

Memories & Flowers

Mouth of Flowers review by Jerome Kugan



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JEROME KUGAN IMAGES RIMBUN DAHAN



Followers of the local visual art scene have been accustomed to expecting good stuff coming from Rimbun Dahan's artist residency program. This year marks the 13th year residency has been running and from the looks of promo shots for the 13th Rimbun Dahan Residency Exhibition featuring works by Ahmad Fuad Osman from Malaysia, and Gabrielle Bates from Australia, we're in for a real visual treat.

The two can't be more different in terms of approach and choice of subject matter. A graduate of Mara Institute Of Technology, 38-year old Ahmad Fuad Osman's new collection of works are entitled *Recollections Of Long Lost Memories*, which draw on the subject of national development and progress and how that has affected our current understanding of the nation's cultural and political growth. His works juxtapose historically significant scenes from the nation's past with present sentiments, setting up points of inquiry into what really happened then and how those events and their consequences are still affecting us.

On the other hand, 40-year-old Gabrielle Bates's new collection *Mouth Of Flowers* is less political on a grand scale, but no less interesting for its playful exploration of texture and colour, and her experience of life in Malaysia. Local fans

of the arts scene would be curious to know that artists such as Saiful Razman, Noor Mahnun Mohamed, Husin Hourmain, Donna Miranda, Ahmad Fuad Osman, Shaffudin Mamat, Low Shee Hoe, Lau Mun Leng and Bilqis Hijias posed for Bates in a series of paintings that "transformed them into players within a fictional narrative that circles the conflicts, anxieties, insights and advantages of (self) censorship."

Despite their seemingly differing approaches, the two artists have collaborated on a video piece that will premiere on the opening night of the exhibition. "This video collaboration is a first for Rimbun Dahan," says arts manager, Noor Mahnun Mohamed. "It is exciting to see this residency produce an exchange of ideas that promotes cultural relations between Malaysia and Australia." Indeed, with two visionaries as fecund as Ahmad and Bates, this exhibition is not to be missed.

The 13th Rimbun Dahan Residency Exhibition is happening from 13 to 27 January at Rimbun Dahan, Km 7 Jalan Kuang, Kuang, Selangor. Open 10am to 6pm daily. Admission is free. There will be an Artist Talk at 3 pm, 19 January in the gallery. For more info, visit www.rimbundahan.org