

FACT SHEET

Exhibition:

Illuminating the Medieval Hunt

Press Preview:

Thursday, April 17, 2008, 10 a.m. until noon

Dates:

April 18 through August 10, 2008

Summary:

Le Livre de la chasse was one of the most influential medieval treatises on hunting. Written by Gaston Phoebus (1331–1391) between 1387 and 1389, the forty-six surviving manuscripts and numerous printed editions of the text testify to its popularity. The Morgan Library & Museum is fortunate to possess one of the two most luxuriously illustrated manuscripts (Paris, ca. 1407). The exhibition presents a unique opportunity for the public to see approximately fifty of its miniatures displayed together as the manuscript has been disbound temporarily for conservation and the preparation of a facsimile. Visitors can leaf through a copy of the facsimile and see miniatures that could not be displayed. Also on view are printed editions of Phoebus' and other hunting books. Other manuscripts in the exhibition demonstrate how hunting themes made their way into a broader cultural context in religious literature as well as secular texts.

Content:

The leaves of *Le Livre de la chasse* are arranged according to the four books of the treatise: domestic and wild animals, the nature and care of dogs, on hunting in general and hunting with dogs, and the use of various snares and crossbows by hunters.

The exhibition includes extremely rare first and second printed editions of *Le Livre de la chasse* along with the first printed book on hunting, based on a fourteenth-century text. Also on view are the first and second editions of the "Book of St. Albans," the first English book on hunting and George Gascoigne's *The Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting* (London, 1575 and 1611).

Two sixteenth-century Flemish manuscripts are presented to demonstrate how the medieval hunt was often used as a metaphor in both profane and sacred texts. And to demonstrate that noble hunt was not limited to Europe, six examples of Islamic and Indian painting are also included.

- **Approximately 50 miniatures** from *Le Livre de la chasse* (including the ex libris of King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Spain, List of Chapter Headings, and Portrait of Gaston Phoebus)
- **8 printed books** (2 printed editions of *Le Livre de la chasse*, 4 English hunting books, 1 French hunting book, 1 German hunting book)
- **12 medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts** of English, French, Flemish and Dutch origin

**Organization
and Sponsors:**

The exhibition is organized by William M. Voelkle, curator and department head of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, The Morgan Library & Museum.

Illuminating the Medieval Hunt is made possible by a generous gift from Melvin R. Seiden and by the Janine Luke and Melvin R. Seiden Fund for Exhibitions and Publications.

Faksimile Verlag Luzern is the corporate sponsor.

**Education and
Programs:**

A family day workshop, *Dogs, Deer, and a Dab of Gold*, complements the exhibition on Saturday, May 17, 2008, from 2 to 4 pm. The activities will include a card game that sends participants to explore medieval forests and mountains in search of wild boars, wild cats, deer, bears, wolves, and mountain goats. Families will also have the opportunity to mix paint using ingredients and tools that would have been familiar to the artists in the exhibition, and then create their own “medieval” illustrations using the paint mixture combined with genuine gold leaf.

For more information and other programs, please contact the Education Department at (212) 590-0333.

About the Morgan:

A complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today it is a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. Nearly a century after its founding, the Morgan maintains a unique position in the cultural life of New York City and is considered one of its greatest treasures. With the 2006 reopening of its new campus, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, the Morgan reaffirmed its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4000 B.C. to the twenty-first century.

**Hours and
Location:**

The Morgan is located at 225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street in New York and open Tuesday to Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Monday and Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. The Morgan closes at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Admission:

Adults \$12; children (under 16) \$8; seniors (65 and over) \$8; students (with current ID) \$8; free to members and children 12 and under (must be accompanied by an adult). Admission is free on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. Admission is not required to visit the Morgan Shop.

For further information please contact Sandra Ho, Communications and Marketing department, (212) 590-0311, or at media@themorgan.org.