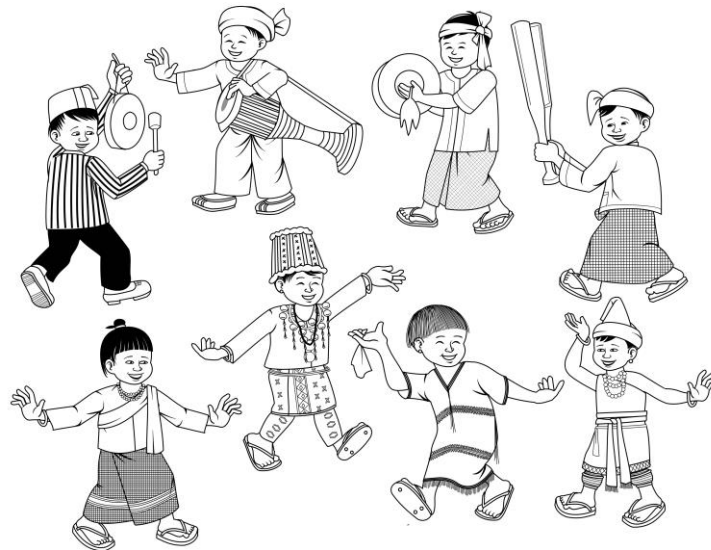


For immediate release

ASIAN FESTIVAL OF CHILDREN'S CONTENT (AFCC) Dissects Diversity in its 10th Edition



Artwork by Myanmar guest illustrator Sai Parn Hein

SINGAPORE, 14 August 2019 – In an increasingly divisive and polarised world, how do books help children and youths make sense of the world that they live in? What is the responsibility of writers dealing with sensitive topics like representation, multiracialism and depression? All these questions

and more will be front and centre at the upcoming Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC), which will mark its 10th edition this September. They will be part of the critical discourse at AFCC, which will explore the theme "Diversity" from 5 to 8 Sep at the National Library Singapore.

Organised by the Singapore Book Council, AFCC will feature a final slate of about 150 speakers, (104 local and 47 international speakers) who will take part in more than 90 sessions over four days.

The opening keynote will see three distinguished speakers – award-winning translator Helen Wang; editor at Random House Books for Young Readers Sara Sargent; and educator/publisher Mary George – advocating diversity in children's books and YA fiction. Furthermore, well-known children's literature scholar Philip Nel will give a lecture titled, "Why Adults Refuse to Admit Racist Content in the Children's Books They Love". Conversely, Sadaf Siddique will give a talk on how to depict Muslims positively in literature.

Debut YA novelists Emily X.R. Pan and Hanna Alkaf, together with two-time Philippines' National Children's Book Awards winner Weng Cahiles will share their insight on how to write about trauma for young readers. Attendees can look forward to Lisa Charleyboy, a Tsilhqot'in (First Nations) writer's lecture addressing the importance of minority representation in children's literature. In lecture "Being a Translator: Crazy but True", Helen Wang discusses a translator's responsibility to source material, readers and cultural sensitivity.

"AFCC has been championing diversity and Asian children's books since its inception," says William Phuan, Executive Director of the Singapore Book Council. "As we mark our 10th anniversary milestone, it is even more important that we continue to push to enrich the literary landscape with multicultural stories and diverse themes."

A new initiative at the festival this year is the Young Book Reviewers podcast. Featuring students from secondary schools and junior colleges, the podcasts will highlight what Asian children's and YA books young people are reading and their perspectives. Partnered with local student radio stations, the podcasts will be streamed online.

AFCC will feature Myanmar as its Country of Focus this year. A delegation of 25 writers, illustrators and publishers from Myanmar will take part in a series of discussions and talks at AFCC, sharing about their

folktales and reading initiatives. The COF programme will culminate in Myanmar Night, a celebration of Myanmar arts and culture.

