

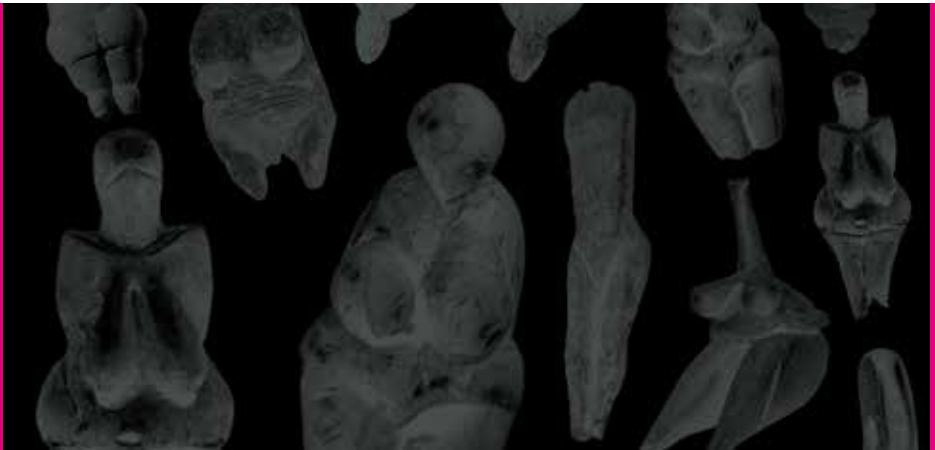


Foreign Rights Guide

Fall 2025



Matthes & Seitz Berlin



weiter

albert ostermaier



Albert Ostermaier

Love Goes On. A Novel with Pasolini

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

A passionate literary monument to Pasolini

Fifty years ago, Pier Paolo Pasolini was brutally murdered in Ostia, Rome. The crime was never solved, and there was more speculation about his death than about the incomparable films, books, plays, drawings, pamphlets and prophecies he left behind. For Albert Ostermaier, however, since he himself began writing poetry, Pasolini and his work have stood out like a fixed star above everything else. With his *Novel with Pasolini*, he now pays a passionate tribute to him by drawing on Pasolini's invocation of poetry, the 112 sonnets he left behind, cries for help from someone abandoned by his 'life partner' Ninetto Davoli. Like Pasolini, Ostermaier transcends boundaries – for both of them, everything private is political and everything political is private.

In his empathetic appropriation of Pasolini's sonnets and in the wake of his mysterious murder, Albert Ostermaier pulls out all the linguistic stops and, in a relentless autobiographical self-exploration, learns something about himself that he would never have learned without Pasolini: love goes on.

"He's the forsaken. He's been forsaken by love, by his sweet reason, a sour shadow now, shading his eyesight. The field of view of the camera between his fingers is fake. The camera, his eye. He shoots one image after another. He wraps up the shadows. And buried among those shadows is a laugh. Each word cries out: Come back, come back to me. I was with you, I was never yours. Come back."

Novel
Hardcover
188 pages
English sample available

**Welt Literature Prize for
his entire literary oeuvre**

Albert Ostermaier, born in 1967, lives as a freelance writer in Munich. He is one of the most frequently performed contemporary German playwrights. His plays have been premiered by Karin Beier, Andrea Breth, Kai Voges and Nuran David Callis. His works have been translated into more than 20 languages and have received numerous literary awards, including the Kleist Prize, the Bertolt Brecht Prize and the Ernst Toller Prize. He has also directed and founded internationally renowned literature festivals.

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Pasolini · Murder · Italy · Abuse · Catholicism · Homosexuality · Self-exploration · Love



Julia Koll

The Book of Mechthild

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

"The Book of Mechthild" tells of friendship, devotion and ecstasy, and of the tremor that holds the world together at its core.

Novel
Hardcover
230 pages

Mechthild, a name like a crocheted doily: probably born over eight hundred years ago, died in Helfta, heard the voice of God shortly before her twelfth birthday and allowed it to guide her over all obstacles. The only thing that remains of Mechthild of Magdeburg is what is perhaps the "most daring erotic poetry" of the Middle Ages, her seven-volume book *The Flowing Light of Divinity*, a work that shimmers between genres, in which song and counter-song alternate with dialogues, visions, autobiographical passages and criticism of monastic life and the Church. But not even this book has survived in its original form. So someone else could have written her texts. She could have been someone else entirely, could never have written. Or much earlier. Even now. The only thing that is certain is her love for courtly love, the combative love of a strong woman. In search of this distant sister, a woman of today sets out to piece together Mechthild's life story where her tracks are lost – with her own.

Julia Koll, born in Göttingen in 1975, is a Protestant theologian and director of the Protestant Academy Loccum. Since completing her doctoral thesis on the relationship between bodily experience and religious experience, she has been working at the intersection of science and practice, spirituality and culture, and most recently studied literary writing in Hildesheim. She lives in Hanover. *The Book of Mechthild* is her first novel.

In her sparkling novel *The Book of Mechthild*, Julia Koll reflects the story of two female lovers across the ages, thus giving the world a new touch of mysticism.

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Religion · Mechthild of Magdeburg · Middle Ages · Feminism · Mysticism · Biography · Female figures



OLA DENIS

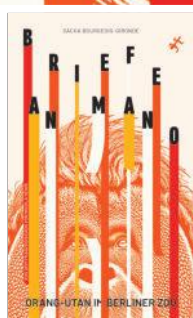
Sacha Bourgeois-Gironde

Letters to Mano. Orangutan at Berlin Zoo

A surprising novel about a more-than-human love

Mano, an orangutan at Berlin Zoo, cannot receive letters. But that doesn't stop the narrator of this novel from writing to him – obsessively, tenderly and with increasing urgency. At first, the letters are inquiries about Mano's life, his origins, the question of his name and his genealogy. But from letter to letter, another thought comes to the fore: how can Mano be freed? Or is it actually the narrator who needs to be freed? What begins as a poetic reflection on captivity and otherness becomes a feverish obsession in which the boundaries between empathy and projection, between reason and madness become blurred. The narrator becomes entangled in legal and philosophical considerations, develops plans for liberation and seeks a means of reaching Mano through language. But Mano remains silent.

Letters to Mano is a haunting, stirring novel about the power of language, the longing for closeness and the impossibility of communication. Sacha Bourgeois-Gironde subtly explores the abysses of our relationship with animals, with our otherness – and thus, not least, our relationship with ourselves.



 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Novel
Hardcover
128 pages
French original available

Sacha Bourgeois-Gironde is a philosopher and economist. He teaches as a professor of economics and cognitive science at the University Panthéon-Assas and École normale supérieure. His research focuses on the relationship between human cognitive abilities and the environments and institutions in which they are used. He is the author of numerous books. Most recently published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *How the Law Brings Us Closer to Nature* (2023).

