

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First hybrid edition of AFCC to take place 27-30 May 2021 Thailand featured as Country of Focus



AFCC 2021 key visual by Kampanart Sangsorn

SINGAPORE, 20 April 2021 — After a year of disruptions and social distancing, the annual Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC) will be returning for its 12th edition from **27 to 30 May 2021** in a new hybrid format. The festival will roll out a blended format of online sessions and select in-person programmes, featuring more than 50 local and international speakers. Tickets are on sale now, with up to 25% discounts for group purchases during the Early Bird promotion until 30 April.

The festival celebrates the theme “Reimagine. Rebuild. Reignite.”, inviting participants to explore and discover the future of stories in children’s books and

young adult (YA) fiction. Featured international speakers include two-time Newbery Honor winner Christina Soontornvat; *New York Times*-bestselling author Holly Black; renowned South Korean writer Hwang Sun-mi; author of the bestselling *Gumiho* series Kat Cho; Oscar-nominated animator and illustrator 山村 浩二(Koji Yamamura); notable translator Lawrence Schimel; and award-winning Taiwanese author and illustrator 刘旭恭 (Liu Hsu-Kung). Participants can look forward to virtual sessions with them and many more at the festival. In-person programmes will consist of a series of workshops that focus on writing about children with disabilities, storytelling through drama and dialogic reading.

As part of its continuing efforts to showcase Southeast Asia, AFCC will feature Thailand as the Country of Focus (COF) this year. AFCC has commissioned award-winning illustrator Kampanart Sangsorn to create the festival's key visual based on the theme. In partnership with the Publishers and Booksellers Association of Thailand (PUBAT), the COF programmes will spotlight trends in children's literature in Thailand; reading initiatives to promote literacy; as well as a window into the works of its writers and illustrators. In addition, the Singapore Book Council (SBC) and PUBAT will embark on a co-translation project to translate and publish selected children's books from both countries. These efforts aim to bolster intercultural understanding and literary collaborations between the countries.

This year's sessions will tackle many current topics, including writing about cultural and ethnic diversity; inclusivity and accessibility in literary arts; digital modes of reading, teaching and learning; mental wellbeing through books; the future of audiobooks; and the importance of translation. Other highlights include:

- i) “Creating Magic Systems”, a workshop on worldbuilding by *New York Times*-bestselling author Holly Black;
- ii) “Joy of Reading: How to develop communities of readers”, a lecture by Teresa Cremin, a Professor of Education at The Open University;
- iii) “Crossing Borders: A Translation Roundtable”, which features translators from different parts of the world discussing how to increase consumption of translated children’s books;
- iv) “Writing For and About Children with Disabilities”, an interactive workshop by Hidayah Amin about providing opportunity for stories about, and for, children with special needs.

Please refer to Annex B for more information about the programmes and Annex C for speakers’ bios .

The public can also look forward to virtual book launches, as well as the Book Illustrators Gallery (BIG). BIG will return as a digital exhibition for the second year, showcasing the best picture book illustrations from Asia and around the world. It received a record of more than 370 submissions this year, boasting new entries from countries such as Kazakhstan, Russia, Canada and France. BIG 2021 will be launched on the AFCC website from 21 May 2021.

AFCC 2021 is supported by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple, Lee Foundation, National Translation Committee, Stephen Riady Foundation, Tote Board Arts Fund and the U.S. Embassy Singapore.

For more information, please visit afcc.com.sg..

Event details

Date: 27–30 May 2021. The complete schedule, including dates of in-person sessions; masterclasses and lectures will be announced in early May.

Venue: Online (afcc.com.sg) and in-person. The physical venue will be announced in early May.

For media related enquiries, please contact:

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Ticketing Information:

The Early Bird promotion runs from now till **30 April 2021**. Participants can enjoy 20%–25% discount off the festival passes.

Ticketing website: <https://afcc2021festivalpasses.eventbrite.sg/?aff=PressRelease>

Category	Price	Early Bird Price	Entitlements
1-Day Digital Pass (27, 28, 29 or 30 May)	S\$50	<p>S\$40 per ticket (20% discount)</p> <p>S\$37.50 per ticket for group purchase of five or more tickets (25% discount)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Access to over 70 sessions for a 4-day festival pass ii. Access to video-on-demand recordings of the digital sessions for 30 days iii. Access to exclusive AFCC 2021 conference materials, including presentation slides, handouts and reading materials from the speakers iv. Meet over 50 local and international speakers v. 15% discount to AFCC 2021 masterclasses and lectures, with priority booking



4-Day Digital Pass (27-30 May)	S\$150	S\$120 per ticket (20% discount) S\$112.50 per ticket for group purchase of five or more tickets (25% discount)	vi. 15% discount to in-person workshops, with priority booking** vii. Free access to Writers Pitch and Media Pitch viii. 10% discount for AFCC merchandise ix. 10% discount at AFCC 2021's Official Bookstore, Closetful of Books x. 10% discount on all SBC Academy programmes for 2021^ xi. 10% discount for all SBC publications^ **Venue to be confirmed ^Discount codes will be sent in the confirmation email after passes are purchased
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Annex A: About Singapore Book Council and AFCC

The Singapore Book Council (SBC) is an independent charity with IPC status. Established in 1968 to support Singapore authors and literature, SBC aims to Build Our Imagine-nation by developing creativity, imagination, original thought and empathy.

