

**Han Nefkens
Foundation**



Fundació Joan Miró

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Ekin Kee Charles (Malaysia, 1996) wins the Han Nefkens Foundation - Loop Barcelona Video Art Production Grant 2022, in collaboration with the Fundació Joan Miró

Barcelona, 15 November 2022: Ekin Kee Charles is the winner of the **Han Nefkens Foundation - Loop Barcelona Video Art Production Grant 2022**, in collaboration with the **Fundació Joan Miró**, MoCA TAIPEI; ILHAM, Kuala Lumpur; Centre d'Art Contemporain, Genève; Art Hub Copenhagen and Inside-Out Art Museum, Beijing.

Han Nefkens - *"I was touched by the sensitivity of Ekin's work. It's clear that what she shows us is close to her heart. I am therefore delighted that, together with the six art institutions that participate in this grant, we will work with this young and promising artist from the periphery who is firmly on her way to develop her unique voice."*

Established in 2018, the **Han Nefkens Foundation – LOOP Barcelona Video Art Production Grant 2022 in collaboration with Fundació Joan Miró** has established itself as a tool for increasing contemporary artistic production in the video art field.

The Grant involves the production of a video art work. Ekin Kee Charles will receive \$15,000 for the production of a new work to be completed by the end of November 2023 and to be presented at the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona in 2024, during LOOP Festival. At a later stage, the new production will also be presented at MoCA TAIPEI; ILHAM, Kuala Lumpur; Centre d'Art Contemporain, Genève; Art Hub Copenhagen and Inside-Out Art Museum, Beijing. The Han Nefkens Foundation will receive a long-term loan of the produced artwork for presentation at art institutions worldwide with whom the Foundation collaborates with.

In order to consolidate the candidates' career, the Grant appraises emerging promising artists, who are 40 years old or less, of Asian nationality or living in Asia and who have established a solid trajectory, but have not had the opportunity to exhibit extensively. To achieve this, ten internationally recognized art critics and curators (nominated by all the partner institutions) carry out the scouting process. Through this exercise, the curators will expand the selected artist's network of contacts as well as discover and get closer to lesser-known video art works and thus, promote this discipline.

The Jury stated - *"We were delighted to select Ekin Kee Charles. Her profound video works explore in an unassuming way the societal pressures that women face every day. We all agreed that her work speaks clearly of a specific place and moment, while at the same time transcending - by virtue of its deep connection with the local - any particular culture, region or country. Her works combine this universality with a sensitive and poetic approach, offering a space for critical contemplation. We look forward to following her next steps."*

The Jury for the 2022 edition of the Grant was chaired by Han Nefkens and consisted of Emilio Alvarez, Founder LOOP Barcelona; Marko Daniel, Director Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona; Carol Yinghua Lu, Director Inside-Out Art Museum, Beijing; Hua-Tzu Chan – Deputy Supervisor of Research Department, MoCA TAIPEI; Jacob Fabricius, Director, Art Hub Copenhagen; Rahel Joseph, Director, ILHAM, Kuala Lumpur and Andrea Bellini, Director, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Genève. The judging took place in the presence of: Hilde Teerlinck, General Director of the Han Nefkens Foundation and Alessandra Biscaro, Coordinator of the Han Nefkens Foundation.

Ekin Kee Charles - *“Being born and brought up in the inland area of Sabah has been the biggest blessing in my life. No matter where I am in life I will always be the village girl that I am. Growing up, I have always wanted to leave my village but now I want nothing more than to go back. The personality, the environment, the community has made such an impact on me and I only realised that when I left. The land that has shaped me has so much character and stories and I wish to share the beauty that I see with others. This opportunity given by The Han Nefkens Foundation to showcase the beauty that I see is a big milestone. It means that more people from different dynamics will be able to appreciate the life that is rarely shined upon and I am very thankful and honoured. I want more people to appreciate where they come from, similar to how I appreciate my community and tradition through the works that I make.”*

Ekin Kee Charles is a young filmmaker from Kota Marudu, Sabah in Malaysia. She graduated from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak with a bachelor in Cinematography in 2019. Upon graduating, she ventured into the filmmaking industry to sharpen her filmmaking skills. Ekin has set the goal to tell stories coming from her community, to share what life is like in her suburban area and the love she feels for her community.

Ekin Kee Charles is an alumna of an exchange program for film students in Japan held by The Japan Foundation Asia Center under the program *....and Action! Asia 4* (2018) where she directed and co-wrote a short film ‘*Your Shirt, My Socks*’. The short film was a part of the SEAShorts |Next New Wave (Malaysia) under the program *Love Letter from Japan*. *Your Shirt, My Socks* also won the Best Short Film award at the 14th Mini Film Festival (Malaysia).

In 2019, she took home the Grand Prize Winner Award of the 13th Edition BMW Shorties with her winning short film ‘*PACE*’, thus making her the youngest Grand Prize winner, at the age of 23 and the first East Malaysian director that has won the title to date. She also won the Best Editing Award and was nominated for Best Screenplay and Best Director. ‘*PACE*’ was also a part of several film festivals such as Minikino Bali Film Week and was in Cinebah 2021, a program that showcases a new wave of Sabahan filmmakers.

Her latest short film credited as director & writer, ‘*Rama-Rama*’ funded by BMW Shorties has been a part of Clermont Ferrand Short Film Market Pick 2022 (France), 14th Cinema Rehiyon 2022 (Philippines) and Next New Wave | SEAShorts 2022 (Malaysia).

The initial selection of ten artists formally presented to the jury was made by the following scouts: Boliang Shen; Christina Li; Hyo Gyoung Jeon; Yee I-Lann; James Luigi Tana; Sau Bin Yap; Seolhui Lee; Sherith Arasakulasuriya; Shuang Li; Vanini Belarmino; Xue Tan.

The shortlist of seven artists, whose proposals were then shared and discussed by the final jury was:

- Boloho (collective), China
- Bo Wang, 1982, China
- Ekin Kee Charles, 1996, Malaysia
- Rui An Ho, 1990, Singapore
- Tao Hui, 1987, China
- Yoonsuk Jung, 1981, South Korea
- Zuqiang Peng, 1992, China

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