

# Robert Perkins, *The Written Image*

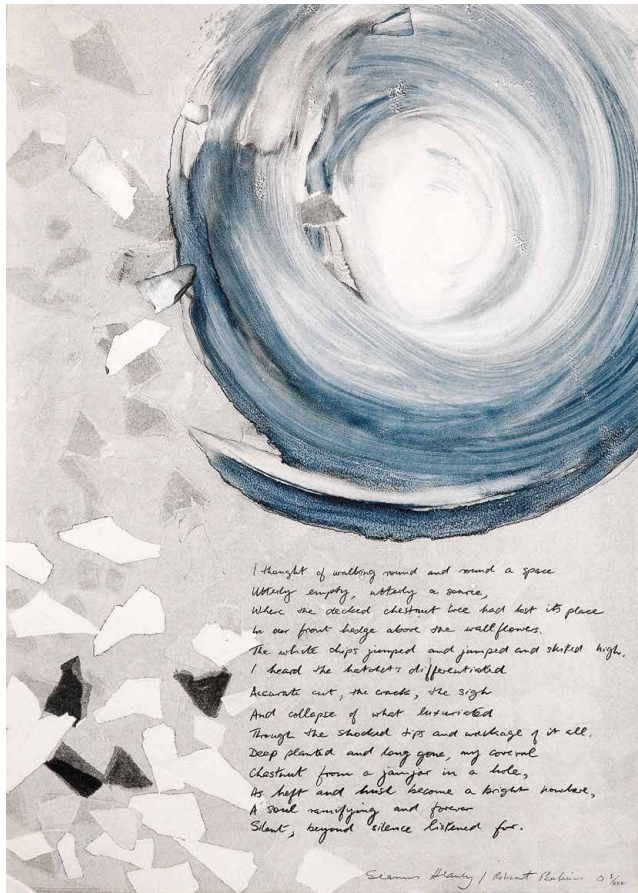
1<sup>st</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2017

**BENJAMIN SPADEMAN RARE BOOKS**

14 Mason's Yard, London SW1Y 6BU

**Private View: Thursday 2nd November, 6 – 9pm**

Benjamin Spademan is delighted to announce the opening of the second half  
of the debut exhibition by the artist and filmmaker Robert Perkins  
at his London gallery on November 1st.



Dear Rob,

*If I could be a symphony that would cover  
all the expressible and inexpressible, I'd be  
up to writing you the letter that I'd like to.  
Your work is out of this world, drawn out of  
this-worldness and a love of it. [...]*

Blessings,  
Seamus [Heaney]

Robert Perkins and Seamus Heaney,  
From *The Haw Lantern*,  
lithograph, 1989.  
©Antiquarian Photographer.

***The Written Image* is an unusual presentation of paintings, prints, and collages created by Robert Perkins  
in collaboration with world renowned poets including  
Seamus Heaney, Octavio Paz, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Lowell, Basil Bunting, John Ashbery,  
W.S. Merwin, James Merrill, David Whyte, Jean Valentine, Louise Glück...**

Perkins' homage to poetry starts with a poet's handwritten text. These collaborations are not broadsides, or illustrations, but creative works in themselves, alive with his sensitivity to materials - rich pigments, and the sculptural quality of paper. In serving the poet's chosen words, and what Perkins knows of the poet, he can obscure, or even split the text. For example, to capture the pain of loss in David Whyte's poem *The Well of Grief*, Perkins divides the paper to create the poem's central image: a well; enhancing the poem's feeling of grief.

His work creates intimacy. The collaborations also invite a viewer to discover the poem's meaning. The words, and the hand written texts, become insightful portraits of the poets.

This work presents a cross section of poetry written from the 1950s through today, a life time of over 48 years of collaborations. It's a refreshing exhibition in our day of over-blown political and artistic egos. The exhibit reminds us there are words more eternal than the current political dialogue.

