Frankfurt Bookfair 2019
Libella Rights’List
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FRENCH FICTION
In 1945, in an Allied-occupied city in Germany, an English war photographer can’t bring himself to go home: while he was covering the German defeat, he witnessed the liberation of a concentration camp. Ever since, it’s as though he is unable to resume ‘a normal life’.

While he is housed at the same hotel as the colonel who led the regiment that liberated the camp, the two men form a friendship based on a shared vision of horror. One evening, the photographer explains his idea to the colonel: he wants to crisscross Germany taking pictures of people in front of their homes. He’s hoping that it might allow him to discover who the people who allowed those camps to exist really are. The colonel provides him with a car and a driver, a new recruit who just arrived and didn’t see any of the horror.

The two men head off randomly across Germany. The photographer is haunted by what he saw, the young driver, by personal events that took place back home in England. La Terre invisible tells the story of their journey.

In short: Germany, 1945: A war photographer who witnessed the liberation of a concentration camp and a young soldier who missed the horrors travel around Germany to meet civilians.

About the author: Born in Alsace-Lorraine in 1956, Hubert Mingarelli writes screenplays and novels. At 17, he left school to join the Marines, which he left three years later. He settled in Grenoble, where he held a variety of odd jobs. His first texts were published in the late 80’s. His novel, Four Soldiers, won the prestigious Médicis Prize in France and was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2019.
La Grande Escapade is set in the narrator’s childhood – a territory that Jean-Philippe Blondel had never explored so far.

The 1970s, the provinces, the orange-brick Denis Diderot Elementary School and the town park. And most of all, the teachers and their families who lived on the school grounds. Back then, teachers, who still saw themselves as conduits towards Knowledge, could be housed in the school building. But times period are changing: the first alerts about the environment are starting to be expressed; a new right-wing president has promised to change society… and then appoints the unhip Raymond Barre as Prime Minister; women are raising their heads; public schools are going co-ed. There are several families: the Coudriers, the Gouberts, the Lorrains, and the Ferrants; there’s Francine, Geneviève, Marie-Dominique and Janick. There is love, heartbreak, and betrayal. Fits of laughter and powerful emotions. All of the characters are wonderfully real and three-dimensional. You’re totally drawn into their lives. Page after page, Jean-Philippe Blondel escorts readers around, giving them an up-close and personal glimpse at a world that has disappeared.


About the author: An English teacher, Jean-Philippe Blondel writes novels for adults and for young adults. His latest novels have all been published by Buchet Chastel since 2010: The Baby-Sitter, G229, Et rester vivant, 06h41, Un hiver à Paris, Mariages de saison and La Mise à Nu. 06h41 was translated into 10 territories, entered the best-sellers’ list in Germany (100,000 copies sold) and was acclaimed in the United States (The 6:41 train to Paris) and across Europe.

Worldwide translation rights: Libella (Buchet Chastel)
Number of pages: 272
Retail price: 18 €
Publication date: August 15th, 2019
Available material: Finished copy
A Greek island in summer.

There are the adults: archeologists from all over the world, slightly eccentric scientists, obsessed with the site they have been working on for so long.

And then there are their children, Evi, Zac and Niso who spend their summers together. A brother and sister are the leaders of this gang living in their own tiny world: one corner of an arid island, a house surrounded by a lush garden, an inlet they can dive into. Their realm: a small stretch of deep water and a plot of red land defined by two paths and a rocky fringe.

Here, during a few weeks, the rest of the world no longer exists; they feel free to live their adolescence ardently.

As the dig is completed, the children grow apart.

A lyrical and very poetical novel about adolescence and its dazzling marvels.

**In short:** A Greek island, an archeological dig. A group of children of different nationalities who get together every summer for several years.

**About the author:** Christine Avel is the author of novels and short stories published by Le Seuil (*Autoportrait à la valise* (Self-Portrait with a Suitcase) and *Le Dilettante* (*Double foyer* (Dual Focus), *L’Apocalypse sans peine* (An Easy Apocalypse)) and of children’s books published by L’Ecole des Loisirs. A specialist in developing nations, she lives and works in Paris.

