*21 March 2024*

*Prague*

**The guest of honour of Book World Prague 2024 – Das Buch – will present literature of German-speaking countries. Visitors can look forward to Judith Hermann, Nicholas Mahler or Peter Stamm, but also to Franz Kafka’s anniversary celebrations and yodelling classes. Moreover, Frankfurt Book Fair returns to Prague after two years as well.**

**For many years, the Das Buch literary programme has been giving the visitors of the International Book Fair and Literary Festival Book World Prague a peek into modern literature of German-speaking countries. In 2024 this presentation was chosen as the guest of honour under the title of “Das Buch – German-Language Literature”. The programme is prepared by the Goethe-Institut of the Czech Republic, the Austrian Cultural Forum in Prague and the Embassy of the Swiss Confederation in the Czech Republic. Das Buch presents various genres of modern German, Austrian and Swiss literature – from fiction and children’s literature to philosophy and comic books, slam poetry or zine. The festival will showcase works, often with new Czech translations, by many prominent authors such as Michael Stavaric, multiple winner of the Austrian State Prize for Children’s and Young Adult Literature, Tonio Schachinger, winner of the German Book Prize 2023, or Peter Stamm, one of the most renown Swiss writers who is a returning guest to Book World Prague. Germany will be represented by bestselling author Judith Hermann and also by Kafka’s most important biographer Reiner Stach. The very legacy of Franz Kafka, as a link between the German language and Prague, is strongly reflected in the programme of the 29th edition, which coincided with the centenary of Kafka’s death. Furthermore, the motto of Book World Prague is Kafka’s quote: “A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within.” Das Buch covers topics related to philosophy, various forms of inclusion and children’s literature. The rich literary programme and book selection will attract literature lovers from 23rd to 26th May at Prague Exhibition Grounds.**

The guest of honour of the 29th edition, Das Buch – German-Language Literature, is the result of long-term cooperation between Book World Prague and Das Buch. Thanks to this tradition, German-language literature has always been strongly represented at the fair. However, as a guest of honour German literature will receive even more attention which is also reinforced by the participation of Frankfurt Book Fair. The impulse for choosing to connect Prague and the German-speaking cultural area was the centenary of Franz Kafka’s death, which falls on 3rd June. At Book World Prague, authors from Germany, Austria and Switzerland will read excerpts from their latest books and discuss with the audience and translators will talk about selected literary works and how they work with texts. Most programmes will be in German and will be simultaneously interpreted. Das Buch 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. The programme will explore a philosophical view of the contemporary world or the use of inclusive language in translation, just to name a few. However, visitors can also attend workshops and mini-courses to learn how to make a zine, i.e. self-made printed material, create their first comic book or try yodelling.

*“Our common goal is to present the most current tendencies in German-language literature which of course also reflect social events in German-speaking countries. Specifically, we touch on topics such as sustainable book production - the so-called slow publishing, a biographical comic book dealing with, for example, the topic of autism, or the conditions under which women write today. In order to make the exchange of opinions and know-how as beneficial as possible, we have invited a number of interesting guests who cover similar topics in the Czech Republic,”* explained the dramaturgical intention behind the guest of honour Lorenza Faessler, Deputy Head of Mission at the Swiss Embassy in Prague.

However, this year’s edition of Book World Prague is above all a unique opportunity to get to know contemporary German-language literature in its entirety, headed by the big names of German-language fiction. The guests include Tonio Schachinger, winner of the German Book Prize 2023. The son of an Austrian diplomat with Latin American roots after his mother received the distinguished award for his novel *Echtzeitalter*, in which he drew on his experience from an elite Viennese grammar school. Another very personal book is *Wir hätten uns alles gesagt [We Would Have Told Each Other Everything]* by German writer Judith Hermann. This poetic bestseller was created as part of a series of famous lectures on creation organized by the University of Frankfurt. The path to literature of one of the most important contemporary Swiss authors, Peter Stamm, a returning guest to Book World Prague who is well known to Czech readers and festival visitors, has not been straightforward. He returns to present the Czech translation of his only children’s book entitled *Warum wir vor der Stadt wohnen [Why We Live Outside Town, Czech translation: Proč bydlíme za městem]*. Stamm has received several prestigious awards for his work (novels, short stories, radio and theatre plays) including the Swiss Book Prize. A great connoisseur of Franz Kafka’s work, German literary scholar and writer Reiner Stach, will help to provide more insight into Kafka’s work and life. In addition to the award-winning three-volume biography of Kafka, which has also reached Czech readers, he designed the world’s most visited Kafka website, franzkafka.de. He is currently preparing a TV series about the world-famous writer from Prague.

Another work related to Kafka’s anniversary that will be presented at Book World Prague is a comic biography *Komplett Kafka [Completely Kafka, in Czech: Kafka v kostce]* by Austrian cartoonist and illustrator Nicolas Mahler who is known to Czech readers also due to his cooperation with Jaroslav Rudiš.

