

PENANG, MALAYSIA

VISUAL ARTS MAP



CENDANA
CULTURAL HERITAGE
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

OVERVIEW OF THE ECOSYSTEM MAPPING

The performing arts landscape in Penang is unique due to its cultural, heritage and community values. This ecosystem mapping presents an overview of performing arts components and practitioners in Penang and their interrelationship. The performing arts map consists of **a directory listing, an ecosystem diagram** and some **scenarios** to capture a wider understanding of the performing arts landscape.

- The **directory listing** provides visual location and details of the visual arts scene.

- The **ecosystem diagram** exhibits the connections and interrelationships within and beyond the visual arts landscape. The diagram plots patterns of different interactions within the ecosystem based on various components and ties which constitute the relationships.

- The **scenarios** present further understanding of the visual arts landscape in Penang based on three focus areas which are derived from experienced visual arts practitioners.

Under its strategic pillar to 'Empower the Communities' through increasing opportunities for Malaysian artists and cultural professionals, CENDANA has worked with Arts-ED & Penang Art District (PAD) to publish Ecosystem Mapping Guides that provide listings of arts organisations, venues, institutions, networks, and platforms as well as local and international funding resources for different cultural sectors.

The Ecosystem Mapping effort is part of a long-term series of information guides initiated by CENDANA for public and private stakeholders, practitioners, policymakers, researchers, artists, and cultural workers encompassing various artistic and cultural disciplines.

DISCLAIMER

This visual arts map is only a brief outline of a larger visual arts ecosystem in Malaysia. Therefore, the information and details in this map may not comprise an exhaustive listing.

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SCENARIOS

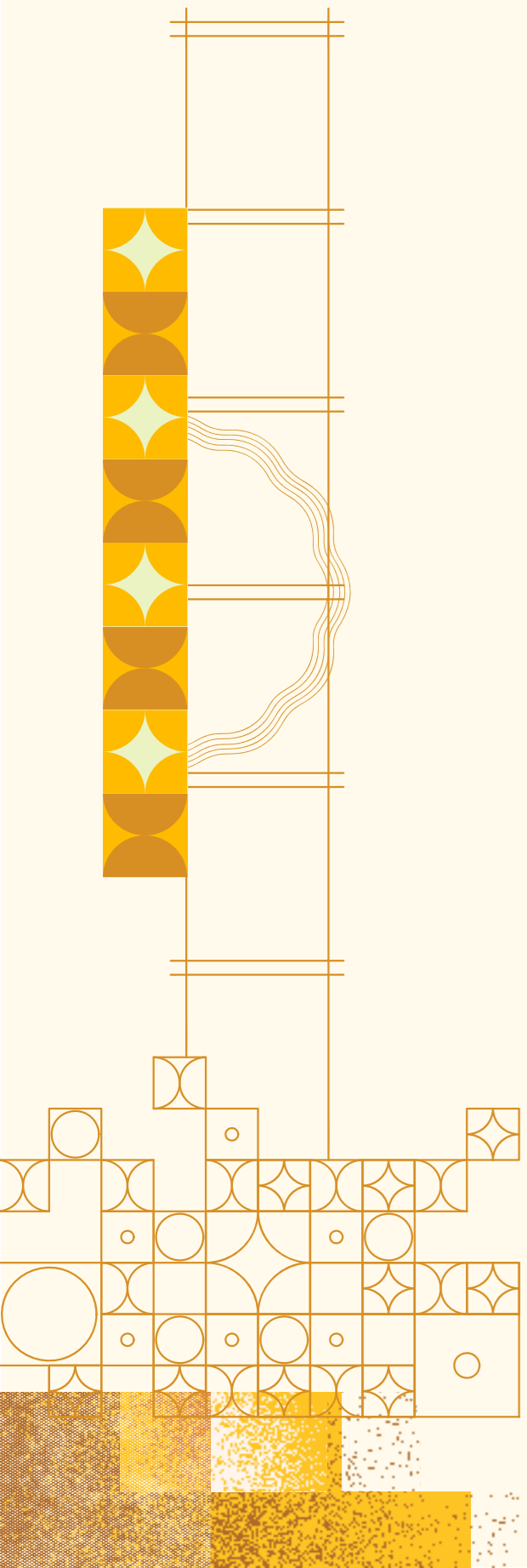
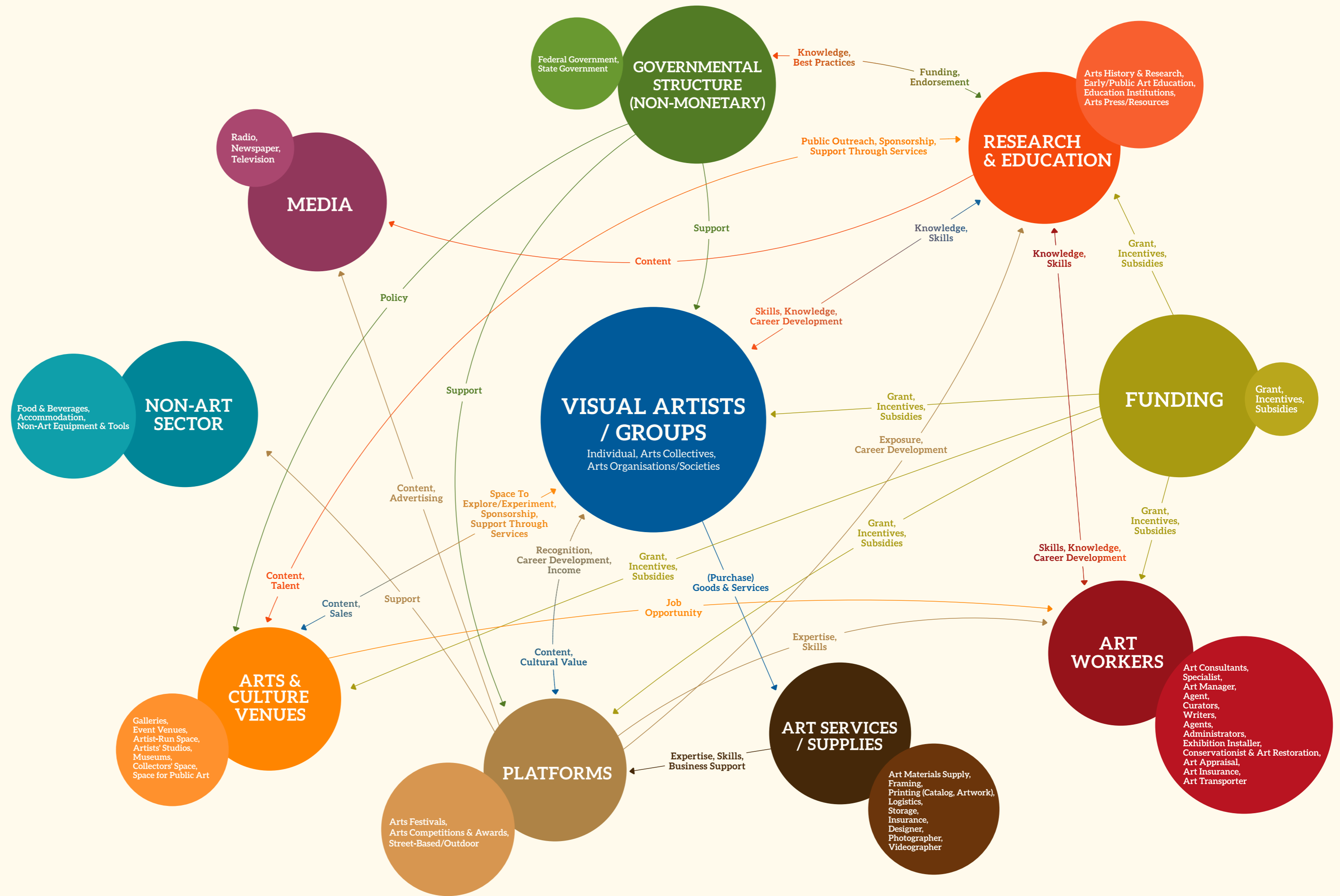
Prominent practitioners in their respective fields of expertise provide insights on the scenarios and impacts pertaining to the visual arts landscape in Penang. The practitioners represent a mix of individuals who play multiple roles in the development of visual arts. This representation reflects a comprehensive view of Penang's visual arts landscape based on three focus areas.

