qualities and devotion to art, Kian Seng was awarded the Japan Foundation Professional Fellowship in 1976, at the age of 26, the first and youngest artist to receive such an honour.

Kian Seng's works transcend cultural barriers, and he seldom stays on one theme for long. He is however, steeped in Taoist



Untitled (Batik, 1980, Collection of the Selangor State Museum Malaysia.)



philosophy of Yin and Yang, the eternal enigma of unity and interdependence. A modernist in the true sense, he still deeply admires the works of Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci. Kian Seng believes the artist must also be a thinker, and in many ways is closer to contemporary truths than most other people.

According to Kian Seng, "the modern man is my concern. Since I'm a Malaysian working in Malaysia, I use local elements, such as the Malaysian flag. If I were in Japan, I would use the Japanese flag. I project the dilemma of the contemporary man in a universal setting."

Like most artists, Kian Seng started out as a recorder of life around him, and later, as a result of further studies and exposures, moved into other areas. For some time now he has been preoccupied with his Yin-Yang series. The hammer-and-nail presentations, for instance, have become universal symbols of Yin-Yang interactions. One of his best known works is the metal sculpture 'Man and the World', which stands near the entrance to the National Art Gallery.



As harmony is essential to the basic concepts of Yin and Yang, so it is to Kian Seng. Everything is "one whole", which exists not in antagonism to each other, but in an effective, creative partnership. Contemplative, provocative works are his concern, as is the subject of peace. As a recognition of his achievement in sculpture, Kian Seng was selected to represent Malaysia at the ASEAN Square Sculpture Symposium in Jakarta in 1984. The theme of his sculpture is "Peace, Harmony and One".



Kian Seng says that Peace in this case is not a counter against war, but denotes harmony between man and the environment (whether natural or man-made). Many of his works emphasise the importance of harmony in a multi-racial society. In making his sculpture in Jakarta, he made use of machine to cut and bend the thick steel plate, thus stressing harmony between art and machine.

Lee Kian Seng's creative versatility has contributed to the enrichment of the Malaysian art scene. He has represented Malaysia throughout the world, and his energy, undiminished spirit and sheer dedication make him an inspiration to other artists. In all his works he projects creativity, intellectual content and the highest possible standards of professionalism. Not content with his numerous awards, Kian Seng continues to create and recreate, and both live with, and work in, a world dedicated to harmony.



Ying Yang series 'Soul & Form 8'
(Batik & Dyes, 1979) (40P)

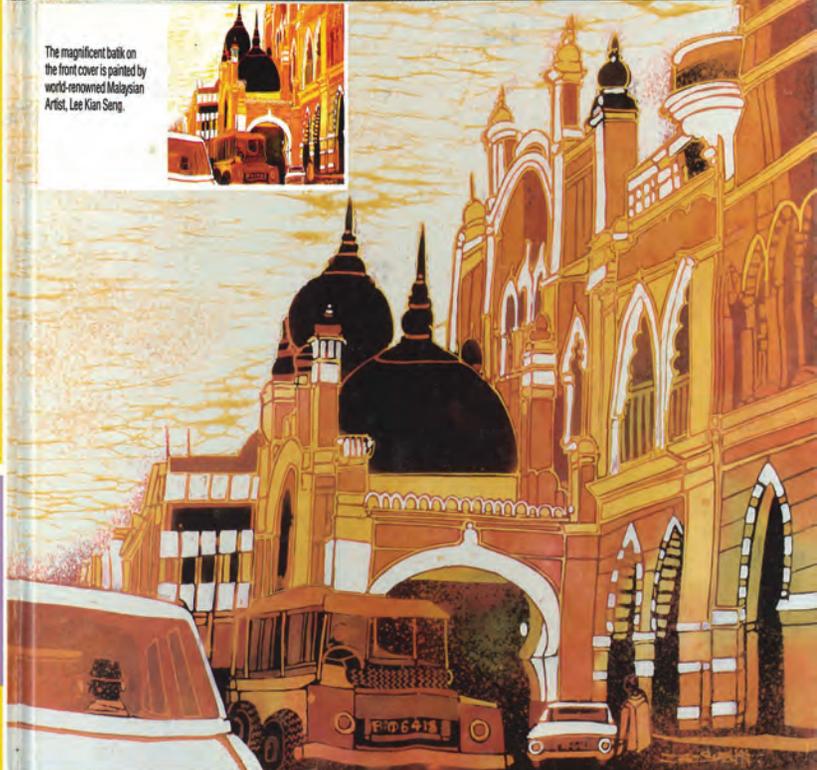
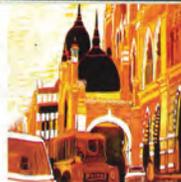
*Ying Yang series
'Soul & Form 21'*
(Batik & Dyes, 1981)
86 cm x 213 cm.



