

ingenious  
Soul

The text 'ingenious Soul' is rendered in a lowercase, sans-serif font. Each letter is filled with a unique, vibrant illustration. The 'i' shows a landscape with a blue sky and green hills. The 'n' depicts a forest with trees and a path. The 'g' is a dense collage of various patterns and colors. The 'e' features a landscape with a yellow sun and green fields. The 'i' contains a scene with two elephants in a forest. The 'o' shows a tree with a yellow background and colorful leaves. The 'u' is a collage of various elements including a house and a sun. The 's' is a colorful abstract pattern. The 'S' in 'Soul' features a woman's face with a blue background. The 'o' is a collage of various elements including a house and a sun. The 'u' is a collage of various elements including a house and a sun. The 'l' is a vertical strip of colorful patterns.



# ingenious Soul

ALI AKBAR OTHMAN • ARTJAMILA • ELLY NOR SURIA • ISMAIL BABA • KHAIRULSANI ISMAIL • LYNA KHAIRI  
NANCY LUA CHING SING • WIDODO SOERONO • YEANNI KOO • ZURIN SHAARI

10 JANUARY – 25 JANUARY 2019  
Galeri Prima, Balai Berita Bangsar

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**G**A L E R I prima **NEW STRAITS TIMES**

## IN THE REALMS OF AN INGENUOUS WORLD

Art is mind therapy. It speaks without words, it's a stress reliever, and it can make you smile and bring your mind to a different world. These are only part of the things that art can do to us.

Planning an art exhibition with a fresh, experiential and more exciting display is always inspiring but curating a show that grabs people's attention can be challenging.

Nonetheless, Galeri Prima is committed in promoting and providing a platform for artists; young or senior and established or budding, to showcase their talents and art from all genres. This includes offering the space to autodidact artists.

An autodidact does not mean they can't produce amazing work and be a great artist. Their passion is equally the same as the professional artists.

"Don't think about making art, just get it done. Let everyone else decide if it's good or bad, whether they love it or hate it. While they are deciding, make even more art." Andy Warhol once said.

This is evident when the work of an autodidact artist, Jean-Michel Basquiat, the masterpiece "Untitled", was auctioned for USD\$110.5 million at a Sotheby auction in New York in May 2017.

We ended our 2018 shows with a contemplative and sophisticated exhibition that challenged our mind. Ushering in the 2019 calendar, we kick-start our show with a simple, ingenious and unsophisticated yet lively display.

Painters participating in this exhibition adopt naïfete as a style. It's a style that is usually, but not exclusively, dictated by inexperience. It rejects conventional expertise in the representation or depiction of real objects and formal knowledge of methods. In short, they are self-taught.

However, the perception that the naïfete is practised by self-taught artists is no longer valid. These days, there are academies for this style. There are more schooled and academic painters who imitate and adopt naïfete to produce their artwork.

Ten young emerging and senior artists - a mixture of self-taught ones, including an autism teenager and fine art background artists - jointly participate in **Ingenious Soul**. They are Ali Akbar Othman; Elly Nor Suria; Ismail Baba; Khairulsani Ismail; Yeanni Koo; Nancy Lua Ching Sing; Lyna Khairi; Artjamila; Widodo Soerono and Zurin Shaari.

Ingenious means (of a person) clever, original, creative and inventive, whereas soul

means the spiritual or immaterial part of a human being or animal, regarded as immortal and emotional or intellectual energy or intensity, especially as revealed in a work of art or an artistic performance.

The exhibition is from 10 to 25 January 2019 at Galeri Prima, divided into genres such as Outsider Art, Primitive Art, Folk Art, Naïve Art and Marginal Art.

Primitive Art is usually simplistic in form and colour, using repetitive and tribal motif and lacking in conventional motifs like chiaroscuro, linear perspective and other types of proportionality.

Folk Art is used to express cultural identity. The works are often instilled with a sense of tradition and community. Folk artists are less concerned with the traditional rules of perspective and proportion that are revered in canonical art history and more focused on expressing their cultural identity.

Marginal Art is close to Art Brut and Outsider artists, both in appearance and directness of expression. These are the artists 'on the margins', that grey area of definition that lies between Outsider Art and normal mainstream art.

Outsider Art is about creating work that is not cognizant of academic traditions or normal artistic criteria. Naïve artists may be consciously ignoring these rules of representation.

