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Five years ago, in 2009, the then host country of China did its own part to keep the atmosphere at the Book Fair somber and subdued, because of its continual expression of harsh attitude towards critics of its regime, both in its own country as well as in Frankfurt itself. When attendees learned that the next host country would be Finland, it caused cheering and raised high expectations, not the least because it would be a unique opportunity to present to a broad public Finland's art, culture, design, highlight its top ranking in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) studies, as well as its role as go-between in a goodly number of international conflicts..

An impression of two days at the Book Fair from *Chris Siluker*

Frankfurt Book Fair 2014 Guest of Honour Finland

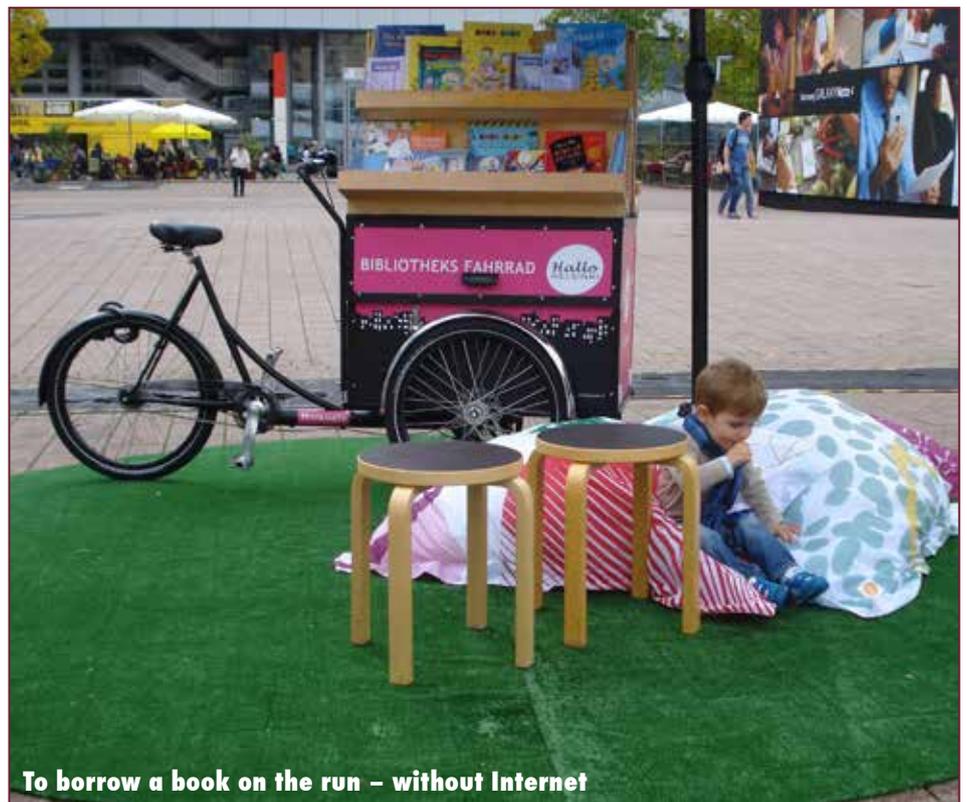
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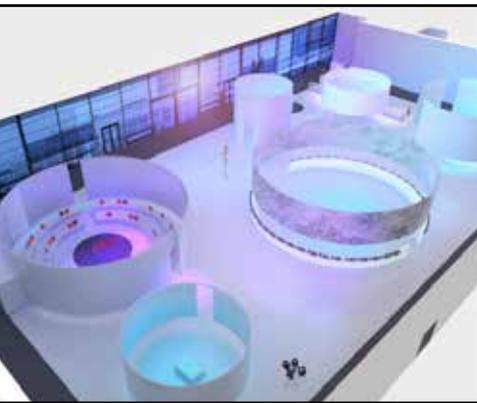
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To borrow a book on the run – without Internet

According to statistics, every inhabitant of Finland reads 17 books per year. In summertime, cargo bikes with trailer loaded with books are criss-crossing parks and pedestrian zones in Helsinki, the capital, functioning as a »mobile library«. One of these cargo bikes even made it to the Book Fair.



