Fiction
Rome, on the eve of October 16, 1943: Aware of the SS’s plans to conduct a raid the next morning, Monsignore M. sends German teacher K. to Palazzo Odescalchi. His mission: getting Ludwig Pollak and his family to safety in the Vatican as fast and as discreetly as possible.

But Pollak has other plans. He bids the unexpected guest sit down and starts telling his story: how he studied archaeology in Prague, of his passion for Rome and for Goethe, of his work at Museo Baracco and above all, because as a Jew he was denied an academic career, of his work as a renowned art dealer. And finally, he speaks of his most spectacular discovery, of how he found the missing arm of *Laocoon and His Sons*.

Torn between listening to the equally fascinating and harrowing tale of the old man and his assignment, K. urges their departure. Dawn is breaking in Rome …

»A book every traveller to Rome should put in their luggage«  Christina Tilmann, MOZ

Hans von Trotha wrote his doctoral dissertation on the interstices between philosophy, literature and garden design. For ten years he managed a publishing house. He lives in Berlin where he now works as a publicist, curator and advisor to cultural institutions. His book *The English Garden: A Journey Into Its History* is a classic. More from this author at SVLTO: *A Sentimental Journey, Laurence Sterne in Shandy Hall*.

Foreign sales: USA (New Vessel Press), Italy (Sellerio Editore)
Fiction:
Backlist Highlights
Young artist Kira lives in Berlin with Marc and their son Karl. She teaches children how to paint; it’s been a while since she painted anything or set up a show. She has doubts. Her relationship to Marc lacks intimacy, of words as much as touch. Her quirky friend Nele asks some questions, understands much and laughs often. Kira thinks she’s seeing the future and inventing the past. In the nineties, she moved from Moldavia to Germany, yet none of her Russian-Jewish family has ever truly arrived anywhere. It is not only her life that Kira subjects to her sometimes detached, sometimes cynical gaze, but also that of her ancestors whom she only knows from photographs. She travels to New York, Israel and Moldavia in an attempt to understand their histories and process it in the form of her large-scale paintings.

Marina Frenk’s language is one of vitality, rich in imagery and almost physical in intensity. Her debut is a striking, well-crafted novel about family and origins, about what it means to be a parent and what it means to be a child. It is a portrait of the artist as a young woman, and, most importantly, it is a love story.

Marina Frenk was born in Moldavia in 1986 and has been living in Germany since 1993. She is an actress and a musician, has worked for Schauspiel Köln, for Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin and for Schauspielhaus Bochum. Along with author and dramatist Sibylle Berg, she was awarded the prestigious Hörspielpreis der Kriegsblinden (Audio Play Prize of the War Blinded) for her play “Und jetzt: die Welt!” (And now: the world!) in 2016. Her audio play “Jenseits der Kastanien” (“Beyond the Chestnut Trees”) was awarded the European Civis Media Prize for radio drama in 2017.

Paperback rights: Germany (btb)
Audiobook rights: Germany (Hörfunk)
A soundproof room. The city outside. Osman Engels is practising the cello. The young music student plays on against invisible barriers that lie somewhere in his family's past. In his world, music has long taken the place of words. He himself cannot hear well, he remembers nothing, and without contact lenses, his sight is poor.

When by chance he finds, then eavesdrops on a recording device, he becomes a 'listening witness' to a relationship that is – in its own way – loud. Meanwhile, his flatmate Luise is studying for her exam in the room next door. Sometimes they share a cigarette by the open window, cook garlic noodles, take waste glass to the bottle bank. Though they get along, they never really touch each other, for in matters of love, they are both beginners.

When his Turkish father, likewise a musician, breaks his wrist and Aunt Elide, his foster mother, suddenly wants to go to Paris after almost twenty years in Germany, Osman is forced to clear up some things, to ask some questions.

