

by Sandra Gugi?
C.H.Beck
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Astronauts

Astronauten

review

Sandra Gugi´c's debut skilfully interweaves the stories of an intriguing group of characters during a summer in the city.

The novel's six characters are all grappling with problems of cultural identity, addiction, mental health and loneliness, as well as being misunderstood by and alienated from other generations of their families. The bookish Darko comes from an immigrant background and has been brought up by his grandparents. Darko's father is a taxi driver, unpublished writer and struggling alcoholic who has been an inadequate father to his son. Zeno shares Darko's immigrant background and is terrified of being sent back to his home country. Mara is Darko's girlfriend, a compulsive fantasist who is having an affair with his father. Alex is a young junkie from an affluent, middle-class family who is befriended by a policeman who suffers from anxiety attacks. Each character feels isolated from the rest of the world, and yet Gugi´c demonstrates how their predicaments are more closely connected than they at first appear.

Astronauts is a compelling investigation of these individuals' thoughts, memories and fantasies set against a minutely observed urban backdrop whose architecture, roads and surveillance cameras frame the characters' emotional development.

An English-language review of *Astronauts* from Literaturhaus Wien is available here:

http://www.literaturhaus.at/index.php?id=10852

press quotes

> *'An eclectic debut!'– STERN*

about the author

Sandra Gugi? was born in Austria in 1976 and divides her time between Berlin and Vienna. She studied creative writing at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and the German Institute for Literature in Leipzig. She received a fellowship from the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education in 2010/11; in 2012 she won an Open Mike Prize and the Prize of the Graz Academy, and in 2013 she was awarded a writing fellowship by the city of Vienna. She has previously published in magazines and anthologies.

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