In summary, all paintings in **Ingenious Soul** range from true examples of artistic expression free of formality, to those works that are acting in a self-conscious or imitative way to reproduce a look of childlike simplicity.

They used both conventional and unconventional approach to keep pace with the contemporary art scene. The works are pure, sincere and authentic expression of emotion. In short, they paint from their souls.

In the words of Jean Dubuffet - Art is a language, an instrument of knowledge, an instrument of communication.

Enjoy the show and let's appreciate ART!

**Azlynn Aziz**

Galeri Prima

# NAÏVE ART

There is a genre of art that is found in almost every country, hung on the walls of the most famous galleries, and created by some of the most acclaimed and talented artists. I am referring to none other than naïve art! Yet despite so much going on for this blossoming genre, very few actually know what defines a piece of art as 'naïve.'

The term Naïve Art was used for the first time at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to describe the painting of Henri Rousseau, a self-taught painter admired by the artistic "avant-garde" of the time, which included geniuses such as Picasso, Matisse and Paul Gauguin, among others.

Naïve Art approaches artistic contexts in a spontaneous way, with total aesthetic and expressive freedom. Its followers define it today as "the art that is free of conventions".

Naïve Art is conceived and produced by artists with no specific academic preparation, and without the "obligation" of having to use elaborate techniques and conventional thematic and chromatic approaches in the work they execute. This does not mean that they do not study and perfect their art, in a self-taught and experimental manner, the development of their works, and certainly does not imply that their quality is inferior. Artistic capacity is an innate gift in human beings, and there are no techniques, rules or dogmas that restrict its quality or withdraw its value, when it truly exists.

## HISTORY OF MALAYSIAN NAÏVE ART

In Malaysia, Naïve art is sometimes known as Outsider Art. This particular genre is part of mainstream art. This exhibition documents the artists and their contributions towards enriching the art history of Malaysia.

Today, the term is more of an 'umbrella' for a variety of styles, works and artists. Under this umbrella, we may see 'Contemporary Folk Art', 'Marginal Art', 'Naïve Art', 'Self-Taught Art' or 'Visionary Art'.

There are a few artists in Malaysian art history who are/were in fact naïve artists. This comes about as the definition were not recognised/popular/clear that the label simply does not apply towards the genre their works are represented. Clear examples would be Zulkifli Buyong, Zulkifli Dahlan, among others.

Naïve art is seldom mentioned in the history of Malaysian art since it was only pioneered here in the early Eighties by Yusof Gajah. Their works are seldom the subject of discussion in the history of Malaysian art although artists like Zulkifli Buyong and Zulkifli Dahlan do contribute towards the development of this art genre.

While they are often categorized as non-academic or self- taught, these artists too

produce artworks of distinctive value. In Malaysia, it is only in recent years that works by non-professionally trained, self-taught artists have begun to be shown publicly, usually under the “naïve” label. The Malaysian Naïve Art Showcase 2008 and The 1<sup>st</sup> Sabah Naïve Art Showcase 2012 are examples.

“Since the history of the development of Naïve Art in Malaysia had just began in the sixties with figures like Zulkifli Buyong and Zulkifli Dahlan (An A- Z Guide to Malaysian Art, Rouge Art, 2012) pioneering the genre, little has been written about this particular subject. Nevertheless artists like Yusof Gajah had played a significant role in making the Naïve art well known to the audience in Malaysia.... that the beginnings of a naïve vocabulary began to manifest itself. It would continue and develop throughout his consequence years back home and his deep involvement” (J.Anu Sunday Star June 28, 1998).

The first Naïve Exhibition made history in 1998 with artists like Yusof Gajah, Zila Zain, Azmi S.H. and Shima producing astonishing naïve works that reflect the Malaysian style. Then came the second show, featuring Adeputra and Mat Dollah, in Appear Innocent in 2001.

The year 2008 saw a breakthrough in the development of Naïve art in Malaysia when The Malaysian Naïve Art Showcase 2008 was held in the Annexe, Central Market, featuring 37 naïve artists.

Then came the Sabahan naïve artists namely Jainal Amambing and Awang Fadilah, who were the forefront of many naïve artists who took part in the second Sabah Naïve Art Exhibition in 2013 after a successful show in 2011.

