

Painting in the spirit of Merdeka

15 artists take part in exhibition to celebrate independence

By CHRISTINA LOW
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FIFTEEN artists gathered at the Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) recently to celebrate and share their views on the country's independence through art. "As Malaysia celebrates her 56th independence from colonial rule, we forget what lies behind but continue to build what is right and just, and bring society together," said curator Debbie Loh who came up with the idea for an art exhibition with her church members.

Loh said she found out that there were many talented artists in DUMC by coincidence and approached them to participate in the gathering.

"They agreed to give it a shot by participating in the two-hour live painting session and I am amazed by what they have presented," she said.

Chong Chee Kong, 22, is an illustrator and concept artist by profession, who was patiently completing his portrait of a woman named Lizzie Velasquez when we stopped to admire his work.

"Lizzie has been living a tough life battling an illness as well as having to endure a title she did not want.

"She is thin and wrinkly not because she wants to be that way, but because she has a rare disorder and people do not know about it.

"Looks can divide us and this is



Immortalised in print: Musician and photographer Elliot Koon showing his photographs taken in Ipoh, Perak and Kuala Lumpur.

certainly something we do not want in our country," he said, adding that bullies on the Internet referred to Lizzie as the "World's Ugliest Woman" and had shared photographs of her.

Chong said Lizzie was conscious of how the public viewed her but later embraced the positive side of life, and became an inspiration to many.

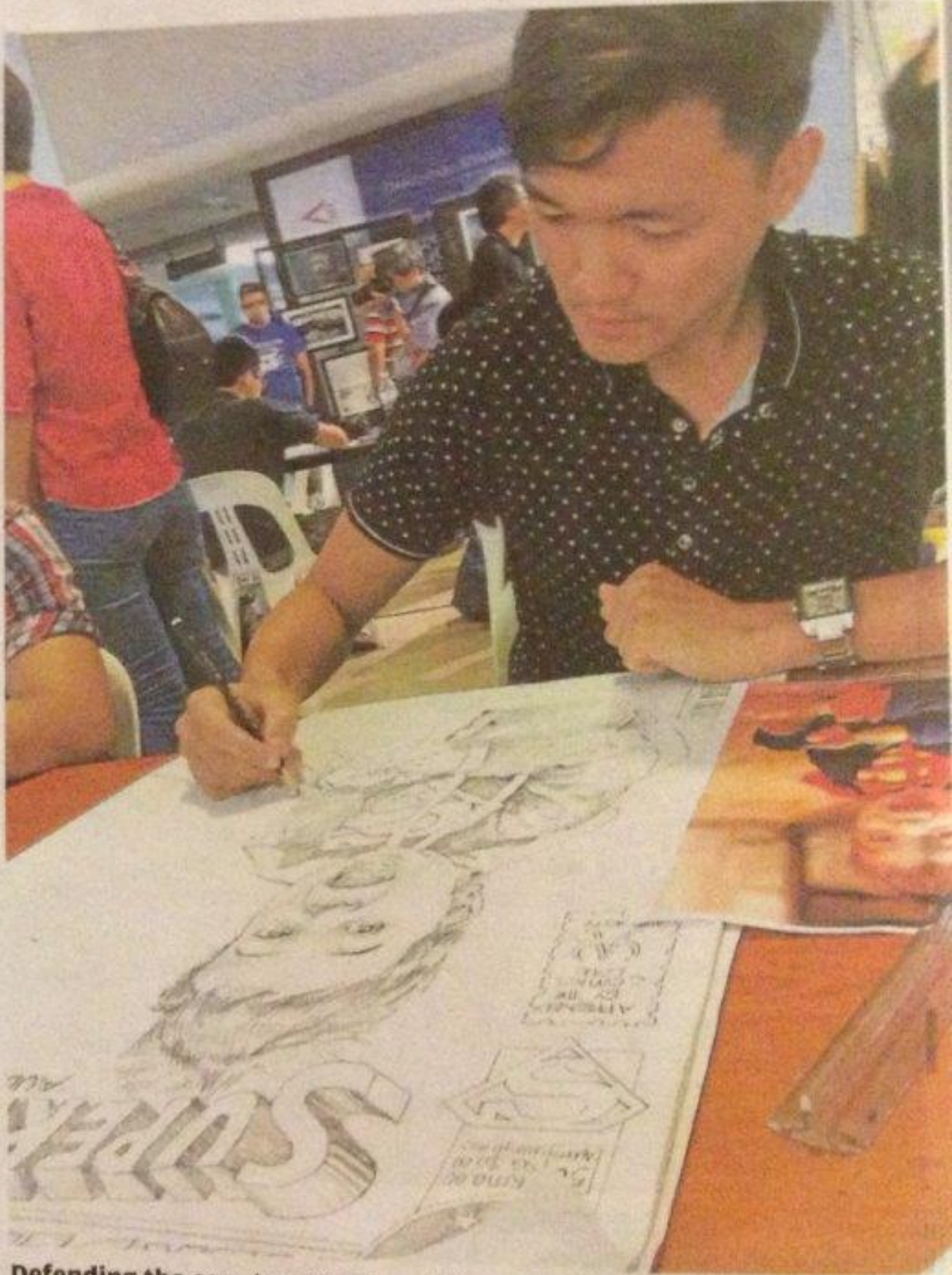
He said Lizzie shared her struggle by motivating others with her story with hopes that the public would

