



# FESTIVAL NEUE LITERATUR

March 28-31, 2019 | [festivalneueliteratur.org](http://festivalneueliteratur.org) | [@festneuelit](https://twitter.com/festneuelit) | [#inmemorywetrust](https://www.instagram.com/festneuelit) | [bit.ly/inmemorywetrust](https://bit.ly/inmemorywetrust)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **IN ITS TENTH YEAR, FESTIVAL NEUE LITERATUR ANNOUNCES THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S EVENTS, "IN MEMORY WE TRUST"**

New York, February 21, 2019 – This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **Festival Neue Literatur (March 28-31)**, the first and only festival to spotlight German-language and U.S. fiction together.

In honor of the 10 years highlighting important work from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and the U.S., the theme of the 2019 festival is "In Memory We Trust," curated by literary critic, writer and translator, **Liesl Schillinger** and **Tim Mohr**, celebrated German-language translator and author of *Burning Down the Haus*. The writers and publishing luminaries featured this year— **Jennifer Croft**, **Stefanie de Velasco**, **Daniela Emminger**, **Laura Freudenthaler**, **Dana Grigorcea**, **Pierre Jarawan**, **John Keene**, **Min Jin Lee**, **Gianna Molinari**, **Idra Novey**, **Karen Phillips**, and **Jenny Zhang**--find truths that explain and define their characters and cross borders of time and place to create ageless maps of identity and connection.

The renowned U.S. novelist **John Wray**, author of, most recently, *Godsend*, and one of Granta's Best Young American Novelists, will be the chair of Festival Neue Literatur 2019.

"As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of Festival Neue Literatur, we once again welcome a new slate of the best writing from the German-language and contemporary American literary scenes. Still too, under this year's theme 'In Memory We Trust,' we take pause to honor the works of over seventy writers and translators from around the world who have brought their stories and perspectives to Festival Neue Literatur," said Brittany Hazelwood, Director, Festival Neue Literatur. "This year, memory guides us as we reminisce on where our festival originated and how far it has evolved. As we find ourselves in deeply troubling times where memories and stories have been manipulated, politically and culturally, to shrink communities and to cast bodies as 'others,' we look to the history of our festival to remember our ultimate mission: to feature storytelling in its infinite capacity to enlighten our imaginations and expand our future possibilities."

The weekend of March 28-31, New York City will host six of the most important authors from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, along with celebrated voices in U.S. literature and culture. The festival's German-language authors are tremendous voices in the European literary world, but their work remains relatively undiscovered to many U.S. readers.

The 2019 Festival Neue Literatur will feature:

- **Stefanie de Velasco (Germany):** is a regular contributor to publications such as Zitty, FAZ, and die Zeit, and her debut novel, *Tigermilch*, was published in 2013 by Kiepenheuer & Witsch. It was translated into multiple languages, including English (as *Tiger Milk*), and adapted into a feature film.
- **Daniela Emminger (Austria):** author of *Kafka mit Flügeln* and *Gemischter Satz*, which was on the longlist for the Austrian Book Prize 2016. Daniela lives and works as a writer and freelance journalist in Vienna. She has received various scholarships and awards.
- **Laura Freudenthaler (Austria):** author of the story collection *Der Schädel der Madeleine*, the novel *Die Königin schweigt*, which was awarded the Förderpreis zum Bremer Literaturpreis 2018 and recommended as best German debut at the Festival du Premier Roman 2018 in Chambéry. This month, Laura published her second novel *Geistergeschichte*.
- **Dana Grigorcea (Switzerland):** author of the novel *Baba Rada, Life is Temporary and So is The Hair on Your Head*, which was awarded the Swiss Literary Pearl. Grigorcea was awarded the 3sat Prize in Klagenfurt at the Ingeborg Bachmann competition 2015 for *An Instinctive Feeling of Innocence*, which is to be published in April 2019 by Seagull Books.
- **Pierre Jarawan (Germany):** has won international prizes as a slam poet, received the City of Munich literary scholarship (the Bayerische Kunstförderpreis) for *The Storyteller*, to be published by World Editions in April 2019, and was chosen as Literature Star of the Year by the daily newspaper AZ.
- **Gianna Molinari (Switzerland):** works as a programming assistant at the Solothurn Literary Forum. In 2012, Gianna received a grant to attend the authors' workshop Prosa at the Literarischen Colloquium Berlin and won the jury prize and audience prize at the 17th MDR Literary Competition that same year. In 2017, she won the 3sat Prize in Klagenfurt for an excerpt from her debut novel, *Everything Is Still Possible Here*.

Each year, the festival pairs the six visiting authors with two U.S. authors, bringing diverse perspectives and sensibilities into an excitingly dynamic intercultural conversation. This year's American writers are **Min Jin Lee**, award-winning novelist and author of *Free Food for Millionaires* and *Pachinko*, which was a finalist for the National Book Award; and **Jenny Zhang**, poet and author of the poetry collection *Dear Jenny, We Are All Find*, and the story collection *Sour Heart*, which won the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize and the PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize for Debut Fiction.

The festival's signature translation event, which showcases a discussion on writing and translating between languages, will feature celebrated writer/translators **Jennifer Croft**, winner of the 2018 Man Booker International Prize for her translation of Olga Tokarczuk's *Flights*; **John Keene**, a 2018 MacArthur Fellow and award-winning author of the novel *Annotations*, short-story collection *Counternarratives*, and two poetry collections; and **Idra Novey**, award-winning author of the new novel *Those Who Knew*.

This year's moderators are Mohr, Schillinger, and **Karen Phillips**, executive director of Words Without Borders, an organization dedicated to building greater cultural understanding through the translation, publication, and promotion of international literature.

