



AL~MUTANABBI STREET STARTS HERE

Who invaded you, Baghdad?
Weren't you once as dear to me as my eye?
Wasn't there a time when people lived
within you, when being neighbors was
a blessing?

Then
the crow came
and divided them.

How much
grief can you endure?¹

"...Who among us had not been enticed by the magical stacks of books on the pavement and in carts, or walked awestruck, browsing titles and sniffing the scent of the pages? Who among us could forget the pleasure of buying new books in the 1970s, or banned and Xeroxed books in the '90s during the period of sanctions? Fridays were like holidays to commemorate the gathering of friends and the purchase of new books in al-Mutanabbi Street. That street was a paradise for readers and writers, an enchanted gateway..."²



“Sometimes the weight of our own silence becomes completely unbearable, until we cannot take one more day of reading about the blood, bone, and ash.

“And then the moment comes when we recognize that this distant landscape is our own, and that we must walk through it.” — Beau Beausoleil, Introduction to *Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here*

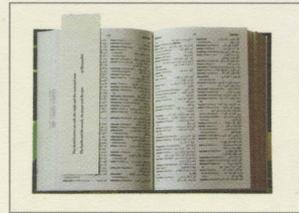
AL~MUTANABBI STREET STARTS HERE



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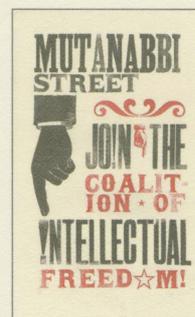
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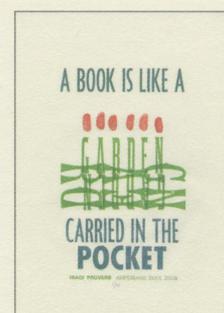
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The Broadsides:

1. Joanna Atkinson, *A Young Soul*, 2009. Text by al- Mutanabbi.
2. Kathleen Burch, *This is No Symbol*, n.d. Text by Zara Houshmand.
3. Angie Butler & Lilla Duignan, *Ode to Mutanabbi*, 2009.
4. Michael Chabot, *Day In, Day Out*, 2009. Text by Abd al-Rahim & Salih al-Rahim, translated by G.P. Skratz.
5. John Cutrone and Seth Thompson, *Occident to Orient*, 2007. Text by Zaid Shlah.
6. Ken Daley, *For it is written: the Kingdom of Heaven is within you*, 2009.
7. Darren De La Pena, *Mutanabbi Coalition*, 2008.
8. Caren Florance, *A Book is Like a Garden*, 2008. Text: Iraqi Proverb.
9. Bernd Friedrich, *More than all the gold/Mehr als das gold*, 2009. Text by G. Chr. Lichtenberg.
10. Andy Gossett, *Peace (More Rare)*, 2009. Text by Adrian Mahsen.

Idaho Center for the Book and the Arts and Humanities Institute at Boise State University present **Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here**, opening on October 2 2015 at the Arts and Humanities Institute Gallery, and continuing through the end of January 2016.

The exhibition honors al-Mutanabbi Street, Baghdad's cherished district of booksellers, publishers and literary cafés, which was devastated by a deadly car bombing in March 2007. In response to the deaths and the destruction, Beau Beausoleil, a San Francisco poet and bookseller, and Bristol UK Book Arts Professor Sarah Bodman, issued an international call to artists and writers to create broadsides, books, poetry, prose and prints reflecting on these events, and commemorating Al-Mutanabbi Street and its significance to Iraq and the world.

The **anthology** of prose and poetry titled **Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here** was edited by

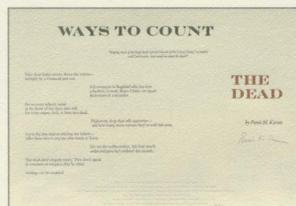
Beausoleil and Deema Shehabi, and published by PM Press in 2012. A distinguished roster of contributing editors, writers and translators includes Etel Adnan, Meena Alexander, Sinan Antoon, Mahmoud Darwish, Sam Hamill, Dima Hilal, Persis Karim, Philip Metres, Dunya Mikhail, Muhsin al-Musawi, Naomi Shihab Nye, Adrienne Rich, Amina Said, Aram Saroyan, Anthony Shadid, Sholeh Wolpé, and many others. It is a beautiful, heartrending and uplifting compendium of responses to this history, and the unbearable.

