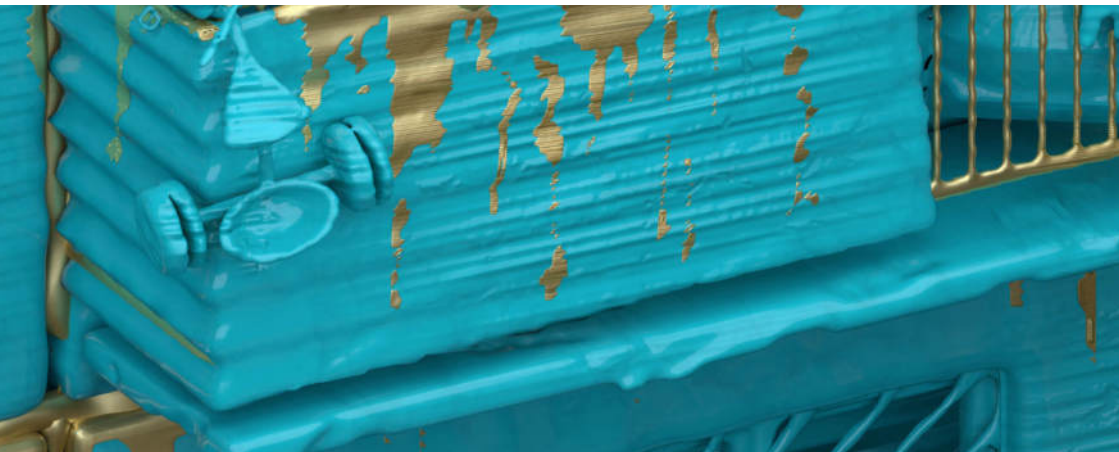




# Foreign Rights Guide Fall 2023

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin





## Viktor Jerofejew

### *The Great Gopnik*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

#### **A novel like a shock, a rogue's tale that drills into the deepest abysses of contemporary Russia**

Viktor Yerofeyev's epic novel is a brilliant picaresque novel about the rise of Putin, who, as the Great Gopnik, embodies what should not be possible: a yob, a rowdy, a chav who not only makes it to the highest center of power, but keeps himself there. Only someone could have thought that up! But who? Someone who is considered talentless by his mother and whose father loses his post as a high-ranking diplomat because of the publication of a critical text, an author who will never be as radical as his sister O., who holds up a mirror to post-Soviet Russia with the help of pornography, and who nevertheless is kicked out of the writers' association more than once and today lives in exile in Germany. And so Yerofeyev tells the story of today's Russia from the perspective of the writer – who is free to move through time and space, to have characters appear and disappear, to invent things and to expose what he has experienced, heard and seen as a hoax. Yerofeyev ventures nothing less than a literary explanation for what is happening today: *The Great Gopnik* is a rapid and ironic, at times cynical, movement through time and space, in which Stalin, Putin and the writer's parents, his fellow writers and his wives find themselves at the same table, as if for dinner, to ask the one insoluble question: how could it have come to this?

Novel  
Hardcover  
614 pages  
2023  
Russian original available

**Viktor Jerofejew (Viktor Yerofeyev)**, born in Moscow in 1947, became known worldwide for his novel *The Moscow Beauty*, published in 1989 and translated into 27 languages. In 1979 he was expelled from the USSR Writers' Union for his participation in the literary anthology *Metropol*, which featured texts by various authors that had been banned by the censors. He has lived in exile in Germany since 2022. Most recently published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *Encyclopedia of the Russian Soul*.

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**Julia Kissina**

*Bubush*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**A brilliantly debauched, tragic novel full of ghosts and confusion that moves from the horrors of the 20th century to the present day**

In the Berlin of technological progress, where Skype, e-mail and text messages characterize everyday life, two disparate characters meet: the charismatic writer Andy, who cultivates a fatal penchant for alcohol, and the mysterious narrator of this story, whom he calls Bubush. A love affair develops between the two, and they move to San Francisco, which is populated by ex-hippies, beatniks, and aging gangsters. But instead of building a future there, Andy clings to the ghosts of the past, especially his mother, who miraculously survived in Paris during the Nazi occupation. Ghostly, she meets him smoking on the roof, forgetting her lipstick in the bathroom and lurking at the head of his bed. His increasing disruption does not leave Bubush untouched; she becomes hostage to Andy's trauma and madness. When one day she catches sight of the deserted island of Alcatraz, the legendary prison, she has only one wish: to escape. In her new novel full of curious moments, Julia Kissina sensitively tells of the desperate attempt to bring together two fundamentally different worlds, born of the trauma of memory and the desire for change. A captivating journey on aberrations from the Paris of the 1940s to the Berlin and San Francisco of the present.

Novel  
Hardcover  
224 pages  
2023  
Russian original and English sample available

**Rights sold to:**  
Italian (Scritturapura Casa Editrice)

**Shortlisted for the Russian National Bestseller Literature Award 2022**

**Julia Kissina**, born in 1966 in Kiev, studied at the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography in Moscow and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Until 1990 she lived in Moscow, where she was part of the unofficial artistic and literary life. She now lives as a freelance artist and writer in Berlin and New York.

*"An incredibly charming book about love and madness."* – Aglaya Toporova

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Paris · Berlin · Mother · 1940 · San Francisco · Relationships



# Yevgenia Belorusets

## War Diary

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

### A monumental, deeply penetrating document of life in Kyiv during the first forty-one days of the Russian invasion of Ukraine

The young artist and writer Yevgenia Belorusets was in her hometown of Kyiv when Putin's "special military operation" against Ukraine began on the morning of February 24, 2022. With the shelling of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odessa, and Kherson, the war with Russia had clearly, irreversibly begun: "I thought, this has been allowed to happen, it is a crime against everything human, against a great common space where we live and hope for a future." With power and clarity, the *War Diary* of Yevgenia Belorusets documents the long beginning of the devastation and its effects on the ordinary residents of Ukraine: what it feels like to interact with the strangers who suddenly become your "countrymen"; the struggle to make sense of a good mood on a spring day; the new danger of a routine coffee run. First published in the German newspaper *Der Spiegel*, the *War Diary* had an immediate impact worldwide: it was translated by an anonymous collective of writers on Weibo; read live by Margaret Atwood on International Women's Day; adapted for an episode of *This American Life* on NPR; and brought to the 2022 Venice Biennale as part of the pavilion "This is Ukraine: Defending Freedom."

