
Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur and Wider Klang Valley

Cultural Cities Profile
East Asia

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tom fleming / creative consultancy

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Introducing Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur is the nation's capital and one of the most diverse and dynamic cities in Southeast Asia. It is an international hub for culture and a regional driver of the creative industries. It is a leading-edge city for design, architecture, urbanism, digital and fashion, with a thriving independent arts scene mobilised by a growing network of independent creative hubs and spaces. KL, and the wider Klang Valley conurbation, convenes creative talent from across Malaysia's diverse regions and connects this talent to an increasingly international art and creative scene with a growing festival and events offer and some organisations of genuine excellence in a range of art forms.

Kuala Lumpur (KL) is the capital city and one of the Federal Territories of Malaysia. It is the largest city in country with 1.6 million citizens in 2019. Greater KL-Federal Corridor Economic Region is the main commercial hub in Malaysia. Its area covers the city of KL, Putrajaya, Cyberjaya and certain parts of Selangor, boosting a population of 7.7M in 2019.¹

- Key economic sectors in this urban region are: business services (engineering construction, aerospace, halal services), financial services, knowledge process outsourcing, oil and gas as well as tourism.²
- KL is emerging as a major creative and cultural hub. In 2016, KL cultural and creative industry contributed RM11.2 billion to the country, accounting for over 2% to the Kuala Lumpur economy and with over 86,000 jobs, according to the Cultural Economy Development Agency (CENDANA).³



The city is vibrant and alive with confidence and ambition, and a growing appetite to compete with other urban and developing cities of Southeast Asia as a major centre for trade, innovation, and culture.

KL Blueprint: Kuala Lumpur as a Cultural and Creative City, P.12. (CENDANA)

¹ Economic Transformation Programme: A Roadmap for Malaysia. P. 124.

² KL calling: Dynamic, Digital, Diverse. (2020). EYGM Limited. P. 45.

³ KL Blueprint: Kuala Lumpur as a Cultural and Creative City. Cultural Economy Development Agency (CENDANA). 2016.

City Vision/Mission/Slogan

KL brands itself as a city of contrasts and diversity which brings ample opportunities for collaborations and partnerships in arts and culture. Its strategic location, infrastructure, quality of life, talent pool and business friendly policies are among the key reasons cited to draw investment in the city.

According to the Draft KL Structure Plan 2040, the vision of the city is “KL A CITY FOR ALL”. It is based on the city dwellers’ aspiration for KL to become a safe and strong commercial hub. To achieve this vision, the implementation of the KL Structure Plan 2040 aims to facilitate bottom-up, inclusive development by ensuring a governance system that can implement integrated planning in line with the development needs in KL.⁴

- “Exciting, surprising, enticing”: This city branding is aimed at bringing KL to the forefront of the region’s most popular destinations for business and leisure.⁵



PETRONAS Twin Tower.

Photo © Tourism Malaysia

⁴ Draft Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2040. P. Chapter 2 – 21.

⁵ New Brand for KL. <https://www.thestar.com.my/metro/community/2016/04/26/new-brand-for-kl-mayor-identity-sums-up-citys-key-attributes>

Creative Industries and Cultural Services

In recent years, the creative industries have grown across greater KL. While many creative enterprises can now be found across Petaling Jaya, some are emerging in other parts of Selangor, including a vibrant presence of advertising to architecture firms, co-working spaces, film and animation industry, game developers, graphic design firms, performance and private spaces, publishers and software developers and more.⁶

“

Kuala Lumpur is home to a great deal of arts and culture conversations and activities (the physical ones especially during the pre-pandemic days). The magic and enchantment of it all lie in the rich mix of multicultural, multi-discipline, plentiful of west/east as well as traditional/modern exposures and the multi-faceted lives of its creative practitioners. It welcomes anyone wanting to collaborate because we are very used to the idea; having grown up in a melting pot of diversity. There isn't one that is typical of what one can find in another country and while of course there are some sterling examples of consistent purposes and programming; I'd like to think that the best things are with interventions where we are able to make-do and make-shift anywhere and whenever we get the chance of funding.

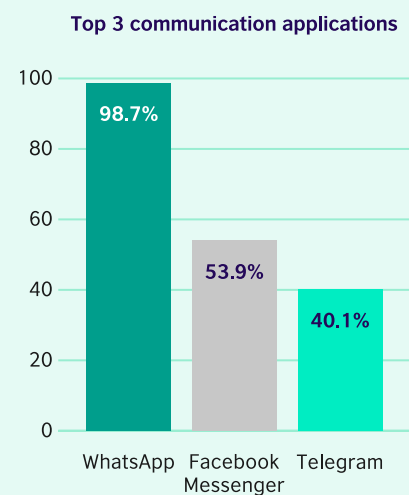
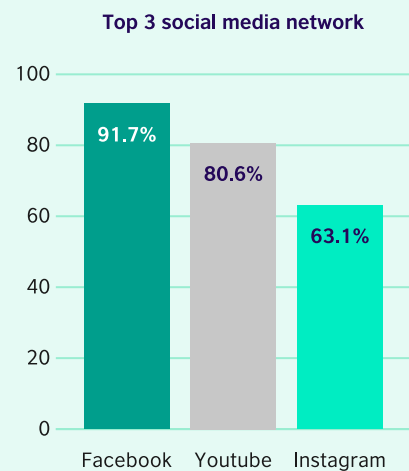
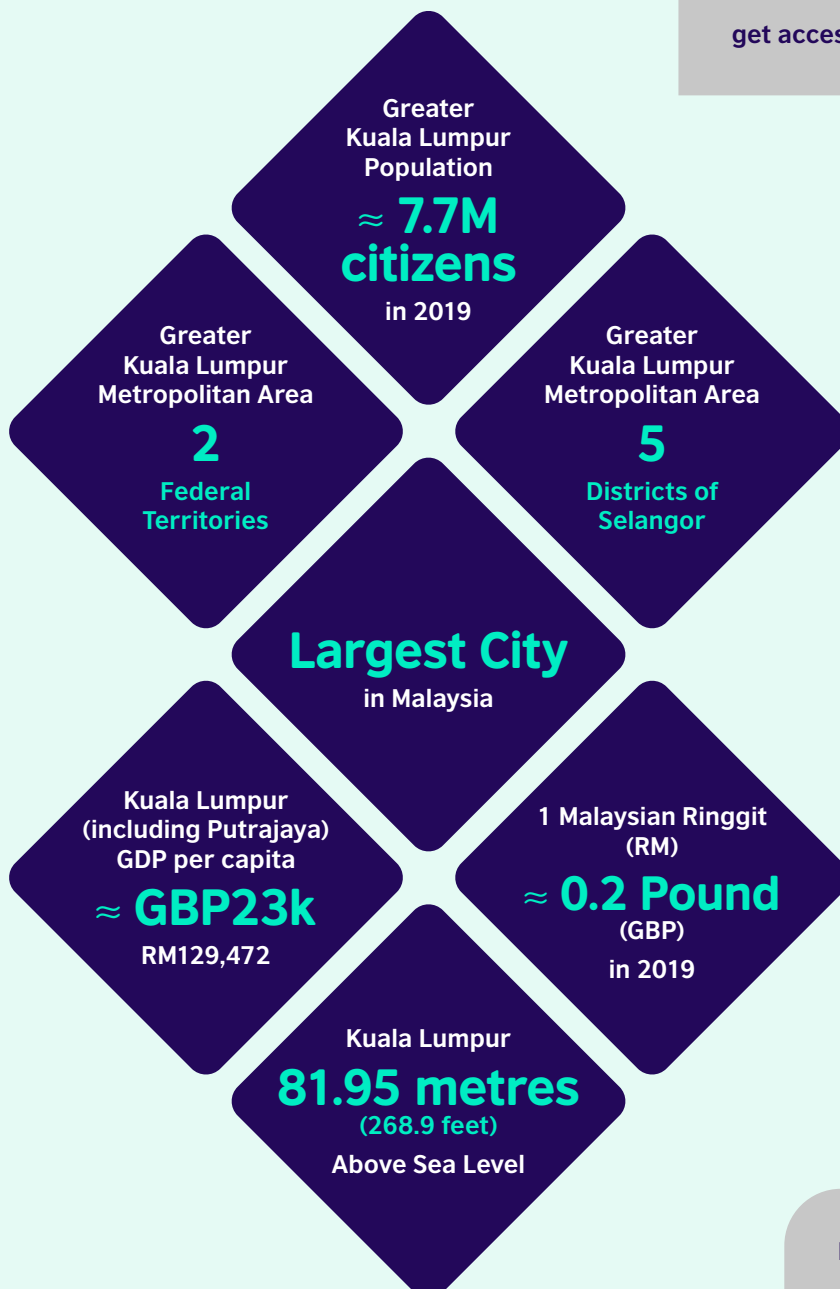
Ngai Yuen Low, President of Kakiseni⁷

⁶ Creative industries in greater KL. <https://maps.thinkcity.com.my/think-city/maps/90771/greater-kuala-lumpur>

⁷ Interview with Penang Institute

Kuala Lumpur in Numbers

98.7% internet users
get access through **smartphone**



Traditional **shophouses** account for
48% of the architectural style in the core city

In 2016,
KL cultural and creative industry
contributed RM11.2 billion,
≈ GBP1.9 billion,
and **over 86k jobs**

Context

KL is the capital and largest city in Malaysia. It is administered by the DBKL (KL City Hall) which was established in 1972. In greater KL, both Federal Territories are managed by agencies (DBKL and Putrajaya Corporation) under the Ministry of Federal Territories. The other Selangor state's districts are administered by the local governments under the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, and Selangor State Government's policies.

Location/Region

KL is located in west-central Malaysia with an average altitude of 81.95 metres (268.9 feet) above sea level.⁸ It enjoys a warm equatorial climate throughout the year.

It had approximately 1.6 million citizens in 2019. KL's city centre is well-connected with a rail transport network, highways and suburban roads linking all the different areas of the city.

Buddhist Maha Vihara.

Photo © Tourism Malaysia



Ethnic Diversity

Other than Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil, as well as other ethnic dialects are also widely in use. In KL and the wider Klang Valley, English is the lingua franca of the business community. Chinese mostly communicate in Cantonese. According to the National Statistic Department, the city has the below populations:

- Bumiputera 788K
- Chinese 683K
- Indians 168K
- Others 21K

Another important element of this region is the indigenous tribe of Selangor, the Mah Meri.

- The Mah Meri is one of the 18 tribes of Orang Asli (indigenous people) living in West Malaysia. Most of them reside in Pulau Carey, Selangor. They are known for their wood carvings, rich songs and vibrant dances.
- One of the most well-known dances of the Mah Meri people is the mask dance, called Mayin Jo-oh, a traditional dance performed to invite the ancestral spirits, or *muyang*, to join in the festivities. In this dance, performers wear traditional masks and exhibit movements and gestures related to everyday activities and events such as fishing and celebrations⁹



It is ethnically diverse with a growing international population, which together are creating a new distinctive identity for Kuala Lumpur that interestingly maintains Malaysia's cultural heritage.

KL Blueprint: Kuala Lumpur as a Cultural and Creative City, P.12. (CENDANA)

⁸ Kuala Lumpur. <https://en-sg.topographic-map.com/maps/s19v/Kuala-Lumpur>

⁹ Traditions and Communities. PUSAKA. <https://www.pusaka.org/communities-mah-meri>

Cultural, Arts and Civic Policy

KL Blueprint: The Kuala Lumpur as a Cultural and Creative City report by CENDANA lists 6 key priority sectors and 2 others which contribute significantly to the creative economy.

- These are music, performing arts, visual arts, museums & archives, literature & publishing, and crafts as well as the design, fashion, textile and film, broadcasting and digital content sectors.

While there is a national culture policy that is cascaded down from the federal level to state level via the National Department of Culture and Arts and institutions like Istana Budaya, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, the industry is legislated by different authorities.

- For instance, live performances, licensing of arts venues and events, permits for activities are by the local authorities or other licensing bodies.

Policies affecting the sector are also formulated by different ministries and planning authorities.

- The government has created a dedicated agency, InvestKL under the purview of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, to attract multinational companies, emerging and fast-growing new businesses to set up hubs in Greater Kuala Lumpur.
- KL local government has long placed its focus in tourism and heritage preservation as a wider driver of the cultural economy.

Artivism – Cultural Advocacy



Community/grassroot has been at the forefront of driving cultural agenda and preserving community identity.

Five Arts Centre is a collective that has been focused on Malaysian culture and identity through **‘explorations and fusions of local vocabularies, forms and traditions’** in relation to the global.

Founded in 1984, by theatre directors Chin San Sooi and Krishen Jit, and dancer-choreographer Marion D’Cruz, its community programme focus on supporting emerging practitioners and advocacy.

They are now the Secretariat of ReformARTsi Coalition, an advocacy group formed by a loose affiliate of advocacy groups including around 114 members, 53 art groups/companies. (The coalition focuses on issues related to the funding in the Arts, Censorship in the Arts and Arts Education).

Five Arts also work with Greenpeace on rainforest protection – known as the *Pertahankan Hutan Simpan Kuala Langat Utara* project.¹⁰

¹⁰ British Council Mapping MY Creative Hubs, 2017.

Regional Policies in the Wider Creative economy

KL Tourism Master Plan 2015 – 2025, 2015. Tourism Unit of KL City Hall.

The vision of the KL Tourism Master Plan is to position KL, through its world-renowned infrastructure and services, as the top-of-mind destination to experience various exhilarating city activities.¹¹

- The main focus areas of the Master Plan are culture, heritage and places of interest in order to highlight the rich variety of cuisine, culture and architecture styles in the city. In addition, food and heritage trails, capitalising on the richness of KL's culture and heritage, will be used as support to facilitate the ascend of KL as a world-class cultural city.
- 6 initiatives are being undertaken to establish KL as a world-class cultural and heritage city by 2025, including propelling KL as a 'food paradise destination'; expanding the number and variety of heritage trails and products; reinvigorating cultural enclaves; creating vibrant cultural and arts events; refining museums' identity and concept; re-establishing and conserving heritage buildings and cultural practice.

KL Creative and Cultural District Strategic Master Plan, 2019. Think City Sdn Bhd.

The Creative and Cultural District Strategic Master Plan for KL contains specific-precinct based proposals as follows:

- Restore the heritage quadrant; reinvigorate the civic precinct; improve Petaling Street precinct; conserve historical education institutions and improve links of the Bukit Nanas forest reserve and nature in the city centre; improve the traditional retail street precinct; preserve Merdeka era civic buildings and monuments; and maintain forests in the city.¹²

Selangor Malay Customs and Heritage Corporation Strategic Plan, 2019 – 2023. 2010. Selangor Malay Customs and Heritage Corporation.

Malay Customs and Heritage Corporation Selangor (formerly known as the Selangor Museum Board) is the only agency under the Selangor state government responsible for doing research, preserving, collecting, documenting, displaying, disseminating and publishing the culture and heritage of Malay society.

- The vision of its strategic plan is towards upholding the legacy of the state of Selangor in the current global era. The mission is to strengthen and preserve the heritage of Selangor.¹³
- There are four key focuses in this plan: to produce the latest research and findings of Selangor heritage; strengthen the management of heritage-related and conservation projects proactively, efficiently and responsibly; and preserve and promote the values of arts culture and heritage of Selangor.

Selangor Structure Plan 2035, 2017. Selangor Town and Country Planning Department.

Selangor Structure Plan 2035 is a statutory planning document that guides and controls physical development. The concept proposed for future growth in the State of Selangor is "city-region development-oriented".¹⁴

- The state intends to enhance its status as one of the country's top tourist destinations for natural, sports and heritage tourism by upgrading the necessary facilities, transportation system, and other related programmes.
- The tourism development will be concentrated in the tourism nodes of Kuala Kubu Bharu, Kajang, Kuala Selangor and Banting, as well as in Petaling Jaya, Subang Jaya, Bandar Baru Bangi, Shah Alam, Klang and Cyberjaya.

¹¹ Kuala Lumpur Tourism Master Plan 2015 – 2025. P. 2

¹² Ibid. P. 107 – 140.

¹³ Selangor Malay Customs and Heritage Corporation Strategic Plan. P. 3 – 7.

¹⁴ Selangor Structure Plan 2035. P. 4 – 6.

KL Structure Plan 2020, 2004. KL City Hall.

The Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020 contains the vision, goals, policies and proposals to guide the development of Kuala Lumpur (the City).

- Particularly under the development of tourism resources, KL City Hall seeks to expand the types of tourism in the city; expand and diversify the types of tourism products to showcase Malaysia's rich culture and multiracial society; encourage the private sector to support local arts and cultural groups and artists by contributing in the construction of more facilities such as museums, art galleries, theatres and concert halls; encourage and facilitate cultural shows, concerts, theatres and etc.; and preserve and conserve heritage buildings.¹⁵

Draft KL Structure Plan 2040, 2020. KL City Hall.

The plan aims to transform KL as a 'City for all' by 2040 and ensure sustainable growth by focusing on the principles of sustainable planning and development. Its development will be centred around the well-being of the residents, quality of life, equitability, sustainability and economic competitive sectors.¹⁶

- The Department of Broadcasting Malaysia (*Radio Televisyen Malaysia, RTM*) and other existing media companies will facilitate KL's growth as a global network, media and communications centre.
- An International Broadcasting Centre will also be established as a media centre mainly for

international events at the Angkasapuri (headquarter for RTM) vicinity. According to the City Planning Department, KL City Hall, the final draft may take 6 months (June 2021) or longer to be ready.¹⁷

KL City Plan 2020 (Pelan Bandaraya KL 2020, PBRKL2020), 2020. KL City Hall.

The first Kuala Lumpur Local Plan known as the Kuala Lumpur City Plan 2020 (PBRKL2020) is a document formulating the long-term vision of PSKL2020 towards a World Class City. KL City Hall uses this plan to make decisions related to control planning, application of building plan, infrastructure development and development work in Kuala Lumpur. According to the City Planning Department, KL City Hall, the draft for the next KL local plan will be ready at the end of 2021 or early 2022.¹⁸

- Volume 1: Strategic Directions and Initiatives, covers all aspects of development to promote the growth of the city. It also ensures these developments contribute towards the improvement of the natural and built environment, transportation, housing, social facilities and infrastructure; and towards the protection of cultural heritage.
- Volume 2: Development Control Plan 2015 contains guidelines to control development, including land-use zoning and development intensity (density and plot ratio), for zones covering heritage, altitude control, transit planning and riverside corridors.¹⁹

¹⁵ Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020. Chapter 8-10.

¹⁶ Draft Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan – A City for All. Chapter 2 – 14.

¹⁷ Penang Institute got the confirmation through a call to the City Planning Department, KL City Hall on 19 January 2021, 3 pm.

¹⁸ Penang Institute got the confirmation through a call to the City Planning Department, KL City Hall on 19 January 2021, 3.30 pm.

¹⁹ Pelan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur 2020. https://www.dbkl.gov.my/klmcity2040/?page_id=3187

Culture and Education

While the country is currently rolling out its Malaysian Education Blueprint, on a local level arts and culture education primarily lie in tertiary institutions like ASWARA, UiTM, Multimedia University, Sunway University and Taylor's University to name a few.

Grassroot and non-governmental culture institutions (NGOs) and collectives are the primary forces that provide arts education and capacity training for practitioners in the field.

Within the public education system, the Ministry of Education has introduced the Sekolah Seni Malaysia (Malaysia Arts School) programme. Recruitment starts at lower secondary from Form 1.

- Applicants have to undergo an audition to determine their aptitude. In lower secondary (Forms 1 – 3, aged 13 – 15), music, dance, theatre and visual arts are offered while in upper secondary (Forms 4 & 5), there are options for music, fine arts, design, visual communications, dance and theatre.
- The institution in KL has over 250 students and 2 batches of graduates.
- Students from this school participate actively in local and international arts events

Culture and Education – case studies

National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage (ASWARA)

ASWARA is Malaysia's only public university that solely focuses on the arts, including a wide range of genres from contemporary, traditional and culture and heritage. Its goal is to produce creative and capable graduates who will continue to promote the preservation of the country's national and artistic heritage(s).

KL Film School

Kuala Lumpur Film School (KLFS) is an accredited centre registered with the Department of Skills Development (JPK). It conducts skills training programmes in the film industry and short-term certificate courses as well, and aims to provide opportunities for industry players.

