

art/

# THE SPACE IN BETWEEN

A heady display of sculpture, printmaking, realism, semi-abstract and abstract-themed paintings are on showcase at Galeri Prima's latest exhibition called Ambiguity, writes Aneeta Sundararaj

In the 1980s, a teacher asks his students what they'd like to be when they grow up. One boy wants to be an artist.

What kind of artist? A singer, perhaps. Or a film star.

A painter, the boy says.

And the teacher's replies, "I wish you luck."

Today, that boy, Mohd Jamil Mat Isa, has become an artist and he's curating a group exhibition called Ambiguity at Balai Berita's

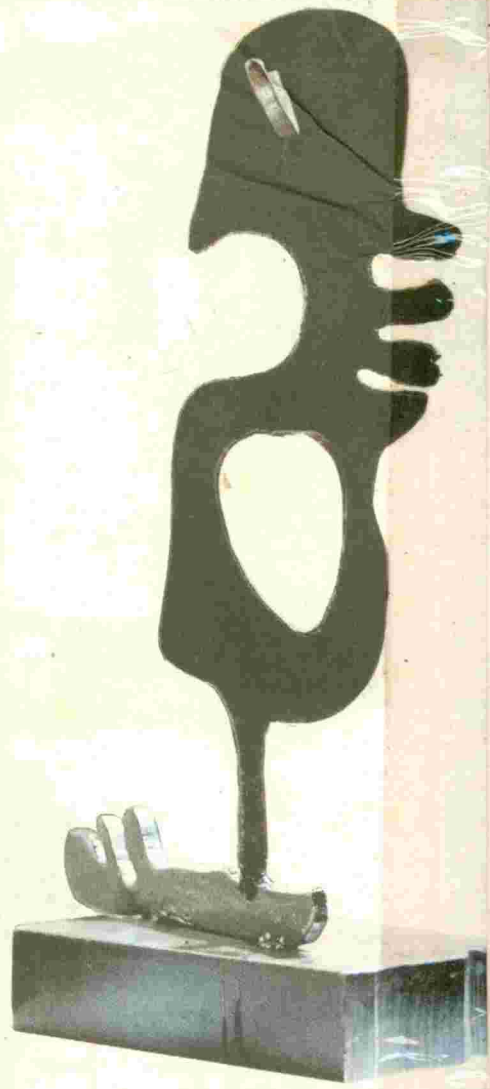
Galeri Prima in Bangsar, KL. The definition of "ambiguity", explains the 50-year-old, means vague or obscure. In design, it refers to the presence of a space when two overlapping shapes produce one vague one in between. For example, place two vases next to each other and the space between them creates a new shape.

Walking me through the exhibition, Jamil explains that each painting in the exhibition has two interpretations - the covert and the overt. The overt represents

the composition of shapes, while the covert is the artists' meaning, thoughts and philosophy behind their artwork.

## Ambiguity - a group exhibition

Where Galeri Prima, Anjung Liku, Balai Berita, 31 Jalan Riong, KL  
When Until Feb 24



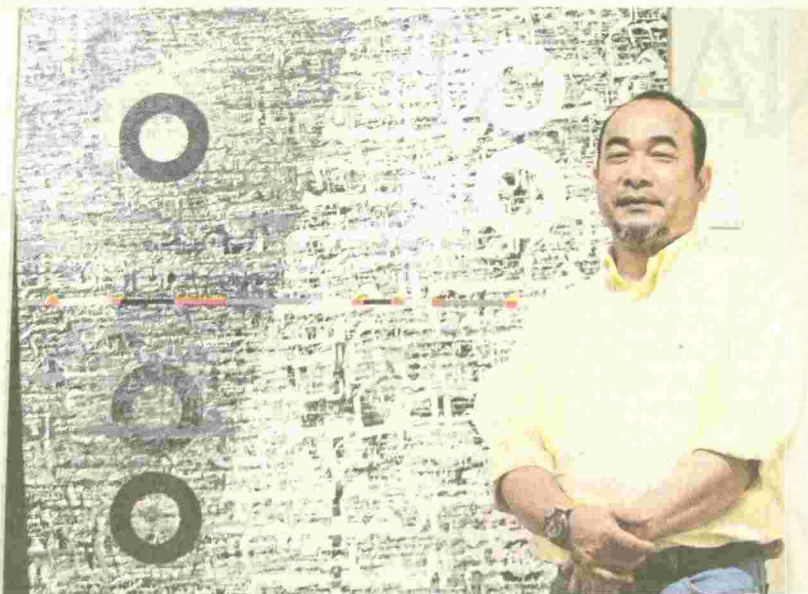
**AMBIGUITY**  
BY DR ROSLI ZAKARIA

The only sculpture in the exhibition, Ambiguity is a piece that focuses on the human figure as the subject matter. Running his hands along the lines of the piece, Jamil explains that the sculptor likes to feature the people around him in his works. The sculpture is, in fact, a face. "There's a balance between the horizontal and the diagonal," adds Jamil.

