

Conservation treatment, research and touristic-education program  
surrounding the *Ghent Altarpiece*

Press conference of 20 June 2014 at the Ghent Museum of Fine Arts  
Press kit



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## 1 Program

10:30 Coffee

- Catherine de Zegher, director of the Ghent Museum of Fine Arts, gives a word of welcome and presents the exhibition *Zonnewende*.
- Annelies Storms, Alderman of Culture, Tourism and Events for the City of Ghent.
- Christina Ceulemans, acting General Director of the KIK-IRPA, gives an introduction to the new findings of the conservation team. The current state of progress of the conservation and research is drawn up by Bart Devolder, on-site coordinator of the KIK-IRPA.
- Prof. Luc Moens, Ghent University, presents the use of the 3D Hirox microscope.
- Prof. Koen Janssens, University of Antwerp, presents the MA-XRF research.
- Prof. Em. Anne van Grevenstein, advisor to the church administration (kerkfabriek) of St Bavo's Cathedral, presents the climate adjustments in the *Ghent Altarpiece's* home in St Bavo's. She also announces the financial support granted for the research by the Gieskes-Strijbis Fund.
- Baron Jan Huyghebaert, president of the InBev-Baillet Latour Fund, elaborates on the fund's financial support for the project.
- Jozef Dauwe, Deputy for Culture, presents the new educational program.
- Word of thanks by the Rev. Ludo Collin, president of the church administration (kerkfabriek) of St Bavo's cathedral

12:00 Possibility to interview and photograph the restorers and researchers. A lunch is also included.

14:30 Optional visit to St Bavo's, the *Ghent Altarpiece's* home and possibility to visit the related exhibitions in the Provincial Cultural Centre Caermersklooster.

## 2 Press release

**Museum of Fine Arts Ghent, 20 June 2014. The KIK-IRPA and its partners will present the spectacular discoveries made during the conservation treatment and study of the Ghent Altarpiece by the Van Eyck brothers. The Province of East Flanders will also present its new touristic-educational program.**

Since the previous press conference in June 2013, the conservators of the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA, Brussels) have continued work on the paintings on the exterior side of the wing panels. After removing the yellowed varnish they gradually realised that **a considerable part of the visible paint layer is in fact overpaint**. Due to the extent of the repainting, its good condition and the fact that the age crack pattern follows that of the original paint layer in most places, this intervention had never been detected or even suspected. The overpaint affects the garments of most of the figures (the donors, the *Archangel*, the *Virgin* and the *Sibyls*), the architectural backgrounds (niches, walls, columns) and the sculptures of *St John the Evangelist* and *St John Baptist*. Overpaint also includes highlights on the faces and hands of the figures.

The observations of the restorers were confirmed by **analysis of tiny paint samples by the laboratories of the KIK-IRPA, research with the 3D Hirox microscope of Ghent University and MA-XRF research by the University of Antwerp**. These analyses were combined with **cleaning tests on the paintings to determine whether the overpaint could be removed without causing damage and to evaluate the condition of the original paint layer beneath**. Fortunately, the latter is in reasonable condition, with relatively little abrasion or paint loss, and the exceptional quality of the Van Eyck brothers work is revealed. In the light of these findings, the international expert committee recommended the **continuation of the process of removal of the overpaint**. This treatment is proceeding centimetre by centimetre and is carried out with a scalpel under a binocular microscope. Patience, precision and experience are the keys to success in this endeavour.

The discoveries have both aesthetic and iconographic implications. Most of the overpaint follows the original forms, but the early painter-restorers did not succeed in imitating the Van Eycks' dextrous handling of the paint and unrivalled depiction of light and materials. Lost under the overpaint is the exceptional sense of three-dimensionality and the subtle play of light and shadow. For example, cast shadows and a corner with cobwebs were found hidden behind the plain black overpaint in the *Elisabeth Borluut* panel, leading to a new iconographical reading of the donor portraits.

**Progress has also been made on the frames**, which in accordance with 15th-century tradition were designed to form a coherent whole with the painting. Paintings from that period with their original frames are rare, and those with their original polychromy are rarer still. Following a detailed study, **it was decided to remove the overpaint in order to reveal the original polychromy underneath**. This was made possible with a grant of 149,113 Euro in early 2014 by the Belgian state agencies Kunsten en Erfgoed (40%) and Onroerend Erfgoed (40%) and by the InBev-Baillet Latour Fund (20%). This aspect of the treatment will thus contribute to the rediscovery of the unique painterly qualities of this icon of Western art. Since its creation in 1432, the altarpiece has inspired generations of art lovers, and will no doubt continue to do so in the future.

