



### **This Little Art**

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### **Kate Briggs**

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## *This Little Art*

An essay with the reach and momentum of a novel, Kate Briggs's *This Little Art* is a genre-bending song for the practice of literary translation, offering fresh and timely thinking on reading, writing, and living with the works of others. Taking her own experience of translating Roland Barthes' lecture notes as a starting point, the author threads various stories together to give us this portrait of translation as a compelling, complex and intensely relational activity. She recounts the story of Helen Lowe-Porter's translation of Thomas Mann, and their posthumous vilification. She writes about the loving relationship between André Gide and his translation of Dorothy Bussy. She recalls how Robinson Crusoe laboriously mad his first table while on the deserted island.

With *This Little Art*, a beautifully layered account of the subjective translating experience, Kate Briggs emerges as a truly remarkable writer: distinctive, wise, frank, funny and utterly original.

*"Kate Brigg's This Little Art shares some wonderful qualities with Barthe's own work – the wit, thoughtfulness, invitation to converse, and especially the attention to the ordinary and everyday in the context of meticulously examined theoretical and scholarly questions. This is a highly enjoyable read: informative and stimulating for anyone interested in translation, writing, language, and expression."*

Lydia Davis, author of *Can't and Won't*.

*"There have been many books written about translation, but few as engaging, intriguing or exciting as Kate Briggs's exploration, with its digressive forays, infinite self-questioning, curiosity, modesty and devotion to the concrete – the very qualities, as it happens, that distinguish the translator's labour."*

Natasha Lehrer, *Times Literary Supplement*

## **Kate Briggs**

Kate Briggs is the translator of two Roland Barthes lecture volumes and seminar notes at the Collège de France: *The Preparation of the Novel* and *How to Live Together*, both published by Columbia University Press. She teaches at Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam.