17,000 Islands of Imagination

Indonesia – Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2015

Press folder for the press conference on October 9, 2014

- 17,000 Islands of Imagination
  Indonesia, Guest of Honour Country at the 2015 Frankfurt Book Fair, presents an enthralling world of myth, mysticism, and modernity

- Indonesian authors at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2014

- A Glimpse into Indonesia’s Treasure Chest
  A year before its tenure, the 2015 Guest of Honour at Frankfurt Book Fair is set to present a diverse programme of literature, culture and cuisine

- Facts and Figures

- Indonesian literature – A long story
Press information, 9 October 2014

17,000 Islands of Imagination
Indonesia, Guest of Honour Country at the 2015 Frankfurt Book Fair, presents an enthralling world of myth, mysticism, and modernity

FRANKFURT. Indonesia: 17,000 islands, hundreds of distinct ethnic groups and a similar number of languages – when the Frankfurt Book Fair hosts its 2015 Guest of Honour, Indonesia, it will be welcoming the fourth largest country in the world, a nation of astonishing cultural diversity and with a long tradition of literature and storytelling. Already at this year’s Book Fair (8 to 12 October), the country will invite visitors to discover the literary treasures interspersed through its myths, mysticism and modernity.

“For centuries, the Malay language – which later became the Indonesian language – has been connecting our many peoples and cultures, just like the sea, which encompasses our 17,000 islands,” said Wiendu Nuryanti, Deputy Minister for Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, at today’s preview press conference at the Frankfurt Book Fair. “Here, surrounded by water and in the shadow of volcanoes, an incredible diversity of literatures has emerged. We want to use our appearance in Frankfurt to show Indonesia’s dynamic literary scene, a side of Indonesia which is little known abroad.” The Guest’s of Honour logo represents the mysterious literature, too: It is a reminiscence to the classical Balinese shadow play.

Indonesia, which gained independence in 1945, bears the stamp of Indian, Chinese, Arab, and Western culture and during the past century, experienced the transition from a colonized nation to an independent one, and from an authoritarian regime to a democratic state with the largest Moslem population in the world.

The country is characterised by its orality and the country has a long and substantial storytelling tradition. Poems, fairy tales and sagas have been passed down since time immemorial, often with music and performed in groups. Even so, the world’s largest island state can still claim about 2,000 years of written culture, with a literature that reflects the country’s eventful history. This includes adaptations of Indian classics and heroes’ tales in old Javanese, to religious books in Arabic and politically combative works from the beginning of the 20th century, through to experimental, contemporary poetry and modern novels of urban existence.

“Indonesia was where one of the world’s longest literary works was written, ‘La Galigo’, which is 20 times longer than the Odyssey”, Juergen Boos, Director of the Frankfurt Book Fair, says. “UNESCO has now included this in its Memory of the World Register. We want to uncover that incredible wealth of content; to explore it and make it accessible to as large an audience as possible. We’re also interested in the dynamic developments occurring in this, the largest of the South-East Asian countries – a place whose youthful population has made it almost the world champion in Twitter and Facebook use.”

Among Indonesia’s most famous writers are Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925–2006), who was nominated several times for the Nobel Prize in Literature, yet spent much of his life as a political prisoner; Mochtar Lubis (1922–2004), both an author and a journalist who was a recipient of the first Magsaysay award and whose novel Twilight in Jakarta was the first Indonesian novel to be translated into English; Rendra (1935–2009), who found international acclaim, not only as a poet, but also as a performer, actor and

Press contact “Indonesia – Guest of Honour 2015”
Mirjam Flender, Kirsten Lehnert, c/o projekt2508, +49 (0)228-184967-24, presse@projekt2508.de
director, and Nh. Dini (*1936), a living legend whose lots of novels with strong female characters helped to shape the feminist mind set of Indonesian women today.

“An essential and unifying characteristic of modern Indonesian literature is the authors’ shared language,” says Goenawan Mohamad, poet, essayist and responsible for the Guest of Honour’s cultural programme. "While the writers of the post-colonial generation might have grown up speaking different mother tongues, it’s still perfectly natural for them – and an expression of their national identity – to write in Indonesian, the country’s official language."

