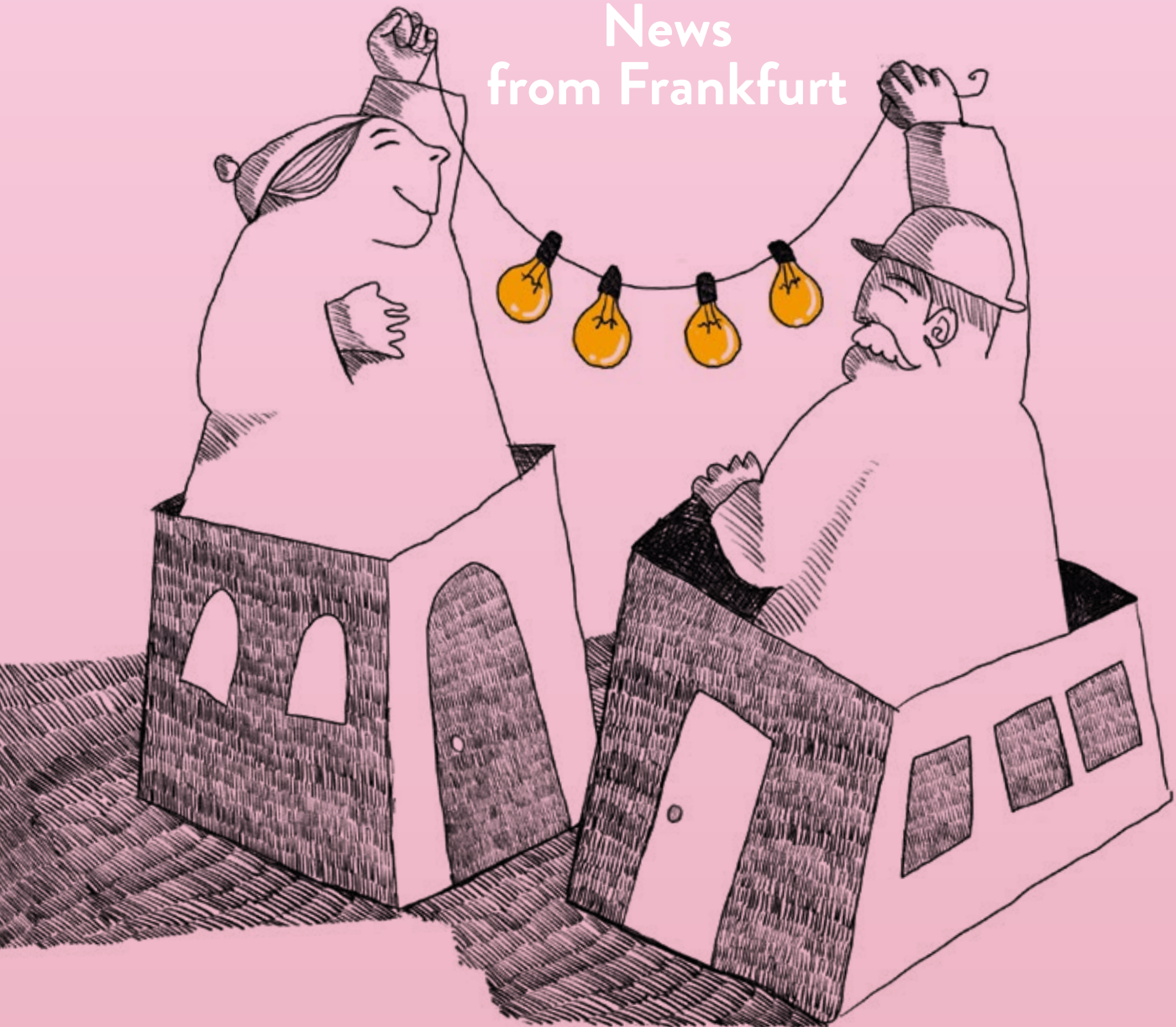


German Stories

News
from Frankfurt



Juergen Boos in Conversation with Jonathan Beck

The Beauty of Difference – New Stories for a Diverse Society

Nothing Beats the Excitement of Real Life – New Graphic Novels from Germany

My Germany is Frankfurt am Main – A Column by Artur Becker

BEST OF FRANKFURT 2023



1: FBW/Holger Mensele; 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14: FBW/Marc Jacquemin;
3: 15: FBW/Zino Petrek; 5: FBW/Anett Weirauch; 8, 9: FBW/
Domenic Driesen; 11: FBW/Katrin Hager; 13: FBW/Ingo Harstendorf

1 75th Frankfurter Buchmesse: The Open Stage continued to draw crowds in the anniversary year | 2 Slovenia, Guest of Honour at #fbm23, handed over the GuestScroll to Italy, GoH at #fbm24 | 3 Translated into around 50 languages: children's book author Cornelia Funke | 4 Salman Rushdie was awarded the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade | 5 The iconic Frankfurt Pavilion from the outside ... | 6 ... and from the inside. The curated stage programme focused on political and social issues | 7 Visitors immortalise their congratulations and thoughts on the 75th Frankfurter Buchmesse on a wall of congratulations | 8 Festival feeling with author and dancer Motsi Mabuse | 9 Daniel Kehlmann presented his new novel 'Lichtspiel' | 10 Comic artist Ralph Ruthe and fan | 11 For the first time, the digital The Hof community met live at Frankfurter Buchmesse | 12 At the opening of the Slovenian Guest of Honour Pavilion: Katja Stergar, director of the Slovenian Book Agency; Slovenian Ambassador Ana Polak Petrič; Asta Vrečko, Slovenian Minister of Culture; Frankfurter Buchmesse's director Juergen Boos; President of Slovenia Nataša Pirc Musar; Minister of State Claudia Roth; Karin Schmidt-Friderichs, chair of the German Publishers & Booksellers Association | 13 These chairs invited visitors to linger and told stories from 75 years of Frankfurter Buchmesse through the QR codes attached | 14 Author Rafik Schami | 15 A project of Frankfurter Buchmesse and Torino book fair, the inaugural Aficionado Award went to Lola Shoneyin for her Aké Arts and Book Festival.

EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

In these times of new wars and old ones, it is up to us 'book people' to remind the world of the most effective forces for peace: talking and listening, reading and understanding. Reading is 'another form of travelling,' says diplomat Ralf Beste: it broadens horizons. Beste is head of the Department of Culture and Society at the German Foreign Office, and gives *German Stories* an insight into the goals of foreign cultural policy.

Diversity and internationality are the overarching themes of this issue – beginning with the cover, designed by Mehrdad Zaeri, who was born in Isfahan in 1970 and fled to Germany with his family at the age of fourteen. The artist and illustrator sees it as a privilege 'to communicate with lots of people through art'.

'Who are we?' asks author Hadija Haruna-Oelker at the beginning of her essay on 'The Beauty of Difference'. She leads us to reflect on the ways people live together in very diverse societies. What binds people together? What divides them? What are the benefits of bringing together many different perspectives? How can we engage with each other in ways that make it an enriching experience?

Writing residencies, of which we have a number in Germany, allow for a very personal kind of engage-

ment with literature: authors and readers meet one another in the local community. The opportunity to spend time visiting and writing in a city is much sought after by writers, and is a valuable form of support for their work. Writers-in-residence are a boon to local communities too; they invigorate the cultural life of the area and serve as a link between the writers' texts and the public.

Helping people to understand the world better, building bridges between the public and the world of academia – this is also Jonathan Beck's mission. C.H.Beck, based in Munich, has been in his family for seven generations and is one of Germany's finest independent publishing houses for literature and non-fiction. I went to see him there, and we talked about books that endure.

I hope you enjoy reading these and all the other contributions to this issue of *German Stories*! We will see each other again in October, when the book world meets in Frankfurt. Days of reunion and dialogue are so important. Important for business but, above all, important for us on a personal level, because in the book trade we do business on the basis of trust. How could it be otherwise, where books are involved?!

Until then, I hope you remain in good spirits!

Yours, Juergen Boos



Juergen Boos
Director Frankfurter
Buchmesse



Mehrdad Zaeri
is a book illustrator,
live performance artist
and storyteller. You
can see his incredible
work at [instagram.com/
mehrdad_zaeri/](https://www.instagram.com/mehrdad_zaeri/)

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FIVE QUESTIONS TO

RALF BESTE

Director-General for Culture and Society
at the Federal Foreign Office



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Ralf Beste at the Austrian State Archives, Vienna

Ralf Beste, born in Witten in 1966, is a diplomat and former journalist. He joined the German Federal Foreign Office in 2014 and, among other roles, served as Ambassador to Austria from 2019 to 2022. Since February 2022 he has been the Director-General for Culture and Society.

1 | *Some people might be surprised to learn that in Germany, certain areas of cultural policy are presided over by the Foreign Office. Why is that?*

Within Germany, responsibility for culture and education lies with the sixteen federal states. But since the Federal Government is responsible for foreign policy, foreign cultural policy is taken on by the Foreign Office: it includes the work of the Goethe-Institut and of German schools abroad. We promote the learning of the German language but also the exchange of ideas between societies in the broadest sense, from town twinning to student exchanges to book fairs.

2 | *How important are translations of work by German authors to the development of binational relations?*

When you read a book you enter different mental worlds, you gain new insights, you are ‘confronted’ in the best sense of the word. Reading is like travelling – but in mind rather than in body. So when you experience the literature of other societies through translations, you are, in a way,

travelling abroad. People wanting to learn more about Germany and the German language may read classics by authors such as Franz Kafka or Hannah Arendt, but also children’s books by authors like Michael Ende, Christine Nöstlinger or Erich Kästner, each of whom have been translated into over forty languages.

3 | *What can politicians learn from authors?*

Writing calls for thoughtfulness, persistence and quietude. These are all things that politics can also benefit from. Rushed solutions are no good if they don’t last. Politicians can only get through to people when they are able to communicate a sense of purpose and tell coherent stories.

4 | *What sort of books do you read for pleasure, and what are your criteria when choosing a book?*

A friend once joked that he’d never seen me reading a book without a year in the title. And he was right, in one sense: I do like novels but I also like history books, really heavy non-fiction. However, I’m less interested in dates and figures than in discovering foreign worlds – and these can also lie in the past. ‘History is another country,’ the Canadian historian Margaret MacMillan once wrote. Another form of travelling.

5 | *If you could pick one author you think should be read all over the world, who would it be?*

You’re putting me in a bit of a diplomatic bind here: it would be rude to recommend a German author. But at the same time, I am responsible for promoting the German language. So I’ll go for an Austrian writer: I really admire Christoph Ransmayr for his powerful use of language, his travel writing and his historical novels. Start with *Atlas of an Anxious Man* – a multifaceted view of the whole world as seen from Central Europe. ♦

AUTHORS, BOOKS, AWARDS

Writing Away from Home

Residency Programmes for Authors



© Carsten Costard

A particularly splendid place: the historic part of the Gutenberg Museum in Mainz is home to the writers-in-residence.



© unknown



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Tucked away in the historic town centre of Bergen-Enkheim is the 'Stadtschreiberhäuschen', the little residency house with its enchanting garden.

The magnificent backdrop of Saxony's capital will be the new setting for the six-month writing residency programme in Dresden.

The writer Charlotte Gneuß lives in Berlin, but she finds it easier to write elsewhere – particularly in the countryside. ‘I find the best words in places where there are hardly any words being spoken around me,’ she says. Gneuß was awarded a grant for a writing residency in a village in Lower Saxony, where she worked on her debut novel *Gittersee*. It was published in 2023 to great acclaim. ‘The idea of going somewhere where nobody knows you is very appealing to me as a writer. It often enables me to write passages I wouldn’t have written otherwise, or which would have taken a lot more effort to write because I would have had to create the space for myself first. I really need solitude in order to write,’ the author explains.

The writing residency in Dresden which Gneuß will begin in June 2024 does not hold out the promise of solitude – nor is it designed to. The author does plan to spend her six months in Saxony’s state capital continuing work on a novel she has already started, but she also wants to get involved in the life of the city. The hope – according to the organisers of the grant, which has been awarded since 1996 – is that Dresden’s writers-in-residence will ‘enrich the literary traditions of this city of culture and, by putting on their own events, give new impetus to the importance of language culture and literature.’ But Gneuß has other ambitions, too, in a year when state parliamentary elections will be held in Saxony and the far-right party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) stands to win a majority. ‘I think it would be pretty lazy to rest on my laurels at a time like this. I’m glad there’s something I can do – and I see that as one of the key responsibilities of the role. I’m not saying I can necessarily change the outcome, but I want to take action, to offer my own small contribution in a cultural form.’

