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## Dealer's Choice: Sandra Hindman

**APOLLO STAFF**

The art market is full of personalities, but dealers and gallerists often seem little more than names when the market gets covered in print. In this regular series, *Apollo* asks art dealers to introduce themselves and their businesses. Sandra Hindman is the owner of Les Enluminures Chicago, New York, and Paris

### **Tell us a bit about the history of your business...**

I'm a professor-turned-dealer, which might be understandable from my background. My father was a well-known research scientist (a member of the Manhattan Project) at the University of Chicago and Argonne National Laboratory, and my mother is an art-lover and ring collector (still going strong at 97 years old). She put reproductions of famous paintings throughout the house, from Bruegel to Degas, and took me on weekends to the Art Institute of Chicago.

After getting a PhD in medieval art history, I taught at Johns Hopkins and then Northwestern for decades. Then, a dealer asked me to write descriptions of his manuscripts, because typically dealers in my field out-source their expertise. One thing led to another: I wrote descriptions, found manuscripts, identified clients, sold manuscripts, raised money for him and, *voilà*, I started my own business. The Paris gallery opened its doors in 1991.

**What are your specialist fields?**

All things medieval, but mostly medieval manuscripts of all sorts – Books of Hours, important illuminated manuscripts, and text manuscripts. Also in the past 15 years, rings and now other medieval jewellery.

**What's the most exciting work you're currently offering?**

A Missal (book for the Mass), which in itself doesn't sound all that thrilling – but this one has 20 incredibly delicate and beautifully painted miniatures by an artist closely related to Jean Pucelle, who is the most important French painter before the Limbourg Brothers.

**What's been your greatest triumph as a dealer?**

One highlight was finding and reuniting a miniature by Birago, stolen in the 15th century from the monk-painter by a renegade friar, with the manuscript from which it was taken, now in the British Library. The British Library calls the manuscript the Sforza Book of Hours, one of the 'finest surviving Renaissance manuscripts.'

A second was finding and selling to the University of Chicago a splendid illuminated copy of the *Roman de la Rose* that had been separated from its sister manuscript, *The Game of Chess*, for 100 years.

Both the [British Library](#) and the [University of Chicago](#) have reunited the objects.

**And your greatest professional regret?**

I'm not much one for 'regrets.' My philosophy is whatever happens happens. Still, I underbid very recently a newly-discovered manuscript full of drawings purported to be by the celebrated Limbourg Brothers (artists of the Duke of Berry's *Très Riches Heures*, perhaps the most important manuscript in the whole world), and I do rather wish I had been the successful buyer.

**How has the market in your field changed since you started dealing?**

Less material. Certain areas have gone way up in value (text manuscripts). Still there's not that much of a difference, except that collectors expect more and better information (which is a good thing, and we're well placed to offer that with our academic background). The internet hasn't had much of an impact yet.

**Do you collect yourself? And in the same field as you deal?**

I collect Dora Maar and School of Paris works on paper, Japanese prints and Alice Halicka (wife of the cubist painter Louis Marcoussis). I definitely don't collect in my field. I have the best of all worlds, a constantly rotating collection of things for which I am merely the temporary guardian before they go to new homes.

**Which work have you been sorriest to part with?**

None. Like I said I love it when they go to new homes.

**If you weren't an art dealer, what would you be?**

Something with animals, like owning a cattery of Persians? I once thought I would take six months off and go to Chile to help a not-for-profit organisation raise endangered

species of small cats (did you know that of the 36 species of cats, 22 are small cats?). I've never had the time – and maybe I wouldn't like it anyway.

Or a chef of many international cuisines? (I once gave Chinese cooking classes in Baltimore; I'm a pretty expert French chef, thanks partly to Julia Child; and I can cook skillfully a wide variety of cuisines, including South East Asian, Indian, and especially Italian, since I have an Italian mother).

'Les Enluminures' is exhibiting at the [Winter Antiques Show](#) (24 January–2 February) and [Master Drawings New York](#) (25 January–1 February).

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