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ART & DESIGN

## What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

By ROBERTA SMITH FEB. 21, 2018



"The Virgin and Child," by a German or Southern Netherlandish Master, circa 1480. Credit Luhring Augustine

### ‘OF EARTH AND HEAVEN’

*Through March 10. Sam Fogg Ltd. at Luhring Augustine, 531 West 24th Street, Manhattan; 212-206-9100, [luhringaugustine.com](http://luhringaugustine.com).*

Sam Fogg, the respected London dealer, has regularly staged exhibitions of medieval art in New York for around a decade, but never before in Chelsea. Unsurprisingly, this year's show begins with the thrill of simply walking into it,

forsaking the neighborhood's contemporary-art babble for the otherworldly hush imposed by nearly 30 expressions of faith in painting, sculpture and whatnot from the Middle Ages. Here, the whatnot includes enamels, a silver and silver-gilt reliquary in the form of a bishop's hand; a large stained-glass window and the lavishly illustrated Carpentin Hours, by the artist known as the Master of the Dresden Prayer Book. The most secular item in this group is a two-tier cast-brass chandelier from the Southern Netherlands (1480-1520) that is remarkably like the single-tier one in Jan van Eyck's "The Arnolfini Portrait" of 1434.

The era's religious faith is especially palpable in two carved softwood sculptures from the 14th century whose colors and gilding remain nearly intact: a pale, life-size Spanish crucifix that is both daunting and slightly comic and a polychrome wood Pietà with anguished expressions and with gaping wounds whose red matches that of the Virgin's robes. The appealing emotionality of these works is countered by a marble of John the Baptist, also from the 14th century. Attributed to Robert de Lannoy of Paris, it is a study in idealization and dignified restraint — down to the orderly rivuletlike textures of the saint's camel-hair coat.

Among many other standouts, a triptych centering on an elaborately ensconced Virgin and Child (1490-1500) reflects the influence of van Eyck's infinite realism and his banishment of the Gothic gold that is so gloriously evident elsewhere in the show, especially in "Saint Michael Vanquishing the Devil," an altarpiece panel made in Aragon around 1470.

The show's rarest inclusion may be a very tall (11 feet!) exquisitely detailed ink drawing of a proposed crossing tower for Rouen Cathedral. It was made by the architect Roulland le Roux who used two perspective points to give mass and dimension to its attenuated form and High Gothic filigree. Pierre des Aubeaux, the sculptor for the project, drew in images of the 60 figures and gargoyles intended to finish the structure, which eventually reached a height of about 260 feet. Its stunning plan glorifies God and human ingenuity with a crisp clarity later called modern.