



**SVĚT KNIHY PRAHA
BOOK WORLD PRAGUE
9.-12. 5. 2019**

Press Release
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Nobel-Prize Winning Novelist Mario Vargas Llosa to pay his first visit to the Czech Republic as honorary guest of 2019 Book World Prague together with other Latin American authors

International book fair and literary festival Book World Prague chose Latin America as the guest of honour of its 25th edition this year. From May 9 to 12, 2019, Prague Exhibition Grounds in Holešovice will present the variety of the literary region to the Czech public. To mark the occasion, Prague will host a number of Latin American authors. The brightest of the stars will be Nobel winner Mario Vargas Llosa, a genius speaking many literary voices. This will be his first visit to the Czech Republic, on the invitation from Book World Prague. Also presenting their works in person will be Bernardo Carvalho, Rodrigo Fresán, Álvaro Enrigue, David Unger, Mariana Enríquez, and other important Latin American writers and guests.

Peruvian writer, politician, journalist and essayist living in Spain, **Mario Vargas Llosa** is one of the most significant contemporary authors not only in the Latin American region. In 2010, he won the Nobel Prize for literature for his depiction of “the cartography of the power structures and for his penetrating accounts of the individual’s resistance, revolt and their defeat.” Artistic Director of the festival Guillaume Basset has described the special guest’s uniqueness as follows: “For more than fifteen years, various Czech organizers and institutions have been trying to invite the literary superstar that is Mario Vargas Llosa to participate in their events. He turned them all down. We are all the more delighted that he’s accepted our invitation and will be coming to Prague in May,” adding that “his visit hopefully illustrates that Book World Prague’s reputation is on the rise.”

Now 82 years old, Mario Vargas Llosa was born in Peru, where he graduated in literature and law from San Marcos National University. At 16 years of age, he was already busy contributing to local newspapers as amateur journalist, and in 1957 also began publishing his first stories. Academic scholarship brought him to Madrid, where he lives now and since the early 1990s has been a Spanish citizen. He has also resided in other European cities – active in Paris and London, lecturing at universities and working as professional writer. Already his first novel, *The Time of the Hero* (*La ciudad y los perros*, lit. *The City and the Dogs*) from 1963



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brought him international success. His third book, *Conversation in the Cathedral*, is generally considered a “monumental work.” Llosa’s output is marked by his political engagement—in 1990 he even ran for the presidential office—palpable for instance in his political thriller from 2000, *The Feast of the Goat* (*La fiesta del Chivo*). Throughout his work, Llosa has remained a top-notch writer, as the Czech reading public has also had the pleasure to find out, thanks to the many translations of his books. Marking the occasion of Llosa’s visit to Book World Prague 2019, Argo intends to publish the Czech translations of his novels *In Praise of the Stepmother* (*Elogio de la madrastra*) and *The Neighborhood* (*Cinco esquinas*), the first penned by translator Jan Hloušek, the other by Anežka Charvátová.

Apart from Mario Vargas Llosa, visitors of Book World Prague will have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with other interesting Latin American writers. They will be coming to Prague from all three American continents. “At the honorary guest stand visitors will get a chance to acquaint themselves with literatures from Argentine, Chile, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru and the largest Portuguese-speaking country of the region – Brazil. Other countries will be represented by samples of their book production or visiting guest writers,” explained Book World Prague director Radovan Auer.

With the works of a number of the guests of the 25th edition, Czech readers have been or soon will be able to familiarise themselves thanks to translations published to mark the special occasion of Book World Prague 2019. **Rodrigo Fresán**, Argentinian writer living in Spain, will be introduced by means of his first novel *Historia argentina* – coming out with Garamond under the title *Argentina! Argentina!* – his 1991 astonishing debut and breakthrough onto the international literary scene. So-called new Argentinian prose is represented by **Mariana Enríquez**, whose “rock” novel *This is the Sea* (*Éste es el mar*) has been translated into many languages, including Czech (published by Host Press, in Lucie Trägerová’s translation). Coming from Brazil is writer and journalist **Bernardo Carvalho**, with Garamond presenting to the Czech readers Lada Weissová’s translation of his first book *Reproduction* (*Reprodução*). Mexican author **Álvaro Enrigue** writes novels, stories and essays, praised especially for his *Sudden Death* (*Muerte súbita*). The story of a bizarre tennis match in Michal Brabec’s translation is coming out with Paseka. Enrigue lives in New York, same as another invited guest, **David Unger**. Although writing in English, Unger is considered one of the most significant Guatemalan authors writing today. Excerpts from his work will be published by *Literární noviny* in a special supplement devoted to the 25th edition of Book World Prague.



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This, however, still is not the complete list of invited guest authors. The international book fair and literary festival Book World Prague in May will also be visited by **Luis Fayad** from Columbia and **Ariel Bermani** from Argentine. Coming to meet their Czech fans all the way from Mexico will be **Juan Villoro**, and from Chile, **Francisca Cárcamo**.

Apropos of this year's guest of honour, Book World Prague director Radovan Auer also adds the following: "It's quite exceptional for Latin-American literature to present itself at an international forum in such complexity. Whereas Germanophone countries are featured under the common label of Das Buch and Scandinavian countries under #ReadNordic, Latin American countries have so far had no such shared label. That's why we've created the "LA literature" brand, with a logo by our graphic designer Pavel Fuksa, which we're happy to present to our Latin American friends as a gift, which we'll be glad if they decide to use at other opportunities as well."

At Book World Prague, literature will go hand in hand with explorations of a broader range of Latin American culture, by way of exhibitions, movie screenings, music and dance programme, workshops and tastings of local cuisine. Thus, Prague Exhibition Grounds will be enlivened by some salsa rhythms and animated with all the colours of Latin America.

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