

# ROOTS IN THE FUTURE



ITALY

GUEST OF HONOUR 2024  
FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE

16-20 OCTOBER 2024

**ITALY GUEST OF HONOUR AT THE FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE  
LITERARY AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMME BY THE ITALIAN PUBLISHER ASSOCIATION  
OVER 100 AUTHORS AND GUESTS FOR 80 MEETINGS  
16-20 October 2024**

Italy – with its books, authors, history and culture – is back at the **Frankfurt International Book Fair**. Thirty-six years after the first such honour in 1988 (when the Fair inaugurated the current format, giving a special place to a country or linguistic region), Italy will be the Guest of Honour from 16-20 October at the 76th edition of the renowned Fair, the world's leading international event for the exchange of rights, and a point of reference for publishers from around the world, with exhibitors from over 120 countries.

Italy, strongly positioned as the fourth publishing industry in Europe, will present himself with a representation of **more than 100 authors and guests** gathered in a programme aimed at linking the centuries-old tradition of Italian culture, art and creativity with a view to the future: the beauty of what has been with the reality of what is and the potential of what will be. Alongside the authors, dozens of Italian and international publishers and stakeholders will report on the present and future of a sector that thrives on exchanges and interactions among different professions: a complexity that the professional programme aims to represent to the fullest extent possible.

**The Arena and the Caffè Letterario**, central spaces of the Italian Guest of Honour pavilion designed by **Stefano Boeri**, will be the venues where the literary programme meetings will take place, while the traditional Italian collective stand, which hosts the exhibitors, will hold the professional programme meetings. The three venues are the sites of a single programme curated by the Italian Publishers Association (AIE) with the aim of representing the entire range and diversity of the world of books, a theme at the heart of the Italy Guest of Honour initiative coordinated by **Extraordinary Commissioner of the Government Mauro Mazza**, who has chosen the theme *Roots in the Future*.

Throughout the Book Fair's five days and morning and afternoon sessions, there will be space for **fiction and non-fiction, poetry and children's books**, the **latest releases** and **beloved classics**. One can explore **literary genres** from *detective* to *romance*, dive into a vibrant universe of **comics** and **graphic novels**, and take off-road tours in **cinema, music, art, science, design** and **tourism**, not excluding the crucial challenges for the future of the planet and society: the **environment, technology, geopolitics** and **Europe**.

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*“We are proud to have built a programme that showcases what Italian publishing is today and what books, authors and ideas are facing the world: we built it while engaging in dialogue with publishers and agents, including authors with works that are already translated and with new translations forthcoming in 2024, but also others who are not yet, but who may become of interest to the international audience,”* explains AIE President **Innocenzo Cipolletta**. *“It is a programme representative of the largest number of disciplines, genres and generations of authors, from large publishing groups to small and medium-sized publishing houses.”*

*“The Italy we are bringing to Frankfurt is one that grows through a fruitful comparison and exchange between different ideas and worlds,”* says **Mauro Mazza**, Extraordinary Commissioner of the Government for the Frankfurt Book Fair 2024. *“The literary and professional programme curated by AIE best reflects this openness.”*

## THE PROGRAMME

### *The Words of Our Time*

While “dates are indispensable hooks holding up the tapestry of history”, as art historian Ernst Gombrich wrote, words are the tools that humans have refined to understand, interpret and even recount this tapestry that continues to weave before our eyes. Writers are the craftsmen who know these tools best and master their secrets, pitfalls and possibilities. They will be entrusted with the task of exploring the vocabulary of our time, through a series of meetings that will address it freely, independently and unpredictably, starting from the ideas contained in the books, the sensitivities of the panellists and the suggestions of the moment. The first page, the opening morning in the Arena, will be symbolically dedicated to both the seduction of **beauty** (particularly that of words, with the writer **Susanna Tamaro** and the philosopher **Stefano Zecchi**) and to reflecting on the **apocalypse** (at the centre of the meeting between physicist **Carlo Rovelli** and theologian **Don Luigi Maria Epicoco**). The journey will continue with a focus on **Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**, entrusted to *solo sessions* by **Dacia Maraini**, **Claudio Magris** and **Alessandro Baricco**. It will then expand into a very broad spectrum including, in alphabetical order, **Absence** (**Daniele Mencarelli** and **Emanuele Trevi**), **Betrayals** (**Marco Missiroli** and **Valeria Parrella**), **The Border** (**Mauro Covacich** and **Paolo Rumiz**), **Chaos** (**Francesco Piccolo** and **Sandro Veronesi**), **The Classics** (**Alessandro D'Avenia** and **Susanna Tamaro**), **The Cure** (**Francesca Melandri** and **Fabio Stassi**), **Ethics** (**Gianrico Carofiglio** and **Emanuele Coccia**), **Genesis** (**Erri De Luca** and **Guido Tonelli**), **Places** (**Paolo**



