



October 16 – 20, 2024 #fbm24

Press release, September 26, 2024

The Philippines to Feature a Dynamic Program for Frankfurter Buchmesse 2024 in Lead-up to 2025 Guest of Honour Role

Frankfurt, Germany - The Philippines will step into a central role at the 2025 Frankfurter Buchmesse (FBM) as the Guest of Honour (GoH). It is a singular opportunity that the culturally diverse nation of 7,641 islands will fully bring into play starting with the FBM 2024. The country will present more than **70 publishers, authors, and creatives**. Moreover, **700 titles** will grace the Philippine stand and various sections of FBM including for genres such as graphic novel, children, new adult, and education.

The program offers a significant platform for the Philippines to highlight its vibrant history, culture and heritage - the basis of its literary depth and richness. The country shines a light on the developments made more than a century after its hero and renowned prolific writer, **Dr. Jose P. Rizal**, accomplished and published his magnum opus in Germany, *Noli Me Tangere*.

The theme for the Philippine participation, **“The Imagination peoples the air”**, draws inspiration from his seminal work.

The Philippines as GoH at the Frankfurter Buchmesse 2025 is an achievement made possible through the joint efforts of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the National Book Development Board (NBDB), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), and the Office of Senator Loren Legarda.

NBDB Chairperson Dante Francis Ang II said the undertaking “will be a crucial step that will reinforce our efforts to promote the growth of the Philippine book industry, and to gain local and international support and recognition.”

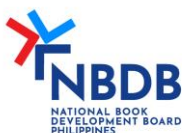
NCCA Chair Victorino Manalo emphasized, “As Guest of Honour, we are afforded the unique occasion to share Philippine culture, our realities and stories through our art and literature from the indigenous to the contemporary. We optimize this platform to promote our stories forged by the diversity of our unique culture and its richness.”

To make the Philippines the Guest of Honour was a long undertaking led by the vision of Senator Legarda, who has been supportive of the Philippines’ continued participation in the FBM since 2015. She explained that, “The Philippines’ presence as Guest of Honour at the world’s most prestigious book fair is a testament to what we can achieve if we nurture our people’s talent. We can make a difference and rally stronger support for the continuous advancement of our book industry and the creative industry through consistent and sustainable government initiatives.”

Philippines – Guest of Honour Frankfurter Buchmesse 2025

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Activities in 2024

Official Launch at the Frankfurter Buchmesse 2024

To present the Philippines as the next Guest of Honour at the Frankfurter Buchmesse, a **press conference** will take place on **October 17, 9:45** at the Frankfurt Pavilion. The event will unveil the visual identity, theme, and plans for 2025.

Key figures from the NCCA, NBDB, DFA, and the Office of Senator Legarda will emphasize the importance of this role in promoting Filipino literature globally and in utilizing arts, culture, and literature to foster stronger global connections.

The theme will be presented by **Patrick Flores**, the Curator of the 2025 Philippine Pavilion as GoH. Flores is an eminent Filipino curator, art critic and professor who is currently Chief Curator of the National Gallery Singapore and held the position of Chair of Art History and Criticism at the University of the Philippines until 2022.

Karina Bolasco, a leading figure in Philippine contemporary publishing, is the Head of the Literary Program and Curator for Books for the Philippines' GoH program. She will discuss the literary and publishing landscape in the Philippines as well as the literary program for 2025.

The press conference program will also feature conversations with Filipino author Budjette Tan, creator of the critically acclaimed graphic novel series *Trese*, and transfeminine thinker and artist Jaya Jacobo. These authors, who were born and raised in the Philippines and with successful international careers, represent the capability of Filipinos to seek creative resources from their roots and the realities of their nation, bringing together all the responsive elements to relate to global stakeholders and the public.

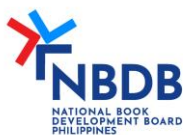
Literary Program for FBM 2024

In a bid to broaden understanding of Philippine literature, the country will leverage the various stages of the FBM 2024 to present a literary program featuring Filipino creatives and publishers.

