



Literaturhaus
Zürich

International Literature
Days: Caucasus
22.2.–4.3.2022



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What are people reading in Yerevan? What stories are being told in Tbilisi and Baku? And what role does literature play in a region where life is shaped again and again by crises and conflicts? In late February the Literaturhaus Zürich will welcome authors, translators, and scholars from the South Caucasus. They will present their books, talk about their writing and lives, and discuss contemporary questions about the cultural life of the region.

Participants

Nasta Agrba is co-curator of Sklad, the first project for contemporary art in Abkhazia. As a journalist, she writes about questions of architecture and society for the magazine Hara Hakalak. She was in the fellowship program of the CEES (Center for Eastern European Studies) at the University of Zurich in 2020. She works on various artistic projects in Abkhazia with the Artas Foundation.

Anahit Avagyan studied theology with an emphasis on early Christian literature. Currently, she is a researcher at the Yerevan Institute of Ancient Manuscripts and is writing a postdoctoral dissertation at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. In 2015 she started collaborating with Wiebke Zollmann to translate the poetry of Naghash, a 15th century Armenian poet, into German. Currently they are translating contemporary Armenian prose and theatrical texts.

Artem Chekh graduated from music school and studied sociology. In 2015–16 he was a soldier in the Ukrainian army. He is the author of more than fifteen works of prose and research. His story collection *Absolute Zero*, which is based on notes the author made during the war, has been published in English and is currently being translated into German. Chekh's current novel "Who are you?" deals with the relationship between a veteran of the Afghan war and a teenager, who later fights in the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Lea Fröhlicher is an artist, filmmaker, and art educator with a Master of Arts in Art Education from the Bern University of the Arts. Her work moves between film, installation, and action. Since 2010 she has made commissioned audiovisual works, and taught courses in video and photography. She is a member of the film cooperative point de vue in Basel, where she writes, directs, and produces.

Nino Gozalishvili is a PhD candidate at the Central European University in Vienna, guest lecturer at several Georgian universities, and a research assistant at the Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information in Tbilisi. Her research focuses on nationalist-populist discourses in Central Europe and Georgia. In the fall of 2021 she was a fellow at the CEES in Zürich.

Violet Grigoryan was born in Teheran, before her family returned to Armenia in 1975. Excerpts of her work as a poet and essayist have been translated into French, English, and German, among other languages. She is the founder and editor of the literary journal Ingnaqir. Grigoryan is one of the most important voices from her country; through her investigation of feminist themes, she challenges deeply rooted societal structures.

Najmin Kamilsoy is a PhD candidate at the Charles University in Prague. He has worked as a consultant and researcher for several international NGOs. His doctoral thesis is concerned with the development of civil society in the Southern Caucasus, focusing on professionalization and its impact on citizen engagement. In fall 2021 he was a fellow at the CEES in Zürich.

Ana Kordzaia Samadashvili lives and works as an author, translator, and cultural journalist in Tbilisi, and is the recipient of many Georgian literary prizes. She has translated the work of Ingeborg Bachmann, Rainald Goetz, Bertolt Brecht and Elfriede Jelinek into German. Several of her novels have been translated into German, most recently *Sinka Mensch* (Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt, 2020, from the Georgian by Sybille Heinze).

Grigor Shashikyan studied Armenian philology and is currently writing a dissertation on contemporary Armenian literature at the Yerevan State University. His first story collection, *Jesus' Cat* made him famous in his homeland nearly overnight. The German translation, published in Switzerland by Kolchis Verlag, was on the Hotlist of independent publishers in 2021. Currently he is working on his first novel.

Maria Stepanova is not only an outstanding poet and essayist — in 2018 her prose debut *In Memory of Memory* is an outstanding work of family history and memory. Her online magazine colta.ru offers a platform for cultural exchange under difficult circumstances both within Russia and in the greater post-Soviet sphere.

Elnura Yivazada is a journalist, translator, and historian. She studied in Baku, Hamburg, and Eichstätt. She received her doctorate in eastern European history in Mainz. She writes about the culture of memory in Azerbaijan. She has worked on many cultural projects in collaboration with the countries of the Eastern Partnership of the EU as well as those of Central Asia. She lives in Berlin.

Wiebke Zollmann studied literary writing at the Schweizerisches Literaturinstitut in Biel from 2011 to 2014. She is a translator and author of poetry and reportage. She is also the music manager of the Naghash Ensemble in Armenia. She lives in Yerevan. Together with Anahit Avagyan, she translated Grigor Shashikyan's short stories into German.

Program

Warm Up

Tuesday, February 22

19:30–21:00

Reading group: *Akram Aylisli*, Stone Dreams. Moderation: *Isabelle Vonlanthen*. Every two months the Literaturhaus reading group meets to discuss a book. Anyone who has read the novel by *Akram Aylisli* is welcome.

Wednesday, February 23

18:00–20:00

Այրութիւն: Introduction to the Armenian alphabet. A workshop of theory and practice with art students from Yerevan. Led by *Shoghakat Mlike Galstyan*, *Dagmar Reichert*.

Festival Weekend, February 25–27

Friday, February 25

20:00–21:30

Tblisi is everywhere: Reading with *Ana Kordzaia Samadashvili*. Moderation: *Rachel Gratzfeld*, German reading: *Andreas Storm*.

Saturday, February 26

11:00–12:30

The streets of Yerevan: *Grigor Shashikyan* in conversation with his translators *Anahit Avagyan* and *Wiebke Zollmann*.

14:00–15:30

Conflict landscape Caucasus and the role of Russia: Conversation with *Nasta Agrba*, *Nino Gozalishvili*, and *Najmin Kamilsoy*. Moderation: *Jeronim Perović*.

16:30–18:00

Baku Divan: Contemporary literature and culture from Azerbaijan, with *Elnura Yivazada*. Moderation: *Sara Winter Sayilir*, reading: *Lara Körte*.

20:00–21:30

These white things on my shoulders are wings: Reading with *Violet Grigoryan*. Moderation: *Valentina Calzolari Bouvier*, German reading: *Miriam Japp*.

Sunday, February 27

11:00–12:30

Who, if not literature? A conversation about cultural spaces in crisis and conflict with *Ana Kordzaia Samadashvili*, *Maria Stepanova*, and *Artem Chekh*. Moderation: *Zaal Andronikashvili*.

Conclusion

Friday, March 4

18:00–19:30

Yerevan for the Time Being: Film screening in Kino Xenix followed by conversation with the director, *Lea Fröhlicher*. Moderation: *Jenny Billeter*.

Advance tickets/Partners

Entrance to the events: CHF 20.—/14.—, for members of the Museumsgesellschaft 12.— per event.

Combo ticket 25–27.2: CHF 80.—/60.—, for members of the Museumsgesellschaft 50.—

Advance tickets at www.literaturhaus.ch (credit card) or in the library of the Literaturhaus (Tu/Th 10–19, Wed/Fr/Sa 10–13).

Discounts for Legi, AHV, IV, unemployed persons, recipients of state assistance as well as those with a ZKB card.

The events will be held in the Literaturhaus and will also be live streamed. Information on which guests are able to join us in person and which will join virtually will be updated on the website.

The streaming links can be found at literaturhaus.ch under the individual events, and are available free of charge.

Those who wish to make a donation to cover festival expenses can buy a "virtual" ticket for each event for 5 or 10 CHF. The online combo ticket is available for 25 or 40 CHF.

Location: Literaturhaus Zürich, Limmatquai 62, 8001 Zürich

Program Curator: Isabelle Vonlanthen, Literaturhaus Zürich

Book sales: www.milleetdeuxfeuilles.ch

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