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**Worldwide translation rights:** Libella (Buchet Chastel)

**Number of pages:** 256

**Retail price:** 16 €

**Publication date:** August 22nd, 2019

**Available material:** Finished copy
April 1945: Daniel Shapiro, a young American rabbi, reaches the Ohrdruf concentration camp with the Allied troops. They have been warned about a “tragic situation.” Gathering the stories, requests, and anguished pleas of the just-liberated inmates, Daniel becomes emotionally attached to a mute, inflexible five-year-old boy, and assigns himself the mission of finding the child’s parents.

What he finds in this camp will remain engraved in Daniel’s memory forever: an encounter with absolute evil. Along with it comes an unanswerable question that leaves him no peace: how could God have allowed such a negation? How can anyone go on believing, loving, or even living after witnessing what mankind is capable of?

Sagalovitsch manages to render the atrocity of the camps and the incredulity of those who saw it first. Through the letters he sends to Ethel, his beloved wife who stayed in America, he tries to find the proper words to describe his experience.

In short: Sagalovitsch has written a novel suffused with humanity, incarnated by the relationship between Daniel and this five-year old child. *A Time of Orphans* explores a subject that has rarely been addressed in literature: discovering the death camps.

**About the author:** Laurent Sagalovitsch was born near Paris in 1967 but has lived in Vancouver since 2009. He was a book reviewer for the French daily *Libération*, and the weekly newsmagazines *Les Inrocks* and *L’événement du jeudi*. His first books have been published by Actes Sud, from *Dade City* (1996) to the last volume of his trilogy, *Un Juif en cavale*. In 2016 Buchet Chastel published *Véra Kaplan* which was acclaimed by literary critics and booksellers.

**Worldwide translation rights:** Libella (“Qui vive” series)
**Number of pages:** 224
**Retail price:** 16 €
**Publication date:** August 15th, 2019
**Available material:** Finished copy
Dorlange is a village in the middle of France. It is also the last bastion of a bygone era, a time before cars or TV, when everyone pitched in for haying, harvesting, and other seasonal tasks. But over the past few years, everything has been changing, as city-dwellers who want to get back to nature have been massively moving in. The locals and the newcomers don’t always get on well... One day, suddenly, a third community arrives: Syrian refugees...

Antoine, a reporter for *L’Écho du Temps*, the local paper, becomes the archivist of the clash between the two groups. On one side, there is the mayor and his hand-knit-sweater-wearing warriors, up in arms about their ancestral lands being “colonized”; on the other, former city slickers, many of them ‘neo-hippies’, wielding their ideals of solidarity and brotherhood.

Stéphane Fièře offers readers a hilariously caustic romp through today’s France, polarized even in its smallest country towns.

**In short:** Stéphane Fièře has spun a biting tale about the clash between two ex-enemy communities which will join forces to fight against a totally new threat: Syrian refugees.

**About the author:** Having studied political science at both Science-Po in France, and at Harvard, where he also studied Chinese, Stéphane Fièře spent over 20 years in China. A businessman turned interpreter and translator, he has written four novels, published by Editions de l’Aube and Métailié. In 2016, Phébus published *Camarade Wang achète la France* (*Comrade Wang is buying France*).
At 20, Chris Piriac is the best tennis player of his generation, an Australian precocious genius who was whipped into shape by his over-bearing father/coach. While the latter misbehaves in the stands, his son comes off as a model of equilibrium and modesty on the courts. Early in his career, anyway.

But with receptions organized in his honor, Chris soon develops a taste for the facile pleasures of fame: alcohol, drugs, and groupies. Eventually, his lifestyle starts to affect his game. Leaden feet, cottony legs… he loses his concentration and his matches. Then one day, he starts whaling on Tonio, one of his opponents, leaving him disfigured. It’s the first step of a long descent into hell. Convinced that he has to hit rock bottom before he can bounce back up, Chris Piriac loses match after match… urged on by Tonio, who has become his partner in excess, but who is actually manipulating him for the sake of revenge.

**In short:** In elegantly limpid prose, Brice Matthieussent offers us a Dostoevskian novel about our darkest impulses and our unconscious desire for failure.

