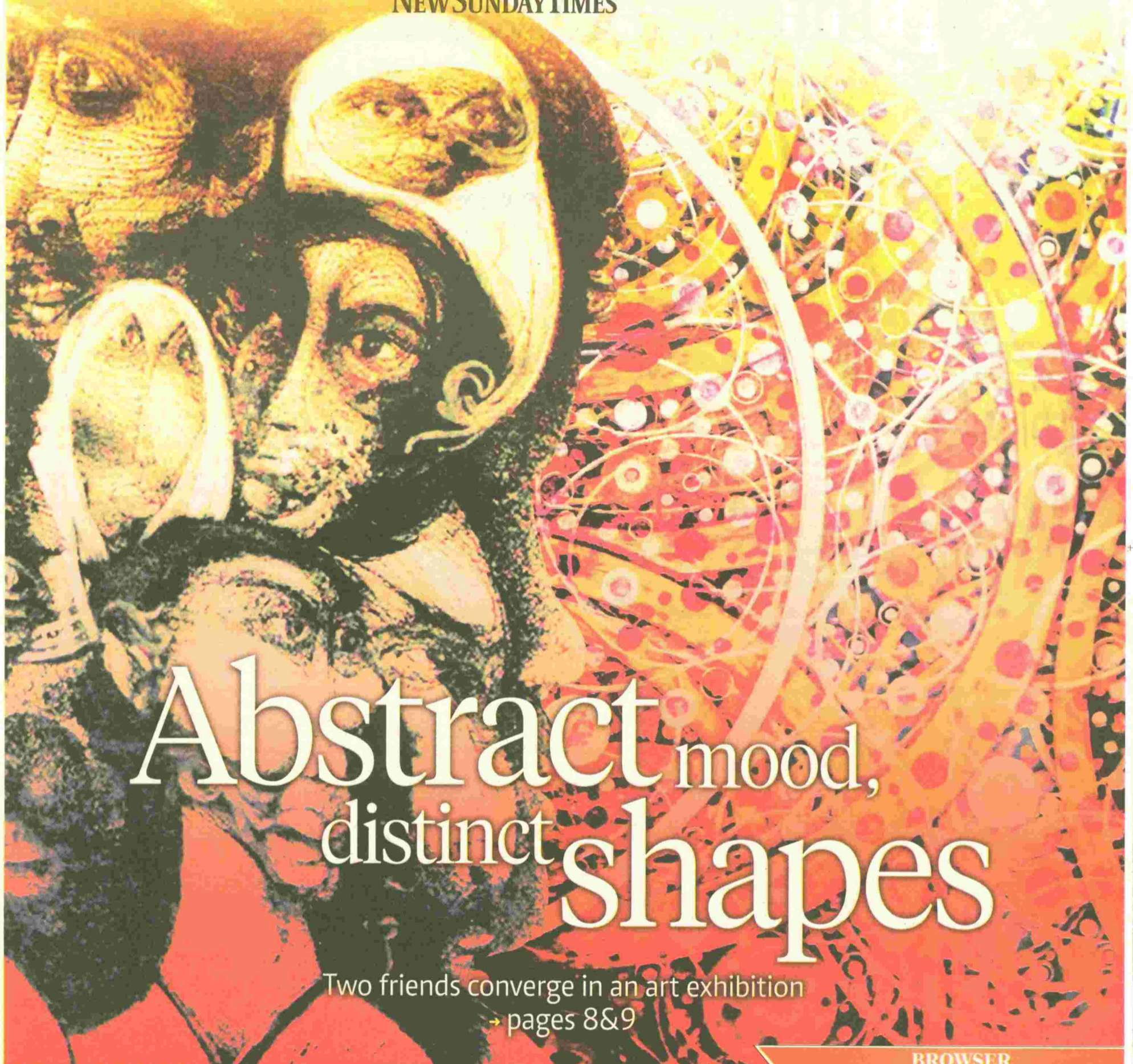


LIFE & TIMES

NEW SUNDAY TIMES



Abstract mood, distinct shapes

Two friends converge in an art exhibition
→ pages 8&9

BROWSER

BEHAVIOUR
CHANGE STARTS
AT HOME

→ FAMILY PAGE 3

KIDS IN
CHARGE

→ FAMILY PAGES 4&5



Mapping
our
culture

→ HERITAGE PAGES 6&7



Echoes of the heart

Two friends, one exhibition. One prefers the abstract while the other focuses on distinct figures and shapes. Their worlds converge in Gema Hati, writes **Aneeta Sundararaj**

