

4 April 2023

Prague

## **Brežná, Aaronovitch, Kutscher, Fulghum but also Sorokin and Zhadan – the variety of guests at Book World Prague 2023 knows no bounds**

The International Book Fair and Literary Festival Book World Prague will present works and personalities from various countries and regions to local readers in 2023 as well. This year the main focus is not a single guest of honour. The concept of the 28th edition entitled “Authors Without Borders” emphasizes all authors transgressing notional borders. From 11 to 14 May 2023, Book World Prague will welcome, among others, the representatives of British fantasy, Ben Aaronovitch and Rob Wilkins, Swiss writer and publicist with Slovak roots Irena Brežná, popular Polish author of historical fiction Elżbieta Cherezińska and American philosopher of everyday life Robert Fulghum. The Das Buch programme will present German-writing authors such as a very talented prose writer Lucy Fricke, Czech native Jan Faktor or crime writers Volker Kutscher and Joachim B. Schmidt. The visitors will also be able to meet Russian literary provocateur Vladimir Sorokin and Ukrainian literary star Serhiy Zhadan, who will also perform a concert with his band. Book World Prague 2023 continues to support Ukraine together with the PPF Foundation. The programme of the festival would not be complete without Czech names and it will, among other things, join the celebrations of 100 years of broadcasting of Czech Radio and 70 years of broadcasting of Czech Television. The public forum of Literature as the Voice of Freedom will help authors to be heard even outside the borders of their countries. The Jiří Theiner Award awarded within this programme section will go to Iranian women and men fighting against oppression. Book World Prague 2023, which can thanks to the variety of topics appeal to young readers as well as literary experts, will welcome visitors at the Prague Exhibition Grounds, both in the newly reconstructed Křížík Pavilions and in tents in the outdoor premises. This event is the largest celebration of books and literature in the country, with fifty thousand readers coming to enjoy the relaxed festival atmosphere over four days.

The 28th edition of Book World Prague will welcome big names of international literature. British author and screenwriter **Ben Aaronovitch**, known for the TV and book series of *Doctor Who* as well as an urban fantasy series with police constable Peter Grant, has many fans in the Czech Republic. Another guest of the festival is the Swiss writer of Slovak origin **Irena Brežná**. This author, publicist, war reporter and supporter of dissidents will present her award-winning novel *Thankless Foreigner* in Prague, which describes her emigration experience with literary finesse and a dose of humour.

Writers from the German-speaking world are traditionally well represented at the festival thanks to the **Das Buch** programme. This year, Book World Prague will present for example the work of **Jan Faktor**, Czech native living in Germany since 1970s, whose autobiographical work *Jiříkovy starosti o minulost* was published in Czech (original edition: *Georgs Sorgen um die Vergangenheit oder im Reich des heiligen Hodensack-Bimbams von Prag*). Following a successful literary “road movie” *Töchter*

(Czech edition: Dcery, 2020), the German author **Lucy Fricke** will present her newest novel *Die Diplomatin* (Czech edition: Diplomátka, 2023). Fans of crime fiction will be pleased to meet German writer **Volker Kutscher**, author of the bestselling crime series *Babylon Berlin*, as well as Swiss writer **Joachim B. Schmidt**, who often sets his books in the harsh landscape of Iceland, where he lives. His newest novel *Kalmann* named after the main character, a self-proclaimed sheriff, is no exception. Another writer loved by Czech readers is **Robert Fulghum**. This American literary philosopher of everyday life is coming to Book World Prague 2023 to introduce his novel *The Impossible Obvious*, the final volume of the *Mender of Destinies* series. Poland will be represented by **Elżbieta Cherezińska**, one of the most popular and acclaimed Polish authors of historical novels who presents the history of medieval Poland and Central Europe as well as Scandinavia with an engaging narrative. In addition to the above-mentioned Ben Aaronovitch, Great Britain will also be represented by **Rob Wilkins**, whose professional life and literary work is connected to the fantasy matador Terry Pratchett. Wilkins wrote his official biography. The current conflict in Russia-invaded Ukraine is reflected in the participation of the following two important guests. Literary provocateur **Vladimir Sorokin** had problems publishing his works in the times of the former Soviet Union and he continues to disturb even in the new millennium with his vision of the future of Russia in his novel *Day of the Oprichnik* or his recent essay *A Monster from the Past* about Vladimir Putin. The exclusive guest of Book World Prague 2023 is the prominent Ukrainian writer and musician **Serhiy Zhadan**. The author, who actively participated in Ukraine's fight for freedom as a defender of Kharkiv, will present his war novel *Internat* and also perform with his punk rock band Sobaki.

