It was standing-room only at the Frankfurt Audio Summit on Thursday, as publishers in many countries see continued growth from the audiobook sector.
Letter from the Editor

One of the largest and most engaged audiences for our Publishing Perspectives Talks at Frankfurter Buchmesse was our Thursday (October 16) discussion of “Women’s Leadership in Publishing.” And the debate was quickly on an economic footing, one of the biggest rounds of applause being for closing the gender pay gap between men and women in publishing.

Using data from the United States for 2019, Tracey Armstrong, CEO of Copyright Clearance Center, said that women in the workplace are paid 78 cents for every dollar made by men. That’s true for women with MBAs. They’re making that much less than men with MBAs. “And for women of color or members of under-represented minorities, it’s even worse,” she said, with “women making 60 percent of what men make doing the same job.”

“It’s a global epidemic,” Armstrong said. “The numbers might be slightly different from market to market, but the trend is the same. And leaders are calling for 2020 to be the year that we, men and women, demand that our executives examine their pay scales and start to make the necessary corrections to close the gap.”

Armstrong introduced the 50/50 By 2020 campaign, calling it “the next jump after #MeToo” and urging audience members to join.

Roanie Levy, CEO of Canada’s Access Copyright and founding CEO of Prescient Innovations, concurred with Armstrong, citing North American statistics that show “other ways in which women are paid less in the publishing industry.”

Female authors, she reported, earn 49 percent of what their male counterparts make, while books by women from mainstream publishers were priced on average 45 percent lower than books by men.

Mikyla Bruder, publisher and global marketing chief of Amazon Publishing, called attention to one type of Catch-22 typically heard in editorial meetings at publishing houses, when the line, “We don’t think the numbers are there” would be a response to content proposed for underserved readerships.

And from Frankfurt’s Guest of Honor Norway, Kagge Forlag managing director Jorunn Sandsmark said that the Scandinavian cultures have long been more purposefully conscious of such issues.

What remains, of course, is a lot of work from everyone in publishing to defeat unconscious bias and move toward parity, making us think that this topic may well be one we’d like to see in next year’s series of talks, too. Watch for it. •

From left: Jorunn Sandsmark, managing director, Kagge Forlag; Roanie Levy, president and CEO, Access Copyright and Prescient Innovations; Mikyla Bruder, publisher and global marketing chief, Amazon Publishing; Tracey Armstrong, president and CEO, Copyright Clearance Center. (Image: Porter Anderson)

Porter Anderson
Editor-in-Chief

Event Highlights: Friday, October 18

Frankfurt Creative AI Conference
10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
ARTS+ Salon, Hall 4.1 R71

AI and virtual technology are embedding themselves into the creative process and culture, fostering a dialogue with the artist and redefining what it means to be creative. But what is also being redefined and redrawn are the lines between fantasy and reality, between what is real and what is “fake.”

Frankfurt Invitation Program
Get-Together
12:30 – 2:00 p.m.
Hall 5.1 A116

Meet the 20 publishers from Africa, Asia, Arab countries, Latin America, and Eastern Europe who are participating in this year’s Frankfurt Invitation Program. This program ensures that small publishers from many countries can attend the fair.

Publishing Perspectives Talks:
Blockchain and Publishing
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
International Stage, Hall 5.1 A128

Three leading experts in blockchain development will provide you with exactly what you need to know about blockchain’s potential value to the book publishing business, dismissing misconceptions and addressing concerns along the way.

British Writers on Brexit
1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
Weltempfang Stage, Hall 4.1 B81

The Brexit vote brought about a political and constitutional crisis and a deep division in British society. Literature Across Borders brings together a panel of writers from England, Ireland, and Wales who will offer their perspectives on the causes and impact of Brexit.

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South America in Translation
4:00 – 5:30 p.m.
Hall 5.1 B110

Writers from Argentina and Chile discuss why translation is indispensable as a path to creating global literary phenomena and a body of world literature during this panel discussion organized by the Agencia Argentina de Inversiones y Comercio Internacional.

Event Highlights: Friday, October 18
Three Amazing Books by the Legendary Japanese Business Leader Kazuo Inamori!

kokoro – The Mind.

A Compass to Fulfillment

The Kyocera Philosophy

“Kokoro” means “mind” in Japanese. Everything begins and ends with the mind.

The most important issue for humankind

Thoughts and ideas regarding the work ethic and life principles for all walks of life

From the publisher of Marie Kondo’s The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up, Sunmark titles are spreading from Japan to all over the world!

Before the Coffee Gets Cold

by Toshikazu Kawaguchi

Zero Training

by Tomomi Ishimura

Could an ordinary Japanese coffee shop become a time machine where miracles occur and lives are changed?

Japanese supersecrets to regain your body’s Zero Position, lose weight, and reverse aging!

“Don’t you know the hippopotamus gave up sweating?” Penta, the boy penguin, introduces us to some wonderful creatures and the features they lost in evolution.

