

Basic Detail Report



Title

Book of Hours of the Virgin

Date

about 1500

Dimensions

5 3/16 in. (13.2 cm) x 3 7/16 in. (page) 5 1/2 x 3 11/16 x 1 in. (binding) 6 3/8 x 4 9/16 x 1 5/8 in. (box)

Medium

Illuminated manuscript on vellum: Latin text in roman script, decorated with calendar illustrations, fifteen full-page miniatures in architectural frames, plus 34 tiny illuminations with floral or ornamental borders. Ink, tempera, and brushed or burnished gold on vellum; eighteenth-century binding in red morocco with metal clasps.

Classifications

Books

Credit Line

Museum Purchase

Object number

1955.28

Published References

Pautler, Margo L., "Books & Manuscripts", TOLEDO MUSEUM NEWS, New Series, Vol. 9, NO. 2, Summer 1966, pp.27-46, repr. p. 32 (b&w) (also published as a handbook).

Putney, Richard H., >i>Medieval Art, Medieval People: The Cloister Gallery of the Toledo Museum of Art, The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, 2002, p. 52 (det.), repr. (col.) fig. 44.

Babbitt, Geoffrey, *Appendices pulled from a study on light*, New York City, Spuyten Duyvil, 2018, pp. 4-5, 8-10, 17, 30, 46, 51, 56, 74, repr. (col.) pp. 8, 20, 33, 45, 60, 62, 66, 70.

Exhibition History

Toledo Museum of Art, *Treasures for Toledo*, Dec. 1964. and Jan. 1965

Toledo Museum of Art, *A Page in Time: Treasured Books from the TMA Collection*, Jan. 13, - June 3, 1990.

Collections

Works on Paper

Label Text

This richly illuminated BOOK OF HOURS is a noteworthy early example of French Renaissance art. In the calendar section, at the beginning of the book, the months are accompanied by a scene depicting an appropriate activity for that time of year and the corresponding zodiac sign. For March, there is a picture of three men pruning trees, and there is the zodiac sign of the ram. The fifteen full-page miniatures include St. John the Evangelist, the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Presentation in the Temple, the Flight into Egypt, the Betrayal, the Crucifixion, the Death of the Virgin, and the Trinity. The detailed compositions include dignified Renaissance architecture or delicate landscapes, all rendered with forceful modeling and brilliant colors. The borders, painted with shadow-casting patterns, are either naturalistic (with sharply defined designs of acanthus, flowers, insects, and butterflies) or decorated with pure Renaissance ornament made of putti and grotesques. This manuscript is in exceptional condition. The script and illuminations are pristine and remarkably fresh, so that one beholds exquisite splendor on each page. Why is this book closed? Because the Museum risks damaging this medieval devotional book by opening it. The book- a collection of prayers, scriptures, and a Church calendar was rebound in the 1700s into its present leather binding. However, it was bound so tightly that opening it cracks the spine, which will eventually damage the pages. This presents a dilemma, since it is a particularly fine example of late medieval book illumination and contains fascinating images of daily life in the calendar depictions of "labors of the months." The Museum has photographed these labors of the months but is considering dismantling the book in order to photograph every page. It could then be re-bound- but not so tightly! --so that it can be exhibited and enjoyed. This richly illuminated Book of Hours—a collection of prayers, scriptures, and a Church calendar used for private worship—is a noteworthy early example of French Renaissance art. In the calendar section, at the beginning of the book, each month is accompanied by a scene depicting an appropriate activity for that time of year and the corresponding zodiac sign. The 15 full-page miniatures include St. John the Evangelist, the Annunciation (Archangel Gabriel visiting the Virgin Mary to announce that she will bear the Christ Child), the Nativity (the birth of Christ), and the Crucifixion of Christ. The book is in exceptional condition with remarkably fresh colors. The book was rebound in the 1700s into its present leather binding. However, it was bound so tightly that opening it too far cracks the spine, which can damage the pages.

Not On View