



Performance by the Mah Meri Cultural Village troupe during the launch of Think City's Arts On The Move event at the Pasar Seni MRT Station in KL.

## SHOWCASE OF MALAYSIAN ARTISTRY AND HERITAGE

### > FROM PAGE 7

Yayasan Hasanah works with various collaborative partners in honouring Malaysian artists and showcasing our heritage.

"In the past two years, close to 5,000 arts practitioners have been enabled, hence employed through the ArtsFAS programme. We have an array of heritage-based arts performances, in many shapes and forms, including theatre, *pantun* competition, classical dance, *bangsawan* and plenty more," says Shahira.

For ArtsFAS 2023, Shahira says that proposals are still coming in and Yayasan Hasanah is planning to have an announcement day to introduce the new ArtsFAS family.

"There will be several flagship shows which will be determined by their reach, exposure, sustainability as well as scalability. The date for applications closes on April 30. We expect to get fantastic and interesting shows as we have year on year."

Another key focus area for Yayasan Hasanah is the conservation of heritage textiles.

Earlier this year, textile makers came together and showcased their art at *Ikat: Motif Kita* – a project designed to revive public awareness and appreciation of Malaysian textile art, especially among urbanites.

In this collaborative project, ArtsFAS connected tech players, fashion designers and visitors from both Malaysia and abroad, then used a new media approach with a 360° video projection to create immersive content.

Also ongoing is the exciting

Silver Lining Project by Malaysian Craft Council which aims to address the heritage craft extinction crisis in Kelantan, particularly pertaining to the *kelingkan* and *songket* textiles.

The Malaysian Craft Council works closely with key stakeholders from the state, including the Kelantan Youth, Sports and NGO Secretariat and the Prison Department Malaysia to deliver a 12-month programmatic project.

The Silver Lining Project also aims to revive the great legacy of Malay textiles through contemporary performing arts, while elevating them to their once opulent glory.

Another inspiring programme, *Aspire*, is a 24-month project which addresses two key issues faced by the local society in Sarawak – the potential loss of an intangible cultural heritage, *kerinkam*, and social challenges faced by youths in Kuching.

Converging the preservation and conservation of traditional craftsmanship of the *kerinkam* textile with the capacity development of local disadvantaged or at-risk youths, the youths will undergo a series of training modules and apprenticeship programmes whereby they learn the techniques of making *kerinkam*.

### Think City: Cities and their stories

Each city has an important story to tell, and its buildings, artefacts and intangible culture not only connect us to the past, they act as living monuments that serve to educate us.

In line with the mission of

making cities more people-friendly, resilient and liveable, Think City provides policy thinking, management and implementation of place-based solutions, while acting as a catalyst for change in the way cities are planned, curated, developed and celebrated.

Think City was conceived to work on tangible and intangible heritage projects, starting with the Unesco World Heritage Site in George Town of which its primary focus was to promote community engagement in preservation and celebration of the city's unique heritage.

Leveraging the success and learnings of the George Town Grants Programme, Think City expanded to Butterworth, Johor Baru, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Lenggong and Kuala Kangsar, amongst others. It is also kicking off its work in the Kuala Lumpur Creative and Cultural District with KL City Hall (DBKL).

By adopting a community-first, evidence-based approach, Think City focuses on four main areas of practice. This includes culture-based economic development which aims to build an interconnected network of cultural assets within and between cities, to preserve and leverage heritage as a catalyst for local socio-economic development.

Think City's strategy and analytics practice generates evidence-led insights to guide urban policy-making, and provide input in decision-making for cities at both strategic and tactical levels. This encompasses effective discovery, interpretation, visualisation and communication of

meaningful patterns in data.

The rationale is, when citizens are equipped with a better understanding of where they live, they will be empowered to play an even greater role in shaping their cities.

More visible to the eye is the popular creative activation Think City does by exploring spaces Malaysians travel through every day, and rejuvenating the areas around it.

Take for example the Arts On The Move programme.

Think City, in collaboration with MRT Corporation and DBKL, and supported by Yayasan Sime Darby and the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry, kickstarted the return of Arts On The Move on Feb 14 this year at the Pasar Seni MRT Station in KL. The launch included a performance by the Mah Meri Cultural Village and the unveiling of Sunnyside Up, an art installation by Pamela Tan of Poh Sin Studio.

"Drawing on Think City's expertise in culture-based regeneration and the growing potential of creative economy worldwide, we hope to create a focus on the collective cultural experience of the Pasar Seni MRT Station environment," says Think City managing director Hamdan Abdul Majeed.

"The celebration of arts in transit stations as alternative public spaces has been successfully done in cities like Singapore, London and New York."

Set up in 2016, Arts On The Move aims to connect culture – via curated arts and cultural activities such as live performances and exhibitions, and the

city's historic core which is rich in tangible and intangible cultural assets – to the rail network system.

It was implemented in collaboration with rail services operator Prasarana at Masjid Jamek LRT Station and supported by Yayasan Hasanah for a duration of two years. This resulted in a diverse arts and culture programming that appealed to Malaysian audiences and visitors that transited the space.

Arts On The Move hopes to contribute towards reenergising downtown Kuala Lumpur with a curated presentation of 12 live shows, three workshops and two art installations at Pasar Seni MRT Station, which transports an average 15,000 commuters daily.

Arts On The Move has been happening every fortnight since February and will continue until June 2023 between 5pm and 6pm at the Pasar Seni MRT Station, featuring varied acts such as contemporary *gamelan* group Gangsapura, traditional Indian music 3T Karnatic Konnexions, *angklung*-guitar collab Kicau Bilau, and The Guzhang Academy among others. Up next is fusion *wayang kulit* on April 27.

On top of this, Think City has also been heavily involved in heritage-related projects since 2009. The Malaysian government recognises the importance of our national heritage that includes buildings such as Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad and Cosca Seri Negara in Kuala Lumpur, which are integral to nation building and can help cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation of Malaysia's history.