

**THE KRISHEN JIT FUND**  
**Supported by ASTRO and Creador Foundation**

**This year the Krishen Jit Fund celebrates 20 years!! A milestone!**

From 2006 to 2024, the Krishen Jit Fund has given out a total of **95 grants** amounting to **RM723,000**.

**This year, 2025, we are delighted to be giving out 7 grants amounting to RM62,000.**

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 2025 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.
- **Sharmilla Ganesan** – Content Lead, Creador Foundation.
- **Leow Puay Tin** – Playwright, performer, arts educator.
- **Ravi Navaratnam** – Senior Advisor Corporate 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.

## **KRISHEN JIT FUND 2025 RECIPIENTS**

**In 2025, we received 78 applications.  
The 7 recipients are:**

### **NADIRA ILANA**



Photo: AI Ibrahim

**The Grant: RM10,000**

**The Project:** *Sumpah Batu Sumpah* (working title) is an experimental video art project by Dusun filmmaker, Nadira Ilana. Oath Stones in North Borneo are ancient, potent instruments of peace-making, sealed through animal sacrifice and rinait – an esoteric incantation and language spoken only by bobolians (shamans). The Keningau Oath Stone is highly charged – in its energy, as an agreement between Sabah’s interior peoples and the Federal Government of Malaysia. This work aims to interpretatively portray the sacred rites binding nationhood, memory and bloodlines. The project is personal; Nadira’s grandfather, Datuk Arif Salleh, was Keningau’s first Member of Parliament, involved in the stone’s inauguration in 1964.

**Nadira Ilana** is an indigenous Dusun filmmaker and film programmer dedicated to reclaiming her Borneo-Malaysian identity through her work. She founded Telan Bulan Films (Swallow the Moon), as a means to proliferate representation in the mass media for indigenous and minoritised voices, ethically. She also curates film screenings through CineBah and serves as a community curator for Cinemata, a platform for social and environmental films. Ilana was recently selected as a Purin Flaherty Fellow at the 70th Flaherty Film Seminar. Her debut feature film, *Ballad of the Half-Boy*, based on an indigenous Sabahan folktale, is scheduled for release in 2025.

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## MOHD NUR FAILLUL BIN ADAM



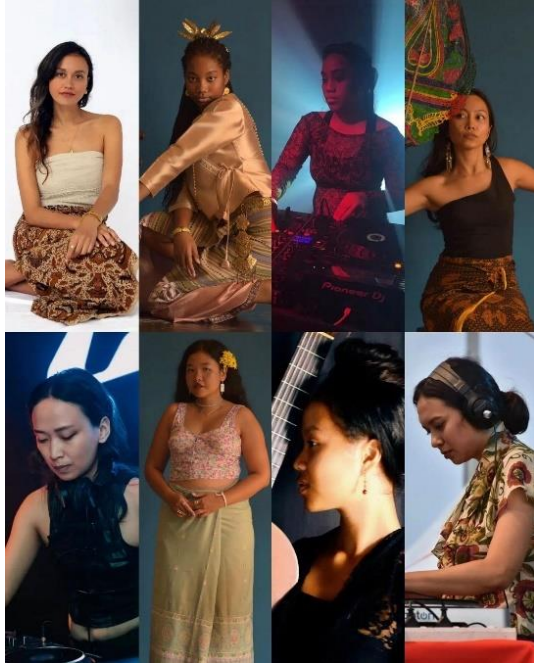
**The Grant:** RM10,000

**The Project:** *Kamilah Penipu - Tapi Kami Tak Menipu* (working title) is a performance of 60 minutes of organized chaos – made of 60 one-minute units – built from the mouths of Malaysians. Two dance artists with a camcorder and some nerve, roam Kuala Lumpur asking unfiltered questions like: “If corruption were an Olympic sport, where would Malaysia rank?” “If the country was a person, what would their therapy session sound like?” With a team of a singer, an actor, musicians, and a multimedia designer, we transform these real voices into movement, sound, and image. The result is a response to the cracks, contradictions, and strange beauty of a nation constantly negotiating with itself – what we call selapis Malaysia. A mirror that’s smudged, cracked, and defiantly alive.