The recent discoveries on the exterior panels have highlighted the need for new diagnostic research on the inner panels. These are currently in St Bavo's cathedral awaiting treatment in the next phase. The research, using the aforementioned techniques, will be carried out by KIK-IRPA and Ghent and Antwerp universities. It is made possible thanks to additional funding of 240,000 Euro from the Gieskes-Strijbis Fund. The InBev Baillet-Latour Fund has already announced that if additional work is required it will continue its structural support of the project by covering 20% of the costs (the contribution of the church administration).



St Bavo's cathedral has just announced that the **micro climate in the glass enclosure housing** the altarpiece – a source of worry for years – **has been improved** with the financial support of the Flemish authorities. In April 2014 the firm Helicon replaced the old lighting with led lights and lined the sides with thermic isolation, minimizing variations in temperature and relative humidity. The micro climate is now sufficiently stable in the medium-long term to ensure the safekeeping of the altarpiece.

**The Province of East Flanders has expanded its educational initiatives for tourists.** For this it has collaborated closely with the tourist offices of Ghent and East Flanders. They have produced a **promotional brochure** and a **walking route** connecting the different historic locations associated with the *Ghent Altarpiece*. The 'Follow Van Eyck' walking map is free with the purchase of a combi ticket. The ticket gives access to St Bavo's cathedral, the Ghent Museum of Fine Arts and the Caermersklooster, which is the provincial cultural centre. In addition, the East Flanders tourist office has developed **two bicycle routes** between Ghent and Wetteren that go past locations that played a role in the theft of the panel of the *Just Judges*. The educational program for schools and families with children will be extended in autumn 2014. From 10 September you can visit the **temporary exhibition 'From tree trunk to altarpiece'** at the Caermersklooster, which concentrates on the wooden support, as well as the current permanent exhibition 'The Ghent Altarpiece revealed!'.

#### Location partners:



#### Conservation and research partners:



#### Partners touristic-educational program:

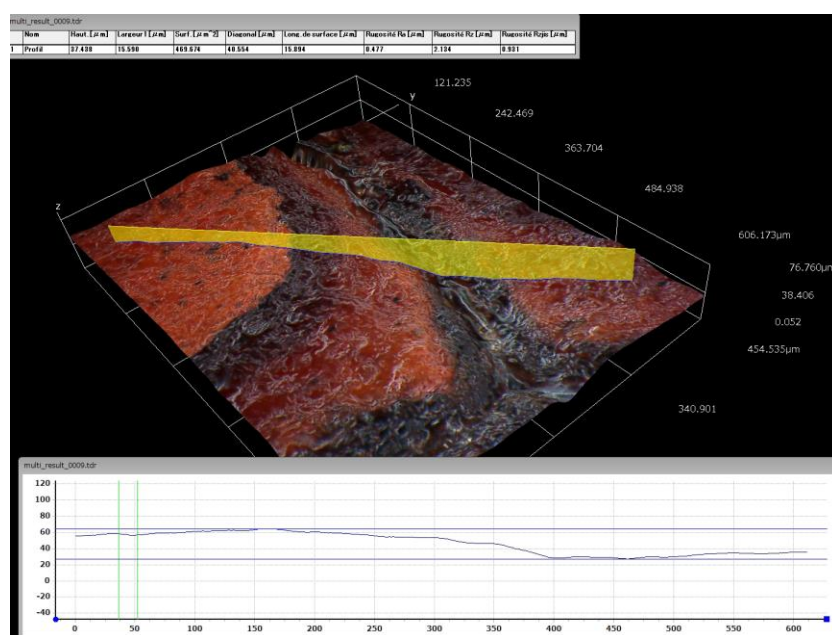


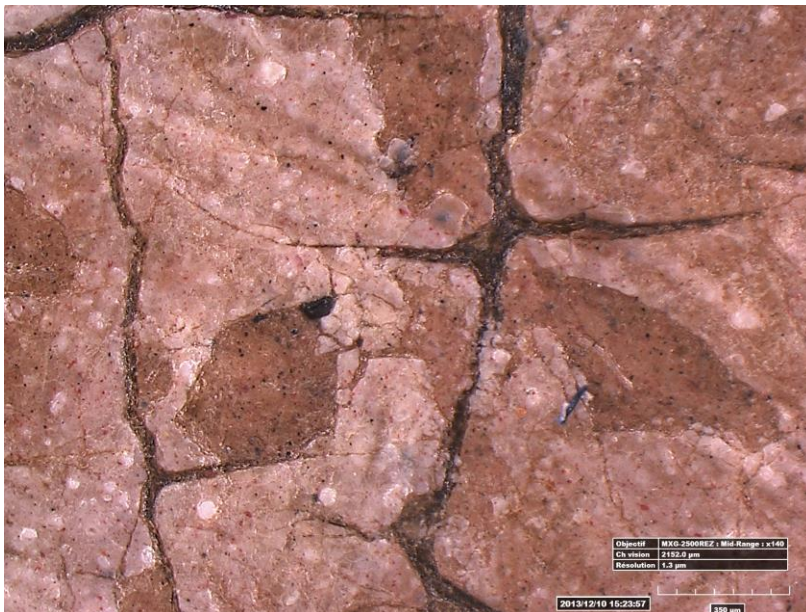
### 3 Press information Ghent University – Application of a 3D digital microscope to the examination of the Ghent altarpiece