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**Cognetti** and **Nicola Lagioia**), *Pleasure* (**Giuseppe Culicchia** and **Giordano Bruno Guerri**), *Science* (**Guido Barbujani** and **Massimo Sandal**), *Stories* (**Alessandro Barbero** and **Aldo Cazzullo**) and *Translation* (**Marco Balzano** and **Paolo Nori**).

Daily interviews by **Loretta Cavaricci** will be dedicated to a discussion on *methodology* in writing and its practice.

## ***Women Have the Power***

There is another word – increasingly central in both the roles and content of contemporary Italian publishing – that will be given special weight: **women**. It is no secret that in Italy there are many more (and stronger) female than male readers, while reflections and battles for gender rights are becoming more widespread, as are women in key positions at every level of the publishing chain. One of the most cross-cutting formats of the literary programme will be dedicated to women, starting from a very long distance – with **Melania G. Mazzucco** and **Annalena Benini** focusing on the feminine side of art and literature, followed by comprehensive dialogue on publishing and literature with **Rosella Postorino** and **Chiara Valerio**, two authors who have a holistic approach to writing and books, and finally a delve into the many open, current, often heated, gender-related issues – regarding adolescence, violence and emancipation – with **Silvia Avallone**, **Giulia Caminito**, **Ginevra Lamberti** and **Alice Urciuolo**.

## ***Infinite Horizons***

The myth of the origins of Rome, linked to the figure of Aeneas as sung by Virgil, teaches us how much wealth can emerge from the movement towards new horizons and from the meeting and intertwining of cultures, traditions and identities. That is a perspective well-known to authors of this format, as in their lives and writing they have faced, and often sought, a continuous remodelling of their own horizons. Writing is nomadic and cosmopolitan, is able to dance between languages and latitudes and find a home everywhere, as proven by well-known authors such as **Claudia Durastanti** and **Helena Janeczek**, storytellers and journalists such as **Igiaba Scego**, and emerging millennial voices such as **Olga Campofreda**, **Maddalena Fingerle** and **Anna Giurickovic Dato**. Joining them are two authors who demonstrate how the inclination toward "infinite horizons" is inherent in the diverse Italian landscape, with a kaleidoscope of scenery and perspectives, from the sea, featured in the noir stories of **Vins Gallico**, to the inland areas explored by **Sacha Naspini**.

## ***The Time-Writing Machine***

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The temporal dimension is another endless horizon dear to the authors, an immense territory in which they love to conduct their creative incursions. The past is a reservoir of stories that take on an even more magical and powerful form when they are recovered and told – at times realistically, at times fictitiously – through the eyes of the present. This unique attitude in looking back in time to address today's readers, which has always been a characteristic element of the best tradition of Italian literature (consider the past in the *Divine Comedy* and Alessandro Manzoni's *The Betrothed*), will be the focus of sessions that will investigate the many possible implications: from the more literary (with **Viola Ardone**, **Donatella Di Pietrantonio** and **Gian Marco Griffi**), to those intertwined with art and its mysteries (**Rita Charbonnier**, **Luigi De Pascalis** and **Carlo Vecce**), and those that recount the great royal and entrepreneurial dynasties, in both historical biographies and the family saga – one of the most vibrant lines of the new Italian novel – (with **Alessandra Necci** and **Stefania Auci**).

## **Italy – Germany**

It may be that there are no two countries in Europe that are more different than Italy and Germany: in their history, landscape, language, cuisine, even the way they play football. Yet, perhaps because these differences are nonetheless developed in the common larger European context, the mutual attraction between the two nations is written in history, and in books. A clear demonstration will come in this cycle of encounters, ranging from the Germans' centuries-old fascination with Sicily (Federico II to Goethe), told by **Pietrangelo Buttafuoco** and **Antonio Franchini**, to the more recent attraction exerted by Berlin on young Italian authors, as “confessed” by **Andrea Bajani** and **Mario Desiati**. The dialogue between Italy and Germany at the Book Fair will also reach many other territories, such as the joint search for a new great European novel (with **Vincenzo Latronico** and **Gianluigi Simonetti**).

