



TODAY'S BEING

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH LITERARY FESTIVAL

"TIRANA GATE" 2024

9 - 10 - 11
October 2024

10th edition

Organizer



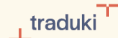
Supporters



Financuar nga
Bashkimi Evropian



BOTIMET
TOENA



Austriada Germanen
Tirana





TODAY'S BEING

Humanity, this perfect being, endowed with enviable intelligence and almost unimaginable sensitivity, carries within itself the genetically encoded history of existence from the beginning until today. Concerned, calm, and productive, dressed in ambition, influenced by the developments of the time, lonely and lacking self-esteem, sociable and full of virtues, prepared for great challenges, responsible, harsh, despicable, murderer, savior, professional...

Who is the human of today?! Do we know ourselves better today? Do we know how to take from it the best possible for as long as we are given to live? Are we wiser in finding what fulfills us, makes us happy, but also makes us useful for social developments? What influences us to be better or less so? Why do we seek at all costs to be first? How much do we need others? What does love, which we think we feel for others, represent for us? What do freedom, citizenship, and development represent for each of us? How similar and how different does our culture, inherited from our ancestors, make us? Is it possible that today, when presidents and leaders of states, party leaders, or corporate heads are also women, the world we live in is better, more balanced, more emancipated?

Why does humanity like to start wars that can only sow death and destruction?! Why this demonstration of force?! What is the inner drive that makes the human of today an aggressor?!

Why can two people who may have been born and identified as twins, and raised in the same family and social environment, exhibit completely different traits of character, sometimes even opposite?

The human and the self, the human and the city, the human and nature, the human and society, the human and the artificial intelligence that he created himself, the human of today facing the pressures of time.

These and many other questions that both established and new writers raise in their literary works make us think and reflect every day. They will be part of the activities of the International Literary Festival of Youth "Tirana Gate"

2024, for three consecutive days, October 9, 10, and 11, in the “Tonin Harapi” hall of the “Jordan Misja” Artistic Lyceum in Tirana.

Everyone with a mission to exchange cultures, experiences, histories, emotions, and human relationships in a literary space where the main theme will be us, the Human today, facing the Self - facing the World; all together to testify that now Albania, through literature, has its own European voice.

Gratitude to all participating writers, translators, and moderators. Gratitude to all creators who illuminate our paths with their works. They are our guides in the world of imagination, taking us through words into new dimensions and helping us discover the essence of love for ourselves, reading, books, and our own lives.

Gratitude to the Ministry of Economy, Culture, and Innovation, the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Municipality of Tirana, the European Union, Traduki, the Goethe Institute, the Publishing Center for Albanians in the Diaspora, the “Jordan Misja” Artistic Lyceum, the German Embassy, and the Greek Embassy, the Italian Institute of Culture in Tirana, the National Center for Books and Reading, RTSH, and “ExLibris” for their annual support of this initiative.

“Tirana Gate” is now open to welcome the literary artists of our beloved Europe!

You are welcome!

Irena Toçi



Director
International Youth Literary Festival "Tirana Gate" 2024



Alban Tufa

Albania / Author

Alban Tufa is a journalist, writer, poet, and lecturer of communication sciences. He has engaged in public life with critical writings and reports on culture, literature, communication and social life. He has won several national and regional awards. Among them can be mentioned (three) Literary Awards at the

Literary Festival for Young Writers (Albania); “Tahir Zema” Award (Kosovo) and “Vexhi Buharaja” Award (Albania). He is the author of two volumes of poetry “An evening like last night”, “They were (remained) two” and two novels “L-shaped Moles” and “What if it wasn’t a dream?”. He also translated the poetic volume “The Romantic Dogs” by Roberto Bolano.

He is also a participant in the READ Literary Residency, Pristina, and the winner of the Young Writers&Support Fund, from the National Book and Reading Center for 2023. He currently works full-time as a lecturer at the Department of Communication Sciences at “Bedër” University College.



Amanda Michalopoulou

Greece / Author

Amanda Michalopoulou is the author of eight novels, three short story collections, a theater play and a novella. She is a winner of the “Revmata Award” (1994), the “Diavazo Award” for her novel “Jantes” (1996) and the “Academy of Athens” Prize

for her short story collection “Bright Day” (2013). Her stories and essays have been translated into twenty languages. Her novels “Why I killed my best friend” and “God’s Wife”, were short-listed for the ALTA National Translation Award in the US. Her short story “Mesopotamia” was selected for Best European Fiction 2018 (Dalkey Archive).

She lives in Athens, where she teaches creative writing.



Anna Kove

Albania / Translator

A well-known poet and translator from Albania. She graduated in Albanian Language and Literature at the University of Tirana and continued her post-graduate (Master) studies in “Media and Intercultural Communication” at the European University of Viadrina (2002-2004), in Germany. She is the author of many poetry books, such as “Shën Valentin ku ishte” (Where were you, Saint Valentine), “Djegë Ujërash” (Scorching Tides), “Nimfa e pemës së humbur” (Nymph of the Lost Tree), “Kambanat e së dielës” (Sunday bells) and has been awarded many prizes. Anna Kove is considered by critics, academics and journalists one of the most distinguished contemporary authors in Albania. She has also been awarded various prizes and scholarships for translation, including the “Schritte Stipendien” from the S. Fischer Foundation at the Literary Colloquium Berlin. Anna Kove was announced “the best translator of 2023” by the jury of the Book Fair for the translation of the novel “The Tin Drum” by Nobel laureate Guenter Grass.