A few weeks ago, Ghent University acquired a 3D digital high resolution microscope by Hirox for the examination of the altarpiece. The microscope will be used for the university's Concerted Research Action project "Archeometrical study of the Ghent Altarpiece" (Promotors: Profs. Peter Vandenabeele, Maximiliaan Martens and Luc Moens).

This kind of apparatus is applied to the study of many types of objects and materials, such as electronic components, biological samples or the mechanism of fine watches and has been used to examine the techniques, materials and degradations of works of art, such as paintings by Vermeer, Rothko or Munch.

The different lenses allow magnifications from x20 to x2500 and a rotation head provides a 360° view. The lenses and software allow the examination of extremely fine details on the painting themselves, such as pigment particles and micro-cracks. 2D- and 3D-measurements of the surface permit to record the size of pigments particles or the thickness and topography of the paint layers. Digital 3D microscopy gives insight in the material history, allows to determine the location of features like ancient overpaint, and decreases to a large degree the need for invasive sampling for the conservation-restoration treatment, or at least is very helpful to determine the exact locations where indispensable sampling can be best performed.





Overpaint highlights on Elisabeth Borluut's hand, containing large lead white aggregates and flowing over the age cracks (magnification x140)

© Hirox

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#### 4 Press information University of Antwerp | MA-XRF investigation of some of the outer panels of *The Ghent Altarpiece*

To support the restoration activities of the *Joos Vijd* and *Elisabeth Borluut* panels of the *Ghent Altarpiece*, they were examined using a new non-destructive imaging method called MA-XRF (Macroscopic X-ray fluorescence), developed by the University of Antwerp (Prof. Koen Janssens). A fine beam of X-rays is used to scan slowly over the painting. During this process the chemical elements in the irradiated paint layers will emit their own X-rays. By recording these signals with sensitive detectors it is possible to obtain distribution maps of chemical elements such as iron, lead, copper and mercury across the panels. These images allow to visualize overpainted representations or to visualize more clearly damages in covered paint layers.

In the *Elisabeth Borluut* panel (Fig. 1), the observation of the KIK-IRPA restorers that the original Van Eyck red paint layer of the dress was largely covered with optically related but chemically different second paint layer could be objectively corroborated. Analysis of microscopic paint samples by Dr Jana Sanyova has shown that the latter layer consists of a red organic dye mixed with the blue and copper-containing pigment azurite. The latter was mixed into the paint in order to give it a darker tone. From the copper distribution image, it is clear that in those small areas where the upper red layer was tentatively removed, copper is no longer present, confirming that no azurite is present in the lower, original paint layer. The copper map also shows that the red dress in this panel is widely overpainted.

In the *Joos Vijd* panel (Fig. 2) the iron and mercury images are the most informative. In the vermilion red robe of Vijd containing the red pigment mercury sulfide (HgS), several lacunae in the paint are visible. In the iron distribution it can be seen that these lacunae were filled in with an iron-rich material and then covered with a second (and sometimes third) paint layer. This is confirmed by analysis of paint cross-sections. In this manner, again the observation of the restorers could be confirmed that the original red robe to a large extent has been overpainted in a later period. During this investigation, it has become clear that MA-XRF has contributed in a substantial manner to the adaptation of the future restoration strategy of the panels of the *Ghent Altarpiece* to the current insights.



Fig. 1. The panel 'Elisabeth Borluut' (A) and several elemental distributions obtained by means of MA-XRF (University of Antwerp): lead (B), calcium (C) en copper (D). In the copper distribution, the small area where the overpaint layer was removed is clearly visible.

