

# INTRODUCTION

In an initiative to physically brand the George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Penang State Government opened an international pitch for "Marking George Town - An Idea Competition for a UNESCO World Heritage Site" in 2009. The winning idea culminated in a unique series of steel-rod caricatures which retells the history of the streets and stories of its communities in a local voice.

Sculpture at Work with the creative direction of local artist Tang Mun Kian won the commission with the theme "Voices of the People", a deserving retelling of Penang history by Penang characters with their own peculiar brand of wit and humour; in effect, marking and relating stories

of key heritage sites of the city in a unique and timeless way.

In 2010, work started and to date, there are 52 steel-rod sculptures. This unprecedented project also opened the door for new public art forms in Penang. Among the more popular are wall murals by Ernest Zacharevic for Mirrors George Town and wall murals by visiting foreign artists invited by Urban Xchange. The Marking George Town project has inadvertently changed the landscape of George Town through art and created a whole new category of attractions.

These pieces, like most public art, were not officially named; hence they are titled here according to subject matter or as they are popularly known.



1 Spy

# THE ARTISTS



Tang Mun Kian

A graduate of the renown Malaysian Institute of Art, Tang Mun Kian is first an artist, as well as an established art director and designer. Typically unassuming and low profile, it is often his work that speaks volumes.



Reggie Lee

Known for his mischievous characters, Reggie Lee's cartoon style and humour is the most recognisable in Malaysia next to Datuk Lat's. He has become a household name after decades as a syndicated cartoonist for the largest Malaysian daily, The Star. His work is also seen on billboards, commercials and animated films.



Baba Chuah

Baba Chuah made his debut in the cartoon scene in 1991 when his work first published in Falsafah Batu Api. This led to the cult anthology series Fantasi. Some of his most elaborate work to date was for Dark Horse Comics and the Eisner-nominated Liquid City.



Lefty

Lefty is a comic-book creator and the co-founder of Gilamon Studio where he gave life to the popular Major Zombie and Jimi Germ series. He also once dealt in dark themes and black humour in the wholly-Southeast Asian, Eisner-nominated Liquid City graphic novels.

# POPULAR PIECES

Some of the most photographed steel-rod sculptures reside along the Muntri Street area. The Cheating Husband piece on a window above Love Lane is a comical rendition of a wealthy man hanging out of his mistress' window. Two other popular pieces are about the famous shoe designer Jimmy Choo and a remarkably large piece explaining the origin of the name of Muntri Street.

The area around Armenian Street, the most visited tourist street in Penang, is also a great place to view and photograph street art. One of the most popular here is a steel-rod sculpture which depicts the wealthy and influential Chinese community leader Chung Keng Kwee, or Ah Quee as how the British named him.



CHEATING HUSBAND  
"Where's my husband?"

A stone's throw away from Love Lane is Muntri Street, the choice address of the wealthy Straits Chinese. Whether the name came from the rich keeping their mistresses here, however, is debatable. There are many versions to the source of the name Love Lane, which was so called as early as 1897 in the Kelly Maps.



JIMMY CHOO  
"This is the place where the famous shoe designer Jimmy Choo started his apprenticeship."

Although a graduate of London's Cordwainers' College, it is said that Jimmy Choo first trained at Hong Kong Shoe Store at the corner of Muntri Street. The shoe store still exists today on Kimberley Street.



WIN WIN SITUATION  
"Hello Orang Kaya"  
"Hello Tauke!"

Muntri Street was named after the Orang Kaya Menter Larut Perak, Ngah Ibrahim. The tin merchants of Penang worked very closely with Ngah Ibrahim as Larut District was one of the major suppliers of tin at that time.

Orang Kaya, an archaic Malay title meaning "rich person". Tauke, meaning "wealthy Chinese businessman".



