

Alherd Bakharevich
Krystsina Banduryna

Sabina Brilo

Yulia Tsimafeeva

Andrei Khadanovich

Syarhei Kalenda

Visegrad focus:

Nasta Kudasava
Iatsiana Nyadabay

Belarus
Syarhei Prylutski

Illya Sin

Tanya Skarynkina

Dmitry Strotsev

Max Ščur

Anka Upala

Eva Vezhnavevets

Maxim Zhbantkov

Visegrad focus: Belarus



The Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture and the Book World 2021

The Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture was founded in the autumn of 2020 and its creation was initially more of a spontaneous gesture rather than an elaborated long-term project. After the rigged presidential election, we watched the protests in the streets of Belarus and we were alarmed by their violent suppression. As we ourselves had experienced a totalitarian regime, it was very painful for us to see innocent people, who were just striving for freedom, being arrested, silenced and exposed to the ever growing despotism and injustice of Lukashenko's regime.

Coincidentally, an anniversary of the Velvet Revolution was approaching at that time, an event whose street protests were to an extent reminiscent of what was happening in Belarus; it is possible that this experience of ours also increased our sensitivity and compassion. At some point in October I therefore approached Petr Minařík from the publishing house Větrné mlýny asking him to help us organize an event that would alert the Czech public to the events happening in Belarus. Back in 2007, Větrné mlýny had made Belarus the guest country of its Month of Author's Reading festival; therefore, the publishing house had a good grasp of Belarusian culture and was equipped with valuable contacts.

At first, we wanted to organize a public debate featuring both Czech experts on Belarus and Belarusian intellectuals who would jointly comment on the events in Belarus and the overall state of Belarusian society. But due to the progressing covid pandemic and restrictions being put on cultural events, it was becoming clear that the debate would have to take place

online by means of streaming. While arranging high-quality connection and creating a communication bridge between Czechia and Belarus, we suddenly realized that the desperate situation in Belarus didn't require a one-time action, but a longer-term project. This is how the idea of the Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture first showed up.

At the beginning, we had no money and personal resources to speak about. The only supportive environment was provided by the Center of Experimental Theater (CED) which procured everything from its own operating budget. Everything was arranged by myself, Petr Minařík and Vanda Košuličová who works at CED as an operational and production assistant. Fortunately, the municipal authority of the city of Brno understood the importance of this initiative and soon provided at least basic funds to reimburse the work of the ambassador; the translator Syarhei Smatrychenka was entrusted with this post.

Less than a year has passed since then, and our embassy has initiated and organized a host of events. It started with letters of personalities of Czech cultural and social life to Belarusian political prisoners, followed by residential stays of Belarusian artists, author's readings and debates with Belarusian artists at universities and in theaters. A list of all events is included at the end of this catalog.

The presence of Belarusian writers at the international book fair and festival Book World can be probably seen as the highlight of our activities so far. The project was called Focus on Belarus; beside the authors' appearance at Book World, it also featured a marathon of author's readings and other events taking place in Brno. In total, we invited twelve Belarusian authors to Czechia; they were reading their most recent texts, but they also participated in debates and other events. Let me mention at least the Night of Poetry and Music at the Bubny railway station which was hosted by Michael Kocáb and to which we invited the Belarusian band Razbitaye Sertsya Patsana (Broken Heart of a Boy), or the debate at the DOX Center for Contemporary Art which was hosted by Jáchym Topol.

The project gained the support of the Visegrád Fund and the Ministry of Culture. Thanks to it, the festival Book World even started a new section called Literature as the Voice of Freedom which it intends to continue in the upcoming years. This gives us much joy because, unfortunately, Belarus is not the only country where writers and artists are being intentionally silenced.

The position of Belarusian culture in its own country is now extremely desperate. Culture with all its manifestations, literature included, is consistently suppressed in Belarus. To give an example, the Belarusian PEN Club was banned just a few weeks before the Book World festival started. Apart from a handful of pro-regime authors, Belarusian writers have virtually no opportunity to publish their texts. Publishing houses reject their books

and it is becoming impossible for many of them to get any space in regime-censored magazines and media. Therefore, authors are completely cut off from their readers. Quality magazines and publishing houses are either explicitly banned or they are absurdly and often harshly persecuted and harassed by state authorities. On top of that, mutual meetings of writers are becoming more and more difficult and sometimes outright impossible. Many writers and artists have been forced to leave the country. The living conditions of those who have decided to stay in Belarus are dire; their movement is often monitored and they are falling into ever deeper isolation.

It is for all these reasons that projects such as Focus on Belarus are so important. On the one hand, they provide a great personal and creative boost to the very authors and artists. At least for a moment can they see that their work and life bear a meaning. During those few days in Prague and Brno, our Belarusian friends told us on several occasions that they were happy to see, at least for a little while, their colleagues and to talk with them freely about their work. On the other hand, these projects are also extremely important to us. Thanks to them, the Czech public has a unique opportunity to become familiar with Belarusian literature and culture which unfortunately still remains somewhat unknown around Europe.

I believe that this modest catalog of contemporary Belarusian literature will contribute to mutual understanding, at least to a small extent.

Miroslav Oščatka

director of the Center of Experimental Theater and the Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture



Words have their weight Alena Karp

These are just two random facts regarding Belarusian literature and culture in general, but they make it easier to see into the local survival strategy. British scholar Arnold McMillin dedicated his book *Writing in a Cold Climate* to Belarusian literature from 1970 to 2010 (the original was published in English and the book can be recommended to all those who want to delve deep into the topic: almost one thousand pages of history, ideas and personalities). Artist and writer Artur Klinav started some time ago the anthology of modern Belarusian culture called *pARTisan*. “A partisan,” as philosopher Valyantsin Akudovich explains, “is someone who always lingers in hiding (...), a partisan is the one who keeps saying about himself: *I am not here*; a partisan is someone who only shows up in a moment of sabotage (in our case intellectual or aesthetic sabotage) and then disappears again in his own absence.” Therefore, the anthology didn’t care about the old Soviet myth and its heroic grandiosity (after WW2 Belarus was labeled as a “partisan country”); on the contrary, the myth was desacralized and partisanship acquired a new meaning; it became synonymous with the underground. An act of guerrilla warfare turns into a cultural explosion. It is possible that only guerrilla warfare has in fact this potential.

And how else could it be, if the climate here really *is* cold (the feeling becomes even more intense from the outside). There have been unfavorable external circumstances over the course of many years; at the same time, the cultural sphere and literature as its integral part are being pushed to the periphery. There is a lack of stable and respected institutions to support

literature, there is a lack of literary agents and critics, of feedback in general, but on the other hand, we have a lot of internal problems. Literature provides the authors with zero financial or social capital. It only costs them a lot of time and stress, it only invokes passion, love and hate. And if you don't surrender, if you still remain in that cold field, it becomes real guerrilla warfare and sabotage, a desperate gesture, dance in the void.

Why did I start with those titles? Maybe because they are so concentrated and I am trying to lean on something firm, to find the coordinates of being here. It seems to me that this is one of the important tasks of literature: to determine the foundations and – especially in the case of Belarusian literature – strive, among other things, to unravel the cosmos and metaphysics of this country.

This tradition reaches back to ancient times: it was the classic of Belarusian literature Maxim Haretski who started playing with the motif of „native roots“, the mystical power of the land and the connection with it. After years of use, this motif has become a little worn out and fossilized. But this only makes more conspicuous any attempts to bring this theme up to date again, to formulate it boldly and laconically, disregarding any authorities. This is exactly what young author Darya Trayden does in her literary debut *A Crystalline Night* (Крышталёная ноч, 2018): “When a Belarusian woman says ‘I want’, the land answers: ‘Forget it.’ When a Belarusian man says ‘I will’, the land sneers: ‘We’ll see.’”

