



Franz Kline, John Marin, Louise Nevelson, Mark Rothko, George Segal, Ben Shahn, and Charles Sheeler. A mystical element predominates in the fascinating works of Alfred Jensen, Charmion von Wiegand, John Willenbecher, and Donald Roller Wilson. Well represented are Texas artists, including Jesse Amado, Bert Long, the late Luis Jiménez, Melissa Miller, Jesús Morales, Celia Alvarez Muñoz, and Dario Robleto. Karal Ann Marling, Dave Hickey, Raphael Rubinstein, Linda Dalrymple Henderson, and David Reed provide special essays. Robert Kushner's 'The good, the bad, and the ugly' assesses James Michener's prescience as a collector, examining both the curated and in-storage portions of the collection, and relying heavily on Michener's own previously mentioned collecting memoir. Annette DiMeo Carozzi introduces the history of the Blanton Museum's American collections.

The Latin American catalogue focuses, in acknowledgment of the museum's strengths, on art since 1960. Among the artists represented are Roberto Aizenberg, Fernando Botero, Luis Camnitzer, Rafael Coronel, José Luis Cuevas, Gonzalo Díaz, León Ferrari, Gonzalo Fonseca, Gego, Gyula Kosice, Alice Rahon, Mira Schendel, Antonio Seguí, and Joaquín Torres-García. While South American artists are especially well represented in the collection, the Mexican masters are also present in force: Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros, Tamayo, and others. Among the writers of multiple catalogue entries are Dawn Ades, Jacqueline Barnitz, David Craven, Andrea Giunta, Cecilia de Torres, Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, and Antonio Eligio Fernández (Tonel), who also writes an artist's statement on his own work in the catalogue. Pérez-

Calligraphy by Jila Peacock, from *Ten Poems from Hafez*.

Barreiro, Barnitz, and Craven also provide special essays, as do Luis Camnitzer, Ticio Escobar, Maria Gough, Inés Katzenstein and Luis Enrique Pérez Oramas.

In recognition of its new premises, the Blanton Museum has also published a smaller-format, 256-page *Guide to the Collection*. It introduces, in much shorter essays, many of the same works found in *American Art Since 1900* and *Latin American Collection*, as well as European and pre-1900 American art. Each of these volumes should entice art tourists on the 'Texas Tour' to add to their itinerary Austin and the Blanton Museum of Art to Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Marfa.

CRAIG BUNCH  
Librarian, Houston, Texas

### TEN POEMS FROM HAFEZ

CALLIGRAPHY AND TRANSLATION BY  
JILA PEACOCK; FOREWORD, PARVIN  
LOLOI; FIGURAL CALLIGRAPHY IN  
THE MUSLIM WORLD, ROBERT  
HILLENBRAND

46 pp. 10 col/10 mono illus  
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There are two beautiful versions of this book, produced to accompany the British Museum exhibition, 'Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East' (18 May–3 September 2006). The book displays ten poems in the shapes of animals, which are rendered in Arabic calligraphy. In the large-format silkscreen plates of the limited edition, each animal

sits regally on the white page, while in the published edition the animals are seen close-up and cropped on a coloured ground, emphasising how the calligraphy catches the animal's gestures. In this edition the poems, in English and in Persian, are placed opposite with the full animal reproduced beneath them. To read the poems in English while looking at the shapes sets up a dynamic between word and visual rhythm, animal and calligraphy stimulating another reading, another sensation, another experience. As is often said of the fourteenth-century Persian court poet, Hafez, new meanings arise from every reading of his poems. So also, from every glance at Jila Peacock's calligraphic shape-poems arise new visual perceptions of the Horse, the Fish, or the Lion. Textures of feathers, of rippling surfaces, or the animal's inner movement stand out at one time or another, depending on how one is looking in our ever-shifting seeing in the world. *Ten Poems from Hafez* is a book of metamorphosis at every glance and at every reading.