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Human-animal relationship · Zoo · Orangutan · Berlin · Animal rights · Liberation · Social criticism



Frank Witzel

Complex Structures

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

The structures of our lives, narrated with prismatic genius by the German Book Prize winner

What may appear on the surface to be a simple narrative, a short anecdote, or a minor description often reveals, upon closer inspection, a number of far-reaching connections that lead into historical, philosophical, and psychoanalytical depths. Frank Witzel explores such 'complex structures' in his new book of the same title. In eighty texts, the author examines structures ranging from harmlessness to humiliation, from parables to school breaks, from pupation to willpower in a manner that is both narrative and self-reflective. The result is an idiosyncratic panorama of an encyclopedia of chance, which, precisely because it is not limited to a single style or theme, reveals a vibrant system subject to constant change.

In profoundly virtuoso texts full of adventurous storytelling, which sometimes turn out to be narratives and sometimes anecdotes, Frank Witzel shakes the foundations of a world that seems to know itself rather inadequately.

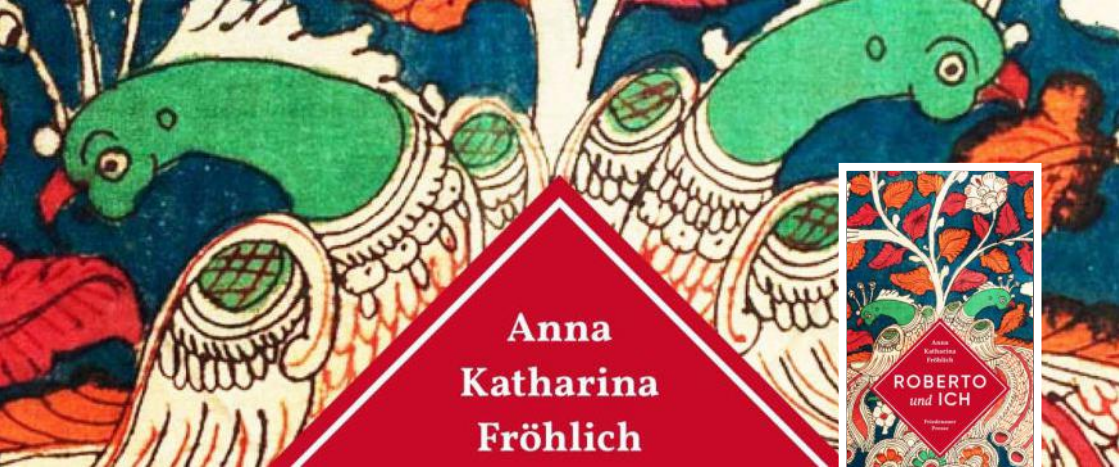
"In addition to irony and eloquence, it is above all the constant questioning that makes Witzel's work so fascinating. In desperation, doubt never turns into despair." – Ulrich Rüdenauer, *PHILOSOPHIE MAGAZIN*

Literature
Hardcover
362 pages

Frank Witzel has published numerous radio plays, essays, and novels, including *The Invention of the Red Army Faction by a Manic-Depressive Teenager in the Summer of 1969*, for which he received the German Book Prize in 2015, and *Sweet Shipwreck* (2020). In 2017 he received the Poetics Lectureship from the University of Heidelberg, and in 2018 the Poetics Lectureship from the University of Tübingen; he also held the Friederichs Endowed Professorship at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach.

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Prose miniatures · Philosophy · Structures · Layers · Anecdotes · Surrealism · Everyday life



Anna Katharina Fröhlich



Anna Katharina Fröhlich

Roberto and I. A Pact with Books



Roberto Calasso: A love and life story between books

He, Roberto Calasso, is the Milanese publisher who gathers authors from all over the world in the Adelphi publishing house he runs, and is also an astutely erudite and linguistically elegant author. She, Anna Katharina Fröhlich, moves from Frankfurt to Mornaga on Lake Garda and finds herself as a young, adventurous woman between books and her garden on her way to becoming a successful writer. The two meet for the first time at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October 1995. "A love story under the star of travel" begins – and a bond with books. Almost thirty years later, Anna Katharina Fröhlich looks back and tells of the bond between two people who together had the courage to embark on a completely unconventional adventure that promised to unite spirit and life – and lasted until 2021, the year of Roberto Calasso's death, who found his grave on the Venetian island of the dead, San Michele, next to his best friend, the poet Joseph Brodsky.

Anna Katharina Fröhlich's reminiscent narrative is both frivolous and discreet, humorous and intimate, but above all rich in thought. It vividly traces the portrait of a person and the core of the extensive oeuvre of a writer who took the liberty of ignoring all the conventions of the literary and academic world.

"Anna Katharina Fröhlich demonstrates a very unique and persistent literary power." – FAZ

Biography
Hardcover
202 pages
2025

Simultaneously published in Italian by Mondadori

Rights sold to:
Italian (Mondadori Libri)

Anna Katharina Fröhlich, born in 1971, grew up in Frankfurt am Main and Munich. She has published the novels *Wilde Orangen*, *Kream Korner*, *Der schöne Gast* and *Rückkehr nach Samthar*. Most recently, her novel *The Yacht* was published by Friedenaue Presse. She lives as a gardener and board member of the Italian publishing house Adelphi between Mornaga on Lake Garda and Milan.

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EINE SPRACHE

Loretta Würtenberger & Hubertus Graf
Zedtwitz
Mit Aquarellen von Erwin Wurm



Loretta Würtenberger, Hubertus Graf Zedtwitz

A Language of Love

A masterful meditation on the secrets of horsemanship - by no means just for horse lovers

In *A Language of Love*, Loretta Würtenberger and Count Hubertus Zedtwitz explore the millennia-old relationship between humans and horses, opening up a perspective that goes far beyond the art of riding. In their touching narrative about their relationship with horses and with each other, they combine personal experiences with philosophical and historical reflections, creating a space in which communication, trust, and relationships are reimaged. In this context, the horse is a mirror of our own behavior and, at the same time, a metaphor for the relationship between humans. This book is by no means only for horse lovers, but for anyone who loves nature writing and the big questions of life.