A collection of **broadsides** was created between 2007 and 2009. These are primarily letterpress prints (employing hand-printed type and imagery) which transcribe and interpret excerpts from the anthology, as well as other writings in honor of the project. The full collection of over 130 broadsides is archived at the Jaffe Center for Book at Florida Atlantic University, and may be viewed online at <http://fau.digital.flvc.org/>

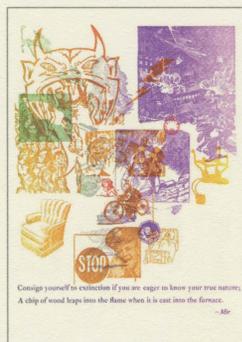
An international call to book artists, subtitled **An Inventory of al-Mutanabbi Street**, was initiated in 2010. More than 260 editions have been created to date; a gallery of the first five years of books may be viewed through the website of the University of West England Bristol's Book Arts program, at <http://www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/>

Most recently, a folio of fine art **prints** (etchings, lithographs, linocuts, serigraphs, woodblock and digital prints) subtitled **Absence and Presence**, was created between 2014 and 2015. Currently more than 140 prints have been contributed by artists from around the world. A partial catalog of this collection is available through the San Francisco Center for the Book, <https://sfcbook.org/exhibitions/absence-and-presence>

The project has been exhibited more than 30 times nationally and internationally. Boise State's own unique iteration of **Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here** comprises 61 selected works, catalogued here.



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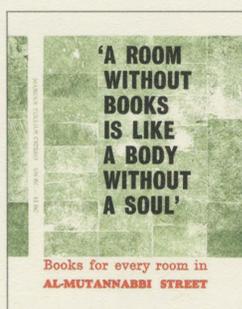
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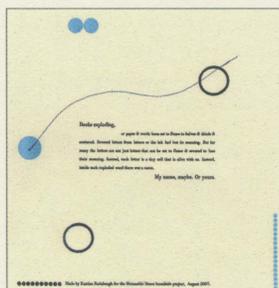
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The Broadsides, continued:

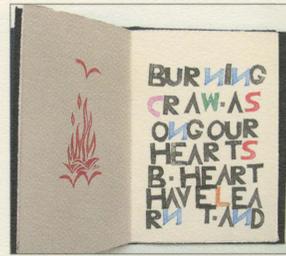
11. Jill Hearne, *Ways to Count the Dead*, 2009. Text by Persis Karim. **12.** Alastair Johnston, *Consign Yourself/Extinction*, 2007. Text by Mir. **13.** Kerry Mc Aleer Keller & Casey Smith, *Language Survival Guide*, 2009. **14.** Ellen Knudson, *C-NTR-L*, 2009. **15.** Mario Laplante, *Mutanabbi Street Starts Here*, 2009. **16.** John Packer, *Cicero's Observation is Timeless*, 2009. With quotation from Marcus Tullius Cicero. **17.** Robin Price, *Just Like Any Other Explosion*, 2008. Text by Shayma Al-Saqr, translated by Sinan Antoon. **18.** Lisa Beth Robinson & Owen Beckman, *Night in Hamdan*, 2007. Text by Saadi Yousef, translated by Khaled Mattawa. **19.** Katrina Rodabaugh, *Books Exploding*, 2007. **20.** Laurie Szujewska, *I Challenge Anyone*, 2007. Text attributed to Mohammed Hayawi, via Anthony Shadid.



