

GEORGE TOWN, LITERARY FESTIVAL 2012

Fri 23 November -
Sun 25 November

Voyages
Hopes
Dreams

for more information
visit gtlfestival.blogspot.com
email info@penangglobaltourism.com
or call +604 264 3456



STUDIO
at straits



Sekeping Victoria





MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE CHIEF MINISTER OF PENANG



On behalf of the State Government of Penang, I would like to extend my personal greetings and a warm welcome to the second George Town Literary Festival.

This year, we welcome fifteen local, regional and international writers, eight local moderators and four musicians to our festival. Although this may be puny, we believe this humble beginning can help the ultimate aim of any literary festival - to encourage and inculcate the spirit of exchange, the love for literature and a greater understanding of the human condition. We may be a small festival, but with largesse of spirit, we will make this into one of the most meaningful literary festivals in South East Asia.

For centuries, George Town has thrived as a beacon of religious and cultural understanding and has fostered an environment where groups of people have thrived, and where generations have taken root. We have had Armenian Jews, Hadramis, Tamils, Gujaratis, Chinese, Dutch, German, English, Scottish, Malay, Burmese, Thai communities, Eurasians, Peranakans, Punjabis and more; all have called this place home. This was a multicultural community, this is a multicultural community, and will continue to be.

We have celebrated pluralism in its diverse shapes and forms, we have welcomed people from near and far. We have welcomed people who voyaged to Penang, who had hopes and who dared to dream. The theme of this year's festival is therefore apt to the continuing migration and movement of people, to the indomitable strength of the human spirit, and the stories that have come from such voyages.

The State Government is committed to creating a cultural and artistic hub in this city, which will add to the quality of life in George Town. We see this as integral in the development of a world-class liveable city as we not only want a city that is clean, green, safe and healthy but an informed one as well.

We wish you all an inspiring weekend, where there will be 20 events from a poetry workshop with schoolchildren, readings and panel discussions, a 'rant', performance poetry in multiple languages, live music and one-to-one conversations with writers from near and far. We want you to be provoked and delighted, to react and respond to the words that you will hear, and to be challenged in ways that will involve conversation, discourse and debate.

It is more crucial than ever to have intellectual and creative freedom, to be encouraged to think for ourselves, in a world that seems to be imposing more boundaries on how we should be and should not be. In other words, an open society where differences are respected and freedoms are celebrated. It is festivals like these that will encourage our efforts towards a truly civil society.

Enjoy the Festival!

YAB LIM GUAN ENG

Chief Minister of Penang

CURATOR'S NOTE



It is with great honour and pleasure that I welcome you to the second edition of the George Town Literary Festival in the historic UNESCO World Heritage Site of George Town, Penang. This year, we continue from **History and Heritage: Where Are Our Stories?** and we hope that our participating writers will inspire you with their stories which span the theme, **Voyages. Hopes. Dreams.**

I believe that George Town is ready to embrace its first international literary festival and I hope that you will join me in welcoming our 15 writers from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia, Ghana/UK, Scotland, the Netherlands and Belgium. We also have a stellar list of Malaysian writers, thinkers and literary critics who will moderate a series of themed panel discussions which will navigate diasporas from the region and beyond, into the literary landscapes that have traversed the physical and emotional and into the imaginary. We look at the stories of people who have uprooted themselves in the search for better lives, we look at how displacement gives rise to conflicts from learned identities, we look at how the writer hopes and dreams, and how the writer writes.

This year, we welcome our festival partner, Writers Unlimited, the International Literary Festival of The Hague, Netherlands with the hope that we will begin a literary and cultural exchange with a shared expertise that will benefit our writers and audiences alike. We believe that the festival will continue to grow from strength to strength and we hope that the people of George Town will continue to welcome the voices of people who have come to these shores, year after year, decade after decade. This is a city at the crossroads of cultural diversity, where faiths, languages and traditions have continued to thrive for centuries. This is a place where people have voyaged to, who have dared to hope and dream.

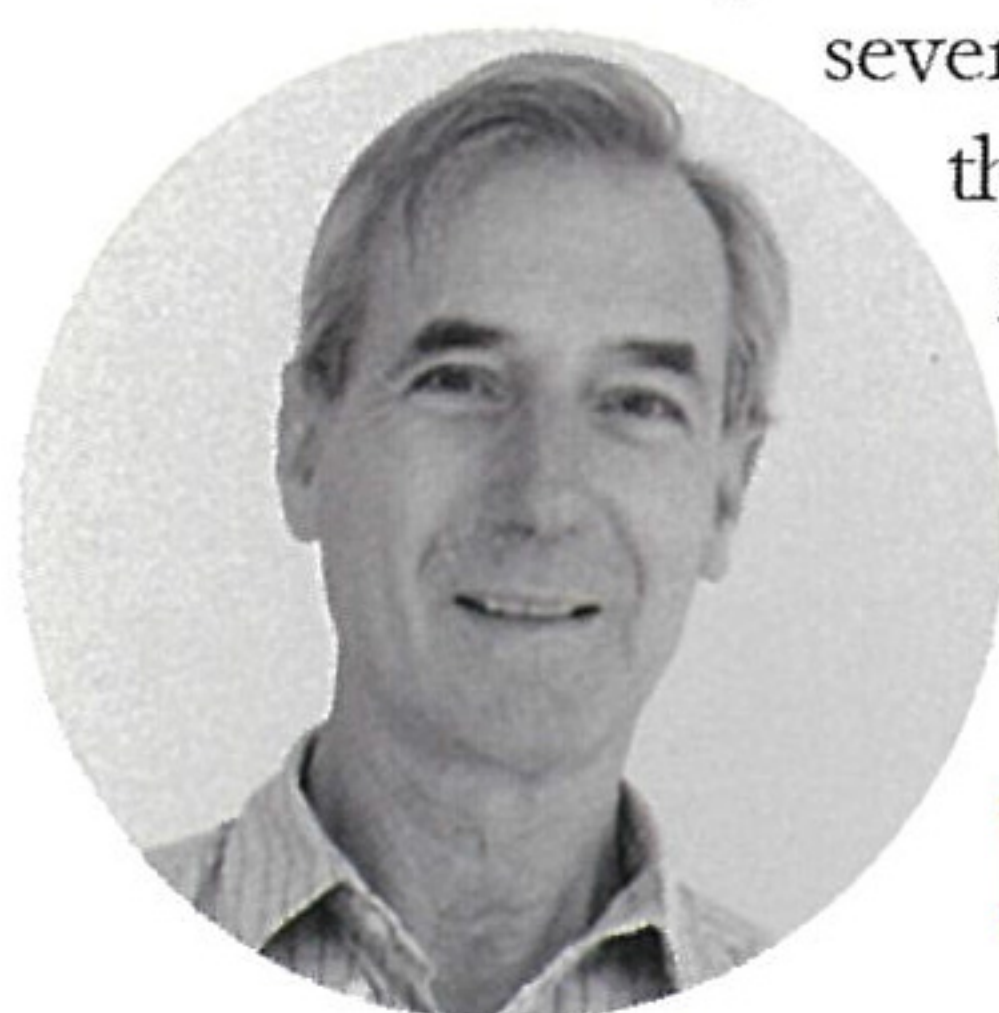
Bernice Chauly, November 2012.

