



Deutscher
Sachbuch
Preis 2021

The Nominees

Heike Behrend • Asal Dardan • Jürgen Kaube
Andreas Kossert • Daniel Leese • Michael Maar
Christoph Möllers • Mai Thi Nguyen-Kim



Heike Behrend Incarnation of an Ape

Matthes & Seitz Berlin

Jury evaluation:

The African studies scholar Heike Behrend presents an ethnographic exploration of foreignness that is reminiscent of other great works in her discipline – but the source material she draws on is not notes about the “others” but autobiographical protocols. For, to the African groups the German researcher visits, she initially appears sometimes as a thing, sometimes as a monkey and sometimes even as almost human. We learn how indispensable misunderstandings are to the research process and that, while the exclusion of “intruders” can take many forms it can also always be overcome with mutual patience and goodwill. A book with a high theoretical standard, extremely relevant to the postcolonial discourse and migration debate, full of surprises and a delight to read.

Biography

Heike Behrend, born in Stralsund in 1947, studied ethnology and religious studies in Munich, Vienna and Berlin. She worked ethnographically, especially in East Africa, taught at various universities in Germany and abroad and lives in Berlin.

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Asal Dardan

Observations of a Barbarian

Hoffmann und Campe

Jury evaluation:

The cultural scientist Asal Dardan, who was born in Tehran and grew up in Germany, writes about being human: about basic experiences such as migration, flight, travel and foreignness. Dardan writes about supposedly ancient family traditions that one actually has to learn anew, and of backward-looking labels that simply don't fit, of the languages of our parents that slip away and new families that arise. Seemingly effortlessly, her elegant essay ranges from country to country and generation to generation, always stylistically confident, both reflecting on and playing with language. In this way, the author also presents a wonderful alternative to rigid discourses on identity that tie people down instead of setting them free.

Biography

Asal Dardan was born in Tehran in 1978 and, after her parents fled Iran, grew up in Cologne, Bonn and Aberdeen. She studied cultural studies in Hildesheim and Middle Eastern studies in Lund. As a freelance writer, she writes for Zeit Online, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and Berliner Zeitung, among others. She also works as a freelance editor and writer for the online magazine was wäre wenn. She was awarded the Caroline-Schlegel-Preis, a literary award for essay writing, for her text "Neue Jahre".

Press contact and interview requests:

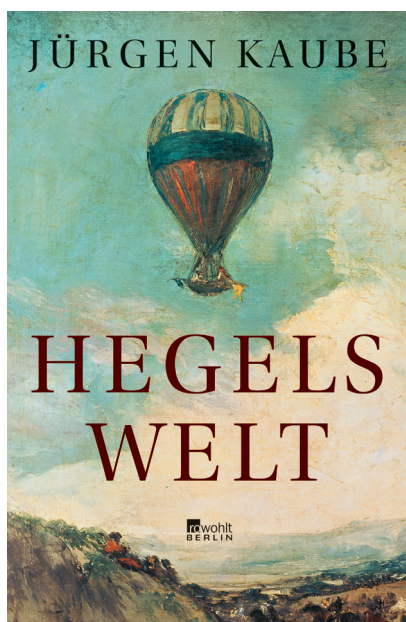
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Jürgen Kaube Hegel's World

Rowohlt Berlin

Jury evaluation:

People have often consulted Hegel in times of crisis, and the same is once again true today; after all, this thinker very much shapes our understanding of society and of the nation in transition to a new era. As Jürgen Kaube shows in his monumental biography of the philosopher, the brokenness of modern society was fundamental to Hegel's experience. Kaube unfolds the spirit of modernity for us as reflected in Hegel's life and work. Kaube's analytical gaze brings to light not only Hegel's worldly work, which seeks to decipher everything novel, but also a questioning philosopher who radically confronts contradictions in his thinking. Kaube has a masterful and instructive ability to nimbly, elegantly and sometimes ironically offer an understanding of the Hegelian possibility of freedom.

Biography

Jürgen Kaube was born in 1962 and is a managing editor of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. He previously oversaw the humanities desk and was vice editor-in-chief of the culture section. In 2012 he was awarded the title of journalist of the year in the field of science by medium magazine and received the Ludwig-Borne prize in 2015. His highly acclaimed biography of Max Weber (2014) was nominated for the Leipzig Book Fair prize.

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Andreas Kossert Uprooted

Siedler

Jury evaluation:

Those who flee lose their homes, possessions, long-established social contacts and, to a certain extent, control over their own lives. Refugees share this experience, they are familiar with the difficulties of starting over and the reservations of "those who have always been there", which are fed by the fear that they could lose as much as those who have fled. The historian Andreas Kossert has immersed himself in the perspective of refugees. He has collected their stories from pre-modern times to the present, gathering not only historical sources but also touching first-hand literary testimonies. This great work is characterised by empathy, a sense of style, perseverance and a calm view of the current debates on emigration and immigration.

Biography

Andreas Kossert, born in 1970, studied history, political science and Slavonic studies in Germany, Scotland and Poland and has a PhD in history. He received an enthusiastic response to his historical depictions of Masuria and East Prussia. Most recently, he published the bestseller "Cold Home. The Story of German Expellees after 1945" and "In Those Days in East Prussia". He was awarded the Georg Dehio Book Prize for his work.