Charlotte Gneuß has a special connection to Dresden. ‘Dresden is where I started writing. Many of my texts began life in that city. I feel as if I’ve lost something there, in a very personal sense, which I have to go looking for,’ she says. Her parents lived in the city on the Elbe before the Wall came down, and Gneuß herself studied social work and worked with asylum seekers in Dresden. Dresden is one of the most renowned writing residencies, but far from the only one. Many cities and towns boast residency programmes. Apart from Dresden, the best-known residencies are in Frankfurt’s Bergen-Enkheim district, in the spa town of Baden-Baden, in Rhineland-Palatinate’s



© Alena Schmick

Charlotte Gneuß

was born in Ludwigsburg in 1992 and now lives in Berlin. Her debut novel Gittersee, about life in the GDR, was nominated for the German Book Prize 2023 and was one of the most talked-about books of the year.

state capital Mainz, and in the town of Rheinsberg in Brandenburg. Eisenbach in the Black Forest has a village residency, Beeskow in Brandenburg a castle residency, Flensburg in northern Germany had a crime writing residency, and the North Sea island of Sylt an island residency. But one thing all the residency programmes have in common is that they enable writers to enjoy a period of financial independence.

Writing residency programmes are the brainchild of the writer Franz Joseph Schneider. Fifty years ago, in his hometown of Bergen-Enkheim, the first writer-in-residence was appointed: Wolfgang Koeppen. He was followed by a whole series of famous writers, including poets Peter Rühmkorf and Wolfgang Hilbig and also Herta Müller, who would go on to win the Nobel Prize. The reputation of these writers rubbed off on the small, unassuming neighbourhood.

In Bergen-Enkheim, the writer-in-residence – who moves into the residency house for a year and receives a grant of 20,000 euros – has no obligations. The extent to which the resident writer gets involved in local life is up to them. Nino Haratischwili, a well-known novelist and playwright, is Bergen-Enkheim’s fiftieth writer-in-residence;



Charlotte Gneuß
Gittersee
(S. Fischer)



Nino Haratischwili
Das mangelnde Licht
(Frankfurter
Verlagsanstalt)



Julia Schoch
**Das Liebespaar
des Jahrhunderts**
(dtv)



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Nino Haratischwili

was born in Tbilisi, Georgia, in 1983. She came to Germany as a refugee from the civil war, and became a well-known novelist and playwright. In her novels, most recently *Das mangelnde Licht*, Haratischwili returns again and again to her childhood homeland, so deeply ravaged by war and insecurity.

after giving her introductory reading she left Bergen-Enkheim for a while to put on a play in Berlin.

Haratischwili's predecessor, Marion Poschmann, moved into the residency house with her husband. 'She was part of neighbourhood life,' says Mark Gläser, head of the Bergen-Enkheim Cultural Society. For Poschmann, who enjoyed having people round for tea, getting involved in the day-to-day life of the neighbourhood felt like the natural thing to do: 'There are various ways of making your presence felt and enriching neighbourhood life,' she says. 'And perhaps the intellectual work that is done in the residency house also radiates outwards, not in a measurable but in a tangible way.' The year in Bergen-Enkheim was also important for her writing: 'In Berlin I live in the city centre, whereas Bergen-Enkheim is on the outskirts of the city, it has a more village-y feel, you're only a few minutes from a green space. Since nature plays a key role in my books, I really benefited from spending a whole year in a rural environment.'

Nino Haratischwili wants to use the residency to start work on a new novel. She already has some initial notes and a structure. 'Being able to work at



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Julia Schoch

was born in 1974 and lives in Potsdam. Her latest novel *Das Liebespaar des Jahrhunderts* – an epic book about love, and the second in a trilogy of novels – became a bestseller. Schoch has previously served as writer-in-residence in Dresden and Rheinsberg.

a different desk helps me – it's much more intensive and effective. I find it easier to write away from home – there are fewer distractions. But it's also difficult for me because I have two young children, so my time is not entirely my own.' For this reason Haratischwili plans to commute between Berlin, where she lives with her children, and Bergen-Enkheim.

Julia Schoch, who lives in Potsdam and will take up the post of writer-in-residence in Mainz from March 2024, is also going to be doing a lot of travelling; she too has children and family responsibilities. 'I can't just disappear from my life for a year,' she says. In Mainz, where she will be based at the Gutenberg Museum, Schoch plans to finish the third book in her novel trilogy *Biographie einer Frau*. The novel will be published in January 2025. The idea behind the project is to 'tell stories about women in society, particularly about how love and thus relationship patterns have changed over the decades.' The thing Schoch is most looking forward to is being able to work without distractions. But she is also excited to discover a part of Germany she knows very little about. Part of this journey of discovery will take place on the water: she is planning a river cruise on the Rhine. ♦



Marion Poschmann
Chor der Erinnyen
(Suhrkamp)

Marion Poschmann

was born in Essen in 1969. She has won numerous awards for her novels and poetry collections, including writing residencies in Rheinsberg and Tübingen. Her latest novel *Chor der Erinnyen* has been called a 'magical work of art', and she was awarded the Joseph Breitbach Prize 2023 for her literary oeuvre.



Holger Heimann

is a literary critic and works for various newspapers and broadcasters. He lives in Berlin.

JUERGEN BOOS IN CONVERSATION WITH

Jonathan Beck

Rendezvous on Ainmillerstraße, a street in Munich's Schwabing neighbourhood and historic home to many prominent members of the German literary and cultural world. Since 1889, the family-owned publisher C.H.Beck has had its offices here. It is a bright, frosty day, with snow on the ground and sunshine. On this wintry morning, straight out of a picture book, Juergen Boos, director of the Frankfurter Buchmesse, has arranged to meet with the seventh-generation publisher Jonathan Beck.



© for all photographs in this article by Ulrike Fömerl

Jonathan Beck (JBe): Welcome to our offices on Ainmillerstraße. By the way, there is an entire book dedicated to this street. Thomas Mann lived on this street and wrote his novella *Gladius Dei* here at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Juergen Boos (JBo): A very appropriate setting then. With *German Stories*, we want to introduce the global publishing audience to iconic German publishers. One of the most important of these being C.H.Beck, not least because of the great tradition of your family business. How did it all begin?

JBe: The founder of this house, Carl Gottlob Beck, was an immigrant from Saxony who moved to the Free Imperial City of Nördlingen and took over a printing house in 1763. He then not only printed for clients, but also began to publish books on his own. One crucial factor for him was that the censor in Nördlingen was much less invasive than in other cities.

JBo: This is not unlike the origin story of the Frankfurter Buchmesse, which began in Mainz. Mainz was the seat of a bishopric and was subject to heavy censorship, so the Buchmesse moved to the Free Imperial City of Frankfurt, far away from the pope, and along a trade route stretching from Lyon to Leipzig. It was a place in which the book trade could flourish.

JBe: Nördlingen worked well for us, too. Over time, the publishing house began to specialise in academic topics. At some point, nearby Munich became a more attractive location due to its university. But we still maintain our printing house in Nördlingen, with 350 employees. Nördlingen also remains an important IT location for us, and much of the work for the Beck online database of our legal publishing division is done there.

English-language literature has played an important role for us

JBo: As a reader, I am familiar with C.H.Beck's literary list through two authors in particular: Paula Fox and Andre Dubus. How did you manage to develop such a significant list over time?

JBe: It's perhaps not a coincidence that you've named two American authors. English-language literature has played an important role for us, with

authors like Anthony Doerr, Lily King, Daniel Mason, and Liz Moore. This has remained an essential aspect of our profile, alongside our parallel focus on German-language literature, with authors such as Jonas Lüscher, Norbert Scheuer, Hans Pleschinski, and Sabine Gruber. But these are not the first literary authors for C.H.Beck. Our house classic is Heimito von Doderer, whose bestselling novel *Die Strudlhofstiege* (*The Strudlhof Steps*), published in 1952, was translated into English not too long ago [laughs] for the first time.

JBo: To me, your lists are a byword for quality. I do wonder, however, whether readers are aware of this. Is the publisher an important brand name in its own right? We have Suhrkamp, Hanser, and C.H.Beck – a triumvirate of quality publishers.

JBe: I believe your characterisation has applied to our non-fiction list for some time now. By number of titles, we are the leading quality non-fiction publisher in Germany. But I'm pleased to hear that you think the same of our literary list.

JBo: Under one roof, you house legal publishing as well as a culturally and politically inflected programme for non-fiction and literature. How would you define C.H.Beck's overall mission?

The political discourse defines us

JBe: Fundamentally, we stand for democracy, freedom of expression, and the constitutional state. Freedom of expression and the democratic constitutional state require one another. This is why it makes sense to have both divisions under one roof. In the end, they serve the same purpose: to uphold and defend liberal democracy.

JBo: I would connect the idea of 'sense-making', or making meaning, to your publishing house.

JBe: Yes, that fits. In non-fiction, it's the historical and political discourse that defines us. Literature, art and culture are important subject areas in addition. I'm quite proud of this mix and believe that many of our employees and authors enjoy being able to address pressing contemporary topics through their work in publishing.

JBo: How do you find and attract excellent talent to your house?

JBe: We are, and to my mind always have been, a publishing house driven by a programme. There are other houses that, justifiably, are more sales-driven.

News about the books, the authors and the publisher can be found on chbeck.de or on facebook.com/CHBeckLiteratur or on instagram.com/c.h.beckliteratur

Dr. Jonathan Beck, born in Munich in 1977, studied Economics in Berlin, Toulouse and Mannheim. In 2008 he started work at C.H.Beck where, amongst other assignments, he was editorial director for Economics and Business in the company's professional publishing division. Since February 2015 he has been the publisher for the trade division, following his father Dr. h.c. Wolfgang Beck as the seventh publisher there since 1763. Since 2023, when the Zurich-based Unionsverlag joined the C.H.Beck group of publishers, Jonathan Beck has served as President of its Board of Directors.



The C.H. Beck company building at Wilhelmstraße 9 on the corner of Ainmillerstraße was completed in 1950 by architect Roderich Fick. From top to bottom: the view from the garden; the entrance to the building; the staircase.

But in our house, the editors walk through the hallways with their heads held a little bit higher than the colleagues in other divisions. They have a corresponding desire for quality works. Recruiting has become a problem in general for publishers today. Fortunately, that's not yet the case for our editorial staff.

JB: It's noteworthy that your employees tend to stay with you for a long time. I'm thinking of important personalities, such as Martin Hielscher in literature, or the quasi-legendary Detlef Felken. They have put their personal stamp on the programme for over twenty years.

JB: This has to do with our work environment and our high level of respect for our employees, but it should be typical for family businesses in every sector. In a business such as ours, it goes without saying that family members may not be especially qualified for a job simply because of their background, regardless of whether they work as publishers or in other areas of the business. We know

Family members may not be especially qualified for a job simply because of their background

how important it is to have good employees on all levels, to value them, and to give them the space to grow and develop. There is a nice anecdote to this effect dating from the time of my grandfather, Heinrich Beck. In his era, the editor Horst Wiemer made Heimito von Doderer famous. And at the Frankfurter Buchmesse, it was Wiemer who spent the night in the Hessischer Hof, not my grandfather. It was the editor who needed the lobby of the Hessischer Hof more to do his job than his publisher.

JB: What distinguishes C.H. Beck's German-language literature?

JB: That's a good question. Recently, I sat down with our programme director for fiction, Susanne Kronen, to brainstorm a slogan or guiding principle for our literary division. Our slogan for the whole house is 'The World in a Book'. One could modify it, for our literature list, to 'Telling the World's Stories'. In non-fiction, history, facts, and the

desire to show what really happened play an important role. But curiosity about the world at large also defines many of our literary acquisitions. One example is Lily King's *Euphoria*, a fictionalised but very well-researched story about Margaret Mead in Papua New Guinea. When we first read it, we knew immediately that this was 'a Beck book'.

Our slogan for the whole house is 'The World in a Book'

JB: Brain research looks at 'the world in our heads.' I think 'The World in a Book' suits Beck beautifully.

JB: Thank you. We recently acquired the Unionsverlag to join our publishing group. Its founding publisher, Lucien Leites, has since 1975 pursued an agenda that we would describe today as 'post-colonial'. His approach also fits nicely with 'The World in a Book'.

JB: The Unionsverlag was always an important partner for the LitProm society, which champions and promotes literature from the Global South.

JB: The Unionsverlag fills a gap for us, since C.H.Beck has so far largely been oriented towards the western world, perhaps because of our strong ties to academia. We tend to focus on expert voices from communities we know. At Unionsverlag, in contrast, what matters is the original voice from a particular region.

