



Cohen & Shiloh Literary Agency

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P.O.Box 10054, Tel Aviv 6110001, Israel

Tel: +97236490811

www.cohen-shiloh-agency.com

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Orly Castel-Bloom

One of the leading voices in contemporary Israeli writing, Orly Castel-Bloom is a celebrated Israeli novelist, feted for her unique post-modern prose.

After studying Film at the Beit Zvi Institute and Tel Aviv University, Castel-Bloom published her first collection of stories in 1987 to critical acclaim and has been a leading voice in Hebrew literature ever since. Castel-Bloom's work has been translated into 14 languages, her creative output encompassing novels, short story collections, and a children's book.

Her numerous awards and accolades include the Tel Aviv Foundation Prize (1990), the Alterman Prize for Innovation (1993), The Neuman Prize (2003), the French WIZO Prize (2005), the Lea Goldberg Prize (2007), and the Rishon Le Zion Prize for Creativity in the Hebrew Language (2016). *An Egyptian Novel* was awarded the Sapir Prize—Israel's premier prize for fiction—in 2015. The jury's citation noted that "in this story, [Castel-Bloom] broadens the canvas of Hebrew literature, in a unique manner setting out a decidedly Israeli story, one which has never been told before." *Biotope*, her most recent novel, has been shortlisted for the 2024 Sapir Prize.

Castel-Bloom has taught at Harvard, UCLA, UC Berkeley, NYU, Oxford, and Cambridge. Presently, she teaches creative writing at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design.

Two unforgettable masterpieces by the groundbreaking author Orly Castel-Bloom: From the futuristic, fantastical Tel Aviv in *Dolly City* to meticulous realistic descriptions of the city in *Biotope*!

Biotope

Novel

Publisher: Hakibbutz Hameuchad/Siman Kriah

Year: 2022

233 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations: Complete French translation by Rosie Pinhas Delpuech, Partial English translation by Jessica Cohen International Man Booker winner

Books in translation: French: Actes Sud, Arles

Joseph Schimmel ought to have been a world-class expert in gastronomy in the work of Honoré de Balzac. But after failing to complete his doctoral dissertation, and being fired from his position in the Department of French Studies at Tel Aviv University, he finds himself almost destitute in his sooty Tel Aviv apartment. He makes a meager living from translations for new immigrants from France—clients of Sophie Ha-Ezrachi, a shrewd albino lawyer who built an empire on the backs of Jewish families seeking to settle in the Holy Land. Sophie, who only works at night to protect her skin from the cruel rays of the sun, sends Joseph in her place to meet her clients.

But the cruel rays of the sun are not the only risk for Joseph. One day, once again waiting at the airport for one of Sophie's families, Joseph meets a charming but shady businessman, who turns his world upside down. Joseph Schimmel follows the man—who lost his entire family in the Park Hotel terrorist attack—into an unavoidable collapse.

Biotope is an eco-urban novel that wends its way through the streets of a central Tel Aviv neighborhood. With sharp observations and the precision of a surgeon's scalpel, Castel-Blum analyses the lives of the homeless, the drug addicts, and the permanent residents populating the neighbourhood. The soot of the buses, the unfinished road works, and the daily bustle take on an original and new dimension in her prose.

Orly Castel-Bloom, one of Israel's leading writers, has already taken her place of honor in the canon of Hebrew literature, and is highly regarded around the world. Once again, she demonstrates her mastery of the Hebrew language with her unique inventive style, in a sweeping and brilliant novel that raises topical issues of loneliness, bereavement and morality.

Critical Praise

I read this book a few days after the recent Israel elections, and *Biotope* is a commentary on the outcome. The novel is about owning a home, exploring what it means to “own a home”—a central issue for the Right-wing parties during the election campaign. At the current time, at least, the book takes on an acutely political, even urgent character.

But this is still Orly Castel-Bloom, defiantly rejecting the didactic role of political or social commentator. One shouldn't expect ordered analysis or feigned seriousness from her. Her writing is unruly, precise in its perspective—and also very funny. She wilfully muddles the subjects being addressed, until it becomes impossible to distinguish one from the other. In essence, one cannot mistake her rhetoric...

As we know, a biotope is a space possessing distinct ecological conditions. Because it is limited, it can also be explored... The eponymous biotope of this novel is a specific area—and domain—in the center of Tel Aviv... a tiny, fascinating ecosphere...

Without quite meaning to do so, Castel-Bloom has written an extremely political novel... but *Biotope* is not a melancholic story; it is steeped in empathy, with kindness and humor. It engages with the Israeli obsession with real estate (and real estate prices). In our political climate, it's better to think about this phenomenon through Castel-Bloom's words than through the politicians' speeches or angry op-eds. Her brilliant new novel offers deeper insights than either of them.

Omri Herzog, *Haaretz*

A new book by Orly Castel-Bloom is cause for celebration. In *Biotope*, she scrutinizes, close-up, the Tel Aviv scene (not disconnected at all from what we describe as “the Israeli Experience”). The subject here is home, property, real estate—but also their complete lack: what it means to have a home, in the broadest sense of the word, as against what it means to not have a home, also in the broadest sense... Castel-Bloom's writing, funny and smart and rich with irony as always, portrays a variety of extremely “Israeli” types...[*Biotope*] provides a lucid account, granular in its detail, of what we do here.

Shiri Lev-Ari, *Calcalist*

Joseph Schimmel—Francophile and loser, fired from his job as an adjunct lecturer in the university's failing Department of French Culture—is gradually shutting himself off from the world in his real estate achievement: an apartment in the heart of Tel Aviv slap-bang in the middle of an eternal traffic jam. Here he lives, protected by his precious belongings from the sights and smells of the polluted city.

Schimmel's sole self-imposed task is “to live” with responsibility for the maintenance of the house, and all the contents of the house, which happen to include him. For Schimmel, home is the essence of existence: “What you have in life is what you have at home, the parking lot included.”

Biotope is a brilliant anatomy of the absurdities of “real estate identity,” a distinctly Israeli phenomenon vividly depicted here in the nuanced tones of Castel-Bloom's poetics. Schimmel, who only leaves his

apartment for essential tasks and to walk his adopted sort-of-dachshund, never strays further than nearby London Ministore shopping mall. Still, the countless colorful homeless people that he encounters—the richness of their character sketches a highlight of this book—are more than enough to feed his pedantic observations.

These homeless people, carrying with them mere fragments of a home—all that they own, in fact—become the pinnacle of real estate identity, precisely because they are constantly preoccupied with its negation. Ostensibly opposed to Schimmel, closer inspection suggests that they may in fact be a collection of his metaphors.

All these people enslaved by their properties (or lack thereof)—together with the tenants of the two nearby luxury blocks, who too reveal their own “tower” mentality – allow Castel-Bloom to document a series of clichés depicting the Tel Avivian “biotope”. But the meticulous realism of Castel-Bloom’s descriptions are accompanied by a wink of cheerful and surprising surrealism.

The book’s plot picks up when Schimmel begins to venture further afield, to acclimatize new immigrants from France to Israel; then shifts another gear when his Francophile identity merges with his identity as a landlord, Schimmel inheriting a house in Normandy. His life is soon overtaken by an extraordinary drama of deceptions, deriving from a political climate that gradually expropriates his assets, leaving him unable to connect to himself anymore.

But by the end, the incompetent anti-hero of Biotope has become an awe-inspiring character, his vicissitudes touching our hearts. And thanks to him, too, the novel joins the first rank of Castel-Bloom’s unforgettable fiction output.

From the back cover: Prof. Menakhem Perry



Dolly City

Novel

Publisher: The New Library

Year: 2007

123 pp.

The novel was published in translation in 9 languages
Translations: English, French, German, Italian translations
and more are available. For details please contact us
Russian: Moscow, Knizhniki, forthcoming

Dolly City is one of the greatest novels in modern Hebrew Literature. A bright, witty novel, which mercilessly deconstructs clichés of motherhood and Israeli culture. The Israeli mother, the Jewish mother, and the relationship with the Land of Israel are all molded together into an empowering, funny, and hauntingly pervasive image.

Dolly, an Israeli doctor trained in Katmandu who lives in the dystopian Dolly City, finds an abandoned baby lying injured in a trash bag as she goes to bury her dog. Tending to his wounds and taking him into her home, she embarks on a deranged, anxiety-ridden journey of motherhood, as she constantly tries to repair and prevent invisible ailments and defects in her son’s body.

First published in 1992, *Dolly City* quickly became a landmark of Israeli literature. The novel has been included in the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works; it was nominated in 2007 as one of the ten most important books published since the creation of the State of Israel, and in 2013 was named by Tablet magazine as one of the 101 Great Jewish Books in English translation.

Critical Praise

Dolly City is one of the best, most important works in the New Hebrew Literature. Here is the Tel Aviv of our most nightmarish fantasy, now so much more similar to the view from our windows. Here is the deconstructed myth of motherhood, redesigned and put under the most intelligent microscope to ever examine it. Here is the ultimate connection between a mother's love and love for the motherland, when Dr. Dolly traces the map of Israel on her son's body, because *we need to cut the flesh*: all the anxieties, all the strength of the emotional vortex we call 'love' is here, with a particularly high dosage of inventive language and visuals.

