





Dear Friends,

One of the pleasures of working on LAR is seeing what letter artists around the world are doing. In this issue we are introduced to the work of German artist Maya Huber, and to the latest developments of The Saint John's Bible (a collaboration among artists from Britain, America and Israel.)

Risa Gettler's "Calligraphic Odyssey" brings us to Spain and Morocco, and the LAR Gallery features works by Russian and German artists. Finally, we see the first Japanese ink sticks decorated with Western calligraphy.

We are happy to announce two ongoing features beginning in this issue: "Scribbler to Scribe" in which we see the early work of well-known calligraphers, and "Best of the Web" which will connect us with exciting calligraphic happenings in cyberville.

Our book review section is especially large this issue as we catch you up on books that have come out recently. On page 63, you'll find the first notice for entering work to Review 2006.

These are just the highlights – dive in and enjoy!

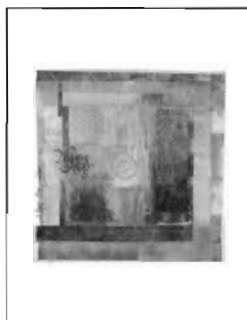
*Rose Folsom*

Editor

FRONT COVER:

"The Ten Commandments"

Thomas Ingmire's illumination of the Ten Commandments combines five different events from Exodus into a single composition. Above, four miraculous events are evoked: the burning bush, the first Passover, the parting of the Red Sea, and Israel gathered at Sinai. Below, the chaotic jumble of color gives way to the orderly black and white of the Law. Gold and color on calfskin vellum; 15-7/8 x 24-1/2 (40 x 62); Copyright 2004 The Saint John's Bible and the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library at Saint John's University, United States of America.



BACK COVER:

Maya Huber  
Carmina Burana  
(eventually), 2000  
24 x 24 (60 x 60)  
Collage, monoprints, ink  
Article on page 2

MAYA HUBER:  
OF MUSIC AND STORIES 2  
BY STEVEN SKAGGS  
The author discovers how music and poetry infuse the life and work of German letter artist Maya Huber.

THE EXHIBITION OF THE  
SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE AT THE  
MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS 8  
BY CHRISTOPHER CALDERHEAD  
Seven years after beginning the project, Donald Jackson and his team of scribes and illuminators gather in Minnesota for a public exhibition of the first three completed volumes.

BERTHOLD WOLPE AND  
HIS TYPEFACE ALBERTUS 16  
BY OWEN WILLIAMS  
The story of the development of Albertus reveals and reflects the cultural and historical currents active in 20th-century Europe.

A CALLIGRAPHIC ODYSSEY 24  
Risa Gettler travels to the oldest medieval city in the world to uncover a thriving letter arts tradition.

LAR GALLERY 28  
Gruppe 26 of Hildesheim, Germany, celebrates its 10th anniversary with a retrospective "exhibit" in the pages of our Gallery; and Russian artist Leonid Pronenko shares his art and the art of his students in a preview of his upcoming book.

THE BEST OF THE WEB 36  
BY FRANCES SPIEGEL  
If you can't travel to a world-class manuscript collection right now, a visit to these websites will keep you satisfied until you can visit in person.

THE VOYNICH MANUSCRIPT:  
HIGH ART OR ELABORATE HOAX? 40  
BY FRANCES SPIEGEL  
This weird and undecipherable manuscript has held the attention of scholars, historians, linguists and code-breakers since its discovery in 1912.

SCRIBBLER TO SCRIBE 44

BOOK REVIEWS 46

READERS WRITE 60

An American is a guest for four days in Maya Huber's house in Koerst, a suburb of Frankfurt, Germany. Strains of Bach, and later Beethoven, mix with the fragrance of fresh herbs, filling the rooms of the warm and comfortable house, an adjoining flat to the Methodist church where husband Rolf is pastor. A diminutive woman with a warm disposition and broad smile, Maya is cooking delicious sausages, picking tomatoes from her garden, taking her guest on tours of the old city of Koerst, translating the conversation for Rolf, sewing two-foot-high Neuland capitals onto a three-story-tall banner for the church's flea market, working on a client's commission – seemingly doing all these activities at once with complete graciousness. Anyone else would be frantic.

But the guest is distracted. The house and the adjoining church are full of examples of amazing calligraphic art which make house and church into one extraordinary gallery. The pieces that most attract the eye are by Maya herself. She is too modest to lead the guest to them from her own initiative, but he insists. By the time he leaves four days later, he not only has made a fast friend but he is also convinced that Maya Huber and her work should be introduced to a larger audience than those fortunate to be within a several-mile radius of the Methodist Church in Koerst.

