



**Maybank**

**WARRR!!!**

Maybank Foundation Balai Seni Art Series

**MAYBANK WOMEN ARTISTS SHOW 2020**



**RRRAWRRR!!!**

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**MAYBANK WOMEN  
ARTISTS SHOW 2020**

Balai Seni Menara Maybank  
Kuala Lumpur

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Maybank Foundation wishes to thank the curator Ms Kay Lynn Chua, the artists and everyone who has contributed to making this show a success.

This catalogue is published in conjunction with RRRRAWRRR!!! Maybank Women Artists Show 2020 at Balai Seni Menara Maybank from 9 March – 4 April 2020

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## **FOREWORD**



Countries all over the world gather in solidarity every year on the 8th of March to celebrate International Women's Day (IWD) and pay tribute to the achievements of women. First celebrated in 1911, IWD is an opportunity to correct gender-based stereotypes and channel efforts towards building gender equality in our communities.

This year's theme, #EachforEqual, is described as 'collective individualism'. This means that together, we can help create a more gender equal world, fight outdated biases, broaden perceptions and improve the quality of life of our entire communities. An equal world is an enabled world, hence gender equality is essential for economies and communities to thrive. The race to create gender equal boardrooms, gender equal media coverage, gender equal workplaces and gender equality in health and wealth has become pivotal for society.

As a leading banking group in the region, Maybank has in place a number of initiatives to recognise and enable the capabilities and contribution of women, not just within our organisation but also in the communities we serve. We strive to empower all women to be better employees, mothers, entrepreneurs and social workers so that they can create positive impacts in their communities.

One of our Corporate Responsibility programmes, the Maybank Women EcoWeavers, for instance, aims to promote traditional textiles globally in a sustainable manner whilst creating economic independence for women weavers regionally. The programme runs in three ASEAN countries – Indonesia, Cambodia, and Laos – where it has produced many new women weavers in silk weaving and provided them with sustainable income-earning opportunities.

In the arts, women have played a meaningful role despite the widely perceived gender gap in art history. Their contribution to creative arts has been significant - as patrons, collectors, and increasingly as artists. We intend to continue providing a platform for local talents, including women artists, to showcase their art, and are proud to mark this year as the third consecutive year that we have hosted the Maybank Women Artists Show RRRAWRR!!! at our gallery, Balai Seni Maybank. The exhibition celebrates women's creativity and strengths, and aims to inspire others to express themselves for the benefit of society. Maybank is, therefore, proud to present the works of 15 talented female artists in this show in honour of all women around the world on this occasion of International Women's Day 2020.

**Datuk Mohaiyani Shamsudin**

Chairman of Maybank and Maybank Foundation

## **FOREWORD**



The Maybank Group is steadfast in its commitment to the arts. Our strategy to achieve our corporate responsibility and community involvement goals is implemented by Maybank Foundation, with Arts and Culture being one of the key areas of focus. The group has had a long history of support for local artists and artistic media practitioners. Balai Seni Maybank, set up thirty-two years ago in 1988, has held over 35 exhibitions, delighting countless visitors, as well as encouraging young talents.

We have also built up one of the largest corporate collections in the country. It consists of over 500 original works of art, many of which are on display on the walls of our offices and branches. Our collection showcases the charm and vigour of people and their lives. It is mostly sourced from the art exhibitions and competitions that we organise, and is steadily growing with new acquisitions. By acquiring artwork, we support artists, raise funds for charities and foster a feeling of pride in the communities where we live.

In the past three years alone, Maybank has been host to 12 exhibitions featuring young contemporary artists, revitalising the local art scene and attesting to the group's commitment to creativity and growth. Presented to the public under the Balai Seni Art Series, they include the annual Merdeka Art Show and MyTIGER Values Art Competition which drew overwhelming participation from art students from 27 Malaysian colleges last year. The Maybank Women Eco-Weavers is a travelling exhibition that we presented in Singapore recently.

In honour of International Women's Day (8 March), Balai Seni Maybank is again pleased to present the Maybank Women Artists Show RRRAWRRR!!!, currently in its third edition. Since its inception in 2018, this show has inspired many women artists to come forward and participate while exploring a wide range of media and themes. It aspires to encourage women to express themselves artistically and create in the spirit of affirmation, exploration and renewal.

This time, fifteen talented female artists from diverse backgrounds and of all ages and levels of artistic experience will be sharing their art and stories, be it the exploration of gender aesthetics, familial relationships, motherhood or identity. The wide range of media in the exhibit includes works in oil and acrylic, as well as mixed media, printmaking, installation, paper sculpture, fibre arts and video production.

RRRAWRRR!!! celebrates female artists from all walks of life and their journey throughout life as women, and viewers will have the rare opportunity to garner insight into womanhood at different stages of life. It runs from 9 March to 4 April 2020 and will be a good occasion to reflect on what the women in your life mean to you. Happy International Women's Day 2020, #EachforEqual.

**Shahril Azuar Jimin**  
CEO of Maybank Foundation

## ***CURATOR'S NOTE***

While an artist's incentive for adopting a craft ranges widely, many strive to excel in the field of fine art. Practicing fine art is highly regarded and revered by society due to the significant skill, intellect and aesthetic acuity needed to produce a work of art.

Throughout centuries women have been artists. As an individual, 'she' is a creator, an innovator of new art forms, a critic, and an art historian. In the collective, women continue to participate in artistic institutions although challenges stubbornly linger. Gender biases, lack of recognition, exclusive environments, and societal discrimination are just some of the difficulties women must face on a regular basis in the art world.

Before the feminist arts movement in the 60s and 70s, female artists were systematically excluded from the arts. A woman's creative potential was limited as her creative place could only be accepted by society if she weaved, sewed, designed clothes, or produced pottery. While they were pieces of art in their own respect, these artistic mediums were pejoratively labelled as 'decorative' or 'craft', never to achieve the same level of 'fine art' accorded to sculptures and paintings produced by their male counterparts. Societally, women were discouraged from pursuing art education or training. The result of this discrimination was twofold. First, there was the ignorance of women's arts – works were left unrecognised as everyday objects used in the household. Second, male artists dominated the field, looking down on women attempting to disrupt the status quo.

