

NEXUS INSTITUTE

25
years
NEXUS

25th Anniversary Celebration

The Magic Mountain Revisited

Cultivating the Human Spirit
in Dispirited Times



Photo: Raphael Schaller

Saturday 21 September | 9.15 AM — 5.00 PM

National Opera & Ballet, Amsterdam

Edoardo Albinati — Ian Bostridge — Antonio Damasio — Aleksandr Dugin
Rebecca Foon — Saskia Giorgini — Intissar Kherigi — Flavia Kleiner
Nadine Labaki — Bernard-Henri Lévy — Joan Magrané Figuera
Andrea Marcolongo — Celeste Marcus — Sari Nusseibeh — Pamela Paul
Jesse Paris Smith — Wojtek Wiczorek — Leon Wieseltier

Programme Nexus Anniversary Symposium

Saturday 21 September 2019
National Opera & Ballet, Amsterdam

- 9.15 AM Welcome Rob Riemen
- 9.30 AM THE RETURN OF SETTEMBRINI AND NAPHTA IN THE 21ST CENTURY
A debate between Bernard-Henri Lévy and Aleksandr Dugin
- 10.30 AM Intermission
- 11.00 AM A MAGIC MOUNTAIN CONVERSATION: ON CULTURE AND POLITICS, LIFE AND DEATH
Edoardo Albinati, Antonio Damasio, Nadine Labaki, Sari Nusseibeh, Pamela Paul, Leon Wieseltier
- 12.45 PM Lunch with complimentary refreshments
- 13.30 PM MAGIC MOUNTAIN MUSIC
Ian Bostridge (vocals) and Saskia Giorgini (piano)
- 14.15 PM BEING HANS CASTORP IN OUR TIME
Intissar Kherigi, Flavia Kleiner, Joan Magrané Figuera, Andrea Marcolongo, Celeste Marcus, Jesse Paris Smith, Wojtek Wiczorek
- 16.00 PM End of regular programme, book signing (near the bookstall)
- 16.10 PM WHAT'S TO BE DONE?
Workshop moderated by Rebecca Foon, with the new Hans Castorps*
- 17.00 PM End

To attend the Nexus Symposium please register online at www.nexus-instituut.nl.
The entrance fee includes refreshments for lunch.

The programme may be subject to change. For the latest information on the symposium and its speakers and for terms and conditions, please see our website.

*The number of participants is limited. See page 17 for more information.

Nexus Symposium 2019

25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Magic Mountain Revisited Cultivating the Human Spirit in Dispirited Times

‘A man changes a lot of his ideas here.’ This is how Hans Castorp is greeted upon arrival at the sanatorium high in the Swiss mountains at Davos; but the greeting is also addressed to the reader of his story in *The Magic Mountain*, Thomas Mann’s masterpiece.

In the summer of 1907 23-year-old Hans Castorp, a recently graduated engineer who is ensured of a good position at a large shipyard in Hamburg, decides to use his three-week holiday to go to Davos to visit his cousin Joachim, who is suffering from tuberculosis. Upon arrival, it is quickly revealed that Castorp assumed his cousin, an army lieutenant who has already been staying in the mountains for half a year, will return to the lowlands with him at the end of his three-week stay, back to the real world and day-to-day life of work, making money, serving one’s country, being of use to society... But this, his ailing cousin responds, is not going to happen. Not only will he have to stay for at least half a year more; he also apprises his recently arrived family guest: *your* notion of time and ideas about the world will change here, too. ‘You have all that to learn. A man changes a lot of his ideas here.’

That is how the story of *The Magic Mountain* starts. Castorp will eventually stay, not three weeks, but seven long years; for he, too, is diagnosed with tuberculosis. These years will be his education, his ‘Pädagogische Provinz’; an education of a completely different order from all the practical and technical skills he learned during his training as an engineer. Here, on the magic mountain, he will have to apply himself to the big questions of life, love, death, the problems facing humanity, the clash of world views, the future of Europe, the meaning of art, the meaning of life...

