

# Schweiß und Poesie – Young Finnish Spoken Word Scene

**A literary road trip with sauna to the Frankfurt Book Fair from October 4<sup>th</sup> till 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

Finland.Cool. is the motto of guest country Finland for the Frankfurt Book Fair. But not everything is cold in Finland. The sauna should be hot and make the body sweat. Also spoken word poetry, the poetry of the spoken word can warm body and spirit; it does not shy from strong gestures, rhythm, emotions and volume.

Spoken word poetry was principally developed in the USA as a lyrical performance form, a form of "oral history", with everyday topics, everyday language and combined with social activism. Through this "lyric" it reconnects to everyday life and is receptive for people who cannot identify with elite lyrical concepts. Through the highly successful poetry slam scene, "spoken word poetry" has sustainably influenced contemporary lyric also in Europe and particularly in Germany.

The Goethe Institute Finland and the German spoken word/sound artist, Dirk Huelstrunk present in cooperation with the Helsinki Poetry Connection (Harri Hertell) and the Turku Poetry Week Association (Esa Hirvonen) young authors from Finland with an affinity for the spoken word poetry/ poetry slam scene. In the scope of a road trip with a fire engine converted into a mobile sauna by the Berlin art project "freie internationale tankstelle", part of the group are travelling to prominent venues in the German spoken word scene in Berlin, Hamburg, Hannover, Düsseldorf and finally to the book fair in Frankfurt. Performances shall take place together with underground authors in underground pubs, clubs, galleries, churches or on the street, spontaneously in front of the mobile sauna. The unusual form of the poetic sauna road trip makes presentation of the young Finnish authors to a performance event. It can spawn unexpected encounters and cooperations, when e.g. German authors, or audience/passers-by are invited as guests into the sauna or collective readings with German authors take place in front of the sauna.

In Frankfurt authors and the FireFit Sauna shall transform the urban gardening project "Frankfurter Garden" into the "Schweiß und Poesie Garden" from 7.10.-11.10. There, every afternoon there is the "Finn Kiosk" an open stage that invites local authors together with their

Finnish counterparts to present short texts in a relaxed atmosphere. In addition, for a small donation, the FireFit sauna is open to guests and audience.

Central event in Frankfurt is the long "Schweiß und Poesie" evening in the scope of the Open Book Festival with all participating authors, live band and DJ.

The "Schweiß & Poesie" poets will appear at the Guest Country Pavilion (Friday) and also in the Lesezelt (Reading Marquee). On Friday evening, two Finnish authors shall be to guest at the Poetry Slam Frankfurt in Cafe1 at the Fachhochschule Frankfurt, one of the oldest poetry slams in Germany.

The tour experience will be posted in a "Schweiß & Poesie" blog.

The participating authors were selected by Esa Hirvonen (Turku Poetry Week) and Harri Hertell (Helsinki Poetry Connection). They are the ambassadors of a new poetic aesthetic that is principally orientated on the spoken word, the sound of language and/or the performance of the texts.

The authors not only represent different performance forms of the Finnish spoken word culture, but also different regions of Finland (Helsinki, Turku, Espoo, Jyväskylä, Oulu) and therefore also geographically cover a significant part of Finland.

Authors:

Harri Hertell (Helsinki), Kasper Salonen (Helsinki) Esa Hirvonen (Turku), Juha Kulmala (Turku), Heli Slunga (Oulu), Katariina Vuorinen (Jyväskylä), Teemu Manninen (Espoo)

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## "Schweiß und Poesie" (preliminary tour programme)

### 4.10. Berlin

7 p.m. freie internationale tankstelle. Tour Opening.  
with Esa Hirvonen (Turku), Harri Hertell (Helsinki),  
Kasper Salonen (Helsinki), Heli Slunga (Oulu),  
Katariina Vuorinen (Jyväskylä) & Guests

### 5.10. Hamburg

4- 5:30 p.m. Finnische Seemannskirche  
9 p.m. KOMET Club  
with Esa Hirvonen (Turku), Harri Hertell (Helsinki),  
Kasper Salonen (Helsinki), Heli Slunga (Oulu) &  
Guests

### 6.10. Hannover

8 p.m. Atelier Krass UNARTIG  
with Esa Hirvonen (Turku), Harri Hertell (Helsinki),  
Kasper Salonen (Helsinki), Heli Slunga (Oulu) &  
Guests

### 7.10. Frankfurt

7 p.m. Frankfurter Garten/"Schweiß & Poesie Garten"  
opening.

