



PRESENTS



Malaysia's largest international literary festival returns

25 · 26 · 27 · 28 NOVEMBER

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Theme

Mikro-cosmos explores the spirit of cosmopolitanism and interconnectedness that endures through literature, language and ideas, even as the troubles of today atomize our existence and deepen social fragmentation. The odyssey of words creates possibilities of connection that transcend conditions of existential isolation. It steers us away from inclinations of insularity and makes each of us a cosmopolitan citizen. The creative spirit of our archipelago remains open and untamed, stirring the winds of confluence, celebration, contestation or conflict. We will explore how the wilderness and freedom of our shared creativity is encapsulated and expressed in the diverse literatures of our region and beyond. We also consider darker avenues of internationalism and power such as colonialism, imperialism, and global capitalism. And, naturally, we reflect on Penang, the home of GTLF, as a vibrant cosmopolitan microcosm of this untamed archipelago — a place where memory takes root, imagination flourishes, and stories come to life.



Mikro-cosmos meneroka semangat kosmopolitanisme dan kesalinghubungan melalui sastera, bahasa dan pemikiran, sekalipun kepayahan yang kita hadapi hari ini telah mengaburi keberadaan kita dan memperdalam lagi perpecahan masyarakat. Penjelajahan yang dilakukan oleh kata-kata sentiasa memberikan banyak kemungkinan jalinan hubungan yang melampaui pahit manis hidup dalam pengasingan. Ia menjauhkan kita dari rasa terperuk, kemudian mengangkat setiap daripada kita sebagai warga kosmopolitan. Semangat daya cipta kepulauan kita sentiasa terbuka dan tidak terjinakkan, terus menyeru angin pertemuan, keriaan, pertentangan ataupun percanggahan. Kita akan melihat bagaimana kebelantaraan dan kebebasan daya cipta bersama kita terbungkus dan terjelma dalam simpang-siur kesusasteraan rantau kita dan lainnya. Kita juga mengintai sisi-sisi gelap pengantarabangsaan serta kuasa seperti penjajahan, penjarahan, dan kapitalisme global. Tentunya kita menoleh ke Pulau Pinang, melihat tanah lahir GTLF ini sebagai sebuah mikrokosma kosmopolitan yang rancak di kepulauan yang tidak terjinakkan ini. Ianya adalah sebuah wilayah tempat berakarnya ingatan, mekarnya khayalan, dan bernafasnya cerita.

About George Town Literary Festival



The George Town Literary Festival is an international literary festival celebrating world literature, translations and literary arts. Held annually in the UNESCO World Heritage site of George Town, Penang, the festival was awarded ‘The International Excellence Awards 2018 for Literary Festival’.

The GTLF is an initiative by the State Government of Penang and remains one of the few free festivals open to the public. Since its first edition in 2011 with only five writers, the GTLF has grown to become Malaysia’s largest literary festival and one of the best literary festivals in the world.



Festival Director's Note

What happens to our sense of the world when we are forced to live in social isolation? Can the world be restored through literature, with its power to illuminate the tiniest realities and the boundless universe? These are the questions that turned in our minds as we curated this year's edition of GTLF. In this age of global pandemic, the spaces we inhabit were narrowed to the size of our homes, and yet each of us still carried the world within us.

"I contain multitudes," Walt Whitman once proclaimed in his poem, *Song of Myself*. As writers-readers-translators-storytellers, we are vessels of the universe, nodes of connection between the ephemeral and the eternal. From the mundane realm to the cosmological imagination, literature throws open our doors of perception and takes us on wondrous journeys even in moments of stillness.

GTFL 2021: Mikro-cosmos features more than 80 participants — writers, poets, translators, scholars, cultural figures — from 15 countries.

Our virtual programme offers 25 conversations in English and Malay in the form of podcast and video, including one-on-one conversations with acclaimed writers; a discussion on the great poet Dante Alighieri, a pertinent panel on decolonising literature, and short story readings by iconic actors, Wan Hanafi Su and Adibah Noor.

Another highlight of our virtual programme is 'Oda dari Seberang', a collaboration between GTLF and Nusi Poetry, featuring poetry, narratives, oral traditions, sounds and voices of the indigenous peoples of Borneo.

Our modest hybrid programme hopes to rekindle the spirit of community in George Town that is a hallmark of GTLF. Over the festival weekend, we offer several hybrid conversations, book launches, a storytelling session for children, an exhibition, and a Writers' Roundtable. As a vibrant port and cosmopolitan city in the Southeast Asian region, Penang is a natural gathering place for conversations, imagination, and ideas.

This year, we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of GTLF (which passed silently last year) with a special publication — *Muara*. A collaboration between GTLF and *Svara* journal, *Muara* features essays, short stories, poetry, book reviews, and translations, *Muara* gathers established and emerging writers from Malaysia, the region, and the world.

I wish to express my thanks to the Penang State Government, GTLF producers PCEB, and to all our festival partners for helping to make GTLF 2021 a reality. My deep appreciation goes to Festival Curator Izzuddin Ramli for his creative vision, and Festival Coordinator Swarna Rajagopal, for her dedication. We are a tiny team brimming with big ideas, and the tenacity to make it happen. Last but not least, GTLF 2021: Mikro-cosmos would not be possible without our audio-visual experts — Ady Faisal of Nusantara Audiobooks, and Huang and Edwin of Tidal61.

I invite all of you to enter our Mikro-cosmos, and discover the universe anew.

Pauline Fan
Festival Director

Curatorial Team



Pauline Fan
Festival Director

Pauline Fan is a writer and literary translator. Her translations from German to Malay include works by Bertolt Brecht, Immanuel Kant, Rainer Maria Rilke and Paul Celan. Her English translation of poems by Sarawak poet Kulleh Grasi, *Tell Me, Kenyalang* (Circumference Books, 2019), was shortlisted for the 2020 National Translation Award in Poetry and longlisted for the Best Translated Book Awards 2020. Pauline was guest editor, alongside Adriana Nordin Manan, for the Malaysia issue of *Words Without Borders* in September 2021, which showcased writings from Malaysia in new English translations. With Bilal Tanweer, she was co-editor of the collection, 'Translations: South and Southeast Asia', for *adda* magazine by Commonwealth Writers. Pauline is the creative director of PUSAKA, a cultural organisation that works closely with traditional artists. She serves on the boards of directors of the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books (ITBM) and Selangor Public Library (PPAS). She is an editor with *Mekong Review* and is the Malaysia editor for the Berlin-based poetry archive and network, *Lyrikline*.



Izzuddin Ramli
Curator

Izzuddin is a writer, researcher and literary translator. Trained as a political analyst, he has spent several years as a researcher at Penang Institute's History and Regional Studies Programme. Izzuddin recently coordinated and edited the coffee table book, *Melayu Pulau Pinang: Di Permatang Zaman dan Perubahan* (Penang Institute, 2021) written by Sasterawan Negara Muhammad Haji Salleh, which explores layered aspects of the Malay community in Penang, historically and in present times. Izzuddin is editor of *Suara Nadi*, a serial publication of essays in Malay on socio-cultural-political issues in contemporary Malaysia. Izzuddin's writings — which comprise commentaries and creative non-fiction essays on politics, culture, and the arts — have appeared in *Penang Monthly*, *New Naratif*, *Nikkei Asian Review*, *Svara* and *The Vibes*. He is currently researching cultural politics in Kelantan, looking at how Islamization has impacted the Kelantanese traditional arts. Izzuddin's work as literary translator includes *Melayu Atau Kemelayuan: Menelusuri Sejarah Idea* (Gerak Budaya, 2019), the Malay translation of Anthony Milner's seminal work, *The Malays, and Rukunegara — Selayang Pandang*, the Malay translation of Rukunegara — *A Brief Introduction* by Eddin Khoo, for *Projek Bina Bangsa*, a public education initiative on Malaysian history and collective memory by PUSAKA and Allianz Malaysia.

Line Up



Adriana Nordin Manan

Adriana Nordin Manan has eight professional roles: writer, translator-interpreter, playwright, researcher, curator, dramaturg, educator and entrepreneur. In 2019, Adriana's translation of "Pengap" by Lokman Hakim became the first Malay submission shortlisted for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize. In 2021, the script of her first full-length play - grappling with themes of diaspora and cultural collisions - was a semifinalist in the International Scratchpad Series by The Playwrights Realm. Adriana was a pioneer cohort member of the ASWARA-CENDANA Arts Writing Mentorship Programme. She speaks Malay, English and Spanish.



