Foreign Rights Guide

Spring 2024

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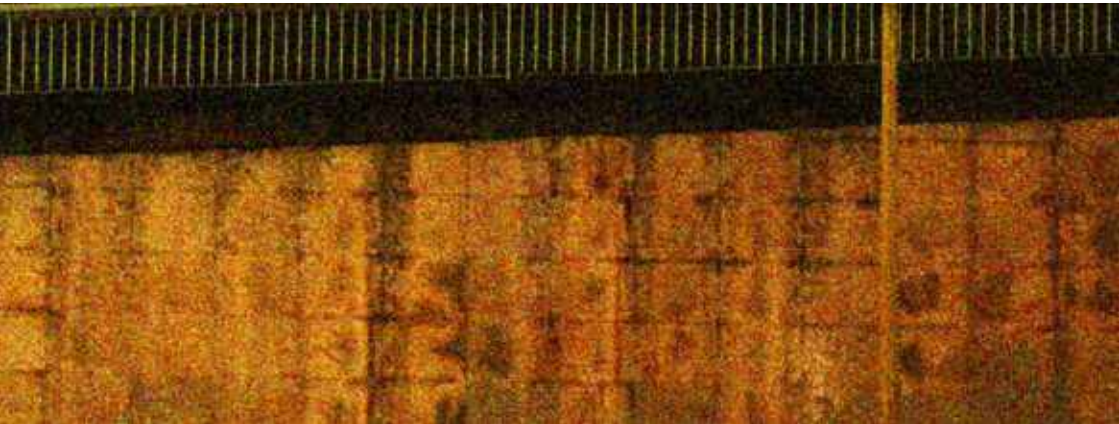

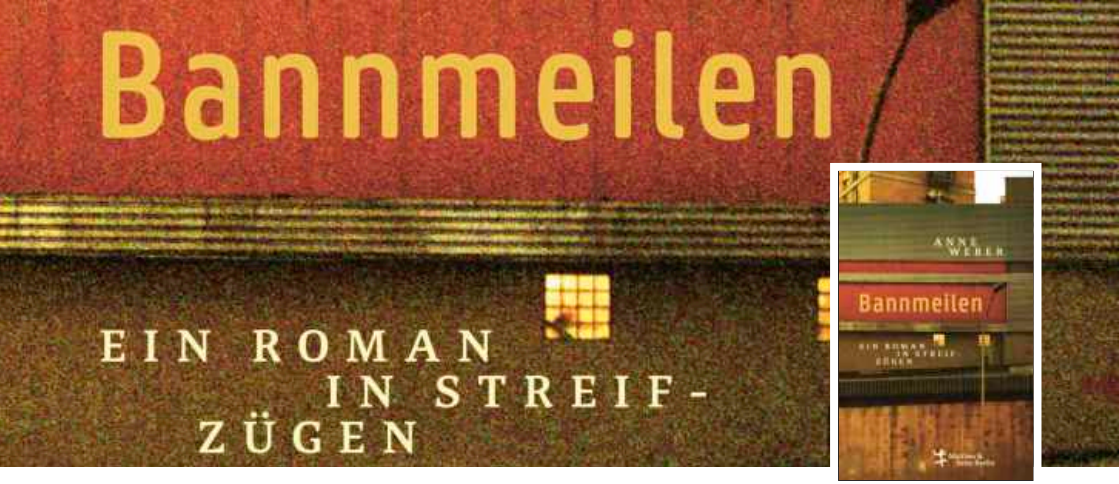

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Anne Weber

Banlieues. A Novel in Eighteen Forays

Anne Weber turns her back on the city of lovers and reveals herself to be a captivating portraitist of the Parisian banlieues

Where the city ends and the suburbs begin is clearly marked in Paris by the Périphérique, which Anne Weber's narrator has hardly ever thought of crossing. For what is there, in the disreputable banlieues, apart from a network of rails, expressways and highways, between which warehouses, huge supermarkets and building sites and millions of people are wedged? Apart from the notorious hardship, violence and poverty? But when her old friend Thierry suggests that she accompany him on a film project about the suburbs of the Seine-Saint-Denis department, which are undergoing a profound transformation ahead of the 2024 Olympic Games, she has to admit that she has been blind to the immediate vicinity for decades. There is, for example, the Muslim cemetery in Bobigny, surrounded by scrap heaps, where an Algerian Olympic champion from the 1920s is buried; the two circular social housing buildings in Noisy-le-Grand, which face each other like gigantic camemberts; and a thousand other places that tell of colonialism and suffering, of hope and progress. Over time, Thierry himself also reveals himself to be part of this contradictory world that has been hidden from her view until now.

"With Anne Weber's astonishing oeuvre, you can always be sure that she is venturing a new literary experiment with every new book." – Die ZEIT

Novel
Hardcover
301 pages
2024
Complete French translation available

Rights sold to:
French (Éditions Philippe Rey)

Annette von Droste Hülshoff Prize 2024

Solothurner Literaturpreis 2024.

Anne Weber, born in 1964 in Germany, lives in Paris. She always writes her books in two languages, German and French, and has translated numerous French authors into German. Her novel *Annette. An Epic Heroine* was awarded the German Book Prize 2020 and has been translated into 15 languages.

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Paris · Suburb · Periphery · Social reportage · Migration · Transformation · Algeria

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Nora Schramm

Hollow Spaces

In Nora Schramm's quirky and clever debut novel, a family becomes a mirror of the bourgeois middle class

When Helene visits her parents shortly before Christmas, the rooms of the familiar house seem strangely hollow, as if they cannot be filled with life despite all her efforts. The reason for her visit is her parents' divorce. The daughter observes their every move with irritation, dissects them with wit and breaks them down into their individual parts, which come together to form a bourgeois family picture: Thomas, the father, is a doctor, but because he doesn't like human bodies, he prefers to advise a pharmaceutical company. His mother, Irene, studied to be a teacher, but after the birth of their only daughter, she decided to make home and hearth her field of work. And Helene herself is a successful artist with solo exhibitions in London and Copenhagen, an assistant and a gallerist. Now she is supposed to help them sort out their possessions as well as the emotional baggage of forty years of marriage. But then her mother falls down the stairs, breaks her hip and her childhood friend Molly, who was thought to have disappeared, suddenly reappears.
With humour and strong images, *Hollow Spaces* tells of the family no longer as a place of psychological abysses, but as the smallest possible social unit, in which the baby boomers' history of advancement is just as recognisable as their children's class advancement – and where sofas, pots and shutters are not just everyday objects, but subtly provide information about values, convictions and certainties.

Novel
Hardcover
237 pages
2024
English sample available
French sample available

Nora Schramm, born in 1993 in the Southern Palatinate, studied foreign languages and cultural studies in Giessen as well as theories and practices of professional writing in Cologne. Her work has been supported by several scholarships, including the Baldreit Scholarship Baden-Baden and the Spaltmaße Scholarship from the Jürgen Ponto Foundation as well as mentoring from the Literaturhaus Düsseldorf. She received the TEXTSTREICH competition prize for new poetry in 2022 for her poetry. *Hohle Räume* is her debut novel.