The novel tells of a young man whose ears and eyes are opened up, and of a woman who lives in silence. It's about identity, about the language of fathers and mothers – and sign language, too. About the moving power of music. In her first novel, Katharina Mevissen shows that she is a major talent.
Milena Michiko Flašar

Mr Katô Plays Happy Families
[Herr Katô spielt Familie]
Novel
176 pages

Some time to himself at last. He could repair the old radio or maybe rearrange the record collection. But when he meets young Mic, who makes him a strange offer, he begins to see things in a new light.

A delicate novel about a fresh start late in life, and about happiness.

The days stretch out and yet time hurries by ... The clock is ticking, yet now is just the moment for life to take off. Could a small, white Pomeranian really change anything?

He has always envied his former colleague. For being retired, for his motorbike and new-found freedom. But there he is, himself recently retired, standing on the mossy steps of his house, uncertain which direction to take. He no longer needs a tie, he's just in the way at home, his children have long since moved out.

And what about the young woman he’s recently met at the cemetery, is she having him on? Hard to say, he's out of practice. Still, he accepts her proposal to get involved with her «Happy Family» agency, as a grandpa to begin with, then as an ex-husband, then once again as a boss. And so he encounters new people, new fates. He’s skilled at his new roles and his wife suspects nothing. She’s taken up dancing again ...

The novel, written by a young Austrian author with Japanese roots, is situated in Japan but might just as well take place in any meritocratic Western society. A book about memories and unfulfilled dreams, about moments of happiness and turning points in our lives. With just a few strokes, eloquent imagery and inimitable warmth, Milena Michiko Flašar illustrates a life both very ordinary – and quite unique.

»A literary godsend. The author has a poetic, laconic tone that delights critics and readers in equal measure.«

Werner Schandor, Wiener Zeitung.

Milena Michiko Flašar was born in St. Pölten in 1980. Her novel I Called Him Necktie sold over 100,000 copies and won several accolades. The author lives in Vienna with her family. Mr Katô is shortlisted for the Austrian Book Prize.

Foreign Sales:
Netherlands (Cossee)
Paperback rights: Germany (btb)
Film option sold
Non-fiction
Lothar Müller

Adrien Proust and his son Marcel

Observers of the ailing world

[Adrien Proust und sein Sohn Marcel – Beobachter der erkrankten Welt]

History of literature / Cultural science 2021

224 pages with many illustrations

A flock of doctors and patients traverse Marcel Proust’s seven-volume novel “In Search of Lost Time.” Proust compares water lilies with neurasthenics; the lovelorn hope to be cured by vaccination, and in the salon of Madame de Saint-Euverte, the comma bacillus, otherwise known as the cholera, makes an appearance. Despite the profusion of medical motifs in Proust’s work his father Adrien, pioneer epidemiologist and quite a prominent figure in his day, has rarely been the focus of attention.

Lothar Müller brings back together father and son, and thereby sheds a new light on the interplay between medicine and modern literature. He shows how the son took inspiration from his father’s world of research and how, conversely, the father relied on his first-born’s imagination and way with words in his fight against the danger of an epidemic that, so it seemed, was overtaking them from the East.

Thus, the author creates a masterful panorama of a time of vibrant social life retrospectively glorified as the Belle Époque – where the inner worlds of the psyche became the focal point of literary investigation and European powers reshaped the globe according to their political, cultural and hygienic ideas.

Born in Dortmund in 1954, **Lothar Müller** is a culture and literature scholar; he worked as an editor in the Berlin-based culture section of the Süddeutsche Zeitung until 2020, and is honorary professor at the Humboldt Universität Berlin. For his work in cultural journalism he was awarded several prizes, among them the Alfred-Kerr-Preis and the Johann-Heinrich-Merck-Preis.

