

Press Release

#ReadWriteThinkTalk: The Cooler Lumpur Festival presents #Word

Supported by the British Council, MINI and Borders Malaysia, the nation's first and only celebration of words in all forms is set to invigorate minds

Kuala Lumpur, 10 June 2013 – PopDigital, Malaysia's creative media shop, today announced the launch of The Cooler Lumpur Festival, an annual multi-disciplinary celebration of art and culture. The inaugural Kuala Lumpur-centric festival which will run from 21 to 23 June 2013 at MAP @ Publika, will adopt specific themes each year to expand the city's cultural horizons and cultivate the creativity and imagination of society.

This year, The Cooler Lumpur Festival in collaboration with British Council, MINI and Borders Malaysia is proud to present #Word, Malaysia's first and only celebration of words in all forms. With an aim to engage producers and purveyors of words – be they written, spoken or performed – #Word will bring together local and international world class writers and panellists from a spectrum of creative disciplines including:

- Award-winning author of teenage novels and professional speaker Nicola Morgan
- Recently named Best Young British Novelist Benjamin Markovits
- Professor of journalism Janet Steele
- Burmese surgeon, writer, and human rights activist Dr Ma Thida
- Poet, novelist and broadcast journalist from Quezon City Philippines Lourde de Veyra
- Vietnamese author and translator Di Li
- Award-winning author from Thailand, Wipas Srithong
- Prolific writer and activist Marina Mahathir
- Prominent Malaysian journalist and writer Rehman Rashid
- Writer, publisher and independent filmmaker Amir Muhammad
- Non-Malay writers who write in Malay Uthaya Shankar and Gina Yap
- Malaysian National Laureate A. Samad Said
- Malaysia's first woman English-language novelist Chuah Guat Eng

To further connect with the public at large, #Word will host a series of lectures, panel discussions, creative writing workshops, readings, art exhibitions, children's activities and book markets to highlight a wide range of topics such as literature, journalism, film, poetry, art exhibition and social media. #Word will also host the inaugural Poskod

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Journalism Campus, which will gather leading voices in journalism today to discuss the state of Malaysian media.

“We realised that it is absolutely crucial for a city like Kuala Lumpur to take a minute and celebrate both the written and the spoken word. That the conversations we have and the connections we make when we come together in these ways are so important to ensure our further growth and development as a cultured and thoughtful society,” said Umapagan Ampikaipakan, The Cooler Lumpur Literary Director.

He added that “#Word is committed to raising the level of discourse and engagement in the country.

“We have ambitions of putting Kuala Lumpur on the world map as a place where ideas come to thrive.

“We hope that #Word will be yet another creative space that Malaysians will be proud to call their own,” he said.

In another first, #Word will also play host to the only Southeast Asian segment of the Edinburgh World Writers’ Conference (EWWC). EWWC is the world’s largest travelling conference on the state of literature, with three special panels covering the topics of ‘Censorship Today’, ‘Should Literature Be Political?’ and ‘A National Literature’ - that aim to address critical questions affecting both our literature and our society.

Nick Barley, Edinburgh International Book Festival Director said “We believe that writers have a role to play in stimulating our imaginative health and thereby engendering mutual respect amongst individuals and nations.

“The EWWC represents an opportunity for all of us to rethink how writers, and their writing, can play a part in understanding and improving our world.

“Together, the Book Festival and the British Council will make this Conference a genuinely worldwide discussion, and we look forward to the debate which will continue in Kuala Lumpur at #Word,” said Barley.

British Council Malaysia Arts Manager Grey Yeoh said “We are incredibly proud to be hosting the South East Asian leg of the EWWC here in Kuala Lumpur, and to be partnering with the good people at Cooler Lumpur.

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“The British Council has had a history of working in literature and promoting the craft of word over the years, through a number of projects like Manga Shakespeare, Animating Literature, Wayang Kata, City of Stories and more recently the International 24 Hour Book, the Charles Dickens Bicentenary celebrations, the George Town Literature Festival and spoken word artist Inua Ellams’ appearance at Urbanscapes 2012.

“We want to continue to contribute to the growth of the community here, and hope that this festival will leave a permanent mark on the literature scene in Malaysia,” he said.

In conjunction with the festival, MINI in partnership with #Word is also running a creative twitter contest called #MINIfiction, where Malaysians are invited to tweet the best story they can in as concise a way possible. The contest which runs from 3 to 19 June 2013, will see weekly winners walking away with a brand new Amazon Kindle in addition to having their stories displayed during the festival in a one of a kind MINI literary theatre, inside of an actual MINI vehicle that will be parked at the festival ground.

“MINI is NOT NORMAL. We are the most exciting and the most unconventional premium automotive brand in the world and so it is only natural that when the people at #Word: The Cooler Lumpur Festival approached us, we thought a MINImalistic approach to literary storytelling over the social media space would be a creative, gutsy and clever way to engage Malaysians to tell stories. This is the story the #MINIfiction campaign will tell at #Word: The Cooler Lumpur Festival,” said Sashi Ambi, Head of Corporate Communications, BMW Group Malaysia.

