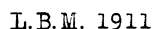


Illustration by Camilla Falsini

Festivaletteratura

MANTOVA
9 • 13
september
2026





Making Mantova live on literature for five days a year is the happy utopia the Festival has been making possible for thirty years, with determination and just a touch of recklessness. Almost everything around us has changed, yet writers still come from every corner of the globe to talk to one another, people still crowd in beside them to listen, and the enthusiasm still spreads. Magic? The very first leaflet handed out in town billed Festivaletteratura as a "celebration of cultural diversion". To divert is to leave the beaten track, to change direction on purpose and end up somewhere else. To stay true to itself – and keep its utopia alive – Festivaletteratura has always looked around, tried new routes and gone on diverting itself and everyone else.

The same goes for this thirtieth edition, for which we have invited over three hundred authors from all over the world to Mantova. Once again, we have built a programme that questions the present without simplifying it, guided by curiosity and wonder. We will talk about identity and belonging in a world where we increasingly feel like strangers, and about the power of new technologies. We will try to understand the hatred we can feel growing around us, to get inside the new class conflicts and to decipher the rules of this present made of exceptions, without giving up on futures that are still possible. And since we are now old enough to ask, we will also be looking at what it means to be thirty today.

We will do all this by bringing writers into the conversation, but also through the lessons and workshops that have long set our programme apart, where there's more time and a more direct relationship to encourage exchange and go deeper. There will be enchantment too – don't miss the Biblioteca Meraviglia at the Chiesa di San Cristoforo – and there will be celebrations with music and parades through the streets. In this catalogue you will find everything you need to choose your own route and start getting ready. We can't wait to welcome you to the Festival!

THE "COMMITTEE"

With thanks to



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Key to the programme

1 FESTIVAL EVENT

1 EVENT FOR CHILDREN



THE PRESENCE OF AN ADULT IS REQUIRED



ADULTS NOT ALLOWED

FREE ADMISSION



GREEN AWARENESS Events with a high environmental sensitivity, marked with the leaf.



STREAMING All events marked by the play button are also streamed live.



EVENTS NOT IN ITALIAN
AND WITHOUT INTERPRETATION



ITALIAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION



SHUTTLE BUS

Festivaletteratura reserves the right to make changes to the programme after this publication goes to print.

→ Any **changes of venue and time, or cancellations**, will be announced promptly by the Festivaletteratura Secretariat: details will be provided by the Ticket Office, our Information Points, the Festival bookshop, the Telegram channel and the Festivaletteratura app, as well as on the Festival website.

→ Literary events **last about** 1 - 1½ hours; workshops about 2 - 2½ hours; walks 1.30/2 hours.

→ Latecomers may be **refused admission**, even if they have a ticket.

→ Spectators give their consent and authorisation for all present or future use of **any audio and video recordings or photographs** in which they may feature as members of the public at the events and workshops they attend. In particular, purchasing tickets for children's and teenagers' events entails release of rights for present and future use of any audio and video recordings and photographs that may be taken of young people at the events or workshops they attend.

BUYING TICKETS

How to get tickets for the 2026 edition of Festivaletteratura.
We ask you to read the following information carefully.

BUYING TICKETS

Festivaletteratura tickets **can only be purchased online**

AT WWW.FESTIVALETTERATURA.IT

from **9:00** on **Wednesday 2 September** for **FILOFESTIVAL** members

from **9:00** on **Friday 4 September** for **everyone else**

At the end of the purchasing procedure, you will receive the PDF tickets by email. These must be shown either printed or on your phone at the event venues (at a cost of €0.50 per order, tickets can be delivered on Whatsapp). Your automatically assigned seat number will be printed on the ticket (this does not include last minute standing tickets, itineraries or installations). Some events, marked with numbers from 500 upwards, will be free of charge but with compulsory booking, and this must be made through the ticketing system. To book, simply add these events to your shopping cart and complete the transaction. Please note that non-members may purchase up to a maximum of 4 tickets per event.

Accepted payment methods: credit cards, Satispay, Amazon Pay, Paypal, Carta della cultura giovani, Carta del merito and Carta del Docente (the last two only allow the purchase of one ticket per event).

To facilitate the purchasing process, **from Thursday 27 August everyone will be able to pre-register** on the ticketing platform at bit.ly/fi-login

BUYING AT THE VENUE

As of this year, you can buy tickets for paying events on the spot, quickly and easily. Scan the **QR code displayed at the entrance** to each event with your phone and a guided purchasing procedure will open on Whatsapp.

Payment is by phone only. For sold-out events, any remaining standing places can be bought at the venue after the event has started at a reduced price and with no seat assigned, while places last.

RE-SALE

You can resell tickets that you do not wish to use. To do so, go to 'My orders' on the ticketing platform. This is not an automatic refund however: if any other user is interested in the ticket now available and buys it, the cost of the ticket (i.e. excluding service fees) will be credited to the bank card used at the time of purchase. **Tickets can be put back on sale up to one hour before the start of the event.** There is a **service charge of €1.50 per ticket.**

N.B.: Resale is not applicable for purchases made with Carta della cultura giovani, Carta del merito and Carta del Docente.

WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The events for children and young people are exclusively designed for an audience of the **age group indicated in the programme.** Accompanying adults will also be able to purchase tickets, except for events/workshops marked with the symbol .

For events marked with the symbol  the presence of an adult is expressly required. There is no need to purchase an additional ticket. To take part in **Sognare Forte**, reserved for 11 to 14 year-olds, you need to apply in advance by writing to sognareforte@festivaletteratura.it.

REGULATIONS FOR FILOFESTIVAL MEMBERS

The deadline for signing up for the Filofestival (friends of the Festival) membership card is **24 August**. Members of the Filofestival Association can purchase tickets **from 9:00 on Wednesday 2 September**.

When purchasing online you will need to enter the 6-character alphanumeric number (printed on the card or received by e-mail).

The card is strictly personal.

Each individual member can book **1 ticket only per event** for events that are compatible in terms of time (with a space of at least 60 minutes). The service will allow two members to purchase adjacent seats. To do so, all that is required is that one member purchases the two tickets at the reduced rate and enters the two membership card numbers during the purchasing process. **The membership discount is around 10% of the full ticket price.**

REFUNDS

In the event of cancellation of one or more events, a refund will be made automatically by re-crediting the net cost of the ticket.

ACCESSIBILITY

For the purchase of tickets for **people with disabilities**, please send an e-mail to perilfestival@festivaletteratura.it, by 24 August, subject to availability.

HELP DESK

At the **Loggia del Grano (4 via Spagnoli)** volunteers will be on hand to help with online purchasing: From **Wednesday 2 September** to **Tuesday 8 September** → from **9:00 to 13:00**; from **15:00 to 19:00**. (Sunday 6 September closed)

From **Wednesday 9** to **Saturday 12 September** → from **9:00 to 19:00**;

Sunday 13 September → from **9:00 to 17:00**.

From **Wednesday 9** to **Sunday 13** another help desk will be set up at the **Infopoint in Piazza Sordello**. Opening hours will be the same as at the main help desk in the Loggia del Grano.

INFORMATION

For information on events and Filofestival membership, call **+39 0376 223989**.

For technical problems with the purchasing platform send an email to cs@clappit.com or call **+39 02 36522969** during office hours.

We recommend registering for our **newsletter** at www.festivaletteratura.it and on our **Telegram** channel t.me/festivaletteratura.

ANIMALS

For organisational reasons, no animals (except guide dogs) will be allowed into the events with assigned seats.



The Festivaletteratura
ticketing platform

WEDNESDAY

9

september 2026

THE SACRED FIRE OF WRITING

Geoff Dyer with Elsa Riccadonna

16:00 PIAZZA DEI LIBRI **FREE ADMISSION** ▶

Thousands, tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of new books are published around the world every year. How is that possible? What lies behind this astonishing flood of novels, essays and poems in every language we know? Some sordid financial racket? A dark universal conspiracy? Neither. There is only a fire – a flame that warms the wits, stirs the fancy and sets the imagination alight. Anyone touched by it knows, or so we like to think. To settle the matter once and for all, ten Italian and international authors will again tell us where their inspiration comes from and why they can't resist it. Ten intimate conversations about the nature of writing, within every reader's reach.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

3 BETWEEN REALITY AND FICTION

Adam Gidwitz with Marco Malvaldi

16:30 SEMINARIO VESCOVILE - AULA MAGNA **7,50€**

"You have to have a strange relationship with truth to live a fiction, Max. You have to believe the fiction you're living, and your mind needs to be totally and utterly free from the truth. Except. You cannot lose the truth. You must keep it buried, in a box under the stairs in the cellar of your brain. You might even struggle to find it some days. But if it's tossed out, if it's lost . . . then so are you." Adam Gidwitz's new novel, *Max in the House of Spies*, shows us how stories can shape people, taking as a start Nazi propaganda. History, adventure, fantasy and mystery come together in a breathtaking novel that also sheds a good deal of light on European history and the Second World War, as the acclaimed American children's author explains to Marco Malvaldi.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

6 SHAKESPEARE BEYOND THE WALL

Isabella Hammad with Veronica Fernandes

17:30 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA **7,50 €**

When Granta drew up its decennial list of the best young British novelists in 2023 – the same list that once picked out Salman Rushdie, Kazuo Ishiguro and Zadie Smith – one of the names on it was the Anglo-Palestinian writer Isabella Hammad. In her novel *Enter Ghost*, shortlisted for the European Strega Prize among others, Palestinian identity and the reality of occupation resonate in a play written four centuries ago. Sonia, an actress of the diaspora, comes back to her family's homeland and ends up rehearsing *Hamlet* in Arabic to be staged in the West Bank. Taking Shakespeare "beyond the wall" becomes an act of creative resistance, where theatre and life under occupation blur into one. Read through Palestinian eyes, the tragedy turns into Hammad's way of asking how art and politics relate, and how complicated an identity becomes when it has to measure itself against history. She will talk to the journalist Veronica Fernandes.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with Civitella Ranieri.

Unical
BE ON FIRE

AGE **11** AND UP

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altropiemonte

8 TAKING OUT WHAT ISN'T NEEDED

David Szalay with Sandro Veronesi

18:00 PIAZZA CASTELLO 8,50 € ▶

David Szalay writes prose that reads like poetry: the same ruthless economy, the same "ruthless concision", like a painting where just a few brushstrokes are enough to get the idea across. And if there is one thing the Anglo-Hungarian writer does supremely well, it is exploring male identity and how it relates to time passing and to aging. "My characters often come across as fairly unpleasant, especially next to a lot of other characters in books and films. But for what it's worth, I think they're more like real people," says the author of *Turbulence, All That Man Is* and *Flesh*, which won him the Booker Prize in 2025. Sandro Veronesi (*Caducità*) joins him on stage.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



1 2 THE VOICE THAT DEFIES THE REGIME

Lina Attalah with Paola Caridi

19:00 PALAZZO SAN SEBASTIANO 7,50 €

The turbulent geopolitics of North Africa, and of Egypt in particular, are among the hardest to read, and it is thanks to the likes of Lina Attalah that we can gain an insight into what is happening there. The Cairo journalist and activist who co-founded the news site *Mada Masr* has spent years fighting for the survival of independent journalism under al-Sisi's military regime, "because knowing is the first step towards criticising." She has covered the Tahrir Square uprisings, the revolutions in Syria and the presidential elections in Iran, working to a simple rule: "I put fear in brackets while I do what I have to do, and deal with it later. But I can't pretend it isn't there - there's no such thing as courage on its own." She discusses the endless struggle between the truth of the sources and censorship with Middle East expert Paola Caridi (*Sudari*).

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with Civitella Ranieri.



1 4 WHAT STAYS, WHAT COMES BACK

Sarah Lubala with Carmen Gallo

21:00 CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA VITTORIA 7,50 €

"I was raised / on the Congolese gospel / I can teach you how to forget / where you are from / to worship the wide road before you / hands open / like this: / make each palm / a letter / to the sky." In *A History of Disappearance*, Congolese poet Sarah Lubala leads us on an intense journey through family and collective memory, shaped by uprooting, migration and historical violence. Time in the collection takes the shape of a river where past and present weave constantly through each other, and where out of its waters come women, memories and stories that seemed lost for good. The disappearance in the title is not a final erasure: it is where the search for voice, belonging and continuity begins. Through writing that blends the intimate and the collective, Lubala examines what colonialism has left behind, the fractures of exile and how memory passes from one generation to the next. She will discuss her work with writer and poet Carmen Gallo.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with the Festival Cabudanne de Sos Poetas.



1 9 A WOLF IN PARADISE: WELCOME TO STRANALANDIA

Theatrical reading from *Stranalandia* by Stefano Benni and Pirro Cuniberti with original script by Daniel Pennac in association with Clara Bauer, Pako Ioffredo and Ximo Solano.

