



When Love, Hope & Faith Endure

Yeak Ping Lian's story is not only about an extraordinary child, but also of a mother's extraordinary love and vision that bears fruit to the extraordinary talent the world is able to appreciate today

At the beginning, Yeak Ping Lian's parents didn't know what autism was all about. They only knew that their child was hyperactive. Later, at the age of four, Ping Lian was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactive disorder (AHDH) with autistic features.

"My husband and I acquired a computer and Internet connection to find out more about autism. We finally realised what autistic meant and we had a shock. We were distraught at what our son's life was going to be like," Ping Lian's mother Sarah S. H. Lee shares.

Instead of wallowing in misery, Sarah and her late husband decided to do something about their child's condition. "We used all kinds of methods – from brain stimulating music to subconscious methods like talking to him before he woke up in the morning, just to break through to him."

It never occurred to them that their son would one day become an artist. "He couldn't hold a pencil properly or use a pair of scissors in kindergarten. So, we trained him to write. We held his hand and helped him to trace a lot." Soon, Ping Lian learned how to trace and write on his own. One day, at the age of eight, instead of tracing, Ping Lian began to draw non-stop.

Ping Lian's breakthrough struck Sarah, whose initial idea was for her son to work in a dim sum shop, that art could be his future. She began to work on developing his skills and talent.

She would tell him every day that he was going to be an artist and associated it with something strong and great. She also hired three art teachers for him, so he could learn each of the teacher's style and eventually develop his own.

"Art is not only an outlet for Ping Lian to express himself. It has also taught him a lot of things. It has certainly enriched his character," Sarah says.

Her devotion and effort paid off. The quality of his drawings rapidly improved and his rate of progress was fascinating. At the age of 11, Ping Lian's work "Ubudiah Mosque" was donated to the Riding For The Disabled Association at the Malaysia Charity Auction and sold for RM100,000. His works appeared in numerous exhibitions throughout the USA, UK, Germany, Australia, Japan and Malaysia. He also appeared in numerous TV productions.

Ping Lian seemed to have developed a liking for cityscapes and buildings, and he drew them with exceptional details and intricate lines, resulting in images within images that often appear unlimited, a feat that not a typical adult could even attempt. Among the local landmarks drawn by Ping Lian are the Khoo Clan house and Kek Lok Si Temple in Penang, A'Famosa and Christ Church in Melaka, Sultan Abdul Samad Building, Ubudiah Mosque and his favourite KLCC and the Petronas Twin Towers. Throughout the last five years, he had also drawn cities and landscapes from Capitol Hill (USA) to Saint Petersburg (Russia), Shanghai (China) and Sydney (Australia).

Today, Sarah and Ping Lian live in Sydney. Ping Lian continues to create magnificent works of art using charcoal, acrylic, watercolour, ink and oil pastels while Sarah remains totally devoted to him.

"I arrange art exhibitions for Ping Lian and on weekends, I will take him to the art market in Sydney to teach him about life. There, he can see what the real world is like and learn how to set up a store, basically to be independent. I have also finished writing a book about Ping Lian which will soon be published.

"I always believe that mothers of autistic children should never give up hope. We just need to do our best, no need to be the best. And we must always be contented with whatever we have but not be complacent," Sarah says.



Ubudiah Mosque I
42cm x 59cm
Ink and watercolour on paper

Christ Church Malacca II
31cm x 72cm
Ink and watercolour on paper

Awards & Auctions

- “Kek Lok Si Temple, Penang” won the Merit Award at Asia Para Art Tokyo, September 2009.
- “Christ Church Malacca IV” won the first prize, ink-work “ArtFirst” Princeton, University Medical Centre at Princeton, USA, 2009.
- “Ubudiah Mosque I” raised RM100,000 during the RDA Charity Ball Grand Auction in KL, November 2004.



KL Twin Towers
42cm x 59cm
Ink and watercolour on paper

Artworks of Prodigious Savant Showcase

The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with The Art Commune is showcasing important works of prodigious savant Yeap Ping Lian, produced between age 12 and 17. There are fewer than 100 prodigious savants worldwide and Ping Lian is one of them. “The Ministry hopes that with the Showcase of Savant Art by Ping Lian, Yeap, we will be able to attract more high-yield tourists to increase the contribution to the economy,” said Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen during the launch.

Details of the showcase:

Venue : MaTic, Pusat Pelancongan Malaysia
109, Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur
Date : Nov 25, 2010 – Jan 30, 2011
Time : Daily, 11am – 5pm
Tel : 03-5635 9110 / 019-3368 928
Admission is free

Ping Lian’s work can be viewed regularly at:

Ping Lian @ The Art Commune, Ping Lian’s Permanent Gallery in Malaysia)
Level 2, Kompleks 3C, Gate 3, Jalan SS13/3, Subang Jaya, Selangor.
Tel: 03-5635 9110