Ariana Melamed, Haaretz

[Castel-Bloom] takes all the fears and aggression of one of the most violent regions on this blue planet, wraps it up in an incredible and unique imaginative plot—in which the protagonist, a sadistic woman who conducts heartless experiments on animals in her home laboratory, finds and saves an infant who becomes the object of her obsession—and the result is literally breathtaking...Castel-Bloom's protagonist is competent and murderously ambitious...With every passing year, it seems the distance between the crazy grotesquerie presented in the book and the harsh reality in which we live is getting shorter and shorter.

Etgar Keret, Tablet

In the days when the word "motherhood" had an aura of sanctity in Hebrew, and every mother was required to report immediately after giving birth a sense of personal fulfillment and unconditional love, Orli Castel Bloom dared to do the unbelievable and write about the abysmal anxiety that accompanies parenthood, about the fine line between sanity and madness this anxiety leads to, and even about the harm we cause our children through seemingly innocent means such as devotion, ideology, and vision. Through the (seemingly) hallucinatory story of Dolly, who adopts a baby she found in a trash bag and devotes herself to his unceasing medical care, Castel-Bloom also touches on the Holocaust, the IDF, Israeli masculinity, Tel Aviv, women, and the stories of the Bible.

Dafna Levi, Israel Hayom

Kafka in Tel Aviv... From the first page, *Dolly City* establishes itself as a major text, an enterprise of systematic irregularity. It challenges one's senses and one's values, its sharp images putting one's nerves to the test. (*Le Monde*)

Castel-Bloom's style... reminds us alternately of Hunter Thompson's new journalism, the hyperboles of Babel, and the fantastic style of Bulgakov. To use a more contemporary jargon: a mixture of punk, rap, and house... The author's professionalism ensures that it does not derail into a stylistic hodgepodge but evolves into a new and fascinating form which proves that literature as a metaphor of life is very much alive.

NRC Handelsblad (Holland)



Yoram Rosner

Born in Israel (1961), Yoram Rosner practiced electrical engineering until discovering that he was more interested in people than electrons. He turned his professional life around, running a well-known user experience design agency while writing novellas and novels. *Weltmeister* is his first published work.

Weltmeister

Novel

Publisher: Kinneret, Zmorah-Bitan, Dvir

Year: 2023

382 pp.

Translation rights: World

Translations: Partial English translation in progress

Climate change sparks a catastrophic heat wave in Israel, fostering political and social unrest in numerous cut-off towns.

Fires engulf the small town where young professor Dan Gidron lives with his wife, Eleanor. Dan is a stern man of few words, the son of a war hero (or, as some would say, war criminal), and Eleanor is a sharp-witted TV personality. Trapped with them in the same house is Dan's assistant, a gentle young man who is hopelessly in love with Eleanor.

As flames approach the town's houses, the terrified residents split into two camps: those who demand to be evacuated and those who are determined to stay. Dan hopes to unite everyone under his leadership but is challenged by a charismatic and violent resident. This thug humiliates him in public and takes over the town with the aggression, divisiveness, and incitement that only utter chaos can cause.

Dan's facade of masculinity cracks when confronted with this blatant cruelty, while his indecisive assistant gets the chance to be a hero in his own right.

Critical Praise

In his debut novel, Yoram Rosner succeeds in describing the protagonists' sense of helplessness, the collapse of the social order, the point when the intense heat outside starts to seep in - and leads to a complete fusion between reality and delusion. And as the temperatures rise, the writing itself becomes wild, sometimes grotesque... Through these three representations of masculinity raise a discussion on the question of "toxic masculinity" and the toll it takes, both on the environment and on the men themselves... This is a mature and powerful book, which combines concrete descriptions with episodes of stream of consciousness and a unique use of language. The intense emotional impression it leaves, and the dilemmas it raises, are expected to accompany the readers for a long time

Eyal Hayut-Mann, Israel Hayom

Rosner's novel is on fire, and the reader, mesmerized by the fire, unwittingly gets closer to it with every page he turns in this exciting book.

From the back cover: Oded Volkstein

Like a self-fulfilling prophecy, Yoram Rosner describes in an original and surprising new novel how a calm situation transforms in an instant and burns everything, and how out of a heated climate arise tyrannical leaders... The climate change is present in the book. Everyone sweats all the time, and the air conditioners and fans don't always help. In such an extreme situation, extreme phenomena also develop...Another central theme in Rosner's novel is masculinity. There are three types of masculinity here: on one end of the scale the bookish student Asaf, out of a job and single; at the other end the emotionally disabled, serious professor, while the one who breaks the scale is the masculine and violent Stud. Only towards the end of the novel is it possible to understand who the "real" man actually is.

Shiri Lev-Ari, Calcalist



Shachar Magen

Shachar Magen is an Israeli author, screenwriter, and director. After graduating from the Tel Aviv University School of Film and Television, he worked as the editor of Ynet's culture section. His first novel, *Black Slaughter*, was published in 2006 and nominated for the prestigious Sapir Prize. He is the director of the documentary films *The Mother of the Gevatron*, *Life Stories*, and *Strange Death*. Magen is the creator and main screenwriter of the drama series *Exposes* and *The Prime Minister's Children*, and a screenwriter for Hagai Levy's series *The Accursed*.

In 2014, Magen's *Sirens*, a three-season thriller, was released. In 2020, his series *The Possessions*, a French-Israeli collaboration, was first aired on Canal Plus and Yes TV. The series was co-written with Valeire Zanatti, directed by BAFTA-nominated Thomas Vincent (*Bodyguard*), and shot in French, Hebrew, and English. It was dubbed best TV series by Syndicat Francais in 2020 and aired on HBO Max. Magen's second novel, *Land of the Monasteries*, was published in 2023 and is currently being adapted into a television series.

Land of the Monasteries

Novel

Publisher: Achuzat Bayit

Year: 2023

333 pp.

Translations: Partial English translation available

Adaptation into a TV series: to be screened in Fall 2024 - a Hot and Paramount co-production

In a quiet town by the Dead Sea, a man dies in a seemingly accidental mine explosion. But when similar deaths accumulate, Tze'ella, a local woman, concludes that they cannot be coincidental.

Tze'ella is a forty-six-year-old single woman living in the town. She becomes increasingly enmeshed in her own private investigation and develops a wild theory that loneliness caused the deaths, until she herself disappears.

Tze'ella's sister, Netta, is determined to find her. The deputy commander at a women's prison, a city dweller, and a mother of two, she is the opposite of Tze'ella's dreamy reclusiveness. The more pragmatic sister, she has her own ideas about what is at the heart of the mystery. But the more Netta learns about the life led by her missing sister and the strange practices of her hometown, the more menacing it becomes.

Set in the mysterious Land of the Monasteries, where the Bible says the prophet Elijah ascended to heaven and John baptized Jesus, the novel is an exploration of loneliness—a taboo in contemporary Israeli society. Through suspenseful storytelling, loneliness emerges as a rich and even beautiful feeling that operates powerfully in the relationship of the two sisters.

Critical Praise

An E-vrit website bestseller

The stirring, powerful ending of *The Land of the Monasteries* is a literary achievement . . . an unexpected and even outrageous ending—yet it leaves you with the feeling the story could not have ended otherwise . . . an unforgettable peak.

Omri Herzog, Haaretz

A sophisticated literary creation and the ability to handle a thick web of characters, giving each one its unique and complex role in the story.

Ron Dahan, Yedioth Aharonoth

This is a very intelligent book, moving and readable . . . it deserves be longlisted and shortlisted for literary prizes.

Udi Ben Saadya, Walla

With his stirring and thought-provoking writing, Magen takes the reader into mystery that becomes gradually resolved—or entangled.

Smadar Shiloni, Ynet

A delightful suspense book that is also a philosophical meditation.

Maya Levin, LaIsha



Galit Dahan Carlibach

Galit Dahan Carlibach was born and raised in Sderot, Ashdod, and Jerusalem. She has published three novels and two YA books. Her poems and stories are regularly published in local and international journals. Her literary achievements have been highly praised over the years: the ACUM Prize 2013, the Prime Minister Prize for Hebrew Writers 2014, a scholarship for the International Writing Program in Shanghai, the Fulbright Foundation Scholarship for the International Program in Iowa, and the Pardes Scholarship by the Israeli National Library for Young Writers. Her book *The End of Alice* (Zmora Bitan) was longlisted for the 2017 Sapir Prize.

Under the Sign of Orphan

Novel

Publisher: Achuzat Bayit

Year: 2023

258 pp.

Translation Rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

German rights sold (Kein und Aber, Zurich, forthcoming)

Translations: Partial English and long synopsis available

Under the Sign of Orphan is about a redheaded girl and a mysterious crime. It tells the story of Avital Ohayon, an orphan with a love of books — particularly books about orphaned boys and girls. Avital was raised by hard-up and hard-hearted grandparents in Lifta, a quaint Arab village on the outskirts of Jerusalem. She drifts through Jerusalem's streets and its social margins and wanders from the lights of the city center through slums and unsavory jobs into an abbey in the Old City. Avital, a redhead whose beauty captivates men, searches constantly for the father she never knew. When a former Mossad agent, Ahituv Porat, suddenly takes her under his wing, Avital's life seems about to change, and — just like in the stories she loves to read — she stands on the verge of discovering her father's identity.