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Sociological novel · Daughter · Parents · Divorce · Stairs · Family dynamics · Classism

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Katharina Winkler

Seven Mile Heart

Katharina Winkler writes literature to break the silence – relentlessly, aesthetically, compellingly

In this novel, Katharina Winkler uses the means of literature to confront violence that gets under your skin and describes the experience of abuse condensed into a narrative and the long, damaged life that follows. Just as the girl, from whose inner perspective Katharina Winkler tells the story, is at the mercy of her father, the author exposes us to a story that spreads from the nursery to all other aspects of life – because neither a new town, new friends nor a romantic relationship bring relief for a traumatic event that has inscribed itself on the body, mind and perception and often remains hidden out of shame. *Seven Mile Heart* tells of an offence that is committed thousands of times a day in the families of our society, shattering the taboo of talking about it.

As in her debut novel *Blue Jewellery*, Katharina Winkler's aim in *Seven Mile Heart* is to break the silence surrounding women's experiences of violence in families and in love. Deeply convinced that literature can enable empathy and trigger change, the award-winning author finds an impressive language, an adequate aesthetic expression for what nobody talks about.

"I fly higher and higher.
I throw my head back and look at the sky.
With every push, Dad pushes me further up.
I can touch the clouds with the tips of my toes.
I'm not afraid."

Child abuse · Trauma · Shame · Violence · Father

Novel
Hardcover
240 pages
2024

Katharina Winkler, born in Vienna in 1979, studied German philoglogy and theatre studies. Her multi-award-winning debut novel *Blue Jewellery* (Suhrkamp) was published in 2016. The book has been translated into seven languages and received the Basque book prize Premio Euskadi de Plata for the best German-language novel as well as the French Prix du premier roman étranger 2017, the prize for the best foreign-language debut. *Siebenmeilenherz* is her first publication with Matthes & Seitz Berlin.

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Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Frank Witzel

My Literary History of the 20th Century

The canon of German Book Prize winner Frank Witzel: a celebration of fiction, a celebration of imposture, a praise of the lie we call literature

One of the great wonders of the literary world is the magnificent rediscovery of an overlooked genius, an unjustly forgotten person, an ostracised or suppressed artist whose work suddenly appears in a completely new light under the eyes of those born later and has something to say to us today. Frank Witzel has set out in search of such writers who have fallen into the darkness of history and has made some astonishing discoveries. But he is interested in more than making amends: the more than one hundred discoveries he reports on in this fascinating essay, first published and celebrated in the magazine *Schreibheft* and now updated and expanded for this edition, also include works by unsuccessful, obsessed, failed and completely unknown authors.

In this very personal canon, a poetics of the literary industry and its ironies, silliness, disappointed hopes and great expectations emerges as if in passing, which also allows a glimpse into the abysses of the writing room. There lurks the longing for the perfect text together with the looming possibility of failure, which never seems final – because a posthumous discovery and great success in the form of after-fame always seem possible. Or is this also just a phantasm of the market? Frank Witzel's essay provides more than one answer and creates a hall of mirrors of the author in all his possibilities.

Fiction
Hardcover
ca. 260 pages
2024
English sample available

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. In 2021 he received the Erich Fried Prize.

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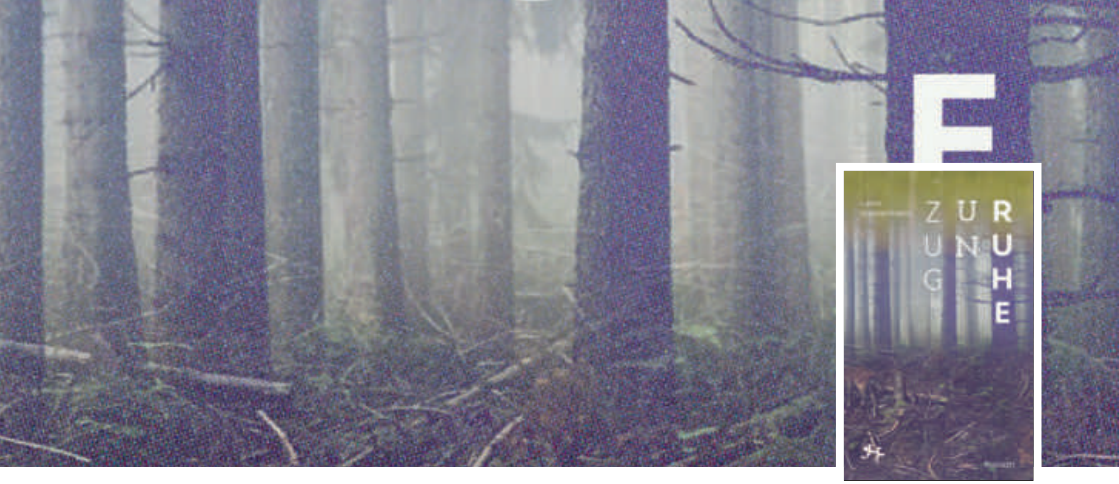
Rediscoveries · German literature · Unknown authors · Literary industry · Research · Fiction



Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Levin Westermann

Migratory Restlessness

With an angry, tender gaze, Levin Westermann tells of the earth as a place full of sleeping people who are heading for the abyss and threaten to take everything with them

Migratory restlessness is the restlessness of birds in the run-up to their migration, the nocturnal longing, the feeling of hardly being able to resist the call of the distance – which, conversely, means that nothing holds in this place, which is becoming increasingly inhospitable. And the world appears inhospitable, almost lost to the protagonist in Levin Westermann's debut novel – and what people have made of it in their rush for progress. Flanked by disaster reports, reports of pandemics and the climate crisis, dreams of space colonization, he wanders through the landscapes of Switzerland and Germany, past rocket stations and suspicious glances, and records the unbridled destructive rage of humans, a species out of control, who have forgotten that they are not alone on this planet, that they are surrounded by life, and who, despite all warnings, will not stop fanning the flames of this storm. The unrest thus ultimately proves to be an expression of the history of the decay of nature and culture, which Westermann knows how to capture at the tipping point, as a rebellion in the face of impending doom.

Novel
Hardcover
192 pages
2024
English sample available

Levin Westermann, born in Meerbusch in 1980, studied at the Bern University of the Arts and lives as a freelance writer in Biel. In 2020 he was awarded the prestigious Clemens Brentano Prize of the city of Heidelberg. For his poetry collection *bezüglich der schatten* he received the Swiss Literature Prize 2021. In 2022 he received the German Prize for Nature Writing. *Migratory Restlessness* is his debut novel.

For further information:
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Climate crisis · Autofictional · Nature writing · Birds · Nature & culture · Anger

Über das moderne

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Yevgenia Belorusets

Modern Animal

After Lucky Breaks and War Diary, this is the third book by one of the most important Ukrainian voices of our time – a fabulously realistic panorama of the present day

Full of laconic humor and bitter truth, these lectures and reports, stories and dialogues deal with possible and impossible animal incidents – such as a tiger in the cellar of a Kiev café, a rabbit falling in the Caucasus or countless dogs and cats living together in a tiny apartment – so that the boundaries between humans and animals become increasingly blurred. It is the small incidents, the quiet anecdotes and the short sentences with which Yevgenia Belorusets' prose reveals the essence of mankind. In her ethnographically precise and sober poetic language, this fictional lecture series creates a space for marginalized experiences in today's Ukraine, which have also been marked by violence since at least 2014 and whose literary treatment is based on a deeply human attitude. For if it is true that man is a wolf to man, then it seems only logical that we humans narrate what we want to be, what we seek and strive for, what we do to each other and endure together, through our relationships with animals. In the strict form of the scientific treatise, which is exaggerated, ironized and further undermined with each text, the voices of different narrators merge into a chorus in which it is not always clear who is speaking – and to whom.

