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Interview with Versopolis poet Samantha Barendson

📅 15th June 2016 👤 Chloe Garner

Samantha Barendson from France is appearing in **Versopolis: A Celebration of Emerging European Poets** on Saturday 2 July. She will also give a 20 minute event on Sunday 3 July. Both events are free. The poets performing in the celebration are Andre Rudolph (Germany), Goran ?olakhodži? (Croatia), Monica Asaprong (Norway), Judith Nika Pfeifer (Austria) and the UK Versopolis poets Jonathan Edwards, Kim Moore, Daljit Nagra and Karen McCarthy Woolf.

If you could write poetry in another language, what would it be and why?

Tough question... I already write in French, Spanish, Italian and now some English... If I had to select a new language, it would be one with a different alphabet like Russian, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Armenian, Thai, Japanese, Chinese or any other non-Latin alphabet. There is a different graphic dimension in those alphabets which allows an alternative visual and perception of the poem.

If you could borrow one word from another language to use in your poetry what would it be?

In Spanish there is a word “desencuentro” for “failure to meet up”. There is no equivalent in English nor in French. I think “desencuentro” is a beautiful and melancholic word with thousands of unachieved possibilities behind it.

How does poetry allow you to be free?

Poetry allows me to be who really I am, without social barriers, without fear nor judgement. In my books and on stage, I can be who really I want to be: a tango singer or a punk. I can use the most violent words, I can give as much love as I want, I can put my heart, blood, guts, vagina and every part of me on it, there are no limits in poetry.

Do you think that poetry offers a medium to protest? (Poetry as Protest is a theme running through the Festival due to our partnership with English PEN)

Yes, poetry is a powerful medium to protest, to change and to modify. Poetry throws words and truth directly inside you, so you have no time for analysis nor pretents. Poetry is pure feeling, and sends us back to our animal state from which we know what is right and what is wrong.

What is the value of the Versopolis project for you?

It is very important and moving for me to be involved in the Versopolis project, essentially because it allows me to meet other poets from other countries, and other types of poetry, other rhythms and other contexts. My poetry is fed by encounters and curiosity. Versopolis is a unique chance to meet poets and poetry beyond our usual frontiers.

And thanks to projects like [Versopolis](#), it is just amazing to notice that poetry is now a real network.



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