YOUR LIFE IN YOUR HANDS

Sunmark Publishing

E-mail: rights@sunmark.co.jp  www.sunmark.co.jp/eng/

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See you at Frankfurt Book Fair 2019  Hall 6.0 B120
Canada’s ‘Colorful Fabric’ at Frankfurt 2020

By Roger Tagholm

Canada promises to showcase its “Singular Plurality” when it becomes Guest of Honor at Frankfurt 2020—and it is off to a cracking start already as the driving force behind the initiative, Caroline Fortin, president of Canada FBM2020 and publisher and vice-president of Montreal-based Groupe Québec Amérique, revealed at yesterday’s press conference.

“We set ourselves the target of having 200 works translated into German, and I am proud to say that we are already nearing that goal,” she said. “Canadian literature is the sum of the diverse voices that reflect the ground swell of ideas that is Canada today,” she continued. “Canada is eclectic and multicultural, and our differences are woven into this colorful fabric that shows a nation that’s growing and striving to push further on all fronts, resulting in vibrant, creative industries.

“This is reflective of today’s Canadian literature, which more than ever, is bursting with new voices and perspectives that are reaching broad audiences. Our literature will be the star of our celebration in 2020, from rising and emerging writers and illustrators to the highly acclaimed and renowned authors. Canada will reveal powerful writing from all literary genres and from French, English, and Indigenous voices while still heralding the myriad of backgrounds that represent our country, our ‘Singular Plurality.’

Margaret Atwood will visit the fair on Saturday to lend her support for the Guest of Honor program. Three participating authors whose names are less known internationally were interviewed on stage yesterday: J.D. Kurtness, Lisa Moore, and Christian Guay-Poliquin. Moore is from Newfoundland and spoke about the many small communities on that island which each have their own dialects. “Their language has a rhythm and power all its own, and we have the ocean close by and this ridiculous weather. We are close to the climate crisis, and all of this informs my work. We have a lot of diverse writers, a lot of indigenous voices, and I hope that the world will have a chance to discover these writers as a result of the program.”

Kurtness talked about the importance of identity, and Guay-Poliquin highlighted literature’s ability “to absorb the point of view of the other,” something that is badly needed in today’s world.

During 2019 and 2020, the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA) will be responsible for the performing arts programming, complementing the efforts of other partners. CCA is also responsible for managing and coordinating a program that supports publishers by providing funding to translate Canadian works to German. All genres—literary and non-literary—are eligible. The CCA has launched three programs and approved support for more than 35 performing and visual arts initiatives, which will take place in 20 cities across Germany and Europe. More than half of those projects will be Canada focused.

The press conference also included some lovely cello playing by indigenous musician Cris Derksen, whose music evoked open spaces as well as the interior places to which literature takes us.

Spain’s New Translation Grants and Market Data

By Olivia Snaije

Miguel Barrero Maján, president of the Federación de Gremios de Editores de España, the Spanish publishers association, Marifé Boix García, the book fair’s director of development for southern Europe and Latin America, and Elvira Marco the Commissioner for Spain Guest of Honor 2021 spoke at a press conference on Thursday at the fair to give an overview of Spanish publishing and talk about translation funding possibilities. As a way of introduction, Marifé Boix García noted that there are 230 exhibitors at the fair from Spain and 28 literary agencies. Besides the Spanish stand, the autonomous communities of Galicia, Catalonia, Valencia, and the Basque Country have their own stands in Frankfurt.

Spanish is spoken by more than 570 million people (in Spain and Latin America), and official languages in Spain include Catalan, Basque, and Galician. Book publishing is the leading cultural industry in Spain, said Miguel Barrero. It represents 3.2 percent of Spain’s GDP, and publications in Catalan, Basque, and Galician make up approximately 12 percent of the total turnover. The publishing industry is located, for the most part, in two cities, Barcelona (50.8 percent) and Madrid (42.4 percent).

The industry is in its fifth year of growth following a devastating 40-percent drop in the market; in 2018, the gross turnover was €2.3 billion (US$2.5 billion).

Translations account for 17 percent of all titles published each year, with English leading, followed by French and then German.

Elvira Marco presented the translation funding project launched specifically for Spain’s presence as Frankfurt Book Fair’s guest of honor in 2021. Designed to increase awareness of Spanish authors and literature, the Acción Cultural Española (AC/E), a public entity, is open to 2019 applications from foreign publishers for German, English, French, Italian, and Dutch languages until December 10, 2019, with a €200,000 (US$222,000) endowment. The budget for 2020 will soon be announced, said Marco.

Foreign publishers who have acquired rights can apply; fiction, nonfiction, and all literary genres including poetry, theater, and graphic novels will be considered.

The AC/E is also funding translation samples for Spanish publishers and agents, and it is facilitating communication between Spanish publishers and literary agents and publishers from abroad. Spanish children’s book publishers already made a trip to Germany, and in November, a group of German publishers of fiction will travel to Madrid and Barcelona to meet publishers and agents.
Translation Funding for the Sheikh Zayed Book Award’s Literature and Children’s Winners

In 2018, the Sheikh Zayed Book Award established its translation grant program with the goal of “increasing the number of Arabic books that are translated, published and distributed abroad,” say the award organizers.

Funding applies to children’s and literary titles that have won the award, and you can find a complete list of eligible titles in the award’s rights guide, available for download at zayedaward.ae or in print at the Zayed Award stand in Frankfurt.

The grant program covers up to $10,000 in translation costs per title, with additional funding available for marketing and promotion. Applications are accepted year-round.

