

Press Release for Immediate Release



Ernest Zacharevic restoring "Kids on Bicycle" 2024

## “Mural Mural on the Wall”

An exhibition by **Ernest Zacharevic**

19th October - 15th December 2024

### **Cultprint by ZACH Studio**

35 Lebuh Melayu,  
10300 George Town, Penang

### **Opening Reception- 8pm, 19th October**

Penang, 15 October 2024 – Artist **Ernest Zacharevic** presents “*Mural, Mural on the Wall,*” an exhibition that reflects on the journey of his iconic public artworks, particularly the beloved *Kids on Bicycle* mural in Penang. Originally painted in 2012 as part of the George Town Festival, the mural has since become synonymous with the city, capturing the joy and freedom of childhood in its vibrant streets.

Attracting visitors from all over the world, the mural has transformed Penang into a cultural destination, but it has also sparked a complex dialogue about the impact of tourism on gentrification, and commercialization.

Once painted on a quiet street, the *Kids on Bicycle* mural is now at the center of a bustling tourist hotspot surrounded by shops selling mass-produced souvenirs that often lack a connection to Penang’s local culture. Areas like Armenian Street are now overtaken by Airbnbs, hotels, and retail chains pushing out local artisans and businesses. Zacharevic raises important questions about the displacement of local communities and calls for greater efforts to preserve Penang’s living heritage and its UNESCO World Heritage List status.



The exhibition also celebrates the completion of the recent restoration of the George Town murals. In 2024, recognizing the cultural importance of these works, Penang Global Tourism approached Ernest Zacharevic to lead a comprehensive restoration effort. This marks the most extensive renovation to date, reviving not just the mural but also the surrounding walls and elements that enhance its context.

Zacharevic humorously reflects on the commercialization of his mural through his candid and playful approach. The exhibition invites public participation, with one highlight being an interactive cut-out version of the *Kids on Bicycle* mural where visitors can insert their faces over those of other tourist. Other pieces include a homemade music video by a passerby, adding to the ever-growing narrative of the mural.

Beyond these reflections, the exhibition also touches on important issues of artist copyright in public art. Zacharevic's murals have been reproduced in advertisements, merchandise, and even in other cities around the world without his permission, prompting discussions about the ownership of street art. His ongoing project, *Ready F\*\*ing Made*, delves into these complexities, exploring how artists can protect and maintain control over their creations in public spaces.

"*Mural, Mural on the Wall*," opens 19th of October to the general public with an opening reception at 8 pm. Admission is free.

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### **About the Artist**

Ernest Zacharevic (b. 1986) is a Lithuanian artist who gained international recognition for his street art, blending fine art techniques with urban landscapes. In 2012, as an artist living and practicing in Penang without a studio, Ernest dedicated himself to documenting the city's rich heritage and vibrant communities. When invited to collaborate with the George Town Festival, he created a series of murals across George Town, but the standout piece—depicting two children joyfully laughing on a bicycle in a quiet street quickly captured the hearts of both locals and tourists alike. Ernest's primary interest is in the relationship between art and the urban landscape, with concepts often evolving as part of a spontaneous response to the immediate environment, the community and culture.

### **About ZACH Studio**

ZACH Studio is a new hub for contemporary art in George Town, Penang. Nestled in the heart of the historic city, it serves as both studio space for artist Ernest Zacharevic, a gallery and the headquarters of printmaking collective Cultprint. The space aims to have residency programs, gather a community of creatives for ideas exchange and have a line up of events and exhibitions for the public.

ZACH Studio,  
35 Lebu Melayu,  
10300 George Town, Penang

### **Opening Hours**

Friday - Sunday 12pm - 7pm

For appointments please call +601116089935

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