



**Foreign Rights Guide**

Spring 2025



Matthes & Seitz Berlin



## Dietmar Dath

## SKYRMIONEN



 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

## Dietmar Dath

*Skymions or: A Fucking Army*

**The story of a woman who ends the computer age with a revolutionary machine: what we now call Artificial Intelligence will die – for something worthy of the name!**

When Renate Hofer falls into a water tank that cleans the ventilation of a huge data storage facility, she not only fears for her life, but also has an epiphany: she will build a machine unlike any that has ever been built before to overcome the computer age. Her plan takes shape in the world as we know it – a pandemic has raged, trust in language is waning, money is eating away at justice. To implement it, Renate recruits the bravest and smartest from the fields of physics and art, linguistic research and financial trickery, a whole fucking army: Kerstin Waldmann, Doro Coppe, Xiasong Zhao, Vexus Texas and more. With them, she builds a new world out of the tiny vortices that are called like this novel: *Skymions*.

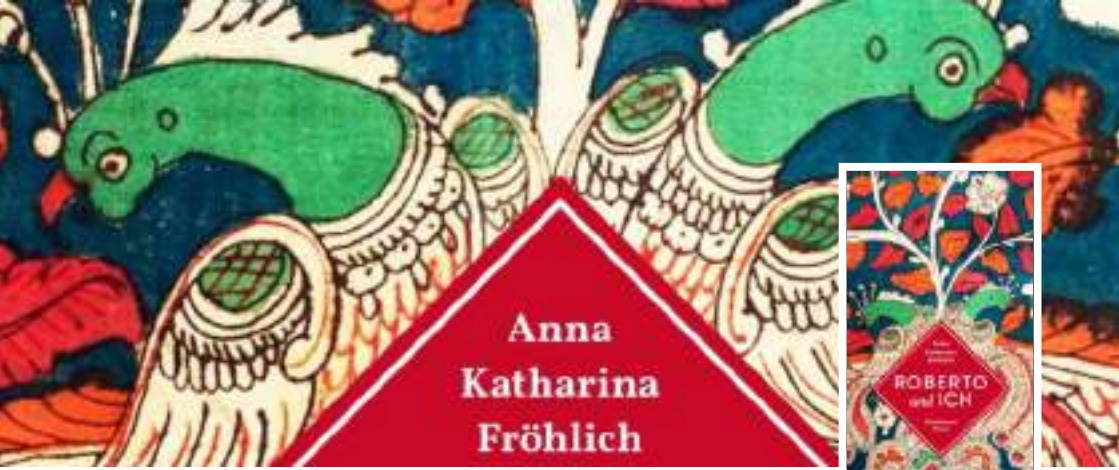
**Thriller, cabinet of wonders and journey into the unknown, as rich in characters and action as a futuristic series: *Skymions* asks us how we can liberate advanced technology for a better global society.**

*“Dietmar Dath is the greatest contemporary author we have, because he knows that the present can only be understood from the future.” – Jens Balzer*

Novel  
Hardcover  
966 pages  
2025

**Dietmar Dath**, born in 1970, is an author, journalist and translator. He has written numerous novels and essays that deal with the technical foundations of our society in literary terms. Previously published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: his comprehensive examination of science fiction under the title *Never Story* (2019) and the novel *Gentzen or Cleaning Up Drunk* (2021) about the logician of the same name.

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## Anna Katharina Fröhlich

### *Roberto and I. A Pact with Books*



#### **Roberto Calasso: A love and life story between books**

He, Roberto Calasso, is the Milanese publisher who gathers authors from all over the world in the Adelphi publishing house he runs, and is also an astutely erudite and linguistically elegant author. She, Anna Katharina Fröhlich, moves from Frankfurt to Mornaga on Lake Garda and finds herself as a young, adventurous woman between books and her garden on her way to becoming a successful writer. The two meet for the first time at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October 1995. "A love story under the star of travel" begins – and a bond with books. Almost thirty years later, Anna Katharina Fröhlich looks back and tells of the bond between two people who together had the courage to embark on a completely unconventional adventure that promised to unite spirit and life – and lasted until 2021, the year of Roberto Calasso's death, who found his grave on the Venetian island of the dead, San Michele, next to his best friend, the poet Joseph Brodsky.

**Anna Katharina Fröhlich's reminiscent narrative is both frivolous and discreet, humorous and intimate, but above all rich in thought. It vividly traces the portrait of a person and the core of the extensive oeuvre of a writer who took the liberty of ignoring all the conventions of the literary and academic world.**

*"Anna Katharina Fröhlich demonstrates a very unique and persistent literary power." – FAZ*

Biography  
Hardcover  
ca. 160 pages  
2025

**Simultaneously published in Italian by Mondadori**

**Rights sold to:**  
Italian (Mondadori Libri)

**Anna Katharina Fröhlich**, born in 1971, grew up in Frankfurt am Main and Munich. She has published the novels *Wilde Orangen*, *Kream Korner*, *Der schöne Gast* and *Rückkehr nach Samthar*. Most recently, her novel *The Yacht* was published by Friedenauer Presse. She lives as a gardener and board member of the Italian publishing house Adelphi between Mornaga on Lake Garda and Milan.

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# EINE SPRACHE

Loretta Würtenberger & Hubertus Graf  
Mit Aquarellen von Erwin Wurm



## Loretta Würtenberger, Hubertus Graf Zedtwitz

### *A Language of Love*

**A masterful meditation on the secrets of horsemanship - by no means just for horse lovers**

In *A Language of Love*, Loretta Würtenberger and Hubertus Graf Zedtwitz take a closer look at the age-old relationship between humans and horses and open up a perspective that goes far beyond the art of riding. The book combines personal experiences with philosophical and historical reflections, creating a space in which communication, trust and relationships are rethought.

The focus is on the language of horsemanship, whose terms – “aids”, “leaning”, “suppleness” – are not just technical instructions, but become metaphors for human interaction. The interaction between rider and horse becomes the basis of a silent dialogue that can be transferred to universal questions of harmony, closeness and trust.

With narrative density and literary precision, the book describes this search for connection and resonance. Würtenberger and Zedtwitz interweave personal moments with reflections on the role of the horse in art, literature and cultural history. Artist Erwin Wurm contributes watercolors created especially for the book, providing his own personal artistic take on the text.

*A Language of Love* blurs the boundaries between practical experience, cultural analysis and poetic contemplation and also makes an important contribution to the current discourse on interspecies communication. The authors invite us to understand the relationship between humans and animals as a mirror of our own behavior – and also to discover the language of quiet sounds in a loud world.