Curated programmes for Children, Youth and Adults, Badan Warisan Malaysia

The curated programmes enable visitors to learn about the Malaysian culture, architecture and traditions. For children and youth, they can learn about the traditional Malay house on site and their restoration. For adults, activities are available to explore the Kampung lifestyle including customs, rituals, sampling of traditional food and drinks.²⁰

Hands-On Pewtersmithing Workshops, Royal Selangor

Founded in 1885, Royal Selangor International Sdn Bhd is a Malaysian pewter manufacturer and retailer. It offers popular experiential workshops to experience pewter as a living craft. Its School of Hard Knocks runs engravable pewter dish workshops; and the Foundry offers pewter lessons from casting, polishing and decorating.²¹

Mak Yong, from the Sembah Guruh Project (May 2016) at Kelantan.

Photo © Wong Horngyih | PUSAKA



²⁰ Badan Warisan Negara. <https://badanwarisanmalaysia.org/visit-us/rumah-penghulu-abu-seman>

²¹ Hands-On Pewtersmithing Workshops. <https://my.royalselangor.com/>

Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) Education Programmes and Events

The Education Department's programmes at IAMM offer lifelong learning for children, students and adults. Past activities include Islamic Calligraphy, painting workshop, soap-making workshop, art on glass workshop and more.²²

National Museum Education and Outreach Service

The National Museum offers many different educational programmes on the country's rich history and culture. It provides advisory services for educational activities and public programmes for schools, government departments, private agencies, NGOs and others.²³

SCREAM (Selangor Creative Arts Movement) Edutainment

SCREAM Edutainment is a community outreach programme for youth-at-risk that offers skill-based training, capacity building and leadership development. Music is the foundation of SCREAM programmes that provide a safe environment to learn and practice music during weekends. This also includes music classes with distinctive modules and mentoring/life coaching classes before conducting a selection process and placing selected candidates in music academies.²⁴

Oral History



In addition to the collection at **Arkib Negara national archives**, preservation of Oral history has been a key focus of NGOs in KL and across Malaysia. **The Oral History Association of Malaysia** aims:

- To be a platform for cooperation with other agencies in conducting oral history studies in Malaysia;
- To conduct courses on oral history studies;
- To intensify the documentation on oral history in Malaysia;
- To create a 'code of practice' in the field of oral history;
- To create a database of oral history experts and studies; and
- To promote awareness on the importance of oral history.

Oral History Collection by Raja Tun Uda Library, Shah Alam

The oral history collection was initiated in 2012 by the Raja Tun Uda Library.

With the help of other parties such as historians, tertiary institutions, associations and local communities, the library has started to **redocument, recapture, reconstruct and rebuild past events, folklore, myths and stories** through the prescribed methodological procedure of oral history.

The collection of oral history enables the gathering, recording, and preservation of a diverse range of information and experiences, which are generally not well documented in writing, for future generations.

²² IAMM. <https://www.iamm.org.my/education/education-programmes>

²³ National Museum. http://www.muziumnegara.gov.my/main/?c=Unit_Pendidikan_dan_Khidmat_Seranta_5&parent=Mengenai_Kami_2, accessible in July 2021.

²⁴ SCREAM Edutainment. <https://scream.com.my/edutainment>

Environment and Sustainability

Environmental legislation in Malaysia is anchored by key documents such as the National Land Code and Green Technology Masterplan.

Reflecting the country's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Kuala Lumpur has funneled substantial resources in initiatives to reduce carbon emissions (outlined in KL Low Carbon Society Blueprint 2030) as well as creating quality public places for its residents (such as in Perdana Botanical Park and Think City's projects under the Kuala Lumpur Creative and Cultural District Strategic Master Plan).

Key Policies Initiatives

Malaysia SDG Cities, 2020. Urbanise Malaysia and Ministry of Housing and Local Government.²⁵

Adopted in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes 17 goals in total. While Goal 11 'Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable' is specifically targeted for cities, all goals are interconnected.

- With this in mind, the KL Creative and Cultural District (KLCDD) not only focuses on Goal 11 but on other SGD goals as well.²⁶

KL Declaration-Cities 2030, 2018. UN-Habitat and Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

The KL Declaration on Cities 2030 was adopted in February 2018 at the closing of the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9).

- It calls for the acceleration of the New Urban Agenda (NUA), which was adopted in 2016 at the Habitat III conference in Ecuador. One of the actions include developing and adopting innovative solutions that encourage the development of a culture of creativity, carry out monitoring and data collection, instill an enabling environment, and implement accessibility and universal design as core principles.
- The Declaration aims to further develop the role of UN-Habitat for the implementation, follow-up and review of the NUA.²⁷

Introduction to Welding Workshop
at Me.reka Makerspace.

Photo © Me.reka



²⁵ Sustainable Development Goals Partnership Platform. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=35816>

²⁶ 2019 Kuala Lumpur Creative and Cultural District Strategic Master Plan. P.15. <https://thinkcity.com.my/publications/KLCDD-Strategic-Masterplan-EN/#page=17>

²⁷ Kuala Lumpur Declaration: Cities 2030. P. 5 – 6

Upcycling – Zero Waste



NGOs take a leadership role in driving the sustainability agenda in the capital.

Hubs such as **KakiDIY** offers DIY workshops that focuses on recycling and upcycling.

As to **Linc KL**, it devotes to sustainable practices, including:

- Environmentally friendly elements such as the insulated roof to lower energy consumption, the recycled materials inside the building, and the six pre-existing trees on the grounds.
- The hub also contains a book sharing initiative to allow visitors to exchange and donate books, and an e-waste bin for electronic items, among others.
- Its venue is also utilised for community events such as the Zero Waste Festival, painting and craft workshops, and many more.

Me.reka Makerspace is an alternative education space that aims to teach the skills of the future to today's youth to build a talent pool that is resourceful, engaged and informed enough to take on the challenges of the future.

- It combines sustainability principles with STEAM Education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) through an engaging, alternative and skills-based approach.
- All of Me.reka's projects are developed in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Culture and Environment – case studies

KL City Centre (KLCC) Park

This 50-acre park is the most prominent in KL as it is located right next to the popular KLCC shopping mall. Along with landscaped gardens and water features, the park also contains a mosque and various facilities for children.²⁸

Putrajaya Wetland Park

Wetland Park is the largest man-made freshwater wetland park in Malaysia and the tropics. The park houses a Nature Consciousness centre that is used as an information and education centre to create awareness about the role and attributes of wetlands to the public.²⁹

Bukit Gasing Forest Park

Bukit Gasing Forest Park, also known as Hutan Pendidikan Bukit Gasing, is situated between KL and Petaling Jaya. The park, which was once a rubber plantation, is now one of the most frequented parks in Kuala Lumpur, by both locals and tourists, as it is suitable for picnics and offers many different types of trails for hiking.³⁰

Bukit Nanas/KL Forest Eco Park

Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve is a popular eco-tourism destination and serves as a natural green lung for the surrounding metropolitan area.³¹

²⁸ Ibid. P. 67.

²⁹ Putrajaya Wetland Park. <https://www.ppj.gov.my/en/second-menu/taman-wetland>

³⁰ Hiking to Bukit Gasing Suspension Bridge: A Comprehensive Guide. <https://annaevening.com/hiking-to-bukit-gasing-suspension-bridge-a-comprehensive-guide>

³¹ KL Forest Eco Park. <https://www.menarakl.com.my/attractions/tower-attractions/kl-forest-eco-park>

Perdana Botanical Garden

The garden was formerly known as the Lake Gardens and was developed in 1888 by A.R. Venning, the then state treasurer of Selangor. Its name was changed to Perdana Botanical Garden in 2011. The garden features a performance amphitheatre, Panggung Anniversary, an Orchid Garden and a Hibiscus Garden, giving visitors the atmosphere of a tropical rainforest.³²

Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)

FRIM is one of the best eco-tourism destinations in Malaysia, endowed with nature trails, waterfalls, nature education centre, camping and picnic sites, botanic gardens and arboreta. It is one of the top international institutions in tropical forestry which has amassed notable awards like the Nikkei Asia Prize (2009) for its contribution to environmental protection in the region, the Brand Laureate Awards for the Best Brand in Forestry–Environment Conservation (2010, 2011, 2012) and the ASEAN Books Award for the best research institution (2019).³³

Global Environment Centre (GEC)

The Global Environment Centre, an NGO focuses on environmental issues at the regional and international levels. GEC has led projects in different parts of Malaysia including Perak, Penang, Kelantan and Selangor. Their current project focuses on river education and rehabilitation at KL's and Selangor's rivers.³⁴

Kebun-Kebun Bangsar (KKB)

Kebun Kebun Bangsar (KKB) is an urban community garden filled with vegetables and farm animals such as chicken, rabbits, and etc.³⁵ The project was a collaboration between DBKL, Think City and KKB. Independently funded through donations and the sale of its produce, it is run by volunteers and the community who donate all produce to orphanages, soup kitchens and charities. The garden is an exemplar demonstration of a sustainable and impactful urban community farming project.

Taman Tugu Project

The Taman Tugu Project is an initiative spearheaded by Khazanah Nasional Berhad with the support of various public sector agencies and civil-society organisations. The project aims at preserving a 66-acre secondary forest in the city centre to change it into an urban forest park for the community.³⁶

Save the North Kuala Langat Reserved Forest

The North Kuala Langat Reserved Forest (Gabungan Pertahankan Hutan Simpan Kuala Langat Utara, PHSKLU) was formed in 2020 to mobilise civil society to defend the status of North Kuala Langat as a reserved forest. The forest was gazetted in the early 1920s but has shrunk by 97% of its original size. It has the uniqueness of biodiversity and is an essential ecosystem to the Banting and Kuala Langat people. More importantly, this forest is also a customary land for the Temuan community, whose customs and life depend on this forest for more than 120 years.³⁷

³² Perdana Botanical Garden.

³³ Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM). <https://www.frim.gov.my/about-us/overview>

³⁴ Global Environment Centre. <https://www.gec.org.my/index.cfm?&menuid=61>

³⁵ Kebun-Kebun Bangsar. <https://happygokl.com/kebun-kebun-bangsar>

³⁶ Taman Tugu Project. <http://tamantuguproject.com.my/en>

³⁷ Selamatkan Hutan Simpan Kuala Langat Utara. <https://www.greenpeace.org/malaysia/act/phsklu>

Culture, Health and Wellbeing

The Kuala Lumpur City Hall has a Department of Health and Environment that is responsible for monitoring as well as enhancing the quality of health of its residents. While there is an erosion of green spaces within the urban contexts, both the authorities and general public are working towards creating more green and public spaces for recreation as can be seen by creation of pedestrianised squares, public art and community gardens.

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On the importance of green spaces in KL: “Parks are a social investment as they promote the people’s wellbeing, which cannot be monetised. What is most important is that parks also create a cohesive urban society. They are places where people can meet and interact. Besides that, it can also be called ‘social urbanism’, which means investing in social infrastructure, such as public spaces, to create sustainable communities.

Country Planning director-general Dr Dahlia Rosly³⁸

Titiwangsa Lake Gardens.

Photo © Tourism Malaysia

³⁸ <https://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/central-park-idea-happier-kl>



Regional Policies to Improve Liveability

Cyberjaya Smart and Low Carbon City 2025, 2017. Sepang Municipal Council.

The preparation of the 'Cyberjaya Smart & Low Carbon City 2025 (CSLC 2025)' document is in line with the Government's undertakings in reducing the level of CO2 emission and achieving sustainable urban development, and with Cyberjaya's goal in becoming a Smart and Low Carbon City by the year 2025.³⁹

- CSLC 2025 is guided by three principles being Low Carbon, Smart, and People. Its key strategies revolve around: implementing smart mobility, encouraging walkability, welcoming compact & mixed-use development, blending nature into urban spaces, adopting efficient and effective resource management practices, implementing smart and low carbon buildings, and encouraging community participation.

Putrajaya Smart City Blueprint 2018 – 2025, 2020. Perbadanan Putrajaya.

Putrajaya's vision is to become a Green City by the year 2025. This entails implementing the objectives of a smart city which include: establish a liveable and well-connected city, improve services and resource efficiency, and build stronger, safer and more resilient communities.⁴⁰

- Some of the initiatives include establishing a tech-community in Putrajaya through an innovative centre and, collaborating with educational institutions/non-government organisations (NGOs) to show and teach young children about climate change and the impacts and improve their creative ideas.

Smart Selangor Action Plan (SSAP) to 2025, 2020. Smart Selangor Delivery Unit.

The SSAP is the revised version of the 2016 Smart Selangor blueprint. It was updated to include the digital technology initiatives of the Smart Selangor State programme that will run from 2020 to 2025.

- These initiatives aim to encourage a greener and safer urban environment, promote better mobility, provide cleaner water and bring forth efficient digital public services, as well as enable entrepreneurs and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to experience better economic opportunities.⁴¹

³⁹ Cyberjaya Smart & Low Carbon City 2025. P.4

⁴⁰ Putrajaya Smart City Blueprint 2018 – 2025. P. 12.

⁴¹ Smart Selangor Action Plan to 2025 (SSAP 2025). P. 53

Culture, Inclusion and Wellbeing – case studies

Epic-Sedunia, 2017

The first project of Epic in 2010 led to the development and establishment of Epic Homes. Since then, Epic Homes has been developing community-based housing solutions in Orang Asli villages, which in turn has enabled Epic Homes to gain the network and experience to replicate social impact in other forms. Since 2017, it has expanded to work with local councils, government bodies, urban developers, SMEs, corporations and volunteers to widen impact.⁴²

The Human Exhibit: Mental health, 2018

‘The Human Exhibit: Mental health’ is a new performance art style exhibit that was held in 2018 to raise awareness on mental health and stop the stigma associated with mental health. Instead of looking at paintings/sculptures, the audience was able to watch different human representations of certain mental illnesses in the form of dances, spoken words, dialogues, scenes, movements, etc.⁴³

World Urban Forum (WUF) 9 Village, 2018

WUF9 Village is an urban living lab (ULL) led by Think City in collaboration with the KL City Hall, showcasing possible ideas and innovations to improve urban living. For WUF9 participants and the public were invited to explore and discover exciting and innovative urban living possibilities such as micro-housing, communal living, view placemaking demonstrations, and participate in public art installations. Other programmes included the social enterprise market, rooftop theatre lounge, exhibitions, and many more.

- The World Urban Forum is organised by UN-Habitat every two years in a different city around the world. The WUF 9 was hosted by Urbanice Malaysia, in Malaysia, in 2018⁴⁴

The Double Blessings (Shuang Fu) International Dispatch Centre, 2001

The Double Blessings (Shuang Fu) International Dispatch Centre aims to help disabled people and former drug addicts learn appropriate vocational skills to get better job opportunities.

- The services being offered include vocational training such as handicraft, recycling, computer skills, job placement and counseling, without any charge to the disabled and underprivileged. The programme is opened to all regardless of race and religion.⁴⁵

Beautiful Gate Performing Arts Troupe, 2003

The Beautiful Gate Performing Arts Troupe was started by a group of Disabled Friends and launched by the Deputy Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism in 2003. Since then, the troupe has performed throughout Malaysia as well as overseas, in countries such as Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines. The objectives of Beautiful Gate Performing Arts Troupe consist of the following:

- Demonstrate the learning and self-development determination of disabled people to the public;
- Encourage accessibility for individuals with disabilities;
- Promote interest and understanding of the potential of people with disabilities;
- Create job opportunities for individuals with disabilities;
- Integrate people with disabilities in society.⁴⁶

Art Includes, Dialogue Includes All, 2012

Dialogue Includes All is a social enterprise that envisions a society where everyone is equal regardless of their race, religion, and abilities/disabilities.

- The enterprise seeks to promote inclusion through the various forms of art. Its programme Art Includes enables visitors to converse with disabled artists, and abled artists to collaborate with disabled artists. In partnership with I'm Soul Inc, the enterprise conducts music and dance workshops for special students using innovative sound technology to educate and empower disabled children and youth in the whole area of arts.⁴⁷

⁴² Epic-Sedunia. <https://epic.my/about>

⁴³ The Human Exhibit: Mental health. <https://kakiseni.com/event/human-exhibit-mentalhealth>

⁴⁴ World Urban Forum 9. <https://thinkcity.com.my>

⁴⁵ The Double Blessings (Shuang Fu) International Dispatch Centre. <https://www.hati.my/dual-blessing-bhd>

⁴⁶ Beautiful Gate Performing Arts Troupe. <https://www.facebook.com/Beautiful-Gate-Performing-Arts-Troupe-206754829361491>

⁴⁷ Dialogue Includes All. <https://www.dialogueincludes.com/about>

Culture and the Urban Landscape

Like most cities in Malaysia, KL has its own local plan that lays out the vision, goals, policies and development strategies up to 20 years in the future – KL's latest Draft Structure Plan takes it to 2040.

- With an aim to make the city more liveable and economically vibrant, the plans are drafted with input from government agencies, private sector and feedback from the community and other relevant stakeholders.

Kuala Lumpur by virtue of its name (Muddy Confluence), is a city that is greatly defined by its rivers. In recognition of the key role and location of the rivers running through Greater KL, efforts have been made to transform this cultural landscape.

- The River of Life project was initiated by the government in 2012 in order to regenerate the Klang River into a “vibrant and liveable waterfront with high economic value”.
- Just like the KL Tower project in the heart of the city's oldest pocket of rainforest, the KL Forest Eco-Park, tries to marry the natural assets with the necessary development for the city and wellbeing of its residents.

Development for All



Under the innovative and productive goal of the Draft KL Structure Plan 2040, its third action focuses on “Empowering KL as a Cultural and Creative City”.

By 2040, diverse action plans will be implemented to further enhance the value of the creative industries:

- Music, performance arts and visual arts
- Museum and archives
- Writing and publication
- Craft
- Design, fashion and textile
- Filming, broadcasting and digital media

The development of creative industries will be supported by:

- Enriching human capital within the creative and cultural industry
- Developing creative hubs and zones along with a comprehensive infrastructure
- Building markets through enhancement of easily accessible information and promotions
- Promoting investment and business support by private enterprises
- Providing public creative spaces to improve art appreciation in the public area.

Waterfront and Culture – case studies

River of Life, 2012 – present

The River of Life (ROL) is a project by the Government of Malaysia to turn the Klang River into a waterfront with high economic value. The project consists of three stages being river cleaning, river embellishment, and commercialisation and tourism.

- Under its river cleaning stage, a Public Outreach Programme (POP) was established in 2012, aiming to alter the attitudes and behaviours of the public, communities and other relevant parties to ensure that the river stays clean.⁴⁸

Alliance of River Three

River Three is positioned to transform urban and suburban river banks into community river monitoring programmes to monitor river quality and discourage rivers and riverbanks from becoming trash dumping points.

- It was founded by entrepreneur Kennedy John Michael and his partner, engineer Mansor Abd Ghani. For his efforts, Michael is recognised as one of the 10 winners of Star Golden Hearts Award 2020, an annual award that celebrates everyday Malaysian unsung heroes.⁴⁹

Key Projects in Connectivity and Transportation

Putrajaya Line, 2016 – present

The Putrajaya Line (previously known as Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya Line) is the second line of the KVMRT Project to be developed. It serves as a corridor with a population of around 2 million people stretching from Kwasa Damansara, a new township development in northwest Kuala Lumpur, and including the southern suburbs, to Putrajaya, Malaysia's federal administrative centre.

- Phase One from the Kwasa Damansara Station to the Kampung Batu Station will start to operate in July 2021, while the remaining line from the Kampung Batu Station to the Putrajaya Sentral Station will only start being operational under Phase Two in January 2023
- Ten interchange stations and connecting stations will be developed, hence easing the transfer of commuters from the Putrajaya Line to current and future rail lines, including the future Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High Speed Rail (HSR Project). Sixteen stations will offer park and ride facilities.⁵⁰ (The HSR Project was cancelled on 31 December 2020 after an agreement could not be reached between Malaysia and Singapore.⁵¹)

Kongsi KL.

Photo © Kongsi KL

⁴⁸ River of Life. <http://www.klriver.org/index.cfm?&menuid=33>

⁴⁹ Michael the river guardian. <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/11/24/michael-the-river-guardian>; Official Website: <https://riverthree.wixsite.com/riverthree>

⁵⁰ Putrajaya Line. <https://www.mymrt.com.my/public/putrajaya-line>

⁵¹ Malaysia, Singapore terminate HSR project. <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/01/01/malaysia-singapore-terminate-hsr-project>



Tun Razak Exchange (TRX), 2016 – present

TRX's 70-acre master plan, developed to be Malaysia's very first international financial district, consists of a dedicated MRT interchange station and provides direct access to Jalan Tun Razak and highways in close proximity. The Exchange Mall, situated on the mall's rooftop, is the TRX Central Park, a 10-acre public green nexus.

