



**The Cahiers Series stands for all that we should be striving for in our increasingly interwoven world.**

## The Cahiers Series

A collaboration between a publisher and a university in Paris has resulted in a wonderful series of books about translation.

Paris has long been the home of exiled and expatriate novelists and poets – from Hemingway to Gertrude Stein, Joyce to Beckett, Cortázar to Kundera. Banned novels such as *Ulysses* and *Lolita* were first published here, and many classics of French literature by writers from Baudelaire to Perec had their genesis in Paris.

Today, the city still acts as a draw for many authors; to celebrate and promote this rich cultural heritage, the Center for Writers and Translators at the American University in Paris is attracting writers associated with Paris.

The Center schedules and sponsors readings, lectures, informal talks and conferences; it supports a Writer in Residence, whose work is studied by the University's students; it offers intellectual and physical space for the exchange of literary works-in-progress and sharing ideas on translation and translation in progress.

It is also collaborating with Sylph Editions – a publishing venture that 'seeks excellence in printed form' – to produce a series of beautifully produced slim books (cahiers) devoted to the exploration of writing, translation and the areas in between. At the time of writing (September 2008) there are eight titles in the Cahiers Series; it is planned that others will be published on a ten-weekly basis.

The volumes in the series are works of art in their own right. Set in Monotype Dante on two weights of paper, the cahiers are elegant examples of how to publish properly. None of them is more than 50 pages long, but the texts are as fascinating and varied as the authors who have written them.

Volume 1, *Translating Music*, is by Richard Pevear, the renowned translator of many books in Russian and French, including *The Three Musketeers* and (with Larissa Volokhonsky) *War and Peace*. It includes his translation of a story in verse by Pushkin (printed alongside the Russian text), as well as a paper he gave at an international conference on translating Tolstoy.

Alan Jenkins's volume, *Drunken Boats*, contains two of his poems and his translation of Arthur Rimbaud's *Le bateau ivre*; in *Proust, Blanchot and a Woman in Red*, Lydia Davis (acclaimed translator of *Swann's Way*) offers a partial alphabet of Proust's translation problems – and their solutions; *Days Bygone*, translated from Hebrew by Ornan Rotem, is a collection of four extracts from Rachel Shihor's *Yankinton*, the fictional recollections of an adolescent girls upbringing in Tel Aviv in the 1940s and 50s.

Series editor Dan Gunn writes in the preface to volume 6, 'it has been my pleasure to discover how much fine writing does indeed resist the pre-established genres, and how much interest can be generated when writers are allowed to combine elements in new and unpredictable ways – stories with essays, translations with original works, reflections with drawings, poetry with paintings, and so on.' Nowhere is this fluidity more apparent than in the cahier *Text on Textile*, in which the artwork of Isabella Ducrot (inspired by her collection of antique cloth) accompanies a translated meditation on her work; this in turn, inspired Italian poet Patrizia Cavalli to write a poem, which has been translated into English by Olivia Sears.

Each individual cahier stands on its own, but together they form a 270-page 'book', held together, not only by a slipcase, but by the unifying theme of translation. Perhaps no other volume published thus far exemplifies this more than Paul Muldoon's *When the Pie Was Opened*, which contains English translations of poems in Latin, Greek, Anglo-Saxon and Welsh, accompanied by the text in the original language and decorated with exquisite artwork.

The Cahiers Series stands for all that we should be striving for in our increasingly interwoven world, with writers and artists influencing and drawing from each others' cultures to create genre-defying works of art.

**Visit the Sylph Editions website**