Vision: International recognition for quality, diverse Singapore literature.

Mission: To develop, support and advocate a multicultural literary arts sector.

SBC is currently chaired by Ms Claire Chiang, co-founder of Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts.

SBC is supported by the National Arts Council of Singapore under the Major Company Scheme for the period from 2019 to 2021. For more information, please visit www.bookcouncil.sg.



The Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC), organised by the Singapore Book Council, is the leading festival in Asia focusing on literature. AFCC offers a series of exciting panel discussions, workshops, lectures, masterclasses, and more events that promote the creation and appreciation of quality children's literature and YA with a focus on Asian themes.

AFCC will run online from 27-30 May.

For more information, please visit www.afcc.com.sg.

Annex B: Selected AFCC Programmes

1. Creating Magic Systems

Date and Time: 29 May, 0900 (GMT +0800)

Programme type: Online Masterclass

An essential part of worldbuilding, your magic system defines your world thematically and is part of the underpinnings for your story. A better understanding of your magic system can deepen your understanding of your characters and their journey. Come create a system that will be internally consistent, dynamic, with real-life parallels to our own world, and most importantly — story generative.

2. Joy of Reading: How to develop communities of readers

Date and Time: 30 May, 16:30 (GMT +0800)

Programme type: Online Lecture

This lecture will focus on the development of engaged communities of readers, particularly young children, who share the joy of reading. The evidence-informed talk will look at how these communities are underpinned by secure subject knowledge (of texts and of readers) and a reading for pleasure pedagogy. She will also discuss how three characteristics – reciprocity, interaction, and strong reader to reader relationships – impact readers' delight and desire.

3. Crossing Borders: A Translation Roundtable

Date and Time: 28 May, 17:00 (GMT +0800)

Programme type: Online Roundtable discussion

This roundtable gathers translators from different parts of the world and working in different languages to engage in a special conversation. They will discuss ways to increase translation of children's books, how to get more people to

read translated works, the challenges that they face, as well as their hopes for the future of translation.

4. Being the Voice for the Forgotten: Writing For and About Children with Disabilities

Date and Time: 27 May, 14:00 (GMT +0800)

Programme type: In-person workshop

Children's stories should go beyond fairy tales and fantasy. Readers should be able to read stories about the 'forgotten'—the special needs children who are marginalised, hidden and ignored. In turn, these forgotten children should be given the opportunity to read the 'same' literature their 'normal' peers are reading. Join this interactive workshop to understand, appreciate and advocate having a stronger voice for children often left on the sidelines.

Annex C: Selected AFCC Speakers



Name: Christina Soontornvat

(US)

Catch Christina in: Conversation with Christina Soontornvat

Christina Soontornvat is the award-winning author of over a dozen children's books. Her picture books include *The Ramble Shamble Children* and *Simon at the Art Museum*. Her recent works include the middle grade fantasy, *A Wish in the Dark*, which was named a 2021 Newbery Honor Book, and *All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team*, which has received numerous nonfiction awards and was also named a 2021 Newbery Honor Book.



Name: Hidayah Amin

(Singapore)

Catch Hidayah in:

- i) Creating Books for People with Disabilities
- ii) Being the Voice for the Forgotten: Writing for and About Children with Disabilities

Hidayah Amin had her first short story published when she was 11. It was only when she lost her childhood home that she resumed writing and published *Gedung Kuning: Memories of a Malay Childhood* in 2010. Hidayah has

since written eight non-fiction books and published 14 children's books, including 10 books for readers with and without disabilities.



Name: Holly Black

(US)

Catch Holly in her masterclass: Creating Magic Systems

Holly Black is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of over thirty fantasy novels for kids and teens. She has been a finalist for an Eisner and a Lodestar Award, and the recipient of the Mythopoeic Award, a Nebula, and a Newbery Honor. Her books have been translated into 32 languages worldwide and adapted for film. She currently lives in New England with her husband and son in a house with a secret library.



Name: Hwang Sun-mi

(South Korea)

Catch Sun-mi in:

- i) AFCC Keynote: Reimagine.Rebuild.Reignite
- ii) Inspiration, Memory and Writing

Hwang Sun-mi is a South Korean writer who has won many awards and published more than 40 books for adults and children. She graduated from the creative writing departments at Seoul Institute of the Arts and

Gwangju University. Her book, *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly* has been on bestseller lists for 20 years and has also been adapted into a comic book, a play, and a musical, and has been translated into 30 languages.



Name: Jason Chin

(US)

Catch Jason in AFCC Keynote:
Reimagine.Rebuild.Reignite

Jason Chin is the author and illustrator of many acclaimed books, including *Grand Canyon*, *Redwoods and Your Place in the Universe*. The latest book he illustrated, *Watercress*, by author Andrea Wang, has garnered seven-starred reviews. Jason has received a Caldecott Honor, Sibert Honor, Boston Globe-Horn Book Honor, and the NCTE Orbis Pictus award.