As centuries passed, women artists persisted and continued producing decorative arts. As a result of this they promoted marginalised modes of artistic production and challenged the power structure that denied women their rightful place as fine artists. As craft revolutionised contemporary art, its position has shifted from a 'domestic' practice into a higher form of feminist art.

RRRRAWRRR!!! Maybank Women Artists Show 2020 presents artwork from 15 artists: Mastura Abdul Rahman, Amy Hashim, Nor Mahnun Mohamed, Chong Yi Lin, Stephanie Zu Shin, Jolene Tew, Tsa Meera, Alya Hatta, Izzati Shahrin, Winnie Cheng, Liew Sze Lin, Poojitha Menon, Nabihah Haiyee, Maya Schmidt and Chew Win Chen.

The exhibition showcases works in a variety of mediums that are traditionally practiced by females to emphasise the fact that methodologies that were once deemed 'decorative' or 'craft' has finally levelled to a fine art status.

The artworks reconcile creative expression by using materials, methodologies, symbols, mediums, and personal narratives as a voice to illuminate female narratives. Such expressions can be viewed through Liew Sze Lin's fabric arrangements illuminating her family relationships or Mastura Abdul Rahman's Interior Series. The series shows paintings of bird's eye view of her home, telling a story about her journey as a housewife.

As artists of different ages, backgrounds, and abilities contribute to the inclusivity of the show, viewers are able to glimpse into what it is like to be a woman at different stages of life. Be it the exploration of gender aesthetics, familial relationships, motherhood or identity, this exhibition celebrates female artists from all walks of life and the challenges they face throughout life as women.



*Kay Lynn Chua (b. 1995, Kuala Lumpur) holds a bachelor's degree in fine arts from the California Institute of the Arts. Herself as an artist and a writer, she has co-curated 'Works On Paper: Art Inside the Wallet' at Bank Negara Malaysia Museum and Art Gallery and 'She Who Paints Her Own Story' at A.P Art Gallery.*



## ALYA HATTA

b.1999, Selangor

Alya Hatta is a multi-disciplinary artist studying fine art at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is currently focusing on the 'individual', using herself and her memories in vulnerable self-confessional artwork – picking into her past and reflecting on a romanticised childhood. On the other hand, the artist is also focused on society, delving into cultural patterns and tropes and trying to make sense of the meaning of identity and how one lives through time and space.

The artist channels intimate experiences of the past and re-appropriates them into a present time, allowing these memories to resurface new ones and developing a practice of art that generates itself. This is reflected in her paintings where the works are birthed from quick instances of thought, crystallising ephemeral moments in the medium of the present. There is an element of uncertainty in the combination of 'then' and 'now' where a meta form of embodiment is created through paint on canvas.



*That One Weird Teacher with the Sandals* 2019 Oil, pastel & spray paint on canvas 180 x 90 cm





*I broke the mirror* 2019 Oil, pastel & spray paint on canvas 180 x 210 cm



*Meat Factory* 2018 Oil on canvas 122 x 180 cm

## AMY HASHIM

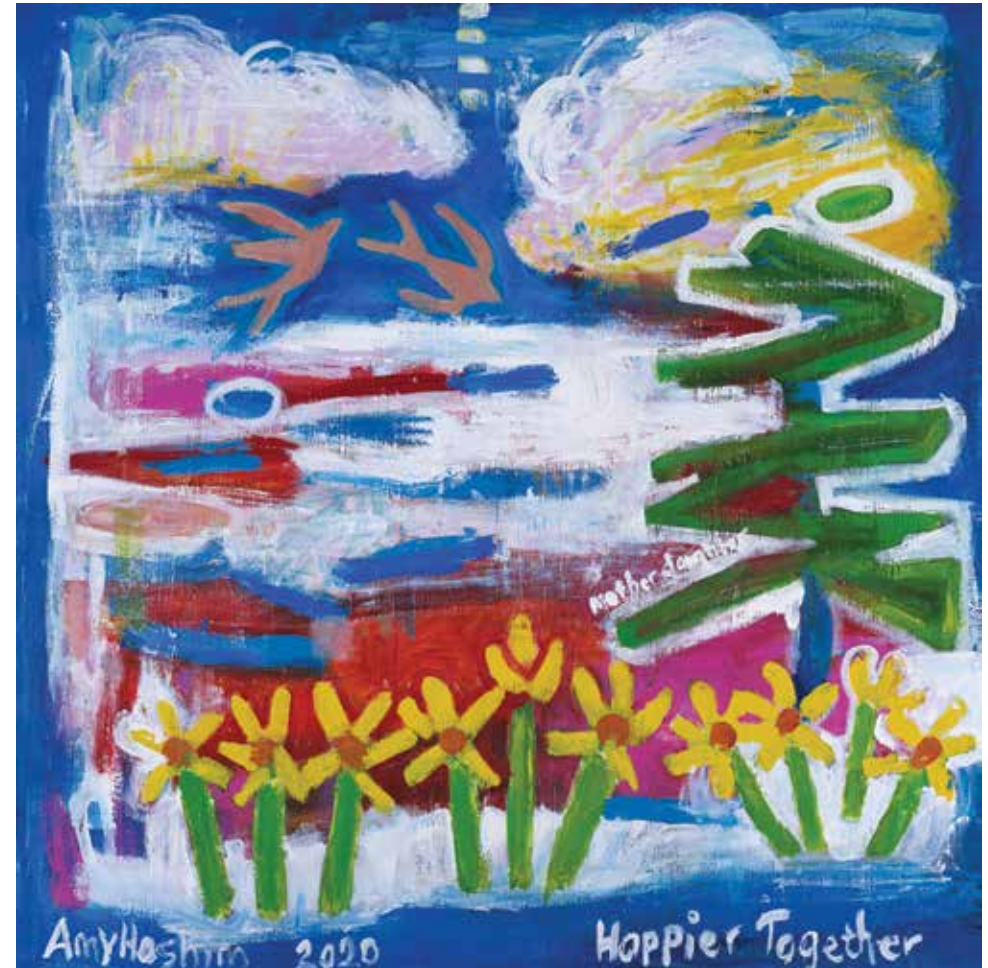
b.1971, Kota Bharu, Kelantan

Amy Hashim is a self-taught artist and a mother of three who cooks, gardens and paints. Her works are inspired by nature and landscapes. She aims to bring to life the feelings and emotions of the landscape to allow viewers to view it in a way 'they have never seen it in real life'. Amy uses technology to reproduce the work in prints on both the canvas and silk textile. The multiple ways of reproducing her work allows her to share it with as many people as possible.