Equestrianism · Riding · Dressage · Language · Friendship · Relationships · Interspecies communication



Hardcover with illustrations  
196 pages  
2025  
English sample available

**Loretta Würtenberger** studied law, philosophy and art history. She was a judge at the Berlin District Court and has received several awards as an entrepreneur. Today she advises artists' estates and manages the Schlossgut Schwante sculpture park.

**Hubertus Graf Zedtwitz** is an international Grand Prix rider and trainer. He was the youngest ever German professional rider champion. Today he trains national teams throughout Europe and works as a somiotherapist.

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**Luise Meier**

*Hyphae*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**In "Hyphae" Luise Meier brings together invisible, historical and completely new forms of networking, thereby expanding the possibility space for a different world.**

Novel  
Hardcover  
303 pages  
2024  
English sample available

When the first week-long power blackout worldwide occurs in 2025, there is, contrary to expectations, no panic. And even when power grids and supply chains, money flows and the internet finally collapse, it does not mean the end of civilisation. Instead, the people in Luise Meier's multi-faceted novel *Hyphae* begin a search, born out of necessity, for other, even non-human, ways of relating to each other that enable them to survive and care for each other. There is Anne, for example, who tries to keep the hospital running, her fifteen-year-old son Tomasz, who suddenly learns to see the power of nature, or Maja, who keeps a record of all this for the ever-growing encyclopedia that spans the globe.

**Luise Meier** was born in 1985 in East Berlin. She studied philosophy, social and cultural anthropology and cultural studies in Berlin, Frankfurt (Oder) and Aarhus and writes both fiction and non-fiction. Previously published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *Marx Machine* (2018).

Like mushroom threads, Luise Meier lays out biographies, experiences, dreams and wishes, interweaves them with unrealised futures and reveals: the world is not coming to an end – rather, it is emerging anew, in radical, all-encompassing connectedness.

*As if Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, Donna Haraway and David Graeber had created a utopia together*

*"An interesting philosophical mind game" – Berliner Morgenpost*

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Power Blackout · Community · Utopia · Mushrooms · Drugs · Criticism of Capitalism · Interconnectedness

# TAGE



## Millay Hyatt

### *Days on the Night Train*



#### **A literary delight to the full: Millay Hyatt recounts the experiences of a night train life.**

Millay Hyatt is a passionate train traveler: it's the charm of the "unpadded encounter with the world" that still makes her swap every airplane for a trip by rail. She knows that you see things differently when you are away from home and on the move, and this is particularly true on the train, at half speed: the train window becomes a temptation, with moving images and entire landscape films running past it. In the carriage itself, we become voyeurs, interested in the most intimate habits of our fellow passengers. We listen to couples arguing, draw psychograms of the people sitting next to us. On rails, a way of thinking is set in motion that disturbs our certainties. As travelers, we enter a school of perception in which our own perspective is placed in relation to others. The train journey promises the happiness of setting off and arriving – and in between the bittersweet joy of self-questioning.

Based on countless journeys of her own, Millay Hyatt draws a literary, allusive cartography of the train journey, in which the dramaturgy of farewells, observed a thousand times, comes into its own, as does the transformation of those arriving home – and at the same time the insight that crossing borders is not a pleasurable experience for everyone.

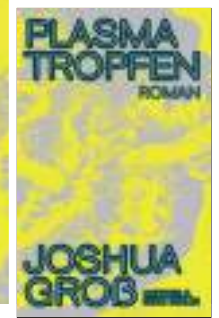
*"Hyatt is a sensitive observer. Her narrative is not limited to what happens inside a train, she captures the unseen, the unfamiliar, the seductively different." – Tagesspiegel*

Traveling · Night Train · Sleeping Car · Europe · Borders · Adventure

Hardcover  
238 pages  
2024  
English sample available

**Millay Hyatt**, born in 1973 in Dallas/Texas, USA, has a doctorate in philosophy and lives as a freelance author and translator in Berlin. Her essays and stories have been published in various media; her book *Ungestillte Sehnsucht. Wenn der Kinderwunsch uns umtreibt* was published in 2012. (Ch. Links). In 2020 and 2021 she received scholarships from the Berlin Senate. She is currently performing in Lola Arias' play *Mother Tongue* at the Gorki Theater in Berlin.

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## Joshua Groß

### *Plasma Drops*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**Magmatic and delicate, iridescent and dark, *Plasmotropfen* tells of love and the normality of telekinetic powers that, despite everything, are not enough.**

Helen is a painter. And she has supernatural powers. Two days before the opening of her exhibition, all her paintings are stolen. Instead of trying to solve the case, she flies back to her Greek hometown of Egio. While Helen devotes herself to her artistic work again, her partner Lenell investigates the tectonic boundary on which Egio lies. The couple's private life is turbulent; they are increasingly unable to escape their own wounds and the devastation of the world. And the question that once arose remains: is it possible to strive only for personal fulfilment in the face of the fractures that surround us? And what should we use our own powers for – especially if, as in Helen's case, they are even telekinetic?

*Plasma Drops* tells of inner and outer fault zones, of plate tectonics and longing, permafrost and art. Joshua Groß does not record what happened, but imagines what could happen in a world that is becoming increasingly surreal and fairytale-like.

*"[An] author who has absorbed the avant-garde, and cyberspace as well." – Deutschlandfunk*

*"Joshua Groß has his own cosmos and his own language." – Nürnberger Nachrichten*

Novel  
Hardcover  
263 pages  
2024  
English sample available


**Joshua Groß**, born in 1989 in Grünsberg, studied political science, economics and ethics of text cultures. He has received several awards, among others the Anna Seghers Prize 2019, the Hölderlin Förderpreis 2021, the Literature Prize of the A und A Kulturstiftung 2021 and a residency scholarship from the Literarisches Colloquium Berlin 2021. He was nominated for the 2023 Leipzig Book Fair Prize for his previous novel, *Prana Extreme*, also published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin.

