Andrzej Stasiuk is to Eastern European literature what Borges or Marquez is to the literature of southern American latitudes – a voice of unique, transcendent quality and supra-regional pertinence.

Contact
Magdalena Hajduk-Dębowska
Literary Agent
debowska@polishrights.com

Aleksandra Smoleń
Rights Assistant
smolen@polishrights.com
Andrzej Stasiuk

Andrzej Stasiuk is one of the most successful and internationally acclaimed contemporary Polish writers. Born in 1960 in Warsaw, he is a writer, poet, essayist and literary critic. Winner of many prizes (including the 1994 Foundation of Culture Prize and the 1995 Kościelski Foundation Prize); also nominated several times for the Nike Literary Prize. In youth, practiced many professions, was engaged in pacifist movement, deserted the army, and spent a year and a half in prison. After this, he wrote for underground newspapers. In late 1980s, moved from Warsaw to a little village in the mountains, where he presently lives. Publishes books at Czarne Publishers, a publishing house he has run together with his wife Monika Sznajderman since 1996.

Andrzej Stasiuk wrote over 10 works of fiction, several theatre plays, as well as collections of essays. He is the winner of numerous literary prizes in Poland and abroad, including such awards as the Nike Literary Prize.

His works have been translated into more than 20 languages.

Selected prizes:

- Foundation of Culture Prize – 1994
- The Kościelski Foundation Prize – 1995
- Biblioteka Raczyńskich Prize – 1998
- Beata Pawlak Prize – 2004
- Samuel Bogumil Linde Literary Prize – 2002
- Adalbert-Stifter-Prize – 2005
- Nike Literary Prize – 2005
- Vilenica Prize – 2008
- Gdynia Literary Prize – 2010
Works of Andrzej Stasiuk

Novels & short stories:
- Przez rzekę (Across the River; 1996)
- Tekturowy samolot (Cardboard Airplane; 2000, 2001)
- Jak zostałem pisarzem (How I Became a Writer; 1998)
- Zima (Winter; 2001)
- Jadąc do Babadag (On the Road to Babadag; 2004)
- Fado (Fado; 2006)
- Dojczland (Dojczland; 2007)
- Taksim (Taksim; 2009)
- Dziennik pisany później (Diary Kept Afterwards; 2010)
- Grochów (Grochów, 2012)
- Nie ma ekspresów przy żółtych drogach (There Are No Express Trains by Yellow Roads, 2013)

Poetry:
- Wiersze miłosne i nie (Verses Amorous and Otherwise; 1994)

Plays:
- Dwie sztuki (telewizyjne) o śmierci (Two (TV) Plays About Death; 1998)
- Noc czyli słowiańsko-germańska tragifarsa medyczna (Night or Slavic-Germanic Medical Tragicomedy; 2005)
- Ciemny las (Dark Woods; 2007)
- Czekając na Turka (Waiting for the Turk; 2009)

Essays:
- Moja Europa. Dwa eseje o Europie zwanej Środkową (My Europe: Two Essays on So-called Central Europe; together with Yuri Andrukhovych; 2000, 2001)

Andrzej Stasiuk, You Can't Get Espresso on Country Roads

...one stops now and then to take a rest, look around and count the time gone and left. This is what this book is like: I am probing where I have been, where I am and where I am heading.
And, needless to say, there is a wide choice of poignant observations, profound thoughts and vivid descriptions.

Yours sincerely: Author
Andrzej Stasiuk, *Grochów*

Andrzej Stasiuk's latest publication consists of four sketches in prose – works that are neither short stories nor pictures. Not particularly extensive, lacking in any clear plot, revolving around people that are not particularly sympathetic. In sum: there's not a lot happening here.

The protagonists of these pieces are taken from real life, and not embellished for literature's sake: a gal, a dog, a writer, and one of Stasiuk's childhood friends. What they have in common is that they have died. In sum: again, not a lot.

At the same time, this not a lot – this loose, digressive narrative style, in which non-obligating description suddenly becomes modest event – creates a dazzling and profound, if very free, philosophical tale, in which a sustained reflection on absence becomes a kind of portrait of life itself. We alternate between questions relating to death and passages saturated with the senses. This interweaving of nothingness, on the one hand, with appearances, colors, and scents, on the other, is so intense that *Grochów* might also be called a melancholy essay on sight, touch, and smell.

For Stasiuk, life is an ephemeral substance that strives to persist. This striving is in vain, because nothing always shines through life. At times that nothing takes the form of spirits that, in appearing, tear through the tightly woven fabric of our existence. At other times, nothing reveals itself in the eyes of a dog. At other times, the narrator is witness to nothing while the bodies of those close to him, tormented by illnesses and old age, are transformed into objects – foreign to those that inhabit them and foreign to those that observe them. But at times nothing appears with no warning. And when nothing betrays no sign of itself, life loses meaning.

This is why Stasiuk doesn't look for meaning, and doesn't ask questions about an overriding order. He knows that the overriding order of life is dying. He knows that life double-crosses always and everyone. That the narrative that all of us attempt to impose upon our existence will sooner or later come undone. There is no point, then, in designing overly cohesive stories. The answer to the fundamental inexpressibility of life is an inexpressibility of the story – a digressive course, an incessant changing of topics, a kind of shunting of narration. (Przemysław Czapliński)

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**Andrzej Stasiuk, *Taksim***

In his latest novel Andrzej Stasiuk tells a tale of a very last chase of capitalism. His two main heroes – Władek, a marketeer who circulates among the bazaars of European provinces, and Paweł, his driver – suffer a symbolic and actual defeat in their encounter with the new force. Up till this moment they'd always managed to come out on top. Władek in particular is like a knight errant of the first phase of capitalism in these parts.

Now, yesterday's culture of short-lived products is becoming a disposable culture of one-time use. Asia invades Europe, not with an army, but with trade. It floods the continent with knock-offs, in other words merchandise the Chinese copied from Central European products that were themselves copies of Western items.

If someone has the impression that Stasiuk has created a contemporary version of the story of how “the yellow race overcomes the white race”, they will only partly be right. Stasiuk is less interested in portraying the victors in this capitalist duel of deceptions, more in showing us the losers – that is to say, the pariahs of Europe, inhabitants of its poorest regions, people condemned to a worse life because they live in a worse place. These people acquire the cheapest goods, but they themselves, especially the women, are also turned into merchandise. The only thing Western Europe exports to Central Europe is its trash, its used objects, the detritus of its development, while from there it imports male bodies for its harsher jobs and female bodies for its entertainment. In this way the strength of money and the weakness of the provinces cause the ideal of Europe to enter liquidation. And since history driven by money has no brakes, it is a liquidation that cannot be reversed. (Przemysław Czapliński)
An account of Stasiuk’s journeys to Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia. But Diary Kept Afterwards is not one more piece of “travel writing”, not just another story about journeys in the Balkans. Stasiuk’s expeditions south, his excursions to places you won’t find in travel guides, are intended to gain some perspective on his own country and on Polishness.

“We went into a bar to get some coffee and raki to help us decide what to do. The inside looked like a robbers’ cave, but no one paid particular attention to us. The faces at the neighboring tables had seen it all. The raki tasted like gasoline. Rigel got into conversation with a man. They walked out in front of the bar together. A moment later he came back. “It was a misunderstanding. He thought I didn’t have a passport and he was offering to smuggle me across”. (excerpt)

Dariusz Pawelec (b. 1960) is a TV director and operator working on programmes and documentaries devoted to culture.

Andrzej Stasiuk, Diary Kept Afterwards
(with photographs by Dariusz Pawelec)

Wedged between anecdotal recollections and colourful descriptions of the present, fragments of highly complex philosophical problems such as Time, Identity, and Memory, flash past, wrapped up in simple events or reflection. This skilful ability to present intricate matters in everyday imagery and words is exactly what makes this book extraordinarily fascinating. Stasiuk is, moreover, an exuberantly lyrical author. This is demonstrated especially in his fantastically detailed descriptions of nature. The now, the light, and the loneliness, the trees and the mountains, are rendered time and again in strange, gripping imagery that strikes one as so very true to life that one finds himself shivering with cold and desolation. (“Trouw”)

Worse than death is waiting for it to come. Like all last words, this one is also to be outdone. In a book written in wonderfully intoxicating language, Andrzej Stasiuk has his characters empty the cup of doubt until the Polish variant of this truth appears at its bottom: Worse than death is uncertainty as to whether life will begin at all. (Thomas Wirtz, “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”)

Andrzej Stasiuk, White Raven

A singular story of friendship, failure and death, told breathlessly in the raw language of suburban Warsaw, but also in solicitously drawn, keenly piercing pictures. (Martin Pollack, “Der Spiegel”)
Short stories conserving the tone of Galician Tales: about people and animals inhabiting the beautiful, cursed land of Galicia.

