

Shakespeare in American Life



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"Shakespeare and American Life" celebrates Shakespeare's influence on American culture - whether high, low, or middlebrow - to mark the 150th anniversary of Henry

Folger's birth and the 75th anniversary of the great library he and Emily created for Shakespearean scholarship. A sampler of such scholarship is here presented by nine essays that offer contexts for the multitude of images and objects on display in the Folger Library's Great Hall during the spring and summer of 2007, many of them - and a few additional images - reproduced in this catalogue. The essays explore Shakespeare's influence on America's cultural history from a variety of perspectives. Chronologically, they range from the colonial period, to the adoption of Shakespeare as an "American genius" in the nineteenth century, to twentieth-century musical comedy, film, theater, and finally to Shakespeare as we know him in twenty-first century America. Culturally, the essays range from the academic (about editors and scholars), to the theatrical (Shakespeare's continuous presence on the American stage), to the popular (the appropriation of Shakespeare as a popular icon in advertising, folk art, and kitsch).

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