On stage Daniel Pennac, Gigio Alberti and Pako Ioffredo

21:30 PIAZZA CASTELLO 30,00 € ▶

There's a place that's not on the maps. It has no borders but it has a door and on the door is written "Stranalandia, Psychological Consulting for Lost Animals." Seated in a rather worn armchair is a wolf. It's not howling, it's listening. It's a wolf that doesn't devour anything, except perhaps words when they get too serious. The wolf is Stefano Benni and this is how Daniel Pennac describes him: not as an icon, not as a statue but as a kind psychoanalyst who receives, in his study, in paradise, all the wounded animals of our times. It's a place where the absurd is not evasion but diagnosis; a place where the imagination is collective therapy, where humour doesn't serve to escape but to remain. We're going into that study today. Not to commemorate but to sit down, listen and perhaps make a confession. The wolf hasn't vanished; it's just changed address.

An Elastica production in association with CompagnieMia. Music by Alice Loup, drawings by Pirro Cuniberti. From an idea by Francesca Parisini and Brunella Torresini, directed by Clara Bauer and Ximo Solano, video and light design by Ximo Solano.



THURSDAY

10

september 2026

23 SECRET PASSAGES

Hélène Vignal with Vera Salton

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

11:00 CASA DEL MANTEGNA 7,50 €

Some books tell of amazing adventures and fantastic worlds, of great deeds and legendary heroes. Others tell you everything in between, underneath, alongside and behind those stories – the secret passages readers negotiate looking for tales about themselves, about small things that can also be enormous, things that happen every day, about what it feels like to be invisible and different but also brave and resourceful. These are the stories of French writer Hélène Vignal (*Passer au Rouge*, *Manuel d'un Garçon Invisible*, *Trop de Chance*), who will be coming to Mantova to talk about stories big and small with young readers. Bookseller Vera Salton will guide her, map and compass in hand.

The author will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

25 ALWAYS HEADING HOME

Sepp Mall and Ilaria Tuti with Simonetta Bitasi

14:30 PIAZZA CASTELLO 8,50 € ▶

The twentieth-century history of Europe's border regions, including the Tyrol and Carnia, throws up tragic choices and devastation that chase the fate of peoples and families like dogs of war, leaving only small flickers of humanity intact. In the novels of Ilaria Tuti (*Ed è un poco la notte e un poco l'alba*) and Sepp Mall (*Ein Hund kam in die Küche*), these small miracles arrive with the force of a freeze-frame snatched from the fury of world wars. For Tuti it is the face of an unbreakable woman who, faced with a new barbarian invasion and the birth of the Kosenland, keeps a firm hand on her community's tiller, turning despair into wonder and fear into welcome. For Mall it is the thoughts of a boy who, in the years of the South Tyrolean Option Agreement and totalitarian violence, uses memory to stitch back together a home unravelled by grief and murder. They will be talking to Simonetta Bitasi.

Sepp Mall will speak in German, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

27 MY PROSE IS POETRY

Eva Baltasar with Silvia Righi

14:30 TEATRO BIBIENA 7,50 €

"I spent fifteen years writing poetry and never thought of changing genre, until a psychologist asked me to write a four-page autobiography as a therapy exercise. I thought it would be easy, but I soon realised how boring the result was. So I started lying to make it sound more interesting," the Catalan poet and novelist Eva Baltasar admitted a few years ago, speaking about her first novel, *Permafrost*. At Festivalletteratura for the first time, the author of *Mammoth* and *Ocàs i fascinació* will lead the audience through the gritty streets of Barcelona, where society's malaise is seen through the ironic, disenchanted gaze of women intent on shattering sexual clichés and capitalist comfort. Baltasar will discuss with poet Silvia Righi how rhythm, musicality and the hunt for the right word matter as much in prose as in poetry..

The author will speak in Catalan, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

AGES 11 - 14



Anffas
FONDAZIONE ANFFAS MANTOVA ONLUS

STUDIOEQ
SOCIETÀ DI CONSULENZA

3 6 ALL THINGS MEDIEVAL!

Manlio Castagna, Adam Gidwitz and Antonio Montefusco

16:15 CASA DEL MANTEGNA 7,50 €

A dark age of ignorance and superstition? The Middle Ages get a bad press, when in fact they were a dynamic period, crucial to the birth of Europe, full of technological, philosophical and artistic innovation and a surprising amount of social and cultural energy. Taking on the stereotypes are Adam Gidwitz – author of *The Inquisitor's Tale*, a historical novel set in the France of Louis IX in 1242 (one of the 50 best children's books of the twenty-first century, according to Booklist magazine) and Manlio Castagna, whose *Il Medioevo dalla A alla Zazzera* shed light on the period as we have never seen it before, full of spookiness, legends and gripping tales. The two writers will swap medieval stories facilitated by Antonio Montefusco, an expert in medieval Latin literature.

Adam Gidwitz will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

3 7 THE CRACKS AND THE FOUNDATIONS

Enrico Giovannini and Lea Ypi with Andrea Pareschi

EUROPE, IN PERSPECTIVE

16:15 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

In an age of polycrisis, marked by wars, geopolitical instability, economic upheaval and rising social and environmental tension, the European Union is still a point of reference. Yet the sheer scale of today's challenges is testing the EU's ability to respond effectively while keeping its founding principles alive. How do current European priorities and policies, decided and applied together with member states, measure up against the ideals of human dignity, freedom, democracy and equality? Political philosopher Lea Ypi and economist Enrico Giovannini ask what it means today to work for social justice and sustainability on a continent under pressure. They will discuss the matter with political scientist Andrea Pareschi

Lea Ypi will speak in Italian.

In collaboration with Pandora rivista.

4 0 THE STORY OF AN ORDINARY MAN

Geoff Dyer with Emanuele Atturo

16:30 SEMINARIO VESCOVILE - AULA MAGNA 7,50 €

"I'd known for a while that I wanted to write something about my childhood and how I grew up: not because it's especially interesting, but precisely because it isn't. Because being an ordinary man, it tells you something about the social and economic changes between the late Fifties and 1977," says Geoff Dyer about his latest book, *Homework*. Like many British punk bands in the Seventies – Chelsea, for instance, sang about the "right to work" – Dyer starts from his own life to paint a picture of the English working class of the time, thinking about class in general through memories forged on the streets of Cheltenham. A guest in Mantova back in 2000, the author of *But Beautiful: A Book About Jazz* returns to meet the Festivalletteratura audience, sharing the stage with journalist Emanuele Atturo (*Roger Federer è esistito davvero*).

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

AGES 11 - 14



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DUGONI
FACILITY MANAGEMENT

4 1 BELFAST UNVARNISHED

Wendy Erskine with Illenia Caito

16:30 CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA VITTORIA 7,50 €

Belfast is not a city you can tame, even though the Troubles and the bitter clashes between Catholics and Ulster Protestants are now well in the past. Belfast-born Wendy Erskine captures the essence of "a dark city that still hasn't learned to talk honestly about itself after the tragedies of the civil war" – and does the same for its residents. This comes through in the working-class characters of the short stories in *Sweet Home*, and in the mothers and other figures of the novel *The Benefactors*, where she examines parenting, gender violence and social privilege. "What made me want to write stories was that I didn't see the world, as I saw it, reflected in much fiction," she says. In Mantova she will be talking with reading group coordinator Illenia Caito.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with Literature Ireland.

4 2 THERAPY FOR DEAD BOOKS

Matei Vişniec with Marco Archetti

16:45 AULA MAGNA DELL'UNIVERSITÀ 7,50 €

Everything in Vişniec's novels is resplendent and unsettling. It is more than a coincidence that the Romanian author, one of Europe's major living playwrights, was brought up behind the Iron Curtain on Beckett and Ionesco, Bulgakov and Kafka. At the heart of his conversation with Marco Archetti are pages where the absurd turns real and sarcasm turns to wonder. So it is no great stretch to sit in on a tête-à-tête between Hitler and Stalin (*Un secol de ceață*), to watch strange communities of exiles gather round publishers with no publishing house (*Panic Syndrome in the City of Lights*), or to listen to devilish word-merchants offering a hand to writers who have run dry (*Negustorul de începuturi de roman*). Because, as André Breton put it, "only the marvellous is beautiful".

The author will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

5 9 I FOUND MYSELF WITHIN A FOREST DARK

Pilar Quintana with Ludovica Lugli

19:15 AULA MAGNA DELL'UNIVERSITÀ 7,50 €

The Gothic novel evokes images of gloomy castles in the rain, ringed by forests that seem painted in black and white. Pilar Quintana, winner of the sixteenth Premio IILA-Letteratura, has moved what you might call "tropical Gothic" to the green jungle of South America. Through the eyes of mothers, daughters and female partners, the Colombian writer describes families where the machinery of affection has jammed and become "an agonising habit, passed on down the generations." The author of the recent *Noche negra* spent nine years in the rainforest and knows its traps: "I think it puts us face to face with our shadow. We're very fond of our bright side; in the jungle you have to meet the dark one too." She discusses literature, feminism, gender violence and the power of nature with journalist Ludovica Lugli.

The author will speak in Spanish, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with IILA - International Italo-Latin American Organisation.

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SISTEMI E INFRASTRUTTURE TECNOLOGICHE

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INTERTES

65 WHEN THE MOUTH BECOMES A BEAK

Jean Boucault and Johnny Rasse with Silvia Mengali

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

21:00 TEMPIO DI SAN SEBASTIANO 7,50 €

If true birdsong experts pique your interest, an hour with the French duo Jean Boucault and Johnny Rasse – known as *les chanteurs d'oiseaux* – should more than satisfy your curiosity. Growing up together among the pastures of northern France, in a village visited every year by over three hundred migratory species, they learned from an early age to trill and warble like birds, competing – first as rivals, then as friends – in local and European birdsong contests. The authors of *The Bird Singers. How Two Boys Discovered the Magic of Birdsong* tell bookseller Silvia Mengali how a shared passion turned into a working partnership and a genuine art form, taking us soaring through nature and up among the branches and clouds.

The authors will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



The Festivaletteratura Museum of Ethnography

Of the many likenesses of **Virgil** handed down over the centuries, one has recently caught the eye of archaeologists and anthropologists. The poet appears in stylised form: you can just make out his laurel-crowned head, immersed in the basin of a fountain from whose lion's mouth a powerful jet of water pours.

The icon comes almost exclusively in blue, or in white on a blue ground, and is usually accompanied by the word «Festivaletteratura». Enigmatic and of uncertain etymology, the term Festivaletteratura appears nowhere in the vast output of the celebrated Latin poet: it refers instead to a **practice of literary devotion** with Virgil as its patron deity, which for many years brought countless people to the Mantova area. What the rite involved, who those people were and what their customs might have been is the story we tell in the sections of the Festivaletteratura Museum of Ethnography, through the artefacts and documents that have been handed down to us.

Around the **blue ceremonial totems**, the household objects (cups, aprons, tea towels, twenty-sided dice), the ration coupons (or «meal vouchers»), the **amazing cardboard constructions** and the information sheets that reveal a surprising command of printing techniques, the Museum reconstructs – with a semblance of scientific rigour and a great deal of fun – the **life and habits** of *Homo festivaletteratensis* over the thirty years in which the species has so far been recorded.

Through **panels, infographics** and a **rich array of video and photographic material**, the exhibition sets out to tell the story of a cultural practice that in some respects scholars still find hard to interpret, but which, for all the time gone by, has lost none of its allure.

The Festivaletteratura Museum of Ethnography opens at the Museo Virgilio in Palazzo del Podestà:

⊗ Wednesday 9 → 16:00 – 19:00

⊗ Thursday 10, Friday 11 and Saturday 12
→ 9:00 – 19:00

⊗ Sunday 13 → 9:00 – 18:00

→ Free admission with complimentary Museo Virgilio ticket. «←

with the contribution of



The Festivaletteratura Museum of Ethnography is part of *Un archivio in movimento (An Archive on the Move)* with the support of



with the support of



September 2026

FRIDAY

11

7 5 UP THERE WE EXIST

Mikael Niemi with Marco Malvaldi

10:30 PALAZZO SAN SEBASTIANO 7,50 €

Deep in the land of the indigenous Sami in the north of Sweden lies the small town of Pajala. Home to Mikael Niemi (*To Cook a Bear*, *The Man Who Died Like a Salmon*, *Popular Music from Vittula*), it is where many of the mysterious, tragicomic stories in his books are set – almost as though the place were a character in its own right. Drawing on the memories of his great-grandfather, a hunter, and his father, a policeman, Niemi moves from urban noir to historical novels set in the frozen taiga without ever losing the humour that pervades his writing. With Marco Malvaldi, the author of *Stone in silk* (out in September) will warn the audience not to get too familiar with his fellow northerners: “never trust a smiling blond surface with blue eyes.”

