

A stylized, white, handwritten signature of the name 'Ellen Frank' in a cursive script, positioned centrally on a dark blue background.

THE BOOK OF JUDITH

ELLEN FRANK

ELLEN FRANK ILLUMINATION ARTS FOUNDATION

For centuries, societies diverse in culture and religion have had in common a timeless craft: Illumination, the union of words and pictures with paint and precious metals, for documents as varied as a Koran, a Hebrew haggadah, a New Testament manuscript, Indian romance, and medical treatises.

THE WORKS OF ELLEN FRANK

and the Ellen Frank Illumination Arts Foundation revitalize, create and exhibit illuminated art, using historic and literary traditions to combine art and social justice and thereby promote global peace and understanding.

The Pomegranate Page

23.5 k moon gold, white gold, palladium leaf and egg tempera on classic English vellum
24 in x 18 in

Symbolic themes:

The **pomegranate** image, associated with holiness throughout religious art and texts, is flavored with sexual symbolism in The Song of Songs. This rich paradox renders the pomegranate a perfect symbol for Judith who uses her sexuality to accomplish a holy victory.

Matzah pattern, placed within the pomegranate fruit itself, draws from The Golden Haggadah, considered the best preserved and the highest artistic quality of all surviving illuminated 14th century Spanish Haggadot. From this celebrated historical page blending Islamic and Jewish imagery, we have created and illuminated an original candelabra.

Additional themes: Geometry (Spiral symbolizing time), Seven Species, Color Symbolism (Blue)





The Necklace Page
23.5 k moon gold, white gold, palladium leaf and egg tempera on classic English vellum
24 in x 18 in

Symbolic themes:

Judith makes her entrance as the Lanner Falcon. The white gold **Necklace** she carries, in the shape of a "J", symbolizes how Judith used jewelry and adornments to accomplish her conquest of Holofernes.

In the center of the pomegranate is a recreation of the **Night Sky**, a star map from the corresponding time period of 629 BCE, with longitude and latitude approximating where the fictional city of Bethulia might have been located.

The Tree Pattern illuminated in gold within the Pomegranate leaves references the historical Assyrian wall reliefs that inspired Klimt. Trees depict the landscape of Judith's path from Bethulia to Holofernes's camp.

Additional themes: Assyrian Jewelry, Technique (Gesso Sotile), Architecture



IMPACT In summary, *The Book of Judith*

- Affirms the universal spiritual and historical significance of Judith's story. The EFI AF Book of Judith celebrates Judith's triumph: peace over war, wisdom over ignorance, the freedom to worship according to one's own dreams, beliefs, and vision.
- Presents original iconography and diverse philosophical interpretations to depict freshly this legendary tale.
- References great historical Judith paintings while setting artistic precedent for the Judith story: using birds instead of humans to represent apocryphal characters.

EXHIBITION World Premiere at
Museum of Biblical Art (MOBIA)
New York, NY
June - October 2013

Rare Book Library
The Jewish Theological Seminary
New York, NY
October 2013 - July 2015

O'Silas Gallery 10th Anniversary
Concordia College
Bronxville, NY
September - October 2015

Temple Adas Israel
Sag Harbor, NY
August - September 2015

MATERIALS *The Book of Judith* is a folio of four leaves, hand-illuminated in 23.5 k moon gold, white gold, palladium leaf and egg tempera on classic English vellum.

The Book of Judith is the ancient and inspiring story of a woman of valor, who singlehandedly saves her small town from military take-over and religious oppression. From Botticelli to Klimt, great artists have painted and sculpted the story of Judith. The EFI AF *The Book of Judith* celebrates the triumph of Judith, her ingenuity and bravery, through images of bejeweled beauty and symbolism free from traditional images of violence used to depict her conquest and victory.

WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT?

