

German Book Prize: Shortlist

Raphaela Edelbauer • Miku Sophie Kühmel • Tonio Schachinger •
Norbert Scheuer • Saša Stanišić • Jackie Thomae



Raphaela Edelbauer

Das flüssige Land (The Fluid Land)

Klett-Cotta Verlag

Jury evaluation:

“Das flüssige Land” is a debut that is in equal measure impressive and fantastic – in the truest sense of the word. This novel takes us into a Kafkaesque topography, to a place called Great Oneland, which is not shown on any map and out of which no roads lead. It is a land undermined by a gigantic, constantly expanding cavity, which unmoors everything in this world: buildings, people, but also any sense of time and space. Raphaela Edelbauer creates a supermetaphor of sorts which masterfully connects the physical, psychic, historical and linguistic worlds in their inscrutability. It’s eerie, gripping, ludicrous and virtually unfathomable – in short, fantastic literature.



Biography:

Raphaela Edelbauer was born in Vienna in 1990 and grew up in Hinterbrühl in Lower Austria. She studied language arts at the University of Applied Arts, received a one-year scholarship from the Deutsche Literaturfonds (German Literature Fund) and won the grand prize at the 2018 Rauriser Literaturtage (Rauriser Literature Days) for her work “Entdecker. Eine Poetik” (“Discoverers. A Poetics”). In 2018, she received the audience award at the Bachmann Prize in Klagenfurt.

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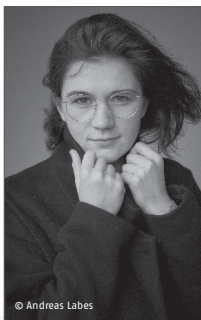
Miku Sophie Kühmel

Kintsugi

S. Fischer Verlag

Jury evaluation:

"Kintsugi" is a psychological chamber play, an ensemble novel set on the sandy soil of the Mark Brandenburg region. Four people, three men and a young woman, come together for a weekend at a country house. Each character narrates in his or her own voice, from his or her own perspective. The relationships between the lovers Max and Reik, their old friend Tonio and his daughter Pega are like the pieces of broken pottery mended with gold in the Japanese art of Kintsugi: the cracks visible, beautiful in their imperfection. A highly readable and extremely contemporary novel that examines our present-day ideas of love and lifestyles, parenthood, sexuality, success, career and bonds.



Biography:

Miku Sophie Kühmel was born in 1992 in Gotha, where she grew up. She studied literature in Berlin and New York, with Roger Willemssen and Daniel Kehlmann, amongst others. Today, she works as an author and podcast producer dedicated to the spoken and written word. Since 2013, her short prose has appeared regularly in magazines and anthologies. In 2018, her manuscript "Fellwechsel" ("Coat Shedding") was on the shortlist for the Blogbuster novel award. "Kintsugi" is her first novel.

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Tonio Schachinger

Nicht wie ihr (Not Like You)

Verlag Kremayr & Scheriau

Jury evaluation:

The only thing Ivo has always been good at is playing football. Now he – who used to be nothing but another “Yugo” among many in Vienna – plays for Everton, earns 100,000 euros a week, is married to a beautiful woman, has two charming children and shares his view of the world with us: endearing and presumptuous, naive and calculating, charming and vicious. Yet “Nicht wie ihr” is much more than a novel about the world of professional sports: In this book, with great ease, Tonio Schachinger negotiates questions of belonging, migration, the ever-present fear of decline, ideals of masculinity and, last but not least, love, between football turfs, locker rooms and expensive cars.



Biography:

Tonio Schachinger was born in New Delhi in 1992, grew up in Nicaragua and Vienna, and is currently studying German language and literature at the University of Vienna and language arts at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. “Nicht wie ihr” (“Not Like You”) is his first novel.

