

Press Release

For Release at 8pm on Tuesday, 18 April

Announcing the 2017 Scholastic Picture Book Award Shortlist!

The Asia-Wide Award Continues to Encourage the Creation of More Asian-Themed Content for Children

Website: <http://bookcouncil.sg/awards/asian-picture-book-award>

Singapore, 18 April 2017 - The shortlist for the 2017 Scholastic Picture Book Award (SPBA) was announced on 18 April by the National Book Development Council of Singapore (the Book Council) at the Makan & Mingle event. SPBA is a joint initiative between the Book Council and Scholastic Asia, the world's largest children's books publishing and distribution company.

The award is presented biennially to an outstanding unpublished picture book with distinct Asian themes by a writer and illustrator team of Asian descent living in Asia. As well as a \$10,000 cash prize, the winning book will also be published by Scholastic Asia.

Ms Claire Chiang, Chairperson of the NBDCS Executive Committee, says, "We at the Book Council are very happy to see so many new and unpublished picture books from around Asia, and that the shortlist reflects this fantastically wide range of talent. We love to see different styles in writing and art, and hope that all of them will eventually be published at some point."

There were a total of 137 entries from all over Asia, including Bhutan, Singapore, the Philippines, Iran, China, Vietnam, Japan, India, Turkey, and Indonesia. The judges have selected six titles for the shortlist, each from a different country.

Ms Rilla Melati, Singaporean author and publisher, and Chief Judge of the 2017 SPBA, says, "The entries were a joy to read overall, with some of the manuscripts and colourful artwork having the qualities to cross mediums and be turned into children's apps. It was fantastic to see entries coming in from all over Asia, and to learn about the diverse cultures of different places through their stories and illustrations." Her fellow judges on the panel include Mr James Foley, author and illustrator from Australia, and Ms Charlene Lai, author, reviewer, and blogger from Taiwan.

The winner of the 2017 SPBA will be announced during Opening Night of the Asian Festival of Children's Content (AFCC) on 16 May, and will be presented by the evening's Guest-of-Honour, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth & Leader of the House, Ms Grace Fu Hai Yien.



The Shortlist:

Name	Title	Country
Aytul Akal, Mavisel Yener, Kubra Nur Ozkececi, and Yasemin Yener	The Flying Grandpa	Turkey
Emila Yusof	How Rooster Became the Zodiac Animal	Malaysia
Ho Jia En, Sabine Ong, Shona Menon, Wong Shu Jing, and Melodie James	The Little Durian Tree	Singapore
Anuradha Ananth Huggler and Shailja Jain Chougule	Poorni and Her Peepal Leaf	India
Maria Karina Putri	The Treasure of Kancil	Indonesia
Le Thi Bich Khoa	The Whale Whisperer	Vietnam

About the shortlisted books and their creators

The Flying Grandpa

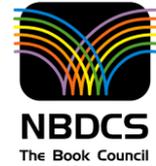
An old man is bored and lonely, so he decides to get a job. What follows is a series of mishaps as he tries to get a job at pet shop, patisserie, carpet shop, grocery, music store, florist, toy shop, causing chaos every time. Until he reaches the one place where he might shine: the library.

Writer and translator **Aytül Akal** started as a journalist, and now has more than 150 stories, picture books, novels, poems and plays for children and young adults, many of which have been translated into German, Spanish, Hungarian, Arabic, Persian, English, and Bulgarian. She was a nominee for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award in 2010. She is passionate about promoting reading culture amongst children, and has won several prizes for her devotion to children's books.

Writer **Mavisel Yener** is one of the most renowned contemporary Turkish authors and has written over a hundred children's, young adult, and adult books. She has also written poetry, fairy tales, radio plays, and theatre scripts. Her primary audience is children, and she has devoted her life to children's literature. She was recently honoured as a nominee of the 2018 Hans Christian Andersen Award.

Illustrator **Kübra Nur Özkeçeci** is a comic book artist, freelance illustrator, mother of one, photographer, and knitter. She loves children and books, and especially children's books.

Translator **Yasemin Yener** has been working as a translator since 2008, and has been the translation coordinator of Bilgi Publishing since 2012. Among her published translations are world classics, novels, and children's books.



How Rooster Became the Zodiac Animal

A long time ago, the Jade Emperor had the power to select the Zodiac Animals. Only the strongest, kindest, most noble animals were chosen. Only animals with a special gift can become a Zodiac Animal. Rooster really, REALLY wanted to be chosen, but what was his special gift? And so Rooster sat down and thought about the other zodiac animals. What was so special about them? So he studied them one by one. Each of them is special in their own way. Rooster thought and thought, and then it came to him. His gift was his golden voice.