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## Philipp Schönthaler

*Pages of the Sky*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**A boundary-breaking novel about the subliminal connections between life and literature, poetry and plutonium, biographies and bombs on the threshold of the 21st century.**

Novel  
Hardcover  
319 pages  
2024  
English sample available

Whilst searching for a lost *Spiegel* article, the narrator in Philipp Schönthaler's new novel unexpectedly receives an invitation to a conference at the Forstell Institute in Nevada. There, in a nuclear bomb-proof archive, not only the specialist publications of natural and engineering scientists such as Wernher von Braun, Robert Oppenheimer and Norbert Wiener are stored. Their poetry, overshadowed by technical masterpieces, is also safely stored there, as if they harboured subliminal alliances between technology and literature, mathematics and fantasy, as if it took novels to land on the moon. In this web of historical events and individual biographies, technical innovations and literary writing projects, the protagonist gradually penetrates further and further to where fiction turns into reality and reality into ever new fictions and all of this becomes legible on the pages of the sky.

**Philipp Schönthaler**, born in Stuttgart in 1976, was awarded the Clemens Brentano Prize in 2012 for his narrative debut *Nach oben ist das Leben offen*. Matthes & Seitz Berlin has published eight of his books; the essay *Portrait of the Manager as a Young Author* (2016) was translated into English and Turkish. In *Pages of the Sky*, Schönthaler deepens his theoretical exploration of technology and literature that he started in *The Automation of Writing and Literature Counterprograms* (2022) and *How Rational Machines Became Romantic* (2024). He lives in Berlin.

What prompted rocket engineer Wernher von Braun to become a science fiction author? Why did Buzz Aldrin write a novel about extraterrestrials after his return as the second man on the moon? And what is the story behind the poems of nuclear physicist Robert Oppenheimer?


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*"A labyrinthine novel with a lookout into space."* – Erwin Uhrmann, *Die Presse*



# Patrick Holzapfel Hermelin auf Bänken



 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**Patrick Holzapfel**

*Ermine on Benches*

**"When I wake up, I can feel the bench under my body and know that I'm still here."**

As the protagonist in Patrick Holzapfel's debut novel *Ermine on Benches* walks through Vienna's ninth district, something almost unheard of happens: he strays from the straight path, begins to follow the meandering steps of a homeless man wrapped in ermine and finally finds himself abruptly – on a park bench made of twenty thin brown wooden boards. From here, where time finally seems to stop for him, an alternative map of the city gradually unfolds, which the narrator explores sitting down, because: 'The longer you sit, the more you learn about the bench. And at the same time, you also learn something about people who sit on benches'; people like Manuela with her extensive, albeit completely useless, knowledge of film history, like Yong, who rants about his countless chess triumphs, or just like the narrator, who in his search for the ermine king becomes a king himself with quiet wit and irony and realises that every bench tells the story of a person and transforms their passions, fears and hopes into a view.

*"Pleasantly, the novel itself makes no claim about the extent to which he wants to change the world politically. He does nothing other than tell of a certain situation in life. About a person who has to answer the existential question 'Where do I go from here?' has a somewhat unusual, but actually obvious answer: Sit down first!" – taz*

Novel  
Softcover  
166 pages  
2024

**Patrick Holzapfel**, born in Augsburg, lives in Austria. He works as a writer, film critic and freelance curator. *Ermine on Benches* is his first book.

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Vienna · Homeless · Mourning · Wanderer · Urban novel · Outsider



 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**Fabian Saul**

## *The Tangent's Grief*

### **A touch that will never return. This is the tangent's grief.**

What is the ground we walk on talking about? In Fabian Saul's first, deeply human novel, certainties are shaken: a friend dies, a love falls apart. In a world where the stones speak of the past, the protagonist encounters his own feelings in the topography. Everything knows about transience – and knows everything about him.

In cinematic scenes of poetic power, shared cigarettes stand here like pictures next to the sunlight on a morning in Nida, the clear edges of Jean Genet's gravestone stand next to a demolished house in Linienstraße, Nina Simone's last concert stands next to the songs from the wall. Every memory tells of the possibility of a different future: of traces of resistance to the violence of the one, grand narrative. Thus, with every moment, with every new image, something tender and new emerges, searching for a place of empathy and solidarity at the abyss of contact.

*"The doctor lifts the blankets and breaks your dead bones until the whole room disappears under fine white dust. 'The poor devil', he says again and again and then enters your number on the death certificate. He hesitates briefly and checks the cause of death in a glossary in which the pages are slowly peeling away from the adhesive. You still had a cigarette and your mobile phone in your hand. Maybe you wanted to call someone."*

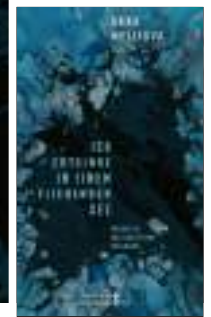
*"A photographic work of great, disturbing beauty. This text speaks softly to the dead, and remembers them as gently as it does freely." – Dorothee Elmiger*

Novel  
Hardcover  
320 pages  
2024  
English sample available

**Fabian Saul**, born in 1986, is an author, composer and editor-in-chief of the award-winning magazine *Flaneur*. The magazine, which dedicates each issue to one of the world's streets, pursues a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach that is also reflected in Saul's work. In addition to his writing, he also works as a composer and songwriter. His music is released under his stage name SAUL. His work has been honoured with the Alfred Döblin Medal, the Roger Willemsen Foundation Scholarship and the Harald Gerlach Scholarship, among others.

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# ICH ERTRINKE IN EINEM FLIEHENDEN



**Anna Melikova**

*I Am Drowning in a Fleeing Lake*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**A young woman on the painful path to finding herself: The love for her lecturer becomes the narrator's subject matter, as abysmal as only reality can be.**

Novel  
Hardcover  
477 pages  
2024  
Russian original available

She comes from the Ukrainian Crimea and is completely influenced by Russian culture. At Kyiv University, she meets a woman who is only three years older – and who casts a spell over her for years. It is the narrator's first love, and it is to be her only one. The lecturer, however, insists on her right to love several women at the same time. In order to escape her control, she goes to Moscow after her studies, but she cannot get away from her. With the Maidan protests and the start of the war in 2014, the conflict between them becomes a political one. While the former teacher denies the narrator any identity, especially her Ukrainian one, she not only fights back against her, but also against her father, who is loyal to Russia.

*I Am Drowning in a Fleeing Lake* is the enchanting self-questioning of a first-person narrator who is shaken by the certainties of her socialisation. From the fragments of her past and the documents of a destructive love affair, she writes a book – and gains her independence in the process.

**Anna Melikova**, born in Ukraine in 1984, grew up in Crimea. She is a writer and screenwriter. After studying German language and literature in Kyiv, she worked as a film curator and critic in Moscow. She has lived in Berlin since 2017. She wrote the screenplay for the film *Grand Jeté* (director: Isabelle Stever, première Berlinale 2022). Her prose texts have appeared in various magazines and anthologies. She was a fellow of the LCB in 2022.