This year, publishers from Italy and Ukraine have received funding to translate several Zayed Award winners into other languages. You can hear these publishers present their translated titles this afternoon in Frankfurt:

Sheik Zayed Book Award Translation Presentation and Networking Reception
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Hall 5.1 B150

Come to the Sheikh Zayed Book Award stand in Frankfurt to learn more about the award and see a list of titles eligible for translation grants: Hall 5.1 B150.

Rights Guide to Sheikh Zayed Book Award Winners

Alongside the translation funding program, the Sheikh Zayed Book Award produces an annual rights guide with information about its winning titles that are eligible for translation grants.

Inside, you’ll find summaries of each title, author biographies, and relevant rights information.

Rights buyers are encouraged to look through this guide to contact rights holders via IPR License.

You can pick up a copy of this year’s rights guide at the Sheikh Zayed Book award stand in Frankfurt (Hall 5.1 B150) or download it from zayedaward.ae.

The 2019 awards, announced in the spring this year, include the following two winners, whose works are eligible for translation funding:

Literature Winner: ‘The Self - Between Existence and Creation’ by Bensalem Himmich

Himmich took his PhD in philosophy from the University of Paris. Writing in both Arabic and French, some of his novels have been translated into several other languages. The Writers’ Union of Egypt chose Himmich’s novel Majnoun Al Hukm as one of the 100 best novels of the 20th century. Himmich received the grand award of the French Academy of Toulouse in 2011. His novel The Man from Andalucia was longlisted for the French Academy of Toulouse in 2011. His novel The Man from Andalucia was longlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction in 2009, and My Tormentor was longlisted for the 2011 edition of that prize.

Children’s Winner: ‘I Dream of Being a Concrete Mixer’ by Hussain Al Mutawaa

Al Mutawaa is a photographer as well as writer. The Kuwaiti author has a bachelor’s degree in literature and criticism from the College of Arabic Language at the University of Kuwait, with a minor in philosophy. He began writing poetry in 2009 and won first place in the University Poet and Storyteller category in the University of Kuwait awards program. His first novel, Tunb, was released in 2017, followed by his Zayed winner, I Dream of Becoming a Cement Mixer. Jurors described his book as “beautifully written, with many twists and turns.”

Pick up a copy: Hall 5.1 B150
Mohamed Sabry Brings Youthful Energy and Fresh Approaches to his Egyptian Publishing House

By Olivia Snaije

Egyptian publisher Mohamed Sabry launched Kayan Publishing with his wife Neven El Tohamy in 2013.

“We had just had two revolutions and it was the worst climate ever, but we had passion,” said Sabry, who is part of the Frankfurt 2019 International Invitation Program. Both Sabry and El Tohamy studied law but ending up working in publishing. Sabry had always loved books, in particular the science fiction author Nabil Farouk, whose The Future Archive “was amazing. I still want to read it over and over again.”

The Giza-based company publishes between 12 and 17 books a year; fiction—including science fiction—and nonfiction, and all their books are by debut authors (with one exception) from countries spanning the Arab world, although the majority are Egyptian. His readers are young—between 13 and 30.

One of the first books Sabry published was a novel by Tunisian author Khawla Hamdi, with the catchy title A Jewish Girl in My Heart. It’s the story of a Muslim girl in Tunisia who loses her mother and goes to live with a Jewish family. It was an instant success.

“People like the book because it’s an original story and it’s a love story. It talks about the three main religions in a tolerant way,” said Sabry. The initial print run was 1,000 copies, but it has since sold more than 200,000 copies in the region. Bringing up the primary concern for publishers in the Arab world, Sabry added that an estimated 1 million pirated editions of A Jewish Girl in My Heart have sold as well.

Sabry has not yet sold rights to the book since his company has been concentrating on developing within the Arab region.

Khawla Hamdi’s second novel, the first of a planned quartet, The Jasmine Migration, is out now, and the subject is Arab immigrants in France.

Sabry came to the publishing industry because he had a friend who ran the now defunct Dar Laila and often visited the company where he “fell in love” with the industry. He ended up working for Dar Laila where he learned the trade.

One of Kayan’s imprints was inherited from Sabry’s friend at Dar Laila, which is a popular collection of books by the well-known Egyptian author Ahmad Khaled Tawfik, who died in 2018. The collection includes young adult fiction and essays in a wide range of genres, including satirical horror.

Like most Arab publishers, Sabry and a team of five or six people spend much of their time traveling to book fairs to sell their books—10 outside of Egypt. They find their authors mostly via social media, but they also meet potential authors at book fairs.

Sabry reiterates that the most challenging aspect of being a publisher in Egypt is dealing with piracy.

“You can find my [pirated] books everywhere. The minute you have a bestseller, it’s pirated. Sometimes it takes them only three days after publication to have a pirated version. It makes our blood pressure boil.”

Besides piracy, Sabry says other challenges include a lack of bookstores and distributors, and the fact that there are no literary agents. “There are more than 100 million people in Egypt and no agents. It’s crazy.”

“We have to start thinking about creative, new ways in publishing,” said Sabry, who does by communicating as much as possible with potential authors and readers.

