



22-25
NOV 2018
PENANG
MALAYSIA

Festival Handbook
#GTLF2018

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MESSAGE

Message from Chow Kon Yeow, Chief Minister of Penang



Selamat Datang.

It is with great honour that I welcome you to Penang for the eighth edition of the George Town Literary Festival or GTLF.

The GTLF was first initiated in 2011 with only five participating writers, with the objective to not only grow and expand the literary arts in Penang, but to also challenge the status quo through the writers' spoken and written word. The festival has grown tremendously since then, and this year, the State of Penang is proud to host over 100 speakers, moderators and performers.

Set within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of George Town, the GTLF is a great way to incorporate both arts and culture together with Penang's history and vibrant heritage. The state government is fully committed to cultivating Penang to champion the fields of arts, culture and literature. We have always taken pride in the fact that the GTLF is the only literary festival in the country that is funded and supported by a state government.

I would like to thank and congratulate the team behind the George Town Literary Festival 2018 for producing yet another edition of Malaysia's largest literary event.

To our guests from Malaysia, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Scotland, Singapore, Taiwan, Turkey, Vietnam, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and the United States:

I hope you will have a great time discovering the brightest voices in the literary world as well as the treasures of Penang.

Chow Kon Yeow

Chief Minister of Penang

MESSAGE

from Yeoh Soon Hin,
Penang State Exco for Tourism Development, Heritage,
Culture & Arts



First and foremost, I would like to personally welcome all of you to the beautiful state of Penang for the eighth edition of the George Town Literary Festival..

Since George Town was conferred the UNESCO World Heritage status in 2008, the tourism industry has since played an important role in building the economy for Penang. People come all over the world to relive history by walking through great mansions and beautiful colonial buildings. They also get the chance to experience our living heritage with skills passed down from generation to generation.

To further allow citizens of Penang and the world to fully enjoy our rich appreciation for arts and culture, the Penang State Government has initiated numerous world class festivals and celebrations. Of one which is the George Town Literary Festival.

Since its inception in 2011 by the then Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, the George Town Literary Festival has become an integral part of Penang's legacy, and has put Malaysia on the world map as the home of a leading literary festival.

As a Penangite, I take pride in the fact that the George Town Literary Festival was conferred the International Excellence Awards 2018 for Literary Festival, and remains the only literary festival in the country funded by a state government.

This festival has always championed freedom of speech and freedom of expression, in line with the spirit of Penang. It is only fitting that the George Town Literary Festival 2018 is themed The State of Freedom, especially this year when Malaysia spoke clearly on May 9.

I hope that you will have a memorable experience in (our) State of Freedom, and you will fully immerse in the best of Penang's warm hospitality.

Yeoh Soon Hin

Penang State Exco for Tourism Development, Heritage, Culture & Arts

MESSAGE

from Ashwin Gunasekeran,
CEO of Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau



It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the eighth edition of the George Town Literary Festival, proudly produced by the Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) for the third year.

Since taking on the festival production in 2016, PCEB has made it our mission to grow the festival each year. This year will see the festival spanning four days for the first time in its eight-year history.

We are also excited to introduce the first Malaysia National Poetry Slam, funded by the British High Commission Kuala Lumpur. The poetry slam will see twelve Malaysian poets compete to become the first Malaysia National Slam Champion. The champion will be able to represent Malaysia in international poetry slam competitions.

GTLF 2018 will feature 100 speakers from 25 countries. Growing this year's festival would not have been possible without the unwavering support from the Penang State Government and Penang Global Tourism, as well as Khazanah Nasional for the sponsorship of Bangunan UAB as the festival main venue. We also are indebted to Cheah Kongsi for opening their doors to host the GTLF 2018 Opening Ceremony.

We also have the privilege of collaborating with various organisations to bring in more local and international speakers and performers. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to some returning partners and new ones including the British Council, Creative Scotland, Embassy of Belgium in Malaysia, Embassy of France in Kuala Lumpur, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, High Commission of Canada in Malaysia, Flanders Literature, Gazebo Books, Gerakbudaya Enterprise, Goethe-Institut, Icelandic Literature Center, Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur, Pheim Unit Trusts Berhad, Writers SA, Malaysia Airlines and other international organisations for contributing to the writers' travels for the passion of cultivating the arts through writing and literature.

To all the literary lovers and festival-goers, we hope you have a fun and fruitful time here with us at the George Town Literary Festival and bring back many memorable experiences from our lovely home state of Penang.

Ashwin Gunasekeran
CEO of Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau

MESSAGE

from Bernice Chauly, Festival Director

Welcome to the eighth edition of the George Town Literary Festival in the historic UNESCO World Heritage Site of George Town, Penang!

This year we delve into the theme ‘The State of Freedom’, which resonates especially with us Malaysians, as we achieved the impossible by removing a corrupt government in the true spirit of democracy, and without a single drop of blood.

The State of Freedom is also significant as 2018 marks many milestones in contemporary history. Seventy years ago in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations in recognition of fundamental human rights for all. That very same year, the Batang Kali massacre was committed by British troops on Malayan soil. A hundred years ago, in 1918, women got to vote in Britain, after years of struggle and strife by the suffragette movement. And in 1968, Dr Martin Luther King was assassinated, thrusting the civil rights movement in the United States towards an ugly head. Ten years ago, the former prime minister Kevin Rudd said sorry to the Aboriginal peoples of Australia. And this year, on 9 May, a new Malaysia was born.

The George Town Literary Festival was also awarded global recognition by winning the London Book Fair’s International Excellence Awards 2018, making us the world’s leading literary festival this year. We are deeply honoured and grateful for this acknowledgement, and especially so when the judges called us ‘brave’ in addressing crucial issues from a challenging part of the world.

We continue our commitment in creating free discourse in thought and speech, and we continue to address some of the most vital and urgent issues that inform us as writers, poets, thinkers and members of the human race.

We are grateful for the continued support from all the embassies, cultural institutions, businesses and individuals who believe in being patrons of the arts – you continue to give us the arms and legs to move forward.

I am indebted to the team at Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau for their tireless efforts, and my brilliant co-curators Gareth Richards, Pang Khee Teik and Melizarani T. Selva for helping me create our most challenging and confronting programme to date. I am grateful to the Penang state government and Penang Global Tourism for the freedom and support for eight years to have open conversations, cultivate new friendships, acquaint us with old ones, all in the true spirit of exchange, dialogue and love for the word. And as I take my leave as Festival Director this year, I wish all involved with future editions of the GTLF the very best of luck in continuing in the vital and long-lasting legacy of this festival.

Thank you, and I wish you all a great GTLF 2018!

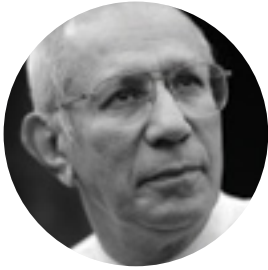
Have a great festival!

Bernice Chauly
Festival Director



Keynote Speaker

Synopsis: The State of Freedom



Anwar Fazal

Is the state of freedom a brave or grave new or old world order? Is it about 'freedom' or 'freedom'? What about 'human wrongs' as well as 'human rights'? A whole new world order or disorder is prevailing where disruptors of the digital kind and 'impunists' galore are generating fake news and unprecedented denials like never before. We are seeing surges of waste, corruption, violence to self, society and Mother Earth. Bookshops and libraries are facing the horizon of the sadness of extinction. Anyone, anywhere, anytime has opportunities to love, and spit, like never before.

The father, or mother (or both) of peace studies, Johan Galtung, tells us that the world has to endure 'autistic, narcissistic and paranoid leadership' undermining the statutes (or is it statue?) of liberty. Fortunately, everywhere, too, are sprouting rainbows of hope where courage, conscience and creativity of someone, somewhere, sometime are made alive through their literature in multifaceted ways. The written word and now evermore a multiversity of mediums are available with a click, including the rising use of podcasting giving us the intimacy and liveliness of conversations galore. We are given the excitement and the pain of the web of certainties and uncertainties, lovely images and dark manoeuvrings of hackers, and the likes of Wikipedia and WikiLeaks.

The overarching struggle for addressing the trio of waste, violence and manipulation is challenged by the celebration of the trinity of culture of balance and harmony of trusteeship and accountability to now and the future. There is also what Paul Hawken describes as 'blessed unrest', of the proliferation of institutions, individuals and issues that are informing, inspiring and igniting action like never before. Can we make the future we want? Whither ... or do we wither?

The Curatorial Team



Bernice Chauly

Bernice Chauly is a writer, poet and educator. Born in George Town to Chinese and Punjabi teachers, she read education and English literature in Canada as a government scholar. She is the author of six books of poetry and prose: *going there and coming back* (1997), *The Book of Sins* (2008), *Lost in KL* (2008), *Growing Up with Ghosts* (2011), which won in the Readers' Choice Awards 2012 in the non-fiction category, and a third collection of poems, *Onkalo* (2013), described by J.M. Coetzee as 'direct, honest and powerful'. For 20 years she worked as a multidisciplinary artist and is recognised as one of the most significant voices of her generation. Since 2011 she has served the director of the George Town Literary Festival, winner of the International Excellence Awards at the London Book Fair 2018, and is an Honorary Fellow in Writing from the University of Iowa's International Writing Program (IWP 2014). She directs the KL Writers Workshop and teaches creative writing at the University of Nottingham Malaysia. Her critically acclaimed debut novel, *Once We Were There* (2017), won the inaugural Penang Monthly Book Prize 2017 and in the Readers' Choice Awards 2018 in fiction.



Gareth Richards (Co-curator)

A former academic, Gareth Richards is a writer, editor and bookseller. He previously taught Southeast Asian politics and international political economy at Manchester University, the University of the Philippines, and the Asia-Europe Institute, Universiti Malaya. He is the founder-director of Impress Creative & Editorial, a small innovative company involved in diverse areas of the arts and book production, notably consultant editing and translation. In 2014 he set up Gerakbudaya Bookshop, Penang, the first independent bookshop in the UNESCO world heritage site of George Town; and in 2018 he co-founded Hikayat, an arts space for books, letters and beyond. He is the co-author/editor of *Asia–Europe Interregionalism: Critical Perspectives* (1999), and wrote the texts for two books of photography, *Portraits of Penang: Little India* (2011) and *Panicrama* (2016). He is a contributing editor at *Mekong Teahouse*.

The Curatorial Team



Melizarani T. Selva (Co-curator)

Melizarani T. Selva is a spoken word poet, showrunner and educator based in Kuala Lumpur. She has performed in six countries and represented Malaysia at the Commonwealth People's Forum in London, Britain, and the ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival, India. Notable performances include TEDxGateway in Mumbai, India, and the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival, Indonesia. Her first book, *Taboo* (2015), was both critically acclaimed and a commercial success. Her poems have been translated into French by Éditions Jentayu and into Malay by Malaysia's Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. She runs Kuala Lumpur's monthly poetry open mic session 'If Walls Could Talk', a bilingual poetry slam 'Slamokrasi', and teaches performance poetry at international and national schools.

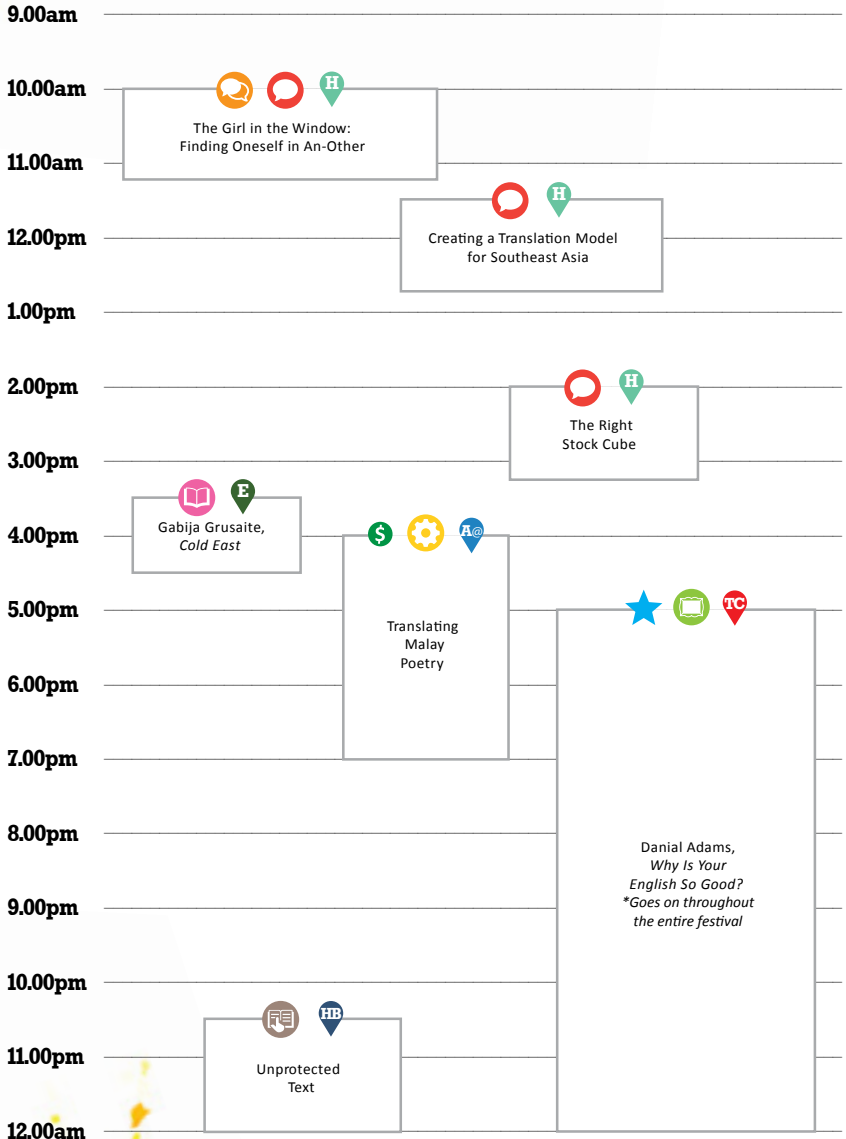


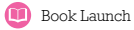
Pang Khee Teik (Co-curator)

Pang Khee Teik is an arts consultant, activist, curator, organiser, photographer, editor and writer. In 2008 he co-founded the sexuality rights festival Seksualiti Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, together with fellow activists and artists. The festival was banned by the police in 2011. He co-edited (with Jerome Kugan) Malaysia's first English-language queer anthology: *Body 2 Body: A Malaysian Queer Anthology* (2010). He is presently the editor of QueerLapis.com, a website by and for LGBT people in Malaysia. Before he was known as an activist, he was the editor of the arts website Kakiseni.com, after which he became the arts programme director of the Annexe Gallery. He has directed the art and activism bazaar Art for Grabs for the last 11 years, and was arrested during one of the bazaars in 2016, under sedition charges. He is a former Chevening Scholar at Birkbeck, University of London, Britain.

22 November Thursday

Programme Flow

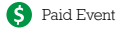




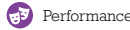
Book Launch



Film



Paid Event



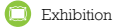
Performance



Reading



Translators' Roundtable



Exhibition



Conversations



Poetry



Special Event



Workshop

10.00 am–11.15 am



Heaven (Level 2)
Bangunan UAB

Hikayat Lecture on Literary Translation The Girl in the Window: Finding Oneself in An- Other

When we translate the classics, apart from cultures and languages and ideas, we also translate space and time. Classics come from worlds that no longer exist and from times we can only imagine. But, the great classical texts were then, as we are now, exploring the only idea that truly matters: what does it mean to be human? From however long ago and however far away, translators present the lives and loves of women and men to us in the here and the now. They bring us fears and aspirations that so resemble our own, no matter what century or culture separates us. As makers and readers of translations, how do we find ourselves in stories from different times and places? Reading about an-other, what is the moment when we say, 'Ah yes, that is me!' When do we see the Girl in the Window?

Speaker: Arshia Sattar

Moderator: Gareth Richards

11.30 am–12.45 pm



Heaven (Level 2)
Bangunan UAB

Conversations: Creating a Translation Model for Southeast Asia

We are not reading each other. And why? The lack of translation of Southeast Asian letters – whether between the region's languages or into major world languages like Mandarin and English – has been a barrier to the greater understanding of our neighbours. We have shared traumas and colonial histories with an understanding to build a common ASEAN 'community'. But there has been little effort in creating ways of reading the past and the present. How do we create a model that is sustainable for writers, translators, publishers and distributors within the region? How can we create something that will last?

Speakers: Amir Muhammad, Kaitlin Rees, ko ko thett, Nhã Thuyền

Moderator: Pauline Fan

2.00 pm–3.15 pm



Heaven (Level 2)
Bangunan UAB

Conversations: The Right Stock Cube

Literary translation is tricky business and not for the faint hearted. John Le Carré said: 'If your book is a cow the translation should be a stock cube, hopefully a beef flavoured cube, not a chicken flavoured one.' How does one begin? When does a real understanding of the text become an affliction or a resolution? And how are the techniques like adaptation, amplification and compensation dealt with? How does one decide to get lost and become a different stock cube – or not – in the work of translation?

