

Research Seminar Series 2010-2011:
Transcultural - Transnational - Global?

Joan-Daniel Bezsonoff's Literature from across the Borders

Wednesday 9th March 2011, 5.30 pm
Resource Centre, Bowland North B88

This talk will be preceded by a reading by the author at 5:15 pm at the same location, within the framework of the 2011 LitFest in DELC.

Joan-Daniel Bezsonoff (Perpignan, 1963) belongs to the generation of Catalan writers in French Catalonia who, as of the 1990s, established themselves as continuators of a long Catalan literary tradition publishing first in the Roussillon and later in Barcelona. He contributes columns to *El Periódico de Catalunya* (Barcelona), *El Temps* (Valencia), and *L'Avenç* (Barcelona).

Bezsonoff has recently stirred the debate on cultural identity on the Spanish side of the Catalan border as a result of the publication of *Una educació francesa (A French Education)* (2009), where he explores his French cultural legacy, and *Un país de butxaca (Pocket Country)* (2010), where his Catalan identity is discussed from a perspective utterly unusual for his compatriots in Southern Catalonia. In fact Bezsonoff had already consolidated his literary career on both sides of the Pyrenees after the critical acclaim attained by novels like *La guerra dels cornuts* (2004) (*The War of the Cuckolds*; translated into French as *La guerre des cocus*), on the presence of Catalan volunteers in the Great War. His subsequent novel in 2005, *Les amnèsies de Déu (God's Amnesia)*, which obtained three prestigious critical awards in Barcelona, is set during World War II, at a time when the sexual exploits of a priest between French Catalonia and Béziers, are used to portray the moments when France started losing its multilingual identity. **Bezsonoff's well achieved narrative tone, half way between cynical and nostalgic, was already present in *La presonera d'Alger* (2002) (*Alger's Woman Prisoner*), where he continues to assess from his complex perspective the last days of the French colonial presence in Algeria, as he had already done in *Les lletres d'amor no serveixen de res* (1997) (*Love letters are useless*), and previously in *Les rambles de Saigon* (1996), on the French twilight in Indochina.'**

Event organised by the Department of European Languages and Cultures (Lancaster University) and the support of Institut Ramon Llull.

