

BRUGGE

**MUSEA
BRUGGE**

In 2020, Musea Brugge lets you discover famous Flemish Masters. Because where better to experience Memling and Van Eyck than where they worked and lived, in Bruges?

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**FLEMISH
MASTERS
2018-2020**



March 12
– July 12 2020

VAN EYCK IN BRUGES

Eye to eye with
van Eyck.

**MASTERS IN
GROENINGEMUSEUM
BRUGES**



April 4
– September 6 2020

MEMLING NOW

Follow Hans, influencer
through the ages.

PRESSFILE

**MASTERS IN
SINT-JANSHOSPITAAL
BRUGES**



EXHIBITIONS IN PICTURESQUE BRUGES, THE CRADLE OF THE FLEMISH MASTERS

Burgundian Bruges, Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling

During the late Middle Ages, Bruges was a cosmopolitan city and a melting pot of nationalities and commerce. With the decline of the cloth industry, our city changed its focus to the production of luxury goods such as gold, illuminated manuscripts, lace, paintings etc. These luxury goods found their way to every corner of Europe.

As a result of the Burgundian court's complex marriage policy, Bruges became part of the county of Flanders. The Burgundian Dukes found Bruges to be an appealing place and enjoyed staying in the luxurious Prinsenhof (now the Dukes' Palace, a unique five-star hotel). The flamboyant Dukes, with their impeccable taste, commissioned the most renowned painters including Jan van Eyck, who based himself in Bruges and became the court painter for Duke Philip the Good. Commissioned by the Duke, he travelled

and made pilgrimages, expanding his international fame and clientele. He painted his masterpiece, 'Madonna with Canon Joris Van der Paele', for the canon of the church of Saint Donatian. Another of his well-known pieces is his portrait of his wife, 'Margaretha van Eyck'. The court painter Van Eyck had a huge influence on both local and international painters including Hans Memling, a citizen of Bruges who created unique panels for rich fellow citizens of Bruges as well as Spanish and Italian merchants and bankers. He was also commissioned by St. John's Hospital to make the 'Ursula Shrine' and the 'Johannes Altarpiece'. There were many paintings created in Bruges by the Flemish primitives which remain in the city to this day; they can be seen at the Groeningemuseum, Sint-Janshospitaal and other locations in the city





Gruuthuse Palace and other monuments

The Burgundians were an inspiration to many significant families. The powerful lords of Gruuthuse built a gothic palace on the banks of the Reie. Jan IV Van der Aa-Van Brugghe began building a manor house in 1425 and his descendant, Lodewijk van Gruuthuse, added the crowning glory with an imposing late 15th century chapel. The splendid palace in the city – which is today the Gruuthusemuseum – is now gleaming following a thorough restoration. During the same period, the Adornes – an Italian merchant family – built

the oriental-style Jerusalem Chapel. During the course of the 15th century, the gothic City Hall – a source of inspiration for architects in Brussels, Ghent and Leuven – was also completed and the construction of the Beguinage (which has been a UNESCO world heritage site since 1998) was in full swing. Thanks to modest donations from the Dukes, wealthy guilds and patricians, embellishments were also added to St. James's Church. The gothic architecture of Bruges' Golden Era defined the way the city looks today.

Italians and the 'beurs'

Many street names, such as Spanjaardstraat, Engelsestraat, Oosterlingenplein and Spinolarei, are a reminder of the various nationalities who made their home in the trade metropolis of Bruges. A colourful collection of foreign merchants found their way here to the most southerly office of the German Hanseatic League. The Italian tradesmen boosted commercial activity in the city as well as ensuring that the financial sector flourished. During the Middle Ages, Bruges was the financial capital of the world. In the area around the Beursplein, close to the Van der Buerze family's inn, the Italians introduced new financial tools such as bills of exchange and bank accounts. The 'beurs' (or stock market) was born.

City of Letters & Handmade in Bruges

The city's tradition of manuscripts, incunables and books can still be seen today. Nowadays, many renowned stone carvers and calligraphers keep Bruges' reputation as a "city of Letters" alive and well. The libraries of the English Convent and the Carmelite Convent will be open to the public from 20 February 2020. The project 'Sacred Books | Secret Libraries' will centre on the themes of silence, authenticity and books. Visitors will be able to experience the unique intertwining of the city and religious life in Bruges and will be given a glimpse behind closed doors.