Speakers: Arshia Sattar, Azhar Ibrahim, Jérôme Bouchaud, Muhammad Haji Salleh

Moderator: Eddin Khoo



3.30 pm–4.30 pm



Earth (Level 1)
Bangunan UAB

Book Launch: Gabija Grusaite, *Cold East* (Clarity Publishing)

Twenty-something author and minor media influencer, Stasys Saltoka – or Stanley Colder to his adoring IG followers – has hit an existential wall. Abandoning his clichéd and stifling New York City life, he buys a one-way ticket to Southeast Asia in search of life-changing experiences. A chance meeting with an enigmatic Russian leads Stasys to a documentary project – the murder of a mysterious Mongolian model that implicates a prime minister and his jewel-hoarding wife. Unravelling the truth takes Stasys deeper through the murky swamp of extreme corruption, death, Islamophobia and media manipulation. Will he ever figure out the meaning of life or find a decent espresso?

*Malaysian Sign Language (BIM)
Interpreting service is provided
for this session

4.00 pm–7.00 pm



Accelerator Room, @CAT

Workshop: Translating Malay Poetry


Translating poetry presents its own special problems. Its compact form must be understood and appreciated. The translator must be conscious of the music of the words. And poetry's use of images and metaphors also poses considerable interpretative problems. Join the poet, translator and National Literary Laureate, Muhammad Haji Salleh, in a discussion and workshop on the particular demands of translating Malay poetry. This workshop introduces the special characteristics of classical poetic forms such as *pantun* and *syair*, and invites participants to share creative strategies like the rhyming scheme, assonance, alliteration and melody. Examples from past renditions that focus on these challenges will be shared in advance and their strategies in solving translation problems will be discussed. Each participant will translate a *pantun* and a verse of a modern poem. Registered participants must be fluent in both Bahasa Malaysia and English and, ideally, have some previous experience in translating literary texts. Limited to 20 participants by prior registration. Medium of instruction: English and Bahasa Malaysia.

Facilitator: Muhammad Haji Salleh


Fee: RM120 (RM80 for students)

22 November

Thursday

 Book Launch


 Film

 Paid Event

 Performance


 Reading

 Translators' Roundtable

 Exhibition

 Conversations

 Poetry

 Special Event

 Workshop

5.00 pm until festival ends

   ChinaHouse

Art Exhibition and Opening: Daniel Adams, *Why Is Your English So Good?*

Artist's Statement: I was an international student for three years and graduated in photography from Falmouth University. I faced my fair share of stereotyping, racism and ignorance while living in England. From small ignorant comments to more aggressive slurs, each experience affected me in one way or another. The understanding of being treated differently, and occasionally being treated as if I were less than another race, was a new experience to me. I am half-Chinese and half-English and have never experienced racism in my own country. However, being in England allowed me to experience this widespread problem that many people at home do. *Why Is Your English So Good?* touches on the widespread problem of racism and ignorance in Britain and Ireland. Each individual pictured in this series of photographs is a Malaysian, either studying or living in Britain or Ireland. The making of this project was envisioned to educate an audience on the situations that still occur and the effects that flow from them. Each image is inspired by each individual's personal experience and is portrayed on the subject through the use of colour, texture and different materials. *Why Is Your English So Good?* explores a variety of concepts that include identity, gender, race and mental health – all in relation to the concept of racism and ignorance.

Introduced by: Tasnem Aljoffery

This exhibition is supported by Penang Art District

10.30 pm–12.00 am

  Hikayat Blue

Readings: Unprotected Text

Join us for an intimate session of pegging the patriarchy, wild 'super' liberalisms and other kinks. Where words are used to express our deepest wants and desires. For mature audiences only.

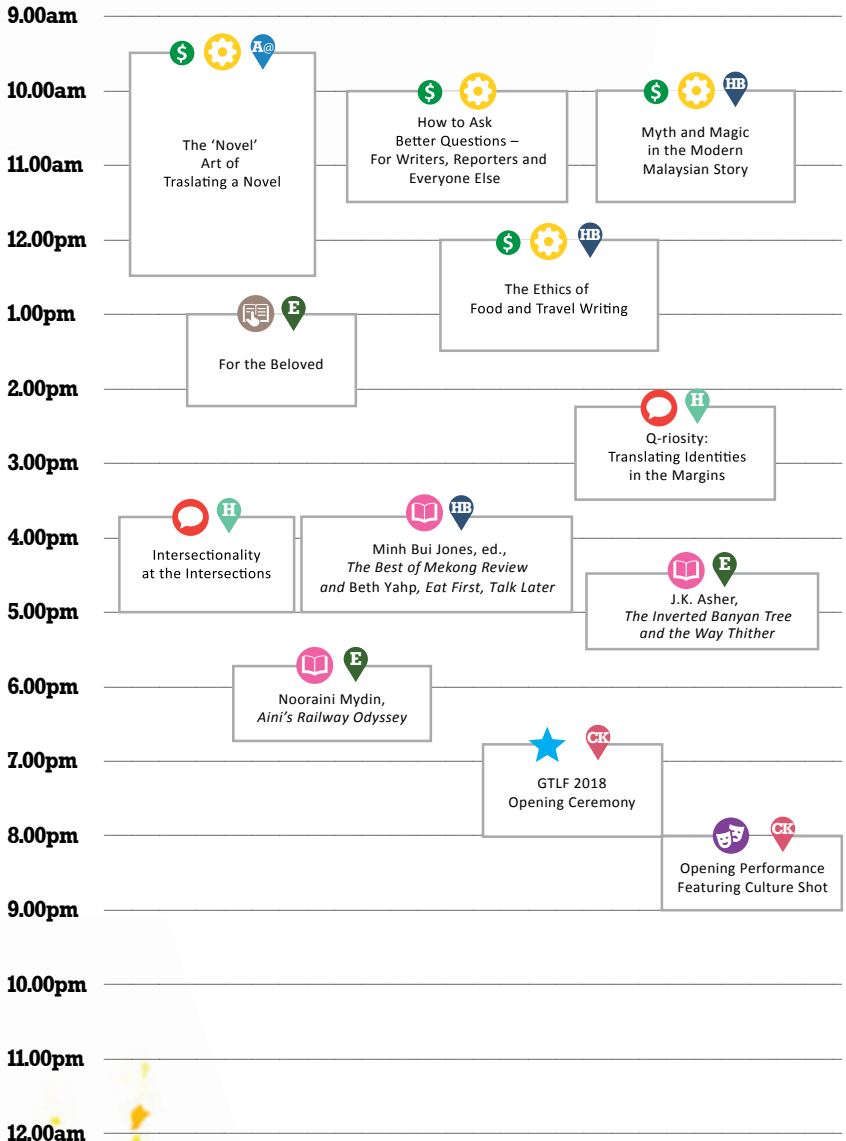
Readers: Amir Muhammad, Ivan Coyote, Kyoko Yoshida, Regina Ibrahim, Shih-Li Kow, Stephanie Dogfoot, William Yang

Hosted by: Pang Khee Teik

*Malaysian Sign Language (BIM) Interpreting is provided for this session.

23 November Friday

Programme Flow



23 November

Friday



9.30 am–12.30 pm



Accelerator Room,
@CAT

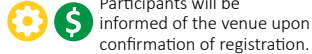
Workshop: The 'Novel' Art of Translating a Novel

Join the celebrated Indonesian author, Leila S. Chudori, and translator and founder of the Lontar Foundation, John H. McGlynn, in a discussion and workshop on the intricacy and artistry required in translating her latest novel, *Laut Bercerita (The Sea Speaks His Name)*. John is one of Indonesia's most vital proponents of the translation of many Indonesian works into English and is responsible for the largest archive of Indonesian letters (past and present) online. Participants will work with the text and construct their own translations which will be reviewed during this workshop. They must also be fluent in English and Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa Malaysia.

Facilitators: John H. McGlynn and Leila S. Chudori

Fee: RM120 (RM80 for students)

10.00 am–11.30 am



Participants will be informed of the venue upon confirmation of registration.

Workshop: How to Ask Better Questions— For Writers, Reporters and Everyone Else

Listening isn't something that is always valued in society. We all have somewhere to be and other things on our mind. And yet this practice is the foundation of being a skilful reporter, journalist or writer. This interactive storytelling workshop will blend presentation, discussion and interactive role play to explore how to ask good questions of the subjects we speak with. It will also emphasise the key elements of storytelling: What makes a good story? Why do certain stories resonate with readers and others do not? And how does asking good questions help us tell the kinds of stories that will connect with our intended audience?

Facilitator: Nico Lang

Fee: RM65

*Malaysian Sign Language (BIM) Interpreting is provided for this session.

10.00 am–11.30 am



Hikayat Blue

Workshop: Myth and Magic in the Modern Malaysian Story

Using two examples of short literary texts set in Asia and the diaspora, this workshop examines ways in which myth and magic can be used to focus on nationalism and indigenous geographies. By rethinking the modern writer's role in a gendered, ageist, urbanised and postcolonial world, participants will be encouraged to explore the role of myths in their own communities to write their own short story.

Facilitator: Dipika Mukherjee

Fee: RM65



12.00 pm–1.30 pm



Workshop: The Ethics of Food and Travel Writing

The art of food and drink writing has metamorphosed since the glory days of print media when journalists had access to unlimited expenses and could write with complete objectivity, through to the reality of the present day when a new generation of writers are obliged (almost exclusively) to be invited by restaurants and hotels they are reviewing, while bloggers go as far as asking to be paid by the establishment for their review. How do you keep any sense of objectivity today? And what do readers know or think about all this?

Facilitator: John Brunton

Fee: RM60

1.00 pm–2.15 pm



Reading: For the Beloved

Readings of texts in the original and by their translators.

Readers: Kaitlin Rees and Nhã Thuyên, John H. McGlynn and Leila S. Chudori, Gopika Jadeja, Jérôme Bouchaud, Pauline Fan, Eddin Khoo and Ye Mimi

Introduced by: Jérôme Bouchaud

2.15 pm–3.30 pm



Conversations: Q-riosity: Translating Identities in the Margins

If identities are products of history, politics and culture, how do we talk about queer identities? Are relationships that are formed in the margins and conjugated beneath what is speakable, escape cultural contexts, or do they depend on them even more? If language is formed by the very cultural forces that marginalise us in the first place, can it do the job of connecting one margin to another? What names do we give to the relationships that thrive on being nameless?

Speakers: Regina Ibrahim, John H. McGlynn, ko ko thett, Maud Vanhauwaert

Moderator: Pang Khee Teik

*Malaysian Sign Language (BIM) Interpreting is provided for this session.

23 November
Friday



3.45 pm–5.00 pm



Heaven (Level 2)
Bangunan UAB

Conversations: Intersectionality at the Intersections

Feminist intersectionality theory shows us that as our multiple identities intersect they often converge oppressions or privileges upon us simultaneously based on gender, ethnicity, citizenship status, sexual orientation, social class, disabilities and so on. This conversation seeks to discuss how intersectionality forms not just the protagonists we create through writing, but also how it exposes our experiences as writers representing multiple identities navigating a world more fraught than ever with uneven wealth distribution, power dynamics and publishing opportunities.

Speakers: Anthony Chong, Aidli Mosbit, Eleanor Goroh, Vamba Sheriff, William Yang

Moderator: Jac sm Kee

*Malaysian Sign Language (BIM)
Interpreting is provided for this session.

3.45 pm–5.00 pm



Hikayat Blue

Book Launches: Minh Bui Jones, ed., *The Best of Mekong Review* (Gerakbudaya) and Beth Yahp, *Eat First, Talk Later* (Gerakbudaya)

Mekong Review is celebrating its third anniversary with an anthology of its best essays. Selected from over 250 pieces by its founding editor, Minh Bui Jones, they showcase the sharpest and liveliest writing from the region, from established writers Emma Larkin and Sebastian Strangio to new voices Pim Wangtechawat and Norman Erikson Pasaribu. From Aung San Suu Kyi to Najib Razak, Marguerite Duras to Viet Thanh Nguyen, Southeast Asia in all its gore and glory is brought together in this memorable collection.

Eat First, Talk Later is a beautifully written, absorbing memoir of a daughter's 'second honeymoon' road trip with her ageing parents in the days of Reformasi, when rampant corruption, censorship, detentions without trial and deaths in custody transfix the nation. Nothing goes to plan. Her parents argue, while Beth is embroiled in a turbulent relationship with an opposition activist at the forefront of the democratic struggle for change. Shortlisted for the 2018 Adelaide Festival Award for Literature (Non-Fiction), *Eat First, Talk Later* is a book about how we tell both family and national stories; about love and betrayal; home and belonging; and the joys of food.



4.30 pm–5.30 pm



Earth (Level 1)
Bangunan UAB

Book Launch:
J.K. Asher, *The Inverted Banyan Tree and the Way Thither*
(Atlantis Books)

During the Second World War in Port Dickson, Malaya, an angelic Roman Catholic Serani (Eurasian) girl saves the life of a Muslim teenager, Ismael, from Japanese soldiers. His father, Ummah Ibrahim, headman and guardian of Keramat Rimau, is captivated by her selfless courage. When he learns her family is massacred during the Japanese occupation, Ummah's love is sealed over Mariam. Years later Ummah seeks her hand in marriage for Ismael, now a ranger with the Worcestershire Regiment. As Malaysia is under siege by new money and greed, the innocence of Port Dickson is under threat and the world of the Eurasians is on the cusp of being eclipsed. Can good triumph over evil? Will love prevail over fanaticism and madness?

5.45 pm–6.45 pm



Earth (Level 1)
Bangunan UAB

Book Launch:
Nooraini Mydin, *Aini's Railway Odyssey*
(ZI Publications)

This book will have you trawling the internet for train tickets to Timbuktu. Like its author, *Aini's Railway Odyssey* is a conundrum – part autobiography, part travel writing, constantly moving from the words of a travel writer to an innocent abroad. In this beautifully illustrated book, Nooraini Mydin grabs you by the hand and takes you with her on a madcap rail adventure through 10 countries, sleeping with 53 passengers in the open carriage of the Trans-Siberian railway, taking in the stunning views of Lake Baikal, getting held up in a fake tea shop in Beijing, climbing the Great Wall of China with a prosthetic knee and sampling the orgasmic food of Penang.

6.45 pm



Cheah Kongs

**George Town
Literary Festival 2018
Opening Ceremony**

Welcome by

Ashwin Gunasekaran,
CEO of PCEB

Speech by

Bernice Chauly,
Festival Director

Keynote Address by

Anwar Fazal

Speech by

YB Yeoh Soon Hin

Speech by

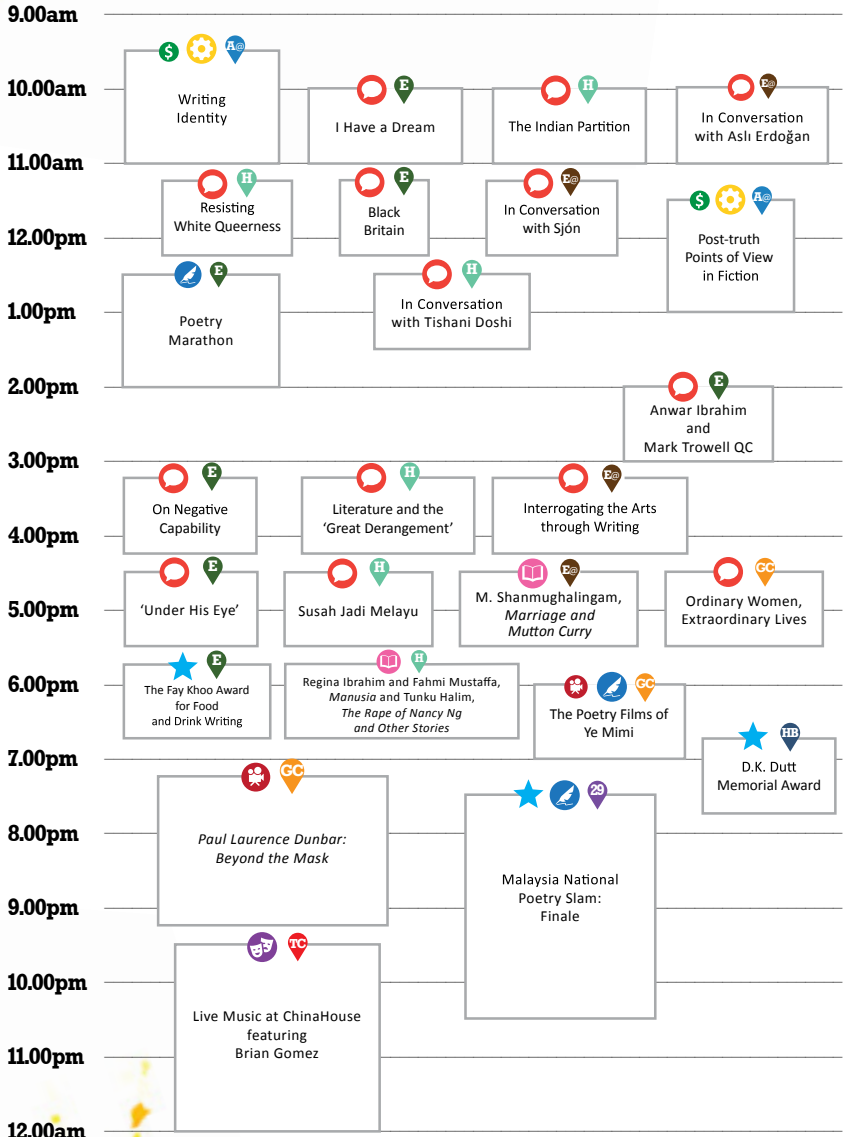
Chief Minister of Penang
Chow Kon Yeow

Performance by

Culture Shot

24 November Saturday

Programme Flow





9.30 am–11.00 am



Accelerator Room
@CAT

Workshop: Writing Identity

Working with two genres that encourage you to compose a completed draft within the workshop constraints (poetry – lyrical or satirical; short short fiction), we will focus on ‘local’ voicing while also encompassing national and global concerns. Providing core elements in these creative forms, this workshop will direct you through imaging exercises to tap your individual imaginations and passions. Finally, you will share your writing in a safe, intimate and communal public reading.

