

## 85

**BADA SHANREN**  
**MAO ZEDONG**  
**SONG OF SONGS**  
**TANG DYNASTY**  
**XUE TAO**

**CLAIRE HUOT**

**ROBERT MAJZELS**

Created by Claire Huot and Robert Majzels, **85** consists of five stunning volumes that are simultaneously art objects, radical translations, and powerful works of visual poetry. In a series of creative cross-cultural encounters, these writer-translators take passages from a variety of texts and transform them into 85-letter blocks of text. These letters, presented without space breaks or punctuation, float in elegant geometric columns on the variously colored pages, demanding the reader's active engagement as she organizes and reorganizes them into constantly fluctuating combinations of meaning. **85** uses visual media and avant-garde techniques to explore the border between translation and original creation. The aim is to apply a non-mastering ethical view of the translator's task: "rather than reducing the foreign text to dominant cultural values in English," the translator seeks to achieve "an ethnoveviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text" (Venuti, *The Invisibility of the Translator*). Majzels' and Huot's approach is open-ended, nonlinear, and materialist—a practice evoked by the visual layout of the texts, which enacts the difficult negotiation in English of Chinese poetic works.

85  
 Claire Huot  
 Robert Majzels  
 Five volume set  
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## ABOUT THE MATERIALS

Produced in a limited edition of 200 (180 of which are available for sale), **85** is printed on Lynx Opaque acid-free paper with an accordion fold. Bound individually in hard covers with embossed and foil stamped titles, each volume is a work of visual text-art in its own right. Complete sets come in a specially made, frosted silicone case by Nathan Tremblay.

## ABOUT THE BOOKS

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- **BADA SHANREN** presents the reader with vibrant new translations of the poet-artist Bada Shanren's inscriptions, which appear in his ink-brush paintings of small, seemingly inconsequential creatures and plants: mynah birds, globefish, the muddy roots of lotus.
- **MAO ZEDONG** newly translates passages from the *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, better known in the West as "The Little Red Book," reproducing aslant those hyperbolic quotations rich in imagery and replete with numbers that are so deeply imbedded in China's collective memory.
- **SONG OF SONGS** presents the materiality and semantic multiplicity of the Torah's most poetic and erotically charged book, transforming the language of the original into a tangible, material substance.
- **TANG DYNASTY** re-translates works by canonical Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) figures such as Li Bai, Wang Wei, and Du Fu, approximating the limitation of 20 words in the original Chinese poetic form, the *jueju* or "perfected sentence."
- **XUE TAO** translates 17 out of 100 surviving poems of the female Chinese poet Xue Tao (768-831), whittling their already sparse, minimalistic imagery into a highly individual voice of banishment on the edge of language.

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## ABOUT THE TRANSLATORS

**Claire Huot** is a scholar specializing in Chinese studies. She has written two books on contemporary Chinese culture, *La Petite révolution culturelle* (Éditions Philippe Picquier), and *China's New Cultural Scene: A Handbook of Changes* (Duke University Press), as well as one mystery novel, *The Prison Tangram*, featuring a bilingual Mandarin and English female detective. She holds a doctorate in comparative literature from the Université de Montréal and is presently an associate professor in the Department of Linguistics, Languages and Cultures at the University of Calgary. With Robert Majzels, she is also a non-member of The Provisional Avant-garde (PROVAG).

**Robert Majzels'** books include *Hellman's Scrapbook*, *City of Forgetting*, *Apikoros Sleuth*, and *The Humbugs Diet*. In 2007, he was awarded the Alcuin Society Prize for Excellence in Book Design for the limited edition of *Apikoros Sleuth*. His full-length play *This Night the Kapo* was produced at the Berkeley Street Theatre in Toronto, in March 2004. He was attributed the Governor General's Award of Canada for his translation of France Daigle's *Just Fine* in 2000. More recently he has translated her novel *For Sure*. With Erin Moure, Robert has translated several books of poetry by Nicole Brossard, including, most recently, *The White Piano*. Their translation of *Notebook of Roses & Civilization* was nominated for the Governor General's Award and the Griffin Poetry Prize in 2008. He is presently an associate professor in the English Department of the University of Calgary. With Claire Huot, he is also a non-member of The Provisional Avant-garde (PROVAG).