Antonio Caiazza

Italy / Author

Antonio Caiazza was born in 1964 in Siano, in the province of Salerno, the city where he graduated. He lives in Trieste and since 2000 has been a journalist at Rai headquarters in Friuli Venezia Giulia. For about thirty years he has followed the evolution of the Balkan nations for various newspapers.

Antonio Caiazza has a deep knowledge of Albania, so much so that in 1992 his final thesis of the postgraduate course he attended at LUISS in Rome was a reportage on Albania, where he followed the political and social events of recent years. On this subject, he has published, among others, “In alto mare - Viaggio nell’Albania dal comunismo al futuro”, “La notte dei vinti”.



Arta Marku

Albania / Moderator

Architect and culture journalist. She has worked in the newspaper “Koha Jonë”, “Gazeta Shqiptare”, “Shekulli”, “Shqip”, “Panorama”, etc. She has been the editor-in-chief for social and cultural magazines such as “AKS”, “Spectrum”, “VIP”, “Psychology”, “Letters from Diaspora”, “Mehr LICHT”, “Art & Legacy”, “Klan”, “Milosao”, “ExLibris”, etc. She is the host of her weekly show “Library”, at the center of it there are interviews and discussions with writers, translators, etc. She is the author of the collection of stories called “The corners of memory”, and one of the authors of “My credentials”. As a translator, she has brought us multiple books in Albanian, especially the ones connected to architecture, tying us back to her degree. Her last published book “The room without walls”.



Ben Andoni

Albania / Translator / Publicist

Well-known journalist, translator and Ben Andoni activist. He has worked as a journalist and translator of Slavic languages. He has written for various major newspapers in Albania, such as “Koha Jonë”, “Gazeta Shqiptare” and “Korrieri”, he has been the editor-in-chief of the magazine “ABC” and vice editor-in chief of the magazines “MAPO” and “Java”. He was the correspondent of Belgrade’s BETA news agency. As a publicist, he writes for national periodicals in Kosovo and Albania. He translates from Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin and English to Albanian. He is an activist and continues to provide his expertise in many civil social activities, such as being the key speaker at the Second Conference titled “Protecting Children from Violence in Albania”. For his work in media he has been presented with different awards in Albania.



Blerina Rogova Gaxha

Kosovo / Author

Blerina Rogova Gaxha (1982) was born in Kosovo. She is a poet, essayist, and literary scholar; she has a Ph.D in literary sciences. Laureate of the International Prize for Literature, Crystal Vilenica Award (Slovenia, 2015), and the National Prize for the best work in poetry (2020) and the best work in literary criticism (2022); she has given numerous presentations at literary festivals and book fairs in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Croatia, Slovenia, Ireland, and Macedonia, and she has been a guest writer at international writers' residencies in Vienna, Split, and Novo Mesto. Her poems and essays have been translated and published in German, English, French, Italian, Slovenian, Croatian, Greek, Romanian, Turkish, Bosnian, and Macedonian. Her work has been presented in the anthology of European poetry *Europe Grand Tour*, 2019. Gaxha's essay "Easy Life," written for the project *Archipelago Yugoslavia* of Traduki, has been translated into several languages and published in major Western media. She is a member of the Kosovo PEN Center. She has published *Gorgonë* (poetry, 2009, winner of the National Prize for Poetry, 2010), *Kate* (poetry, 2013), *Forms of Kadare's prose* (literary criticism, 2015), *She comes from the East* (poetry, 2016), *Thasë* (poetry, 2020); *Death in modern Albanian literature* (monograph, 2021) and interdisciplinary study: *Memory and Trauma: Memory of 1998-1999 Kosovo war in Albanian Literature in Kosova* (memory studies, 2023).



Brajan Sukaj

Albania / Author

Born in Kavaja in 1987. He graduated from the University of Tirana, law department. He worked as a lawyer at the Durrës District Council for 5 years, then attended postgraduate studies in Public Administration. In 2018, he published his first book entitled "Cyclopi", which was awarded as the best work at the Tirana Fair with the motivation "On deep human sensitivity through a story that is as real as it is fantastic". His second book was published in 2020, titled *The Year of the Elephant*, a historical novel set in ancient Arabia. He currently lives in Durrës.



Clemens Meyer

Germany / Author

Clemens Meyer was born in 1977 in Halle and lives in Leipzig, Germany. Meyer studied creative writing at the German Literary Institute, Leipzig and was granted a scholarship by the Saxon Ministry of Science and Arts in 2002. His first novel, *Als wir träumten* “While We Were Dreaming”, was a huge success in Germany. His second book, *Die Nacht, die Lichter* “All the Lights”, a collection of short stories, was awarded the Leipzig Book Fair Prize 2008. His new novel “*Die Projektoren*” is on the longlist for the German Book Prize 2024.