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**The Second Voice – The Art of Declamation from Goethe to Kafka**

[Die zweite Stimme – Vortragskunst von Goethe bis Kafka]

160 pages

Literary criticism with the help of cultural and media studies recently has paid more and more attention to oral versions of written texts. Award-winning cultural and literary critic Lothar Mueller in this important and much praised work about the art of public reading and performance brings voices to our ears which have never been recorded, be it on analogue or digital media. By tracing e.g. Goethe dictating his texts Mueller succeeds in developing a virtual acoustic physiognomy of the ingenious writer.
Henry Keazor

Raphael’s School of Athens
From philosophical academy to Hall of Fame

Born in 1965, Henry Keazor studied art history, German literature, musicology and philosophy in Paris and Heidelberg. From 2008-2012, he was Chair of Art History at Saarland University; since autumn 2012, he has been Professor for Modern and Recent Art History at the University of Heidelberg. His research interests include French and Italian painting as well as architecture in the 17th century, and he publishes on the relation between art and media, on music videos and on the subject of forgery.

Painted in 1510/11, Raphael’s fresco “The School of Athens” in the Stanza della Segnatura at the Vatican is among the most famous works in the history of art. But how could the depiction of an assembly of philosophers become this popular? Why is it that this painting in particular was and continues to be discussed, analysed and, in the course of history, received in the most diverse contexts, beyond art history and philosophy? Why did it lend itself equally well to parody as to adaptation in art and pop culture?

Henry Keazor demonstrates that, with this fresco, Raphael brilliantly managed to bring to life the abstract philosophical disciplines, their history and the links that tie them together. The artistic concept he developed to this end proved so viable that, to this day, it is successfully applied to very different subjects and figures.

The author first sheds light on “The School of Athens’s” production process to then trace a course through the history of art: from Italy to France, England and Germany. A course that ultimately leads him to Cy Twombly and the appropriation of the fresco by music videos, advertising, Lego and Hollywood.

Interpretation, Imitation, Adaptation, Parody – what has made “The School of Athens” one of the central images of the Renaissance?
Images dominate the digital communication – and create new languages. The first book series that systematically takes a close look at the aesthetical, social and political dimensions of image phenomena in the digital world.

If we want it or not, our world changes thanks to digitalisation: images are becoming more and more important. Thanks to smart phones the creation of images is faster, more variable and more professional than ever before, and thanks to social media it is easy to distribute and share them almost endlessly.

For the first time people can exchange information with the help of images as naturally as they do with spoken or written language. The “Iconic Turn”, proclaimed for years, has become reality. This results in various new forms and functions of images. Selfies, memes, fake-images or image protests have their roots in the analogue sphere, but can only be explained through the logic and infrastructure of social media.

Until now there haven’t existed any suitable criteria to classify the digital image culture. The volumes of the “Image Cultures in Digital Media” series discuss the most important digital image phenomena, they pick up debates or initiate these, offer expert overview and dare first conclusions.

Wagenbach consequently continues its tradition of socio-critical intervention and shows its sustainable interest in aesthetical questions: true to Aby Warburg’s method, to take image practices seriously, independently of their location within the culture, and to see them in a bigger cultural and socio-political context.
Jörg Scheller

Body-building

Digitalisation, body culture and social networks

[Body-Bilder - Körperkultur, Digitalisierung und Soziale Netzwerke]

Image Cultures in Digital Media

Cultural Science 2021

80 pages with illustrations

Workout videos are everywhere on social media. Jörg Scheller analyses how YouTube, Instagram and smartphones change exercising at the gym, and what forms of physical self-optimisation prevail in the digital age.

With smartphones, picture-taking devices are moving closer to the body and seem to be at the verge of becoming appendages. The intervals between producing and reproducing images of the exercising self are growing shorter, between push-ups, posing, posting – reaching the simultaneity characteristic of mobile digitalisation. Jörg Scheller charts the social space of the gym and shows how digital culture is accompanied by a culture of functional training: creative, efficient, locally flexible.

Born in 1979, Jörg Scheller is Professor for Art History at Zurich University of the Arts, a journalist, musician, and certified fitness instructor. Some of his latest publications include “Metalmorphosis: The unlikely transformations of Heavy Metal” (2020) and “Appetite for the Magnificent. On Aquariums” (2017).
Whenever a camera closes in on our faces, we have to expect being made the object of digital mass surveillance, involuntarily and without our knowledge. Automatic facial recognition is omnipresent – with dire consequences for our relationship to the “private” image.

