



Singapore Book Council

Building Our Imagine-nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HABA 2020 SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED AWARD CEREMONY TO BE VIRTUAL



SINGAPORE, 8 September 2020 – **Six children's books** have been shortlisted for the Hedwig Anuar Children's Book Award (HABA), a biennial literary award recognising the best children's literature in English written by a Singaporean or permanent resident. The winner from this shortlist will be revealed at the award ceremony, which will be held online for the first time and will be live-streamed on the Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC)'s Facebook on **4 October 2020 at 6pm.**

The authors and illustrators who are shortlisted for HABA for the first time are Eisner-nominated comic artist Andrew Tan, publisher Goh Eck Kheng, film director Ken Kwek, animator Lim An-ling, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts student Lolita Chiong and Singapore Literature Prize winner Peh Shing Huei. Author-illustrators Ben Lai and Quek Hong Shin complete the shortlist.

The shortlisted books showcase a range of themes that are distinctly Singaporean and relatable to children. *We Can* and *Panjang: The Tall Boy Who Became Prime Minister* portray Singapore's icons and culture and second Prime Minister respectively while *Kelly and the Krumps* address the pressures of PSLE.



Singapore Book Council

Building Our Imagine-nation

The winner of HABA will join the ranks of former recipients Xie Shi Min (2018), Hidayah Amin and Idris Ali (2015), Chew Chia Shao Wei and Anngie Neo (2015), Edmund Lim and Tan Zi Xi (2013) and Yixian Quek and Grace Duan Ying (2011).

The six shortlisted works were selected from a record number of 87 submissions for the award—representing a remarkable 33% increase since the award's last edition in 2018. Since the award was established in 2011, the number of submissions for the award has increased with every edition. For HABA 2020, close to a quarter of the 87 submissions were first-time submissions, and four of the six shortlisted authors have been shortlisted for the first time for HABA. These trends reveal a heartening observation—that Singapore's children's literature is a growing genre, with new players in the scene writing and illustrating books for children with fresh, quality perspectives.

There have also been changes to the prize for the winner of HABA necessitated by the impact of the pandemic on its organiser, the Singapore Book Council (SBC). The cash award of S\$10,000 has been reduced to S\$3,000. The writer and illustrator of the winning book will each receive S\$3,000.

Judges' Comments

The judges for HABA 2020 consisted of chief judge Dr Donna Lim who is a lecturer at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. She is joined by illustrators Charles Santoso and Lee Kow Fong, aka 阿果(Ah Guo). They jointly praised the quality of the entries that were submitted, and expressed faith in the development of children's literature in English:

“It was not an easy deliberation with so many entries of such high quality. We considered each entry in its appeal to its intended audience and how it would measure up in its own genre. The shortlisted books stood out from the rest in their masterful narration of original subject content with a strong interplay of text and visuals.



Singapore Book Council

Building Our Imagine-nation

We are indeed privileged to have read and viewed such a wide array of children's books that are locally written. We are heartened that among us exist such promising writers and illustrators that are on their way to making a mark not just locally but also internationally. We look forward to a rich and vibrant scene in children's literature especially in a world we can call our own".

Please refer to Annex A for the full shortlist of HABA and Annex B for information about the judges. For more information about HABA, please visit:

<https://bookcouncil.sg/awards/HABA>

Guess the HABA Winner

In the lead up to the virtual award ceremony, SBC has launched an online contest, "Guess the HABA Winner" on AFCC's Facebook and Instagram, encouraging the public to guess the shortlisted book that will win the award. Participants who guess the correct book will stand to win a book voucher to AFCC's official bookstore, [Closetful of Books](#). The contest will end on 29 September, and the winning participants will be announced after the HABA 2020 award ceremony on 4 October 2020.