At the back of Kayan books there is a paragraph encouraging writers to get in touch, and for readers, Sabry includes a mini-catalogue of his own coupon business, ranging from fast food restaurants to opticians. Sabry pays a fee for the coupons via a company called Bogo Club, and although he says some publishers look down on the practice, he feels it adds value to the books and readers have written to thank him.

Another initiative Kayan Publishing takes is to adopt a wide variety of pricing in the region. “In Egypt people need books to be cheap. We and younger publishers adapt our prices according to the economics of the country to make it possible for readers to buy books.”

He hopes that publishers in the Arab world can unite in order to face their many challenges. In the meantime, Sabry is enthusiastic about being at his first Frankfurt Book Fair and is looking to acquire and sell rights. “I will be back,” he says.
The Poop Workbook

What is The Poop Workbook?


“The Poop Workbook” combines the two together in a new “study workbook” which fuses “poop” x “learning.” Since its release in March 2017, “The Poop Workbook Series” has become a massive hit. It has sold a total of 5million copies, where 2 in every 3 elementary school children in Japan own a copy.

Don’t be shy! Come by and say hi!
at 3.0/J83

The series continues to grow!

For Elementary School Children
1. The Poop Kanji Workbook
2. The Poop Math Workbook
3. The Poop Arithmetic Workbook

For Kids Aged 3-6
1. The Poop Hiragana Workbook
2. The Poop Katakana Workbook
3. The Poop Thinking Skills Workbook
4. My First Poop Number Workbook

Unko Sensei
David Roth-Ey, executive publisher at Fourth Estate & William Collins in the UK, has begun a “Men Reading Women Book Club”—and the inspiration for it came at last year’s Frankfurt Book Fair.

“I had the idea after listening to our author Chimamanda [Ngozi] Adichie at the opening press conference last year. I really thought about what she said [that not enough men are reading women authors] and I decided to act.” (Image: Roger Tagholm)

The future foretold? UK picture agency Topfoto has acquired the archive of Punch magazine, the humorous weekly that ran from 1841 to 1992, and then briefly from 1996 to 2004.

Managing partner Flora Smith notes that many of the magazine’s covers are curiously prescient. She has two on Topfoto’s stand from the 1960s and ’70s, which show the UK breaking away from Europe and asking of Scotland: “Could they go it alone?” (Image: Roger Tagholm)

Ryland Peters & Small in Frankfurt for the 25th year. From left: Sarah See, rights manager; Denise Lie, rights director; David Peters, MD; Cindy Richards, publisher; Emma McArthur, export sales manager (Image: Dorothea Grimberg)

Books International comes to Frankfurt for the 50th time, now with their stand in Hall 6.0. From left: Vartan Ajamian, president; Azad Ajamian, chairman; Aznive Khleifat, director of human resources (Image: Michelle Claussen)

Helen Kogan, managing director of Kogan Page, and Dorothea Grimberg, sales manager at Frankfurter Buchmesse, celebrate 50 years of Kogan Page’s presence at the fair. (Image: Michelle Claussen)

25 years exhibiting at the Frankfurt Book Fair: Gunnar Lie, founder of Gunnar Lie & Associates (Image: Dorothea Grimberg)
Speakers at the Frankfurt Audio Summit, from left: Katja Böhne, Frankfurter Buchmesse; Kurt Thielen, Zebralution; Valérie Lévy-Soussan, Audiolib; Stacy Creamer, Audible; Michael Krause, Spotify (Image: Johannes Minkus)

Elena Pataki, publisher of Patakis Publishers in Greece, sold world English rights for a picture book titled The Yellow Hats by Kelly Matathia Covo to Enchanted Lion Books in the US. The English edition is scheduled to be published in 2020. (Image: Johannes Minkus)

Juergen Boos, Frankfurt Book Fair director (left), and His Excellency Said Saeed Ghobash, undersecretary of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi, sign the agreement for Germany to be guest of honor at the 2021 Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (Image: Johannes Minkus)

At Canada’s 2020 Guest of Honor press conference, from left: Nam Kiwanuka, journalist; Lisa Moore, author; J.D. Kurtness, author; Caroline Fortin, President, Canada FBM2020; Juergen Boos, Frankfurter Buchmesse director; Hélène Laurendeau, deputy minister, Canadian Heritage; Christian Guayabera-Poliquin, author; Cris Derksen, cellist. (Image: Johannes Minks)

From the fair on Wednesday: Author Karl Ove Knausgård (left) and Frankfurt Book Fair director Juergen Boos drew an eager crowd to Norway’s Guest of Honor pavilion (Image: Claus Setzer)
Frankfurt Audio Summit: Outlook from France

Valérie Lévy-Soussan, founder of Audiolib, has tracked France’s audiobook market from CDs in the early 2000s to streaming and download formats that are thriving today.

“We've seen a significant increase in the fully digital formats, with different kinds of audiences and readers.”

Valérie Lévy-Soussan

By Porter Anderson

The Frankfurter Buchmesse’s inaugural Audio Summit conference took place yesterday with speakers from a number of countries providing a global look at the fast-growing audiobook market.

The summit was keynoted by Michael Krause, managing director for Spotify in Central Europe, and then gave over to a pace-setting panel on the industry’s understanding of audiobooks and other audio products and their potential in the international arena.

