

For immediate release

**THREE SINGAPORE WRITERS TO RECEIVE S.E.A. WRITE AWARD ON 25 NOV
PRESTIGIOUS ASEAN AWARD FOR 2016-18 WINNERS**

[SINGAPORE, 31 Oct 2019] – Three writers from Singapore have been selected to receive the S.E.A. Write Award, a prestigious award presented to writers from ASEAN countries. The three winners – Ovidia Yu (2016); 谢裕民 (Chia Joo Ming, 2017) and Peter Augustine Goh (a.k.a Goh Mey Teck @ Iskandar Goh, 2018) – will be presented with their awards together at a ceremony on 25 Nov 2019 to be held in Bangkok, Thailand. The ceremony was put on hold for the past three years due to the passing of the late King Bhumibhol Adulayadej.

Her Royal Highness Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana Rajakanya of Thailand will be presiding over the ceremony, which will be held at the Royal Ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok.

On Hold for Three Years

The S.E.A. Write Award was established in 1979 to recognise and honour literary excellence in the ASEAN region. Based in Bangkok, the awards have been presented annually since 1979 to leading poets and writers in the 10 ASEAN countries which will choose their own winners.

The awards ceremony was put on hold for the past three years from 2016 to 2018 due to the passing of the late King Bhumibhol Adulayadej in 2016. It was restored after the subsequent coronation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn in May this year. All three winners from Singapore will receive their awards at the ceremony.

They will join a long illustrious list of writers that include Arthur Yap, Catherine Lim, Edwin Thumboo, Haresh Sharma, Ho Minfong, Isa Kamari, J.M. Sali, K.T.M. Iqbal, Rex Shelley, Suratman Markasan, Suchen Christine Lim, 张曦娜 (Teoh Hee La), 黄孟文 (Wong Meng Voon) and 英培安 (Yeng Pway Ngon).

2016 – 2018 Winners

The three writers Ovidia Yu, 谢裕民 (Chia Joo Ming) and Peter Augustine Goh (who writes in Malay under this pen name) were selected for their literary excellence and contributions to Singapore literature.

Each awardee will receive a monetary honorarium of baht 50,000 (about S\$2,200) plus an all-expenses-paid, four-day stay in Bangkok. Her Royal Highness Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana Rajakanya will also bestow the winners with commemorative plaques. In addition, they will take part in literary talk activities at the Bangkok Bank Public Company and Chulalongkorn University.

Comments from Ovidia Yu (2016 winner):

"I heard about it in 2016 so I had a bit more time to absorb it. At first I was of course thrilled, excited, overwhelmed, and humbled by the honour. But since I've had some time to think about it, I realise I've been writing differently since. Thinking differently about writing too. Like before the award, I had written more "entertainments", whether plays or novels. But after I heard about the award in 2016, it made me think about who I am writing as and for the first time I thought about writing not just as a Singaporean but as an Asian writer. If you look at the books I have written since then (*Frangipani Tree Mystery* in 2017, *Betel Nut Tree Mystery* in 2018, *Paper Bark Tree Mystery* in 2019) you are actually seeing the effects the S.E.A. Write award had on me and my writing!"

Comments from 谢裕民 (Chia Joo Ming, 2017 winner)

“新的一章，但是文章还是要继续。” (“It is a new chapter, but the writing must continue.”)

Comments from Peter Augustine Goh (2018 winner):

“Menulis hampir 45 tahun sejauh ini, saya berasa amat gembira dan pada masa yang sama terharu kerana telah dipilih sebagai pemenang Anugerah Penulis Asia Tenggara 2018. Kemenangan ini akan terus menjadi galakan dan memacu saya ke tahap kejayaan yang lebih tinggi.”

(“After writing for almost 45 years, I feel happy and touched to be chosen to be the winner of the S.E.A. Write Award 2018. This success will surely boost the momentum of my writing career and spur me to greater heights.”)

As part of their wins, the writers will be invited to give public talks and share about their writing journeys at the Singapore Book Council in 2020. More information will be released later.

ANNEX I: 2016–2018 S.E.A. Write Award Winners Information

ANNEX II: List of Former S.E.A. Write Award Winners

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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 the S.E.A. Write Award

The S.E.A. Write Award was established in 1979 to encourage ASEAN countries to recognise creative literary talents in the region. The annual Awards Presentation and Gala Dinner has always been presided over by a member of the Thai Royal Family.

The awards are given to a writer from a country that is part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) though not all countries in ASEAN have been represented each year.

The 10 countries which comprise the ASEAN region are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Singapore Thailand and Vietnam. The S.E.A. Write Award Selection Committee is chaired by esteem poet and scholar 王润华教授 (Professor Wong Woon Wah), who is also a former winner.

Award Objectives

The S.E.A. Write Award's objectives are:

- i) To recognise the creativity of ASEAN writers;
- ii) To raise awareness of the richness of each ASEAN's country's literary scene;
- iii) To honour the talents of creative writers in ASEAN;
- iv) To bring together the many talents of ASEAN writers.

ANNEX I: 2016–2018 S.E.A. Write Award Winners Information

Ovidia Yu (2016 winner)



Ovidia Yu has had over 30 plays produced in Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These include *The Woman in a Tree on the Hill*, which won an Edinburgh Fringe First, and *Hitting (on) Women*, which won the Audience Award and Singapore's Life! Theatre Awards Best Original Script. She has also written musicals including *A Totally Fictitious Island in the Sun*. Yu is, moreover, an accomplished novelist



and short fiction writer with several books to her name. Her most recent bestselling novels in the international market are *the Auntie Lee Singaporean Mystery* trilogy.