"Her ability to speak from the point of view of an animal makes the book not only like a folktale but also, as the press avows, a curious form of autofiction." – Los Angeles Review of Books

Lectures with photographs
Hardcover
209 pages
2024
Russian original available

Rights sold to:
French (Bourgois)

Women of Europe Award 2023

Yevgenia Belorusets is a Ukrainian photographer, artist and writer who lives between Kyiv and Berlin. She is concerned with the intersections of art, media and society, and involved in a number of cultural and political initiatives. Her first book *Lucky Breaks* has been critically acclaimed and translated in 10 langauges.

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Ukraine · War · Animals · Autofiction · Humour · Dogs · Rabbits · Horses · Voices

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Viktor Jerofejew

The Great Gopnik

A novel like a shock, a rogue's tale that drills into the deepest abysses of contemporary Russia

Viktor Yerofeyev's epic novel is a brilliant picaresque novel about the rise of Putin, who, as the Great Gopnik, embodies what should not be possible: a yob, a rowdy, a chav who not only makes it to the highest center of power, but keeps himself there. Only someone could have thought that up! But who? Someone who is considered talentless by his mother and whose father loses his post as a high-ranking diplomat because of the publication of a critical text, an author who will never be as radical as his sister O., who holds up a mirror to post-Soviet Russia with the help of pornography, and who nevertheless is kicked out of the writers' association more than once and today lives in exile in Germany. And so Yerofeyev tells the story of today's Russia from the perspective of the writer - who is free to move through time and space, to have characters appear and disappear, to invent things and to expose what he has experienced, heard and seen as a hoax. Yerofeyev ventures nothing less than a literary explanation for what is happening today: *The Great Gopnik* is a rapid and ironic, at times cynical, movement through time and space, in which Stalin, Putin and the writer's parents, his fellow writers and his wives find themselves at the same table, as if for dinner, to ask the one insoluble question: how could it have come to this?

"A milestone of Russian literature" – Ijoma Mangold, ZEIT Literatur

Novel
Hardcover
614 pages
2023
Russian original available

Rights sold to:
Hungarian (Atlantic Kft.)

Viktor Jerofejew (Viktor Yerofeyev), born in Moscow in 1947, became known worldwide for his novel *The Moscow Beauty*, published in 1989 and translated into 27 languages. In 1979 he was expelled from the USSR Writers' Union for his participation in the literary anthology Metropol, which featured texts by various authors that had been banned by the censors. He has lived in exile in Germany since 2022.

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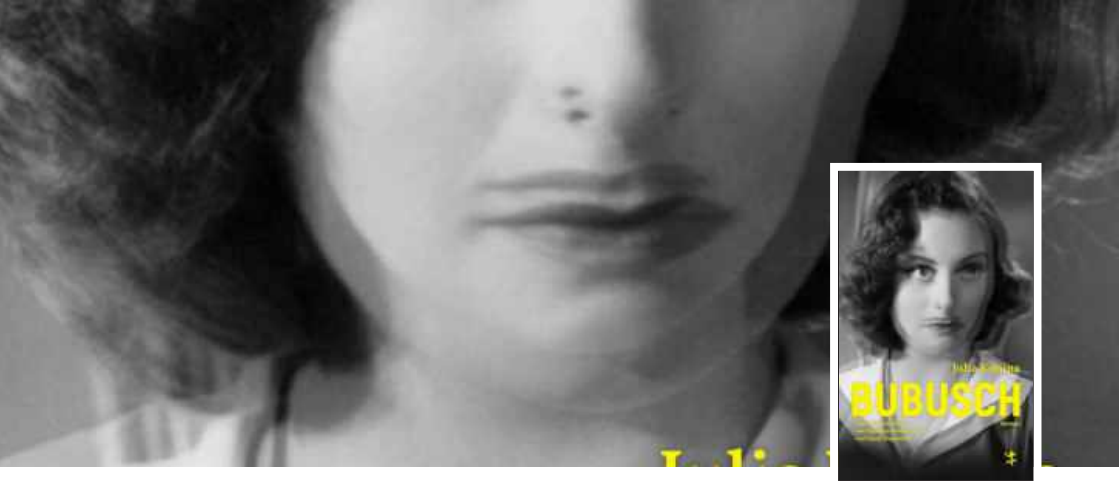
Russia · Ukraine · Cynicism · Writers' Lives · Humor · Autofiction



Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Julia Kissina

Bubush

A brilliantly debauched, tragic novel full of ghosts and confusion that moves from the horrors of the 20th century to the present day

In the Berlin of technological progress, where Skype, e-mail and text messages characterize everyday life, two disparate characters meet: the charismatic writer Andy, who cultivates a fatal penchant for alcohol, and the mysterious narrator of this story, whom he calls Bubush. A love affair develops between the two, and they move to San Francisco, which is populated by ex-hippies, beatniks, and aging gangsters. But instead of building a future there, Andy clings to the ghosts of the past, especially his mother, who miraculously survived in Paris during the Nazi occupation. Ghostly, she meets him smoking on the roof, forgetting her lipstick in the bathroom and lurking at the head of his bed. His increasing disruption does not leave Bubush untouched; she becomes hostage to Andy's trauma and madness. When one day she catches sight of the deserted island of Alcatraz, the legendary prison, she has only one wish: to escape. In her new novel full of curious moments, Julia Kissina sensitively tells of the desperate attempt to bring together two fundamentally different worlds, born of the trauma of memory and the desire for change. A captivating journey on aberrations from the Paris of the 1940s to the Berlin and San Francisco of the present.

"An incredibly charming book about love and madness." – Aglaya Toporova

Paris · Berlin · Mother · 1940 · San Francisco · Relationships

Novel
Hardcover
221 pages
2023
Russian original and English sample available

Rights sold to:
Italian (Scritturapura Casa Editrice)

Shortlisted for the Russian National Bestseller Literature Award 2022

Julia Kissina, born in 1966 in Kiev, studied at the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography in Moscow and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Until 1990 she lived in Moscow, where she was part of the unofficial artistic and literary life. She now lives as a freelance artist and writer in Berlin and New York.

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Onur Erdur

School of the South. The Colonial Roots of French Theory

The birth of French Theory in the streets of Algiers

In his history of ideas in eight portraits, Onur Erdur opens up a new geography of French thought that characterised the second half of the 20th century: the theories of intellectuals such as Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard and Hélène Cixous were significantly shaped in North Africa or in the confrontation with the French colonies. Erdur's search for traces leads him to Algiers, where the young soldier Pierre Bourdieu did his military service in the middle of the Algerian war; to the coastal village of Sidi Bou Saïd north of Tunis, where Michel Foucault developed an attitude of philosophical hedonism between sunbathing, walks on the beach and ritualised body culture; or to Casablanca, where Roland Barthes fantasises about becoming a novelist in a kind of enlightenment – and to Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous or Jacques Rancière, who reflect philosophically on their Algerian origins. Onur Erdur's knowledgeable perspective bathes French-influenced postmodernism in the light of the North African sun. Half a century after the publication of the major works of post-structuralism, *School of the South* looks beneath the pavement of the French academy – with the beach of Tunis shining below.

"How can the human experience be brought so close to the spiritual-theoretical that one can be seen to glide over into the other? How is theory created? Like no other movement of the 20th century, French theory in particular developed a style of thought that was against identity and for difference, against the centre and for the periphery, against the hegemonic and for the minoritarian."

