KANCIL CREATIVE FESTIVAL CONFERENCE 2026



The KANCIL CREATIVE FESTIVAL CONFERENCE IS BACK, bringing together the people, ideas and perspectives shaping creativity today. This year, MAKE IT FOR YOURSELF asks what you care enough to put into the work: your culture, convictions, curiosity and craft. Because in a world of algorithms, templates and endless content, original work begins with something no one else can replicate: a point of view that is unmistakably yours. One that might even remind you why you started creating in the first place.

4As MALAYSIA

27th NOV2026
Friday

8:30 a.m-6:00 p.m
(Followed by the Kancil Awards)

Ex8,
Subang Jaya

HRD CORP CLAIMABLE: (HRDC: 10001785449)

FIND WHAT IS YOURS. MAKE IT MATTER

AT THE KANCILS 2026



From global creative leaders to homegrown voices, this year's line-up explores what happens when you put more of yourself into the work. **Ali Rez** shows how culture becomes creative advantage, **Thomas Hongtack Kim** explores how ideas can impact business and society, **Eugene Cheong** reveals the courageous habits behind great work, and **Rey Tiempo** shares why winning in gaming starts with belonging to its culture.

Julie Jihyun Kang explores reinvention in the age of AI, while **Michael Lim (Space Dawg)** shows how learning by making can lead to a voice unmistakably your own. **Erik Reiff** reflects on keeping your inner artist alive in a commercial career. Closer to home, **East Malaysian makers** explore how their roots shape what they create and give back, while our **side hustle panel** looks at how life outside advertising can feed the work within it.

Add **Astro's** guide to creating entertainment people choose to watch, **young Kancils** finalists defending their ideas live, and **Edward Ong's** exploration of the many paths a creative journey can take, and you have a day designed to help Malaysia's creative community find what is theirs, make it matter, and make it unmistakably their own.

Across talks, panels, performances and interactive sessions, expect new ways of looking at your work, your career and where your creativity comes from, and perhaps a timely reminder of why you chose this ridiculous, wonderful industry in the first place.

A DAY DESIGNED TO IGNITE YOUR CREATIVE SELF



HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT:

- Inspiring talks by local and global creative heavyweights
- A dedicated Creative Careers Track to learn from different career journeys and ask candid questions
- Panels and conversations exploring creativity, culture and life beyond the brief
- Exhibitions showcasing Malaysia's hottest work of the year
- Plenty of opportunities to meet, mingle and spark new connections across the creative community
- ***The grand finale: the KANCIL AWARDS***, celebrating the best ideas made by Malaysia's very best creative minds.

Whether you're an established creative, an ambitious marketer, a rising talent, an independent creator or a student finding your way in, this is your day. A chance to step outside the day-to-day, learn from some of the industry's most accomplished practitioners, and return with new perspectives, renewed confidence and fresh inspiration for what's next.

Come meet your creative community, rediscover what makes your perspective valuable, and leave ready to put more of yourself into whatever you make next. Book your place and make the next chapter of your creative journey yours.

Get ready to make it for yourself.

TICKET DETAILS

*excluding 8% SST

FESTIVAL (+Awards Night)

4As members

1-10 People
RM950*

11-20 People
RM900*

21+ People
RM800*

Non 4As Members

1-10 People
RM1,450*

11-20 People
RM1,400*

21+ People
RM1,300*

Students
RM50

AWARDS NIGHT ONLY

4As members
RM250

Non 4As Members
RM300



THE PROGRAMME:

