

FESTIVAL  
GUIDE



PRESENTS

# Through The Looking Glass

26 · 27 · 28 · 29 NOVEMBER



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# THEME



## Through The Looking Glass

As we emerge from the grip of a global pandemic, we find ourselves adrift in the pages of an unwritten chapter of human experience. How will this story unfold?

George Town Literary Festival's theme for 2020, Through the Looking Glass, contemplates the role of literature and art in a time of crisis. Reflecting the Festival's liminal shift online, we embrace the 'new normal' of viewing the world through our black mirrors.

The imposed distance that has redefined our lives offers us an interlude to collectively pause and rethink the nature of our being. It is time to ask ourselves existential questions about the place of humankind in the universe.

We invite you to journey with us Through the Looking Glass, where we discover the other side of everything, where imagination has the power to alter reality. We explore how imagination transforms anxiety, fear, and trauma into hope, spirit, and resilience.

While we turn our gaze to the wounds of the past and present, the Looking Glass is ultimately a crystal ball to the future — a place to dream and envision new possibilities. We can either let our new reality be written by external forces, or we can choose to become the authors of our collective destiny.



## 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.



# CURATORIAL TEAM



## **Pauline Fan**

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. She is the creative director of PUSAKA, serves on the Board of Directors of the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books (ITBM), and is an editor with *Mekong Review*. She is the Malaysia editor for the Berlin-based poetry archive and network, *Lyrikline*.



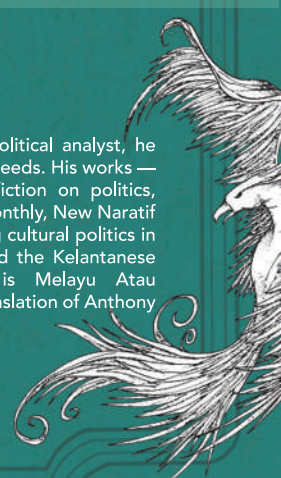
## **Sharaad Kuttan**

Sharaad Kuttan has been curating conversations on various platforms for the last 30 years. Currently host of a talk show on Astro Awani, he spent many years presenting a radio show. Sharaad has a keen interest in political analysis; he co-edited a book on Singaporean cultural politics, contributed to scholarly analysis of the local electoral system, and has had columns in various media. He is a member of the International Art Critics Association (IACA).



## **Izzuddin Ramli**

Izzuddin is a writer and translator. Trained as a political analyst, he explores other forms of writing to feed his creative needs. His works — which comprise commentaries and creative non-fiction on politics, culture, and the arts — have appeared in *Penang Monthly*, *New Naratif* and *Nikkei Asian Review*. He is currently researching cultural politics in Kelantan, looking at how Islamization has impacted the Kelantanese traditional arts. Izzuddin's latest publication is *Melayu Atau Kemelayuan: Menelusuri Sejarah Idea* (2019), the translation of Anthony Milner's *The Malays*.





# CURATORS' STATEMENT

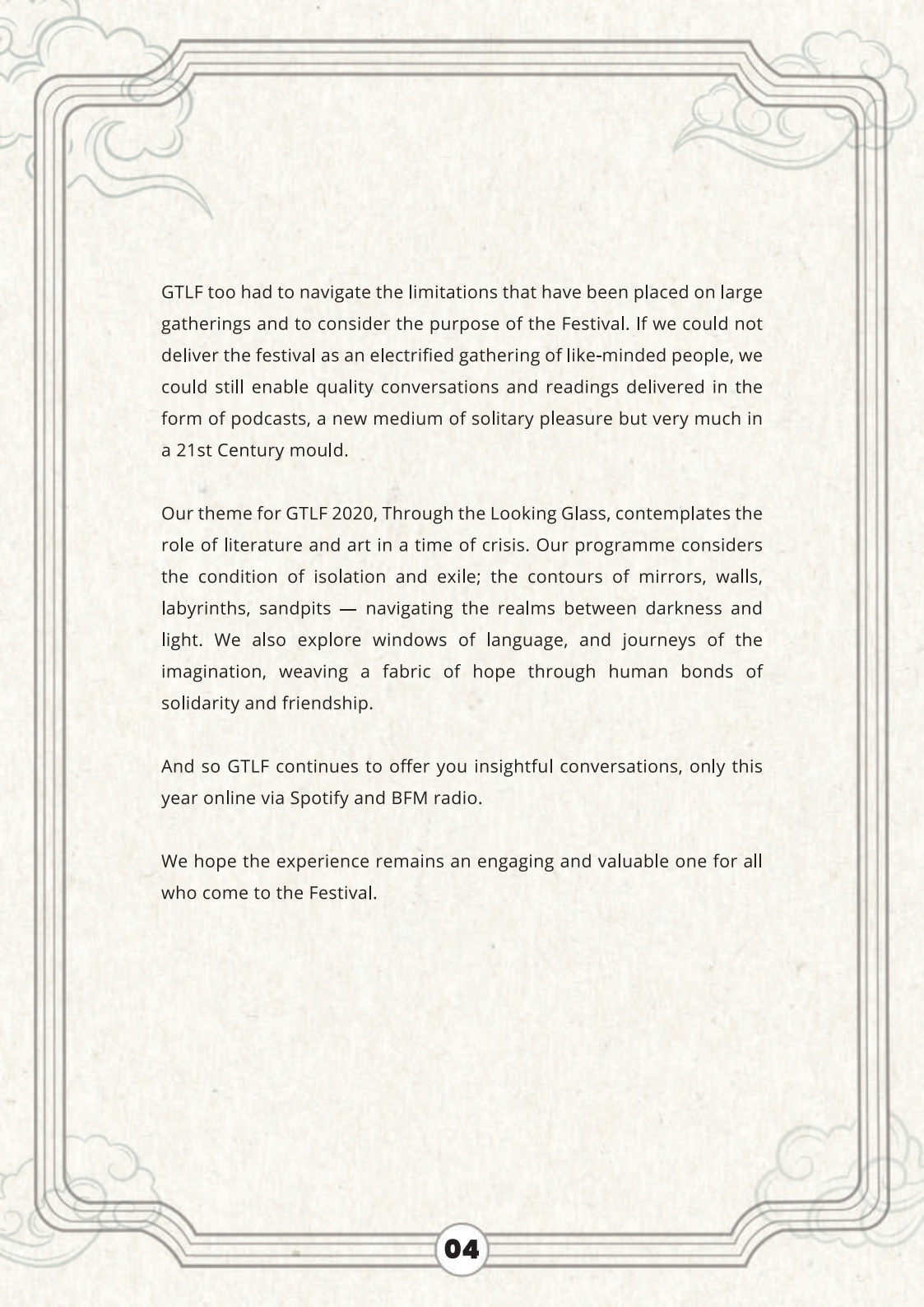
2020 has presented humanity with stark choices, not only about how we organise society, but also about our relationship to the planet.

The virus and the pandemic hold up a mirror to human society — from our wanton destruction of Nature's biodiversity to our love of discovery through tourism and global travel.

National borders have closed entirely or restricted movement in ways that would have been unimaginable only a year ago. A veritable multiplicity of Iron Curtains have descended across the planet.

The cultural landscape has been profoundly impacted by this public health crisis resulting in a temporary pause or collapse in mass musical events, festivals, biennales, theatres — activities predicated on the mass gathering.

And while literary festivals have been similarly impacted, literature — writing as well as reading — is, at its core, a solitary experience. A writer sits by herself composing words; a reader sits by himself conjuring worlds in his mind's eye.

A decorative border with a double-line inner edge and a single-line outer edge, featuring stylized cloud motifs in the corners.

GTLF too had to navigate the limitations that have been placed on large gatherings and to consider the purpose of the Festival. If we could not deliver the festival as an electrified gathering of like-minded people, we could still enable quality conversations and readings delivered in the form of podcasts, a new medium of solitary pleasure but very much in a 21st Century mould.

Our theme for GTLF 2020, Through the Looking Glass, contemplates the role of literature and art in a time of crisis. Our programme considers the condition of isolation and exile; the contours of mirrors, walls, labyrinths, sandpits — navigating the realms between darkness and light. We also explore windows of language, and journeys of the imagination, weaving a fabric of hope through human bonds of solidarity and friendship.

And so GTLF continues to offer you insightful conversations, only this year online via Spotify and BFM radio.

We hope the experience remains an engaging and valuable one for all who come to the Festival.

# SPEAKERS



## **Adriana Nordin Manan**

Adriana Nordin Manan is a writer, playwright, translator and researcher. Born, raised and based in Kuala Lumpur, she is fascinated by the expanse of stories as mirrors to society and monuments to the human condition. In 2019, her translation of *Pengap* by Lokman Hakimwas shortlisted for The Commonwealth Short Story Prize, a first for Malay language submissions in the history of the Prize. Adriana is currently completing her debut full-length play, which grapples with issues of diaspora, cultural psyche and belonging. She is also a pioneer cohort member of the CENDANA-ASWARA Arts Writing Mentorship Programme. She is fluent in Malay, English and Spanish.



## **Aida Redza**

Aida Redza is one of Malaysia's leading contemporary dancers and choreographers, noted for creating multimedia performances. Based in Penang, she is the founder of WindRiver Productions, the artistic principal of Studio Pentas and a member of Ombak-Ombak ARTStudio. Her major recent productions as a performance maker include *Wandering Padi* (Ansan Street Arts Festival, South Korea, 2019), *Reclaim* (George Town Festival, 2019), *Entranced: A Mystical Gathering* (Hamamatsu, Japan, 2018), *Call and Response: The Spaces Between* (Penang, 2018), *Entranced: An Evening with a Ghost* (DiverseCity KL International Arts Festival, 2017), *The Italian Restaurant* (George Town Festival, 2017) and *Moved By Padi* (George Town Festival, 2016). In 2018 Aida was named as *Kakiseni's Gamechanger* at the 15th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards. Aida continues to evolve as a socially engaged artist committed to creating performances that are inclusive and collaborative, situated between art and every day, to raise awareness and advocate for the causes she believes in.



## **Al Jafree Md Yusop**

Al Jafree is a film writer and director. He co-wrote the feature films *Paloh* (2002) and *Dukun* (2002) and recently wrote and directed the *Mencari Rahmat* (2018), a local adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. He has written many telemovies including *Sumbangsih* (1999), *Teman Malam* (2002), *Senandung Malam* (2008), *Joe & Faridah* (2009) and *Tulus Ikhlas* (2016). He also wrote and directed *Melur Vs Rajawali* (2015) and *Kembara Nak Dara* (2016). He made his feature directorial debut with *Mencari Rahmat* (2018), a local adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* which garnered the 2018 Kuala Lumpur Film Critics Circle award. Al Jafree also founded *Komuniti Filem Titiwangsa*, a community of filmmakers and cinephiles which advocates local films.



## **Al-Mustaqeem M Radhi**

Al-Mustaqeem M Radhi is a Kuala Lumpur-based translator, writer and editor. As a translator from English into Malay, he has published some 30 books, including *George Orwell's Animal Farm* (as *Politik Kandang*, 2014) and *Ibn Rusyd's (Averroes) Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory* (as *Makalah Penentu Hubungan antara Syariah dan Falsafah*, 2006). He is currently translating *T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land* and *Nikola Madzirov's Remnants of Another Age*. He is also the chief editor at *IBDE Ilham*, a publishing house based in Selangor, Malaysia.





