poster

by Aristarchus Pk

Concept image for Subo Pomelo Steel Sculpture. Suramadu Bridge photo by Sakurai Midori (Wikipedia.org)

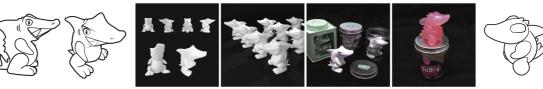Surabaya city emblem from oldest to present (Widodo, 2008)

The iconic Suro and Boyo sculpture

DESIGN CONCEPT

Subo is a character and an art toy design based on the city emblem of Surabaya, East Java, the second largest city in Indonesia. The city's name consists of two entities of Sura and Baya, which in linguistic terms, sura or suro in Javanese language can mean "brave" and can also refer to a mythical shark-like fish, and baya or boyo means "crocodile", while the similar-sounding Indonesian word "bahaya" means "danger". With these meanings, "Surabaya" can mean "brave in the face of danger" (Peters, 2013). Thus also the two creatures of shark and crocodile are always symbolically shown to represent the city. As also told in the city's legend, that the two creatures are in never ending fights in between both of their territories, between the land, rivers, and the sea, in pursuit of preys.

Subo reinterprets Suro & Boyo and combines them into one character, as a "sharkodile" art toy, hence the name Su-Bo. It tries to play into the creative activity of mixing and convergence to create new ideas and offer new concepts, where Suro and Boyo is almost always portrayed as two entities. As a new concept, Subo offers a more contemporary engagement towards the city. As an art toy or a designer toy, Subo finds a niche segment where such a hybrid character can be accepted and reach a wider audience outside Surabaya and even abroad. This in a way helps to introduce Surabaya to the world (see Subo's Instagram @subosuroboyo).

Subo was designed in May 2017 for an exhibition celebrating the 724th anniversary of Surabaya. It has gone into several limited productions, mostly as blanks or platform art toys. By being a platform toy, Subo asks the buyer to participate in expressing him/herself onto the toy by painting or modifying it. It becomes an interactive and engaging medium. Subo is given a logo design and has several form redesigns or versions with the same concept. This character design, as an intellectual property, has prospects of further development into merchandizing, story-telling, animation, games, public attractions, and so on. This project becomes an example of local character design that can offer a new way of rejuvenation or expansion to a city's brand and has the potential to be aligned with its marketing and tourism globally.

Character design of Subo

Subo in digital sculpture, production, packaging, logo, and one of the variations, the "Pomelo" version

AUTHOR / DESIGNER PROFILE

Aristarchus Pranayama Kuntjara is an artist and lecturer at Visual Communication Design and International Program in Digital Media of Petra Christian University Surabaya, Indonesia.
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Peters, R. (2013). Surabaya, 1945-2010: Neighborhood, state and economy in the Indonesia's city of struggle. Singapore: NUS Press.
Widodo, D.I. (2008). Hikajat Soerabaia tempo doeloe. Surabaya: Dukut Publishing.

ASLI SUROBOYO

subosuroboyo

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konsep

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