

Heartless intellectuals, Oil on canvas, 172cm x 146cm, 2014



On the air, Oil on canvas, 158cm x 121cm, 2014



Scandalous, Oil on canvas, 166cm x 204.5cm, 2015

Ruzzeki Harris (b.1984)

**EDUCATION**

2007 Bachelor (Hons.) Fine Arts, Majoring in Painting  
UiTM Shah Alam, Malaysia

**SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

2015 GONE VIRAL, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
2014 POINT BLANK by Ruzzeki Harris, CHAN HAMPE  
GALLERIES, Singapore.  
2011 DICTUM by Ruzzeki Harris, RA Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
2008 Gravitare by Ruzzeki Harris, HOM, Kuala Lumpur,  
Malaysia.

**SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

2014 YOUNG GUNS Award group exhibition, Singapore  
CANCER SOCIETY CHARITY SHOW, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
2013 ART BASEL, KL-MIAMI, Miami Florida, USA.  
YOUNG GUNS Award group exhibition, White box, Kuala  
Lumpur, Malaysia.  
CHARITY SHOW FOR HAIYAN DISASTER, White box, Kuala  
Lumpur, Malaysia.  
18@8 KUL-SIN, Wei Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
18@8 KUL-SIN, ION Art, Singapore.  
2012 TRANSIT A4 EXHIBITION, HOM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
BRIGHT AND YOUNG, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
PRECIOUS LITTLE PIECES, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur,  
Malaysia.  
2011 Art Expo, Matrade, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
THE X RESIDENCE, Group Exhibition, House of Matahati,  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
2010 FRAGMENT, Exhibition #7, Malihom A.I.R. Programme, Penang,  
Malaysia.  
2009 Uncut, Group exhibition, Shambala Gallery, Copen Hagen,  
Denmark.  
MEA Award, Group exhibition, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
Dazed in Mazes, 4men show, Valentine Willie Fine Art,  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
Contemporary Rhetoric, Group show, Valentine Willie  
Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
B.A.C.A, 4 men show, RA fine art gallery, Kuala Lumpur,  
Malaysia.  
Young & New : Part 2, House of Matahati, Kuala Lumpur,  
Malaysia.  
Open house Raya, Group show, Gallery Chandan, Kuala  
Lumpur, Malaysia.  
Young & New : Part 1, House of Matahati, Kuala Lumpur,  
Malaysia.  
Graffiti clinic instructor, Rakan muda Klang & Puchong,  
Selangor, Malaysia.  
Quddinandfriends '08, Group exhibition, McCann Worldgroup,  
Selangor, Malaysia.

'Bukak Mata' Group exhibition, Studio Dikala jingga, Shah  
Alam, Malaysia.  
'Loveartpassion'. Group exhibition, 360studio gallery, Kuala  
Lumpur, Malaysia.  
'Young & New Part 1', Group exhibition, House of  
Matahati, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
2007 Mana Batik?' Group installation, Annexe Gallery Central  
Market, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
Open Show Shah Alam Gallery, Malaysia.  
'SoSound' Experimental Music Group Performance, Pati Satu  
Studio.  
Finalist for PACT MACT Art Competition, Penang, Malaysia.  
Degree Show, Tengku Zaharah Gallery, UiTM Shah Alam,  
Malaysia.  
The Tanjong Heritage 2007 Art competition organized by  
Tanjong  
2007 Public Ltd. Co. - consolation prize, Mixed media category,  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
Flora Fest Art Exhibition, Putrajaya, Malaysia.  
Global Logistic Art Exhibition, KL City Library, Kuala Lumpur,  
Malaysia.  
2006 Open Show Shah Alam Gallery, Malaysia.  
The Tanjong Heritage 2006 Art competition organized  
by Tanjong Public Ltd. Co. - consolation prize, printmaking, at  
Seri Melayu Restaurant, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
2004 Open exhibition, Sri Pinang Gallery, Penang, Malaysia.  
USM Penang public sculpture exhibition, USM Penang,  
Malaysia.

**AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

2013 YOUNG GUNS award, HOM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
2012 Nafa's artist in residence programme, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.  
2010 Malihom artist in residence programme, Penang, Malaysia.  
2009 MEA Award 50 finalist, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
2008 MATAHATI Art Residency, HOM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
2007 3rd prize, 'Salon meets art' competition, by Swartzkopf, Elle six  
gallery Kuala Lumpur.  
Consolation Prize The Tanjong Heritage 2007 Art  
competition organized by Tanjong Public Ltd. Co. Mixed media.  
Finalist for PACT MACT Art Competition, Gurney Plaza, Penang,  
Consolation prize, My Wildest Dream Global  
Transportation, Global Logistic Art Exhibition, KL City Library,  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
2006 Consolation Prize The Tanjong Heritage 2006 Art competition  
organized by Tanjong Public Ltd. Co. Printmaking.



Wei-Ling Gallery

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Front image: *Leka*, 165.5cm x 171cm, Oil on canvas, 2015.



Wei-Ling Gallery

## Real Wild Child – Ruzzeki Harris Gone Viral.

“...too many people in high places who are stone-cold dead.”

— Kurt Vonnegut, *Cat's Cradle*

He is back, this ‘wild child’ in his fourth solo, *Gone Viral*, after a successful showing of third solo, *Point Blank* in Singapore last year. The word viral, ‘of the nature of, caused by, or relating to a virus or viruses’ blows the Warhol-attributed quote “In the future, everyone will have their 15 minutes of fame” to smithereens – this lover of Dali and Magritte plans to stay a lot longer than that.

And why wouldn't he love Dali and Magritte? Why wouldn't anyone? Ruzzeki Harris' outlandish riddle paintings unconsciously refer to Magritte's works touching political embroilment especially, with the resounding effect of course, of his own convictions.

“My artwork takes a critical view of social, political and popular culture issues. In these paintings, I deconstruct the dreams of humanity in a satirical way, with fairy tales, lullabies and history that are part of our childhood and adult culture. Having engaged subjects as diverse as street art, fashion, and independent music has been a huge influence in my processes; they reproduce familiar visual signs, arranging them into fresh and conceptually layered pieces. Sometimes these themes are combined into installations that feature fancy domestic objects, juxtaposed with whimsical objects, and sometimes embellished with stenciled text. My works establish a dream-like, pop-surreal quality, suggests notions of chaos and the frantic, and formally unifies the disparate objects in each one. The texts provide clues to content and interpretation” the artist muses.

*Gone Viral* explores the artist's Pop Surrealism leanings even deeper, penetrating and venomous works which reveal the artist's barely concealed disdain for conformity, as seen in *Heartless Intellectuals* and *Leka*. Are intellectuals heartless? I think so, they're complete lunatics. Ruzzeki's latest offering is a kind of ‘rage against the machine’, the phrase incidentally, coined by the heavy-metal rock, hip-hop, alternate rock band infamous for both their fuming libretti and political activism, and *Rage Against the Machine*, named after the band's ramshackle, often-uncooperative van sums up Ruzzeki's works – he thrashes them into existence, or none existence, depending on how one epitomises them.

2008' *Gravitate* is a journey to flesh out the intricate and changing milieu of relationships – *Bagai Bulan di Pagar Bintang*, *Try Me...I Can Transform*, *The Archangel*, *Vaporised by the Moon*, *I'm Coming to you My Love* and *I'm a Volcano* feature the deceptively miserable denim-clad protagonist of nervous energy in half playful, half portent attitudes; in each painting the central character looks about ready to implode; and he does. Ruzzeki's skills of drawing the human anatomy is on full display here, each brush stroke deeply contemplated to reveal the severity of each situation.

*DICTUM*, his 2011 show I keep going back to – his apocalyptic Armageddon, set against furious skies; an icy-blue all-knowing eye glaring down in celestial rage at the two acidic Rodin-esque figures contemplating their own awaiting doom was just...JUST. And of course there was his version of Darth Vader; brought to life into this living-nightmare we call our world. Worthy mentions include the Cujo-trained Rottweilers/ Pit bulls, dead-infants-turned-poltergeists, skulls with lollipops for orbs, and the carmine toy-robot thingamajig decreeing a sinister sounding “YEAY..!!” mimic the seemingly drug-addled, glassy eyed look one gets after too much television and listening to ear-splitting music.

Ruzzeki's inner turmoils makes an unabashed showing in 2014' *Point Blank—On the Air*, *Two Faced*, *Apple (Just Take My Money) Save Your Ammo Before Someone Gets Killed*, *Think Twice*, *I'm Not a keyboard Warrior*, *Pura-Pura* and *Death by Oil* speak of injuries, plagues, of scrambled madness and human predicaments, and his growing frustration over how things currently are.