## **Alfian Sa'at**

Alfian Sa'at is a Resident Playwright with WILD RICE. His published works include three collections of poetry, 'One Fierce Hour', 'A History of Amnesia' and 'The Invisible Manuscript', a collection of short stories, 'Corridor', a collection of flash fiction, 'Malay Sketches', three collections of plays as well as the published play 'Cooling Off Day'. Alfian has won Best Original Script at the Life! Theatre Awards four times, in 2004 for 'Landmarks', in 2010 for 'Nadirah', in 2013 for 'Kakak Kau Punya Laki' (Your Sister's Husband) and in 2016 for 'Hotel' (with Marcia Vanderstraaten). In 2001, Alfian won the Golden Point Award for Poetry as well as the National Arts Council Young Artist Award for Literature. He has also been nominated for the Singapore Literature Prize three times, for 'Corridor' (1999, Commendation Prize), 'A History of Amnesia' (2004) and his translation of the novel 'The Widower' (2016).



## **Amir Muhammad**

Amir Muhammad is a writer, film-maker and publisher. He founded both Buku Fixi and Matahari Books as leading independent publishing houses. As a film director, his credits include *The Big Durian* (2003), *Lelaki Komunis Terakhir* (2006) and *Malaysian Gods* (2009). He is the author of Yasmin Ahmad's *Films* (2009) and *120 Malay Movies* (2010). He also produces films under Kuman Pictures, specialising in low-budget horror and thriller titles.



## **Ann Lee**

Ann Lee is a playwright, editor, and researcher. She completed her doctorate in Southeast Asian studies at the National University of Singapore and is now working on a book about satire in Indonesia and Malaysia. She is also developing a film script adaptation of her stage work, *Perpustakaan*, with producer Susan Lankester. Ann collaborated with Ines Somellera and Rhoda Grauer on the script of *Xalisco – A Place* (2019), which toured in Indonesia, Thailand, and Mexico. Her award-winning play *Tarap Man* is in Southeast Asian plays (*Aurora Metro*, 2016) and other work in *Sex, Stage and State* (Kuali Works, 2011). Ann has also written and edited stories for *Buku Fixi/Matahari* and *ZI Publications* titles.



## **Anne James**

Anne James is an actor, educator and dancer with over 40 years of experience in Malaysian theatre. She has worked with distinguished directors from Malaysia, Singapore and Australia. In 2019 she was *Lady Macbeth* in a touring production of *Macbeth*. From 2015 – 2018 she was touring with *Baling*; seen at festivals in 8 cities around the world. Her awards in film and theatre include: Best Group Performance for *Another Country* (Boh Cameronian Arts Award 2016), Best Supporting Actress (Female) for *KIL* (Anugerah Majlis Pengkritik Filem Kuala Lumpur 2013) and Best Solo Performer for *Dinner for Two* (Boh Cameronian Arts Award 2003). Anne trained in acting at Universiti Sains Malaysia and Northwestern University (USA) and is a member of Five Arts Centre. She teaches Acting and Voice at local institutions.



## Arif Rafhan

Arif Rafhan is a visual artist. His work spans from graphic novels to murals and animation. His first graphic novel, *Adventures of a KL-ite in Afghanistan* was published in 2014 and he has since had his name credited under more than 20 published works in Malaysia and Singapore. He also publishes webcomics on his social media on a regular basis. His comics are a reflection of life, real-life experiences, surrealism, and everything in between. He also collaborates with writers, doctors and other professionals on awareness projects. He's currently working with Lat on a new graphic novel project.

*Arif Rafhan is supported by Epigram Books.*



## Bernice Chauly

Bernice Chauly is a novelist, poet, educator and curator. She is the award-winning author of seven books of poetry and prose and has lectured in creative writing for more than 20 years. She directed seven editions of the George Town Literary Festival (2011 to 2018), runs KL Writers Workshop and is the current pro tem President of PEN Malaysia. Her fourth collection of poems *Incantations/Incarcerations* was published in 2019 and she is currently working on the development of a Triple-A video game.



## Carlos Sardiña Galache

Carlos Sardiña Galache is a journalist who has covered Burma since 2010. Based in Bangkok, he has visited the country regularly covering its many conflicts during the transition period, with a special focus on the plight of the Rohingya. His work has been published in outlets like Al Jazeera, the Intercept, the Christian Science Monitor, the South China Morning Post, TIME, the Bangkok Post, or Nikkei Asian Review. He currently works for the Spanish news agency EFE in Bangkok.



## Carol Koh

Carol Koh founded the Books on the Move Malaysia Movement in 2017, in hopes that it will encourage more Malaysians to read. She runs the movement during her free time (outside her full-time job as a programme adviser) to hide free books around the city. In 2018, she set up three community libraries in train stations of KL to make books more accessible. The libraries are now located in three different retail malls. The movement is part of the Books on the Move Global Initiative in 14 countries.



## Charis Loke

Charis Loke is an illustrator and comics editor from Penang, Malaysia. Drawing upon literature and visual culture, she evokes wonder and curiosity through thoughtful images. She's drawn maps for fantasy novels, illustrated a game about kaki lima, sketched the 14th General Elections, and explained asexuality by way of sambal. Charis is also Comics + Illustrations Editor at New Naratif where she commissions and works with Southeast Asian artists from all over the world. Currently doing an MA in Visual Sociology, Charis is a former artist-in-residence at Rimbun Dahan and the Light Grey Art Lab Iceland Residency. As a committee member and artist programmer at Arts-ED Penang, she designed and facilitated workshops for youth and teachers. Believing that a rising tide lifts all boats, she regularly engages in capacity-building efforts for illustrators and comics artists. Find her work at <http://charisloke.com> or on Twitter and Instagram @charisloke.



## Chee Sek Thim

Chee Sek Thim is a Penang-based theatre director and performer. His involvement in the Malaysian performing arts began in the early 1990s as a performer with Marion D'Cruz and Dancers. Sek Thim's directorial works span a range of genres, from solo to ensemble work, monologues to musicals. His last directing project was "Tajjituatow", a musical in Hokkien produced by ZXC Theatre Troupe in 2018/2019, and was performed in both George Town and KL. As a performer, he was last seen in the George Town Festival 2017's "The Italian Restaurant" by Umewaka Naohiko. He is currently working on Johan Othman's contemporary opera "Malam Takdir" and developing new work with dancer/choreographer Aida Redza. Sek Thim is the founder of Reka Art Space, a Penang-based theatre company, and is also a member of Kuala Lumpur-based Five Arts Centre, a theatre collective of practitioners, producers and educators.



## Chiew Ruoh Peng

Chiew Ruoh Peng is a poet born in Malaysia. He has won several literary awards including the Hua Zong Literary Award (Malaysia), Hai-O Literary Award (Malaysia) and Outstanding Young Poet Award (Taiwan). Three of his compilations have been published under the titles Lovesick, Speedread, and Vanilla. He is a columnist for China Press (Malaysia). Apart from writing, he is also a regular spoken word performer. His translation work includes English, Malay and Chinese.



## Danton Remoto

Danton Remoto was educated at Ateneo de Manila University [ASEAN Scholar], University of Stirling [British Council Scholar] and Rutgers University [Fulbright Scholar]. He has worked as a university professor, publishing director, head of communications at the United Nations and TV-radio presenter. His last posting was as Head of School at the University of Nottingham Malaysia. He has published a book of stories, three books of poems, and five books of nonfiction, all written in English. His latest book is "Riverrun, A Novel," was published by Penguin Random House South East Asia. It deals with a colourful and chaotic military dictatorship in the Philippines. It has stirred controversy for its depiction of gay love in a conservative and Catholic country run by corrupt leaders. Nevertheless, his body of work is included in The Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Literature, The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics, and The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Postcolonial Literature.



## Dina Zaman

Dina Zaman is a Malaysian writer and editor. Her works include *I Am Muslim* (2007) and *Holy Men, Holy Women: A Journey Into the Faiths of Malaysians and Other Essays* (2018). She has been in the media for over 20 years, serving as editor at *Malaysiakini.com* and *The Malaysian Insider*. It was during her time working for such media outlets, that she realized that many issues were not addressed, and noted certain worrying trends. She translated her passion for writing about religion into co-founding IMAN Research, a think tank focusing on society, beliefs, and perception. She is currently the Director of Fundraising and Business Development at IMAN.



## Eddin Khoo

Eddin Khoo is a poet, writer, translator, journalist and teacher. He is the founder of Pusaka, one of the region's leading cultural centres, and the publishing house Kala, which devotes itself to publishing literary translations from the world's languages into Malay. He has worked intimately with Malaysia's custodians of the traditional and ritual arts including shadow puppeteers, musicians, dramatists and dancers. Among his preoccupations is researching aspects of oral transmission, cultural and religious politics and aspects of ritual in traditional theatre. He is the author of a study on traditional Malay woodcarving, *The Spirit of Wood: The Art of Malay Woodcarving* (2003). 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.



## Erica Eng

Erica Eng is an animation student and comics creator from Johor. She is best known as the creator of "Fried Rice" which won the 2020 Will Eisner Award for Best Webcomic, and has also been nominated in the Harvey and Ringo Awards in the corresponding categories (Digital Book of the Year, Best Webcomic). She is currently pursuing her degree in 3D character animation and continues to write stories and draw comics



## Evi Shelvia

Evi Shelvia is a professional writer and illustrator of Children's Book that has produced 35 book titles to this date, and published in countries like The United States, Malaysia, China, and Indonesia, along with several book illustration awards from Singapore and Malaysia. She is also active in giving coaching clinics and professional workshop on book illustration, as well as participating in various literary events internationally.



Photo courtesy of F. Sionil José

## F. Sionil José

F. (Francisco) Sionil José was born on December 3, 1924 in Rosales, Pangasinan, in the Philippines. His work includes eleven novels, five books of short stories, a book of verse, a couple of plays collection of stories for children and four books of essays. His works highlight the social underpinnings, class struggles and colonial history of Filipino society. His major work, the Rosales Saga, consists of *The Pretenders*, *Tree, My Brother My Executioner*, *Mass*, and *Po-on*. His work is translated in 28 languages including Tagalog and Ilokano. In 1958, José founded the Philippine Center of PEN, an international organisation of poets, playwrights, essayists, and novelists. In 1965, he established the publishing firm *Solidaridad*, edited the journal, *Solidaridad*, and founded the art gallery, *Solidaridad*. José has received numerous fellowships, honorary PhDs from the University of the Philippines, De La Salle University, Far Eastern University, University of Pangasinan and Foundation University and awards, which include: the Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Award (1980); the National Artist Award for Literature (2001); and the Pablo Neruda Centennial Award (2004). He also received decorations from the Emperor of Japan, the French government and the European Union.



## Fahmi Mustaffa

Fahmi is a Malaysian writer, translator and visual artist born in Terengganu but based in Penang. Formerly a lecturer in biology at UiTM, his fiction boldly explore topics which are deemed sensitive in Malaysia, such as homosexuality and religion. His writings include *Laknat* (2015), *Suatu Hari Nanti Manusia Akan Melupakan Tuhan* (2016), *Amsterdam* (2017), and *Manusia* (2019), which he co-wrote with Regina Ibrahim. His most recent work was *Di Situ Langit Dijunjung* (2019), a Malay translation of Hanna Alkaf's acclaimed debut novel set against the racial riots of 1969.



## Faisal Tehrani

Mohd Faizal Musa or his pen name, Faisal Tehrani (born 1974) is an essayist and novelist in Malaysia. He is currently working at the Institute of the Malay World and Civilisation, National University of Malaysia (UKM) where he is researching on literature, and human rights. Seven of Faisal's books are banned by the Malaysian government and he is frequently targeted by religious extremists. Faisal Tehrani is among a few human rights defender in Malaysia working in freedom of religion and beliefs.