Through art and text, *The Book of Judith* creates an original illuminated manuscript and interpretation of the story of Judith. *The Book of Judith* chronicles the struggle for religious freedom in a contemporary voice while echoing the great illuminated manuscripts that flourished in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: *The Book of Kells* within the Celtic tradition, *Tres Riches Heures*, the magnificent *French book of prayers to the Virgin Mary*, *The Sarajevo Haggadah* celebrating the Passover story.

The EFI AF *The Book of Judith* heralds a new Judith: one who slays ignorance and military aggression – not a man. It is Judith's insight, her penetrating analysis of what is appropriate and necessary to transcend conflict that distinguishes this Judith.



The Sword Page
tt23.5 k moon gold, white gold, palladium leaf and egg tempera on classic English vellum
24 in x 18 in

Symbolic themes:

The Sword references derive from major known paintings that depict the Judith story. Such visual references clearly place *The Book of Judith* within a significant stream of artistic interpretations. References include: Giorgione, *Judith*, 1504; Andrea Mantegna – *Judith and Holofernes*, 1495; Alessandro Botticelli – *Judith Returning to Bethulia*, 1470; Michelangelo Buonarroti – *Judith Carries Away the Head of Holofernes*, 1508 – 1512; Titian – *Judith With the Head of Holofernes*, 1515; Lucas Cranach – *Judith With the Head of Holofernes*, 1530.

Additional themes: Micrography, Iconography (Sword hilt), Color symbolism (Crimson)



Judith Bejeweled (The Victory Page)

23.5 k moon gold, white gold and egg tempera on classic English vellum
24 in x 18 in



Symbolic themes:

Charaters Depicted as Birds: The EFAF *Book of Judith* uniquely uses distinct bird species to depict historical and apocryphal human characters. Each bird species represents aspects or traits that distinguish a character: The Lanar Falcon (Judith); The Cinereous Vulture (Holofernes); The Jackdaw (Assyrian army); The Blue Rockthrush (Judith's handmaiden); The Hooded Wheatear (the Israelites); The Hooded Crow (Achior); The Brown Necked Raven (Bagoas).

Additional themes: Geometry (symbolism of the octagon), Iconography (8 pointed star), Contemporary Art Materials





ELLEN FRANK, Ph.D.

Artist, scholar, and writer, Ellen Frank's many awards in painting, book design, and scholarship include a Fulbright Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts, Ford Foundation Fellowship, Pollock-Krasner Award in Painting, New York State Council on the Arts, and a New York Foundation for the Arts grant.

Dr. Frank studied art history and connoisseurship at Yale University, the Courtauld and Warburg Institutes, and holds an interdisciplinary doctorate in English Literature and the Visual Arts from Stanford University.

Dr. Frank was Assistant Professor of English Literature at UC Berkeley where she co-designed and created the first interdisciplinary major "Literature and the Visual Arts"; she was guest Associate Professor at Barnard College and Rutgers University, visiting professor at School of Visual Arts and Tyler School of Art. Her first book, *Literary Architecture: Essays Toward a Tradition* (University of California Press), was awarded the New York Institute for Graphic Arts 50 Best Books, Ronce & Coffin Club Design Award, and "Best Book in 50 Years" by University of California Press.

ABOUT EFIAF

In 2005, Dr. Frank founded Ellen Frank Illumination Arts Foundation, Inc., (EFIAF), a 501(c) (3) non-profit global initiative dedicated to the transformative power of art to build a culture of understanding. As artistic director, Dr. Frank has trained artist-interns from more than 25 countries, uniting scholars and experts to work on its joint creations.

Participating artist-interns include: Jazmine Catusus, Derek Elmore, Eugene Yeap, Laura Byrne, Emily Deutchman, Jurij Puc, Masa Zmitek, Adja Mladenovic, Clara Nguyen, David Huettner, Patricia Johnston, Natasha Camhi, and Nehama Grenimann-Bauch.



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ILLUMINATION ARTS
FOUNDATION, Inc.