Non-fiction
Harcover
ca. 300 pages
2024
English sample available

Onur Erdur, born in Diyarbakir in 1984, is a historian and cultural scientist. He researches and teaches at Humboldt University in Berlin on issues relating to the global history of ideas.

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French theory · Poststructuralism · Deconstruction · Colonialism · Wokeness · Foucault · Derrida

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Katharina Bluhm

Russia and the West. Ideology, Economy and Politics since the End of the Soviet Union

A behind-the-scenes look at the war, in a unique and fundamental study of the background to Russian politics

Since the start of the war of aggression on Ukraine in February 2022, there has been a great deal of puzzling about the mindset of Russia's most powerful man. Previously recognized as a skilled pragmatist, Putin now appears as an enraptured old man who would like to go down in history as the new Peter I or Nikolai I. People are puzzling over what he reads, to whom he lends his ear, who has taken possession of his brain. Everyone can read Putin's history-obsessed speeches in German. So everything is familiar? Katharina Bluhm's fundamental book opposes the truncated view of Russia's top power and Putinology. She analyzes how an illiberal-conservative intellectual countermovement to shock therapy and Western integration has formed since the late 1990s, how it tried to establish itself in Russia's new party system in the 2000s, and how its motives, ideas, and concepts have been incorporated into Putin's conservative-repressive state project since 2012. Bluhm draws attention to those social forces that have sustained the Putin regime and influenced its state capitalism, but at the same time are in permanent tension with it. Without them, Russia's return to the world stage as a revisionist power cannot be understood.

"Katharina Bluhm's book provides illuminating and politically highly important explanations of how Russia has become the state it is today over the past three decades." – Süddeutsche Zeitung

Putin · Russia · Ideology · Autocracy · International Politics · Sociology

Non-fiction
Hardcover
490 pages
2023

Katharina Bluhm, Professor of Sociology with a focus on Eastern Europe, grew up in East Berlin and studied philosophy at Humboldt University and Lomonosov University in Moscow. After 1989/90, she switched from philosophy to sociology and from the Academy of Sciences in East Berlin to the Georg-August University in Göttingen. Her other professional positions include the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Harvard University in Cambridge (USA), and the University of Osnabrück.

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Pierre-Héli Monot

Hundred Years of Tenderness. Surrealism, Bourgeoisie, Revolution from 1924 to 2024

100 years after the proclamation of surrealism, it is more necessary than ever: a book about deep crises, overburdened citizens and radical politics

In the politically contested and eventful 20th century, surrealism, as conceived by André Breton in his *First Surrealist Manifesto* in 1924, has a special status: although it is rarely received and narrated today as anything other than an artistic avant-garde, it was in fact a bourgeois awakening movement that attempted to confront the bourgeoisie itself with its own contradictions. In novels, essays and poems, the surrealists conceived a policy of minimal demands that the bourgeoisie should make of itself: if the bourgeoisie did not fulfil these minimal demands for honesty and consistency, it should be abolished. In both cases, the values of freedom, equality and solidarity would be realised by giving up bourgeois privileges and fighting for common values. One hundred years after its proclamation, surrealism is highly topical for our crisis-ridden present, in which the bourgeois class not only fails to recognise that it hardly has any common class interests, but is also completely and historically paralysed in the face of increasing inequality. The radical concept of freedom that emerges from the surrealist programme allows us today to think of a politics of possibilities in the face of apocalyptic prospects – if we not only historicise surrealism in celebration, but once again understand it as a concrete starting point for political movements. But this is ultimately a book about a historical precedent: bourgeois revolts against the bourgeoisie are always also moments of disinhibition, the price of which society may ultimately have to pay.

Non-fiction
Hardcover
ca. 200 pages
2024

Pierre-Héli Monot, born in Lausanne (Switzerland) in 1981, teaches aesthetics and political theory at the American Institute of the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich.

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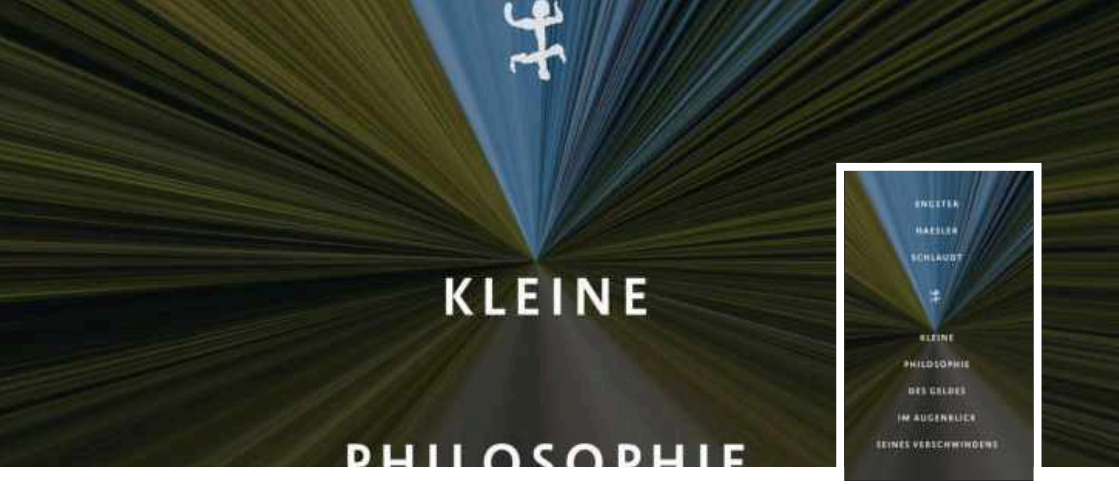
Surrealism · André Breton · Revolt · France · Radical politics · Salvador Dali · Psychoanalysis



Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Frank Engster, Aldo Haesler, Oliver Schlaudt

A Brief Philosophy of Money at the Moment of its Disappearance

The disappearance of cash: capitalism at the dawn of a new age

While everyone is talking about the "limits to growth", money is increasingly detaching itself from matter, disappearing from our sensory experience, seemingly expanding all the more powerfully behind our backs and expanding its sinister logic even more unconditionally. Shortly before the process of its dematerialisation comes to an end, Aldo Haesler, Frank Engster and Oliver Schlaudt seize what is perhaps the last opportunity to reveal the logic of money. Their key question is: what are we actually getting ourselves into when we take money into our hands? Money, they say, makes trade and exchange more fluid, allows us to pay off our debts, measure value and make rational decisions by quantifying costs and benefits. But at what price? What does it demand for its services? We think we know what we use money for – but what does money use us for? If we give in to the illusion that we can use money for our needs for free, it has long since foisted its economy, its world and its reason on us. We know that money is by no means economically neutral, but rather fundamentally changes the economy, for example through the emergence of a financial industry. *A Brief Philosophy of Money at the Moment of its Disappearance* shows that it is not metaphysically neutral either.

"If you want to escape money, you first have to follow its withdrawal in order to understand this withdrawal – it alone leads 'directly' to the essence of money."

Non-fiction
Hardcover
ca. 320 pages
2024
English sample available

Frank Engster, research associate at Hellen Panke e.V. - Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Berlin, has published on the relationship between measurement, money and time and on the intertwining of cognitive and social criticism. **Aldo Haesler**, born in 1954, is a professor of sociology (social theory and social philosophy) at the Université de Caen Normandie. **Oliver Schlaudt**, born in 1978, studied physics and philosophy, and holds a professorship for Philosophy and Political Economy at the HfGG - Hochschule für Gesellschaftsgestaltung in Koblenz.

