

Cohen & Shiloh Literary Agency

Spring 2025 LIST

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

Tel: +97236490811

www.cohen-shiloh-agency.com

Table of Contents

Fiction

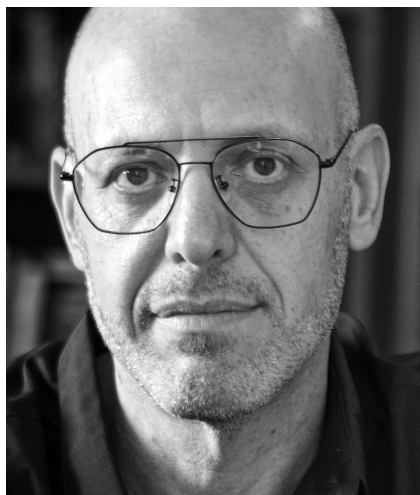
Yirmi Pinkus, <i>A Stopover in Lindenbruck</i>	3
Ari Lieberman, <i>Happiness</i>	5
Yuval Yareach, <i>Blind Spot</i>	7
Tamar Raphael, <i>There were Two with Nothing to Do</i>	9
Orly Castel-Bloom, <i>Biotope</i>	13
Orly Castel-Bloom, <i>Dolly City</i>	16
Julia Fermentto-Tzaisler, <i>Black Honey</i>	18
Julia Fermentto-Tzaisler, <i>Exile</i>	19
Saleit Shahaf Poleg, <i>All the Way from Oklahoma</i>	22
Orna Landau, <i>Last Stop: Paradise</i>	24
Shachar Magen, <i>Land of the Monasteries</i>	27
Galit Dahan Carlbach, <i>Under the Sign of Orphan</i>	29
Omer Meir Wellber, <i>The Loneliness of the Hands</i>	31
Michal Ben-Naftali, <i>The Anarchists</i>	32
Tamar Weiss-Gabbay, <i>The Weather Woman</i>	34
Ilana Rudashevski, <i>Taska</i>	40

Non-Fiction

Sharon Rotbard, <i>White City, Black City</i>	42
Tamar Berger, <i>Aside</i>	45
Tamar Berger, <i>Dionysus at the Center</i>	47

Thrillers

Nilly Assia, <i>The Double Files</i>	49
Nilly Assia, <i>The Odeski File</i>	49
Nilly Assia, <i>The Aya File</i>	51



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: 2025

179 pp. (MS)

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Long synopsis in English 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:

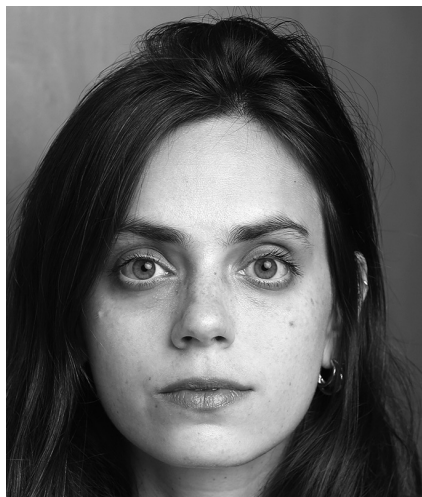
Inspector Yair Yamin can speak to the dead. He listens to what their remains tell him about the story of their lives, trying to understand how they perished. In this investigation, too, he focuses all his efforts on listening, attempting to solve the mystery surrounding the identity and fate of a skeleton 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 contempora-

neous issues of immigration and memory.

There were Two with Nothing to Do

Novel

Publisher: Pardes

Year: 2024

345 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translations:

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.

Tzvil 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, HaPanaz



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 Inrternational Man Booker winner, Complete Spanish translation by Margalit Mendelson.

Books in translation: French: Actes Sud, Arles, 2025

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

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 Avivian "biotope". But the meticulous realism of Castel-Bloom's descriptions are accompanied by a wink of cheerful and surprising surrealism.

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

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

From the back cover: Prof. Menakhem Perry



Dolly City

Novel

Publisher: The New Library

Year: 2007

123 pp.

The novel was published in translation in 9 languages

Translations: English, French, German, Italian translations and more are available. For details please contact us

Russian: Moscow, Knizhniki, 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)



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

46,000 words

Year: Forthcoming

Translation rights: World

Audio Visual rights: World

Translation: Partial English by Yardenne Greenspan, German translation by Ruth Achlama

Books in translation: German, Diogenes, Zurich, forthcoming

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

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

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

255 pp.