*"I finally had a goal: to prove to her that I could do it, that I could survive. I was obsessed with the idea of transformation. The idea of surpassing myself. From a distance, I could believe that all of this was only happening because I had decided it. They didn't exist – I did."*

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**William T. Vollmann**

*Shalamov or The Laws of Life*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**“If you want to know the laws of life, read Shalamov.” One of the most important American authors reinterprets Varlam Shalamov for our times**

From the genocide of the Herero and Nama to the Holocaust, the terror of the Khmer Rouge and the massacre of Srebrenica: the 20th century is a mass grave in which the most recent dead are piled on top of the previously murdered until they are no longer visible. There are few authors of our time who have seen so much suffering and written about so much inhumanity as William T. Vollmann. This makes his horror at the stories from Kolyma all the more astonishing. In it, Varlam Shalamov asks the question: “Did we exist?” Yes, Vollmann answers in his deeply impressive exploration of the archipelago of Shalamov, the still incomprehensible and probably most important literary chronicler of Stalinist horror. And yet Shalamov wrote more than literature. His stories are also testimonies – testimonies of an experience that Vollmann places in a rich context of extremes in his haunting essay, in the hope of making them somewhat more comprehensible. Testimonies that remind us never to forget the humanity of all those who were broken, blunt, ugly and turned into animals.

*“Regardless of what Shalamov says, he does not merely record the atrocities in his ‘documents’. He hands them over to memory by turning them into stories.”*

Non-fiction  
Hardcover  
ca. 200 pages  
2025  
English original available

**William T. Vollmann**, born in Los Angeles in 1959, is a journalist and author of numerous books dedicated to the horrors of the world. He received the National Book Award in 2005 for his novel *Europe Central*.

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## Irina Rastorgueva

### *Pop-up Propaganda. Epicrisis of the Russian Self-Poisoning*

**Irina Rastorgueva describes the incessant propaganda machine of contemporary Russia, its disturbing background and its brutal mechanisms that permeate all social relations.**

While within Russia the ban on critical media and the synchronisation of nationalised broadcasters are producing an almost cartoonish narrative about traditional values and the necessity of 'special military operations', carefully planned propaganda campaigns in the rest of the world are working to destabilise democratic societies. A planned madness is sweeping the country. It manifests itself in the inflationary use of euphemisms and hate speech, as denunciation and in a punitive regime that has been thought through to the most subtle level. And it is a madness with a history. For the violence that has a relentless grip on Russian society is a continuation of the paranoid search for enemies, the nightly arrests, searches and torture as well as the gulags from the Soviet regime – in a garish, new guise and fused with the gangsterism of the 1990s.

In her unique tone, which is as precise as it is ironic, Irina Rastorgueva shows the effects of Russian self-poisoning in a montage of newspaper clippings and independent reports, from her own experience as well as from the analyses of authors critical of the Kremlin and loyal to Russia.

*"She has made a significant contribution to the understanding of Russian conditions."* –  
Sonja Margolina, *Die ZEIT online*

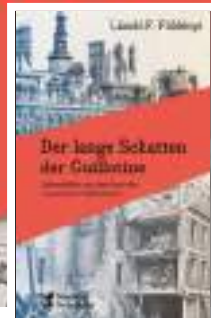
Non-fiction  
Hardcover with collages  
337 pages  
2024  
English sample available

**Irina Rastorgueva**, born in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk in 1983, studied philology at Sakhalin State University and worked as a cultural journalist for several Russian magazines and radio stations. From 2006 to 2015, she was a lecturer in journalism at Sakhalin State University. She is the author of numerous academic articles on the theory and history of literature and journalism in the 20th century. In 2011 she founded the cultural magazine *ProSakhalin*. She has been working as an author and graphic designer in Berlin since 2017. She writes for the *FAZ*, *NZZ* and *Osteuropa magazine*.

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# Der lange Schatten der Guillotine

Lebensbilder aus dem Paris des  
neunzehnten Jahrhunderts



**László F. Földényi**

*The Long Shadow of the Guillotine. Life Stories from Paris in the Nineteenth Century*

**László F. Földényi tells the story of the aftermath of the French Revolution as a montage full of images and asks who we are when we lose our heads**

Even before the French Revolution, there were occasional executions by guillotine, but it was not until 1791 that death on the scaffold was used across the board and for everyone. Until then, social status and the nature of the crime determined the choice of the execution method. Now the industrialisation of killing began. Because everyone becomes equal in front of the guillotine.

And while contemporaries are still puzzling over whether the consciousness of the decapitated can live on separate from the body in the face of all the severed heads, László F. Földényi creates his very own narrative of the long 19th century in his richly illustrated essay – based on our entry into headlessness. At the same time, the new technology of photography was introduced. Only its widespread dissemination made it possible to free the moment from the transience of life, to immortalise it as much as to kill it. This leads not only to a new understanding of time and space, but also to a change in perception itself. From then on, everything appears fragmented, as if the cut of the falling axe continues indefinitely: the bodies, the city, the poetry and the painting. A completely new image of man emerges, which portrays him as a bizarre, violent, headless being and which continues to have an effect right up to the present day.

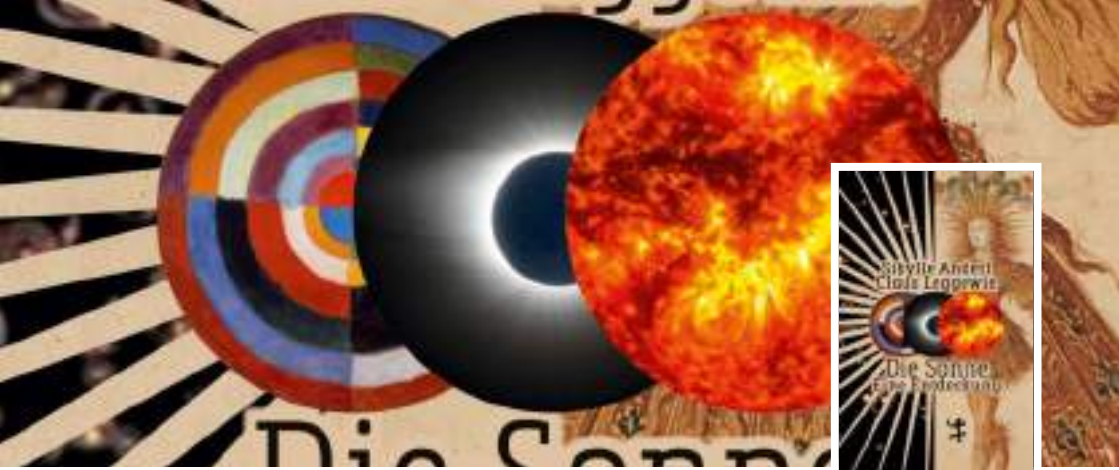
 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Non-fiction  
Hardcover with illustrations  
302 pages  
2024  
Hungarian original available

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**László F. Földényi**, born in 1952 in Debrecen, is a Hungarian art theorist, literature specialist and essayist. He holds a chair for art theory at the Academy for Theater and Film in Budapest. Since 2009 he is a member of the German academy for language and poetry. His books have been translated into several languages.