In its continuing bid to recognise the excellence of writers and illustrators in Asia, AFCC will present the biennial Scholastic Picture Book Award 2019 (SPBA) this year. Seven picture book manuscripts have been shortlisted from among 88 submissions. The shortlisted works came from India, Vietnam, Singapore, Turkey, Philippines and South Korea. The winner, who will receive \$10,000 in prize money and have the opportunity for their work to be published by Scholastic Asia), will be announced at Celebrating Our Stars, an AFCC highlight event.

"We're incredibly pleased to be bringing these wonderful stories to our markets. Through SPBA, Scholastic will continue in our commitment to uplift Asian creators, and the unique stories they have to tell," enthused Selina Lee, Vice President of Scholastic Asia.

Visitors can also check out free programmes at AFCC. They can visit the Book Illustrators Gallery (BIG), an exhibition showcasing picture book illustrations by illustrators from Southeast Asia and the Asian diaspora. Moreover, there will be a showcase of the best GIF creations from the GIF Challenge in August, a 24-hour GIF-making competition co-organised by the Singapore Book Council, LASALLE College of the Arts and CAMPUS Magazine. Participants had to create a GIF in 24 hours inspired by selected works of AFCC's featured authors. The winners will be announced during AFCC.

For more information, please visit afcc.com.sg.

Event details

Asian Festival of Children's Content 2019

Date: 5 to 8 September

Venue: National Library

100 Victoria St, Singapore 188064

Ticketing information

Concession discount of 25% is available for students and senior citizens.

Ticketing website: afcc.com.sg/2019/page/tickets

| Category | Concession | Regular |
|-----------------|------------|---------|
| All Access Pass | \$200 | \$260 |
| One-day Pass | \$60 | \$80 |
| Two-day Pass | \$112.50 | \$150 |
| Three-day Pass | \$165 | \$220 |
| Masterclasses | \$60 | \$80 |
| Lectures | \$15 | \$20 |

Annex I: AFCC 2019 Programmes (Selected)

Annex II: Speakers' Bios (Selected)

Annex III: Shortlist of Scholastic Picture Book Award 2019 (SPBA)

For media related enquiries, please contact:

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About Singapore Book Council

The Singapore Book Council (SBC) is an independent charity with IPC status. Established in 1968 to support Singapore authors and literature, SBC aims to Build Our Imagine-nation by developing creativity, imagination, original thought and empathy through writing, reading, illustration and storytelling. We are committed to developing the literary arts sector through our festivals, training workshops and courses, as well as book awards to recognise excellence. Because it all starts with a story.

Vision: International recognition for quality, diverse Singapore literature.

Mission: To develop, support and advocate a multicultural literary arts sector.

SBC is supported by the National Arts Council of Singapore under the Major Company Scheme for the period from 2019 to 2022. For more information, please visit www.bookcouncil.sg.

About Asian Festival of Children's Content

The Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC), organised by the Singapore Book Council, is the leading festival in Asia focusing on children's books and stories and young adult (YA) fiction. Targeted at writers, illustrators, translators, publishers, parents, teachers and media producers, this one-of-a-kind festival offers a series of exciting panel discussions, workshops, lectures, masterclasses, pitching sessions, networking events and public activities promoting the creation and appreciation of quality children's literature and YA with a focus on Asian themes. For the past 10 years, the AFCC has since grown to become a key literary event in the region, attracting many local and international speakers, as well as thousands of delegates and participants.

For more information, please visit www.afcc.com.sg.

Annex I: Selected AFCC Programmes

1. Keynote Address: Championing Diversity in a Volatile World

Speakers: Helen Wang, Sara Sargent, Mary George

Moderator: Geraldine Teo-Zuzarte

Date: 5 Sep 2019 (Thu) 9:00am – 10:30am

Venue: National Library Building, level 16, The Pod

Why is it important for children to see themselves represented in the books and media they consume? What does it really mean to "Champion Diversity in a Volatile World"?