*"War Diary" is among the first books to come out of this conflict, and it has plenty to say to a world audience.*" – The New York Times

Hardcover with photos  
191 pages  
2022  
Written in German  
Complete English translation available

**Rights sold to:**  
French (Bourgois)  
Italian (Piemme)  
English World Rights (New Directions)

**Women of Europe Award 2023**

**Yevgenia Belorusets** is a Ukrainian photographer, artist and writer who lives between Kyiv and Berlin. She is concerned with the intersections of art, media and society, and involved in a number of cultural and political initiatives. Her first book *Lucky Breaks* has been critically acclaimed and translated in 10 languages.

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Kyiv · Common space · Spring day · Impact · Morning · Future





## Joshua Groß

### *Prana Extreme*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

### **Giant dragonflies, Chupa Chups, a stolen meteorite in a psychedelic, increasingly hot Tyrolean summer: Prana Extreme tells of the longing to grasp the world**

On the Bergisel ski jump in the Tyrolean winter sports metropolis of Innsbruck in early summer, the narrator Joshua and his partner Lisa meet sixteen-year-old Michael Stiening, an Austrian ski jumping talent who is preparing for the new season and his attack on the world's best. In the training methods of his older sister Johanna, gravitation, inclusiveness and self-confrontation come together. When Joshua and Lisa move into the holiday flat in the siblings' house, a temporary community is formed, which is unexpectedly joined by Joshua's eccentric but caring grandma Suzet and, for a few weeks, little Tilde. And so, in this hot summer in this almost unreal place near the swamps where aloe vera grows in the Alps, a journey of self-discovery begins for all of them. *Prana Extreme* is an attempt to depict the rapidly changing world in a multi-layered way; it is the venture to create space for a different togetherness through attention and humour; a book that tells of the success of deep connection.

Novel  
Hardcover  
301 pages  
2022

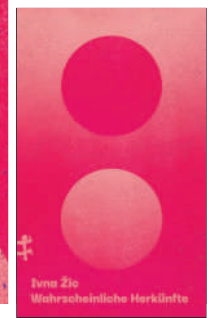
**Nominated for the Leipzig Book Prize 2023**

**Joshua Groß**, born in 1989 in Grünsberg, studied political science, economics and ethics of text cultures. He has received several awards, among others the Anna Seghers Prize 2019, the Hölderlin Förderpreis 2021, the Literature Prize of the A und A Kulturstiftung 2021 and a residency scholarship from the Literarisches Colloquium Berlin 2021.

*"Effortlessly Groß switches between gamerlingo, rap jargon, post-structuralist theoretical terms and poetizing anachronisms. In the collision of these linguistic realms, but also in their virtuosic motivic intertwining, sparks are struck that are as fascinating as they are enigmatic in their sparkling luminosity."* – taz

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Ski Jump · World's Best · Community · Aloe Vera · Togetherness · Counter-space



 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

## Ivna Žic

### *Probable Origins*

#### **Wouldn't it be time to adapt the language to the present? And to the past?**

How do we tell about a past that we have not experienced ourselves? How and in what language do we tell of and about stories that we cannot relate to? For when we speak, we speak the present, in which the past also speaks: whoever wants to understand what he speaks must also understand the language of the dead. In her autofictional reflection, Ivna Žic opens access to the completely different worlds of her two grandmothers and the silent grandfather, in whose lives European history and a vanished world are reflected, which still lives on in us and determines our actions.

In tender prose and with precise descriptions, Ivna Žic traces the footsteps of her ancestors and opens a place of recognition in the other and of the other. Diversity is horizontal and vertical, diachronic and synchronic. Žic's text opens up in a passage from the past into a European future in which a new, radical multilingualism has long since created space for itself, thereby allowing the political to emerge from the private and new narratives to emerge from the new circumstances.

*"Ivna Žic's collection of essays is an intellectual and equally personal adventure. A search for traces in which even the finding remains ambivalent. The traces of life and its languages prove to be so ambiguous that it simply pulls the rug out from under the self-assured word 'identity.'" – Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

Novel  
Hardcover  
217 pages  
2023

**Ivna Žic**, born in 1986 in Zagreb, grew up in Zurich, studied Applied Theater Studies, Acting Direction and Scenic Writing in Gießen, Hamburg and Graz. Žic has received numerous grants and awards for her texts. In 2019, she was nominated for both the Austrian Book Prize and the Swiss Book Prize for her debut novel *Die Nachkommende*. In 2020, she received the prestigious Anna Seghers Prize. Žic lives in Zurich and Vienna.

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# Die fernen Orte des Versagens



**Frank Witzel**

*The Distant Places of Failure*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**Finally: Frank Witzel's new narrative masterpiece, a book of stories, as if Montaigne met Thomas Mann and dreamed like Salvador Dalí**

Stories that intertwine, and stories within stories: with *The Distant Places of Failure*, Frank Witzel has woven a grandiose literary Möbius strip. Starting from everyday situations, the narrator, together with his characters, drills relentlessly to the bottom of the conditions of being human. Breathlessly, the reader follows the labyrinthine stories that lead him into a maze of reality. A colorful bouquet of life concepts, stereotypes and pathologies reveal realities behind reality: a mushroom picker finds a corpse in the forest and tries to avoid possible consequences; a couple goes to a photo shoot on the Todtnauberg; a woman with a horse wish has to deal with the even more outlandish wishes of her partners; a lawyer develops the theory of the illogical second on a free afternoon; a woman gets into a remote village by chance, where she is exposed to various mechanisms of desire; another woman tries to save herself from an impending blow of fate through a voodoo ritual.

