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LOCAL ICONS

A skateboarder, a rapper, a shoemaker to Kobe Bryant... Singaporeans may be few in number, but they pack a surprising punch. Here are a few making names for themselves globally.

Photographs by **Jasper James**

THE SKATEBOARDING SUPERSTAR

Farris Rahman

Singapore's top skateboarder, Rahman is probably more comfortable on wheels than he is on solid ground—he's been competing since he was six years old! Rahman is only the second Singaporean to be signed on as a Red Bull Athlete, joining the likes of racer Sebastian Vettel and skydiver/BASE jumper Felix Baumgartner.

Where to spot him: Check www.redbull.com for Rahman's schedule.



WORD OF MOUTH

'My Singapore secret?
The outdoor bar of White
Rabbit, a restaurant in a
restored church, where I
got married this year!'

THE POP-UP ARTIST

Dawn Ng

One of Singapore's most famous artists, Dawn is known for her larger-than-life installations like *WALTER*, an enormous white rabbit who pops up at random locations all over Singapore, catching the fancy of locals and visitors alike. Her latest show, *A Thing of Beauty*, is a series of photographed installations of small, locally sourced objects—all picked from 138 mom-and-pop shops, bakeries and convenience stores across Singapore. "It's a bold celebration of the everyday and ordinary." Dawn is a multidimensional artist who works across collage, photography, illustration and installations. Dawn's recommendations for a night out in her city? "The outdoor bar of the White Rabbit, a European restaurant tucked away in a beautifully restored old church, where I got married this year!"

Where to spot her: Chan Hampe Galleries (www.chanhampegalleries.com).



SHOEMAKERS TO THE STARS

Sue Anne Lim & Mark Ong

If you thought Singapore lacked edge, meet the husband-and-wife duo that are the founders of Sabotage (SBTG), which designs customised sneakers. Big hits have included Black Mamba custom Nikes for basketball star Kobe Bryant, and a pair for Linkin Park's Mike Shinoda. Their influences are punk music, horror films and the military—the latter owing to the time Mark served in the Singapore Armed Forces. Mr and Mrs SBTG (as they're called) have also forayed into contemporary art. "Our style has evolved from sneakers and apparel to sign painting and murals," says Sue Anne. "We've broadened our focus from products to the entire environment and experience."

Where to spot them: Check their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Royalefam) for new designs. Or look for them at their favourite hawker, Chin Chin Hainanese chicken-rice at Purvis Street.

'We're inspired by punk and rebel culture and philosophies. We try not to depend on the 'climate' and focus on staying independent.'

SIR RAPS-A-LOT
Shigga Shay

A rapper who wouldn't give up, Shigga Shay is Pek Jin Shen's stage name. He began rapping at the age of nine, and got "serious" at 14. "I knew this was going to be something I would do for the rest of my life, because it truly makes me happy," he says. "It was hard at the beginning, because hip-hop culture in Singapore is still not widely accepted." His latest single, "Lion City Kia" ('kia' is Hokkien for 'kid'), an English track about growing up in Singapore, has Hokkien and Singlish lyrics as well as verses in Malay and Tamil, and topped local iTunes charts. This year, he's working on his first full-length album in Los Angeles. He's come a long way from *ShiGGa Shay's in the Building!* which he made in his bedroom, in 2010.

Where to find him: Buy and listen to his music on www.shiggashay.com.

'It was hard at the beginning because hip hop culture is still not very widely accepted in Singapore'



THE MUSIC COLLECTIVE **Funk Bast*rd & Kaye**

An independent record label, Darker Than Wax (DTW) prides itself on bringing out music in its raw form. Founders Funk Bast*rd and Kaye want to build a cohesive collective of artists whose sounds range from electronic, jazz and reggae to instrumental hip hop. "What catches our attention is when the music grabs us in a visceral way, rather than an intellectual way, the soul of the music, if you will," explains Kaye. "We're not interested in popularity and trends, because that fades with time." DTW now has over 30 musicians as part of their roster. Kaye's tip to visitors: go off the beaten track to find the true, authentic side of Singapore. "Try Golden Mile Tower for Thai food, or the old coffeeshops in Little India," he says. "Singapore is rapidly changing, so visit places with old-school charm before they die. Marina Bay is always going to be there; it can wait."

Where to find them: Get to know more on www.darkerthanwax.com.

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