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Creative spirit

By Karen Tan

HIGHLY talented and creative, Suzanne Lee sews, strings beads and paints – that may not sound extraordinary but she happens to be 82 years old.

Until recently, Lee used to sell her creations – beaded handbags, embroidered and sequined shoes and hand-painted clothes – at hotel shops along Ferringhi Beach.

Now, the slim and active mother of three paints for her friends and her many godchildren.

There is clearly a tinge of flamboyance and panache in her artwork as she favours striking colours and bold styles.



Suzanne Lee with one of her creations – a white dove that's been painted and embroidered on a pair of pants.

Demonstrating her steady hands and keen eye, Lee, who looks much younger than her age, deftly threaded a needle taken from her “industrialized” sewing box.

Her nimble fingers then skilfully threaded the sequin which she sewed onto a T-shirt – all that without any special magnifying instrument. Her work table is by the window of her semidetached house and she uses natural light for most of her work.

Previously, Lee used to make beaded shoes in the nyonya style with minute beads but since they were so time-consuming, she modified her designs to incorporate bigger beads.

When not wearing her own creations, Lee favours cheongsams and often pairs her attire with her favourite gemstone – jade.

“I love high heels and wear them all the time,” smiled Lee as she showed off various items which mostly combine beadwork or sequins with fabric paints.

Her hobby keeps her occupied when she is not busy entertaining friends.

“Life is good. At this age, you do not have many worries,” laughed Lee, the embodiment of good health, as she folded her various creations and returned them to their various boxes.