JB: The core of your publishing house, its DNA, is your desire for quality. And, secondly, the idea that one should tell more than just a story. What defines this sense of 'more'?

JB: That we can learn something from the story that's being told. When Sabine Gruber tells a story of mourning in her latest novel, *Die Dauer der Liebe* (*The Permanence of Love*), in which a woman is confronted with the sudden death of her life partner and reflects on the trips she took with him, an architect, to places in Italy that are filled with architecture from a fascist past, a political dimension enters the narrative. Indirectly, her novel also educates me about life under fascism.

JB: How does your rights and licensing division work? Do your colleagues travel internationally? Do they travel to New York once a year to buy and sell rights?

JB: We don't do New York once a year for licensing, not even me. Our programme directors –



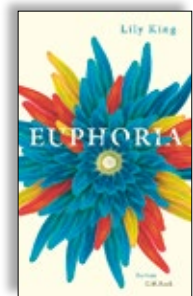
The conversation between Juergen Boos and Jonathan Beck took place in the 'Grüne Salon' – also known as the 'Gartensalon' for its beautiful view of the garden.

Susanne Krones in literature, and Sebastian Ullrich in non-fiction – take regular trips to London and New York. With eight acquiring editors, we probably have the most non-fiction editors of all the German quality publishers. In addition, we have three foreign rights representatives who attend all the European book fairs. We make a three-digit number of foreign rights deals every year.

The style of academic non-fiction writing has greatly improved

JB: How do you explain the high level of foreign interest in German non-fiction?

JB: We're likely responsible for the fact that non-fiction written by German professors has long been viewed as well-researched, but hard to read.



Highly praised also for its eye-catching cover: the C.H.Beck edition of Lily King's *Euphoria*.



Ewald Frie's book, published in February 2023, was awarded the German Non-Fiction Prize 2023.

However, the style of academic non-fiction writing, including by professors, has greatly improved. *Ein Hof und elf Geschwister* (A Farm and Eleven Children) by Ewald Frie is currently our most successful example: it's a fact-filled history of German farming in the twentieth century, written in an accessible, humorous and personable style. It's easier to interest foreign publishers in that kind of writing. One decisive factor is that authors are more interested in communicating clearly and reaching a large audience than they used to be. This aligns nicely with our own understanding of ourselves as a publisher – we see ourselves as a bridge between the university and the public. We help academics move beyond pure peer-to-peer communications.

We want to empower debates and be pluralistic wherever possible

JB: We've come back to our initial topic: strengthening democracy through the mediation of knowledge and ways of thinking.

JB: This year, I believe that the role of our sector in promoting democratic processes will be a topic of international importance.

JB: I'd like to turn to the topic of debates. On the one hand, Germany enjoys a healthy debate

culture on a broad spectrum of topics; on the other, arguments often devolve into ad hominem, hurtful attacks. What does it mean, in this turbulent time, to publish sophisticated books that provoke debate?

JB: Books remain an excellent vehicle for debate culture: they construct positions and put forward arguments. We want to empower debates and be pluralistic wherever possible. We also try to facilitate debates within our house and represent multiple positions on controversial topics – if not in one book, then in two or three. Our 'landmark' German historians, for example, have for a long time included the more conservatively inclined Thomas Nipperdey as well as Hans-Ulrich Wehler, who is closer to the Social Democrats.

JB: To me, the art of publishing seems to lie in the ability to address current events and simultaneously recognise their universal relevance – in other words, to publish books that won't be forgotten in two years' time.

JB: That is, of course, our hope and our goal. Books should never aim to replace newspapers. They enjoy a higher degree of freedom and reflectiveness. It would be a waste of the work we put into each book if they were to disappear too quickly. This is why we avoid chasing trends. But some debates persist: Germany has been having a debate on immigration for thirty years now, and as such we naturally want to publish books on it. Books that endure.

JB: Mr Beck, thank you very much for the conversation. ♦

The Book, That Sacred Good

4 Notes on Becoming a Book

1 Book design is not an art form, but intentional product design

Most normal books, as opposed to bibliophile editions and other special printings (which are created to appeal to a specific, small group of customers), are designed with one goal in mind: to find the most commercially appealing form for the content of each book.

Book design is thus not an art form, but intentional product design. This heightens its challenges: art is free, it bows to no man and stands proudly on its own. Product design, however, is a goal-oriented service in which clients often enjoy voicing their tastes, preferences, clichés and ideas about how business should be done.

A book cover which doesn't speak to its viewers – which doesn't draw them in via its subject, title or subtitle design, or allude to the topic of the book through its overall design – is responsible, in 95 out of 100 cases, for lost potential sales. Confusing design choices lead to irritation and uncertainty. Uncertainty generally makes people reject a book and decide not to buy it. It is a rare reader who is driven by curiosity to think: *I will buy*

it precisely because I don't understand it, and hope to receive new and stimulating ideas from it.

This attitude is mirrored by bookshop buyers: go ahead and ask publishing sales representatives about reactions to 'confusing' book covers that 'no one likes.'

Anyone who hopes to sell a book shouldn't go overboard with its design.

None of these essentials have changed for the book, that 'sacred good', as Bertolt Brecht once called it, and likely never will: aesthetics and sales have always gone hand in hand.

2 The book market will soon look different

The market for books made of printed and bound paper is shrinking. Overall, book sales in Europe, the United States and Canada have decreased due to changing habits when it comes to media consumption and leisure time, lower footfall in city centres, and many other reasons. Publishers have begun to shore up their profits by raising book costs – but this strategy will soon reach its



The book world called him the Pope of book art: Peter Hassiepen was art director at Hanser for 37 years and had a profound influence on the publishing house's aesthetic. His extended flap concept protected the book without having to shrink-wrap it. Here Karen Köhler: *Miroloi*, one of the most beautiful German books 2020.



limits. We don't yet know how quickly and to what extent things will change, but one thing is clear: the book market as we know it will soon look different.

Many titles – not only academic ones – will exist only as Print on Demand, which means they will no longer be visible or available in bookshops, and customers will need to already know about them. This will increase the need for marketing and publicity, especially among smaller publishers. Since they may not be able to afford it, Print on Demand is both a boon – lowered production costs, no warehousing costs – and a curse for new, unknown, 'curious' books that must be seen to be sold.

These unlucky books will no longer benefit from impromptu encounters with potential readers in bookshops – and in consequence, their designs will change. They will no longer have to compete with all their neighbours on a display table, shouting, *Hello! Pick me up!* The covers can be pared back, since PoDs are sought out rather than picked up while browsing.



© Charlie Herber



© Suhrkamp

Digital printing has made it possible to create complex, multi-coloured images, and colour sections are currently experiencing a real boom, especially in fantasy, romance and YA/NA, but also in thrillers.

The era of the design tastemakers is over, but Willy Fleckhaus' concept for edition suhrkamp, with its 48 colours, has lived on since 1963. This 36 volume box set was published to mark the 60th anniversary of the publishing house.

3 Gen Z loves books

Young people don't read? Not true at all. Not only are influencers always on the lookout for a publisher willing to turn their content into a book; Gen Z loves books, especially if they've been jazzed up with coloured edges, spot gloss, foil stamps and glitter. Some of these books are more reminiscent of a marshmallow crossed with a gummy bear – for those who like that sort of thing. (The resulting challenges for sustainability and recycling have been addressed in other forums.)

4 The era of all-powerful design tastemakers is over

Is it new-found freedom, or anything goes? Book design reflects the gradual 'dissolution' of society into socio-cultural subgroups: covers can sport tartan patterns or pictures of striped mice, be monochromatic, colourful, bold or discreet. Photos, illustrations, collage, mixed media – everything is fashionable, everything is a trend: there's even 'classic' and bi and LGBTQ+ design. Everything now exists side by side (though perhaps not in the bookshops themselves). And this is a good thing: the era of all-powerful design tastemakers is over. Each publishing house has become the architect of its own success in reaching an audience and must rely on its own instincts more than ever, now that the days of the 'icons', which were eagerly and unobtrusively emulated, are over. It goes without saying that book designers now must look to trends in fashion, furniture and design in general. And so, to all those involved in reaching a new audience, we wish the best of luck. ♦



Rainer Groothuis, born in 1959 in Emden/East Frisia, is a freelance book and media designer, agency founder -> groothuis.de and author. He is one of the most honoured book designers in Germany. In January 2013, the Hanseatic City of Hamburg awarded him the title of Professor for his services to art and culture.



NEW STORIES FOR A DIVERSE SOCIETY

THE BEAUTY OF *DIFFERENCE*

We don't see things the way they are – we see them the way we are, says the Talmud, one of Judaism's most important texts. But which way is that? Which stories are told about Germany and its people, and who is missing from them?

Wer wir sind (*Who We Are*), is the title of Lena Gorelik's book, an autobiographical novel that shows how identity is forged in the conflict between shame and pride, assimilation and foreignness. It is about a girl who moves to Germany with her family in 1992 and becomes a foreigner. A Jewish refugee child in a homemade parka, who pronounces words so 'strangely' that other children laugh at her. Who grows up in Germany during the 'baseball bat years' of the 1990s, which have featured in many texts since the racially motivated and antisemitic attacks in Halle and Hanau in 2019 and 2020.

Our society needs ideas about how to turn its differences into strength in order to counter prejudice and hostility. This is one reason why, in my book *Die Schönheit der Differenz (The Beauty of Difference)*, I invite the reader to reflect on the state of our society. On the ideas we have about each other. Constructions. The perception of supposed groups, appearance, background, desire, body and religion.

How can the complexity of our existence and co-existence be better understood from a Black, disabled, queer, spiritual or psychological and neurological point of view? What does it mean to be privileged in Germany – in other words 'white', heterosexual, mentally well, conventionally attrac-

tive, able-bodied, socialised in a Christian environment, with qualifications and a secure income? To build a good community, each of us needs to understand our own position within society, and to know: what am I, and what am I not? And we must confront this fact without defensiveness or (self) stigmatisation.

What am I, and what am I not?

There are many authors who produce critiques of power in society and write texts exploring their own position in the social hierarchy, be that an oppressed position or privileged one. In their stories they move away from suffering and towards the causes and consequences of injustice, illustrating the links between power and identity in various languages. They point the way towards understanding, and engage with painful memories of the past. They reawaken memories.

The 1990s are also addressed in *Dschinns (Djinns)*, Fatma Aydemir's family saga set in a fictitious city on the Rhine and featuring the Yilmaz family, made up of father Hüseyin, his wife and their four children. A migrant worker from a Turkish



[german-stories.de/
diversity](https://german-stories.de/diversity)

More information
about the featured
book collection
can be found here.



The Council of Europe's 'No Hate Speech' campaign supports people taking action against hate and discrimination online.

'We become ourselves only to the extent that the other becomes himself, we become free only to the extent that the other becomes free.'

Karl Jaspers (1883–1969), German psychiatrist and philosopher, in *Weltgeschichte der Philosophie*



© Popart, Lizenz: CC BY-SA 3.0

'Every person is unique'. Since 2005, artist Hans Traxler's '1'-monument has stood on the south bank of the River Main in Frankfurt, inviting everyone to create a monument to themselves.

mountain village, Hüseyin moved to Germany with his wife Emine but has never really felt settled there. In the book, different narrative voices explore the multigenerational impact of migration and Germanness, gender roles and gender identities, racism, homophobia and classism – all of which were much less part of the public debate in the 1990s than they are now.

Aydemir's novel is not the only one in which different experiences overlap like this. Other books also illustrate, in a tangible way, what academics and progressives call intersectionality. These texts perceive people in their simultaneity rather than their individual characteristics. In *Vaters Meer (Father's Sea)* by Deniz Utlu, for example, the narrative voice of thirteen-year-old Yunus talks about caring for his father, who is living with locked-in syndrome after suffering two strokes. The adult Yunus looks back on that time, and the migration story is coupled with an exploration of the father-son relationship, self-discovery, loneliness and disability.

People read novels because narrative voices help them to better understand themselves, as well as other people and their lives. The ephemeral, incidental portrayal of experiences and characteristics in texts thus plays an important role: that of representation. It is a natural way of conveying a message without finger-wagging. Different perspectives on the world resonate with readers and

take people out of their pigeonholes. How does it feel to arrive in a foreign city? And how does it feel to be a Black person in Germany in search of a place where you can feel happy and safe? This is what Musa Okwonga writes about in *Es ging immer nur um Liebe (In the End, It Was All About Love)*. 'Borderless', as the poet May Ayim once described it in one of her poems.