## Fatimah Busu

Fatimah Busu is an award-winning Malaysian novelist, short-story writer, and academic. Her first novel, *Ombak Bukan Biru* was published in 1977. Fatimah's other notable works include *Salam Maria* (2004) and *Kepulauan* (1980). She has written numerous short stories including the award-winning *Mawar Yang Belum Gugur* (1971) and *Anak-anak dari Kampung Pasir Pekan* (1975). Fatimah is also the recipient of various literary awards including the Kelantan State Laureate, 2015.



## Foo May Lyn

May Lyn is a performer who began her artistic life as a 13-year old in the late '70s with Teater Kanak-kanak Malaysia, an experimental children's theatre project. She has previously worked in theatre, dance, film and festival productions under the direction of Krishen Jit, Ivan Heng, Claire Wong, Ong Keng Sen, Agnes Limbos, and Koike Hiroshi. In 2005, she was part of a group exhibition entitled "Crowds" at Reka Art Space. May Lyn held her first solo exhibition of drawings and embroidered artwork in a collection called COMING HOME at Straits Cafe in 2010.



## Hafiz Hamzah

Hafiz Hamzah is the founder of Obscura, an independent publishing house based in Kuala Lumpur. He is also the editor of Svava, a quarterly journal on Malaysian contemporary culture. He has published two collections of poetry, Malakalis (2014) and Gertak Sanggul (2016), which has been translated into English—Blooms of Ire (2019).



## Hassan Muthalib

Hassan Muthalib is a Malaysian animator, film director, designer, writer and critic. He has published two books titled Malaysian Cinema in a Bottle (2013) and From Deer Mouse to Mouse: 70 Years of Malaysian Animation (2016). Hassan has also written numerous academic articles that have been presented both locally and internationally. Known as the first Malaysian pioneer of animation, he directed Malaysia's first animation film, Silat Lagenda which was honoured with a Special Award for First Animated Feature Film in Malaysia at the 1998 Malaysia Film festival. He has also been recognised by the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore as the Father of Animation.



## 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. In a former life, Heidi was a maritime lawyer in London and a failed restaurateur in KL.



## Jaymani Sevanathan

Jaymani Sevanathan is a Political Science graduate from the National University of Malaysia (UKM). She writes for mainstream magazines and newspapers. Her work can also be found and read in several anthologies. Jaymani's interest in Malay literature began recently and she intends to continue to study and explore more in the near future.



## Jérôme Bouchaud

Jérôme Bouchaud is a writer, literary translator and publisher. He has lived in Asia for the past 17 years and made Malaysia home 12 years ago. He founded and curates *Lettres de Malaisie*, a French-language webzine dedicated to literature from and about Malaysia. In 2015 he launched *Éditions Jentayu*, a publishing venture focusing on pan-Asian literature and literary translation. Its main publication is the eponymous *Jentayu* review, a biannual literary journal dedicated to writings from Asia translated into French, with 10 issues and 5 special issues released so far.

*Jérôme Bouchaud supported by the Embassy of France in Malaysia and the Alliance Française de Malaisie.*



## Jo Kukathas

Jo Kukathas, actor, writer, director of The Instant Café Theatre best known for its satirical political theatre which has also staged everything from Shakespeare to contemporary plays to new Malaysian writing. ICT's writing platform FIRSTWoRKs supports new writing, while *Almost True Stories* explores more personal storytelling. Jo's newer plays, inspired by her minority Sri Lankan community, explore migration stories. Selected past work as a director/writer include *The Island in Between*, *Hotel Grand Asia*, *Break-Ing*, *M! Opera*, and international environmental theatre, *Beautiful Water* (Japan/Malaysia/Indonesia). Current projects: *And Then Came Spring*, a collaboration with Afghan refugee theatre company, *Parastoo*; *The Bronze Lion*, an oral history project; and *Zoom Parah*. She has directed in Singapore and run workshops in Brazil, Japan, Australia, Germany and Taiwan.



## Johan Radzi

Johan Radzi is an author based in Seri Kembangan, Selangor DE. Among the titles of his work are *Tinju & Peluru* (2017), a collection of short stories; and *Stesen Titik Nol* (2020), a collection of essays on his solo journey in Indochina. Among his literary heroes include Ernest Hemingway, JM Coetzee, Haruki Murakami, Anthony Bourdain, and Yukio Mishima.



## Joshua Kam

Joshua Kam grew up in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, taking frequent trips with his father down the coastal state of Pahang. A history graduate of Hope College, Michigan, he developed a hunger for the mythology of place-names, rebel peasants and sea gods his family inherited from generations by the water. Dividing his time between Malaysia and graduate school in Michigan, he interviews Nusantara mystics for a living, bakes when he can and drinks when he shouldn't. *How the Man in Green Saved Pahang*, and *Possibly the World* is his first novel, and the winner of the 2020 Epigram Books Fiction Prize.

*Joshua Kam is supported by Epigram Books.*



## Julya Oui

Every morning Julya Oui sits in the garden with her furkids to breathe in the wonders of the day and be mesmerised by the thought of how insignificant humans are and then she goes to write stories about them. She has published five short horror story collections, written numerous feature films, TV movies, animation scripts, and a few stage plays.



## Kam Raslan

Kam is a Malaysian writer, director and broadcaster. He previously ran a weekly column in *The Edge* and *Off the Edge* magazine. Kam's writings have been compiled in *Generation: A Collection of Contemporary Malaysian Ideas* (1997). He is also the author of *Confessions of an Old Boy: The Dato' Hamid Adventures* (2007) and host of BFM Radio's "A Bit of Culture" which airs on Saturdays.



## Karl Nadzarin

Karl Nadzarin works in the field of migration and human rights. Formally trained in the law, he has dabbled in photography, filmmaking, music, and research writing while also secretly wishing he could draw. Being born and based in Kuala Lumpur, he likes to think of the larger Southeast Asia as an extension of home.





## Kulleh Grasi

Kulleh Grasi's poems have been published in the Malay-English journal *Naratif | Kisah* (2016). His first full-length poetry collection, *Tell Me Kenyalang* was published last year by Circumference Books, a New York-based publisher, and has been listed as a nominee for the Best Translated Book Award 2020 and the National Translation Award 2020 by ALTA American Literary Translation Association. The work of this prolific artist from the heart of Borneo has also been featured in the Poetry Society of America.



Photo credit: Mueck Fotografie

## Lea Schneider

Lea Schneider lives and works as a freelance author, translator, and critic in Berlin after extended periods living in China and Taiwan. Her writing is situated in the space between poetry, essay, and translation. Recent publications include a collection of Chinese poetry translated into German, "*Chinabox. Neue Lyrik aus der Volkrepublik*" [*China Box. New Poetry from the People's Republic*, 2016] as well as a volume of poem-essays, "*Made in China*" (2020).



## Leila S. Chudori

Leila S. Chudori is one of Indonesia's best writers. Born in Jakarta in 1962, she studied at Trent University, Canada. In 1989 until 2017, Leila work as a *Tempo*'s journalist. She has received the Khatulistiwa Award for the Best Prose work of 2013, for her novel, *Pulang* (Home). In 2017, Leila published her next novel, *Laut Bercerita*, (*The Sea Speaks His Name*, publ by Penguin Random House SEA), for which she recently won the South-east Asia Write Award.



## Lilianne Fan

Lilianne Fan is 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. Between 2005 and 2012 Lilianne served in several large-scale post-crisis recovery missions, including with the UN-led humanitarian response in postearthquake Haiti; as Advisor to the ASEAN Special Envoy on Post-Nargis Recovery in Myanmar; as a member of the Advisory Team of the Governor of Aceh on sustainable development following the Aceh peace agreement of 2005; and as Senior Policy Coordinator for Oxfam International in Aceh and Nias from 2005-2008. She holds an MA in Anthropology from Columbia University, New York.



## Marco Ferrarese

Marco Ferrarese lives in Penang since 2009, from where he covers Malaysia, India and the larger Southeast Asian region for a number of international guidebooks and publications that include the Rough Guides, Fodor's Travel, Travel + Leisure Southeast Asia, the Guardian, BBC Travel, Nikkei Asian Review and South China Morning Post. His debut novel *Nazi Goreng*, a quirky subcultural thriller set in Penang, was published by Monsoon Books in 2013 and banned by Malaysia's Ministry of Home Affairs in 2016. Marco and his Malaysian photographer wife still call Penang home, even though they are on the road reporting from elsewhere most of the time. Know more about him and his books at [www.marcoferrarese.com](http://www.marcoferrarese.com)



## Melizarani T. Selva

Melizarani T.Selva is a Malaysian writer and spoken word poet, with notable performances at StoryFest Singapore, ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival and TEDxGateway. Her first book, *'Taboo'* is a poetic exploration of her Masters' thesis on the constructs and representations of the Malaysian Indian Identity. Her poems have been translated in French and Bahasa Malaysia. She co founded *If Walls Could Talk - Poetry Open Mic* and co-published an anthology of 100 poems by 61 poets from Malaysia titled *'When I Say Spoken, You Say Word!'*. Presently, she is the co-editor of the literary journal, *SingPoWriMo.com*



## Mislina Mustaffa

Mislina Mustaffa, despite several awards in her pocket, abandoned her 20 years film career to pursue her Art/Life project *Homeless by Choice* which is already 8 years now; and still ongoing. Her writing work includes *Homeless by Choice* and *Are You Talking About Trust, Mislina Mustaffa?* Currently active doing her Performance Art pieces, she still does not believe that the word 'beyond borders', more than often, is just borders existed only in her mind, thoughts and beliefs that she needed not to really walk over it physically.



## 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. At present, Muhammad is an adjunct professor in the International Islamic University, USIM and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.



## **Nazir Harith Fadzilah**

Nazir Harith Fadzilah was born in Ipoh and is currently residing and working in Kuala Lumpur. He is the founder of Tintabudi Bookshop: an independent bookshop that focuses on humanities subject. Apart from selling books, Tintabudi also runs as an event space which holds various events such as forums, book discussions and poetry reading group. He is also part of a team that publishes Svava journal, a periodical journal in Malay language that features writings around art, culture and society.



## **Ngoi Guat Peng**

Ngoi Guat Peng is an Associate Professor at the Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia (Chinese Program). She received her PhD degree from the School of Arts and Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore. Her research interest includes Chinese Intellectual History, Neo-Confucianism and History and Literature in Malaysia and Singapore. She has published a monograph titled Unity of Jun Dao and Shi Dao: The Discourse of “Unity of Three Teachings” in Late Ming Period in 2016, and a collection of essays Malaysian Chinese Literary Criticism: Ngoi Guat Peng in 2019.



## **Nirwan Dewanto**

Nirwan Dewanto is a poet, essayist, editor and curator. He is widely known in Indonesian contemporary literature for his critical stance toward excessive lyricism and nationalist-populist sentiment in most literary works and discourses in his country. His poetry books Jantung Lebah Ratu (The Queen Bee’s Heart, 2008) and Buli-Buli Lima Kaki (The Five Footed Jug, 2010) won the Khatulistiwa Literary Award in the respective years. Nirwan’s poems have been translated into the Japanese, German, Chinese, Korean and English; his poems in John McGlynn’s English translation is Museum of Pure Desire (2017). His works also appear in various international journals such as Stand, Asia, and Words Without Borders. His most recent book is Kaki Kata (2020), essays on literature and literary endeavours.



## **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 currently a news editor at The Malaysian Insight. He is also the editorial advisor of Svava, a print quarterly journal in Bahasa Melayu exploring anything and everything about arts, culture and society.