谢裕民 (Chia Joo Ming, 2017 winner)



谢裕民，1959 年生于新加坡，现为《联合早报》高级执行编辑，《文艺城》主编。

17 岁开始写作，1993 年获国家艺术理事会“青年艺术家”奖，1995 年受美国爱荷华大学之邀，参加“国际写作计划”。2014 年受邀为新加坡南洋理工大学“驻校作家”，同时应邀为国家艺术理事会纪念新加坡建国 50 周年出版的“Singathology”创作作品。

美国哈佛大学东亚语言与文明系讲座教授，当代著名的文化评论学者王德威教授评定，谢裕民是“新加坡华语语系”的十个关键词之一。（《华语语系的人文视野：新加坡经验》）

42 年来（1976—2018），谢裕民出版 10 部作品，包括散文、小说、小小说与历史笔记小说，作品每出版都带来文学新视野与新冲击，其中四部作品获新加坡文学奖（Singapore Literature Prize）与书籍奖。

Born in 1959, Chia Joo Ming (Chia) is now a Senior Executive Sub-Editor in *Lianhe Zaobao*, leading the literary section.

Chia started writing at the age of 17 and was presented the Young Artist Award by National Arts Council (NAC) in 1993, and in 1995, upon invitation from the University of Iowa, he participated in the International Writing Program. Chia was also invited to be the lecturer of the "Writer-in-Residence" program organised by Nanyang Technological University (NTU), and at the same time, contributing original work for *Singathology: What We Talk About When We Talk About Singapore*, which had been published by NAC for SG50.

Prof David Der-Wei Wang, Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University commented: "Chia is one of the ten keywords of Singapore's Chinese Literature." (*Sinophone Humanities and Singapore Experience: Ten Keywords*).

From 1976 to 2018 (42 years), Chia has published 10 books, which include essays, novels, mini-fiction, flash fiction and a history novel. Every piece of work has brought about viewing literature from different perspectives and creating a unique impact on the readers, of which four have been awarded the Singapore Literature Prize and other book awards.

Peter Augustine Goh (2018 winner)



Peter Augustine Goh adalah nama pena Goh Mey Teck @ Iskandar Goh. Beliau menulis dalam pelbagai genre – cerpen, novel kanak-kanak dan novel dewasa, sajak, drama TV, drama radio dan esei sastera. Semua karyanya dihasilkan dalam bahasa Melayu. Beberapa karyanya telah diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Inggeris, Mandarin dan Tamil. Dewasa ini, beliau adalah pembimbing penulisan kreatif dan penterjemah bebas. Beliau telah memenangi Anugerah Pena Mas sebanyak tiga kali ia itu pada tahun 1995, 1999 dan 2003 bagi kategori cerpen dan sajak. Pada tahun 2016, beliau telah memenangi Hadiah Sastera Singapura bagi kategori fiksyen Melayu, yang berupa kumpulan cerpen yang mengandungi 19 buah cerpen yang diberi judul 'Air Mata Di Arafah'. Beliau telah menghasilkan sebanyak 40 buah buku termasuk 10 buah antologi bersama penulis dari Singapura, Malaysia, Brunei dan Indonesia.

Peter Augustine Goh is the pen name of Goh Mey Teck @ Iskandar Goh. He writes in various genres namely short story, adult and children's novel, poetry, TV drama, radio drama and literary essay. All his works are in Malay. Some of his works have been translated into English, Mandarin and Tamil. Currently, he is a creative writing trainer and a freelance translator. He won the Singapore Golden Point Award thrice for short stories



and poetry in 1995, 1999 and 2003. In 2016, he won the Singapore Literature Prize in the Malay fiction category. It was a collection of 19 short stories entitled *Air Mata Di Arafah* (*Tears in Arafah*). He has about 40 books to his credit, including 10 with other writers from Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia.

ANNEX II: List of Former S.E.A. Write Award Winners Information

- 1979 Edwin Thumboo
1980 *Masuri bin Sulikun
1981 黄孟文 (Wong Meng Voon)
1982 Ma Ilangkannan (M Balakrishnan)
1983 *Arthur Yap
1984 王润华 (Wong Yoon Wah)
1985 *Noor S.I. (Ismail Bin Haji Omar)
1986 *Paranan (C. Veloo)
1987 Lee Tzu Pheng
1988 蔡文玄 (Chua Boon Hean) (柳北岸 Pen name: Leou Pei Ann)
1989 Suratman Markasan
1990 Rama Kannabiran
1991 *Gopal Baratham
1992 张荣日 (Cheong Weng Yat)
1993 Muhammad Ariff Ahmad
1994 *Naa Govindasamy
1995 刘宝珍 (Lew Poo Chan) (淡莹 Pen name: Dan Ying)
1996 Ho Minfong
1997 Elangovan
1998 *Abdul Ghani Hamid
1999 Catherine Lim
2000 张曦娜 (Teoh Hee La)
2001 K.T.M. Iqbal (Mohamed Iqbal)
2002 Mohamed Latiff bin Mohamed
2003 Philip Jeyaretnam
2004 孙爱玲 (Soon Ai Ling)

2005 P. Krishnan

2006 Isa Kamari

2007 *Rex Shelley

2008 Stella Kon

2009 谢惠平 (Chia Hwee Pheng) (希尼尔 Pen name: Xi Ni Er)

2010 Johar Buang

2011 Robert Yeo

2012 Suchen Christine Lim

2013 英培安 (Yeng Pway Ngon)

2014 Haresh Sharma

2015 J.M. Sali

2016 Ovidia Yu

2017 谢裕民 (Chia Joo Ming)

2018 Goh Mey Teck (Pen name: Peter Augustine Goh)

*deceased