But naïve artists seemed to shy away since then although Naïve artist like Ismail Baba, Eliza Tajuddin, Ali Akbar Othman, Jainal Amambing, Awang Fadillah still constantly showcased their paintings in various shows and exhibitions.

In 2018, a new batch of young naïve artists collaborated with senior artists in a group exhibition named RONA Merdeka at the Balai Seni Lukis Melaka in August. This is followed by another show, TONAWARNA, held at Masa Gallery in Johor Baharu in November 2018.

From this development, Naïve Art Style artists have been invited to showcase their recent works at Galeri Prima.

Enjoy!

**Ali Akbar Othman**

Representative

Malaysian Naïve Art Style Artist



**Ali Akbar Othman**  
Johorscape: Rumah Bugis • Acrylic on canvas • 91.5 x 61 cm • 2018





**Ali Akbar Othman**  
Perakscape Series • Acrylic on canvas • 61 x 91.5 cm • 2018



**Elly Nor Suria**

Colours Festival • Mixed media on canvas • 107 x 131 cm • 2018



**Elly Nor Suria**  
Laskar Mimpi • Mixed media on canvas • 70 x 70 cm • 2018



**Ismail Baba**  
Atap Genteng Atap Rumbia • Acrylic on canvas • 82 x 99 cm • 2018



**Ismail Baba**  
Senja Di Kampung Kuantan • Acrylic on canvas • 92 x 92 cm • 2018



**Khairulsani Ismail**

Media Persepsi Bikin Bingung Kepala • Watercolour on paper • 42.5 x 32.5 cm • 2018



