



BACTRIA
Cultural Centre

window
Bactria Newsletter

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Semaine de la
Francophonie

2010

Editorial (from Antoine Buisson)

L'entrée dans le mois de mars signifie l'approche de Navrouz et des beaux jours printaniers, mais aussi de la Semaine de la francophonie qui sera célébrée cette année, à Douchanbe, du mardi 9 au jeudi 17 mars.

D'aucuns pourraient se demander : pourquoi célébrer la « francophonie » au Tadjikistan, alors que ce pays n'est ni membre ni observateur de l'Organisation internationale de la francophonie, et n'a pas de relations historiques spécifiques avec la France ? C'est ignorer ou négliger l'attrait et le prestige dont la langue et la culture françaises jouissent dans la société tadjikistanaise depuis l'époque soviétique ; c'est aussi ignorer l'existence d'une communauté francophone substantielle au Tadjikistan et négliger les efforts qu'elle fournit pour continuer à faire vivre et prospérer cet héritage depuis 1991. C'est une tâche difficile, mais loin d'être impossible ! La célébration de la francophonie au Tadjikistan est donc à la fois un signe de reconnaissance et d'encouragement, ainsi que le moyen de renforcer les liens et les échanges entre le Tadjikistan et la communauté des pays francophones.

Pour cette édition 2010, le Centre Culturel Bactriane est heureux de vous présenter, avec le soutien précieux de l'Ambassade de France et du Bureau de Coopération Suisse au Tadjikistan, un programme riche et varié : les événements et activités proposés abordent divers thèmes (environnement, questions sociales et économiques, créativité artistique), et mobilisent différentes formes d'art – théâtre, cinéma, photographie, art vidéo, musique,

littérature et poésie. Cinq invités francophones de marque se produiront pendant cette semaine : les actrices Diane Müller et Athenas Poullos (Suisse), la poétesse Marie Huot et le typographe-imprimeur Jean-Claude Bernard (France) et l'artiste graphique et poétesse Roshanak Ostad (Iran)... sans oublier le chef d'orchestre Gerardo Colella (Italie) et les professeurs et étudiants de français du Centre Culturel Bactriane !

L'environnement est le thème choisi pour la « Journée internationale de la francophonie » 2010. Notre programme traitera cette question d'actualité à travers deux longs métrages et cinq courts métrages d'art vidéo, mais sans toutefois s'y limiter pour le reste des événements.

En plus du 7^e art et de l'art vidéo, « Bactriane » a

souhaité que trois autres arts soient à l'honneur pour cette édition 2010 : le théâtre, la musique et enfin la littérature et la poésie.

Notre Semaine de la francophonie s'ouvrira ainsi le 9 mars, au théâtre Maïakovski, avec la performance théâtrale de Diane Müller et Athenas Poullos. Les deux actrices nous proposeront une lecture vivante d'extraits de *Les enveloppes bleues*, un recueil de correspondance entre deux écrivains suisses, Alice Rivaz et Pierre Girard. La Semaine sera également clôturée par une performance théâtrale, celle des étudiants et professeurs de notre centre, qui se produiront dans deux mises en scène et une chorale.

Deux événements musicaux ponctueront les festivités : l'opéra *Carmen* (Opéra-Ballet S. Aïni) et un concert de musique classique rendant hommage aux grands compositeurs français (Conservatoire National S. Sattorov), tous deux sous la direction de Gerardo Colella.

Enfin, la littérature et la poésie tiendront une place de choix pour faire écho à l'importance et l'attrait dont elles jouissent dans la culture tadjike : Madame

Tsyganova donnera une conférence sur « La prose de Françoise Sagan », tandis que Marie Huot et Jean-Claude Bernard présenteront les œuvres d'écrivains et poètes francophones majeurs de notre temps.

Nos deux compatriotes animeront également, du 9 au 12 mars, des ateliers d'écriture, lecture et récitation de poésies ; ils sont programmés

spécifiquement pour aider les participants du concours de poésie (qui se tiendra le 15 mars) à s'y préparer. Venez nombreux !

Le champ de la créativité artistique englobera également deux ateliers spécifiques : l'un sur la profession de typographe imprimeur, l'autre sur la typoésie, avatar moderne du calligramme et genre poétique à part entière.

L'ensemble de l'équipe du Centre Culturel Bactriane est impatiente de vous accueillir pour ces festivités, et vous souhaite une excellente fête de la francophonie !

