



111. *Obsession with levitation (Leap into the void)*, by Yves Klein. 1960. Black-and-white photograph, 30 by 24 cm. (Yves Klein Archives, Paris; exh. Walker Art Center, Minneapolis).

models as 'human brushes' – may be more notable for the idea they embody or the event and process they record than for the image they present. Yet one of the most impressive works in the exhibition, *Mondo Cane shroud* – the product of a rehearsal for the filming of the creation of another work that does not survive – has both ethereal delicacy and formal dignity. The handprints it incorporates may now suggest Jasper Johns, but for Klein they echoed prehistoric cave markings and the images of human shadows imprinted by the atomic bomb blast in Hiroshima. 'A painting', wrote Klein, 'is merely a witness, the sensory surface that records what occurs [. . .] the flame of poetry during the pictorial moment. My paintings are the "ashes" of my art'.<sup>7</sup> In his own way Klein is one of the great artists of the atomic age and the space age and of the aftermath of the Second World War: his trademarked International Klein Blue was in part an antidote for the blackness he associated with the War's devastation. The exhibition closed with a room of the so-called fire paintings (Fig. 110), some lyrical, some savage, but all made using a blowtorch as an instrument of creative destruction.

In Klein's most famous gallery exhibition, *The Void*, the artist presented an empty gallery painted white, with swags of blue velvet framing the entrance on the outside. This provoked Albert Camus to write in the guest book: 'With the void, full powers' – the exhibition's subtitle. Klein's gesture was not, however, purely a conceptual play or institutional critique. He believed, following Rosicrucianism, in cosmic energy, and spent several days in the gallery beforehand 'concentrating'; in his view, those who came to the gallery and were sensitive would be 'impregnated' by his artistic sensibility as mediated through the aesthetically charged space. The most entrancing

section in this retrospective was a display of small sculptures made of sponges. They suggest surreal flora and fauna but were meant to embody the process whereby the viewer soaks up Kleinian energy.

Klein's utopian plans for an architecture of air, with forced air replacing walls and roofs, appear in several drawings that show people basking naked in an Edenic existence. For Klein, this futuristic world follows the Rosicrucian vision of a marriage of art, science and religion, and would be a victory of the invisible and immaterial over the material, a fitting conclusion for human progress and his own meteoric artistic evolution.

<sup>1</sup> Catalogue: *Yves Klein: With the Void, Full Powers*. Organised by Kerry Brougher and Philippe Vergne, with texts by Kerry Brougher, Philippe Vergne, Klaus Ottmann, Kaira Cabañas and Andria Hickey. 352 pp. incl. 120 col. + 175 b. & w. ill. (Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2010), \$65 (HB). ISBN 978-9-0356409-46.

<sup>2</sup> K. Ottmann: 'The Explorer of the Void', in *idem*, ed.: *Yves Klein: Works and Writings*, Barcelona 2010, p.67.

<sup>3</sup> Klein quoted in P. Restany: *Yves Klein*, transl. J. Shepley, New York 1982, p.76.

<sup>4</sup> K. Cabañas: 'Ghostly presence', in Brougher and Vergne, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.181.

<sup>5</sup> Klein quoted in *ibid.*, p.122.

<sup>6</sup> Y. Klein: 'The Monochrome Adventure: The Monochrome Epic', cited in Ottmann, *op. cit.* (note 2), p.144.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.137.