not judge people by their looks.

"Not many know of her but with me painting this picture of her, I hope I can share her inspiring story with everyone," he said.

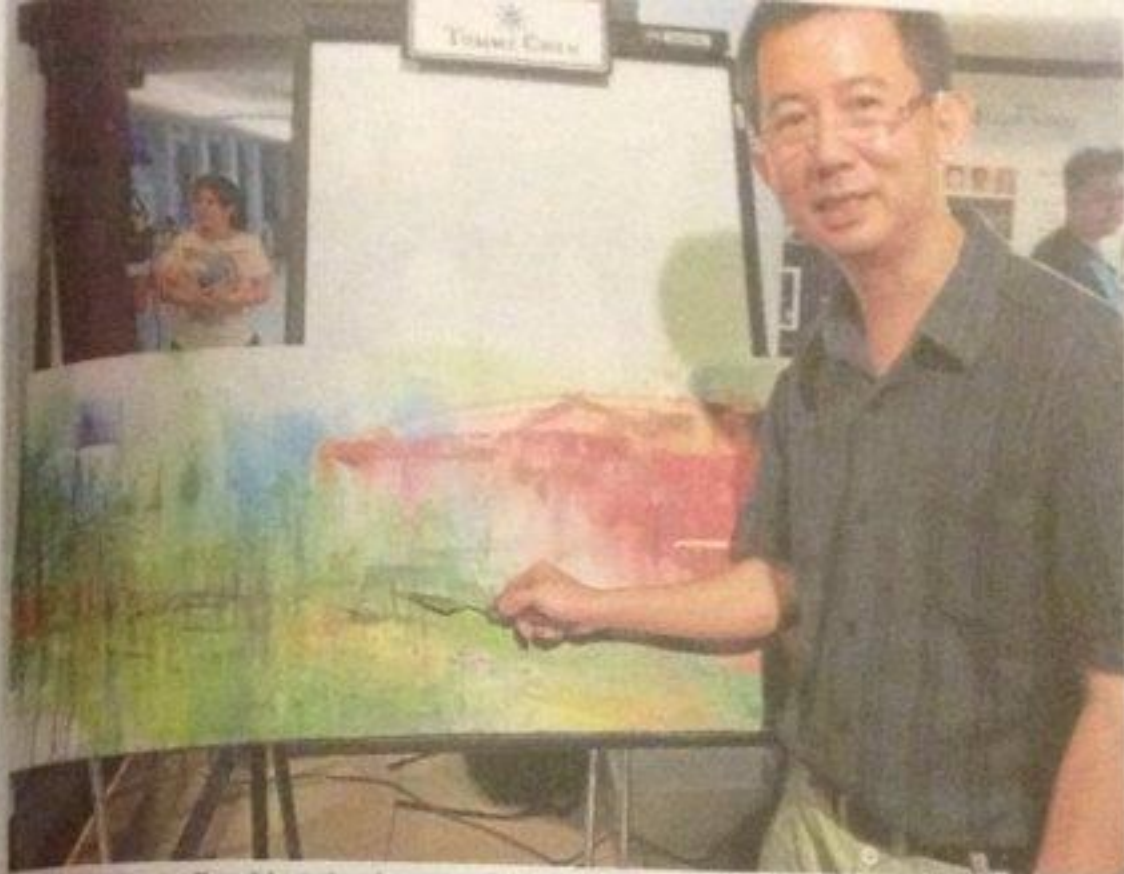
Sitting in a corner was Andrew Chew, who was calm and composed as he gave his full attention to a piece at hand.