Ainunl Muaiyanah

Ainunl Muaiyanah is a Malaysian novelist, poet and editor. Her first novel, *Sepe-tang Di Kafe Biblioholik* won the Malaysia Premier's Literary Award. Several of her poems won the Utusan Group Literary Awards (HSKU) and Malaysia Premier's Literary Award (HSPM) and they were later collected into her first poetry collection title *Perempuan Bulan Perempuan Hujan*. She actively conducts and curates literary events in Kuala Lumpur under Punggok Agency. She has edited numerous literary books from new and prominent writer. She is one of the founding editors of *KLReviu*, an independent literary journal. Since 2012, she has worked at the Malaysian Institute of Translation & Books (ITBM).



Amir Muhammad

Amir Muhammad publishes books (under *Buku Fixi* and *Matahari Books*) and movies (under *Kuman Pictures*). He thinks laksa Sarawak is the best laksa in Malaysia



Andrea Paduano

Graduated in Italian Language and Literature with a Major in Musicology at the University of Parma, Andrea Paduano is an Italian Language teacher at University of Malaya.



Anna Tan

Anna Tan grew up in Malaysia, the country that is not Singapore. She writes fantastical stories and fairy tales, and has short stories included in various anthologies. She helps people publish books at Teaspoon Publishing, which includes yelling at HTML for ebook reasons. She is also the editor of NutMag, an annual zine published for and by MYWriters Penang.

Anna has an MA in Creative Writing: The Novel under a Chevening scholarship and is the current President of the Malaysian Writers Society. She is interested in Malay/Nusantara and Chinese legends and folklore in exploring the intersection of language, culture, and faith. She can be found tweeting as @natzers and forgetting to update annatsp.com.



Arif Rafhan

Arif Rafhan Othman a.k.a Superdoofus is a multi-platform visual artist with more than 20 published graphic novels and illustrated books under his belt. His work can be seen from murals in Little India and Taman Tun Children's Library, to sculptures in Setia Alam and Ipoh. He's also a pre-production artist (concept, character design, storyboard) for animation and live-action productions in Malaysia, Singapore and the US. He has been collaborating with doctors, poets, journalists, and many other professions in creating comic books, illustrated books and webcomics. Currently, he's working with Lat as his inker and colourist.



Azhar Ibrahim

Azhar Ibrahim, PhD is a Lecturer at the Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore (NUS). He teaches Malay-Indonesian literature and ideologies of development at the Department. His research interest includes sociology of literature, social theology religion, Islamic thought, critical literacy, and the Malay-Indonesian intellectual development.



Azrin Fauzi

Born in Penang, Azrin Fauzi is the author of two short story collections, Urban (2015) and Metaskandal (2018). His short stories have been published in Malaysian anthologies, journals, literary magazines, and newspapers. He was a recipient of the Selangor Literary Prize in 2017 (for his short story), 2018 (essay), and 2019 (short story). In 2019, he co-curated Pesta Playlet, organised by Ensembel Teater Kaos Nol; and was selected to represent Malaysia in MASTERA Writing Programme: Essay in Bandung, Indonesia, organised by Southeast Asia Literary Council (MASTERA). He lives in Kuala Lumpur.



Badrul Hisham Ismail

Badrul is a writer and filmmaker based in Kuala Lumpur. He is one of the founders and the Content Editor of Svara, a Malay-language periodical journal on art, culture and society. For his film works, he has been featured in a number of international film festivals, including the International Film Festival Rotterdam, Art of the Real at Lincoln Center New York, the Singapore International Film Festival and the Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival.



Clariessa Kesulai

Clariessa Kesulai is from Sibul, Sarawak, who writes poetry and short stories. Her works have been published in local and mainstream newspapers since Form 4.



Danielle Lim

Danielle Lim is an award-winning author of three books. Her short story collection, *And Softly Go the Crossings*, won the Book of the Year and Best Literary Work in the Singapore Book Awards 2021. Her novel, *Trafalgar Sunrise*, was shortlisted for Best Literary Work in the Singapore Book Awards 2019. Her memoir, *The Sound of SCH: A Mental Breakdown, a Life Journey*, won the Singapore Literature Prize 2016 (non-fiction) and has been translated to Chinese and Tamil, published in Taiwan and India. Her second novel will be published by Penguin Random House in 2022.



Deric Fe

Deric is a writer, editor and arts manager from Seremban. He has curated and managed cultural events in Johor, Kuala Lumpur and Penang. The *Fixi Novo* short story anthology *KL Noir: Magic* (2021) was his first foray into editing fiction. He wishes to spend the rest of his life gardening while listening to Taylor Swift.



Eddin Khoo

Eddin Khoo is a poet, writer, translator, journalist and teacher. He is Executive Editor at the news site *The Vibes*, overseeing the Culture and Lifestyle, News Features and the Southeast Asia desks. He edited an autobiography of the celebrated Malaysian artist Ibrahim Hussein, entitled *Ib: A Life* (2010), and has translated works by the Indonesian poet Goenawan Mohamad and the Malaysian poet Latiff Mohidin. Eddin edited and co-authored *I, KKK: An Autobiography of a Historian* (2017), the memoirs of his father, the Malaysian historian Khoo Kay Kim, whose complete writings Eddin is presently compiling and editing. He is presently establishing the *Tanah Air|Waterland- the Khoo Kay Kim Center for History*.



Eka Kurniawan

Eka Kurniawan is Indonesian writer. He writes novels and short stories including “Beauty is A Wound”, “Man Tiger”, “Vengeance is Mine, All Others Pay Cash”, and “Kitchen Curse”. He lives in Jakarta.



Elly Oldman

Elly Oldman is a Rennes-based illustrator with a peculiar graphic style.



Engku Roestam Alias

Engku Roestam has spent over a decade of his career in the manufacturing industry and now manages his own business. He recently undertook the initiative of co-managing and preserving the works of his late father, poet T. Alias Taib, mainly in the form of writing and personal belongings. He has republished all the works of T. Alias Taib, in addition to publishing a posthumous in the form of a poem under the Pusaka Alias Niaga publishing house. Engku Roestam is also the founder of Kedai Buku Titiwangsa, selling local and foreign books.



Fadhli al-Akiti

Fadhli al-Akiti is the editor of Dewan Sastera, a science fiction writer and a member of the Kuala Lumpur Film Critics Council.



Faisal Tehrani

Faisal Tehrani is a Malaysian author and academic.



Giuliana Nuvoli

Giuliana is a Professor of Italian Literature at the State University of Milan (Italy). In the last twenty years, she has focused her research on Dante and literature and cinema.



Hafizah Iszahanid

Hafizah is a journalist and novelist, winner of the Kuala Lumpur World Book City (KLWBC) 2020, Novel Competition for 'Kuala Lumpur di Sebalik Bulan'.



Haslina Usman

Haslina Usman or Lyna Usman was born in Singapore. She is the eldest child of SN Usman Awang. Haslina began writing poetry in high school. Her work has been published in school magazines, Dewan Sastera DBP and the anthology Mahabbah Bahasa by Beta. She once used the pen names Lalaruka, LynaUA and Lyna Usman.

At one point she played an advisory role when establishing the Usman Awang Foundation. She is now a member of the organization's Advisory Board.



Heidi Shamsuddin

Heidi Shamsuddin writes stories inspired by Southeast Asia for both adults and children. Her books have been published by Oyez Books, Fixi, MPH and Oxford University Press. In 2012, Heidi won the regional prize for the Eye Level Children's Literature Award, and in 2017 she won the IPCC Award to produce a short animated film based on her screenplay, 'Batik Girl'. Her most recent book is based on 'Hikayat Raja Babi' which she has adapted as an illustrated children's book, 'The Malay Tale of the Pig King'. Her collection of Nusantara Fairy Tales has just been picked up by a publisher and will hopefully be out in the coming year.



Indrani Kopal

Indrani Kopal is a documentary filmmaker with more than 16 years of experience in the industry. She started as a TV Producer and editor in 2004. In 2012, Indrani received a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue her MFA in Documentary Film Studies and Production at Hofstra University in New York. In 2016, she co-founded Far East Documentary Centre with her long-time collaborators. They have been exploring various independent non-fiction films with a focus on elevating stories of underrepresented Malaysian communities.



