



Press Release

New Release – Lyrical Poetry

Where does New England intersect with Old Europe? GM's Pontiac Firebird, iPods, atrophic long-distance relationships, wax figures, dildos, facebook, guardian angels, the A-Train to Brooklyn, vinyl records, japanomania, speed dating, theater organs, and Carl Lewis are certainly a strange assortment.

And yet, the Boston born German-American poet Paul-Henri Campbell (1982) delivers just this: a probably more monstrous than postmodern inventory in a rhythm that inspires surprisingly plausible relationships among things that are otherwise completely unconnected. The themes are transported by a voice that jives along in a current of suggestive metaphors and a torrent of unpretentiously wayward sound.

But these poems are also hieroglyphic images of the present, hieroglyphs of contemporary lifestyles in which people want to live – are compelled to live – at the height of their time. Campbell confronts the precariousness of the fast-paced global lifestyle with an amused rhythm that expresses a multitude of rough opposites in one single voice – the duktus operandi.

In the iconic framework of Campbell's hieroglyphic poetics, well-known mythological and literary motifs waft along like a warm breeze wafting through the chill of urban modernity. Although Campbell calls himself an European Extremist, his at times perversely ironic and gleefully sober style draws liberally from various traditions and thereby fuses them to a hybrid texture of meaning.

But despite their elevated, if not elated and ceremonious poetic voice, these poems are always a bit timid, even hesitant, never presumptuous, though occasionally chauvinistic and frequently hilarious.

In terms of form, this book of poems is an interesting encounter. The verses are scattered across the pages. These poems use the entire space available on each sheet of paper. The essential ingredient in Campbell's rhythm is his ability to literally make the unprinted areas speak. Many writers invite us to read between the lines, but this author forces us to recognize the meaning vested in the gaps that are conspicuously placed on each page alongside the text. And although one may not see them, undertones of the elegy, the ballad, or the sonnet in the Campbell's vers libre can indeed be heard.

This debut introduces a bilingual poet into a literary landscape that is increasingly populated by writers who live in multiple cultural traditions and translate their experience into verse.

About the author: Paul-Henri Campbell was born 1982 in Boston, Massachusetts. duktus operandi is his first book of poems, and contains texts in both German and English.

Paul-Henri Campbell

duktus operandi

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www.duktusoperandi.com

ATHENA-Verlag

Mellinghofer Straße 126 46047 Oberhausen
Telefon 0208 871505 Telefax 0208 871547
E-Mail info@athena-verlag.de
Internet www.athena-verlag.de