As in Western symbolism, each animal conveys an aspect of human nature. There is the 'sweet-toothed Parrot', the 'weeping Nightingale', and the Lion who 'shatters the coronets of power with royal ease', but there is also another level of reading, the love poem, where 'the wafting tresses in the perfect garden of your face, Drop like a peacock falling into paradise'. And this, then, metamorphoses into mystical poetry where Hafez writes of the Butterfly, 'My soul is burning . . . , And all the while you rest . . . , Whose is the burning butterfly, whose?' In Sufism, animal images are symbols of Divine Love, as indeed, 'all beautiful things are symbolic signs of the Creator himself', writes Parvin Loloi in her Foreword.

Hafez is thought to have been a Sufi and often called the 'interpreter of secrets'; he is so honoured in Iran that a copy of his poems is said to be found in most homes. He has been an important figure in Western poetry, influencing Byron, Tennyson, Emerson and Goethe, who called Hafez his 'spiritual master'.

Hafez wrote in Persian, an Indo-European language, but the script is Arabic. Jila Peacock uses the cursive *nast'aliq*, a fluid, flowing script, each letter lending itself to great expression and beauty. Its versatility makes possible its metamorphosis into the pictorial where a sweeping line can become a feather of

the peacock, a shorter angular line a claw of the parrot or the falcon, regular curling linear patterns become the hair of the lion's mane, long lines the antlers of the deer or the struts of the butterfly's wings. She varies the mass or linear delicacy, straight line or curve in order to capture something of the symbolic animal in harmony with Hafez's poetic pictures. As Robert Hillenbrand writes, Jila Peacock's choice of this script:

encourages the most complex rhythms and asymmetries, with its natural tendency towards the layering or tiering of words and phrases, its swooping lines ... the very image of rapid thought.

Shape-poems have a long legacy, from Greek poetry to Apollinaire's Cubist poetry. Early examples of zoomorphic calligraphy in Persian and Arabic poetry are known from the middle of the fifteenth century, so Jila Peacock belongs to a rich tradition in which the word in its visual form, the architecture of sound, merges in one of many ways with animal image.

Indeed, this interrelationship between word and image is the focus of Sylph Editions, *Ten Poems from Hafez* being its inaugural publication. The published edition links word and image in the beautiful design, choice of typefaces, and in its attention to detail; the calligraphy of the birds is raised on the page becoming textural and bold, facing the spaciousness of whiteness on which the bilingual poems sit quietly. There is contrast, then, and there is elegance, which matches perfectly with the content of poetry and word-image/shape-poem. As Jila Peacock writes in her notes on 'Making the book', what she discovered in the particular script was how it 'incorporates phonetic word and visual icon in one form'. Only readers of the Persian and the script will be able to experience this other, integrating level of the book, but for the rest of us, seeing the sheer beauty of the movement of the calligraphy, transforming into animal imagery, while at the same time being able to read the poems in English, a form of calligraphy of sound, makes this book an experience of metamorphosis in itself.

Metamorphosis is the touchstone of the three very interesting and erudite articles that bind this book together in a discussion of the history of Persian poetry and figural calligraphy. So this artist's book, in an edition of 50, or its trans-



formed published version, will appeal to the wide audience of artist, poet, linguist, calligrapher, art and literary historian, and anyone who loves beautiful things.

PATRICIA RAILING  
Director, Artists . Bookworks

Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Charles de Solier, Sieur de Morette*, c. 1534, Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister. From *Hans Holbein the Younger The Basel Years 1515–1532* by Christian Müller, Stephan Kemperdick et al.

## HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER THE BASEL YEARS 1515–1532

CHRISTIAN MÜLLER, STEPHAN  
KEMPERDICK ET AL.

Prestel 2006 £45.00 \$80.00  
524 pp. 219 col/246 mono illus  
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### EDITOR'S NOTE

Sylph Editions has been awarded the British Book Design Production award for 2006 in the Literature Section for Jila Peacock, *Ten Poems from Hafez*. They can be found at [www.sylpheditions.com](http://www.sylpheditions.com).

A mere decade ago, when Hans Holbein the Younger was the subject of a five-hundredth birthday anniversary (1497–1997), the celebratory volume of that year by Oskar Bätschmann and Pascal Griener stood (along with symposium volumes from Washington and Basel) as a modern, comprehensive study of the artist. In the meantime,