

Artist Ernest Zacharevic confronts Southeast Asia's Art Exploitation Crisis in New Exhibition, Announcing, "We Need To Talk"



A SOLO EXHIBITION BY
ERNEST ZACHAREVIC

05.07–31.08.2025
FRIDAY–SUNDAY
12.00–19.00

**CULTPRINT, 35 LEBUH MELAYU,
10300 GEORGE TOWN, PENANG**

BOARD TO SUPPORT:

Who's cashing in on creativity?
An exhibition about the silent, persistent exploitation of artists in commercial spaces and the importance of IP rights. It's time this conversation took off.

CULTPRINT.CO **HOTLINE +6011 1608 9935**

Penang, 30th June 2025 - Artist Ernest Zacharevic is taking aim at creative exploitation in Southeast Asia with a bold new exhibition, *We Need To Talk*. Opening July 5, the campaign blends art, advocacy, and satire to break the silence around how independent artists are routinely exploited by corporate interests. Inspired by Zacharevic's own pursuit of legal justice over unauthorised uses of his iconic George Town murals, the exhibition will feature artist panel discussions, IP legal clinics, and immersive art installations designed to spark overdue public conversations around artists' rights.

The exhibition casts a wider lens on a long-standing regional crisis. From muralists and illustrators to filmmakers, independent creatives across Southeast Asia have seen their work reproduced by corporations without consent, credit, or fair compensation. For Zacharevic, this issue holds personal weight. His iconic Penang murals, including the famous *Kids on Bicycle*, have been repeatedly reproduced and repurposed for commercial gain without permission, fair compensation, or proper

credit. "This is bigger than me - it's happening to independent artists everywhere," says Zacharevic. "Most don't have the legal or financial means to fight back against these large corporations, and worse, they're under immense pressure to stay quiet. This exhibition is about breaking that silence."

A key event in the campaign is a public panel discussion on **5th July**, where Zacharevic will be joined by other creatives who made waves for speaking out against IP theft. Among them is creative strategist Fey Ilyas, whose viral allegations in April this year against Malaysia's Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) - for **allegedly** appropriating his agency's concept for the Malaysian Pavilion in Expo 2025 Osaka - reignited public debate on creative rights in Malaysia. Also on the panel is artist Jun Ong, whose acclaimed "Star" light installation has faced its own battles against unauthorised use.

Between **July 5 - August 31**, the Cultprint gallery space will be transformed into an immersive, airport-themed experience that blends performance art with visual installations. Beneath its playful, tongue-in-cheek surface, *We Need To Talk* delivers a hard-hitting critique on topics like intellectual property abuse, the myth of the "starving artist," and the imbalance of power between corporations and independent creatives.

In addition to the exhibition and panel, highlights of the campaign include an exclusive launch party, *Mile High Club*, on **5th July**, and an IP Clinic on the weekend of **9th and 10th August**, where visitors can receive pro-bono legal advice on intellectual property issues.

Admission to the exhibition is free, but visitors can deepen their experience by purchasing themed "Boarding Passes" from a mock check-in counter at the event space. These passes unlock limited-edition merchandise, collectible artwork, and cheeky campaign souvenirs stowed in playful packaging like airplane sick bags and luggage. This fundraising initiative will support Zacharevic's pursuit of legal justice, with the aim of setting stronger precedents and protections for creatives across Southeast Asia. Boarding passes can also be purchased online via the official exhibition website:

cultprint.co

Exhibition Dates: July 5th 2025 - August 31st 2025

Exhibition Venue: Cultprint, 35 Lebuh Melayu, 10300 George Town, Penang, Malaysia

Admission: Free Entry

Website / Socials: cultprint.co | IG: [Cultprint](https://www.instagram.com/cultprint)

About Ernest Zacharevic:

Ernest Zacharevic is a Lithuanian-born artist based in George Town, Penang. His experimental work blurs the lines between fine art and urban landscapes. His murals, a celebrated part of Penang's cultural landscape, have long been the target of commercial exploitation, fueling his advocacy for stronger protections for independent artists. Zacharevic is the founder of Cultprint.

About Cultprint:

Cultprint is dedicated to making contemporary art accessible through limited-edition prints and curated exhibitions. Partnering with leading and emerging artists worldwide, Cultprint provides a platform where creativity meets community, bridging the gap between collectors and artists.