

18 AUG 2017 – 25 FEB 2018
LEVEL 10, GALLERY
NATIONAL LIBRARY BUILDING

MANUSCRIPTS AND EARLY BOOKS
Tales of the Malay World

GETTING TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

BY BUS

Cosmic Insurance Building
Bus stop (01029)
7, 32, 51, 61, 63, 80, 145, 175,
197, 851

Bras Basah Complex
Bus stop (01019)
2, 12, 33, 130, 133, 960, NR7

St. Joseph's Church
Bus stop (01013)
130, 133, 145, 197, 851, 960,
NR7

Hotel Grand Pacific
Bus stop (01012)
2, 7, 12, 32, 33, 51, 61, 63, 80,
175, NR7

BY TRAIN

10-minute walk from:
Bugis MRT Station
Bras Basah MRT Station
City Hall MRT Station

BY TAXI

Pick-up and drop-off points
along Middle Road and
Victoria Street.

BY CAR

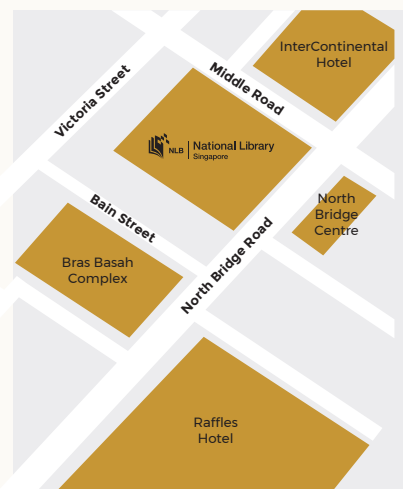
Parking is available at the
National Library Building.
Operating hours: Monday to
Sunday, 7.00am to 11.30pm

ADDRESS

National Library Building
100 Victoria Street
Singapore 188064

OPERATING HOURS

Monday to Sunday
10.00am – 9.00pm
(except public holidays)



The information stated in this brochure is correct at the time of print. The National Library of Singapore reserves the right to make changes to the programmes without prior notice.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS



Hikayat Abdullah
Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir
1849, Singapore
Collection of National Library, Singapore

First Printed Malay Work by a Local

Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir (c.1797–1854), better known as Munsyi Abdullah, was a scholar and translator. Regarded as the ‘father of Malay printing’, his autobiography, the *Hikayat Abdullah*, was published in 1849 in collaboration with Reverend Benjamin Keasberry (1811–75), a Protestant missionary. Munsyi Abdullah was the first non-European to have his work published in Malay. The *Hikayat Abdullah* is a record of the sociopolitical landscape of Singapore, Melaka and the kingdoms of Johor and Riau-Lingga at the beginning of the 20th century.

Story of Romance and Adventure

The *Hikayat Isma Yatim* tells the story of Isma Yatim, who has been writing *hikayat* (narratives) since childhood. His good work led him to be accepted into the king's service as an adviser. This *hikayat* also features the love story of the king and a princess hidden in a magical sapphire. Isma Yatim later rescues the pregnant princess from the wrongful accusations of the king's elder wife. The work is replete with descriptions of beautiful objects, people and places.



Hikayat Isma Yatim
18th to early 19th century
Collection of British Library

Poem of a Disguised Heroine

The protagonist of the *Syair Abdul Muluk* is Abdul Muluk's second wife, Siti Rafi'ah, who disguises herself as a man in order to rescue her husband and his first wife from captivity. Tales of women disguised as men is a popular theme for many romantic *syair* (poems). This one is believed to have been written by a woman – Raja Salihah of the Riau court of Penyengat.

The *Syair Abdul Muluk* was very popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries based on the number of editions produced by various printers. This edition was printed by a prominent early printer, Muhammad Amin.



Syair Abdul Muluk
Isterinya Siti Rafi'ah
Printed by
Muhammad Amin
1311 (1894), Singapore
Collection of National
Library, Singapore



Letter from Sultan of Pontianak to Stamford Raffles

Sultan Syarif Kasim (1766–1819) of Pontianak, Kalimantan, sent this letter to Stamford Raffles (1781–1826). Much of the letter pertains to the sultan's request for British help against their 'common' enemy, the sultan of Sambas. The end of the letter mentions that Sultan Syarif Kasim would send two manuscripts requested by Raffles: a legal text and the *Hikayat Raja Iskandar*. Raffles was an avid collector of Malay manuscripts.