Benjamin Spademan is excited to bring this exhibition to his gallery: '*It directly reflects the ethos that I have been trying to develop here, the interaction of books and art. I love the way Robert Perkins immersed himself in modern poetry and found ways of engaging with texts through his art. His catalogue gives profound insights into the creative process, as well as a fund of highly entertaining anecdotes.*'

**Robert Perkins** (b. 1949, Boston, USA) was educated at Harvard University where he studied with Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, and Octavio Paz. For fifteen years, Perkins produced independent films for PBS in the United States and Channel 4 in the United Kingdom, travelling to wild and remote corners of the world. A trilogy of three films was aired recently on PBS in the US under the title of *One Man's Journey*.

[www.robertperkins.com](http://www.robertperkins.com)



### ***The Written Image***

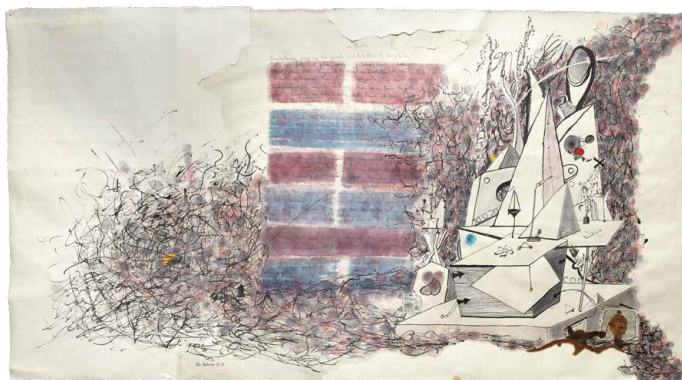
A catalogue presents the whole collection, with introductions by art critic Ilka Scobie and Ewan Clayton, author of *The Golden Thread, A History of Writing*.

280 x 230 mm, pp. 132, ISBN 978-1-5272-0764-6, April 2017.

Cover: Robert Perkins and Octavio Paz, Fragment from *Trowbridge Street*, collage on Belgium linen, blue paint, 1972.

© Louie Fasciolo, Antiquarian Photographer.

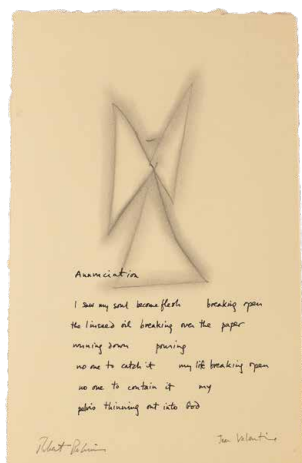
### **Selected poems**



Robert Perkins, John Ashbery, excerpt from "Daffy Duck in Hollywood" from *Houseboat Days*. mixed media drawing, with one Lifesaver, 1973.



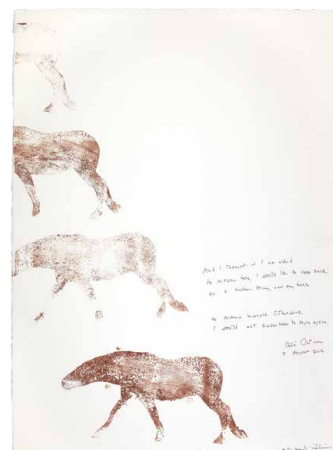
Robert Perkins, J. D. McClatchy, *Zion*, lithograph, 1995.



Robert Perkins, Jean Valentine, *Annunciation*, Lithograph and pencil drawing, 2015.



Robert Perkins, David Whyte, *The Well of Grief*, India ink and collage on rag paper, 2016.



Robert Perkins, Louise Glück, From *Landscape* Monotype and India ink, 2016.

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**Benjamin Spademan Rare Books** has been in business for some twenty years.

It specialises in literary first editions and illustrated books.

The gallery in Masons Yard opened in 2012, and focuses on rare books and associated works of art, with occasional special exhibitions.

Opening hours: Monday - Friday, 10am - 5.30pm

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