



# MONSTER INSIDE US

darbotz solo exhibition  
27 March 2013 - 3 May 2013

**MiFA** | ASIAN PACIFIC  
CONTEMPORARY ART

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GRAFFITI CULTURE:  
ITS DEVELOPMENT AND  
SHIFTINGS IN INDONESIA  
***Alia Swastika***

BEHIND THE MONSTER  
***Torey Karlin***

MONSTER INSIDE US  
***Darbotz***

# GRAFFITI CULTURE: ITS DEVELOPMENT AND SHIFTINGS IN INDONESIA

*Alia Swastika*

In Indonesia, when you mention public art, graffiti is the first type of art that crosses a person's mind. Graffiti has been growing as the most visible signifier of urban visual culture, competing only with advertisement on billboards and posters. All of these forms of public imagery are trying to grab and shape the collective visual memory of the public. And yet, aside of its very interesting visibility, graffiti of course plays another cultural role as part of the agent of social movement, to massively build communication with general public regarding certain issues, in a creative, agitative, and sometimes humorous way.

Looking back at its history, the connection between graffiti and political movements had started even in the very early stage of the nation. Wall drawings of important slogans were written down all over the cities such as, 'Be Independent or Die'. This moniker was recognised as the first graffiti tagging, announcing the younger generations' intentions in supporting the movement to fight for a new Indonesia.

Graffiti was being implemented as the main medium to communicate issues that could not be run in mass media because of political conditions and censorship. A key practice of the student movement, graffiti usage continuously grew as a form of communication during the 1980s and 1990s, where the students were fighting against the New Order Regime.

During 1990s graffiti was used by the subculture to identify themselves with certain peer groups introducing Indonesians to the technique called 'tagging'. The public started to recognise popular youth gangs and famous nicknames as they appeared on surfaces around the city. Graffiti also became a sign of battle between the nation's different gangs.

In some cities, artists started to question discourse of public space and who was in charge of it. They realised that they could play an important role if they claimed spaces to use artistically for the benefit of the public.

It was at this time in Yogyakarta that a collective called "Apotic Comic" was established. Shortly thereafter the collective followed the notion that it should use public walls to express artistic visions. In the early 2000s,

the creation of murals had become one of the mainstream expressionistic movements popular among both the youth and artists in the city. This phenomenon then influenced other cities, including small rural areas throughout the archipelago, growing to become a unifying trend for youths all over the country.

After the New Order regime collapsed, censorship in the media was erased and greater freedoms of expression became a reality. In the galleries and art spaces, this change had forced the artists to broaden their subject matters from political issues. For artists working in public spaces such as street and graffiti artists, the shift encouraged them to be more verbal, critical, provocative and direct, making issues part of the daily discourse of common people.

MERDEKA ATAOE MATI

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NEW STYLES OF GRAFFITI EMERGED AS THE INFLUENCE OF A GLOBAL VISUAL LANGUAGE ENTERED INDONESIA SPREADING QUICKLY THROUGH STREET ART. THEY ESTABLISHED THEIR OWN NETWORK AND WORKED COLLABORATIVELY WITH MANY ARTISTS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, THUS CONNECTING STREET CULTURES AROUND THE GLOBE.

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Street art soon became part of the dynamic contemporary visual arts as well as a new medium trend. Graffiti artists soon took part in gallery and museum exhibitions leading graffiti's induction into the canon of visual arts. Of course there are still critics who possess a cynicism towards graffiti artists who have joined the commercial side of the arts, but the same can be said for all types of new art during their respective time periods. The shift from the open public spaces to privately owned canvases has also signified that the graffiti artist is also changing when it comes to choosing his medium for presentation.

Darbotz is one of the graffiti superstars in Indonesia. His images are spread out all over Jakarta, easily visible among thousands of images produced everyday. His signature character 'cumi' (a modification of squid monster form), stands out due to his use of a black and white colour palette and repetitive patterns that have become his signature. By day the artist works as a designer in an advertising agency amongst everyday Indonesians, but by night Darbotz experiences Jakarta in a way that only an artist could. Nightfall in Jakarta brings its own inspirations after the crowds of life have gone inside.

TEMBOK  
*Burn on' all*  
BOMBER

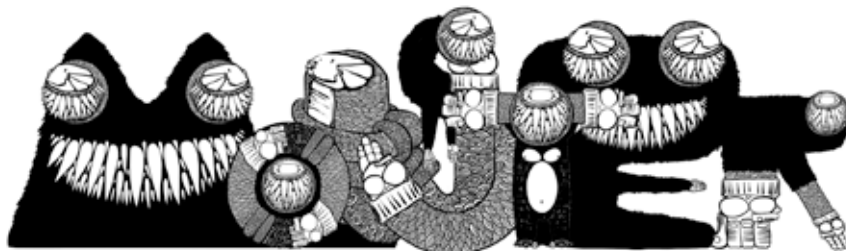
Darbotz is also a leader in the graffiti movement, gathering other graffiti artists all around Jakarta into a network called Tembokbomber. Together they built their networks and shared their experiences with the broader public. They have held graffiti collaborations with artists from around the world in cities such as Berlin, Sao Paulo, and Paris.