**About the author:** The translator of over 200 texts written in English, including works by Bret Easton Ellis, Jim Harrison, John Fante and Henry-David Thoreau, Brice Matthieussent has written four novels published by P.O.L, including *Vengeance du traducteur* (*The Translator’s Revenge, 2009 Style Prize*) and *Identités françaises* in 2016 (Phébus).
Hennes van Veldes has just graduated from film school in Berlin. To earn a little money, and to give some kind of meaning to his empty life, he styles himself a “free-lance documentary filmmaker.” In that capacity, he is contacted by an aging writer, Cornelius Düler, who asks him to make a documentary about Wolfgang Laib, an artist who lives in southern Germany.

This strange client, who wants the film only for himself, will finance the entire project. So Hennes takes his camera and goes to live in a youth hostel, as he films any trace he can find of Laib, who remains invisible. After days of wandering around a deserted house in the cold and gloomy German countryside, Hennes gradually starts to lose touch with reality.

An extremely well-constructed and masterfully written narrative in which tongue-in-cheek humor is omnipresent. An accurate, melancholic portrait of our times, *L’Absence de ciel* is reminiscent of Houellebecq in its descriptions of youth hostels that have no soul, a countryside that has no nature, and artists that get no recognition… in a documentary with no subject by a young man with no vocation.

**In short:** *L’Absence de ciel* – a “road novel” that holds our attention with the quality of its descriptions – delivers a very contemporary message about human relations, youth, the end of school, the Internet, and ugly landscapes. A captivating book that gets under your skin, drawing you in with its style and strange, tense emptiness.

**About the author:** Adrien Blouët was born in 1992. After studying art, first at Paris’s School of Beaux Arts, then in Shanghai, he discovered anthropology which led him to write and then decided to focus on fiction. *L’Absence de ciel* is his debut novel.

**Worldwide translation rights:** Noir sur Blanc (Notabilia)
**Number of pages:** 176
**Retail price:** 15 €
**Publication date:** August 15th, 2019
**Available material:** Finished copy
Alexander Morrison is a journalist for gossip magazines. Every winter, in search of stories, he flies to Malagusta island, a haven for celebrities, mafiosi, the ‘nouveaux riches’, and party people. But his stay on the island takes an unexpectedly macabre turn when the body of William Porticelly, a.k.a. Diouke, who had gone to ground on the island after a financial scam, is found. Alexander and he went way back. Alexander had met Diouke, a charismatic, fast-talking, Marxist, American, budding writer – as well as a confirmed alcoholic and skirt chaser who introduced him to his broad circle of friends in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris’s literary enclave, thirty years before, when Alexander had just arrived in Paris from his native Boston. But their friendship took a dramatic turn when Diouke bedded the beautiful Rossana, whom Alexander was crazy about.

Looking back, Alexander’s thoughts range from youthful memories to high-level con jobs, Russian oligarchs, arms dealers, and phenomenal forgers. Shaded with melancholy, *Un vrai salaud* draws readers into bohemian college-student life in Paris in the 1980s.

**In short:** A gossip columnist goes to the Malagusta island every winter in search of sensational stories about the celebrities who flock there. But the murder of Diouke, a man he met in Paris in his youth and who shattered his hopes, triggers a wave of memories and a journey back through time.

**About the author:** Essayist, journalist and novelist, Louis-Bernard Robitaille was born in Montreal, and has lived in Paris for several years. After the success of *Ces imposibles Français (Those Impossible French)*, Louis-Bernard Robitaille’s *Les Parisiens sont pires que vous ne le croyez (The Parisians Are Even Worse than You Thought)* was published by Denoël in 2014. Notabilia published two of his novels: *Dernier voyage à Buenos Aires* in 2013 (*Last trip to Buenos Aires*) and *La Péninsule (The Peninsula)* in 2016.
Francesca left Palermo to study literature at the Sorbonne. A romantic bet leads her to take a dare: inform her family that, this year, she won’t be spending Christmas with them, without upsetting or scandalizing them. After all, isn’t her family light years away from clichés about Sicilians, a left-wing intellectual family of atheists, who respects its members’ individual freedoms? But that would be underestimating the importance of Christmas in Sicily.