"And then, as usual, everything wanes, and the most ancient darkness falls on Edek, Kaczmarek, Hrynacz and the others. Dreams change, but the darkness lasts and gives solace. It washes away events and things. It strengthens the bodies. It has happened thus since the beginning of the world, and it will happen, to protect us from dying of the excess". (Excerpt)
On the Road to Babadag

The spellbinding language captures the author’s piercing insights with painful clarity; Stasiuk refuses to soften what he sees, hears and smells, providing a dynamic postcard of his travels. [...] Whether writing about gypsies, the ancient bond between beasts and humans or the threadbare currency of Moldova, Stasiuk’s language and sharp observations reveal a discerning intellect. A mesmerizing, not-to-be-missed trek through a little-visited region of the world. (*KIRKUS REVIEWS*)

A eulogy for the old Europe, the Europe both in and out of time, the Europe now lost in the folds of the map, On the Road to Babadag (and Fado, too) is valuable reading for UK readers. If we can’t read our way around Europe, how will we ever find our place, our identity, within it? (JAMES HOPRIN, “THE GUARDIAN”)

Nine

One measurement of a genuine writer is his or her ability to evoke a place that is instantly familiar yet outside our direct personal experience, presenting it to us as a more accurate and vivid depiction than our prejudices had previously allowed. Andrzej Stasiuk is this kind of writer. He’s an accomplished stylist with an eye for the telling detail that brings characters and situations to life. [...] In this canny translation from the Polish by Bill Johnston, Stasiuk’s prose soars over the city. He sees as a helicopter might, and illuminates stray lives with empathy and verve. [...] I caught a flavor of Hamsun, Sartre, Genet and Kafka in Stasiuk’s scalpel-like but evocative writing. Nine feels like a major work of modern fiction, a portrait of an uprooted and restless generation of Eastern Europeans and of a city resigned to the fact that post-Communism is not quite as advertised. This book will undoubtedly win Andrzej Stasiuk a greater following in America and, with luck, will pave the way for the translation of more vibrant literature from Eastern Europe. (IRVINE WELSH, “NEW YORK TIMES”)

 [...] The seedy Warsaw criminal underground underscores Stasiuk’s bleak motif, creating a tone that is unmistakably European and distinctly influenced by Poland’s former communist regime. The novel, impressively translated by Johnston, offers a sobering vision of the new face of central Europe in a narrative that is at once hallucinatory, haunting and abject. (*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*, STARBED REVIEW)

The technique is masterly, and the carefully calibrated atmosphere of dread and threat beautifully sustained. (*KIRKUS REVIEWS*)

In its very inexpressiveness, the narrative voice in Nine becomes an active element, oscillating across a range of overtones. Parts of the novel verge on satire, their deadpan humor derived from the colloquial, fast-moving dialogue and the sheer triteness of the characters’ perceptions and aspirations. [...] In some ways, Nine seems to draw on the tradition of fictional angst and revulsion, as if Nausea and The Stranger were crossed with the dyspeptic vision of Michel Houellebecq. But the combination of elements Stasiuk evokes, the small hopes and widespread corruption, the tawdriness and seductiveness of the material world, the hooligan toughness and melancholy cynicism, belongs unmistakably to post-Communist Eastern Europe. (EVA HOFFMAN, “THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS”)

For all its street-smart pace and grit, Nine is studded with hauntingly graceful and tender passages (Bill Johnston’s translation reads beautifully). [...] Impatient with join-the-dots exposition, Stasiuk can be elliptical to the point of opacity. He cuts from scene to scene, mind to mind. Keep up, and the rewards justify the effort. If Quentin Tarantino mutated into a Polish literary novelist, his work might resemble Nine. (BOYD TONKIN, “THE INDEPENDENT”)

The writing is intensely atmospheric. [...] Nine is a novel almost wholly given over to mood. [...] Nine is not always intelligible; it is sometimes frustratingly opaque, but it is brooding, beguiling, memorable. It is a serious novel about politics, society, doing what one must; it approaches the intellect via the senses. (TOSY LICHTIG, “TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT”)

Tales of Galicia

Tales of Galicia [...] describes the soul of a village community with more authenticity than anything else I have read. (JOHN BERGER, “LOS ANGELES TIMES”)
On the Road to Babadag

Albania (Mesonjetorija)
Belorussia (Zmicier Kolas)
Bulgaria (Paradox)
Croatia (Fraktura)
Czech Republic (Periplum)
Finland (Like)
France (Christian Bourgois)
Germany (Suhrkamp)
Greece (Polis)
Hungary (Magvető)
Italy (Bompiani)
Lithuania (Ritos Knygos)
Netherlands (De Geus)
Romania (RAO)
Serbia (Dereta)
Slovenia (Beletrina)
Spain (Quaderns Crema)
Sweden (Ersatz)
UK (Harvill)
Ukraine (Krytyka)
USA (Harcourt Brace)

Tales of Galicia

Czech Republic (Periplum)
France (Christian Bourgois)
Germany (Suhrkamp)
Hungary (Jak Publishing House)
Netherlands (De Geus)
Slovakia (Slovak)
UK (Twisted Spoon Press)

Nine

Croatia (Fraktura)
France (Christian Bourgois)
Germany (Suhrkamp)
Hungary (Magvető)
Italy (Bompiani)
Netherlands (De Geus)
Romania (RAO)
Russia (Azbooka)
Slovenia (Beletrina)
Spain (Quaderns Crema)
Sweden (Norstedts)
UK (Harvill Secker)
Ukraine (Klassyka)
USA (Harcourt Brace)

The World Behind Dukla

Czech Republic (Periplum)
France (Christian Bourgois)
Germany (Suhrkamp)
Hebrew world rights (Modan)
Hungary (Magvető)
Italy (Bompiani)
Netherlands (De Geus)
Norway (Aschehoug)
Russia (NLO)
Slovakia (Baum)
Spain (Quaderns Crema)
Sweden (Norstedts)
Turkey (Monoki)

Fado

English world rights (Dalkey Archive)
France (Christian Bourgois)
Germany (Suhrkamp)
Romania (RAO)
Ukraine (Grani-T)

Cardboard Airplane

Germany (Suhrkamp)

Across the River

France (Le Passeur)
Germany (Suhrkamp)

How I Became a Writer

Czech Republic (Prostor)
France (Actes Sud)
Germany (Suhrkamp)
Korea (Saemulgyul)
Romania (Paralela 45)
Hungary (Magus Design)

My Europe – Two Essays on So-Called Central Europe

Croatia (Fraktura)
Czech Republic (Periplum)
France (Noir sur Blanc)
Germany (Suhrkamp)
Hungary (Kijárat Kiadó)
Romania (Polirom)
Spain (Quaderns Crema)
Ukraine (Klassyka)
Andrzej Muszyński, *Baulk*

Andrzej Muszyński is a new strong voice in Polish prose. *Baulk*, his debut collection of stories, is a literary treat and a moving picture of the provincial Poland and the life in the borderland. It is the story of a world which is dying because it is not fast enough to keep pace with the modernity, yet unable to give up its values. Andrzej Muszyński has been chosen by this world as its chronicler and poet.

**Andrzej Muszyński** (b. 1984), the winner of the first scholarship from the Herodot Foundation in the memory of Ryszard Kapuściński and the winner of the competition for the best short story at the Wrocław International Storytelling Festival. A contributor to press and literary magazines. His travelling serves him as a pretext to return to his provincial roots, which he explores in his prose. A winner of national travel awards, e.g. for his traverse of the Minkébé forest in Gabon. He also completed a solo crossing of the Atacama desert.
I wrote this book over the course of few months after my father died. The narrative has the rhythm of longing and sorrow. My purpose was neither to heal myself nor to turn experience into literature. I wrote this book because there was nothing else I could do. I did, of course, everyday chores and the necessity of those chores is one of the elements of my narrative: adults go into a despair mode after they have done their due. I comforted myself with the image of my dad who would have called me immediately after reading the book. But this is horrible comfort as he would have praised me for the description of his own death.

Inga Iwasiów (b. 1963), professor of literature, writer, researcher, essayist, and literary and theatre critic. Author of widely recognised monographs, dissertations, essays and columns. She has published two volumes of poetry, short stories and three novels: Bambino (shortlisted for the Nike Literary Prize), its sequel Towards the Sun (Ku słońcu) and Cutting It Short (Na krótko).

Inga Iwasiów, *He Died On Me*

When an ex-policewoman – a strong and independent woman who does not hesitate to punch those who deserve it – finds a job at a literary publishing house as a story researcher, one may expect anything but humdrum stories from behind a dust-covered desk. Ewa is an indefatigable seeker of curious stories, a faithful confidante of eccentrics and a comforter of picturesque failures. The non-conventional and the absurd are escalated to the degree that we are no longer surprised by confessions of her interlocutors, including Anna Jantar and Arnold Schwarzenegger!

Agnieszka Wolny-Hamkało masterfully juggles with pop culture clichés and plays with the model of feminine sexuality. Her strong, sensitive and liberated protagonist is a Polish Lara Croft. Mad, unpredictable and going towards self-destruction. Towards an eclipse.

Justyna Bargielska, *The Little Foxes*

Two women live on a suburban estate consisting of very large houses: one is Agnieszka, a single academic and ardent feminist, and the other is Magda, who is keen on family life and is realizing her ideals by having babies. Meanwhile, there’s a a knife-wielding bandit called Pajda hiding in the nearby woods, with whom each of our heroines has a peculiar love affair – at different times and in different circumstances, but because of similar needs.