But life in Jerusalem in the early 2000s refuses to resemble a glittering myth. Despite the luxury and the security that Ahituv showers on Avital as she becomes part of his family, his motivations are mysterious and his reason for taking an interest in her remains a mystery. Ahituv's family is powerful and established, the offspring of Israel's heroes and titans: the kind of family Avital wishes she had. But the primal crime — linked to questions surrounding Avital's birth and her mother — comes to the surface, changes the balance of power, and reveals the Porat family's true face. Where will Avital's destiny lead her next?

Avital is an unforgettable heroine. The tale of her life, from her birth to her emergence as a woman, reminds us of the famous orphans of classic literature. The plot swivels repeatedly: We worry for the heroine while also admiring her strength, and we hope that the unprincipled and hypocritical characters will be punished. Dahan Carlibach's writing is bold, shifting between wild imagination and sharp cinematic insights into reality. Avital's engrossing story sinks deep into our hearts; with each sentence we sense her pain. This is a suspenseful, heartbreaking, and romantic book that is impossible to put down.

Critical Praise

Orphanhood is a recurring theme in Galit Dahan Carlibach's books. The fact that in this novel she again succeeds in saying something new about it proves that she is a gifted writer.

Tamar Mishmar, Yedioth Ahronoth

A novel full of twists, with a mystery at its center solved in unexpected fashion... Dahan Carlibach has written a riotous and unpredictable novel.

Omri Hertzog, Haaretz

A well-written novel with a truly brilliant, rich, and authentically portrayed world... highly recommended

Yaron Avituv, Makor Rishon

Her best book, starting 2023 with this book was an unsettling experience for me... a must-read, the writing is singular.

Shay Amit, Channel 14

It is such a pleasure to read a book so intricately made, where each particle connects to another in the bigger picture... add to that a suspenseful plot and you have Galit Dahan Carlibach's new novel.

Maya Mizrahi, Epoch

It's poignant, it's gloriously beautiful, and I wholeheartedly recommend it.

Iris Ganor, Blogger



It's Me, Iowa

Novel

Publisher: Graff

Year: 2018

126 pp.

Rights Available: World

Audio Visual Rights Available: World

Translations available: Complete English translation by Yardenne Greenspan

"The first encounter with the jet-lagged writers resembled a formal visit to the UN. Each said their name and waved their country's flag. I shared unsure handshakes with Macedonia, Tibet, Malasia and Japan. Exchanged a polite nod with Iran, Egypt, and Palestine. I hugged Poland, Australia, and Sweden.

Thirty countries come together in the international program for writers. I look around and try to guess with which of them Israel can bond, where should I build an embassy? With whom will a diplomatic crisis ensue? And what will the denunciation message read?"

The writer Galit Dahan Carlibach was selected for the prestigious international writing program in Iowa, USA. She went there representing herself, but is anything personal – and not political – when you are Israeli? From this estranging experience came *It's Me, Iowa* – a poetic treatise, centered on a great love story in a faraway pastoral setting.

Critical Praise

Galit Dahan Carlbach's excellent book *It's Me, Iowa* brings forth a surprising plot - but not with too many twists and turns - and manages to visit topics such as abortion, Trump, and feminism with a pleasant sharpness.

Aviad Hominer, Makor Rishon

A very dark comedy taking wild fictional liberties in Philip Roth fashion... From the beginning, Dahan Carlbach's alter ego has irreverent fun with the political pecking order at the program.

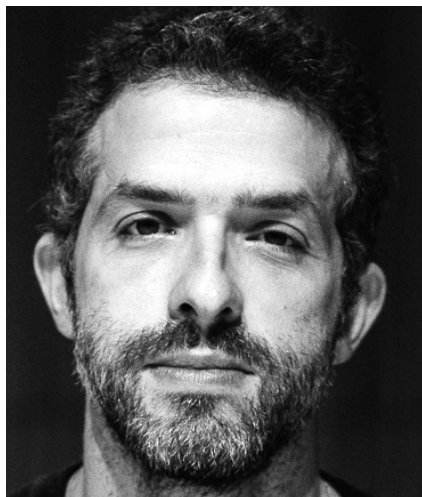
Michael Weingrad, Jewish Review of Books

The story takes us far away to the cornfields of the United States, only to shine a searing spotlight on the Israeli reality in which the personal and the public are always comingled.

Haaretz

There is no trace of tone-deafness in the note of self-deprecation that she strikes, in the rhythm she sets of losing herself in a compulsive process of obsession with an unattainable man. Her story is captivating and convincing.

Talma Admon, Ma'ariv



Omer Meir Wellber

Omer Meir Wellber (b. 1981) is one of Israel's leading conductors of operatic and orchestral repertoire. Music Director of the Teatro Massimo Palermo and Artistic Director of the Toscanini Festival, he has since 2009 served as Music Director of Israel's Ra'anana Symphonette Orchestra. Wellber is also the incoming Music Director of the Volksoper Wien. He has worked with some of the world's most prestigious orchestras and is a regular guest conductor at the Israeli Opera.

A long-standing association with the Semperoper Dresden culminated in Wellber's appointment as Principal Guest Conductor between 2018 and 2022. Chief Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic between 2019 and 2022, Wellber gave his inaugural concert at the BBC Proms in July 2019. Other career highlights include serving as Music Director at the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia between 2010 and 2014, and assisting Daniel Barenboim at the Berliner Staatsoper Unter den Linden and Milan's Teatro alla Scala between 2008 and 2010.

Wellber is a Goodwill Ambassador for Save a Child's Heart, an Israeli-based NGO that provides critical cardiac medical support. He works with various institutions on a range of music outreach programs and is a passionate champion of the emerging generation of Israeli conductors.

The Absences of Haim Birkner (Die vier Ohnmachten des Chaim Birkner), Wellber's first novel, was published by Germany's Berlin Verlag in 2019, and by Sellerio Editore in Italy in 2021 (Storia vera e non vera di Chaim Birker). The French translation has been published in September 2022 by Éditions du Sous-Sol/Le Seuil. *Die Angst, das Risiko und die Liebe - Momente mit Mozart*, which explores the emotional context of the three Mozart/Da Ponte operas, was published in Germany in the spring of 2017.

Forgiving Cain

Novel

Publisher: Keren

Year: Forthcoming

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

In a closed Soviet town in the late 1980s, two classmates play a cruel game that ends in disaster when one of them, who is disabled, falls into a freezing river and dies. When knowledge of the gruesome event reaches his townsfolk, the life of the killing boy, Arthur, is changed forever. He is sent to a corrective facility and two years later his family is forced to leave the country. They decide to immigrate to Israel, where Arthur becomes a famous actor in Tel Aviv but suffers from violent rages that he is unable to control.

Many years later, the mother of the dead boy contacts Arthur with a terrible request of her own while he is rehearsing for his biggest role in Theatre as Richard III. Now his life reconverges, and he must make a harrowing choice on his way to forgiveness.

Another boy, Dima, from the same town, grew up with the story of the disaster in the river. His family immigrates to Israel, and he becomes an Orthodox Jew in Jerusalem. An unplanned meeting with Arthur pushes him towards forgiveness, as he marries the disabled granddaughter of a powerful rabbi. Can the past forgive the present?



Michal Ben-Naftali

A renowned awarded writer, outstanding scholar, translator, essayist, and literary editor, Michal Ben-Naftali was born in Tel Aviv in 1963. She studied history and philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and received her PhD in contemporary French philosophy from the University of Oxford.

Between 2006 and 2014, Ben-Naftali edited “The French” series for Hakibbutz Hameuchad publishing house, and presently edits a contemporary Israeli literature series for Afik Publishing. She also teaches literature and creative writing, at Tel Aviv University and Ben-Gurion University.

Ben-Naftali has published novella collections, memoirs, a novel, short stories, and collections of literary essays, as well as numerous articles on literature, philosophy, and art for publications in Israel and abroad. She lived in Paris for several years; her translations from French to Hebrew include works by Jacques Derrida, André Breton, Marina Tsvetaeva, Maurice Blanchot, Julia Kristeva, Esther Orner, Annie Ernaux, Didier Eribon and Michelle Debords. In 2008, Ben-Naftali was awarded a scholarship for translators from the French Ministry of Culture, and in 2013 was writer-in-residence at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. Prizes for her literary work include the *Haaretz* prize for Best Literary Essay of the Year (2008). Her novel, *The Teacher*, won the 2016 Sapir Prize, and the 2019 Adei Wizo Prize in Italy. In 2018, she was appointed Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by France’s Minister of Culture, for her contribution to the enrichment of the French cultural inheritance. Her book, *A Dress of Fire*, was shortlisted for the 2019 Sapir Prize. For Michal Ben Naftali's previous publications please check our complete catalogue.

The Anarchists

Novel

Publisher: Pardes

Year: 2023

210 pp.