TIME	Main Hall Programmes	Parallel Programmes (held alongside main-stage sessions)
9:00 a.m.	Participants arrive	
9:15 a.m.	Welcome Address by Kien Eng Tan, 4As President	
9:30 a.m.	Make Ideas That Matter by Thomas Hongtack Kim	Student Kancils Exhibition | Kancil Awards 2026 Exhibition
10:15 a.m.	Make Yourself Part of the Game by Rey Tiempo	
11:00 a.m.	Make Your Reinvention Count by Julie Jihyun Kang	Upper Level Workshop Room: Make Your Own Journey Count Creative Careers Track by Level Up (Official Training Partner) Creative Journey with Justin Phang Young Creatives Forum Senior Creatives Roundtable Networking Sessions
11:45 a.m.	Panel: Make Your Other Life Count Side hustle panel moderated by Mia Goh	
12:30 p.m.	Make Courage a Creative Habit by Eugene Cheong	
1:15 p.m.	Make Before You're Ready by Michael Lim (Space Dawg)	
1:45 p.m.	Make Room For Your Inner Artist by Erik Reiff	
2:15 p.m.	Panel: Make Your Roots Your Superpower with East Malaysian makers, moderated by Fay Ulrica Lee	Student Kancils Exhibition | Kancil Awards 2026 Exhibition 
3:00 p.m.	Make Local Truths Travel by Ali Rez	
3:45 p.m.	Make Entertainment, Not Interruption (presented by Astro) with Astro guests featuring an artist showcase by special guest artists (TBA)	
5:00 p.m.	Young Kancils Live Judging moderated by Jaz Lee	
6:00 p.m.	KANCIL AWARDS 2026	

*Programme may be subject to change.



PROGRAMME TOPICS

MAKE IDEAS THAT MATTER

by Thomas Hongtack Kim
Founder, 2kg Creative Solution Lab
Chief Creative Officer, Paulus

What if your best idea is the one nobody asked for? Some of Thomas Hongtack Kim's most successful projects began without a client brief. Instead, he identified a problem worth solving, brought the idea to the client and worked with them from the start to turn it into reality.

Drawing on a career creating solutions for brands, businesses and society, Thomas shares how taking the initiative to find the right problems can unlock ideas that drive business growth and social impact, and why you shouldn't always wait to be asked before putting an idea forward.

MAKE YOURSELF A PART OF THE GAME

by Rey Tiempo
Founder & Chief Creative Officer, Co-Op Play

Why do so many brands struggle to connect with gaming audiences? Because gaming isn't just a platform. It's a culture.

Having spent years helping brands navigate one of the world's most passionate and misunderstood communities, Rey Tiempo has seen firsthand that the most successful brands don't advertise to gamers. They become part of the experience. Drawing on award-winning work recognised by Cannes Lions, D&AD and The One Show, Rey explores what it takes to earn relevance in gaming culture and why participation will always beat interruption

MAKE YOUR REINVENTION COUNT

by Julie Jihyun Kang
Founder & CEO, Flux AI Asia/Co-Founder, CRAISEE

Throughout her career, Julie Jihyun Kang has worked at the intersection of creativity, technology and transformation. She helped incubate Dot, the Korean technology startup developing tactile devices for people with visual impairments, whose work went on to win a Titanium Lion at Cannes. Her work has consistently explored how creativity can solve real-world challenges and create meaningful impact.

Then came her own reinvention. Leaving the traditional agency world behind, Julie co-founded and leads CRAISEE, an "all-at-once" AI platform that lets creators work across multiple models in one place.

Drawing on her journey from creative leader to technology entrepreneur, Julie explores what meaningful reinvention looks like in the age of AI, and how to embrace powerful new tools without losing the judgement, humanity and point of view that make your creativity valuable.

MAKE YOUR OTHER LIFE COUNT

moderated by Mia Goh,
Copywriter, Leo & Manager, MS. Bianca
with Rafique Ramleh, Creative Strategist/Singer, Songwriter & Producer

Some of the experiences that make us better at what we do happen entirely outside of the ad world. Mia moves between writing copy and building an independent women-first cocktail bar, while Rafique is a creative strategist who also writes, produces and performs music under the moniker Kindaraf.

Together with other guests leading equally interesting lives beyond their day jobs, they explore how these different worlds feed each other, what one pursuit teaches them about the other, where they find the time and energy for both, and how they keep a passion from becoming just another job. Sometimes stepping outside your day job is exactly what gives you more to bring back into it.

