The 20th poesiefestival berlin (June 14 – 20) finished successfully with a record attendance yesterday. On seven days 13,000 visitors came to the Academy of the Arts (Akademie der Künste) at Hanseatenweg to experience 150 artists from 25 countries and to get an insight into the contemporary poetry scene.
Haus für Poesie, the organizer, curated, together with 62 partners, over 50 exquisite poetry events. The Minister of State for Culture and the Media, Prof. Monika Grütters opened the festival.

On the vernissage of the festival exhibition Aubergine with Windscreen Wiper – The Drawings of Oskar Pastior, Herta Müller gave a speech: “The drawing […] is free, it is open. It reveals something different for each different eye. It is the same with Pastior’s texts. You read the poem whilst the poem is reading you.”

Weltklang – Night of Poetry gathered eight poets, who gave readings in six languages. With flashlights the audience was able to read along in German translations.

The non-binary underground poet Eileen Myles from New York caused a rush of visitors. As a first-hand witness Edmund White shared his experience of the Stonewall riot 50 years ago, which is being commemorated on Christopher Street Day each year.

The philosopher Giorgio Agamben spoke in a forum on hate speech and poetic resistance.

The Berliner Rede zur Poesie (Berlin Poetry Lecture) was held by Sergio Raimondi from Argentina. His text Problems with Writing an Ode to the Pacific Ocean explored – through a dialogue with Theodor W. Adorno – how poetry can give a contemporary response to the global streams of data and goods.

The staging of Walt Whitman’s Leaves of Grass (by Leopold von Verschuer in the translation by Jürgen Bröcan) exposed the astoundingly contemporary nature of the text.

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