

## The 2008 Man Asian Literary Prize - Shortlist Announced

**Hong Kong, 22 October 2008** – Kavery Nambisan, Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi, Miguel Syjuco, Yu Hua and Alfred A. Yuson are the five authors selected for the shortlist by the judging panel for the 2008 Man Asian Literary Prize, the leading regional prize for a novel unpublished in English. The winner of the prize will be announced on Thursday 13 November, 2008 at a ceremony in Hong Kong.

The five shortlisted works were chosen from a longlist of 21 and are:

- Kavery Nambisan, *The Story that Must Not be Told*
- Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi, *Lost Flamingoes of Bombay*
- Miguel Syjuco, *Ilustrado*
- Yu Hua, *Brothers*
- Alfred A. Yuson, *The Music Child*

The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, chair of the panel of judges for the prize, said:

“All the books breathe with a vibrant sense of what the Asian world is today – modern, yet connected to tradition, aware of change but saturated with the past. I really had the sense that I could feel the living vibrant worlds these novels describe.”

“Reading the shortlisted books, I was struck, above all, by their passionate engagement with contemporary realities in India, China and Philippines. They are primarily concerned, as literary novels must be, with the fate of the individual, but they do not exclude or reduce to a mere backdrop the tumultuous changes in Asian societies. By reckoning with these massive social and political dislocations, they recreate the vitality and urgency of the European novel in the 19th century and Latin American Literature in the 20th. I came away from my reading of the longlisted books thinking that Asia may increasingly provide, to the world's literature as well as to its political economy, the all-important stimulus,” said Pankaj Mishra, one of the three judges.

The winner will receive USD 10,000 and can look forward to publication and wider recognition in the English-reading world. There is additionally a USD 3,000 award for the translator (if any).

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 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, and which was published in English to great acclaim in early 2008. Several short- and longlisted works of the 2007 Prize have since been published.

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](http://www.manasianliteraryprize.org)

**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**

Man is a world-leading alternative investment management business. With a broad range of fund products for institutional and private investors globally, it is known for its performance, innovative product design and investor service. Man manages \$70 billion in funds under management and employs around 1,700 people in 13 countries worldwide.

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 \$12 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.mangroupplc.com](http://www.mangroupplc.com).

## Judges biographies



**Adrienne Clarkson** came to Canada as a refugee during the War in 1942. A leading figure in Canada's cultural life, Madame Clarkson had a rich and distinguished career in broadcasting, journalism, the arts and the public service. During her career Madame Clarkson received numerous prestigious awards both in Canada and abroad in recognition for her outstanding contribution in professional and charitable endeavours. The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson PC, CC, CMM, COM, CD. was Canada's twenty-sixth Governor General from 1999-2005. Madame Clarkson was judge of the 2006 Scotiabank Giller Prize. Her memoirs *Heart Matters* was published in the Autumn of 2006.



**Nicholas Jose** is the author of several acclaimed novels, including *Paper Nautilus*, *The Rose Crossing*, *The Custodians*, *The Red Thread*, and *Original Face*, as well as a memoir, *Black Sheep: Journey to Borrooloola*. He was Cultural Counsellor at the Australian Embassy, Beijing, from 1987 to 1990. He held the Chair of Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide, 2005-08, and now holds a Chair of Writing at the University of Western Sydney. He was a judge of Kiriyama Prize in 2004.



The acclaimed Indian writer and thinker **Pankaj Mishra** is the author of New York Time's Notable books *Temptations of the West: How to be Modern in India, Pakistan and Beyond* and *An End to Suffering: The Buddha in the World*, and a novel, *The Romantics*. Mishra's writing has appeared in New York Times, the New York Review of Books, The Guardian, Granta and the New Statesman, among other American, British, and Indian publications.

## Information on shortlisted authors and works



**Kavery Nambisan** is an essayist and novelist from Karnataka, India. Her adult novels have been published by Penguin India. *The Scent of Pepper* was published by Penguin UK (2001). She is a regular contributor to the national media on literature and healthcare issues.

*The Story That Must not Be Told* is about Simon Jesukumar, an ageing widower who lives in a housing colony in Madras. He is stirred by his guilt about the slum, optimistically called Sitara ('The Star') next door. With the reluctant help of a young journalist and his 'surprise' girlfriend, Simon embarks on a journey that ends in an ugly episode with the slum terrorists.

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**Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi's** first novel, *The Last Song of Dusk*, translated into ten languages, won the Betty Trask Award (UK); the Premio Grinzane Cavour (Italy); and was nominated for the IMPAC Prize. Shanghvi lives in Bombay.

A beautiful but twisted affair between a married older woman and a young photographer takes centre stage in *The Lost Flamingoes of Bombay*, a sharp and ravishing examination of modern India's perverse fascination with celebrity, the tension between public morality and private desire, and all the awful things we commit in the name of love.

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**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.

*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.

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**Yu Hua** was born in 1960 in Zhejiang, China. He has published four novels, six collections of stories, and three collections of essays. In 2002 Yu Hua became the first Chinese writer to win the prestigious James Joyce Foundation Award. His novel *To Live* was awarded the Premio Grinzane Cavour (1998), and *To Live* and *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant* were named two of the last decade's ten most influential books in China. Yu Hua lives in Beijing.

*Brothers* is a big, spirited comedy of society running amok in modern China. Song Gang and Baldy Li are very different, though united in their love of the beautiful Lin Hong, and as their fortunes rise and fall over the decades, Yu Hua paints an extraordinary portrait of modern China through the eyes of these two brothers.

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**Alfred A. Yuson** has authored 22 books, including two novels as well as short fiction, poetry and essay collections. He contributes a weekly culture column to *The Philippine Star*, and a fortnightly column to the weekly *Philippine Graphic* magazine. He teaches fiction and poetry in Ateneo de Manila University, where he held the Henry Lee Irwin Professorial Chair.

*The Music Child* tells about an American journalist who undergoes strange experiences in a southern island in the Philippines. He stumbles into a remote tribe of hair-string fiddlers, and encounters a half-breed child with the magical gift of song. Violence intrudes, forcing him to flee. Many years later, he encounters the "music child" again, this time as a grown man who has found a female partner with an equally prodigious gift.

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