

The Benway Series Project

The Benway editorial project was set in motion by a group of Italian poets and translators. The aim is to offer the reading public a path to follow modern and contemporary poetry and poetics, both in Italian and in translation, that often go unnoticed by the mainstream. We especially cherish experimental writing, nontraditional forms and unusual formats, all those experiments that hardly ever find a place in the publishing plans of large-scale publishing houses but make a difference in the literary canon and in critical thinking.

Most Benway publications are bilingual: our ambition is to create a double and reciprocal reading opportunity for both Italian and non-Italian readers interested in innovative writing and in participating in an international cultural discourse. At the same time, we believe in translation as a powerful creative device that can spread knowledge and give rise to critical debate and cultural awareness.

We are committed to produce books that are art objects as well as major contributions to contemporary poetry. Hence the choice of printing beautiful books rather than producing the less expensive ebooks: we take meticulous care in the layout, the choice of materials and the graphic aspects because we consider the content of a work a concrete presence to which attention must be given in terms of time and effort dedicated to an essential craftsmanship.

Our reputation and activities

In the span of a few years the Benway Series has become a widely recognized reality, held in high esteem by scholars, critics, authors, journalists and cultural activists, in Italy and in Europe. They make up a network of enthusiast intellectuals who help us disseminate our work by means of reviews, essays and articles.

To raise awareness of the Benway Series publishing project and promote published titles, curators choose initiatives that go from the classic literary festival to cultural events with a more heterogeneous audience, with the aim of using the poetic text as a critical voice and commentary on society. Hence the decision to contextualize the text in a public dimension. Significant examples are participations in events focused on major contemporary issues, such as international migration and work in the global age.

Other choices of dissemination of the editorial project reflect our interest in young generations, especially students, who have been the privileged audience of a series of workshops, seminars and conferences held in the universities and libraries in collaboration with tutors and professors.

Brief history of the Benway Series

In 2013 four Italian authors (Mariangela Guatteri, Giulio Marzaioli, Michele Zaffarano and Marco Giovenale, who is no longer part of the editorial board) gave life to the editorial project Benway Series (<https://benwayseries.wordpress.com/>) in collaboration with the printing and publishing house 'La Colornese' (Tielleci editions).

With two exceptions, Benway's publications are all bilingual. To this day 15 volumes have been published, including the first Italian translations of *100 Multiple-Choice Questions* by John Ashbery, translated by Damiano Abeni and Moira Egan, *Nioque de l'avant-printemps* by Francis Ponge, translated by Michele Zaffarano, with an introduction by Jean-Marie Gleize, *Holocaust* by Charles Reznikoff, in a translation by Andrea Raos, *Be With* by Forrest Gander (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 2019), translated by Alessandro De Francesco and *Zong! As told to the author by Setaey Adamu Boateng* by Marlene NourbeSe Philip, translated by Renata Morresi.

The project originates in a literary event organized by the four authors and called "EX.IT - Materials out of context (<https://exitmateriali.wordpress.com/>), an international festival of innovative writing", Albinea (IT), April 12-14 2013, to which Italian and foreign authors and translators participated with talks, readings, multimedia works and sound performances. Among the non-Italian participants: Rosaire Appel (USA), Charles Bernstein (USA), Rachel Blau DuPlessis (USA), Jean-Marie Gleize (FRA), Rosa Menkman (NL), Bob Perelman (USA), Nathalie Quintane (FRA), Jennifer Scappettone (USA), Ron Silliman (USA), Éric Suchère (FRA), Miron Tee (POL).

On this occasion two book archives dedicated to contemporary writing, both in Italian and other languages, were established, hosted by the following libraries: Biblioteca "San Gerardo", Monza (IT), and Biblioteca Pablo Neruda, Albinea (IT), <https://exitmateriali.wordpress.com/2014/01/15/i-fondi-librari-ex-it/>

Benway's chronology of major facts:

2013

- The first Benway book is Corrado Costa, *La soddisfazione letteraria = Literary Satisfaction*, English translation by Paul Vangelisti.
- Proceedings of the international festival "EX.IT 2013 - Materials out of context", a collection of creative works.
- Benway Series curators are invited to hold a series of talks addressed to students of the Literary Criticism seminar at the University of Rome 3.

2014

- Benway Series inaugurates the Fogli Benway, multilingual, visual and verbo-visual works in A1 format.
- Proceedings of the international festival "EX.IT 2014 - Materials out of context", a collection of essays, articles and creative works including the dialogues and works presented at the festival EX.IT 2014, October 17-19 2014, Albinea (IT).
- Benway Series Foglio 9, *Le Moulin 14-19 juillet 2014*, is the result of a creative residence held during the summer of 2014 in the French countryside near Paris, where French, Italian and USA authors have collaborated to produce a collective multilingual work.

2015

- *Nioque de l'avant-printemps* by Francis Ponge (Benway Series 4) wins the Morlupo "City of Poetry" Prize 2015, in Italy.

- The Swedish review *OEI* dedicates an issue to the Benway Series books, publishing the translation of two volumes and three 'fogli'. Authors and curators participate in readings and video performances taking place at the Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm.
- The French avant-garde review *Nioques*, in an issue dedicated to contemporary Italian poetry, publishes several Benway authors.
- The Department of Cognitive Science, University of Messina (IT) invites Pietro D'Agostino to give a talk on photography and visual culture and discuss his *Carta da viaggio/Alight*, Benway Series 7.
- The Benway Series takes part in "A modest proposal", a workshop on poetry publishing and pragmatic thought held at the Coop Zanichelli Bookshop, Bologna (IT).

2016

- The Department of Photography and Digital Video, University of Rome Tor Vergata (IT) invites Pietro D'Agostino to give a lecture on photography and how to open up its potential applications.
- Olivier Favier translates Michele Zaffarano's *Cinque testi tra cui gli alberi (più uno)/Five pieces trees included (plus one)* (Benways Series 2) into French. In the following year the text will be performed by French actor Jean-Daniel Piguet during the Actoral Festival in Marseille.

2017

- "Tavola delle materie" by Mariangela Guatteri is translated by Giorgia Tsouderos into Greek and presented at a public poetry reading in Athens.

2018

- *La mer est pleine de poissons / Il mare è pieno di pesci* by Simona Menicocci (Foglio Benway 4), a text addressing the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean, is performed during public readings in Rome and Florence, at art festivals and cultural events dealing with new migrations and migrant workers.
- During Athens World Capital Book 2018, Benway Series takes part in a transnational project on writing, language and visual arts: Greek poets are invited to apply for publication in the Fogli Benway.
- Benway Series Greek Version, <https://benwayseriesgreece.blogspot.com/>, comes into being thanks to the collaboration with Georgia Tsouderos.