

10. international literature festival odesa

24—28 02 2025
in Kraków
Pałac Potockich

Photo
© Ali Ghardschi

Design
Tatja Weusshka Gitz Berlin



sat 22 02
19.00

Concert

Venue:
Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie
Al. 3 Maja 1,
Kraków 30-062 Polska
<https://mnk.pl/en/>

Spółdzielnia Muzyczna Contemporary Ensemble Kraków in co-production with the 10th international literature festival odesa as part of the »Interactions Series« concert series.

Piotr Peszat
»Untitled Folder #4« for sampler, percussion, saxophone, and cello

Piotr Peszat
»Real Life Proof« for clarinet, percussion, sampler and violin

Daniel Glaus (*1957)
»Sing against the breaking night« for female voice and instrumental ensemble

World premiere

Christina Daletska – voice
Spółdzielnia Muzyczna Contemporary Ensemble Kraków:
Matgorzata Mikulska – flute
Tomasz Sowa – clarinet
Krzysztof Guńka – saxophone
Paulina Woś – violin
Barbara Mglej – viola
Jakub Gucik – cello
Aleksandra Ptaczek – sampler
Aleksander Wnuk – percussion

»How am I supposed to write a score of forgiveness after hearing the table songs of murderers?«
Serhij Zhadan

The following Ukrainian poets provided inspiration for the Swiss composer's work: Taras Shevchenko, Lesya Ukrainka, Tania Maliarchuk, Serhij Zhadan and the Romanian-German authors Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger and Paul Celan. He was particularly impressed by the unshakeable hope and confidence that manifests itself in their texts – despite all the repression and destruction by the Russian army – and leads, or may lead, to a great will to persevere. The composition is characterized by a preoccupation with the painful, ancient history of the country and the tension created by the constantly changing occupying powers.

The instruments of the ensemble and the voice of the soloist merge into a constantly changing soundscape. The compositional work on this piece is characterized by an exploration of the parameters of approach and distance: a large-scale heterophony in which the instruments more or less follow the voice. Rapid, multi-tonal appoggiaturas use echo effects to create a chordal level in addition to the linear weave, which in turn is characterized by a differentiation and metamorphosis of timbral shades, and thus opens up wide sound spaces.

Selected poems from the volume »Skrypykivka« (Chernivtsi, 2023) by Serhij Zhadan serve as the textual basis, forming a superficial layer. As a background, the composer has put together a collage of text fragments from the aforementioned authors and names of people killed in the war.

The composer dedicates his work to all the victims of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, which violates international law.

Venue:
Patac Potockich
Rynek Główny 20
31-005 Kraków, Polska

mon 24 02
11.00

Moderation: Olaf Kühl
Language: English, Polish

The speech is reminiscent – in Václav Havel's sense – of the »Menetekel character« of Eastern (dictatorship) experiences from the perspective of the saturated

mon 24 02
15.00

Moderation: Ulrich Schreiber
Language: Ukrainian, Polish, English

Ukrainian authors Yuri Andrukhovych and Andrey Kurkov, as well as Francesca Melandri will read texts by poets killed in the war, including Volodymyr Vakulenko, Maksym Kryvtsov, and Victoria Amelina.

Welcome:

Festival directors

Hans Ruprecht [Switzerland]
Ulrich Schreiber [Germany]
Szymon Kloska [Poland]

Opening speech by Marko Martin [Germany]

Notes on communication between Western and Eastern Europe in times of war

West. The speech is thus also an homage to an accuracy of perception that – despite the clichés of the supposedly permanently tragic East, is neither unfamiliar with irony nor

eroticism and is also on familiar terms with metaphysics. Not least its potential for resistance could benefit us all right now.

