

## **THE KRISHEN JIT FUND**

### **Supported by ASTRO and Creador Foundation**

The **Krishen Jit ASTRO Fund** was introduced by ASTRO, together with Five Arts Centre, in 2006, in commemoration of the late Dato' Krishen Jit, and is aimed to provide deserving arts practitioners with monetary aid to pursue projects in the Arts.

In 2019, we gained a new supporter for the Fund, SK Chambers. The Fund changed its name to the **Krishen Jit Fund, supported by ASTRO and SK Chambers**. In 2020, Creador Foundation replaced SK Chambers as a supporter. The Fund is now the **Krishen Jit Fund supported by ASTRO and Creador Foundation**.

One of the main objectives of Krishen's pioneering work was celebrating original Malaysian creativity in as varied and alternative ways as possible, in all the areas of the arts.

His ground-breaking theatre practice straddled and brought together a wide range of contrasting spheres, producing projects that were inter-disciplinary, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and experimental. Negotiating between academia and practice, tradition and contemporary pop culture, Hollywood and Bollywood, the mainstream and the marginalized, Krishen's work articulated a Malaysian identity that was ever evolving, and encouraged practitioners and audiences to reflect on their lives and societies.

This is the spirit of the **Krishen Jit Fund**. The **Krishen Jit Fund** works as an extension of this spirit, to encourage and support creative work in Malaysia.

The announcement of the Fund took place on 28 April 2006, at *Utih...Celebrating Krishen*. This was a commemorative event on the first anniversary of his death. The Fund was launched by Astro at this event.

Selection Panel for 2024 was:

- **Tuan Haji Saifulkhairi bin Ahmad** – Director, Arts and Culture Enhancement Division, National Department for Culture and Arts, Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture, Malaysia.
- **Jolyn Gasper** – Senior AVP, ESG, Astro.
- **Maha Subramaniam** – Vice President, Creador Foundation.
- **Leow Puay Tin** – Associate Professor, School of Arts, Sunway University.
- **Ravi Navaratnam** – Vice President Strategy Minconsult Sdn Bhd / Member, Five Arts Centre.
- **Lim Ying Xian** – Senior Manager, Programmes & Partnerships, GMBB

The Fund is administrated and managed by Five Arts Centre. Grants are given for training, workshops, attachments or residencies, experimental productions, writing, or creating new work in music, dance, theatre, film, visual or performance art.

From 2006 to 2023, the Krishen Jit Fund has given out a total of **89 grants** amounting to **RM672,000**

## **KRISHEN JIT FUND 2024 RECIPIENTS**

**In 2024, we received 72 applications.**

**The 6 recipients are:**

### **SYARIFAH NADHIRAH BINTI HAJI SYED ABDUL RAHMAN**



**The Grant: RM12,000**

**The Project:** **Roots and Ruins** investigates the plight of trees in Klang Valley, uprooted by harsh weather and human activities. Through an artistic inquiry and archival documentation, the project chronicles the architecture of roadside trees and traces the historical greening of Kuala Lumpur pre and post-independence. This multifaceted research will map socio-ecological aspects of significant historic trees that defied the test of time, trees violently uprooted for concrete jungles, and trees exhibiting a sense of place. By reflecting on popular landscape trends and Kuala Lumpur's chaotic urbanization, **Roots and Ruins** aims to foster a deeper appreciation of native trees in urban landscapes. The project will culminate in an Immersive Arts Exhibition and Walking Tour on mapping iconic dead trees.