Short Stories  
Hardcover  
346 pages  
2023

**Frank Witzel** has published numerous radio plays, essays, and novels, including *The Invention of the Red Army Faction* by a Manic-Depressive Teenager in the Summer of 1969, for which he received the German Book Prize in 2015, and *Sweet Shipwreck* (2020). In 2017 he received the Poetics Lectureship from the University of Heidelberg, and in 2018 the Poetics Lectureship from the University of Tübingen; he also held the Friederichs Endowed Professorship at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach. In 2021 he received the Erich Fried Prize.

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# DAS GEFÜHL ZU DENKEN



**Veronika Reichl**

*The Feeling of Thinking*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**How reading changes lives: Tales of one of the most existential experiences that readers can have**

Every true reader knows the feeling: suddenly you are swept away into a new, unknown world. Or a truth slowly dawns on you, the existence of which you never even imagined before, but which touches you at the core of your being. This sensation is triggered by a book, an author, perhaps only a sentence, which puts life in completely new circumstances. Veronika Reichl traces these existential awakenings and turning points in reading theory in her stories distilled from countless interviews and conversations: How does it feel to read Judith Butler or Slavoj Žižek? Do you have to be silent to understand Hegel? How does one get into the Derrida tension? Does Kant help stop the free-flowing phenomena?

Reichl's brilliant narratives of fiction and documentation form an archipelago of knowing and feeling, a universal history of philosophy as much as a reading guide and self-analysis. Humorous and precise, surprising and ingenious, she tells of experiences of thinking, of the pain of reading, of dealing with not understanding, and of how reading touches lives and changes them forever.

*"Her humorously essayistic storytelling casually opens up an insight into the essential approaches of philosophy and modern theory combined with great reading pleasure. Quite ingenious!" – WDR*

Literary Essay  
Hardcover  
251 pages  
2023  
English sample available

**Rights sold to:**  
Russian (Individuum)

**Veronika Reichl**, born in Baltimore in 1973, lives in Berlin as an author, illustrator and lecturer. She studied communication design and media art in Stuttgart and Portsmouth and completed her doctorate on the visualizability of theoretical texts. She was a prize winner of the 11th Open Mike.

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## Walter Sperling

### *In Front of the Ruins of Grozny. Life and Survival in the Multiethnic Caucasus*

#### **A magnificently told civilization story of a forgotten region on the edge of the empire, the battlefield of the future**

"What was the multiethnic state of the Soviet Union, which after all determined the lives of over two hundred million people for seven decades? How did the multiethnic communities that existed in a multitude of Soviet cities for decades function together? In other words, how did people manage to look each other in the eye again after the excesses of violence – revolution, civil war, terror, the Second World War – and regain trust? Or were the decades spent together after Stalin's death nothing more than a holding out, a waiting for the 'end of history'?" The search for answers to these questions led Walter Sperling to the edge of the former Soviet Union, to Grozny, in this stirring everyday history. There, like in a burning glass, the power play of resistance and integration is bundled, in the struggle of the Russian empire and the periphery, of the colonizers and the colonized. First a garrison town, then a boomtown for oil, after the October Revolution a building site for socialism, a little later a frontline city targeted by the German Wehrmacht. After the deportation of the Chechens and Ingush in 1944 and their return in 1957, nothing was heard for a long time from the tranquil little town in the Caucasus, which struggled persistently for social peace. Until the first Russian Chechen war, when Grozny once again ended in ruins. Walter Sperling traces the escalation and radicalization. Above all, he makes the efforts to build bridges and mediate visible, because the elites of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious periphery knew what the price of unleashing was.

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Non-fiction  
Hardcover with illustrations  
688 pages  
2023

**Walter Sperling**, born in Karaganda in 1975, emigrated from the USSR to the Federal Republic of Germany in his childhood. After studying history, East European history and Slavic studies at the University of Bielefeld, with stays abroad in Yaroslavl' and St. Petersburg, he received his doctorate in 2010 and became an Akademischer Rat at the Faculty of History at the Ruhr University in Bochum. In 2016, he held a substitute professorship in the history of Eastern and East Central Europe at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. In 2018, he was a fellow at the German Historical Institute Moscow.

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## Guillaume Paoli

### *Mind and Garbage*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

### **A furious manifesto against bullshit and great plea for an enlightened catastrophism**

Essay  
Hardcover  
268 pages  
2023  
English sample available

The background has moved forward. The backdrop has become the protagonist. The facts are known. Repeating them does not bring any gain in knowledge. The only thing that remains important is how we relate to them. But the world continues to act as if the reports of species extinction, forest destruction, floods and heat deaths could be slipped in between the sports news and the latest celebrity scandal. This business as usual has a paradoxical effect: not only the disaster seems unreal, but also and above all everyday life. In view of this, it is urgent to bring unrest into the public debate and to reflect on the conditions of the possibility of thinking today. In the texts of the tiring belief in progress of the 1960s and 1970s, Paoli already encounters everything it takes to understand the situation. His essay thus becomes at once an archaeology of repressed insights, a prolegomena of a science of garbage, and a rigorous condemnation of our present.

**Guillaume Paoli** is a French journalist and philosopher living in Berlin. He is one of the founders of the movement of the „Happy Unemployed“.