The impressionistic oil painting *Paddy Field* from her popular *Kampung* series was borne out of the frequent trips she had made to the rural areas of Malaysia where paddy fields abound, rice being the staple food of the nation.

*Happier Together* is a mother-daughter collaborative work, inspired by her seven year-old daughter, Ayescha who made a similar sketch while they were having tea at a café. It was developed further on a bigger scale using in acrylic to amplify the effect.

*Pause and Smell the Flowers* is a tribute to her flower garden. The artist grows a variety of flowers such as scented kesidang, roses, blue butterfly peas, white jasmines and water lilies in the garden. Greeting friends and visitors to her home-based studio and gallery, the garden is also a muse to inspire creativity.



*Happier Together* 2020 Acrylic on canvas 152 x 152 cm



*Paddy Field* 2019 Oil on canvas 153 x 91cm



*Pause and Smell the Flowers* 2020 Mixed media on canvas 121 x 121cm

## CHEW WIN CHEN a.k.a OKUI LALA

b. 1991, George Town, Penang

Okui Lala is an artist and cultural worker based in Penang and Kuala Lumpur. She studied media arts at the Multimedia University, Cyberjaya. Her practice often employs an autobiographical approach using photography, video, performance and public engagement, exploring the themes of diaspora, home and belonging through domestic acts or vocational labour such as sewing, cooking, conversing and building. Her recent presentation was at Yamaguchi Art Centre for Arts and Media, Japan.

*Sewing & Sew Eng* is Okui Lala's first collaborative work, originally made for the Good Malaysian Women exhibition at Publika, Kuala Lumpur in 2014. Sew Eng is the name of her mother who is a seamstress and 40 years older. They sew together. Each with a sewing machine of a different operating system, on a single piece of cloth placed between them. In this piece, Okui becomes both the subject and artist-performer who negotiates with her mother in the making of a work where questions arise and different identities emerge: the languages they speak, the environments they were brought up in and the notion of home that differs among the generations.



## CHONG YI LIN

b.1992, Kuala Lumpur

Chong Yi Lin has been exhibiting actively since 2013 and recently completed her degree in fine arts at the Taipei National University of Arts, Taiwan. Awed by the needlework that weaves and embeds emotions in a piece of cloth while holding them together, Yi Lin ventures on a process of mark-making in textile art.

In the *Evanescent Series*, she explores emotions in the bereavement and loss of loved ones. Death and loss is inevitable, while the grief may pass or last a long time. The Good Morning towel is a metaphor of grief in Yin Lin's childhood, originating from a scene at her great grandmother's funeral procession. In the traditional Chinese funeral, the bereaved family gives the Good Morning towel to wipe away the tears, sweat and bad luck.

In the *Amulets Series*, she explores the state of emotions with the passing of time. Memory erodes in time and there is only 'now'. The transfer prints on the child's singlet redefine the meaning of loss and sorrow, the abstract images being a metaphor of the eternal. Life-like images of flowers, moss, wounds and others serve as the non-verbal storytelling of her memories.



*Amulets Series* 2019 Mixed media on linen Dimensions variable



*Evanescent Series (I-X)*

2017 Thread, eastern gouache, mineral pigment ink on Good Morning towels Dimensions variable

## IZZATI SHAHRIN

b. 1991, Subang Jaya, Selangor

Izzati Sharin is a special needs and self-taught artist who started painting in her teens. Colours, patterns and flowers are her passion. Her painting of people began with multicoloured dots and squares on faces only, with no bodies, though later she began to study the human body, particularly of dancers and their movements.

*Gemalai Bonekaku* reflects Izzati's fascination with the Malay classical dance after watching her sister and others perform the dance. She sees the dancers as 'boneka' (dolls), though they remain 'gemalai' (graceful).

Almost in everything she paints, there will be flowers and a riot of colours, raw and mixed in ways one cannot imagine, as evident in this *Flowers in M'dala* series.

*Kaler Kayuku* represents a new medium and journey of discovery for Izzati. Venturing into 3D art and, she would use pieces of wood, fabric or whatever she can find and paint them in blazing hues.