The age-long defiance and the cold local climate already start to work as some kind of ontological, fatal and immutable law of being. “Nothing sticks here,” realizes every female character of the novel *What are you after, wolf?* by Eva Vezhnavets. That sentence will be repeated several times throughout the book in various forms. Women of three generations have observed the inevitability of fate, the futility of any efforts, they have seen how everything created with love, everything that is important to the people, to the family, to the nation, disappears, how it is violently destroyed. The wolf is after what is left.

Eva Vezhnavets has sharp eyes. She is able to feel the most important things in reality and compress them into a text in which she doesn't use unnecessary words. This makes her one of the most remarkable authors of today's Belarusian prose. Both her books, *The Journey of a Bitch* (Шлях дробнай сволачы, 2008) and *What are you after, wolf?* (Па што ідзеш, воўча?, 2020), have in their title the semantics of a journey, they both work with traumas and sore points. In *The Journey of a Bitch* it is the relatively recent epoch of the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century, whereas her latest book deals with a more remote history in which war and terror are abundant. And this way of letting the traumas speak, (new) reading and re-evaluation of the complicated national history, is of great importance especially these days.

Literature is a pain factory. Our memory hurts us. For novelists, the simplest way of working with memory is the documentary form. In contemporary Belarusian literature, this stream is primarily associated with the name of the Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich. But next to her, it is impossible not to mention one more name, that of her teacher Ales Adamovich. During the Soviet period, Belarusian literature existed for decades under greater or lesser censorship restrictions. Post-war books were full of victorious heroism. Documentary prose worked as a space of the truth, a manifestation of courageous defiance against oblivion and falsification. Both Ales Adamovich and Svetlana Alexievich have tackled difficult and traumatic topics, explored the psychology of evil, and searched for answers to the question of how such inhuman terror was even possible.

Who knows, it is possible that in a few years we will see equally important full-length chronicles of hell, but for the time being, contemporary Belarusian non-fiction, which has been gaining popularity in recent years, works with topics much less dramatic. Alyaxey Talstov, author of the novel *Vagrants* (Валацугі, 2014), and Raman Svechnikav, author of the bestseller *Roma on the go* (Рома едзе, 2015), both write about their daring travels and their books resonate. Not only because of the exotic destinations, but especially because at least the members of their generation are able to find themselves in their travelogues, they feel a shared experience that makes them think about running away, they feel the emotional discharge originating in the fact that someone made it, someone could afford it. In her book *District Town* (Райцэнтр, 2020), Tanya Skarynkina meticulously collects little stories from a provincial town, the voices of its inhabitants, the peculiarities of their speech. The boundaries between the big and the small disappear and it is possible that the small doesn't even exist. The houses are torn down, the people leave, traditions wane, and the book becomes a memorial, an anthology of collective memory. Anka Upala writes a personal diary about silence that pricks like a stone in the shoe, about the world, about making oneself understood in different languages, in different cultures, and through the stories of the people she meets on the way and who become her neighbors she tackles serious social problems. Alherd Bakharevich creates a portrait against the backdrop of the time – My nineties.

Non-fiction fulfills different tasks for different authors, but always gives them the freedom to speak for themselves. Freedom is a high value, but we all need to realize now and again that even other people's experience is important and that even other people's voices have their weight.

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Similar to prose, today's poetry is represented by authors of various generations and various aesthetic traditions, but the most interesting things

are happening in what we can call intellectual poetry. Ales Razanav, poet-philosopher and indefatigable explorer, entered literature in the 1960s. His original, innovatory poetry stood out, would not fit into any literary canon. For example his book *Journey-360* (Шлях-360, 1981) seemed so innovative in those days that in order to be published at all it had to be covered by a foreword and a postscript by respected authors. In his verses, Ales Razanav searched for the ontological foundations of being and new optimal ways of expression; at the same time, he was adopting well-known (albeit long labeled as avant-garde) genres or was discovering his own.

Aesthetically close to Ales Razanav is the poet Nadzeya Artymovich, to whose poems he wrote forewords and commentaries. Artymovich is the author of delicate, harmonically verified associative and hermetic poetry. Equally hermetic and hushed is the work of Tatsyana Sapach. Her seminal book *Autumn* (Восень, 1992) is a collection of music, semitones and whispers. Very personal, refined poetry for a small audience, for those who really understand.

These authors – each in her own way – changed the poetic landscape. Without having a direct impact on the following generations, they proved that it is possible, that in poetry a person can be herself, that “poetry is freedom” (N. Artymovich).

Perhaps it does not need any special accentuation, but the fact is that in a conservative milieu freedom can become a threat. Valzhyna Mort, one of the most distinctive and best-known Belarusian poets, debuted in 2005 with her book *I am as thin as your eyelashes* (Я тоненькая, як твае вейкі) which was immediately and inevitably labeled as scandalous. Not everybody expected to find openness, wrath and eros in female poetry. And the truth is, few expect it even today. In the meantime, however, Valzhyna Mort has published several books in English and Belarusian, has become the recipient of prestigious international awards and is now considered an author without whom contemporary poetry cannot be even imagined. She lives in one dimension with both today’s poets and the authors of times long gone by. In her poems, we encounter tangles of cultural references; her metaphors, apparently originating from riddles, are based on extremely remote, but all the more powerful associations. And most importantly, her poems contain concentrated pain which is the guardian of memory (yes, I have already used this word several times, but it is really important), the memory of a family whose entire generations have experienced violence. The poet returns to her childhood, to her grandmother’s stories, she boldly strides through her family’s history, through her nightmares, through a city that remembers the black wheat of truncheons and blood on the snow. Her poems resemble shamanic incantations and it is not very clear whether that memory is going to heal the reader’s wounds or cause them to fester.

Today's poetry is more linguistically relaxed and at the same time more minimalistic. It reaches for topics that were previously taboo; this way, the language rids itself of the prudishness of euphemisms and calls things by their true name. Poetry searches for the exact words in the exact order; therefore, it discards anything superfluous, renounces old-world lace. Language, speech, is one of the themes of Yulia Tsimafeeva's. The desire to find an adequate, as yet non-existent language, the bare original word, which is expressed in her latest book *ROT* (2020), is apparently of the same nature as the wish to take off one's skin and find one's real essence (I stand naked as a grain) which appears in her early poem "Striptease". By the way, this earthly metaphoricity (naked as a flower, naked as a grain) was not that conspicuous in her first poems, but it has become fully developed in her latest book. Yulia Tsimafeeva has village origins. Belarusian literature has had a complicated relationship with the countryside; there is an entire stratum of high-quality rural prose, but as it is often the case with frequently tackled topics, in the works of the less gifted this theme has been overgrown with clichés and stereotypes, has become trite and now appears as something shameful and inferior. Yulia Tsimafeeva approaches this theme as an intellectual problem. A person searches for her roots, and if those roots are stuck in the spoiled soil of Chernobyl, she has no choice but to turn it into her strength and uniqueness.

