

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

Vienna, November 21, 2008

### **Bank Austria Literaris**

- **Eastern and Southeastern European literature award with the highest prize money**
- **Award ceremony held during book fair on November 20**

Staged for the second time in 2008, the Bank Austria Literaris award is a sponsorship award for literary works from Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Currently, its total prize money of 100,000 euros is the highest awarded for literature from this part of the world. This focus corresponds to the economic activities of Bank Austria, which is a part of UniCredit Group and stands as the market leader in this growth region. Above all, however, it complements the bank's wide-ranging existing cultural partnerships. What's more, with *Kulturkontakt Austria* and *Wieser Verlag* publishers, it has teamed up with two partners who have gained extensive experience in Eastern Europe.

Chaired by Czech writer and President of the international P.E.N. Club, Jiří Gruša, the jury again discussed this year's numerous candidates. After looking through some 800 texts, it compiled a short list of 25 titles, from which the winners of the Bank Austria Literaris 2008 were finally chosen:

And the winner of the Bank Austria Literaris 2008 is Slovakian author Agda Bavi Pain with his "Koniec sveta" (At the End of the World). Coming in second and third are Srđan Valjarević, Serbia, with "Komo" (Como), and Palmi Rancev, Bulgaria, with "Malko kismet za po-kasno" (A Little Luck for Later). This year, a special prize for poetry was up for grabs, too. It was awarded to Slovakian poet Rudolf Jurolek for his book "Život je možný" (Life is Possible). The award ceremony was held on November 20 at the Metro Kino in Vienna.

Additionally, a four-week stay in Vienna was awarded to Katarina Marincic (Slovenia), Sigitas Parulskis (Lithuania), Ion Manulescu (Romania), Aleksej Iwanow (Russia), Peter Semolic (Slovenia), Tanja Stupar-Trifunovic (Bosnia- Herzegovina), and Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki (Poland).

### **Microcosm of change**

Eastern European literature is experiencing a new awakening. Like no other region and for many years now, it has reacted to the radical changes sweeping our world. The narrative expression of a new beginning, imagination living up to the freedom to determine form and content, and the courageous exploration of what is by now not all that novel anymore, these are just a few of the characteristics of this relatively young literary scene. What's more, the writing skills of these authors are remarkable and form the basis for a highly original narrative style that makes Eastern European literature an important current of the early 21st century – a major contribution to the literature of our day.

### **Europe is a winner, too**

Against this backdrop, Bank Austria sees its responsibility in bringing together the knowledge and sensitivity needed to create a platform that enables authors in this important region to harness a strong network and realize their potential to attract a wide readership. That benefits all those involved: Eastern Europe's cultural scene, the authors themselves, readers – and last but not least Europe as a whole, which has a vested interest in growing together even further.

Within this context, Bank Austria sees itself as a partner and supports the integration of Central and Southeastern Europe on many levels. *Shape your tomorrow today* is the guiding principle of UniCredit Group, and here it has once again been put into action.

### **Roadmap to the breakthrough**

The award winning works by the three main award winners of the Bank Austria Literaris 2008 competition have already been translated into German and published by Wieser Verlag with support from Kulturkontakt Austria; additionally, the winner will receive a sponsorship award carrying prize money of 7,500 euros. The winning texts along with further writings by seven excellent authors will be presented at a series of readings in Vienna. Thus, the authors are given an opportunity to introduce themselves to a larger audience and draw attention to the complexity of their literary heritage and origins.

This „literary journey“ commenced with a gala event at Vienna's Metrokino: The speaker on this occasion was writer György Dalos who served as a member of the jury and has proved himself to be a wonderful mediator between literary worlds.

Over the following days, readings by the award winners will be held on the stage of the BUCH WIEN book fair.

**Bank Austria Literaris 2008: Readings by the Award Winners**

***Srdjan Vljarevic***

November 21, 2008, 12:30 pm

***Palmi Ranchev***

21. November 2008, 2:30 pm

***Rudolf Jurolek***

November 22, 2008, 3:30 pm

***Agda Bavi Pain***

November 22, 2008, 5:00 pm

BUCH WIEN 08, 1020 Vienna, Messeplatz 1  
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## Bank Austria Literaris 2008 – Biographies of the Award Winners

### **Agda Bavi Pain**

Agbar Baba Pan, among others; born as Jozef Gaál in Kosice in 1962; he has used various pen and brand names as a poet, prose writer, TV and movie screenwriter, songwriter, copywriter, journalist, and for stints at theaters.

His debut came in the form of a controversial poetry anthology *Kost&Koža* (published by Drewo a Srd in 2002), he has signed several manifests, and is a member of secret lodges (such as KE mafia). As a prose author, he gained fame by participating in the literary fiction competition *Poviedka* (organized by L C A) where he won more awards than any other author.

Much less is known about his biography than about his own mystifications of his personality.

Agda Bavi Pain lives in Kosice and Bratislava and stylizes himself as being involved in the criminal scene, a satanist, and an animal rights activist. He is or may also not be a member of the „Dezorzovo lutkove divadlo“ live-art performance group. Possibly, further information is available from his homepage: <http://agdabavipain.szm.sk>

### **Srdjan Valjarević**

Born in Belgrade in 1967

The following works of fiction have already been published:

*List na korici hleba* (Leaf on a Piece of Bread), 1990

*Ljudi za stolom* (People at a Table), 1994

*Dnevnik druge zime* (The Diary from the Second Winter), 2005

*Komo*, 2006

Additionally, Srdjan Valjarević has published three poetry books

*Džo Frejzer i 49 pesama* (Joe Frazer and 49 Poems)

*Džo Frejzer i 49 (+24) pesama* (Joe Frazer and 49 (+24) Poems)

*Zimski dnevnik* (The Winter Diary)

He received the Gorak List Award for “Komo” and „Zimski dnevnik“ has won him the Biljana Jovanović Award.

His works of fiction have been translated into Swedish, French, English, and German.

### **Palmi Ranchev**

Was born in Sofia and graduated from a sports academy; he subsequently did stints as a boxer and trainer; he has also been the owner of a café and a sports hall. Furthermore, he has headed a newspaper and worked both as a freelance journalist and a screenwriter; for a time, he also hosted his own TV show.

For a long time, he wrote literary texts without publishing them. His first book immediately won him Bulgaria's National Book Award and further prizes followed. He has authored poetry as well as novels and stories, which have been translated into English, French, Polish, Spanish, Hungarian, Turkish, Serbian, Greek, among others.

### **Rudolf Jurolek**

Was born in Zákamenné in 1956. He is a poet as well as a publisher and has authored six books of poetry.