

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Jon Cho-Polizzi, Prize Recipient 2024

Jon Cho-Polizzi has been chosen to receive the 2024 Helen & Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a three-person jury for his translation of Max Czollek's *De-Integrate: A Jewish Survival Guide for the 21st Century*, published by Restless Books in 2023. The honor was presented to him at an award ceremony at the Goethe-Institut New York on October 1, 2024.

Jury Statement: The jury for the Helen & Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize takes great pleasure in awarding the 2024 prize to Jon Cho-Polizzi for his translation of Max Czollek's *De-Integrate*, published by Restless Books. We congratulate Jon Cho-Polizzi, whose marvelously confident rendering introduces English-speaking readers to a fresh and powerful voice with a vital message. Max Czollek's reflections on Germany's past, present, and potential future, as the country reckons with rising antisemitism, xenophobia, and racism, urges minoritized communities in Germany not to buy into the promise of assimilation as defined by the dominant culture—all too eager to shed its past—and to stop participating in a kitsch-filled memory culture, but instead to adopt a stance of resistance and embrace "otherness" while striving to forge a truly pluralistic society; hence the title *De-Integrate*.

Cho-Polizzi's crackling, punchy language brilliantly takes up the challenge of the book's many shifts in register (theoretical, academic, critical, colloquial), tone (sardonic and humorous to reflective and personal), and form (poetry, rap lyrics, newspaper/journal articles, speeches, statements). His buoyant prose, which manages to read both effortlessly and invitingly, captures the flavor of the original as it conveys issues of urgent current interest. His sparkling presentation extends even to the translator footnotes. Max Czollek's book, in Jon Cho-Polizzi's resplendent translation, is sure to linger in readers' minds for a long time to come.

About Jon Cho-Polizzi: Jon Cho-Polizzi is Assistant Professor of German at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He was born and raised in Northern California and received his PhD in German and Medieval Studies from UC Berkeley after studying Literature, History, and Translation in Santa Cruz and Heidelberg. His literary translations highlight the polyphony of contemporary German-language literature. Jon lives and works between Michigan, California, and Berlin.

The Jury:

Shelley Frisch, Princeton, NJ (Chair)
Elisabeth Lauffer, Hannacroix, NY
Philip Boehm, Houston, TX

No prize was awarded in 2023.

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Vincent Kling, Prize Recipient 2022

Vincent Kling has been chosen to receive the 2022 Helen & Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for his translation of Heimito von Doderer's novel *The Strudlhof Steps*, published by New York Review Books in 2021. The honor was presented to him at an award ceremony at the Goethe-Institut New York on June 16, 2022.

Jury Statement: The jury for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize takes great pleasure in announcing that the 2022 winner is Vincent Kling, for his translation of Heimito von Doderer's *The Strudlhof Steps*, published by NYRB. This novel, one of Austria's most renowned literary works, yet never previously translated into English, moves between two time periods—1908 to 1911 and 1923 to 1925—and introduces an intriguing array of characters from many walks of life. During the long years Vincent Kling devoted to this extraordinarily challenging text, he kept a translator's diary—part of which was published in *Asymptote*—that offers readers a glimpse into Kling's daunting task of rendering the distinctive idiolects of the novel's (as he writes in the diary) "panoply of types worthy of Chaucer or Balzac or Dickens (or Joyce)—droll or menacing, devious or naïve, brilliant or plodding, real deal or wannabe" and of matching the author's linguistic playfulness. Our jury was tickled and transported by the translation's musicality ("contrive, connive, keep the tryst alive"), alliterative allure ("secret sharer of his solitude"), command of nomenclature, and metaphoric inventiveness ("her neck lengthened out over the situation"), its adherence to the long and twisty sentences of the original German, and its introduction of words-that-ought-to-be-words ("advicellets"). We congratulate Vincent Kling on this monumental linguistic and literary achievement, the masterful quality of which is maintained on each of the novel's more than eight hundred pages. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the very last word of this resplendent translation is "perfection."

About Vincent Kling: Vincent Kling teaches English, German, and French at La Salle University in Philadelphia. His dissertation was on the early works of Hugo von Hofmannsthal. He has translated Doderer, Veteranyi, Fritsch, Bahr, and Jonke, as well as Heimrad Bäcker, Hofmannsthal, Andreas Pittler, Engelbert Pfeiffer, and Werner Kofler. He was awarded the Schlegel-Tieck Prize in 2013 for his translation of Veteranyi's novel *Why the Child is Cooking in the Polenta*.

The Jury:

Shelley Frisch, Princeton, NJ, Chair
Bettina Abarbanell, Potsdam, Germany
Philip Boehm, Houston, TX
John Hargraves, New York, NY
Susan Harris, Chicago, IL

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Jackie Smith, Prize Recipient 2021

Jackie Smith has been chosen to receive the 2021 Helen & Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for her translation of Judith Schalansky's novel *An Inventory of Losses*, published by New Directions Publishing in 2020. The honor was presented to her by David Gill, the Consul General of Germany, at an award ceremony at the Goethe-Institut New York on June 24, 2021.

Jury Statement: The jury for the Helen & Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize is excited to award the prize for 2021 to Jackie Smith for her translation of *An Inventory of Losses* by Judith Schalansky, published by New Directions. *Kirkus Reviews* described the book as "an exploration of extinct animals and objects told through dazzling stories that question the bounds of memory and myth," and Jackie Smith's rendering into English is no less dazzling.

Schalansky's genre-bending (or blending) text roams across time and space in twelve chapters whose identical lengths belie their tremendous diversity of subject matter, as they transport us from an island that disappeared into the South Pacific all the way to the moon, from ancient Greece to present-day Germany – and beyond. One of the many extraordinary features of Schalansky's writing is to equip each episode with its own distinct narration, and the resultant voices are every bit as wide-ranging as the tales they tell.

Jackie Smith's translation follows this back-to-the future slalom with remarkable grace and agility, brilliantly capturing the musicality of the original text, its philosophical depths, psychological insights, meticulous scientific observations—as well as its playful ingenuity and deeply poetic imagination. In fact a catalogue of these achievements might properly be construed as an "Inventory of Gains."

The jury is also pleased to note how many fine translations were submitted for consideration: we would be delighted if readers would explore the remaining 30 titles, and would once again especially like to commend the three other translations that constituted our shortlist.

About Jackie Smith: Jackie Smith studied Modern Languages (German and French) at Cambridge University. She worked as a commercial translator, including several years at a German bank, before venturing into book translation. She translates fiction and non-fiction, and in 2017 was the winner of the Austrian Cultural Forum London Translation Prize. Her translation of Judith Schalansky's *An Inventory of Losses*, which is her first full-length literary translation, has been longlisted for the International Booker Prize 2021.

The Jury:

Shelley Frisch, Princeton, NJ, Chair
Bettina Abarbanell, Potsdam, Germany
Philip Boehm, Houston, TX
John Hargraves, New York, NY
Susan Harris, Chicago, IL

Philip Boehm, Prize Recipient 2020

Philip Boehm was chosen to receive the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for his translation of Christine Wunnicke's novel *The Fox and Dr. Shimamura*, published by New Directions Publishing in 2019.