"The language of horsemanship as the language of love — a very poetic and very surprising insight in this very rich book." – Dennis Scheck, WDR 3

"The book is distinguished by its technically accurate examination of equestrian terminology such as rhythm, contact, aids, and suppleness. However, it derives its great, emotionally touching charm from the philosophical reflections that the two authors add, from the cultural artifacts, especially the poems, that they use to explain and illustrate the terms, and finally from their personal commitment to tenderness and sensitivity, which the terms demand in our dealings with our fellow creatures." – Monopol Magazine



FRIEDENAUER
PRESSE

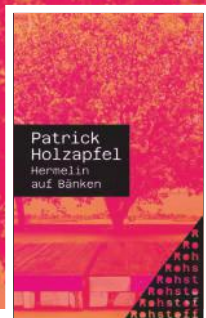
Literary essay
Hardcover with water-
colours by Erwin Wurm
196 pages
2025
English sample available

Loretta Würtenberger
studied law, philosophy
and art history. She was a
judge at the Berlin District
Court and has received several
awards as an entrepreneur. Today she advises
artists' estates and manages the Schlossgut
Schwanse sculpture park.

Count Hubertus Zedtwitz
is an international Grand
Prix rider and trainer. He
was the youngest ever German
professional rider
champion. Today he trains
national teams throughout
Europe and works as a
sociotherapist.

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Patrick Holzapfel Hermelin auf Bänken



Patrick Holzapfel

Ermine on Benches

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

"When I wake up, I can feel the bench under my body and know that I'm still here."

As the protagonist in Patrick Holzapfel's debut novel *Ermine on Benches* walks through Vienna's ninth district, something almost unheard of happens: he strays from the straight path, begins to follow the meandering steps of a homeless man wrapped in ermine and finally finds himself abruptly – on a park bench made of twenty thin brown wooden boards. From here, where time finally seems to stop for him, an alternative map of the city gradually unfolds, which the narrator explores sitting down, because: 'The longer you sit, the more you learn about the bench. And at the same time, you also learn something about people who sit on benches'; people like Manuela with her extensive, albeit completely useless, knowledge of film history, like Yong, who rants about his countless chess triumphs, or just like the narrator, who in his search for the ermine king becomes a king himself with quiet wit and irony and realises that every bench tells the story of a person and transforms their passions, fears and hopes into a view.

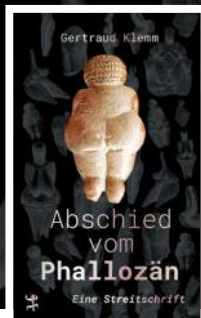
Novel
Softcover
166 pages
2024

Patrick Holzapfel, born in Augsburg, lives in Austria. He works as a writer, film critic and freelance curator. *Ermine on Benches* is his first book.

"Pleasantly, the novel itself makes no claim about the extent to which he wants to change the world politically. He does nothing other than tell of a certain situation in life. About a person who has to answer the existential question 'Where do I go from here?' has a somewhat unusual, but actually obvious answer: Sit down first!" – taz

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Vienna · Homeless · Mourning · Wanderer · Urban novel · Outsider



Gertraud Klemm

Farewell to the Phallocene. A Pamphlet

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

What can feminism achieve? Gertraud Klemm provides answers: radical and uncompromising.

The showdown of the Anthropocene seems imminent: against the backdrop of climate crisis and wars, a handful of power-hungry and unscrupulous politicians, in league with ruthless tech billionaires, threaten to drive the world into the ground. What do all these actors with unprecedented global influence have in common? Without exception, they are men. Ignoring this white elephant in the room means that all activism is futile, because it is not humans who have the Earth in a stranglehold, but patriarchy! Overcoming it would mean tackling the most serious global problems in a concerted manner. Until recently, slavery, racism, colonialism and imperialism seemed to be 'without alternative', but they have been largely overcome because they have been exposed as abuses unworthy of the human species. Why should this not also be possible with patriarchy?

In her passionate essay, Gertraud Klemm takes matriarchal societies from the past and present as a model for her announcement of *Farewell to the Phallocene* – a powerful thought experiment on matriarchal inspiration, patriarchal deconstruction and the necessity of colonial reversal.

"Let us recognize patriarchy for what it is: a fatal programming error at the core of our seemingly humanistic paradigm. Its superpower is abuse; its legacy is destruction."

Non-fiction
Hardcover
142 pages
English sample available

Gertraud Klemm, born in Vienna in 1971, grew up in Baden near Vienna, studied biology and worked as a hygiene consultant for the City of Vienna until 2005. Since then, she has been living with her family as a freelance author in Pfaffstätten, Lower Austria. She writes novels, plays, guest commentaries and essays for Austrian newspapers and gives speeches on the current state of women's politics.

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Feminism · Polemic · Anthropocene · Global crisis · Patriarcharchy · Matriarcharchy · Gender trouble

aus der Gewalt



Thomas Wagner

Paths Out of Violence. Impulses for a New Political Thinking

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

"Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert." – Hannah Arendt

Non-fiction
Hardcover
160 pages

Since Russia's attack on Ukraine in February 2022, Europe has been confronted with the end of a peace order that was negotiated by the so-called victorious powers after 1945 and which sought to establish a fragile order based on borders, military security and reconstruction aid, which we call Western democracy. But what if we understood democracy no longer as a form of government, but as the ability of local communities to govern themselves? What new forms of responsibility, sovereignty and self-determination would arise from a serious commitment to federalism? And what political understanding of society do we need in the 21st century for peace, the most fragile and precious commodity we have?

Thomas Wagner, born in Rheinberg in 1967, is a cultural sociologist and author of numerous books. Recently published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *Desertion into Freedom* (2022).

Using historical examples from Somaliland, the indigenous peoples of North America and the Zionist founding of the State of Israel, but also using current cases such as Kurdish self-government in Rojava, cultural sociologist Thomas Wagner traces the possibilities of federalist concepts as shared sovereignty and shows how they innovatively combine the self-organisation of ethnic groups with the principles of modern, constitutional democracies.

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Wolfgang Müller-Funk

Borders

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Migration and globalisation. A new perspective on borders, what they are and what they mean.

Borders have become a constant topic of discussion in a globalised world: overcoming borders is seen as both a promise and a source of panic, and the assumption that borders will simply disappear in a digital world driven by abstract money is a misconception that is as widespread as it is erroneous. But borders are much more than that; in the concept of liminality or borderline existence, they prove to be an inescapable phenomenon of individual and social self-determination. In fact, liminality is constitutive for the self-experience of our own physical boundaries, for the presence of death in life, or for our heterogeneous psychological state and identity. This does not dissolve the function of boundaries as obstacles, but it does reveal that liminality is constantly changing and taking on new forms.

Wolfgang Müller-Funk shows that boundaries must be understood in terms of social psychology and only become visible in certain social constellations. His philosophical and literary search for clues leads him into the world of myth, but also into the realm of intimate encounters and into the midst of everyday life in modern societies, which are threatened with division over the question of boundaries.

