



FIFTY YEARS IN THE MIDST OF LITERATURE

lcb
rcp



LITERARISCHES COLLOQUIUM BERLIN

FIFTY YEARS IN THE MIDST OF LITERATURE

- 02 S-Bahn to Arcadia**
- 04 A stage for literature**
- 06 In dialogue with the world**
- 08 A place of reflection**
- 10 Talent forge**
- 12 Translators: The mineworkers of language**
- 14 Guesthouse**
- 16 Solid relationships**
- 18 Language in the age of technology**
- 20 Interfaces – The LCB in the digital age**
- 22 Prehistory – The house and its occupants**
- 23 A place to convene and receive**



WE THANK THE ERNST VON SIEMENS ART FOUNDATION FOR ITS GENEROUS SUPPORT.

»The Colloquium, viewed from abroad,
is an irreplaceable model, a shining island«

PAUL NIZON

S-Bahn to Arcadia

A stately approach, mansion behind enormous trees, grand staircase, creaking parquet, molded ceilings, arcades and turrets, and then the wonderful »English« view down to the lake below – it is one of this city's ironies that the spirit of postwar modernism in the early 1960s found its home in a fancy, run-down villa built in Imperial Germany. In frugal West Berlin, just after the Wall went up, Walter Höllerer had the infectious vision of developing an artists' workshop for writers, theater people and filmmakers, a home for language and literature in the age of technology. The discovery of an empty terrace hotel at a gorgeous location in Wannsee turned out to be a stroke of luck. Close to the S-Bahn railway station, it was suitable both as a guesthouse as well as for experimenting with different events.

The »Literarisches Colloquium Berlin« (LCB), founded in 1963 with start-up funds from the Ford Foundation and supported by the Senate of Berlin, soon became a focal point of international gatherings and a platform for public discussion. Meetings of »Gruppe 47,« the San Francisco poets, itinerant theater companies, and writers from East and West filled the house with life and laid the blueprint of the literary scene we're familiar with today.

Fifty years in the midst of literature. The Literarisches Colloquium Berlin has continually had to redefine itself. Today it plays an important role as an event location and guesthouse, as a workshop and »talent forge« for authors and translators. Its now traditional literary review *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter*, its Internet projects and promotional programs have helped it continue its original mission right down to the present. The LCB is a place of lively literary exchange, an institution with an international presence.

FIFTY YEARS IN THE MIDST OF LITERATURE

LITERARISCHES COLLOQUIUM BERLIN



»We're dealing with the cream of the German literary public.«

INGEBORG HARMS, DIE ZEIT

A stage for literature

If the Literarisches Colloquium, together with Gruppe 47, is described as the seed of the modern German literary scene, then mainly because of its public events. Höllerer's *Literatur im technischen Zeitalter* and a series of readings and discussions with authors such as Heimito von Doderer, Nathalie Sarraute, John Dos Passos and Ingeborg Bachmann succeeded in capturing the spirit of the time and marked the beginning of a development that made literary discussion a public affair.

Even today the LCB is a place where writers and their readers come together, where critics and hosts reflect on written and spoken text, always in search of the literary. A variety of theme-based series, new publications, »Studio LCB« radio broadcasts with their worldwide coverage, readings in a cozy, familiar setting, but also more festive, lively occasions such as the yearly summer party or our »Small Publishers on Lake Wannsee« garden fair – it is public events like these that make the Literarisches Colloquium a forum for conversations about literature. Many events can now be heard online anytime at www.lesungen.net.

FIFTY YEARS IN THE MIDST OF LITERATURE

BRET EASTON ELLIS AND DENIS SCHECK



ILSE AICHINGER



ANTONIO TABUCCHI AND MAIKE ALBATH



MICHAEL LENTZ READING.