## **The Culture That Unites**

After decades spent in a relatively calm and solid manner, the world seems to be back to wearing thin on different levels, with conflicts that open cracks in the geopolitical fabric, crises that jeopardise economic health and tensions that cross social, generational and religious contexts. What if culture were the best tool to mend these frays? In a series of meetings in the Arena discussions will revolve around the historical and contemporary roles of intellectuals (**Marina Valensise** and **Marcello Veneziani**), politics (**Alessandro Campi** and **Andrea Romano**), religion (**Rav Scialom Bahbout** and **Mons Francesco Moraglia**), the book as a universal and technological



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vehicle for culture (**Umberto Vattani** and **Massimo Bray**), for training (with **Matteo Lorito**, the Dean of the University Federico II of Naples, which celebrates its 800th anniversary in 2024) as well as the centuries-old relationship between Europe and Russia, once again at risk from the invasion of Ukraine (**Gennaro Malgieri** and **Luciano Mecacci**).

## ***Sui Generis***

Publishing is also a matter of genres. These literary works are true magnets for the attention of millions of readers, and food for their passions. Two genres in particular – **detective** and **romance** - will be the subjects of much in-depth analysis at the Frankfurt Fair. Detective fiction will be presented in all its nuances, in an exciting Saturday evening marathon in the Arena with two of the most popular contemporary Italian authors (**Maurizio de Giovanni** and **Antonio Manzini**), and a tribute to the master who gave new life to the genre from the 1990s onward, **Andrea Camilleri**, whose birth centennial is approaching. Romance, which is now an online buzzword and bookshop bestselling genre, will be the focus of meetings with **Cristina Caboni**, **Erin Doom**, **Felicia Kingsley** and **Kira Shell**.

## ***Through Clouds and Imagination***

The world of comics, graphic novels and illustration has seen a real golden age, with growing attention and satisfaction internationally (including the recent boom in translations of works in Germany), could not miss being the focus of another important series that will animate the Caffè Letterario on a daily basis. In Frankfurt, there will be great illustrators including **Beatrice Alemagna**, **Lorenzo Mattotti** (who also created the Italy Guest of Honour poster), **Alessandro Sanna**, **Olimpia Zagnoli** and comics luminaries **Igort**, **Luca Enoch**, **Milo Manara**, **Teresa Radice** and **Stefano Turconi** and **Pera Toons**.

## ***The Books That Feed Tomorrow's Citizens***

Children and teenagers' publishing raises readers and therefore the citizens of tomorrow. It is also one of the main drivers of contemporary Italian publishing. This is seen in the steadily increasing numbers from both the domestic and international market. In 2022, more than one in three translation rights sold abroad by Italian publishers came from this sector. It goes without saying that it will be at the forefront of the Frankfurt Fair, where the Arena will feature three days (Thursday through Saturday) of some of the most successful stories in Italian children's publishing, from **Geronimo Stilton** (with his creator **Elisabetta Dami**) to **Pierdomenico Baccalario's** series. The

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worlds of fantasy and school, illustration and translation will be involved with **Davide Calì**, **Chiara Carminati**, **Elisabetta Gnone**, **Beatrice Masini**, **Davide Morosinotto**, **Marta Palazzesi** and **Patrizia Rinaldi**.

## ***Of Verses***

Even before prose, poetry was the realm in which – nearly a millennium ago – the fledgling Italian language began to discover and reveal its rich expressive potential. Poetry is a tradition that has been renewed over the centuries, and esteemed and recognised internationally, and it is fact that half of the Italian winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature awarded in the twentieth century are poets (Giosuè Carducci, Salvatore Quasimodo, Eugenio Montale). Two meetings, both led by **Pierfranco Bruni**, will be dedicated to these continuously developing and reinvented verses, with some of the most recognisable voices of contemporary Italian poetry: **Franco Buffoni**, **Giuseppe Conte**, **Vivian Lamarque** and **Davide Rondoni**.

