



**Nature Illuminated: Flora and Fauna from the  
Court of Emperor Rudolf II (Getty Trust  
Publications: J. Paul Getty Museum)**

*Lee Hendrix, Thea Vignau-Wilberg*

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The court of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II produced nothing more amazing than the *Mira calligraphiae monumenta*, a brilliant demonstration of two arts--calligraphy and miniature painting. The project began when Rudolf's predecessor, Ferdinand I, commissioned master calligrapher Georg Bocsday to create a model book of calligraphy. A preeminent scribe, Bocsday assembled a vast selection of contemporary and historic scripts.

Years later, at Rudolf's behest, miniaturist Joris Hoefnagel filled the spaces on each manuscript page with insects, fruits, flowers, and other botanical images. The combination of word and illustration is rare and, on its tiny scale, constitutes one of the marvels of the Central European Renaissance.

*Nature Illuminated* reproduces forty-one pages from the original codex. Those who love and collect beautiful books will be endlessly fascinated by Hoefnagel's imagery and invention. The accompanying commentary identifies and explains the details of Hoefnagel's exquisitely crafted illuminations.

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