Dejan Atanacković

Serbia / Author

Dejan Atanacković (Belgrade, 1969) teaches several university courses in the field of visual arts and culture in Florence and Siena. He collaborates with the Florentine Museum of Natural History on his course “Body Archives”, dedicated to the history of representation of the human body. In the past few years, he led workshops based on a dialogue between students and psychiatric patients. In Belgrade, in collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Art and Museum of Ethnography, he initiated “Another Gaze”, a project for “new narrative itineraries”, dedicated to the perception of the city by persons with physical and mental disabilities. Between 2005 and 2010 he led a cultural exchange project called “Outside”, between Florence and Belgrade in which more than 300 students, artists and art educators took part. As a visual artist, since the 1990s, he has produced many solo exhibitions and curatorial projects in Serbia, Italy, USA, Canada, Bosnia, Albania and his works were presented in many collective exhibitions worldwide. Some of Atanacković’s works are part of museum collections. His novel “*Luzitanija*” was published in 2017.



Diana Çuli

Albania / Author

Writer, journalist and translator. She is the author of twelve novels, three short story collections, two plays and three film scenarios. Many of her novels have been adapted for the screen and translated into Italian, Macedonian and Chinese. Her work has received national and international recognition and

she has been awarded with several literary prizes. Her recent novel “Murder in the Prime Minister’s Office” in 2019 received Winner of the “KULT” Academy Award “Best Novel” of the Year in 2014. In 2017, he was awarded by the Albanian Editors’ Association Prize as Best Translator of the Year. The last award was “The Olive’s Branch” for The Best Book for Children’s Literature, by the jury of the Ulqini Book’s Festival, on June 2021.



Eleana Zhako

Belgium / Author

Eleana Zhako was born in Gjirokaštër and she is originated from the Greek minority of Albania. Since 2009, she is based in Brussels. Her first poetry book in Greek language “Genesis” will be published soon from Saixpirikon Editions. Several short proses in Albanian language by her are published in well-

known Albanian literary and cultural magazines like “Poeteka”, “Peizazhe të fjalës” and “Revista Letrare”. She is partly working as a cultural journalist and as a bilingual literary translator from Greek to Albanian and the opposite. She has a Bachelor’s degree in Literature from the University of Tirana, BA’s in European and International Studies from Panteion University of Athens, a Master’s degree in Energy and Environmental Law from Catholic University of Leuven and a Master’s degree in Theatre Studies from the Open University of Cyprus.



Erina Çoku

Albania / Author

Erina Çoku has published five books: “Krahë s’kanë engjëjt e mi”, 1997, “Gjurma e gjethes”, 2011 and the poetic trilogy “Frymë”, 2022 that includes three books: “Fill”, “Rrëfime të vogla për shenja të mëdha” and “Jemi gjallë gjer në mbrëmje”.

Her poems and reviews are published in different literary magazines, literary antologies and other literary mediums. Her book “Fill” has been awarded the “Poetry Book of the Year, 2022” from the “Bukinist” platform. She was part of different poetic activities and had an artistic collaboration (as editor and as creative writer) for the descriptive texts of the Italian artist Luca Morici paintings presented in the exhibition “Il dolore” (The Pain), 2012.

She graduated from the Faculty of History and Philology, in Tirana University (1999-2003). She is an editor by profession.



Eris Rusi

Albania / Translator

Italian language translator and Albanian writer. He was born in the city of Korça, in 1983. He completed his university studies at “La Sapienza” University, Rome with excellent results. He is a lecturer and prose writer, author of several volumes of stories and novels. He has a doctorate in “Literary

Studies” at the University of Tirana with the topic “Fantastic proportions in Albanian literature of the 20th century”. He is a full-time pedagogue at “Fan S. Noli” University, Korçë, as well as the chairman of the “Bota e Re” Writers’ Club. He was selected as a member of the Academy of Young People at the Academy of Sciences of Albania. At the Ulcinj Book Fair in 2023, he was honored with the “Servantes” Literary Award.



Florian Gantner

Austria / Author

Born in rural Salzburg in 1980, Gantner studied comparative literature and currently lives in Vienna. His published novels are “Trockenschwimmer” (2015) and “O.M.” (2018), as well as texts in literary magazines such as “Lichtungen” and “Die Rampe”.

He has won numerous awards, including the Theodor Körner Prize (2014) and a residency fellowship at the Literary Colloquium Berlin (2015). Florian Gantner is director of the festival “Literatur findet Land” since 2019.



