

Portrait of long lost friend strikes gold

By Leong Su-Lin



HER INSPIRATION: Namiko Chan Takahashi receiving the UOB Painting of The Year trophy from President S R Nathan. -- LIANHE ZAOBAO

HER portrait of a friend from long ago won art teacher Namiko Chan Takahashi the top prize at this year's United Overseas Bank (UOB) Painting Of The Year.

Her winning work, titled Charisse, depicts a black woman in the altogether, whom Chan, 32, says symbolises the strength of womanhood.

She actually painted the woman's likeness from memory some years ago, as she has long lost touch with her muse but entered it for the competition only this year.

They had met when Chan, a former lawyer, was studying at the Arts Students League in New York, but lost touch after she returned here in 2002.

But Chan, 32, may never get to thank her friend, whom she named only as Charisse, for inspiring her to paint 13 hours a day for two weeks to create the



unflinching portrait.

At the prize presentation last Saturday, Chan said: 'Perhaps Charisse will come to hear about the award, and that will lead her to get in touch with me.'

For her effort, the artist received \$20,000 in cash and a trophy from President SR Nathan, who was the guest of honour at the awards ceremony at the Esplanade - Theatres On The Bay.