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**Sibylle Anderl, Claus Leggewie**

*The Sun. A Discovery*

It is the ball of fire in our part of the galaxy, without it there would be no life on Earth. But our relationship with it has changed in recent years: whereas it used to be the celestial star that promised guidance and defined the day, today it is a threat to us. It ruthlessly burns down whole areas of land and melts the polar ice caps, we seek protection from its rays – and at the same time utopian ideas entwine around it, the seemingly infinite source of energy.

Together, Sibylle Anderl and Claus Leggewie approach the overwhelming nature of our star as a scientific and cultural-historical fact. Anyone who wants to say something about the Sun cannot remain silent about heliocentric cosmologies, solar deities, the functioning of semiconductors, solar geoengineering and nuclear fusion.

*“Why discover the sun, which we see almost every day? Well, there is a lot to rediscover: thousands of years of human knowledge about weather and navigation, agriculture and plant cultivation, well-being and much more that today’s people have forgotten or delegated to smartphones and experts. Since the sun has been burning down on us more and more frequently and whole areas of land have become deserted, people have been looking at this source of all life with fear and trying to protect themselves from it. On closer inspection, we discover how imperfect our star is – and how finite.”*

*“As a duet, they succeed in conveying a ‘feeling for the interplay of different perspectives’ of our view of the sun.” – Otto Kallscheuer, Frankfurter Rundschau*

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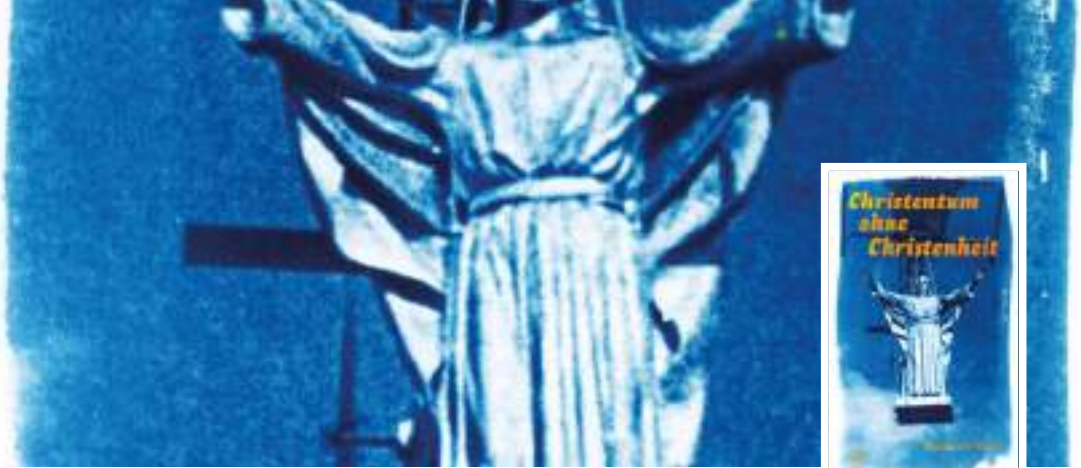
Non-fiction  
Hardcover  
189 pages  
2024

**Sibylle Anderl**, born in 1981, is an astrophysicist and philosopher. From 2017 she was an editor in the features section of the *FAZ*, in 2021 she became head of the science section in the *FAZ* and *FAS*, and since 2024 she has been head of *ZEIT Wissen*. She has also been co-editor of the cultural magazine *Kursbuch* since 2021.

**Claus Leggewie**, born in 1950, is a political scientist. He was Director of the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities in Essen from 2007 to 2017 and has since been Head of the Panel on Planetary Thinking at the University of Giessen.

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Philosophy · Astronomy · Narrative non-fiction · Cultural History · Solar Radiation · Climate Crisis



**Norbert Bolz**

*Christianity Without Christendom*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**The culture of modernity is secularized and at the same time perverted Christianity.**

The death of God as a nuisance: in a profound essay, Norbert Bolz explores the “invention” of Christianity, which only found its world-historical form through Paul and his radical “Word of the Cross”. Modern society owes its emergence to this Pauline invention; Christianity itself set the history of secularization in motion – and thus its own deconstruction. Norbert Bolz follows the demystification of the world through the sciences and the secularization of Christian beliefs to finally state the “perversion of Christianity”: its decline is sealed by the attempt to adapt to the spirit of the times by abandoning dogma and orthodoxy and naively pursuing theological politics. But “anyone who believes they have to defend Christianity has never believed in Jesus Christ”. Consequently, Bolz does not defend Christianity against the practical life of Christianity; his theological reflection on Christianity first and foremost rehabilitates its original power, which challenges – and reverses – every value system.

Non-fiction  
Hardcover  
142 pages  
2025

**Norbert Bolz**, born in Ludwigshafen on the Rhine in 1953, is a philosopher and communication scientist. He taught media studies at the TU Berlin until his retirement in 2018. His publications revolve around the topic of transformation in modern societies and the increasing insecurity of postmodern societies. Most recently published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *No power of morals!* (2021).

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MATTHES & SEITZ BERLIN

# SPRECH



**Byung-Chul Han**

*Speaking about God. A Dialogue with Simone Weil*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**“The most widely read living German philosopher of the present day is Korean: Byung-Chul Han.” – EL PAÍS**

Simone Weil is the brightest intellectual of the 20th century. Her thoughts are more relevant than ever. They help us to understand and master the crisis of the present. In his new essay, Byung-Chul Han brings us closer to Simone Weil's inspiring, clairvoyant, even healing world of thought and re-reads it through our present. With Weil, he vividly brings up the transcendence that has been completely lost in today's world of consumption and production. Weil leads us, indeed seduces us, to a different reality that leads us out of a life devoid of meaning, out of a radical lack of being. She teaches us that ultimately it is God, this overwhelming power from above, that gives us a blissful fullness of being. Reading her writings, we at least sense that there is another way of life, another way of being than the one that is completely at the mercy of performance, production and consumption.

