

A stroll through the  
UNESCO City of Literature

# Heidelberg Thou Fair One



**One thinks Heidelberg by day - with its surroundings - is the last possibility of the beautiful; but when he sees Heidelberg by night, a fallen Milky Way, with that glittering railway constellation pinned to the border, he requires time to consider upon the verdict.**

Quoted from: Mark Twain, *A Tramp Abroad*

**First he must open the padlock on the front gate with its wishing-well canopy. He does so, then walks slowly up the brick path to the six steps leading to the porch, where he stops and turns, and confirms as if he doubted it that the same magical view is also intact.**

Quoted from: John Le Carré, *Absolute Friends*

**Wherever you stood, Heidelberg composed itself effortlessly into a picture.**

Quoted from: David Lodge, *Out of the Shelter*

**Heidelberg is like something out of a fairy tale, unreal, one of the few German cities that wasn't bombed. I try to see if I recognize any streets. I spent the first five years of my life here. Some things feel familiar: the bakeries, the Neckar River and its banks, the smell of the streets.**

Quoted from: Carla Maliandi, *The German Room*.

Translated by Frances Riddle

**One must be able to depart  
and yet remain like a tree:  
as if the roots remained in the ground,  
as if the landscape pulled and we stood still.  
One must hold one's breath  
until the wind abates  
and the strange air about us begins to stir,  
until the game of light and shadows,  
green and blue,  
shows its old pattern  
and we find ourselves at home  
wherever that might be ...**

Quoted from: Hilde Domin, *Pulling Landscape*.

Translated by Mark S. Burrows

**Creation is in a swoon  
And asleep in the arms of the night.  
The stillness has cast such a spell  
That even the flow of the Neckar seems still.**

Quoted from: Muhammed Iqbal, *On the Banks of the Neckar (Heidelberg)*. Translated by Mumtaz Hasan



# Heidelberg Thou Fair One

A stroll through the  
UNESCO City of Literature

On behalf of



Heidelberg

During the time I lived in Heidelberg I commuted to Frankfurt four times a week to see my analyst. The ride took an hour each way and trains became an important part of my fantasy life. I kept meeting beautiful men on the train, men who scarcely spoke English, men whose clichés and banalities were hidden by my ignorance of French, or Italian, or even German. Much as I hate to admit it, there are some beautiful men in Germany.

Quoted from: Erica Jong, *The Fear of Flying*

## Bibliography

Domin, Hilde. "Pulling Landscape." In *The Wandering Radiance. Selected Poems of Hilde Domin*, translated by Mark S. Burrows, Grinnell: Green Linden Press, 2023. | Iqbal, Muhammed. "On the Banks of the Neckar (Heidelberg)." *Iqbal Review* 10, no.1 (April 1969). <https://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr69/index.htm> | Jong, Erica. *Fear of Flying*. New York: Holt, Rineheart and Winston, 1973. | Carré, John Le. *Absolute Friends*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2004. | Lodge, David. *Out of the Shelter*. New York: Penguin Books, 1970/1985. | Mallandi, Carla. *The German Room*. Translated by Frances Riddle, Edinburgh: Charco Press, 2018. | Scheffel, Joseph Victor von. "Old Heidelberg, thou fair one." In *Adolf Jensen, Selected Songs*, translated by W.H. Pratt, New York: G. Schirmer Verlag, 1901. | Twain, Mark. "A Tramp Abroad." In M.T., *Other Travels, Literary Classics of the United States, Inc.*, New York: 2010.

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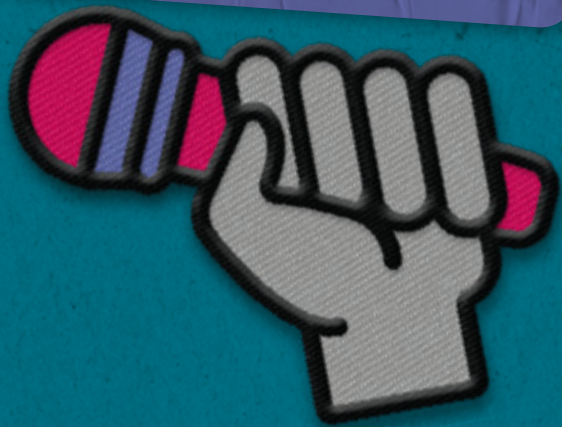
Welcome to Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature! A city of venerable writers and thinkers, but also of powerful raps and poetry slams. A city of many faces and stories. Stories that want to be told and that should be told. Contemporary and historical, high culture and subculture: Heidelberg keeps its literary heritage alive whilst also embracing the new. In other words: in this city, literature is loved, lived and practiced. In all its diversity. And in concert with everyone. Because a UNESCO City of Literature needs everyone who lives and works there to get involved: authors, editors, translators, booksellers, publishers, event organizers and many more. UNESCO Cities



**The UNESCO City of Literature keeps its literary heritage alive whilst also embracing the new.**

of Literature are already well connected, and they forge new connections too: between people, stories and cultures. Across all borders. Local, regional, national and international ones. The goal is to promote the local creative and cultural potential. Because culture matters. And it makes the city attractive. For Heidelberg's citizens. For visitors. For you!