HABA 2020 Award Ceremony

Date: 4 October 2020, 6pm SGT

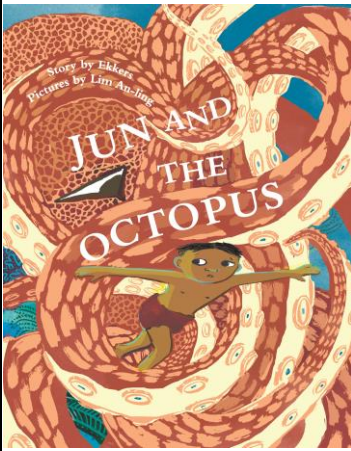

Venue: Online on AFCC's [Facebook](#) Page

For media related enquiries, please contact:

Ethan Leong | ethan@bookcouncil.sg |

###



Annex A: Shortlist for HABA 2020

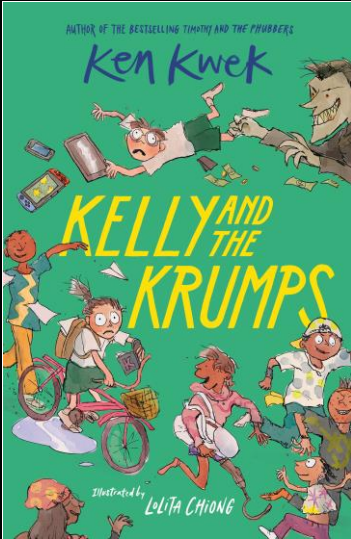
No.	Book Title	Synopsis	Author/Illustrator	Bio
1	<p><i>Jun and the Octopus</i></p>  <p>(Singapore Children's Society, 2019)</p>	<p>Jun has a secret. It is about Mok, the uncle from the neighbouring village who has come to help Ma and Pa.</p> <p>Jun is happy that Mok has taught him how to swim, but there is something that Mok does which worries him and gives him nightmares. What should Jun do? What will happen to him?</p>	<p>Author: Ekkers (Goh Eck Kheng)</p> 	<p>Goh Eck Kheng is a book editor and the founder of publishing house Landmark Books. He is a keen photographer and potter, and also a long-time collector of children's books.</p> <p>He was the chairman of the Speak Good English Movement and participated in a volunteer children's reading programme at one-room HDB flats. Eck Kheng is the author of two children's books, <i>Jun and the Octopus</i> and <i>Friends, A Counting Book</i>.</p>



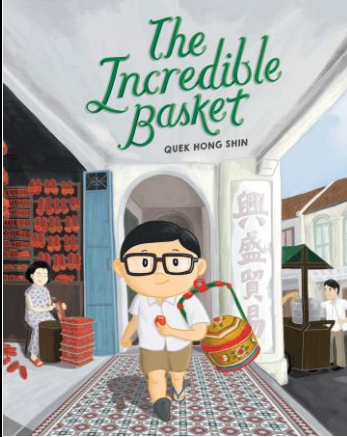

Singapore Book Council

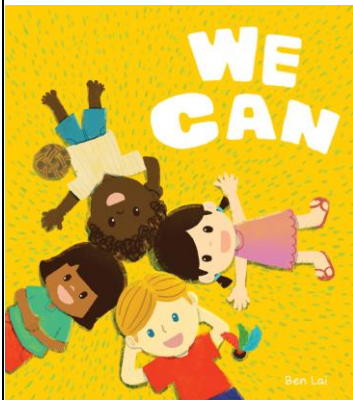

Building Our Imagine-nation

No.	Book Title	Synopsis	Author/Illustrator	Bio
			Illustrator: Lim An-ling 	Lim An-ling is an animator and illustrator. Her hand-made animated short film has been shown in major animation festivals. She has illustrated fiction and non-fiction books for both adults and children. She has also worked on mixed-media projects for the Singapore Discovery Centre and illustrated several issues of Singapore stamps.
2	Kelly and the Krumps	Kelly Mao has got quite the headache: her tiger mum is threatening to ground her, her tuition timetable barely gives her time to eat, and she suspects her twin brother is up to something. On top of everything, the PSLE is looming!	Author: Ken Kwek 	Ken Kwek is a screenwriter, film director, playwright and author of the best-selling <i>Timothy and the Phubbers</i> , his first children's novel. Ken studied literature at the University of Cambridge and dramatic writing at New York University. He