- TRX City Sdn Bhd, which is wholly owned by the Malaysian Ministry of Finance and serves as a strategic development company, is the master developer of TRX.⁵²

Bukit Bintang City Centre (BBCC), 2016 – present

Bukit Bintang City Centre is a new urban development by UDA Holding (government-link company), Eco World (developer) and Employees' Provident Fund (a federal statutory body under the purview of the Ministry of Finance) in central KL. The project aims to develop residential towers, hotels, retail and entertainment spaces, and a transit hub. It will also include gardens, open spaces and a signature landmark tower.⁵³

- A project named Malaysia Grand Bazaar, currently in phase 1 implementation, serves as a platform to boost the entrepreneurship of local craftsmen, traders and artists.⁵⁴

Merdeka 118, 2016 – present

The Merdeka 118 precinct development is funded by Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB), one of the largest fund management companies in Malaysia, with a budget of RM5 billion. The Merdeka 118 tower also hosts two heritage icons – Stadium Merdeka (where the declaration of independence was proclaimed in 1957), and Stadium Negara (the first indoor stadium in Malaysia-1962). When completed in 2022, it will be the tallest building in the country.⁵⁵

Bandar Malaysia, 2020 – present

Bandar Malaysia is an urban development that is projected to accelerate the transformation of Greater Kuala Lumpur. Strategically located within seven kilometres of Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC), the development will become a central transport hub in the city by serving as a gateway for the high-speed rail-line to Singapore.⁵⁶

- However, its development may be jeopardised due to the cancellation of the HSR project.⁵⁷

⁵² TRX. <https://destination.trx.my>

⁵³ BBCC. <https://bbcckl.com>

⁵⁴ MBG. <http://mgb.my>

⁵⁵ Merdeka 118 delayed by more than six months, ready in Q2 of 2022 <https://www.nst.com.my/property/2020/10/635337/merdeka-118-delayed-more-six-months-ready-q2-2022>; Official website: <https://www.merdeka118.com>

⁵⁶ Bandar Malaysia. <http://www.bandarmalaysia.my>

⁵⁷ HSR axing to derail prospect built around Bandar Malaysia project. <https://themalaysianreserve.com/2021/01/05/hsr-axing-to-derail-prospect-built-around-bandar-malaysia-project>

Digital and Culture

In late-1990s, national investment was committed to the development of digital technology, establishing a Silicon Valley-inspired science park Cyberjaya⁵⁸ to bootstrap the country into a knowledge-intensive and information-based modern economy for Wawasan 2020 (Vision 2020) by promoting technology transfer and leveraging the nation's educated workforce.

- This multimedia super corridor spans over 7K acres and now hosts a multimedia university and headquarters of international IT firms. Generous incentives were provided to local and foreign ICT and technology companies under the MSC Status scheme⁵⁹ if they relocated operations to the Corridor.

The government's ambition has set in motion a generation of digital and creative developments.

Today, the 5G infrastructure delivery is being accelerated, paved by the JENDELA plan for wider and

better broadband quality and in early 2021 the Prime Minister has also launched the Malaysian Digital Economy Blueprint that will be rolled out in 3 phases until 2030.

The coronavirus pandemic has both highlighted shortcomings in digital infrastructure as well as accelerated Malaysia's pivot to digital services and the digital economy. The thirst for content in this 'pandemic' period has also created new influencers or allowed personalities to grow their following to a point, where when they venture into e-commerce, their products are able to sell out very fast on release.

- E-sports is an emerging sector that is receiving a lot of government attention and funding. The E-sports Business Network is developing an E-sports City at the heart of Kuala Lumpur while the Ministry of Youth and Sports are also funding the development of E-sports Hubs in the Klang Valley.

Critical Importance



KL is a growing magnet for international investment in visual post-production, animation and graphic design.

Such as in the case of Base FX, three-time Emmy Award winning visual effects and animation company.

- The company consists of production studios in Beijing, Wuxi, Xiamen (China), Kuala Lumpur

(Malaysia) and an office in Los Angeles. The production studio in Kuala Lumpur is located in Bangsar South City.

- Founded in 2006, Base FX specialises in high-end creature and character animation, fluid and dynamic effects, and photo-real 3D matte painting and set extensions, and provides services to Hollywood film companies, and producers and top directors in China.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ <https://www.cyberjayamalaysia.com.my>

⁵⁹ <https://mdec.my/what-we-offer/msc-malaysia>

⁶⁰ Base FX.

Smart City and E-Sports (selected)

Selangor Intelligent Transport System (SITS)

Developed under the “Smart Transport and Mobility” domain, the Selangor Intelligent Transport Systems Application (SITS) is one of Smart Selangor initiatives to facilitate and encourage the public to use public transport.

- The application enables those using the Smart Selangor Bus to successfully plan their journey by being able to identify the nearest bus terminals, check on the estimated time of bus arrivals, and refer to the Smart Selangor Bus transport schedule.⁶¹

EBN E-sports City by E-sports Business Network Malaysia

Eyeing the market potential of the region and building an e-sports ecosystem for Malaysia, Southeast Asian E-sports organisation E-sports Business Network (EBN) launched a new RM4 million, 65k square foot facility EBN E-sports City slated to open in Quill City Mall, KL to host international e-sports tournaments and events in 2021.⁶²

- EBN stems from a recent merger between Malaysia’s prominent E-sports café, Orange E-sports Cafe and award-winning full-service e-sports marketing agency, The Gaming Company. EBN E-sports City is the first of its kind and the most extensive e-sports facility in Southeast Asia.

Digital News Asia (DNA), 2012

Digital News Asia is an independent news portal that covers the ICT ecosystem, including industry and public policy issues, entrepreneurs, startups, movers and shakers in the industry and business trends, especially how Digital Disruption is affecting traditional businesses.

- Besides the portal, it also has a twice monthly radio show on BFM in Kuala Lumpur and a Tech Talk segment on Bloomberg TV Malaysia.

Smart Cities Asia Conference, 2015 – present

- Organiser: Knowledge Group of Companies
- Smart Cities Asia is an event organised by Knowledge Group of Companies to convene worldwide industry leaders, policymakers, and entrepreneurs accelerating sustainability in cities, to discuss how cities can adapt to the latest ideas and technologies of a smart city. Many government departments and agencies have since become their supporting partners, such as the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM), Technology Park Malaysia, Malaysia Automotive Robotics and IoT Institute, Urbanice Malaysia and so on.⁶³

⁶¹ Selangor Intelligent Transport System (SITS). <https://www.malaysia.gov.my/portal/content/30745>

⁶² <https://esportsinsider.com/2020/12/esports-business-network-esports-city-malaysia>

⁶³ Smart City Asia. <https://smartcitiesasia.com>

Digital Hubs in Greater KL

Selangor Digital Creative Centre (SDCC)

Selangor Digital Creative Centre is an incubator and co-working space built for networking, mentoring, brainstorming, spurring creativity and resource sharing.

- It holds approximately two e-commerce classes every month and a host of various e-commerce, startup and tech activities.
- The space with 11,000 square feet space includes a seminar room, multiple meeting rooms, a maker space, a library and a café. It is under the management of Selangor Information Technology & Digital Economy Corporation (SIDECE).

Sunway iLabs, 2017 – present

Sunway iLabs aims to foster entrepreneurship and stimulate market-driven innovations to help entrepreneurs become more competitive in this rapidly changing environment.

DOJO KL, 2017 – present

DOJO KL is a community-focused co-working space in downtown Kuala Lumpur. It empowers the creative and entrepreneurial community by creating inspiring workspaces, organising educational and social events, and providing personalised services to help members grow.

Unionspace, 2015 – present

UnionSPACE is a co-working space for creators to work together with other talented members to build their dream ventures. This space has its own famously curated food strip and hosts many big parties and tech events such as Startup Grind and more.

Commonground

Started in 2016, Common Ground is a flexible and focused coworking community where traditional office spaces are broken down to bring people, ambition, and resources together. It has an ecosystem of diverse business and social events, a multitude of partnerships across lifestyle and professional companies, and a web of robust business networks and opportunities on its very own Common Ground mobile app. There are 16 Common Ground venues in Malaysia.

WORQ

Founded in 2017, WORQ is a productivity community – they believe that by improving the productivity of entrepreneurs, freelancers, and businesses, it can significantly impact the economy. It does so by taking care of all of the workplace needs and facilitating a deeper connection.

Found8

Found8 is the leading co-working space provider and innovation community that enables the game-changing members to collaborate and grow by providing the right network, knowledge and environment. The space it currently has in KL Sentral is Found8's first co-working space in Malaysia. It has five locations in Singapore.

Cultural workshops.

Photo © National Art Gallery



National and Regional Partnerships

KL as the country's capital houses headquarters for organisations on the national, regional and internationally level. It also takes a leadership role in initiating industry agenda such as in the case of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia, which was formalised as a legacy from a meeting in 2008 at KL.

Regional Alliances

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok by the five original member countries, Malaysia is one of them.

In Malaysia, The International Relations Division (Culture) of Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC) is the department mandated to plan, coordinate and supervise the implementation of tasks related to ASEAN as follows:

- ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts (AMCA) and AMCA + 3 (China, Japan & Korea).
- ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (ASEAN COCI) and its Sub Committee on Culture (SCC).
- Senior Officials Meeting on Culture (SOMCA) and SOMCA + 3 (China, Japan & Korea).
- Bilateral negotiations between ASEAN and dialogue partner's (Australia, New Zealand, India, Russia, Canada, Korea, Republic China, Japan & European Union).
- ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council (ASCC).
- ASEAN Cultural Fund⁶⁴

“

Cooperative peace and shared prosperity shall be the fundamental goals of ASEAN.

ASEAN Heads of State and Government

⁶⁴ International Relations Division (Culture).

Key Platforms

Malaysian Association of Local Authorities (MALA) 2000

This association plays an essential role in coordinating local authorities' (Hall/ City Councils, Municipal Councils, District Councils and etc.) activities and contributing to their development and progress. The members include ten local authorities from Greater KL and two from Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya.⁶⁵

The Regional Network of Local Authorities for the management of Human Settlements (CITYNET)

CityNet is the largest association of urban stakeholders dedicated to sustainable development in the Asia Pacific region. Through capacity building, city-to-city collaboration and other projects, it helps its members address climate change and disaster issues, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and infrastructure demands. KL and Putrajaya are both members.⁶⁶

The United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC)

UCLG ASPAC, initiated in Taipei in 2004, is the key knowledge management hub on local government issues in the Asia Pacific region. The Malaysian Association of Local Authorities (MALA) is one of the members of UCLG ASPAC. All the local authorities in Greater KL are part of MALA.⁶⁷

Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth-Triangle (IMT-GT)

IMT-GT was formed by the governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand in 1993 to quicken economic transformation and welfare growth in their least-developed regions. It covers 14 provinces in Southern Thailand, 8 states in Malaysia (Kedah, Kelantan, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Penang, Perak, Perlis, Selangor), and 10 provinces in Indonesia.⁶⁸

Other Collaboration Platforms

National Department for Culture and Arts (JKKN) – National Member of IFACCA (International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies)

The National Department for Culture and Arts (JKKN) implements arts and culture activities in Malaysia. An agency of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, JKKN is responsible for preserving and promoting arts and culture, supporting cultural infrastructure, and carrying out research.⁶⁹

National Museum of Department of Museums Malaysia – Executive Committee of the Asian National Museums Association (ANMA)

The Asian National Museums Association (ANMA) was founded to encourage and facilitate exchange and collaboration between national museums in Asia. Since its inception in 2007, twelve representative museums in Asia have joined ANMA and will host, in succession, the Executive Committee Meeting every two years. The first meeting was held at the National Museum of Korea.⁷⁰

Tourism Promotion Organisation for Asia Pacific Cities (TPO)

The organisation is an inter-city network that seeks to develop the tourism industry and economies of Asia-Pacific cities as a whole. Ten cities from Malaysia, including Kuala Lumpur, are member cities of TPO.⁷¹

Living Arts Cultural Festival, November 2018.

Photo © JKKN

⁶⁵ Malaysian Association of Local Authorities. <https://www.mala.com.my>

⁶⁶ CityNet. <https://citynet-ap.org/network/280-2>

⁶⁷ UCLG ASPAC. <https://uclg-aspac.org/en>

⁶⁸ Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle. <https://imtgt.org>

⁶⁹ IFACCA. <https://ifacca.org/en/places/asia/malaysia>

⁷⁰ Asian National Museums Association (ANMA). https://www.museum.go.kr/site/eng/content/io_anma

⁷¹ Tourism Promotion Organisation for Asia Pacific Cities. <http://aptpo.org/eng>



International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA)

ICCA is the global association leader for the international meetings industry. Its area of expertise revolves around the international association meetings sector, being able to provide unmatched data, education, communication channels, and business development and networking opportunities.

- In Malaysia, members include Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC), Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB), Malaysia International Trade & Exhibition Centre (MITEC), World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur (PWTC) and 2 event organisers, Evenesis – Y Us Sdn. Bhd. and My Meeting Partner @ Anderes Fourdy.⁷²

International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia, 2009 – present

The ICTM Study Group on the Performing Arts of Southeast Asia (PASEA) began organisational meetings in 2008 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It was formally established under the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) in 2009. This Study Group is open to all ICTM members involved in research and documentation on the performing arts (including music, dance and theatre) of Southeast Asia.

- Current members have initiated three sub-study groups, i.e. Sub-Study Group on Performing Arts of Muslim Communities in Southeast Asia; Sub-Study Group on Performing Arts in Royal Contexts; and Sub-Study Group on Popular Performing Arts Industries of Southeast Asia. It holds a symposium every two years at various locations in Southeast Asia.⁷³

ASEAN Solidarity



NGOs have been active in building regional cultural communities, such as the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (MBRAS), which promotes a greater interest in the study of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and the region.

- Since 1977, the Society has focused on encouraging the development of regionalism and ASEAN solidarity.
- The society publishes a journal and carries out other scholarly activities.

- To date, it has published 318 Journals, 51 Monographs, 34 Reprints, 3 Indexes, a statistical gazetteer, a map of the Malay Peninsula, a textbook on Eastern Geography as well as numerous pioneer articles on a wide variety of subjects such as culture, history, literature, anthropology, archaeology, botany, zoology and others.

⁷² ICCA. <https://www.iccaworld.org>

⁷³ ICTM Study Group on Performing Arts of Southeast Asia. <https://ictmusic.org/group/performing-arts-southeast-asia>

City Partnership



KL has been in active partnership with the international community through live twinning cities, including:

- Ankara, Turkey (1984)
- Casablanca, Morocco (1991)
- Isfahan, Iran (1997)
- Mashhad, Iran (2006)
- Chennai, India (2011)
- London, United Kingdom (n.a.)

8th World Summit on Arts and Culture KL, 11 – 14 March 2019

Organiser: International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) in collaboration with one of the National Members every 3 years.

The event sought to promote international cooperation, learning and information exchange amongst art support agencies, artists, art managers and policy makers around the world.

- In 2019, the World Summit on Arts and Culture was held in Malaysia, from 11 to 14 March, and it was jointly organised with the National Department for Culture and Arts, Malaysia (JKKN), Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Malaysia.⁷⁴

7th Asian National Museums Association Executive Meeting and Conference (ANMA 7), 29 – 31 October 2019

Organiser: Department of Museums Malaysia

The ANMA meeting was reserved for its members who looked for possible cooperative measures to develop Asian museums and ways to encourage continuous exchange among national museums within Asia.

- Its theme was “Social Unity through Culture, Art and History: The Museum Challenges” and it aimed to unite nations and highlight the importance of museums in moulding a country’s cultural identity through the celebration of its culture, customs, religion and ethnicity.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ 8th World Summit on Art and Culture. <https://www.artsummit.org/history>

⁷⁵ ANMA 2019. <http://anma2019.jmm.gov.my>

Cultural and Creative Ecosystem, and Infrastructure

Consistent with a national trend, the growth of the creative ecosystem in greater KL was initially led by public institutions like the museums, galleries, and performance spaces which then sparked the growth of private creative and cultural bodies, venues and entrepreneurs.

With the development of mega malls and multi-sector complexes, arts and culture were also absorbed with galleries, theatres and performance spaces opening in such developments or allocated a dedicated space and/time within the public areas of the complex as an added attraction.

Cultural Funding

Among the Key Economy Growth Areas set out in the National Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 are the Digital Economy and Content Industries. Support for these industries also has an impact on the cultural sector.

The government sets aside an annual allocation in the budget for the arts and culture and for 2021, the amount is RM15million (up from RM5 million the previous year). Among which, RM10million will be disbursed via the Cultural Economy Development Agency (CENDANA) and the rest via MyCreative Venture through loans.

In addition to this, many local corporations through their foundations have arts and culture as a pillar and offer project grants.

For KL, cultural funding has also been extended through direct sponsorship by the private sector and by international cultural foundations which have a presence in the country as well through a variety of international grant programmes that are periodically open to Malaysians.

In recent years, crowdfunding is quickly gaining popularity⁷⁶ among micro businesses and startups due to the speed of direct access to funds, while providing a diversified and broadened investor demographic. It has also become more prevalent as part of the cultural funding mix.

Since the service of popular platforms such as Kickstarter and GoFundMe are not available in Malaysia, Asian crowdfunding platforms⁷⁷ become top choices for the country's creative talents to seek financial backers, including:

- 100% Project
- Give.asia
- Airfunding

Pasar Seloka at Rumah Tangsi.

Photo © Seetizenslab



⁷⁶ <https://www.malaymail.com/news/what-you-think/2020/05/06/why-crowdfunding-will-be-the-new-normal-for-malaysian-companies-izwan-zakar/1863712>

⁷⁷ <https://blog.airfunding.net/crowdfunding/5-top-crowdfunding-platforms-in-malaysia>

Arm's Length Cultural and Creative Economy Support and Investment

Cultural Economy Development Agency's (CENDANA) Funding Programme, 2018 – present⁷⁸

Cendana is a government agency with aims to develop Malaysian creative economy. It provides a leadership, advocacy, networking, showcasing and development role. It works to empower, energise and recognise the creative and cultural across Malaysia.

- It offers a variety of funding programmes as well as Covid recovery scheme.

Film in Malaysia Incentive (FIMI), 2016 – present⁷⁹

- The "Film In Malaysia Incentive" (FIMI), a 30% cash rebate on all Qualifying Malaysian Production Expenditure (QMPE), was introduced by the Malaysian Government to offer an additional financial incentive for creative content development, specifically for film, television and other screen production within Malaysia, to further support and develop the industry.
- FIMI applications are processed through the Film In Malaysia Office (FIMO), a division of the National Film Development Corporation Malaysia.

Think City Grants Programme, 2014 – present⁸⁰

Think City was established in 2009 in Penang, a year after George Town and Melaka were both awarded UNESCO World Heritage Site. Funded by the Ministry of Finance, it launched the George Town Grants Programme (GTGP) to lead urban regeneration and encourage community engagement to preserve and appreciate heritage through grants and technical support.

- In 2014, Think City opened offices in Butterworth, Johor Bahru and KL.
- At present, Think City continues to run its grants programme for two cities – KL and Johor Bahru.⁸¹

Corporate and Foundations

Maybank Foundation, 2010 – present

The focus of the Maybank Foundation is to create a positive and long-term impact in communities in the markets where Maybank operates.

- This is done through strategic partnerships with local stakeholders and NGOs in all six areas, namely Education, Community Empowerment, Arts and Culture, Environmental Diversity, Healthy Living, and Disaster Relief.⁸²

The Krishen Jit Fund, 2006 – present

Five Arts Centre is a vibrant collective of Malaysian artists and producers renowned for its pioneering performances on theatre, dance and music. In 2006, in collaboration with ASTRO, Five Arts Centre launched the Krishen Jit ASTRO Fund to aid artistic work done by Malaysians and others who are dedicated to the development of arts in Malaysia.

- In 2020, grants ranging from RM1,000 to RM20,000 were distributed for workshops, attachments/residencies, experimental productions, research and documentation, writing, creating new work in music, dance, theatre, writing, film, visual/performance art and others.⁸³

CIMB Foundation, 2007 – present

CIMB Foundation is a non-profit organisation set up to implement CIMB Group's corporate social responsibility and philanthropic initiatives. The Foundation focuses on three specific areas: Community Development, Sports, and Education. Their grant programme, Community Link has continuously and consistently supported various community-based cultural programmes over 12 years, implementing 850 projects nationwide.⁸⁴

- The grant amount is RM50,000 per application and the project period should not be more than 12 months.
- In 2019, Community Link was restructured to focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) supported by CIMB Group. The previous Community Link programme clusters have been re-categorised under the 4 SDGs. These SDGs are as following SDG 3: Good Health And Well-Being, SDG 8: Decent Work And Economic Growth, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities and SDG 13: Climate Action.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ <https://www.cendana.com.my>

⁷⁹ <https://www.filminmalaysia.com>

⁸⁰ Think City Sdn Bhd. (n.d.). Our Story. <https://thinkcity.com.my/about-us/our-story>

⁸¹ Penang Institute obtained this information via a call with Think City on 29 January 2021, 3.15 pm.