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Bernice Chauly is a writer and poet. Born in George Town to Chinese-Punjabi teachers, she read education and English Literature in Canada as a government scholar. For over 20 years, she has worked extensively in the creative industries as a writer, photographer, actor and filmmaker and has won multiple awards for her work and her contribution to the arts. In 1998, she began organising literary events, and in 2005, founded *Readings* and *Cerit.Aku*, which continue to be platforms for established and emerging writers and poets. In 2011, she was Festival Director for the Writers Unlimited Tour Kuala Lumpur/Makassar and invited to curate the inaugural George Town Literary Festival. She is the author of four books, which include poetry, short fiction and the acclaimed literary memoir *Growing Up With Ghosts* (2011), an exploration of grief, history and bloodlines. In 2012, she was invited to be writer-in-residence with the *Nederlands Letterenfonds* (Dutch Foundation for Literature) in Amsterdam where she began work on a novel. She has toured and performed in literary festivals in Suriname, the Dutch Antilles, South Africa, Indonesia, India, Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore and the Netherlands. She lectures in English and creative writing at Taylor's University in Kuala Lumpur.

Lecture

Dr John Robertson comes from a naval background and joined the Royal Navy as a medical cadet. He graduated from Edinburgh University in 1964 going on to serve a further 6 years as a surgeon with the Royal Navy. After returning to civilian life he specialised in Psychiatry working in academic departments of several London teaching hospitals. He became a Subdean of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 1997 with responsibility for post-graduate education. He retired in 2002 and spends the winter months in Penang. He is married with two sons. His book *The Battle Of Penang* was published in early 2012.



Dr John Robertson

Book Launches

Sat 24 November

5.30pm – 6.00pm

Book Launch by Amir Muhammad

Writer/Moderator: Amir Muhammad

Venue: Studio@Straits

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

Sun 25 November

4.00pm – 5.00pm

Readings from *Readings 2 : New Writing from Malaysia, Singapore and Beyond*

Edited by: Bernice Chauly and Sharon Bakar

Moderator: Sharon Bakar

Venue: Studio@Straits

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

5.00pm – 6.00pm

Sex, Stage + State: Kualiti Works Plays – Book Launch by Ann Lee

Writer/Moderator: Ann Lee

Venue: Studio@Straits

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

Ann Lee was born in Tawau, Sabah, and began writing for theatre when she joined the Royal Court Young Peoples Theatre in London, while studying for a film degree. Selected for a yearlong workshop with Hanif Kureishi, she then returned to Malaysia in 1987 and wrote her first play, *Happy Families*. Her plays are published in *Sex, Stage and State – Kualiti Works Plays* (2011), first launched at the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival's last year. Her work has been performed in Jakarta and Lampung, Perth, Tokyo and New York and her most recent play *Tarap Man*, won a Boh Cameronian Award for Best Original Script in 2007.



Ann Lee

Alternative Bookfair

Sat 24 November & Sun 25 November

The Alternative Bookfair will feature local publishers and distributors Gerakbudaya, Areca Books, The Penang Bookshelf, Matahari Books and Fixi.

Venue: 14 Chairs, ChinaHouse

Fri 23 November

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2.00pm – 3.30pm

Poetry Workshop with PELLTA & Arts Ed

Three award-winning writers and poets work with Penang schoolchildren to create a series of rap poems in one afternoon. Come and share in the fun!

Writers: Ng Yi-Sheng, Omar Musa and Nii Ayikwei Parkes

Venue: Sekeping Victoria

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

2.00pm – 3.30pm

Lecture by Dr John Robertson

The Battle of Penang

On the 28th October 1914, at the dawn of WW1, the German cruiser Emden steamed quietly into Penang harbour and sank the Russian cruiser Zhemtchug. Leaving before anyone could retaliate, the Emden encountered and sank the French destroyer Mousquet. Writer John Robertson recounts this fascinating event in our naval history.

Venue: Vic's, Upstairs at The Canteen, ChinaHouse

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

8.00pm – 9.00pm

Official Opening Ceremony by Chief Minister of Penang, Y.A.B. Lim Guan Eng

Readings and Performances by A. Samad Said, Ng Yi-Sheng and Omar Musa

Venue: Sekeping Victoria

Admission: By invitation only

9.00pm – 11.00pm

Opening Reception and Live Music at The Canteen

Reception courtesy of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Music by Isaac Entry, Andrew Greig and Az Samad

Venue: The Canteen, ChinaHouse

Admission: By invitation only

Sat 24 November

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10.30am – 12.00pm

Reading and Panel Discussion

Women Writers Forum

Five women. Five writers working in different genres, forms and styles. Listen to how they are inspired to write what they do, and discover the inner workings of what it takes to engage with material that matters to them.

Writers: Dina Zaman, Shivani Sivagurunathan, Linda Christanty, Chiew-Siah Tei and Judith Uytterlinde

Moderator: Sharon Bakar

Venue: Vic's, Upstairs at The Canteen, ChinaHouse

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

10.30am – 12.00pm

[In Conversation with David Van Reybrouck](#)

A meeting of minds between two writers and readers of history, society and political realities of the East and West, this promises to be an open and riveting discussion about issues that are current and relevant to us all.

Writer: David Van Reybrouck

Moderator: Rehman Rashid

Venue: Sekeping Victoria

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

2.00pm – 3.30pm

Reading and Panel Discussion

[Imaginary \(Home\)Lands](#)

Writers write about landscapes and spaces that are real and/or imagined. See how these writers are inspired to transcend the real into the realm of the imaginary.

Writers: Andrew Greig, Nii Ayikwei Parkes, Shivani Sivagurunathan and Reggie Baay

Moderator: Umapagan Ampikaipakan

Venue: Vic's, Upstairs at The Canteen, ChinaHouse

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

2.00pm – 3.30pm

Reading and Panel Discussion

[The Mind of the Malay Author](#)

Inspired by the title of the book *The Mind of the Malay Author* written by Muhammad Haji Salleh, this panel seeks to discuss the underlying currents, complexities and changes in the history and points of view of Malay literature from the past to the present.

Writers: Dina Zaman, A. Samad Said, Alfian Sa'at and Omar Musa

Moderator: Rehman Rashid

Venue: Sekeping Victoria

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

4.00pm – 5.30pm

Reading and Panel Discussion

[Fixi and the Rise of New Malay Fiction \(Session in Bahasa Malaysia and English\)](#)

Launch of the latest 2 novels from Fixi, the new-kid-on-the-block on the Malay fiction scene. They are *Mental* by Shaz Johar (his third Fixi novel after *Kougar* and *Tabu*) and Gina Yap Lai Yoong's *Mangsa* (the continuation of her bestseller *Ngeri*). Fixi has created a platform for new and exciting voices in contemporary Malay fiction. The 2 novelists and Fixi founder Amir Muhammad will discuss how the publishing label has been received, and the anticipation of its foray into local English pulp fiction.

Writers: Shaz Johar & Gina Yap Lai Yoong

Moderator: Amir Muhammad

Venue: Studio@Straits

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

5.30pm – 6.00pm

[Book Launch by Amir Muhammad](#)

Amir Muhammad will be launching a book which title and content are yet unconfirmed at press time! This session will have the book hot off the press, with a limited edition specifically done for this festival. We are told that the book will be 200 pages long and promises to be objectionable. Not to be missed!

Writer/Moderator: Amir Muhammad

Venue: Studio@Straits

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

8.00pm – 9.30pm

Spoken Word/Performance Poetry:

[Wayang Kata VIII](#) - Wayang Kata began in Kuala Lumpur in 2006 as a collaboration between the British Council and Jasmine Low and Jerome Kugan, of open mic events Doppelganger and Troubadours, as an attempt to popularise the spoken word. Three years of performances to a packed house saw a host of UK poets grace the Wayang Kata stage in Kuala Lumpur - Francesca Beard, Jacob Sam-La Rose, Malika Booker, Kim Trusty and Polarbear - alongside a constellation of rising Malaysian poetry stars. Wayang Kata is now independently funded and will host its first ever show in Penang featuring a multi-lingual lineup of poets and spoken word performers in English, Bahasa Malaysia, Hokkien, Tamil, Thai, Burmese and more!

