

LIFE&TIMES ART

Knots of humanity

Up-and-coming artist Faiz Yunus tells **Aneeta Sundararaj** about the inspirations behind his first ever solo exhibition called *Knots*

TODAY, artworks by Malaysian artists have the potential to become a viable form of long-term investment.

But which artist does one invest in? And how much does one pay for an artwork? Well, you could start with the up-and-coming artist Faiz Yunus.

At 24, this dynamic young man makes the point of telling you that he's born in the Chinese Year of the Dragon and is the youngest in his family. A graduate of fine arts from Universiti Teknologi Mara in Shah Alam, he says he wanted to be an artist since he was a child.

"I used to visit my grandmother in the kampung. She had many paintings. Looking at them, I knew I wanted to be an artist."

Looking at his resume, the list of competitions and group exhibitions where he had showcased his work is long for someone so young. "I didn't want to let go of any opportunity. That's why I joined as many competitions as I could."

Last year, Faiz was named the grand prize winner of Nando's Annual Peri-fy Your Art Competition, an annual competition by Nando's Malaysia. The theme was

What: *Knots*, a solo exhibition of 20 new works by Faiz Yunus
When: Till May 5
Where: NN Gallery, 53A & 56 Jalan Sulaiman 1, Taman Ampang Hilir, Ampang, Kuala Lumpur
www.nngallery.com.my



With Faiz's *The Thinker* sculptures, people are free to interpret the form

er. Second, they represent times of difficulty and remind him of his struggles as a young artist.

Faiz likes working with various materials, shapes, textures and lines because he's curious about how they will respond spontaneously. What shape will a material twist into? What will the final artwork resemble? How will it be interpreted by others? These are the sort of questions he considers when creating his artwork.

"Knots connote a strong bond and act as a metaphor for how humans relate to one another."

Faiz Yunus

"My works are a starting point," he says. "I want people to think when they look at my works."

This is precisely why he has named one of his favourite sculptures, *The Thinker*. "People can

look at my sculptures and think about what they represent. Some say this reminds them of a dragon. Others say it looks like a snake."

Faiz's sculptures are made from scrap metal — some are shiny, others have a turquoise patina from allowing the metal to oxidise. He chooses not to work with wood as wood, he says, will eventually disintegrate. He likes to create sculptures and doesn't mind people touching them.

On his future plans, Faiz is unabashed when he says: "I would like to have a sculpture in the middle of KLCC."

He is also more comfortable creating art that represents flora and fauna as he thinks Malaysians are not ready to view the human body in art.

For his first ever solo exhibition, it is clear that what permeates his works is the connection between what he sees and feels when confronted with challenges. His works are representations of how we, as humans, deal with our environment.

"Health Is... Body, Art and Soul".

"It's all about silaturahmi (friendship)," explains Faiz of his winning entry, *The Dream* (acrylic on canvas).

"In the middle, you

have the city, where people hardly talk to each other — they're busy, busy, busy. Then you have the kampung, where life is simple."

With tongue in cheek, he adds: "But there's no Nando's there."

Even the doodling in this painting has a story: "See the egg? It has become a chicken. Then, when it's big enough, it goes to Nando's and the busy people eat it."

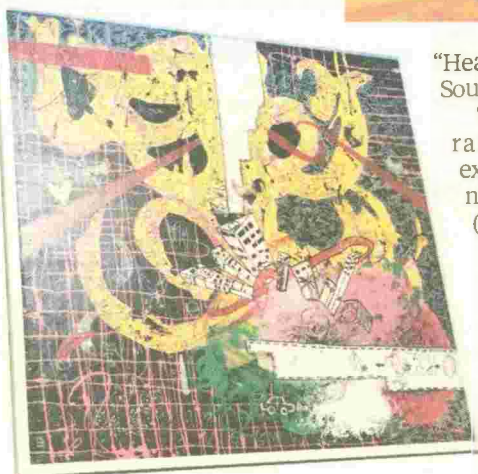
The strokes of yellow and red add vibrancy to this work. "They remind me of happy things... like ice cream," says Faiz.

As for the pink lines, Faiz's eyes

soften as he explains how the tjanting technique employed in batik designs is used to create them. Drawn parallel to each other, they take on shapes that both resemble and represent an object. This, he says, is influenced by the work of the iconic Ibrahim Hussein.

As part of the prize from Nando's Malaysia, NN Gallery will host a solo exhibition of 20 works by Faiz called *Knots*.

Knots, he says, represent two things to him. First, they connote a strong bond and act as a metaphor for how humans relate to one another.



The Dream—a vibrant prize-winning piece