There are also lots of secondary characters including: Kula, whose two-year-old twin daughters were killed in a car crash, but in the very large house no one believes they ever existed; Renata the hairdresser who, unable to fall pregnant, communicates with the spirit of a client’s dead daughter; the ideal blonde couple, to whom after ten years of blissful life together a terminally ill child is born. And so on.

The framing device for these events is the search for one of the residents of the very large house, who goes missing along with the first snowfall, but is then found along with the last snowfall as a frozen corpse, on a little roof above the swimming pool. When the notice posted in the stairwell saying that the tenant has gone missing is replaced by the announcement of his death, the romance is at an end too – for Magda, Agnieszka, and Pajda.

How is one to live, when evil is close at hand and God is far away? When the way of life which we were prepared to pay for in blood turns out to be as boring as any other? When as we take our daily walk with the dog in the woods, we cannot be sure who we will be on the way home, or whether we will get home at all? Don’t expect this book to come up with the answers... (Courtesy of the Book Institute)

Justyna Bargielska (b. 1977), poet, author of three books of poems. For the last one she received the Gdynia Literary Prize 2010. Her poetry has been translated into Slovenian and English.

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Justyna Bargielska, *Stillbirthlets*

*Stillbirthlets* is a collection of 43 prose miniatures of modest dimensions. The pieces – most of which are no longer than a single type-written page – link the narrator with several themes running through the book. The narrator is a young, married woman – by vocation and passion a poet – bringing up two small children and trying to reconcile her domestic duties with her literary work. Bargielska strives to synthesise these two realities. On the one hand she portrays the everyday existence of Justyna (her narrator and heroine), and on the other she draws out metaphors from the most ordinary experiences, intertwining them with dreams and fantasies. This first-time writer of prose is clearly searching for a distinctive literary form; she would like – one surmises – to organise the text in such a way as to talk about ordinary things in an original way.

The motifs cementing this collection revolve around the experience of pregnancy, giving birth, and motherhood. First and foremost, there is the title motif. Stillbirthlet is a neologism coined by Bargielska and derived from a Latin medical term (“obsoleta” is a synonym for a stillbirth). In Justyna’s world the experience of losing a baby seems a central and critical one, a figure of loss in general. As such, it does not only represent a female or marital drama – but something more. Influenced by this experience, the heroine begins to pose fundamental questions: about the meaning of life, the concept of happiness and about her own identity. It should nonetheless be stressed that everything played out here is only hinted at, as it were, through fleeting images, reflections or fantasies. The events the main character participates in, the stories other people tell her, and all her individual experiences and reflections are “encrypted”, possibly through fear of their direct expression, but maybe owing to a conviction that what the author would like to communicate is inexpressible. (Dariusz Nowacki; courtesy of the Book Institute)

Justyna Bargielska (b. 1977), poet, author of three books of poems. For the last one she received the Gdynia Literary Prize 2010. Her poetry has been translated into Slovenian and English.
Krzysztof Varga, Sawdust

Krzysztof Varga’s latest book is a daring satire on modernity. The author invites us to join the main character, a 50-something traveling salesman, in deconstructing the things we find annoying: fellow train passengers, smells in the staircase, team-building courses and yuppies in cafes. Spewing the venom of hatred, Piotr mercilessly exposes the weaknesses and quirks of a contemporary Pole. He draws up full-blooded and painfully faithful portraits of his toxic parents and greedy ex-wife, pathetic nouveau riches, kebab lovers and corporate weaklings. His piercing gaze penetrates hypocrisy – an armour which is intended to shield the last shreds of dignity and offer protection against harm. All the characters are unfilled, clumsy in hiding their disappointments in life, resentful and scared to death with the prospect of loneliness.

The resultant picture is distorted, grotesque and irresistibly funny. Sawdust is a tour de force in fiction – an excellent, cynical and brilliant piece of entertainment not only for sociopaths. A cautionary tale...

Krzysztof Varga (b. 1968), a writer, literary critic and journalist. He studied Polish language and literature at the University of Warsaw. His debut was Chłopaki nie płaczą (Boys Don’t Cry), a short novel about a group of friends in the early ‘90s in Warsaw. Between 2002 and 2006 he worked as chief editor for culture in the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza”. His main books include the novels Tequila (Tequila), Śmiertelność (Mortality), Nagrobek z lasryko (Terazzo Tombstone) and Aleja Niedopodległości (Independence Avenue) as well as the non-fiction title Gulasz z turula (Turul Goulash).

Krzysztof Varga, Independence Avenue

A modern parable about the mystery of human existence.

Independence Avenue is a major Warsaw street that runs through Mokotów, a district that Krystian Apostate, the main character in Varga’s latest novel, rarely leaves. He was born there in 1968, and it is his permanent home. The novel describes a twenty-five years long friendship between Krystian and Jakub Fidelis; their experiences, which at first are shared, later become extremely different. Fidelis is a success – a dancer and celebrity, constantly featured in colour magazines, but Apostate is a failed painter, a conceptual artist who has squandered his talent. While Fidelis enjoys fame and all sorts of luxury, Apostate is stuck in a state of lethargy; his life is limited to drinking beer and rummaging around on pornographic websites.

The meaning of the name of the Warsaw street is metaphorical – Varga aims to describe the fortunes of the generation that entered adulthood at the start of Polish independence. Varga asks how this freedom has been put to use, especially at the level of the individual.

This is a terrifying and at the same time immensely funny book. [...] Varga matures like Hungarian wine. He gets better and better. (Andrzej Stasiuk)

Krzysztof Varga (b. 1968), a writer, literary critic and journalist. He studied Polish language and literature at the University of Warsaw. His debut was Chłopaki nie płaczą (Boys Don’t Cry), a short novel about a group of friends in the early ‘90s in Warsaw. Between 2002 and 2006 he worked as chief editor for culture in the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza”. His main books include the novels Tequila (Tequila), Śmiertelność (Mortality), Nagrobek z lasryko (Terazzo Tombstone) and Aleja Niedopodległości (Independence Avenue) as well as the non-fiction title Gulasz z turula (Turul Goulash).
This book is a slow-paced journey through time and space. Wojciech Nowicki explores the history, memories, fears and injustices experienced by his ancestors hailing from Poland's Eastern borderlands to weave a universal picture of longing and fear. It is also an account of travels to the world's metropolises, towns, villages and hamlets, a story of roaming the faraway lands (“with a home in your head and a feeling of homelessness”). Excellent, meditative prose.

Wojciech Nowicki (b. 1968) works as a journalist, translator, curator and photographer. He also runs the culinary reviews column in the Cracow edition of the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza”. Co-founder of the Imago Mundi Foundation devoted to promoting photography, member of the programme board of the Cracow Photomonth.
Angelika Kuźniak, *Papusza*

Bronisława Wajs. She was known by her Romani name Papusza, meaning “doll”. A poet discovered by Jerzy Ficowski and applauded by Julian Tuwim, she became known for her simple poems laden with longing for nature that have since been the icon of the Roma heritage.

Her popularity soon became her curse. Regarded as a traitor of the tribal code, she was banished from the Roma world and spent her life isolated and disdained by fellow Romas. Isolation took a toll on her body and mind. When she died in 1987, she was buried away from Roma graves.

The archival evidence uncovered by Angelika Kuźniak casts an entirely new light on the icon of Roma poetry. Papusza’s diary, her letters to Jerzy Ficowski and to Julian Tuwim provide also an invaluable source of information on the life of Polish Gypsies: their travels in wagons, the Volhynia massacre, forced settlements, distrust by Poles and, first and foremost, their love of nature and freedom. *Papusza* is an excellent book of reportage about a world which is no more. And the price one has to pay for being a misfit.

Angelika Kuźniak is a graduate of cultural studies at the European University in Frankfurt/Oder. She has contributed to the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza” since 2000. She has received the Grand Press award twice: in 2004 and in 2008. Author of a biography of Marlene Dietrich.
Wojciech Tochman, *El, Eli*  
(with photographs by Grzegorz Welnicki)

Those who will read *El, Eli* will perhaps no longer be able to travel like they used to. Wojciech Tochman tells the story of the unknown Philippines, the world of the poorest of the poor who have lived for years in the slums and graveyards of Manila. But this book is not only about them; it is about us, too.

We travel more, we photograph the world more. But we do not see the things grasped by Tochman in his writings and by Welnicki in his photographs. We cannot see what is underneath: pain and suffering. Why? Because we have become immune to them. Tochman looks through his camera the other way round to scrutinise us, but also himself, to see how we view a tragedy, how we perceive another person. And he revives our bond of empathy.

*El, Eli* is a book that both accuses and brings hope, or even maybe a solution to the dilemma of how to behave in the face of human suffering. A reporter’s attentive eye, ability to challenge one’s own perceptions and openness to another human being are of key importance in this task.

Tochman’s dense prose is illustrated by Grzegorz Welnicki’s excellent, moving pictures. The faces we see are not anonymous; one’s own perceptions and openness to another human being are laid bare. But this book is like they used to. Wojciech Tochman tells the story of the unknown man looks through his camera the other way round to scrutinise us, but also himself to see how we view a tragedy, how we perceive another person. And he revives our bond of empathy.