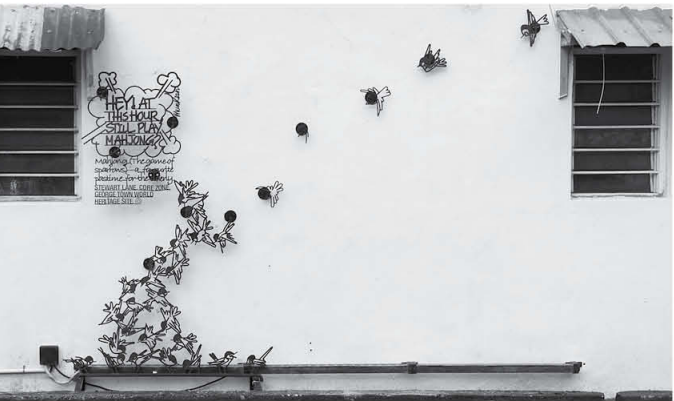
Ah Quee

# HISTORY, HERITAGE, HUMOUR

To fully understand and appreciate each piece, it is important to read the accompanying descriptors - they briefly explain the history of the place and the people who worked and lived there. The Marking George Town sculptures carry the theme "Voices of the People", and is meant to retell the history of each part of George Town in the way that the locals would; with their own peculiar brand of wit, humour and language.

A steel-rod sculpture at Transfer Road, for example, uses the word "Goh Ka Ki", the local Hokkien-

Malay term for the five-foot ways of Penang. Another piece called "Mahjong" at Stewart Lane has neighbours shout in local English accent "Hey! At this hour, still play Mahjong?" in response to the noisy shuffling of Mahjong tiles; Mahjong being the favourite pastime in this mainly Cantonese quarter. It is also no coincidence that the artists who created these pieces are local Malaysians and Penangites. All these makes Marking George Town a fun and interesting way to discover the local heritage.



Mahjong



Mr Five Foot Way



Limousine

# HAVE YOU SEEN THIS ONE?

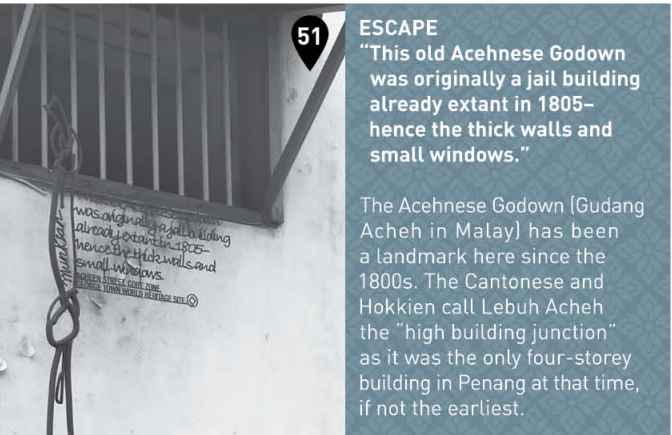
Explore off the main tourist routes and you'll find some of the best pieces. Hidden at the end of Lumut Lane and gracing a simple house is a clever piece by artist Tang Mun Kian introducing Ahmad Rashid Talu, the first to write an original Malay novel based on the local setting and characters. Here, the famous author is depicted as a baby writing from his cradle.



BORN NOVELIST

In 1927, Ahmad Rashid Talu wrote Kawan Benar or "true friend", the first novel using Malay characters in the local setting of Penang. His second novel lakah Salmah? is revered for its protagonist Salmah, a Malay woman of progressive thinking in colonial times.

Another economically-simple steel-rod sculpture depicts an escape from the window of a warehouse building that was once a prison on Lebuah Aceh. One should also look out for the steel-rod sculpture at an actual rattan-making shop on Chulia Street - to tell its story, this piece uses real rattan whips as part of the sculpture!



ESCAPE  
"This old Acehnese Godown was originally a jail building already extant in 1805 - hence the thick walls and small windows."

The Acehnese Godown (Gudang Aceh in Malay) has been a landmark here since the 1800s. The Cantonese and Hokkien call Lebuah Aceh the "high building junction" as it was the only four-storey building in Penang at that time, if not the earliest.



