

MEDIA RELEASE

(Embargoed till 22 October 2007)

Singapore Writers Festival 2007

Presents

CROSSINGS

*A Celebration of New and Emerging Asian Writing
Through Multi-Disciplinary & Multi-Generational Programmes!*

1 – 9 December 2007

The Arts House & other participating venues

www.singaporewritersfestival.com

SINGAPORE, 22 October 2007 – The nation's major literary festival *Singapore Writers Festival* (SWF) returns this December with new initiatives aimed at bringing the festival to its next level of growth.

SWF 2007 will mark a milestone in the development of the festival through a first-time collaboration between the National Arts Council and The Arts House. From this year onwards, the festival will dedicate itself towards a focus on new and emerging Asian writing, with an emphasis on a more inter-disciplinary programming strategy. Since its first launch in the 1986 as *Writers Week*, as a component of the then Singapore Festival of Arts, SWF subsequently grew to become the Singapore Writers Festival in 1991.

With its central theme of *CROSSINGS*, Singapore Writers Festival 2007 will see a celebration of the literary arts through a programme of intersections between disciplines, cultures, traditions, language, time and space. Held from **1 to 9 December 2007** at The Arts House and other participating venues, SWF 2007 will showcase over 40 authors from 13 countries, including several prominent Asian literary heavyweights and rising talents, as well as exciting new programmes including a series of film screenings, visual arts exhibitions, as well as music and theatre programmes.

Said Mr. Lee Suan Hiang, CEO of the National Arts Council and Chairman of the SWF 2007 Steering Committee: "The highlight for many major literary festivals around the world, including Asia, has always been major American and European writers. Emerging Asian writing and work recently available from established Asian writers are often overlooked or given less focus. From 2007 henceforth however, SWF aims to serve as a platform for writing that is coming out from Asia, and to become a festival which Asia and the Asian diaspora around the world can be proud of. Together with The Arts House, NAC aims to build SWF as THE major literary arts festival in Asia, organised by Asians, for Asians and the world."

Singapore Writers Festival is co-organised by

Noteworthy Asian and international literary stars include Tash Aw (Malaysia/United Kingdom; *The Harmony Silk Factory*), Jung Chang (China/UK; *Wild Swans*), Goh Poh Seng (Singapore/Canada; *If We Dream Too Long*), Elmo Jayawardena (Sri Lanka; *Sam's Story*) A. Samad Said (Malaysia; *Salina*), Su Tong (China; *Raise the Red Lantern*), Gail Simone (U.S.A; *Welcome to Tranquillity*) and the well-known actress, TV presenter and chef – Madhur Jaffrey (India/UK; *Madhur Jaffrey's Flavours of India*) The Singapore contingent features inspiring authors such as novelist, poet and playwright Isa Kamari (*Satu Bumi*), Daren Shiau (*Heartland*), Yeng Pway Ngon (*Turmoil*) and Suratman Markasan (*Tak Ada Jalan Keluar*). **A full list of participating writers is available in Annex 1.**

Indeed, SWF 2007 – *CROSSINGS* will not just promote and showcase new and emerging Asian writers and writing in four languages (English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil), it will also dedicate itself towards creating a platform to increase the awareness and appreciation of Singaporean literary talents, traditions and heritage, all of which Singaporeans ought to be proud of and to treasure indefinitely.

For the first time in the history of the festival, *CROSSINGS* will feature programmes that specifically pay homage to Singapore's rich literary tradition and pioneers. One of the highlights of the festival is the return of one of Singapore's pioneer writers, 1982 Cultural Medallion recipient for literature Goh Poh Seng who makes a return visit to Singapore after over 20 years. Another notable feature of SWF 2007 will be a visual arts exhibition bringing to light works of our late poet, Arthur Yap.

Said Mr. Colin Goh, General Manager of The Arts House: "We're happy and honoured to co-organise SWF with NAC. Since we opened in 2004, The Arts House has been firmly dedicated to the development of the literary scene with initiatives such as the NUS/FASS-The Arts House Writing Fellowship and Earshot. Our involvement in SWF marks a major milestone for The Arts House's long-term commitment towards the literary arts. For this year's SWF, we have planned not only an inspiring line up of writers but we have also looked towards featuring literary-inspired programmes in other disciplines such as film, visual arts and music to draw new audiences for the literary arts.