Only the very best materials were good enough for the Burgundian princes: gold, crystal, diamonds and rubies, silk and ivory. For them, beautiful objects and luxurious items were a way to display their power. Nowadays, with the support of 'Handmade in Brugge', traditional craftspeople still work with sustainable, precious materials such as textiles, leather, lace, silver and gold.

The Year of Van Eyck

2020 will be 'The Year of Van Eyck', and the theme of the Burgundians and the Flemish primitive painters will continue. The Palace of the Lords of Gruuthuse – the ultimate Burgundian city palace – opened its doors again last spring, following a thorough year-long restoration. Visitors are treated to a custom-made museum experience and can learn about the history of Bruges from the Middle Ages to the current day thanks to a selection of masterpieces.





The recently renovated late Medieval chapel of Lodewijk van Gruuthuse – which is unique in Europe – is an absolute must-see. It was built by Burgundian knight Lodewijk van Gruuthuse as an oratory and connected his palace directly to the gothic choir of the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk (Church of Our Lady), so that he could follow the service from the comfort of his own private chapel without needing to leave his home.

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THE MAIN EXPOS OF 2020 IN BRUGES

**FLEMISH
MASTERS**
2018-2020



Musea Brugge is the umbrella organisation of all municipal museum locations, with a very varied permanent and temporary offer. Every year, approximately 850,000 national and international guests visit one or more locations. The rich, permanent collections of Musea Brugge are a great asset, but Musea Brugge also organises a series of temporary exhibitions every year. In 2020, two exhibitions will be part of the total “Flemish masters” project, promoted by Tourism Flanders.

Many of the works of these Flemish Masters can be admired all over the world, but it is only at the place where their works were created, in the unique setting of Flanders, that you really experience our Flemish Masters to the fullest.

From 12 March to 12 July, 2020 the Groeningemuseum will host the exhibition

VAN EYCK IN BRUGES.

IN BRIEF

This exhibition is devoted to two masterpieces by the Burgundian court painter from Bruges: Madonna with Canon Joris Van der Paele and Portrait of his wife Margaretha van Eyck.

The exhibition will familiarise you with Jan van Eyck's Bruges period and uses authentic documents to demonstrate what kind of lifestyle the artist led in Bruges and where he lived. The exhibition also focuses on Joris van der Paele who had an impressive career at the Roman Curia during the extremely turbulent 15th century. He bore witness to the power-games which were played out between the pope and the antipope and was involved with negotiations concerning the Hundred Years' War and the councils.

The Groeningemuseum has been renovated this winter; the rooms have been completely refreshed and the permanent display has also been redesigned. This is equally worth a visit!

PRACTICAL INFO EXHIBITION

Title	Van Eyck in Bruges
Location	Groeningemuseum, Dijver 12, 8000 Bruges
Dates	from 12 March to 12 July, 2020
Opening times	Tuesday to Sunday from 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tickets	€ 12 (26-64 y.) € 10 (>65 y. & 18-25 y.) [incl. permanent collection] free -18 years old
Scenography	Koen Bovée, Bruges
Info	www.museabrugge.be
Group visits	guided tour € 80/ max. 20 persons reservations via www.visitbruges.be/ticketshop NL / FR / EN / DE / ES / IT
Audioguides	Free / NL / FR / EN / DE

TIP

Also visit the exhibition in MSK Gent “Van Eyck. An Optical Revolution” - from 1 February to 30 April 2020

ANNE BOLEYN 1533-1536



ANNE BOLEYN 1533-1536



SIS GREGORIUS PAPA XPI

MORE INFO

Some time at the start of the 1430s, Jan van Eyck – court painter to the Duke of Burgundy – came to live in Bruges, which at that time was a flourishing economic and cultural metropolis of European importance. Van Eyck opened a workshop in the city and it was there until his death in 1441 that he painted the works for which he is best known today. Reason enough, if any were needed, to focus on this great painter and his home city in the exhibition ‘Van Eyck in Bruges’.

Two of Jan van Eyck’s greatest masterpieces are still on display in Bruges and they occupy a central position in the exhibition. The paintings in question are the ‘Madonna with Canon Joris van der Paele’, dating from between 1434 and 1436, and the ‘Portrait of Margaretha van Eyck’, dating from 1439. These two outstanding works form the core of the exhibition, around which displays relating to different aspects of the life and work of Jan van Eyck are linked.

