

Book World Prague 2020 to Focus on the Heart of Global Discord, with Poland as its Guest of Honour

The international book fair and literary festival Book World Prague enters its 26th season. From 14th to 17th May 2020, Exhibition Grounds at Prague-Holešovice will again host many inspiring encounters with foreign and domestic authors and their work. For the main topic, the organisers have chosen The Heart of Global Discord, or, as the more succinct but untranslatable Czech version goes, *Střed/t světa*, playing on *střed* or the centre, and *střet*, meaning conflict. The event will emphasise both meanings evoked by the two words with shared pronunciation, i.e. the centre as well as the conflicts of contemporary world. The topic also corresponds nicely with this year's guest of honour – Poland. After a decade our neighbours return to Book World Prague, courtesy of co-operation with the Warsaw Book Fair. Czech-Polish co-operation is also reflected in the Book World's visual designs.

Although "*střed*" and "*střet*" are kept apart in writing, they can easily be mistaken in pronunciation. 26th Book World Prague exploits this ambiguity to pose a whole array of related topics and questions. The conflict or *střet* featured in the festival's keynote motto refers to clashing opinions in today's society, where often wholly contradictory views divide families and countries alike, resulting in discord. One of the issues the organisers are interested in is the extent to which these conflicting opinions can be attributed to the world's "online" interconnectedness, or perhaps the tendency to consider my own perspective, culture or god to be the only acceptable centre or heart of the matter.

The centre or *střed* will also be debated at this year's event in geographical terms, naturally leading to issues of Central European history and identity. After all, many places in this region lay claim to representing the centre or heart of Europe, be they in the Czech Republic or Slovakia, but also in Germany, Austria or Poland. In its capacity as the guest of honour, our northern neighbour stands at the centre of interest of this year's programme.

Book World has already put Poland centre stage once, ten years ago. Today's visitors are thus presented with an ideal opportunity to compare how Polish literature has developed in the space of a decade. "*We are putting together an attractive programme comprising award-winning titles, the popular fantasy genre, poetry, comic books and feature stories. After last year's success, we will continue to offer debates featuring global stars,*" says the Artistic Director of the festival Guillaume Basset.



Poland was selected as guest of honour from a host of interested countries mainly based on the close partnership established between Book World organisers and the Warsaw book fair. Book World's Polish counterpart will be held on 21-24 May and will in turn introduce the Czech Republic. *"We consider aiding Czech literature's visibility in the international field to be our important task, which is why we proposed and developed the idea of reciprocal presentation in the first place. Currently preparations are under way on two fronts. The Czech Literary Centre prepares a presentation of Czech literature in Warsaw, while we – together with Instytut Książki, Polish Institute in Prague and numerous other partners – work on the Polish presentation here and develop joint projects,"* Book World director Radovan Auer added.

In the future, the Prague and Warsaw book fairs consider joining forces, e.g. to invite an outstanding author from across the ocean. This year they have already resolved to share the same visual referencing the cross-border co-operation. Book World's very own graphic designer Pavel Fuksa has created a hyperbolic paraphrase of the two states' symbols, and the event's visitors will find themselves in the company of a reading griffin. The festival version of the creature, originally of mythological descent, sports the head of the Polish eagle and the body of the Czech lion.

Media contact

Michaela Váchová, michaela.vachova@piaristi.cz, tel.: +420 774 555 570

Book World 2020 contact

Mgr. Jana Chalupová, jana.chalupova@svetknihy.cz, tel.: +420 603 439 943