*22 February 2024*

*Prague*

**Book World Prague 2024 has been inspired by Franz Kafka and focuses on his legacy and literature of German-speaking countries. The festival will yet again feature Literature as the Voice of Freedom and inspire little readers.**

**The programme of the 29th International Book Fair and Literary Festival Book World Prague reflects the centenary of the death of Franz Kafka. Which is why this year’s guest of honour is the traditional festival project of Das Buch entitled for the 2024 edition as *Das Buch – German-Language Literature*. It will present authors and speakers from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The programme commemorating Kafka’s anniversary will feature his work and the sources of inspiration it provided. The legacy of the Prague-based writer who wrote in German is also reflected in the visuals by the graphic studio of Pavel Fuksa, as well as in the motto of this year’s edition, which is Kafka’s quote: *“A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us”*. The name of Franz Kafka, as well as the names of other important Czech writers such as Jaroslav Seifert and Karel Čapek, were also used to rename the festival halls. Book World Prague will be held from 23rd to 26th May at the Prague Exhibition Grounds. Apart from the literature of German-speaking countries, the festival will continue with its programme supporting young readers as well as the well-established section entitled Literature as the Voice of Freedom which provides space for those who cannot speak freely.**

The guest of honour of the 29th edition was chosen based on the anniversary of Franz Kafka. It is the literary project of Das Buch which has been part of Book World Prague for several years. In 2024 it will be entitled **Das Buch – German-Language Literature**. *“German literature is traditionally strongly represented in our festival thanks to the jointly produced presentation of Das Buch. Kafka’s anniversary in 2024 inspired us to highlight this long-term cooperation by making the project this year’s guest of honour. Kafka creates an ideal link between German literature and Prague,”* said Radovan Auer, Director of Book World Prague. The guest of honour programme will feature authors and speakers from all three German-speaking countries, i.e. Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The programme, prepared jointly by the Goethe-Institut of the Czech Republic, the Austrian Cultural Forum in Prague and the Embassy of the Swiss Confederation, will present the wealth of contemporary German-language literature across genres, such as fiction, comics and children’s literature but also philosophical and journalistic texts. It will focus on achievements and tendencies reflecting the current state of society as well as the specific ties of the Czech Republic to its neighbouring countries.

Not only the guest of honour, but this year’s entire programme was influenced by an important literary anniversary: 3rd June will mark **one hundred years since the death of Franz Kafka**, German-speaking writer who lived in Prague. The motto of the 29th edition, which will be the philosophical line of the festival reflecting the purpose of literature and how it changes our inner life, is Kafka’s quote: *“A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us”*. The programme will offer discussions about Kafka’s work and inspiration it provided and the festival opening will feature a concert for the public performed by Kafka Band, a band that sets Kafka’s texts to music. The Kafka anniversary is also accentuated by the visuals prepared by our key graphic artist Pavel Fuksa. An observant viewer will recognize the out-of-focus beetle from Kafka’s short story – *The Metamorphosis (Die Verwandlung)* in his design.

Moreover, one of the **programme halls** was also named by Franz Kafka. The organizers of Book World Prague decided to name the halls after important Czech authors in order to pay tribute to these authors and at the same time draw attention to the diversity of Czech literature. The message is addressed to both domestic visitors and foreign professionals in the field. *“We want to remind the visitors that we have a Nobel Prize winner – Jaroslav Seifert and a president who was a writer – Václav Havel. The hall where science fiction and fantasy are presented is named after Karel Čapek who was the first to use the word robot. We also brazenly claim authors about whom there has been an endless dispute as to how much they are part of Czech literature, i.e. Kafka and Kundera. We were very pleased to see that the relatives who were contacted agreed to us using the authors’ names without any problems and were delighted,”* added Radovan Auer.

The accompanying programme will also include the Literature as the Voice of Freedom section, a public forum for authors fighting for freedom. The related **Jiří Theiner Award** supporting the fight against censorship and pursuit of democracy will be newly presented during the opening ceremony of the fair. The accompanying programme will also focus on **live literature**: Prague poet Petr Borkovec will present a project entitled *The Poet and The City (Básník a Město)*; a programme prepared in collaboration with the National Theatre will introduce dramatization of literary works, whether by classical or contemporary authors and there will also be a slam poetry performance featuring German authors. Book World Prague also continues its long-term support of young readers – inspiration for the youngest generation will be once again provided in the **Growing With a Book** pavilion which will be renamed after the writer Pavel Šrut. The 2024 edition of the festival will also feature the **Central and East European Book Market** project, through which Book World Prague created a new platform for international trade in book rights in Central and Eastern Europe.

The 29th edition of Book World Prague will offer publishers’ presentations and programme to all literature fans from **23rd to 26th May at the Prague Exhibition Grounds** and Křižík Pavilions. Tickets are available at the [Book World Prague website](https://eshop.svetknihy.cz/).

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