

FAIR NEWS

21. BOOK WORLD PRAGUE 2015 FRIDAY 15. 5.
International Book Fair and Literary Festival

21st Annual Book World Declared Open

THE ACTRESS TEREZA KOSTKOVÁ HOSTED THURSDAY'S OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 21ST BOOK WORLD, WHICH STARTED AT 10 AM.

Given Egypt's participation as the guest of honour, this year's proceedings had a distinctly Arabic feel. The audience afforded a very warm welcome the music ensemble Ziriab, whose harmonies and melodies, rather exotic to a central-European ear, elicited spontaneous applause. The first guest to take to the microphone was the senator Tomáš Grulich, chairman of the Permanent Committee for Czech Expatriates. „A Czech person and rum can be found everywhere,” he quoted from Hašek's famous novel Good Soldier Schweik and added that there are currently some two and a half million Czechs living all around the world and claiming allegiance to their homeland. He emphasised the

important role of the Czech exiles in the pre-Munich period of Czech history and in maintaining cultural continuity after 1948. „We need to tell people that we are not alone. That there is even a Czech literary diaspora, deserving of our attention and respect,” he stated in reference to one of this year's key themes of the book fair.

„I wish to emphasise that Egyptian culture, since its very beginnings, stems from profound respect and tolerance towards all cultures and nations,” the ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Czech Republic Ms. Amany Fahmy said in her speech. She reminded her audience of the essential contribution of Egypt's

culture to the culture of the entire world, offered a detailed insight into Egypt's history and also added that „culture and literature cannot live separated from the ideas, opinions and dreams of the inhabitants of various countries.”

Book World's guests were then addressed by the deputy minister of culture Kateřina Kalistová and City of Prague councillor Jan Volf, who highlighted the fact that it was, to the day, the 699th birthday of emperor Charles IV.

„We come as guests from Cairo, the city of one thousand minarets, to your Prague of one hundred spires,” dr Ahmed Megahed, director of the Egyptian General Egyptian Book Organisation, then said, adding that: „These very cultural exchanges, our journeys, our wanderings between Cairo and Prague, point to very strong bonds between the Czech and the Egyptian people, between the Czech and Egyptian culture, which contribute to the further development of both these civilisations”. While the chairman of the Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers Martin Vopěnka welcomed UNESCO's granting of the title World City of Literature to Prague, at the same time he bemoaned the fact that it had largely failed to make a visible impact so far. When the book fair director Dana Kalinová thanked all those involved in preparing and organising the book fair for their „synergic share”, the Egyptian ambassador Amany Fahmy and dr Ahmed Megahed had ceremonially cut the ribbon.

IK



COUNTRY OF PHARAOHS TAKES OVER

The opening ceremony at the stand of the book fair's guest of honour this year – Egypt – was marked by the traditions of the country boasting five thousand years of literary history. Typical Egyptian sweet treats and traditional music attracted dozens of visitors to the Central Hall. With the Book World director DANA KALINOVÁ and director of the General Egyptian Book Organisation AHMED MEGAHED in attendance, the guests were addressed by the writer MAI KHALED and her fellow countryman IBRAHIM ABDEL MAGUID. They introduced their homeland as a land of rich history, dynamic present, and a wealth of outstanding works of culture. They also emphasised several remarkable artists from the Czech Republic. „It is an honour to be as guests in a country, which elected a writer as its first president”, noted Maguid. Such was the launch of a very colourful programme dedicated to the history and present of Egypt and its language that will be taking place at the stand of the Book World's honourable guest.

OŠ

Where Is the World of Books Heading?

Which direction is the international book market taking and will electronic books marginalise the printed production? This question is being put to leading world experts in the field every year. This time, developments in the sphere of the world book production were assessed by Austrian specialist RÜDIGER WISCHENBART.

Many statistics and graphs suggest that the international book market is undergoing a major transformation. „The safe world of printed media has fallen apart, to be replaced by a rather tumultuous electronic world, which does not, however, spell the end of traditional books,” Rüdiger Wischenbart said at the start of his encounter with the book fair's visitors. „It may be a fact that the number of printed books is decreasing, but the production of electronic books does not grow as much as was previously expected,” said Rüdiger Wischenbart, confronting the most recent results of book development with the prognosis of the past years. He admitted, however, that smaller publishers are not enjoying the best of times. „The world market is dominated by five large players with Penguin Random House at the top, followed by Hachette Livre, Harper Collins, Simon and Schuster, and Macmillan. Despite the fact that these five control the largest bulk of book production, small publishers should get down to work, rather than keep complaining about being too small. There is room for them on the