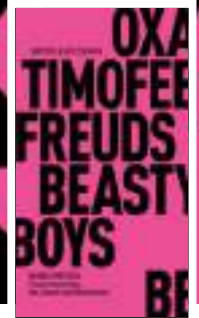
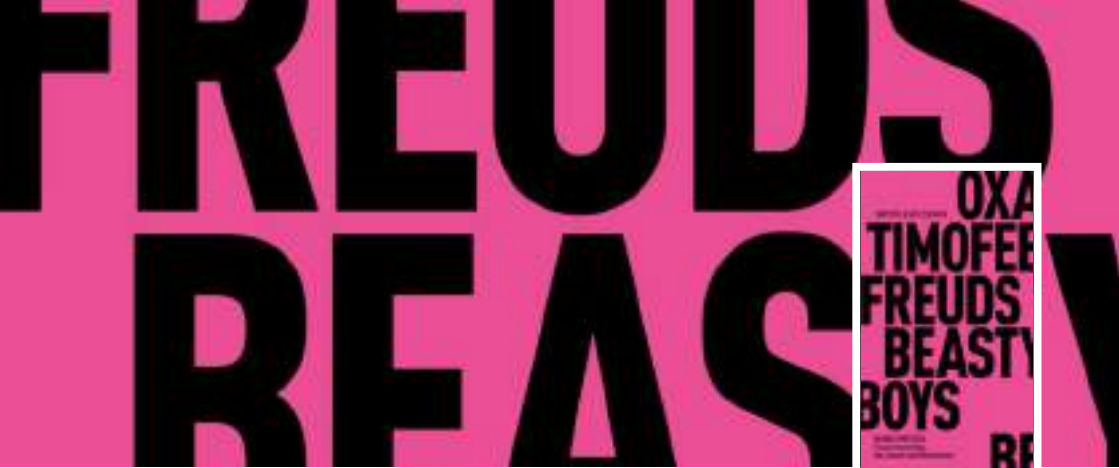
**According to Han in his impressive essay, there would be more peace and beauty in the world today if we lived the way Simone Weil exemplified and envisioned.**

*“God is not dead. Dead is the man to whom God revealed himself.”*

Essay  
Softcover  
ca. 200 pages  
2025

**Byung-Chul Han** was born in Seoul, South-Korea. His works have been translated in over 30 languages and are bestsellers in numerous countries. He lives in Berlin.

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**Oxana Timofeeva**

*Freud's Beastly Boys. Sex, Violence and Masculinity*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

With Little Hans, the Rat Man and the Wolf Man, Sigmund Freud, for whom sexuality forms the background of our psychic life, presented three case studies that remain classic to this day and which, with their combination of trauma, animal and child, contributed significantly to the development of psychoanalysis. But what, Oxana Timofeeva asks in her masterful reflections, which draw on religion, anthropology and personal experience, if her reading was clouded by the sexualized gaze of the adult analyst? If unconscious sexual fantasies are not the origin of psychic disorders, but something else lies behind the psychic dramas of sexuality: a mechanism of violence, a "machinery of masculinity"? By focusing her attention on the actual protagonists, namely the children, taking them seriously in their pain, in their openness and ability to empathize and identify with the animals, Timofeeva not only succeeds in shedding new light on the role of animals in male gender socialization and thus in the constitution of patriarchy. She also uncovers the animality that inhabits the core of human subjectivity.

Essay  
Softcover  
ca. 200 pages  
2025  
English original available

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**Oxana Timofeeva**, born in Siberia in 1978, is an author and member of the artist collective Chto delat. Previously published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *How to Love a Homeland* (2022) and *Solar Politics* (2024).

*"Extraordinary: Oxana Timofeeva discovers and analyzes the animality that inhabits the core of human subjectivity."* – Slavoj Žižek

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Sigmund Freud · Psychoanalysis · Sexuality · Boys · Violence · Animal-human relationship

MATTHES & SEITZ BERLIN



**Guillaume Paoli**

*Something Better Than Optimism*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**An incitement to think for yourself – without regards to comfortable habits of thought and lazy compromises**

Critical thinking is unwelcome. More and more people are opting out of the constant flow of bad news, while the call is repeated in all tones: 'Optimism is mandatory' – a blatant threat against all those who are read as pessimists. Mood-mongering takes precedence over opinion-forming. However, the prevalence of feelings smuggles in implicit views that need to be exposed. Optimism is not just a state of mind or an attitude, but a concept that goes back to Leibniz's theodicy and demands the fatalistic acceptance of what exists. Taking action against optimism does not mean surrendering to pessimism, but freeing ourselves from this clumsy alternative.

Essay  
Softcover  
112 pages  
2025  
English sample available

**Günther Anders Prize for  
Critical Thinking 2024**

**Guillaume Paoli** is a French journalist and philosopher living in Berlin. He is one of the founders of the movement of the "Happy Unemployed". Previously published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *Mind and Garbage* (2023).

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# JENSEITS



**Yuk Hui, Milan Stürmer**

*Beyond West and East. Discussion about Technology and Philosophy*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**From technodiversity via the imagination of futures to the epistemology of capitalism**

Essay  
Softcover  
135 pages  
2025

"The world is the limit and possibility of philosophy. Philosophy that tries to escape the world loses itself in rapture, but if philosophy only remains in the world, then it is a prisoner of this world." This outlines the field of tension in the thinking of Hong Kong philosopher Yuk Hui, which he expands on in the dense conversations with Milan Stürmer published here for the first time. In them, he explores the question of the pluralisation of the concept of technology, which for him is a fundamental question of philosophy in general, reflects on the possibility of science today and develops an epistemology of the unknown. In doing so, he transcends all boundaries between rational, irrational and non-rational. Yuk Hui's thinking is a departure into new worlds, and so his philosophy is always about imagining other futures. With his concept of technodiversity, he imagines a new form of coexistence and an ecology that includes technology.

**Yuk Hui**, philosopher from Hong Kong, studied Computer Engineering, Cultural Theory and Philosophy at the University of Hong Kong and Goldsmiths College in London. He has taught at the Institute of Philosophy and Art Studies at Leuphana University Lüneburg, the Chinese University of the Arts and Bauhaus University Weimar, among others. Yuk Hui is currently Professor of Philosophy at Erasmus University Rotterdam and Professor at the City University of Hong Kong. Hui is the author of several books on philosophy and technology, which have been translated into numerous languages.