Letter from Sultan Syarif Kasim of Pontianak
22 Muharram 1226 (February 1811),
Pontianak
Collection of British Library

Love Poem about a European Clerk and a Married Woman

The *Syair Sinyor Kosta* is a romantic poem that narrates how Dutch clerk Sinyor Kosta has fallen in love with Lela Mayang, the wife of a Chinese merchant. He tries to win her heart, and the couple eventually have a happy ending.

There are several variants of this story. In other versions, the protagonist is a Portuguese merchant, and the Chinese merchant wins back his concubine. This particular *syair* (poem) was composed by Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin (1767–1852), the ruler of Palembang in Sumatra. It was probably written before the Dutch banished him to Ternate in 1821. This manuscript was copied in 1863.



Syair Sinyor Kosta
1863, Ternate
Collection of Leiden University Library



Sulalat al-Salatin
Probably 17th century
Collection of Royal
Asiatic Society of Great
Britain and Ireland

Tale of How Singapore Got its Name

The *Sulalat al-Salatin* (Genealogy of Kings) contains the story of Sri Tri Buana (Sang Nila Utama) landing on the island of Temasek and establishing a city named Singapura.

One of the oldest and most famous texts in Malay literature, the *Sulalat al-Salatin* chronicles the genealogy of the Melaka sultans (c.1400–1511). It is more commonly referred to as the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals). This particular copy – known as Raffles 18 – once belonged to Stamford Raffles, and is believed to be one of the earliest recensions of the original text.

Step into the world of Malay stories –
fantastical adventure tales of
kings and heroes, founding myths
of sultanates, and romantic poetry.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

For centuries, Malay was the language of trade, diplomacy, religious discourse, and literature for maritime Southeast Asia. This exhibition explores traditional Malay literature captured in ink on paper – from handwritten manuscripts to early lithographed books.

These rarely seen items provide glimpses into the society that produced and read these literary works. Discover lesser-known stories of women authors and 19th-century lending libraries in the Malay world. Learn about the dramatic impact of printing on the manuscript tradition, and Singapore's role as the early Malay/Muslim printing hub for the region.

The exhibition features precious manuscripts on loan from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, shown in Singapore for the first time. It is a unique opportunity to view these collections together.

Highlights include a manuscript (copied in 1710) of one of the oldest existing *syair* (narrative poem), which tells of the war (1666–69) between the Dutch and Makassar; the earliest manuscript on the exploits of the legendary Malay hero, Hang Tuah; one of the most ornate Malay manuscripts; and an 1811 letter from the sultan of Pontianak in Kalimantan to Stamford Raffles.

Come, discover these and other fascinating stories.

ORGANISED BY



National Library
Singapore

PROGRAMMES

AUGUST 2017

TALK | Art and Artists in Malay Manuscript Books
18 August, 7.00pm – 8.00pm | Level 16, The Pod
Speaker: Datuk Dr Annabel Teh Gallop
This talk will be conducted in English

The art of the Malay book is primarily a religious art. The finest examples of manuscript illumination in Southeast Asia are found not in literary or historical works, but in copies of the Qur'an. Almost without exception, these exquisite works of art are anonymous, for Malay artists did not traditionally sign their artworks.

However, the artist has inscribed his own name in one finely illuminated Malay literary manuscript from the British Library – the *Hikayat Nabi Yusuf* (The Story of the Prophet Joseph), copied in Perlis in 1802 – displayed in this exhibition. The artist's comments and annotations in the text also shed invaluable light on the mechanics of the manuscript trade in the Malay Peninsula in the early 19th century.

Join Dr Annabel Gallop in this talk as she shares about the illumination of Qur'ans and other Islamic manuscripts.



Hikayat Nabi Yusuf, 1802. Collection of British Library

Annabel Teh Gallop is the lead curator for Southeast Asia at the British Library. Her main research interests are Malay manuscripts, letters, documents and seals, and the art of the Qur'an in Southeast Asia.