Scheduled for talks at the International Stage are **Jaya Jacobo**, multi-awarded creative writer **Jose Dalisay**, investigative journalist and author **Patricia Evangelista**, and Filipino historian **Ambeth Ocampo**.

At the ART+ Stage, there will be talks from **Budjette Tan**, **Patricia Evangelista**, as well as from award-winning illustrators **Isabel Roxas** and **Frances Alvarez**, who are both members of Ang INK, the Philippines' first and only organization for artists dedicated to children's illustration.

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Additionally, **Mina Esguerra**, author and publisher of romance novels and founder of RomanceClass, a community of Filipino authors who write romance in English, will give a talk at the New Adult Stage.

The Asia Stage, sponsored by Buchmesse and Rex Education (Philippines), will host 30 sessions covering literature, education, the arts, humanities, technology, and sciences. This platform fosters regional discussions on key challenges and trends in the publishing industry.

The Handover Ceremony

A key event of the 2024 FBM will be the formal handover of the Guest of Honour role from Italy to the Philippines in a ceremony on **October 20, 16:00** at the Italian Pavilion.

This symbolic event will further offer insights into the cross-cultural exchange that the Guest of Honour program promotes, through a creative talk by Filipino author and illustrator **Isabel Roxas** and Italian illustrator **Alessandro Sanna**.

To profile the creative talent and cultural heritage of the Philippines, the program will include performances from multidisciplinary artist and indigenous musician **Waway Saway**, and the multi-awarded choral group, the **Philippine Madrigal Singers** - renowned for winning top prizes in the world's prestigious choral competitions, including the Grand Prix in the 2016 Concorso Internazionale di Guido d' Arezzo, Arezzo, Italy, and the only choir to have won the European Grand Prix for Choral Singing twice, in 1997 and 2007.

IN THE AIR in Heidelberg and Wilhelmsfeld

The Philippines will extend its cultural programming beyond the fairgrounds in Frankfurt through a dynamic four-day launching program titled *In the air* that will be held in Heidelberg and Wilhelmsfeld from **October 24 - 27**.

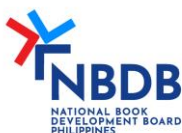
The program will explore Jose Rizal's legacy as a hero, writer, and thinker who inspired countless Filipinos, surfacing how his experiences in Germany shaped his work and ideas. It will also delve into broader themes such as home, exile, and international solidarity, examining their relevance to the contemporary Philippine diaspora and how these interactions with the world animate Filipino literature.

The events in **Heidelberg** include a **Filipino and German Writers Fellowship; Walking Tour** led by Ambeth Ocampo retracing Rizal's footsteps in Heidelberg; **Talking Heads #4: Art and Science Show**, a collaborative engagement between Philippine artist Miljohn Ruperto and Professor Jonas Grethlein from the University of Heidelberg; **With Spectres** an artists' talk between Joscha Steffens and Stephanie Misa inspired by Rizal's ophthalmology studies in Heidelberg; a launching

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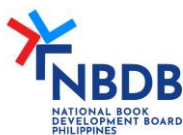
program with the collaborating agencies for the Philippines' GoH role; and a concert featuring Filipino artists.

Additionally, the **Wilhelmsfeld** event titled, ***Pumpon ng mga Gunita (Bouquet of Reminiscences)***, features a two-part program that combines performances, talks, and conversations about Rizal.

The first part, ***Lebendes Bild***, is an evocative performance-tableau that will depict scenes from Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* and dramatize his letters to his close friend Ferdinand Blumentritt and his family. It will culminate in Pastor Karl Ullmer's house, where Rizal lived for three months in 1896.

The second part is the ***Tertulia***, an engaging discussion led by German and European scholars, artists, and authors whose works focus on Rizal. The talks will be complemented by performances of Filipino music and poetry, evoking the lively spirit of Rizal's era.

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