

DESIGN DECODED 2021 : ART EXHIBITION



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visual creativity*

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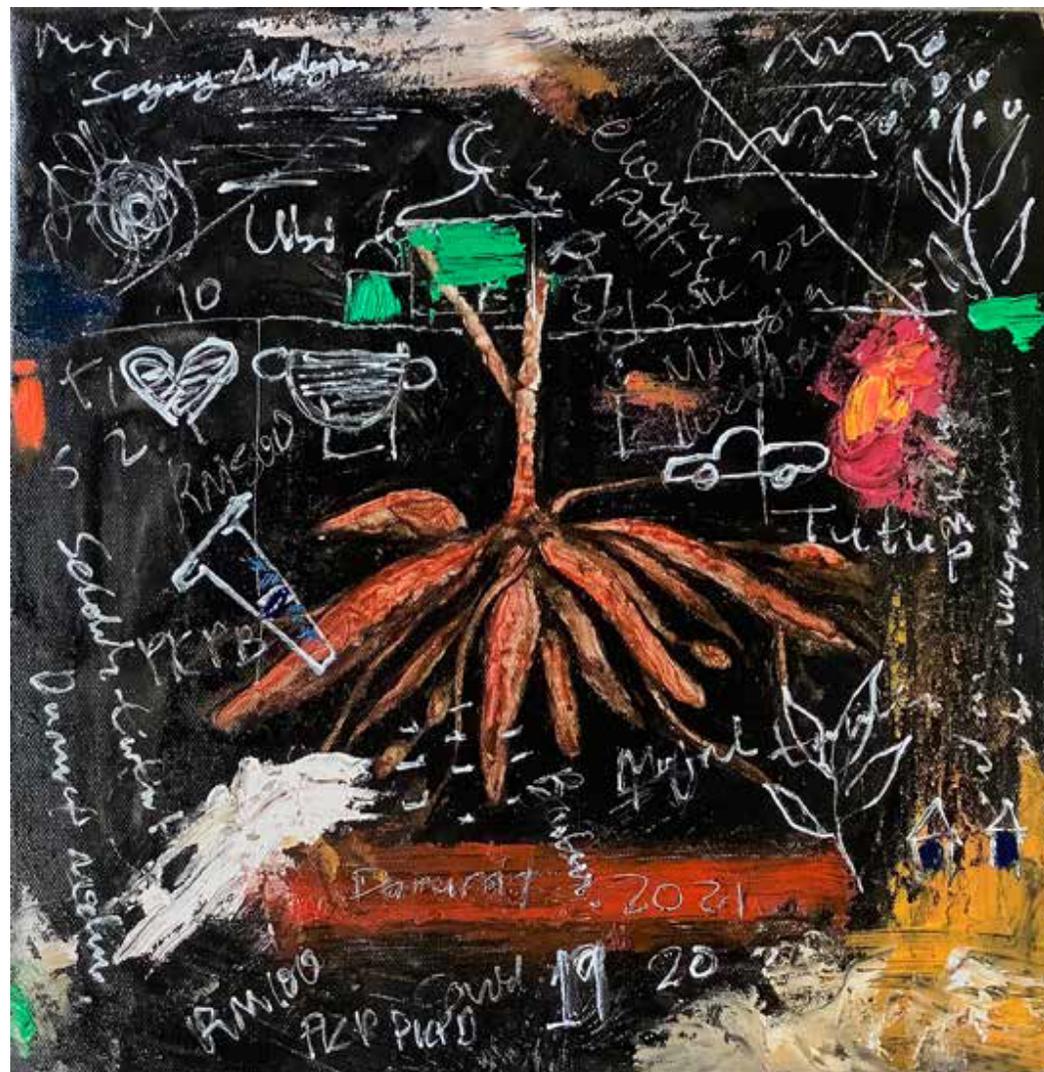
Ruji

This painting is a reflection on the comparison of two different ages of Emergency Ordinances. One, which is called The Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) and the other, is the current that we are experiencing now, the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance (2021).

As we were growing up, we were often fed with the historical facts from our ancestors, and we were taught in school on the history of Malaysia independence. The Malayan Emergency is one of the many historical yet tragic events that could not be erased especially to those who experienced it first-hand. This event occurred over twelve consecutive years and has affected many families during those days. Due to food shortages, food was rationed out as a strategy to combat the communist insurgency at that time. Tapioca has become the food of choice during hard times as it can be cooked in many ways and made into various dishes for everyday meals.

In the light of the recent event, I took this starchy root taken from the cassava plant as the symbolism of hardship that is experienced by these two different eras. This tropical food that is rich in carbohydrates reminds me of the hardship during the colonial area where our ancestors had to suffer living under the emergency ordinance. Guided by the police, not allowed to go out, were threatened to death and had close to nothing to eat to survive besides tapioca. They had to starve themselves and live with whatever they had in the house.

Similarly, what happened in the past is happening again as pandemic has taken a toll in our lives. Especially since the emergency ordinance was announced. Similar to The Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), many Malaysians are affected by this. Only this time, we are fighting with an invisible but dangerous living thing. Every day, we are haunted by numbers of death, and survivors. Hence, to flatten the curve, Malaysian have gone through several MCO (Movement Control Order) varying from MCOs, CMCOs, and RMCOs. Regulations and Standard of Procedures are changing from time to time. Schools were closed and the business operation had to operate within the time allowed. Online classes and work-from-home have become the 'temporary solution'. Not only that, roadblocks with police officers at almost every end of the road, we even have curfews, radius limits, and limits on the number of people per car. Religious places such as mosques, churches, temples, had to either shut their door or limit the entrance as MCO is in force. Meanwhile, only the essential parties are allowed to



operate as usual. These changes have affected many small business owners, educators, children, youth, low-income and middle-income families, and society as a whole. However, if The Malayan Emergency had taught us the hardship to survive, is today's emergency ordinance teaching us something about our surroundings or it reveals many unspeakable shenanigans that are happening in our country behind closed doors? This is the question that is concerning me, and I wish to take on the table and open it for views and discussions.

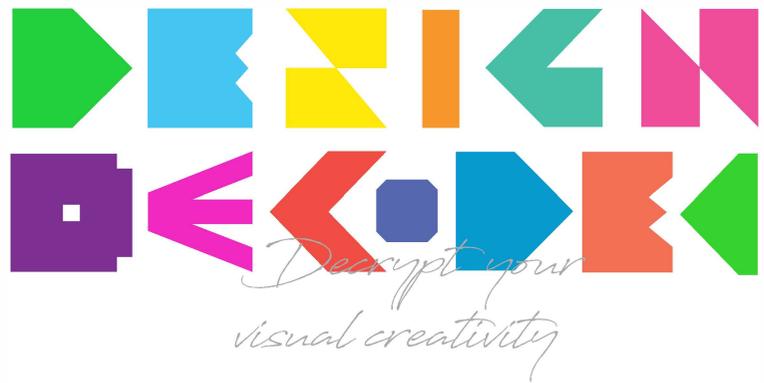


BADRULZZAMAN

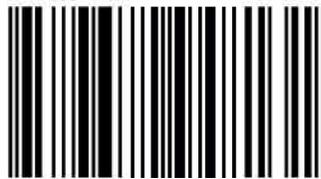
Ruji

Acrylic on canvas
30 cm x 30 cm
2020

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