Festival NEUE LITERATUR
New Literature from Austria, Germany, Switzerland and the United States
March 7 – March 8, 2010

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?
Modes of Mobility in Contemporary Fiction

The annual Festival NEUE LITERATUR brings some of the best up and coming German-speaking authors to New York, where they encounter well-known American writers in a series of conversations and readings. This year's edition of the festival centers on the notion of mobility in today's increasingly globalized world. Many authors in Europe and the United States share an immigrant back-ground and write in languages that are different from what they grew up with.

The "immigrant experience" has become a common theme in many recent books of contemporary fiction. However, mobility or the lack thereof is not only experienced by authors who have arrived and struggled to establish themselves and their identities in a new and often hostile society, but also by writers who are longing to move away from their small-town provincial surroundings but feel that they are stuck and cannot leave.

Contemporary fiction lets people move from one place to another or never at all, but it shows that ultimately, mobility is a concept of our mind.
### Schedule

**Sunday, March 7, 12:00 – 2:00 PM**  
Location: Deutsches Haus NYU, 42 Washington Mews

Please reserve free tickets by calling Deutsches Haus at NYU at 212 998 8660 or emailing rsvp.deutsches.haus@nyu.edu

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**Small Town**  
Authors: Martin Becker, Lorenz Langenegger, John Wray  
In conversation with Daniela Strigl and Klaus Nüchtern

> I hate being odd in a small town  
> If they stare let them stare in New York City  
> At this pink eyed painting albino  
> How far can my fantasy go?  
> **John Cale / Lou Reed:** “Smalltown”

German author Martin Becker and Swiss-born Lorenz Langenegger write about being stuck in the provinces and trapped in the stifling atmosphere of a small town. The sympathetic heroes in Becker's short stories don't necessarily lead a “beautiful life,” but their failure in a slightly surreal world always has a humorous side. Jakob Walter, the delightfully average protagonist in Langenegger’s debut novel *Hier im Regen (Here In The Rain)*, asks himself one day why he is living in Bern. Even after a bizarre foray into the refreshingly exotic Locarno region he is unable to find the answer. John Wray, an American with Austrian roots, set his first novel, *The Right Hand of Sleep*, in a fictitious Carinthian town called Niessen. The plot: a WWI veteran and ex-Bolshevist returns to his homeland in 1938, when the Nazis are already in power. In contrast, Wray’s fast-paced third novel, *Lowboy*, takes place in subterranean Manhattan. The story revolves around William Heller, a schizophrenic sixteen-year-old who uses the confines of the subway tunnels to escape the constraints of his mind.

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**Sunday, March 7, 6:00 – 8:00 PM**  
Location: Wyoming Building, Goethe Institut, 5 E 3rd St

Please reserve free tickets by calling the Goethe-Institut at 212 493 8700.

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**Reading**  
Authors: María Cecilia Barbeta, Martin Becker, Olga Flor, Rivka Galchen, Lorenz Langenegger, Perikles Monioudis, Joseph O’Neill, Julya Rabinowich, John Wray
Monday, March 8, 06:00 – 08:00 PM
Location: Austrian Cultural Forum,
11 E 52nd St

Admission to exhibitions, concerts,
and other events at the Austrian
Cultural Forum is free.
Reserve tickets online at
www.acfny.org or call 212 319 5300
ext 222.

A House is Not a Home
Authors: Rivka Galchen, Olga Flor, Julya
Rabinowich
In conversation with Daniela Strigl

A room is still a room
Even when there’s nothing there but gloom;
But a room is not a house,
And a house is not a home
When the two of us are far apart
And one of us has a broken heart
Burt Bacharach / Hal David: “A House Is Not a Home”

Another group of novels explores the
experience of not feeling quite at home in the
place where we live and our yearning for
security and well-being despite all outward
success.
In her mesmerizing first novel Atmospheric
Disturbances, Canadian-born Rivka Galchen
tells the tale of a psychiatrist who one day
believes his wife is actually a double. Does he
have a psychosis, or is it an attempt to deal with
conjugal love?
Mischka, the youthful heroine of the eponymous
debut novel by Julya Rabinowich, suffers from a
split personality: born in Leningrad, she and her
family are transplanted from a Jewish
community of artists to 1970s Vienna, where life
in the ostensibly “golden West” puts her
parents’ marriage to test.
Graz-based Olga Flor lets the characters in her
many-voiced novel Kollateralschaden
(Collateral Damages) meet in the agora of the
present – a supermarket in which exactly one
hour will pass until something dramatic will
happen because of the hysteric reaction of a
fearful society that lives for consumption.
**Monday, March 8, 08:00 – 10:00 PM**

Location: Austrian Cultural Forum, 11 E 52nd St

Admission to exhibitions, concerts, and other events at the Austrian Cultural Forum is free. Reserve tickets online at www.acfny.org or call 212 319 5300 ext 222.

