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# Nature Illuminated: Flora And Fauna From The Court Of Emperor Rudolf II (Getty Trust Publications: J. Paul Getty Museum)



## Synopsis

The court of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II produced nothing more amazing than the *Mira calligraphiae monumenta*, a brilliant demonstration of two arts--calligraphy and miniature painting. The project began when Rudolf's predecessor, Ferdinand I, commissioned master calligrapher Georg Bocskay to create a model book of calligraphy. A preeminent scribe, Bocskay assembled a vast selection of contemporary and historic scripts. Years later, at Rudolf's behest, miniaturist Joris Hoefnagel filled the spaces on each manuscript page with insects, fruits, flowers, and other botanical images. The combination of word and illustration is rare and, on its tiny scale, constitutes one of the marvels of the Central European Renaissance. *Nature Illuminated* reproduces forty-one pages from the original codex. Those who love and collect beautiful books will be endlessly fascinated by Hoefnagel's imagery and invention. The accompanying commentary identifies and explains the details of Hoefnagel's exquisitely crafted illuminations.

## Book Information

Series: Getty Trust Publications: J. Paul Getty Museum

Hardcover: 64 pages

Publisher: J. Paul Getty Museum; 1 edition (July 10, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0892364726

ISBN-13: 978-0892364725

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.4 x 7.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 20 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #596,309 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #11 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media > Illuminations](#) #161 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Graphic Design > Commercial > Book Design](#) #222 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media > Calligraphy](#)

## Customer Reviews

The most important legacy of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II is the *Mira calligraphiae monumenta*, a manuscript comprised of illuminated pages of calligraphy. Around 1561 a master calligrapher wrote the text as proof of his preeminence among scribes. After his death, a master illustrator was employed to illuminate his writing, and the outcome is a rare combination of words and images in small-scale drawings--considered one of the wonders of Renaissance Europe. This

book culls different plates from the collection that are each unique, consisting of lavishly executed text in Roman and Hebrew letters accompanied by realistic and detailed drawings of plants, animals, and insects.

Demeude's preoccupation with letters has led him to bring together illuminated initials and ornamental characters from 12 centuries of alphabets and typography, ranging from 8th-century sacred manuscripts to 20th-century mass-produced postcards. Included are samples from over 100 alphabets created by such artists as Durer, Holbein, Daumier, and Kate Greenaway. The animated letters may be draped with the human form, used to offer historical or biblical scenes, or entwined with naturalistic scenes. While the accompanying historical notes and essays are succinct, the visuals will be of the most value as a study collection. The Getty's diminutive (5 1/4" x 7 1/4") volumes contain reproductions and notes on calligraphy and miniature paintings from a work commissioned by the court of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II during the 16th century. Currently in the J. Paul Getty Museum, the *Mira calligraphiae monumenta* (Model Book of Calligraphy) is the combined effort of master calligrapher Georg Bocsday and court artist Joris Hoefnagel. Considered one of the most precious books of the European Renaissance, it represents the transition from medieval European manuscript illumination to the emergence of the floral still life genre of the early 17th century. *Nature Illuminated* contains reproductions of 41 manuscript pages with meticulous studies of flora and fauna. An *Abecedarium* contains 38 illuminated reproductions of Roman capital and Gothic lowercase letters. These unique titles are best suited to specialized art and design collections. ?Judith Yankeilun Lind, Roseland Free Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I love this book! Even though this is only in a small format, I find it to be a little gem! Not a lot of accompanying text but the information is concise. An excellent selection of botanical illumination of old manuscripts, each colour plate is a joy to behold. For what the book costs I would say that it's really worth having!

A little snippet of the *Mira Calligraphiae Monumenta*. love this little book

Such a little jewel of a book! Artists, naturalists, botanical illustrators, art historians, and lovers of beauty will find this tiny volume to be right up their alley. Smaller than I expected, but perfect.

perfection on a small scale; a delight. A perfect gift for a lover of botanical illustrations as well as

calligraphy.

For anyone into botanical embroidery and illuminated manuscripts - this book is sure to please. Page after page of stunning botanical drawings accompanied by beautifully written texts. An inspiration for those in the decorative arts. Highly Recommended.

This is a great book for those who appreciate beauty in nature. I find that just paging through the gorgeous artwork of natural objects and flowing calligraphy is very soothing. The book is smaller than I expected but its content does not disappoint. Makes a wonderful gift for special friends. I bought my copy for myself but I might buy others in future as gifts for friends.

magnificent book.....arrived on time

Although just a small book, studying the examples included within reminds one of the major steps taken in the study of nature

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