

Celebrate culture in the heart of KL

Three-month long art series to offer pandemic-proof programmes

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KUALA LUMPUR: Multimedia light shows, festival “villages”, traditional theatre on the streets, public art, handicraft bazaars and many other culture-centred forums and activities will be rolled out to give the capital a new buzz when the Art In The City 2021 (AITC) series kicks into gear this month.

AITC, supported by the Cultural Economy Development Agency (Cendana), runs from Oct 14 to Dec 28.

Apart from offering diverse arts and culture programmes in the heart of KL, AITC will also create an additional 2,000 employment opportunities, a boost for the pandemic-stricken arts industry.

“The government recognises the importance of the role of arts and culture to revitalise the country, not only from the economic aspect but also from a humanity perspective,” said Communications and Multimedia Minister (KKMM) Tan Sri Annuar Musa at the AITC launch at KL Pac yesterday.

“Therefore, KKMM invites the arts communities to work with the Ministry via our Creative Taskforce to create a systematic structure so that the country’s creative industry can grow.”

Veteran festival director Joe Sidek, who will helm the “KLWKND” programme in November is excited about celebrating the capital’s rich history, arts, design, culture and heritage.

KLWKND’s programmes (running from Nov 25 to 28) will look to revive pandemic-hit KL arts venues such as The Godown KL, Panggung Bandaraya DBKL, Pasar Seni, and REXKL. Each venue is expected to host its own “festival village”.

“I’m very excited to be working with Cendana, DBKL and Think City



A lot of h-art: Sape musician Alena Murang (left) and guzheng player Sara Heng performing during the launch of Art In The City 2021.

— ONG SOON HIN/The Star

as the main partner of this project.

“KLWKND brings together all the genres of the arts into downtown KL at key locations like Central Market, REXKL, Godown, High Street Studios, Panggung Bandaraya and Fourpoints for now.

“We’ll be naming these places ‘Di situ, di situ, di sini, di sana, sinilah’; names that are very familiar to the Malaysian public,” said Joe.

“KL has all the talent and ecosystem set up for this series of events. The programme should be very inclusive, something for everyone to celebrate the best of Malaysia.

“We’re excited to be still talking to partners who will be joining us and we will be announcing full programmes and partnerships in November.

“We feel it’s timely to join forces for the spirit of positivity and make the arts accessible to all,” he added.

Traditional culture, too, has a platform with Panggung Rakyat, a series of cultural evenings featuring traditional performances led by masters of living traditions.

Panggung Rakyat is carried out in collaboration with DBKL.

Performances planned include Kompong Jidor (Oct 9), Zapin Melayu (Oct 23), Kuchipudi (Nov 13), Sounds of Sabah (Nov 27), Mah Meri (Dec 11), and Menora (Dec 24) via Cendana’s Facebook page.

“With Panggung Rakyat, it is always best to begin any conception of ‘the future’ with a firm grounding in the past.

“Tradition, tradition, tradition’ –

this is where the resources for the future lie,” says Eddin Khoo, founder-director of traditional arts outfit Pusaka, which will be involved in the Panggung Rakyat series.

For digital art fans, the media art exhibition titled *SENSORii*, focusing on light, colour and sound, is KL’s highlight in December.

It features multimedia artist Lim Kok Yoong in collaboration with KC Tan, Flux 28, Wee Jia Foong, Ashly Nandong and Azarikh Amran.

The site-exclusive *SENSORii*, which takes place at REXKL from Dec 1 to 28, will be curated by artistic director Yap Sau Bin, and produced by Melissa Teoh with music by Ahmad Muriz Che Rose.

The Light Project public art tour

will be a programme – from November to next March – that will go beyond the borders of the Klang Valley.

It is a Think City collaboration with local municipalities.

It includes six participating cities here: KL (in collaboration with Interstellar Studio’s Jun Ong), Batu Pahat, Kuching, Ipoh, Melaka and Butterworth.

AITC 2021 will also see the roll-out of Studio C, which focuses on Malaysian craft products, handmade by traditional artisans.

A sneak preview of Studio C will be held at CIMB Artobor’s Hotel Art Fair at Element Kuala Lumpur (from Nov 4 to 6) and KLWKND’s Sinilah at Pasar Seni (Nov 27 and 28).