*Press release*

*2 May 2024, Prague*

**Book World Prague 2024 will welcome guests from 40 countries and regions**

**Czech readers can look forward to Irish novelist John Boyne, exiled Russian author Lyudmila Ulitskaya, French comic book writer Alexis Nolent and Nordic crime fiction star Alex Ahndoril as well as the guest of honour, Das Buch: German-Language Literature**

**The International Book Fair and Literary Festival Book World Prague 2024 will feature 801 performers, a third more than the previous year, providing an insight into contemporary literature of 40 countries and regions. The programme of the festival, which will take place from 23 to 26 May at the Prague Exhibition Grounds, will include a wide range of authors and styles. Children’s and YA literature will be represented by Irish novelist John Boyne whose book *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* has become a contemporary classic. Book World Prague will also feature renowned Russian exiled author and human rights activist Lyudmila Ulitskaya. The Nordic crime fiction stars include French author Alexis Nolent aka Matz, who is well-renowned in the world of comics, and Lars Kepler aka Alex Ahndoril, which are the pen names of authors and married couple Alexandra and Alexander Ahndoril. We also cannot forget to mention the award-winning Czech writers Radka Denemarková, Bianca Bellová, poet Petr Borkovec, sci-fi writer Ondřej Neff and the winner of this year’s Magnesia Litera Award Alena Machoninová. And last but certainly not least the stars of German-language literature: Bernhard Schlink, Peter Stamm or Tanya Stewner, since the guest of honour of the 29th edition is the traditional festival project of Das Buch entitled for the 2024 edition *Das Buch – German-Language Literature*. The motto of this edition of Book World Prague is a quote by Franz Kafka: “A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within” and the fair commemorates the centenary of the death of this world-renowned author through a number of events. The visitors can also look forward to the well-established section Literature as the Voice of Freedom, which provides space for those who cannot speak freely, and programme to promote children’s reading.**

**Book World Prague in Figures**

Book World Prague 2024 offers even more than the previous editions. *“The number of exhibitors, programmes and performers has increased by ten to fifteen percent – the visitors can look forward to 801 performers participating in 482 programmes, and 415 exhibitors. Compared to last year’s thirty countries and regions, this year exactly forty will be presented at Book World Prague,”* commented Radovan Auer, Festival Director, adding, *“This can clearly be attributed to the fact that we managed to coordinate the guest of honour of German-language literature with the preparation of Czech guesting in Frankfurt. The Czech book market is now in the forefront of interest and we have to try to make the most of it.”* Germany, Switzerland and Austria are among the honoured guests, as this year’s guest of honour is the literary programme Das Buch: German-Language Literature. The attention paid to the wealth of German literature across genres and themes is further enhanced by the participation of the Frankfurt Book Fair, headed by the President of this prestigious event, Juergen Boos.

The German-speaking area is also linked to Prague by the commemoration of the centenary of the death of writer Franz Kafka. The programme will offer discussions on Kafka’s work and inspiration it provided. The opening concert for the public by Kafka Band on 23 May promises an extraordinary musical experience.

