



**MEDIA ADVISORY (For Immediate release)**

**Empowering local literary arts: Three writers and a translator awarded the inaugural Writers+ Grant**

SINGAPORE, TUESDAY 10 JUNE 2025 – Four recipients – three Singaporean authors and one translator – have been awarded the inaugural Writers+ Grant, launched by both the Copyright Licensing and Administration Society of Singapore (CLASS) and Singapore Book Council in 2024. The new grant aims to support Singaporean writers and translators in their creative literary pursuits to develop their craft and create new works.

The four recipients are children's book author R.S. Vern (Chua Ruey Shyan); Malay-English translator Emilia Idris; author Don Shiau; and poet Tania De Rozario. They were selected from close to 40 submissions in this first application cycle, with the proposals spanning across different literary genres and languages. They were selected by a selection panel based on the strength of their proposal, their track record and potential of their projects.

In a joint statement, Andrew Fong, CEO of CLASS, and William Phuan, Executive Director of SBC say: "We are very gratified by the high number of submissions that we received for the inaugural Writers+ Grant. The submissions reflect a very vibrant and diverse literary arts sector, with proposals ranging from poetry to graphic novels and translations, and across the four official languages. We are excited about the four recipients, and hope that the grant will help them develop their works and deepen their literary practice to further enrich the Sing Lit scene."

R.S. Vern will use the grant to take part in a writer's residency in Japan to develop a new manuscript for her series, *Haee and the Other Middlings*. Emilia will translate from Malay to English the book *Idris, Aku dan Muzik*, a biography of her late father. Don will work on the manuscript of his first full-length novel, *My Twenty Names*, which revolves around his personal and national identity. Tania will work on a manuscript for the poetry chapbook *Erasure: Interventions in Blame* about greenwashing.



The selection panel comprised the chairperson Daren Shiau, novelist, poet and editor; Gene Tan, Chief Librarian and Innovation Officer, National Library Board; Lim Geok Leng, General Manager, International Sales (Chinese), Marshall Cavendish Education; and Suriani Suratman, Senior Lecturer, Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore.

The new Writers+ Grant the grant is a collaboration between CLASS and the SBC, with both organisations committing a total amount of \$150,000 over three years. It aims to support both local writers and translators in their creative literary pursuits, nurturing the local literary landscape. It was launched in June 2024, and open for applications in September 2024. The next cycle of applications will start in mid-June.

Appendix A: General Information

Appendix B: About the Writers+ Grant Recipients

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## **Appendix A: General Information**

### **About Copyright Licensing and Administration Society of Singapore (CLASS)**

The Copyright Licensing and Administration Society of Singapore (CLASS) was established in 1999 by book publishers and authors to protect their published works. It is an independent, not-for-profit, government-regulated organisation which seeks to eliminate unauthorised use of copyrighted works of its members and affiliates. CLASS collects and distributes royalties to its members and foreign creators through reproduction rights organisations (RROs). It also provides licensing services to any local organisations, which allow access to the repertoire of copyrighted works handled by CLASS. For more information, please visit <https://class-singapore.com/>.

### **About Singapore Book Council (SBC)**

Established in 1968, the Singapore Book Council (SBC) has for over 50 years remained committed to developing and promoting a multicultural literary arts sector in Singapore. Our programmes focus on creative writing, translation, storytelling, reading and illustration to boost creativity, imagination, and empathy. They include the annual Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC), a premier festival for children's books; the prestigious biennial Singapore Literature Prize, the top literary prize in the country; the Singapore Translation Symposium, which promotes literary translation; SBC Campus and Little Campus, our school outreach programmes; as well as our training and mentorship programmes that support and nurture new talents. For more information, please visit [bookcouncil.sg](http://bookcouncil.sg).



## Appendix B: About the Writers+ Grant Recipients

### R.S. Vern (Chua Ruey Shyan)



R.S. Vern is the writer of an award-winning cat book trilogy series: *Hae and the Other Middlings*. Part One of this series, *Hae The Cat with a Crooked Tail* won the International IndieReader Discovery Award in 2013. In March 2025, Vern continued her writing with a writer's residency program in the midst of rural Japan. She quietly observed the ordinary and understated middling lives of the community with thoughtful fascination. From dignified coffee shop owners, to imperfect sushi chefs, apologetic tofu ladies, extremely mindful farmers, and suspicious neighbourhood cats, she found a compelling story brewing in the surprising city library and a 1,300 year old onsen.

