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• CROWD: a joint-venture project of literary activists who provide ideas, stimulus and inspiration

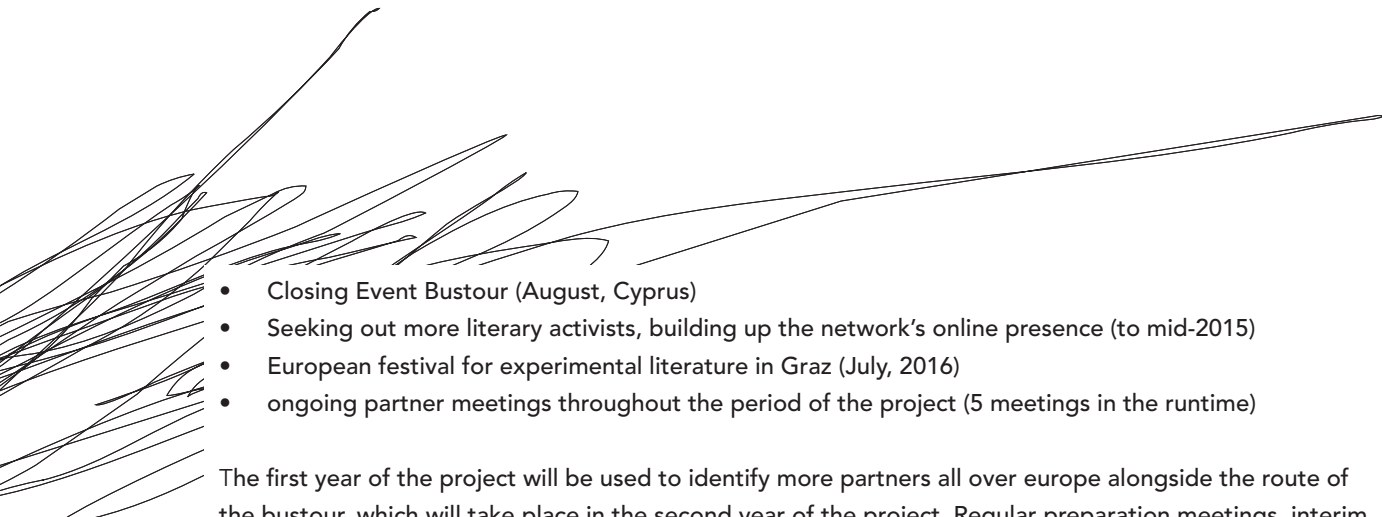
WHAT

• CROWD is a joint-venture project of various literary activists who provide ideas, stimulus and inspiration that aims to support the capacity of European writers and literary activists to operate transnationally and internationally. CROWD enables the European audience to keep up with current developments in contemporary European literature and the dissemination of literature in real time by means of various subsidiary projects such as a reading tour by OMNIBUS across Europe, taking 120 writers at least 10 countries, and an interactive web platform and app for mobile devices. The idea is to offer simpler access to the diversity of literary products in the whole of Europe and work towards building contacts and exchanges among the many small, separate reading markets in Europe. What CROWD means by the term 'literature activist' is all the event organisers and promoters, writers, publishers and translators who work, often under precarious economic conditions, on the foundation of a European literature scene in the 21st Century in the knowledge that literary products and their presentation can only reach a larger audience if they are regarded as interactive communication offerings.

We want to take contemporary literature out of its urban contexts and enable new routes which promote the mobility of the cultural and creative players of Europe. We want to wake provincial Europe up from its deep slumber to set free unused cultural resources and engage European audiences as active participants. The joint-venture project CROWD is intended to offer European literary activists specific practical assistance in the transnational circulation of literary texts and translations via new ways of presenting, disseminating and distributing literature, for instance by reaching a new reading public via digital technologies, and taking the lead from the best practice of network participants.

