





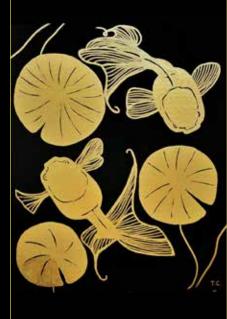
Heart & Art MEETS

Through her work, artist Tiffany Choong aims to bring joy and shine light on important topics.

Text by William K.C. Kee Photos courtesy of Tiffany Choong









he great Spanish artist Pablo Picasso once said "The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away."

When it comes to her art, Tiffany Choong has similar convictions about its purpose.

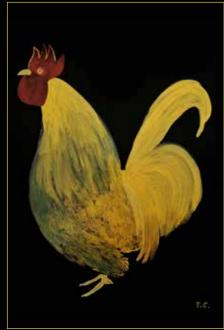
"The intention of my art is to bring joy and celebrate life by giving a voice to nature and wildlife and shining light on certain topics to create enlightening conversations."

Adds the Penang-based artist: "I feel like I have grown in confidence and I am grateful that I am still able to pursue this journey. The adage 'life is a marathon, not a sprint' really holds true for artists. It takes a lot of time, dedication and commitment to endure the course, and the course at times feels like a treasure hunt with the lights off. Having a vision and purpose has helped me to stay focused and motivated."

As a child, Choong's ambition was to be a 'hippie traveller'. She recalls with a laugh: "I didn't know at that time that it wasn't considered a career. I saw all these backpackers arriving in Penang, and I wanted to do the same thing - travel the world!"

She may be all grown-up now, but Choong's free-spirited persona and wanderlust cravings remain unabated. In 2019 alone, she managed to visit Singapore, Portugal, Britain and Germany. "In September 2019, I attended the launch of Fear Not by Dublin's popular poet Stephen James Smith at the Embassy of Ireland in London. I am over the moon that two of my illustrations were included in his book. My art has connected me with many amazing people and I am thankful."







TM | NOVEMBER/OCTOBER 2020 30 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020 | TM

and also be able to travel," muses Choong, who studied French to shine once more for a good cause." and interior design at University College London. She is quick to add: "However, the bohemian part is proving to be an was "Portraits For NHS Heroes". The project was initiated ideology; in reality, I have to treat art as a business."

to the pandemic. Choong has opted to look at the brighter pandemic. Artists were invited to offer portraits of front liners side of things. "Despite COVID-19 and the devastation that on Instagram using the hashtag #PortraitsforNHSHeroes. it has brought upon the world, it has actually turned out to be my best year. I have never had to work so hard in my life to exhibition on Google Arts and Culture website. succeed, as my mindset was to work or die."

State Art Gallery in collaboration with the Department of which featured Choong's art piece Bulan, showed Malaysia's explains Choong. commitment to addressing the extinction of the Malayan

was approached by restaurant De Wan 1958 by Chef Wan. "It income but the joy of reading my clients' feedback on social was to illustrate for the 'My Unity Tiffin' carrier for Merdeka media exceeded any monetary reward." and Malaysia Day celebration, a collaboration between Chef Wan and Hugo Boss to support local restaurants and the Lost exhibitions such as Chairity (organised by National Cancer

Choong describes herself as being a bohemian artist. Food Project. They wanted illustrations of Malaysian wildlife "Basically, it's a lifestyle to be able to draw and paint authentically including the Malayan Tiger and so Bulan the tiger was able

Another project she participated in during the MCO by British artist Tom Croft as a way to celebrate and thank Although this past year has been challenging, no thanks front liners, medics and nurses for their work during the This project has since been curated as a permanent virtual art

During the MCO, social media connected Choong and Entering 2020, Choong had two group art exhibitions her art to the world. "It has been a lifesaver! During the already planned. The first was BELANG at the Penang lockdown, I completed a series of paintings on birds which I observed from my balcony. I made them available to download Wildlife and National Parks (PERHILITAN). The exhibition, online for free for people who were keen to start birdwatching,"

"I also started a series of pet portrait commissions, which I collaborated with singer-songwriter Chelsia Ng who provided During the Movement Control Order (MCO), Choong the music to my art videos. It was a way to generate some

Thus far, Choong has participated in various group







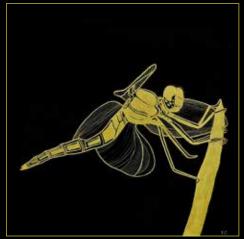


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Society at The Edge Gallery, Kuala Lumpur in 2014), Femmes a pair of flamingos. Plurielles (by Alliance Française at The Star Pitt, Penang in in 2017).

solo artist; it was held at G Art Gallery in G Hotel, Penang. Hill every other day." Titled Treasures Of A Straits Chinese, it featured 30 paintings inspired by Choong's Peranakan ancestry; more than half of the collection were sold within the first week.

acrylic and oil on canvas. They revolved around elements of of the cockatoo in the Garden Of Eden to the dragonfly's become an artpreneur." flight in Flutter Your Wings And Fly, the pieces are exquisitely detailed."

According to Choong, her art has its roots in the Peranakan culture. Somewhere during the process of creating this collection, it dawned on her that she is the legacy of her ancestors. "It brought back memories of my childhood, of being surrounded by black-and-gold furnishings and colourful porcelain vases," says Choong, who is the third of four siblings;

"I wanted to bring this heritage back which many people may have forgotten. In my imagination, if the Peranakan culture evolves, what will the next phase look like?" She did inject a couple of modern elements here and there; one of her most favourite paintings (You Make My Heart Smile) featured

Away from art, her passions include travelling and sports. 2015) and 8 (all-women exhibition at China House Gallery "I am a bit of a sponge, I like a lot of things. By travelling, I meet people from different cultures and backgrounds which In 2018, Choong held her very first exhibition as a broadens the mind. And if I am in Penang, I hike up Penang

What's her advice to aspiring artists?

"Know the reality of the industry, and the hard work that goes into it. One must also be able to stand the course of time, Most of the works were painted in gold and black, using as you might not be making money for the first few years. Anyone can follow their passion and become an artist but to nature, including flowers and insects. From the crest feathers make a living from it, one has to treat it is as a business and

For more on Choong's works, visit www.BulanLifestyle.com

TM | NOVEMBER/OCTOBER 2020 32 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020 | TM