To officially launch the Asian Festival of Children's Content 2019, join us for the opening keynote as our distinguished speakers will offer their views on this year's festival theme of Diversity in a series of keynote addresses, followed by a panel discussion.

2. Dealing With Trauma in Books (Panel)

Speakers: Hanna Alkaf, Emily X.R. Pan, Weng Cahiles

Moderator: Elaine Fong

Date: 7 Sep 2019 (Sat) 4:00pm – 5:00pm

Venue: National Library Building, B1, Programme Zone

How to portray sensitively trauma in books for young adults? From racial violence to murder and depression, what is the responsibility of writers in writing about these topics? This panel will share about how they navigate these issues on both a systemic and personal level.

3. Expanding Multicultural Understanding Through Muslim Children's and YA Books (Talk)

Speaker: Sadaf Siddique

Date: 6 Sep 2019 (Fri) 9:00am – 10:00am

Venue: National Library Building, level 5, Possibility Room

How can we counter Islamophobia through stories? Sadaf Siddique from KitaabWorld will share on a toolkit of books and programming ideas that will facilitate positive representations of Muslims and create a more inclusive environment.

4. Country of Focus Book Launch – 18,000 Islands of Creativity: Indonesian Children's Literature Today and Skyscrapers, Books and Imagination: The Evolving Children's Literature Landscape in Singapore

Speakers: Evelyn Wong, Murti Bunanta

Date: 5 Sep 2019 (Thurs) 4:15pm – 5:15pm

Venue: National Library Building, L3, Drama Centre (By invite only)

As part of AFCC's 10th edition, we are launching two edited compilations of essays and presentations based on the highlights of, and key ideas shared during the Asian Festival of Children's Content in 2017 and 2018.

Edited by Dr Ruth Wong, these compilations feature a regional focus on Indonesia and Singapore. Scholars and practitioners, writers, and illustrators share their insights and reflect on children's literature in their respective countries and beyond, and how the rest of ASEAN is evolving to accommodate the diversity of the landscape.

5. Why Adults Refuse to Admit Racist Content in the Children's Books They Love (Lecture)

Speaker: Philip Nel

Moderator: Donna Lim

Date: 6 Sep 2019 (Fri) 6:00pm – 7:30pm

Venue: National Library Building, L16, The Pod

As childhood is where the psyche becomes susceptible (or more resistant) to racism, children's books are one of the best instruments to combat this social ill. To better educate adults who resist considering that beloved children's literature may harbour racist content, Philip Nel will cover the "hate mail" inspired by his 2017 book on The Hidden Racism of Children's Literature and the Need for Diverse Books, and offer pedagogical strategies in response.

6. The Importance of Indigenous and Minority Representation (Lecture)

Speaker: Lisa Charleyboy

Moderator: Cheeno Marlo Sayuno

Date: 6 Sep 2019 (Fri) 10.45am - 12.15pm

Venue: National Library Building, L16, The Pod

Statistics published by the Cooperative Children's Book Centre and social movements like #WeNeedDiverseBooks all highlight the current lack of diversity in children's books, but what are the actual social outcomes, impacts, and realities of children not seeing reflections of themselves portrayed? What kind of social change can be created by creating parity in their literature? Hear from Lisa Charleyboy as she discuss these issues from both a personal, and professional experience about the influence of inclusion in this lecture.

7. Being a Translator: Crazy but True (Lecture)

Speaker: Helen Wang

Moderator: Avery Fischer Udagawa

Date: 7 Sep 2019 (Sat) 11.30am - 1.00pm

Venue: National Library Building, L16, The Pod

As the middleman between author and reader, being a translator often means being pulled in different directions at the same time. How does a translator ensure the readability of translated texts without compromising their loyalty to the original? How does one manage cultural differences? In her lecture, Helen Wang addresses these questions and offers insight into her role as a translator.