market. They should keep a better eye on what is going on around them and how they could take part in it. They must be more awake.” Once again the name of the internet shark Amazon was mentioned. Almost all publishers and booksellers seem to be afraid of ending up in its large mouth. „Yes, we cannot pretend it does not exist, it has the largest book sales in the universe and must be taken into consideration. We are witness to an atomisation of the book world, it is different than it was and we must find our way in it. This is one of the current issues of the world book market. How to find one's place in it. Another problem is piracy, which, while it exists for a long time now, has adopted many new forms today. This is another thing the international book market must adapt to,” Rüdiger Wischenbart added. When another year passes, it will no doubt be interesting to take a fresh look at how the book market has developed in the meantime. The times are changing fast and new trends appear not every couple of years, but every few months. Let's see in a year's time.

JaM

Václav Havel's Egyptian Adventure

One of the 2015 Book World's distinguished guests is the Egyptian Czech studies expert KHALED EL BILTAGI, who teaches Czech language at the Al Alsun department of the Ain Shams university. He talked about his work as a translator, while also sharing his opinion on the contemporary situation in Egypt. The event, prepared under the auspices of the Václav Havel library, was hosted by Lucie Němečková, organiser of numerous programmes focusing on the Arab world.

Khaled el Biltagi is known as the author of several translations of Czech authors into Arabic. Among names such as Miroslav Verner or Milan Kundera, Václav Havel remains the most notable personality. How did the author come about translating Havel's famous essay The Power of the Powerless? „In 2011 I met with the Czech ambassador Pavel Kafka, who asked me if I would like to translate this work,” El Biltagi smiles. „Back then I was in revolutionary mood, just like everybody else in Egypt, so I accepted the offer.” In this Arabic country, Václav Havel was always predominantly known as a civil activist. The Arabic



version of his The Garden Party enjoyed considerable success, but many other works still awaited a decent translation. With the advent of the Arab Spring and its aftermath, however, an increasing number of Egyptians became interested in his writing and the method of Havel's struggle with Czechoslovakia's communist regime reminds many of the current situation in Egypt. Havel's works became popular among the political opponents imprisoned by the regime. „Everyone, even the Czechs, told me how difficult this text is. But for me it wasn't. Maybe because of what we were experiencing ourselves,” says the translator,

alluding to the situation at the turn of the years 2011 and 2012, when he was translating the essay and when it was published.

The debate also turned to this more sombre topic. According to el Biltagi, today's situation is more complicated than it was before the series of Egyptian revolutions. Protests against the regime have been made illegal and many activists landed in jail. „The system in Egypt respects neither the law, nor the constitution,” the author says. „Absurd situations, when innocent people are being imprisoned, are on the rise.”

The author was also asked about his personal acquaintance with Havel. „I came to Prague and I was supposed to meet him, but unfortunately I was only greeted by his assistant. Václav Havel was in the hospital.” During this visit, however, el Biltagi received a book signed by Havel. The Egyptian Bohemist's opinion on the renaming of the Prague airport, which caused some controversy in the Czech Republic, however, remains unequivocal. „I'm glad that Mr. Havel enjoys at least a part of the recognition that he deserves.”

OŠ

White Ravens from Around the World Meet in Munich

„For us the white raven is a trademark, a symbol of something unique, of what we want to select from among the total of children's books from various corners of the world. We are concerned with the literary quality, the quality of the illustrations, unconventional and innovative approaches, but also the comprehensibility for children all around the world,” Katja Wiebe from Munich's

International Library for Young People said on Thursday afternoon, commenting on the annual publishing of the White Ravens catalogue. „We compare worlds of children's books from various countries. We hope that our catalogue will enable readers to discover books which they otherwise would not find, and also publishers from other countries, who might want to translate and publish these

books.” Every year a team of the Library's experts looks at some ten thousand children's books from sixty countries, selecting two hundred of the most interesting ones. The 2014 short list is on display at the book fair, with detailed information on the exhibited collection being provided by both the above-mentioned Katja Wiebe and her colleague Ines Galling.

IK

2015 Jiří Orten Prize Awarded to Alžběta Stančáková

The Jiří Orten Prize is awarded to young authors of up to 30 years of age. It is organised by the Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers. The prize enjoys the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic. Its partner is the City of Prague.