## Ooi Kee Beng

Ooi Kee Beng is Executive Director of Penang Institute, and Visiting Senior Fellow at ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, where he was Deputy Director (2011-2017). He has lectured on Malaysian History and Politics, and Chinese History and Philosophy, and is founder-editor of Penang Monthly, ISSUES (Policy Briefs), and ISEAS Perspective; editor for Trends in Southeast Asia; and long-time columnist for The Edge. He is an award-winning author. His works include *As Empires Fell: The Life and Times of H.S. Lee, the First Finance Minister of Malaya*. His other books include *Month by Month. A Collection of Editorials. The Eurasian Core and Its Edges: Dialogues with Wang Gungwu on the History of the World; The Reluctant Politician: Tun Dr Ismail and His Time; Yusof Ishak: A Man of Many Firsts; In Lieu of Ideology: An Intellectual Biography of Goh Keng Swee; and Lim Kit Siang: Defying the Odds.*



Photo credit: Philippe Matsas

## Pierre Joris

Pierre Joris has moved between Europe, the US & North Africa for some 55 years now, publishing as many books of poetry, essays, translations & anthologies — most recently *Fox-trails, -tales & -trots* (poems & proses); *Microliths: Posthumous Prose of Paul Celan & A City Full of Voices: Essays on the Work of Robert Kelly. Memory Rose into Threshold Speech: The Collected Earlier Poetry of Paul Celan* is forthcoming from FSG in November 2020. Also: *Arabia (not so) Deserta* (essays, 2019) & *Conversations in the Pyrenees with Adonis* (2018); a translation of Egyptian poet Safaa Fathy's *Revolution Goes Through Walls* (SplitLevel, 2018); *The Book of U* (poems, 2017, Simoncini Books, Luxembourg), *The Agony of I.B.* (a play, Editions PHI, 2016), *An American Suite* (early poems, Inpatient Press, 2016). *Diwan of Exiles: a Pierre Joris Reader*, co-edited with Ariel Resnikoff, is forthcoming. When not on the road, he lives in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, with his wife, multimedia praticienne Nicole Peyrafitte.



## Rebecca Ilham

Rebecca Ilham is the pen name of Hazwani Rameli. Her short stories have been published in *Berita Harian* and *Mingguan Malaysia* newspapers, *Dewan Sastera* magazine, *Dewan Budaya*, *Tunas Cipta*, *Dewan Siswa*, and *Dewan Kosmik*. Rebecca's other short stories include *Kimono Ungu Bersulam Bunga* (May 2010, Ameen Books), *Hujan Hujung Januari* (2013, ITBM) and *Perempuan Paling Sunyi* (2018, Nusa Center). Her novel *Bumi Lestari* won second place in the Utusan Group Literary Youth Novel Category 2010. Rebecca's first travelogue is the *Perempuan Nan Berlari* (2017, Termite Studio). Rebecca currently works as an assistant curator at an art gallery in the capital of Malaysia



## 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.



## **Ruzanna M. Zuknik**

Ruzanna M. Zuknik is a writer and editor, with many years of experience working with Malaysian and international clients. She is also a member of the globally renowned agency Impress Creative and Editorial. Her portfolio focuses on content writing and all aspects of editing for corporations and for media companies. With an educational background in science, Ruzanna has an equal passion for literature and the arts, balancing the values of empirical knowledge and creative imagination. She has written and edited in the areas of the Islamic economy, science and technology, arts and culture, food and beverage, research and development, branding and marketing, finance, and consumer behaviour. Her major clients include Thomson Reuters Dubai for Salaam Gateway and My Salaam, Shapers Malaysia for the Malaysia International Halal Showcase and World Halal Summit, Panasonic Japan for its magazine *Aspire*, and Australia's conscious hip-hop group The Brothahood.



## **S.M. Zakir**

S.M. Zakir worked in the news media before becoming a full-time writer in 2000. Earned much acclaim and many awards with tens of novels, short stories books, poetry collections, a biography, theatre and film criticism, socio-culture essays and political commentary. A columnist and editor for several magazines. Received tens of literary awards/prizes. The awardee of MASTERA Young Laureate Awards 2010 in Jakarta, and S.E.A Write Award 2011 by SEA Write Award Council in Bangkok, Thailand.



## **Sharifah Amani**

Sharifah Amani somehow knew she would be a storyteller. Fascinated by all the bedtime stories she grew up listening to, she was fortunate enough to meet and work with a master storyteller, the late Yasmin Ahmad. Amani is also happy that apart from helping to weave other people's tales, she gets to tell hers, short films she directed – Sangkar, Kampung Bangsar and Hawa all three of which was screened at the Roppongi Malaysian Film Week in 2015. She is grateful for the gifts of Sepet, Gubra, Mukhsin, Muallaf, Pigeon and many others. In 2015 she was involved in a *Another Country* play featuring actors from Malaysia and Singapore. She played the title role in *Nadirah* a play stage at Festival Tokyo 2016. In 2018 and 2020 she was part of the many creatures of *Beautiful Water* staged in Fujimi, Tokyo (2016) and Jakarta, Indonesia (2020).



## **Sharmilla Ganesan**

Sharmilla Ganesan is a presenter/producer with BFM 89.9 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where she hosts *Front Row*, the radio station's arts show. She also co-hosts *By the Book* (literature), *Popcorn Culture* (film and popular culture), and *The Daily Digest* (current affairs). Sharmilla is also a writer and critic, with in-depth experience covering and commenting on Malaysian arts and culture. She was a features journalist with *The Star* newspaper 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*. She was an Asia Journalism Fellow with the National University of Singapore in 2017, and a Fulbright/Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow with the University of Maryland in 2015/2016.



## 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. Sharmin also currently works with Astro Malaysia overseeing the dynamic and rapidly-changing On Demand Content Business.



## Show Ying Xin

Show Ying Xin is a postdoctoral fellow at the Malaysia Institute, Australian National University and lecturer at ANU's School of Culture, History & Language. She received her Ph.D. degree from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She is interested in Southeast Asian history and literature, and her current research project looks at writings and polemics of Sinophone/Chinese community in the making of Malaya during the Cold War. She is also the translator of Singapore writer Alfian Sa'at's short stories collection *Malay Sketches* to the Chinese language.



## Siti Rahayu Baharin

Siti Rahayu Baharin is a mother and teacher who believes that education is a fundamental right of every human being, and it needs to be provided for everyone. Passionate about everything education and societal empowerment, Rahayu and a group of friends co-founded *Buku Jalanan Chow Kit*, an organisation that upholds the idea that knowledge through education is the most vital food for humans if they are to thrive. *Buku Jalanan Chow Kit (BJCK)* mindfully and critically unpack the question as to whether humans need to 'eat to live, or to live to eat?', as they engage with the urban poor of Chow Kit (Kuala Lumpur), specifically educating the young minds of children. From an organization that operates on the street, *Buku Jalanan Chow Kit* now runs a center that operates as a homeschool center for undocumented children, and also a safe space for children.



## Sreedhevi Iyer

Sreedhevi Iyer is the author of *The Tiniest House of Time* and *Jungle Without Water*. She has been shortlisted for a *Pushcart Prize (US)* and a *Penang Monthly Book Award*. Her work has appeared around the world, including *Hotel Amerika*, *Drunken Boat*, *Asian American Literary Review*, *The Writers Chronicles*, *Ginosko Literary Journal*, *Asia Literary Review*, *TEXT*, *Cha*, and many more. She lives and works in Melbourne.



## **Thira Mohamad**

Thira Mohamad is a writer, poet 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* and *Woke & Loud: A Faith-Based Medley of Muslim Poetry & Spoken Word* by Inked Resistance Publishing, Toronto. She is a member of *WordPower Sabah*, creative arts and communication platform based in Kota Kinabalu, where she conducts poetry workshops. Thira is currently working on translating works by Sabahan poets into English and is working on her first poetry collection.



## **Wan Nor Azriq**

Born in Alor Setar, Kedah, Wan Nor Azriq is an award-winning novelist and social media coordinator at MUBI Malaysia. He has published six novels and one essay collection. His latest upcoming book is a short story collection debut titled *Mana Dadu Darjeeling?* which will be published by Kata-Pilar Books.



## **Wanda Nanibush**

Prior to joining the AGO in 2016, Wanda Nanibush held various curatorial and academic roles across Canada since 2001. In addition to independent curation, Nanibush held the post of Aboriginal Arts Officer at the Ontario Arts Council, Executive Director of ANDPVA and strategic planning for CCA. She holds a Master's Degree in visual studies from the University of Toronto, where she has also taught graduate courses. Nanibush has published widely in magazines, books and journals. As co-lead of the AGO's department of Indigenous and Canadian art, Nanibush's area of specialty is Indigenous Art and collection diversification.

*Wanda is supported by the High Commission of Canada (Malaysia).*



## **Wang Gungwu**

Professor Wang Gungwu received his BA and MA from the University of Malaya in Singapore, and his PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. He was Professor of History at University of Malaya; Professor of Far Eastern History at Australian National University. From 1986 to 1995, he was Vice-Chancellor of University of Hong Kong. Recent books include (with Margaret Wang) *Home is where we are* (2020); *China Reconnects: Joining a Deep-rooted Past to a New World Order* (2019); *Home is not Here* (2018); *Nanyang: Essays on Heritage* (2018); *The Eurasian Core and its Edges: dialogues on world history* with Ooi Kee Beng (2015); *Another China Cycle: Committing to Reform* (2014); and *Renewal: The Chinese State and New Global History* (2013).



## **Zahid M. Naser**

Zahid M. Naser writes poetry, essays and short stories, in addition to translating and editing. His first book, *Berehat Di Sisi Paus* was published in 2016.



## **Zikri Rahman**

Zikri Rahman has consistently embarked on collaborations with cultural activist groups in various socio-political projects. *Buku Jalanan*, a community-based cultural literacy initiative he co-founded, is a loose cultural and knowledge workers network focusing on decentralizing the modes of knowledge production. Operating like a “rhizome”, the initiative has spread over 90 different locations and has been adopted by hundreds of other autonomous cultural workers worldwide. He is also the festival director of the inaugural *Idearaya*, a festival of ideas dedicated to celebrating progressive discourses within the vibrant grassroots community of intelligentsia, civil society, and community organizers in Southeast Asia. With *LiteraCity*, he initiated a literary and cultural mapping project in the city of Kuala Lumpur. Currently pursuing his postgraduate studies in Social Research and Cultural Studies in Taiwan, Zikri is also a writer, independent researcher, translator, and podcaster for various online portals.



# POETS



## Abdulsalam

Abdulsalam is a Syrian poet and a freelance photographer, living in Malaysia since 2013. Last year, he won Second Prize in The Migrant and Refugees Poetry Competition held annually in Kuala Lumpur. He performed his poems in the George Town Literary Festival, Ilham Gallery, and Refugee Festival among other places. His poetry explores topics like exile, homeland, identity, the uncertainty of the future, his relationship with the past, and sometimes, love.



## Ainuni Muaiyanah

Ainuni Muaiyanah is a Malaysian novelist, poet and editor. Her first novel, *Sepetang 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).



## Aisyah Rais

Aisyah Rais, from Kuala Lumpur has published several zines and books of poetry and prose including *Holograf*, *UNO*, *Kaktus*, *Memorabilia* and *Li*.



## Aliff Awan

Aliff Awan first gained recognition because of his poetry collections on Twitter. He just wants to try and test with everything that can be played with. He is now actively involved with poetry performances. Aliff represented Malaysia at the CEX Poetry Slam in Singapore and was chosen as Tok Dalang at the Panggung Puisi Urbanscapes 2019. Besides being crowned the first champion of the 2019 Urbanscapes Poetry and Slam Off IUMW-Lit, Aliff is also involved in *Tukang Puisi* and *Kaca Mencari Ikan*, his first solo zone published by *Terbitan Langit*. Currently, Aliff is focusing on #SeminitSajak, an effort to collect poetry readings in a minute, through his blog, @maingayong.