Distinctive and yet, somewhat similar are the poets Tanya Skarynkina and Sabina Brilo. They both observe themselves and the people around them, they both choose a simple or even naive (in the case of Tanya Skarynkina) style, even though this naiveté is mere illusion. Skarynkina's poem originates from a specific case (encounters, conversations), while Brilo's stems from a fragment of personal experience that eventually comes out as universal; their simple words are grown through with details and meanings like the crown of a tree. These are atemporal narratives: human passions remain unchanged, unchanging is the experience of betrayal, envy, lack of love. And yet, the pain of the present time and the incurable trauma of the past still find their way into their poetry, such as in Sabina Brilo: "You never know which petty detail / will turn your mood towards Siberia / for me today it was a dead moth / a tiny motionless body in the color of hair / the hair of gray Soviet women." Even more politicized, tied to its place and time, is the work of Dmitry Strotsev. Up to the point of his book *Newspaper* (Газета, 2012), his poetry had been an embodiment of light, dance and flight; it was the poetry of a demiurge who writes the world at the moment of its creation, compiles a book that is not bound by any strict rules. The strictness only came along with his journalistic style, with his effort to capture the exact contours of today's ruthless reality: "I saw a pillow made of bread in the torture chamber at Okrestina." By contrast, when Syarhei Prylucki wants to speak about his experience of life in a dictatorship, he chooses North Korea as the setting of his poems. This is what happened in his book *Patriotism for beginners*

(Патрыятызм для чайнікаў, 2016). At the same time, he tells the story of personal formation, and in this way, he picks out the best of the best from all current tendencies: from narrative poetry, from (pseudo)documentaries and from work with the traumatic experience.

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Today's drama seems to stand on the sidelines: hardly ever is it represented in magazines and only rarely is it published in anthologies, despite the fact that it is rather well-known and popular abroad. Texts by Belarusian playwrights (Pavel Prazhko, Dmitry Bogoslavsky, Konstantin Steshik, Alena Ivanyushenka), mostly written in Russian, are regularly put on stage in Russia and Ukraine. The authors use Russian as their language of choice not because their works are intended for export, but because of the existing language situation. They simply strive to capture today's reality, and the linguistic situation in Belarus is its part and parcel. This is the most common answer to the question regarding the language of contemporary drama, even though if we decide to delve deeper into this topic we might chance upon some less popular answers which would require a special discussion.

But as regards the publication of drama anthologies, they are needed at least as an indicator of the present state of affairs. Plays will leave the stage sooner or later, but the anthologies of selected texts remain part of the story. The 1990s were marked by the popularity of absurdist texts, whereas the first decade of the twenty-first century brought to the fore the so-called "new drama", although this term does not seem to be accurate any longer. One of the latest and most important anthologies bears the title *Everything All Right. Her-Version* (Всё нормально. Её-версия, 2019). It includes plays by female authors who take the present as their material (spoiler: nothing is all right) and work with a specific female experience, with the problems that can only be adequately expressed by a woman's voice. This book is more than just a collection of dramatic texts: an extensive preface explains the publication's concept and offers a historic introduction; the monologues of playwrights Alena Ivanyushenka and Alena Papova and stage director Valyantsina Maroz speak about the professional experience of women in the theater sphere. Thanks to the fact that the authors are members of different generations, we can find out whether and how the context has been changing over time.

* * *

After 2020, literature – and especially poetry which is always faster to react than prose – has been concerned with expressing and experiencing

the trauma we all live in. Much of what is written these days comes to being as a sort of personal psychotherapy. Certain texts, however, have a chance to become collective therapy: for example the poems of Andrei Khadanovich are being copied and sent to political prisoners and they receive positive feedback. In the meantime, literature records reality in a nearly straightforward way. Deep understanding will only come later, it is always delayed, there is nothing strange about that. At this point, literature is expected to provide consolation, hugging words. And new words, if possible. Singer and poet Sveta Ben transforms the experience of many Belarusians into the story of a teddy bear ("The teddy bear has escaped from the detention facilities again"), articulates important things ("And there is no need to fear evil. You should be afraid of becoming part of evil"), and dresses up our painful and dramatic experience in the entirely undramatic form of children's counting-out rhymes.

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Literature might not be able to break walls, but for the time being, it can at least heal. It can send out love, and that is what it is doing.

Alena Karp (1987) is a literary scholar and critic. She completed her studies of Belarusian philology at the Belarusian State University and received her doctoral degree at the Academy of Sciences in Minsk where she now works. She has also worked in the editorial offices of several literary journals.



Kateřina
Tučková

Eva
Vežnavec

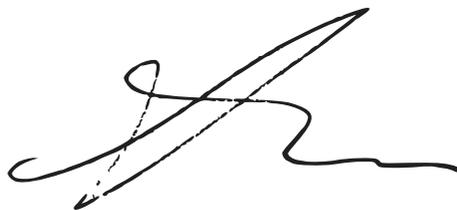


Alherd Bakharevich (Альгерд Бахарэвіч, born 1975 in Minsk). Having completed his studies of pedagogy, he has devoted himself entirely to writing since 2006. He is the author of short story collections, novels, essays and autobiographical books. His nine-hundred-page long novel *Dogs of Europe* (Сабакі Эўропы, 2018), staged, among others, by the Belarusian Free Theatre, is considered his magnum opus. His last book published in Belarus is called *Mr. A's Latest Book* (Апошняя кніга пана А., 2020); after being sold out, its reprint was retained at the border and is now investigated by the Belarusian authorities for extremism. Alherd Bakharevich lived in Hamburg for six years and completed several scholarship programs in various European countries. In the autumn of 2020, after being actively involved in the Belarusian protests, he and his wife decided to leave the country; he accepted the invitation of the Kulturvermittlung Steiermark and currently lives in Graz, Austria. Bakharevich is the holder of several literary awards, including the Belarusian Book of The Year Award which he has been awarded twice. His books have been translated into five languages; Czech translations have so far only appeared in magazines (*Host*, *RozRazil*, *Labyrint Revue*, *Babylon*, etc.).



Alherd
Bakharevich

Альгерд
Бахарэвіч

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SEZONY

ESPAÑA

Jeunesse
Livres pour enfants

LA UN
DE NUIT
Bambi
POP
LE LUNE

Sciences, Sciences humaines
Véda, Společenské vědy

ANATOMIE CLINIQUE
ATLAS DE L'ANATOMIE

ATLAS
LE CORPS HUMAIN

AMBASÁDA NEZÁVISLÉ BĚLORUSKÉ KULTURY

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edy

Sciences, Sciences humaines
Věda, Společenské vědy



Krystyna Banduryňa (Крысціна Бандурына, born 1992 in Mazyr) is a poet. She graduated from the Philological Faculty at Homel University and received her master's degree in American Literature at the Belarusian State University in Minsk. She worked as an editor for the *Maladosts* magazine. She is the holder of the Zalaty Apostraf Award of the *Dzeyaslov* magazine in the category of literary debuts. She has so far only published one book of poetry (*Homo*, 2019), but her poems have been translated into many European languages. She runs a blog dedicated to the issue of domestic violence.



Krystsina
Banduryna

Крысціна
Бандурына

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Zaostřeno
na
Bělorusko

ANDREI CHADANOVIC



Sabina Brilo (Сабіна Брило, born 1975 in Minsk). Having completed his studies of pedagogy, he has devoted himself entirely to writing since 2006. He is the author of short story collections, novels, essays and autobiographical books. His nine-hundred-page long novel *Dogs of Europe* (Сабакі Эўропы, 2018), staged, among others, by the Belarusian Free Theatre, is considered his magnum opus. His last book published in Belarus is called *Mr. A's Latest Book* (Апошняя кніга пана А., 2020); after being sold out, its reprint was retained at the border and is now investigated by the Belarusian authorities for extremism. Alherd Bakharevich lived in Hamburg for six years and completed several scholarship programs in various European countries. In the autumn of 2020, after being actively involved in the Belarusian protests, he and his wife decided to leave the country; he accepted the invitation of the Kulturvermittlung Steiermark and currently lives in Graz, Austria. Bakharevich is the holder of several literary awards, including the Belarusian Book of The Year Award which he has been awarded twice. His books have been translated into five languages; Czech translations have so far only appeared in magazines (*Host, RozRazil, Labyrint Revue, Babylon*, etc.).



