

Local books on TV

Nine Singaporean children's books have been turned into cartoons



PHOTO: PEACH BLOSSOM MEDIA

COMING ALIVE: Ben's Friends From The Rainforest is one local title which is part of 2D-animation series Tales Alive.

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COMING to a TV set near you - Singapore children's books.

Local production house Peach Blossom Media has adapted nine original kids' stories by Singapore authors into a 2D-animation series titled Tales Alive.

The cartoon series consists of nine three-minute shorts and it will be telecast on MediaCorp TV12's Kids Central channel at the end of this year.

As for viewers in other parts of the world, they may get a taste of this Singaporean literary and animation talent showcase too.

Tales Alive is being shown at international TV trade fair Mipcom which is being held in Cannes, France, this week.

Global buyers have expressed interest in purchasing Tales Alive, said Peach Blossom vice-president Karen Tang. However, speaking to Life! on Wednesday from Cannes, she declined to reveal more as negotiations are still under way.

Close to 100 shows are up for sale from 24 Singapore companies taking part in the fair this year.

Ms Tang said the idea of a print-to-screen adaptation took root early this year when the Media Development Authority (MDA) approached Peach Blossom to make an animated series adapting Asian folk stories.

During her research, she came across books published under the First-Time Writers And Illustrators Publishing Initiative.

The MDA grant, launched two

years ago, offers up to \$8,000 to help local authors publish their works.

Ms Tang said: "Many Singaporeans do not know we have a pool of people who are writing kids' stories and getting them published. I thought, why don't we start with Singapore first?"

MDA chief executive officer Christopher Chia said Tales Alive is an example of how made-by-Singapore content can be adapted across different platforms.

He added: "Such multi-purpos-

'It gives a second life to the stories that we have written'

Author Adeline Foo, whose story is being turned into an animation

ing of content extends the shelf-life of original properties and opens up new revenue opportunities for industry players.

While most scenes were taken from existing pictures in the books, extra frames were sometimes added by the books' illustrators for the TV adaptation.

The project took six months to complete. It was only last week that the final cut was ready, just in time for Mipcom.

For author Adeline Foo, 36, who wrote one of the stories, Ben's Friends From The Rainforest, the initiative is a shot in the arm for local writers. "It gives a second life to the stories that we have written," she said.

Her book was illustrated by

Miel Prudencio Rosales Jr, 43, a senior executive artist with The Straits Times.

However, the mother of three, who is also the head of corporate affairs for the National Community Leadership Institute, has now had to field questions from eldest son Benjamin, seven, on whom she based her character Ben.

Recounting a trip to the production studio, she said: "Benjamin saw the dubbing artist voicing his cartoon persona. He asked me, 'Why is someone else doing my voice? I'm a kid, he's an adult.'"

Mrs Foo may have more explaining to do. If Tales Alive does well at Mipcom, Peach Blossom may consider adapting two other stories by her, Secret Hoarder and Lost In The Secret Garden.

The writer's two other children - Tessa, four, and Jeremy, two - are the stars of the tales, and she said with a laugh: "That would only be fair."

Besides Ben's Friends, Tales Alive also consists of:

- > The Falling Raindrop by Neil Johnson and Joel Chin
- > The Little Nightingale Who Can't Sing by Angie Featherstone and Stephanie Wong
- > What I Love Most by Agnes Lew
- > That Little Girl by Julie Ee
- > Emily The Duckling Says "Humph!" by Ka Lim
- > The Elephant And The Tree by Jin Pym
- > One Fine Day by Michelle Tham
- > The Lost Astro-Cadets Oolie & Sputnik by Boon Lai Thyre and Cheryl Chiu

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