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This month culture360.org unveils a new series of articles and interviews entitled By people / In cities. The second Kuala Lumpur-based interview introduces Vishal J. Singh, a design consultant and keen explorer of the world's many cultures.

Q: If you had to pick a word that captures KL, what would it be?

Just one word? Well, that word would be "diverse" in every sense of the

word. Diverse!

Q: How would you describe KL's creative community?

A community that's standing on the "edge" of making things happen and preparing ourselves to soar and compete with the rest of the international creative community that's already taken that step. Its a community that realizes its moment has finally come to create a significant positive impact in our society and our nation in general, and can no longer sit idly waiting for other people in society to implement that change for the better. It's an exciting, transformative one for us in this society, because, never has there been a time where so much is possible through the means provided by technology and the media to strongly galvanize our efforts in making things happen.

Q: Who are the latest movers and shakers?

The grassroots people. There is not one person making the change (although there might be some prominent individual here and there helping to lead and guide the pack, such as Marina Mahathir, a prominent local women rights activist) but it is more of a collection of individual clusters of people dedicated to specific causes that they feel strongly about that are moving and shaking the industry at its roots. Exciting changes are happening in the local music scene, in the local design and architecture industries, in the propagation of social media, in political circles which are more open and less restrictive then before, in charitable and humanitarian initiatives, including environmental affairs, and so forth. These people are no longer interested in waiting for change to happen, they are spearheading those changes themselves and they are the latest movers and shakers.

Q: What are the biggest challenges for culture and creativity in KL?

Probably the biggest challenge we face right now is to implore certain government quarters to be less restrictive and inhibitive on creative and artistic expressions among the youth who clearly have this interest and passion, whether its art, dance, theatre or whatever other form of individual or public displays of creativity. A need also exists to create an atmosphere of understanding between these two parties, (the one propagating the creative spirit and the members in power) should be

encouraged through upholding the notion of the freedom to share and to disseminate information as seen relevant to the cause at hand.

Furthermore, the old paradigm of education, where students are simply expected to memorize and regurgitate facts and figures to pass their exams as and when it is needed, urgently needs to be replaced with a more dynamic and vibrant, thought provoking form of education, which consistently encourages the development of innovative problem solving and creative thinking skills.

Q: Is the future bright for KL?

Undoubtedly, a big, fat resounding yes. The future is bright. Undeniably, there will be challenges obstructing our path in creating a better future the way we imagine it to be for everyone, but like all great truths, that must go through three steps of resistance before that truth can be accepted by everyone, that future is nonetheless bold and bright.

Our ideas for a better KL will first be ridiculed, which is step number one, that can already be seen by various layers in society, especially those calling out for more creative freedom through the media. Some of our more “provocative” ideas and efforts will be violently opposed, which is step number two, especially in the political and societal arenas among the youth in the country, as we have seen happened here right now on the streets and the universities of the country, but eventually it will be accepted as self – evident and vindicated, which is the final step in the process. We’re on our way, and nothing will stop us from getting there. Yes, the future is bright!

Vishal J.Singh is a design consultant, presently running his own architectural and interior practice, Solar Design Services, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He's designed and supervised an impressive variety of residential and commercial projects in Kuala Lumpur for a host of clients ranging from private property owners to corporate business executives.

He also enjoys traveling, to explore the finer things in life, which includes meeting new people and experiencing new cultures, while making the effort to visit iconic buildings to appreciate their design principles and aesthetics. For a view of this journeys, please visit:

www.architectonist.blogspot.com

He also currently dabbles in his own unique brand of artworks. which can be viewed at www.sanubari-artworks-vjs.blogspot.com.

More:

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[Interview with Grey Yeoh, designer and arts manager at the British Council Malaysia](#)

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By people / In cities is a series of articles and interviews that aims to enhance the understanding of art and culture in Southeast and East Asia through individual stories and perspectives including artists, cultural practitioners, and policy makers from the following 6 cities: Bangkok, Jogjakarta, [Kuala Lumpur](#), [Phnom Penh](#), [Hong Kong](#) and Singapore.

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