Tochman’s dense prose is illustrated by Grzegorz Welnicki’s excellent, moving pictures. The faces we see are not anonymous; Tochman tells us the stories of the people depicted in the photographs – every one of them. With his trademark sensitivity known to the readers of his previous books, he introduces us to the silent world of a tree woman, to the everyday life of children living in the graveyard, to the drama of a 14-year old protagonist of a soap opera which will never be filmed. We are looking at their lives at such close range that we are finally beginning to feel.

Wojciech Tochman

Today We’re Going to Draw Death shows the scars of the Rwandan genocide that can still be found today. These scars are the fortunes of particular individuals, both victims and their neighbours, who have committed crimes. As in Tochman’s book about Bosnia *Like Eating A Stone*, in these dramatic accounts too, graves and long-delayed burials are important. But what matters even more is to gain insight into the cruel events that were enacted in a country that can now be seen in its fragile, ostensible normality.

The book has some remarkable heroines, women who out of pure kindness once tried to hide someone in danger. But there are other people too, including clerics, whose attitude raises some disturbing questions. Tochman also bids us examine their immature attitude to the requirements of the border situation. This insight leaves a painful echo, but we must listen to this sort of echo too.

What for? To learn the lesson that we don’t know what we would do if we were faced with that kind of situation. As he talks about dark and terrifying things, at the same time Tochman gives a lesson in courageous sympathy. (Halina Bortnowska)

**Wojciech Tochman**

Wojciech Tochman (b. 1969) is a journalist and writer. His reportage has been published in English, French, Swedish, Finnish, Russian, Dutch and Bosnian. With *Like Eating a Stone*, Tochman was a finalist for the Nike Literary Prize and for the Prix Témoin du Monde, awarded by Radio France International. He runs the Polish Reportage Institute together with Paweł Goziński and Mariusz Szczygiel. Other books by Wojciech Tochman:

- *Bóg zapłać* (God Bless You, 2010) – rights sold to Czech Republic (Dokoran)
- *Wściekły pies* (The Rabid Dog, 2007) – 1st serial rights sold to Russia
- *Schodów się nie pali* (Staircases Don’t Burn, 2006)
- *Córęłka* (Beloved Daughter, 2005) – rights sold to Holland (De Geus)

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Wojciech Tochman, *Like Eating a Stone*

During four years of the war in Bosnia, over 100,000 people lost their lives. But it was months, even years, before the mass graves started to yield up their dead and the process of identification, burial and mourning could begin. For many, the waiting, the searching and the grieving continue to this day.

Here we travel through the ravaged post-war landscape in the company of a few survivors (mostly women) as they visit the scenes of their loss: a hall where the clothing of victims is displayed; an underground cave with its pale jumble of bones; a camp for homeless refugees; a city now abandoned to the ghosts of painful memories; a funeral service where a family finally says goodbye. These encounters are snapshots and memorials, a feat of powerful reporting told from the viewpoint of people who have lost nearly everything. With the sensibility [...] of Ryszard Kapuściński, Tochman captures a painful moment in history, as an entire community comes to terms with its raw and recent past. (From the *Financial Times*)

[Tochman’s] style is all the more powerful for its restraint: outrage speaks terribly for itself, needs no hype, no colour. (“Sunday Times”)

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*Abkhazia*

Abkhazia has a territory, borders and citizens, a president, a prime minister and an army. The Central Electoral Board organises elections and the Abkhazian Post issues stamps. A thirty years’ old chopper in the service of Abkhazia Airlines ferries passengers from Sukhumi to the mountainous town of Pskhu, and citizens are kept informed by the state press agency Apsnpres and the media such as the press, television, radio and Internet.

Wojciech Górecki is one of the select few people to witness how the quasi-state of Abkhazia with its disputed borders and unclear status was born, has grown and began to collapse in the past twenty years. Poland does not recognise Abkhazia, which it treats as part of Georgia. So does the rest of the world with the exception of Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru, Vanuatu and Tuvalu. Recognition of Abkhazia and of an ever growing number of states with a similar genealogy would lead to many new conflicts that would unbalance the world order.

The book is the third and last part of Górecki’s Caucasian triptych that began with *Planeta Kauczuk* (*The Planet Caucasus*) and *Toast za przodków* (*A toast for the ancestors*).

Wojciech Górecki (b. 1970), graduated in history and journalism. He has written for various Polish magazines and newspapers. An expert at the Centre for Eastern Studies, he spent the years 2002-2007 working at the Polish embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan. Author of *The Planet Caucasus* (2002), published in Italy as *Pianeta Cauca* by Bruno Mondadori, and *La terra del vello d’oro. Viaggi in Georgia* (2009). He was member of the EU team of experts examining the 2008 war in Georgia.
Edward PiekarSKI, exiled to Siberia in 1888, compiled a dictionary of the Yakut language. Wacław Sieroszewski, who came to Siberia ten years earlier, is the author of *Twelve years in the country of the Yakuts*, an ethnographic oeuvre that summarises his long exile. Michał Książek went to Yakutsia of his own will. Following in the footsteps of his great predecessors, he travelled far and wide in the snow covered land, fascinated by the language and customs of its peoples.

Ten times bigger than Poland, Yakutsia has fewer than a million inhabitants. As winter lasts for most of the year, Yakuts have countless names for different types of snow and frost, and it can be so bitingly cold that the chubby Father Frost has been replaced in the Yakut language by the Winter Bull.

Inflecting Yakut words for Polish cases, Książek creates something of a grammar of that faraway yet familiar snowy land.

Michał Książek (b. 1978) is an ornithologist and culture expert and a guide to Siberia. He spent a few years in Yakutsia. A contributor to the weekly “Polityka” and other magazines.
Magdalena Rittenhouse, *New York: From Mannahatta to Ground Zero*

A story-filled portrait of the vibrant metropolis, *New York: From Mannahatta to Ground Zero* blends historical account, essay and reportage to produce a companion for a curious explorer. Rittenhouse leads us through the history of the city – spanning from the voyage of Henry Hudson and the Dutch settlement on the island of Mannahatta to the dazzling billboards of contemporary Times Square and the reconstruction of Ground Zero. Her accounts combine cultural, intellectual, financial and economic history of New York with its architecture and urban planning, fashion and entertainment, religion and politics. Rittenhouse's narration is full of facts yet it embraces unforgettable energy, diversity, and creativity of Manhattan. As she examines a city full of contrasts, trying to conjure up its atmosphere, she moves back and forth in time, constantly changing her lenses – looking at wider context, then focusing on minute details of everyday life. Her explorations are organized around themes and places rather than chronologically, as one might experience during long walks. Way more than a standard traveler’s guide, it's a great introduction to a fascinating city.

Magdalena Rittenhouse (b. 1969), a journalist, translator and freelance writer currently based in New York. She published in “Polityka”, “Tygodnik Powszechny”, “The Seattle Times”, “The Nation” and others, and has worked for several news organizations, including the Associated Press and the BBC. *New York: From Mannahatta to Ground Zero* is her first book.

Book details
*Nowy Jork. Od Mannahatty do Ground Zero*, reportage
Czarne 2013, 400 pages

Rights available
World

Andrzej Muszyński, *The South*

Where does the South begin? Is the Brandt Line the border, or is it somewhere entirely else? Is the South a geographical, political or economic concept? Is it a lifestyle, a climate? A state of mind, “a hopeless escape into the depth, the heart of the world to check for the palpable, reassuring pulse”?

The stories told by Muszyński are set amid the scenery of lush green jungles, dusty roads, sun-burned sands of Atacama and snow-covered mountain passes. His characters include African dictators, the murderous Khmers Rouges and their victims, South African revolutionaries and bandits, tribes lost among the peaks of Sierra Nevada and the heirs of ancient civilisations. We are invited to meet passengers of an impossibly overcrowded Asian bus, Arab gastarbeiters in Austria and noisy stallholders at African bazaars.

Andrzej Muszyński uses a simple, unadorned language to tell big and small stories, treating the reader to known and unknown landscapes of southern Asia, Latin America, Maghreb and Africa. Combining a traveller’s passion with a reporter’s inquiring mind, he takes us on a fascinating journey in search of the South.


Andrzej Muszyński (b. 1984), the winner of the first scholarship from the Herodot Foundation in the memory of Ryszard Kapuściński and the winner of the competition for the best short story at the Wrocław International Storytelling Festival. A contributor to press and literary magazines. His travelling serves him as a pretext to return to his provincial roots, which he explores in his prose. A winner of national travel awards, e.g. for his traverse of the Minkêbé forest in Gabon. He also completed a solo crossing of the Atacama desert.
Filip Springer, A Bathtub With a Colonnade
A Book of Reportage on Polish Space

Poland had one of the best spatial planning systems in Europe; in fact, it was so good that it was emulated by many countries. For example Germany. But that was before the Second World War. After the war, the system was centralised. And in new Poland there is neither central nor spatial planning.

