

KLAS Art Auction

A DEFINITIVE REVIEW OF THE KLAS ART AUCTION RESULTS

The latest session at the KL Lifestyle Art Space (KLAS) was more than a mere transaction of canvases; it was a high-stakes validation of Southeast Asian modernism. As the gavel fell across fourteen standout lots, the results signaled a clear trend: collectors are pivoting toward works that offer a synthesis of rigorous academic training and raw local soul. Here is an in-depth exploration of the pieces that defined the season.



The undisputed pinnacle of the auction, this work from Mohidin's Post Rimba period represents a spiritual evolution in his career. Having already mastered the dense, primal energy of the jungle in his earlier Rimba series, this 1999 masterpiece sees the artist translating the ancient wisdom of the Tao Te Ching into a visual language. The canvas is a kinetic field of complex brushwork where the "nameless" essence of the Tao is captured through grand, sweeping lines and a vibrant chromatic arrangement. It is a rare fusion of literature and art, solidifying Mohidin's status as a living national treasure. This specific series is highly coveted because it demonstrates a shift from the physical landscape to an internal, philosophical one, marked by overlapping layers of color that create a sense of infinite spatial depth.

ABDUL LATIFF MOHIDIN
 Tao Landscape (Homage To Lao Tzu), 1999
 Oil on canvas 92 x 92 cm
SOLD RM 425,600

Painted just a year after the formation of Malaysia, this oil-on-board work is both a poignant cultural record and a modernist triumph. Chia Yu Chian, who was famously the first Malaysian artist to study at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris, applied a European "French chic" sensibility to a distinctly local scene. The bullock cart, a symbol of Malacca's traditional labor and a vanishing mode of transport, is depicted with strong, simplified geometric forms that emphasize weight and the slow rhythm of rural life. The restrained depiction of figures conveys a quiet dignity, while the earthy palette anchors the composition in everyday reality. Its high price reflects its rarity as a post-independence document of Malaysian identity and Chia's status as an "auction darling."



CHIA YU CHIAN
 Bullock Cart-Malacca, 1964
 Oil on board 65 x 80 cm
SOLD RM 106,400

A master of the "Nanyang" style, Lee Man Fong's 1960s study of a rooster is a classic example of his ability to marry Western oil techniques with the calligraphic elegance of Chinese ink tradition. The rooster—rendered in a regal, dignified posture against a minimalist, textured background—is more than a nature study; it is a cultural icon of industriousness and courage. The use of warm, earthy tones and fluid strokes captures the animal's vitality, making it a quintessential piece for collectors of Southeast Asian heritage art. His "oil-wash" technique is particularly evident here, where the thinned paint allows the grain of the board to interact with the brushwork, creating a texture that feels both ancient and modern.



This striking work from the Garis Mega series exemplifies the artist's commanding presence in contemporary abstraction, where gesture, memory, and landscape converge into a deeply physical visual language. At a substantial 122 × 122 cm, the painting asserts itself immediately, its square format creating a contained yet expansive field in which movement and emotion unfold.

The surface is intensely labored, built up with thick layers of mixed media that give the canvas a raw, tactile energy; paint is not merely applied but pushed, scraped, and embedded, leaving ridges and scars that record the artist's gestures like a visual diary. A dynamic interplay of white, blue, and black dominates the composition, evoking shifting skies, water, and earth, while sharp accents of red and ochre punctuate the surface with flashes of heat and vitality, suggesting both emotional intensity and the hues of rural terrain.

U Lun Gywe, one of Myanmar's most revered modern painters, is renowned for blending the broken color and immediacy of Western Impressionism with the contemplative depth of Buddhist spirituality, and this 2002 temple scene beautifully exemplifies that synthesis.

Rather than rendering the temple with precise architectural lines, he uses swift, expressive brushstrokes that dissolve solid forms into shimmering fields of color, allowing light itself to become the true subject of the painting. Soft golds, muted violets, and airy blues seem to vibrate across the surface, suggesting sunlight filtering through open spaces and settling gently on sacred ground.

U LUN GWYE
Temple Scene, 2002
Oil on canvas 46 x 36 cm
SOLD RM 35,840



LEE MAN FONG
Rooster, 1960s
Mixed media on paper 42 x 29 cm
SOLD RM 109,760

AWANG DAMIT AHMAD
Garis Mega "Akhir Mega 7", 2019
Mixed media on canvas 122 x 122 cm
SOLD RM 85,000





Ismail Mat Hussin is celebrated as the foremost visual storyteller of East Coast Malaysian village life, and this monumental 2007 batik work exemplifies his ability to transform everyday scenes into richly dignified cultural narratives. Spanning an impressive (109 × 210 cm), the composition unfolds like a panoramic stage, depicting fishermen gathered along the shoreline as they sort and tally the day's catch—a routine moment that Hussin elevates into a scene of quiet heroism and communal pride. Rather than treating batik as purely decorative, he employed an unusually refined fine-art approach, carefully layering dyes and wax resist techniques to achieve remarkable tonal depth, subtle shading, and painterly detail. The result is what many describe as a “sunny rendition,” where warm yellows, glowing ochres, and soft coastal blues suffuse the scene with the radiant light characteristic of Kelantan's shores.