Translation rights: World, excluding English, French, Italian, Arabic, Russian

Audio visual rights: World

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

After teaching as an adjunct at Tel Aviv University for twenty years, Yael loses her job. Lonely and unemployed, she decides to organize a reading group unlike any other. The six women in her group begin engaging in secret anarchist activity inspired by Tzipora Perlman, the mysterious right-hand woman of Jewish-American anarchist Emma Goldman, whose journal came into Yael’s possession under suspicious circumstances.

The Anarchists moves across different periods in Yael’s life in a pendulum swing of times and perspectives, depicting each milestone with astounding clarity—milestones that are also existential crossroads of the Israeli experience: her military service in the far north, studying at a seminary for the newly religious in Jerusalem, and her academic life in Tel Aviv. Yael’s captivating story is weaved throughout with versatile and fascinating portraits of the reading group participants and historical figures, each mirroring Yael’s experiences.

The novel falls like a ripe fruit into the circumstances of our present time. Questions of identity and the comforts of belonging become more urgent than ever, until at times the book seems to suggest that the only means of authentic survival is literature itself, or in the words of a poet Yael invites to speak at her military base: “an open flower whose petals never close.”

Critical Praise

Michal Ben-Naftali masterfully weaves an intricate plot that contains mystery and suspense, a little bit of humor, and a lot of beauty.

Tamar Mishmar, Yedioth Aharonoth

In its fierce perspective, tender language, parting from familiar paradigms, and refusal to please, *The Anarchists* follows its protagonists' resistance performance: a public aesthetic action that does not submit to rational and utilitarian edicts, resists interpretation and leaves its witnesses to wonder at its meaning.

Yoana Gonen, Haaretz

The Anarchists is an elusive book that requires patience and does not coddle idle readers—it has long and restless paragraphs, twists and coincidences weaved with the charmed and threatening elements of fairy tale, and reflective musings that seem to repeat themselves in a spiral movement insisting on accuracy, on touching the wild root, on exposing the raw wound—and it is a worthwhile effort, even if it does not lead to salvation. It is a poignant, breathless creation.

Jacob Goldberg, Mako

As in her previous books, Ben-Naftali offers us not the dramatic rebellion, but the minor one. Her anarchism is a desire for undoing that is not the already-doomed desire to undo the social order, but to undo the integrity of the spirit, of temporal progression, of the stable boundaries between one woman and another, of the presumption to clearly know the soul.

Orit Neumeier Potashnik, HaMussach Literary Magazine

An enigmatic, fascinating, reluctant leader in which everything comes together—feminism, queer culture, and anarchy. Michal Ben-Naftali once more created an iconic character of a mentor for life, and perhaps even beyond.

Editor's Choice, E-vrit



Asaf Schurr

Asaf Schurr is an Israeli author, translator, and editor. In 2009 he received the prestigious Bernstein Award for his novel *Amram* as well as the Prime Minister's Prize for Hebrew Literary Works, and was a finalist for the Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature in 2013. He has written book reviews for various Israeli newspapers and cultural supplements.

Schurr studied theater and philosophy at the Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University and trained in behavioral therapy for dogs. He also practices and teaches Wu Wei Gung Fu. He lives with his wife close to Tel Aviv.

The Bear is his seventh book.

The Bear

Novel

Publisher: Hakibbutz Hameuchad

Year: 2023

149 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations: English translation by author Todd Hasak-Lowy

It was not a bad world to live in. Even after the destruction, life still persisted in all its beauty.

At the end of a near-extinction event, Israel is full of wreckage. The hunger and danger are not yet over, but some people still collect moments of joy and kindness among the deserted grocery stores and orphaned post offices. There are packs of dogs and children playing together in the streets. A large bear prances on the sand and the asphalt. Cats wander aimlessly. New and fragile relationships develop cautiously, as if from a distance, between the survivors living among the ruins.

The Bear is a story about life in post-apocalyptic Israel. In lively and agile prose, Asaf Schurr moves among characters and events and depicts a vivid world of horror and compassion, cruelty and camaraderie.

Critical Praise

Asaf Schurr is one of the greatest Hebrew writers of our times... this isn't just another book about what will happen in Israel after the apocalypse. It's a book about scattered reflections, about a present that we all already know, from the anxiety and from the spirit.

Navit Barel, Yediot Ahronoth

The insistence of finding the beauty within the catastrophe is probably what distinguishes *The Bear* from most of the dystopias that keep multiplying on the bookshelves.

Maya Becker, Haaretz

With *The Bear*, Asaf Schurr reinvents the dystopian genre. It's a beautiful and lucid novel whose heroes find compassion and mercy even after the apocalypse... In a brilliant turn, Schurr uses the apocalypse as dark background for a beautiful, intimate novel, whose characters wander between the abandoned houses, still living their small lives, building relationships of love and kinship and experiencing moments of compassion and even boredom. In a place of horror and rebuke, *The Bear* is enveloped in sorrow and observation, and its heroes are much more than mere survivors. In clear and minimalist language, he reminds us that after the apocalypse there is beauty and empathy, that the world was here for a long time before us and will be here for a long time after us, and that there is consolation in this fact... Schurr is without doubt one of the best Israeli writers working today.

Yoana Gonen, Haaretz



Agur Schiff

Born in Jerusalem in 1955, Agur Schiff is an author, filmmaker and professor emeritus at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. He has published two short story collections and six novels. He has been awarded the Israeli Prime Minister's Prize for Hebrew Literary Works; his novel *The Latecomers* (2013) was shortlisted for the Israel's prestigious Sapir Prize for Literature. Schiff lives in Tel Aviv.

Professor Schiff's Guilt

Novel

Publisher: Achuzat Bayit

Year: 2021

287 pp.

Translation rights: World excluding English

Translation: English translation by Jessica Cohen, Man Booker International prize winner

Rights sold: World English (New Vessel Press, NY)

An Israeli professor travels to a fictitious West African nation to trace a slave-trading ancestor, only to be imprisoned under a new law barring successive generations from profiting off the proceeds of slavery. But before departing from Tel Aviv, the protagonist falls in love with Lucile, a mysterious African migrant worker who cleans his house. Entertaining and thought-provoking, this satire of contemporary attitudes toward racism and the legacy of colonialism examines economic inequality and the global refugee crisis, as well as the memory of transatlantic chattel slavery and the Holocaust. Is the professor's passion for Africa merely a fashionable pose and the book he's secretly writing about his experience there nothing but a modern version of the slave trade?

Critical Praise

A writer contends with slavery's legacy, and his own link to it . . . Daring in both scope and imagination.
The New York Times

Professor Schiff's Guilt skewers the exoticizing western gaze that homogenizes the Global South . . . Quite entertaining . . . This snidely funny novel suggests that even the most well-meaning, educated people are prone to showing their inner colonizer.
Jewish Book Council

In prize-winning Israeli novelist/filmmaker Schiff's insightful commentary on postcolonial responsibility . . . the professor is met firmly by his accusers, who finally point out that "when a white European author writes about Africa, he is unwittingly reenacting an exploitative act." This might damn the author himself, but he is to be praised for taking the risk as he hones important questions with razor-sharp intensity.
Library Journal

Aspects of subjugation . . . repeat themselves across generations in uncanny yet pointed ways. Mr. Schiff is often too clever for his own good . . . this shrewd masquerade has real bite.
Wall Street Journal

This provocative novel raises urgent questions about family legacy, human trafficking, atonement and memory. Full of unexpected twists and humor.

Sandee Brawarsky, Hadassah Magazine

A daring post-colonial satire about a professor who inadvertently gets wrapped up in human trafficking in modern-day Tel Aviv... The author takes a clear-eyed view of the horrors of slavery and its present-day consequences... It's a blistering skewering, and as sharp as it is funny.

Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)

In this very funny, wise, and rueful novel, the cranky hero thrashes around in the coils of guilt, atonement, desire, and shame once he learns that a distant relative was a slave trader. (There's other bad stuff, not nearly so distant.) But really, he's no more culpable than we all are—and no less.

James Traub, author of Judah Benjamin: Counselor to the Confederacy and Foreign Policy magazine columnist

Not only a hilarious satirical novel full of self-deprecation, but also a topical and very relevant book, which cleverly ridicules the self-righteous and should finally place its author alongside the most prominent writers.

Haaretz

One of the most thrilling and thought-provoking novels I've read in the past year... Schiff writes with simplicity, full of charm and humor.

Israel Hayom

A wonderful and brilliant book... a very entertaining book, rich with imagination and literary innovations.

Walla



Tamar Weiss-Gabbay

A writer, editor, and screenwriter, Tamar Weiss-Gabbay writes for both adults and children. Co-founder and editor of the leading Israeli literary journal HaMussach, Weiss-Gabbay has initiated a number of literary-social projects, including The Israeli Women Writers' Forum, The Street Libraries in Jerusalem, Two: A Bilingual Project for Arabic and Hebrew Contemporary Literature, and others.

Her books *Babylonian Mythology* and the children's book *Vainana Chooses a King*, both published in 2003, are based on Sumerian and Akkadian myths. Weiss-Gabbay has also written two fiction books for adults, *Zeppelin* (Keter) and *Blind Spot* (Ha'Kibbutz Ha'Meuchad).

Her children's books *Tali Under the Table* (Kinneret Zmora, 2020) and *Just an Empty Field* (Kinneret Zmora, 2022) were both selections of the PJ Program, with 120,000 copies distributed in kindergartens and preschool facilities across Israel. The PJ Program published special limited editions of both books in Spanish and Portuguese.