**Khairulsani Ismail**  
Bangkit Melawan, Itulah Aku • Ink on paper • 42.5 x 32.5 cm • 2018



**Yeanni Koo**

Journey Through The Ocean • Oil on canvas • 100 x 100 cm • 2018

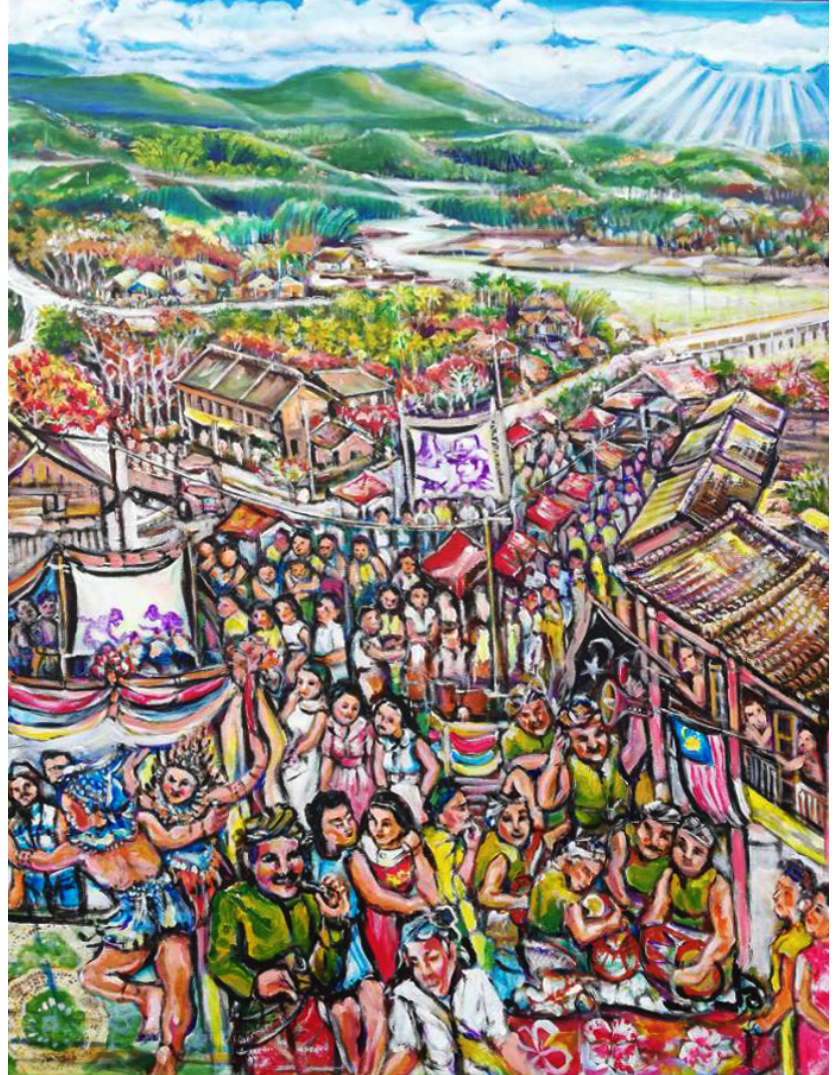




**Yeanni Koo**  
Endless Story • Oil on canvas • 100cm x 150 cm • 2019



**Nancy Lua Ching Sing**  
Anak Gadis Muda dari Jerteh • Acrylic on canvas • 107 x 76 cm • 2016



**Nancy Lua Ching Sing**  
Grand Celebration Merdeka di JERTEH. Nostalgia 1958 - 1963 • Acrylic on canvas • 91 x 183 cm • 2018

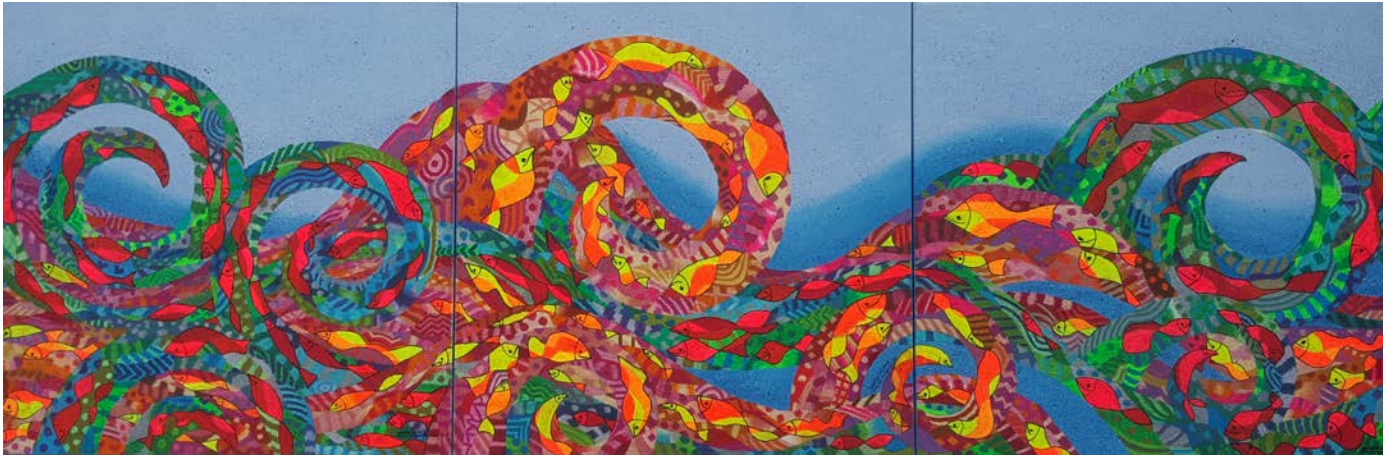


**Lyna Khairi**

Adventure of Nina and Normy: Balik Kampong 1 • Acrylic on canvas • 91.5 x 91.5 cm • 2018

