

University of Iowa News Release

Oct. 4, 2006

IWP Presents Oct. 20 Panel About National Identity In Writing

University of Iowa International Writing Program will present "Writing With (and Against) National Identity," a free panel discussion at noon Friday, Oct. 20, in Meeting Room A of the Iowa City Public Library.

Panel participants will be Laksmi Pamuntjak from Indonesia, Fadhil Thamir from Iraq and Mimi Khalvati from England, by way of Iran.

A poet, editor and translator, Pamuntjak writes columns and articles on politics, film, food, classical music and literature for Tempo Magazine and other publications. She translated and edited "Goenawan Mohamad: Selected Poems," published "Jakarta Good Food Guide" and co-founded Aksara, a bilingual bookstore in Jakarta. Her first collection of poetry, "Ellipsis," appeared on the Herald UK 2005 Books of the Year list. A treatise on violence and "The Iliad" entitled "War, Heaven, and Two Women" came out in 2006, along with her first collection of short stories, "The Diary of R.S.: Musings on Art." She is at the UI through the IWP Writers' Support Fund.

Thamir recently served as the chairman of the Iraqi Writers Union. He writes regularly for Arabic-language newspapers and magazines, including the Baghdad Observer, and translates extensively from English-language press. In the 1960s he led a student movement opposed to the Baath Party, then suffered several arrests between 1979 and 1993 on political grounds. He left Iraq in 1994 but returned in 2003 to participate in rebuilding the country's cultural infrastructure. His most recent book is "The Repressed and Unspoken in Arabic Narration" (2005). He participates in the IWP through the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Khalvati was born in Tehran, grew up on the Isle of Wight and was educated in Switzerland and London. Her poetry collections include "Mirrorwork" (1995), which received an Arts Council Writers' Award, "Selected Poems" (2000) and "The Chine" (2002). She is also the author of a children's book, "I Know a Place," published in 1985. She participates in the IWP as the recipient of the William B. Quarton International Writing Program Scholarship.

They are among the 29 writers, representing 22 countries, in residence this fall at the IWP. Biographies of all the writers are accessible on the IWP website, www.uiowa.edu/~iwp.

For UI arts information and calendar updates, visit <http://www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa>. To receive UI arts news by e-mail, go to <http://list.uiowa.edu/archives/acr-news.html>, click the link "Join or leave the list (or change settings)" and follow the instructions.

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