COLORS OF THE WORLD
ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS
IN THE AGE OF EXPLORATION

The quintessential Morgan school program that broadens students’ perspective of books and museums.

Unit Overview
In Colors of the World, the prevalence of literacy in today’s world is contrasted with a time when reading and access to knowledge were relegated to the few. The program instills students with a sense of value for the written word.

Students will draw upon the Morgan’s superb collection of illuminated manuscripts and relate them to world history in a way that will deepen their understanding of cultural identity and interaction among diverse peoples across time and place. Hands-on activities will emphasize the impact of trade with West Africa and Asia on medieval Europe’s glorious manuscript production, as imported spices, dyes, semiprecious stones, gold, and animal matter became the basis for illuminators’ palettes.

Session One
Students will analyze a vast selection of painted and gilded pages and discuss material and function within their historical context. They will then determine the many ways images and text interact and discuss material and function within their historical context.

Session Two
Students will reenact historical artists’ techniques and use traditional tools and ingredients to produce their own illuminations. Art supplies will include saffron threads, dried insects, and malachite chips to be ground with a mortar and pestle. These materials will serve as a starting point for discussions on European history and topics related to Eurasian trade routes, including geography, botany, geology, chemistry, zoology, and social history.

Contact
To schedule a class please call 212.685.0008, ext. 509 or email schools@themorgan.org.

For Teaching Evaluation Instrument, we are offering an in-school previst meeting to prepare teachers for Colors of the World. They will receive instructional materials and resources to enhance their students’ content knowledge. The meeting will be 45 minutes long, and will take place one month prior to the first session of Colors of the World.

Gallery Activities
Gallery exploration, discussion, and hands-on art project.

In School Previst Meeting with Teachers
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Grades 3 to 12
Two sessions at the Morgan booked approximately one week apart.

90 minutes per session

Previsit material
Images from Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, a guide to a large online compilation of images from the Morgan’s collection of manuscripts.

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