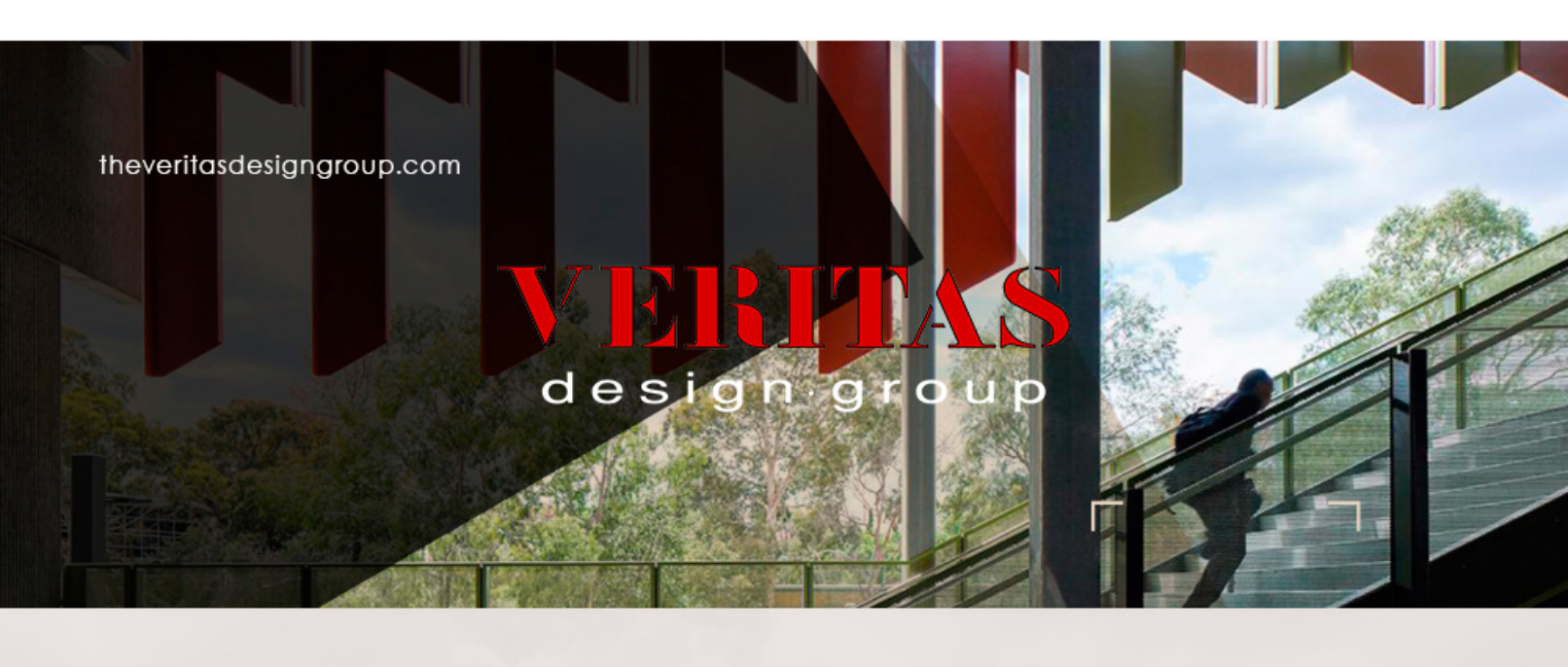
theveritasdesigngroup.com



Hello Everyone! SELAMAT HARI MALAYSIA!

Firstly, Happy Malaysia Day (which fell on 16 September), commemorating the establishment of the Malaysian federation on that date in 1963 with the merger of Sabah and Sarawak with Malaya.

In this month's E-news, we are pleased to feature the strategic design collaboration which has recently been established between VERITAS and MGS Architects in Australia. At VERITAS we are committed to continually improving and expanding our presence around the world to serve our increasingly global clientele, and our newly formed international business units and collaborationsare testament to this objective. We foresee great opportunities to expand our professional services to the fast-growing global market.

This E-news will also cover many other interesting happenings in VERITAS including VERITAS Hari Malaysia E-card competition and CSR activity. We hope you enjoy this month's VERITAS E-news! And please feel free to contact us if you would like to know more about any of the stories featured here.

September 2021
enewsletter

+ VERITAS MGS

A strategic design alliance connecting Australia and South East Asia

We are excited to announce the strategic collaboration between VERITAS and MGS Architects of Melbourne to provide integrated design consultancy services connecting Australia and South East Asia.

This collaboration brings together the VERITAS Design Group with its established capacity in South East Asia and VERITAS Architects Australia led by Principal Anton Alers with MGS, an award-winning Melbourne-based architectural design practice with strong urban design and planning capabilities.

> *"I am certain that our cooperation will succeed and evolve into a true partnership. On our part, we are committed to providing professional services of the highest standard to exceed the market expectations*

David Hashim
Group President
VERITAS Design Group

VERITAS

> *We're excited that the complimentary reach of the two award-winning design practices VERITAS and MGS will provide our clients with access to personalised, deep expertise, innovation and capability across the region.*

Robert McGauran
Director
MGS Architects

mgs

ABOUT VERITAS + MGS ARCHITECTS (McGauran Giannini Soon Pty Ltd)

The VERITAS+MGS alliance provides seamless project delivery across Southeast Asia and Australia, to deliver a range of projects of significant scale with local implementation and innovative, award-winning expertise across a range of project typologies.