SEPTEMBER 2017

TALK | The Script State (Negeri Naskhah) – Malay Manuscripts in Documenting Memories
30 September, 3.00pm – 4.00pm | Level 5, Possibility Room
Speaker: Dr Azhar Ibrahim
This talk will be conducted in English

Manuscripts are testaments of their time, as they reflect the conditions and people surrounding the text. Today, the reception of manuscripts and texts – the way we read and interpret them – is also subject to the prevailing ideas of our time.

This programme provides an overview of the written tradition of the Malay world, which we have inherited in the form of manuscripts. Discover the stories of these texts; their various forms throughout history; and how the written text has become a symbol of power, intellect and mastery.

Azhar Ibrahim is a lecturer at the Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore. His research interests include sociology of religion, sociology of literature and critical literacy, and the Malay-Indonesia intellectual development.

OCTOBER 2017

WORKSHOP | Basic Jawi in Minutes!
7 October | Level 10, Learning Space
9.30am – 11.00am (conducted in Malay)
12.00pm – 1.30pm (conducted in English)
Facilitators: Undergraduates who are also experts in Jawi, from the Malay Language and Culture Division, National Institute of Education

Learn basic Jawi (modified Arabic script) and familiarise yourself with simple Jawi symbols and their corresponding Roman alphabets. Discover also the various script types used in many Malay manuscripts!

Participants are welcome to choose either one of the workshops based on their preferred language of instruction.

**Parent and child pairs are welcome. Suitable for children 9 years old and above.*

NOVEMBER 2017

TALK | Malay Manuscript Collection and Early Malay Printing in America and Europe
25 November, 2.00pm – 3.00pm | Level 5, Possibility Room
Speaker: Associate Professor Hadijah bte Rahmat
This talk will be conducted in Malay

Professor Hadijah Rahmat will discuss the manuscripts and early Malay books found in the United States (US) and Europe, where there are precious collections on Malay literary culture. These were gathered by Christian missionaries, scholars as well as European and American colonial officers. Learn about Professor Hadijah's experiences in examining manuscripts and early Malay printings held at institutions such as the Library of Congress (US), Leiden University (Netherlands) and the University of Cambridge (United Kingdom).

Hadijah bte Rahmat is the deputy head of the Asian Languages and Cultures Academic Group, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University.

DECEMBER 2017

TALK | Malay Magic and Divination Manuscripts
2 December, 2.00pm – 3.30pm | Level 5, Possibility Room
Speaker: Dr Farouk Yahya
This talk will be conducted in English

Malay manuscripts on magic and divination contain fascinating and diverse images. These include illustrations of spirits, human beings and animals, as well as diagrams and talismanic designs for protection, healing and sorcery.

Join Dr Farouk Yahya as he explores the intriguing images found in these books.

Farouk Yahya is the Leverhulme Research Assistant (Islamic Art and Culture) at the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, United Kingdom.

SCREENING | Layar Klasik: An Evening of Malay Classic Films
2 December | Level 16, The Pod
6.00pm – 7.40pm (Tun Fatimah)
8.10pm – 10.15pm (Hang Jebat)
Both Malay films are rated PG with English subtitles

Tun Fatimah (98 mins, 1962)
Director: Salleh Ghani
Cast: Maria Menado, Noordin Ahmad, Yusoff Latiff, Rose Yatimah, Mat Sentol



Movie still courtesy of Cathay-Keris Films Pte Ltd

Tun Fatimah is a tale about Fatimah, the daughter of the *bendahara* (chief minister) of Melaka in the 16th century. Besotted by her beauty and wishing to take her as his consort, the sultan plots the murder of Fatimah's husband, the *bendahara* and his sons. Despite her contempt for the sultan, Fatimah mobilises a resistance and defends the kingdom against the invading Portuguese.

Hang Jebat (117 mins, 1961)
Director: Hussein Haniff
Cast: Noordin Ahmad, M. Amin, Siput Sarawak, Latiffah Omar



Movie still courtesy of Cathay-Keris Films Pte Ltd

Hang Jebat tells the legendary tale of the close relationship between two warriors – Hang Jebat and Hang Tuah. Hang Tuah is unquestionably loyal to the sultan. Under the influence of court officials, however, the sultan instructs for Hang Tuah to be executed. The *bendahara* (chief minister) defies the order and keeps Hang Tuah alive. Hang Jebat, bent on seeking revenge for his best friend, is unstoppable in wreaking chaos. To defeat him, Hang Tuah is called upon to stop the rebellion.