Valérie Lévy-Soussan, one of the panelists at the conference and the founding director general of Hachette Livre’s Audiolib, came in from Paris with the latest word from France’s audiobook market.

At that time, Hachette—which has experimented with the increase of audio in the United States—and Albin Michel, my shareholders, believed in the development of the digital audio format as a future for reading for new generations and created Audiolib, the first to develop an audiobook catalogue of contemporary, non-abridged editions. Audiolib launched this catalogue with MP3 editions and CDs, and appealing physical packages because this format allowed us to have non-abridged formats—French people hate digests—at a competitive price.

Since 2016 and the development of platforms and the increasing prevalence of smartphones, we’ve seen a significant increase in the fully digital formats, with different kinds of audiences and readers.

And now, audio is much easier to find and to get, and everybody is equipped with smartphones. It looks more appealing to users of generations born after 1999 with mobile devices in their pockets, and the growth is here. Originally, we were more focused on combining digital technology with audiobooks to listen on the go, and who wanted to create a joint venture in Europe with Bertelsmann’s book club.

“Beginning in 2019, we’re seeing that 14 percent of audiobook users in the French population are readers.”

Valérie Lévy-Soussan

Valérie Lévy-Soussan: Yes, I completely agree.

But it’s not only the download capability of digital and ease of use, but also the size and variety of the available catalogue, and the awareness of the medium among a broader audience.

In 2007, there were only CDs. Cassettes had disappeared in France at least two or three years before, and the audiobook market was absolutely flat in France, largely dominated by children’s books and CDs.

In 2004, I had the chance to meet with Don Katz, the founder of Audible.com, who had first this vision of combining digital technology with audiobooks to listen on the go, and who wanted to create a joint venture in Europe with Bertelsmann’s book club.

Quickly, it was clear that in France, there wasn’t enough spoken audio content to build a market.

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Hongying Yang, China’s Top-Selling Kid’s Writer

By Porter Anderson

L ast month, the author known to many in China as “Madame Yang” introduced the 27th title in her runaway bestselling series Mo’s Mischief. The new book in the series is called A Cherry Town.

While many in the West may not yet know of Hongying Yang, she has more than 120 stories published—including her novels, short stories, and fables—and she has sold some 160 million copies of her books.

Her work has been translated into several languages, and according to data from book sales research firm OpenBook, Yang was the top-selling author in China in 2018.

She’s also vice-chair of the Sichuan Writers Association and has seen some of her early work soar to record-breaking sales. Her Diary of a Girl, for example, first appeared in 2000 in its original publication by Writers’ Publishing House. In the intervening 19 years, it has sold an estimated 3 million copies.

Publishing Perspectives had a chance, on the release of her new book A Cherry Town, to ask Yang about her work, and we began by asking if it’s possible for her to select a favorite book from her own work. She chose not a book but a series of children’s books that has been popular for 12 years and sold more than 70 million copies in China.

Hongying Yang: My favorite series is Diary of a Smiling Cat.

The first reason I like it is that it’s a fantasy story based on the real lives of Chinese children. The Diary of a Smiling Cat series has a continuous relationship with the Mo’s Mischief series. The character Ma Xiaotiao—[the main character in Yang’s Mo’s Mischief series]—is based on a naughty boy I taught when I was a teacher. The fantasy scene [is set in] a park in Chengdu, my hometown in southwest China’s Sichuan Province, where I have unforgettable childhood memories.

The second reason I’d choose Smiling Cat is that the character of the cat is a wise animal character with Chinese characteristics. It smiles because it has ideas and enthusiasm for life. With a laughing cat as the narrator, I can direct children to think about basic values regarding life, human nature, and destiny while they’re happily reading.

Publishing Perspectives: What makes your storytelling such an abiding favorite for children?

HY: I always want to communicate with children on an equal stance, which makes my works much closer and more inspirational to young readers.

I didn’t start writing books to be a writer, I just wanted to inspire my students to love reading. In the 1980s when there were few original children’s books in China, I wanted to write stories for my students, stimulating their interest in reading and helping them to form a good habit of reading.

Wattpad in Deal with Picturestart To Develop Rachel Meinke’s ‘Along for the Ride’

By Porter Anderson

J ust in time for Frankfurter Buchmesse, the Toronto-based Wattpad has announced yet another development deal, this time with producer Erik Feig’s Picturestart acquiring the film and television rights to Along for the Ride, a runaway hit by author Rachel Meinke, who writes as @knightsrachel on the platform.

The deal calls for Wattpad Studios’ Aron Levitz, Eric Lehrman, and Lindsey Ramey to produce, with Jessica Switich and Lucy Putnam on board for PictureSmart, which will develop and finance the show. Tate Hanyok (Sex Appeal) will adapt the project for the screen, and Ashleigh Gardner’s Wattpad Books has publishing rights for the book, set for the coming spring and summer list.

On the platform—with some 80 million active users monthly—Along for the Ride has logged more than 26.3 million reads. And this, of course, is the marketing logic behind so many of the books-to-film development partnerships for Wattpad, the presence of a huge, loyal readership for a story ahead of both the book’s publication and the film or television release.