Jury Statement: The jury for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize is delighted to award the prize for 2020 to Philip Boehm for his translation of Christine Wunnicke's *The Fox and Dr. Shimamura*. Wunnicke is a contemporary writer known for her historical characters drawn from eccentric corners of real life. Her sly novel is both subtle and startling: a retired Japanese psychiatrist, helped (or perhaps tricked) by the four women in his household, is remembering (or perhaps misremembering) his younger days when he struggled to master cases of both Japanese spirit-possession and Parisian hysteria under Charcot. Through all the surprising turns of the story, Wunnicke conveys Dr. Shimamura's strange outer and inner life without exoticizing or overidentifying, in an ironic yet compassionate authorial voice. Boehm's sensitive and versatile translation, making admirable choices of both tone and vocabulary throughout, captures all the sparkle and slanting energy of this fresh, original, and very modern novel.

The jury is especially pleased to honor Boehm as a translator this year since his superb retranslation of Arthur Koestler's gripping masterpiece *Darkness At Noon* was a strong contender for the prize as well. Boehm has given English-language readers the many kinds of beauty, terror, and quiet flashes of wit and insight in these extraordinary works of literature.

About Philip Boehm: Philip Boehm is a translator, playwright, and theater director whose career zigzags across languages and borders, artistic disciplines and cultural divides. He has translated more than thirty novels and plays mostly by German and Polish writers, including Herta Müller, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Hanna Krall. For this work he has received numerous awards including fellowships from the NEA and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. As a theater director and playwright he has staged dozens of professional productions at theaters in Poland, Slovakia, and the United States. Philip Boehm is also the founding artistic director of Upstream Theater in St. Louis.

The Jury:

Shelley Frisch, Princeton, NJ, Chair
Bettina Abarbanell, Potsdam, Germany
John Hargraves, New York, NY
Susan Harris, Chicago, IL
Damion Searls, New York, NY

**HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE
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Damion Searls, Prize Recipient 2019

Damion Searls was chosen to receive the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for his translation of Uwe Johnson's *Anniversaries: From a Year in the Life of Gesine Cresspahl* published by New York Review Books in 2018. The honor was presented to him at the Goethe-Institut New York on May 23, 2019 by Yasemin Pamuk, Head of Cultural Affairs and Science at the Consulate General of Germany.

Jury Statement: The jury for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize takes great pleasure in awarding this year's prize to Damion Searls for his masterful translation of Uwe Johnson's *Anniversaries*. This multi-volume novel, which poses daunting translation challenges, chronicles a year (August 1967-August 1968) in the life of Gesine Cresspahl, a woman who left her small town in East Germany for New York's Upper West Side with her young daughter, and overlays her daily struggles with painful memories of the past and the alarming news of the present world in a daily-recorded, year-long montage.

Searls's translation of this monumental work—which has been compared to the writings of Joyce, Faulkner, and Balzac— is the first complete edition of this novel in English. His sparkling translation captures the dizzying swirl of events, from the quotidian to the earth-shattering, with meticulous, acoustically spellbinding prose, and makes for riveting reading throughout its nearly 1,700 pages.

About Damion Searls: Damion Searls is the author of a book on Hermann Rorschach and the Rorschach test, and has translated many classic modern writers, including Marcel Proust, Rainer Maria Rilke, Friedrich Nietzsche, Robert Walser, Ingeborg Bachmann, Alfred Döblin, Jon Fosse, Elfriede Jelinek, Patrick Modiano and Nescio.

The Jury:

Shelley Frisch, Princeton, NJ, Chair
Bettina Abarbanell, Potsdam, Germany
Ross Benjamin, Nyack, NY
John Hargraves, New York, NY
Susan Harris, Chicago, IL

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Isabel Fargo Cole, Prize Recipient 2018

Isabel Fargo Cole has been chosen to receive the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for her translation of Wolfgang Hilbig's *Old Rendering Plant* published by Two Lines Press in 2017. The honor was presented to her at the Goethe-Institut New York on June 7, 2018 by David Gill, the Consul General of Germany.

Jury Statement: The jury for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize is delighted to award the prize for 2018 to Isabel Fargo Cole for her translation of Wolfgang Hilbig's *Old Rendering Plant*. Hilbig, who grew up in the German Democratic Republic and later moved to the West, has his narrator reflect on dark childhood memories over one extended monologue. While the text itself is brief, the challenges of rendering this Rendering are daunting.

As the narrator himself muses early on in the book, "the relevant nouns at my command proved again and again to be treacherous tools, perpetually demonstrating the impotence of all descriptions." Isabel Fargo Cole's superb translation rises to the myriad challenges with stylistic pyrotechnics: alliterations and assonances, wordplay of all kinds, and inventive phrasings that capture the text's lyrical and sensual qualities.

About Isabel Fargo Cole: Isabel Fargo Cole is a US-born, Berlin-based writer and translator. Her most recent translations include *Old Rendering Plant* by Wolfgang Hilbig (Two Lines, 2017), *At the Burning Abyss* by Franz Fühmann (Seagull Books, 2017) and *Gaslight* by Joachim Kalka (NYRB, 2017). Her novel *Die grüne Grenze* (Edition Nautilus, 2017), written in German, was shortlisted for the 2018 Prize of the Leipzig Book Fair in the fiction category.

The Jury:

Shelley Frisch, Princeton, NJ, Chair
Bettina Abarbanell, Potsdam, Germany
Ross Benjamin, Nyack, NY
John Hargraves, New York, NY
Susan Harris, Chicago, IL

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Charlotte Collins, Prize Recipient 2017

Charlotte Collins has been chosen to receive the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for her translation of Robert Seethaler's *A Whole Life* (*Ein ganzes Leben*) published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in 2016. The honor was presented to her on June 8, 2017 by the Consul General of Germany in New York.

Jury Statement: The jury for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize takes great pleasure in awarding Charlotte Collins the 2017 Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize, for her translation of Robert Seethaler's *A Whole Life*. This novel, Robert Seethaler's fifth, and the first to be translated into English, is a model of compact beauty, taking the reader from the protagonist's bleak childhood through the trials and tribulations—and fleeting joys—of his largely solitary adulthood, in unhurried, unadorned, stirring prose. Charlotte Collins's masterful translation of this meditative novel perfectly captures the quiet, compelling tone of the original German-language narrative of a "whole life"; her gentle yet powerful diction recreates a work that is both haunting and graceful. We are pleased to learn that Charlotte Collins is continuing to translate Robert Seethaler's writing into English and make it accessible to an expanded international readership.

About Charlotte Collins: Charlotte Collins studied English Literature at Cambridge University, and worked as an actor and radio journalist in Germany and the UK. Before becoming a literary translator. Her translation of *A Whole Life* was shortlisted for the 2016 Man Booker International Prize and the 2017 International Dublin Literary Award. She has also translated Robert Seethaler's *The Tobacconist* (House of Anansi, 2016), and is currently working on Benedict Wells' *The End of Loneliness* as well as Nino Haratischwili's award-winning family saga *The Eighth Life*.