Jack Malik

Jack Malik is a poet from Ipoh, Perak. Jack has been a part of an artist collective, Projek Rabak, since 2015. Since then, he has been actively writing, performing, and translating poetry. His works have been published internationally in Mekong Review and locally in Dewan Sastera, Selangorkini, Tukang Puisi, Tunas Cipta and more. Jack mainly writes in Malay and has two poetry collections published entitled Wannabe Sasau and Sajakjakja(c)k. Jack is also one of the recipients of the Selangor State Literary Prize 2020 (known as Hadiah Sastera Selangor 2020) for poetry.



Jan Wagner

Jan Wagner is a poet, essayist, translator of Anglo-American poetry. He has published seven poetry collections since 2001, most recently Die Live Butterfly Show (2018). Regentonnenvariationen (“Rain Barrel Variations”), his sixth collection, won the Award of the Leipzig Bookfair in 2015. Wagner’s poetry has been translated into forty languages. He is a member of the German Academy of Language and Literature.



Juvita Tatan Wan

Juvita Tatan Wan is the producer and co-founder of The Tuyang Initiative. Tuyang is a community-led arts management company and social enterprise focused on upskilling Borneo indigenous (Dayak) cultural guardians and facilitating creative and cultural industry participation. Bringing her professional experience from an international advertising agency and major music label into Tuyang, it helps her and the team to think locally, and act globally. Juvita is a Kenyah, one of over 50 different Dayak groups in Borneo.



Kulleh Grasi

Kulleh Grasi is a multidisciplinary artiste from the heart of Borneo and his book ‘Tell Me Kenyalang’ was listed as a nominee for the BTBA American Best Translation Book Award 2020 at (March) 2020 and National Translation Award (October) 2020 by ALTA American Literary Translation Association. His work was featured in several local and internationally, namely Poetry Society Of America, lullabies for AAWW (Asian American Writers Workshop-The Transpacific Project 2021, PEN Malaysia 2021. As the co-founder of Nading Rhapsody, a world music avant-garde band, he has been featured in various music and literary festivals since 2011. He was listed as one of the recipients of “ Man Of The Year 2020” by Augustman Malaysia for his arts and culture contribution.



Lee Chwi Lynn

Lee Chwi Lynn is the presenter and editorial lead of the Evening Edition on BFM 89.9, a daily drive time show that discusses the news that shape daily conversations around politics, culture, and business. She has a keen interest in issues surrounding pop culture, feminism, and current affairs, and is also a co-producer and presenter on By the Book, a show that celebrates literature and reading, and Popcorn Culture, which is all about movies and television.



Lilianne Fan

Lilianne Fan is the International Director and Co-Founder of Geutanyoë Foundation, a regional humanitarian organisation based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Aceh, Indonesia; and Chair of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network's Rohingya Working Group (APRRN). She is a cultural anthropologist and humanitarian professional with more than 20 years of experience working with refugees, internally displaced persons, and communities affected by conflict and disaster, including in Aceh, Myanmar, Haiti and with Syrian refugees in Jordan, and currently specialises on the situation of the stateless Rohingya in Rakhine State and in ASEAN. She provides regular expertise to a range of institutions and governments including the UN, the World Bank, ASEAN, the Government of Malaysia and the Government of Indonesia.



Linda Christanty

Linda Christanty has written a number of fiction and non-fiction books. In 2013, she received the Southeast Asian literature award or S.E.A Write Award from the Kingdom of Thailand. She has worked as an editor in media studies and journalism magazines, writer of conflict transformation-themed radio plays, and researcher for gender issues and the women's movement in Indonesia, with assignments in eastern Indonesia. She also set up a news office in Banda Aceh after the conflict and post-tsunami.



M. Navin

M. Navin is a noted Malaysian Tamil writer and literary activist whose works centre on the lives of Malaysian Tamils and their daily struggles. To date, Navin has published 15 works, including 3 short story collections, 3 poetry, 8 essay collections and 1 Novel. Navin's first novel, *Peichi* (2019) cemented his reputation as an international Tamil writer of repute, though it has been banned in his home country. Navin established the noted alternative literary magazine 'Vallinam' in 2007, which later expanded into a publishing house focusing on contemporary Tamil works by young Malaysian talents. In 2019, he received the Tamil Literary Garden Award from Canada.



Manash Firaq Bhattacharjee

Manash Firaq Bhattacharjee is a poet, writer, and political scientist from Jawaharlal Nehru University. He is the author of *The Town Slowly Empties: On Life and Culture during Lockdown* (Headpress, Copper Coin, 2021), *Looking for the Nation: Towards Another Idea of India* (Speaking Tiger, 2018), and *Ghalib's Tomb and Other Poems* (The London Magazine, 2013). His writings, apart from regular contributions to *The Wire*, have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Guernica*, *World Literature Today*, *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, and *Outlook*, among others.



Marc de Faoite

Born in Dublin, Marc de Faoite is a freelance writer and editor based in Malaysia since 2007. His short stories, articles, and book reviews have been published both in print and online. *Tropical Madness*, a collection of his short stories, was longlisted for the 2014 Frank O'Connor International Short Story Prize



Marina Mahathir

Marina Mahathir is a newspaper columnist and activist. She led an HIV/AIDS NGO for 12 years, served on the board of Sisters in Islam for six years and currently chairs the board of Musawah, the global movement for justice and equality in the Muslim family. Marina has also produced TV programmes, feature films and a documentary and founded Zafigo.com, a website for women and travel. She has also hosted Hello Zafigo, an online chat show, and a podcast on books called Busy Reading Books. Penguin Random House SEA will publish her memoir in November 2021.



Masturah Alatas

Masturah Alatas is a Singapore-born Malaysian writer and teacher who has been living in Italy for the past thirty years. She is the author of *The girl who made it snow in Singapore* (Ethos Books, 2008), and *The Life in the Writing* (Marshall Cavendish, 2010). She is one of several writers along with Naomi Klein and Amitav Ghosh to be published in the *Will the Flower Slip Through the Asphalt: Writers Respond to Climate Change* (2017) anthology. Her short fiction has been longlisted for the *Lingua Madre* and Cambridge short story prizes. She teaches English and translation at the University of Macerata.



Meena Kandasamy

Meena Kandasamy is an anti-caste activist, poet, novelist and translator. Her writing aims to deconstruct trauma and violence while spotlighting the militant resistance against caste, gender, and ethnic oppressions. She explores this in her poetry and prose, most notably in her books of poems such as *Touch* (2006) and *Ms. Militancy* (2010), as well as her three novels, *The Gypsy Goddess* (2014), *When I Hit You* (2017), and *Exquisite Cadavers* (2019). Her latest work is a collection of essays, *The Orders Were to Rape You: Tamil Tigresses in the Eelam Struggle* (2021). Her novels have been shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction, the International Dylan Thomas Prize, the Jhalak Prize and the Hindu Lit Prize.



Melisa Idris

A journalist with 15 years of experience working in news media—newswires, print, online, radio and television—Melisa is currently Assistant Vice President & Senior Editor at Astro AWANI, where she anchors several talk shows including 'Consider This' & 'The Future Is Female'. Prior to her foray into television, she was the Executive Producer & Anchor of the morning drive-time show for the business radio station, BFM89.9.



Minae Mizumura

Born in Tokyo, Minae Mizumura moved to the United States at the age of twelve when her father was stationed in New York. After studying fine art in Boston and then living briefly in Paris, she went on to study French literature at Yale College and Yale Graduate School before returning to Japan to become a novelist. She has since then published four books of fiction, three books of nonfiction, and coauthored a compilation of epistolary essays. Acclaimed for her audacious experimentation and skilful storytelling, she has won five major literary awards in Japan, including the prestigious Yomiuri Literature Award, and her works have been translated into multiple languages.



Muhammad Haji Salleh

Muhammad Haji Salleh is a poet, critic, editor and translator in both Malay and English. He has published ten collections of poems and over 30 books of criticism and translation, including *Beyond the Archipelago* (1995), *The Poetics of Malay Literature* (2008), *Jatuh ke Laut Menjadi Pulau* (2014) and *The Purple Desire of the Islands* (2016). His translations of prominent historical literature include *The Epic of Hang Tuah* (2010) and *Sulalat al-Salatin* (1977). He has been awarded the Malaysian Literary Award and the Southeast Asian Literary Prize, appointed Malaysian National Laureate, and in 2009 received the National Scholar Award.



