



RECORD-BREAKING BOOK WORLD PRAGUE 2019

This year's Book World Prague, international book fair and literary festival, has celebrated its 25th anniversary with a record-breaking attendance of over fifty thousand visitors. The four-day event that took place at the Holešovice exhibition grounds on 9-12 May has thus counted among the most successful in its history.

Displays of publishing houses, many of which have launched new book titles in spring to coincide with the book fair, filled the entire Palace of Industry. A total of 460 exhibitors has been represented at the book fair.

This year's guest of honour was Latin America, which presented itself to the visitors in many different guises. Largest audiences were drawn to debates and meetings with interesting authors, such as Marianna Enríquez, Rodrigo Fresán, Luis Fayad, Álvaro Enrigue or David Unger, as well as to children's activities, which included the making of Mexican masks and even a salsa dance workshops. The most eagerly awaited event of the Latin American programme was a meeting with the Nobel Prize winner in literature, Peru's writer Mario Vargas Llosa, who resides in Spain. Presentations of individual countries at the Latin American stand were also greeted enthusiastically by visitors.

All four days of the book fair were packed with interesting programme, numerous debates, book launches and signings. Visitors could meet many interesting authors and get their autographs. The nearby National Museum's Lapidarium offered a welcome respite from the bustle of the Palace of Industry, ideal for serious debates. These introduced the likes of the Portuguese writer Afonso Cruz, Swiss author Peter Stamm, Austria's Robert Menasse or the French Alain Finkielkraut.

This year's Book World Prague provided visitors with a wide-ranging overview of contemporary European literature. Among other guests, Prague hosted Spain's Javier Cercas or the Irish novelist John Banville, winner of the Man Booker Prize. The book fair also played host to the French author Bernard Minier, a star of the crime novel, as well as to the writers Robert Bryndza and Tim Weaver.

At the very last moment the organisers could also announce yet another celebrity guest, giving the fans from all over the Czech Republic the opportunity to fill another new book-fair venue called Gauč ve Stromovce and meet the mystic and legend of many artistic disciplines Alejandro Jodorowsky.

The book fair's main theme was Memory and Reminiscence and it could be felt all throughout the programme. At the Jiří Theiner Award ceremony, presented this year to the Polish translator Jan Stachowski, political normalisation and samizdat were remembered, on another occasion discussion was held concerning Tibetan and other literary exile, and the American-Czech writer Mark Slouka had shared his experiences of emigrant life, with many debates bringing up the topic of the holocaust, which should never be forgotten.

One of the book fair's highlights was undoubtedly the meeting between Mario Vargas Llosa and another Nobel prize-winner, German author of Romanian origin Herta Müller. Besides works by the two authors, the discussion also focused on political dictatorships of the past, the influence they bore on life and culture, and the necessity to stay alert in today's uncertain times to make sure we avoid a similar course.

The 2019 book fair expanded considerably to the area in front of the Palace of Industry. The Café Evropa pavilion hosted a discussion on the future of Europe, the continent's most pressing needs and the role the Czech Republic plays in it. The auditorium was filled till the last moment, proving how important this topic currently is.

Another outdoor tent was also filled to capacity, not least with children's voices and laughter. The Growing with the Book pavilion was a venue designed for children. Here, the youngest readers could

talk to their favourite writers and illustrators. The traditional Readers' Challenge was also held here and results of literary competitions were announced.

This year's Book World Prague offered a colourful programme indeed and the number of visitors – in excess of fifty thousand – proves that the event has taken the right direction. We are looking forward to seeing you at Book World Plzeň and next year again in Prague.

BOOK WORLD PRAGUE 2019 in numbers

Total number of visitors: 51,000

Book Fair:

Number of exhibitors: 461

Number of displays: 214

Exposition area: 3 790 m²

Literary festival:

Number of performers: 769

Number of programmes: 685

Number of exhibitions: 17

Participating countries and regions (both as exhibitors and part of programme):

Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Columbia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, U.S.A.

The book fair and festival presented guests from a total of 39 countries and regions of the world.

[Book World 2019 photographs](#)

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