Like the opening scenes of a horror film, Francesca arrives in Palermo without foreseeing in the slightest the catastrophes that are about to crash over her. While pretending to accept her choice, her mother, father, brother and sister are all doing their utmost to get her to change her mind… and they have no qualms about using any means necessary. This zany immersion in a modern Sicilian family looks surprisingly like an exploration of our own neuroses and our own relationships to tradition, belonging, and gastronomy.

**In short:** A romantic dare leads Francesca, from Palermo, to refuse to celebrate Christmas with her family. This exposes the student at the Sorbonne to a series of farcical plot twists secretly and subtly orchestrated by different members of her family. In this Italian style comedy, the author explores our relationship to family, love and tradition with great panache.

**About the author:** Born in 1972, Jérémie Lefèbvre is a writer, songwriter and actor. He lives in Paris. His previous novel, *Avril*, was published in 2016 by Buchet Chastel and was translated into Italian (Fandango Libri).

**Worldwide translation rights:** Libella (“Qui vive” series)

**Number of pages:** 264

**Retail price:** 16 €

**Publication date:** October 24th, 2019

**Available material:** Finished copy
NON FICTION
LITERARY Non-Fiction
At age 20, and as handsome as a Greek demi-god, Brahms made an encounter that would change both his own life and the course of music history. When Schumann paid tribute to his genius, the young man fell head over heels in love with the famous composer’s wife, Clara Schumann, who also happens to be the greatest pianist of her time.

But tragedy arrived on the heels of that epiphany: committed to a mental institution, Schumann passed away. Clara pulled irrevocably away from Brahms, and the fate of German music landed squarely on the young man’s shoulders.

While the art world was obsessed with innovation and progress, he stood alone in his determination to prove that you could go even further by looking back. Singing the praises of nature and of his own most inner self, he wrote the most perfect and original music conceivable.

In short: After Un hiver avec Schubert (Winter with Schubert), Olivier Bellamy guides readers through the work and life of Brahms in 44 chiseled, well-documented and thoughtful texts. The most secretive composer of his time will become as familiar as a close relative.

About the author: Born in 1961, Olivier Bellamy is a reporter at Classica (formerly known as Le Monde de la Musique) and editor at Le Parisien. He presents an hour and a half long daily program in the early evening on Radio Classique. He has written several TV documentaries on musical themes. In 2010 he published the first biography ever written on Marta Argerich the translation rights of which were sold in ten territories (Buchet Chastel).
Prosper is back! The most unbearable writer in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris’s literary enclave, is grappling with the ransom of success: he’s invited to talk shows, speechifies about literature, runs a master class and, after his first novel becomes a best seller, he tries to write a police procedural. As he awaits inspiration, he fiddles his metaphors, recruits characters, sets the scene, drags his ghostwriters over the coals, and strews clues with his smug pen… nudging his advance up all the while.

Readers will delight in this fierce and titillating diatribe against industrialized literature and the world of best-selling writers.

In short: Prosper at work is a hilarious and scathing satire, illustrated, as ever, by Jean-François Martin.

About the authors: Born in 1964, Eric Chevillard is a novelist and newspaper columnist. Since 1980, most of his books have been published by Editions de Minuit. In 2011, he revived the tradition of serialization in Le Monde des livres, where his work appears, illustrated by Jean-François Martin, every other week. His novel, La Nébuleuse du crabe (The Crab Nebulous, 1993) won the Feneon Prize, and his Le Vaillant Petit Tailleur (The Valiant Little Tailor, 2004) the Wepler Prize. In 2014, he was awarded the Vialatte Prize for his life’s work.

Jean-François Martin works for several publishing houses, as well as for the French and international press. In 2011, he received the Bologna Ragazzi Award (Milan) for his work on Aesop’s Fables.