FEBRUARY 2018

WORKSHOP | I Can Compose and Recite Syair!
3 February, 9.30am – 11.00am | Level 5, Imagination Room
Facilitators: Dr Sa'eda Buang and Dr Kartini Anwar
Participants must understand and be able to speak simple Malay. *This workshop will be conducted in English and Malay*

Syair is a form of traditional Malay poetry that is made up of quatrains. Unlike another poetic form, *pantun*, each line of every stanza in *syair* contributes to the formation of a unified idea or story.

Participants will be introduced to the functions and basic features of *syair*. They will also encounter various melodious forms of *syair* recitations based on the content and intent of the *syair*. Look forward to composing at least two verses of *syair* and reciting them!



Syair Ken Tambuhan, Probably 19th century
Collection of Leiden University Library

For more information on our current and new programmes, please visit www.nlb.gov.sg/exhibitions/

Admission to programmes is free and open to all unless otherwise stated. Seats are limited, on a first-come first-served basis. Please register at **library eKiosks** or www.nlb.gov.sg/golibrary

All programmes will be held at the National Library Building (100 Victoria Street, Singapore 188064).

SHARED STORIES: MALAY MOVIES AND MANUSCRIPTS



Poster and article of *Panji Semerang*
© Jaffar Abdullah, *Majallah Filem* & Malay Film Productions, 1961
© R.M. Yusoff Ahmad bagi pehak Harny, *Bulanan Arena Film*, 1961

18 August 2017 – 25 February 2018
10.00am – 9.00pm
Level 1, Lobby, National Library Building

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Singapore was the hub of Malay film production. Some of these films feature stories similar to those in Malay manuscripts. This display features snippets of seven such films, including *Sultan Mahmud Mangkat di-Julang* and *Dang Anom*, with accompanying film magazines.

Jointly organised by the National Library of Singapore and the Asian Film Archive.

GUIDED TOURS

What kinds of stories were popular in the early Malay world? And how was the manuscript tradition different from printed books? Join our guided tours to learn about these and more.

CURATOR'S TOURS
2017 | 8 Sep, 6 Oct, 3 Nov, 8 Dec
2018 | 5 Jan, 2 Feb

Time: 7.00pm – 8.00pm
Meeting Point: Level 10, Gallery entrance
The tours will be conducted in English
Free admission. Register at www.nlb.gov.sg/golibrary

PUBLIC TOURS
Every Saturday^{*} and Sunday[^] until 25 Feb 2018
^{*} Except 23, 30 Dec 2017, 17 Feb 2018
[^] Except 24, 31 Dec 2017, 18 Feb 2018

Time: 1.00pm – 2.00pm
Meeting Point: Level 10, Gallery entrance
Led by docents
Free admission, first-come first-served basis

SCHOOL TOURS
The National Library provides guided tours for students and teachers. Interested schools can email visitnls@nlb.gov.sg for more details. Book early to secure a tour slot!

For other tour requests, please email visitnls@nlb.gov.sg

TALES OF THE WILY MOUSEDEER



Hikayat Sang Kanchil, edited by Ahmad Murad bin Nasruddin, 1953

In Malay folklore, the wily mousedeer is the king of the forest. Stories of how the mousedeer outsmarts animals bigger than itself have entertained adults and children alike for centuries. The earliest manuscript containing the mousedeer story was written over 350 years ago! Learn more about the mousedeer in this travelling mini-exhibition.

Venue	Date
Geylang East Public Library (Level 2)	11 Aug - 1 Oct 2017
Ang Mo Kio Public Library (Level 1)	2 Oct - 16 Nov 2017
Jurong West Public Library (Level 1)	17 Nov 2017 - 11 Jan 2018
Bedok Public Library (Level 3)	12 Jan - 25 Feb 2018

The National Library would like to thank Inch Chua for allowing her music video, Mousedeer, to be featured in the showcase.