

Disabled Artists Get Helping Hand from Maybank Foundation *Successful mentorship programme culminates in Nukilan Jiwaku Art Exhibition*

A total of 29 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) who attended a five-month intensive training programme in art, proudly received their graduation certificates today at a ceremony held at Balai Seni Maybank in Kuala Lumpur.

The pioneer training programme was organised by Maybank Foundation through a partnership with the Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation (MCR) and Universiti Malaya (UM). It was held at Akademi Pengajian Melayu, UM from November 2014 and March 2015.

The participants were awarded the Nukilan Jiwaku V.S.A (Very Special Arts) Mentorship Programme Certificate which was accredited by UM. Among the recipients included those with physical impairments, learning disabilities and hearing impairment. The participants also included three representatives from Maybank's "Train the Trainer" programme.

The artists received their certificates and appreciation plaques from the Chairman of Maybank and Maybank Foundation, Tan Sri Megat Zaharuddin Megat Mohd Nor and Prof Dr. Mohamad Mokhtar Abu Hassan, Director of Akademi Pengajian Melayu, UM. They were accompanied by Prof Dr. Sabzali Musa Khan, Senior Lecturer, Masters and PhD Coordinator at Akademi Pengajian Melayu and Encik Shahril Azuar Jimin, CEO of Maybank Foundation.

Speaking at the event, Tan Sri Megat Zaharuddin said arts enable us to imagine the unimaginable and connect to the past, the present and the future. "Music and arts can transform the mundane into the magical. How gray our world would be today if not for the beauty of a Van Gogh painting, a Mozart symphony or a Yasmin Ahmad's movie or her festive advertisements which we all continue to hold close to our hearts. Not having arts is like living in a black and white world when colour is an option.

"Therefore, through programs like Nukilan Jiwaku, Maybank hopes to make a difference to the lives of artists like yourselves, who in return will inspire us with the quality of your artwork whether they are in the form of batik painting, fine arts, acrylic painting or others."

He added, "Arts and culture make up a very important part of our Corporate Responsibility program. In turn, Corporate Responsibility forms an integral component to our business. As Maybankers, we genuinely believe in bettering the lives of the communities that we serve, especially of people in the vulnerable groups. We believe that to truly live up to our powerful mission of humanizing financial services, we have to go beyond banking, reach out to the very heart of the communities we serve and play the role of enabling society."

The Nukilan Jiwaku V.S.A Mentorship Programme is one of Maybank Foundation's initiatives to empower the disabled through capacity building and knowledge transfer so that they are able to enjoy economic independence and financial inclusion

The training programme was held during weekends under the guidance of Prof Dr Sabzali and his team comprising lecturers specialising in fine arts and batik painting, who volunteered their time to support this programme.

A total of 10 structured learning modules in the area of acrylic and batik painting were tailor made for the three groups to help improve their techniques and creativity. Apart

from the formal graduation ceremony, the success of the participants have also culminated in a special art exhibition, entitled Nukilan Jiwaku which is on display at Balai Seni Maybank from 19 November - 4 December 2015.

Nukilan Jiwaku Art Exhibition

The Nukilan Jiwaku art exhibition features a total of 60 artworks and offers members of the public and art enthusiasts a chance to have a glimpse into the journeys taken by each of these very special artists. Through the power of art and dialogue, the art exhibition will challenge perceptions about disability and help build a more inclusive community that creates opportunities for people of all talents. The artists produced their artworks in the form of acrylic painting and batik painting on canvas. The price of the artworks range from RM600 - RM2000.

History of Nukilan Jiwaku programme

Nukilan Jiwaku began as a volunteerism programme in 2012 by the employees of Maybank's Group Risk who, supported by the Maybank Foundation, helped PWDs by providing them skilled training to learn how to manage their own their businesses and become economically self-sufficient. Part of this programme also included providing those with artistic skills an avenue to display their creative works at Balai Seni Maybank.

Two exhibitions were held - in 2012 and 2013 - generating sales of over RM67,000, which were all channelled back to the special artists. The Maybank Foundation subsequently worked with MCR and UM to design structured programmes that would enable the PWDs to further enhance their skills especially in visual arts, to help them improve their income, and at the same time, enable them to receive accreditation from a recognised academic institution.

The Nukilan Jiwaku V.S.A Mentorship Programme is the first such collaboration between the private, public and academia that provides an opportunity to persons with disabilities who would otherwise not have access to the expertise and guidance that many art college students are exposed to or follow the academic route to an art education.

The programme also aims to revolutionise the local creative arts industry as part of a human capacity development initiative that will see the Maybank Foundation nurture and develop an alternative pool of artists with their own intrinsic sense of creativity.