**R.S. Vern's project includes her participation the Writer's Residency Programme, ARTS ITOYA, in Fukuoka, Japan, where she will develop a new manuscript for her ongoing series, *Hae and the Other Middlings*.**

### Emilia Idris



Emilia Idris is a writer whose career spans media, education, and curriculum innovation. A

former journalist, she holds a Doctorate in Education with interests in active learning, educational technology and faculty development. In her spare time, she shares her thoughts on education and parenting through writing. This debut book project is deeply personal. In translating her parents' stories, she reflects on family and her personal identity amid the backdrop of Singapore's socio-cultural shifts.

**Emilia's project focuses on the translation of *Idris, Aku dan Muzik*, a biography of her father, Idris Md Yusof, from Malay into English. Her father was the former Director of Music of the Singapore Police Force Band. The book will serve as not just a personal memoir, but a tribute the indomitable spirit of Singapore's pioneer generation and a testament to the enduring legacy of her late father.**

### Don Shiau



Don Shiau is a writer, performance poet, musician, and co-organiser of spoken-word platform Outspoken. He won Singapore's inaugural National Poetry Recitation Competition in 2023 (English, open category), and was awarded the 2025 Sing Lit Station Jalan Besar Fellowship. He is developing his debut novel as a writer-in-residence of the National Arts Council and National Library Board's Writers' Lab 2025.

**Don's project focuses on the development of the manuscript for his first full-length novel, *My Twenty Names*, which revolves around his personal and national identity.**



## Tania De Rozario



Tania De Rozario is a writer, artist, nonprofit worker and author of four books. Her most recent collection, *Dinner on Monster Island*, was released by Harper Perennial in 2024. Born in Singapore, she lives and works on the traditional unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, colonially known as “Vancouver”.

**Tania’s project focuses on the development of *Erasure: Interventions in Blame*, a new manuscript of 10 found/erasure poems derived from publicly available articles, media releases and policies written by corporations in an effort to greenwash their processes.**

## Appendix C; About the Writers+ Grant Selection Committee

### Daren Shiau



Daren Shiau is a novelist, poet and editor. A recipient of National Arts Council's Young Artist Award in 2002, his published works include *Heartland* (1999), *Peninsular: Archipelagos and Other Islands* (2000), and the seminal microfiction collection *Velouria* (2007). Together with Lee Wei Fen, Daren co-edited a mono-titular intergenerational anthology of Singapore Writing, *COAST* (2011). From 2021 to 2023, Daren served as Co-Chair of the Singapore Writers Festival's maiden Advisory Panel. He currently serves as the Chair of the Writers' Grant Selection Committee launched by the Singapore Book Council and CLASS.

### Gene Tan



Gene Tan is the Chief Librarian of the National Library Board (NLB) and watches over the professional development of all librarians in NLB. As Chief Innovation Officer, he is spearheading the development of LAB25 (Libraries and Archives Blueprint 2025), a new



transformative vision for the National Library, National Archives and the public libraries in Singapore. Previously, as the Executive Director of the Singapore Bicentennial Office at the Prime Minister's Office, Gene helmed the Singapore Bicentennial which commemorated the 200th anniversary of Raffles' arrival in Singapore in 1819. The commemoration included The Bicentennial Experience at Fort Canning which broke attendance records for exhibitions. He was also the Creative Director of the SG50 capstone event, The Future of Us Exhibition that captured the hopes and dreams of Singaporeans. Gene was formerly the Director of the National Library, where he developed the Singapore Memory Project, and also the former President of the Library Association of Singapore.

### **Lim Geok Leng**



Lim Geok Leng is a senior publisher in the educational publishing industry. She has more than 40 years of comprehensive educational experience in planning, publishing, marketing and training. Geok Leng has been the only partner working with Singapore Ministry of Education in publishing three language textbooks (Chinese, Malay, Tamil). In addition to editing, leading art design, planning domestic and overseas marketing, she also shares teaching skills and classroom management with teachers. For many years, she has led Pan Pacific Education Publishing Company in Singapore and has been active in the local and overseas education markets in Singapore. These include China, ASEAN countries, Europe, America, East Africa, and recently Kazakhstan. Geok Leng is the president of the Singapore Chinese Publishing Association and a member of the Singapore Ministry of Education's Chinese Learning Promotion Committee.

## Suriani Suratman



Suriani Suratman, a social anthropologist, is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Malay Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore. Her research areas include (re)production of portrayals of Malays and gender relations in Malay families and households. Her publications include *Skills for "Marriage of a Lifetime: An Examination of Muslim Marriage Preparation Handbooks in Singapore 1974 to 2018* (2021, Religions). She is also a ceramic artist and has presented her works in solo and group exhibitions. She co-authored a journal article "Between Scientific and Sensory Knowledge: Exploring the Enactment of Clay Sensibilities among Clay Artists in Singapore" (2024, American Behavioral Scientist).