### THEWISE

BY MOHD JAMIL MAT ISA

A native of Penang, Jamil focused on khat — a form of calligraphy. He explains: "Zikir Asma-Ul-Husna" is a zikir featuring the 99 names of Allah." With this in mind, he created layer upon layer of khat. This repetitive process is a reflection of the practice of zikir which relies on recitations of verses that are frequently doubled. The final product was an amalgamation of the elements of spontaneity and agility, and interesting visual textures.



### ALBERT EINSTEIN

BY ZARINA ABDULLAH

There are two curious features in all the works by this artist — each has a flower painted in bright red. And, like in this painting, "What?" is also imprinted. In this rather sad portrayal of Einstein, it's as though the artist is asking the genius scientist, "What have you done?" All this, explains Jamil, is the artist's way of combining the expressionist and impressionist genres to make a comment on the state of our politics, economy and other issues that continue to plague us.



**THE GOLDEN VALLEY #12**  
BY ZAHARIN MOHAMMAD

Surface colours of stone, wood, soil and mud feature prominently in this artist's works. The artist, Jamil explains, is trying to display the richness of the world with cheerful gold colours. He sees the world up close, ensuring that lines and textures appear more clearly. The world we live in is also the place we look for sustenance. As such, it's important to make all efforts to preserve our good earth.



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**STRUGGLE #4**

**BY ANASSUWANDI AHMAD**

There are four figures in the painting with the one on the left being dominant. The blurry and biomorphic humanoid images are a contrast against textured backgrounds to produce a camouflage effect. Jamil feels that the artist is trying to portray his struggles in life.



**NYANYIAN ANGIN LAGU DERU-DERUAN DAUNAN 1**

**BY ZAINON ABDULLAH**

A full-time abstract artist and educator, Zainon uses the beauty of nature as the main theme in his artwork. Jamil insists that to fully comprehend this piece, we need to understand that the artist didn't just paint lines. It's the quality of the lines that make it special and their interplay dominates the work. The bright colours in the background represent the artist's sympathy towards the victims of the war in Gaza.



**PASSION OF COLOUR - GARDEN SERIES 1**

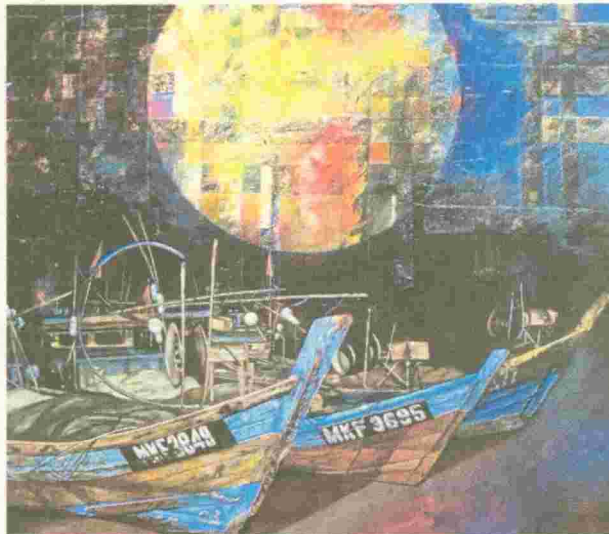
**BY AZMAN HILMI**

One of the most colourful pieces in the exhibition, *Passion of Colour - Garden Series 1* showcases the artist's expertise in the genre called "fauvism". The artist is inviting us to appreciate the joy of nature. Such show of spontaneity and energy in the painting, however, is in complete contrast to the nature of the artist. "Azman," shares Jamil, "is a very quiet guy."

**CERITA POKOK TUA 1**

**BY JOHAN MARJONID**

As a "realist naturalist painter", Johan's work reflects the contrast between urban dwellings and nature. Says Jamil: "Johan likes to go into the jungle." Indeed, *Cerita Pokok Tua 1* is based on a tree in the Royal Belum Temenggor Forest. The complex detail of the intertwining branches suggest to Jamil that this tree has had to struggle to survive. In fact, choosing to paint a tree devoid of leaves depicts "a sick world", where we have destroyed humanity's "oxygen tanks".



**BULAN PENUH**

**BY ZAIM DURULAMAN**

From Bagan Serai, Zaim has actively participated in exhibitions locally and internationally. In *Bulan Penuh*, he has chosen to focus on fishing boats. They are a metaphor for how we're sailing through life and can never turn back. Death is merely the jetty upon which we'll get off the boat and begin life in the hereafter. Every boat also has a compass. Similarly, we have a compass, and that's our faith.

**BIAS 7**

**BY HAMDAN SHAARANI**

A native of Teluk Intan, Perak, Hamdan often paints scenes that depict his fascination with the flow and movement of water. In *Bias 7*, the artist used a "bird's eye view" to observe the shadows that emerge on the surface a body of water. He used purple for those shadows to make his work more dynamic. It could also be the sky. This indecision points to the abstract nature of the piece and underlines the artist's belief that when looking at our reflections, we're often observing a shadow of our real selves.



**GARIS-GARIS YANG BERTAUT**

**BY NORHANEM MOHD NOR**

This Melacca-born artist is recognised as having discovered the technique of using fine sands in his art pieces. Naturally, his choice of subject matter is landscapes. Jamil says that with the liberal use of white space, there's an air of being able to "breathe" in Norhanem's words. This work showcases his inspirations which are often the concept of wind, light and sound.

