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Emilie Chaya Moatti

Emilie Haya Moatti was born in 1980 and grew up in a religious family of Tunisian descent in the town of Netanya. The oldest of six siblings, she dropped out of high school to go to work and in 2003, she traveled to Paris to study at the Sorbonne. In Paris, she also worked as a producer and spokesperson for the Israeli Cinema Festival and joined several forums dealing with Jewish culture. She was involved in two left-wing peace projects: the Geneva Initiative and the Israel Regional Initiative. Since 2014, she has been a member of the board of WePower, a feminist NGO that aims to integrate women into the municipal and national political arenas. She was elected to the 24th Knesset (Israeli parliament) as a member of the left-wing social-democratic Labor party (Ha'avoda).

She served as a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and the Education, Culture and Sports Committee. She also chaired the Subcommittee for the Preservation of Heritage and Aliyah Culture.

Today, Moatti is a writer, publicist, politician, and social activist who appears regularly as a commentator on various Israeli TV channels. She heads the Diplomacy department in the Hostages and Missing Families Forum. *Blue Marks* is her debut novel. She was awarded the Culture Ministry Prize for a Debut Novel in 2018. A French-speaking film version of Emilie's novel, shot in Paris and starring French actors, is scheduled to premiere in France in 2026. Renowned actress and producer Virginie Lacombe, of the French production company Virginie Films, bought the film rights to the film, and currently a behind-the-scenes 'making-of' documentary, incorporating interviews with Emilie herself is in under production.

Blue Marks

Novel

Publisher: Tchelet | **Year:** 2018 | **246 pp.**

Translation Rights: World

A young woman flees the life she has been living on the margins, and lands in Paris — but life on the margins isn't done with her: it comes crashing back just as Iris starts to believe she has finally left it behind for good.

All she wanted was to start over, in another language, where no one knew her. With a steady job and a new apartment, her dream felt just within reach. But then "that man" entered her life. She thought his beauty was divine, with the scarf wrapped around his neck and that gaze that followed her wherever she went. The man who only had a first name. The man she killed.

Behind prison walls, the abyss within Iris is laid bare — the woman who took a gun and shot the man who raped her. Through raw, searing fragments of memory, her path winds between pain and a fragile hope for redemption. From the father who abandoned her, leaving behind a home darkened by grief, to the mother frozen in her humiliation; from the streets of Paris that refused to embrace her, all the way to that cursed night she believed she could leave behind. With tenderness and courage, it gently pries open, finger by finger, the clenched fist of pain, bathing the soul of its wounded heroine in light, and transforming an unfathomable strangeness into intimacy.

Critical Praise

Blue Marks is not a story of revenge, because revenge is a set of searing, vibrant moral fantasies, the very thought of which arouses a feeling of control and purification. The heroine of the novel kills the man who raped her not because of what he did, but because of the smiling newborn he left within her; a baby that awakens no feeling in her, only threatens to erase who she is - like his father before him... She kills in order to survive: the baby will be taken from her, she will go to prison, where she will be able to sit in a cell for

years, emptied, indifferent, and protected. And so it happens; that's all that happens...

Blue Marks is a book that requires time. It is not literary fast food that proceeds according to familiar paradigms of loss and redemption. It gives voice to a voiceless figure, without flaunting a sense of triumph or self-intoxication. Yet it has a sober, even daring power that gradually develops over the course of the novel and justifies its stylistic and narrative syntax. Moatti has written a story about a woman on the margins, who erases her act of erasure, and thereby secures meaning for herself - even if destructive and draining... leaving you with a (blue) mark on your body.

Omri Herzog, *Haaretz*

Blue Marks is a heartbreaking book, well-written, with clear and grim observations about the power relations between men and women and about the all-too-likely possibility that women will be exposed to violence, will become victims simply because someone stronger has decided so, and that's simply how it is. It offers an understanding of the human soul in a state of distress. Moatti sketches the technical blueprint for erasing yourself, the timing of the soul's disappearance as a refuge from an unbearable situation. The heroine's mental state, the emotional numbness and distance, are described without being too emotional. It is precisely for this reason that reading *Blue Marks* is so harrowing.

Gilli Izikowitz, *Haaretz*

At the center of Emilie Moatti's debut novel, *Blue Marks*, is a murder that, technically, is a very brief episode in the overall plot. There is also a murderess who lives in absolute alienation, who expresses no remorse for her actions and is unwilling, even for a moment, to surrender to the story that society (the legal system, the press, her family) tells about her. This is the reason why Meursault, the protagonist of Camus' *The Stranger*, surfaced and came to mind more than once during my reading.

Dorit Shiloh, *Hamussach*



Emuna Elon

Emuna Elon is an internationally best-selling, critically acclaimed novelist, journalist, and women's rights activist. She was born in Jerusalem, raised in Jerusalem and in New-York and now lives in Jerusalem and teaches Judaism, Hassidism and Hebrew literature. Elon, a serving member of the Academy of Hebrew Language, has published essays, short stories, popular children's books and six bestselling novels. Her novels *If You Awaken Love* (2007) and *House on Endless Waters* (2020) were finalists for the National Jewish Book Award. Elon received the Book Publishers Association's Gold Book Prize (2010) for her novel *Inscribe My Name*, the Aminoach Prize for *Beyond My Sight* (2014), the Prime Minister's Prize for her literary work (2015), and the Adei Wizo literary prize in Italy

(2020). The exclusive option for the TV/film adaptation based on Elon's novel *House on Endless Water* was purchased by Fremantle in April 2019.

Where Heaven Meets Earth

2 Novellas

Publisher: Kinneret Zmorah Bitan | **Year:** 2025 | 175 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations: Complete English translation available (the author is bi-lingual)

A daughter travels to visit her dying mother, while her father and brother are on the warfront who knows where. A woman bids farewell to her husband, who sets out on a rescue and atonement mission of his own accord. These are the heroines of Emuna Elon's novellas. Although the two stories unfold during the third week of the October 7th war, their narratives echo tales from the distant past, creating a deep and painful resonance across time. With sensitivity and compassion, with insight and richly layered language, Elon weaves a fateful connection between past and present—until it seems that history repeats itself, with only the characters changing... or perhaps not even the characters. Like Emuna Elon's previous novels, *Where Heaven Meets Earth* is a book to read slowly, to experience, to become part of its beautifully eloquent family stories highlighting human tragedy and resilience.

Where Heaven Meets Earth is Emuna Elon's sixth work of prose. A recipient of the Prime Minister's Prize for Hebrew Authors and Poets, her literary work has been translated into many languages receiving critical acclaim and a devoted readership.

Critical Praise

The formulaic nature of the novellas is easier to digest because they are explicitly framed as modern versions of Jewish archetypes.

The accusation of simplicity—such as the direct, unembellished presentation of the Akedah motif in the characters' lives—could or should be addressed not to the author, but to reality itself, which presents painful repetitions of the Jewish and Israeli fate. The sense of urgency that pulses through the novellas contributes to their positive impact, as does their brisk pacing and charming prose.

But there is another element here that lends the works greater weight. On the conscious level, the book is a rewriting of two ancient Jewish stories (the second one less familiar than the Akedah, drawn from Talmudic legends about Rabbi Meir and his wife Beruriah), now seen in light of the repetitive nature of Jewish history, as manifested on October 7.

On another level—perhaps subconscious and hidden—characters in both novellas move persistently

between religious observance and secularism, and then back again... I believe this religion/secularism motif aptly reflects the theological confusion Israeli society faces after the events of October 7. On the one hand, these events present us with something akin to “negative theology.” The stubborn Jewish fate they reflect almost serves as metaphysical (or pseudo-metaphysical) proof, not necessarily of the existence of God, but of the uniqueness of the Jewish people. But on the other hand, what comfort can be found in a Jewish uniqueness that reveals itself through such suffering? This fundamental theological unease is expressed through the novellas’ choice of protagonists who oscillate between faith and secularism in a constant push and pull. This tension deepens the impact that *Where Heaven Meets Earth* has on its readers.

Eric Glessner, Yediot Aharonot

Where Heaven Meets Earth, two beautiful, heart-breaking novellas full of thought-provoking horror and bravery, disaster and grace, depths of doubt and heights of devotion. As all of Emuna Elon's stories these too are about our relationships with our families, with our nation, with our history and with ourselves.

Ariel Ser-Levi, Ben-Gurion University

Where Heaven Meets Earth is a novel written with a light and delicate touch that nonetheless reaches emotional and intellectual depths. The ideas unfold in a way that draws the reader in and sustains engagement throughout. Its structure—composed of short, fluid chapters—allows for seamless movement across time, creating a reading experience that is both compelling and immersive.

Ruth Bachy, critic

Critical Praise for Past Works

A story of love, loss, and yearning... Lyrically phrased and often powerfully visual... this deeply felt tale offers a rewarding meditation on survival... Blurring the edges between history and fiction, this achingly mournful work impresses with its grave empathy.

Starred review in Kirkus Reviews

House on Endless Waters is a deeply immersive achievement that brings to life stories that must never be forgotten.

Emily Gray Tedrowe, USA TODAY

Elon powerfully evokes the obscurity of the past and its hold on the present.

THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

[on *House on Endless Waters*] Poignant.

Le Figaro



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. Galit Dahan Carlibach has been selected by the Goethe-Institute Israel and the Brandenburg Ministry of Culture for a three month residency fellowship at Schloss Wiepersdorf, in Fall 2024.

You'd Never Know It

Novella

Publisher: Achuzat Bait | **Year:** Forthcoming 2026 | **35,000 words**

Translation Rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Nothing ever comes easy for Masha Peretz, a young woman from a small, dusty town in southern Israel. Despite her sharp wit and intelligence, she drifts from one odd job to another, trying to scrape by, only to find herself fired time and again. The army gives up on her, and both her love and social life are nothing short of a disaster: most of the time, she's alone, attracting only exploitative men and random acquaintances who are surprised to discover that the beautiful, brilliant woman who "You'd Never Know" has a bipolar disorder, can't you tell, and is frequently hospitalized in a psychiatric ward.

With a tone that's both bitter and funny, Masha lays bare the battle she fights, walking the tightrope between two poles – crushing depression and the tempting heights of mania – as well as the power struggles with the psychiatrist treating her. What unfolds is the portrait of a singular soul, aching to belong yet failing again and again.

Masha Peretz's coming-of-age story crosses many of the major intersections of Israeli society – yet always stays on its margins, offering a fresh, striking perspective on life within it. The novella was awarded the 2025 ACUM prize for an unpublished work, given annually by the Society of Authors, Composers and Music Publishers in Israel.

Critical Praise

In vivid, sweeping language laced with humor, this novella tells the story of Masha Peretz, a woman who moves between extremes. At one end, awaiting her are hospital rooms, pills, electroshock treatments, and sessions with a psychiatrist – all intended to "fix" her and turn her into a productive member of society. At the other end – the one she actually prefers – lie her visions, dreams, desires, and loves, waiting to burst forth. As the story moves back and forth between these two poles, we come to know the childhood and coming-of-age of a truly singular woman – one who finds her freedom precisely in the space between things, and who, with all her strength, slips through the gap and grasp of any fixed definition.

Jury for the 2025 ACUM prize for an unpublished work

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, 2026)

Translations: Complete German translation by Ruth Achlama, 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 Carlbach's new novel.

Maya Mizrahi, Epoch

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

Iris Ganor, Blogger



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).

Eden

Novellas

Publisher: Hakibbutz Hameuchad | **Year:** 2025 | **270 pp.**

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translation: Partial English translation available

Three women stand at the heart of *Eden*, a novel by Noga Albalach. Noa, who has been living alone for a while, suddenly vanishes. When her family tries to track her down, they begin to see her in a whole new light – and through their accounts, we slowly discover what happened to her on the fateful morning of October 7th. Roni is a senior official in a government office. As she searches for a new relationship and wrestles with the new management position she's landed, she finds herself needing to reflect, eavesdrop on strangers' conversations, and take aimless walks – one of which ends with her inviting an unexpected tenant into her home. And Dana is a young woman who decides, despite having zero experience, to open a neighborhood café. She ropes in Regev, an awkward music lover she met by chance, as her partner. All three women search for comfort, for a home, in a country undergoing upheaval and thrown into the chaos of war.

Eden is a story of relationships forming and unraveling, a story where the concept of “home” is built up and torn down over and over again. Roni, Dana, and Noa – each in her own brave and deeply human way – lead themselves and those around them to reflect on ideas such as responsibility, friendship, regret, and hope. Each of them is trying to carve out their own small island of freedom, independent thought, and human kindness – right in the middle of Israeli reality, until reality comes crashing down on them.

Their stories unfold separately but are intertwined, merging into a novel in three parts where Albalach's storytelling and distinctive voice offer a compelling literary vision, dealing with painfully relevant issues. On the surface, *Eden* is a novel where not much seems to happen, and yet somehow everything happens, because it's so closely attuned to the emotional lives of its characters. Its insight, humor, compassion, and sharpness, along with Albalach's sideways view of the world, make *Eden* a moving, thought-provoking read.