The awards ceremony was held on May 14 as part of the book fair's accompanying programme. The nominees were Alžběta Michalová for her poetry collection Zřetelně nevyprávíš (Fra), Alžběta Stančáková for her poetry collection Co s tím (Nakladatelství Petr Štengl publishers) and Luboš Svoboda for his poetry collection Vypadáme, že máváme (Fra). Alžběta Stančáková came out as the winner. She was nominated by an expert jury consisting of the literary theoretician and editor Blanka Čínátlová, Odeon publishers' editor-in-chief Jindřich Jůzl,



editor and poet Milan Ohnisko, writer and editor Marek Šindelka and writer Miloš Urban. Stančáková was nominated „for her accurate poetic observations, her rude and tough gestures.” The poet received a cheque for 50000 Czech crowns as part of the award.

JCH

The Art of Egypt's Streets

The younger generation of Egyptian artists is represented in Prague by the writer and radio presenter **MAI KHALED**.



She introduced the visitors to an extensive pictorial presentation focused on events organised by young Egyptians. We could thus bear witness to numerous „underground” or spontaneous events, rarely noticed by the Czech and other foreign media. The key role in these events belongs to the streets of Cairo, the graffiti, the street performances of writers and musicians. To name but one example – Art is a Square was a performance conducted by young artists, which

for a long time failed to attract the attention of the regime, but recently it was ordered to stop.

The writer also talked about artists' attitude to politics. „After the revolutions, politics was just as important for us as food. We talked about it without end, comparing the various political parties. It was politics, politics, politics all the time,” Mai Khaled describes the atmosphere of the first years after the Arab Spring. „When some time had passed, however, most artists realised that it would be better if they returned to what they do well. People started to be tired of politics.”

One question concerned the role of women in Egyptian society. According to the writer, women were under-represented in the parliament, but all the more vocal on the streets. „Women are very courageous in these dynamic times. Often they have to support their unemployed husbands and feed their families, but they endure all this with pride and a smile,” she adds.

To conclude with, the author introduced her brand new novel published this year and called Gymnasium. „The story takes place one night after the revolution – prisons have opened their gates and there is fear stalking the streets. Each chapter is told from a different perspective, some are more relaxed, others are gloomier,” Mai Khaled summarised her work. The author will be reading from her book at Egypt's stand on Saturday from 3 pm.

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LITERARY STROLL THROUGH EGYPT'S MAJOR CITIES



All the fragrances of Cairo and Alexandria's small shops and alleys filled the air in the Literary Café on Thursday afternoon. Institute of Near Eastern and African Studies of the Charles University – Arts Department presented a lecture on the two most significant Egyptian cities and their literary portrayals. The lecturer, Arabist **FRANTIŠEK ONDRÁŠ**, taught at the Ain Shams University for many years. The programme attracted many visitors well-read in the Arabic language, which allowed Mr. Ondráš to use ample quotes from many Arabic works in their original versions. He started by introducing some of the most outstanding authors whose works focus on the two cities, be it Muhammad al-Muwaylihi or Naguib Mahfouz for Cairo, or Ibrahim Abdel Meguid and Edwar el-Kharat for Alexandria. The visitors were also acquainted in considerable detail with the narrators' role in the works of these authors. While some of them

anxiously explore the existential needs of the towns' poorest inhabitants, others view the cities from a more compact perspective and emphasise their importance both for Egypt and the entire Mediterranean region. The authors also frequently allow their narrators to wander backwards through centuries into times of great prosperity or important events.

Ibrahim Abdel Maguid's participation in the programme as a guest added an extra spark to the topic. Born in Alexandria, he moved to Cairo in 1973, but he nonetheless still counts among the most significant authors to write about Alexandria. Several years ago, an interesting turning point occurred in his work with the publication of the book Cairo Is Here, wherein he shifts some of his attention also to this Egypt's city.

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Are We Afraid of Learning about Islam?

Thursday's programme reached its peak in the late afternoon in Authors Room. Debate focusing on the portrayal of Islam in Czech book production has attracted dozens of visitors at the very end of Book World's first day. It was moderated by Arabic and Islamic studies expert Bronislav Ostřanský, from the Czech Academy of Sciences – Oriental Institute. The panel included university professor Luboš Kropáček, expert in religions Pavel Žďárský and Muslim blogger Richard Hlaváček.

What is the situation on the Czech book market regarding Islamic religious topics? The debate highlighted many positive points. „Recently three books have been published on Islamic law – one of these was even brought out by a publishing house specialising in law,” Luboš Kropáček said. But he also found areas that have so far been largely overlooked. „What we are absolutely missing is a quality text on the Shiah Islam.