*Gemalai Bonekaku* 2020 Acrylic on Canvas 76 x 101 cm



*Flowers in M'dala* 2020 Acrylic on Canvas 76 x 76 m



*3 Kayuku* 2019 Acrylic on upcycled wood panel 53 x 66 x 8.5 cm





*Kaler Kayuku* Acrylic on upcycled wood panel 25 x 62.5 x 4 cm

## JOLENE TEW

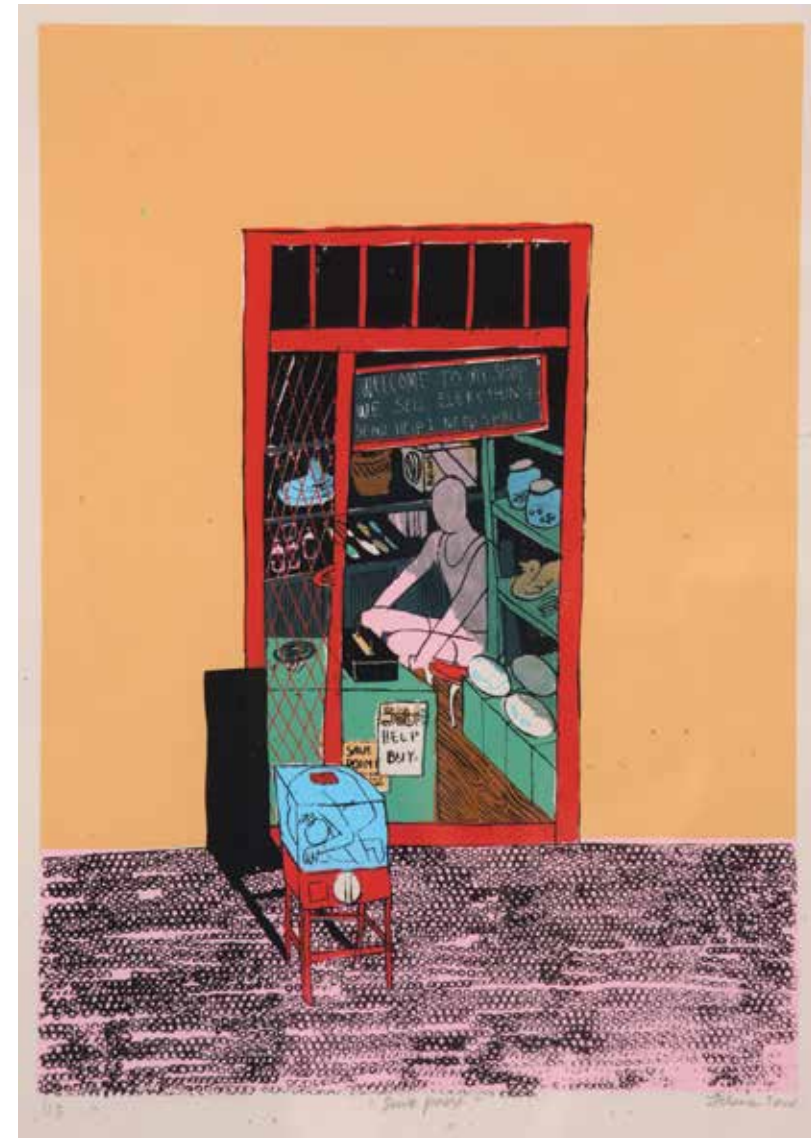
b.1989, Kuala Lumpur

Jolene Tew is an illustrator and printmaker based in Kuala Lumpur. She has an MA in Illustration from the University of the Arts, London. Deriving inspiration from the past and the present, her art springs from the many adventures and misadventures she chances upon. Finding critters under the stones and bricks, climbing trees and exploring the lush greenery near where she grew up were her favourite childhood activities. Her work often features elements found in dollhouses, invoking a sense of comfort and nostalgia.