Ivana Trajanoska

North Macedonia / Author

Writer, literature researcher, and Associate Professor at University American College Skopje, N. Macedonia. She holds a PhD Degree in Anglophone studies from University Paul Valery in Montpellier, France where she also completed her Master studies in the same field. She graduated from

University Ss Cyril and Methodius in Skopje at the Faculty of Philology in two concentrations English and French Language and Literature. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in English Literature, Academic Writing, and Intercultural Communication. Her research is mainly focused on interdisciplinary studies in literature and language, particularly early twentieth-century English literature, art and music, and intercultural communication. She is a Dorothy Richardson scholar and member of the International Association of Word and Music Studies (WMA). She is also a literary translator from English and French into Macedonian. She has published many works.



Ledia Dushi

Albania / Author

Ledia Dushi is a poet, translator and researcher. She completed her higher studies in the Language and Literature branch at the University of Shkodra and then her doctoral studies at the Center for Albanology Studies, today the Academy of Albanological Studies, the Institute of Cultural

Anthropology and Art Studies.

Since the beginning of the 90s, she began to write poetry, standing out with her talent: The volumes with poetry are: “Me mujt me fjet” with the return of the birds”, “Seancë dimnash”, “Ave Maria bahet lot”, “Nji fije t thelle kalku”. With the last poetic volume, it was announced as the “Best book of 2019” in the category of poetry from the “Leximtari” and “Bukinist.al platforms”.

In addition to poetic creativity, Ledia Dushi stands out as a well-known translator of prominent names of European and world literature such as Umberto Eco, Borges, Carlos Ruis Zafon, Sandro Ceronese, Andrea Camilleri, Jane Austen.

She has been invited as a poet to several international book fairs and has participated in several International Poetry Festivals. Actually works as a responsible of Communal Library “Marin Barleti” in Shkodra.



Loreto Schillock

Germany / Author

Loreto Schillock was born in Berat and has been living in Germany since 2001. She completed his higher studies in the USA for English and, in Germany, for German and the Science of German Literature.

She has translated from German into Albanian the works of several important German authors and

into the German language the works of many Albanian authors. For the translation of the book “Enver und sein Parodies Illusionen und Propaganda im kommunistischen Albanien” she was awarded in 2020 by the Ministry of Culture in Albania as the winner of the project for literary translations from Albanian to German. Her translations are published in well-known European cultural magazines. She currently teaches at the University of Stuttgart and devotes himself to literary translations of Albanian and German works.



Liridon Mulaj

Albania / Author

Graduated in law, public relations and politics. He debuted in Albanian literature with the poetic volume “I pakuptuari”. A year after this volume he published the experimental novel “Kërkohet një vrasës”. In 2020, he published his second novel “Mos harro të më kujtosh”, a novel which was included in

the short list of finalists for the National Literature Prize as well as in the short list of the European Prize for Literature. In 2022, he published the novel “Province” where he won the “Rexhai Surroi” literary, as the best novel of the year 2022. He participated in the Frankfurt International Fair 2021 as well as the Turin Book Fair in 2023.

It has been translated into several foreign languages such as Turkish, Italian, Romanian, Bulgarian, English, Dutch, etc. He currently lives in Tirana and regularly writes literary and social articles in Albanian press periodicals. He is the founder and artistic director of the book fair “Kamza Lexon” and a member of PEN Center of Albania.



Luella Myftari

Albania / Moderator

Born in the capital city, Tirana is known mainly as a journalist, but she studied for Albanian Language and Literature. The author of more than 1000 articles on social issues, human rights and cultural developments in Albania, Luella Myftari has a Master's degree in Comparison Literature from

University of Tirana and has accomplished several trainings in Journalism in England, North Macedonia, Turkey and Kosovo. She has written at “Kult” magazine and “Shekulli” newspaper. She worked also at the TV Stations “Albanian Screen” and “Vizion Plus”. Currently, she works as culture journalist at the “A2-CNN” TV.



Majlinda Rama

Albania / Author

She completed higher studies in Albanian Literature and Language, (Tirana). In 2012, she graduated from the Faculty of Political Science with a degree in International Relations.

In 2014 she received the title of Master of Science in Political and Legal Sciences. She is the author,

screenwriter, and show manager for social, cultural, and political. She works in the Municipality of Fier and is the executive director of the Cultural Foundation “Harpa”. She is the founder and director of the National Book Fair “Fieri”. She has published “Perandorët”. Her literature translated in several countries, such as: Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Poland, the Netherlands, Hungary, Spain, etc.



Maklena Nika

Albania / Translator

Maklena Nika is a lecturer of Greek Maklena Nika Literature at the Department of Greek Language, the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Tirana. In 2013 she earned the title PhD (doctor) in Comparative Literature and in 2015 the title “Assisted Professor”. Also, she has studied at the

Caen-Normandy University of France, for Organization and Direction of the Cooperations.

Maklena Nika has translated works of Greek writers, such as: “Red dyed hair” by Kostas Mourselas, “Fool’s gold” by Maro Douka, “Journeying: Travels in Italy, Egypt, Sinai, Jerusalem and Cyprus” by Nikos Kazantzakis, “Constantina and her spiders (a.k.a. Tina’s Web)” by Alki Zei, “The experiment” by Myrto Azina Chronides, “Transitorium” by Vassiliki Rapti, and “New day” by Nikos Chrysos. Also, she has translated from the Albanian language in Greek the haiku poetry collection “The fan of the moon” by Milianov Kallupi. She has written two books of poetry: “Oksimoron” and “Nitroglicerinë”.