Reading on the occasion of the 3rd anniversary of the beginning of the war

The festival will be providing financial support to the initiative of the Ukrainian poet Ilya Kaminsky and others, who founded the NGO Poems Not Bombs in Odesa. Through the 2023 foundation of their poetry studio in Odesa, they have set themselves the goal of encouraging

children's curiosity and creativity by organizing writing workshops and poetry reading sessions.

www.poemsnotbombs.org
The project can be supported with donations directly via PayPal: Eveningodesa@gmail.com

mon 24 02
16.30

Moderation: Olaf Kühl
Language: English, Polish

Andrei Kurkow [Ukraine] Texts on War

February 2022: The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine begins. Three years later, the people of that country are still under attack and have suffered unspeakable crimes

and losses. How to carry on and keep fighting when everything has changed, and there's no end to the war in sight? Andrey Kurkov's journalistic texts, notes, and diary ent-

ries show how the war is becoming more and more integrated into people's everyday lives.

mon 24 02
18.00

Andrzej Stasiuk ^[Poland] and
Jurij Andruchowycz ^[Ukraine]

Moderation: Ziemowit Szczerek
Language: English, Polish

Twenty years ago, Yuri Andrukhovych and Andrzej Stasiuk published two essays on Central Europe, a literary double portrait of a landscape that they had travelled through together. Travelling on foot and by car between the Beskids and Bukovina,

through Polish, Slovak, Czech, Hungarian, Romanian, and Ukrainian territory, they – ethnographers, map readers, reporters, and poets all at once – created a new terrain: literary Central Europe. While Andrukhovych discovers fragments of

a sunken world in the ruins of former Galicia and tells a »family saga«, Stasiuk appears as a surveyor obsessed with perception and gifted with a magical eye. What remains of the discovery of this Europe after two decades?

mon 24 02
19.30

Francesca
Melandri ^[Italy]
»Cold Feet«

Moderation: Andrirej Kurkow
Language: English, Polish

What does war mean? And what happens if you fight on the wrong side? Francesca Melandri tells the story of her own father – and gives voice to the silence of an entire generation. In the winter of 1942/43, Italian soldiers fled from the Red

Army in shoes with cardboard soles. Thousands of them froze to death. It is only when images and sites of war in Ukraine become omnipresent at the start of 2022 that it becomes clear that it was above all Ukraine where her father had been.

What did he really experience there; why was he there at all?

»Francesca Melandri masterfully interweaves human destinies with the great history of Europe.«
Andrirej Kurkow

mon 24 02
21.00

Judith
Hermann ^[Germany]
The Frankfurt Poetry
Lectures and
»Summerhouse, Later«

Moderation: Hans Ruprecht
Language: German, Polish

In the Frankfurt Poetry Lectures, Judith Hermann talks about her childhood in unconventional circumstances, about divided Berlin, family ties

and elective affinities, and long, happy summers by the sea. She reflects on the construction of narratives and questions the reliability

of memory. She will read the story »Red corals« from the book that established her success, »Summerhouse, Later«.

tue 25 02
15.00

J.S. Margot ^[Belgium]
»Masel tov« and
»Minjan«

Moderation: Olga Szmidt
Language: English, Polish

For six years, student Margot accompanies the children of the Jewish Orthodox Schneider family: She gives tutoring and cycling lessons, comforts them in crisis situations, and always has a sympathetic ear. Through her close contact with daughter Elzira and son Jakob in particular, Margot gains ever dee-

per insights into a closed world whose strict commandments and centuries-old traditions fascinate and alienate her at the same time. Even when the children leave home, she remains deeply attached to the family. In »Minjan« (tr: Minyan), J.S. Margot talks about the encounters she had

in the Orthodox Jewish community after the publication of her book »Mazzel tov«: Mosje the cook from Hoffs in Antwerp, the photographer Dan, Esther, the quirky, Hasidic mame who defends the necessity of taboos and argues with Margot about ultra-Orthodox upbringing and schooling.