MAKE COURAGE A CREATIVE HABIT

by Eugene Cheong
Creative Pioneer & Author,
Cowards Don't Go To Heaven

What separates the unforgettable from the forgettable? After a career spent creating some of Asia's most celebrated work, Eugene Cheong has come to believe it isn't simply talent or opportunity. His new book, Cowards Don't Go To Heaven, distils a lifetime in creativity into eight habits: courage, idealism, curiosity, playfulness, free-spiritedness, intuition, authenticity and persistence.

In this candid session, Eugene Cheong explores why courage comes first, and how the habits we choose to practise can help us resist mediocrity, trust our convictions and keep making work worth caring about.



PROGRAMME TOPICS

MAKE BEFORE YOU'RE READY

by Michael Lim (Space Dawg)
Animator and Founder, Studio Space Dawg

How do you stand out when everyone has access to the same tools, trends and references? For rising creatives, the answer can feel daunting: learn another tool, follow another trend, wait for the right opportunity, or get better before putting yourself out there. Michael Lim took a different path. With a background in graphic design but no formal training in animation, he taught himself by making, experimenting and learning as he went. Along the way, he developed a visual language that became unmistakably his own, leading to collaborations with Hermès, Cartier, Adobe and Adult Swim.

In this session, Michael Lim shares why you don't need to master every skill or wait for the perfect opportunity before you begin. Sometimes you learn by making, and somewhere in all that making, you start discovering what makes the work yours.

MAKE ROOM FOR YOUR INNER ARTIST

by Erik Reiff
CCO/Founding Partner, Black Cat White Cat

Before becoming an award-winning music producer and creative entrepreneur, Erik Reiff started as a musician, songwriter and performer. Since then, his career has spanned everything from commercial music and sound design to work on major entertainment and gaming franchises, while continuing to nurture his own artistic passions. In this session, Erik talks honestly about what happens when the thing you love becomes the thing you do for a living, and why keeping your inner artist alive might just be what keeps the work alive too.

MAKE YOUR ROOTS YOUR SUPERPOWER

moderated by Fay Ulrica Lee
Founder & CEO, Far Out and Artist
with Sarah Lois Dorai, Filmmaker, Publisher & Indigenous Advocate
and Johan Donough, Head of Partnerships and Community of Tupai.ai, Tech Expert and Community Builder

Do you have to leave where you come from behind to get ahead? Bringing together East Malaysians working across film, publishing, technology, AI and community-building, this conversation explores what happens when we carry our lived experiences with us instead. Fay, Sarah Lois and Johan Donough share how their roots have shaped what they notice, what they care about and what they choose to create, while finding their own ways to stay connected to, champion and give back to the communities that shaped them. A conversation from East Malaysia with a lesson for everyone: moving forward doesn't mean leaving your roots behind. They may be exactly what gives you something different to bring to what comes next.

MAKE LOCAL TRUTHS TRAVEL

by Ali Rez
Regional CCO, IMPACT BBDO Dubai

As Regional Chief Creative Officer of IMPACT BBDO, Ali Rez has helped transform the Middle East into one of the world's most awarded creative regions. His work has earned more than a thousand international accolades, and he has become one of the region's most influential creative voices.

In this session, Ali shares how the Middle East built global recognition not by imitating Western creativity, but by drawing on its own culture, people and stories. Discover why the strongest creative voices are often rooted in local truths, and how embracing where you come from can help ideas travel farther than you ever imagined.

MAKE ENTERTAINMENT, NOT INTERRUPTION

(PRESENTED BY ASTRO)
with special guests from Astro and performances by Astro artists (TBA)

What if the best way for a brand to get attention is to stop interrupting what people are watching and become part of what they want to watch instead?

As audiences become increasingly selective about what deserves their time, Astro brings together entertainment leaders, brand-builders and talent to explore how brands can move beyond traditional advertising and play a meaningful role in entertainment itself. Through ideas, examples and a special showcase featuring Astro talent, discover how stories, creators and entertainment platforms can help brands earn their place in culture rather than interrupt it.