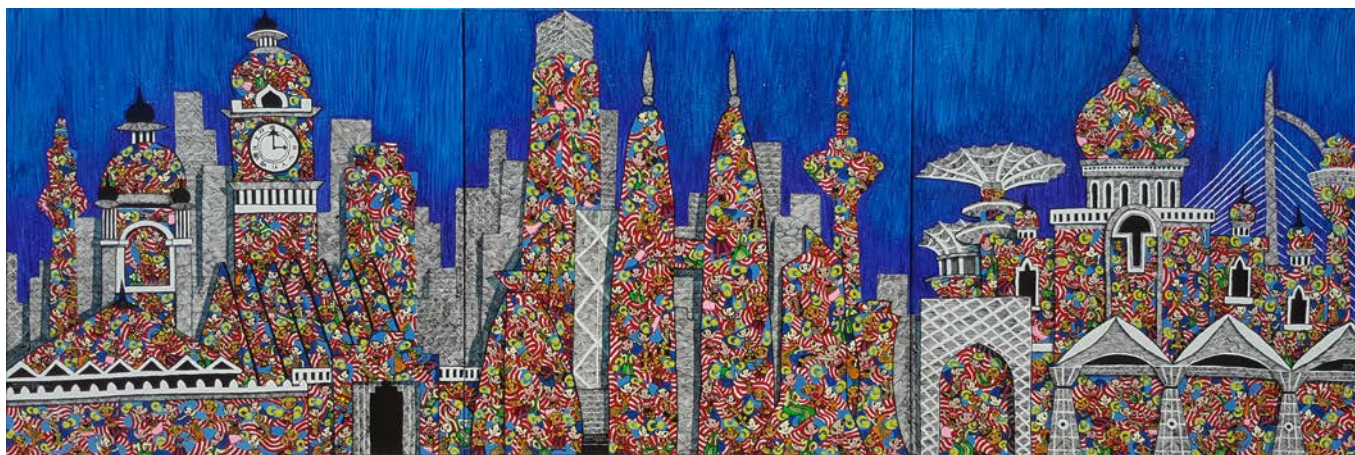


**Lyna Khairi**  
Siri Rumah Kampung Tiang Seribu; Kampung Dusun • Acrylic on canvas • 43 x 122 cm • 2018



**Artjamila**

Fish Mosaic: Wave Series 3,4,5 • Mixed media on canvas • 91.5 x 274.5 cm • 2018



Unity in Diversity: Skyline Series 4,5,6 • Acrylic on canvas • 91.5 x 274.5 cm • 2018 **Artjamila**



**Widodo Soerono**  
Mighty • Mixed media on canvas • 122 x 122 cm • 2016





**Widodo Soerono**  
Keep The World Green • Mixed media on canvas • 105 x 96 cm • 2018



**Zurin Shaari**

Bukan Ratu • Mixed media on canvas • 120 x 150 cm • 2018



**Zurin Shaari**  
Children In The Wonderland - Mummy's Womb and Dream • Mixed media on canvas • 92 x 92 cm • 2016

### **ALI AKBAR OTHMAN (b. 1956)**

- Malaysia Certificate of Education (1974), Diploma in Art & Design (Graphic Design) and Master of Fine Art and Technology from Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam.
- **Selected Exhibitions:** Landskap Malaya Solo Exhibition (Main Lobby, NSTP), National day Art Exhibition (City Art Gallery), The Beauty of Malay Intellect - Tampannya Budi (National Visual Art Gallery), Amal Palestin (National Visual Art Gallery), Rasa Alam (DECTAR UKM), Kurnia Cipta (Galeri Seni Johor), Campur – Campur (White Box), Shanghai World Expo (China), Malaysian Week (London, United Kingdom), World Cup 2010 (Underwater World, Langkawi), Kepadamu Kekasih (National Visual Art Gallery), Kasihnya Ibu (National Visual Art Gallery), Borneo Hornbill Festival Visual Arts Exhibition (MATIC), Art @KLIA (KLIA), Celebrate Individuality, Harvest Diversity” (The Penang PAC), “toi, (la) Nature et moi” (Alliance Francaise), Members Only (National Visual Art Gallery), Lukisan Inspirasi Alam (Kompleks Kraf), Gema Suasana (Galeri Shah Alam), 1001 Malaysian Artists (Kuala Lumpur).
- **Selected Achievements:** Poster Anti Drug Campaign (First Prize), Logo Design for Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan (Main Prize), in, First Prize , HLR Insurance Logo Design (First Prize), Pertandingan Lukisan Spontan - Galeri Shah Alam (3rd Prize) and Shah Alam Open Show Kelab Dagang MITI (Incentive Award).

### **ELLY NOR SURIA (b. 1983)**

- A full time artist and children picture book illustrator.
- Selected Exhibitions: Open Show (Galeri Pelita Hati), Heart Where the Home Is (Pelita Hati), Open Show (Galeri Shah Alam), Erti 2.0 (Galeri Seni Universiti Malaya), ArteDecor 2018 (Matrade), Maharani (MASA gallery), ‘rumah kecil tiang seribu’ (Premiera Hotel), Lakar Wanita (Balai Seni Visual Negara), Rona Merdeka (Balai Seni Lukis Melaka), Language Of Colours (The Ledge Gallery), Yayasan Sejahtera Charity Art Exhibition (The Quill City Mall), ArteDecor Resident Artist Art Exhibition (Kind Malaysia, MICC) and TONAWARNA Naïve Art Exhibition (MASA Gallery).