Darbotz is quite aware that people have conflicting opinions about graffiti due to its transition from the subculture to mainstream. For him, it seems that being part of the subculture, considered to be more political and subversive also has its own ambiguous position. One can hardly avoid the exposure of capitalism and consumerism as it has touched virtually everyone's life. Instead of seeing this transformation merely as a sign of the graffiti movement's decline in political motive, it demonstrates how they are focused on developing their own identities, defining their own notion of being political, and developing more creative ways to connect with public spaces.

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WHETHER WORKING IN PUBLIC SPACES OR GALLERIES, DARBOTZ HAS ALWAYS WANTED TO SHARE WHAT HE HAD EXPERIENCED IN THE STREETS OF JAKARTA IN THIS PARTICULAR EXHIBITION. HE CAPTURES THE NOTION OF MONSTERS THAT HAVE GROWN INSIDE THE SOUL OF THE URBANITE WHILE THE CITY IS BUSY EXPANDING AND GROWING. WE AS HUMAN BEINGS HAVE GROWN ANOTHER SOUL INSIDE US, A MONSTER TO FIGHT ALL THE COMPLEXITIES OF OUR DAILY LIFE.

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# BEHIND THE MONSTER

*Torey Karlin*

Today's world revolves around the city and its brick, mortar, concrete and steel. The city becomes the shell and the people become its soul. The grey walls become a place of interaction, a form of communication through colour and line.

Darbotz is an artist based in Jakarta, a complicated, hectic city drowning in colours and chaos. His artwork converses with everyday pedestrians with its largely monochromatic colour schemes free from messy complexities.

His images are filled with secret symbols waiting to be deciphered. Darbotz rescues the dirty streets by transforming walls with captivating images of his alter egos. The artist has a keen interest in symbolism in his works with colours such as orange unofficially representing Jakarta and pink representing the poisonous undercurrent of pollution in the city. While the colours sometimes represent the city's negativity, the pink is still beautiful and necessary.

Darbotz uses intricate patterns and designs that are almost a tribal exploration of our primal inner monster. These patterns however, form complex and bold imagery that interact with his alter ego the Cumi- a monster squid. Cumi needs numerous arms in order to keep up with the wild and chaotic streets of Jakarta.

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THE WORKS FROM  
MONSTER INSIDE US  
BRING THE STREETS  
OF JAKARTA INTO  
THE GALLERY.