Welcome to MALAYSIA

Guest Information

The magnificent batik on the front cover is painted by world-renowned Malaysian Artist, Lee Kian Seng.



Maps Dining Shopping & Sightseeing

Kian Seng

ART

In the forefront of creativity



'Exploring new expressions is a lonely, lonely path, and sometimes takes years. An artist has to be sincere and true to himself to produce something that is contemporary and lasting, without material considerations.'

ellery pendants set in gold (18K) and silver, weighing approximately 5.25g and 36g respectively.

It is an important development of the function of a sculpture from the monumentality and one using creative space to an everyday wear item, in this case, a ready-to-wear "costume" sculpture.

His "living" sculptures, *Hammer And Nail*, are powerful social statements, yet using only handyman tools.

The works are also "extended" into limited edition prints, and reproduced on t-shirts.

Awards such as the Creation Award are not only recognition for Kian Seng's high standards and self-discipline, but also a great motivation to set new goals and face new challenges.

"Exploring new expressions is a lonely, lonely path, and sometimes takes years," he says.

"An artist has to be sincere and true to himself to produce something that is contemporary and lasting, without material considerations.

"I am happy that there are people out there who realise this too."



Artist Lee Kian Seng has bagged many awards for originality and creativity, his latest being the Tokyo Creation Award Overseas Prize. OOI KOK CHUEN reports...

FOR 30 years, Lee Kian Seng has been at the cutting edge of Malaysian art. Whether working in paintings, batik, print-making (lithography) and sculptures, his is a model of consistency, innovation and excellence.

Many a time, the 45-year-old artist has been recognised with awards for originality and creativity.

His latest accolade is the Tokyo Creation Award Overseas Prize, presented by the Tokyo Fashion Association of the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Created in 1987, the award, with stringent standards under a selection panel headed by Takemochi Ishii (professor of the Keio Gijuku University), is a sort of "lifetime achievement award".

Kian Seng received it in Tokyo on Oct 25. It came with a medal, certificate of merit and cash prize of 500,000 yen (about RM12,000).

The only other Malaysian to have won it is cartoonist Lat.

Kian Seng's citation read: "(With) His creativity, original approach with the application of modern techniques, Lee Kian Seng has further developed batik into a modern art and has made known worldwide batik/dyes painting.

"The amalgamation of the traditional art with modern technology he has developed and created and subsequent new developments would certainly demonstrate a potentiality and a future hope for progress in the Southeast Asian countries and make a great contribution to raising the morale of the peoples in the region."

Says Kian Seng: "I'm moved by the honour, and the award is also an honour for Malaysia for it is its environment that inspires me to excel."

For one only self-taught in sculpture, his reinforced concrete sculpture, *The Pair* (1968), showed up his remarkable sensitivity in handling form and materials.

Kian Seng was recently commissioned to do a public sculpture called *Vision 2020* at Public Bank's KL headquarters, Taman Wawasan (Vision Gardens).

In painting, Kian Seng creates a mystical fugue in his *Soul and Form* and later *Origin* series - a result of years of painstaking research into batik (Malaysia, Indonesia, China and Egypt) and innovative dye techniques (Japanese like ukiyo-e and yuzen-zomei, and German developments).

His *Soul and Form* series could be traced back to 1972 when he won the major award in the Malaysian landscape national art competition where there were traces of the bungalow and the traditional Malay door.

