



ALIR

Alir: A Locus for Reflection

"The land surrounded by water!" That was my immediate impression upon my first visit to Parit Buntar. The tranquil atmosphere, starkly contrasting with bustling urban environments, is undeniably a sight to behold. Water, a prominent feature in Parit Buntar, is not just a geographical element but a cultural symbol. It is a vital source of sustainability for its population, fostering a deep connection between the community and their everyday activities. Time seems to flow leisurely here, a rhythm set by the gentle ebb and flow of the surrounding waters. This serene atmosphere, perhaps a gift from the nature of water, bestows a calming effect on all who behold it. Its fluidity, its ability to adapt and sustain, mirrors the peaceful spirit that flows through Iskandar Murad's artistic practice.

"Alir" is Iskandar Murad's first solo exhibition, showcasing his artwork created over several years. A Fine Art graduate of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) majoring in sculpture, he has a penchant for creating visual expressions that reflect his connection to the world around him. The word "Alir" translates to "flow" and represents Iskandar's philosophical takes on adapting to different situations and noticing things that are often overlooked. Life in the periphery has taught him to be observant of his slower-paced surroundings, allowing him to immerse himself in the art of contemplation.

The tranquillity of rural living, away from the distractions of urban areas, encourages introspection and mindfulness. Iskandar incorporates elements of everyday life in Parit Buntar into his work, such as the serene flow of a river, the gentle rustle of wind across paddy fields, and the unassuming architecture of village dwellings. These depictions are not just observations; they convey a deep appreciation for life's simple, unhurried moments.

Iskandar's artworks often epitomise resilience and an indomitable spirit, reflecting his dedication to creating art despite the challenges. Pieces like "Resilient Spirit" symbolise Murad's unwavering optimism, conveying a steadfast determination that transcends the constraints of his geographic location. Like the journey of life, the flow of water is gentle yet persistent. It adapts, finds its way around obstacles, and never ceases.

His work not only expresses an internal dialogue but also resonates with the people he encounters. There is a sense of empathy exuded towards the person who shares a similar experience, albeit in different circumstances. This keen understanding of the people and experiences that shape his immediate environment is reflected in "Gemok," a piece that pays tribute to one of his friends who remained in Parit Buntar to care for his family.

Iskandar Murad's approach to sculpture is as unconventional as it is organic. His creative process relies heavily on the interaction between intention and chance, resulting in spontaneous and deliberate works. Using minimal tools, Iskandar crafts his sculptures entirely by hand, beginning with a single metal stick that he twists and bends freely. This physical manipulation, performed without sophisticated machinery, gives his sculptures a raw, unrefined essence that speaks to his unique philosophy of creation.

At the heart of Iskandar's sculptural practice is his commitment to simplicity. The absence of sophisticated instruments allows him to maintain a direct, tactile connection with his materials. This hands-on process ensures that each twist, bend, and curve is imbued with a sense of human touch, preserving the integrity and authenticity of the work.

Working with minimal tools is not just a stylistic decision—it reflects Iskandar's broader artistic philosophy. By limiting the use of technology, he embraces the imperfections and irregularities that come with manual craftsmanship. This brings an organic, almost primal quality to his sculptures, making them feel alive as if they are extensions of the natural world.

Iskandar's process is both guided and unpredictable. While he starts with a clear vision of each sculpture's final form, he leaves much of the intermediate shaping to chance. As he twists the metal rods, he allows the unexpected to happen. The curves and lines of the sculpture emerge organically, without a rigid preconceived plan.

The freehand twisting of the metal results in a fluidity that mirrors natural forms, like the winding of a river or tree branches. There is no uniformity, no perfect symmetry in his sculptures; instead, they feel like they have grown rather than been constructed. This allows for a certain level of unpredictability—no two twists are the same, and each sculpture is a unique expression of the artist's hand and the material's resistance.

While Iskandar allows chance to guide much of the process, the ultimate shape of each sculpture is never entirely left to fate. He begins with a strong conceptual foundation: the final form of the sculpture is decided before the twisting begins. This preordained structure is an anchor, ensuring the work remains cohesive despite its free-flowing elements. In this way, Iskandar's sculptures are like puzzles—though the pieces may seem random or unplanned in isolation, they all fit together to form a deliberate, unified whole.