Her novella *The Weather Woman* received the prestigious Brenner Literary Prize, 2022.

Her picture book *Tali Under Table* was the Winner of the prestigious Dvora Omer award (2021), and her book *The Thank You Tomatoes* was shortlisted for the Jewish Children's Book Award (2022)

For additional information about Tamar Weiss-Gabbay's children's books, please see our Children and YA catalogue.

The Weather Woman

Novella

Publisher: Locus Books

Year: 2022

91 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: In adaption into a television series by HSCC

Translation: Complete English translation by Jessica Cohen, Man Booker International prize winner

Partial German by Anne Birkenhauer

Italian rights sold (Giuntina)

The first part of the novella The Weather Woman was translated into English by Jessica Cohen, and published by Two Lines Press in the anthology Elemental in March 2021. It has since been developed into a TV script.

An isolated town, perched on a cliff overlooking a canyon in the middle of a desert. Changing weather patterns and worsening floods mean imminent peril for the town and all its residents.

The novella follows the fate of three protagonists: a charismatic teacher, who stands bravely against the forces of nature; his daughter, the local weather woman, whose prognosis for the town's survival is bleak and counsels abandonment; and her niece, slow and unambitious, sent to live in the town to attend a special education program, a final chance to set herself right.

Basking in her aunt's status as the saviour of the town after predicting the deadly floods, the girl tries hard to make the best of the opportunity she's been given. Beneath the surface though, charged emotions are threatening to pull the family apart. Seeking to impose his authority on the forces of nature, the father

initiates construction of a giant pipeline to divert the flow of the next flood, into the canyon below.

The weather woman fears the arrogance of her father and his followers. Their belief, that they can bend nature to their will, can only end in hubris and loss, she fears. And so, the battle lines are drawn...

In *The Weather Woman*, Weiss-Gabbay personifies the all-too-real extreme manifestations of nature as characters in her fiction, channeling them into a complex and engaging relationship with her human heroes and villains. *The Weather Woman* is a sweeping, topical story, with unforgettable protagonists who will work their way into the reader's heart and mind.

Critical Praise

Then came *The Weather Woman*—a clever and agile Israeli novella, embroidering an exemplary allegory about the complex relationship between man and nature. This is not a book about the climate crisis; the concept itself is not mentioned in the novel, the characters do not deal with global warming, and it is not even clear that in their fictional world there is awareness of the depth of the crisis and its far-reaching consequences. This is not an environmental manifesto, but simply excellent prose, in part because it deals with the environment without making abrasive statements about it. *The Weather Woman* is a powerful book in part because the climate-environmental issue is not pushed forward; the plot, and the characters are simply steeped in it and organically influenced by it...

Every sentence in the book is symbolic, denoting something else besides. Everything is loaded with meaning beyond the plot and the words themselves; everything says something about the power balance at the core of the book, which makes reading it a kind of layered and enigmatic game. Reading *The Weather Woman* requires vigilance, but is also able to generate pleasure and curiosity. Everything in this novella is tight and precise. There are no unnecessary words, no overflowing descriptions. Weiss Gabbay sculpts with Hebrew as if with damp clay, and also places in the story references to other works—to films, belles lettres, the Bible—some implicit and some direct. 'The relationship between man and nature' is a big, pretentious theme, but the novella itself is modest, and avoids preaching as is the way of good works of art. The change will take place through the heart... It evokes a sense of a one-time event. *The Weatherwoman* is a timeless and clever parable, one that deserves to become a significant landmark, in both the environmental and the cultural sense.

Haaretz, September 2022

This journey should begin with a travel warning: while small in size, *The Weather Woman* is powerful in its literary dimensions [...] Its ninety pages present an engrossing, original, and concise plot that lingers on after its last page.

Gilit Chomsky, Makor Rishon

It's a surprise and a pleasure to come across such a book, that wanders away from the magnet of Tel Aviv and all the bourgeoisie troubles; with a plot that unfolds in a rock-carved canyon, rather than in a big shopping mall; with deers, eagles, and wild dogs supporting characters, set against mountains and changing seasons.

Maya Becker, Haaretz

Weiss-Gabbay's writing maintains a sensible edge, even as it strives toward an optimistic and peaceful vision in its allusions to a fascinating intellectual-literary proposition: that changing our relationship with nature may bring with it a literary change—not only in the way we read our classics, but in the composition of all masterpieces of the future.

Keren Dotan, Israel Hayom



Ilana Rudashevski

Ilana Rudashevski is an Israeli author, architect, and urban planner. *Taska*, her debut novel, was a critical and commercial success in Israel, receiving glowing praise in the local media. Her short stories have been published in various Hebrew literary magazines, winning a number of literary honors, including first place in Haaretz's prestigious short story contest.

Rudashevski lives in Jerusalem with her family.

Taska

Novel

Publisher: Shtaim

Year: 2022

255 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translation: Partial English

Taska is an untranslatable Russian word that captures a sense of inexplicable melancholy, longing, and nostalgia. This elusive feeling is at the heart of Ilana Rudashevski's debut novel—an instant bestseller that received enthusiastic responses from readers and critics alike. Following an immigrant family from the Soviet Union to Israel, *Taska* relates a migration story that is witty, poignant, and entirely new.

In the early 1970s, Max and Sophie leave behind their beautiful home and loved ones and immigrate to Israel with their two daughters. They know that they may never see their family and friends again, but are nevertheless driven by a persistent urge—part ideology, part survival instinct. Once in Israel, they settle in a utopian tiny community on the Egyptian border—only to be uprooted again when the Sinai Peninsula reverts to Egyptian control.

Present-day Israel. Sophie is dead; her elder daughter Elka, an urban planner in Jerusalem, is caught up in a bribery scandal. Even though she has lived in Israel since her childhood, the affair confronts her with cultural rifts that have been running beneath the surface all the while. At once earnest and ironic, nostalgic and disillusioned, Elka traces her family's story—and the sense of indistinct longing that is inseparable from immigrant life.

Critical Praise

Written with charismatic skill uncommon in debuts, diving into [Taska] is emotionally and conceptually rewarding.

Omri Herzog, Haaretz

Composed with confidence, with a humor typical of modern Russian literature, [Taska] moves elegantly between times and continents.

Shiri Lev-Ari, Calcalist

Rudashevski moves between life and death, past and present, childhood and old age, hallucination and hard-

core reality (a misconduct affair), with the skill and grace of a sophisticated author.

Yaron Fried, Maariv



Saleit Shahaf Poleg

Saleit Shahaf Poleg is a writer, editor, and university lecturer. Born in 1977, she spent her childhood in Beer-Sheva, and her adolescence on a Kibbutz and in a Moshav (collective agricultural settlement) in the Jezreel Valley in Northern Israel. Shahaf Poleg has an MA in English Literature and Creative Writing from Bar-Ilan University, and has published short stories in leading Israel and international literary periodicals, in both Hebrew and English. In the summer of 2017, the Harrison NY Jewish Community Center's Short Story Club invited her to host a master class discussing her short stories.

Till it Rains Again, Poleg's debut novel, is an Israeli bestseller, topping the charts for weeks and is highly praised by critics and public.

Till it Rains Again

Novel

Publisher: Two Sfarim Publishing house

Year: 2021

235 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translation: Partial English and long synopsis

German rights sold (Aufbau, Berlin)

Italian rights sold (Neri Pozza, Milan)

Winner of the Ministry of Culture award for debut book 2021

Yaeli Shteinman returns to the village that she had promised never to set foot in again. She is carrying her unborn child, its future already overshadowed by uncertainty and fear. Gali, her sister, has returned from Canada. She is to be wed, she thinks, under the grapefruit tree in the backyard of the family home; but the groom is not showing up.

It has been twelve years since it last rained, twelve years since the family secret was exposed. Now, the past is threatening to haunt them once again.

In a valley defined by strife, in one of the first of Israel's revered collective agricultural settlements, three generations of Yael's family must face the consequences of the secret locked up in their attic for decades—and other secrets, even more terrifying, passed like a heirloom from generation to generation. As the family drama unfolds, the villagers struggle with the rain that refuses to fall. Farmers clash over the little water left, even as their crops are superseded, slowly but surely, by soulless real estate.

In *Till it Rains Again*, Saleit Shahaf Poleg details with humor and irony, but also with compassion, a portrait of what remains of the great Zionist settlement dream; a story played out by some of the most colorful and unforgotten characters of contemporary Israeli literature.

Critical Praise

Poleg tells the story of the history and ideals of the Zionist settlement dream over generations in a polyphonic, witty and energetic manner.

Litprom, Best World Literature of 2023 List

Saleit Shahf Poleg's debut is nothing short of a great Israeli generational and social novel.

Elle

A mature and sophisticated novel... superbly crafted in terms of plot and structure, its gaze and its voices, its universe and its characters... an impressive debut by a writer who enters the arena of Hebrew fiction with a confidence, offering the readers a multidimensional artistic and emotional experience.

