

Miguel Syjuco's *Ilustrado* Wins the 2008 Man Asian Literary Prize

Hong Kong, 13 November 2008 – A panel of three internationally acclaimed authors and experienced literary judges named Filipino author Miguel Syjuco the winner of the 2008 Man Asian Literary Prize for his novel *Ilustrado*, a fictional account of a young Filipino caught within a notorious scandal spanning over the Philippine history.

The Man Asian Literary Prize was established in 2006 to bring greater worldwide attention to Asian writing and authors. The inaugural prize was awarded in November 2007 to *Wolf Totem* by Jiang Rong, which was published in English to great acclaim in early 2008. Several works shortlisted and longlisted for the 2007 Prize have since been published.

The panel of judges for the 2008 prize praised *Ilustrado*:

“The shortlist for the Man Asian prize testifies to the great vitality of the novel in Asian societies undergoing hectic and unexpected transformations. In the end, we had to choose; and *Ilustrado* seems to us to possess formal ambition, linguistic inventiveness and sociopolitical insight in the most satisfying measure. Brilliantly conceived, and stylishly executed, it covers a large and tumultuous historical period with seemingly effortless skill. It is also ceaselessly entertaining, frequently raunchy, and effervescent with humour.”

The prize winner was announced at a celebratory dinner at The Peninsula Hong Kong and Miguel Syjuco was awarded USD 10,000.

The judging panel for the 2008 Man Asian Literary Prize is: Adrienne Clarkson, former Governor General of Canada (Chair); Nicholas Jose, writer, scholar and former Cultural Counsellor at the Australian Embassy in China; and Pankaj Mishra, acclaimed Indian writer and thinker.

The shortlist of five from which the winner was chosen included Indian writer Kavery Nambisan for *The Story that Must Not be Told*, Indian writer Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi for *The Lost Flamingoes of Bombay*, Filipino writer Miguel Syjuco for *Ilustrado*, Chinese writer Yu Hua for *Brothers* and Filipino writer Alfred A. Yuson for *The Music Child*.

Man Group plc is the sponsor of the Man Asian Literary Prize, in cooperation with Asian Literary Prize Ltd. Man Group also supports a variety of other programmes as well as charities aimed at furthering literature and literacy, including the Man Hong Kong International Literary Festival, a 10-day event that attracts authors from around the world and thousands of attendees. Separately, Man Group also sponsors the annual Man Booker Prize and the bi-annual Man Booker International Prize, in conjunction with the Booker Foundation.

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Additional information on the website:

www.manasianliteraryprize.org

Biography for Miguel Syjuco



Miguel Syjuco was born in Manila, Philippines in 1976. His fiction and poetry have appeared in national publications and anthologies. He co-founded and edited an online publication, Localvibe.com. He has written poetry, fiction and journalism for national and international publications. The manuscript of his debut novel, *Ilustrado*, has just been awarded the Grand Prize at the Palanca Awards.

Synopsis of *Ilustrado*

Ilustrado begins with Crispin Salvador, lion of Philippine letters, dead in the Hudson River. His acolyte Miguel investigates the author's demise and the disappearance of a manuscript about the corruption behind rich Filipino families. To understand the death, Miguel scours the life, charting Salvador's trajectory via his poetry, stories, interviews, novels, polemics and memoirs. The literary fragments become patterns become stories become epic: a family saga of four generations tracing 150 years of Philippine history forged under the Spanish, Americans and Filipinos themselves. Finally, the story twists, belonging to young Miguel as much as his lost mentor.

Notes to Editors

The Man Asian Literary Prize will be awarded in November 2008. This major new literary prize aims to recognize the best of new Asian literature and to bring it to the attention of the world literary community. A distinguished panel of judges selects a single work of fiction to be awarded the prize each year. The first Prize was awarded to the Chinese writer Jiang Rong for his novel *Wolf Totem* on 10 November 2007. Works submitted for consideration must not yet have been published in English, although they may have been published in other languages. The prize is jointly administered by representatives of the Man Hong Kong International Literary Festival, the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and is sponsored by Man Group plc, a leading global financial services firm based in London.

About Man

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The original business was founded in 1783 and this year celebrates its 225th anniversary. Today the parent company, Man Group plc, is listed on the London Stock Exchange. It is ranked in the top 40 companies of the FTSE 100 Index with a market capitalisation of about \$10 billion.

Man supports many awards, charities and initiatives around the world, including sponsorship of the Man Booker literary prizes and the Man Group International Climate Change Award. Further information can be found at www.mangrouplc.com.