Publisher: Shtayim

Year: 2024

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 Kalaniot 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 Kalaniot 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 is currently being adapted into a television series. 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

Adaptation into a TV series: to be screened in Spring 2025 - a Hot and Paramount co-production

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

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

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

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

Critical Praise

An E-vrit website bestseller

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

Omri Herzog, Haaretz

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

Ron Dahan, Yedioth Aharonoth

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

Udi Ben Saadya, Walla

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

Smadar Shiloni, Ynet

A delightful suspense book that is also a philosophical meditation.

Maya Levin, LaIsha



Galit Dahan Carlibach

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

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, 2025)

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 Carlbach'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 Carlbach 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.

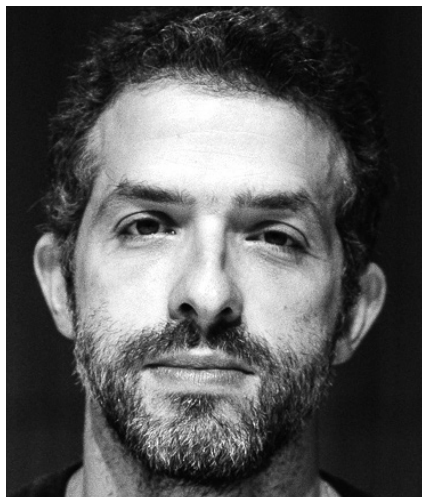
Shay Amit, Channel 14

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



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 will also conduct the opening concert at the forthcoming Leipzig book fair.

Music Director of the Teatro Massimo Palermo and Artistic Director of the Toscanini Festival, he has since 2009 served as Music Director of Israel's Ra'anana Symphonette Orchestra. Wellber is also the incoming Music Director of the Volksoper Wien. He has worked with some of the

world's most prestigious orchestras and is a regular guest conductor at the Israeli Opera.

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

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

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

The Loneliness of the Hands

(formerly: Forgiving Cain)

Novel

40,000 words (MS)

Year: Forthcoming

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

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



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



Tamar Weiss-Gabbay

A writer, editor, and screenwriter, Tamar Weiss-Gabbay writes for both adults and children. Co-founder and editor of the leading Israeli literary journal HaMussach, her novella *The Weather Woman* received the prestigious Brenner Literary Prize, 2022. In 2024 it has been published in Italian by Giuntia and was met with rave reviews. The novella is now being adapted into a television series by HSCC.

Her picture book *Tali Under Table* (Kinneret Zmora, 2020) was the Winner of the prestigious Dvora Omer award (2021), her book *The Thank You Tomatoes* was shortlisted for the Jewish Children's Book Award (2022) and her picture book *Just an Empty Field* (Kinneret Zmora, 2022) was

shortlisted for the Sasa Settone award (2024).

Her children's books *Tali Under the Table* and *Just an Empty Field* were both selections of the PJ Program, with 120,000 copies distributed in kindergartens and preschool facilities across Israel. The PJ Program published special limited editions of both books in Spanish and Portuguese. Her Children's book *Kidstory - A Million and a Half Years of Kids' History* (Kinneret Zmora, 2024) was published in German by Fischer Verlag.

Weiss-Gabbay has initiated a number of literary-social projects, including The Israeli Women Writers' Forum, The Street Libraries in Jerusalem, Two: A Bilingual Project for Arabic and Hebrew Contemporary Literature, and others.

The Weather Woman

Novella

Publisher: Locus Books

Year: 2022

91 pp.

Translation rights: World

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

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

Partial German by Anne Birkenhauer, complete Spanish translation by Margalit Mmendelson.

Italian rights sold (Giuntina, 2023)

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

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

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

Basking in her aunt's status as the saviour of the town after predicting the deadly floods, the girl tries hard to make the best of the opportunity she's been given. Beneath the surface though, charged emotions are threatening to pull the family apart. Seeking to impose his authority on the forces of nature, the father initiates construction of a giant pipeline to divert the flow of the next flood, into the canyon below.

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

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

Critical Praise

A must-read reflection on our relationship with nature, on the infinite and controversial attempt to tame it using culture.