Model of the Finnish pavilion at the FORUM, level 1

Poster with the corporate design

drafted by students at Aalto-University, Helsinki
 (Photos: Matti Mikkilä).

FINNLAND.COOL. that was the motto of this year's host Finland at the 66th Frankfurt Book Fair. The question arises whether this COOL could be the acronym for something like »Charming, Open-minded, Original Literature«. But nothing to that effect was to be found in common reference works. Oh, there were e.g. »COFF (Common Object File Format), or »COSO« (Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission)« and a number of others... but nothing for COOL. If the intention was to express that »Finland is cool«, then this in itself would have been *un-cool*, says the specialist for Culture and Communication Sciences at the University for Arts in Bremen, Anette Geiger. *Cool*, this import from English was listed for the first time in 1980, in Germany's standard dictionary Duden, but in the meantime has lost its appeal; it does still exist in everyday language of young school children in Germany, but only up to third grade, in a similar way to the use of »awesome« in the United States.

Therefore, *cool* may not have created the desired (?) effect on a slightly older public in downtown Frankfurt when they walked by the huge posters of the Fair with this somewhat kinky motto. Most advertisements for the Book Fair this year were just texts in capital letters, on monochrome background – violet, which in Germany traditionally has been the color to announce congresses of Lutheran or Reformed churches. The question arises: Who's dreamed up this stuff? Reportedly, three students, Anssi Kokkonen, Jinhee Kim und Tommi Leskinen, from Aalto University Helsinki were responsible for this corporate design. Architects-to-be Natalia

Baczyńska Kimberley, Nina Kosonen und Matti Mikkilä created, as work project for their Masters, the Pavilion. They tried to evoke in their design the quiet and purity Finland's in winter time and transfer it to the 2,300 m² (7,546 sq.ft.) hall in Frankfurt. Their concept was to create six circular areas made of partially transparent fabric draped over a pure white, shiny floor which made the impression of huge lamp screens. From time to time, beautiful nature scenes were projected in slow motion. Only in the two largest circular areas, seating accommodations were provided.

**Alvar Aalto: Organic
 Architecture + Artek Design**

In the largest circular area, Jochen Eisenbrand, curator at Vitra-Design Museum (Weil on the Rhine, near Basel), presented the book »Second Nature«, a compendium of an exhibition about the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto (1898 - 1976) at that museum. That exhibition, by the way, is still running till 1 March 2015; the publication is available at Artek. Artek was founded by Aalto and his friends in 1935, with the purpose to promote, besides the sale of furniture and lighting, also the culture of living in general. The Swiss furniture company Vitra acquired Artek in 2013, and all rights to marketing of that brand.

»Second Nature« is a comprehensive document of Aalto's theories on construction, his projects, his buildings, his life. Already during his honeymoon in Italy, in 1924, Aalto was fascinated by Renaissance churches which designs he then adapted for Finland (e.g., Muuramen kirkoo, 1926). And in his design for the sanatorium to treat tuberculosis patients in

Paimio (1928), Aalto took especially care that patients would receive the right amounts of light and fresh air.

Alvar Aalto gained great popularity in Germany after World War II because his forms of architecture derived from nature were opposite the monumental architectural forms so prevalent during the times of National Socialism in Germany. Aalto's apartment building in Interbau's Hansa Quarter in Berlin was already built in 1955.

The city of Wolfsburg (attributed at its inception 1936 the moniker »city of the KdF car – *Kraft durch Freude* or: Strength through Joy«, the National Socialist leisure organization, since it was created around Volkswagen's main plant), realized that in order to offset architecture remaining from Nazi times it had to create architecture of a different style, and was able to entice Alvar Aalto to take over to develop several important buildings in the city, such as the Culture Center and two churches. In other cities in Germany as well, Alvar Aalto was called upon for help: e.g., Essen's opera building – which Aalto had already designed in 1959 but whose construction had been stopped several times – was nevertheless completed twelve years after his death. Aalto's construction style – organic, playing with nature – still fascinates today.