Worldwide translation rights: Noir sur Blanc (Notabilia)
Number of pages: 112
Retail price: 15 €
Publication date: October 10th, 2019
Available material: finished copy
He has been described as a racist, eugencist, antifeminist, Islamo-phobic fascist... But who really is Michel Houellebecq? In 2005, Libella published Denis Demonpion’s Unauthorized Houellebecq, the first in-depth biography of the scandalous writer. Thanks to a meticulous and well-documented investigation into one of the most important contemporary French literary phenomena, Demonpion was able to reveal several important details about Houellebecq’s life, as well as pointing out some concealed facts.

Now Demonpion has picked up the investigation where he left off: presenting the period from 2005 to 2019. He recounts Houellebecq’s adventures in moviemaking, for instance, and provides some clarification to the first version.

In short: Based on some hundred documents and eyewitness accounts, the most recent of which have never been published before, the author redefines the border between Houellebecq’s work, the real person, and his public persona, gradually dissipating the diabolical fog shrouding this icon of postmodern literature.

About the author Denis Demonpion was born in 1954. As a journalist, he has practiced his profession at Paris-Match, AFP, Libération and Le Point. He now works at L’Observateur, where he is editor-in-chief. He is also a renowned biographer, most notably for his investigation into the life of J. D. Salinger, for which he received the 2018 Goncourt Prize for biography.
Is poetry a form of war? A line of verse, an elite language corps? By going over the history of French prosody, Jacques Réda reveals processes of transformation of the French language that are as ineluctable as those of physics, in which poets are the more or less conscious executants of a natural action.

From the Roman d’Alexandre to Armand Lubin, via Delille, Hugo, Rimbaud, Claudel, Apollinaire, Cendrars and Dadelsen, Jacques Réda’s experienced eye strolls over both emblematic and sometimes little-known works from our literary history. Inspired and alert, he knows better than anyone how to knead the clay of poems to draw out the most precious threads. A lesson in reading and writing, and an essay with metaphysical resonance, Quel avenir pour la cavalerie ? is both Jacques Réda’s Letters to a Young Poet, and the apex of his poetic reflections.

In short: An essay about poetry and the connections between the French language and its versification.

About the author: Jacques Réda is a poet, and the author of prose narratives. An editor and jazz chronicler, he has also been contributing to Jazz Magazine-Jazzman since 1963. He ran the Nouvelle Revue française from 1987 to 1996. Among other prizes, he has won the Grand Prix of the Académie française for the full body of his work, as well as the Goncourt Prize for Poetry in 1999.

Worldwide translation rights: Libella (Buchet Chastel)
Number of pages: 224
Retail price: 20 €
Publication date: October 17th, 2019
Available material: Finished copy
HISTORY
September, 1919: Fiume (now Rijeka, in Croatia) is an ostensibly Italian city on Yugoslavian soil. The situation is unacceptable for many Italians, including numerous war veterans, particularly the celebrated arditi. They decide to form a rogue army and to capture the city. Their Commandante is none other than Gabriele D’Annunzio, the champion of Italian jingoistic warmongering, who, at age 51, joined the Italian Royal Air Force during World War I.

Once Fiume was theirs, a slightly-over-a-yearlong artistic and political saga could begin. Having started out nationalist and patriotic, the adventure soon took a radically different turn: unions, feminism, and artistic experimentation sprang up; sexual freedom, nudism, and vegetarianism were all tested, and the use of both narcotics and psychedelic drugs was legalized.

But in late 1920, under pressure from the Allies, the government in Rome put a stop to the experiment by bombing the city. Gabriele D’Annunzio, the self-styled “Regent of Carnaro,” retired to a long exile on the banks of Lake Garda, far from the “festive revolution.”

In short: Shortly after the end of World War I, a rogue army of Italian volunteers captures the city of Fiume, in Yugoslavia. Their leader is the most famous Italian writer of the time, the flamboyant dandy Gabriele D’Annunzio. For the fifteen months of his reign, the city becomes the theatre of a vast revolutionary experiment.