Facilitator: Shirley Geok-lin Lim

Fee: RM60

10.00 am–11.00 am



Earth (Level 1)
Bangunan UAB

Conversations: I Have a Dream— Women, Writing and Freedom

How do women write to, and from, power? In a world that sprung #metoo, toxic masculinity and systemic, endemic patriarchy - much of which colludes in the erasure of herstories, writing, art and thought - what informs and inspires us now? How do we begin the process of forgiveness, reclaiming memory, and finding the self in a world that is becoming more and more hostile to women?

Speakers: Ali Cobby Eckermann, Kyoko Yoshida, Leila S. Chudori, Tang Siu Wa

Moderator: Pauline Fan

*Malaysian Sign Language (BIM)
Interpreting is provided for this session.

10.00 am–11.00 am



Heaven (Level 2)
Bangunan UAB

Conversations: The Indian Partition— Finding the Light Beneath the Shadow

The Partition of India changed the sub-continent and the world. It promised much: the liberation of India from British rule and the creation of the Muslim state of Pakistan. Instead, the divide brought displacement and death, and catastrophic human loss. It brutalised and silenced public consciousness for decades and the horrors of Partition resound today, 71 years later. In India, how do the issues of caste, communalism, politics, religion and fate play out in a country that is becoming more and more nationalistic and violent? How can the two neighbours – both nuclear powers – find a means to coexist? How do Indian writers seek balance – within and without? How does one of the most fractured nations on earth nurture itself, and will it ever reclaim the teachings of one its greatest teachers, the Mahatma?

Speakers: Arshia Sattar, David Davidar, Gopika Jadeja, Salil Tripathi

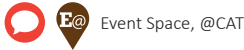
Moderator: Michael Vatikiotis

24 November

Saturday



10.00 am–11.00 am



In Conversation with Aslı Erdoğan

A research physicist turned writer of extraordinary power and conviction, Aslı Erdoğan is one of Turkey's most courageous voices – as novelist, columnist, essayist – who sheds light of the great taboos: prisons, the displaced, torture, Kurdish issues, women's rights, and continuing resistance.

Moderator: Chris Keulemans

11.15 am–12.15 pm



Conversations: Resisting White Queerness

Many countries resist the human rights of queer individuals by claiming these rights are western exports and forms of neo-imperialism. Activists resist this by championing the universality of these identities and rights. But the domination of queer, white, liberation rhetoric on the global stage seemed to have framed the rest of the queer world through its lens, often creating invisibility in other ways of being queer and other forms of (self) liberation. The struggle to be seen, whether in the East or the West, finds many who simply don't fit in. How far can queering our queer narratives help in our own liberation?

Speakers: Cyril Wong,
Ivan Coyote, Jhoanna Cruz,
Louise Welsh

Moderator: Sharaad Kuttan

*Malaysian Sign Language (BIM) Interpreting is provided for this session.

11.15 am–12.15 pm



Conversations: Black Britain

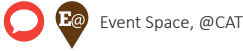
Black people have lived in Britain for centuries – and this population has grown exponentially, first through empire and then in the postwar era of decolonisation. How has the Black presence in Britain shaped the politics, cultural discourses and everyday struggles for respect, recognition and rights? How have Black people responded to key sites of resistance: over immigration (including the Windrush generation), policing, institutional racism, state-sanctioned violence, the War on Terror, and more? Does the once-powerful politics of 'political blackness' – that originated in the united struggle of working-class African-Caribbean and Asian communities against racism and imperialism – still provide the basis of a progressive and inclusive strategy today?

Speakers: Lemn Sissay,
Mohan Ambikaipaker

Moderator: Gareth Richards



11.15 am–12.15 pm



In Conversation with Sjón

A visionary – poet, novelist, lyricist, friend and fellow conspirator of Björk – Sjón has internalised the lyrical language of epics, myths and folktales, and yet is urgently contemporary. He is truly a trickster and a master wordsmith of the times we live in.

Moderator: Umapagan Ampikaipakan

11.30 am–1.00 pm



Workshop: Post-truth Points of View in Fiction

Asians were always postmodern. What does that mean? Discover the secrets of points of view and psychic distance in short fiction. The workshop unpacks Ryūnosuke Akutagawa's short story 'In a Bamboo Grove' and teaches the value of multiple perspectives. It will also discuss John Gardner's five levels of psychic distance, a rare but ultimately necessary tool for quality fiction.

Facilitator: Sreedhevi Iyer

Fee: RM60

12.30 pm–2.00 pm



Poetry Marathon

A non-stop performance by festival poets, guest poets and their work. A celebration of poets, poetry and the world.

Poets: Ali Cobby Eckermann, Cyril Wong, Danton Remoto, Eleanor Goroh, Ivan Coyote, Jeet Thayil, Jhoanna Cruz, ko ko thett, Lawrence Wong, Lily Jamaludin, Maud Vanhauwaert, Nhã Thuyên, Omar Musa, Shirley Geok-lin Lim, Raja Ahmad Aminullah, Sjón, Stephanie Dogfoot, Tang Siu Wa, Tshiung Han See, Ye Mimi and Lemn Sissay

Introduced by: Melizarani T. Selva

24 November

Saturday



12.30 pm–1.45 pm



In Conversation with Tishani Doshi

Award-winning poet, dancer, novelist, Tishani Doshi is an artist of extraordinary range and depth and is one of India's most celebrated contemporary voices. Her recent collection of poems, *Girls Are Coming Out of the Woods*, has been hailed as a testament to violence, memory and the enduring power of the female voice.

Moderator: Bettina Chua Abdullah

2.00 pm–3.00 pm



Conversations: Anwar Ibrahim and Mark Trowell QC

Who is Anwar Ibrahim? Prisoner, thinker, Islamist, politician – he remains an icon for many in Malaysia and around the world. What are his dreams for a 'new Malaysia'? What are his thoughts on 'liberalism' and what freedom really means for all Malaysians? How does he envisage a political terrain in the making? A heart-to-heart conversation with Anwar Ibrahim and the lawyer Mark Trowell, who has followed and written on the Anwar trials since 1998.

Moderator: Bernice Chauly

3.15 pm–4.15 pm



Conversations: On Negative Capability—Of Being the Most Unpoetical of Anything in Existence

'Negative capability' is not a contemporary concept, but originated with Keats. His idea was that the poet should be a kind of negative force – that only by remaining herself negative, or in some way empty, is the poet able to fill herself with an understanding of, or sympathy for, or empathy with the subject of her poem. How does this translate to notions of appropriation in a world that has become less tolerant of diversity? How does the poet continue to fill 'other' bodies, and still write in voices that are true?

Speakers: Cyril Wong, Jeet Thayil, Kaitlin Rees, ko ko thett, Nhã Thuyên

Moderator: Sasha de Buyl



3.15 pm–4.15 pm



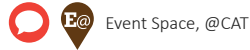
Conversations: Literature and the 'Great Derangement'

We live in the age of the Anthropocene, the period when human action has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment. And we have been destroying the Earth and unleashing what Amitav Ghosh calls 'the great derangement'. According to the authoritative Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we now have 12 years left to save our home. How do we save the planet? And ourselves? Who and what do we leave behind, and what do we save? The need for documentation, archiving and, above all, a critical imagination – including literature – is more crucial than ever.

Speakers: Ali Cobby Eckermann, Anwar Fazal, Jean-Christophe Rufin, Louise Welsh

Moderator: Katrina Jorene Maliamauv

3.15 pm–4.15 pm



Conversations: Interrogating the Arts through Writing—T.K. Sabapathy and Krishen Jit

While creativity is taken as an unalloyed good, and art-making receives due attention, writing about the arts engenders relatively little traction. Two recently published books buck the trend. *Writing the Modern* is a diverse selection of essays from T.K. Sabapathy's corpus of art writing; and *Excavations, Interrogations, Krishen Jit & Contemporary Malaysian Theatre* is an assemblage of essays responding to Krishen Jit's work. As pioneers in writing about the arts in Southeast Asia, T.K. Sabapathy and Krishen Jit exemplify an unusual commitment and belief in the value of critical engagement, and their work has inspired countless writers, creators and practitioners for over 50 years.

Speakers: Charlene Rajendran, T.K. Sabapathy

Moderator: Carmen Nge

Presented by: Five Arts Centre

4.30 pm–5.30 pm



Conversations: 'Under His Eye'

In Margaret Atwood's Republic of Gilead, 'Under His Eye' is the farewell uttered by the 'handmaids' who are subject to the extremist and tyrannical religious society they live in. It is 'he' who dictates. It is 'he' who watches – there are 'eyes' everywhere that forcibly trap women and men by religion, the far right and the divine gaze. This post-apocalyptic, dystopian society is now more prescient than ever – in how nativism, authoritarianism, doublethink and state mechanisms are being used to deny even the most basic freedoms. Will we ever feel safe? And how?

Speakers: Anwar Fazal, Lemn Sissay, Maud Vanhauwaert

Moderator: Ann Lee

24 November

Saturday



4.30 pm–5.30 pm



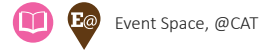
Bicara: Susah Jadi Melayu—The Politics of What It Means to be Malay in Malaysia and Singapore

Siapa sebenarnya ‘Melayu’? Perdebatan ini bukan baru. Pada abad ketujuh, di Jambi, Sumatra, ‘Melayu’ hanya ditemui pada nama sebatang sungai. Orang yang pada hari ini digelar ‘Melayu’ pula, dahulunya tidak menganggap diri mereka sedemikian. Ketika kuasa Eropah tiba pada sepuluh abad kemudian, ramai orang, antaranya Bugis, Banjar, Minang, Dayak, dan lain-lain mula ditarik ‘masuk Melayu’. ‘Melayu’ ternyata lahir bersama sifat kosmopolitan dengan wujud pelbagai suku, etnik, malah agama. Namun, setidak-tidaknya di Malaysia serta Singapura, perubahan waktu telah menunggalkan ‘Melayu’. ‘Melayu’ lemas dalam satu takungan budaya, bahasa, dan agama. Menjadi ‘Melayu’ bermakna memikul beban-beban jangkauan yang sempit. Mereka yang lemas cuba memecah keluar dari takungan makna tunggal ini, dan meneroka erti-erti lain ‘menjadi Melayu’.

Pembicara: Aidli Mosbit, Azhar Ibrahim, Ridhwan Saidi, Raja Ahmad Aminullah

Perantara: Izzuddin Ramli

4.30 pm–5.30 pm



Book Launch: M. Shanmughalingam, *Marriage and Mutton Curry* (Epigram Books)

A kimono-clad Tamil woman greets Japanese soldiers at the door while her Anglophile husband cowers in his car. Two sisters share a husband when one fails to produce a child for the longest time. A daring civil servant proposes to a woman in his Sri Lankan hometown mere minutes after meeting her, breaking a thousand years of marriage protocol. M. Shanmughalingam’s debut collection paints, with gentle wit and humour, the concerns and intrigues of the Jaffna Tamil community in Malaysia. Satirical yet deeply empathetic, these 15 stories explore what happens when we hold on to – and choose to leave behind – our traditions and identities in a changing world.

Introduced by:
Shirley Geok-lin Lim



4.30 pm–5.30 pm



Gayo Cafe

Conversations: Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Lives: What Makes Ordinary Women Extraordinary

The women in our families and communities have in most cases quietly and unobtrusively shaped us. Yet this is seldom talked about, seldom recognised and rarely publicised. This conversation is inspired by the power of biblio-diversity in giving voice to the marginal, unheard, unknown and untold – deliberating on what makes ordinary women extraordinary by discerning the lived experiences of their subjects. How do these women overcome the odds, the destiny that is supposed to be fated on them? How much freedom do they have to act and how do they navigate their agency? What values, action and practices turn ordinary women extraordinary?

Speakers: Aida Redza, Chan Lean Heng, Por Heong Hong

Moderator: Molly Lee

5.45 pm–6.45 pm



Earth (Level 1)
Bangunan UAB

Award: The Fay Khoo Award for Food and Drink Writing

The Fay Khoo Award for Food & Drink Writing was established in 2017 in tribute to the memory of author, publisher and radio host Fay Khoo, who wrote passionately about her food experiences, and thoroughly deserved the admiration and accolades she received in her professional life. Food writing is the story of humanity's relationship with food. Open to citizens and residents of ASEAN countries, the aim of the Fay Khoo Award is to recognise new and talented voices, and to encourage and develop excellence in food and drink narratives.

Hosted by: Bettina Chua
Abdullah

24 November

Saturday



5.45 pm–6.45 pm



Heaven (Level 2), Bangunan UAB

Pre-launch Reading:

Regina Ibrahim and Fahmi Mustaffa, *Manusia* (Fixi)

Manusia is a collaborative novel by Regina Ibrahim and Fahmi Mustaffa. *Manusia* lies at the crossroads of consciousness between Salma and Sheila – and carries the strength to fight against the test of time. Salma unveils the answer to the question of what it means to be a human as they go along the journey of life. The novel then transforms into a postmodern, antithetical out-of-fictional-body experience that unleashes growing conflicts during Sheila and Salma’s journey. To walk along the road until the end is nothing but an act of simple bravery before the true ‘meaning of meanings’ can be understood.

Book Launch:

Tunku Halim, *The Rape of Nancy Ng and Other Stories* (Fixi)

The Rape of Nancy Ng is Tunku Halim’s fifth book of original short stories. The title story is a sequel to the title story of his first collection, *The Rape of Martha Teoh* (1997). You’ll find a whole range of characters including hungry, slimy creatures, a cunningly cuddly toy, a vengeful romantic, a killer bodyguard and a wife who refuses to stay dead.



6.00 pm–7.00 pm



Film Screening: The Poetry Films of Ye Mimi

Ye Mimi is an award-winning Taiwanese poet and filmmaker. Her poetry films are delicate ruminations of life, which contemplate the ordinary and the bizarre, and the existential nature of all things.

Even a Llama Has the Speed (2008, 6 mins). In the spring of 2008, at a little park by the Chicago Lake Front, the poet filmed a group of children on 16mm. After coming home, she wrote a poem based on the children's images of play. Suddenly, she realised the topic was speed and the main character was a llama. Like baking a fresh fruit cake, she merged all the light and all the words together with a floating accordion.

They Are There but I Am Not (2009, 7 mins). We experience poems as a record of real life. Through the specific Taiwanese backdrop, this poetry film illustrates a series of moments to approach the concept of time, which is not as concrete as we are taught. As a poet, the filmmaker presents her ideas on the nature of reality, existence, what is there and what is not there.

Was Being Moved? (2012, 11 mins). This film is about the state of moving and being moved. When people build a boat to carry themselves; when people start to walk backwards; when gods lead people to step on the Earth ... is it possible that everyone becomes someone else's 'far-afar' in the continuous movement?

Tail (2014, 5 mins). Sometimes, you're not sure if you're still there, the 'there' where you used to be. The speed of your instantaneous displacement is far lighter than a banana or a mask. This video is based on the first half of the poem 'Tail' by the Taiwanese poet Ling Yu. Instead of being a realistic accompaniment, it's a bizarre echo from the bottom of the soul.

Hail the Bodhisattva of Collected Junk (2015, 6 mins). This experimental music video is based on a poem that both satirises and celebrates local culture in Taiwan. 'Hail the Bodhisattva of Collected Junk', the title of both the song and the poem, is a play on the Buddhist phrase 'Hail the Bodhisattva Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy'. The poem refers to local junk vendors, who repeatedly call out 'sell them to me' as they walk from neighbourhood to neighbourhood looking for unwanted household items, typically scrap metal, tools and electronics.