Non-fiction
Hardcover
ca. 250 pages

Wolfgang Müller-Funk was Professor of cultural studies in Birmingham and Vienna and, among other things, Fellow at the New School for Social Research in New York and at the IWM in Vienna. He is the author of numerous books. Recently published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *Crudelitas* (2022), which has been translated into English (Polity) and Russian (AST).

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Iris Därmann

Out of the Night. Children's Perspectives

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Children as witnesses and actors – a history of violence in the 20th century from a child's perspective

As adults, we cannot know exactly how children experience this world. But in places where childhood has been destroyed – in ghettos, camps or war zones – children display a vital resilience that occasionally leads them out of the darkness of violence. At the beginning of the 20th century, Polish doctor Janusz Korczak founded a children's republic in his orphanage in Warsaw, which was entirely self-governed by the children. He never left the side of the children entrusted to his care, not even when they were deported to the Treblinka camp. In the summer of 1945, Marie Paneth encouraged Jewish children in an English reception camp to paint their experiences. The pictures impressively show their experience of the Shoah. The anarchic kindness of the surviving children from the Theresienstadt ghetto, whom Anna Freud took into her care, also testifies to an unconditional brotherhood and sisterhood without direct kinship. And this experience of the camps would change psychiatric institutions forever: with Fernand Deligny and Maud Mannoni, the anti-psychiatric movement created new institutions and forms of democratic participation for children.

In four case studies, Iris Därmann allows children to appear in their wounded subjectivity and in a mode of radical brotherhood that shatters our infantilising conception of childhood. Their children's perspectives form a critical stimulus for a coming democracy.

Non-fiction
Hardcover
240 pages

Sigmund Freud Prize for scientific prose 2022

Iris Därmann, born in Witten in 1963, is Professor of Cultural Theory and Cultural Aesthetics at the Humboldt University in Berlin. Her non-fiction books *Underserviceability, A History of Violence and of Political Philosophy* (2020) and *Sadism With and Without Sade* (2023) have been translated into Spanish.

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Violence · Children · Concentration camp · Survival · Art therapy · Cuddle stone · Brother- and sisterhood



Heike Behrend

Conversations with a Dead Man. Gustaf Nagel, Prophet from Arendsee

Returning to a foreign home: ethnologist Heike Behrend asks questions close to home that she brought back from afar.

When ethnologist Heike Behrend visited her grandfather's house after the fall of the Berlin Wall, she encountered the Christian prophet Gustaf Nagel at Arendsee in the Altmark region. Nagel was born in 1874 during the German Empire and died in 1952 in a mental asylum in the GDR. As part of the Lebensreform movement, the German nationalist prophet was subjected to various forms of persecution throughout his life. Heike Behrend reconstructs Gustaf Nagel's biography on the basis of his self-portraits on postcards and his texts, which local historians had already collected and archived during the GDR era, as well as in conversations with them and the deceased. She also recounts conflicts, cooperation and friendship in a present in which disappointment and dissatisfaction with reunification are also finding expression in new forms of self-assertion among the inhabitants of the Altmark. In dialogue with them, she learns not only to recognise her own questions, but also what it means to generate ethnographic and historical knowledge together and in solidarity.

Following in the footsteps of a discredited prophet, these *Conversations with a Dead Man* paint a picture of the life reform movement, its colourful protagonists, but also its dark sides, make photography comprehensible as a resistant practice, explore feelings of home before and after reunification, and show what it means not to turn close strangers into others.

Ethnology · Ethnography · Prophet · GDR · Africa · Lebensreform movement · Biography · Photo postcards

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Non-fiction
Hardcover with illustrations
312 pages

Heike Behrend, born in Stralsund in 1947, studied ethnology and religious studies in Munich, Vienna and Berlin. She worked ethnographically, especially in East Africa, taught at various universities in Germany and abroad and lives in Berlin. Her book *Incarnation of an Ape* (2020) has been awarded the Leipzig Book Fair Prize 2021 and has been translated into Italian, Spanish and Chinese.

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William T. Vollmann

Shalamov or The Laws of Life

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

“If you want to know the laws of life, read Shalamov.” One of the most important American authors reinterprets Varlam Shalamov for our times

From the genocide of the Herero and Nama to the Holocaust, the terror of the Khmer Rouge and the massacre of Srebrenica: the 20th century is a mass grave in which the most recent dead are piled on top of the previously murdered until they are no longer visible. There are few authors of our time who have seen so much suffering and written about so much inhumanity as William T. Vollmann. This makes his horror at the stories from Kolyma all the more astonishing. In it, Varlam Shalamov asks the question: “Did we exist?” Yes, Vollmann answers in his deeply impressive exploration of the archipelago of Shalamov, the still incomprehensible and probably most important literary chronicler of Stalinist horror. And yet Shalamov wrote more than literature. His stories are also testimonies – testimonies of an experience that Vollmann places in a rich context of extremes in his haunting essay, in the hope of making them somewhat more comprehensible. Testimonies that remind us never to forget the humanity of all those who were broken, blunt, ugly and turned into animals.

“Regardless of what Shalamov says, he does not merely record the atrocities in his ‘documents’. He hands them over to memory by turning them into stories.”

Non-fiction
Hardcover
ca. 200 pages
2026
English original available

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Italian (Il Saggiatore
Gruppo Editoriale SpA)

William T. Vollmann, born in Los Angeles in 1959, is a journalist and author of numerous books dedicated to the horrors of the world. He received the National Book Award in 2005 for his novel *Europe Central*.

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Irina Rastorgueva

Pop-up Propaganda. Epicrisis of the Russian Self-Poisoning

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Irina Rastorgueva describes the incessant propaganda machine of contemporary Russia, its disturbing background and its brutal mechanisms that permeate all social relations.

While within Russia the ban on critical media and the synchronisation of nationalised broadcasters are producing an almost cartoonish narrative about traditional values and the necessity of 'special military operations', carefully planned propaganda campaigns in the rest of the world are working to destabilise democratic societies. A planned madness is sweeping the country. It manifests itself in the inflationary use of euphemisms and hate speech, as denunciation and in a punitive regime that has been thought through to the most subtle level. And it is a madness with a history. For the violence that has a relentless grip on Russian society is a continuation of the paranoid search for enemies, the nightly arrests, searches and torture as well as the gulags from the Soviet regime – in a garish, new guise and fused with the gangsterism of the 1990s.

In her unique tone, which is as precise as it is ironic, Irina Rastorgueva shows the effects of Russian self-poisoning in a montage of newspaper clippings and independent reports, from her own experience as well as from the analyses of authors critical of the Kremlin and loyal to Russia.