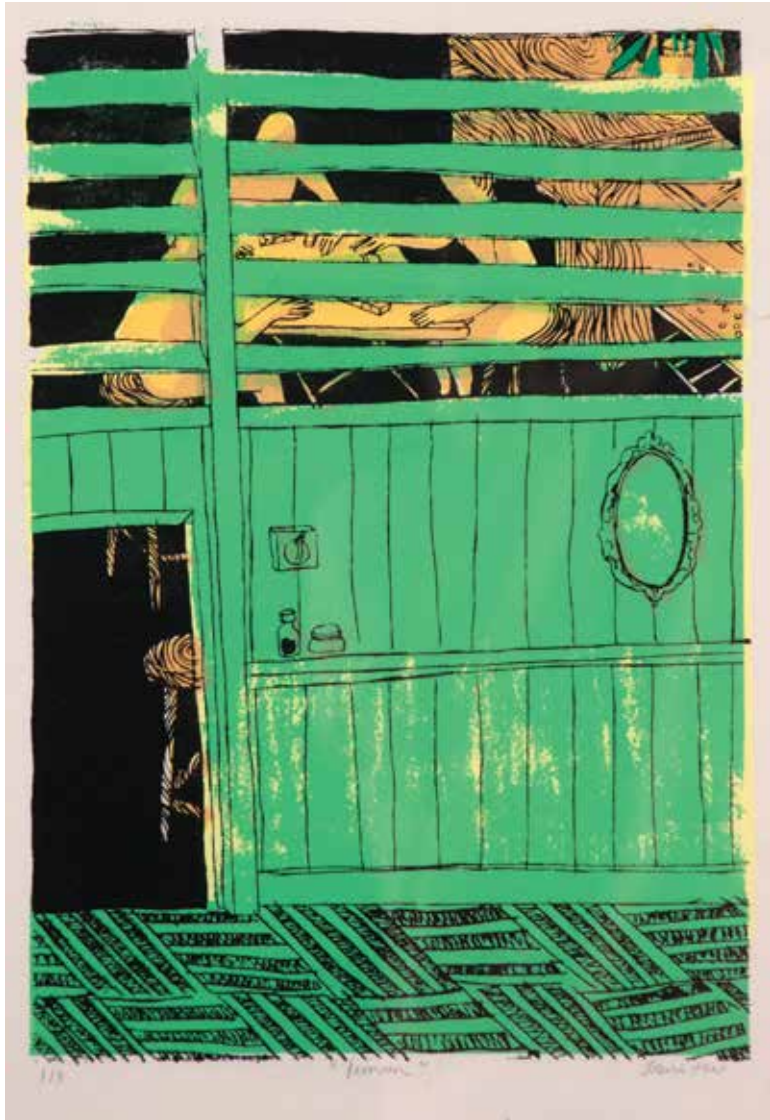
*Embracing Heat*

2019 Silkscreen on fabriano paper 20 x 20 cm



*Save Point*

2019 Silkscreen on fabriano paper 28 x 20cm



Reunion 2019 Silkscreen on fabiano paper 28 x 20 cm



A House That Doesn't Exist 2018 Silkscreen on fabiano paper 28 x 20 cm

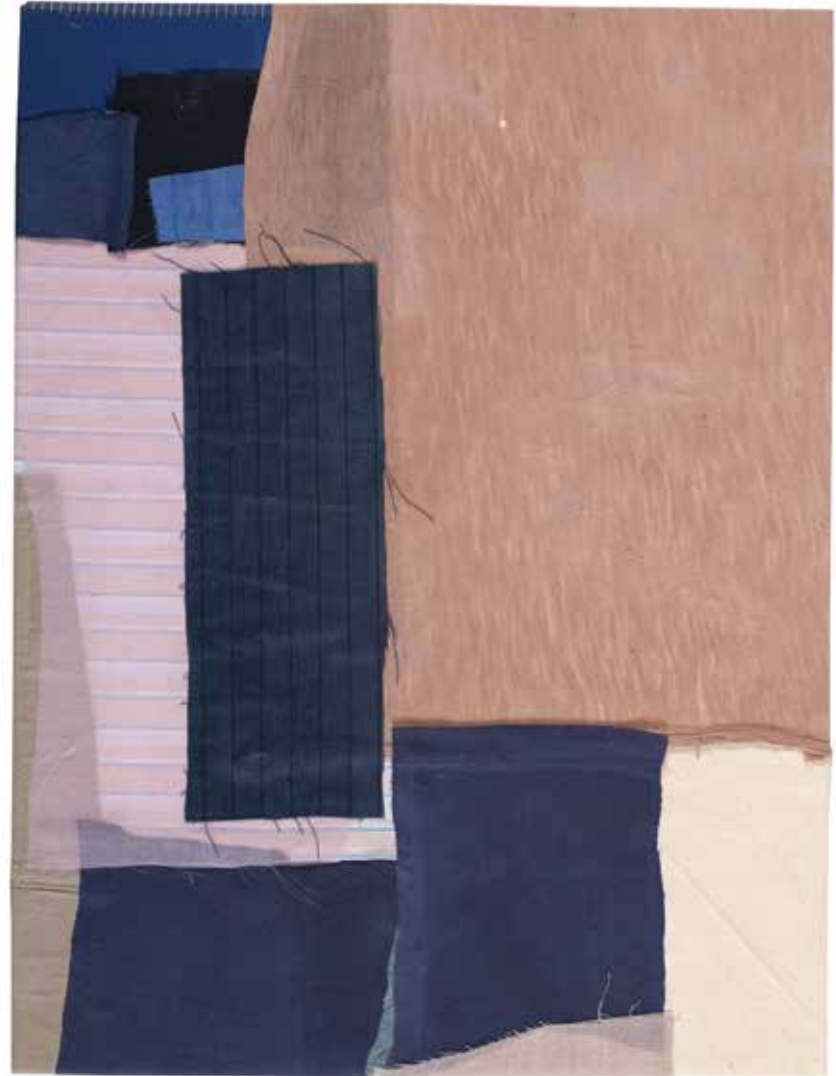
## LIEW SZE LIN

b.1988, Kuala Lumpur

Liew Sze Lin studied art at Dasein Academy of Art and has been working from a small studio next to her house in Kuala Lumpur. She was inspired to pursue a career in art after a year-long travel around Europe and a tour of its famous art centres.

Sze Lin tries to reach an understanding of materiality through her collection of materials; the collage of mixed mediums such as loose seams and paper cut-outs, deconstructing and reconstructing the fabrics to blur the line between function and form, and expanding them beyond their definitive identities.

This new found medium consists of discarded clothing and materials that had been used by family members. The artist wants to highlight the relevance of transitional ideas and events that have taken place within the objects, instead of deducing meaning on the surface appearance of the work. It frames the context where the daily activities of each family member are placed in a work, raising a question on how interrelation is built through connection.



*Reunion* 2020 Gunny sack, fabric, mesh, canvas, thread, pva glue and acrylic 117 x 85 cm



*Her Temper* 2020 Fabric, mesh, canvas, pva glue on canvas 53 x 41 cm



*Her Secret* 2020 Fabric, mesh, thread, pva glue on canvas 45.5 x 45.5 cm



*Her Mind* 2020 Fabric, mesh, thread, pva glue on canvas 55 x 50 cm

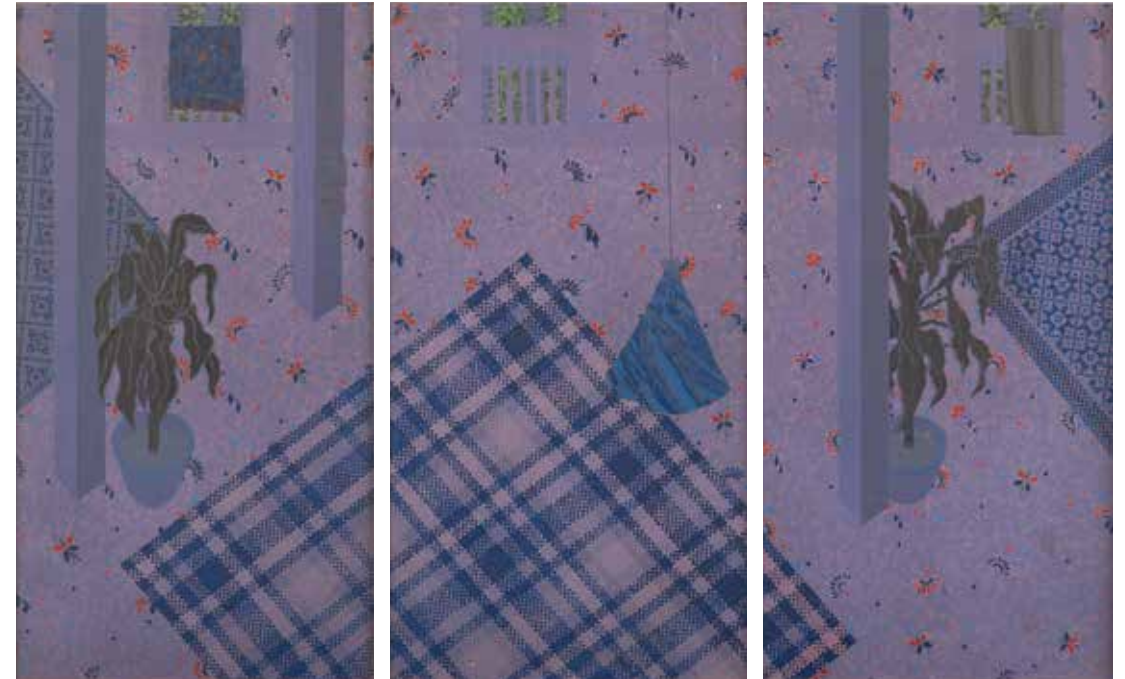


*A Man and a Women* 2020 Gunny sack, fabric, mesh, acrylic and thread on canvas 83 x 78 cm

## MASTURA ABDUL RAHMAN

1973, Singapore

Mastura Abdul Rahman studied art formally – drawing, painting, sculpture and print making – at UiTM, Shah Alam and won a major prize at the prestigious Bakat Muda Sezaman art award in 1986. Her work is influenced by Persian and Mughal miniature paintings, Ukiyo-e prints and the Malay traditional architecture and decorative arts. When she became a mother in 1991, she started to include her children's toys, as objects of interest, imbuing her compositions with family life, and later on moving to childhood narratives and everyday life. Mastura's *Interior Series* shows a bird's eye view of her home, telling a story about her journey as a housewife.