tue 25 02
16.30

Jeroen
Theunissen ^[Belgium]
»I, Cartographer«

Moderation: Wolfgang Martin Roth
Language: English, Polish

In 2017, the author set off on a six-month hike from the southwest of Ireland to the Bosphorus. He was following in the footsteps of the Briton Patrick Leigh Fermor, who travelled on foot from Holland to Constanti-

nople in 1933, crossing Europe. The Europe that Theunissen travels through is struggling with many problems: climate change, nationalism, and the refugee crisis. »I, Cartographer« is many books in one: a report

on a long journey and an attempt to understand our world. In »I, Cartographer«, Theunissen draws a personal map of Europe.

tue 25 02
18.00

Adam Michnik ^[Poland],
Marcus Welsch ^[Germany],
Marko Martin ^[Germany]:
On European East-West
relations

Moderation: Olaf Kühl
Language: English, Polish

Adam Michnik, Marcus Welsch, and Marko Martin discuss European East-West relations, how they developed historically – especially after Charter 77 and the Solidarność mo-

vement in 1980 – and how they see the present. They also look at the future of these relations in view of the political upheavals since the occupation of Crimea and the war

perpetuated by Russia in Ukraine since February 2022, as well as since October 7, 2023.

tue 25 02
19.30

Robert
Menasse [Austria]
On Europe

Moderation: Wolfgang Martin Roth
Language: English, Polish

Robert Menasse explains and defends the European idea, but also calls on us to criticize and overcome the systemic contradictions of the Union. The alternative we face is not complicated: Either we suc-

ceed in what is historically unique, namely, the construction of a post-national democracy, or we are threatened with a relapse into the Europe of nation states. In many member states, politicians who no

longer (want to) learn from the experiences of the founders are stirring up a new nationalism. Today, Europe is once again at a crossroads. What will the world of tomorrow look like?

tue 25 02
21.00

Andrzej
Stasiuk [Poland]
»Crossing«

Moderation: Michał Koza
Language: Polish

June 1941, a few days before the Wehrmacht invades the Soviet Union. An escape to Russia is underway, shaped by the dreamy, nocturnal river landscape. Now,

it seems strange and threatening, as motorcycles, trucks, and tanks roll through it, and German words buzz through the air. Back in that village, at the end of his life, the

narrator's father can no longer remember being a child here.

wed 26 02
15.00

Urszula
Honek [Poland]
»White Nights«

Moderation: Olaf Kühl
Language: Polish

The talk with Urszula Honek will focus on her prose debut, »White Nights« (2022). With these thirteen stories, which are linked by a thematic arc, the award-winning poet

has created a vibrantly poetic portrait of people in a sleepy village on the edge of the Beskid Mountains. The question of where she finds the strength for her quiet contempla-

tion in the face of the world's turbulent events will be one of the topics of the evening.

wed 26 02
16.30

Radu
Vancu [Romania]
»Kadisz«

Moderation: Jakub Kornhauser
Language: Romanian, Polish

Radu Vancu's poetry collection »Kaddish« is based on a true and shocking story: The young poet Miklós Radnóti was killed by the Nazis and thrown into a mass grave. After

the end of the war, his widow, Fanni Gyarmati, salvaged his corpse from the mass grave and found a diary in his breast pocket that contained his final poems, soaked through by his

rotting body. She rescued the poems – literally bringing them back from the grave. »Kaddish« is a long poem about memory, about death and life.

wed 26 02
18.00

Sofia
Andruchowycz [Ukraine]
»Amadoka«

Moderation: Katarzyna Trzeciak
Language: English, Polish

In her trilogy »Amadoka«, the author interweaves past and present in a Ukrainian family story, from the 1920s to the present day. The title of the trilogy, »Amadoka«, refers to

the largest lake in Europe, which is said to have existed on the territory of Ukraine in the Middle Ages. In »The Story of Sofia«, the concluding volume, Andruchovych brings to-

gether all the threads of the trilogy and shows that we can only understand Ukraine's present if we know its history.

wed 26 02
20.00

Poetry Night
Tomas Venclova [Lithuania]
Kristiina Ehin [Estonia]
Urszula Honek [Poland]

Moderation: Olaf Kühl
Language: Lithuanian, Estonian, English, Polish

Tomas Venclova (*1937 Lithuania) is a Lithuanian poet, writer, and translator and was a founding member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group. After teaching in the USA and Europe, he now lives in Vilnius once again. He will read his poems in Lithuanian.