To date, no more than a couple dozen full length literary titles have been translated into and published in German. These include works by Pramoedya, Lubis, and Rendra, but also more recent novels such as Saman by Ayu Utami (Horlemann, 2007), and The Rainbow Troops by Andrea Hirata (Die Regenbogentruppe, Hanser, 2013). As part of Indonesia’s Guest of Honour appearance, an extensive funding programme has been set up in order to render further translations possible. “We’d like to make our literary treasures accessible to even more people in the future,” says Husni Syawie, General Secretary of the Indonesian Book Publishers Association. “Germany should become a bridge for us, by means of which we can reach other European countries and Western markets where we are hardly present so far.” Indonesia, with a population of 250 million, has more than 1,400 publishers, collectively publishing an average of 24,000 books per year.

Indonesia’s Guest of Honour appearance will be accompanied by an extensive support programme that introduces the various streams of Indonesian culture. For this, a large number of Indonesian authors will present their books at literary festivals, readings and discussions throughout the German-speaking countries. Frankfurt museums will host exhibitions on subjects such as Indonesian architecture and photography. Similarly, a film week is planned with screenings of independent films from Indonesia, as well as performances by 20 composers and choreographers from different parts of the archipelago.

At this year’s Frankfurt Book Fair, some 30 events will already provide interesting insights into Indonesia’s contemporary literature scene. There will be several authors in Frankfurt, including the poet and women’s rights campaigner, Toeti Heraty; children’s author Murti Bunanta; novelist and singer, Dewi Lestari; and the poet and performance artist Afrizal Malna. A presentation entitled the Literary Treasure-Chest will see that treasure chest opened up for visitors, in an event that includes musical poetry recitations by well known Indonesian singers and dancers. One of the country’s most famous actors, Slamet Rahardjo, will examine the state of Indonesian cinema together with Dewi Lestari, while Afrizal Malna has been invited to a talk at the ARTE stand. Indonesian painter Raden Saleh, whose art has already sold for record sums at auctions in Germany, will also be showcased. In the Weltempfang, meanwhile, experts such as Luthfi Assyaukanie, co-founder of the Liberal Islam Network, will discuss the democratisation process in the Islamic world. Finally, a number of prominent Indonesian chefs, including Petty Elliott and William Wongso will whet our appetites quite literally for the future Guest of Honour with its 17,000 islands.

Further information: www.indonesiaafbf.com
www.buchmesse.de/de/ehrengast/
Indonesian authors at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2014

Afrizal Malna

Born in Jakarta in 1957, Afrizal Malna is a poet and writer, with publications that cross the borders of literature, theatre, dance and art. He is the author of a large body of critical and scholarly work. His writings on Indonesian literature can be seen in *Sesuatu Indonesia*, while his studies on Indonesian theatre have been published in *Perjalanan Teater Kedua* (The Journey of the Second Theatre). Malna’s poetry collection *Teman-Temanku dari Atap Bahasa* (My Friends from the Roof of Language), published in 2008, was chosen as the best literary work of 2009 by the Indonesian news magazine *Tempo*. Besides his poems, he has also written short stories and published two longer prose works, *Novel yang Malas Mengisahkan Manusia* (A Novel Reluctant to Tell of Humans) in 2003, and *Lubang dari Separuh Langit* (A Hole from Half the Sky) in 2004. During 2014, he is a guest of the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Programme.

Titles in English:
*Anxiety Myths* (Lontar, Jakarta 2013); *Menagerie 3*, John H. McGlynn (Hrsg.), (Lontar, Jakarta 1997)

Titles in German:
sie haben angst, nicht, vor dem rot, in: *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter*, Heft 204, Dezember 2012

Dewi Lestari

Dewi Lestari is one of Indonesia’s best-selling and most critically acclaimed writers. She was born in Bandung in 1976. Under the pen-name Dee, she made her debut with the serialised novel *Supernova*. Altogether, Dee has now published eight books, including *Perahu Kertas* (Paper Boat) and three anthologies: *Filosofi Kopi* (Coffee's Philosophy), *Madre* (Mother), and *Recto verso*, a unique hybrid of music and literature. So far three of her works have been turned into films, and further screen adaptations are planned.