**The Main Stars of the 29th Edition**

The programme will feature star names from all over the world. One of the guests is Irish novelist **John Boyne**, who rightfully ranks among the most successful writers of his generation. His most famous book, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas,* has become a contemporary classic. The insight into the atrocities of the concentration camp through the eyes of the commandant’s young son has been adapted for film, theatre, opera and ballet. Boyne wrote the total of twenty novels for adults and young readers; his latest prose collection *The Elements* will be published in Czech in the fall. At Book World Prague 2024 on 23 May, John Boyne will take part in a debate with illustrator Marto Kelbl on LGBTQ+, a publication that is also suitable for children. One of the most acclaimed contemporary Russian writers **Lyudmila Ulitskaya** will come to Book World Prague from her German exile. The writer, who is also known for her activism and social commentary, has been living in Berlin since 2021. Ulitskaya is a master storyteller, appreciated for her deep insight into human nature and morality, which enables her to paint a sharp picture of Russian society. Her novels *Medea and Her Children, The Funeral Party* and *Daniel Stein, Interpreter* have received widespread recognition and critical acclaim. She will reveal her unique perspective on literature, life and the state of humanity to the visitors of Book World Prague during the meeting on 25 May. The next day, she will meet with Russian-writing author of Armenian origin **Narine Abgaryan** to debate about culture on the fringes; i.e. about storytelling, cultural identity and the role of literature in shaping and perhaps even saving society. Narine Abgaryan’s prose is associated with the simple, poetic, but also tragic world of Armenia, and her novel *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* was particularly successful among Czech readers. Another guest of this edition, **Alexis Nolent**, spent his childhood in Martinique and his teens in Paris. He pursues two separate careers: during the day he writes scripts for video games under his real name and he also published a novel and at night he writes comic books under his pen name Matz. His best-known comic book titles include *The Killer* series which was twice nominated for the Eisner Award in San Diego in the category of the Best U.S. Edition of International Material. The Czech translations will be completed this year with the publication of the final volumes. Pen names are also used by the married couple Alexandra Coelho Ahndoril and Alexander Ahndoril. In their native Sweden, they were named the best-selling authors of the decade for their series of best-selling crime novels starring Commissioner Joona Linna, which they wrote together under the pen name Lars Kepler. However, at Book World Prague they will feature under another pen name – **Alex Ahndoril**. On Saturday, 25 May, they will tell readers what led them to embark on another crime-solving adventure in a trilogy of classic detective stories. Czech thriller fans can look forward to the second novel of the *Nyckelserien* series entitled *Jag blundar och ber*.

**German, Swiss and Austrian Works**

Authors from German-speaking countries are strongly represented at the 29th edition thanks to the guest of honour, Das Buch. Austrian novelist **Tonio Schachinger** has won awards in two of those states, one of the awards being the German Book Prize for his novel Echtzeitalter.

Austrian cartoonist and illustrator **Nicolas Mahler** is known to Czech readers thanks to comic adaptations of famous literary works or as co-creator of the comic Nachtgestalten he published together with **Jaroslav Rudiš**. “A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within” – Kafka’s quote, which is the motto of this year’s edition, will be reflected on by one of the greatest contemporary Swiss writers, **Peter Stamm**. Graphic designer **Nando von Arb** will come to Prague from Zurich. The contemporary literature of our closest western neighbour will be introduced by German lawyer and famous novelist **Bernhard Schlink**. His novel *The Reader* has become a literary phenomenon and has been adapted to an Oscar-winning film with Kate Winslet. A number of his novels have reached Czech readers, most recently the novel *Die Enkelin*, set in the backdrop of a divided and reunified Germany. Bernhard Schlink will talk about his work on 25 May at Book World Prague. Comic book author **Josephine Mark** bases her work for young readers on a combination of different emotions. Another author writing for children is German writer **Tanya Stewner** who has captivated her readers with her fantasy series *Alea Aquarius*. In addition to the Das Buch stand, German-language book production will also be presented in an exhibition called **German Stories**, thanks to the participation of the Frankfurt Book Fair.

