



Photographing Shakespeare

The Folger Shakespeare Library



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Robert Dawson

Introduction by Michael Witmore

Edited by Daniel De Simone

Ellen Manchester

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- The Folger is a singular library devoted to the greatest writer in the English language
- Offers close-up and behind-the-scenes views of everyday life at the Library
- Folger's editions of Shakespeare's plays are perennial best-sellers, popular with students and general readers alike

Founded in 1932, the Folger Library in Washington, D.C. is the world's largest Shakespeare collection. It hosts millions of visitors – in person and online – each year. For two years, award-winning photographer Robert Dawson and independent curator Ellen Manchester went behind the scenes to document its diverse, lively, and sometimes surprising culture. Provided with full access, Dawson and Manchester offer a vivid look at life and work at the Folger, from its arts, outreach, teaching, and research programs to the delicate craft of book conservation. Dawson's images also depict topics that might seem too difficult to capture – the birth of ideas, the scope of digital research, and the staff and visitors' connection with Shakespeare and his works from *Macbeth* to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Along with photographs, the book also includes writer Jennifer Howard's exploration of the Folger's human side; a meditation on life, death, and the library by Stanford art historian Alexander Nemerov; and an essay by poet and playwright Afaa Michael Weaver on the many ways in which Shakespeare's works live on.

Author and photographer **Robert Dawson** is the recipient of a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, a Creative Work Fund grant, a Graham Foundation grant, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and a Dorothea Lange-Paul Taylor Prize. His books include *The Public Library: A Photographic Essay* (2014); *Farewell, Promised Land: Waking From the California Dream* (1999); and *A Doubtful River* (2000), among others. Mr. Dawson's photographs are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the National Museum of American Art (Smithsonian Institution). The Library of Congress recently purchased his entire archive of 680 prints, negatives, and field notes from the Public Library Project. He recently retired from San Jose State University, and has been an Instructor of Photography at Stanford University since 1996. **Ellen Manchester** is an arts administrator, photography curator, and project director. She and Robert Dawson were co-directors of the Water in the West Project, a collaborative venture with eleven photographers that addressed water issues in the American West. She has served as a guest curator for the Oakland Museum, the de Young Museum (San Francisco), The Ansel Adams Center, and numerous nonprofit galleries and art centres.