

# Post-event Report

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**A Wasteland of Malaysian Poetry in English**  
**20 November 2023 – 29 November 2023**

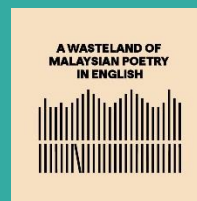
**Georgetown Literary Festival**



**JANUARY 4**

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**For Hai-O Arts & Culture Grants 2022**  
**Authored by: Brandon K. Liew**



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# Overview

The audio-exhibition *A Wasteland of Malaysian Poetry in English* was held at Hall 1, Jetty35, Georgetown, Penang from 20 November 2023 to 29 November 2023 coinciding with the Georgetown Literary Festival 2023. This was the third iteration of the exhibition, and present new recordings. Informed by curator Brandon K. Liew's research into the history of twentieth and twenty-first century Malaysian literature, the exhibition presented a continuous tradition of poetry in English predating Malaysian independence.



The exhibition hosted live readings, open mics, exhibition talks, poetry workshops, and open recording sessions over the two-week period coinciding with the Georgetown Literary Festival 2023. It was partially supported by both local and international community grants programmes. Entry was free and open to public, but registration was required for events

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# Exhibition Notes

## Heritage Space

Held at Jetty35, a renovated jetty space-turned-arts hub in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Georgetown, Penang, this exhibition articulated Malaysian poetry in English as an audioscape of spoken word. Original, never-before-heard recordings of poetry from figures such as K.S. Maniam, Lee Kok Liang, Malachi Edwin Vethamani, Omar Musa, Muhammad Haji Salleh, Shirley Geok-Lin Lim, Wang Gungwu, Wong Phui Nam, and many more are included in this exhibition, tracing the work of foundational Malaysian poets in English from the 1940s to their legacies in emerging poetic voices today. The voices blend and blur into each other, preoccupied with a Malaysian consciousness over the last century that is neither disassociated nor whole.

## EXCLUSIVE AUDIO

The exhibition featured contemporary and never-before-heard readings from pioneering poets such as Shirley Geok-lin Lim, Salleh Ben Joned, and Wong Phui Nam. This includes readings from Shirley Geok-lin Lim's forthcoming collection of poems titled *Dawns Tomorrow* scheduled for publication in 2024, readings from Wong Phui Nam's forthcoming collection of poems titled *Into the Mirror* scheduled for publication in 2024, and interview recordings featured in Salleh Ben Joned's *Truth, Beauty, Amok and Belonging* published concurrently at the Georgetown Literary Festival 2023.

## DAILY EXHIBITION TALKS

Short talks were given at certain times during opening hours of the exhibition by curator Brandon K. Liew, a published researcher of Malaysian Literary History. These talks are based on cutting-edge peer-reviewed research that has been presented at conferences internationally. They discuss the ways in which Malaysians relate to their homeland and sense of self through poetry.

Some topics include:

*Malaysia is a Mirror: The Malayan literary movement of Engmalchin*

*At Home in the Wilderness: Poets and Place*

*Malaysian Literature as Global: A history of the international book market*

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# Events

## LIVE READINGS & OPEN MIC SESSION

Select poets from the exhibition performed a live performance reading at 7pm on Saturday 25 November at Jetty35. All experienced and aspiring writers were invited to sign up for the open mic session that followed the live readings.

## WORKSHOPS

Yee Heng Yeh and Wan Phing Lim, two Penang-born published writers, each led a public creative workshop as part of the exhibition. Wan Phing's workshop focused on short story writing and was held on Thursday, 23 November, 3pm. Yee Heng Yeh's workshop focused on the discipline of stagewriting and was held on Friday, 24 November, 11am.

<p><b><u>The Spirit of Place</u></b> <b>Thursday, 23 Nov, 3pm</b></p> <p><b>Led by Wan Phing Lim</b></p> <p><b>In-person only at Hall 1, Jetty35.</b> <a href="https://thespiritofplace.peatix.com">https://thespiritofplace.peatix.com</a></p>	<p>'Place' in fiction is not only about setting – it informs the mood, theme, characters, and even the plot itself. We'll discuss how a strong sense of place makes a story believable, and the importance of 'place' in making fiction authentic. Participants can expect to partake in short writing exercises during this workshop.</p>
<p><b><u>Talking About Talking: Dialogue in Playwriting</u></b> <b>Friday, 24 Nov, 11am</b></p> <p><b>Led by Yee Heng Yeh</b></p> <p><b>In-person only at Hall 1, Jetty35.</b> <a href="https://dialogueinplaywriting.peatix.com">https://dialogueinplaywriting.peatix.com</a></p>	<p>The workshop will cover the basic elements of playwriting, with a particular focus on how to develop one of the most fundamental building blocks of a play—the dialogue. Participants will look at excerpts from classic and contemporary plays and take their first step into crafting a scene.</p>

# Financial

Grant recipient / Event manager:

BRANDON

Budget Summary		
Budget	Actual	Under (Over)
\$ 7,000	\$ 6,945	\$ 56

Activity	Venue/ Equipment Hire		Printing/ stationery / graphic design		Advertising		Payment of guest speakers/ performers		Travel costs associated with the activity		Catering		Exhibition costs		Other <Prizes>		Other <Enter description>		Other <Enter description>		Budget	Actual	Under (Over)
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual					
<b>Grand Total all phases/category</b>	<b>\$ 1,000</b>	<b>\$ 600</b>	<b>\$ 3,000</b>	<b>\$ 3,051</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 1,500</b>	<b>\$ 2,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 1,500</b>	<b>\$ 1,293</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 7,000</b>	<b>\$ 6,945</b>	<b>\$ (56)</b>
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<b>Workshop</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ -
Heng Yeh Playwriting							\$ 500	\$ 500													\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ -
Wan Phing Short Story							\$ 500	\$ 500													\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ -
																					\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Workshop</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ -
Sheena Performance							\$ 500	\$ 500													\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ -
Reader Payment (5x Readers)							\$ 500	\$ 500													\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ -
																					\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Other</b>	<b>\$ 1,000</b>	<b>\$ 600</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 1,500</b>	<b>\$ 1,293</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 1,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,893</b>	<b>\$ (893)</b>
Material Budget													\$ 1,293								\$ -	\$ 1,293	\$ (1,293)
PA RENTAL (RM600)	\$ 1,000	\$ 600																			\$ 1,000	\$ 600	\$ 400
																					\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Printing</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 3,051</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 3,051</b>	<b>\$ (3,051)</b>
Phoenix (RM1870)				\$ 1,870																	\$ -	\$ 1,870	\$ (1,870)
KL Printer (RM1100)				\$ 1,100																	\$ -	\$ 1,100	\$ (1,100)
CRESCENT PRINTING (RM81.35)				\$ 81																	\$ -	\$ 81	\$ (81)

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