

BROUGHT TO YOU  
BY LIFE & TIMES**PLUSH** art

# PRINTMAKING FOR THE HEART AND MIND

A group of artists has elevated printmaking into an art form, writes  
**Aneeta Sundararaj**

**T**ODAY, when you want to send an email to multiple people, you just have to click the 'CC' icon on your email programme. When you want multiple hard copies, just enter the number of copies you want and press "Print".

There was a time not so long ago when this wasn't the case. Copies of all documents were made manually using a sheet of carbon paper.

"It would be an exact copy of a document," says Zat Heikal Takiyuddin, the curator of an exhibition at G13 Gallery called Carbon Copy. It's a collaborative printmaking exhibition featuring six printmakers from three countries: Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia.

The themes and technical aspects of these 20 artworks are a blend between contemporary and conventional methods of printmaking.

Although the name of the exhibition is derived from copying original data using a sheet of carbon, the purpose of this showcase is to highlight the art of printmaking in Fine Art. The impetus for this is because Zat feels that the average

Malaysian isn't necessarily introduced to this art form. Often, the commercial value of a painting or sculptor is considered much higher. He suggests that this is probably because there's a perception that printmaking is usually associated with things that are mass-produced. With paintings and sculptors, there's usually only one piece, which then makes them far more valuable.

That said, Zat feels that art isn't all about the execution. Artists must do the necessary research to get the message they need to convey, insists this graduate from UiTM Shah Alam.

There are three decisions that every artist needs to make before he commences any piece, says the 27-year-old.

The first has to do with the subject of the work. Is it going to be figurative or an abstract work? Then comes the form. Is it Classical or Impressionist? Finally, the artist must decide the content of the work. In other words, what's it about?

#### DUALITY OF LIFE

In this exhibition of about 20 pieces, Zat's favourite is Crow XIV by Hug Yin Wan.

Usually, in printmaking, the block is created first and the final print becomes

the artwork. What's unique here is that it's the block itself that's the artwork. The subject matter with all of Hug's work, Zat explains, is the crow. Often regarded as an inauspicious, the artist, however, has set the image against lighter backgrounds.

The artist concurs with Zat's assessment of his work. "It's about the impermanence of life," Hug, 22, says. He then tells the story of what inspired such works. A few years ago, his mother was diagnosed with cancer. At the same time, his uncle was diagnosed with the disease too. While his mother survived, his uncle did not. All this turmoil was happening

at a time when two of his four siblings were getting married. It made young Hug realise that there was always going to be this duality in life. "There's tall and short; there's light and dark; there's life and death," he emphasises.

#### PRECISION ART

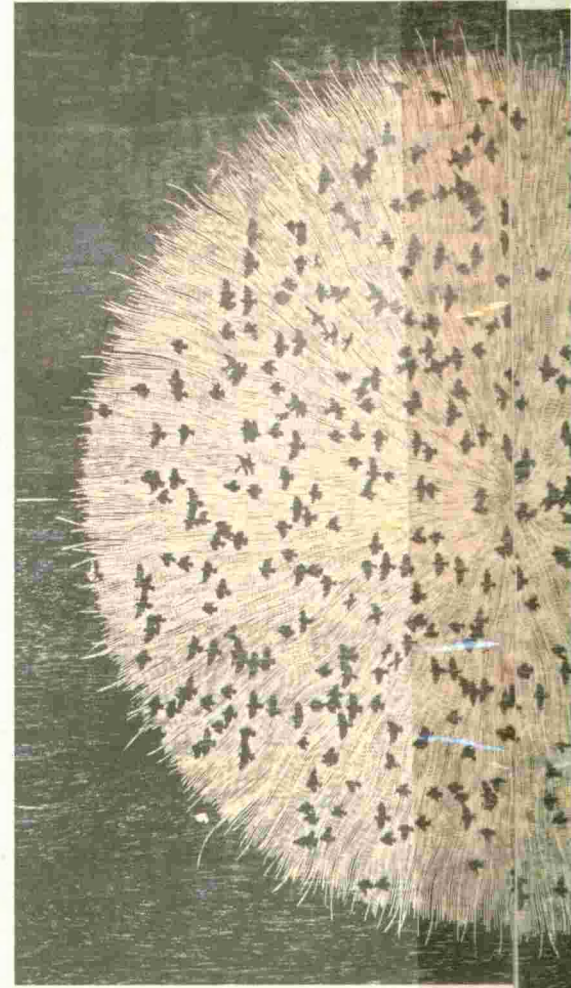
There's another element of printmaking Zat is keen to highlight. "In paintings," he says, "a mistake can be corrected. Sometimes, that mistake even adds value to the painting."

