

Introducing Michael Foo and the art of the bean

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GEORGE TOWN: When it comes to creating drawings, most artists prefer a canvas, brush and paint.

But local artist Michael Foo has taken his art to another level by “painting” with coffee beans, red peas, green peas and kuaci shells.

His latest masterpiece – a portrait of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim – is made of 681 coffee beans in different hues of brown.

Although many have reached out to buy the framed piece, Foo said the artwork is not for sale.

“This portrait is special to me as Anwar is my idol.

“It took me six hours to create,

which requires a detailed sketch of a photo before gluing the beans onto an A3 sized paper.

“I’ll be writing to him officially as I want to present the artwork to him personally,” he said at his house in Bandar Baru Ayer Itam on Friday.

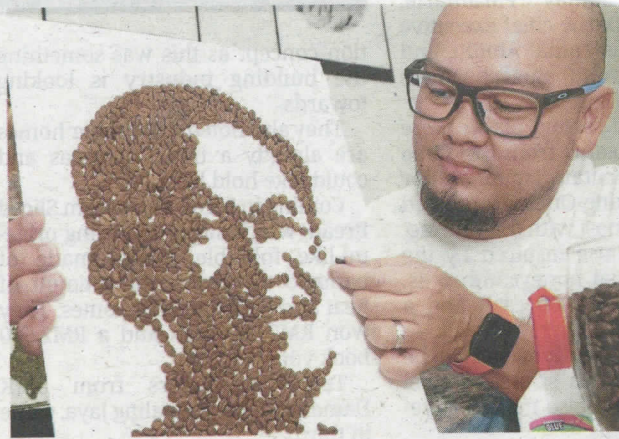
Foo, 40, used to work as a sales manager before he quit to become a full-time artist.

When the pandemic hit, he started to work with mixed mediums.

Besides coffee beans, Foo is also working with green peas, which are harder as they are tiny and take longer to place individually.

“The tough part is in the details because the sketch must look like the intended person,” he said.

Foo said he does not spray on



Human beans: Foo with the piece featuring Anwar at his home in Bandar Baru Ayer Itam. — CHAN BOON KAI/ The Star

preservatives over the artwork as not to damage it.

“I use really strong glue before framing the artwork. There has been no problem so far as I only work with dry materials,” he said.

Foo first shot to fame after he did a portrait of Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah

with kuaci shells during a contest.

Foo, who teaches art, said those featured in his art pieces are people who have become a source of inspiration for fellow Malaysians.

“One day, I might hold an exhibition with all my artworks. For now I have no plans to sell them,” he said.