



KL FESTIVAL RETURNS TO REIMAGINE DOWNTOWN KUALA LUMPUR

A confluence of creativity, cultures and communities

KUALA LUMPUR, 13 MARCH 2026 – Kuala Lumpur’s historic core is about to come alive. From 6 to 31 May 2026, KL Festival (KL Fest) will transform Downtown Kuala Lumpur’s heritage buildings, streets and public spaces into an inclusive, largely free, and family-friendly celebration of art, culture and shared civic experiences. As the city’s flagship cultural platform, the KL Fest invites everyone to rediscover the city in new and unexpected ways.

Over 26 days, KL Fest unfolds across 25 venues, public spaces and streets, presenting over 80 events and more than 700 hours of programming. With 90% of its line-up free and open to the public, the festival makes the arts more accessible while fostering city-wide participation. Organised by Think City and Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), and supported by the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Territories Department (Prime Minister’s Department), KL Fest is held in conjunction with Visit Malaysia 2026, Warisan KL, and Kuala Lumpur’s designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Design. Through curated cultural activation and community-led programming, the KL Festival drives footfall, supports enterprise and strengthens civic pride.

Inspired by the theme Memory & Tomorrow, the 2026 edition explores how the stories we inherit shape the futures we imagine. Rooted in Malaysia’s rich heritage while actively engaging youth voices, the KL Fest bridges generations through a variety of programmes from reimagined wayang kulit, contemporary dance, immersive installations, theatre and outdoor film screenings, unfolding against the living backdrop of the city.

This year’s edition also presents several Malaysian and Asian premieres, presenting internationally touring works to local audiences for the first time. As part of its expanding network of cultural exchange, KL Fest positions Kuala Lumpur as a regional hub for contemporary artistic dialogue. Festival highlights include Fragments of Tuah by Mark Teh & Faiq Syazwan Kuhiri (from Malaysia/staged at ASWARA), Pending by January Low (Malaysia/at Chan She Shu Yuen Ancestral Hall), Origin of a Tale by Collectif Kahraba (Lebanon/at Rumah Tangsi), Chapter 2 by Pichet Klunchun (Thailand/at ASWARA), and Lessons of Silence by Agnes Christina (Indonesia/at The Godown Arts Centre).



Family-friendly, youth-focused and accessible programmes include:

- Siapa Cacat? – a disabled-led theatre production (GMBB)
- Jogeton – a mass joget celebration and competition (Dataran Merdeka)
- Irama Pusaka – a celebration of Malaysia’s musical heritage over three nights with Orkestra KL, Gangsapura, Lee Rubber Chinese Orchestra, a Classical Indian ensemble and master musician from Borneo (Auditorium Bandaraya)
- Warung Terang -- by Filamen, transforming laneways with light, projection and storytelling
- The Wayang Women -- an all-female ensemble reinterpreting wayang kulit with modern narratives and contemporary performance styles (Dataran Merdeka)
- A Film Weekend in collaboration with FINAS
- ASWARA Artskap -- workshops, open studios, and performances (ASWARA)
- Public Art Installations -- a collaboration with the KL Architecture Festival Competition
- Berkelah di Bawah Layar -- a picnic open-air cinema experience (Dataran Merdeka)
- Planet KL – family-friendly programme exploring otters, rivers and climate through fun and participative activities (River of Life)
- The Making of Merdeka Textile Museum: A Creative Journey (Stadium Merdeka Foyer)

Dato' Hamdan Abdul Majeed, Think City's Managing Director said, "KL Fest demonstrates how culture can animate public spaces, and reconnect people with the city. More than a series of events, it reflects our belief that a liveable city is shaped not only by its buildings, but by how its people experience and animate those spaces together."

June Tan, Artistic Director of KL Fest added, "The Festival invites us to look at Kuala Lumpur more closely – to notice the stories embedded in its streets, buildings and communities. Under the theme Memory & Tomorrow, we bring together artists who reflect on our shared histories while imagining the futures we want to build, transforming the city into a living stage for all."

The inaugural KL Fest in 2024 drew over 140,000 visitors, activated 26 venues and generated more than 800 creative jobs and gigs – demonstrating the role of culture in revitalising the historic core of the area.



To sustain its largely free and accessible programming, KL Fest is expanding its partnership network across the corporate, philanthropic and creative sectors. Organisations interested in supporting cultural accessibility, youth engagement and urban revitalisation are invited to explore sponsorship and collaboration opportunities.

Updates are available at the KL Festival website (klfestival.com.my) and on social media platforms.

ENDS

About Kuala Lumpur Festival (KL Fest):

KL Fest is Kuala Lumpur's flagship city celebration, inspired by its designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Design and aligned with the Warisan KL aspiration. The festival brings Downtown Kuala Lumpur to life through creativity, cultures and communities, presenting curated local and international performances, installations and public programmes accessible to all. Held across heritage buildings and public spaces, KL Fest transforms historic areas into vibrant cultural destinations. For more information, visit www.klfestival.com.my

About Think City

Think City is an impact organisation established in 2009 to create more sustainable and equitable places for the benefit of all. Our knowledge, skills and strategies focus on urban solutions, the environment, social communities, and the cultural economy. Think City is a wholly owned subsidiary of Khazanah Nasional Berhad (the sovereign wealth fund of the Government of Malaysia). For more information, log on to thinkcity.com.my.

For media queries, please contact:

Jacinta Vythilingam | Email: jacintav@spinmeistercomms.com | Tel: +6012 3145935