Annex II: Speakers Bios



1. Speaker Name: Dr Mary George

Country: Singapore

Dr Mary George is a child development consultant and teacher educator. She currently writes primarily for emerging teens and publishes What's Up, a monthly newspaper for children in Singapore. Be it for adults or kids, Mary's primary focus is on educating for resilience, hope and wisdom



2. Speaker Name: Emily X.R. Pan

Country: USA

Emily X.R. Pan lives in Brooklyn, New York, but was originally born in the Midwestern United States to immigrant parents from Taiwan. She is the founding editor-in-chief of Bodega Magazine and author of The Astonishing Color of After.



3. Speaker Name: Hanna Alkaf

Country: Malaysia

Hanna Alkaf spent a decade writing everything from marketing emails to investigative feature articles. She now spends her time making it up as she goes along, both as an author of fiction and as a mom. The Weight of Our Sky is her first novel.



4. Speaker Name: Helen Wang

Country: UK

Helen Wang translates Chinese children's books into English. In 2017 she won the Marsh Christian Award for Children's Literature in Translation Award for her translation of 《青铜葵

花》 (Bronze and Sunflower) by Cao Wenxuan, as well as the Chen Bochui Special Contribution Award for translation and increasing visibility of Chinese children's literature.



5. Speaker Name: Lisa Charleyboy

Country: Canada

Lisa Charleyboy (Tsilhqot'in from Tsi Deldel First Nation) is an award-winning writer, editor, storyteller, and host. She keeps her finger on the pulse of Indigenous issues through projects like the CBC Radio One series *New Fire*, and the APTN documentary television series *Urban Native Girl*. Charleyboy also has edited three anthologies with Annick Press, with the award-winning *#NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women* as the latest release.



6. Speaker Name: Philip Nel

Country: USA

Philip Nel is a University Distinguished Professor of English at Kansas State University. He is the author or co-editor of eleven books, the most recent of which is *Was the Cat in the Hat Black?: The Hidden Racism of Children's Literature, and the Need for Diverse Books*.



7. Speaker Name: Sadaf Siddique

Country: India/USA

Sadaf Siddique is a co-founder of *KitaabWorld*, an online platform for the discovery and distribution of South Asian children and young adult literature. With a focus on curated content and community outreach, *KitaabWorld* seeks to

address social issues in the South Asian community and beyond.



8. Speaker Name: Sara Sargent

Country: USA

Sara Sargent is a Senior Executive Editor at Random House Books for Young Readers, where she publishes platform-driven fiction and nonfiction in the picture book, middle grade, and young adult categories. She has previously held positions at HarperCollins and Simon & Schuster, where she worked on many New York Times, USA Today, and Wall Street Journal bestsellers.

Annex III: Shortlist for Scholastic Picture Book Award 2019 (SPBA)

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| Manuscript Title: | My Grandfather's Rojak |
| Author: | Emily Lim-Leh (Singapore) |
| Illustrator: | Alycia Teo (Singapore) |
| Author Bio: | <p>Emily Lim-Leh is an award-winning author of 30 children's picture books. She is the 1st outside North America to win three medals at the IPPY Awards (the world's largest book awards competition) and 1st in Southeast Asia to receive the Moonbeam Children's Book Award. Her 4-picture book Toy Series has been published in 4 languages in 5 countries and sold over 50,000 copies.</p> <p>Emily thinks that life is like a bowl of messy rojak. Sometimes, the most unexpected ingredients can provide that refreshing lift to the mix, bringing out a different perspective and flavour to life's familiar routines.</p> |
| Illustrator Bio: | <p>Alycia Teo is a freelance illustrator and was formerly the Festival Manager of the Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC). As a freelance illustrator, she has been commissioned to work on murals, wedding invitations and personal paintings.</p> <p>Alycia wants to bring joy and hope to those she meets, and she hopes to make a difference in the world one day at a time.</p> |
| Manuscript Synopsis: | <p>Guo helps at his grandfather's rojak food stall every day. He carries out the same duties of preparing the same ingredients for the rojak dish, based on his grandfather's age-old recipe. Guo faces a dilemma when his teacher gives his class a project that requires them to "Do Something Differently". He wonders what he can do since he follows the same routine daily. Guo experiments with changes to their family's rojak dish and discovers a way to make a difference. He succeeds in getting his grandfather to accept his idea and finds his own voice in his journey of self-discovery.</p> |

