

# CZECHIA 2024

## Petr Hruška

Foto: Pavel Kotrba



# I Caught Sight of My Face

(Translated by Joshua Mensch, Kulturalis, 2024)

FRIDAY, 18 OCTOBER FROM 14:00

Frankfurt Book Fair

Czech national stand, Hall: 4.1, Stand: D76

Reading with Petr Hruška

Moderation: Jan Zikmund, Joshua Mensch

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## I Caught Sight of My Face

In *I Caught Sight of My Face*, translated from the Czech by Joshua Mensch, Petr Hruška exchanges the lyricism of his previous collections for an epic voice that contemplates the contemporary world through the lens of the distant past. And not just any past: his poetic cycle draws on *The First Voyage around the World*, written five centuries ago by Antonio Pigafetta, one of the few to survive Ferdinand Magellan's voyage of discovery (1519–22). However, this is no glorious saga of heroic endeavour. Hruška adopts the perspective of the Venetian adventurer to show how little human behaviour has changed in half a millennium. Then as now, mankind is anxious, insecure, sometimes cowardly, xenophobic and violent. The poem's deceptively simple, accessible style conveys a profound and complex reflection on our capacity for evil.

## Petr Hruška

is a poet and literary historian living in Ostrava. He is widely considered one of the most important Czech poets writing today, renowned for his acute powers of observation. His poetry has won several state and international prizes, including the Czech State Award for Literature and the Magnesia Litera Award, the most prestigious annual literary award in the Czech Republic.

## Joshua Mensch

is a poet and literary translator based in the Czech Republic. He is a founding editor of the online literary journal *B O D Y* (bodyliterature.com) and the author of *Because: A Lyric Memoir* (W.W. Norton, 2018), which was shortlisted for the Canadian Governor General's Literary Award in poetry.

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