There is, in this work, the German tradition of course. It is a tradition at once steeped in a disciplined skillfulness, but also partnered with expressive experimentation. Her concern with generating emotional power through extreme contrast of weight and rhythm is in a line of descent that includes such masters as Hermann Kilian, Friedrich Neugebauer, Karlgeorg Hoefer, and Gottfried Pott. Her dense textures call to mind Rudolf Koch; her lyrical

line possesses the lightness of hand of Ernst Schneidler. The solid German foundation, however, should not blind us to the internationalist influence. Her layering might put one in mind of Thomas Ingmire, the delicacy of her color palette suggests Anne Hechle, or perhaps Gwen Weaver. She has also been influenced by Anna and Arne Wolf in her use of sequence, through which she enhances a sense of narrative.

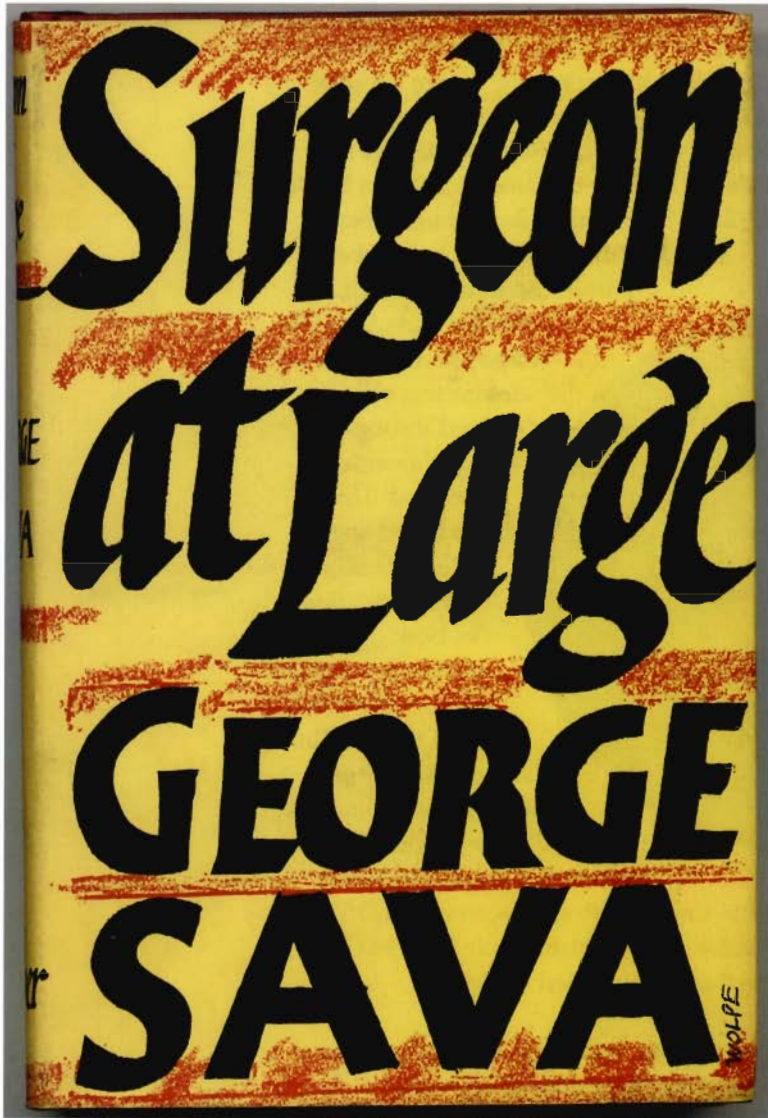


As in her home, so also in her work: music is everywhere. There is melody in the movement of individual lines, harmony in the textures – light or dense – which orchestrate the page, polyrhythmic beats pulsing through each surface, dramatic *crescendi*, whispering *diminuendi*, and everywhere the confident sensibility of being under the control of a master composer, inspired conductor.

Calligraphy may be, as Gottfried Pott put it, frozen music, but facing great calligraphy, one is also powerfully aware of being also in the presence of language. For