Titles in English:
*Supernova: The Knight, The Princess and the Falling Star* (Lontar, Jakarta 2011)
Goenawan Mohamad

To the outside world Goenawan is known as the founding editor of Tempo, a weekly magazine that was ultimately banned by the Suharto regime in 1994. Above all, however, he is a poet, essayist and playwright. Every week since the mid 1970s, Goenawan has produced pieces of Catatan Pinggir – a sort of marginalia, or short essays on ideas, arts and literature. Ten volumes of these essays have now been published, with three of them available in English. A German translation, Am Rande bemerkt, was also issued by Horlemann in 1993. The long list of his published works includes plays, librettos and six volumes of poetry. He has won several national awards, and was the first recipient of the Professor Tjeeuw Award, presented by the University of Leiden in 1992. He also received the 1997 Louis Lyons Award from Harvard University and the 2006 Dan David Award from Tel Aviv University. In 2006, the French president presented him with the medal of Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres, and in 2011 he was appointed a Regents’ Professor by the University of California.

Titles in English:
Letters of Karna, a book of plays (Tempo Magazine, Jakarta 2014); Don Quixote a book of verses on Carvantes' hero ( Tempo Magazine, Jakarta 2011); God and Other Unfinished Things (Katakita Publishing, Jakarta 2007); Sidelines (Highland House in association with Monash Asia Institute, Monash University, Carlton 1994); Conversation with Differences (Tempo Magazine, Jakarta); Sharptimes (Pusat Data & Analisa Tempo, 2011); Selected Poems (KataKita, Jakarta 2004)

Titles in German:
Am Rande bemerkt… 35 Essays über Kultur, Politik und Gesellschaft Indonesiens (Horlemann, Bad Honnel 1993); different publications in: Berthold Damshäuser und Wolfgang Kubin (Hrsg.), Orientierungen, Zeitschrift zur Kultur Asiens; Herbstquatrains and In dieser Stadt, so heißt es und Kälte, nicht messbar, in: Berthold Damshäuser (Hrsg.), Gebt mir Indonesien zurück!: Eine Anthologie moderner indonesischer Lyrik (Horlemann, Bad Honnel 1994)

Luthfi Assyaukanie

Luthfi Assyaukanie was a co-founder of the Liberal Islam Network and is now a senior lecturer at Paramadina University, Jakarta. He was born in Jakarta in 1967. Assyaukanie pursued his academic career in Jordan, Malaysia and Australia. He has published three books, contributed 50 entries to two Indonesian encyclopaedias, and has written hundreds of articles. His pieces appear in prominent newspapers, such as Kompas and Tempo. Among other books, he is the author of Faces of Liberal Islam in Indonesia.
Murti Bunanta

The author Murti Bunanta has won numerous international awards and received wide acclaim for her contributions to children's literature, having published 48 children's books. She was born in Semarang in 1946. As a children's literature specialist and children's folklorist, she has written many essays and given lectures at numerous national and international events. She is the founder and president of the Society for the Advancement of Children's Literature, a non-profit organization in Indonesia that pioneers activities to develop children's reading. She established the Indonesian chapter of the International Board on Books for Young People, and has also been its president since 1990.

Titles in English:
*Indonesian Folktales* (Komunitas Bambu, 2003); *The Tiny Boy and Other Tales from Indonesia* (Groundwood Books, 2013);
*Collection of 19 titles* (Gramedia, Jakarta 2010)

Petty Elliott

Petty Elliott is an Indonesian chef who has specialised in developing Indonesian cuisine to a high modern standard. She cooks dishes that reflect the history of Indonesian cuisine. For this, she draws upon influences ranging from Chinese and Arabic to Spanish and Dutch, combining them to produce a wealth of different flavours. Petty is a regular columnist in the *Jakarta Globe* and *Now Jakarta*. Her book *Papaya Flower* was voted best cookbook discovery by the *Wandering Palate*.

Titles in English:
*Papaya Flower: Menadonese Cuisine Provincial Indonesian Food* (Komunika Partners, Jakarta 2009)
Toeti Heraty is a poet. She was born in Bandung in 1933. She writes subtle poems that are both intimate and personal, which highlight repressive social and emotional conventions. Toeti is considered one of the first generation of Indonesian feminist thinkers, after having written extensively on issues of importance to women. She released her first major collection of poems, Sajak-Sajak 33 (Poems at 33), in 1974, and Mimpi dan Pretensi (Dreams and Pretences) in 1982. She has also edited a volume of Dutch and Indonesian poetry, as well as a collection of poetry by women. She founded Jurnal Perempuan, a feminist magazine that addresses issues of concern to women. Besides being a poet, she is also a philosopher, an art historian and a human rights activist.