YOUNG KANCILS LIVE JUDGING

(PRESENTED BY ASTRO)
Moderated by Taz Lee
Executive Creative Director, Leo Malaysia

Cheer on Malaysia's brightest under-30 creative talent as the top three Young Kancils finalists take on a brief set by Astro: how can brands become part of entertainment rather than interrupt it?

Watch them present their ideas live before a jury of industry leaders, defending their thinking under pressure as bold ideas and a little friendly competition play out on stage. It's a chance to see Malaysia's next generation of creative talent in action, proving they're not just the future of the industry, but its fiery present.



MAKE YOUR OWN JOURNEY COUNT

CREATIVE CAREERS TRACK

With Level Up (Official Training Partner)
Hosted by Edward Ong
Location: Upper Level Training Room

What does it really take to build a creative career when there's no single path to follow?

Across three hours of stories, candid conversations and networking, Edward Ong brings together creatives at different stages of their journeys to share what getting somewhere actually looks like. Hear from former Global Group Creative Director for VALORANT Justin Phang, whose career took him from working at a printer to Shanghai, Tokyo and Los Angeles; young creatives navigating their first years in the industry; and senior creative leaders ready to share what they've learned along the way.

Come listen, ask the questions you don't always get the chance to ask, exchange perspectives and make connections that could help shape where your own creative journey goes next.

Creative Journey with Justin Phang

From starting out at a printer to working across Shanghai, Tokyo and Los Angeles, eventually becoming Global Group Creative Director for VALORANT, Justin Phang retraces the decisions, detours and opportunities that shaped a creative career he could hardly have mapped out at the beginning.

Young Creatives Forum

What does building a creative career feel like while you're still in the messy middle of it? Young creatives from different disciplines get candid about their first breaks, wrong turns, doubts, ambitions and what they're still trying to figure out.

Cakap-Cakap with Senior Creatives

No portfolio required. No formal review. Just a chance for students and young creatives to sit down with creative seniors and ask the career questions they don't usually get the opportunity to ask.

Make Some Connections

A relaxed meet-and-mingle bringing emerging talent, established creatives, educators and other people across the industry together. Meet someone outside your usual circle, continue a conversation from an earlier session, or simply put a face to a name. You never know which connection might matter somewhere down the road.

COME FOR ONE. STAY FOR ALL FOUR. LEAVE WITH A FEW MORE POSSIBILITIES FOR WHERE YOUR OWN JOURNEY COULD GO.

ALI REZ

REGIONAL CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER, IMPACT BBDO

Ali Rez is one of the world's most awarded creative leaders, with more than 20 years of experience across the United States, Middle East, North Africa, Pakistan and Asia-Pacific. Named Campaign's Creative Leader of the Year five times, he has won more than 1,000 international awards, including three Cannes Lions Grand Prix, D&AD Yellow Pencil, Clio Grand, Effie Grand and One Show Best of Show. He was also the first Middle Eastern Jury President at Cannes Lions, The One Show and the Clios. His work has helped demonstrate how creativity rooted in local culture can build brands, travel globally and create positive social change.

EDWARD ONG

FOUNDER & CREATIVE DIRECTOR, BORDERLESS

If I had 3 lives to live, I would spend the first 2 as a copywriter. The third, I would travel the world, and meet all kinds of people. I'll forget I was CCO of Y&R Malaysia, Regional Creative Director on Sony, Caltex and Tiger Beer (with Y&R Asia) and Regional Copy Chief (again with Y&R Asia).

I'll put aside all the awards, all the accolades, and my 10+ years training agency and client-side creatives (all the sordid details at LevelUpProfessionalTraining.com). I'll explore creation and be insanely curious about all kinds of wonderful things everywhere.

