



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: INDEPENDENCE

The Cooler Lumpur Festival returns for its fourth consecutive year with partners British Council Malaysia and BMW Malaysia.

KUALA LUMPUR, 12 August 2016 – Returning to Publika, Solaris Dutamas this 10th and 11th September is Southeast Asia’s first and only festival of ideas; The Cooler Lumpur Festival. Themed *RE: Independence*, the collaborative effort between creative media shop PopDigital, British Council Malaysia and BMW Group Malaysia is set to delve into the concept of independence and re-examine what it really means for a person, a people, and a nation to be truly independent.

“This year’s theme *RE: Independence* is aimed at driving healthy discourse amongst communities, on everything from independence in nation-building, right down to independence in our everyday lives,” said The Cooler Lumpur Festival co-founder and Executive Director, Hardesh Singh.

He continued, “Amongst the concepts we find intriguing is the paradox of technology – it automates so many of our daily tasks so we can free up our minds for other things, but most of us urban dwellers are also slaves to our mobile devices. In a simple example, we have social media deciding what we should see on our feeds, navigation apps to tell us which route to take, and soon enough we won’t even need to drive ourselves anymore. This leads us to wonder – if we cannot function without technology, does this mean we can never truly be independent? Or will these technologies allow us to in fact be independent in mind and spirit?”

Representing the British Council Malaysia, literary partner of The Cooler Lumpur Festival, Director Malaysia, Sarah Deverall, said: “We are

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incredibly proud of the distance our partnership with PopDigital and The Cooler Lumpur Festival has come over the past 3 years. This year, the British Council continues to present the best of UK talent and literary minds in pursuit of strengthening and contributing to the development of creative thought and innovation of expression. We are also using our network of offices to bring the literature sector together for this fantastic festival of ideas and bright minds.”

Among the thought-provoking speakers from abroad who will be participating in The Cooler Lumpur Festival weekend are:

- **Kate Bassett (UK)**. Renowned theatre critic for The Times newspaper and author of award-nominated *In Two Minds: A Biography of Jonathan Miller*.

- **Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan (US)**. Hailing from Singapore, this New York-based journalist is the author of insightful titles including the witty *Sarong Party Girls* and *A Tiger in the Kitchen: A Memoir of Food and Family*.

- **John Dinges (US)**. Former special correspondent in Central America for *The Washington Post* and recipient of the *Maria Moors Cabot Prize* for excellence in Latin American Reporting.

- **Evangeline Neo (SG)**. Creator and artist of comic books *Eva*, *Kopi and Matcha* depicting cultural differences between Singapore and Japan and *Eva Goes Solo* made up of short stories and musings from her experience living in the land of the rising sun.

Joining the international roster of speakers will be a host of great Malaysian writers including:

- **Boey Chee Ming**. Recognised by his illustrations on coffee cups, daily webcomic *iamboey.com* and autobiographical graphic novel *When I Was A Kid*. Boey currently has a weekly comic published in The Edge (Malaysia) newspaper.

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- **Shamini Flint.** Extensively travelled crime fiction author of the Inspector Singh series, which is published by international publisher Little Brown, translated and distributed across the world. Also a children's book author, her latest novel *Ten* explores universality of human values and multi-cultural idiosyncrasies.

In addition to a careful selection of lectures and panel discussions, festival-goers will be treated to event favourites "Bump in the Night", a horror story sharing session and children's activities under Cooler Lumpur Junior, this year specially programmed by Bangkok-based **Jen and Nat Whitman (US)**. Driven by the belief that each child has a unique story to tell and highlighting the essential role storytelling plays in child education, the Whitmans recently teamed with Dr. Margaret Read MacDonald to write *Teaching with Story: Classroom Connections to Storytelling*, an insightful how-to guide for storytelling in the classroom.

A returning partner to The Cooler Lumpur Festival is BMW Group Malaysia. Previous years have seen BMW participating in the Festival with injections of arts and culture including MINI Malaysia's #MINIFiction program and showcases of special selections from the highly acclaimed BMW Shorties Short Film archives as well as the BMW Safety 360° program.

"With the theme RE: Independence at the Cooler Lumpur Festival this year, we are continuing our efforts on the BMW Safety 360o campaign where we hope to raise awareness, concern and action for more responsible on-the-road and in-car safety technology and practises. This time around, we will be partnering with the Association of Registered Childcare Providers Malaysia (PPBM) and San Lorenzo Montessori, which is located in Publika." said Mr. Sashi Ambi, Head of Corporate Communications, BMW Group Malaysia.