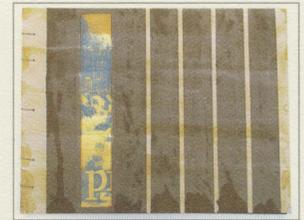
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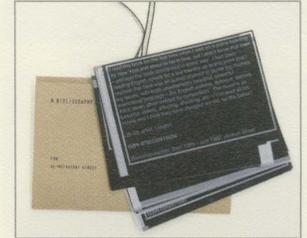
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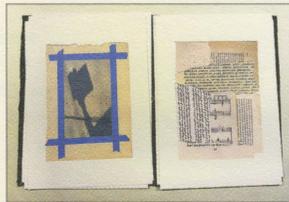
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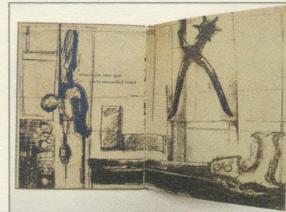
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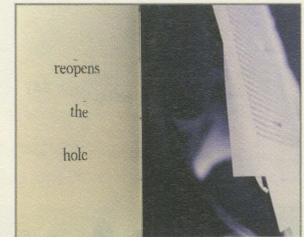
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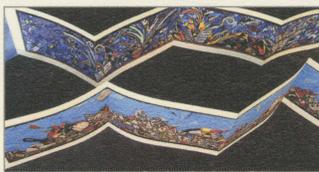
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The Books:

21. Laurie Alpert, *Iraqi Peace Song*, 2011. 22. Peter Annand, Camilla Birkeland, Renata Buziak, Martin Barry, Henri Van Noordenburg, Brigid Annand, *28 cards, dedicated to lives cut short*, 2012. 23. John Bently, *The Song Lives On*, 2011. 24. Loretta Cappanera, *It's Spring*, 2012. 25. Julie Chen, *Memento*, 2012. 26. Catherine Cartwright, *Pile of Bricks*, 2011. 27. John Paul Dowling, *Burning Daylight*, 2012. 28. Hazel Grainger, *A Bibliography of Recommendations for Al-Mutanabbi Street*, 2012. 29. Art Hazelwood, *Al Mutanabbi Street, March 5, 2007*, 2011. 30. Scott McCarney, *Material Meditation on Mending Al Mutanabbi Street*, 2012. 31. Andrew Morrison, *Rebinding*, 2012. 32. Susan Mortimer, *Response*, 2011. 33. Elizabeth Raybee & Armand Brint, *Nightfall/A List of the Broken*, 2012. 34. Bev Samler, *Scavenged*, 2013. 35. Mimi Shapiro, *Walking Softly: Memory and Future*, 2011. 36. Batool Showghi, *Al-Mutanabbi Street*, 2011. 37. Sabina Mariana Stan, *Al-Mutanabbi Before and After/In Words/Before and After in Words*, 2012



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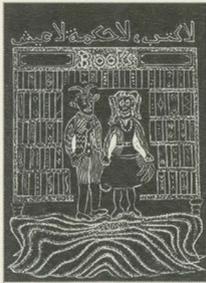
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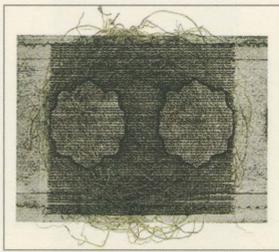
They Didn't Ask: What's After Death

They didn't ask: What's after death? They were memorizing the map of paradise more than the book of earth, consumed with another question: What will we do before this death? Near our lives we live, and don't live. As if our lives are desert lots disputed by the gods of real estate, and we are dust's bygone neighbors. Our lives are a burden to the historian's night: "Whenever I hide them they come into my view out of absence..." Our lives are a burden to the artist: "I paint them, then I become one of them, and fog veils me." Our lives are a burden to the general: "How does blood blow from a ghost?" And our lives should be as we wish. We want to live a little, not for anything...other than to respect resurrection after this death. And they quoted, unintentionally, the philosopher's words: "Death means nothing to us. We are and it isn't. Death means nothing to us. It is and we aren't." Then they rearranged their dreams in a different manner. And slept standing!