Sabina Briło

Сабина Брило

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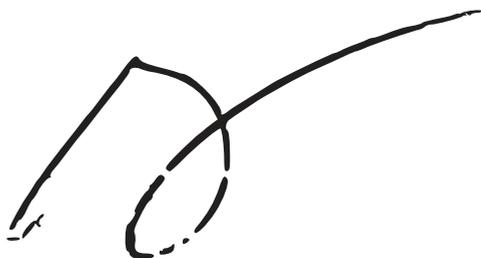




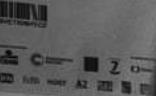
Yulia Tsimafeevea (Юля Цімафеева, born 1982 in the village of Spyaryzha) is a poet, translator and photographer. She is the author of three books of poetry: *Book of Errors* (Кніга памылак, 2014), *Circus* (Цырк, 2016), and *ROT* (2020). She is the co-founder and editor of the internet magazine of translated literature *PraidziSvet*. Her work has been so far translated into English, Latvian, Swedish, German, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Croatian and Slovene. Tsimafeevea is the winner of the Exlibris competition of young writers, organized by the Union of Belarusian Writers. Her collection *Book of Errors* was shortlisted for the Belarusian literary award Debut. She regularly attends literary festivals, book fairs and literary events – e.g. in Sweden, Germany, Slovenia, Latvia, Ukraine, France, Czechia and Belarus. During the protests of 2020 she organized public readings of poetry in city squares, one of which was dispersed by the police. Her diary from the Minsk protests of 2020 was published in German and Swedish. In the autumn of last year, she left the country with her husband, writer Alherd Bakharevich, and currently lives in Graz.



Yulia Tsimafeeva
Юля Цімафеева



Svět knihy
Praha '21



Svět knihy
Praha '21

Белорусская Язык
Для Нації...

Kateřina
Tučková





MINISTERSTVO
KULTURY

23. – 26. 9. 2021
Výstaviště Praha

26. mezinárodní knižní veletrh
a literární festival

Čestný host: Francie

Motto: Můj domov je v jazyce

PRÁVO

Eva
Pavlová

Anka Upala

Andrei Khadanovich (Андрэй Хадановіч, born 1973 in Minsk) is a poet, translator, essayist, literary scholar and educator. He completed his doctoral studies at the Faculty of Philology of the Belarusian State University where he currently lectures on French literature. Furthermore, he leads a creative writing course at the School of Young Writers and a literary translation course at the Translation Workshop. From 2008 till 2017, he was the chairman of the Belarusian Center of the International PEN Club. He has published more than ten books of poetry and his poems have been translated into many world languages, including Czech. Andrei Khadanovich has been a guest of a large number of literary festivals all over the world and is himself one of the organizers of the festivals Grand Duchy of Poetry and Poems on Asphalt. He has also been awarded several prizes, e.g. the Carlos Sherman Award for the best translation (selected poems of Charles Baudelaire, 2017), or the *Rzeczpospolita* Award (2020).



Andrei
Khadanovich

Андрэй
Хадановіч

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Sjarhej
Prylucki

Andrej
Chadanovic

Dmitrij
Strocev

Syarhei Kalenda (Сяргей Календа, born 1985 in Kapyl) is a writer and editor, a culturologist and Hebraist by formation. He studied at the Faculty of International Relations of the Belarusian State University and at the Department of Literature and Philosophy of the Belarusian College. He is a member of the Belarusian PEN Club and the Union of Belarusian Writers. He has published a dozen of books of prose, some of which were shortlisted for various literary awards: for example the autobiographic confession *A Journey to The Bed's Edge* (Падарожжа на край ложка, 2016), the short story collection *Punks Die Sometimes* (Часам панкі паміраюць, 2018), or the collection of short stories for children *Baltic Socks* (Балтыйскія шкарпэтка, 2019). With his first wife, the artist Vasilisa Palyanina, he published the magazine of topical prose *Makulatura* (ten issues were released, one of which was dedicated to Slovak literature); from 2017, he has been publishing the irregular literary magazine *Minkult*. As a child, Kalenda attended classes of clarinet and saxophone at a music school; in recent years, he has dedicated himself to visual arts and is a renowned professional hairdresser.



Syarhei Kalenda Сяргей Календа



Tacjana
Nadбай

LLIA SIN



Nasta Kudasava (Наста Кудасавя, born 1984 in Rahachov) is a poet. At the Belarusian State University, she studied Russian philology and a subsequent master's program in the field of literary science. She published her first poems at the age of fifteen in the *Nasha Niva* weekly. She drew attention to herself by her very first book of poems *The Leaves of My Hands* (Лісце маіх рук, 2006). After studying in Minsk she lived for several years with her husband in Saint Petersburg, Homel and in the Belarusian countryside, but after being divorced she returned to her native Rahachov on the Dnieper river where she raises her son and daughter. To date, she has published four books of poetry, the third of which – *My Unspeakable* (Маё невымаўля, 2016) was declared the best Belarusian book of the year by the Belarusian PEN Club. In February 2021, Nasta Kudasava became the recipient of the Mikhas Straltsov Award; on this occasion, her first large book of selected poems, *Spring. Lips Are Tight* (Вясна. Вуснам цесна), was published.



Nasta Kudasava Наста Кудасава





Tatsiana Nyadbay (Тацяна Нядбай, born 1982 in Polatsk) is a poet and translator and a manager of cultural, human rights and media projects. She graduated from the Philological Faculty of the Belarusian State University in Minsk, followed by a master's program of the European Humanities University in Vilnius and a doctoral degree in Lublin, Poland. She served as the chairwoman of the Belarusian Center of the PEN Club; recently, she ceded the post to Svetlana Alexievich and became a deputy chairwoman. She has translated many books and published one book of poetry – *The Sirens are Singing Jazz* (Сірэны спяваюць джаз, 2014, prize for the best literary debut of the year).



Tatsiana Nyadbay Тацяна Нядбай

Тасцяна Нядбай

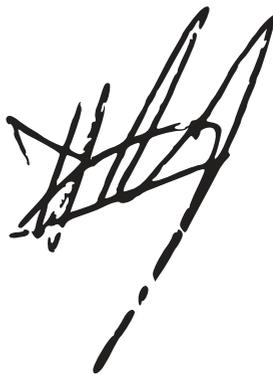




Syarhei Prylutski (Сяргей Прылуцкі, born 1980 in Brest) has lived in Kyiv since 2008. He published his first two books under the assumed name Pistonchuk: *The Beastly Attempts of Two Young Outcasts* (Ёпыты двух маладых нелюдзяў, 2009, in co-operation with Ulasik the Whelp) and *The Degenerative Dictionary* (Дэгенератыўны слоўнік, 2014). Under his own name he has published several books of poetry, such as *Eurydice does not look back* (Эўрыдыка не азіраецца, 2021), and the book for children *Down with the grownups* (Далоў дарослых, 2017). He is also the author of the literary mystification *Patriotism for beginners* (Патрыятызм для чайнікаў, 2016), in which he features as the translator of a book of poems by the fictitious North Korean poet Kim Jong-ho (while being himself the real author). Prylutski's poems have been published in Czech on several occasion, most recently in the magazines *Psí víno* and *Plav*.