After his famous ‘Lamb of God’ triptych, the ‘Madonna with Canon Joris van der Paele’ is the largest of Jan van Eyck’s paintings that has survived to the present day. Using original source material, the exhibition will explain the function this painting was intended to serve, while the very latest material-technical research will show how the painting was actually made. The life of the painting’s donor and patron will also be explored, as will his motives for commissioning the work.

Jan van Eyck painted the panel from 1434 onwards at the request of Joris van der Paele, a canon at the collegiate church of St. Donatian in Bruges. The painting was not commissioned for ‘personal use’, as it were, but was intended as part of a foundation set up by the canon to honour his memory. The foundation was required to say masses for van der Paele’s soul after his death and also to ensure that van Eyck’s masterpiece could serve as his epitaph.

How was it possible for van der Paele to acquire the necessary financial means to fund this foundation and commission on its behalf a prestigious altarpiece from no less an artist than the court painter of the Duke of Burgundy? New research, which will be on display for the first time, has shed new light on the impressive ecclesiastical career of this well-respected Flemish cleric, who spent many years at the papal court in Rome, but never lost sight of his own personal and financial interests.

However it was financed, the resulting painting by Jan van Eyck is a masterpiece in every sense of the word. The work was remarkably ambitious, both in conceptual and artistic terms, and might be said to encapsulate the essence of van Eyck’s art. Taking as his starting point a compositional scheme that was traditionally used for epitaph paintings, the artist added layer on layer of new meaning, which satisfied the canon’s wishes and expectations in a visually clear yet highly innovative manner. The exhibition will explain the meaning and symbolism behind the painting, both as a whole and in its details, allowing visitors to discover, understand and admire both the artistry of the execution and the different levels of allegorical interpretation.

Explaining how van Eyck and his assistants actually went about creating this masterpiece is closely related to the artist’s intentions and ambitions in terms of the composition. Thanks to the latest modern technologies, it is now possible, as it were, to follow the artist as he painted. Material-technical research allows us to understand the creative processes employed by van Eyck; for example, by a detailed analysis of his use of pigments or by close examination of his preliminary outlining and drawings, which can now be made visible by new techniques. The results of this material-technical research will be integrated into the exhibition with the necessary degree of explanation, so that visitors can gain a real insight into the creativity and technical mastery of van Eyck as an artist.

The second core piece in the exhibition is the ‘Portrait of Margaretha van Eyck’, painted in 1439. It was the first painting in European art history – perhaps even in world art history – in which the artist chose his wife as his subject. It was only a generation before van Eyck’s time that portraits were still the exclusive preserve of kings and noble families – and now van Eyck picked someone as relatively ‘humble’ as his own wife for this ‘honour’. His original intention in making this painting has never been clear, but it is certain that it was never intended to be displayed in a museum. It might reasonably be assumed that van Eyck and Margaretha planned to hang the panel in their own home, but the fact that the back of the panel is also painted suggests otherwise, while the Latin text almost seems to imply a ‘public’ function of some kind. The exhibition will seek to enlighten visitors about these possible purposes to which the painting might have been put and

will again demonstrate exactly how the work was painted.

This figure of Margaretha van Eyck also raises questions about the van Eyck home and workshop in Bruges, as well as the family's social status. Recent source research has again shed new light on these matters, which now allows us to view the career of van Eyck in Bruges in a new perspective. This, too, will be incorporated into the exhibition. In particular, the possible role played by Margaretha van Eyck after her husband's death will be a highlighted theme.

The exhibition is closed by an important **recent acquisition** for the Groeningemuseum: a painting made in the 1450s by a follower or assistant of van Eyck. It depicts the Virgin Mary with the Jesus Child in a pose that was used by van Eyck in several of his paintings. In contrast, the landscape in the background is more reminiscent of German art at this time, while a number of the other elements seem to be drawn from the repertoire of van Eyck's contemporaries. The panel's preliminary outlines, which are displayed in the exhibition for the first time, immediately make clear that this anonymous artist had sufficient knowledge and ability to impersonate van Eyck's style in his own work. This suggests that he must have worked under the guidance of the late master or his assistants for quite some time.

The exhibition 'Van Eyck in Bruges' is not a retrospective exhibition of his oeuvre as a whole, such as were held in Bruges in 2002 and 2010 (in the context of European-wide retrospectives), and as is currently the case in Ghent. This exhibition is intended to deepen people's experience of one of the greatest artists in the history of European art through a detailed analysis of two of his most iconic works. The exhibition is a collaboration between Musea Brugge, the Flemish Research Centre for the Art in the Burgundian Netherlands, the Bruges City Archives and the Faculty of History at the University of Ghent.



