

Artist gets big break

Painter is first Sarawakian to hold solo exhibition in US

KUCHING: Professional artist Chew Fang Chin has finally gotten a big break in his career – he is the first Sarawakian to hold a solo exhibition in the United States.

Chew, whose works showcase the colourful lifestyles of Sarawak's indigenous people, specialises in a painting style which is a mix of classical Chinese and modern western art.

"I am excited about this exhibition as it is a rare honour given to a Malaysian artist.

"It is my hope that through my paintings, Americans will get to learn more about Sarawak and Malaysia, especially its diverse culture, plural characters and inter-racial harmony," said Chew before departing for the United States yesterday in a Malaysia Airlines-sponsored trip.

Malaysian Ambassador to the United States Datuk Dr Rajmah Hussain will open the show at the Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania on Friday.

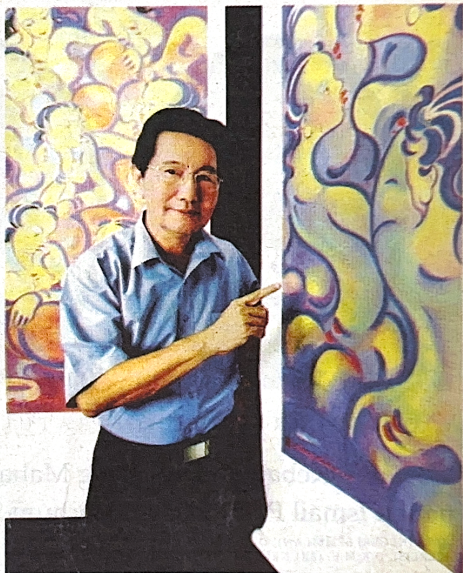
The three-week event themed "East Meets West" is hosted by the college as a US-Malaysia cultural exchange programme to mark the institution's 40th anniversary celebrations. The college has some 16,000 students.

Some of Chew's best collections from 2000 to 2007 will be among the 40 masterpieces to be on display.

Chew, who turned professional 25 years ago, said he would help pro-

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mote Malaysia as a tourist destination. His exhibition comprises four categories: *Ethnic Impressions – Lifestyle*; *Ethnic Impressions – Heritage*; *Carnal Fantasies* and *Landscape*.

His *Ethnic Impression* series were featured in the 1993 and 1994 tourism calendars of the Sarawak Tourism Ministry.

His latest works were inspired by a two-month participation in art workshops in Poland a year ago.

Chew has over the years taken part in cultural exchange programmes in Australia, South Korea, Taiwan and China under the sponsorship of the state Tourism Ministry.

He has also held solo exhibitions in Taiwan, China and Singapore, among other countries.

Moving art: Chew showing one of his masterpieces entitled *Poetry in Motion*.