Among the Broken Furniture (2018, 7 mins). 'Objects have memories. The more they are worn or broken, the more stories they remember. For three days, the energy of the poem led me to the ruins in small villages as I carefully carried the wreckage of its words.'

Introduced by: Bernice Chauly

24 November

Saturday

-  Book Launch
-  Film
-  Paid Event
-  Performance
-  Reading
-  Translators' Roundtable
-  Exhibition
-  Conversations
-  Poetry
-  Special Event
-  Workshop

6.45 pm–7.45 pm



7.15 pm–9.15 pm



Award: D.K. Dutt Memorial Award

The D. K. Dutt Memorial Award For Literary Excellence was established in 2015 as a Malaysian literary award to reward the spirit of creative thinking fostered by Delip Kumar Dutt in his role as a renowned educator. Organised and judged by Dipika Mukherjee and Sharon Bakar, this prize has encouraged Malaysian voices to find publication on the world stage (the 2015 prizewinner, Hanna Alkaf, has a book published by a Simon & Schuster imprint in 2019). *Endings and Beginnings*, the third and final anthology for this award, will be launched at the festival, following on from the two earlier anthologies, *Champion Fellas* and *Bitter Root, Sweet Fruit*.

Hosted by: Sharon Bakar and Dipika Mukherjee

Film Screening: *Paul Laurence Dunbar: Beyond the Mask* (2017, 118 mins)

Written, directed and co-produced by Frederick Lewis, *Paul Laurence Dunbar: Beyond the Mask* is a feature-length documentary on the life and legacy of the first African-American writer to gain international fame. Born to former slaves in Dayton, Ohio, where he was boyhood friends with the Wright brothers, Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906) is best remembered for his poem 'We Wear the Mask' and for lines from 'Sympathy' that became the title of Maya Angelou's famous autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Dunbar's story mirrors the African-American experience around the turn of the twentieth century. The man that the abolitionist Frederick Douglass called 'the most promising young colored man in America' wrote widely published essays critical of Jim Crow laws, lynching and what was commonly called the 'Negro Problem'. More than eight years in the making, *Beyond the Mask* received major funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

-  Book Launch  Film  Paid Event  Performance  Reading  Translators' Roundtable
 Exhibition  Conversations  Poetry  Special Event  Workshop

7.30 pm–10.30 pm



Malaysia National Poetry Slam: Finale

Following a nationwide preliminary round, the search for Malaysia's first National Poetry Slam champion comes to an end tonight. Twelve finalists are set to compete in this three round poetry slam. Audiences are invited to cheer and participate as guest judges in this exciting selection process.

Musical performance:

Adil Johan

Hosted by: Melizarani T. Selva and Will Beale

Guest of honour: Vicki Treadell, British High Commissioner to Malaysia

Supported by: The British High Commission

9.30 pm



Live Music at ChinaHouse featuring Brian Gomez

Immerse yourself in the sounds and words of lyrical genius Brian Gomez. Known for his vibrant sets and tongue-in-cheek verses, this musical showcase will be a celebration of Malaysian songwriting and storytelling.

25 November

Sunday

Programme Flow

9.00am

10.00am

11.00am

12.00pm

1.00pm

2.00pm

3.00pm

4.00pm

5.00pm

6.00pm

7.00pm

8.00pm

9.00pm

10.00pm

11.00pm

12.00am

<p>Just Like That</p>	<p>Senjata Mereka Yang Lemah</p>	<p>Crazy @\$%! Asians</p>	<p>In Conversation with William Yang</p>	
	<p>The Politics of Healing and the Healing of Politics</p>		<p>In Conversation with Jean-Christophe Rufin</p>	<p>The Great Indian Democracy</p>
<p>Write in Passion, Edit in Cold Blood</p>	<p>Refugee and Migrant Worker Poets in Malaysia</p>		<p>Are the Arts Just Bigger Closets?</p>	
<p>A Perfect World versus A Better World</p>	<p>We the People</p>	<p>Emerging Writers #1</p>		
	<p>Hate Speech - Freedom to Speak or Freedom to Hate?</p>		<p>Emerging Writers #2</p>	
	<p>The Second Coming</p>	<p>Imperial Amnesia</p>	<p>Salam Malaysia Baru! What Is the New Real?</p>	
<p><i>When I say 'Spoken', you say 'Word'</i></p>	<p>Manifestos for (Unmoderated) Freedoms Location: UAB Courtyard</p>			
	<p>Festival Finale Expect comedians, spoken-word poets, musicians and the unexpected!</p>			
	<p>Featuring: Brian Gomez + Putrabumi</p>			



10.00 am–11.30 am



Accelerator Room,
@CAT

Workshop: Just Like That— Improve Your Use of Metaphor in all Genres

While metaphor is the core of poetry, its numerous communicative and artistic powers transfer easily to all genres of writing and communication (if not thought). Good metaphors are unforgettable, in part because they help observe the essence of a thing (or situation) but also because a good metaphor can simultaneously be right in several different ways. Metaphors, every writer knows, also share a lot of DNA with jokes. We will look at: the comparative impulse, accuracy *plus* surprise, quintessence, layering and multiplicity (aka good ambiguity), metaphor and humour, metaphor and memory, metaphor and subjectivity.

Facilitator: Darryl Whetter

Fee: RM60

10.00 am–11.00 am



Earth (Level 1)
Bangunan UAB

Bicara: Senjata Mereka Yang Lemah

Buku penting pakar antropologi tersohor, James C. Scott *Weapons of the Weak* yang ditulis 1970-an telah memelopori proses bantahan senyap dalam budaya politik di kawasan Sedaka di negeri Kedah. Kajian mengenai kaedah rintangan di kalangan kaum petani dan mereka yang berpendapatan rendah merupakan analisa kuat tentang cara-cara perlawanan kecil yang dibuat oleh golongan petani. Meminjam tajuk ini, ruang panel ini membicarakan saluran-saluran politik bantahan yang menggunakan aspek satira, jenaka, keingkaran, sebagai alat subversif dan bayangannya dalam arus politik masa kini.

Pembicara: Adil Johan, Muhammad Haji Salleh, Eleanor Goroh, Uthaya Sankar S.B.

Perantara: Eddin Khoo

10.00 am–11.00 am



Heaven (Level 2)
Bangunan UAB

Conversations: Crazy @#%! Asians— Representation and the Hollywood Movie

In Shirley Geok-lin Lim's essay 'Semiotics, Experience and the Material Self' (1988), she writes: 'The Asian woman writer, like women everywhere, continues to be constituted by a Male Other. When we look at ourselves in maturity, the gaze we have re-constituted from our culture is male.' In 2018, nearly 30 years after the essay was written, is it still viable to talk about 'the' Asian woman writer or the 'male gaze'? *Crazy Rich Asians* went from a satire to a Hollywood movie. Just who is having the last laugh?

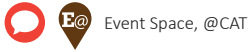
Speakers: Beth Yahp, Shih-Li Kow, Shirley Geok-lin Lim, Sreedhevi Iyer

Moderator: Ann Lee

25 November Sunday



10.00 am–11.00 am



In Conversation with William Yang

William Yang's iconic work has influenced generations of artists in Southeast Asia. His documentation of the loves lost during the early days of HIV, along with the voice of the Chinese immigrant in Australia, are subjects in his most seminal works as a photographer, filmmaker and storyteller. His is a crucial voice in creating a queer narrative for the immigrant.

Moderator: Pang Khee Teik

*Malaysian Sign Language (BIM) Interpreting is provided for this session.

11.15 am–12.15 am



Conversations: The Politics of Healing and the Healing of Politics

Patriarchy, racism, colonialism and other systemic inequalities create conditions that leave some of us more vulnerable to depression and mental illnesses. Meanwhile, present-day mental healthcare often treats each of us as individual, isolated cases without connecting us to the social and political causes of our traumas. By alienating us from politics, it also prevents us from finding communal strategies towards changing the conditions that enable traumas. How then can we move beyond collective traumas towards collective healing?

Speakers: Aslı Erdoğan, Carlo Pizzati, Ivan Coyote, Jhoanna Cruz

Moderator: Katrina Jorene Maliamauv

11.15 pm–12.15 pm



Conversations: The Great Indian Democracy

India is the world's largest democracy and with a population of more than 1.3 billion it represents one fifth of humanity. How does democracy even begin to function under such conditions? Under the BJP government, there are real threats to freedom of expression and vigilantism is a norm in many states. Government dissenters, critics and journalists, couched as anti-Hindu nationalists, are sought out and killed. 63 million women are 'missing' statistically, and more than 21 million girls are unwanted by their families. 'Incredible India' is the tourism catchphrase. But India is also desperately poor and rich. It is one of the most literate countries in the world, but also the most illiterate. It is mother and father to some of the world's oldest religions and civilisations. Will India continue find order in its chaos? Will Modi stay, or will he go?

Speakers: Arshia Sattar, Jeet Thayil, Tishani Doshi, Salil Tripathi

Moderator: Umapagan Ampikaipakan



11.15 am–12.15 am



In Conversation with Jean-Christophe Rufin

John-Christophe Rufin is a force of nature – doctor, historian, diplomat and novelist. Above all, a pioneer in solidarity in the conversation of humankind. Is the world he imagined and helped create – ‘without borders’ – now being crushed by the forces of Realpolitik, ‘compassion fatigue’ and overwhelming hostility to the ‘other’?

Moderator: Lilianne Fan

12.00 pm–1.30 pm



Workshop: Write in Passion, Edit in Cold Blood

In this workshop, hear Omar Musa discuss his own experiences as a published author and performance poet, and his approach to writing and performing poetry. Using visual prompts, create new poems and have the opportunity to read them with other participants.

Facilitator: Omar Musa

Fee: RM60

12.30 pm–1.30 pm



Conversations: Are the Arts Just Bigger Closets?

Does the bigger picture of the arts in Penang include those whose pictures were removed during the recent George Town Festival? Or does the act of erasure now fill in where the photos once were, leaving their existence more precarious than ever? The arts have always provided strategies for queer subjects to exist, express and occasionally explode into the spotlight. But without the light, are we left only with shadows?

Speakers: Anthony Chong, Lawrence Wong, Lily Jamaludin, Regina Ibrahim

Moderator: Jac sm Kee

*Malaysian Sign Language (BIM) Interpreting is provided for this session.

25 November Sunday



12.30 pm–1.30 pm



Earth (Level 1)
Bangunan UAB

Readings by Refugee and Migrant Worker Poets in Malaysia: Emotions of Expatriation

There are some half a million refugees in Malaysia, a manifestation of the world facing its biggest refugee crisis for more than half a century. Refugees live in a legal limbo – they do not have access to legitimate employment, structured education or healthcare. But refugees have powerful voices. And in their writings, themed here as ‘Emotions of Expatriation’, refugee poets look at the pain and anguish of being forced to flee their homes. They reminisce about their childhoods, growing up surrounded by love, early education, a rich culture – they signal what they have lost and the struggle to make a new home, in the face of hostility and yet carrying an inescapable hope for the future.

Poets: Aamer Hasani, Abdulsalam Al Shamat, Annisa Citra Kasih Ayu Savitri, Joan Santillan Amurao, Masuma Tavakoli, Mwaffa Al-Hajjar, Shamshad Ahmad Chaudhry, Vihirthan Jayachandra

Moderator: Mahi Ramakrishnan

Supported by: Place Identity Sdn Bhd

1.45 pm–2.45 pm



Heaven (Level 2)
Bangunan UAB

Conversations: A Perfect World versus a Better World

For the last seven decades, ideas of ‘freedom’ and ‘rights’ have been central to a whole range of politics: inscribed in instruments like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and articulated as part of everyday political discourse. There is a presumed fact that freedom is a *universal* idea: that individuals should be able to act without unjust constraint, with agency and autonomy. And yet freedom quite clearly means different things to different people. Does it mean *from* limiting constraints – from fear, from want, from discrimination, from violence? Or does it mean the freedom *of* choice, as neoliberalism would have it, to be delivered by an unfettered market? What kinds of alternative possibilities of action exist? Is another world really possible?

Speakers: Leila S. Chudori, Mohan Ambikaipaker, Kyoko Yoshida, Salil Tripathi

Moderator: Sharaad Kuttan



1.45 am–2.45 am



**Conversations:
We the People—The
State, Statelessness
and Nationhood**

The societies we inhabit are becoming more oppressive. Across the globe, regimes breed far-right sentiment and intolerance, and so-called populists and nativists are emboldened, brash voices of hate often leading to violence. And states put up unscalable walls. The number of stateless people continues to rise as people are expelled and driven from their homelands. For many, there is a sense of pervading powerlessness. And are we becoming more racist, more intolerant? Or have these sentiments always been there? How do we even begin to imagine and navigate possible configurations in nations that are at the point of rupture? What is the (sorry) state of the nation and of nationhood?

Speakers: Adil Johan, Carlo Pizzati, David Davidar, Tang Siu Wa

Moderator: Michael Vatikiotis

1.45 am–2.45 am



**Conversations:
Emerging Writers
#1—On Privilege and
Freedom to Write in
and of Malaysia**

It's a path that is becoming more and more difficult for writers creating in English in Malaysia. Publishing spaces seem to be getting smaller and it is hard not to be discouraged by the lack of avenues. How do these writers deal with the pressures and expectations generated by publishers, editors, agents and markets? And how much are writers willing to sacrifice, to compromise, in the telling and representation of their stories?

Speakers: Hanna Alkaf, Ling Low, Marc de Faoite, Sreedhevi Iyer, Ted Mahsun, Zedeck Siew

Moderator: Melizarani T. Selva

3.00 pm–4.00 pm



**Conversations:
Hate Speech—
Freedom to Speak or
Freedom to Hate?**

Hate speech forms a double threat to freedoms of speech: through intimidation and threats leading to self-censorship on the one hand, and through demands for stricter regulation of freedom of speech to deal with the very real threat of political violence that is the aim of organized hate speech campaigns. Do we criminalise freedom of speech – apart from speech with direct incitement to violence as is outlined in Article 19 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights? But at the same time, hate speech is becoming an obvious threat to freedom of speech everywhere. How do we counter hate speech without infringing upon freedom of speech itself?

Speakers: Jhoanna Cruz, Sjón, Uthaya Sankar S.B., Vamba Sherif, Gopika Jadeja

Moderator: Chris Keulemans

25 November Sunday



3.00 pm–4.00 pm



Conversations: Emerging Writers #2—On Poetry and Malaysian Poetics

Malaysian and Singaporean poets create under very different circumstances. The publishing options available to Singaporeans, for instance, are simply greater. Why are things so different across the Causeway? What can Malaysian poets do to increase their visibility and passion for this form and enable their voices to be heard? What will it take for Malaysian publishers to support poetry? Or does the answer lie in do-it-yourself initiatives, zines and making the most of the margins and the underground?

Speakers: Lawrence Wong, Lily Jamaludin, Stephanie Dogfoot, Tshiang Han See

Moderator: Will Beale

4.15 pm–5.45 pm



Readings: The Second Coming

Readings by the creative writing students from the University of Nottingham Malaysia and LASALLE College of the Arts Singapore.

Hosted by: Darryl Whetter and Shivani Sivagurunathan

4.15 pm–5.30 pm



Conversations: Imperial Amnesia— The Legacy of the Commonwealth

What are the unspoken horrors of British 'benevolence' in the countries of the Commonwealth? What are the scars and legacies that remain? This was the theme of Australian literary journal *Griffith Review's* 59th edition which brought together a host of international writers and poets to consider the future of the Commonwealth. This session will discuss the essays 'Without Hindsight' by Salil Tripathi and the reportage on the Batang Kali Massacre by Bernice Chauly, along with one of Australia's most urgent voices on the Stolen Generations, Ali Cobby Eckermann.

Speakers: Ali Cobby Eckermann, Bernice Chauly, Salil Tripathi

Moderator: Jane Camens



4.15 pm–5.30 pm



Heaven (Level 2)
Bangunan UAB

Conversations: *Salam Malaysia Baru! What Is the New Real?*

It's been dubbed 'regime change', a moment of 'catharsis'. The outcome of the Malaysian general election in May 2018 was astonishing in so many ways. The world's most resilient elected coalition was decisively swept from power for the first time since independence, peacefully. Former political foes now find themselves as allies. The ousted prime minister stands accused of abuse of power and money. Hopes were set high and expectations of real change touched on every aspect of life. Half a year on what is the prospectus for the new Malaysia? What are the institutions, interests and ideas that are at stake? The old may be dying, but has the new yet been born?

Speakers: Beth Yahp, Brian Gomez, Ridhwan Saidi, Shih-Li Kow, Ted Mahsun

Moderator: Gareth Richards

6.00 pm–7.00 pm



Event Space, @CAT

Book Launch: *When I Say 'Spoken', You Say 'Word'* (Skinny Walls)

Kuala Lumpur's longest running poetry open mic, now in its third year, If Walls Could Talk brings you an anthology of its best and brightest poets. Inside you'll find over a hundred never-been-published poems from a range of ages, backgrounds and experiences.