Mukoma Wa Ngugi

Mukoma Wa Ngugi is an Associate Professor of Literatures in English at Cornell University and the author of *The Rise of the African Novel: Politics of Language, Identity and Ownership*, the novels *Mrs. Shaw*, *Black Star Nairobi*, *Nairobi Heat*, and two books of poetry, *Logotherapy and Hurling Words at Consciousness*. In 2013, *New African* magazine named him one of the 100 most Influential Africans. He is the son of world-renowned African writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.



Nazry Bahrawi

Nazry Bahrawi is a literary translator, critic and academic. He translates to introduce Anglophone readers to the rich tradition of Bahasa literature. Trained in comparative literature, Nazry specialises in the study of non-material cultures through literary texts and films of the Malay Archipelago as part of the Indian Ocean cultural sphere. He is an editor-at-large at *Wasafiri* magazine and the essay & research editor for *Practice, Research and Tangential Activities (PR&TA)* journal.



Nelson Dino

Nelson Dino conducted his research on the Iconology of Suluk Motifs and Designs. His published books are about Suluk Way of Life, Culture, Identity and Thinking. His post-master research is about Suluk Indigenous Knowledge and Oral Tradition. His research deals with indigenous culture. He is a recipient of the, 'Excellence in Poetry and Music Award' at Northern Illinois University, USA, 'The 100 Best Work' at the 2nd ASEAN Poetry Writing Competition, Purwokerto, Indonesia, SUNTIK Puisi Pilihan, Sabah Literary Prize 2016-2017 from DBP Sabah, and Poetry Expression Award for Beloved Mother, 2020, Awan Nasional, KL. His two novels are published by Dewan Bahasa Pustaka (DBP), Malaysia, Janikar Oh Janikar, 2020 and Sapi Mandangan dan Apuk Daguang, 2018. His three books of poetry are published in Jakarta, Indonesia.



Nithiya Muthusamy

Nithiya is a public policy professional with more than a decade of professional and academic experiences in the US, India, Malaysia, Turkey and South Africa. He recently returned to Malaysia after many adventures in the development sector in India, and is now eager to creatively engage his tanah air's journey in the 21st century. Nithiya currently serves as Deputy Director of Research at The Khazanah Research Institute.



Noor Azam Shairi

Noor Azam Shairi is a journalist who started his career in 1997. He has worked in print with Utusan Malaysia, Mingguan Malaysia; in broadcast with Astro Awani, and is currently a news editor at The Malaysian Insight. He is also the editorial advisor of Svara, a print quarterly journal in Bahasa Melayu exploring anything and everything about arts, culture and society.



Nur Adilla

Nur Adilla is currently a diplomat at Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She writes short stories and essays on literary criticism, and has translated a novel. Among others, her works has been published in Singapore & Brunei, Dewan Sastera, Dewan Budaya, Berita Harian, & Utusan Malaysia. She previously won Main Prize for Hadiah Sastera Kumpulan Utusan 2010 and 20 Cerpen Terbaik Malaysia 2016 for Putrajaya International Book Festival. In 2018, Adilla represented Malaysia to the Southeast Asian Literary Council (Short Story) or MASTERA held in Jakarta, Indonesia.



Ooi Kee Beng

Ooi Kee Beng is the Executive Director of Penang Institute, and was Deputy Director of ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore in 2011-2017. He is an award-winning author and long-time columnist for The Edge Malaysia and other regional media outlets; editor of Trends in Southeast Asia; and founder-editor of ISEAS Perspective and the Penang Monthly. His noted works include *The Eurasian Core and Its Edges: Dialogues with Wang Gungwu on the History of the World* (2015); *Lim Kit Siang: Defying the Odds* (2015); *Yusof Ishak: A Man of Many Firsts* (2016); *Catharsis: A Second Chance for Democracy in Malaysia*; and *As Empires Fell: The Life and Times of Lee Hau-Shik, The First Finance Minister of Malaya* (2020).



Paul GnanaSelvam

Paul GnanaSelvam is an Ipoh-born writer and poet whose work often focuses on the experiences, issues and identity conflicts of those in the Indian diaspora. Writing since 2006, he has published both locally and internationally in anthologies, literary journals and e-magazines. His first collection of short stories *Latha's Christmas & Other Stories* was published in 2013, while *The Elephant Trophy & Other Stories* was published by Penguin-Random House, SEA in 2021. He currently teaches writing while undertaking research focusing on instructional communication and L2 writing in Higher Education at University Tunku Abdul Rahman in Kampar, West Malaysia.



Raihani Mohd. Saaid

Raihani Mohd. Saaid was born in Kuala Lumpur in 1979 and is the daughter of Sasterawan Negara Dato' Dr. Zurinah Hassan. Raihani's works include *Badrul Bambi* (short story collection), *Terminus A Quo*, *Sidang Kultus* and *Naskhah Nuraga* (poetry collection) and *Dari QM Ke DM and Opereta* (novel). She has a number of accolades to her name including multiple Malaysian Premier Literary Prize and Utusan Group Literary Prize, Prize Éso-GAPENA Poems 1995, Student Literary Prize-Bank Rakyat 1997 & 1998, FINAS Film Script Writing Competition (2001, 2002 and 2004) and many more. She served as a lecturer and dean at the Faculty of Creative Writing, ASWARA from 2015-2019.



Regina Ibrahim

Regina is a former public school teacher who started writing actively at the age of 50 and never looked back. Her works include *Perjalanan* (2014), *Delima* (2016), *Noor: Memoir Seorang Transwoman* (2017) and *Manusia* (2018), a novel co-written with Fahmi Mustaffa. Regina also wrote *Mak Nyah* (2015), a Malay language guide on understanding the trans community. Based in Penang, she is currently training young writers online via Wattpad.



Ruhaini Matdarin

Ruhaini is Kadazan by nationality. Graduated from the Faculty of Finance Management of the University of Science of Malaysia in Penang. Freelance auditor. Published more than 32 books since 2010. She won 23 awards in literature.



S.M. Zakir

S.M. Zakir is the awardee of MASTERA Young Laureate Awards 2010, awarded by the Literary Council of Southeast Asia (MASTERA) in Jakarta Indonesia. In 2011 was the awardee of S.E.A Write Award 2011 in short story category, awarded by SEA Write Award Council in Bangkok, Thailand. Work in the news media before becoming a full-time writer in 2000. Earned much acclaim and many awards with five novels, nine short stories books, five poetry collections, a biography, theatre and film criticism, socio-culture essays and political commentary.



Saleh Sepas

Saleh was born in Afghanistan. He began his university studies in Kabul University in 2001 where he studied art writing at the Faculty of Fine Arts for 4 years. In 2005-2016 he had been tasked with producing and preparing radio programs as a writer and director on the “Kalid” radio, “Rahe Farda” radio and TV and “BBC/AEP”. These programs have been designed to promote youth education, eliminate domestic violence and fight for human rights and strengthening democracy, and the values of civil society. Since 2016, Saleh left his country and now resides in Malaysia as a refugee. In June 2017, Saleh founded Parastoo Theater in KL and theater has written and directed “the bitter taste of history”, “Screaming in silence” and “Overcoming the crisis”. Parastoo has so far had more than 6,000 viewers in Malaysia. From 2019 until now, he has been working with the Geutanyoe Foundation as a community and art coordinator.



Sanaz Fotouhi

Sanaz Fotouhi a Melbourne based writer, academic and filmmaker, and the former director of the Asia Pacific Writers and Translators. Her latest book Love Marriage in Kabul: A Memoir chronicles her travels to Afghanistan as part of a two member team to make documentaries about the country.



Serge Jardin

Serge Jardin is a memory smuggler. Born in France, and married to a Malaccan. Geographer and historian by training. For more than thirty years, in love with Malaysia where he worked as a tour leader, tourist guide, travel agent and finally as a hotelier, before he called it a day. His latest effort, *Diary of a French Missionary. Penang during the Japanese Occupation*. Working on *A Fortuitous Encounter*. Walks in the French Memory of Malaysia. And on the translation of the *Account of a VOC Mercenary in Melaka*. French contribution to Malaysia and Melaka history are his two principal centres of interest.



