

ART

A romance of colours

Two Dutch painters talk to **CHEAH UI-HOON** about the inspiration behind their art

ARTISTS seldom create art in a void of silence, and these two Dutchmen are no exception. While Jan Peter Van Opheusden's expressionist art is painted to "calming" music from the classical genre, Leon Dolle does his to rock and jazz.

That's not the only contrast between the two, whose styles and subject matter are as different as ink and oils. But they do share another common point, which is to create vibrant, colour-filled canvases.

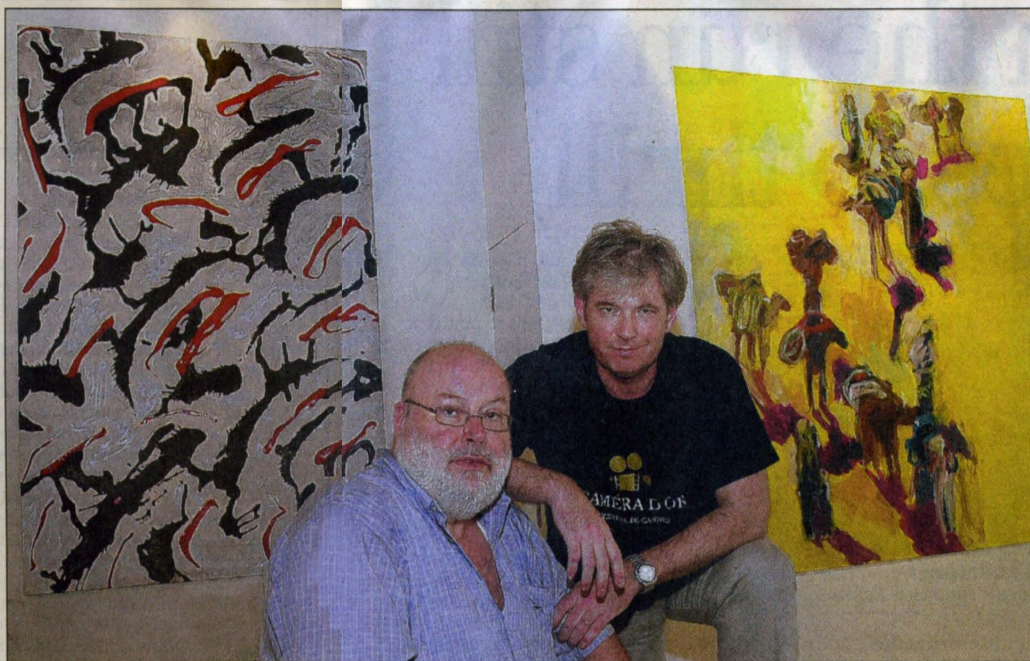
"That's why the exhibition is called 'Wild Romance' of colours. We are quite passionate about painting and the colours show it," says Dolle, 44, who's a hotelier by day and painter by night. Dolle, now based at the Renaissance in Kuala Lumpur, will showcase 10 mixed media works at

Gallery +.

"The music I listened to while creating Pollock-like drippings had a big influence on them. Painting is a very physical and laborious process for me, so I like to have very loud music playing in the background," he shares.

"I'd listen to the same song 20, 40 times, to get into a rhythm," he adds, referring to the "mathematical" patterns in his dripwork. Otherwise, Dolle is also influenced by the late Herman Brood, who has the distinction of being Holland's "only real rock and roll star and a professional junkie" who was also an artist.

He also makes it a point to paint with the canvas on the ground, instead of on an easel, and uses all kinds of implements besides the paintbrush, like spatulas, sticks,



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rollers or sometimes, using none at all.

If Dolle's works are loud and pop-edgy, Opheusden's still lifes are as refreshing and "alive" as Spring and Summer rolled into one. Hung near the entrance of the glass-walled gallery is an arresting large mural which has wild flowers jumping out at

the viewer from a gold acrylic background.

Fond of using the primary colours of red, yellow and blue, Opheusden says he paints for himself only, and doesn't pander to prevailing tastes or opinions. "I don't have a 'message' in my works either, I paint to bring warmth and positive feelings," the

63-year-old declares, adding that he does it often to religious music. One can imagine the "Buddha Bar"-type selections.

A former art teacher, Opheusden's breakthrough was in 1998, when he exhibited on the roof of "La Grande Arche" in Paris.

He debuts 20 works in Singapore,

Vibrant and bold: Jan Peter Van Opheusden (left) and Leon Dolle with their works

most of them painted specifically for this joint exhibition. Both Opheusden and Dolle first met a while ago through a mutual friend. If he wasn't a painter, says Opheusden, he would have been a shepherd — a way of saying that he would have enjoyed the beauty of solitude.

Even so, Opheusden wants his paintings to elicit strong emotions from viewers. "To me, when someone loves or hates my work — it's fine, because it's an emotional response. I'd rather have that kind of a response than to not have people react to my works."

It's hard to see how one can give anything other than a positive reaction to Opheusden's works. Full of colour and sweeping but well-controlled strokes, his works give a clear impression of their subject matter — mainly fruits, flora and fauna in this particular exhibition.

The Dutch "invasion" has begun — injecting bold colours into a corner of the financial district commonly associated with more sombre colours like blacks, blues and greys.

Colours — A Wild Romance, from Aug 27 to Nov 1, 11am to 7pm. Gallery +, 137 Telok Ayer Street #01-01.

