



## WESTERN INFLUENCES IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN PAINTINGS: A COMPARISON OF A BALINESE INK PAINTING AND TWO MALAYSIAN GRAFFITI ARTWORKS

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**ABSTRACT:** Balinese ink paintings started to be created in the 1930s only after Western influences created suitable conditions in Bali. Of major importance were the European painters Walter Spies and Rudolf Bonnet, who decided to live long term in Bali. The artwork discussed in this article is a Balinese ink painting collected by the Czech painter and collector Rosita Charlotta Urbanová and the other artworks are two graffiti paintings by the Malaysian graffiti artist Hafiz Ab Rahman aka KATUN.<sup>2</sup>

The dissemination of graffiti art into Malaysia was inspired and influenced by hip-hop culture, skateboarding and also through visits of Malaysians to Western countries. The latest trends in Malaysian graffiti art have shown artists trying to nationalize, localize and anchor graffiti art in Malaysian culture.

A comparison of the Balinese ink painting and the two Malaysian graffiti artworks highlights interesting parallels, especially the resemblance of the human profile faces in the selected artworks.

**KEY WORDS:** Bali – Kuala Lumpur – Ink Painting – Rosita Charlotta Urbanová (1888–1978) – Graffiti Art – Hafiz Ab Rahman aka KATUN (1986) – Indonesia – Malaysia – Western Influences.

At the center of this paper are Western influences and inspirations as they affected paintings in Southeast Asia, principally in Bali and in Kuala Lumpur. Taking Balinese ink paintings and Malaysian graffiti art as examples, it demonstrates how Western

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<sup>2</sup> The graffiti artists' anonymous names (tag names) are written in CAPITAL letters as is common practice in the graffiti art community and as already used by graffiti researchers: AUSTIN. *Taking The Train: How Graffiti Art Became an Urban Crisis in New York City*. 2001. SNYDER. *Graffiti Lives: Beyond the Tag in New York's Urban Underground*. 2009. The graffiti artists' citizen names are added, if known from various Malaysian newspaper articles. In Malaysia many of the graffiti artists are publicly known and not really anonymous.