Antoine Buisson
Directeur Pédagogique



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The books of famous modern French writers to be presented at the Week of Francophone by a French poetess Marie Huot

Tonino Benacquista – “Comedy of Losers”



Tonino Benacquista with skills of a great artist, impartial and insightful could depict in his works the unfair reality of the present world exposing truthful and veiled background life of different social classes, whom he ironically describes for their flaws, fancy nature and unexpected turn of mysterious adventures that his heroes were drawn into. The adventures his characters had to live through needed resolutions. But every resolution was shrouded in secrecy and intertwined with logical puzzles. And no one other but the hero of his most famous creation – “Comedy of losers” – the novel that vividly portrays the life of two Italian emigrants in their native town Vitria, makes every effort to find solutions to those puzzles. The “Comedy of losers”, that got several literary awards, is both

entertaining and full of humor, irony, paradoxes and mockery of hackneyed stereotypes artfully expressed in a sophisticated storyline and its vivid characters – belongs to the best paradoxical detectives. This is a young Italian living in Paris, with his friend later killed under mysterious circumstances; unexpected inheritance; American gangsters; clandestine catholic miracles of Vatican with its insane pilgrims; a couple of gun shots made by a murderer; jealous husband and unfaithful wife; reminisces of the past war and a ceaseless fight for inalienable rights in a strange land.

Pascal Quignard - “Wandering shadows”

The creative work of Pascal Quignard is beyond any ordinary description. For his characters, wandering in a magic triangle between philosophical essays, novels and higher poetry without any ready words for self-expression that can be found in an ordinary dictionary. He is the author of 25 books and the Goncourt Prize breaking with all traditions was given to him for his ambitious literature works, great ideas and versatility. As for his three-volume book with a red ribbon of a “Goncourt Prize” shown off on its cover – “Wandering shadows” it depicts the relations of completely opposite personalities whose fates are intertwined, unpredictable and inevitable. His



heroes are a teenage girl, wise beyond her years, who writes letters to God with her finger in the air, likes dolls and does not know what her fate has in store for her – inevitable disappointment; an elderly concierge studying philosophy and listening to Mozart, who expects the Third World War and is afraid for animals; a rich Japanese-gay, imaging himself a plant, who at the decline of his years settled in a luxurious Paris apartment; a seller and a devoted collector of antique toys, loving flowers and strong Belgian beer, likes sunsets and fleece-made sweaters but hates music, noise and women-made home cooking. All his heroes are inhabitants of quite different worlds meeting each other by accident. However it is unimportant where they all come from. All that matters in the story is the way the characters express their intimate feelings and contact the objects, be it a warm plaid, dewy grass or child's hair or whatever – all can equally provoke sadness, sentimental reminisces or slightest melancholy. It is not their actions that define the plot of the book, but the recollections of associations, déjà vu and flashbacks about their failed meetings, plane flights, touches, rains, sunsets, insomnia, deserted beeches, hot chestnuts, hermit's life in Paris – and every fate is different and wanders in the darkness.

Muriel Barbery - “The Elegancy of Hedgehog”

The novel of a modern and popular French writer, Muriel Barbery, “The elegance of Hedgehog” (2001), is acknowledged to be an absolute bestseller among the readers in France was translated into 31 languages, and got a number of literary awards. This novel immediately won public attention and was spread all over the world. It is an artful creation and every letter is endowed with life and breathe of the writer and heroes whose understanding and inner world are utterly different. The world in which everyone lives on one's own rules is lonely and sad, the world expressed in letters on paper – a paper world. It is the life of different destinies with opposite social backgrounds, but aspiring for the same thing – to be understood. But they failed to open up, because their imagined world turned to be perverted and without any honest person to whom they could trust and reveal their soul. The book tells of a very unusual friendship – the friendship between an elderly concierges and a teenage girl from a decent family. Both of them represent different worlds and, at the same time, have a lot in common. They are extraordinary smart, but prefer to conceal



their intellect from others. René is fifty two years old. At her leisure time she enjoys the masterpieces of the world's cinematography, listens to the symphonies by Gustav Mahler and studies, though with difficulties, the phenomenology of Husserl. But to conform her current position she keeps her occupation in secrecy. Palloma is twelve years old. She is clever beyond her years, even cleverer than many adults. The girl is a bit hostile towards adults and that is the reason why she gives preference to share her deep thoughts only with her diary, but not with people around her. She has no idea of how beautiful the world is.