This is ostensibly because the process of planning is boring and boils down to laws, regulations, graphs, drafts and terminology. So there is no planning, only chaos throughout. However, Filip Springer fearlessly dedicated himself to the task of finding a method in this madness. Undeterred by fences, meandering among hundreds of billboards, he travelled the length and breadth of the country. His trip took him to cities and towns big and small, ghost streets, suburbs without roads or pavements, bridges spanning non-existent rivers. He talked to officials, scientists, architects and residents of new, promisingly named housing estates which had turned out to be places of banishment and exile. He found an Egyptian pyramid in Silesia, a variation on the Parthenon in Jelonki and a Venetian palace near Warsaw. During his travels he also stumbled upon a new disease: pastelosis.

The seemingly dull topic has been thus transformed into a fascinating story about the country in which we live and the people who shape our reality. A story which is partly funny and partly scary. A story of spatial order – a concept “everybody has heard of but not seen in Poland for a very long time”.

Filip Springer (b. 1982) studied archaeology and ethnology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. A self-taught journalist, he has been working as a reporter and photographer since 2006. He is a contributor to the weekly “Polityka” and a member of the Visavis.pl Photographers’ Collective. Winner of a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. He has exhibited his works in Poznań, Warsaw, Łódź, Gdynia, Lublin and Jelenia Góra.

Copperberge, Kopferberg, Kupferberg, Miedzianka – a tiny town near Jelenia Góra which is no more. Nor is the City Hall Restaurant where gossiping women would cringe with disgust when their husbands started singing: “If you had another mother-in-law…” Gone are the parties when dancing couples would swirl to the music of Martin Lehmann’s saxophone. The brewery, the paper factory, the mason and other craftsmen’s shops – they are all gone. There is no Mrs Trenkler the shirt-maker, Mrs Assman and Mrs Alex the bed linen makers and Mrs Breuer the seller of bread and eggs.

There is no graveyard by the road to Mniszków that overlooked the Rudawy Janowickie hills, although local people still remember how gravestones were torn from the ground by tractors and dogs would drag human bones all over the village.

Filip Springer devoted two years of research to find out why a town with seven centuries of history disappeared from the face of the earth. Was it because of the wasteful exploitation of uranium deposits by Russians in 1948–1952? Or were mining damages used as a pretext by the authorities to knock down the whole town in an attempt to bury a secret?

Filip Springer (b. 1982) studied archaeology and ethnology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. A self-taught journalist, he has been working as a reporter and photographer since 2006. He is a contributor to the weekly “Polityka” and a member of the Visavis.pl Photographers’ Collective. Winner of a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. He has exhibited his works in Poznań, Warsaw, Łódź, Gdynia, Lublin and Jelenia Góra.
Jacek Hugo-Bader, *White Fever*

Jacek Hugo-Bader’s book was inspired by two Soviet reporters for “Komsomolskaya Pravda”, who over fifty years ago outlined their vision of Russia in the twenty-first century. Most of their ideas about the future now belong among all those fairytales about a Communist paradise on Earth. The modern Russia that Hugo-Bader presents is certainly no idyll.

Hugo-Bader is the type of reporter who “goes the whole way”, gets in everywhere, gets on with everyone, and has to experience just about everything at first hand. To get to know Lake Baikal he crosses it by kayak, and to get the full picture of the state of Russia’s roads he travels several thousand kilometres by jeep. But what interests him most of all are the people: he spends several days in disguise with the homeless, investigates a community living in the taiga that has almost died out because of alcoholism, and meets with a group of people who are HIV positive. He also gets to know the only "happy Russians" – the followers of “one of the six Russian Christs”. All the other characters in this book are straight out of the pages of Dostoyevsky.

As Ryszard Kapuściński used to do, Jacek Hugo-Bader “gives a voice to the poor”, thus nurturing the finest traditions of Polish reportage. This genre remains the true pride of our literature. (Marta Mizuro)

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**Jacek Hugo-Bader** (b. 1957), before he became a journalist for the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza” in 1991, he taught in a special school, worked in a grocery store, loaded trains, weighed pigs at a collection point, counselled couples at a marriage counselling service, and ran a distribution company. At the same time, he was part of the anti-Communist opposition. He specializes in features on the former USSR. He wrote about Central Asia, China, Mongolia and Tibet after travelling through them on his bike. Russia is too big for a bike, alas. He has received several journalistic awards.

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**Jacek Hugo-Bader, The Kolyma Journals**

Jacek Hugo Bader’s newest book is a fascinating record of travelling along the Kolyma Highway, a distance of 2025 kilometres. The author confesses: "I've come to Kolyma to see what it is like to live in such a place, in such a graveyard. The longest one. Is it possible to love, laugh and scream with joy in this place? What is it like to cry, produce and bring up children, earn money, drink vodka and die here? This is what I'm going to write about. About what they eat, how they sift gold, bake bread, pray, treat illnesses, dream, fight..."

The author delivers on his promise, taking us on a journey to “Russia’s golden heart”. Although sometimes shocked, the reader will be surprised to discover the true face of the Island of the Damned.

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Gottland is a not a book, it is a gem. (Le Figaro)
Extraordinary, hypnotizing and disturbing tales. (Libération)
A collection of exquisite literary pieces of reportage on the Czechs entangled in their times. Mariusz Szczygieł’s Gottland is not a stereotypical tale featuring happy-go-lucky people who bind their time drinking beer. Lída Baarová, actress – the woman who made Goebbels cry; Otakar Szvec, sculptor – creator of world-largest statue of Stalin, who decided to kill himself before his work was finished; Marta Kubilova, singer – the Communist regime banned her from singing for 20 years and erased archive radio recordings of her songs; Tomas Bata – legendary shoe manufacturer who built a town fully controlled by himself ten years before George Orwell suggested a similar idea; and many others – those are the characters portrayed in this book. By presenting their unusual lives, Mariusz Szczygieł gives account of the times in which they (and we) have lived. He shows the high price they had to pay for seemingly unimportant decisions and the tragic combination of chance and fate affecting the lives of whole generations.

An intelligent, captivating and much needed book. Through his tale of lives of individual people, Mariusz Szczygieł reports on the complicated history of our southern neighbour. Fascinated with their culture and morale, their sense of irony, humour and sarcasm, he gives an account of how the Czechs dealt with ‘history which was let off the leash’. We are reading those stories from the perspective of our destiny and that makes the reading even more captivating. Our experience was similar yet so much different. A fascinating book. (Adam Michnik)

Mariusz Szczygieł, Gottland

Make Your Own Paradise

Unlike Gottland, which described the Czechs between 1882 and 2003, Make Your Own Paradise is first and foremost about the present day Czech Republic. It is the story of a nation which created culture as an antidepressant. The author is fascinated by Czech culture: a culture of joyful sorrow in which laughter serves as a mask for tragic helplessness. The reporter in Szczygieł is most fascinated by Czechs who do not believe in God. “What is life like without God?” – a question sometimes asked directly, sometimes hidden, is the refrain of this book – a mixture of personal diary, essay, feature and reportage.

Mariusz Szczygieł (b. 1966), reporter of the “Gazeta Wyborcza” daily. A graduate of the Faculty of Journalism at the University of Warsaw. He hosted his own talk-show for which he received several awards. He is an editor of the reporters’ feature “Duży Format” in “Gazeta Wyborcza” and together with Wojciech Tochman and Paweł Goźliński runs the Polish Reportage Institute.

Mariusz Szczygieł, Make Your Own Paradise
Lidia Ostałowska, *It Hurt Even More*  

*It Hurt Even More* is a collection of reportage from the past twenty years. There are twelve stories from across the country – twelve complicated lives but, in fact, only one heroine: B-class Poland. The Poland of those who are not wanted, are lost and poorly dressed, those who suffer from post-abortion syndrome. The book gives voice to people who cannot cope. But it is also an invaluable insight into ourselves and our social insensitivity.

This collection of stories about Polish suffering is a true display of Lidia’s mastery of reportage. Set against the backgrounds as varied as the multicultural region of Masuria, the bankrupt state-owned farm and the district of Bałuty with its rampant unemployment, some of the stories date back to a decade ago but have not lost any of their topicality thanks to the author’s talent for listening, talking and watching. The picture of a country in perpetual transformation, mired in its past and haunted by the guilt for its unexpiated sins, emerges from this mosaic of human problems. It is a portrayal of a country whose wounds run from the sea to the mountains. (Sylwia Chutnik)

**Lidia Ostałowska** (b. 1954), a graduate of Polish studies at the Warsaw University. She worked as a reporter on various weeklies at the time of Communism and as a journalist for the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza” after the martial law of 1981. She is particularly interested in disadvantaged people: national and ethnic minorities, women, subcultures of young people and those suffering exclusion. She is the co-author of many collections of reportage.

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**Lidia Ostałowska, A Gypsy is a Gypsy**

Lidia Ostałowska’s excellent Roma portraits have not lost any of their topicality in the more than ten years that have passed since their original publication. Despite the involvement of private organisations and international agencies, the plight of Roma has remained unchanged or has even got worse with the passage of time. None of the post-communist countries has developed a successful policy of cohabitation with the Roma minority. Virtually invisible in everyday life, this minority is brought into the spotlight on such headline-making occasions as deportations from France, the erection of ghettos in Slovakia or the ban on begging in Poland. *A Gypsy is a Gypsy* provides a glimpse into the complex nature of the Roma community and how it is affected by the Gadje mentality and the national identity of the countries in which the likes of Limalo, Marika, Ziutek, Badzio or Romek live as holders of Polish, Bulgarian, Serb or Hungarian passports...