Manjola Nasi

Albania / Author

Manjola Nasi (born in 1982) is an Albanian poet and translator based in Tirana, recipient of the Crystal Vilenica Award in 2019. A Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program alumna, she holds a PhD in literature from the University of Tirana, where she also teaches. Her debut poetry collection, *Sonnet of Autumn*, was published in 2002. Her second collection, *A Journey and a Half* (2018), received critical acclaim and won the Best Poetry Collection Prize from Bukinist platform that year. She has been a guest of numerous literary events, festivals, and residencies. Selections of her poems have appeared in anthologies and literary journals in several languages. As a translator, she has brought into Albanian a series of important English-speaking authors and has translated into English excerpts and works from Albanian authors, the latest of which is a book-length selection of Dritëro Agolli's poems



Mimoza Hysa

Albania / Moderator

Translator, writer and researcher. She was graduated from the University of Tirana in Italian language and literature as well as for Italian Culture in "Siena", Italy. She has done the Phd studies for literary sciences. As a literary translator she has translated into Albanian over than 30 literary work of the most important authors of the Italian literature such as Buzzati, Tabucchi, Leopardi, Mazzatini, Baricco, Mazzucco, Starmone, Montale, Magris, etc. As a writer she has published 4 volumes in the prose: "Koha e Erës", the winner of the prize "The Europe, our Common Homeland" given by the Ministry of Culture, "Histori pa emra", "Vend/imi", "Bijat e gjeneralit", finalist for the "Kadare" prize and "Kult" prize, translated in Italian and Romanian language. She is the winner of The Big Prize for translator of the year in 2014, given by The Ministry of The Heritage and Cultural Activity of Italy, the prize of The translator of the year in 2018, given by The Cult Academy, Albania, etc.



Namik Dokle

Albania / Author

Namik Dokle was born in Durrës, on March 11, 1946 and grew up in his village, Borje of Gora of Kukës. He studied journalism and agrarian economics and completed two post-graduate specializations in Spanish language and culture at the “Complutense” University of Madrid. For almost

20 years he worked in the media, as a journalist and editor-in-chief. He was a deputy of the Assembly of Albania in eight legislatures, as well as vice president and president of the Assembly. In 2004-2005 he was the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania.

He started his literary creativity in his youth. He has published three compilations of dramas: “Mjegulla e dimrit të largët” (2003), “Dënimi i dytë i Homerit” (2010) and “Shën Maria e Beratit” (2012); six novels: “Vajzat e mjegullës” (2015), “Lulet e skajbotës” (2017), “Ditët e lakuriqëve të natës” (2018), “Kolerë në kohë të dashurisë” (2020), “Covid-1984” (2022), “Dhjetë gramë nder” (2023). In 2024, he published the book “Vallëzim me Hënën”, a compilation of the legends of Gora. Namik Dokle’s novels have been translated and published in Spain, England, Turkey, Bulgaria and Bosnia. Dokle translates prose and poetry from Spanish.



Odise Kote

Albania / Author

Albanian writer, poet and publicist. He completed his studies at the “Skënderbej” High Military Academy, at the Faculty of Language and Literature, postgraduate qualifications for journalism in Germany, as well as a scientific master’s degree in Literature.

For almost thirty years he has worked as a journalist in Deutsche Welle and in the Albanian media. Among his publications, we can mention the novels: “Laughter behind the gate”, “False oath”, “Ura e Margarita” and “Funeral i hijes”, as well as collections of poems: “Morning hours”, “Some poems”, “Ajkuna” and “Stone Hostages”. He has also written books with stories such as: “Vejusha” and “Ticket to Heaven”. His last book is “Agony” 2024.



©Jana Lozeva

Petar Denchev

Bulgaria / Author

Petar Denchev (1986) is a Bulgarian writer and stage director. He has received numerous awards and nominations from various prose and poetry competitions (Razvitie, Svetlostroy, Vesselin Hanchev, Altera magazine's Extaz). His novel "Just Like a Man Kisses a Woman He Loves" was chosen by the Razvitie contest as Best New Bulgarian Novel of 2007. His novels "The Small God of Earthquakes" (2019) and "Overwinding" (2021) were nominated for the national readers' Helikon award. Petar's short stories have been published in Serbian, Macedonian, Slovenian, German (eta Verlag), English and Farsi. His stories from The Past collection was published by Partizanska Knjiga in Serbian (2022). The "Small God of Earthquakes" was recently published in Macedonian by Antolog (2024). He worked in the bigger Bulgarian theatres and staged authors such as Edward Albee, Shakespeare, Molière, J. Galceran, A. Jodorowski and others. His productions have travelled to festivals in Serbia, Romania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Moldova. His productions have been awarded at various national competitions. Works as a theatre researcher at The Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.