"She has made a significant contribution to the understanding of Russian conditions." –
Sonja Margolina, *Die ZEIT online*

Non-fiction
Hardcover with collages
337 pages
2024
English sample available

**Leipzig Book Fair Prize
2025 for the best work of
non-fiction**

Irina Rastorgueva, born in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk in 1983, studied philology at Sakhalin State University and worked as a cultural journalist for several Russian magazines and radio stations. She is the author of numerous academic articles on the theory and history of literature and journalism. In 2011 she founded the cultural magazine *ProSakhalin*. She has been working as an author and graphic designer in Berlin since 2017. She writes for the *FAZ*, *NZZ* and *Osteuropa magazine*.

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Der lange Schatten der Guillotine

Lebensbilder aus dem Paris des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts



László F. Földényi

The Long Shadow of the Guillotine. Life Stories from Paris in the Nineteenth Century

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

László F. Földényi tells the story of the aftermath of the French Revolution as a montage full of images and asks who we are when we lose our heads

Even before the French Revolution, there were occasional executions by guillotine, but it was not until 1791 that death on the scaffold was used across the board and for everyone. Until then, social status and the nature of the crime determined the choice of the execution method. Now the industrialisation of killing began. Because everyone becomes equal in front of the guillotine.

And while contemporaries are still puzzling over whether the consciousness of the decapitated can live on separate from the body in the face of all the severed heads, László F. Földényi creates his very own narrative of the long 19th century in his richly illustrated essay – based on our entry into headlessness. At the same time, the new technology of photography was introduced. Only its widespread dissemination made it possible to free the moment from the transience of life, to immortalise it as much as to kill it. This leads not only to a new understanding of time and space, but also to a change in perception itself. From then on, everything appears fragmented, as if the cut of the falling axe continues indefinitely: the bodies, the city, the poetry and the painting. A completely new image of man emerges, which portrays him as a bizarre, violent, headless being and which continues to have an effect right up to the present day.

"Földényi's perspective, his collage of image analyses, executioner stories, newspaper advertisements and poems, is captivating." – FAZ

Paris · French Society · Guillotine · Decapitation · Headless · Photography · Urban Planning

Non-fiction
Hardcover with illustrations
302 pages
2024
Hungarian original available

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Russian (AST)
Turkish (Ketebe Kitap)

László F. Földényi, born in 1952 in Debrecen, is a Hungarian art theorist, literature specialist and essayist. He holds a chair for art theory at the Academy for Theater and Film in Budapest. Since 2009 he is a member of the German academy for language and poetry. His books have been translated into several languages.

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Sibylle Anderl, Claus Leggewie

The Sun. A Discovery

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

It is the ball of fire in our part of the galaxy, without it there would be no life on Earth. But our relationship with it has changed in recent years: whereas it used to be the celestial star that promised guidance and defined the day, today it is a threat to us. It ruthlessly burns down whole areas of land and melts the polar ice caps, we seek protection from its rays – and at the same time utopian ideas entwine around it, the seemingly infinite source of energy.

Together, Sibylle Anderl and Claus Leggewie approach the overwhelming nature of our star as a scientific and cultural-historical fact. Anyone who wants to say something about the Sun cannot remain silent about heliocentric cosmologies, solar deities, the functioning of semiconductors, solar geoengineering and nuclear fusion.

"Why discover the sun, which we see almost every day? Well, there is a lot to rediscover: thousands of years of human knowledge about weather and navigation, agriculture and plant cultivation, well-being and much more that today's people have forgotten or delegated to smartphones and experts. Since the sun has been burning down on us more and more frequently and whole areas of land have become deserted, people have been looking at this source of all life with fear and trying to protect themselves from it. On closer inspection, we discover how imperfect our star is – and how finite."

"As a duet, they succeed in conveying a 'feeling for the interplay of different perspectives' of our view of the sun." – Otto Kallscheuer, *Frankfurter Rundschau*

Non-fiction
Hardcover
189 pages
2024

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Gruppo Editoriale SpA)

Sibylle Anderl, born in 1981, is an astrophysicist and philosopher. She was an editor in the features section of the *FAZ*, in 2021 she became head of the science section in the *FAZ* and *FAS*, and since 2024 she has been head of *ZEIT Wissen*.

Claus Leggewie, born in 1950, is a political scientist. He was Director of the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities in Essen from 2007 to 2017 and has since been Head of the Panel on Planetary Thinking at the University of Giessen.

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Philosophy · Astronomy · Narrative non-fiction · Cultural History · Solar Radiation · Climate Crisis



Julian Nida-Rümelin

The Epochal Change. On the Way to a New World Order

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

If Europe wants to have a future, it must find a visionary new path shaped by old values.

Essay
Softcover
ca. 160 pages

For many years now, the erosion of the previous liberal, rule-based and value-oriented international order has been evident, and since Donald Trump's re-election at the latest, it has been gathering pace rapidly. There is talk of a pre-war period, and Europe appears at a loss. The frantic attempts to regain Germany's ability to act through massive rearmament mask the lack of a European strategy. Europe is in danger of being crushed between the major world powers. International politics has always been shaped by visions, values and national identities: while a public titanic struggle between liberals, neo-conservatives, realists and libertarians is taking place in the USA, Russia and China, the two other major players in international politics, are developing new concepts of international politics aimed at breaking the dominance of the West. Julian Nida-Rümelin's essay contributes to intellectual clarity in times of great confusion, outlines the vision of a multipolar but cooperative world order, and advocates a return to an ethically based realpolitik of peacekeeping.

Julian Nida-Rümelin is a philosopher and political theorist. He was director of the Geschwister Scholl Institute for Political Science in Munich and professor of philosophy at the universities of Tübingen, Göttingen, Munich and Berlin, as well as visiting professor in the USA, Italy and China. His research focuses on decision theory, ethics and political philosophy. He was head of the interdisciplinary working group on international justice at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities and is the founding rector of the Humanist University of Applied Sciences in Berlin.

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MIT



Antonia Birnbaum

Courage Without Heroism

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

What does courage mean in our days?

Since the days when Don Quixote bravely rode out to fight windmills, courage has become detached from heroism. Ours is a post-heroic era; we have long since ceased to sacrifice our lives for a higher ideal. Today's calls to restore a supposedly homogeneous society stem solely from the incessant murmurings of the global rumour mill.

Rethinking courage in modern times requires breaking away from its definition as overcoming the fear of death. The question is no longer, 'What is a person willing to die for?' but 'What desire are they unwilling to give up?' This question branches out into reflections on Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Hölderlin, Heinrich von Kleist and Jacques Lacan. What guides us in these divergent considerations is the link between courage and the willingness to take risks. It is no longer the confrontation with death that constitutes this courage, but the negation of its omnipotence in favour of an unpredictability that enables a connection to truth.