12 years have passed since the original publication of *A Gypsy is a Gypsy*. Much has since changed in our corner of Europe. We belong to a community that champions human rights. In the hustle and bustle of our public space, a voice is being increasingly heard that it is not for us to decide on the future of Roma people. It is for them to determine how to reconcile modernity and tradition.

How engagingly Lidia Ostałowska writes about the fascinating world of Gypsies! There are so many surprising stories, so many curious lives. Excellently written, passionate and full of humanism, this book of reportage uncovers a fascinating and mysterious reality that engages the reader from the very first page. (Ryszard Kapuściński)

**Lidia Ostałowska** (b. 1954), a graduate of Polish studies at the Warsaw University. She worked as a reporter on various weeklies at the time of Communism and as a journalist for the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza” after the martial law of 1981. She is particularly interested in disadvantaged people: national and ethnic minorities, women, subcultures of young people and those suffering exclusion. She is the co-author of many collections of reportage.
Dina Gottliebova, a talented Jewish student of fine arts from Brno, was deported from the Terezin ghetto to Auschwitz-Birkenau where she was assigned the task of painting numbers on the barracks. When she had painted the children’s barracks with scenes from *Snow White*, she attracted attention of Dr Mengele, then the chief medical officer of the Gypsy family camp known as the Zigeunerlager, who was looking for someone to paint the portraits of Gypsies as part of his research on inferior race.

The youngest child in the family of an Auschwitz railwayman died in 1942. Three days after liberation the railwayman’s son went to the camp to look for an orphan to replace the child his grieving mother had lost. He chose a girl called Ewa, a Hungarian Jew. He also brought back home with him a bunch of watercolours that some prisoner had found in the barracks and gifted to him.

In 1963 the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum bought the paintings from Ewa. In 1970s their author was identified: Dina Gottliebova lived in the United States as a wife to the famous Disney animator Art Babbitt. She visited Poland while on a trip to Paris. At the museum she recounted her experiences of living at the camp and asked for photographs of her paintings. The museum claims that she would not respond to letters after she had received the photographs. In mid-1990s Ms Babbitt demanded the return of the original paintings…

Witold Szablowski, *Assassin from Apricot City*

*Assassin from Apricot City* is a multithreaded story about a Turkey torn between East and West, Islam and Islamophobia; soaked through with conservatism and post-modernity, a yearning for Europe and euroscepticism. Szablowski leads a colourful procession of protagonists which we follow into the heart of Turkey, of a nation which, infected with europeanness, is slowly losing its natural traditional rhythm.

Witold Szablowski (b. 1980), studied political science in Warsaw and Istanbul, worked for CNN Türk and for the Polish television. He has received several prizes for his writing, including an award from Amnesty International.

Lidia Ostałowska, *Water-colours*

Lidia Ostałowska (b. 1954), a graduate of Polish studies at the Warsaw University. She worked as a reporter on various weeklies at the time of Communism and as a journalist for the daily "Gazeta Wyborcza" after the martial law of 1981. She is particularly interested in disadvantaged people: national and ethnic minorities, women, subcultures of young people and those suffering exclusion. She is the co-author of many collections of reportage.
A fascinating story about Israel. In more than twenty excellent pieces of reportage writing, Paweł Smoleński gives us a tour of backstreets of Israeli cities, towns and kibbutzim, as well as beaches, bars and temples. Whenever it is possible, in elegant halls and in open-air markets, he talks to people. He listens to their stories. And he writes: about Fatima and other women from the Sziruk association going out with their mission to Israeli women, about the life of settlers in the Gaza strip and about liquidation of Jewish housing estates, about an illness called “the Jerusalem syndrome”, about despair and hope, about the Beverly Hills kibbutz in the Negev desert, about rabbis and marihuana pushers, about Hasidic Jews and those who have come to build a new country, about the Israel of Amos Oz and Etgar Keret, about Jews from Poland, Morocco, Romania, Yemen, Ukraine, Ethiopia, about this extraordinary, unique crucible of cultures, religions, epochs, customs. He writes about the original idea and about the land in which it is to be coined into reality.

Paweł Smoleński has the eye of the reporter, the mind of the scientist and the heart of the poet. This particular anatomy produces remarkable pieces which stand far beyond journalist writing (Etgar Keret)

**Paweł Smoleński** (b. 1959), reporter, political columnist, since 1993 a journalist working for the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza”, formerly contributor to underground publications. In October 2003 he was awarded the Polish-Ukrainian Reconciliation Award for “all his publications on Polish-Ukrainian relations, for the fact that they have worked towards this reconciliation. Smoleński has managed to show the harm done to both Poles and Ukrainians without flaring it up” (Marek Cynkar, chapter secretary).

The cruelty of dictatorship, the poverty of freedom, the arrogance of conquerors... All this and much more can be found in the dramatic stories Iraqis entrusted to Paweł Smoleński. This is not a book that contributes to the dispute on whether or not the military intervention in Iraq was justified. This is a book about the plight of a country and a people crushed by the wheels of History. Away from the maddening buzz of news reporting and war propaganda, we can hear and listen to Iraqi voices. And how varied they are. Nothing is simple or obvious here, especially for us, people from another world. Let us – no, we must – listen to these voices. (Artur Domosławski)

Paweł Smoleński’s book is an excellent example of literary reportage, ranking him among masters of the genre such as Pruszyński and Wańkowicz. Like all good literature, it is multidimensional. First and foremost a reportage about Iraq, the book is not merely a commentary on frontline events. The author sets himself to a much more ambitious task: he wants to understand a Muslim society, its culture, tradition and way of thinking. He follows the path followed by reporters since the times of Herodotus: he talks to people and narrates their stories. (Ryszard Kapuściński)

**Paweł Smoleński** (b. 1959), reporter, political columnist, since 1993 a journalist working for the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza”, formerly contributor to underground publications. In October 2003 he was awarded the Polish-Ukrainian Reconciliation Award for “all his publications on Polish-Ukrainian relations, for the fact that they have worked towards this reconciliation. Smoleński has managed to show the harm done to both Poles and Ukrainians without flaring it up” (Marek Cynkar, chapter secretary).
Krzysztof Varga, *Turul Goulash*

**Book details**
*Gulasz z turula*, essay
Czarne 2008, 196 pages
ISBN 978-83-7536-040-0

**Rights sold**
Bulgaria (FBL)
Czech Republic (Dokoran)
Hungary (Europa)
Russia (NLO)
Serbia (Rönet)
Slovakia (Kalligram)
Ukraine (ECEM Media)

**Prizes**
Nike Literary Prize 2009 – Readers’ Choice

A very personal collection of essays about past and contemporary Hungarian issues, as well as an attempt to unveil the author’s Magyar roots. Unpretentious, light and intelligent prose. (Dariusz Nowacki)

Krzysztof Varga (b. 1968), a writer, literary critic and journalist. He studied Polish language and literature at the University of Warsaw. His debut was *Chłopaki nie płaczą* (*Boys Don’t Cry*), a short novel about a group of friends in the early ’90s in Warsaw. Between 2002 and 2006 he worked as chief editor for culture in the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza”. His main books include the novels *Tequila* (Tequila), *Smiertelność (Mortality)*, *Nagrobek z lastryko (Terrazzo Tombstone)* and *Aleja Niepodległości (Independence Avenue)* as well as the non-fiction title *Gulasz z turula (Turul Goulash)*.

Krzysztof Varga, *Terrazzo Tombstone*

**Book details**
*Nagrobek z lastryko*, novel
Czarne 2007, 356 pages

**Rights sold**
Bulgaria (Paradox)
Hungary (Europa)

**Prizes**
Shortlisted for the Nike Literary Prize 2008
Longlisted for the Angelus Central European Literature Award 2009

Here is a book that describes our reality in its complexity, which shows its paradoxes, stigmatizes silly habits. The beauty and sadness of consumption, escape from death and fascination with it, the selfish urge to satisfy your own needs, and the desire to be part of social rituals. The need for love and for loneliness. Wobbly balance between death and decay and shiny perfumed magazines. Between objects – newer, better, more beautiful, more reliable, and the living organism – unreliable and painful.

Krzysztof Varga (b. 1968), a writer, literary critic and journalist. He studied Polish language and literature at the University of Warsaw. His debut was *Chłopaki nie płaczą (Boys Don’t Cry)*, a short novel about a group of friends in the early ’90s in Warsaw. Between 2002 and 2006 he worked as chief editor for culture in the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza”. His main books include the novels *Tequila* (Tequila), *Smiertelność (Mortality)*, *Nagrobek z lastryko (Terrazzo Tombstone)* and *Aleja Niepodległości (Independence Avenue)* as well as the non-fiction title *Gulasz z turula (Turul Goulash)*.
Krzysztof Środa
Travels to Armenia and Other Lands, with a Focus on Nature's Most Interesting Phenomena

Book details
Podróże do Armenii i innych krajów z uwzględnieniem najbardziej interesujących obserwacji przyrodniczych, novel
Czarne 2012, 160 pages

Rights available
World

Prizes
Longlisted for the Gdynia Literary Prize 2013

This book does not slot into any specific literary genre, but includes elements of several ones. It is at once a travelogue, a minor treatise on nature, a piece of reportage, and it comprises the beautifully presented confessions of a traveller, writer and human being who is interested in other people, in their life stories and the places where both those stories and those people originated.

