



# HISTORICAL BOOK CRAFTSMANSHIP

Join 'Lost Letters' and 'Prelo Prints' on a journey back to the late 15th century and experience the interplay of art, history, and craftsmanship.



We're proud to bring historical craftsmanship to life!



## Hand-Painted Initials and Early Printing

Throughout history, hand-painted initials have played a key role in manuscripts – both as decorative elements and as a means to highlight the meaning of the text. Although the invention of the printing press revolutionized book production in the 15th century, this tradition did not disappear overnight.

Many printed books, especially luxury or special editions, retained handmade features such as painted initials well into the 17th century. This reflected not only an aesthetic preference but also a continued appreciation for the artistic and symbolic value of craftsmanship.



## Craftsmanship

At Prelo Prints and Lost Letters, we work from the principle that materials and techniques should remain true to the historical period we represent.

Jorge Lar from Prelo Prints demonstrates the early printing process using a reconstructed 15th-century printing press, while also showing his work with woodcuts and letterpress.

Marianne Beyer from Lost Letters presents medieval painting materials and techniques by creating decorative initials on parchment and handmade paper.

## Background and Collaboration

The collaboration behind 'Historical Book Craftsmanship' began in 2020 when Jorge Lar decided to reconstruct a late 15th-century printing press.

However, our shared passion for historical craft goes back many years. We have long collaborated through 'Sankt Lukas Gildet – The Guild for Painting and Decoration' at the Medieval Centre in Nykøbing Falster, Denmark. Here, we have immersed ourselves in medieval colors and artistic techniques in writing and painting – which now form the natural foundation for our current project.

Over the years, we have participated in historical events, workshops, and live demonstrations at churches and castles, including:

- Copenhagen Cathedral's Christmas Market
- Birgitta Festival at Maribo Cathedral, Denmark
- History Days at Øksnehallen in Copenhagen
- Maribo Craft Days, Denmark
- Manor House Day at Gjorslev Castle, Denmark
- Reformation Days in Nyborg, Denmark
- Workshops at Rentemestervej Library in Copenhagen



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The fact that the people behind Prelo Prints and Lost Letters are joining forces for the project 'Historical Book Craftsmanship' is the best news in this field I've heard in a long time. Both are outstanding artisans with deep experience in their fields, and their results – in both early printing techniques and medieval calligraphy – are nearly unparalleled. On top of that, they are exceptionally skilled and captivating communicators. I have the highest expectations for this project.

**Kåre Johannessen** | Author and Historian

## Book an experience or a workshop

Prelo Prints and Lost Letters are available for workshops and live demonstrations – either individually or as a combined experience, depending on the needs of your event.

- **Experience** a living workshop where traditional techniques are brought to life. Prelo Prints and Lost Letters demonstrate the crafts behind historical printing and beautifully illuminated initials. The live workshop can be booked on its own or in combination with a hands-on session.
- Join a two-day **workshop** that offers both insight into and practical experience with historical book craftsmanship. Jorge teaches woodcut printing, while Marianne's workshop focuses on medieval illuminated letters and colors made from natural pigments and gum arabic.



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It was a truly fascinating experience to see the live workshops in action. You could feel their deep passion for the craft. Both were highly knowledgeable and engaging communicators, and their workshops attracted great interest from both children and adults visiting the library. Finally, Jorge Lar and Marianne Beyer were an absolute pleasure to work with.

**Troels Malthe Borch** | *Curator, Østfyns Museer*

## Further Information and Booking

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