In order to understand present-day Germany, we need to understand the interwovenness of people's differing experiences and of the country's history. We also need to engage critically with the past, since everyone in Germany, in different ways, carries the consequences of the country's history with and within them. This includes the Holocaust and the process of coming to terms with it, anti-

We are here because you were there

semitism, racism, and the role of the 'forgotten' victims, including Sinti and Roma people, gay people, people with disabilities, socially disadvantaged people, and political opponents of the Nazis. We need new narrative forms – because the big political question (still) is: where does far-right violence come from? And why has all never been well in Germany?

'We are here because you were there' is a phrase coined by Ambalavaner Sivanandan, director of the Institute of Race Relations in London, in the 1980s. It refers to the global context of migration flows, reminding us of centuries of colonial exploitation and pointing out that the reasons why people emigrate or have to leave their homes do



Lena Gorelik
Wer wir sind
(Klett)
A girl moves with her family from Russia to Germany and ends up in a small town in Swabia in a hostel for asylum seekers.



Hadija Haruna-Oelker
Die Schönheit der Differenz
(btb)
A highly topical book that develops visions of how we can unlearn things we have learned, and re-imagine the way we live together.



Fatma Aydemir
Dschinnis
(dtv)
Spent several weeks on the German bestseller list and was shortlisted for the German Book Prize 2022. 'A family novel of extraordinary intensity.' *Süd-deutsche Zeitung*

Learning together – learning togetherness

A ‘learning process of socialisation’ is what the educationalist Maisha-Maureen Auma calls concepts that look critically at societal power structures. And children’s books fall into this category, because they have an impact on children’s thinking, language and view of the world. We need only look at a bookshelf and ask ourselves who is represented there, or which children will feel themselves represented there. Is it only white children, able-bodied children, children living in heterosexual family units?

Children do not need books that are explicitly about racism or other experiences of difference in order to see norms being challenged. What matters is that differences are perceived as natural, which is why our plurality is now increasingly found in children’s books too. *Ich bin anders als du – Ich bin wie du (I Am Different From You – I Am Like You)* by Constanze Kitzing is an example of how this can work even for very young children. And the young adult book *Die Sonne, so strahlend und Schwarz (The Sun, So Bright and Black)* by Chantal-Fleur Sandjon helps readers discover multiple perspectives on life by exploring Nova’s complex identity and love life as a queer young Black woman in Germany, in rich poetic language. *Was wird es denn? Ein Kind! (What Are You Having? A Child!)* is the title of Ravna Marin Siever’s non-fiction book about giving children a gender-neutral upbringing. Because the process of growing up is particularly full of ‘pluralities’ which adults, in their homogeneous bubbles, often do not experience any longer. There are many opportunities to unlearn what we have learned. Including in children’s literature.



Constanze von Kitzing
Ich bin anders als du
(Carlsen)
Different children, many things in common and many differences: a pioneering picture book about diversity and commonality. For children aged 3+.



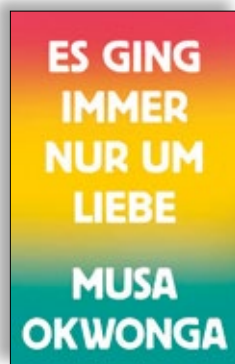
Chantal-Fleur Sandjon
Die Sonne, so strahlend und Schwarz
(Thienemann)
A powerful, eloquent coming-of-age novel for young adults, full of depth and emotion, fresh and exciting. For readers aged 14+.



Ravna Marin Siever
Was wird es denn? Ein Kind!
(Beltz)
A guide that lends a helping hand to parents, whether their child embraces every single pink/blue cliché or is gender nonconforming, non-binary or trans.



Deniz Utlü
Vaters Meer
(Suhrkamp)
Awarded the 2023 Bavarian Literature Prize, among others. ‘An incredibly warm and moving family story,’ said the jury.



Musa Okwonga
Es ging immer nur um Liebe
(Mairisch Verlag)
‘He does what all the best authors do: he writes from the heart. I’m a fan.’ Ed Sheeran



Selma Wels (Hg.)
anders bleiben
(rororo)
What is actually meant by ‘we’? And how can social participation work? 21 letters about life in German society.

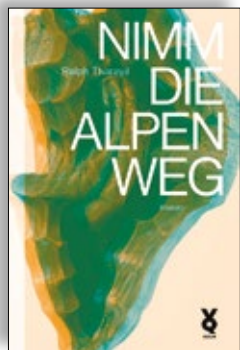


© Deutsche Post AG, 85, Bettina Walker, Bonn

A statement for diversity that can be shared: the 85 cent stamp from Deutsche Post

not come about in a historical vacuum. Clearly, the answers to questions about the state of German society are connected to the wider world. Germany is an immigration society. One which has changed over the decades and the generations. A transnational understanding explains why there are no homogenous groups in Germany, because almost everyone is different and many also want to *stay different*, as described by the contributors to Selma Wels's collection of the same name: *anders bleiben*. In the form of letters, they enter into a dialogue about their lives in German society – sometimes tentative, sometimes vehement, remembering, always seeking.

Lena Gorelik, Fatma Aydemir, Deniz Utlu, Selma Wels and many other authors – they do not form one homogenous unit in German society, but they do all express a commitment to the belief that we are all equal at the same time as all being different, as the publicist Hannah Arendt once described it. And this is precisely where the beauty of difference lies: in an attitude that enables us to tell stories. Stories which question what is viewed as normal: because difference is the true normality. This is why it is so important that we get to know each other better, so that we can understand each other better and speak to each other without causing each other pain.



Ralph Tharayil
Nimm die Alpen weg
(Azur)
Tharayil's debut tells an incomparable coming-of-age story of a childhood in Switzerland.



Hami Nguyen
Das Ende der Unsichtbarkeit
(Ullstein)
Hardworking, servile, quiet – there are many stereotypes about people from Asia. Nguyen decodes this anti-Asian racism.



Marlen Hobrack
Klassenbeste
(Hanser Berlin)
Working women, helicopter mothers and middle-class feminists – Marlen Hobrack radically reformulates the class issue from a female perspective.



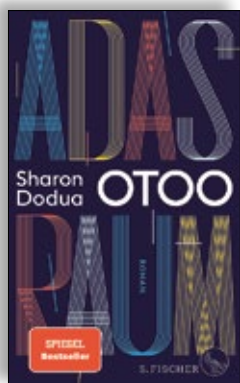
Necati Öziqi
Vatermal
(Claassen)
A family story full of powerful emotion. Shortlisted for the German Book Prize 2023.



Behzad Karim Khani
Hund, Wolf, Schakal
(Hanser Berlin)
Khani's debut novel about the fate of two brothers combines the toughness of the streets with the melancholy of Iranian prose. Awarded the Debut Prize by the Buddenbrookhaus in Lübeck.



Betiel Berhe
Nie mehr leise – die neue migrantische Mittelschicht
(Aufbau)
From the child of migrant workers to a successful academic: Betiel Berhe has climbed the social ladder and is therefore perfectly placed to show how difficult it is.



Sharon Dodua Otoo
Adas Raum
(S.Fischer)
'Ada's Room' weaves the life stories of many women into a journey through the centuries and across continents. A novel that explores what it means to be a woman.



Luisa Laudace
Behindert und stolz
(Eden Books)
'A book about the difficulties which the author and so many others still have to contend with ...' stern.de



Raúl Aguayo-Krauthausen
Wer Inklusion will, findet einen Weg. Wer sie nicht will, findet Ausreden
(Rowohlt)
Krauthausen is a very well-known activist for inclusion and accessibility and the rights of people with disabilities.

Language is also a means of self-empowerment that leaves aesthetic traces in the German language. It is the plurality that shows itself in the multitude of new words describing worlds which the mainstream too often knows little about. ‘We suck on our nails. They are jagged like a saw. We eat our grinds,’ writes Ralph Tharayil in his book *Nimm die Alpen weg (Take Away the Alps)*. In a sparing poetic style he describes how two parents of Indian origin struggle to settle and assimilate in Switzerland, along with their children who were born there. Where assimilation does not work, there is pain – because integration is also violent, as Tharayil shows.

Where assimilation does not work, there is pain

Different forms of text are needed in order to overcome stereotypes imposed by others: in order to bring about *Das Ende der Unsichtbarkeit (The End of Invisibility)*, which is the title of a non-fiction book by Hami Nguyen. In it, she describes the interwoven experience of anti-Asian racism and classism, drawing on her own experience and the history of Vietnamese migrants, which is often absent from histories of Germany. Similarly, the issue of social class is often absent from explanations of people’s complex biographical experiences. Marlen Hobrack, for example, debunks the middle-class myths of social mobility and equality of opportunity in *Klassenbeste (Top of the Class)*, demonstrating that every identity politics debate has the issue of class at its heart. *Vatermal (Birth Mark)* by Necati Öziri revolves around the experiences of narrator Arda and his friends, and how these experiences relate to immigration, class and illness. These ‘boys’ are seen as outsiders in Germany because they hang around train stations and are on the police’s radar. They have to cultivate their own self-image with which to counter the image others have of them. This theme is also addressed in *Hund, Wolf, Schakal (Dog, Jackal, Wolf)*, by Behzad Karim Khani, in which eleven-year-old Saam, a refugee from Iran, feels doubly foreign in the majority-Arab neighbourhood of Neukölln as he tries to step into the role of head of the family. On the other hand there are the



educational climbers, the people seen as ‘well integrated’, who are described by Betiel Berhe in her non-fiction book *Nie mehr leise – die neue migrantische Mittelschicht (Never Quiet Again – The New Migrant Middle Class)*.

These books all bear witness to the variety of fluid identities in Germany. They all broaden the scope of German-language literature and tell stories about our society that are different from the usual ones – such as *Adas Raum (Ada’s Room)* by Sharon Dodua Otoo. This book is about Black and Afro-German identities – because Germany is made up of many post-societies, and people have many different stories to tell about their ancestors. All of these stories are simultaneously shaping people’s lives today in different ways. Sociology has an encouraging insight for us in this regard: diverse societies can actually become more integrated as a result of conflicts, as long as these conflicts are recognised as necessary and are institutionalised. This means not only acknowledging what we have in common but also what makes us different from each other – engaging with disability and ableism as an able-bodied person, for example, as Luisa Laudace and Raúl Aguayo-Krauthausen encourage us to do in their books *Behindert und stolz (Disabled and Proud)* and *Wer Inklusion will, findet einen Weg. Wer sie nicht will, findet Ausreden (If You Want to Be Inclusive, You’ll Find a Way. If You Don’t, You’ll Find an Excuse)*.

What does inclusion mean – including in a literary sense? It is something fundamentally democratic, because it is a learning process, a sociopolitical principle according to which nobody is excluded and forced to adapt; instead everybody is included just as they are. And ‘we’ are a society of intersections, which explains why there are sometimes tensions between us, why there are hierarchies and ambivalent narratives. For this reason it is important that we accept the contradictions arising from our differences. And literature can help us to better understand these. ♦

They live the beauty of difference – the cosplayers set a colourful sight at the weekend of Frankfurter Buchmesse 2024.



Hadija Haruna-Oelker is a journalist, radio news presenter and political scientist. Her journalism focuses on social issues, migration, racism and intersectional perspectives. She is co-translator of Amanda Gorman’s *The Hill We Climb*. Her first memoir, *Die Schönheit der Differenz*, was published in 2022.

The Five Most Beautiful Books of 2023

In the 'Most Beautiful German Books' competition, three expert juries chose 25 out of 602 submitted books which they considered to be exemplary in terms of their design, concept and production quality.



Guides, Non-Fiction

Frank Berzbach,
Jenna Gesse
Königswege zum Unglück
(Verlag Hermann Schmidt)



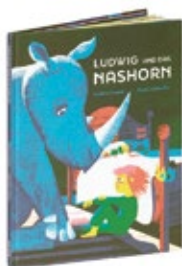
Art Books

Dimitri Hegemann,
Paul Hockenos,
Regina Baer
Tresor: True Stories
(Tresor Records)



Fiction

Thomas Köck a.o.
eure paläste sind leer (series)
(Suhrkamp)



Children's Books

Noemi Schneider
Ludwig und das Nashorn
(NordSüd)



Non-fiction

Gabriele Stötzer
Der lange Arm der Stasi
(Spector Books)

More information about the featured titles can be found here:
stiftung-buchkunst.de

Excellent Independents 2024

Two prizes awarded by the Kurt Wolff Foundation, which represents the interests of independent German publishers, honour the work of two fantastic female publishers:



© Klara-Emilia Kgdli



© Sarah-Eck

1 The 2024 Kurt Wolff Prize goes to Aviva Verlag, headed by Britta Jürgs, who, according to the jury, has 'brought the female voices of world literature to the fore with unflagging energy and great flair' for a quarter of a century. The result is a small universal library spanning epochs, continents and genres, in which the writings of Christine de Pizan stand alongside travelogues from China, feature articles alongside novels and biographies, and poets alongside visual artists and filmmakers. | **2** The 2024 Kurt Wolff Promotional Award goes to mikrotext, where publisher Nikola Richter has been bringing together short prose and novels, reportage and reflection, essays and song lyrics, poetry and social media poetry in an original mix of hardcover, paperback, trade paperback, e-book and podcast since 2013, thus promoting the contemporary character of German-language literature.