CROWD subsidiary projects

- AGORA – website and app (full operation Spring 2016, start of the bus tour)
- Conference in Berlin (December, 13./14. 2014)
- OMNIBUS reading and discussion tour from Finland to Cyprus (120 writers, 10 countries, 20 cities, May to August 2016)
- Opening Event Bustour (May 2., Finland)

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- Closing Event Bustour (August, Cyprus)
 - Seeking out more literary activists, building up the network's online presence (to mid-2015)
 - European festival for experimental literature in Graz (July, 2016)
 - ongoing partner meetings throughout the period of the project (5 meetings in the runtime)

The first year of the project will be used to identify more partners all over Europe alongside the route of the bustour, which will take place in the second year of the project. Regular preparation meetings, interim and final evaluation of the project are planned as a fixed component of the project. Decisions about content will be made and implemented jointly.

WHO

CROWD is a joint venture project of various, well experienced European literature activists from Cyprus, Germany, Austria and Finland with associate partners, some of whom are organised in institutions, some are freelance and working under precarious circumstances; some are located in urban contexts, some in rural situations. CROWD will invite other innovative literature activists in Europe (publishers, translators, writers, event organisers, editors, journalists, teachers and readers) to exchange ideas and event formats as well as providing mutual assistance in the conception, organisation and implementation of free projects. After the project begins with the conference in Berlin, we will attempt to recruit at least one representative from every European country as a member.

Why the German Lettrétage as project leader? We have been working on the foundations of CROWD for more than three years, beginning with establishing contact with those project partners who have already firmly committed, followed by jointly setting out the details of the idea of co-operation, its specific function and tools, through to the first network meeting and several European research trips in the Summer and Autumn of 2014 (Vienna, Prague and Athens) in the course of which the idea of carrying out the conference of European literature activists in Berlin was also developed. Besides that: Networking, (re)vitalisation and opening up of the European literary landscape is the focus of the project „SOUNDOUT! New Ways of Presenting Literature“, which is currently running in the Lettrétage literature house in Berlin (September 2013 - June 2014). With the main funding coming from the German Lottery Foundation Berlin, a new European prize for new forms of presenting literature has been initiated. At the end of May 2014, the best of the more than 100 projects submitted from all over Europe will be invited to Berlin for a festival week. During this festival, from 26 May to 1 June 2014, various large and small literary happenings, performances, readings, reading concerts, literature installations and much more will take place all over the city. After the week of presentations, an international jury will select the most interesting, innovative and sustainable project to receive the 5,000 euro prize. The more than 100 contacts from more than 30 European countries established in this way and the stimuli thus generated are even now proving to be an important resource that will continue to influence the future work of CROWD, especially the conference in Berlin, and the bus tour OMNIBUS.

CROWD is for everyone, and therefore strives explicitly to achieve not only the networking of literature activists but also sustained exchange and discussion with non-readers and people who do not normally go to readings.



WHY

We want to get to know the various different ideas of contemporary literature that exist in Europe, develop them together and introduce them to the public for Europe-wide discussion. We want to make parallel communities aware of each other and of course by focusing on disseminating literature, significantly and sustainably enlarge the range of innovative contemporary literature irrespective of the language of its creation. We want to work on the foundation of a European literary public that can itself form the basis of a common and diverse European contemporary literature.

HOW

- CROWD supports and connects the various activists in Europe, some of whom live under precarious circumstances, in an uncomplicated way with a firm footing in practice, and provides an important and exciting stimulus in relation to literary events and publications in marginalised language areas. The network offers various suggestions and assistance for dissemination, as well as providing something of an (organisational) support for literary translations from and into smaller European language areas, for cheap accommodation for travelling writers and publishers (book fairs and the like) and for easier establishing of contact within the European literary scene and beyond. A first "trial run" for the bus trip is taking place in 2014, organised by Nuoren Voiman Liitto from Finland, on the occasion of the guest appearance of Finland at the Frankfurt Book Fair; Finnish experimental writers will travel through the literary landscape of Germany, Austria and Switzerland and take part in events in the Lettrétage and in the Forum Stadtpark in Graz.

- For uncomplicated establishing of contact on an equal footing a series of large events (symposium in Graz, etc.) and the creation and use of digital interaction in the Internet are planned. The latter includes a digital map which can be installed as an app on mobile devices and keeps literature activists and all other subscribers throughout Europe informed of new developments and exciting events and texts and making them available for discussion. This AGORA mobile app will help European cultural professionals and artists to reach new and enlarged audiences in a new and innovative way.