

German Writer in Residence Dr. Angelika Overath – Session 2010



For the German Section of the School of Modern Languages, the second semester opened with a special treat: From 25 to 29 January 2010, Angelika Overath returned for the 4th time as German Writer in Residence to Newcastle University. In a very generous move, she offered this week long series of workshops, readings and creative activities for students and staff as a gift to the School of Modern Languages – all the more valuable because since her recent prize-winning novel 'Flughafenfische', the demand on her time and expertise has been growing in Germany, Switzerland and indeed Britain where Cambridge University and Queen Mary College, London, were anxious to secure her services.

During this week she did a continuous workshop with our 1st year students and did several creative writing workshops at the Hatton Gallery. After reading, discussing and analyzing poems and short stories like for example Bruce Chatwins "Ein Abendessen mit Diana Vreeland", the students started to produce their own texts. They did "Elfchen" (an Elfchen is a little poem which consists of 11 words) and also portraits and short stories based on 5 random words. These exercises in creative writing are directly connected with the general language seminar for Level B and are the basis for their third portfolio. Firstly, the students have to write about their experiences during the workshops, what they did and what they have learned. Secondly, they will continue with their creative work and can choose between writing a portrait of a local person or writing a short story based on the short story "Die Tochter" from Peter Bichsel. The DAAD-Lektorin and -Assistentin are planning to publish a booklet of collections of the students creative works they did during this week.



The Wednesday was open to all students of German and the wider public. In the afternoon, for the second time a cross-disciplinary workshop together with the Hatton Gallery took place. In front of the Merzbarn by Kurt Schwitters, text collages were produced – and the resulting posters even exhibited alongside the dadaistic work of art! In the evening, a dialogue reading took place: Angelika Overath's readings from her German collection of biographical brainteasers were matched with their English translations and matching readings from Nicholas Johnston (Newcastle graduate of the MA in Professional Translation).

The long-standing connection of the German Section with Angelika Overath as Writer in Residence will hopefully continue in the future. During her stay, she explored, among other things, possibilities for placing Nick's translations of her brainteasers with an English publisher and pursued ideas for her third novel. Something to look forward to!