Maybe I'll write about cars, chocolates, cloud computing, cyber security, solar panels and when the mood strikes, organic vegetables. With insight, empathy, wit and plenty of charm. Oh wait, that's kinda what a copywriter does.

ERIK REIFF

CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER AND FOUNDING PARTNER, BLACK CAT WHITE CAT MUSIC

Born in Manila and raised in Tokyo, Erik Reiff studied music and songwriting at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, where he received a songwriting lesson from Paul McCartney. After touring and performing in the United Kingdom, he returned to Tokyo to produce artists and contribute as a lyricist and producer to games including Final Fantasy and Metal Gear Solid. Since moving into advertising music, Erik has worked on global campaigns for brands such as Nissan, Uniqlo, Audi and Nike, earning recognition including a Cannes Lions Grand Prix, Clios and ADFEST awards. He continues to balance commercial work with film, television and independent artist projects.



EUGENE CHEONG

CREATIVE PIONEER AND AUTHOR, COWARDS DON'T GO TO HEAVEN

Eugene Cheong is one of Asia's most celebrated advertising creatives and has been named among the world's 50 greatest copywriters by D&AD. Across more than four decades at Ogilvy Asia-Pacific, including ten years as its Chief Creative Officer, he helped the network win more than 250 Cannes Lions and seven consecutive Campaign Brief Asia Creative Network of the Year titles. His book, Cowards Don't Go To Heaven, distils a lifetime of experience into eight creative habits: courage, idealism, curiosity, playfulness, free-spiritedness, intuition, authenticity and persistence. Handwritten in ink and charcoal, the book is his defiantly human manifesto against creative timidity and mediocrity.



FAY ULRICA LEE

CO-FOUNDER, FAR OUT | VISUAL ARTIST | CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIST

Fay Ulrica Lee is a Sabahan visual artist, video producer and creative technologist whose work spans storytelling, spatial computing and artificial intelligence. She is the founder of Far Out, an AI-driven technology studio, and Managing Partner of Undercurrent, a collective working to strengthen Malaysia's creative and cultural infrastructure.

Her artistic practice explores identity, memory and the tension between tradition and modern life, while her technology work focuses on using innovation with intention, empathy and real-world purpose. An advocate for responsible AI, Fay believes Malaysia's creative future should be shaped by its own creators, cultures and communities.

JOHAN DONOUGH

HEAD OF PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY, TUPAI.AI | AI & XR EXPERT | COMMUNITY BUILDER

Johan Donough is a Sarawakian technology strategist working across artificial intelligence, education and community development. A Professional Technologist certified by the Malaysia Board of Technologists, he also serves on MDEC's Digital Expert Network for AI and XR and is an accredited HRD Corp trainer. As Head of Partnerships and Community at Tupai.ai, Johan helps build AI-supported learning communities designed to make educational support more accessible and scalable. His current work includes bringing Tupai's peer-learning model to schools and communities in Sarawak, connecting emerging technology with the needs and opportunities of the communities he comes from.



JULIE JIHYUN KANG

FOUNDER & CEO, FLUX AI ASIA | CO-FOUNDER,CRAISEE

Julie Jihyun Kang is a Seoul-based creative entrepreneur working at the intersection of creativity, technology, culture and business transformation. Across her career, she has led work for brands including BMW, IKEA, Genesis and SK hynix, while helping incubate Dot, the Korean technology startup pioneering tactile devices for people with visual impairments. That collaboration went on to win a Titanium Lion at Cannes, while work under her leadership has received more than 100 international awards.

In 2025, Julie began her own reinvention from agency leader to technology entrepreneur. She co-founded and now leads CRAISEE, an AI-native creative platform orchestrating more than 100 generative models across image, video, audio and text.

MIA GOH

COPYWRITER, LEO MALAYSIA | MANAGER, MS. BIANCA

Mia is a writer and brand builder who divides her creative life between advertising and hospitality. A First Class Honours graduate in Advertising and Design, she currently is a copywriter for Leo Malaysia, working on Samsung. Outside the agency, she manages Ms. Bianca, where she channels her creativity into relationships, themed nights and storytelling that builds a distinctive brand. Her interests also lie in cinema, volunteer work, and other experiences that reflect her belief in learning through people and life beyond the office.