Heroes of Poetry



The poetry recommendations selected by poetry experts have been a guide through the jungle of new publications for several years. Now, for the first time, volumes of poetry suitable for children and young people have been added. Their lyrical mascot: the HaiKuh (a combination of shark and cow), inspired by the Japanese poetry form 'Haiku'. The poetry recommendations will be announced by 21st of March, World Poetry Day, at lyrik-empfehlungen.de

Book Heroines 2023



© Michael Jordan



© DASDI/Andreas Reeg



© Daniel Müller/Literaturhaus Hamburg

1 The jury recognised her as ‘one of the most radical poets of our time’ and honoured her for an oeuvre ‘that sets new standards for the art of poetry’. The Joseph Breitbach Prize 2023 for her literary oeuvre in German was awarded to Marion Poschmann. | **2** Jutta Person won the Johann-Heinrich-Merck-Preis for literary criticism and essay writing, awarded since 1964 by the Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung to authors of outstanding criticism and essays in the fields of literature, music, theatre, art, architecture and cultural policy. | **3** Dana Vowinkel won the generously endowed Maja Cassens Prize for German-language debuts for her novel *Gewässer im Ziplock* (‘The World in a Ziplock Bag’). Named after its founder, the prize is the only literature prize to be awarded by a jury of readers.

International Publishing in Frankfurt



© FBW/Nurettin Cisek

The Frankfurt Invitation Programme, founded in the 1970s, enables publishers from developing book nations from Africa, Asia, the Arab world, Latin America and the Caribbean to attend the Frankfurter Buchmesse. The aim of the project is to enable the publishers to take part in the industry’s largest gathering, so that they can form networks and operate in the book market worldwide in the medium and long term. The programme is supported by the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, and curated and organised by Frankfurter Buchmesse GmbH.

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ICH
ERWACHE.

NEW GRAPHIC NOVELS FROM GERMANY

Nothing Beats the Excitement of Real Life

New comics and graphic novels from Germany, Austria and Switzerland skilfully depict life crises, contemporary history and social challenges.

They illuminate the effects of historical events on people's lives. They analyse the relationship between individuals and their environment. They artfully envisage the dramas of everyday life. Increasingly, German-language comics and graphic novels are focusing on the factual instead of the fictional in the shape of biographies, autobiographies, reportage and autofiction.

One outstanding example is Anke Feuchtenberger's *Genossin Kuckuck*. This graphic novel – made up of a set of interlocking episodes – is autobiographically inspired. The artist, who was born in East Berlin in 1963, tells the story of a girl growing up in an East German village in the 1960s through a combination of seemingly realistic passages and dream-fantasy sequences.

One of the most powerful graphic novels on long-term historical trauma is Barbara Yelin's *Emmie Arbel. Die Farbe der Erinnerung*. Based on the life story of Holocaust survivor Emmie Arbel, it uses ink and colour-pencil illustrations to explore

conversations between the two women about the National Socialist and post-war eras, as well as the lifelong effects of Arbel's experiences.

Comics make the invisible visible

The anthology *Gerne würdest du allen so viel sagen* also traces the long-term consequences of twentieth-century upheavals. It features 16 graphic artists who have researched their family histories or historical figures.

In his autobiographical work *Fürchten lernen*, Swiss artist Nando von Arb provides remarkable insights into his experiences of living with anxiety. He combines realistic everyday scenes with the surreal – a visually intoxicating panopticon that skilfully exploits the possibilities of the comic art form.



[german-stories.de/
comics](https://german-stories.de/comics)

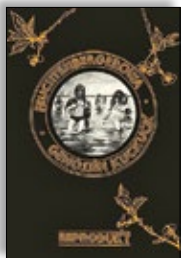
More information about the featured book collection can be found here.



Nando von Arb
Fürchten lernen
(Edition Moderne)



Growing up in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in the GDR era: Kerstin and Effi are best friends and attend the old village school together, where Kerstin's grandmother is a Russian teacher. From Anke Feuchtenberger, *Genossin Kuckuck* (Reprodukt)



Anke Feuchtenberger, *Genossin Kuckuck* (Reprodukt)



Lars von Törne is a journalist at Berlin's newspaper *Der Tagespiegel*, responsible for national and international reporting as well as comics and graphic novels. He has been a jury member for several comics and graphic novel awards.

Focusing on the factual instead of the fictional

Refugees' struggles to survive as they journey to the EU and those involved in Mediterranean sea rescues are the subject of Adrian Pourviseh's reportage comic *Das Schimmern der See*. In realistically drawn watercolour-style images, the author, who is based in Marburg, relates his experiences as a helper on one such mission.

Ralf König's humorous comic strips about Konrad and Paul may be fictional, but they are inspired by his own daily life. The Cologne cartoonist's latest collection is entitled *Abba Hallo!* Here, König takes an entertaining look at the effects of aging and the Covid-19 crisis on his protagonists, whose life stories he has been tracing since 1990.

Lisa Frühbeis's book *Der Zeitraum* explores the

conflict between self-realisation, family responsibilities and economic constraints. Using a blend of semi-realistic and fantastical scenes, the Munich artist tells the story of a single mother who gains a new perspective on life following a major crisis.

Tragic anti-heroes are often at the heart of Franz Suess's stories. Social outsiders, the marginalised, and those looking for happiness are also key figures in the Austrian artist's latest comic book, *Diebe und Laien*.

The manga series *Kiela und das letzte Geleit*, by Cologne-based artist Sozan Coskun, explores how society handles the subject of death. Inspired by Japanese role models, it tells the story of young Kiela, who longs to make contact with her dead brother.

It's also a matter of life and death in *Ein verdammter Handschlag*. In this fast-paced action story, a petty criminal's pact with the devil is the start of an entertaining adventure, told with hearty humour and innovative visuals by Matze Ross and Jan Bintakies. ♦



'My birthday calendar. But I also write in when someone dies.'
 From: Barbara Yelin, Emmie Arbel. Die Farbe der Erinnerung (Reprodukt)



Barbara Yelin
 Emmie Arbel.
 Die Farbe der Erinnerung
 (Reprodukt)



Franz Süss
 Diebe und Laien
 (Avant)



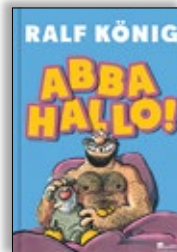
Adrian Pourviseh
 Das Schimmern der See
 (Avant)



Sozan Coskun
 Kiela und das letzte Geleit
 (Altraverse)



Gertraud Gassner
 Gerne würdest du allen so viel sagen
 (Avant)



Ralf König
 Abba Hallo!
 (Rowolt)



Lisa Frühbeis
 Der Zeitraum
 (Carlsen)



Matze Ross,
 Jan Bintakies
 Ein verdammter Handschlag
 (Splitter)

ARCHITECTURAL BOOK AWARD

<https://dam-online.de/en/program/architecture-prizes/dam-architectural-book-award/>

The Frankfurter Buchmesse and Deutsches Architekturmuseum (DAM) are presenting the jointly initiated international DAM Architectural Book Award for the fourteenth time. This prize, the only one of its kind and now highly regarded, honours the best architectural books of the year. 102 architectural and art book publishers from all over the world accepted the joint invitation to participate. A jury made up of external experts and representatives of DAM met to select the year's ten best architectural books from 245 entries. They based their decision on criteria such as design, content, quality of material and finishing, innovation, and topicality. ♦

Axel Simon (ed.)
Armando Ruinelli
Architekten.
Bauten 1982–2022.
Leggere il tempo
(Park Books)

Meret Wandeler,
Ulrich Görlich,
Caspar Schärer (ed.)
Stadtwerdung im Zeitraffer
(Scheidegger & Spiess)

Annette Spiro,
Elizabeta Radi,
Florian Schrott (ed.)
Innenputz
(Park Books)

ICOMOS Suisse
Arbeitsgruppe System & Serie (ed.)
System & Serie. Systembau
in der Schweiz – Geschichte
und Erhaltung
(gta Verlag ETH Zürich)

Charlotte Bofinger,
Andreas Ruby,
David Vaner
Besser als neu.
(Ruby Press)





IBA Thüringen (ed.)
StadtLand Projekte.
(M Books)



IBA Thüringen (ed.)
StadtLand
Perspektiven.
(M Books)



Elli Mosayebi, Michael
Kraus (ed.)
The Renewal of Dwelling.
European Housing
Construction 1945-1975
(Triest Verlag)



Hochschule Luzern,
Institut für Architektur,
Kompetenzzentrum
Typologie und Planung (ed.)
Atlas des
Dazwischenwohnens.
(Park Books)



Henrik Spohler,
Gerbrand Bakker (ed.)
Flatlands
(Hartmann Books)

Books That Travel 2024

Great stories travel and translate well



[german-stories.de/
travel-24](https://german-stories.de/travel-24)

More information about the featured book collection can be found [here](https://german-stories.de/travel-24).

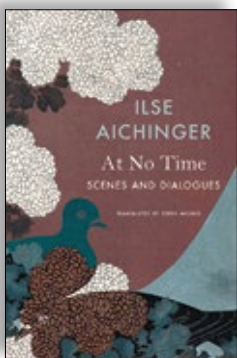


Sarah Hemens is the Project Director of New Books in German, which promotes German-language literature for translation into English in the UK, USA, and beyond.

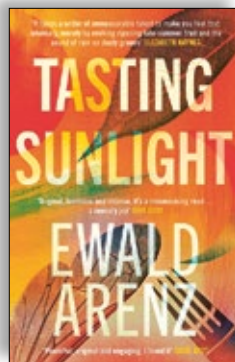
Promoting literary translation fosters cultural exchange and enriches the global literary landscape. There are several tools to help books travel across linguistic borders. These include recognition and awards for translators and translated fiction and non-fiction books; educational initiatives that bring literary translation to schools and universities; translation grants and fellowships; book festivals, books fairs – especially those with Guest of Honour programmes – and literary events; collaborations between publishers in different countries; government-funded translation programmes; translators residencies; translators associations and initiatives; and book clubs that focus on translated literature. Perhaps you can think of a few more.

These tools can all be harnessed to help create a more inclusive and diverse literary landscape that reflects the richness of global storytelling. Promoting literary translation is a celebration of cultural diversity and an investment in fostering understanding and empathy across borders. In this spirit, we are happy to present below a selection of books translated into English from German that have recently been published. Let's raise a glass to the translators, publishers, advocates, librarians, and all those who work in the promotion of translated literature, mining for German-language gems they can bring to a broader audience through translation into English. Prost! ♦

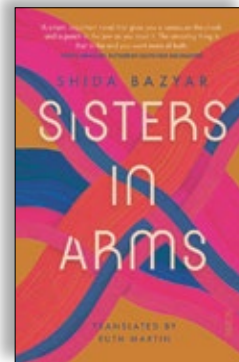
FICTION



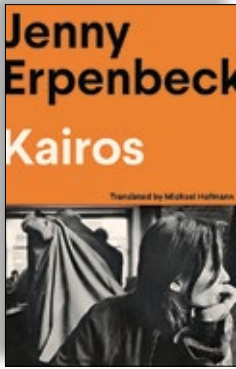
Ilse Aichinger
Zu keiner Stunde
(S. Fischer)
T: Steph Morris
Dramatic sketches full of surprising twists and turns from a major twentieth-century German-language author and member of the Gruppe 47 writers' group.



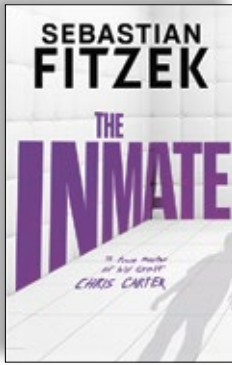
Ewald Arenz
Alte Sorten
(DuMont)
T: Rachel Ward
An extraordinary bond develops between an angry teenage runaway and a middle-aged woman running a large farm on her own. Three years on the German Bestseller List!



Shida Bazayr
Drei Kameradinnen
(Kiepenheuer & Witsch)
T: Ruth Martin
An explosive feminist and anti-racist novel about the importance of friendship. For fans of Elena Ferrante, Zadie Smith and Kamila Shamsie.



