

FineBooks & COLLECTIONS

Lavish Manuscript on Vellum Sold at Frieze Masters for €3 Million

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Word from London: During the VIP Preview Day yesterday at Frieze Masters, Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books sold an extremely rare, imperial Book of Hours known as “The Wedding Hours” to a private collector for an estimated €3 million (\$3.45 million). The Swiss bookseller called it “a highly important work of cultural heritage and is of exceptional historical and art-historical value.”



This manuscript on vellum was illuminated by the Master of Anna Sforza in Milan in 1493. It contains 235 leaves, with fifteen full-page miniatures, fourteen of which are accompanied by an elaborately decorated text-page with full, historiated borders. It was created as a wedding gift for Bianca Maria Sforza (1472-1510) upon her marriage to the Holy Roman Emperor elect, Maximilian I of Austria-Habsburg. According to the bookseller, “The book was commissioned by the noblewoman’s uncle, Ludovico ‘Il Moro’ Sforza and not only testifies to the high level of Renaissance art made for the Sforza family in Milan, but also shows how art was used to link social, religious, and political life. The famed marriage by proxy between the niece of the Duke of Milan and the Emperor’s son was celebrated with great pomp in Milan on the 30th of November 1493. The entire manuscript is lavishly illuminated with opulent Renaissance motifs in gold and saturated colours.”

Frieze Masters is happening now through Sunday.

Image courtesy of Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books