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Autor

Winterbienen (Winter Bees)

Verlag C.H.Beck

Jury evaluation:

The plot of this novel is based on fictional diaries from the war years of 1944/45, allegedly left behind by Egidius Arimond, an erstwhile teacher, beekeeper, Casanova and epileptic. Grippingly and with great precision, Norbert Scheuer unfolds the story of his anti-hero, who smuggles Jews over the Belgian border to make money to pay for his medication, thereby standing up to the regime in his own way, albeit not for noble reasons. Egidius becomes a witness and chronicler of a landscape mangled by bombs and the associated destruction of the natural and human order. And it happens in an almost restrained manner, ultimately allowing Egidius to become a "hero" unable to escape his fate after all.

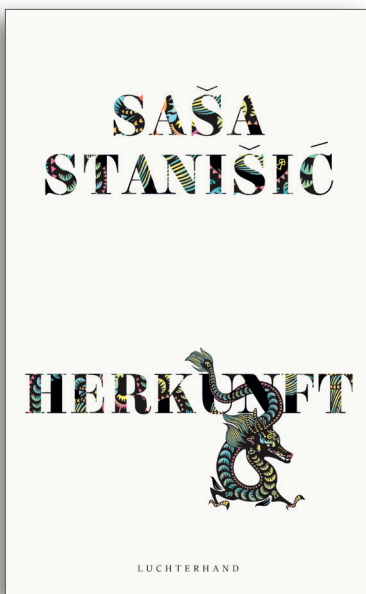


Biography:

Norbert Scheuer was born in 1951 and works as a freelance writer in the Eifel region. He has won numerous literary awards. Most recently, he published the novels "Die Sprache der Vögel" ("The Language of Birds") (2015), which was nominated for the Leipzig Book Fair Prize, and "Am Grund des Universums" ("At the Bottom of the Universe") (2017). His novel "Überm Rauschen" ("Above the Rush") (2009) was shortlisted for the German Book Prize and, in 2010, was the "Book of the City of Cologne".

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Saša Stanišić

Herkunft (Origin)

Luchterhand Literaturverlag

Jury evaluation:

An autobiographical novel about the question of our era, a self-interrogation in fragments and arabesques: about the gift and burden of origins, about finding a new language with a core "as hard as that of a plum" and about the birth of a writer. Along twisted paths, "Herkunft" leads us to Višegrad, Bosnia, to the village of the protagonist's grandparents and to Heidelberg, where he ended up as a refugee from the war as an adolescent. Slyly and nimbly, the narrator never lets down his guard against himself – with intelligence, humour and a way with words, without falling prey to the "kitsch of belonging" or the pathos of victimhood. The enchanting delight he takes in telling his story renders onerous themes light as a feather – the treating of wounds through literature.



Biography:

Saša Stanišić was born in Višegrad (Yugoslavia) in 1978 and has been living in Germany since 1992. His debut novel "Wie der Soldat das Grammophon repariert" ("How the Soldier Repairs the Gramophone") was translated into 31 languages. His novel "Vor dem Fest" ("Before the Feast") was a SPIEGEL bestseller and won the Leipzig Book Fair Prize. "Fallensteller" ("Trappers"), his book of short stories, received the Rheingau Literature Prize and Schubart Literature Prize. Saša Stanišić lives and works in Hamburg.

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Jackie Thomae

Brüder (Brothers)

Hanser Berlin

Jury evaluation:

“Brüder” is a sweeping novel that can be situated in the American narrative tradition but whose unusual plot about the two very different sons of an African father takes us from their childhood in East Germany out into the wide world to London, Paris and South America. With utter nonchalance, the book tackles topics such as skin colour, success, love, the question of living right and, above all, the meaning of fate, origins and influence. “Brüder” is an incredibly gripping read, but Jackie Thomae also manages to weave existential questions and themes into it with great ease, almost in passing.



Biography:

Jackie Thomae, born in Halle (Saale) in 1972, is a journalist and television writer. Her successful debut novel “Momente der Klarheit” (“Moments of Clarity”) came out in 2015. She lives in Berlin.

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