Hosted by: Tshiung Han See and Lily Jamaludin

6.30 pm–7.30 pm



Courtyard (Level 1)
Bangunan UAB

Manifestos for (Unmoderated) Freedoms

We have heard them throughout the festival guiding our discussions, but now we free them to speak their minds. In this session, we invite our moderators to share their visions for what it takes to create, moderate, and free our freedoms. Or not. We won't moderate their freedom.

Manifesto presenters: Chris Keulemans, Eddin Khoo, Jac sm Kee, Melizarani T. Selva, Michael Vatikiotis, Umapagan Ampikaipakan and Yasmin Bathamanathan

Hosted by: Pang Khee Teik

25 November

Sunday

-  Book Launch
-  Film
-  Paid Event
-  Performance
-  Reading
-  Translators' Roundtable
-  Exhibition
-  Conversations
-  Poetry
-  Special Event
-  Workshop

8.00 onwards

- 
- 
-  The Canteen,
ChinaHouse

Festival Finale

This GTLF tradition lives on! In this open mic session, expect comedians, spoken-word poets, musicians and the unexpected!

Featuring: Brian Gomez + Putrabumi

Hosted by: Melizarani T. Selva



Participating Speakers



Adil Johan

Adil Johan is an ethnomusicologist and a musician. His scholarly research explores cultural nationalism, popular music, film and media, and postcolonial nation-making. As a musician, he plays the saxophone and sings with his own jazz-funk group AJQ, the folk-rock collective Azmyl Yunor and Orkes Padu, and the cultural fusion band Nadir. He is the author of *Cosmopolitan Intimacies: Malay Film Music of the Independence Era* (2018), which examines postcolonial nation-making, cultural intimacy and the cosmopolitan music of Malay-language films of the 1950s and 1960s. He is a research fellow at the Institute of Ethnic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.



Aida Redza

Aida Redza is a performer, choreographer and dance educator. Her repertoire includes numerous collaborative choreographies for multimedia performances, with a renowned reputation for site-specific productions. Major recent productions as a performer, director and choreographer include *Entranced* (2018), *The Italian Restaurant* (2017), *Moved By Padi* (2016), and the Island Trilogy – *Cross Waves and Moving Jetties* (2015), *Bridges and Kaki Lima* (2013) and *River Meets Light* (2011). She is a member of Ombak-Ombak ARTStudio, founded the Penang Modern Dance Ensemble (Euphoria) as a vehicle for training young dancers, and established TradeWinds in 2017 to foster arts exchanges between Penang and Japan.



Aidli Mosbit

Aidli Mosbit is a playwright, actor and theatre director. She has worked extensively with Singapore-based companies including the Toy Factory, the Theatre Practice, Teater Ekamatra and Drama Box. She has toured in Southeast Asia, Australia and Europe, and was the recipient of the Young Artist Award for Theatre (2008). She played the lead in the film *Sayang Disayang* (2013), Singapore's entry for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar (2015). With Noor Effendy Ibrahim and Alfian Sa'at, she published an anthology of Malay Singaporean drama, *Bisik* (2003), and a collection of her own Malay-language plays, *Chantek* (2016), winner of the Hadaiah Persuratan (Literary Award). She works at Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore.



Ali Cobby Eckermann

Ali Cobby Eckermann is an award-winning poet and novelist. Her first collection *little bit long time* (2009) was written in the desert. She is the author of six further books including, most recently, the poetry collection *Inside My Mother* (2015) and the memoir *Too Afraid to Cry* (2013). She won the Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry and Book of the Year (New South Wales) for the verse novel *Ruby Moonlight* (2012). She was the inaugural recipient of the Tungkunungka Pintyanthi Fellowship at Adelaide Writers' Week (2014), and the first Aboriginal Australian writer to attend the International Writing Program (IWP 2014) at the University of Iowa. In 2017 she was awarded Yale University's Windham Campbell Prize in Poetry.

Ali Cobby Eckermann is supported by Writers SA



Amir Muhammad

Amir Muhammad is a writer, film-maker and publisher. He founded both Buku Fixi and Matahari Books as leading independent publishing houses. Over 200 titles have been published in the past seven years, including two launching at this year's George Town Literary Festival. As a film director, his credits include *The Big Durian* (2003), *Lelaki Komunis Terakhir* (2006) and *Malaysian Gods* (2009). He is the author of *Yasmin Ahmad's Films* (2009) and *120 Malay Movies* (2010). He also produces films for his new company Kuman Pictures, specialising in low-budget horror and thriller titles.



Anwar Ibrahim

Anwar Ibrahim is a politician and leader of the governing Pakatan Harapan coalition in Malaysia, and is internationally known as a Muslim democrat and a reformist. He has been hailed as the father of Reformasi in Malaysia because of his long-standing struggle against injustice and corruption. He has been a political prisoner, twice jailed (1998–2004 and 2015–2018) under politically motivated charges. Notwithstanding the difficulties he has faced he still aspires to champion the cause of the people to create a new, better Malaysia. He is the author of *The Asian Renaissance* (1995).



Anthony Chong

Anthony Chong is a writer and activist who focuses on the rights of the deaf community. He was the recipient of a World Deaf Leadership Scholarship to support his graduate studies. He has presented papers in relation to deaf culture and published articles examining identities and child sign language acquisition. He has also co-authored books on Malaysian sign language and taught it to hearing students. Currently, he is affiliated to four deaf associations and advocates for the betterment of deaf people's life. He contributes to QueerLapis.com.



Anwar Fazal

Anwar Fazal is a civil society activist and thinker, whose contributions have focused on consumer protection, the environment, human rights, heritage, interfaith and peace issues. He was the president of Consumers International (formerly International Organisation of Consumers' Unions) and then served with the United Nations Development Programme as senior regional adviser on urban governance in the Asia-Pacific. He is a pioneer many local, national and global citizens' movements. He is the author of *Consumer Power: Anywhere, Anytime, Anyone* (2011) and, most recently, of *Our Cities, Our Homes: People, Places and Passions* (2018). He received the Right Livelihood Award in 1982 and is the current director of the the Right Livelihood College.



Arshia Sattar

Arshia Sattar is an author, translator and facilitator who works with epics and the storytelling traditions of the Indian subcontinent. Her bestselling translation of Valmiki's *The Ramayana* (1996) from Sanskrit texts has remained continuously in print for more than 20 years. Her essays on the Ramayana as a tragic love story, *Lost Loves: Exploring Rama's Anguish* (2011), was shortlisted for the Crossword Book Award. Her most recent publications are *Ramayana for Children* (2016), *Uttara: The Book of Answers* (2016), a translation and commentary on the last book of the Valmiki's *Ramayana*, and *Garuda and the Serpents* (2018). She teaches courses on classical Indian literatures and is a jury member for several literary awards.



Aslı Erdoğan

Aslı Erdoğan is former researcher in high energy particle physics and now a writer, human rights activist and columnist for *Özgür Gündem*. She is the author of eight books – novels, collections of short stories, essays and poetic prose – which have been translated into French, German, Italian and Arabic, among others. Her novel *The City in Crimson Cloak* (2007) and short-story collection *The Stone Building* (2018) have been translated into English. She has received more than two dozen awards including the European Cultural Foundation Award for Culture, the Erich Maria Remarque Peace Prize and the 2018 Simone de Beauvoir Prize for Human Rights.

Aslı Erdoğan is supported by Goethe-Institut



Azhar Ibrahim

Azhar Ibrahim is a researcher, writer and translator. His research interests include the comparative sociology of religion, the sociology of literature, critical literacy and Malay-Indonesian intellectual development. His major publications include *Contemporary Islamic Discourse in the Malay-Indonesian World: Critical Perspectives* (2014), *Narrating Presence: Awakening from Cultural Amnesia* (2014), *Menyanggah Belunggu Kerancuan Fikiran Masakini* (2016) and *Historical Imagination and Cultural Responses to Colonialism and Nationalism* (2017). He is a lecturer in the Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore.



Beth Yahp

Originally from Malaysia, Beth Yahp is an author of fiction and non-fiction. Her award-winning novel *The Crocodile Fury* (1992/2017) was translated into several languages, and her libretto for the composer Liza Lim for the opera *Moon Spirit Feasting* (2000) won the APRA Award for Best Classical Composition. Her latest publication is a collection of short stories, *The Red Pearl and Other Stories* (2017). Her travel memoir *Eat First, Talk Later* (2015) was shortlisted for the 2018 Adelaide Writers' Festival Award for Literature (Non-Fiction). She teaches creative writing at the University of Sydney, Australia.



Brian Gomez

Brian Gomez is a writer and musician. He is the author of the cult novel *Devil's Place* (2008). His short stories have appeared in various anthologies including *Body 2 Body* (2009), *Readings from Readings* (2011) and *KL Noir: Red* (2013). He fronts the rock band Putrabumi, which plays regularly at Merdekarya, an independent music bar in Petaling Jaya that he co-owns. Putrabumi's album, *Bukan Budaya Kita*, is streamed on major online platforms.



Carlo Pizzati

Carlo Pizzati is a writer and journalist. As a journalist who has worked for the Italian daily *La Repubblica*, he covered the Northern Ireland Troubles, the guerrilla war in Colombia, the narco business in the Andes, illegal immigrant smuggling in Mexico, among many other major stories. He writes about Asia for *La Stampa*, and contributes to *Scroll* and *The Hindu*. His non-fiction books include *Technoshamans* (2012), *The Edge of an Era* (2016) and *Mappilai: An Italian Son-in-Law in India* (2018), and he has published two novels, a short-story collection and a screenplay for a film (all in Italian). He also works as an adjunct professor at the Asian College of Journalism in Chennai, India.



Chan Lean Heng

Chan Lean Heng is lifelong learner, popular educator and retired academic. She has been actively engaged with various local, regional and international groupings for grassroots communities and change-makers. She was a founding-member of the Workers' Education Centre in the 1980s. In recent years, she initiated the Women's Stories Project, the Women's Mosaic Wall and the new publication *Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Lives: Everyday Stories of Inspirational Women* (2018).



Charlene Rajendran

Charlene Rajendran is a theatre educator, researcher and practitioner. As a performer, writer and director, she has collaborated with a range of practitioners in devising and facilitating dialogical theatre processes. More recently she has been dramaturg for interdisciplinary and intercultural arts projects that engage with issues of culture, subjectivity and agency. She is also engaged in researching pedagogies of play in arts education. She is the co-editor of *Excavations, Interrogations, Krishen Jit and Contemporary Malaysian Theatre* (2018). She is an assistant professor at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Charlene Rajendran is supported by Five Arts Centre



Cyril Wong

Cyril Wong is a poet, fictionist and critic. Considered as one of the most prolific of the post-1995 generation of Singapore poets, he has authored 16 books, ranging from poetry to criticism and short fiction. His poems have appeared in *Atlantic Review, Fulcrum, Poetry International, Cimarron Review* and *Asia Literary Review*, among others, and he has been a featured poet at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, the Hong Kong Literary Festival and the Sydney Writers' Festival. His collection of poems, *Unmarked Treasure* (2004), and his most recent collection, *The Lover's Inventory* (2015), both won the Singapore Literature Prize for English poetry.



David Davidar

David Davidar is a publisher and novelist. He has published three novels, *The House of Blue Mangoes* (2002), *The Solitude of Emperors* (2007) and *Ithaca* (2011). He is the editor of the bestselling short-story anthology, *A Clutch of Indian Masterpieces* (2014). In parallel to his career as a fiction writer and anthologist, he has been a publisher for several decades in India, Britain and Canada. He was the founding publisher at Penguin India and publisher at Penguin Canada, and the co-founder of the Aleph Book Company, where he is currently managing editor and publisher.



Eleanor Goroh

Eleanor Goroh is an indigenous artist and activist from Sabah, East Malaysia. Her work involves beads as a medium for conceptual installations, combining them with poetry, melodies and dance – in order to recreate old ways of telling stories based on beadlore. She is a member of the Tamparuli Living Arts and Cultural Heritage Association and the founder of Kraf Kadamaian – a land project at her village in Kampung Pinasang Tamu Darat, Kota Belud.



Frederick Lewis

Frederick Lewis is a writer, director, producer and teacher of narrative production and screenwriting. His films have been broadcast on commercial, cable and public television, and screened at cultural and educational venues. Most recently, he produced, wrote and directed *Paul Laurence Dunbar: Beyond the Mask* (2017) and he is working on a biography of the artist and activist Rockwell Kent. He recently served as a Fulbright Specialist in Hungary and has also taught in Britain, Germany, France, Malaysia, Ukraine and Vietnam. He is a professor in the School of Media Arts and Studies, Ohio University, USA, where he received the Presidential Teacher Award.

Frederick Lewis is supported by Ohio University



Gopika Jadeja

Gopika Jadeja is a bilingual poet and translator writing in English and Gujarati. She publishes and edits the print journal and a series of pamphlets for a performance-publishing project, Five Issues. Her current research weaves together Dalit literature and the Dalit movement in Gujarat in the light of ideas of inclusion and exclusion within ideas of the nation. Her work has been published in *Asymptote*, *The Four Quarters Magazine*, *The Wolf*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, among other. She is working on a project of English translations of poetry from Gujarat. She is a PhD candidate at the National University of Singapore and King's College London.



Hanna Alkaf

Hanna Alkaf has been a copywriter, a senior writer at *Marie Claire* and worked in non-profit communications. She now spends most of her time making things up as she goes along, both as a writer of fiction and as a mother. Her short story 'The Tryouts' was the winner of the D.K. Dutt Memorial Award for Literary Excellence. She is the author of *Gila: A Journey through Moods and Madness* (2016) and her young adult novel, *The Weight of Our Sky*, will be published in 2019.



Ivan Coyote

Ivan Coyote is the author of 11 books, the creator of four short films, six full-length live shows and three albums that combine storytelling with music. Ivan is a seasoned stage performer, and over the last two decades has become an audience favourite at storytelling, writers', film, poetry and folk music festivals. Ivan's most recent book, *Tomboy Survival Guide* (2016), was named an American Library Association Stonewall Honor Book in 2016, shortlisted for the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Non-fiction in 2017 and longlisted for Canada Reads 2018. Ivan received an honorary doctorate of laws at Simon Fraser University, Canada, for their writing and activism.

Ivan Coyote is supported by the High Commission of Canada



Jean-Christophe Rufin

Jean-Christophe Rufin is a doctor, diplomat, historian and novelist. As a doctor, he was one of the pioneers of humanitarian movements 'without borders'. He is the author of 11 novels, including *Rouge Brésil* (*Brazil Red*, 2001), winner of the Prix Goncourt, and *Le collier rouge* (*The Red Collar*, 2014), winner of the Prix Maurice Genevoix. His non-fiction books include *Le piège humanitaire* (*The Humane Trap*, 1986), *Mondes rebelles* (*World Rebels*, 1996) and *Immortelle randonnée: Compostelle malgré moi* (*The Santiago Pilgrimage*, 2016). He is the president of Action Against Hunger and a former vice-president of Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), and is a member of Académie française.

Jean-Christophe Rufin is supported by the French Embassy in Malaysia



Jeet Thayil

Jeet Thayil is a poet, novelist, librettist and musician. He worked as a journalist for 23 years before writing his first novel, *Narcopolis* (2012), shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, and winner of the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature. His four poetry collections include *These Errors Are Correct* (2008), which won the 2013 Sahitya Akademi Award (India's National Academy of Letters), while his *Collected Poems* was published in 2015. He is the editor of *60 Indian Poets* (2006) and *The Bloodaxe Book of Contemporary Indian Poets* (2008). His second novel, *The Book of Chocolate Saints*, was published in 2017.



Jérôme Bouchaud

Jérôme Bouchaud is a writer, literary translator and publisher. He has lived in Asia for the past 15 years and made Malaysia home 10 years ago. He founded and curates *Lettres de Malaisie*, a French-language webzine dedicated to literature from and about Malaysia. In 2015 he launched Editions Jentayu, a publishing venture focusing on pan-Asian literature and literary translation. Its main publication is the eponymous *Jentayu* review, a biannual literary journal dedicated to writings from Asia translated into French, with 10 issues released so far. His latest book, *Langkawi Style* (with Howard Tan, 2015), is a tribute to Langkawi's craftsmakers and artists.



Johanna Lynn B. Cruz

Johanna Lynn B. Cruz wrote the first sole-author anthology of lesbian-themed stories in the Philippines, *Women Loving: Stories and a Play* (2010), available as an e-book as *Women on Fire*. She won the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Literary Award in the Philippines for the full-length play and for the essay in English. Her work has been included in the 'New Asia Now' issue of *Griffith Review* (2015) and in the anthology *The Near and the Far* (2016). She writes a weekly column, 'Lugar Lang', for the *Mindanao Times*, and teaches literature and creative writing at the University of the Philippines Mindanao.