Borders Chief Operating Officer Yau Su Peng said “#Word takes us to another level by expanding the eco-system for literacy and all things related to it. Borders is proud to contribute towards the 3-day programme with book launches, author appearances and book sales and are equally proud to be part of it and be able to offer more to our widening base of customers and fans alike.

“This has been long time coming for KL’ites and Malaysians and we truly believe it will be well received,” she added.

#Word is presented by The Cooler Lumpur Festival in collaboration with **British Council, MINI and Borders Malaysia**. The Edinburgh World Writers’ Conference is **supported by the British Council, the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund, Creative Scotland, the City of Edinburgh Council and Event Scotland**.

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#Word is also working with Radioshack, Sonica, Aesop, The Last Polka, MOCAFest, Filmmakers Anonymous FIXI, ZI Publications, New Village, Readings curate by Sharon Bakar, Doof Bean bags, DoubleTree by Hilton Kuala Lumpur, Poetry Café KL, Paradiso Lounge, Interpr8 Gallery, The Bee, Uma and Joe at the Movies, PopTeeVee, #BetterCities & The Greatest Hits.

- End -

Notes to the Editor:

About The Cooler Lumpur Festival

The Cooler Lumpur Festival is a multidisciplinary festival curated by PopDigital. The Kuala Lumpur-centric festival will adopt 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.

PopDigital is a creative media shop 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; 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; and The Greatest Hits, PopDigital's in house creative shop.

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

About The Edinburgh World Writers' Conference

Presented by the Edinburgh International Book Festival and the British Council, the Edinburgh World Writers' Conference is a unique series of events that are bringing writers together around the world to create an historic picture of the role of literature today.

The conversation began in August 2012 at the Edinburgh International Book Festival where 50 world renowned writers joined members of the public every afternoon of 17-

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21 August 2012 to discuss the five topics that almost brought writers to blows during the infamous Writers' Conference of 1962.

Following the events in Edinburgh, the world's first UNESCO City of Literature, the World Writers' Conference visits Berlin, Cape Town, Toronto, Krasnoyarsk, Cairo, Jaipur, Izmir, Beijing, Brussels, Port of Spain (Trinidad), St Malo, Lisbon, Kuala Lumpur and Melbourne, giving writers in different countries the chance to add their voice to the growing debate about literature and its relationship to contemporary life.

The conversation will be on-going throughout 2012-13, with regular live streaming of events worldwide, videos and blogs.

About The British Council

The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. It is a Royal Charter charity, established as the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations.

Its 7,000 staff in over 100 countries work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year through English, arts, education and society programmes.

The Council earn over 75% of its annual turnover of nearly £700 million from services which customers pay for, education and development contracts and from partnerships. A UK Government grant provides for the remaining 25%. The Council match every £1 of core public funding with over £3 earned in pursuit of our charitable purpose.

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. 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.

British Council Malaysia is a branch (995232-A) of the British Council, registered as a charity in England and Wales (209131) and Scotland (SC037733).

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For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org.my. You can also keep in touch with the British Council through <http://twitter.com/britishcouncil> and <http://blog.britishcouncil.org/>.

About The BMW Group

The BMW Group is the leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles in the world with its BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce brands. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 28 production and assembly facilities in 13 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2012, the BMW Group sold about 1.85 million cars and more than 117,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2012 was euro 7.82 billion on revenues amounting to euro 76.85 billion. At 31 December 2012, the BMW Group had a workforce of 105,876 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been built on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy. As a result of its efforts, the BMW Group has been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last eight years.

About BMW Malaysia Sdn. Bhd

BMW Malaysia Sdn Bhd is a joint venture between Bayerische Motoren Werke (BMW) AG and Sime Darby Berhad. BMW Malaysia activities 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. Its dealership network covers 29 outlets in various cities in Malaysia.

About Borders

Borders is operated by Berjaya Books Sdn. Bhd, a subsidiary of Berjaya Corporation Berhad. Borders goes beyond offering quality books, with educational toys, gifts & collectibles such as Moleskins & Cath Kidson and innovative mobile technology products by Radio Shack.

The first Borders store in Malaysia opened in 2005 and today, there are seven stores altogether, located at The Curve, Mutiara Damansara; The Garden, Mid Valley City; Tropicana City Mall, Petaling Jaya and Queensbay Mall, Penang; plus another three

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Borders Express stores located at Berjaya Times Square, Bangsar Village II and 1Mont Kiara.

With wide selection of book and magazine titles, the urban bookstore chain believes in developing the culture of reading and aims to promote English literacy. To achieve this, Borders is committed with its long term initiatives to provide highly differentiated learning experience in making reading and learning fun and exploratory. Another key characteristic of Borders is the personal service and the warm, reader-friendly ambience.

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THE COOLER LUMPUR
FESTIVAL
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