

Iris Schwanck

Director

FILI –Finnish Literature Exchange and Finland.Cool. 2014

(The spoken word applies.)

Mr. Boos, President of the Frankfurt Book Fair; members of the press; colleagues; ladies and gentlemen:

I'd like to welcome you to the adventure that is 'Finland.Cool.'! According to our countdown clock, as of today there are 105 days remaining until the start of the Frankfurt Book Fair.

Our aim is to put together a Guest of Honour programme that is different, inclusive, surprising, joyful and democratic. Now that there are a limited number of days remaining and our main target in October is approaching fast, it's time to let you know how things look.

Literature and reading are at the core of our Guest of Honour project. We believe that culture belongs to everyone; literature belongs to everyone; it belongs everywhere. My colleagues are going to talk about our literature programme at the Book Fair, but I want to be sure to mention the importance of our literature programme beyond the Book Fair, with around 25 literary festivals and events, as part of our overall programme, so that our message is carried to as many people as possible.

Finland has a very active cultural institute in Berlin. They have produced a large satellite programme of events in over 30 locations that have been taking place throughout the German-speaking countries since the start of this year. That programme has included discussions on topics such as cultural openness and accessibility, as well as future education solutions with dozens of local partners – and there are more events to come. The satellite programme has also been introducing people to Finnish music, design and art.

At this press conference today we also have Sofie Backman, the project manager of the satellite programme, and Anna-Maija Mertens, who is the director of the Finnish Institute in Germany. They will both be happy to answer any questions about the satellite programme.

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**FINNLAND. COOL.
FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR.
GUEST OF HONOUR 2014.**

As I mentioned, our project is a community-oriented project, not a political branding project or an effort to improve our image. In fact, it is something we have been working on for several years in conjunction with the Finnish and German publishing industries, translators, authors and other people in the literary field. We had set a goal of getting translation rights for 100 Finnish books sold to Germany. As of now, we have achieved the landmark figure of 130 titles. We have to thank the publishing professionals in both countries for that impressive result. It has been a delight to receive German publishers' catalogues featuring Finnish authors on the front covers and in other prominent places.

For the Book Fair itself, we have designed a programme that encompasses every hall, with exhibitions, discussions, debates and performances. If I understand correctly, this is the first time this has been done in the history of the Guest of Honour programme.

Finland will have two 'national' sections for its publishers: the usual one for members of the Finnish Book Publishers' Association in Hall 5, and a separate one for educational publishers in Hall 4.2.

At this press conference, you will also find out about Finland's great pavilion project. For the first time in the history of the Frankfurt Book Fair, the task of designing the pavilion has been entrusted to students. The creative work done by Natalia Baczynska Kimberley, Nina Kosonen and Matti Mikkilä, master's students in the spatial and furniture design programme at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture, will soon be unveiled. It has been a privilege to work with these young people – their enthusiasm, professional skills and analytical views of 'coolness' have been a huge inspiration for the progress of the whole project. In a short while, our young designers will present the 'Finland.Cool.' pavilion themselves.

We have teamed up with the City of Helsinki for the Agora area. That's where we will see the Helsinki Bookmobile, which has been decorated with Moomins motifs to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of their creator, Tove Jansson. Visitors can learn about our capital city in various portable exhibitions and a park that will be created in the area.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The primary goal of the 'Finland.Cool.' project is to bring Finnish literary exports to a higher level than before, and keep them there. Another essential element of the Guest of Honour project is the additional cultural programme to be held in Frankfurt. I am absolutely delighted at how the cultural institutions here have approached our culture with curiosity and open minds. The cultural programme has

Further information:

Press Office Finland. Cool. | c/o WBCO GmbH | Silvia Lenz | Krögerstraße 2 | 60313 Frankfurt | T +49.69.13388037 | F +49.69.13388033 | s.lenz@wbco.de

been put together in collaboration with professionals – here, too, a proactive community of stakeholders has made its mark on a broad collaborative fabric. Experts and decision-makers from museums, cultural centres and the city of Frankfurt have visited their Finnish counterparts, as well as meeting artists and getting to know what is on offer. The basic principle has been that Frankfurt is the place where the decisions are made about which aspects of Finnish culture and cultural offerings you want to present to your own audiences, and what you want to commit to. It is precisely a matter of commitment, because exhibitions, festivals, publications and other productions take an enormous amount of work, energy, brainpower – and euros.

