Enlightening works of art on life and hope

Trio's creations using the sunflower to greet visitors at memorial park's special ceremony

By BRENDA CH'NG
brenda@thestar.com.my

SUNFLOWERS take centre stage at Xiao En Memorial Park in Nilai until tomorrow as part of the park's annual Enlightenment Ceremony 2017. About 10,000 visitors are expected to perform prayers this weekend and they will get to see art pieces featuring sunflowers by students from Sunway University College School of Art.

At the main entrance, guests will be greeted by a huge 2.4m by 4.8m 2D printed piece filled with different types of colourful sunflowers created by three students from Sunway University's department of Art and Design. In front of the Xiao En temple in the park will be an oil painting of sunflowers on canvas measuring 3.6m by 9.7m by a renowned artist in the Chinese art scene, Goh Ah Ang.

The sunflower was chosen as the main element for both art pieces as they symbolised positivity, which is in line with Xiao En Group's core values – love and hope.

"Sunflowers never die because at the end of its cycle, the seeds fall off and grow into another sunflower," said Xiao En Group corporate communications senior manager Kidman Kok.

A printed version of the original artworks – with a dimension of 0.9m by 1.2m – will be on display at their sales office. Xiao En will be selling two postcards featuring the colourful sunflowers and people can buy them on a donation basis.

Funds will be channelled to non-profit organisation, Academy for Silent Mentor. "I hope I love..."

Visitors who purchase a sunflower-themed postcard, designed by Sunway University students, can write a message and Xiao En will mail their postcards for free.

"This collaboration between Xiao En and Sunway University is the first of its kind for both parties. This is definitely good exposure for our students as we want them to experience new things and be exposed to other types of art and scenarios like working with memorial parks," said Art and Design department head Augustine Wong.

The three artists who are part of the project are a first-year diploma student, a second-year degree student and the third is an alumnus. Ang Jia Chie, who designed the postcards with heart-shaped colourful sunflowers, said it portrayed how she felt about life and death.

"We should be more open about expressing our love to our loved ones while they are still alive," she said.

She recalled how she lost her pet dog of nine years and how she regretted not expressing more love to it.

"My dog spent half of my life with me and my one regret was not showing her more love," said Ang, 18.

Alumnus Stefanie Pong designed the other postcard that had a tree filled with sunflowers.

"The tree represents life and a happy family tree, like the big and old trees at the memorial park," said the 22-year-old.

Both Pong and Ang were led by 24-year-old Tang Miao King, who coordinated and ensured all the art pieces were in place.

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