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The Cooler Lumpur Festival will also see the introduction of The Cooler Lumpur Disruptions - presented by TBWA\KL. Disrupt. Innovate. Shakeup. The Disruptions Track will look at how these principles apply to brands, corporations and communities. Featuring a lineup of individuals and organisations who have challenged and revolutionised their respective industries, these sessions will look to answer questions and question answers.

Apart from workshops, the festival is free of charge and largely open to participants of all ages.

10th – 11th September will undoubtedly be an exciting weekend at Publika, Solaris Dutamas. Log on to www.coolerlumpur.com or follow them on instagram @coolerlumpur and Facebook for more details.

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Notes to Editors

About This Year's Theme "RE: Independence"

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The struggle for independence is a perpetual human pursuit. We are constantly striving towards greater self-determination - to say what we want to say, to be who we want to be, to live our lives the way we want to live. We want to be free.

But are we, really? We depend on our smartphones to tell us when's the next appointment, social media to keep us up-to-date on current affairs, and soon enough, our cars to drive themselves. So, if we cannot function without technology, does this mean we can never truly be independent? Or will these technologies allow us to in fact be independent in mind and spirit?

This year, The Cooler Lumpur Festival will re-examine just what it means to be independent; whether we are still able to decide what to control and how much of ourselves we want to allow to be controlled - as a person, as people, and as a nation.

About The Cooler Lumpur Festival

The Cooler Lumpur Festival is a multidisciplinary festival curated by PopDigital. The Kuala Lumpur-centric festival adopts specific themes each year with the aim to expand the city's cultural horizons, build stronger communities and cultivate the creativity and imagination of people.

In 2013, The Cooler Lumpur Festival debuted under the simple theme of #WORD which set out to explore the written and spoken word.

The annual festival's sophomore edition was themed #FAST – rooted in the notion that the driving-force behind successfully fast-forwarding development was through sharing, engaging and experimenting in new ideas. 2014's #FAST was attended by over 5,000 attendees and featured contributions from artists, musicians, writers and thinkers including Man Asian Literary Prize winner Miguel Syjuco, The Man Booker-nominated writer Adam Foulds and Damian Barr who was named Writer of the Year at the 2013 Stonewall Awards.

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2015's festival theme DANGEROUS IDEAS celebrated ideas as the driving force behind every decision we make, the root of all human progress, the power and means to overcome difficulty and the impetus to take action against injustice. DANGEROUS IDEAS featured panels and lectures by Lindy West, Ian Doescher and Tun Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

This September, The Cooler Lumpur Festival digs deep *RE: Independence*.

About PopDigital

PopDigital is a creative media group specialising in media and technology. It has a diverse portfolio of projects, each with specific aims and objectives, including #BetterCities, which focuses on community-based projects to improve urban living; Tongue in Chic, the definitive voice of fashion in Southeast Asia; Makchic, an online portal for young, urban Malaysian mothers, Poskod.my, an online magazine about city, community, and culture in the Klang Valley; PopTeeVee, a web TV network with the primary objective to help create a democratic media space; Uma and Joe at the movies, a website dedicated to giving the audience everything they've ever wanted from an online show about movies; The Wknd, your guide to music in Southeast Asia and The Greatest Hits, the creative media agency of the group.

PopDigital also conceptualises and produces podcasts, videos, websites and digital campaigns to help engage corporate clients to reach their intended audience. PopDigital has worked with organisations such as PEMANDU, BMW, Samsung, Unilever, Bursa Malaysia, MINI, ASTRO and Konrad Adenauer Foundation on various campaigns.

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. We create international opportunities

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for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide. We work in more than 100 countries and our 8,000 staff – including 2,000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year teaching English, sharing the Arts and delivering education and society programmes.

We are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter. A core publically-funded grant provides 20 per cent of our turnover which last year was £864 million. The rest of our revenues are earned from services, which customers around the world pay for, such as English classes and taking UK examinations, and also through education and development contracts, and from partnerships with public and private organisations. All our work is in pursuit of our charitable purpose and supports prosperity and security for the UK and globally.

