



Rights Guide

Spring
2024

FICTION

Demidov, Georgy: Fone Kvas or The Sucker.....	3
Gerhold, Stefanie: Nefertiti's Smile.....	4
Koneffke, Jan: In the Shadow of Two Summers.....	5
Kornmüller/Menschik: Leaving the House.....	6

NON-FICTION

Brunner, Bernd: On the Road to the Promised Land.....	7
Möller, Melanie: The Incapacitated Reader.....	8
Wehr, Marco: Complex New World and How to Come to Terms With It.....	9

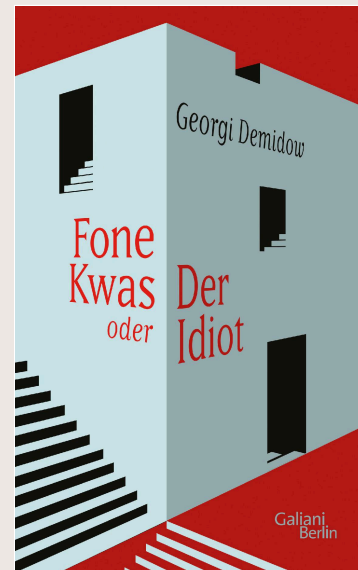
CONTACT	10
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Georgi Demidow

Fone Kvas or The Sucker

- The rediscovery of a great author who captured the madness of the Stalinist terror with the power of literature
- Translation rights with KiWi except for French and Russian
- English sample translation by Donald Rayfield available

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November 2023 · 208 pages



© Walentina Demidowa and Julia Sinjakowa

Georgi Demidov (1908-1987), was a Soviet physicist who grew up in what is now Ukraine and worked in Kharkov, was arrested there in 1938 and interrogated for six months at NKVD headquarters. He survived fourteen years of Gulag on the Kolyma River. After his release, he began to write about his experiences. In 1980, the KGB confiscated all his manuscripts and destroyed his typewriters (without which he could not write, as his fingers had been frozen in the Gulag). Demidov died believing that his entire life's work had been destroyed. Only after the end of the Soviet Union were his works returned to his daughter and published for the first time in Russia.

"Fone Kvas is a timeless, true document of literature about the real and timeless pain of human beings" - FAZ

A distinguished scientist is arrested in a provincial Soviet-Ukrainian town for belonging to an organization he has never heard of. He is threatened with torture, and suspects he will not be able to endure it. So he develops the idea of pretending to be the "Fone Kvas" (a Yiddish term for a fool or "idiot") in front of the NKVD officers, making wild and implausible "confessions" in the hope of being convicted quickly, but then appealing and showing that everything he has confessed to is completely untenable technically and scientifically, so that he will eventually be released for "erroneous" arrest.

He puts his plan into action. He tells of legendary acts of sabotage, draws convoluted diagrams. The more insane and bizarre his explanations become, the more pleased his investigator appears.

And in the end, everything turns out quite differently than the defendant expected. The insane reality of Stalinist terror will far surpass the fabricated fantasies of the "Fone Kvas".

Stefanie Gerhold
Nefertiti's Smile

- The discovery of the bust of Nefertiti and its far-reaching consequences



February 2024 · 288 pages



© Susanne Schleyer

Stefanie Gerhold, born in 1967, is a translator of Spanish-language literature, including the works of Max Aub and Elsa Osorio. In 2023, she received the Eurodram Prize for her translation of Juan Mayorga's play *Himmelweg*. *Nefertiti's Smile* is her first novel.

Timelessly beautiful, its discovery is a sensation: the bust of Nefertiti. Its arrival in Berlin is a triumph for the sponsor of the excavations that unearthed it, James Simon. But demands for its return are not long in coming. Stefanie Gerhold writes about the excavation frenzy in Egypt, about the colonial power struggles underpinning it, and about Berlin's Jewish bourgeoisie caught between nationalism and the desire to finally be fully accepted in German society.

After weeks of anxious waiting, the bust of Nefertiti finally arrives on the desk of James Simon in 1913. The Jewish patron can hardly believe that Berlin had been awarded the find after all. Simon, a wealthy Jewish textile manufacturer, enjoys an excellent reputation as the founder of social institutions and donator of countless art treasures to Berlin's museums. But the bust of Nefertiti outshines all else.

Yet Germany's defeat in World War I, the rise of nationalism, and the crises of the Weimar Republic put Simon under extreme pressure. When Nefertiti's bust is finally exhibited in the Neues Museum for the first time in 1924, a bitter dispute breaks out between Egypt, the French and Germany. Where does she really belong? And while Berlin celebrates its new queen and, with her, the glory of an important discovery, James Simon increasingly loses influence as nationalist and antisemitic propaganda are on the rise.