Syarhei Prylutski Сяргей Прылуцкі





Eva
Veinavec

Alherd
Bacharevič

Dmitrij
Strocev



www.ced-bmo.cz

divadla centrum experimentálního
Zaostřeno na Bělorusko

Siarhiej A Blamejka
Jasmina Banduryňa
Sabina Brilo
Chadanovič
Lukašuk
Radbaj
Gylucki
Sur
n

Siarhiej S...
Tana Skary...
Dmitrij Stro...
Anka Upe...
Evgenij...
Aljona...
M...
Al...
J...

Ilja Sin

Andrej
Chadanovič

Jáchym
Topol

Illya Sin (Ілля Сін), in his real name Illya Sviryn (Ілля Свірын, born 1978 in Minsk) is a writer and performer, the author of five books of prose. He is also a co-founder of the literary movement BumBamLit, the existential clown group Theater of Psychic Lability, and the multimedia group Exorcist Gesamtkunstwerk. He has authored several hundred performances both in Belarus and abroad. The basis of Illya Sin's creative practice are existential and religious issues expressed in a free and playful way; his distinctive feature is an unsystematic approach to writing and a tendency to break any possible rules, including those established by himself. Illya Sin is the recipient of several literary prizes, including the Jerzy Giedroyc Award for the best prose book of the year (novel *Libido*, 2018).



Илья Син Ілля Сін





Svět knihy Praha '21





Svět knihy
Praha 21
14. - 16. října 2021
Vstupné zdarma

Andrej
Danovíc

Eva Klíčová

Lenka
Pásová

Tanya Skarynkin (Таня Скарынкiна, born 1969 in Smarhon) graduated from the Agricultural Academy in Horki. She lived for several years in Portugal where she worked as a postwoman and later as a children's books illustrator. Nowadays, she makes her living as a columnist and journalist, writing in Russian and Belarusian. Her first collection of poems, *Book for reading indoors and outdoors* (Книга для чтения в помещениях и вне помещений), was published in 2013, followed by *Portuguese Triplets* (Португальские трёхстишия, 2014). Her book *And they all dropped their knives* (И все побросали ножи, 2020) was awarded the prestigious Andrei Bely Award. She also published a collection of essays, *A lot of Czesław Miłosz with a bit of Elvis Presley* (Шмат Чэслава Мілаша, крыху Элвіса Прэслі, 2014), which was shortlisted for the very prestigious Jerzy Giedroyc Prize.



Tanya Skarynkina Таня Скаринкіна





Dmitry Strotsev (Дмитрий Стрoцев, born 1963 in Minsk) is a poet writing in Russian, representative of the Belarusian underground movement, author of seventeen books of poetry. After the bogus presidential elections of 2020, he became actively involved in the street protests; he was kidnapped with a bag over his head and later found to be in jail. He is currently publishing the poetic series *Minsk School* and leads the publishing project *Novye Mekhi*. He is a member of the Belarusian PEN Club and of the Union of Belarusian Writers. He is the recipient of several awards, such as the prestigious Russian Prize (Русская премия, 2008), the Norwegian Authors' Union's Freedom of Speech Award (2020), and most recently, the Disturbing the Peace Award, awarded by the Václav Havel Library Foundation (2021). His poems have been translated into fifteen languages, including Czech.



Dmitry Strotsev Дмитрий Стрoцев

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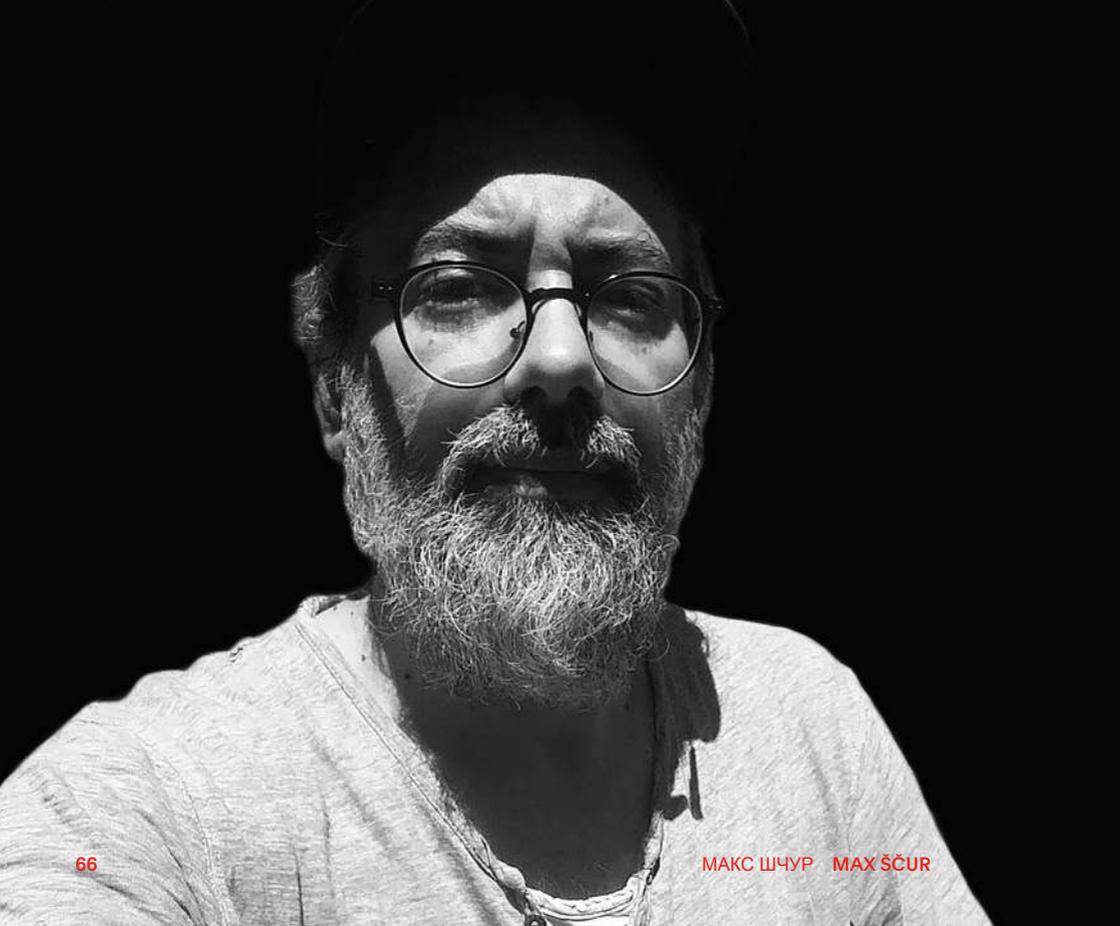
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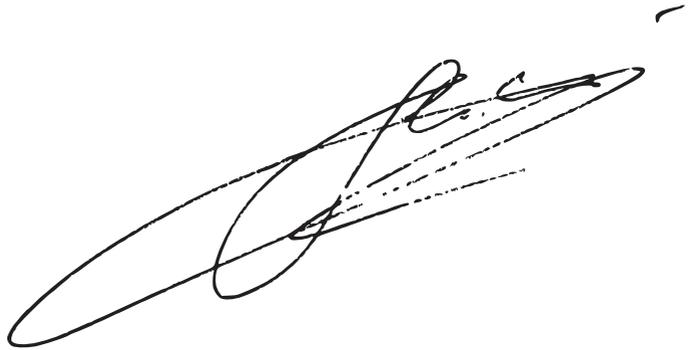
XP-10 Roland