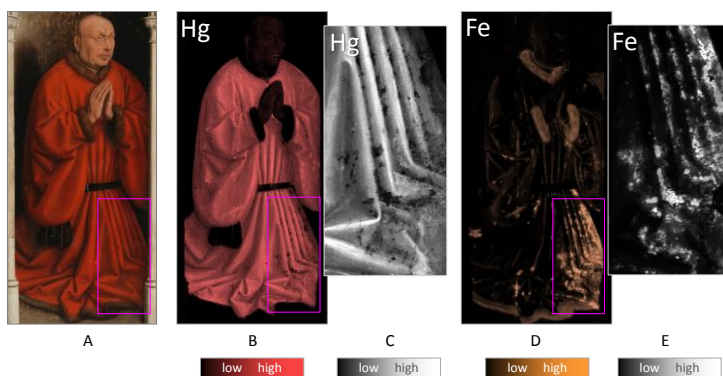


Figure 2. The *Joos Vijdt* panel (A) and different elemental distributions obtained by means of MAXRF (University of Antwerp): mercury (B, C) and iron (D,E). In the mercury distribution, a number of lacunae are visible in the original vermilion red layer that were filled in with an iron-rich material and overpainted.

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## 5 Press information | The Province of East-Flanders expands its touristic-educational program surrounding the restoration of the Ghent Altarpiece

In October 2012 conservation of the world famous masterpiece of the Van Eyck brothers started: the Ghent Altarpiece. The Flemish authorities appointed the Ghent Museum of Fine Arts (MSK) as location for the conservation and charged the Province of East Flanders with the educational program surrounding this campaign. The treatment itself was assigned to a team of restorers from the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA, Brussels).

### **A program aimed towards different target groups**

This year the Province strives towards a more intensive communication towards tourists and recreational visitors on the one hand and to children on the other. For this it cooperated closely with the tourist offices of the City of Ghent and the Province of East Flanders. This resulted in a promotional brochure distributed in 35 000 copies with the walking magazine *Pasar*, and in new touristic products connecting the different historic locations that play a role in the story of the Ghent Altarpiece. A walking map leads the visitor past remains of the 15th-century Ghent of the Van Eyck brothers. The walking map 'Follow Van Eyck' is available in four languages (and comes free when buying a combi ticket that grants access to the three locations that tell the historical and present-day story of the Ghent Altarpiece). This combi ticket is for sale (€ 12) in St Bavo's cathedral, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Caermersklooster, our provincial cultural centre. The ticket gives access to the three abovementioned locations and remains valid until the conservation campaign is completed. The walking map is available in four languages (English, Dutch, French and German).

In addition, the East Flanders tourist office developed two bicycle routes between Ghent and Wetteren, the city where Arsène Goedertier lived, the alleged thief of the panel of the 'Just Judges'. Two loops connect locations that played a role in the theft or that surfaced as alleged hiding places during the judicial investigation.

### **Expansion of the educational program**

From December 2014 onwards an educational kit will be available for children aged 8 to 12 years that complements the different Ghent Altarpiece locations in the city. The kit contains assignments that are both suited for schools and families, leading to a fascinating and instructive experience. For the same target group the Caermersklooster is developing an adventurous and creative journey through the historical cloister, with the exhibition on the Ghent Altarpiece as an important anchor. It is intended for schools and families and opens in September 2014.

### **Want to know more about the Ghent Altarpiece? The provincial cultural centre Caermersklooster**

During conservation of the Ghent Altarpiece you can visit the Caermersklooster to discover the different facets of the masterpiece. Through film fragments, X-radiographies, instruments and models the permanent exhibition 'The Ghent Altarpiece revealed!' gives an insight into the Earthly (wooden support, paint layer structure) and Heavenly aspects of the polyptych. The history and the different studies of this masterpiece are presented in an unequalled fashion. An eye-catcher is the

life-size reconstruction with prints of the underdrawing and preparatory drawings. In the Oud Huis you can follow the restoration from nearby through video images from the MSK and interviews with the restorers.

### **'From tree trunk to altarpiece'**

A series of temporary exhibitions highlight specific aspects of the altarpiece. After *'Whither the Ghent Altarpiece?'* and *'What does the Ghent Altarpiece tell us?'*, a third exhibition focuses on the wooden supports made of oak imported from the Baltic Sea area. The first part of the exhibition zooms in on this long journey: the felling and transport of the tree trunks, the manufacturing process of the planks and the instruments used.

In the course of the centuries the wooden panels and frames have repeatedly been disassembled, moved, sawn through or their shape was changed. All these interventions have left traces in the wood. There are also several hypotheses on the original placement of the polyptych in the Vijd chapel for which traces on the architecture and on the panels and frames could serve as proof. The second part of the exhibition elaborates upon these historic reconstructions.