Writer and illustrator **Emila Yusof** is a Malaysian author and illustrator. She has written and illustrated over thirty books. She won the Best Illustrator, Children's Literature Award 2015, in Malaysia. Her books *My Father's Farm* and *My Mother's Kitchen* won 1st and 3rd Award in the Children's Literature Award 2015, with the latter being awarded Parent's Choice Award. *Princesses of Malaysia*, written by K.Raman and illustrated by her, won 1st Award in the festival. She's also won three 2nd Prize Awards in the Samsung KidsTime Author's Award, Singapore. Many of her books have been translated into other languages, including Indonesian, Vietnamese, German and Chinese.

The Little Durian Tree

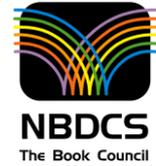
Little Durian is a very friendly tree. All the other trees warn him not to have friends because he might hurt them. Little Durian loves his friends and continues to spend time with them. One day, he finds out that the other trees are right and tells his friends to stay away from him. However, his friend Monkey refuses to stay away. Instead, he finds a way to solve Little Durian's problem.

Writers and illustrators **Ho Jia En, Sabrina Ong, Shona Menon, Wong Shu Jing, and Melodie James** are all 19-year-old final year students in the Diploma in Creative Writing for Television and New Media at Singapore Polytechnic. They are all incredibly creative, and pursue many creative pursuits outside of children's books, including photography, journalism, and filmmaking.

Poorni and her Peepal Leaf

Poorni is a little girl who is making a leaf collection book. For the final page, she needs a peepal leaf. Though it seems like an easy requirement, the quest for the leaf proves to be quite a challenge. Poorni encounters several forces: a hungry cow, a dangerous broom, and a rowdy group of boys – but none as fearsome and all pervasive as Vayu the mighty wind! Who will finally win the tempestuous battle: Poorni or Vayu? Allow yourself to be swooshed up by this delightful tale.

Writer **Anuradha Ananth Huggler** was a broadcast and print journalist for a decade. For the past two years, she has been working as a Business Development and Client Relations Executive in a news agency. She previously authored the bilingual children's book *Rangoli*, published in India by Tulika.



Illustrator **Shailja Jain Chougule's** fascination for the world of lines and cinema took her to College of Art, Delhi and then to the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, which set her off on a journey in the deep and expansive world of visuals. She has worked with leading Indian Publishing houses such as Tulika, Pratham, Mango, Room to Read, Tota Books, Eklavya, and GQ India, and has illustrated for more than 15 magazines and children books.

The Treasure of Kancil

Kancil is one of Indonesia's most beloved fable characters. He is known for his cunning and cleverness. This story follows Kancil in the forest as he looks for a hidden treasure. He first heard of the treasure from his friend, the Enggang bird, and so sets off on a journey through the forest, meeting many new animal friends along the way.

Writer and illustrator **Maria Karina Putri** is a 22-year-old who loves children's illustration and making clay, so she decided to combine them to create a story. She loves mixed media and experimenting with different kinds of material to create illustrations. She recently graduated with a Visual Communication Design degree from Bandung Institute of Technology. *The Treasure of Kancil* was her first book as the result of her final project.

The Whale Whisperer

As a young and talented swimmer, Hải (whose name means "the sea" in Vietnamese) makes a reckless debut at dive-fishing. Her grandmother, a wise and mysterious woman, had so much to teach her grandchild, but her time on earth was almost up. Hải secretly prepares for her first trip into the ocean, but it does not go according to plan. Nearly drowning, she is saved by a strange creature: the Whale God, who was once worshiped by the people who travel the sea...

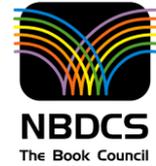
Writer and illustrator **Le Thi Bich Khoa** is based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and is the author and illustrator of numerous picture books. In addition to her publishing work, she also has other projects as a graphic designer, painter (participated in several group and solo exhibitions), and the mom of three cats. She also has a passion for travel and eager to learn the different cultures as well as discover the beauty of the world.

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NOTE TO THE EDITOR:

About the Scholastic Picture Book Award

The Scholastic Picture Book Award (SPBA) is a joint initiative between the National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS) and Scholastic Asia, and it is presented biennially to an



outstanding unpublished picture book with distinct Asian themes by an Asian team of writer and illustrator.

About the National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS)

NBDCS is a non-profit, charitable organisation in Singapore that promotes storytelling, reading, writing, and publishing through a variety of programmes and festivals, including the Asian Festival of Children's Content and the All In! Young Writers Media Festival. NBDCS also presents many annual and biennial awards, including the Singapore Literature Prize and the Hedwig Anuar Children's Book Award for published works, and the Scholastic Asian Book Award, and the Scholastic Picture Book Award for unpublished works. Their training arm, the Academy of Literary Arts and Publishing (ALAP) runs publishing-related and literary arts-focused courses and workshops throughout the year.

For more information about AFCC and NBDCS, please visit www.bookcouncil.sg or contact:

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