Kristiina Ehin (*1977, Estonia) is a poet, translator, singer, and songwriter. She represented Estonia at the satellite event of the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. From 2015 to 2016, Ehin was Professor of Liberal Arts at the University of Tartu.

Urszula Honek (*1987, Poland) The young, multi-award-winning poet published her first collection of stories (»White Nights«) in 2022.

thu 27 02
15.00

Klementyna
Suchanow [Poland]
On Freedom and War

Moderation: Olaf Kühl
Language: Polish

Russia is not only inundating Ukraine with murderous attacks. It is waging an insidious, hybrid war against the entire democratic West. The full extent of this war is only gradually being recognized. Klementyna Suchanow, author of

a biography on Gombrowicz and an expert on Latin America, uncovers the surprising connections between arch-Catholic sects and Russian agents in Poland in her book »To jest wojna« [Eng. »This Is War«, 2023]. What prospects does the

fight against infiltration have, and who should lead it? Are freedom and democracy still effective forces against the authoritarian movements gaining strength around the world?

thu 27 02
19.30

Mina
Hava [Switzerland]
»Für Seka«

Moderation: Hans Ruprecht
Language: German, Polish

»Für Seka« is Mina Hava's debut novel, published in 2023 (Suhrkamp). In her novel, the young author explores the history of her Bosnian family

and draws on her own research into people in the diaspora and their reception abroad. The newspaper »Neue Zürcher Zeitung« writes:

»What is true in Mina Hava's debut novel is the frantic standstill of fear. [...] Anyone who writes like this can write about anything.«

thu 27 02
16.30

Santiago
Roncagliolo [Peru/Spain]
»The Year the Devil
Was Born«

Moderation: Pieter van Os
Language: Spanish, Polish

Viceroyalty of Peru, 1623. In a city full of crime and corruption, plagued by bad omens and uncertain winds, Alonso Morales, a novice of

the Holy Office, witnesses the arrival of evil and discovers how difficult it can be to distinguish between good and evil. In his novel, Santiago

Roncagliolo brings a dark era full of intrigue and the ghosts of superstition and idolatry to life.

thu 27 02
21.00

Mariann
Bühler [Switzerland]
»Shift in the Rock«

Moderation: Hans Ruprecht
Language: German, Polish

In her debut novel, »Shift in the Rock«, the Swiss author tells the story of three characters who know nothing about each other,

but whose lives gradually become intertwined. In her linguistically dense debut, Mariann Bühler observes how change finds its way,

and shifts that were never intended sometimes even move mountains.

thu 27 02
18.00

Anna
Weidenholzer [Austria]
»Here Drifts My
Potato Heart«

Moderation: Hans Ruprecht
Language: Polish, German

Anna Weidenholzer's second novel, »Der Winter tut den Fischen gut« (tr: Winter is Good for the Fish), was nominated for the Leipzig Book Fair Prize. In her new collection

of stories, »Hier treibt mein Kartoffelherz« (tr: Here Drifts My Potato Heart), she paints the picture of an illustrious society with masterful strokes. In it, the certainties of

everyday life gradually threaten to slip away and begin to settle into small, absurd moments full of humour and poetry.

fri 28 02
16.30

Pieter
van Os [Netherlands]
»Hiding in Plain Sight«

Moderation: Wolfgang Martin Roth
Language: English, Polish

Polish Catholics thought she was one of them. A devoted Nazi family took her in as if she were their own daughter. She fell in love with a German engineer who built airplanes for the Luftwaffe. What nobody

knew, however, was that Mala Rivka Kizel had been born into a large Polish Orthodox Jewish family in Warsaw in 1926. Thanks to a combination of luck and her exceptional chameleonic talents, she was the

only member of her family to survive the Second World War. Mala's story is one of identity and the meaning of it, in the past and today.

fri 28 02
18.00

Jakub
Matecki [Poland]
»The Quake in Us«

Moderation: Łukasz Wojtusik
Language: Polish

Many authors of Poland's middle generation are still dealing with the traumas of the last World War as well as the Soviet and German occupation. Jakub Matecki is one of them. In his new novel, »The Quake

in Us«, he tells a story of intergenerational wounds and interweaves them with elements of magical realism, skilfully revolving around a family secret. What makes this author so popular with younger readers?