Meinke’s story follows 17-year-old soccer star, Katelyn, as she’s forced to put her dreams on hold when her brother is offered a chance to tour for the summer with a world-famous boy band. Stuck on tour, Katelyn tries to focus on soccer to preserve her shot at the national team, but when she crosses paths with the band’s lead singer, her summer takes an unexpected turn.

In a prepared statement, Levitz, chief of the studios division, is quoted saying, “Along for the Ride is a phenomenon, a story with millions of reads and fans all over the world. Rachel’s story gives new life to the classic romance formula, bringing together a strong, empowered young woman, new media stardom, and the difficult choices that define first love.

“With Erik Feig’s unmatched track record of YA hits, Picturestart is the perfect partner to bring this beloved story to screens.”

And for Picturestart, the founding CEO Feig says, “Rachel’s story hooked us at once and we devoured the book immediately. Her story introduces us to characters who are both relatable and aspirational and a world we didn’t want to leave. It’s funny, smart, unexpected, and a great roller coaster of emotions.”
UK Publishers Want Certainty as ‘Unbelievable Tangle’ of Brexit Plays Out

By Roger Tagholm

As Publishing Perspectives Show Daily went to press, British publishers were checking their phones every five minutes to discover the latest Brexit news, following headlines that a deal with the EU had been struck by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. But then it emerged that the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland still held the balance of power and that the deal—obviously—still has to be voted through Parliament.

The mood in Hall 6 was summed up by Pan Macmillan international director Jonathan Atkins who said: “I’ve never been at a book fair where the news changes so quickly, with the pound going up and down depending on what the latest announcement is.

“What we want is certainty. The idea of getting to the London Book Fair next year with another deadline looming is appalling.

“We have been telling our international customers to stock up, just as we did in March last year when another deadline approached. But this is a difficult time of year for customers to stock up, when they already have little warehouse space because of Christmas.

“But to argue about the referendum result anymore is somehow irrelevant. As I say, what we want is certainty.”

There is speculation that if a deal is voted through, then it may affect the shipping of big stands back to the UK. But publishers were too busy absorbing the news to comment on that detail as yet. Penguin Press publishing director Simon Winder echoed the view of many when he said: “It’s an unbelievable tangle, and I despair at the whole thing. I’d like to stay, and I think we should try and disentangle ourselves. The prime minister may say he has a deal, but it still has to be voted through.” •

IPA Presents its Forthcoming Events and Programs

By Porter Anderson

Capping off a week of multiple meetings and events during the Frankfurter Buchmesse, the International Publishers Association (IPA) today (October 18) will hold an Open Meeting from 9:30 to 11 a.m., and anyone interested is invited to attend the session at the Congress Center, Level C2, Room Spektrum.

Several of the Frankfurt events produced by the organization—the membership now comprises 81 organizations from 69 countries in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, and the Americas—have been open to trade visitors.

One highlight was a presentation of the plans for the IPA’s 33rd International Publishers Congress in Lillehammer on Wednesday, and another was a look at the lives of the laureates of the IPA’s Prix Voltaire, the now-annual award for valor in defending the freedom to publish, frequently under oppressive regimes.

The latter program about the Prix Voltaire, featured Mahmoud Lutfi, the brother of Khaled Lutfi, who is imprisoned in Egypt.


In both events, Kristenn Einarsdottir, vice-president Bodour Al Qasimi on the program featured Lui Simp-
When the eighth edition of the FIFA Women’s World Cup in France started gaining attention this summer, few publishers may have been as well positioned to capitalize on the excitement as Sweden’s Olika Förlag.

Sweden’s powerful showing—they defeated England 2 to 1 to win the bronze—was a proud accomplishment for the yellow-clad players who had come into the tournament ranked No. 9 in the world.

But Olika’s founding publisher Marie Tomićić was set with a winning play of her own.

In 2016, she’d told Publishing Perspectives about a series of “books inspired by female football stars since there are so few girls in books about football.”

Olika’s first book on women’s football was published in 2014, and the series has since grown to include more than 20 titles, most aimed at young readers six to nine years old.

This focus on women’s football will surprise no one who knows Olika and its focus on diversity for young readers.

In an interview with With Tomici, we start by asking how the international enthusiasm for this year’s FIFA Women’s World Cup affected sales of her women footballers’ series.

Marie Tomici: This summer really helped the interest for our books. For example, this autumn, the Swedish Association for Soccer has spread the word about our books in social media channels, arranging a contest in which they asked the public to share their best stories from the world championship in France. I caught a lot of attention, and great stories were shared.

Also, the match this month in which Sweden is playing against Slovakia is great for us. We’ve been invited to participate in the fan zone hosted by the Swedish Football Association, and we’ll have a chance to speak about our book series together with one of our stars, Therese Sjogran, in a meetup arranged by Forza Football [which supports equal pay and play in the sport].

We have also started a new concept, Tell Your Sport Stories, where we’d love to expand with international stars because we strongly believe that this is a very promising direction.

The interest from various news media has also increased a lot because these women have such a strong voice and such an urge to change. It makes them interesting both as athletes and as people.

Publishing Perspectives: As yet, your football series is solely focused on women, right?

MT: So far, yes, it’s all been about female athletes, but we’re working right now on a book with a male athlete. Our goal is to contribute to increased equality and that means mirroring strong female athletes but also mirroring male athletes working for equality.