John H. McGlynn

John H. McGlynn lives in Jakarta, Indonesia, where he co-founded and serves as director of publications for the Lontar Foundation, the only organisation in the world devoted to the promotion of Indonesia through the translation of literary texts. Through Lontar, he has ushered into print more than 200 books on Indonesian literature and culture. As the translator of several dozen publications himself, he has garnered much international praise for his work. He is a contributing editor to several literary journals, including *Manoa* and *Words without Borders*. He is also head of the Literary and Translation Funding Programmes of Indonesia's National Book Committee.



Kaitlin Rees

Kaitlin Rees is a poet, translator and publisher. She co-founded (with Nhã Thuyên) Ajar Press, a bilingual imprint with an online journal and a poetry festival (A-Festival). Her translations of Nhã Thuyên's poetry have been published in various literary spaces, with one full-length collection, *words breathe, creatures of elsewhere* (2016). Her ongoing work of compiling fragments of a dictionary was exhibited in Zalaegerszeg, Hungary, in 2015 and in the *hutongs* of Shanghai, China, in 2016. She is the recipient of the PEN/Heim Translation Grant 2017 and, with Nhã Thuyên, she is the inaugural winner of the Hawker Prize for Southeast Asian Poetry (2018).



ko ko thett

ko ko thett is a poet by choice and Burmese by chance. In between he is a poetry editor (*Poetry International* and *Mekong Review*), literary translator, anthologist of contemporary Burmese poetry and honorary fellow in writing at the University of Iowa, USA. His most recent poetry collections are *The Burden of Being Burmese* (2015) and *laylulaythein* (2018). His poems have also been published in various literary journals and are anthologised in *Box 2016: Best American Experimental Writing* (2016), *Capitals: A Poetry Anthology* (2017) and *The Borderlands of Asia* (2017), among others. He writes in both Burmese and English.



Kyoko Yoshida

Kyoko Yoshida writes fiction in English and translates from and into Japanese. Her debut short-story collection is *Disorientalism* (2014) and she has published a chapbook, *Spring Sleepers* (2017). Her stories have appeared in the inaugural *BooksActually's Gold Standard* (2016) and *After Coetzee: An Anthology of Animal Fictions* (2017). She is the co-translator of Masataka Matsuda's *Like a Butterfly, My Nostalgia* (2007); Kiwao Nomura's *Spectacle & Pigsty* (2011), winner of the Best Translated Book Award in Poetry; Shu Matsui's *Proud Son* (2015); and *Alice Iris Red Horse: Selected Poems of Yoshimasu Gozo* (2016), among others. She was a 2005 International Writing Program fellow at the University of Iowa, USA.

Kyoko Yoshida is supported by the Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur



Lawrence Wong

Lawrence Wong is a poet focusing on issues related to human rights, politics, love and the LGBT community. His poems have been published in newspapers like *Sin Chew Daily*, *Kwong Wah Yit Poh*, and *Nanyang Press*; and literary magazines including *Mahua Literature*, *Monsoon Review*, *Jiao Feng*, *Voice and Verse Poetry Magazine* and *What Poetry*. In 2014 he received awards for prose writing at Universiti Sains Malaysia's fifth Literature Composition Competition, as well as at Universiti Malaya's 29th Biweekly Chinese Literature Poem Writing Competition. He is currently involved in a stage performance titled *Dong Di Yin* and recently published *Xiao San*.



Leila S. Chudori

Leila S. Chudori is short-story writer, novelist, script writer and journalist. She published a collection of short stories, *Malam Terakhir* (1989) just before joining *Tempo* magazine. Her short-story collection *9 dari Nadira* (2009) has been translated into English and was a joint winner of Badan Bahasa Award for Best Fiction in 2010. Her first novel, the critically acclaimed *Pulang* (2012), won the 2013 Khatulistiwa Literary Award and is published in English as *Home*. Her latest book is *Laut Bercerita* (2017), translated into English as *The Sea Speaks His Name*, and has been adapted into a short film by Pritagita Arianegara.



Lemn Sissay

Lemn Sissay is an award-winning poet, playwright for radio and the theatre, and broadcaster. He is the author of five poetry collections: *Tender Fingers in a Clenched Fist* (1988), *Rebel without Applause* (1992), *Morning Breaks in the Elevator* (1999), *Listener* (2008) and *Gold from the Stone* (2016). His most recent play is an adaptation of Benjamin Zephaniah's novel *Refugee Boy* (2013). He was the official poet of the 2012 London Olympics, has worked with the British Council and is a patron of the Letterbox Club, supporting children in care. In 2015 he was elected as the chancellor of the University of Manchester, Britain.

Lemn Sissay is supported by the British Council



Lily Jamaludin

Lily Jamaludin is writer and poet. Her work has been published in *The Grinnell Review*, *Geometry Literary*, *plain china*, and in the anthology *Straits Eclectic* (2017). She was formerly a volunteer for the Washington DC-based poetry organisation Split This Rock, and was part of the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre's Theatre for Young People programme. She helps run Kuala Lumpur's monthly poetry open mic, If Walls Could Talk.



Ling Low

Ling Low is a writer and filmmaker. Her short stories have appeared in various anthologies, including *Little Basket: New Malaysian Writing* (2016), *Cerpen Terbaik* (2016) and *Bitter Root, Sweet Fruit* (2017). She was a runner-up for the D.K. Dutt Memorial Award for Literary Excellence in 2016. She has written for the BBC Radio 4 comedy show *Sketchtopia*, and has also directed short films and music videos. She was formerly the editor-in-chief of the award-winning culture website Poskod.my. She also edited a non-fiction anthology, *Stories From the City: Rediscovering Kuala Lumpur* (2016), based on stories from the website.



Louise Welsh

Louise Welsh is a short-story writer and novelist. She is the author of eight novels, including *The Cutting Room* (2002), winner of the CWA John Creasey Memorial Dagger, *Death is a Welcome Guest* (2015) and *No Dominion* (2017). She is the editor of *Ghost: One Hundred Stories to Read with the Lights On* (2016). She has presented over 30 radio features and has written libretti for opera, most recently the critically acclaimed Scottish Opera/Music Theatre Wales production *The Devil Inside* (2016). She is co-director of the Empire Café, an award-winning collective exploring Scotland's relationship with empire. She is a professor of creative writing at Glasgow University, Scotland.

Louise Welsh is supported by Creative Scotland



Marc de Faote

Marc de Faote is a reader, writer and editor. His short-story collection *Tropical Madness* (2013) was longlisted for the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Prize. He was runner up for the the D.K. Dutt Award for Literary Excellence in both 2015 and 2016. His food writing was runner-up for the inaugural Fay Khoo Award for Food and Drink Writing in 2017. His most recent short stories have been published in the *Honest Ulsterman* and *New Reader Magazine*. He also regularly reviews books for *The Star* newspaper and occasionally contributes to the *Irish Times*.



Mark Trowell QC

Mark Trowell QC is a leading criminal lawyer based in Western Australia. He is co-chair of the criminal law standing committee LAWASIA. In recent years, he has been an international observer reporting on behalf of LAWASIA, the Australian Bar Association, the International Commission of Jurists, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and the Union Internationale des Avocats. He also represented the interests of the Geneva-based Inter-Parliamentary Union at criminal trials in Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Philippines. He is the author of three books about the trials and tribulations of Anwar Ibrahim, his latest being *Anwar Returns: The Final Twist* (2018).



Maud Vanhauwaert

Maud Vanhauwaert is a writer and text-on-stage performer. Her first poetry book *Ik ben mogelijk* (2011, I am possible) was awarded the Vrouw Debut Prijs. *Wij zijn evenwijdig* (2014, We are parallels), which can read as a poetry album, as a meandering story or as a compilation of sad jokes, was awarded the Herman de Coninck Public Prize and by the Hughues C. Pernath Prize. She has performed in different countries, won the Frappant TXT competition (2012) and was a finalist at the WK Poetry Slam (2012) and Leids Cabaret Festival (2014). She is currently the city poet of Antwerp, Belgium.

Maud Vanhauwaert is supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium in Malaysia



Mohan Ambikaipaker

Mohan Ambikaipaker is a writer and academic scholar. He researches and writes about questions of race and racism in Britain, the United States and Malaysia, and has published in journals such as *Postcolonial Studies*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* and *Communication, Culture & Critique*. His creative non-fiction essay 'Lessons Out of Time' was a finalist for the D.K. Dutt Literary Memorial Award for Literary Excellence in 2017. He is the author of *Political Blackness in Multiracial Britain* (2018) and teaches at Tulane University, New Orleans, USA.



Muhammad Haji Salleh

Muhammad Haji Salleh is a poet, critic, translator and editor, who has published over 50 books in both Malay and English. He is the author of 14 books of poems, including *Jatuh ke Laut Menjadi Pulau* (2014) and *Purple Desire of the Islands* (2016). He published a definitive translation of *The Epic of Hang Tuah* (2010) and is working on a translation of *Sulalat al-Salatin*, a book of proverbs and his autobiography. He has won many national prizes for his poetry and criticism/theory: the National Laureate of Malaysia (1991), the ASEAN Literary Award (1977), SEA Write Award (1997) and MASTERA (Southeast Asia Literary Council) Award (2001). He is a professor emeritus at Universiti Sains Malaysia.



Nhã Thuyên

Nhã Thuyên is a writer, translator and editor. She has authored books of poetry, short fiction and books for children. Her most recent poetry collection, *từ thờ, những người lạ* (2015) was published in English as *breathe, creatures of elsewhere* (2016). Translations of her work appear in *Poems of Lưu Diệu Vân, Lưu Mêlan & Nhã Thuyên* (2013) and she is the co-editor of *Poems of Lê Văn Tài, Nguyễn Tôn Huệ, Phan Quỳnh Trâm* (2015). She co-founded Ajar Press, a bilingual imprint with an online journal. She is the recipient of the PEN/Heim Translation Grant 2017 and, with Kaitlin Rees, is the inaugural winner of the Hawker Prize for Southeast Asian Poetry (2018).



Por Heong Hong

Por Heong Hong is an academic researcher and writer. She is an interdisciplinary scholar who uses a wide range of conceptual tools across various disciplines of social sciences to explore issues pertaining to health, diseases, medicine, bodies, nationalism and modernity. She is the co-editor of *Cohesion and Tension: Intra-Ethnic Relations of Contemporary Chinese Malaysian* (2009).



Raja Ahmad Aminullah

Raja Ahmad Aminullah is a poet and non-fiction writer. His published collections of poems include *Menyarung Jiwa / Soulship* (2004), *Kata-kata Hati* (2006), *Sajak-sajak 3 Seniman* (2013) and *Ketawalah, Tanahairku: Sajak-sajak Resistencia* (2017, *Laugh, My Beloved Country: Poems of Resistance*). His book dealing with intellectuals and power, *Minda Tertawan: Intelektual, Rausyanfikir dan Kuasa* (2011), has been reprinted and is read widely by the younger generation. His journey has encompassed being a student leader, a youth activist, a political insider and subsequently political outsider as well as a socio-cultural activist.



Regina Ibrahim

Regina Ibrahim is a transgender writer, who was previously a government schoolteacher. She started writing a little late in life but that has not stopped her from pursuing her passions for freedom of expression and transparency in storytelling. Both her fiction and non-fiction work focuses on females and trans women. Her published fiction includes the novels *Perjalanan* (2014), *Delima* (2016) and *Budiman* (2017), and the short-story collections *Cerpen* (2015), *Lebih Duka Dari Suka* (2016) and *Manusia* (2018, with Fahmi Mustaffa), while *Mak Nyah* (2015) is a guide on trans people for parents and professionals.



Ridhwan Saidi

Ridhwan Saidi is a novelist, playwright and publisher. His published books include *Amerika* (2011), *Cekik* (2011), *Mautopia* (2012) and *Brazil* (2015), and he is the co-editor of the short-story anthologies *Bila Larut Malam* (2013) and *Cerpen Hari Jumaat* (2016). His series of short plays, *Teater Modular*, consisting of 13 playlets, was presented in Kuala Lumpur earlier this year. He runs an indie publishing house, Moka Mocha Ink, which focuses on contemporary Malay fiction and is part of the LiteraCity research team, a literary mapping project of Kuala Lumpur. He established an open collective, Kaos Nol, for theatre-making and activism.



Salil Tripathi

Salil Tripathi is a writer and editor. His books include *Offence: The Hindu Case* (2009), *The Colonel Who Would Not Repent* (2014) and *Detours: Songs of the Open Road* (2015). Aleph will publish his next book, about the Gujaratis. He is a contributing editor at the magazine *Caravan* and at the business daily *Mint*. He was formerly a correspondent for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and has also written for *Asia Inc* magazine. He is a senior adviser for global issues at the Institute for Human Rights and Business, and chairs PEN International's Writers in Prison committee.



Shih-Li Kow

Shih-Li Kow is a writer based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She is the author of the short-story collection *Ripples and Other Stories* (2009), which was shortlisted for the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Prize. She has contributed short stories to the anthologies *News from Home* (2007), *Body 2 Body* (2009) and *Clutch, Brake, Sellerator and Other Stories* (2013). Her most recent work is the novel *The Sum of Our Follies* (2014), which has been translated into Italian and French.



Shirley Geok-lin Lim

Shirley Geok-lin Lim is a poet, novelist and literary scholar. Her first book *Crossing the Peninsula and Other Poems* (1980) received the Commonwealth Poetry Prize. She has since published ten poetry collections, three short-story collections, the novels *Joss and Gold* (2001) and *Sister Swing* (2006), and a children's novel, *Princess Shawl* (2008). Her memoir, *Among the White Moon Faces* (1996), received the American Book Award. She has published numerous anthologies including *The Forbidden Stitch: An Asian American Women's Anthology* (1989), which received an American Book Award, and she is the co-editor of *Writing Singapore* (2009). She is a research professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, USA.



Sjón

Sjón is a novelist, poet, playwright, librettist and lyricist. He has published over a dozen works of fiction and nine poetry collections, as well as plays and four opera libretti for the theatre. He won the Nordic Council's Literary Prize for his novel *The Blue Fox* (2003) and the novel *From the Mouth of the Whale* (2008) was shortlisted for both the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award and the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize. The novel *Moonstone – The Boy Who Never Was* (2013) received the Icelandic Literary Prize. His latest work *CoDex 1962* (2016), a trilogy, has just been published in English translation. In 2001 he was nominated for an Oscar for his lyrics in the film *Dancer in the Dark* (2000). He is the president of Icelandic PEN and lives in Reykjavik.

Sjón is supported by the Icelandic Literature Center



Sreedhevi Iyer

Sreedhevi Iyer's *Jungle Without Water and Other Stories* was shortlisted for the Penang Monthly Book Award in 2017. She has also been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her work has appeared in the United States, Britain, Malaysia, Australia, Hong Kong, Sweden and Sardinia, including in *Hotel Amerika*, *The Writer's Chronicle*, *Asian American Literary Review*, *Asia Literary Review*, *Everything About Us*, *Free Word Centre*, *Two Thirds North* and more. She guest edited the Hong Kong Special Folio for *Drunken Boat*, and a special issue of *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*. She currently teaches creative writing in Melbourne, Australia.

Sreedhevi Iyer is supported by Gerakbudaya and Gazebo Books



Stephanie Dogfoot

Stephanie Dogfoot is an award-winning writer, performer and educator. She has won national poetry slam championships in both Singapore and Britain, and has represented both countries at international slam competitions. She has performed in 11 different countries, and toured Australia and Germany. Her work has featured at the Adelaide Fringe Festival, Glastonbury Festival and the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival among many others. Her first solo spoken word show, *Foreigner Go Home (With Me!)*, premiered at the Edinburgh Free Fringe Festival in 2012. She is also an editor of the Singapore Poetry Writing Month 2017 and 2018 anthologies. In 2017 she founded Spoke and Bird, a monthly live poetry event and also hosts the Singapore Story Slam.



T.K. Sabapathy

T.K. Sabapathy is a writer, lecturer and consultant. His research has established significant trajectories for developing and consolidating histories of the modern in Southeast Asian art. His monographic studies of artists such as Redza Piyadasa, Yeoh Jin Leng, Teo Eng Seng, Latiff Mohidin and Nyoman Masriadi are landmarks in the region's art historiography. His *Writing the Modern* (2018) brings together his major writings on art and art history in Singapore, Malaysia and Southeast Asia over the last four decades. He is an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore and a lecturer in the history of art. He serves as a consultant for developing research and publications at the Singapore Art Museum and the National Gallery Singapore.

T.K. Sabapathy is supported by Five Arts Centre



Tang Siu Wa

Tang Siu Wa is a poet, writer, cultural critic, curator and television host. She is the author of two poetry collections (*A Bottle Unmoved* and *The Opposite of Sounds*), two volumes of prose writing (*A Motley of Banalities* and *Just Like Nothing Happens*), and a collection of interviews (*Asking Directions from the People*). She is also the editor of the collections *Wait and See: Collected Works of Six New Hong Kong Writers*, *The Tomb of Film* and *The Same Darkness Befalls Dawn: Hong Kong June Fourth Poetry*. In addition, she is the founding editor of the literary magazine *Fleurs des lettres* and as a co-founder of the House of Hong Kong Literature, where she is chief curator.



