

## German Book Prize: Shortlist

Fatma Aydemir • Kristine Bilkau • Daniela Dröscher •  
Jan Faktor • Kim de l'Horizon • Eckhart Nickel



### Fatma Aydemir **Dschinn's**

Carl Hanser Verlag, February 2022

#### Jury evaluation:

Hüseyin Yilmaz was a first-generation "Gastarbeiter" ("guest worker") in West Germany. After slaving away non-stop for 30 years, he dies at the moment when his dream of retiring to his very own flat in Istanbul has finally come true. His death brings together his family, some of whose members have fallen out with each other, in this flat – with all their fears, hopes and despair. Aydemir reveals their secrets meticulously and with sensitivity. The individual family members' perspectives show that, despite the differences that separate the generations, they are close to each other as regards one thing, at least: a feeling of homelessness. "Dschinn's" combines questions of identity, gender and origins with the themes of racism and discrimination, while also taking on an aspect of recent German history that has barely been addressed in literature before.

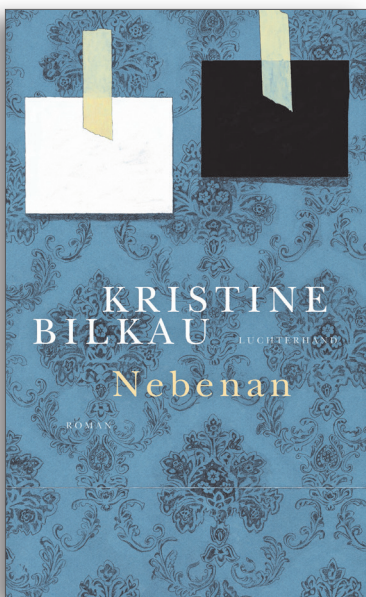


#### Biography:

Fatma Aydemir was born in Karlsruhe in 1986 and now lives in Berlin. She is a columnist and editor at taz. In 2017, Hanser published her debut novel "Ellbogen" (Elbow), for which she received the Klaus-Michael Kühne Prize and Franz Hessel Prize. In 2019, she co-edited the anthology "Eure Heimat ist unser Albtraum" (Your Homeland Is Our Nightmare) with Hengameh Yaghoobifarah. Her second novel "Dschinn's" (Genie) (Hanser 2022) won the Robert Gernhardt Prize.

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### Kristine Bilkau **Nebenan**

Luchterhand Literaturverlag, March 2022

#### Jury evaluation:

The ceramic artist Julia is in a loving relationship but desperately longs for a child. Astrid, a mother of three grown sons, is ready to retire gradually from her professional life as a doctor. Through the fates of two women in provincial northern German, Kristine Bilkau masterfully shows the abysses that lurk in seemingly everyday lives. The power of this subtly narrated novel lies in the details and small tipping points – between fertility clinics and mothers that have disappeared, forgotten, dreamlike landscapes and illegal rubbish dumps, between stagnation and change. Again and again, the seemingly solid ground is pulled out from under the feet not only of the characters in the book but also of its readers. Yet “Nebenan” also bears witness to the fact that a life without trust is bound to fail.



#### Biography:

Kristine Bilkau, born in 1974, studied history and American studies in Hamburg and New Orleans. Her first novel “Die Glücklichen” (The Lucky Ones) received the Franz Tumlér Prize, Klaus-Michael Kühne Prize and Hamburg Prize for Literature and has been translated into several languages. Before “Nebenan” (Next Door), Luchterhand Literaturverlag published her book “Eine Liebe, in Gedanken” (A Love, in Thoughts). Kristine Bilkau lives with her family in Hamburg.

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Daniela Dröscher

### Lügen über meine Mutter

Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch, August 2022

**Jury evaluation:**

Hunsrück, mid-1980s, a woman's life in provincial Germany. The daughter of Silesian refugees, she had hoped for more from life, but her career-driven husband now controls everything: the household finances, daily fights and her overweight body, of which even her own child is ashamed. When the mother squanders her inheritance in a bizarre act of self-defence and locks out the master of the house, the façade of this petty bourgeois, upwardly mobile family finally crumbles once and for all. Daniela Dröscher presents her literary microsociological account, interspersed with essayistic parentheses, from the child's perspective. The story of the mother's sorrow, no longer beyond dreams, only ends when a new game begins – that of her own family.

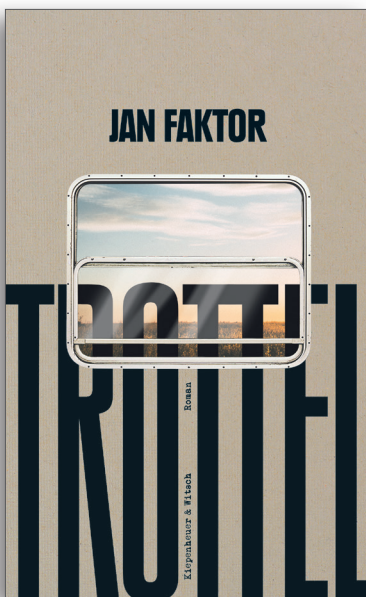


**Biography:**

Daniela Dröscher was born in 1977, grew up in Rhineland-Palatinate and now lives in Berlin. She writes prose, essays and theatre texts. She studied German, philosophy and English in Trier and London and received her doctorate in media studies from the University of Potsdam. Her debut novel "Die Lichter des George Psalmanazar" (The Lights of George Psalmanazar) was published by Berlin Verlag in 2009, followed by the short story collection "Gloria", the novel "Pola" and the memoir "Zeige deine Klasse" (Show Your Class) with Hoffmann & Campe. She has won the Anna Seghers Prize, among other awards.