**Mohd Nur Faillul bin Adam** is a full-time lecturer at ASWARA, bridging tradition and contemporary inquiry. He joined an International Cultural Exchange in the United States in 2009. In 2014, he took part in *Step Up* and worked with the renowned Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre in Ireland. In 2015, he won the prestigious BOH Cameronian Arts Award for Best Choreographer in a Mixed Bill and joined the Southeast Asia Choreolab. He directed and choreographed *In Transit: An Evening of Contemporary Dance Performance* (2020). In 2022, with Murni Omar, he researched traditional elements in contemporary choreography, creating *Korpus* – internationally selected for the Singapore International Dance Conference Festival 2024.

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## ILLYA SUMANTO and WAYANG WOMEN



**The Grant:** RM8,000

**The Project:** *Wayang Women* presents a female-centred Wayang Kulit Kelantan with a ghost folklore twist. At its heart is Penanggal, a powerful midwife turned demon who defies borders and journeys across ASEAN, telling stories of womanhood and environmental collapse. Performed by an all-female multinational troupe of 7 main performers, the show fuses traditional Southeast Asian instruments such as celempung, khim, saw u, and suling with live electronic soundscapes by Malaysian DJ Victoria Yam, who weaves in rare traditional Malaysian samples. This bold reimagining honours ancestral forms, while challenging gender norms and spotlighting urgent issues through the haunting shape-shifting figure of Penanggal. The full-length public performance is scheduled on 18 October 2025, at Temu House.

**Wayang Women** is an all-female, multinational Wayang Kulit troupe reimagining Southeast Asia's ancient shadow puppetry. Traditionally centered on patriarchal tales from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, their performances instead highlight stories of female ghosts – powerful, yet overlooked figures in regional folklore. Through these narratives, they explore themes of motherhood, resilience, and the feminine bond with life, death, and renewal. Blending Southeast Asian traditional instruments with contemporary DJ soundscapes, the ensemble creates a vibrant fusion of past and present. By exchanging folksongs, folklore, and women's lived experiences across Southeast Asia, Wayang Women offer a fresh, inclusive, and environmentally conscious revival of a centuries-old art form.

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## ADRIANA NORDIN MANAN



Photo: SueAnne Koh

### **The Grant: RM8,000**

**The Project:** *Kubu Seni* is a story lab and art incubator in Semporna. Centering youth empowerment, the platforming of marginalised voices and celebration of local culture, *Kubu Seni* encourages artistic upskilling and collaborative art making among students from Borneo Komrad, an NGO that advocates for the rights of stateless youth. Delivered over a month, the first half comprises online workshops on three weekends, focusing on experimental work in writing, film and sound, in order to start the participants' creative journeys. The second half is a five-day incubator conducted in Semporna, followed by a two-day arts fest and showcase open to the public.

**Adriana Nordin Manan** juggles eight professional roles: writer; translator; playwright; researcher; curator; dramaturg; educator and entrepreneur. She is the founder of Protagonist Studio (est. 2022), a company offering services in writing and writing-adjacent areas such as translation, curation, and research. Adriana is also the Artistic Director of Cocoon Creative Lab (CCL), the creative arm of Protagonist Studio which dwells in storytelling, cultural exchange through language, and new works incubation. Adriana has a Master's in Politics from New York University. Born, raised, and based in Kuala Lumpur, she speaks Malay, English, and Spanish.

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## ONG QIAO SE



Photo: Maya Bisram

### **The Grant: RM8,000**

**The Project:** *The Shape of an Almond* is a non-fiction film about Ah Ma, a 90-year-old woman living with Alzheimer's disease, and her last memories of pre- and post-Merdeka Malaysia. It experiments with the traditional biographical documentary, and complements official histories of our nation and cultures with the intimate oral histories from Ah Ma. In this film, we piece together vignettes of her personal history that are situated within larger historical moments of migration, the Japanese occupation, and post-Merdeka Malaysia. Through reenactment, puppetry, and animation, the textures of Malaysian life from the 1940-50s are recreated in a playful reimagination of the past.