HEINER MÜLLER AND WALTER HÖLLERER



A. L. KENNEDY UND BERNHARD ROBEN

»Here arose in innumerable encounters what Goethe called ›world literature‹: a network of awareness and recognition of the other as an equal.«

ADOLF MUSCHG

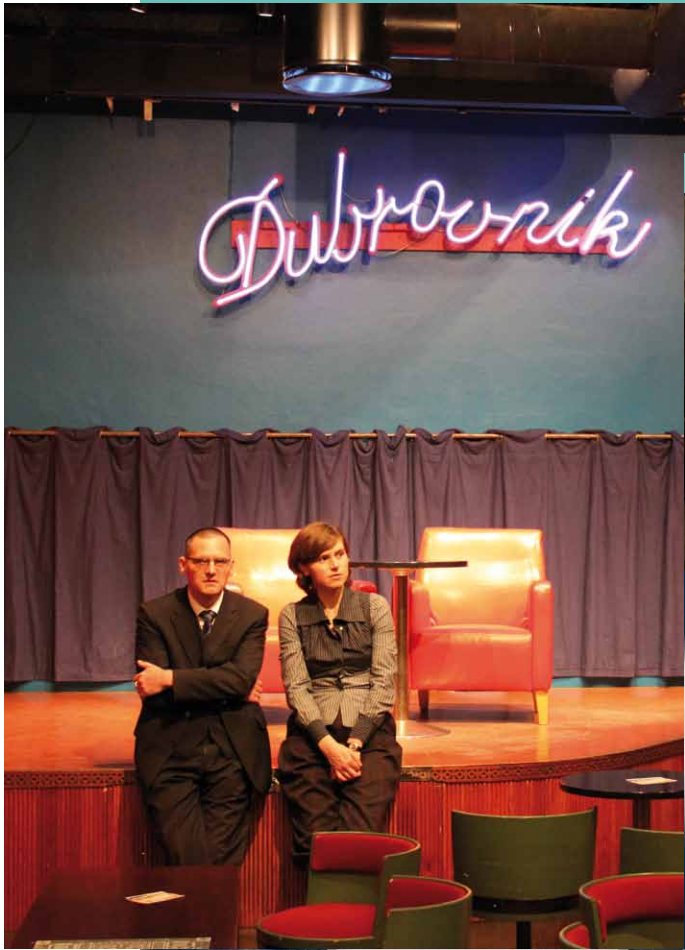
In dialogue with the world

The LCB was conceived from the very start as an international venture. Walter Höllerer, the »gifted collector of people, igniter of talents, ringleader of the present« (A. Muschg), made it a meeting point of East and West in close proximity to Cold War borders, a venue for writers and filmmakers of various backgrounds and temperaments. These traditions continue today, even if the political context has changed. The LCB's contacts to Central and Eastern Europe have been particularly strong since the 1990s.

China and India are now on its radar too, whereas older, traditional ties extend to the United States. Partners from around the world have come to treasure the LCB as an ambassador of contemporary German literature with project series such as »Publishing Metropolises« or »The Diversity of German.« Each year translators of German literature from around the world meet at the LCB, establishing ties to authors and critics as well as to publishers in the city. Berlin, a »free port« of art – the LCB makes the most of this, and is itself a magnet in the gravitational field of literature.

FIFTY YEARS IN THE MIDST OF LITERATURE

JUDITH SCHALANSKY AND BENJAMIN STEIN IN HELSINKI, 2010



IN L'VIV, UKRAINE, 2006



CHINUA ACHEBE, 1988



WEEK OF KOREAN LITERATURE, 1992

»If, apart from the academy, one institution has influenced the literary life of three generations, then without reservation the Literarisches Colloquium Berlin. Anyone who doubts it should ask the writers, translators and listeners living throughout the world. He won't find one among them who hasn't found something meaningful there for his literary education.«

MICHAEL KRÜGER

A place of reflection

The *Werkstattgespräch* or »workshop conversation« between writers has a long tradition at the LCB, beginning with Gruppe 47. Today's author meetings, entitled »Ein Tunnel über der Spree,« usually start with a chosen theme – »The Start of a Novel,« »Pull and Suggestion,« »Writing the Present?« – then move on to discussions about new and unpublished texts.

But also the readings and workshop conversations in conjunction with the Alfred Döblin Prize, an initiative of Günter Grass to support writers in completing their manuscripts, focus on writing as a craft and don't shy away from nuts-and-bolts discussion. Colloquia on poetry criticism, conferences on »Poetry and the Big City,« on »The Poetry of Experimentation« or »Cultures of Reading« combine literature, criticism and philology, and help make the LCB a place for reflecting on contemporary literature.