The novel ends in 1914, when the great war has erupted. We meet Hans Castorp one last time, no longer far from day-to-day reality high in the

mountains, but as a soldier on the battlefield. We do not know if he will survive this war. But we know that in these seven years he has received a spiritual education, a *Bildung*, that made him a different person, an adult — with very different ideas from when his story began.



It is no coincidence that the book's author had an identical experience. In 1912, Thomas Mann starts writing what was meant to be a humorous novella about the experiences of a young man in a sanatorium in Davos, entirely in the spirit of Schopenhauer's and Wagner's 'Sympathie zum Tode'. When, twelve years later, in October 1924, he finally manages to write the *finis operis*, the work has evolved into a novel of over a thousand pages — and the author has grown to have different ideas about life and the world's problems from when he started writing *The Magic Mountain*.

A political dispute with his brother Heinrich, the war, the revolutions in Russia and Germany, the uncertain future of Europe — all of these cause Thomas Mann to reconsider the basic motivations of his work as a writer, his own view of humanity and the world, his ideas about culture and politics, and his notion of the responsibility of artists and intellectuals. All of this comes together in this novel in which, as Mann said, 'the true hero is the *homo Dei*, man himself with his religious questions about himself, about his whence and whither, his essence and his destiny, the secret of his existence, the eternal enigmatic task of mankind.' And, as he declared in an interview in 1925, with this book he wanted above all to '*create intellectual clarity about life itself*'.



Although *The Magic Mountain* was published nearly a century ago, it has become a classic, timeless work that has lost none of its meaning or power to speak to us.

For which student or recent graduate would not recognize him- or herself in Hans Castorp? He is no paragon of brilliance, but is keen to learn, open to new experiences, critical and of an independent mind; he has learned a trade, but has not yet really experienced life. And who would not see something of themselves in 'one of life's problem children', as Castorp is called in the novel, still looking for his place in society and his own answers to the questions with which life and society confront him?

The great political-philosophical conflict in *The Magic Mountain*, between Enlightenment and Anti-Enlightenment, is no less relevant for our times. And the arrival of an anti-Semite with fascist sympathies in the sanatorium, towards the end of the story, is unfortunately no less topical.

For us, too, the question remains: what should be our view of humanity and the world? Which teacher should we follow?

Should it be Lodovico Settembrini? This Italian freemason and humanist detests religion and metaphysics, but fully trusts in the goodness of human nature, the power of reason, and the power of literature, because, he believes, beautiful words lead to beautiful deeds. Music, however, he finds too ambiguous, and therefore politically suspect, because it can entangle people in the emotional, even dark side of their existence. Sickness and death are unavoidable, but one should above all honour life and all that which gives life. Hence his profound love for the humanist tradition, with its reverence for the human dignity of each individual and the permanent striving for moral and spiritual progress, and his loathing of everything reactionary. He wants to be cosmopolitan, despises nationalism and holds a sacred conviction that the future belongs to a united Europe.

The other teacher, no less eloquent and gifted with immense persuasive powers, is Naphta, a devoted communist Jesuit, who wishes to convert us to a completely different view of humanity and the world. For him liberalism, humanism, capitalism are nothing but empty intellectual notions that can do nothing to nourish the spiritual yearnings of human beings. On the contrary; they are the cause of humanity's degeneration into self-centred, greedy, materialist creatures in a decadent society. Naphta does not believe in democracy, because the deepest desire of human beings is not freedom, but the desire to live a carefree life and to submit to an authority which they need only obey to bring this life about. He also rejects Settembrini's cosmopolitan humanism, because the need for a strong national identity will always prove more powerful. And, already at the start of the twentieth century, Naphta envisions the rise of a totalitarian state — for that is what the people will embrace, because it will offer them the greatest degree of security and satisfaction.

But are these two intellectual, political-philosophical visions the only options, or is there, as Hans Castorp begins to suspect, a vision of life which rises above all this — like love, or pure life itself? This will certainly be so, but is 'love' or 'life itself' enough to bring order to a society?