Sources as diverse as the Borobodur, Siva the destroyer, Japanese ukiyo-e erotica, sleek advertising exploitation of women, ethnic crafts and local flora (hibiscus and lotus) complete his backcloth of Asiatic cosmogony.

Often his trademark conch would appear, acting as a unifying force.

The spiritual essence lies somewhere between the flaming desires and shamanistic totems.

In graphic art, Kian Seng's lithographs stand for their rich humanistic symbolism, his yin-yang (positive-negative) dualism, and high technical quality.

His controversial 1977 work - *Of Image, Object, Illusion Off Series Mechanism* (which had the Malaysian flag in reverse) - was arguably one of the first installations in the world, though at that time there was no name to that kind of work.

As it defied categorisation then,

'Artists are closer to contemporary truths than even social scientists.'

Kian Seng epitomises the artist as both creator and thinker. As he once declared: "Artists are closer to contemporary truths than even social scientists."

His life, as well as that of his artist wife, Shoko Kobayashi, is devoted to excellence in art.

Kian Seng began to show flashes of his precocity when he was only 16, winning the third prize in the oil category of the *Joy Of Living* competition organised by the Arts Council of Malaysia in 1964.

In 1968, he bagged a "double" of third prizes in sculpture and in mixed media in the first Salon Malaysia competition, besides winning honourable mention in the batik section.

It won the first prize for the graphic section of the 1977 Open art and graphic print competition.

In sculpture, Kian Seng's monumental works of stainless steel stand in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur, while others like *Mankind* (1972, mild steel plate, 160x220x140cm) and *Resumption And Consumption* (1975, wood, 130x130x15cm) have been collected by the National Art Gallery.

Kian Seng is always setting new frontiers. In 1984, he erected the mild steel sculpture weighing 250kg called *Peace, Harmony And One* as part of the Asean Square Sculpture Symposium in Jakarta.

Three years later, he turned this sculpture into limited-edition jew-

海外賞

伝統芸術である バティックペインティングの 現代化(マレーシア)

◆表彰理由

元来、その泥臭さのために芸術品というよりも衣類などの実用品として利用されてきた伝統芸術「バティック(ろうけつ染め)」を、版画や型染、リトグラフなどの現代的技法を用いた新しい創造力と融合させ、モダンアートにまで高め、世界的に「バティックペインティング」を認知させた。

南アジア諸国にとって、伝統芸術が外国の技術と融合し新たな展開を見せたことは、同地域の発展の可能性と将来への希望を感じさせ、士気の高揚にも大いに貢献している。



【受賞者】
李 健省 殿
(Lee Kian Seng)



Title/Sprins

◆解説

「バティック」とは、日本でも馴染みの「ろうけつ染め」のことである。そもそもは「点」の意のジャワ語だったが、その後語義を広げて、現在では技法のみに限らずろうけつ染めによって染められた染色品をも指す。最もポピュラーなのが、ジャワ更紗で有名なインディアン・バティックである。

ろうによる手描きの技法は、かつて南インドのコロマンデル沿岸で栄えた

が、その後インド国内ではあまり発達しないままジャワに伝来し、ジャワ古来のデザインと融合してジャワ更紗として実を結んだと言われる。以来、南アジア諸国でこの「バティック」の技法が取り入れられるようになった。南アジアにおいては、実用品として重宝されている伝統芸術である。

そして現在、マレーシアの李健省氏(Mr. Lee Kian Seng)の手により「バティックペインティング」というモダンアートとして脚光を浴びるに至っている。氏は独学で絵画と彫刻を学び、その後のアーティストとしての活躍が認められ、日本の国際交流基金の招請芸術家として東京芸大および東京造形大学研究所で型染やリトグラフを研究。版画や型染から靈感を受け、バティックペインティングと学んだ現代技法との融合により新しい芸術世界を創造したわけである。

この伝統芸術の新しい展開は、南アジア諸国の文化水準の向上の一役を担うと共に、今後の南アジア文化の拡がり可能性を期待させる。



Title/Bunza Rava Series

峇迪與染色手法創新

著名藝術家李健省

榮獲東京創作大獎

張啓華
本報專訪

(吉隆坡十一日訊)現年四十五歲的著名藝術家李健省，最近榮獲東京創作大獎海外獎，成爲在藝術領域中首個獲得上述獎項的海外藝術家。該獎項是表彰在環境、工業、文化領域有創造力的人士或企業團體。