*“Paoli has succeeded with his essay *Mind and Garbage* a briskly written, a rousing book that directly intervenes in the public debate and could not be more topical. [...] Right thinking seems to be only a weak solution in view of the impending apocalypse, but at the same time probably the best we can hope for. Guillaume Paoli has made a valuable contribution to this with *Mind and Garbage*.” – neues deutschland*

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# GEGENWART

## Über Entgrenzung Subkulturen und Bewusstseinsindust



**Paul-Philipp Hanske, Benedikt Sarreiter**

*Ecstasies of the Present. On Dissolution of Limits,  
Subcultures and the Industry of Consciousness*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

### **A fascinating history of mankind along its rapturous states**

To this day, the Greek god Dionysus has to be used when talking about them: ecstasies are wild, they have an inherent energy that can be felt by those who have just been raptured, but which is all too difficult to put into words. Shamans move in ecstasy in invisible worlds, medieval mystics united with God in it, and intoxication was and is an integral part of every society. Because they are difficult to control, ecstasies are frowned upon to this day - but they have never completely disappeared. And they are returning with a vengeance: surprisingly, we encounter them today not only at raves or in shamanistic rituals, but also in yoga classes, mindfulness seminars and workshops designed to improve job performance. And last but not least, the new boom in ecstasy is evident in crisis phenomena such as a martial masculinity, in mass movements such as the violent storming of the Capitol in Washington or the protests against the Corona measures. But where does this new desire for ecstasy come from? It is high time to trace this basic human need for self-transgression with historical depth, critical curiosity, an analytical view of the present, and cultural respect in medical laboratories, witchcraft rituals, ayahuasca ceremonies, and club culture - in order to find an ethic for the ecstasies of the present.

Non-fiction  
Hardcover  
351 pages  
2023  
English sample available

**Paul-Philipp Hanske**, born in Regensburg in 1975, co-founded the editorial agency Nansen & Piccard, where he still works today. **Benedikt Sarreiter**, born in Munich in 1976, co-founded the editorial agency Nansen & Piccard, where he works.

*"Paul-Philipp Hanske and Benedikt Sarreiter have written a book about the history of ecstasy on the psychedelic wave that has the potential to become a standard work." – Süddeutsche Zeitung*

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# LAND und

# der WESTEN



**Katharina Bluhm**

*Russia and the West. Ideology, Economy and Politics since the End of the Soviet Union*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**A behind-the-scenes look at the war, in a unique and fundamental study of the background to Russian politics**

Non-fiction  
Hardcover  
ca. 520 pages  
2023

Since the start of the war of aggression on Ukraine in February 2022, there has been a great deal of puzzling about the mindset of Russia's most powerful man. Previously recognized as a skilled pragmatist, Putin now appears as an enraptured old man who would like to go down in history as the new Peter I or Nikolai I. People are puzzling over what he reads, to whom he lends his ear, who has taken possession of his brain. Everyone can read Putin's history-obsessed speeches in German. So everything is familiar? Katharina Bluhm's fundamental book opposes the truncated view of Russia's top power and Putinology. She analyzes how an illiberal-conservative intellectual countermovement to shock therapy and Western integration has formed since the late 1990s, how it tried to establish itself in Russia's new party system in the 2000s, and how its motives, ideas, and concepts have been incorporated into Putin's conservative-repressive state project since 2012. Bluhm draws attention to those social forces that have sustained the Putin regime and influenced its state capitalism, but at the same time are in permanent tension with it. Without them, Russia's return to the world stage as a revisionist power cannot be understood.

**Katharina Bluhm**, Professor of Sociology with a focus on Eastern Europe, grew up in East Berlin and studied philosophy at Humboldt University and Lomonosov University in Moscow. After 1989/90, she switched from philosophy to sociology and from the Academy of Sciences in East Berlin to the Georg-August University in Göttingen. Her other professional positions include the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Harvard University in Cambridge (USA), and the University of Osnabrück.

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# Darstellung des Schrecklic Versuch über das



**Yassin Al-Haj Saleh**

*The Representation of the Terrible. Attempt about the Destroyed Syria*

**An intense book that, against all odds and horrors, gives hope**

For more than half a century, Syria has been dominated by the Assad regime, a regime that elevated arbitrary persecution, destruction and torture to a structural principle of rule in order to secure its own power in the long term. Talking about Suriya al-Assad therefore always means talking about the violent transgression of the boundaries of bodies, society and humanity, about worlds of experience in which death and life have become mixed to the point of indistinguishability. Above all, however, it means talking about the impossible, which has become reality against all odds and hoped-for democratization efforts: the terrible, which completely denies all sense and all language. For only by including the cruel experiences of Syrians in all reflections on the country, by depicting the horror as directly as possible, by living through it and acknowledging it, can we succeed, as Yassin Al-Haj Saleh breathtakingly demonstrates, in developing a consciousness of horror that brings about moral anger and thus leads to creativity and a more just world.

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Non-fiction  
Hardcover  
ca. 280 pages  
2023  
Arabic original available

**Yassin Al-Haj Saleh**, born in Raqqa in 1961, studied medicine before being arrested in 1980 as a member of the democratic wing of the Communist Party for his opposition to the Assad regime and spending 16 years in Syrian prisons. In 2013, his wife Samira was kidnapped in a Damascus suburb and has disappeared to this day. Saleh has lived in exile since 2013, first in Istanbul and since 2017 in Berlin.

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# Sadismus mit und ohne Sade



**Iris Därmann**

*Sadism With and Without Sade*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

## **A History of the Body, Pornography, and Theory of the Colonial Desire for Violence that Determines Our Desire to this Day**

How could people do what they did to their peers in the monstrous histories of violence of modernity? Iris Därmann finds an answer in the central role of a historically new lust for violence. In transatlantic enslavement, this lust for violence was indissolubly linked to the torture of flogging. The Marquis de Sade was not only well informed about conditions in the French colonies, he also made the colonial lust for violence visible in literature and transformed it into pornographic practices aimed at the abolition of slavery. In Därmann's analysis, therefore, Sade occupies a key position: in this perspective, sadism is an organized practice of violence, a pornographic genre, and a colonial racist use of the pleasures. Against the trivializing attempt of late 19th-century sexology to reduce "sadism" to the "perversion" of individual perpetrators, Därmann examines in an eye-opening way the deliberate revival of whip torture in the colonization of Africa and the extermination of European Jews; she gives particular space to those who were exposed to sadistic violence, diagnosed it clairvoyantly, and resisted it. Since the 1930s, sadism has thus also become a critical category: Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Jean Améry, Georges Bataille, and Pierre Klossowski found their way back to Sade's radical political project and at the same time opposed it in the search for another desire that does not turn the human body into sadistic prey.