⁸² Maybank Foundation. <http://www.maybankfoundation.com/index.php/who-we-are>

⁸³ The Krishen Jit Fund 2020. <https://www.fiveartscentre.org/krishen-jit-fund>

⁸⁴ CIMB Foundation. <https://www.cimbfoundation.com/about-us/overview>

⁸⁵ Community Link 2019. <https://www.cimbfoundation.com/grant-application>

Yayasan Sime Darby (Sime Darby Foundation), 2009 – present

Yayasan Sime Darby's support for community arts is showcased in its ardent commitment in sponsoring projects and initiatives focusing on arts and culture, particularly areas centred around: sustainability of Malaysian arts, culture and heritage; arts and culture encouragement; arts demand development; and arts education and empowerment.

- Currently they have contributed RM27.95 million to arts and culture since 2009. They supported 309 artists, 29 arts festivals, and trained 20,893 individuals through capacity building initiative.⁸⁶

AirAsia Foundation, 2012 – present

The AirAsia Foundation helps underprivileged Asian entrepreneurs raise their profiles, rebrand their products and reach new markets; as well as build new and existing businesses within communities. Its core work centres on supporting social entrepreneurs.

- Since its inception in 2012, the AirAsia Foundation has funded many social enterprises. Local projects include the animal preservation programme APE Malaysia HOSES for Wildlife in Petaling Jaya; micro-hydro turbine scheme Tonibung Renewable Energy Fund in Borneo; a bicycle repair/training centre called The Basikal Know-One Teach One in Kuala Lumpur; and many more.⁸⁷

The INXO Arts and Culture Foundation, 2012 – present

The INXO Arts & Culture Foundation continuously oversees and develops arts and culture education.

- INXO Arts Fund, a funding project for cultural and arts creation, facilitates and promulgates cultural and arts development for youth and offers conceptual and technical guidance, support and resources on top of funding.⁸⁸ It used to support 10 proposals per year and provide between RM3,000 and RM10,000 for each proposal. Funding for 2020 was suspended.



Many positions the arts as a luxury and entertainment, but arts and culture shapes who we are...

Tan E-Jan, INXO Arts and Culture Foundation⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Arts and Culture. <http://www.yayasansimedarby.com/our-projects/arts-culture>

⁸⁷ She Heads a Foundation that Benefits Community. The Star. <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/star2.com-video/2017/03/10/yap-mun-ching-airasia-foundation>; Official website: <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/star2.com-video/2017/03/10/yap-mun-ching-airasia-foundation>

⁸⁸ About INXO. <https://www.inxo.org.my/about>

⁸⁹ <https://www.nst.com.my/lifestyle/groove/2019/12/548331/showbiz-artful-impact-small-towns>

Yayasan Hasanah (Hasanah Foundation), 2015 – present

Yayasan Hasanah is an independent grant-making foundation. It addresses and tackles different issues ranging from child poverty, preservation of forests, and arts and cultural heritage among others. The foundation awards grants once a year for projects that focus on achieving long-term impacts on the following areas: education, community development, environment, and arts & public spaces.

- It offers two types of funding, Organisational Development Funding (ODF) and Programme Management Funding (PMF), which aim to support initiatives' sustainability. A maximum of RM2,000,000 can be awarded for projects running over three years, while pilot projects and short-term projects are eligible for smaller grants.⁹⁰

The Hai-O Arts and Culture Grants, 2018 – present

Since its inception in 1975, Hai-O Enterprise Berhad, through the Hai-O Arts & Culture Grants, has continuously promoted education and culture as well as aided underprivileged individuals and groups through generous donations.

- The organisation also values arts and has vigorously supported the Sasaran Art Festival, theatre, poetry recitals, dance and cultural performances, performing arts centres, as well as national literary laureates. (A total of RM50,000 in grants were made available in 2018 for the following: RM5,000 for one Lifetime Achievement Award; RM1,000 to RM20,000 grants for creating new work in music, dance, theatre, film and visual art, experimental productions, research and documentation, training, workshops and residencies.)

Corporate Social Responsibility



Community empowerment is a key focus of cultural funding in KL.

Organisations such as **Maybank Foundation** have helped numerous artists, photographers, graphic designers, and writers by sponsoring and promoting a wide range of events to celebrate the unique, diverse, and vibrant cultures locally and in the region.

- The Balai Seni (Arts Gallery) Arts Series and KataKhata. Balai Seni Maybank is among one of the first corporate galleries in Malaysia. It has played a key role in the development of arts since the 1980s and has actively promoted the country's cultural, artistic and historical

heritage for the past 10 years, both domestically and internationally, to support and encourage their preservation and sustainability.

- Maybank Women Eco-Weavers is currently running in Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos and Malaysia with the key objective being creating economic independence and financial inclusion for women weavers through sustainable woven textile production. As part of a holistic approach to ensure sustainability in the weaving ecosystem, they also infuse sericulture programmes to help mulberry farmers who play a major part in the silk supply chain in selected countries.

⁹⁰ Yayasan Hasanah. <https://yayasanhasanah.org/partner-with-us>

International Cultural Institutions

Arts, Education and Society, British Council, 1948 – present

The British Council promotes innovative and diverse aspects of the UK arts including visual arts, architecture, design, dance, drama, music, film, literature and creative economy. It provides opportunities for people in Malaysia and the UK to share creativity, collaborate and inspire each other.⁹¹

- Connections Through Culture (CTC) programme is an arts grants programme run by the British Council in the UK and East Asia. It was established in August 2019 in Southeast Asia to provide grants to artists, cultural and arts professionals, or representatives of art collectives, networks or organisations, of the UK, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. The total amount of the grant is from £2,500 to £8,000.⁹²
- The Crafting Futures programme in Malaysia is part of the regional Crafting Futures programme, which aims to empower women in the crafts sector in South East Asia by providing inclusive opportunities through design and creative enterprise development to help increase their social and economic well-being and revitalise their cultural assets. Working with the Institute of Design Innovation at Glasgow School of Art, the programme focused on supporting the new generation of artisans from the National Craft Institute (IKN) through capacity building and design innovation workshops, local, regional and UK exchanges, and networking events with industry and other educational institutions. This pilot project will help IKN become a creative hub for vocational students and a catalyst of creativity for the craft sector.⁹³
- The Hubs For Good programme aims to provide support for the development of creative hubs to be key drivers and catalysts for good across Malaysia. It is to increase and enhance the capacity of hubs to

function more efficiently, and increase the positive impact towards their community, contributing to the well-being of these cities. Other than mapping studies, workshops and digital archives, this programme also provides support for the development of creative hubs to be key drivers and catalysts for good in their community. In line with the programme's objectives, five grants were awarded to Malaysian creative hubs in March 2020 for the purpose of conducting clinics, workshops or exchanges with experts to increase the capacity of creative hubs and advance professional development of hub managers in areas such as social media audience engagement, mass media and public relations, branding and legal.⁹⁴

Cultural Programme, U.S. Embassy in Malaysia, 1957 – present

The U.S. Embassy in Malaysia is supporting the programmes that bring American speakers, performing artists, or art exhibitions to Malaysia. Other than that, the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation provides direct small grant support to heritage preservation in Malaysia and other developing countries.

- The programme was established by the U.S. Congress in 2001 with US\$1 million, and to date has supported 437 projects worldwide, totalling more than US\$11 million.
- It also offers grants to Malaysian institutions, organisations and individuals to assist in organising cultural programmes and activities for Malaysians. These programmes include American Studies, performing arts, entrepreneurship, empowering women and youths, strengthening democracy, interfaith forums and combating extremism. The grant is up to \$125,000 for each award.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Our Works in the Arts. <https://www.britishcouncil.my/programmes/arts>

⁹² Connections Through Culture. <https://www.britishcouncil.my/programmes/arts/connections-through-culture>

⁹³ Crafting Futures. <https://www.britishcouncil.my/programmes/arts/work/crafts>

⁹⁴ Hubs for Good. <https://www.britishcouncil.my/programmes/arts/work/hubs>

⁹⁵ Cultural Programmes. <https://my.usembassy.gov/education-culture/cultural-programs>

Goethe-Institut Malaysia, 1962 – present

Goethe-Institut Malaysia provides funding to the fields of visual arts, mass media, performing arts and theatre to encourage collaborations.

- International Co-production Fund (up to €25,000) is intended for co-productions by artists in the fields of theatre, dance, music and performance art, in which hybrid and interdisciplinary formats and the use of digital media may be key components.⁹⁶
- The Artist-In-Residence exchange programme (AIR) aims at supporting and encouraging contemporary visual arts and promoting international exchange between Frankfurt and Kuala Lumpur. The programme offers young and emerging artists the opportunity to gain experience regarding their own artistic practice and to build an international network.⁹⁷
- In collaboration with LIA (Leipzig International Art Programme) the Goethe-Institute offers artists from Southeast Asia a three-month residency at the Art and Culture Centre Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei.⁹⁸

Grants for Arts, Culture and Intellectual Exchanges, Japan Foundation, 1972 – present

The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 with the primary objective of promoting mutual cultural exchange between Japan and other countries worldwide. There is a Small Grant Programme which supports projects concerning Japan in the field of Japanese arts and culture/Japanese studies and Intellectual Exchange (up to RM14,000), projects concerning cultural collaboration (up to RM30,000) and projects concerning Japanese language education (up to RM4,000).⁹⁹

Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)¹⁰⁰

ASEF has a rich portfolio of funding programme in Malaysia, from research, mapping, residencies and many more. It aims to bring Asia and Europe closer by providing information, facilitating dialogue and stimulating reflection on the arts and culture of the two regions.

Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN)¹⁰¹

AVPN commits to building the ecosystem for social investors with an active presence in Malaysia – from foundations and impact funds to corporations, intermediaries and beyond. They provide funding for social impact programmes.

⁹⁶ International Coproduction Fund. <https://www.goethe.de/ins/my/en/kul/ser/ikf.html>

⁹⁷ Artists in Residence Exchange Programme. <https://www.goethe.de/ins/my/en/kul/sup/air.html>

⁹⁸ Pazifik-Leipzig. <https://www.goethe.de/ins/my/en/kul/sup/ple.html>

⁹⁹ JFKL Financial Support. <https://www.jfkl.org.my/support/financial>

¹⁰⁰ <https://culture360.asef.org/countries/malaysia>

¹⁰¹ <https://avpn.asia/markets/malaysia>

Heritage Assets

Under the National Heritage Act in 2005, Malaysia has developed a register of national heritage covering both tangible and intangible assets as well as a register of heritage sites covering buildings, archaeological and natural sites, and objects both tangible and intangible. One can have access to a wide selection of this in Greater Kuala Lumpur. KL is also a hub to sample the diversity of cultural traditions and intangible cultural heritage from across Malaysia.

“

...historical buildings such as Carcosa Seri Negara, Masjid Jamek Sultan Abdul Samad, the St Mary's Cathedral, Kuala Lumpur Railway Station and headquarters of Kereta Api Tanah Melayu (KTM) Berhad, the old Istana Negara and Merdeka Stadium are places rich in history involving the formation of this country where most of it is closely related to the early history of Selangor. The influence of Moorish and Mughal architectural features of historical buildings around Kuala Lumpur has its own story and should be preserved as well as appreciated for future generations

The Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah¹⁰²

¹⁰² <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2021/01/661927/selangor-sultan-calls-preservation-state-related-kl-historical-buildings>

UNESCO Titles

World Book Capital 2020

The UNESCO World Book Capital designation is awarded to cities that pledge to promote books and reading. KL received the nomination in 2020 due to its strong focus on inclusive education and development of a knowledge-based society, and for making reading accessible for everyone in the city. Events and activities included the creation of a book city in the Kota Buku Complex, a reading campaign for train commuters, strengthening digital services and accessibility by the National Library of Malaysia for the disabled, and new digital services for 12 libraries situated in poor housing areas of KL.¹⁰³

Tentative list of World Heritage (selected)

FRIM Selangor Forest Park, 2017

Category: Cultural

FRIM-SFP is the oldest and largest re-created rainforest in the world. Standing at 544 ha, it serves as a remarkable illustration of scientific prowess as it demonstrates that recreating a tropical rainforest is feasible even on completely deforested and degraded land.¹⁰⁴

Gombak Selangor Quartz Ridge, 2017

Category: Natural

Gombak Selangor Quartz Ridge's uniqueness can be attributed to the fact that it is entirely made of quartz and possibly the longest pure quartz dyke worldwide with a length of 14 km. As a natural site of 200 million years, its landscape is also breathtaking due to its elongated craggy rocks in the midst of a green tropical forest that resembles the spine of a dragon.¹⁰⁵

Sungai Buloh Leprosarium, 2019

Category: Cultural

Officially referred to as the National Leprosy Control Centre (NLCC), the Sungai Buloh Leprosarium is situated in the valley of Bukit Lagong, 25km away from KL. It was the first centre to treat leprosy patients humanely in the 20th Century by providing social amenities and modern medical facilities to enable patients to live independently and undergo treatments with dignity.¹⁰⁶

Wayang Kulit from Pustaka Evenings @ Publika 2015.

Photo © Cheryl J. Hoffmann | PUSAKA

¹⁰³ Kuala Lumpur World Book Capital 2020. <https://www.kualalumpurwbc.com/#home>. Official website: <https://en.unesco.org/world-book-capital-city-2020>

¹⁰⁴ FRIM Selangor Forest Park. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6174>

¹⁰⁵ Gombak Selangor Quartz Ridge. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6175>

¹⁰⁶ Sungai Buloh Leprosarium. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6388>



Historical Core



Think City, a government think tank dedicated to mapping and urban regeneration.

- Think City's focus in KL was to revitalise the historic area around Masjid Jamek which led to 32 crowd-sourced grantees being funded to work towards that goal.
- It has also collaborated with the following organisations: KL City Hall on a number of initiatives; National Museum and National Stadium for heritage preservation and engagement; and the Klang City Hall, Klang Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Selangor Malay Chamber of Commerce Malaysia and the Klang Indian Chamber of Commerce to revitalise two major nodes within the old Klang Town.
- Categories of heritage building.
<https://maps.thinkcity.com.my/think-city/maps/91695/categories-of-heritage-buildings#>

According to Think City, KL's historical identity is highlighted by its distinct architecture.

- About half (51%) of the buildings in KLCCD are in traditional style.

With many of these traditional buildings being left vacant, efforts are being taken to revive these spaces to position KLCCD as the convergence and cultural centre of the community.

- While prime assets such as Masjid Jamek, Dataran Merdeka, Muzium Negara, and Islamic Arts Museum reside in KLCCD, the historic core area is witnessing the development of many creative industries along with tangible and intangible cultural assets.

Sample of ‘Movers and Shakers’ in the Cultural and Creative Sector of KL

KL brands itself as a city of contrasts and diversity which brings ample opportunities for collaborations and partnerships in the arts and culture. Its strategic location, infrastructure, talent pool and business friendly policies are among the key reasons cited to draw investment in the city and this is rounded up by ensuring the livable quality of Kuala Lumpur.

Table 1 Selected Kuala Lumpur stakeholders¹⁰⁷

Media/Film/Digital	Arts	Crossover – Culture/Arts/Lifestyle
Lorna Tee, film producer	Eddin Khoo, founder of PUSAKA	Izan Satrina, Cultural leader and Director of CENDANA
Afdlin Shauki, actor and comedian	Ahmad Fuad Osman, artist	Melinda Looi, fashion designer
Affendy Ali Dally, general manager of Media Prima Berhad	Dr. Hj. Yatela Zainal Abidin, CEO of Yayasan Sime Darby	Datin Sri Sharifah Menyalara Hussein, CEO and partner of M&C Saatchi
Ho Yuhang, film director	Amir Muhammad, founder of Buku Fixi	Alif Satar, singer
Jin Lim (Jinnyboy), radio DJ and YouTube filmmaker	Pauline Fan, creative director of PUSAKA	Elizabeth Cardosa, heritage conservator
Joe Flizzow, singer, songwriter and music producer	Bayu Utomo Radjikin, director of HOM Art Trans	Fahmi Reza, graphic designer
Khailee Ng, founder of Says.com	Bernard Goh, founder of Hand Percussion (HANDS)	Pang Kee Teik, art consultant and activist
Namewee, artist	Marion D'Cruz, founder of the Five Arts Centre	Suryani Senja Alias, founder and managing director of CULT Sdn Bhd
Shanjhey Kumar Perumal, film director and screenwriter	Loh Kok Man, founder of Pentas Project	Benjamin Young, The BIG Group
TP Lim, Infinitus Entertainment	Najib Bamadhaj, artist	Fern Chua, designer and founder of FERN
June Tan, producer	Ramli Ibrahim, chairman of Sutra Foundation	Kelvin Long and Chantelle Teoh, A Piece of Malaysia (APOM) and Doof Industries
Jennifer Thompson, Music Industry Advocate	Salehuddin b. Md Salleh, Deputy Director General (Policies & Planning) of JKKN	Janet Pillai, educator and activist
	Shafiq Nordin, artist	William Tham, publication officer at GerakBudaya
	Zamzuriah binti Zahari, dancer, choreographer, actress and singer	Suryani Senja Alias, founder of Senijari
	Professor Joseph Gonzales, performer and choreographer	Beverly Young and Rachel Ng, co-director of Rogue Art
	TitikMerah Collective, 2014	

¹⁰⁷ For the purpose of this report, cultural influencers are defined as the media or cultural sector go to people comprising key opinion leaders who are networked into the public, private and cultural scene. They or their organisations, where possible, have a substantial following (>50,000 followers) especially on social media and/or digital channels and are seen as credible experts in their field and can influence change, innovating culture and arts practices through their programmes. In order to provide a sampling of the movers and shakers, they have been categorised into 3 key sectors comprising media, film and digitals, the arts, and those within a crossover of culture, arts and lifestyle.

Media/Film/Digital	Arts	Crossover – Culture/Arts/Lifestyle
	Zikri Rahman, writer, independent researcher, translator and podcast	
	ACX Productions, 2011	
	Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO), 1998	
	National Symphony Orchestra (OSK), 1993	
	Novia Shin Pui San, illustrator	
	Swadaya Collective	
	Liza Ho, founder of The Black Room	
	Joe Hashim and Datuk Faridah, co-founders of The Actors Studio	
	Jo Kukatas, director of Instant Café Theatre	
	Red Hong Yi, architect and artist	
	Ahmad Zakii Anwar, artist	
	Bilqis Hijjas, president of MyDance Alliance	
	Bernice Chauly, writer and poet	
	Ann Lee, writer and researcher	
	Shaq Koyok, artist	

Media/Film/Digital

Lorna Tee, film producer

Lorna Tee is a well-known personality in the Asian film scene. In 2005, she managed the marketing and distribution at Focus Films Hong Kong, and also worked alongside Chinese superstar, Andy Lau on his international business. After that, she managed the Asian office for Variety as their Business Development Manager, creating sales and marketing opportunities for the renowned publication. She then ventured to set up and be the general manager of the Asian investment fund Irresistible Films, working alongside top producer Bill Kong (Edko Films) and Avex Entertainment (Japan).

- Currently, Tee is working with leading production company October Pictures (Hong Kong) and manages her own production company Paperheart (Malaysia) to produce films across Asia. She is also the Co-Festival Director of the new International Film Festival Malaysia while working alongside numerous other international films festivals as a consultant.

Afdlin Shauki, actor and comedian

Afdlin is an actor, director and TV presenter. He was part of the supporting cast for Pesona Pictures' *Mimpi Moon*, a local movie, and the interpreter in the Hollywood movie *Anna and the King*. He owns a company called Vision Works.

Affendy Ali Dally, general manager of Media Prima Berhad

Affendy Ali Dally was head of legal of MyCreative Ventures Sdn Bhd, a company set-up by the Malaysian Government to provide funding via loans & equities to Malaysian creative-related businesses. He is also the co-founder of RIUH, a pioneering creative event, meet up and creative platform held at the fashionable creative hub. He is currently the general manager of Media Prima Berhad, Malaysia's largest media and entertainment company.