Titles in English:
Calon Arang: The Story of a Woman Sacrificed to Patriarchy (Yayasan Pustaka Obor, Jakarta 2012); Rainha Boki Raja: Sixteenth Century Queen of Ternate (Komunitas Bambu, Jawa Barat 2010); A Time, A Season: Selected Poems of Toeti Heraty (Lontar, Jakarta 2003)

Titles in German:
A Glimpse into Indonesia’s Treasure Chest

A year before its tenure, the 2015 Guest of Honour at Frankfurt Book Fair is set to present a diverse programme of literature, culture and cuisine

Indonesia, the Guest of Honour of the 2015 Frankfurt Book Fair, will present itself as a country of great cultural diversity, with a long tradition of literature and storytelling. Even this year, visitors to the Frankfurter Book Fair (8–12 October) can already gain fascinating insights into the culture and literature of this country of 17,000 islands. With Indonesian authors and experts on literature, art and architecture, as well as five-star chefs and political commentators, some 30 events will invite you to discover the largest of the world's island states with fresh eyes.

A look into the country’s literary treasure chest awaits us at a presentation under that title, by the expert in Indonesian studies Berthold Damshäuser (10 Oct, 2.30–3.30 pm). A discussion with the famous writer and first-generation women's rights campaigner, Toeti Heraty, has examined the significance of women for and in Indonesian literature in the last century (8 Oct, 4.00–5.00 pm). Visitors can experience the beauty of Indonesian poetry in a reading with Goenawan Mohamad, Toeti Heraty and Dorothea Rosa Herliany (11 Oct, 12.30–1.30 pm).

Several well known Indonesian singers and dancers will initiate the audience into a centuries-old Indonesian tradition: the recital of Indonesian poetry in song (9 Oct, 12.30–1.30 pm; 10 and 11 Oct, 10.00–11.00 am). And in a talk at the ARTE-stand, the poet and performance artist, Afrizal Malna, has provided interesting insights into how the younger generation of writers perceive the poetry and political literature of the Guest of Honour (8 Oct). Bestselling Indonesian author, Dewi Lestari, whose books have already been turned into films, will present her works (10 Oct, 3.00–4.00 pm). She will also discuss the relationship between film and literature, above all in the social field, with the famous Indonesian actor Slamet Rahardjo (11 Oct, 3.00–4.00 pm). To introduce international trade visitors to the business of Indonesian literature, there will also be events on the Indonesian book market, translation funding, the children's book segment and the digital book market. Two of the world's foremost translators of Indonesian literature, John McGlynn and Berthold Damshäuser, for instance, will discuss the availability, translation and the need to create a canon of Indonesian literature in translation (11 Oct 4.00–5.00 pm).

The rich artistic and architectural history of Indonesia will also be a subject of attention at this year's Book Fair. An entire event is planned, devoted to the famous Indonesian painter Raden Saleh, who is seen as a moderniser of both society and painting in Indonesia, and who also brought orientalism to Germany. Werner Kraus, an expert on Saleh, will introduce the painter, whose works have achieved record sums in auctions in Germany (11 Oct, 11.15 am – 12.15 pm). In addition, there will be fascinating glimpses of the philosophy of Balinese architecture and architectural design, with the presentation of the “Asta Kosali”, a historical treatise inscribed on palm leaves, which sets out rules of harmonious design reminiscent of Feng Shui (9 Oct, 5.30 pm).

Group discussions will look at current affairs. For example the event entitled “Democratisation processes in the Islamic world: Indonesia and Egypt” will examine the question of how far, if at all, Islam has influenced the political changes in Indonesia and Egypt. The expert panel will include the journalist, author and academic, Stefan Weidner, as well as Luthfi Assyaukanie, co-founder of the Liberal Islam Network in Indonesia (9 Oct, 1.30–2.30 pm).

Press contact “Indonesia – Guest of Honour 2015”
Mirjam Flender, Kirsten Lehnert, c/o projekt2508, +49 (0)228-184967-24, presse@projekt2508.de
The Guest of Honour will also give visitors to the fair a first taste of the culinary delights to come. In the Gourmet Gallery, prominent Indonesian chef, William Wongso, and celebrity TV chef and cookery author, Petty Elliott, will invite us to discover exotic aromas, flavours and specialities from the country of 17,000 islands (9 Oct, 2.00–2.30 pm; 10 Oct, 2.30–3.30 pm; 11 Oct, 1.00–2.00 pm).