Non-fiction  
Hardcover  
350 pages  
2023

**Sigmund Freud Prize for  
Scholarly Prose 2022**

**Iris Därmann**, born in Witten in 1963, is Professor of Cultural Theory and Cultural Aesthetics at the Humboldt University in Berlin. Her publications include *Resistances. History and Theory* and *Underserviceability. A History of Violence and of Political Philosophy*.

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# PANAJOTIS KONDYLLIS



 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

## Panajotis Kondylis *Conservatism*

### The long overdue rediscovery of a classic of the history of political thought and ideas

In this interpretation, long out of print and still novel and startling, philosopher and historian of ideas Panajotis Kondylis turns against the notion of conservatism as a reaction to the French Revolution. In brilliant lines of thought that take him from Bonald and Burke to Carlyle and Chateaubriand to Fénelon, de Maistre, and Schlegel, he demonstrates that conservatism as a social and political force had existed since the Middle Ages, when the nobility and its system of estates fought emerging egalitarian interpretations of the law. But Kondylis goes a step further and shows how conservatism adapted to the particular reality of the modern sovereign state, which was inconceivable without it, and analyzes it as a political force that recurs in surprising forms. He succeeds, for example, in showing how the central themes of the socialist critique of capitalism emerged in the ideological sphere of counterrevolution and circulated idealized images of a pre-capitalist reality up to the present day. Conservatism is the necessary contribution to better understand the political and cultural debates of our time.

*"A book that could help to better understand the dilemma of contemporary conservatism, not only in Germany."* – Welt

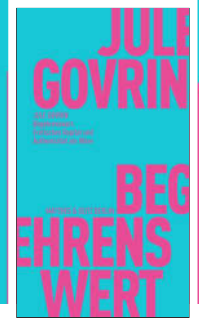
Non-Fiction  
Hardcover  
869 pages  
2023  
English sample available

**Panajotis Kondylis**, born in Olympia in 1943, lived as a philosopher in Athens, where he died in 1998. He studied philosophy in Heidelberg, where he received his doctorate under Dieter Henrich. He translated Marx, Cassirer, Carl Schmitt and Machiavelli, among others, into Greek and worked on the concept and premises of the Enlightenment, philosophical polemics and the unquestioned presuppositions of European world views.

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# Erotisches Kapital und Authentizität als Ware

# B



**Jule Govrin**

*Desirable. Erotic Capital and Authenticity as a Commodity*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

## About the value of desire and the desire of value

At first glance, desire and value appear to be opposites. While the former aims at the personal and intimate, the latter describes abstract judgment. But the opposition becomes fragile as soon as we discover in desire the constant upvaluing and devaluing of others, and in value the incessant, affect-laden game of evaluations. Jule Govrin's brilliant essay *Desirable* asks how desire permeates economic value systems, and how economic valuation patterns are inscribed in a subtle way in social relationships and self-perceptions – in semantics of self-worth, in the search for unique selling points to set oneself apart from others. The foray through the present is accompanied by detours into the history of capitalism and sexuality to show how desire is tied to commodities, people, and values. In the triangle of value, desire, and authenticity, *Desirable* fathoms the matrix of our present – and at the same time points to the vanishing point of an emancipatory perspective in the desire for different, solidary ways of relating that unites all.

Essay  
Softcover  
191 pages  
2023

**Jule Govrin** is a political philosopher researching the political dimension of bodies and desire as a transformative force at the intersection of feminist philosophy, political theory, social philosophy, and aesthetics. Most recently published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *Political Bodies* (2022).

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# WANN IDEN



## Bernd Stegemann

### *Identity Politics*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

#### What is "identity politics"? Bernd Stegemann brings order to an overheated debate

Identity politics is an unwieldy word, and many heated debates revolve around it.

No one is quite able to explain it, yet the core of this fighting term is as old as mankind. "We first!" is a rallying cry that has been heard throughout the ages.

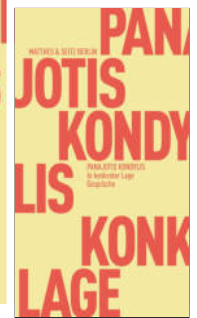
"America first" is identity politics, but "Black Lives Matter" also uses the clout that comes from "We first!". Both slogans share an enigmatic mix of platitude and attack.

Of course, Black lives matter. But the call becomes militant where the statement "All Lives Matter" is no longer accepted. Why shouldn't "all lives" count, and why should only "Black lives" count? Or is that not the point at all? With these questions leading to the heart of identity politics, Bernd Stegemann begins his essay grounded in the history of ideas, taking a look at the tipping points of identity politics such as victim management, intimate communication, cancel culture, critical race theory, or wokeness, and asking the question about the future of universalism.

Essay  
Softcover  
110 pages  
2023

**Bernd Stegemann**, born in Münster in 1967, is professor of dramaturgy and cultural sociology at Berlin's Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Art and has published *Das Gespenst des Populismus, Wutkultur*, and *Die Öffentlichkeit und ihre Feinde*, among others. Most recently published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin: *Die Moralfalle* (2018).

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## Panajotis Kondylis

*In a Concrete Situation. Interviews*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

### Self-preservation and power as key concepts of an interpretation of human things

Panajotis Kondylis, the Greek philosopher and theorist of ideas, knew: only through a total existential commitment, a vigilant observation of concrete, always historically conditioned situations and living people striving for their self-preservation and thereby necessarily also for the expansion of their power, as well as through an unstoppable filtering of the observations with strict reflection, which capitulates to no prejudice and shuns no conflict, does the mind reach maturity and escape normative binding. In the three interviews conducted in the 1990s, this knowledge presents itself in practical perfection and at the same time offers a fundamental entry into Kondylis' thinking - a thinking that makes use of philosophy, anthropology, economics and history without bowing to disciplinary boundaries. A thinking that sifts through the political-ideological currents and theories of the past to reveal their relevance to the present and the impact they have on today. A thinking that comes to no end and proves to be an almost planetary one.