Heidelberg is a site of memory for the beginnings of German hip-hop. From the early nineties onwards, German rap pioneers from Heidelberg such as "Torch" and "Toni-L" influenced hip-hop culture all over Germany. As a tribute to that era, the Heidelberg Hip-Hop Archive was founded in November 2019. It centers around archive material relating to "Torch", including exclusive and previously unpublished material like the drum computer used to produce the groundbreaking album "Blauer Samt" (Blue Velvet) in 2000. In March 2023, the German Commission for UNESCO included hip-hop from Heidelberg in the Nationwide Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage.



1993: Linguist, Toni-L and Torch (Advanced Chemistry) during the music video shoot for "Fremd im eigenen Land" (Stranger in Your Own Country) at the Old Bridge.



# 1

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## The Literary Calendar

Literature shapes and propels Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature. 365 days a year. Summer and winter. And this is celebrated with a packed calendar of literary events that leaves nothing to be desired. There's something for every taste and for all ages, whether it's poetry in dialect, international literature, promising new talent or award-winning authors in exile. The annual highlight is the festival "Heidelberger Literaturtage" (Heidelberg Literature Days), first organized in 1994 and renamed "feelit. International Literature Festival Heidelberg" in 2023. Not forgetting Heidelberg's "Literaturherbst" (Literary Fall), the "Poetikdozentur" (an annual poetry lectureship), a cornucopia of awards, and lots more. Want to know more? Subscribe to the Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature event newsletter or check out the city's event calendar to stay up to date! → p. 73

## World Poetry Day

March 21

World Poetry Day was introduced by UNESCO in 2000 and is celebrated each year on March 21. The day is designed to celebrate the diversity of language as a cultural asset and to promote intercultural exchange, as well as highlighting the important place poetry holds in our social and cultural lives.

## Heidelberger Stückemarkt

(Heidelberg Festival of Theater Plays)

April 23

## World Book Day

## Heidelberger Poetikdozentur

(Poetry lectureship)

## feelIt. International Literature Festival Heidelberg

Formerly  
Heidelberg  
Literature  
Days

## Literaturherbst Heidelberg

(Heidelberg Literary Fall)

September 30

## International Translation Day

## KinderTheaterFestival „Kleine Helden“

(Children's Theater Festival "Little Heroes")

## Internationales Kinderliteraturfestival

(International Festival of Children's Literature)

## French Week

## Heidelberger Theaterage

(Heidelberg Theater Days)



**Clemens Brentano  
Prize for Literature**

**Hilde Domin Prize for  
Literature in Exile**


**Heidelberg Authors'  
Prize**

**Ginkgo Biloba Prize for  
Poetry Translation**

**Heidelberger Leander**

**Karl Jaspers Award**

**Luther Cities Award  
"Das unerschrockene Wort"**

 Awarded by the City of Heidelberg since 1993, the Clemens Brentano Prize for Literature is unique in that the jury includes students from the German Studies department as well as professional literary critics. Together they discuss who the winner should be.



The city's two most important literary prizes are named after Hilde Domin (1909–2006), honorary citizen of Heidelberg, and Clemens Brentano (1778–1842), principal representative of the Heidelberg Romantic Period.





## Literature Up Close

Get up close and personal with literature, in a city whose literary scene is as lively as it is diverse. A city that boasts renowned institutions and established names like the City Library, as well as many unique and very active literary clubs, societies and salons. In other words: **Heidelberg brings together Dante and Domin, Confucius and Mark Twain under one roof.** Whether it's the Montpellier House or the German American Institute (DAI), the Intercultural Center (IZ Heidelberg), the cultural center Karlsruhbahnhof or the Documentation and Cultural Center of German Sinti and Roma: Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature offers a platform for literature from the city, the region, the rest of Germany and all over the world. Up close and accessible. Want to join the next reading? 

**Documentation and Cultural Center  
of German Sinti and Roma**

**GEDOK**  
**German American  
Institute (DAI)**

**Intercultural Center  
(IZ Heidelberg)**

**LitOff**

**WORD UP!**

**Theater und Orchester  
Heidelberg**

**Confucius Institute  
Heidelberg**

**Leselust**

**Karlstorbahnhof**

**Opante Society**

**Goethe Society**

**Literaturnetz  
Heidelberg**

**Montpellier  
House**

**Freundeskreis  
Literaturhaus  
Heidelberg**

**Heidelberg City  
Library**

**Deutsch-Französischer  
Kulturkreis (dfk)**

**Literary Society Palais  
Boisserée**

**Museum Haus Cajete**

**Wanderbühne Theater  
Carnivore**

👉 The Wanderbühne (traveling theater) is the original form of theater. It moves around playing to different audiences, and takes place mostly outside. Founded in 2005, the Wanderbühne Theater Carnivore set out to revive this tradition in Heidelberg. In 2023, Heidelberg even played host to an International Festival of Wanderbühnen.









