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The imagination peoples the air

Philippines Unveils Visual Identity, Theme and Plans for Guest of Honour Presentation at Frankfurt Book Fair 2025

Frankfurt (Main), Germany – The Philippines will step into a central role at the 2025 Frankfurter Buchmesse (FBM) as the Guest of Honour (GoH). During today’s press conference, curators **Patrick D. Flores** and **Karina A. Bolasco** as well as representatives of the organizing Philippine agencies – **Dante Francis Ang II**, Chair of the National Book Development Board (NBDB), **Eric B. Zerrudo**, Executive Director of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and H.E. **Irene Susan B. Natividad**, Ambassador of the Philippine Embassy to Germany – revealed the visual identity and full theme, providing a sneak peek at the 2025 Guest of Honour presentation. Furthermore, two members of the authors’ delegation, the transfeminine thinker and artist **Jaya Jacobo** and **Ferdinand Benedict „Budjette“ Tan**, creator of the *Trese* Comics, gave an insight into their work.

As a culturally diverse nation of 7,641 islands, the Philippines will highlight the strength of this diversity by featuring national artists, indigenous traditions, global perspectives, and a tribute to national hero Jose Rizal. Inspired by a line from Rizal’s *Noli Me Tangere*, **the country’s theme *The Imagination peoples the air*** encapsulates the profound intersection of Philippine literature, vibrant culture, and rich history. It invites the global audience to experience the nation’s literary heart.

“The keywords *imagination*, *people*, and *air* allude to the elements of the writing and reading context: the producers and receivers of texts; the talent of the idiosyncratic individual who reads and writes; and the community gathered by the air emanating from and animating books,” said **Patrick Flores**, curator of the Philippine Pavilion. Literature in the Philippines is more than storytelling; it is a social practice that connects readers to global ideas and future aspirations. Philippine narratives span genres and mediums, offering a unique perspective on history, culture, and contemporary realities. “The Guest of Honour Pavilion will be the space, the climate for sharing: democratic, deliberative, daring, convivial, peopled by imagination, prompted to action by struggle and dream,” Flores added.

The visual identity, Flores introduced, also follows the theme: *The imagination peoples the air* while conveying the act of ‘imagining’ as a graphic and geometric abstraction brought to life. The main logo visualizes this process by an ascending grid lifting in the air, recalling the collective aspirations of the nation. The color scheme reflects Rizal’s descriptions of vivid tones of gold, blue, red and green in the settings and characters of his book. The typefaces refer to letters used in the first printing of *Noli* around 1890. Finally, the visual design also includes glyphs, inspired by the baybayin script, an ancient writing system, used by early

Filipinos before the Spanish colonization. They represent characters or objects playing a central role in *Noli*.

Karina A. Bolasco, Head of the Literary Program, emphasized the unique offerings the Philippine Pavilion will feature: “The 2025 Philippine Pavilion will be a showcase of our literary development focusing on pioneering, unique works that represent significant aspects of Filipino culture. Collaborating with experts and stakeholders, the delegation aims to highlight titles that not only delve into Filipino heritage but also appeal to international markets interested in diverse stories.”

The expansive Philippine program at the Frankfurter Buchmesse 2024, Bolasco introduced, will already provide initial insights into the ambitious plans of the GoH team, presenting more than **70 publishers, authors, and creatives** taking part in various stages in the fair. Moreover, **700 titles** will grace the Philippine stand and various sections of FBM including for genres such as graphic novel, children’s literature, new adult, and education. A key event of the 2024 FBM will be the formal **handover of the Guest Scroll** from Italy to the Philippines in a ceremony at the Italian Pavilion. Additionally, the Philippines will extend its cultural programming through a dynamic four-day **launching program titled *In the air*** that will be held in **Heidelberg and Wilhelmsfeld** where Jose Rizal wrote his *Noli Me Tangere* in the 1880s.

In 2025, the Philippines will double the numbers of representatives and books to take up space in the 2,000 square-meter pavilion creating a hub for dialogue and inspiration. Moving beyond traditional marketing, the Philippines’ participation seeks to engage with readers, writers, and publishers through a creative exchange: Panels, lectures, and interactive exhibits will explore the role of literature as a catalyst for social change, bridging historical and contemporary realities. The Philippines is working with German institutions to launch a comprehensive cultural program, focusing on Philippine perspectives on global issues and offering a space where past, present, and future come together in a dynamic exchange.

As the world gathers at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2025, the Philippines promises an inspiring vision of literary and cultural exchange. **The Philippine Pavilion will be a nexus of ideas, cultures, and history** and a vibrant highlight of the fair, where stories come alive, and *The imagination peoples the air*.

Juergen Boos, Director of Frankfurter Buchmesse, said: “I am very excited about the Philippines’ Guest of Honour presentation in 2025. The motto *The imagination peoples the air* resonates with the universality of storytelling. Even though the Philippines is the world’s thirteenth largest nation with more than 109 million citizens, I believe for many of us in Europe, Philippine literature is currently still rather unknown territory. As the country steps into its role as Guest of Honour, we will learn a lot about the importance of storytelling and today’s cultural scene for Philippine civil society. With an incredible 183 different languages spoken on its 7,641 islands, the country’s diverse influences are one of the aspects I am looking forward to seeing in Frankfurt in 2025.”

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.

The journey to becoming the Guest of Honour has been a remarkable one. The Philippines made its debut at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 1998, presenting 302 titles from 45 publishers. After a brief hiatus, the country made a powerful return in 2015, driven by the unwavering support of Hon. Senator Loren Legarda, further cementing its status on the global literary stage. In 2023, the Philippines was officially confirmed as the Guest of Honour for 2025, a landmark moment in its cultural narrative.

“This is a moment of immense national pride,” Senator **Loren Legarda**, the project’s main supporter, remarked. “With the Philippine government support, we see the country being celebrated at the world’s largest book fair as a testament to the relentless efforts invested in promoting our literary and creative soul. We are excited to share the stories of the Filipino people with the world.”

Website:

www.philippinesfrankfurt2025.com

Press download, including an extensive press kit and a selection of photographs from the press conference:

www.artefakt-berlin.de