Non-fiction  
Softcover  
158 pages  
2023

**Panayotis Kondylis**, born in Olympia in 1943, lived as a philosopher in Athens, where he died in 1998. He studied philosophy in Heidelberg, where he received his doctorate under Dieter Henrich. He translated Marx, Cassirer, Carl Schmitt and Machiavelli, among others, into Greek and worked on the concept and premises of the Enlightenment, philosophical polemics and the unquestioned presuppositions of European world views.

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# BYUNG-CHUL HAN

## Die Krise der Narration



## Byung-Chul Han

### *The Crisis of Narration*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

**The inflationary use of storytelling masks the narrative crisis of the present. In the midst of noisy storytelling, there is a narrative vacuum that manifests itself as an emptiness of meaning and disorientation.**

Narratives in the original sense bring forth the binding, the connecting and the obligatory, thus creating the community as a community of narratives. Narratives eliminate contingency. Just when everything has become so arbitrary and random, that is, in the midst of the contingency storm of the information society, storytelling speaks out loudly. Narratives as narratives are themselves perceived as contingent. Storytelling is spreading in the midst of a great disorientation. It is ultimately narrative in consumer form. Narrative and advertising fall into one. Capitalism appropriates narrative. Storyselling. Storytelling is storyselling. But it cannot transform the information society back into a narrative community. The crisis of narration, however, has a long history. Byung-Chul Han's new essay traces it. In doing so, Han consistently continues his reflections on our information society and now shows that narrative and information are originally opposing forces.

*"The inflationary use of storytelling masks the narrative crisis of the present. In the midst of the noisy storytelling, there is a narrative vacuum that manifests itself as an emptiness of meaning and disorientation." Byung-Chul Han*

Essay  
Softcover  
100 pages  
2023

Complete English translation available

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Turkey (Ketebe)  
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**Byung-Chul Han** was born in Seoul, South-Korea. His works have been translated in over 30 languages and are bestsellers in numerous countries. He lives in Berlin.

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MATTHES & SEITZ BERLIN



**Sylvia Sasse**

*Inverting into the Opposite. About Subversion as a Power Technique*

### **A key to understanding autocratic rule**

At the latest since a fascist political system justified a war by means of "denazification," it has been clear: the world is out of joint. Trust in institutions is dwindling, facts are interpreted as fiction even when confronted with them on a daily basis, autocracy is becoming dissidence and criticism is becoming censorship. But it is not only with Putin's autocratic regime, not only with conspiracy theories, corona and climate change denial, or Trump's attempt to exploit the leeway of democracy ever further for his own interests, that the perception of reality and the capacity of reception and criticism are under attack. As Sylvia Sasse demonstrates with a captivating view, history is rather full of political as well as media strategies for the creation of inverted worlds. It is therefore time to recapitulate the observable reversals, to understand their history(s), and to understand them as one of the fundamental procedures of disinformation. For the inversion into the opposite is not a subversive strategy "from below", but a means to consolidate and legitimize power and terror - and a direct attack on democracy.

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Essay  
Softcover  
187 pages  
2023

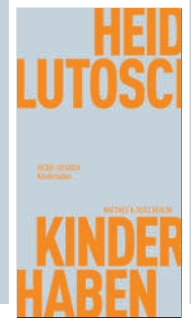
**Sylvia Sasse** is Professor of Slavic Literary Studies and co-founder of the Center for Arts and Cultural Theory (ZKK) at the University of Zurich as well as editor of the online magazine *Geschichte der Gegenwart*. She is currently researching the relationship between the arts and disinformation in the Cold War and in the present.

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# HEIDE LUTOSCH

## Kinderhaben



## Heide Lutosch

### *To Have Children*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

### **Furious analysis, tender pamphlet – theory that touches and demands change**

Mothers' meetings and playgrounds, shared flats and ICE trains are the places where precise observations condense like pieces of a puzzle into an analysis whose object of knowledge is having children. In short, self-contained sections, Heide Lutosch theorizes in a way that is as radical as it is full of relish and as curious as it is unerring, with Marxist, feminist, and psychoanalytical training, while remaining relentlessly close to her own experience. She speaks out what seems unaddressable: the travails, the frustration, and the very individual sense of failure at the resolution to do everything differently—especially differently from one's own mother. She angrily asks why feminists are still struggling with the same problems today as they were fifty years ago, why so few couples continue to succeed in the equitable distribution of care work, and what can be gained if we try to solve these supposedly private issues socially. For hidden in the seeming obviousness of having children is a power keg that presses for progressive change in society as a whole.

Essay  
Softcover  
103 pages  
2023  
English sample available

**Heide Lutosch**, born in 1972 in Lower Saxony, Germany lives in Leipzig and has translated numerous non-fiction books on such diverse topics such as self-compassion, Thomas Mann and elephants.

*"An essay that is beautifully written stylistically and that speaks out insanely wicked, unsparing, truths."* – Deutschlandfunk Kultur


*"What better thing can happen to a publication than to put something up for discussion? that may not be new, but is always a new concern."* – der Freitag

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## Sacha Bourgeois-Gironde

*How the Law Brings us Closer to Nature*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

### **Rivers as legal subjects in their own right? Can animals go to court? A long overdue admission and a way to recast the relationship between nature and culture**

The fundamental assumption in this surprising and politically programmatic essay is the fictionality of the construction of law – especially that of legal personality. The philosopher and economist Sacha Bourgeois-Gironde sees in this the only seemingly paradoxical possibility of bringing us closer to nature and abolishing the divide between nature and culture. By assigning the status of independent legal subjects, he argues, we would be able to better identify nature and its concerns and ultimately protect it and our existence within it. This position may argue against challenging law in favor of an ideal and imagined law of nature that humans aspire to in their search for nature and desire for harmony with the environment. It would be a path of endogenous change rather than one that leads from within beyond notions of natural law. A new legal version of the relationship between humans and nature could also include indigenous conceptions of nature and recognize them through a new constitution.