Critical Praise

In the book's third part, “Noa Has Disappeared”, a character who had previously appeared only as a footnote – a customer at the café – steps into center stage of the story. In the shadow of the burning days of October 2023 lies a small, seemingly insignificant tragedy, one almost too embarrassing to report to the police: an adult woman, organized and overly responsible, vanishes without explanation. On the surface, this is a familiar motif in Israeli fiction, but Albalach gives it a sharp, painful contemporary twist. She composes a portrait of a competent, high-functioning woman whose very functionality covers unbearable pain, the novel's quietly brilliant response to the events of October 7. The aesthetic principle of restraint is once again

charged with something raw and brave. The short sentences, the fragmented narrative, are used effectively, capturing that blend of collapse and the attempt to piece together the broken shards. Not to replace the pain with something else, but to try to soften it...

The most powerful and revealing moment I encountered as I opened *Eden*, Noga Albalach's new novel, appears right at the start, in what seems like a dedication or a motto: "Stay with me, I need you." A simple, unadorned sentence that feels less like a literary statement and more like a direct appeal to the reader. It is a request for closeness, for patience. Not intellectual understanding, not admiration. Just staying together. That appeal, like a whispered message from a stage to the audience, became for me a guiding thread throughout the reading of her novel... Albalach tests how minimal a story can be yet still touch you. How much she can strip away – drama, literary flourishes, excess – without losing the ability to connect, to arouse empathy, to generate emotional movement... And yet, Albalach already stands out for her poetics of fragmentation, detachment, clinging to the stem. It seems to me that in this book, a silent war is being waged in the spirit of bonsai. Beneath the spare prose, something pulses that longs not to be pruned. "Stay with me, I need you" ...

The two competing threads running through the novel – the stripped-down realism and the undercurrent of fantasy, myth, and symbolism; the yearning and the mourning – all ultimately merge. But that revelation builds slowly as the book unfolds, growing out of Albalach's principled, prosaic stance, which, to my mind, is her most mature and daring work to date. Moments like these keep circling back to the book's motto, echoing something deep and essential at the heart of the ongoing crisis.

Yoni Livne, Haaretz

Despite their differences, the stories of Roni, Dana, and Noa share certain similarities: at one point or another, each of them disappears for a few days. Roni vanishes into the desert, Dana holes up in her parents' house on the very day she's supposed to open the café, and Noa flees to Caesarea. Their internal conflicts also echo one another: all three women long for love – they are the ones who initiate connections with others, actively crafting their own "plotlines" – but they also long for solitude and aloneness. In their individual ways, each one wrestles with the question of how to live her life, how to find a balance between personal freedom and independence on the one hand, and social existence and meaningful human contact on the other. All three are in search of a home in the world – but they also question and wonder what "home" even actually means...

There's something deceptive about reading this book. At first glance – especially when reading the first two stories – it seems as if we're encountering three separate narratives. Each one constructs its own self-contained world, with a clear central character driving the plot... But the third story, which appears at first to be the least story-like of the three – lacking an obvious narrative arc, composed of a short introduction and a series of accounts – is the one that pulls everything into focus: it reveals that we are in fact reading a novel, and that the three stories merge into a cohesive whole. This becomes clear when Noa – a mysterious, fairly minor character from the second story – disappears in the third. Her disappearance transforms her into a central figure, and more than that, her story repositions the entire book as a novel taking place around a single day in October.

The novel's structure is both fascinating and surprising: it starts with what feels like a bubble-like existence – an introspective space, questioning life from a "privileged" perspective, one that lives largely within itself, wondering whether and how to live in a consumer-driven society that alienates the individual from "natural authenticity." Yet the book that begins in this kind of bubble ends with a life-altering event... Throughout her writing, Noga Albalach has excelled at transposing "big" and "small" events – often as a literary device that asks: what is the story's central? Her novel *Eden*, which is both heart-stirring and thought-provoking, takes this strategy to its peak.

Tamar Mishmar, Ynet

Gradually, characters from one story begin to seep into another, and scenes we encountered just a few pages back are now retold from a different perspective. Out of these overlaps, a cohesive narrative begins to

emerge – one that can be read as a novel, though it doesn't conform to the classic expectations of the genre. Albalach doesn't place a single clear protagonist at the center, nor does she guide her characters from one defined point to another through conventional confrontations with crisis. There are crises in Eden, and internal struggles, moments of despair and moments of sudden, surprising strength – but more than serving as dramatic turning points in the characters' lives, they offer readers a chance to observe different slices of life in contemporary Israel through lives that seem to exist in separate bubbles – at least until reality, that same unbearable reality we all know firsthand, breaks in.

At the heart of the novel are women, each one wondering how and why she ended up where she is, what brings her comfort, what frustrates her, and what she needs to do now to avoid sinking into numbing grayness. The steps they take aren't grand. They're small, sometimes odd, and mostly, they require courage – because behind them lies the effort to carve out a real home for themselves in the world... Noa's disappearance, in the book's final chapter, ruptures the sense of ease that seemed to float over the story until that point – even in its heavier moments. Up until this chapter, Albalach writes in a very restrained tone, one that allows her to describe people, actions, and social situations in meticulous detail without overwhelming the reader with too many words. She does so with a blend of dry, almost imperceptible but endearing humor, and a kind of unflinching candor when writing about sex, which gives the women in the novel a simple, grounded realism. This ability of Albalach's – to create emotionally layered characters and subtle, intricate situations under the guise of quiet prose – is something we've seen in her earlier work too... In *Eden*, Albalach frequently moves between different points of view: some parts are told by the women themselves, others by an omniscient narrator, and at times she addresses the reader directly. In the first two parts of the book, this shifting perspective feels fresh and engaging, giving us access to the bubbles the characters – especially the younger ones – seem trapped inside. In the third and final part, these shifts, some of which take the form of police testimonies from people in Noa's life, pierce the heart and are at times chilling, as it becomes clear just how little these people really know about the woman who lived with and alongside them... It's worth noting that even though Albalach doesn't bring the story to a neat, definitive close – the shock, fear, and sense of collapse that accompany the real-life events referenced in the book cast a new light on everything that came before, raising questions about safety, home, belonging, stability, and trust. Even if these questions aren't asked outright in the text, they're hard to shake off once the reading is over.

Dafna Levi, Israel Hayom



Sealand

Novel

Publisher: Am Oved | Year: 2015 | 166 pp.

Translation Rights: World

Audiovisual Rights: World

Translations: Partial English translation available

Like in the microcosm of the Island principality of *Sealand*, the protagonists of this eponymous novel all live in the same small building: she's a young teacher, and he's a retired bank clerk. Their small, quiet world is turned upside down when a foreign worker from Bulgaria, on the run from his employer, is found sleeping in the building's basement shelter. He won't be sleeping there for long, and not because he's going to be deported. Another man appears – a young man with some very unconventional ideas – and he, too, disrupts the familiar routine.

As these four characters cross paths, the boundaries of home, personal space, and the law begin to crack and shift. Everything is open for reexamination, with boldness and a refusal to play by the rules. In a space shaped by vast economic forces, the four protagonists of *Sealand* move cautiously, trying to carve out their own

independent, human path. And it turns out that sometimes, a single small act – generous and brave – is enough to create a private haven of grace.

This is the clear-eyed debut novel, laced with quiet humor, written by Noga Albalach who has already been widely praised for her short stories. The novel received the Ministry of Culture's Prize for Debut Books (2015).

Critical Praise

Noga Albalach is a daring writer whose originality and love of literature are evident in all her short stories and in this novel. She is full of contradictions: her concise language is splendid, her irony is refined...Her writing is original and full of vitality, opening the eyes and the heart, helping her readers see the world we live in and understand it a little better. A little differently. Her novel *Sealand* deserves a special mention... It is filled with fine and sharp observations replete with restrained humor, and is brilliantly arranged through abundant variations around the central theme: The desperate attempt to break through the thick skin of existence and persevere that which is extreme, unique, mysterious, anarchic and ultimately human.

The Prime Minister's Prize Committee, December 2015

In this wonderful novel, Albalach uses a narrative method quite distinct from what we are used to in Israeli literature - very few details of the past are known, while the future is obscure.

Yotam Shwimmer, Ynet

Albalach injects into Kenaz's heritage a surprising and non-manipulative warmth that strengthens the impact of her writing.

Arik Glasner, Yedioth Ahronoth

Albalach's style is distinctive: clear and restrained, with very little decoration. But as *Sealand's* protagonists proceed on their journey, everything becomes freer and more open: the protagonists' gestures to each other, the writing itself... Even the supporting characters are described with sensitivity and enrich the story's setting.

Neta Halperin, Israel Hayom

Sealand, Albalach's first novel, adds even greater depth to her unique voice. She creates sensitive, clear and touching insights from ordinary daily materials, even news items...With delicate irony and compassion, she leads her quiet protagonists along a daringly subversive path.

Hadassa Wollman, Haaretz

The characters emerge from their apartments and their solitude, brought to life through writing that is both refined and restrained, allowing the reader to get to know them gradually and deeply. Here is Galia, a schoolteacher by day – not just an educator who carefully hides her fears from her students, but also a passionate, sensual woman. Here is Nathan, a lover of classical music who lives off the charity of his sister-in-law – yet he's also a revolutionary, someone willing to break the law in order to feel he's making the world a better place. And there is Peter, a foreign worker with no language and no marketable skills in his new surroundings – yet he is also a man of culture, whose dreams do not align with the status assigned to him.

All of these characters inspire empathy and warmth, while the world around them looms vast, frightening, and drenched in violence.

Meital Sharon, MAKO



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 Track is his eighth book.

The Track

Novel

Publisher: Hakibbutz Hameuchad | Year: 2025 | 160 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

A dinner for four ends in sudden, temporary blindness. A lovers' encounter at a hotel goes wrong. A scooter rider, fresh from a near accident, arrives at his aunt's home and stumbles upon something astonishing. Above ground, train traffic grinds to a halt – while deep beneath the surface, the marks of an ancient excavation in the rock still linger.

In precise, understated language, with his intimate storytelling and a fine thread of humor, Asaf Schurr paints the portrait of a society feeling its way through the dark. Stories, characters, and flashes of memory race like tracks toward a moment that seems on the verge of happening – or perhaps has already happened, its meaning still hidden. Together, they move toward a singular work of fiction unlike any other.

Asaf Schurr presents a deeply felt literary response to Israel's current social reality – one that shines a light toward the future. His previous works have been published in English (Dalkey Archives), German (Berlin Verlag), French (Actes Sud) and Italian (Voland).

Critical Praise

Few writers can take a familiar, cliché-filled exchange and render it with such precision and charm that it is precisely the formulaic phrasing of the characters that leaves the reader in awe of the writer's skill. Asaf Schurr is one of them. This is Schurr's eighth book, and here too he is a philosophical, empathetic author, with an exceptionally sharp pen and a distinctive sense of humor that surfaces from time to time...

The Track is not a post-apocalyptic novel, nor does it directly address current events, but it reads as a work charged with trauma from beginning to end. Its characters lead entirely ordinary daily lives – except for one thing that robs them of normality: a constant, chilling sense that everything could collapse in an instant, and any moment... Within this hyper-realistic reality, something happens that lies somewhere between the highly improbable yet still possible – and the outright fantastic. Time itself seems to slip off its rails, and the story's characters must exist under entirely different rules.

Some scenes feel like dreams; others like a confusing AI-generated image where you have to count the fingers to tell whether it's real or not... Schurr gazes at humanity from a perspective reminiscent of a nature film, or of a researcher peering with fascination at a petri dish in the lab. His research question is this: What happens in those moments when the ground splits open, time veers off course, and something occurs that is possible – yet utterly unthinkable. It's a question so urgently relevant these days, and Schurr does what

literature at its best does: approach it in an original, delicate, deeply sensitive way – without hammering away at the sore spots.

The conclusion of his inquiry is that everything we take for granted is, to an unbearable degree, fragile and brittle. The corner grocery in the village, the train station, the railway track, what seems reasonable to eat, and whom it seems reasonable to touch – all are invisible walls that can crumble in an instant. In the midst of this, human beings try to cling to what is taken for granted and to remain human. We know this, of course – but not in the unique way that *The Track* tells it.

Tzlil Avraham, Haaretz

This is a smart, subtle, and thought-provoking Israeli book, a carefully woven and precise fabric of human stories, with several protagonists. It's well divided into short chapters that begin and end in just the right places, written in Schurr's wonderfully crystal clear language, a language that makes readers more sensitive...

Anyone looking to read a creative and profound literary response to the contemporary Israeli reality—sad, horrifying, fragile, and shocked—should open *The Track* and discover the work of Asaf Schurr. I've considered Schurr one of the greats of Hebrew literature even before the massacre and the war, since he published his previous book, *The Bear*, which portrayed Israeli lives after a great disaster. In many ways, *The Track* continues the disaster consciousness of *The Bear*, but the understanding of disaster has shifted: it is no longer “something that happened” as a collective trauma, nor is it “something that will happen” as collective anxiety. Rather, it is here always, ongoing and spreading, shaping the subjects whose lives continue alongside it.

