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Artist Lim Pui Wan Creates Miniature Sculptures That Are Big On Nostalgic Charm



The Johor Bahru-based artist, also known as PicoWorm, picks five of her favourite artworks so far

Lim Pui Wan mines nostalgia with her miniature sculptures that are often based on her childhood memories. The self-taught artist started with food before moving on to intricately realised tiny replicas of everything from a coffeeshop to her grandmother's kitchen. Her works have exhibited at the Tokyo Dollhouse & Miniature Show in 2018 and she was invited by TedxPetaling Street in 2017 to share her artistic journey. Earlier this year, she tutored Deadpool and The Hitman's Bodyguard actor Ryan Reynolds about miniature art on his Snapchat series, *Ryan Doesn't Know*.

She works under the professional name of PicoWorm—according to her website, the name is a combination of the word 'pico', which is a tremendously small unit in metric system, and 'worm', which is derived from the word 'bookworm'. It so happens that P.W. is also her initials.

We ask Lim to list five of her favourite works, in no particular order, so far.

Ho Kow Kopitiam in Chinatown, Kuala Lumpur



Old vs new: Lim's sculpture serves as a nostalgic reminder of what Lorong Panggung used to look like

I'm still in love with my Lorong Panggung artwork as it was based on the original structure before it was refreshed in 2018. I love preserving the original scene when the 60-year-old Ho Kow kopitiam was still located in the alley. At that time, I was also reading a book about KL history and I really wanted to keep this spot as a miniature art. I'm happy that I did as the place has totally changed into just another hotspot for the Instagram.

Grandma's kitchen in Negeri Sembilan



An olden day kitchen cabinet in Lim's grandmother's home

This work is inspired by my grandma's kitchen in Mantin, Negeri Sembilan. We used to go back there every month, and my grandma would cook my favourite kampung chicken dish. I remember with much fondness the wooden cabinet and the accessories it held in the kitchen.

A barbershop in Melaka



A traditional barbershop near the Melaka river

I went to this place occasionally when I was having a walk along the Melaka river. I was randomly taking photos and the barber himself welcomed me to come inside to take some pictures. I was having a great time chatting with him and I decided to create a miniature art of the shop. I returned to Melaka twice to show the barber the artwork. Sadly, during MCO last year, my friend informed me that he had passed away and that the barbershop had closed down. This work is now a treasured memento of our time together.

Ban Fong Provision Shop in Kuala Lumpur



A biscuit shop in Kuala Lumpur

This is very important work for me as it represents the start of my artistic journey. I made it for a competition in Taiwan in 2014 - 2015, and I was the only Malaysian picked to participate. It was inspired by a biscuit shop I used to pass by when I was studying in Tunku Abdul Rahman University College. I admired its simple beauty, and bought some biscuits and snacks from the shop while I was waiting for the bus.

Thanks to the competition, I got to practise different techniques and I improved my skills rapidly during this time. I became almost inseparable from miniature art after this competition.

Yong Heng Lee Provision Shop in Singapore



An old shophouse in Singapore

This was my first commissioned work, and it was from someone in Singapore who wanted to recreate her grandfather's provision shop. She had a lot of good memories of the shop as she used to play around the neighbourhood when she was a kid. The shop operated for 35 years before it closed due to dwindling business. It was challenging to create this artwork as I only had old photos for reference. I had a lot of discussions with my client about the facade and the wares it sold. She was able to present it to her grandpa on his 80th birthday and I was very pleased to have been able to share this happiness with the family.



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