

Press release · October 2022

International star author receives the Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award



Photo credit: Sølve Sundsbø

On Sunday October 30th, Norwegian author Karl Ove Knausgård will receive the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award as the first Nordic recipient. Previous recipients include renowned international authors such as J.K. Rowling, Sir Salman Rushdie and Haruki Murakami. The award will be presented to the author during a ceremony at Odense City Hall, which the Mayor of

Odense, Peter Rahbæk Juel, will participate in.

In 2020, it was announced that Karl Ove Knausgård (b. 1968), the Norwegian author behind the autobiographical series of novels *My Struggle* (2009-11) would receive the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award. Due to COVID-19, the award committee postponed the actual ceremony until October 30th 2022, when the author will visit Odense to receive the award.

In addition to the honor, Karl Ove Knausgård will be presented with the bronze sculpture *The Ugly Duckling*, created by sculptor Stine Ring Hansen, as well as a money prize of 500,000 DKK and the diploma entitled *The Beauty of the Swan*.

This year's ceremony will send Knausgård through the magical city of Odense

When Karl Ove Knausgård is presented with the Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award, he will find himself in Odense's magical surroundings. The schedule of the day kicks off with a lecture by the author himself at the city library along with literature professors Jon Helt Haarder and Adam Poulsen. After this, Karl Ove Knausgård will continue to H.C. Andersen's House, where a special memorial plate will be revealed, and he will sign Hans Christian Andersen's guestbook.

Next stop is Odense City Hall, where a Hans Christian Andersen parade will be ready to receive Karl Ove Knausgård along with Mayor of Odense, Peter Rahbæk Juel. Then, Ellen Hillingsø will take over as the host of the official ceremony.

View the full schedule of the day below.

First Nordic recipient of the Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award

Knausgård will be the first Nordic recipient of the award. Previously, the prestigious award has been presented to renowned authors such as Paulo Coelho, J.K. Rowling, Isabel Allende, Sir Salman Rushdie, Haruki Murakami and, most recently, Dame A.S. Byatt.

Karl Ove Knausgård had his debut as an author of fiction in 1998 with the novel *Out of the World*, which secured him the Norwegian Critics Prize for Literature. This was the first time a debut novel had ever won the prize. In 2004, the follow-up *A Time for Everything* was published. This novel was also well-received, both at home and abroad. Both novels have been published in Danish in 2005 and 2007, respectively.

A strong ambassador of Nordic literature

His best-known work is the colossal *My Struggle*, which was published across six volumes between 2009 and 2011. The series has sold more than half a million

copies in his native Norway, and it has been published in the other Nordic countries, as well as throughout most of the Western world. This has made him a rockstar within the world of literature – not just in the Nordic countries, but also in both the US and the UK.

In *My Struggle*, he carefully and with a strong emotional intensity describes his upbringing and family life, which stirred up a significant international debate on the lines between fiction and reality. What is certain, however, is that *My Struggle* is a work of art that a large number of people have been able to see themselves in – men and women alike.

Since then, Knausgård has published several significant collections of essays, including a series on the seasons, which he wrote for his unborn daughter. 2019 saw the release of the novella entitled *The Birds Beneath the Sky*, which is a return to fiction with a tightly composed story. It is the basis of a theater production of Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, and the novella contains delicate references to Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard.

Read more about the award and previous recipients at www.andersen-award.com.

Best regards

Jens Olesen

Chairman of the Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award committee

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SCHEDULE OF THE DAY

10:00-11.00am: Lecture by Karl Ove Knausgård in front of 120 people, followed by a discussion with literature professors Jon Helt Haarder and Adam Poulsen at the city library.

11:55am: Karl Ove Knausgård arrives at H.C. Andersen's House, where he will be greeted by council member Søren Windell and museum director Henrik Harnow.

12:00-12:15pm: Reveal of memorial plate at H.C. Andersen's House.

12:15-12:20pm: Karl Ove Knausgård signs Hans Christian Andersen guestbook, accompanied by a photo session.

12:20-1:15pm: Tour of the museum

1:55pm: Karl Ove Knausgård arrives at Odense City Hall, where Mayor Peter Rahbæk Juel will greet him. A Hans Christian Andersen parade will take place in front of City Hall.

2:15-4:55pm: The Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award ceremony, which will be hosted by Ellen Hillingsø and opened by Mayor Peter Rahbæk Juel. Knausgård will do a reading, and the award will be presented to him. Along the way, there will be artistic performances by Odense Jazz Orchestra, Claus Hempler and DR Danish National Girls' Choir.