The two central storylines in this book are essentially emotional states that seem to move along by themselves, without any certainty that they can be controlled... The issue of naming, knowing how to call something by name, is important here in connection with the relations between psychic structures and social mechanisms. But above all, this is a work of images, where similar matter meets similar matter, and similar emotion meets similar emotion. Even the interwoven stories are analogous to one another... *The Track* is the essential literary response to October 7. It replaces memory albums and documentary texts. An outstanding literary creation is the one that plants its roots deep into the circumstances of its historical moment, and this is the literature that lights the way... It seems that Asaf Schurr has quietly embedded himself in the contemporary literary field, and with almost invisible steps, he fortifies his position as part of radical political writing in Hebrew.

Navit Barei, Ynet

Asaf Schurr's sentences practically dance, the words moving fluidly across the page... The short chapters weave together two main storylines in alternating episodes: one about the people in a train car, the next about a tangled relationship between two childhood friends and their partners. Sometimes the narrative veers off to a new character who seems minor at first, until they suddenly take on a key role. The story slips back and forth between these groups, switching from first-person perspectives to an all-knowing narrator, peppered with humor and surprises that pop up like clowns at a circus — all woven so tightly you just can't put the book down.

Everything's woven, literally. Thoughts, details, and scenes are described in such fine detail, zooming in deeper and deeper — and somehow, all at once, it connects with our own lives, yours and mine, here and now... And the ending? Simply amazing.

Atara Ofek, literary critic and blogger



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, Complete Spanish translation by Margalit Mendelson.

Books in translation: French, Actes Sud 2025 ; Italian, Salani, forthcoming.

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

This vision without concession yet funny of Israeli daily life could suggest a warning to those who wish to settle there. A sort of anti-hero, Joseph Shimel, the narrator and protagonist of Orly Castel Bloom's novel, wanders the streets of Tel Aviv, lost in his contradicting identities (he is Jewish on his father's side, Norman on his mother's). The French part is duped by a crook, Dvir. A very successful dystopia that reality not only demonstrated but surpassed.

Nicolas Weill, *Le monde* - summer 2025 "Nos Coups de Coeur pour L'été"

Our narrator meticulously chronicles a narrow, constrained life that he accepts without bitterness. He describes what happens outside his window in the polluted hyper-center of Tel Aviv. A bus station where 12 lines intersect (his kitchen window is so noisy that he waits until night or Shabbat to cook). And a methadone distribution center around which addicts struggle to survive. One of his greatest pleasures is watching *Des chiffres et des lettres* on a French channel, just as he used to at his grandmother's house. For a while, it's unclear where all of this is leading. But in the meantime, the observation of this man's mortally boring life—this mortally boring man himself—is incredibly captivating. His seemingly neutral tone (as if to say, it's not so bad, even while recounting his bleak life and that of his miserable, homeless, drug-addicted neighbors) is surprisingly addictive... The story is punctuated with varied twists that keep the reader engaged, much like a psychological thriller—but without the anxiety. At one point, Shimel hits rock bottom, and then, as if in a fairy tale, he inherits a house in Arromanches from his French grandmother. Without delay, he moves to Normandy and rediscovers a childhood paradise... During his stay, the novel touches on the fire at Notre-Dame, the Eurovision contest in Tel Aviv, and a series of fortunate and unfortunate events that the reader follows with fascination—because despite everything, it's impossible not to feel compassion, even sympathy, for this rather mediocre man. Not only does he hold no grudge against the former university colleagues who humiliated him or the unscrupulous settlers who defrauded him, but he also has the strength (or is it weakness?) to take both good and bad events with a certain equanimity. *Biotope* is Orly Castel-Bloom's eighth novel, and it contains her usual anxious depth, her sharp and extremely humorous perspective on her country, as well as on France—a country with which she has a relationship as strong as it is complex... But above all, in this book (finished in 2021), there is a new tone, a different kind of humor—less absurd. More joyful? In addition to absolute mastery, there is something like a newfound serenity. You can tell she was happy while writing it.

Natalie Levisalles, *Libération*

A French-speaking writer who writes in Hebrew, Orly Castel-Bloom is celebrated in Israel for pointing out the ambiguities and flaws of her country. She does this without flourishes or dramatic tension, in a manner that matches the deadpan narration and disillusioned observations of Joseph Shimel about his environment.

Isabelle Spaak, *Le Figaro*

Orly Castel-Bloom, one of the leading figures of contemporary Israeli literature, is back with a Kafkaesque novel that is as funny as it is unsettling. The protagonist of this book could be described as a hybrid between a character from Michel Houellebecq, Jonathan Franzen, and Franz Kafka, living in the apartment of Daniel Auteuil's character in the film *La Personne aux deux personnes*... With this new postmodern tragicomic novel, Castel Bloom delivers a scathing satire that is as hilarious as it is disturbing and disorienting. As we follow the misfortunes of poor Joseph Shimel—ultra-precarious, a true misfit antihero entangled in absurd and chaotic situations—we are never quite sure whether his mental health is deteriorating, if he is

trapped in a nightmare, or if this fractured, deranged society is just as mad as it seems. With creativity and boldness, Orly Castel-Bloom chooses to laugh at the struggles of modern life, mocking pettiness, conspiracy theories, the ultra-rich with their pools plagued by microalgae, extremists, the hell of WhatsApp groups, pseudo-humanitarian paternalistic initiatives, the arrogance of students, and even the somewhat lost French immigrants arriving in Israel.

Jacques Besnard, *Artes Libres*

From his balcony in Tel Aviv, Joseph Shimel plays with a remote control to raise and lower the parking gate, making drivers believe that God is personally opening the gate for them. Here, condensed into a short passage, is part of what makes Orly Castel-Bloom's work so distinctive: the constant interplay of contrasts (between the prosaic and the mystical, wealth and poverty, seriousness and frivolity), whose collision is most often hilarious and sometimes touching. This distinctive taste the Israeli writer sprinkles generously into "Biotope", marking the return of a rare author, now 64 years old. Emerging in the 1990s with her cult novels "Dolly City" (Actes Sud, 1993) and "Where I Am" (Actes Sud, 1995), Orly Castel-Bloom returns nine years after "An Egyptian Novel", moving from the Mediterranean to the English Channel for a highly Francophile book, partially written during a writing residency in Calvados. The reason? Joseph Shimel was born in 1969 in Bayeux to a mother who later moved to a kibbutz. This ancestry provides a providential lifeline to the otherwise mediocre destiny of this narrator, whose details you are left to discover. An only child, a single adult, a researcher who has yet to finish his thesis on gastronomy in Balzac, scraping by with odd jobs after failing to secure a permanent position at the university—this is the modest existence of a man who endures life rather than acts upon it. His life mirrors a novel that captures our times more through observation than action. This doesn't prevent it from being brilliant, however, as Joseph, adhering to the sole doctrine of "submitting to reality," offers us a hallucinatory distillation of an era. It's a time when cryogenics allows one to dream of immortality, global warming is cooled by denial, and misery ultimately drives all the homeless mad.

Youness Bousenna, *Télérama*

In the work of Orly Castel Bloom, the fantastic of yesterday has been overtaken by reality. But her realism today has something reassuring for the future... A tragicomedy of mismanaged guilt, *Biotope*, named after a biology assignment imposed on the author in high school, captivates by the psychological subtlety of the characters as much as by its descriptions. A passive hero, Shimel lets himself be tossed about in spite of himself by an existence full of storms, in which one can end up convincing oneself there is nothing desirable.

Nicolas Weill, *Le Monde*

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 Avivan “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, 2025

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)



Yirmi Pinkus

An illustrator, novelist, and one-time opera critic, Yirmi Pinkus won the Sapir Prize for a Debut Novel in 2009 for *Professor Fabrikant's Historical Cabaret*. The French edition of the novel was later shortlisted for the Prix Ulysse. *Petty Business*, published in 2012, was an Israeli bestseller, winning the Golden Book award of the Israeli Association of Book Publishers, and was adapted to theater. These two novels have been published in Italian, French and English.

A founding member of the Actus Independent Comics collective, Pinkus is a professor of illustration at the Shenkar College of Art and Design, Israel, where he has taught visual story telling for two decades. He is also an editor of picture books for young readers at Noah Books Publishers;

in 2014, he received the Israel Museum Illustration Award for his picture book *Mr. Fibber*.

Pinkus, who lives in Tel Aviv, is widely considered one of the wittiest and most astute storytellers of his home town.

A Stopover in Lindenbruck

Novel

Publisher: Keter | **Year:** Forthcoming | **162 pp. (MS)**

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations: Partial English translation by Yardenne Greenspan available

Micky Levinson is stuck at the Lindenbruck airport – a provincial town in southern Germany, where he needs to catch a connecting flight from Tel Aviv to Hamburg. As he wanders through the terminal, he encounters a gallery of bizarre passengers, all trying to kill time as they await their flights, who are drawn to tell him their life stories and to extract his. As the hours go by and the flight is delayed again and again, the more questions arise about Micky – what is his real identity? Did he really win the lottery, as he keeps telling everybody? Is he traveling, or running away? And if so, from whom? The short vignettes, each told from the perspective of a different character, slowly start to assemble a picture of Micky's life, and the enigma starts to unravel as Lindenbruck – and the world – fall under the threat of a mysterious epidemic.

With his signature blend of sharp, witty humor, poetic descriptions and his keen eye for the human condition, Yirmi Pinkus creates a novel that grapples with issues of pretense and authenticity, immigration, mundane bureaucracy and the possible escape of love and human connection in an age of solitude.

Critical praise for past works

Yirmi Pinkus' Tel Aviv is beautiful, joyful, messy, wonderful... There is no doubt that Pinkus is one of the greatest living writers in Israel, and he is simply getting better and better... *Way Too Lazy to Die* is a beautiful lament for a world that once was, with a cultural scene populated with real characters: the ones who ran wild in their twenties back in the 1970's, and who came back in the 1990's, in their forties, for a second round of madness. A brilliant book... every moment is a pleasure.

Yediot Ahronoth

The Israeli comic novelist that we have coveted for years... [Yirmi Pinkus] is a brilliant illustrator, with an omniscient sense for all kinds of characters and situations... His humour... is almost always on point, elegant, effortless, and always at the service of the story. Unlike his forebears in the genre (Hanoah Levin aside), Pinkus does not hesitate to turn to the poetic when the mood takes him. I relished every word.

Ma'ariv

Yirmi Pinkus' new book is sharp and witty. For several days, I walked about with a smile on my face. I really hope that Pinkus is now working on his fifth book

La'Isha

An enjoyable and admirable [book], depicting covetousness as a harmless fantasy.

Yediot Aharonot

A picaresque ode, dedicated to the love of Yiddish folk theater... chanting the Hebrew text, words from their language, bits of sentences that become music in French translation, melancholy yet with legendary humor. A recognition of the very soul of Yiddish culture. Professor Fabrikant's Grand Cabaret retraces the odyssey of the troupe of eccentric Romanian bourgeois, made up of seven young orphans whom he saved from a sad fate.

Eglal Errera, Le Monde

But the '30s were actually bustling years of revival for Yiddish and Yiddish culture. Pinkus alludes to Kafka, Chagall, and Manger, who represent this avant-garde period. Having Yiddish represented by aged actresses may seem anachronistic, like the present's view of the past. But Pinkus manages to breathe new life even into this cliché: nothing, his novel convinces us, is younger and more alive than an old Yiddish actress.

Benny Mer, Haaretz

A troupe composed of bric-a-brac, with its orphans, and its abandoned women with hatreds, complicities, and pettiness. A joyful epic that serves as a picaresque tale, a Polish-style road movie; a truculent tale where Yiddish theater is in the spotlight, before meeting the looming horror of the camps.

Lauren Schteiner, Lecturama



Ari Lieberman

Born in Mexico and raised in Israel, Ari Lieberman turned to fiction after an early infatuation with the visual arts. He has a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Princeton University and currently teaches at the University of Georgia. He is the author of three novels, as well as multiple short stories and essays. His 2022 novel *Samson the Silent* was short-listed for the Sapir Prize for Literature.

Happiness

Novel

Publisher: Achuzat Bayit | Year: 2024 | 256 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations: Complete English available

One morning, Osher (meaning happiness in Hebrew) Carlebach, a 44-year-old divorced and lonely man, receives devastating news: he has a malignant tumor in his brain and his death is fast approaching. Faced with this dark discovery and the short time he has left, he undergoes a transformation. We follow him over the course of one day, as he wanders the streets of Jerusalem, pursues forgotten dreams, rekindles old loves, seeks closure, and at times behaves recklessly, as expected of someone with no future. This absolute present in which Osher decides to live places him - and us - face to face with experiences that are at times humorous, at others deeply moving, awe-inspiring, and even chilling. The doomed protagonist is joined by an unforgettable gallery of supporting characters, each adding their unique shades to Osher's life. He becomes a kind of later-day Ecclesiastes, and within this dramatic day lies the essence of the entire biblical scroll. Like Ecclesiastes, Osher explores the purpose of human existence in a world of futility, both in tragicomic moments and in the face of absurdity. He examines everything around him in an attempt to uncover the secret of life and the meaning of death and returns with a surprisingly definitive answer.