The third part is dedicated to the dendrochronological study, which uses the year rings of the planks to determine the date of felling of the tree and allows to determine whether different planks came from the same tree. This interdisciplinary research generates arguments that are of great importance for the ongoing discussion: what is the part of each Van Eyck brother in the altarpiece and can these interventions be dated? The exhibition opens on 10 September 2014.

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Tim Bottelberghe, East Flanders tourist office  
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[www.tov.be](http://www.tov.be)

### **Combi tickets are sold at the three Ghent Altarpiece locations:**

#### ***St Bavo's cathedral***

Sint-Baafsplein, 9000 Ghent



tel. 09 269 20 45

[www.sintbaafskathedraal.be](http://www.sintbaafskathedraal.be)

**Provincial cultural centre Caermersklooster**

Vrouwebroersstraat 6, 9000 Ghent

tel. 09 269 29 10

<http://www.caermersklooster.be/en/follow-Van-Eyck>

**Ghent Museum of Fine Arts**

Fernand Scribde reef 1, 9000 Ghent

tel. 09 240 07 00

[www.mskgent.be](http://www.mskgent.be)

**Walking map 'Follow Van Eyck'**, free with the purchase of a combi ticket or available for € 1.

**Bicycle route available for free at:**

**Tourist office Wetteren**

Markt 23

9230 Wetteren

[www.beleefwetteren.be](http://www.beleefwetteren.be)

**Tourist office Ghent**

Sint-Veerleplein 5

9000 Ghent

[www.visitgent.be](http://www.visitgent.be)

**Tourist office East Flanders**

Sint-Niklaasstraat 2

9000 Ghent

[www.tov.be](http://www.tov.be)

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Deputy for communication: Alexander Vercamer



## 6 Press information | The role of the Flemish government in the conservation of the Ghent Altarpiece

### **Protected as mobile and immobile heritage**

As a cultural good that is an integral part of Ghent's St Bavo's cathedral, the Ghent Altarpiece is protected by the laws for monuments (as immobile heritage). Because of its exceptional importance as mobile cultural heritage, on 7 April 2009 the altarpiece was included in the Flemish government's list of masterpieces, the *Topstukkenlijst*. On 25 August 2010 the Minister of Culture decreed special protection for the altarpiece. Thanks to this, and in addition to the protection as a monument and its funding according to the existing laws, the funding and protection implied by the *Topstukken* decree also apply to the Ghent Altarpiece. With this double protection, the Ministers Bourgeois and Schauvliege made the current conservation campaign of the Ghent Altarpiece possible. On the authority of the Ministers, the campaign is supervised by an official mixed working group and by the *Topstukkenraad*.

### **Conservation and funding**

In 2009-2010 the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA, Brussels) carried out an urgent conservation treatment on the panel of the *Just Judges*, the copy by Van der Veken. For this, the Minister responsible for immobile heritage and the Minister of Culture respectively granted a maintenance subsidy of 12.000 euro and of 16.204,34 euro, hence covering large part of the 35.255,43 euro total cost. Meanwhile the entire altarpiece was studied using scientific methods. The final report strongly advised restoration of the altarpiece.

In the light of these developments, in 2012 the Ministers responsible for mobile and immobile heritage each decided to grant half of the funds required for the restoration of the Ghent Altarpiece (504.173,25 euro each). The church administration of St Bavo's was supported by the Fund InBev-Baillet Latour to provide the remaining funds (20 % of the total cost). The Flemish authorities also granted an additional subsidy of 119.938,40 euro for the restoration of the gilded frames of six wing panels that still have large parts of Van Eyck's original polychromy. The Ministers of Culture and of Immobile heritage each granted half of this subsidy.

### **Study of the conditions of preservation**

The conservation of the Ghent Altarpiece is carried out in the Ghent Museum of Fine Arts where a conservation studio with a safe and stable micro climate was built.

After restoration the panels will return to the cathedral, but a permanent location can only be designated after completion of the cathedral's restoration (2023?). Meanwhile a temporary solution to exhibit the altarpiece in safe conditions in the glass case in the Villa chapel had to be found.

On demand of the Minister of Culture, the firm Helicon defined the parameters for good safekeeping of the altarpiece (stable climate, protection against theft, fire, water damage and other calamities, low heat lighting) and formulated a proposition to improve the conditions in the glass case of the Ghent Altarpiece.

The first results of the adaptations carried out on the basis of this study, get a positive evaluation:

- Since implementing the measures temperature and relative humidity have become much more stable
- The new lighting produces less heat, implying a smaller impact on the temperature conditions in the glass case
- The new lighting gives less reflection and partially neutralizes the greenish effect of the glass, leading to a better appreciation of the work by the visitors.

