

Press Release

Saša Stanišić receives German Book Prize 2019 for “Herkunft” (“Origins”)

Börsenverein honours the best German-language novel of the year / Award ceremony with 300 guests at the Frankfurt Römer

The winner of the German Book Prize 2019 is Saša Stanišić for his novel “Herkunft” (Luchterhand).

Statement from the jury:

“Saša Stanišić is such a good storyteller that he even distrusts storytelling. Beneath each sentence in this novel the unavailable origins lurk, which simultaneously drive the storytelling. These origins only make themselves available as a fragment, a fiction and as a toying with the story’s possibilities. The author ennobles his readers with his vast imagination and releases them from the conventions of chronology, realism and formal unambiguity. ‘Hesitation has never told a good story’, he has his first-person narrator say. With great humour, he counters the narratives of historical misrepresentation with his own stories. ‘Herkunft’ (‘Origins’) is a portrait of a present that constantly re-tells itself anew – with the result that a ‘Self-Portrait with Ancestors’ becomes a novel about a Europe of life journeys.”

The members of the jury for the German Book Prize 2019 are: Petra Hartlieb (Hartliebs Bücher bookstore, Vienna), Hauke Hückstädt, (Literaturhaus, Frankfurt am Main), Björn Lauer (Hugendubel, Frankfurt), Jörg Magenau (independent literary critic), Alf Mentzer (Hessischer Rundfunk), Daniela Strigl (literary scholar) and Margarete von Schwarzkopf (author and literary critic).

“The German Book Prize aims to draw attention to the quality and diversity of German-language fiction. Over the last 15 years, it has become indispensable to contemporary literature and our literary industry. Not only because this prize supports authors, helping them to develop and reach a larger audience, but also especially because at no other time is the discussion around books as intense as it is in the context of the awarding of this prize”, says Heinrich Riethmüller, President of Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels (German Publishers and Booksellers Association).

The other novels that were shortlisted for the award are:

Raphaela Edelbauer, “Das flüssige Land” (Klett-Cotta), Miku Sophie Kühmel, “Kintsugi” (S. Fischer), Tonio Schachinger, “Nicht wie ihr” (Kremayr & Scheriau), Norbert Scheuer, “Winterbienen” (C.H.Beck) and Jackie Thomae, “Brüder” (Hanser Berlin).

Saša Stanišić receives 25,000 euros; the five finalists 2,500 euros each. The winner was determined in several stages. Since the submission process began, the seven members of the jury have reviewed 203 titles published between October 2018 and 17 September 2019. A longlist of 20 of these novels was compiled, from which the jurors then selected six titles for the shortlist.

The Stiftung Buchkultur und Leseförderung des Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels (Foundation for Book Culture and the Promotion of Reading of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association) is awarding the German Book Prize 2019 to the best German-language novel of the year to coincide with the start of Frankfurter Buchmesse. The German Book Prize receives financial support from the Deutsche Bank Stiftung (Deutsche Bank Foundation), and other partners include Frankfurter Buchmesse and the city of Frankfurt am Main. The television network Deutsche Welle supports the German Book Prize in its media activities both at home and abroad.

Further information, including the dates and times of events with the winner at Frankfurter Buchmesse, can be found at www.deutscher-buchpreis.de/en/.

The hashtag of the German Book Prize is **#dbp19**

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