(Marco Filoni, *Venerdi*)

The second chapter is truly dizzying and daring... A man who asks for help becomes a man who calls for his mother, then a man who is no longer a man but a form of life, and an elementary form at that. A journey backwards. And a mystery: that of an end which - perhaps - will resemble a beginning.

(Marco Archetti, *Il Foglio*)

It's hard to think of a more "political" text... than the novel *The Meteorologist* by Israeli writer and screenwriter Tamar Weiss Gabbay... In this microcosm... Weiss Gabbay precipitates worries which only apparently concern man's relationship with nature, but that in fact question the meaning of existence itself and our perception of ourselves as part of an interconnected, multiple, plural space... with extreme grace and equal determination, along with the irreducible capacity of narrative to question the world as we know it, the novel helps us imagine it together with the others.

Tamar says: "This is why nature is not just rocks, floods and gazelles: it is everything, perhaps it's the only thing. And it includes ourselves, even if we try to deny it. Then try to find your place in nature, in your habitat, among all animals and elements (including other human beings) around you, means trying to understand your place in the world - and this it is truly an internal position. And all this affects you too when you sit in front of your computer on the third floor of a building in a busy city, far away from what is considered «nature»"... Above all, I wanted to free [the protagonists] from many other roles; giving them a name would have forced them to identify with a specific nation, culture, history and perhaps even a religion. I tried to peel all these layers off the story to thus represent the characters: humans and other animals who share a space and take on roles with each other... Consciously or unconsciously I was inspired by some events I witnessed or of that I heard about. One is the Tzafit River disaster, in which in 2018 ten young people were killed in a flash flood when their teachers urged them to take unnecessary risks. Then there is the story of Yohana, a gazelle that entered my heart: once freed it never found its place neither in the pack, nor among humans. All her life she was torn between her identities. As I think happens to all of us... Naturally, as a young author raised in the canon of men's literature, I wanted to put my story ahead of that famous (and beautiful) by Hemingway and say: here's how I tell it. Each of the three characters brings with it something that belongs to me, I see myself in each of them and I don't consider them "good" or "bad". But I put a young girl at odds with the old man catching a fish (and in contrast with Hemingway, who was himself a hunter) because I believe that young women may have new stories from bring into this world... In fact, [the meteorologist] thinks we are already leaving. Whether we like it or not, we are part of a network and we are very dependent and fragile, and it is difficult to draw the lines between that what is "us" and what is not "us". This applies to both the germs in our body and for those of our neighbors. It is an illusion to be separated from what surrounds us, to manage it and use it only for our needs. Even if we succeed for a short time, in the long term our well-being depends on the well-being of others. Of all creatures... I think you can read it even as relating to the history of Israel. After all, I think that in my country the approach towards nature is also affected from History and its different phases. When your connection with the earth, with your physical habitat, is questioned again and again, you struggle to find answers to these questions

and to demonstrate your connection to that place. Sometimes you can't afford to have doubts. You can't always ask yourself: which one is the form of my relationship with the place itself? Is it a relationship of property? Does being tied to a place mean modifying it for our needs? Growing fruits in the desert? Travel anywhere and at any time, despite difficulties and problems? Can we live in it without owning it? Can we only be another part of our habitat, one of the others? Can we share it? Will it still be our habitat if won't we control it?... This is a terrible time. But when it comes to authors, I hear many say that they find their words have lost meaning and I'm still looking for a new language. This reminds me of the old story of Etgar Keret, where says that when someone has an asthma attack, every word that he can say it matters more than usual - in moments like these it is there a huge difference if you say «I love you» instead of "Ambulance!". So I hope that more and more people here are able to say and write something more than «Ambulance!». But as long as we all bury our dead, worry about young women kidnapped and for children dying of starvation, and have to care for thousands of displaced people both a Gaza than Israel, I understand that it's hard to expect... May there be enough pain for everyone today. We can recognize our horrible suffering and yet want the suffering of others to end. This is how I feel: my heart and the my mind goes to all those who suffer. I cry together with my relatives and friends for their terrible losses, and I can't stop thinking about what Palestinian families are experiencing. You can't fix an evil with another evil, and this applies to both parties. I am very concerned about the many opinions that seem unable to support an overall approach that treat everyone equally... Maybe we really need a leader like my weather woman, someone who can see all the creatures they share the same living space and desire to truly act for the good of them all. But we also need a leader that has more faith in the future than the weather woman, who doesn't see a way to solve the problem she is facing. If you think about it, this leader it should look more like the girl trying to save a gazelle even if she is told that this action is useless.