**Ong Qiao Se** is a transnational anthropologist and filmmaker. Supported by the Projects for Peace grant, Qiao Se works currently as a cultural programmer and community organizer in Norcasia, Colombia. As a recent graduate from Mount Holyoke College, she writes about Malaysian film theory and criticism, affect, cultural studies, and experimental ethnography. Qiao Se's multidisciplinary work explores the political and social capacities of art, asking how the practice and study of the arts interact with lived realities, normative histories, and unruly futures. Having lived in Kuala Lumpur, Pune, Buenos Aires, and Massachusetts, she values community, laughter, and good food.

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## HO CHEE JEN



**The Grant:** RM8,000

**The Project:** This project takes inspiration from gallery wall labels – the small descriptive plaques beside artworks – and transposes them into public urban spaces. I will install only the artwork descriptions, elegantly printed or etched onto placards, signboards, or street surfaces, mimicking the language of institutional gallery tags. These texts playfully unsettle meaning, inviting passers-by to imagine what once existed. The first phase takes place in Petaling Street, where I grew up, with potential to expand elsewhere. Blending fiction, memory, and critique, the project draws on Michel Foucault's ideas of space and power, to question who writes urban history, turning streets into open-air archives.

**Ho Chee Jen** is a visual practitioner and researcher. She completed her Master's degree in Visual Studies at the University of Malaya, where she focused on left-wing theatre with the support of the Joseph William Yee Eu Foundation Research Grant. She also received the Hai-O Arts & Culture Grant for her recent debut solo exhibition, *Life is Elsewhere*, which reflected on movement, memory, and the negotiation of new boundaries. The exhibition was presented in the unconventional setting of a vacant condominium unit. She currently teaches in the field of art and media studies.

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## LEE YEE HAN



Photo: Will Chong

### **The Grant: RM8,000**

**The Project:** *Discrimination and Visual Illusions* is a hybrid performance and exhibition exploring visual manipulation in a post-truth era. Blending documentary theatre, AI visuals, and audience interaction, it questions how filters, deep fakes, and media bias shape social prejudice. Created by director Lee Yee Han and multimedia designer Tan Chung Cea, the project includes live performance, interactive installations, and an online archive. The duo previously collaborated on *Discrimination* (2015), which won the Grand Prize at China's SanXingDui Theatre Festival. In 2025, they reunite after a decade to expand their inquiry into the impact of new media on perception and discrimination.

**Lee Yee Han** graduated from the Theatre Department of National Taipei University of the Arts (Taiwan). In 2007, he was recruited to Godot Theatre Company, one of the most successful theatre companies in Taiwan, as actor and director. Yee Han was also a lecturer in New Era College Drama and Visual Department, and One World Hanxing College of Journalism and Communication, winner of BMW SHORTIES 2012 The Best Actor, winner of China SanXinDui Residency Project 2015, The Best Performance. He also received a full scholarship (Goethe Institute Munich and Kuala Lumpur) to participate in Berliner TheatreTreffen International Forum 2015. He was the first Malaysian who participate in this world festival.

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## ABOUT ASTRO MALAYSIA HOLDINGS BERHAD

**Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad (Astro)** is Malaysia's leading content and entertainment company, serving 5.2 million homes or 64% of Malaysian TV households, 8,900 enterprises, 16.3 million weekly listeners across FM radio and online, and 13.5 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. Today, our customers enjoy streaming our local signatures, Astro Originals, live sports and the best global shows from Netflix, Disney+ Hotstar, HBO GO, iQIYI, TVBAnywhere+, beIN SPORTS CONNECT, BBC Player, Viu, ZEE5, WeTV, Qalbox by MuslimPro, and our own TV companion app Astro GO. Astro Radio, home to the country's highest-rated radio brands across all key languages, and our digital brands including AWANI, SYOK, Gempak, Xuan and Astro Ulagam, connect Malaysians to content and stories that matter.

Astro and its foundation, Yayasan Astro Kasih, continue to support local communities based on three of Astro's ESG Pillar: 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 first launched Multiply, a free financial education platform empowering Malaysians to make better financial decisions. In 2024, the foundation launched Schola, a free career guidance ecosystem helping secondary school students explore jobs and plan their pathways. In just a year, Schola has reached nearly 300,000 students and thousands of teachers nationwide. The foundation is now focused on scaling Schola as a national benchmark for early career guidance.

**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, Fiaqsyzwan 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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