Max Šćur (Макс Шчур, born 1977 in Brest) is a Belarusian-Czech poet, writer and translator living in Prague since 1998. From 1994 till 1998, he studied Spanish and English at the Linguistic University of Minsk, and from 1999 till 2006, Spanish and Latin American literature at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University. He has published several books of poetry and two collections of short stories in Belarusian. He is also the author of three novels: *Where we aren't* (Там, дзе нас няма, 2004, Yanka Yukhnavets Award), *To Close the Gestalt* (Завяршыць гештальт, 2016, Jerzy Giedroyc Award for the best book of prose of the year), and *A Cinematic Novel* (Кінараман, 2019). In Czech, he has published the poetry books *Modus bibendi* (2012) and *Arythmia* (Arytmie, 2019), the novella *Kulturtréger* (Kulturtréger, 2013) and a book interview with František Dryje entitled *The Great Anti-Masturbator* (Velký antimasturbátor, 2017). He publishes his texts in the magazines *Analogon*, *Plav*, *Bělarus*, etc. He has translated into Belarusian the works of Egon Bondy (selected texts under the title *Invitation to dinner*, Minsk, 2013) and many other world authors. He is the editor of the Belarusian-Ukrainian-Russian internet magazine Litrazh.org, where he regularly publishes his translations and poems.



Max Ščur Макс Шчур



AMBASÁDA NEZ
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ÁVISLÉ
ULTURY



Анка Упала (Анка Упала), real name Alena Kazlova (Алена Казлова, born 1981 in Mahilyov), is a Belarusian writer and translator from English, Swedish and Finnish. She works as the editor-in-chief of the women's publishing house Pflaumbaum which was founded by the Nobel laureate Svetlana Alexievich. She has published the book of short prose and poems *Entolypus Tree* (Дрэва Энталіпт, 2012) and the autobiographical novel *Onto a snow-covered island* (На заснежаны востраў, 2017) which was shortlisted for the Jerzy Giedroyc Prize, the most prestigious Belarusian literary award.



Анка Урала Анка Упала

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AMB
BĚL

ASÁDA NEZÁVISLÉ RUSKÉ KULTURY



Eva Vezhnavecs (Ева Вежнавец), born 1958 in Minsk) is a journalist, film critic and cultural analyst. He studied classical philosophy at the Belarusian State University where he defended his thesis in 1986. From 1992 to 2012, he led a legendary film club at the Peramoha movie theater in Minsk. He lectures at the Belarusian Humanities University in Lithuania and at the Belarusian College and co-operates with various independent media. He has published the books *NO STYLE. Belarusian culture between Woodstock and the harvest celebration* (NO STYLE. Белкульт между Вудстоком и „Дажынкамі“, 2013) and *SloMo. Domestic criticism of cultural design* (SloMo. Хатняя крытыка культурнага дызайну, 2021). His areas of interest include the transformation of cultural patterns in the post-Soviet space. His texts have been translated into Czech, German and Polish.



Eva Vezhnavets Ева Вежнавец

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Centrum
ambasáda
Belorusko
Zašestvo
ne
Belorusko
13.-18. 6. 2021
Svět knihy
Mezinárodní knižní
vešmí a literární festival
Vizovizie Praha
Holešovice

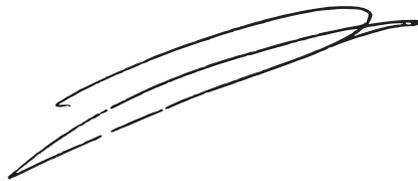
AMBASÁDA NEZÁVIS
BĚLORUSKÉ KULTURY



Maxim Zhabankov (Максім Жбанкоў) is a journalist, film critic and cultural analyst. He studied classical philosophy at the Belarusian State University where he defended his thesis in 1986. From 1992 to 2012, he led a legendary film club at the Peramoha movie theater in Minsk. He lectures at the Belarusian Humanities University in Lithuania and at the Belarusian College and co-operates with various independent media. He has published the books *NO STYLE. Belarusian culture between Woodstock and the harvest celebration* (NO STYLE. Белкульт между Вудстоком и „Дажынкамі“, 2013) and *SloMo. Domestic criticism of cultural design* (SloMo. Хатняя крытыка культурнага дызайну, 2021). His areas of interest include the transformation of cultural patterns in the post-Soviet space. His texts have been translated into Czech, German and Polish.



Maxim Zhbankov
Максім Жбанкоў



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Embassy of independent Belarusian culture in the Czech Republic

In 2020, the Center of Experimental Theater (CED) founded the Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture in the Czech Republic. The official opening of the embassy was symbolically scheduled for November 17, which is an official holiday in Czechia and the Day of Struggle for Freedom and Democracy. The embassy's *raison d'être* consists in promoting independent Belarusian culture; at the same time, it strives to provide Czech people with a better access to information about current events in Belarus.

Miroslav Oščatka and Petr Minařík, the embassy's founders, speak about the importance of building a bridge between Czechia and Belarus. They emphasize the fact that it is not a political project, but rather a cultural one, whose goal is to cover independent and free Belarusian culture and its manifestations in all its scope and diversity.

The translator Syarhey Smatrychenka was appointed ambassador. For many years, he has significantly contributed to the mutual understanding of Czech and Belarusian cultures, and in 2015 was awarded the Jiří Theiner Prize for the popularization of Czech culture abroad.

Letters to Belarusian political prisoners

In the autumn of 2020, the Center of Experimental Theater and the Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture addressed several personalities of Czech and Slovak cultural and social life and asked them to send personal letters to Belarusian political prisoners. The result is an extraordinary series of twenty-two letters – the authors include not only important Czech and Slovak artists, but also top political representatives of the Czech Republic:

1.
Semjon Byčkov, chief conductor and artistic director of the Czech Philharmonic orchestra
↓
Mikalay Statkevich, politician and leader of the Narodnaya Hromada party.
2.
Radka Denemarková, writer, translator, screenwriter
↓
Syarhey Tsikhanouski, vlogger, entrepreneur, disallowed presidential candidate
3.
Fero Fenič, Slovak and Czech film director, screenwriter and film producer
↓
Pavel Yukhnevich, co-founder of the activist youth organization Zubr
4.
Fedor Gál, Slovak politician and sociologist, co-founder and president of the VPN movement
↓
Maxim Znak, lawyer, expert of the World Bank and of the UNO Development Program
5.
Tomáš Halík, catholic priest, theologian, religious studies scholar, sociologist, psychologist and philosopher
↓
Marya Babovich, participant in the Belarusian protests
6.
Michal Hvorecký, Slovak writer and columnist
↓
Rastsislav Stefanovich, architect and interior designer
7.
Šimon Krupa, theater actor
↓
Alyaxandra Patrasaeva, participant in street protests
8.
Václav Malý, catholic bishop, co-founder of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted
↓
Marya Babovich, participant in the Belarusian protests