(Guido Caldiron, *Il Manifesto*)

The story takes place in a desert... but while the desert is the backdrop to the story, it matters little which desert it is. The desert is a bit like the ocean: a space so large and absolute that it sucks every other place into itself, that it becomes like the synthesis of every other place, even internal and not just geographical... And in all this, which happens far beyond the contribution of each individual life, an author like Tamar Weiss Gabbay knows how to weave her story, knows how to place the embryo of her idea and embody it inside a desert as in a womb, so that it utters one's cry... *The Meteorologist* is indeed a woman outside the box, an adventurer at the service of nature and man, who was the first to achieve something that no one would have ever expected in that remote desert... And by a woman, no less! The heroic exaltation of this femininity devoted to an hermitage dedicated to the desert constitutes the moral interweaving of the whole story... A heroine returned to the town to save it, with all the messianic impulses attached to such a powerful description... The intrinsic poetics of the text supports the emphasis of this only apparently meteorological mission, transforming every prediction into an oracle, grasping vague signs in the sky without destiny, however, being able to remain grasped by it... The whole book revolves around the unknown ethics of expectations, those that come from outside voices and those that arise - much more pressing - from within the soul. The meteorologist experiences the daily anguish arising when her predictions do not come true: a Cassandra in reverse, where the problem is not that she is not believed, but that she does not believe herself, or that she believes too much in the value of what others would like to believe, in their expectations... There are, of course, also readers' expectations. At the beginning they are all focused on the book, and its 95 pages which could be all or nothing; in the end each reader turns them on himself, because those 95 pages worked, and well too. Leaving within us, perhaps, the space of a providential desert, of a remote sound of breaking waters, and of a distant East wind which we do not know whether it brings rain or drought, and which perhaps is our very soul.

(Nuccio Puglisi, *Lucia Libri*)

The challenge that *The Meteorologist* faces is to remind us that the presence of us human beings on Earth, with our organization, the mania for measuring, sheltering, leveling streets and fields, domesticating, mapping - is not necessarily well-liked. That our entire existence is, in reality, a continuous concession

by the soil that hosts us... That our entire existence is actually a continuous concession from the soil that hosts us... In the book "natural life and interior life mix in a game of alliances, references and symbiosis. In some respects the novel is very reminiscent of another beautiful and poetic recent one, *Pain is a Thing with Feathers* (Max Porter). Because animals and nature are not only what is other than us, the foreign body that tells us the simplest and purest aspect of our existence, but they are also symbols and metaphors to signify what we sense but cannot explain: life.

(Francesca Coraglia, *Il Librario*)

The Meteorologist is a magical book. Of the world from which she comes, i.e. the screenplay, the author borrowed both the ease of language and the respect for time, and dictated, in this case, by a prose that is heated yet expertly kept at bay. Especially when the first disagreements start between the meteorologist and her neighbours, because "people only hear what they want to hear". .. Suddenly, the meteorologist understands that "her whole body was not suited to that place, it didn't feel like her own, it did not recognize the winds, the clouds, the animals" and it is from this point in the story onwards that the novel becomes a tale of the double. The protagonist, in short, is a woman who left without ever actually leaving and, returning home, realizes that home means everything and nothing. It might seem like a tongue twister, but in reality it's everyone's condition; we all wander around the world in search of ourselves and, in doing so, only create our own double... the leitmotif of the entire story is precisely the sense of challenge: expectations versus reality, man against nature, stray dogs against gazelles but, above all, a sort of all against all which becomes a boxing match with oneself. It has to be said that, despite the nuances of the plot are at times distressing, Tamar Weiss Gabbay manages to keep the reader on the razor's edge thanks to a calibrated prose... Earth and the human beings who inhabit it, occupiers and occupied, nature and carelessness, in short, are the true protagonists; above all that nature which warns us, even brutally, that we are all, everyone, immigrants and guests. If it doesn't suit us, the narrator tells us, we should go back to where we came from.