Critical praise

Lieberman's third novel breathes life into an old literary and philosophical cliché... The protagonist's awakening to his own mortality directs him to live properly; and with sudden urgency, he attains the spiritual, mental and sexual freedom necessary to celebrate what little time he has left... on his final day he is finally free from his crippling mortal anxiety: in the shadow of death, life becomes simple... He cherishes the joy of his living body, his liberty and the total absence of fear. Although these may seem predictable outcomes, Lieberman's main achievement is the avoidance of the cliché nature of these ideas, which he accomplishes by portraying them with kindness and a sense of humor... Osher chooses to experience his last day through the vitality of storytelling, rather than the melancholy of a doomed fate. Similarly, the novel does not take itself too seriously; it knowingly frees itself from heavy-handed reflection on the meaning of life. Instead of engaging with grand themes, the novel wanders through the small and mundane. The city of Jerusalem, whose streets the protagonist roams throughout that day, takes on the role of the goddess of fate - it orchestrates encounters and memories on the streets of the Rechavia neighborhood and the alleyways of Machneh Yehuda market. Freed from the fear of death, Osher lingers for the first time in his life, on the minutiae of the everyday: he breathes the air deeply, notices the scents, and takes pleasure in them. The protagonist rediscovers the world's

details, filling his consciousness with everything that the bustling activity of life had erased. Similarly, the novel itself wanders through works of literature - from the Jewish prayer book, through Sholem Aleichem, to Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener*... Thankfully, there are almost no didactic moments. The narrative avoids attempting to frame the protagonist's experiences as a comprehensive spiritual stance, where every sign or encounter carries meaning. On the contrary, the tapestry of randomness and profound significance takes on a tragicomic form - a form that recognizes within the hum of forgiving laughter the silence that inevitably awaits at the end of the road.

Omry Herzog, Haaretz

Lieberman is a quintessential postmodernist. Not only does his language constantly switch from the lofty to the mundane, sampling different linguistic registers and creating paraphrases of canonical texts, he also deliberately constructs impossible, even absurd coincidences throughout Osher's final day. It almost seems as if these events could not happen in reality, as if they are intentionally unrealistic, or perhaps the entire novel, like a stream of consciousness, actually takes place only in Osher's sick mind. A man who spent his whole life consumed by an all-encompassing fear of death, and now, as he faces it and knows this day has come, he is serene and calm. The pure childhood memory, the pivotal moment of Osher's life, is breathtakingly beautiful and masterfully written, and it is impossible not to be moved by its description. It is during this pivotal moment that Osher loses his happiness, as awareness and the stifling burden of consciousness enter and replace the joy of his idyllic childhood. It is impossible not to see in this moment some symbolic element reflecting our lives in Israel, though the author handles it casually, subtly, and with symbolism that doesn't feel heavy-handed. To this space, Osher will return on his last day, like a criminal revisiting the scene of the crime, partly in the flesh, partly within his consciousness.

Ran Yagil, Israel Hayom

Death is the true protagonist of this novel, and it is the thing that gives life meaning, drives us to act, and mostly frees us from inhibitions and submissions to all sorts of insignificant ambitions, ranging from the wish to placate other people and the pursuit of respect and credit to the false promise of a successful career.

Dafna Levi, Israel Hayom



Yuval Yareach

Yuval Yareach was born 1971 in Hod Hasharon, Israel. He holds a degree in Social Sciences from the University of Haifa. In the 1990s, he participated in creative writing workshops with authors A.B. Yehoshua and Ortziyon Bartana. In 2013, he transitioned to teaching and is now a high school English and Computer teacher. His first books were the short story collection *The Yearning* (2000) and *The Naked Dictionary* (2003). His novel *The Silences* (2016), which tells the story of his grandmother's life during the Holocaust, was a bestseller and received critical acclaim. *Blind Spot* is his third novel.

Blind Spot

Novel

Publisher: Kinneret Zmorah Bitan | Year: 2024 | 256 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations: Partial English translation by Yardenne Greenspan

Inspector Yair Yamin can speak to the dead. He listens to what their remains tell him about the story of their lives, trying to understand how they perished. In this investigation, too, he focuses all his efforts on listening, attempting to solve the mystery surrounding the identity and fate of a skeleton discovered in the Negev desert, next to a Bedouin settlement. But the clamor of mounting evidence, as suspects are ruled out one by one, and the information piling up threatens to drown out Yair's inner voice. He finds himself sinking deeper and deeper into a world of violence and exploitation, a world of men taking whatever they please and women being reduced to commodities. This conjures guilt-ridden memories, alongside his failure to protect a woman under his care, the thickening silence of his wife, and the growing distance from his only son. As every step forward in the investigation only seems to push the solution further away, the horizon slips further and further from Yair's grasp. *Blind Spot* is a gripping work that constantly oscillates between the poetic and the technical, sweeping the readers into a torrential and whirling stream of consciousness that plunges them into the protagonist's conflicted soul. This is a dark, realistic detective story offering a jarring glimpse into the collapse of silent and alienated toxic masculinity, carrying within it the seeds of its own destruction.

Critical praise

Yuval Yareach's bright and daring novel disguises itself as a police detective story yet it aims to unearth disturbing truths about women's exploitation. In the best tradition of noir fiction, it presents a lonely, tormented investigator haunted by past trauma, exposed to the worst imaginable human evil, and forced to confront it morally and emotionally on his way to solving the mystery. But this seemingly familiar genre framework serves as bait, and a trap that becomes increasingly clear as the murder investigation progresses. Clues are examined, suspects are arrested and interrogated, yet the investigation is stuck. Out of this vacuum emerges the chronicle of a different death, unfolding in the novel's final lines, which bears no resemblance whatsoever to a detective story. This literary structure, that is gradually revealed is sophisticated and brilliant, as it directly addresses the issues at the heart of the novel... Depicting a horrifying world of slavery, rape, and abuse always poses a challenge for writers, walking a tightrope between a realistic portrayal of violence and suffering and elements of voyeuristic thrills bordering on exploitation. The horrors shock the readers but also evokes a sense of moral superiority and relief: these lives, however terrible, are distant and other. Crime stories set in this territory often emphasize the triumph of the human spirit, of survivors of exploitation or the detective who

brings the culprits to justice. This literary stance reinforces the cathartic effect of confronting such realities and, symbolically, reproduces the exploitation it critiques. Yuval Yerach is acutely aware of this trap. "In TV shows, they manage to find the killer, but in real life, what are the chances, after 20 years, for a hooker no one cared about?" he writes. The narrator follows Yamin's internal monologue, recounting it in a rough and authentic language, yet he also intervenes in the plot, commenting on it, addressing characters directly, and occasionally even the readers. The novel is deliberately artificial; it exposes the illusion that literature can mediate or resolve such horrors. Gradually, the real story is revealed: this is not a tale of delayed justice but of how evil ultimately defeats those who witness it. The violence Yamin encounters every day alienates him from others. Like an infectious disease, it festers within him, leaving no clear path for release. Yuval Yerach's novel is sophisticated, harrowing, and daring. Its title, *Blind Spot*, does not refer to the detective struggling to understand what happened to Anna in the desert, far from her home and family. It refers to the consciousness of the readers. The vision the book presents is deeply unsettling. I usually read at night before bed, but in the case of this book, I couldn't sleep.

Omry Herzog, *Haaretz*



Tamar Raphael

Born in 1989 in Petach Tikvah, Israel, Tamar lived in Tel Aviv and currently resides in Berlin. Her first book, a poetry collection titled *Receding Songs*, published in 2021, won her the Ministry of Culture Prize for Young Poets. Her debut novel, *There Were Two with Nothing to Do*, published in 2024, was received with rave reviews and won the Brener Prize's honorable mention for a debut novel. Her poems and short stories were published in various journals, including *Granta*, *Ho!*, *Hava LeHaba*, *Maayan*, *Moznayim* and *Panas*. She worked as the literary critic of *Time Out* magazine and translated the novella *Benigna Machiavelli* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. She currently teaches Hebrew as a second language while working on her next novel, which will revolve around contemporary issues of immigration and memory.

In August 2025 she'll be a resident at the prestigious MacDowell artist residency program located in Peterborough, New Hampshire.

There were Two with Nothing to Do

Novel

Publisher: Pardes | Year: 2024 | 345 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations: Partial English translation available.

Yiftach and Ellinor live together “in this city by the sea, which isn't what it used to be”. Ellinor yearns to write, but can barely manage to read. Yiftach, whose advice is usually sound, tells her that the problem is that she's searching for herself in every word, and so she endeavors to turn her gaze outward. He is a parliamentary assistant of an elected official, one of the good guys, as far removed from the ruling party as possible. He also tries to help Dana, his high school sweetheart, who returned to the city after many years abroad. Dana wants to get involved in politics, but it's hard to enter a world that is slowly falling apart. Surrounding the protagonists are floating pieces of conversations, intertwined voices, phrases and sayings that are heard and understood out of context – all coming at a great price. *There Were Two with Nothing to Do* is a literary accomplishment, a meticulous and raw portrayal of the attempts of sensitive and intellectual young people to comprehend themselves, just before everything changes. In a poetically analytic language, the author describes a tangle of coming-of-age stories, trying to understand what roles her generation can fulfill at a time when politics and language become empty and hollow. This is not a story of dreamers being awakened to a fragile, ambivalent and violent reality, but a confrontation with this reality from an already disillusioned point of view. Bravery and cowardice are fused together and everyone seems to be circling themselves, searching for budding ambitions and trying to identify what prevents them from feeling fulfilled.

Critical praise

Melancholy is a central element in this book, no less than its fairly minimalist plot. Raphael wrote a debut novel with a distinctive and well-crafted style, possessing a rhythm and atmosphere that transcend both place and historical context. Her style is so unique that one must pause and attempt to break it down: part of it is achieved through her insistence on not mentioning specific names. Her protagonists live in “the city by the sea”, Yiftach works at “the House of Representatives”, a colleague of his gets entangled in a controversy on “social media”, and significant historical events unfold in “our beloved superpower”. This choice imbues the novel with a sense of detachment and anonymity. Another aspect is Raphael's sensitivity to words... Added to this is her impressive ability to defamiliarize banal images, crafting marvelous descriptions... Together, these

elements create an impression that is somehow both highly precise and entirely unspecific - a style that perfectly reflects the stagnation and sense of helplessness experienced by Yiftach and Ellinor... Despite the lack of specificity in terms of time and place, *There Were Two with Nothing to Do* naturally lends itself to being read as a novel about generational disappointment. It explores the constraints of this particular time and place for people who had prepared themselves to live lives as the cultural and economic elite, only to find themselves struggling for small consolation prizes, such as publishing a book or securing a job as a parliamentary aide. But even though the setting is familiar and the message is easy to decipher, it would be a mistake to read the novel solely as a social and economic critique. Its true strength lies in its universality. The question “What’s wrong with her?” or “Why is this young, talented woman unhappy?” is a key motif recurring in literature throughout the generations. The answer to it is sometimes gendered, sometimes shaped by the era, and sometimes, there is no answer at all. In 1963, Sylvia Plath crafted an extraordinarily bleak depiction of a young woman’s experience in *The Bell Jar*... This dark image became a symbol of youthful depression. Plath’s protagonist, a brilliant and sought-after student accepted into a prestigious writing program at a New York magazine, experiences what appears from the outside to be a life of endless opportunities, akin to wandering through a candy store, yet from the inside, it feels like a desperate, Sisyphean struggle to carve out a path in an artificial and meaningless world. Raphael’s novel ends when its protagonist is 29, just before the final deadline to board the train of heteronormativity and settle into the expected path without paying too high a price. Raphael bids farewell to her readers with a kind of apology, noting that most of the book was written before the pandemic and before the war, making its small-scale story perhaps seem even smaller now. But this is precisely where its power lies, in its ability to depict a sincere and delicate human story about one person’s journey to find their place in the world.

Tzlil Avraham, Haaretz

This tension between independence and referencing, between freedom and alluding, is present in Raphael’s debut novel - a delightful and decadent work (in the best sense of the word). Ellinor, a frustrated aspiring writer, and her partner Yiftach, an idealistic functionary in a left-wing party (without explicitly saying “left-wing”), navigate a world of cultural references and parodic debates about privilege and social change - all within a specific radius of Tel Aviv (without explicitly saying “Tel Aviv”). And just as in Raphael’s poetry, in her prose as well, the act of writing and the search for a personal (or impersonal) style become the subject itself. As one character pointedly says to Ellinor: “What does that even mean, to write like someone else?... You can’t write like anyone else, Ellinor. You can barely write like yourself”. *There Were Two with Nothing to Do* is an impressive performance of revelation and concealment, of playfulness and sincerity, capturing the spirit of a place and time that must remain unnamed.

Leo Gurevich, Haaretz

The novel’s protagonists meet and part, get together and break up, but above all, they search for a role that will define them and give them a sense of place - whether it’s saving the world, helping others, or simply *doing* something. An exception among these characters is Ellinor, who has neither a role nor a job, whose face absorbs the expressions of those around her, and who can barely be herself.

