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The 10-day festival closed with writers irreverently dissecting whether True Art Is Always Ugly to an overflowing house at the festival's main tent on Singapore Management University's Campus Gree

SINGAPORE - This year's Singapore Writers Festival, which concluded on Nov 9, saw more than 19,600 people participating in a record 280 events that featured over 200 writers from Singapore, Asia and around the world.

More than half of the ticketed programmes were sold out, including workshops conducted by featured authors, a lecture by acclaimed travel writer Paul Theroux, the Balik Kampung Literary Walk, as well as Body X, an interactive bilingual murder-mystery production.

Festival Director Paul Tan said: "We're delighted that the Festival continues to attract large audiences through diverse and multi-lingual programming in our four official languages; as well as our stronger multidisciplinary focus this year, with elements of poetry, theatre, spoken word and music.

"SWF is a platform for showcasing Singaporean and Asian writers to the world and presenting international writers to our audiences. So it's been very encouraging to see more Singaporeans embrace the literary arts, especially home grown writing, and we've seen this from the crowds thronging the sessions featuring our Singapore writers, easily matching or even exceeding attendance at those of renowned international writers."

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Retired civil servant Ms Julia D'Silva, in her 60s, commented that the moderators at the events she attended this year were better than those she saw last year.

Taiwanese-American Ms Janet Wu, a first-time festival-goer, said she was very impressed by the variety of interesting programmes.

"Having grown up in America, I was curious to hear writers' perspectives in the Homeward Bound panel discussion. The Asian authors at this panel had lived in Western countries. They shared about how they had to re-establish themselves in a non-Asian place and this really resonated with me," she shared.

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