Sharaad Kuttan

Sharaad Kuttan is a journalist who has worked in print and broadcast, currently hosting two talkshows on Astro AWANI - *Let's Talk with Sharaad Kuttan and Consider This*. He is a member of the Singapore branch of the International Association of Art Critics. In 2006 he was awarded the Nippon Foundation's Asian Public Intellectual fellowship. Apart from Art and Culture, he is a regular commentator on local politics and contributed a chapter to "Elections and Democracy in Malaysia", a scholarly study of the Malaysian electoral system. He has been involved with the GTLF since its inception, playing co-director for the year 2019 and 2020. He is currently President of PEN Malaysia as it seeks registration.



Sharmilla Ganesan

Sharmilla Ganesan is a presenter/producer with BFM 89.9, where she co-hosts daily current affairs programme *The Evening Edition*. She also presents *Everyone's A Critic* (arts), *By the Book* (literature), and *Popcorn Culture* (film and popular culture). Sharmilla is a writer and critic as well, with in-depth experience covering and commenting on Malaysian arts and culture. She was a features journalist with *The Star* for over a decade, where she wrote extensively on the arts, books, and film. Her articles have been published in, among others, *The Atlantic*, *South China Morning Post*, *NewNaratif*, and *ArtsEquator*. Sharmilla was an Asia Journalism Fellow in Singapore in 2017, and a Fulbright/Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow in the United States in 2015/16.



Sharmin Parameswaran

Sharmin Parameswaran is a part-time independent curator working in the Malaysian visual arts scene with interests rooted in the potential of collaborative art projects to engage wider audiences through thought, experience, and discourse. Her curatorial and project management projects include a collaboration with women's rights group All Women's Action Society to stage *The Good Malaysian Woman: Ethnicity, Religion, Politics*; highlighting how female stereotypes affect women's sense of self, community and nationality. Other collaborators include the acclaimed *Obscura Photo Festival*, as well as the multidisciplinary *Cooler Lumpur Festival 2017* and *Urbanscapes 2017/2018*. Her most recent project was *SH/FT A Contemporary Visual Art Exhibition, 2019* with CENDANA (Cultural Economy Development Agency) as Lead Curator & Project Manager.



Shazmin Shamsuddin

Shazmin Shamsuddin is a media broadcaster and producer with over 20 years in the radio industry. She is Editor for Culture and Lifestyle at The Vibes.



Sheera Ghafar

Sheera Ghafar is a writer from Taiping, Perak who now lives in Kuala Lumpur. Her short story *Penjual Besok* was awarded the Selangor Literary Prize 2018, while her other short story *Gigi Palsu Pasar Pudu*, which has been translated into English, was featured on *Adda*, *Commonwealth Writers* in August 2021.



Souvankham Thammavongsa

Souvankham Thammavongsa is the author of four poetry books and the short story collection *HOW TO PRONOUNCE KNIFE*, winner of the 2020 Scotia-bank Giller prize. Her stories have won an O. Henry Award and appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *The Paris Review*, *Harper's Magazine*, and *NOON*. She was born in the Lao refugee camp in Nong Khai, Thailand and was raised and educated in Toronto, Canada.



Steven Sim

Steven Sim is the Member of Parliament for Bukit Mertajam and previously served as the Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports from July 2018 to February 2020. He writes regularly for *Penang Monthly* as well as contributes opinion pieces to prominent Malaysian online news portals. He has written a few books including a collection of poems in Malay. His latest, *Hang Tuah Adiwira Bangsa* (2021) explores the Malay literary gem that is *Hikayat Hang Tuah* and its values that are still relevant to the new generation.



Syed Omar Husain

Syed Omar Husain serves as a translator and editor for the independent publishing house *Teratak Nuromar*. He has translated and co-translated numerous publications, including art exhibition catalogues, and two books, i.e. *'Perang Anjing Suruhan'* and *'Jagat Kehidupan dan Pemikiran Einstein'* (both published by *IBDE*). He is a co-founder of the Ipoh-based cultural and bibliophile hub, *Hu-books*, and co-editor of the *Hubooks* zine. He enjoys writing poetry, collecting local zines, and talking about arts, literature and culture.



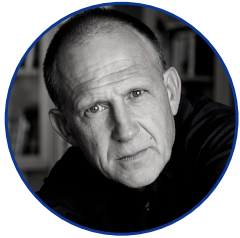
Tehmina Kaoosji

Tehmina Kaoosji is an independent Broadcast Journalist, Gender Activist and Communications Consultant currently based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. A familiar and in-demand broadcast face, Tehmina has more than 8 years of LIVE breaking news and current affairs programming experience. She is a versatile and highly experienced moderator of high-level debates and conferences on a wide range of subjects- from business, economy and technology, to politics and women's rights, sustainable development, public interest issues and media freedom.



Thira Mohamad

Thira Mohamad is a poet, writer, translator and educator from Sabah, Malaysian Borneo. She has read and published her poetry in Malaysia and Canada, where she was formerly based. Her work has appeared on the Malay-English journal *Naratif | Kisah, Woke & Loud*, a Toronto-based poetry anthology, and *Words Without Borders*. She is based in her hometown of Kota Kinabalu, and is on a mission to translate more Sabahan literature into English while working on her first poetry collection.



Tim Parks

Tim Parks is a novelist, essayist, travel writer and translator based in Italy. Author of eighteen novels, including the Booker-shortlisted, *Europa*, *Destiny*, *Cleaver*, and more recently *In Extremis*, he has translated works by Moravia, Calvino, Calasso, Tabucchi, Machiavelli and Leopardi. While teaching translation to post-graduates in Milan, he writes regularly for the LRB and the NYRB. His many non-fiction works include the *Italian Neighbours*, *An Italian Education*, *A Season with Verona*, *Italian Ways*, and *The Hero's Way*, as well as a memoir on chronic pain and meditation, *Teach Us to Sit Still* and the recently published *Out of My Head*, an unclassifiable book that mixes essay and memoir in a reflection on the nature and location of consciousness. His critical writings include *Where I'm Reading From* and the recent *Pen in Hand, Reading, Rereading and Other Mysteries*.



Tina Makereti

Tina Makereti is author of *The Imaginary Lives of James Pōneke* (2018) and co-editor of *Black Marks on the White Page* (2017), an anthology that celebrates Māori and Pasifika writing. In 2016 her story 'Black Milk' won the Commonwealth Writers Short Story Prize, Pacific region. Her other books are *Where the Rēkohu Bone Sings* (2014) and *Once Upon a Time in Aotearoa* (2010). She won two Ngā Kupu Ora Māori Fiction Awards, was nominated twice for the Dublin Literary Award, and has been the recipient of the RSNZ Manhire Prize for Creative Science Writing and the Pikihiua Award for Best Short Story in English. She teaches creative writing at the International Institute of Modern Letters at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington. Her collection of personal essays, *This Compulsion in Us*, is forthcoming.



Vernon Adrian Emuang

Vernon Adrian Emuang is an intercultural hyphenate in his genetics, heritage, occupational and recreational pursuits. He is an award-winning advertising copywriter/creative director and theatre producer, an accomplished performing arts practitioner and media presenter, and will soon embark on post-graduate studies on issues of identity among Southeast Asians of hybrid ancestry.



Wan Nor Azriq

Wan Nor Azriq is a Malaysian novelist born in Alor Setar, Kedah. He has published six novels, one short story collection, and one essay collection. An acolyte of Robert Aickman and H. P. Lovecraft. Currently working at MUBI. Spends his free time playing Star Wars Battlefront and Disco Elysium.



Wan Phing Lim

Wan Phing Lim is the author of *Two Figures in a Car and Other Stories*, a short story collection published by Penguin Random House Southeast Asia in September 2021. Born in Penang, she is currently based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and works as a freelance writer and editor.



Zakaria Ali

Zakaria Ali is a contemporary Malaysian artist and a scholar of the arts. His literary works include essays, journals, novels and poems while as an artist, he has been actively involved in the area of fine arts. Zakaria was a recipient of the SEA Write Award in 2003. He writes both in Malay as well as English.