About the author: Olivier Tosseri, 30, is a journalist, contributes regularly to the French daily, Les Échos, and is CNEWS’s Italian correspondent. He has also been a contributor to the specialized magazine, Historia.
As soon as they came to power, the Nazis developed an aggressive cultural policy, which on the one hand attacked so-called “degenerate” art, and on the other, tended to enrich the personal art collections of the Führer and other Nazi dignitaries. On July 17, 1940, the Rosenberg Organization was founded to eliminate Jewish cultural life throughout Europe by confiscating art and book collections. The “Sonderstab Musik” commando was also created: eminent German musicologists assigned to ferret out music scores, books about music, and musical instruments.

That formidably efficient cell organized a system for looting musical artifacts throughout the occupied territories. Willem de Vries describes their actions with great precision.

Seizures, foreclosures, forced sales, exchanges, and seemingly voluntary transactions: Nazi pillage and plunder came in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. French Jewish art dealers and collectors were easy prey, and their collections were fought over by the different services the Führer had ordered to seize artwork. In France alone, some 100,000 works of art and several million books were stolen from 72,000 homes and “transferred” to the German Reich.

In short: This unique book is devoted to the massive looting of Jewish-owned musical items (instruments, scores, recordings, books) throughout occupied Western Europe, under the aegis of the ‘Sonderstab Musik’ commando. This is the only book on the subject.

About the author: Willem de Vries is a Dutch musicologist. After finding five Darius Milhaud scores in Germany – scores that had been confiscated in 1944, he decided to search archives throughout Europe. That search provided the original material for this book.
The author's mother's family left Poland in the 1930s. As Jews, they found a welcoming new home in France. Young Uncle David was even able to enroll in medical school. Hiding out in the Creuse region during the Occupation, he was captured by the French police and sent to the internment camp in Drancy before being deported to Majdanek, in occupied Poland, never to return.

This fate in the shape of a circular journey is the starting point for both Jacobo Machover's narrative and his musings. Because his parents, Holocaust survivors, decided to migrate to Cuba. But after the Castrist revolution, they went back to France.

Bearing within him the burden of the trauma experienced by his parents’ generation, the author explores his own suffering as an exile, seeking to flee his past in ways that lead him to desert from the French army and to live in the margins, torn between a desire for revenge and erotic searches.

In short: On the trail of his uncle David, the author leads us on a personal, family journey. From Vichy France to Castro’s Cuba, memories of the Holocaust and a critique of the revolution rush headlong into the trauma of totalitarianism, the thirst for revenge and sexual frenzy.

About the author: Jacobo Machover was born in Havana in 1954. A writer, journalist, translator and academic who has lived in exile in France since 1963, he is the author of, among other works, *Cuba, totalitarisme tropical* (Buchet Chastel, 2004), *La Face cachée du Che* (*The Hidden Face of Che*, Buchet Chastel, 2007) and *Cuba, de Batista à Castro*, Buchet Chastel, 2018). He is an activist for freedom and democracy in Cuba.
ENVIRONMENT
The digital universe is expanding exponentially: over 4 billion human beings are now connected through the Internet, and the mass of data they exchange never stops increasing. Nowadays, the 70 Ko. of data that put men on the Moon in 1969 would barely suffice to send an e-mail!

Most of what we do now depends on digital tools: every day, we watch DSL TV, play games on our smartphones, chat on social networks, share photos, check our bank balance, etc., etc. But every octet has an impact. Computing’s environmental footprint is about four times larger than France’s, the equivalent of an 8th continent.

How did the digital world balloon up like that? What will its impact on the environment, and more generally, on the future of humanity be? Considering our current ecological crisis, what can we do to turn it into a tool for greater resiliency? Surely, there are paths we can explore for designing a more restrained, sustainable Internet.

In short: Information technology, which is now omnipresent in our daily lives, actually has a considerable environmental impact, particularly on global warming and in terms of CO² emissions. Going beyond simply pointing those facts out, this book explores ideas for designing a digital future that is more restrained and sustainable.

About the author: Frédéric Bordage, a renowned pioneer and expert in green computing in France, is the founder of Green IT, which helps large public and private corporations and organizations design more restrained, sustainable applications, websites and other digital services. He is the main author of Éco-conception web: les 115 bonnes pratiques (“Green Web Design: 115 Best Practices”, Eyrolles, 2015).
Defenders of the vegan cause oppose consuming animals and animal products: neither meat, nor milk, nor leather, nor even honey or wool. While they are still in a minority, they are extremely active, with an increasing presence in both public space and the media. They enjoy a certain sympathy from the general public, which has become more sensitive to animal suffering and is becoming more aware of the ecological impact of intensive livestock production.

