



**Friday, October 16, 2009**

[Scripture for the eyes](#)



Who would have thought Bible illustrations from the 16th century would speak to a recovering Hindu from the 21st century? Yet the exhibition opening tomorrow at the [Michael C. Carlos Museum](#), has enough devotion, symbolism, and religious ferment for every persuasion.

[Scripture for the Eyes: Bible Illustrations in Netherlandish Prints of the Sixteenth Century](#) presents Dutch and Flemish masters from [Lucas van Leyden](#), [Maarten van Heemskerck](#), and [Hieronymus Wierix](#) with loans from important institutions including the [British Museum](#), the [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York](#), Antwerp's [Plantin Museum](#), and the [Rijksmuseum](#) in Amsterdam.

Visitors are in for a wonderful treat: virtuosic prints in various styles that inspired great masters, including Rembrandt, who consulted them in later centuries. Eighty woodcuts and engravings literally glow against the claret red walls of the museum's third-floor galleries, a color the Carlos Museum design team is especially proud of after examining every hue of red possible in the physical world.

I was well aware of the reach of the Bible, having studied parts of the Bible as literature in India, yet I couldn't have imagined the pivotal role of biblical art during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements in Europe. The boom of print publishing houses coincided with the proliferation of biblical texts and images and why was this important? It popularized the word of God through scripture.

[Walter Melion](#), [Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Art History](#), and curator of the exhibition, also notes that Antwerp was the center of the production of vernacular Bibles in many languages, including English. In fact, the exhibition includes five rare volumes of the Antwerp Polyglot Bible (in several languages) from the Emory Libraries.

I had quite a few "illuminating experiences." Wierix's "Christ in the Wine Press," invited me to go beyond the image of Christ bleeding into the sacramental wine with God turning the press to fully comprehend Christ's suffering for all humanity.

Also captivating was [Goltzius](#) series called "Life of the Virgin," where he imitates great masters from [Federigo Barocci](#) to [Albrecht Dürer](#), signifying the multiple forms of beauty required to evoke the Virgin's physical and spiritual perfection. Gorgeous details--some of the lines so exquisitely and finely rendered, the artist could have only done so using a magnifying glass and the slow attentive persistence of true devotion to the subject matter.

Amen.

-- Priyanka Sinha, director of communications & marketing, Carlos Museum  
Posted by Emory Alumni Association at [4:45 PM](#)