

## MASTER DRAWINGS 2020

January 25 to February 1, 2020

*Les Enluminures* New York

23 East 73rd Street, 7th Floor, Penthouse, New York, NY 10021

### "IT'S A PERSONAL THING": COLLECTING ILLUMINATIONS

**Why do we collect? What do we collect? How do we collect?** This exhibition encourages visitors to pose these questions as they view the nearly three dozen diverse medieval and Renaissance illuminations dating from the twelfth through the sixteenth centuries.

In the first century B.C. the Roman poet Lucretius expressed the idea that likes and dislikes vary from person to person in the form of a proverb, when he wrote in "The Nature of Things": "One man's meat is another man's poison." Following Lucretius, there have been many modifications of this proverb: "One man's trash is another man's treasure" or "One man's pain is another man's pleasure" or "One man's loss is another man's gain." **In art, what lies behind individual choice and preference is the result of complex personal, cultural, and aesthetic patterns.**



So, we encourage visitors to this exhibition, as they appreciate the miniatures on the walls, to ask themselves what their "personal thing" is and, perhaps, to ask themselves why. Will it be the **sheet from a Choir Book that depicts Job visited by his wife** painted with an intense palette and bright gold leaf **by the Second Master of the Strozzi Breviary (FIG. 1)**? While Job reclines in bed, sores covering his body, fantastic hybrid figures with bearded faces inhabit the margin and a musician plays kettle drums in the lower right. Those with backgrounds in the practice of art might be drawn to the skillful portrayal of the faces and drapery, reminiscent of Italian gold ground panel painters. Musicians might appreciate the implied contrast between the sacred music sung in church and the secular music that reverberates in the Italian courts and city streets.

Dramatic moments are vividly depicted in a full-page miniature from the thirteenth century showing scenes from the **Lives of Four Apostles (FIG. 2)**. Even if the stories, which entail episodes of boiling, flaying, and goring of saints, are mostly unfamiliar to a modern audience, viewers cannot help but be struck by the bold rendering of the figures who stand out on the thick gold ground, contained by the blue border, as though on the stage in a theatre. A limited palette of blue, brownish-red, and green and sparse modelling creates color fields within each of the pods divided on two registers. What's your pleasure? Does the abstract rendering of this miniature capture your attention? Or perhaps its historical context in Paris in the age of the Cathedrals strikes a chord?

Bold color and vivid hatching characterize another French miniature that presents a realistic depiction of the **Virgin nursing the Christ Child (FIG. 3)**. The naturalism of the scene is enhanced by the window-like ledge behind which the half-length figure stands framed by architectural pilasters. Details such as the jewels in her crown and the creamy tone of her skin encourage not only devotion but appreciation, as she appears to inhabit our own space. This fifteenth-century painter was active to the southeast of Paris between Lyon and Grenoble. If realistic portrayals are more your "personal thing," then perhaps this page will captivate you.

**A multitude of other factors can influence your "personal thing"** -- the subject matter, color, historical period, rarity (for connoisseurs already familiar with this sector of the art market), even framing. Come and gaze at these high-quality illuminations from France, Germany, Austria, and Italy, learn more about this rare field, and tell us what is your "personal thing." **As an unusual experiment we will keep a tally (anonymous of course) of what each visitor chooses and announce the "personal things" on our website after the show. The results will undoubtedly be interesting – and infinitely diverse.**

Founded by Dr. Sandra Hindman more than twenty-five years ago and with locations in Paris, Chicago, and New York, *Les Enluminures* has forged long-standing relationships with major museums and prestigious private collections throughout the world. Sandra Hindman is responsible for numerous publications on medieval manuscript illumination, especially single leaves and cuttings; her scholarship over many decades has established a model for study in this field, and descriptions of works available in the gallery meet the same level of professionalism.



FIG. 1

SECONDO MAESTRO DEL BREVIARIO STROZZI 11

(active Tuscany, c. 1340-1350 )

*Job in Bed Visited by his Wife*, initial 'S' on leaf from an Antiphonal  
(leaf 622 x 450 mm.; miniature 165 x 150 mm.)

Italy, Tuscany, Florence or Pisa, c. 1340-1350

Painted on this leaf from an enormous Choir Book is a miniature showing the suffering Job reclined in bed with sores covering his body, his lower half partly wrapped in a diaphanous sheet, all contained in the upper half of a large initial 'S.' Fantastic human-hybrid figures with bearded faces inhabit the margins, and at lower right a musician playing two kettle drums slung around the hips. Linked to a group of artists in Pisa historically associated with the celebrated painter Francesco Traini, the artist has been named the Secondo Maestro del Breviario Strozzi 11 for contributions to a Breviary made in Florence in 1326 (Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS Strozzi 11).

\$85,000.00



FIG. 2

PARISIAN ILLUMINATOR (circle of the Master of Guînes?)

Scenes from the Lives of Four Apostles

(leaf 180 x 140 mm.)

France, probably Paris, c. 1230-1240

Dramatic scenes illuminating this leaf show four apostle saints with imagery well known in the thirteenth century, and with clear parallels to the Golden Legend, but here with striking details. Many sister leaves, all full-page, have survived, and they most likely served as a prefatory cycle of a Psalter. The artist is thought to have worked in one of the Parisian workshops in this golden age of the Cathedrals.

\$60,000.00





3.

## MASTER OF THE APOCALYPSE OF AYMAR DE POITIERS

(active Dauphiné, c. 1480-1490)

*The Nursing Madonna*, full-page miniature on leaf from a Book of Hours  
(leaf 212 x 144 mm.; miniature 188 x 113 mm.)

Southeastern France, Dauphiné, perhaps Grenoble or Lyon, c. 1480-1490

This captivating full-page miniature from a Book of Hours from Southeastern France shows the Nursing Madonna, or *Madonna lactans*, with a jewel-studded crown and flowing mantle. From a Book of Hours of which the major portion is still in the Lilly Library in Indiana, the miniature shows off a theatrical setting that is a delightful adaptation from popular engravings coming from the Southern Netherlands.

\$19,000.00



4.

## REGENSBURG PAINTER

*Saint Bartholomew* in a historiated initial 'E'

(leaf 445 x 375 mm.; initial 88 x 83 mm.)

Germany, likely Regensburg, c. 1310.

From a well-known music manuscript, which originated in the Dominican convent of the Holy Cross in Regensburg, this leaf joins as many as twenty sister leaves many in museum collections (e.g., The Morgan Library and Museum, the National Museum of Stockholm). The name "Gerwich" on the leaf in the Morgan may identify the founder of the abbey. Here, Bartholomew, typically shown with reference to his martyrdom (he was flayed) holds what appears to be a parchment stretcher.

\$28,000.00

Please contact us for high resolution images and descriptions of the featured works of art.

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