

LAURENT BINET

U.S. TOUR : 12-22 November 2013

Postmodern novelist Laurent Binet's astonishing first novel *HHhH* has earned him the prestigious Prix Goncourt du Premier Roman and sweeping international acclaim. Using his instincts as a historian and virtuosic storyteller, Binet has created a World War II novel that brings history to life in a way that is captivating, thrilling and deeply moving.



BIOGRAPHY

Laurent Binet was born in Paris, France, in 1972. He is the author of *La Vie professionnelle de Laurent B.*, a memoir of his experience teaching in secondary schools in Paris. Binet is a professor of French Literature at the University of Paris III. His debut novel *HHhH* (Grasset), a remarkable and surprising fast-paced World War II novel, won the Prix Goncourt du Premier Roman in 2010 and was adapted for the stage and performed at the Théâtre de la Commune in Aubervilliers in 2012. The English translation, published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, has been highly praised by authors such as Bret Easton Ellis, Martin Amis and Gary Shteyngart. It has been short-listed for several prizes, including the National Book Critics Circle Award, and was selected as one of *The New York Times'* Notable Books of 2012. His most recent novel, *Rien ne se passe comme prévu* (Grasset 2012) is a firsthand account of the successful presidential campaign of François Hollande, which Binet wrote while embedded in the campaign staff.

LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS

Topics suggested by Laurent Binet:

Laurent Binet is available to give talks on several subjects, and he is most often asked to give lectures on literature and World War II, or more generally, literature and history. He prefers a more interactive discussion/interview format to the traditional lecture.

His literary focus is on the postmodern novel, but he is also interested in discussing issues of adaptation – how to tell a true story and how to adapt written narrative for the screen, for example.

He is interested in issues about fiction, metafiction, autofiction, and in running writing workshops.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH

HHhH, tr. by Sam Taylor, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012

IN FRENCH

Rien ne se passe comme prévu, Grasset, 2012

HHhH, Grasset, 2010

La Vie professionnelle de Laurent B., Little Big Man, 2004

Forces et Faiblesses de nos muqueuses, éd. Le Manuscrit, 2000

MORE ON HIS BOOK

HHhH: “Himmlers Hirn heisst Heydrich”, or “Himmler’s brain is called Heydrich”. The most dangerous man in Hitler’s cabinet, Reinhard Heydrich was known as the “Butcher of Prague.” He was feared by all and loathed by most. With his cold Aryan features and implacable cruelty, Heydrich seemed indestructible—until two men, a Slovak and a Czech recruited by the British secret service, killed him in broad daylight on a bustling street in Prague, and thus changed the course of History.

Who were these men, arguably two of the most discreet heroes of the twentieth century? In Laurent Binet’s captivating debut novel, we follow Jozef Gabčík and Jan Kubiš from their dramatic escape of Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia to England; from their recruitment to their harrowing parachute drop into a war zone, from their stealth attack on Heydrich’s car to their own brutal death in the basement of a Prague church.

A seemingly effortlessly blend of historical truth, personal memory, and Laurent Binet’s remarkable imagination, *HHhH*—an international bestseller and winner of the prestigious Prix Goncourt du Premier Roman—is a work at once thrilling and intellectually engrossing, a fast-paced novel of the Second World War that is also a profound meditation on the nature of writing and the debt we owe to history.

PRAISES ON *HHhH*

“A literary tour de force . . . [*HHhH*] is a gripping novel that brings us closer to history as it really happened.” —Alan Riding, *The New York Times Book Review*:
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/29/books/review/hhhh-a-novel-by-laurent-binet.html?_r=0

“[Binet] knows how to wrangle powerful moments from history.” —Susannah Meadows, *The New York Times*

“Captivating . . . [*HHhH*] has a vitality very different from that of most historical fiction.” —James Wood, *The New Yorker*:
http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2012/05/21/120521crbo_books_wood

Emma Garmand, *Words Without Borders*: <http://wordswithoutborders.org/book-review/lauren-binets-hhhh>

French Authors on Tour 2013 – Cultural Services of the French Embassy

Contact Fiction: colombine.depaire@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Book Department - www.frenchculture.org

Watch more: <http://us.macmillan.com/author/laurentbinet>

Interview by Killian Fox, *The Guardian*:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/apr/27/laurent-binet-hhhh-interview>

“*HHhH* blew me away. Binet’s style fuses it all together: a neutral, journalistic honesty sustained with a fiction writer’s zeal and story-telling instincts. It’s one of the best historical novels I’ve ever come across.” —Bret Easton Ellis, author of *American Psycho* and *Less Than Zero*

“*HHhH* is a highly original piece of work, at once charming, moving, and gripping.” —Martin Amis, author of *The Pregnant Widow*

“A wonderful, ambitious book, and a triumph of translation.” —Colum McCann, National Book Award-winning author of *Let the Great World Spin*

“*HHhH* is an astonishing book—absorbing, moving, for the agony and acuity with which its author engages the problem of making literary art from unbearable historical fact.” —Wells Tower, author of *Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned*

“A work of absolute originality.” —Claude Lanzmann