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Quebec opens a window on Basque literature

- **Université Laval to host a conference on literature and linguistic diversity**
- **The Québec en toutes lettres festival will devote an evening to Basque literature**

Basque Minister of Culture and Linguistic Policy Bingen Zupiria, Etxepare Basque Institute Director, Irene Larraza, President of Euskal PEN Kluba (Basque PEN Club) Laura Mintegi, and writer Itxaro Borda met at Tabakalera in Donostia to present the 2021-2022 Saison Québec - Pays Basque programme. Three events revolve around literature.

Congreso en la Université Laval

Université Laval, Etxepare Basque Institute, PEN Club of Quebec and Euskal PEN Kluba (Basque PEN Club) have organised '[La voix des autres-Besteen ahotsa. Multilingualism and literature: Basque Country and Quebec](#)', for October 13 and 14. The event will be held online due to pandemic-related restrictions and will feature daily presentations with roundtable discussions at the end of each lecture. The lectures proposed by the conference will identify the traits shared by these literary creations, addressing topics such as multilingual environments with minority languages, francophone-Québécois literature, literature of cultural minorities and literary production in the Basque Country, Quebec and North America, among others.

Quebec en toutes lettres

The acclaimed Québec en toutes lettres festival, which runs from 14 to 24 October, will dedicate an evening to Basque literature. The event, entitled 'Soirée découverte Accent basque' will take place on 16 October at 7pm at the Musée de la Civilisation in Quebec City.

There will be a round table on Basque literature with writers Itxaro Borda and Kirmen Uribe, and Irene Larraza, Director of the Etxepare Basque Institute. Writer and translator Méliissa Verrault will lead the panel.

In addition, the new edition of the '[Chekhov vs. Shakespeare](#)' project will be presented, featuring the Basque writer Aurelia Arkotxa and the Quebecois writer Jean Désy. For a year, they have exchanged correspondence and reflected on various topics such as acculturation, colonialism, cultural diversity and the Covid-19 pandemic. The result is a book published in Basque, Spanish, French and English, which Désy and Arkotxa themselves will present at the festival. Some passages from the book will also be read at the event, to the music of Trio Zukan. It should also be mentioned that this group made up of Maria Zubimendi, Gorka Catediano and Jon Ansorena will be giving another concert on 20 October with the Quasar Saxophone Quartet in Montreal.

The artist selected to create the cover of this new edition of 'Chekhov vs. Shakespeare' is illustrator Higinia Garay. The book will be presented in the Basque Country in November, as part of the Literaktum festival in San Sebastian.

To round off the Québec en toutes lettres festival, Itxaro Borda will take part in Poetry Night, an event not to be missed on the Quebec literary scene, where she will share the stage with a number of renowned and up-and-coming voices.

Itzultzaile Berriak (New Translators)

Also presented at Tabakalera was the '[Itzultzaile berriak](#)' (New Translators) project, aimed at training international translators of literature in Basque and building bridges between international and local translators. Under the direction of EIZIE (Association

of translators of Basque language) member Aiora Jaka, Quebec translators Yannick Bédard and Michel Usereau are translating the following texts: 'Abian' and 'Ederra eta piztia' by Garazi Arrula; 'Oreina' and 'Ezertan lagun diezazuket?' by Uxue Alberdi; and 'Arrokarik altuena' and 'Safaria' by Harkaitz Cano. The result will be shown at the Gutun Zuria festival in Bilbao. The translators are also expected to visit the Basque Country in 2022.

Saison Québec - Pays Basque

These literary proposals take over from the Québécois and Basque film cycles held in spring and summer. The first took place at the Basque Film Archive between April and June, while the ['Basques contemporains'](#) cycle was held at the Cinémathèque Québécois between September, with the screening of 11 films.

The aim of this two-way project is to open a window in Quebec to contemporary Basque culture and creation and to showcase the work of Quebec creators in the Basque Country with a view to consolidating the relationship between the two territories through language, culture and art. The programme, which focuses on culture, contemporary creation and language, includes a wide range of multidisciplinary activities. This programme will give the Quebec public the opportunity to discover the richness of Basque culture and creativity, and the Basque public will be able to enjoy Quebec creation. Collaboration between cultural players will also be promoted and relations between artists, creators and cultural industries will be fostered. In fact, more than 30 Basque and Quebecois cultural stakeholders will collaborate in various events.

Quebec: priority partner

The Saison Québec - Pays Basque project has its origins in the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with the then Prime Minister of Québec Philippe Couillard during the institutional trip to Quebec by Basque President Iñigo Urkullu. Quebec is a priority partner in the Basque Government's internationalisation strategy, as Quebec shares a number of things with the Basque Country, including its support for cultural and linguistic diversity, its commitment to innovation, the environment and

to combating climate change. This agreement aims to deepen cooperation between the two territories in the field of culture, as well as other areas, such as the environment, economic development and innovation. Saison Québec - Pays Basque is one of the outcomes of this cooperation.

Representatives of the Etxepare Basque Institute have made three trips to Quebec, and already in July 2019, professional Basque-Quebec cultural meetings were held in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Bilbao and San Sebastian with the aim of promoting cultural exchanges and showcases. This was the first step in the organisation of the Saison Québec - Pays Basque. The Basque Government and the Quebec Ministry of Culture and Communications have also launched calls for grants to support cultural activities within the framework of this project.

Kultur Konexioak: promoting dialogue through culture

In 2019, the Etxepare Basque Institute began to pay special attention to the territories identified as strategic for foreign relations and the internationalisation of the Basque Country. Kultur Konexioak (Culture Connections) were created to incorporate the cultural dimension in these relationships, as well as strengthen ties with these regions and cultures. The project also aims to establish lasting relations, build bridges and strengthen collaboration between creators and cultural agents, as well as promote both cultural and academic exchanges.

Info+

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