Krzysztof Środa (b. 1959) is a writer, translator and a historian of philosophy. He has worked at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology within the Polish Academy of Sciences and has translated over a dozen books about philosophy and economics. His previous publications include An Unclear Situation on the Continent (2003) and A Plan for Trading in Kabardian Horses (2006), and he is a past winner of the Gdynia Literary Prize in the essay category.

Ewa Winnicka
Londoners

Book details
Londoners, reportage
Czarne 2013, 208 pages

Rights available
World

Prizes
Nominated for the Gryfia Prize 2012

In 2008 a young Italian artist found 3,000 black and white photographs on a dumping ground in Brixton. The technique in which the photographs were taken and the appearance of the persons depicted suggested they dated back to 1950s. Apart from official events, the photographs were of weddings, births, baptisms and amateur theatre performances. Having apparently no idea to what use to put them, the author simply got rid of this unusual collection of photographs.

The identity of the author and of the persons photographed was established by chance. The photographs were taken by Jan Markiewicz, one of the war émigrés associated with Władysław Anders, for whom there was no place in the new Poland. Several hundred persons were identified in the photographs: former ministers, generals and ordinary people doing ordinary tasks.

These unusual pictures are a starting point for a story about Polish emigrés.

Ewa Winnicka studied journalism and American studies at the Warsaw University. She has been associated with Władysław Anders, for whom there was no place in the new Poland. Several hundred persons were identified in the photographs: former ministers, generals and ordinary people doing ordinary tasks.

Angelika Kuźniak
Marlene

Book details
Marlene, biography
Czarne 2009, 208 pages

Rights sold
Lithuania (Gimtasis Zodis)

Almost eighteen months after the death of Marlene Dietrich, 25 tonnes of what used to be her personal belongings lands in Berlin: floor cloths, toilet paper, cigarette butts, but also exotic bird feathers smuggled across borders... There is also a notebook. Red and small – seven and a half by eleven and a half centimetres. On the last page it reads “Pologne, Poland”, followed by a list of several Polish names.

Angelika Kuźniak is a graduate of cultural studies at the European University in Frankfurt/Oder. She has contributed to the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza” since 2000. She has received the Grand Press award twice: in 2004 and in 2008. She worked with Włodzimierz Nowak on two texts about German-Polish relationships which appeared in Nowak’s book Circumference of the Head.

Dariusz Rosiak
A Man of Stamina.
The History of Father Romuald Jakub Weksler-Waszkinel

Book details
Człowiek o twardym karku. Historia księdza Romualda Jakuba Wekslera-Waszkinela, reportage
Czarne 2013, 208 pages

Rights available
World

He was ordained a Catholic priest in 1966. He was 35 years old, when his adopted mother told him he was a Jew, and it was the day when he was born for the second time.

This is an extraordinary story of a man with a double-barrelled name and a double identity rooted in two fatherlands, none of which is really his own.

It is a wise book on suffering, on pain and horrible wounds in the Jewish memory but also on the wounds in the Polish, Lithuanian, Russian and German memories and on the painful relations between Christians and Jews. A profound book on a tenacious search for one’s identity as formed and deformed by the tragic history of the 21st century. (Maciej Żęba O.P.)

Dariusz Rosiak (b. 1962) is a radio and press journalist, presenter on Polish Radio Channel 3 and contributor to the international reporting section of the Polish Radio. A contributor of many years to the daily “Rzeczpospolita”, today he works as a freelance journalist. He has published Oblicza Wielkiej Brytanii (The Faces of Great Britain, 2001), a fruit of his nine years’ work in Great Britain, and Żar. Oddech Afryki (Heat. A Breath of Africa, 2010), a collection of travel essays on African countries.
Igor T. Mieciłk

2.57 pm Train to Chita. Reportages about Russia

Book details
14:57 do Czyty: Reportże z Rosji, reportage
Czarne 2011, 162 pages

Rights available
World

Prizes
Shortlisted for the Kapuściński Award 2013

A passenger train takes five days to travel from Moscow to Chita and a whole week to the destination station of Vladivostok. This is the beginning of a journey that may provide a key to understanding the Russia of recent years.

2.57 pm Train to Chita is a collection of fascinating pieces of reportage on mothers of the Kursk sailors and par-ents of the children murdered in Bieslan, cadets of the Alexander the Third’s Imperial Corps in Novocherkassk, and tenants of a former Communist party-owned house on the banks of the Moscow River. This is the story of a country that never ceases to fascinate, surprise and amaze.

Igor T. Mieciłk is a reporter and journalist. He worked for the weekly “Polityka”, now he is a contributor to the “Newsweek”. 2.57 pm Train to Chita is his first book.

Katarzyna Kobylarczyk

Candy Dust. Spanish Fiestas

Book details
Pył z landynie. Hiszpanskie fiesty, reportage
Czarne 2013, 160 pages

Rights available
World

Candy Dust. Spanish Fiestas is a book about a country swept by Tramontane, the devilish wind from one of Márquez’s stories; a country where people have fun putting on fire polystyrene foam structures larger than houses and celebrate holidays by throwing candies, mud, dead rats and turnips at each other. It is an account of travelling to places where drummers bang so hard on their drums on Good Friday that their hands get bloody and where witches are exorcised using shots of warm liquor. It is also a collection of stories about bandits, butchers, kings and dancers from the forgotten towns of Castile-La Mancha, Andalusia, Extremadura and Catalonia. The book is the result of the author’s three years of life and travel in Spain and particularly her pursuit of Iberian fiestas.

Katarzyna Kobylarczyk (b. 1980), a reporter with the Alexander the Third’s Imperial Corps in Novocherkassk and girl students of St Mary’s Gymnasium in Krasnodar. She was a ground press, co-founder and publisher of the magazine “Czas Kultury”. Published originally in 1991, her book Anka Grupińska conducted in 1985–2000 with Jewish sol-diers: Marek Edelman, Samuel Ron, Marza Gliżman Putermilch, Pinia Grynszpan Frymer, Aron Karmim, Luba Gawisar, Adina Blad Szważigier, Halina (Chajka) Belchatowska, Broniek Szpigiel and Kazik Ratażer. It is an exceptional record of oral history from the times of the Holocaust.

Anka Grupińska, Always Circling Around.
Interviews with the Soldiers of the Warsaw Ghetto

Book details
Cięgle po kole. Rozmowy z żołnierzami getta warszawskiego, reportage
Czarne 2013, 296 pages

Rights available
World


Anka Grupińska is a writer, journalist, reporter, co-au-thor of exhibitions and author and coordinator of oral history projects. She was a contributor to the underground press, co-founder and publisher of the magazine “Czas Kultury”. Published originally in 1991, her book Po kole. Rozmowy z żydowskimi żołnierzami was re-published in 2000 under the new title Cięgle po kole. Rozmowy z żołnierzami getta warszawskiego. Her other books include Najtrudniej jest spotkać Lilit. Opowieści chasydzkich kobiet (Lilit is the One Hardest to Find. Sto ries from Hasidic Women), Odczytanie listy. Opowieści o powstaniach żydowskich (Roll Call. Stories of Jewish Insurgents) and Buntownicy Polskie lata 70. i 80. (Re-bels. The Polish 1970s and 1980s).

Jacek Hugo-Bader

Among the Weeds in the Vale of Paradise

Book details
W małej dolinie wśród zielenki, reportage
Czarne 2001 (2nd edition), 400 pages
with 84 photographs

Rights available
World

Reportage pieces from Russia from the years 1993–2001.

The vale of paradise is the former Soviet Union which Bader’s protagonists recall as a land of bounty and beau-ty. A virtual bounty and sham beauty they were, but the nostalgia remains and it crawls out of all crevices in the provincial concrete blocks of flats and the fancy brick houses in a town for astronauts near Moscow. “The Rus-sian soul is like a sponge, even when he is cheerful, his musele looks desperately sad”, writes the author. His images of the former empire are so vivid that one can nearly smell the smoke of cheap Bielomory cigarettes which caused the death from cancer of two husbands of Sofia Pietrowna from Vorkuta. (Anna Zebrowska)
Katarzyna Surmiak-Domańska
Marshlet

Pawel Smoleński
Burial for the Rezun

Wojciech Górecki,
A Toast to the Ancestors

Wojciech Górecki,
Planet Caucasus

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I am proud to have invented the title of this book. This is the kind of reportage I have been waiting for years. It is an excellent contemporary documentary fiction about the hidden face of a so-called normal Polish family. “Aren’t you interested in finding out the truth?” asks the journalist. “And where will you find that truth?” she hears in response. I believe this sentence reflects the existential situation of the people portrayed in Marshlet – and not only theirs. (Mariusz Szczygieł)

Katarzyna Surmiak-Domańska (b. 1967), a graduate in French studies, is a reporter with the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza”. The people she has written about include a Polish Army officer who is a transvestite, the man who killed his transsexual parents, the activists of the prostitutes’ trade union, doctors performing euthanasia. “And where will you find that truth?” she hears in response. I believe this sentence reflects the existential situation of the people portrayed in Marshlet – and not only theirs. (Mariusz Szczygieł)

Pawel Smoleński (b. 1959), reporter, political columnist, since 1993 a journalist working for the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza”, formerly contributor to underground publications. In October 2003 he was awarded the Polish-Ukrainian Reconciliation Award for “all his publications on Polish-Ukrainian relations, for the fact that they have worked towards this reconciliation. Smoleński has managed to show the harm done to both Poles and Ukrainians without flaring it up” (Marek Cynkar, chapter secretary).