## ***Dialogue with the Muses***

Publishing, literature and books will of course be Italy's main focal points in Frankfurt. However, the trip will also allow you to explore other worlds and languages – always linked to the idea of writing and culture – which testify to the great diversity of Italian creativity. A dialogue with the other Muses will include **architecture** and **design** (with **Stefano Boeri**, designer of the Italian pavilion in Frankfurt), **movies** (**Pupi Avati**, **Simona Ercolani** and **Roberto Genovesi**), **music** (**Frida Bollani Magoni**) finally venturing into a territory that ideally unites them all with the landscape and cultural, historical and entrepreneurial traditions of our country, namely **tourism** (with **Riccardo Giumelli**). These sessions will also have the function of linking Italian art and culture to other, definitely challenging contemporary words: **environmental sustainability** (a key point in the session on architecture), **inclusivity** and **breaking down barriers** (the music session) and the **revival of the economy** (the tourism session).

## ***The Thousand Lights of a Prism Called Book: The Professional Programme***

The book industry employs **70,000 people in Italy**, an industry in which publishers are in constant dialogue not only with authors, illustrators and translators, but also with a complex constellation of booksellers and librarians, organisers of trade fairs and the thousand festivals that take place across the country, literary agents, the paper and printing industry, cultural foundations and much more.



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The professional programme developed by AIE has the ambition of giving a voice to this wonderful complexity in a discussion that starts with the Italian case and extends to the world.

**The genres that make up the Italian publishing range** and their excellence will be at the centre of a daily series of discussions among publishers, aiming to engage the foreign audience. Topics will include fiction, non-fiction, children's books, comics, art and design books, and more will be discussed.

The latest market data and analysis of the sales flows of translation rights will be at the centre of other sessions, starting with the numbers and getting to the story of Italian, European and global industry evolution. We will also talk about the historical relationships between Italian and German publishing houses, the challenges of translating great classics and new languages, the role of archives (with **Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori**), the literary awards (with the **Premio Strega**, the **Lucca Comics Awards** and the **Invictus Sports Literature Prize**), and the many Festivals in Italy (including **BookCity Milano** and **Taobuk**, the **Taormina Book Festival**). Reading and book promotion programmes will be discussed with #ioleggoperché, comparing different European policies on the subject.

Among the many collaborations, some of which are still being determined, are those with **Associazione Librai Italiani - Confcommercio**, **StradeLab** and **Associazione Italiana Traduttori e Interpreti**, **Associazione degli Agenti Letterari Italiani (ADALI)**, **Federazione Arte e Grafica**.

In recent years, through dialogue with international institutions and within associations representing the world of books in Europe and worldwide, important Italian professionals have contributed to feeding and directing the debate on topics such as **the use of artificial intelligence and the defence of copyright and accessibility rights**. These topics will also be discussed in Frankfurt together with the **Federation of European Publishers (FEP)** and the **Fondazione LIA (Accessible Italian Books)**. Thanks to LIA, in Frankfurt there will also be Reading in the Dark, an experience that explains digital accessibility for people with visual impairments via readings in the dark.

The dialogue with the major Italian trade fairs is also central: thanks to **Salone Internazionale del Libro di Torino**, a special edition of the annual **Dall'italiano al mondo** conference will be organised for translators who translate from Italian to all the world's languages, curated by **Ilide Carmignani**. At the **Bologna Children's Book Fair**, we will be talking about the new generations of Italian illustrators, starting with the **From illustration to comics - pencils in talented young hands** exhibition in the Italian Pavilion, curated by the Accademia Drosselmeier. With **Più libri più liberi**,

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the national fair for small and medium-sized publishers, the role of these businesses in the book world will be analysed, while **Lucca Comics & Games** will shed light on Italian comics. Another exhibition in the Italian Pavilion, ***Written on the Face***, will tell the story of twentieth-century writers through vintage photos of them, a theme that will also be the subject of a session, from an original idea by The Italian Literary Agency, curated by Alberto Saibene.

## The Italy of Books in the World

Frankfurt 2024 continues that virtuous journey that has seen our country as a Guest of Honour through the years at the most important publishing events around the world: from the Salon du Livre in Paris in 2002 to fairs in Rio De Janeiro (2003), Geneva (2005), Cairo (2007), Guadalajara (2008), Montreuil (2009), Moscow (the International Book Fair in 2011 and the Non/Fiction Book Fair in 2018), Abu Dhabi (2016), Tehran (2017), Sharjah (2022), again to Paris (2023), the Bucharest Bookfest (2023), and Tunisia and Warsaw (2024). This journey has been made possible – from time to time – by the commitment of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation** with the **local representatives of Italian Embassies and Cultural Institutes**, the **Ministry of Culture** with **Centro per il Libro e la Lettura**, **ICE - Italian Trade and Investment Agency** and the collaboration of **AIE, the Italian Publishers Association**.