AN art exhibition titled Gema Hati was recently launched at the Balai Berita NSTP lobby gallery by National Laureate Datuk Dr Mohd Anwar Ridhwan. It showcased a collection of close to 60 works by two friends, Mazlan Noor and Hassan Majid.

Mazlan Noor (or more popularly known as Along) hails from Kg Serkam, Malacca and pursues the abstract. Hassan Majid, meanwhile, prefers to focus on figures and shapes, including human faces.

During the ceremony to launch the exhibition, there were poetry recitals, performance of songs as well as tributes for these artists. Professor

Mohamad Hatta Shaharom spoke of his collaboration with Along during the publication of a coffee-table book, *Beyond Tears*.

"I didn't just meet with a designer or artist. Many other designers have a very narrow scope. With Along, it was something more. I felt I was meeting a philosopher. In the book, I provided the photos and words but he made sense of the arrangement and the concept. He philosophised what would be published."

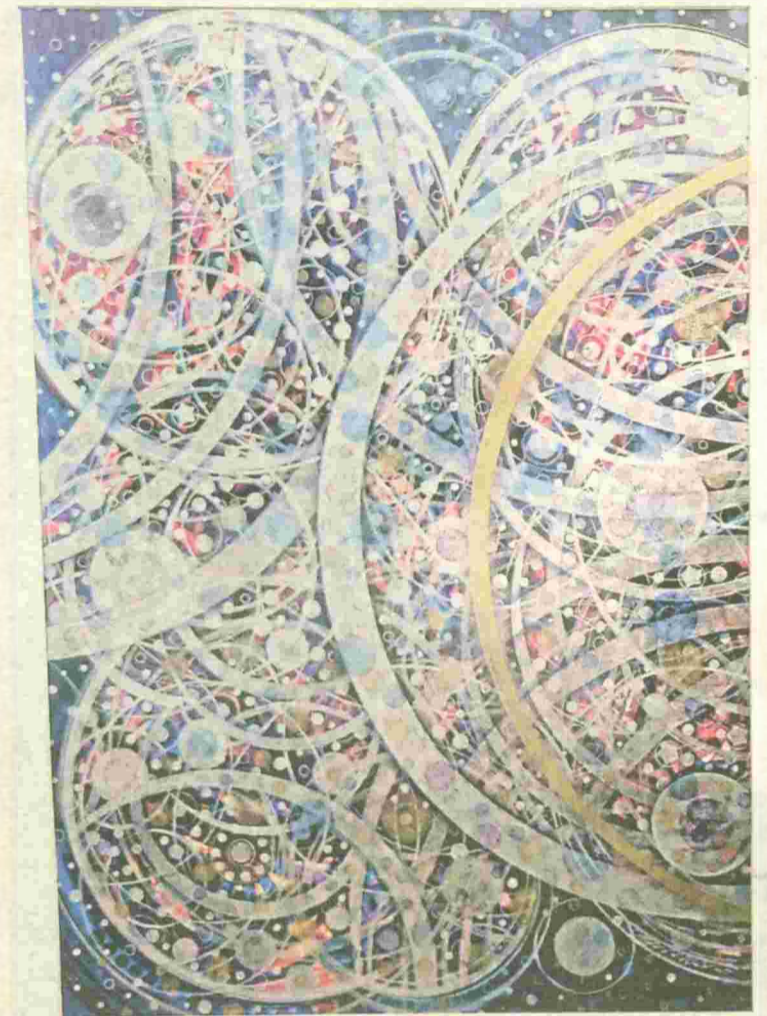
Hajjah Ayesah Scott, author of books such as *The Supplication Series* and *The Glorious Prophet Series*, said: "I am a perfectionist and sometimes Along had to play peacemaker when

some of the work his artists produced did not meet my high standards. Still, he once asked me, 'So, when are you going to write a poem for me?' I told him to give me 10 minutes and came up with the poem I recited a while ago titled 'My Lord'."

