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**JUNE 2017 TO
JUNE 2018**

KUNSTKAMMER VIENNA

A GUEST FROM FLANDERS

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD - FOLLOWER OF DIERIC BOUTS (C. 1415-1475)
FROM THE M-MUSEUM LEUVEN, INV.-NO. S/47/B

As part of a successful collaboration, the Kunsthistorisches Museum and the Government of Flanders agreed to showcase an annual loan selected from a Flemish collection in the Kunstammer. In 2017/18, our fifth guest is a precious panel on loan from the M-Museum in Louvain; it depicts the Virgin and Child. For one year, the panel will be showcased in Gallery 34 of the Kunstammer.

The Virgin Mary is shown seated in a bay window that opens onto a landscape bathed in light. Tenderly holding the infant Christ, Mary is gazing at Him with an earnest but loving expression. With one hand, He is clutching a small apple – a reference to the fall of man, redeemed through His birth and subsequent death on the cross – with the other He is touching His toes, a vivid and realistic gesture. This is clearly an attempt at verisimilitude and thus reflects the miracle of God's incarnation.

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The pale, hard modelling of both the mother's face and the child's body, in conjunction with the angular folds of the baby's napkin, give the impression of a composition carved in stone. This is contrasted with the soft and subtle brocade of the Virgin's precious robe. The plastic modelling of the figures gives them an almost three-dimensional presence. Dieric Bouts (c. 1415-1475), an Old-Netherlandish master active in Louvain, radically transformed and modernised the venerable tradition of half-length depictions of the Virgin and Child derived from Byzantine icons. He replaced the gold ground with real views, and imbued the faces and gestures of mother and infant with a natural warmth and intimacy. Bouts' art proved highly influential and he had numerous followers. This painting is generally attributed to one of them.

For one year, the loaned panel will be showcased in Gallery 34 of the *Kunstkammer*, where it will join other fifteenth-century devotional works, both early Renaissance sculptures from Italy and late-Gothic ones from Germany. As an example of contemporary Netherlandish realism it rounds off this survey of pioneering developments in the art of this period, inviting comparison with, for example, the reliefs depicting the Madonna by Donatello (1386-1466) and his circle, who changed traditional formulas by introducing novel references to classical antiquity. The half-length marble relief showing the Virgin and Child by Antonio Rossellino (1427-1479) feels incredibly three-dimensional, the very effect our anonymous Old-Netherlandish master was aiming for. However, Rossellino's virtuoso handling of the marble turns the hard stone into something soft and subtle. In contrast, Tilman Riemenschneider's (c. 1460-1531) large limewood figure of the Virgin and Child is still very much indebted to mediaeval conventions.

All these depictions of the Madonna bear eloquent witness to the deep veneration of the Virgin in the late Middle Ages and the early modern era. This too connects this year's Flemish loan with Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), who was Regent of the Netherlands and whose portrait medallion by her court sculptor Conrat Meit (1475/80-1550/51) is displayed in Gallery 30. Earlier loans in this exhibition series also focused on Margaret's Marian piety, which is so characteristic of this period. An inventory of the art-loving archduchess' collection in her palace at Malines tells us that she owned a painting depicting the Madonna by Bouts.

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ARCHDUCHESS MARGARET OF AUSTRIA

In 1507 Emperor Maximilian I installed Archduchess Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), his recently widowed daughter from his marriage to Mary of Burgundy, as regent of the Netherlands. Her palace at Mechelen became a centre of learning, drawing numerous artists and scholars, with special rooms to house her extensive library and collections of art and natural objects – an early and important step in the evolution of Kunstkammer collections north of the Alps. Margaret was also the first in a long line of Habsburg connoisseurs and collectors whose love of art still informs the holdings of the Kunstkammer Vienna.

PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

These images may be used free of charge when writing about the exhibition; to download them go to press.khm.at.



The Virgin and Child

Follower of Dieric Bouts (c. 1415–1475)

Netherlandish, c. 1500

Oil on panel

Louvain, M – Museum Leuven, inv.no. S/47/B

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OPENING HOURS AND ENTRANCE FEES

Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Thursdays until 9 p.m.
June, July and August open daily!

Annual Ticket	€ 44*
Annual Ticket U25	€ 25*
Adults	€ 14
Vienna Card	€ 13
Concessions	€ 11
Children under 19	free
Group ticket (p.p.)	€ 11

(*Until August 31, 2017: Annual Ticket €34 / Annual Ticket U25 €19)

Buy your tickets ONLINE at:
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