### Contact

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Brigitte Myle, staff member – spokesperson of the government agency 'Kunsten en Erfgoed'

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## 7 Background information

### 7.1 The Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA)

The KIK-IRPA is a federal scientific institute responsible for the documentation, study and conservation-restoration of the cultural and artistic heritage of our country.

Art historians, photographers, chemists, archaeologists, engineers and conservator-restorers carry out interdisciplinary research on the materials and techniques used in works of art and cultural artefacts and on the materials and methods used in conservation-restoration.

The KIK-IRPA is a unique resource for scientific, photographic and technical documentation of the cultural heritage of the country.

### 7.2 A conservation campaign visible to the public (2012-2017)



The conservation treatment of the Ghent Altarpiece is carried out in three phases. It takes place in an exhibition gallery of the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent. The space was redesigned as a conservation workshop with a glass wall that allows visitors to view the treatment in progress. At the same time the provincial cultural centre, the Caermersklooster, is hosting several exhibitions on the project. These explore the materials and techniques of the altarpiece as well as its art historical background. Throughout the duration of the project the panels

awaiting or after treatment will remain on display in the Cathedral of Saint-Bavo, and those undergoing conservation will be indicated by full-scale black and white photographs.

The preliminary study has shown that the polyptych is in relatively good condition. Nonetheless numerous old varnish layers obscure the original painting; these are yellowed and cracked and risk causing damage over time. The conservation treatment will therefore remove the varnish in whole or in part, and at the same time examine and consolidate the paint layer. Old retouching and overpaint will be reduced or removed and where necessary new retouching will be carried out. A new varnish layer will be applied. The wooden support will be examined and treated to facilitate unconstrained expansion and contraction of the wood, therefore preventing further splits. The treatment also provides the ideal conditions to carry out a new scientific study of the polyptych and to fully document its materials and techniques.



### 7.3 A conservation treatment in several phases

Phase 1 | exterior wing panels | 8 panels and 8 original frames



*The Archangel Gabriel and the Prophet Zachariah | City view and the Erythraean Sybil | Interior and the Sybille of Cuma | Virgin of the Annunciation and Prophet Micha | Joos Vijd | John Baptist | John Evangelist | Elisabeth Borluut*

Phase 2 | interior, upper register | 7 panels and 4 original frames



*Adam and Sacrifice of Caïn and Abel | The Singing Angels | The Virgin Enthroned | God Enthroned | John Baptist Enthroned | Musician Angels | Eve and the Murder on Abel by Cain*

Phase 3 | interior, lower register | 5 panels and 4 original frames



*The Just Judges (J. Van der Veken, 1939-1951) | The Knights of Christ | The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb | The Hermits | The Pilgrims*

## 7.4 Funding

The initial budget for the conservation campaign is 1 260 433,20 EUR. Belgian state agencies 'Kunsten en Erfgoed' and 'Onroerend Erfgoed' provided 40% each and the InBev-Baillet Latour Fund the remaining 20%. Early 2014 an additional 149 113 EUR was granted by Onroerend Erfgoed (40%), Kunsten en Erfgoed (40%) and InBev-Baillet Latour for conservation of the frames. The Gieskes-Stribis Fund granted 240 000 EUR for continued research of the interior panels and InBev-Baillet Latour engages itself to provide 20% of the funds needed in case of additional interventions.

## 7.5 Documentation and research

The treatment provides the ideal conditions to carry out a new scientific study of the polyptych and to fully document its materials and techniques. Parallel with the treatment the paintings are studied, documented and researched with laboratory techniques. Several projects surround the campaign

- Dendrochronological analyses by Pascale Fraiture (KIK-IRPA, laboratories)  
The reports are published on <http://closertovaneyck.kikirpa.be>
- Characterisation of the original paint layers by Jana Sanyova (KIK-IRPA, laboratories)  
Jana Sanyova, specialist in the physico chemistry of paint layers, does research on Van Eycks materials to study hist painting technique and to assist the conservation treatment.  
Research project *The Ghent Altarpiece in the laboratory 60 years after Paul Coremans. Contribution of the new analytical techniques*, financed by the Belgian Science Policy Office.
- The project Closer to Van Eyck, gathering a wealth of documentation on the Ghent Altarpiece online in open access, funded by the Getty Foundation and The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO): <http://closertovaneyck.kikirpa.be>
- Research on the material history of the Ghent Altarpiece: PhD of H el ene Dubois at Ghent University (promoter: Prof. Maximiliaan Martens)
- The VERONA Project (Van Eyck Research in Open Access): the paintings of Jan van Eyck (c. 1390-1441)

The VERONA project is the most comprehensive technical and scientific investigation of Jan van Eyck's paintings to date. It aims to use state-of-the-art scientific equipment to examine seventeen paintings in ten different European locations, including all of the signed and dated works. As a result, a complete set of high quality technical images will be available for the first time. In the future, this new scientific documentation will be published online in open access, complementing the 'Closer to Van Eyck' website, co-developed by the KIK-IRPA, which focused on the Ghent Altarpiece.