At Sint-Janshospitaal, between 4 April and 6 September 2020, the exhibition

MEMLING NOW: HANS MEMLING IN CONTEMPORARY ART will be on display.

IN BRIEF

Throughout the centuries, Flemish primitive Hans Memling has had a great influence on other masters, including Dürer and Raphael.

This exhibition shows how he continues to affect artists even today. The visitor discovers this through works by David Claerbout (BE) and Diana al-Hadid (USA), created especially for the exhibition.

As well as a range of early portraits by Joseph Kosuth (US), one of the forefathers of conceptual art, there will also be works on display by African-American painter Kehinde Wiley, and Iranian painter Aydin Aghdashloo.

PRACTICAL INFO EXHIBITION

Title	Memling Now. Hans Memling in Contemporary Art
Location	Sint-Janshospitaal, Mariastraat 38, 8000 Bruges
Dates	from 4 April to 6 September, 2020
Opening times	Tuesday to Sunday from 9.30 a.m. to 17 p.m.
Tickets	€ 12 (26-64 y.) € 10 (>65 y. & 18-25 y.) [incl. permanent collection] free -18 years old
Info	www.museabrugge.be
Group visits	guided tour € 80/ max. 20 persons reservations via www.visitbruges.be/ticketshop NL / FR / EN / DE / ES / IT
Audioguides	Free / NL / FR / EN / DE

MORE INFO

Art inspires. Artists, both past and present, consciously and actively allow themselves, to a greater or lesser degree, to be inspired by the work of their predecessors. This is the rationale behind the exhibition 'Memling Now'. The unique masterpieces of the 15th century painter Hans Memling in the Sint-Janshospitaal in Bruges have inspired painters throughout the subsequent centuries, including famous artists like Pieter Pourbus, Joshua Reynolds and James Ensor. What's more, Memling still inspires artists today.

Hans Memling

Between 1474 and 1490, Hans Memling painted a number of works in Bruges that were clearly connected with the ideas of some of his predecessors and contemporaries. For example, his paintings in the Sint-Janshospitaal were inspired by the work of Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden. Both of these great painters belonged to the generation that preceded Memling's own, but their compositions are clearly recognisable in some of their young successor's finest masterpieces. Memling's 'Adoration of the Magi' triptych is based on van der Weyden's 'St. Columba' altarpiece in Cologne and his monumental 'Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine' would have been inconceivable without the example of Van Eyck's 'Madonna with Canon Joris van der Paele'. In turn, the 'Apocalypse' scene in the right panel of this imposing Memling triptych is thought to have possibly inspired Albrecht Dürer to create his series of biblical woodcuts depicting 'The End of Days'.

Memling now

Interesting though it would be, the 'Memling now' exhibition does not focus on Memling's artistic impact across the centuries. Instead, for this exhibition Musea Brugge has invited a select group of contemporary artists who have found – and still find – inspiration in Memling's work and has asked them to take part in a new project that combines the modern with the traditional. Their 'Memling Now' contributions will be woven into the existing museum display in the St.-Janshospitaal. The unique context, the genius loci, of a centuries-old hospital building in combination with the works of modern art that will be on show has created

a high level of expectation amongst all those involved in this ambitious project. From 4 April 2020, the general public will also be able to enjoy this remarkable artistic experiment: an interaction between five contemporary artists and five hundred years of art and history in one of Europe's oldest and best preserved care institutions. The exhibition includes both existing works and new creations.

Five artists, three continents

Five contemporary artists from three different continents are participating in this exhibition. They will not only display some of their existing works, but have also created new pieces especially for 'Memling Now'.

'Wildfire' by David Claerbout is one of these new creative commissions, which takes as its starting point the shocking experience of the great forest fires that have devastated parts of California and Australia in recent years, which must be regarded as a direct consequence of global warming. The traumatic and life-threatening sea of fire has been 'frozen' by David Claerbout, so that it seems to acquire an almost crystalline quality. In this way, the artist connects with Memling's imagination of what the Apocalypse would be like, whilst at the same time also exploring in his own way – either consciously or unconsciously – concepts such as Purgatory.