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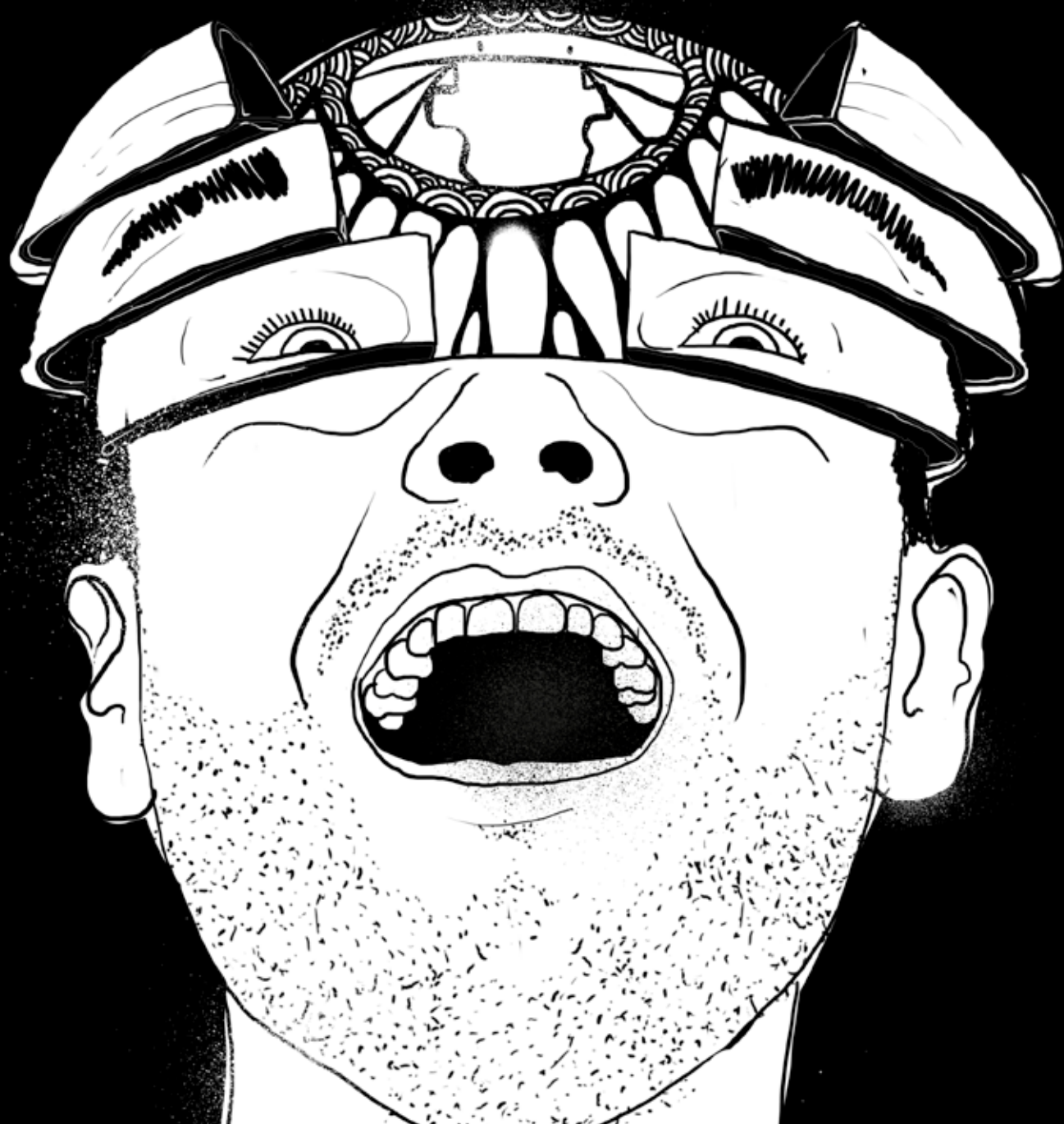
Each piece shows how disturbances in the city and modern conveniences can create a monster within us. The artist describes the brick wall as a 'silent witness in every city' as it is transformed by each person who decides to change it. Whether it is with posters and paint, or new construction and demolition. The wall becomes part-monster contributing to the chaos of a modern city. And yet, part-story teller, changing the stories on its surface over time.





Other key works display prominent characters in any modern city—street signs and buses. Street signs are unassuming entities telling one must obey the way of the city. If chosen to be ignored, signs become useless and the city transforms into a monster functioning without order. The Metromini bus becomes a menace on the streets of Jakarta driving with abandon while at the same time creating pollution.

THE MONSTER INSIDE US  
DEMONSTRATES THAT CHAOS CAN BE  
A BEAUTIFUL AND NECESSARY EVIL.  
THERE IS A MONSTER INSIDE ALL OF US  
AND IT CAN COME OUT WHEN WE  
ENCOUNTER SMALL HICCUPS IN OUR  
EVERYDAY LIVES. DARBOTZ SHOWS US  
HOW EVERYTHING WE ENCOUNTER HAS  
THE POSSIBILITY TO BRING OUT  
THE MONSTER IN ALL OF US.



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I'VE BEEN LIVING IN JAKARTA FOR ALMOST 30 YEARS. EVERYDAY WE SEE SOMETHING DIFFERENT IN THIS CROWDED CITY. EVEN WORSE IS THE TRAFFIC - HECTIC AND CHAOTIC.

THE CITY'S SURROUNDINGS AFFECT ITS PEOPLE. YOU'LL NEVER KNOW A PERSON'S REAL ATTITUDE BY THEIR APPEARANCE, EVERYTHING HAS THEIR "MONSTER SIDE", EVEN ANIMALS AND OBJECTS.

IN THIS EXHIBITION, I WILL PORTRAY THE MONSTER INSIDE US. IT DOES NOT DIRECTLY EXPRESS THE CORRELATION, BUT WILL SHOW HOW OBJECTS AROUND US CAN BE MONSTERS. HOW A BRICK WALL CAN BE A MONSTER, HOW TRAFFIC CAN MAKE YOU A MONSTER, AND HOW MONSTERS CAN EVEN BE GLITCHES ON A PERFECT SUNDAY MORNING.