The billions of faces that circulate on social media each day have become a valuable resource, managed and siphoned off by state and commercial actors. But the algorithms of facial recognition software are prone to error and far from “neutral”: They exacerbate racial discrimination and entrench gender stereotypes. Roland Meyer inquires after the consequences of this technology – and the possibilities to subvert and evade it.

Roland Meyer is an arts and media scientist at the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg. In his work, he focuses on the history and theory of technical images. In 2019, he published his book “Operative Portraits” that traces the pre-history of today’s facial recognition software from Lavater to Facebook.
Cultivation – Production – Transport – Sales – Consumption: It is along supply chains where stories of big winners and many losers are being made. Based on his travels all over the world and a number of striking examples, Caspar Dohmen demonstrates how all this could change. Early capitalism already knew supply chains; they were enlarged in the age of imperialism and have gained new traction since the eighties. Not only does Caspar Dohmen trace how the global network of supply chains has evolved historically he also describes the mechanisms and powerful interests they are based on, as well as the damage they do. Because no matter how profitable this construct may be for a few of the actors involved it is, at the same time, highly precarious: Natural resources are getting scarcer; global political conflicts result in shortages, and exploitation is steadily increasing – about 6,000 people die every day at or because of their work.

Legal provision in Germany or in the EU is long overdue but remains hotly contested. Institutions like the World Trade Organisation are growing weaker; international trade deals have come under fire. The call for sustainability and fair working conditions, for an accounting of the true costs including the ecological damage is getting louder.

Caspar Dohmen, journalist with a focus on economics, author and lecturer, works for Süddeutsche Zeitung, Deutschlandfunk and SWR
Non-fiction:
Backlist Highlights
Otto Rosenberg

The Burning Glass
Recorded by Ulrich Enzensberger. With a preface by
Klaus Schütz.

[Das Brennglas - Aufgezeichnet von Ulrich Enzensberger. Mit einem
Vorwort von Klaus Schütz]
160 pages with many photographs

It took Otto Rosenberg fifty years to find the strength for this book. A German Sinto survivor
of the death camps, he shares his memories. Neither accusing nor bringing charges, he merely
tells the story of what happened.

Before, Sinti and Roma were actively involved in Berlin city life. Otto Rosenberg recounts care-
free scenes of his childhood from a time before the national socialist corrosion of society. In plain
language, he describes how the brown cloud only slowly began to descend on the everyday life of
German Sinti and Roma. In 1936, the then nine-year-old Otto was declared to be of “alien blood”
and, along with his family, forced to move to an internment camp for “Gypsies” in the Berlin
district of Marzahn, north-east of the city centre. There, he was subjected to medical tests by NS-
“researchers for racial biology” before being deported to Auschwitz in 1943 where most of his
family was murdered. Rosenberg himself was sent to the camps of Buchenwald, Dora, and Bergen-
Belsen – and survived. The account of his life in Germany afterwards is succinct, harrowing and
memorable. Carefully and with great empathy, writer Ulrich Enzensberger has recorded his story
and added some well-advised commentary. A necessary and topical book given the continued and
socially still widely accepted Antiziganism.

Otto Rosenberg was born on 28 April 1927 in East Prussia and died on 4 July 2001 in Berlin.
Rosenberg was one of the founders and long-serving chair of the Berlin-Brandenburg State
Association of German Sinti and Roma; he was also board member of the Central Council as well
as an active member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). In 1998, he was awarded
the Federal Cross of Merit First Class (Bundesverdienstkreuz 1.Klasse).

Foreign sales: Polen (Universitas), UK (London House), Italy (Edizioni la meridiana)
Stefan Schweizer

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon:
From Wonder of the World to Green Architecture
[Die Hängenden Gärten von Babylon –
Vom Weltwunder zur grünen Architektur]
Many coloured pictures and illustrations & an essay by F. Maier-Solgk
Cultural history 2020
240 pages

A mythical queen as much adored as reviled, the search for a lost wonder of the world and the promise of blooming gardens in the midst of concrete architecture: Stefan Schweizer traces the history of architectural fascination with the Hanging Gardens – right up until the green architecture of today.