»Design Happy Hour« with Aalto + Aalto.

Towards the end of each day, at many booths there are unofficial celebrations: people get together, have a bite and a drink, discuss things, entertain themselves. Visitors stopping by are gladly invited. This year, the »Happy Hour« was even included in the program of Finland *cool* pavilion. For that,

Elina and Klaus Aalto arranged an environment of a »breakfast« designed for a family with small child. Its ensemble, called »Creatures at Dinner«, was composed of their well-known Artek furniture, and a high stool reconstructed as a baby-high chair. While



Elina Aalto put black adhesive tapes on chairs and walls, husband Klaus decorated everything with all sorts of bric-a-brac. This breakfast area design was supposed to stimulate children's phantasies. Common objects should thereby transform themselves – in children's minds – into figures out of children's tales; e.g., a stool into a bear, a lamp into a beehive, says Mom Elina. But apparently unimpressed, the Aalto's daughter Elsa gave her own performance with a little ball, on and around the display – it must have been her cute behavior that led most on-lookers to pull out their cameras and shoot pictures. A cameraman from one of the news organizations didn't want to be outdone. Only after a while, a Finnish buffet was served. □

Design Happy Hour *how a Finnish institution becomes a fairy-tale world*

*presented at the Stage
coffeehouse at the Finnish
pavilion by designers Aalto +
Aalto, Helsinki.*

Bestsellers

In What Language? That Depends...



Translators (from left to right) Patricia Klobusiczky, Werner Richter und Katy Derbyshire discuss the influence of English on German literature and on the German book market.

First of all, authors striving to get their new book on a list of bestsellers better are male, from a country other than Germany, and the title of their work shouldn't be longer than three words. That's the result of a statistical study evaluating bestseller lists out of the last fifteen year; the study was done as part of a research project on literature and media, done at the Insti-

like to export to the German market: translations are done quickly, and due to the Fixed Book Price Agreement – generally, a fixed minimum price for at least the first eighteen months after initial publication date must be kept – profit margins are good.

An interesting panel discussion under the title **It's all English, I suppose** among three translators underlined



tute for Literary Sciences at the University of Stuttgart, Germany. Professor Hektor Haarkötter, University for Media, Communication and Economics, Cologne: »Within the researched period, out of the twenty most popular books, only 39 percent were authored by women. The 'Top 100' list only reinforces that picture: In some years, only eighteen percent of works written by women made it on the bestseller list.«

Furthermore, only 27 percent of authors on the »Top 100« list were German; the majority were English writers (see graph, page 6). U.S. publishers

the situation in the trade. 60 to 65 percent of all titles are translations from English into German. Werner Richter, a certified translator for French, Russian and English, born in Berlin but now working and living in Vienna, remarked cheekily: »They translate every fart out of English into German.« To improve market presence, nowadays German translations appear simultaneously with their English originals. For example, still during the Frankfurt Book Fair, the first edition of 150,000 copies of David Nicholls's newest novel »Us« appeared on the

market, in both its English original, published by Hodder & Stoughton, and its translation »Drei auf Reisen« by the German publisher Kein & Aber.

Confusion over Anglicisms and Anglicized German

Katy Derbyshire from London has been living in Berlin for the last 18 years, and translates from German into English. She is of the opinion that the number of Germans has been increasing who know English fairly well and have a certain familiarity with the Anglo-American world; witness their preference to spice their conversations with Anglicisms and Anglicized German words. That shows, according to her, that Germans feel closer to English literature than, e.g., Iberian literature. It is not easy, says Ms Derbyshire, to translate »pseudo-English« German expressions e.g., *gefakte Backfactory*^{*)} – as they may from time to time appear in German literary works as an expression of style – into English, to catch the intent of the writer and assign it an appropriate English expression... **FINNLAND.COOL.** would fall into that category, I'd say.

