

THE EXPAT

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT YOUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME

art

BY SHARUNA SEGAREN



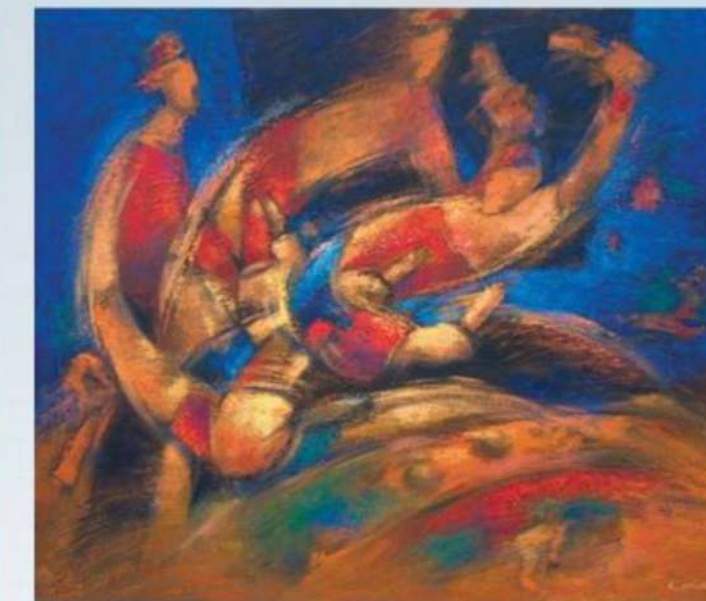
Title: Drummers & Warrior Dancer
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size: 152.5cm x 152.5cm
Year: 2017



Title: Fly To "Success"
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size: 152.5cm x 152.5cm
Year: 2017



Title: Fly Your Dream
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size: 152.5cm x 152.5cm
Year: 2017



Title: Drum and Drummer 13
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size: 152.5cm x 127cm
Year: 2009

Culture & Colour

Artist Profile: Voon Kim Cheong



Voon Kim Cheong



Title: Deers Searching Foods
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size: 61cm x 61cm
Year: 2016



Title: Teamwork
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size: 107cm x 107cm
Year: 2017

Based in Selangor, 49-year-old artist Voon Kim Cheong paints stunning abstract artworks with cultural elements in vivid colour. After graduating from Saito Academy in 1992, he continued honing his craft by learning from experienced artists. Today, he has successfully found and established his own identity as an artist through his unique artwork that perfectly embodies the rich colours and culture of Malaysia.

Kim Cheong said he is always inspired by the local culture and customs. "In multi-racial Malaysia, there is so much natural landscape and vivid culture in our surroundings. I apply these cultural elements in my paintings."

As his paintings are abstract, at first glance you might not see the subject matter. However, if you look carefully, you can see the outlines of the fluid scenes and what they really depict.

Using rough textures and dynamic combinations of colour with oils, Kim Cheong applies both gentle and strong strokes into the painting,

He said, "Personally, I get most of my ideas and concepts through sketching randomly to capture the composition, strokes, colours, and the culture elements. In my latest 'Cultural Exuberance' series, you can see that the use of abstract figure subjects focuses on wau, gasing, traditional dances, drums, children playing games such as flying paper airplanes, instruments, and textiles to highlight Malaysian elements."

In his latest series, some of the works are inspired by East Malaysia's cultural elements expressing energy in the form of pulsating drums, drummers, warrior dancers, and their instruments. He explained, "I symbolize the round-shaped drum as an amalgamation of the sun and moon, the sun is harder while the moon is soft as sometimes when you bang a drum it is hard, and other times is soft. I captured the flow of sounds, waves, and even movements by my twirling stroke gesture and energetic colours which move across the surface, overlapping form of figures and subject forming unity based on the tension between the balance of colour, shape, texture,



Title: Drum & Drummer 11
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size: 127cm x 152.5cm
Year: 2009



Title: "Wau" Kites Festival
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size: 59cm x 65cm
Year: 2016



Title: Drum & Drummer 14
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size: 152.5cm x 127cm
Year: 2009

surface, and depth. I drew figures in their finery and executed their movements in both gentle and strong strokes, drawing the force of the actions of drummers and warrior dancers. I try to communicate these issues of identity of a multicultural country with the understanding and respectful harmony of races and cultures."

His works are also focused on emotions and movements. For the Wau paintings he was fascinated and mesmerized by the graceful glides of the traditional kite. Wau flying is one

of the most popular traditional cultures on the East Coast of Malaysia. "I captured the movement of the kites in abstract form overlapping each other and apply strong and gentle strokes moving across the surface, and texture mixed with vibrant colour. The kites are viewed as a symbol of having high aspirations and elevated vision. Man always had an inherent wish to fly high in the sky and reach the sky, so this would have surely made him invent the kite that can touch the sky on his behalf, giving him the satisfaction that he indeed touched

the sky as high as he likes. The Red Sun behind overlapping the kite in this painting symbolises the 'light' and 'hope' to achieve our goal in success."

Kim Cheong emphasized, "I intend to share messages of spirit of unity, joy, strength, courage, harmony, and energy through my work, which to me, is the very essence of our Malaysian culture." ■

For more information on the artist and his paintings, please e-mail sharuna@tegmia.my.

*Wishing all
The Expat Readers
a Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year*