

## PRESS RELEASE

### Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books at MAZE Art Gstaad 2026

Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books, the world leading specialist dealer of manuscripts and miniatures from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, is excited to announce their participation at MAZE Gstaad, where the following highlights, among other masterpieces, will be exhibited. Set in the prestigious ski resort of Gstaad, this MAZE Art Gstaad brings together a curated selection of leading international galleries and creators across modern and contemporary art, historical masterpieces, collectible design, and high jewelry.

#### 1 The Liechtenstein *Tacuinum Sanitatis*.

Manuscript in Latin on vellum, illuminated by four different artists. Italy, Padua, c. 1450.  
160 x 170 mm.

This extraordinary secular picture book is a highly unusual witness to everyday life in 15<sup>th</sup> century Padua. Originally a medical handbook, or a guide to wellbeing, the *Tacuinum Sanitatis* was a popular text copied and widely read throughout medieval Europe. It was originally written in Arabic in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by Ibn Butlān.

This remarkable manuscript features 130 full-page miniatures of men and women from different social classes eating, preparing, and selling food, visiting shops, harvesting and mowing, conversing around a fire, drinking different types of wine (and sometimes too much of it), having sex, and playing musical instruments

are interspersed with identifiable plants in verdant and craggy landscapes, metaphorical depictions of the seasons, beloved and spoiled pets, as well as animals led to slaughter.



## 2 The 'Croÿ-Arenberg Hours'.

Book of Hours for the use of Sarum (Salisbury).

Manuscript in Latin on vellum, illuminated by the Master of Sir George Talbot and a collaborator, the Master of the Older Prayerbook of Emperor Maximilian, the Master of the David Scenes in the Grimani Breviary and artist from the circle of the Master of James IV of Scotland.

Flanders, Ghent or Bruges, c. 1508-20. 211 x 153/156 mm.

The 'Croÿ-Arenberg Hours' represents one of the finest examples of Flemish illumination and was made for a high-ranking member of the English royal court, as strongly suggested by the Tudor roses in its marginal decoration. The commission for this book was undoubtedly motivated by the patron's desire for uniqueness and luxury.

Most of the large miniatures are the work of the Master of the Older Prayer Book of Maximilian I, a leading artist in celebrated manuscript projects. Another famous collaborator on this prestigious project was the Master of Sir George Talbot, known for his lively colour palette and magnificent landscape backgrounds. An additional enigmatic illuminator was an artist from the circle of the Master of James IV of Scotland, who also worked on the legendary Spinola Hours. The astounding, dramatic close-ups in the miniatures were copied from the groundbreaking image cycle created by Simon Marmion.

Stunningly rich border decorations and single motifs on every single blank margin complete this one-of-a-kind masterpiece.



### 3 Herbal.

Illustrated manuscript on vellum.

Northern Italy, perhaps Veneto or Padua, 1500-1520. 225 x 170 mm.

This highly unusual northern Italian herbal, filled with almost 400 drawings of plants, was most probably used as a workbook with botanical sketches for apprentices of a high-end workshop. However, the high degree of realism in the illustrations could just as well point to a precursor to the first real botanical compendiums, which start to flourish in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.



Labels in different languages identify many of the plants, documenting continuous use of this work- and study book throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The majority of the botanical depictions in this hitherto unstudied manuscript are astonishingly lifelike, bearing witness to late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries illustrators' renewed interest in the accurate observation of nature. In addition to the plants, this herbal also features individually scattered, luscious fruits, as well as insects and a lizard. The arrangement of the botanical depictions, sometimes with two, three or more plants on one page left no space for further explanatory text, focusing entirely on the visual representation of the countless plants, ranging from

Chamomile to White Poppy.

### 4 Herbal, illustrated manuscript on paper.

Northern Italy, end of 15th century.

