Although not very many murders are committed in Sweden, the Swedish crime novel has become a specialty with a worldwide reputation in just a short space of time. From Gotland in the east to Fjällbacka in the west, from Ystad in the south to Kiruna in the north, the country can be discovered from a different perspective: via fictional murder investigations where the focus is not only on the crime but also on the Swedish welfare model and human psychology.

The Swedish crime novel phenomenon has a long lineage, but today’s stories have largely fallen out of the shabby overcoat of Inspector Martin Beck, the protagonist in The Story of a Crime, the legendary ten-book series by Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö. Their first book, Roseanna (1965), marked the arrival of the modern Swedish crime novel, rich in social criticism and portraying ordinary police characters trying to deal with a crumbling society.

Their work was continued by Henning Mankell, whose character Kurt Wallander, a divorced police inspector operating in the province of Skåne in the south of Sweden, raised the literary quality of the genre and already in 1991 began to wonder where the Swedish society was heading. Kerstin Ekman, former member of the Swedish Academy and one of Sweden’s most important fictional authors, has also written a number of crime novels, where Blackwater (1993) holds a special position.
The texts in the exhibition are written in cooperation with Lotta Olsson, crime fiction critic at the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter.

Titles in quotation marks are not yet published in English.
Stationed in Brussels, Ingrid Hedström worked for years as Europe correspondent for Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter. The experiences laid the foundation for her first crime series, six books that take place in the fictional Belgian city of Villette, describing both European history and the complex Belgian legal system, shown through lawyer Martine Poirot (!). Ingrid Hedström, avid reader of crime novels herself, has since continued with three books about a Swedish diplomat, Astrid Sammils, with a family farm in idyllic Dalarna. The most recent book, ‘Firebreak’ (2018), came eerily close to real life during the Swedish forest fires in the summer of 2018.

KRISTINA APPELQVIST (b. 1968)
The university setting takes up a lot of space in Kristina Appelqvist’s classical whodunit novels, which take place at the University of Skövde in Västergötland province. Among the knowledgeable academics there is also a plethora of intrigues, and Kristina Appelqvist uses the whole scale from petty rivalry to magnificent research projects and literary riddles. She is clearly influenced by Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers as well as by Swedish 1950s author Maria Lang, and uses two female protagonists, researcher Helena Waller and University President Emma Lundgren. Appelqvist’s latest book, ‘The Fourth Pact’ (2018), deals with University of Skövde’s opportunities within international archaeology research.

INGRID HEDSTRÖM (b. 1949)
Stationed in Brussels, Ingrid Hedström worked for years as Europe correspondent for Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter. The experiences laid the foundation for her first crime series, six books that take place in the fictional Belgian city of Villette, describing both European history and the complex Belgian legal system, shown through lawyer Martine Poirot (!). Ingrid Hedström, avid reader of crime novels herself, has since continued with three books about a Swedish diplomat, Astrid Sammils, with a family farm in idyllic Dalarna. The most recent book, ‘Firebreak’ (2018), came eerily close to real life during the Swedish forest fires in the summer of 2018.
Somewhere between Kerstin Ekman, Camilla Läckberg and Liza Marklund we find Ninni Schulman, who has written five books in her series taking place in the Värmland province. The series started with ‘The Girl with Snow in Her Hair’ (2010) and centres on journalist Magdalena Hansson, a new single mother who returns to the small town of Hagfors for a job as an editor. The novels are about today’s rural problems, but Ninni Schulman also suggestively describes the extensive local forests where houses are few and far between.

NINNI SCHULMAN (b. 1972)

Approximately 87 per cent of the province of Värmland is covered by vast forests.
After resigning as a detective, Håkan Nesser’s main protagonist Van Veeteren becomes the owner of an antique books shop.

HÅKAN NESSER (b. 1950)

Van Veeteren, the police inspector at the centre of ten Nesser books, is by no means Swedish, operating instead in a vaguely Dutch setting. But Håkan Nesser has also written four crime novels about Gunnar Barbarotti, who, despite his Italian-sounding name is Swedish and works in the small town of Kymlinge in western Sweden. In addition, Nesser has written a number of freestanding crime novels that tend to place more emphasis on characterisation, settings and atmosphere than on traditional crime-solving. Nesser flits between the detective story and the ordinary novel, between Sweden and the outside world, and between the present and the past. His latest crime novel to date is Through the Eyes of Eugene Kallmann (2016).
CHRISTOFFER CARLSSON (b. 1986)

This crime writing prodigy earned his PhD in criminology at age twenty-seven. That same year, 2013, his third crime novel, The Invisible Man from Salem, was awarded Best Swedish Crime Novel. So far, he has written six books with an unusual stylistic strength considering the genre, where the references hail to the classical role models as with the book Master, Liar, Traitor, Friend (2015), a spy story with numerous references to Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy by John Le Carré.