## **Amin Kamrani**

Amin Kamrani an Iranian photographer, filmmaker, translator and social & cultural activist who has been based in Malaysia since 2011. His works and projects have mostly reflected the stories of migration and exile.



## **Hidayu Hatta**

Hidayu Hatta is a dentist who occasionally dabbles in poetry. Her works include *Memintang-Bintang-Bintang Pagi* (2019) and *Ini Sekolah Kita* (2017).



## **Jack Malik**

Jack Malik is a Projek Rabak poet hailing from Ipoh. Wannabe Sasau and *Sajakjakja(c)k* are two of his poetry collections respectively published by Rabak-Lit dan Kata-Pilar Books. His works has been featured in a few local and international literary publishing such as *Mekong Review*, *Tunas Cipta*, *Selangorkini* and more. Jack is a meme enthusiast.



## **Karim Mohd**

Originally from Setiu, Terengganu. Karim Mohd is the curator of the poetry site, *Bilik Penyair*. He writes poetry and essays on literature and music. His writings have been published in the journal *Svara*, *Selangorkini*, *Berita Harian*, *Dewan Sastera*, *Tunas Cipta*, *Utusan Malaysia*, *GONG* music journal, *Tukang Puisi* and *Majalah Pendidik*. His debut poetry collection, *Nokturna (Kata-Pilar, 2018)* won the Grand Prize of *Kata-Pilar 1.0 Poetry Competition* and the Grand Prize of the Poetry Group: *Darul Iman IV Literary Prize (HASDI 2018/19)*. The latest, a selection of personal essays, *Catatan Mimpi* is published by the *Bilik Penyair* (2020).



## Masuma Tavakoli

Masuma Tavakoli is an Afghan woman writer, poet, illustrator and artist based in Malaysia. Inspired by her life story, Masuma's work has deeply been reflecting women right issues and living in exile. In 2019, she won third place in "Migrant Worker & Refugee Poetry Competition". Malaysian publisher Gerakbudaya published Masuma's first illustration book titled "Life Under Taliban".



## Mwaffaq Al-Hajjar

Mwaffaq Alhajjar, a Syrian poet, performer, engineer and educator who has been living in KL since 2016. Mwaffaq was the winner of the 2017 Migrant and Refugee Poetry competition. He debuted on the Malaysian stage in a production of Nassim Soleimanpour's Blank in 2019. Mwaffaq has performed poetry on different stages and events in KL and Penang and participated in George Town Literary Festival 2018 & 2019. He launched his first poetry collection "Poetic Entropy" via Gerakbudaya, 2019.



## Qurratul 'Ain

Qurratul 'Ain writes poems and short stories for newspapers, magazines as well as zines. She is also a former participant of Youth Writers Week (MPR) in 2019. Her work has been published in *Tukang Puisi*, *Selangorkini*, *Tunas Cipta* and a collection of notes; *Dua Rahsia Berjabat* published by Bilik Penyair (2020). Qurratul 'Ain's first collection of poems, *Momen* (2020) was a finalist in the *Kata-Pilar 2.0* Poetry Competition.



## Raihani Md.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 Esso-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.



### **Shafiq Said**

Shafiq Said is a writer and poet. His works include Merumahan Kembara (2019) by the Malaysian Institute of Translation & Books and Netramu Buruj di Langit Malam (2019).



### **Shaira Amira**

Shaira Amira is a writer and translator with a focus in Malay poetry. Following the publication of her first Malay anthology poetry “Akulah Perempuan Muda Itu”, Shaira’s writings were published in mainstream and independent publications including Dewan Sastera, Svava and Obscura. Steadily influenced by the arts and music scene, she collaborates with grassroots makers in an aspiration to communicate the notion of the Malaysian cultural identity to the masses.



### **Syaheeda Hamdani**

Syaheeda Hamdani is a writer who happens to love pop culture and music. She currently lives in Sabah and wrote Sepasang Nila di Bahu published by Katapilar and is now a teacher at a school near the beach.



### **Tulangkata**

Tulangkata is a poet, song-writer & rapper. Was born in 1995 in Taiping, he started to write poems at the age of 18. He also founded TTONTHEMOVE, an independent music collective based in Shah Alam. He has published 4 collections of poetry including SHA (2020) & Tentang Semalam (2019).

# PROGRAMME

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NOV



## Writing Peril in the Personal and Political

This podcast focuses on two novels by leading writers in the region, now published by Penguin Random House SEA: Indonesian author and journalist, Leila S.Chudori's award-winning *The Sea Speaks His Name* (translated by John H McGlynn from *Laut Bercerita*) and *Riverrun* by pioneering writer and educator, Danton Remoto, from the Philippines. Both novels feature characters who face the peril of sweeping state violence during the years of Soeharto and Marcos, though their authors choose different routes to make fresh the horror of atrocity and the resilience of resistance. Join us to find out what drives these authors and in what ways to 'speak of the unspeakable'... In conversation with Ann Lee, playwright and researcher.

**Speakers:** Leila S.Chudori, Danton Remoto, Ann Lee

**Language:** English

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NOV



## The Malay in Me: Covid-19 and Identity

Identity is an ever-present matter in discussions about Malaysia and her southern neighbour, Singapore. And none more contentious in that mix is that of Malay identity. What does it mean to be a Malay while observing the racial and political dynamics of each, one as a minority and the other as a member of the majority community? How do they as observers and writers find meaning and humour in such a subject? This podcast features Singaporean playwright Alfian Sa'at in conversation with Malaysian writer Dina Zaman.

**Speakers:** Alfian Sa'at, Dina Zaman

**Language:** English

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NOV



## Ketika Kata Menyapa Kertas

Dunia digital semakin menguasai. Penerbitan beralih bentuk. Gedung-gedung buku di biar runtuh. Namun, di celah-celah puing runtuh ini lahirnya Svara. Tugasnya adalah untuk menyatukan sisa-sisa dakwat dan serpihan-serpihan kertas bersama. Ternyata, helaian surat-surat Svara membongkar kerinduan abadi yang selama ini segan diserlahkan. Perbualan ini membawa pendengar kembali ke beberapa detik ke belakang, melihat sidang redaksi Svara duduk di meja sebuah kedai kopi di kota Kuala Lumpur. Mereka menabur benih-benih bagi kelahiran jurnal seni, sastera, dan budaya berbahasa Malayu ini.

**Pembicara:** Izzuddin Ramli, Nazir Harith Fadzilah, Hafiz Hamzah, Noor Azam Shairi

**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia

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NOV



## What Remains of the Light

Poetry has long been the vehicle for translating the ineffable, offering a slice of hope in troubled times. As inner lives become enmeshed with uncertain shifting realities in a global pandemic, new norms invite us to reconsider what we know of the self and the world around us. To what extent can forms, language and conventions in and out of poetry help define embodied lived experience, when the world seems to be fraying at the edges? German poet Lea Schneider considers these questions and shares insights into her own practice of poetry and translation.

**Speakers:** Lea Schneider, Thira Mohamad

**Language:** English

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NOV



## Menterjemah Yang Tak Terjemahkan

Penterjemah adalah perantara di alam sastra. Peranan hakikinya adalah untuk memindahkan makna dan rasa pada landasan kata-kata supaya yang dibawa selamat sampai di wilayah-wilayah tujuannya. Namun sudah tentu kecelakaan tidak terelakkan. Ada yang tercicir dan mati di perjalanan. Hakikat ini mengheret sang penterjemah untuk bertentang dengan diri sendiri, mempertanyakan hubungannya dengan subjeknya, persoalan kewibawaan diangkat, dan akhirnya menghadap kematian dirinya sendiri. Perbualan ini berlegar di sekitar kepayahan yang dihadapi oleh penterjemah ketika membawa dunia ke wilayah Melayu dan sebaliknya. Lalu bagaimana cabaran ini diharungi?

**Pembicara:** Adriana Nordin Manan, Zahid M. Naser, Al-Mustaqem M. Radhi, S.M. Zakir

**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia

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NOV



## Windows of the Word

Journals of literature in translation open windows to unfamiliar landscapes of the imagination, inviting us to discover worlds we would otherwise have little access to. We speak to Jérôme Bouchaud, publisher, translator and editor of Éditions Jentayu and Lettres de Malaisie, on his role as an intermediary who introduces the literature and languages of Malaysia and other parts of Asia to readers in France and beyond.

*This podcast is supported by the Embassy of France in Malaysia and the Alliance Française de Malaisie.*

**Speakers:** Jérôme Bouchaud, Sharmilla Ganesan

**Language:** English

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NOV



## Cerpen: 'Suami dan Isteri' oleh Usman Awang

Pelakon terkemuka negara, Sharifah Amani, membacakan karya cerpen Sasterawan Negara Usman Awang.

**Pembicara:** Sharifah Amani  
**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia

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NOV



## The Long 20th Century – Wang Gungwu in Conversation

With his follow-up memoir, *Home Is Where We Are*, renowned historian Wang Gungwu continues his personal journey through the 20th Century as a participant and keen observer. We ask him how the individual, caught up in forces far beyond her control, might come to understand and negotiate both the progress and the devastation that the Century wrought on people and the planet.

**Speakers:** Wang Gungwu, Sharaad Kuttan  
**Language:** English

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NOV



## Road Trips of the Imagination

If road trips bring us a change of scenery, road trips of the imagination take us to vistas along a horizon only limited by the expanse of our creative mindscapes. Writers Joshua Kam and Arif Rafhan join Adriana Nordin Manan in a conversation on the journeys taken in their works, and how they change, challenge and compel us to always carry the voyager's spirit within.

*This podcast is presented in co-partnership with EPIGRAM.*

**Speakers:** Joshua Kam, Arif Rafhan, Adriana Nordin Manan  
**Language:** English

27  
NOV



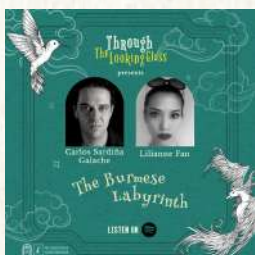
## Memayungi Obor Kritikan Sastera

Kritikan menghidupkan sastera dan karya tumbuh melalui penulis dan pengkritik. Setidak-tidaknya begitulah alam kesusasteraan di Nusantara khususnya di negara ini mengekalkan keberadaannya sejak abad ke-20. Namun, kritikan sastera dalam ranah teori kadangkala mengeringkan atau terasing. Tetapi ketika dibawa turun, kritikan sastera kemudiannya tidak lagi dianggap sebagai batu pengasah untuk menajamkan lagi daya fikir dan suara penulis, sebaliknya sebagai sebilah pedang untuk dibenamkan pada tubuh karya. Pada titik ini karya akhirnya berdarah ditusuk cemburu dan dendam. Pertemuan ini memeta budaya kritik sastera, berbual tentang keberanian penulis untuk keluar dari ruang selesa, dan bagaimana untuk mengekalkan satu suasana yang sesuai bagi perbincangan-perbincangan penting dalam sastera di Malaysia.

**Pembicara:** S.M. Zakir, Wan Nor Azriq, Rebecca Ilham

**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia

27  
NOV



## The Burmese Labyrinth

Since ancient times, labyrinths have been paradoxical by design. Serving as a path to spiritual rebirth, a trap for evil spirits, and a place to hold captive monsters of the empire, the complex layers of a labyrinth hold the promise to both enlighten and confound. In this conversation, we explore the formation of national belonging in Burma and the ways in which these histories have created constructions of the Burmese 'self'. What has this meant for the Rohingya, who have been cast as the quintessential 'other' of Burmese identity? What are the myths and parameters of this national imagination, and what would it take to shift them? Journalist and author, Carlos Sardiña Galache, interrogates these questions in a conversation on his new book, *The Burmese Labyrinth*.