His mother Tracey Chan who was sitting a distance away approached

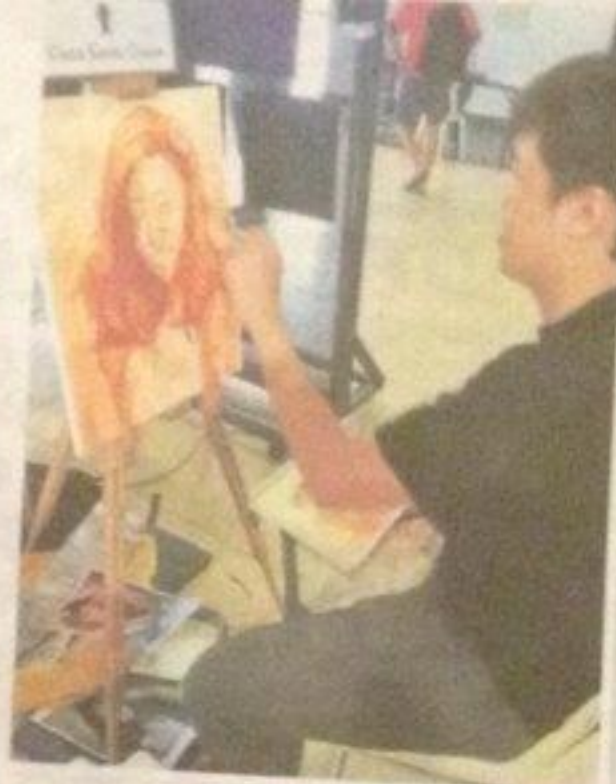


Defending the country: Chris Tan giving a lighter side of life with his piece of a child dressed up as Superman working to defend the country.

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Flow of life: Tommy Chen did not plan what to draw for the exhibition but came up with a 'live' piece of a beautiful garden and the ugly side in the slums, but they are connected by a stream of life.



My friend
Visual artist
Chong w
an impro
portrait
church



My friend
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Chong w
an impro
portrait
church

Hidden talents come to the fore

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me to explain about her son's condition.

"He is autistic but he loves drawing and has never stopped enjoying it since he was just four years old," said Qian who encourages Andrew to pursue his hobby.

She went on to share his piece depicting a contrast between an affluent neighbourhood to the slums, where the rich were oblivious to how the poor lived.

3D animator Chris Tan gave a lighter side of life with his artwork of a child dressed up as Superman working to defend his country.

"It is my way of telling my audience of how a child stepped forward to defend the country to everyone else should also follow suit," said Tan who used a pencil to sketch his piece.

Perak-born Diana Ling's artwork was of two people hugging each other with the hope of mending their broken relationship, and embracing each other's flaw with an open heart.

Other artists participating in the exhibition were graphic student Nicholas Lee, advertising



Tales of love: Diana Ling's piece intends to mend the relationship of two broken hearts.

designer Loh Chan Wai, digital painting student Ng Jian Han, Koi artist Tommy Chen, photographer Elliot Koon, Toh Hua Jie, Sara Soo, Chew Bee Bee, Gerald Chong, A Ravindren and Mercy Selvarani.

The exhibition ends on Sept 30. It is currently being held at DUMC from Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 4pm. For details call 03-7958 7388.



Bridging the nation: Nicholas Lee drawing a black and white piece featuring 14 bridges linking Borneo and peninsular Malaysia.

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