

A Stroke Brilliance OF

**CALLIGRAPHY ARTIST RYAN LOI
ADDS HIS MAGIC TOUCH TO ADORN
THE HOMES OF SINGAPOREANS.**

Having trained in various forms of Western art, Ryan Loi has been in the field of design and advertising for 20 years. Currently the Creative Director of Whitewood Creative Company, his work mainly involves designing marketing and promotional materials for television dramas, movies and theatre productions.

Apart from his day job, Ryan is a calligraphy artist whose works have been seen on TV and in musicals, as well as at restaurants, events and commercial merchandise. These days, the 42-year-old takes on commissions to create calligraphy art pieces for homes and private collectors.



A testament to his vast experience in photography and typography, Ryan's works encompass strong imagery and expressive brush strokes, which are inspired by his interest in Zen philosophy, contemporary art forms, and roots in Southeast Asian culture.

Ryan tells *Life Storeys* about his journey in pursuing calligraphy and his enduring love for Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park.

What inspired you to delve into calligraphy?

I am goal-oriented; my initial objective was to use calligraphy for my marketing works. But as I dive deeper into this craft, I see calligraphy more as an art form rather than a means to an end. I dabbled with basic Chinese calligraphy at a young age due to my father's influence, but only practised it actively in the past five years under the tutelage of Japanese calligraphy master Kimie Nagai. It is through her teachings that I have learnt the way of *shodo* (the art of beautiful writing).

Currently, where can we view your calligraphy works? To date, which artwork are you most satisfied with?

My works can be found on my official website (ryanloi.com) and Instagram (@ryan_loi).

The most memorable project that I have done so far is 定风波, which means 'Stabilise the Storm'. It is an ongoing series that I created at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which I experienced great uncertainty and anxiety. The title represents a desire close to my heart at that point in time. One of the pieces has been sold to a private collector. I intend to continue this series as I get older, to document how I feel about stability and chaos over time — an open-ended series with unexpected possibilities.

Do you have plans to hold an exhibition?

Yes, I hope to hold a solo exhibition within the next two years!



(Above and background)

The most memorable calligraphy artwork that Ryan has done is titled 定风波, which means 'Stabilise the Storm', a reflection of his experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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What do you think can be done to raise awareness and interest in calligraphy?

I am unable to provide data on the size of the calligraphy community in Singapore, but I do know that there is a sizeable group of young Singaporeans who are interested in commissioning calligraphy art pieces for their homes. Instead of raising awareness for one particular art form, I believe there is a need to increase the overall standard of arts education and art appreciation.

How long have you lived in your current flat? What do you like about your neighbourhood?

Five years. I lived with my parents in Bishan — just across Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park from my current flat — when I was younger. I chose to buy my own flat in Ang Mo Kio because it is close to my parents, so I can walk over often to visit. But the biggest pull factor is really the park.

I have always enjoyed going to the park, even before its major revamp from 2009 to 2011. After its transformation, I love it even more! It is tranquil and has such beautiful landscaping; and with the Park Connector Network, I can jog and cycle to Bishan Depot easily. It is very convenient and helpful for people like me who jog regularly.

Ang Mo Kio is a mature estate with many amenities. Are there any hidden gems that people living in other parts of Singapore may not know about?

Ang Mo Kio has a lot of good food. If you ask any foodie, they will know where to go — I am not sure if anything is hidden from them! If I can only recommend one stall, it will be SHU Vegetarian at Block 554, Ang Mo Kio Avenue 10. Good vegetarian *tze char* is hard to find!

How is your relationship with your neighbours?

I have a cordial relationship with my neighbours, and we do not intrude on each other's privacy, which is important to me.

What is your favourite part about HDB living?

Living in an HDB flat gives me a sense of pride, knowing that it is one of the systems in the world that is effective in providing citizens with a roof over their heads. The system may not be perfect, but I am extremely grateful that we do not have a serious housing crisis like what other countries are facing.