Ted Mahsun

Ted Mahsun is an award-winning science fiction author who writes in both Malay and English. He is co-editor of *Little Basket*, a literary journal of new writing (2016–2018). In 2017 he was awarded both the third and consolation prizes in the biannual Malaysian science fiction novel-writing competition, Sayembara Novel Fiksyen Sains dan Teknologi UTM-Utusan. His book reviews have been published in *The Star*, and his fiction included in *Griffith Review* as well as in various Malaysian anthologies. He is a 2018 graduate of the Clarion West Writers Workshop in Seattle, USA.



Tishani Doshi

Tishani Doshi is an award-winning poet, novelist, journalist and dancer. She is the author of seven books, including the novel *The Pleasure Seekers* (2010), a retelling of the story of Owain, or The Lady of the Fountain, *Fountainville* (2013), and the poetry collections *Countries of the Body* (2006) and *Everything Begins Elsewhere* (2013). Her most recent book – *Girls Are Coming Out of the Woods* (2017) – is a Poetry Book Society summer recommendation, a powerful collection of poems that deal with coastal living, gender violence, memory, happiness, ageing, and what the point of poetry might be. Since 2001 she has been the lead dancer in the Chandralekha Troupe.



Tshiung Han See

Tshiung Han See is a writer and editor. He co-edited *Voices of the Displaced: Poems from the Malaysian Migrant Poetry Competition 2015–2016* (2017) and the anthologies *Little Basket 2016* and *Little Basket 2017*, and published *New Village* zine, now on hiatus. He is the editor of *Burning House* (2016), a poetry chapbook by Dhabitah Zainal, and the forthcoming poetry anthology *When I Say Spoken, You Say Word*. He also teaches English as a second language.



Uthaya Sankar S.B.

Uthaya Sankar S.B. is a freelance writer, editor and consultant, having previously worked in television and lectured at colleges. He is conducting research into and writing about Indian culture in Bahasa Malaysia so it can be read and understood by every Malaysian. His recent books include *Malaiur Manikam* (2015), *Mandala Bicara* (2016), *Ikan Patin dan Beruang Besar* (2017) and *Thirukkural dan Megha Duta* (2018). He is the founder of Kumpulan Sasterawan Kavyan (Kavyan Writers' Group) which has been actively organising language, literature, arts and cultural events in Malaysia since 1999.



Vamba Sherif

Vamba Sherif is a Liberian-born novelist and journalist writing in Dutch and English, whose work is translated into French, Spanish and German. His writing focuses on the themes of identity, exile, war, love, belonging and religion. He has published five books, including (in English) the novels *Bound to Secrecy* (2015) and *Land of My Fathers* (2016). His journalism has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Long Cours*, *Kultur Aaustauch*, *Trouw* and *De Volkskrant*, among others. He is a motivational speaker and an ambassador for the Dutch Refugees Council. He is passionate about films which he reviews and presents.

Vamba Sherif is supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Malaysia



William Yang

William Yang is a writer and visual artist, principally known for exploring issues of cultural and sexual identity. Starting out as a playwright, he turned to photographing parties and social events. Since the 1970s, he has chronicled and memorialised Sydney's gay community and his own place within it. In the 1980s, he began to explore his Chinese heritage, and his photographic themes expanded to include landscapes and the Chinese in Australia. He started performing monologues with slide projections in theatres, integrating his skills as a writer and a visual artist – recognised as a unique form of performance theatre which has since become his preferred way of showing his work. A major exhibition of his work, *Stories of Love and Death*, took place at Sydney's Stills Galley in 2016.



Yasmin Bathamanathan

Yasmin Bathamanathan is a Penang-based writer, poet and playwright. She is one half of the Si-Jin Poets that work with elements of translation, contextual interpretation and imagination. In 2015, Si-Jin Poets published the experimental poetry book, *Found in Translation*. It is a first-of-its-kind Penang Hokkien–English bilingual poetry book. She developed and curated the women writers programme VOICES for the George Town Literary Festival 2014 to 2016. She has been the producer of the GTLF since 2016.



Ye Mimi

Ye Mimi is a Taiwanese poet and filmmaker. She is the author of three volumes of poetry, most recently *With/out a Hitch* (2015). Steve Bradbury's translation of her chapbook *His Days Go by the Way Her Years* was a finalist for the Best Translated Book Award in poetry in 2014. She also makes poetry films, which have been exhibited internationally. Through collaging her words and images, she tries to erase the border between poetry and image-making to create a new landscape. A book length collection of translations of her work entitled *I Didn't Know You Didn't Know I Didn't Know* will soon be available in Dutch.



Zedeck Siew

Zedeck Siew is a writer based in Port Dickson, Malaysia. He has been a journalist, essayist, editor and game designer. He writes short fiction in English and translates from Malay. *Creatures of Near Kingdoms* (2018) is his first book.

Participating Moderators



Ann Lee

Ann Lee is a playwright, writer, editor and researcher. Her work for the stage has been performed in Kuala Lumpur, Ubud, Sydney and New York, and is published in *Sex, Stage & State: Kuali Works Plays* (2011). She has published short stories in collections such as *Body2Body: A Malaysian Queer Anthology* (2009) and *Malaysian Tales: Retold and Remixed* (2011), and edited an anthology of fiction about Sabah, *Chronicles of KK* (2016). Her best-known full-length play *Tarap Man* was published in *Southeast Asian Plays* (2016) and was launched in Britain earlier this year. She is currently a doctoral candidate at the National University of Singapore.



Bettina Chua Abdullah

A spinner of many plates, Bettina Chua Abdullah is the co-director of Hikayat, Penang's latest nexus of art, literature and culture. A prediction that she would never have a single career turned out to be remarkably true: on television she served as chief anchor of *Squawk Box* for the business network CNBC Asia; producer and presenter of her independent series *Asian Style*; and as moderator of the Merdeka Award Roundtables on Astro. She is the founder of the Fay Khoo Award for Food+Drink Writing and a co-founder of Malaysia's green NGO Free Tree Society.



Carmen Nge

Carmen Nge has been writing about Malaysian culture, and specifically the visual arts, for over a decade. She has written numerous art essays for books, journals and art exhibition catalogues. She also co-edited *Ismail Hashim: Essays, Interviews and Archives* (2015) and was a regular contributor to *Off the Edge* magazine (2004–2010). She is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia, where she teaches in the subject fields of Malaysian media and culture, critical thinking, science fiction and games design.

Carmen Nge is supported by Five Arts Centre



Chris Keulemans

Chris Keulemans is a writer, journalist and cultural activist based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. In the 1990s he was curator and director of De Balie, a centre for culture and politics; and from 2006 to 2014 he was the founder and artistic director of Tolhuistuin, an arts centre, both located in Amsterdam. He has published novels, essays and plays, as well as numerous articles on art, social movements, migration, music, cinema and war – with a particular focus on art after crises.

Chris Keulemans is supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Malaysia



Eddin Khoo

Eddin Khoo is a poet, writer, translator and journalist, and the founder of the cultural heritage organisation Pusaka. He has worked with Malaysia's custodians of the traditional and ritual arts, including shadow puppeteers, musicians, dramatists and dancers. He has researched aspects of oral transmission, cultural and religious politics, and ritual in traditional theatre. He is the co-author of *The Spirit of Wood* (2003) and edited an autobiography of the artist Ibrahim Hussein, *Ib: A Life* (2010). He has translated the works of the poets Goenawan Mohamad and Latiff Mohidin into English, and is presently compiling and editing the complete writings of the historian Khoo Kay Kim.



Izzuddin Ramli

Izzuddin Ramli is a researcher at Penang Institute. His research interests include Malay political culture, subaltern studies and literary production, particularly translation work. He writes social-political commentary for news portals and for *Penang Monthly*. His essays are published in *Letters to Home: Young Malaysians Write Back* (2016), *Lastik! Lontaran Batu-Batu Kerikil* (2016) and *Media and Elections: Democratic Transition in Malaysia* (2018). He is currently working on a Malay-language translation of Anthony Milner's *The Malays*.



Jac sm Kee

Jac sm Kee is a feminist activist, poet, and writer. She has been involved with activists organising at local, national and international levels on issues related to sexuality, queer rights, gender, culture, communications and the internet. She is the recipient of the 2016 Stieg Larsson Prize, and is a co-founding team member of the Malaysia Design Archive.



Jane Camens

Jane Camens is an editor, writer and literary event organiser, and founder of a peripatetic writers' network, Asia Pacific Writers & Translators, which partners with universities and literary organisers around Asia to support the development of writing. At the beginning of the century, while resident in Hong Kong, she co-founded the first annual international literary festival in Asia, which successfully helped to showcase new writing from the region. Since returning to her native Australia she has co-edited two issues of *Griffith Review*, 'New Asia Now' and 'Commonwealth Now'. She is an award-winning short-story writer.

Jane Camens is supported by the Griffith Review



Katrina Jorene Maliamauv

Katrina Jorene Maliamauv is a writer and a human rights activist working on the rights and dignity of migrants, refugees and persons in various forms of slavery. She has advocated for and intervened on labour rights, arrest and detention, gender-based violence, and an intersectionality of issues and rights. She has also researched refugees, migrants and human rights defenders at risk.



Lilianne Fan

Lilianne Fan is a cultural anthropologist and humanitarian professional with more than 16 years' experience working with refugees, internally displaced persons, and communities affected by conflict and disaster. She currently specialises on the situation of the stateless Rohingya in Rakhine state, Myanmar, and in ASEAN. She provides regular expertise to a range of institutions and governments including the United Nations, the World Bank, ASEAN, and the governments of Malaysia and Indonesia. She is the international director and co-founder of Geutanyoë Foundation, a regional humanitarian organisation, and deputy chair of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network.



Mahi Ramakrishnan

Mahi Ramakrishnan is a filmmaker and investigative journalist. She has worked with both television and print media including the BBC, *Time*, Al Jazeera, *USA Today* and Voice of America. Her investigative work examines subjects such as trafficking, migrant workers, refugees and statelessness, child brides, the underage sex industry and the LGBT community. Her most recent documentary, *Bou* (Bride, 2017), won the Best Documentary award at ARFF Amsterdam, among other prizes. She founded the annual Refugee Festival in 2016 (the first of its kind in Asia) and, together with her son, runs an online job matching platform for refugees in Malaysia.

Mahi Ramakrishnan is supported by Place Identity Sdn Bhd



Michael Vatikiotis

Michael Vatikiotis is a writer, journalist and private diplomat working in Southeast Asia since 1987. He was formerly editor of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and a correspondent for the Hong Kong-based news magazine for 16 years. He is the Asia regional director of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, a Geneva-based private foundation that facilitates dialogue to resolve armed conflicts. He has written two novels set in Indonesia; his new book is *Blood and Silk: Power and Conflict in Modern Southeast Asia* (2017). He is a regular contributor to Al Jazeera and the BBC.



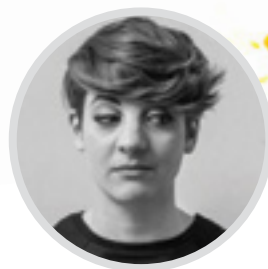
Molly Lee

Molly Lee is an educator and has been a schoolteacher, school inspector, university professor and programme specialist in an international governmental organisation. She now spends her time working with young people utilising arts and culture for community development and social transformation. She also volunteers at a women's centre that deals with domestic violence and child abuse.



Pauline Fan

Pauline Fan is a writer and literary translator. She is the creative director of the cultural heritage organisation, PUSAKA. Her translations from German to Malay include works by Bertolt Brecht, Immanuel Kant and G.E. Lessing. She is currently working on Malay translations of the poetry of Paul Celan and the letters of Rainer Maria Rilke. Her English translation of selected poems by Kulleh Grasi will be published in 2019. She was a literary columnist with *Esquire Malaysia* and Malaysiakini.com, and a contributor to the *New Straits Times* on cultural heritage. She is Malaysia editor for Lyrikline.org, a Berlin-based international poetry network and archive.



Sasha de Buyl

Sasha de Buyl is a writer, illustrator and comics-maker based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Her comics have been featured as part of the BBC's *The Social*, *The Dangerous Women Project* and *The Common Weal*, and her writing work has been featured in *The List* and 404 Ink's *Nasty Women*. She also delivers workshops on making comics and zines. Previous clients include Book Week Scotland, For Book's Sake and Edinburgh Libraries. She currently works for Creative Scotland in the literature team, and takes on freelance projects. These include programming, events management, podcasting and chairing/hosting events.

Sasha de Buyl is supported by Creative Scotland



Sharaad Kuttan

Sharaad Kuttan is a television host and producer with Astro Awani. His daily show, *Let's Talk with Sharaad Kuttan*, debuted recently. For many years he was anchor on a morning radio show with BFM89.9. He has a long-standing interests in the arts and has co-edited a collection of essays, *Looking at Culture*, set against Singapore's early ambitions as a cultural hub. He is a member of the International Association of Art Critics and has contributed to ArtsEquator.com. He is a regular commentator on Malaysian politics.



Umapagan Ampikaipakan

Umapagan Ampikaipakan is a media moll. You can find him almost everywhere – from newsprint to the world wide web, from radio to television – where he contemplates everything from the idiosyncrasies of Malaysian politics to his unnatural obsession with the written word. Blessed with a critic's pen and a reader's enthusiasm, he is a leading literary voices. His long-running radio show on BFM89.9, *Bookmark*, is Malaysia's pre-eminent broadcast on all things book related. He is a film critic with *At the Movies* and the co-host of BFM89.9's drive-time radio show, *The Evening Edition*. He is also the literary director of the Cooler Lumpur Festival, Southeast Asia's first and only festival of ideas.



Will Beale

Will Beale is a spoken word poet, writer and actor. His debut poetry collection is *They Call Us Loud* (2015). As co-creative producer of Slamalamingdong, one-third of Three Round Circus, and co-founder of If Walls Could Talk, he has years of experience performing, producing and teaching in international poetry communities. His work has been called 'a boy howling his way into the world, despite all its muzzles', but in real life he's just glad he's afraid of moths, not microphones.

Participating Performers and Readers

Aamer Hasani

Aamer Hasani is a refugee from Pakistan. He started writing poetry in 1990 and has written more than 100 poems in Urdu. A journalism graduate, he currently lives in Malaysia and works as a freelance photographer and designer.

Abdulsalam Al Shamat

Abdulsalam Al Shamat is from Damascus, Syria. He started writing poetry when he was in the tenth grade. He fled Syria in February 2013 and has been in Malaysia ever since. He is a project coordinator in a training services company and has been volunteering as the Syrian community representative with the UN Refugee Agency for almost two years.

Annisa Citra Kasih Ayu Savitri

Annisa Citra Kasih Ayu Savitri is a migrant worker from Indonesia. Her love for poetry began at an early age. She writes about everything around her. She has been working in Malaysia for the past two years.

Culture Shot

Culture Shot, also known as 'La La Li Tam Pong' (a childhood game), is a six-piece band who have flair for both music and heritage. From various ethnic backgrounds, this factor has been put to use to spread awareness of what makes Penang unique and Malaysia a place called home. The band is led by M. Sivasilan on the gendang, with Ang Eng Bok on lang tin tang, Tan Yean Chang on erhu, Kasiman on rebana, Kang Su Kheng on gongs and Clarence Ewe with a pair of Chinese cymbals. They play through passion with songs specially combined with Malay, Chinese and Indian tunes as well as some Hokkien as a taste of Penang.

Joan Santillan Amurao

Joan Santillan Amurao was born and raised in the Philippines. She is a migrant worker based in Malaysia's southernmost state of Johor Bahru. Her aim is to motivate and encourage other migrants and as well as refugees around the world through her writing: 'People need people to remind us that life may be difficult, but it is just temporal.' She was the third prize winner at this year's Migrant and Refugee Poetry Competition.



Masuma Tavakoli

Masuma Tavakoli is from Afghanistan but was born and raised in Iran. She was married at the age of 16 because her community practices *sar babal* or exchange, which is a traditional marriage common among the Afghan families where daughters are exchanged because of money paid by the groom. She and her husband currently live in Malaysia because they were condemned for this traditional marriage practice.

Shamshad Ahmad Chaudhry

Shamshad Ahmad Chaudhry is from Rabwah, Pakistan. He worked as a print and broadcast journalist in Pakistan for 18 years. He was the winner of this year's Migrant and Refugee Poetry Competition. He has been living in Malaysia as a refugee since 2016.

Mwaffaq Al-Hajjar

Mwaffaq Al-Hajjar is an engineer, creative writer and performer from Damascus, Syria. He has been writing poetry since the age of 12 and performing since the age of 18. He was the first prize winner of the Migrant and Refugee Poetry Competition held in Kuala Lumpur (2017). He is currently completing his first collection of poems, to be published soon. He has been living in Kuala Lumpur since April 2016.

Vihirthan Jeyachandra

Vihirthan Jeyachandra is from Jaffna, Sri Lanka. He fled his country in 2009 due to the internal war. He started writing poetry from a young age. His recent body of work focuses on the longing for hope and reconciliation in Sri Lanka, to enable him to return home. He currently works as a freelance designer and lives with his family in Kuala Lumpur.