MICHAEL LIM

DESIGNER, ANIMATOR & FOUNDER, STUDIO SPACE DAWG

Michael Lim is a self-taught animator whose experiments during the pandemic grew into Studio Space Dawg, an acclaimed 2D animation studio based in Kuala Lumpur. A former advertising art director with a background in graphic design, Michael developed his craft by making and learning as he went, eventually creating a visual language that became unmistakably his own. His tactile, frame-by-frame animations have led to collaborations with Hermès, Cartier, Adobe, Adult Swim and Galeries Lafayette. His work has received multiple D&AD and ADC honours, and in 2025 he was named an ADC Young Guns 23 winner.

RAFIQUE RAMLEH

CREATIVE STRATEGIST, SINGER, SONGWRITER AND PRODUCER

Rafique Ramleh is a creative strategist, singer, songwriter and producer who moves between the worlds of advertising and independent music. He performs as solo artist Kindaraf and is the founder and frontman of Malaysian genre-fluid band The Peachskins, known for pairing evolving sounds with an unconventional approach to storytelling and promotion. The band gained national attention for the guerrilla campaign behind its Are You Okay? EP, described by NME Asia as a smart and audacious music-marketing move. Rafique's experience on both sides of creativity gives him a distinctive perspective on how strategy can shape music, and how making music can sharpen strategy.

REY TIEMPO

FOUNDER & CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER, CO-OP PLAY

Rey Tiempo is a multi-awarded creative leader and gaming specialist with more than 20 years of experience across networks including Publicis Groupe, VMLY&R, Dentsu, BBDO and Leo Burnett. Ranked the Philippines' number-one Creative Director and recognised among Creativepool's Top 100 global creative leaders, his work has been awarded at Cannes Lions, D&AD, The One Show, Clios, Spikes Asia, ADFEST and MAD STARS. Today, he helps brands participate authentically in gaming culture through Co-Op Play and Game On, APAC's first Gaming × Marketing content platform. He also founded the In-Game Ads Awards, celebrating fictional advertising created within video-game worlds.



SARAH LOIS DORAI

FILMMAKER | AUTHOR | PUBLISHER | INDIGENOUS ADVOCATE

Sarah Lois Dorai is a Sarawakian film director, author and publisher whose mixed Indian and Kelabit heritage shapes her commitment to Indigenous and underrepresented stories. She is the founder of Sceptre Seven Press, an independent publishing and media house focused on cultural preservation and multilingual storytelling.

Her work includes the award-winning documentary Songs of the Highlands, exploring the role of music in preserving language and identity, and the music video Warrior Spirit for Alena Murang. A Chevening Scholar with a master's in Film and Television Production from the University of York, Sarah uses film and literature to carry cultural memory forward.

THOMAS HONGTACK KIM

FOUNDER, 2KG CREATIVE SOLUTION LAB | CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER, PAULUS

Thomas Hongtack Kim is a globally recognised "Creative Solutionist" specialising in ideas that turn human insight, technology and purposeful innovation into practical solutions. Formerly Executive Creative Director of Cheil Worldwide's Creative Innovation Group, he has worked across Seoul, New York, Beijing and Shanghai, creating digital, social and CSR platforms for brands and organisations. His work increasingly addresses environmental and social challenges through collaborations with UN organisations, NGOs, businesses and universities. Named Campaign Asia-Pacific's Creator of the Year and ranked among the world's Top 10 Executive Creative Directors, Thomas serves on the boards of The One Club for Creativity, ADFEST and 4A China, and has judged Cannes Lions and UN SDG awards.

THE 2026 KANCIL AWARDS & FESTIVAL OF CREATIVITY

Make it for urself





QUESTIONS?



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godfrey@macomm.com.my

4As MALAYSIA