LARS KEPLER

The established literary couple behind this pseudonym, Alexander Ahndoril (b. 1967) and Alexandra Ahndoril (b. 1966), made a dramatic breakthrough in 2009. So far, they have written five novels about the Finno-Swedish police inspector Joona Linna, a calm figure at the centre of the storm, and his young colleague, Saga Bauer, a slip of a girl who possesses almost supernatural powers. The pair is based in Stockholm and the first murders occur in the suburb of Tumba, but their work takes them both into the Stockholm archipelago as well as to northern Sweden. In Playground (2015), they have left Joona Linna and the traditional detective format and instead write a novel with an obvious supernatural theme, where a dangerous realm lurks on the other side of death. However, in Lazarus (2018), inspector Joona Linna reappears as he is drawn in to a series of uncanny murders in both Norway and Germany.
Mari Jungstedt has produced fourteen books about Inspector Knutas and his colleagues in the Visby police force in Gotland, Sweden’s foremost holiday island. Tourists enjoy the sandy beaches and ancient town walls, handicrafts and local delicacies during summer. Jungstedt often makes reference to its history, its adjoining island Fårö, where Ingmar Bergman lived, and the political focal point of the Swedish summer, Almedalen Week. She contrasts the teeming life of summer with the empty, abandoned island environment of autumn and winter. Besides police inspectors Anders Knutas and Karin Jacobson, a young couple also play important roles, the photographer Johan Berg and teacher Emma Winarve. In 2015 Mari Jungstedt together with Ruben Eliassen introduced a new crime series, which takes place on the island of Gran Canaria in the Spanish archipelago.

MARI JUNGSTEDT (b. 1962)

Former nurse Anna Jansson made her literary debut in 2000 with ‘The Speechless God’, the first book about inspector Maria Wern, who eventually moves to Gotland. There are now nineteen books in the series, where police investigations provide Anna Jansson with plenty of opportunities to describe both every-day situations and the local environment. She writes with drastic humour that is unusual for the genre, and often uses her medical skills in her writing. She has also written a series of children’s detective books about Maria Wern’s son, Emil, as well as several feel-good novels.

ANNA JANSSON (b. 1958)
The narrow limestone island of Öland has evolved similarly to Gotland, and both the rugged old fishing communities and today’s well-to-do tourist spots appear in Johan Theorin’s novels. The books centre on former sea captain Gerlof Davidsson, who lives in an old-age home and has all the time in the world to reflect on children who disappear, terrible accidents and all the inexplicable things that happen, possibly rooted in Öland’s supernatural past. Johan Theorin has written four suggestive crime novels featuring the island’s varying seasons, and one about a fictitious mental hospital on Sweden’s west coast, *The Asylum* (2011).

**HÅKAN ÖSTLUNDH** (b. 1962)

Another author to have chosen Gotland for a setting is Håkan Östlundh, who has written eight books about Visby police detective Fredrik Broman. They feature classic, unsentimental investigations of credible murders, where a car roof box smells as vile as rotten seaweed, or where a young woman ponders whether to report her father for murder, or where two petty thieves suddenly find themselves in the clutches of hardened criminals. Gotland is both a cheerless winter wilderness and a sun-drenched summer paradise. His latest book to date is ‘Winter of the Prophet’ (2018).