李健省是通过现代技术，致力于創新峇迪/染色的表现手法，使之提升及发挥于现代艺术领域，因而获世界之认同和肯定。

廿五年來致力於峇迪/染色创作研究的李健省，为峇迪赋予新的

终极目标，我只有用亚洲的题材，去表现亚洲的情感与意境，把亚洲固有的文化遗产带到更高艺术境界。」

对李健省而言，击败了亚洲一百廿三名提名参赛者，赢得上述创作大奖，不啻是对他高水平作品的一种肯定，同时也鞭策与鼓舞着他迈向新的目标与挑战。

创作手法革新

根据事实，峇迪与染色是文明的产物和人类共有的文化遗产，它们并不只限于友族或东南亚的疆域中，在古埃

及、印度、中国等文明古国，已有峇迪/染色的记载。

李健省表示，峇迪/染色的创作，其空间是无限的，引伸至其他的传统性创作媒介，道理也是一样，关键的问题是要如何去开拓它而已。

榮獲多項殊榮

艺术家甚至要比社会科学家更接近当代的史实，这是李健省所一直强调的。他认为，一名艺术家必须忠于自己，不以物质为考虑的情况下，才能创出永垂不朽的作品。

李健省自十八岁开始，就在我国和国际艺坛中崭露头角，荣获国内或国际的多项殊荣。他于一九七七年以宇宙观方式处理的『铁锤与铁打雕塑系列』，强烈地展示了当代人性最深处的情感与潜在元素，七种心态，藉此传达了热爱和平的讯息，而震撼我国和国际艺坛。



▲李健省在前往東京領獎回國後，和他的其中一部峇迪/染色作品合影。



▲李健省「2020宏願」雕塑，置於馬來西亞的宏願園中，並於九月間由首相拿督斯里馬哈迪醫生主持開幕。

Klang artist wins Tokyo award for batik techniques

INTERNATIONAL artist Lee Kian Seng's 20 years in developing traditional batik techniques for modern art has earned him the Tokyo Creation Award.

The award by the Tokyo Fashion Association of Tokyo Chambers of Commerce and Industry is for remarkable contributions by individuals and organisations in any particular field.

Lee, 45, of Klang is the first artist to win the award.

This year's grand award was for excellence in the field of creation.

Lee, a well-known artist who had won many awards and prizes both locally and internationally during his 30-year career, said the award was a recognition for his contributions as a whole.

Lee, who attributed the achievement as an honour for the country, said he was touched. He was presented the award on Oct 25

in Tokyo.

He said although he had won many awards in the past, this was the first one which was awarded for his all-time contributions.

"My other prizes were for particular art pieces so this award is very unique and special," he said.

Lee received a trophy and cash prize.

The silver trophy entitled *Man Looking Towards The Future* was sculptured on a black marble base designed by Mr Taro Okamoto.

He said the award came as a surprise since he was notified about it only in early October.

Lee said the award gave him encouragement to further his experiment using batik dye techniques for modern art.

Besides the batik and dyes, Lee is more popularly known for his sculptures, oil paintings and lithography.



ELEGANT ... Lee admiring his trophy.

a travel award to attend and exhibit at the prestigious Third Asia Pacific Triennial held at the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane, Australia, she chose her extremely large work *Prosperity* which features a mountain-like shape amidst a collage of colourful ethnic-styled strips. To Timah, mountains are not only the spiritual centres described in Malay legends but also symbolise achievement and hope.

Apart from traditional motifs, Timah is also inspired by the Tibetan meditative concept of *mandala*. In Tibetan Buddhism, a *mandala* is an imaginary palace contemplated during meditation, and is often illustrated with four gates facing the four corners of the earth. Imagine a colourful concentric plan seen from the top. The *mandala* influence is most apparent in Timah's *Temple and Meditation* series.