## Sistine sacristy manuscripts

Madrid and Dallas

by ANNE-MARIE EZE

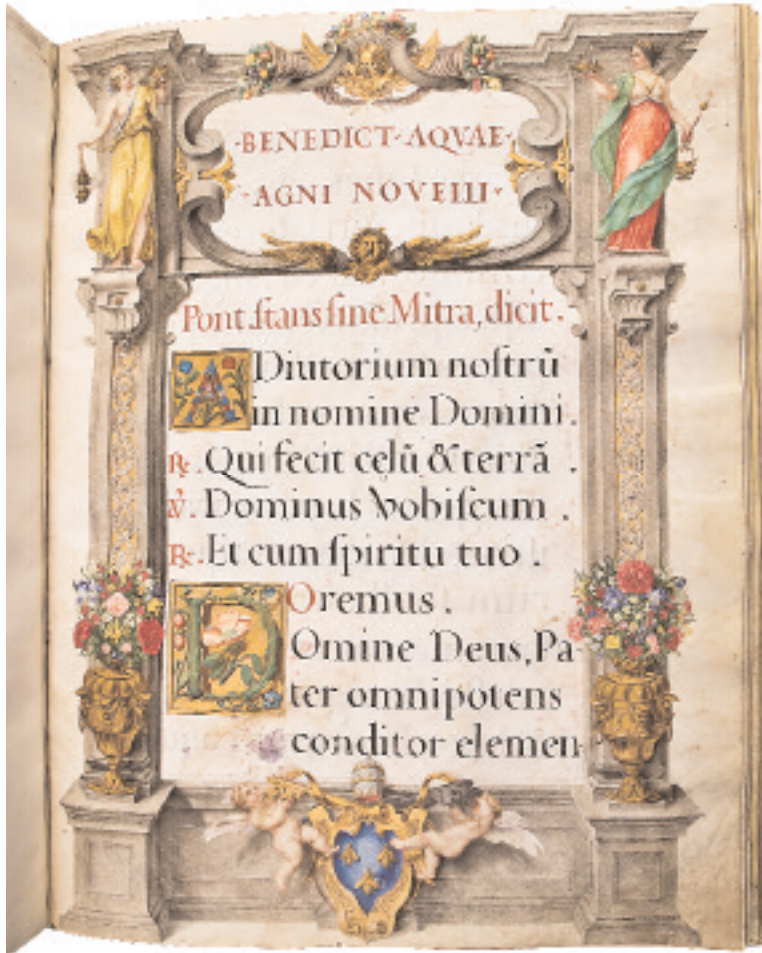
THE EXHIBITION OF manuscripts from the Sistine Chapel in Spanish collections, first seen at the Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid (closed 9th January), and now showing with the title *The Lost Manuscripts of the Sistine Chapel: an Epic Journey from Rome to Toledo* at the **Meadows Museum of the Southern Methodist University, Dallas** (to 23rd April), presents to the public for the first time a remarkable hoard of liturgical manuscripts originally in the Sacristy of the Sistine Chapel.<sup>1</sup> Apparently looted by French troops during the occupation of Rome in 1798, the books were retrieved and sent to Toledo for safe-keeping by Cardinal Francisco Antonio de Lorenzana y Buitrón (1722–1804) and are now divided between Toledo and Madrid.<sup>2</sup>

Used exclusively by popes, cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops and bishops for liturgical services in the Sistine Chapel, the manuscripts kept in the Sacristy were illuminated by the best artists available in Rome and decorated more lavishly than those used by choristers, which were housed in the Chapel. Unlike the choirbooks, most of which survive in the

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,<sup>3</sup> all the Sacristy service books were dispersed. Dismembered and mutilated for their miniatures, hitherto their splendour was known from cuttings in public and private collections, from the catalogue of the celebrated sale of miniatures belonging to the Venetian art dealer Abbé Luigi Celotti held at Christie's, London, in 1825, and from three inventories of the Sistine Sacristy compiled in 1547, 1714 and 1728. The rediscovery of forty Sacristy volumes in Spain by the exhibition's co-curator, Elena De Laurentiis, is a milestone for the study of the workings and artistic production of the papal scriptorium.

The exhibition in Madrid, where it was seen by this reviewer, was arranged in two parts. The first displayed portraits, vestments, maps and books related to Cardinal Lorenzana, establishing his importance as an ecclesiastic, patron of the arts and literature, and figure of the Spanish Enlightenment. Remembered for his beneficence to his sees when archbishop of Mexico (1766–72) and of Toledo (1772–1800), he crowned his distinguished career at the Roman Curia. Created cardinal by Pius VI in 1789, Lorenzana was sent to Rome in 1797 to assist the pope during the turbulent period of the French invasion, and it was then that Sistine Sacristy manuscripts were sent from Rome to Toledo. Following the pontiff's death, the cardinal played a significant role in organising and financing the conclave to elect his successor, which took place in Venice at the end of 1799. Lorenzana accompanied the new pope, Pius VII, to Rome and remained there until his death in 1804. Each Vatican manuscript donated to the cathedral of Toledo by Lorenzana bears the inscription: '*Anno 1798 Codex M. S. magna cura pretioque maxima in Urbis direptione redemptus . . .*'.

The second part of the exhibition showed all forty manuscripts rescued by Lorenzana, which range in date from the eleventh century to the eighteenth and encompass a variety of liturgical texts, including evangelistaries, pontificals, benedictionals and missals. Grouped chronologically by century, each section was introduced by panels explaining the books' liturgical content, decoration and patronage, and was accompanied by engraved portraits of their owners. Highlights included an early eleventh-century Benedictine evangelistary linked stylistically to the scriptorium of the Abbey of S. Eutizio near Perugia; an exquisite Missal commissioned by Cardinal Antoniotto Pallavicini in Rome between 1503 and 1507 (Fig. 113); and a Benedictional of Urban VIII (*reg.* 1623–44) of 1643 with two delightful female figures bearing liturgical instruments in its architectural border (Fig. 112). A projection of images from the books allowed visitors to see other openings and enlarged details of the pages. Their original home was evoked by suspended back-lit panels with details from Michelangelo's frescos on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, and a recording, performed by Ensemble Plus Ultra, of Tomás Luis de Victoria's *Las*



112. Benedictional of Urban VIII. 1643. Colours and gold on parchment, 43.5 by 35.5 cm. (Biblioteca Capitulare, Toledo, fol.32r of Cabildo Primado, MS 38.12; exh. Meadows Museum of the Southern Methodist University, Dallas).