**JOHAN THEORIN** (b. 1963)

The narrow limestone island of Öland has evolved similarly to Gotland, and both the rugged old fishing communities and today’s well-to-do tourist spots appear in Johan Theorin’s novels. The books centre on former sea captain Gerlof Davidsson, who lives in an old-age home and has all the time in the world to reflect on children who disappear, terrible accidents and all the inexplicable things that happen, possibly rooted in Öland’s supernatural past. Johan Theorin has written four suggestive crime novels featuring the island’s varying seasons, and one about a fictitious mental hospital on Sweden’s west coast, *The Asylum* (2011).
The 2006 publication of Easy Money by criminal lawyer Jens Lapidus marked a new direction for Swedish crime fiction. While James Ellroy and Dennis Lehane write in a similar vein, Lapidus is something new. The language is clipped, hip hop-influenced and full of slang expressions and mannerisms. The settings are the flashy nightclubs around central Stockholm, but also drug-running locations around Stockholm with poor suburban youth as foot soldiers. Lapidus calls his first trilogy Stockholm Noir. His latest novel to date, Top Dog (2017), concludes another trilogy including the critically acclaimed prequels The VIP Room (2014) and Stockholm Delete (2015).
The summer of 2016 saw the arrival of the twelfth police novel from Sweden’s best-known criminologist, Leif G W Persson, who mixes a close familiarity with his subject with ironically humorous observation. His cast of police characters ranges from the masterly Inspector Lars Martin Johansson, a northerner who ‘can see round corners’, according to his admirers, to the corrupt and prejudiced Evert Bäckström. They usually operate from Stockholm’s police station in Kungsholmen, but Inspector Johansson’s favourite haunts are an Italian bar and a hot-dog stand elsewhere in the city. The protagonists seldom leave Stockholm, but in *Linda – As in the Linda Murder*, Evert Bäckström makes life difficult for people in the southern town of Växjö.

**LEIF G.W. PERSSON** (b. 1945)

Arne Dahl is the pseudonym of author Jan Arnald (b. 1963), who has written eleven books about the ‘A Group’, a talented group of unusual police investigators in Stockholm operating in traditional Stockholm environments: the old industrial zone at Sickla (now gone), the increasingly trendy streets of the Södermalm district, and luxury villas in wealthy suburbs such as Danderyd. But crime no longer recognises frontiers, and consequently Arne Dahl’s series Opcop (2011) follows up by featuring a group of Europol officers in The Hague in Holland, who work across borders. The subsequent novels *Watching You* (2017) and *Hunted* (2018), introducing detectives Sam Berger and Molly Blom, has since been appreciated by critics for bringing to life yet another side of Arne Dahl’s skills as a crime fiction writer.

**ARNE DAHL**
STIEG LARSSON (1954–2004)

The Millennium Trilogy scarcely needs any introduction: journalist Mikael Blomkvist and the tough, asocial computer hacker Lisbeth Salander are world famous. Their creator, Stieg Larsson, died before the series was published and the trilogy achieved worldwide fame. It is an affectionate pastiche on the Swedish crime writing genre, represented by the whodunit, The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, the police novel, The Girl Who Played with Fire, and the spy thriller, The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet’s Nest. Stieg Larsson caringly describes Södermalm in Stockholm, where both Lisbeth and Mikael lives, but also the Stockholm archipelago and sparsely populated areas in northern Sweden. In 2015 an original sequel, The Girl in the Spider’s Web, written by David Lagercrantz (b. 1962), followed the original trilogy, which was in turn followed by The Girl Who Takes an Eye for an Eye (2017).
Stockholm is a city of water and light built on islands connected by bridges.

For a crime writer, it is extremely useful to have worked both in the Swedish security service and as a counter-terrorism officer in the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe). Kristina Ohlsson made her debut with Unwanted (2009), a traditional police thriller and the first in a series of six about police inspector Alex Recht and investigative analyst Fredrika Bergman, whose investigations become increasingly international in character. Especially in Hostage (2012) Kristina Ohlsson incorporates her knowledge about terrorism and security policing. Kristina Ohlsson has since written two hard-boiled thrillers about lawyer Martin Benner, Lotus' Blues (2014) and Mio's Blues (2015).

KRISTINA OHLSSON (b. 1979)

It began with a much-publicised non-fiction book about rape, in which the then criminal reporter Katarina Wennstam revealed that rape most often takes place in the home. She wrote another booklet on the subject but changed tracks in 2007 and started writing crime novels that became extremely popular. In her eight crime novels (and two for teenagers) written to date, she relies on her knowledge of the subject, and often uses real-life cases as a basis. The books are not just about violence against women; Wennstam has also portrayed the violent culture among extreme football fans in the crime novel 'The Traitor' (2012).
This crime writing duo first appeared in 2004 with *The Beast*, which dealt with paedophilia but also asked questions about the impact of individual acts on the community at large. In their six books, Roslund and Hellström scrutinise Sweden’s and especially Stockholm’s underworld, sometimes literally, as in *The Girl Below the Street* (2007), in which homeless people live in city tunnels. *Two Soldiers* (2012) describes a fictitious Stockholm suburb which has turned into a ghetto. Their last title together was *Three Minutes* (2016). Since 2014, Anders Roslund has published two acclaimed thrillers, *Made in Sweden I & II*, together with co-writer Stefan Thunberg (b. 1968).
LIZA MARKLUND (b. 1962)

