

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE FESTIVAL ODESSA – ENGLISH



ilo 09. international literature festival odesa

09.
international
literature festival
odesa

22—25 02 2024
in Bucharest

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Fondation
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G. Al. Ghandabov

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T&B Verusika Götz Berlin

litfestodessa.com

PROGRAM

Main location of the festival:

Goethe-Institut Bukarest
Calea Dorobanti 32
RO- 010573 Bukarest

Thursday, February 22

5 pm

Venue: Goethe-Institut Bukarest
Calea Dorobanti 32

Music: Johnny Bica

Welcome: Hans Ruprecht [CH], Ulrich Schreiber [D] Festival directors, Dr. Joachim Umlauf, Goethe Institut Bukarest [R]

Greeting: E.S. Domnul Igor Prokopchuk, Ambasadorul Ucrainei în România Laura Napolitano [I], EUNIC

Opening speech by Radu Vancu [R] A Humanity Whose Words Do Not Fail the Human

Barbarism does not have the last word, but literature does. In his speech, Radu Vancu outlines the Europe that needs to be created: a Europe in which words are not used to establish death or ideologies of extermination – but a Europe in which words bear witness against barbarism. Where words bear witness that people can be murdered – but not annihilated. Where we put our words at the service of our fellow human beings and not at the service of ideologies.

Moderation: Gabriel Horatiu Decuble

Language: English

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

6.30 pm

Philippe Sands [UK]: Genocide, Remembrance, Justice

In books such as “The Ratline” (2020) and “My Lviv” (2016), which won Book of the Year at the British Book Awards 2017, the lawyer and professor of international law reflects on the origins of genocide and crimes against humanity, partly based on his own family history. In his latest book about India, “The last colony” (2022), he also shows that colonialism has not yet been overcome.

Moderation: Marian Voicu

Language: English

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalesLiteraturfestivalOdesa>

8 pm

Poetry Night I

Paula Erizanu [MLD], Iya Kiva [UA], Vasyl Makhno [UA/ USA]

The journalist and writer Paula Erizanu (*1992 in Kishinau) refers to the political developments in her home country Moldova in her non-fiction books as well as in her poetry. As an editor, she has specialized in female poetry from her homeland.

Poet, translator and graphic designer Iya Kiva (*1984 in Donetsk), whose texts have been translated into over 15 languages, reflects on language and speechlessness, on identity and memory, on collective and personal experiences of war, trauma and uprooting.

The multi-award-winning poet, essayist and translator Vasyl Makhno (*1964 in Chortkiv) has published over fourteen collections of poetry in which he explores, among other things, the concepts of homeland and memory and reflects the polyphonic past of his place of origin, where Ukrainians, Poles, Jews and Roma once lived side by side.

Language: English, Ukrainian, Romanian

Moderation: Ernest Wichner

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalesLiteraturfestivalOdesa>

Friday, February 23

2 pm

Yuriy Vynnychuk [UA]

The author is considered the most versatile of Ukrainian writers, a tireless critic of the political system and representative of Galician literature, who reflects above all on the culture of remembrance and foresaw today's war in his works. His novels and short stories, plays and poetry make him a living legend of modern Ukrainian literature. In this discussion, he will present his novels "Tango of Death", "Malva Landa", "Lutetia" and "The Apothecary".

Moderation: Vasyl Makhno

Language: English

3:30 pm

Ariane von Graffenried [CH]: BABYLON PARK / 50 HERTZ

Award-winning author and spoken word performer Ariane von Graffenried, member of the duo "Fitzgerald & Rimini" and curator of the International Poetry Festival Basel, presents texts from "Babylon Park" (2027) and "50 Hertz" (2019). She playfully switches from the concrete to the poetic and between languages and dialects to sing the praises of unique female characters, literary landscapes, reality and fantasy.

Moderation: Jonas Lüscher

Language: English

5 pm

Jonas Lüscher [CH / D]: The populist planet – voices from a world in turmoil

In 2019 and 2020, Jonas Lüscher exchanged letters with seven intellectuals from around the world on the subject of populism. The result is a multifaceted conversation about the most diverse manifestations of populist movements. What unites populists around the world, what distinguishes them and what impact does this have on the realities of life in each case? Are the promises and temptations of populists similar everywhere? And if so, what kind of world and society do the populists promise?

Moderation: Joachim Umlauf

Language: English

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

6:30 pm

Norman Ohler [D]: THE TOTAL INTOXICATION / THE STRONGEST SUBSTANCE/ WAR ON DRUGS

Ohler's first non-fiction book "Der totale Rausch: Drogen im Dritten Reich" (2015), which has been translated into more than 30 languages and was on the New York Times bestseller list, describes the consequences of drug abuse among military and political leaders. His latest book, "The Strongest Substance" (2023), sheds light on the history of the development of LSD and differentiates between three functions of drugs: as an intoxicant, as a tool for mind control and as a cure.

Moderation: Eugen Hriscu

Language: English

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

8 pm

Daniel Kehlmann [D]: TYLL

In his novel, Kehlmann "draws up the panorama of a blatantly compassionless epoch in which human life counts for nothing (...) but sets a new tone of attentiveness to human misery". (Sigrid Löffler) At the beginning of the 17th century, the vagabond, showman and provocateur comes into conflict with the church and encounters the church.

On his wanderings through a country devastated by the religious wars, he encounters many human destinies that condense into an epic of the Thirty Years' War.

Moderation: Matei Martin [RO]

Language: English

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

Saturday, February 24

12 pm

WORLDWIDE READING OF UKRAINIAN LITERATURE

The worldwide readings continue! In Copenhagen, Erevan, Calcutta, Milan, Zaporizhia, Berlin and other cities, texts by Ukrainian authors will be read in Bucharest, including those by the poets Volodymyr Vakulenko, Victoria Amelina and Maksym Kryvtzov, who were killed in the war. In a film produced especially for the worldwide reading, Yuriy Andrukhovych, Svitlana Bondar, Andrei Kurkov, Marie Ilașenko, Iya Kiva, Dmytro Lazutkin, Halyna Kruk, Vasyl Makhno from Ukraine, Dan Sociu and Varujan Vosganian from Romania as well as Nora Bossong, Daniel Kehlmann and Jan Koneffke from Germany, among others, will read Ukrainian texts. We would like to thank the Goethe Institutes for their cooperation.

This event can be watched online, also after the festival

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

14.00 pm. online event from Odesa

LITERATURE ON WAR, WRITERS ABOUT WAR

As part of the IX International Literature Festival Odesa, we will talk about literature and war, about authors and numerous works that have appeared over the 10 years of struggle.

Poet and journalist Olena Huseinova, writer and soldier Bohdan Kolomyichuk, and writer and volunteer Halyna Litsur-Shchadey will talk about their experience of writing texts reflecting on the events of recent years.

We will also honour the memory of those authors who have died, but whose words live on in the ranks.

At the end of the talk, we will present a video for Halyna Litsur-Shchadey's text Nine Scattered Universes, created with the help of Suspilne Ivano-Frankivsk.

We really wanted to hold this event live in Odesa, but it didn't work out.

The event will be available online. Join us!

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalalliteraturefes7445>

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

Moderation: Svitlana Bondar

Language: Ukrainian

3 pm

Olivier Guez [F] about the past, present and future of Europe

The Strasbourg author and journalist Olivier Guez, who was honored with the German Film Prize for his screenplay "Der Staat gegen Fritz Bauer", discusses with the celebrated author Norman Ohler about used and missed opportunities in the realization of the dream of Europe in a time of profound political and cultural changes.

Moderation: Norman Ohler [D]

Language: English

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

4:30 pm

Film screening: SCARRED HEARTS

Director: Radu Jude

Introduction: Ernest Wichner

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

6:00 pm

Memory, Speak

Blecher (1909-1938): SCARRED HEARTS. Reading and conversation

This autobiographical novel from 1937 tells the story of a Romanian chemistry student in Paris who falls ill with bone tuberculosis and spends almost a year in a sanatorium on the Atlantic. He increasingly falls under the spell of the fascinating company of the sick, from which even the cured can hardly free themselves. "The paradox of all important art also applies here, in Blecher's wonderful prose: the misfortune so suggestively described becomes the reader's intellectual happiness." ("FAZ"). Ernest Wichner translates the novel into German.

Doris Mironescu [RO]

Moderation: Ernest Wichner [D]

Language: English, Romanian

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

7:30 pm

Poetry Night II

Ernest Wichner [D], Marie Iljašenko [CZ/UA], Nichita Danilov [RO]

The lyrical texts of Ernest Wichner (* 1952 in Zăbrani, Banat) are characterized by clarity of statement, short cuts and abrupt endings, whereby a meaning can be surprisingly reinforced by an anti-climax.

Marie Iljašenko (* 1983 in Kiev) writes her poems in Czech, her works have been nominated for several prestigious awards and show a broad spectrum of influences from different languages, experiences and cultures that are part of her multicultural identity.

The poet, writer and translator Nichita Danilov (* 1952 in Climăuți, Mușenita) has published seven volumes of poetry, in which he captures the spiritual and metaphysical heritage of his native Romania in a surrealist poetics with playful and ironic expression.

Moderation: Gabriel Horatiu Decuble

Languages: English, Czech, German, Romanian

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

8 :00 pm

Film screening: Photophobia

directors: Ivan Ostrochovský & Pavol Pekarcik

**Venue: Institututul Francez din România la București
Bulevardul Dacia, nr. 77**

On a cold February morning, 12-year-old Niki and his family arrive at the Kharkiv metro station to take shelter from the terrifying war raging outside. For Niki's family, daylight is synonymous with mortal danger, and the boy is not allowed to leave the station premises, living under the constant glow of their neon lights. While aimlessly wandering around the abandoned cars and full platforms, Niki meets Vika (11), and a new world opens up to him. As their bond strengthens, the children find the courage once again to feel the sun on their faces.