And that other question raised by *The Magic Mountain* also remains: where can we find the *Bildung*, the spiritual education that will help us become fully human, to care for our spiritual consciousness, our moral and spiritual values? Can we find it in music, literature, philosophy? Hans Castorp thinks we can. What he likes best is to sit on his balcony, wrapped in a blanket, looking out over the snow-covered mountain peaks and to read a book, think about life while looking at the starry skies at night, to have a good conversation (or discussion) with the two gentlemen who would like to be his teacher; and above all he likes to listen to music, is touched to the depths of his soul every time he hears *Der Lindenbaum* from Schubert's *Winterreise* as the purest expression of what he finds meaningful. Even death cannot frighten him at such moments; it even becomes something he desires.

He does not read newspapers, does not care about political developments and he ignores all of Settembrini's warnings: be wise and do not lose sight of politics and *do* read the papers!

In this way, *The Magic Mountain* poses us a question that will always remain pressing: what should we know, and what must we be able to do to meet the *Forderung des Tages*, the demands of our time? What is our own, our intellectual responsibility? What is our political responsibility? At this moment in time, when all the existing forms of politics seem lacklustre, can there be a new politics, inspired by humanism, if we want to avoid reactionary politics? What will it take to realize this?

The Magic Mountain ends with a *Götterdämmerung*, the outbreak of that all-devouring war in 1914. A war that comes as a complete surprise to Castorp — because he has not been reading the newspapers. One final time, we see him as a soldier, running through the mud on the battlefield; a battlefield already covered with the bodies of fallen soldiers. We do not know whether he will survive this war. But together with the author, we can still ask the closing question of *The Magic Mountain*: 'And out of this worldwide festival of death, this ugly rutting fever that inflames the rainy evening sky all round — will love someday rise up out of this, too?'

This is a question full of hope at the gloomy ending of what is, in the final instance, still an optimistic book.

'A man changes a lot of his ideas here'; this is how the reader is greeted at the beginning of the book. And those who follow Hans Castorp's experiences in his seven years on that magic mountain will certainly have different ideas by the end of his story.

This novel, which is no less than a timeless document of European humanism, points the way to a new confidence in life, it increases our awareness of everything that really matters, and our responsibility in all of this. And it is precisely this that is the essence of all *Bildung*, of all spiritual education.



'What is the Nexus Institute?' This is a question, after 25 years, we are still often asked. The only right answer is not that we are a think tank, nor that we are a scientific institute. We are not an artistic organisation (although we value the arts highly and our public events are not without a theatrical quality), and the term 'cultural institute' is too vague. In truth, the Nexus Institute is nothing but the continuation of the novel that inspired it: *The Magic Mountain*. Hence the big questions about life and the world's problems; the conversation, the debate held in public; the space offered to the most varied, often strongly opposed views. Hence also the ambition to contribute to the continuation of the tradition of a cosmopolitan European humanism

with its spiritual and moral values, the cultivation of the nobility of spirit and the care for the soul, the fight for the democratic spirit and a book culture — all of this with a constant eye to ‘the demands of our time’. Nothing that is difficult will be avoided, because Spinoza — one of the spiritual fathers of European humanism — is all too right when he asserts at the end of his *Ethics* that all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare. This is why the Nexus Institute aims precisely to be an *elitist* institute, as elitist as *The Magic Mountain* is in the original meaning of the word: meaning not to exclude, but to *offer the best* there is.



The Nexus Institute was opened on 22 September 1994 with a first Nexus Lecture by the Palestinian-American polyhistor Edward Said. We want to celebrate our 25th anniversary with a symposium that will also mark the next step in the history of the Nexus Institute: the opening of the *International Magic Mountain School* of the Nexus Institute. With a lecture, debates and through music, the following *Magic Mountain* themes will be addressed:

Why is the conflict between Enlightenment and Anti-Enlightenment not only still topical, but is the worldview of the Anti-Enlightenment increasingly gaining the upper hand?