In print making, however, precision

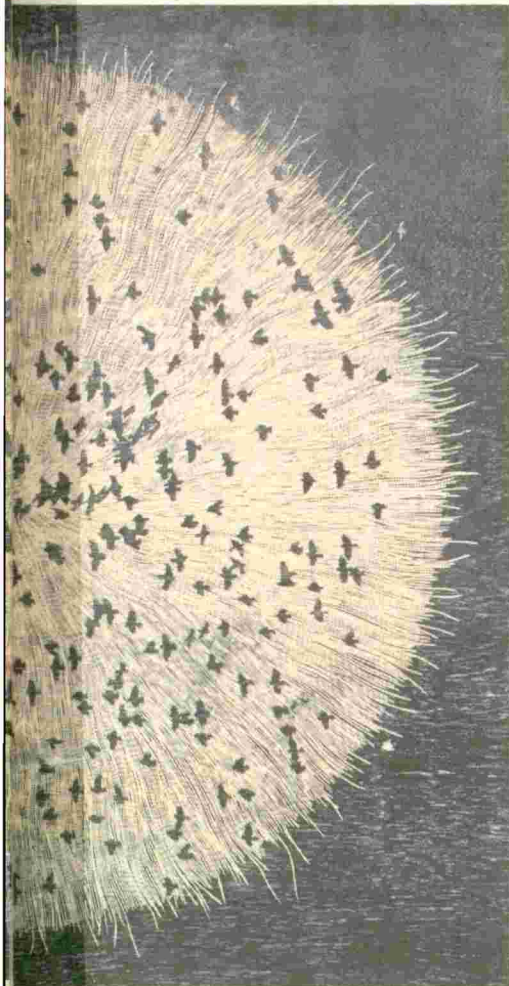
**What** Carbon Copy - a Printmaking Exhibition  
**Where** G13 Gallery, G13, Ground Floor, Block B, Kelana Square, Jalan SS7/26, Kelana Jaya, Selangor.  
**When** Until Dec 17  
**Website** www.g13gallery.com / www.facebook.com/G13gallery



Arti by Hug Yin Wan.



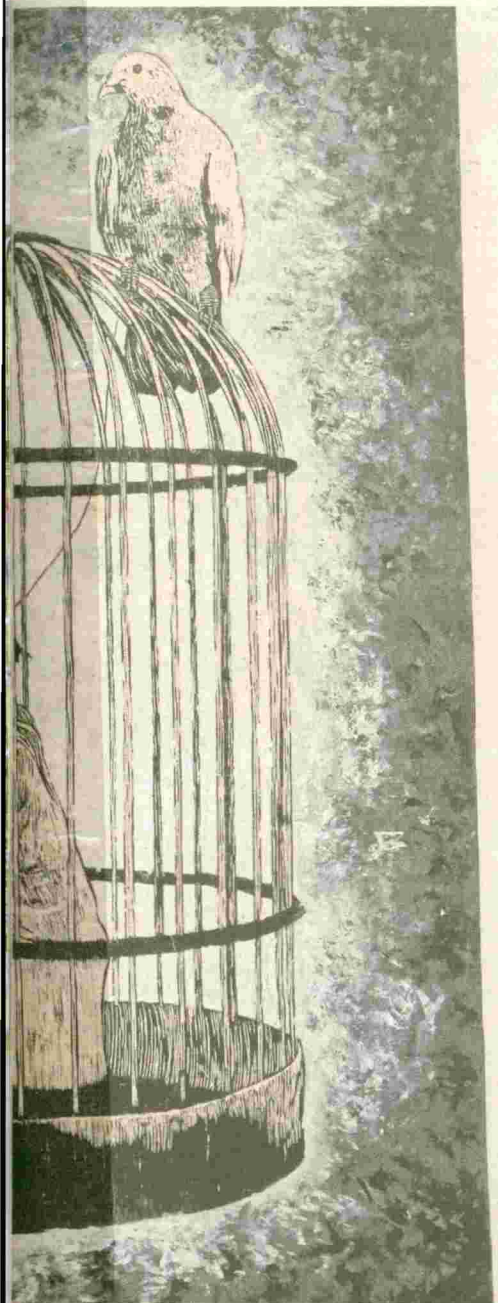
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The Crow XIV by Hug Yin Wan.



Floating by Thammasin Darunkan.



The Crow XII by Hug Yin Wan.

is the key. None showcases this precision more than the work called Floating by Thammasin Darunkan. This etching on paper depicts a box of cacti being allowed to float away. The cacti, says Zat, represents the artists' painful memories. In allowing them to float away, he's letting them all go.

In a similar vein, Sabihis Pandi's contributions to the exhibition speak of wanting to run away. The 28-year-old struggles to explain what he's running away from. The fifth in a family of six children, he takes a deep breath before confiding that he wants to run away from all the inherent problems, such as the high cost of living and debt. And where does one run away to? This soon-to-be-father is quick to answer and says: "Another planet."

There's one fascinating feature with Sabihis's works. Other artists have chosen to exhibit the printing block or the canvas. With King of Hearts and Queen of Hearts, both are on show. On the bottom is the MDF board used to create the block. On the top is the canvas upon which the image has been printed.

In spite of the underlying sense of doom and gloom surrounding the content of these works, there is one that lifts the spirits somewhat. In Crow XIII, there's an image of a dove. This, says Hug, represents hope. He has observed that members of his generation always seem so busy.

"They have no time to communicate with their parents," he says. Believing that they'll have time later, they don't realise that in time, their parents will die. "They'll lose their chance to communicate with them. Time is running out."

Denying that his words seem to bring out a fear of the future, Hug ends the discussion when he says: "I'm not scared [of the future]." He believes that when you do everything you need to do when you're alive, you won't be scared when death comes.



Sabihis Pandi and his King of Hearts and Queen of Hearts.



Exhibition curator Zat Heikal.