VERITAS + MGS FEATURED PROJECTS

VERITAS Projects
In Melbourne

Coppin Suites, Melbourne

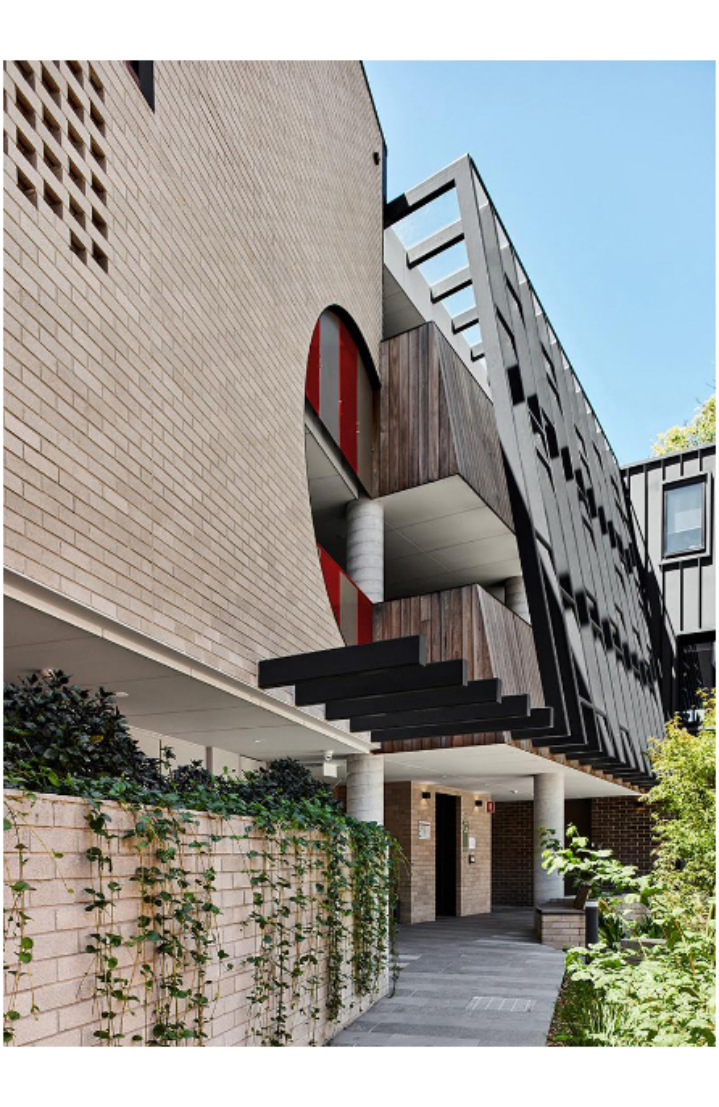
VERITAS Architects Australia were commissioned by the Royal Freemasons Victoria to act as the Client representative Project Managers for the Coppin Centre project. Upon completion VERITAS Architects Australia in conjunction with Visionbuilt Solutions designed the Coppin Suites as a retrofit the top floor to create 16 luxury residential care apartments. This high-end facility creates a hybrid model of aged care where the residents enjoy a more spacious and comfortable living environment than traditional aged care environments.

Royal Freemasons Centennial Lodge Expansion, Melbourne

VERITAS Architects Australia has undertaken a review of several existing residential aged care centres operated by Royal Freemasons Homes and has provided recommendations for the development of each site, including this 200-bed expansion of the Centennial Lodge residential aged care centre.

MGS PROJECTS

Rushall Park is the nexus between old and new, between ever-advancing infrastructure and a charming pocket of history. It engages confidently and purposefully with the tension these two conditions present. The scale of the building's detail and its colour, texture and shadow is in synthesis with its assorted and characterful heritage counterparts.



Rushall Park Fitzroy North Melbourne, Australia

Rushall Park expands upon the built legacy of the Old Colonists' Association of Victoria, the state's oldest retirement village provider, delivering 35 independent living units on the last remaining development site within the historic village boundaries.

Previously given over to ad hoc back of house facilities, the location needed a response that was able to interface both with the immediately abutting metropolitan rail line and station, and the nuanced and highly sensitive existing village. It needed to provide an amenity buffer without becoming a wall unsympathetic to the delicacy and scale of the existing scattered neighborhood.

Award:

Victorian AIA Commendation for Residential Architecture

Monash University Clayton Campus Center Clayton Campus, Australia

Forming a new 'campus 'heart', the first stage in the redevelopment of student hub and the central retail and servicing the Clayton Campus aims to establish a new design language and clear pedestrian movement paths that can be leveraged for future stages to deliver a building that is easy to navigate and reads as a cohesive design statement.

A new interior street, a semi-enclosed out-door dining area and a landscaped plaza, designed by landscape architects Taylor Cullity Lethlean, have been formally arranged and articulated to deliver a vibrant new socialising hub for the university campus.

The interior was stripped back to reveal structure and services, and new finishes were selected from a palette of raw, natural materials to establish a 'mood' more representative of the student lifestyle.