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Daniel Leese

Mao's Long Shadow

C.H.Beck

Jury evaluation:

In major historical upheavals, right and wrong are redefined, the roles of perpetrators and victims redistributed. Daniel Leese describes the decade after Mao's death as a balancing act between legal reappraisals, reparations and renewed repression. Using the special case of China, he grapples with major, timeless questions about confronting historical guilt that remain as topical as ever. The book is as evocative as it is perceptive, as meticulous as it is self-assured – a historiographical tour de force.

Biography

Daniel Leese teaches Chinese studies with a focus on the "history and politics of modern China" at the Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg.

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Michael Maar
Die Schlange im Wolfspelz
Das Geheimnis großer Literatur

Michael Maar The Snake in Wolf's Clothing

Rowohlt

Jury evaluation:

A linguistic circuit training, mental boot camp, and school of mindfulness: with "Die Schlange im Wolfspelz" ("The Snake in Wolf's Clothing"), Michael Maar has written a major essay on good style, illustrated with many examples from German-language literature. Maar's speciality: extolling. Whether he is praising Marie Ebner-Eschenbach "for the unromanticised, anti-idyllic naturalism, for her sharp psychology and ear" or applauding Theodor Fontane's ability to "allow the world to get carried away in conversation", Maar's analyses and arguments are convincing. A book that can teach you to write and think.

Biography

Michael Maar, born in 1960, is a Germanist, author and literary critic. He gained recognition with his work "Geister und Kunst. Neuigkeiten aus dem Zauberberg" (1995), for which he received the Johann Heinrich Merck Prize. In 2002 he was accepted by the German Academy for Language and Literature, in 2008 by the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, and in 2010 he was awarded the Heinrich Mann Prize.

Press contact and interview requests:

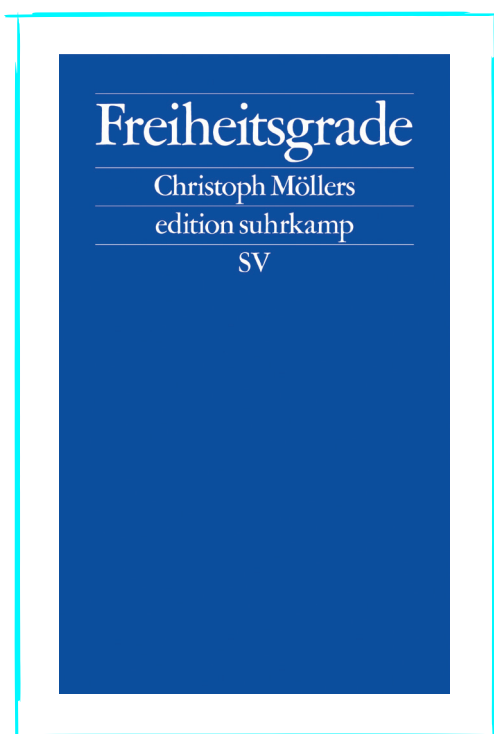
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Christoph Möllers

Degrees of Freedom

Suhrkamp

Jury evaluation:

Analysing the gradations of the concept of freedom, Christoph Möllers calls them degrees of freedom. His philosophy of law includes reflections on how law is interpreted and the consequences of this. Brilliantly and knowledgeably, Möllers reminds us of the democratic context of legal interpretation and how freedom works – specifically, freedom is not natural but has always been a phenomenon of social allocation. Where does that leave individuality? How can liberalism work? Möllers argues for liberalism to be redefined, because this readjustment alone can meet the challenges of the future as regards social justice and ecological perspectives. A powerful thesis for a necessary and urgent debate.

Biography

Christoph Möllers, born in 1969, teaches Public Law and Legal Philosophy at the Humboldt-University of Berlin. In 2015, he was awarded the Leibniz Prize, the most important research award in Germany.

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Mai Thi Nguyen-Kim The Lowest Common Reality

Droemer Knaur

Jury evaluation:

Researchers have discovered, the study has shown, science has revealed – today more than ever, in the era of the coronavirus pandemic, results are quoted, compared and stretched, even condemned. That is why it is important to understand how science works in the first place. What is valid data? Where does interpretation begin? In this book, science journalist Mai-Thi Nguyen-Kim explains all of this as entertainingly, knowledgeably and calmly as she does in her YouTube videos. Do video games really make young people more aggressive? Should drugs be legalised? Can homeopathy even work at all? By the end, you will be smarter, have a better understanding of how science works and dare to take a stand in debates.

Biography

Dr Mai Thi Nguyen-Kim has a PhD in chemistry and is a science journalist. She presents the knowledge programme Quarks on WDR and produces the mailLab YouTube channel, which has received several honours including the Grimme Online Award in 2018. In the same year, she won the Georg von Holtzbrinck Preis for science journalism, then in 2019 she was awarded the Hanns Joachim Friedrichs Preis and in 2020, the Goldene Kamera and German Federal Cross of Merit.

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