Sunday, February 25

11 am

The Art of Podcast

Ilaria Gaspari [I]: CHEZ PROUST / BACHMANN

Since October 2023, the Milan-born writer has been publishing her literary podcasts on works by well-known writers in collaboration with the Austrian Cultural Forum Rome and the Goethe-Institut Italy. The compositions of memories, quotations, excerpts and poems, some of which are original recordings of readings, also include a search for traces of Ingeborg Bachmann's life in Rome.

Moderation: Razvan Tupa

Language: English

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

12:30 pm

Location matters. Stories from the Black Sea – Black Sea Lit

Lavinia Braniste [RO], Archil Kikodze [GE], Anush Kocharyan [AM], Halyna Kruk [UA]

Stories from the Black Sea – Black Sea Lit brings together ten outstanding writers from five countries in the Black Sea region to engage in a dialogue about regionality, identity and the possibilities of a common language. At the Odesa Lit Festival, Lavinia Braniste (Romania), , Anush Kocharyan (Armenia), Halyna Kruk (Ukraine) will come together for an exchange on the question of locality in the context of current crises in literature.

Black Sea Lit is a project of the Goethe-Institut and the Goethe Centre Yerevan. More information at: [Geschichten vom Schwarzen Meer – Black Sea Lit – Goethe-Institut.](#)

Introduction: Jan-Tage Kühling (Goethe Centre Yerevan)

Moderation: Arevik Ashkharoyan

Language: English

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

2 pm

event canceled

Karl-Markus Gauss [A]: THE ART OF TRAVEL LITERATURE

The writer and editor, who has been awarded the Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding 2022, among others, knows like no other how to combine the genres of reportage, history and autobiography into a unique form of travel literature. He is not only an expert on the countries and landscapes of Eastern Europe, but “above all a great philosopher of disappearance, of the vanishing, who wants to rescue people and things, the silenced and the forgotten into memory.” (“Wiener Zeitung”)

Moderation: Marius Chivu

Language: English

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

3:30 pm

Nora Iuga [RO]: Conversation with Ernest Wichner on her poetry

The grande dame of Romanian poetry and award-winning translator of German literature reads from her poems, which were first published in 1968. Due to their diversity, they cannot be assigned to any particular genre. Nora Iuga's poetry combines the everyday with the unusual, reality with the irrational and follows a path of dreams, at the center of which, however, is always the human being with his existential experiences.

Moderation: Ernest Wichner

Language: Romanian, German

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

5:00 pm

Norris von Schirach [D/ RO]: BLASSE HELDEN

In his debut, Norris von Schirach, alias Arthur Isarin, paints a garish portrait of the 1990s in Eastern Europe from the perspective of a strolling stranger. In Mykolaiv, where his protagonist and a KGB officer have ended up, cholera breaks out and post-Soviet abysses open up during the imposed quarantine. His novel is a “bold literary adventure” (Viktor Jerofejew).

Pale Heroes is set in the 1990s in Moscow, Siberia and Southern Ukraine during the euphoria and the abyss that followed the implosion of the Soviet Union. According to Viktor Yerofeev, “you should read ‘Pale Heroes’ if you want to understand today’s Russia”.

Moderation: Gabriel Horatiu Decuble

Language: English

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

6:30 pm

Nichita Danilov [RO]: VULTURII ORBI, Dan Sociu [RO] : Poetry

In his texts, Danilov recreates the village world of his childhood and uses memorable images to depict the real and unreal worlds of different languages and cultures with their enormous upheavals of recent times. Sociu, who belongs to the “2000s” generation of poets, with a preference for anti-heroes and biographical writing, cultivates a youthful ductus in his poems as an expression of the longing for metaphysical passion.

Moderation: Ernest Wichner

Language: Romanian, English

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

GUESTS

participants of the 9th international literature festival odesa

[Lavinia Braniste \[Romania\]](#)

[Johnny Bica \[Romania\]](#)

[Nichita Danilov \[Romania\]](#)

[Gabriel Horatiu Decuble \[Romania\]](#)

[Paula Erizanu \[Moldova\]](#)

[Ilaria Gaspari \[Italy\]](#)
[Karl Markus Gauss \[Austria\]](#)
[Ariane von Graffenried \[Switzerland\]](#)
[Olivier Guez \[France\]](#)
[Marie Iljašenko \[Czech Republic\]](#)
[Nora Iuga \[Romania\]](#)
[Daniel Kehlmann \[Germany\]](#)
[Iya Kiva \[Ukraine\]](#)
[Anush Kocharyan \[Armenia\]](#)
[Halyna Kruk \[Ukraine\]](#)
[Jonas Lüscher \[Switzerland\]](#)
[Vasyl Makno \[Ukraine\]](#)
[Doris Mironescu \[Romania\]](#)
[Norman Ohler \[Germany\]](#)
[Philippe Sands \[United Kingdom\]](#)
[Norris von Schirach \[Germany\]](#)
[Dan Sociu \[Romania\]](#)
[Radu Vancu \[Romania\]](#)
[Yuriy Vynnychuk \[Ukraine\]](#)
[Ernest Wichner \[Ukraine\]](#)

TEAM

Ulrich Schreiber



Ulrich Schreiber, born in Solingen in 1951, is a construction architect and cultural manager. He founded and directed the international literature festival berlin (ilb) from 2001 to 2023. It is supported by the Peter Weiss Foundation for Art and Politics. Schreiber is co-founder and co-

director of the international literature festival Odessa (ilo). He organizes the formats “Worldwide Readings” and “Worldwide Screenings” since 2006. He was involved in the founding of the literature festival “World Voices” in New York in 2005 and directed the literature festival in Mumbai in 2007. He is a member of PEN-Berlin, author of “Die politische Theorie Antonio Gramscis” (1982, 4th edition 1994), editor of “Kulturpolitik in Hamburg. Ein Weissbuch” (1986), “Die Bilderwelt des Peter Weiss” (1995) and the “Berliner Anthologien” (2001 – 2023) as well as the catalogs for the ilb between 2001 and 2020. In 2015, Schreiber was appointed Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres for his “contribution to the mediation of literature and art in France and the world”.



Hans Ruprecht

Hans Ruprecht is responsible for music and literature festivals and occasions, and is a mediator between various European literatures. From 1979 to 2007, he co-organized the TAKTLOS Festival Bern for Jazz, New Music, and Music Performances; since 2005, he has headed the Leukerbad International Literary Festival; and since 2006, he has organized the Bern Literature Festival. In 2011, he began a new European project, ABSOLUT ZENTRAL, which brings together journalists, writers, essayists, philosophers, and historians, many of them from Eastern Europe, for discussions, lectures, readings, and talks about ideas on cultural values and the development of culture.

www.sprachform.ch



Tatjana Gridnev

Tatjana Gridnev studied Cultural Studies and Cultural Management in Berlin.

Since 2016, she works in the finance, cooperation and personnel department of the international literature festival berlin and international literature festival odesa.

PRESS

[media on the international literature festival odesa 2022](#)

[media in the international literature festival odesa 2021](#)

[media on the international literature festival odesa 2020](#)

[media on the international literature festival odesa 2019](#)

[media on the international literature festival odesa 2018](#)

[media on the international literature festival odesa 2017](#)

[media on the international literature festival odesa 2016](#)

PARTNERS



NEWS

final press release

26/02/2024 Written by editor1

The most important literary festivals in Romania,
alongside the International Literature Festival Odesa

Last night, February 25, the 9th edition of the International Literature Festival Odesa ended, a traditional event, which became itinerant due to the war and was hosted this year in Bucharest. There were four full days, in which the Bucharest public was able to attend a program of events with an extremely diverse format: from public readings to debates around the most important topics of the moment in terms of world politics, such as the future of Europe or the fight against barbarism.

E.S. also spoke about the architecture of the program of the 9th edition of the International Literature Festival Odesa and the relevance of the themes. Mr. Igor Prokopchuk, Ambassador of Ukraine to Romania, in his speech on the evening of February 22. His Excellency wanted to express his joy regarding the fact that the festival is hosted in Bucharest, in Romania, one of the leading countries in supporting the Ukrainian population after the outbreak of the war. Also, the Ambassador

of Ukraine in Romania urged the public to hold a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the war in Ukraine, which he called “the biggest humanitarian crisis in Europe after the Second World War”.

At the end of the four days that totaled over 20 events, the organizers of the most important literature festivals in Romania sent a few thoughts to the organizers of the International Literature Festival Odesa.

“To be effective against a tyranny or against violence, literature must assert itself and be. That’s it. History has shown us, so many times, that a dictator is more afraid of words than anything. Literature is a universal weapon, because the border of language is illusory: therefore, the imperative to which it submits is an affirmative one, of literary action.

I’m glad that literature won once again, and the Literature Festival Odesa could continue in Bucharest”, said Ioan Cristescu, president of the Bucharest International Poetry Festival (FIPB) and director of the National Museum of Romanian Literature.

About the power of literature to find ways to reach the public, beyond the power of weapons, the writer Lucian Dan Teodorovici, president of the Iasi International Literature and Translation Festival – FILIT, also spoke: “A festival like this, which moved for a few days Odesa in Bucharest is more than a literary manifestation, it is above all a declaration of freedom. However, as much joy as the festival of literature lovers in Romania could produce, I wish that in the coming years (many and good) I will know that it takes place at home, where it belongs. In complete safety and in complete freedom”.