This contrast between the intentional and the accidental creates tension central to his work. The sculptures appear spontaneous, but an underlying order governs their creation. Each piece is controlled and liberated—free in its details but bound by an overarching vision. This duality reflects Iskandar's deep interest in philosophical ideas, particularly those drawn from Redha, where the balance between human effort and divine guidance is a recurring theme.

Redha, the highest form of acceptance, holds a significant place in Iskandar's life. It can be defined as wholeheartedly accepting what the Almighty has decreed. But it comes with effort. One has to work to their due diligence, but at the same time, we must accept the limit of our ability as humans, which relies on the mercy of the Almighty.

For Iskandar Murad, the act of creation is more than an artistic pursuit; it is a form of therapy. His process, defined by repetition, engages the mind and body in a rhythmic, almost meditative state. This single-minded focus is not concerned with deep thinking or conceptual planning but rather with the psychomotor act of making—a mechanical yet mindful practice that grounds the artist in the present.

In Iskandar's work, repetition becomes a crucial element. Whether it's twisting metal rods, forming delicate structures, or assembling small components, the act of repeating the same movement over and over functions as a meditative exercise. This repetition, devoid of complex thought, allows the artist to be fully present in the moment. It is a physical engagement where the body's movements become the primary focus, and the mind is free from distraction.

This mechanical repetition serves as a form of therapy, offering a kind of mental clarity. For Iskandar, the repetitive task is not about achieving perfection or conceptual depth—it's about completing the task. The focus is purely on the doing, and there is a sense of surrender to the process itself. It's a reflection of how, in life, there are moments when we must accept our circumstances and focus only on what we can control.

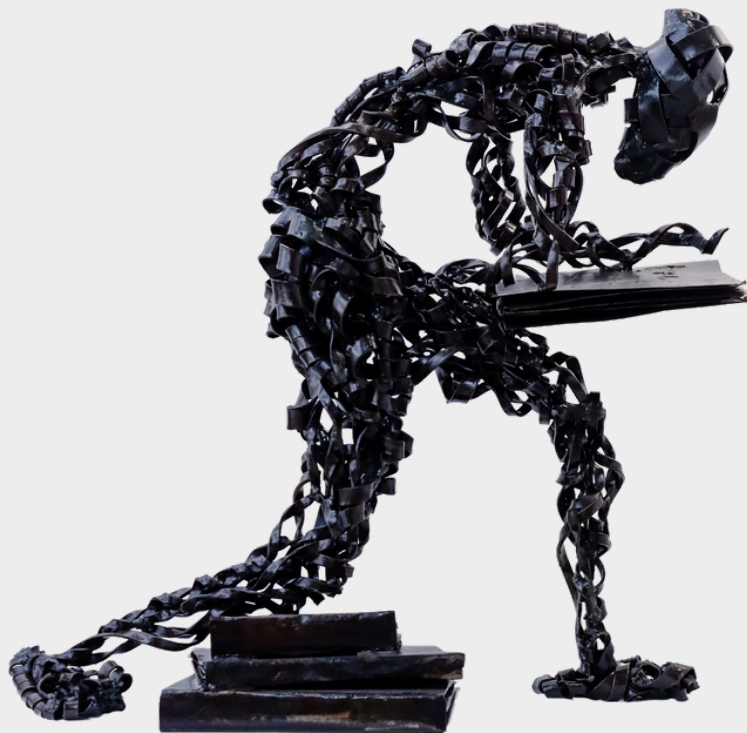
Iskandar's approach to freehand creation naturally leads to imperfections. By its nature, handmade work is often unpredictable and prone to error, but for Iskandar, these "mistakes" are far from undesirable. Instead, he sees them as "perfect mistakes," unintentional outcomes that are embraced as integral to the final piece rather than being undone or corrected. These imperfections carry a certain truth about the human condition—our inherent inability to achieve absolute perfection and the acceptance that comes with it.

In Iskandar's philosophy, these perfect mistakes reflect life's unpredictability. Just as each twist of metal in his sculptures cannot be precisely controlled, our paths and decisions are often marked by unintended consequences. Once a choice is made, it cannot be undone; it becomes part of our reality. Iskandar suggests that instead of resisting or attempting to fix these imperfections, we must find peace in them. His works become metaphors for this acceptance—the realisation that life, like art, is shaped by both intention and accident and the interplay of the two gives it meaning.

