



November 11-14, 2021 | [festivalneueliteratur.org](http://festivalneueliteratur.org) | [@festneuelit](https://twitter.com/festneuelit) | [#turnandfacethestrange](https://twitter.com/turnandfacethestrange) |

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## FESTIVAL NEUE LITERATUR RETURNS WITH VIRTUAL FAIR AS WE “TURN AND FACE THE STRANGE”

New York, October 30, 2021 – After postponing last year’s festival, **Festival Neue Literatur (November 11–14)** returns this fall to bring German-language writers from Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland to American audiences, alongside notable U.S. writers. The theme for this year’s festival is “Turn and Face the Strange,” curated by writers and translators **Alta Price** and **Tess Lewis**.

Now entering its second decade highlighting important work from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and the U.S., the theme of the 2021 festival is “Turn and Face the Strange.” The writers featured this year are **Anna Baar**, **Isabel Fargo Cole**, **Judith Keller**, **Benjamin Quaderer**, **Sasha Marianna Salzmann**, and **Ivna Žić**. For the first time in festival history, an author from Liechtenstein joins the lineup. Each year, the festival pairs the six German-language authors with two U.S. authors, bringing diverse perspectives and sensibilities into an excitingly dynamic intercultural conversation. This year’s American writers are **Joshua Cohen** and **Helen Phillips**.

Translators **Jennifer Croft**, **Katrine Jensen**, **Tess Lewis**, **Sawako Nakayasu**, **Mary Ann Newman**, and **Peter Wortsman** will be participating in the festival’s signature translation event, alongside **Isabel Fargo Cole** and Friedrich Ulfers Prize winner **Jill Schoolman**.

The eleventh edition of Festival Neue Literatur invites authors and attendees alike to ***Turn and Face the Strange***. The books featured this year explore the strangeness, uncanniness, and eeriness that sometimes lurks just beneath the surface of daily life and can break out full force in times of change—whether large or small, internal or external, real or imagined, spatial or temporal. We start with out-of-body experiences, the loneliness of a

con-man in a tiny country, a lost twin, time travel in and out of complicated pasts and no less complicated presents, poisonous bees, a miracle or two, deer-headed intruders, along with a series of far-fetched women—and then things get really strange.

The writers and publishing luminaries featured this year find truths that explain and define their characters and cross borders of time and place to create ageless maps of identity and connection.

“There are certainly more things in heaven and earth than most of us have dreamt of or ever will. The thrill of Festival Neue Literatur is having eight writers challenge and expand our notions of what is ordinary and what is strange. When was the last time you looked, *really looked*, at what you take for granted and at what makes you feel unsettled? Let’s do this, in November, together.”—Tess Lewis

“FNL is the country’s only German-language literary festival in English; how obvious and yet odd a proposition that is. Sometimes a small change in perspective can bring your world into new focus. Previous years’ events have examined cultural clichés—both our own and others’—and this year we’ll keep questioning. We’re thrilled to double down on the excitement of hearing stories from afar and realizing they resonate with our own experiences of what it means to exist right here, right now, in these bodies, and in this society.”—Alta L. Price

November 11–14, Festival Neue Literatur will feature hybrid and virtual-only events for attendees in New York and at home. 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. This year’s authors twist and turn it to tame the unfamiliar and turn the familiar inside out, expanding—even deepening—our horizons. 2021 Festival Neue Literatur will feature:

**Anna Baar (Austria)** - Anna Baar has published numerous short stories, essays and poems in magazines and anthologies. Her first novel *Die Farbe des Granatapfels* (“The Color of the Pomegranate”) was published in 2015. An excerpt from the manuscript was shortlisted for the Bachmann Prize at the Festival of German-Language Literature 2015. The novel was ranked number 1 on the ORF Best List for three months and was awarded the Rotahorn Literature Prize. For her second novel *Als ob sie träumend gingen* (“As If They Were Walking in a Dream”), Baar received the Theodor Körner Prize.