Jan Koneffke

In the Shadow of Two Summers

- A tragic fictional love story set in Vienna in 1914 and Paris in the 1930s, embedded in the biography of Joseph Roth
- For readers of Volker Weidermann's *Ostende*
- English sample translation by Will Burn available



February 2024 · 304 pages



© Isolda Ohlbaum

Jan Koneffke, born in 1960, commutes between Vienna, Bucharest and Măneciu/Romania. He writes novels, poetry, children's books and essays, and he translates from Italian and Romanian. He has received numerous awards and scholarships, most recently the Uwe-Johnson-Prize for his novel *Sunday's Child*.

Spring has sprung in Vienna, and a room becomes available to sublet in the home of the Jewish shoemaker Fischler. The new tenant is a shy, somewhat eccentric student from Galicia. His name is Joseph Roth.

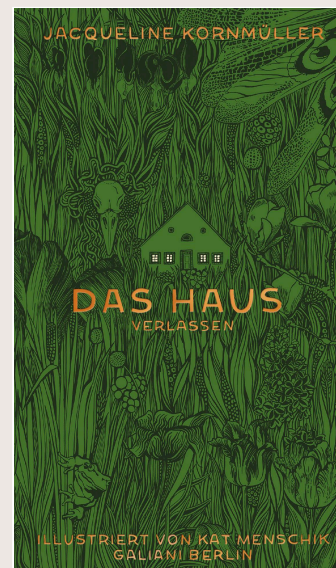
Soon, he and Fanny, the family's older daughter, get to know each other and a secret summer of love begins for the two. Yet it ends in separation – and, in historical terms, in a human catastrophe: the start of World War I.

The two do not see each other again for many years, until Fanny, after an adventurous escape from Vienna, ends up in Paris in 1938, where, by chance, she runs into her first summer crush at the German Relief Committee. By now, Roth has become a famous writer also living in exile in Paris, and his most recent lover, Irmgard Keun, has just fled from him. Fanny will stay with the choleric, charismatic author, who is at odds with himself and the world and holds court in his circle like a prince though he doesn't have a penny left to his name, until shortly before his death.

Kat Menschik, Jacqueline Kornmüller

Leaving the House

- When houses have minds of their own
- Beautifully illustrated by Kat Menschik



February 2024 · 96 pages

Jacqueline Kornmüller is a director. Most recently, she staged *The Uncanny Library* by Haruki Murakami at the Odeon Theater in Vienna, inspired by Kat Menschik's illustrations, among other things.

Kat Menschik is a freelance illustrator. Since 2016, she has been designing her own series of books, which includes Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (2016), Kafka's *A Country Doctor* (2016), Volker Kutscher's *Moabit* (2017) and E. A. Poe's *Uncanny Stories*.

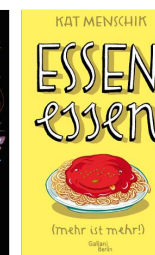
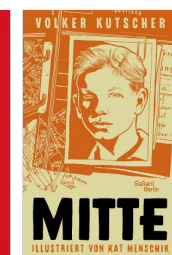
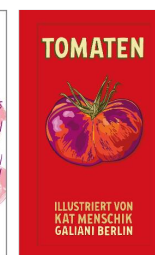
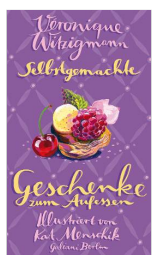
A poetic, beautifully-illustrated story full of gentle humor about an old fieldstone house that refuses to part with its owner ...

There are people who not only live in a house, but are magically attracted by its peculiarities. They want to know the house's history. They want to find out when it was built and who lived in it before. For them, a house is a mysterious being that does not open up to everyone.

The narrator of this story feels the same way when she moves into a lonely little fieldstone house in the countryside. While the gruff village community ridicules her for her ramshackle hovel, she starts bringing the 140-year-old house back to life - from the attic to the vaulted cellar, from the overgrown vegetable garden to the ancient fruit trees.

But now and then there comes a time when you want to set off for new shores: After ten years, the narrator decides to sell her house. However, she is forced to realize that ending a relationship with a home is not so easy. When prospective buyers come to view it, the house starts behaving in an unexpectedly unruly and strange way...