Participating Workshop Facilitators

John H. McGlynn and Leila S. Chudori

The 'Novel' Art of Translating a Novel

Shirley Geok-lin Lim

Writing Identity

Darryl Whetter

Just Like That—Improve Your Use of Metaphor in all Genres

Darryl Whetter is the inaugural director of the first Creative Writing MA in Southeast Asia, at LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. He is the author of three books of fiction and two poetry collections. In his native Canada, his debut collection of stories, *A Sharp Tooth in the Fur* (2003) was a *Globe and Mail* Top 100 Book, and *Origins* (2012), his first poetry collection, received a starred review in *Quill & Quire*. His essays on literature and creative writing pedagogy have been published by Routledge, the US National Poetry Foundation and Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle.

Dipika Mukherjee

Myth and Magic in the Modern Malaysian Story

Dipika Mukherjee is an author and sociolinguist. Her work, focusing on the politics of modern Asian societies, won a 2018 Illinois Arts Council Agency Grant and she features in *Lit50: Who Really Books In Chicago*. She has mentored Southeast Asian writers for over two decades and founded the D.K. Dutt Award for Literary Excellence in Malaysia. She has also edited anthologies of Southeast Asian fiction that include: *Bitter Root, Sweet Fruit* (2017), *Champion Fellas* (2016), *Silverfish New Writing 6* (2006) and *The Merlion and Hibiscus* (2002).

Muhammad Haji Salleh

Translating Malay Poetry

Sreedhevi Iyer

Post-truth Points of View in Fiction

John Brunton

The Ethics of Food and Travel Writing

John Brunton is a long-time contributor with the *Guardian*, covering travel, food and wine, and is based in Paris and Venice, having spent five years in Malaysia in the 1980s where he started his career as a photojournalist. He has had wide experience with the British and international press, writing for *The Times*, *Telegraph*, *Independent* and *Daily Mail* as well as magazines ranging from *Elle* and *GQ* to *SlowFood* and *Conde Nast Traveller*. He recently collaborated with Lonely Planet on a series of books themed on wine, food, culture, coffee and beer. He is a jury member of Vinitaly and the hotel and restaurant awards, Prix Villegiature. He has been the chief judge of the Fay Khoo Award since its inauguration in 2017.



Nico Lang

How to Ask Better Questions— For Writers, Reporters and Everyone Else

Nico Lang is an award-winning news and politics reporter at *INTO*, the largest LGBTQ publication in the world. During his decade-long career in journalism he has served as a lead politics correspondent for the *Advocate*, film critic for *Consequence of Sound*, opinion editor at the *Daily Dot*, regular op-ed columnist at the *Los Angeles Times*, and co-creator and co-editor of the Chicago queer website *In Our Words*. He is the author of *The Young People Who Traverse Dimensions While Wearing Sunglasses* (2013) and co-editor of the *BOYS* anthology series. He was honoured with the inaugural Visibility Award (2018) from the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund for his coverage of trans lives around the world.

Omar Musa

Write in Passion, Edit in Cold Blood

Omar Musa is a Malaysian-Australian author, rapper and poet from Queanbeyan, Australia. He has released four hip hop records, three poetry books (including *Parang* and *Millefiori*) and received a standing ovation at TEDxSydney at the Sydney Opera House. His debut novel *Here Come the Dogs* was long-listed for the International Dublin Literary Award and Miles Franklin Award and he was named one of the Sydney Morning Herald's Young Novelists of the Year in 2015. He was a screenwriter on the Stan Original/BBC TV series *Romper Stomper* and wrote a one-man play *Since Ali Died* in 2018.

Participating Artists



Charis Loke

Charis Loke is an illustrator and educator based in Penang, Malaysia. Trained as a scientist and schoolteacher, she now illustrates for clients like Gerakbudaya, Editions Jentayu and TEDxKL; her work has been shown in galleries in the United States, Britain, Nepal and Malaysia. She is interested in the relationships between word and image as well as how images are used to communicate, enhance and subvert narratives. She teaches art workshops for young people and teachers, and is a member of Arts-ED, a community arts and culture education non-profit organisation.

Daniel Adams

Daniel Adams is a Malaysian conceptual and portrait photographer who explores and blurs the lines between gender, identity and cultural norms. He also delves into the usage of social and political ideologies throughout his concepts, wanting his work to start discussions amongst its viewers. Along with the exploration of these subjects, Daniel also looks for the unusual and the not-your-everyday aspects to implement into his photography, aiming to recreate the surreal images in his head. Daniel is currently based in Kuala Lumpur. This exhibition was previously shown at the Truman Brewery in and The Greenwich Gallery in London.

Sharon Chin

Sharon Chin has made paintings, performances, costumes, sculptures, installations and videos. Her work has been shown in museums and galleries, on sidewalks and in shopping malls, in Malaysia and around the world.



Participating Book Launch Authors

Fahmi Mustaffa

Manusia

Fahmi Mustaffa is a Penang-based writer whose fictional work addresses questions of ethics and philosophy, including topics that are deemed 'sensitive' in Malaysia. His debut novel, *Laknat* (2015), tackles the place of homosexuality within the dominant religious discourse. His second novel, *Suatu Hari Nanti Manusia Akan Melupakan Tuhan* (2016), set in a dystopian future, focuses on religio-ethical issues that confront human civilisation. His novel *Amsterdam* (2017) offers a portrait of the city inhabited by those at its very margins.

J.K. Asher

The Inverted Banyan Tree and the Way Thither

J.K. Asher grew up in Malaysia during the 1960s but has lived in Australia for the last 17 years. She wrote her novel out of her search of identity and the turmoil of being a '*pendatang*' or immigrant in Australia. This inward journey took her to the early settlers of Malaysia, the Eurasian Seranis of Portuguese, Dutch and English progeny – the Kristang of Melaka – who still survive from the sixteenth century.

Gabija Grusaite

Cold East

Gabija Grusaite is an author and curator. *Cold East* is her second novel. A graduate of anthropology and media from Goldsmiths College, London, her creative pursuit is defined by the relentless search for new horizons through travel. In 2009 she settled in Penang, Malaysia, where she co-founded an independent contemporary art centre – Hin Bus Depot – where she was curator-in-chief. She currently lives in Vilnius, Lithuania.

M. Shanmughalingam

Marriage and Mutton Curry

M. Shanmughalingam's short stories and poems have appeared in more than 30 anthologies and broadcasts by Buku Fixi, BFM 89.9, the British Council, Dewan Bahasa, EPB, Evans Brothers, Fish, Harvard University, Heinemann Asia, Maya Press, MPH, National University of Singapore, National Arts Council (Singapore), Pearson Education, Oxford University, Pearson-Longman, Penguin, Radio Fremantle, RNS Publications, Silverfish, Word Works and ZI.

Minh Bui Jones

The Best of Mekong Review

Minh Bui Jones is a serial publisher and editor of journals and magazines, and the founding editor of *Mekong Review*, a literary quarterly publishing fiction, non-fiction and poetry from mainland Southeast Asia. He also initiated Mekong Translation, a new publishing venture to translate and publish literary classics from the Mekong region. He is the founding editor of *The Diplomat*, *American Review* and the *Euro Daily*, an online business and political news website. He was formerly a television producer at SBS-TV, reporter at the *Sydney Morning Herald* and news editor at *Asia Times Online*.

Regina Ibrahim

Manusia

Regina Ibrahim is a holistic artist. A former schoolteacher, she started writing creatively at a relatively age. She has published seven books and appeared in many more anthologies. She is also a painter and is active on social media with a view to inspiring young people. While she began by writing about transgender issues, she now engages with other topics as an inspiration for her realist fiction. Her previous books include *Perjalanan* (2014), *Cerpen* (2015), *Delima* (2016) and *Budiman* (2017).

Nooraini Mydin

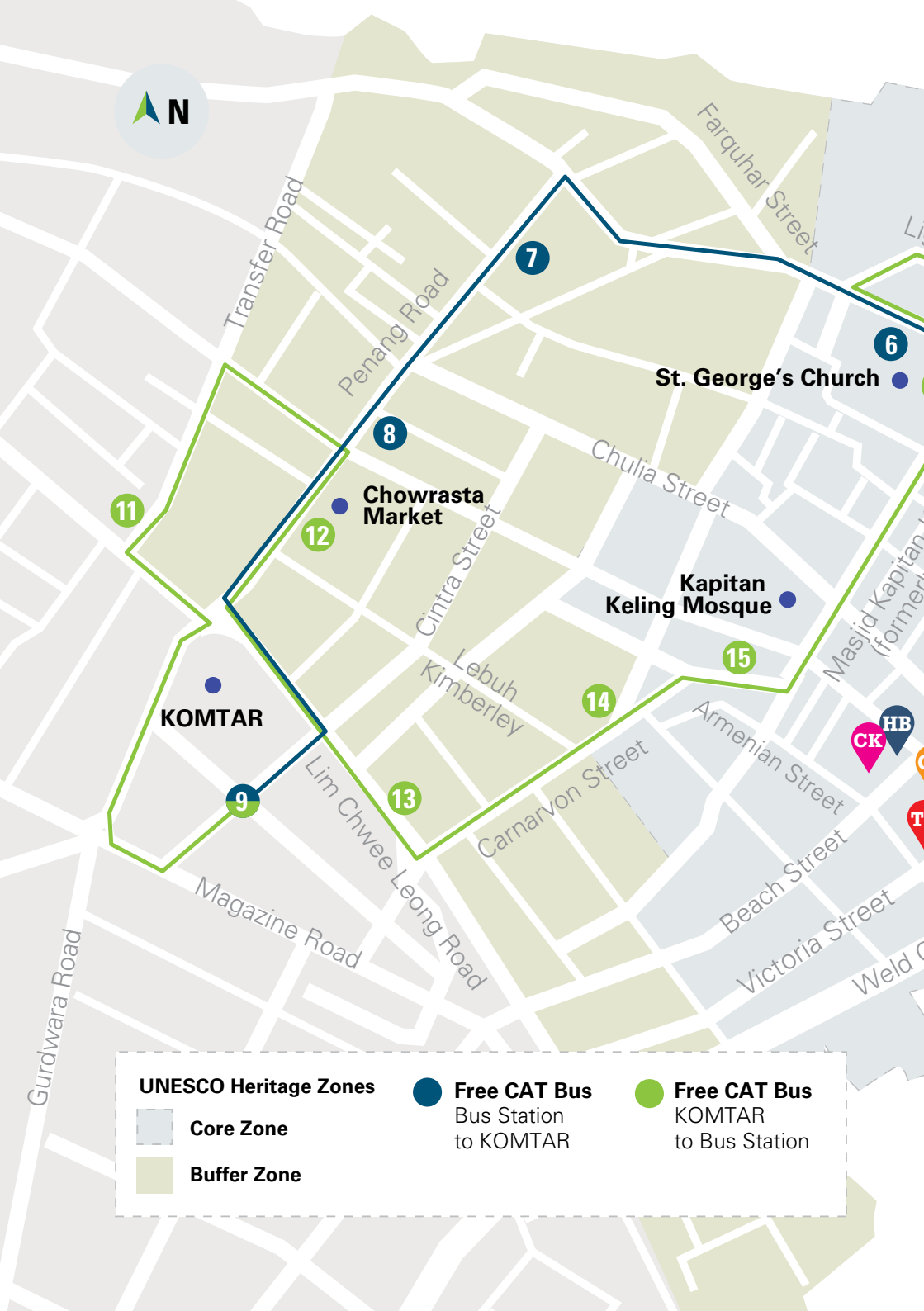
Aini's Railway Odyssey





Nooraini Mydin was born in Penang on the eve of Malaya's independence. Her writing career started at the *New Straits Times* in Kuala Lumpur. She moved to Britain in 1984 but never lost touch with her roots. She has been a press officer for a local authority, sold baguettes in Harrods, worked as a secretary in a hospital, helped refugees to claim political asylum, taught English to migrants and battled with West Ham supporters at the London Stadium. When not writing travel articles, you might find her checking your bags at the Royal Albert Hall.

Tunku Halim

The Rape of Nancy Ng and Other Stories

Tunku Halim lives nomadically but is a frequent visitor to his country of birth, Malaysia. His books have been published since the late 1990s. His first book was the bestselling mid-career retrospective *Horror Stories* (2014), which won the Popular-The Star Readers Choice Award in 2015 as well as the MPH Best of 2014. His subsequent books for Fixi Novo are the novels *Last Breath* (2014) and *A Malaysian Restaurant in London* (2015), as well as *Horror Stories 2* (2016).



UNESCO Heritage Zones	Free CAT Bus	Free CAT Bus
 Core Zone	 Bus Station to KOMTAR	 KOMTAR to Bus Station
 Buffer Zone		

FESTIVAL MAP



FESTIVAL VENUE

-  @CAT
-  Bangunan UAB
-  Cheah Kongsi
-  Gayo Cafe
-  Hikayat Blue
-  Loft 29
-  The Canteen, ChinaHouse

FESTIVAL HOTEL

-  Royale Chulan Penang

The Production Team

Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau

<i>Adviser:</i>	Ashwin Gunasekeran
<i>Festival Producer:</i>	Yasmin Bathamanathan
<i>Design Lead:</i>	Terry Neoh
<i>Finance Manager</i>	Siti Sarah Ismail
<i>Festival Coordinators:</i>	Stephanie Kee Toh Mei Chern Kenny Ng
<i>Production Assistant:</i>	Rilana Pusceddu
<i>Interns</i>	Ang Zhi En Leong Yi Qin Sylvia Chan

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Martin Axe
MinXi Chua
Peter Cheah
Thilaga Sulathireh
Wong Swit Yen
Yusminov Ahmad

PEN Women's Manifesto

This year the George Town Literary Festival adopts and endorses the PEN International Women's Manifesto and its principles as we believe in the freedom of speech and expression for women and girls in Malaysia and the world over.

PEN International Women's Manifesto

PEN International was founded in London in 1921 to promote friendship and intellectual co-operation among writers everywhere, emphasize the role of literature in developing understanding, stand for freedom of expression and act as a powerful voice on behalf of writers harassed, silenced, imprisoned and sometimes killed for their views.

THE PEN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MANIFESTO

Passed with unanimity at
The Assembly of Delegates of PEN International
83rd World Congress in Lviv, Ukraine
21 September 2017



*Presented by Jennifer Clement, PEN International President
and seconded by Margie Orford, PEN International
Board Member*

pen
INTERNATIONAL

PEN International Women's Manifesto

The first and founding principle of the PEN Charter asserts that 'literature knows no frontiers.' These frontiers were traditionally thought of as borders between countries and peoples. For many women in the world – and for almost all women until relatively recently – the first, and the last and perhaps the most powerful frontier was the door of the house she lived in: her parents' or her husband's home.

For women to have free speech, the right to read, the right to write, they need to have the right to roam physically, socially and intellectually. There are few social systems that do not regard with hostility a woman who walks by herself.

PEN believes that violence against women, in all its many forms, both within the walls of a home or in the public sphere, creates dangerous forms of censorship. Across the globe, culture, religion and tradition are repeatedly valued above human rights and are used as arguments to encourage or defend harm against women and girls.

PEN believes that the act of silencing a person is to deny their existence. It is a kind of death. Humanity is both wanting and bereft without the full and free expression of women's creativity and knowledge.

PEN international endorses the following internationally recognized principles:

NON-VIOLENCE: End violence against women and girls in all of its forms, including legal, physical, sexual, psychological, verbal and digital; promote an environment in which women and girls can express themselves freely; and ensure that all gender-based violence is comprehensively investigated and punished, and compensation provided for victims.

SAFETY: Protect women writers and journalists and combat impunity for violent acts and harassment committed against women writers and journalists in the world and online.

EDUCATION: Eliminate gender disparity at all levels of education by promoting full access to quality education for all women and girls, and ensuring that women can fully exercise their education rights to read and write.

EQUALITY: Ensure that women are accorded equality with men before the law, condemn discrimination against women in all its forms and take all necessary steps to eliminate discrimination and ensure the full equality of all people through the development and advancement of women writers.

ACCESS: Ensure that women are given the same access to the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights to enable the full and free participation and public recognition of women in all media and across the spectrum of literary forms. Additionally, ensure equal access for women and girls to all forms of media as a means of freedom of expression.

PARITY: Promote the equal economic participation of women writers, and ensure that women writers and journalists are employed and paid on equal terms to men without any discrimination.

Advisors

Jennifer Clement, President, PEN International

Margie Orford, board member and President Emerita of PEN South Africa

Kiirto Kaldmaa, International Secretary, PEN International

Jouane Leedom-Ackerman, Vice President, PEN International

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Gillian Slovo, President Emerita of English PEN

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International PEN is a registered charity in England and Wales with registration number 1117088. International PEN's registered office is Koops Mill, 162-164 Abbey Street, London SE1 2AN www.pen-international.org

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