With her debut novel, *The Bomber*, in 1998, Liza Marklund changed the Swedish crime writing map. The book was a major success. Marklund was awarded both the Swedish Crime Writer Academy’s prize for a first book and the new Poloni Prize designed to encourage women writers of crime fiction. Since then, restless tabloid reporter Annika Bengtzon has starred in a total of eleven books (the concluding book, *The Final Word*, appeared in 2015) – and she is an unusual protagonist. She leads an everyday brand of city life in her Stockholm flat, forever puzzling together bus times, press deadlines and parental obligations. The first books of the series in particular are set on the streets of the capital, where murder victims are discovered in a Jewish cemetery in the inner city, a woman is murdered in the central square, Sergels Torg, and Bengtzon meets a bomber at a fictitious Olympic stadium in southern Stockholm. In later books Annika Bengtzon has been to the north, in Luleå, but also crossed the country’s borders, including to Spain’s Costa del Sol.

SOFIE SARENBRANT (b. 1978)

One of the most popular narrators of Stockholm today is Sofie Sarenbrant, whose book series about police detective Emma Sköld has become popular among readers. Sofie Sarenbrant is strongly rooted in contemporary events, writing about the Stockholm Marathon in *Second Wind* (2013), about Stockholm’s soaring housing prices in *Killer Deal* (2015), and about the increasing gulf between classes in *Scapegoat* (2018), where well-to-do homeowners use illegal immigrants to perform underpaid renovations and cleaning jobs.

At the opening of Sofi Sarenbrant’s novel *Second Wind* (2013), the annual Stockholm Marathon is struck by a series of mysterious deaths.
The far north of Sweden, around Kiruna in northern Lapland, is the setting for Åsa Larsson’s five detective novels about the nervy lawyer Rebecka Martinsson who leaves Stockholm for the small village Kurravaara. Together with the calm and self-possessed local police officer Anna-Maria Mellan, she investigates cases where priests are murdered, sects are exposed, murder victims are found both on and under the ice, and in a small dog kennel a boy who can no longer speak is hiding. The landscape is mortally cold and people live far apart, but it is strangely warm and secure in the kitchens where the dogs sleep in the heat from the stove. In recent years, Åsa Larsson has started to write children’s books that have become very popular.

ÅSA LARSSON (b. 1966)

Northern Sweden, as described by Åsa Larsson, is a mixture of pervasive nature and indispensable technology.

Kiruna, the northernmost city in Sweden, experiences polar nights for a few weeks in winter and midnight sun in summe.
One of Sweden’s bestselling crime writers is Camilla Läckberg, who moved the Swedish detective story closer to the chick lit genre in her ten novels. She writes both about Inspector Patrik Hedström, who pursues traditional police investigations, and about the woman he lives with, Erika Falck, who always gets involved but can do things that police are not allowed to. Their life together is given considerable attention in the books, not least all the problems faced by families with young children. They live in the idyllic seaside town of Fjällbacka, a fishing port on the west coast, where Läckberg often bases her murder stories on historical events.

**CAMILLA LÄCKBERG** (b. 1974)

Lawyer Viveca Sten writes about Sandhamn, a favourite island among sailors in the Stockholm archipelago and an appreciated excursion destination for tourists. But Viveca Sten’s description of Sandhamn starts out in a different era, beginning with the hard life of archipelago farmers and fishermen of old. Even her descriptions of contemporary life are broader than what the tourists see: there is a daily life-cycle all year round where nature plays a major role. Since the debut in 2008, she has written ten crime novels about police Thomas Andreasson and lawyer Nora Linde, most recently ‘In the wrong company’ (2018).

**VIVECA STEN** (b. 1959)

The granite archipelago of Bohuslän near Camilla Läckberg’s Fjällbacka.

Photo: Henrik Trygg