

Artist in Our Midst

TALENTED PATIENT SELLS PAINTINGS OF OLD SINGAPORE



Painting of an old Singapore River (left) and an old image of Singapore's shophouses (above), both by Mr Sim

Mr Sim Kah Lim is an ordinary person with an extraordinary talent.

At a tender age of eight, he came up tops in his first art competition organised by Goodwood Park Hotel. Inspired, Mr Sim then knew he wanted to be a professional painter. Sadly, his dream was dashed when he started having hallucinations and was diagnosed with schizophrenia at the age of 15. He was sent to the then Woodbridge Hospital and has been in IMH since.

His paintings on canvas celebrate scenes of old Singapore including Boat Quay and Chinatown. Using a mix of medium from water colour, acrylic to oil pastels, his paintings are vibrant and full of life. He pays specific attention to details and one would think he has spent much time painting by the Singapore River or in Chinatown.

However, what is remarkable about his works is that all the beautiful Singapore River scenes with its quaint bumboats and other famous local landmarks that he had captured on canvas were painted purely out of memory. Having called IMH home for more than 20 years, Mr Sim has lost touch with the outside world, especially the rapidly changing landscape of our fast developing nation.

As such, his style is unpretentious, exuding delicately serene poetry. Some of his pieces are prominently displayed in the executive offices of healthcare institutions like the National University Hospital and IMH. He has recently sold two of his paintings to BizLink for their new range of 'These Abled People' greeting cards.

"It is heartwarming to know that my paintings are appreciated", says an unassuming Mr Sim. A talented but humble artist, he hopes that the income from the sale of his paintings would supplement the nominal allowance he earns as a patient helper. The money would also go towards helping his aged parents who are not working and allowing him simple pleasures of buying food from the hospital canteen.

Like Mr Sim, many recovering patients at the IMH have dreams and aspirations and long for gainful employment which helps them on the road to normalcy. Some like Mr Sim, are highly talented, and the bouts of mental illness that they suffer belie the beauty of their mind. Recovering psychiatric patients need all the support and help they can get from their families and the community.

If you are interested to purchase our patients' paintings, please drop an email to: enquiry@imh.com.sg.

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