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SPIEGEL  
Bestseller

# AFTER



**Jens Balzer**

*After Woke*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

## Is the 'woke', i.e. identity-political, left on the brink of complete moral bankruptcy?

In view of some reactions to the massacre by the Islamofascist terrorist group Hamas in Israel on 7 October 2023, which was marked by inconceivable cruelty, the question is being asked in many places: is it time to say goodbye to any kind of 'wokeness'? Or, as Jens Balzer explains with a knowledgeable view on the history of this contested term, is it not rather time to reflect on the original impulses of post-colonial and queer feminist theories: on the critical awareness of the fundamentally becoming, hybrid, diverse, ambivalent that precedes all formation of identity?

*After Woke* impressively points the way past rigidized, essentialist concepts of identity and shows: only by understanding identity as fictitious, fragile and fluid at all times can it become an urgently needed alternative to the reactionary forces of identitarian thinking that are preparing to take control of the world.

*"Jens Balzer knows that some things first have to be thought about in a wild way to get closer to the truth." – Jungle World*

Essay  
Softcover  
105 pages  
2024

**Shortlisted for the Tractatus Prize 2024**  
**SPIEGEL bestseller**

**Jens Balzer**, born in 1969, lives in Berlin and is a feature writer for *DIE ZEIT*. His last essay published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin, *Ethics of Appropriation* (2022) has been translated into Italian and Spanish.

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Wokeness · Identity Politics · Israel · Violence · Gender Studies · Queer Feminism · Postcolonialism

MATTHES & SEITZ BERLIN



**Nora Weinelt**

*Failure*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**If failing is always beautiful in the neoliberal order, what means failing miserably?**

Calling someone a failure is the greatest possible insult, as it is rooted in the judgment that something that could not be avoided anyway has broken through in the failure of the person being addressed: someone who has failed has missed out on their own life, someone who has failed is incapable of achieving what all other people seem to succeed at effortlessly. In addition to the social judgment that others pass on you, there is also the self-accusation: I have failed. But there are no precise criteria as to when one speaks of failure.

Essay  
Softcover  
119 pages  
2025

**Nora Weinelt** studied general and comparative literature, art history and Italian philology and wrote her doctoral thesis on the poetics of failure in the European novel around 1900.

**Nora Weinelt traces the ways in which the concept of failure, which originates from mechanics, finds its way into common parlance and shows that it is only in our postmodern society, in which every failure has to be described retrospectively as a stage towards success, that it fully unfolds its utterly devastating power.**

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# ZUKUNFT DES LESENS



**Christoph Engemann**

*The Future of Reading*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

## **Reading after reading: Toward an age of post-literacy**

Reading is in crisis, writing is being automated by generative AI: literacy is in a state of flux. Publishers, educational institutions, the press and other institutions of written culture find themselves on the defensive. Their fixation on literacy overlooks the fact that AI has enabled platforms to renegotiate the relationship between orality and literacy. On platforms, the spoken and written word are recombined with far-reaching cultural, political and social consequences: where AI can process verbal utterances and texts in equal measure, oral formats are beginning to dominate over literary ones. As a result, reading runs the risk of becoming a cultural technique of the few.

**In *The Future of Reading*, Christoph Engemann shows how the new platform orality of podcasts, online video and TikTok is not only changing reading, but how their AI-supported monopolization is also calling the openness of language into question.**

Essay  
Softcover  
ca. 110 pages  
2025

**Christoph Engemann**, born in Paderborn in 1972, is a media scientist and, after working in Bremen, Stanford, Austin, Weimar and Hangzhou, conducts research at the DFG Collaborative Research Center "Virtual Lifeworlds" at Ruhr University Bochum. His research focuses on artificial intelligence, media of statehood, graphs & graph assumptions, genealogy of the transaction, rurality and barns.

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## Christian Welzbacher

### *Walls, Camps, Slums. Features of a Neoliberal Spatial Regime*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

#### **Who benefits from the way society treats those in need of protection?**

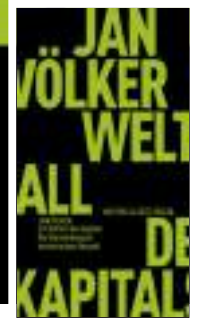
Essay  
Softcover  
ca. 170 pages  
2025

Wherever you look, no other topic has dominated the political debates of the global North in recent decades as much as flight and migration. But instead of enacting and implementing coherent laws and regulations, instead of reflecting on the dignity of human beings across national borders, radical demands are being made to tighten asylum laws, for deportation and isolation, and highly standardized strategies of exclusion, selection and "storage" are being implemented. But what are the calculations behind camps, walls, refugee shelters and border security facilities? Who profits from them? And above all: who creates the structures and framework conditions that make it possible to profit from the treatment of refugees? Christian Welzbacher takes a detective-like approach to the infrastructures of deterrence that undermine the last values of a critical democratic society with a sober cost-benefit calculation.

**Christian Welzbacher**, born in 1970, lives in Berlin. In addition to his work as an author, Welzbacher also works as an exhibition organizer and translator. He has received several awards for his work, including the Theodor Fischer Prize of the Central Institute for Art History and the Critics' Award of the Federal Chamber of Architects. Most recently published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *Bobby, Requiem for a Gorilla* (2019).

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**Jan Völker**

*A Universe of Capital. The Overcoming of Terrestrial Reason*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**“The human of the future will be a colonist in space.”**

After a long period of silence surrounding state space programmes, space travel is experiencing a renaissance under the auspices of privatization. Tourists are being transported into space, plans for mining on asteroids are being considered, new sites of humanity are being sought – this is how the colonization of space begins. This goes hand in hand with the creation of a new image of humanity, in which reality is supposed to be in perfect harmony with the imagination. An image, as Jan Völker explains anecdotally and with captivating stringency, from which the unconscious has been eliminated. It not only strives to overcome the limits of reason founded in Kant, but also the image of the earth created by the Apollo missions, which showed it as man's environment and urged concern for the planet. In the eyes of capital, the earth thus proves to be nothing more than a place abandoned in the future, the starting point for a new human reality – left to the coming apocalypse.