**Speakers:** Carlos Sardiña Galache, Lillian Fan

**Language:** English

27  
NOV



## Riwayat Kebudayaan Melayu (1940-1960) Melalui Sastera Mahua

Seperti apa sastera Mahua mempengaruhi perkembangan serta riwayat kebudayaan Melayu pada takah 1940 sehingga 1960-an? Dengan bolak-balik migrasi yang cukup pesat, pertembungan ideologi sehinggalah persoalan identiti, di mana letak duduk sastera Mahua dalam menangkap kebudayaan masyarakat kita kemudiannya? Bersama Profesor Ngoi Guat Peng (UPSI) dan Dr. Show Ying Xin (ANU) di dalam meneroka titik mula perkembangan sastera Mahua dan kesannya di Malaya.

**Pembicara:** Show Ying Xin, Ngoi Guat Peng, Zikri Rahman

**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia



27  
NOV



### Short story: 'The Wall' by Ho Sok Fong

Artist and performer Foo May Lyn reads a short story by acclaimed Mahua writer Ho Sok Fong. 'The Wall' stands at the threshold between the real and the surreal, between quiet anguish and wild delirium. 'The Wall', Lake Like a Mirror by Ho Sok Fong, translated by Natascha Bruce, published by Granta (2019).

**Speakers:** Foo May Lyn  
**Language:** English

27  
NOV



### Peta Seribu Diri Terbentang

Tatkala terkurung, puisi menjadi jalan keluar. Ia membawa kita menuju ke ruang-ruang yang jarang disinggahi melalui bahasa yang melampaui kebiasaan. Dengari lima belas penyair Malaysia membacakan puisi-puisi terpilih, membentangkan kedukaan, cinta, dan harapan.

**Pembicara:** Jack Malik, Kulleh Grasi, Tulangkata, Aliff Awan, Ainunl Muaiyanah, Aisyah Rais, Qurratul 'Ain, Karim Mohd, Hafiz Hamzah, Shaira Amira, Syaheeda Hamdani, Zahid M. Naser, Shafiq Said, Hidayu Hatta, Raihani Md. Saaid  
**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia

28  
NOV



### Black Milk of Morning — Paul Celan Centenary

Paul Celan remains one of the greatest poets of the 20th century. Grappling with the long shadow of the Holocaust, Celan's poetry was forged from language that had spiced "through the thousand darkneses of death-bringing speech". It was a powerful Gegenwort (counter-word) that resounded against the violence of obliteration, against the limits of poetry and language itself. In conjunction with the centenary of Paul Celan's birth, we speak to the distinguished poet and translator Pierre Joris, who has engaged deeply with Celan's work for over 50 years. We explore the complexities and intricacies of Celan's poetics, his striking reconfigurations of the German language, and what Joris calls Celan's "fearful polysemy". This conversation is moderated by GTLF Co-Director Pauline Fan, who is translating Celan's poetry into Malay.

**Speakers:** Pierre Joris, Pauline Fan  
**Language:** English

28  
NOV



## Fatimah Busu: Memecah Tempurung Belunggu

“Tiada guna menjadi penulis jika karya yang ditulis tidak menyuarakan kepentingan dan kebajikan masyarakatnya”. Begitu menurut Fatimah Busu. Sedari awal menulis, sasterawan dan novelis ini tekal menegur ketempangan yang terjadi dalam masyarakatnya. Namun, tidak selalunya teguran lewat sastera disambut baik oleh khalayaknya atau lebih-lebih lagi oleh sang penguasa. Regina Ibrahim bersama Fatimah Busu berbicara tentang sastera Malaysia, tujuan menulis, dan perihai lain di sekitarnya.

**Pembicara:** Fatimah Busu, Regina Ibrahim

**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia

28  
NOV



## Illusive Elucidations: Aida Redza in Conversation

Spirits, systems, control and release. How does one bridge the chasm between contemporary life and elusive memory-fragments of a past, to reclaim what was meant to be but never was? Renowned dancer and choreographer, Aida Redza, contemplates her search for a language to re-invent a lost lineage that aims to connect, to heal.

**Speakers:** Aida Reza, Chee Sek Thim

**Language:** English

28  
NOV



## In Solidarity: the Writer, his Conscience and the Nation — F. Sionil José in Conversation

Best known for his “Rosales Saga” novels, multi-award-winning Filipino writer F. Sionil José, is known equally outside his country for his interventions on questions of land reform and social justice as well as one of the founders of the regional journal of literature and opinion, *Solidarity*. Born before the Great Depression, he is rare in being a living witness to the tumultuous 20th Century; throughout he has been a consistent advocate for freedom of expression with his confirmation as Vice President of PEN International in October 2019 a testament to that conviction. In this conversation, Eddin Khoo speaks to him about the role of the writer in the formation of national consciousness.

**Speakers:** F. Sionil José, Eddin Khoo

**Language:** English

28  
NOV



## Sastera Dalam Kurungan

Suasana sepi, tersisih, dan terpinggir adalah antara suasana yang sering dikaitkan dengan pengkaryaan sastera. Perbualan ini akan meneroka tentang karya yang terhasil dalam kurungan seperti penjara, pulau orang buangan, di dalam suaka politik (dan mungkin juga dalam tempoh Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan?). Bakal dibincangkan juga “kurungan” bersifat geografi, tentang sastera Melayu yang mungkin membataskan diri cuma dalam wilayah Malaysia atau Asia Tenggara, tentang jarak antara sastera Melayu Malaysia dan Indonesia, dan sebagainya.

**Pembicara:** Nirwan Dewanto, Al-Mustaqeem M. Radhi  
**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia

28  
NOV

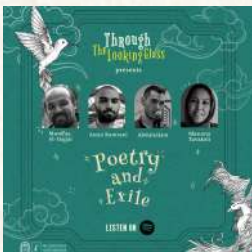


## The Sandpit: A Monologue by KS Maniam

In tribute to the late legendary Malaysian writer, K.S. Maniam, GTLF offers a special reading of his play, *The Sandpit* — a story of tradition, oppression, endurance and the female body set in a working-class Malaysian-Indian family. This dramatised reading features celebrated actresses Anne James and Jo Kukathas reprising the roles of Santha and Sumathi which they performed in the 1994 production.

**Speakers:** Anne James, Jo Kukathas  
**Language:** English

28  
NOV



## Poetry and Exile

Exile has been a recurring theme and metaphor in poetry since ancient times to the present day. How do the social, political and existential conditions of exile or displacement shape a poetry of insistent memory and resistance? Poets and translators Abdulsalam, Amin, Masuma and Mwaffaq gather for a conversation among friends. They speak of longing for their homelands of Syria, Iran and Afghanistan, tensions of belonging in their new home of Malaysia, of hope, loss and the possibility of freedom.

**Speakers:** Mwaffaq Al-Hajjar, Amin Kamrani, Abdulsalam, Masuma Tavakoli  
**Language:** English

29  
NOV



## Quirky Antiquity: A Pig King, A Malay Tale

Originally written by a merchant in 1775, publisher Amir Muhammad set the challenge to re-tell one of Malay literature's strangest stories alongside author Heidi Shamsuddin and illustrator Evi Shelvia. This story of pig king offers challenges for both readers and the authors who have created an evocatively modern re-telling as well as a novel funding process to produce this beautifully illustrated book.

**Speakers:** Amir Muhammad, Heidi Shamsuddin, Evi Shelvia, Kam Raslan

**Language:** English

29  
NOV



## Storylines – Making Life Visible

The world of comics, graphic novels, and illustrations in Southeast Asia has been gaining its fair share of global attention. These visual mediums have provided markers of national identity, such as that found in Lat's cartoons, and have continuously informed our imaginations and realities. But what is it that makes these ways of storytelling so treasured? And how do they inform our collective and individual ways of seeing and thinking? Join Eisner award-winning comic artist, Erica Eng and New Naratif Comics and Illustrations Editor, Charis Loke as we explore these question and their personal approaches to the visual form.

**Speakers:** Karl Nadzarin, Erica Eng, Charis Loke

**Language:** English

29  
NOV



## Stesen Titik Nol

Setelah Tinju dan Peluru selesai diterbitkan, Johan Radzi, seorang penulis asal Kuala Lumpur, mengambil keputusan untuk keluar seketika dari dunia fiksi dan berpindah ke bukan fiksi. Di situ, peguam muda ini bertemu dengan dirinya di kota-kota utama di Asia Tenggara. Beliau mencatat pemerhatiannya terhadap kebudayaan-kebudayaan yang asing bagi dirinya. Kemudian lahirlah Stesen Titik Nol. Noor Azam Shairi berbual dengan Johan Radzi tentang bagaimana gamaknya menulis sambil mengembara dan kesan pandemik terhadap genre penulisan travelog.

**Pembicara:** Johan Radzi, Noor Azam Shairi

**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia

29  
NOV



## Indigenous Art, Loudly Speaking to Contemporary Times — Wanda Nanibush in Conversation

Wanda Nanibush is the current Curator of Indigenous art at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada, as well as an author, educator & community organiser. She speaks to Malaysian curator Sharmin Parameswaran on the continued importance of Indigenous art in bringing forth the collective experience and knowledge of people to our contemporary lives. Additionally, how Indigenous Canadian artists are expressing out loud against authoritarian states.

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

**Speakers:** Wanda Nanibush, Sharmin Parameswaran  
**Language:** English

29  
NOV



## Kosmopolitanisme Dalam Filem Melayu

Jika sejarah panjang filem Melayu ibarat seutas rantai emas, suasana yang menyulaminya adalah kosmopolitanisme. Manusia hidup dalam sebuah masyarakat dunia adalah citra yang sering di papar dalam filem Melayu sejak dari zaman studio lagi. Namun, manusia sudah terhantuk pada dinding kaca yang telah memantulkannya kembali ke belakang. Semakin terhubung masyarakat dunia, semakin ke dalam cara pandangannya. Kosmopolitanisme kini di asak oleh parokialisme dan nasionalisme sempit. Apakah ini yang sedang terjadi dalam filem Melayu hari ini? Bersama dua sosok filem terkemuka Malaysia, Al Jafree Md Yusop dan Hassan Muthalib, memeta salasilah filem Melayu dan membedah tema-tema utama filem-filem masyarakat Malaysia hari ini.

**Pembicara:** Al Jafree Md Yusop, Hassan Muthalib  
**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia

29  
NOV



## Writing in a Wounded World — A travel writer's unlikely journey around the COVID-19 globe

COVID-19 has wounded people the world over in untold ways. Although some wounds may never truly heal, there is always hope for healing and change. In this podcast, travel writer Marco Ferrarese shares his first-hand experience of this pandemic with the loss of his beloved parents in the killing fields while he was stuck in Peru due to global border control orders. Listen to his story, how this has affected his work, and his take on what the future holds for travel writers.

**Speakers:** Marco Ferrarese, Ruzanna M. Zuknik  
**Language:** English



## Alkisah Maka Tersebutlah: Serpihan Sulalatus Salatin

Fahmi Mustafa dan Mislina Mustafa, dua orang penulis dan penggiat seni yang menetap di Pulau Pinang, membacakan petikan daripada Sulalatus Salatin.