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with Kulturrådet / Swedish Arts Council.

RED-SYSTEMS
Accende il tuo futuro

7 8 MASKS AND HISTORY

Olivier Guez with Carlo Lucarelli

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

11:00 TEATRO BIBIENA 7,50 €

One constant in Olivier Guez's work is the very fine line between fact and pretence, between the pressure of the outside world and the constant urge to reinvent oneself. His characters – the British adventurer and diplomat Gertrude Bell in *Mesopotamia*, or the notorious Nazi at the centre of the bleak *The Disappearance of Josef Mengele* – pass through history and shape it without ever really getting caught up in it. In his first novel, *Les Révolutions de Jacques Koskas*, the French writer brings us a bewildered contemporary anti-hero, forced against his will to embody the contradictions of a personal and collective moment in which he never quite finds his place. These and other elusive identities will be the focus of his conversation with fellow novelist Carlo Lucarelli (*Almeno tu*).

The author will speak in Italian.

**CUBERTI
PALACE**

7 9 THE ISLANDS OF ARMIN GREDER

Armin Greder with Giulio Macaione

11:00 SEMINARIO VESCOVILE - AULA MAGNA 7,50 €

“I was born in 1942 in a small town in Switzerland where the street names are written in German and French, and where you never know which of the two to use with whoever is behind the shop counter... and that's how I understood that language isn't the sound you make when you speak, but something that makes your thoughts tangible.” Born in Switzerland, Greder emigrated to Australia, then moved to Peru, and now lives in Italy. After years teaching design and illustration at the Queensland College of Art, he began illustrating books – other people's first, then his own. His work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions from Germany to Japan. At the Festival we get a rare chance to travel across Armin Greder's career, from *The Island* to the recent *Then you Came along* and *The Great Bear*, and through his literary and artistic library, meeting the voices and pencils he has engaged with and the encounters that have made him the person and the artist he is. He talks to cartoonist Giulio Macaione.

The author will speak in Italian.

AGE 13 AND UP

arti grafiche
CASTELLO
L'UNICA GALLERIA D'ARTE CONTEMPORANEA

STAMPACK
FUMETTI, CARTONI, LIBRI, POSTER, TAVOLE

MOCKAPPERIA
PRODOTTORE DI FUMETTI

87 ALBANIA, FAMILY ALBUM

Lea Ypi with **Christian Elia**

14:30 PALAZZO SAN SEBASTIANO 7,50 €

An old photograph posted on social media by a stranger goes viral in Albania: Lea Ypi's grand-parents on honeymoon in Cortina d'Ampezzo in 1941. In the comments some accuse her much-loved grandmother Leman of being a Communist spy, others a Fascist collaborator, others both of these. Out of that insult came *Indignity*, in which Ypi – a political philosopher at the London School of Economics – accesses the secret police archives to reconstruct her grandmother's life. The result is a hybrid book, half memoir and half novel, in which, as in the earlier *Free*, family memories emerge against the backdrop of major events of twentieth-century Albania: the end of the Ottoman Empire, and a pasha among her grandmother's ancestors; the birth of the Albanian nation, with her great-grandfather Xhafer as prime minister in the Twenties and Thirties; and the Communist regime that jailed her grandfather Aslan. Running through the story is a philosophical question: what is dignity? She will be talking to journalist Christian Elia (*Grande Padre. Viaggio nella memoria dell'Albania*).

The author will speak in Italian.



90 IS LANGUAGE EVER NEUTRAL?

Natasha Brown with **Nadeesha Uyangoda**

14:30 TEATRO BIBIENA 7,50 €

In the age of post-truth, words seem to have lost their innocence: instead of describing reality, they are often used to direct public feeling, build consensus or hide responsibility. It is in that gap between language and truth that Natasha Brown (*Universality*) focuses her investigation. A British author with a background in mathematics, she uses her novels to show how power, money and words create force fields that affect the stories underpinning not only daily life but literature and journalism too. She addresses this very current and very urgent subject with writer Nadeesha Uyangoda (*Acqua sporca*).

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



92 ALONG THE BANKS OF THE LIFFEY

Caitríona Lally with **Enrico Terrinoni**

14:30 CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA VITTORIA 7,50 €

The northern suburbs of Dublin are not what most people picture when they think of Ireland, with its green fields and streams lashed by sudden showers. Roddy Doyle's *The Commitments* gave us a first taste almost forty years ago; now Caitríona Lally paints an ironic, disenchanted contemporary picture. Whereas her first novel, *Eggshells*, came out of walking the streets of the Irish capital while unemployed, her recent memoir *Home Economics* reflects on the necessity to combine writing with a cleaning job at Trinity College and running a house: "I won a \$100k writing award but made more cleaning." She discusses the reality of writers worlds apart from the celebrity circuit with translator and professor of English Enrico Terrinoni (*James Joyce e la fine del romanzo*).

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with *Literature Ireland*.



96 OUT OF PLACE, TOGETHER

Ece Temelkuran with **Francesca Mannocchi**

14:45 PIAZZA CASTELLO 8,50 € ▶

A series of different causes exist at the heart of today's great migrations: armed conflict, deep economic inequality, environmental crisis and the simple need to build a more dignified life. What emerges is a growing multitude of people forced to leave where they come from, uprooted in a way that leaves them without any real sense of belonging – a condition that often even extends to "those who feel out of place inside their own country." Millions of people on Earth now live this way. Journalist and activist Ece Temelkuran (*How to Lose a Country*) is one of them and her essay-memoir *Nation of Strangers* reflects on this collective displacement. She discusses the "endless zigzagging between pride and dignity" with Francesca Mannocchi (*Creștere, la guerra, Sulla mia terra*).

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



99 A FUTURE MADE TO MEASURE

Konstantin Grcic with **Paolo Ferrarini**

16:30 TEATRO BIBIENA 7,50 €

One of the most iconic pieces of furniture of the last twenty years is a chair that has entered the collective imagination: *Chair One*, a die-cast aluminium shell with a strong three-dimensional geometry, inspired by the panels of a football and dreamed up by Konstantin Grcic. The German designer, who was already restoring furniture for fun at secondary school, trained as a cabinetmaker and then specialised in industrial design in London. He has always been interested in the world of sport, where equipment design follows the principle of "getting the most out of the least." The two-time Compasso d'Oro winner will be discussing with lecturer and curator Paolo Ferrarini how "developments in sports equipment will end up shaping the way we make products," pushing design towards solutions tailored to individual clients.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with the *Goethe-Institut Mailand*.



101 CHOOSING?

Hélène Vignal with **Simonetta Bitasi**

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

16:30 SEMINARIO VESCOVILE - AULA MAGNA 7,50 €

Hélène Vignal has been a household name in writing for children and teenagers for many years. She was a finalist for the Premio Andersen in 2012, was selected for the IBBY Honour List the same year and in 2021 won the Pépète d'Or, France's most important children's book prize, for *Queen Kong*. "I chose without waiting to be chosen," says the book's heroine, opening up a big conversation about the limits of discovering your body and sexuality in a world where nobody is free to be who they are. Cut off by friends and classmates, buried in insults on her phone and on social media, she still chooses who to be and what to do. The French writer talks with young readers and with Simonetta Bitasi about the books we need, about stories that centre around the reality of young people, and about how literature can take on injustice and stereotypes.

The author will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

AGE 14 AND UP



102 BACK TO YOUR OWN CAGE

Tommy Wieringa with Nicolò Porcelluzzi

16:30 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

"Identity matters enormously to me - often, if you know where you come from, you also know who you are." Tommy Wieringa (*Nirvana*, *These Are the Names*, *The Blessed Rita*) grew up on a farm two hours from the nearest school, which gave him four hours travelling a day to spend on writing as a way of working out his place in the world. Perhaps it was that small-village childhood that drew one of the most important voices in contemporary Dutch literature towards borderline settings and marginalised characters, a "dead-end province", where modernity, progress and change are often seen as bringers of chaos. He meets Nicolò Porcelluzzi (*Medusa*) on stage to talk about how his work has developed and the themes that define it.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with the Nederlands Letterenfonds (Dutch Foundation for Literature) and the Embassy and Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Italy.



106 TRANSLATION SLAM

Mikael Niemi, Katia De Marco and Alessandra Scali with Laura Cangemi

17:00 CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA VITTORIA 7,50 €

Two unpublished pages, one writer, two translators - and a week to wrestle with the text. These are the simple ingredients of the Translation Slam, which - fifteen years after its Festaletteratura debut - once again features a Swedish writer. Katia De Marco and Alessandra Scali, two of Mikael Niemi's translators, will discuss their choices with the author on stage, while the audience, refereeing the match as always, is invited to weigh in with questions of its own. Laura Cangemi moderates.

Mikael Niemi will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with Kulturrådet / Swedish Arts Council.



110 DOTS, BLOBS, SHAPES AND COLOURS

Hervé Tullet with Vera Salton

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

17:00 AULA MAGNA DELL'UNIVERSITÀ 7,50 €

Hervé Tullet (*The Game of Shapes*, *Press Here*, *Draw Here*) is known as "the king of pre-school books." For over thirty years the French illustrator has worked with the simplest marks, turning them into fuel for the curiosity and imagination of very young readers, and launching them on a journey through shape, colour and texture on the page itself. At Festaletteratura, the author of the recent memoir *The Child in Colour* meets an adult audience for once. Starting from his own childhood, Tullet leads us through his very personal abstract alphabet and into the working method of a "social artist" who finds art everywhere and believes firmly in the power of making things together. He talks to bookseller Vera Salton.

The author will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



THE SACRED FIRE OF WRITING

Pilar Quintana with Ilenia Caito

18:00 PIAZZA DEI LIBRI FREE ADMISSION ▶

The author will speak in Spanish, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with IILA - International Italo-Latin American Organisation.

On the sacred fire of writing SEE P. 33



117 THE GARDEN OF BIRDS

Jean Boucault and Johnny Rasse, clarinet Vincent Lochet

performance walkabout

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

18:30 PARCO BELFIORE 15,00 € ◊ 🚗

An invitation to slow down, fine-tune your hearing and let yourself be drawn into a landscape that, little by little, stops being mere background and becomes a living presence. The group walks in silence. The senses awaken, attention sharpens: every rustle, every call, every pause might turn into an encounter. Then, without warning, the bird singers strike up their conversation with the wood. Trills, whistles and songs ring out, and the birds answer back. Jean Boucault and Johnny Rasse, "chanteurs d'oiseaux" and authors of *The Bird Singers: How Two Boys Discovered the Magic of Birdsong*, take all these sounds and create a music score born of listening, turning the landscape into an open stage where music and place reflect each other. *The Garden of Birds* is an experience of listening together, a piece of poetry that takes shape in the moment and vanishes with it, leaving behind the memory of a possible conversation between human beings and the living world. *The meeting point is the Monumento ai Martiri di Belfiore. A free return shuttle bus to Parco Belfiore leaves Piazza Sordello twenty minutes before the event and returns afterwards.*



118 NATURE, OUR CONTEMPORARY

Amitav Ghosh with Barbara Furlotti

NATURAL IDEAS

18:30 PALAZZO TE 7,50 € ◊

A force that creates, a blind fury that destroys, an endless source of wonder, a vast territory to discover and understand, a model to copy, a treasure to plunder. What ideas have we humans formed about nature over the course of our history? The countless artistic and literary versions of the natural world we have produced over the centuries all point to a relationship that has always been ambivalent, torn between attraction and fear, curiosity and the wish to possess. To reconnect that dissonant inheritance to a present that still has to reckon with nature, Barbara Furlotti and Guido Rebecchini - curators of the exhibition "Inventing Nature. Leonardo, Arcimboldo, Caravaggio," opening at Palazzo Te at the end of September - talk to two Festaletteratura 2026 guests. The first is Amitav Ghosh, the Indian writer who has made ecology and climate justice the centre of his literary and intellectual work.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



Maurizio Corraini
Arte Contemporanea

121 ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE

Ian Leslie with Peter Florence

19:00 AULA MAGNA DELL'UNIVERSITÀ 7,50 €

Woolton, a suburb of Liverpool, 6 July 1957: the Quarrymen are playing at the St Peter's church fête, and fifteen-year-old Paul McCartney meets John Lennon for the first time. The rest is history - the start of a partnership that produced the Beatles and their immortal songs. Examining 43 tracks from their repertoire British writer Ian Leslie (*John & Paul*) tells the story of a friendship he calls "passionate, tender and stormy," and looks at how competition kept pushing both men to do better. "Our life was like climbing a long staircase, and we did it side by side," McCartney said. Ian Leslie discusses that climb, which oscillated between chaos and control, with Peter Florence.

