

Press Release

1 September 2022

Reminder

KABUL – BERLIN – CAIRO

A benefit evening by the Akademie der Künste, the PEN Centre Germany and PEN Afghanistan for Writers in Prison / Writers at Risk

Thursday, 8 September 2022, 7 pm

Akademie der Künste, Pariser Platz 4, 10117 Berlin

Tandem readings of Afghan poetry, music, talks and video
with Sadeq Osyan & Christoph Hein, Dastgir Farhood & Jenny Erpenbeck, Tamanna Tawangar & Yoko Tawada, Wahab Mojeer & Kathrin Röggla, Abdul Manan Shiwaesharq & Josef Haslinger and Astrid Vehstedt

With texts from Writers in Prison / Writers at Risk read by Valery Tscheplanowa

Welcome: Kathrin Röggla, Vice President of the Akademie der Künste

Music: Delagha Surood & Ardhi Engl and others

Host: Cornelia Zetsche and others

Over the past weeks and months, ten Afghan writers and their families, all together around one hundred people, have been evacuated from Afghanistan to Germany – thanks to the collaboration between the PEN Centre Germany and PEN International, as well as the extensive cooperation with the NGO “Luftbrücke Kabul”, the German Foreign Office, the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media. Meanwhile, writers all around the world are increasingly living in danger. Autocratic governments have been bolstered, especially in these times of Covid-19 and strict pandemic restrictions. Freedom of speech is in crisis. A video from Ruanda and the reading by Valery Tscheplanowa serve to remind us of the poets and authors who – in Turkey, India, Kazakhstan, Egypt and Cuba – have been arrested, imprisoned or murdered, or who, like Innocent Bahati, have simply vanished. To welcome their Afghan colleagues, German authors and writers will introduce the Afghan PEN members.

Samay Hamed: Doctor, composer, songwriter, President of PEN Afghanistan; radio and television programme director; award-winning author of over 50 books, ranging from poetry to literary criticism, from art to politics.

Sadeq Osyan: Poet, literary scholar, human rights activist, member of the PEN executive committee in Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh Province; expert on contemporary Farsi poetry.

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Dastgir Farhood: Poet and influential literary figure in his native language of Uzbek; PEN representative for Turkish-language literature since 2018.

Tamana Tawangar: Born in 1991 in Herat; poet, actress, theatre director in Kabul; PEN Afghanistan representative for Farsi literature; published three novels and two books of poetry.

Wahab Mojeer: Born in 1975 in Mazar-i-Sharif; since 1990s active as poet, writing socially critical and political poems – most of which are in the form of classical Ghazals; author of thirteen books of poetry.

Abdul Manan Shiwaesharq: Born in 1983; former Deputy Minister of Culture; poet and author of nonfiction works on democratic values, political thought and philosophy.

The evening's diverse programme will support the work of the Writers in Prison/ Writers at Risk Committee of PEN Germany. Musical accompaniment is provided by the celebrated singer and musician Delagha Surood and his Tabla player, and from the virtuoso multi-instrumentalist Ardhi Engi from Munich.

The event is a cooperation between the Akademie der Künste, PEN Afghanistan and the PEN Centre Germany.

Donations to Writers in Prison / Writers at Risk are welcome.

Event information

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Admission: €15/10

Tickets: Tel. (030) 200 57-1000, ticket@adk.de

Press tickets: Tel. (030) 200 57-1514, presse@adk.de

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