## Books on Every Corner

Literature is omnipresent in Heidelberg – in its most beautiful form, as a **printed book**, and on nearly every corner. 9 out of 15 city districts have an owner-managed **bookstore** within walking distance. You can also browse one of the city's characteristic **antiquarian bookstores**. Or while away the hours at the University Library or one of the University of Heidelberg's numerous faculty libraries. They have something to suit every taste. You are a lover of English-language literature? The DAI is home to the only public English-language **library** in the region. Or are you a fan of Asian literatures? Visit the Confucius Institute Heidelberg, the South Asia Institute or the Center for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS). Are you pressed for time, but still keen to read in a sustainable way? Check out one of the city's public **bookcases**, where you can take a book for free or swap it for another. Last but not least, the City Library's **Book Bus** is bound to be making a stop in your district soon! ▶

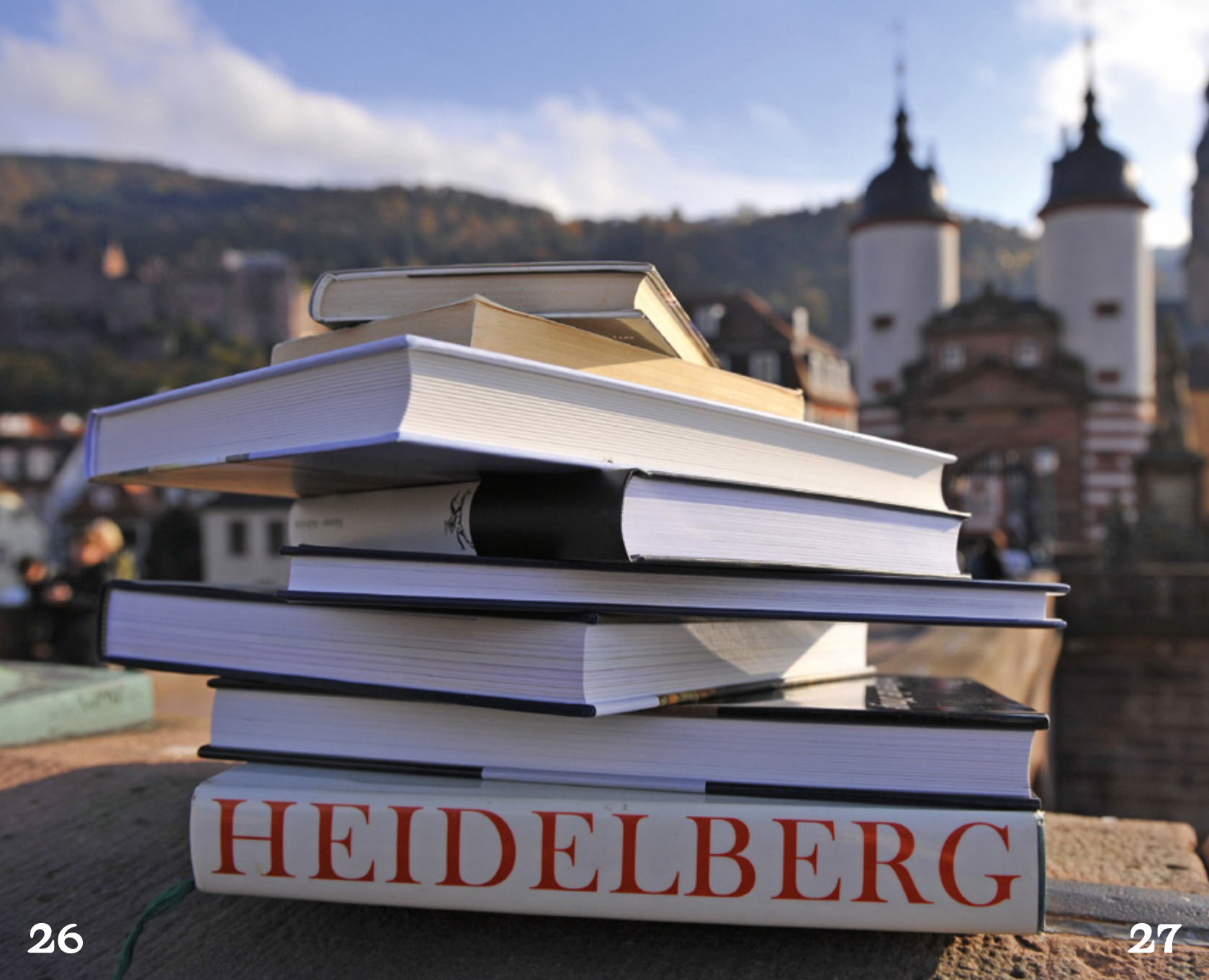
📖 Created in the early 14th century, the magnificently decorated Codex Manesse contains the largest collection of Middle High German Lied- and Spruchdichtung (a genre of sung verse). It belongs to the collection of the Bibliotheca Palatina, which was founded in Heidelberg and became one of the most important libraries of the Renaissance period. In 1623, the collection was moved to Rome. But in 1816 the German-language manuscripts and prints were returned to Heidelberg. Together with the Codex Manesse, they are housed in the University Library and are its most precious possession. Since 2019, the Bibliotheca Palatina has been fully digitized. It is accessed online over 3 million times a year by users from around 180 countries. In May 2023, the Codex Manesse was included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme.