Motty Fogel, Yediot Aharonot

In the uncanny yet familiar world that Raphael constructs, nothing is stated explicitly, exactly as it is. Abstract ideas are lost in a tangle of words and sentences, simpler concepts are left unsaid, and even the most basic terms are replaced. Instead of Tel Aviv, there is “the city by the sea”; instead of a left-wing party, there are “our side” and “our camp”; instead of WhatsApp, there is “the instant messaging app”. As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that this is more than just a clever stylistic choice. Layer by layer, Rafael builds an atmosphere of detachment - ironic and almost grotesque - where everyone, with a deep sense of self-importance, talks endlessly about very little. The characters occasionally recognize the slightly more complex language around them, yet they remain cocooned in a uniform, insular discourse, one that directly embodies the “right” messages, the indignation and righteousness of their worldview. For Ellinor, however, this discourse takes on

a more private, physical, and often non-dialogic form... Raphael's linguistic and representational elusiveness, combined with her masterful command of Hebrew, is evident on every page, not just in her portrayal of public and cultural spaces but also in her depiction of personal experiences. Ellinor's public silence - her constant wondering "what do they know that she doesn't" - becomes both a barrier and an invitation into her inner world, brimming with hyper-awareness and sharp analytical insights. It would be easy to dismiss her life - struggling to read because she searches for herself in every word, struggling to write because writing requires an active interest in things outside oneself - as a portrait of privileged idleness. Similarly, Raphael's attempt to characterize "the self-exploration of educated and sensitive young people, just before everything changes", as described in the book's back cover copy, could be seen as overly ambitious. But the novel proves that this ambition is justified, if only because these educated, sensitive young people manage to represent something far beyond the fragile boundaries, both literal and metaphorical, of greater Tel Aviv... Ellinor's struggle to find her place in the big city, in the wider world, among the so-called "great" people, serves as a reminder that this elusive space is not a matter of geography. The challenge of navigating space, any space, whether peripheral or central, bourgeois or bohemian, is always elusive, requiring interpretation and arrangement. Any deeply felt presence within a defined environment can serve as the foundation for a multifaceted process of both collapse (of ideologies, definitions, roles) and creation (of words, language, reality, experience)... Raphael presents an extremely impressive debut novel, distinguished by a strikingly personal style, a notable talent rich in sensitivity and aesthetic depth, and a masterful, intricate handling of the Hebrew language.

Yaacov Goldberg, MAKO

When I came across Tamar Raphael's debut novel, I was glad to discover that it encompasses the authentic experiences of a generation of the here and now... *There Were Two with Nothing to Do* is a refreshing, different and intriguing novel... In the first person, and through a protagonist with a delicate soul and a clear-eyed gaze, Raphael depicts Ellinor's hesitant steps with remarkable restraint, avoiding sentimentality or clichés. Drawing on both well-known and niche literary references, Raphael dissects the experiences of a woman struggling to find her place in the world, not only because of her age but also due to the endless national and political turmoil surrounding her. The novel grapples with everything that troubles young people in their early twenties: relationships, starting a family, career choices, and self-fulfillment. But when all these concerns persist in the shadow of political upheaval, it is the most personal, intimate form of agency that is truly put to the test. While reading, I couldn't help but be reminded of Ronit Matalon's distinctive writing, rooted in both a sharp human sensitivity and an incisive critical perspective. The novel raises fundamental questions that linger long after the last page: Who does the younger generation look up to? What are its personal and political role models? And in the end, what will prevail - fear or hope?

Sarai Shavit, Israel Hayom

The absence of hope is precisely the central theme of the novel. All the evasions that permeate the story - dodging action, avoiding strong opinions, shying away from commitment to either personal or collective goals - form its very core. Evasion is both the content, an indirect yet sharp political critique, and the form: the novel articulates a different kind of poetics, one that might be called *the poetics of disappointment*. The language of the novel is steeped in avoidance, a deliberate distancing from direct engagement with things themselves. And yet, this constant circling around issues ends up drawing a bold outline around precisely what the text critiques. One of the novel's defining historical moments is described in a way that not only disillusioned millennials will immediately recognize.

Shiri Shapira, Sfarim BeOtobusim

Ellinor's indirect path, set apart from the race her peers are running, and, on the other hand, the helplessness of those runners and the futility of their efforts, are masterfully crafted in the novel. The plot unfolds at a leisurely pace, with every action deconstructed down to its smallest components, creating a sense of deceleration, distance, and suspension, as events seem to hover, stripped of their immediate meaning. This is, first and foremost, a poetic achievement, and Rafael's strength as a poet is evident in descriptions such as:

“I waited for the moment when the lilac-colored sun would be sucked into the water”... The novel’s process of dismantling and reassembling mundane occurrences, or, in this case, a cliché like a sunset, not only forces readers to slow down and engage in active reading but also suggests that language itself does not fulfill its role. The separation between signifier and signified, the refusal to follow conventional linguistic paths, opens the door to new discoveries. A seemingly trivial description gains vividness in the reader’s mind’s eye, painting a living picture that reveals the underlying tension simmering beneath the surface of this strange situation... At the same time, this prolonged focus, this close examination, paradoxically creates a sense of detachment, as if the narrative were lifted from an anthropological study. Indeed, there is perhaps something anthropological in Rafael’s gaze throughout the novel. The end result is a work of striking beauty, filled with sharp insights scattered throughout its pages.

Naama Israeli, HaPanas



Julia Fermentto Tzaisler

Julia Fermentto Tzaisler was born in 1984 and raised in Kfar Saba, a suburb of Tel Aviv. She has been heralded by the Israeli press as “a brave new voice” (*Haaretz*), and “if not the voice of her generation, then at least one of its chroniclers” (Prof. Eva Illouz, Hebrew University). *Safari*, her debut novel, was an Israeli bestseller. Her short stories have been translated and published in several languages. A journalist, essayist and critic, Fermentto Tzaisler has a Ph.D. in Jewish American Literature from UC San Diego. Julia Fermentto Tzaisler has been nominated Artistic Director of the prestigious Jerusalem Writers Festival at Mishkenot Sha’ananim.

Black Honey

Novella

Publisher: Achuzat Bayit | Year: Forthcoming, 2026 | 46,000 words

Translation rights: World

Audio Visual rights: World

Translation: Partial English by Yardenne Greenspan and Complete German translation by Ruth Achlama

Books in translation: German (Diogenes, Zurich), 2026

Talia Cohen-Kaplan is an Israeli expat living in New York. For over a decade, she has been struggling to complete her PhD in Hebrew literature at NYU. She is married to Daniel, an American-Jewish composer, and they have an 8-year-old daughter. We meet her in the midst of a crisis dealing with the emotional burden of a decade of immigration – as he yearns for her homeland, her language, and longs for the promises of the past. Her marriage is strained, her social ties are flimsy, and her career is stagnant - she feels lonely. Enter Efrat Shor, a mother of three from Tel Aviv, who calls Talia one evening asking her to visit Noam, her husband, who is hospitalized in critical condition, with whom Talia has an unresolved romantic past. The phone call, coming out of the blue, shakes Talia’s life up. She decides to travel to Tel Aviv to visit him, under the guise of a work trip, as she begins to weave a web of lies. Now, all these relationships are unraveling and being re-stitched; marriages, parenthood, homeland, and the unexpected relationship between Talia and Efrat. This is a story of two women and the surprising intersection of their lives.

Critical Praise

A story of life in exile, of longing for one’s homeland, and of taking a chance on love – or not. This novel is worldly-wise on the *Sturm und Drang* of living abroad and what gets left behind, an Israeli echo of Shakespeare, of the advice Polonius gives to his son – ‘to thine own self be true’.

John Irving

“Is it a novel about a love-hate relationship with two different countries or two different men? I would guess both, and that’s what makes “black honey” so erotic, powerful, and thought-provoking”

Eshkol Nevo

Exile

Novella

Publisher: Achuzat Bayit | Year: 2025 | 135 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations: Partial English translation available

Rubi Yerushalmi is, or actually was, a filmmaker and high school teacher. After moving from his peripheral hometown of Nahariya to the big city, he became a well-known figure in Tel Aviv's fringe culture. We meet him as he celebrates his 44th birthday alone, on a secluded beach in a faraway country that he fled to after a series of sexual harassment incidents he committed two decades earlier became public. Lonely and terrified, he tries to reconstruct the stories and recall the women he harmed, revealing a bleak and complex picture. The second half of the novel focuses on Romi Heller, a young and beautiful actress who met Rubi at a club and went home with him. Even though what transpired between them that night was not illegal per se, it had a devastating effect on her psyche. The story follows her struggle in the weeks following that night. The novel reaches its climax when Rubi and Romi meet for one small and agonizing moment. Fermentto-Tzaisler's novel examines the boundaries of the 'gray area' in the relationships between men and women in the #MeToo era and sheds light on the psychological and physical implications of such encounters. She portrays the characters of Rubi and Romi with compassion and humanity, refraining from making moral judgments, and unfolds a groundbreaking novel that explores the perspective of a man grappling with the consequences of his actions in the #MeToo era and cancel culture, while also offering a new model for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Critical Praise

In this tight and precise novella, Julia Fermentto-Tzaisler creates a literary work which is both intimate and universal, delving deep into the protagonists's psyche and raising complex questions on justice, identity and exile – both literal and psychological. Though it is read breathlessly, the impression of the book lingers and resonates long after the reading is done... Romi and Rubi's relationship embodies the power dynamics between the artist and his muse, the old and the new, the powerful older man and the young woman trying to make her way.

Romi's character is complex: she isn't the voiceless victim, yet she doesn't have the upper hand either. She moves between the strive for independence and the inevitable dependence in the power structures and hierarchies typical of the art and culture sphere... The way in which she develops throughout the novel into a distinct character with an independent and unique voice creates a layered and thought-provoking novel. Fermentto-Tzaisler's writing is sharp and realistic, yet filled with compassion. There are no unequivocal accusations here, nor a simplistic portrayal of characters as purely good or evil. Instead, the novel presents a nuanced exploration of a man who may have believed he was in control, only to discover how much of his life was built on illusion. The book also examines personal and collective memory, questioning whether one can truly escape their past and what happens when there is nowhere left to return to.

One of the most impressive aspects of Fermentto-Tzaisler's writing is its precision—both in style and in the novel's structure. Not a single word is redundant, and the plot moves forward with momentum without sacrificing depth or emotional gravity. The dialogues feel natural, the descriptions are almost cinematic, and the emotions that flood the characters are conveyed with disarming honesty.

Not only a personal and psychological novel, *Exile* is also a social one. It examines the post-MeToo social reality from an unconventional perspective, and the questions it raises remain unanswered. This is not an attempt to justify questionable actions or relieve moral judgment, but rather an invitation to reflect—on power, remorse, and whether redemption is at all possible.

Julia Fermentto-Tzaisler, one of the most prominent and unique voices in Tel Aviv literature of the past decade, now publishes *Exile*, her fourth novel. Tel Aviv is portrayed as a tangible, turbulent, and dizzying city—an alluring intellectual ideal that only a select few manage to grasp. The protagonists of the book, who arrive in the city only to be cast out, are not among them. You'll want to read this.

Time Out

Rubi, the protagonist of Julia Fermentto-Tzaisler's novella *Exile*, is a complex character. A charming, well-built, handsome, and talented man, he lives in Tel Aviv, surrounded by a group of cultured people like himself, though from a slightly different background. He left Nahariya (a small town in the north of Israel), where he was born and raised (and bullied by his schoolmates), and never looked back. In Tel Aviv, he became a successful director, a teacher at an art school - and a man whose reputation follows him and ultimately catches up with him. His romantic affairs went on for years, uninterrupted, walking the tightrope of various shades of gray, ranging from unbridled sexual behavior with young women—some of them practically girls—to a more unambiguous case.

But now, something has happened. Times have changed, and past wrongs are raised anew and demand justice. As a result, Rubi now looks at the present, and what led to it, from a different perspective. At the same time, Fermentto-Tzaisler also tells the story of the young women, primarily Romi's, who came face to face with Rubi's blurred boundaries. What happens to her as a result of this encounter, and what happens to others in the book, is a reflection of what happens to women who have undergone abuse, whether slight or severe. Throughout most of the book, readers are repeatedly forced to form an opinion and then challenge it — to feel empathy for the perpetrator, sometimes against their will, only to subsequently experience utter disgust.

For the most part, Fermentto-Tzaisler writes with moral ambiguity, in grayscale, which ultimately culminates in an unequivocal situation—one that may still evoke compassion for the perpetrator... However, the case she describes is interesting not only for these reasons but for others as well. First and foremost, because it echoes very real cases that have unfolded in the Israeli public sphere, particularly in the milieu to which Fermentto-Tzaisler herself belongs... At times, it even seems as though she is describing actual events—book launches on Tel Aviv rooftops and regular cafés—that certain readers may feel they themselves have attended... The seven years that have passed since the release of *Kfar Saba 2000* and the release of *Exile* do not diminish the sense that, as she has done before, Fermentto-Tzaisler has once again observed an enigmatic reality and sought to explore it through a literary experiment, to bind it safe within the pages of a book.

