



Press Release
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Pitting Monsters Against (Im)Mortals at the George Town Literary Festival 2017

George Town, Penang - The George Town Literary Festival returns for its seventh edition this year with the theme 'Monsters & (Im)Mortals'. The festival is the largest international literary festival in Malaysia and is supported and funded by the State Government of Penang.

Shortlisted for the Best Literary Festival Award by The London Book Fair in 2017 and proclaimed as "One of the best literary festivals in the world" by Man Asian Prize winner Tan Twan Eng, GTLF 2017 will be held from 24 to 26 November with the festival's most acclaimed line-up of local and international writers and poets.

Helming GTLF 2017 is Bernice Chauly, who returns this year as Festival Director, supported by the Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) as Festival Producer. The three-day festival will see panel discussions, readings, conversations, spoken word performances, dance and film screenings. This year, Gareth Richards and Pauline Fan have been invited to co-curate the festival programming.

This year's theme, 'Monsters & (Im)Mortals', explores a world ruled by demagogues, where we are reminded of a time when the immortals ruled, where myth and legends pervaded our understanding of the world and the cosmos, where human beings were human and the gods immortal. Monsters lived in their midst and it was one of the reasons the gods went to war, to wage battle against fearsome beasts who threatened all manner of destruction. But there were also men who became monsters, who turned against all that was good and all that was human.

"Monsters & (Im)Mortals looks at light and dark; of genius and madness, reality and fantasy, the element of the shadow in literature and of divine tragedy," said Bernice Chauly at the press conference this afternoon at Majestic Theatre Penang.

The festival continues to have to have riveting conversations, panel discussions, a poetry marathon, book launches, and workshops with writers from all over the world. The festival has confirmed luminaries like Belgian cultural historian, **David van Reybrouck**; Malaysian-Chinese-American journalist, **Mei Fong**; Indonesian poet and food writer **Laksmi Pamuntjak**; Icelandic poet and children's book writer, **Gerður Kristný**; Northern Irish playwright and novelist, **Paul McVeigh**; Cambodian American spoken word artist, **Kosal Khiev**; Singaporean graphic novelist, **Sonny Liew**; Dutch author and journalist, **Caroline de Gruyter**; Burmese poet and artist **Maung Day**; and our very own fantasy author, **Zen Cho**; novelist **Fahmi Mustaffa**; poet and activist, **Rahmat Haron**; veteran visual artist and poet, **Latiff Mohidin**; and many more.

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For this first time this year, the GTLF will also host a Translators' Roundtable, featuring writers and translators **Jerome Bouchaud** (France/Malaysia), **Lee Yew Leong** (Singapore/Taiwan) and **Muhammad Haji Salleh** (Malaysia) and more. This half-day event aims to give more visibility to the role of translators in local literature, and to also highlight the many issues that translators face today. The Translators' Roundtable is curated by Gareth Richards and Pauline Fan and is funded by the Penang Institute and Gerakbudaya Bookshop Penang.

"In bringing the world to Penang through the congregation of invited writers, poets and artists from around the globe, I hope the public will once again, be inspired and motivated to a join in a celebration of poetry, prose, spoken word, film, and music," said Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

As the literary festival expands each year, new and exciting programmes are added to the mix to reach out to wider audiences. This year, the GTLF is accompanied by a Fringe Festival and a free public screening of 'You Mean the World to Me', set in 1970s Penang and the first Malaysian film to be filmed entirely in Penang Hokkien.

"For the Fringe Festival, we are collaborating with the producer of The Cooler Lumpur Festival and the event is curated by Umapagan Ampikaipakan. The Fringe Festival will see fun events such as midnight heritage walk complete with site-specific performances in English, Malay and Penang Hokkien, as well as a series of digital graphic stories leading up to the festival," said Ashwin Gunasekeran, the CEO of PCEB CEO.

"We are also proud to announce that we are partnering with Astro Shaw and Majestic Theatre Penang for a free public screening of the acclaimed Penang Hokkien film, 'You Mean The World To Me' by Saw Teong Hin," he added.

The festival is also partnering with the the Fay Khoo Award, which was set up in tribute to the memory of author, publisher and radio host Fay Khoo. The festival's Pop-Up Market returns this year with more Penang artisanal goods and local flavours.

The festival is supported by Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Embassy of Belgium in Malaysia, British Council, Goethe Institut, Culture Ireland, South Australian Writers Centre, Icelandic Literature Centre, Singapore Literature Prize, Majestic Theatre Penang, Astro Shaw, Penang Monthly, Mekong Review, Royale Chulan Penang, and many more. We are indebted to your continued support in the spirit of exchange and of bringing writers from your countries to share and engage with our writers and audiences.

The George Town Literary Festival, which continues to be free and open to the public, with exception of the writing workshops, is one of the most anticipated festivals in the region.

For further media inquiries, kindly contact Ms. Yasmin Bathamanathan at yasmin@pceb.my. More information on the George Town Literary Festival 2017 can be obtained from:

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