Is a new politics, inspired by European humanism, possible in our time?

Will a united Europe ever be possible?

What are the demands of our time and what is needed to meet them?

What is the role of intellectuals as teachers in our time?

What are the questions, concerns, dreams for the future and responsibilities of today’s younger generation, one hundred years after Hans Castorp? What kind of *Bildung* do they get, what kind should they get? What choices can they make?

And what can teach us about the three most important experiences of human existence: love, sickness and death?

With his *Magic Mountain*, the last great European *Bildungsroman*, it was Thomas Mann’s ambition to ‘*create intellectual clarity about life itself*’. Well, what can give us so much intellectual clarity now?

Rob Riemen

Founder and president of the Nexus Institute

Speakers



EDOARDO ALBINATI (Italy, 1956) is a novelist, journalist, and screenwriter. For over twenty years, Albinati has taught the inmates of Rome's Rebibbia penitentiary, an experience described in his memoir *Maggio Selvaggio* (1999). His work for the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Afghanistan and Niger inspired him to write *Il ritorno* (2002) and *Otto giorni in Niger* (2018, with Francesca d'Aloja). He has worked with the directors Matteo Garrone and Marco Bellocchio on the screenplay of their movies *The Tale of Tales* (2015) and *Fai bei sogni* (*Sweet dreams*, 2016). His novel *Svenimenti* won the 2004 Viareggio Literary Award, and *The Catholic School*, his semiautobiographical novel on sexual abuse, catholic education and fascism, won the 2016 Strega Prize, the most prestigious Italian literary award. His latest book is the novel *Cuori fanatici* (2019).



IAN BOSTRIDGE (United Kingdom, 1964) is a world-renowned tenor. His international recital career has taken him to the foremost concert halls of Europe, South East Asia and North America, and he has had residencies at the Wiener Konzerthaus, Carnegie Hall New York, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Luxembourg Philharmonie, Barbican Centre, Wigmore Hall and with the Seoul Philharmonic, the first of its kind. His many recordings have won all the major international record prizes and were nominated for fifteen

Grammys. He was awarded a CBE in the 2004 New Year's Honours. In 2016, he was awarded the Pol Roger Duff Cooper Prize for non-fiction writing for his latest book, *Schubert's Winter Journey: Anatomy of an Obsession*, which includes a chapter on the music in Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*.

Photo: Sim Canetty-Clarke

ANTONIO DAMASIO (Portugal, 1944) is a neuroscientist known for his pioneering research on how the brain deals with memories, language, emotions and decisions. He is world-famous for international bestsellers such as *Descartes' Error. Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (1994), *Looking for Spinoza. Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (2003) and *Self Comes to Mind. Constructing the Conscious Brain* (2010). His most recent work is *Strange Order of Things: Life, Feeling, and the Making of Cultures* (2018). Damasio, who has been living and working in the us for many years, is David Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience and Director of the Brain and Creativity Institute at the University of Southern California.



ALEKSANDR DUGIN (Russia, 1962) is a political philosopher. He is the founder of the Eurasian Movement in Russia and the foremost theoretical proponent of Eurasianism, which holds that Russia has a unique cultural position in between Europe and Asia that is incompatible with Western modernity. Dugin gained a PhD from the University of Rostov-on-Don and was head of the International Relations Department and the Center for Conservative Studies at Moscow State University from 2008 to 2014. He is a staunch critic of liberalism and a strong and influential supporter of President Putin. Among his many books the most prominent is *The Fourth Political Theory* (2012), in which he argues for a new form of politics that supersedes aspects of liberalism, communism and fascism.





REBECCA FOON (Canada, 1978) is a cellist, composer, producer and environmental activist. Foon co-founded the Juno Award-winning contemporary chamber group Esmerine in 2002 and was a core member of a post-punk band and an experimental instrumental collective. Alongside over a dozen albums as a composer and musician, Foon has a long list of credits as a guest musician, among others with Nick Cave, and has composed for several soundtrack projects, including the award-winning tar sands documentary *H2Oil*. Her album *A Common Truth* is about climate change and an attempt to musically translate a complex mix of emotional, social and political resonances in this regard. Together with Jesse Paris Smith, Foon is co-founder of Pathway to Paris, a non-profit organization focused on highlighting the urgency of turning the Paris Agreement into reality and offering innovative solutions.