Amin Maalouf - "The Rock of Tanios"

A French-Lebanese writer, Amin Maalouf – is a modern poet, whose works were translated into 27 languages. He is the winner of the Goncourt Prize for his novel "The Rock of Tanios". It is his most famous book, which fully expressed his feeling of nostalgia for his hometown. The hometown he was deprived of, the way a child is separated from its mother. The hero of the story, Tanios, once climbed up the rock and disappeared forever. Nobody heard or saw him ever after in his hamlet since that time. The boy who did not return home from that rock was an adopted son of sheik Francis, the governor of Lamia and his beautiful wife. Why did not he come back home? And that is where the real story begins – a story of a fine and captivating "literary legend" which is worth believing. Tanios is a tragic hero that embodies the main idea of the book: rejection of violence, riot against the imposed destiny; sheik



– wealth and trickery; Lamia – beauty; the herder of mules – love for books. But the main symbol is the rock – Lebanon from which nobody comes back as never returned Amin Maalouf to his Levant. The night dreams about his left hometown were converted into books about "The Rock of Tanios" – the rock from which nobody ever comes back, the novel about a native place, torn off destiny, thoughts about motherland, when you are far away and homesick.

Gilbert Sinoué - "Sapphire Tablets"

Gilbert Sinoué –is a well-known musician, guitarist and a screenwriter and, first of all, the author of historical novels written with knowledge of the past – trilling, captivating and often with detective-like. He gained a worldwide fame. His novels were honored with prestigious literary awards of France among which the "Sapphire Tables" was widely and indisputably recognized as the best one – the thriller that gradually transfers the reader, as if in a time machine, to the epoch of Renaissance and

flourishing age of humanistic philosophy, to the golden age of painting and literature. It is the time when a wave of brutal violence and crimes engulfs Europe ruthlessly depriving its painters and sculptors of their lives. Nobody knows anything about mysterious and threatening letters sent to their victims. Nobody has enough courage to track down the murderer and stop him once and for all. And Gilbert Sinoué puts the burden of a justice-seeker on the shoulders of a boy who risked taking the destinies of the heroes into his hands. The boy – the foster son of a painter from Bruges, Van Eyck undertakes investigation himself. The "Sapphire Tablets" –a mystery of holly inscriptions which if unveiled endows with immortality and everlasting glory is what the boy should find and save from evil intentions. The author invests him with the power of Prometheus – a great responsibility for such a young boy, severe life trials that must undergo and prevent that powerful holly mystery –"Sapphire tablets" from falling into the hands of selfish people who intend to use its magic for evil purposes.



The subject that all these French writers try to express in their books is a struggle of completely different fates against the nature, pervertedness and injustice of the world. All the fates of the heroes against their will, unexpectedly and quite accidentally got involved into the games of ruthless destiny. They are the prisoners of contradicting circumstances who try with all their spiritual and physical being to withstand the reality that is boring and hackneyed, and escape from the captivity of destiny and desires, fly up into the sky and widely spreading both wings to breathe in deeply and feel free.

The books listed above will be presented by a French poetess Marie Huot on the 14th of March at the Exhibition hall of Bactria Cultural Centre.

Writers' bios and their participation in Francophone Week

Marie Huot is a French poet born in 1965. She lives in Arles, south of France, where she works as a library manager. She has founded and directed during four years a poetry journal – Carte Noire (Black Card). She has collaborated with different periodicals and art books with painters and engravers.

She has published six poem compilations, two of which won distinguished awards: *Les Gestes* (Gestures), 1984; *Bleu* (Blue), 1992; *Absenta* (Absenta), 2004 – Jean Follain award; *Chants de l'éolienne* (Songs of the wind turbine), 2006 – Max Jacob award 2007; *Récits librement inspirés de ma vie d'oiseau* (Narratives freely inspired by my bird life), 2009; *Portrait de ma grand-mère en demoiselle coiffée* (Portrait of my grand-mother as a hair-styled lady), 2009.

In the framework of the Francophonie Week 2010 at Bactria, Marie Huot will participate in two major events. On March 14 (2 PM), she will present at Bactria six major French writers whose books show the diversity of French literature today. These books are not to be found anywhere and will enrich Bactria's library. Marie Huot will also participate in March 15 poetry evening at Bactria. On that very day, she will recite her best poems before sitting in the jury which will evaluate participants' performance. Prior to the contest, from March 9 to 12, she will animate workshops on poetry writing and give advice to participants of the poetry contest.

Jean-Claude Bernard is a French master of typography, printer and founder of the association and editions "Encre et lumière" (Ink and light). Created in 1998, the association has two main goals:

1) Printing high quality books, composed manually and with lead, in the tradition of Gutenberg. These books deal with poetry, literature, primitive art, painting... and texts are generally published together with artistic work – such as engraving, paintings, drawings – which gives a "bilingual" dimension to the book.

2) Enhancing knowledge about book-making professions through the conduction of workshops in schools, libraries, cultural centres, companies, in France and abroad, and the organizing of traineeships, exhibitions and festivals.