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Monetary theory · Political economy · Capitalism · Philosophy of money · Monetary system

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Ludwig Fischer

Nature Alliance. Perspectives for a New Relationship With Nature

"The days of the mere exploiter, the overlister, the mere seizer of opportunities are also technically numbered." – Ernst Bloch

For centuries, we have worked towards dominating, exploiting and utilising nature. Now the ill-considered consequences of these actions come to us in the form of catastrophic events and processes as alien natural processes. This shows that the root of our relationship with nature lies in our alienation from the potentials of nature, which can only be overcome if we recognise, in our thoughts and actions, that the human subject always and everywhere deals with immanent strivings of the animate and inanimate. In *The Principle of Hope*, Ernst Bloch mentioned the need to assume a "natural subject" with which human being and action must mediate. He calls the social practice of this mediation a "natural alliance". Ludwig Fischer takes up this term, reconceptualises it and expands it: he sees nature alliance as a fundamental principle of natural processes – every breath, every food production, every technical device is based on nature alliance. To recognise them attentively and respectfully could stop the unrestrained destruction of the basis of life. Because "alliance thinking" includes all ambivalences, contradictions and imponderables and gives social action a new direction.

Non-fiction
Hardcover
313 pages
2024

Ludwig Fischer, born in Leipzig in 1939, was Professor of Modern German Literature and Media Culture at the University of Hamburg. He is a landscape and nature theorist, writer, gardener and herbalist.

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Ernst Bloch · Ecological Criticism · Ecology · Nature · Hope · New Materialism · Bruno Latour

UND ZEIT

Heilsgeschichte

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Otto Kallscheuer

Pope and Time. Salvation History and World Politics

Universal claim and secular boundaries: A political view of the papacy through the ages

True doctrine and false documents, holy wars and diplomatic art: the Catholic Church knows the abysses of politics; after all, it was born out of messianic anti-politics. But how could a persecuted migrant sect from the Middle East become the largest institution in world history? Why is the ever-endangered papacy *the* embodiment of continuity today? The philosopher and political theorist Otto Kallscheuer analyses the church as a corpus, tells of orthodoxy as an invention, of the clergy as the backbone and of the salvation of Catholicism by women. He reports on the popes as warlords and peace brokers, as enemies of the Enlightenment and liberators from secular ideology – and of their despair in the face of the world wars of the twentieth century. His problematic history of ecclesiastical Rome also brings to light the spiritual grammar of the West.

The centre of gravity of Catholic Christianity has long since shifted to the global South. Can a Latin American pope today succeed in becoming a peacemaker in the *new-old* world conflicts, in the face of the hatred of current ethnic and religious wars?

Pope and Time provides the historical and political background to the current debates in the Catholic Church – and also to the rifts in the Vatican. To understand the papacy, you need world history and theology.

Non-fiction
Harcover with illustrations
ca. 980 pages
2024

Otto Kallscheuer, philosopher and political theorist, lives in Berlin and Rome. His publications include *Die Wissenschaft vom Lieben Gott, Zur Zukunft des Abendlandes, Das Europa der Religionen, Gottes Wort and Volkes Stimme.* He has been a regular contributor to Die Zeit, NZZ, FAZ, Kursbuch and Merkur, and is currently a member of the Green Academy and the "Non-Fiction of the Month" jury for Die Welt and rbb. He is interested in building discursive bridges between different disciplines and scientific fields – beyond disciplinary boundaries and national or continental "research bubbles".

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Knut Ebeling

Whe War in the Head. Meditating with Bataille

”Words only imperfectly reach inner states” – Georges Bataille

In a rainy and grey September, Knut Ebeling embarks on a Vipassana meditation. He wants to find peace, stop the flow of thoughts and overcome depression. It is not his first meditation and, like the others, it is characterised by silence, breathing exercises and complete abstinence from writing. However, he soon begins to take notes with the only thing he has at his disposal, a dripping biros and toilet paper, thus superimposing his experience on another: a good ninety years before him, Georges Bataille also meditated. This is how the philosopher got through the war years and published *Method of Meditation* in 1947, a volume that has hardly been received to date – a seemingly esoteric aberration in Bataille’s boundary-breaking work. And yet in it, the radical experience of being-in-the-world becomes a method, namely of thinking.

In his autotheoretical writing, Knut Ebeling looks through his own experience of meditation to the shared practice that transcends the boundaries of the thinkable through sensual experience: breathing, sensations and their absence, the asceticism of the gaze, pain and the passing of time become guiding points of a reflection that decentres philosophising. Knut Ebeling thus reveals an intimate view of another Bataille, which leads right into the crises of the contemporary self and our time: is it possible to meditate through a war?

Non-fiction
Hardcover
365 pages
2024

Markus Knut Ebeling, born in Hamburg in 1970, is a German philosopher, media theorist and art critic. Since 2009, he has held a professorship for media theory and aesthetics in the Department of Theory and History at the Berlin-Weißensee School of Art. He lives in Berlin.

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Meditation · Bataille · Mindfulness · Memoir · Experience report · Methods of meditation

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Paul-Philipp Hanske, Benedikt Sarreiter

Ecstasies of the Present. On Dissolution of Limits, Subcultures and the Industry of Consciousness

A fascinating history of mankind along its rapturous states

To this day, the Greek god Dionysus has to be used when talking about them: ecstasies are wild, they have an inherent energy that can be felt by those who have just been raptured, but which is all too difficult to put into words. Shamans move in ecstasy in invisible worlds, medieval mystics united with God in it, and intoxication was and is an integral part of every society. Because they are difficult to control, ecstasies are frowned upon to this day - but they have never completely disappeared. And they are returning with a vengeance: surprisingly, we encounter them today not only at raves or in shamanistic rituals, but also in yoga classes, mindfulness seminars and workshops designed to improve job performance. And last but not least, the new boom in ecstasy is evident in crisis phenomena such as a martial masculinity, in mass movements such as the violent storming of the Capitol in Washington or the protests against the Corona measures. But where does this new desire for ecstasy come from? It is high time to trace this basic human need for self-transgression with historical depth, critical curiosity, an analytical view of the present, and cultural respect in medical laboratories, witchcraft rituals, ayahuasca ceremonies, and club culture - in order to find an ethic for the ecstasies of the present.

"*Paul-Philipp Hanske and Benedikt Sarreiter have written a book about the history of ecstasy on the psychedelic wave that has the potential to become a standard work.*" – Süddeutsche Zeitung

Non-fiction
Hardcover
351 pages
2023
English sample available

Paul-Philipp Hanske, born in Regensburg in 1975, co-founded the editorial agency Nansen & Piccard, where he still works today. **Benedikt Sarreiter**, born in Munich in 1976, co-founded the editorial agency Nansen & Piccard, where he works.

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Dionysus · Intoxication · Encounters · Crisis · Desire · Transgression

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Philipp Schönthaler

How Rational Machines Became Romantic. AI, Creativity and Algorithmic Post-Rationality

How creativity has become the benchmark against which artificial intelligence must prove itself

Based on Daniel Kehlmann's trip to Silicon Valley and his attempt to write a narrative with the help of an AI, Philipp Schönthaler shows how romanticism as a cultural interpretation scheme still unfolds its power even where technology wants to appear the most advanced: in visions of a singularity and super intelligence.
While in the 1960s the computer, which was still finding its way into society as an agent of objectivity, transparency and reliability, and the "birth of poetry from the spirit of the machine" stood for an anti-romantic writing programme, today digital technologies are increasingly regarded as opaque, biased and, above all, creative. The contrast between a natural poetry, which allows the act of writing to begin in an ego anchored in the lifeworld, and an artificial poetry, which, in a radical departure from this, binds it to the functional principle of a rule-governed and rationally operating machine, has long since become blurred. But how did it come about that the space-filling apparatuses of cutting-edge technology, which had little to do with the culture of the fine arts, became the blueprint for writing? And what does it mean that computers are now received less through their logical-mathematical functions than through a popular-romantic pattern?