This project will be of benefit to Van Eyck research in several ways. It will shed new light on Jan van Eyck's individual techniques and methods whilst producing high-resolution, detailed material for comparative study. Although visual evidence derived from comparison has long been used in Van Eyck scholarship to make arguments about attribution, workshop practice or chronology, the existing documentation of Jan van Eyck's paintings is incomplete and uneven in quality. A crucial feature of the VERONA project is that it uses consistent procedures and standards of technical analysis, enabling researchers to make comparisons on the basis of analogous material. This innovative concept will bring new rigour and greater objectivity to comparative research in Eyckian painting.

Bart Fransen (head of the Centre for the Study of the Flemish Primitives) and Susan Jones (art historian)  
 Pioneer project financed by the Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO) / 2014-2016

## 8 KIK-IRPA's conservation team

Coordinator of the conservation: Livia Depuydt-Elbaum

In-situ coordinator: Bart Devolder

Coordinator of the research: H  l  ne Dubois

Conservators: Livia Depuydt-Elbaum, Bart Devolder, H  l  ne Dubois, Nathalie Laqu  re, Claire Mehagnoul, Marie Postec, Fran  oise Rosier en Griet Steyaert

Removal of overpaint on the original polychromy on the frames: Anne-Sophie Augustyniak

In close collaboration with Jean-Albert Glatigny, specialist in wooden supports.

## 9 Members of the international expert commission

The conservation treatment is assisted by an international commission of art historians, chemists and conservators:

Name	First name	Specialisation /Profession	Function/ Affiliation /country
Ainsworth	Maryan	Art Historian	Curator, The Metropolitan Museum, New York
Borchert	Till-Holger	Art Historian	Chief Curator, Musea Brugge, Belgium
Campbell	Lorne	Art Historian	National Gallery, London, UK
Carlyle	Leslie	Conservator	Professor of Conservation, Universidade Nova de Lisboa
De Belle	Liesbeth	Art Historian	Curator of 17th-century Dutch Paintings, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels, Belgium
Dunkerton	Jill	Painting Conservator	Conservator, National Gallery, London, UK
Farnell	Susan	Painting Conservator	Freelance, Belgium, formally associated to KIK-IRPA
Gallagher	Michael	Painting Conservator	Head of Painting Conservation, Metropolitan Museum of Art
Gifford	Melanie	Conservation Scientist	National Gallery of Art, Washington, USA
Goetghebeur	Nicole	Painting Conservator	Formerly head of Painting Conservation KIK-IRPA
Guislain-Wittermann	R��gine	Painting Conservator	Freelance, Belgium, formally associated to KIK-IRPA
Hartwig	Babette	Painting Conservator	Head of Painting Conservation, Gem��ldegalerie, Berlin
Klaassen	Lizet	Painting Conservator	Head of Painting Conservation, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp
Neidhardt	Uta	Art Historian	Curator of Dutch and Flemish Paintings, Gem��ldegalerie Alte Meister Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden
Oberthaler	Elke	Painting Conservator	Head of Painting Conservation, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
P��rier-d'leteren	Cath��line	Art Historian	Professor Emeritus, Universit�� Libre de Bruxelles
Spring	Marika	Conservation Scientist	Principal Scientific Officer, National Gallery, London, UK
Wadum	J��rgen	Painting Conservator	Head of Conservation, National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen / Professor of Conservation, University of Amsterdam
Martens	Maximiliaan	Art Historian	Professor Art History Universiteit Gent
Spronk	Ron	Art Historian	Professor Art History Queen's University Ontario / Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen
B��cken	V��ronique	Art Historian	Curator / Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels

## 10 Images

These images can be downloaded in high resolution on the press page of our website ([www.kikirpa.be](http://www.kikirpa.be) > press or <http://www.kikirpa.be/EN/136/371/Press.htm>) and may be published. Copyright mention: nos. 1-5: © KIK-IRPA, Brussels / nos. 6-7: © Hirox / nos. 8-9: © University of Antwerp / nos. 10-18: © Jean-Luc Elias, KIK-IRPA, Brussels.

