



NEWS RELEASE

Singapore, 2 May 2023

National Arts Council and NTU Singapore renew joint writing programme for aspiring writers

Renewed Asia Creative Writing Programme to offer new and exciting programmes led by leading international and local Visiting Writers

In a significant boost for writers and the literary arts scene in Singapore, the National Arts Council (NAC) and **Nanyang Technological University, Singapore's (NTU Singapore)** School of Humanities have agreed to renew their joint initiative for the Asia Creative Writing Programme (ACWP) for an additional two years for 2023 and 2024.

The ACWP is a milestone creative writing programme for the literary arts sector that aims to provide capability development opportunities for writers at different stages of their artistic practice, across all four official languages. Under the programme, leading international and local writers are appointed as Visiting Writers to teach creative writing workshops and masterclasses hosted at NTU Singapore, as well as mentor and guide emerging, developing and advanced writers in Singapore.

Over the next two years, emerging and experienced writers in Singapore can look forward to a variety of exciting courses from the ACWP. This May 2023, ACWP brings 2022 Booker Prize-shortlisted and multiple award-winning Irish writer, Claire Keegan, to Singapore. According to the *New York Times*, Claire Keegan "has gained a towering reputation as one of Ireland's canonical writers."

She will read from her award-winning fiction and answer questions about her work and writing life at [An Evening with Claire Keegan](#). The ticketed event, open to the public, will be held on 14 May 2023, 7pm at the Asian Civilisations Museum.

Award-winning Malaysian writer Dr Mawar Safei, recipient of the 2018 SEA Write Award, and Dr Suneel Krishnan, recipient of the 2018 Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar award, will also come to Singapore in 2023 as Visiting Writers for ACWP.

Since 2019, ACWP has worked with a number of world-class writers to deliver high-quality creative writing courses in Singapore, including Akhil Sharma (winner of the 2015 Folio Prize and the International Dublin Literary Award 2016) and Mary Jean Chan (winner of the 2019 Costa Book Award and a judge for the 2023 Booker Prize).

Leading French-Vietnamese, award-winning speculative fiction writer Aliette de Bodard; Taiwanese editor and writer Dr Feng-en Tu; and award-winning Scottish writer A L Kennedy have also provided online workshops and mentoring under the programme.

In line with NAC's Our SG Arts Plan (2023–2027), ACWP will provide writers with opportunities to hone their existing practice and to widen their creative writing skills through courses for fiction, poetry, creative non-fiction, literary translation, and other forms and genres in creative writing. ACWP aims to reach out to writers in Singapore and the neighbouring region to deepen intercultural understanding within Singapore and across Asia.

"The ACWP has been highly successful since it began over three years ago, and we are fortunate to have such remarkable talents to inspire our campus and local communities. We look forward to continuing working together with the National Arts Council to bring more outstanding, international and Singaporean writers to teach and develop writers across Singapore and our students at Nanyang Technological University," said **Professor Neil Murphy, Chair of the School of Humanities at NTU.**

"We hope ACWP will support writers in Singapore and Asia to pursue higher levels of literary excellence and find new opportunities that leverage their unique skillsets as experts of the written word. Singapore, as a unique multicultural crossroads within Asia, has the potential to grow its international standing in creative writing education. The National Arts Council, together with the Nanyang Technological University, will continue to facilitate these development opportunities for writers, and position Singapore as a cultural and distinctive city for the literary arts," said **Ms Aruna Johnson, Director of Literary Arts at NAC.**

Visiting Writer **Mary Jean Chan** said: "It was a pleasure and a privilege to be an ACWP Visiting Writer for Summer 2022. I met a group of brilliant poets during our poetry workshops and enjoyed getting to know the Singaporean literary community through meeting with other writers. I felt supported and nourished throughout my time in Singapore, and will cherish this experience for many years to come."

ACWP has grown in strength over the last three years, despite the challenges of COVID-19, and now provides a valuable platform and centre of excellence for Singapore-based writers to develop their craft and interact with regional writers too.

To date, over 600 writers and students have benefitted from ACWP's professional development courses and activities open to the public and undergraduate courses at

NTU, including 40 writers from overseas who attended ACWP's online courses and events.

For the latest updates on ACWP, please visit the [ACWP website](#).

END

Media contact:

Mr Lester Hio
Manager, Media Relations
Corporate Communications Office
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
Email: lester.hio@ntu.edu.sg

About Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

A research-intensive public university, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Engineering, Business, Science, Medicine, Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences, and Graduate colleges.

NTU is also home to world-renowned autonomous institutes – the National Institute of Education, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Earth Observatory of Singapore, and Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering – and various leading research centres such as the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute (NEWRI) and Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N).

Under the NTU Smart Campus vision, the University harnesses the power of digital technology and tech-enabled solutions to support better learning and living experiences, the discovery of new knowledge, and the sustainability of resources.

Ranked amongst the world's top universities, the University's main campus is also frequently listed among the world's most beautiful. Known for its sustainability, over 95% of its building projects are certified Green Mark Platinum. Apart from its main campus, NTU also has a medical campus in Novena, Singapore's healthcare district.

For more information, visit www.ntu.edu.sg

About the Asia Creative Writing Programme

The Asia Creative Writing Programme is a joint initiative between the National Arts Council of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, that develops writers and deepens intercultural understanding within Singapore and across the region.

