



## Friedrich Dürrenmatt Guest Professorship for World Literature

Each semester an international author is invited to Berne to teach a weekly seminar to students of the Faculty of Humanities. He or she also offers a workshop for PhD candidates and public readings in Berne and other Swiss cities.

**HS 2014: Joanna Bator (Warsaw)**

**When: Wednesday, 2–4 pm | Where: t.b.a.**

Further information: [www.iash.unibe.ch](http://www.iash.unibe.ch)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/friedrichduerrenmattgastprofessurfuerweltliteratur>

## Of Misfits, the Uncanny and Heterotopias – Places and Narratives

Participants are invited to wonder/wander about places and narratives following the lead of misfits, the uncanny and heterotopias. The seminar consists of three parts: First we follow Godzilla who will guide us through the world of *kawaii* and *moe* (sweet) girls and *otaku* (nerd) boys. We read Godzilla as a Freudian symptom that shows the repressed meaning of cultural trauma in a distracted form. We visit places like Jingu bridge in Tokyo's Harajuku district where cosplayers (costume players) used to gather, Akihabara district where otaku subculture has flourished for the last decades, and all female Takarazuka theater among 'other places'. Here we enter the world of Japanese popular culture, the world of *idoru* (idols), monsters, manga, anime and computer games that has influenced Japanese neo pop, Haruki Murakami and Banana Yoshimoto. Then we have a look at Polish post-communist literature. Poland will appear here, ironically, as the "Second Japan" that Lech Wałęsa had dreamed our country would become – in vain, of course. We will come back to Godzilla or he will come back to us because one cannot kill him for reasons we will explore. We will also try to answer the question if Japan's Godzilla as a symptom exists in other cultures as well. Do we have a Polish Godzilla? Or a Swiss one? Furthermore, we focus on the subversive discourse of Polish post-transition literature, including Michał Witkowski's *Lubiewo* and my own *Sandberg* as narrative spaces for our own strolling. Finally, I ask participants to become ethno-graphers and/or writers who will guide me through Bernese heterotopias and show me their misfits and their uncanny – real or imaginary.

**Course reading:** Kerry Mallan: *Strolling Through the (Post)modern City*; Walter Benjamin: *The Arcades Project*; Keith Tester (ed.): *The Flâneur*; Sigmund Freud: "The Uncanny"; Michel Foucault: "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias"; Jennifer Robertson: *Takarazuka. Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan*; Norihiro Kato, "Goodbye Godzilla, Hello Kitty. The Origins and Meaning of Japanese Cuteness"; Takashi Murakami (ed.): *Little Boy*; Hiroki Azuma: *Japan's Database Animals*; Patrick Galbraith: *Otaku Encyclopedia*; extracts from the work of Haruki Murakami; Banana Yoshimoto: *Kitchen*; Michał Witkowski: *Lubiewo*; Joanna Bator: *Sandberg*.

**ECTS points:** 6 (BA) / 9 (MA)

**Joanna Bator** was born in Wałbrzych, Poland, in 1968. She graduated in cultural studies and philosophy. Her debut novel was *Kobieta* (in English: *A Woman*), written in 2002. Until 2011 she was a university lecturer and lived for several years in Japan where she wrote *Piaskowa Góra* (2009; in English: *Sandy Mountain*; the German translation, *Sandberg*, was published by Suhrkamp in 2011). The story of three generations and its sequel *Chmurdalia* (in English: *Cloudalia*; German translation, again with Suhrkamp: *Wolkenfern*) of 2013 was highly acclaimed and established her as one of the most important voices of contemporary Eastern European literature. In 2013, her most recent novel, *Ciemno, prawie noc* (2012), won the Nike Literary Award (Nagroda Literacka Nike), the most prestigious award for Polish literature.

Supported by:



**Institut für Germanistik**  
Project leader:  
Prof. Dr. Oliver Lubrich  
Länggassstrasse 49  
CH-3000 Bern 9  
[www.germanistik.unibe.ch](http://www.germanistik.unibe.ch)

**Institute of Advanced Study  
In the Humanities and the  
Social Sciences | IASH**  
Muesmattstrasse 48  
CH-3012 Bern  
[www.iash.unibe.ch](http://www.iash.unibe.ch)



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