



Village scene: A painting depicting village life.

Kampung comes alive on the canvas

Artist holds solo exhibition on paintings of rural folks

Story and photos by
YIP YOKE TENG
metro@the-star.com.my

It seems like many urbanites long for the simple village life but face the same dilemma of not being able to leave behind their many commitments and comforts in the city. Art provides a platform for them to relieve their frustration. Though it is just a temporary remedy, it has nevertheless brought about many good works. Kuen Stephanie's solo exhibition titled "The Essence of A Tropical Life - in the Kampung" came about under such circumstance. "To be away from the city's hustle and bustle is something I long for," said the 39-year-old. "These works reflect what is deep down in my heart."

The paintings, created with oil or acrylic, depict idyllic activities such as tucking into durians wearing a sarong, having an afternoon chat with neighbours, eating rambutans under the tree or combing a sister's hair under a blossom-laden tree. They also show kampung folks' down-to-earth character as well as their strong family ties. Her portrayal of heart warming moments such as playing together under the sun, sending father off to work and girls' secret-sharing sessions act as fresh reminders to city folks. The thick lines and vibrant colours of her works leave a long lasting impression. "I imagine the scenes. I have not really gone to the village to study the lifestyle there. However, many visitors have said that these works remind them of their childhood, as well as the good old days they had in the village," said the



Family ties: 'Ayah Pergi Kerja' is also part of the exhibition.



Nice: Keun with her painting titled Under The Frangipani Tree.



Colourful: A painting of a family enjoying durians titled 'The Feast'.



Siesta: This painting is titled 'A Hard Day's Work'.

Graphic Design graduate of Malaysia Institute of Arts. Kuen has had her share of urban stress. She was in the saturated advertising industry for years before she left and operated a graphic studio with her husband while taking care of her only child. However, she found relief only when she started paying serious attention to fine art. "It was in 1999, I bought a few tubes of oil paint. I was all the while painting

with watercolour and did not dare to venture into oil because of an unpleasant experience I had during childhood. My husband encouraged me to try and to my surprise it turned out better than my watercolour works," she added. "She has been selling her works through souvenir and furniture shops but was determined to put up her own show so that she can get feedback from the buyers. The exhibition is on until April 8 at KL Performing Arts Centre, Sentul. For details, call 012-218 0690.

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