FIFTY YEARS IN THE MIDST OF LITERATURE



MEETING OF THE GRUPE 47, 1965



»EIN TUNNEL ÜBER DER SPREE«, 2009

»The Sagrada Família of workshops.«

LARISSA BOEHNING
ON THE LCB'S PROSE WORKSHOP

Talent forge

The LCB »would essentially like to be for young writers what music conservatories have been for budding musicians and art colleges for up-and-coming visual artists. We certainly don't believe that you can replace talent or breed genius by drumming rules into people's heads, but we do hope that intense work with writers can offer some positive impulses to talented and interested young people and possibly even guide them on their development as writers.« This invitation, addressed to writer Nicolas Born in 1963, encapsulates the LCB's ambition of promoting writers in the early phase of their development by offering critical support.

The prose workshop in 1963-64 with its collaborative novel *The Guesthouse* (and writers-in-residence the likes of Hubert Fichte, Hermann Peter Piwitt, Hans Christoph Buch, Peter Bichsel and Elfriede Gerstl) was how it all began, followed by workshops on playwriting, later for radio plays and translating. The »new« prose workshops were started in 1997 and spurred on by numerous success stories: Georg Klein and Judith Hermann, Inka Parei and Sherko Fatah, Rainer Merkel and David Wagner, Zsuzsa Bánk and Thomas von Steinaecker counted among the participants. Parallel to this are the meetings for translators of foreign literature into German, which enliven the LCB on autumn weekends. The LCB's translators' workshops are the showcase project of practice-oriented continuing education for literary translators into German.

FIFTY YEARS IN THE MIDST OF LITERATURE

PROSASCHREIBEN, 1963



AUTORENWERKSTATT PROSA, 2001

*»It's not important to look the people in the mouth [...];
it's important to look yourself in the mouth.«*

KLAUS REICHERT AT THE LCB TRANSLATORS' CONFERENCE IN 1966

Translators: The mineworkers of language

»Shouldn't we try, for once, to consider translations their own literary genre?« An intelligent thought, uttered by Friedhelm Kemp in 1966 at the LCB's first translators' conference. The series »A Poem and its Author« offered the opportunity for in-depth discussion, and came at a time when the translator scene in Germany was just beginning to form. Given its international orientation, the theme of translation is a mainstay at the LCB. Translators play an ever-greater role in its programs. Conferences, seminars, German-Polish and German-Arabic workshops, and symposia such as »The Mineworkers of Language« have initiated discussions about the history of German as a literary language, have sounded out the scope and elements of the translator's art while sharpening the literary public's understanding of the nature of works in translation.

With the founding of the German Translators' Fund (Deutscher Übersetzerfonds) in 1997, the LCB has been the headquarters of a nationwide institution solely devoted to promoting the art of translation. Numerous initiatives have emerged since 2000 for supporting translators of German literature from all around the world. The »Summer Academy« (Sommerakademie) in August and the International Translators' Meeting (Internationales Übersetzer-treffen) in March, as well as translator-in-residence grants from the S. Fischer Foundation and the Robert Bosch Foundation have all played a part over the years in making the LCB an international ambassador of German literature.

FIFTY YEARS IN THE MIDST OF LITERATURE

YVES BONNEFOY AND FRIEDHELM KEMP



WORKSHOP: JENNY ERPENBECK AND HER TRANSLATORS



WEI TANG AND LIAOYU HUANG,
INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF TRANSLATORS
OF GERMAN LITERATURE, 2012



HINRICH SCHMIDT-HENKEL AND GEORGES-ARTHUR GOLDSCHMIDT



»Sometimes I left my room late in the evening and went down to the deserted ground floor. The floorboards creaked, and pale silhouettes of the figures on the photos emerged from the walls. I didn't turn the light on. As discreetly as possible, I made my way through the empty room. I always found a chair at the window, and listened to the stories that the throng of writers' ghosts, each of them muttering his unending monologue, tried to fob off on me that night.«

ALEŠ ŠTEGER

Guesthouse

The eleven-room LCB guesthouse accommodates event participants as well as our writing and translation fellows – and could certainly tell a tale or two! Our policy of inviting fellows for extended work stays at the LCB is largely determined by grant programs. Grants from the Senate of Berlin, for example, dating back to the 1980s have enabled young German-language writers to come for a period of several months, and have usually marked the start of a close working relationship to our institution and staff. The German Foreign Office and select partners such as the Taiwan Literature Foundation have enabled international guests to participate as well, along with translation fellows of the S. Fischer Foundation and the Robert Bosch Foundation.