What are the foundations of this movement? Are human and animal rights really compatible? Can we actually do without animal husbandry? More generally, can we realistically say that choosing an entirely vegetable-based lifestyle would resolve current issues which involve agriculture, climate, nutrition and animal welfare?

Based on an in-depth investigation involving both numerous key players in the movement and intellectuals, Frédéric Denhez points out the flaws in vegan reasoning and explores our relationship to nature and to life.

In short: This book offers a striking analysis of the vegan movement, which opposes consuming animals and animal products. While the movement does raise some fundamental issues, its answers often turn out to be incomplete, simplistic, and sometimes radical.

About the author: Frédéric Denhez, specialist in environmental issues, contributes regularly to prestigious magazines (Géo, National Geographic, Ça m’intéresse, etc.) and radio and TV programs. He is also the author of several books about the climate, pollution and biodiversity. In 2018, Buchet Chastel published Le Bio, au risque de se perdre in this same series.
MUSIC SERIES
Beethoven in His Own Words is an anthology of some one hundred texts handwritten by the composer, from little Ludwig’s earliest known letter in which he already expressed his passion for music, to the last pages he wrote, shortly before his death, in which he had to beg for subsidies to put food on the table. Intertwining excerpts from his letters with his famous conversation notebooks (to which he resorted after he became deaf) and sorted by theme, this anthology was assembled by Nathalie Krafft, who also provides commentary. She turns it into a kind of autobiography of Beethoven, delving deeply into his inner thoughts. She brings back to life the man who is undoubtedly the most deified composer in classical music, enabling readers to discover a complex, extravagant, profoundly human, very funny, and always brilliant person.

In addition, the letters reproduced here are presented in a new translation, granting the text fresh appeal.

In short: An anthology of Beethoven’s letters, selected and introduced by Nathalie Krafft that compose a sort of self-portrait offering a glimpse of the composer’s inner thoughts.

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS
When he gets married, a young man acquires a wealthy, tyrannical father-in-law who is obsessed with esotericism. Their relationship soon sours, and violence threatens to erupt. In the mountains, a young shepherdess suddenly and inexplicably disappears. Through these two tales, the author invites us on a journey through the most darkly troubled facets of Switzerland.

Then we follow him to the People’s Republic of China, both in 1982, under the régime of Deng Xiaoping, and in today’s China. His steps lead him all the way to Taiwan.

Interspersed with these narratives are two portraits: one of Paul Léautaud, immortalized by painter Matisse; and one of Ernest Renan, when he is going through a major crisis of faith that will eventually lead him to leave the seminary.

A Manifesto that intertwines biography, autobiography and fiction, all emphasizing the agony and ecstasy of uncertainty more or less explicitly.

In short: This 8th volume of the Uncertain Manifesto includes two short stories set in a profoundly troubled Switzerland, a fragmented diary of both today’s China and the same country in the Deng Xiaoping years, as well as the island nation of Taiwan; and two portraits: of Paul Léautaud and Ernest Renan.

About the author: Frédéric Pajak was born in 1955 near Paris. He has had over a dozen works published, many of which he both wrote and drew. In 2012, the first volume of his series, Le Manifeste Incertain was released and each year, a new volume is published and focusses upon a different key artistic figure each time: Walter Benjamin, Ezra Pound, Vincent Van Gogh… These works have been translated in the United States, Spain, Germany, Korea, China, Taiwan, Russia and Ukrainia.

In 2019, Frédéric Pajak received the Goncourt Prize for Biography for the seventh volume of his series.
On March 30, 2030, fine particles begin to rain down on the Earth, causing humans to “retro-evolve.” They return to their original state, becoming fish. The historian Raymond Saw, having turned into a sawfish in the ray family, meets Brigitte Van Dyck, an arts teacher in the shape of a narwhal. The new pals draw us into their underwater trials and tribulations as they search for the miracle antidote that will give them back their human form.

