

Press release from the Haus für Poesie

26.5.2021

22nd poesiefestival berlin: Focus on European Multilingualism

Under the heading **There lies Europe**, the **22nd poesiefestival berlin from 11 to 17 June 2021** will be looking at the poetry of Europe in all its diversity of forms and languages and, in spite of the pandemic, building poetic bridges across the continent. The Festival will be paying special attention to Europe's many languages: regional and minority languages, multilingualism and the ambivalence between languages and language policy.

In the **FORUM: Europe's diversity has no skin**, Europe's wealth of languages is the starting point for an approach to the cultural, social and political reality of the continent from the linguistic side. The Turkish journalist Can Dündar, former editor-in-chief of the newspaper Cumhuriyet, will give a lecture on European multiculturalism and multilingualism. Representatives of the Directorates General of the European Commission for Translation and for Education and Culture together with linguist Jürgen Trabant and writer Zoltán Danyi have been invited to take part in the subsequent discussion. Afterwards, poets from "small" languages will be reading their poetry and talking about the relationship of their languages to the "big" languages.

The **Language Archipelagos of Europe** deserve special attention. Multilingualism in five European regions – Spain, former Yugoslavia, the Baltic, Romania and the Caspian Sea – will come under scrutiny in five events looking at language policy and linguistic nationalism, identity and poetic tradition.

To enable a deeper understanding of the topic, **written interviews** with the writers can be accessed online on the Festival website from 1 June in the original language and German translation: The writers will be talking in depth about questions of linguistic identity, challenges and opportunities thrown up by multilingualism and language policy in their countries.

Senka Marić (BIH), in her interview, describes the linguistic situation in the post-Yugoslav states thus, "As I am firmly convinced that this is one and the same cultural space, literature, too, gains in importance from an emphasis on common features: it is a testimony to the poetological diversity of a greater cultural space, a greater language and a greater literature."

Latvian poet **Sergej Timofejev** says about the relationship of the "small" Baltic languages to Russian, "It is a matter of preserving and continuing to develop Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian, which is why the public is very receptive to such processes. Russian is here on the one hand the language of the biggest minority, but on the other

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hand, it is also the language of a giant and not very predictable neighbour with its own political interests. For us as writers writing in Russian the essential point is that culture can also happen here in this language; it is not just the language of the street or of buying and selling.”

Aleksandr Skidan (RUS), in his interview, summarises his understanding of Europe thus: “For me, Europe is more defined by its historical and cultural context, from which a political context cannot be excluded (Kant’s idea of eternal peace, for instance). And what I would take as being definitive of being European is the idea of the figure of the Other, the possibility of thinking the Other (even beyond the European), of imagining the Other and being open to it.”

All interviews and essays can be accessed free of charge at poesiefestival.org

SAT 12.6. | from 2 pm
FORUM: EUROPE’S DIVERSITY HAS NO SKIN



2 pm
Multicultural Europe: Challenges and Opportunities

Can Dündar (TUR/DEU), former editor-in-chief of the newspaper Cumhuriyet, casts an eye in his lecture on Europe’s (linguistic) diversity from its position as Turkey’s next-door neighbour and the internal view of an exile living in Europe.



4 pm
All kinds of people in all kinds of language: Diagnoses of Europe’s tongues

Kristina Cunningham (SWE) of the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, Levke King-Elsner, department head in the Directorate General for Translation of the European Commission (DEU), linguist Jürgen Trabant (DEU) and writer Zoltán Danyi (SRB) talk to moderator Asmus Trautsch (DEU) about ambivalences in the wealth of languages, its social and political dimensions and translation tasks for the EU.



6 pm

Delicate paths in the garden of languages

Poets Roberta Dapunt (ITA), Aurélia Lassaque (FRA), Nikola Madzirov (MKD), Johan Sandberg McGuinne (SWE) and Elan Grug Muse (GBR) let us hear their poetry and essayistic language portraits in Ladin, Occitanian, Macedonian, Southern Sámi and Welsh and discuss minority languages and their relationship to “big” languages in poetry.