Jenny Erpenbeck
Kairos
(Penguin)
T: Michael Hofmann
From a prize-winning German writer, this is the intimate and devastating story of two lovers and the ruins of a relationship during the declining GDR.



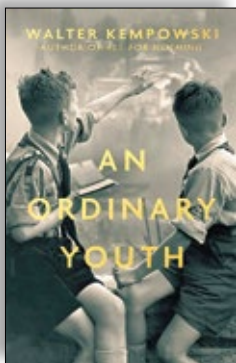
Sebastian Fitzek
Der Insasse
(Droemer Knaur)
T: Jamie Bulloch
A missing child. A desperate father. A terrible secret. Bestselling author Sebastian Fitzek sends the reader on an ingeniously disturbing journey with his new psychological thriller.



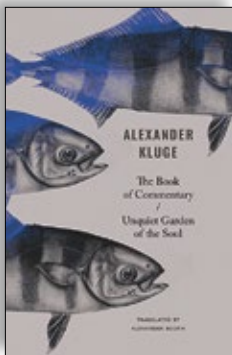
Dana Grigorcea
Die nicht sterben
(Penguin)
T: Imogen Taylor
Winner of the Swiss Book Prize and nominated for the German Book Prize, this book set in post-Communist Romania is an atmospheric tale of revenge and extremism.

Will you come to my funeral?
She looks down at her coffee cup in front of her and says nothing.
Will you come to my funeral, he says again?
Why funeral – you're alive, she says.

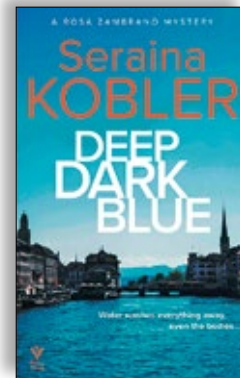
Jenny Erpenbeck, *Kairos*, translated by Michael Hofmann



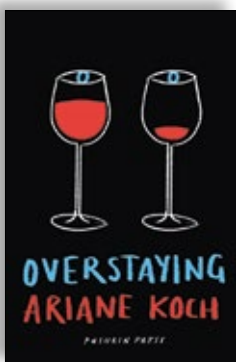
Walter Kempowski
Alles umsonst
(Penguin)
T: Michael Lipkin
A meticulous chronicle of daily life in 1930s Germany, unnerving for the warmth, humour and empathy with which Kempowski imbues his hometown.



Alexander Kluge
Das Buch der Kommentare / Unruhiger Garten der Seele
(Suhrkamp)
T: Alexander Booth
A highly engaging exploration of existential questions, written in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic.



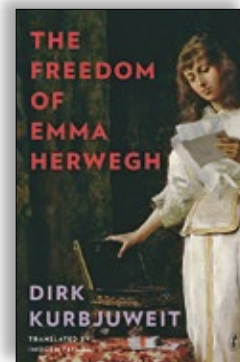
Seraina Kobler
Tiefes, dunkles Blau
(Diogenes)
T: Alex Roesch
An atmospheric, contemporary police procedural set on Lake Zurich, introducing detective Rosa Zambrano.



Ariane Koch
Die Aufdrängung
(Suhrkamp)
T: Damion Searls
'Comparing this magnificent first novel to the great Kafka does it no disservice – on the contrary.' Neue Zürcher Zeitung



Judith Kuckart
Kein Sturm, nur Wetter
(DuMont)
T: Alexander Booth
An engaging romance focusing on disparate ages of lovers. 'Kuckart is one of the most brilliant storytellers in contemporary German literature.' WDR



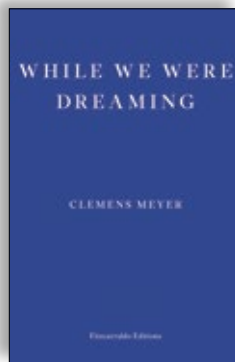
Dirk Kurbjuweit
Die Freiheit der Emma Herwegh
(Hanser)
T: Imogen Taylor
A gripping novel based on the life of the revolutionary woman who joined the armed troops that brought the revolution from France to Germany in 1848.

Ane Beaumanoir is but one of her names. She exists, indeed she does, not only in these pages, but also, to be precise, in Dieulefit, a village – ‘God-made-it’ – in south-eastern France. Shes does not believe in God, but He no doubt believes in her. And if He does exist, then surely He made Anne.

Anne Weber, *Epic Annette. A Heroine's Tale*, translated by Tess Lewis



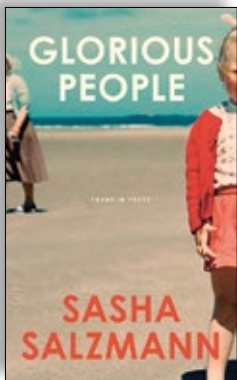
Alexander Lernet-Holenia
Ich war Jack Mortimer
(S. Fischer)
T: Ignat Avsey
A taxi-driver in 1930s Vienna impersonates a murder victim, and is dropped into a dangerous spiral. This book has been filmed twice.



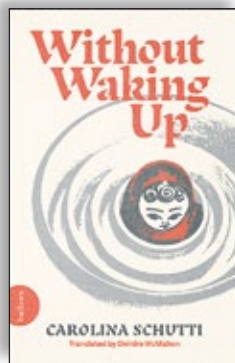
Clemens Meyer
Als wir träumten
(S. Fischer)
T: Katy Derbyshire
'German literature has not seen such a debut for a long time, a book full of rage, sadness, pathos and superstition.' FAZ



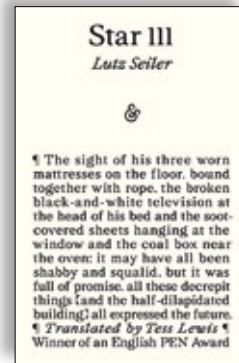
Brigitte Reimann
Die Geschwister
(Aufbau)
T: Lucy Jones
This fervid, ground-breaking novel, written when Reimann was only twenty-seven, remains one of the cult classics of East German literature.



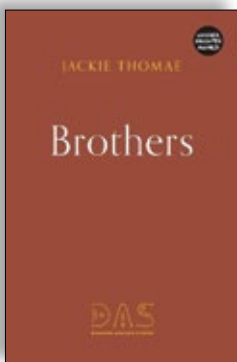
Sasha Salzmänn
Im Menschen muss alles herrlich sein
(Suhrkamp)
T: Imogen Taylor
In a story that spans generations, Salzmänn creates a vivid depiction of how the collapse of the Soviet Union reverberated through the lives of ordinary people.



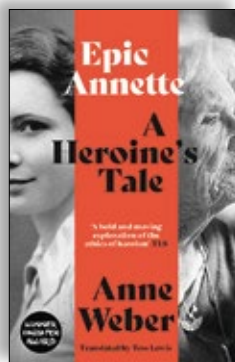
Carolina Schutti
Einmal muss ich über weiches Gras gelaufen sein
(Otto Müller)
T: Deirdre McMahon
'Dreamy, lyrical and richly evocative, Without Waking Up is a Matryoshka doll of a novel, revealing itself slowly but powerfully.' Jan Carson, Author



Lutz Seiler
Stern 111
(Suhrkamp)
T: Tess Lewis
The German best-selling novel tells of the moment of idealism and upheaval after the Fall of the Berlin Wall. Winner of the 2020 Leipzig Book Fair Prize.



Jackie Thomae
Brüder
(Hanser Berlin)
T: Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp
'How can one write so accurately and coolly about men? ... The German present, perceptive and light.' Die Zeit

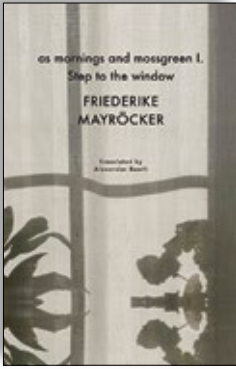


Anne Weber
Annette, ein Heldinnenepos
(Matthes & Seitz)
T: Tess Lewis
The true story of a medical student who joined the French Resistance and saved the lives of two Jewish children. Winner of the German Book Prize in 2020.

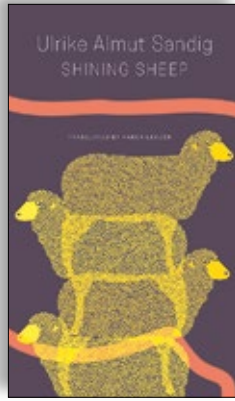


Juli Zeh
Über Menschen
(Luchterhand)
T: Alta L. Price
Germany's bestselling author Juli Zeh's novel takes place in the middle of lockdown in spring 2020 and subtly describes the social and very private consequences of the pandemic.

POETRY

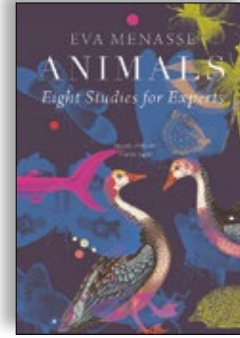


Friederike Mayröcker
da ich morgens und moosgrün.
Ans Fenster trete
 (Suhrkamp)
 T: Alexander Booth
 Austrian poet Mayröcker is widely considered one of the most important European poets of the 20th and 21st centuries.



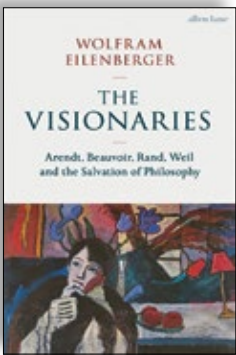
Ulrike Almut Sandig
Leuchtende Schafe
 (Schöffling)
 T: Karen Leeder
 In Ulrike Almut Sandig's latest volume of poetry, it is only a leap from the creation of the world to the symphony of the Berlin metropolis.

SHORT STORIES

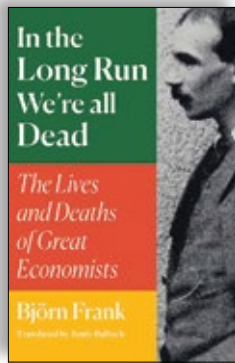


Eva Menasse
Tiere für Fortgeschrittene
 (Kiepenheuer & Witsch)
 T: Simon Pare
 A collection of unique, profound, and witty short stories that relate animals' peculiarities to human attitudes.

NON-FICTION



Wolfram Eilenberger
Feuer der Freiheit
 (Klett-Cotta)
 T: Shaun Whiteside
 de Beauvoir, Arendt, Weil and Rand: Wolfram Eilenberger describes the dramatic lives of the most influential female philosophers of the 20th century.



Björn Frank
Zu Keynes passt das nicht
 (Berenberg)
 T: Jamie Bullock
 Frank tells us about the lives of great economists and how they developed the theories for which they became famous, in a style that is engaging, irreverent and comic.

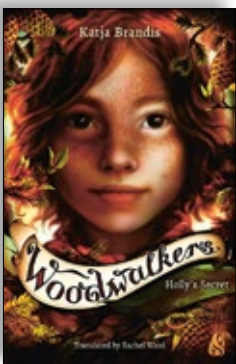


Florian Illies
Liebe in Zeiten des Hasses
 (S. Fischer)
 T: Simon Pare
 Illies interweaves some of the greatest love stories of the 1930s with the darkening backdrop of fascism in Europe, and brings history to vivid life.

On 9 June 2013, the Swedish biochemist Alf Stefan Andersson, professor at the University of Houston, was battered to death by his girlfriend with her stiletto heel. That's one way for an academic to get into the papers, I thought at the time. But a pointless one – it was a news item, not a story, and it certainly didn't teach you anything about biochemistry.

Björn Frank, In the Long Run We're All Dead. The Lives and Deaths of Great Economists, translated by Jamie Bullock

CHILDREN/YA



Katja Brandis
Woodwalkers (3). Hollys Geheimnis
 (Arena)
 T: Rachel Ward
 The third book in The Woodwalkers, a shapeshifting adventure series.



Kai Lüftner, Wiebke Rauers (ill.)
Marie Käferchen
 (NordSüd)
 T: Marshall Yarborough



Julya Rabinowich
Dazwischen: Ich
 (Hanser)
 T: Claire Storey
 Madina's family have fled war to seek asylum in Europe and begin a hopeful new life. Can Madina find the path that's right for her?



Life, Love and Death

These days, German children's and young adult books are tackling life's big questions. In addressing these difficult subjects, they raise issues that are far from straightforward and tackle them head-on. They create space for discussion, suggest solutions and offer a helping hand to young readers, letting them know: you are not alone with your problem.