The Jury:

Shelley Frisch, Princeton, NJ, Chair
Bettina Abarbanell, Potsdam, Germany
Ross Benjamin, Nyack, NY
John Hargraves, New York, NY
Susan Harris, Chicago, IL

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Daniel Bowles, Prize Recipient 2016

Daniel Bowles has been chosen to receive the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for his translation of Christian Kracht's *Imperium: A Fiction of the South Seas* published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in 2015.

Jury Statement: The jury is delighted to award the 2016 Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize to Daniel Bowles for his translation of Swiss novelist Christian Kracht's *Imperium*, the story of a German radical vegetarian nudist at the turn of the twentieth century who was determined to found a South Seas colony based on worship of the sun and of coconuts. This novel, which brims with allusions and intertextual echoes, evokes literary models from Conrad, Stevenson, and Melville to Thomas Mann. Bowles's brilliant, creative use of an exaggeratedly antiquated diction and syntax to craft a self-consciously ornate and mannered text succeeds in capturing the comic archness of Kracht's prose style for English-language readers.

About Daniel Bowles: Daniel Bowles' translations include works by Christian Kracht, Thomas Meinecke, Alexander Kluge, Rainald Goetz, and Xaver Bayer. His academic publications focus on postwar and contemporary German literature, including most recently *The Ends of Satire* (De Gruyter, 2015), a study of satiric writing and theory since 1950. In past years he has received support from the Fulbright Program and the German Academic Exchange Service. He currently teaches German Studies at Boston College and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The Jury:

Shelley Frisch, Princeton, NJ, Chair
Ross Benjamin, Nyack, NY
John Hargraves, New York, NY
Susan Harris, Chicago, IL
Karen Nölle, Niederkleeveez, Germany

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Catherine Schelbert, Prize Recipient 2015

Catherine Schelbert was chosen to receive the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for her translation of Hugo Ball's *Flametti: oder vom Dandysmus der Armen (Flametti, or The Dandyism of the Poor)* published by Wakefield Press in 2014. The honor was presented to her in June 2015 by the Consul General of Germany in New York.

Statement of the jury: The jury for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize takes great pleasure in announcing that the winner for 2015 is Catherine Schelbert's translation of Hugo Ball's *Flametti or The Dandyism of the Poor*. Ball, the founder of the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich and one of the fathers of the Dada movement, published his novel in 1918 and now, after almost a century, we have an English translation of this rollicking, zany, melancholy story of about the rise and fall of a troupe of performers in the louche world of cafés, taverns, nightclubs, and vaudeville theaters in a Switzerland where the Great War is only a distant rumble. On every page, Catherine Schelbert has rendered Ball's slangy, offbeat German into equally exuberant English. Her translation was far and away our first choice and makes this Dada classic at long last available to an English-speaking readership.

Catherine Schelbert was born in London some two decades after Dada shocked the public in Zürich. After attending Barnard College in New York, she joined the Peace Corps and worked for two years in the jail in Arequipa, Peru. On a trip to Switzerland, she fell in love and into translating. Her fields are contemporary art and architecture, film subtitles (*The Circle*, 2014) and film script editing (*Mary, Queen of Scots*, 2013). She has been on the staff of the art journal *Parkett* since its inception in 1984. Translating *Flametti* was an exciting complement to the equally demanding work of translating theoretical writings on art. Schelbert received the Meret Oppenheim Prize in 2006 and a PEN translation grant for *Flametti* in 2011. She lives in Weggis, Switzerland.

The Jury:

David Dollenmayer, Hopkinton, MA
Shelley Frisch, Princeton, NJ
John Hargraves, New York, NY
Susan Harris, Chicago, IL
Karen Nölle, Niederkleveez, Germany

**HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE
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Shelley Frisch, Prize Recipient 2014

Shelley Frisch was chosen to receive the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for her translation of Reiner Stach's *Kafka – Die Jahre der Erkenntnis* (*Kafka - The Years of Insight*) published by Princeton University Press in 2013. The honor was presented to her on June 16 by the Consul General of Germany in Chicago, Dr. Christian Brecht.

Jury Statement: Reiner Stach's biography of Franz Kafka deserves the adjective "monumental" in two senses, by virtue of its sheer length and detail, but more importantly by virtue of a lively, readable style that will make it the standard account of Kafka's life for the foreseeable future. Following her translation of *Kafka: The Decisive Years*, Shelley Frisch's completion of *Kafka: The Years of Insight*, covering the last decade of the writer's too brief life, makes this marvelous biography not just available, but accessible and inviting for English-speaking readers. Frisch sustains Stach's voice over hundreds of pages, finding fresh, compelling, and often witty ways to render his German into English. Not only that, but given the lack of a standard complete edition of Kafka's work in English, Shelley Frisch made the risky and courageous decision to provide her own translations of all the biography's quotations from Kafka's works, letters, and diaries, and the results more than justify her choice. Together with Reiner Stach, Shelley Frisch has given us a Franz Kafka whom we will read with new insight, wonder, disquiet, and yes – even laughter. Because Kurt Wolff early recognized Kafka's genius and published him in German, it is especially fitting that this skillful rendering of Stach's biography into English receive the Helen and Kurt Wolff prize for translation.

Shelley Frisch taught at Columbia University while serving as executive editor of *The Germanic Review*, then chaired the Haverford/Bryn Mawr Bi-College German Department before turning to translation full-time in the 1990s. She has published widely on German literature, film, cabaret, and the political and linguistic dimensions of exile, as well as on translation; her book on origin of language theories, *The Lure of the Linguistic*, was published in 2004. Her many translations from the German include biographies of Nietzsche, Einstein, and Kafka, for which she was awarded a Modern Language Association Translation Prize. She has received an array of grants, prizes, fellowships, and residencies, and co-directs international translation workshops. She lives in Princeton, New Jersey.

The Jury:

David Dollenmayer, Hopkinton, MA
Krishna Winston, Middletown, CT
Karen Noelle, Germany
John Hargraves, New York
Susan Harris, Chicago, IL

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Philip Boehm, Prize Recipient 2013

Philip Boehm was selected by a five-member jury as the winner of this year's Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for his translation of Gregor von Rezzori's *An Ermine in Czernopol* (New York Review of Books, New York, 2011), originally published as *Ein Hermelin in Tschernopol*. The prize was presented by Dr. Christian Brecht, Consul General in Chicago.

Statement of the jury: "There are realities besides and beyond our own, which is the only one we know, and therefore the only one we think exists." Thus begins Gregor von Rezzori's novel *An Ermine in Czernopol*, his brilliant evocation of a city where Romanians, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Armenians, ethnic Germans, exiled Russians, Jews, Gypsies, and others rub shoulders in uneasy coexistence following the First World War. Philip Boehm's virtuoso translation captures both the stylistic pyrotechnics of Rezzori's digressive and often hilarious prose as well as the spiritual turmoil that lies just below its surface. Through the naïve yet knowing childhood ears and eyes of the narrator, we listen to a babel of ethnic voices and watch as disaster unfolds in slow motion. With this translation, rich in alliteration, assonance, elaborate sentence structure, and changing rhythms, Philip Boehm makes another masterpiece by the author of *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite* vividly available to English-speaking readers."