Ho Yuhang, film director

Yuhang Ho took a degree in engineering at Iowa State University in the US, but opted for a career in TV production when he returned to Malaysia. His debut feature in 2003 was financed by television and shot on digital video, but was invited to many film festivals as a film and won the Special Jury Prize at the Festival des 3 Continents in Nantes, France. His subsequent features and shorts have been invited to an ever-widening circle of festivals and have won several more prizes, including the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC) Award and the Tiger Award for Best Short at International Film Festival Rotterdam.

Jin Lim (Jinnyboy), radio DJ and YouTube filmmaker

Jin Lim, better known as Jinnyboy, is one such Malaysian content creator with over one million subscribers on his YouTube channel. He started his career in the traditional world of radio and officially launched the JinnyboyTV channel on YouTube in 2012. He is currently leading a company called JinnyboyTV, a production house and digital content creator.

Joe Flizzow, singer, songwriter and music producer

Credited for placing Malaysian hip-hop on the global scene, Joe Flizzow is a Malaysian singer, songwriter, music producer and entrepreneur who has won numerous awards such as the Song Champion Award and Music Industry Award. Through his own music label, Kartel Records, he actively seeks to discover and promote local hip-hop artists, thus making him the perfect candidate for the position of Def Jam South East Asia's managing director which aims to focus on the energetic hip-hop scene in the region.

Khailee Ng, founder of Says.com

Khailee Ng is the founder of Groupsmore (acquired by Groupon) and Malaysia's largest online media company, Says.com (acquired by Media Prima). He is currently a managing partner at 500 Startups, a Silicon Valley based venture capital firm, which also provides funding in seed capital and development programmes to countries in the Middle East, Latin America and Southeast Asia. Khailee is responsible for more than 180 investments in Southeast Asian tech startups, including Grab, Carousell, and many others.

Nomee, artist

Nomee is an artist, musician and content creator. He is currently based in Taiwan. Nomee first had his works released online in 2006. Since his debut, Nomee's diligence has accumulated over 800 songs of different genres with the collaboration with many top tier musicians of various generations across Asia. His YouTube channel is ranked amongst the top 10 most-viewed in Malaysia. He started to be involved in the film industry in 2011.

Shanjhey Kumar Perumal, film director and screenwriter

Shanjhey Kumar Perumal is a film director and screenwriter. He has been involved in a diverse array of media ranging from documentaries and short films to musicals and children's programmes. He made his debut film called "*Jagat*" / "*Brutal*" (International Title) in 2015 which won Best Film and Best New Director in 2016 Malaysian Film Festival.

TP Lim, managing director of Infinitus Entertainment

TP Lim is the managing director of Infinitus Entertainment (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, which has produced many Malaysian block-busters and award-winning movies, such as "*Hantu Kak Limah*", "*Sangkar*" and "*J Revolusi*". As an Executive Producer, TP also oversees different aspects of the business, which include among others, the production, distribution and marketing of movies.

- Infinitus Entertainment Limited was established in 2015, with regional offices in Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Beijing and Taipei. Its core businesses include film development and production with target audiences primarily spanning from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan to South East Asia.

June Tan, producer

June Tan is a screenwriter, producer and acts as secretariat and committee member of ReformARTsi, a community coalition advocating policy change in the arts.¹⁰⁸

Jennifer Thompson, Music Industry Advocate¹⁰⁹

Jennifer Thompson is the managing director of event company J TWO Entertainment and a long-time advocate of the Malaysian music industry.

¹⁰⁸ <https://apam.org.au/artist/june-tan>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jennifer-thompson-a3904560>

Arts

Eddin Khoo, founder of PUSAKA

Eddin Bu-Eng Khoo has been deeply involved in preserving the heritage of Malay culture, particularly through his writing. He is the founder and assistant director of PUSAKA, a non-profit organisation that works to support the continuity and viability of traditional performance arts in Malaysia.

Ahmad Fuad Osman, artist

Ahmad Fuad left his hometown of Baling, Kedah, in 1987 to obtain a degree in Fine Arts at the then Institut Teknologi MARA (now Universiti Teknologi MARA UiTM). It was there that he met fellow artists Bayu Utomo, Hamir Soib, Ahmad Shukri and Masnor Ramli and formed the Matahati group. The artistic collective addresses history, identity, cultural and social changes in Malaysia, and have subsequently become a giant in SEA art history.¹¹⁰ His work has found worldwide acclaim and has been exhibited in institutions such as the National Visual Art Gallery and Petronas Gallery Malaysia; Tacheles Berlin, Germany; The Seoul Metropolitan Art Museum, Korea; Singapore Art Museum; Gertrude Art Centre, Melbourne, Australia; Guangdong Museum of Art China; Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan; Manes Gallery, Czech Republic; Red Mill Gallery, Vermont USA; and many other galleries and museums.

Dr. Hjh. Yatela Zainal Abidin, CEO of Yayasan Sime Darby

With 24 years of experience with Sime Darby, Dr. Hjh. Yatela Zainal Abidin has spent almost half of her career in philanthropy in search of initiatives that address the critical needs of today's ever-changing society and environment. Her experience in Corporate Social Responsibility is reflected in the various projects undertaken by Yayasan Sime Darby in accordance with its five pillars which are Education; Community & Health; Environment; Sports; and Arts & Culture.

Amir Muhammad, founder of Buku Fixi

Amir Muhammad is a publisher with his company Matahari Books which is founded in 2007. He started an online bookstore, Buku Fixi, in 2011 and opened his first bookstore in 2015. Amir is also a well-known film director.

Pauline Fan, creative director of PUSAKA

Pauline Fan is a writer and translator who has translated several books from German to Malay and selected German and Malay poems into English. Since 2002, she has worked as creative director at the cultural organisation PUSAKA (Centre for Culture, Tradition, Ideas) to support the viability of the traditional performing arts of Kelantan and other states in West Malaysia.

Bayu Utomo Radjikin, director of HOM Art Trans

Bayu Utomo Radjikin was born in Sabah, Malaysia. With a diverse practice ranging from figurative painting to sculpture, his work focuses on public and personal identity, social commentary and international political tensions. Bayu has exhibited in the UK, Indonesia, Pakistan and has won several major Malaysian awards. He is a member of Malaysian artist collective MATAHATI and The F Klub, and now Director of HOM Art Trans, an independent art space that seeks to assist and support the development of visual art in Malaysia and facilitates networking with the Southeast Asian counterparts.

Bernard Goh, founder of Hands Percussion (HANDS)

Bernard Goh is the founder and artistic director of Hands Percussion (HANDS) and has successfully led the group for 20 years. HANDS is now a leading percussion group in Malaysia, and has represented Malaysia in music festivals all over Asia, Europe and America.

¹¹⁰ <https://universes.art/en/nafas/articles/2009/matahati>

Marion D'Cruz, founder of the Five Arts Centre

One of the five original founders of Five Arts Centre in 1984, Marion D'Cruz is a pioneering contemporary dancer-choreographer.¹¹¹ Five Arts Centre is a vibrant collective of Malaysian artists and producers from diverse disciplines, renowned for its pioneering performances in theatre, dance and music that also incorporate aspects of the visual and digital arts. The collective has performed and presented its work in many countries in Asia and around the world, and it has been instrumental in the growth of a Malaysian identity in the arts. Their performances, exhibitions, seminars and workshops showcase current social, political and cultural issues affecting Malaysians.

- They share their studio, Kotak, for free, for artists who need a space to rehearse, experiment, and develop their creative practice. This venue can hold rehearsals, small group meetings of up to 15 people max and is flexible for use such as panel discussions, screenings and forums for a maximum of 30 people. All events that apply for partnership needs to be free of charge to the public to qualify.

Loh Kok Man, founder of Pentas Project

Loh Kok Man is the artistic director of Pentas Project, an established theatre director, actor, lighting designer and theatre lecturer. He was a recipient of Best Director, Best Set Design and Best Lighting Design in The BOH Cameronian Arts Awards in Malaysia. His work usually integrated various theatrical elements such as visual imageries, lighting, sound, physical movement and interactions between dramatic structures of theatre, exploring rich development of space and time in theatre visuals. He was awarded a fellowship from the "Asian Cultural Council" and invited frequently to participate in international theatre collaboration projects.

Najib Bamadhaj, artist

Najib Bamadhaj has participated in various group exhibitions, including: *Endangered*, a two-man show with Hirzaq Harris at TAKSU KL (2011), Visual Art Award (2011), *LiFest* at MAPKL (2011), *HIMPUN* at National Art Gallery KL (2010), and many others. He was the Finalist of MRCB Art Awards at National Art Gallery KL (2008), 1st Prize Winner in the Tanjong Heritage Art Competition in Kuala Lumpur (2010), and Finalist of VAA in Kuala Lumpur (2011). Najib Ahmad Bamadhaj currently lives and works in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Ramli Ibrahim, chairman of Sutra Foundation

Accomplished in Indian classical dance and contemporary modern dance, Ramli Ibrahim is a Malaysian cultural and dance pioneer in Malaysia as well as overseas. He has performed locally and abroad for more than three decades and become a cultural champion by creating an awareness of culture through his dance. He is the artistic director of Sutra Dance Theatre and chairman of Sutra Foundation. He has received numerous awards namely the Fulbright Distinguished Artist Award, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, three Lifetime Achievement Awards from prestigious organisations in Malaysia and India. He is also considered as a 'Living Heritage' by the Malaysian government.

Salehuddin b. Md Salleh, deputy director general (policies & planning) of JKKK

Salehuddin b. Md Salleh is the deputy director general of the National Department for Culture and Arts (JKKK) and is in charge of the Policy & Planning division.

Shafiq Nordin, artist

Shafiq Nordin majored in painting and received his degree in Fine Art in 2012 from UITM Shah Alam. Since then, his creative style and connotation have continuously evolved. His artworks showcase events happening around the world and focus on the aggressors rather than victims, who are depicted in many different and unattractive situations.

Zamzuriah binti Zahari, dancer, choreographer, actress and singer

Zamzuriah Zahari is a dancer, choreographer, actress and singer, specialising in traditional Malay dance and theatre. She is a recipient of the National Arts Award 2006 (Young Talent-Dancer). Her expertise is in the styles of *Tarian Tari Inai*, *Mak Yong Kelantan*, *Mek Mulung Kedah* and *Mak Yong Riau*. She is committed to preserve and revive the legacy of traditional Malay dance and theatre through visits to her hometown, Kelantan, and studying the knowledge and movements of these disappearing art forms.

¹¹¹ <http://www.fiveartscentre.org/marion-d-cruz>

Professor Joseph Gonzales, performer and choreographer

Professor Joseph Gonzales is a versatile performer and a prolific choreographer. He is also a recognised expert in the choreography and interpretation of traditional dances in Malaysia, prominent in dance pedagogy with a vision to educate, inspire and nourish new generations of young dancers to pursue their dreams. Joseph was the recipient of the Crosscultural Champion of the Arts in 2007 and the Gamechanger Award in 2019 at the BOH Cameronian Arts Awards in Malaysia. In 2016, he became Head of Academic Studies and Postgraduate Programme Leader in Dance at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA). He is currently teaching Dance Perspectives, Improvisation and supervising Thesis Project Seminar and Research Project.

TitikMerah Collective, 2014

The TitikMerah Collective was founded by visual artists Raja Azeem Idzham (better known as Ajim Juxta), Adeputra Mastri and Latif Maulan in 2014. The group operates an eponymous gallery in the spirit of collaboration, engagement and community building, and offers new artists a much-needed platform free from the obligations often seen within deals with commercial galleries.

Zikri Rahman, writer, independent researcher, translator and podcaster

Zikri Rahman is a festival director for the inaugural Idearaya Festival; a festival of ideas to celebrate progressive and dynamic discourses within vibrant and diverse grassroots community, intelligentsia, civil society and community organiser in Southeast Asia. He is also involved in Buku Jalanan, a project co-founded as a cultural worker collective and community based cultural literacy initiative focusing on decentralising the modes of knowledge production. He is also a writer, independent researcher, translator and podcaster for various online portals such as Projek Dialog, Jalan Telawi and Roket Kini.

ACX Productions

ACX (Arts, Culture, and Experimental) Productions, an arts organisation established in 2011, with a vision to reach all communities with the arts. Amelia Tan and her friends started it from the Universiti Malaya Department of Performing Arts. They worked together in the 2009 production of *Aku Cinta XXX*, which was held in the Auditorium Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. The organisation experiments with all kinds of art mediums, understands and practices the theories and methodologies, and finds ways of implementing new creative concepts. Its missions are to promote the expression of creative freedom, provide a space for experimentation, retain the simplicities in methodology and practice of the arts, and explore humanity, culture, and society.¹¹²

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO)

The Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra gave its inaugural performance at Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS (DFP) in 1998. With the initial search for outstanding musicians involving a worldwide audition tour, the result was a symphony orchestra made up of musicians from 25 nations, including Malaysians, a remarkable example of harmony among different cultures and nationalities. It regularly performs in major cities of Malaysia. Internationally, it has toured Singapore (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2018), Japan (2001, 2009 and 2017), Korea (2001), Australia (2004), China (2006 and 2019), Taiwan (2007) and Vietnam (2013). It has also released 21 CDs.¹¹³

National Symphony Orchestra (OSK)

Founded in 1993, the history of the National Symphony Orchestra (OSK) began in 1989 when the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism Malaysia appointed 17 full-time Professional Musicians as the basis for the orchestra's establishment. In 1993, OSK was officially launched by the then Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism.¹¹⁴ Currently, OSK has 43 full-time professional musicians under Datuk Mustafa Fuzer Nawawi, the National Symphony Orchestra's (NSO) music director and chief conductor since 1999.¹¹⁵

¹¹² ACX Production. <https://www.facebook.com/ACX-Productions-我愛工作室-1437866986425851>

¹¹³ Meet the MPO. <https://www.mpo.com.my/aboutus>

¹¹⁴ Orkestra Simfoni Kebangsaan (OSK). <http://istanabudaya.gov.my/orkestra-simfoni-kebangsaan>

¹¹⁵ National Symphony Orchestra marks 25th anniversary with youthful outlook. <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/culture/2018/11/15/national-symphony-orchestra-istana-budaya-mustafa-fuzer-nawawi-classical-pop>

Novia Shin Pui San, illustrator

Novia Shin, a Malaysian with a Multimedia and Graphic Design background, is passionate about documenting Malaysia's local culture and history. She has been trying to tell stories with various mediums ranging from illustration, paper art, miniature art, comic, animation, and installation art.¹¹⁶

Swadaya Collective

Swadaya Collective is a collaboration of independent bookstores in Malaysia. It consists of six bookstores, including Tintabudi, Pelita Dhihin, Lit Books, Bibliophile, Nur Innai Bookshop and Gerakbudaya.¹¹⁷

Liza Ho, founder of The Black Room

Liza Ho is the founder of The Black Room gallery,¹¹⁸ located at the Zhongshan Building creative hub.¹¹⁹

Joe Hasham and Faridah Merican, co-founders of The Actors Studio

The duo are the co-founders of The Actor Studio. Joe and Faridah are also artistic director and executive producer, respectively, of the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (klpac)¹²⁰ and the Performing Arts Centre of Penang (penangpac).¹²¹

Jo Kukathas, director of Instant Café Theatre¹²²

Jo Kukathas is an actress and the theatre director of the multidisciplinary Instant Café Theatre.¹²³

Red Hong Yi, architect and artist¹²⁴

Red Hong Yi previously worked as an architect in Shanghai. She achieved social media fame when a video of her painting, a huge portrait of China basketball player Yao Ming, went viral. Red Hong Yi

creates mixed media installations by 'reinterpreting everyday materials through the accumulation of objects'. She combines traditional craftsmanship and digital technology, often expressing themes of women and race.

Ahmad Zakii Anwar, artist

Ahmad Zakii Anwar, also known as Zakii, is a highly-regarded visual artists. His photo-realistic, large-scale charcoal drawings of male nudes are lauded for capturing not only city motifs and urban features but also the distinctive psychological dimensions and cinematic quality of these settings.¹²⁵

Bilqis Hijjas, president of MyDance Alliance

As president of the membership association MyDance Alliance, Bilqis Hijjas has been a leader in promoting contemporary dance in Malaysia through innovative programmes.¹²⁶

Bernice Chauly, writer and poet

Bernice Chauly is a writer and poet. She is also the founding director of the George Town Literary Festival (GTLF).¹²⁷

Ann Lee, writer and researcher

Anne Lee is an award-winning playwright and researcher.¹²⁸ She recently completed a doctorate in Southeast Asian studies at the National University of Singapore, and is writing a book on political humour in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Shaq Koyok, artist¹²⁹

Shaq Koyok is a contemporary artist and activist of the indigenous Temuan tribe of Selangor.

¹¹⁶ Novia Shin. <https://shinpuisan.wixsite.com/illustrator/about>

¹¹⁷ Swadaya MY. <https://www.facebook.com/swadayamy>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.thebackroomkl.com/aboutus>

¹¹⁹ <https://www.artandmarket.net/analysis/2020/1/5/liza-ho-and-collaborations-through-the-back-room>

¹²⁰ <https://www.klpac.org>

¹²¹ <https://www.optionstheedge.com/topic/people/cover-story-datuk-faridah-merican-and-joe-hasham-co-founders-actors-studio>

¹²² <https://instantcafetheatre.com>

¹²³ <https://poskod.my/features/where-im-coming-from-jo-kukathas>

¹²⁴ <https://redhongyi.com/about>

¹²⁵ <https://www.artsy.net/artist/ahmad-zakii-anwar>

¹²⁶ https://performingarts.jp/E/pre_interview/2002/1.html

¹²⁷ <https://bernicechauly.com/about>

¹²⁸ <https://creativebureaucracy.org/speakers/dr-ann-lee>

¹²⁹ <https://shaqkoyokart.blogspot.com>

Crossover – Culture/ Arts/Lifestyle

Izan Satrina, director of Cultural Economy Development Agency (CENDANA)

Izan Satrina, with a background in performing arts management and development, is a leading champion and advocate for arts and culture and is playing a dynamic role in shaping national partnership and policy and building an international profile for arts and culture.

Melinda Looi, fashion designer

Looi is a fashion designer known for her avant-garde and vintage style and president of Malaysia Official Designer Association (MODA). She claimed the title Designer of the Year three times – twice at the Malaysian International Fashion Awards Malaysian International Fashion Week and latest in 2009 at Mercedes Benz Stylo Fashion Awards.

Datin Sri Sharifah Menyalara Hussein, CEO and partner of M&C Saatchi

CEO and partner of M&C Saatchi, Datin Sri Sharifah Menyalara Hussein, is known as the granddaughter of Malaysia's first prime minister and a giant in media and advertising.¹³⁰

Alif Satar, singer

Muhammad Alif bin Mohd Satar is a famous Malaysian singer, actor and television host. He is also an entrepreneur and content creator.

Elizabeth Cardoso, heritage conservator

Elizabeth Cardoso is known for her advocacy work on the preservation of cultural heritage in Malaysia. Her technical involvement in building restoration includes Stadium Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur, winner of the 2010 Award of Excellence for the UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation, and the 2019 PAM Gold Medal award for the conservation of Masjid DiRaja Sultan Sulaiman in Klang.

Fahmi Reza, graphic designer

Fahmi Reza is political activist, graphic designer, street artist and documentary filmmaker who won the “Most Outstanding Human Rights Film” award at the 2007 Freedom Film Fest. He uses art as a means to advocate for human rights and protest against various critical issues in Malaysia such as corruption and the Sedition Act in Malaysia.

Pang Khee Teik, art consultant and activist

Pang Khee Teik is a Malaysian arts consultant, activist, curator, organiser, photographer, and writer. He is the director of popular art and activism bazaar Art For Grabs in Malaysia. He was formerly the arts programme director of The Annexe Gallery where he curated many exhibitions and festivals. Before that, he was the editor of arts website Kakiseni.com. He remains active in speaking on LGBT issues as well as mentoring Malaysian LGBTs to organise events to raise the public's awareness.

Suryani Senja Alias, founder and managing director of CULT Sdn Bhd

Suryani Senja Alias is the Managing Director of CULT, giving advisory work on art and the development of creative strategies, policy and spaces. She also created a newly established social enterprise to grow “Senjari”, a heritage-inspired brand, and she is on the Board of Think City. Some of her past working experience include being Special Officer to the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Senior Vice-President of Investments at Khazanah Nasional in Malaysia, and Chair of the Tuanku Nur Zahirah Foundation, promoting Malaysian heritage.

Benjamin Yong, The BIG Group

Established in 2011 by Benjamin Yong, The BIG Group is a collective of eclectic food and beverage concepts that aims to provide the best and newest to the Klang Valley and Ipoh. BIG includes numerous restaurants, cafes, bars, retail food stores and a supermarket.