### 8.10. Frankfurt

4-8 p.m. Frankfurter Garten, Sauna & Open Mic

### 9.10. Frankfurt

4-7:30 p.m. Frankfurter Garten Sauna & Open Mic  
8 p.m. Open Book Festival, Roemer9  
with Esa Hirvonen (Turku), Harri Hertell (Helsinki),  
Kasper Salonen (Helsinki), Heli Slunga (Oulu),  
Katariina Vuorinen (Jyväskylä), Juha Kulmala  
(Turku), Teemu Manninen (Espoo) & Live-Band.  
Guest: Nora Gomringer (Bamberg)

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## 10.10. Frankfurt

3-4 p.m.                      Schweiß & Poesie Feature. Finnish Pavilion, Book Fair  
4-7:30 p.m.                 Frankfurter Garten, Sauna and Open Mic  
8:30 p.m.                     Poetry Slam Frankfurt with Kasper Salonen & Heli Slunga

## 11.10. Düsseldorf

ZAKK, Esa Hirvonen, Harri Hertell & Guests

Further information:

### The mobile FireFit Sauna:

FIREFIT the CREATIVE ENERGY FORCE is a mobile sauna integrated into a fire engine. For the project "World Design Capital 2012" in Helsinki, Artist Dida Zende together with Finnish carpenters constructed this masterpiece of Finnish culture. It is a part of his social cultural project, the FIT freie internationale tankstelle. An artistic company that transforms abandoned petrol stations across the world into creative service stations. This always with the involvement of the community. Zende currently operates a global network of 12 service stations.

FIT Sauna: <http://www.f-i-t.org/index.php/firefitsauna>

### Articles on the new Finnish Lyric & Spoken Word Culture:

<http://www.fmq.fi/2012/12/from-page-to-stage-poetry/>

<http://www.babelsprech.org/tuerme-der-nachbarn-1-finnland/>

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## Contributors to the "Schweiß & Poesie"

### Harri Hertell (Helsinki)

(born 1985) is a poet, spoken word artist, DJ and event manager from Helsinki, Finland. As a spoken word performer, he forms half of the dub poetry project Dubros and turns out lyrics for spoken word duo Hertell & Hertell.

The kick-off and highlight of Hertell's event management career can be considered to be the formation of the Helsinki Poetry Connection, a collective of poets and performers who have helped cement the popularity of stage poetry in Finland since 2008. Together with the members of the collective, Hertell runs two poetry club events in Helsinki: the high profile Helsinki Poetry Jam and the Kiiski Open Mic, the only monthly open stage poetry event in the Finnish capital. Hertell published his début poetry collection, *Kunnes oppii kävelemään*, in 2011 and the next collection titled *Kutsumme sitä kodiksi* will be published on the 27th of March 2014. Hertell's poetry has been translated into English, German, Spanish and Czech.

In his capacity as a professional DJ, Hertell is known for the popular retro club "In the Mood", and for the mixed-style Kynäniskaklubi. Hertell is constantly gaining new ground in event production, having piloted the first ever Finnish Name-Dropping Championships and Aikomusten seminaari, a "seminar of intentions" where members of the audience were invited to share their hopes and dreams. During the past year Hertell has also been a regular fixture at the We Love Helsinki dances, serving as DJ at the highly acclaimed event.

### Esa Hirvonen (Turku)

is a poet and journeyman who found his home in Turku. His first book, *Harlem*, appeared in 2001. His collection of palindromic poems *Takana kapakan akat* ("The Broad Back of the Bar") was published a year later. Hirvonen cites Gregory Corso and Dan Fante as influences for his new third collection entitled *The Hunger of the Urals*. Hirvonen is one of the strongest and most original poetic voices of contemporary Turku street poetry. Fast-moving, prosaic poetry is Hirvonen's word, and life's colour is his emphasis. His poetry has been translated into English, Estonian, Udmurt, Slovenian and Italian. As well as being an active performer, Hirvonen is the chairman of the Poetry Week Association of Southwest Finland.