*Siri Dalam* 1983 Acrylic on canvas 66 x 107.5 cm



Interior 1997 Mixed media on canvas 31 x 61 cm



## MAYA SCHMIDT

b. 1995, Kuala Lumpur

Maya Schmidt is an illustrator and comics artist from Kuala Lumpur. She studied Illustration at the University of the Arts, London. She enjoys creating comics and work inspired by her daily life, as well as finding out about things supernatural and strange with the world. Currently working as a graphic recorder, Maya's series of illustrations explores her own understanding of what womanhood looks like, conveyed through key moments of her mother's life.



*Second* 2020 Risograph on paper 21 x 30 cm



*First Marriage* 2020 Risograph on paper 21 x 30 cm



After School 2020 Risograph on paper 30 x 21 cm



Chiku Tree 2020 Risograph on paper 30 x 21 cm



Hockey 2020 Risograph on paper 21 x 30 cm



Commute 2020 Risograph on paper 21 x 30 cm

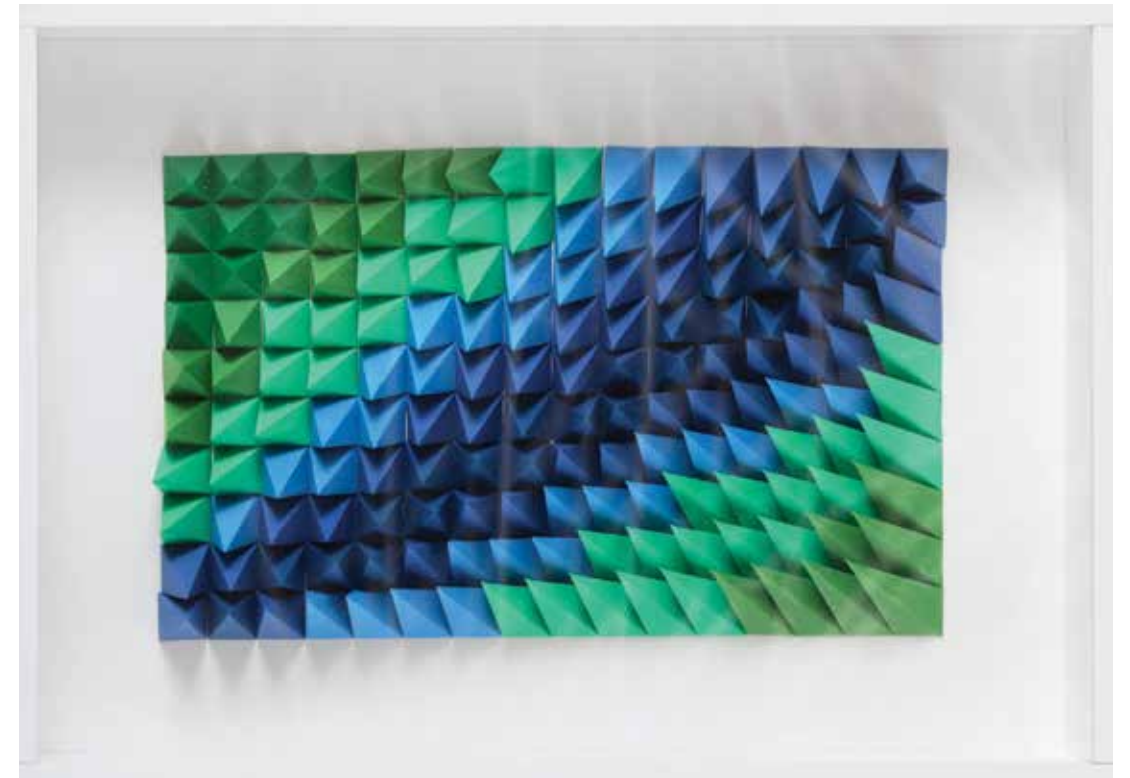
## NABIHAH HAIYEE

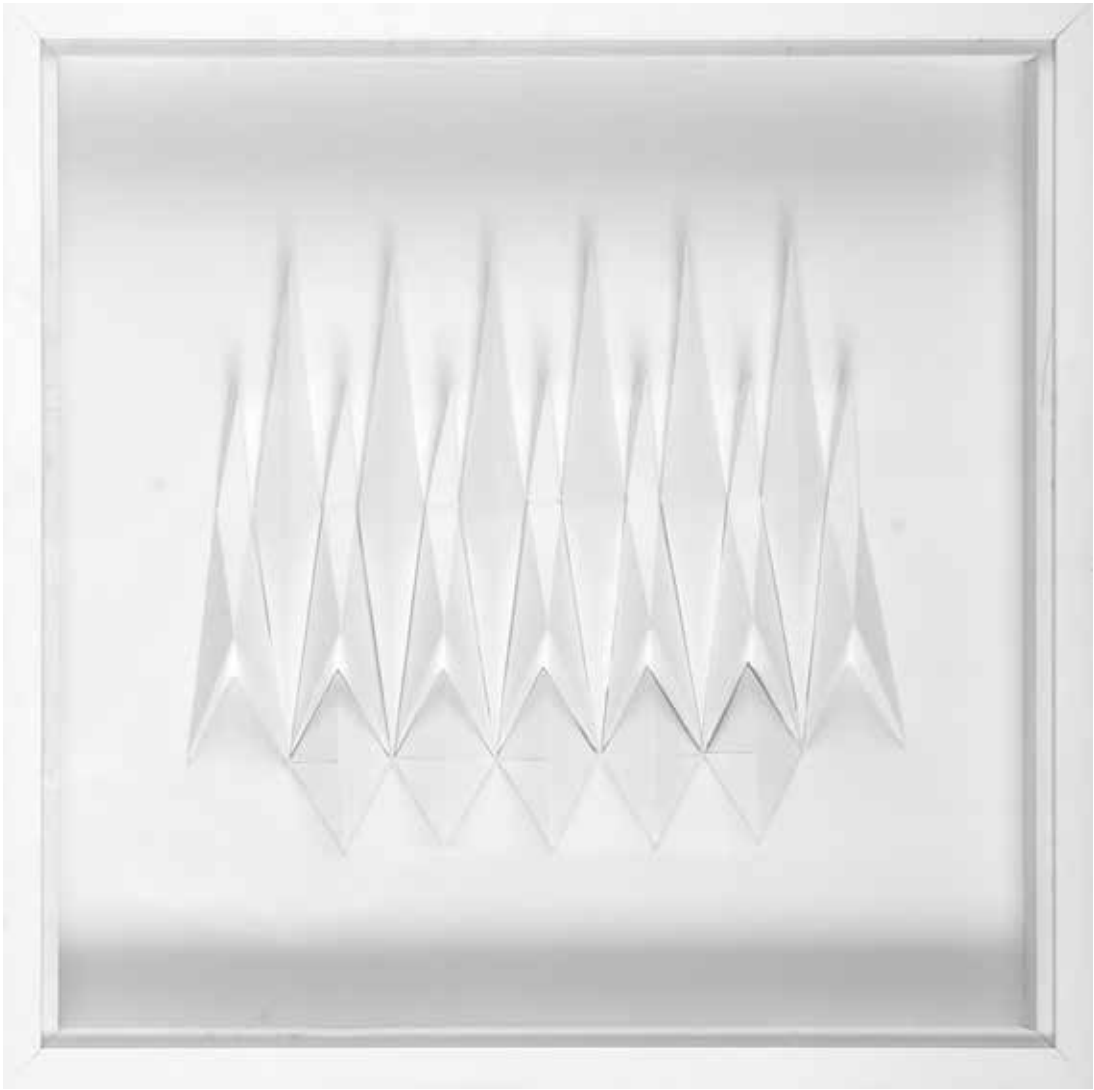
b.1990, Kuala Lumpur

Nabihah Haiyee studied architecture at Universiti Malaya (BA) and the University of East London (MA). Her fascination with paper art began with her first encounter with origami. Learning from books on the subject, she began making paper sculpture, eventually exhibiting her *Animal Instinct* paper sculpture series for the first time at a UM art exhibition in 2012. As an architect, she continues to experiment with paper sculpture and making installations for art exhibitions and permanent landscapes.

*Arus* is 'doubt, fragile, chance, fate, blurry, freedom, expectation, blessing, dependent, regret, indecision, just do it, uncertainty, perfection, anxious, failure, process, surprise, opportunity, unexpected, dynamic, prospect, reward, inferior, trust, trial, real, unknown, error, insecurity, drowning, determination, faith, liberty, possible, risk, escape, flexible, afraid, impossible, flaw, virtue, greed, decision'.

*Muka Depan* is the artist's attempt to develop a geometric iteration of landmark buildings in a city using paper as a medium. A city is shared with those who have lived there before us and those who will be borne after us. Everything in the city from man-made to natural is ever changing except for the standing buildings. They are the familiar and permanent faces in space, forming the identity and genius loci of the city. What if these faces also change with the passing of time as much as other elements in the city? Would it change the identity of the city?