Zayn Gregory

Zayn Gregory is a senior lecturer with the Department of Architecture at the Faculty of Built Environment, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). A native of Detroit, Michigan in the United States, Zayn moved to Malaysia in 2002. Prior to immigrating, Zayn worked as a landscape architect in the Detroit area in the parks and recreation sector. Zayn converted to Islam from a mixed Jewish and Catholic family in 1992, leading to his interest in interfaith dialogue which he has pursued through engagement with the Sarawak Islamic Information Center. His other interests include translation of Malay poetry and literature, for which he has won substantial popular acclaim. Zayn resides in Kuching, Sarawak with his wife and seven children.

Special Guests



Adibah Noor

Adibah Noor is a professional singer, actor, voice talent and host.



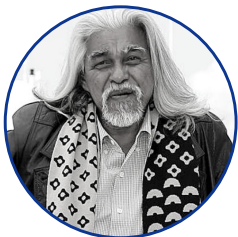
Nikki Palikat

Nikki Palikat is an actress and singer. She broke into the local music scene after signing a recording contract with Artistes United Records in 2005. To date she has released three albums; Maharani (2005), Maharani Repackaged (2006) and Hawa (2008), all of which have received numerous nominations and awards locally and abroad. She joined forces with Filipino superstar Jed Madela in 2012 to release Antara Kita, which became the theme song for TV3 hit series Stanza Cinta. She has also performed alongside West End stars in Licence To Thrill, the first-ever James Bond Tribute Concert in Southeast Asia. Her work in musical theatre includes The Yellow Girl in Shout! The Mod Musical (2010), the iconic Sally Bowles in the legendary musical Cabaret (2015), The Witch for Into The Woods (2016), and Euphrasia Pelletier for KLPA's Euphrasia The Musical (2019). She has also landed various roles for television, most notably as Laura in Astro's Dendam Aurora (2017).



Tony Eusoff

Tony Eusoff has been a stellar stage and screen entertainer since 2004. With numerous tv series, films and musicals under his belt, Tony won the hearts of many households with one of his most memorable performances playing the legendary P. Ramlee in the special biopic miniseries 'Saloma', and on stage playing the title role in 'P. Ramlee The Musical', among others.



Wan Hanafi Su

Wan Hanafi Su or also known as W. Hanafi Bin W. Su were born in Besut, Terengganu. He received his early education at primary and secondary levels in his hometown and pursue his higher education at ITM in the course of Fine Art and also in USM in the course of Creative Art. He started his career in theatre in the early '70s and in the early 80's he continued his acting career as a television actor. His biggest achievement was in 2016 when he received the world premiere at Cannes Film Festival for one of his films called APPENTICE. He is now actively pursuing his career as an actor.

Poets



Angelina Bong

Angelina Bong is a poet and visual artist. She represented Malaysia at the 3rd Delphic Games 2009, South Korea in the Lingual Art-Poetry category. Since then, she has read and performed physically in Malaysia, South Africa, Botswana, UK, Australia, India, Brunei, Egypt and Japan with poems translated into Korean, Malayalam, Japanese, French, Arabic and Malay. She held her first solo Art & Poetry exhibition abroad after completing a 7-week writing-art residency at Toji Cultural Foundation, Wonju, South Korea in 2018. She is a core member of Wordsmiths of Kuching. You can find her at @swakgel on Instagram and Twitter. Her debut poetry collection will be out in 2022.



H.Mar

H.Mar@Hj Mohd Ali bin Hj Radin's work comprises an Anthology of poems and short stories titled *Hidup Yang Mati* (DBP Brunei:1996); Novel titled *Kota Kaca* (DBP Brunei: 2003 dan 2020); Anthology of drama and short stories titled *Taman 'O'* (DBP Brunei: 2003); Collection of poems titled *Gerlora* (DBP Brunei: 2011); Collection of short stories titled *Éxotis* (DBP Brunei: 2018); and Collection drama titled *Taman Mimpi* (DBP Brunei: 2021).



Karl Agan

Karl Agan was born and raised in Miri Sarawak. He is a poet, also a screen print artist at Warehouse Borneo. He developed his passion for poetry in his university days and began writing in 2008. He is known for his graceful melancholic and nostalgic vibes in his poetry. He published several poetry collections: *Sekumpulan Epitaf & Surat-surat Yang Lewat* (2014), *SUnyi Merdu Di Tengah Pusaran Kata* (2016), *Fragmen* (2018), and a few other poetry compilations: *Boke* (2013), *Éksotikata* (2014), *Melompat Keluar Dari Mimpi* (2015), *Tukang Puisi* (2018), and *Hujan Bakawali Di Rumah Tuhan* (2018).





Opah Aspa

Opah Aspa is the vocalist/chanter for Nading Rhapsody - an Avant-Garde Borneo Ethnic World Music band from Kuching, Sarawak. As one of the band's founding member, for almost 10 years Opah Aspa grew fond of the 'main asal'/traditional literature/arts. Her love for literature & arts expanded when she became the co-founder for Nusi Poetry, a movement initiated by Nading Rhapsody. For their 2021 edition, Nusi Poetry will be curated by Nading Creatives in collaboration with GTLF 2021 as part of their hybrid programme. Be sure to catch Opah Aspa with her oral tradition in this year's edition!



Kathy Tati Sitim

Kathirina was born in Kota Kinabalu, started writing in 1995, have written 13 books; novels, Children books, a collection of Folklore stories, short stories and a collection of poems. She also has organized 14 anthologies of Poems and short stories. Kathirina had received The Sabah Literature Awards for years 1996/97, 2016/17. She is also the recipient of the World Parliament of Peace Lifetime Achievement Noble Peace Personality Award, India 2021.



Unis Sagena

Unis Sagena resides in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, and teaches at Mulawarman University. Unis is active in social and cultural organizations, especially literacy activities. Unis is nationally certified as a freelance writer and editor. Her works in the form of essays and poems are published in dozens of anthologies. She primarily writes about women's issues, social, and political themes.



Programme

25 November



Circles of the Afterlife: 700 Years of Dante

Giuliana Nuvoli and Masturah Alatas in conversation with Andrea Paduano

GTLF pays tribute to the great Italian poet Dante Alighieri, commemorating the 700th anniversary of his passing through a celebration of his life and work. Dante's 'Divine Comedy' takes us on a macrocosmic journey through the nine circles of Inferno, the terrestrial mount of Purgatory, to the celestial spheres of Paradise. In his epic masterpiece, Dante intersects the divine universal and the human individual, contemplating eternal questions of life, death and the afterlife. In this conversation, eminent scholar of Italian literature, Giuliana Nuvoli, and Italy-based Malaysian writer Masturah Alatas discuss the enduring legacy and influence of Dante in Italy and the world, including the question of Dante and Islam.

This conversation is supported by the Embassy of Italy in Malaysia.



The Shifting Shores of Language

Minae Mizumura in conversation with Pauline Fan

Minae Mizumura, one of Japan's most distinguished writers, was profoundly shaped by the cultural and linguistic shores of Japan and the United States. Boldly contemporary and often experimental, her writing nevertheless engages with and builds upon the literary past. Underlying all her work is a deep concern with the nuances of language. In this conversation with GTLF Director Pauline Fan, Minae Mizumura reflects on the forms and subjects of her fiction, her grappling with language and literature, and her momentous decision to return to Japan and write in Japanese.

This conversation is supported by the Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur.



Unearthing the Universe

Tina Makareti in conversation with Lee Chwi Lynn

How can fiction be a force against collective forgetting? Tina Makareti's powerful fiction unearths buried narratives, untold stories, and family histories. The two-time winner of the Ngā Kupu Ora Māori Book Awards speaks to Lee Chwi Lynn about the themes that recur in her work and the effect of her mixed heritage on her writing. Tina shares her process for writing historical fiction and the role that stories play in informing one's sense of belonging and self.

This conversation is supported by the High Commission of New Zealand in Malaysia.



Wan Hanafi Su Membaca Angin Timur Laut (S. Othman Kelantan)

Bacaan petikan novel S. Othman Kelantan oleh: Wan Hanafi Su

Kehidupan nelayan pesisir di Pantai Sabak merungkai tentang derita kaum nelayan bukan sahaja menghadapi Angin Timur Laut yang menghalang mereka mencari rezeki berbulan lamanya, tetapi juga penindasan lintah darat serta manusia berkepentingan yang tidak kenal belas kasihan. Saleh berjuang mencari nafkah untuk isteri dan anak-anaknya, mengharungi semua rintangan dan khianat. Tetapi kemiskinan adalah lubang gelap yang tidak punya jalan keluar. Malah kemiskinan juga menukarkan watak manusia menjadi haiwan. Angin Timur Laut melukiskan kehidupan dengan seni yang hidup sekali. Novel ini adalah mahakarya S. Othman Kelantan.