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| Manuscript Title: | Orang & Hutan |
| Author: | Low Joo Hong (Singapore) |
| Illustrator: | Low Joo Hong (Singapore) |
| Author/Illustrator Bio: | Low Joo Hong is an author-illustrator of children's books. His academic credential includes a BA Honours in Fine Arts from |

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| | <p>the University of Leeds, an MA in Children's Books Illustration from the Anglia Ruskin University - the same university which he is currently studying for a PhD. Low received Highly Commendable in the prestigious McMillan Prize 2009 for his book <i>There is No Steak Buried Here</i>, which is serialized and translated into English, Chinese and Vietnamese. <i>His Night in the Garden</i>, featuring Singapore's world-famous Gardens by the Bay, was on the shortlist for the Asian Children's Book Award 2017.</p> |
| Manuscript Summary: | <p>This picturebook describes the friendship between Orang (an Orangutan) and Hutan (a banana tree). One day Hutan went missing and Orang embarked on a journey to look for him. Along the way, Orang met many unique and beautiful animals – Sumatran Tiger, Bird-of-Paradise, Javan Rhino, Komodo Dragon, and Pygmy Tasir – found in Southeast Asia. But no one could tell Orang where Hutan was and they seemed to be in a rush. Then Orang met a digger and soon found himself alone in a barren jungle. The story ends with a surprising twist, suggesting that Hutan may have returned.</p> |

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| Manuscript Title: | Pahiyas Planting Rainbow Seeds |
| Author: | Eugene Evasco (Philippines) |
| Illustrator: | Joffrey Zamora Atienza (Philippines) |
| Author Bio: | <p>Eugene Y. Evasco is a writer, editor, translator, and scholar of Philippine children's literature. He currently teaches Creative Writing, Filipino, and Philippine Literature in the College of Arts and Letters at the University of the Philippines Diliman. He is the author of several award-winning books <i>The One and Only Onyok</i>, <i>Anina of the Sea</i>, <i>Ten Dandelion Seeds</i>, <i>Scars on Silver: Personal Essays</i>, and <i>There's a Tiyanak Inside My Bag: Children's Poems</i>. He translated E.B. White's <i>Charlotte's Web</i> to Filipino language. In 2009, he was inducted into the Carlos Palanca Memorial Award for Literature Hall of Fame. He is currently a Fellow of the Likhaan: UP Institute of Creative Writing. In 2016, he became a Research Fellow at the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany.</p> |
| Illustrator Bio: | <p>Joffrey Z. Atienza also known as 'Pepot' is a multidisciplinary artist based in Quezon Province, Philippines. He is a recipient of numerous awards such as Honourable Mention in the PBBY-Alcala Prize 2015, the Lampara Book Illustrator's Grand Prize 2015, AFCCSketch 2016 – held in Singapore, and the 2017 ASEAN Children's Book Illustrator- Best in Fiction for 'Malong The Magic Cloth' at the ICCRF in Chiang Mai, Thailand. All these achievements inspire Pepot to teach and share the joy of</p> |

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| | creating art in its many forms – children's book illustration, painting, sculpture, paper mache and clay work, and many others. |
| Manuscript Summary: | The story's milieu is Pahiyas, a traditional festival in Lucban, Quezon, in memory of Saint Isidro Labrador, a patron saint of farmers and workers. The story is being told by a boy talking to his younger blind sister, Leona. This is an ode to Pahiyas. Also featured in the narrative are the Philippine traditional arts such as kiping art (colored rice wafer), folk music, and culinary tradition. The story is being guided by the principle of inclusivity while advocating agriculture and respect to the environment. |