With her numerous awards, successful solo exhibitions, intricate works in the National Art Gallery's Permanent collection and more than 30 years of creating art, one would think Timah would be happy to rest on her laurels. Not so for this petite powerhouse. Currently tenured to a local university's art and design school, Timah is keen to teach and share her knowledge and experience with young inquisitive minds.

And her future plans? "To open a batik school and establish Malaysia as a

centre of batik learning. We have a wealth of talent here and they should be nurtured and encouraged."

Fatimah Chik can be contacted on tel 012-624 9647. – *Ping Long*

LEE KIAN SENG

The Prize Winner and Innovator

At the grand old age of 18, he held his first solo exhibition to critical acclaim. At 28, he became the first Malaysian and the youngest ever artist to receive the Japan Foundation Professional Fellowship in recognition of his outstanding talent and contributions to art. In a career that has spanned almost 40 years, he has received awards – both local and international (too many to list here) – which recognise his innovation and creativity not just in the batik medium, but also in oil painting, sculpture and lithography.

In 1993, he won the prestigious Tokyo Creation Award (Overseas Prize) jointly presented by The Tokyo Fashion Association and Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry to "leaders from all walks of life and all fields". His unique and creative ideas in the exploration of batik dye techniques for modern art, the Japanese admitted, "were far more advanced than ours ... by 16 or 17 years at least." He was also the first artist to receive the award.

He is, of course, world-renowned Malaysian artist, Lee Kian Seng.

Lee was born on the isle of Kinmon but moved with his family to Singapore when he was five and subsequently settled down in Klang a year later. With the family in financial dire straits during most of his early years, young Lee had nothing but imagination and passion to stoke the fire of artistic fervour burning in him. "I was too poor to pay for the membership fees to the local school's art club, so I painted on my own." One of the boyhood pieces that has remained in Lee's collection (it can be viewed on his web-site), *Klang River* (1959) – painted when he was all of 11 years – bears testament to the huge raw talent that the young Lee had.

In retrospect, not being able to afford his art club's membership fees

Below
"Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad" (1988), produced in conjunction with "Visit Malaysia Year 1989", Batik / Dyes, approximately 72cm x 52cm



Left: 1973
"Spring" (1994)
Batik/Dyes on cotton
Approximately 5m x 5m

Below:
"Combing Hair" (1970s)
Batik/Dyes on cotton
Approximately 40cm x 30cm



Above:
"Soul Form Series" (1980s)
Batik/Wax with resist technique
100cm x 70cm

must have been a blessing in disguise. Lack of a formal art education has, in many ways, unhindered the free spirit within, enabling him to explore ideas freely, unencumbered by known schools of style or art movements.

"I have never been constrained by any methods of work nor influenced by any artist... (of) whatever paradigms – Western or Eastern... the idea overcomes medium and expression," explained Lee.

To speak only of his batik art is doing the man a great injustice, for his talent and art encompass several media. Hailed as the father of installation art by P.G. Lim, the former Malaysian Ambassador to the United Nations and one of the founding members of the National Art Gallery, Lee has, incredibly, achieved outstanding, (awe-inspiring even) results in every artistic sphere that he chose to dabble in.

To document all of Lee's work, however, would require a lot more pulp. For now, we will have to contend with his batik art, which, according to Lee, "only accounts for 20 per cent of my work." Small volume notwithstanding, great beauty and depth permeate Lee's batik works. Visually stunning and exquisitely executed, they are the works of a visionary.

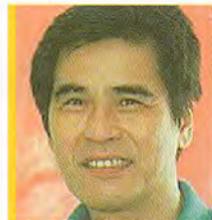
An artist once praised by the

National Art Gallery director Datuk Syed Ahmad Jamal for his immaculate craftsmanship, aesthetic sensitivity and innovative creativity, Lee is deeply committed to his craft. After years of painstaking research into batik dye techniques, he produced his *Soul and Form* series – a collection of artwork with subjects as diverse as Borobudur, Japanese *ukiyo-e* erotica and ethnicity.

Lee's researched dye techniques range from the *katazomei* (Japanese *ukiyo-e*) and *guzenzomei*, to various German methods as well.

Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad, which houses the country's Federal Court and Court of Appeal, also seems to be another source of inspiration. Its aesthetic beauty was encapsulated in Lee's *Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad*, which is an extension of the *Klang* series and *Kuala Lumpur* series done in the 60s and early 70s respectively. The piece was done in conjunction with the *Visit Malaysia 1989* campaign, though it must be said that the vehicles in it seem to be of another era.

Combing Hair and *Indian Dancers* illustrate Lee's versatility within the realm of batik painting. In these pieces, he set out and succeeded in transforming ordinary scenes into extraordinarily beautiful and lively artwork. *Indian*



LEE HUI LING AND LEE KIAN SENG

Artists

Topic: Batik: A Contemporary Art Form?

Bios

At 23, Lee Hui Ling is the youngest KLIB presenter. Hui Ling graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in New York with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Her work, "The Teahouse at Sarah Lawrence College" won the Commencement Artwork competition. She has already had a few solo exhibitions, namely "Little Book of Days" in Kuala Lumpur, and "Pictorial Journal" at Sarah Lawrence. She was awarded the Sarah Lawrence College Board of Trustees Scholarship and the Gaylord Donnelly Family Scholarship. Her first solo art exhibition of Paintings from 1992 to 2001 was at the J W Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She was awarded the Sarah Lawrence College Board of Trustees Scholarship to pursue Liberal Arts studies from September 2001 onwards.

Born in 1948, full time, self-trained, multi-media artist Lee Kian Seng has consistently received recognition at home and abroad. His submission entitled "Joy of Living" won the 3rd Prize in Category

B of a 1964 competition organized by the Art Council of Malaysia – when he was just 16. This was followed by a string of national art awards from 1966 through to major exhibitions in the 70s. Kian Seng's principal research area is "Comparative studies in dyeing art", covering technical aspects of etching, silkscreen and lithography. His explorations and innovations in the dye and resist technique (batik) medium won him the Tokyo Creation Award (Overseas Prize) in 1993. He has held 21 solo exhibitions since 1966 and been part of too many joint exhibitions to mention, winning many awards along the way. Lee has been one of the most consistent, productive and dedicated artists on the Malaysian art scene over the past 40 years. Website: www.leekianseng.com

Abstract

In this paper, Lee Hui Ling discusses the emergence of batik as a modern art form and to challenge the limitations, stereotypes and assumptions about batik as a traditional craft. The batik trade and its place in the Western art market will be discussed with regards to comparisons to traditional Western aesthetics. Lee Kian Seng will contribute the visual materials for this presentation.

An eye for resist and dye



IN STEP: His 1968 batik artwork of Indian dancers and musicians



A 'WOW' EFFECT: Kian Seng and Thai Ling unrolling one of his *Soul and Form* works

From cracked lines and pointillist highlights, to resist and dye innovations, Lee Kian Seng's batik art has truly evolved. **OOI KOK CHUEN** views his *Soul and Form*, and *Origin* works.

The batik story of artist provocateur Lee Kian Seng will finally be seen in full, and told.

For a start, his artist daughter, Thai Ling, just took from her Sarah Lawrence College studies in New York, and his "batik" works (from 1963-89), as illustrations in her talk entitled *Batik: A Contemporary Art Form* at the Kuala Lumpur International Batik Convention last month at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Then, the full spectrum of Kian Seng's resist-dyeing painting works were viewed for the first time at his Klang studio, by appointment, for five weeks after that. Batik art is not Kian Seng's only forte. He has also pushed the envelope in painting, printmaking, mixed media and three-dimensional art (the notable installation — the 1977 of *Jungle Object, Illusion Off Series Moebius* — even before the word was coined for it).

His batik art started with the usual "cracked lines" stereotypes in 1962, progressing with a

foreground-background play of Indian dancers and musicians using pointillist highlights in 1968.

In the early 1970s, he adapted the form to landscapes and urban street scenes, something difficult to accomplish given the constraints of the dye-lad methods at that time.

He achieved these with different treatments of landmarks like the Sultan Abdul Samad Building (1970), and in 1989 even a silhouette effect of the chalet of the old Kuala Lumpur Railway Station.