Essay  
Softcover  
ca. 180 pages  
2025

**Jan Völker**, born in 1976, is a philosopher and lives in Leipzig. He studied general and comparative literature, philosophy and cultural studies in Leipzig, Berlin and Paris. He completed his doctorate in 2009 with a thesis on the “aesthetics of liveliness” in Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*.

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# MINIMA



**Marcus Steinweg**

*Minima Amoralia*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

## **"Steinweg: hard, resistant" – Jean-Luc Nancy**

The title of the book refers to Theodor W. Adorno's *Minima Moralia*. Not to contradict him, but to remind us that for Adorno, too, thinking is only possible as a conflict with the existing, with the zeitgeist, with tradition, with society. Truly moral thinking is amoral. It does not opportunistically come to terms with the economically and ideologically controlled conditions and constraints, but rather questions them, points out their directionality, as well as the fact that no one exists without direction, i.e. freely. The notes collected in this book deal with ghosts, sour milk, Hans Blumenberg, denied drowsiness, non-heroic writing, but also with Heraclitus, the pleasure of language, forgetful water, the materiality of language and the rain-bow, to which every thinking that goes to extremes entrusts itself.

*"Thinking will always struggle with the good. Not because it is in favor of evil, but because it knows that there is no good that does not imply its opposite. That is why politics cannot be substituted by morality, since all morality is the positing of the good while ignoring its inherent evil."*

Essay  
Softcover  
201 pages  
2025

**Marcus Steinweg**, born in Koblenz in 1971, lives as a freelance philosopher in Berlin after various teaching assignments and professorships, including at the Karlsruhe Art Academy. He has been working with the artists Thomas Hirschhorn and Rosemarie Trockel since the 1990s and creates his own philosophical conceptual diagrams. Many of his texts and lectures operate at the interface between art and philosophy.

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## Bernhard Malkmus

### *Skylines. The Life of Birds and the Survival of Humans*

#### **An ancient cultural landscape and a magical bird paradise in the midst of a pandemic and a lack of species**

The English North East is a landscape that reflects the systemic changes to the biosphere caused by 250 years of technological and social revolutions: the richest coal deposits in Britain were mined here until recently, the world's largest shipyards were located here around 1900, and huge chemical agglomerates are still changing the earth's metabolism. Fringed by the mysterious North Sea coast to the east and bleak moorland mountains to the west, this Anglo-Scottish borderland is also an important breeding ground for numerous bird species. Bernhard Malkmus refers to the areas where these flying artists are at home as well as the calligraphy they draw in the air as the "skylines" of seabirds. But for some time now, this bird paradise has been ravaged by the bird flu, which has been bred in industrial animal husbandry and spread by migratory birds all over the world. As Malkmus finds more and more carcasses on his forays, he begins to create a literary monument to the animals.

***Skylines* is a delightful combination of travel diary and essay, in which natural and cultural history are interwoven: a song to the sea, a hymn to the grace and resilience of seabirds, a meditation on home and migration, a search for words of mourning in the face of species extinction around us.**

*"Bernhard Malkmus is a special writer: a lynx-eyed analyst of text and image, a subtle ecological ethicist and a very fine maker of sentences"* – Robert Macfarlane

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Non-fiction  
Hardcover with illustrations  
ca. 228 pages  
2025

**Shortlisted for the W. G. Sebald Literature Prize**

**Bernhard Malkmus**, born in Aschaffenburg in 1973, grew up in the Spessart and near Lisbon, and teaches German and Environmental Humanities at the University of Oxford. Before that, he lived among humans and seabirds on the North Sea coast outside Newcastle upon Tyne. For the Naturkunden series he has previously written *Lynxes. A portrait* and edited a newly revised translation of Peter Matthiessen's *The Snow Leopard*.

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## Johannes Zeilinger

### *Storks. A Portrait*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

#### **“As if the stork had been specially created to stimulate the longing to fly in us humans ...” – Otto Lilienthal**


It brings spring, children, new beginnings. When it stalks through the freshly mown meadows on its long red legs during the summer and clatters loudly in the nests in the evening, not only does the natural environment seem intact, but also the moral order. Ancient Greece already invented a word for the myth that stork children look after their parents in old age. And it is not only because of fairy tales such as *Caliph Stork* that the bird can still be considered monogamous today, although this has long been empirically refuted: fidelity is to the nesting site, not to the partner bird. For centuries, people puzzled over where storks spent the winter, but nowadays it is possible to trace their migration routes in detail using tracking devices. And this also makes it clear that it is changing drastically due to man-made climate change: instead of flying to Africa, they spend the winter in southern Europe and feed on scraps they find at garbage dumps.

Based on his own observations, Johannes Zeilinger tells of a bird about which there is so much more to report than our image of it suggests, despite the 'stork bite', 'stork claw' or the 'stork of the man'.

Non-fiction  
Hardcover with numerous illustrations  
152 pages  
2025

**Johannes Zeilinger**, born in Wolfratshausen in 1948, studied medicine in Würzburg and Berlin, where he worked as a surgeon in private practice from 1983. He is also the author of numerous publications on the work of Karl May, the history of Cyprus and biographical works on Lya de Putti, Frederic A. Cook and B. Traven. In the town of Werben on the Elbe, his second home, storks are his neighbors.

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## Ein Portrait von Steffi Memmert-Lunau



 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

### Steffi Memmert-Lunau

#### *Birches. A Portrait*

**"One could do worse than be a swinger of birches." – Robert Frost**

Radiant, fertile, youthful: the pioneer plant with the delicate, sticky leaves provides people with shimmering shade and a series of festive rites surrounding its flourishing, not only at Pentecost, when young May trees are carried into villages. With tirelessly resourceful reproductive power, the birch grows in the most unlikely places, on the slopes of Mount Etna as well as in peat bogs, and prepares the breeding ground for other tree species and a multitude of fantasies that have shaped poems, rhymes and children's songs, especially in Slavic and Scandinavian culture, but also the Worpswede artists' colony. While the forestry industry held the tree in low esteem and regarded it as disruptive and worthless, today the birch is seen as the savior of the forest, not only warding off fires but also bringing back biodiversity and counteracting the losses caused by climate change.

Non-fiction  
Hardcover with numerous  
illustrations  
160 pages  
2025

**Steffi Memmert-Lunau**, born in 1962 and raised in Halle/Saale, studied Slavic studies and literary history in the Soviet Union during perestroika. After completing her doctorate, she taught at the Institute for Slavic Studies in Greifswald and then worked in Switzerland. She translates books from Russian and publishes essays and travel books. She has been living in Berlin since 2017.

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