Rita Petro

Albania / Author

Author of textbooks and a poetess. Rita Petro is the co-author of 36 textbooks related to Albanian language and literature. Currently, she is the executive director at "Albas" publishing house. Rita Petro has been a participant in some poetic festivals within the country and abroad, involved with her creativity in some literary magazines and anthology of the contemporary world literature. Her works have been translated and published in French, English, Romanian. Among other awards that has been given to Rita Petro we could mention: the prize of the "Career for the Poetic Creativity" in 2015 and the prize "Onufri" in 1999, at the Summer Poetic Festival.



Rigels Halili

Poland / Translator

Rigels Halili is a cultural anthropologist with a focus on the Balkan region and Central Europe. He completed his studies in the fields of philology and cultural anthropology at the Faculty of Polish Philology at the University of Warsaw, as well as studies in international relations at the Faculty of Journalism and Political Sciences there. He completed his doctoral studies at the Postgraduate School of Social Research at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Polish Academy of Sciences. He is a lecturer at the Center for Eastern Europe at the University of Warsaw. He is the author of a monograph, co-editor of six scientific books and dozens of articles. His translations from Polish to Albanian include poems by some of the most famous Polish poets of the 20th century (Mitosz, Szymborska, Rozewicz, Herbert) and essays (Krzysztof Czyżewski). He has translated from Albanian to Polish poems by E. Hatibi, P. Teferiçi, G. Çoçoli. As an animator of Albanian culture in Poland, he was honored with the title “Ambassador of the Nation” and with the “Naim Frashër” Order of the Second Class.



Stefan Çapaliku

Albania / Author

Born in Shkodra. He majored in Albanian language and literature at the University of Tirana in 1988, followed by further studies in Italy, Czech Republic and England. In 1996 he completed his Ph.D. at the University of Tirana. His plays have been performed in several international theatre festivals, where national and international prizes have been awarded to him. Parts of his works in poetry, prose, drama and essays are translated into English, German, French, Italian, Russian, Romanian, Polish, Bulgarian, Serbian, Macedonian and Turkish. In 2021 he was elected as a member of Albanian Academy of Sciences. Stefan Çapaliku was proclaimed from the Ministry of Culture, the best playwright for the years: 1995, 2003, 2007, 2012, 2016. He is the author of a number of books, which have also been translated into foreign languages.



Milena Selimi

Albania / Festival Art Director

Milena Selimi, born in Tirana, Albania has an extensive career in journalism, translating, and playwriting. Ms. Selimi has been responsible for the culture section in various editorial offices and has worked as a correspondent, coordinator, and moderator for numerous national and international organizations. Active in journalism, dramaturgy, and translation panels and workshops, participated in events such as TRADUKI's "Writer-in-Residence Program" in Split, Novi Sad, Sarajevo, Sofia, Belgrad, Roma, etc. She is also a professional literary translator in Albania. Ms. Selimi has translated numerous novels into Albanian, including works by Georgi Gospodinov, Nikola Madzirov, Alek Popov, Kalin Terziyski, Milen Ruskov, Zlatimir Kolarov, Edo Popović, Ognjen Spahić, Lidija Dimkovska, Svetislav Basara, etc. Her translations of dramas by Goran Stefanovski and Tena Štivičić won Eurodrame 2019. She was shortlisted for the Bulgarian Peroto Award for translation (2020) for *The Physics of Sorrow* by Georgi Gospodinov. Since 2021, she has been the Artistic Director of the International Youth Literary Festival "Tirana Gate" in Tirana, Albania, which has hosted renowned authors from the Balkans and Europe, including winners of the European Union Prize for Literature (EUPL). She holds a degree in Albanian Language and Literature from the University of Tirana, Faculty of History and Philology, and has completed a specialization in TV Journalism at the "Kliment Ohridski" University in Sofia, Bulgaria. She is fluent in Bulgarian, Italian, Macedonian, and Serbian.



Irena Toçi

Albania / Festival Director

With an experience of 30 years in the field of publishing, she holds the position of the Executive Director of the Institute of Book and Promotion and Toena Publishing House (publishing company, printing house and bookstore). Constantly guided under the principle of valuing tradition, yet promoting innovation, Irena Toçi is a compiler of publishing and promotional policies of both the Institute and the publishing house, expanding this way not only the reading culture across Albania, but also promoting these values outside the borders through being part of multiple collaborations and projects.

She has collaborated with organizations, institutions, national and international cultural centers as a project manager for the editions of the Youth Literary Festival and “Tirana Gate” co-financed by the Albanian Ministry of Culture, the City Hall of Tirana and the Balkan network intercultural READ. She is an initiator and project manager of more than 48 figurative artists’ colonies, held all over in Albania, Greece, Italy, North Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro. Under her direction, the Toena Publishing House has developed an important expansion of publishing policies, creating new initiatives, and moving onto the continuation of tradition and the genesis’ history and value its name holds today. Under the principle of trust in the author’s freedom, Irena Toçi has re-dimensioned the publishing house, developing publishing policies of integration, where each book is integrated with the next book, believing that this course of action, the dialectic intervention and invisible thread that links each book with the other is the circuit that gives meaning to the only cultural publishing house, the author’s freedom. Under her direction, the Toena Publishing House is part of “Creative Europe” and Balkan projects, whilst the Institute of Book and Promotion is part of an intercultural Balkan network called READ for years already, supported by the European Union. Irena Toçi is honored with international and national titles and medals, among others are the title “Peace Ambassador”, given by the Universal Peace Federation and the “Golden Medal of UNESCO”, given by Greece UNESCO (Branch of Piraeus and of the islands).

PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH LITERARY FESTIVAL “TIRANA GATE” 2024

Wednesday, 9 October 2024

📍 *Artistic Lyceum “Jordan Misja”, “Tonin Harapi” hall*

◆ **Time 10:00**

Opening ceremony, with the participation of the organizers, authors, translators and art and culture personalities.

With the participation of the students of the “Jordan Misja” Artistic Lyceum.

◆ **Time 10:30-11:30**

Panel 1

Does it still make sense to bet on freedom? Writing in a catastrophic world.

Participants: Florian Gantner (Austria); Blerina Rogova Gaxha (Kosovo); Stefan Çapaliku (Albania)

Host: Anna Kove

Language: Albanian, German

The past as both an alibi and a source. Today, we are witnessing a battle for control over the past, for its reinterpretation and redistribution. Contemporary narratives cut through the heart of individual experience—our fears, loneliness, confusion, and hopes. While words may not stop tanks or take down drones, they can potentially—can’t they?—cause those behind the weapons to hesitate, even if just for a moment. Join Florian Gantner, an author who dismantles stereotypical thinking with his “antidotes,” Blerina Rogova Gaxha, whose poignant words remind us that “War has no memory, but the poetic mind remembers” and Stefan Çapalik, an author and witness, offering a voice of change and a testament to the events of the past for future generations.

◆ **Time 11:30-12:00**

Authors read

Blerina Rogova Gaxha (Kosovë); Ledia Dushi (Albania); Stefan Çapaliku (Albania)

◆ **Time 12:00-12:30**

Projections in LED
Materials from “TOENA” archive
Youth festival
Various activities
Interviews

◆ **Time 14:00-16:00**

Break

◆ **Time 16:00- 16:30**

Authors read

Erina Çoku (Albania); Maklena Nika (Albania); Amanda Michalopoulou (Greece)

◆ **Time 16:30-17:30**

Panel 2

Translation in two times. / The homeland in poetry: Agolli vs Hatibi; Kadare vs Lleshanaku.

Participants: Rigels Halili (Poland); Eleana Zhako (Belgium); Loreta Schillok (Germany); Manjola Nasi (Albania)

Host: Mimoza Hysa

Language: Albanian

What does it mean to translate the concept of homeland in the poetry of Dritëro Agolli and Ervin Hatib? Or the homeland in Kadare’s poem “Përse mendohen këto male?” compared to that in Lleshanaku’s “Ujë e karbon”? Does poetry exist within time? And what of translation? Do words “move”? Is today’s translator different from those of our tradition? Both the translator and the text shift and evolve, striving to preserve aesthetic integrity while softening the rigidity that can accompany the profound act of translation. This dialogue unfolds through the experiences of translators working from Albanian into foreign languages during their residency at the “Fan Noli” program, opened for the first time by the Diaspora Publishing Center.

◆ **Time 17:30-18:00**

Authors read

Florian Gantner (Austria); Anna Kove (Albania); Manjola Nasi (Albania)

◆ **Time 18:00-19:00**

Panel 3

The Stolen City. On ambitious provincialism and suburbs invading the city. Politics as emotional space.

Participants: Dejan Atanacković (Serbi); Eris Rusi (Albania); Ledia Dushi (Albania); Alban Tufa (Albania)

Host: Ben Andoni

Language: Albanian, Serbian, Italian

Little by little, our city was stolen. An ambitious provincialism with sharp teeth—suburban sprawl consuming the urban core—until the city itself becomes a vast suburb, a landscape of unchecked abuse and rulelessness. Politics shapes intentions. Politics governs communities. Politics is meant to be a space for debate. Emotions drive how people vote and engage. But can today's increasingly polarized public debates still produce reasoned arguments and foster a sense of community? Can they address the influence of emotions on political culture? Do democratic structures strengthen or erode in the face of populism and intolerance?

◆ **Time 19:00-19:30**

Authors read

Antonio Caiazza (Itali); Eris Rusi (Albania); Liridon Mulaj (Albania)

Thursday, 10 October 2024

◆ **Time 10:00-11:15**

Panel 1

The Berlin Wall (didn't) fall and we saw each other. / East and West, efforts, challenges. How long?

Participants: Clemens Meyer (Germany); Rita Petro (Albania); Rigels Halili (Poland)

Host: Anna Kove

Language: Albanian, German

What was life like in Eastern societies before the '90s? And what about after? What happened to the countries of the East when the Berlin Wall fell? How did people make their way to the West? And did those who came from the East truly make it? Can borders truly be crossed? Many young people lost their way,

as their parents and societies, overwhelmed by their own struggles, could no longer care for them. Jobs were lost, systems collapsed. The fall of the Berlin Wall opened a deep chasm—and some fell through it. Join Clemens Meyer, an exceptional author who has bridged the generational gap between East and West, along with his Albanian publisher, Rita Petro, and Rigels Halili, an anthropologist of a generation caught between two systems.