Diana Al-Hadid comes originally from Syria, but when she was a child moved with her family to the United States, where she has developed an impressive artistic career. She is one of the most productive artists of our time and has been creatively engaging with the work of Hans Memling for decades. Her art has redefined the boundaries between painting and sculpture, particularly in her three-dimensional wall objects and her various monuments. She has always been intrigued by Memling's allegorical depictions of women and has re-interpreted his themes in her own authentic feminist manner in her own work. Her participation in 'Memling now' combines some of her older work with a new creative commission.



Some years ago, **Kehinde Wiley** created a furore in the United States with his Memling project. This son of a Nigerian father and an American mother is today one of the international art world's great superstars. He is renowned for his creative dialogues with the Old Masters to produce portraits of Afro-American models that have allowed the under-privileged masses of today to stake their claim to the ownership of history. This series, which has already been exhibited in the Brooklyn Museum of Art, will now be confronted directly for the first time with the art of Hans Memling, which offers an interesting and exciting range of presentational possibilities.

In conjunction with the 'Memling now' exhibition, a number of workshops will be organised, in which the participating artists will explain the creative thinking behind their work and how and why they have been inspired by Hans Memling.

Aydin Aghdashloo is an Iranian artist with Azerbaijani roots. He is well-known as a paint-

er, graphicist, writer, lecturer and curator. During the 1970s, his 'seemingly' naturalist style was regarded as an artistic reaction to the neo-traditionalist and nativist movement that dominated Iranian Modernism at that time.

Joseph Kosuth is an American artist who is regarded as one of the foremost exponents of conceptual art in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1981, he began to make use of the theories of Sigmund Freud in series like 'Cathexis', which depicts a text with inverted reproductions of the paintings of Old Masters, each marked with a coloured X. He created them for 'documenta' by Rudi Fuchs in 1982. This was intended as an ironic satire on the revival of 'traditional' painted art that was taking place at that time. Memling was one of the artist's treated in this way: pictures of artworks, such as his portraits were displayed upside down in conservative wooden frames. In psychoanalysis, cathexis is also defined as the process of investing mental or emotional energy in a person, object or idea.



IN THE MARGIN OF THE EXHIBITIONS

MEET & GREET VAN EYCK



Bruges is the cradle of the Flemish primitives and was the home town of painter Jan van Eyck in the 15th century. Led by an expert guide, you will be following in van Eyck's footsteps. You will 'meet' the atmosphere of the Burgundian era and learn more about his personal life as well as discovering locations in Bruges where you can 'greet' his creations and feel his presence. During this walk, you will not only experience his daily commute, the guide will also take you to a few hidden spots in the city. You will also receive a discount on your entry ticket into the Groeningemuseum upon presentation of your ticket.

PRACTICAL INFO

From 12/3/2020 until 12/7/2020: Sundays at 2.30 p.m. During (Belgian) school holidays: extra walk on Wednesdays at 2.30 p.m.

Rendezvous: Statue of Jan van Eyck, Jan van Eyckplein

Price: € 12,50

Upon presentation of a printed ticket for the guided city walk, you will receive a discount of € 2 on the regular entrance price at the front desk of the Groeningemuseum (discount only valid from Thursday 12 March until Sunday 12 July 2020).

Reservations via : www.visitbruges.be/buy-tickets-meet-greet-van-eyck

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LECTURE BY DAVID CLAERBOUT

5 September, 2020 at 8 p.m. at Concertgebouw, 't Zand 34, 8000 Bruges
(in Dutch)

IMAGES IN HIGH RESOLUTION

Images to promote this exhibition/museum can be downloaded via the following link:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/museabrugge/albums>

Please mention the correct credits to be found with each photo.

MORE INFO

All **arrangements** can be made via the press officer of Musea Brugge,
sarah.bauwens@brugge.be or t +32 50 44 87 08.

Press visits to the exhibitions are possible with an appointment: see under the heading 'pers' (press) on the website www.museabrugge.be.

The press file can be consulted online, and texts can be copied via www.museabrugge.be, under the heading 'pers'.

For the **foreign press**, the **Visit Bruges press department** is also available with up-to-date and personalized information about the city. They will be happy to assist you with introducing subjects and contacts, applying for permits and organising your trip.

Contact: toerisme.pers@brugge.be

REQUEST

We collect every possible **review** of our museums and events. Therefore we would like to ask you to send a copy of any article you publish, or a link to the relevant broadcast, to sarah.bauwens@brugge.be.

Thank you for your cooperation and interest.