*Muka Depan* 2019 Paper 50 x 50 cm

## NOOR MAHNUN MOHAMED

b. 1964, Pasir Puteh, Kelantan

Noor Mahnun Mohamed studied art at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Braunschweig, Germany and obtained an MA in Fine Art in 1996. As an artist, she has had several solo and group exhibitions. She has also curated a number of art shows and taught art and design courses at art colleges in the Klang valley.

These objects and patterns oil paintings in this exhibition are a continuation of her previous work, which started with watercolour and graphite on paper works. The pairing is chosen for its visual coherency. It is also an attempt at 'match-making' the underlying theme of the subject with a repetitive design.



*Sarsi* 2020 Oil on linen 30.5 x 51 cm (Diptych)



Saline 2020 Oil on Linen 30.5 x 61 cm (Diptych)



Spray 2020 Oil on linen 30.5 x 51 cm (Diptych)

## POOJITHA RAVI MENON

1979, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

Poojitha Ravi Menon is a self-taught artist who hails from Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. She moved to Malaysia in 2003 and has taken part in many exhibitions in the country and internationally.

Drawing inspiration from the daily happenings around her, she pours them onto the canvas, where the work becomes a talking point, coaxing the viewer to engage with it. As an artist and a mother, Poojitha cherishes the freedom she gets from an empty canvas, which enables her to push beyond the emotional setbacks, society set rules, roles, labels and boundaries, and seek answers to some important questions; Are we as women in 2020 really free? Who am I? What is my worth? Who really decides my freedom?

Badan is an ongoing collection of semi-realistic figurative oil works, thematically related to current affairs; be it social, personal or political, represented both in animal and human forms; eventually encompassing installations and sculptural works.



