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The art of applying color to written documents is an ancient one, practiced by the Egyptians, Persians, Indians, Romans, and other cultures. But it was the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages, perhaps more than any other documents, that preserved this exceptionally rich art form for posterity.

This handsome collection of designs, drawn chiefly from illuminated European manuscripts of the eighth to sixteenth centuries, as well as from rare woodcuts and monumental brasses, offers today's graphic artists, calligraphers, and students of design a rich selection of 30 authentic medieval alphabets and more than 150 decorative letters and ornamental devices. Included are reproductions of splendid images adapted from the Westminster Abbey monuments of Richard II and Henry III, French prayer books of the fifteenth century, labels from early German prints, designs from Cranmer's Bible and the stalls in St. George's Chapel at Windsor, and many other sources. The elaborately embellished letters, numerals, and decorations display a beautiful mix of elegant forms, highly finished details, and fanciful arrangements of figures, vines, flowers, leaves, faces, and other graceful devices.

Ideal for adding a medieval touch to a wide variety of graphic art and craft projects, these intricate, eye-catching designs will also be of immense interest to students of art, history, and Western culture.

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