

[Embargoed till Wednesday 25 February 2026, 4pm]

Create New Worlds At AFCC 2026

Over 100 speakers, new Reading Forum & Creator's Talk at 17th edition



AFCC 2026 key visual by Claire Low

SINGAPORE, 25 February 2026 — The 17th Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC) will explore the theme "The Worlds We Make" this May 21 – 24. It will unpack how stories use imagination and agency to help children make sense of their place in the world, as well as nurture connection and care for others in a fragmented age. Participants can now tap on Culture Pass and SkillsFuture Credits to save on festival passes.

Over 100 writers and speakers from Singapore and around the world will take part in the 4-day festival at the National Library Building. The festival will roll out new programmes such as Reading Forum and Creator's Talk. The public can also enjoy a number of exciting exhibitions including *Pinocchio's New Clothes* and an SG-Japan

60 exhibition, which marks the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Singapore and Japan.

AFCC will welcome speakers from all over the world, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and Taiwan. They include Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award nominee Klaas Verplancke (Belgium); White Raven Award winner Philip Giordano (Italy); Stonewall Award Notable graphic novelist Aśka (Australia); beloved picture book author-illustrator Bonsoir Lune (Korea); multiple award-winning author Jack Wong (Canada); popular *Candy* author Kaoru (Malaysia); 2024 Korea Book Award winner Kim Dong-Soo; multiple award winning author and book designer Lena Anlauf (Germany); Feng Zikai Children's Picture Book Award winner Liu Hsu Kung (Taiwan); 2025 German Children's Book Prize winner author-illustrator Vitali Konstantinov (Germany).

Featured Singapore children's literature writers and creators include 2025 World Illustrator Award winner Priscilla Tey; 2024 Crystal Kite Award winner Chloe Chang; bilingual author Abhi Krish; acclaimed author Dai Yun; author and educator Far'ain Jaafar; 2023 White Ravens featured artist Josef Lee; 2018 Hedwig Anuar Children's Book Award (HABA) shortlist Low Ying Ping; multiple award-winning author Emily Lim-Leh; and educator and librarian Muhammed Shahril Shaik Abdullah.

Programmes highlights

Over four days, participants can take part in more than 100 programmes such as panel discussions, presentations, workshops, lectures and masterclasses. The programmes will focus on three main focus areas:

- **The Worlds We Build**

These programmes unpack how storytelling invokes the imagination and agency that help children make sense of themselves, their place in the world, and how they can make it their own. Highlight sessions unpack the industry of comics (including young adult Southeast Asian Fantasy Comics), the

merchification trend of books, and youth changemakers who are building the literary scene.

- **The Worlds We Bridge**

These programmes explore how stories cross languages, cultures, and generations, fostering connection and understanding in a fragmented age. Highlight sessions explore the whimsical notion of children as book award judges (inspired by the Children's Booker Prize), as well as new stories based on old mythologies. There will also be a keynote on translating children's literature across borders (supported by the National Translation Committee).

- **The Worlds We Nurture**

These programmes explore how children's books nurture care for nature, others, and their inner worlds, shaping how young readers learn to live with attentiveness and hope. Highlight sessions discuss the preserving and fracturing of folktales, navigating loss through picture books, and using technology to create new stories.

New Programmes

i. Reading Forum

AFCC launches an inaugural Reading Forum to explore strategies for fostering meaningful and balanced reading experiences. The Forum will discuss how parents, creators, and educators can make informed choices about guiding children towards healthy digital and reading habits. Sessions unpack how children's reading practices are evolving across print and screen-based environments; and address the impact of screen time and emerging reading formats on attention, engagement, and comprehension.

ii. Creator's Talks

This series brings renowned authors and illustrators into conversation about their craft and creative processes. Through practical insights, creators share how stories are shaped across cultures, languages, and formats, and what it takes to build worlds that

resonate with young readers. Designed for writers, illustrators, educators, publishers, and passionate readers alike, these sessions offer an intimate look at the artistic journeys that power children's literature today.

III. Meet the Illustrators

Besides bringing back crowd favourites *Writer's Pitch* and *Illustrator's Portfolio Review*, AFCC will be launching a new initiative called *Meet the Illustrators*, an elevator pitching session for illustrators to present their portfolios, creative strengths, and storytelling interests to writers, publishers, and potential collaborators to launch creative partnerships.

