



Press Release
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Nobelist Herta Müller to visit Book World Prague 2019, alongside other prominent European writers

International book fair and literary festival Book World Prague has chosen Latin America as the guest of honour of its 25th edition this year, however this does not mean that no attention is to be paid to writers from other countries. With great joy the organisers announce that their invitation has been accepted by the prominent figure of German letters, novelist, poet and Nobelist, Herta Müller. Personally present to introduce their work to the Czech readership will be other fascinating European writers. Apart from Müller, Book World Prague will host Bernard Minier, John Banville, Javier Cercas, Robert Menasse, and Alain Finkielkraut, among others. This year's diverse and enticing programme will be presented at the Exposition Grounds, Holešovice, from 9 to 12 May.

Herta Müller will be joining Book World Prague by virtue of the support of Goethe Institute Prague and Mladá Fronta publishing. The festival's 25th edition will thus enable its visitors to meet not one, but two guests whose work has been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. The organisers have previously announced that Book World Prague will mark the first-ever visit to the Czech Republic of the stellar Latin American Nobelist Mario Vargas Llosa. Both Vargas Llosa and Müller will perform on 11 May, at a shared Saturday evening programme at the Lucerna Cinema. *"I think this will be the first time in this country that two Nobelists will be sharing one stage. Both these personages also have in common a prominent political-social engagement, and so I'm expecting the debate to go far beyond the framework of literature only. Which is a direction we want to take as well, just as with other book fairs our primary aim is to be a festival of thinking,"* book fair director Radovan Auer has remarked.

Herta Müller was awarded the Nobel Prize ten years ago. The Swedish academy appreciated how "with the concentration of poetry and the frankness of prose, [she] depicts the landscape of the dispossessed." The 65-year-old author has devoted her books to examining the history of the German minority exposed to the oppression of the regime led by dictator Ceausescu. She too found herself at odds with the regime, but in 1985 she received a permit to travel to (then West) Berlin, where she has lived ever since.



"We've been trying to invite Herta Müller for a few years already. Not only since she's a Nobelist, but because she's such a strong – literary as well as political – voice," Artistic Director of the festival Guillaume Basset has announced. Czech readers have had the chance to read a whole number of Herta Müller's books, for instance *The Hunger Angel (Atemschaukel)* or *The Passport (Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt)*. All have been published by Mladá fronta in Radka Denemarková's translation. Due to appear shortly before the start of Book World Prague is the new title *The Fox Was Ever the Hunter (Der Fuchs war damals schon der Jäger)*.

Book World Prague covers a wide spectrum of literary production, and so one of this year's guests is also the bestselling crime-novel author **Bernard Minier**. His suspenseful crime novels, featuring the character of policeman Martin Servaz, have been translated into over 20 languages including Czech. The latest story, appearing this year – just as all those before with XYZ publishing in Jiří Žák's translation – is *Sisters (Soeurs)*.

Connected to the main theme of Book World Prague 2019, **Memory and Reminiscence**, are the visits of Spanish novelist **Javier Cercas** and Irish prosaist **John Banville**, winner of the Man Booker Prize. *"Javier Cercas is an author of 'historical memoirs.' His works remind us that memory, unlike history, tells us much more about the present than about the past. For John Banville's most important work The Sea, the long search for memories is part of the fight against death,"* Guillaume Basset has said of these two novelists. Banville also writes, under the pseudonym Benjamin Black, novels of the noir genre. His latest, *Prague Nights*, is set in medieval Prague. It has been brought to Czech readers by Moba publishing in Richard Podaný's translation. Cercas has won worldwide acclaim with his novel *Soldiers of Salamis (Soldados de Salamina)*, translated into Czech by Blanka Stárková and published by Mladá fronta. His latest book is called *The Anatomy of a Moment*, whose Czech translation is the work of Adriana Krásová and has been published by Prostor.

Another special guest of the 25th edition, **Robert Menasse** was born and lives in Vienna, but can rightly be called not only an Austrian, but a European writer and thinker. He has devoted his novels and essays to European issues (particularly those of the EU), for instance in the acclaimed *Main City (Die Hauptstadt)*, which will be published in the Czech translation on the occasion of the author's visit to Book World Prague.

This year visitors can look forward to a new pavilion called Café Europe. *"Café Europe is a new themed pavilion, based this year in front of the Industrial Palace. In collaboration with the Czech Office of the European Parliament we'd like to embed our programme even more firmly within an international context, present European authors, organise debates on*



European literature and thinking. Book World Prague will take place a mere two weeks before the EU elections, and so we'd like to emphasise Czech literature and culture as parts of the broader context of European literature and culture," Book World Prague director Radovan Auer has explained.

Broader contexts of contemporary matters are also what interests **Alain Finkielkraut**, French philosopher, historian and essayist with Jewish-Polish roots. He regularly comments on contemporary matters in his country and the world. Czech readers have had a chance to get to know his thinking through *The Only Exactitude (La seule exactitude)*, which has been published in Jan Seidl's translation by the Czech Centre for the Study of Democracy and Culture. Finkielkraut is also a close ally of one of the most important Czech writers Milan Kundera, who has been for many decades connected to the French intellectual scene. Finkielkraut will participate in a debate organised by Book World Prague 2019 to celebrate Kundera's 90th birthday.

Contact person for media

Michaela Dostálová, michaela.dostalova@piaristi.cz, tel.: 774 555 570

Contact person at Book World Prague 2019

Jana Chalupová, M.A., veletrh@svetknihy.cz, tel.: 603 439 943