No.	Book Title	Synopsis	Author/Illustrator	Bio
	 <p>(Epigram Books, 2019)</p>	<p>When the pressure gets too intense, Kelly decides to secretly join a dance crew called the Krumps, but slowly she gets entangled in her brother's troubles with an evil genius named Fang Boy.</p>	<p>Illustrator: Lolita Chiong</p> 	<p>worked as a journalist and a cook for a few years, then wrote and directed several movies.</p> <p>Lolita Chiong is the illustrator of <i>Timothy and the Phubbers</i>. She is currently studying illustration with animation at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. She loves drawing cartoons, pixel art and comics. In her spare time, Lolita loves going to the bird park to draw the birds, and the prawning pools to catch prawns. She also loves eating chicken nuggets with her boyfriend.</p>
3	<p>Panjang: The Tall Boy Who Became Prime Minister</p>	<p>Panjang is the tallest kid around. He hates standing out, but little does he know,</p>	<p>Author: Peh Shing Huei</p>	<p>Peh Shing Huei is a Singapore Literature Prize-winning author of several books, including</p>

No.	Book Title	Synopsis	Author/Illustrator	Bio
	 <p>(World Scientific Publishing, 2019)</p>	<p>he's on his way to greater heights...</p> <p>This book tells the childhood story of Singapore's second prime minister, Goh Chok Tong, and how he conquered his self-consciousness to become a leader. This "tall" tale inspires children to embrace the things that make them different.</p>	 <p>Illustrator: Drewscape (Andrew Tan)</p> 	<p>the bestseller <i>Neither Civil Nor Servant: The Philip Yeo Story</i>. He is a founding partner of content agency The Nutgraf, and former news editor and China bureau chief at <i>The Straits Times</i>.</p> <p>Drewscape (Andrew Tan) is a freelance illustrator and an Eisner-nominated comic artist. He is the author of two graphic novels- <i>Monsters, Miracles and Mayonnaise</i> and <i>The Ollie Comics: Diary of a first-time dad</i>. He enjoys experimenting with new art styles and drawing</p>

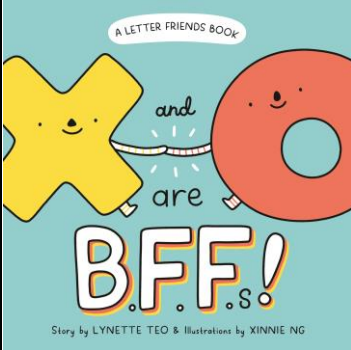

No.	Book Title	Synopsis	Author/Illustrator	Bio
				tools. His illustrations can be found in the children's series <i>Sherlock Sam</i> , magazines like the monthly <i>Young Parents</i> , print ads and picture books.
4	<p><i>The Incredible Basket</i></p>  <p>(Epigram Books, 2018)</p>	<p>In this sequel to <i>The Amazing Sarong</i>, a beautiful Chinese wedding basket is used in myriad ways. Xiaoming delivers a batch of <i>ang ku kueh</i> with the basket, then fashions it into a prop for a lion dance. When the sun beats down on him, he repurposes the basket's cover as a hat! At home in a second-floor shophouse, the basket is attached to a rope to pass a comic book and a bowl of noodles.</p>	<p>Author and Illustrator: Quek Hong Shin</p> 	<p>Quek Hong Shin is a freelance illustrator who has illustrated several picture books including <i>The Amazing Sarong</i>, <i>Lolly's Secret</i> and the <i>Ahoy, Navy!</i> series for RSN's 50th anniversary. <i>The Amazing Sarong</i>—the first book he wrote and illustrated—was shortlisted for Best Children's Title at the Singapore Book Awards 2016.</p> <p>He conducts workshops for primary school children and is an advocate for Superhero Me, an inclusive arts</p>