(Maurizio Fiorino, *La Repubblica*)

The book describes a dystopian but contemporary, very current world in which the climate represents a sort of obsession for the inhabitants of the city, their greatest fear, to the point of rejecting dire predictions of imminent disasters, deluding oneself into thinking we are able to influence nature through weather forecasts. Weiss Gabbay's story is striking, and not so much for the indisputable relevance of the topic, as for the intelligent and original way in which it is approached. The author, who also writes texts for children, takes the reader by the hand and leads him page after page, leading him to open his eyes, building an exemplary allegory on the complex relationship between man and nature. It is (explicitly) not a book about the climate crisis, the concept itself is never mentioned in the novel, and it's not even clear whether the protagonists, in their imaginary world, are aware of the depth of the crisis and its consequences, yet the plot and characters are immersed and influenced by it. And it is not even an environmentalist manifesto, but simply a story with a tight and precise rhythm, where the author abstains from sermons and moral, alluding, however, to the need for a profound change in individual and collective perspective in order to face the ongoing crisis. This short novel offers readers a vibrant snapshot of one of the greatest contemporary concerns; with an original narrative choice, it stages the danger of man's defeat in struggle with nature but also with himself; proposes a Greek tragedy ending but also a (possible) catharsis, the idea of a possible future to a new relationship between man and nature.

(Francesca Santolini, *La Stampa*)

three generations (toledot) who demonstrate the difficulty of responding to other people's expectations and question us readers on the most complex themes of life, death, decline and rebirth... In the book the natural and interior lives of the protagonists compete for the narrative space "in a game of alliances, references and symbiosis". But, in the writer's opinion, nature, who hosts and tolerates the presence of man, not always respectful of his rhythms, is the true protagonist of an agile and fast novel which however requires a slow and concentrated reading... "*The Meteorologist*" is a novel that surprises, excites, overwhelms and gives us,

with a prose with a calibrated rhythm, imbued with nuances that are sometimes imaginative and sometimes disturbing, a powerful reflection on our relationship with Nature that we would like to tame to the needs of ephemeral profits. A must-read book to remind us that "our existence is, in reality, a continuous concession by the soil that hosts us" and that, making use of the tools of culture, we must learn to respect and love it for our own survival.

(Georgia Greco, *informazione corretta*)

How much time is contained in a few hours? All. And this is what Tamar Weiss-Gabbay delivers to us with her *The Meteorologist*. Time is measured, analysed, evaluated, convoluted, unfolded, predicted, recalled, photographed in snapshots that change and distort before our eyes like color dripping onto a canvas. In every fragment of the book there is hidden, intertwined on itself in the space of a few hours, all the time that the protagonists have lived, live and will live and it is the writer's ability to let these intertwined threads emerge without confusing the reader and, indeed, making each interconnection that is revealed clarifying for the text as a whole. The line of the present is grafted with references to the past and glances at the future thanks to which the experiences of the characters merge and confuse each other, mirroring each other in a continuous exchange of details used to intertwine the identities of each one in a single collective experience that merges the natural with the artificial, the human being with everything that surrounds him, literature and lived life, physiological time with that of memory... The world of *The Weather Woman*, in fact, does not know the nominal, but it is not missed. None of the characters are marked by a proper name, the only words used to draw the figures that move between the pages are functional and have to do with the actions they carry out or with the relationships they form with others which therefore give them the role, the position, that they occupy in the moving puzzle that is gradually forming, tile after tile. She is the woman of the time, of her time, who can know and spread the future one step away from everyone else. An almost prophetic figure in some ways... A modern Cassandra, who lends her mouth to the forces of nature, fatally forced to remain silent or lie to be believed, not in control of her predictions of which she cannot be completely certain, but for which she must carry the responsibility with her. Or as a sort of Christological figure who sacrifices herself at the end of her literary story for having embodied, in some way, the spirit of the times of her era ... Each of these parts dialogues with the others in many different ways starting from the fact that they are three different generations who consequently embody three different ways of perceiving and relating to the world, time, space and the environment that surrounds them: Tamar Weiss-Gabbay skillfully uses all the imaginative methods that a literary composition makes available to intertwine the inside with the outside, the past with the present and the future, to confuse the natural kingdoms into which the world is conventionally and anthropocentrically divided, to flow constantly, with the same oscillatory movement with which the tide moves, from literature to life and vice versa.