“I am still shaken by the documentary I watched last night, 20 days in Mariupol, a film which, thanks to the courage and vocation of some journalists, shows how a city turns into an inferno due to the Russian invasion. Odesa is standing, not like Mariupol and other Ukrainian cities that have become ruins, but its life is, well, elsewhere. In order to continue living, the Odesa literature festival had to find a refuge in Bucharest. Solidarity worked again this time, and writers were able to make their voices heard. The world of literature has, in fact, no borders, and the different languages in which it is written are not barriers, but meeting colors. These days, the roads of literature led to Odesa, via Bucharest. I hope that next year the festival will take place where it belongs, at his home, in peace”, testified Robert Șerban, president of the Timișoara International Literature Festival (FILTM).

On behalf of the International Festival of Poetry and Music “Poetry is in Bistrita”, the writers Marin Mălaicu-Hondrari and Dan Coman also expressed their confidence in the power of literature to conquer people more powerfully than bands manage to conquer territories: “Literature sees his way. Even when it seems irrelevant, it demonstrates its strength, as it happened now, from Odesa to Bucharest. Its strength lies not in conquering territories, but in uniting people. The Odesa festival continues, that matters and gives us courage”.

The writer Radu Vancu, who gave the opening speech of this year’s edition of the Odesa International Literature Festival, gave us another thought, this time from the perspective of the cultural manager – as the president of the “Poets in Transylvania” International Festival ” which takes place in Sibiu: “The Odesa Literature Festival took place in Bucharest on the two-year anniversary of the barbaric war started by Russia in Ukraine. Two years of heroism – in which Ukraine was not only not conquered & annihilated, but became a candidate state for admission to the European Union. And fight on for all of us. For the world that believes in freedom & democracy – which will remain so (ie free & democratic) only if Russia is definitively defeated. And it will be. So being with Ukraine today means believing that the human species has a future. Not just as a species – but as a truly human one.”

Founded in 2015, the International Literature Festival Odesa aimed to emphasize the cultural effervescence and international character of the city and contribute to strengthening its ties with other cultural metropolises in Europe and on other continents. The program of each separate edition expresses this desire, both through the selection of invited writers and through the dialogue themes. A particular importance in the architecture of the festival program is occupied by the panorama of the cultural space in the area of Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region. To date, almost 300 writers have taken part in the events of the International Literature Festival Odesa. Hans Ruprecht and Ulrich Schreiber have been running the festival since its inception.

“Literature gives the dead a voice and makes them sing”

21/02/2024 Written by [editor1](#)

Ariane von Graffenried, guest of the 2024 Odessa International Literature Festival

Tomorrow, **the 22nd of February**, the 9th edition of the Odessa International Festival of Literature opens at the **Goethe-Institut** in Bucharest (Calea Dorobanți 32). A beloved and popular project for

literature lovers, the festival enjoys consistent support from today's most important European writers and leading civic voices. For this reason, new names have joined the festival's public readings, such as Ukrainian writers **Andrei Kurkov** and **Yury Andrukovych**, and many others. The current programme of the festival can be found on the official website: <http://litfestodessa.com/program-en> Another novelty is that, at the opening event, planned for February the 22nd, at 17:00, **His Excellency Mr. Ihor Prokopchuk, Ambassador of Ukraine** will attend the festival.

In anticipation of their arrival in Bucharest, some of the writers invited to this year's edition of the festival have sent their thoughts to Romanian literature lovers.

"I think every gathering of international writers is a good opportunity to exchange ideas about literature and politics. I hope we can actively listen to each other. If we believe that literature is a universal tool for understanding, we can use it for discussion, not for fighting," says Ukrainian writer **Vasil Makhno**—a multi-award-winning poet, essayist and translator who explores the concepts of motherland and memory in his books, reflecting the polyphonic past of his native land. *"I believe that if war should come upon them in their homeland, writers must become its defenders when their country is brutally attacked. This is why many Ukrainian writers write literature and essays about war and participate in international festivals. Many of them serve in the army and fight on the front lines. In this moment, literature becomes a voice of these times, because it has to be heard,"* he added.

"Literature in times of war is both a getaway from the terrible reality and a weapon because it is impossible to not write about war", said writer **Yury Vinnychuk** before coming to Bucharest; he is a living legend of Ukrainian literature, tireless critic of the political system, considered the most versatile of contemporary Ukrainian writers.

The Swiss writer **Ariane von Graffenried**, spoken word author, member of the duo "Fitzgerald & Rimini" and curator of the Basel International Poetry Festival, also talks about the power of writing to give a voice to literature in her advance message to Romanian readers: *"Metaphors don't work against people with guns. And beautiful verses cannot heal wounds. Literature can create a community here and now, it can offer comfort, it can express anger, and it can witness both what is beautiful and what is hideous. Literature can give the dead a voice and make them sing."*

For Italian writer **Ilaria Gaspari**, known for her passion for podcasts dedicated to the works of famous writers, this year's Odessa International Festival is an opportunity to remember the horrors of the two world wars: *"I am coming to Bucharest thinking of two great European authors who lived in different historical moments, but were both touched by the consequences of one of the two world wars. I*

am thinking of Marcel Proust, who witnessed the collapse of his childhood, whose inexorable decline he had already observed and recorded, with the outbreak of the First World War. Then, my thoughts turn to Ingeborg Bachmann, who in her Austrian childhood experienced the trauma of the Nazi devastation and who would search throughout her life for a way to live in a historical moment in which the self is no longer submerged in history, but history is in the self."

Is literature an escape? A voice? Or a weapon?

"It is not a weapon, because literature does not destroy; and it is indeed unequipped and vulnerable in the face of war, but it has the collective force of a voice that transmits words and thoughts. It is not a form of escape, but an open refuge, that is, open as a protection against horror," added the beloved Italian writer.

Festival activities will be held in **English, Ukrainian, German and Romanian**, with translation. **Public access to the event is free of charge.**

Founded in 2015, **the Odessa International Literature Festival** aims to highlight the cultural effervescence and international character of the city and to contribute to strengthening its ties with other cultural metropolises in Europe and on other continents. The programme of each edition expresses this aim, both through the selection of guest writers and the dialogues. Of particular importance in the architecture of the festival's programme is the overview of the cultural space of Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region. So far, almost 300 writers have taken part in the events of the Odessa International Literature Festival. Hans Ruprecht and Ulrich Schreiber have been running the festival since its creation.

16/02/2024 Written by [editor1](#)

WORLDWIDE READING OF UKRAINIAN LITERATURE

The worldwide readings continue! In Copenhagen, Erevan, Calcutta, Milan, Zaporizhia , Berlin and other cities, texts by Ukrainian authors will be read in Bucharest, including those by the poets Volodimir Vakulenko, Victoria Amelina and Maksym Kryvtzov, who were killed in the war. In a film produced especially for the worldwide reading, Yuriy Andruchovitch, Svitlana Bondar, Andrei Kurkov, Iya Kiva, Dmytro Lazutkin, Halyna Kruk, Vasyl Makhno from Ukraine, Dan Sociu and Varujan Vosganian from Romania as well as Nora Bossong, Daniel Kehlmann and Jan Koneffke from Germany, among others, will read Ukrainian texts. We would like to thank the Goethe Institutes for their cooperation.

This event can be watched online, also after the festival

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

participants:

Time: 16:00 -19.00. (Copenhagen time)

Organizers: Ukraine House in Denmark

Venue: Strandgade 27B, 1401 Copenhagen

Participants: Kateryna Kalytko, Iya Kiva , Halyna Kruk , Oleksandr Mykhed , Iryna Shuvalova

Iryna Tsilyk

Event language: Danish, Ukrainian

Website: <https://www.ukrainehouse.dk>

Time: 18.30 p.m. (Calcutta time)

Organizers: Goethe-Institut Kolkata mit der Unterstützung von Deutschen

Generalkonsulat in Kolkata

Venue: Goethe-Institut Calcutta

Event language: English

Website: <https://www.goethe.de/ins/in/en/ver.cfm>

16.00 – 17.30 p.m. (CET)

Organizers: Association Ucraina Più Milano in cooperation with Goethe-Institut Milano

Venue: Goethe-Institut Mailand, Via San Paolo 10, Milano

Website: https://www.goethe.de/ins/it/de/sta/mai/ver.cfm?event_id=25420063

13.00 – 14.00 (Kyiv time)

Organizer: Zaporizhia public library

Venue: Zaporizhia public library

Participant: Yaroslava Degtiarenko

Event language: Ukrainian

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/biblio zp>

14:00 – 15:00 (Kyiv time)

Organizers: Suspilne Odesa and Odesa Ukrainian Academic Theatre named after V. Vasylo

The event is devoted to the authors killed in the war.

Venue: Radio Studio of Suspilne Odesa

Event language: Ukrainian

Moderator: Svitlana Bondar

This event can be watched online

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@internationalliteraturefes7445>

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

Press release 26.01. 2024

The 9th international literature festival odesa will take place in Bucharest from 22 to 25 February 2024. Among the invited guests are the Ukrainian authors Iya Kiva, Yuriy Vynnychuk and Vasyl Makhno, the Romanian authors Nora Iuga, Dan Sociu, Nikita Danilov and Radu Vancu, who will give the opening speech, Philip Sands from Great Britain, Olivier Guez from France, Daniel Kehlmann and Norman Ohler from Germany, Karl-Markus Gauss from Austria, Ariane von Graffenried and Jonas Lüscher from Switzerland and Ilaria Gasperi from Italy, who will present her literary podcasts "Chez Proust" and "Bachmann". Topics will include the future of Europe, literary relations between the countries of the Black Sea region, Max Blecher's novel Scarred Hearts (first published in 1937) and Ukrainian literature, which will be the subject of a worldwide reading on 24 February, the anniversary of the outbreak of war. In this context, we remember the authors Viktoria Amelina and Maksym Kryvtsov, who have been killed in the war.