Philip Boehm's career zigzags across languages and borders, artistic disciplines and cultural divides. He is the author of more than two dozen translations of novels and plays by German and Polish writers, including Nobelist Herta Müller, Christoph Hein, Franz Kafka, Bertolt Brecht, Ida Fink, and Stefan Chwin. Nonfiction translations include *A Woman in Berlin* by Anonymous and *Words to Outlive Us*, a collection of eyewitness accounts from the Warsaw Ghetto. For his work as a translator he has received awards from the American Translators Association, the U.K. Society of Authors, the National Endowment for the Arts, PEN America, the Austrian Ministry of Culture, and the Texas Institute of Letters. As a theater director fluent in several languages he has staged plays in Poland, Slovakia, and the United States. His most frequent venue is Upstream Theater in St. Louis, which he founded in 2004. Since then the company has become a leading producer of new international work, having presented over a dozen U.S. premieres of plays from countries as far-flung as Cuba and Croatia. In 2012 Upstream was recognized by the American Theatre Wing with a National Theater Grant as one of the most promising emerging companies in the United States. As a dramatist his staged plays include *Mixtitlan*, *Soul of a Clone*, *Alma en venta*, *The Death of Atahualpa* (inspired by a Quechua oral drama), and *Return of the Bedbug*—a modern fantasia on Mayakovsky's 1928 satire. For this work he has received awards from the Mexican-American Fund for Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts as well as a 2013 Guggenheim fellowship.

Honorable Mention was also awarded to Donald O. White for his translation of A.V. Thelen's novel *The Island of Second Sight* (Overlook Press, 2012). The jury stated: Donald O. White, with his translation of Albert Vigoleis Thelen's *The Island of Second Sight*, has recovered for readers of English a work of grand proportions and manifest virtuosity. White is particularly successful in capturing and sustaining the

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language of Thelen's wry, irreverent, penetrating, and often hedonistic humor, whether in the narrator's voice or the many voices of his variegated cast of characters. This is a major effort for a landmark work of the mid-twentieth century.

The Jury:

David Dollenmayer, Hopkinton, MA

Krishna Winston, Middletown, CT

Karen Noelle, Germany

Michael Ritterson, Gettysburg, PA

Susan Harris, Chicago

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Burton Pike, Prize Recipient 2012

Burton Pike was selected by a five-member jury as the winner of this year's Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for his translation of Gerhard Meier's *Isle of the Dead* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2011), originally published as *Toteninsel*.

Statement of the jury: Burton Pike's masterful translation introduces English-speaking readers to an important writer they might otherwise never have known. In *Isle of the Dead*, Gerhard Meier (1917-2008) narrates the conversation of two old men in a quiet, meditative, and intensely lyrical voice reminiscent of Robert Walser. Friends since their army days, Baur and Bindschädler walk their regular route along the river, observing, conversing, and reminiscing. Burton Pike has been able to reproduce in English Meier's delicate balance between the everyday and the spiritual, between precise description of physical surroundings and moving exploration of art and its relation to memory and emotion. Pike's deft rendering of the rhythm of Meier's undulating sentences, in which leitmotifs constantly reappear in slightly altered form, keeps the reader enthralled to the end. He has beautifully preserved the deceptive simplicity of a text that gradually reveals itself to be profoundly elegiac. *Isle of the Dead* is the first novel of a tetralogy, and we can only hope that Burton Pike will make more of Meier's rich oeuvre available in English.

Burton Pike is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature and German at the CUNY Graduate Center. He has also taught at the University of Hamburg, Cornell, Queens and Hunter Colleges of CUNY, and been a Visiting Professor at Yale. He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Medaille für Verdienste um Robert Musil from the City of Klagenfurt. He is a member of the PEN Translation Committee. He edited and co-translated Robert Musil's *The Man without Qualities* and a book of Musil's essays, *Precision and Soul*, as well as editing a collection of Musil's stories. He has also translated and written the introductions to Goethe's novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Rilke's novel *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, and most recently Gerhard Meier's novel *Isle of the Dead*. He translated a story by Proust for *Conjunctions*, a story by Ingeborg Bachmann for *Grand Street*, and stories by Alissa Walser for *Chicago Review* and *Painting in a Man's World*. Others of his translations of prose and poetry from German and French have appeared in *Fiction*, *Grand Street*, *Conjunctions*, and other magazines.

The Jury:

David Dollenmayer, Hopkinton, MA
Krishna Winston, Middletown, CT
Karen Noelle, Germany
Michael Ritterson, Gettysburg, PA
Annie Wedekind, Brooklyn, NY

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Jean M. Snook, Prize Recipient 2011

Jean M. Snook was selected by a five-member jury as the winner of this year's Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for her translation of Gert Jonke's *The Distant Sound*, (Dalkey Archive Press, 2010), originally published as *Der ferne Klang*. Mr. Onno Hückmann, Consul General of Germany in Chicago, will present the award to Jean M. Snook.

The jury's statement: The jury for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translation Prize is pleased to award the prize for 2010 to Jean Snook for her translation of Gert Jonke's *The Distant Sound*, published by Dalkey Archive Press. The Austrian novelist, poet, and playwright Gert Jonke (1946-2009) wrote a German rich in descriptive detail and evocative sound effects that Snook has rendered with consummate skill into an English as poetic, funny, and crazy as the original. In long, spooling sentences and synaesthetic images, she gives English-speaking readers access to a writer who deserves a place next to better-known contemporaries such as Thomas Bernhard and Arno Schmidt. Jean Snook makes the tightrope act of translating Jonke's exploration of language as a means of capturing the ineffable look effortless.

Jean M. Snook lives with her husband on the easternmost tip of North America, the Avalon Peninsula on the island of Newfoundland, where she has taught German language and literature at Memorial University since 1984. She has translated Else Lasker-Schüler's *Concert* and Luise Rinser's *Abelard's Love* for the University of Nebraska Press; Evelyn Grill's *Winter Quarters* for Ariadne Press; Hans Eichner's *Kahn & Engelmann* for Biblioasis; and, thanks to a reference from translator Renate Latimer, Gert Jonke's *Homage to Czerny: Studies in Virtuoso Technique* for Dalkey Archive Press, where she received very welcome editorial assistance from Jeremy Davies. Continuing with Dalkey Archive Press, she began translating Jonke's *The Distant Sound* during a stay at the Europäisches Übersetzerkollegium in Straelen, Germany, in 2007, and finished the translation in 2009, when it won the inaugural Austrian Cultural Forum Translation Prize. Her translation of the third book in Jonke's trilogy, *Awakening to the Great Sleep War*, is due to appear later in 2011. She is now translating a book by the Swiss author Paul Nizon.