From encounter to encounter and discovery to discovery, the mistakes of the Anthropocene era appear: climate change, water acidification and pollution, endocrine disruptors, invasive species and biodiversity loss. The book is all the more effective in that the light-hearted style, the characters’ caustic sense of humor, and the beauty of the watercolor illustrations belie its dramatic assessment. A subtle blend that manages to entertain readers while sounding the alarm at the same time.

**In short:** This graphic document intertwining reality and fiction is set in a post-apocalyptic future where life is reappearing where it all started: in the oceans. Through the fishes’ trials and tribulations — well-served with clever dialogues — readers explore an underwater world in crisis, before arriving at an optimistic ending.

**About the author:** Anne Defréville is an illustrator and professor of art. A multi-talented artist, she works for both the press (*Madame Figaro Pocket*) and book publishing, particularly in the fields of personal development and children’s books. She also has a cartoon blog. Long concerned about the environment, she researched this book thoroughly, meeting with scientists, activists, and small-scale fishermen.
Sarcastic, ridiculous, adorable, sardonic, zany, incorrigible: in a word: Cool Birds!

These droll little penguins live on an endangered ice field that is strangely reminiscent of our long-suffering planet. Their human attitudes, idiosyncratic and collective quirks, and convictions that tack between the absurd and the clairvoyant make them our light-hearted and ludicrous doppelgangers. Through them, Xavier Gorce offers a caustic analysis of our own society.

This book is a compendium of strips about different environmental issues. From the consequences of global warming to the contradictions of our eating habits; from lobbies’ influence to politicians’ inertia; from consumers’ hypocritical naivety to multinationals’ cynicism, from small cowardly acts to unbearable scandals, the author exposes the absurdity of our incoherent behavior with dark humor, awakening our conscience.

In short: When droll little penguins, Xavier Gorce’s famous “Cool Birds,” expose with dark humor the absurdity of our incoherent behavior, while our planet is subjected to an unprecedented crisis and faces multiple challenges: climate change, loss of biodiversity, pollution, and political negligence.

About the author: Born in 1962, Xavier Gorce is an illustrator for the press. In 2004, he came up with his penguin characters, the “Indégivrables” (“Cool Birds”). From 2011 to 2016, the series was published in the daily paper Le Monde. It was adapted as animated cartoon in 2012. His blog, Les Indégivrables, is hosted by Lemonde.fr.
Discovered by chance in the family’s apartment in Saint Petersburg in the 1990s, the Henkin brothers’ thousands of negatives compose an exceptional photographic archive. Their images offer us an intimate portrait of 1930s Russia and Germany. Although their lives were vastly different – one in Berlin and the other in Leningrad, the brothers shared the same passion for photography. With astonishing artistic freedom for the era, they brought their cameras to places where people let their hair done, practicing sports or other leisure-time activities. Far from political tension, the rise of Nazism and Stalinist terror, their images portray cheerful, healthy aspects of everyday life. Without cropping out the portraits of Stalin in Leningrad or the swastikas in Berlin, they chose not to do utilitarian or propaganda photography.

These often-joy-filled photographs are now shaded with unexpected meaning. We are struck not only by the crowds’ insouciance, but also by the photographers’ unfailing love for the human figure and for ordinary people.

**In short:** Taken separately in Leningrad and Berlin in the 1930s, and having languished for decades on shelves in a Russian apartment, the Henkin brothers’ photographic archives form a unique and precious dual-eyewitness account of a turbulent era.

**About the author:** Evgeny and Yakov Henkin were born in Rostov-on-Don, Russia, in the early 20th century. After the 1917 revolution, their paths diverged: the elder, Evgeny, left for Berlin, while Yakov moved to Leningrad. Little is known about their lives: after a degree in engineering, Evgeny, who was fascinated by the theremin (one of the first electronic musical instruments), became a musician; Yakov, who was very athletic, worked as an economist. Both brothers met tragic ends: returning from Germany, Evgeny was murdered during the Stalinist repression of 1937-1938; Yakov was drafted into the army and died on the front lines during the first months of the war, in 1941.