

Panel 18

Images and Graphic Elements in Poetry

Graphic Elements in Zeina Hashem Beck's Recent Collection, *O*

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Raised in Lebanon, Zeina Hashem Beck is a polyglot poet who developed a unique form she refers to as “duet,” which alters lines or stanzas in English and Arabic to afford three possible, multiscriptual texts in a single poem. Independently published forays into this form, such as “Dear White Critic - رفيقي في الرحيل” (2018) and “Estranged / غربة” (2019), are now gathered in Beck’s most recent collection, *O*. They are accompanied there by other experiments with graphic elements. My presentation focuses on the triptych, a form with origins in painting. Like the duet, the triptych spreads across the page and combines poem panels. While the duet unites an English half with an Arabic one in a dialogue the poet considers a third text, the triptych unites three parts to something that likens a fourth text. Each of the four, mainly anglophone triptychs included in *O* presents three thematically divided panels that can be read horizontally, vertically, or at times diagonally. Seen in combination, they tell a more elaborate story. I will highlight “triptych: you & my country & i” and “triptych: reprise” to illustrate how this inter-medial form displays postmodern fragmentation. I will further look at “ode to fear of,” which merges the triptych form with a calligram. These examples demonstrate that Hashem Beck addresses listeners as well as readers with her unique translingual poetics.

Biography

Doris Hambuch is Associate Professor and Coordinator of the MA in English programme in the Department of Languages and Literature at United Arab Emirates University. She is the guest-editor of several special journal issues, including Issue 6.2 of *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies*, on Caribbean cinema and, most recently, Issue 49.3 of the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, on polyglot art practices. She is past President of the Canadian Comparative Literature Association, and her current research focuses on eco-poetics and multilingualism. She is the author of three chapbooks, *All That Depends* (2019), *Monsters - الوحوش* (2021), and *Office Monsters – وحوش المكتب* (2023).