(Luna Piccioni, *Fata Morgana*)

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

Every sentence in the book is symbolic, denoting something else besides. Everything is loaded with meaning beyond the plot and the words themselves; everything says something about the power balance at the core of the book, which makes reading it a kind of layered and enigmatic game. Reading *The Weather Woman* requires vigilance, but is also able to generate pleasure and curiosity. Everything in this novella is tight and precise. There are no unnecessary words, no overflowing descriptions. Weiss Gabbay sculpts with Hebrew as if with damp clay, and also places in the story references to other works—to films, belles lettres, the Bible—some implicit and some direct. 'The relationship between man and nature' is a big, pretentious theme, but

the novella itself is modest, and avoids preaching as is the way of good works of art. The change will take place through the heart... It evokes a sense of a one-time event. The Weatherwoman is a timeless and clever parable, one that deserves to become a significant landmark, in both the environmental and the cultural sense.

Haaretz, September 2022

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

Gilit Chomsky, Makor Rishon

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

Maya Becker, Haaretz

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

Keren Dotan, Israel Hayom



Ilana Rudashevski

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

Rudashevski lives in Jerusalem with her family.

Taska

Novel

Publisher: Shtaim

Year: 2022

255 pp.

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translation: Partial English

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

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

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

Critical Praise

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

Omri Herzog, Haaretz

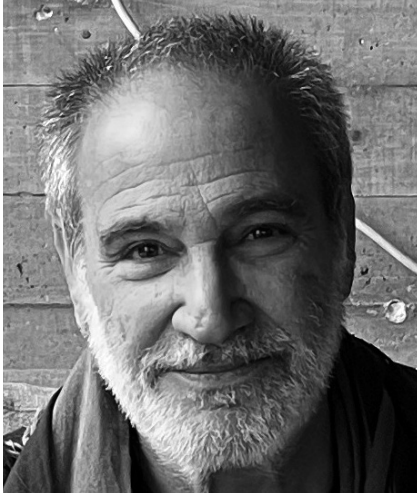
Composed with confidence, with a humor typical of modern Russian literature, [Taska] moves elegantly between times and continents.

Shiri Lev-Ari, Calcalist

Rudashevski moves between life and death, past and present, childhood and old age, hallucination and hard-core reality (a misconduct affair), with the skill and grace of a sophisticated author.

Yaron Fried, Maariv

N o n - F i c t i o n



Sharon Rotbard

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

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

White City, Black City

Non-fiction

Publisher: Babel

Year: 2005

352 pp.

Translation rights available: World excluding 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 will be 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 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 Israel* (Hakibbutz Hameuchad 2022) is a cross-section of Israel'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.

Aside: Residual Scapes in Israel

Literary Nonfiction

231 pp.

Publisher: Hakibbutz Hameuchad

Year: 2022

Translation rights: World

Audio visual rights: World

Translation: Complete English translation by Michal Sapir available

Tamar Berger (author of *Dionysus at the Center*, *In the Space between World and Play* and *Autotopia, Suburban In-between Space in Israel*) wanders through the remnants of the Israeli landscape, both social and material, exploring the places and people that have been marginalized or distanced: waste sites, peripheral settlements, prisons, ruins, and finally the aging body. In her personal essayistic documentary style, she describes the places she observes, introduces the men and women she encounters - whose presence is often powerful - and analyzes the phenomena she describes within their broader conceptual contexts. Berger's essayist documentary writing and rich literary style, integrating description and analysis, the concrete and the general, make *Aside, Residual Scapes in Israel* a unique reading experience, sweeping and intriguing at one and the same time. The book won great critical acclaim in the Israeli media. *Aside, Residual Scapes in Israel* was adapted into a theatre piece and staged by the Ruth Kanner Theatre Group (2023)

"The City Beach", in Kibbutz Ha'on, Sea of Galilee. The rain is getting stronger. There is no one at the site. The old high-water mark, marked by stones, is now a meter or two above the water level, and the pier stretches across dry land.