Essay  
Softcover  
91 pages  
2023  
Full French translation  
available

**Rights sold to:**  
French (Les Presses Universitaires de France / PUF - Humensis)

**Sacha Bourgeois-Gironde** is a philosopher and economist. He teaches as a professor of economics and cognitive science at Université Paris 2 and École normale supérieure. His research focuses on the relationship between human cognitive abilities and the environments and institutions in which they are deployed.

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# EIN BESTIARIUM

# MENSCHLICHER ÄNGSTE



## Stephan Wunsch

*Disreputable Animals. A Bestiary of Human Fears*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

### Unpopular animals and a rousing exploration of human fears

Whether it is the fear of snakes, the loathing of vultures or the disgust of spiders – the human relationship to many animals is characterized by deep rejection. Their origins go back to mythical prehistoric times, when man believed he had renounced the animal world, not least through storytelling and fable.

Stephan Wunsch portrays ten of these ill-named, even disreputable animals. His forays lead him into the shadowy realm of malicious natural history – and into the abysses of the human psyche. For a bestiary of disreputable animals is a catalog of our fears, a mirror of our inadequacies, a survey of open wounds – in short, a cryptic and hilarious study of human nature, from vulture to false snake, from deceitful hyena to vampiric bat.

Nonfiction  
Hardcover with illustrations  
238 pages  
2023

**Stephan Wunsch**, born in 1968, studied philosophy and literature. He has been working as a puppeteer, figure designer and director in Aachen since 2002. Projects about bird creatures, the Cambrian and the deep sea are a focus of his work.

*"Every animal, especially the dubious and obscure, is a challenge to the human mind and to the human imagination."*

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Prejudices · Cultural History · Sharks · Spiders · Snakes · Hyenas · Bats



## Paul Scraton

### *Harz Hikes In Heinrich Heine's footsteps through the German forest*

When Paul Scraton set out on a hike from Göttingen on a clear autumn day, he did not know what to expect. With Heinrich Heine in his luggage, he wanted to reflect on his own experiences of Germany, hike along the Leine to Northeim, over low hills and light forests to Osterode. In the Harz Mountains, he followed the old trade routes and witches' paths, went underground in the mines near Goslar and crossed the old inner-German border in the middle of a dam. He climbed the Brocken, not only in the footsteps of Heine, but also of Goethe and Coleridge, Lou Andreas-Salomé, Anselm Kiefer and all the dreamers and schemers who were attracted to these slopes, where the witches danced, the students sang and the Cold War spies listened. Paul Scraton has found signs of the past, but also hikers, drinkers, football fans, workers and ex-miners in a forest threatened by the climate crisis, whose salvation has recently been appropriated by right-wing movements alongside nature activists, thus raising anew the question of the forest's place in German cultural identity then and now (and at all times in between).

*"The wandering author picks up the traces and stories of the past. The result is a clever, entertaining book."* – Westfalen Blatt

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Narrative Non-fiction  
Hardcover  
253 pages  
2023  
English original text available

**Paul Scraton**, born in Lancashire in 1979, studied International Studies at the University of Leeds before moving to Berlin in 2001. He is the editor of *Elsewhere magazine* and the author of several books about different parts of Germany.

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# Ein Portrait von Andrea Grill



 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

## Andrea Grill

### *Seahorses. A Portrait*

**Drifting instead of swimming, gliding instead of swirling –  
from the seahorse we learn to move with the tides**

These amazing, elegant animals teach us that everything can be quite different: that males can get pregnant and that instead of chasing targets, it would be just as rewarding to drift. A seahorse can wait for hours in the sea grass until prey comes its way. It then sucks it in with its mouth like an eyedropper. Nevertheless, the pairs, which are largely monogamous, manage to find and greet each other every morning. Then the female goes hunting while the male carries the fertilized eggs in his belly pocket. Under water, the sounds of the brightly colored animals, growling when threatened or pleased - or clicking during courtship - can only be heard by humans with technical amplification. But what are seahorses actually? "Horse-like sea creatures," Carl von Linné said, "fish, bony fish, to be precise," Andrea Grill specifies. In her dazzling portrait, the biologist and writer sets out to find these whimsical creatures of the water, which have existential significance: as mythical figures, as animals with utopian potential, as graceful survivors - and not least as indicators of the state of our oceans.

Non-fiction  
Hardcover with numerous  
illustrations  
ca. 160 pages  
2023


**Andrea Grill** lives as a poet and writer in Vienna, Amsterdam and the Salzammergut. She is a habilitated evolutionary biologist and translates from several European languages. Her poetry collection *Happy Bastards* is among the poetry recommendations of the German Academy for Language and Poetry. Her novel *Cherubino* was nominated for the German Book Prize in 2019. In 2021, she received the Anton Wildgans Prize. Her animal portrait *Butterflies* has previously been published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin and translated into several languages.

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## Volker Sommer

### *Monkeys. A Portrait*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

#### **The most human of all animal portraits so far - because it tells a lot about our own affinity**

Whether we're making a monkey of ourselves, going ape, or will be the monkey's uncle – it's not just the rich metaphors that connect other primates' lives to ours, but the eternal constants: living and eating, socializing and sex, rearing young, and inevitable death. In his humorous and knowledgeable animal portrait, which is purposely not dedicated to the great apes, Volker Sommer shows the striking variance that evolution has created in this process. Rather, it is the lemurs, the lorises, the tarsiers and the old and new world apes from which we learn that there is nothing that does not exist: polyandry or eternal fidelity, solo sex and females ensnaring each other, mistreatment of babies by mothers or devoted paternal care, plus unusual dietary habits, wakes or strict nocturnal activity. As individually as we encounter the apes here, as Madame Berthe's mouse lemur, crested black macaque or spot-nosed monkey, it is also clear that there is one ape that threatens them all: homo sapiens.