**Joshua Cohen (U.S.)** – Joshua Cohen’s books include the novels *Moving Kings*, *Book of Numbers*, *Witz*, *A Heaven of Others*, and *Cadenza for the Schneidermann Violin Concerto*, the short fiction collection *Four New Messages*, and the nonfiction collection *Attention: Dispatches from a Land of Distraction*. His most recent novel, *The Netanyahu: an account of a minor and ultimately even negligible episode in the history of a very famous family*, appeared last year. His web-based project, *PCKWCK*, the world’s first live-streamed, live-written novel, involved the participation of nearly two million Internet users across the globe. Cohen was awarded the 2013 Matanel Prize for Jewish Writers, and in 2017 was named one of Granta’s Best Young American Novelists.

**Isabel Fargo Cole (Germany)** - Isabel Fargo Cole grew up in New York City and has lived in Berlin as a writer and translator since 1995. Her translation of Wolfgang Hilbig’s *Old Rendering Plant* received the Kurt & Helen Wolff Prize in 2018, and her other translations of work by Wolfgang Hilbig and Franz Fühmann have been nominated for several awards. Since 2005 she has published short fiction and essays in German. Her debut novel *Die grüne Grenze* was nominated for the Klaus Michael Kühne Prize and the Prize of the Leipzig Book Fair. Her second novel, *Das Gift der Biene* (“The Poison of the Bees”), was selected for the 2019 LiteraTour Nord. From 2006–2016, she co-edited *no man’s land*, an online magazine for new German literature in English. In 2013, she was a co-organizer of the initiative “Writers Against Mass Surveillance.”

**Judith Keller (Switzerland)** - Judith Keller studied German language and literature in Zurich as well as literary writing at the Swiss Literature Institute in Biel and the German Literature Institute in Leipzig. She also studied German as a foreign language in Berlin and Bogotá and was editor of the literary magazine *Edit*. In 2014 she received the New German Fiction Award for her short story *Wo ist das letzte Haus?* (*The Last House*) which was subsequently translated into English by Katy Derbyshire and published through Readux Books. Her book *Die Fragwürdigen* ("The Questionable Ones"), won an award from both the City of Zurich and the Canton of Zurich. *Die Fragwürdigen* was also performed as a theater production and featured as an audio play for Swiss radio.

**Helen Phillips (U.S.)** – Helen Phillips is the author of five books, including, most recently, the novel *The Need*, a nominee for the 2019 National Book Award, a *TIME Magazine* Top 10 Book of 2019, and a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2019. Her collection *Some Possible Solutions* received the 2017 John Gardner Fiction Book Award. Her novel *The Beautiful Bureaucrat*, a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2015, was a finalist for the New York Public Library's Young Lions Award and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. Her collection *And Yet They Were Happy* was named a notable collection by The Story Prize. She is the recipient of a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award and the Italo Calvino Prize.

**Benjamin Quaderer (Austria/Liechtenstein)** - Benjamin Quaderer, born in Feldkirch, Austria, and raised in Liechtenstein, studied literary writing in Hildesheim and Vienna. He was co-editor of the literary magazine *BELLA triste* and part of the artistic direction of "PROSANOVA 2014 - Festival for Young Literature." *Für immer die Alpen* ("The Alps are Forever") is his first novel. For an excerpt from it, he received the 2nd prize at the Open Mike 2016 and a work grant from the Berlin Senate.

**Sasha Marianna Salzmann (Germany)** - Sasha Marianna Salzmann was born in Volgograd and grew up in Moscow. In 1995 they emigrated with their family to Germany and studied literature, theater, and media at the University of Hildesheim. They have been awarded multiple accolades for their plays, and *Außer sich (Beside Myself)* was shortlisted for the German Book Prize in 2017. Salzmann now teaches creative writing in Germany, Turkey, Moldova, Spain, Italy, and the U.S.