"Birnbaum's thoughts are directed against accepting concrete powerlessness – and without any need for something like a heroic death." – Vincent Sauer, Tagesspiegel

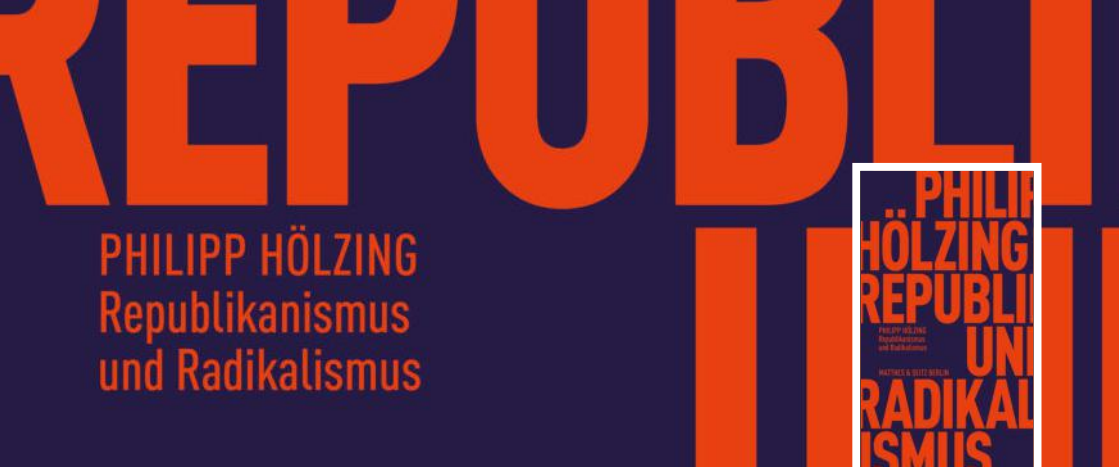
Essay
Softcover
188 pages
2025

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Antonia Birnbaum teaches philosophy at Paris 8 University and at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. She works at the intersection of critical theory and French poststructuralist philosophy on politics and art. Most recent publications: *Benjamin. Bonheur, Justice, Le vertige d'une pensée. Descartes corps et âme and Radikale Gleichheit. Rancière teilen.*

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Adorno · Hölderlin · Lacan · Freud · Kleist · Antigone · Odyssee · Heroism · Fear



Philipp Hölzing

Republicanism and Radicalism

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

A new Machiavelli!

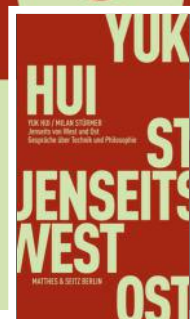
Niccolò Machiavelli, Renaissance man, politician and philosopher, is one of the most controversial figures in history. To this day, Machiavelli is predominantly viewed as a 'teacher of evil,' renowned and notorious primarily for his allegedly amoral doctrine that the end justifies the means: Machiavellianism. A hard-nosed realism in power politics and a primacy of reasons of state were also often seen as further central elements of Machiavelli's teachings. In the lively international debate about the Florentine thinker, however, the focus today is either on Machiavelli the republican or even on the radical, proto-Marxist democrat and class theorist. Philipp Hölzing traces this equally astonishing and exciting turn in the debate about Machiavelli in his book.

Essay
Softcover
220 pages

Philipp Hölzing, born in 1978, is a philosopher, historian of ideas and editor in the academic editorial department of Suhrkamp Verlag. He focuses on the history of political thought, particularly republicanism, and on the life and work of Machiavelli. He is the author of numerous books, including *Republikanismus und Kosmopolitismus. Eine ideengeschichtliche Studie* (Republicanism and Cosmopolitanism: A Study in the History of Ideas) and *Ein Laboratorium der Moderne. Politisches Denken in Deutschland 1789–1820* (A Laboratory of Modernity. Political Thought in Germany 1789–1820).

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JENSEITS



Yuk Hui, Milan Stürmer

Beyond West and East. Discussion about Technology and Philosophy

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

From technodiversity via the imagination of futures to the epistemology of capitalism

Essay
Softcover
135 pages

"The world is the limit and possibility of philosophy. Philosophy that tries to escape the world loses itself in rapture, but if philosophy only remains in the world, then it is a prisoner of this world." This outlines the field of tension in the thinking of Hong Kong philosopher Yuk Hui, which he expands on in the dense conversations with Milan Stürmer published here for the first time. In them, he explores the question of the pluralisation of the concept of technology, which for him is a fundamental question of philosophy in general, reflects on the possibility of science today and develops an epistemology of the unknown. In doing so, he transcends all boundaries between rational, irrational and non-rational. Yuk Hui's thinking is a departure into new worlds, and so his philosophy is always about imagining other futures. With his concept of technodiversity, he imagines a new form of coexistence and an ecology that includes technology.

Yuk Hui, philosopher from Hong Kong, is currently Professor of Philosophy at Erasmus University Rotterdam and Professor at the City University of Hong Kong. He is the author of several books on philosophy and technology, which have been translated into numerous languages.

Milan Stürmer teaches at Leuphana University Lüneburg at the Institute for Culture and Aesthetics of Digital Media.

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ZUKUNFT



Christoph Engemann

The Future of Reading

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Reading after reading: Toward an age of post-literacy

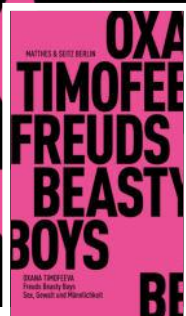
Reading is in crisis, writing is being automated by generative AI: literacy is in a state of flux. Publishers, educational institutions, the press and other institutions of written culture find themselves on the defensive. Their fixation on literacy overlooks the fact that AI has enabled platforms to renegotiate the relationship between orality and literacy. On platforms, the spoken and written word are recombined with far-reaching cultural, political and social consequences: where AI can process verbal utterances and texts in equal measure, oral formats are beginning to dominate over literary ones. As a result, reading runs the risk of becoming a cultural technique of the few.

In *The Future of Reading*, Christoph Engemann shows how the new platform orality of podcasts, online video and TikTok is not only changing reading, but how their AI-supported monopolization is also calling the openness of language into question.

Essay
Softcover
158 pages

Christoph Engemann, born in Paderborn in 1972, is a media scientist and, after working in Bremen, Stanford, Austin, Weimar and Hangzhou, conducts research at the DFG Collaborative Research Center "Virtual Lifeworlds" at Ruhr University Bochum. His research focuses on artificial intelligence, media of statehood, graphs & graph assumptions, genealogy of the transaction, rurality and barns.