Poets: Lucille Das, Maria Teutsch, Ko-Ai, Sheena Baharudin, Mark Walker, Murugan Sellapan, Venogopal Sahadevan, Ksatriya Words N Rhymes, Jamal Raslan, Jerome Kugan, Jasmine Low and more.

Hosted by: Jasmine Low and Jerome Kugan

Venue: Sekeping Victoria

Admission: RM5

9.30pm – 11.00pm

[Live Music at The Canteen](#)

Musicians : Jerome Kugan and Mei Chern

Venue: The Canteen, ChinaHouse

Sun 25 November

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10.30am – 12.00pm

Reading and Panel Discussion

[My Democracy](#)

Should writers care about their governments? Should literature be political? Should the writer also be an activist? See how these different writers deal with their own democracies and how they choose to work with their own political realities.

Writers: David Van Reybrouck, Alfian Sa'at, Linda Christanty and A. Samad Said

Moderator: Sharaad Kuttan

Venue: Vic's, Upstairs at The Canteen, ChinaHouse

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

10.30am – 12.00pm

[In Conversation with Tan Twan Eng](#)

Is Malaysian writing finally getting the recognition it deserves? Tan Twan Eng is the first Malaysian writer to be short-listed for the Man Booker Prize, one of the most prestigious literary prizes in English. An open discussion on the writer's life, its trials and tribulations.

Writer: Tan Twan Eng

Moderator: Sharon Bakar

Venue: Sekeping Victoria

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

12.30pm – 1.30pm

Poetry Rant

[Mad as Hell!](#)

Five poets get angry. Watch them get mad - and bad!

Writers: Ng Yi-Sheng, Omar Musa, Alfian Sa'at, Shivani Sivagurunathan and Nii Ayikwei Parkes

Hosted by: Jasmine Low

Venue: Sekeping Victoria

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

2.00pm – 3.30pm

Reading and Panel Discussion

Show Me the Money!

Do writers write to get rich? What happens when writers become successful beyond their wildest dreams? See how money plays a role in the complex, intricate business of publishing and market-driven profits.

Writers: Judith Uyterlinde, Chiew-Siah Tei, Andrew Greig, Nii Ayikwei Parkes and Tan Twan Eng

Moderator: Kam Raslan

Venue: Vic's Upstairs at The Canteen, ChinaHouse

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

2.00pm – 3.30pm

Reading and Panel Discussion

Taboos or Travesties

How do writers go about saying the unsayable? How do they deal with issues and themes that may cause scandal and uproar? See how these writers deal with challenging issues that simply need to be said.

Writers: Ng Yi-Sheng, Reggie Baay, Dina Zaman, Linda Christanty and David Van Reybrouck

Moderator: Bernice Chauly

Venue: Sekeping Victoria

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

4.00pm – 5.00pm

Book Launch

Readings from Readings 2 : New Writing from Malaysia, Singapore and Beyond

Since 2005, *Readings@Seksan* and *CeritAku* have provided platforms for local and expatriate writers, both new and established, who have found keen audience in Kuala Lumpur. A first highly acclaimed collection of short fiction, poetry and essays was published in 2011. This second anthology features more voice from Malaysia, Singapore and beyond.

Edited by: Bernice Chauly and Sharon Bakar

Moderator: Sharon Bakar

Venue: Studio@Straits

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

5.00pm – 6.00pm

Book Launch

Sex, Stage + State: KualI Works Plays – Book Launch by Ann Lee

Award-winning playwright Ann Lee's collected plays was first launched at the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival in Bali. Enjoy rehearsed readings by local actors Jo Kukathas, Foo May Lyn and other special guests.

Writer/Moderator: Ann Lee

Venue: Studio@Straits

Admission: Free

Seating available on first-come, first-served basis

8.30pm – 11.00pm

Open Mic and Live Music at The Canteen

Musicians: Isaac Entry, Az Samad, Andrew Greig, Mei Chern and Jerome Kugan

Hosted by: Sharon Bakar and Jasmine Low

Venue: The Canteen, ChinaHouse

Festival Venues :

Sekeping Victoria 164 Lebu Victoria, George Town

ChinaHouse 153 & 155 Lebu Pantai, George Town

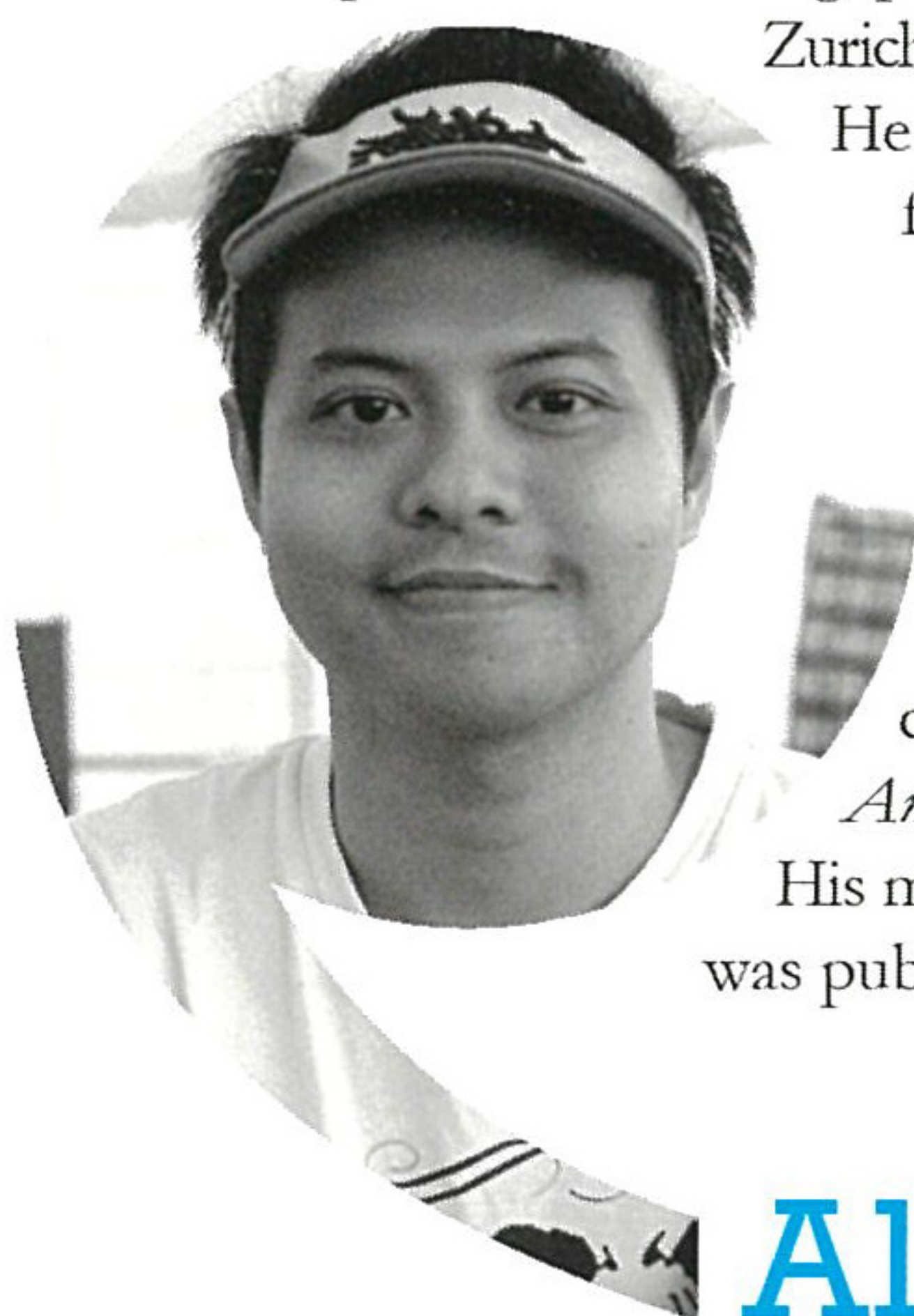
Studio@Straits 86 Lebu Armenian, George Town

PARTICIPATING WRITERS

Alfian Sa'at is the Resident Playwright of WILD RICE in Singapore. His plays have been translated into German, Swedish and Danish, and they have been read and performed in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, London, Berlin, Hamburg, Zurich, Munich, Melbourne, Copenhagen and Stockholm.