Just a click away: consult the Digital Literature Map (see p. 74 /75) of the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach (German Literary Archive Marbach) and discover the rich history and present of literary Heidelberg.

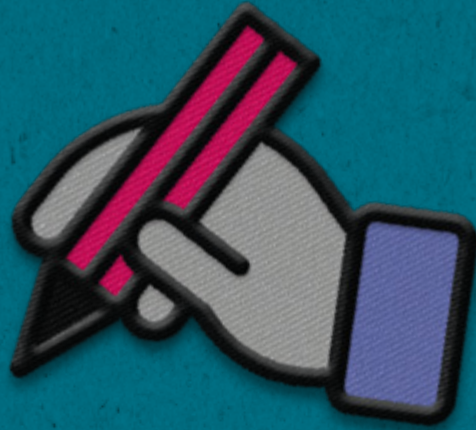




HEIDELBERG



# 4




## Writing. Translating. Making Books: Professionals at Work

Do you like to work with **professionals**? There are plenty of them in Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature! The city is a hub of literary expertise in many different forms, including fantastic owner-managed **bookstores and antiquarian bookstores** in almost every district, and award-winning publishers of national renown. Currently comprised of around 150 writers, the **Netzwerk der Heidelberger Autor\*innen (Network of Heidelberg Authors)** continues to grow. Heidelberg is also home to acclaimed **illustrators**. And last but not least, the city on the Neckar is an epicenter for translation. Many individual **translators** are based in Heidelberg, as is the Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IÜD) and the University of Heidelberg's South Asia Institute (SAI). Both these institutes are very important within the industry, and are known far beyond the region. **Heidelberg, a city of many voices!**


*a hub of literary  
expertise in  
many forms*




## Authors

Heidelberg is currently home to around 150 authors, with some writing full-time and some part-time. The majority of them belong to the Netzwerk der Heidelberger Autor\*innen, which was founded in 2015. The network pools and represents the interests of local authors in order to promote and empower them. In 2018 the network created its own prize: the Preis der Heidelberger Autor\*innen (Heidelberg Authors' Prize). Another platform for Heidelberg's authors and their works is the City Library's exhibition "Schreiben in der Metropolregion" (Writing in the Metropolitan Region), which is regularly added to. The city also has poetry groups for students and non-students alike. These groups bring together established and emerging authors, and offer new writers their first opportunities to perform and get published. 

## Literary Translators


More than 30 literary translators live in Heidelberg and the surrounding area. Since 2012 the regional group Weltlesebühne e. V., an association of German-speaking literary translators founded in 2009, has been shedding light on the great but invisible art of literary translation, introducing it to interested audiences by running activities and events including workshops in schools. Annual highlight: International Translation Day on September 30, the feast day of Saint Jerome, honors the work of literary translators around the globe. And finally: **the Ginkgo Biloba Prize for Poetry Translation!** 

 A prize for poetry translation? Heidelberg has made it happen! Launched in 2018 by the Freundeskreis Literaturhaus Heidelberg (Friends of the Heidelberg House of Literature), the Ginkgo Biloba Prize for Poetry Translation is the only one of its kind in Germany. It is awarded annually to recognize outstanding achievements in the translation of foreign poetry into German.






## Bookstores and Antiquarian Bookstores

Heidelberg is home to over 25 bookstores and antiquarian bookstores. They offer literature at its finest, within walking distance, for all ages. Through their passion and dedication they contribute to one of UNESCO's most important goals: promoting and safeguarding cultural diversity. Many bookstores in Heidelberg have won the Deutscher Buchhandlungspreis (German Bookstore Prize) for their efforts in this regard, some multiple times. And incidentally: not only does Heidelberg have one of the highest concentrations of bookstores in Germany, with 1.5 bookstores per 10,000 inhabitants, but 9 of its 15 districts also have at least one owner-managed bookstore. The city even boasts a vocational school for the book trade - the Julius-Springer-Schule. 