Award:

2015 RAIA National Architecture Award for Urban Design - Monash University North West Precinct by JCB Architects in collaboration with MGS Architects (Masterplan)

2016 PIA National Awards for Planning Excellence, From Plan to Place Award

2016 Australian Urban Design Awards, Delivered Outcome, Large Scale

2017 PIA National Awards for Planning Excellence, From Plan to Place Award

Featured Interview

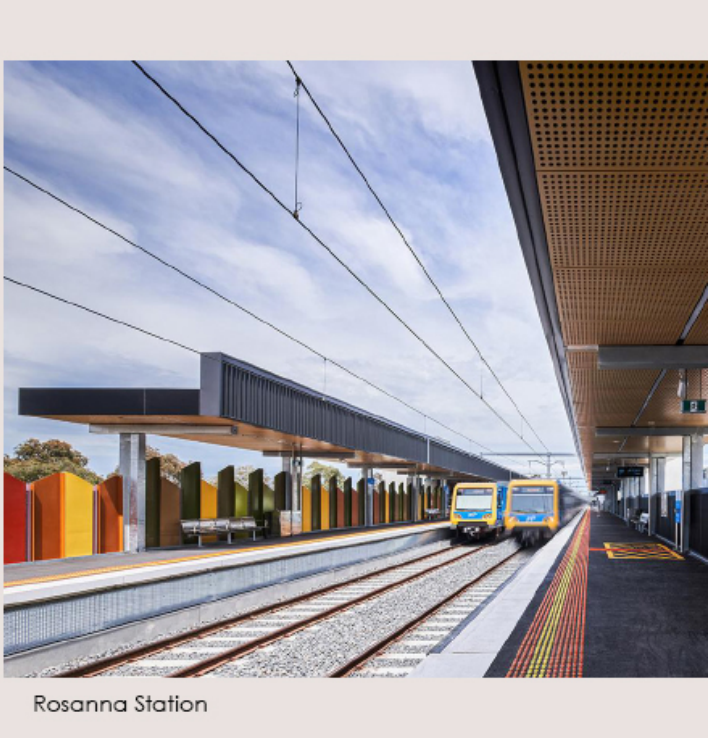
This month we introduce our VERITAS Architects Australia director Anton Alers and Director of MGS Architects (McGauran Giannini Soon Pty Ltd) Cameron Lacy behind the VERITAS+MGS Collaboration!

MGS Practice Director, Cameron Lacy (CL) on the background to the VERITAS+MGS collaboration:

Tell me a little about MGS?
CL: Rob Started the practice as a young graduate with his partner Mun Soon around 35 years ago. It was still a relatively small company when I joined after graduating around 20 years ago but has grown steadily over the years. I did have a brief hiatus from MGS living and working in London for 3 years before being invited back as a Director about 10 years ago.

What do you think about this collaboration?
CL: At MGS we are very used to collaborating with others, having teamed with other architects through several our projects over the years to deliver some outstanding projects. We strongly believe that delivering great projects requires great partnerships that bring complementary skills and strength of resources together. Rob and I have gotten to know David, Anton, and the VERITAS team well over the last few months and are comfortable that together we can open new project opportunities and work together to deliver successful outcomes.

How do you think this will benefit both sides?
CL: I think there are a few key benefits to both Veritas and MGS through our collaboration. Firstly, the combined team will certainly provide a compelling offer to prospective clients looking to develop in Australia and, in particular in our home town Melbourne. We bring the local knowledge, connections, a local presence, and reputation for design excellence in Australia. Teaming with VERITAS on large projects will provide the expertise, experience and capacity required to underpin delivery. Secondly, there will certainly be opportunities to learn from each other; whether it be from introducing certain expertise or through fine tuning our project delivery processes. Bringing complementary teams should provide many opportunities for knowledge sharing that will enable both of our practices to grow in skills.



Rosanna Station

What projects are you working on right now?
CL: Too many! I like to work on a range of projects ranging from master planning to project delivery. Currently my architectural projects include a few large not-for-profit housing projects, a large build to rent apartment building, two multideck car park structures, a small museum. I am also heading a few master planning projects including two brownfield site redevelopments and a new local government civic precinct.

How do you see the property/construction market in the next few months?
CL: We are blessed to be riding the wave of a strong economy, high levels of government spending and strong market confidence now in Australia. After a subdued year last year, this has been one of our busiest and we've expanded our team despite dealing with lockdowns. There is no shortage of project opportunities at the moment and we see this continuing for some time.

VERITAS Architects Australia's (VAA) Director, Anton Alers (AA) on the background to the VERITAS+MGS collaboration:

What inspired VAA to collaborate with MGS?
AA: Since its formation in 2010 VAA has provided international design expertise in the health and assisted living sectors to establish VERITAS as a leader in these sectors in Malaysia. Our next objective is to be able to support our Malaysian client in their Australian ventures. For this reason, we have formed the VERITAS+MGS association.

Why MGS?
AA: We were seeking to collaborate with a Melbourne-based firm which shares similar aspirations and a client-focused approach to design, and the capacity to support complex and significant projects in Melbourne and further afield in Australia. I went through Melbourne University with the founding partners and have maintained a professional connection with MGS as it has evolved over the last 35 years. They were a logical choice.