◆ **Time 11:00-11:30**

Authors read

Clemens Meyer (Germany); Ivana Trajanoska (North Macedonia); Brajan Sukaj (Albania)

◆ **Time 11:30-12:30**

Panel 2

Embracing chaos as a path to liberation. / What cannot be spoken must be told.

Participants: Petar Denchev (Bulgaria); Brajan Sukaj (Albania); Erina Çoku (Albania)

Host: Milena Selimi

Language: Albanian, Bulgarian

Time 12:30-13:00

Community, quality of life, and participation are often central factors in choosing where to live. So why does the urban-rural divide persist? Authors Denchev, poet Çoku, and Brajan Sukaj delve into the complexities of modern individuals, exploring the social dynamics of urban and rural environments. They tell stories of people whose relationships are fraught from the outset. Do we change when we cross borders? Are we fundamentally similar? This exploration raises questions about today's person in the context of technology and artificial intelligence.

◆ **Ora 12:30-13:00**

Authors read

Liridon Mulaj (Albania); Diana Çuli (Albania)

◆ **Time 13:00-13:30**

Projections in LED

Materials from the “TOENA” archive

Youth festival

Various activities

Interviews

◆ **Time 14:00-16:00**

Break

◆ **Time 16:00-16:30**

Authors read

Majlinda Rama (Albania); Petar Denchev (Bulgaria)

◆ **Time 16:30-17:30**

Panel 3

They are simply dismantling life. The space of the female voice of freedom.

Participants: Amanda Michalopoulou (Greece); Eleana Zhako (Belgium); Maklena Nika (Albania); Ivana Trajanoska (North Macedonia)

Host: Luela Myftari

Language: Albanian, Greek, Macedonian

A panel of female authors and translators who embrace it all—the confusion, the fear, and the tenderness. They seek neither justice nor moral lessons; instead, they dismantle the complexities of life. How do we become who we are, shaped by and in spite of our genetics? These authors explore identity, whether through fiction or true stories, believing that harmony arises from the interplay of light and dark, much like in photography. Life becomes more intimate and tangible when we understand its rhythms, including its discouragements and joys. This discussion delves into the concept of international literature and identity politics through the lens of female voices.

◆ **Time 17:30-18:00**

Authors read

Eleana Zhako (Belgium); Alban Tufa (Albania)

◆ **Time 18:00-19:00**

Panel 4

In the presence of absence... A new literary testament, towards an author who remembers and confesses.

Participants: Namik Dokle (Albania); Antonio Caiazza (Italy); Liridon Mulaj (Albania); Diana Çuli (Albania)

Host: Arta Marku

Language: Albanian, Italian

The authors depict the tragic fate of the trapped man, reconstructing the claustrophobic atmosphere of a regime rife with suspicion and denunciation, hypocrisy in its rhetoric and rituals, and inhumane rules enforced by a tense power structure—all in a desperate bid for self-preservation. They strive to prevent the past from becoming the present and future. In what ways do these literary voices resonate with their generation while also transcending the spirit of their time, embodying an unselfish ideal that is nostalgically tied to a specific time and place yet rich in truths for future generations? What about the narratives that remain confined to their era—what significance do they hold beyond it?

◆ **Time 19:00 -19:30**

Authors read

Odise Kote (Albania); Namik Dokle (Albania)

Friday, 11 October 2024

◆ **Time 10:00-11:00**

Panel 1

Collective memory and the power of literature to keep it alive.

Participants: Majlinda Rama (Albania); Odise Kote (Albania); Ivana Trajanoska (North Macedonia)

Host: Milena Selimi

Language: Albanian, Macedonian

Memory is not merely the sum of past experiences; it is a misty, phantasmagorical realm embedded deep within the soul, creating an atmosphere that serves as the natural habitat for the author's imagination. It represents the interplay between imagination and the events we label as the real world or objective reality, or phenomenological experience. In this misty world of the soul and imagination, how does literature navigate the past and present?

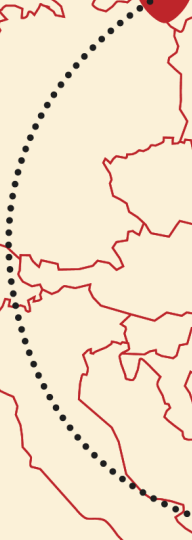
◆ **Time 11:00-11:30**

Authors read

Readings by the authors of “Kamez” book club.

LITERATURE BRINGS US TOGETHER

in Tirana
of Albania



Organizer



ILP
ISBN 9789928458582



9 789928 458582

Supporters



Financuar nga
Bashkimi Evropian



TOENA



Ambasada Gjermane
Tirane



ExLibris
gjuetë e përkrahjeje letrare & kulturore