## Publishers

Around 50 publishers are based in the UNESCO City of Literature. From large publishing corporations like Springer Nature and J.B. Metzler to renowned university and academic publishers like Universitätsverlag Winter and independent publishers like Das Wunderhorn, Draupadi and hochroth Heidelberg, the varied programs of the city's publishing houses enhance literary diversity. Whether it's books on the Palatinate or on art, poetry from Latin America or literature from Asia, Africa or Australia: readers and literature buffs are bound to find something to their liking among the output of Heidelberg's many and diverse publishers. 





## In a Nutshell: The UNESCO Creative City

Founded in 2004, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was established shortly before the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions was adopted in 2005. The network currently comprises and connects 350 cities worldwide. The cities share their experiences, strategies, ideas and best practice in the areas of contemporary art, culture and the creative industries, and also set up collaborations.

From Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, a Creative City of Crafts, to Östersund in Sweden, a Creative City of Gastronomy, to the Japanese city of Hamamatsu, a Creative City of Music: UNESCO Creative Cities are centers of excellence grouped into seven fields: Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music.



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Every UNESCO Creative City aims to support local artists in its own artistic field, and to promote the local cultural and creative industries. The title comes with a number of benefits for the city and its inhabitants: professionals in the relevant field are part of a network connecting them with each other and with colleagues from other UNESCO Creative Cities. This ensures international collaboration, synergies and knowledge transfer. Being designated a UNESCO Creative City helps to raise a city's profile both nationally and internationally. Its creative potential makes the city more attractive to tourists, students, businesses and new residents.



📍 In 2014, the City of Heidelberg was designated a UNESCO City of Literature and became part of the global network of UNESCO Cities of Literature. This network currently comprises 53 cities worldwide, spread across six continents and 38 countries. It is part of the larger UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).



# UNESCO Creative Cities: Synergies Worldwide

**350 UNESCO Creative Cities**  
worldwide

**7 UNESCO Creative Cities in**  
**Germany**

Berlin, Bremen, Hannover, Heidelberg, Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Potsdam


**53 UNESCO Cities of Literature**  
worldwide

**German Commission for**  
**UNESCO**

📍 The UCCN currently includes seven German Creative Cities: Berlin (Design), Bremen (Literature), Hannover (Music), Heidelberg (Literature), Karlsruhe (Media Arts), Mannheim (Music) and Potsdam (Film). They are grouped together in the network of the German Commission for UNESCO.





Like all UNESCO Creative Cities, Heidelberg is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and thus to creativity as a driver of sustainable urban development. Heidelberg as a UNESCO City of Literature, therefore, is actively seeking to forge new connections and undertake more cultural collaborations with other regional UNESCO title-holders who are committed to UNESCO's peace goals, such as UNESCO World Heritage Messel Pit and UNESCO Global Geopark Bergstraße-Odenwald. 

**“Heidelberg is a city with a rich literary history and a highly vibrant literary present. The title of UNESCO City of Literature which we have held for 10 years now is the highest international distinction currently awarded to our city. With it comes a mission to continue promoting the diversity and unique features of our literary landscape.”**


Prof. Dr. Eckart Würzner, Mayor of the City of Heidelberg

≈ **150** authors

≈ **30** literary translators

≈ **50** publishers

≈ **25** bookstores and antiquarian bookstores

Heidelberg City Library has 225,565 media titles available to borrow. In 2023 they were borrowed over 1,097,823 times. With nearly 750,000 items borrowed, Heidelberg University Library is one of the busiest libraries in Germany. It is a world leader when it comes to the digitalization of services: its e-library is accessed 36 million times a year, including 26 million requests to access items on the library's own servers. The book market makes up the largest proportion of Heidelberg's creative industries, at over 30%. In 2020 the book market generated a total turnover of around EUR 67 million. 

“Around 800 companies, or 11% of all businesses in the city, belong to the cultural and creative industries. 118 of these companies are part of the book market (publishers, bookstores, freelance writers, translators, antiquarian bookstores). In 2020, around 4,800 people of working age worked in the cultural and creative industries. The annual turnover for 2020 was EUR 600 million.”


Special Unit Cultural and Creative Industries of the City of Heidelberg



When it was designated a UNESCO City of Literature in 2014, Heidelberg set up the “**Literaturversammlung**” (**Literary Assembly**) as a body for literary professionals based in Heidelberg. The assembly usually meets once a year at Heidelberg City Hall.

Authors, translators, publishers, bookstores and antiquarian bookstores are divided into **industry groups** with their own elected spokespeople.

Projects designed to complement Heidelberg’s rich literary program are planned by **working groups** in consultation with the city’s Office of Cultural Affairs.

The **Office of Cultural Affairs** serves as a point of contact and a coordination center. It subsidizes literary and cultural projects, consults on project and event planning, and provides logistical support as well as PR. 

 Heidelberg’s first Artists’ Assembly was set up in March 2021, bringing together freelance artists from all artistic fields. Authors, musicians, visual artists, dancers and others – in Heidelberg as UNESCO Creative City they all come together to speak up for the importance of culture and the arts.