When choosing male athletes, we choose people who want to contribute and who are, as people, contributing to equality. That’s of utmost importance to us.

PP: When did you start work on this series, and what prompted you to develop it?

MT: The idea was born between me and journalist Johan Thorén. We met when we ended up sitting across from each other in a shared office facility for small companies.

We realized when we started to talk that there were few books about girls playing football. Olika had just finished a series of books inspired by real children and the reactions were great.

So we took the same approach to this idea and started to look for stars.

We found one, Charlotte Rohlin, here in our city. And when she said she’d like to be part of this we started to look for a writer that knew both sports and literature. Not so easy, but we found Jennifer Wegerup. And then we found Anja Gatu. And the rest is history.

We’re impressed that our athletes have been so brave, saying yes to our projects—especially Charlotte and Kosse [Asllani] in the beginning. We believe in building collaborations like this to speed up the process for equality and gender equality, and we’re happy they want to be a part of it.

PP: Where do these books lie in terms of fiction vs. nonfiction?

MT: We interview the athletes once or twice, and try to get a sense for who they were when they were young. To do this, we ask them about anecdotes, real anecdotes. And based on these interviews and anecdotes, we create a book’s story.

The main goal is to make the story interesting for the readers, that’s the top priority. So the quality of the story is very important. But we combine the nonfiction with fiction. We want the story to feel immediate, not something from the past.

One anecdote, for example, is about how Kosse Asllani always got nervous when she would have to spend the night away from home. Our book is about how she handled that. Another example comes from Nilla Fischer, who had thought of herself as a forward when her trainer said she needed to change to a defensive position. And then there’s Olivia Schough, whose mother was dying of cancer when she was young, and that became an important part of her life and story, of course. Her story helps children facing these very difficult themes in their own lives.

PP: In addition to adding books that feature male athletes, what are your plans for the series?

MT: We’re expanding to more sports and would love to expand internationally. We think we have a great concept that seems to be working, and our dream would be to have athletes from all over the world sharing their stories and working for equality and gender equality.

“These women have such a strong voice and such an urge to change. It makes them interesting both as athletes and as people.”

Marie Tomićić
Tom Fickling, ‘Sudden’ Publisher of Philip Pullman

As the new MD of David Fickling Books, Tom now finds himself the publisher of one of the UK’s most successful authors and a partner of the world’s largest trade book publisher.

By Mark Piesing

Tom Fickling, the still-new managing director of David Fickling Books (DFB), says he finds himself “this tiny, tiny independent company working with this absolute giant of publishing”—and he’s co-publishing one of the most successful franchises in British books, Philip Pullman’s new The Dark Commonwealth.

There’s also the premiere in November of the BBC/HBO big-budget adaptation of Pullman’s epic fantasy trilogy His Dark Materials.


The reason that Fickling is “suddenly” Pullman’s publisher—after being in charge for years of Phoenix Comics—is that in January, he was made managing director of his father’s Fickling Books, which publishes Pullman.

Fickling’s father—David Fickling—“has been Philip’s editor for a long time,” says the younger Fickling, “and they trust each other. There are no clashes. No final words to be had. It’s Philip’s book, and he is the author.”

Pullman is one of the UK’s biggest sellers, a true heavyweight on the international bestseller stage. He was made a knight by Queen Elizabeth II in this year’s New Year’s Honors and tirelessly champions his fellow writers.

If it sounds like Fickling is being shot out of a cannon, he is, in a way, but with a smoother ride than some might expect. “There’s a lot of editorial input from Random House,” Fickling says.

Fickling’s calm as PRH’s enormous marketing campaign for the new book ramps up is remarkable, given that he’s been in his new role for less than a year. He took over as managing director from Simon Mason in January. Mason is now an editor with Pushkin Press’ children’s books. Fickling remains the editor and managing director of the Phoenix, the sister company of David Fickling Books.

“I have found myself in this position through the completely random thing of being in my family,” he says with disarming honesty. “I can’t claim to have earned it in the way that some people probably have. I’m not very experienced at running companies either, and I didn’t go to business school.

“Luckily, both companies have fantastic non-execs, people who really care about what we do. And I’m someone who will sit down with anyone for some advice.

“Being inexperienced is a kind of a challenge,” Fickling says with a laugh, “but I think running small businesses is a challenge for anyone. You’re inevitably in the situation where you don’t have enough resources and you’re continually having to choose between things that you don’t want to have to choose between.”

Despite this challenge, the comics imprint, the Phoenix, has grown under Fickling’s management from 7,000 to 15,000 titles. “We’ve now got artists working in-house,” he says. “We’ve got more writers, making more of the content ourselves. But in the end, it’s still about getting kids reading. In two years’ time, I want us to be publishing in America and have a sizable subscriber base” for those comics.

The size of the company might also work in favor of achieving another of Fickling’s goals: increasing diversity. To many people, DFB’s home base in Oxford, UK would seem the epitome of the white male world. “It is,” Fickling says, “but whenever we make an appointment at the company, we’re mindful of this. Ultimately, the best way to get people to work in publishing is for them to see people from different communities writing books.

“It’s really important to me that the company is reflective of the people reading the books.”