First, audience development (participation trends). The art market in Malaysia is limited and this leads to stagnancy in audience development. Apart from that, there is a lack of art appraisal infrastructure, shortcomings in the arts curriculum within the Malaysian formal education system and inadequate financial support for informal arts education programmes. These are fundamental factors that curtail a sustainable demand for art consumption, especially high-end artworks. Generally, the level of art appreciation is low as many perceive art as incomprehensible. The expansion of the visual arts market is geared more towards public-friendly or touristic attractions (public streets, shopping malls, social media, virtual exhibitions). Although art buyers and collectors make up a large portion of the ecosystem, the lack of shared databases hinders the understanding of art consumer behaviour.

Second, collaboration and partnership. Collaboration and partnership in terms of funding and networking is generally established with state assemblymen, state agencies and private corporations. With regards to enriching Penang art with new art elements, collaboration is formed mostly with art players in the Klang Valley and the international arena. As for the promotion of Penang artists to international art platforms, this can be done by bringing in international artists. However, individual artists face challenges in organising international collaboration events. Collaborative efforts do enhance the value of arts in Penang, however long-term collaboration among various entities in the visual art ecosystem is not prominent.

Third, technology. Opportunities and challenges come with the evolution of technology. The global trend of growing adoption of technology, hastened by the pandemic, has seen the proliferation of virtual exhibitions and non-fungible tokens (NFT). Notably, the younger generations, who are technology-savvy, are creating a path towards digital art as a potential direction for art development. Such digital readiness is broadening access to digital-based artwork. It is important to also understand that digital art is different from a physical artwork process and the digitisation of it. In the latter process, digital technology helps collectors to archive their collections and store a database of the artwork. Furthermore, social media and virtual platforms have provided the visual art community avenues to widen its audience. On the other hand, the less tech-savvy groups of local artists are struggling due to the lack of basic technological skills and knowledge to adapt to digital platforms.

VISUAL ARTS ECOSYSTEM



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Research Team: Abel Benjamin Lim, Koe Gaik Cheng & Chen Yoke Pin
Project Manager: Radziah Othuman Sahib
Design and Layout: hlfzn & caraca2

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ABOUT CENDANA

CENDANA (Cultural Economy Development Agency) was officially launched on 6 September 2017 to shape a vibrant, sustainable, and ambitious cultural economy for Malaysia, further raising the profile of Malaysian arts and culture to help form the identity of Malaysia as an arts destination and strategically place Malaysia on the global stage. It is a unit of MyCreative Ventures Sdn Bhd (a wholly owned company of the Minister of Finance Incorporated) and reports to the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia. For more information, please log on to www.cendana.com.my.

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