

SMA Charity Auction

Giving through Art

Text by Dr Ng Chew Lip



Centenarian Cultural Medallion winner, Mr Lim Tze Peng, has generously donated a piece of his iconic artwork to support the publication of an artbook by SMA and writer/artist Mr Josef Lee on Singapore's fight against COVID-19. All nett proceeds from the book will go towards the SMA Charity Fund to support medical students in need.

Born in 1921, Mr Lim is one of Singapore and Southeast Asia's most celebrated living artists. He was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 2003 and is also Singapore's highest-selling living artist, with a painting auctioned for HK\$1.25 million (S\$215,226) at Christie's in December 2021. A largely self-taught artist, his calligraphy was profoundly influenced by Kang Youwei, a master calligrapher, politician and reformist of the late Qing dynasty, and his paintings by painter and art theorist Huang Binhong. His iconic muddled words (糊涂字), often portrayed against colourful backgrounds and paintings of shophouses along the Singapore River, are highly sought after by collectors.

At 100 years of age, Mr Lim continues to paint and write daily. At a recent launch of a book about Mr Lim's life and philosophy on art, guest of honour Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said, "From his streetscapes and kampung scenes in our early nation-building years, to his iconic paintings of Chinatown and the Singapore River through the decades, they offer a vivid glimpse of the colour of everyday lives in Singapore – still within living memory, but fading into the past year by year. His life's work captures the atmosphere of the changing times, as our country developed and urbanised. It opens a window into our nation's soul, while enriching our heritage, and helping to form an emerging national cultural identity."

This iconic calligraphic piece (97 cm by 89 cm), titled 孝 (filial piety), was completed in December 2021. It demonstrates strong brush strokes with masterful 飞白 (white spaces within the black ink), with Mr Lim's iconic harmoniously colourful background painted with ink specially sourced from Japan. It is signed off with 百岁林子平, which means "Lim Tze Peng at 100 years old". At 100 years old, his works have a special auspiciousness and meaning due to an association with his longevity, and are crystallisations of the century-long practice of his craft. This artwork will make a pleasing centrepiece in a home or clinic; it harbours deep meaning and will make a delightful conversation piece. It will also be exhibited at our book launch for public viewing in mid-2022. This piece comes unframed, with a letter of appreciation and authenticity from SMA.

SMA is pleased to open bidding to Members, beginning from \$8,000 (excluding GST). Please submit your bids via email to sma@sma.org.sg before 20 March 2022. We will announce the winning bid by 31 March 2022. ▶

The SMA Charity Fund (SMACF), an independent charity arm of the SMA, is an Institution of a Public Character (IPC) and charity in Singapore. SMACF endeavours to develop a compassionate medical profession that contributes towards better healthcare in Singapore through providing financial assistance to needy medical students; advocating volunteerism among the profession; supporting learning exposure for medical students; and recognising mentorship. Both SMA and SMACF believe in giving back to society and encourage SMA Members to do the same.