Pop Surrealism, or Lowbrow, or lowbrow art, defines an anti-establishment visual art crusade that took its roots in the latter 70s in Los Angeles, California. This anti-elitist art movement with its artistic pedigrees in underground comix, punk music, and hot-rod cultures of the street has produced many names we recognise today, including cat-obsessed Anthony Ausgang, the gothic-crazed Esao Andrews and the Emmy Award winning background painter of *My Life as a Teenage Robot* Seonna Hong.

There's some winning literature available on Pop Surrealism, one in particular by Seattle's Roq la Rue Gallery founder Kirsten Anderson. “Pop Surrealism: The Rise of Underground Art” opens with a bracing essay, “Dumbing Down to Da Vinci” by Robert Williams:-

“For some time now, many talented and imaginative artists have had to make do with participating in the near arts – art without sanction. This might change. These denigrated forms of expression do have the seminal characteristics of becoming the primary arts. The modern use of cartoon imagery is a good example. Always encumbered with the stigma of humour, the abstract use of the cartoon in the future might not leave anybody laughing. That brings me to the conclusion that lowbrow art is, if nothing else, an honest celebration of runaway human thought processes”.

Throughout the time spent writing this essay, revisiting the artist's past exhibitions and this current one, the Australian rock and roll song composed by Johnny Greenan, Johnny O'Keefe, and Dave Owens, inspired by an Italian wedding gone rogue; (would love to see how he would interpret on his canvases, a sedate, formal reception metamorphosing into a thing incredibly appalling) released via album *Shakin' at the Stadium* in July 1958 and covered extensively over the years by Jerry Lee Lewis, Status Quo, Everlife, Joan Jett & The Blackhearts, Glamour Camp, Marshall Crenshaw, Brian Setzer, Teenage Head, Albert Lee and Wakefield and Christopher Ocasek, *The Wild One* went viral inside my head:-

Well I'm-a just outta school, like I'm real real cool  
Gotta shake, gotta jive  
Got the message that I gotta be alive, I'm a wild one  
Ooh yay I'm a wild one  
Oo-oo-oooh baby, gonna break loose, I'm gonna keep her movin' wild  
I'm gonna keep her shakin' baby, I'm a real wild child

The artist's ‘coolness’, while tortured, is never overdone.

An alumna of UiTM, (Universiti Teknologi MARA class of 2007) and finalist in the 2009 Malaysian Emerging Artist Award, Ruzzeki's prior solo appearances include *Gravitate* in 2008, *DICTUM* in 2011, and *Point Blank* in 2014. Some of his group shows comprise *Dazed in Mazes* in 2009, and the 2012 Wei-Ling Gallery offering, *Precious Little Pieces*, miniature works *The Hairdresser*, *'Penin' Lalat* and *The Itchy Suckers* solidifies the artist's expressionist instincts. Back at the same gallery a year later, his *9 Months*, Photoprint of baby scan in the group show *Measuring Love* shows his ‘softer’ side – a proud (then) father-to-be-in-a romantic/ patriarchal-reflective mood. Ruzzeki's artist residencies include the MalihomAiR, Penang and NAFAS in Jogjakarta, Indonesia.

*Gone Viral* are tough, misanthropic works with a twist of the macabre; they beg drawn-out mental war, an engagement of meltdowns, ‘snapshots of the intolerable’ spawned from an artist beautifully-burdened with a rapacious, boundless imagination.

Go viral. Please.

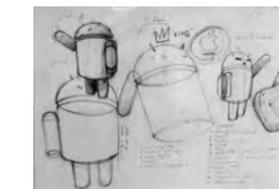
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Sarah NH Vogeler

\*Sarah Vogeler is an arts writer who contributes regularly for Malaysia's National newspaper, *The News Straits Times*.



#Duckfies, Oil on Canvas, 161.5cm x 181.5cm, 2015.



Progress sketches of the show.



Urban Wizard, Oil, acrylic on canvas, 163cm x 181cm, 2015.



Rebel, Oil & acrylic on canvas, 145cm x 151cm, 2014.



Device  
Oil, spray paint on canvas  
161cm x 235cm  
2015