ANNEX A – Visiting Writers Bios

Claire Keegan

Claire Keegan was raised on a farm on the Wicklow/Wexford border. Her works have won numerous awards and are translated into more than thirty languages. *Antarctica* won the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature. *Walk the Blue Fields* won the Edge Hill Prize for the finest collection of stories published in the British Isles. *Foster*, after winning the Davy Byrnes Award — then the world’s richest prize for a story — was chosen by The Times as one of the top 50 works to be published in the 21st Century. It is now part of the school syllabus in Ireland.

Her latest, *Small Things Like These*, was shortlisted for the Booker Prize and the Rathbones Folio Prize. It won the Orwell Prize for Political Fiction, the Ambassadors’ Prize for best Irish novel published in France, and The Kerry Prize for Irish Novel of the year. It is now nominated for the Dublin Literary Award, the world’s richest literary prize, which is presented annually for the best novel in the world written or translated into English.

Claire Keegan will be a Visiting Writer from 1 April to 22 May 2023.

Dr Mawar Safei

Dr Mawar Safei is an esteemed writer of Malay language fiction with a world class reputation as a Malay scholar and educator.

She has published her academic writing in numerous journals and magazines. She has also written short story collections including:

Zel (Galeri Melora, Bandar Baru Bangi, Selangor Darul Ehsan 1998)
Montaj II (Penerbitan Pustaka Nusa, Kajang 2002)
Masitah (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2007, 2009)
Narasi Gua dan Raqim (Institut Terjemahan & Buku Malaysia, 2013, 2014)
Dan Coklat Mengalir dari Ruang Buncah (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2015)
Narasi dari Tanah Selandia Baru dan Kisah Lainnya (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2021)
Narasi Musim Wabah: Antologi Cerpen Covid (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2021)

As a columnist in *Dewan Siswa*, she comments on Malay young writers' work and has published as well in *Himpunan dan Ulasan Cerpen* (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2021).

Among the awards and recognition she has received include, in multiple years, the Utusan Melayu-Public Bank Literary Prize, the Utusan Group-Exxon Mobil Literary Prize, the Perdana Malaysia Literary Prize and the Darul Takzim Literary Prize. She is the recipient of the 2018 National Academic Award (Art and Creativity) and SEA Write Award 2018.

She is currently an Associate Professor and Head of the Malay Heritage Cluster (2020-2022) at the Malay Excellence Center, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Her specialization is comparative literature and creativity. She completed her Doctor of Philosophy (Comparative Literature) at Nanyang Technological University and Master of Arts at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Dr Mawar Safei will be a Visiting Writer from 7 Aug to 27 Oct 2023.

Dr Suneel Krishnan

Dr Suneel Krishnan is an esteemed writer, translator, critic, essayist and editor of Tamil language fiction who has presented at workshops and festivals in India, Malaysia and Singapore.

He has written short stories and novels including *Ambu Padukkai* (2018), *Vishakkinaru* (2020) and *Neelakantam* (2020).

He has also translated works including *Hindu Gnanam Oru Eliya Arimugam* by Kshiti Mohan Sen, *Sudanthiramum Samuganeedhiyum* by Rajmohan Gandhi, *Mahathmavuku Anjali* for Tributes inn Radio, and *Sathiyathudanana Sodhanaigalin Kadhai* (upcoming 2023), a translated version of the critical annotated edition of Gandhi's Autobiography, edited by Tridip Suhrud. He has written two books on literary criticism: *'Samakala Sirukadhaigalin Parinamam'* critical essays on short storie, and *'Valaroli'* an anthology of critical essays and interviews.

He has also edited Anthologies including *Gandhi Ellaigaluku Appal* (2012), a book of translated Articles on Gandhi, *Pinnavinathuva vadhiyin* Manaivi - Selected stories of Sureshkumara Indrajith (2019), *Gandhiyai Sumapavargal* (2021) and *Mahathma Gandhi in Tamil - An anthology* (Bharatiya Vidya bhavan 2022).

Among the awards and recognition he has received include the 2018 Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar award for his short story collection 'Ambu Padukkai', the 2018 Kanaiyazhi Ezhuthu Kuru novel competition 'Asokamithran' prize for his novella 'Pesum Poonai', the Ka Na Su short story award for 'Eppodhum Mudivele Inbam' in 2020 and the “அறச்செம்மல்” award given by Erode Aram Arakatalai.

He has also participated in various television discussion programs, delivered lectures and talks in relation to Tamil Modern literature in various educational institutions and forums, and participated in literary festivals such as Gateway litfest, Mumbai, International Litfest at Shimla, organised by Sahitya Akademi, and the Singapore Writers' festival. Further he is an editor of a website in Tamil dedicated to articles on Gandhi, Gandhian thoughts and Gandhians– www.gandhitodaytamil.com, one of the editors of Tamil literary ezine 'Padhakai', and one of the editors of tamil.wiki. He was also one of the judges for the 2019 Golden Point Tamil language short story competition in Singapore and a judge for the Singapore literary prize fiction in Tamil in

2022. He is a member of the Academic Council of Srimath Andavar College of Arts and Science, Srirangam.

He is currently an Ayurvedic Physician and Chief consultant at Kotakkal Arya Vaidya Sala, Karaikudi, India.

Dr Suneel Krishnan will be a Visiting Writer from 11 Sept to 1 Dec 2023.