The Friedrich Ulfers Prize will be presented at the festival's opening ceremony on March 28 to **Susan Bernofsky**, director of the program Literary Translation at Columbia in the Columbia University School of the Arts Writing Program, and winner of the 2015 Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, The Schlegel-Tieck Translation Prize, the Ungar Award for Literary Translation, the Oxford-Weidenfeld Translation Prize, and the inaugural Warwick Prize for Women in Translation. Award-winning novelist and *The New Yorker* contributor **Rivka Galchen** will present

Bernofsky with the award. The prize is endowed with a \$5,000 grant and honors a publisher, writer, critic, translator, or scholar who has championed the advancement of German-language literature in the United States. Previous recipients of the Friedrich Ulfers Prize include Barbara Perlmutter, Barbara Epler, Burton Pike, Robert Weil, Sara Bershtel, and the late Carol Brown Janeway.

Each year, the festival publishes the FNL Reader, a booklet featuring English-language excerpts of the featured German-language works, often marking the first appearance of these texts in English. The 2019 FNL Reader will be available for download in March in an electronic version on the festival website at [www.festivalneueliteratur.org](http://www.festivalneueliteratur.org).

## FNL 2019 EVENTS LINE-UP

All FNL events are free and in English. RSVPs are required due to limited seating. Go to [bit.ly/inmemorywetrust](http://bit.ly/inmemorywetrust):

### **FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 6PM, Austrian Cultural Forum** (11 East 52nd Street, Manhattan)

#### *Words with Writers*

New York's brightest students take on FNL authors in a lightning round of literary interviews.

Featuring: All six German-language authors – Daniela Emminger, Laura Freudenthaler, Stefanie de Velasco, Pierre Jarawan, Dana Grigorcea, and Gianna Molinari – as well as students Amanda Mandel, Endre M. Holéczy, Sean Crisp, Eliza Perkins, Zachary Issenberg, and Nicole Uberreich. Moderated by festival co-curator and translator Tim Mohr.

### **SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2PM, Goethe-Institut Library** (30 Irving Place, Manhattan)

#### *Double Lives: Writers Who Translate*

The festival's signature translation event returns and pays homage to writers who translate and translators who write. On this very topic, the celebrated novelist and literary translator Idra Novey remarked in an essay entitled *Writing While Translating* that, "to begin writing after translating is to begin airborne—suspended between languages—a reckless place I'd like to believe leaves a writer's mind particularly open to innovation not just with word choice, but with tone and irony and all the other subtle, stylistic aspects that add up to what we call a writer's voice."

Featuring: Idra Novey, John Keene and Jennifer Croft. Moderated by Karen Phillips of Words Without Borders.

### **SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 6PM, The POWERHOUSE ARENA** (28 Adams Street, Brooklyn)

#### *Another Country: Distant Lands Up Close and Personal*

How does the interplay of geography and time alter the identity of a person, a character, a city, a nation? The lives we lead, wherever we live, are shaped by events that happened before we were born, not necessarily in our own countries. To understand who we are, we need to understand who we were, and where we came from. In this panel, we speak with four novelists whose books travel to foreign lands, delving into past events, personal and political, mining memory, and exposing buried clues that define their characters in the present. Is it dangerous to romanticize distant countries, vanished people, and past times? Or can it be cathartic; a way to inhabit the present more fully and meaningfully?

Featuring: Daniela Emminger, Pierre Jarawan, Dana Grigorcea, and Min Jin Lee. Moderated by Liesl Schillinger, festival co-curator, translator and critic.

### **SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2PM, Deutsches Haus at NYU** (42 Washington Mews, Manhattan)

#### *The Author's Voice*

The six German-language authors of Festival Neue Literatur pair up with NYC actors to give a sampling from their work, providing a taste of new writing from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland.

Featuring: Daniela Emminger, Laura Freudenthaler, Pierre Jarawan, Stefanie de Velasco, Dana Grigorcea, and Gianna Molinari. Moderated by the festival curator Tim Mohr. English excerpts will be read by the actors Adelind Horan and Robert Lyons.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 6PM, McNally Jackson** (52 Prince Street, Manhattan)

*Ghosts in the Machine: Haunted Memories and Reimagined Futures*

How would living under Communism have shaped your identity? What about being the child of Jehovah's Witnesses; or being a deceived wife; or living in the continual (and reasonable) fear of attack by a ravenous wolf? Perhaps, if you were affected by such conditions, you could ignore the "monster in the house," and form successful friendships, relationships and careers. Then again, your experience with that fraught backdrop might linger, stretching into future generations. In this panel, we speak with four authors whose novels and short stories bring to life the specters that haunt them — some political, some familial, some ineffable. These ghosts in the machine have colored their characters' views of themselves and the world around them. We explore the question of how those who form their selfhood in the shadow of dark influences can use memory to illuminate their reality and liberate their truth.

Featuring: Laura Freudenthaler, Gianna Molinari, Stefanie de Velasco and Jenny Zhang. Moderated by the novelist and Festival Neue Literatur chair John Wray.

**ABOUT FESTIVAL NEUE LITERATUR:** Festival Neue Literatur (FNL) is a collaborative project of New York's leading German-language cultural institutions: the Austrian Cultural Forum, the German Consulate General New York, the Consulate General of Switzerland, Columbia University School of the Arts, Deutsches Haus at NYU, the Frankfurt Book Fair New York, and the Goethe-Institut New York. All FNL events are free of charge, though RSVPs are required due to limited seating. The 2019 festival will take place from March 29-31, 2018. Festival Neue Literatur 2019 is made possible through the generous support of the German Federal Foreign Office, Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, the German Academic Exchange (DAAD), Esterhazy Winery, and Radeberger Gruppe, as well as festival media sponsors A Public Space, Publishing Perspectives, STILL Magazine, The Virtual Memories Show, and Words Without Borders.