Haaretz

Excellent constructed from beginning to end... Shahaf Poleg succeeds in creating a multi-generational mythology of authentic Israelis, rooted and replete with Zionist ideals, slowly being abandoned through a despairing process that one cannot tear one's gaze away from... Shahaf Poleg's [book] has a rich and sophisticated plot full of revelations... a book with rhythm, fun to read.

Yediot Aharonot



Shifra Horn

Born and raised in Jerusalem, Shifra Horn is the scion of a family that has lived in the city for five centuries, descendants of the scholar Maimonides. Horn has published six bestselling novels, a collection of short stories, three non-fiction books, and four books for children. In a prolific career, Horn has received numerous accolades for her work, including the Israel WIZO Prize (1997), the Bat Yam Prize for Literature (1997), the Prime Minister's Prize (2005), the ADEI-WIZO Prize (Italy, 2006), the Brenner Prize (2006), and the French WIZO Prize for Ode to Joy (2008). Her novel *Scorpion Dance* [*Promenade à Deux*] was awarded the Minister of Culture's Prize (2014) and the ADEI-WIZO Prize (Italy, 2017). Five of her

novels have been awarded Gold and Platinum Awards by the Book Publishers Association; in 2002, Horn was nominated Literary Woman of the Year by the financial daily Globes.

Horn's work engages intimately with questions of identity and belonging—themes she explored as a guest of the Israeli television program *Who Do You Think You Are?*, based on the BBC series of the same name. Tracing her roots back ten generations, from Jerusalem to Bukhara-Uzbekistan via Odessa, Horn makes an astonishing discovery about her father's family—whom, until then, had all been presumed to have perished in the Holocaust.

Horn's books have been published in nine languages, including English (St Martin's Press, Piatkus), French (Fayard), Italian (Fazi), German (Bertelsman, btb), and Dutch (Archipel/ Arbeiderspers).

O Daughters of Jerusalem

Historical Novel

Publisher: Kineret

Year: 2021

445 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translation: Complete English translation by Gilah Kahn; Long synopsis in English available

Italian rights sold (Fazi, Rome)

Alexandra, last of a proud lineage of women, scrolls through her family history, weaving her own life into the historical narratives. It begins with the photograph of a little girl, which takes her on a journey from Ottoman-era Jerusalem to the signing of the Oslo Accords and the murder of Yitzhak Rabin.

Alexandra is at work on her book at the writers' retreat at Mishkenot Sha'ananim in Jerusalem, the city in which her family have always lived. In the writing room, looking out on a landscape that her ancestors knew well, she traces the forces of fate that determined her family's history, embroidering it with the love stories of the women inhabiting the pages of her book: the orphan Shoshanna, married to a poet-adventurer; Victoria, wild and beautiful, and her relationship with a British prince and heir to the throne; Eduarda, an illegitimate child married to an amputee hunter; Abigail, who turns her back on all men; and finally Alexandra herself, with a father whose fate remains unknown.

Alexandra's journey is populated by characters real and imaginary, alive and dead: English counsels, a Turkish pasha, a white donkey, a cat called George who turns up again and again across the ages, and a grumpy goat named Vashti. From the city of Jerusalem, the plot wends its way to the streets of Victorian London and its rolling waves of fog.

A compelling family saga ranging across several generations, *O Daughters of Jerusalem* blends history and imagination in a lively narrative that draws the reader into engaging anew with the past.

Critical Praise

Descriptions in this book are really a masterwork ...I have read Shifra Horn's previous novels, and marvelled at her talent; here, in this novel, she exceeds even herself—*O Daughters of Jerusalem* is a clever and heartfelt novel, and will fascinate the reader from start to end.

Moshe Granot, Literary Scholar and Critic

This saga, about a female dynasty, is narrated in crisp and clean writing. Horn, this time, begins with the Ottoman period, sweeping breathlessly to the mid-1990s...with lyrical prose, as in her previous books... she succeeds, once again, in constructing a puzzle, taking it apart, then putting it together anew. And this without losing either its magic, or the reader, along its complicated path.

Shlomit Cohen Asif, Author and Literary Critic

Once again, Horn demonstrates her talent for the baroque, displaying her ability to describe the subtleties of life in Jerusalem, principally of the past but also of today.

Makor Rishon

O Daughters of Jerusalem is a marvellous display of talent. It is a book that captures the reader from the first line.

Mira Magen, Author

In a flowing and heartfelt prose, the narrator recounts a family saga with four strong and intriguing women at the center: Shoshana; her daughter Victoria, who has an affair with a British prince; and Edwarda, her illegitimate daughter who later gives birth to Abigail, who is really not interested in men and yet gives birth to Alexandra, the narrator... The book presents four generations of fierce women, rebelling against conventions.

The Good Life Magazine, September 2022



Scorpion Dance

Novel

Publisher: Kinneret Zmorah Dvir

Year: 2012

327 pp.

Translation rights available: World

Audio Visual Rights available: World

Rights sold: Italian: (Rome, Fazi, 2016); English: (Melbourne, Hybrid Publishers, forthcoming)

Translations: Complete English translation by Jessica Cohen, Man Booker International prize winner

"Two elderly Holocaust survivors I knew as a girl lived in an repair shop on November 29th Street in Katamon, Jerusalem. When we passed by the iron gate of their room, we used to throw rocks at them."

Within these heartbreaking lines, Shifra Horn encompasses a world which has ceased to exist; a world whose fictional counterpart she creates as a monument in memory of these unnamed elderly women.

Scorpion Dance, told from the perspective of Orion Herman, is the story of a boy who lost his father in the Six-Day War, before he was born, and the story of the two women who raised him under unusual circumstances. Orion, who experiences synesthesia manifested in an ability to taste and smell sounds, tells his story with a compelling frankness, as the son of a woman who is herself a lost girl, as the descendant of a ghost father, and the grandson of a grandmother who isn't a grandmother; he describes a love affair which is impossible and inevitable all at once.

Scorpion Dance is the story of the lives of three heroes trapped between the desire to remember and the necessity to forget; heroes who yearn for the truth and need a lie. But it is also a very colorful journey that begins in Jerusalem after the Six-Day War, looks back at World War II, and continues to the present day; a journey that vividly captures the sounds, colors and smells of the city and the fascinating culture of its immigrants, and is also shared by a desert parrot, an ice-cream truck that undergoes a surprising transformation, scorpions in the sky and on the ground, and one wisteria bush that threatens to take over them all. Above all, this is a story that chillingly brings together the subhuman and the superhuman and delves deeply into the difficult questions of our relationship with our past as individuals and as a nation.

Critical Praise

Horn tells this love story by miming a dangerous and fatal dance, always oscillating between relief and pain. But there's more: she does it through the gaze of a man full of gratitude for the feminine, indulgent about its defects, protective with its pains. The same gaze rests on Jerusalem and its wounds, old and new. Thus we see the city pale with dust, fill with flowers and weeds, shine and burn with the sun. Like a treasure chest in which too many conflicting emotions are locked up.

Lara Crinò, "D di repubblica"

A minuet of love and regret...*Scorpion Dance* is deeply immersed into Shifra Horn's story and that of her country. But it speaks to all, intensely.

Francesca Paci, *La Stampa*

A superb book, all contradictions and contrasts, binding together blossoming and withering, evil and grace ... The writer's choice of getting her male side to speak out with such impressive honesty was something of a gamble, and the outcome is a happy one How good it is to realize that she has succeeded in finding a sort of alter-ego in his touching character... The platform, then, is given over to the male voice, and it makes virtuoso use of the abounding knowledge and the rich and layered language which it has been granted. There's a profound enchantment in the book, in the integration of meticulous realism and caressing, poetic language... This is a magic potion of a wise and brave writer who writes about life and death with a warm intimacy and does not recoil from microscopic descriptions replete with empathy and tolerance, which together form a singular and special mixture. Shifra Horn's descriptions of nature in this book are among the most beautiful that I've read and her Hebrew provides a sense of spiritual satisfaction... Only someone who has experienced great love and who is prepared to share it with others can write like this. *Scorpion Dance* is a song of praise to a man who stands up boldly to his fate. It is a book that is a living and breathing organism which continues to accompany the readers long after they have taken their leave of it.

Rivka Keren, *Ha'aretz*

Horn's Hebrew in the book is rich, lofty, and complete... Another achievement of the novel lies in the construction of the male character. This is a credible male character, certainly when it comes to everything connected to the intimate descriptions of his life. Horn writes them with boldness, honesty, reliability. And there are also a few twists in the plot which make it more complex, surprising. *Scorpion Dance* is a layered book with multiple meanings ... At its core, the book is very relevant to the lives of Jews and Arabs in this place. It touches upon the root of the pain.

Shiri Lev-Ari, *Ynet*

The book gives an account of an impossible love affair ... With linguistic precision and descriptive wealth...
The plot is replete with passions.

Dubi Zakai, Ma'ariv

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The plot is replete with passions.

Dubi Zakai, Ma'ariv



Noga Albalach

Noga Albalach is an Israeli author and editor living in Tel Aviv. In 2005 she left a successful career as an equity analyst to focus on literature. After working as an editor for several years, she is now the CEO and co-editor of Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House.

Albalach has written novels, novellas, short stories, and children's books. She has been awarded the Ministry of Culture Prize for Debut Fiction (2011), the Prime Minister's Prize (2016), and the Brenner Prize for her memoir *The Old Man* (2018).