"Artificial intelligences will continue to rely on the romantic idea of an infinite literature in the future, because this is the only way they can provide full proof of their intelligence, creativity and emotionality by drawing on literature and art."

Essay
Softcover
ca. 160 pages
2024

Philipp Schönthaler, born in Stuttgart in 1976, received the Clemens Brentano Prize in 2012 for his narrative debut *Nach oben ist das Leben offen*. He lives in Berlin.

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Artificial intelligence · Computer technology · Cybernetics · Maschines · Experimental literature

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Andreas Weber

Animism

"Animism means seeing yourself as an active part of a meaningful whole and acting in such a way that your own quality of life improves that of the whole."

"We are all savages," says Andreas Weber, making it clear that our civilisation has not only colonised the indigenous peoples, but also our own thinking. If we want to make the world a life-giving place again, we should discover the indigenous in ourselves. "Radical democracy", "ethics and morality of commonality", "justice", "ecology of the gift" and "sustainability" – Weber's philosophical plea for an open exchange in a world of reciprocity, which is only just being rediscovered, revolves around these terms: physicists, biologists and humanities scholars are beginning to reconceptualise the holistic cosmos in the face of ecological and social crises and to shed old certainties. Embracing this new world view offers the opportunity to become a living part of a holistic reality and to realise an ecological art of living.

Essay
Softcover
126 pages
2024

Andreas Weber is a Berlin-based philosopher, biologist, and writer. He teaches philosophy at Leuphana University, Lüneberg, and the University of Fine Arts, Berlin. Previously published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *Enlivenment* (2016).

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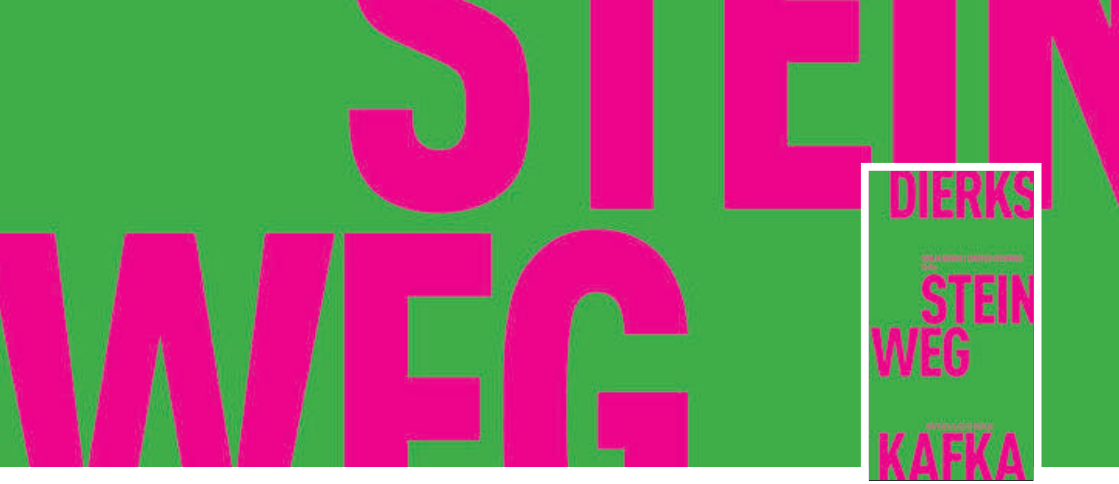

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Marcus Steinweg, Sonja Dierks

Kafka

In a web of holes: Kafka re-read against the grain

Kafka did not collect his manuscripts. He squandered them and left behind fragments. The famous novel fragment *The Trial* has no definite chapter order. The two other novels *The Missing Person* and *The Castle* also remained fragments and create an atmosphere in which the boundary between real threat and paranoia becomes blurred. If for Kafka his own writing was the matrix to which reality was to be brought into a relationship of congruence – and if not, what he had written was destroyed immediately or later at his request – he drilled so many holes in it until there was no way through. The web of holes is the matrix, and it is reality: "The light shone down in a hard blow, tearing apart the web that fled on all sides, burning mercilessly through the remaining empty large-mesh net. Below, like a caught animal, the earth twitched and stood still. One under the spell of the other, they looked at each other. And the third, shying away from the encounter, moved aside". The prophetic aspect of this quote, which describes the moment of panic-stricken contactless touch, is the non-prophetic aspect. Kafka is not saying what he sees, but what he knows.

Essay
Softcover
288 pages
2024

Marcus Steinweg, born in Koblenz in 1971, is a philosopher, lives in Berlin and is Professor of Art and Theory at the Karlsruhe Art Academy. He has been working with the artists Thomas Hirschhorn and Rosemarie Trockel since the 1990s and produces his own philosophical conceptual diagrams. Many of his texts and lectures operate at the interface between art and philosophy.
Sonja Dierks, born 1970, studied Modern German Literature, Musicology and Philosophy in Freiburg and Basel. Doctorate in 2001 at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg with *Es gibt Gespenster. Betrachtungen zu Kafkas Erzählung* (2003).

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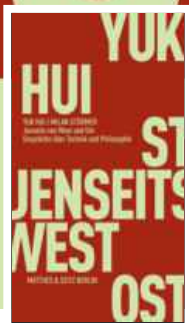

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Yuk Hui, Milan Stürmer

Beyond West and East. Discussion about Technology and Philosophy

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

"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.

Essay
Softcover
135 pages
2024

Yuk Hui, philosopher from Hong Kong, studied Computer Engineering, Cultural Theory and Philosophy at the University of Hong Kong and Goldsmiths College in London. He has taught at the Institute of Philosophy and Art Studies at Leuphana University Lüneburg, the Chinese University of the Arts and Bauhaus University Weimar, among others. Yuk Hui is currently Professor of Philosophy at Erasmus University Rotterdam and Professor at the City University of Hong Kong. Hui is the author of several books on philosophy and technology, which have been translated into numerous languages.

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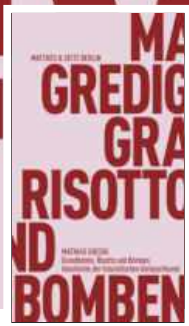

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Mathias Gredig

Grand Hotels, Risotto and Bombs. The History of Futuristic Noise Art

An unexpectedly humorous explanation of the avant-garde and futurism

The orchestras of the grand hotels could only be heard mixed with noise. The program for Luigi Russolo's quirky noise art emerged from this overall sound. This has less to do with a passion for industry and machines and more to do with stuffed quail thighs, bands playing in vestibules or the parks and colonnades of spa towns. Between 1909 and 1921, money and its contempt, anarchism and fascism, futurism and the avant-garde culminated there and in the Lombard metropolis.
Based on unknown documents, Mathias Gredig reconstructs this unique and fleeting historical moment, not only turning futurism research upside down, but also proposing a new aesthetic and historical classification of noise art as well as the early avant-garde and bourgeois popular music as a whole. Accompanied by Russolo's noise intonators, he tells an unprecedented story: of the Milan risotto, of fanatics, war veterans and esotericists, of anarchist and fascist agitations, of bomb attacks and their surroundings, which migrate into the music.

