

Press release, March 20, 2025

Guest of Honour Philippines Unveils New German Editions, Leipzig Lineup, and First Wave of Authors for Frankfurter Buchmesse 2025

Berlin, March 20, 2025 – As Guest of Honour at Frankfurter Buchmesse 2025, the Philippines announced its key initiatives, major programs and activities during a press talk in Berlin today.

These developments include new German editions of Philippine books and the initial lineup of authors set to participate in literary and cultural events at both the National Stand and the Philippine Pavilion, and around Frankfurt during FBM 2025. The country also announced its first-ever national stand and official presence at the Leipziger Buchmesse. Additionally, it will launch its inaugural cultural program, *Oculus*.

At the press talk, the Philippine Guest of Honour delegation was represented by **Karina Bolasco**, curator of books and head of the literary program, alongside acclaimed Filipino authors **Daryll Delgado**, who introduced the new German edition of her climate fiction novel *Remains*, and **J. Philip Ignacio**, presenting his compelling historical graphic novel *Alandal*. The discussion with the authors was moderated by Frankfurter Buchmesse’s Director **Juergen Boos**.

Senator Loren Legarda, the driving force behind this initiative, reflected on its deeper meaning, stating, “The Philippines’ presence in Germany is more than a literary offering—it is a call to journey through stories that sail across oceans, voices that weave connections between cultures, and ideas that know no boundaries.”

Juergen Boos added, “At a time of global division, literature remains a powerful tool for connection. Our Guest of Honour program enhances the visibility of the guest country’s literature and the expansion of the international network of publishers, authors and cultural institutions, which are important players for the democratic civil society.”

The Philippines Guest of Honour presentation (PHLGoH2025) at Frankfurter Buchmesse 2025 is a collaborative undertaking of the National Book Development Board (NBDB), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), and the Office of Senator Loren Legarda. Inspired by a line from Rizal’s *Noli Me Tangere*, the country’s theme *The Imagination peoples the air* encapsulates the profound intersection of Philippine literature, vibrant culture, and rich history. It invites the global audience to experience the nation’s literary heart.

New German Editions

Through the PHLGoH2025 Translation Subsidy Program for Foreign Publishers, led by the NBDB, **129 Filipino books have been translated into foreign languages.** The program bridges the gap for Filipino writers working in English and regional languages, ensuring their voices reach a global audience.

Twenty-seven titles have been translated into German- including the highly anticipated *Aswanglaut* by **Allan Derain**, *Tiempo Muerto* by **Caroline Hau**, *The Collaborators* by **Katrina Tuvera**, *The Singing Detainee and the Librarian with One Book: Essays on Exile* by **Michael Beltran**, *Second Opinion* by **Gideon Lasco**, *Essays on Philippine Cinema* by **Nick Deocampo**, and graphic novels such as *mga walang pangalan pero andyan* by **Archie Oclos**, *Death Be Damned* by **Mike Alcazaren**, **Noel Pascual**, and **AJ Bernardo**, *Depikto* by **Ruvel Abril**, and *Josefina* by **Russell Molina** and **Ace Enriquez**.

More titles are set for release in 2025, including *Kites in the Night* by **Blaise Campo Gacoscos**, *Some People Need Killing* by **Patricia Evangelista**, and *Trese Vol. 3* by **Budjette Tan** and **Kajo Baldesimo**. March 2025 will also see the release of *Remains* by **Daryll Delgado** and *The Age of Umbrage* by **Jessica Zafra**.

More than expanding readership, this initiative strengthens the Philippines' literary presence on the global stage, opening doors to wider recognition and international publishing partnerships. **Kristian Sendon Cordero**, co-head of the translation committee with **Flor Marie Sta. Romana-Cruz**, highlights its significance, "Translation allows our literature to break beyond local languages and enter a global dialogue. Philippine writers contribute to the world, and in turn, our literature is enriched by engaging with other cultures."

Aside from the products of the translation subsidy, the Philippines will also feature existing translated works, as well as German editions that have been translated through the initiative of foreign publishers who have shown interest in Filipino books. The complete list will be announced before October.