Fickling also says he’s hardly expecting to be “a replacement for David,” his father, still at the helm of the company. “David’s the publisher. David sets the list. He’s the lead editor on lots of the books.”

“My job is to provide the environment to help him and the editorial team make the best books possible. It is basically about the good management of the company.”

And Pullman’s new book is, Fickling says, “his best ever.” •
Invitation Program

The Invitation Program brings publishers working in developing book markets to the Frankfurt Book Fair.

Maximiliano Papandrea, Editorial Sigilo, Argentina

Tell us what you do:
“I’m one of the publishers at Sigilo, a press that I started in 2014 in Buenos Aires. Last year we opened offices in Spain as well. I work from Argentina, and my partner, Adam Blumenthal, is in Madrid.

“Sigilo is a small press, and for the time being, it’s just the two of us filling all roles (without counting occasional collaborators).

“Our main objective, currently, is to consolidate our project, help Sigilo grow, be enriched by new titles, and strengthen what we’ve always been dedicated to: discovering new voices in Latin American fiction.”

About your market:
“While Argentina is and always has been one of the most vibrant book markets in Latin America, right now my country is experiencing an economic crisis. For the past several years, the publishing industry has suffered a sharp decline in book sales, as well as a constant devaluation of the peso.

“Our current model is to publish a few but very carefully chosen titles, and our sales have been very good, which has allowed us to expand. We have published books that have sparked great interest among Argentine readers, such as Cometier (Earth Eater) by Dolores Reyes, named one of the best books of the year in Argentina and which already has sold more than 30,000 copies. That’s a huge success for a small market. And the book has been translated into 16 languages so far.”

Nenad Saponja, AGORA Publishing House, Serbia

Tell us what you do:
“I was a renowned poet and literary critic in Serbia when I was established AGORA Publishing House in 2002. The main idea was to publish high-quality contemporary fiction from overseas as well as, of course, the best Serbian writers.

“We publish roughly 30 titles per year. In our 17 years, AGORA’s books have become a vast library comprising the most significant titles from international and Serbian literature, including Nobel prize-winning authors such as Doris Lessing and Alice Munro—and before they win their Nobel.

“As we publish both classics and new voices from our younger generations of writers. The next challenge is to offer our authors’ work to publishers in other countries and other languages.”

About your market:
“Serbia has only 7 million inhabitants. And the main problem with the Serbian book market comes from the fact that Serbia is still a poor country in transition. But there are some good sides to this story. The surrounding countries of the Western Balkans—the countries of the former Yugoslavia—have the potential to provide many more readers, a language area of up to 20 million people.

“We were fortunate to have one of the best books of Serbian contemporary literature (Tesla, A Portrait With Masks by Vladimir Pistalo), and it has sold more than 30,000 copies. That’s a huge success for a small market. And the book has been translated into 16 languages so far.”

Frankfurt Fellowship

Meet two members of the 2019 Frankfurt Fellowship which helps the next generation of publishers build global connections.

Annie Oliver, Jonathan Ball Publishers, South Africa

Tell us what you do:
“I am a nonfiction publisher at Jonathan Ball Publishers in Johannesburg, South Africa. I’m responsible for identifying new writing talent in the South African market and for commissioning books that will speak to the national dialogue and the fascinating social phenomena that are part of living in a developing nation with such diversity as ours.

“I love the fact that, in a small way, I can make a difference by the kinds of books I publish, and therefore career-wise I’m very happy where I currently am.”

About your market:
“For many years, nonfiction has been outselling fiction in our country. Political and current affairs books do particularly well, as do motivational books and memoirs by successful black business people. By publishing a number of exposés, South African publishers have unintentionally become role players in the fight against state corruption.

“Sadly, our book market is currently under quite some pressure because of our weak economy. Our biggest challenges are a poor reading culture and the fact that a book is a luxury item for the majority of South Africans.”

Plans for Frankfurt:
“The fellowship has offered me a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet peers from all over the world and to be inspired by them. At the fair I look forward to renewing old relationships and making new contacts. I am also keen to experience THE ARTS+ for the first time.”

Stella Rieck, Cossee Publishers, Amsterdam

Tell us what you do:
“Cossee Publishers in Amsterdam in the Netherlands, where I currently work as rights manager, has a fantastic team, and all departments cooperate closely. Thanks to that, I can also take part in evaluating incoming manuscripts for acquisitions in German, French, and Spanish.”

About your market:
“As a medium-sized independent publisher, we luckily have some flexibility to be creative and adapt. Slowly recovering from the blow of the crisis in 2008, the main challenges today include finding adequate ways of reaching our audiences and adapting to an ever-changing media landscape.”

Plans for Frankfurt:
“As every year, I’m happy to spread the word about our fantastic list of Cossee International Agency authors, as well as hear about noteworthy authors from around the world. We’re happy with every translation rights sale, but it’s of course a special thrill when one of our titles travels somewhere new.

“For example, Eva Meijer’s Animal Languages, having been sold to 14 territories, is also going to be published in Japan soon.”

—Interviews by Porter Anderson
The international festival for literature, stories and ideas with Margaret Atwood, Jo Nesbø, Ken Follett, Colson Whitehead, Elif Shafak, Mac Barnett, Jon Klassen and many more!

#fbm19