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The Art Market Collecting

Will Jeff Koons fare better in Miami?

Plus: Medieval forgeries for show; Pace steps up in New York; momentum builds at fee-free auction business



'St Martha Taming the Tarasque' by the Spanish Forger in 'Holy Hoaxes' ©Les Enluminures

Holy Hoaxes is the superb title of an exhibition coming to gallery of Medieval art Les Enluminures (New York, January 17-February 2). This will show part of the fakes and forgeries collection that belongs to William Voelke, curator emeritus of the Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts department at New York's Morgan Library and Museum.

Highlights include works by the so-called Spanish Forger, who was in fact based in Paris in the early 20th century but earned his name because of a work he attributed to a 15th-century Spanish artist. Voelke believes there are more than 400 works by the Spanish Forger, exposed as such in the 1930s, including about a dozen in his collection. A large panel, "St Martha Taming the Tarasque", that Voelke bought for \$300 in 1974 features at Les Enluminures.

It's rare for Medieval copying to be so intentionally deceptive. "The line between fakes, forgeries, copies and facsimiles is much more blurred than for other periods," says specialist Sandra Hindman, chief executive of Les Enluminures. She points to work by nuns at the Abbey of Maredret, Belgium, who learnt the intricate techniques of illumination to connect with their predecessors. There is also work by Caleb Wing, who recreated manuscripts for a London collector whose library was damaged by a flood in about 1846.

The works in the show are "emphatically not for sale", Hindman says; it presents an "extraordinary collection" about an "intriguing topic".