We began planning and organising visits around two years ago. After a great many trips, endless meetings, applications, encounters, dinners and correspondence, we have a cultural programme that is diverse and 'cool' – in more than one sense of the word.

Our cultural programme will start on the 24th of July, when a contemporary art exhibition entitled 'Matters of Time. Artists from Finland' will open at the Frankfurter Kunstverein. This exhibition has been curated by Holger Kube Ventura, the director of the association.

An unusually wide-ranging exhibition of the works of Helene Schjerfbeck will open at the Schirn Kunsthalle on the first of October. It will continue until next January, and it will include some great classic Finnish paintings from private collections which have never been on public display before. That exhibition has been produced in cooperation with the Finnish National Gallery and the Friends of the Ateneum society.

DAM, the German Architecture Museum, will host an exhibition entitled 'Suomi Seven – Emerging Architects from Finland' from the fifth of September to the 26th of October. It was really fun to see that almost all of the architects included are exhibiting at the Venice Architecture Biennale, which is going on right now.

The Ausstellungshalle in Frankfurt will be the venue for 'The Loveliest Girl in the World', a bold, empowering photography project by Miina Savolainen. In the Haus am Dom, an exhibition by author and artist Rosa Lixsom will open on the fifth of October. It is entitled 'Burkha' and takes a stand for equality.

From the fourth of October, the Mousonturm will host a festival of contemporary Finnish dance, featuring four different dance companies. The Film Museum is putting on two major Finnish film series. Our grand old man of cinema, Peter von Bagh, was given carte blanche to select 10 films to be shown. The Film Museum's own offering is a complete retrospective of the films of Aki Kaurismäki. It will be

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interesting to see what happens when these two gentlemen meet – this time in Frankfurt.

Of course, the Literaturhaus itself is clearly one of Frankfurt's cultural institutions. It is organising a literary evening on Sofi Oksanen and her works at the Schauspielhaus on the eighth of October. In the dignified setting of this building, we will hold a literary tango evening on Monday the sixth of October, where you can learn the secrets of Finnish tango under guidance from dance instructors, to music provided by the Unto Tango Orchestra. All interested Frankfurt residents are welcome to attend this event!

We have also worked with the Frankfurt public library on a number of projects. There will be an exhibition about Finnish children's book illustration, along with discussions of minority literature, reading, libraries and other topics in a programme in the main library as well as branch libraries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I began by saying that literature belongs to everyone, and it belongs everywhere. I would like to prove this by bringing Finnish literature and books to the city of Frankfurt as well as its saunas, homes and clubs during the Book Fair. Together with the Goethe-Institut of Finland, we have even created a sauna bus that will be parked here in the city.

I would like to give my sincere thanks to our countless colleagues and partners throughout Germany, and especially here in Frankfurt and in Finland. The major cultural programmes have received financial support not only from our Ministry of Education and Culture, but also from numerous Finnish funds and foundations. Without their help, many of the programmes would not have been possible. My special thanks go to FILI's sister organisations in Finland, which have helped to bring Finnish art, music, dance, film and architecture to audiences in Frankfurt.

As ever, the thirteen women of the FILI team deserve enormous praise and thanks. The members of the team here today are Maria Antas, Tiia Strandén, Silja Hakulinen, Päivi Haarala and Kirsti Pärssinen.

I hope I have managed to get you interested in what 'Finland.Cool.' has in store. I am absolutely certain that we will surprise and amaze you, and we will help you discover new dimensions – even challenging shades – of culture and literature. Cool is not just brisk, fresh and bracing; it is also new, bold, silly and surprising.

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