Bacaan ini disokong oleh Nusa Centre.



Literacy and Cosmopolitanism in an Era of Crisis

Ooi Kee Beng in conversation with Sharaad Kuttan

Penang is home to the George Town Literary Festival and the cosmopolitan culture it has long hosted. Over the centuries, its people and cultures have been buffeted by global political conflict, social dislocation and technological advancement, for better and worse. In this conversation with Ooi Kee Beng, Executive Director of Penang Institute, we explore if the assumptions underpinning the Island's cosmopolitan impulses have been permanently disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Tumpah Kuah Ke Nasi

Perbualan: Fadli Al-Akiti bersama Engku Roestam Alias, S.M. Zakir, Haslina Usman

Di mana tumpahnya kuah kalau tidak ke nasi. Begitu perumpamaan buat tiga orang penggiat sastra ini. Mereka lahir daripada para penanda waktu-waktu penting dalam sejarah alam kesusasteraan Malaysia. Buat mereka, pintu masuk ke alam sastra pastinya berbeza: bukan hanya bilik darjah, tetapi langsung dari Usman Awang, S. Othman Kelantan, dan T. Alias Taib. Namun, sebanyak mana kuah yang tertumpah? Atau, apakah nasi di pinggan sudah digenang kuah? Dengari bagaimana Fadli Al-Akiti menyelidik persamaan dan perbezaan, serta pertengkaran dan perdamaian antara kerja sastra dan karya ketiga-tiga anak sasterawan ini dengan segala yang ditinggalkan oleh para pendahulu mereka.

26 November



Pertemuan Dua Pengarang

Perbualan: Eka Kurniawan, Wan Nor Azriq

Dua orang pengarang prolific Malaysia dan Indonesia bertemu secara maya. Mereka mula berdialog tentang proses kepengarangan masing-masing. Di pertengahan, kedua-duanya singgah ke karya-karya sendiri, menanggapi seperti apa wajah dan semangat karya-karya mereka yang sudah menjelma dalam bahasa-bahasa asing, khususnya Inggeris. Di penghujung, kita diajak untuk membayangkan bagaimana, pada waktu yang tidak menentu, dua negara serumpun ini tetap mampu berkongsi cerita.



Adibah Noor reads 'A Mosque in the Jungle' by Othman Wok

Short story by Othman Wok, reading by Adibah Noor

Years before his political career took off, Othman Wok pioneered the writing of ghost stories and horror fiction in Singapore and Malaysia while working as a young reporter for Utusan Melayu and Mustika magazine between 1952 and 1956. These stories were fantastically popular, making him a household name in the Malay-speaking world. In fact, these tales may have been the first examples of horror fiction in either Singapore or Malaysia, in any language. This GTLF podcast features renowned Malaysian actress, Adibah Noor, reading one of Othman Wok's ghost stories from the collection, 'A Mosque in the Jungle', newly published by Epigram.



Plagues of Mind and Matter

Manash Firaq Bhattacharjee in conversation with Nithiya Muthusamy

Manash Firaq Bhattacharjee's book, 'The Town Slowly Empties', charts his thoughts through several months of pandemic and lockdown in New Delhi. Reflections on life, culture and society around him intertwine with meditations on an eclectic and worldly range of artistic and literary sources. Manash speaks to Nithiya Muthusamy about the discontents and paradoxes that plague the various themes in his book — Memory, History, Love, Friendship, Nature, Modernity. Manash and Nithiya also contemplate the pertinent question: Have we failed to take on the pandemic's special opportunity for reflection and change?



Antara Kissa dan Ensena: Alam, Kata-kata dan Jati Diri

Perbualan: Thira Mohamad bersama Kulleh Grasi, Clariessa Kesulai, Nelson Dino

Kata-kata lahir dari kisah, seperti yang diceritakan melalui ensena Iban atau kissa kaum Suluk. Penulis dan penyair dari Borneo telah lama menjalin bebenang yang lisan dengan yang tersurat. Seperti apa rupanya karya yang disuntik oleh bahasa dan cara pandang alam tempatan ini? Lalu, bagaimanakah mereka menanggapi dan menimbang-nimbang hakikat kepelbagaian bahasa di kepulauan itu dalam membentuk jati diri?



Bitter Fruit: Art and War in Afghanistan

Saleh Sepas in conversation with Lilianne Fan

In August 2021, Afghanistan fell once again to Taliban rule. What impact is the Taliban takeover having on the country's artists? How have the long histories of war shaped the forms and content of Afghanistan's literary expression? What challenges do writers face in a society where art itself is perceived as a transgression? Lilianne Fan speaks to Kabul-born playwright and theatre director Saleh Sepas about the trials of writing under the shadows of armed conflict and displacement.



Antara Bayangan dan Kebebasan

Perbualan: Jack Malik, Ainun Muaiyannah

Penyair hadir sebagai tukang bicara dan pembawa semangat zamannya. Mereka adalah orang yang terus-menerus berusaha untuk mencari kebebasan, bertelingkah dengan bahasa, dan membebaskan bahasa bagi mengungkap segala yang tidak terungkap oleh bahasa sehari-hari. Namun, tidak mudah untuk para penyair hari ini untuk lepas dari bayangan para pendahulu mereka, khususnya para penyair yang diangkat oleh negara. Bagaimana penyair hari ini, khususnya penyair muda, menimbang-nimbang perkara ini? Bagaimana kita mengekalkan hubungan dengan yang lama, tetapi tetap mampu mencipta bahasa dan melahirkan suara sendiri?



Magic of the Second Order

Jan Wagner in conversation with Pauline Fan

A tea bag unravels into a cosmic vision; a swarm of insects dance like ancient inscriptions freed from stone. One of the most celebrated German poets of his generation, Jan Wagner's poetry illuminates the everyday world with a sense of wonder and playfulness. In this conversation with GTLF Director Pauline Fan, Jan Wagner shares his thoughts on the magic of poetry, his poetic sensibilities and influences, and how a detailed observation of physical reality reveals contours of the meta-physical.

This conversation is supported by the Goethe-Institut Malaysia.



Cerpen: Alam Nyata dan Tak Nyata

Perbualan: Hafizah Iszahanid bersama Sheera Ghafar, Ruhaini Matdarin, Azrin Fauzi

Resah gelisah hidup dalam dunia yang tidak menentu ini tidak lain tidak bukan menuntut kita untuk berkhayal dan terus-menerus membangkitkan semula pesona hidup. Cerpen adalah salah satu pintu masuknya. Melaluiinya penulis mencipta dan mengawal keajaiban alamnya sendiri, dan pembaca dibawa untuk menjelajah. Namun, apakah pembahagian alam nyata dan tak nyata, atau cereka dan bukan-cereka ini, bermakna lagi buat penulis? Bersama tiga orang penulis cerpen Malaysia bercerita tentang cara mereka menggambarkan dunia mereka melalui cerpen.



Travel, Translation and Other Diversions

Tim Parks in conversation with Eddin Khoo

In this sprawling conversation acclaimed novelist, essayist and translator Tim Parks speaks to Eddin Khoo about his myriad preoccupations and diversions — writing across genres, translating Italian literature, on language and reading, and the politics of culture today. The conversation also invokes great figures of Italian literature and history as it meanders from a reflection on Dante in our times, to Garibaldi whose footsteps Tim retraces in his new book, and a personal recollection of the towering literary polymath, Roberto Calasso.



Laughter at the Edge of the World

Souvankham Thammavongsa in conversation with Sharmilla Ganesan

Literature tends to view the experience of refugees and migrants through the lens of terrible tragedy or extraordinary achievement, with characters portrayed as victims or heroes. In her debut short story collection, 'How to Pronounce Knife', Souvankham Thammavongsa subverts these literary tropes and reveals refugees and migrants as ordinary people. In this conversation, the 2020 Giller Prize winner speaks to Sharmilla Ganesan about the role of laughter in her fiction, her reorientation of 'centre' and 'margins', moving between poetry and prose, and how her writing is an invigorating refusal of pity.