Essay
Softcover
176 pages
2024

Mathias Gredig completed his doctorate at the University of Basel and lives as an author and researcher in the Engadin.

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Erotisches Kapital und
Authentizität als Ware

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Jule Govrin

Desirable. Erotic Capital and Authenticity as a Commodity

About the value of desire and the desire of value

At first glance, desire and value appear to be opposites. While the former aims at the personal and intimate, the latter describes abstract judgment. But the opposition becomes fragile as soon as we discover in desire the constant upvaluing and devaluing of others, and in value the incessant, affect-laden game of evaluations. Jule Govrin's brilliant essay *Desirable* asks how desire permeates economic value systems, and how economic valuation patterns are inscribed in a subtle way in social relationships and self-perceptions – in semantics of self-worth, in the search for unique selling points to set oneself apart from others. The foray through the present is accompanied by detours into the history of capitalism and sexuality to show how desire is tied to commodities, people, and values. In the triangle of value, desire, and authenticity, *Desirable* fathoms the matrix of our present – and at the same time points to the vanishing point of an emancipatory perspective in the desire for different, solidary ways of relating that unites all.

"Elegantly written and thought-provoking." – Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Essay
Softcover
191 pages
2023

Jule Govrin is a political philosopher researching the political dimension of bodies and desire as a transformative force at the intersection of feminist philosophy, political theory, social philosophy, and aesthetics. Most recently published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *Political Bodies* (2022).

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Value · Desire · Authenticity · Capitalism · Commodity · Relations

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Sacha Bourgeois-Gironde

How the Law Brings us Closer to Nature

Rivers as legal subjects in their own right? Can animals go to court? A long overdue admission and a way to recast the relationship between nature and culture

The fundamental assumption in this surprising and politically programmatic essay is the fictionality of the construction of law – especially that of legal personality. The philosopher and economist Sacha Bourgeois-Gironde sees in this the only seemingly paradoxical possibility of bringing us closer to nature and abolishing the divide between nature and culture. By assigning the status of independent legal subjects, he argues, we would be able to better identify nature and its concerns and ultimately protect it and our existence within it. This position may argue against challenging law in favor of an ideal and imagined law of nature that humans aspire to in their search for nature and desire for harmony with the environment. It would be a path of endogenous change rather than one that leads from within beyond notions of natural law. A new legal version of the relationship between humans and nature could also include indigenous conceptions of nature and recognize them through a new constitution.

"*An inspiring contribution to an important debate*" – Spektrum der Wissenschaft

Essay
Softcover
91 pages
2023
French original available

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French (Les Presses Universitaires de France / PUF - Humensis)

Sacha Bourgeois-Gironde is a philosopher and economist. He teaches as a professor of economics and cognitive science at Université Paris 2 and École normale supérieure. His research focuses on the relationship between human cognitive abilities and the environments and institutions in which they are deployed.

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Philosophy · Nature · Law · Legal Personality · Rivers · Environment

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Stephan Wunsch

Disreputable Animals. A Bestiary of Human Fears

Unpopular animals and a rousing exploration of human fears

Whether it is the fear of snakes, the loathing of vultures or the disgust of spiders – the human relationship to many animals is characterized by deep rejection. Their origins go back to mythical prehistoric times, when man believed he had renounced the animal world, not least through storytelling and fable.
Stephan Wunsch portrays ten of these ill-named, even disreputable animals. His forays lead him into the shadowy realm of malicious natural history – and into the abysses of the human psyche. For a bestiary of disreputable animals is a catalog of our fears, a mirror of our inadequacies, a survey of open wounds – in short, a cryptic and hilarious study of human nature, from vulture to false snake, from deceitful hyena to vampiric bat.

"Every animal, especially the dubious and obscure, is a challenge to the human mind and to the human imagination."

"The most beautiful thing about this book are not the wild associations that Stephan Wunsch imposes on his beasts, nor the entertaining literary and cultural stories with which he recaptures them, no, the most beautiful thing about this bestiary is its tone; this alternation of pathos and laconicism, this meaningful growl, which at times sounds as if Captain Ahab had choked on the FAZ feuilleton of the sixties, and which despite everything spits out the most precise phenomenological observation." – Bayrischer Rundfunk

Nonfiction
Hardcover with illustrations
238 pages
2023

Stephan Wunsch, born in 1968, studied philosophy and literature. He has been working as a puppeteer, figure designer and director in Aachen since 2002. Projects about bird creatures, the Cambrian and the deep sea are a focus of his work.

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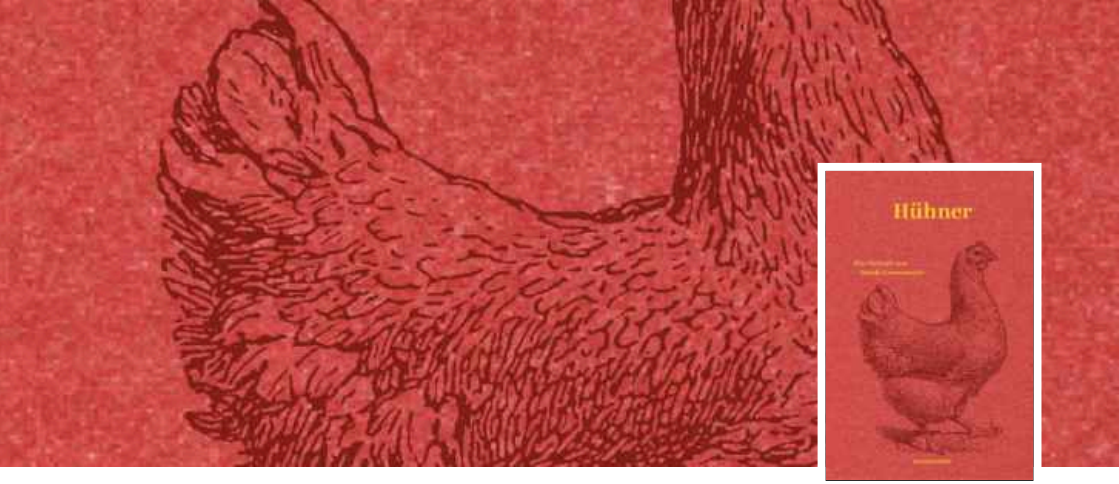

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Nicole Gronemeyer

Chicken. A Portrait

"It must therefore remain a mystery to us how man began to transform the freedom-loving wild chickens into perfect slaves." – Alfred Brehm

Chickens have only been a part of human life for around 3500 years. In the beginning, the closest living relatives of the Tyrannosaurus Rex were worshipped and not eaten – in ancient times they were consulted as oracles and the popular cockfights were held to celebrate the heroism of youth. It was only with the Roman estates that chickens and their eggs became a popular food, and Queen Victoria's enthusiasm for chickens from the Asian colonies was followed in the 19th century by chicken fever, which gripped aristocratic society in Europe and North America. This laid the foundations for the breeding of pedigree poultry, which also provided Charles Darwin with valuable information in the development of the theory of evolution. Industrial chicken breeding began in the 20th century in the USA, where the "chicken of tomorrow" was invented, and the incredible diversity of chicken breeds developed into today's homogeneousness of hybrid breeds. Yet chickens are anything but simple-minded. A chicken can remember a hundred other chickens and knows thirty different sounds to communicate with them. They hiss and shriek, cluck and crow, coo and squawk, cluck and coo. If we could understand them, they would tell us their story of domestication, industrialisation and capitalism. Nicole Gronemeyer, herself a chicken farmer since childhood, translates the sounds of domestic chickens in this loving animal portrait, which appeals to our humanity without any admonition, which is proven not least in our treatment of chickens.