Photo: Christine Reichling

SASKIA GIORGINI (Italy, 1985) is considered one of the most interesting pianists of the younger generation. She received her first piano lessons at the age of four, and graduated from the Conservatorio di Torino with Claudio Voghera, with the highest grades and honours. She then completed her studies at the Accademia di Musica di Pinerolo with Enrico Pace, at the Kunstuniversität Graz with Julius Drake and at the Mozarteum Salzburg with Pavel Gililov. She won the second prize as well as the Mozart Prize and the Audience Award in the Prix d'AmadèO in 2012. In 2015, she received a special award for the best interpretation of a work by Chopin in the International Piano Competition Ferruccio Busoni. She won the International Mozart Competition in Salzburg in 2016.

INTISSAR KHERIGI (Tunisia, 1985) is a lawyer and co-founder of the Jasmine Foundation, a Tunisian NGO dedicated to building democratic culture by engaging young people in the most marginalised neighbourhoods and regions in Tunisia. Kherigi was born to politically active parents who opposed the Ben Ali regime. After experiencing life under the dictatorship, she went into exile, first in Algeria and then in the United Kingdom. She has worked as a researcher at the House of Lords in London, the UN Security Council in New York, and the European Parliament in Brussels, and is currently a PhD student in Comparative Political Sociology at Sciences Po in Paris. Her academic research focuses on decentralisation, regional inequality and local governance reforms in post-revolution Tunisia.



FLAVIA KLEINER (Switzerland, 1990) is a political activist. She studied contemporary history, constitutional law and philosophy of law in Fribourg and Jerusalem. Her work focuses on the future of democracy, the rule of law, the current rise of populism on the right, and civil society activism. In 2014, after the so-called ‘Initiative Against Mass Immigration’ by the populist Swiss People’s Party was passed by a waferthin margin, she co-founded the liberal movement Operation Libero which managed to overturn the result. Since then, Operation Libero’s innovative and effective campaigning has successfully defeated the nationalist conservative agenda of the Swiss People’s Party in several referenda. In November 2018, her letter on how to counter right-wing populism was published in *The Guardian*.



Photo: Mirjam Kluka



NADINE LABAKI (Lebanon, 1974) is one of the most acclaimed Arab filmmakers of her generation, known for tearing down stereotypes and touching on fundamental issues like religion and the role of women in society in humorous and poetic ways. She obtained a degree in audiovisual studies at Saint Joseph University in Beirut; her graduation film, *11 Rue Pasteur* (1997), won the Best Short Film Award at the Biennale of Arab Cinema in Paris. In 2007 her first feature

film, *Caramel*, a comedy about the everyday lives of five Lebanese women, premiered at Cannes. In 2008 the French Ministry of Culture gave Nadine Labaki the insignia of Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters. Her second feature film *Where Do We Go Now?* (2011), about a village in which church and mosque stand side by side, where women try to keep their blowhard men from starting a religious war, also premiered at Cannes and won several international awards. Her 2018 film *Capernaum*, about a 12-year-old Syrian refugee living in the slums of Beirut, was selected for the Palme d'Or, won the Jury Prize at Cannes and was nominated for an Oscar for the best foreign language film.