Gili Izikovich, Haaretz

“Everyone is born a king; some people die in exile”, declared our sharp-witted teacher and master, Oscar Wilde. But in Julia Fermentto-Tzaisler's new novel *Exile*, even one's childhood in provincial Nahariya can be as hellish as adult life, in Tel Aviv or on a Caribbean island. Such is the life of Rubi Yerushalmi, a filmmaker and a renowned figure in Tel Aviv's cultural scene, who is accused of serious sexual misconduct and flees far from the insular Israeli cultural milieu to a deserted island. Fermentto-Tzaisler has mastered the art of writing well-rounded and complex characters, both male and female. Particularly moving is the way the chubby, rejected boy from Nahariya - an Israeli version of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ugly Duckling* - becomes an influential man, only to ultimately sink to such a low point...

Fermentto-Tzaisler is a mature writer. She knows exactly where she stands on the spectrum and what she is doing... In *Exile*, cinema is a central theme. This is manifest not only in the protagonist's being a filmmaker, but also in the novel's structure, which consists of segments without chapter divisions, rather like cinematic scenes and *mise-en-scènes*, resembling a series of shots and two-shots. Some even evoke

the feeling of a thriller or detective film, as a police investigation unfolds involving Rubi... Romi, the victim, does not admit to herself that she was raped, and those around her - her parents and friends - never entertain the possibility, despite her worsening psychological state. Only external signs—omens or miraculous signals from the world, calling to her through coincidences involving objects, people, and situations, both imagined and real—constantly hint, like a divine code, at the rape she underwent...

Another central motif in Fermentto-Tzaisler's novels is the tension between the periphery and the big city. The protagonists are drawn toward the city, pouring into it, rising from the gutters. This is a mythical Tel Aviv that exists only in their dreams, as no such city truly exists. An urban space where they imagine they will be celebrated as cultural heroes. But dreams and reality are two different things - great hopes remain unfulfilled, and many dreams fade. Fermentto-Tzaisler skillfully conveys this feeling of small but grand-spirited artists, those whose ambitions far exceed their ability to realize them. Fermentto-Tzaisler is, at her core, a profoundly social writer. She emphasizes and prioritizes social critique, particularly extreme real-life cases that have impacted civil society. In Kfar Saba 2000, it was the murderer Re'i Horev. One may speculate and think of several figures from the Israeli cultural milieu and their sexual transgressions - harassment and rape - that may have served as inspiration for the author. Fermentto-Tzaisler employs an intriguing technique in character and scene construction, leaving loose ends, much like in postmodern cinema. Peripheral figures from the protagonists' pasts appear and disappear intermittently along the narrative's trajectory, illuminating the main characters before being abandoned mid-story...

They don't merely pass by; rather, they paint the protagonists in a different light. That is their entire *raison d'être*, and through them, both the male and female leads evolve into even more interesting and complex characters. I was also drawn to Fermentto-Tzaisler's urban-erotic conception of the artist. The premise here is that individuals on the fringes, deeply self-involved and narcissistic, may engage in acts that society rightly deems disgraceful and illegitimate; yet, these actions stem not only from animalistic urges but from their being artists, living on the edge, with souls exposed to the pain of existence. This is, ostensibly, a romantic, conservative, somewhat outdated notion of "the artist". And yet, in contrast to the rigid sterility of gender discourse and the tyranny of political correctness - which, unfortunately, has drained all vitality from the field - there is something refreshing about it.

Albert Camus' renowned and late story collection *Exile and the Kingdom* takes Wilde's clever saying and translates it into stories - situations and characters. Camus depicts five men and one woman who have passed through childhood and adolescence, their "kingdom", and now enter the Sartrean age of reason and awareness, only to suddenly find themselves in exile. The same is true of the two protagonists of Fermentto-Tzaisler's novel. They each follow their own path from the sovereignty of consciousness to exile: Rubi Yerushalmi and Romi Heller (note the intentional phonetic resemblance in their names). They are mirror reflections of one another, even though one is the perpetrator and the other the victim, and Fermentto-Tzaisler writes them masterfully.

Ran Yagil, Israel Hayom

Julia Fermentto-Tzaisler is still a storyteller whose charm one cannot refuse - from the very first page it is clear that it will be impossible to stop reading.

Dor Babayoff, MAKO

In Julia Fermentto-Tzaisler's determination to restore a few shreds of beauty, human decency, dignity and sensuality to literature, she has written an astonishing novella - a painfully honest, kaleidoscopic and intensely personal take on the many meanings of trouble.

Christian Kracht



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.

All The Way from Oklahoma

Short Stories

Publisher: Shtayim | Year: 2024 | 160 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translation: partial English translation available

The Pontiac wasn't easy to drive but that's all they had and we took it. I become aware of the expressions on the faces of the drivers who swerve around me. They range from amazement to pity to fury. As one woman overtakes irritably, she turns back to yell, "If you don't know how to drive, go back to fucking Oklahoma!" and I don't even know where Oklahoma is. We're giving the state bad PR. There are days when I know that without Ami's love I won't survive more than twenty minutes, and on other days I shove away that love, ball it up like an unsuccessful draft and don't give it a second thought. But now Ami is in pieces, unconscious, and I have to keep going. We may need a doctor after all.

Four funerals and one grandpa who disappeared and refuses to attend his own funeral; A young mother who runs away from home and embarks on an intergalactic journey of self-discovery; A woman emerging from her old leather suit in a Kafkaesque story; A lively elderly woman in a heroic battle for life and death against a representative of a construction company coveting her home. These and others are the protagonists of the fantastical, wild, poetic, and amusing stories in the new collection by Saleit Shahaf Poleg, *All the Way from Oklahoma*. Saleit Shahaf Poleg burst onto the local literary scene with *Till It Rains Again*, her debut novel that garnered praise from readers and critics alike, and went on to win the Ministry of Culture's Publishing Award for a debut novel. The book became a bestseller in Israel and was published in German (Aufbau) and Italian (Neri Pozza).

Critical Praise

The stories are diverse and revolve mostly around female protagonists, even though the best story is about a man – a grandfather who, while dead, drags his family from cemetery to cemetery in four funerals taking place at different times, as he disappears and refuses to attend his own funeral, as he used to disappear all his life, living the grandmother worried and wondering where he is... It is clear that every story is different, and they are all very good. The logos of the stories, their essence, the overarching argument of the oeuvre, isn't new; Shahaf Poleg walks in familiar paths of the Hebrew-Israeli prose. But the way she treats the material is original, the narratives are surprising, and her rare ability to control the story without it slipping through her fingers and refraining from drab and bland endings is fantastic and very impressive... The collection strives to depict an overall, feminine and feminist portrait of women across Israeli society. And the men? They are always passive, zombie-like, half-conscious at best and half-dead at worst, and if they happen to be alive, they

are the subjects of ridicule and wit. The women want to rebel, but end up as bourgeois, her partner always at work or in the military... Shahaf Poleg manipulates the language, but not in a shallow, copywriter fashion but profoundly, in a thought-provoking way... all the stories possess some degree of creeping yet prominent Misandry, as a poetic leitmotiv... but it does not disturb the reader, since it is written with captivating grace... This argumentative side of Shahaf Poleg, manifested in the constant criticism of the opposite sex, doesn't obstruct the stories, but rather enriches them... The stories often reach towards the abstract and the fantastical... (but) Shahaf Poleg knows how to slide into the fantastic with nonchalant elegance.

Ran Yagil, *Globes*

Shahaf Poleg's stories tend to be sharp, precise and to the point. Some of them are based on situations she derives from reality – and then manipulates, distorts, rearranges and takes to the extreme height of absurdity – and the best among them hit the reader like a slap of a wet towel to the face. One of the stories, *Betty's Train Wreck*, deals with an elderly woman who leads a heroic battle against the representative of a construction company that wants to appropriate her property and build residential towers over it, and ends in an outburst of violence that may or may not have ever happened. In another story, *Just One More Time*, a woman follows her ex and his new partner with a determination not unlike that of the stalker from Netflix's *Baby Reindeer*. *Everyone Wants Me Dead* is, as its name suggests, a display of paranoia that echoes the events of October 7th.

Ronen Tal, *Ha'aretz*

Here she is at it again Shahaf Poleg – back winking at us, like the protagonist of one of the stories who, even though no one is actually trying to eliminate her, trying to console her son during a missile attack, as he asks, “Why is everyone trying to kill us?” while avoiding a hug (but any of her readers open to it won't miss the narrator's hug). “Sweetie, don't take it so personally,” she whispers to him. It's funny, but it's clear to her that this war simply cannot be taken impersonally. Or not to take it too seriously, as Shahaf Poleg asks us to do most of the time between the lines. It is possible, and even recommended, to laugh in the face of death, as some of the characters in the stories do... How wonderful it is to discover that death doesn't really change the order of things... Shahaf Poleg's protagonists interact with death, but most of them harbor a great passion for life, and some are hungry for change. Like in the story *Lizard Tongue*, named after an unwanted kiss initiated by a particularly dubious brother-in-law, they even launch the *Theater of Life*, which is nothing but a morbid and absurd show that wizzes around a cemetery on a mobility scooter... Shahaf Poleg has sympathy for people who try their hardest and insist and get excited and despair in every Israeli city... Israelis whom everyone is trying to eliminate, and even the routine of everyday life may kill, but before that happens, they will eliminate everyone else themselves... Death is funny, so we laugh.

Yaron Fried, *Ma'ariv*

The small, petty calculations that we all constantly make, are made sharper and clearer by Shahaf Poleg. She deconstructs love, and does so many times over throughout this excellent collection, at different points in time, in different contexts, with an unfamiliar perspective... Poleg's boundless imagination is wild and exciting; existence is a theater of death filled with dark humor. With malicious madness, she scorches moments of insanity and terror, creating cracks in the fabric of her protagonists' lives, turning them into cruel, swallowing sinkholes. Threads of fate and karma stretch across time, change lives, determinedly cutting through the flesh. Everything seems friendly and polite, but in fact, it's destructive and deceptive... But for Saleit Shahaf Poleg, in every defeat there is a victory, and in every victory there is a bit of defeat.

Ran Bin Nun, *Yedioth Aharonot*



Orna Landau

Orna Landau is an Israeli author, book editor and publisher. Her previous books, for both adults and children, some of which were translated into other languages, enjoyed critical acclaim and became bestsellers. *Last Stop Paradise* - written and published less than eight months after the October 7th attack, while the war continues to be waged and the same government remains in power - became a topic of conversation, controversy and inspiration.

Last Stop: Paradise

Novel

Publisher: Shtayim | Year: 2024 | 255 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translation: Partial English and long synopsis available

"Why are you doing this?," she hears Jonathan's voice, and he is irritated. "Because someone has to," she replied. Those were still the days after [the tragedy], and the construction of the wall had just begun. On the TV news, experts debated the danger, but men and women appeared on talk show panels and spoke of a new-old region that needed to be redeemed and settled, and praised the pristine beauty, and the land crying out for farmers. She and Jonathan sat in their living room, and she said to him, "Look, it's just like the old days! They even speak differently. Who says 'redeeming the land' or 'crying out' any more" And he said, "You pay too much attention to words."

After the calamity later known as "what happened", Shira, a somewhat famous writer, decides that if she stays home, sitting in front of the television, she will surely explode from anger and hate. So she gets into her car and drives south, where people like her, nostalgic dreamers, come to make the desert bloom, cultivate and revive the forsaken land as well as themselves, and under the shadow of a great wall, start everything anew. As always, they come with the best intentions. But where will they lead them this time?

Last Stop: Paradise, a book written in a frenzy after the Hamas invasion of Israel on October 7th, is a powerful tale of love and loss, longing and despair, and the remnants of hope. Original and poignant, it re-examines Zionism's somewhat naïve myths and heroes, effortlessly floating in time and space, to tell a tale that is at once very specific and even intimate, and yet truly universal.

Critical Praise

Orna Landau's book *Last Stop: Paradise* deals with the painful reality of war, and offers much more than a lament or a political vision; It is a work that touches, in clever and inventive ways, the heart of our existence after "what happened", and flows naturally between genres and mixes times and spaces, reality, fantasy and legend... "On the day the wild drones came upon them, and then the thunder bombs, followed by the all-consuming fire, and everything that happened and earned the name 'what happened', she stopped writing." Sometime after the end of the war, the heroine Shira, who lost her son in the war, her daughter and perhaps her husband - decides to rebel. To maintain her sanity, and not to be swept away into the peace offered by the "protective government" with the "protective leader"... The solution that Shira finds to escape the emptiness of chaos is a renewed fulfillment of the pioneer Zionist vision and its values: working the land, the collective, settlement of the border areas. She moves to the southern district of Kalaniot, to the settlement of Paradise, located near what is called "the wall". After the war ended, "there is nothing" behind the wall, as the leader

said (if so, why is a wall necessary?), maybe only jackals and rats and alligators, howls (of children? weapons? owls?) maybe even demons. No one knows what is or isn't beyond it, because the wall is a symbol of separation not only between populations (us and them. The Gazans?), but between the "sane" reality and some repressed, hideous and infected thing... Beyond the impressive stitching of political reality, the book's charming quality is the elusiveness and fluidity between times and places, between reality and fantasy, which gradually transform each other, gradually blur. The Israeli past, present and future thus become a continuum, in which the ideal and the prose, the disasters and the redemptions are used in a distinctive mixture, in a way that does not lead to firm conclusions; On the contrary, the wild combinations are what give the book its uniqueness as a multi-layered work, and at the same time flowing and readable.