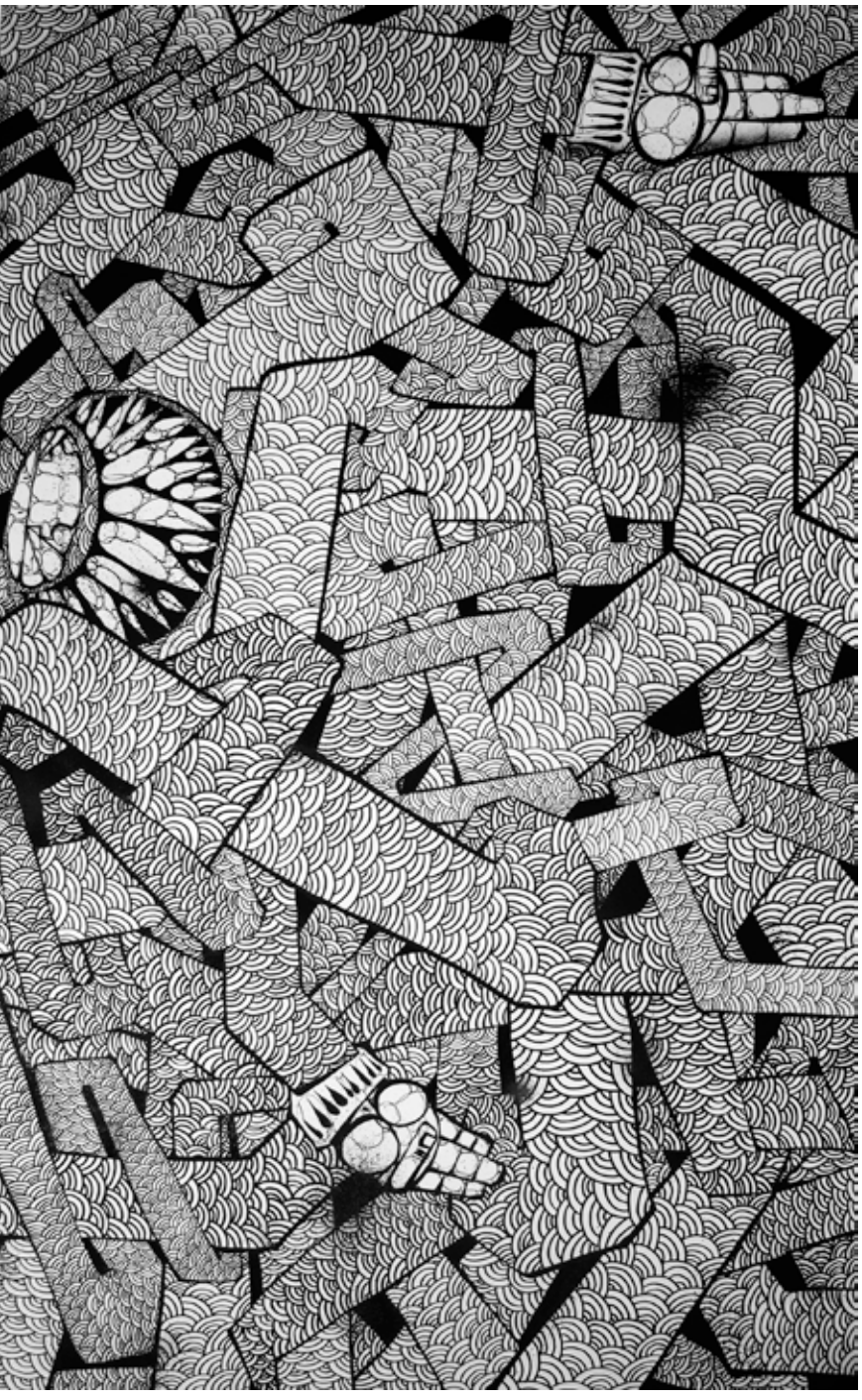
WHILE I USE A VARIETY OF MATERIALS AND PROCESSES IN EACH WORK OF ART, MY SUBJECT IS CONSISTENT. THE MONSTER ITSELF IS THE CHARACTER THAT I HAVE CREATED ALMOST 10 YEARS AGO. IT'S IN ME, IT'S MY ALTER EGO, IT'S HOW I SEE AND FEEL IN THE CITY I LIVE IN. //