**Syarifah Nadhirah Binti Haji Syed Abdul Rahman** (b.1993), an architect and visual artist, is the Creative Director at Forest House, overseeing the Forest Learning Centre at KL's Perdana Botanical Gardens. This community space invites the public to engage with Malaysia's ecological heritage and conservation efforts across forest, marine, and wildlife sectors. She self-published a book, *Recalling Forgotten Tastes*, which documents edible and non-edible plants through the perspectives of the members of the Semai and Temuan Orang Asli communities in Peninsular Malaysia. Her solo exhibition, *Measure of Seeds*, examines movement of species in colonial plantations. Through printmaking and archival art, Syarifah explores the relationships between botanical landscapes, seed guardianship, and food security. She has attended notable residencies, including Rimbun Dahan Southeast Asian Arts Residency and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's Plants on Paper Residency. She has also been invited to speak at international panels, including the National University of Singapore and Bangkok Literature Festival.

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## HAZIQAHA BINTI AZEMI



**The Grant:** RM11,000

**The Project:** This proposal is to produce a **Proof of Concept** (POC) package for a feature film in-development titled *Garek*. The production will take place entirely in Tumpat, Kelantan, and feature a perspective on Muslim women who are jailed for being pregnant out-of-wedlock. The feature film project has been picked up by an A-List worldwide collaborator for co-production.

**Haziqah Binti Azemi** is an emerging film producer from Kelantan, Malaysia. She brings her 7 years of advertising strategy expertise at the local's DDB and Ogilvy & Mather to launch her debut feature film, GAREK. Under her leadership, GAREK has won Best Project Presentation at the Malaysian International Film Festival (MIFFEST) Project Market 2022 and participated at international labs including Bangkok Asian Film Festival (BAFF), Southeast Asian Pitch (SEAPITCH) 2022, Busan Asian Film School (AFiS), International Film Business Academy Fellowship 2023, and EAVE Ties That Bind 2023/2024. She is scheduled to develop the project further at the Singapore International Film Festival Asian Producers Network 2024, and Asia Pacific Screen Lab 2024.

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## SHARIFAH ALEYSHA BINTI SYED ZAINAL RASHID



**The Grant: RM10,000**

**The Project:** **TRACE/US** is a video essay project that hopes to document the journey of two artists, as they embark on a journey to find avatars of people they have loved and lost. Aleysha searches for the man who would eventually become her grandfather while Theyvapaalan searches for the ghost of her father. Using written and photographic materials from their old lives, the two artists will go searching for a Penang past, the one that existed in the 1950s-1960s and in the 1990s respectively. Through this, the artists hope to weave an alternative story while they explore their own private histories.

**Sharifah Aleysha Binti Syed Zainal Rashid** is an artist, writer, producer, and mother. Having worked in both the film and theatre industry in all capacities, Leysha's work revolves around the personal and private as she seeks to understand the world around her with grief, girlhood and heritage being the key topics of her exploration at this moment. A graduate of the University of South Wales with a Degree in Film, Leysha has written and directed six short films with several of them traveling overseas to international film festivals. Her debut short film, *Diri* (2013), was shortlisted for the BMW Shorties. Along with her own artistic journey, Leysha has been an active player in the local theatre scene as a producer with a key interest in uplifting fellow artists. She is also a member of ReformARTsi, an arts coalition discussing topics affecting local Malaysian artists such as Freedom of Expression, Arts Education and Funding.

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## HASBE ZURAINI BINTI ABU BAKAR



**The Grant: RM8,000**

**The Project: The Sensory Drama School Tour** aims to provide students with disabilities in Kuala Terengganu and Kuala Nerus with the opportunity to experience theatre performances. Due to limited facilities and adaptations, many students have missed out on such experiences. This project integrates sensory elements—touch, lights, sound, and smell—into drama activities to cater to students with sensory integration issues. The chosen districts are particularly suitable due to the high number of PPKI (Program Pendidikan Khas Integrasi) schools, and the presence of Persatuan Autisme Terengganu PAUT in the area.