The authors will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



1 2 4 LEAVING, AND FINDING YOURSELF

Theodor Kallifatides with **Federica Manzon**

19:15 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

If any writer has made migration the perfect meeting between book and life, it is Theodor Kallifatides. Greek by birth, he emigrated to Sweden in the early Sixties and over five decades has become an icon of contemporary European fiction. In his writing, he adopts the register and nuance of a Scandinavian language to describe a Mediterranean world caught between the thousand-year echo of a rural culture and the whirl of events that, within a few years, threw it into the violent Via Crucis of the twentieth century. Out of that poetics, which he examines at the Festival with writer Federica Manzon (*Alma*), come novels such as *Peasants and Masters*, *The Plough and the Sword* and *A Cruel Peace*, as well as books rightly counted as masterpieces of memoir, *Mothers and Sons* and *Another Life*, where the radical experience of always being a foreigner comes with a prose full of fond attachments and words lost in time.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with Kulturrådet / Swedish Arts Council.

MARCEGAGLIA

1 3 0 PERU IN REVOLT

Gabriela Wiener with **Nadeesha Uyangoda**

21:15 CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA VITTORIA 7,50 €

"We are the Peruvian pioneers consuming Russian fiction in the struggle against cultural imperialism at the height of the Cold War. We sing in Russian to entertain the sailors and convince them we are fit heirs to the Socialist Republic. We are the Third World, the slaves without bread, the wretched of the Earth, the starving legion, the ones who ought to be on top instead of underneath, according to the workers' official anthem." Gabriela Wiener started out as a "gonzo" journalist reporting on gender violence and sexual exploitation and has since become a leading voice in Latin American fiction. Both heir to and irreverent towards the indigenist literary tradition, in *Atusparia* she intertwines personal memory - desire, addiction, the search for meaning - with collective memory, going back over the last forty years of Peruvian history: from the Eighties and the violence of Sendero Luminoso to an authoritarian future so close it might as well be the present. She talks with author Nadeesha Uyangoda.

The author will speak in Spanish, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

MARCEGAGLIA

1 3 1 WHAT FUTURE AT THE BORDER?

Anne-Claire Defossez and **Didier Fassin** with **Lorenzo Alunni**

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

21:30 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

The poet Vittorio Sereni wrote that a border is that place where "the frontier is tinged between the already and the not yet." Places on the edge live in a constant balance between being a bridge and being a line you cannot cross between two different worlds. The topic of migrants fleeing wars, persecution and climate emergencies attracts more than its share of prejudice and leads part of the public to see desperate people as invaders. Anthropologist Didier Fassin and sociologist Anne-Claire Defossez, who co-authored *Exile. Chronicle of the Border* spent five years on the stretch of Alpine land between France and Italy, tracking and interviewing exiled men and women, collecting their stories and analysing data that build up an important picture of how migration works today. They discuss that fieldwork - which involved not only migrants but activists and police as well - with anthropologist Lorenzo Alunni.

The authors will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

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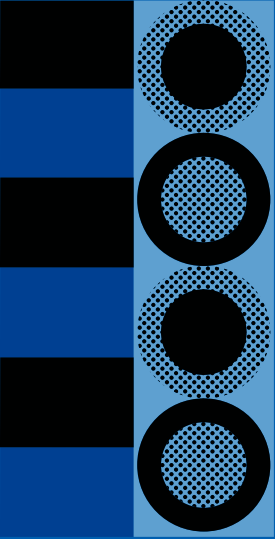
1 3 3 DARK SKY RESERVATION

L.Y.R.

21:30 TEATRO BIBIENA 15,00 €

L.Y.R. is the result of an encounter between the poetry of the great Simon Armitage, Britain's Poet Laureate, the voice of Richard Walters and the soundtracks of producer and polyinstrumentalist Patrick J. Pearson. In concert, the trio transforms Armitage's poetry into an immersive experience where spoken word, songwriting and electronic music blend harmoniously. Lyrics take on new life through suspended melodies and intense, elegant vocal range to produce one of the most original projects to emerge from the contemporary British music scene. Serving as its manifesto, Dark Sky Reservation is the title both of an Armitage poem and the latest album. Each track is a story, a journey through borders and languages: verse becomes sound, electronic music engages with voice and the imagination finds its own space.





SATURDAY

12



September 2026



137 NORTH, SOUTH, WEST, EAST

Mathias Enard with Lorenzo Alunni

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

10:00 PALAZZO SAN SEBASTIANO 7,50 €

Ten years ago, Mathias Enard met the Festival audience in the Basilica di Santa Barbara as the winner of the Prix Goncourt for *Compass*. He has now taken that metaphorical compass and set off to explore all four points, planning a tetralogy that looks at the many shapes of the border, both geographical and internal. Starting from an image of melancholy – “mourning for what never happened” – Enard is making a journey that begins in Berlin (*Mélancolie des confins: Nord*) and, by way of the Iberian Peninsula (south) and the Balkans (east), will end in the Americas (west). His means of transport? Literature, “an engine for exploring different worlds even if you never arrive completely.” He talks to anthropologist Lorenzo Alunni (*Le cicatrici di Ulisse*).

The author will speak in Italian.

138 CECIL BEATON: ONE, NO ONE AND ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND

Judith Clark and Laura Grandi with Manuela Soldi

10:00 TEATRO BIBIENA 7,50 €

Fashion photographer, but also photographer of film stars, British royalty and the horrors of war. Oscar-winning costume and set designer (*My Fair Lady*, *Gigi*). Arbiter of taste and curator of *Fashion: An Anthology* (Victoria & Albert Museum, 1971), the exhibition that changed the way museums think about fashion. All this, and a great deal more, was Cecil Beaton. Nothing conveys the extraordinary range of his interests, friendships and activities better than the diaries he kept for over fifty years. Laura Grandi, editor and translator of the Italian edition (*Molto dipendeva dal futuro. Diari 1922-1974*), and exhibition-maker Judith Clark (*Exhibiting Fashion: Before and After 1971*, with Amy de la Haye) discuss them with historian and archivist Manuela Soldi.

Judith Clark will speak in Italian.

140 THE BARBARIANS ON THE EDGE OF TOWN

Houria Bouteldja with Annalisa Camilli

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

10:00 CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA VITTORIA 7,50 €

Racism usually gets described as a matter of individual behaviour, or of the more blatant stance of the far right. The trouble with that is that it hides the structural side of the problem, turning it into a moral question rather than a political and collective one. French-Algerian activist Houria Bouteldja (*Rednecks and Barbarians*) argues that we need to find common ground between “the ‘barbarians’ of the postcolonial cities and the ‘yokels’ of Europe’s low-paid work” – that is, between the white working class and racialised people. Starting from the French banlieues, Bouteldja looks at why class struggle should never come at the expense of colonised peoples. She will be discussing the question with journalist Annalisa Camilli.

The author will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

1 4 7 DEMOCRACY ILL AT EASE

Michele Ainis and Ece Temelkuran with Giacomo Bottos

EUROPE IN PERSPECTIVE

10:30 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

In a world shaken by the crisis of international order, shaped more and more openly by raw power, democracies appear to be afflicted by a growing unease. Set against other models that seem to be doing rather better in the world as it is, they struggle to find ways of interpreting popular will while also putting forward a long-term strategy. Where does the crisis come from, and how does it manifest itself? Journalist Ece Temelkuran and constitutional lawyer Michele Ainis examine the roots, the causes and the dynamics of the situation, and ask what alternative scenarios might look like. Giacomo Bottos, editor of *Pandora rivista*, talks with them.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with Pandora Rivista.

1 4 9 SHAKESPEARE IN ITALY: KISS ME, KATE

Peter Florence

11:00 POLITECNICO DI MILANO - CAMPUS DI MANTOVA 7,50 €

Is William Shakespeare's play *The Taming of the Shrew* a misogynist joke, a product of 1590s patriarchy and a ghastly tale of toxic masculinity on the rampage? How are we supposed to watch it today? And what would Cole Porter say? In his annual session on Shakespeare in Italy, Peter Florence un-cancels the problem play. He offers a re-reading that reminds us of who wrote it and what he's asking of who watches it, then and now.

The author will speak in English, without interpretation.

THE SACRED FIRE OF WRITING

Helen Oyeyemi with Elsa Riccadonna

12:00 PIAZZA DEI LIBRI FREE ADMISSION

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

On the sacred fire of writing SEE P. 33

1 5 3 WHO OWNS THE INTERNET?

Tim Berners-Lee with Riccardo Luna

12:15 PIAZZA CASTELLO 8,50 €

In December 1990, in the CERN laboratories in Geneva, Tim Berners-Lee invented something that would transform every aspect of human life: the World Wide Web. Within a few years the internet had changed the way we get our news, work, love and hate. He decided not to patent it. He handed it over to humanity, so that it would stay an open space and a common good. That founding impulse feels a long way off now. The web has become territory to be conquered, where power is concentrated in a handful of platforms, feeds fill up with armies of bots and AI-generated content, and algorithms eat away at our mental health and at the resilience of our democracies. Interviewed by Riccardo Luna (*Qualcosa è andato storto*), Tim Berners-Lee (*Weaving the Web*) brings to Festivalletteratura the story of what the internet was and what it has become – and, against the grain, the argument that the damage done to the digital ecosystem can still be undone.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



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1 5 4 HUMANITY IN NATURE

Andrea Wulf with Telmo Pievani

12:15 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

The thinkers Andrea Wulf writes about in her superb biographies are radicals. For over a decade the German historian has mapped, in minute detail, the lives of European scientists and writers who, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, at the height of the Enlightenment and in the middle of an epochal shift, changed the way we read human history as part of a much larger natural history. Her adventurous biography of Baron Alexander von Humboldt, at the centre of the hugely successful *The Invention of Nature*, is one example; another is that of his mentor Georg Forster, ethnologist, naturalist and travel writer, whom Wulf tenaciously rescues from obscurity in the recent *The Traveller: The Revolutionary Life of George Forster and his Search for Humanity*. With Telmo Pievani, she retraces a journey that starts on James Cook's second voyage, passes through the study of indigenous peoples and world cultures, and ends in the political ferment sweeping Europe during the French Revolution.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

1 6 2 A LIFE THAT ISN'T WAITING FOR A CATASTROPHE

Pajtim Statovci with Marco Archetti

14:30 TEATRO BIBIENA 7,50 €

Ultimately, it is all we want – and yet it is remarkably easy to forget, wrapped in the comfort of a lacklustre routine. Pajtim Statovci is here to remind us though, in every book that has captured a fragment of his voice and turned it into stories impossible to shake off. *Crossing, Bolla, My Cat Yugoslavia* and *The Cow Gives Birth at Night* are more than a body of work that has spent over a decade proving him one of the finest literary talents of our time: they are stages on a painful journey that begins in Kosovo and ends in Finland, scrambling identity, language, gender, anger and desire, turning them now into a love soliloquy, now into a furious celebration that regenerates itself out of a past steeped in suffering. Writer Marco Archetti (*La luce naturale*) meets a former enfant prodige of European literature, now come fully into his powers.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with FILI – Finnish Literature Exchange.

1 6 5 THE WORD "ANTISEMITE"

Houria Bouteldja and Valentina Pisanty with Lorenzo Alunni

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

14:30 AULA MAGNA DELL'UNIVERSITÀ 7,50 €

The war in the Middle East has given new urgency to a question that has run through public debate for years: does criticising Israel's actions automatically make you an antisemite? And when is the word used as a weapon to silence legitimate dissent? Semiotician Valentina Pisanty (*Antisemita. Una parola in ostaggio*), who has spent years studying the rhetoric of racism, puts at the centre of the discussion something that became explosive after 7 October 2023: the gradual and calculated overlapping of antisemitism and anti-Zionism. She discusses the redefinition of a concept that shifts the focus from historic anti-Jewish prejudice to hostility towards a government's political and military choices, and the semantic drift that in a polarised world empties a word with a tragic history of its meaning, with activist Houria Bouteldja (*Rednecks and Barbarians*).

Houria Bouteldja will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

ecology
SYSTEM
PER UN PIANETA PIÙ PULITO



VALTEC LOMBARDA

166 ANTONELLO GERBI AND THE NEW WORLD

Sandro Gerbi and Gabriela Wiener with Maria Matilde Benzoni

14:30 POLITECNICO DI MILANO - CAMPUS DI MANTOVA 7,50 €

Mid-eighteenth-century naturalists and philosophers who had never crossed the ocean pronounced the New World and its inhabitants inferior. Taking that centuries-old prejudice apart became the subject of the best-known work by historian and economist Antonello Gerbi, *La disputa del Nuovo Mondo*. Exiled to Peru by the racial laws of 1938, Gerbi remained there until 1948, and throughout that decade in Lima he never stopped observing, writing and photographing. Looking with the eye of a cultivated European who never exoticises, he took thousands of pictures of Lima, the Andes and indigenous faces, shown not as ethnographic specimens but as protagonists of their country's history. Held in the Archivio Storico Intesa Sanpaolo, the photographs have now been collected for the first time in a volume, *Dall'Europa al Perù. Fotografie di Antonello Gerbi (1930-1948)*. His son Sandro Gerbi and historian Maria Matilde Benzoni, who edited the book, introduce him alongside Peruvian writer Gabriela Wiener, whose novels chart the fractures that have continued to run through her country's society in the decades since.