The LCB offers peace and quiet as well as inspiration and the opportunity for exchange, not to mention convenient train connections to the heart of Berlin – good conditions for the creation of literature, it seems. Whatever the case, traces of the LCB can be found in numerous literary works – sometimes quite surprisingly and often years later – as well as in autobiographical writings and letters, from Wolfgang Koeppen to Roberto Bolaño.



SCHISCHKIN, 2009



O'NAN, 2009



KEHLMANN, 2000



DENEMARKOVA, 2008

»The place asks the questions.«

BURKHARD SPINNEN ON HIS RESEARCH
AS A »GRENZGÄNGER« IN BOSNIA AND CROATIA

Solid relationships

The LCB maintains close cooperation with a variety of partners, resulting in long-term joint projects. Projects developed with the Leipzig Book Fair include events such as the »Author Special,« »Prose Prognosis« and, especially, since 2005, the »Prize of the Leipzig Book Fair« awarded in three categories. The »Grenzgänger« (Border Crosser) grant program of the Robert Bosch Foundation supports authors in their research on transborder publication projects focused on countries in Central and Eastern Europe as well as North Africa. Novels such as Herta Müller's *The Hunger Angel* or Olga Grjasnowa's debut *All Russians Love Birch Trees*, the documentary films of Vadim Jendreyko (*The Woman with the 5 Elephants*) and Jakob Preuss (*The Other Chelsea*), and photo projects by Frank Gaudlitz and Andrea Diefenbach all received important impulses from it.

The organizational threads of the program – the jury, support and assistance to grant recipients, and promotion of »Grenzgänger« events around the world – all come together at the LCB. Co-operation with the Allianz Cultural Foundation has enabled international author encounters such as »European Borderlands,« the festival series for young literature from EU border states, or the Mediterranean project »The White Sea.« The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia and the International Literature Festival in Leukerbad are strong and consistent partners in presenting and translating Swiss authors, whereas grant programs of the S. Fischer Foundation, the German Foreign Office and Goethe Institute have brought countless international guests to Wannsee. A marathon project since 1990 is »Studio LCB,« a literature broadcast recorded monthly at the LCB and aired on Deutschlandfunk.

FIFTY YEARS IN THE MIDST OF LITERATURE

MELINDA NADJ ABONJI, GRENZGÄNGER 2010



OLGA GRJASNOWA, GRENZGÄNGER 2012



DAVID WAGNER, PRIZE OF THE LEIPZIG BOOK FAIR WINNER 2013

CONCLUSION OF THE JURY, 2006 HERMANN HESSE PRIZE

Language in the age of technology

The appropriation of reality is the appropriation of language. The quarterly review *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter* can therefore only live up to its claims if it reacts in a sensitive way to problems both real and linguistic. Each issue is primarily devoted to contemporary literature, German and international, and its discussion by literary critics and scholars. *Spritz* is edited by Norbert Miller and Joachim Sartorius, and is published four times a year.



»»Literaturport« offers writers from Berlin and Brandenburg a small but comfortably furnished berth on the web, opening up their works to interested readers in an unconventional way. (...) It succeeds in creating a focused, web-friendly interface between authors and readers, which both sides profit from equally.«

CONCLUSION OF THE JURY, 2008 GRIMME ONLINE AWARD

Interfaces – The LCB in the digital age

lcb.de – the LCB has long been on the web, with an address that’s easy to remember. But the possibilities of the Internet have also given rise to new initiatives. Literaturport.de, launched in cooperation with the Brandenburgisches Literaturbüro, went online in 2006. The site offers an encyclopedia of contemporary writers (authorized entries on 1,200 writers from Germany, Austria and Switzerland), an archive of the literary landscape of Berlin and Brandenburg, a navigator through the prizes and grants available in the field of literature, more than 500 audio samples of contemporary literature, as well as a calendar of literary events in Berlin and its environs. Under the heading »literatours,« writers from Berlin, Brandenburg and the Ruhr region invite readers on audio, visual or written tours through their respective region. The web portal was honored with the 2008 Grimme Online Award.