The British Council literature team promotes UK writers, poets and publishers to communities and audiences around the world, developing innovative, high-quality events and collaborations that link writers, publishers and cultural institutions. Our recent projects include a Writers' Salon in Moscow; a global celebration of the bicentenary of Charles Dickens including a seminar in Berlin; the Erbil Literature Festival, the first international literature festival ever to be held in Iraq; a writers' tour of Turkey; and a global partnership with Hay Festival. To find out more on what we are currently busy with in literature, visit: <http://literature.britishcouncil.org>

British Council Malaysia is a branch (995232-A) of the British Council, registered as a charity in England and Wales (209131) and Scotland (SC037733). For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org. You can also keep in touch with the British Council through <http://twitter.com/britishcouncil> and <http://blog.britishcouncil.org>. If you are interested in following what British Council Arts is doing in Malaysia please visit www.twitter.com/myBritishArts and www.facebook.com/ArtsBCMY.

About BMW Malaysia Sdn. Bhd

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BMW Group Malaysia is the representative of Bayerische Motoren Werke (BMW) AG in Malaysia with activities that cover the wholesale of BMW, MINI and BMW Motorrad vehicles, spare parts and accessories as well as the overall planning of sales, marketing, after-sales, and other related activities in Malaysia. The organisation's presence in the country includes its National Sales Centre (NSC) in Cyberjaya and BMW Assembly Facilities at the Kulim Hi-Tech Park, Kedah which supports the Malaysian region as well as the BMW Group Data Centre (GDC), BMW Group Regional Training Centre (RTC) in Cyberjaya and BMW Group Parts Distribution Centre (PDC) at the Free Industrial Zone of the Senai International Airport in Senai, Johor which supports 22 markets in the Asia-Pacific region. BMW dealership network covers 39 outlets in various cities in Malaysia.

Website: www.bmw.com.my
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Instagram: <http://www.instagram.com/bmwmalaysia>
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/bmwMYS>

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Selected Programme Highlights

RE: Journalism in Service of Democracy

John Dinges

Moderator: Umapagan Ampikaipakan

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In this in depth, one-on-one conversation, journalists Sharaad Kuttan and John Dinges navigate the complexities of their profession in order to answer the one question that has consistently plagued our national discourse: What does it take to make democracy work and what should be asked of the press?

RE: English, Singlish, Manglish.

Cheryl Tan, Chuah Guat Eng, Kate Bassett
Moderator: Fuad Rahmat

We adopt. We appropriate. We mix. We muddle. We mangle. We hurt the ones we love the most. Fuad Rahmat speaks to a Malaysian, a Singaporean, and an actual English person about our beloved English language, about its uses and abuses, and about how its versatility has spawned a thousand different versions.

RE: The “Art” of the Biography

Cheeming Boey, Evangeline Neo
Moderator: Umapagan Ampikaipakan

They tell life stories - both real and imagined - one panel at a time. Whether capturing singular moments in time or spinning epic yarns about fictional lives well lived, their literature is altogether precise, articulate, and compelling. Three of our very best graphic storytellers sit down with Umapagan Ampikaipakan for a candid conversation about all the things that take place in between the frames of their stories.

RE: Minds for the Future

Kate Bassett, Pang Khee Teik, Leyla Jagiella
Moderator: Sharmilla Ganesan

We need criticism. We need something outside of ourselves to provide reflection, discernment, and connection with the larger world. Sharmilla

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Ganesan sits down with Kate Bassett, Pang Khee Teik, and Leyla Jagiella for a conversation about how real discourse and engagement can only exist with criticism and about how criticism is essential in developing independent minds.

RE: Stories for Boys and Girls, Both Big and Small

The Whitmans, Shamini Flint

Moderator: Hanna Alkaf

It is folklore that tells us of our history, that describes where we live, what our values are, and ultimately who we are. It is folklore which remembers the hopes, fears, dreams, and details of everyday lives. Hanna Alkaf speaks to extraordinary storytellers about the importance of telling stories and the role it plays in enriching they way we live and work and love.

RE: Chic Lit. or Why Women Should Rule the World

Cheryl Tan, Shamini Flint

Moderator: Umapagan Ampikaipakan

Literature is still very much a man's world. Whether in English or not, books by women are still rarely in the spotlight of publishers, critics, and award panels. Umapagan Ampikaipakan sits down with women in literature for a conversation about how each went about finding their own unique literary voice and why it is critical to our social, political and literary landscapes.

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