The Old Man

Novella

Publisher: Hakibbutz Hameuchad

Year: 2018

118 pp.

Translation rights: World (excluding French and Danish)

Audio visual rights: World

Translation: Complete English translation by Daniella Zamir

Rights sold to France (Edition Do, Bordeaux), Denmark (Forlaget Vandkunsten, Copenhagen)

In her lucid and lyrical prose, Noga Albalach creates a vivid portrait of her father, examining the textures of their relationship, their family, and the changing society around them. With one hundred and thirteen fragments of memory and routine, tragicomic moments, she describes a brave but modest man, a noble and optimistic person. His life and death help her shed light on her own story and lead her to profound insights.

Translated into French and Danish and published to rave reviews, this is the story of an adult daughter caring for her father in the last months of his life. She witnesses his mind grow faint and tries to conserve his personality, which seems to be fading away. The more he forgets, the more she remembers; the further he retreats into his world, the more profoundly she feels their new intimacy; the weaker his grasp of life becomes, the more vivid is its meaning to her.

Critical Praise

Israel

This book is, to my mind, a masterpiece.

Dror Burstein

It is difficult for me to express in words how much generosity and beauty and moral honesty there is in this book.

Orna Coussin

A beautiful and minimalist distillation of the existential absurdity of human life, which chokes the throat as it is read.

Yoana Gonen, Haaretz

France

This book made me cry.

Eric Vuillard, winner of the 2018 Prix Goncourt

It is made of one hundred and thirteen brief or very brief texts (only one exceeds a page) which are like arrows: each must touch, each aims at the heart.

Mathieu Lindon, Liberation Livre

Albalach draws a string of moving snapshots of a life which are anonymous and at the same time unique.

Le Monde

I came away simply overwhelmed by the love it contains. Illness and death are difficult subjects that scratch at our lives, and literature is also there to talk about them. Noga Albalach does so in a beautiful way . . . A book that touched my heart, revealing a sensitive and delicate author with a sense of humor despite the seriousness of the subject.

Les miscellanées d'Usva Blog

Denmark

If this reviewer has read something harder, something more boiled over about dementia and grief and death, he can no longer remember it. A lot has been written and filmed, *Still Alice*, *The Father* and more, but in none of these can such intense and concentrated descriptions be found, as in the case of the Israeli author Noga Albalach... Writing about a person who disappears is an art, and the Israeli Noga Albalach masters it better than most.

Kristian Jensen, Demensen

Thrillers

Nilly Assia



Nilly Assia is an author, a lecturer and a marketing executive with twenty years' experience in the high-tech industry. A mother of four, she loves art and live rock concerts, and is addicted to detective books. *The Aya File*, *The Odeski File* and *The Avihu File* are the first books in her suspense series featuring police officer Liora Dgani. Both are Israeli bestsellers; *The Odeski File* is the most popular title on Storytel, a leading audiobook platform in Israel.

Bestselling Suspense series

The Aya File

Novel (thriller)

Publisher: Kinneret, Zmora, Dvir

Year: 2019

269 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio Visual rights: Under option by Eight Productions

Translation: Complete English translation by Yaron Regev and Gilah Kahn

Sixteen-year-old Aya vanishes from her home in north Tel Aviv one morning. Runaway? Kidnap? Where are you, Aya? The investigation case lands on the desk of Police Detective Liora Dgani. Liora, addicted to work and cigarettes, loves black boots and misses her grandmother dearly. She has cracked some complicated cases in her career; Liora's interrogation methods, a combination of excellent intuition and an obsessive fondness for detail, have often triumphed despite the odds. Now, she has a series of suspects to investigate; the secrets of adolescents to decipher; a dinner at her parents' house that she cannot wriggle out of; and an investigations officer whose rippling dorsal muscles do strange things to her. Amidst all this, Aya's fateful day takes over Liora, sucking her into a whirlpool of the personal and the professional that she cannot control. *The Aya File* is a rhythmic and sweeping detective novel, its protagonists trying their best to rise above their circumstances but repeatedly exposed in all their human vulnerability

Critical Praise

The *Aya File*, the enjoyable debut novel by Nilly Assia, is easy to read; it mostly travels on uncommon territory thanks to its heroine, a brilliant police investigator, a lone wolf focusing on professional advancement and casting ambitious eyes on promotion to Chief Superintendent.

Gili Izikovitch, Haaretz Galleria Cultural Supplement

The work *The Aya File*, Nilly Assia's sympathetic debut book, is a detective novel placing at its center the image of Police Detective Liora Dgani. Assia knows how to create a light and diverting thriller; it seems that its key inspiration is the TV series 'Law and Order' and its likes.

Omri Herzog, Haaretz

The depth of the research into the police carried out by the author Nilly Assia for 'The Aya File' is certainly evident; one can easily imagine such a police detective in our Israeli reality.

Assaf Golan, Israel Hayom



The Odeski File

Novel (thriller)

Publisher: Shtaim

Year: 2022

285 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio Visual rights: World (option on the first novel in the series, see above)

Translation: English translation by Gilah Kahn

Police Detective Liora Dgani thought she was going to get a promotion, but instead, she got an unwelcome new boss. No one remembers the files she slaved over to decipher; while her erstwhile commander vacations in Sri Lanka, the promises he gave her are all drifting away in the wind. Liora wants to get up and walk out, but how can she? After all, someone has left a body in a bordeaux-colored suitcase in the parking lot of a shopping center, right next to the grocery store. Armed with black boots, a battered car, terrible eating habits, and excellent intuitions, Liora Dgani tries to find out who is responsible for the murder of Lena Odeski, an immigrant care worker for the elderly. However, it quickly becomes clear that nothing is as it seems. This immigrant worker had not been taking care of the elderly for some time; the neighborhood may be quiet, but it is certainly not sleepy. All this aside: might it be that Liora's commander, who always wanted the best for her, has betrayed her this time, and perhaps not only her? Or that her best friend has been disloyal to her, and not only her? And that perhaps the story with Gur, the muscular officer in Investigations who did nothing but good for her, isn't actually good for her at all? Her ex-boyfriend returning to the country after three years abroad, Liora Dgani intuitively, probably isn't very good either.

The country is hardly functioning, and the sanitation department is on strike. Amidst all this garbage, Liora Dgani, the toughest but also the most humane detective in Israel, is searching for a lead.

The Odeski File is the second book in the Liora Dgani investigation series by Nilly Assia.

Critical Praise

It's a great exposition, following the tropes of the classic male detective: broken hearted (twice), a staple in detective literature; heavy drinking is a necessary element for shaping her character; so too the loneliness that defies any cure, interactions with the secondary characters only reinforcing it. The solution to the mystery, therefore, cannot not deliver the heroine from her anguish but rather intensifies them; what at first seems like the possibility of redemption turns out to be merely a step in the wrong direction. This is, then, our heroine—lonely, a drinker, broken-hearted: equipped with these qualities, she sets out on her way... *The Odeski File* is an elegant and interesting thriller which, thanks to the author's familiarity with Israeli society and her ability to reflect what is happening in it, is about much more than merely solving a mystery. The way Assia shines a flashlight into this dark corner puts the things that happen in it on the agenda, even if only for a moment.

Haaretz

The Odeski File, by Nilly Assia, is not just a detective story. It is a real reflection of life today in Israel. This makes the book much more realistic; the reader can easily identify with the plot details, along with its twists and turns. From this point of view, it is great to be able to say that this is a very Israeli detective book, and a very pleasant read.

Assaf Golan, Israel Hayom

The Odeski File is not the name of the new Versace bag; it is the title of another suspense book featuring Liora, the police detective who proves us that not only men get addicted to work or struggle with commitment issue. This time, Liora is annoyed because she didn't get the long waited promotion she thought was in her pocket. Still, she can't say no when told that the body of an immigrant worker has been found in a suitcase set next to the grocery store in Tel Aviv. An interesting, enjoyable, and readable book, providing along the way an answer to that age-old question, "What is an Israeli in your eyes?"

Mako N12

Nilly Assia has done it again. *The Odeski File* does not convey a message; it is an excellent book, full stop. Assia has created a wonderful, rounded, intriguing, and human characters, embedded in an intriguing and suspenseful plot. Above this, she does not make assumptions, not for the characters and not for me, as a reader wanting something specific for Liora. The insights had to wait until I finished the book.

Sarit Plain, Vocabular



The Avihu File

Novel (thriller)

Publisher: Shtaim

Year: Forthcoming

Translation rights: World

Audio Visual rights: World

Liora Dgani is four months pregnant when a new murder case lands on her desk—the corpse of a wealthy contractor, rumored to be mixed up with the gambling industry in southern Israel, is found tossed in Ben Shemen Forest.

Meanwhile, Liora's ex-partner and lover, Gur Ben Dov, had fled to the south two months earlier to avoid her.

Solving the murders of bodies found in central Israel is Lior's responsibility. Exposing gangs running illegal gambling businesses down south is Gur's. So is, though he doesn't know it yet, the fetus in Liora's womb.

Now, inadvertently, Liora and Gur will meet and discover what led to the contractor's murder, who stands behind the illegal gambling operation, and how far they are willing to go for each other.