Photo: Jean Christophe Marmara-*Figarophoto*

BERNARD-HENRI LÉVY (Algeria, 1948) is a French philosopher and filmmaker, and one of Europe's most important public intellectuals who still carries the torch of European humanism. He is the author of over 30 books, including his brilliant study *The Genius of Judaism* (2017) and most recently *The Empire and the Five Kings* (2019). His first-hand account of the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya appeared in the form of a writer's journal, *La guerre sans l'aimer* (2012), and a documentary film, *The Oath of Tobruk* (2012). Lévy made

two documentaries on the Iraqi Kurds: *Peshmerga* (2016) and *The Battle of Mosul* (2017). In Spring 2019 Lévy toured the theatres of Europe with his one-man show 'Looking for Europe' and wrote and published a pro-European manifesto calling for resistance against populism and fascism, which was signed by several Nobel Prize winners including Mario Vargas Llosa, Herta Müller, Svetlana Alexievich and other prominent intellectuals including Milan Kundera, Agnes Heller, Claudio Magris, Adam Zagajewski, David Grossman, Anne Applebaum and Simon Schama.

JOAN MAGRANÉ FIGUERA (Spain, 1988) is a Catalan composer. He received his first composition lessons from Ramon Humet and subsequently studied at ESMUC (Barcelona) with Agustí Charles, at the Kunstuniversität (Graz) with Beat Furrer, and at the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse (Paris) with Stefano Gervasoni. He was *lauréat* of the Villa Medici in Rome, member of the Casa Velázquez in Madrid, resident at Faber in Olot and composer in residence at La Pedrera in Barcelona. Magrané has been awarded several international awards, including the XXXI Queen Sophia Composition Prize – Fundació de Música Ferrer Salat. Poetic and artistic references are crucial in his creative process; as well as the music of Josquin Desprez, Orlando di Lasso and Claudio Monteverdi. Magrané sees the arts as a refuge, a humanistic counterbalance to the banality of everyday life.



Photo: Daniel Campbell

ANDREA MARCOLONGO (Italy, 1987) is a classicist and a writer. She studied at the University of Milan and Scuola Holden in Turin and she worked as a storytelling consultant for politicians and companies in Italy and abroad. She gained recognition for the essay *The Ingenious Language: Nine Epic Reasons to Love Greek* (2016), a passionate plea for the social value of a dead language in our modern times, which became an international best seller. In 2018 she published the novel *La Misura Eroica*, for which she was awarded the Lupica del Terriccio Prize. Marcolongo's work is widely translated, and she has written for prestigious newspapers including *La Stampa* and *La Repubblica*. She translates plays from the ancient Greek, including *Palamede* for Alessandro Baricco and Valeria Solarino. Andrea Marcolongo currently lives in Sarajevo and teaches Writing and Storytelling at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Universidad de Los Andes in Bogota and UNAM in Mexico City.



Photo: ROSSO35



CELESTE MARCUS (United States, 1995) is a student of intellectual history. She was born to a modern orthodox Jewish family in Philadelphia. Through high school her studies were divided evenly between traditional Jewish texts and rituals, and secular curricula. Upon graduating, she studied for a year in an orthodox Israeli seminary in Jerusalem before transitioning to secular college. At the University of Pennsylvania, Celeste majored in intellectual history with a focus on European enlightenment and modern thought; her teachers were the minds and spirits that pushed the West into the modern period. At Penn, constructing a personal relationship with religion was as much a part of her education as were *The Leviathan*, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, and *The Gay Science*. Living Jewishly, suddenly and radically, was a choice, and her senior thesis — *A Printed People: Journalism and Jewish Consciousness in Nineteen Century British Jewry* — was one of the fruits of that effort. Another was *Or* (Hebrew for ‘light’), the intercollegiate journal of ideas which she founded in 2015 and for which she served as editor and chief. Marcus is now assisting in a research project about abuse and corruption on Native American reservations in South Dakota.



SARI NUSSEIBEH (Syria, 1949) is a Palestinian political philosopher. He studied at Oxford and pursued his PhD in Islamic philosophy at Harvard. Nusseibeh is an influential voice in the effort to establish peace in the Middle East and in striving for an independent Palestinian State. Among other efforts, he was involved in the organisation Peace Now, together with the Israeli philosopher Avishai Margalit, whom he befriended at Oxford. Nusseibeh is Professor of Philosophy at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem and served as representative of the Palestinian Authority in this city until 2002. He received various awards, including the Four Freedoms Award for freedom of religion in 2004 and — with Amos Oz — the Siegfried Unseld Preis in 2010. His most recent publications are *What Is a Palestinian State Worth?* (2012) and *The Story of Reason in Islam* (2016).