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**Up, Up and Away**

Authors: Joseph O’Neill, María Cecilia Barbeta, Perikles Monioudis

In conversation with Klaus Nüchtern

*For we can fly we can fly*

*Up, up and away*

*My beautiful, my beautiful balloon*

*Jimmy Webb: “Up, Up and Away”*

Large or small? Near or far? Urban or provincial? Sometimes it’s hard to say, and it’s definitely a question of perspective.

Perikles Monioudis, for instance, was born in Glarus, Switzerland as the son of Greek parents from cosmopolitan Alexandria. A town of less than 6,000 inhabitants, it had been rebuilt in grid pattern based on the American model after a fire.

María Cecilia Barbeta came from Buenos Aires to Berlin, ended up staying and writes in German.

And Joseph O’Neill, of Irish-Turkish extraction, grew up in the Netherlands where he attended the Lycée Française and the British School. It goes without saying that a person with this kind of background couldn’t live anywhere else but the famous Chelsea Hotel – with his family.

As different as the origins, paths, and aesthetic sense of these three writers may be, one thing they have in common is their spirited take on the colorful (and dark) sides of cultural transfer, whether forced, accepted, or deliberate. Having set out in this manner, where, then, do these people arrive?

María Cecilia Barbeta summed it up aptly in an interview: “I’m at home where Argentina and Germany meet. But you won’t find that place on any ordinary map.”
AUTHORS

AUSTRIA

Julya Rabinowich

Born in 1970 in St. Petersburg, Russia, Julya Rabinowich has been living in Vienna since 1977, where she studied translation (Russian-English), took courses in psychotherapy, and studied painting at the University of Applied Art in Vienna. For her novel Spaltkopf, published in 2008, she was awarded an author’s scholarship by the city of Vienna, the Book Award for an outstanding literary debut by Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Art and Culture, and the Rauriser Literary Prize by the Province of Salzburg in 2009.

Olga Flor

Born 1968 in Vienna, currently living in Graz, Olga Flor studied physics and worked in the field of multimedia. Her first novel, Erlkönig, was published in 2002, followed by Talschluss in 2005 and Kollateralschaden in 2008, which was longlisted for the German Book Prize 2008. In 2004, Flor’s monologue Fleischgerichte was presented at the Schauspielhaus Graz.

GERMANY

Martin Becker

Martin Becker, born in 1982, studied the prose and drama at the German Creative Writing Program at Leipziger Literaturinstitut in 2003. He has been working as a radio journalist, a reviewer and author and worked on several radio plays. In 2007, Ein schönes Leben, a collection of stories, was published. Two stories of it – the title story Ein schönes Leben and Gesellschaft – were published as audio pieces on CD by the Zurich audio publisher Sprechtheater. In 2002, Martin Becker was the winner at the Treffen Junger Autoren. In 2007, he was invited to take part in the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize in Klagenfurt, Austria, and in 2010, he received a scholarship by the Province of Sachsen.

María Cecilia Barbetta

María Cecilia Barbetta was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1972. She first came to Germany with a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) stipend in 1996, and has been there ever since. She has worked as a freelance writer, writing in German, since 2005. In 2007, she received the Academy of Arts' Alfred Döblin Stipend and participated in the renowned prose writers’ workshop at the Literary Colloquium Berlin. Barbetta was awarded the Aspekte Literature Prize for her debut novel, Änderungsschneiderei Los Milagros (Alterations by Los Milagros), published in 2008. In 2009, she received the Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Prize and the Bayern 2 Wortspiele-Prize.
SWITZERLAND

Perikles Monioudis

Perikles Monioudis was born in 1966 in Glarus, Switzerland. His Greek parents and his sister had moved there from Alexandria. He holds a Phil.M. in Sociology and Political Science (U of Zurich), has lived in Berlin for 12 years and has held readings and lectures from his novels in many countries throughout the world as well as at several American universities. In 2005, Monioudis was teaching at MIT in Cambridge, MA. His poetological lecture Im Äther/In the Ether is to date his only book in English. His novels have been translated into several languages (French, Greek, Serbian, Turkish and others.). He has received a number of renowned awards, including the Prize of the Swiss Writers’ Association and the Conrad Ferdinand Meyer Prize. His most successful novels are Land (2007), Paladium (2000) and Eis (Ice, 1998).