113. Border with the arms of Cardinal Antoniotto Pallavicini and initial "T" (*Te igitur*) with the *Pietà*, from a Missal with Christmas Mass of Cardinal Antoniotto Pallavicini, by the Pallavicini Master. 1503–07. Colours and gold on vellum, 40 by 27.5 cm. (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, fol.66r of MS Vitr.22–7; exh. Meadows Museum of the Southern Methodist University, Dallas).

*Lamentaciones de Jeremias* from a sixteenth-century Sistine Chapel manuscript of the piece.

The principal aim of the curators, Elena De Laurentiis and Emilia Anna Talamo, was to give an overview of the state of illumination in Rome between the fifteenth century and the eighteenth, focusing particularly on cinquecento and seicento manuscripts produced under the patronage of the Curia. The dazzling display left the visitor in no doubt of the artistry of the papal scriptorium. However, those seeking further details on iconography, artists and style, would have been frustrated by the lack of labels containing more than basic information for individual books and objects. More extensive labels could have aided comparison of the different periods and schools of illumination represented in the collection, and clarified the role of Lorenzana's contemporaries, cardinals Francesco Saverio de Zelada and Luis Antonio Jaime de Borbón y Farnesio, whose engraved portraits were displayed without explanation.

The accompanying catalogue's richly illustrated, scholarly essays, entries and numerous appendices compensate for this. It provides

much new information on the identities of papal illuminators, calligraphers and copyists, particularly those who executed manuscripts for Urban VIII, such as Maddalena Corvina, the brothers Antonio Maria and Leopardo Antonozzi, and Francesco Grigiotti, as well as the cinquecento masters Vincent Raymond and Apollonio de' Bonfratelli. Although the catalogue charts the fate of the manuscripts after their arrival in Spain, it does not set the scene of French-occupied Rome and does not clarify the circumstances of the cardinal's acquisition of the codices for '*muchísimo dinero [...] a peso de oro*'.<sup>4</sup> This is also the case for the sister-volumes owned by Luigi Celotti, despite new findings on their vicissitudes before the Christie's sale.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps elucidation of the Sacristy manuscripts' epic journeys, at least the leg from Rome to Venice, will be found through further study of the lengthy conclave in the lagoon city, where impoverished members of the Curia sold off valuables with which they had escaped from Rome.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Catalogue: *Códices de la Capilla Sixtina. Manuscritos miniados en colecciones españolas*. By Elena De Laurentiis and Emilia Anna Talamo. 490 pp. incl. 252 col. + 66

b. & w. ills. (Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, Madrid, 2010), €59. ISBN 978-84-936776-8-8. English edition: *The Lost Manuscripts of the Sistine Chapel: an Epic Journey from Rome to Toledo*. ISBN 978-0-578-06427-7. Italian edition: *Codici della Cappella Sistina. Manoscritti miniati in collezioni spagnole*. ISBN 978-88-88168-53-1.

<sup>2</sup> In the Biblioteca Capitulare de la Catedral and the Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha in Toledo; and at the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid.

<sup>3</sup> See G. Morello and S. Maddalo, eds.: exh. cat. *Liturgia in figura: codici liturgici rinascimentali della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, Rome (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana) 1995; and E.A. Talamo: *Codices cantorum: miniature e disegni nei codici della Cappella Sistina*, Florence 1998.

<sup>4</sup> De Laurentiis and Talamo, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.27, note 5.

<sup>5</sup> For details of Celotti's life, see A.-M. Eze: 'Abbé Celotti and the provenance of Antonello da Messina's "The condottiere" and Antonio de Solario's "Virgin and Child with St John"', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 151 (2009), pp.673–77. For new documents on the codices' whereabouts between 1802 and 1819, see *idem*: 'Abbé Luigi Celotti (1759–1843): connoisseur, dealer, and collector of illuminated miniatures', unpublished Ph.D. diss. (Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 2010), pp.292–317.

<sup>6</sup> For the history of the conclave, see S. Baldan: *Il conclave di Venezia. L'elezione di papa Pio VII. 1 dicembre 1799 – 14 marzo 1800*, Venice 2000.