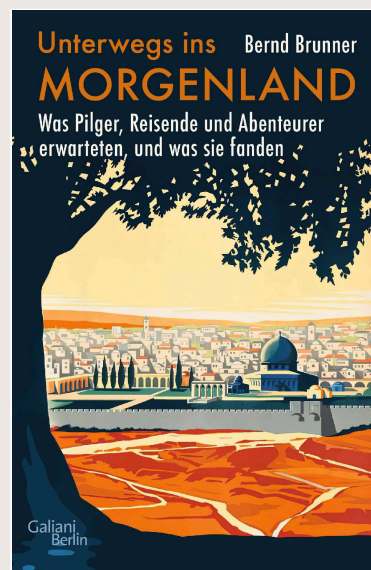
Further Titles



Bernd Brunner

They Came to the Holy Land. What Pilgrims, Travelers and Adventurers Expected and What They Found

- The fascinating history of journeys to the Promised Land, from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century
- English sample translation by Lucy Jones available
- Recommended for translation by New Books in German



March 2024 · 320 pages

© Susanne Schleyer



Bernd Brunner, born in 1964, writes widely acclaimed, highly entertaining books at the interface of culture and the history of science. Most recently, Galiani published *The Book of Night* (2021) and *Extreme North* (2019). **His books have been translated into several languages.**

A multifaceted, thus far largely overlooked chapter in the encounter between West and East: Bernd Brunner writes of explorers, pilgrims, tourists – and fearless border-crossers in the homeland of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

The Promised Land was a dream destination, a utopia, a promise – traveling there could free you of your sins, get you knighted, and offer hope of being cured of illness. Above all, however, it allowed you to get closer to the mystery that surrounded the place. For Christian pilgrims in particular, the journey was often very different from what they expected, and the gap between expectation and reality plunged more than a few into deep crisis – when, for example, they discovered that neither milk and honey nor water flowed in the arid landscape of Palestine.

An arena for the meeting of religions, a dreamland, a locus of projection, a place of fulfillment or disillusionment: Bernd Brunner has sifted through countless travel reports (of which he presents a fascinating and adventurous selection in this book) and has a lot to recount. And so we encounter Zionist visionaries and American missionaries, Templars and dragomans, aristocrats with crosses tattooed on their noses, pilgrims traveling alone, and many others.

Melanie Möller

The Incapacitated Reader. For the Freedom of Literature – A Polemic

- Clear words, open statements: unconditional passion for art and literature



April 2024 · 240 pages



Melanie Möller is Professor of Latin Studies at the Free University of Berlin and writes regularly for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. In 2016, she published her book *Ovid. 100 Pages*, and in 2017 she organized the event series *Bimillennium 2017: Ovid and Europe*.

Literature must be free, wild, allowed to be angry and to hurt - otherwise it loses its appeal, says Melanie Möller. It must remain a free space for unguarded thoughts and sharp words. The author delivers a wild ride through several centuries of literary history in the fight for the freedom of the word.

Banning the bible from schools in Utah and classics from curricula and textbooks, smoothing out translations, censoring classics, politically correct guidelines for literature, sensitivity reading, trigger warnings, banning 'difficult' vocabulary: a disaster, says Melanie Möller, and warns against underestimating the reader. There must be no compromises when it comes to art. If you water it down, you incapacitate the reader - and the reader is smarter than you think.

"What is lacking is a passionate fight for the autonomy of literature that protects it like an endangered minority - without compromise" - Melanie Möller

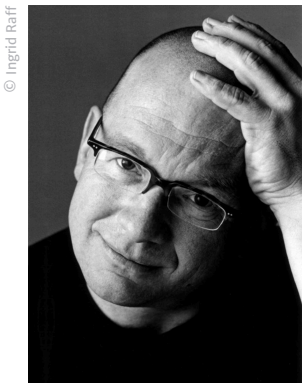
Marco Wehr

Complex New World and How to Come to Terms with It

- Marco Wehr – a physicist and philosopher – delivers an intelligent analysis of our time and provides the impetus for an overdue social conversation
- English sample translation by Neil Solomon available soon



April 2024 · 400 pages



© Ingrid Raiff

Marco Wehr, born in 1961, is a physicist and holds a PhD in philosophy. An award-winning author and speaker, he examines questions of predictability, complexity, and the relationship between the brain and computers. He writes for the *FAZ*, among other outlets, and has published much-discussed books on topics such as chaos theory and the significance of the hand for human thought.

Why has everything become so complicated? Or have you ever managed to cancel something as mundane as your phone contract without running into any problems? Marco Wehr shows us where complexity is unavoidable and where humanity is maneuvering itself into chaos.

What is it about complexity traps, about the impenetrable chaos of information that besieges us, overwhelming our brains and even high-performance computers? An astonishing number of them exist. Just take the inscrutable global economic system or the European Union's convoluted verbiage, which often even the experts can't understand.

When such manmade complexity then intersects with natural complexity – when, for example, a mutated virus appears in a strained, fragile society – the result can be the emergence of complexity monsters like the coronavirus pandemic. In these cases, the world becomes more than we can handle and we are forced to confront the urgent question of what we can do to avoid such situations.

Marco Wehr picks apart the tangles of complexity and shows us which threads we need to pull on to find our way back to a more contented and self-determined life.

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