Since 2011, lesungen.net has served as the online portal for the audio archives of the LCB and other promoters like the houses of literature in Basel and Vienna. Countless audio recordings – veritable treasures of words – featuring Günter Grass, Richard Ford, Oskar Pastior, Christa Wolf, Salman Rushdie, Ilse Aichinger, Thomas Kling, Max Frisch, Martin Walser and others have since been digitalized and made available online – an audio literature archive made possible by the support of the German Federal Cultural Foundation, the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media, and the S. Fischer Foundation. International translators of German literature are networked at www.uebersetzercolloquium.de – with information about grants and continuing education, an integrated translator database, and a well-used email forum.

FIFTY YEARS IN THE MIDST OF LITERATURE



»The kitchen and basement were superb, cigars were freely available, and my host was a charming person, who moreover went into town every morning and didn't come back until evening time.«

CARL ZUCKMAYER

Prehistory – The house and its occupants

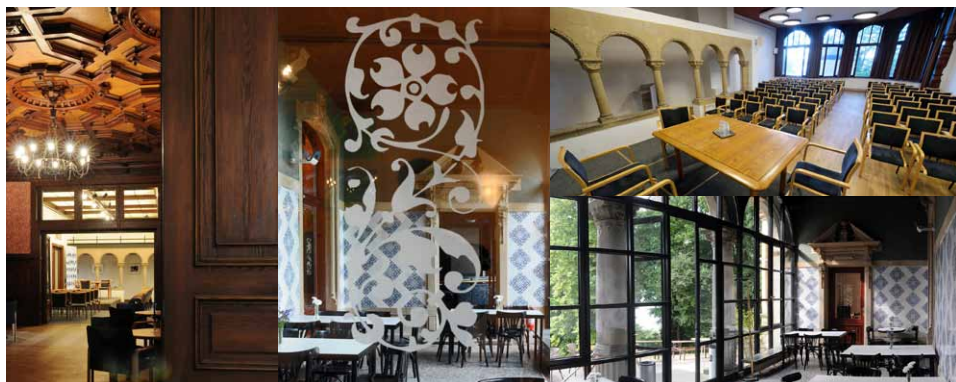
In the early 1880s, Robert Guthmann, a government architect, cement manufacturer and the owner of a limestone factory, acquired lakeside property in the Wannsee Villa Colony. In 1885, he had a mansion built by architects Kayser & von Groszheim – the brick dream-house of the Wilhelmine era. After Guthmann's death in 1924, his grandson and heir, Hans Georg von Morgen – who apparently inhabited the »turret room« himself – rented out part of the house to the banker Dr. Ernst Goldschmidt, a cousin of playwright Carl Zuckmayer's mother. In the summer of 1925, Zuckmayer wrote *The Merry Vineyard* there, at the »castle on Wannsee,« as he called it. Later, industrialist Ernst Possel moved in – for just a few years, before leaving Germany in 1938, estranged by the Nazis. Prof. Paul Otto Rosin (1890-1967) bought the estate in 1934, then emigrated to England in 1935 and was dispossessed (but got it back in 1953 in a restitution procedure).

The building changed hands in rapid succession during the ensuing years until finally, in 1942, the entry in the land register listed the »War Treasury« as its owner. The German navy used it until the end of the war. It was during these years that the garden atrium was given a roof, forming the basis of today's event room. In 1945, American military officers moved into the building, but soon made way for the »Wannsee Casino Hotel.« One prominent guest was Anna Seghers, who stayed at the Casino for several months in 1947, upon her return from exile in Mexico. The hotel business – postcards from the 1950s show that the adjoining building was also being used – seems to have gotten worse from year to year. In 1960, the owner sold the property to the state of Berlin, and the somewhat ramshackle building was restored in the following years. In 1962, Gruppe 47 held a conference at the »Old Casino.« In 1963, it became the birthplace and headquarters of the Literarisches Colloquium Berlin.

