



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## San Diego Public Library

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **New Wangenheim Room Exhibit Displays Leaves of Illuminated Manuscripts and Medieval Book of Hours**

**SAN DIEGO** – A new exhibit, *Leaves of Gold: an Exhibit of Illuminated Manuscripts* opens at the Central Library Wangenheim Room. This free exhibit located at 820 E St. in downtown San Diego is open to the public from August 10 through December 10, 2009. The Wangenheim Room is open to the public from Monday through Saturday, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Hidden in the collections of the Wangenheim Room is unexpected treasure—a rich trove of beautiful medieval and Renaissance miniature paintings and flashes of gold on vellum leaves that have rarely been on public display.

Illuminated manuscripts flourished from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and are hand written texts that are supplemented by the addition of decoration, such as decorated initials, borders (marginalia) and miniature illustrations. In the strictest definition of the term, an illuminated manuscript only refers to manuscripts decorated with gold or silver, but in both common usage and modern scholarship, the term is now used to refer to any highly decorated or illustrated manuscript. The majority of these manuscripts are of a religious nature. Historically, illuminated manuscripts were produced by monks in monasteries. Beginning in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, an increasing number were created by professional artisans working in commercial centers across Europe. The birth of the printed word in the late 15 century that could produce works faster and in a more affordable way meant the demise of the illuminated manuscripts that were labor intensive, costly and produced in a less timely manner.

Highlights of the exhibit include a beautiful 15<sup>th</sup> century Book of Hours from France, a 13<sup>th</sup> century Latin bible, a Spanish missal from 1615, and an exquisite and highly illuminated 20<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* illustrated by Edward Taylor Jewett. The exhibit also includes an interactive manuscript display, individual illuminated leaves, and beautiful facsimiles and reproductions of important illuminated works.

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The Wangenheim Room, which holds collections of rare books and other valuable items, is on the third floor of the Central Library, located at 820 E St. in downtown San Diego.

For more information about the exhibit, please call Heidi Wigler at 619-236-5807 or visit our website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/public-library/locations/wangenheim.shtml>

Learn about other events at the San Diego Public Library's Central Library and 35 branches, find links to numerous additional resources, or search for materials in the Library's catalog online at [www.sandiegolibrary.org](http://www.sandiegolibrary.org)

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