The festival is jointly supported by the Jan Michalski Foundation, Culture of Solidarity Fund powered by the European Cultural Foundation, EUNIC Romania, PRO HELVETIA, Goethe-Institut Bucharest.

Hans Ruprecht and Ulrich Schreiber have been running the festival since it was founded in 2015. The full programme will be published February 29th at www.litfestodessa.com.

Keynote speech of the festival 2022 by Anne Applebaum

18/09/2022 Written by editor1

EIN OZEAN DER GLEICHGÜLTIGKEIT

Anne Applebaum

Im schrecklichen Winter 1932/33 gingen auf der Suche nach Lebensmitteln Brigaden kommunistischer Parteiaktivisten – aus Moskau, Kiew und Charkiw, aber auch aus Nachbarorten – in ukrainischen Dörfern von Haus zu Haus. Sie wühlten in den Gärten, brachen Wände auf und stießen mit langen Stangen in die Schornsteine, um nach verstecktem Getreide zu suchen. Sie nahmen Nutztiere mit und beschlagnahmten Tomatensetzlinge. Nach derartigen Überfällen aßen die ukrainischen Bauern Ratten, Frösche und gekochtes Gras. Sie knabberten an Baumrinde und Leder. Etwa vier Millionen starben an Hunger.

Dennoch fühlten viele der Eintreiber keine Schuld. Die sowjetische Propaganda hatte ihnen eingebläut, die vermeintlich wohlhabenden Bauern, die sie *Kulaken* nannten, seien Schädlinge, Saboteure und Feinde, reiche Landbesitzer, die dem sowjetischen Proletariat den Weg versperrten in

die von seinen Anführern verheißene Utopie. Die Kulaken sollten beseitigt werden, zerquetscht wie Parasiten oder Fliegen. Ihre Lebensmittel sollten an die Arbeiter in den Städten verteilt werden, die sie mehr verdient hatten als sie.

Die Aktivisten hatten ihnen geglaubt. Jahre später sprach der in der Ukraine geborene, sowjetische Überläufer Viktor Krawtschenko darüber, wie es war, zu diesen Brigaden zu gehören. „Um sich seelische Qualen zu ersparen, verschleiert man unangenehme Wahrheiten, indem man die Augen halb verschließt und den Verstand ausschaltet“, schrieb er. „Panisch erfindet man Rechtfertigungen und ersetzt sein Wissen durch Worte wie *Übertreibung* und *Hysterie*.“

Er beschrieb auch, wie der politische Jargon und Euphemismen dazu beitrugen, die Auswirkungen ihrer Taten zu camouflieren. Anstatt die Menschen, deren Lebensmittel sie stahlen, beim Namen zu nennen, wurde in seiner Gruppe von einer „Bauernfront“ und „Bedrohung durch Kulaken“ gesprochen, vom „Sozialismus auf dem Dorf“ und vom „Klassenwiderstand“. Der sowjetische Schriftsteller Lew Kopelew, der als junger Mann ebenfalls in einer dieser Brigaden gedient hatte (und später mehrere Jahre im Gulag verbrachte), reflektierte das Geschehen in ähnlicher Weise. Auch er hatte festgestellt, dass Klischees und eine ideologisierte Sprache ihm halfen, sein Handeln zu verbrämen, sogar vor sich selbst: „Ich redete mir etwas ein, gab mir selbst Erklärungen. Ich durfte nicht in lähmendes Mitleid verfallen. Wir erkannten die historische Notwendigkeit. Wir erfüllten unsere revolutionäre Pflicht. Wir beschafften Getreide für das sozialistische Vaterland. Für den Fünfjahresplan ...“ Vor dem Hintergrund anderer Prioritäten erübrigte sich das Mitleid für die Bauern. Sie hatten keine Existenzberechtigung. Ihr bäuerlicher Reichtum würde bald das Eigentum aller sein.

Aber die „Kulaken“ waren nicht reich. Sie litten Hunger. Das Bauernland war nicht wohlhabend, es lag brach. So schildert es Krawtschenko in seinen viele Jahre später geschriebenen Memoiren:

„Große Mengen von Geräten und Maschinen, die einst von ihren Besitzern wie wertvoller Schmuck gehütet worden waren, lagen nun unter freiem Himmel verstreut, schmutzig, verrostet und nicht mehr zu reparieren. Abgemagerte Kühe und Pferde, voll verkrustetem Mist, irrten über den Hof. Hühner, Gänse und Enten wühlten scharenweise im ungedroschenen Getreide.“

Diese Realität, die er mit eigenen Augen sah, war einprägsam genug, dass er sie nie vergaß. Aber zum Zeitpunkt seines Erlebens konnte er sich das Gegenteil einreden und war damit nicht der Einzige. Wassili Grossman, ein weiterer sowjetischer Schriftsteller, legte einer Figur seines Romans „Alles fließt“ folgende Worte in den Mund: „Ich bin nicht mehr verhext, ich sehe jetzt, dass die Kulaken Menschen waren. Aber warum war mein Herz damals so versteinert? Die Menschen haben doch so gelitten, was hat man ihnen nicht alles angetan? Und gesagt wurde: ‚Das sind keine Menschen, das ist Kulakengesocks‘.“

Neunzig Jahre sind seit diesen Ereignissen vergangen. Die Sowjetunion gibt es nicht mehr. Schon lange sind die Werke von Kopelew, Krawtschenko und Grossman für russische Leser verfügbar. Zudem wurden in Russisch und vielen anderen Sprachen zahlreiche Bücher geschrieben über das Sowjetsystem und dessen Fähigkeit, seine Opfer zu entmenslichen und das damalige Geschehen kleinzureden.

Früher gingen wir davon aus, dass allein das Erzählen dieser Geschichten eine Wiederholung durch wen auch immer unmöglich machen würde. In den späten 1980er Jahren, in der Zeit von *Glasnost*, waren Bücher und Memoiren über das stalinistische Regime und den Gulag in Russland Bestseller. Seitdem hat sich die Stimmung geändert. Derartige Bücher sind in Russland theoretisch erhältlich, aber niemand kauft sie. „Memorial“, die wichtigste Gesellschaft zur historischen Aufarbeitung in Russland, musste schließen. Museen und Denkmäler für die Opfer sind nach wie vor klein und wenig bekannt. Vor allem aber ist die Fähigkeit des russischen Staates, das Geschehen vor seinen Bürgern kleinzureden und seine Feinde zu entmenslichen, stärker denn je.

Heutzutage braucht es weniger Gewalt: Es hat in Putins Russland keine Massenverhaftungen gegeben, zumindest nicht im selben Ausmaß wie zu Stalins Zeiten. Aber vielleicht ist das auch gar nicht notwendig, denn die heutigen Werkzeuge der Propaganda sind so viel effektiver. Das russische Staatsfernsehen, Hauptinformationsquelle der meisten Russen, ist unterhaltsamer, spektakulärer und schicker als die Sendungen aus den knisternden Radios der Stalinzeit. Die sozialen Medien, die jedem von uns eine individuell zugeschnittene Sicht auf die Welt vermitteln, haben mehr Suchtpotenzial und sind fesselnder als die schlecht gedruckten Zeitungen der Vergangenheit.

Aber auch die Propaganda hat sich gewandelt. In der Sowjetunion unter Stalin wurde wie auch unter Chruschtschow und Breschnew von den Sowjetbürgern verlangt, an etwas Positives zu glauben, an eine künftige Utopie, eine bessere Welt. Bilder vom mustergültigen Staat waren allgegenwärtig: lächelnde Bürger, nagelneue Traktoren, heldenhafte Arbeiter, Fabriken, die Rekordmengen an Stahl produzieren, und Felder, auf denen endlos viel Weizen wächst. Jeder musste sich an dieser Propaganda beteiligen, sie wiederholen und zumindest so tun, als ob er daran glaubt.

Heutzutage kann die russische Propaganda auf diesen gespielten, aktiven Positivismus verzichten. Der Staat braucht keine aktiven Bürger, sie sollen zynisch, apathisch und passiv sein. Die meisten Menschen in Russland konnten in den letzten zwei Jahrzehnten unbehelligt vom Regime ihrem Alltag nachgehen. Sie wussten, wenn sie unpolitisch bleiben und sich nur um ihre eigenen Angelegenheiten kümmern, wenn sie nur im kleinen Kreis murren und sich aus den gesellschaftlich relevanten Fragen heraushalten, dann würde sie kein solches Schicksal ereilen wie das von Anna Politkowskaja, die in ihrem Treppenhaus ermordet wurde, wie das von Michail Chodorkowski, der ein Jahrzehnt im Gefängnis verbrachte, oder wie das von Alexej Nawalny, der erst vergiftet und dann inhaftiert wurde.

