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## Writers galore

Acclaimed authors to attend international festival in Jerusalem



NICOLE KRAUSS (Yossi Zamir)



ETGAR KERET (Yehiel Yanai)

## Every day they write the book

A who's who of the literary scene in both Israel and abroad will gather at Mishkenot Sha'ananim in Jerusalem this week for The International Writer's Festival

• By NOA AMOUYAL

**I**'m very pessimistic about the future of reading," famed novelist Philip Roth confesses in *Philip Roth: Unmasked*, a documentary about his life. "I think serious novels will continue to be written by talented people, but the readers aren't there. They don't have the antenna to pick up what's in a serious novel. What happened? It shriveled up because of the screens."

It is interesting, then, that a discussion about this particular documentary will kick off this year's International Writer's festival. This weeklong annual event, which will take place at Mishkenot Sha'ananim in Jerusalem, will focus on the often challenging task of adapting novels to the screen.

Discussing Roth's illustrious career, what his films say about modern Jewish identity and his four books that went through the tumultuous book-to-screen process with varying degrees of success, is certain to make for interesting remarks from literary historian and Bar-Ilan professor Michael Kramer at the opening event on Monday.

The Roth documentary gives a rare glimpse into the life of one of the most influential voices of contemporary literature and features several other prominent writers who knew and admired him, including Nicole Krauss, who will also be participating in the festival.

Krauss's work includes a prolific collection of poems and novels such as *Man Walks Into a Room* and *The History of Love*. Her most recent novel, *Great House*, an intricate depiction of

the many different ways one acknowledges God and Judaism, became a finalist for the 2010 National Book Award and was translated into over 30 languages. At the festival, Krauss will participate in two writing panels – one with A.B. Yehoshua on Wednesday and one with David Grossman on Thursday.

Another notable name participating in next week's festival is Etgar Keret. Keret, whose surreal, almost Kafka-esque stories have made an indelible mark on the Israeli (and international) literary scene, will co-host a screening of his short film *Goldfish*. A showing of *Barney's Version*, a film adapted from Mordecai Richler's novel and starring Dustin Hoffman and Paul Giamatti (who won a Golden Globe for his performance), will follow afterwards.

Other sessions to catch include a discussion on literature, writing and maternity with Lihi Lapid and Ayelet Waldman. Lapid will no doubt discuss her latest novel *Women of Valor*, which explores the challenges and blessings of motherhood. Waldman's essays and novels, too, have focused on the difficulties inherent in maintaining a balance between a cultivating a career and being a mother.

Finally, no Israeli literary festival would be complete without paying tribute to one of Israeli literature's greatest pillars. As such, on Tuesday, the day's events will culminate in a celebration of Yehuda Amichai's poetry. His children David, Emanuella and Ron will be on hand to read selections of his work, while popular Israeli singers such as Assaf Amdursky, Israel Gurion, Maya Belsitzman and Ania Bukstein will be on hand to perform his work through song.