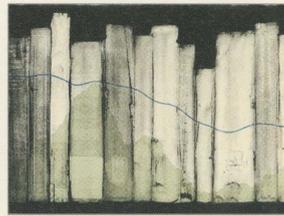
—Mahmoud Darwish

Translated from the Arabic by Fady Joudah

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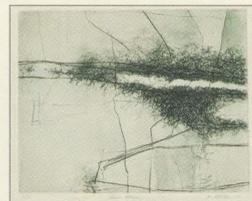
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The Prints:

38. David Avery, *Ex Libris—In Absentia*, 2014. 39. Pamela Bowden, *Sintered Book*, n.d.
 40. Justus Evans, *IQRA*, 2015. 41. Stephen Fredericks, *Untitled*, 2014. 42. Juan Fuentes, *Iraq*, 2014. 43. Marsha Goldberg, *Smoke Billows*, 2014. 44. Ronnie Goodman, *Our Spirit Still Lives On*, 2014. 45. Amy Haney, *Burning and Rising: Absence and Presence*, n.d. 46. Gary Harrell, *No Books—No Wisdom—No Life*, 2014. 47. Gary Harrell, *Underground Library*, 2014. 48. Art Hazelwood, *Arise from Flames*, 2013. 49. Fumi Ishida, *Lingering Memory of Sacred Words*, 2015.
 50. Anita Klein, *Reading Under the Covers*, n.d. 51. Csilla Kosa, *Presence and Absence*, n.d.
 52. Mario Laplante, *Absence/Presence*, 2014. 53. Kent Manske, *Knowledge*, 2014. 54. Fethi Meghelli, *Al-Mutanabbi Street: The Lute Player*, n.d.. 55. Golbanou Moghaddas, *The Nourishing River*, 2014. 56. Claudio Orso-Giacone & Ja'far Mahallati, *As if God had uttered unnecessary words*, 2014.
 57. Ali Pawson, *Sanctuary*, n.d. 58. Anders Sandstrom, *The Helmsman*, 2014. 59. Bob Tomolillo, *Absence and Presence*, 2014. 60. Sergei Tsvetkov, *Arch*, 2015. 61. Dane Weldon, *Going, Going*, n.d.

“

..No more printers; no more printing; no more engravers, no more engraving; no more paper, no more papermakers; no more calligraphers, no more binders; no more secret alphabets of animals and trees; no more Abulafia, no more Kabalah; no more Conference of the Birds; no more Ibn-Arabi; no more algebra; no more writing; no more astounding medical knowledge first brought to Europe by way of the Spanish Moors; no more Romani codes, no more hand-painted gold initial letters; no more fantastical alphabetical beasts; no more tooled inlay of dark brown and blood-red leather incised on the cover of the book you're holding now;

No more astonishing reading of the poet's work, no more first-time knowing; no more wandering inner delights of meaning's multiple senses unraveling in your mind; no more intimate occasion of a first reading as language gathers its power and breathes its life into your soul;

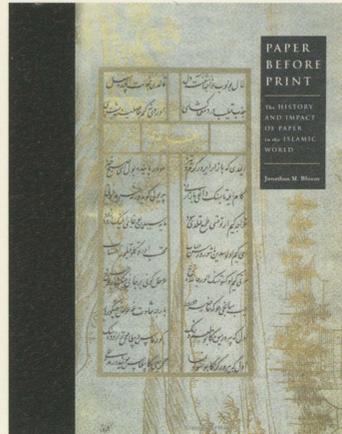
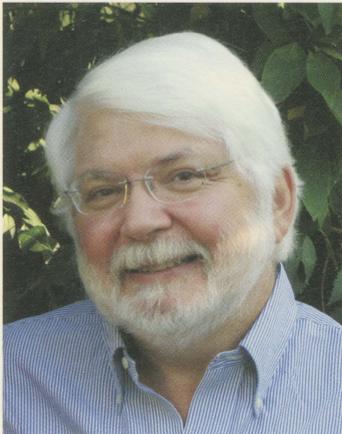
No more stepping out into the afternoon heat with the book's promised pleasures now held inside the cup of your hand;

