



## MEDIA RELEASE

### DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OPENS MOTOUR ART GALLERY

PUTRAJAYA, 13 SEPT - Deputy Prime Minister, YAB Tan Sri Dato' Muhyiddin Haji Mohd Yassin, officially opened the Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia (MOTOUR) Art Gallery at the lobby of the Tourism Ministry before attending its Raya Open House, Warna-Warni Aildilfitri 2012 here, today.

The event was graced by the Tourism Minister, YB Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen and a number of senior officers from various government departments, foreign ambassadors, local artists and representatives from the tourism industry.

The MOTOUR Art Gallery grand opening exhibition features a stellar collection of large creative artworks by various talented local artists.

Dato' Sri Dr. Ng Yen Yen in her speech said that the art gallery was set up to support the 1Malaysia Contemporary Art Tourism event and to complement the Malaysian artists' creative efforts.

"I believe that the MOTOUR Art Gallery can be used as a platform to promote the very best in contemporary Malaysian artworks to the public, especially to the local and foreign visitors that the Ministry receives daily," said Dato' Sri Dr. Ng, adding that the opening of the art gallery would help expose the local artist artworks to a wider audience.

"Creativity is an important value and I strongly believe that Malaysian art offers a window to the rest of Malaysia, our beautiful natural landscapes, our culture and tradition." she added.

The MOTOUR Art Gallery currently features Malaysian aboriginal sculptures by the Mah Meri tribe which have attained the UNESCO Seal of Excellence recognition - the only one in the world. Through their sculpture works, the Mah Meri people from Pulau Carey, show their legacy of culture and traditions.

There is also an exhibition of the international award winning masterpieces by Suhaimi Fadzir, who recently won the Dublin Biennial 2012 Award of Excellence, the first major award won by a Malaysian in any biennials to date. In Suhaimi's sculptures, installations and mixed media works, the viewer will be able to identify common items and icons that they, too, can relate and thus form a bond of understanding with the artist.

Another outstanding collection at the art gallery is the artworks by Ahmad Shukri. This award-winning Malaysian contemporary artist (Philip Morris, Young Contemporary and ASEAN Art Awards) is one of the co-founders of leading non-conformist art group, MATAHATI. Through MATAHATI, Ahmad Shukri contributes towards shaping the future of Malaysian art, using it as a platform to guide and mentor aspiring artists.

On display too are “The Malaysian Rice Plates Project” organised by Wei-Ling Gallery which brings together 60 Malaysian artists who have created individual artworks inspired by the Malaysian currency, not on canvas, but on rice plates. Rice, being the staple food of Asians, is as necessary to sustenance as money. It is also an important symbol of unity as all Malaysians eat their rice from plates.

The exhibition today also features Malaysia’s young creative talents in “Reflections of 1 MALAYSIA” - an exhibition by Malaysian students organized by Institut Kajian Etnik (KITA) of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. This art programme reaches out especially to the young children of Malaysia. It brings together the reflections of a group of school children of various cultures and ages around the themes of friendship and social relationships.

## **BACKGROUND ON 1MALAYSIA CONTEMPORARY ART TOURISM FESTIVAL**

Held for the third consecutive year, the 1Malaysia Contemporary Art Tourism Festival was initiated in 2010 to diversify Malaysia’s tourism product offerings and establish Malaysia as a reputable destination for art aficionados in the region to enjoy and acquire contemporary art, with museum-quality pieces in line with the theme “Malaysia, Your New Art Tourism Destination.”

The event, with a series of nationwide art-related events organized from July to September, serves as a platform to promote Malaysian artists and artworks to a global audience as well as groom and launch the careers of young Malaysian artists.

The first 1Malaysia Contemporary Art Tourism Festival in 2010 recorded 42,000 visitors and about RM14 million in art sales throughout the three-month festival from July to September. One of the most significant turn of events during the festival was the success of the Henry Butcher Art Auction, a first in Malaysia, which recorded sales of RM1.7 million in a single afternoon with 90% of the works sold.

The following year, the Henry Butcher Art Auction registered total sales of over RM3 million, while in 2012, total sales was RM4.1 million, proving that apart from a growing interest in collecting Malaysian artworks, the secondary art market for Malaysian artworks is well and truly on the rise as well.

*For more information on MOTOUR Art Gallery, kindly contact Mr. Ramzi Abu Yazid, Senior Deputy Director, Advertising Division, Tourism Malaysia at 03 - 8891 8702 or email [ramziabuyazid@tourism.gov.my](mailto:ramziabuyazid@tourism.gov.my)*

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