

Simon Tay, Nadiputra to get S.E.A. Write Award for S'pore

Olivia Ho

Assistant Life Editor

Writer Simon Tay (right) and Malay theatre doyen Nadiputra (below right) will receive the S.E.A. Write Award for Singapore.

The regional award, given annually since 1979 to leading poets and writers in the 10 Asean countries, will be presented at a ceremony



pandemic delays.

Tay and Nadiputra won for 2019 and last year respectively. The wins were announced yesterday by the Singapore Book Council.

Tay, 60, won the 2010 Singapore Literature Prize for his novel *City Of Small Blessings*. He has also published poetry and short stories, such as the collection *Middle And First* (2016).

A former Nominated Member of Parliament, he is a National University of Singapore associate law professor and chairman of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, a non-profit think-tank.

He says it is “humbling” to receive the award, which he has been aware of since he was a young

him to persist in the later phase of his writing.

“It’s really a call to refocus on what I started doing 40 years ago, before I can’t write any more – and to write as much as I can, or rather as best as I can.”

He is working on two books: a poetry collection and a creative non-fiction work about his father.

Almahdi Al-Haj Ibrahim, better known as Nadiputra, is a pioneer of the Singapore Malay theatre scene, which he has been involved in for more than 50 years.

An actor, director, producer and more, he has written more than 300 works for stage, radio and television. He scripted Malay TV dramas such as the popular 1980s

The former president of Malay performing arts group Sriwana, he has penned plays from 1980s musical *Jefri And Maria* to the lavish bangsawan production *Raden Mas: An Epic Of A Princess* in 2016.

The 75-year-old’s accolades already include the Cultural Medallion in 1986 and the prestigious literary honour Anugerah Tun Seri Lanang in 2013.

Still, he says, this latest award means a lot to him.

“To me, it represents all the hard work that I put in sincerely without (expecting) anything in return. It is an honour to be recognised and appreciated.”

Recipients of the S.E.A. Write Awards are selected by their peers in each of the Asean countries.

The award may be given for a specific work by an author or for lifetime achievement.

Past recipients from Singapore include writers Edwin Thumboo (1979), Catherine Lim (1999) and