PAMELA PAUL (United States, 1971) is the editor of *The New York Times Book Review* and oversees books coverage at *The New York Times*. She also hosts the weekly *Book Review* podcast. Paul is the author of five books: *The Starter Marriage and the Future of Matrimony* (2003) was named one of the best books of 2002 by *The Washington Post*; her second book, *Pornified* (2005), was named one of the best books of 2005 by *The San Francisco Chronicle*. She is also the author of *Parenting, Inc.* (2008), *By the Book: Writers on Literature and the Literary Life from The New York Times Book Review* (2014), and most recently, *My Life with Bob: Flawed Heroine Keeps Book of Books, Plot Ensues* (2017). Her sixth book, *How to Raise a Reader*, co-written with Maria Russo, will be out this fall. She is currently working on the book *100 Things We've Lost to the Internet*.



JESSE PARIS SMITH (United States, 1987) is a composer, writer, instrumentalist, producer, and co-founder of Pathway to Paris, a non-profit organization dedicated to combatting global climate change. Smith was born in a musical family and has been recording and performing since 2004, collaborating with artists around the globe. Recognizing the deeply transformative and healing power of music, she shifted her focus to incorporate this element more intentionally. Many of Jesse's projects focus on the topics of climate change and the Himalaya. She is on the Associate Board of Tibet House US, where she has co-curated and hosted events. In light of the Himalayan earthquake in April 2015 she founded Everest Awakening, an initiative raising awareness and funding, and organizing humanitarian and rebuilding projects in Nepal. Jesse launched Pathway to Paris in 2014, together with cellist Rebecca Foon. Over the last five years the organization has organized several major concert events and offered tangible solutions to climate change, including the 1000 Cities Initiative launched in 2017.





WOJTEK WIECZOREK (Poland, 1998) was born and raised in Warsaw. He studied to become a doctor for many years, until he finally relinquished this idea and decided to focus on literature. In 2018 he came to Amsterdam to study humanities at Amsterdam University College. He debuted in spoken-word poetry in 2017 during an event in Warsaw's Royal Baths Park organised by Polish poet Jarosław Mikołajewski. Wieczorek is currently preparing his first collection of poems which he hopes to publish this year. The working title is 'to nie czas na poezję' which translates as 'this is not the time for poetry'. Wieczorek finds his main literary inspiration in Polish literature: in it he finds a unique representation of universal ideas. Wieczorek is particularly interested in the representation of 20th-century reality through literature, ideas of a united Europe in literature, and literary correspondence. The future he envisages for himself oscillates between writing, teaching literature, engaging in local politics, and opening a café.



LEON WIESELTIER (United States, 1952) is one of America's leading public intellectuals, a distinguished critic and prolific writer. After his studies at Harvard and Oxford, he quickly became the principal literary editor for *The New Republic*. After more than thirty years at this influential journal, he left in 2014 in protest of managerial changes. Wieseltier, whose moving diary *Kaddish* (1998) phenomenally addresses the eternal themes of loss and faith, freedom and predestination and the significance of traditions, is a devoted Jew. Wieseltier regularly publishes articles on a wide variety of social issues, with a sharp eye for the central problems of our time, setting the standard for serious cultural discussion.

What's to Be Done?

Workshop moderated by
Rebecca Foon

We are often asked: how can we put all the ideas and idealism that inspire the participants and visitors of the Nexus Symposia and Conferences into practice? To find an answer, the Nexus Symposium 'The Magic Mountain Revisited' will end with a workshop moderated by Rebecca Foon.