### **ISMAIL BABA (b. 1951)**

- Certificate Majoring in Building Design from Industrial Training Institute.
- **Selected Exhibitions:** Ceritaku (MATIC Art Gallery), Urban Art 2 (Galeri Pelita Hati), Open Show (G13 Gallery), Members Only (National Visual Art Gallery), Naivistit Litalassa (Hollaajantie, Litala Finland), Langkawi Art Colony (Sheraton & National Visual Arts Development), Sabah Folk Art International 2011 (Sabah State Gallery), Outsider Art Expo 2010 (Shanghai, China), Art of the World (Kompleks Kraf Malaysia) and MASIF 2010 (Pavilion).
- **Selected Achievements:** Incentive Awards from Galeri Shah Alam.

### **KHAIRULSANI ISMAIL (b. 1966)**

- A self-taught artist and trained under Ahmad Khalid Dato' Yusuf and Yusof Ghani.
- **Selected Exhibitions:** Ambiguity (New York, USA), Negaraku (Kuala Lumpur), Poemics Art (Lublin, Poland), Lakar SaPa (Shah Alam) and ArtEduCare 9 (Solo, Indonesia).

### **YEANNI KOO (b.1994)**

- Fine Art graduate from Dasein Academy of Art.
- **Selected Exhibitions:** The Colour of My Life (Fidars Art Space), Hidup Bersama: Malaysia@55 (Menara Maybank), RRRAWRRR Emerging Women Artist Show (Menara Maybank), Thailand & Malaysian Fusion 4 (Gallery Mutiara), Remix Malaysia Artist Show (ArtWeMe Contemporary), ArtHOMEDEC (KLCC), Merdeka: Unity & Diversity (National Art Gallery), School of Thought (Segaris Art Centre), Image of Life - Art for Heart (RHB Bank & National Visual Art Gallery), Mosaic Art Project (HOM Art Trans), Equilibrio International (Artemis Gallery), Young Artist Show (Galeri Petronas), Young and New 4 (Hom Art Trans), Avenew contiNew group exhibition (Artemis Gallery).
- **Selected Achievements:** Petron Art Competition (First Prize Painting Category), Maybank Hari Raya Aidilfitri Creative Wau Design Competition (First Runner-up) and finalist for Bank Negara Tanpa Nama 2 Competition and Nando's Art Initiative Competition (2014 and 2018).

### **NANCY LUA CHING SING (b. 1949)**

- Fine Art graduate from Malaysian Institute of Art, an assistant town planner with Urban Development Authority (UDA) and a resident artist of UDA Art Club.
- **Selected Exhibitions:** Pameran Terbuka (Galeri Shah Alam), Unity & Diversity (Balai Seni Visual Negara), International Art College Niigata (Japan study tour), Colourful Carps Bring Abundance Solo Exhibition (NSTP Lobby), Public Exhibition (Hilton Hotel), Remembering Yunnan (KLSCAH), Merdeka 57 (Penang State Gallery), Merdeka Art Exhibition (City Art Gallery), Lotus Revival (Fu Guan Yuan Art Gallery), Lion Club Exhibition (KDU) and Charity Fair (Island Gallery).
- **Selected Achievements:** Award Winner in Chinese Brush Art Competition 1989, Silver Award in Chinese Brush Art Competition 2009 and Gold Award in Watercolour Art Competition. Hikmah 21 (Galeri Pelita Hati), Dual ART Show Prof. Abdul Jalil & Lyna Khairi (Hotel Arseana, Langkawi), 1MCAT (Balai Seni Visual Negara), Kita Rasai (Galeri Shah Alam), Seni & Warisan Muzium Perak (Ipoh), Minda Merdeka (Balai Seni Visual Negara), Breakthrough Malaysia - Jogjakarta (Kersan Art Gallery, Jogjakarta, Malaysian Naïve ART (Balai Seni Visual Negara), Unity & Diversity Exhibition Tour (Balai Seni Visual Negara), Imago Mundi 3 Nation (Hotel Hulo), Artedecor (Matrade), LakarWanita (Balai Seni Visual Negara) and Rona Merdeka (Balai Seni Melaka).