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Oxana Timofeeva

Freud's Beastly Boys. Sex, Violence and Masculinity

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

With Little Hans, the Rat Man and the Wolf Man, Sigmund Freud, for whom sexuality forms the background of our psychic life, presented three case studies that remain classic to this day and which, with their combination of trauma, animal and child, contributed significantly to the development of psychoanalysis. But what, Oxana Timofeeva asks in her masterful reflections, which draw on religion, anthropology and personal experience, if her reading was clouded by the sexualized gaze of the adult analyst? If unconscious sexual fantasies are not the origin of psychic disorders, but something else lies behind the psychic dramas of sexuality: a mechanism of violence, a "machinery of masculinity"? By focusing her attention on the actual protagonists, namely the children, taking them seriously in their pain, in their openness and ability to empathize and identify with the animals, Timofeeva not only succeeds in shedding new light on the role of animals in male gender socialization and thus in the constitution of patriarchy. She also uncovers the animality that inhabits the core of human subjectivity.

"Extraordinary: Oxana Timofeeva discovers and analyzes the animality that inhabits the core of human subjectivity." – Slavoj Žižek

Essay
Softcover
ca. 200 pages
English original available

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Turkish (Tetes Kitap)
Spanish World Rights (Mármol-Izquierdo Editores)

Oxana Timofeeva, born in Siberia in 1978, is an author and member of the artist collective Chto delat. Previously published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *How to Love a Homeland* (2022) and *Solar Politics* (2024).

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Sigmund Freud · Psychoanalysis · Sexuality · Boys · Violence · Animal-human relationship

MATTHES & SEITZ BERLIN



Guillaume Paoli

Something Better Than Optimism

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

An incitement to think for yourself – without regards to comfortable habits of thought and lazy compromises

Critical thinking is unwelcome. More and more people are opting out of the constant flow of bad news, while the call is repeated in all tones: 'Optimism is mandatory' – a blatant threat against all those who are read as pessimists. Mood-mongering takes precedence over opinion-forming. However, the prevalence of feelings smuggles in implicit views that need to be exposed. Optimism is not just a state of mind or an attitude, but a concept that goes back to Leibniz's theodicy and demands the fatalistic acceptance of what exists. Taking action against optimism does not mean surrendering to pessimism, but freeing ourselves from this clumsy alternative.

"An ode to political scepticism" – Raul Zelik, WOZ

"A successful, imaginative, and enlightening book" – Gert Scobel, Philosophy Magazine

Essay
Softcover
112 pages
2025
English sample available

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Günther Anders Prize for Critical Thinking 2024

Guillaume Paoli is a French journalist and philosopher living in Berlin. He is one of the founders of the movement of the "Happy Unemployed". Previously published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *Mind and Garbage* (2023).

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MATTHES & SEITZ BERLIN



Nora Weinelt

Being a Failure

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

If failing is always beautiful in the neoliberal order, what means being a failure?

Calling someone a failure is the greatest possible insult, as it is rooted in the judgment that something that could not be avoided anyway has broken through in the failure of the person being addressed: someone who is a failure has missed out on their own life, someone who is a failure is incapable of achieving what all other people seem to succeed at effortlessly. In addition to the social judgment that others pass on you, there is also the self-accusation: I am a failure. But there are no precise criteria as to when one speaks of being a failure.

Nora Weinelt traces the ways in which the concept of being a failure, which originates from mechanics, finds its way into common parlance and shows that it is only in our postmodern society, in which every failure has to be described retrospectively as a stage towards success, that it fully unfolds its utterly devastating power.

"Expertly explained, insightful and worth reading." – Augsburger Allgemeine

Essay
Softcover
119 pages
2025

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Nora Weinelt studied general and comparative literature, art history and Italian philology and wrote her doctoral thesis on the poetics of failure in the European novel around 1900.

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Mistakes · Evaluation · Narration · CV · Society · System failure · Cultural theory · Literary history



Linn Penelope Rieger

Broken Fire. Volcanoes and the End of the World

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Linn Penelope Rieger responds to the burning of the world with fire that comes from the earth.

Magma forms the fiery core of our planet, and without the eruptions of ancient times, there would be no continents, no mountains, no habitats, and no life. And yet volcanoes are threatening, not least because even with the most modern measuring instruments, their eruptions cannot be predicted with any precision in terms of time or location. Volcanism is one of those natural phenomena whose unpredictable geological force has always sparked new stories. These stories are about human hubris, fear, and the beauty of the sublime, and they ask the ultimate questions: where do we come from, and where is this world headed?

Lanzarote, Indonesia, Martinique, or Italy: Linn Penelope Rieger follows the manifold traces and abysses of numerous trembling sites of enormous, sometimes deadly, but also fertile eruptions in the vivid and eloquent descriptions of literature – with a pounding heart, a delight in fear, and fearless questions about the origin of life and death.

Non-fiction
Hardcover with illustrations
ca. 150 pages


Linn Penelope Rieger, born in 1992 in the Thuringian Forest, now works as an author, lecturer, presenter, and managing director of the literary magazine *Edit* and the association *Netzwerk Lyrik e.V.* in Leipzig. Together with Josef Braun, she talks about books, writing, and the literary world in her podcast *Wasser und Buch* (Water and Books).

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Bernhard Malkmus

Flight Lines. Of Avian and Human Homing Instincts

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

An ancient cultural landscape and a magical bird paradise in the midst of a pandemic and a lack of species

The English North East is a landscape that reflects the systemic changes to the biosphere caused by 250 years of technological and social revolutions: the richest coal deposits in Britain were mined here until recently, the world's largest shipyards were located here around 1900, and huge chemical agglomerates are still changing the earth's metabolism. Fringed by the mysterious North Sea coast to the east and bleak moorland mountains to the west, this Anglo-Scottish borderland is also an important breeding ground for numerous bird species. Bernhard Malkmus refers to the areas where these flying artists are at home as well as the calligraphy they draw in the air as the "skylines" of seabirds. But for some time now, this bird paradise has been ravaged by the bird flu, which has been bred in industrial animal husbandry and spread by migratory birds all over the world. As Malkmus finds more and more carcasses on his forays, he begins to create a literary monument to the animals.

***Skylines* is a delightful combination of travel diary and essay, in which natural and cultural history are interwoven: a song to the sea, a hymn to the grace and resilience of seabirds, a meditation on home and migration, a search for words of mourning in the face of species extinction around us.**

"Bernhard Malkmus is a special writer: a lynx-eyed analyst of text and image, a subtle ecological ethicist and a very fine maker of sentences" – Robert Macfarlane

Non-fiction
Hardcover with illustrations
246 pages
2025
English abstract and sample available

Shortlisted for the W. G. Sebald Literature Prize

Bernhard Malkmus, born in Aschaffenburg in 1973, grew up in the Spessart and near Lisbon, and teaches German and Environmental Humanities at the University of Oxford. Before that, he lived among humans and seabirds on the North Sea coast outside Newcastle upon Tyne. For the Naturkunden series he has previously written *Lynxes*. A portrait and edited a newly revised translation of Peter Matthiessen's *The Snow Leopard*.