**Pembicara:** Fahmi Mustafa, Mislina Mustafa  
**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia

## BONUS . . . . .



## Literacy and Cosmopolitanism in an Era of Crisis

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 the Director of the Penang Institute we explore if the assumptions underpinning the Island's cosmopolitan impulses have been permanently disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Speakers:** Ooi Kee Beng, Sharaad Kuttan  
**Language:** English



## Yang Indah, Yang Nakal: Melayu Dalam Sastera Lisan dan Tulis

Bahasa bukan sekadar alat untuk menghantarkan rasa. Dengan bahasa, kita juga mencuit, menampar, mahupun menggoda. Perbualan ini menelusuri lenggang-lenggok bahasa Melayu dalam pelbagai karya lisan dan tulisnya. Ia membawa kita untuk merenung persenjangan, namun pada hujungnya, yang indah dan yang nakal dalam bahasa ini tetap bersulam antara satu sama lain. Lalu, bagaimana pula penginstitution kemudiannya menyemai atau mematikkan kedua-dua sifat bahasa ini?

**Pembicara:** Muhammad Haji Salleh, Eddin Khoo  
**Bahasa:** Bahasa Malaysia

# PEN MALAYSIA X GTLF



PEN Malaysia is the local chapter of PEN International, founded a century ago, in 1921, to foster kinship and intellectual cooperation among writers. Today, we are open to all who love words, who cherish reading and writing, who support writers and their freedoms. Join us.

Be a part of the PEN Malaysia community today!

**PEN MALAYSIA** **Georgetown Literary Festival** [fb.com/georgetownlifefest](https://fb.com/georgetownlifefest) **LIVE**

## Sembang Baru

# New Conversations

*A 3-part online dialogue series for Malaysia's writing communities, presented by PEN Malaysia*

**26 - 28 NOV 2020**  
**8.30PM - 10PM (MYT)**

Featuring (Left To Right) Ann Lee, Sreedhevi Iyer, Carol Kah, Siti Rahayu Baharin, Julyo Ooi, Melizarani T. Selva, Bernice Chauly, Kulleh Grasi, Jaymani Sevanathan, Faisal Tehrani, Al-Mustaqeem M Radhi, Chiew Ruoh Peng, Adriana Nordin Manan, Jo Kukathas, Fahmi Mustafa

## Sembang Baru/New Conversations

Catch 'Sembang Baru/New Conversations', a 3-part online dialogue series for Malaysia's writing communities, presented by PEN Malaysia, from 8.30 pm to 10 pm on Nov 26, 27 & 28 streamed live on the GTLF Facebook Page. Supported by PEN International, the renowned global literary organisation, celebrating 100 years of promoting literature and protecting freedom of expression.

Ikuti 'Sembang Baru', dialog atas talian sebanyak tiga siri untuk pengarang dan sasterawan di Malaysia, ditampilkan oleh PEN Malaysia, 8:30 pm – 10 pm, Nov 26, 27 dan 28 'langsung' @ GTLF Facebook Page. Acara ini disokong oleh PEN International, organisasi sejagat tersohor, sempena meraikan 100 tahun meraikan kesusasteraan dan melindungi kebebasan bersuara.

## 26 November

PEN Malaysia 'Sembang Baru' /  
New Conversations' series presents:

fb.com/georgetownlifefest  
f LIVE

Satu Penerokaan Ikrar PEN Sejagat

# Kalau Sastera Bungkam, Bagaimana Saya Akan Bicara?

Moderator:  
Faisal Tehrani

Bernice Chauly  
Jaymani Sevanathan  
Kulleh Grasi

**KHAMIS, 26 NOV 2020**  
**8.30PM - 10PM (MYT)**

PEN MALAYSIA

Kita secara umumnya mengetahui betapa sastera itu merentas sempadan dan merupakan satu modal seni untuk kemanusiaan di celah krisis dan goncangan politik. Sastera menjadi suara manusia tatkala perang, dan aman. Sastera adalah puncak luahan seni dan wacana intelektual umat manusia. Ia tidak harus digugat dan terkekang oleh kuasa politik. Maka sebagai sasterawan, penyair dan juga seniman; pengarang menebar kefahaman, kecintaan dan berusaha menjuarai hidup sentosa selain menjadi suara kesetaraan. Dalam dunia penuh kebimbangan oleh pandemik, gasakan kuasa, kemerosotan hak asasi manusia, bagaimanakah pengarang akan kekal bersuara jika dibungkam? Pembentangan oleh Bernice Chauly, Jaymani Sevanathan, dan Kulleh Grasi ini akan diselaraskan oleh Faisal Tehrani. Mereka akan sama-sama berbincang persoalan karya masing-masing, harapan untuk kemanusiaan dan sikap terhadap Ikrar PEN Sejagat (PEN Charter).

## 27 November

PEN Malaysia 'Sembang Baru' /  
New Conversations' series presents:

fb.com/georgetownlifefest  
f LIVE

# The Politics, Poetics & Rituals Of Translation

Moderator:  
Johny Murtaza

Al-Muqtasim M'Raabi  
Ghaw Raah Peng  
Auliyana Ibrahim

**FRIDAY, 27 NOV 2020**  
**8.30PM - 10PM (MYT)**

PEN MALAYSIA

Stories are never 'just' stories. Each is a home for every human, a sense of belonging with a bigger purpose, driven by imagination and tamed by discipline. Stories gather ecosystems of thought, perception and importantly, imagination. They travel across space and time, via word of mouth or the visceral mind of a translator. Maka seperti kulit yang pejal sifatnya, stories will be assigned a new form, roh dan nyawa baharu, that will surface upon translator's politics, poetics and rituals, seperti benih yang tumbuh mekar setelah tanah terbaja dan hujan menumpang tumpah. This is a session tentang memecahkan terjemahan towards a new realm of how story travels dan bagaimana ia direkayasa so humans will have a home to go back to dan mencerap setiap kejadian alam; because translations adalah sebuah pintu menuju kemungkinan.



## 28 November

PEN Malaysia 'Sembang Baru' /  
New Conversations' series presents:

**The Malaysian Women's Manifesto**

Moderator:  
Maltzarani Y. Sobra

Ann Lee  
Sreedhevi Iyer  
Carol Koh  
Julya Ooi  
Siti Rahayu Bicharin

fb.com/georgetownlifefest  
LIVE

**SATURDAY, 28 NOV 2020**  
**8.30PM - 10PM (MYT)**

PEN MALAYSIA

Witness the stories, lessons and visual journey of five Malaysian women in the literary arts, as they reclaim the principles of the PEN International Women's Manifesto. From one playwright's battle against the banning of 'The Vagina Monologues' to a trans woman writer's journey of wrangling her fears into text, this session will be a feminist shake-up on the very definition of being a Malaysian woman. Audiences are invited to participate in the discussion on how we can continue to promote literacy, improve accessibility and create a safer literary ecosystem for Malaysian women writers to flourish. This session will consist of five presentations followed by an interactive fireside chat, conducted in English and Bahasa Malaysia.

# SWADAYA X GTLF



The Swadaya Collective consists of Tintabudi, Pelita Dihin, Lit Books, Bibliophile, Nur Innai Bookshop and Gerakbudaya. They are a collection of local bookstores, distributors and publishers based in the Klang Valley. In collaboration with GTLF, Swadaya Collective have several virtual events lined up over the festival weekend.

## 26 NOVEMBER

**Book Launch:** Rahman's Big Break  
Launch with Gerakbudaya x Kakiseni  
**Time:** 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm  
**Platform:** Gerakbudaya Facebook Page  
**Ticket:** Free

Set in 1920s Penang, this final instalment of Hikayat Series by Kakiseni highlights the rich tapestry of Malaysian performing arts embedded in Teater Bangsawan for young readers. Kakiseni works with author David Chin and Penang-born illustrator, Leong Wai Khong to bring the characters and surroundings to life. The first book in the Hikayat Series is *Shadows*, revolves around the art of wayang kulit, and the second book is *The Girl Who Loves to Dance*, revolves around the art of Mak Yong. Featuring Low Ngai Yuen, President of Kakiseni; Leong Wai Khong, illustrator.

## 27 NOVEMBER

**Book Presentation:**  
Freundschaft/Friendship  
**Time:** 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm  
**Platform:** Gerakbudaya Facebook Page  
**Ticket:** Free

**Description:** What is friendship? The first interpersonal relationship that we ourselves choose. Jörg Brüggemann and Tobias Kruse ask what kind of a relationship “friendship” is. It is neither familial nor romantic and yet, it often goes so much deeper. Together, the two photographers have photographed each other and observed friendships in public space.

In their new series for the OBSCURA Festival of Photography and this artist's book, they find emblematic images of closeness and distance, joy and sorrow, love and competition, trust and doubt, giving and taking, strength and weakness, sharing and separating.

The friendship between both photographers deepened on the journeys they undertook together. In the spring of 2019, during a residency at OBSCURA in Penang, Malaysia, they captured it all in photographs—their friendship and friendships in general. The two Ostkreuz photographers asked themselves what distinguished these connections, which are neither familial nor romantic, and decided to create pictures of them.

## 27 NOVEMBER

**Book Launch:** Paper & Text, edited by William Tham  
**Time:** 4:30 pm – 6:00 pm  
**Platform:** Gerakbudaya Facebook Page  
**Ticket:** Free

A translator. Two academics. A publisher. A bookseller. Five individuals share their thoughts on the state of the Malaysian book trade in this post-pandemic era on the edge of a permanent digital transformation. We discuss Malaysian literature in huge detail, but comparatively little is said about the ecosystem that makes it possible. Paper & Text seeks to resolve these questions and more. Featuring a discussion with William Tham and the contributors. This book was produced with the support of Clarity Publishing and Lit Books.

**Talk:** Malay(sia) is not a Cultural Desert: Visual Art. Then and Now. With Victor Chin and Eric Goh  
**Time:** 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm  
**Platform:** Zoom Meetings  
**Ticket:** RM10.00

Outside of the circle of practitioners, art can be mystifying to outsiders. Great works of art can transcend centuries, and like their creators, can often become mythical in their own right. Yet art can often seem like a bastion of elitism; a deep reading of art is crucial to understanding it, but this is often an investment in time and effort. Can or should art bedone for its own sake, or does it have a pedagogical or social role? If yes, then how should art engage with the wider world in terms of class, community and of course literature? And on the subject of literature, how does writing impact one's practice and viewpoints? Digging past auctions and galleries, and speaking from the margins of the art world, Victor Chin and Eric Goh answer these questions, and more.

## 28 NOVEMBER

**Talk:** Diasporic Writing with Vincent Ternida  
**Time:** 11:00 am – 1:00 pm  
**Platform:** Gerakbudaya Facebook Page  
**Ticket:** Free

The subject of diasporic writing has gained traction in recent years, especially so in North American literature. The subject of Asian heritage is trendy, and writers like Amy Tan, Madeleine Thien and Joy Kogawa have broken out into the consciousness of the wider reading public. But for all the focus on telling a more human side to stories of migration, it also forces writers into boxes, becoming permanent Others who are neither here nor there. In this discussion, we speak to Canadian author Vincent Ternida about his work, how he fits into the Canadian writing scene, as well as how his background and experiences growing up in Asia before permanently moving abroad continue to define him.

Vincent Ternida's pieces have appeared in Ricepaper Magazine, Dark Helix Press, and was long-listed for the CBC Short Story Prize in 2019. Ternida's first novella, *The Seven Muses of Harry Salcedo*, was published by Asian Canadian Writer's Workshop. He currently has a collection of short stories in development, adapting his novella into a screenplay, and interviews other authors for fun and profit. He lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

*Brought to you by the Canadian High Commission.*

**Talk:** Young Editors' Panel with  
Thatchaayanie Renganathan, Sheau Yun  
Lim and Regina Hoo

**Moderator:** Nadine Azalea

**Time:** 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

**Platform:** Zoom Meetings

**Ticket:** RM10.00

What does it mean to be an editor today, and why is their role important?

