

Vibe 19192

# Holy history

CALL IT DIVINE inspiration, but the Phoenix Art Museum's trinity of exhibitions focused on illuminated handmade Bibles and religious manuscripts collectively span more than 1,300 years of history.

The highlight of the three is **Illuminating the Word: The Saint John's Bible** – the only handwritten and illuminated Bible commissioned since the advent of the printing press more than 500 years ago.

The Saint John's Bible is a richly ornamented masterwork, hand illustrated with gold leaf on oversized vellum pages. The project's artistic director and expert calligrapher, **Donald Jackson**, has worked with Welsh and British scribes and artists to illuminate the Saint John's Bible.

For the first time these pages will be shown alongside ancient examples of the Good Book. Selections from the nearly completed Bible are traveling the United States as part of a national tour sponsored by the Target Corp.

The project is slated to be completed in late 2009; Phoenix-based **Roswell Book Binding** will take on the task of binding the finished Bible.

The museum also will host **The Early History of the Bible**, a show centered on sacred manuscripts from the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, as well as **Selections from the James Melikian Collection**, representing more than 20 ancient Christian and Jewish texts and manuscripts. Among the rarities in this collection is a rare **Khabouris Codex**, one of only two Assyrian New Testament manuscripts from the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, written in Aramaic.

The shows open Dec. 11. Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors (65 and older) and full-time college students (with ID), \$4 for children ages 6-17 and free for children younger than six and for museum members. For more info and viewing hours, visit [www.phxart.org](http://www.phxart.org) or call (602) 257-1880.



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Above, Adam and Eve, Genesis 2: 4-25, Donald Jackson and Chris Tomlin, c. 2002  
Acrylic inks on calkskin vellum. © The Saint John's Bible and Saint John's University.