Carefully marked parking lots, umbrellas along the waterline, white tent cubes with fringed awnings, caravans securely placed on a sandy lot, a large central tent, shelters and seating areas, and patches of grass. Everything is set up for hosting. Suddenly, a loud voice booms from a cabin at the edge of the compound: 'Come have some coffee!' Menachem the Great, overflowing in a white plastic chair in front of a white plastic table, greets us without moving from his spot. Rafi, standing beside him, is sent to put toilet paper in the showers and water on the gas. Menachem talks. He's from Poriya and runs the site. 'Come, it's cheap and informal.' His father was a career soldier, and he's a collector. He points to his vintage collections: radios, a fan, an alarm clock, a rifle, a Primus stove, a whistling kettle, a wooden saltshaker, glass jars, and sends us to see the fire truck standing outside, a trophy from Syria. The rain is now pounding fiercely on the cabin roof. A large black jeep approaches. A man in his fifties steps out. 'A shell-shocked veteran from the First Lebanon War', he declares at the entrance and comes in, 'hospitalized with all sorts of pills at Tel Hashomer hospital, got out to open up'. And falls silent. Everyone is silent. Then he rolls a cigarette and goes out to smoke in the downpour.

Critical Praise

Tamar Berger's new book is a reminder of the power of theory to change the way we view the world. Berger takes her readers on a journey to what is shoved into the backyard of the social order or discarded there; a journey through spaces, sites, and to the people we turn into 'trash'. Berger's journey begins with a reading of Bialik's story *Behind the Fence* - much of which takes place in a fenced-in no-man's-land - and then moves from fiction to a very real Israeli space, to the backyards of Tel Aviv buildings, to the sites where our trash is sorted and buried, to the people and communities living nearby, to sites of isolation and imprisonment. It ends in nursing homes and with a reflection on the final burial site - the cemetery. Over the course of Berger's journey, a completely new map of Israel emerges; not the familiar map of historical sites, nor the current map of restaurants or entertainment venues, but a map of exclusion and marginalization, revealing the connections between what Israeli society turns into trash and the people it pushes to the margins.

Dror Mishani, Ha'aretz

It is that same attraction to the marginal, the peripheral, to the power dynamics within Israeli society, that has guided Berger in her previous books... Here, Berger sets out on a journey across Israel, exploring the landscapes of the remnants, a journey where "every cracked stone wall", every "decomposing green plastic sheet" and every "rat carcass" carries a much larger story - social, political, economic, historical, architectural, aesthetic. The choice to conclude the book with a beautiful chapter on the aging body, and especially the aging female body, as a site of marginalization, of shame and degradation, is intriguing. "And against the plundering and destruction of the body's collapse stands the factory of repair", Berger writes, hinting that, like the factories in Haifa Bay, the skin and graying hair are also a political issue.

Maya Beker, Ha'aretz

This book is of critical importance in the local academic space where so few dare to delve into the margins of society, certainly not as impressively as Berger has done here. The text is beautifully written, in rich Hebrew that turns even didactic statements and dry data into pure poetry... *Aside* offers a thorough examination of the darker corners of Israeli life that are obscured from view and from the heart - digging into our trash, unrecognized villages, neglected industrial areas, ruins (mostly of silenced Muslim history), and almost everything that is intentionally hidden... Berger's virtuosic, elastic and varied language, her immense wisdom and ability to delve deeply into topics while casually referencing facts and data, alongside the seamlessly presented multidisciplinary approach, the breadth of cultural scope, and her unique perspective on the physical and mental periphery - all of these could have created one of the most beautiful prose works written in Hebrew; One that deserves to stand alongside Agnon, Bialik, and Uri Nissan Gnessin - three writers Berger mentions in her book as she skillfully analyzes their texts... Bright conceptual diamonds, like the final chapter - the most beautiful chapter in the book, perhaps because it deals with the human body rather than geographic space, and perhaps because it is the most personal subject in the book, as Berger describes her own body, with the signs of time clearly evident on it.

Neta Ahitov, Ha'aretz

Dionysus at the Center

Literary Nonfiction

240 pp.

Publisher: Hakibbutz Hameuchad

Year: 2009

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 Double Files* 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: 2024

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: English translation by Gilah Kahn

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

The country is hardly functioning, and the sanitation department is on strike. Amidst all this garbage, Liora Dgani, the toughest but also the most humane detective in Israel, is searching for a lead. *The Odeski File* is the second book in the Liora Dgani investigation series by Nilly Assia.

Critical Praise

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

Haaretz

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

Assaf Golan, Israel Hayom

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

Mako N12

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

Sarit Plain, Vocabular

The 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