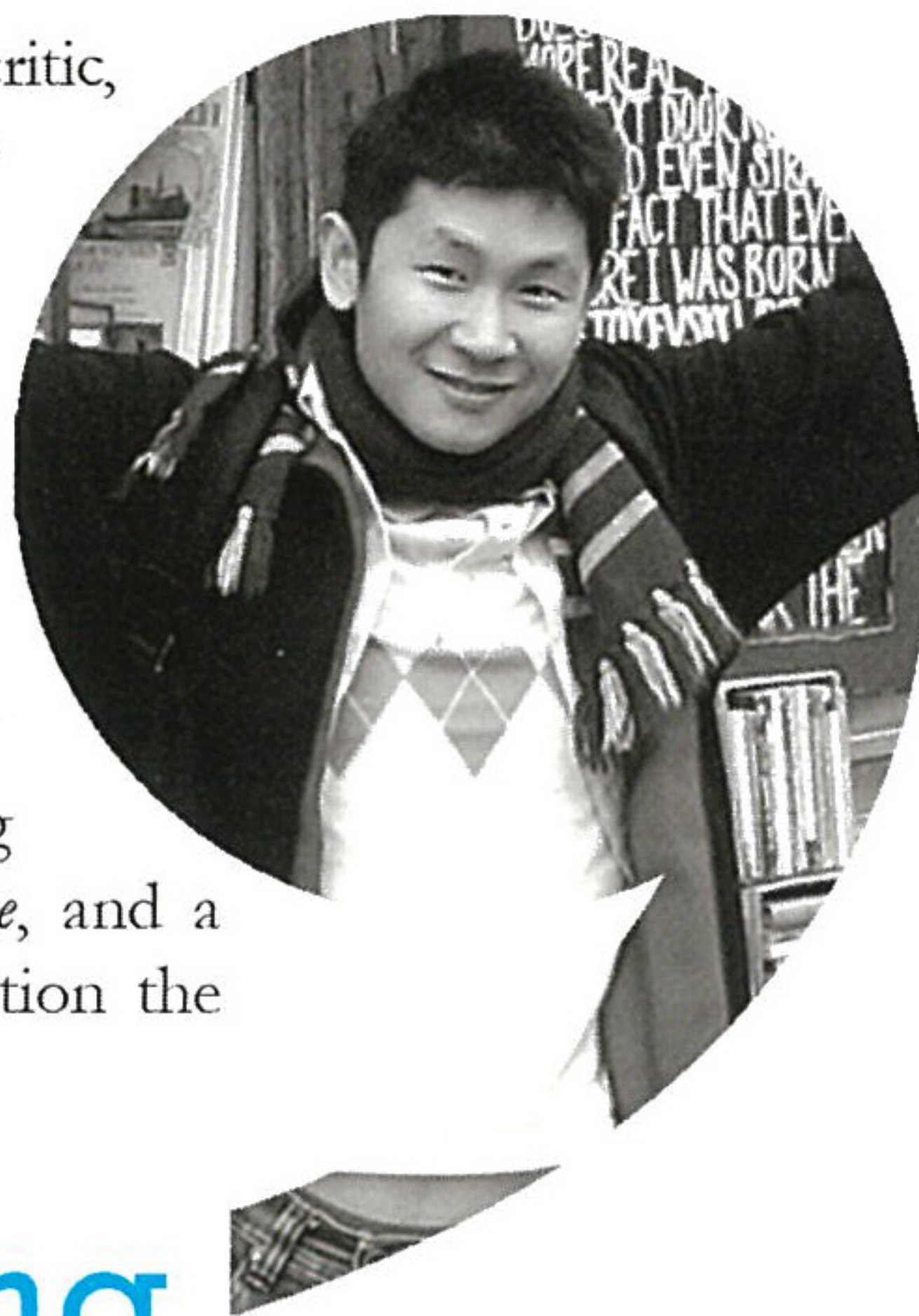
He has been nominated for the Life! Theatre Awards for Best Original Script seven times, and has received the award twice. He was the winner of the Golden Point Award for Poetry and the National Arts Council Singapore Young Artist Award for Literature in 2001. His other works include *Collected Plays One and Two*, the poetry collections *One Fierce Hour* and *A History of Amnesia*, and the short story collection *Corridor*.

His most recent short fiction collection, *Malay Sketches*, was published in March 2012.



Alfian Sa'at

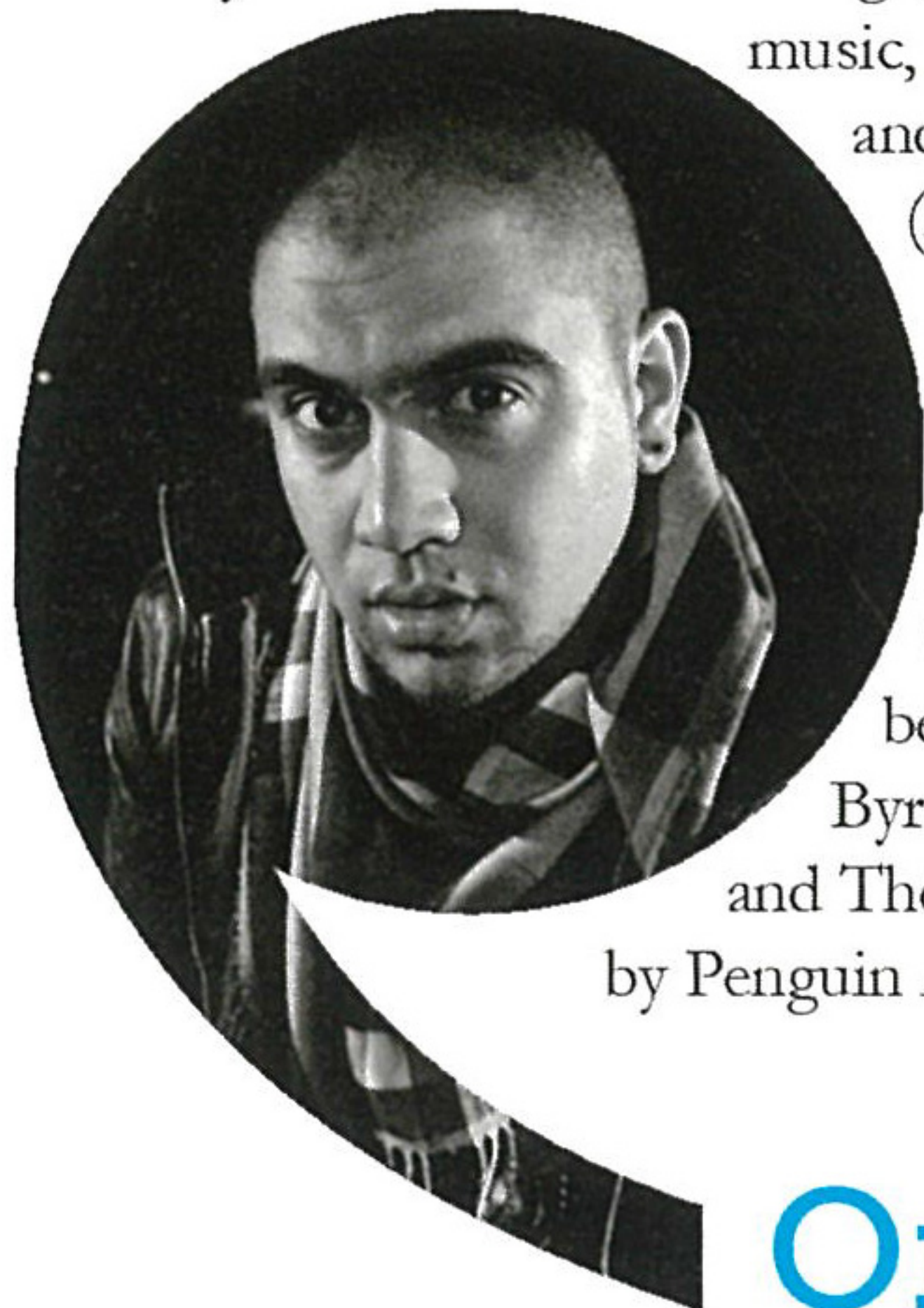
Ng Yi-Sheng is a poet, playwright, journalist, critic, fiction writer and LGBT activist. He is the youngest-ever recipient of the Singapore Literature Prize, which he won for his poetry collection, *last boy*. He teaches creative writing at Nanyang Technological University and co-organises the monthly, multidisciplinary event SPORE Art Salon. His recent projects include co-editing *GASPP: A Gay Anthology of Singapore Poetry and Prose*, a translation of Wong Woon Wah's poetic memoir *The New Village*, and a show by the new performance poetry collection the *Party Action People*.