## Heidelberg Literary Assembly

### Industry groups

Authors, translators, publishers, bookstores and antiquarian bookstores

### Regional and national cooperation partners

### Academia and research

### Festivals

### Cultural institutions

### Clubs and initiatives



# Growing Up in a World of Words

Reading and writing are the key to the world. Heidelberg as UNESCO City of Literature is committed to that belief. Because both these cultural activities, reading and writing, enable social and cultural participation. Actively promoting reading and writing skills from an early age is therefore an integral part of Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature. Whether it's writing and theater workshops with authors in schools, the Frederick Reading Day at the City Library, Shared Reading, or the Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature at Heidelberg's University of Education: the city attaches huge importance to reading and writing. ▲

💡 Growing through words: since late 2017, Heidelberg's Karlsruhbahn station has been an important regional center for "Shared Reading". It offers training for volunteer Reader Leaders, and its impact is felt across Germany. The initiative was born in the UK. How it works: people - no matter what their age, social class or cultural background - come together in a safe space for about ninety minutes and read world literature, one story and one poem, aloud, under the guidance of a Reader Leader. Then they share their thoughts. The great thing about it is that you don't need any previous knowledge - anyone can join in. In this way, through literature, new spaces are opened up for people to come together, providing accessible opportunities for Heidelberg residents from different social groups to meet and talk. There are currently about 30 Shared Reading groups in Heidelberg and the surrounding region, offering a total of around 320 meetings a year (some of them online). And that number is still growing!



**Creative Writing in Heidelberg's  
Elementary Schools**

**HD Ink**

**World Literacy Day**

**reading competition  
"Vorlesewettbewerb des  
Deutschen Buchhandels"**

**POEDU Poetry Works  
for Children**

**Mentor-Leselernhelfer  
Heidelberg e. V.**

**National  
Reading Day**

**HEIKOGRU**

**Poetic Pen Pals**

**Zentrum für Kinder- und  
Jugendliteratur  
(Heidelberg University of  
Education)**

**Shared Reading**

**Kindergarten  
"Wörterwald"**

**Frederick  
Reading Day**

**Theater- und Spiel-  
beratung Baden-  
Württemberg**

**Heidelberg Literature  
Scouts**

## Heidelberg Literature Scouts

Children and young adults between the ages of 13 and 21 look behind the scenes, meet authors, publishers, booksellers and translators, read unpublished book manuscripts and share their experiences on social media.



## Reading Competition

Every year, students from Heidelberg take part in the national reading competition. In this way, Heidelberg's schools and teachers actively support and improve the reading skills of children and young people. And their hard work has paid off: in 2023, it was a student from Heidelberg who won the Baden-Württemberg state competition.



## Poetic Pen Pals

Cultural education at its best: students from different elementary schools in Heidelberg send each other letters with poems to be finished by the recipient.

## Writing Workshops in Elementary Schools


How do you become a writer? How does a writer work? How do I learn to write? Heidelberg-based writers for children and young adults pass on their passion for language to elementary school kids.









# Resounding Language. Dancing Letters

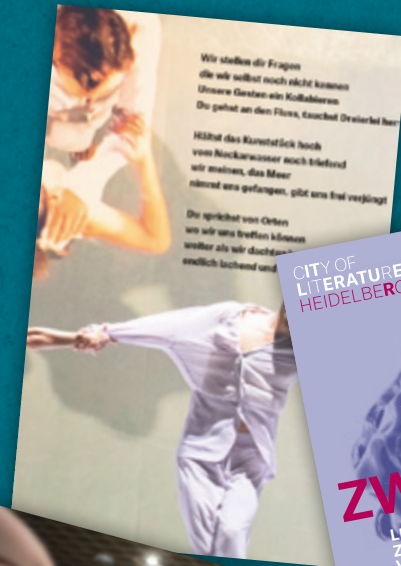
Creativity wants to be free. Innovative art needs space and no limits. So Heidelberg, as a UNESCO Creative City, uses an interdisciplinary approach to forge connections between all kinds of creatives and between different artistic fields. With the help of strong partners – from Enjoy Jazz and Heidelberger Frühling to the Metropolink festival, KlangForum and the **Prinzhorn Collection** – literature enters into a dialog with other art forms. It makes language resound and letters dance. 

 Hans Prinzhorn created the world-famous Prinzhorn Collection in the early 20th century. It features artistic works by inmates of psychiatric facilities. But Prinzhorn was not only a doctor and a collector; he was also one of the many translators of the French writer André Gide, whose work was the subject of much scandal at the time.




## Literature and Dance

When dance and literature come together, opposites meet. Because dance is a language beyond language. So how do you make letters dance? How do you translate the movement of bodies into the linearity of language? Which linguistic devices can be used to represent current forms of expression in dance? To find answers to these questions, Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature creates spaces for artistic dialog between the two art forms. 