### Juha Kulmala (Turku)

Juha Kulmala (b. 1962) is a Turku poet, with four collections so far. His third collection of poetry, *Emme ole dodo* ("We are not a Dodo"), was awarded the 2011 national Jarkko Laine Prize as the best Finnish fiction in the last two years. His poetry is rooted in beat, surrealism,

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expressionism and symbolism and often makes use of a wry, laconic humor. Kulmala's poems have been translated into several languages. He has performed at many festivals and clubs, e.g. in England, Russia, Estonia and Turkey, sometimes with musicians or other fellow artists.

Poetry collections:

- *Pompejin iloiset päivät* ('Merry days of Pompeii'), Savukeidas Publishing 2013
- *Emme ole dodo* ('We are not a Dodo'), Savukeidas Publishing 2009.
- *Mitä te odotatte* (What are you waiting for?), Savukeidas Publishing 2006
- *...väärin kootut runot* (...wrongly assembled poems), Savukeidas 2002

Member of The Union of Finnish Writers, Secretary of the Littera Baltica Association, Chairman of the Writers' Association of Southwest Finland and Chairman of the Poetry Week Association.

### **Teemu Manninen (Espoo/Helsinki)**

(b.1977) is an award-winning poet, critic and editor from Helsinki, who has published five collections of poetry and has been featured in many anthologies, journals and events all across Finland. His poems have been translated into Swedish, German, English, Italian and Russian, and his performance work with his sound art collective *Linnunlaulupuu* has appeared in Austrian and American art publications. He is a founding member of the acclaimed poetry co-operative Poesia, and writes reviews for the major newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*.

### **Kasper Salonen (Helsinki)**

(b. 1987) is a bilingual Finnish poet from Helsinki. Salonen's range as a writer is broad: he has written meditative modernist verse but also writes high-energy spoken-word poetry intended for live performances. He is an active member of the Helsinki Poetry Connection and has both a collection of poetry and a spoken word album in the works. Salonen writes and performs his original material in both Finnish and English.

### **Katariina Vuorinen (Jyväskylä)**

Born in Janakkala in the Häme region in Southern Finland, Katariina Vuorinen (b. 1976) studied literature at Tampere University and later made Jyväskylä in central Finland her basecamp for traveling the world, while also working in the university there. She published her first book, *Edith suuteli minua unessa* in 2001, shortly before temporarily studying at the Universidad de Oviedo in Spain. With the next two books, *Kylmä rintama* (2006) and *Rouvien ja lintujen talo*

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(2010), she has become one of the most important poets for the bohemian publisher Savukeidas. She has also contributed to several anthologies dealing with topics such as exercising sexual power, social aspects of modern poetry, and correspondence between Finnish and African writers. Currently she is writing her fourth poetry collection and a prose travel book. A familiar performer at literary events in Finland and abroad, and also a creative writing teacher, Vuorinen has been the president of the Central Finland Writer's Union since 2008 and has worked to bring the Writer's House in Jyväskylä into the network of international literary centres.

### **Heli Slunga (Oulu)**

(b. 1982)

2010 – Runner up of the Finnish Poetry Slam Championship

2013 – Artist of the Year in Oulu

<http://www.helislunga.fi/> (Finnish only)

[http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heli\\_Slunga](http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heli_Slunga) (Finnish only)

Dirk Hülstrunk (HuelsTrunk) (Frankfurt)

HuelsTrunk is an internationally acting sound poet, minimalist spoken word poet, audio artist, author, freelance tutor for creative writing/performance and curator of cultural events from Frankfurt/Main. Influenced by Dada, Surrealism, Fluxus, Beat Poets, Pop and contemporary electronic sound poetry. He is amongst the pioneers of the spoken word movement in Germany and has been organising poetry slams in Frankfurt since 1996.

Since 2008 regular performances, tours and projects in Finland and cooperation with vocal performer Juha Valkeapää (Helsinki) as sound poetry Duo „JIRK“ and dancer /choreographer Milla Koistinen (Oulu/Berlin). „Bold Initiatives in the art“ KONE Foundation Prize 2014 (with Milla Koistinen). Member of the international board of trustees of the „Turku Poetry Week“.

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