Non-fiction
Hardcover with numerous illustrations
144 pages
2024

Nicole Gronemeyer, born in 1969 on a farm in Lower Saxony, is an editor of non-fiction books and lives in Berlin and Brandenburg. After studying cultural studies, she completed her doctorate at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main with a thesis on magical nature writings from the early modern period.

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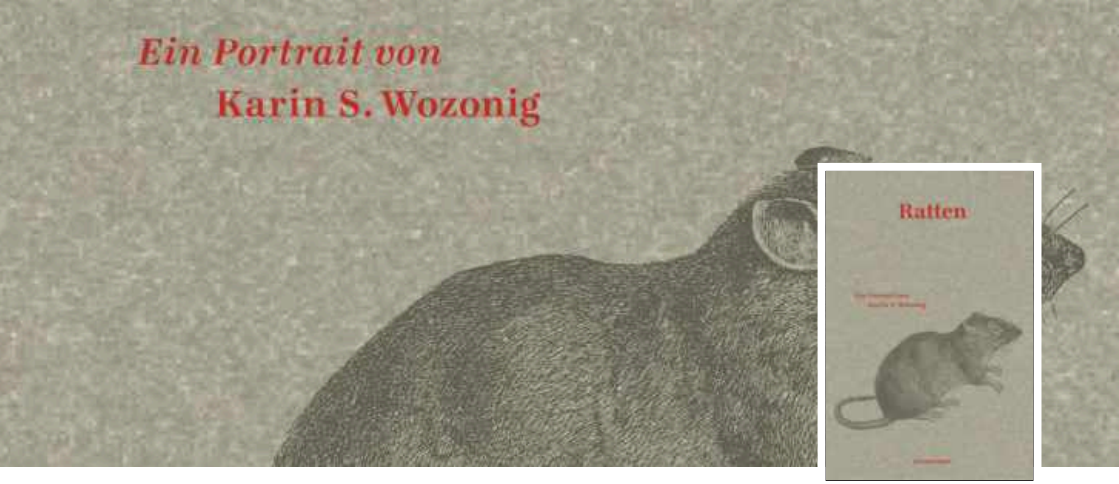

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Karin S. Wozonig

Rats. A Portrait

"A rat is known to many more than he would like." – Thier book, Conrad Gessner

Norway rat, house rat or wistar rat – the species of the genus Rattus are numerous, which is hardly surprising given that they have spread from Asia across the whole world over the course of time because they are able to adapt to local living conditions like almost no other animal. As omnivores, rats in the wild feed on plants as well as animal carcasses, in New York on leftover pizza and in Berlin on discarded kebabs. This is probably why most people believe that there are always rats in their neighbourhood, some even estimate the ratio to the population at 1:1. It is impossible to determine how many rats there really are, as they love dark corners and are good at hiding. However, if you count their multiple appearances in fiction by Selma Lagerlöf, Gerhart Hauptmann and Marlen Haushofer, as well as in myths and fairy tales, such as the Pied Piper of Hamelin, you slowly begin to realise their astonishing diversity, cunning and resilience. While the rat is revered in Hinduism and Buddhism, the Western world has long ascribed to it the role of disease vector, vermin or unwelcome guest that strays onto merchant ships, and sometimes it is even said to rain rats from storm clouds. However, the fact that rats are used as model organisms in experiments and animal testing shows that this furry rodent with its ever-growing teeth has at least as much to say about us humans.

Non-fiction
Harcover with numerous illustrations
136 pages
2024

Karin S. Wozonig, born in Graz, studied Comparative Literature, English and German Studies in Vienna and Los Angeles, researches and publishes on chaos theory and 19th century literature. She lives in Vienna.

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Holger Teschke
Seagulls. A Portrait

"I'll give the whole bird's song for a seagull's cry!" – Friedrich Goethe (1956)

Seagulls are birds of hope and terror. On the high seas, they herald the harbour of salvation as well as the deadly storm. In the works of the Old Masters, they foreshadowed the end of the world, which is not only evident today in the alternation of droughts and cloudbursts, and as Jonathan Livingston Seagull they have entertained generations of children. Author, dramaturge and director Holger Teschke follows the traits of this white-grey bird, of which there are 55 known species today, once around the globe. Gulls have adapted to almost every habitat in the world, and today they are not only found in harbours and on coasts, but increasingly also inland, where they are displaced by the meagre food of overfished seas. Even in Berlin, they are already breeding on the roofs above the city. And then there is the sailor's superstition that the souls of dead sailors find a second home in seagulls. So learning from seagulls means learning to remember. If you look carefully into the pupils of a seagull, you will realise that nothing and nobody will stop it.

"They lie lightly like foam balls on the waves and stand out so vividly from them with their dazzling colours that they become a true ornament to the sea." – Alfred Brehm, BREHMS THIERLEBEN

Non-fiction
Hardcover with numerous illustrations
119 pages
2024

Holger Teschke, born on Rügen in 1958, went to sea as a machinist on fishing boats before studying theatre directing in Berlin, where he worked as a dramaturge and author. From 2000 to 2010 he worked as a director and directing teacher in the USA, Australia and South East Asia, and since 2010 he has been a lecturer in theatre history and dramaturgy. Holger Teschke's last book, *Guide to Rügen and Hiddensee*, was published in 2013. He writes for mare, Theater der Zeit and Deutschland Radio Kultur and lives in Berlin and South Hadley, Massachusetts.

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Sea · Coast · Herring gull · Arts · Herald · Superstition

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Volker Sommer

Monkeys. A Portrait

The most human of all animal portraits so far - because it tells a lot about our own affinity

Whether we're making a monkey of ourselves, going ape, or will be the monkey's uncle – it's not just the rich metaphors that connect other primates' lives to ours, but the eternal constants: living and eating, socializing and sex, rearing young, and inevitable death. In his humorous and knowledgeable animal portrait, which is purposely not dedicated to the great apes, Volker Sommer shows the striking variance that evolution has created in this process. Rather, it is the lemurs, the lorisids, the tarsiers and the old and new world apes from which we learn that there is nothing that does not exist: polyandry or eternal fidelity, solo sex and females ensnaring each other, mistreatment of babies by mothers or devoted paternal care, plus unusual dietary habits, wakes or strict nocturnal activity. As individually as we encounter the apes here, as Madame Berthe's mouse lemur, crested black macaque or spot-nosed monkey, it is also clear that there is one ape that threatens them all: homo sapiens.

"Primates are so different in terms of anatomy, ecology and behavior that the monkey does not exist. Moreover, each individual of a species embodies personalities, with often very contrasting preferences, fears, and habits. In relation to us humans, this is a truism – which becomes wisdom when we see ourselves as part of an evolutionary continuum."

Biotopes · Diet · Sociability · Offspring · Aging

Non-fiction
Hardcover with numerous illustrations
143 pages
2023

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Volker Sommer, born in Holzhausen am Reinhardswald in northern Hesse in 1954, is an evolutionary biologist and primatologist who has been researching the behavior and ecology of wild primates in Asia, Africa and South America for decades. He is Professor of Evolutionary Anthropology at University College London (UCL).

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