[german-stories.de/
cbot-2024-1](https://german-stories.de/cbot-2024-1)

Further information about the Frankfurter Buchmesse's biannual collection 'Children's Books on Tour' can be found here.



Julia Rosenkranz,
Nele Palmtag (ill.)
**Als Mama einmal
unsichtbar war**
(Klett)

4+

Day-to-day friction between children and parents, stressful situations with friends and family, disability, illness and death – more than ever, children's literature is art and problem-solver at the same time. In its diversity, it no longer speaks exclusively to children.

Lonely, different, creative?

Physical limitations, emotional challenges and other problems – these are 'normal' and all part of life, but to get through them it helps to have friends! Even when it's just a minor physical difficulty like being short-sighted, as in *Winifred will mehr sehen*. Winifred the rhino is so cumbersome that she's a danger to her tiny friends the ants. For not entirely selfless reasons, the ants decide to help Winifred construct a pair of glasses. A picture book that shows even the youngest readers how solidarity and creativity can help us to help each other.

In *Tagebuch eines Überfliegers*, Tomke meets Delia and discovers that dancing can actually help with

a stutter! Delia has no preconceptions, and with her approach to solving problems and her creative offer of friendship she helps others to overcome all kinds of hurdles. Tender and powerful writing and illustrations make for a book that serves as a first-aid kit for strengths and weaknesses.

The same is true of *Sieben Tage Mo*. 13-year-old Mo is 'too tall' for her age, and seemingly also for her first kiss. When a neighbour is dying, the question of what life really means leads to a friendship that provides many answers. A profound yet accessible read.

Ice swimming is like therapy for 13-year-old Anni after her uncle's death rocks her family to its core. When Fred, who is the same age as her, comes to stay in the village, their chance encounter quickly turns into something more – because Fred is different. Sensitive, creative, trans. Readers will take all the protagonists of *Fred und ich* to their hearts.

In *Zimteis mit Honig*, ice cream flavours symbolise difference. And when primary-schooler Moritz is the only one in his class to befriend waif and stray Mila, he sees the impact of homelessness and poverty on other people – and discovers empathy and solicitude in himself. A gentle book for all ages.



© 2023 Fischer Kinder- und Jugendbuch Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt am Main

Illustration by Marika Haensch from *Winifred will mehr sehen*

The difficult moments in life

Coping with loss begins with the everyday – and in *Nicht mehr da*, Pepe discovers that even a snowman can be a comforting friend. He starts off saying he ‘can’t do anything’ with the snowman. But when the snow melts, he has to learn how to deal with the pain of saying goodbye. A poetic illustrated story which addresses fundamental human emotions in a way that speaks even to very young readers. The fact that illness changes not only the sufferer but their whole family is illustrated by the picture book *Als Mama einmal unsichtbar war*. Little Hennie sees how cancer – which she thinks of as a kind of animal – is changing her mum, making her lose weight and causing her hair to fall out. And this makes both of them angry! The form of the book gives this difficult topic a lightness that is both comforting and illuminating. Grief is shown in all its facets, in a clear and unfiltered way, in the young adult book *Das ist doch einfach nur Scheiße*. The book deals with young people’s experiences of illness, accidents and death, and is designed to help its readers cope with bereavement.

The two creators of *Radieschen von unten* show that children’s books can approach the subject of death in a profound way but with a beautifully light touch. This children’s non-fiction book uses humour and exquisite illustrations to provide answers to questions about the last chapter of life. We have always known that irony can be comforting, and this book is a masterful example of that.

Another book that uses humour as a healer is *Trip mit Tropf*, a children’s graphic novel which is as dynamic as a film, as entertaining as a comic and also disarmingly funny. It shows that helping others is a fundamental part of life, as is stumbling and getting up again. The book does away with the

cliché ‘be kind’, and shows that getting healthy involves a lot of patience, unshakeable optimism, and a great deal of luck. A captivating and hugely entertaining drama.

Hostilities of all kinds

Racism, antisemitism, turf wars, enmities of all kinds – young adult literature is full of sources of conflict, and makes clear that tolerance is a precious commodity. *Kollektorgang* is set against a backdrop of high-rise buildings of the kind found in banlieues the world over. It tells the story of how a feud between rival gangs from different cultures ultimately proves fatal. A highly topical narrative full of hard-hitting literary insight, narrated from the perspective of a dead person.

Ausgerappt features simple language and lots of stereotypes, and paints an accessible portrait of a scenario involving bullying and exclusion, punctuated by plenty of humour. Entertaining, reassuring, relatable.

Racism and supposed tolerance are handled in a much more complex way in *Weißer Tränen*. A deeply intelligent book about a society that credits itself with being woke and open-minded. Relatable characters make this book a compelling coming-of-age novel.

Weil is a prize-winning book about responsibility, power and powerlessness, written by one of the most successful German authors working today. It has broad appeal to young people aged 14+.

For younger readers, *Der war’s* deals with the themes of law and justice in an accessible way. It clearly communicates things that are difficult to explain. And this too is an invaluable function of contemporary children’s and young adult literature: it answers many questions, thereby plugging the educational gap between home and school.

Self-confidence, superheroes, superpowers

It sometimes feels as if you need superpowers to cope with life and its challenges. Even young children know you can’t get these powers by drinking magic potions. And yet fairytale characters serve as very good translators for problems.



In imagination, mums are superheroes, whizzing through the corridors with a cordless vacuum cleaner. From: *Zimteis mit Honig*, illustration by Ulrike Möltken



4+



Ann Marie von Löw, Marika Haensch (ill.)
Winifred will mehr sehen (Fischer Sauerländer)

8+



Frauke Angel, Lilli L'Arronge (ill.)
Tagebuch eines Überfliegers (Tulipan)
Delia is really cool, so cool that Tomke even forgets to stutter sometimes. But even when he does stutter, it doesn't matter!



Oliver Scherz, Philip Waechter (ill.)
Sieben Tage Mo (Thienemann)
Bestselling author Oliver Scherz – once again full of empathy for his young protagonists. With pictures by renowned illustrator Philip Waechter

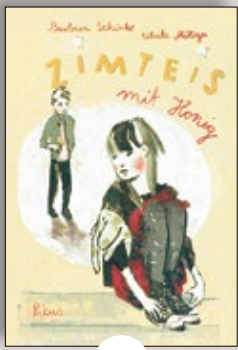
11+

11+



Lena Hach
Fred und ich (Beltz & Gelberg)
A sensitive, life-affirming novel about first love in which everything feels new and wonderful.

6+



Barbara Schinko, Ulrike Möltgen (ill.)
Zimteis mit Honig (Picus)
Barbara Schinko's novel deals with homelessness in a child-friendly way: by means of a captivating story full of empathy and beautiful illustrations.

4+

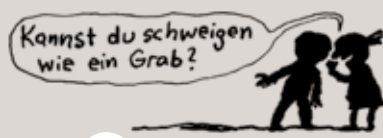


Eva Dax, Sabine Dully (ill.)
Nicht mehr da (Knesebeck)
This picture book explains sensitively to children how to deal with the loss of a beloved person who never completely disappears.

12+



Tina Geldmacher, Angela Grauman (ill.)
Das ist doch einfach nur Scheiße (Ovis)
Everyone experiences grief. But children and young people often deal with grief in a particularly honest way.



8+



Katharina von der Gathen, Anke Kuhl (ill.)
Radieschen von unten (Klett)
Colourful book about death and life.

12+



Josephine Mark
Trip mit Tropf (Kiebitz)
An unusual series of events on a fast-paced road trip with everything that entails: trigger-happy hunters, cheap motels, bears, freezing IV bags.

14+



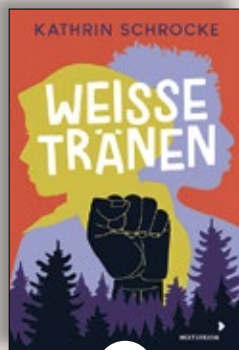
David Blum
Kollektorgang (Beltz & Gelberg)
A novel with an unusual narrative perspective: the protagonist narrates from beyond the grave ... Winner of the Peter-Härtling Prize 2023.

11+



Stephan Knösel, Marek Bláha (ill.)
Ausgerappt (Beltz & Gelberg)
A turbulent story with lots of humour and heart, in which friendship wins out in the end – even for children who don't find reading easy.

11+



Kathrin Schrocke
Weiße Tränen (Mixtvision)
A highly topical, evocative book for young people that raises awareness of discrimination without pointing the finger.

14+



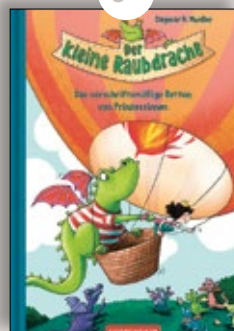
Martin Muser
Weil
(Carlsen)
The spine-tingling YA debut by a successful children's book author: a perfidious game of power, dark and oppressive. Fans of thrillers will devour Because.

8+



Juli Zeh,
Elisa Hoven,
Lena Hesse (ill.)
Der war's
(Carlsen)
'Sensationally good children's book about justice' (Süddeutsche Zeitung, Ronen Steinke)

6+



Dagmar H. Mueller,
Sabine Rothmund (ill.)
Der kleine Raubdrache
(Copperrath)
The little robbing dragon makes a tongue-in-cheek demand for dragons and princesses to be allowed to decide their own futures.



© Lena Hesse/Carlsen Verlag



Daniel Fehr,
Sébastien Mourrain (ill.)
So kam das mit den Drachen
(Thienemann)
How to get rid of a boring present – and suddenly own a giant, fire-breathing dragon.

4+



Franz Hohler,
Kathrin Schärer (ill.)
Das kleine Wildschwein und die Krähen
(Hanser)
When the little boar falls ill, only chestnuts from Paris can help, says the doctor. It's good to have friends who can fly ...

3+



Martin Baltscheit
Papa liest vor
(dtv)
A story about the magic of reading (aloud) and the magic of childhood. Touching, funny and beautifully told – the perfect gift.

4+



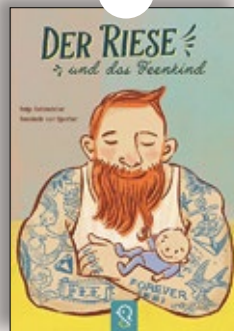
Willi Weitzel,
Verena Wugeditsch (ill.)
Der Frieden ist ausgebrochen
(Bohem)
Willi Weitzel won the Grand Prize of the Academy for Children's and Youth Literature in 2022.

4+



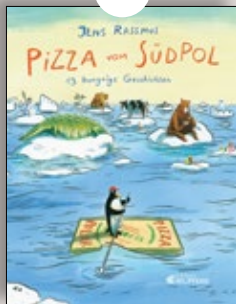
Martin Fuchs,
Hildegard Müller (ill.)
Klein ist fein, sagt die Maus
(Annette Betz)
They are an unequal duo – big lion and little mouse – and they complement each other perfectly.

3+



Antje Schmelcher,
Annabelle von Sperber (ill.)
Der Riese und das Feenkind
(klein & groß)
The giant embarks on the biggest adventure of his life and becomes a father. It's a good thing he has the fairy by his side.

4+



Jens Rasmus
Pizza vom Südpol
(G & G Verlag)
13 read-aloud stories about food, impossible ideas combined with captivating pictures. A feast for the eyes and fun for the whole family.

5+



Johnny Bauer,
Stephan Lomp (ill.)
Fang
(Annette Betz)
Animal researcher Darko is not allowed outside, so he decides to hang his fishing rod out of the window from the 8th floor.

4+



Jörg Isermeyer,
Kai Schüttler (ill.)
Mo und die coolste Oma der Welt
(Fischer Sauerländer)
A funny and insightful book with an unusual duo and exciting everyday adventures.

6+



Katharina
Grossmann-Hensel
**Sachen kaputt
machen**
(Annette Betz)
BOOM, CRACK,
DONG ... all about
the great joy of
breaking stuff.

4+



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In *Der kleine Raubdrache* we see a task turn into a real challenge. The fact that the story plays out in a land of dragons and princesses is no obstacle to this – parallels with children's real lives can be drawn in a highly entertaining way. The dragon in *So kam das mit dem Drachen* also acts as a translator of problems. The principle of bartering becomes a solution in this magical, warm-hearted book rich in life experience.

You don't need superpowers – just the right friends, discovers the family of the poorly pig in *Das kleine Wildschwein und die Krähen*. In this book, help comes from above! And the lovingly drawn illustrations lend a lightness to the story.

In *Papa liest vor* we see how sometimes, all you need in order to feel better is a book and someone to read it to you. Ah, if only every child had a superdad like this one, solving all of life's problems with a book in his hand. Short texts and large pictures appeal to young readers.

