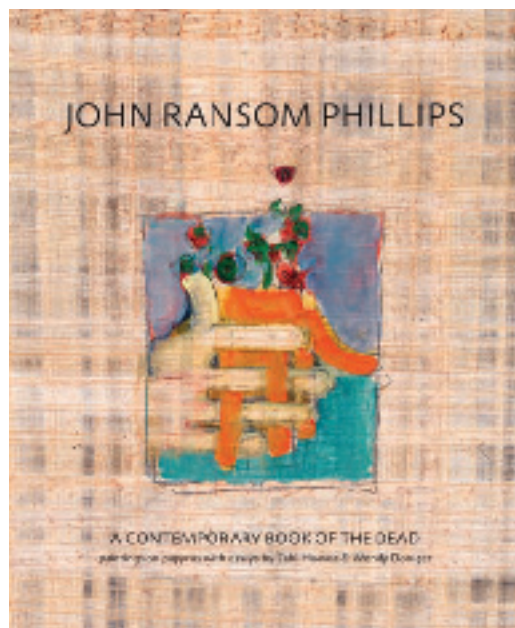
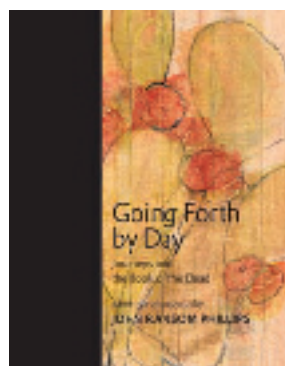




Hudson Hills Press



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OCTOBER 2009

JOHN RANSOM PHILLIPS: A Contemporary Book of the Dead

The ancient Egyptians were the first to examine the afterlife in a book composed between 1567 and 1085 BCE. This collection of funerary texts has historically been referred to as the Book of the Dead or Book of Going Forth by Day. For the Egyptians, the Book of the Dead was a vital part of the quest for immortality. Millennia later, the second Book of the Dead, written in Tibet dating from the eighth century CE, tells a similar tale, but this journey has an entirely different end—rebirth here on earth, instead of in another world.

John Ransom Phillips: A Contemporary Book of the Dead charts and affirms the Egyptian tradition of preparing for the afterlife by celebrating our earthly existence in all its fullness. Using watercolors on papyrus—an echo of the Book of the Dead incantations written on papyrus scrolls buried with mummies in ancient Egypt—this collection of colorful paintings creates a contemporary interpretation of how human beings contemplate their earthly and spiritual existence. Phillips's work is a vivid visual exploration into universal and timeless themes of life, love, fear, hope, and sublime happiness that combine into the human experience. Commentaries by authors Zahi Hawass and Wendy Doniger place the images in historical and spiritual context with the ancient texts and argue that his body of work is a continuation of the celebration of life, rebirth, and transformation.

JOHN RANSOM PHILLIPS is an artist whose work has been exhibited internationally at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C., and the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art in Chicago. He has been a faculty member of the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Chicago.

ZAHİ HAWASS is the Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities and Director of Excavations at Giza, Saqqara, and the Bahariya Oasis, Egypt. His many books about ancient Egypt include *The Golden Age of Tutankhamun: Divine Might and Splendor in the New Kingdom*. Most recently, he was instrumental in sending the touring exhibition *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs* to the United States.

WENDY DONIGER is a noted author of nearly 30 books and is the Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions in the Divinity School at the University of Chicago.

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