SHADEZ



# JOURNEY #1

*mixed media on canvas*  
120 x 200  
2012



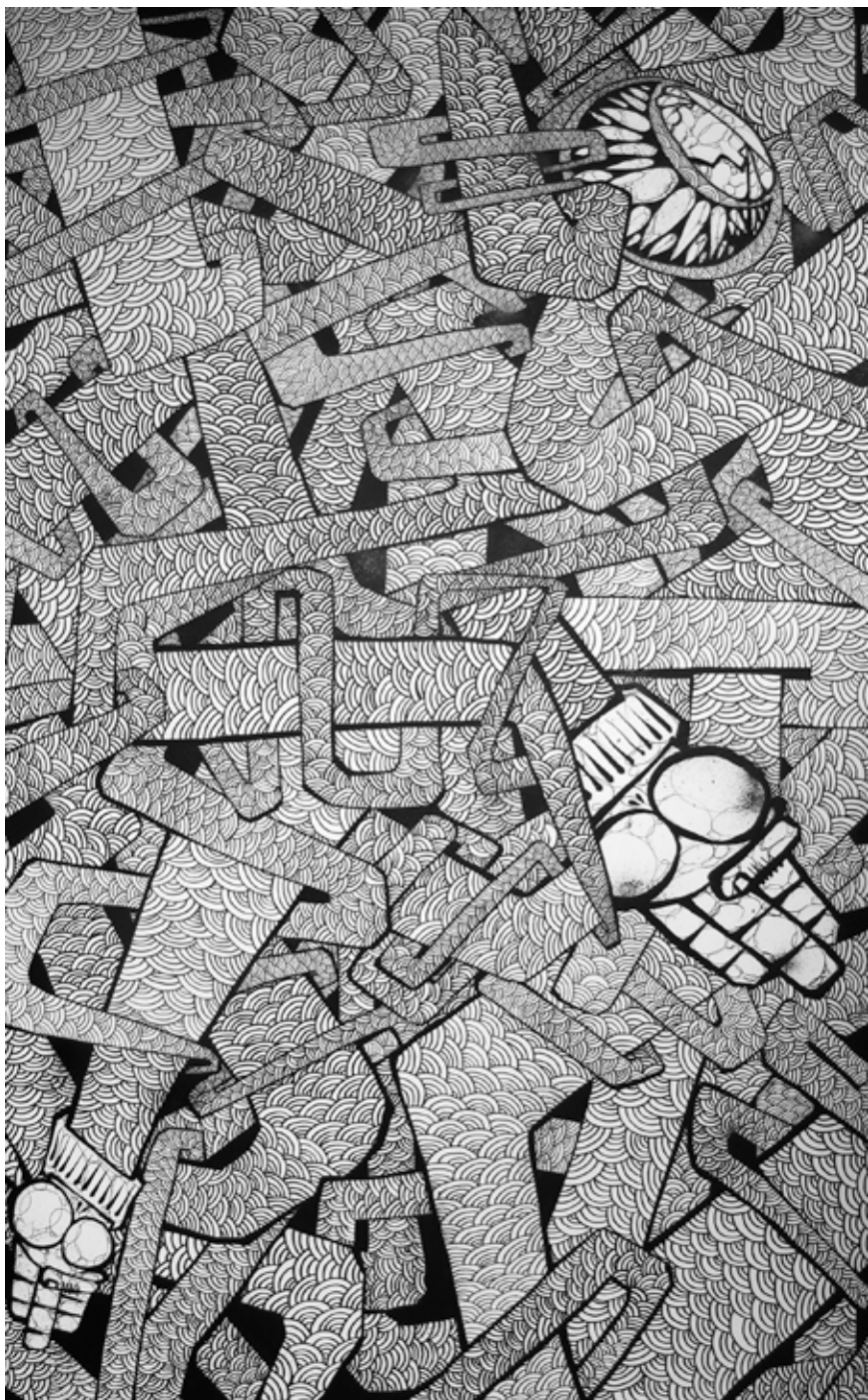


# JOURNEY #2

*mixed media on canvas*

120 x 200

2012





# GLITCHES #1

*mixed media on canvas*

120 x 50

2012





# GLITCHES #2

*mixed media on canvas*  
120 x 50  
2012



# METROPOLUTE #1

*mixed media on canvas*  
20 x 20  
2012



# METROPOLUTE #2

*mixed media on canvas*  
20 x 20  
2012





# METROPOLUTE #3

*mixed media on canvas*

20 x 20

2012



# METROPOLUTE #4

*mixed media on canvas*

20 x 20

2012

# METROPOLUTE #5

*mixed media on canvas*

100 x 100

2012

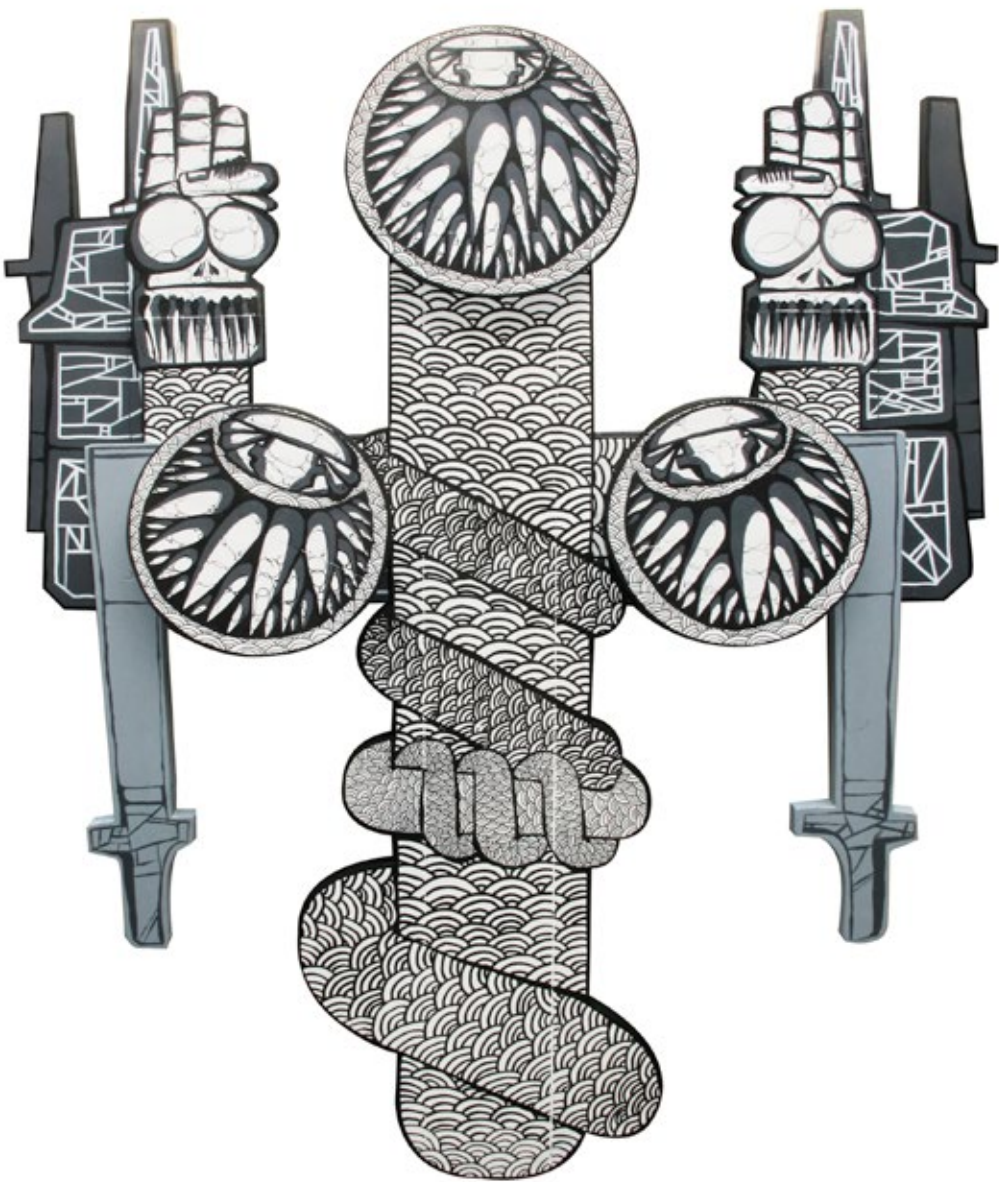






# SIGNAGE #1

*mixed media on wood*  
94 x 60  
2013



# SIGNAGE #2

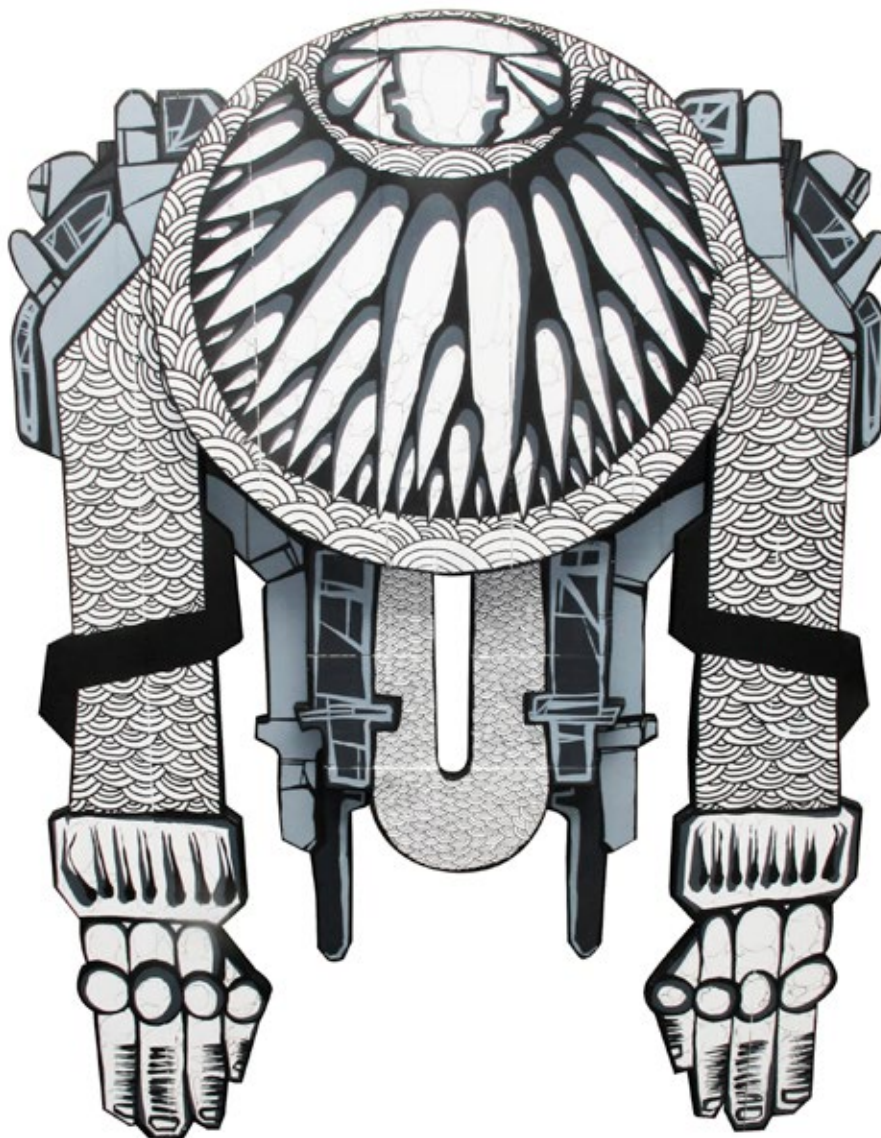
*mixed media on wood*  
93 x 70  
2013

# SIGNAGE #3

*mixed media on wood*

93 x 70

2013







# METROMINI#1

*mixed media on wood*  
81 x 65  
2013



