



**MEDIA RELEASE: 24 OCTOBER, 2018**

**180+ AUTHORS, ARTISTS AND ACTIVISTS DESCEND ON BALI FOR UWRF'S 15TH YEAR  
AS SOUTHEAST ASIA'S LEADING FESTIVAL OF WORDS AND IDEAS**

Ubud, INDONESIA –

15 years ago, when Indonesia was suffering after the Bali bombing in 2002 and the lingering Asian financial crisis, the first Ubud Writers & Readers Festival (UWRF) drew tourists back to the island by showcasing the nation's diverse beauty through literature and art. Since then, the UWRF has evolved into Indonesia's biggest platform for its writers and artists, and one of the world's best-loved literary events.

From Indonesia to Japan, Nigeria to Pakistan, Spain to Vietnam, more than 180 authors, artists and activists from across the archipelago and 30 other countries have converged in Ubud for the Festival's milestone year. Over the next five days, the UWRF will deliver more than 200 events across 30 venues, spanning open-air panel discussions, in conversations, special events, live music, poetry slams, Indonesian film screenings, cultural tours, book launches, art exhibitions and more.

The Main Program's 70 one-on-one and panel discussions promise a world of extraordinary stories, diverse perspectives and deep dives into the region's most pressing issues, from feminism to the environment, religion to freedom of expression, immigration to Indonesia's 2019 presidential election.

Featuring the Festival's most acclaimed authors, award-winning journalists and political mavericks, there in conversation series includes eminent British writer, Hanif Kureishi, twice Miles Franklin winner, Kim Scott, Australia's former president of the Human Rights Commission, Gillian Triggs, celebrated author and essayist, Geoff Dyer, Indonesia's Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Susi Pudjiastuti, and former Foreign Minister, Marty Natalegawa, bestselling author Fatima Bhutto, and one of Italy's most popular writers working today, Giuseppe Catozzella.

Audiences will hear how the #MeToo movement has impacted Asia; the region's finest foreign correspondents will share their career-defining highs and lows; Indonesian writers will weigh in on what has and hasn't changed during the 20 years since *Reformasi* was ushered in; and Balinese artists will examine their island after a century of tourism.



After Indonesia's recent devastating natural disasters in Lombok and Central Sulawesi, the Dealing with Disasters panel will address what disaster risk reduction measures are urgently required, and, for those tragically affected, how these events can be processed and memorialized.

As part of the Festival's mission to support Indonesian communities, the UWRF has teamed up with local NGO IDEP Foundation to assist their emergency response programs in North Lombok and Central Sulawesi. Donation buckets will be placed at various points around the Festival, audiences can donate via the UWRF website, and hear from IDEP's Director Ade Andreawan during the Dealing with Disaster Panel.

"The UWRF was started after an act of terrorism 15 years ago to support the Balinese community; this year it's important we do our best to support North Lombok and Central Sulawesi," commented Founder & Director Janet DeNeeffe.

"As we reflect on the last 15 years and on how the Festival has evolved, as we look back on all the meaningful exchanges that have been made between Indonesian and international writers and readers, one thing is clear. Most visitors in the early days said they knew nothing about Indonesian writers, but this has now changed. People are now sitting up and taking notice," DeNeeffe continued.

"One of the world's biggest publishers, Penguin Random House, has just announced its expansion into Southeast Asia, meaning many more Indonesian writers will be read around the world. This heralds a new era for Indonesian fiction and nonfiction, and after 15 years of sharing Indonesian literature and culture with the world, we feel we've had an important role to play in that. I look forward to celebrating this exciting new era and our milestone year with you all over the next five days," DeNeeffe concluded.

## More Information

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### Ubud Writers & Readers Festival 2018

The 15<sup>th</sup> Ubud Writers & Readers Festival runs from 24-28 October, 2018. The full program is online at [ubudwritersfestival.com](http://ubudwritersfestival.com).

### About the Festival

The Ubud Writers & Readers Festival's mission is to create a world class festival 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 and connection.

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](#)

*UWRF is one of Penguin Random House's [Best Literary Festivals Around the World](#)*

### 2018 Poster

The 2018 poster 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/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/ubudwritersfest/).