Ng Yi-Sheng

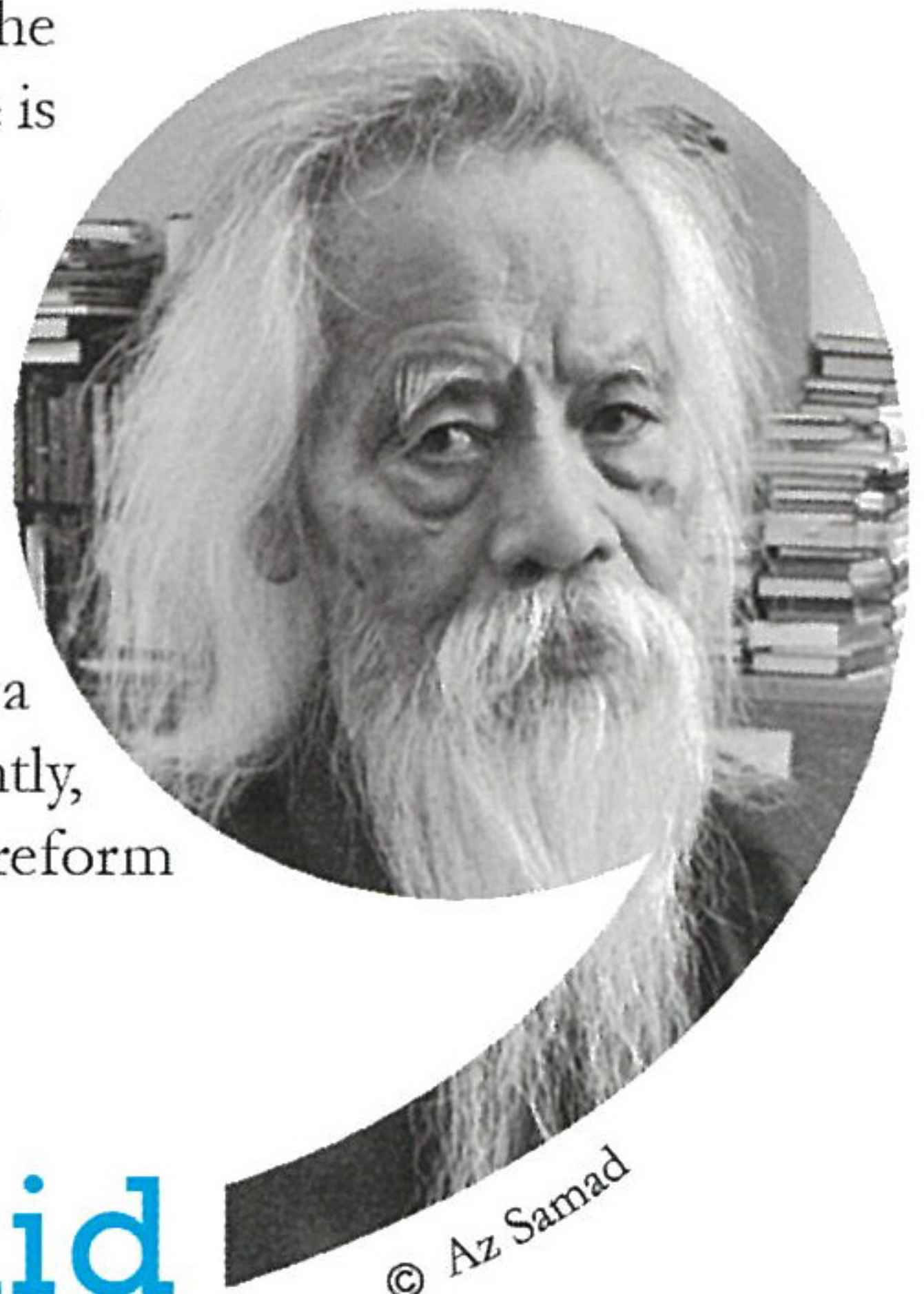
Omar Musa is a rapper and poet from Queanbeyan, Australia. Born in 1984 of Malaysian-Australian heritage, he has won numerous awards for poetry and music, which include the Australian Poetry Slam (2008) and the Indian Ocean Poetry Slam (2010). *The Clocks*

(2009) is his first collection of poems and he has recorded three hip-hop albums in the USA. A member of the international hip-hop group MoneyKat, he has toured Asia, Europe and Australia and was tour support for the legendary Gil Scott-Heron in Germany in 2009. He has been featured in literary festivals in Ubud, Singapore, Byron Bay, Melbourne, Sydney, Jaipur, Galle, Beijing and The Hague. His first novel will be published in 2013 by Penguin Australia.



Omar Musa

A. Samad Said was born in Melaka in 1935. He studied in Singapore during and after WWII and graduated with Senior Cambridge Certificate in 1956. He worked as a clerk at the Singapore General Hospital for six months and then moved to Kuala Lumpur to become a writer. He joined the national dailies, *Fikiran Rakyat*, *Berita Harian* and *The New Straits Times* and left journalism after three decades to focus on writing. One of the most significant writers in Bahasa Malaysia, he is renowned for his poetry, novels, short stories, essays and plays. His works include *Salina*, *Hujan Pagi*, *Cinta Fansuri*, *Al-Amin*, *Warkah Eropah* and *Lantai T. Pinkie*. He received the Southeast Asia Write (SEA) Award in 1979, the Anugerah Sasterawan Negara (National Laureate) in 1985 and Sasterawan Nusantara (Laureate of the Archipelago) in 1999. Currently, he is co-chairman for the Malaysian electoral reform movement Bersih.



A. Samad Said

© Az Samad

Dina Zaman is currently an API (Asian Public Intellectual) Senior Fellow and she is conducting research for her book, *Holy Men, Holy Women*, an extension of her column with the online journal *The Malaysian Insider*. She has a keen interest in socio-religious issues and hopes to work on inter-faith dialogues and matters in the future.



Her first non-fiction book, *I Am Muslim*, was a bestseller, and her short story collection, *King of The Sea* was published by Silverfish Books this year. She has worked as a columnist in many English-language media and in public relations for over 18 years. In 1998, she was a British High Commissioner Chevening Award scholar, and graduated with an MA in creative writing from the University of Lancaster.

