

Bookfest in KL with indie spirit

THE Kuala Lumpur Alternative Bookfest 2023 (KLAB), which opened on Thursday, has turned Central Market in Kuala Lumpur into a wonderland for book lovers.

This is the 14th edition of KLAB, which has championed local independent publishers, and also supported mini art events and film scene/archival programmes through the years.

The festival, which ends tomorrow, has shifted venues in the heart of KL, including early stops at Central Market Annexe and Dataran Underground. The Central Market venue is where it has captured its biggest – and youngest – audience as seen by the thousands who made their way to this downtown literary event last year.

KLAB 2023 is presenting 36 vendors, with stalls taking up the ground floor of Central Market, and also an art lane space.

The vendors – indie publishers to hip bookshops – include Buku FIXI, Inisiatif Buku Darul Ehsan (IBDE), Bundusan Books, Tokosue, Riwayat Bookshop, Ilham Books, Katapilar, Maple Comics, Gerak Budaya, Hikayat Fandom, Merpati Jingga, Karangkraf, Pelita Mihin, Dubook, Rabak-lit x Lejen, Kedai Dr Maszlee, Kedai Buku Biblio



Independent bookshop Toko Sue makes a return to this year's KL Alternative BookFest at Central Market in Kuala Lumpur. — YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

And Biblio Press, Mangosteen Books, Legasi Oakheart and others.

With the focus mainly on contemporary Bahasa Malaysia language books, visitors can expect a diverse range of titles, from fiction to graphic novels,

biographies and journals. The local poetry and fanzine scene will also be well-represented. There will also be vendors offering English books and a curated section of vintage and rare books on "Malaysiana".

Online film site Siar is also



Bundusan Books, a pop-up bookshop specialising in publications from or of Borneo, indigenous and cultural topics, is also a part of this year's festival. — Bundusan Books

presenting a list of movies at the festival in its "Sila Panggung" series, with directors and filmmakers set to appear for post-movie discussions.

Today's programme (Feb 25) sees the movies *Tuah* (2pm), directed by Anwardi Jamal in 1988, and *Femina* (5pm) entertaining film buffs, while Sunday's programme rolls out *Rozana Cinta 97*, directed by

Nasir Jani, at 2pm. The 1993 comedy drama *Imigran* at 5pm rounds up the film line-up.

New book releases, talks and workshops with authors and industry players will be held throughout the (free admission) festival's duration.

Organised by Jejak Tarbiah, The Patriots Asia, and indie publisher Buku Fixi, the fair is open from 10am to 8pm daily.