Wojciech Górecki (b. 1970), graduated in history and journalism. He has written for various Polish magazines and newspapers. An expert at the Centre for Eastern Studies. He has combined his expert knowledge with a reporter’s talent to create a book which it is hard to put down. (Masia Przelomiec)

Wojciech Górecki (b. 1970), graduated in history and journalism. He has written for various Polish magazines and newspapers. An expert at the Centre for Eastern Studies, he spent the years 2002-2007 working at the Polish embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan. Author of The Planet Caucasus (2002), published in Italy as Pianeta Caucaso by Bruno Mondadori, and La terra del vello d’oro. Viaggio in Georgia (2009). He was member of the EU team of experts examining the 2008 war in Georgia.

Wojciech Górecki has written a great book. His passion, effort, determination and knowledge has resulted in one of the most valuable publications among the young generation of Polish reportage writers. (Ryszard Kapuściński on the first edition of the book)

Prizes
Shortlisted for the Nike Literary Award 2013

Time has stopped here. Time is a motionless, dead fossil. Somewhere out there the world is moving forward, destroying the things past, creating each day new shapes and acquiring new colours, forms and meanings. Yet the way in which our planet keeps on reinventing itself has no influence whatsoever on the people featured in Smoleński’s book: it does not shake them awake or encourage self-reflection. The world so penetratingly described by the author does not move forward but stays on the same orbit, spinning around the axis of mutual prejudices, resentments and virulent anger. (From the Foreword by Ryszard Kapuściński)

Few are the books that grapple with the Gordian knot of Polish-Ukrainian relations, and of post-war Poland, with such moral purity and journalistic diligence. Or is it only Poland? No, the book is about all the places in the world where neighbours make life a hell on earth to each other. (Adam Szostkiewicz)

How do you combine the wish to join NATO with the belief that Stalin and Jesus Christ were the most influential personalities in the history of the world? How did Poles build the oil power of Azerbaijan? Why did the Soviets invent South Ossetia and why did the war in Georgia break out? Last but not least, does South Caucasus with the two oldest Christian countries Armenia and Georgia lie in Europe or in Asia? These are only a few of the questions which Wojciech Górecki tries to answer in his new book. He has travelled through Caucasus for many years as an expert of the Centre for Eastern Studies. He has combined his expert knowledge with a reporter’s talent to create a book which it is hard to put down. (Masia Przelomiec)

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Prizes
Giuseppe Mazzotti Award 2007

Rights sold
Georgia (Kaukaski Dom)

Rights previously sold to:
Italy (Bruno Mondadori)

Rights available
World

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Prizes
Shortlisted for the Nike Literary Award 2013

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20 Years of New Poland in Reportage

Writing ed. Mariusz Szczygieł

Book details
20 lat nowej Polski w reportażach, reportage
Czarne 2009, 472 pages
ISBN 978-83-7536-143-8

Rights sold
Slovakia (Premedia)

A personal selection of texts about where New Poland began and where it is now. Not the Poland seen in newspapers or on TV, but that which had to redefine its mentality overnight. (Mariusz Szczygieł)

Authors include: Irena Morawska, Joanna Sokolińska, Stanisław Łubieński, Karol Podgórski, Włodzimierz Nowak, Wojciech Tochman, and Mariusz Szczygieł

The Pirate of the Steppe

Stanisław Łubieński
The Pirate of the Steppe

Book details
Pirat stepowy, reportage
Czarne 2012, 140 pages

Rights sold
Croatia (DaF)

He was sickly and small, and was said to resemble a child or an ugly woman. He was born a free man although his father had been a serf. During his christening ceremony, the Orthodox priest’s robe caught fire from the candle. The inhabitants of the steppe town of Huliai-pole took this as an omen that the Antichrist had been born. He joined anarchists at an early stage of his life. He would rob and kill the rich on behalf of poor peasants and exploited labourers. Imprisoned, he was lucky to escape the gallows as the revolution broke out. Peasants thought he was a successor to Cossack atamans; they believed that he would chase away the landlords and grant them land and freedom.

Nestor Makhno, known as “Bat’ka” (Father), commanded an army of thousands upon thousands of soldiers who did not respect any authority and forcefully defended the territory inhabited by two and a half million people. He used to say: fight the Reds until they are white, fight the Whites until they are red. The black banners of Makhno’s army bore the inscription: Freedom or Death.

Stanisław Łubieński (b. 1983) is a graduate in cultural and Ukrainian studies at the Warsaw University. A contributor to different newspapers and magazines, he is also a co-author of a series of films about the life of migrants in Warsaw. His hobby is ornithology. He lives in Warsaw.

The Heart of the Nation at the Bus-Stop

Włodzimierz Nowak
The Heart of the Nation at the Bus-Stop

Book details
Serce narodu koło przystanku reportage
Czarne 2009, 256 pages

Rights available
World

A book about a Poland which has been forgotten, pushed to the margin of the developing capitalism. The pieces which make up this collection come from the years 1998–2009. They deal with the most urgent issues: collapsing state farms, coalmines which are being closed down, and the consequences of EU accession. Nowak writes about front-page topics such as teenage suicides or the conflict between the city of Oświęcim and Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, but he also visits these and other places when the cameras have gone and the media noise subsides.

Włodzimierz Nowak tries to find places where the “heart of the nation” beats. He meets ordinary, average people and from their everyday lives and seemingly trivial events he creates the great history of the last decade with great talent. It’s worth travelling with Nowak, and obligato to read him. (Teresa Torańska)

Lautzimierz Nowak (b. 1958) has been a reporter for the “Gazeta Wyborcza” daily for 14 years. Co-author of several collections of reportage writing. His texts were included in a Swedish anthology of Polish reportage writing (Ouvertyr till livet, Brombergs 2003), as well as French (La vie est reportage, Noir sur Blanc 2005) and German anthologies (Von Minsk nach Manhattan, Zsolnay 2006). Winner of several prizes for his reportage writings.

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Robert Makłowicz, 
*Café Museum*

**Book details**
*Café Museum*, essay
Czarne 2010, 184 pages

**Rights sold**
Czech Republic (Dokoran)
Hungary (Europa)

When I was reading this book, a constant feeling of hunger accompanied me; physical hunger caused by the incredible descriptions of food, but also a hunger for knowledge about the world which Makłowicz so vividly describes. I wanted to devour all those dishes, described with such love and connoisseurship, then drink everything accompanying those dishes, and even more - jump in my car and drive to all those places Makłowicz enumerates in his book. But this is not a cook book nor a travelogue, this is a book about nations, communities and their cultures. True, Café Museum is about hunger and thirst, but above all it is a journey to the mysterious land of Mitteleuropa, more complex and extraordinary than all the lands ever imagined. And one where we, Central Europeans, originate. Because, in fact, true Poles, Slovaks or Hungarians do not exist, not to mention the Austrians. There are only true Central Europeans. Like Robert Makłowicz. (Krzysztof Varga)

Robert Makłowicz (b. 1963), journalist, writer, culinary critic and traveller. For a decade he hosted a TV programme about culinary voyages. An expert on Central European cuisine. Author of seven culinary and cook books.

Wojciech Nowicki, 
*Bottom of the Eye*

**Book details**
*Dno oka*, essays
Czarne 2010, 184 pages, with colour photographs
ISBN 978-83-7536-183-4

**Rights available**
World

Wojciech Nowicki regards photographs tenderly and tries to understand them. He knows a lot about photography, but he experiences even more. This subtle tension between erudition and sudden sensuality has created one of the best Polish books on photography. (Michał Paweł Markowski)

This book was written not by some intellectual who became interested in photography and dissects his new hobby using academic tools. Wojciech Nowicki writes about specific photographs as if from the inside, in a way peculiar to each of them. He understands how these photographs work and how they are constructed [...] This is not a common approach. A great book. (Kuba Dąbrowski)

Wojciech Nowicki (b. 1968) works as a journalist, translator, curator and photographer. He also runs the culinary reviews column in the Cracow edition of the daily “Gazeta Wyborcza”. Co-founder of the Imago Mundi Foundation devoted to promoting photography, member of the programme board of the Cracow Photomonth.