Ebenfalls im Unterschied zu früher ist heute in Russland vor allem niemand mehr verpflichtet, alles zu *glauben*, was im Fernsehen gesagt wird. Selbstverständlich wurde im sowjetischen Radio und Fernsehen gelogen. Aber man gab sich die Mühe, Unwahrheiten echt aussehen zu lassen. Es wurden

Beweise und Argumente geliefert. Eine Bezeichnung der Lüge löste Empörung aus. In Putins Russland spielen sowohl die Fernsehsender als auch die Politiker ein anderes Spiel. Sie lügen ununterbrochen, unverhohlen und offensichtlich. Aber sie scheren sich nicht um Beweise. Als 2017 das malaysische Passagierflugzeug MH17 über der Ukraine abgeschossen wurde, kam aus Russland als Reaktion kein einziges Dementi, sondern eine Vielzahl wahrscheinlicher und unwahrscheinlicher Geschichten: mal war die ukrainische Armee schuld, mal die CIA, oder es war eine abscheuliche Verschwörung, und 298 Tote wurden in ein Flugzeug gesetzt, um einen Flugzeugabsturz vorzutäuschen und Russland zu diskreditieren. Der endlose Strom von Lügen, „Firehose of Falsehood“ genannt, verursachte keine Empörung, sondern Apathie. Wenn es so viele Versionen gibt, wie kann man dann überhaupt wissen, welche davon wahr ist? Und wenn nun gar nichts von alledem wahr ist?

Anstatt eine Utopie sowjetischen Typs zu bewerben, hat sich die zeitgemäße russische Propaganda in den letzten zehn Jahren auf die Feinde konzentriert. Die Russen erfahren kaum etwas darüber, was in ihren eigenen Städten oder in der Nachbarschaft einen Häuserblock weiter passiert. Anders, als die Sowjetbürger in früheren Zeiten, müssen sie sich deshalb nicht mit der Kluft zwischen Realität und Fiktion auseinandersetzen. Stattdessen wird ihnen ständig von Orten erzählt, die sie nicht kennen und meist noch nie gesehen haben: Amerika und Europa, Frankreich und Großbritannien, Schweden und Polen, Orte voller Entartung, Heuchelei und „Russophobie“. Eine Untersuchung des russischen Fernsehprogramms zwischen 2014 und 2017 ergab, dass auf den drei wichtigsten, allesamt staatlich kontrollierten russischen Kanälen durchschnittlich 18 Mal am Tag negative Nachrichten über Europa gezeigt wurden. Einige der Geschichten waren erfunden („die deutsche Regierung nimmt Familien gewaltsam Kinder weg und gibt sie an homosexuelle Paare“), aber auch wahre Geschichten bedienen ein bestimmtes Narrativ. Das tägliche Leben in Europa wurde als beängstigend und chaotisch dargestellt, Europäer als schwach und unmoralisch. Der Terrorismus greift um sich, die Menschen leben in Angst und Schrecken. Die Europäische Union ist aggressiv und regulativ, mal will sie die Ukraine als Atommüllsonderdeponie missbrauchen, mal zwingt sie ihre Mitglieder zu einer „russophoben“ Politik.

Selbst innerhalb dieses sich ständig verändernden Dramas aus Wut und Angst, das sich jeden Abend in den russischen Abendnachrichten abspielt, kam der Ukraine für lange Zeit eine besondere Rolle zu. Für die russische Propaganda ist die Ukraine kein richtiger Staat, hat keine Geschichte, keine Legitimität, und ist eigentlich nichts weiter als der „Südwesten von Russland“, ein unveräußerlicher Teil der „Geschichte, Kultur und des geistigen Raums“ unseres Russlands, wie Putin es formulierte. Schlimmer noch, dieser Nicht-Staat dient den amerikanischen und europäischen Feinden Russlands mittlerweile als Waffe und wurde von den degenerierten, dem Untergang geweihten westlichen Mächten in ein hasserfülltes „Anti-Russland“ verwandelt. Putin bezeichnete die Ukraine als „vollständig von außen kontrolliert“, als „Kolonie eines Marionettenregimes“. Er sei in die Ukraine einmarschiert, um Russland „gegen diejenigen zu verteidigen, die die Ukraine in Geiselschaft genommen haben und sie gegen unser Land und unser Volk ausspielen wollen.“

In Wirklichkeit ist es Putin, der in die Ukraine einmarschiert, um sie zur Kolonie seines Marionettenregimes zu machen. Dass die Ukraine längst eine andere Entwicklung genommen haben könnte, liegt außerhalb seines Vorstellungsvermögens, denn sein durch den KGB geprägtes Weltbild schließt die Möglichkeit einer authentischen Politik, einer Basisbewegung, einer öffentlichen Meinung aus. In Putins Sprache, in der Sprache der meisten russischen Fernsehkommentatoren und jetzt auch in der Sprache der meisten Russen haben die Ukrainer keine Handlungsmacht. Sie können keine Entscheidungen für sich selbst treffen. Sie können keine Regierung wählen. Sie sind nicht einmal Menschen, sondern „Nazis“. Und deswegen kann man sie, wie vormals die Kulaken, ohne Gewissensbisse, Bedenken oder Schuldgefühle beseitigen. Und genau das geschieht heute.

*

Es sei angemerkt, dass eine genozidale Sprache nicht zwingend mit einem genozidalen Verhalten einhergeht oder dieses vorwegnimmt. Menschen können sich gegenseitig kränken, erniedrigen, beschimpfen und trotzdem nie versuchen, einander zu töten. Aber selbst, wenn massive Hassrede nicht zwangsläufig zu Massenmorden führt, gehen Massenmorden zwangsläufig massive Hassreden voraus. Rückblickend hat sich der Propagandastaat, den Wladimir Putin schuf (mit Hilfe Zehntausender anderer Menschen, von grauen Apparatschiks und Armeeobersten bis hin zu eleganten, gut gekleideten und frisierten Fernsehmoderatorinnen), als ideales Vehikel für einen Massenmord und dessen Verschleierung vor der russischen Öffentlichkeit erwiesen. Sie hatten noch gar nicht begonnen und wussten schon, dass die Zerstörung dieses nichtexistenten Staates, dieses Anti-Russlands keinerlei Mitgefühl oder Mitleid auslösen würde bei einem Publikum, dass sie zu Skepsis und Zynismus erzogen hatten in Bezug auf alles und jeden, besonders jedoch in Bezug auf die ukrainischen „Marionetten“ Amerikas und Europas.

Von den ersten Kriegstagen an war offensichtlich, dass die russischen Militärstrategen viele Menschen, Millionen von Menschen zu töten, zu verwunden oder aus ihren Häusern in der Ukraine zu vertreiben gedachten. Auch früher hat es schon massive Angriffe auf Städte gegeben, von der alliierten Bombardierung Dresdens über die deutsche Bombardierung Coventrys bis hin zu Hiroshima und Nagasaki. Sie aber ereigneten sich nach Jahren eines schrecklichen Konflikts, dem schlimmsten in der europäischen Geschichte. Im Gegensatz dazu begann die Vernichtung von Mariupol und seiner Einwohner nur wenige Tage nach einer Invasion, der keine Provokation vorangegangen war, und sie diente allein dem Zweck der Entvölkerung dieser russischsprachigen Stadt. Mehr als 90 Prozent der Gebäude wurden zerstört, Stahlwerke und eine wirtschaftliche Infrastruktur, die eine erobernde Armee zu anderen Zeiten unter ihre Kontrolle gebracht hätte, wurden zusammen mit Wohnblocks, Straßen, Schulen und Krankenhäusern dem Erdboden gleichgemacht. Auf dem Höhepunkt der Kämpfe war die Zivilbevölkerung noch immer in der Stadt eingeschlossen, ohne Nahrungsmittel, Wasser oder Medikamente. Männer, Frauen und Kinder starben an Hunger und Dehydrierung. Fliehende wurden unter Beschuss genommen.

Außenstehende, die Nachschub bringen wollten, wurden beschossen. Unbestattet blieben Leichen von ukrainischen Zivilisten wie auch die von russischen Soldaten auf den Straßen liegen.

Selbst in dem Moment, als dieses Verbrechen vor den Augen der Weltöffentlichkeit verübt wurde, vor laufenden Kameras, wonach die Fotos auf jedem Handy und Laptop auf unserem Planeten verfügbar waren, verheimlichte der russische Staat die Tragödie erfolgreich vor seinem eigenen Volk. Wie in der stalinistischen Vergangenheit kam ihm dabei der Jargon zu Hilfe. Im russischen Staatsfernsehen und in der Sprache der russischen Beamten war es keine Invasion, sondern eine „militärische Spezialoperation“. Es handelte sich nicht um einen Massenmord an Ukrainern, sondern um eine „Verteidigung“ der Bewohner in den von Russland illegal besetzten ostukrainischen Gebiete. Es war kein Genozid, sondern eine Abwehr des „vom Kiewer Regime verübten Genozids“.

Am Vorabend des Krieges hatte Putin zudem zur jahrzehntealten Propaganda über den perfiden Westen zurückgefunden und sich dabei einer Sprache bedient, die den meisten Russen bekannt vorkommen dürfte: „Sie waren bestrebt, unsere traditionellen Werte zu zerstören und uns ihre Pseudowerte aufzuzwingen, die uns, unser Volk, von innen heraus zersetzen würden – jene Haltungen, die sie bereits aggressiv in ihren Ländern durchsetzen und die direkt zu Degradierung und Entartung führen, da sie gegen die menschliche Natur selbst gerichtet sind.“

Während die Hungersnot das Ziel hatte, die existenzielle Bedrohung durch die Kulaken zu beseitigen, so hat dieser Krieg das Ziel, die existenzielle Bedrohung durch „Pseudowerte“ der demokratischen Welt außer Kraft zu setzen. Allen, die wegen der Zerstörung von Mariupol ein schlechtes Gewissen hatten, wurde zur Vertreibung dieses Gefühls folgendes an die Hand gegeben: Mariupol war eigentlich nur ein kleiner Teil einer existenziellen Bedrohung, die früher oder später beseitigt werden muss.

