

über:blick

German Book Industry Insight



Literary Scene

Nobel Prize Winner Herta Müller on her novel »Atemschaukel«. Suhrkamp publisher Ulla Unseld-Berkéwicz looks to the future. Houses of Literature: where readers meet authors and authors meet readers. LitCrit goes European.

Publishing Industry

German Book Prize – hitting the ground running. Know-how unlimited: int'l vocational training programmes. Digitisation & e-books the key issues of the day. Argentina – Frankfurt Book Fair Guest of Honour 2010.

Marketplace

Barometer of current industry trends – facts & figures. The market for rights and permissions in Germany. Not only for children: the success of »all age« books. Grow or perish? Strategies of independent publishers. Best German Book Design.

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Auswärtiges Amt



Ideas Without Walls

Cornelia Pieper
Minister of State
Federal Foreign Office

In the 1450s Johannes Gutenberg invented movable type printing in Europe and set in motion a revolution of ideas. News and books began to travel across Europe much faster than before. It fed the growing Renaissance, and since it greatly facilitated scientific publishing, it was a major catalyst for the later scientific revolution. Time-Life magazine has identified his invention as the most important of the second millennium.

The written word – whether in the form of books or online publications – is a mirror of our cultural identity and a treasure trove of our intellectual achievements. While numbers cannot adequately reflect what we call »Germany's book and reading culture«, they are still impressive: almost 100,000 new publications a year, over 1 billion books and printed products, and a publishing industry with an annual turnover of over 5 billion euro.

As part of its cultural diplomacy, Germany seeks to share the wealth of our book and reading culture with people abroad. For many decades now, the Federal Foreign Office has been cooperating with the Frankfurt Book Fair and the German Publishers & Booksellers Association. Our funding helps German publishers participate in some 20 book fairs around the world every year. We provide substantial support

for the five German Book Offices in New York, Moscow, Bucharest, Beijing and New Delhi. With the help of our partners, we support a number of translation promotion programmes designed to share with people abroad the creativity of our authors, the issues that move us and the ideas that inspire us.

Since Gutenberg invented movable type printing, creativity and ideas have travelled the planet in print. Today's world is in constant flux. Borders – whether natural or national – have lost much of their meaning. News and ideas can travel much faster than ever before. What, we may wonder, will be the most important invention of this third millennium? Will the e-book revolutionize our way of thinking? Will the Web 3.0, whatever form it may take, be a tool that helps people across the planet to connect, to promote common causes and to shape their own destiny in ways we can still only dream of?

Whatever invention may shape our interconnected world, we have to keep asking ourselves: how can we ensure that core values and ideals – those that also inform Germany's foreign policy – continue to inspire people around the world?

The dedicated men and women responsible for Germany's cultural diplomacy – diplomats, language teachers,

programme directors, exchange coordinators, volunteers and web editors – are guided by the lessons of German history: the possibility of peaceful change, the importance of the rule of law, human rights and respect for human dignity, and the understanding that common action begins with dialogue and mutual trust.

Guided by this credo, we seek to open up spaces for people to enjoy the freedom of ideas central to Germany's progress in recent history. Such spaces open up when students visit a modern design exhibition at their local Goethe-Institut and are stimulated to create their own images of the future. They open up when teachers come to Germany and feel they must tell their students more both about World War II as well as our peaceful revolution in 1989. They open up when over 3700 college students discuss their ideas of »Freedom Without Walls« on Facebook or when students at the over 1500 schools participating in our »Schools: Partners for the Future« network plant hundreds of trees in a single day. And they open up whenever an idea printed and translated into a foreign language inspires people to act for a common cause.

Photo: © Auswärtiges Amt

6-10 October 2010

FRANKFURTER
BUCHMESSE
GUEST OF HONOUR > ARGENTINA <



Published by
Frankfurt Book Fair,
Ausstellungs- und Messe GmbH,
Reineckstrasse 3, 60313 Frankfurt am Main, Germany
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Image manipulation
Der Ripperger
Medienproduktion GmbH

Printed by
Druckhaus Wittich KG

Circulation
15,000

Editorial cut-off date
29.01.2010

Bylined articles do not
necessarily reflect the views
of the editors.

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A Literary Map of Germany: Principal Locations



Houses of Literature

The beating heart of literary life in many a German-speaking city, the Houses of Literature give authors and readers an opportunity to engage in dialogue at readings, exhibitions, and discussion events.

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Publishing hubs

Munich just edges out Berlin as the German city with the largest number of publishers. Trailing them at a fair distance are Stuttgart, Hamburg, Cologne, and Frankfurt.

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Literary festivals

The place to enjoy literature and reading as a collective experience, the literary festivals staged each year by many cities attract anything from hundreds to thousands of book enthusiasts keen to see their favourite authors, to discover newcomers, and to share their love of literature with like-minded souls.

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Book fairs

The highlights on the annual book fair circuit: the shows in Leipzig and Frankfurt. In 2010, Argentina is Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair – an event not to be missed!

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Training centres

Apprenticeships, courses in book sciences, the chance to attend tailor-made training programmes, and to benefit from international exchange programmes – virtually no other country offers such a wide range of vocational and further training programmes for the book and media industries as that available in Germany.

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Book output

How many first editions does a city produce? The ratio between this figure and the number of locally based publishers can, in some instances, be rather surprising. Norderstedt, for example, takes place #7 in the ranking, an honour it owes primarily to a single company: Books on Demand GmbH.

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Figures on book output and publishing hubs are taken from the volume »Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen 2009«.