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NUS Singapore History Prize doubles to $100,000, now open to arts and multimedia

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Arts Editor

The NUS Singapore History Prize, the richest of its kind in the country, has doubled from $50,000 to $100,000. The prize will also now be open to the arts and multimedia.

The Department of History at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Fass), National University of Singapore (NUS), announced the changes in a statement on April 1.

The prize is financed by an anonymous donor, who has doubled the endowment for the award, which is given out every three years. Awardees have included inaugural winner Professor John Miksic's Singapore And The Silk Road Of The Sea, 1300-1800 (2013) and, most recently, Khir Johari's The Food Of Singapore Malays: Gastronomic Travels Through The Archipelago (2021).

The new arts and multimedia category will encompass other disciplines ranging from theatre to film. The award will now alternate between books and the other art forms for every edition.

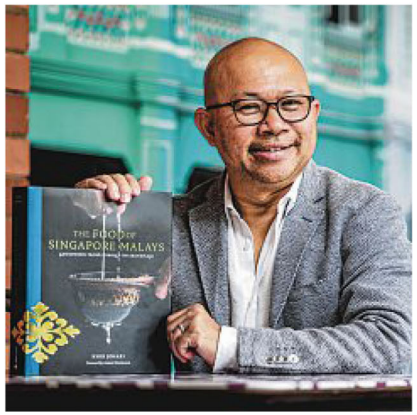
The prize recognises both fiction and non-fiction works that deal deeply with Singapore's history.

Associate Professor Joey Long, head of the history department, said in a statement: "We firmly support our donor's belief that Singaporeans can learn a lot more about Singapore's rich history from different mediums.

"These include documentaries, films, visual arts, performing arts, installation art, podcasts and videos (excluding audiobooks, books in printed form and e-books). As such, we are glad that the prize has now been expanded to recognise works beyond books, which also reflects NUS' commitment to foster a comprehensive appreciation of Singapore's past through accessible and modern platforms."

The 2027 NUS Singapore History Prize for Arts And Multimedia is open for submissions for works in the English language or works translated into English. There is no limit to the date of production, but the work must address Singaporean history. The deadline is May 31, 2027.

The panel of judges will be chaired by Mr Kishore Mahbubani, former diplomat and Distinguished Fellow at the NUS Asia Research Institute. He helped found the prize in 2014.



Khir Johari won the 2024 NUS Singapore History Prize for his book, The Food Of Singapore Malays: Gastronomic Travels Through The Archipelago. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO FILE

He said in a statement: "There is no doubt that for the next phase of Singapore's national development, the Singaporean sense of national identity must be deepened and strengthened. The best way to do this is to develop a deep and common understanding of Singapore's history.

"Hence, in addition to its academic and scholarly contributions, the NUS Singapore History Prize is also supporting a strong national imperative."

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