All the dates and additional information can be found in the Frankfurt Book Fair’s Calendar of Events at www.buchmesse.de.
### Facts and Figures

**Organisation “17,000 Islands of Imagination”**

- **Contact**
  - Mr Hawignyo
  - hawignyo@kemdikbud.go.id
- **Director**
  - Mr Ainun Naim
  - Mr Agus Maryono
- **Members of the Board**
  - Mr Ananto Kusuma
  - Mr Sugiyono, Herr Yun Widiati
- **Programme Manager Literature**
  - Mr Husni Syawie
  - Mr John McGlynn
- **Responsible for the Cultural Programme**
  - Mr Goenawan Mohamad
- **Coordination and Organization**
  - Mr Hawignyo
  - Mrs Kestity Pringgoharjono
- **Press Contact**
  - Mrs Mirjam Flender, Mrs Kirsten Lehnert
  - c/o projekt2508 GmbH
  - Riesstraße 10, 53113 Bonn, Deutschland
  - presse@projekt2508.de

**The book market in Indonesia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of inhabitants of Indonesia</td>
<td>250 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual number of titles published in Indonesia</td>
<td>2013: 19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012: 30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual number of printed books in Indonesia</td>
<td>72 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of the book market (sales)</td>
<td>2013: IDR 7,000,000,000,000 (= about 450 mill. €)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012: IDR 6,000,000,000,000 (= about 390 mill. €)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translated titles in Indonesia</td>
<td>50% of books published in Indonesia are translated – mainly from English, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright sales (export)</td>
<td>IDR: 2,000,000,000 / year (= about 130,000 €)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book sales (export)</td>
<td>IDR: 10,000,000,000 / year (= about 650,000 €)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination countries (export)</td>
<td>Main destinations: Malaysia, Vietnam, Turkey, Korea, Italy, Germany, Australia, the USA, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of publishers</td>
<td>Approximately 1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest publishers in Indonesia</td>
<td>Gramedia, Mizan, Agromedia, Erlangga, Penebar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of Indonesia's Publishers' Association (IKAPI)</td>
<td>2013: 1,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012: 1,157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Specification in EUR at the conversion rate of October 2014: 1000 IDR = 0.07 €*
Indonesian Literature – A long story

Like the country itself with its 17,000 islands, the great diversity of peoples, languages and religions in the Indonesian archipelago has also left its mark on Indonesia’s literature. This means there is not just a single literature, but a dozen different writing traditions, including Malay (Indonesian), Balinese, Sundanese and Javanese. Poetry has always played a significant role in the cultures of Indonesia and the country is distinguished by a very long oral tradition. Poems, fairy tales and sagas have been passed down by word of mouth, since time immemorial – often accompanied by music and performed in groups.

The roots of Indonesia’s written traditions stretch back 2,000 years – further back in time than most Western literatures. Some of the earliest known examples are the stone inscriptions of Kutai, in western Kalimantan (Borneo), dating from around 400 AD, and the Talang Tuwo stone, dating from 648, which was found in Palembang (South Sumatra), the 7th century capital city of the old kingdom of Srivijaya. Already at that time, the site was an important centre for the study of Buddhism with an extensive library and more than 1,000 scholars from near and far.

Hindu-Javanese literature began to develop from the 10th century, as Hindu-influenced states emerged on what is today Indonesian soil. To begin with, verse adaptations of Indian classics and mythology were mainly produced in Kawi, a linguistic mix of Javanese and Sanskrit. Mpu Sindok (928–950) became famous for his creative interpretations of Indian epics (e.g. the Mahabharata and the Ramayana). New Javanese literature began with the Nagarakretagama by Rakawi Prapañća, which is a song of praise to King Hayam Wuruk (1350–89) of Majapahit. This also marked the emergence of a new literary form, the Kidung, which dealt predominantly with Javanese material, recounting both history and sagas in free verse.

La Galigo, an ancient epic in the old Bugis language of Sulawesi, evolved between the 13th and 15th centuries. It has been passed down to us in numerous manuscripts, and has now been listed by UNESCO in its Memory of the World Register. With around 300,000 stanzas stretching across 6,000 pages, La Galigo is one of the longest literary work ever produced – some 20 times longer than Homer’s Odyssey.

As more and more Muslim traders visited Indonesia from the 13th century onward and Islam started spreading there more widely, the next chapter in this history began: Islamic-Malay literature. By now, Malay had established itself as the lingua franca across south-eastern Asia, being the primary language of trade on the seas and in the markets of the multi-ethnic archipelago. A form of Malay literature now began to develop which would familiarise the region with the fairytales, sagas and mythology of the Arabian and Persian cultures. Numerous Koranic stories and tales of the prophet were also published, alongside an extensive body of Islamic theological literature. In Malay poetry, the pantun emerged, a verse form which later became popular among poets in France, England and Germany in the 19th century.

