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**FIRST ROUND OF AUTHORS, ARTISTS AND ACTIVISTS ANNOUNCED FOR UBUD
WRITERS & READERS FESTIVAL'S 15TH YEAR**

Ubud, INDONESIA –

The Ubud Writers & Readers Festival (UWRF) today announced its first lineup of authors, artists and activists who will join this year's five-day program of impassioned discussions, intimate special events, stimulating films and powerful performances from 24–28 October. Early Bird tickets are now on sale until the full program is announced from mid-August.

In 2018 UWRF celebrates its 15th year as Southeast Asia's leading festival of words and ideas. It will bring together more than 150 speakers from 25 countries, to share extraordinary stories and refreshing perspectives through the lens of this year's theme, 'Jagadhita'.

Like many of the Festival's previous years, the theme is drawn from a Balinese Hindu philosophy. 'Jagadhita' is the individual pursuit of universal harmony and prosperity as one of life's primary goals, interpreted in English as 'The World We Create'.

The Festival's five-day program will explore countless ways to create a world that we want to live in; how we strive as individuals and as communities to manifest positive change; and how to nurture this goal through respect and actions that sustain compassion for each other and ourselves.

From Makassar to Nigeria, Jakarta to India, the first lineup of 16 speakers is testament to the Festival's cultural diversity. Along with its intimate venues in the artistic heart of Bali, with views of Ubud's iconic rice fields, jungles and valleys, the vast number of nations represented is what makes the UWRF unique among the world's top literary events.

The Festival is honored to welcome revered British playwright, screenwriter, filmmaker and novelist **Hanif Kureishi**, alongside Professor **Gillian Triggs**, who served as President of the Australian Human Rights Commission from 2012 to 2017. During her term Professor Triggs' launched an inquiry into children in immigration detention, causing controversy



among the political right and conservative media, and has since focused on the gendered nature of the criticism.

Reflecting on the relationships between communities divided by history, language, and cultures is **Kim Scott**, whose *Benang* (1999) was the first novel by an Indigenous writer to win the Miles Franklin Award, Australia's premier literary prize. Scott's second novel also won the Miles Franklin, and his third, *Taboo*, is shortlisted for this year's Award.

Acclaimed Indian poet, novelist and dancer **Tishani Doshi**, who recently gave a fervent response to the problem of violence against women in India at the 2018 Hay Festival, will appear alongside Nigerian American writer, filmmaker, and medical doctor **Uzodinma Iweala**. Iweala is also CEO of The Africa Center in New York, promoting a new narrative about Africa and its diaspora through a focus on culture, policy, and business.

Pakistani memoirist and novelist **Fatima Bhutto** will return to UWRF after her first appearance in 2008. "It's been nearly ten years since my first Ubud experience and I was so moved then by the multitude of voices, experiences and narratives that I encountered at the Festival. I'm very happy to return," she commented.

Leading the conversation on equality and inclusivity in publishing is Indonesian Singaporean writer **Clarissa Goenawan**, who will be joined by acclaimed British author **Geoff Dyer**, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature whose books have been translated into 24 languages.

The nation's extraordinary cultural and creative diversity is embodied by the Festival's first round of Indonesian speakers. UWRF is thrilled to welcome **Kamila Andini**, director of *Sekala Niskala (The Seen and Unseen)*. One of Indonesia's most celebrated recent films, it premiered at Toronto International Film Festival 2017 and received the Grand Jury Prize at Tokyo Filmex, and the Generation Kplus Grand Prix at Berlinale.

As screenings of independent Indonesian films remain rare both internationally and locally, celebrating independent Indonesian cinema has grown into a core component of the Festival. This year's UWRF also sees the return of experimental filmmaker **Richard Oh** for the premiere of his fifth film *Love is a Bird*.



One of the frontrunners of Indonesia's modern literature landscape, **Dee Lestari**, will be joined by bestselling poet and rising star **Aan Mansyur**, award-winning author, poet, and architect **Avianti Armand**, and esteemed editor and author **Putu Fajar Arcana**.

From 17 August 2018, Indonesian Independence Day, Bali will be home to the world's tallest statue. The Festival is excited to welcome legendary sculpture artist **Nyoman Nuarta**, creator of the Garuda Wisnu Kencana Statue and other major national monuments, including the Indonesian Proclamation of Independence monument in Jakarta.

As increasing Islamic conservatism dominates news reports about the world's third largest democracy, the Festival is pleased to welcome author, entrepreneur and philanthropist **Haidar Bagir**. Bagir recently received the Global Business & Interfaith Peace Award for promoting pluralism and progressive Islamic thought through interfaith dialogue.

"We are so proud to reveal the first round of outstanding Indonesian writers and artists alongside our diverse group of international guests," commented UWRF Founder & Director Janet DeNeefe. "From humble beginnings 15 years ago, we have grown into the most prominent platform for showcasing the nation's emerging and established writers and artists, and one of the world's leading literary and artistic events," she continued.

"At a time when we need it most, we bring together voices from across the world for important debates and meaningful exchanges. At our Festival, cultural and geographical borders dissolve as our speakers and audiences create a global community," DeNeefe concluded.

"I invite you all to join us in celebrating our 15th year as Southeast Asia's leading festival of words and ideas."

More Information

Ubud Writers & Readers Festival 2018

The 15th Ubud Writers & Readers Festival will be held from 24–28 October, 2018. The first round of 16 speakers has been announced, and Early Bird tickets are now on sale from the



Festival's website. Early Bird tickets give buyers 20% off the 4-Day Pass, granting access to 72 Main Program sessions across three venues.

About the Festival

The Ubud Writers & Readers Festival's mission is to create a world class event that celebrates extraordinary stories and amplifies brave voices, tackles global issues and bold ideas. The Festival brings together a diverse mix of Indonesian and international writers, speakers, thinkers, artists, advocates, commentators and activists, to create a space for cross-cultural dialogue.

The Ubud Writers & Readers Festival is one of the major annual projects of not-for-profit foundation, the Yayasan Mudra Swari Saraswati. It was first conceived of in 2004 by Janet DeNeefe, Co-founder of the Foundation, as a healing project in response to the first Bali bombing.

Testimonials

"The festival – surely the best in the world – ensures that you're never at a loss for intellectual nourishment." - [Harper's Bazaar](#)

One of the '[Best Literary Festivals Around the World](#)' – Penguin Random House

UWRF18 Artwork

The 2018 artwork was created by Balinese artist Budi Agung Kuswara, aka Kabul.

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High-res Festival imagery (please note photo credits) can be downloaded from www.flickr.com/photos/ubudwritersfest/.

Media Accreditation

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