ANAKALAM

What many in the audience had in common with the two artists celebrated that day was their association with Anak Alam. Various descriptions were given for what Anak Alam constituted. One person said it was an "art movement of the 70s and 80s". Another described it as an "artists' colony", whose patron was the late Usman Awang. It was a place where painters were "let loose" and able to express themselves free of dogma, said another. Yet another said that it was a "commune". Many described it as the breeding ground for artists in Malaysia.

Whatever the description, what was obvious during the reunion-like atmosphere of the launch of Gema Hati was that those



Mazlan's circles suggest the never ending.

who spent time there had a fabulous time. They all speak of "lots of music, laughter, sharing of knowledge and improvisation."

Indeed, Along credited Anak Alam as the place where he "found himself and his art". He completed his schooling in 1972 (he studied at the Methodist High School in Malacca) and is now in his 60s.

His artwork is roughly described as an arrangement of a series of circles in a timeless zone. He explains that

when each piece of artwork is given a title based on religion, that "never ending" aspect of his work becomes more apparent.

With circles within circles, circles of different sizes and circles superimposed upon each other, it forces us to stop and think on the miracle of life around us. Together with the use of dots, there is a constant reminder when looking at Along's work that "all things start out as dots and we will all eventually return to the start-

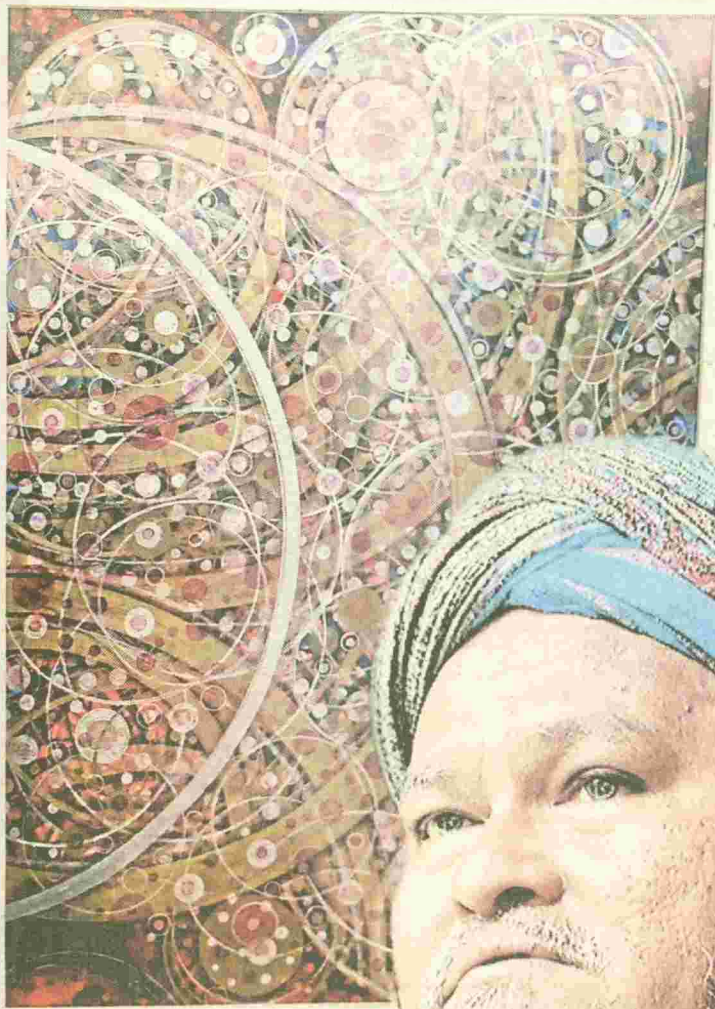


Hassan Majid's work has an eerie feel that makes it captivating.



Hassan Majid has a penchant for figures and shapes.

PICTURES BY NUR ADIBAH AHMAD IZAM



ideas and comes up with the designs. He has an immense love of God."

OF FACES AND COLOURS

In complete contrast to Along's work are Hassan Majid's creations. Along describes his friend's work as "very antagonistic."

He uses mixed media - from acrylic, to oil pastel and ink - to breathe life into his paintings. He enhances his work using eye-catching forms and colours. At a glance, Hassan Majid's paintings

have that eerie feel but they are certainly captivating.

Pointing to a work titled *Di Kala Malam Bulan Mengam Abang*, Hassan

said: "People accuse me of being able to see dead people. Actually, this is not true. What happens is that when I'm drawing, I can see three-quarters of

what appears to be a face appearing. What you see in between, that's not my intention. These are evil forces at play."

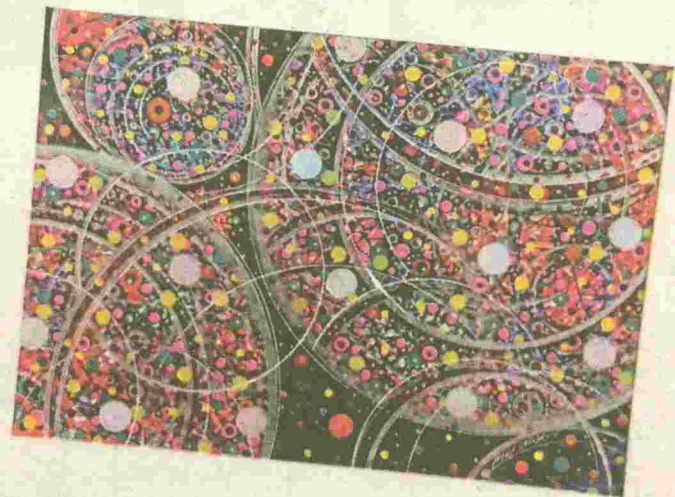
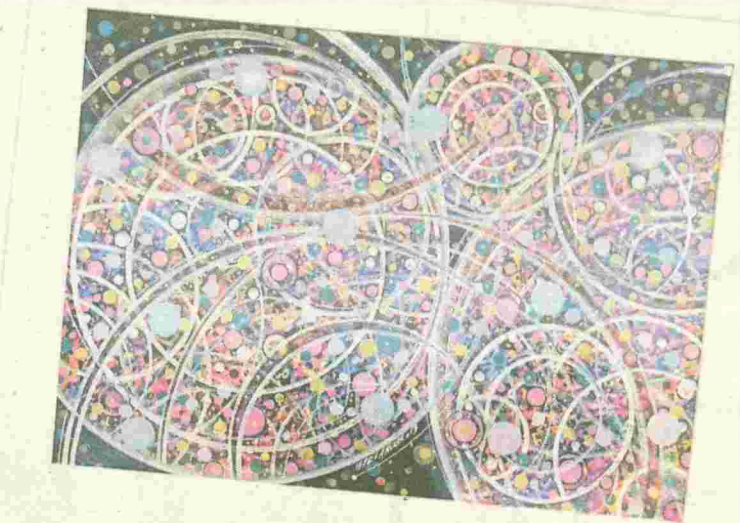
Shaking his head, this 66-year-old father of four, who hails from Hulu Langat, Selangor Darul Ehsan, added: "I've been drawing beautiful things all my life. Now I draw social issues. I read the papers, I listen to the news. And it upsets me. I would like the public to be aware of social ills like drugs and rape. I cannot explain

my paintings one by one. You must look at my paintings and study them.

