

Taobuk is back, among the winners the Nobel Annie Ernaux

📖 Entertainment | 🕒 February 10, 2023 | 💬 No Comments



“Freedom in the singular exists only in freedoms in the plural”, underlined Benedetto Croce, to indicate the multiplier effect of an ideal that gradually takes shape and evolves in symbiosis with social and customary changes. It is in this meaning that the concept of the XIII edition of Taobuk Festival – See Sicily will be articulated, the event conceived and directed by Antonella Ferrara, which this year presents itself with an articulated denomination: the original logo is in fact associated with that of the project of tourist promotion designed by the Sicilian Region “to renew the charm that the island has always exerted on travellers”. “This strengthens the collaboration between See Sicily and Taobuk for an international festival, created with the support of the Sicilian Region – Department of Tourism, Sport and Entertainment, and with the contribution of the Regional Department of Cultural Heritage and Sicilian Identity, Naxos Taormina Archaeological Park, Taormina Arte Sicilia Foundation, Municipality of Taormina, University of Messina, University of Catania”.

The kermesse will be dedicated precisely to the theme “Liberties”, those recognized and above all those denied, to individuals and to the community, in a space-time mapping whose coordinates will be traced by the most authoritative writers, intellectuals, philosophers and artists, coming from every part of the world. Prominent names who will converge in Taormina from 15 to 19 June, to explore the “meridians of freedom” from multiple points of view and disciplines, giving life to an observatory aimed at favoring the dynamics of the present and perspectives on the future. Once again an agora of thought will come alive, starting with the contribution of the recipients of the Taobuk Award, who will go for Literature to the French Annie Ernaux, Nobel Prize 2022, to the Iranian Azir Nafisi and to the American Joyce Carol Oates, while for Science will be awarded to the North American essayist and popularizer David Quammen.

Over one hundred events in five days to identify an itinerary among the infinite variations of what is an ancestral yearning of man, not only in the wake of literary and philosophical investigation, but also along the guidelines of geopolitics, science and bioethics, of spirituality and faith, exploring the challenges posed by innovation and new technologies.

A specific focus will be on the evolution of freedom

A specific focus will be on the historical and conceptual evolution of freedom. If, in fact, it is considered a natural right by the democratic Constitutions, among which that of the Italian Republic whose 75th anniversary stands out for its advanced breadth of content, in many other countries its recognition remains a privilege still reserved for groups and categories restricted.

«Without claiming to be exhaustive given the vastness of the theme, Taobuk will explore the immense and intoxicating creative power, the strength of aggregation, the dignity and the opportunities that freedom and freedoms confer on free man, in guaranteeing him the inviolability of his own body, of one’s home, of privacy, and in assuring him the autonomy to express himself and the independence of the people to which he belongs» declares Antonella Ferrara, president and artistic director of the festival, who last year was honored by the presence of the President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella. «Among the reasons that led to choosing the concept – continues Ferrara – there is precisely the urgency, dictated by the historical moment in which we live, to open a dialogue with many voices on the historical process of a fundamental conquest of civilization, i.e. the reversal of freedom from the prerogative of some classes to a status that is no longer privileged, but recognized to everyone from birth on the basis of equality and brotherhood of men. An unprecedented vision until the Enlightenment, from which it originated, and still in progress: the condition of free men is therefore far from obvious and of burning relevance. Minority is in fact the portion of humanity to which the enjoyment of fundamental rights is guaranteed. An aspiration that continues to be marked by heroic sacrifices to pursue it. It is not past, remote or near: it is today, as the tragic events of Iranian women demonstrate”.

The concept of freedom is so central in human history that it cannot find univocal readings: great literature has always had to deal with its ambivalence and problematic nature. And it is for their extraordinary contribution to the cultural debate that the Taobuk Award for Literary Excellence will be awarded to three female figures distant in human and artistic itinerary yet similar. In fact, each one has drawn inspiration from the autobiographical experience to transfer it to the story of the social and collective bonds that condition existence. And each one, in different ways, has actively worked for the full emancipation of women. Annie Ernaux – who has signed masterpieces such as *The Years*, *The Event*, *The Boy* and already won multiple prizes before the Nobel Prize – continues to be at the

forefront of many battles for gender equality, which she strenuously advocated during the 1968 protest.