FIFTY YEARS IN THE MIDST OF LITERATURE

CASINO HOTEL TERRACE, 1950s





A place to convene and receive

The LCB is largely financed by public funds, as well as by the proceeds from admission fees and rental. For more information about room and building rental or about the LCB as a conference center and film location please contact Corinna Ziegler.

Tel: +49 (0) 30 – 81 69 96 20
ziegler@lcb.de

Literarisches Colloquium Berlin
Am Sandwerder 5
D-14109 Berlin

www.lcb.de

Association

The Literarisches Colloquium Berlin is a registered non-profit society.

Dr. Ingo Fessmann

Society Chairman and Executive Director

Dr. Wolfgang Haus

Chairman of the Board

Dr. Ulrich Janetzki

Managing Director
janetzki@lcb.de

Kerstin Lammers

Director's Office,
Project Coordination
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-38
lammers@lcb.de

Jürgen Jakob Becker

Deputy Director, Program Curator,
Translation Promotion,
Managing Director of the
Deutscher Übersetzerfonds
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-25
becker@lcb.de

Thomas Geiger

Program Curator, »Sprache
im technischen Zeitalter«
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-13
geiger@lcb.de

Thorsten Dönges

Program Curator
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-11
doenges@lcb.de

Inga Niemann

Grenzgänger, Prize
of the Leipzig Book Fair
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-64
niemann@lcb.de

Nadja Grabsch

Lesungen.net, Grenzgänger
Events, Robert Bosch
Foundation Translator Grants
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-33
grabsch@lcb.de

Claudia Schütze

Literaturport.de, Projects
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-34
schuetze@literaturport.de

Solveig Bostelmann

Lesungen.net, Literaturport.de
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-15
bostelmann@lcb.de

Mandy Seidler

Deutsch-Chinesisches Schrift-
stellertreffen, Das weiße Meer
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-15
seidler@lcb.de

Corinna Ziegler

Office Management,
External Events
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-20
ziegler@lcb.de

Christine Wagner

Finance, Projects
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-18
wagner@lcb.de

Alexandra Kühner

Accounting
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-10
kuechner@lcb.de

Olaf Rode

Maintenance
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-0
rode@lcb.de

Barbara Kopsch

Housekeeping
+49 (0) 30 - 816 996-0
kopsch@lcb.de

Anyone who knows the LCB knows the author portraits of Renate von Mangoldt, the LCB's in-house photographer since 1964. A retrospective of her work spanning the last 50 years has just been published by Steidl Verlag (Renate von Mangoldt: *Autoren, Fotografien 1963-2012*; 543 pp., 38 euros). This brochure also contains photos taken by Tobias Bohm.

Photo credits: Renate von Mangoldt: p. 04 (Ellis/Scheck, Aichinger, Lentz, Müller/Höllerer); p. 06 (Koreaner, Achebe); p. 08 (Gruppe 47); p. 10 (Prosaschreiben, Autorenwerkstatt); p. 12 (Bonnefoy/Kemp); Tobias Bohm: all photos of the house and grounds; p. 04 (Tabucchi/Albath, Kennedy/Robben); p. 08 (Tunnel über der Spree); p. 12 (Erpenbeck, Schmidt-Henkel/Goldschmidt, Tang/Huang); p. 14 (Schischkin, Denemarkova, Kehlmann, O'Nan), p. 16 (Nadj Abonji, Grjasnowa, Wagner); p. 20 (Rammstedt, Franck, Hermann, Böttcher); Jürgen Jakob Becker: p. 06 (Schalansky/Stein); Zu Gast in L'viv (p. 06) und Casino-Hotel (p. 22): photographer unknown

Text: Jürgen Jakob Becker. Translation: David Burnett. Design: Steffen Kalauch. Printed by Druckerei Javitz, Berlin



LITERARISCHES COLLOQUIUM BERLIN