The Jury:

Krishna Winston, Middletown, CT
Helmut Frielinghaus, Hamburg, Germany
David Dollenmayer, Hopkinton, MA
Michael Ritterson, Gettysburg, PA
Annie Wedekind, Brooklyn, NY

**HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE
RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024**



Ross Benjamin, Prize Recipient 2010

Ross Benjamin was selected by a five-member jury as the winner of this year's Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for his translation of Michael Maars's *Speak, Nabokov* (Verso, 200), originally published as *Solus Rex. Die Die schöne böse Welt des Vladimir Nabokov*. Mr. Onno Hückmann, Consul General of Germany in Chicago, will present the award to Ross Benjamin.

The jury's statement: "The jury for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translation Prize is pleased to award the prize for 2010 to Ross Benjamin for his translation of Michael Maar's *Speak, Nabokov*, published by Verso. The jury finds that this remarkably musical translation reads beautifully, and brings to English-speaking readers an important study of a writer of world stature whose works cry out for skilled exegesis. Benjamin's translation is elegant, witty, even playful, doing justice to both the German original and the book's subject. The translator reveals a sophisticated understanding of literary criticism and his own sure sense of literary style."

Ross Benjamin's publications have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Bookforum*, *The Nation*, and elsewhere. Additional translations include Friedrich Hölderlin's *Hyperion* (Archipelago Books, 2008), Kevin Vennemann's *Close to Jednew* (Melville House, 2008), Joseph Roth's *Job* (Archipelago, forthcoming, 2010) and Thomas Pletzinger's *Funeral for a Dog* (W.W. Norton & Company, forthcoming, 2011). He spent 2003-04 in Berlin as a Fulbright scholar. Ross Benjamin is presently at work on a novel about the Harlem Renaissance.

The Jury:

Krishna Winston, Middletown, CT
Helmut Frielinghaus, Hamburg, Germany
David Dollenmayer, Hopkinton, PA
Michael Ritterson, Gettysburg, PA
Annie Wedekind, Brooklyn, NY

**HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE
RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024**



John Hargraves, Prize Recipient 2009

Translator John Hargraves was chosen to receive the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for his translation of Michael Krüger's *Turiner Komödie* (*The Executor – A Comedy of Letters*) published by Harcourt in 2009.

The jury said that "John Hargraves has performed a masterful job in recreating the authentic and natural voice of Michael Krüger's novel *The Executor* (*Die Turiner Komödie*). The language is vigorous and full of penetrating humor. Hargraves displays a sensibility that fully understands the subtle undertones of the German language, for which he then finds elegant and refined stylistic correspondences in the English language. Nothing seems to be lost in this translation, vibrates with a refreshing vitality."

John Hargraves is an author, translator, and editor. He has written *Music in the Works of Broch, Mann and Kafka* (Camden House, 2001) and has translated Elias Canetti's *Notes from Hampstead* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux 1998), *Dear Mrs. Strigl*, a memoir of Hermann Broch by his son H.F. Broch de Rothermann (Yale University 2001), *Geist and Zeitgeist: The Spirit in an Unspiritual Age* (Counterpoint Press, 2003), a collection of essays by Hermann Broch, with an introduction by the translator, various essays on Philip Roth, *Bach: Life and Work by Martin Geck* (Harcourt, Inc. 2006) and *The Executor: A Comedy of Letters* by Michael Krüger (Harcourt, Inc. 2008). In addition, he has edited many of the German translations of the novels of Philip Roth for Hanser in Munich. He received a B.A. from Dartmouth and a Ph.D. from Yale. He has taught German at Yale and Connecticut College. He is also a pianist and accompanist with an interest in song.

The Jury:

Renate Latimer (Atlanta, GA)
Krishna Winston (Middletown, CT)
Peter Constantine (New York)
Denis Scheck (Köln, Deutschland)
and Committee Chair, Rainer Schulte (Dallas, TX)

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



David Dollenmayer, Prize Recipient 2008

Translator David Dollenmayer was chosen to receive the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for his translation of Moses Rosenkranz' *Childhood. An Autobiographical Fragment (Kindheit. Fragment einer Autobiographie)* published by Syracuse University Press in 2007.

The jury said that "David Dollenmayer's translation of this memoir by a poet unknown in the English-speaking world conveys a vivid picture of life among Jews in the last days of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Dollenmayer captures with great sensitivity and skill the lively, often poetic, sometimes ironic, always unexpected style of the original. To translate this text, Dollenmayer had to familiarize himself with the setting—rural Bucovina before, during, and just after World War I—and make sense of Rosenkranz's elliptical and imaginative account of a childhood in which privation, cruelty, and danger might well have destroyed a less resilient spirit. Thanks to Dollenmayer, this extraordinary document is now accessible to readers who will find its perspective, language, and content fascinating."

David Dollenmayer is Professor of German at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Massachusetts. He is the author of *The Berlin Novels of Alfred Döblin* (University of California Press, 1988) and co-author with Thomas Hansen of *Neue Horizonte: A First Course in German Language and Culture* (Houghton Mifflin, 7th edition, 2008). In addition to *Kindheit* by Moses Rosenkranz, he has published translations of works by Bertolt Brecht (*Flüchtlingsgespräche*), Perikles Monioudis (*Im Äther*), Anna Mitgutsch (*Haus der Kindheit*), and Michael Kleeberg (*Der König von Korsika*). His translations of Mietek Pemper's *Der rettende Weg. Schindlers Liste – die wahre Geschichte* will appear in Fall, 2008 and of Peter Stephan Jungk's *Die Reise über den Hudson* in Spring, 2009. He is currently at work on a translation of Veza and Elias Canetti's *Briefe an Georges* as well as, with Susanne Even, a bilingual young adult novel.

The Jury:

Renate Latimer (Atlanta, GA)
Krishna Winston (Middletown, CT)
Denis Scheck (Cologne, Germany)
Peter Constantine (New York) and
Committee Chair, Rainer Schulte (Dallas, TX)

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Peter Constantine, Prize Recipient 2007

Translator Peter Constantine was chosen to receive the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize by a jury of five for his translation of the novel *The Bird is a Raven* (*Der Vogel ist ein Rabe*) published by Alfred Knopf in 2006.

The jury was impressed with Peter Constantine's ability to render the voices of Benjamin Lebert's young characters into convincing, generationally accurate contemporary English. In translating this novel that lives through its language, Constantine demonstrates perfect pitch as he captures the ennui, the yearning, the hollowness, and the moral confusion of young adults who have lost their way.

Peter Constantine's most recent translation is *The Essential Writings of Machiavelli* (Modern Library, 2007). He was awarded the PEN Translation Prize for *Six Early Stories by Thomas Mann*, and the National Translation Award for *The Undiscovered Chekhov—Thirty-Eight New Stories*. His translation of the complete works of Isaac Babel received the Koret Jewish Literature Award and a National Jewish Book Award citation.