# METROMINI #2

*mixed media on wood*  
79 x 52  
2013



# ANOTHER BRICK ON THE WALL #1

*mixed media on fiberglass*

60 x 25

2013





ANOTHER BRICK  
ON THE WALL #2

*mixed media on fiberglass*

60 x 25

2013

# ANOTHER BRICK ON THE WALL #3

*mixed media on fiberglass*  
60 x 25  
2013







# ANOTHER BRICK ON THE WALL #4

*mixed media on fiberglass*  
60 x 25  
2013

ANOTHER BRICK  
ON THE WALL #5

*mixed media on fiberglass*

60 x 25

2013







INSIDE US #1

*mixed media on canvas*

80 x 80

2013





## INSIDE US #2

*mixed media on canvas*

80 x 80

2013

# MIND THE GAP #1

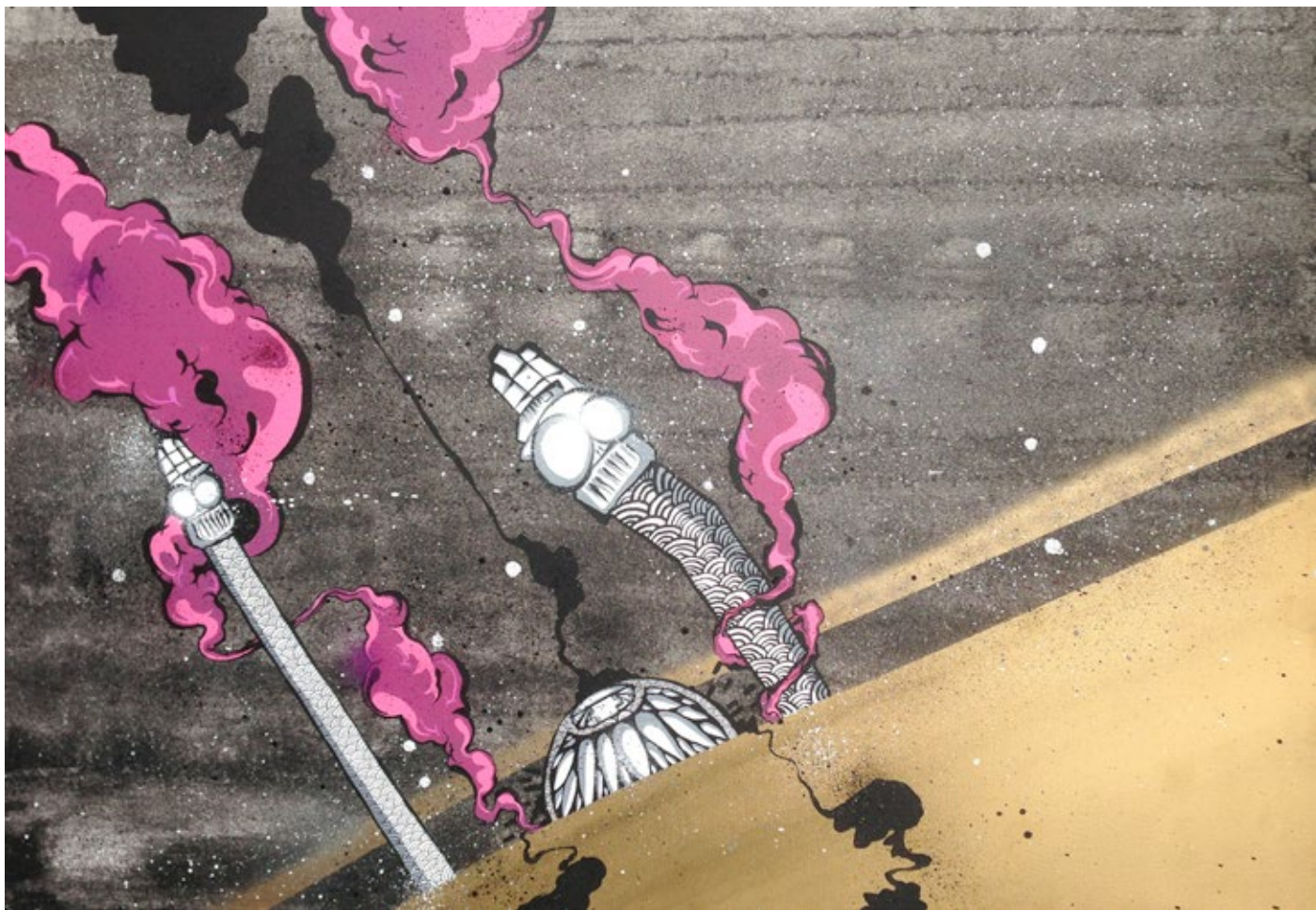
*mixed media on fiberglass*

100 x 70

2013







# MIND THE GAP #2

*mixed media on fiberglass*  
100 x 70  
2013





NERVE #1  
mixed media on canvas  
100 x 100  
2013



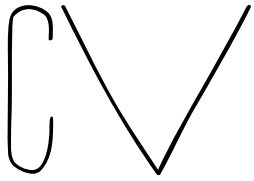
# NERVE #2

*mixed media on canvas*  
100 x 100  
2013