*Finding Uri* 2019 Oil & silkscreen print on canvas 147 x 122 cm





*Eve's War* 2020 Oil & screen print on canvas 147 x 122 cm



*Emotions of a God* 2020 Oil & mixed media on canvas 101 x 76 cm

## STEPHANIE TAM ZHU SHIN

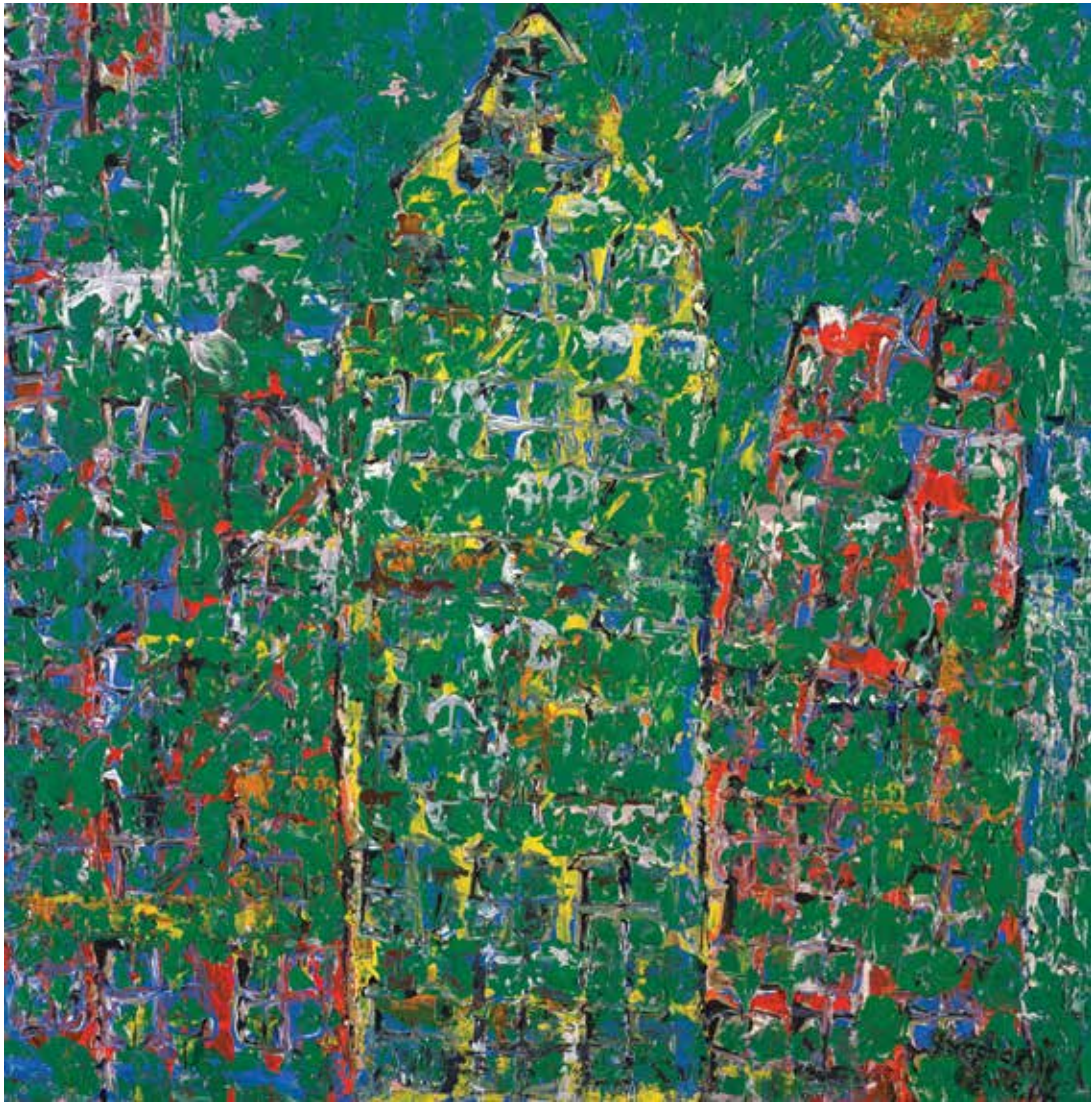
b.1998, *Petaling Jaya, Selangor*

Stephanie Tam Zhu Shin is self-taught abstract impressionist who was born autistic. She started painting since she was very young and has completed more than 300 pieces and won many awards for her paintings since 2011.

Because of her autism, Stephanie finds it difficult to express herself in words and art became a channel of expression. Her perception and understanding of colour is unique and each piece of work is vibrant and teeming with meaning. 'Life is like a picture. I need to paint it colourful'. The artist reveals her inner emotions towards individual human beings, animals, objects and nature and draws us into an enigmatic realm, a world that we do not see, normally.



*Gaze* 2015 Acrylic on canvas 41 x 41 cm



*Summer Reign* 2016 Acrylic on canvas 88 x 88 cm



*Misty Autumn* 2016 Acrylic on canvas 88 x 83 cm



*Live - Full Bloom* 2020 Acrylic on canvas 127 x 97 cm

## TSA MEERA

b. 1989, Bayan Baru, Penang

Tsa Meera studied digital media at Multimedia University, Cyberjaya and has an MA in Fine Arts and Technology from UiTM. She aims to merge traditional art practices with digital technology and take the best of both worlds, and has been experimenting with metaphors and science in her concepts and themes throughout her artistic development. She joined an Artist Residency with Waley Art in Taipei, Taiwan where she held OCCUR, a showcase on the discoveries of being in a new town.

Tsa Meera uses optical art in expressing the notion of duality. The duality of feeling hollow and full. Behind every lonely being is the realization that you are never alone. It is through the cracks that the light can come through. 'Don't be afraid to be broken'.



*Mind Body Spirit* 2020 Acrylic on canvas, spray paint 127 x 101.5 cm

## WINNIE CHENG a.k.a ERYN

b. b. 1983, Sg. Petani, Kedah

ERYN is a Penang-based artist who creates quaint and surreal work using drawing, painting, cutouts and collage, delving into human psychology, self-identity and gender issues. She holds a Masters in Art from the University of Brunei Darussalam and won the Gold Award in the Emerging Artist category of the UOB Painting Competition (2015).

*The Birdcage* series examines the power imbalance faced by women. Each birdcage is like a mass-produced home, like a terrace house, that has been turned into a gilded cage for its occupants. The perceived sense of security is a sham as snakes and other monsters can easily trespass.

The pieces are executed on cut canvas and are part of an exploration to create another dimension on a flat piece of work. Small sections are carefully sliced away, leaving an intricate surface with a sense of depth. At the same time, these cutout cages help to hold the subject of the painting in place, like insects in a spider's web.



*Cherry Whispers* 2019 Acrylic on canvas 92 x 61 cm



*The Myth of Flying* 2019 Acrylic on canvas 92 x 61 cm



*Nothing is Sacred* 2019 Acrylic on canvas 92 x 61 cm

## ABOUT MAYBANK FOUNDATION



Maybank Foundation has been the strategic driver of Maybank Group's community programs since it was inaugurated in 2010, in conjunction with the Group's 50th anniversary. The Foundation's mandate is to create positive, long-term impact in communities in the markets where Maybank operates. It strives to identify programs that will have the most tangible and sustainable results, in line with Maybank's mission of humanising financial services.

Maybank Foundation focuses on six key areas, namely;

EDUCATION	COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT	HEALTHY LIVING	ARTS & CULTURE	ENVIROMENTAL DIVERSITY	DISASTER RELIEF
Empower future leaders in the finance community	Ensure inclusiveness of those in the communities	Promote community compassion	Promote artistic creativity of the youths	Help protect the planet's diversity for future generations	Mobilize employees together with partners in disaster situation, locally and regionally

In all six areas and in every country it operates in, Maybank Foundation is focused on activities and programs that would create meaningful, measurable and sustainable impact, in line with Maybank's mission of humanising financial services.