¹³⁰ <https://my.asiatatler.com/people/sharifah-menyalara-hussein>

Fern Chua, designer and founder of FERN

Fern Chua, designer and founder of her eponymous batik label FERN, is the winner of the Fashion Pitch 2013 by MyCreative Ventures in Malaysia. The label recently expanded to include an artisanal collection that promotes 'local-made' ethical bespoke lifestyle goods.¹³¹

Kelvin Long and Chantelle Teoh, A Piece of Malaysia (APOM) and Doof Industries

The couple, who used to own an advertising agency, have come up with a very successful bean bag business called Doof as well as APOM which sells Malaysian paraphernalia such as T-shirts and totes printed with expressions, slang and lingo, such as *Lah, Alamak, Aiseyman, On The Way, Cun, Chup, Wa Lao, Macam Yes, Kanto, Buaya Danger, Syok Sendiri, Talk Cock Sing Song* and, for the Instagram generation, *OOTD*.

Janet Pillai, educator and activist¹³²

Janet Pillai leads Arts-ED, an organisation specialising in heritage education, research and publication for community.¹³³

Suryani Senja Alias, founder of Senijari¹³⁶

Heritage-inspired lifestyle brand Senijari,¹³⁷ that promotes Malaysia craft was founded by the former banker/lawyer turned creative Suryani Senja Alias. Alias also operates her contemporary art gallery, Cult Gallery.¹³⁸

Beverly Young and Rachel Ng, co-director of Rogue Art¹³⁹

The duo, alongside Adeline Ooi founded Rogue Art in 2008, a group of contemporary Southeast Asian art specialists. The platform focuses on the creative, strategic and organisational management of art and cultural projects, exhibitions, collections and publications. Rogue Art is the go-to platform to access expertise, knowledge and connections on the visual arts scene in Malaysia.

REXKL.

Photo © REXKL

¹³¹ <https://fern.gallery>

¹³² <https://poskod.my/features/im-coming-janet-pillai>

¹³³ <https://gerakbudayapenang.com/janet-pillai>

¹³⁴ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-wai-liang-tham-62451ba9>

¹³⁵ <https://www.gerakbudaya.com>

¹³⁶ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/suryani-senja-alias-58170635>

¹³⁷ <https://senijari.com>

¹³⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/cultgallery>

¹³⁹ <http://www.rogueart.asia>



Events, Festivals and Creative Marketplaces (selected)

Greater Kuala Lumpur offers a vibrant creative festival and marketplace scene. Pre-pandemic, there was a regular calendar of both public and/or private sector events as well as independent events covering the gamut of arts and crafts sectors including the emerging digital scene.

Many independent events have popped up catering to the local context – from the digital corridor of Cyberjaya to cultural venues like at Publika or creative hubs such as Arts Printing Works (APW). Some have built a brand that travels to different venues like Pasar Seloka and RIUH.

Selected Creative Events and Festivals

Malaysia Film Festival, 1980 – present

Organiser: Malaysian National Film Development Corporation (FINAS) collaborates with Malaysian Film Associations¹⁴⁰ and supported by the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia.

The Malaysia Film Festival is an annual event organised by FINAS (National Film Development Corporation Malaysia), which is held to appreciate Malaysia's art activists in producing quality works. It also provides an opportunity for new filmmakers to showcase their abilities.

- The objectives are to develop a prestigious national film festival platform to recognise and celebrate the country's film industry's excellence and generate strategic networking and cooperation between the government and the sector to implement programs that raise the players' professionalism. It also cultivates cinema in the community through quality works, which creates a support system for the industry's empowerment.
- Only Malaysian films that have never participated in any Malaysian Film Festival series and have obtained the Film Censorship Board (LPF) Certificate on or before the deadline will be eligible to FFM.¹⁴¹

Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair (KLIBF), 1981 – present

Organiser: Secretariat of the National Book Council of Malaysia

The Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair is organised by the Ministry of Education Malaysia, the National Book Council of Malaysia (NBCM) in collaboration with six Malaysian book industry associations. It is a major annual event in the global publishing calendar. During the event, publishers across the regions host various activities, such as book launches, seminars, conventions, and so forth, to cater to the book-lovers community's needs.¹⁴²

Malaysia International Film Festival (MIFFest), 2016 – present

Organiser: MIFFest & MGGA Office

Malaysia International Film Festival and also the Malaysia Golden Global Awards (MGGA) are public exhibitions to showcase international and local films in Malaysia. Both events were established in 2016 by a group of renowned film experts across Asia. It is built on the foundation to create endless opportunities and provide accessible platforms for people in the film industry. The objectives are to promote Malaysian and international film production; to recognise Malaysian and international filmmakers; to introduce Malaysian film, art and culture to the world; and develop the Malaysian Tourism Industry.¹⁴³

MAP Fest, 2010 – present

Organiser: Publika, MAPKL (MAP is an arts and cultural platform that serves as a catalyst to explore contemporary ideas) and others

MAP Fest is an annual arts and cultural festival covering a variety of events from Malaysia and other countries such as theatre productions, cultural performances, poetry, arts workshops, dance and music. The festival aims at inculcating an appreciation for the different kinds of performing arts amongst the public and communities.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Those film associations are including the Malaysian Film Producers Association (PFM), Malaysian Television Producers Association (PTVM), The Malaysian Artists' Association, Film Directors Association of Malaysia (FDAM), Professional Film Workers Association of Malaysia (PROFIMA), Malaysian Entertainment Journalists' and Writers' Association (WHAM), the Malaysian Society of Cinematographer (MySC), Creative Content Association Malaysia (CCAM), Malaysian Documentary Association (MYDOCS), Post-Production, Animation & Creative Content Association Malaysia (POSTAM), and Animation Society of Malaysia (ANIMAS)

¹⁴¹ About FFM. <https://www.finas.gov.my/en/festival-filem-malaysia>

¹⁴² KLIBF. <https://www.klibf.my/index.php>

¹⁴³ MIFFEST. <https://www.mgga.com.my>

¹⁴⁴ MAP Fest 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/events/publika/map-fest-2019/389129658573090>

Urbanscapes festival, 2012 – present

Organiser: Freeform Sdn Bhd

Urbanscapes festival is one of Malaysia's biggest annual art festivals. Initiated in 2002, it has grown into an international event attended by both locals and foreigners. It features creative communities from the fields of music, arts, design, films and more.¹⁴⁵



We want Urbanscapes to inspire people to get out of their homes and explore their city, to discover new experiences and create meaningful conversations around all the fest has to offer.

Adrian Yap, founder, Urbanscape¹⁴⁶

Citrawarna, 1999 – present

Organiser: Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia Official Portal, MOTAC

Citrawarna, also known as Colours of Malaysia, is an annual festival organised sometime in May by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia. It was first introduced to promote and celebrate Malaysia's arts, heritage, nature through street performances, dance routines, cultural demonstrations, marching band performances, and many other activities.

- The festival is staged at Merdeka Square. It brings together over 7,000 participants from diverse sectors (school students, public and private higher education institutions, local cultural organisations and NGOs. It attracts around 100,000 spectators every year.¹⁴⁷

Rantai Art Festival, 2006 – present

Organiser: Rantai Art

Rantai Art started off as a movement of young people who help showcase the work of young and local artists to the public. Since then, the movement has grown to include an annual festival, the Rantai Art Festival, which gives young talents the opportunity to display their creative and artistic work through physical installations, performances and many more, to the public consisting mainly of youth.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Urbanscapes <https://www.urbanscapes.com.my>

¹⁴⁶ <https://rojakdaily.com/lifestyle/article/7852/malaysia-s-longest-running-creative-arts-festival-urbanscapes-is-returning-this-november>

¹⁴⁷ Colours of Malaysia. <http://www.wonderfulmalaysia.com/attractions/colours-of-malaysia.htm>

¹⁴⁸ Rantai Collective. <https://www.facebook.com/rantaiart>

Malaysia International Gourmet Festival (MIGF), 2001 – present

Organiser: AsiaReach Events

The KL Gourmet Festival was established after a series of restaurant reviews, called 'The Gourmet Club', was showcased in VisionKL. In 2006, due to its overwhelming popularity, it was transformed into Malaysia's International Gourmet Festival, and welcomed the participation of restaurants from all over the country.¹⁴⁹

KL Fashion Week, 2013 – present

Organiser: Andrewsmodels

KL Fashion Week is the city's largest fashion event reserved for fashion professionals and attended only by invitation or accreditation. Covid-19 has forced the 2020's event to go digital. The event went live on hurr.tv YouTube channel over three days with 15 episodes.¹⁵⁰

KL Photography Festival (KLPF), 2010 – present

Organiser: PCP Publications, Creator, Advanced Images, Fotografika, Travelmate and Travelution.

KLPF serves as a platform for photographers to join seminars from the industry leaders, mingle with industry experts, meet possible new clients/ collaborators and discover new products.

- Formerly known as the KL Photo Trade Show, the only platform at that time for art and technology exchange in South East Asia, it became the KLPF in 2015 to focus on photographers and photography enthusiasts.
- Since 2015, it has also held the Young Photographers Exhibition Programme for students to learn about professional photography.¹⁵¹

Cooler Lumpur Festival, 2013 – present

Organiser: Cooler Lumpur Sdn Bhd

The Cooler Lumpur Festival is Southeast Asia's first and only festival of ideas bringing together creative thinkers, doers and innovators from all over the world. Over the years, this week-long festival has hosted numerous events across a broad range of creative and artistic disciplines, including independent music, art exhibitions, creative writing, film and creative content, literature, photography, and design.¹⁵²

Tempatan Fest, 2013 – present

Organiser: Brand Design Bazaar (BDB)

Tempatan Fest started off from a humble local store called Brand Design Bazaar (BDB) in Jalan Kia Peng, Kuala Lumpur. Since then, Tempatan Fest has taken to the road, along with the country's foremost innovative clothing entrepreneurs and independent apparel brands to consumers all over Malaysia. In 2014, the number of visitors to all its tour locations was estimated at 100,000.¹⁵³

Goodvibes, 2013 – present

Organiser: Future Sound Asia

Good Vibes Festival features the hottest local and international acts in the music scene. The festival is a homegrown brand created by Future Sound Asia and has become one of the biggest and most anticipated events of the year.

- Good Vibes Presents – an offshoot of Malaysia's much-loved Good Vibes Festival – is a series of live headline shows in Malaysia. It was established as a way of extending the festival all year round, and features top international acts.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ Malaysia International Gastronomy Festival Wins PATA Gold Award. <https://www.visionkl.com/malaysia-international-gastronomy-festival-bags-pata-gold-award>

¹⁵⁰ Highlights from KLFW 2020: Alia Bastamam, MimpI Kita & More, 17 November 2020. Tatler Malaysia. <https://my.asiatatler.com/style/highlights-from-kuala-lumpur-fashion-week-2020>. Official website: <http://klfashionweek.website>

¹⁵¹ KLPF. <https://klpf.com.my>

¹⁵² Cooler Lumpur. <https://www.coolerlumpur.com/about-us>

¹⁵³ Tempatan Fest. <https://www.tempatanfest.com.my/pages/new-page-1>

¹⁵⁴ Good Vibes. <https://www.facebook.com/GoodVibesFest>

Light and Motion Putrajaya (LAMPU), 2013 – present

Organiser: Putrajaya Corporation

LAMPU is the largest annual event of its kind in Malaysia. As per its name which means lamp in Malay, the festival utilises light-based effects in performances and displays such as Car and Bike Light Show, fire-eating performances and many others in the heart of Kuala Lumpur.¹⁵⁵

TAPAU Fest, 2014 – present

TAPAU Fest is Malaysia's Indie Culture and Community Festival. It is a fully local and independent festival organised by the young creative team at TAPAUtv – Malaysia's #1 online indie community portal. The festival celebrates and showcases the best of Malaysia's young and creative talents, and offers a variety of things such as musical performances, music collectors' market, talks, workshops, film screenings and many more.¹⁵⁶

KL International Arts Festival (KLIAF), 2015 – present

Organiser: DiverseCity

Introduced in 2015 by DiverseCity, KLIAF is an annual arts and cultural festival showcasing music, dance, theatre, visual arts and literature. It also aims at helping struggling artists and performers by providing them with a platform to promote themselves and their work.¹⁵⁷

Selangor International Indigenous Arts Festival, 2015 – present

Organiser: Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia

The festival showcases the lives and cultures of the indigenous people of Selangor. The annual events feature arts, crafts, music and lifestyles of the various indigenous communities with presentations from international tribes.¹⁵⁸

LIFT Festival, 2019 – present

Organiser: Ministry of Finance

Hosted by the Malaysian Ministry of Finance and organised in collaboration with Bank Negara Malaysia, and the financial industry in Malaysia, Putrajaya LIFT Festival is a finance & technology (Fintech) festival that seeks to promote to the public the adoption of a digital culture and participation in digital transactions.¹⁵⁹

Kuala Lumpur International Photoawards (KLPA), 2009 – present

The Kuala Lumpur International Photoawards [KLPA], is an international portrait photography prize organised every year to search for the best photographs from professional and amateur photographers to encourage and support portraiture practice particularly in South East Asia.¹⁶⁰

16th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards, April 2019.

Photo © Kakiseni

¹⁵⁵ Light and Motion Putrajaya. <https://www.visionkl.com/light-and-motion-putrajaya>

¹⁵⁶ Tapau Fest. <https://www.tapaufest.my>

¹⁵⁷ KLIAF. <https://www.diversecity.my/about-kliaf>

¹⁵⁸ http://www.cioff.org/events-festival.cfm/en/4904/Malaysia-SELANGOR_INTERNATIONAL_INDIGENOUS_ARTS_FESTIVAL_SIIAF

¹⁵⁹ WHY L.I.F.T. <https://putrajayalift.com/about-us>, accessed in July 2021.

¹⁶⁰ Kuala Lumpur International Photo Awards. <https://www.klphotoawards.com>



Borak Arts Series, 2013 – 2018

Organiser: My Performing Arts Agency (MyPAA), 2012 – 2020

Borak Arts Series is a conference that serves as a cultural and arts platform to generate opportunities and build capacity by bringing together cultural leaders, artists, presenters, producers, intermediaries, funders, academics and students from South East Asia and around the world.

- In 2018 and in partnership with OzAsia Festival, Australia Department of Foreign Trade and Affairs, Australia Council for the Arts, and Cultural Economy Development Agency Malaysia, Borak Arts Series transformed itself into a touring conference with the city of Adelaide in Australia as its first stop.¹⁶¹

National Urban Forum, 2015 – present

Organiser: Urbanice Malaysia

Malaysia National Urban Forum is an annual and national forum that aspires to promote dialogues among stakeholders towards the creation and enhancement of sustainable urbanisation strategies, policies and programmes to accelerate and secure Malaysia's position as a sustainable urban nation.¹⁶²

KL Biennale, 2017 – present

The main objectives of Kuala Lumpur Biennale are to increase the National Arts Gallery's network of collaboration; promote Malaysian contemporary arts overseas; position Kuala Lumpur as one of the must go to city for art in the international art map; and showcase Malaysia's dedication in developing a competitive creative economic sector globally.¹⁶³ The National Art Gallery (NAG) in Kuala Lumpur announced in a statement in March 2020 that the biennale 2020 had been cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak. It was supposed to run from September 2020 to February 2021.¹⁶⁴

Creative Marketplaces

Central Market

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly

Central Market is a cultural, art and craft centre in KL. Formerly known as a wet market, the place has been renovated to showcase Malaysia's rich heritage. It features a variety of shops, more than 350, selling local handicrafts, textiles and souvenirs among others, as well as restaurants. The Central Market Annexe, positioned behind the main building, houses an Illusion 3D Art Museum, Art House Gallery and ten art studios offering contemporary and architectural art, portraits, batik and many more.¹⁶⁵

Publika

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly

Publika offers visitors a fresh and unique shopping experience by featuring stores that focus on arts, culture and creativity, such as cafes with artsy vibe, contemporary fashion boutiques, and many others. Murals, sculptures and art installations in various forms, shape and colors have also been integrated throughout the building to further accentuate the distinct décor and ambience of the shopping mall.¹⁶⁶

RIUH, MyCreative Ventures Sdn Bhd

Accessibility: Depends on venue selected

RIUH is a curated and creative platform in Kuala Lumpur that links creative entrepreneurs, creators and artists to the community. It offers a variety of pop-up stores and food stalls, creative workshops, showcases and live performances.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶¹ Borak Arts. <https://www.borakarts.com/general>

¹⁶² URBANICE. <http://www.urbanicemalaysia.com.my/about-vmuf2020>

¹⁶³ Kuala Lumpur Biennale. Biennale Foundation. <https://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennials/kuala-lumpur-biennale-malaysia>

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/culture/2020/03/23/kul-biennale-2020-the-nation039s-biggest-art-event-cancelled-amid-public-health-concerns>

¹⁶⁵ Central Market. <https://www.centralmarket.com.my>

¹⁶⁶ Publika. <https://www.publika.com.my/about-us>

¹⁶⁷ RIUH. <http://www.riuh.com.my>

Creative and Cultural Platforms and Networks (selected)

There are a variety of online platforms and channels set up to showcase latest cutting-edge creative content by Malaysians and sometimes practitioners in the region. Some are open to submission by artists themselves who are looking to gain more exposure. Even though online, it has been acknowledged that breakthroughs in the Kuala Lumpur scene will ensure faster growth and recognition.

- The Wknd and its web television channel The Wknd Sessions showcase latest music from Malaysia and the region.
- Theatresauce is a director-driven collective with a focus on edgy and innovative works.

Table 2 Sample of creative and cultural influencers¹⁶⁸ and platforms

Media/Film/Digital	Arts	Crossover – Lifestyle
Freedom Film Fest, 2003	Amy Blair, founder of Batik Boutique	Adrian Yap, Founder of Urbanscapes
Giggle Garage, 2010	Daily Seni, 2013	Darren Teoh, executive chef of Dewakan
PopTeeVee, 2007	Dua Space, 1998	Ee Soon Wei, CEO of Art Printing Works (APW)
TheSaladShow, 2012	Kapten Batik, 2017	Kamil Merican, CEO of GDP Architect Malaysia
Kaki Seni, 2001	KitaKita, 2010	Lisette Scheers, founder of Nala Boutique
Soundscape Records, 2001	Stage Centre Line and Associate, 2006	Nani Kahar, architect, partner of LabDNA
XENO, 2012	The Wknd Sessions, 2008	Noor Neelofa Mohd Noor, founder of Naelofar Hijab
	William Harald-Wong and Associates, 1980s	Ng Sek San, Principal of Seksan Design
	Theatresauce, 2016	Ng Ping Ho, Managing Director of KLoé Hotel
		Think City, 2009
		Vivy Yusof, founder of FashionValet and the dUCK Group
		Nusantara Performing Arts Research Centre

For more information on creative hubs in Kuala Lumpur, see British Council Creative Hub Malaysia: <https://creativehubs.my>

¹⁶⁸ These influencers are defined as those who are building up creative enterprises, creating jobs and supporting the development cultural economy.

Media/Film/Digital

Freedom Film Fest

FreedomFilmFest began in 2003 with the aim to create a much-needed platform for filmmakers and activists to showcase their films and advocate their causes to the Malaysian public.

Giggle Garage

Founded in 2010, Giggle Garage is a company that produces original character brands and animated contents of high quality for children & family entertainment worldwide. It was awarded the MSC Malaysia status which is a form of recognition by the Government of Malaysia through the Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC), for ICT and ICT-facilitated businesses that develop or utilise multimedia technologies to create and improve products and services.

- The co-founder Juhaidah Jeomin was awarded the Women Entrepreneur Icon (Digital) by the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development Malaysia for industry excellence and for providing job opportunities to women in the digital arena.

PopTeeVee

Founded in 2007, PopTeeVee (www.popteevee.net) is an online TV network that aims to involve young Malaysians to develop a more democratic media space and create a more engaging media experience. The network carries individual channels such as *That Effing Show*, *Giler Selamba Jane*, *#TanyaYBeee*; and hosts original content developed by digital media agency The Greatest Hits. PopTeeVee is part of the Popfolio network, a Pop Digital company that conceptualises and produces original creative content in the form of podcasts, videos, websites and digital campaigns to help connect brands with their audience. Some of these include fashion portal Tongue in Chic and Poskod.MY, an online magazine about the community, culture and city in the Klang Valley.

TheSaladShow

TheSaladShow is a famous Youtuber channel in Malaysia which has 69.5K subscribers in 2021. It is founded by Jiven and Caleb who are both marketing students, decided to make videos for fun back in November 2012. They started out as PotatoFilms before renaming themselves TheSaladShow as it means “easy, light, healthy and a healthy mixture.” They worked together with Projek Dialog to produce a series of fun and educational videos on racial stereotypes in Malaysia in 2018.