photo : rendha rais





## SOLO EXHIBITION

### **MONSTER IN DISGUISE**

2009

geseho garage  
Singapore

### **MONSTER GOES OUT AT NIGHT**

2010

D'gallerie  
Jakarta, Indonesia

### **THE BOY WHO BECAME A MONSTER**

2011

viviyp art room  
Jakarta, Indonesia

## SELECTED GROUPSHOW

### **MEDIUM RARE**

2005

galeri nasional  
Jakarta, Indonesia

### **SNEAKERPIMPS**

2006

Jakarta, Indonesia

### **SHOUTOUT JOGJAKARTA BIENALLE**

2007

Jogjakarta, Indonesia

### **400ML EXHIBITION**

2008

Maison des Metallos  
Paris, France

### **JAKARTA STREET ART UNITED**

2009

Institut Kesenian Jakarta  
Jakarta, Indonesia

### **QUINTIN SHOW**

2009

tokyo, Japan

### **WALLSTREET ART**

2010

salihara  
Jakarta, Indonesia

### **INDONESIAN DISJUNCTION**

2010

Kendra gallery  
bali, Indonesia

### **COLORS EXHIBITION JAKARTA/SAO PAULO**

2011

wallworks gallerie  
paris, france

### **L'ART DU GRAFFITI**

2011

Grimaldi Forum  
Monaco

### **FINDING ME**

2011

Galeri Semarang  
Semarang, Indonesia

### **KOSMO ART TOUR JAKARTA**

2011

D'gallerie  
Jakarta, Indonesia

## SELECTED PROJECTS

### 2008

nike bearbrick custom toys  
nike flywire window display installation  
nike sportswear remastered video installation  
nike windrunner commissioned artwork

### 2009

mercedes benz exhibition live painting on car  
Nike (RED) lace up save lives installation

### 2010

google chrome commissioned artwork  
nike AW77 commissioned artwork

### 2011

tv eye custom toy by indieguerillas  
natuzzi, the art of living commissioned artwork

### 2012

Nike Sportswear the look of sport exhibition  
Google chrome openspaces project  
Berlin Jakarta urban art project  
Artotel Surabaya commissioned artwork

## RESIDENCY

### 2011

Kosmopolite art tour  
Paris france









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