

"Medieval/Modern": Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books Will Open Exhibition to Complement Art Basel

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Complementing Art Basel 2018, Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books will open its doors for a public exhibition. An exceptional selection of manuscripts, miniatures, and early printed books will be on display at the Dr. Jörn Günther Antiquariat in the heart of Basel from the 11th to the 15th of June, 2018. Under the motto “Medieval/Modern”, this year’s exhibition enters artworks from the past into a dialogue with those of the present, exploring medieval and Renaissance art as an important point of reference for contemporary artists. With a special focus on the theme “Black & White vs. Bursts of Colour”, the artworks on view represent the artistic power in the juxtaposition of vibrant colour choices and a more muted, mysterious grisaille palette that has inspired artists for centuries.



Artists have always been drawn to a world in black and white - ranging from medieval grisaille paintings to Jackson Pollock’s drip paintings up to contemporary works by Gerhard Richter. Representing the muted, elegant palette, Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books will present an exceptionally fine Book of Hours whose miniatures show the exquisite refinement of a great artist. This sophisticated prayer book is attributed to the Master of Petrarch’s *Triumphs*, a distinctive artist whose earlier work is localized in Tours. The varied gradients of grey combined with small touches of few other pigments emanate a degree of translucency and purity. The manuscript includes 38 small miniatures with gold and red frames, as well as 4 full-page miniatures surrounded by borders of gilt scrolls containing the repeated motto “*Parce Michi Domine*”, meaning “Spare me, O Lord”, which may possibly indicate a yet unidentified patron’s device. While rooted in spiritual aspiration, this opulent manuscript nonetheless provides the owner with a luxury object that expresses his or her social status.

On the other end of the spectrum, Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books will present a vividly coloured Book of Hours, illuminated by the Masters of the *Grandes Heures de Rohan*, whose expressive colour choices offer a brilliant precursor to exquisitely colourful works by Vincent van Gogh, expressionist painters like Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, or Jean-Michel Basquiat. The Rohan Masters’ striking and dramatic style shows clamorous colours, distorted perspectives, and impulsive gestures used for emotional effect. Characteristic motifs include long limbs, golden clouds drifting across vividly coloured skies, and fascinatingly layered patterns. The miniatures in this Book of Hours, including the fine figures of St. John Baptist, the Archangel Michael, or the Burial scene, anticipate the impressive, monumental compositions of the *Grandes Heures de Rohan*, created about fifteen years after this Book of Hours.

Image: Book of Hours, use of Rome. Manuscript on vellum, illuminated by the Master of Petrarch’s *Triumphs*. France, Tours, c. 1490-1500. Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books AG.