No more walking down the street to the cafe for a bowl of thick black coffee with sweet cream and argument and talk;

No more languages to puzzle, no more street-market Arabic, no more street-market French; no more Assyrian, no more Armenian, no more Azerbaijani; no more Persian, no more Aramaic, no more Turkish, no more Turkamen; no more Iraqi Baghdadi Arabic, no more Afro-Asiatic Baghdadi; no Kurdish, no Italian, no Middle Eastern Romani; no German, no Spanish, no Afghani, no Russian, no Portuguese, no Lebanese; no more muddled, inflected English with the oddly shifting taste of hidden syllables on your tongue;...”

—Excerpt from *Al-Mutanabbi Street* by Eileen Grace O'Malley Callahan
 Reprinted with permission from the anthology, *Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here*.

Noted Scholar Dr. Jonathan Bloom to Speak at Exhibition Opening



As part of the opening celebration for *Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here*, Dr. Jonathan Bloom, Norma Jean Calderwood University Professor of Islamic and Asian Art at Boston College, will give a talk on *Books in Islamic Culture: the Role of Paper*. The talk and opening reception will occur at the Arts and Humanities Institute Gallery, in the Ron and Linda Yanke Family Research Park, 220 East Parkcenter Blvd. The exhibition opens October 2, 2015; doors open at 4:30, and Dr. Bloom's talk will begin at 5:30. After the talk, there will be an opportunity to meet Dr. Bloom as the reception continues.

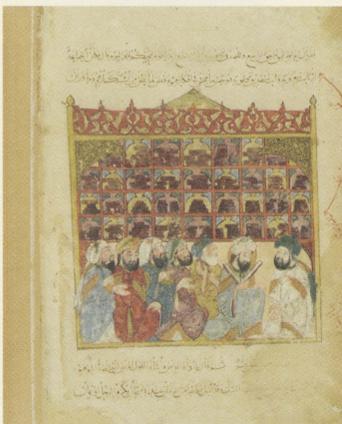
Dr. Bloom, who is the author of *Paper before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (2001), *The Minaret* (2013), and many other books, provided the following synopsis of his talk.

"Books have been an essential part of Islamic culture since its origins in the 7th century CE. The Quran, which Muslims believe is God's word as revealed orally to the prophet Muhammad, refers to the revelation as al-kitab, "the book," and very

soon thereafter copies of the holy scripture were transcribed into multipage parchment books. As Islam expanded from Arabia in the 7th and 8th centuries, however, Muslims in Central Asia encountered paper, a Chinese invention, and began to use it for the administration of their vast empire, which stretched from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. Soon thereafter, writers of all sorts adopted the use of paper from the bureaucracy, thereby facilitating an enormous burst of literary activity, as authors wrote on all subjects from astronomy to zoology and translators made the works of Classical Antiquity and India available for the first time in Arabic. The use of relatively inexpensive paper (which was made from vegetal fibers and rags,) rather than parchment (which was made from animal skins,) facilitated the creation of vast libraries of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of books in Muslim capitals from Spain to Iran, and the nature of this medium led to the development of new scripts and types of bindings that have persisted to the present day."

For more information, contact AHI@boisestate.edu

ABOVE LEFT, DR. BLOOM; ABOVE RIGHT, *PAPER BEFORE PRINT: THE HISTORY AND IMPACT OF PAPER IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD* (YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2001;) AND LEFT, A MEDIEVAL ARABIC LIBRARY AS DEPICTED IN A COPY OF AL-HARIRI'S *ASSEMBLIES*, TRANSCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED BY YAHYA AL-WASITI (BAGHDAD, 1237.)



in memory

Two dear and longstanding friends of Idaho Center for the Book have left us, too soon, in recent weeks. These losses are noted with sorrow and respect.