Petronas Leadership Center, Selangor

How do you see the VERITAS+MGS collaboration benefitting Malaysian Clients?
AA: MGS is well-connected and highly respected in the Melbourne scene and brings particular expertise in urban design and planning. These skills, combined with VERITAS' understanding of our client's commercial needs are the key to unlocking the development potential of any project.

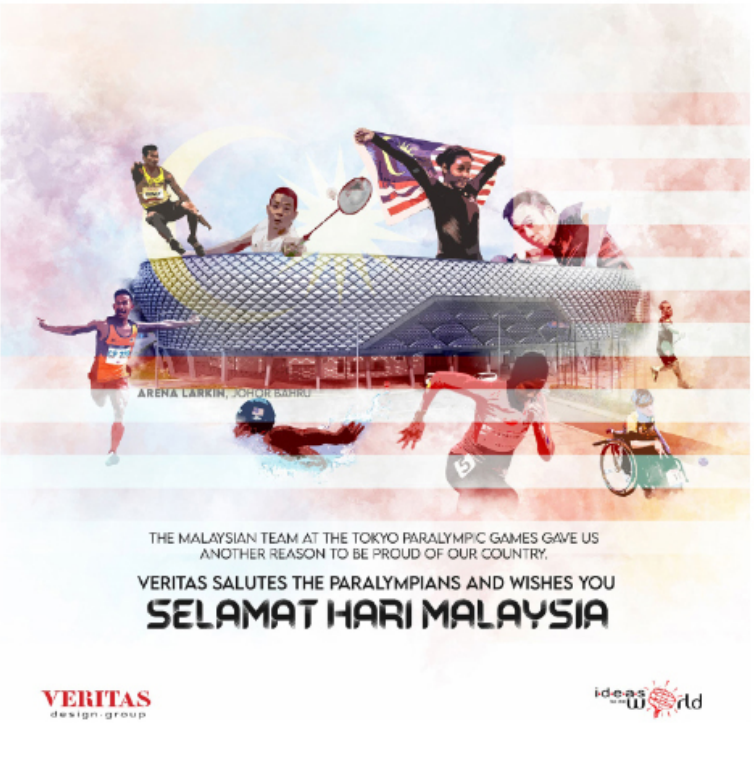
Our ability to operate effectively and seamlessly in both countries is a great asset. Our combined expertise will directly benefit any Malaysian developer interested in the Australian market as our combined network extends beyond Melbourne and Victoria.

What other benefits do you see in the collaboration?
AA: Despite globalization in design and development sectors, local connections, expertise and cultural understanding are more relevant than ever. VERITAS has a number of Melbourne graduates in our KL office who are keen to maintain their connection to Australia and who will contribute to this process.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT VERITAS

VERITAS' Malaysia Day E-Card Competition

VERITAS organized an in-house Malaysia Day E-card design competition among VERITASians. We received 10 entries and the decision was certainly difficult! Congratulations to VERITAS Johor IT Executive Suhaimi Saat for the amazing graphical e-card.