Gabriela Wiener will speak in Spanish, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

INTESA  SANPAOLO

167 HOW DO YOU PUT FASHION ON SHOW?

Judith Clark

HORIZONTAL LESSONS

14:30 POLITECNICO DI MILANO - CAMPUS DI MANTOVA 7,50 €

"Every time we come across an inconsistency or a simplification in a work of art that strikes us as 'unrealistic' or 'untrue to life' - which happens constantly - we should at least ask ourselves: what other aspect of the observed reality or the imagined event does this 'unrealistic' touch manage to make more vivid?" Starting from this remark by art historian T.J. Clark, lecturer and exhibition-maker Judith Clark (*Prefigured: Fashion and Exhibition-making*) discusses with participants the criteria we use to judge an exhibition. Curators of fashion shows are often accused of overstatement: exaggerated silhouettes, theatrical wigs, updates that stray from strict historical reconstruction. But what revelatory power might be hidden in the anomaly?

The author will speak in Italian.

L.B.M. 1911

171 INHERITANCE AND BORDER CONDITION

Lidija Dimkovska with Ema Stefanovska

16:00 TEMPIO DI SAN SEBASTIANO 7,50 €

"A bullet in the head would do you good, / a jump off the bridge or a cut vein, / hydrochloric acid in your tea, your husband's belt round your neck, / at the wrong time, in the wrong place, / death is an awakening, a volcano, an earthquake, / you want to die, but not like all the others". A border is never just a line: it is a condition of contemporary life. In Lidija Dimkovska's writing, and in *Granična sostojba* (Border Condition) in particular, that condition takes concrete shape, crossed by experiences of belonging and disorientation, continuity and rupture, between different cultures, languages and countries. In this constant shifting the border stops being only what divides and becomes what connects, producing unexpected forms of nearness and distance. *Granična sostojba* reads as a poetic exploration of contemporary identity, understood not as a fixed fact but as a process constantly being redefined. The author talks with translator Ema Stefanovska.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian..

179 GIVING VOICE BACK

Nathacha Appanah with Espérance Hakuzwimana

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

17:00 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

Like a diviner of stories that have been silenced, hushed up or forgotten, Nathacha Appanah, in Mantova for the first time, often draws on her own family to think - and to make us think - about colonialism, racism, migration and gender violence. In *La Mémoire délavée* she shows how our bodies carry the marks of where we come from, retracing her ancestors' migration from India to Mauritius; in *Night at Heart* she weaves together two true stories of femicide which, through literature, become everyone's: "as I wrote, I slowly understood that every woman I met, whose story I knew, was a part of me, so all those women were inside me." The Mauritian writer, several times a Prix Goncourt contender and winner of the Prix Femina, discusses the value - and the misuse - of stories with writer Espérance Hakuzwimana.

The author will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

180 THE WORLD IN A SINGLE LINE

Armin Greder

literary exploration workshop

17:00 POLITECNICO DI MILANO - CAMPUS DI MANTOVA 7,50 €

What would it be like to peek inside an illustrator's studio and see how they move among their own work? What thoughts guide them? And what if you could pick up a pencil and create something together with them? At Festivalletteratura, Armin Greder (*The Island, The Mediterranean, You, The Great Bear, Then You Came Along*) - an illustrator who has received the highest honours worldwide - meets readers for a conversation and exchange on what it means to draw the present day and its stories, to recount what surrounds us, to choose what to say, and to use language to make thoughts tangible. And to try doing it together, one line at a time.

The author will speak in Italian.

184 CHATTING IN COLOUR

Hervé Tullet

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

18:00 CINEMA OBERDAN 10,00 €

Hervé Tullet takes to the theatre for an offbeat event. Alone on the stage, he shares his best-kept secrets: his career, his creative rituals, his artistic influences, and the tricks of the trade. Turning the pages of his books, he sweeps the audience into song, following a line that ripples into waves or a circle that shrinks and then swells. There is, however, one golden rule: the microphone belongs entirely to the youngest members of the audience. Only children get to ask questions and chat with the artist. To finish, everyone is invited on stage to co-create a spectacular collective exhibition!

Conceived and created by Hervé Tullet, directed by Leo Tullet.

The author will speak in Italian.

THE SACRED FIRE OF WRITING

Tommy Wieringa with Ilenia Caito

18:00 PIAZZA DEI LIBRI FREE ADMISSION 

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with the Nederlands Letterenfonds (Dutch Foundation for Literature) and the Embassy and Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Italy.

On the sacred fire of writing SEE P. 33



AGES 14 - 17



AGE 3 AND UP



187 CLASSIFYING HUMAN BEINGS

Gergely Péterfy and **Igiaba Scego** with **Melania G. Mazzucco**

18:15 SEMINARIO VESCOVILE - AULA MAGNA 7,50 €

Gergely Péterfy is one of Hungary's leading contemporary writers. Novelist, essayist, journalist and cultural organiser, he has devoted much of his work to the cultural history of Central Europe and to freedom, memory and the identity of the continent. Now finally translated into Italian, *The Stuffed Barbarian* tells the story of Angelo Soliman, who arrived in Europe as a slave and became a scientist and a respected figure in the Viennese Enlightenment – yet whose body, on his death in 1796, was embalmed and displayed in the Imperial Cabinet of Natural History. The man who in life had been welcomed in aristocratic salons and admired as an intellectual became, in death, a subject for observation. In the graphic novel *Figli della foresta*, with pictures by Chiara Abastanotti, Igiaba Scego restores memory and dignity to Tukuba and Makunka, two “pygmy” children taken from Africa to Europe to be observed, classified and analysed, and now emblems of everything Italy has chosen to forget about its colonial past. They discuss racism, cultural as well as physical violence, historical memory and nationalism with writer Melania G. Mazzucco.

Gergely Péterfy will speak in Italian.

189 CAN WE TALK ABOUT IT?

Samy Ramos with **Luigi Dal Cin**

18:15 CASA DEL MANTEGNA 7,50 €

How do you talk about all the things the adult world pretends not to see? In their books, Samy Ramos (*Where do we go when we die?*) and Luigi Dal Cin (*Il più grande spettacolo*) have taken the best of words, mixed them deftly with pictures, and found a way to tackle some of the subjects grown-ups would rather avoid. An event that finally makes the invisible visible and lets us talk about the big questions out loud.

The author will speak in Spanish, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

194 DON'T CALL ME A CHILD PRODIGY

Helen Oyeyemi with **Lella Costa**

19:00 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

While she was still at school, Helen Oyeyemi sent, almost as a joke, twenty pages of a story she was writing to a literary agency she'd found in the phone book. The reply was enthusiastic, and those few pages became *The Icarus Girl*, the fantasy novel that launched her career. Born in Nigeria and raised in London, Oyeyemi blends both cultures in a body of work that – drawing on Poe and Stephen King – navigates between the dreamlike and the supernatural. Books whose text changes every time they're opened, women in whom multiple, intensely vivid personalities coexist alongside strange eating disorders, mysterious girls arriving from Africa... A first-time guest in Mantova, the author of *A New New Me* (out in Italian in September) will speak with Lella Costa, explaining that “I don't write magic realism. I simply call what I do stories.”

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

AGN
ENERGIA

AGES 7 - 10



S.MARTINO



NOVELLINI

196 WHO INHABITS THE WORLD WITH US?

Simon Armitage with **Peter Florence**

19:00 CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA VITTORIA 7,50 €

Hives, burrows, nests, shelters: ways of living that came before human beings and will go on after us. In the poems of *Fiorire e nidificare* (*Blossomise and Dwell*), Simon Armitage's most recent collection, the natural landscape becomes an archive of relationships, presences and stories that invite us to rethink where we stand in the world. With writing that combines precise description, imagination and the memory of folklore, Armitage builds a geography of dwelling that crosses the boundaries between species and questions the relationship between human and non-human. His poems treat nature not as scenery but as a complex, living reality, full of forms of intelligence, adaptation and coexistence that defy our usual categories. The invitation is to look at the world from somewhere other than the centre, and to recognise in all these ways of dwelling a fragile, shared network of lives.

The authors will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

197 THE LONG TRAIL OF COLONIALISM

Amitav Ghosh with **Matteo De Giuli**

19:00 PIAZZA CASTELLO 8,50 €

Back in 2009, Festivalletteratura staged a retrospective on Amitav Ghosh (*The Great Derangement*, *The Glass Palace*, *The Shadow Lines*), in which translator Anna Nadotti introduced the audience to the key themes of his fiction and his reporting. The Indian writer, journalist and anthropologist has always divided his time between the novel and the historical account of “the arc of colonialism” and its effects on the land. Moving between Calcutta and Mumbai, London, Hong Kong and Canton, Ghosh has worked to reconcile literature with the climate crisis, always in relation to the long trail of past events that have determined its boundaries. “I feel that a novel should reflect the reality in which it is written,” says the author of the recent *Ghost-Eye*. With Matteo De Giuli he explains why science is not the only thing that can speak for nature.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

204 MAYBE GLASGOW DIDN'T LOVE ME

Douglas Stuart with **Mario Desiati**

21:30 PALAZZO SAN SEBASTIANO 7,50 €

“In the area where we lived, books weren't looked on kindly, especially if a boy was reading them. They were for girls, or women at a push. If they caught you reading, you could get a hiding.” In the Eighties and Nineties, growing up queer in the working-class outskirts of Glasgow meant feeling out of place: judged by everyone, sometimes not understood even by your own family, and at the mercy of a system built on machismo and on bullying anyone labelled different. It is a theme that recurs powerfully in the work of Douglas Stuart, the Scottish-born American fashion designer who won the Booker Prize in 2020 with his first novel, *Shuggie Bain*. With Mario Desiati (*Malbianco*), the author of *Young Mungo* and the recent *John of John* talks to the audience about going back to places that didn't always make you welcome, and about the many shapes love can take.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

VOLUME!

Irvine Welsh

22:00 PIAZZA LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI FREE ADMISSION

Irvine Welsh's relationship with music has always been visceral – techno and acid house pulsate through the pages of his novels like an inner soundtrack. For a night Piazza Alberti will (almost) become the Edinburgh of Renton, Spud, Begbie and Sick Boy. Irvine Welsh takes off his author's hat to step up to the DJ console..

PALAZZO CASTIGLIONI
Luxury Suite in Mantova
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kaleidoscope français

There is an idea of the world that seems to have shattered, its brightly coloured fragments glinting on the ground and waiting for someone to try to piece them back together into some possible horizon of meaning. Contemporary French literature moves within the crisis running through the whole of the West, and whether in fiction for adults and young readers or in writing closer to testimony, philosophy and cultural criticism, it attempts to make sense of a world that seems to have slipped out of frame – shifting the angle, taking the pieces apart and reassembling them in unexpected combinations. To capture the range of voices, the ever-changing readings and the multiple points of view that mark French writing at the start of this third millennium, Festivalletteratura has put together *kaleidoscope français*: a prism of encounters, lessons, performances and open-air walks with some of its leading figures, and one of the mainstays of the programme of this thirtieth edition.

THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER

CASA DEL MANTEGNA, 11:00

25 SECRET PASSAGES, Hélène Vignal with Vera Salton

TEMPIO DI SAN SEBASTIANO, 21:00

65 WHEN THE MOUTH BECOMES A BEAK
Jean Boucault and Johnny Rasse with Silvia Mengali

FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

TEATRO BIBIENA, 11:00

99 MASKS AND HISTORY
Olivier Guez with Carlo Lucarelli

SEMINARIO VESCOVILE, 18:30

999 CHOOSE?
Hélène Vignal with Simonetta Bitasi

AULA MAGNA DELL'UNIVERSITÀ, 17:00

999 DOTS, BLOBS, SHAPES AND COLOURS
Hervé Tullet with Vera Salton

PARCO BELFIORE, 18:30

999 THE GARDEN OF BIRDS
Jean Boucault and Johnny Rasse

BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA,

21:30

999 WHAT FATE AT THE FRONTIER?
Anne-Claire Defossez and Didier Fassin with Lorenzo Alunni

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

PALAZZO SAN SEBASTIANO, 10:00

137 NORTH, SOUTH, WEST, EAST
Mathias Enard with Lorenzo Alunni

CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA VITTORIA,

10:00

140 THE BARBARIANS OF THE SUBURBS
Houria Bouteldja with Annalisa Camilli

AULA MAGNA DELL'UNIVERSITÀ, 14:30

165 THE WORD "ANTISEMITE"
Houria Bouteldja and Valentina Pisanty with Lorenzo Alunni

BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA,

17:00

179 GIVING VOICE BACK TO THE VICTIMS
Nathacha Appanah with Espérance Hakuzwimana

CINEMA OBERDAN, 18:00

184 COLOURFUL CONVERSATIONS
Hervé Tullet

SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

PALAZZO SAN SEBASTIANO, 10:00

208 A FRACTURE IN THE MORAL ORDER
Didier Fassin with Veronica Fernandes

TEATRO BIBIENA, 10:00

211 LOSING YOURSELF IN COLOUR
Annie Cohen-Solal with Melania G. Mazzucco

BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA,

12:15

222 A NATURAL EVOLUTION OF POLITICS
Pierre Charbonnier with Matteo De Giuli

PIAZZA CASTELLO, 14:30

227 SHAME MUST CHANGE SIDES
Gino Cecchetti and Gisèle Pelicot with Ilenia Caito

PIAZZA CASTELLO, 18:30

251 GENEALOGICAL MEMOIR
Emmanuel Carrère with Gabriele Romagnoli

With the support of Fondazione Nuovi Mecenati – French-Italian Foundation for Contemporary Creation.