Even among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon hold an exceptional position – among other things because no evidence of their existence has yet been found. Well into modernity, the question whether or not the monumental terraced gardens have ever existed has proven controversial.

This has in no way diminished fascination with the gardens – on the contrary. From Antiquity to Karl Friedrich Schinkel, a tradition of image-making tells of each epoch creating their own vision of this archetype of the art of gardening – as well as of its creator, the legendary Babylonian queen Semiramis. Apart from fantasies of reconstruction that peaked with Robert Koldewey’s archaeological rediscovery of Babylon around 1900, many buildings and gardens from the Renaissance to modernity attest to the Babylonian influence: The Palazzo Piccolomini in Pienza, the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino, the Small Erimitage in Saint Petersburg or Le Corbusier’s rooftop gardens.

In his concluding essay, architectural critic Frank Maier-Solgk examines how the interplay between architecture and greenery finds new expression in modernity and in the present day. And he investigates how a spectacular “Hortitecture,” characterised by a reconsideration of climate protection and sustainability, increasingly seems to determine the future appearance of the metropolis: Are high rises with facades entirely covered in green at the apex of an exotic architecture of representation or do they finally make good on the old promise of bringing blooming nature to the city?

Born in 1968, Stefan Schweizer studied Art History, History and Sociology. He was Junior Professor for Art History at Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf and held the city of Düsseldorf’s endowed professorship for European Garden Art. Since 2012 he is scientific director of the Benrath Palace and Park Foundation, and runs the Museum for European Garden Art there.
Ursula Schulz-Dornburg, 
Martin Zimmermann

The Division of the World: 
Records of Colonial History?

[Die Teilung der Welt – Zeugnisse der Kolonialgeschichte]
Colonial history, Photography, Cultural Studies 2020
160 Pages. Large format with unpublished photographs

In this impressive series, Ursula Schulz-Dornburg photographically documents the monumental archive of Spanish colonial power in Seville. Pictures that let guess at what is hiding on the shelves: momentous manuscripts, histories of voyages of discovery and of monarchs’ hubris.

The papers seem to be moving on their own. The cardboard is warped out of shape, slightly bent as if someone with a child’s curiosity had tried to lift up the edges to pry out its secrets. Countless secrets are hidden inside, the papers know of disappeared languages, of lust for gold and dreams of a “New World”: a monument to power in paper form behind cabinet doors of Cuban cedar wood, marble halls flooded with light, breath-taking architecture.

Ursula Schulz-Dornburg’s never-before-published, historically unique photos show the Archivo General de Indias in Seville before its restoration. Since 1785, about 300 years of Spanish colonial history in the Americas are housed in the archive, 8,000 maps, around 90 million documents – among them Christopher Columbus’s logbook and the famous “Treaty of Tordesillas:” In 1494, the kings of Spain and Portugal, with the help of the pope’s mediating power, drew a line of demarcation through the Atlantic and divided between themselves the discovered and yet-to-be discovered countries of the world.

Historian Martin Zimmermann sets out on a journey to the Age of Exploration and tells the story of hazardous passages, encounters with the Other, colonial violence, the power of cartography – and the insatiable desire to make known to oneself the entire world.

Ursula Schulz-Dornburg and Martin Zimmermann are friends of long standing. Ursula Schulz-Dornburg is one of the internationally most renowned German photographers. In her work, she explores spaces at the margins of Western perception and border landscapes created and shaped by humans, most recently in an exhibition called The Land In-Between at Frankfurter Städel Museum. She lives in Düsseldorf. Martin Zimmermann is Professor for Ancient History at Munich’s Ludwig Maximilians Universität (LMU). In 2021, he will assume the office of speaker at Deutscher Historikertag, an annual conference of mostly German-speaking historians. Most recently, he has published Violence. The Dark Side of Antiquity and Curious Places of Antiquity.

Foreign Sales: UK (Haus Publishing)