

Press release from the Haus für Poesie

21.02.2019

## 20th poesiefestival berlin: Finally Time for Language

The poesiefestival berlin is entering its 20th edition this year. Organised by the Haus für Poesie, it is taking place from **14 to 20 June 2019** in the Academy of Arts in Hanseatenweg. Under the title of **Finally Time for Language**, it will present international poetry in all its many and varied forms and in conjunction with art, theatre, performance, music, film and digital media.

Language is the medium of thought and the central means by which people can understand each other. Language expresses and translates, and creates understanding and connection. At the present time we are experiencing the toxic contamination of language. Language is being used to shift the parameters of standards of morality and respect, to discredit the truth and to make autocracy, nationalism and discrimination socially acceptable. It is time for linguistic counter-measures and artistic intervention.

For the **20th poesiefestival berlin** the Haus für Poesie is inviting poets from around the world to present on the stage poetry as a counter-argument to linguistic dumbing down, populism and incitement to hatred, to make connections and a display of complexity.

The country in the Festival's focus this year is the USA. In the translation workshop **VERSschmuggel / reVERSible**, in which German-speaking and American poets will be translating each other, the dialogue form is a fundamental requirement. Languages, art and people come together in all their diversity and come to understand each other with the aid of intermediaries and translations. There will be two special events dedicated to **queeres Schreiben / queer writing** to mark the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York, which sparked off the gay liberation movement. **Freily ausgefranst**, curated by German poet Uljana Wolf and American author Christian Hawkey, is all about translingual writing. **Walt Whitman** is considered to be the founder of modern American poetry; his long poem **Leaves of Grass** is adapted for the stage for the poesiefestival berlin. American artist **Sarah Kay**, a star of the international scene, will be flying in for a big Spoken Word evening.

Central and South America come into the limelight too. There will be a day dedicated to looking at contemporary poetry in Cuba, culminating in a concert by legendary Cuban singer-songwriter **Raúl Paz**. Argentinian poet **Sergio Raimondi** will give the **2019 Berlin Poetry Lecture** on global questions and their impact on writing.

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**Haus\_**  
**für\_**  
**Poesie**

The Festival will open in the traditional way with **Weltklang**, a panoramic survey of international poetry in many languages, featuring among others Marion Poschmann and Eileen Myles.

In the run-up to the Festival, the exhibition **Aubergine mit Scheibenwischer / Aubergine with Windscreen Wiper** will be opening on 8 June. It shows drawings by the poet **Oskar Pastior** that have never before been on show in this scope.

The poesiefestival berlin has been taking place since 2000 and is the biggest of its kind in Europe. Each year it brings around 150 well-known poets and artists from around the world to Berlin. Poetry has long been seeking other forms of presentation beside the book and experimenting with theatre, performance, music, dance, film and digital media. The Festival has up to 12,000 visitors each year, for whom it makes poetry in all its diversity of forms a tangible experience.

The poesiefestival berlin is a project of the Haus für Poesie in co-operation with the Academy of Arts and is sponsored by the Hauptstadtkulturfonds.

**14–20 June 2019**  
**20th poesiefestival berlin**  
Academy of Arts  
Hanseatenweg 10  
10557 Berlin

In the run-up

**8 June Aubergine mit Scheibenwischer – die Zeichnungen von Oskar Pastior**  
**(Aubergine with Windscreen Wiper – the Drawings of Oskar Pastior)**  
Exhibition opening

**11 June poets corner**  
Readings in Berlin's city districts

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