Once the initial phase of repetition and unintentional outcomes has been completed, Iskandar moves to the next step: arranging and rearranging the individual parts. This phase of his process is where meaning begins to emerge. The small parts, each shaped through freehand work and laden with the marks of chance, are carefully placed to form a more significant gesture—a movement, a form, or a structure that reflects something more intentional.

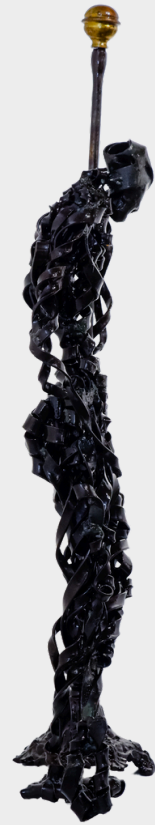
However, even in this phase, there is fluidity. The act of rearranging speaks to the idea that nothing is indeed fixed. The parts are moved, shifted, and adjusted, creating a dynamic relationship between the whole and its components. The final gesture may seem intentional, but it is the result of many small decisions and mistakes that have been incorporated into the whole. In this dialogue between the accidental and the deliberate, Iskandar's works find their unique identity.

Iskandar Murad's artistic process, rooted in repetition and the embrace of imperfection, offers a profound reflection on life itself. His works remind us that perfection is not the goal; rather, the small, unintentional moments, the perfect mistakes, give both art and life their depth. By arranging and rearranging these imperfect parts, Iskandar creates something that is not only visually compelling but also philosophically resonant. His sculptures speak to the beauty of accepting life's unpredictability and the peace that allows the process—whether in art or life—to unfold naturally.