Dina Zaman

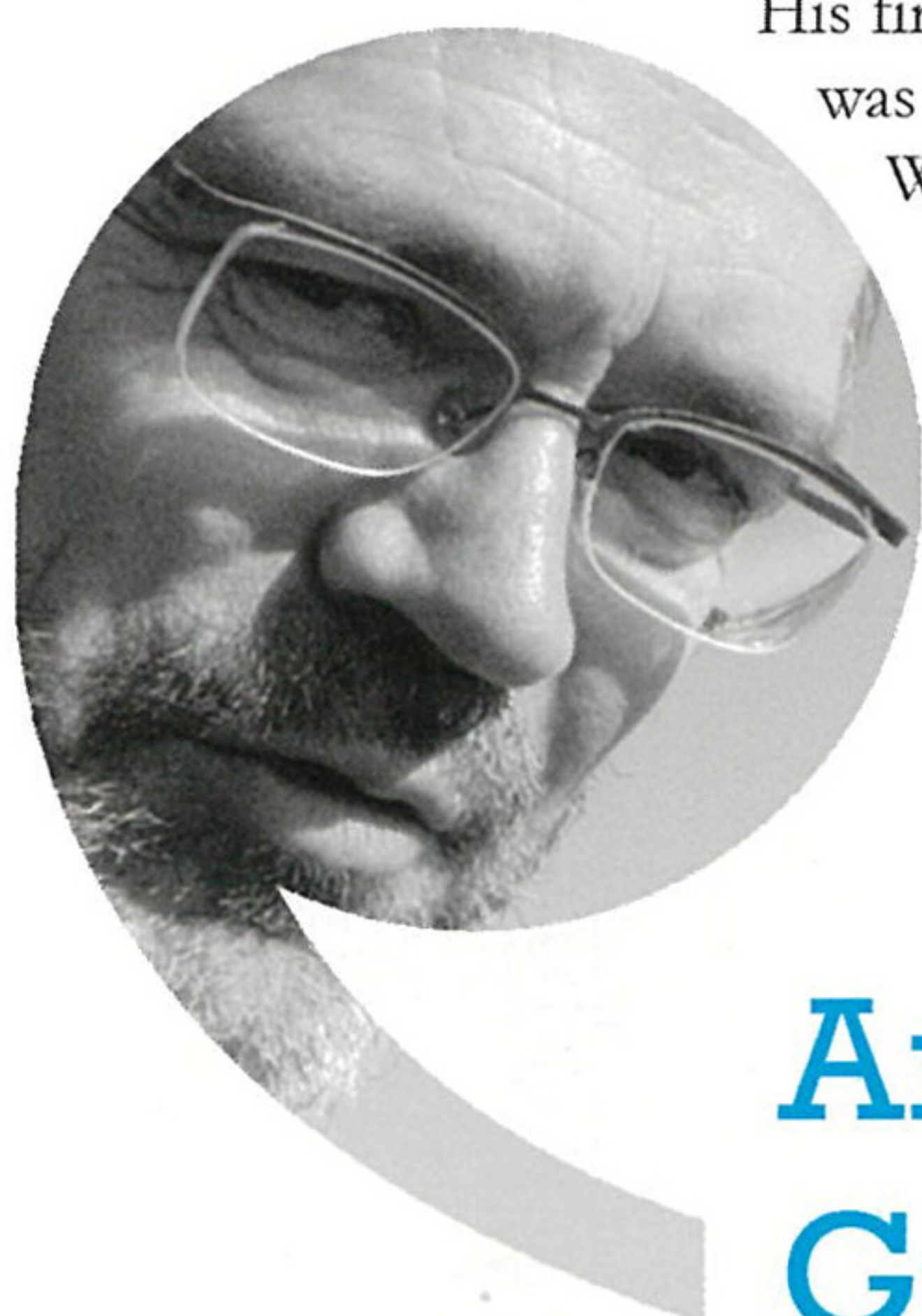
Shivani Sivagurunathan is a fiction writer and poet. Born in Kuala Lumpur and raised in Port Dickson, she spent eight years in the UK where she studied comparative literature. She now lives in Malaysia and lectures at University Putra Malaysia. Her short story collection *Wildlife on Coal Island*, published by UPM Press, came out in August 2011 and was later republished by Harper Collins in 2012. Her poetry chapbook, *Chiaroscuro*, and her first collection of poetry, *Diorama* is due for release in 2012 - both published by Bedouin Books. Her short stories and poems have appeared in various international journals including *Agenda*, *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *The Wolf* and *Flash*. She is currently editing her recently completed novel.



Shivani Sivagurunathan

Andrew Greig was born in 1951 in Bannockburn, Scotland. A prolific writer, he was educated at the University of Edinburgh and won an Eric Gregory Award in 1972. His first book of poetry, *White Boats* was published in 1973. Two books on mountaineering followed: *Men on Ice* (1977) and *The Order of the Day* (1990). In 1985 he published *Summit Fever: The Story of an Armchair Climber on the 1984 Mustagh Tower Expedition*, shortlisted for the Boardman Tasker Memorial Prize. *Kingdoms of Experience: Everest, the Unclimbed Ridge*, was published in 1986.

His first novel, *Electric Brae: A Modern Romance* (1992), was shortlisted for the McVitie's Prize for Scottish Writer of the Year. His fifth novel, *In Another Light* (2004) won the Saltire Society Scottish Book of the Year and is partially set in colonial Penang. He lives in Orkney and Edinburgh.



Andrew Greig

Chiew-Siah Tei is the author of *Little Hut of Leaping Fishes*, listed for the inaugural Man Asian Literary Prize and Best Scottish Fiction, and winner of Malaysia's Popular Books Readers' Choice Award.

Her work covers literature, film and theatre.

She wrote the script for *Night Swimmer*, which won Best Short Film at Vendome International Film Festival and stage play *Three Thousand Troubled Threads* for the Edinburgh International Festival in 2005. Tei completed a PhD in creative writing and film studies at the University of Glasgow in 2007 and now lives in Scotland.

