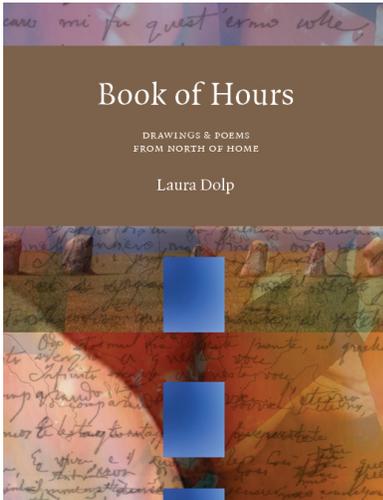


## PRESS KIT

### BOOK OF HOURS



Breathing new life into the form of the devotional text, *Book of Hours* is a powerful meditation on the conditions of place, gaze, and being.

This pocket-sized collection of original drawings and poems in English animates visual and textual poetics around the mythology of place. Recalling the richly-illustrated devotional texts of medieval Christian Europe, its images draw widely on sources from Swedish, Italian, and German literature, as well as music, photographs, architectural blueprints, and geological maps from Europe, Australia and the Americas.

With the startling clarity of a mathematical theorem and the lyrical familiarity of a dream, Dolp's poetry provides metaphorical instructions for the delicate work of tracing and orientation. The collection's visual miniatures are invested too in the project of sight: objects of meditation are collaged on and against each other, urging the reader to reconsider what is and what is yet to be.

Colored by grief, nostalgia and ecstasy, *Book of Hours* honors the circumambulatory paths of our lives, asking: *How did we get here? Where are the borders of day and night, gravity and weightlessness, inside and outside? What have we gained and what are we in danger of losing?*



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### Laura Dolp

*author, illustrator*

Laura Dolp is a practitioner, creative writer, and researcher about music as a site of human transformation. Her work often includes themes of music and spirituality, the interrelation of music and social spaces, mapping and musical practices, and the poetics of the natural world. Current projects include illustrations and poems for a dream-atlas entitled *Sophia* and an essay collection that explores the historical relationship between cartography and the music score, *Maps and Music: Stories of the Cartographic Score*. She is also the editor of Arvo Pärt's *White Light: Media, Culture, Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2017) and co-author for *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and *Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis* (Oxford University Press, 2016).



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## Sample Interview Questions

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### 1. What is a Book of hours, and how has it been reimagined in this collection?

The original Book of hours were devotional books widely popular among the laity in late medieval Europe. The works were often designed for individual patrons and illuminated with miniature paintings depicting the life of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and individual Saints. The form of Books of Hours, made up of written language and complementary visual miniatures, mirrors the form of this originating text. Four of the five chapters of Books of Hours—Calendar, Psalms, Office of the Dead, and Praise—were elements also found in these medieval devotional books.

Dolp's *Book of Hours*, however, takes inspiration from beyond the borders of Western Europe and outside the time period of the medieval ages. The book's fifth chapter, entitled Hours of the Buddha, hints at a more expansive cartography. The images in *Book of Hours* are drawn from music, photographs, literature, architectural blueprints, and geological maps not only from Europe, but also from the Middle East, the

Americas, and Australia. As made clear in the notes section of the book, its network of references are widespread, spanning from 9th century Syria to 17th century France to 20th century United States. Through this diverse set of materials, images, and references, *Book of Hours* figures itself as a contemporary and more global instrument of ritual than the book from which it was inspired.

## 2. In what ways does *Book of Hours* explore the im(materiality) of language?

The book's visual miniatures takes the form of collage, incorporating written and symbolic language (e.g. musical notation) as well as purely visual imagery. Dolp explores the im(materiality) of language by intentionally distorting, reshaping, and cutting up language past the point of legibility. In this way, *Book of Hours* probes how a loss of cognitive meaning can give shape to new, visual understanding. The visual manipulation of both text and score is in part drawn from the work of British artist Idris Khan, whose work relies on a linguistic deconstruction/destruction in order to imbue a kind of visual (re)meaning.

This dance between figuration and abstraction first came into play for Dolp while she was learning Arabic. She remarks how in the process of learning the language, one must cross a series of thresholds in order to learn new signs. Sonic association precedes meaning in the early period of learning; it is only through daily re-learning and re-associating that the Arabic signs gain any conceptual meaning. Before writing Arabic script, Dolp relished in the process of drawing it—enjoying the shapes, the elegance, the way it morphs according to where the letters are located in the word. The drawings in *Book of Hours* come out of these initial encounters with Arabic, ones marked by playfulness, mystery, and personal discovery.

Also important to note is the role of musical notation in these visual miniatures. The scores used in *Book of Hours* are a personal library of intellectual and emotional influence for the author. Her background as a professional historian underscores the reality that these scores are inherently material, for they exist as a cultural product that represent place and the values of a particular canon. For Dolp, to repurpose score symbols as purely visual material is also to change its very sound, transforming it into a visual cacophony. It also becomes a self-reflexive exercise in memory; the process of transformation recalls all of a score's performances, inevitably collapsing time and distance.

## 3. Are there any historical forms of notation from which *Book of Hours* drew inspiration?

The interest in language (im)materiality in *Book of Hours* is not an entirely new project; rather, this practice draws on visual/artistic traditions from the past:

**Hieroglyphic languages:** Across the drawings in *Book of Hours* appears recurring imagery in the presence of written languages. Through these common visual "codes," akin to those in hieroglyphs, *Book of Hours* relies on visual meaning to confer esoteric, or perhaps extralinguistic, meaning.

**Palimpsest:** The layering of both texts and musical scores in *Book of Hours* recalls the practice of making palimpsests, particularly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, where Christian scribes copied and wrote

over older texts. While making the drawings for *Book of Hours*, Dolp covered her studio in images from palimpsestic texts, using them as visual inspiration. Some such texts include the Archimedes Palimpsest, copied over in 1204 with a Christian prayer book and contains Archimedes' work "On Floating Bodies"; the Novgorod Palimpsest, the oldest book of the Rus' people from around the year 1000, with psalms 75 and 76 as well as dozens if not hundred of textual layers; and the Vatican Palimpsests, a collection of over 550 manuscripts in 13 languages.

#### **4. How was the process of making the book personally transformative for the author?**

During the making of *Book of Hours*, Dolp was challenged to question her previous academic training. In other words, making *Book of Hours* was an act of subversion: it released her from the expectation of having to explain unexplainable concepts in written language. The process let Dolp work intuitively, take risks, rewire her process of discernment, and rethink her relationship with material and cultural products.