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FRANCO - ITALIANA
PER LA CREAZIONE
CONTEMPORANEA

the SACRED FIRE of WRITING

On paper or on screen, driven by furious strokes of the pen or the endless tapping of a keyboard, it sets light to the pages of novels, poems, essays and memoirs and never goes out. Where does that fire come from — the one that fuels thoughts and words and drives an author to pour their heart and soul into writing? What impassioned stuff is inspiration made of, and what does it search for from morning to night, feeding on creative ardour and sheer imaginative power?

Ilenia Caito and Elsa Riccadonna are inviting ten authors from Italy and abroad to the Book Piazza to talk about the origin and nature of this sacred fire, its surprising manifestations, the craft it takes to tame it and the tricks for keeping it alight. Ten interviews on how you become a writer, and how you stay one.



EVENTS:

Wednesday 9 September

16:00
Geoff Dyer

Friday 11 September

18:00
Pilar Quintana

Saturday 12 September

12:00
Helen Oyeyemi

18:00
Tommy Wieringa

Project made possible
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Unical
BE ON FIRE

SUNDAY

13

September 2026

208 A BREAK IN THE MORAL ORDER

Didier Fassin with **Veronica Fernandes**

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

10:00 PALAZZO SAN SEBASTIANO 7,50 €

"What is history for?" Marc Bloch asked in *The Historian's Craft*. Cicero thought its job was to be "the teacher of life," and yet we seem to keep making the same mistakes. The destruction of Gaza and the killing of thousands of Palestinian civilians, which began after the Hamas attack of 7 October 2023, have shaken the moral foundations of the international community. The West, through its governments and its media, still seems to marginalise voices of dissent, using the word "antisemite" as an improper weapon. "Critical analyses of the situation, positions taken in defence of international order, are stigmatised and punished," says anthropologist and sociologist Didier Fassin, whose *Moral Abdication* examines the censorship of first-hand witnesses to the genocide and the treatment handed out to anyone calling for international law to be applied. He discusses the matter with journalist Veronica Fernandes.

The author will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

 **UNITI SI VINCE**
SUZZARA-MANTOVA

209 ANALOGUE SOULS

Johan Harstad with **Ludovica Lugli**

10:00 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

A writer of prose and of plays, Johan Harstad has found a deep vein in the history and the pop and film culture of the second half of the twentieth century. The Apollo 11 moon landing of 1969, with its heroes in the foreground and the background, becomes a way of thinking about the beauty of staying in the shade, alongside the quiet, gifted narrator of *Buzz Aldrin, What Happened to You in All the Confusion?* In *Max, Mischa and the Tet Offensive*, the Norwegian author assembles thousands of pieces of a monumental love story that runs between Europe and the United States, between Vietnam and the Nineties, *Apocalypse Now* and contemporary art, capturing the exact moment when our solid analogue memories sink into the fragmentation and disenchantment of the digital age. He will talk to journalist Ludovica Lugli.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with NORLA (Norwegian Literature Abroad) and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Italy.

DREAMLAB
PERFORMANCE, EXPERIMENT, CULTURE

211 LOSING YOURSELF IN COLOUR

Annie Cohen-Solal with **Melania G. Mazzucco**

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

10:00 TEATRO BIBIENA 7,50 €

In 1913, when he was just ten years old, Mark Rothko fled Latvia with his family to escape anti-Jewish persecution and arrived in Portland, United States. The anguish and disorientation of being an immigrant never left him and fuelled the large, chromatic panels that made him famous. Among the best-known exponents of colour field painting and a pioneer of abstraction, Rothko embraced deconstruction in search of the purest interiority: "You paint, and I film, nothingness" the celebrated director Michelangelo Antonioni told him. Historian Annie Cohen-Solal (*Mark Rothko*) discusses the legacy of one of the twentieth century's greatest artists with writer Melania G. Mazzucco.

The author will speak in Italian.

GIOVANARDI
TEXTILE EXPERIENCE

2 1 2 THE LAND IS THE WAR

Eyal Weizman with Nicolò Porcelluzzi

10:00 AULA MAGNA DELL'UNIVERSITÀ 7,50 €

How do you prove a crime that takes place in space? Eyal Weizman has spent twenty years working to produce an answer. Forensic Architecture, the organisation of which he is director, uses satellite imagery, three-dimensional models and analysis of soil and structures to produce evidence of human rights violations for international courts. In his most recent book, *Ungrounding. The Architecture of Genocide*, Weizman brings the method to bear on Gaza: a journey through the 'deep cartography' of the territory, from the tunnels underground to the militarised topography above, from the villages destroyed in the Nakba in 1948 to the systematic demolition of recent years. He argues that land is never neutral background: it is where the balance of power between coloniser and colonised gets written, and where – if you know how to look – it becomes legible and documentable. At Festivaletteratura, Weizman talks about his method and about what it means to build evidence at a moment when images are everywhere yet the truth is still contested. Nicolò Porcelluzzi (*Medusa, Sonar*) talks with him.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



2 1 6 A SMALL INVENTORY OF DAYS

Samy Ramos

10:30 CASA DEL MANTEGNA 7,50 €

Take any day at all. Got one? Now watch how it starts and you'll see that pretty soon it'll turn into a happy day, or a slooooooow day, or an explosive day. Every day looks different depending on the mood we're in, but also on what does or doesn't happen. So what does this particular day at Festivaletteratura look like to you? With Samy Ramos (*There are Days – Ci sono giorni*) we'll take a closer look and work out what kind of day it is – it might turn out to be way nicer than it first seemed!

The author will speak in Spanish, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

AGES 4 – 6



2 2 2 A NATURAL EVOLUTION OF POLITICS

Pierre Charbonnier with Matteo De Giuli

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

12:15 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

Pierre Charbonnier is a French philosopher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris, who has worked extensively on the relationship between politics, its development over time and the way environmental issues have been conceptualised in the modern era. From the seventeenth century to the post-World War II period, the increasing use of energy and resources transformed society, expanding prosperity and social rights; consequently, the material freedom and bargaining power of the working classes are rooted in the historical bond between humanity and environment. Not only economic growth is intertwined with ecology: war, climate change and the events of the twentieth century all are, and all have occupied the author of *Affluence and Freedom*, who keeps his focus carefully trained on "an environmental history of ideas, not a history of environmental ideas." He examines the question in Mantova with Matteo De Giuli.

The author will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



2 2 3 CHOOSE LIFE

Irvine Welsh with Carlo Mazza Galanti

12:15 PALAZZO SAN SEBASTIANO 7,50 €

Thirty years ago, *Trainspotting* captured a generation through a raw and unflinching portrayal of heroin addiction, unemployment, and the socio-political landscape of Thatcher-era Edinburgh. Irvine Welsh has gone back to those characters – Renton, Spud, Sick Boy, Begbie – multiple times since then, but *Men in Love* finds them at a different point: the late Eighties, after punk and before acid house, trying to build something that looks like an adult life and finding in romance and the dance scene a shot at redemption that heroin had never offered. Writer and literary critic Carlo Mazza Galanti talks with Welsh, whose books also include the collection *Ecstasy*.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

2 2 7 SHAME HAS TO CHANGE SIDES

Gino Cecchetti and Gisèle Pelicot with Ilenia Caito

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

14:30 PIAZZA CASTELLO 8,50 €

Two stories marked by gender violence, two ways of working through pain in public. Gisèle Pelicot (*A Hymn to Life*) survived ten years of abuse by her husband with the complicity of dozens of men he recruited online, and chose to hold the trial in open court, turning her own case into a collective act of accusation and a symbol of the fight against rape culture. Gino Cecchetti, father of Giulia, killed by her ex-boyfriend, decided not to shut himself away in the silence of grief but to campaign publicly for emotional education and against male violence towards women. On the stage in Piazza Castello, they discuss what it means to turn your own tragedy into an instrument of social change, and the responsibility that comes with memory. Ilenia Caito, who runs reading groups, will keep the conversation flowing.

Gisèle Pelicot will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

2 3 1 THE CAZALET'S RETURN

Louisa Young with Chiara Valerio

15:00 PALAZZO SAN SEBASTIANO 7,50 €

There are some stories you never want to end, family sagas that span generations and keep you glued to the page. *The Cazalet Chronicles* are among the best known and most beloved of these, offering a realistic portrait of England from the 1930s to the post-war years. The series ended after five volumes in 2013, shortly before the death of its author Elizabeth Jane Howard. Since then, London and the United Kingdom have changed, including in literature. Louisa Young (*My Dear I Wanted to tell You, The Heroes' Welcome*), the British writer's niece, has undertaken the challenge to continue the story, filling the narrative gap and taking William and Kitty's descendants into the swinging Sixties. The first volume of a new trilogy (*The Golden Hours*) comes out this September. Alongside Chiara Valerio, Young will discuss the process of bringing the Cazalet family into a new era without losing the qualities that made the original series so memorable.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

Giovanzana

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di Romani e Gozzi

232 SELF-HELP MANUALS FOR BRUISED HEARTS

Lorrie Moore with Claudia Durastanti

15:00 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

On one side there is the one-liner, quick as lightning, releasing just enough irony to keep the black dogs at bay: illness, grief, redundancy, the end of a love affair. On the other there is memory, casting its cloak over everything we have lived through and studying it with surgical detachment, never passing judgement. In between – adjudicating among dozens of characters caught up in the small and large currents of daily life – stands the mistress of the short story, Lorrie Moore, whom thousands of readers have loved and never let go of, thanks to unforgettable novels of friendship such as *Who Will Run the Frog Hospital*, and to dozens of flawless short pieces finally gathered, in deliberately non-chronological order, in *Collected Stories*. Claudia Durastanti (*Cleopatra va in prigione*, *Missitalia*) has the task – and the pleasure – of meeting one of the boldest and most distinctive voices in contemporary North American fiction.

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

239 IN THE VAULTS OF MEMORY

Siri Hustvedt with Gaia Manzini

16:30 PIAZZA CASTELLO 8,50 € ▶

Siri Hustvedt is one of the most clear-eyed and cultivated novelists writing today, bringing together a passion for psychology and neuroscience with an abiding investigation into memory. "To remember is to change," she writes, and memory is the foundation of many of her books (*Living, Thinking, Looking, or Memories of the Future*), where family life becomes the engine for examining identity and the way we read our relationships. The same holds true for the recent *Ghost Stories*, a memoir retracing forty years spent with her husband Paul Auster, who died in 2024 and to whom she was "bound by literature": "I miss Paul, but most of the time I miss Siri and Paul [...]. I miss what a simple conjunction made me feel."

The author will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

246 WRITING FROM A WAR, WRITING A WAR

Haidar al-Ghazali and Francesca Mannocchi with Mario Soldaini

17:15 BASILICA PALATINA DI SANTA BARBARA 7,50 €

How do you tell the story of a war when it is not an exceptional event but the very substance of daily life? That is the question running through the conversation between Haidar al-Ghazali and Francesca Mannocchi. Born in Gaza, al-Ghazali – whose poetry appears in the anthology *Il loro grido è la mia voce* – belongs to a generation that grew up inside the conflict, at a time when the experience of war coincides with growing up, with memory and with identity. The discussion also draws on *Crescere, la guerra*, the book in verse in which Mannocchi turns years of testimony gathered in Syria, Afghanistan, Palestine and other conflict zones into a poetic reflection on loss, memory and the responsibility of bearing witness. Two very different paths converge around shared questions: what words can still describe a war without reducing it to news or to spectacle? And what room is left for poetry and testimony when violence takes over daily life?