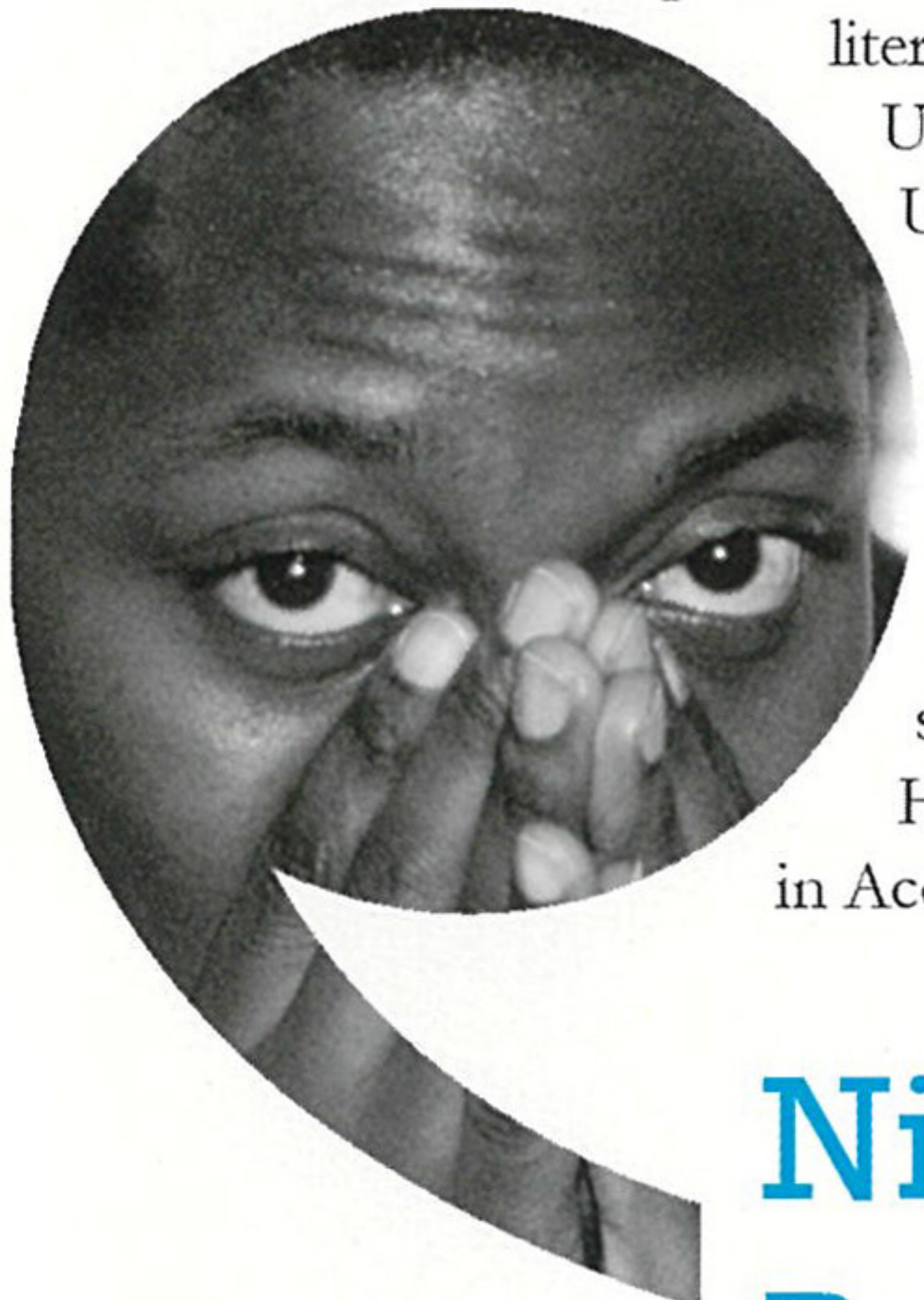
Her second novel, set in early 20th century Malaya, will be published in 2013.



Chiew-Siah Tei

Nii Ayikwei Parkes is a Ghanaian editor, socio-cultural commentator, poet and author of the acclaimed *Tail of the Blue Bird* (Random House), which was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Prize and translated into Dutch and German. A 2007 recipient of Ghana's national ACRA award for poetry and literary advocacy, he has held visiting positions at the University of Southampton, California State University and lectures internationally. He runs the African Writers' Evening series at the Southbank Centre, London and was a jury member for the 2012 Commonwealth Prize.

His latest collection of poetry is *The Makings of You* and he is completing a book of short stories, *The City Will Love You* for Random House, as well as two projects for stage. He lives in Accra and London.



Nii Ayikwei Parkes

Nii Ayikwei Parkes and the George Town Literary Festival 2012 is supported by the British Council

Linda Christanty is an Indonesian writer, activist and journalist. Her latest non-fiction book *Jangan Tulis Kami Teroris*, (*Don't Write Us Down As Terrorists*) examines religious, political and gender issues in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. She has been an activist for over 23 years and spent several years in conflict-ridden Aceh while promoting discourse on ways to transform conflict via peace and human rights. She has won Indonesia's top literary award, the Khatulistiwa Literary Award twice - in 2004 for *Mario Pinto's Flying Horse* and in 2010 for *Rabasia Selma*. In 2012, she was a nominee for the N-Peace Awards, Role Models for Peace, an award given to champions of peace in the region.



Linda Christanty

Judith Uyterlinde is a writer, journalist, festival programmer and literary talk show host. She began her career as a translator and worked for many years as an editor and publisher for noted Dutch literary publishing houses De Bezige Bij and Meulenhoff. Her book *The Baby Void – My Quest for Motherhood* (2001) was an international bestseller and was translated into 20 languages. Her second book, *The Woman Who Says She Is My Mother* (2010), an acclaimed autobiographical and historical family narrative, is set against the Jewish experience of WWII. She is currently a jury member for the Anton Wachter Prize and is one of the festival curators for Writers Unlimited, the International Literary Festival of The Hague, Netherlands. She is currently an acquiring editor of foreign fiction for the Dutch publisher Nijgh en Van Ditmar.



Judith Uyterlinde

Tan Twan Eng is a Malaysian author born in Penang in 1972. His debut novel, *The Gift of Rain*, was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2007. His second novel, *The Garden of Evening Mists* is shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2012, a first for any Malaysian author. He has a first-dan ranking in aikido. He has spoken at various literary festivals, including the Singapore Writers' Festival, the Ubud Writers' Festival in Bali, The Asia Man Booker Festival in Hong Kong, the Shanghai Literary Festival, the Perth International Writers' Festival, the Abbotsford Convent in Melbourne, Australia, the Franschoek Literary Festival in South Africa and the Galle Literary Festival in Sri Lanka.



Tan Twan Eng

David Van Reybrouck was born in Bruges in 1971. He read archaeology and philosophy at the universities of Leuven and Cambridge and holds a doctorate from Leiden. He was a visiting scholar in Barcelona and Paris, postdoctoral research fellow in Leuven and most recently, Cleveringa Professor in Leiden. His first book *De plaag* (*The Plague*, 2001) is set in post-apartheid South Africa and won several prizes. He is the founder of the Brussels Poetry Collective and in 2009, devised *The European Constitution In Verse*, which involved fifty-two poets from all over Europe. In 2010, he published the acclaimed *Congo. Een geschiedenis* (*Congo: A History*), an ambitious and absorbing history of Africa's most devastated country. *Congo* has been awarded the most prestigious prizes in Dutch letters: the AKO-Literatuurprijs (AKO Literature prize), the Libris Geschiedenis Prijs (Libris History prize) and the Jan Greshoffprijs. He is one of Belgium's leading political commentators.



© Stephan Vanfleteren

David Van Reybrouck

Reggie Baay was born in Leiden in 1955 and has won much praise with his books on the *njai*, Indonesian women who were housekeepers and concubines during the period of the Dutch East Indies. Baay's writings, himself a *njai* grandchild, is seen as breaking a taboo and his book *De Njai; Het concubinaat in Nederlands-Indië* (*The Njai; Concubinage in the Dutch East Indies*, 2008) was reviewed by the Dutch press as 'an indispensable book on our colonial past. His other books, *De ogen van Solo* (*Solo's Eyes*, 2005), *Portret van een oermoeder* (*Portrait of a Primordial Mother*, 2010) and *Gebleekte ziel* (*Bleached Soul*, 2012), which delve into the themes of uprootedness and lost identity, have made him one of the most influential voices on post-colonial narrative in the Netherlands.



Reggie Baay

Moderators

Sharon Bakar was born in the UK but has lived and worked in Nigeria and, for the past 28 years, in Malaysia. She is a teacher-trainer, freelance writer, editor, literary blogger, and most recently, independent publisher. She is the editor of an anthology of short fiction, *Collateral Damage*, published by Silverfish Books,



and was one of the judges for MPH's Short Story Competition in 2010. She teaches creative writing, and has run her courses in partnership with the British Council. She organizes *Readings*, a monthly event for local writers, at Seksan Gallery in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur, and is the co-editor (along with Bernice Chauly) and publisher of the anthology *Readings From Readings: New Malaysian Writing 1 and 2*.