Rechtfertigungen wurden auch für jene bereitgestellt, die versehentlich ein paar Fotos von Mariupol gesehen hatten. Am 24. März zeigte das russische Fernsehen tatsächlich Aufnahmen von den Ruinen der Stadt – Drohnenaufnahmen, die möglicherweise bei CNN gestohlen wurden. Aber anstatt die Verantwortung zu übernehmen, wurden die Ukrainer beschuldigt. Eine Fernsehmoderatorin beschrieb die Szene mit traurigem Ton als „schreckliches Bild. Die [ukrainischen] Nationalisten wollen auf ihrem Rückzug kein Stein auf dem anderen lassen.“ Das russische Verteidigungsministerium beschuldigte sogar das Asow-Bataillon, eine bekanntlich radikale Kampftruppe, das Theater von Mariupol in die Luft gesprengt zu haben, die Zuflucht von Hunderten von Kindern. Warum sollten überpatriotische ukrainische Kräfte absichtlich ukrainische Kinder töten? Das wurde nicht erklärt, aber es wird ja ohnehin nie etwas erklärt. Die russischen Fernsehzuschauer sind darauf trainiert, alles, was sie sehen und hören, mit Vorsicht zu genießen: Wenn man nichts sicher weiß, kann man auch niemanden beschuldigen. Vielleicht wurde Mariupol von „Nationalisten“ zerstört. Vielleicht auch nicht. Da können keine Konsequenzen gezogen werden, da ist niemand verantwortlich.

Bisher funktioniert das ganz gut. Selbst jetzt, bei der voranschreitenden Mobilisierung, schweigt die russische Öffentlichkeit. Die Täter fühlen sich zumeist im Recht. Mitschnitte von Telefongesprächen zwischen russischen Soldaten und ihren Familien – sie benutzen gewöhnliche Sim-Karten, die leicht abzuhören sind – zeigen Verachtung für die Ukrainer. „Ich habe auf ein Auto geschossen“, sagt ein Soldat bei einem der Telefongespräche zu seiner Frau oder seiner Schwester. „Erschießt die Wichser“, antwortet sie, „Hauptsache, es trifft euch nicht. Scheiß auf sie. Verdammte Drogensüchtige und Nazis.“ Im Gespräch werden gestohlene Fernsehapparate erwähnt, das Trinken von Cognac und das Erschießen von Menschen in Wäldern. Keine Betroffenheit über die Gefallenen, nicht einmal die eigenen. Präsident Selenski wunderte sich in einem Interview über die Unbekümmertheit, mit denen die Russen den Ukrainern ein paar Müllsäcke anboten für ihre eigenen Leichen: „So behandelt man nicht einmal einen Hund oder eine Katze, wenn sie stirbt.“

Das ist keine Begeisterung für Gewalt, sondern nur Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber Gewalt, dem menschlichen Leben und jeder Art von Moral. Selbst der Versuch des russischen Staates, mit der Z-Kampagne ein wenig patriotische Begeisterung für den Krieg zu wecken, scheint gescheitert. Sie existiert in sozialen Medien, nicht jedoch im realen Leben.

Russische Bürger und russische Soldaten haben den Krieg hingenommen, weil sie aus der eigenen Geschichte nichts gelernt haben, weil der ukrainische Holodomor, der Gulag oder der stalinistische Terror von 1937/38 nie aufgearbeitet wurden. Nie haben die Täter Reue gezeigt. Die Krawtschenkos und Kopelews waren in der Minderheit und schlugen lediglich kleine Wellen im großen Ozean der Gleichgültigkeit. „Das sind keine Menschen, das ist Kulakengesocks“ – dieses Gefühl beherrschte die Herzen der meisten Sowjetbürger, die wussten, was geschehen war. Die anderen versuchten mehrheitlich nicht einmal, es herauszufinden. Der Krieg gegen die Ukraine ist nun das Ergebnis. Er sollte uns alle daran gemahnen, dass Geschichte erinnert werden muss, ihre Lektionen verinnerlicht werden müssen, heute wie in der fernen Vergangenheit.

Übersetzung ins Deutsche von Franziska Zwerg

ARCHIVE

GUESTS

Participants of the VIII international literature festival odesa 2022

A

[Roin Abusalidze \[Georgia \]](#)
[Rati Amaglobeli \[Georgia \]](#)

Yuri Andruchovych [Ukraine]
Art Antonyan [Ukraine]
Anne Applebaum [USA]

B

Lukas Bärfuss [Switzerland]
Lasha Bugadze [Georgia]
Zaza Burchuladze [Georgia]

C

Raul Chilachava [Georgia]

D

Genri Dolidze [Georgia]

F

Filip Florian [Romania]

G

Damon Galgut [South Africa]

J

Nika Jorjaneli [Georgia]

H

Norbert Hummelt [Germany]

K

Eka Kevanishvili [Georgia]
Iya Kiva [Ukraine]
Oleh Kotsarev [Ukraine]
Halyna Kruk [Ukraine]

L

Dmytro Lazutkin [Ukraine]
Giorgi Lobzhanidze [Georgia]

M

Jakub Małecki [Poland]
Tamta Melashvili [Georgia]

N

Tatia Nadareishvili [Georgia]
Diana Nakaidze [Georgia]

O

Serhiy Osoka [Ukraine]

P

Muriel Pic [Switzerland]

R

Karl Rühmann [Switzerland]

S

[Ostap Slyvynsky \[Ukraine \]](#)
[Paata Shamugia \[Georgia \]](#)
[Burhan Sönmez \[Türkiye \]](#)

T

[Ekaterina Togonidze \[Georgia \]](#)
[Szczepan Twardoch \[Poland \]](#)

V

[Halyna Vdovychenko \[Ukraine \]](#)

W

[Katja Walters \[Georgia/ Germany \]](#)
[Ernest Wichner \[Germany \]](#)

Z

[Serhiy Zhadan \[Ukraine \]](#)

Guests of the festival 2021

A

[Yuri Andrukhovych \[Ukraine \]](#)

B

[Igor Bauersima \[Switzerland \]](#)
[Yevhenia Bilorusets \[Ukraine \]](#)
[Lukas Bärfuss \[Switzerland \]](#)
[Olena Braichenko \[Ukraine \]](#)

F

[Sasha Filipenko \[Belarus \]](#)
[Angelica Freitas \[Brazil \]](#)

G

[Forrest Gander \[USA \]](#)

H

[Volha Hapeyeva \[Belarus \]](#)
[Judith Hermann \[Germany \]](#)
[Nadiya Hlushkova \[Ukraine \]](#)

K

[Boris Khersonsky \[Ukraine \]](#)
[Glib Kuchma \[Ukraine \]](#)

L

[Dmytro Lazutkin \[Ukraine \]](#)
[Sergei Lebedev \[Russia \]](#)
[Jonas Lüscher \[Switzerland \]](#)
[Ferdinand Lutz \[Germany \]](#)

M

[Tania Malyarchuk \[Ukraine \]](#)
[Marius von Mayenburg \[Germany \]](#)
[Mawil \[Germany \]](#)
[Sebastian Meschenmoser \[Germany \]](#)

O

[Sofi Oksanen \[Finland \]](#)
[Lea – Lina Oppermann \[Germany \]](#)
[Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor \[Kenya \]](#)
[Serhiy Osoka \[Ukraine \]](#)

P

[Valeriy Puzik \[Ukraine \]](#)

R

[Mikael Ross \[Germany \]](#)

U

[Ludmila Ulitskaya \[Russia \]](#)
[Christian Uetz \[Switzerland \]](#)

S

[Mariana Savka \[Ukraine \]](#)

V

[Halyna Vdovychenko \[Ukraine \]](#)

W

[Bettina Wilbert \[Germany \]](#)
[Yulia Werba \[Ukraine \]](#)

Z

[Serhiy Zhadan \[Ukraine \]](#)
[Dmytro Zhuravel \[Ukraine \]](#)

Guests of the festival 2020

A

[Kim Fupz Aakeson \[Denmark \]](#)

B

[Andriy Bondar \[Ukraine \]](#)

C

[Moon Chung-hee \[South Korea \]](#)

E

[Mathias Énard \[France \]](#)

G

[Olivier Guez \[France \]](#)

H

Judith Hermann [Germany]

Steven Herrick [Australia]

I

Shota Iatashvili [Georgia]

K

Kateryna Kalytko [Ukraine]

Vakhthang Kebuladze [Ukraine]

Marianna Kiyanovska [Ukraine]

Andriy Khajetsky [Ukraine]

Boris Khersonsky [Ukraine]

L

Dmytro Lazutkin [Ukraine]

Valentina Lesnova [Ukraine]

M

Mawil [Germany]

Petro Midianka [Ukraine]

Zirka Menzatyuk [Ukraine]

Katja Lange – Muller [Germany]

N

Taya Naydenko [Ukraine]

P

Maryna Pavlenko [Ukraine]

Emil Hjorvar Petersen [Iceland]

Muriel Pic [Switzerland]

Marko Pogocar [Croatia]

Taras Prochasko [Ukraine]

S

Lubomyr Serniak [Ukraine]

u

Lyudmila Ulistkaya [Russia]

V

Tomas Venclova [Lithuania]