*"Primates are so different in terms of anatomy, ecology and behavior that the monkey does not exist. Moreover, each individual of a species embodies personalities, with often very contrasting preferences, fears, and habits. In relation to us humans, this is a truism – which becomes wisdom when we see ourselves as part of an evolutionary continuum."*

Non-fiction  
Hardcover with numerous illustrations  
143 pages  
2023

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**Volker Sommer**, born in Holzhausen am Reinhardswald in northern Hesse in 1954, is an evolutionary biologist and primatologist who has been researching the behavior and ecology of wild primates in Asia, Africa and South America for decades. He is Professor of Evolutionary Anthropology at University College London (UCL).

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## Martin Köbel

### *Cacti. A Portrait*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

#### From the desert to the windowsill: a plant between cultures

After the violent conquest of Mexico, the Spaniards may have been astonished: of all things, a misshapen and thorny desert plant enjoyed a high local veneration marked by cult and rite; indeed, an entire state system traced its foundation back to it, and in some places people even drank a special cactus brew to put themselves into intoxicating ecstasies. At home in Europe, however, no one knew these important plants until then. For cacti grow endemically only in America. In evolution, they only appeared long after the continents drifted apart. Whether it was their cult prominence, their adaptability, or their exotic appeal, over time these strange plants aroused desires in Europe as well, conquering not only the imagination but also many a sunny parlor. In his knowledgeable portrait, Martin Köbel follows the cacti on their multifaceted path through the centuries and shows how strongly nature and culture have grown together: A cactus is never just a cactus. Rather, it always reflects the desires and realities of those who cultivate and observe it.

*"The small dose of wildness or alienation it brought to European thought and feeling animated the widening of social confines or the shifting of aesthetic boundaries, and probably did so primarily because it touched on a deeply human desire: the desire for cultural taming of wild nature."*

Non-fiction  
Hardcover with numerous illustrations  
ca. 160 pages  
2023

**Martin Köbel**, born in 1969, studied philosophy and German language and literature in Berlin, Freiburg/BrsG. and Paris and received his doctorate with a thesis on Franz Kafka's *Das Schloss*. He is the editor of Bertolt Brecht's notebooks (Suhrkamp) and a passionate cacti enthusiast.

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## Wilhelm Bode

### *Hares. A Portrait*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

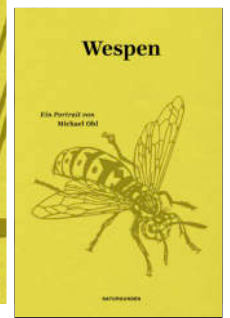
**What is the Easter Bunny all about? A lovingly illustrated book about an animal that is known to all of us and about which we know so little**

Non-fiction  
Hardcover with illustrations  
159 pages  
2023

Hares are strange creatures - with a disarming lack of aggression and astonishing harmlessness, they seem somewhat out of time. Their long whiskers vibrate to the left and right of the hare's cleavage that characterizes their species. Above it, their nose trembles tirelessly to sniff out everything imaginable. Their eyes like their long ears, the so-called spoons, are always in 360° readiness, which nevertheless is not always able to save their lives, because enemies of the hares are many: Foxes, birds of prey as well as hunters. Among them is the author himself, who tells in this very personal portrait how he was supposed to shoot a hare with his own gun when he was eight years old. It will not be the last time that compassion wins out in Wilhelm Bode's lifelong relationship with hares and rabbits. In this portrait, he devotedly illuminates the ambiguous role that these so fertile animals play, not only in Christian-influenced cultural history: from the companion of Aphrodite to the Easter Bunny. Immortalized by Dürer, threatened by human hunting instincts and agricultural land consolidation, today's highly endangered hare must repeatedly prove its resilience.

**Wilhelm Bode**, born in 1947, a lawyer and forestry academic, first headed the state forestry administration and later the supreme nature conservation authority of the Saarland. In 1987, he was the first to introduce clearcut-free permanent forestry throughout a federal state. He initiated, among other things, today's Bliesgau biosphere region and, in 2004, the designation of five clusters of ancient beech forests as Germany's contribution to the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site European Beech Forests. He is the author of the animal/plant portraits *Deers* and *Fir Trees*.

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## Michael Ohl

### *Wasps. A Portrait*

 Matthes & Seitz Berlin

#### **The wasp teaches us that pain and beauty are inseparable.**

As uninvited picnic guests, they are the pest of every late summer, their restless flight putting us all in a tizzy as we fear their burning stings. Rightly so. Not only by their ability to sting, social wasps undermine outdated gender roles. For every spring, a single queen sets to work building a nest for her yet-to-be-born state. But there are also stories of tame wasps whose beauty overwhelms, or of human-animal creatures that fuel erotic fantasies as *Wasp Woman*, for example. Often referred to as the wild, anarchic counterpart of the well-behaved honeybee, it's time to give this tantalizing yellow-and-black hymenoptera her due: In his portrait, Michael Ohl, one of Germany's leading wasp researchers, paints a multifaceted picture of a helpful ecosystem service provider, an intelligent insect and an evolutionary stroke of luck that we should do everything we can to protect in the face of insect mortality.

*"The author is so enthusiastic about the social behavior of wasps, the structure of their sting, the architecture of their nests, that one can't help but be infected by the enthusiasm."*

– Neue Zürcher Zeitung

Non-fiction  
Hardcover with illustrations  
135 pages  
2023

**Michael Ohl**, born in 1964 in Westphalia, is a scientist at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, an adjunct professor at the Humboldt University Berlin and a passionate wasp researcher for many years. He researches topics in evolutionary biology, systematics and taxonomy, and the history of science. His previous book *The Art of Naming* was published in English by MIT Press.

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