

Alternate history of Singapore wins comics Oscars

25th July, 2017



A Singaporean graphic novelist has won three of the comic industry's equivalent of the Oscars. Sonny Liew picked up three Eisner Awards for his comic book, "The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye". The book is a satirical rewrite of

Singaporean history. Mr Liew scooped the top prize for Best Writer/Artist, Best US Edition of International Material, and Best Publication Design at the awards ceremony. The annual awards show was held at the San Diego Comic-Con on Friday. Liew told reporters that he was surprised his book had done so well as he never expected he would get an international audience for it. He said: "I always wanted people to read the book and get a sense of how rich our history was."

Mr Liew's book outlines the history of Singapore from its struggle for independence from British colonial rule. As well as focusing on Singapore's founding father and first leader, the late Lee Kuan Yew, Liew also highlights the role played by lesser-known people. He said: "I think the so-called official narrative Singapore story is part of our history, but it's not the whole story and I wanted to tell a more inclusive version of our history. I hope that's what people reading the book will get from it." Liew initially feared his book would be unsuccessful after Singapore's National Arts Council withdrew a grant for the book. However, this brought the book a lot of attention and boosted exposure and sales.

Sources: freemalaysiatoday.com / straitstimes.com / themailonline.com

Writing

People should read more graphic novels. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

graphic novel / comic / industry / satirical / top prize / awards / reporters / history / struggle / independence / colonial rule / official / narrative / version / exposure / sales

True / False

- a) The graphic novelist won three awards at an awards ceremony. T / F
- b) The awards show is held every two years. T / F
- c) The writer largely wrote for a global audience. T / F
- d) The writer wants people to get a sense of how wealthy Singapore is. T / F
- e) The book is about Singapore up until independence from Britain. T / F
- f) The book focuses on lesser-known characters in Singapore's history. T / F
- g) Sonny Liew didn't think his book would be successful. T / F
- h) The book got a grant taken away from it, which added to its success. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. novelist | a. summarizes |
| 2. picked up | b. yearly |
| 3. satirical | c. awareness |
| 4. annual | d. took away |
| 5. sense | e. writer |
| 6. outlines | f. fight |
| 7. struggle | g. increased |
| 8. narrative | h. won |
| 9. withdrew | i. account |
| 10. boosted | j. ironic |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What country's struggle for independence impressed you most?
- c) Who was important in the founding of your country?
- d) In what way might graphic novels tell stories better?
- e) How can graphic novels help you learn English?
- f) What is the greatest part of your country's history?
- g) What kind of novel would you like to write?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Sonny Liew?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. the comic industry's equivalent | a. and sales |
| 2. Sonny Liew picked | b. ceremony |
| 3. The book is a satirical rewrite | c. our history was |
| 4. at the awards | d. lot of attention |
| 5. get a sense of how rich | e. up three Eisner Awards |
| 6. Mr Liew's book outlines the | f. independence |
| 7. its struggle for | g. version of our history |
| 8. a more inclusive | h. of the Oscars |
| 9. this brought the book a | i. history of Singapore |
| 10. boosted exposure | j. of Singaporean history |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of graphic novels?
- What's the difference between graphic novels and comic books?
- Do you prefer graphic novels or novels?
- What do you know about Singapore's history?
- What do you know about Comic Con?
- What is your favourite novel?
- How rich is the history of your country?
- What is your favourite comic?

Spelling

- the comic industry's gauniteelv of the Oscars
- a atisliacr rewrite of Singaporean history
- Mr Liew spdocoe the top prize
- at the awards oencymre
- The nuanla awards show
- get an international ieednauc for it
- Mr Liew's book iesulotn the history of Singapore
- lggeurst for independence
- the so-called official raaervnti
- a more veiunlsci version of our history
- Liew yinliatil feared his book would be unsuccessful
- boosted oerupsx and sales

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. j	4. b	5. c
6. a	7. f	8. i	9. d	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Historical

You think historical fiction is the best genre. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their genres aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): crime, science fiction or fantasy.

Role B – Crime

You think crime is the best genre. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their genres aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): historical fiction, science fiction or fantasy.

Role C – Science Fiction

You think science fiction is the best genre. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their genres aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): crime, historical fiction or fantasy.

Role D – Fantasy

You think fantasy is the best genre. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their genres aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): crime, science fiction or historical fiction.

Speaking – Novel genres

Rank these with your partner. Put the best novel genres at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| • fantasy | • historical |
| • science fiction | • romantic |
| • espionage | • crime |
| • urban fiction | • action |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.