**Hasbe Zuraini Binti Abu Bakar** is a seasoned educator and consultant with extensive experience in English Language, Literature, and theatre. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and began her career teaching at Sekolah Menengah Kompleks Gong Badak and UniSZA, before working as a Research Assistant at Tarleton State University, Texas. Upon returning to Malaysia, she was driven by her desire to support her autistic son and launched a playgroup in 2006 to teach language and social skills through drama. Hasbe taught English at several colleges before opening her own consultancy under the name Generation-E Consultant. Generation-E Consultant was established to improve the quality of English among students and professionals using humanistic, drama-based methods. As a founding member and Public Relations Officer for Persatuan Autisme Terengganu (PAUT), she advocates for sensory-based learning at the Supportive Reading Lab, and drama workshops tailored to children with autism, ADHD, and GDD. Her community efforts include coaching drama at Sekolah Imtiaz, pioneering the English Theme Park in Terengganu, and promoting multisensory learning and storytelling.

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## JACKY YEAP



**The Grant:** RM6,000

**The Project:** <See See> is an experimental film exploring the concept of viewing the viewer. In this 60-minute video, instead of featuring the events that happen, the camera focuses on the viewer who is watching the events. Through this project, the film intends to concretize the idea of viewing and explore the nature of watching.

**Jacky Yeap** born in 1992, graduated in filmmaking from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. In 2018, he established <WuBen>, a local film magazine documenting the state of Malaysian cinema. In 2020, he completed his first feature film <Sometime, Sometime>. In 2021, he launched <Second Run Cine:ma>, promoting the experience of watching Malaysian films on the big screen. In the same year, his project <Homework> received the CNC Cash Award at the Taipei Golden Horse Project Market. In 2024, he founded the <Raintown Film Festival> in his hometown Taiping, and also started <Black Curtain>, an art platform that collaborates with artists to critique social issues through humour.

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## CHERYL LISA HADDY



**The Grant: RM4,000**

**The Project:** CCTV is a lively, nostalgic, and comedic student short film project which is directly inspired from the director's childhood and personal life. The story focuses on Tabitha, a little girl who wants to remove a hypothetical surveillance camera that was set up by her strict mother to make sure she studies and does her homework. Although her mother merely conjured the CCTV up as a white lie, Tabitha, being a child, takes it seriously and is determined to make it her mission to prove to her mother that she cannot control her. She convinces her studious big brother to join her in a grand adventure to sneak out in the night in search of the CCTV, leading to them finding out just how strong a sibling bond can be. Amidst the childlike innocence and stubborn disobedience, the film captures the unique bond between siblings, and showcases how a mother and daughter, though having opposing views, can still reunite in the end.

**Cheryl Lisa Haddy** is a 22-year-old Sarawakian-born filmmaker, currently in her final year of Bachelor of Cinematic Arts at Multimedia University, Cyberjaya. Born and raised in Kuching, Sarawak, she hopes to tell stories and documentaries of people in Borneo. Majoring in Cinematic Arts at Multimedia University has prepared her firsthand for what it is like to be on an actual set and working in a production crew. She focused primarily on producing, screenwriting, and editing during her film studies. Other than that, she has worked on being assistant director, continuity, and production designer on set. As an aspiring filmmaker, her practice is to make films reflecting on personal stories and the events that happen in her life, or stories from friends and families. She hopes to make films that are relatable to audiences and tell important values of the human condition with a 'coming-of-age' feel.

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## ABOUT ASTRO MALAYSIA HOLDINGS BERHAD

Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad (Astro) is Malaysia's leading content and entertainment company, serving 5.3 million homes or 65% of Malaysian TV households, 8,600 enterprises, 17.1 million weekly listeners across FM radio and online, and 14.2 million visitors to our digital brands every month. We serve Malaysians with 3 distinct services – Astro Pay-TV, NJOI Prepaid and sooka, our own OTT for the millennials; and Astro Fibre, our own broadband service, offers greater value with its content-broadband bundles. More than a million homes are already streaming the best of home entertainment via our Hybrid 4K UHD Ultra Box and HD Ulti Box, which can be self-installed and run on both satellite and broadband.