"With the support of the community and together with our partner NAC, TAH will continue towards developing SWF as a vehicle to stimulate interest in the literary arts and share the transformative power of writing with the people of Singapore."

Ms Ginney Lim, General Manager of Singapore Press Holdings Foundation, and Executive Vice President of Legal and Corporate Communications of Singapore Press Holdings, said: "SPH and the SPH Foundation are proud to be the presenting sponsors of our nation's most important festival that celebrates both established and emerging literary talents. We are pleased that the Singapore Writers Festival is taking a leading role in the region to focus on Asian writers and giving them the attention that they deserve. As a leading media company with 14 newspapers in all four languages, SPH takes great interest in promoting writing and reading. We are happy to sponsor this Festival which aims at promoting and creating a platform to increase the awareness and appreciation of Singaporean literary talents, traditions and heritage."

Highlights of SWF 2007 – CROSSINGS

In a bid to reach out to a wider audience and create a greater interest in the literary arts, the nine-day festival will showcase top-calibre writers from Asia and around the world whose works address a wide range of issues – from incarceration to female sexuality – through a host of activities including seminars, workshops, music and theatre performances, film screenings as well as visual arts exhibitions.

Graphic novel fans can look forward to meeting and sharing ideas during workshops conducted by stellar, highly-respected talents like Gail Simone, Kurt Busiek and Mark Waid. In addition to the Singapore programmes featuring Goh Poh Seng and a visual arts exhibition on Arthur Yap, there will be an exhibition to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Joseph Conrad's birth as well as a spellbinding play by Cake Theatrical Production – **y grec**, which is based on a recent book of poetry by Madeleine Lee and Eleanor Wong. **More details available in Annex 2.**

Both aspiring and established writers, publishers and all who are keen in the writing and publishing industry will stand to gain invaluable experience through **The Business of Books** – a two-day professional symposium featuring local and international industry experts who will share their thoughts on the finer points of publishing one's work and provide insights into the literary industry.

To book tickets to the performances and film screenings or to register for the talks and symposium, please contact **The Arts House Box Office** at +65 6332 6919 or email tickets@toph.com.sg. The public can refer to www.singaporewritersfestival.com for regular updates and further information of all programmes.

Special Programmes Leading up to SWF 2007 – CROSSINGS

Look out for the upcoming SWF Pre-Fest Event, **Tune into Text II: The Halloween Getai Special** – a multi-lingual celebration of local bands uniquely presented in a setting that is usually confined to Mandarin and Chinese dialects, on **27 October 2007, 7.30pm at The Arts House**. Held regularly since February 2007, the SWF Pre-Fest Events involving writing workshops, readings and performances, aim to generate buzz and awareness of the festival happening at the end of the year.

Singapore Writers Festival 2007 is co-organised by the National Arts Council and The Arts House with the generous sponsorship of the presenting sponsors, Singapore Press Holdings Foundation and Singapore Press Holdings Ltd, major sponsor Lee Foundation and sponsors including Page One Publishing Pte Ltd and Grand Plaza Park Hotel.

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About the National Arts Council, Singapore

The National Arts Council (NAC) was established in September 1991 to spearhead the development of the arts in Singapore. To realise its vision of developing Singapore into a distinctive global city for the arts, NAC provides total support to nurture artistic talent, promotes the practice and appreciation of the arts among Singaporeans, builds up capabilities and resources, facilitates internationalization and advocates the value of the arts. Through its holistic range of programmes and initiatives to develop the entire arts value chain, the Council champions the growth of a vibrant arts sector where the arts is accessible to all, and the community of artists, arts groups and arts businesses can innovate, excel and achieve sustainability in the long term. www.nac.gov.sg

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The Arts House at the Old Parliament

Officially opened on 26 March 2004, The Arts House at the Old Parliament is the only gazetted historic government building which has been designated as an arts and heritage venue. The 180-year-old national monument was originally built in 1827 as a home for a Scottish merchant but subsequently became Singapore's first Court House and former Parliament House. The Arts House is now a multidisciplinary arts centre that offers visitors the opportunity to create their own mix of activities from a broad spectrum of engaging, contemporary arts events, entertainment and lifestyle options. The Arts House is managed by The Old Parliament House Limited, a not-for-profit full-service arts management company limited by guarantee. For further information, please visit www.theartshouse.com.sg.

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