Kaki Seni

Kakiseni is a registered non-profit organisation, first launched in 2001 as an online portal for listings, reviews, and feature stories about arts and culture. They are dedicated to building a sustainable arts industry in Malaysia through programmes that enrich artists and develop audience appreciation. Kakiseni also in a partnership with BOH Plantations and launched the BOH Cameronian Arts Awards in 2002 to recognise excellence in the Malaysian performing arts.

Soundscape Records

Founded in 2001, Soundscape Records is a Kuala Lumpur based independent record label that also acts as a concert promoter. While initially more centred on Malaysia's burgeoning Chinese indie scene, the brand has expanded its reach to the bigger urban market, bringing the likes of post-rockers Explosions in the Sky, Mogwai, Mono, Tortoise, toe, Godspeed You! Black Emperor, Tycho and many more to our shores. It has also played a pivotal role in nurturing the local scene and releasing some of the most exciting and genre-defining albums. It also put up several outdoor festivals – Street Roar Festival (2003, 2004, 2006), Trans-regional Sounds Festival (2004) and City ROARS! Festival (2019, 2020).

XENO

Founded in 2012, XENO, formerly known as Paranormal Group Asia, started its business back in 2012 as a social media artiste & influencer marketing suite. It currently houses over 20 talents and represents more than 200 talents in Malaysia. They are actors, singers, comedians, hosts and social influencers. It has its recording company and discovered and developed talents such as Elizabeth Tan & Ayda Jebat.

Arts

Daily Seni

Established in 2013 by filmmaker and arts practitioner Bront Palarae, The Daily Seni delivers gossip-free entertainment news with focus on the Malaysian arts and culture industry.

Dua Space

Dua Space Dance Theatre, the first local non-governmental full time professional contemporary dance company, was established by Anthony Meh and Aman Yap in 1998. It focuses on sharing dances with the local communities and building a dance network from its base in Puchong. The company has performed around the world and developed many productions, such as *'TWO'*, *'Scream-A Response to Munch'*, *'The Legend of Hou Yi and Chang Er'*, *'Anak Malaysia'*, *'Black & White@VARIATION'*, *'DEN'*, *'Ancient Inscriptions'*, *'The Tree'*, *'MW-Men and Women Seeking for Love'*, *'The Lotus Sutra'* and many more, ranging from, and inspired by, ethnic to contemporary dance forms.

Kapten Batik

Launched in 2017 in KL, Kapten Batik offers casual batik clothes for men. The company was established to preserve and revitalise the heritage of batik by making it more accessible and suitable for daily use. Today, the company provides shirts with different motifs, colours, patterns, designs and themes thereby making it the most sought-after batik shirts for men in Malaysia.

KitaKita

Established in 2010 by four women, KitaKita (meaning 'us' in Bahasa Malaysia) is a Malaysian social enterprise that is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of homegrown culture, arts, and design, to support home-based small artisans and maintain Malaysian traditions and identity. It sells over 100 artisan products from all over Malaysia which include clothing and accessories, stationery, woven bags and baskets, body care, home décor, pottery and paintings, and features a café that serves homemade local fare. KitaKita also holds workshops occasionally, such as batik painting, to teach children about art and appreciation for Malaysian cultures.

Stage Centre Line and Associates (SCLA)

SCLA seeks to ameliorate and enhance performance spaces and technology in the performance arts scene in Malaysia. The company offers numerous services such as theatre media facility space planning, architectural lighting design, audio visual integrated system design, acoustic design, interior design, programming & training services and most recently, architainment.

The Wknd Sessions

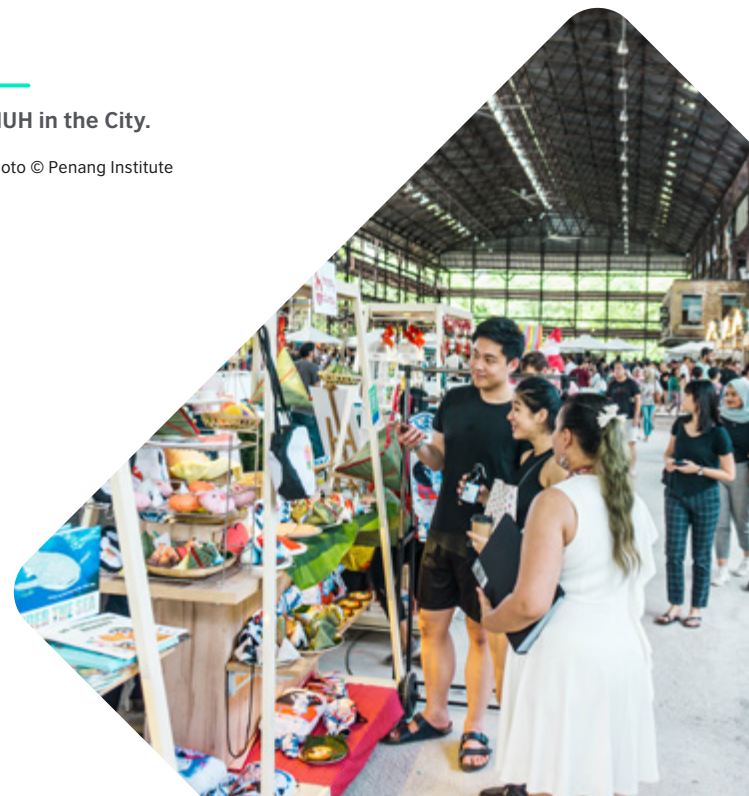
Started in 2008, The Wknd is a platform to discover and listen to the latest music from Southeast Asia. It also shares the latest musical news and events that are happening in Malaysia and neighbouring countries, and even possesses its very own web TV show called The Wknd Sessions.

Theatresauce

Theatresauce is a director-driven collective founded in 2016. It advocates diverse thought, dramaturgy, and practices by training emerging directors and runs a school for learning opportunities on all things theatre. It also rents out multi-purpose studios at highly affordable rates.¹⁶⁹

RIUH in the City.

Photo © Penang Institute



¹⁶⁹ Theatresauce. <https://www.theatresauce.com>

Crossover/Lifestyle

Adrian Yap, Founder of Urbanscapes

Malaysian-born Adrian Yap is the founder of Urbanscapes, an art festival held annually since 2002. His goal was to showcase local and international upcoming and established talents, artists and musicians. The festival has become one of the most popular festivals in Malaysia.

Darren Teoh, executive chef of Dewakan

Darren Teoh is the executive chef at the restaurant 'Dewakan', located in KLCC, KL. Darren Teoh focuses on locally sourced produce to instil in customers a better understanding and profound appreciation for the land and culture in Malaysia. His efforts were rewarded in 2019 when Dewakan was included in Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list, the first ever Malaysian restaurant to achieve such honour.

Ee Soon Wei, CEO of Art Printing Works (APW)

Ee Soon Wei is the man behind the success of Art Printing Works (APW). He is responsible for repurposing a commercial printing factory into a vibrant and creative campus where arts, culture, business and technology meet to stimulate and encourage new forms of innovation to vitalise the creative economy.

William Harald-Wong and Associates

With more than 32 years of design experience, William Harald-Wong and Associates' reputation lies in three areas, being: wayfinding, signage and environmental graphics (placemaking); brand/visual identity and strategy; and art and culture-related projects. They also help develop business strategies and city/place branding, design exhibitions and many more.

- Their designers have created visual identities for art festivals in Malaysia—for The British Council, Department of Trade & Industry UK and the Australian High Commission.

Kamil Merican, CEO of GDP Architect Malaysia

Kamil Merican, is the founding partner of GDP Architects Malaysia, one of Malaysia's leading design and architecture firms. As GDP's principal design partner, Mr. Merican has been involved in all the firm's major projects which have won numerous awards, including 24 PAM Awards (the Malaysian Institute of Architects), a RIBA award (jointly with Foster + Partners) and the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2007 (for the Universiti Teknologi Petronas, also with Foster + Partners).

- Kamil Merican has served as a member of the steering committee for the Greater KL Council since 2010. He is also an external examiner for the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and Universiti Malaya and the Adjunct Professor Faculty of Architecture of Universiti Malaya.

Lisette Scheers, founder of Nala Boutique

Lisette Scheers is the founder of Nala, a pattern design boutique which she started off in 2009 in Kuala Lumpur. Since then, she has opened two Nala stores that offer a variety of items such as cushion covers, handbags, women and men clothes, and accessories, and has expanded her brand into an integrated creative agency. She has also started a restaurant called Dr.Inc which has since been renamed Lisette's Cafe and Bakery@Bangsar.

Nani Kahar, architect, partner of LabDNA

Nani is a renowned and social architect who aims to construct better places for people. She is a partner at LabDNA, a placemaking-focused urban architectural design practice, and she is passionate about community building using fine art, popular culture and activism.

Noor Neelofa Mohd Noor, founder of Naelofar Hijab

Noor Neelofa Mohd Noor or popularly known as Neelofa is an actress, a television presenter, the ambassador of Lancome and Swarovski, a director at Air Asia, and a successful entrepreneur. She is the face of fashion firm Naelofar Hijab, one of Malaysia's biggest and fastest selling headscarf brands in Malaysia and overseas.

- Launched in 2014, this line of affordable and stylish head scarves catering to women of all ages are available at its flagship store in Malaysia and sold online and ship to all over the world. The success of the company has led to Neelofa being listed on Forbes' 30 Under 30 Asia 2017 under the Retail and E-commerce category.

Ng Sek San, Principal of Seksan Design

Ng Sek San is the Principal of Seksan Design: Landscape Architecture & Planning in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Trained in civil engineering before studying landscape architecture in New Zealand, he has solely concentrated on the latter and is known as someone who believes in simple, affordable and local solutions. His projects are driven by a belief in ecologically sustainable architecture and in making works that reflect an egalitarian lifestyle.

Ng Ping Ho, Managing Director of KLoé Hotel

Ng Ping Ho is a former Malaysian award-winning director, producer and screenwriter. Together with his wife, actress Cheryl Samad, they have set up LOKL café, the adjoining BackHome backpackers' hostel and more recently KLoé, a neighbourhood hotel.

- The name KLoé, comes from the combination of two words 'KL' and 'Chloe', KL to reflect the hotel's personality as all the furniture, ceramics and artwork are from KL's top designers and artists, and Chloé as the Greek name stands for 'tender, young shoot', or 'fresh bloom' which actually represents the current status of the hotel in the city.

Think City, 2009

Think City is an impact-focused organisation dedicated to making cities more liveable, resilient and sustainable. It is a special purpose vehicle of Khazanah Nasional Berhad, the Malaysian Federal Government's strategic investment arm. Established in 2009 Think City pioneered a small grants programme in the George Town World Heritage Site to catalyse urban regeneration. In 2014, Think City's mandate was expanded to Butterworth, then Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru.

- In 2018, management was tasked by its shareholder to pivot towards a more financially independent model focused on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals and Decade of Action. The 40-plus strong team is now assembled around four communities of practice (Placemaking, Resilience, Analytics and Conservation), six flagship programmes and the Think City Institute.
- Over the past 10 years we have generated an economic output of RM900 million (approximately USD225 million), with a co-investment ratio of 1:3 (approximately RM300 million/USD 75 million co-invested), over 300 grants disbursed, 13 grants received, and more than 700 projects on record.

Vivy Yusof, founder of FashionValet and the dUCK Group

Vivy Yusof is the co-founder and Chief Creative Officer at FashionValet, a fashion e-commerce company founded in 2010. The company is based in KL and carries 170 fashion brands. She is also the co-founder of The dUCK Group, one of the fastest-growing brands in Malaysia selling scarves, bags, and cosmetics with stores in Pavilion, KLCC, Setia City Mall, and 1 Utama in Malaysia and on Haji Lane in Singapore.

Nusantara Performing Arts Research Centre (NusPARC)

The Nusantara Performing Arts Research Centre is a multi-faceted organisation with several programs dedicated to advancing the performing arts in Southeast Asia. The Education Program offers outreach to classes for school-going children as well as to the public at large. A significant part of NusPARC activities is educational. The Centre maintains a teaching and rehearsal studio for classes in Malaysia's dance and music, a library/conference room, and administrative offices. The NusPARC facilities also offer professional-level rehearsals, workshops, seminars, meetings and other events related to the performing arts.

- Another part of the NusPARC Education Program is devoted to providing funds, in the form of grants, to individual scholars for research and documentation in the traditional and contemporary performing arts of Southeast Asia through a competitive and screened application process. NusPARC also solicits applications from scholars and organisations to attend or organise seminars, symposia, and educational workshops to explain traditional or newly-composed works.

APW Bangsar.

Photo © APW Bangsar



Creative Infrastructure, Hubs and Assets (selected)

KL is constantly changing, with creative hubs and networks emerging across this large poly-centric conurbation. In recent years, creative and cultural hubs have emerged in old industrial sites, shop houses, shopping malls and existing cultural institutions. Since the early 2000s, due to a slowdown of the property market in greater KL practitioners rent upper floors on shoplots and light industrial lots to convert them into studios for different types of creative practices.¹⁷⁰ Many formerly derelict and

abandoned structures have been transformed in the arts and culture centres with marketplaces and dining/leisure (F&B: food and beverage) options.

In turn, the cultural sector and its institutions are adapting – to keep pace with the energetic cultural scene. Covid-19 may have temporarily moved the scene on-line, but the appetite and energy of the city's creatives will guarantee new spaces and places to emerge once the pandemic has subsided.



We wanted to create an ecosystem within the place. It was important to have a place where we can meet, and have dialogues, and connect with other people.

Arts consultant and gallerist Liza Ho and manager of The Zhongshan Building¹⁷¹

Despite of the pandemic, the commercial scene of KL continues to plan ahead with ambitious developments. Located inside the newest extension of the 1 Utama complex – the largest mall, Petaling Jaya Performing Arts Centre (PJPAC)¹⁷² will be joining the vibrant KL art scene.¹⁷³ It will operate a 700-seat theatre and an incubator.

- As one of the busiest and most convenient location in Malaysia, the shopping mall complex is also connected to MRT transportation hub. PJPAC will be fully operated by 1 Utama.

- Such a development points to the growing appetite of mixed-offer, intersecting across arts and lifestyle.

For more information on creative hubs in Kuala Lumpur, see British Council Creative Hub Malaysia: <https://creativehubs.my>

¹⁷⁰ BC Mapping MY Creative Hubs (2017) https://creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org/media/resources/Malaysia_Creative_Hubs_Report_final.pdf

¹⁷¹ <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/culture/2020/02/09/turning-old-kl-buildings-into-art-spaces-does-it-really-work>

¹⁷² <https://www.facebook.com/pjpac>; Official website under construction, <http://www.pjpac.com.my>

¹⁷³ <https://www.1utama.com.my/about-us>

National Visual Arts Gallery (Balai Seni Visual Negara)

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

Founded in 1958, the National Visual Arts Gallery is Malaysia's official art institution. Over the years, the gallery has encouraged and supported local artists at national and international levels, as well as raised awareness and built an understanding and appreciation of arts and culture amongst the public.¹⁷⁴

National Museum of Malaysia (Muzium Negara)

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

The National Museum, designed according to traditional Malay architecture, is considered a national treasure in Malaysia. Destroyed during World War II, it was reconstructed and officially launched in August 1963 by Malaysia's Third Yang di-Pertuan Agong. Its duties revolve around carrying out activities, including public education, on the heritage of the country's history.¹⁷⁵

National Library of Malaysia (Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia)

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

The National Library of Malaysia was initially formed in 1966 as a unit under the National Archives of Malaysia. It is presently responsible for facilitating the collection of library resources at the national level for current and future generations.¹⁷⁶

Malaysian Institute of Art (MIA Gallery)

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly

Founded in 1967, MIA Gallery and MIACC Gallery belong to the Malaysian Institute of Art. The art galleries enable MIA students, lecturers and staff, alumni, local and/or international artist(s) to display their artworks to instill an inspirational and stimulating learning environment. They also seek to highlight and raise awareness about local, national and international artworks.¹⁷⁷

Museum of Asian Art, University of Malaya

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly

The Museum of Asian Art possesses a remarkable collection, notably the world's largest collection of extensive water vessels (kendi) with pieces dating from the 11th century A.D., amassed over a period of almost 50 years. Initially based in Singapore University's campus, it moved to the campus of University of Malaya in the 60s and to its present location, the scenic area between the Faculty of Economics and the Law Faculty (currently occupied by the Business and accounting Faculty), in 1980.

- The museum showcases three civilisations: Indian, Chinese and Islamic (Malay culture), and aims to promote Asian art among multicultural Malaysians.¹⁷⁸

World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur

Completed in 1980s, this iconic building, designed with traditional architecture steeped in customs and history, offers various halls, meeting rooms and flexible multi-purpose open spaces with modern settings.¹⁷⁹

Chen Voon Fee Resource Centre, Badan Warisan Malaysia

Accessibility: Limited access for wheelchair bound, no accessible toilets

Named after Chen Voon Fee, an architect who contributed substantially to Malaysia's architecture, the Chen Voon Fee Resource Centre was completed in 1982. It operates as a specialised library and information centre that contains various documents, books, periodicals, articles, measured drawings as well as slides and photographs on architecture, world heritage sites, history and culture.

- The Centre most likely possesses the most comprehensive collection of materials on the preservation and conservation of Malaysia's built heritage which was acquired over a period of 30 years.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ National Visual Arts Gallery. <https://www.artgallery.gov.my>

¹⁷⁵ National Museum of Malaysia. http://www.muziumnegara.gov.mymain/?c=Muzium_Negara_16&parent=Mengenai_Kami_2, accessible in July 2021.

¹⁷⁶ National Library Malaysia. <https://www.pnm.gov.my>

¹⁷⁷ MIA Gallery. <https://mia.edu.my/mia-gallery>

¹⁷⁸ Museum of Asian Art. <https://museum.um.edu.my/introduction>

¹⁷⁹ World Trade Centre KL. <https://worldtradecentrekl.com.my>

¹⁸⁰ Chen Voon Fee Resource Centre. <https://badanwarisanmalaysia.org/visit-us/chen-voon-fee-resource-center>

Raja Tun Uda Library (PPAS)

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

Operated since 1988, Raja Tun Uda Library is named after the first Governor of Penang who was also a member of Selangor Royal Family. Based in Shah Alam, this six-storey state modern library can host up to 2,500 visitors and possess state-of-the-art technology and digital equipment.¹⁸¹

Rumah Air Panas (R.A.P.)

R.A.P. is an independent art space initiated by a group of art enthusiasts. Since 1997, it has acted as an artist studio and an art venue and aims to discover and bring together visual arts and other cultural practices. Over the years, it has featured numerous exhibitions, art and cultural workshops, and many more.¹⁸²

Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly

Founded in 1998, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia is Southeast Asia's largest museum of Islamic art with a built-up area of 30,000 square metres. The building of the museum is modern with turquoise domes on the roof.

- It contains 12 galleries, is home to more than ten thousand artefacts and possesses a remarkable library of Islamic art books. It also displays Islamic works from the Malay World, China, India and Southeast Asia.¹⁸³

Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS (DFP), 1998 – present

Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS is Malaysia's first concert hall dedicated to classical music and home to the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO). Located at the PETRONAS Twin Towers, the hall takes its inspiration from the traditional shoe-box shape of the great 19th-century European concert halls, with the magnificent Klais Pipe Organ providing a spectacular backdrop to the stage. It seats 920 people at one time which includes box seats, corporate suites and a royal suite.

- It plays an integral part in the music and cultural landscape of Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia.
- It continues to enthrall audiences since the day it first opened its doors. World-renowned orchestras that have performed here include the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, BBC Symphony and Vienna Symphony.

