

SHIRLEY  
FITERMAN  
ART CENTER

## The Conference of the Birds

Curated by Brenda Zlamany

May 18–July 9, 2016

Opening Reception: May 18, 6–9 p.m.

Gallery Hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 12 p.m.–6 p.m.

*The Conference of the Birds*, composed in the twelfth century by the Persian poet Farid ud-Din Attar, is an epic, mystical quest narrative in which hundreds of birds embark on a perilous journey in search of a king called the Simurgh, who can right the wrongs in their world. They are led by Attar, who has been transformed into a sharp-beaked, crested hoopoe. On their journey they pass across seven treacherous valleys:

Aban (Flash), or Talab (Quest)  
Ishq (Love)  
Marifat (Gnosis)  
Istighnah (Detachment)  
Tawheed (Unity)  
Hayrat (Bewilderment)  
Fuqur o Fana (Selflessness and Oblivion)

Some birds give up the journey in each of these valleys, unable to endure. Only thirty birds are left when the flock crosses the final valley. When the birds finally find the Simurgh, they simply see a reflection of themselves.

Attar's poem can be seen as a metaphor for the often perilous journey of self-discovery that artists face. This metaphor and the rich imagery of birds in the poem are the gravitational glue that brings together a diverse group of works for this exhibition.

LC Armstrong  
Brandon Ballengee  
Mike Ballou  
Rachel Berwick  
George Boorujy  
Katherine Bowling  
Mary Carlson  
Elizabeth Condon  
Leslie Dill  
Eric Dyer  
Shauna Finn  
Juan Fontanive

Tsibi Geva  
Allison Green  
Sarah Haviland  
Amy Hill  
Kurt Hoffman  
Sharon Horvath  
David Humprey  
Marya Kazoun  
Wendy Klemperer  
Kevin King  
Kate Kuharic  
Valentina La Pier

Paula McCartney  
Norma Minkowitz  
Laura Newman  
Graham Nickson  
Jennifer Wynne Reeves  
Ron Richter  
Christopher Russell  
Wade Schuman  
Susan Silas  
Hunt Slonem  
Fred Tomaselli  
Brenda Zlamany