## Literature and Music

The texts of Heidelberg author Ralph Dutli set to music as part of Enjoy Jazz? A radio play collaboration with the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Trossingen? A live performance featuring 14 authors writing a text based on the 14-hour-long piece "Vexations" by Éric Satie? Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature makes all these things happen - and makes letters resound. 







## Literature and much more ...


... because literature's expressive possibilities and its potential for connection with other art forms are limitless. An evening of text and pictures from the Prinzhorn Collection. Murals inspired by literature at the Metropolink festival. The premiere of a movie about the life of Ingeborg Bachmann, shown during the Heidelberger Literaturherbst. A workshop on miniature painting, held during the Heidelberger Literaturtage. A sound collage in video form by the artist Peter Bösselmann, based on text fragments by Kafka, read in different languages. An oversized note pad as a piece of art in the public space. Keep your eyes and ears open!





## In Touch with the Literatures of the World

International literary luminaries including Ossip Mandelstam, Erica Jong, Mohammed Iqbal, Lung Ying-tai and José Rizal have all worked in Heidelberg and left their mark here. Today, Heidelberg as UNESCO City of Literature attracts authors from around the globe. Together with strong local partners and the other UNESCO Cities of Literature, the city promotes regular networking and literary exchange across linguistic, cultural and geographical borders. The formats are diverse: inter-municipal translation workshops, literary residences, multilingual anthologies, readings, literary exhibitions. This promotes dialog and understanding among everyone, including interested audiences. Literature builds bridges, not least in times of war and crisis. ▼


The unifying potential of culture and artistic exchange is at the heart of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Linguistic and literary diversity are therefore the key to every UNESCO City of Literature. In Heidelberg these things are in evidence all year round, in the form of bilingual artistic formats and bilingual publications that span geographical borders. Want to see what this looks like in practice? 



The world comes to Heidelberg (clockwise): Yannick Garcia (translator, Barcelona) with Philipp Herold (author, Heidelberg), Anton Kurnia (writer/ translator, Jakarta), Judith Rossell (author of children's books/illustrator, Melbourne), Pippa Goldschmidt (writer, Edinburgh) and (on the right) Hanna Osadko (author/illustrator, Ternopil).



## Writers in Residence Program

Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature regularly offers **residence and work grants** to authors and translators from the worldwide network of UNESCO Cities of Literature. These opportunities are in great demand – especially the writing and working residency at **Kommandantenhaus Dilsberg** near Heidelberg. The residency program has been run in collaboration with the Kulturstiftung Rhein-Neckar since 2019. From a Ukrainian children's book author and illustrator, to a Catalan translator, to an Indonesian writer: Heidelberg plays host to the world. 

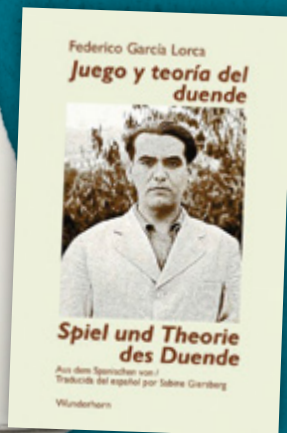


## Bilingual Translation Workshops

Since 2018, authors from Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature and another UNESCO City of Literature have been working together to translate each other's poems as part of a bilingual workshop series called **"Expedition Poetry"**. So far the project has welcomed writers from Prague, Granada and Melbourne. For its anniversary in 2024, "Expedition Poetry" will travel from Heidelberg to Jakarta and to our twin city of Montpellier. The translation workshops are followed by joint readings in both participating cities. The results are published as an e-book with support from Prague UNESCO City of Literature.

## Multilingual Publications

Celebrating linguistic diversity through poetry: in 2018, 51 authors from 28 different UNESCO Cities of Literature wrote their texts by hand on large sheets of handmade paper from Fabriano UNESCO City of Crafts and Folk Art, as part of the project **"Poetic Encounters"**. The paper traveled from Fabriano to Heidelberg, and from there to the other Cities of Literature all over the world, before returning to Fabriano via Heidelberg once the handwritten texts had been added. This unique manuscript, including translations of the poems into English, was then bound in leather in the traditional way.



It is dedicated to all people worldwide valuing the power and richness of literature and advocating the freedom of thought and speech.

Produced by the 28 UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature with special editorial assistance by Heidelberg UNESCO Creative City of Literature.

We would like to express our gratitude for the work of each and every collaborating poet who, through their dedication and professionalism, have made it possible to put this window to our world's poets into print.

All texts have been written or printed on handcrafted paper from Fabriano UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art where the unique book has been bound.




Dietmar von Aist (approx. 1140–1171) wrote what is thought to be the oldest surviving Tagelied. An excerpt from his text can be found below.