Together with Jesse Paris Smith, Rebecca Foon founded Pathway to Paris: a non-profit organization which brings together musicians, artists, activists, academics, mayors and innovators to help raise consciousness regarding the urgency of climate action and offer solutions to implement the Paris Agreement. If you want to know how to bridge the gap between ideas and practice, Rebecca Foon is the person to ask. At the end of the Nexus Symposium, the young artists and activists from the second panel discussion — our 'new Hans Castorps' — and Foon will engage in a discussion with the audience to explore how ideals can be made a reality.

This workshop will be held in a closed-off part of the foyer of the Dutch National Opera & Ballet between 4.10 PM and 4.50 PM. To participate in this workshop, please register by sending an email to info@nexus-instituut.nl.

Please note that the maximum number of participants is set at 50, due to the interactive nature of this workshop. Nexus members have priority when registering.

A summary of the results of this workshop will be published on our website.

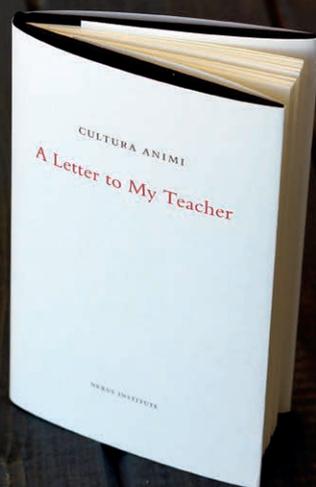
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Cultura Animi

The journal *Nexus*, the Institute's longest-running publication, is published in Dutch. To make the finest essays from *Nexus* available to our international readers, we have launched the new series *Cultura Animi*. With one volume published each year, this series will present the most compelling and captivating essays in an elegant hardbound volume.



Guardian Angels of the Nexus Institute — Our 100 finest —

The Nexus Institute's 25-year history has been a remarkable success story. It began in 1991 with the journal *Nexus*, which led to the founding of the Nexus Institute in 1994. The Institute soon gained international fame for its unique ability to keep the spirit of European humanism alive and for pursuing the ideal of *universitas*, which disappeared in the academic world a long time ago.

In the last 25 years, the Nexus Institute has addressed the most important questions and topics, and hundreds of acclaimed speakers from the worlds of the arts, culture, science and politics have already stepped onto the Nexus stage, including Amos Oz, Mario Vargas Llosa, Margaret Atwood, John Coetzee, Susan Sontag, Richard Rorty, Ágnes Heller, Jürgen Habermas, Patti Smith, Sonia Gandhi, Ai Weiwei, Simon Rattle, Wole Soyinka, Jeb Bush, Daniel Barenboim, George Steiner, Nuria Schoenberg Nono, Garry Kasparov, José Manuel Barroso, Azar Nafisi, Amartya Sen, Jacqueline de Romilly, Alain Finkielkraut, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Anne Applebaum, Simon Schama and many more...

In these times, when intellectual education is disregarded and extreme forms of politics are re-emerging, the existence of an independent institution which — inspired by the ideal of European humanism — nourishes intellectual culture to defend freedom and democracy is anything but self-evident. The Nexus Institute's 25-year existence is largely due to its loyal members, generous Friends and funding bodies, and to politicians in the Netherlands who recognized the Institute's importance and acted accordingly.

Unfortunately, this political support has become less and less self-evident as a result of pressure from extreme political forces. In order to make the Nexus Institute stronger in times when our work is needed more than ever and the demand for our activities is growing, we are looking for our 100 finest: a circle of Guardian Angels of the Nexus Institute. The Nexus Institute has been granted the 501(c)(3) status in the United States, allowing for donations to be tax deductible for US citizens.

Would you like to join this circle? Please contact Eveline Riemen - van der Ham, vice president of the Nexus Institute, by sending an email to ham@nexus-instituut.nl or call +31 (0)85-047 1229 for more information.

INVITATION

As a Guardian Angel you will receive, in addition to our English-language publications and VIP tickets for events, an invitation for yourself and an additional guest to the speakers' dinner after the Nexus Symposium 'The Magic Mountain Revisited' on Saturday 21 September in Amsterdam. In addition, if you wish, we will mention your name as a generous supporter in our brochures.

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