Prof. Hana Hertzog, Israel Hayom

Following a national disaster, the nature of which remains unclear until the end of the novel, Shira decides to leave her home and husband in Tel Aviv and move to the Kalanot District. In this district, located on the outskirts of the country, there are three settlements... Shira's desired destination is the settlement called Paradise. Paradise is a kind of kibbutz or community where a group of older individuals try to revive the early days of Zionism as they once were... Shira parks her car in the Paradise parking lot, deposits her phone at the reception, and joins the group. She wakes up early every morning to work alongside everyone else, occasionally dances at the lively evening dances where these new pioneers find solace, converses with Aharon David, the spiritual leader of the group whose words she drinks thirstily. She befriends some members of the group and is wary of others. Will Shira be able to ease her pain? The memory of the national disaster? The memory of the personal disaster that befell her and is related to the fate of her son Uri (the exact nature of which remains unclear almost until the end)? Will the new pioneers succeed in recreating the early days of Zionism? Its enthusiasm? Its faith? Its defiance?... As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that something has indeed happened in the novel's reality, something similar to what happened on October 7th. As a result, a wall was erected between us and the other side (although no one knows exactly what happened on the other side until the end). The leader tightened his grip on the people and placed all responsibility for the disaster on the military. Somehow, those who joined the group yearn for renewal through agricultural work, yet exactly how they will be able to achieve this goal, remains unclear... One thing, though, is clear: the novel was written out of deep concern and care for Israeli society. We are in a time of crisis, and everyone who loves and is tied to Jewish-Israeli civilization is called to action... In a quarrel between Shira and her husband Jonathan, Jonathan argues that "all that 'Zionism once more,'" as he called the renewed settlement in the Kalanot District... seems outdated and ridiculous to him. "You can't restart Zionism any more than you can be a virgin again," he says. In this argument, in which Jonathan loses hope and contemplates emigration, I side with Shira... The desire for a home does not have a statute of limitations. That is, the desire for a society, a language, a culture, and a piece of land where you feel at home. In the epilogue, Landau discusses the urgency with which the book was written following the events of October 7th... It offers important testimony to both the deep fracture we are currently experiencing and to the fact that people who care about the future of Israeli society are considering radical ideas for healing it.

Eric Glesner, Yedioth Aharonot

This is the first Israeli novel to address October 7th, which is referred to in the novel (either directly or as a very similar disaster) as "what happened." In the story, the State of Israel "still exists, at least partially, despite what happened"... Shira, who is a writer, and Orna Landau, who is the author of this novel, draw on significant influences to sharpen the message. For example, Brecht... Brecht may be speaking about something that happened in another place, at another time, but the connection to the here and now in Israel is clear... Even without Landau revealing in the acknowledgments that "I realized that I would not find redemption unless I could, out of the hatred and anger, the despair and mourning, build something new" – it is unquestionably clear that this book comes from the depths of those burning emotions and that unfathomable wound... Readers are required to decide whether the new paradise, depicted in vivid colors with a wall at its heart, is a dystopia or a utopia. And whether hope is lost, or the opposite is true. Assuming that all answers are correct

makes the story both beautiful and heartening... The impossible yet inevitable duality of existence, both before and especially after “what happened”. And since Sartre is also invited to the party, and Shira recalls that hell is other people, perhaps this is the duality of existence itself, wherever it may be... This book is one enormous immense scream, which remains a scream even when whispered or implied, and even in the poetic moments that some characters deem unnecessary... The sense of urgency in the story propels and guides it well through bold paths that lead to a satisfying ending, in the non-ingratiating sense of the word, amid all the difficulties and obstacles surrounding it... Landau’s literary scream... is important and necessary, so long as Israel continues to exist.

Yaron Fried, Ma’ariv

Shira, the protagonist of Orna Landau’s novel, is a true heroine: in a reality of total despair, she carries a solitary flag of hope, driven by an almost desperate determination to do everything possible to transform her hatred and anger into something else, and to be reborn as a person with purpose, meaning, and a future... Landau conveys this terrifying sequence of events in an informative, simple, almost indifferent language, a tone that heightens the atmosphere of dread that pervades the novel. One of her notable stylistic choices is to begin many chapters with the same sentence: “Fields lie far and wide, from horizon to edge”, the opening line of the song *The Wheat Grows Again*. The recurring line is read differently each time - with wonder, hope, and later boredom, sadness, and emptiness - and it develops into some kind of background music for the book.

Tsilil Avraham, Ha’aretz

A marvelous book of powerful prose. Landau has succeeded in capturing the spirit of the times in Israel after October 7th, with captivating characters with philosophical depth. Weeks have elapsed since I read it, and the book remains with me.

Sahrah Blau, author and journalist



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 was adapted into a television series, on screens worldwide as of 2026. Magen has been selected by the Goethe-Institute Israel and the Brandenburg Ministry of Culture for a three month residency fellowship at Schloss Wiepersdorf, in Fall 2024.

Land of the Monasteries

Novel

Publisher: Achuzat Bayit | **Year:** 2023 | 333 pp.

Translations: Partial English translation available

TV series: A critically acclaimed adaptation, on screens worldwide as of Fall 2026 by Paramount Plus.

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.

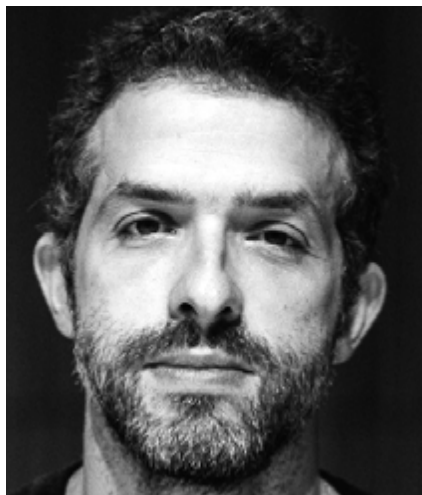
Udi Ben Saadya, Walla

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



Omer Meir Wellber

Omer Meir Wellber (b. 1981) is one of Israel's leading conductors of operatic and orchestral repertoire.

This coming summer (2025) he will enter his new role as Hamburg General Music Director at the Philharmonic State Orchestra and General Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Hamburg State Opera. 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.

His Hands Remember

Novel

Publisher: Kinneret Zmora Dvir | **Year:** 2025 | 238 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

For actor Arthur Deyersky, who immigrated to Israel at the age of twelve, there is no tangible difference between the stage and real life, between real memory and imagination, between pain and pleasure. He lives inside a vibrant urban bubble with Lea, and the two actors are caught in a maze of sex, texts, and desire. Arthur then pulls them both into a whirlwind of dark and brutal corners of the heart, when Dimitri suddenly appears from his former life, and insists on searing him like frostbite.

Perhaps the absolute and destructive freedom Arthur has taken for himself in art and in life will come to his aid this time?

His Hands Remember juggles a world where rich language, classical references, and psychological depth exist alongside the novel's wild rhythm. Through Arthur, author Omer Meir Wellber moves between Russia and Israel, between condensed silence and relentless screaming, between a culture that never learned to cry and one that doesn't know how to keep quiet. He observes Arthur as he dons characters and masks, and peers deep . into his soul, and ours

This book wasn't written with the intention of being categorized and limited to a single shelf or genre. Like its protagonist, it seeks only to burn.



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 and published in French by Actes Sud, Arles, and in English by Open Letter, Rochester, USA. For Michal Ben Naftali’s previous publications please check our complete catalogue.

The Anarchists

Novel

Publisher: Pardes | **Year:** 2023 | **210 pp.**

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translation: Complete English translation by Gabriel Levin available

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

Graphic Novels



David Duvshani

David Duvshani is a painter and comic artist, a graduate of the Beaux-Arts Academy in Paris and the Master's program in art at Bezalel. His works have been exhibited in Israel and around the world. He published a comic column in Tohu magazine and in Haaretz newspaper, together with writer Julia Fermentto-Tzaisler, with whom he also wrote the graphic novel *Butcher Shop of Spirits* (Tangier Publishing). In 2018, his book *The Crusades* was published in France (Hoosh Publishing).



Julia Fermentto Tzaisler

For bio and further details please check page 31 above.

Butcher Shop of Spirits

Graphic Novel

Publisher: Tangier | **Year:** 2023 | **78 pp.**

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations: Partial English translation available.

Shuki and Zisel are the owners of “Hip on Thigh”, a kosher butcher shop in Jerusalem. Some of their loyal customers include the sought-after widower Liezer-Wolf, the brilliant seminary student Fanny Fillet, and Masha Cholent. At the end of each workday, Shuki and Zisel count their earnings and take pleasure in their piles of cash. But not everything is as sweet as honey. One day, the customers stop coming, the meat spoils, and the debts pile up, and on top of it all - they discover that some of their customers disappeared. At the same time, at the Capital police station, Detective Danielle Drumstick receives a missing person report. Together with her loyal assistants, Ricky and Micky, she uncovers shocking and confusing details that make the case much more complex than it initially seemed...

The graphic novel *Butcher Shop of Spirits* humorously combines detective stories with Jewish mysticism, connecting Eastern European Jewish folklore with contemporary Israeli culture. The graphic novel is drawn entirely in ink, with vivid colors and a free-spirited, non-realistic style. It draws inspiration from Marc Chagall's paintings and the dark aesthetics of film noir. It is a novel where, literally, the demon stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer meet the detective stories of Israeli author Dror Mishani. On one hand,

the plot is rooted in a Jewish, traditional, and folkloric world where the spirits of rabbis play a role in reality. On the other hand, it takes place at the Capital police station in Jerusalem, as we dive into a local crime investigation. The fusion of Jewish folklore with Israeli detective fiction creates a funny and original literary-aesthetic encounter. The book was shortlisted for Best Book of the Year by Treisar, an annual award celebrating the finest Israeli book designs.

Critical Praise

The graphic novel *Butcher Shop of Spirits* is simply a delight. Humor, Yiddish, Jewish mysticism, bite-sized detective tales, Eastern European folklore with a twist of Agatha Christie, all come together in a colorful, playful spectacle. Every panel brims with detail, while the comic itself runs wild with sharp, irreverent humor, splashed in ink, vivid colors, and a loose, fantastical style... *Butcher Shop of Spirits* blends the Jewish traditional and folkloric world with the modern vibe of a Jerusalem crime investigation, turning it into a bold, contemporary creation that feels completely relevant to this moment in time in Israel.

Maya Guez, Yediot Aharonot

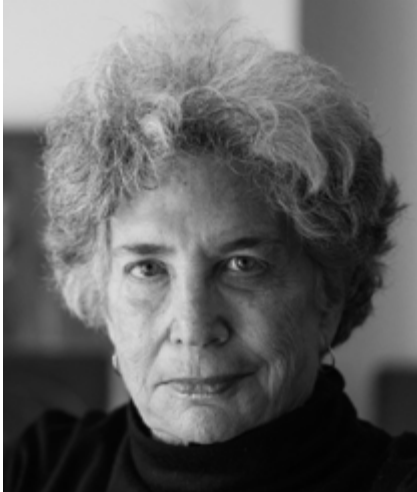
A gripping and funny tale set in a kosher butcher shop in Jerusalem, blending Jewish folklore with a detective story, where the characters are torn between the sacred and the profane.

Portfolio Magazine

Butcher Shop of Spirits serves up heaps of meat — the flesh slaughtered in the ultra-Orthodox butcher shop run by Shuki and Zissel, and the carnal appetites of their loyal clientele. Julia Fermentto-Tzaisler and David Duvshani, who created the work together, blend Jewish folklore, detective fiction, humor, and the grotesque into a rich, layered narrative.

Yuval Avivi and Maya Sela, "Ma SheCaruch" Podcast

N o n - F i c t i o n



Varda Mühlbauer

Dr. Varda Mühlbauer is a psychologist, a committed feminist researcher, emeritus lecturer, and editor. For many years, she has worked extensively teaching, researching and consulting on gender issues from a feminist perspective. She is the winner of the 2013 Florence L. Denmark Award for her contributions to the study of women and aging. She is particularly interested in the ways socio-political power structures impact the construction of gendered identities. Recently, her focus has been on the intersection of identity issues and liberal or religious-conservative attitudes. Among her edited treatises are two co-edited collections on women and aging (with J. C Chrisler and F. L. Denmark) and smart power perspectives (with W. Henry).



Mina Zemach

Dr. Mina Zemach is a social psychologist and a leading expert in public opinion research on political and social issues. From 1965 to 1972, she served as a full-time lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, specializing in identifying the factors that drive changes in attitudes and behavior. During her tenure at the university, she conducted laboratory studies on these topics. In late 1973, she decided to leave the lab and focus on field research on attitude change. She then went on to direct an applied research institute, conducting studies related to the absorption of new immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Over time, her work shifted toward political research and polling, and she developed a formula for predicting election results. In Israel's landmark 1977 elections, she was the only pollster to predict the historic change of government – known as the “Mahapach” (the political “upheaval” that brought the right-wing Likud party to power for the first time). From that point on, she became the principal pollster for Israel's leading media outlets, including Channel 12 News and Yedioth Ahronoth, earning the nickname “Israel's national pollster”. In 2020, Dr. Zemach stepped back from her media work to focus on in-depth social research, with a particular emphasis on polarization and social divisions in Israeli society. Dr. Zemach has published several books in the fields of statistics and social science.