Patricia Klobusiczky, translating French and English literature into German, thinks that French as international language has almost disappeared from the European horizon. Only ten percent of books translated into German were originally written in French. It may be that the radiance France once possessed faded: its position of cultural lead appears to have gone, economics and politics are in disarray. The Académie française is still clinging to its puritanistic ideal of French language, but legal efforts in France to stop the onslaught of Anglicisms in French have not shown the desired effect.

^{*)} Pretention of a full-blown bakery where actually only frozen pre-formed rolls, loaves of bread etc. are heated.

All three participants in this panel discussion agreed that there exists in Germany a still vigorous culture of translation which had its beginnings in translations of the works of Shakespeare in the 18th



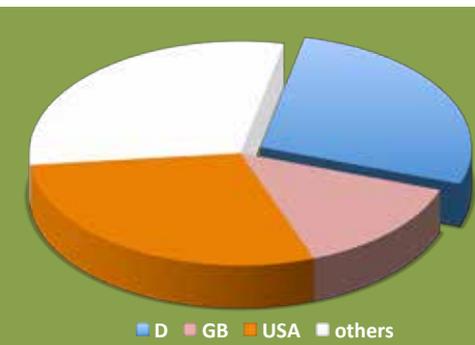
century. In Germany, even »little« languages have their chance to be translated into German. Such as Finnish. As host of this year's Book Fair, the hope is to widen the circle of readers of Finnish literature.

Sofi Oksanen, widely popular in her home country Finland, said at the opening of the Book Fair: »People asked me why on earth I write in Finnish, since I can also speak English. Well, I write in Finnish because that's my mother's tongue, and thanks to all the translators I have been able to reach readers all over the world, despite the fact that only a small percentage of all the people in all the world speak Finnish. With its alliterations and near endless possibilities of inflections, you possibly cannot surpass Finnish as a language of literature.«

Compared to the situation in Germany, translations of literature writ-

Only free languages can fly, says Finnish author Sofi Oksanen while expressing her thanks for being supported to Josef Haslinger, president of PEN-Germany.

The German Bookmarket:
Where do the Bestsellers
come from?



Mainly from Anglo-Saxon countries, colored in red. The pie chart's white segment represents bestsellers written in another forty languages.

Notice the relatively small segment (blue) of German authors.

ten in non-English languages are far and in-between in the United Kingdom and the United States. For authors in these countries, it may therefore be more difficult to look beyond one's own nose. »Well, better a little bit than nothing at all«, says Katy Derbyshire. »Better to translate, e.g., from German into English using it as a language to 'bridge the gap', and from there into, let's say, Bahasa Indonesia.« I must mention here that Indonesia will be the host of next year's Frankfurt Book Fair. Patricia Klobusiczky implored the publishers to continue providing translations of literature written in minority languages, as befits the tradition of German literary culture. At the time a work written by Japanese author Haruki Murakami was translated into German from an English translation – out of economic considerations, it was said – there was an outcry of protest within the world of literature in Germany. Werner Richter, now editing English publications at the Vienna Institute of Demography, threw in that in his opinion, wor-

king with native speakers in an international team can be a hurdle because of non-native speakers often being unfamiliar with the native speaker's idiomatic expressions, historical references, local pronunciations and accent (e.g., be it Welsh, or Texan). Katy Derbyshire pointed out the Anglification in the sphere of humanities and cultural studies. And it is not only the translators who worry about advantages and disadvantages of purely English communications in the humanities, as well as the consequences for other European languages and politics of promotion of languages in the different European countries. Non-English languages in Europe are losing their foothold. Promotion of foreign languages in Europe? Limited to English, one can say. More and more, English terminologies are used. Germans study no longer *Geisteswissenschaften* (Sciences of Arts and Minds) but Humanities. If it's a *menschliche Tragödie* (tragedy for mankind), it's now a »human catastrophe« ... lacking humanity. □

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