N o n - F i c t i o n



Ofri Ilany

Dr. Ofri Ilany is a historian, journalist, literary critic, and editor. He is the author of *In Search of the Hebrew People: Bible and Nation in the German Enlightenment* (Indiana University Press, 2018) and writes a weekly column for *Haaretz*. He is the editor-in-chief of *Hzman Haze* (These Times), a magazine of political thought, culture, and science founded by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute.

We Are New People

literary non fiction

Publisher: Babel

Year: 2023

266 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations: Partial English translation available

For many people, living in the present feels like living in a foreign country. Those of us who were born in the twentieth century have seen rules change and the texture of existence become unrecognizable within the span of a single lifetime. Forms of life have evaporated; we live under a new sky, on a new earth.

The essays in this collection pay close attention to those transformations, many of which have been unimaginable in the 1970s or even the 1990s. Like the protagonists of a science fiction story, physically transformed after landing on a faraway planet, we must come to grips with having become new humans. Simultaneously, we have to face up to the new monsters that have sprung around us.

From reflections on fandom and *Lord of the Rings*, to the place of the laundry machine in German culture, to the revival of the Hebrew language, these essays are about culture, politics, ecology, theology, sexuality, technology and more. What unites them is an attempt to identify that new creature which has been fashioned in the womb of our current period.

We Are New People includes several never-before-published essays as well as some which have been adapted from the author's publications in *Haaretz*, one of Israel's leading daily newspapers.

Critical Praise

Ilany stands out as one of the most astute cultural critics of our time, a true intellectual who straddles the realms of history and contemporary hot topics. His book, *We Are New People*, is precisely that: a compilation of numerous columns from recent years—some previously published in a similar version in the *Haaretz* supplement, while others make their debut—all aimed at diagnosing the present era and comprehending the profound changes we have undergone. In the introduction, he insightfully remarks,

“History books attempt to capture the worldview of people from distant times – be it the people of the Middle Ages or the ancient Egyptians. However, even the worldview of the people from the 1980s seems almost unreachable to us. Try watching popular series like Dallas or Soap, and you will encounter people from a different era.”

Ilany generously acknowledges that even intellectual discussions remain entangled in a discourse crafted decades ago. Consequently, he endeavors to frame the discourse around issues pertinent to the ‘new person of the 21st century.’ The book’s columns, written in the first person, traverse diverse subjects encompassing culture, sexuality, politics, ecology, technology, and more. Ilany effortlessly weaves references to intellectuals such as Herbert Marcuse and Frederic Jameson with contemporary figures like Marie Kondo, Game of Thrones, trending recreation drugs, the real estate market, and climate change. All these references serve to shake off the dust of convention and “gaze upon the new monsters that have emerged around us.

Maya Becker, Haaretz

Forces of nature, household appliances, invasive birds, bespectacled geeks, concerned philosophers, spendthrift hipsters, sandal-wearing settlers, and a myriad of other intriguing creatures come to life within the pages of Ilany’s compelling book, *We Are New People* . . . it is an endeavor to portray human beings in all their diverse thoughts, habits, and peculiarities, capturing this very moment in time. *We Are New People* firmly establishes Ilany as one of today’s most engaging historians. His texts emanate originality, critical insight, and occasional radical perspectives, all expressed in a confident tone and accessible language.

Elad Bar-Noy, Yedioth Aharonoth

In his exploration of the nascent human experience, Ilany delves into a diverse array of social phenomena, each offering insights into our collective nature. From the unprecedented deep-sea mining to the invasion of myna birds, from viewing newspapers as a humanistic imperative to examining attitudes towards the Temple Mount, and even delving into the metaphysics of air conditioners and deodorants and their societal impact—Ilany leaves no stone unturned in his quest to understand the human condition.

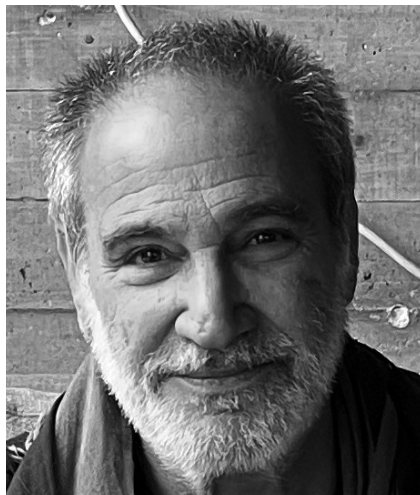
The author’s keen observations often stem from an examination of spaces, giving rise to broad social reflections. This method of observation runs as a common thread through many texts in the collection, perhaps influenced by the author’s formative experiences – growing up in a small settlement in the Negev desert as the son of a zoologist, an original researcher. These roots showcase a unique juxtaposition of the concrete with the taxonomic, the apparent phenomena alongside their finely crafted characterizations.

Ido Nitzan, Israel Hayom

Ilany’s essays successfully articulate a new critical existence, where the wandering mind remains receptive to the diverse voices of the surrounding reality, avoiding the imposition of a single narrative to explain the catastrophes of our time.

Ilany seeks to discover the ‘new people,’ emerging from the aftermath of ideological projects that have shaped the country—from Zionists to gays, from socialists to ultra-Orthodox. He encourages them to walk the twilight path between the periphery and the center, cultivating a profound skepticism towards the reality they encounter. By embracing their foreignness as a weapon, they can carve out a new existence.

Dr. Itamar Ben Ami, Haaretz



Sharon Rotbard

Sharon Rotbard (b. 1959) is a Tel Aviv-based architect, author, activist, educator, editor, and co-founder of Babel Press. He is currently serving as Senior Lecturer at the School of Architecture of the Bezalel Academy, Jerusalem.

Among his books: *The Refuseniks' Trials* (Hebrew, 2004), *White City, Black City: Architecture and War in Tel Aviv and Jaffa* (Hebrew, 2005; English edition 2015), *Avraham Yasky: A Concrete Architecture* (Hebrew, 2007); *Neither in Jaffa, Nor in Tel Aviv* (Hebrew, 2009), *The War of Streets and Houses and other Texts about the City* (Hebrew, 2021).

White City, Black City

Non-fiction

Publisher: Babel

Year: 2005

352 pp.

Translation rights available: World excluding English and Polish

Audio visual rights: World

Translations available: English, Russian, Polish

Rights sold: English UK (London, Pluto Press, 2015), English US (Cambridge MA, The MIT Press, 2018),

Russian: Moscow (Ad Marginem Press, 2017), Polish: (Warsaw, Wydawnictwo Filtry, 2022)

This is the story of two cities, historical Jaffa and modern-day Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv is the 'White City,' said to have risen from the sands of the desert, acclaimed worldwide for its Bauhaus-inspired modernist architectural heritage. Jaffa is the 'Black City,' the Palestinian city that was largely obliterated to make way for the new European-style architecture that dominated newly formed Israel. Israeli writer and architect Sharon Rotbard offers a rare insight into the politics that underpin the narrative of the White City, and how architecture has been used as a political tool. Both a gripping narrative history and a unique architectural record, this deeply moving book shows how any city in the world is built not only of stones and concrete but also of stories and histories – victors and losers, predator and prey. In this way, the legend of the Black City and the White City, architecture and war, is our story too.

Critical Praise

Landmark book.

The Architect's Newspaper

White City, Black City still reads like a fresh and necessary corrective – in parts like a slap in the face – mostly due to the fluent urgency of Rotbard's prose...One can only read Tel Aviv-Jaffa's streets with more open eyes..., with a more sober tread, with Rotbard's book in hand.

Barbara Mann, Quest, Issues in Contemporary Jewish History

"This book by an Israeli architect and historian focuses on the construction of Tel Aviv's 'Bauhaus Style' city centre in the 1930s, for which it was awarded UNESCO World Heritage Status. Rotbard reads these mostly speculative white-walled apartment blocks (almost never by actual Bauhaus-trained designers) as a reaction against colonial architecture which ended up being the most colonial city building project imaginable, designed to circumvent, then to consume and subjugate the adjacent Palestinian city of Jaffa. This often

ugly story is told with tact, subtlety and through some particularly seductive images of this Weissenhof-on-Levant.

Owen Hatherley, *The Architectural Review*

Challenging modern architecture from another direction was Sharon Rotbard's *White City, Black City* (Pluto), in which the much-admired "Bauhaus"-style houses of Tel Aviv are attacked as agents of the colonisation and impoverishment of the Arab city of Jaffa. These works of progressive European intelligence, he argues, are actually instruments of conquest. Taken together, Rotbard and Hatherley show the relationship of buildings to politics to be a slippery but nonetheless vital aspect of architecture.

Rowan Moore, *The Guardian*

"a responsible, sharp, critical project, in which Rotbard reads the Zionist representations of Tel Aviv... written with a political and esthetical responsibility: not only in relation to his discoveries, but also in relation to the censored political story of the Tel Avivian landscape, that its false signs are freedom, secularism and progress. Rotbard demonstrates how the cultural imagination marks its narrative on the place, and more important from this, he draws a straight line between the fiction of 'the flourishing of wilderness' and the actual contemporary violence that is supported upon it.

Omri Herzog, *Ha'aretz*