„Slâfest du, friedel ziere?  
man weckt uns leider schiere:  
ein vogellân soô wol getân  
daz ist der linden an daz zwî gegân.“


„Ich was vil sanfte entslâfen:  
nu rüefstu kint Wâfen.  
liep âne leit mac niht gesîn.  
swaz du gebiutst, daz leiste ich,  
friundin mîn.“

Diu frouwe begunde weinen.  
„dî rîrst und lâst mich eine.  
wenne wilt du wider her zuo mir?  
owê du fuerst mîn fröide sament dir!“

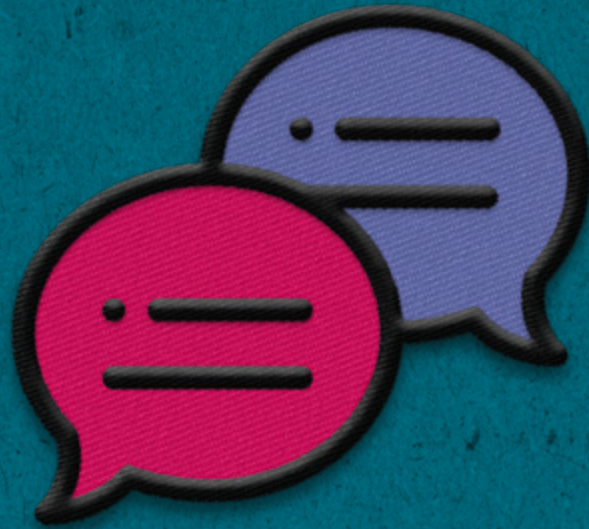


At the break of dawn, two lovers must part. The events of the night must never come to light. Their farewell becomes the symbol of a love that brings both happiness and suffering. This type of situation is described and discussed in the Tagelied, a genre of medieval German love poetry. The series **“Abschied von Gestern: Das Tagelied und die Gegenwartslyrik”** (Goodbye to Yesterday: The Tagelied and Contemporary Poetry) centers around contemporary versions of the medieval Tagelied. Poets from Heidelberg and another UNESCO City of Literature with a different mother tongue present their own new versions of the Tagelied. The goal is to create a multi-lingual publication. 



Around the globe, around the clock, around literature: within the UNESCO Cities of Literature network, **online collaborations** allow for multifaceted dialog and topical debates between authors close to home and further away, across all borders. From multilingual anthologies about the relationship between literature and the climate, to online writing residencies, to a series of Ukrainian/German/English postcards about war and resilience, to a transnational literary cookbook: authors in the UNESCO Cities of Literature have their finger on the pulse. And they advocate for tolerance and dialog. 





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## 📌 Digital Literature Map

Are you looking for new perspectives on the history and present of Heidelberg's literary landscape? Take a look at the Digital Literature Map created by the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach at

<https://www.literaturland-bw.de/literaturkarte/>.

Apply the filter "Heidelberg" and take a stroll through the rich literary landscape of the UNESCO City of Literature.

## 📌 Book a literary city tour

Do you want to book a literary city tour for a group or just for yourself? No problem! Get in touch with Heidelberger Gästeführer's literary city tour group at [www.heidelberger-gaestefuehrer.de](http://www.heidelberger-gaestefuehrer.de).

📌 **Get in touch** Do you have any questions you want to ask the coordinating office of Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature?

Email us at [unesco.creative.city@heidelberg.de](mailto:unesco.creative.city@heidelberg.de) or call +49-6221-58-33000.



📌 The south-west of Germany has one of the richest literary landscapes in Europe. The "Digital Literature Map" created in September 2023 by the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach (German Literary Archive Heidelberg) makes this landscape visible. Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature has been chosen by the literary archive as a model city. Heidelberg currently has more than 400 entries on the map. It shows important places in authors' lives, sites where literary works were created, locations from literary works, literary museums, memorials, commemorative plaques, school and street names, fiction publishers, literary institutions, literary prizes and festivals. These facts and texts are complemented by pictures, audio documents and films. You can search for authors, places, regions or time periods. Thematic filters open up new perspectives on the literary landscape.



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Heidelberg thou fair one

A stroll through the UNESCO City of Literature

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Romy Fursland and Susanne J. Schneider

## Editing Team

Coordination team of Heidelberg UNESCO City of Literature

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Old Heidelberg, thou fair one,  
thou City rich in lore,  
The Neckar nor the Rhine  
vale have Cities honored more.

Quoted from: Joseph Victor von Scheffel, *Old Heidelberg, thou fair one*. Translated by W.H. Pratt

### \*Note on the title “Heidelberg Thou Fair One”:

“Alt Heidelberg, du feine” (Old Heidelberg, thou fair one) is a poem by Joseph Victor von Scheffel, written in 1852. After being set to music by Anton Zimmermann, it was publicly performed for the first time in 1861. Today, Heidelberg is a city that prides itself on retaining its connection with the venerable spirit of its past whilst also distinguishing itself through excellence and innovation in many areas.

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