All proceeds from the concert will be donated to support the Kharkiv volunteer battalion of Chartija. This is possible thanks to the cooperation with the **PPF Foundation**, which decided to cover all the costs associated with the presentation of Ukraine at this year's Book World Prague. *"We joined forces with the PPF Foundation during our support for Ukraine. Last year, the foundation organized a large-scale event called "Textbooks for Ukraine" and our Ukrainian booth – the first live presentation of Ukrainian literature since the Russian invasion – was one of the ideal platforms. Which is why this year we have agreed on wider support and cooperation and the PPF Foundation will also support the presentation of Ukrainian literature,"* said Radovan Auer, Director of Book World Prague. The aim of the festival is to help Ukrainian refugees to maintain contact with their language and literature. The PPF Foundation also promised to support the first three years of the **Central and East European Book Market** project, which will be launched this year by Book World Prague. Book World Prague aims to become a "shopping window" in Central and Eastern Europe within the international trade in book rights.

*"We think that it is important to familiarize the wider Czech public with Ukrainian literature and culture, especially with regard to the ongoing integration of Ukrainian refugees into Czech society. Book World Prague has long provided space to authors fighting for freedom in various countries and this year's programme of the Ukrainian booth is part of it. At the same time, we support the ambition to raise awareness of Ukrainian literature and culture among the Czech public. The aim of this year's edition is to also help Ukrainian refugees living in the Czech Republic to maintain contact with their language and literature. The second part of the support is aimed at helping the festival to become a meeting place for professionals within the trade in book rights in Central and Eastern Europe. Given that a similar platform is missing in our country and in other Central European countries, we consider its creation to be an important moment in the involvement of the Czech Republic in the international*

*literary and publishing environment,”* Jana Tomas Sedláčková, Member of the Board of the PPF Foundation, explained the decision of the foundation.

The list of writers, **representatives of the Czech literary scene**, includes dozens of names, and visitors can meet the most popular and most read ones during the four festival days. Successful writer **Alena Mornštajnová** will present her new novel *Les v domě*, Egyptologist **Miroslav Bárta** will reveal the newly published secrets of Tutankhamun’s tomb, **Petra Soukupová** will present her current book *Nikdo není sám*, **Halina Pawlowská** will share her plans for the readers, and **Kateřina Tučková** together with artist **Jaromír 99** will present a limited illustrated edition of her novel *Bílá Voda*. Readers also have the opportunity to discover a number of new Czech authors. This year, the program is also enriched featuring other representatives of Czech culture thanks to the celebrations of 100 years of broadcasting of Czech Radio and 70 years of broadcasting of Czech Television.

Even in 2023, Book World Prague remains the place where visitors can get to know the work of authors from many countries. In addition to the above-mentioned regions, the twenty-eighth edition will also list literature from Taiwan, France, Spain and Nordic countries. All representatives are interconnected by the exceptional concept of this year’s presentation at Book World Prague since the guest of honour is not a specific country but authors transgressing borders - whether physical, social, cultural, genre, political or sexual. The leitmotif of freedom links the theme of **“Authors Without Borders”** with the separate section of **“Literature, or a Voice of Freedom”**, which has been defined as a platform for authors who fight bans or censorship in their country. The same is also reflected in the **Jiří Theiner Award** which goes to Iranian men and women fighting against the totalitarian regime this year. Inspiration for the youngest generation of readers is concentrated in the **Growing with a Book** pavilion at Book World Prague. The festival provides also other cultural content, including music, theatre performances and slam poetry.

Book World Prague puts emphasis on the variety of programmes, ranging from encouraging children to read to discussions with professionals. Thus, there will be appealing topics for all age categories. Literature lovers will find what they are looking for at Book World Prague 2023 from 11 to 14 May at the Prague Exhibition Grounds. The exhibition part of the festival will be held in the newly reconstructed Křižík Pavilions and the programme part will be housed in tents and their surroundings. Tickets for Book World Prague 2023 are available at [www.svetknihy.cz](http://www.svetknihy.cz).

### **Book World Prague 2023 in Figures**

Number of exhibitors: 364

Number of booths: 181

Area: 2706 m<sup>2</sup>

Literary festival:

Number of participants: 601

Number of programmes: 424

Number of exhibitions: 15

Number of countries and regions: 30

Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Iran, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, USA, Great Britain, Taiwan

**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

**Partners:** Czech Literary Centre, Moravian Library, National Gallery, National Library, National Museum, Scandinavian House, Auroton Computer, ČSOB, Grasp, Magnesia

**Main media partner:** Czech Television

**Media partners:** Czech Radio, Právo, Echo, Echo 24, Knižní novinky, Host, A2, Deník N, Forum 24, Vltava Labe Press, Revue Prostor, Radio1