

**SEE ALEX FACE'S ICONIC THREE-EYED BABY
BUNNY COME 'ALIVE'**

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On Sunday afternoon at Bangkok CityCity gallery, a six-wheeler slowly turned into the parking lot. Sprawled on top, a massive humanoid baby with three eyes and bunny ears. "That thing looks crazy," someone said.

That thing is Mardi, the trademark character of Bangkok graffiti icon Alex Face. With smiling gallery staff looking on, Alex and his team proceeded to unload and assemble the fiberglass sculpture for its debut Wednesday as the centerpiece of "Alive," a large exhibition of his work.

Alex has risen to fame since his 2002 debut. Like a lot of ne'er-do-wells, skateboard culture was his gateway to graffiti. At first he would tag walls with his name and face for fun. People took notice and he landed a few small painting jobs. It was 2009 when his daughter came into the world that he gave birth to Mardi, the three-eyed character in the bunny suit.

"Alive" will be his sixth such show, but this time Mardi will be immersed in a more natural setting.

"This exhibition is different because of the impressionist element in my new work. When I was growing up, I was always close to nature," he said. "I lived next to rice paddies and lily ponds, and I wanted to use that theme."

I asked him why he chose the name Mardi. Alex stopped me and said that he regrets giving it a name.

"I never intended it to have a name, but people started asking me about the character, so I told them it was named after my daughter Mardi," he said. "But I prefer that it doesn't have a name because sometimes the character tells other people's stories and topics."

In April the character landed Alex in some hot water when some complained a mural on a historic building painted as part of a city art project was too modern. He took it in stride when he was told to take it down.

Dealing with haters is part of any job, but it's hard to be creative when you're stressed out. In Alex's case he started preparing in August for "Alive," where 30 of his new works will show.

“I never really worry too much about it, I just really enjoy making art. It really makes me happy and it’s a kind of therapy for me. Art is something that I loved since I was kid, I never stopped doing it, and I didn’t expect anything from it,” Alex said.

What he didn’t know, he said, was whether he could survive off it.

“A young artist once said to me, ‘If I don’t make it in two years as an, artist I’m gonna look for another job,’” he said. “I said to him that two years is not enough. I’ve been doing this for over 20 years, and even when other people made fun of me and criticized me, I was always happy to keep on doing my art.”

“Alive” runs Dec. 21 to Feb. 19 at Bangkok CityCity Gallery. The year-old venue is owned and operated by filmmaker Akapol “Op” Sudasna and former Channel [V] VJ Supamas “Louktan” Phahulo.