Name: Kat Cho

(US)

Catch Kat in: Why I Write About Diversity

Kat Cho is an international bestselling YA author who loves to incorporate her Korean heritage in her writing, especially if it involves describing food. She loves anything that encourages nerding out, including reading, K-dramas, K-pop and anime. She's the author

of *Gumiho: Wicked Fox and Vicious Spirits*
(Putnam/Penguin).



Name: 山村 浩二 (Koji Yamamura)

(Japan)

Catch Koji in: *Between Illustration and Animation:
Straddling Both Art Forms*

Koji Yamamura is an animator and illustrator. His anime short film *Mt. Head* (2002) was nominated for an Oscar and marked a turning point in his career and propelled him to prominence. He is also known for *Franz Kafka's A Country Doctor* (2007) and *Muybridge's Strings* (2011). His films have been awarded with more than 90 prizes and he also writes and illustrates picture books.



Name: Kristyn Maslog-Levis

(Philippines/Australia)

Catch Kristyn in:

i) *Culturally Diverse Middle Grade and YA books as the
Future of Content*

ii) *Why I Write About Diversity*

Kristyn M. Levis is a marketing specialist, author, ghostwriter and photographer. She worked as a TV reporter in the Philippines and a radio broadcaster with SBS in Sydney, where she still occasionally does voice-

overs. Her young adult novel *The Girl Between Two Worlds* and *The Girl Between Light and Dark* were published by Anvil Publishing. The third book in this series, *The Search for Adarna*, is out now.



Name: Lawrence Schimel

(US/Spain)

Catch Lawrence in:

- i) *Translating the Future: Why Translated Children's Books Are Vital*
- ii) *Creating Books for People with Disabilities*

Lawrence Schimel (New York, 1971) lives in Madrid, Spain and writes in both Spanish and English. He's published over 120 books in a wide range of genres. He is also a prolific literary translator. His translations into Spanish include the graphic novel *They Called us Enemy* by George Takei; his translations into English include the middle grade novels *The Wild Book* by Juan Villoro and *The Treasure of Barracuda* by Llanos Campos.



Name: 刘旭恭 (Liu Hsu-Kung)
(Taiwan)

Catch Hsu-Kung in: *Seen/Unseen: Realism and Fantasy in Illustrations*

In 1995, he began writing picture books. His works clinched the Xinyi Picture Book Children's Literature Award and Feng Zikai Chinese Children's Picture Book Award, and were showcased at the Illustrators Exhibition. He is currently residing with his family in Taipei.



Name: Loh Chin Ee
(Singapore)

Catch Chin Ee in: *Using Podcasts to Promote Reading and Books*

Loh Chin Ee is Associate Professor and Deputy Head (Research) at the English Language and Literature Academic Group at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University. She is the co-editor of *Little Things*, *Poetry Moves* and co-author of *Teaching Poetry to Adolescents: A Teachers' Guide to Little Things* by Ethos Books. She recently produced and co-hosted the *How We Read* podcast series.



Name: Nat Amoore

(Australia)

Catch Nat in: Using Podcasts to Promote Reading and Books

Nat Amoore is an Australian kid's writer and kidlit podcast host. Her debut novel *Secrets Of A Schoolyard Millionaire* had great success as both Dymocks and QBD's "Kids Book Of The Month", becoming Australia's #1 bestselling debut Aussie children's fiction in 2019. Nat is a host of KidLit podcast *One More Page* which has already had over 80,000 downloads and was a finalist in the "Best Newcomer" category for the 2018 Australian Podcast Awards.



Name: Siti Aisyah Binte Abdul Nasir

(Singapore)

Catch Aisyah in: Looking for and Using Digital Resources

Aisyah leads a team of librarians in the strategic planning, development and implementation of Children and Teens programmes, across all Singapore public libraries. She has presented at various platforms for MOE educators on topics such as collection development, digital trends and inclusive reads. Aisyah enjoys reading graphic novels for all ages and children's picture books—she finds the combination of pictures and words truly magical.



Name: Teresa Cremin

(UK)

Catch Teresa in: Joy of Reading: How to develop communities of readers

Teresa Cremin is Professor of Education at The Open University. An ex-teacher and pre-service lecturer, her research focuses on volitional reading and writing, teachers' literate identities and creative pedagogies. Teresa is passionate about developing readers for life and works with the profession to ensure research-informed practice in reading for pleasure.



Name: Wai Yin Pryke

(Singapore)

Catch Wai Yin in: Looking for and Using Digital Resources

Mrs Wai Yin Pryke has been an educator for over 30 years, before becoming Director of the National Library Singapore for three years. She is currently Director of Education and Community Outreach at the National Heritage Board. Wai Yin is passionate about making learning meaningful and accessible to all.

Bios of all the speakers at AFCC can be found [here](#).