### **LYNA KHAIRI (b. 1977)**

- Fashion Design graduate from Universiti Teknologi MARA.
- **Selected Exhibitions:** Artgeng Exhibition (Bastion House, Melaka), WCOP World Congress of Poetry (Ipoh) Blues Nasi Lemak (Rajawali Art Gallery), PIOR PERAK (Galeri Artiseri), Rupa Selangor (Galeri Shah Alam), Solo Dari Kerana Mata (Galeri Perupa), Hikmah 21 (Galeri Pelita Hati), Dual ART Show Prof. Abdul Jalil & Lyna Khairi (Hotel Arseana, Langkawi), 1MCAT (Balai Seni Visual Negara), Kita Rasai (Galeri Shah Alam), Seni & Warisan Muzium Perak (Ipoh), Minda Merdeka (Balai Seni Visual Negara), Breakthrough Malaysia - Jogjakarta (Kersan Art Gallery, Jogjakarta, Malaysian Naïve ART (Balai Seni Visual Negara), Unity & Diversity Exhibition Tour (Balai Seni Visual Negara), Imago Mundi 3 Nation (Hotel Hulo), Artedecor (Matrade), LakarWanita (Balai Seni Visual Negara) and Rona Merdeka (Balai Seni Melaka).

### **WAN JAMILA WAN SHAIFUL BAHRI (b. 2002)**

- A fulltime artist known as Artjamila.
- **Selected Exhibitions:** Independent Arts Converge & Connect 2017 (TM Convention Centre), Art Bazaar (BNM Art Gallery), Imago Mundi 3: Malaysia, Singapore & Indonesia (Hulo Art Gallery), ArtEdecor (MATRADE), Luminance Art for Autism (Eco World Puncak Alam), The World of Thousand Colours (Menara Maybank), Kind Malaysia 2018 (MITEC), Leaders (Ledge Gallery), Malaysia Makes History (MAEPS), Merdeka (Ledge Gallery), World Landmark (Ledge Gallery), International Montessori Forum 2017 (Montessori Association of Malaysia), Expo Negaraku Kuala Lumpur (Dataran Merdeka), Women International Day (KL Journal Hotel), Closing the Gap (Utropolis Event Centre, Glenmarie), Lawabana Luncheon & Charity Auction “Weaving Our Dreams Together” (Hilton Hotel KL), International Federation of Library Association - World Library International Conference (UiTM Puncak Alam), and Kind Malaysia 2018 (MITEC).
- **Selected Achievements:** Winner of National Weekly Competition (Live painting): NEGARAKU 2017 and 3rd place of National Abilympics Painting Competition 2018 (Live Painting).

### **WIDODO SOERONO (b.1938)**

- Fine art graduate from Institut Seni Rupa Indonesia (ISI) Yogyakarta (formerly known as Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia).
- **Selected Exhibitions:** He has participated in numerous exhibitions during his studies and took a break for 20 years to focus on his business. Make a comeback on 2005 with group exhibition (Elle Six Art Gallery, Damansara Height), LINK (Yayasan Warisan, Johor Bahru) and group exhibition (Galeri Shah Alam).
- **Selected Achievements:** Best Student Award, Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia.

### **ZURIN SHAARI (b. 1977)**

- Degree in Textile Design, UiTM Shah Alam and Master in Fine Art & Design from University of Tasmania, Australia.
- A lecturer for drawing foundation at Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam.
- **Selected Exhibitions:** Synergsm MY - PH (Robinson Galleria, Philippine), Art Against AIDS (Publika), Lakar Wanita Tour (CMT Hub, UiTM), Rona Merdeka (Balai Seni Lukis Melaka), Blossom (Li Chi Mao Art Museum), Pameran 21 (Galeri ASWARA), Wang Wang Exhibition (Putra Creative Space & Island GALLERY), BonDa (Balai Seni Visual Negara) and Kiwa Exhibition (Kyoto Municipal Museum, Japan), Imago Mundi in Jakarta.
- **Selected Achievements:** Malaysia's Piala Seri Endon Batik Competition in Soft Furnishing Category for 2016 and 2018 (3rd Prize), UOB Painting of the Year Award (Finalist). IIDEX (Invention, Innovation and Design Exhibition) and IIAD Innovation for Commercialization (Gold Medal) and Hevea Creative Competition in Craft category (3rd Prize).

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The artists would like to thank **Galeri Prima, Azlynn Aziz** and **Ahmad Syukri Idris** who helped in making this exhibition a success.

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This publication is published in conjunction with Ingenious Soul exhibition held on 10 Jan – 25 Jan 2019 at

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