W

Anna Weidenholzer [Austria]

Alex Wheatle [UK]

Z

Gabriella Zalapi [Switzerland]

Kathy Zarnegin [Switzerland]

Guests of the festival 2019

B

Andriy Bondar [Ukraine]

Maxim Biller [Germany]

D

Dimitré Dinev [Bulgaria/Austria]

F

Michael Fehr [Switzerland]

D

Durs Grünbein [Germany]

H

Franz Hohler [Switzerland]

Emmanuelle Houdart [Switzerland/France]

Maryna Hrymytsch [Ukraine]

I

Yuriy Izdryk [Ukraine]

J

Chen Jianghong [China/France]

K

Boris Khersonsky [Ukraine]

Max Kidruk [Ukraine]

Eugenia Kononenko [Ukraine]

Andrey Kurkov [Ukraine]

L

Dmytro Lazutkin [Ukraine]

Andriy Lesiv and Romana Romanyshyn [Ukraine]

Johanna Lier [Switzerland]

Andriy Lyubka [Ukraine]

M

Galyna Malyk [Ukraine]

Henry Marsh [UK]

Terézia Mora [Germany/Hungary]

N

Oleksiy Nademlinsky [Ukraine]

P

Stepan Protsiuk [Ukraine]

S

Thomas Sandoz [Switzerland]

Marina Skalova [Switzerland]

Yuri Slezkine [USA]

Natalka Sniadanko [Ukraine]

Pavlo Stekh [Ukraine]

V

Lesia Voronina [Ukraine]

W

Yulia Werba [Ukraine]

Robert Paul Weston [UK]

Guests of the festival in 2018

A

Melinda Nadj Abonji [Hungary/Switzerland]

B

Yurij Bedryk [Ukraine]

Pamela Biermann [Germany]

Wolf Biermann [Germany]

D

György Dalos [Hungary/ Germany]

Marente de Moor [The Netherlands]

Liubko Deresh [Ukraine]

Oleksandr Dermansky [Ukraine]

Maya Dimerli [Ukraine]

E

Viktor Erofeev [Russia]

F

Gerhard Falkner [Germany]

Filip Florian [Romania]

G

Maryana Gaponenko [Germany/Ukraine]

Evgenij Golubovskij [Ukraine]

H

Jürg Halter [Switzerland]

Oleksandr Havrosh [Ukraine]

Felicitas Hoppe [Germany]

Rolf Hosfeld [Germany]

Alois Hotschnig [Austria]

K

Volodomir Kadenko [Ukraine]

Boris Khersonsky [Ukraine]

M

Gianna Molinari [Switzerland]

O

Serhij Osoka [Ukraine]

P

Vera Pavlova [Russia]

Jurko Prohasko [Ukraine]

R

Meg Rosoff [USA/UK]

Anushka Ravishankar [India]

Volodymyr Rutkivskyi [Ukraine]

S

Sascha Marianna Salzmann [Germany]

Samuel Shimon [Irak/UK]

T

Anne Thomas [Germany]

U

Christian Uetz [Switzerland]

V

Saskia van Stein [Netherlands]

Volodomir Vjatrovich [Ukraine]

W

Bette Westera [Netherlands]

Z

Oksana Zabuzhko [Ukraine]

Serhij Zhadan [Ukraine]

Stefan Zweifel [Switzerland]

Guests of the festival 2017

A

Bachtyar Ali [Iraq/ Germany]

B

Priya Basil [UK/ Germany]

Sonja Beeck [Germany]

Pamela Biermann [Germany]

Wolf Biermann [Germany]

Alida Bremer [Germany]

C

Maite Carranza [Spain]

Bohdan Cherkes [Ukraine/ Austria]

Oleksiy Chupa [Ukraine]

Jennifer Clement [USA/ Mexico]

D

Evgeniy Demenok [Ukraine]

Mircea Dinescu [Romania]

Oleg Drozdov [Ukraine]

E

Viktor Erofeyev [Russia]

G

Maria Galina [Russia]

Evgenij Golubovskij [Ukraine]

Nora Gomringer [Switzerland]

H

Olena Herasymyuk [Ukraine]

Tendai Huchu [Zimbabwe/ UK]

I

[Christos Ikonomou \[Greece \]](#)

J

[Peter Stephan Jungk \[USA/ Austria \]](#)

K

[Aleksandr Kabanov \[Ukraine \]](#)

[Boris Khersonsky \[Ukraine \]](#)

[Johannes Kister \[Germany \]](#)

[Artur Klinaŭ \[Belarus \]](#)

[Felix Kochricht \[Ukraine \]](#)

[Jan Koneffke \[Germany \]](#)

[Halyna Kruk \[Ukraine \]](#)

[Michael Krüger \[Germany \]](#)

[Andrey Kurkov \[Ukraine \]](#)

[Sjoerd Kuyper \[Netherlands \]](#)

L

[Myroslav Laiuk \[Ukraine \]](#)

[Nicol Ljubić \[Germany \]](#)

M

[Perihan Mağden \[Turkey \]](#)

[Andrei Malaev-Babel \[Russia/ USA \]](#)

[Robert Menasse \[Austria \]](#)

R

[Anushka Ravishankar \[India \]](#)

[Volodymyr Rutkivskyi \[Ukraine \]](#)

S

[Marijana Savka \[Ukraine \]](#)

[Jochen Schmidt \[Germany \]](#)

[Peter Schneider \[Germany \]](#)

[Armin Senser \[Switzerland \]](#)

[Paata Shamugia \[Georgia \]](#)

[Adania Shibli \[Palestine/ Germany \]](#)

T

[Janne Teller \[Denmark \]](#)

[Ilija Trojanow \[Bulgaria/ Germany \]](#)

[Iryna Tsilyk \[Ukraine \]](#)

V

[Simon van der Geest \[Netherlands \]](#)

[Saskia van Stein \[Netherlands \]](#)
[Haris Vlavianos \[Greece \]](#)
[Yuriy Vynnychuk \[Ukraine \]](#)

W

[Peter Weber \[Switzerland \]](#)
[Anna Weidenholzer \[Austria \]](#)

Y

[Lyuba Yakimchuk \[Ukraine \]](#)

Z

[Adam Zagajewski \[Poland \]](#)
[Serhij Zhadan \[Ukraine \]](#)

Guests of the festival 2016

A

[Omar Akbar \[Germany \]](#)
[Ivan Andrusjak \[Ukraine \]](#)

B

[Milena Baisch \[Germany \]](#)
[Zsafia Ban \[Hungary \]](#)
[Azouz Begag \[France \]](#)
[Meriam Bousselmi \[Tunisia \]](#)
[John Boyne \[Ireland \]](#)
[John Burnside \[Great Britain \]](#)

C

[Artem Chapeye \[Ukraine \]](#)
[Boris Chersonsky \[Ukraine \]](#)

D

[Sonja Danowski \[Germany \]](#)
[Ievgenij Demenok \[Ukraine\]](#)

E

[Victor Erofeyev \[Russia \]](#)

G

Zsuzsanna Gahse [Switzerland]
Ines Garland [Argentina]
Alexander Golovanov [Ukraine]
Evgenij Golubovskij [Ukraine]
Olga Grjasnowa [Germany]

K

Ilya Kaminsky [USA]
Esther Kinsky [Germany]
Julia Kissina [Ukraine]
Johannes Kister [Germany]
Felix Kochricht [Ukraine]

L

Yitzhak Laor [Israel]
Pedro Lenz [Switzerland]

M

Nikola Madzirov [Macedonia]
Tanja Maljartschuk [Ukraine]
Jose Mateus [Portugal]
Serhij Mazurkevitch [Ukraine]
Larysa Merkulova [Ukraine]
Amanda Michalopoulou [Greece]

P

Laksmi Pamuntjak [Indonesia]
Katja Petrowskaja [Ukraine / Germany]
Maxim Prasolov [Ukraine]

R

Vladimir Rafeyenko [Ukraine]
Mikhail Reva [Ukraine]
Jaroslav Rudiš [Czech Republic]

S

Ivana Sajko [Croatia]
Samuel Shimon [Iraq /Great Britain]
Ales Steger [Slovenia]
Marcin Szczygielski [Poland]

T

Silja Tillner [Austria]

U

Raphael Urweider [Switzerland]

V

Edward van de Vendel [Netherlands]

Z

Serhij Zakharov [Ukraine]

Vadim Zaplatnikov [Ukraine]

Guests of the festival 2015

A

Yuri Andrukhovych [Ukraine]

B

Lukas Bärfuss [Switzerland]

Marica Bodrožić [Germany]

Melvin Burgess [Great Britain]

E

Viktor Erofeyev [Russia]

G

Yves Grevet [France]

H

Nino Haratishvili [Georgia/ Germany]

K

Sema Kaygusuz [Turkey]

Andrej Kurkov [Ukraine]

L

Barbara Lehmann [Germany]

M

Nils Mohl [Germany]

R

Ilma Rakusa [Switzerland]

S

[Joachim Sartorius \[Germany \]](#)
[John Ralston Saul \[Canada \]](#)
[Robert Schindel \[Österreich \]](#)
[Samuel Shimon \[Iraq/ UK \]](#)
[Mikhail Shishkin \[Russia/ Switzerland \]](#)
[Tzveta Sofronieva \[Bulgaria/ Germany \]](#)

T

[Dato Turashvili \[Georgia \]](#)

V

[Varujan Vosganian \[Romania \]](#)

W

[Eliot Weinberger \[USA \]](#)

Z

[Serhiy Zhadan\[Ukraine \]](#)

