

## Literary Café

“It’s like a pilgrimage. Katowice is my Mecca in August,” Krzysztof Varga wrote of the OFF Festival in one of his newspaper columns in the summer of 2011. A long-time friend of the festival and annual pilgrim, this year he finally takes his vows and becomes a fully ordained organizer of Poland’s greatest alternative festival, joining us as the new curator of the Literary Café.

**Krzysztof Varga** (1968) is a writer, journalist, and columnist for *Gazeta Wyborcza*. He is the author of numerous books, including the rock’n’roll novel *Tequila, Nagrobek z lastryko* (*Terrazzo Tombstone*), *Aleja Niepodległości* (*Independence Avenue*), and the somber *Trociny* (*Sawdust*). He has also published a book of essays about Hungary titled *Gulasz z turula* (*Turul Goulash*) as well as a collection of essays previously printed in *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s weekly magazine *Duży Format*, under the title *Polska mistrzem Polski* (*Poland, the Champions of Poland*).

## Literary Café Program

### August 2

5:45 – **Dr Mirosław Pęczak**: The author of the book *Subkultury w PRL* (*Subcultures in the People’s Republic of Poland*), a scholar and faithful fan of independent culture, will explain what made subcultures unique in Communist Poland and tell us whether any new cultural rebellion and subcultures are still possible in an age of postmodernism and unbridled commercialism.

7:35 – **Sylvia Chutnik**: Writer, feminist, literary anarchist, and Polish Mother, author of the novels *Kieszonkowy atlas kobiet* (*Pocket Female Atlas*) and *Cwaniary* (*Hustlers*).

9:45 – **Zygmunt Miłoszewski**: Author of a series of crime novels featuring prosecutor Szacki: exceptional novels read even by those who aren’t usually fans of the genre, and that’s no minor achievement.

12:05 – **Kamil Sipowicz, Jacek Dehnel, Robert Brylewski, Maciej Świerkowski**: A rock lyric workshop. Two colorful Polish writers, a rock musician, and a translator will read and analyze the words to legendary rock songs, including some from the repertoires of two OFF Festival headliners: The Smashing Pumpkins and My Bloody Valentine. Hosted by Szymon Kloska.

### August 3

5:45 – **Marcin Baran**: Poet, legend of the “brulion generation,” winner of the 2012 Silesius – Poland’s most prestigious poetry prize – for book of the year. When someone wins over 11,000 euro for poetry book, it’s worth finding out what all the buzz is about.

7:35 – **Natalia Fiedorczuk**: A renaissance woman who writes, plays, and sings. She'll be taking on two roles at the OFF Festival, performing with Nathalie and the Loners and as herself, Natalia Fiedorczuk.

9:45 – **Ignacy Karpowicz**: A weird and individual writer, praised for his monumental *Balladyny i romanse (Balladyna and Romances)*, a sweeping blend of pop lit and avant garde that revived the concept of mythology and literature as a great story. He'll be presenting his new novel *Ości (Fish Bones)* at the OFF Festival.

12:05 – **Konstanty Usenko**: Author of an extraordinary book about the underground music scene in the USSR, and researcher of a world we know little about. He'll also be performing at the festival as the frontman of Super Girl & Romantic Boys. Hosted by Szymon Kloska.

#### **August 4**

5:45 – **Piotr Paziński**: Author of the books *Pensjonat (The Boarding House)* and *Ptasie ulice (Bird Streets)*, winner of the Polityka Passport prize, editor in chief of the monthly Jewish culture magazine *Midrasz*. He is the most Jewish young Polish writer and the most Polish Jewish writer. The literary great-grandson of both Bruno Schulz and Isaac Bashevis Singer.

7:35 – **Father Andrzej Draguła**: From art to blasphemy. Father Andrzej examines the links between pop-culture and religion, rock and faith, scandals and God, as examined in his books *Copyright na Jezusa (Copyright on Jesus)* and *Bluźnierstwo. Między grzechem a przestępstwem (Blasphemy. From Sin to Crime)*. We'll talk about finding the boundary between art and blasphemy, the differences between faith and mass culture, and whether God listens to concerts at the OFF Festival.

9:45 – **Yuri Andrukhovych**: If the Swedish Academy ever decides it's finally time to give the Nobel Prize to Ukraine, Yuri will undoubtedly be their first pick. He's also Poland's literary ambassador to Ukraine and vice versa. A fantastic writer with an extraordinary talent for intricate prose and deadly irony; a true star.

12:05 – **Krzysztof Siwczyk, Maciej Melecki, and Marta Podgórnik**: a trio of poets from Mikołów and Gliwice, together known as the "Silesian Beats," guardians of the legacy of Rafał Wojaczek. There must be something about the Silesian air that encourages this kind of poetry: poignant yet affirmative, uncompromising and painfully real.

The Literary Café was created in cooperation with National Centre for Culture.