Trading marked-up text for digital editing tools, working collaboratively over Google Docs in real-time versus a time-lag of several days, how does all of this change the way an editor works? And for young editors in particular, how does one make up for youth and “inexperience” in the gruelling, fast-paced world of publishing and beyond? Moderated by Gerakbudaya’s Executive Editor Nadine Azalea, learn more about the editor’s craft and ask all the questions you want about the process.

Sheau Yun Lim is Lead Researcher at Malaysia Design Archive. She holds a BA in Architecture from Yale University and was awarded the John Addison Porter Prize. She started and leads O For Other, a blog, and MDA Publications. Regina Hoo is a writer and deputy editor for Penang Monthly. She comes from a background of English literature, broadcasting and journalism. Thatchaayanie Renganathan interns as an editor for Penguin Random House SEA, while also exploring her skill in the film and video games industries. She has a background in TESL and literature.

**Talk:** Collaborative Community  
Worldbuilding and Storytelling with the  
Unity Macroverse

**Time:** 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm

**Platform:** Zoom Meetings

**Ticket:** RM10.00

What is the Unity Macroverse? It is a large story canvas based on an alternate reality where Asian influences such as community wellbeing and shared prosperity is the dominant driving force on earth, as opposed to capitalism and the pursuit of wealth. Anyone can populate this canvas by contributing their stories, which will be curated and incorporated into the storylines. Participation is also open for the production of story delivery formats such as books, comics, novels and others whereby illustrators, artists, writers, hobbyists and makers can chip in as well. Join Azlan Tahir and Adely Ariffin as they talk about community- and world-building, their journey in creating the macroverse and where they hope to go from here. Azlan Tahir and Adely Ariffin are neither professional writers, nor publishers in the commonly understood definitions of such terms. Their background is from a corporate environment, previously handling operational, management, and boardroom matters for public listed and large local corporations responsible for many of the public and private services available today ranging from transportation infrastructure and telecommunications services to media and property development. As with many other prior initiatives, they had created the Unity Macroverse as demand and business aggregation platform – aimed at assisting local businesses especially microbusinesses and freelancers, whilst encouraging and inspiring younger generations to read and be more actively involved in storytelling.

**Talk:** Writing Race with Melissa De Silva with Sharmilla Ganesan and Lee Chwi Lynn

**Time:** 8:00 pm – 9:30 pm

**Platform:** Zoom Meetings

**Ticket:** RM10.00

One common Malaysian and Singaporean problem is our love for boxes, for putting people within categories. In Singapore, we have the infamous CIMO – Chinese, Indian, Malay and Others – it is this inescapable formula of categorisation that author Melissa De Silva confronted in her award-winning creative nonfiction collection, 'Others' is not a Race.

Sharmilla Ganesan and Lee Chwi Lynn of BFM speak to Melissa about her writing journey, how her upbringing and experiences have shaped here, as well as how her work resonates with people on both sides of the border.

Melissa De Silva is the author of 'Others' is Not a Race, winner of the Singapore Literature Prize 2018 (Creative Nonfiction), about Eurasians in Singapore. She has worked as a journalist and book editor and is Singapore's Education Ambassador for online global creative writing platform for teens, Write the World.

## 29 NOVEMBER

**Talk:** 失序时刻的（马华）文学 (Sinophone Malaysian) Literature in a time of crisis/disorder with Show Ying Xin, Loo Pei Yi and Lee Chee Yong.

**Time:** 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

**Platform:** Zoom Meetings

**Ticket:** RM10.00

超现实的2020年虽然接近尾声，但是公卫、政治和生存危机却没有尽头。民间组织【业余者】在疫情期间举办小小小说征文比赛，获得马来西亚各地写作爱好者踊跃投稿，书写疫情底下的失序世界，也通过文学作品，想象和反思日常生活的非日常状态。面对庞大现实，我们无法避开政治的角力；然而回到写作，文学情感提供坚实柔软的后盾，让人们有勇气直视问题。文学既无法回避政治，也应该超越政治。来听听业余者三位成员，聊聊他们目前关心的文学课题，从几个维度来思考危机时刻和新常态下的文学。

苏颖欣（讲师，《马来素描》译者）：透过语言与翻译之窗看马来西亚文学

卢佩伊（作家、大将出版社编辑）：看不见的编辑之眼：选集、记忆和马华文学

李志勇（业余者成员）：封存片刻永恒：危机时刻的日记书写

**Talk:** Crosstalk: On Science and Culture with Clarissa Lee and C.W. Shern

**Time:** 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

**Platform:** Zoom Meetings

**Ticket:** RM10.00

There are some concepts we take for granted. Science fiction is sometimes considered a foreign import even as it is a universal concept. Our society perceives its citizens as divided into two kinds of people: those who went into the sciences and those who did not. Such that when someone goes into the arts, that is separate and unconnected to science. Or is that the case? Tune in with Clarissa Lee as she discusses not just science fiction but also arts/science, speculative design and the degree to which science is imagined in popular culture — in virtual and augmented spaces, from small screens to big screens, inspired by books while also inspiring them in kind. And looming above this is the spectre of our colonial past, and how we turn existing history on its head in the journey towards a decolonised future. For this upcoming segment, she will be joined by C.W. Shern as he shares his insights from his exposure to science fiction and

the spaces he currently is involved in. Clarissa Ai Ling Lee is an art-science creator, science and technology studies scholar, and design-based research specialist residing in Malaysia. In her spare free time, she likes to play tabletop games, read on non-work related topics, learn about the latest technology, find the most horrifying horror to watch and work on manual creative projects. She is an expert at bringing together different strands of incoherent ideas, much to the chagrin of those around her. She tweets as @normasalim. C. W. Shern has written across diverse spaces, especially in action, thriller, and science fiction. His projects include an award-winning mobile game, a UNICEF text-based interactive story, and development on a UK film production. He is also a videogame designer and has a novel in the works.

**Book Launch:** Superficiality by Tee Lin Dee  
**Time:** 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm  
**Platform:** Gerakbudaya Facebook Page  
**Ticket:** Free

In this debut short story collection, a young doctor comes to terms with the gruelling life of the medical profession, struggling with ethics and responsibilities. A retiree navigates the petty squabbles and rivalries in her Tai Chi group. A part-time moneylender must face the consequences of his decisions as he juggles his day job. And an avowed dancer questions the thin line between committing to art and selling out in the cutthroat world of his profession. Weaving in and out of these stories is the ever-outspoken Swensen, who sheds new light on entrenched perspectives. Lin Dee's debut collection questions the superficiality at the heart of modern Malaysian life and the possibilities that lie beyond. Join her for this virtual book launch as she talks about her journey into YA territory.

Tee Lin Dee is a writer, TV producer and the founder of the SchoolHeroes programme. She was with The Star for 14 years, a time she credits as being dynamic and adventure-some. Thereafter, a divided Malaysia bothered her and in a quest for contribution, went on to start SchoolHeroes, teaching 21st-century life lessons to predominantly Malay-speaking Malay and rural Indian students.

**Talk:** Penjual Buku, Bersatu! with The Swadaya Collective  
**Time:** 8:00 pm – 9:30 pm  
**Platform:** Gerakbudaya Facebook Page  
**Ticket:** Free

Apakah situasi terkini untuk para penjual buku indie dalam era COVID-19 ini? Kolektif Swadaya akan membincangkan situasi ini dalam perbincangan terakhir kami.

## BONUS

\*Self-guided Tour

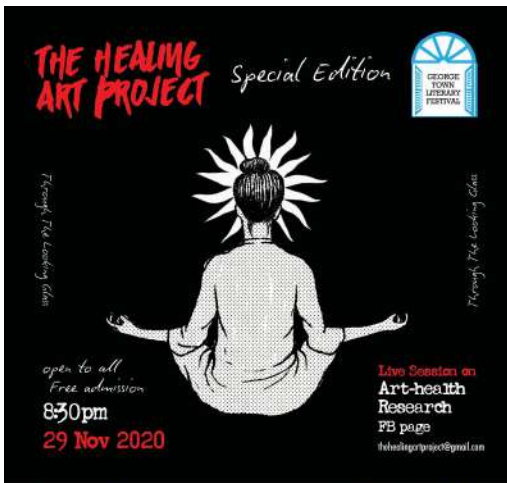
As part of his “Koli Kallen” project with the Getty Foundation, Simon Soon of the University of Malaya has prepared a Google Map which ties together cryptic poetry, Boria performances, the long reach of secret societies and the streets and history of George Town, with the support of organisations such as Penang Institute and Penang Heritage Trust. We invite you to (safely and responsibly) explore the contours of old George Town, and through this interactive map.

# The Healing Art Project



The Healing Art Project, a program designated into exploring developed by fusing the power of music composition with therapeutic elements is coming together in the George Town Literary Festival 2020, through our looking glass, to where ever you would be. Soothing in with our composition, fusing in with poetries and bring yourself to our realm of deeply immersive, full-body listening experience, intentionally using music to invite gentle yet powerfully therapeutic and restorative effects to your mind and body. Through the comfort of your own home, the program will be brought through the Healing Art Project Facebook page, with the very same intention, to lie down, and relax while featuring a collaboration of gifted performing artist of different genre and practice.

## THE PROGRAMME



The session takes place in a room, a maximum of 40 people for each session with live music, and guided body movements. An organized series of sharing session with musician, researcher, and choreographer will be conducted live with direct engagements with the participants, to go through a session of body and spiritual experience, exploring one's reactivity to the ambience of the designed atmosphere, to induce the participants to immerse in the guided choices, led by the expert. The session ends up with a survey and interviews. The data then analyzed and the result from the program reported.

As an extension to the physical participatory programme, participants will be given a chance to experience THAP's virtual program through a designated virtual space (website) from the comfort of their own home. The guided session will be able to bridge the gap of geographic constraints.

## THINGS TO DO: . . . . .

1. Prep your space with good ventilation, calm and soothing lighting, to enhance your experience.
2. Prepare a yoga mat or any sort of rug or soft padding on the floor. Participants will be required to follow a set of exercise that will involve lying down.
3. Please ensure that you have a stable internet connection as the workshop will be conducted via an online streaming platform.
4. A well-balanced sound system is encouraged. Every instruction will be conducted with audio, and the ambience of the music is the key to experiencing the program.
5. Keep yourself hydrated throughout the day. When you are well hydrated, you will have a better experience.
6. Eat light and healthy food. The experience becomes more impactful when your diet is well balanced.
7. Wear warm, comfortable and flexible clothing.
8. There will be a pre-registration required.
9. The streaming platform will be online 15 minutes prior to the program. Please login before the program start to prepare yourself and ensure that your connection is working properly.
10. If you are following the program in a group, please make sure there is enough space within all participants. Each participant will need an approximate space of about 72cm x 24cm or more, please ensure that the group will practice social distancing at a minimum of 6 feet apart from each other.
11. At the end of the program, please fill-up the questionnaire form. Every participant will be required to fill-up the form as part of the research for this program.

Last but not least remember to relax and enjoy the journey with us!

For those who are interested to experience the program, follow The Healing Art Project through their social media accounts.



healingartproject



Art-Health Research





# PRODUCTION TEAM

Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau

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Finance Manager – Siti Sarah Ismail

Festival Coordinator – Swarna Rajagopal

Design Lead - Terry Neoh

Social Media - Farah Saleem



# THANK YOU

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