



Yeow Kai Chai to Helm Singapore Writers Festival's 30th Edition

Description

The **Singapore Writers Festival (SWF)** is heading into a milestone with a familiar hand at the wheel. Arts House Group (AHG) has appointed acclaimed writer, poet, curator and cultural practitioner **Yeow Kai Chai** as Festival Director of SWF 2027, the festival's landmark 30th edition.



Yeow Kai Chai, appointed Festival Director of Singapore Writers Festival 2027. Image: Arts House Group

Yeow is no stranger to the role. He previously served as Festival Director across four editions from 2015 to 2018, including the 20th edition, and is widely credited with pushing the festival's multilingual programming and cross-disciplinary collaborations that connected literature with music, theatre, visual arts, dance and film.

A milestone edition in 2027

Founded in 1986, SWF has grown from a national gathering into one of Southeast Asia's leading multilingual literary festivals, today presenting more than 200 programmes a year and drawing hundreds of writers, thinkers and artists from Singapore and around the world. Organised by Arts House Group and commissioned by the National Arts Council (NAC), the 30th edition is being framed as both a celebration of three decades of literary history and a chance to chart what comes next.

“The 30th edition is more than a celebration of the Festival's past. It is an opportunity to define its future,” said Sharon Tan, Executive Director of Arts House Group, adding that Yeow “combines deep institutional knowledge with an instinct for artistic innovation.”

Outgoing Festival Director Yong Shu Hoong, whose final edition takes place in 2026, welcomed the handover, saying he was “heartened to see the Festival's 30th edition entrusted to Kai Chai.” Yeow himself described the return as “both familiar and exciting,” pledging to “honour everything the Festival has achieved while creating space for new voices and new ways of experiencing literature.”

Building the next generation of literary leaders

Alongside the appointment, the NAC will roll out a Festival Leadership Development Programme from 2027 to strengthen the pipeline of literary leadership. NAC Chief Executive Officer Mrs Elaine Ng said the initiative would “nurture future literary festival directors and support a vibrant literary scene in the years ahead.”

More details on SWF 2027, including the theme, dates and programming direction, will be announced later. In the meantime, book lovers can get their fill at other local literary and arts happenings, from [BagFest 2026's books and games festival](#) to [Monstrous Fun at The Arts House](#) and the [Esplanade's 2026 fundraising gala](#).

Date Created

06/08/2026

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