His veiled female forms appeared in the early 70s works, first with subtle maidens sometimes with tattoos on naked bodies from his *House of the Rising Sun* (1975) series, after the catchy 1964 song made famous by The Animals. Here, he combined the floral psychedelia of the Sixties with an art nouveau kind of ornamentation.

His female forms became mysterious and fathom-erotic; later, when he became inspired by Suttana's opiated *Allegory*

Humans. But they have become more like nymphs in patterned settings a la Botticelli than seductive vamps.

While he has already extended the picture-making possibilities of what was regarded as a batik-based medium, his next instalments of the "Soul and Form" (1982-1976-1983) and "Origin" (1986-88) are really phenomenal, moving the mind away. (In between, there is a short break-out series depicting the bikiniess.)

In discovery terms, it is like cracking the genetic code of humans, yet batik is just a label, for it really makes up only 20 per cent of what are resist/dyeing paintings.

For these staggering resist-dyeing innovations, he was awarded the Tokyo Creation Awards in 1993, by the Japanese whose process in this field is irrefutable.

For if batik dyesen Danish (Kian Seng's Thai Ling had translated a batik craft tradition into the modern pictorial format, it is Kian

Seng who pushed it in quantum leaps to the true painterly effects never thought possible.

The doubting Thomases have charged that he had applied silkscreen for the mock-photographic and mystifying "antique" surfaces *à la*. Some others even pointed to his early research in Japanese silkscreens of katayomei and yuzenomei, and German lithography and dyes.

But no, it is not silkscreen, in any variation or form. Kian Seng would only say that his works are inspired by photography and lithography techniques, besides, applying modified tools.

In batik, the control of the wax and the elusive dyes, and the treatment of the materials like cloth (cotton) and even water (with the right purity), are integral. But in Kian Seng's hands, there is no guesswork, no short cuts and no compromise. It has come to that.

He uses some 20 to 30 layers of overlaps, and meticulously paints on the images using wax.

But lest it be thought that techniques are the be-all and end-all, Kian Seng says: "While I invent my own techniques, I am not controlled by them. When things become mechanical, it's like construction."

He confides that he did experiment with the Japanese techniques, but found them too formulaic.

"There's too much grammar, but it's not writing," he insists.

"An artist has to be individualistic, based on humanitarian thinking that is sometimes universal. I believe in producing works that can last that can advance some things to people."

As he has oft intoned: "Artists are closer to contemporary truths than social scientists."

When viewing his *Soul and Form* and *Origin* works, one tends to get too caught up by the sheer sensual textures and tones — the dark, foreboding mystique of *Soul and Form*, and then the iridescent hues with positive-negative shades of his *Origin*.

What is important, perhaps



EVOLVING: The *Soul and Form* series



EPHEMERAL: The 1989 work of the old Railway Station in Kuala Lumpur



BACK TO ROOTS: Kian Seng and his *Origin* works

more so, is the resonance of the more spiritual message of the transient worldly desires and human value systems.

In his *Soul and Form* works, he has a nude soft feminine form juxtaposed against Buddhist or Hindu statuary (including the dancing Siva with ominous fireballs of redemption and damnation).

Interestingly, the use of nude female forms has its parallels in the works of his contemporaries, like in Sulaiman Esa's 1977 print, *Waiting For Godot*; the late Joseph Tan's 1968 batik-acrylic *Love Me In My Batik*; and Datuk Ibrahim Hussein's 1975 print/acrylic *Hari Ini Kita Dewasa*.

The yet earlier pieces are more symbolic, with the use of the boat bangas (ornamented prow) and kerawang (wood carvings) lintel motifs, representing a tradition, identity and cultural roots.

Some works are also infused with Islamic elements, like a visual strains of the azan reverberating from the intricate mscarabos, of the cupolas of Nasrid architecture.

The textural frieze gets turned into a colourful fuge in *Origin* (of life), with a brilliant play of the clam-shells, with its womb-like

shape, and stunning symmetry and serrated patterns. The hard, obdurate shells, through the mesmeric kaleidoscopic blend of colours, become something organic like an outer skin.