Astro and its foundation Yayasan Astro Kasih continue to positively impact local communities by designing and implementing long-term sustainable social programmes based on Astro's ESG Pillars namely Responsible Business, Caring for our Environment, Voice for Good, Education for All and Community Development.

## ABOUT CREADOR FOUNDATION

Creador Foundation drives equal opportunities for all in Malaysia and India. Based in Kuala Lumpur, it is a registered foundation funded by Creador, a leading regional private equity firm. Creador Foundation creates and co-creates solutions at the heart of three systemic problem areas: inclusive education, arts and culture, and healthcare for all. These solutions take various forms, ranging from highly scalable digital products to funding infrastructure that fosters impactful change.

**Education:** Creador Foundation initially launched Multiply, a free financial education platform empowering Malaysians to make better financial decisions. Most recently, the foundation launched an MVP version of Schola in August 2024, a free career guidance platform designed to support students in transitioning from school to careers. Schola has garnered over 120,000 users in just three months, underscoring the strong demand for accessible career resources. The foundation is now focused on growing Schola's reach and awareness while enhancing its core features to deepen impact on students' career planning.

**Arts & Culture:** Believing in the importance of art for a well-rounded society, Creador Foundation supports initiatives that foster the Malaysian art community and celebrate Malaysia's rich cultural heritage. The foundation proudly supports the Krishen Jit Fund and the Five Arts Centre.

**Healthcare & Aid:** The foundation is responsive to humanitarian needs, including driving food aid and flood relief efforts in 2020 and 2021. Additionally, the foundation has invested in enhancing hospital infrastructure and facilities, including at UTAR Hospital and Tung Shin Hospital, to improve healthcare quality and accessibility.





## ABOUT FIVE ARTS CENTRE

Five Arts Centre is a dynamic collective of Malaysian artists and producers, dedicated to generating alternative art forms and images in the contemporary arts landscape. It is well known for cutting edge performances in theatre, dance, music, young people's theatre, multidisciplinary performance, and incorporates aspects of the visual and digital arts as well. The collective has performed and presented its work in Southeast Asia, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, India, Egypt, Australia, Canada, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Portugal, Switzerland, Finland, UAE, and the United Kingdom.

Since it was formed in 1984, by theatre directors Chin San Sooi and Krishen Jit, and dancer-choreographer Marion D'Cruz, Five Arts Centre has been committed to articulating the complexity of Malaysian culture and identity through explorations and fusions of local vocabularies, forms, and traditions, in relation to the global, modern, and cross-cultural. As such, it has been instrumental in the growth of a Malaysian identity in the arts, that draws from multiple influences and hybrid histories.

For almost four decades, Five Arts Centre has been at the forefront of creating experimental, interdisciplinary, and intercultural work, providing platforms for the next generation of arts practitioners. Contemporary social, political, and cultural issues impinging on Malaysian life are precipitated by way of performances, exhibitions, creative seminars, and research workshops.

From 2004 to 2006, Five Arts Centre was the manager of Arts Network Asia, a regional organisation supporting arts work in Asia. In 2006, ASTRO and Five Arts Centre launched the Krishen Jit ASTRO Fund to support artistic work by Malaysians and others committed to the development of the arts in Malaysia. In 2019, this fund became the Krishen Jit Fund, supported by ASTRO and SK Chambers. In 2020, the fund became the Krishen Jit Fund, supported by ASTRO and Creador Foundation. At the 12th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards in 2015, Five Arts Centre was awarded the inaugural "Most Inspiring Award". In 2016, Five Arts Centre was awarded the Praemium Imperiale Grant for Young Artists, awarded by the Japan Art Association.

Today, the collective consists of 13 individuals from diverse generations and disciplines. They are Anne James, Fiaqsyazwan Kuhiri, Ivy N. Josiah, Janet Pillai, June Tan, Kubhaer T. Jethwani, Lee Ren Xin, Mac Chan, Marion F. D'Cruz, Mark Teh, Ravi Navaratnam, Suhaila Merican and Syamsul Azhar.

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