202 x 142 mm

This is an unknown Herbal from Northern Italy that may have been meant as an illustrated manual for alchemical recipes. It is an important example of late 15th century herbals, whose quite abstract illustrations were not intended to identify plants but rather served as symbols of the actually existing plants. This tendency for the simplification of plants observable from the late antiquity and intensifying in the late Middle Ages, is perfectly exemplified by this rare tome.

Such illustrated herbals are extremely rare on the art market. According to our research, around twenty herbals or pharmacopoeias have been offered for sale at



auctions or in antique shops since 1900. Some of them consisted of only a few pages and were probably incomplete.

**5 Book of Hours, made as wedding gift of Ludovico Sforza to his niece, Bianca Maria Sforza, upon her marriage to Maximilian I.**

Manuscript on vellum, illuminated by the Master of Anna Sforza (Nicoletto da Modena?). Italy, Milan, 1493. 98 x 70 mm.

With 15 full-page illuminations and more than 200 decorated pages, the Wedding Hours is an opulent witness to the ambitions of the Visconti-Sforza dynasty. The intricate and rich illustrations were completed by the Master of Anna Sforza (possibly Nicoletto da Modena). With its opulent Renaissance motifs completed in gold and heavily saturated colours, the manuscript's style demonstrates the genius of the artist, who combined techniques of illumination and goldsmith's work (seen in medallions with red and blue backgrounds that simulate painted enamel). This quality, along with the intricate architectural elements, is characteristic of late fifteenth-century Milan. The Master of Anna Sforza would have been influenced by the vibrant artistic community of this city, which included figures such as Donato Bramante, Leonardo da Vinci, and brothers Cristoforo and Giovanni Ambrodio de Predis.





DR. JÖRN GÜNTHER RARE BOOKS AG

Medieval Manuscripts and Miniatures

## Note to Editors

**Company Info** Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books is the world leading specialist dealer of manuscripts and miniatures from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Dr. Günther has accumulated 40 years of experience with Medieval Manuscripts, opening his first Antiquarian book store in Hamburg in 1990. Today, the gallery and company office can be found in the historical old town of Basel, Switzerland, located at Gemsberg 10. Our team of experts thoroughly investigates and documents every book and miniature for the benefit of our clients and collectors. We actively circulate our findings and participate in scholarly discourse.

[www.guenther-rarebooks.com](http://www.guenther-rarebooks.com)

### MAZE Art Gstaad

Set in the prestigious ski resort of Gstaad, this boutique winter salon brings together a curated selection of leading international galleries and creators across modern and contemporary art, historical masterpieces, collectible design, and high jewelry. For its third edition, the salon will return to the Festival-Zelt, right in the center of the village. Its scale allows for a focused presentation and meaningful encounters between exhibitors, collectors, and visitors. MAZE Art Gstaad is part of a series of salons designed to explore different disciplines in carefully chosen settings, at key moments in the cultural calendar.

February 19th – 22<sup>nd</sup>, Venue Festival-Zelt Gstaad – Sportzentrum Strasse 5, 3780

<https://www.mazepresents.com/salon/art-gstaad>

**Contact Us** Dr. Günther is available to speak with the press and provide further information. Please contact Elisabeth Wingerter (ew@guenther-rarebooks, +41 (0)61 275 75 62) with your questions and possible interview dates.

**Download high-res photos and press materials**

<https://www.guenther-rarebooks.com/press-materials/>

(see photo captions on the next page)

## Photo Captions – English



**The Liechtenstein *Tacuinum Sanitatis*.** Manuscript in Latin on vellum, illuminated by four different artists.

Italy, Padua, c. 1450. 160 x 170 mm. © Courtesy of Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books, Basel.



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**Herbal,** illustrated manuscript on paper. Northern Italy, end of 15th century. 202 x 142 mm. © Courtesy of Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books, Basel.



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**Book of Hours**, made as wedding gift of Ludovico Sforza to his niece, Bianca Maria Sforza, upon her marriage to Maximilian I. Manuscript on vellum, illuminated by the Master of Anna Sforza (Nicoletto da Modena?). Italy, Milan, 1493. 98 x 70 mm. © Courtesy of Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books, Basel.