Unfired in mock sequential mode, the clams become a lotus, a symbol of purity that has been adopted by Kian Seng as his trademark. At its crudest, it even resembles the sail-like thrusts of the Sydney Opera House.

"I never go for material gain. Although the environment may be against me, not appreciating and not recognising what I do, I don't play safe. I always go for challenges.

"Some call me a gambler, doing things without knowing what's next, but life's like that."

That's Kian Seng, whose life is dedicated to art since he won the third prize in the national *Joy of Living* competition in 1964, at the age of 16 and who was given his first solo by the Art Council of Malaysia two years later.

For appointments to view his resist-and-dyeing works, call 03-3372-3351.

o o l n s t p . c o m . m y

报道：黄树发 摄影：林凯斯



李健省

防染虽然属工艺领域，不过要将之化为艺术，李健省说：“就像作文章，就语法步步为营，难能有创作；然而一味构思而无技艺底子来呈献也是徒然。”

▲李健省对“艺术史被窜改”事件是不会像这样一笑置之的。

峇迪 人类的共同遗产

配合吉隆坡国际峇迪年会，李健省将特地展出《自1963年的演化》系列。誉为本地三次元装置艺术的开拓者，他的创作媒介多元，曾获11项国家奖及2项国际奖。防染技术占了他创作总量的四分之一。

防染虽然属工艺领域，不过要将之化为艺术，李健省说：“就像作文章，就语法步步为营，难能有创作；然而一味构思而无技艺底子来呈献也是徒然。”他曾遇一位70高龄的日籍老人，告知他虽从事防染工作多年却苦思不解，李氏是如何创作出如此高难度的作品。“这就是工艺家与艺术家之分。”他说峇迪艺术创作可不是平面填色，简易成作。

“峇迪是人类的共同遗产，不要将之政治化。”据他透露，欧阳文风还会为他撰写成集，挖掘李氏在艺术圈子面对的困境。“装置艺术在本地的发展出现了断层，3间代表性的艺术学院也停滞不前，带动不了艺术潮流。”可惜，李健省至今还未公开其防染超凡技艺。“我正等着相等层次的艺术家用之传授，或在适宜的时机进行交流互相激荡。”

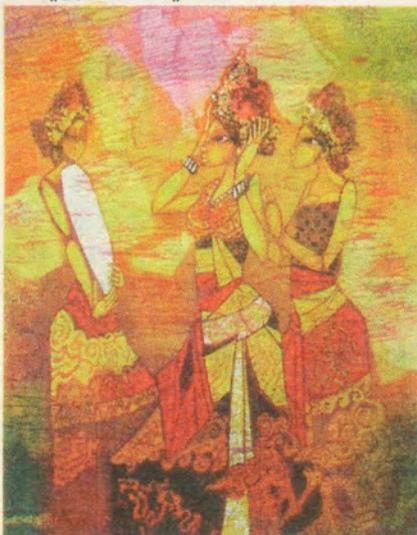


▲《魂与形》

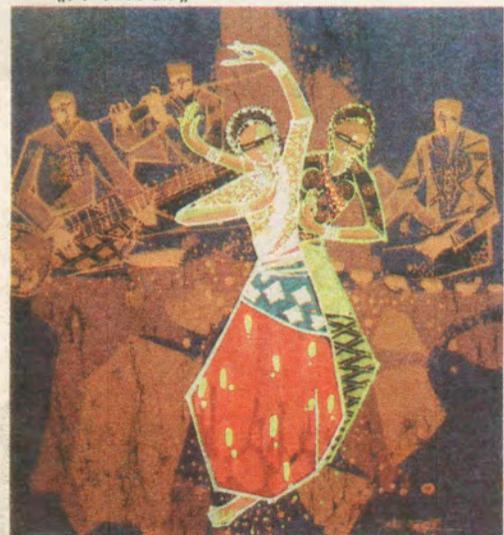
▼《盲人玩乐》



▼《峇厘艳色》



▼《舞乐齐扬》



时间：2005年12月12日至2006年1月22日
(必须预约)

电话：03-33723351

网页：www.leekianseng.com



《 Absurd(c)ity 》 @ The National Art Gallery Malaysia 2013-2014. Photo by LEE Hui Ling