**What Not to Miss**

The Book World Prague programme will also feature the powerful story of North Korean refugee **Jihyun Park**. Memories of life in the DPRK and attempts to escape from the heavily guarded totalitarian country will be shared during a debate, which will also include South Korean writer **Seh-lynn Chai**. She wrote the story of a woman who currently works as a politician and human rights activist in the book *My Life in North Korea*. The serious social topic of gender and identity will be elaborated on during a debate by the French writer **Pauline Delabroy-Allard**, known for her novel *Ça raconte Sarah* and her feminist exploration of LGBTQ+ rights. Close relationship with the Czech Republic and the Czechs is reflected in the books of an important representative of the Polish school of literary reportage **Mariusz Szczygieł**. He is returning to Book World Prague to present his latest title *Fakty muszą zatańczyć*, which is an homage to the genre of literary reportage. The programme of the 29th edition cannot be missing essential names and works of contemporary Czech literature. Four-time Magnesia Litera Award winner **Radka Denemarková** will talk about her latest novel *Čokoládová krev*, which focuses on women’s freedom, the ruthless power of money and the invisibility of poverty. **Bianca Bellová** skilfully linked ordinary and at the same time remarkable human fates in her short story collection *Transfer*, **Alexei Sevruk**, in turn, wrote about the impact of the great history of Eastern Europe through the memories of his grandmother in his novel *Evropanka*. Russian Studies expert **Alena Machoninová** captivated the Magnesia Litera Award jury for 2023 with her auto-fictional prose *Hella*, in which she explores the fate of Czech Jewess Helena Frischer. **Kateřina Bursíková Jacques** and **Kateřina Procházková** will present the book *Dalajlama a Havel* dedicated to two personalities whose friendship also reflects the post-revolutionary development of Czech-Tibetan relations. In addition, visitors to the festival will be able to meet in person the “faces” of Czech TV programmes and the “voices” of Czech Radio.

**Literature as the Voice of Freedom**

*“The Literature as the Voice of Freedom section will once again highlight authors fighting for freedom. The related Jiří Theiner Award, intended for authors who promote the ideal of freedom by their work or life, will be newly awarded during the opening ceremony of Book World Prague and this year it will go to* ***Elif Şafak****,”* explains Guillaume Basset, Dramaturg of the festival. The Turkish writer, storyteller and outspoken advocate of human rights and freedom of speech is not afraid to pursue controversial topics of identity, culture, politics or gender in her engaging texts.

The accompanying program will also feature live literature, including slam poetry. A novelty of this year’s edition is the naming of the programme stages in honour of important Czech authors, including Franz Kafka. Pavel Šrut Stage will offer an inspiring book production for children and YA since Book World Prague in cooperation with the Growing Up with a Book campaign continues to promote children’s reading. As part of the programme the development of the **Central and East European Book Market**, the new international platform for representatives from the book industry interested in the Central and Eastern European region, continues as well. Around 90 professionals will take part in the project this year.

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

**Book World Prague 2024 in Figures**

**Fair:**

■ Number of exhibitors: 415

■ Number of booths: 211

■ Area: 3053 m2

**Literary festival:**

■ Number of participants: 801

■ Number of programmes: 482

■ Number of exhibitions: 11

**Countries and regions: 40**

**Argentina – Armenia – Belgium – Belarus – Bulgaria – Burundi – Czech Republic – Denmark – Finland – France – Chile – Ireland – Italy – Colombia –** Democratic People’s Republic of Korea – Republic of Korea – **Cuba – Hungary – Mexico – Germany – Netherlands – Norway – Peru – Poland – Portugal – Austria – Romania – Russia – Greece – Slovakia – Slovenia – Serbia – Spain – Sweden – Switzerland – Taiwan – Turkey – Ukraine – USA – Great Britain**

**Organizer:** Svět knihy, s.r.o., společnost Svazu českých knihkupců a nakladatelů

**Financial support:** Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, Prague City Hall, Prague 7 City District, PPF Foundation, Pro Helvetia, Deutsch-Tschechischer Zukunftsfonds

**Partners:** Das Buch, Czech Literary CentreČ, Moravian Library, National Gallery, National Library, Scandinavian House; Auroton Computer, Magnesia

**Main media partner:** Czech Television

**Media partners:** Czech Radio, Deník.cz, Echo, Echo 24, Knižní novinky, Host, A2, Deník N, Forum 24, Vltava Labe Media, Radio1

**Contact for media:**

Pavla Umlaufová, pavla.umlaufova@piaristi.cz , +420 723 901 326

Jana Chalupová, jana.chalupova@svetknihy.cz, +420 603 439 943

**More information**

Web: <https://www.svetknihy.cz/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/svetknihypraha>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/svetknihy/>