Haidar al-Ghazali will speak in English, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



247 INFECTED SEAS, TERRORS FROM SPACE

Kim Bo-young with Luca Crovi

THE DARK MYTHS OF H.P. LOVECRAFT

17:30 AULA MAGNA DELL'UNIVERSITÀ 7,50 €

In Asia, and in Japan and Korea especially, H.P. Lovecraft's aesthetic caught on among writers, directors, artists and illustrators far faster than in the West, where his work – defended by a handful of devoted fans and a few far-sighted critics – had to fight hard not to be dismissed as pulp, or worse. This is not simply a matter of differing critical reception, but of a genuine meeting of imaginations, one that writers of the calibre of Kim Bo-young – known for her work as a script consultant in film, but above all for the way she fuses weird fiction, science fiction and the philosophical novel in books such as *A Plagued Sea* and *I'm Waiting for You and other Stories* – have absorbed and thoroughly reinvented. Luca Crovi meets her to talk about alien marvels, mysterious fishing villages and other Miskatonic delights!

The author will speak in Korean, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.

In collaboration with LTI Korea (Literature & Translation Institute of Korea).

251 A GENEALOGICAL MEMOIR

Emmanuel Carrère with Gabriele Romagnoli

KALÉIDOSCOPE FRANÇAIS

18:30 PIAZZA CASTELLO 8,50 € ▶

The collective celebration marking this thirtieth edition of Festivaletteratura closes in the embrace of Piazza Castello, with the return of one of the great contemporary writers. Emmanuel Carrère (*V13, Le Détroit de Behring, Lives Other Than My Own*) is a skilled and precise witness to the spirit of the age, able to weave together literature and the events of history through archives, files and testimony. So it is with *Kolkhoz*, where the work of reconstruction centres on the author's own family, and above all on the figure of his mother, the historian and academic Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, born Zourabichvili. With journalist Gabriele Romagnoli (*La prima cosa bella*), Carrère takes the audience on an imaginary journey through the twentieth century, from the Soviet Union to Georgia and France, ending with one fundamental question: what generational legacy do those who came before us leave behind?

The author will speak in French, with consecutive interpretation into Italian.



Also thanks to the support of



IN 30 WORDS

CAN THIRTY WORDS CAPTURE A TANGLE OF PASSIONS, THE SHOCK OF AN ENCOUNTER, A MEMORY RESURFACING, A SPELL BREAKING?

This is the challenge Festivaletteratura is setting for the community that has flocked to Mantova every September for thirty years to hear stories from authors the world over: write a story with as many words as the Festival has years. Anyone can take part: there is no age limit, any genre goes, no language is excluded and stylistic excess is welcome.

ONE RULE ONLY: USE EXACTLY THIRTY WORDS.

The aim is to build a great collective anthology whose first pages will go up over the summer on the Festivaletteratura social media channels, and which at the Festival will become the centre of gravity of a lively creative installation.

In the **BOOK PIAZZA** a giant **30** inlaid with felt-tips marks the way into a space where you can read all the micro-stories collected so far and write new ones on the spot.

If you want to send in your piece now, fill in the form at the **QR CODE**.



In thirty words was made possible thanks to



NEW FESTIVAL SIGNAGE IN TOWN!

The new system of totems and signage for **Festivaletteratura Mantova 2026**, designed by **Studio GISTO**, began with the idea of building an infrastructure to accompany the Festival, guide the public and make its presence recognisable around town. It is a **single system** in which totems and information units make the event easier to navigate and give a festive welcome to everyone arriving in Mantova. Four principles guided the work: **participation, sustainability, efficiency and identity**.

Participation here means both a design and a production method: the system grew out of the exchange between designers, technical specialists, local businesses and the Festival volunteers who handle the installations. The **companies** involved were active partners in developing the solutions, helping to define materials, processes and construction details.

Working with Graepel, Martinotti, Arche3D and Giovanardi turned design ideas into finished objects through constant dialogue between drawing board and production. Every element, from the perforated metal sheets to the concrete bases, from the mould to the large-scale totems, came out of a shared process involving culture, craft and local industry.

Sustainability guided the design choices: durable units that can be repaired, transported and stored easily, and are made to cut down on complexity, assembly time and handling.

What gives the system its **identity** is a small metal weathervane on top of each unit, turning with the wind – a recognisable and playful touch, very much in the spirit of Festivaletteratura.



The new Festivaletteratura
signage was made possible
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This year too, Fahrenheit returns live from Piazza Leon Battista Alberti.

From Friday to Sunday, from 15:00 to 18:00, Susanna Tartaro — with Michele di Mieri on the editorial team and direction by Beatrice Palazzoni — presents three afternoons of live broadcasting, featuring encounters with authors, stories, readings and the Festivaletteratura audience.

As always, this event accompanies the Festival, giving voice to its ideas and conversations.



Rai Radio 3

FESTIVALETTERATURA AND PALAZZO TE

This year Festivaletteratura and Fondazione Palazzo Te join forces to explore our feeling for nature, through the artistic and literary visions that have tried to capture it over the centuries. Moving from the classical world to a present under threat from climate change, and setting Western thought alongside other cultures and traditions, the two *natural ideas* events with Amitav Ghosh and Giulia Sissa – hosted by Barbara Furlotti and Guido Rebecchini – act as a prelude to the exhibition *Inventing Nature*. Leonardo, Arcimboldo, Caravaggio, at Palazzo Te from 26 September 2026 to 10 January 2027.

PALAZZO TE

An archive on the move

THE FESTIVALETTERATURA ARCHIVE IS CHANGING ADDRESS

This autumn the Festivaletteratura Archive begins a new chapter. Thanks to *An Archive on the Move*, a project supported by the 2024 call for Progetti Emblematici Provinciali promoted by **Fondazione Cariplo** and **Fondazione Comunità Mantovana**, the archive is leaving its current home in Palazzo dell'Accademia for new premises at **Palazzo Andreani**, in the heart of Mantova. For the first time the Festival's documentary heritage – declared of notable cultural interest by **Lombardy's Superintending Body for Archives and Libraries** – will be reunited with the organisational offices, back in the place where each new edition takes shape, year after year. It is a permanent home, designed to guarantee the best conditions for conservation, to allow the archive to grow and to make it increasingly accessible.

This is more than a change of address. The new premises are next door to spaces for workshops and community activities, which will bring the archive out of storage and make it a living place: exhibitions, training courses, publishing projects, artists' activities and events open to the public will go hand in hand with the work of preserving and making the most of a heritage that grows with every edition of the Festival. At the same time **Palazzo Andreani** will become a living space once more, giving one of the city's historic buildings a new lease of life through fresh occasions to meet and take part.

THE MOVE IN NUMBERS

Thirty editions of the Festival are on the move: a history of over **7,000 events**, more than **5,000 Italian and international guests** and **300 locations** around town, recorded in documents, photographs, audiovisual, graphic and editorial material. Travelling with them are over **500 archival units**, more than **300,000 photographs**, over **4,800 sound recordings** (almost **3,600** of them already online) and more than **3,600 videos**, along with administrative documentation and the press reviews that trace the Festival's long journey.

An archive looks after the past. But when it changes home, it is also getting the future ready.

An Archive on the Move is a project supported by:



The Festivaletteratura digital archive was created with **archivio.com**, a web platform for managing and making the most of historical, cultural and corporate collections, developed by the Turin-based company Promemoria Group.

archivio.com

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

SECRETARIAT FESTIVALETTERATURA

via Castiglioni 4 - 46100 Mantova
tel. 0376.223989
segreteria@festivaletteratura.it

FESTIVALETTERATURA ARCHIVE

via Accademia 47 - 46100 Mantova
tel. 0376.223989
archivio@festivaletteratura.it

INFORMATION

For information about any late changes to the programme (changes of venue for reasons such as bad weather) and of any events postponed, sold out or cancelled, the website www.festivaletteratura.it is kept constantly updated. You can also check in real time by enquiring at our Information Point, on Telegram, on the Festivaletteratura app, by calling 0376.223989 or by sending an email to info@festivaletteratura.it

The **Information Point** in **Piazza Sordello** will be open during the whole of the Festival. General tourist information can be obtained from **Infopoint InLombardia** in Mantova - piazza Mantegna, 6, entrance under the arcades (tel. 0376.432432, info@turismo.mantova.it; www.turismo.mantova.it), open every day 9:00 - 19:00.

PRESS OFFICE

Lara Facco P&C
viale della Moscova, 18 - 20121 Milano
stampa@larafacco.com
www.larafacco.com
9 - 13 september:
Sala stampa Festivaletteratura
piazza Leon Battista Alberti - Mantova
tel. 351.6564754



FESTIVALETTERATURA NEWSLETTER

Sign up to our newsletter
and stay up to date on all the

Festival news. Subscribe at

bit.ly/newsletter-festlet



TELEGRAM

Get updates, practical news
and information about the
Festival on Festivaletteratura's
Telegram channel.

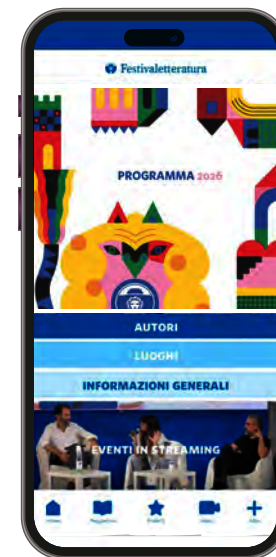
To subscribe, go to the 'Festivaletteratura'
channel in the app or, on your phone, click
on t.me/Festivaletteratura

FESTIVALETTERATURA APP

The Festivaletteratura app is free and available for iOS™ and Android devices. It gives you real time updates, including any schedule changes, comprehensive biographical information on the authors at this edition, and a chance to set up your own itinerary with all the events you don't want to miss. The map includes all the Festival venues and even where to find Festival-friendly places to eat, sleep and shop. And there is more: during the rest of the year the app becomes your way into the vast audio and video holdings of the Festivaletteratura archive.



DOWNLOAD THE APP



FESTIVAL BOOKSHOP 2026 WITH LIBRERIE.COOP

*In collaboration with Cooperativa Librai Mantovani
and thanks to the contribution of UNIPOL*

The Festival bookshop is in [piazza Sordello](#).

OPENING HOURS:

from Thursday 3 to Tuesday 8 September

9:30 → 13:00, 15:30 → 22:00.

**from Wednesday 9 to Saturday 12
September**

9:00 → 24:00

Sunday 13 September

9:00 → 20:00.

Books by the authors attending the Festival
will be available at the bookshop and event
venues. For information: 0376.360414 (from
9:00 - 19:00).

librerie.coop²⁰



SOCIAL MEDIA

Keep up with the latest news and share your
experiences on Twitter and Instagram with
the official hashtags: [#FESTLET](#)

- Festivaletteratura
- @Festivaletteratura
- @festivaletteratura
- Festivaletteratura
- Festivaletteratura

FESTIVALE LETTERATURA LOCATIONS 2026

- 10 Aula Magna dell'Università
- 2 Basilica Palatina di Santa Barbara
- 16 Biblioteca Teresiana
- 8 Cappella di Palazzo del Mago
- 23 Casa del Mantegna
- 21 Chiesa di San Cristoforo
- 12 Chiesa di Santa Maria della Vittoria
- 19 Cinema Oberdan
- 14 Museo Virgilio - Palazzo del Podestà
- 26 Palazzo Te
- 24 Palazzo San Sebastiano
- 9 Parco Belfiore
- 28 Parco Museo Virgilio - Forte di Pietole
- 20 Pescherie di Giulio Romano
- 13 Piazza Alberti
- 4 Piazza Castello
- 17 Piazza Concordia
- 6 Piazza dei Libri
- 18 Piazza Mantegna
- 7 Piazza Virgiliana
- 11 Politecnico di Milano - Campus di Mantova
- 5 Seminario Vescovile - Aula Magna
- 3 Sotterranei del Castello di San Giorgio
- 15 Teatro Bibiena
- 25 Tempio di San Sebastiano
- 1 Tenda Sordello
- 22 Via Tasso
- 27 Villa Nievo - Fossato di Rodigo

