

KUNST
HISTORISCHES
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**JULY 10, 2019 -
JANUARY 6, 2020**

**JAN VAN EYCK
»ALS ICH CAN«**

The exhibition presents three of the circa twenty extant works by Jan van Eyck, offering a glimpse of the art produced during the reign of Duke Philip the Good, when the Burgundian Low Countries witnessed a unique flowering of courtly and urban civilisation.

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Jan van Eyck (c.1390-1441), the favourite court painter of Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy (1396-1467), is celebrated for his virtuosity in the use of oil paint and his skill in combining naturalism and realism with brilliant colours. Already regarded as an epoch-making artist by his contemporaries, he was soon renowned throughout Europe as the founder of Netherlandish painting.

Jan van Eyck was one of the first artists north of the Alps to sign and date his works. His use of a motto is remarkable. In the early fifteenth century, it was highly unusual for a painter – then still regarded as a mere craftsman – to have his own device, something reserved for the dukes of Burgundy and the nobility. Jan van Eyck chose ΑΛΣ · ΙΧΗ · ΧΑΝ as his motto and inscribed it in pseudo-Greek letters; it is, however, in Dutch and means “as I can” or “as best I can” as in “as best I can, not as I would”, which is presumably some form of pretend-modesty.

Jan van Eyck painted his Madonna at the Fountain in 1439, two years before his death. His virtuoso handling, the brilliance of his colours in the newly-perfected medium of oil painting, and his subtle brushstrokes turn this devotional picture into a perfect masterpiece.

This exceptional loan from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp engendered this exhibition, in which the two panels by Jan van Eyck are juxtaposed with the highlights of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna’s collection of Early Netherlandish painting.

Also on show is the Chasuble from the vestments of the Order of the Golden Fleece, the influential order of chivalry founded by Philip the Good in 1430. Normally displayed in the Imperial Treasury, it represents the exquisite textile arts that played such a seminal role in the legendary splendour of the court of the dukes of Burgundy. This uniquely sumptuous liturgical vestment is couched and embroidery all over in gold and coloured silk threads, making it back then many times more expensive than paintings.

The Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna’s exhibition JAN VAN EYCK »ALS ICH CAN« was organised in collaboration with Flanders (<http://www.flanders.at>), which will honour this great “Flemish Primitive” master in 2020 by organising a number of exhibitions and events in Ghent.

Within the context of the exhibition, the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA), Brussels, exclusively provided the

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Kunsthistorisches Museum with the content of the updated website *Closer to Van Eyck* (closertovaneyck.kikirpa.be) to be shown in public. The access to the website *Closer to Van Eyck* should above all help visitors to focus on viewing the rich details on the original works displayed.

The exhibition has been curated by Sabine Pénot, curator of Netherlandish and Dutch Paintings, Picture Gallery, Kunsthistorisches Museum

Exhibition design: Gerhard Veigel

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PHOTOGRAPHS**

Press photographs are available in the press section of our website free of charge, for your topical reporting: <http://press.khm.at/>.



Jan van Eyck (c. 1390 Maaseyck near Maastricht – 1441 Bruges)

Madonna and Child at the Fountain

The painter signed his work on the bottom ledge of the original frame with his motto ALS ICH CAN written in pseudo-Greek letters; below it is the inscription „JOHES DE EYCK ME FECIT + [com]PLEVIT ANO 1439“. 19 x 12 cm, incl. original frame: 24,8 x 18,1 cm

Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp

KMSKA © Lukas - Art in Flanders VZW, Photo: Dominique Provost



Jan van Eyck (c. 1390 Maaseyck near Maastricht – 1441 Bruges)

The Goldsmith Jan de Leeuw (1401 – after 1456)

inscription on the original frame: IAN DE (image of a lion) OP SANT ORSELEN DACH/DAT CLAER EERST MET OGHEN SACH. 1401 / GHECONTERFEIT NV HEEFT MIA IAN/VAN EYCK WEL BLICT WANNEERT BEGA(N) 1436 + 1436 dated

33 cm x 27,5 cm

© KHM-Museumsverband



Jan van Eyck (c. 1390 Maaseyck near Maastricht – 1441 Bruges)

Portrait of a Scholar, formerly identified as Cardinal Albergati

1438?

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Copy after: Rogier van der Weyden (1399 or 1400 Tournai – 1464 Brussels)
Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (1396 – 1467)

c. 1500

31,8 cm x 20,6 cm

© KHM-Museumsverband



The chasuble from the vestments of the Order of the Golden Fleece (front)

circa 1430/40

149,5 cm x 135,5 cm

Imperial Treasury

© KHM-Museumsverband



The chasuble from the vestments of the Order of the Golden Fleece (back)

circa 1430/40

149,5 cm x 135,5 cm

Imperial Treasury

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OPENING HOURS AND ENTRANCE FEES

Kunsthistorisches Museum Maria-Theresien-Platz 1010 Vienna	Adults	€ 16,-
	Concessions	€ 12,-
	Vienna City Card	€ 15,-
	Groups (of 10 or over)	€ 12,-
	Annual Ticket	€ 44,-
	Annual Ticket under 25	€ 25,-
	Children and teens under 19	free
Tue–Sun, 10am – 6pm Thu till 9pm		

Open daily from June to August and during the exhibition »Caravaggio & Bernini« from October 15, 2019 until January 19, 2020.

Online tickets are available at:

<https://shop.khm.at/de/tickets/>

CATALOGUE

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue in German and English.

PRESS CONTACT

Nina Auinger-Sutterlüty, MAS (Head of department)
Mag. Sarah Aistleitner

PR, Online Communications & Social Media

KHM-Museumsverband

1010 Vienna, Burgring 5

T +43 1 525 24 –4021 /–4025

info.pr@khm.at

www.khm.at