*“Our intention is not to present literary works from our countries in a one-sided way, but rather to promote genuine dialogue and lively debate in the host country. It is meetings, conversations and mutual confrontations that can inspire new creative impulses, thereby strengthening mutual understanding and peaceful, democratic coexistence," commented Denise Quistorp, Director of the Austrian Cultural Forum in Prague, on the preparations of the Das Buch programme, adding, “This edition of Book World Prague will also be visited by a number of foreign publishers who are interested in publishing new books by Czech authors in German translation.*”

A biographical road trip entitled *Trip Mit Tropf [A Trip with a Drip, in Czech: Kudy kam s kapačkou]* by Josephine Mark will expand the awareness of German comic works. Close to the fine arts is another of our guests, Maria Zimmermann. The textile artist also used literature to process her autism diagnosis in her debut book entitled *Anders nicht falsch [Different, not Wrong]*. Philosophy lovers will be delighted by *Revolution für das Leben* *[Revolution for Life]* by Eva von Redecker, one of Germany’s most interesting young philosophers, as well as the thought-provoking ideas in the book *Was ist ein lebenswertes Leben* *[What Kind of Life Is Worth Living]* by her compatriot Barbara Schmitz. Traditional slam poetry connects the domestic and foreign scenes: the festival will present writer and playwright Emil Kaschka, from the Flemish minority in Tyrol, who is the reigning champion of Austrian slam poetry, and German cabaret artist Teresa Reichl, who, among other things, is also interested in feminism in literature. For German author Anke Stelling, writing is primarily about taking on social responsibility. Her novel *Schäfchen im Trockenen [Higher Ground]* by which she addresses her daughter won the Leipzig Book Prize. Another author heading to Book World Prague is Barbara Rieger, creative writing teacher from Vienna, whose novel *Escalationsstufen* published this year deals with the topic of domestic violence. The wide range of Czech translations of German-language works will be further expanded by two new books: one by Fatma Aydemir, The Guardian columnist who impressed critics as well as the public with her German-Turkish generational novel *Dschinns,* and another one by Michael Stavaric, multiple winner of the Austrian State Prize for Children’s and Young Adult Literature originally from Brno. His inquisitive approach to the world is reflected in a popular science publication for children entitled *Faszination Krake [Amazing Octopus]*. Daniel Beskos, German publisher, translator, host and organizer of cultural events, together with Annette Beger, Swiss founder of the independent publishing house of Kommode Verlag, will offer visitors a glimpse behind the scenes of literary operations during their visit to the fair.

In a way, Franz Kafka is also a “guest” of Book World Prague 2024. The organizers derived the overarching theme of this year’s edition from the centenary of the death of this world-renowned author from Prague who wrote in German. This essential event of the literary calendar will be commemorated by a series of activities dedicated to the life and work of Franz Kafka, from the opening concert for the public by Kafka Band to lectures on Kafka’s work and related inspirations. The launch of a new video game *Playing Kafka* also promises an original experience. The video game, developed by the Goethe-Institut together with an independent game studio Charles Games, brings Kafka’s mysterious literary world to life in virtual space. The story is based on his novel *The Trial* and reflects the author’s work in relation to today’s world. There will also be a theatre performance by Das Thema, Czech-German cabaret, entitled *Kafka Has Left the Building*.  Last but not least, Kafka’s legacy is evident in the motto of the 29th edition which is Kafka’s quote: “A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us”. The centenary is also reflected in the visuals by the graphic studio of Pavel Fuksa.

*“Franz Kafka is by no means just a classic. His social criticism and depictions of basic human experience are still very relevant. 2024 marks the 100th anniversary of Kafka’s death. We see this anniversary as an opportunity to reflect on Kafka’s work. You can expect different formats from us, the aim of which is to show new ways of approaching this author and his work,”* comments Sonja Griegoschewski, Director of the Goethe-Institut.

A novelty of this year’s edition is the naming of the programme halls in honour of important Czech authors, including Franz Kafka. The accompanying program will offer a public forum for authors fighting for freedom in the form of the Literature as the Voice of Freedom section and the related Jiří Theiner Award as well as programme focused on living literature and the ongoing support of children’s reading. Inspiration for children and young people will be once again provided in the Growing With a Book pavilion which will be renamed after writer Pavel Šrut. Book World Prague is also further developing the building of an international platform for representatives of the book industry with an interest in the Central and Eastern European region under the Central and East European Book Market brand.

The publishers’ presentations and the programme of the 29th edition will enhance the experience of visitors of Book World Prague from 23rd to 26th May at Prague Exhibition Grounds and a newly located Hall A on Bruselská cesta and in the Křižík Pavilions. Tickets are available at the [Book World Prague website](https://eshop.svetknihy.cz/).

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