Sharon Bakar

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Rehman Rashid is a prominent writer, award-winning journalist, commentator and author of *A Malaysian Journey* (1993). Now retired after 30 years in newspaper and magazine journalism, he continues to observe life and the world from a shophouse in a small town in the foothills near the shared borders of Selangor, Perak and Pahang.



Rehman Rashid



Sharaad Kuttan

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Sharaad Kuttan is a producer with BFM89.9 in Kuala Lumpur and has worked as an activist, journalist and teacher. As a graduate student in Singapore, he co-edited a collection of essays on cultural politics in the city-state: *Looking at Culture* (1996) and has contributed a chapter on civil society activism to a volume on the electoral system in Malaysia – *Elections and Democracy in Malaysia* (2005). His current interests include contemporary art practice and he has written on performance art for *Sentap*, a local journal of visual art. He recently moderated a discussion on 'Arts Policy and Kuala Lumpur' for the radio series *Hear and Now* in Malaysia. He is also a member of the International Association of Art Critics.

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Umapagan Ampikaipakan

Umapagan Ampikaipakan is a literary commentator, film critic, and radio presenter. He has a column in the *New Straits Times*, where he ruminates on 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 one of Malaysia's foremost literary voices with his *Well Lit* column in the *New Straits Times*, as well as his radio show *Bookmark* on the station BFM89.9. He is also the co-host on BFM89.9's *Evening Edition* drive time show.



Kam Raslan

Kam Raslan is a writer and one-time film director. He writes the weekly *Talking Edge* column in The Edge newspaper, hosts the radio shows A Bit of Culture and Hear and Now in Malaysia on BFM89.9. His first novel was the highly successful, *Confessions of an Old Boy* (2007). He is presently writing a non-fiction book on Malaysian histories as well as a sequel to the Dato' Hamid memoirs.



Amir Muhammad



Amir Muhammad is a Malaysian writer, publisher and occasional moviemaker. He was born in Kuala Lumpur and started writing for the print media at the age of 14. In 2000, he wrote and directed Malaysia's first DV feature, *Lips to Lips*. His films have been screened internationally, including the Sundance Film Festival and the Berlin International Film Festival. Two of his films, *Apa Khabar Orang Kampung* and *The Last Communist* have been banned in Malaysia. A retrospective of his work was screened at the 2008 Pesaro Film Festival, Italy. He formed *Matahari Books* in 2007 to publish creative non-fiction, and *Fixi* in 2011 for Malay pulp fiction. He has written *Rojak*, *Yasmin Ahmad's Films* and *120 Malay Movies*. In 2012 he also produced *Kopi*, an anthology of short films.

Jasmine Low is a marketing communications consultant who writes short stories and hosts community arts events. Born in Penang in 1970, she grew up in Kuala Lumpur and at 17, left for Australia to read economics at Sydney University. After a decade of living overseas, she returned to Kuala Lumpur in 2002 to pursue her entrepreneurial dreams. Jasmine has dedicated her life's work to empowering youth using arts and music. She is the Festival Director of FEYST – a digital lifestyle and independent music festival, which has seen 45 youngsters represent Malaysia at international festivals around the world. She was inducted to the Voize Indie Music Awards Hall of Fame in 2010 for her contribution to the indie music industry.

Jasmine Low



Musicians

Guitarist-composer **Az Samad** has appeared on sixteen CDs, and worked with Grammy winners, Flaco Jiménez and Max Baca, drummer Bernie Dresel, singer-songwriters Tara Linda and Reza Salleh, guitarists John Stowell, Stuart Ryan, and Teja Gerken, Cumbia-Dub band Candelaria and string jazz ensemble JazzMine. He has been on the faculty of Berklee College of Music's Summer Guitar Sessions and has taught at Wesleyan University in Middletown and The Freight & Salvage in Berkeley. In 2012, he toured Europe with Tara Linda and The Tortilla Western Trio at the Folk Segovia Festival and Töpferei Niehenke, Hasbergen. The Amsterdam Recordings - his first solo electric fingerstyle album - was recorded during the tour.



Az Samad



Isaac Entry

Isaac Entry has been a regular feature in KL's live music scene with his easy blend of reggae, folk and blues. In 2010, in collaboration with No Black Tie, KL he released his first album *Isaac Entry Live at No Black Tie* and in Nov 2011, backed by a string quartet and a horn section comprising members of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, he performed at the Dewan Philharmonic Kuala Lumpur. His song Happiness from the *Live at No Black Tie* album currently features on Air Asia's segment on George Town on their Travel 3Sixty website. He divides his time between Sydney and Kuala Lumpur.



Jerome Kugan

Jerome Kugan is a writer, LGBT activist and musician. Born in 1975 in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, he began writing poetry at 14 and won a scholarship at 18 to study writing at the University of Canberra. In Australia, Jerome started performing poetry, learning the guitar, writing songs and playing in an electro-synth punk band. Upon graduating, he moved to Kuala Lumpur to work as an editor, writer and researcher. Jerome's works of poetry and fiction has been featured in several journals and anthologies. In 2008, he released his debut album *Songs For A Shado* and in 2009, he co-edited *Body 2 Body*, an anthology of queer writing from Malaysia.



Mei Chern is an experimental psychologist by training who works in the financial services sector by day, and writes songs and articles by night. Her songs on social justice have been used in award winning documentaries. She performed at The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival in 2008, an international feminist music festival in the USA, where she also released her self-titled CD.

Mei Chern

Writers Rana Dasgupta, Andrew Greig and moderator Farish Ahmad Noor are unable to participate in the festival.

We have therefore invited the writers Andre Vltchek and Zakariya Amataya to complete the festival.

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Andre Vltchek was born in Leningrad and is a novelist, filmmaker, photographer and investigative journalist. He has covered wars and conflicts from Bosnia and Peru to Sri Lanka, DR Congo and Timor Leste. He is the author of *Nalęzny*, published in Czech and *Point of No Return* which has been translated into French by Yago. His book on Western imperialism in the South Pacific, *Oceania*, is published by Lulu. His most recent book is *Indonesia - The Archipelago of Fear* (Pluto), a provocative portrayal of post-Suharto Indonesia. He wrote and produced a documentary film about the 1965 Indonesian massacres, 'Terlena – Breaking of The Nation', which featured Pramodya Ananta Toer, as well as a film on Dadaab, the biggest refugee camp in the world, 'One Flew Over Dadaab'. His latest film, 'The Rwandan Gambit' will attempt to reverse the official narrative of 1994 by exposing the Rwandan and Ugandan plunder of DR Congo. He is currently working on a film and book on his recent conversation with Noam Chomsky at MIT. After living for many years in Latin America and Oceania, Vltchek presently resides and works in East Asia and Africa.



Andre Vltchek

* Andre will participate in the session "My Democracy" at 10.30am on 25 November

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Zakariya Amataya is a poet, translator and fiction writer. Born in the southern province of Narathiwat's Bacho, he attended the Islamic College in Bangkok and later spent five years in India studying Islamic Sciences, Arabic Language and Literature before returning to Thailand to study Comparative Religion at Mahidol University. Zakariya's first translation book, *Duay-Jit-Winyarn-Aun-Piemsook*, (Happy Soul) is translated from the Arabic work of Sayyid Qutb. Since 2004 his translated works and poems have been published regularly in newspapers and journals. *No Women in Poetry*, his first collection of poems, received the 2010 S.E.A. Write Award for Thailand. He studies literature, writes and translates poetry and conducts poetry readings and events. He built his own website, www.thaipoetsociety.com, as a communal channel for poetry forums and critics. In 2011 he attained an artist in residence program by Doris Duke Foundation For Islamic Art and University of Hawaii. For now he is working for his second compilation of poems and writing a novella.



Zakariya Amataya

* Zakariya will participate in the session, "Imaginary (Home)Lands" at 2.00 pm on 24 November