



## Wondrous in every detail! Van Eyck online and in BOZAR

**Brussels, 19 February 2021:** After six years of research crowned by a European prize, the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA, Brussels) has just published the last high-resolution images on [closertovaneyck.kikirpa.be](http://closertovaneyck.kikirpa.be). This famous website is dedicated to the restoration of the *Ghent Altarpiece*, but also features the complete oeuvre of Jan van Eyck, his studio and his followers. The new images are of *Léal Souvenir* (or *Portrait of a Man*) from London (National Gallery), *Saint Jerome* from Detroit (Institute of Arts), *Saint Francis* from Philadelphia (Museum of Art) and *Madonna at the Fountain* from New York (private collection). All four of these paintings were on display at the large Van Eyck exhibition in the Ghent Museum of Fine Arts in 2020. Shortly after the first wave of the pandemic and just before they were packed and flown back to their owners, KIK-IRPA was able to examine and document the paintings.

You can now **zoom into this rich new visual material online and savour the tiniest details as well as discovering the layers below the paint surface** with the help of radiography and infrared reflectography.. For the minutely painted works of Jan van Eyck, this is not only a feast for the eyes. The website is also **a unique tool to probe the sometimes thorny issue of attribution** as project leader Bart Fransen (KIK-IRPA) explains: 'There are several versions of some compositions. For the very first time, we can now compare them in the minutest detail on the basis of equivalent visual material, because all the paintings were photographed according to an identical protocol and with the same equipment.' There are two versions of *Saint Francis*, one in Turin (Galleria Sabauda), the other in Philadelphia. They differ in size, but the degree to which some details match, down to the smallest touch of paint, is extraordinary. There are also two versions of *Madonna at the Fountain*, one in Antwerp (KMSKA) and one in New York. **Bart Fransen: 'In the long run, you end up playing the game of spot the difference. Comparative research may have become simpler, but the interpretation of similarities and differences is still a subject of much debate.'**

Also new on the website are **photos of the reverse sides of all the paintings**. These usually remain hidden from the museum visitor. Sometimes they contain old labels identifying former owners, or they offer insight into the structure of the wooden panel. But often they are also **painted with imitation marble or porphyry and show paint splatters, which in close-up are even reminiscent of Jackson Pollock's paintings**.

It is precisely by zooming in on the paintings of Van Eyck that we can fully appreciate their true beauty . **On 28 January, after the dramatic fire at BOZAR, the exhibition *Facing Van Eyck. The Miracle of Detail* reopened. It is prolonged until 14 March 2021.** In this co-production of BOZAR and KIK-IRPA, the visitor is literally immersed in the oeuvre of Jan van Eyck, thanks to the high resolution photography of the past six years. Countless details were drawn from the master's twenty surviving works. **The projection is interactive: as a visitor, you yourself determine the route through Van Eyck's oeuvre**, from one detail to the next, divided into five themes: man, nature, architecture, light and technology. **The accompanying cello music was composed and performed by the Belgian artist Benjamin Glorieux especially for this project.** Beauty is in the detail, there is no doubt about that. As early as 1604, Karel van Mander wrote about Van Eyck's unique rendering of detail: "You can almost count the hairs of men, ponytails and manes. They are so finely painted that it amazes all artists." Even today, we couldn't agree with him more.

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Exhibition prolonged until 14 March 2021: *Facing van Eyck. The Miracle of Detail* in BOZAR, Brussels

<https://www.bozar.be/en/activities/159475-facing-van-eyck>

Discover the complete oeuvre of Jan van Eyck at: <http://closertovaneyck.kikirpa.be> > [Further works by Jan van Eyck and followers](#)

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**Photos for publication** are available on [www.kikirpa.be](http://www.kikirpa.be) > [press](#) ; or feel free to take screenshots on the website <http://closertovaneyck.kikirpa.be> > [Further works by Jan van Eyck and followers](#) (credit line = closertovaneyck.kikirpa.be)

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**Project partners:** Closer to Van Eyck; Kenniscentrum vzw, Brugge; Universiteit Antwerpen; Universum Digitalis; Vrije Universiteit Brussel

**Museum partners:** Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten | Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie | Bruges, Groeningemuseum | Covarrubias, Museo de la Colegiata | Detroit, Institute of Arts | Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister | Frankfurt, Städel Museum | Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste | Londen, The National Gallery | Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen Bornemisza | Montauban, Musée Ingres Bourdelle | New York, Metropolitan Museum | New York, private collection | Paris, Musée des Arts décoratifs | Paris, Musée du Louvre | Philadelphia, Museum of Art | Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen | Sibiu, Muzeul National Brukenthal | Turin, Galeria Sabauda | Turin, Palazzo Madama - Museo Civico d'Arte Antica | Venice, Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' d'Oro | Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie | Washington, National Gallery of Art