Authors at Frankfurter Buchmesse

The Philippines has unveiled its initial lineup of authors for the program at the Pavilion and National Stand at the Frankfurter Buchmesse 2025, presenting the nation's rich literary diversity. This selection features both established and emerging voices, including award-winning novelists, poets, indie authors, and publishers who are shaping the future of Philippine literature.

The lineup spans a wide array of genres, including climate fiction, new adult, science fiction, poetry, graphic novels, children's and young adult literature, and contemporary fiction.

Five National Artists—the highest national recognition given to Filipino individuals who have made significant contributions to the development of Philippine arts—lead the roster of creatives, namely, **Virgilio S. Almario** (Literature, 2003), **Resil B. Mojares** (Literature,

2018), **Kidlat Tahimik** (Film, 2018), **Gemino H. Abad** (Literature, 2022), and **Ricky Lee** (Film and Broadcast Arts, 2022).

Notable multi-awarded authors include **Jose Dalisay**—acclaimed for *Last Call Manila* and the recent German translation of his *Killing Time in a Warm Place*, a novel set during martial law—and Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Maria Ressa**, trauma journalist **Patricia Evangelista**, alongside poets and novelists **Luna Sicat Cleto**, **Luisa Igloria**, **Marjorie Evasco**, and **Merlie Alunan**.

The lineup also includes award-winning authors such as children’s book writer **Luis Gatmaitan**, novelists **Sarge Lacuesta** and **Ronaldo S. Vivo Jr.**, and leading graphic novelists **Budjette Tan** (*Trese*), **Manix Abrera** (*Kikomachine*), and **Mervin Malonzo** (*Tabi Po*). More authors will be revealed at the Frankfurt press conference on June 26, 2025.

The country’s publishing industry strongly supports its literary talents, with contributions from leading academic institutions such as Ateneo de Manila University Press, The University of the Philippines Press, and University of Santo Tomas Press. Major commercial publishers like Anvil Publishing, Vibal Publishing House, and Adarna House, along with independent publishers—19th Avenida Publishing House, Milflores Publishing, Komiket, Balangay Books, and Exploding Galaxies—bring fresh perspectives to the literary scene. Additional publishing houses will be announced in June.

“This selection underscores the Philippines’ commitment to engaging the world in meaningful conversations on identity, history, imagination, and today’s pressing issues,” said **Karina Bolasco**.

First Participation at Leipziger Buchmesse

Building momentum for its Guest of Honour role at Frankfurt 2025, the Philippines will make its debut at the Leipziger Buchmesse (March 27–30, 2025), presenting German-translated Filipino works at **Hall 4, C402** and **eleven events** on different stages at the fairgrounds and in the city of Leipzig.

The Philippine stand will feature **150 titles, including 14 German editions**, six of which are new releases. The delegation includes both award-winning and emerging authors. Representing the country’s thriving graphic novel and comic scene are **Renren Galeno**, **J. Philip Ignacio**, and **Paolo Herras**. Celebrated authors **Daryll Delgado**, **Jessica Zafra**, and **Stephanie Co** will discuss themes like climate change, colonialism, globalization, and social inequality. Translators **Kristian Cordero**, **Annette Hug**, and **Monica Fröhlich** will give vivid impressions on the art of literary translation.

Beyond Books: Philippine Culture Takes the Spotlight

The Philippines' Guest of Honour participation extends beyond literature with *Oculus*, an exhibition exploring how we “see things.” Hosted at the Heidelberger Kunstverein, *Oculus* reflects on the intersections of science, art, and imagination—where the line between real and spectral blurs.

Curated by **Patrick Flores** (also the curator of the Philippine Pavilion, FBM 2025), the exhibition references José Rizal's ophthalmological studies in Heidelberg and his novel *Noli Me Tangere*, which he partly wrote in the city. Artists **Stephanie Misa** and **Joscha Steffens** work out how seeing, shaped by both ecology and imagination, can give rise to visions.

Oculus opened on March 15 and runs until May 18, 2025.

More cultural and literary activities will be announced.

For full event details, visit philippinesfrankfurt2025.com, download the digital press kit and follow us on **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **Tiktok**, **LinkedIn** @philippinesfrankfurt2025.