Beca



Cannon Hole

# LIGHT UP YOUR EVENINGS

For a little entertainment after dinner, try exploring the Marking George Town sculptures to indulge in some local wit and humour, or simply to take photos.

The Marking George Town steel-rod sculptures are purposefully-lit for night-time photo-taking. And because they are located at key areas, the Marking George Town sculptures also become your location markers when exploring the city. If you choose to start from the Pier, you

might also want to stop by the Esplanade for a walk along the waterfront. In the vicinity, prominent British-era buildings such as the Courthouse and the St. George's Church are lit up in full splendour.

The nights are more cooling at around 26°C with an occasional strong breeze coming in from the sea and road traffic slows down after 8pm, making it perfect for walkabouts.



ROTTAN  
"Thick, Medium or Thin?"

The rattan whip or Rotan used to be the "light but memorable" punishment for children. At an actual rattan shop on Chulia Street, a mother teases his boy with a choice of thick, medium or thin whips before even looking at his school report card, but the boy has already fled into the bushes. Can you spot him?

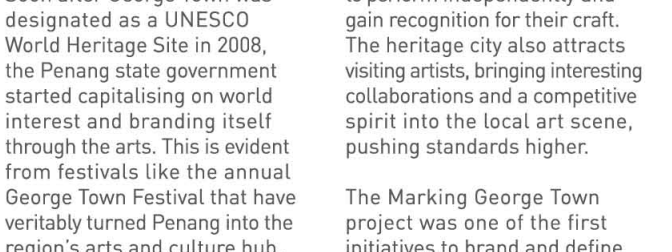
Certainly, there are some pieces which can make you laugh even after seeing them countless times. Located at the side wall of an actual pawnshop on Chulia Street, a steel-rod sculpture tells the story of a short man at a high counter of a pawnshop.

Another hilariously straight-faced piece sits above a local coffeeshop at the corner of Kimberley Street and Penang Road. It celebrates the amazingly simple, straight-up way of communicating that Penangites are known for. Marking George Town sculptures are unique in its local-accented wit and humour.



KOPI O' KAU!  
"One Tall, Double Shot, Decaf Espresso"  
"Kopi-O'-Kau!"

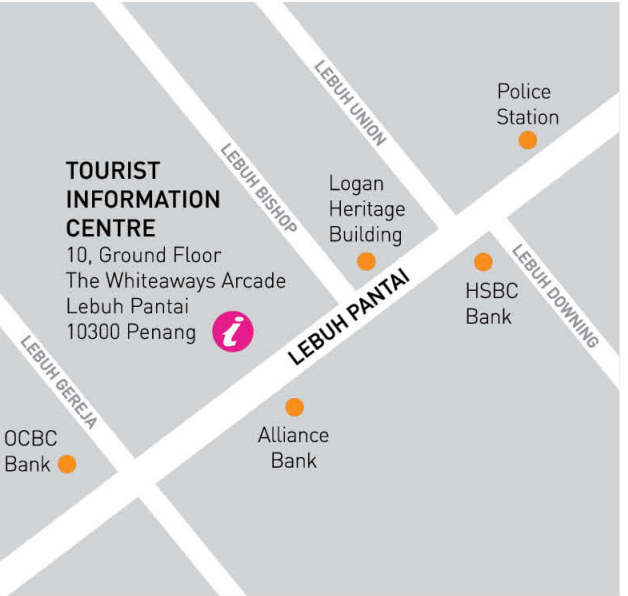
A customer's request in a slew of barista terms is quite simply and quickly simplified to "Kopi-O-Kau" or black coffee by the waitress.



The counter of the pawnshop is typically higher for security.



FREE COPY



The Tourist Information Centre in George Town handles tourist enquiries, provides brochures/directional maps and highlights the latest events and happenings in Penang.

## TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

**Monday-Friday**  
9.00am to 5.00pm

**Saturday**  
9.00am to 3.00pm

**Sunday & Certain Public Holidays**  
9.00am to 1.00pm

**Web** : mypenang.gov.my  
**Facebook** : Penang Global Tourism  
**Instagram** : penang.experience  
**Twitter** : PenangXperience  
**Tel** : +604 263 1166





## STARTING FROM KOMTAR

**1 SHORN HAIR**  
Location: Jalan Sungai Ujong

**13 CHEATING HUSBAND**  
Location: Love Lane

**2 LABOURER TO TRADER**  
Location: Jalan Chowrasta

**14 BUDGET HOTELS**  
Location: Love Lane

**9 KOPI O' KAU!**  
Location: Lebuh Kimberley

**15 ROTAN**  
Location: Lebuh Chulia

**4 HAPPY HOUR**  
Location: Jalan Transfer

**16 JIMMY CHOO**  
Location: Lebuh Leith

**5 MR FIVE FOOT WAY**  
Location: Jalan Transfer

**17 WIN WIN SITUATION**  
Location: Lebuh Muntri

**6 SPY**  
Location: Lorong Kampung Malabar

**18 ONE LEG KICKS ALL**  
Location: Lebuh Muntri

**7 SAME TASTE, SAME LOOK**  
Location: Lebuh Cintra

**8 THREE GENERATIONS**  
Location: Jalan Sungai Ujong

**19 NARROWEST FIVE FOOT WAY**  
Location: Lorong Stewart

**20 BECCA**  
Location: Lorong Chulia

**9 ROPE STYLE**  
Location: Jalan Pintal Tali

**21 MAHJONG**  
Location: Lorong Stewart

**10 RETAIL PARADISE**  
Location: Lebuh Campbell

**11 TING TING THONG**  
Location: Lorong Seck Chuan

**12 HIGH COUNTER**  
Location: Lebuh Carnarvon

**22 WRONG TREE**  
Location: Lorong Pasar



## STARTING FROM WELD QUAY

**24 TOO HOT**  
Location: Pengkalan Weld

**39 KANDAR**  
Location: Lebuh Ah Quee

**25 TOO SALTY**  
Location: Jalan Green Hall

**40 TOO NARROW**  
Location: Lorong Soo Hong

**26 BULLOCK CART WHEEL**  
Location: Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling

**41 PROCESSION**  
Location: Lebuh Armenian

**27 GOLD TOOTH**  
Location: Lebuh Queen

**42 THEN & NOW**  
Location: Lebuh Armenian

**28 QUIET PLEASE**  
Location: Lebuh Gereja

**43 CANNON HOLE**  
Location: Lebuh Cannon

**29 UNTRAINED PARAKEET**  
Location: Lebuh King

**44 BORN NOVELIST**  
Location: Lorong Lumut

**30 GEDUNG RUMPUT**  
Location: Lebuh Queen

**45 LIMOUSINE**  
Location: Lorong Carnarvon

**31 TOK TOK MEE**  
Location: Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling / Lebuh China

**46 COW & FISH**  
Location: Lebuh Melayu / Lorong Ikan

**32 ROTI BENGGALI**  
Location: Lebuh King

**47 NO PLASTIC BAG**  
Location: Lebuh Prangin

**33 DUCK**  
Location: Lorong Che Em

**48 WATERWAY**  
Location: Gat Jalan Prangin

**34 PROPERTY**  
Location: Lebuh Victoria

**49 CHINGAY**  
Location: Gat Jalan Prangin

**35 "YEOH" ONLY**  
Location: Gat Lebuh Chulia

**50 IRONSMITH**  
Location: Lorong Toh Aka

**36 DOUBLE ROLE**  
Location: Gat Lebuh Chulia

**51 ESCAPE**  
Location: Lebuh Aceh

**38 AH QUEE?**  
Location: Lebuh Ah Quee

**52 HAJ PILGRIMAGE**  
Location: Gat Lebuh Aceh

