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`Explosion of colours' in children's art

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - For many, the term abstract art itself sounds formidable, conjuring up images of unintelligible colours brushed by equally unintelligible people who live in a world of their own.

But recently for 23 young children, aged between five and 10, what was once abstract is now more intelligible to them, after spending two-hours every weekend for the last three months exploring the intricacies of abstract art, albeit the "kiddy" version of it.

And yesterday their weekends under the guidance of Shanghai-born jet-setting artist Louis Wah culminated in an explosion of colours, the "Abstract Expressions by kids for kids", proudly exhibited at Galeri Taksu.

More than 130 pieces of "abstract art" was propped all over the gallery as the proud children ran around the place, probably not aware that their paintings were also on sale for a minimum of RM1,500 each.

"Well, they do have short attention spans. They're children after all. Still they have a burst of spontaneity that is vital in abstract art. I was there only to guide, to tell them when to stop and shift direction," said Wah.

Wah, who was inspired by his traditional training in Chinese calligraphy and painting, basically asked the children to let loose their imaginations.

"Sometimes, I took out an object, say a candle. And I'd ask them to paint it on one condition - don't make it look like a candle."

And the children were let loose. Two of the paintings were even auctioned at RM10,000 and RM5,000 that day, a feat indeed.

Toh Puan Mahani Daim, wife of recently installed Special Functions Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin was the patron of the programme.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's wife Datin Seri Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali was also present to see her granddaughter's painting.

Proceeds will go to the Centre for Achievements of Human Potential and the Future Minds Centre, two special schools catering to children with learning problems.

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