And although we do have well-balanced books on the subject of the relationship between Judaism and Islam, we lack a similarly reliable look at the historic developments in the relationship between Christianity and Islam.”

The topic of islamophobic sentiments in the society was also addressed. „Such outcries, often anonymous, which we have seen on social networks, have no place in a decent society,” all the programme's guests agreed. They also expressed disapproval of the behaviour of some media, which sometimes needlessly arouse such feelings.

What book would they recommend to a reader interested in a quality read about Islam? The answer from the panel of guests seemed fairly unanimous – book entitled Atlas muslimských strašáků, published last year by Academia. Its author and, at the same time, moderator of the debate Bronislav Ostřanský could hardly wish for a more erudite appraisal.

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Česká televize

Srdečně vás zveme na setkání s tvůrci, herci a moderátory, které znáte z televizní obrazovky!

ČTVRTEK 14. KVĚTNA
12:00 stánek P 409
Slavnostní otevření stánku České televize
12:30 stánek P 409
Večerníček slaví 50

PÁTEK 15. KVĚTNA
10:30 stánek P 409
České století – Češi 1942: Jak v Londýně vymysleli atentát na Heydricha
autogramiáda Pavla Kosatíka a Marka Rubce
12:00 stánek P 409
Život a doba soudce A.K. | autogramiáda Zdeňka Zapletala a herců ze seriálu
13:30 stánek P 409
Vaříme podle Herbáře č. 2 | autogramiáda Kateřiny Winterové, Lindy Rybové a fotografa Adama Holého
15:00 stánek P 409
Příběh templářů 2 | autogramiáda Bohumila Vurma, Zuzany Foffové, s patronkou knihy Ivetou Toušlovou
16:00 stánek P 409
Toulavá kamera 20 | autogramiáda Ivetou Toušlové a Josefa Maršála

SOBOTA 16. KVĚTNA
11:00 stánek P 409
Wifina | autogramiáda Martina Poláčka a wifináků – Kuby, Verči a Kariny
12:00 sál Rosteme s knihou
Rande s Fyzikou | fyzikální show s pokusy
13:00 stánek P 409
Rande s Fyzikou | křest a autogramiáda Radomíra Šofra, Martina Vlachy a Zdeňka Drozda, s patrony knihy Janem Kratochvílem, Václavem Kubatou, Vladimírem Kořenem a Marošem Kramářem
13:30 stánek P 409
Zázraky přírody | autogramiáda Vladimíra Kořena a Maroše Kramáře
16:00 stánek P 409
České století – Češi 1992: Jak Mečiar s Klausem rozdělili stát
autogramiáda Pavla Kosatíka a Dana Černého

NEDĚLE 17. KVĚTNA
11:00 sál Rosteme s knihou
Vynálezce Alva | výtvarná dílna Kláry Smolíkové a Ludka Barty, soutěž o Nobelovu cenu
12:00 stánek P 409
Médové na cestách... s Václavem Chaloupkem | autogramiáda Václava Chaloupka a fotografa Karla Brože, soutěž

SLOVNÍK ROKU 2015

Slavnostní vyhlášení výsledků a předání cen
22. ročníku soutěže, pořádané Jednotou tlumočnicků a překladatelů.

Dnes 15. 5. 2015 ve 14.00 • Literární sál www.JTPunion.org

Publikace JTP pro diváky zdarma. • Všechny slovníky a encyklopedie, přihlášené do soutěže, jsou vystaveny v expozici **Slovník Roku** ve foyer levého křídla.

Vydal: Svět knihy, s.r.o. v Nakladatelství Jalta | redakce: Jana Chalupová, Ilja Kučera, Jana Marxtová, Radek Šofr, Ondřej Šofr | technická redakce: Jiří Sládeček | překlad: Lukáš Houdek | grafický návrh a sazba: Jiří Sládeček ml. | Foto: Jakub Sládeček, Martin Šust | tisk: MHTisk, s.r.o. | uzávěrka 14. 5. 2015. • Published by Book World, Ltd. in Jalta Publishers | Editorial staff: Jana Chalupová, Ilja Kučera, Jana Marxtová, Radek Šofr, Ondřej Šofr | Technical editing: Jiří Sládeček | Translation: Lukáš Houdek | Graphic design a typesetting: Jiří Sládeček ml. | Photo: Jakub Sládeček, Martin Šust | Print: MHTisk, Ltd. | Deadline 14. 5. 2015 | **Neprodejné – Not for sale**

SKUTEČNÝ KULTURNÍ KAPITÁL

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