



A hit in the Big Apple

Young Malaysian sensation Yeak Ping Lian standing in front of his paintings at the Henry Gregg Gallery in Brooklyn, New York, on Saturday, where he is holding his debut exhibition. The 12-year-old autistic savant has received acclaim as an artist who draws and paints what he feels. Italian artist Daniel Rossi was among those who were impressed by the Malaysian's talent. See Page 8. — STARpic by JOHAN FERNANDEZ



TALENTED: Ping Lian posing with Dr Becker in front of some of his paintings at the launch of the exhibition at the Henry Gregg Gallery in Brooklyn on Saturday.

Ping Lian, 12, is autistic and a hit in New York

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NEW YORK: Malaysian sensation Yeak Ping Lian, a 12-year-old autistic savant, is a hit in the Big Apple where he is holding his debut art exhibition.

His works were being shown with fellow autistic savant artists Richard Wawro of Edinburgh, Scotland, and Iranian-born Christophe Pillault of Olivet, France.

Ping Lian was the only artist present at the launch of the exhibition *Autistic Savant Artworks: Don't 'dis' the Ability* at the Henry Gregg Gallery in Brooklyn on Saturday.

Italian artist Daniel Rossi was clearly impressed.

"He draws and paints what he feels. His work is not contami-

nated by other influences. I just love his work," said Rossi.

Kuala Lumpur-based Ping Lian's mother Sarah Lee resigned from a senior position with a telecommunications company to spend more time with him. The youngest of three children, Ping Lian has very limited communication and social skills and lives in a world of his own.

He received home tutoring and attended supplementary lessons for children with special needs.

Lee said Ping Lian was a wonderful child, full of love. She advised parents with special children not to give up.

"Have faith in your child. Celebrate each small progress as a major achievement. Who knows one day a miracle may

happen," she had once said.

Dr Laurence Becker of the Creative Learning Environments of Austin, Texas, said artists like Ping Lian, Wawro and Pillault provided a fitting embodiment of the quality and persistence of the human spirit.

"I'm not an artist but an educationist, and my gift is to share this story, of these wonderful, gifted people," he said.

Wawro is known worldwide for his detailed drawings using wax oil crayons; while Pillault, who is unable to talk, walk or feed himself and cannot use his fingers, uses his hands to paint.

Dr Becker and Dr Rosa Martinez of the Children's Centre for Early Learning Creative Learning Environments in New York were responsible for organising the exhibition.