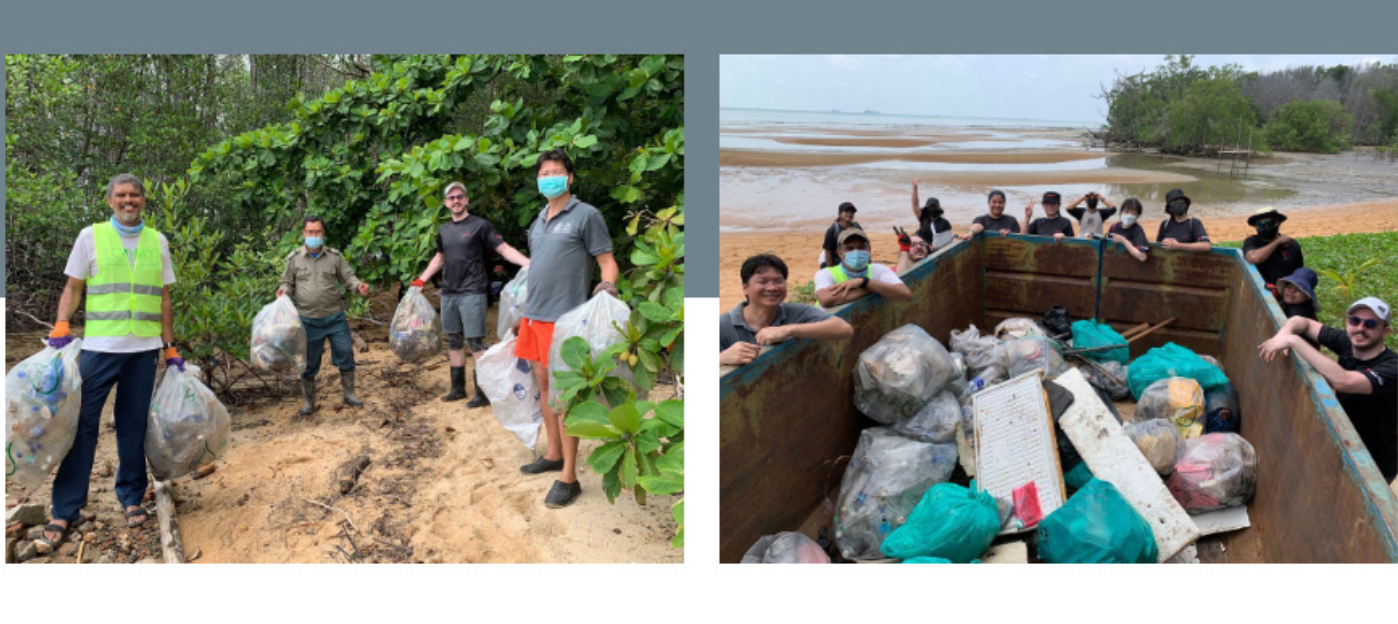

ARENA LEBIH
THE MALAYSIAN TEAM AT THE TOKYO PARALYMPIC GAMES GAVE US ANOTHER REASON TO BE PROUD OF OUR COUNTRY
VERITAS SALUTES THE PARALYMPIANS AND WISHES YOU
SELAMAT HARI MALAYSIA
VERITAS
ideas for the world

This competition was created with the aim of encouraging staff to appreciation the culture, tradition of our multicultural country and to express our utmost felicitations to Malaysian Paralympians at the recent Tokyo Paralympic Games 2020.

The VERITAS Fund for Excellence (VFE) was founded in 2004 to further our core values.

VERITAS FUND for EXCELLENCE (VFE) Beach Cleanup

On 19th September 2021, a group of VERITASians visited the beach of Pantai Cermin in Port Dickson for a beach cleaning activity and mangrove sapling collection. We were assisted by Andrew Sebastian from NGO EcoMY. We started with the beach cleanup at 10:30 am and within an hour, 1.5 km of beach was scoured and 16 large bags were filled with beach debris. Fine weather made the activity fun for everyone, to add a challenge to the event individuals competed with each other for how much rubbish was collected!



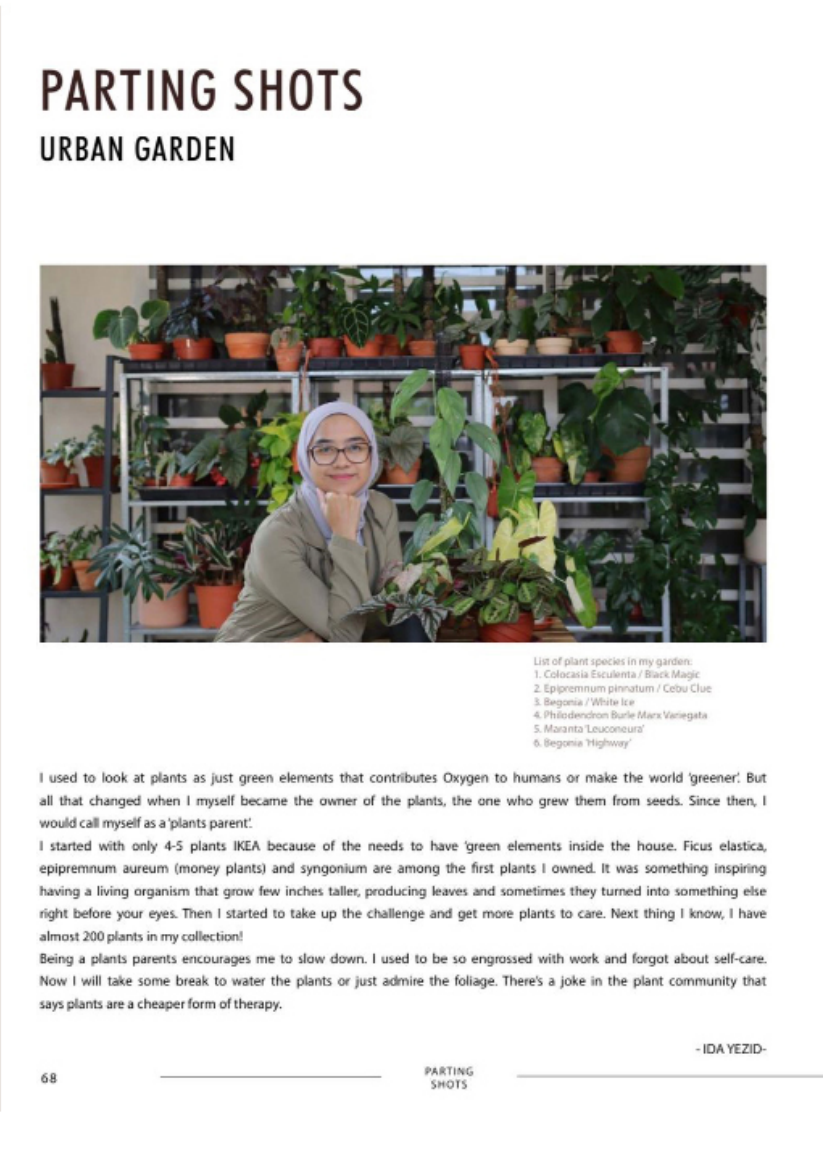
Info!!

In Malaysia, over 50 per cent of total beach debris comes from recreational activities like picnics, festivals, sporting events and beach outings. Litter washed from streets, parking lots and storm drains also contribute to this category. Smoking-related activity also adds heavily to the rubbish found on the beach. We should all be more conscious of ourselves the next time we visit the beach!