Is it his narrative craft and the subliminal topicality of the historical subject matter? Or is it the fascination that family stories hold?

fri 28 02
19.30

Paavo
Matsin [Estonia]
»Gogol's Disco«

Moderation: Łukasz Wojtusik
Language: Estonian, English, Polish

Europe in the near future: The newly founded Russian Tsarist Empire has forcibly annexed the entire Baltic region, wiping out every trace of Estonian culture in the process. Viljandi, a formerly tranquil town in the heart of Estonia, has become a gathering place for all kinds of bohemians and miscreants trying to escape the new tsarist empire. One morning, master thief Konstantin Opiatovich robs a man on the tram who turns out to be the great Rus-

sian writer Nikolai Gogol, back from the dead after some 170 years. Together with a bunch of dodgy yet charming petty criminals and thieves, Opiatovich tries to use the revenant for his own purposes – but Gogol refuses to go along with their plan and unleashes a nightmarish caper for his kidnappers that plunges the whole of Viljandi into chaos. In »Gogol's Disco«, cult author Paavo Matsin takes aim not only

at the Estonians' fear of their powerful neighbour, but also the torn relationship between Eastern and Western culture. With his anarchic humour and numerous references to the pop culture of the Beatles era, he succeeds in conjuring up an atmosphere in which this fear becomes tangible and at the same time is reduced to absurdity.

fri 28 02
21.00

Moderation: Ulrich Schreiber
Language: English, Polish

The Algerian author Boualem Sansal was arrested at Algiers Airport on 16 November 2024 on his return from France. Since then, there have been neither official reasons for the arrest nor any charges against him. The state-controlled Algerian media has renounced his attitude towards political and religious developments in Algeria as well as his statements on geopolitical issues, such as the country's western border with Morocco and the Western Sahara conflict. The 75-year-old author, who was awarded the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in 2011, the Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie Française in 2015, and the Prix Méditerranée in 2021 for his novel »Abraham ou La cinquième Alliance« (tr: Abraham, or The Fifth Alliance), among others, could be sentenced to several years in prison. His latest novel, »Vivre: Le compte à rebours« (2024; tr: Life: The Countdown) tells facets of Algeria's history against the backdrop of a global dystopia. Sansal made his debut with »Le serment des barbares« (1999; tr: The Oath of the Barbarians), which was celebrated by the local press for its playful use of the French language.

Despite his dismissal from the civil service in 2003 and the permanent observation that followed, the author

Open Call

by the international literature festival odesa for a worldwide reading of texts by imprisoned Algerian author Boualem Sansal on 6 April 2025

lived with his family in Boumerdès, near Algiers. He published without the protection of a pseudonym and repeatedly intervened in current political debates. He continued to live in Algeria, even though his books were banned there at times, even though he repeatedly criticised the Algerian government and warned of the dangers of Islamism, and even though many of his colleagues had long since emigrated to Europe.

In order to emphasise international solidarity with the author and the demand for his immediate release, the international literature festival odesa and the signatories below are calling for a worldwide reading of his texts. The goal is for Boualem's texts to be read in public spaces, on public transport, in parks, as well as in schools, universities, and theatres. Participants in the worldwide reading can freely choose the texts to be read. We suggest novels and articles in which Sansal intervenes in public debate.

Individuals and institutions who would like to participate with a reading on 6 April 2025 are requested to send us the following information by 30 March at the latest: organiser name, location, time, participating readers, event language, and a website link, if applicable.

Supported by:

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