The Philosophy Within

Metal
40cm x 78cm x 73.5cm
2024
RM 18,000



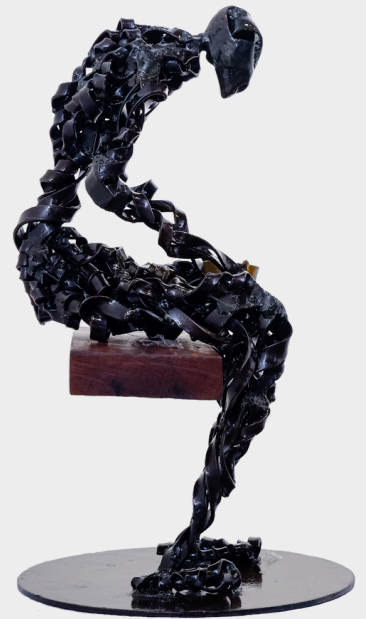
Keeper of Knowledge

Metal and brass
75cm x 33cm x 17cm
2024
RM 10,500



Truth and Fallacy

Metal and wood
19cm x 36cm x 56.5cm
2024
RM 9,500



Contemplative Sip

Metal, brass and wood
36.7cm x 30cm x 50.5cm
2024
RM 9,500



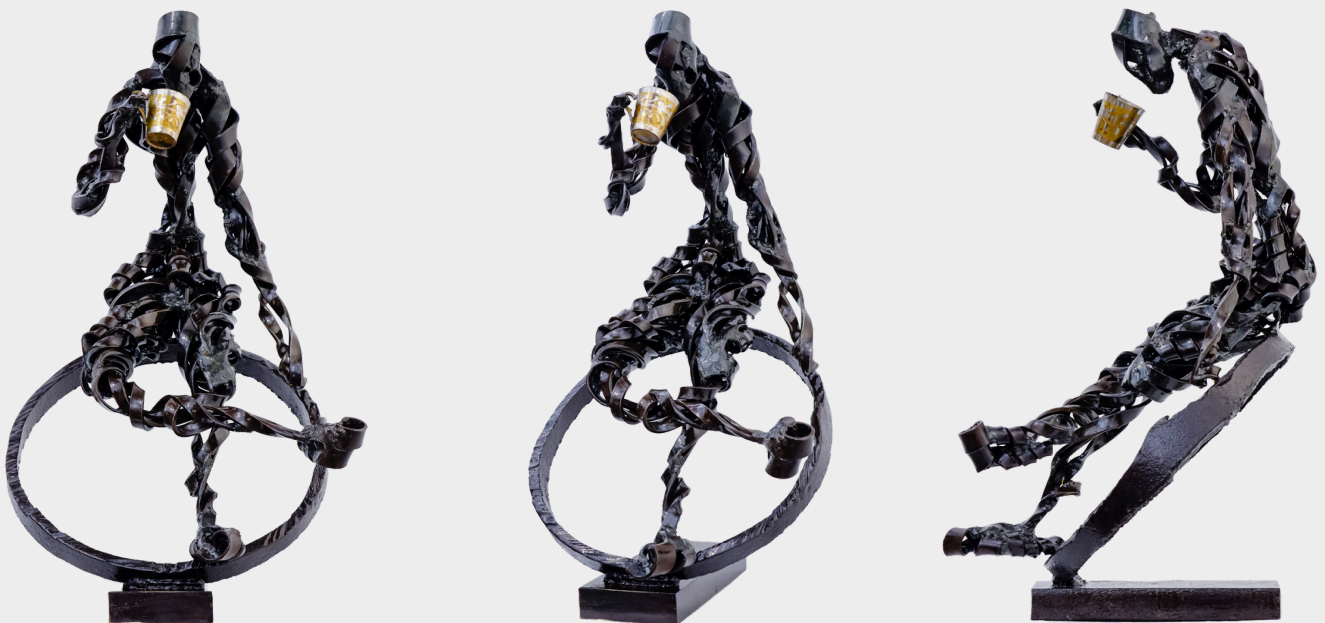
Infinite Learner

Metal
30cm x 30cm x 61cm
2024
RM 9,500



Engrossed in Knowledge

Metal and wood
28cm x 35cm x 36cm
2024
RM 8,500



Reflective Solitude

Metal and brass
27cm x 20.5cm x 50.5cm
2024
RM 9,500



Relaxed Resolve

Metal and wood
24.2cm x 24cm x 47cm
2024
RM 8,500



Ease and Thought

Metal and wood
55.5cm x 30cm x 56cm
2024
RM 9,500



Burdened Strength

Metal and wood
23cm x 30cm x 59.5cm
2024
RM 9,500



Mr. Muscle

Metal
34.5cm x 26cm x 49.5cm
2024
RM 9,500



Serene Moment

Metal and brass
22.5cm x 30cm x 62cm
2024
RM 10,500



Eager for Insight

Metal and wood
37.4cm x 31.6cm x 49.5cm
2024
RM 8,500



Perseverance Unveiled

Metal and wood
42cm x 45.6cm x 18.5
2024
RM 8,500



Ascending with Determination

Metal and wood
30.5cm x 49cm x 80cm
2024
RM 9,500



Devoted Care

Metal and wood
31cm x 26cm x 99cm
2024
RM 10,500



Solitary Ascent

Metal
30cm x 42cm x 112cm
2024
RM 9,500



Resilient Spirit

Metal and wood
47cm x 42cm x 121.5cm
2024
RM 9,500



Comfortable

Metal, skin and wood
40.7cm x 40.7cm x 99cm
2024
RM 8,500

Acknowledgement

Dedicated to

'MAK' Hajah Salmah Abd Rahman, 'PAK' Allahyarham Haji Murad Darus
and my family.

My extended thanks to

Artas Galeri, Mr. Roy, Raeyen, Raja Shahrman Raja Aziddin, Daud Rahim,
Dr.Fuad Arif, Azzad Diah, Sukor Romat, Fadhli Ariffin, Hafiz Yahaya,
Edroger Rosili, Abang Aswad and Che Wan.

Iskandar Murad

Education

2013

Bachelor of Fine Art (Hons), Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor

2010

Diploma of Fine Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA Sri Iskandar, Perak

Selected exhibitions:

2008

Penang Open Show (Pesta Pulau Pinang), Pulau Pinang

2009

Open Show, Kuala Lumpur

2010

3D Sculpture Show, Universiti Teknologi MARA Sri Iskandar, Perak

Diploma Show Universiti Teknologi MARA Sri Iskandar, Perak

Open Show Galeri Shah Alam, Selangor

2011

Beautiful Minds, Core Design Gallery

2012

Art Expo, MATRADE, Kuala Lumpur

Private Show, Penang

Seni Dua Hari, Galeri Shah Alam, Selangor

2013

Degree show UiTM shah alam

Performing Art 'Ais Kirim & Bunga Teloq', Padang Polo, Ipoh

2023

Cimb Art & Soul Artober

Warisan Dulu & Kini, Artas Gallery

Ipoh International Art Festival MARCAPADA: The World Today, Ipoh

2024

CIMB Hotel Art Fair, Kuala Lumpur

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Thank You
Terima Kasih
谢谢
Nandri