He has recently translated *Within Four Walls: The Correspondence between Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Blücher, 1936-1968* for Harcourt, and Gogol's *Taras Bulba*, Tolstoy's *The Cossacks*, and Voltaire's *Candide* for Modern Library. He was one of the editors for *A Century of Greek Poetry: 1900-2000* and is currently co-editing an anthology of Greek poetry since Homer for W.W. Norton. He is also a senior editor of *Conjunctions*. His upcoming translation of Sophocles' Theban Trilogy will be published by Barnes and Noble later this year.

The Jury:

Renate Latimer (Atlanta, GA)

Susan Harris (Chicago, IL)

Denis Scheck (Cologne, Germany)

Krishna Winston (Middletown, CT)

Committee Chair, Rainer Schulte (Dallas, TX).

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Susan Bernofsky, Prize Recipient 2006

Translator Susan Bernofsky was selected by a five-member jury as the recipient of the 2006 Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for her exceptional translation of Jenny Erpenbeck's *The Old Child & Other Stories* (Geschichte vom alten Kind), which was published in 2005 by New Directions.

The jury said that "Susan Bernofsky's translation of Jenny Erpenbeck's *The Old Child & Other Stories* catches not only the semantic content of the work but also the subtle rhythms of the prose – with amazing ease, she has transformed the energy of the German language into an at once delicate and powerful English. Her ear has picked up the nuances of the original, enabling her to recreate Erpenbeck's dense and explosive style in a compelling and fascinating English rendition."

Susan Bernofsky received her PhD in Comparative Literature, from Princeton University, where she wrote her dissertation on "Writing the Foreign: Studies in German Romantic Translation." Her MFA in Fiction Writing was awarded by Washington University, St. Louis. She has also studied at University of Zürich, Switzerland, University of Münster, Germany, and at Johns Hopkins University. Ms. Bernofsky has been an instructor at Princeton University, an Assistant Professor at Bard College and is currently a Research Scholar in the Humanities at Bard College.

She has translated contemporary and classical fiction by Robert Walser, Hermann Hesse and Ludwig Harig. Susan Bernofsky has been the recipient of numerous fellowships and translation prizes, including: American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship, 2005-2006; PEN Translation Fund Award, 2005; an Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, 1997; a Federal Chancellor Fellowship (Bundeskanzlerstipendium), Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, 1995-96; a National Endowment for the Arts Translator's Fellowship, 1991-92; a Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, 1990-91, 1993-94, 1997; an Olin Fellowship, Washington University, 1988-90; and a Swiss Universities Grant (administered by the Fulbright Association), 1987-88. She is a member of the PEN American Center. In 2005, Susan Bernofsky published a book with Detroit: Wayne State University Press, entitled, *Foreign Words: Translator-Authors in the Age of Goethe. Kritik: German Literary Theory and Cultural Studies*.

The Jury:

Rainer Schulte (Dallas), Chairman of the jury

Renate Latimer (Atlanta)

Susan Harris (Chicago)

Denis Scheck (Cologne)

Krishna Winston (Middletown, CT)

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Michael Henry Heim, Prize Recipient 2005

Translator Michael Henry Heim has been selected by a five-member jury as the recipient of the 2005 Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for his exceptional translation of Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* (*Death in Venice*), which was published last year by Ecco/HarperCollins.

The jury said that Mr. Heim „has created a sensitive and very readable new translation of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*. His ear is close to the musical flow of Mann's sentences, which he has brought to life in English through a wonderfully paced rhythm. He has carefully chosen his words that evoke lyrical resonances in the reader and provide new insights into Mann's world view.“

Michael Henry Heim is Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he has taught for more than thirty years. He translates contemporary and classical fiction and drama from the Czech, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Romanian, Russian, and Serbian/Croatian. His previous translations include *Anton Chekhov's Life and Thought: Selected Letters and Commentary* (with Simon Karlinsky); *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera, *Too Loud a Solitude* by Bohumil Hrabal; *My Century* by Günter Grass, *Helping Verbs of the Heart*, by Peter Esterházy, and *Encyclopedia of the Dead* by Danilo Kiš. He has recently published new translations of Chekhov's plays (Modern Library/Random House) and Mann's *Death in Venice* (Ecco/HarperCollins). At UCLA he teaches a Workshop in Literary Translation and is the adviser of the Babel Study Group for Translation Studies. He has been the recipient of numerous fellowships and translation prizes and served on translation juries for the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the PEN American Center, and the Goethe-Institut. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The Jury:

Rainer Schulte (Dallas), Chairman of the jury
Renate Latimer (Atlanta)
Susan Harris (Chicago)
Denis Scheck (Cologne)
Krishna Winston (Middletown, CT)

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Breon Mitchell, Prize Recipient 2004

Translator Breon Mitchell has been selected by a five-member jury as the recipient of the 2004 Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for his superb translation of Uwe Timm's novel *Morenga*.

Breon Mitchell is a professor of Comparative Literature and German Studies at Indiana University in Bloomington. Among Breon Mitchell's translations into American English are works by F. Federspiel (*Geographie der Lust/ Laura's Skin*), Rüdiger Kremer (*The Color of the Snow*), Ralf Rothmann (*Messers Schneide/ Knife Edge*), Martin Grzimek (*Die Beschattung/ Shadowlife*), Franz Kafka (*Der Prozess/ The Trial*), Heinrich Böll (*Der Engel schwieg/ The Silent Angel* and *Der blasse Hund/ The Mad Dog*), Sten Nadolny (*Ein Gott der Frechheit/ The God of Impertinence*) und Marcel Beyer (*Spione/ Spies*). He is currently working on a new translation of Günter Grass' *Blechtrommel (The Tin Drum)*

Honorable Mention has been given to Susan Bernofsky for her translation of *Reise nach Bordeaux (The Trip to Bordeaux)* by Ludwig Harig.

The Jury:

Rainer Schulte, Translator, Professor, University of Texas at Dallas

John Woods, Translator

Susan Harris, Former Director, Northwestern University Press

Krishna Winston, Translator, Professor, Wesleyan University

Gertraude Krueger, Translator, Germany

**HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE
RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024**



Margot Bettauer Dembo, Prize Recipient 2003

Translator Margot Bettauer Dembo has been selected by a five-member jury as the recipient of the 2003 Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for her exceptional translation of Judith Hermann's *Sommerhaus, Später* (*Summerhouse, later*).

The jury said that Ms. Dembo had achieved "an excellent transposition of the German work, which resulted in an impressive and rhythmically strong English text" and commended her for having "captured the atmosphere of the original and admirably recreated the tone and language pulse of the German short stories."

The Jury:

Rainer Schulte; translator, professor, University of Texas at Dallas

Breon Mitchell; translator, professor, Indiana University

Susan Bernofsky; translator, professor, Bard College

Krishna Winston; translator, professor, Wesleyan University

Gertraude Krüger; translator, Germany

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Anthea Bell, Prize Recipient 2002

Translator Anthea Bell has been selected by a five-member jury as the recipient of the 2002 Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for her exceptional translation of W.G. Sebald's novel *Austerlitz*, which was published last year by Random House.