WHERE ARE WE FEATURED

PARTING SHOTS Urban Garden

VERITAS Penang Associate Nurhidayah Yezid was featured in the PAM Northern Chapter publication. The article shared her passion for implementing environmental consciousness to create aesthetic green spaces within her home. She started nursing 4-5 plants and now she has a collection of 200 over plants.



PARTING SHOTS
URBAN GARDEN

List of plant species in my garden:
1. Colocasia Esculenta / Black Magic
2. Epipremnum pinnatum / Cebu Blue
3. Begonia / White Ice
4. Philodendron Burle Marx Variegata
5. Maranta 'Leuconeura'
6. Begonia 'Highway'

I used to look at plants as just green elements that contributes Oxygen to humans or make the world 'greener'. But all that changed when I myself became the owner of the plants, the one who grew them from seeds. Since then, I would call myself as a 'plants parent'.
I started with only 4-5 plants IKEA because of the needs to have 'green elements inside the house. Ficus elastica, epipremnum aureum (money plants) and syngonium are among the first plants I owned. It was something inspiring having a living organism that grow few inches taller, producing leaves and sometimes they turned into something else right before your eyes. Then I started to take up the challenge and get more plants to care. Next thing I know, I have almost 200 plants in my collection!
Being a plants parents encourages me to slow down. I used to be so engrossed with work and forgot about self-care. Now I will take some break to water the plants or just admire the foliage. There's a joke in the plant community that says plants are a cheaper form of therapy.

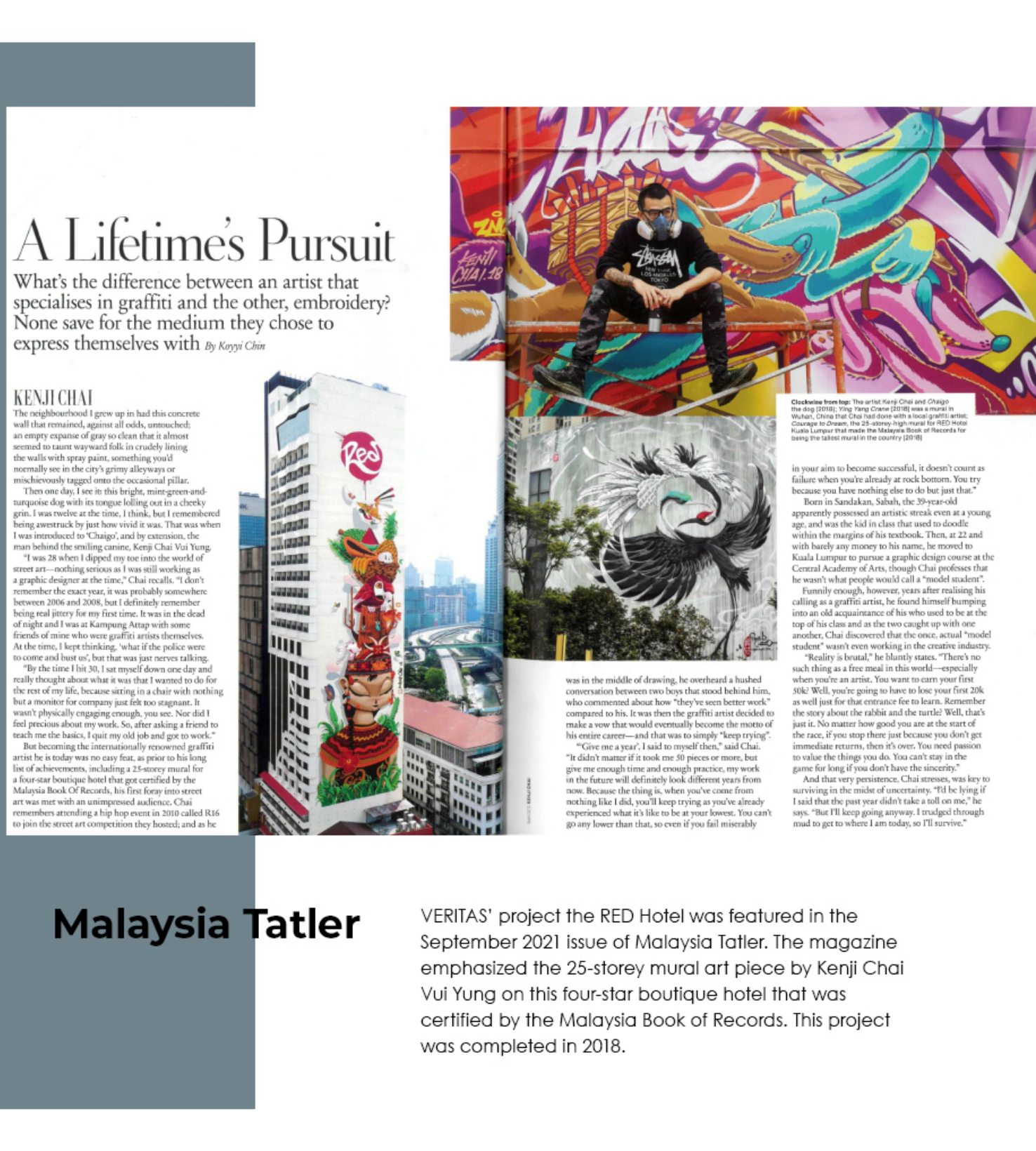
-IDA YEZID-

68 PARTING SHOTS

ASTRO AWANI How Covid will change the design of buildings in the future?

consider this.