This conversation is supported by the High Commission of Canada in Malaysia.



Asam dan Garam: "Merantau" Dalam Sastera Nusantara

Perbualan: Faisal Tehrani, Azhar Ibrahim

Sejarah panjang kepulauan Nusantara adalah sejarah perantau. Sejak berabad-abad, di kepulauan Sumatera, Jawa, mahupun semenanjung Tanah Melayu, orang-orang keluar masuk dan berpindah-randah atas pelbagai tujuan, baik untuk berdagang, membina keluarga, atau lari dari keluarga. Malah, kita mengenal banyak kata Melayu yang menggambarkan tindakan meninggalkan tanah sendiri ini: rantau, kembara, kelana, petualang, pelimbang, dan banyak lagi. Bagaimana sastera, khususnya sastera lisan dan tulis Melayu, baik yang dahulu dan sekarang, merakam tema ini?



Ways of Seeing: Storytelling through Documentary

Sanaz Fotouhi and Indrani Kopal in conversation with Shazmin Shamsuddin

How does the medium of documentary open up possibilities of storytelling? What is the nature of the documentary lens through which a narrative plays out? Iranian-born Australian filmmaker, writer, and scholar, Sanaz Fotouhi, and award-winning Malaysian filmmaker, Indrani Kopal, speak to Shazmin Shamsuddin about how much of oneself is inherent when directing and filming a documentary, and how documentary offers viewers access to stories they may never come across.

28 November



The Page Is Not Your Colony

Mukoma Wa Ngugi, Juvita Tatan Wan, Nazry Bahrawi in conversation with Adriana Nordin Manan

How can literature decolonize? How do we know we are actively and critically decolonizing and what marks an end point for it? If we are resisting certain narratives because they pin us under the yoke of colonialism, what narratives should take their place, and how can they come into conversation with one another? Kenyan-US writer and scholar Mukoma Wa Ngugi, Sarawakian cultural advocate and producer Juvita Tatan Wan, and Singaporean scholar and translator Nazry Bahrawi speak to Adriana Nordin Manan about the complexities of local and indigenous vs colonizing languages, written vs oral literature, cultural erasure, and crafting new narratives in a world ripe for rethinking and renewal. They also discuss what the decolonizing project looks like in corners of Asia and Africa, and the possibilities for solidarity between writers and translators across continents.



The Apple and the Tree

Marina Mahathir in conversation with Melisa Idris

What is it like to be the daughter of Malaysia's most iconic leader? Marina Mahathir speaks to Melisa Idris about her newly published memoir, 'The Apple and the Tree: Life as Dr. Mahathir's Daughter'. She reflects on the challenges of truth-telling in a memoir — digging past our own vanities and the stories we tell ourselves, the discomfort of writing in vulnerability, the difficulty of writing about family and loved ones, and on her hopes for the future of this country.



Kewartawanan Sasterawi

Perbualan: Badrul Hisham bersama Linda Christanty, Noor Azam Shairi

Kewartawanan semakin 'tenat', bukan hanya kerana dihimpit politik, tetapi juga bazar yang sedang merebak dari dalam. Mungkin kerana hidup hari ini yang selalu menuntut kecepatan dan kesegeraan dalam banyak hal. Kewartawanan ikut terjerumus dalam urusan jual beli perhatian. Mutu penulisan kewartawanan terkorban. Perbualan ini membawa pendengar menyelongkar genre penulisan bukan-cerika berbentuk kreatif yang tidak kurang penting dalam dunia penulisan. Apakah yang terjadi di pertemuan antara sastera dan penulisan esei bukan rekaan? Bagaimana juga sastera boleh menyelamatkan kewartawanan yang pernah menjadi pengasuhnya ini?



Doors of Perception: Writing the Psyche and Social Self

Paul GnanaSelvam and Danielle Lim in conversation with Vernon Adrian Emuang

Can writing 'cleanse the doors of perception', as William Blake once said, and allow us to see life as it is? Singapore Book of the Year Award winner Danielle Lim and Malaysian writer Paul GnanaSelvam speak to Vernon Adrian Emuang about how their short stories open up our perception to the inner workings of the psyche, and reveal how the self is shaped by social forces. While Danielle's writing examines the subtleties of personal relationships in difficult situations, Paul's stories bring to the fore the challenges of the Malaysian Indian community in our complex multicultural milieu.



Lima Dekad Kepengarangan Zakaria Ali

Perbualan: Syed Omar Husain bersama Zakaria Ali

Jika dicari satu sosok yang boleh memimpin kita menelusuri simpang-siur denai sastera dan seni Malaysia dari 1970-an hingga sekarang, maka kita akan menuju ke Zakaria Ali. Anak kelahiran Rembau ini sudah meninggalkan jejak-jejak di kedua-dua ranah yang sering berkait ini. Karya-karya beliau dalam bentuk puisi, cerpen, dan novel, malah terjemahan, mahupun seni rupa—barangkali menjadi wadah untuk beliau meneroka dan meluahkan beberapa perkara, terutamanya bahasa dan rasa. Kita mencari makna sastera nasional dan hal-hal lain seputar sastera Malaysia dari kacamata orang yang petah berbahasa Melayu, Inggeris, dan Sepanyol ini.



Menghidupi Sastera Tamil di Malaysia

Perbualan: Nur Adilla bersama M. Navin

Sejarah panjang sastera Malaysia sememangnya rencam. Walaupun di mata negara sastera kebangsaan hanya yang berbahasa Melayu, kita sebaliknya menemukan kepelbagaian ketika turun ke ranah masyarakat. Karya-karya ditulis, kesusasteraan dibangunkan, dan aneka kenyataan diungkapkan melalui pelbagai macam bahasa. Salah satunya bahasa Tamil. Dalam perbualan ini, Nur Adilla mengintai seperti apa ekosistem sastera Tamil di Malaysia melalui jendela M. Navin, seorang penulis cerpen yang semakin diterjemahkan ke pelbagai bahasa ini. Kita kemudian dibawa untuk melihat bagaimana M. Navin menggunakan cerpen untuk mencabar hal-hal di sekitarnya.



presents

Nusi Poetry x GTLF: Oda dari Seberang



A collaboration between GTLF 2021 and Nusi Poetry, 'Oda dari Seberang' features poetry, narratives, oral traditions, sounds and voices of the indigenous peoples of Borneo.

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NUSANTARA
AUDIOBOOKS



&

SVARA
PERIHAL BUDAYA KONTEMPORARI

presents

CONFLUENCE | PERTEMUAN **Muara**

Muara, the Malay word for estuary, is a passage of fluidity and connection, where the river meets the open sea. Muara evokes a place where we find ourselves between the memory of the land and the lure of the unknown deep. In these pages, writers engage in ideas and imaginings, interpreting the shifting shoreline of our realities. The ink we leave upon this topography are traces of ourselves, inscribing this moment in the ebb and flow of existence.

A collaboration between George Town Literary Festival (GTLF) and Svara journal, Muara celebrates the 10th Anniversary of GTLF, and Penang as a vibrant port and cosmopolitan city in the Southeast Asian region. Featuring essays, short stories, poetry, book reviews, and translations, Muara gathers established and emerging writers from Malaysia, the region, and the world.



Muara adalah cerminan kepada kecairan dan keterhubungan, tempat pertemuan antara “laut dan sungai” dengan segala dunianya yang berbeza. Di dalam lembar Muara, kami mencuba untuk mempertemukan diri di dalam ingatan dan kedalaman yang tak berdasar. Semua itu terakam dalam fikiran dan baris ayat yang memaknai keberadaan dan kemanusiaan kita bersama.

Muara merupakan sebuah penerbitan usaha sama antara George Town Literary Festival (GTLF) dan jurnal Svara, yang menandai ulang tahun ke-10 GTLF, dan juga sebagai tribut kepada Pulau Pinang sebagai kota pelabuhan kosmopolitan paling menarik di Asia Tenggara. Menampilkan tulisan esei, cereka, sajak, ulasan buku dan juga terjemahan, Muara menghimpunkan ramai penulis dari latar sosial dan geografi berbeza, dari seluruh dunia.

Available at Tintabudi Bookshop from 1 December onwards.

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