The jury commended Ms. Bell on her unique ability to "bring the richness of the German text into a correspondingly rich English" and, in addressing the complexity of Sebald's language- rather than event-driven novel, remarked that the translator had "accomplished what might seem impossible: she has enabled us to suspend our disbelief and feel that while we are reading English—real English—we are also reading German."

Anthea Bell was born in Suffolk, was educated at Somerville College, Oxford, and has worked as a translator for a number of years, primarily from German and French. Her translations include works of non-fiction (biography, politics, social history, musicology and art history), literary and popular fiction, and books for young people including classic German works by the Brothers Grimm, Clemens Brentano, Wilhelm Hauff and Christian Morgenstern. Recent translations include E.T.A. Hoffmann's *The Life and Times of Tomcat Murr* (1999; Penguin Classics) and Lilian Faschinger's *Vienna Passion* (2000; Review). Ms. Bell has also served on the committee of the Translators' Association and the jury panel of the Schlegel-Tieck German translation prize in Great Britain. She has been the recipient of a number of translation prizes and awards, among them the 1987 Schlegel-Tieck Award for Hans Berman's *The Stone and the Flute* (Viking) and the first Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation for Christine Nöstlinger's *A Dog's Life* (Andersen Press). She lives in Cambridge and has two adult sons.

Honorable Mention was awarded to Michael Ritterson for his translation of Wilhelm Raabe's novel *The Odin Field* (2001; Camden House), in which the jury noted Mr. Ritterson's adept rendering of the author's wry, almost morbid humor and particularly commended him for "tackling a fine work of an author virtually unknown here."

The Jury:

Michael Heim, Chairman
Susanne Höbel
Burton Pike
Krishna Winston
John E. Woods

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Krishna Winston, Prize Recipient 2001

Translator Krishna Winston has been selected by a five-member jury to receive the sixth annual Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize 2001. Her outstanding translation of Günther Grass's novel *Too Far Afield* was published in 2000 as a Helen and Kurt Wolff Book by Harcourt.

The jury commented that "Krishna Winston's translation rises splendidly to the challenge of rendering into English the many twists and turns of Günther Grass's dissection of life in the former German Democratic Republic after the fall of the wall in 1989, thus opening up Grass's novel for the English-speaking reader."

Krishna Winston has been a professor of German language and literature at Wesleyan University in Connecticut for thirty years. She began translating while still a graduate student, and has translated over twenty books and numerous shorter works by authors such as Oskar Schlemmer, Siegfried Lenz, Golo Mann, Goethe (*Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*), Grete Weil, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Peter Handke, and Günther Grass. In 1994 she received the Schlegel-Tieck Translation Prize for her version of Ralf Georg Reuth's *Goebbels*. Professor Winston, whose parents, Richard and Clara Winston, were also distinguished translators, (notably of Thomas Mann), is currently engaged in translating Martin Geck's new book on Johann Sebastian Bach. During the 2000-2001 academic year she was a visiting fellow at Smith College's Kahn Liberal Arts Institute, where she participated in a project titled *Anatomy of Exile*. Her research focused on some of the less prominent literary exiles from Hitler's Germany and their relationships with their American publishers and translators. Ms. Winston knew Helen and Kurt Wolff personally and greatly admires their work.

The jury awarded Honorable Mention to John Felstiner for his translation of *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*, published by W.W. Norton, New York, commenting that "John Felstiner, who has lived with and explored Celan's poetry for many years, has succeeded in re-creating it from the inside."

The Jury:
Burton Pike, Chairman
Michael Heim
Susanne Höbel
Peter Jansen
Breon Mitchell

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Michael Hofmann, Prize Recipient 2000

Translator Michael Hofmann has been selected by a five-member jury to receive the Fifth Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize 2000 for his outstanding translation of Joseph Roth's novel *Rebellion*, published in 1999 by St. Martin's Press.

The jury commended the translator's "ability to recreate the yeasty, nervy postwar atmosphere of a novel dominated by the erosion of the soul and the attrition of spirit. Hofmann demonstrates a deep understanding and sympathy for Joseph Roth's work. His translation of *Rebellion* reproduces, with admirable energy and consistency, the often disturbing and cynical vision of its anti-heroic protagonist Andreas Pum. Roth has been praised for the poetic quality of his prose, evident even in this early novel. Hofmann's own feel for language enables him to recapture its bleak yet poetic tone in a version that is both fluent and faithful to the original."

Michael Hofmann, the son of the German novelist Gert Hofmann, was born in 1957 in Freiburg. At the age of four, he moved to England, where he has lived, off and on, ever since. After studying English at Cambridge, and comparative literature by himself, he moved to London in 1983. He has published poems and reviews in England and America. In 1993, he was appointed Distinguished Lecturer at the English Department of the University of Florida in Gainesville, where he teaches in the spring semester.

He has published four books of poems with Faber & Faber, most recently, *Approximately Nowhere*, which appeared in 1999. Among his more than 20 translations are his father's novel *The Film Explainer* (Northwestern University Press), Wolfgang Koeppen's *Death in Rome*, Kafka's *The Man Who Disappeared* (both Penguin), and Joseph Roth's *Right and Left*, *The Legend of the Holy Drinker* (Overlook), and *The Tale of the 1002nd Night* for which he received the PEN/Book-of-the-Month-Club-Prize. He has written about Roth for the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *London Review of Books* and is a frequent contributor to *The New York Times Book Review*.

The Jury:

Helmut Frielinghaus, journalist, editor, translator
Michael Anania, poet, writer, and professor
Philip Boehm, translator and theatre director
Edna Mc Cown, translator
Peter Filkins, poet, translator, and professor

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Joel Agee, Prize Recipient 1999

American translator Joel Agee has been selected by a five-member jury to receive the Fourth Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize 1999 for his "outstanding translation" of Heinrich von Kleist's play *Penthesilea*, published in 1998 by Michael di Capua Books / Harper Collins Publishers.

The jury stated that Joel Agee succeeded in rendering in dynamic blank verse Kleist's tragic story of love in a world governed by the rules of war in his translation. The translation is both gripping to read and masterfully rendered for the stage. Joel Agee has created a linguistic masterpiece and presented a new Kleist to the English-speaking world.

Shortlisted for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize 1999 were Michael Hulse for his translation of *The Rings of Saturn* by W. G. Sebald (New Directions, 1998) and Breon Mitchell for his translation of *The Trial* by Franz Kafka (Schocken Books, 1998).

Mr. Agee has distinguished himself as a translator of works by such authors as Rainer Maria Rilke, Elias Cannetti, Robert Musil, Gottfried Benn, Walter Benjamin, and Ernst Jünger. His translation of the major works of Friedrich Dürrenmatt is to be published by The University of Chicago Press.

An accomplished writer himself, Joel Agee is the author of *Twelve Years: An American Boyhood in East Germany*, a memoir of his life behind the Iron Curtain from ages eight to twenty. The German edition of the book, translated by Agee, was nominated "Book of the Month" by the Critics' Circle of Darmstadt, Germany, in 1983. His essays and stories have appeared in publications such as *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, *The Yale Review*, and *The Best American Essays* (1995). He has reviewed for *The New York Times Book Review* and *The New Republic*.