Lorenz Langenegger

Lorenz Langenegger, born in 1980, lives and writes in Zurich. He studied dramaturgy and political science at the University of Bern. He has written several plays for theater, among them works for the Schaubühne Berlin and the Nationaltheater Mannheim. In 2006, he won the playwriting competition of the Schaubühne Berlin. In 2009, his debut novel Hier im Regen (Here In The Rain) was published by Jung und Jung in Salzburg, and received the 2009 Franz Tumler Prize and the Literature Prize of the city of Bern.

USA

Joseph O’Neill

Joseph O’Neill was born in Ireland in 1964, raised in the Netherlands and is of half-Irish and half-Turkish ancestry. He received a law degree from Cambridge University and worked as a barrister in London. He writes regularly for The Atlantic Monthly and has published the non-fictional Blood-Dark Track: A Family History (2001), which was a New York Times Notable Book, and three novels so far: This Is the Life (1991), The Beezes (1996), and Netherland (2008), for which he received the 2009 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. He lives with his family in New York City.

John Wray

John Henderson, better known by his pen name John Wray, was born in 1971 to an American father and an Austrian mother. Wray’s first novel, The Right Hand of Sleep, was published in 2001 and received a Whiting Writers’ Award. For his second novel, Canaan’s Tongue, he did a 600-mile tour by raft on the Mississippi River in 2005. In 2007, Wray was chosen by Granta magazine as one of the "Best of Young American Novelists". His third novel, Lowboy, was published in 2009. He is also a regular contributor to The New York Times Magazine.
Rivka Galchen

Rivka Galchen, born in 1976, is a Canadian-American writer and physician. Galchen attended Princeton University in 1994 before taking her M.D. from Mount Sinai in 2003, with a focus in psychiatry. After completing medical school, she completed an MFA at Columbia University. She was a 2006 recipient of the Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award for women writers. Galchen has contributed and co-authored several scientific articles to national magazines such as The New Yorker, The New York Times and The Believer. Her first novel, Atmospheric Disturbances, was published in 2008, which was named as a finalist for the 2008 Governor General’s Award, one of Canada's most prestigious literary prizes. She currently is an adjunct professor in the writing division of Columbia University's School of Art.

CURATORS

Daniela Strigl

Born in Vienna in 1964, Daniela Strigl studied German, history, philosophy and dramaturgy in Vienna. She works as an essayist and literary critic. From 1992 to 1994, she was responsible for the Walter Buchebner Gesellschaft's literary program at Kunsthaus Mürzzuschlag. From 1995 to 1998, she was editor-in-chief at the arts magazine was. Between 1996 and 2001, she was a co-organiser of the Literatur im März festival in Vienna. From 2003 to 2008, she was on the panel of judges for the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize, in 2009 for the German Book Prize. She was Scholar in Residence at Rutgers University, New Jersey, in 2005 and since 2007, she has taught at Vienna University's Institute of German Studies. Daniela Strigl was awarded the Austrian State Prize for Literary Criticism in 2001, and the Max Kade Essay Prize in 2006.

Klaus Nüchtern

Klaus Nüchtern, born in 1961 in Linz, Austria. He studied German and English language and literature at the University of Vienna. He has been an editor of the arts section with the Viennese weekly Falter since 1990, and co-editor of the Falter since 1998. From 2004 to 2008, he was on the jury of the renowned Ingeborg Bachmann Prize. His weekly columns for the Falter, Nüchtern betrachtet, are regularly published as books, the fifth of which, Ok ist eh ok (Alright is quite alright), came out in 2009. Klaus Nüchtern was awarded the Preis der Stadt Wien für Publizistik in the same year.

The Festival NEUE LITERATUR is organized by the Austrian Cultural Forum New York, the German Consulate General New York, the Consulate General of Switzerland in New York, the German Book Office New York, the Goethe-Institut New York, and the Deutsches Haus at NYU.