AFCC Books Village

Singapore's biggest children's book fair, the AFCC Books Village, will present a wide range of free family-friendly public programmes and activations. Members of the public can browse through the latest selection of children's books at the AFCC Book Fair, get their books signed and meet their favourite authors. They can browse the Artist Cart-out for works by illustrators and artists. New highlights include:

- Film Night (Fri, 22 May)
An evening screening of award-winning animation film *Sirocco and the Kingdom of Winds*, and animated shorts from LASALLE Puttnam School of Film & Animation students
- Games Day (Sat, 23 May)
A day of live drawing battles, carnival games and game stations, ending with a games night.
- AFCC Exhibitions
 - *Pinocchio's New Clothes* – the Asian premiere of the travelling exhibition organised by Bologna Children's Book Fair to celebrate the bicentennial of the birth of Carlo Collodi, Pinocchio's creator
 - Nami Concours 2026 Winning Works Exhibition – a showcase of award-winning works from the 2026 Nami Concours Illustration Competition
 - SG-Japan 60 exhibition - a showcase of select picture book illustrations from Singapore and Japan in celebration of 60 years of bilateral relations

between two countries. Curated along the themes of friendship and peace, this exhibition is a collaboration with Chihiro Art Museum

- Book Illustrators Gallery (BIG) – an annual exhibition that showcases the best picture book illustrations by illustrators and artists from Southeast Asia, those based in Asia and in the global Asian diaspora

Hedwig Anuar Children's Book Award (HABA) 2026

Established in 2011 in honour of the literary pioneer Hedwig Anuar, HABA is a biennial award that recognises the best Singapore children's literature in two categories – Picture Book and Middle Grade Book. The shortlist for HABA 2026 will be announced in March, and authors, bookstores, and distributors will get to meet the shortlisted writers in April. The winners will be announced during AFCC Opening Night on Thursday, 21 May.

Early Bird Sales until Monday 6 April 2026

Participants can enjoy a 20% to 25% discount off regular tickets during the early bird sales promotion, which runs from 25 February to 6 April 2026. Student and senior citizen discounts are also available.

Two new festival passes introduced for greater savings

Participants can now tap on SkillsFuture Credits to purchase a Workshop Pass, which provides access to all workshops and masterclasses. They can also tap on Culture Pass to purchase a Festival Talk pass, which provides access to panels and presentations across all four days.

Regular passes include 1-Day, 2-Day, 4-Day festival passes. They range from \$60 to \$220. There are also public workshops for children and parent, which are available from \$15 - \$25. Participants can tap on Culture Pass to purchase them as well.

The 4-Day Festival Pass will allow participants access to more than 100 sessions, as well as complimentary access to masterclasses, Publishing Forum, Translation Forum and workshops.



Ticket Type	Full Price	Early Bird (20%) <i>From 25 Feb to 6 April 2026</i>
Festival Pass - Full access to all presentations, panel discussions, workshops and masterclasses on selected pass dates	4-Day: \$220 2-Day: \$130 1-Day: \$80	4-Day: \$176 2-Day: \$104 1-Day: \$64
Workshop Pass (New! SkillsFuture Credits eligible) - Access to workshops/ masterclasses across all 4 days)	\$180	\$144
Festival Talk Pass (New! Culture Pass Eligible) - Access to presentations, panel discussions and Creator's Talks across all 4 days)	\$120	\$96

Festival Information

Date: 21 – 24 May 2026

Venue: National Library Building

Tickets: afcc.com.sg/tickets

Website: afcc.com.sg



Annex A: About Singapore Book Council and AFCC

Annex B: AFCC 2026 Programmes (Selected)

Click [here](#) for speaker photos. Click [here](#) for speaker bios.

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Annex A: About Singapore Book Council and AFCC

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. Our festivals, awards, workshops and school programmes have reached out to the various language and ethnic communities, boosting creativity, imagination, and empathy. SBC is a nonprofit and charity with IPC status.

Vision: The power of words, connecting peoples and cultures.

Mission: To champion Singapore's role in enhancing multicultural literary arts.

Our programmes run year-round, reaching out to many audiences. 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; Translation Day Singapore, 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.

SBC is chaired by Dr Tan Chee Lay, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies & Professional Learning, NIE, NTU.

We are a recipient of the National Arts Council of Singapore's Major Company Grant for the period from 2025 to 2027. For more information, please visit <https://www.bookcouncil.sg/>



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, educators and media producers, AFCC 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.

Since its establishment in 2010, AFCC has grown to become a key literary event in the region, attracting many local and international speakers, as well as thousands of delegates and participants.

The 17th AFCC will run from 21-24 May, celebrating the theme "The Worlds We Make". For more information, please visit www.afcc.com.sg. For more information, please go to:



Annex B: AFCC 2026 Programmes (Selected)