On 20th September, VERITAS Vice President Lillian Tay, spoke intensely on improving ventilation and indoor air quality in non-residential buildings for "*Consider This*" program by Astro Awani, hosted by Melisa Idris and Sharaad Kuttan.



A Lifetime's Pursuit

What's the difference between an artist that specialises in graffiti and the other, embroidery? None save for the medium they chose to express themselves with *By Koyyi Chin*

KENJI CHAI

The neighbourhood I grew up in had this concrete wall that remained, against all odds, untouched; an empty expanse of gray so clean that it almost seemed to taunt wayward folk in crudely lining the walls with spray paint, something you'd normally see in the city's grimy alleyways or mischievously tagged onto the occasional pillar.

Then one day, I see it: this bright, mint-green-and-turquoise dog with its tongue lolling out in a cheeky grin. I was twelve at the time, I think, but I remembered being awestruck by just how vivid it was. That was when I was introduced to 'Chaigo', and by extension, the man behind the smiling canine, Kenji Chai Vui Yung.

"I was 28 when I dipped my toe into the world of street art—nothing serious as I was still working as a graphic designer at the time," Chai recalls. "I don't remember the exact year, it was probably somewhere between 2006 and 2008, but I definitely remember being real jittery for my first time. It was in the dead of night and I was at Kampung Attap with some friends of mine who were graffiti artists themselves. At the time, I kept thinking, 'what if the police were to come and bust us', but that was just nerves talking.

"By the time I hit 30, I sat myself down one day and really thought about what it was that I wanted to do for the rest of my life, because sitting in a chair with nothing but a monitor for company just felt too stagnant. It wasn't physically engaging enough, you see. Nor did I feel precious about my work. So, after asking a friend to teach me the basics, I quit my old job and got to work."

But becoming the internationally renowned graffiti artist he is today was no easy feat, as prior to his long list of achievements, including a 25-storey mural for a four-star boutique hotel that got certified by the Malaysia Book Of Records, his first foray into street art was met with an unimpressed audience. Chai remembers attending a hip hop event in 2010 called R16 to join the street art competition they hosted; and as he was in the middle of drawing, he overheard a hushed conversation between two boys that stood behind him, who commented about how "they've seen better work" compared to his. It was then the graffiti artist decided to make a vow that would eventually become the motto of his entire career—and that was to simply "keep trying".

"Give me a year', I said to myself then," said Chai. "It didn't matter if it took me 50 pieces or more, but give me enough time and enough practice, my work in the future will definitely look different years from now. Because the thing is, when you've come from nothing like I did, you'll keep trying as you've already experienced what it's like to be at your lowest. You can't go any lower than that, so even if you fail miserably in your aim to become successful, it doesn't count as failure when you're already at rock bottom. You try because you have nothing else to do but just that."

Born in Sandakan, Sabah, the 39-year-old apparently possessed an artistic streak even at a young age, and was the kid in class that used to doodle within the margins of his textbook. Then, at 22 and with barely any money to his name, he moved to Kuala Lumpur to pursue a graphic design course at the Central Academy of Arts, though Chai professes that he wasn't what people would call a "model student".

Funnily enough, however, years after realising his calling as a graffiti artist, he found himself bumping into an old acquaintance of his who used to be at the top of his class and as the two caught up with one another, Chai discovered that the once, actual "model student" wasn't even working in the creative industry.

"Reality is brutal," he bluntly states. "There's no such thing as a free meal in this world—especially when you're an artist. You want to earn your first 50k? Well, you're going to have to lose your first 20k as well just for that entrance fee to learn. Remember the story about the rabbit and the turtle? Well, that's just it. No matter how good you are at the start of the race, if you stop there just because you don't get immediate returns, then it's over. You need passion to value the things you do. You can't stay in the game for long if you don't have the sincerity."

And that very persistence, Chai stresses, was key to surviving in the midst of uncertainty. "I'd be lying if I said that the past year didn't take a toll on me," he says. "But I'll keep going anyway. I trudged through mud to get to where I am today, so I'll survive."

Clockwise from top: The artist Kenji Chai and Chaigo the dog (2018); Ying Yang Crane (2018) was a mural in Wuhan, China that Chai had done with a local graffiti artist; Courage to Dream, the 25-storey-high mural for RED Hotel Kuala Lumpur that made the Malaysia Book of Records for being the tallest mural in the country (2018)

Malaysia Tatler

VERITAS' project the RED Hotel was featured in the September 2021 issue of Malaysia Tatler. The magazine emphasized the 25-storey mural art piece by Kenji Chai Vui Yung on this four-star boutique hotel that was certified by the Malaysia Book of Records. This project was completed in 2018.