9.
Luděk Navara, writer, columnist, screenwriter and historian
↓
Yauhen Afnahel, activist, one of the chief organizers of street events and protests, leader of the European Belarus initiative
10.
Jiří Padevět, writer, bookseller and publisher
↓
Eduard Palchys, blogger and columnist
11.
MacDonagh Pajerová, activist, university lecturer, former diplomat and student leader of the Velvet Revolution of 1989
↓
Pavel Sevyarynets, politician, journalist, writer, co-founder of the Young Front organization, leader of the Belarusian Christian Democracy
12.
Šimon Pánek, co-founder and director of the humanitarian organization People in Need
↓
Ihar Losik, blogger, external consultant of Radio Freedom
13.
David Prachař, theater and film actor and dubbing artist
↓
Alyaxandra Patrasaeva, participant in street protests
14.
Martin C. Putna, literary historian and critic, translator, writer and lecturer
↓
Andrei Papov, graphic designer, participant in street protests
15.
Martin Reiner, writer, publisher and cultural organizer
↓
Alana Gebremariam, dentist and activist, member of the leadership of the Belarusian Student Association
16.
Pavel Rychetský, chairman of the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic, politician and jurist
↓
Marya Kalesnikava, flute player and conductor, member of Viktor Babaryka's electoral crew
17.
Olga Sommerová, documentarist and film director
↓
Alyaksandr Vasilevich, gallerist and advertising entrepreneur
18.
Erik Tabery, journalist, columnist, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Respekt*
↓
Stsyapan Latypav, arborist, industrial alpinist, participant in protests

19.
Kateřina Tučková, writer, columnist,
curator

↓

Marfa Rabkova, coordinator of
volunteers for the human rights
organization Vyasna

20.

Petr Vančura, theater and film actor,
host

↓

**Anastasia Mirontsava and Viktoryha
Mirontsava**, participants in street
protests

21.

Miloř Vyrřčil, politician, chairman
of the Senate of the Parliament of the
Czech Republic

↓

Viktar Babaryka, banker and
sponsor, disallowed presidential
candidate

22.

Michael Źantovský, diplomat,
translator, director of the Václav
Havel Library

↓

Maryna Hlazava, English teacher,
participant in the street protests

CED director Miroslav Ořatka said about the project: *“We find it right and extremely important to loudly alert the Czech and world public to the fact that Lukashenko’s authoritarian regime acts unfairly and is suppressing basic human rights. People in Belarus are being detained, imprisoned, beaten, intimidated and otherwise harassed for expressing their opinion peacefully and non-violently. This is inadmissible and we vehemently protest against such behavior.”*

“Among the thousands of people who were detained in Belarus or who are imprisoned especially in connection with the protests against the bogus presidential elections of 2020, we have selected personalities that we want to encourage and let them know that we are thinking of them and that we are not indifferent to their efforts and fate,” adds Syarhey Smatrychenka, ambassador of independent Belarusian culture in Czechia.

The letters were translated from Czech into English and Belarusian and sent to the addressees in the respective Belarusian prisons.

The letters served as a basis for the two-hour long radio program Belarus in the center of Europe / Letters of Czech personalities to Belarusian political prisoners. The program was prepared by Ivan Motýl and broadcast by Czech Radio Vltava on Wednesday, November 24, 2021.

Residential stays for Belarusian artists

The embassy has initiated several residential stays for Belarusian artists. In cooperation with various partners, the following residential stays were organized in 2021:

I.

Moravian Library and Czech Literary Center / Residential stays for two Belarusian writers

Syarhei Kalenda, writer and editor, founder and editor-in-chief of the magazines *Malakultura* and *Minkult*. Stayed in Czechia from May 16 to June 16, 2021.

Nasta Kudasava, poet. Stayed in Czechia from May 16 to June 16, 2021.

II.

House of the Arts Brno / Residential stays for two Belarusian artists

Uladzimir Hramovich, artist and activist. Stayed in Czechia from May 1 to May 31, 2021.

Alesya Pcholka, artist. Stayed in Czechia from May 1 to May 31, 2021.

III.

National Theater in Prague and the Prague Crossroads international center / Residential stays for two Belarusian playwrights

Axana Hayko, stage director, actress, screenwriter and cultural organizer. Stayed in Czechia from May 1 to June 15, 2021.

Alena Ivanyushenko, playwright. Stayed in Czechia from May 1 to June 15, 2021.

In connection with their stay in Czechia, *The Handbook of Belarusian Drama* was published.

IV.

National Theater in Prague Residential stays for two Belarusian playwrights

Andrei Ivanov, playwright, screenwriter and stage director. Stayed in Czechia from October 15 to November 29, 2021.

Alexei Makeychik, playwright. Stayed in Czechia from October 15 to November 29, 2021.

Being an artist in Belarus

On the occasion of the residential stay of the writer Syarhei Kalenda and the poet Nasta Kudasava, the Center of Experimental Theater and the Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture organized the project Being an artist in Belarus. It was a series of author's readings and debates that took place at universities and theaters of eight Czech and Moravian cities.

24. 5.

Zlín

City Theater Zlín /hosted by Patrik Lančarič/ morning: Tomáš Baťa University in Zlín

24. 5.

Liberec

F. X. Šalda Theater, Liberec morning: Technical University in Liberec / hosted by Jakub Železný/

26. 5.

Plzeň

J. K. Tyl Theater, Plzeň /hosted by Zdeněk Janál/ morning: West-Bohemian University in Plzeň

27. 5.

Ostrava / Opava

National Moravian-Silesian Theater, Theater „12“, Ostrava / hosted by Sandra Procházková/ morning: Silesian University in Opava

31. 5.

Olomouc

Na cucky Theater, Olomouc morning: Palacký University in Olomouc

3. 6.

Hradec Králové

Klicpera Theater, Hradec Králové morning: University of Hradec Králové

7. 6.

Ústí nad Labem

Dramatic Studio, Ústí nad Labem morning: Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem

7. 6.

Brno

Center of Experimental Theater, Husa na provázku Theater, Brno

All readings and debates were translated into Czech and streamed on the internet. The closing debate at the Center of Experimental Theater was attended not only by Syarhei Kalenda and Nasta Kudasava, but also by other Belarusian artists who were at that time staying in Czechia following the Embassy's invitation – Uladzimir Hramovich, Alesya Pcholka, Axana Hayko and Alena Ivanyushenko. The debate was hosted by Eva Klíčová.

Focus on Belarus / Book World

Presentation of independent Belarusian writers at the international book fair and festival Book World. In total, twelve Belarusian writers participated in the project. Besides a host of other partners, the DOX Center for Contemporary Art, the Na zábradlí Theater and the Belarusian Center of Radio Free Europe also joined the collaboration. In addition to the authors, the Belarusian band Razbitae Sertsu Patsana also presented itself to the Czech public. The series of author's readings was accompanied with debates and further program:

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

15.00–15.45

Opening of the exhibition at the stand of the Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture Stand S104 of the Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture (located in the central part of the book fair)

Ceremonial opening of the exhibition of the Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture which represented contemporary Belarusian culture at the book fair *Radovan Auer, Miroslav Oščatka, Syarhei Smatrychenka, Alyxandr Lukashuk, Tomáš Kubíček, Dmitry Strotsev*

16.00–16.50

Language and literature
Small workshop, Book World
Belarusian literature exists in two languages: Belarusian and Russian. What kind of symbiosis is this and to which extent does the language define the author's position within society and in the literary context? Can one choose the language of their work?

Tanya Skarynkina, Dmitry Strotsev, Syarhei Prylutski, Andrei Khadanovich. Hosted by: Eva Klíčová

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 2021

14.00–14.50

Belarusian women / Does the Belarusian revolution have a female face?