Among Joel Agee's many fellowships and grants are a Guggenheim Fellowship (1986/87), a National Endowment for the Arts grant (1987), and a Berlin Artist Program Fellowship of the German Academic Exchange Service (1990/91).

The Jury:

Helmut Frielinghaus, journalist, editor, translator
Michael Anania, poet, writer, and professor
Philip Boehm, translator and theatre director
Edna Mc Cown, translator
Peter Filkins, poet, translator, and professor

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



John Brownjohn, Prize Recipient 1998

British translator John Brownjohn was selected by a five member jury to receive the Third Helen and Kurt Wolff Prize 1998 for his outstanding translation of Thomas Brussig's *Helden wie wir / Heroes Like Us* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997) and Marcel Beyer's *Flughunde / The Karnau Tapes* (Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997).

The jury stated: "John Brownjohn's translations of Marcel Beyer's *The Karnau Tapes* and Thomas Brussig's *Heroes Like Us* demonstrate a genuine gift for rendering the spirit and letter of the original works while achieving a powerfully convincing sense of voice and style in the translation. .. he rises to meet every challenge posed by the original... and not only lifts the act of translation to an imaginative and interpretive art, but also proves himself a consummate stylist in his own right."

Shortlisted for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize 1998 were Edward Snow and Michael Winkler for their translation of *Rainer Maria Rilke: Diaries of a Young Poet* (W.W.Norton & Co., 1997) and Breon Mitchell for his translation of *Ein Gott der Frechheit / God of Impertinence* by Sten Nadolny (Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1997)

Mr. Brownjohn has distinguished himself as a translator of German literature, biographies, memoirs, letters, politics, and art books. His translations include works of Michael Ende, Bodo Kirchhoff, Hans Hellmut Kirst, Otto Klemperer, Martin Gregor-Dellin and Rolf Hochhut. John Brownjohn's translations have received excellent reviews in *Times Literary Supplement*, *The Literary Review*, *Best Sellers*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Observer* and *Publishers Weekly*.

Mr. Brownjohn has also been involved as a script and dialogue consultant. Among his screen credits are *The Boat (Das Boot)* directed by Wolfgang Petersen, *Bitter Moon* directed by Roman Polanski and *The Name of the Rose* and *The Bear* by Jean-Jacques Annaud.

John Brownjohn is the recipient of four previous translation awards:
1979 Schlegel-Tieck Special Award, 1981 US PEN Goethe House Prize
1993 Schlegel-Tieck Award, 1995 Christopher Award

The Jury:

Rainer Schulte, Director, Center for Translation Studies, Dallas, TX

Michael Anania, poet, writer, and professor, La Grange, IL

John Felstiner, translator and professor, Stanford, CA

Helga Pfetsch, translator and president of the Association of German-Language Translators, Heidelberg

Peter Filkins, poet, translator, and professor, Great Barrington, MA

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



Leila Vennewitz, Prize Recipient 1997

Leila Vennewitz was presented with the award for her outstanding translation of Jurek Becker's *Jakob der Lügner / Jacob the Liar* Arcade Publishing (1996) by the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Gabriele von Malsen-Tilborch.

The jury stated: "(We were) impressed by the elegance and accuracy of the translation, but even more so by the authority with which Leila Vennewitz deftly shapes the book's title narrative voice in order to convey the grand dark humor and emotional force that make Jurek Becker's novel an important work of contemporary German fiction."

Ms. Vennewitz has distinguished herself as a translator of many German literary works, most notably as a translator of Nobel Prize Winner Heinrich Böll's novels, as well as short stories, essays and reviews by him that have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Esquire*, *The New York Times* and other publications. Other German authors translated by Leila Vennewitz include Uwe Johnson, Hermann Hesse, Uwe Timm, Walter Kempowski, Alexander Kluge, and Alfred Andersch.

Leila Vennewitz is the recipient of three previous translation awards:

In 1968 from the Society of Authors in London: the Schlegel-Tieck Prize for *End of a Mission (Ende einer Dienstfahrt)* by Heinrich Böll; McGraw-Hill, New York. In 1979 from the American Center of P.E.N.: The Goethe House P.E.N. Prize for *And Never Said a Word (Und sagte kein einziges Wort)* by Heinrich Böll; McGraw Hill, New York. In 1989 from the American Translator's Association: the German Literary Prize for *Breakers (Brandung)* by Martin Walser; Henry Holt, New York.

In 1994 her translation of *Narcissus and Goldmund (Narziss und Goldmund)* by Hermann Hesse, published by Peter Owen Ltd., London was shortlisted by the (London) Times Literary Supplement/ Society of Authors for the Schlegel-Tieck Prize.

The Jury:

John E. Woods, Translator and winner of the Wolff Prize 1996

Michael H. Heim, UCLA Comparative Literature

Joseph Parisi, Publisher/Editor of Poetry, Chicago

Helga Pfetsch, Translator and president of the Verband deutschsprachiger Übersetzer

Rainer Schulte, President, ALTA (American Literary Translators Organisation)

HELEN AND KURT WOLFF TRANSLATOR'S PRIZE RECIPIENTS AND JURIES 1996-2024



John E. Woods, Prize Recipient 1996

In an award ceremony hosted by the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Gabriele von Malsen-Tilborch, John E. Woods was presented with the Helen and Kurt Wolff Prize 1996 for his outstanding translation of Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg/The Magic Mountain* (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.) and Arno Schmidt's *Nobodaddy's Kinder/Nobodaddy's Children* (Dalkey Archive Press, 1995.)

Mr. Woods has distinguished himself as a translator of many German literary works, most notably Arno Schmidt's *Collected Novellas* (Dalkey Archive Press, 1993), for which he won the 1995 PEN West Literary Award for Translation, an ALTA Translation of the Year award from the American Literary Translators Association, and the American Translators Association German Literary Prize. He won both the American Book Award for translation and the PEN Translation Prize (1981) for his work on Schmidt's *Evening Edged in Gold*. His translation of Patrick Süskind's *Perfume* received the PEN prize in 1987. Woods has translated works by Raabe, Döblin, Dürrenmatt, Grass, Monikova, Ransmayr (*The Last World* - awarded the Schlegel-Tieck Prize, 1991), Dörrie, and others, including Richard Wagner, in the form of subtitles for a Peter Sellar's production of *Tannhäuser*. He has recently completed translating Schmidt's critical writings and is currently at work on Mann's *Doctor Faustus*.

The Jury:

Rika Lesser, Translator, New York

Helmut Frielinghaus, Translator, New York

Joseph Parisi, Editor of Poetry, Chicago

Rainer Schulte, American Literary Translator's Association, Dallas

Joachim Sartorius, in 1996 with the Berlin Senate for Cultural Affairs, and presently Secretary General of the Goethe-Institutes worldwide.