In this spirit, Jean-Claude Bernard will conduct two specific workshops at Bactria: one on the profession of typographer-printer (March 15, 2 PM), during which he will explain the « book chain », i.e. how a manuscript is transformed into a book; another one on "Typoetry", i.e. the poetry genre which consists in searching for the meaning of the world by observing the form of words. Besides, Jean-Claude Bernard will take part in the poetry workshops conducted by Marie Huot, as well as in the book presentation (March 14, 2 PM) during which he will present three French contemporary poets. He will also sit in the jury of the poetry contest.

Roshanak Ostad is a visual artist and poet currently living and working in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. She was born in 1977 in Tehran, Iran. She graduated in graphic design in 2004 from the Arts University of Teheran. Since then, she has been working on the interaction between text and visual art, creating visual poems, typographic works, book covers and illustrations for poem compilations and books for children (such as *L'histoire du Pêcheur*, *Cinq frères chinois*, *Mademoiselle Lune*). She has also turned to composing series of live



digital drawings and performances, notably in Paris and Dushanbe. Her creativity is the product of her culture of origin and experiences accumulated in France, Turkey and Tajikistan.

Roshanak Ostad will conduct, together with Jean-Claude Bernard, the workshop on "typoetry" (March 16, 2 PM). Participants will thus discover "typoetry" through different angles and perspectives.

Environmental films of Francophonie Week 2010

This year, the theme of the Francophonie Week is dedicated worldwide to environmental issues. This is why Bactria, in collaboration with the French Embassy and the Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan, is programming five short films and 2 feature films on this very topic. The five video art films are the works of Central-Asian artists who propose an off-beat, sometimes humoristic but always sharp vision of the relationship between human beings and environment.

The two feature films are *Home* (France, 2009) and *Un petit coin de paradis* (Switzerland, 2008). With *Home*, Yann Arthus-Bertrand blows the whistle and shows how our current model of economic development is endangering the fate of Planet Earth and future generations. He narrates the evolution of species, insisting on the miracle of life and the idea of equilibrium between elements... which has been increasingly disrupted by the fast technological development of homo sapiens.

Outstanding photos of nature, taken from above, contrast with alarming facts and figures. Good nature is endangered by harmful human beings. We are told that human development has proved so damaging since the 1950s that crucial natural resources – such as hydrocarbons, ores, water of major rivers and seas, fish, forests – will be totally depleted by the end of the 21st century if it were to continue unchanged. Climate change is frightening in its potential consequences: a quarter of all species would become extinct by 2050; the quick melting of glaciers and ice packs of the North Pole and Greenland endangers major coastal cities (be it in Bangladesh or Japan); the melting of permafrost in Siberia would be cataclysmic and radically modify the world as we know it. On top of this, social inequalities between and within countries are rocketing: 2% of the richest controls 50% of world wealth; 20% of global population uses 80% of global resources; poverty has become the driving force of urbanisation; 1 billion of human beings are starving and have no access to drinking water.

There will be soon 9 billions people on Planet Earth and we are already on the brink of breaking the cycle of life... Yann Arthus-Bertrand hurls that only 10 years are left to humanity to change and reverse this destructive trend... Are we watching a disaster movie?

This is where the film strikes a positive note: solutions do exist; positive decisions are being implemented to protect common goods, resort to renewable energies and promote sustainable development. Besides, every single human being has the possibility to change and make a difference. The entire film is aiming at giving people a sense of responsibility for their environment, and is pushing for decisive action on an individual basis. To impact on the widest audience as possible, the film is available for free on the Internet (YouTube page) and in several languages. *Home* is the first film ever whose première was organized the same day (World Environment Day – June 5) in 181 countries and in different media supports (cinema, TV, Internet).

However, if solutions do exist, the few enumerated ones do not question the capitalist development model, but rather imply that it is able to adapt and provide solutions to tackle social and environmental problems. How could it go otherwise with a film whose sponsors are spear-head representatives of the capitalist system? One might say that there is no time for sterile controversies but only for awareness raising and concrete action.



Precisely, *Un petit coin de paradis* talks about a concrete sustainable development project: the rehabilitation of a deserted hamlet in the mountainous region of Valais, Switzerland, into an exemplary green-village, with the support of local authorities. The goal is to preserve traditions and the environment, combine them harmoniously with modernized agriculture, new ways of life and green tourism, and make three generations cooperate in the project. This film certainly strikes a chord with living conditions in Tajikistan: the older people narrate the story of their bitter fight to survive in a hostile environment, where water and climate are an issue, and where women especially had a very difficult life. They explain how the hamlet was deserted 50 years ago when men left to construct a dam in the upper-valley... They are now passing their recollections and experience on young people, coming from different cultural and geographic origins and who are searching for values and objectives.

Films will be screened at Bactria's exhibition room between March 10 and 14 at 6 PM. Come along and enjoy

Antoine Buisson
Antoine Busson Bactria Educational Director