For the author of *Il posto*, whose peculiarity consists in merging literature and sociology, writing even represents a “political act” to induce the reader to become aware of what the privilege of birth or belonging to a gender can represent in the patriarchal society. Azar Nafisi – his bestsellers *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, *The things I didn't say*, *The Republic of the Imagination* – chose exile in the United States to escape persecution by the ayatollah regime due to his proud denunciation of all forms of literary censorship: she is a witness of the times who remains inflexible in her position for the liberation of the women of her country, victims of constant abuses. Joyce Carol Oates – prolific pen, multiple Pulitzer Prize finalist and winner of the Jerusalem Prize in 2019, awarded to writers whose work is connected with the themes of human freedom and society – has explored in novels, short stories, poems, theatrical dramas, essays, including *Stray children*, *Beasts*, *The female of the species*, *Blonde*, uncomfortable issues such as the oppression and commodification of women in a society driven by power and money, but also the daily horror and violence more frightening, the one that is enclosed within the home. A new book, *Babysitter*, will be released in June by Ship of Theseus.

That of freedoms is an aspect that touches all branches of knowledge: the Taobuk Award for Science is assigned, for 2023, to David Quammen, whose vast dissemination work has taken on planetary resonance following the spread of the zoonotic pandemic, from he expected in *Spillover* already in 2012. The Taobuk Award 2023 will be conferred on Saturday 17 June during the now traditional gala evening that the festival organizes at the Ancient Theater of Taormina and which will be broadcast by Rai Uno. Every year very high profile personalities from the literary, artistic and civil world are awarded. Ernaux, Nafisi, Oates and Quammen will enrich the Roll of Honor of the 48 winners of past editions, including Nobel Prize winners Svetlana Aleksievič, Mario Vargas Llosa, Orhan Pamuk, Olga Tokarczuk, Giorgio Parisi, and other protagonists such as Paul Auster, Michel Houellebecq, Emmanuel Carrère, David Grossman, Amos Oz, Abraham Yehoshua.

As anticipated, the festival adopts the new title Taobuk Festival – See Sicily, accompanying a calendar of initiatives for the tourist-cultural promotion of the area and in homage to the international and cosmopolitan vocation of Taormina, in a mix of history, culture and Belle Lettere . «Taobuk has become a global cultural event – says the president of the Sicilian Region, Renato Schifani – and the regional government supports it with conviction. The event is increasingly an example of how our island manages to be a protagonist on an international level thanks to the intellectual and organizational skills it expresses and the beauties of its monumental and landscape heritage, in this case embodied by Taormina. This year's theme, “Liberties”, is extremely topical and reminds us how important the values enshrined in the Italian Constitution are. Principles which, between rights and duties, are the basis of our culture and also inspire the action of the regional administration”.

In this vision, the choice was made to strengthen the collaboration between Taobuk 2023 and See Sicily, the project of the Sicilian Region which gives away one night every three to those who stay on the island and provides vouchers for excursions and discounts on transport. «Culture, major events and tourism are three keywords at the heart of the promotion strategy of the Sicily brand that the regional government carries out incessantly on various fronts – highlights the councilor for tourism, sport and entertainment, Elvira Amata – It is no coincidence that this too he year the See Sicily project of the Sicilian Region is at the side of Taobuk, even more than in the past. We are convinced that

appointments like this must be accompanied in their growth and planning as they increase the attractiveness of our island, attract qualified tourist flows, allow for an important return of image and generate economy in the area”. «This festival – adds the Councilor for Cultural Heritage and Sicilian Identity, Francesco Paolo Scarpinato – is a moment of in-depth reflection on the themes of our age. The protagonist will be one of the most prestigious places of culture on our island. For the regional government it is a priority to preserve and enhance the assets of the Sicilian architectural, monumental and archaeological heritage since they are evidence of our identity. And still today they continue to convey ideas, thoughts and messages of freedom and pluralism, capable of opening up our island to the world, reworking those different and overlapping cultures that have made its history”. Taobuk Festival – See Sicily is therefore deeply linked to the spirit of the genius loci. “The festival thus continues to combine the Fine Letters with the other arts such as economic, political and scientific analysis, in a global approach to knowledge and knowledge” comments Antonella Ferrara. «The literary act in itself is an act of freedom, which is expressed in the choice between a range of infinite creative possibilities in affirming oneself, one’s values and codes: and this remains even when the censorship of the expression intervenes and the author announcement. Ultimately, that of literature is a story of non-aligned and counter-current freedoms».