DOWNLOADS

Opening speeches of the festival

[The opening speech by Ludmila Ulitskaya 2021 \(download\)](#)

[The opening speech by Tomas Venclova 2020 \(download\)](#)

[The opening speech by Franz Hohler 2019 \(download\)](#)

[The opening speech by Oksana Zabushko 2018 \(download\)](#)

[The opening speech by Nora Gomringer 2017 \(download\)](#)

Programs of the festival

[The program of the international literature festival odesa 2022 \(download \)](#)

[The program of the international literature festival odesa 2021 \(download \)](#)

[The program of the international literature festival odesa 2020 \(download\)](#)

[The program of the international literature festival odesa 2019 \(download\)](#)

The program of the international literature festival odessa 2018 ([download](#))

The program of the international literature festival odessa 2017 ([download](#))

The program of the international literature festival odessa 2016 ([download](#))

The program of the international literature festival odessa 2015 ([download](#))

E – readers of the festivals

The e-reader of the festival 2019 ([download](#))

The e-reader of the festival 2018 ([download](#))

The e- reader of the festival 2017 ([download](#))

[The e -reader of the festival 2016 \(download\)](#)

The e-reader of the festival 2015 ([download](#))

Special projects of the festival

Wolf Bierman “songs and poems” ([download](#))

AUTHOR'S VOICES

Authors´voices 2022

Svitlana Bondar

Wonderful opportunity for transcultural communication over the sea from Batumi to Odesa. We hope that festival will return to its native city Odesa soon.

Dmytro Lazutkin (Ukraine)

Dream festival

Ekaterina Togonidze (Georgia)

I was happy to receive this letter and I think that here I can connect with all of you, so I will take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the festival team, all the participants, my new friends and all the supporters of the festival.

*To my regret, I had to leave a little early and missed the wonderful moment of performing anthem, which I would join with all my heart!
It was a great honor for me to be a part of this special event, to listen to all of you, to understand more, feel more, share ideas and emotions with Ukrainian colleagues.
Planning and thinking about joint projects filled me with hope and joy. I know that talking about war is not easy, and I appreciate every word that has been said on the literary stage or in private conversations. This means a lot to me, I am full of impressions and look forward to our next meeting, wherever and whenever it takes place.*

Authors' voices 2019

Robert Paul Weston (UK)

*Thanks again for inviting me to Odessa. It was great to meet everyone and connect with writers—such as Franz and Chen—whom I would rarely meet otherwise.
It was a pleasure introducing Zorgamazoo to children who would never know it otherwise—all thanks to the festival.*

Maryna Hrymych (Ukraine)

The Odessa International Literary Festival made an impression. First, it's the Author's Readings Festival. Authors' texts sound and are perceived differently than in a book. You can fall in love, or you can fall out of love with a writer in 20 minutes of his/her speech. So it happened to me this time. Secondly, it is a real international festival, where the percentage of foreign writers is not less than that of the Ukrainian one's. And this is a real workshop. Writing workshop. You see how other writers work. And they work differently than you do. And this is a school, intensive training courses (of course, unless you focus solely on yourself, sweetheart, and attend not only your presentation). Third, it is Odesa.

Lesia Voronina (Ukraine)

*Wonderful impressions of meetings with readers, presentations and literature parties :).
And the sea is fantastic in any weather!*

Eugenia Kononenko (Ukraine)

My father was born in Odesa. There, a year before, his parents got married. The presentation of my book The Word of its Kin at the Fifth Odessa Literary Festival was a success!

Henry Marsh (UK)

«I greatly enjoyed my visit to Odesa and I liked the Literature Festival very much. Boris Khersonsky is an excellent moderator.»

Galyna Malyk (Ukraine)

Three wonderful days of the Fifth Literary Festival in Odesa have passed missed. They passed very quickly because those were the days full with events, meetings, new experiences and great acquaintances. There remains a pleasant aftertaste of being present in something long-awaited, like a family holiday, new and unusual, as a test of a pen in another genre, and at the same time joyful as meeting with the loved ones.

Authors' voices 2018

Anushka Ravishankar (India)

A huge thank you for inviting me to the festival. I had a wonderful time, both with the children at my sessions and with the other authors, translators and moderators. It was a very enriching and stimulating few days.

I had one session at the Puppet Theatre and two at schools. There were 150 children at the Theatre where we had a most interesting conversation about monsters under beds. We also sang some silly songs.

Both the school sessions were wonderful, with bright children, full of curiosity and enthusiasm. The second one, at school no 64, Malinovski Str., stood out for the involvement of the teachers. The children asked excellent questions. They were excited, engaged and responsive. It couldn't get more rewarding for a children's author! Children at both schools asked if they could get a Ukrainian version of the book. I'm in the process, therefore, of trying to contact a publisher there. Hope it works out!

A special mention for the actor who was doing the readings. I couldn't understand a word, of course, but I could see that he was doing a great job from the reactions of the children and I could sense that he was really connecting with them.

Thank you once again, for inviting me. This is such an important festival, and I'm honoured to have been a part of it.

Volodymyr Kadenko (Ukraine)

Huge thanks for wonderful days in Odesa!

Meg Rosoff (US/UK)

Thank you for a really wonderful few days in Odessa. The festival had such an incredibly warm and friendly atmosphere, and I loved meeting the other authors.

It was beautifully organised and you were so helpful — it was altogether a brilliant experience. I felt really privileged to be invited to Odessa.

Authors' voices 2017

„I believe that this project is an appearance from the future, a future in which we can discuss literary news, free from the ideological nightmare that is holding us captive for now.”

Viktor Erofeyev

“That morning, Thursday the 28th of September 2017, starting at nine o'clock, in The Odessa Puppet Theatre, was one of the best mornings I had in my life as a writer. And I thought it would be so hard: one hundred and fifty students or more, and their teachers, Russian their mother language, Ukraine their lover language, and me and Simon van der Geest, my Dutch colleague before the festival and my friend ever after, with only our Dutch and some English... But how it worked!

The students were eager to listen and talk to us, to find out how and why we write our books the way we do. It's all new to them. I mean, in The Netherlands much is taken for granted, when I talk to students there I have to be funny at least, and the best is to be cynical: “Well, it's only books. I know, let's not be too serious about it.” In Odessa everybody in the audience wanted to be serious. It was a relief, these fresh open minds. After the reading I went outside, sat on the steps before the Theatre, in the Odessa sunrise, said hello to everyone passing by, and they said it back to me, and I was glad Simon and I had another reading that afternoon.

The rest of the week this feeling stayed. I made new friends from all over the world, even from The Netherlands, I attended their readings, had wine with them during dinner, talked about politics and life and books, we went into town together, to the beach, till all our languages became one and the same. I am sure that at this moment in time, on this planet, the best place to organize an international literary festival is Odessa."

Sjoerd Kuypers

"It was a pleasure to be part of the 3rd international literature festival Odessa. I met many interesting and talented authors, read poems and discuss several actual problems and challenges. It was my first visit to Odessa and I think I will be back some day. As for the event itself – it was remarkable, all the part of the festival was very well organized. I have been able to get in touch with audience and it was very impressive. Thank you very much!"

Paata Shamugia

"I truly enjoyed the meeting of colleagues from all over the world, seeing the wonderful city, and learning more about the situation in Ukraine. Hopefully the little steps we all took towards furthering mutual understanding through literature can do its contributing part to help unite our splintered world. So thank you so much for giving us this opportunity. "

Janne Teller

"Without doubts and I consider such event is very useful for Odessa and Ukraine in generall and I also hope it helps to create a positive image of Ukraine which is a promicing and perspective (and very beautiful) country."

Maria Galina

"It was all perfectly organised, and for me, first time in Odessa, it was a big surprise to see the old houses, in which some of my beloved artists, from Emil Gilels to Paustowski lived. And it was such a pleasure meeting you all."

Michael Krüger

*"Dear ilo family,
Just to say thank you for the wonderful days, and most inspiring conversations and crossings you created. Thank you, and warmest regards to everyone."*

Adania Shibli

"It was very inspiring to meet, share, lecture within the context of Odessa. I realize this was the first time the festival has choosen for a more transdisciplinary approach, which to me has great added value. Funny enough the urban (social and economic) challenges we face in the Western European context are not so different from the Ukrainian reality yet obviously from very different historical backgrounds, which pivot around money and identity (politics)."

Saskia van Stein

„The third international literature festival odessa was very successful, as I can judge by the number of visitors as well as their feedback. I am grateful to be a part of the festival. I hope this wonderful cultural event will be continued."

Elena Karakina

Authors' voices 2016

"What a wonderful initiative it was to create the Festival in Odessa. I have been talking about in interviews continuously since I left. I do think that it was an important statement about the role of literature and free expression in countries caught up in war. It was particularly great to see the quantity of young people in the rooms getting to their feet. Congratulations and thanks to both of you. I was glad to be part of it".

John Ralston Saul, The President of PEN International

"An der Kreuzung der Zeiten und der Sprachen treffen sich in Odessa Dichter und Leser. Wo würden sie lieber in den Lektüren versinken als am gastlichen Ufer des Schwarzen Meeres?"

Mikhail Shishkin

"As I know it was Ulrich Schreiber's idea to organise the 1 st international literature festival in Odessa and therefore I would like to thank him and his perfect team for everything what made me so happy joining this festival.

Of course I'm very content with all events I participated there and of course I used a brilliant chance to meet so interesting people (not only writers) from other countries and also I'm very glad to have a presentation of my book to the readers in Odessa".

Davit Turashvili