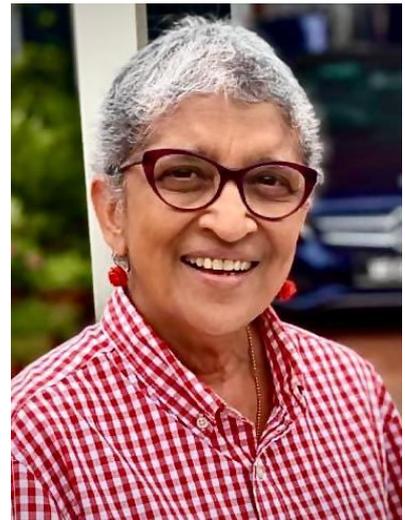


2019 Hai-O Arts & Culture Grants Lifetime Achievement Award – Winner

DATIN MARION F. D'CRUZ

Born in Johor Bahru, Datin Marion F. D'Cruz is a founder member of Five Arts Centre which was formed in 1984 by theatre directors Krishen Jit and Chin San Sooi and dancer-choreographer Marion D'Cruz. Five Arts Centre is a dynamic collective of Malaysian artists and producers, dedicated to generating alternative art forms and images in the contemporary arts landscape. It is well-known for cutting edge, experimental, interdisciplinary, and intercultural performances in theatre, dance, music, and young people's theatre, and incorporates aspects of the visual and digital arts as well. Five Arts Centre has been committed to articulating the complexity of Malaysian culture and identity through explorations and fusions of local vocabularies, forms, and traditions, in relation to the global, modern, and cross-cultural. As such, it has been instrumental in the growth of a Malaysian identity in the arts, that draws from multiple influences and hybrid histories. The collective has performed and presented its work in Southeast Asia, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, India, Egypt, Australia, Canada, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Portugal, Switzerland, Finland, UAE, and the United Kingdom.



Datin Marion graduated with a BA in Performing Arts (1977) and an MA in Dance (1979) from Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang. She has studied traditional, modern, and contemporary dance in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, London, and New York. In 1983 she formed *Marion D'Cruz and Dancers*, who have performed extensively both locally and internationally. Datin Marion began dancing at the age of 6 and started making dance at the age of 16. One of the pioneers of contemporary dance in Malaysia, her work has gone through many phases – the search for a Malaysian identity in contemporary dance, the socio-political commentary, working with 'non-performers', the democratization of the artistic space. She has broken many rules and continues to do so in search of interesting projects that empower performers and audiences alike. More recently, she has been creating unique performance structures that allow artists and non-artists to come into and tell their stories.

Her most notable works include *Bacchanale* (New York, 1981), *Swan Song* (1988), *Urn Piece* (1988), *Alter Art* (Singapore, 1991 – a collaboration with visual artists Liew Kung Yu, Raja Shahrman and Wong Hoy Cheong), *Bunga Manggar Bunga Raya* (2007), *ISA* (2008), *Gostan Forward* (2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2018), *Dream Country: a lost monologue* (Singapore, 2012 – an international commission for the Singapore Arts Festival, in collaboration with Anne James, Charlene Rajendran, Claire Wong, Natalie Henedige and Zizi Azah), *2 minute solos* (2013 & 2014). She has also choreographed for theatre, most notably for *Wrong Guys* (New York, 1981), *The Tempest* (New York, 1981), *The Cord* (1984 & 1994), *Nagraland* (Singapore, 1992), *Suara Rimba* (1994), *Savages* (1995). In addition, she has produced numerous projects with Five Arts Centre, most recently being the publication of *Excavations, Interrogations, Krishen Jit & Contemporary Malaysian Theatre* (2018, Five Arts Centre and Epigram Books).

Datin Marion has received numerous awards including the 2019 Hai-O Arts & Culture Grants *Lifetime Achievement Award*, *Anugerah Inspirasi MAGIS 2018* from ASWARA, the 2006 BOH Cameronian *Cross-Cultural Champion of the Arts Award*, the 2010 BRDB NST Dance Malaysia Award for contribution to dance in Malaysia. At the 2015 BOH Cameronian Arts Awards, she was honoured as an Arts Legend. Her performance text *Gostan Forward – A Solo Performance Lecture* has been published in the *Theatre Research Journal, Volume 43, Issue 2*, Cambridge University Press, 2018, (with an introduction by Mark Teh).

Datin Marion was the manager of Arts Network Asia from 2004 to 2006 and is now the manager for the Krishen Jit Fund. The Krishen Jit Fund (originally Krishen Jit ASTRO Fund) was introduced in 2006 by ASTRO together with Five Arts Centre, in commemoration of the late Dato' Krishen Jit, and is aimed to provide deserving arts practitioners with grants to pursue projects in the Arts. The Fund is now in its 15th year.

Datin Marion now teaches fulltime in the Dance Faculty of the National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage (ASWARA – Akademi Seni Budaya dan Warisan Kebangsaan). In addition, she continues to produce, perform, and choreograph.



Marion D'Cruz in Bamboo & Glass (1991) - Photo Albert Lim KS



Marion D'Cruz in Bunga Manggar Bunga Raya (2007) - Photo Philip Craig



Marion D'Cruz in Bunga Manggar Bunga Raya (2007)- Photo Philip Craig



Marion D'Cruz in Domestic Engineer (1994) - Photo Five Arts Centre



*Marion D'Cruz in Gostan Forward (2009)
- Photo Philip Craig*



Marion D'Cruz in Gostan Forward (2014) - Photo Five Arts Centre



Marion D'Cruz, Ivy Josiah and Anne James in Urn Piece (1991) - Photo Albert Lim KS