

**Publication: The Straits Times Online**

**Date: 22 October 2018**

**Headline: Four first-time novelists shortlisted for the Epigram Books Fiction Prize**

## **Four first-time novelists shortlisted for the Epigram Books Fiction Prize**



The youngest on this year's shortlist is former teacher and amateur playwright Lu Huiyi, 28. PHOTO: COURTESY OF EPIGRAM BOOKS

SINGAPORE - The Epigram Books Fiction Prize (EBFP) has for the first time an all-women shortlist, where all finalists are first-time novelists.

The award is Singapore's only prize for unpublished English-language novels, as well as its richest literary award. The top prize is worth \$25,000, while three runner-ups will get \$5,000 each.

The youngest on this year's shortlist is former teacher and amateur playwright Lu Huiyi, 28, who is pursuing a post-graduate course at Singapore Management University.

This will be the first time any of the shortlisted writers is publishing a novel, although Yeoh Jo-Ann, 36, has contributed short stories to anthologies such as *In Transit* (2016) and *The Epigram Books Collection Of Best New Singaporean Short Stories: Vol 3* (2017).

Formerly a Singapore Press Holdings Magazines features editor, Yeoh is now a client operations director with a digital marketing agency.

The other two writers on the shortlist are freelance writer and English literature tutor Anittha Thanabalan, 29, and Channel NewsAsia senior digital lifestyle journalist May Seah, 33.

Epigram publisher Edmund Wee noted that this year's finalists were all under 40 years old. "It's a wonderful indication of the level of interest in writing out there."

He is on the judging panel alongside Singapore Literature Prize-winning author Suchen Christine Lim, Professor Rajeev S. Patke, director of the Division of Humanities at Yale-NUS College, and children's book author Linda Locke, the great-grand-niece of horticulturist Agnes Joaquim, who created Singapore's national flower, the Vanda Miss Joaquim orchid hybrid.

The award is open to all Singapore citizens, permanent residents and Singapore-born authors.

The winner will be announced at an award ceremony and gala dinner on Nov 22 at the Junior Glass Ballroom of Conrad Centennial Singapore.

**Source: The Straits Times @ Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Permission required for reproduction**