Who's Celebrating Their Birthday - September

VERITAS ARCHITECTS SDN. BHD. (KUALA LUMPUR)
Meor Herme Mansor 1st
Mohd Azmin Ibrahim 6th
Wan Mohd Nizam Wan Abdul Wahab 12th
Mohd Azrul Adnan 18th
Abu Hazreiq Abu Hassan 19th
Tan Yee Lyn 20th
Alif Arif Iskandar Abd Wahab 21st
Komathi Ramakrishna 22nd
Wong Ka Yee 26th
Saza Nurlyana Sabarudin 29th
Faizol Izan Morat 30th

VERITAS LANDSCAPE
Noryanti Jamal 2nd
Azizul Maddalis 13th

VERITAS CONTRACTS SDN. BHD.
Richard Brian Raymond 7th

VERITAS ARCHITECTS SDN. BHD. (PENANG)
Mohd Zamri Abd. Lateh 2nd
Mohd Zulhelmie Zakaria 14th

VERITAS ARCHITECTS SDN. BHD. (JOHOR BAHRU)
Mohamed Nadzeem Abdullah 1st
Mohd Fadzil Mohamad Yunos 6th
Y Vijaya Kumar Yoganathan 14th

VERITAS INTERIORS SDN. BHD.
Hendry Rajkumar 9th

VERITAS PLANNING SDN. BHD.
Fazelyna Abdul Rashid 25th
Adeeb Idraki 30th

ideas for the world

Newcomers

Khairul Anuar Hj. Othman
General Manager
VAKL

Wilson Yong
Architect
VAKL

Ashwin Mohan
Intern
VISB

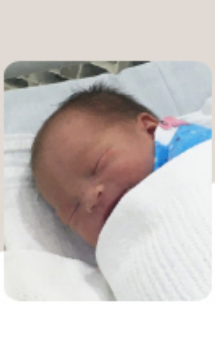
Muhammad Izhar Lutfi Amran
Resident Landscape Architect
VLSB

Cynthia Foo
Intern
VISB

Bundle Of Joy

1st Twin
Ali Nael
2nd Twin
Fatema Naela

Congratulations to VERITASian Nur Amalina Ahmad Taufik and her spouse Mohammad Razali on the arrival of their twins Ali Nael and Fatema Naela on the 20th August 2021. Amalina will certainly have her hands full.



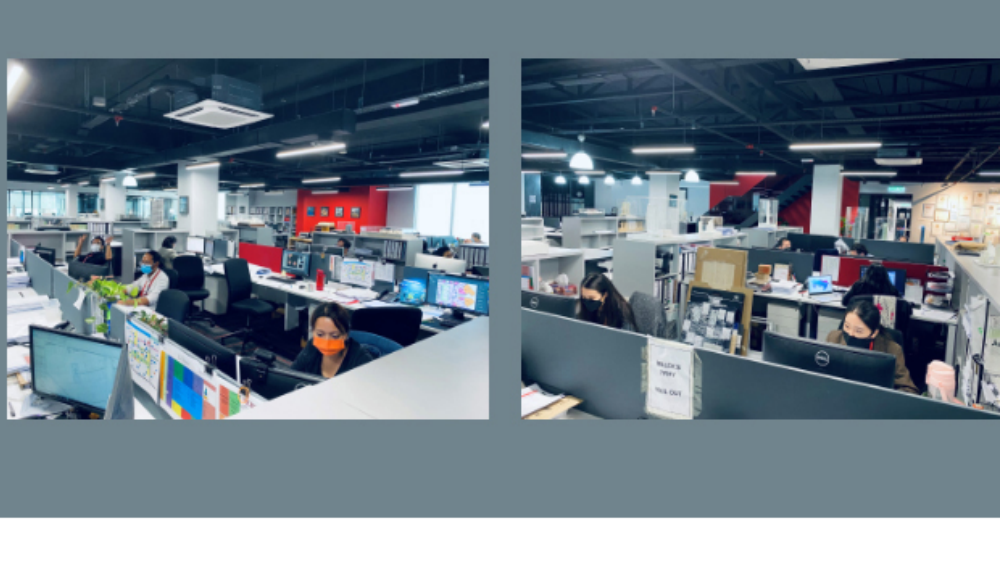
Congratulations to VERITAS Architects Penang Associate, Daniel Chong Voon Chuen and his spouse Ch'ng Ping Ping on the arrival of their baby boy Ethan Chong Ern Yang on 11th September 2021!

And finally, congratulations to VERITASian Mohd Irwan Shah Mohd Hashim and his spouse Najihah Abd. Razak the arrival of their baby girl Alya Maisarah Mohd Irwan Shah on 6th September 2021!

> "THE MOTHER ART IS ARCHITECTURE. WITHOUT AN ARCHITECTURE OF OUR OWN WE HAVE NO SOUL OF OUR OWN CIVILIZATION."
>
> *Frank Lloyd Wright*

ANNOUNCEMENT

VERITAS is back in FULL CAPACITY from 27th September 2021



We are pleased to announce that as of 27th September 2021, the entire workforce of VERITAS is back in the office! In full compliance with the guidelines set by MITI and KKM, the VERITAS Covid-19 SOP Task Force has reconfirmed that more than 80% of VERITAS' 300 staff have met the criteria for full vaccination (+14 days), thereby triggering the 100% WFO rule. The Task Force has also established more stringent internal SOPs to ensure that the workplace remains safe and conducive to our productive operations. VERITAS is proud to have always been at the cutting edge of pandemic response protocols and commits to providing continued leadership by example in that respect.