Striking works of art
UiTM Sarawak undergrads display inspiration, creativity and teamwork in ‘Ranting’ exhibition

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UNIVERSITI Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Sarawak’s fine arts and graphic design students have come up with striking works of art for their final-year exhibition, currently on display at the State Library in Kuching.

Called “Ranting”, the exhibition features sculptures, paintings, drawings and prints as well as graphic design displays.

One eye-catching piece is a wood and metal sculpture called “Rhythm of Life” by 21-year-old fine arts student JC Recho Japal.

“I’ve taken the Orang Ulu tree of life motif and presented it in my own interpretation by making a sculpture of a tree. It represents people’s lives and how they overcome problems. The branches have spirals which represent the difficulties people face in their lives,” the Sabahan student said.

He added that the sculpture was made from wood, rod metal and wire and took him one and a half months to complete.

Another work inspired by ethnic Sarawakian culture is “Raining Beads”, an installation of oversized fabric and cotton “beads” hanging in strings from the ceiling.

Noor Khairunnisa Mohd Daniel, who created it, said she wanted to introduce Sarawak beads to the public through her work.

“Sarawak has a lot of beads. I want to highlight the beauty of beads as well as their value,” she said.

To make the installation, she painted pieces of fabric with different bead designs and sewed them by hand into bead shapes.

Ivy Paul, another 21-year-old student from Sabah, was inspired by Kuching’s nickname as the Cat City.

“A long time ago, there were many cats playing along the riverbank in what is now the Waterfront. My work represents Kuching as the city of cats,” she said.

One of her pieces is a sculpture titled “Cats’ Playground”, featuring a number of cats frolicking among themselves.

She also did two paintings and two prints with cats as the main subject. The students have to produce works in sculpture, painting, drawing and printmaking in their fine arts diploma programme.

“I like printmaking the most. For the print of a cat’s face, I carved a piece of plywood, then applied lino ink on it. The image was then transferred onto paper,” Ivy said.

“The sculpture is made from plaster of Paris, while my second print uses the etching method.”

Meanwhile, the graphic design students have to produce a display of their work for a company of their choice.

“The students have to go out and find a company which they think the design is quite weak. They have to redesign the company’s brand from scratch in terms of corporate identity, website, packaging, advertising materials and other aspects.

“They also have to come up with illustrations which they paint themselves. Even though they’re graphic design students, they need to do painting too,” lecturer Vincent Wong said.

Nur Shazana Rosli, a 21-year-old from Alor Setar, chose a company from her hometown which makes cupcakes, among other products.

She redesigned the company’s logo to reflect its target market of teenagers and came up with envelopes, business cards, packaging, retail sign, kiosk and even cupcake papers based on her design concept.

She also did a brochure based on popular flavours, aprons for employees and magazine advertisements.

“My mother has a cupcake business, that’s why I was interested in this company as cupcakes are their main products. I hope they will like my design,” Nur Shazana said.

Kuching girl Nur Farahin Madehi picked a local boutique for her design project, which she based on a henna motif in red, yellow and orange.

“I rebranded it using more colours because women are attracted to colourful, floral designs. It was quite challenging at first to come up with the design concept.

“I had to do research and refer back to the company to get their feedback,” she explained.

This is the first time the fine arts students are showing their work together with the graphic design students. The exhibition ends tomorrow.
The artist: Ivy in front of two of her artworks ‘Mua Mayau’ and ‘Urban Feline’.
Rare piece: Some of the paintings inspired by Sarawak's multi-ethnic society.

View from under: Visitors drawn to an art installation titled ‘Raining Beads’ by fine arts student Noor Khairunnisa Mohd Daniel.

One for the cats: A sculpture by fine arts student Ivy Paul.

Fashion attraction: Nur Farahin with her graphic design display for a local boutique.
Reptile replica: Students with a clay sculpture of a crocodile by fine arts student Muhammad Amin Harun.
Colours of rainbow: A visitor taking a snapshot of a colourful artwork.