History and historical novels were particularly significant for prose writing in Malay. For instance, important 15th century texts, such as the Sejarah Melayu (Malay Chronicle), provide us with extensive insights into the life of the Sultan’s court. While Malay increasingly became the language of Muslims, Javanese saw the development of a more mystical kind of literature; with its multifariously illustrated manuscripts, it was indeed a significant art form. By the end of the 19th century, more and more writers
of all ethnicities were consciously choosing to write in Malay, so they could share their ideas with the world.

In 1928 nationalist leaders declared Malay to be the official language of the nascent nation and its name was changed to Indonesian, thereby laying an important foundation for the country’s independence almost two decades later. At around the same time, modern Indonesian literature began to emerge. European literary forms, such as the novel and the sonnet, were introduced. The author now entered the spotlight as a critical voice and self-aware individual, while literature increasingly became a weapon in the fight against injustice and suppression. In the 1920s, writers like Mas Marco Kartodiromo (1890–1932) and Soemantri (1899–1971) described their visions of a nation freed of colonialism while later, in the 1930s, others, such as Sultan Takdir Alisjahbana (1908–1994), stated the case for Western values, including the rights of women. The era of cultural criticism began with the publication of the literary-cultural magazine Pujangga Baru (New Poet), in 1933. At that time, cultural critics were divided into two camps: the first consisted of those who called for the unquestioning assimilation of Western ideologies and the rejection of antiquated customs (Sultan Takdir Alisjahbana), while the second defended the traditional values of Indonesian culture (Armijn Pané, 1908–1970).

Alongside the fight for national independence, the need to overcome social problems also came to the fore. The literary group Angkatan 45 (Generation of 1945) focused on topics like universality and humanity, while orienting themselves on the works of the poet Chairil Anwar (1922–1949). They were followed by Angkatan 66 (Generation of 1966), whose members protested against the Sukarno regime and composed combative poems about truth, justice and freedom (Taufiq Ismail, *1937). This politically and socially aware literature was superseded by a literary current that preferred experimental forms of poetry. The most important exponent of this was Rendra (1935–2009), one of the best-known Indonesian authors of the 20th century. Rendra, whose influences included Brecht, Shakespeare and Beckett, also used his theatre work to provide a new setting for older forms of music and language. A selection of his poems was published in German translation under the title Weltliche Gesänge und Pamphlete (Horlemann, 1991; Secular Songs and Pamphlets). Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925–2006), who was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature several times was – and still is – perhaps the most famous Indonesian writer internationally. He wrote about 40 works, which have been translated into around 40 different languages. Toer spent many years in prison for his political views, where he continued to write surreptitiously, producing his most famous work, the four novels of his Buru Quartet (consisting of This Earth of Mankind, Child of All Nations, House of Glass and Footsteps).

Among Indonesia’s older contemporary authors are Toeti Heraty (*1933), Sapardi Joko Damono (*1940), Goenawan Mohamad (*1941), Damanto (*1942) and Putu Wijaya (*1944). Two of these authors, Toeti Heraty and Goenawan Mohamad, will participate in the 2014 Frankfurt Book Fair. Besides criticism of social and political shortcomings and attempts to address the problems of existence, these writers’ themes include the search for God, the conflict between tradition and modernity, and the place of the individual in the inhuman world of the megacity.

During the change in transition from an authoritarian to a democratic state, starting in 1998 with the resignation of Indonesia’s strongman-leader, Soeharto, a whole new generation of Indonesian writers have appeared – many of them women: Ayu Utami, Dewi Lestari, Leila S. Chudori, and Laksi Pamunjak to name just four. Indonesia’s younger writers are much more confrontational in their approach to writing and not averse to airing their views on subjects such as homosexuality, abortion,
religious tolerance, and women’s rights, subjects that in previous years had rarely been spoken about publicly. Recent novels by Ayu Utami, Leila Chudori, and Laksmi Pamuntjak are scheduled for rerelease in German next year. Dewi Lestari will participate in the 2014 Frankfurt Book Fair and will accept, on Indonesia’s behalf, the scroll that is passed each year from the current Guest of Honour country to the next one – in this case, the Republic of Indonesia.