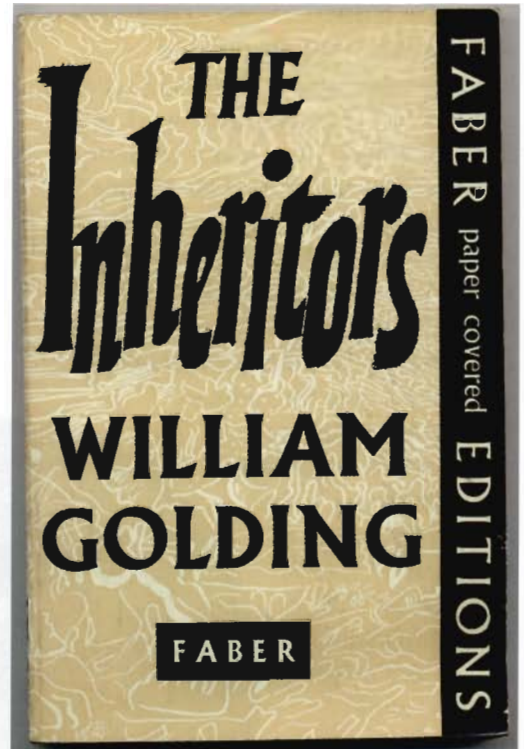
Buchstabenbuch, 2002  
10 x 15 closed  
Rice paper collage, mixed  
media  
Text: Fritz Usinger

Inheritors  
Book jacket from 1961



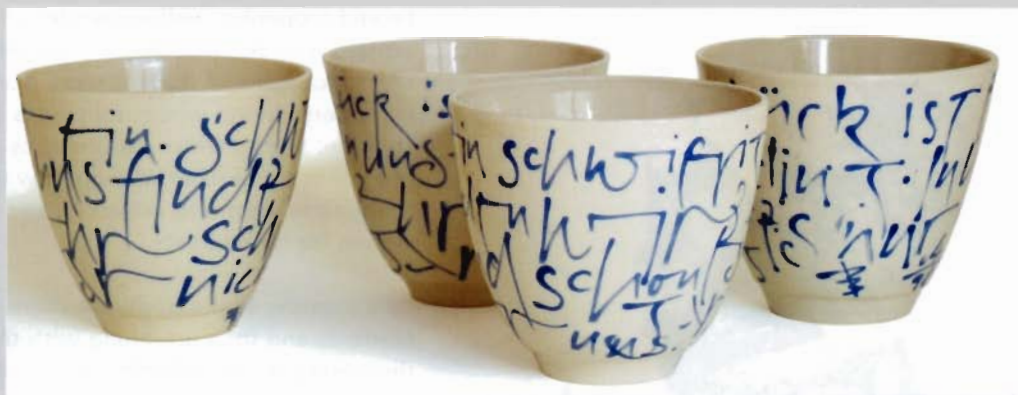
Surgeon at Large  
Book jacket from 1956

Germany, Rudolf Koch. Rudolf von Larisch developed a contemporary approach to lettering based on the even widths of nineteenth century grotesque lettering – his ideas were to prove particularly important to the development of Art Nouveau and Art Deco lettering, and are best viewed within the context of the Vienna Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte. Anna Simons translated Johnston’s pioneering book *Writing, & Illuminating, & Lettering* into

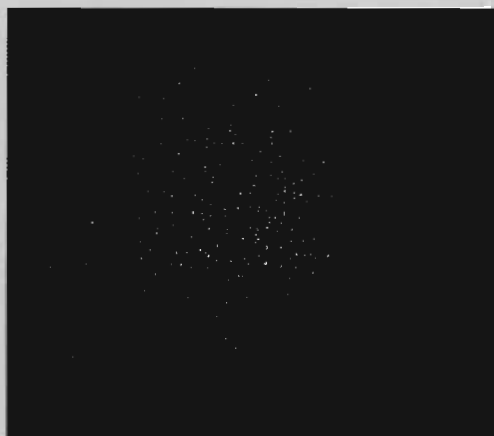


German and introduced Johnston’s methods, based upon a rational analysis of historical letterforms, into Germany. Koch developed a unique approach for writing blackletter using the broad-edged pen by changing the angle of the pen. As an educator he integrated elements from both Larisch and Simons into his pedagogical approach. Koch’s Offenbach workshop produced several lettercraftsmen and type designers, laying the foundations for a particularly rigorous school of lettering in Germany. Thus from the beginning of his education Wolpe was introduced to an approach to lettering that reflected the complex cultural environment of early twentieth century Germany.

Wolpe founded his approach to lettering upon an intuitive analysis of letterform. He emphasized the balanced relationship of black and white space to create an even texture, and advocated direct working methods using modest materials and simple techniques. Two favored techniques were cut paper and painted lettering produced



4



5

6



4  
Petra Beisse  
Ceramic Cups  
1999

5  
Brigitte Schrader  
Labyrinth II  
Metal pen, liquid frisket,  
Chinese ink on white paper  
19 x 19 (48 x 48)  
2001

6  
Uta Wolf  
Psalm 8 #2  
Brush and pen on paper  
38 x 28 (100 x 70)  
2000