ISMAIL MAT HUSSIN
 Mengirakan Ikan Tangkapan, 2007
 Batik 210 x 109 cm
SOLD RM 95,200



Yusof Ghani has long been recognized for channeling raw emotional intensity into dynamic, gestural compositions, and *Nightwalkers II* stands as a powerful example of his later exploration of the human condition. While he first gained major acclaim through his *Topeng (Mask)* series—where distorted, mask-like faces symbolized psychological tension and social façades—the *Nightwalkers* works shift focus from the individual psyche to collective human movement. In this series, figures appear elongated, fluid, and partially dissolved, striding across the picture plane like shadows in motion. They are not portraits of specific people but embodiments of anonymous urban dwellers, representing the restless, often isolating rhythm of modern city life.

Charcoal lines form the structural backbone of the composition, slicing through the space with urgency and spontaneity, while layered passages of color—sometimes muted, sometimes electric—soften the severity of those marks and create a pulsing visual dialogue between bodies. This interplay reduces rigid tension and instead suggests interdependence, as figures overlap and merge, their boundaries blurring to convey shared experience rather than separation. Ghani's sweeping gestures record not just physical movement but emotional turbulence, evoking what can be read as a “spiritual struggle” beneath the surface of everyday existence.

YUSOF GHANI
 Nightwalkers II, 2006
 Chalk & charcoal on canvas 120 x 110.5 cm
SOLD RM 100,800

**AHMAD ZAKII ANWAR**

Gopala, 1996

Mixed media on paper 42 x 29 cm

SOLD RM 61,600

In Gopala, Zakii Anwar reveals the meticulous draftsmanship and technical control that have positioned him among Asia's most accomplished contemporary realists. Created during a pivotal phase of the 1990s, when he was deeply engaged with the human figure as a vessel for psychological and spiritual inquiry, the work reflects his sustained exploration of silence, stillness, and the expressive power of light.

Central to the painting is his masterful use of chiaroscuro, where dramatic contrasts between illumination and shadow sculpt the body into a three-dimensional presence that feels almost tangible. Yet, despite this physical solidity, the figure carries a quiet inwardness—a “meditative weight” that suggests contemplation, vulnerability, or even transcendence. Zakii's anatomical precision is never merely academic; each contour and muscle is rendered with sensitivity, serving the emotional atmosphere rather than overshadowing it.

Ahmad Zakii Anwar's Rangda #3 is a deeply atmospheric and psychologically charged work that draws from Balinese mythology while remaining firmly rooted in his signature exploration of the human figure, theatricality, and the power of shadow. Rangda—the fearsome witch queen of Balinese legend, often associated with chaos, dark magic, and the forces of destruction—is not rendered here as a decorative or folkloric figure, but as a commanding, almost otherworldly presence that seems to materialize from darkness itself.

Zakii employs a visceral language of chiaroscuro, using stark contrasts between illuminated flesh and engulfing shadow to sculpt the form with dramatic intensity. Light does not simply reveal the figure; it feels as though it struggles against the surrounding darkness, heightening the sense of menace and spiritual charge. This theatrical emergence mirrors Zakii's long-standing fascination with ritual performance and masked traditions, where identity is both hidden and amplified through costume and gesture.

**AHMAD ZAKII ANWAR**

Rangda#3

Acrylic on canvas 120 x 180 cm (Diptych)

SOLD RM 67,200

A rare early work, this 1960 piece shows a younger U Lun Gywe refining the impressionistic style that would later make him Myanmar's most famous living artist. The painting captures the rhythmic swaying of boats at harbor, using a more muted and restrained palette than his later works. Its age and historical significance contributed to its strong performance, as early examples of his work are increasingly difficult to source and represent a bridge between his academic training and his eventual mastery of light.

U LUN GYWE

Fishing Boats, 1960

Oil on canvas 49.5 x 62.5 cm

SOLD RM 56,000



KHALIL IBRAHIM
Untitled, 1981
Acrylic on canvas 25.5 x 20.5 cm
SOLD RM 16,800



YUSOF GHANI
Biring Series -Study #7, 2009
Oil on canvas 100 x 50 cm
SOLD RM 61,600



NIZAR KAMAL ARIFFIN
Faces and Faces - Daerah Dunia #2, 2006
Acrylic on canvas 152 x 152 cm
SOLD RM 20,160



JOLLY KOH, DR
Untitled, 1960's
Oil and acrylic on canvas 76 x 91 cm
SOLD RM 40,320



YONG MUN SEN
 Penang Fishing Village, 1951
 Watercolour on paper 28 x 38 cm
SOLD RM 13,440



YONG MUN SEN
 Forest Village, 1947
 Watercolour on paper 27.5 x 38 cm
SOLD RM 13,440



YONG MUN SEN
 Kampong House, Penang, 1950
 Watercolour on paper 29 x 39 cm
SOLD RM 13,440



YAYOI KUSAMA
 Pumpkin, 2000 (Red)
 Screenprint in colours on paper
 30 x 35 cm
SOLD RM 11,200



TAKASHI MURAKAMI
 Blue Flower & Skulls, 2012
 (Edition 277/300)
 Offset lithograph on smooth wove
 paper 69 x 53 cm
SOLD RM 16,240



YAYOI KUSAMA
 Pumpkin, 2000 (Green)
 Screenprint in colours on paper
 30 x 35 cm
SOLD RM 12,320



**SHARIFAH FATIMAH
 SYED ZUBIR, DATO'**
 Dancing Forms I, 2019
 Acrylic on paper 42 x 30 cm
SOLD RM 4,256



CHUAH THEAN TENG, DATO
 Mother and Children, 1970's
 Batik 88 x 65 cm
SOLD RM 13,440



**SHARIFAH FATIMAH
 SYED ZUBIR, DATO'**
 Dancing Forms II, 2019
 Acrylic on paper 42 x 30 cm
SOLD RM 4,256