What: 'Gema Hati' Art Exhibition by Mazlan Noor and Hassan Majid
Where: Main Lobby, Balai Berita, The New Straits Times (M) Berhad
When: Until Dec 28, 2013. Daily 10am to 6pm

Each person will come up with a different interpretation. What you will notice is that each drawing is associated with either a poetry or song. One of my paintings has inspired a poem or song."

Indeed, the poem recited by Marzuki Ali was inspired by Hassan Majid's painting, *Pinggiran Kota*. The recitation adds a voice to the story being told in the painting. With changes in rhythm and tone, you will slowly realise that the city folk and those who live on the periphery of the city enter into a dialogue about what each has given up because of "development". This collaboration between artists - be it poetry, painting, illustrations or literature - is what Hassan Majid refers to as, "an exchange and a true manifestation of true art."



An arrangement of circles in a timeless zone.

ingpoint."

"My drawing is from the heart," said this father of four. "When you don't draw from your heart, you can't produce good work. What I feel in my heart is what I draw. That's why this exhibition is called 'Gema Hati'. I am very calm when I paint and draw. I see all the good things around me. These are God's creations. The world is so beautiful. It's man who destroys it."

In short, his works centre on the relationship between man and his Creator. He added: "I meditate and think of Allah when I paint and draw."

"Yes," agreed Dr Siti Zainon Ismail. "Along's spiritual energy is strong. I am the writer but he, as the illustrator, suggests the

Mazlan Noor says he sees all the good things around him.

THE A-LIST COMPILED BY INTAN MAIZURA AHMAD KAMAL

"It's Still Life..." photography exhibition

Where: The Print Room, 49 Lorong 16/9E, Seksyen 16, Petaling Jaya.

When: Until Dec 26, Sat-Sun, 2pm-7pm.

Admission: Weekdays by appointment.

Contact: 012-337 2903

The exhibition features images painstakingly captured after scouring wet markets, digging up childhood memories in storage, foraging kitchen cupboards and even street drains for inspiration. For many of the participating pho-

tographers, this will be their first time dabbling in this longstanding genre.

Ikan: A Photography Essay by Dev-Lee

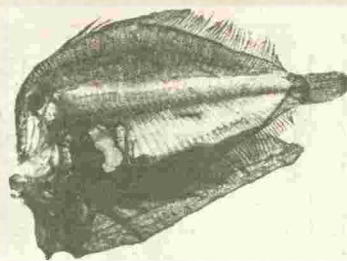
Where: Aku Cafe & Gallery, First floor, 8 Jalan Panggong, KL.

When: Until Dec 31, Tue-Sun, 11am-8pm; Closed on Mon

Admission: Free

Contact: 03 2857 6887

Is it possible to make fish carcasses look remotely attractive? Well, Dev-Lee seems to have done just that in his solo exhibition, *Ikan*. Inspired by an exchange between the Chinese mystic Zhuang Tzu and Hui Tse, the photog-



Ikan, by Dev Lee.

rapher's works look at subjectivity, truth, and the labels that humans assign to things. A monochromatic visual essay, it's a far cry from the photographer's usual subjects — perform-

ers from the Hands Percussion Group and Dua Space Dance Theatre.

DevLee will host a free photo sharing session on Dec 14 from 8pm to 9pm

I See Beautiful by Danny Lim

Where: Lot 48, Level G2, Publika, KL.

When: Dec 14 & Dec 15, 10am onwards

Admission: Free

Supported by Menard, ic! berlin + MARTELL, the young model-turned-photographer is making his debut with a series of black and white portrait shots of local celebrities such

as Ning Baizura, Nizam Othman, Lynn Lim, Lawrence Wong, Yunn Ru, Rita Suraya, Nadia Heng and AenieWong.

Colours of Life by Mass Yusof for Artiseri

Where: Seri Pacific Hotel, KL

When: Dec 16 - Dec 29

Admission: Free

Contact: 03-4042 5555

Prominent painter Mass Yusof depicts a colourful Malaysian life on canvas. Artiseri is fully open to the public and purchase can be made directly to support the artist at fair price.