Thomas Mark Rockne (1955-2015) was a poet and writer, photographer, artist and framer. A former student of ICB founder Tom Trusky (in both Composition and Book Arts) Tom Rockne was an honored contributor to this publication, most recently as a juror for Booker's Dozen 2013. Tom held several advanced degrees, including BFA in Painting and Photography, an MFA and an MS in Economics: a rare combination that may hint at his multifaceted gifts. Tom won First Place in Boise State's Presidential Essay Contest in 1976, of which he was quite proud; and also taught photography at Boise State from 1984-1988. He was devoted to his writing, which he pursued until the end of his life; and will be remembered by those who knew him for his uncommon warmth and wry humor.

Cheryl Kae Shurtleff (1947-2015) was an extraordinary artist, art historian and educator, for which she will no doubt be well eulogized and long remembered. She held a BFA in Drawing and Painting, as well as MA degrees in both Art Education and Art History. Among numerous distinctions, she was recently awarded the 2015 Arts Fellowship by the Idaho Commission on the Arts. She was a founding member of the Advisory Board for the Hemingway Western Studies Center, and its pioneering Artists' and Eccentric Book Competition. She was a loyal friend to ICB since its establishment and early years, during times of challenge

and controversy, and remained so throughout her life. She was an advocate for social justice, for students, for animals and for women. No one who knew Cheryl could forget her startling talent, her collegiality and erudition, her unflagging style and thoughtful, gentle manner. SB

paper blog

Idaho Booker's Dozen 2015-16

Booker's Dozen 2015-16 continues its tour, surprising everyone it meets along the way! As of press time (September 2015) *Booker's Dozen* is enjoying its first visit to ISU's Oboler Library; and has a few visits left to make. These are: October 2015: Idaho Falls Public Library; November 2015: BYU Idaho McKay Library; December 2015: Twin Falls Center for the Arts; January 2016: Center for Arts & History, Lewis-Clark State College; February 2016: City of Moscow Third Street Gallery. Will there be one last hurrah, a final Boise showing of *Booker's Dozen* in March or April 2016? Stay tuned.

The Call for Entries for *Idaho Booker's Dozen 2017* will be released in Spring 2016; jurying will occur in September 2016. To receive a paper or electronic copy of the call, please email idahocenterforthebook@boisestate.edu, or drop us a line at the postal address on the mailing side of this newsletter.

For all sorts of ordinary and extraordinary help with the *Al-Mutanabbi Street* project and exhibition, special thanks are due to Beau Beausoleil, Sarah Bodman, Katie Chesbro, Kris Hargis, Sue Hexum, Ann Hottinger, Muffet Jones, Nick Miller, Karen Pinto, Elizabeth Sloan and Lee Ann Turner.

Idaho
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for the **Book** * **
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IdahoCenterfortheBook@boisestate.edu
Director: Stephanie Kathryn Bacon

*Book, construed to include all forms of written language.

** An Affiliate of the Center for the Book
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Idaho Center for the Book & the Arts and Humanities Institute present
AL~MUTANABBI STREET STARTS HERE



for every room in
MUTANABBI STREET

An exhibition of artists' books, broadsides, prints and poetry created
in honor of Baghdad's beloved district of booksellers, publishers and
literary cafés, which was devastated by a car bombing in 2007.

Opening Reception Friday October 2

Special Guest Speaker

Dr. Jonathan Bloom

Professor of Art History, Boston College
Historian of Print and Paper in Islamic Culture

Doors open at 4:30; talk at 5:30; reception continues until 8:00
Hors d'oeuvres and no-host bar; free event parking

Arts and Humanities Institute Gallery

Yanke Center at Boise State • 220 East Parkcenter Boulevard
Exhibit hours: Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm
through the end of January 2016 (excepting holidays.)
For more information: AHI@boisestate.edu

Images Above, details from *Day In, Day Out* by Michael Chabot; *Presence
and Absence* by Csilla Kosa; *Cicero's Observation is Timeless* by John Packer
Front Cover: *Presence and Absence* by Csilla Kosa

Texts: ¹ *Untitled* (excerpt) — Ibn al-Utri (9th century.) Translator unknown

² Excerpt from *Al-Mutanabbi Street* by Lutfiya al-Dulaimi

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Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here. PM Press, 2012