SUN 13.6. – THU 17.6. | 6 pm each day
LANGUAGE ARCHIPELAGO I–V



SUN 13.6. | 6 pm

LANGUAGE ARCHIPELAGO I: FORMER-YU – Our language(s)

Are Bosnian, Montenegrin, Croatian and Serbian ultimately just variants of a ‘common’ language, or are they languages in their own right after all? Does a language area end at the country’s border? What are the consequences when nationalisms split a language apart? These questions will be discussed by the poets Senka Marić (BIH), Ivana Bodrožić (HRV), Kralj Čačka (SRB) and Dejan Ilić (SRB) with moderator Mascha Dabić (AUT).



MON 14.6. | 6 pm

LANGUAGE ARCHIPELAGO II: Lust of languages and language war in Spain

Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Asturian, Basque, Galician: poets María Callís Cabrera (Catalonia/ESP), Sofía Castañón (Asturia/ESP), Olvido García Valdés (Castile/ESP), Teresa Irastotza (Basque Country/ESP) and Chus Pato (Galicia/ESP) discuss Spain’s plurality of languages, a historical fact and today politically instrumentalised, in terms of its meaning for poetry and the mainstream Spanish literature industry with moderator Cecilia Dreytmüller (DEU).



TUE 15.6. | 6 pm
LANGUAGE ARCHIPELAGO III: Minorities, languages and representations in Romania
Poets Radu Vancu (ROU), Claudiu Komartin (ROU) and Teodora Coman (ROU) explore with moderator Ernest Wichner (ROU/DEU) the question of the situation of minority languages in Romania before and after 1990, in the tug-of-war between linguistic nationalism and the deconstruction of the national idea.



WED 16.6. | 6 pm
LANGUAGE ARCHIPELAGO IV: Caspian Sea – Is that even Europe still?
Europe thought of as a cultural space: the Caspian regions are also influenced by Islamic European poetic traditions. The poets Shamshad Abdullaev (UZB), Egana Djabbarova (RUS/AZE), Nicat Mammadov (AZE) and Kanat Omar (KAZ) hold a discussion with moderator Hendrik Jackson (DEU) about Neo-Orientalism, Self-Exoticisation, topographical cul de sacs and queer Islamic poetry.



THU 17.6. | 6 pm
LANGUAGE ARCHIPELAGO V: Poetry and self-perception of self in the Baltic
Is there such a thing as a specifically "Baltic" identity? What are the influences that mark poetry and cultural self-perception in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Russia? Poets Vaiva Grainytė (LTU), Maarja Kangro (EST), Aleksandr Skidan (RUS) and Sergej Timofejev (LVA) take a look at the literatures and their languages together with moderator Marie Luise Knott (DEU).

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FRI 11.6. – THU 17.6.2021
22nd poesiefestival berlin
online at poesiefestival.org

Tickets: € 3, Festival Pass: € 19

The prices for Poetic Education may vary.

Representatives of the press, please get your accreditation at presse@haus-fuer-poesie.org

Every summer, Berlin is transformed for ten days into a stronghold of poetry. 150 poets from around the world come to the poesiefestival berlin and present current trends in contemporary poetic art. The Festival enables poetry to be experienced in all its diversity of forms and welcomes up to 13,000 visitors each year. As in 2020 already, the Festival will be taking place online this year.

The 22nd poesiefestival berlin is a project by the Haus für Poesie in cooperation with the Academy of Arts. Funded by the Capital Cultural Fund and the Federal Foreign Office. It gratefully acknowledges the kind support of the Alfred Ritter GmbH & Co. KG and the Goethe-Institut. Presented by Der Freitag, taz, BÜCHERmagazin, tip Berlin/ EXBERLINER, rbbKultur, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, ASK HELMUT and SINN UND FORM.