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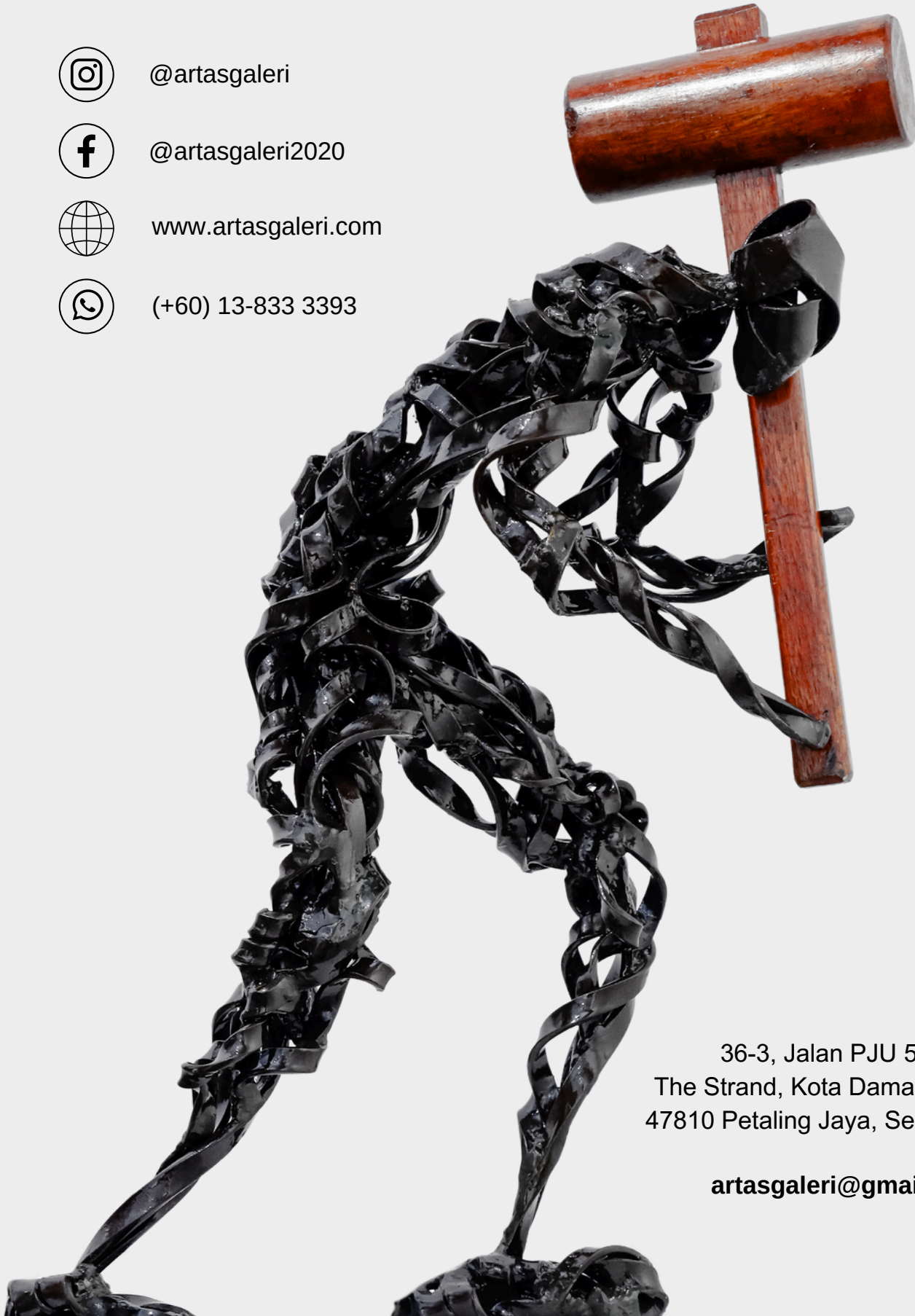
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