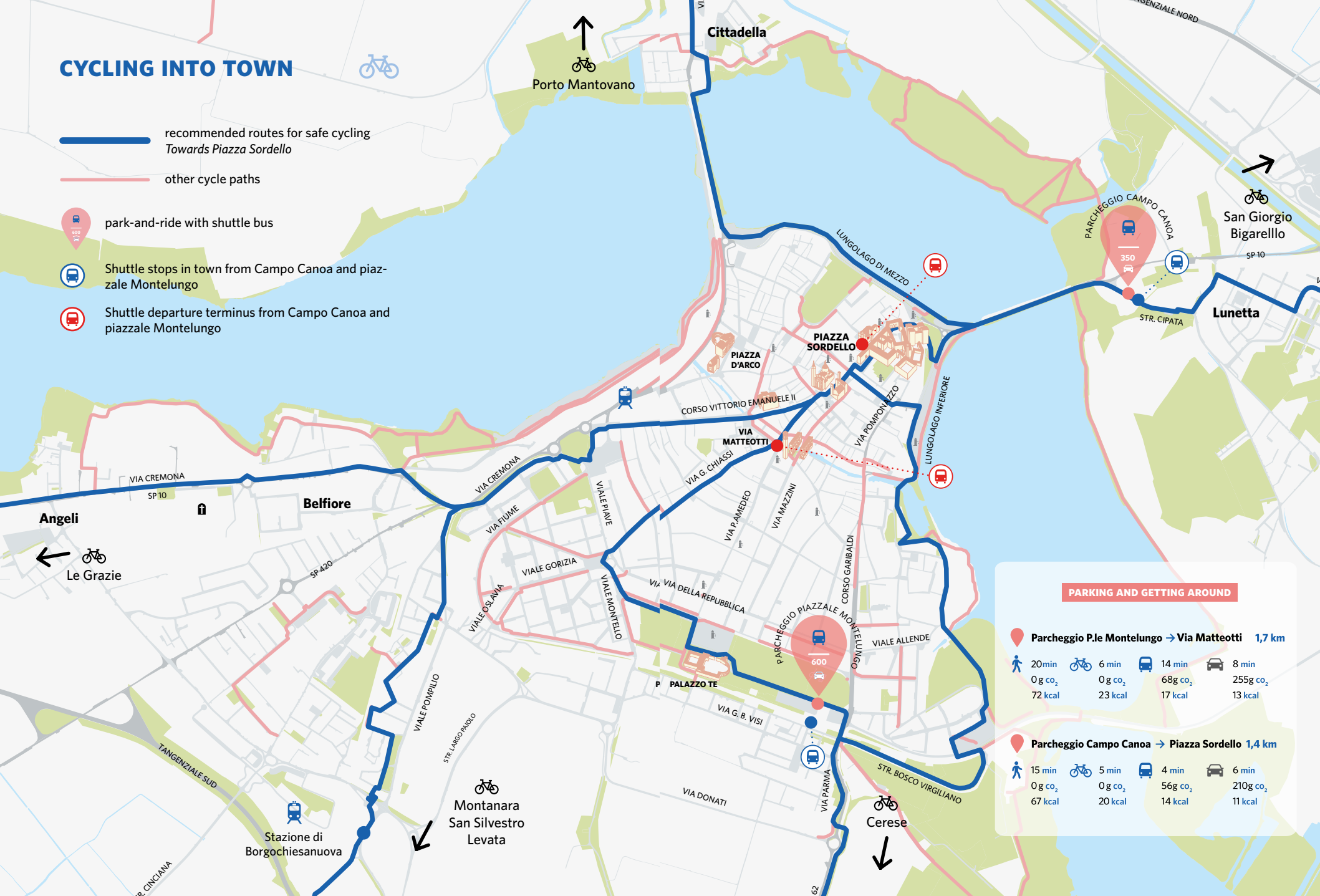
- A Authors' lounge
- B Ticket assistance, Secretariat
- C Press office, Web editorial staff
- D Multisensory Oasis
- I Info-point
- Book Festival bookshop
- Bus Shuttle stop - Piazza Sordello
- Camera Festival Restaurant
- FS Railway station
- Refreshment areas
- Flask refill station
- Toilets
- Fountains



CYCLING INTO TOWN

- recommended routes for safe cycling
Towards Piazza Sordello
- other cycle paths

- park-and-ride with shuttle bus
- Shuttle stops in town from Campo Canoa and piazzale Montelungo
- Shuttle departure terminus from Campo Canoa and piazzale Montelungo



PARKING AND GETTING AROUND

Parcheggio P.le Montelungo → Via Matteotti 1,7 km

	20min		6 min		14 min		8 min
	0 g co ₂	0 g co ₂	68g co ₂	255g co ₂			
	72 kcal	23 kcal	17 kcal	13 kcal			

Parcheggio Campo Canoa → Piazza Sordello 1,4 km

	15 min		5 min		4 min		6 min
	0 g co ₂	0 g co ₂	56g co ₂	210g co ₂			
	67 kcal	20 kcal	14 kcal	11 kcal			

GETTING AROUND

Getting to Mantova and moving around town

In 2021 we made a pledge to limit the Festival's carbon footprint, reducing greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum for both our own and the public's transport. Here we provide you with all the information you need to plan your trip sustainably.

→ TRAINS

Direct rail connections to Mantova: MILAN, VERONA, MODENA, BOLOGNA, CREMONA. The station is **just a few minutes' walk from the old town**. Due to works on the Mantova-Milan line, a replacement bus runs in either direction between Mantova and Bozzolo

→ BUSES

Several bus services connect the old town with other places in the province, outside the province and with the different neighbourhoods of the city. The circular city route takes you right round the old town, with departures every 15 minutes. All APAM buses have a lift platform for wheelchair access. Full details of all APAM city and intercity bus services are available online (www.apam.it) or by scanning this QR Code.



→ PARK-AND-RIDE

There are three park-and-ride car parks located at entry points to the city, so that if you come by car you can park easily on the edge of town and keep traffic out of the old town: Campo Canoa and piazzale Montelungo (free of charge) and the Porta Pradella underground car park (pay and display).

From **Campo Canoa** and **piazzale Montelungo** APAM operates two shuttle services into town, free of charge on weekdays and pay-as-you-go on Sundays and public holidays (€1 day ticket, on board only). Departures every 10 and every 15 minutes respectively, from 7:00 to 24:00 on Festival days.

Other car parks in town: **Anconetta, Porta Mulina, piazza Virgiliana, piazza d'Arco, piazzale Gramsci, viale Risorgimento, viale Isonzo, viale Mincio, lungolago dei Gonzaga** (pay and display zones).

→ CYCLING

Mantova is a mostly flat, **bike-friendly** town with a historic centre largely closed to traffic and good cycling infrastructure. Cycling is undoubtedly the most convenient and fastest way of getting around town. To encourage its use even over longer distances (in urban routes between 5 and 10 km, the bicycle is faster than the car in terms of overall travel time and parking), we've created a **map with safe cycle routes to the centre both from the neighbouring municipalities** (Curtatone, Borgo Virgilio, San Giorgio Bigarello and Porto Mantovano) and from the four park-and-ride car parks. The recommended routes follow cycle paths and pedestrian areas or low-traffic roads.

→ CAMPERS

Stopover points equipped with drainage, toilets and showers:

SPARAFUCILE AREA - via Legnago, 1/a - Mantova
<https://www.aster.mn.it/turisti/area-camper>

PARCO PAGANINI - via della Fiera, 1 - Grazie di Curtatone (MN)

For information info@camperclubmantova.com

→ TAXIS

Every day, non-stop from 5:00 am to 1:00 am | Tel. 0376.368844 - cell. 335.5959285

Pick up points in piazza Cavallotti, piazza Sordello (near entrance to Palazzo Ducale), piazza Don Leoni (train station).

→ ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORT

ANFFAS again offers a dedicated service with purpose-trained staff. Departures from **Campo Canoa** and **piazza Virgiliana** car parks. There is no charge for this service, but reservations must be made by Tuesday 8 September.

For information and booking: **0376.360515 - 338.6617278** (Graziella) **from Monday to Friday 9:00-13:00 and 14:30-17:00**.

SPECIAL REDUCTIONS FOR THE UNDER 35

If you're **BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 AND 35**, Festivalletteratura and Associazione Filofestival have put together some great offers for you, making it easier to enjoy the Festival.

For more details, scan the QR code.



Here's what you can get:

- **DISCOUNTED TICKETS:** with the Filofestival card included in your package, you can buy event tickets early and at a reduced price.
- **AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION:** stay in shared dorms equipped with showers and bathrooms, right in the heart of Mantova.
- **MEALS:** enjoy one meal each day at the Festival's refreshment area or at designated food trucks in Piazza Sordello.

These special offers are part of an initiative by the **Stati Generali di Festivalletteratura**, where young volunteers have been working for the past three years to make the Festival more inviting and accessible for those aged 18 to 35.

I'M GOING TO THE FESTIVAL!

For a Festival everyone can enjoy

With the 2025 edition, Festivaletteratura set out to make the Festival experience more accessible to people with disabilities, so that everyone can enjoy the event and feel part of the Festival community.

Here's what's available this year:

> **Accessible map:** downloadable from the website, with full details of routes across town to the Festival venues

> **Accessibility guides:** complete descriptions of the accessibility features of each venue, in the 'venues' section of the website.

> **Multisensory Oasis:** a dedicated space at Palazzo Vescovile to help with moments of sensory and emotional overload (in collaboration with Associazione Casa del Sole Onlus).

> **Radio beacons:** installed at the main venues to help you get your bearings

> **Accompaniment service:** for people with disabilities (in collaboration with Anffas Mantova)

> **Italian Sign Language interpretation:** available for events marked with the icon 

> **Dedicated ticket service:** people with disabilities can email perilfestival@festivaletteratura.it by 24 August to buy tickets for the 2026 edition (1 paying + 1 free for a companion, if needed)

With thanks to:

Anffas Mantova Onlus, Associazione Casa del Sole Onlus, Ente Nazionale per la protezione e l'assistenza dei sordi ETS APS - Sezione Provinciale di Mantova, Pro Senectute srl, Unione Italiana dei Ciechi e degli Ipovedenti ETS-APS - Sezione Territoriale di Mantova, ViviAmo Mantova

With the support of:



FEDERFARMA MANTOVA

A MULTISENSORY OASIS AT FESTIVALETTERATURA

9-13 settembre

📍 Palazzo Vescovile

A dedicated space to help with moments of sensory and emotional overload and to regain your sense of calm, with sensory stimulation designed to welcome each person as they are and respond to their particular needs.

COME AND TRY IT!

A project by Casa del Sole. Find out more at www.casadelsole.org



Casa del Sole



SUPPORT FESTIVALETTERATURA

Since its very first edition, Festivaletteratura has received the support of **private companies, cultural institutions and retailers** that have recognised the spirit of the event and pledged to work alongside the organisers to offer a literary festival to an increasingly large audience. Local and national companies continue to find in Festivaletteratura an opportunity to link their brand to a lively initiative that still fascinates thirty years on.

To find out how to become a supporter, email sponsor@festivaletteratura.it

PATRONS PROGRAMME

SUPPORT FESTIVALETTERATURA
WITH THE **SORDELLO** AND **VIRGILIO** PASS

Festivaletteratura turns thirty. To mark the occasion with the people who have made three decades of culture and encounter possible, the **Patrons programme** – launched last year to build a closer bond between the festival and its supporters – has been expanded into two levels of **membership**, the **Sordello Pass** and the **Virgilio Pass**, opening up membership of the Festivaletteratura patrons' community to a wider public.

PASS SORDELLO

from 500€

- A front-row ticket for every event of your choice (provided the times don't clash)
- Guaranteed priority booking until 22 August
- Filofestival Supporting Member card
- The full set of this year's merchandise
- A complimentary ticket for events organised by Festivaletteratura throughout the year

PASS VIRGILIO

from 1000€

- Two front-row tickets for every event of your choice (provided the times don't clash)
- Guaranteed priority booking until 22 August
- Filofestival Supporting Member card
- The full set of this year's merchandise
- Two complimentary tickets for events organised by Festivaletteratura throughout the year
- Five books signed by guest authors
- Access to the cocktail receptions for authors and sponsors at Palazzo Castiglioni
- A welcome at the via Frattini refreshment point, in the area reserved for authors and guests

For information on the Patrons programme, email sponsor@festivaletteratura.it

Donations to the Patrons programme are eligible for **tax relief** within the limits set by law.

Filofestival

(FRIENDS OF FESTIVALETTERATURA)

It began as a grassroots initiative during the run-up to the very first Festival in 1997, to help make a dream come true: the aim was to **organise a truly festive occasion that would bring authors and their readers together** and enable everyone to enjoy getting to know each other.

Annual enrolments open every January, giving you the chance to join and support the Festival to make those five days even more engaging. **Today the Festival's friends number over 2500** and come from all over Italy, and beyond.

As well as receiving a free copy of the print catalogue and up-to-date information on Festivaletteratura by email, members are entitled to a **discount** on Festival tickets, **priority booking**, and **special offers** and **discounts** at affiliated shops and restaurants. The Association also organises various initiatives throughout the year, including the reading group *Impulsi*.

Membership costs just €30 a year, or €15 for under 30s. You can of course become a supporting member by contributing an additional sum.

Enrolment for 2026 closes on 24 August.

You can join via the website www.filofestival.it, at the association's office at 4 Via Castiglioni, or at the Libreria Coop Nautilus bookshop at 2 Via Roma, in Mantova.



MANTOVA

9 • 13 september
2026



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