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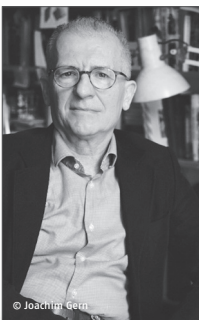


### Jan Faktor **Trottel**

Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch, September 2022

#### Jury evaluation:

Jan Faktor's novel "Trottel" combines contemporary history and the story of one person's life in a very distinctive way: it describes an outsider's path from Prague to Berlin, from worker in a real-life socialist system to writer engaged in literary mourning. The loss of a son lies at the heart of the novel. Faktor pulls off the great feat of generating humour through a story about grief. He takes aim at both former East Germany and present-day West Germany, at the literary scene and, last but not least, at his narrator's self-avowed "bungling". The result is a provocative, sometimes disturbing picaresque novel about the question of "whether a bungler can be happy in life". It is a book that also criticises our society, mercilessly but very helpfully.



#### Biography:

Jan Faktor was born in Prague in 1951 and moved to East Berlin in 1978. He worked as a kindergarten teacher and locksmith. In the 1980s, he discovered the "Rückläufige Wörterbuch der deutschen Gegenwartssprache" (Reverse Dictionary of the Contemporary German Language) for experimental poetry. Until 1989, he was involved almost exclusively in the underground literary scene. In 1989/90, he co-founded the newspaper of the Neue Forum (New Forum) movement.

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### Kim de l'Horizon **Blutbuch**

DuMont Buchverlag, July 2022

#### Jury evaluation:

In the life of Kim, the non-binary main character of this novel, the copper beech ("Blutbuche", or "blood beech", in German) in the garden is both origin and vanishing point. The tree was planted when their grandmother – "Großmeer" ("great sea"), as she is called in Bernese German – was born. As a child, Kim risks drowning in the sea of this larger-than-life figure, who also holds a magical fascination for them. When dementia robs Großmeer of her knowledge and dominance, Kim begins to form their own language: for identity and physicality and for origins and influences. Since there is no straight path in this jumble, the novel cannot be linear in form. Experimental and daring, it is suddenly crude and obscene one moment and subtle and intense the next. A touching and moving novel that uses surprising narrative levels and perspectives.



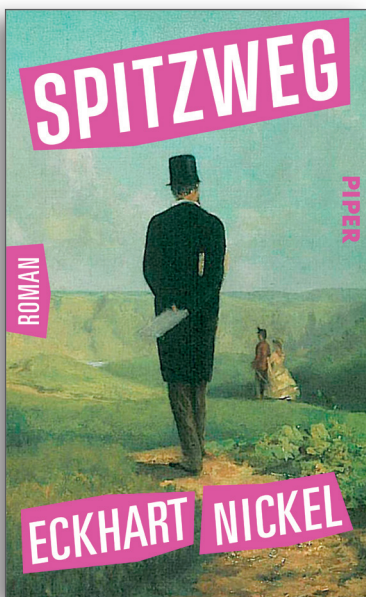
#### Biography:

Kim de l'Horizon, born in Bern in 1992, studied German and film and theatre studies in Zurich and literary writing in Biel. They are currently studying for a Master's degree in transdisciplinarity at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). A member of the collective eoboff and of the editorial team of the literary magazine delirium, they have won the Treibhaus & OpenNet competitions at the Solothurn Literature Days for prose, the Textstreich competition for poetry, the Dramenprozessor 2020 award for playwrights and a short film competition organised by Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung. Their work has appeared in various literary magazines.

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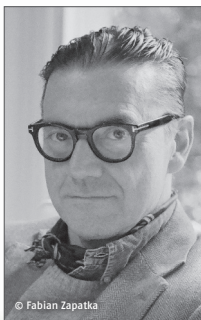


### Eckhart Nickel **Spitzweg**

Piper Verlag, April 2022

#### Jury evaluation:

With his novel "Spitzweg", Eckhart Nickel achieves something great: what begins as a story about schoolchildren turns into a masterful reflection on the relationship between art and life. He very deliberately grapples with aesthetic questions and, by turning the reader into a student, renders even complex discourses comprehensible. With linguistic confidence and great irony, "Spitzweg" plays with exaggerated erudition, convoluted sentence structures and a seemingly antiquated vocabulary. Despite its philosophical depth, the novel is extremely fast paced and even has comedic passages. A great delight to read, this intelligent book shows us another way culture can be discussed.



#### Biography:

Eckhart Nickel was born in Frankfurt am Main in 1966 and studied art history and literature in Heidelberg and New York. He was part of the pop-literary quintet "Tristesse Royale" (1999) and made his debut in 2000 with the short story collection "Was ich davon hält" (What I Think About It). Together with Christian Kracht, Nickel ran the literary magazine Der Freund in Kathmandu. Today he writes mainly for Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and its magazine. In 2019, he received the Friedrich-Hölderlin-Förderpreis (Friedrich Hölderlin award) of the city of Bad Homburg.