**Ivna Žic (Switzerland)** - Ivna Žic studied Applied Theater Studies, Theater Directing, and Dramatic Writing in Giessen, Hamburg, and Graz. Since 2011 she has been working as a freelance author, lecturer and director at the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin, Schauspielhaus Vienna, Lucerne Theater, Theater Neumarkt, Schauspiel Essen, Theater St. Gallen, and at uniT. Žic has received numerous scholarships and prizes for her work. Her debut novel *Die Nachkommende* ("Those Who Came Later") was nominated for both the Austrian Book Prize and the Swiss Book Prize in 2019. Ivna Žic lives in Zurich and Vienna.

The Friedrich Ulfers Prize will be presented at the festival's opening ceremony on November 11 to **Jill Schoolman**, Founder, Publisher, and Editor-in-Chief of Archipelago Books. Tess Lewis will present Schoolman 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 Susan Bernofsky, Barbara Perlmutter, Barbara Epler, Burton Pike, Robert Weil, Sara Bershtel, and 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 2021 FNL Reader is available for download in an electronic version on the festival website at [www.festivalneueliteratur.org](http://www.festivalneueliteratur.org).

**FNL 2021**

**EVENTS LINE-UP**

All FNL events are free and in English.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 12PM ET – [Register here](#)**

*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 – **Anna Baar, Isabel Fargo Cole, Judith Keller, Benjamin Quaderer, Sasha Marianna Salzmann, and Ivna Žic** – as well as students from Columbia University, New York University, and Rutgers University. Moderated by festival co-curator and translator Alta Price.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 6PM – [Register here](#)**

*The Author's Voice*

The six German-language authors of Festival Neue Literatur pair up with past FNL participants from the United States to give a sampling from their work, providing a taste of new writing from Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland. **Hosted by award-winning novelist Monique Truong.**

Featuring: **Anna Baar, Isabel Fargo Cole, Judith Keller, Benjamin Quaderer, Sasha Marianna Salzmann, and Ivna Žic.** Hosted by **Monique Truong** and featuring English excerpts read by notable U.S. writers and past FNL participants **John Keene, Idra Novey, and John Wray.**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1PM – [Register here](#)**

*Poisoned Roots*

The after-effects of war—hot or cold—reverberate through generations. This panel will explore how experiences of war shape even generations and societies who believe they've been spared. This is nothing new: as Homer warned, 'Beware the toils of war... the huge dragnet sweeping up the world.' Can literature build antibodies by bringing those toxins to light?

Featuring: **Isabel Fargo Cole, Ivna Žic, Anna Baar, and Joshua Cohen.** Moderated by Alta Price

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 4PM – [Register here](#)**

*Who Are You Calling Strange?*

Conversations that explore how translation can call into question established norms and narratives (political, social, historical, and linguistic)

Featuring: **Sawako Nakayasu** and **Katrine Jensen** will discuss how translation can thwart or provide alternative approaches to dominant linguistic or cultural expectations. **Jill Schoolman** of Archipelago Books and translators **Mary Ann Newman** and **Peter Wortsman** will discuss how a small indie press can change the literary landscape and how the editor/translator collaboration enriches a translated text, moderated by Tess Lewis. **Isabel Fargo Cole** will talk with **Jennifer Croft** about writing as translators and translating as writers as well as creating narratives of self between languages.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1PM – [Register here](#)**

*Alternate Realities*

How can fiction help us question our assumptions about what seems most familiar? This panel will explore the way literature can sharpen our sense of realit(ies) by unsettling us.

Featuring: **Sasha Marianna Salzmann, Judith Keller, Benjamin Quaderer, and Helen Phillips.** Moderated by Tess Lewis.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 4PM – Register here**

*A Celebration of Translation*

Closing remarks from our curators and panelists, video of some of the top moments from this year's Festival Neue Literatur.

**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 New York, the German Consulate General New York, the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, the Consulate General of Switzerland in New York, Columbia University School of the Arts, Deutsches Haus at NYU, and the Goethe-Institut New York. All FNL events are free of charge, though RSVPs are required due to limited seating.