No.	Book Title	Synopsis	Author/Illustrator	Bio
				movement for children with special needs.
5	We Can  (Epiphany Arts, 2018)	<p>No child is an island!</p> <p>Join Ah Girl in her day-to-day interactions with her family and friends. Discover local culture and icons while exploring the many ways we can achieve more when we work and play with others.</p>	Author and illustrator: Ben Lai 	<p>A multidisciplinary designer and illustrator, Ben Lai is a picture book maker and an advocate of play. He draws inspiration from things that enable people to appreciate their relationships with our surroundings and people.</p>
6	'X' and 'O' are B.F.F.s!	<p>While A always gets to be first and Z has the final say, X and O are the quiet overachievers of the lot. <i>X and O are BFFs!</i> is a warm and light-hearted tale about X and O—best friends, partners in crime, the yin and the yang. This</p>	Author: Lynette Teo	<p>When Lynette Teo isn't thinking up fun escapades for <i>X and O</i>, she is, oddly enough, a full-time copywriter. She is also a wife, daughter, sister, and a lucky mom to a happy and energetic five-year-old</p>



Singapore Book Council


Building Our Imagine-nation

No.	Book Title	Synopsis	Author/Illustrator	Bio
	 <p>(Bubbly Books, 2019)</p>	<p>story is an engaging read about how X and O together, have a role in the language of love, music and play.</p>	 <p>Illustrator: Xinnie Ng</p>	<p>girl who inspires her to be better every single day. You can find more writing by Lynette at her blog, where she muses about parenting and other stuff: www.lilvignettes.com</p> <p>Fuelled by the love of creative exploration, Xinnie creates and concocts illustrative designs that brew and balance a love for the handwritten and digital. She loves a good story and believes that both a kickass idea and detailed execution work hand in hand. Born and bred in Singapore, her background in art, industrial design and intense people-watching guide her creative</p>



Singapore Book Council

Building Our Imagine-nation

No.	Book Title	Synopsis	Author/Illustrator	Bio
				process and perspective. www.x-spots-the-mark.com

Images of the shortlisted writers, illustrators, and their book covers can be downloaded [here](#).



Annex B: HABA 2020 Judges

No.	Judge	Bio
1	Dr Donna Lim (Chief Judge) 	Dr Donna Lim is a lecturer with the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She specialises in primary English Language methodology. Her interest area is in developing literacy with a focus on teaching writing. She has considerable teaching experience with young learners and finds it fulfilling to work with fellow educators to enhance EL teaching and learning. Dr Lim serves as the Chief Judge for HABA 2020.
2	Charles Santoso 	Charles Santoso loves drawing little things in his little journal and dreaming about funny, wondrous stories.. He has illustrated books for publishers in the USA such as Simon & Schuster, Scholastic, Harper Collins, Penguin Random House, Disney Hyperion, Abrams, Bloomsbury, Little Brown and MacMillan. He has also illustrated the New York Times bestseller Wishtree book by Katherine Applegate.
3	Lee Kow Fong (Ah Guo) 	Lee Kow Fong (Ah Guo) holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Translation and Interpretation from Nanyang Technological University and received his MA in Children's Book Illustration from Anglia Ruskin University in 2011. Besides teaching part-time at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, he is also actively involved in the promotion and creation of children's picture books in Singapore. So far, he has published near to 20 books and is now a full-time illustrator.



Singapore Book Council

Building Our Imagine-nation

Annex C: 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. Our programmes focus on creative writing, reading, illustration, translation and storytelling. We are committed to developing a multicultural, diverse literary arts sector through our festivals, training workshops and courses, as well as book awards to recognise excellence.

Vision: International recognition for quality, diverse Singapore literature.

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

SBC is currently chaired by Ms Claire Chiang, co-founder of Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts.

The Book Council develops and advocates Singapore's books and literary arts scene by organising a variety of festivals, including the annual Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC); giving out prestigious awards such as the biennial national award Singapore Literature Prize; supporting community outreach through the #BuySingLit movement; and building professional capacity through our Academy programmes.

Because it all starts with a story.

SBC is supported by the National Arts Council of Singapore under the Major Company Scheme for the period from 2019 to 2021. For more information, please visit www.bookcouncil.sg.