



**KNOWLEDGE,**  
**NETWORK, AND**  
**SOCIETY IN THE**  
**AGE OF VAN EYCK**

**16 DECEMBER 2022**

**MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS (MSK), GHENT**

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Museum of Fine Arts (MSK) Ghent  
(Auditorium, entrance via Hofbouwlaan 28)

## KNOWLEDGE, NETWORK, AND SOCIETY IN THE AGE OF VAN EYCK

Research conducted in the context of the ongoing long-term conservation and restoration project of Jan van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece, and in preparation of the exhibition 'Van Eyck: an Optical Revolution' (MSK, 2020), has yielded vital new knowledge and has opened up further avenues for advanced art-historical scholarship.

Firstly, as the first *pictor doctus* in the North, Jan Van Eyck was knowledgeable about antique texts, natural sciences (optics, alchemy) and theology. At the heart of his theoretical knowledge lies the metaphysical interpretation of contemporary optical theory as a gateway to understanding God's creation ('Visio Dei'). This finding now raises the need for the meticulous reconstruction of the intellectual profile of Van Eyck and other contemporary artists. This requires an in-depth study of learning at the Burgundian court and of the culture of the urban elite and guild milieus to which the artists were connected. The central research question is how and through whom did Jan Van Eyck and his contemporaries accumulate their scientific and theological knowledge?

Secondly, recent discoveries concerning Van Eyck's provenance, as well as on his workshop in Bruges, raise questions about the artist's background and early life in the Meuse region, as well as on his embeddedness within local artistic and patronage networks, and how this may have informed his artistic practice.

Thirdly, the discovery of large areas of overpaint during the current conservation/restoration project of the Ghent Altarpiece made it clear that during the 16<sup>th</sup> century changed reception altered not only the original appearance of the polyptych, but also its meaning. More specifically, the unexpected revelation of the original humanoid face of the Mystic Lamb has stunned the art world and spurred debate among scholars and art critics on the meaning of both the original appearance and the reasons for its later overpainting. Considering that in the past decades, art historians have become increasingly sensitive to the materiality of the transmission and reception of Early Netherlandish paintings, researchers are therefore challenged to investigate how changes and adaptations were triggered and informed by shifting religious, political, theoretical and artistic paradigms.

The present workshop (which will be hosted in a hybrid format) will bring together established experts and early career scholars, providing a forum on which they can shed light on these particular research demands and opportunities, and exchange new results. Considering the overwhelming international attention for the humanoid Mystic Lamb and its later alterations, the workshop will also provide a stimulating interdisciplinary panel discussion on this topic at which leading scholars from various (art historical, historical, and philosophical) backgrounds will be able to collectively confront the problem head on and present their hypotheses.

The afternoon roundtable discussion will be followed by an evening dinner for speakers, discussants and sponsors.

Cover image:

Sint-Baafskathedraal Gent  
[www.artinlanders.be](http://www.artinlanders.be)

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### Program

TIME	MORNING PROGRAM	TIME	AFTERNOON AND EVENING PROGRAM
8:30	Arrival and Coffee		<b>SESSION 3 Chair: Tine Meganck (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)</b>
	<b>SESSION 1 Chair: Bart Lambert (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)</b>	13:30	Astrid Harth (City University of Hong Kong) <i>Intentional alterations of early Netherlandish paintings: Towards an interpretive framework</i>
9:00	Jan Dumolyn (Ghent University) and Bert Mersch (City Archives Maaseik) <i>The Van Eyck brothers: what can we say about their early years?</i>	14:00	Maryan Ainsworth (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) <i>Jan van Eyck's Crucifixion and Last Judgment: Solving a Conundrum</i>
9:30	Joannes van den Maagdenberg (Ghent University/Université Libre de Bruxelles) <i>Social Networks of Bruges artists during the age of Van Eyck</i>	14:30	Hélène Dubois (Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage KIK-IRPA) <i>The major, mid-sixteenth-century overpainting campaign of the Ghent Altarpiece: materiality and interpretations</i>
10:00	Jan Verheyen (KU Leuven/Ghent University) <i>Locating the workshops of post-Eyckian painters in Bruges (1440-1475)</i>	15:00	Coffee break
10:30	Coffee break		<b>SESSION 4 Chair &amp; Moderator: Maximiliaan Martens (Ghent University)</b>
	<b>SESSION 2 Chair: Jan Dumolyn (Ghent University)</b>	15:30	Geert Van der Snickt (Universiteit Antwerpen) <i>MA-XRF imaging for the 3rd phase of the conservation treatment: a sneak preview of the panels of Adam and Eve and the Deity</i>
11:00	Stephan Kemperdick (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) <i>Diego de Guevara, Margaret of Austria and Hernoul le fin</i>	16:00	Griet Steyaert (Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage KIK-IRPA) <i>Hubert and Jan Van Eyck in the Ghent Altarpiece, the Different Stages in the Execution of the Interior Lower Register</i>
11:30	Mathijs Speecke (Ghent University) <i>Jan Van Eyck and perspectiva in the medieval Low Countries</i>	16:30	<b>Panel discussion</b> Maryan Ainsworth (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), Till-Holger Borchert (Suermondt Ludwig Museum), Emma Capron (National Gallery), Koenraad Jonckheere (Ghent University), Danny Praet (Ghent University), Jan van der Stock (KU Leuven).
12:00	Céline Talon (Université Libre de Bruxelles/Ghent University) <i>Ars nova painting technique and the medieval taboo of mixture</i>	19:00	Dinner (speakers, discussants and sponsors)
12:30	Lunch and coffee break		

#### Registration and payment:

<https://congrezzo.ugent.be/kns2022/>

Full registration fee (EUR 30) includes workshop and catering.

Discount rates are available for students of Ghent University, Vrienden van het MSK and members of the Henri Pirenne Institute for Medieval Studies.

Online participation (EUR 10)

#### Contact

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