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England · Industrialisation · Avian influenza · Climate change · Nature essay · Climate grief

und Zottelmähne

EIN PILZATLAS



Benjamin Haag

Velvet Foot, Dead Man's Fingers and Shaggy Mane. A Mushroom Atlas

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

As a mysterious life form alongside plants and animals, fungi have always inhabited the human imagination. Their diverse appearance is also reflected in a multitude of crude to melodious names given to them. It is the sheer inexhaustible and regionally diverse wealth of linguistic designations that inspired Germanist, mushroom expert and passionate mushroom collector Benjamin Haag to create his mushroom atlas: velvet foot, dead man's fingers and shaggy mane are just a few of them. Tracing their common names, he shows that no two mushrooms are alike – and that almost every one has a breathtaking story to tell, in which nature and culture intertwine like mycelium. His portraits deal with Germany's extinct and reviving truffle culture, with the mushroom hunters who took their knowledge of gathering places on the war fronts to their graves, of melting coprinus mushrooms that can be processed into forgery-proof ink, the inscrutable *wood wide web* of mycorrhizal fungi that ensure the well-being of the forest – and the tasty ways of preparing edible mushrooms.

A practical guide, etymological reference work and natural history picture atlas – a mushroom-picking book that combines knowledge and myth.

"Mushroom hunting is a school for the senses and instincts. The forest calls out 'hot' and 'cold' to you. It fixes a thousand eyes on you, sending you markers, recommendations, instructions." – Hans Helmut Hillrichs

Non-fiction
Hardcover with illustrations
ca. 220 pages

Benjamin Haag studied German, history and philosophy. While hiking through the forests of his native Hesse, he discovered mushrooms. First cauliflower mushrooms and porcini mushrooms, then chanterelles, noble morels and black morels. To this day, every excursion into the fascinating world of mushrooms brings new and surprising encounters. The author finds the scarletina bolete, also known as dotted stem bolete, particularly exciting and beautiful. He is a mushroom expert and mushroom coach trainer for the German Mycological Society.

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Svenja Beller

Octopuses. A Portrait

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

"They ake cuts and knots; they make a difference; they weave paths and consequences but not determinisms; they are both open and knotted in some ways and not others." – Donna Haraway

A body with three hearts, skin that adapts to its surroundings in a fraction of a second, eight arms that can think autonomously and ink that can form phantom images – these are all characteristics that could be used to describe an octopus. And yet this does not do justice to this amazing sea creature. Its fluid nature, which transcends all categories, is as if evolution had thrown the dice a second time and completely reorganised all its senses and body parts. For centuries, the animal with its many names – octopus, octopod or, erroneously, polyp and squid – has been the subject of horror stories, including one that ascribes it an extraterrestrial origin. Today, its non-conformist existence inspires natural and cultural science research and all those who are fascinated rather than alienated by its otherness.

In her portrait of the elusive intangible, Svenja Beller encounters the octopus in the sea, in the aquarium, in literature and in pictures and describes magical moments of realisation and recognition.

Non-fiction
Hardcover with numerous
illustrations
ca. 160 pages

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Svenja Beller, born in Münster in 1987, is a freelance journalist and author based in Hamburg and Lisbon. She writes for *Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin*, *Das Magazin* (CH), *Die Zeit* and *The Guardian*, among others. She published her first book *Einfach loslaufen* (Dumont) in 2017 and has been the environmental columnist for *Freitag* since 2018. She has received several awards for her work, including the German Journalism Prize and the Hansel-Mieth Prize.

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Sea animals · Fleeting · Transformability · Hearts · Arms · Consciousness · Camouflage · Ink · Escaping



Mirjam Herrmann

Protest

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

A climate change activist of the group "Letzte Generation" is accused of forming a criminal organisation: A powerful essay on the meaning of protest.

She was part of the IAA blockade in Munich and the spectacular Barberini action in Potsdam, and she uses her legal knowledge to provide legal assistance to other activists. Then Mirjam Herrmann herself is convicted and decides to use her default imprisonment sentence to gain further experience and pass on her knowledge: How does it feel to go to prison for your political convictions? What forms of solidarity can be learned in prison? And is there any other way to deal with the threats of the unfolding climate crisis than to live a different, connected, unconditional life in the here and now?

As a defendant in a trial for forming a criminal organisation, Mirjam Herrmann is affected by a dangerous precedent at a time when nature and human rights are equally threatened. In an essay that poses the question of nature in a completely different way, she explains why she nevertheless repeatedly decides to resist: Nature is our shared habitat, which we must defend, but also nurture.

"Courage is overcoming fear through love."

Essay
Softcover
134 pages
Complete English translation available

Mirjam Herrmann, born in 1997, is a lawyer and climate activist. She studied law in Passau, London and Jerusalem. In 2021, she established the legal department of the climate protection group 'Letzte Generation' (Last Generation). She gained notoriety in 2022 through a public action: to draw attention to climate change, she threw mashed potatoes at a Monet painting in the Barberini Museum in Potsdam.

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Jan Wilm

Water Bears

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

"Life as a moment of perseverance, of endurance."

Water bears have lived on Earth since the days of the dinosaurs, and while the giant lizards died out, they persevered. They had plenty of time to adapt to this world: these microscopic survivalists can withstand the Dantean heat of volcanoes and the bitter cold of the Arctic, long periods of drought hardly affect them, and they have even survived the vacuum of space unscathed. Instead of indulging in science fiction fantasies, however, Jan Wilm's literary essay explores the more than a thousand species of the 'little water bear,' as it was once affectionately called, in a post-humanist sense: Do these tiny creatures have a sense of time? And what might it mean to be a tardigrade?

From the tiny to the big picture, the essay recounts the biological origins and diverse portrayal of tardigrades in pop culture. And it traces the contact between humans and tardigrades to date in order to take an unusual look at what constitutes life on Earth.

Essay
Softcover
80 pages

Jan Wilm is an author and translator from English. He has translated works by Arundhati Roy, Isabel Wilkerson and Adam Thirlwell. His non-fiction book *The Slow Philosophy of J. M. Coetzee* was published in 2016, his novel *Winterjahrbuch* in 2019, and his friendship book *Ror.Wolf.Lesen* in 2022. His most recent publications are his translations of Lydia Davis' stories *Our Strangers* and Joshua Cohen's essays *Notes from the Cave*. He lives in Frankfurt am Main.

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