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| Manuscript Title: | The Girl on the Roof and the Boy on the Beach |
| Author: | Vu Thuy Ngoc Ha (Vietnam) |
| Illustrator: | Vu Thuy Ngoc Ha (Vietnam) |
| Author/Illustrator Bio: | Vu Thuy Ngoc Ha is a Vietnamese illustrator and graphic designer. She studied Graphic Design and then worked as a freelance illustrator due to her passion for children's books. She believes that children's imaginations are the best miracle and that their world is our world too. As Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once said, "All grown-ups were once children. But only few of them remember it". |
| Manuscript Summary: | Once there was a girl who lived in a small fishing village. She liked sitting on the roof and looking out to sea while waiting for her father. One day, she saw a boy on the beach. The boy had lost his mother, so he was very lonely. The two little friends tell each other innocent stories in their imagination. That is the way they consoled each other and consoled themselves. |

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| Manuscript Title: | Let's Try Planting Flowers |
| Author: | Nayong Lim (South Korea) |
| Illustrator: | Nayong Lim (South Korea) |
| Author/Illustrator Bio: | Nayong Lim was born and raised in South Korea. She studied in the UK and graduated from Kingston university with a master's in communication design in 2019. She has done various project with medical clinics, social enterprises, and publishers as a freelancer illustrator. Her main source of inspiration |

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| | is from the natural world and memories of her childhood. She currently lives and works in South Korea. |
| Manuscript Summary: | 'Let's Try Planting Flowers!' deals with the serious topic of child sexual abuse. The story shows how one girl overcomes her difficulties by receiving as much love as possible from her neighbours, even though one of them causes her to suffer. Each character is characterized anthropomorphically in the form of a goat wolf, and sheep, and the child's various emotions are indicated through colourful flowers of red, blue, yellow, and purple that change over time. |

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| Manuscript Title: | My Grandmother's Yellow Goat |
| Author: | Şafak Okdemir (Turkey) |
| Illustrator: | Şafak Okdemir (Turkey) |
| Author/Illustrator Bio: | Şafak Okdemir is a Turkish writer and illustrator of several picture books, <i>The Island with Stairs</i> , <i>Blue Girl</i> and most recently, <i>Children of City</i> . She studied Graphic Design at Marmara University and has received awards for her work with picture books. |
| Manuscript Synopsis: | The Yörüks, who lived a nomadic life for ages in the Taurus Mountains in Anatolia, are in high lands, as in every summer. One morning, a girl with blond hair and a yellow goat are born at the same time. They grow up together. The tribe named them "Blond Girl and Yellow Goat". Blond Girl learns to be shepherd. One day, they find out that, the river they always drink water dried. Blond Girl and Yellow Goat find an untouched source between the rocks. Learning this, the elders understand that, Yellow Girl will be the "Chief Mother" of the tribe. |

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| Manuscript Title: | Nimboda |
| Author: | Ishan Trivedi (India) |
| Illustrator: | Ishan Trivedi (India) |
| Author Bio: | Ishan Trivedi is a writer and artist from New Delhi, India. After completing his post-graduate in painting from Lucknow College of Arts and Crafts in 2008, he began his carrier as an illustrator in the comic industry. His interests are not confined only to illustration, but also to a love of writing fantasy books. His art style and stories are based on Indian art and culture. |



Singapore Book Council

Building Our Imagine-nation

Manuscript Synopsis:

This is a story of a Magician, 'Bakka Kaka' and his puppets. He lived alone and to overcome his loneliness, he made two lively puppets, Gulabo & Sitabo. He loved his puppets like his family. Everybody enjoyed his puppet shows in fares in the nearby areas around his village. Bakka Kaka was rejoiced to see the children applauding his feats. The twist in the story comes when he creates one more puppet, Nimboda. Out of jealousy Gulabo and Sitabo tries to get rid of Nimboda but were caught in strange circumstances. Finally, in the end all is resolved and everyone is happily united.

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