Small workshop, Book World
Men are behind bars and women have to get involved in politics, that is the story of today's Belarus. About women, politics, literature and frying cutlets not only with the leading female figures of Belarusian literature

Anka Upala, Krystsina Banduryna, Sabina Brilo, Eva Vezhnavecs, Maxim Zhbakov
Hosted by: Johana Ozhvold

15.00–15.50

Author's reading of Belarusian writers

Small workshop, Book World
Author's reading of Belarusian writers
Alherd Bakharevich, Yulia Tsimafeeva.
Hosted by: Klára Fleyberková

16.00–16.30

Presentation of books of the Liberty Library series

(RFE/RL Belarus Service)

Small workshop, Book World

Two recently published books from the Liberty Library series were presented: the book *Unknown Minsk* was presented by its author Syarhei Ablameyka and the book *Voices of Belarus* by Syarhei Dubavets was presented by the director of RFE/RL Belarus Service Alyaxandr Lukashuk. *Hosted by: Alyaxandr Lukashuk*

18.00–19.30

Debate / Belarusian dinner

DOX Center for Contemporary Art
Authors representing contemporary Belarusian fiction and poetry presented themselves in the course of one debate evening. The meeting was hosted by Czech poet, writer, musician and journalist Jáchym Topol. The public had the opportunity to meet Dmitry Strotsev, author of seventeen poetry books, a poet writing in Russian and a representative of the Belarusian underground movement who was in 2021 awarded the Disturbing the Peace Award, given by the Václav Havel Library Foundation; journalist Eva Veznavets, author of several books currently living in Warsaw; Andrei Khadanovich – poet, translator, essayist, literary scholar and former chairman of the Belarusian Center of the International PEN Club and author of dozens of poetry books; and writer and performer Illya Sin, co-founder of the BumBamLit literary movement.

Dmitry Strotsev, Andrei Khadanovich, Eva Vezhnavevs, Illya Sin, Alherd Bakharevich. Hosted by: Jáchym Topol

20.00–23.00

Opening party – Night of poetry and music

Bubny railway station

Evening of music and poetry featuring the stars of Belarusian poetry, all this combined with contemporary Belarusian music
Musical accompaniment: Razbitae sertsya patsana

Dmitry Strotsev, Krystsina Banduryna, Andrei Khadanovich, Syarhei Prylucki, Tatsyana Nyadbay, Sabina Brilo, Tanya Skarynkina, Max Ščur, Yulia Tsimafeeva. Hosted by: Michael Kocáb. Belarusian poetry was read by: Jindřiška Dudziaková

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 25, 2021

10.00–10.50

Author's reading of Belarusian writers

Small workshop, Book World

Author's reading of Belarusian writers.

Sabina Brilo, Dmitry Strotsev, Maxim Zhbakov. Hosted by: Petr Vizina

12.00–12.50

Debate / Away from Home

Big hall, Book World

Debate with four Belarusian authors who have had experience with living away from home – in exile.

Eva Vezhnavevs, Syarhei Prylutski, Max Ščur, Tatsyana Nyadbay, Yulia

Tsimafeeva. Hosted by: Tomáš Kubíček

15.00–15.50

Author's reading of Belarusian writers

Big hall, Book World

Author's reading of Belarusian writers.

Eva Vezhnavets, Anka Upala.

Hosted by: Kateřina Tučková

18.00–18.50

Debate / How to inform about the truth

Evropa Workshop, Book World

Independent media in Belarus

have nearly ceased to exist. It is necessary to rely on news coming from across the border. How does it work, how does objective reporting reach Belarusian citizens, and how do they access political reflections and comments?

Alyaxandr Lukashuk, Maxim Zhbankov, Tatsyana Nyadbay, Sabina Briilo, Alherd Bakharevich.

Hosted by: Ondřej Soukup

20.30–22.00

Belarusian poetry

Na zábradlí Theater, Book World

Presentation of authors representing contemporary Belarusian poetry hosted by Czech poet and musician Petr Váša. The public had the opportunity to meet Krystsina Banduryňa, author of the poetry book *Homo* (2019); the journalist, columnist and poet Tanya Skarynkina (*Book for reading both indoors and outdoors*, 2013, *Portuguese Triplets*, 2014, *And they*

all dropped their knives, 2020, etc.); Syarhei Prylutski – author publishing under the pseudonym Pistonchyk whose poems have been published in Czech several times (most recently in the magazines *Psí víno* and *Plav*); and Andrei Khadanovich – poet, translator, essayist, literary scholar, former chairman of the Belarusian Center of the International PEN Club and author of more than ten books of poetry. *Krystsina Banduryňa, Tanya Skarynkina, Syarhei Prylucki, Andrei Khadanovich*
Hosted by: Petr Váša

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 26, 2021

12.00–12.50

Author's reading of Belarusian writers

Small workshop, Book World

Author's reading of Belarusian writers.

Tatsyana Nyadbay, Illya Sin, Max Ščur.

13.00–13.50

Free Europe Calling

Evropa workshop, Book World

Debate with journalists from the Belarusian program of the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty which is broadcasting from Prague.

Alyaxandr Lukashuk, Syarhei Shupa, Alyaxei Znatkevich, Syarhei Ablameyka. Hosted by: Adéla Tallisová Dražanová

15.00–15.30

Closing ceremony of the Focus on Belarus program at Book World

Stand of the Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture, Book World

Closing ceremony of the exhibition of the Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture which represented contemporary Belarusian literature at Book World
Radovan Auer, Miroslav Oščatka, Syarhei Smatrychenka, Tomáš Kubíček, Andrei Khadanovich

The project was co-financed by the governments of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia by means of a grant provided by the International Visegrád Fund. The fund's mission consists in developing the idea of sustainable regional cooperation in Central Europe.

The project was carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic which also supported the project financially, similarly to the Moravian Library.

The aim of the project was to raise awareness about the independent Belarusian literary scene in the V4 countries and to send a clear signal that we support the segment of society which is represented by writers who care about human rights, freedom of speech and democratic values.

Focus on Belarus / Presentation of Belarusian literature in Brno

An integral part of the Focus on Belarus project was also the presentation of Belarusian literature in Brno. Among the highlights of the program was the marathon of author's reading at the Center of Experimental Theater, the exhibition of photographs by Yauhen Atsetsky entitled *The Square of Changes*, and a commented screening of the feature-length documentary *Courage* at the Scala cinema. The gala evening was accompanied by DJ Liquid's musical production.

The project Focus on Belarus will continue in 2022 at the Kino na hranici/granicy festival in Český Těšín and Cieszyn, as well as at the BRaK international book festival in Bratislava.

Abstract

This book is the result of the event Focus on Belarus which took place in the autumn of 2021 at the Book World fair in Prague and subsequently at the theatre Husa na provázku in Brno. It contains the texts by sixteen contemporary Belarusian authors who took part in readings and debates and presented excerpts from their work. The collection begins with a study by literary critic Alena Karp which provides an overview of contemporary Belarusian literature, mentions the most prominent figures in poetry, prose, non-fiction and drama, and places their works in a social and political context. What follows is an anthology of texts that the authors read at the above-mentioned events, or which had previously been published in Czech cultural periodicals. The book concludes with a brief summary of the activities of the Embassy of Independent Belarusian Culture, an initiative of the Brno Centre for Experimental Theatre at whose instigation the event was organized.





centrum experimentálního divadla

AMBASÁDA NEZÁVISLÉ
BĚLORUSKÉ KULTURY



АМБАСАДА НЕЗАЛЕЖНАЙ
БЕЛАРУСКАЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ

Zaostřeno na Bělorusko
Sborník běloruských textů

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