A similar superdad features in *Der Frieden ist ausgebrochen*. In a conversation between parent and child, the issue of conflict is explored in a sensitive way, making clear how difficult it is to keep the peace – however big or small you are.

Klein ist fein, sagt die Maus has an encouraging message for very young readers: you don't have to be big to help others. But some powerful characters have yet to be convinced of that.

Der Riese und das Feenkind also has a positive message for parents and children: that superpowers are created, above all, by love. This very modern family shows that different talents are important at different stages of life – but the most important thing is to go through life together and to be tolerant with each other, so that the family remains a reliable source of happiness.

Parenting today – having the courage to face the unexpected

'Me squash yours, squaaash!'
'Me squash yours,
squashy-squash!'
'You squashed mine!'

'Buttspercengame and
stick-fighting ...'

If children are to grow up confident and capable of handling whatever life throws at them, they need creative and loving parents. Tolerance is a vital part of this, as shown by *Sachen kaputt machen*. The book communicates in a colourful, refreshing and reassuring way that good can come out of chaos, that destruction also means a fresh start, and that breaking things can help us to be creative.

Pizza vom Südpol lovingly lampoons the sometimes bizarre eating habits in families. It also features a subtle critique of a common bad habit: ordering takeaways all the time!

The little protagonist of *Fang* demonstrates how boredom is integral to the formation of personality. Bad weather and an overprotective mother are no excuse not to reach your full potential.

Sometimes your own family doesn't fit the template for a perfect life, which is why Mo in *Mo und die coolste Oma der Welt* counts himself incredibly lucky when he gets to borrow a grandma. She is not at all anxious, and thus the opposite of Mo's 'pedagogically challenged' parents.

The questions and answers in the books mentioned here are as varied as their narratives and illustrations, and yet they all have one thing in common: they are empathetic, highly entertaining – and take children and young people, and the lives they live today, very seriously. ♦



Christine Paxmann
is the author of numerous books for adults and children and the publisher of *Eselsohr*, one of the most important German-language journals for children's and young adult literature.

READING IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

GERMAN BOOKSHOPS ABROAD

Thanks to the internet, we can now buy books in many different languages all over the world. But how much nicer it is to be able to browse them in person! These three bookshops in Brussels, Paris and Prague take on the wonderful challenge of making German books available to interested readers.



© Wim Wenders

Many celebrities gathered on Rue Bonaparte for the opening in November 2023: actress Hannah Schygulla sat between Nobel Prize winner Peter Handke and publisher Lothar Schirmer – and director Wim Wenders took a photo of Sophie Semin-Handke in front of her bookshop.

Le neuvième pays
84 Rue Bonaparte
75006 Paris
[facebook.com/
leneuviemepays](https://www.facebook.com/leneuviemepays)

‘LE NEUVIÈME PAYS’ IN PARIS

Since Sophie Semin-Handke opened ‘Le neuvième pays’ (The Ninth Country) near the Jardin du Luxembourg just a few weeks ago, Paris once again has its own German bookshop. At No. 84, Rue Bonaparte – a building with a historical aura, in the neighbourhood where Rainer Maria Rilke wrote his book on Rodin – she sells German-language books alongside their French translations, as well as French-language books and their German translations. Sophie Semin-Handke doesn’t simply plug current bestsellers: her selection bears her own personal touch. It features books by Ingeborg Bachmann and Franz Kafka, Marcel Beyer and Esther Kinsky, Cécile Wajsbrot and Anne Weber. And of course by Peter Handke, from whose novel *Die Wiederholung* (*Repetition*) the name ‘Le neuvième pays’ is taken. In it, he writes: ‘Long live storytelling. Storytelling must go on. Let the sun of storytelling shine forever over the ninth country, which cannot be destroyed until all life has breathed its last.’ What better guiding principle could there be for a bookshop? ♦



‘To read is to enjoy’. The Gutenberg Bookshop has the right book for every taste.

THE GUTENBERG BOOKSHOP IN BRUSSELS

‘We love reading and we love inspiring others to read.’ And this is what the Gutenberg Bookshop has been doing ever since it was founded in 1981. Since 2017 it has been located in Kraainem, on the eastern edge of Brussels. It offers readers a broad selection of German-language books including new releases and current bestsellers, but also classics, non-fiction books on all kinds of subjects, language-learning books and travel guides – not forgetting a diverse range of children’s and young adult literature. The bookseller team is committed to promoting young talent – writers and books that deserve to be discovered. The bookshop also includes an antiquarian section which is particularly popular with collectors and fans of collector’s editions. The booksellers maintain this section with great care and attention, and it boasts some very rare editions.



Vitalis’ little bookshop is housed in one of Prague’s most significant literary sites: this romantic little house was where Franz Kafka, then aged 33, withdrew to write.

THE VITALIS BOOKSHOP IN PRAGUE

The Vitalis Bookshop at No. 22 Golden Lane, inside Prague Castle, is a literary address of the first order. Franz Kafka once lived and wrote in this picturesque little house, and today it is home to a wealth of literature from Prague. Of course, Kafka’s books hold a special attraction within these walls, and there are also plenty of other gifts to gladden a Kafka fan’s heart, from Kafka bookmarks to Kafka notebooks. This was where, during the winter of 1916–17, Franz Kafka wrote the short stories which would be published in 1920 under the title *Ein Landarzt (A Country Doctor)*. Vitalis’s own illustrated ‘Prague edition’, featuring an informative afterword about the genesis of the story, is available in several languages. But Kafka is not the only writer to be found here – the shelves are also home to Jan Neruda, Gustav Meyrink, Rainer Maria Rilke and others. So why not pay a visit to Golden Lane and browse the Vitalis bookshop. You won’t regret it!



The 3rd June 2024 marks the anniversary of the death of Franz Kafka. He and his legacy will be commemorated in many places and at many events, in books, blogs, podcasts and even video games, emphasising once again how topical and inspiring his texts and his reflections on life and art are.

Vitalis Bücherstube
Zlatá ulička 22
118 00 Praha 1
vitalis-verlag.com

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Stokkel
gutenbergbuch
handlung.be

My Germany is Frankfurt am Main

A Column by Artur Becker



© Triestino_Abe



Artur Becker

was born in Poland in 1968 and has lived in Germany since 1985. He is the author of more than 20 books, most recently the novel *Drang nach Osten* (2019), the poetry volume *Hinter den Säulen des Herakles* (2023), and the essay collection *Schwarze Servietten auf meinem Herzen. Aus den Leben der Kosmopolen* (2024).

On 21 November 2023, I flew from Tokyo back to Frankfurt am Main – back home. Crammed into economy class like a sardine in a can, I couldn't wait to get the S-Bahn into the city after landing at Frankfurt Airport: to Hotel Lindley in the Ostend district, where I've lived for the past three years. I come from the East, you see, from Poland, and fate led me symbolically to Frankfurt's Osthafen – its East Harbour – and to Goethe and Adorno, who both called this city home.

To all intents and purposes, Frankfurt is Europe's most central stopping point. Every nomad has to pass through this transit country and make a stop here. For me, Frankfurt is Germany's secret capital, a city where cosmopolitanism flourishes – here I often forget that I actually live in Germany. My anarchic soul also likes that I can head to the airport and make a quick get-away anytime I please, and hotel life reinforces my sense of being free as a bird. And that's the key word: for me, Germany represents freedom. I'm not a nostalgic – I'm a child of the Cold War, after all – but when I moved to West Germany from the Polish People's Republic in 1985, it really was the West we had dreamed of back in the Eastern Bloc, with colourful shopping arcades where you could buy Pink Floyd records and Casio watches. In short, you didn't have to answer politically to any regime here. And after 1989, after Reunification, the twentieth century so tragically dominated by Germany finally came to a close, which was a blessing for those of us from Central Eastern Europe too, where Soviet communism had raged – despite the many fears that history would repeat itself.

But if you fancy getting to know the imperial city of Frankfurt better, like in a quiz show, I recommend taking the number 11 tram from Hauptbahnhof, the central train station, to Osthafen: in just twenty-one minutes you'll receive a wide-ranging tour of German history. The station district never sleeps of course, but before long you reach Willy-Brandt-Platz, which honours the Chancellor who knelt before the Ghetto Uprising Memorial in Warsaw. Here you'll also find the Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt's main theatre, while Hörl's Euro Sculpture struts its stuff across the way. The medieval Karmeliterkloster (Carmelite monastery) is next, then the venerable Römer-Platz and Paulskirche, where German democracy began in 1848. After that you're taken past Börneplatz and Judengasse: Ludwig Börne (1786–1837) was a sharp-tongued journalist and political commentator, and Frankfurt's Judengasse, which now houses its own museum, was one of the cradles of German Jewry. Allerheiligentor follows, with its links to the Thirty Years' War, and then you're swinging by the European Central Bank, our tower of debt. At the Osthafen stop, however, Hotel Lindley awaits, where I'll plan my next escape to Tokyo or Venice. And my return to Frankfurt, our international enclave. ♦

Books and book trade in figures

Garden of Books

Data for Germany 2022, change compared to the previous year in brackets

Specialist media
8.33 billion (+4.2%)

Computer and video games
6.38 billion (+3.5%)

Film industry
3.83 billion (+17.2%)

Music industry
2.07 billion (+6.1%)

Book market
9.44 billion (-1.9%)

Industries in comparison
Sales in euros

How much do new books cost?
Hardcover only

Fiction
18.63 Euro (+4.8%)

Children's and young adult
13.54 Euro (+5.0%)

Textbooks
19.92 Euro (+11.8%)

China
825 (share: 12.4%)

Italy
374 (share: 5.6%)

Czech Republic
336 (share: 5.0%)

Translations into German: most important languages

Number of translations (first release)
9,403 (+8.0%)

English
5,675 (share: 60.4%)

French
999 (share: 10.6%)

Japanese
1,150 (share: 12.2%)

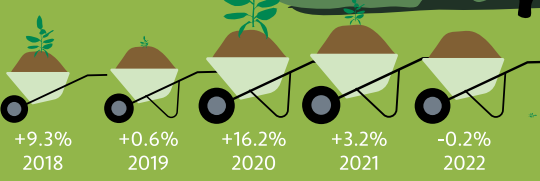
Licenses sold abroad: most important countries

Number of agreements (first release)
6,655 (-14.4%)

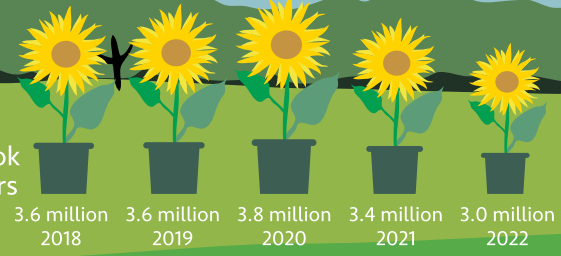
E-book market

Private use, not incl. textbooks and reference books

Sales trend e-books compared to the previous year



E-book buyers



Market for digital audiobooks

Downloads +16.8% +16.9% +17.9%

Sales trend digital audiobooks compared to the previous year

Streaming +56.3% +31.9% +23.6%

Digital audiobook buyers

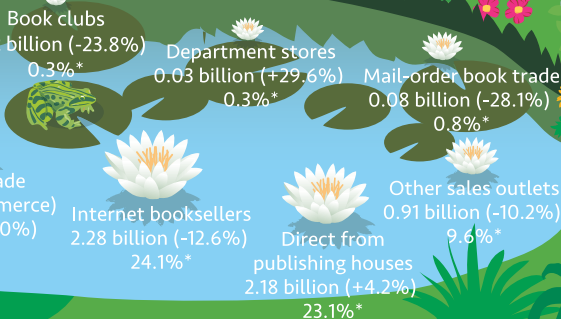


Product groups: share of turnover

Fiction: 34.0% (+4.4%)
Children's and young adult: 18.5% (-3.4%)
Companions: 13.0% (-8.2%)
Non-fiction: 10.4% (-9.2%)
Education & study guides: 10.6% (+2.5%)
Science: 9.0% (-13.6%)
Travel: 4.7% (+16.5%)

Share of turnover by sales channel

Sales in euros
Total turnover
9.44 billion (-1.9%)



About once a week / every 14 days

Women 18% Men 14% Women 44%

About once a month / less frequently

Men 23% Women 38% Men 63%

Book consumption: Who reads how often?

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FRANKFURTER
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16 – 20 OCTOBER 2024
GUEST OF HONOUR ITALY



Frankfurter Buchmesse 2024 **is Read!ng**

(→ Read / **Reflect** / Relate. ↙)

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