Beyond the Partition: Ultra-Orthodox Women, Power, and Politics

Non-fiction

Publisher: Yediot Sfarim | Year: 2024 | 249 pp.

Translation Rights: World

Audiovisual Rights: World

Translations Available: Partial English translation available

For much of Israel's secular public, *Haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) women are an enigma. They fascinate secular and liberal observers – especially women – who struggle to understand them. They are seen both as victims of an ultra-conservative religious society and as unexpected agents of social and political change within the *Haredi* world itself.

What is really happening behind the curtain that separates men and women in *Haredi* life? Why are women directed to the back of the bus? Since when have gender-segregated beaches become so normalized? What social and political forces have intensified modesty regulations to the point of erasing women's images and even their names from advertisements? Why do so many women appear to cooperate with their exclusion from public life and centers of power? And are there issues – such as sexual abuse – that push them to speak out and fight back?

The social and political reality of *Haredi* women defies easy explanation. Religion – especially in its fundamentalist forms – often obscures the workings of power and coercion against women, repackaging them as necessary accommodations to religious needs. But are religious needs alone what shape the gender codes and social order in the *Haredi* world? The battle over the collective identity of *Haredi* women is fought in a lively political arena, as part of broader struggles over power and control.

This collection of essays presents new research by legal scholars and social scientists who analyze major events and current trends shaping the lives of *Haredi* women in Israel. It also includes an original survey of *Haredi* women themselves, exploring their views on key issues affecting the country's future – and their own perspectives on the balance of power between men and women in their community.

Critical Praise

[The book] brings together research on women who are excluded, hidden from view – women we might suppose are simply waiting for us to rescue them from their repressive lives. The assumption was that now, with more ultra-Orthodox women pursuing higher education and coming into contact with the secular world, they would bring greater liberalism to their community, more “Israelization”, and spark a process of change. That assumption did not prove true... They are, in fact, very satisfied with their lives. To us, it might seem obvious that they should rebel – but they see no reason to do so.

Varda Mühlbauer and Mina Zemach held in-depth conversations with their interviewees. The women were genuinely content – they weren't just putting on a front. When we set out to “save” them from lives of oppression and exclusion, we are, it turns out, mistaken.

Ilan Lukatch, Ulpan Shishi (Channel 12 News)

Mühlbauer and Zemach examined a range of trends and developments among ultra-Orthodox women in recent years against the backdrop of the growing political power of the ultra-Orthodox sector. Alongside a detailed survey that they conducted among ultra-Orthodox women, the book presents a collection of essays on topics such as discrimination and exclusion; the community's response to women who have experienced sexual abuse; ultra-Orthodox women's participation in the workforce; and the emergence of ultra-Orthodox women's cinema.

Various public events in recent years have given new urgency to these fundamental questions. The research touches on issues deeply embedded in the DNA of Israeli society – such as gender-segregated public transportation and separate bathing beaches for men and women. The book sets out to examine how we reached this point in the first place.

The findings are striking: ultra-Orthodox women largely feel that their lives are, indeed, good. One explanation for this widespread sentiment is what Zemach and Mühlbauer term “benevolent sexism.” Unlike hostile sexism, which controls and restricts women through strict rabbinic rulings and pashkevlim (public wall posters, often carrying moral or religious warnings), benevolent sexism defines women as wonderful and worthy of admiration, but also as weak and dependent on men for support and protection.

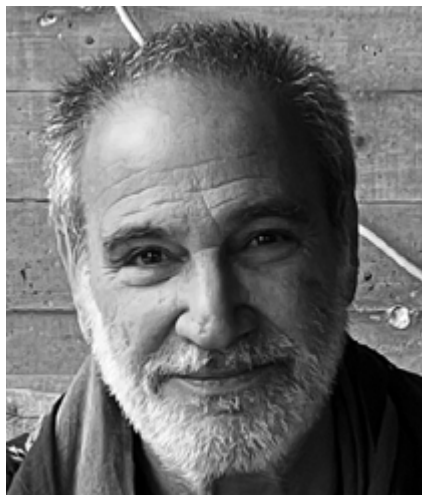
While secular women, as well as secular men, will quickly recognize the patronizing, diminishing undertones beneath this seemingly flattering approach, it cannot simply be dismissed as a deliberate mechanism for producing “false consciousness”. A crucial part of anyone's identity, including gender identity, is shaped by the narratives we tell ourselves. Most ultra-Orthodox women inherit their narratives from their mothers, who received them from their grandmothers, and they wish to be like them/model

themselves on them.

The only visible crack in this optimistic worldview emerged around the question of core curriculum studies (basic secular subjects such as mathematics, science, and English, which are often excluded from ultra-Orthodox girls' schools). About one-third of the women – a relatively high figure – supported introducing these studies because they connected them to the next generation, to their children. This “for the children” motivation may also lead to greater engagement with secular society.

In ultra-Orthodox society, there are mechanisms, both overt and covert, that prevent the development of political consciousness and block change. As in other fundamentalist movements, ultra-Orthodoxy fuses religious faith with essentialist gender differences: This is how God created the world. This is non-negotiable. If I try to change it or criticize it, I am, in effect, criticizing God and the faith itself. If I, as an ultra-Orthodox woman, challenge the gender hierarchy within my community, I am challenging the divine order.

Ronen Tal, 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), , *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 Polish

Audio visual rights: World

Translations available: English, Russian, Polish

Rights sold: English UK (London, Pluto Press, 2015, 2025), 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.

The book has been published in April 2025 in a new edition, including a postscript reflecting on the effects of the recent war.

Critical Praise

A superbly researched and exemplary architectural study ... If you want an explanation of the roots of the Israel-Palestine conflict - and of just how deep they go, right into the very foundations of the buildings - this book gives one of the most unusual and convincing accounts.

Owen Hatherley, Guardian

An important and fascinating exposé through architecture, geography and history. A sad but revealing history of how myths are forged and histories corrupted.

Raja Shehadeh, author of Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape and winner of the Orwell Prize for Literature

This tale of Tel Aviv's growth from a Jaffa suburb to a metropolis is gripping.

The Economist

Fascinating.

Edwin Heathcote, Financial Times

A path-breaking and brilliant analysis that combines architecture, urban design, military strategy and general culture into an exhilarating war of streets and homes.

Eyal Weizman, *founding director of the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths, University of London*

A detailed and useful corrective to the mainstream Zionist narrative about the founding of Tel Aviv.

Times Literary Supplement

White City, Black City is not a book about architecture. It is a political text written in a beautiful clear language.

Time Out

A challenging book that deserves to be read and argued over. Rotbard here slaughters an especially sacred cow: Tel Avivness.

Tom Segev, *Haaretz*

A fundamental, fascinating and clever book on architecture in the service of politics.

Adam Baruch, *Maariv*

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 a 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*



Tamar Berger

Tamar Berger (b. 1957) is an Israeli writer and architect. She has published four books and dozens of essays, many of them focusing on topical aspects of Israeli society and culture. Berger is also a senior lecturer at the *Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design*. Berger's essay writing is both narrative and documentary, phenomenological and conceptual, and has a loyal readership in Israel. Two of her books were adapted into plays and one served as the thematic backbone of a recent documentary. Berger's first book, *Dionysus at the Center* (Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1998) is a cultural, political and familial archeology of the site of a mall in the center of Tel Aviv, a history that encapsulates to a great extent the Zionist-Palestinian story. *Dionysus at the Center* was adapted into a

play and staged by the Ruth Kanner Theatre Group (2004). It also serves as the thematic backbone of the documentary *The Centre* (producers and directors: Kobi Faraj and Morris Benmayor, 2023). Berger's second book, *In the Space between World and Play* (Resling 2008), combines a series of essays illuminating, from varied angles and points of view, various manifestations of the model – actual and conceptual – in Israeli culture, also discussing them in their larger contexts. *Autotopia, Suburban In-between Space in Israel* (Hakibbutz Hameuchad 2015) describes the major spatial phenomenon of the past few decades in Israel: the process of suburbanization that is creating a new post-urban landscape. The book follows typical road-trips in the suburban space, that are heavily dependent on the car, describing and analyzing the localities it creates and also discussing its general social, cultural and political aspects. Berger's most recent book, *Aside: Residual Spaces in Isarel* (Hakibbutz Hameuchad 2022) is a cross-section of Isarel's phenomena of residuality, both social and physical. Using terms such as dis-order, marginality, ruin, periphery and others, the book leads its readers from landfills to unrecognized Bedouin villages, detention centers, industrial ruins, impoverished neighborhoods, drosscapes, archeological sites and Palestinian ruins, eventually leading to the gradual ruination of the aging (female) body.

Dionysus at the Center

Literary Nonfiction

Publisher: Hakibbutz Hameuchad | **Year:** 2009 | 240 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations: French translation by Rosie Pinhas-Delpuech (Actes Sud, 2009); Partial English available

Dionysus at the Center unravels the intricate story of Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Center mall, from the days of the Jaffa-based Hinnawi family who owned the land, through the Nordia shack neighborhood and the controversy over the evacuation of its residents, to the construction of the current shopping center initiated by Aryeh Pilz, and up to the horrific Purim bombing in 1996. Through her captivating literary writing, Tamar Berger weaves a delicate tapestry of critical observations on the Center's story. As we follow its history, she reveals the political, economic, architectural, and literary aspects of the complex archaeology of the site, which serves as an exemplary intersection of Israeli urban culture and life in Israel in general.

Critical Praise

Tamar Berger's work is worth stopping to consider. It lies at the intersection of different fields and sciences. Let's start by saying that it is an archaeology of memory... Today, [Tel Aviv] is "the bubble," the city in a state of effervescence and light, the exact opposite of the somber Jerusalem, overrun by fanatics and obscurantists. The cliché isn't entirely false, but the writer doesn't engage in a glorification of the city. Yes, "writer" seems the appropriate term to describe the author who, in presenting her book, highlights

its poetic dimension: knowing that it's above all a story of human beings - their houses, their objects, their memories, their dreams, their current disappearance - it will be told through names. The author draws from Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin to account for the metamorphoses of a piece of land, and by extension, the entire city. *Le Spleen de Paris* and the famous *Arcades Project*, Benjamin's reflections on the flâneur or the prostitute, the references to the transformations of Paris initiated by Haussmann, serve as her guide. There's nothing new under the sun, especially not the scorching sun that crushes the White City... One could say that the story of Dizengoff Square is that of the defeated: those who sold land for nothing, land which has since increased in value tenfold, those who lived there in poor, even disgraceful conditions before being evicted, those who haunt the shopping center, its basements, its floors, fugitive children and homeless people, Palestinian clandestine working illegally in the city, and prostitutes who are never seen except when the police find and chase them away. It is also a Balzacian story, a tale of ambitious and victorious individuals, businessmen and cunning schemers, hiding behind a form of insignificance, living in ordinary apartments, without seeking splendor or ostentation to never expose themselves to criticism or arouse curiosity. Tamar Berger tells all this in nearly 350 fascinating and always enlightening pages, without ever letting anger or indignation show.

Norbert Czarni, *La Quinzaine Littéraire*

In telling us the history of this district in the cultural and economic capital of the country, Tamar Berger deciphers with us the palimpsest that every city fundamentally is. However, telling the story of the heart of Tel Aviv is also telling the story of the construction of the State of Israel, or rather questioning the conditions under which it was built. What was covered up and replaced in the process?

Natalie Levisalles, *Liberacion*

Here is an example, the first of its kind in Israeli literature: a genealogy of a site, written in the form of a panoramic continuum of personal observations, emerging out of historical, political and social insights which could be called neo-Marxist... and one happy idiosyncratic dream in the epilogue... certainly not just for academic consumption, but forming, surprisingly, an overwhelming, fascinating and wonderfully readable patchwork.

Ha'ir

Dionysus at the Centre is a new and fascinating kind of Israeli literature/fiction. Its language is very clear, its standpoint (and assumptions) well-reasoned and its philosophical ambition will not prevent those who are not versed in this philosophy from reading it.

Tarbut Ma'ariv

This complex framework creates new insights and surprising angles that could not be achieved through regular historical writing nor through the conventional form of the novel. Citing Walter Benjamin, sharing the belief that "nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history", Berger turns to the denied and repressed elements, out of empathy for the characters, integrating themes that are usually studied separately.

Ha'aretz

This is the way to build the story of a real place, with actual people who are not elegant illustrations of historical generalizations. There are few books that try to tie the "small" history, the everyday experience of ordinary people, with the "big" history, which is made of "historic moments", through a radical perspective. It is radical in the Israeli context, since it refrains from the usual reduction of the history of a place to that of our place, our community.

Ha'aretz

T h r i l l e r s



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 Double Files

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.



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: Translation: English translation by Gilah Kahn (partial)

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 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