Istana Budaya (Palace of Culture)

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

Since 1999, Istana Budaya, also known as the Palace of Culture has acted as Malaysia's National Theatre and offers a variety of performances such as opera, classical concerts, and musical theatre among others.¹⁸⁴

KL City Hall's City Theatre (Panggung Bandaraya)

The City Theatre, being more than 100 years old, is the oldest stage in Malaysia. Although a major fire in 1992 destroyed the entire interior of the theatre, City Hall designers and builders were able to repair, renovate and upgrade the City Theatre and restore it to its original glory. It is currently a leading performing art venue in KL.¹⁸⁵

Shantanand Auditorium, Temple of Fine Arts Malaysia

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

Located on the second and third floor of the Temple of Fine Arts, the Shantanand Auditorium, built in early 2000s is a performance venue ideal for cultural events and artistic productions as it can house 600 people and delivers top-of-the-range acoustic sound.¹⁸⁶

Lostgens' Contemporary Art Space

Lostgens' was developed by a group of artists to promote contemporary arts while at the same time foster originality, creativity and individuality. Founded in 2004, it is an alternative space for up-and-coming innovative exhibitions and performances, as well as a platform to cultivate multifaceted artistic cultures.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸¹ Raja Tun Uda Library. <http://www.ppas.gov.my/index.php/perkhidmatan/waktu-perkhidmatan>

¹⁸² Rumah Air Panas. <https://rumahairpanas.wordpress.com/a-brief-history-of-rap>

¹⁸³ IAMM. <https://www.iamm.org.my/about-us>

¹⁸⁴ Istana Budaya. <http://www.istanabudaya.gov.my>

¹⁸⁵ Panggung Bandaraya. <https://www.dbkl.gov.my/en/perkhidmatan/kebudayaan-dan-kesenian/panggung-bandaraya>

¹⁸⁶ Shantanand Auditorium. <http://www.tfa.org.my/#!shantanandadt.html>

¹⁸⁷ Lostgens Contemporary Art Space. <https://arthop.co/spaces/lostgens-contemporary-art-space>; Official website. <https://lostgens.org>

KL Convention Centre

This five-storey building, located in Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) precinct, covers over 33,000 sqm of flexible multi-purpose function space. Founded in 2005, its facilities consist of two auditoria, plenary hall and theatre, a grand ballroom, a banquet hall, three conference halls, meetings rooms, eight exhibition halls, and a stand-alone marquee.¹⁸⁸

KL Performing Arts Centre (klpac)

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

The KL Performing Art Centre (klpac), was opened in May 2005 in lieu of The Actors Studio after the original building had been destroyed by flash floods in 2003. klpac, a fully integrated art centre, is a collaboration between The Arts Studio, YTL Corporation and Yayasan Budi Penyayang.

- It offers several types of services ranging from educational for the performing arts to corporate, such as team building, creative thinking, workshops on body language and change management.¹⁸⁹

House of Matahati (HOM) Art Trans

HOM Art Trans is an independent art space, consisting of a gallery, a studio and an art archive, that aims to encourage the development of visual art in Malaysia and networking with other similar art spaces in Southeast Asia. HOM's core objective is to promote Malaysian Art and look after young artists through its programmes, namely: The Residency, The Art Fund and The Art Award.¹⁹⁰

Annexe Gallery

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly

The Annexe Gallery, located in the Central Market Annexe building, is a centre for contemporary arts. Since its opening, the gallery has welcomed a large number of youths and adults searching for ideas and inspiration. The gallery also serves a space where artists, activists, thinkers and believers can congregate and freely share their perspectives on various issues.¹⁹¹

Malaysia Design Archive

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly

Founded in 2008, Malaysia Design Archive (MDA) is a project that focuses on recording and archiving the development of graphic design in Malaysia to conserve and create a collection of the country's history and design work. MDA also organises public events such as talks, reading groups and workshops for children and young adults.¹⁹²

PJ Live Arts

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly

PJ Live Arts is a lively neighbourhood performance venue, consisting of a theatre and studio, that showcases the most exhilarating programmes for family theatre. The layout of the auditorium is casual and intimate thereby making it the preferred venue for comedians and variety acts. Apart from comedy and other entertainment shows, dance and fitness classes are also available for the public.¹⁹³

National Textile Museum

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly

Founded in 2010, the National Textile Museum is located in KL city centre, in a heritage building that was completed in 1896 and originally housed various departments and institutions.

- The museum contains four galleries which showcase the origins, growth and development of traditional textiles as well as the respective tools and techniques used in making them. The displayed textiles are from the different ethnic communities in Malaysia such as Chinese, Malay, Peranakan and indigenous, and highlight Malaysia's rich cultural heritage.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ KL Convention Centre. <https://www.klccconventioncentre.com>

¹⁸⁹ KLPAC. <https://www.klpac.org>

¹⁹⁰ HOM. <http://www.homarttrans.com>

¹⁹¹ Annexe Gallery. <https://www.facebook.com/pg/annexegallery/about>

¹⁹² Malaysia Design Archive. <https://www.malaysiadesignarchive.org/aboutus>

¹⁹³ PJ Live Arts. <http://www.pjlivearts.my/about>

¹⁹⁴ National Textile Museum. <http://www.jmm.gov.my/en/museum/national-textile-museum>

The Godown

Launched in 2011, the Godown KL is an art space located in KL centre, tucked away and nestled within Lorong Ampang. It consists of two contrasting buildings: the Main Hall, which was a “gudang” (warehouse) with a history of over 100 years, most notably as the 11LA club and the Boom Boom Room in the 80s and 90s; and a semi open-air building, designed by award-winning architect, Ling Hao of a Singaporean architecture firm, Linghao Architects.

- Its programming focuses on the arts and architecture and offers the audience a wide range of experiences, including exhibitions, performances, workshops and more.¹⁹⁵

Merdekarya

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

Merdekarya is an independent and indie venue located in Petaling Jaya. It holds live Malaysian acts from Tuesday to Saturday as well as open mic sessions every day to help performers gain stage experience and practice their art.¹⁹⁶

Damansara Performing Arts Centre (DPAC)

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

Damansara Performing Arts Centre (DPAC) is a company committed to inculcate an appreciation for art by promoting and highlighting its significance through education and hands-on practice. DPAC possesses avant-garde facilities in terms of its proscenium and experimental theatres, black box, dance studios and indoor theatre-foyer.¹⁹⁷

The Garden Theatre, Mid Valley City

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

Located in Mid Valley City, in the centre of the Klang Valley, the Gardens Theatre is fully air-conditioned and features state-of-the-art acoustics and lighting, and well planned and laid out facilities and amenities such as VIP rooms, shower/dressing rooms, and washrooms.

- The theatre can accommodate 320 people and provides special disabled-friendly seating. The experienced team of professionals for technical and support services ensure that everything runs smoothly to create a truly memorable experience for spectators.¹⁹⁸

ILHAM Gallery

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

ILHAM Gallery is a public gallery that highlights modern and contemporary art. The gallery holds many exhibitions and other educational programmes and lectures for the public and art enthusiasts to gain a better understanding and appreciation of art and to facilitate discussions with artists. The gallery also provides internships for college/university students to learn the daily activities of a gallery as well as staff functions.¹⁹⁹

Now Theatre, 2015

Now Theatre is a non-profit performing arts site. It serves as an alternative performance space for Malaysian arts practitioners who wish to establish pure art creations and voice new ideas. It also wishes to provide a new location to catch what falls through the cracks between larger public institutions and commercial ventures.²⁰⁰

KuAsh Theatre, Tuanku Bainun Creative Centre for Children

Accessibility: Wheelchair Friendly

Founded in 2013, KuAsh Theatre is an experimental theatre, a Black Box, fitted with a heavy-duty timber sprung floor in a laminated finish. It is an ideal performing arts venue. The modular seating caters for a variety of seating configurations and can seat a maximum of 245. The theatre is equipped with three dressing rooms and a first-floor catwalk with four control-system-docking locations, and Wheelchair/OKU friendly. The ample space is the perfect location for product launches, graduation ceremonies, theatrical productions and concerts.

- The Tuanku Bainun Creative Centre for Children has other venues for rent too to suit various events. Other than KuAsh Theatre, there are also an outdoor amphitheatre, dance and craft studios.²⁰¹

Suma Orientalis

Suma Orientalis, which translates to ‘Flowers from the East’, is a fine art gallery. The gallery coordinates art exhibitions and talks, art courses for individuals and organisations, art festivals and other art related activities. The gallery’s future plans include conducting art fairs and trade exhibitions.²⁰²

¹⁹⁵ The Godown KL. <https://www.thegodown.com.my>

¹⁹⁶ Merdekarya. <https://www.merdekarya.com/artists>

¹⁹⁷ DPAC. <http://www.dpac.com.my/content/30/About%20us%20-%20Profile.html>

¹⁹⁸ The Garden Theatre. <https://www.gardenstheatre.com.my/venue>

¹⁹⁹ Ilham Gallery. <http://www.ilhamgallery.com>

²⁰⁰ Now theatre. <https://www.facebook.com/nowtheatre>

²⁰¹ Event Space. <https://pkktuankubainun.com/venues>

²⁰² Suma Orientalis. <https://www.sumaorientalis.com>

Twenty20Two

Located in the heart of Kelana Jaya, in Taman Peoples Park, and occupying two shop lots, Twenty20Two is a venue that caters to a wide range of events and performances such as annual dinners, birthday parties, workshops, training programmes, exhibitions, and etc.

- The venue is also perfect for theatre, musical theatre, music gigs, experimental shows, and film screenings due to its moveable stage and different lighting bars across the room.²⁰³

Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC)

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly

MITEC is a large and multi-purpose venue able to host various different types of events of diverse magnitudes with its flexible and customizable spaces on three colossal double volume floors.

- It was designed to meet the increasing demands of the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) industry and to cater to local, regional and international events.²⁰⁴

Serambi Karya Bellamy

Founded in 2018, Serambi Karya Bellamy is a black box suitable for theatre, performing art, acoustic session and discussion.²⁰⁵

The Platform at Menara KEN TTDI

Founded in 2018, the Platform is a fully-integrated performing arts centre comprising a 523-seat theatre and is suitable for large scale musicals and concerts.²⁰⁶

Lot'ng Arts Space

Founded in 2017, Lot'ng (pronounced Loteng) is USJ Taipan's newest arts centre purpose-built for the performing arts, comprising a 40-seater black box and a rehearsal studio. It is also the home of theatrethreesixty.²⁰⁷

Me.reka

Founded in 2017, Me.reka Makerspace is an alternative education space that aims to teach the skills of the future to the youth of today, in order to build a talent pool that is resourceful, engaged and informed enough to take on the challenges of the future. It combines the principles of sustainability with STEAM Education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) through an engaging, alternative and skills-based approach.

- All Me.reka's projects are developed in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.²⁰⁸

Art Printing Works (APW)

Art Printing Works (APW) is located in Bangsar and was first established in 1952 as a commercial printing factory. In 2013, APW started the process of converting its underutilised spaces into inspiring creative spaces to become an urban campus for the community, by connecting people and groups from different backgrounds via events, performances, workshops, programmes and many more.²⁰⁹

Crackhouse Comedy Club

Founded in 2014, Crackhouse Comedy Club is Malaysia's First and Longest Running Comedy Club. Its founding is with the ambition to take Malaysian Comedy to the next level. It also has a Malay language's night called Bahahasa Komedi.²¹⁰

KakiDIY

KakiDIY focuses on recycling and upcycling. It provides a virtual space for DIY fans, makers, innovators and entrepreneurs to work together, learn from each other and render services to others. Workshops on robotics, 3D printing and many more are also available.²¹¹

²⁰³ Twenty20Two. <http://twenty20two.orangecowstudios.com/about>

²⁰⁴ MITEC. <https://mitec.com.my>

²⁰⁵ Serambi Karya Bellamy. <https://www.facebook.com/SerambiKaryaBellamy>

²⁰⁶ The Platform at Menara KEN TTDI. <https://www.facebook.com/theplatform.ttdi>; Official website: <https://kenholdings.com.my/index.html>

²⁰⁷ Lot'ng. <https://kakiseni.com/venue/lotng>; Official website: <https://www.facebook.com/upstairsatlotng>

²⁰⁸ Me.reka. <https://www.linkedin.com/company/merekamy>

²⁰⁹ APW. <https://apw.my/#our-story>

²¹⁰ Crackhouse Comedy Club. <https://crackhousecomedy.asia>

²¹¹ KakiDIY. <https://www.kakidiy.com>

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Rumah Tangsi's heritage setting really adds to the value of the place. The aesthetics and the facade really add to the ambiance. Some of the materials here have been preserved for over 100 years! The way some of the ornamentation has been applied to the building, such as the columns and the staircase, is great. That really creates the attraction.

Ridha Razak, creative director, Rumah Tangsi²¹²

Rumah Tangsi

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly

Rumah Tangsi, originally the residence of Loke Chow Kit, was transformed into the Empire Hotel and stayed so till 1942. In 1974, the building was turned into the Malaysian Institute of Architects' (Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia, PAM) headquarters and in 2012, under the Management of KL City Hall, it was restored to its original splendor to become a social hub capable of hosting numerous events for the community.²¹³

The Zhongshan Building

Accessibility: Wheelchair friendly only on the ground floor, no lifts to upper floors.

The Zhongshan Building is an independent arts hub situated in a block of restored shophouses and consists of a community of artists, researchers, designers, artisans and musicians.

- The hub is a space for discussions and collaborations and to exchange ideas, and occasionally it houses events such as art exhibitions, live music gigs, workshops, lectures and many more.²¹⁴

²¹² <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/culture/2020/02/09/turning-old-kl-buildings-into-art-spaces-does-it-really-work>

²¹³ Rumah Tangsi. <https://www.facebook.com/rumahtangsi>

²¹⁴ The Zhongshan Building. <https://www.thezhongshanbuilding.com>



KongsiKL is built on the idea of ‘kongsi’ – sharing and gathering. It’s an experiment to see how people with different resources such as underused space in the city and creativity can come together to make something bigger.

Low Pey Sien, KongsiKL artspace manager²¹⁵

KongsiKL

KongsiKL, formerly a stainless-steel factory, is a creative and cultural hub located in old Klang road, in KL that aims to help artists and others cultivate their creative and cultural vitality. KongsiKL embraces the essence of ‘kongsi’ – ‘sharing’ in Bahasa Malaysia and ‘collaboration’ in Chinese – by developing joint and collaborative social and artistic projects and experiments. To date, the warehouse has held many activities including performances, exhibitions, screenings, talks, workshops, and many more.²¹⁶

REXKL

REXKL is a unique arts and cultural hub in Kuala Lumpur for like-minded people to come together through different art forms such as music, performances, theatre, exhibitions, screenings and many more.

- The marketplace, located on the ground floor, hosts several unique looking F&B kiosks and retail spaces, and is the perfect starting point for F&B entrepreneurs. The Main Hall on the first floor is an open space used to host events.²¹⁷

AweGallery

AweGallery is a convertible creative space attached to the Awesome Canteen café in Petaling Jaya. It serves as a venue for creative events such as art exhibitions, music concerts, workshops, and art performances among others. Currently, there is a virtual arts exhibition on their website.²¹⁸

The Linc KL

The Linc KL is a hub located at the intersection of Jalan Ampang and Jalan Tun Razak in the heart of Kuala Lumpur. It focuses on sustainable practices and includes environmentally friendly elements such as the insulated roof to lower energy consumption, the recycled materials inside the building, and the six pre-existing trees on the grounds.

- The hub also contains a book sharing initiative to allow visitors to exchange and donate books, and an e-waste bin for electronic items, among others. Its venue is also utilised for community events such as the Zero Waste Festival, painting and craft workshops, and many more.²¹⁹

²¹⁵ <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/culture/2020/02/09/turning-old-kl-buildings-into-art-spaces-does-it-really-work>

²¹⁶ KongsiKL. <https://www.kongsikl.com/about>

²¹⁷ REXKL. <https://www.rexkl.com>

²¹⁸ AweGallery. <http://www.awegallery.my>

²¹⁹ Official website: <https://www.thelinckl.com.my>

Other Key Creative and Cultural Infrastructure Assets

Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad

The Sultan Abdul Samad Building is among Kuala Lumpur's earliest Moorish-style buildings. It is located to the east of Merdeka Square (Dataran Merdeka) and the Royal Selangor Club, across from Jalan Sultan Hishamuddin.

- It was built in 1897 and was named after the reigning sultan of Selangor at the time. The historic building originally served as the secretariat for the colonial British administration and was later used to house the superior courts of Malaysia before they transferred to Putrajaya.²²⁰

Carcosa Seri Negara

Located at the hills of KL Lake Gardens, Carcosa (previously known as Carcosa KL and subsequently renamed to Carcosa Sri Negara in 1913) was the official residence for British colonial administrators during the colonial Malaya era.

- Carcosa, which features Tudor and British colonial building styles, was designed by English architect soldier Arthur Benison Hubback, who is also responsible for designing other popular monuments such as Sultan Abdul Samad Building, KL Railway station, Masjid Jamek, Ipoh Railway Station and Kowloon Railway Station.²²¹

Rumah Penghulu Abu Seman

Rumah Penghulu Abu Seman is one of the oldest surviving traditional Malay houses and one of the finest remaining examples of Malay vernacular architecture in the country. It was built in stages between 1910 and the early 1930s and was originally located in a small village in North West Malaysia before being relocated to KL city centre and restored by Badan Warisan Malaysia.

- The property where the house stands, currently possesses a heritage garden full of traditional herbs and with over 50 species of trees and plants.²²²

Sultan Suleiman Royal Mosque, Klang

The Sultan Suleiman Royal Mosque, located in Klang, is Selangor's Royal Mosque. It was designed by the British Architect L. Kesteven and officiated in 1932 by the late Almarhum Sultan Sir Alaedin Suleiman Shah of Selangor along with the British's Federated Malay States High Commissioner Sir Lawrence Nuuns Guillemard.

- The mosque's architecture is a combination of Western Art Deco and Neoclassical styles. Among the attractive features are the Tangga Diraja (royal stairs) from Istana Alam Shah and a royal mausoleum, where the late Sultan Salahuddin is laid to rest.²²³

Masjid Negara

The national mosque is one of the biggest in Southeast Asia being able to accommodate up to 15,000 people. It is widely visited by tourists, and the open space outside the mosque acts as a forecourt and highlights the beautiful Islamic design motives and landscape features.²²⁴

Titiwangsa Lake Gardens

Titiwangsa Lake Gardens was created to reduce the overcrowding of KL's Perdana Lake Gardens. Located less than four kilometres from the city heart, the park covers an area of 46 hectares and contains a centre for boating and water sports.²²⁵

Permaisuri Lake Gardens

Located in Cheras, this 122-acre park consists of lakes and woodlands and includes a huge terrace garden on an artificial hill, gazebos, seating facilities, a children's playground and facilities for cultural and outdoor creative activities.²²⁶

Shah Alam Lake Gardens

The park serves as the location for the annual International Boat Show and the Selangor Orchid Exhibition. It is compartmentalised into three different sections known as the West, East and Central Lakes which cover an area of 43 hectares.

²²⁰ Sultan Abdul Samad Building in Kuala Lumpur. <http://www.kuala-lumpur.ws/attractions/sultan-abdul-samad-building.htm>

²²¹ Carcosa. <https://www.carcosa.com.my/history>

²²² Rumah Penghulu Abu Seman. <https://badanwarisanmalaysia.org/visit-us/rumah-penghulu-abu-seman>

²²³ Sultan Suleiman Royal Mosque. <https://selangor.travel/listing/sultan-suleiman-royal-mosque>

²²⁴ Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, Peninsular Malaysia, 2005. Open Spaces in Urban Malaysia. P. 79.

²²⁵ Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, Peninsular Malaysia, 2005. Open Spaces in Urban Malaysia. P. 54.

²²⁶ Ibid. P. 57.

Dataran Merdeka

Dataran Merdeka, also known as Merdeka Square, represents one of KL's historical landmarks. It possesses a field that used to serve as the Selangor Club cricket pitch during the British Colonial era.²²⁷

Dataran Putra

Dataran Putra is one of the main civic nodes that form the main planning axis in Putrajaya, with the Convention Centre on the other end. Important civic buildings and government offices have been planned around this node. The Prime Minister's Office is the main focus of Dataran Putra, which is also a popular area among tourists.²²⁸

Bintang Walk Kuala Lumpur

Bintang Walk is a row of streetside cafes, restaurants, and pubs, stretching from Lot 10 Shopping Centre to the JW Marriott Hotel. The existing sidewalks and road reserves within this precinct create a rich walking experience for pedestrians.²²⁹

Dataran Shah Alam

Dataran Shah Alam was developed by the Shah Alam City Council, as an open space that is flexible and adaptable to various events. The space contains water features, a square that acts as a stage, and a seating gallery separated by a road.

- The roads in Dataran Shah Alam are closed to vehicles during formal events and parades, and this allows the space to become much larger and capable of accommodating about 400 people.

Outlook of Zhongshan Building.

Photo © Penang Institute

²²⁷ Tourism Unit, Kuala Lumpur City Hall. (2014). Merdeka Square. http://www.visitkl.gov.my/visitklv2/index.php?r=column/cthree&id=55&place_id=979

²²⁸ Ibid. P. 119.

²²⁹ Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, Peninsular Malaysia, 2005. Open Spaces in Urban Malaysia. P. 111.



