



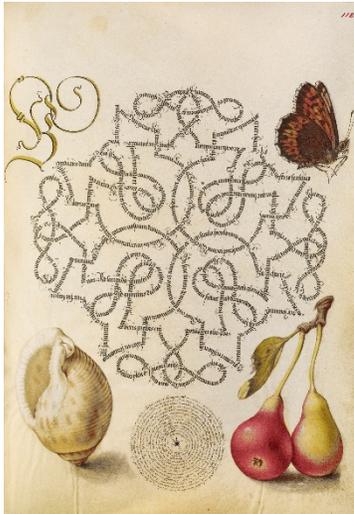
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**THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM PRESENTS**  
***ARTFUL WORDS: CALLIGRAPHY IN ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS***

**At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center**

**December 18, 2018–April 7, 2019**



**LEFT:** *Butterfly, Marine Mollusk, and Pear*, 1561 - 1562; illumination added 1591 - 1596, Joris Hoefnagel (Flemish / Hungarian, 1542 - 1600) and Georg Bocskay (Hungarian, died 1575). Watercolors, gold and silver paint, and ink on parchment. Leaf: 16.6 x 12.4 cm (6 9/16 x 4 7/8 in.). 86.MV.527.118. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Ms. 20, fol. 118 **RIGHT:** Decorated Text Page (*S#rat al-An'#m 6: 108*), 9th century. Pen and ink, gold paint, and tempera colors. Leaf: 14.4 x 20.8 cm (5 11/16 x 8 3/16 in.). 83. MM.118.3.4.verso. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Ms. Ludwig X 1, fol. 4.verso

**LOS ANGELES** – The written word was a major art form in the premodern world. Calligraphers filled the pages of manuscripts with scrolling vines and delicate pen flourishes, and illuminators depicted captivating narratives with large letterforms. These decorative embellishments reveal the monetary, cultural, and spiritual value placed on handmade books at the time. Offering an exploration of decorated letters, *Artful Words: Calligraphy in Illuminated Manuscripts*, provides insight to the artistic trends that shaped calligraphic practice from England to Central Europe and beyond for nearly one thousand years.

Three types of decorated letters were employed in the handwritten book arts of the Middle Ages: ornamented letters, formed by abstract foliate motifs; inhabited letters, in which strokes of the letter are made up of animal, human, or hybrid forms; and historiated initials, in which the letter includes figures or other content related to the text.

The alphabetic adornments in this exhibition appear in manuscripts that range from a Bible and a Qur'an to books of prayer, law, and history. The calligraphers who made them combined script and ornament to embellish pages, while illuminators developed original and complex strategies for fitting miniature stories into individual letters. Several of the manuscripts feature signatures by the scribes, calligraphers, or artists.

"We consume words in a variety of ways—in handwritten, printed, and digital media—decoding messages that are communicated not just by the combination of phrases but also by their design and styling," said Bryan C. Keene, associate curator of manuscripts. "Among the highlights in the exhibition is a grouping of manuscripts penned by the famous scribe David Aubert for Duchess Margaret of York, as well as a Qur'an paired with an Italian ceramic vase with imitation Arabic script."

*Artful Words: Calligraphy in Illuminated Manuscripts* will be on view December 18, 2018, through April 7, 2019 at the J. Paul Getty Museum. The exhibition is curated by Keene and Katherine Sedovic, former graduate intern in the Manuscripts Department. Related programming will include gallery talks, lectures, and more. Additional information can be found at [getty.edu/360](http://getty.edu/360).

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**The J. Paul Getty Museum** collects Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts to 1900, as well as photographs from around the world to the present day. The Museum's mission is to display and interpret its collections, and present important loan exhibitions and publications for the enjoyment and education of visitors locally and internationally. This is supported by an active program of research, conservation, and public programs that seek to deepen our knowledge of and connection to works of art.

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