The Worlds We Build

1. The Industry of Comics: Views from Around the World
By Aśka, Kaoru, Felicia Low-Jimenez, Foo Swee Chin, Kaoru, Vitali Konstantinov
Discover how comics take shape across the world! This lively roundtable brings together leading creators and industry voices from all over the world to explore the current comics landscape—discussing market trends, cross-border publishing, and the future of comics in how kids read.
2. The Next Generation: Youths Making a Literary Scene
By Wu Liangyu, Priyanshi Mohanty, Sophia Magistrado
With social media and digital tools, youths themselves are more involved than ever in shaping the literary scene as they enter it, not just as readers but as creators, organisers, and recommenders of books to their own peers. With this panel of youths whose experiences span literary festival moderating, bookstagramming, youth literary magazines, youth podcasts and more, we explore how teens these days are discovering and shaping their own literary tastes, and how they can make the scene their own.
3. Special Editions and Objects of Desire: The Merch-ification of Books
By David Tay, Alexander Chua, Ang Jin Yong, YZ (@wordwanderlust)
T-shirts and tote bags. Art prints and enamel pins. Sprayed edges, illustrated endpapers, foiled cases, special editions. In the age of subscription boxes, aesthetic Booktoks, and Bookstagram flatlays, the physical features of a book (and its merchandise) are just as important as the story. In this conversation, a distributor, an indie publisher, a Bookstagrammer and a bookseller discuss the new strategies used to market books, how it's affected publishing and bookselling practices, how readers are responding, and what impact the social media age has had on the book as an object.

The Worlds We Bridge

1. When Children Judge Book Awards

In 2026, the first-ever Children's Booker Prize will feature a panel of judges including children themselves, who will recommend the winning books to their peers. Find out what children look for in books, and is that different from what attracts their parents? Three young and avid readers share what makes a good book to them, what they think about when they read, and what they wish writers would write more about.

2. New Old Worlds: Old Mythologies, New Stories

By Tori Tadiar, Low Ying Ping

The Philippine gods, the guardians of Chinese hell, Chang'e and her jade rabbit—stories and figures that have existed for time immemorial. Why do they keep inspiring our imaginations, and how do we keep turning them into new tales? Three Southeast Asian Young Adult and Middle Grade fantasy writers come together to discuss the craft of adapting these legendary characters into new epic adventures, what draws them to mythology from their cultures, and the timeless power of myth through the generations.

3. Curating Worlds for Young Readers: Translating Children's Literature Across Borders

By Kim Inae Sujung

The children's books that travel across languages do not do so by chance. The decisions made—from translation to circulation—shape the shelves of children around the world. This opening panel explores the shared power and responsibilities involved in introducing narratives across languages and cultures, considering what is gained or transformed when stories move between contexts for young readers.

The Worlds We Nurture

1. Picturing Grief in Asia: Navigating Loss Through Picturebooks

By Anindita Putri, Nguyen Huu Quynh Huong, Aw Siyuan

Three authors explore how picture books can visualise children's journeys through loss, grief, and crisis, and how they lead to hope and healing. Drawing on books about Indonesia, Mongolia, and Vietnam, they discuss creative strategies to communicate grief on page, address complex topics like death and migration, and how children's literature can act as a bridge between pain, understanding, and transformation, particularly when grounded in their cultural contexts.

2. Cerita Rakyat: Dilestarikan, atau Diolah Semula (Fractured Folktales: To Preserve, or Fracture?)

By Muhammad Shahril

Sebahagian besar sastera kanak-kanak berasal daripada cerita-cerita rakyat yang diwarisi daripada tradisi sastera lisan. Namun, sejauh manakah penceritaan semula cerita-cerita rakyat perlu kekal benar menurut versi asal? Haruskah ia diubah suai mengikut perubahan zaman supaya kekal relevan? Atau haruskah ia benar-benar diubah dengan tujuan mempermasalahkan versi yang asal atau untuk mengedepankan nilai-nilai baru yang mungkin bertentangan dengan nilai-nilai yang terkandung dalam versi asal? Sesi ini akan berlangsung dalam Bahasa Melayu dan Inggeris.

A large part of children's literature comes from folktales inherited from the oral tradition. However, to what extent should the retelling of folktales remain true to the original version? Should it be revised according to the changes of the era? Or should it be completely altered to problematize or to present new values that may be contrary to the values contained in the original version? This session will be conducted in both Malay and English.

3. குட்டிக் கதைகளும் மகிழ்வூட்டும் மெட்டுக்களும்

(Tiny Tales & Jolly Scales)

By Abhi Krish

குழந்தைகளுக்கு தமிழ் மொழியில் ஆர்வம் ஊட்ட
விரும்புகிறீர்களா? எழுத்தாளர் அபி கிரிஷ் தன் கதை சொல்லும்
முறையைப் பகிர்கிறார். வீட்டிலும் வகுப்பறையிலும்
பயன்படுத்தக்கூடிய எளிய கதைகள் மற்றும் பாடல்களை
உருவாக்க இலவச வளங்களை எவ்வாறு பயன்படுத்தலாம்
என்பதையும் விளக்குகிறார்.

Looking to get little ones excited about Tamil? Author Abhi Krish shares her storytelling process and demonstrates how free resources can be used to create simple, visually engaging stories and rhymes for home or classroom use.

For the full list of programmes, go to afcc.com.sg/2026/page/all-programmes