1



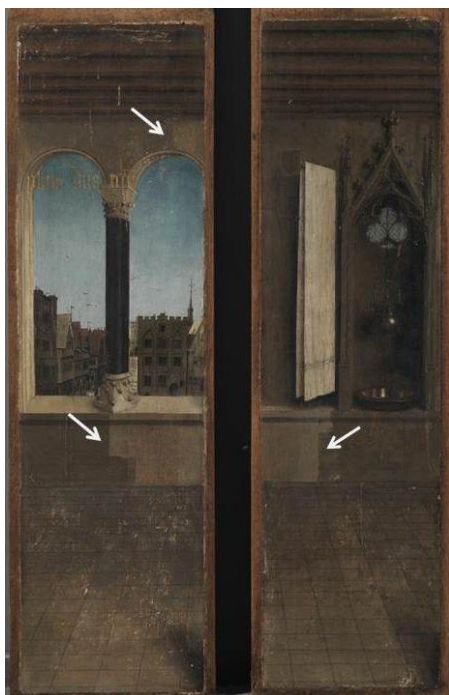
Detail of the panel *The Archangel Gabriel and the Prophet Zechariah* during cleaning. Cleaning tests of the old varnish layers:

- 1) Ermine lining, before cleaning
- 2) Ermine lining after reduction of the varnish
- 3) Ermine lining after removal of the varnish

Removal of the old yellowed varnishes reveals the colours of the painting beneath.

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2

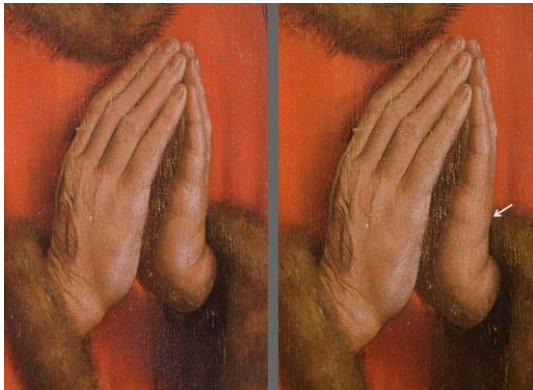


*City view* and *Interior* during removal of the brown overpaint on the walls. Originally these were a lighter shade and the colour of the floor and walls differed. This intervention restores the suggestion of space of the original paint layer.

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3



Detail of the hands of donor *Joos Vijd*.

Left: after varnish removal

Right: after removal of the later highlights on the lower part of the donor's left hand

This leads to a better appreciation of the subtle modeling.

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Panel of *Joos Vijd* during removal of the overpaint (left) and detail of the overpainted red garment (right).

The detail, below the purse, shows two test windows that reveal the original paint layer. The overpaint below the purse covers a drapery fold. To the right of the purse a lighter paint layer is revealed with a deep shadow; the top of the drapery fold is highlighted with a fine red line.

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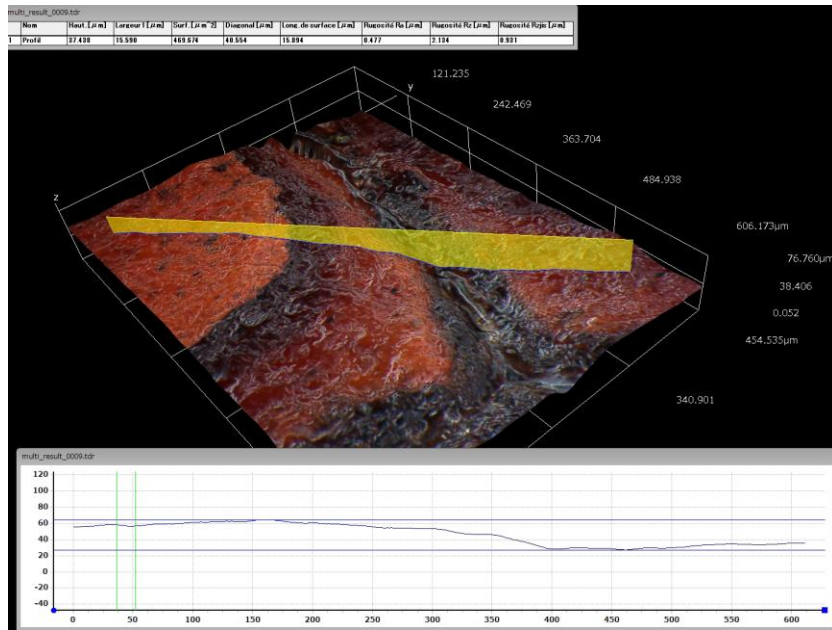
5



Left: detail of the overpainted pink dress of *Elisabeth Borluut*.

Right: same detail with test window: the original paint layer is a lighter shade of pink and the drapery folds are darker and deeper. The top of the fold is accentuated with a lighter line. © KIK-IRPA, Brussels

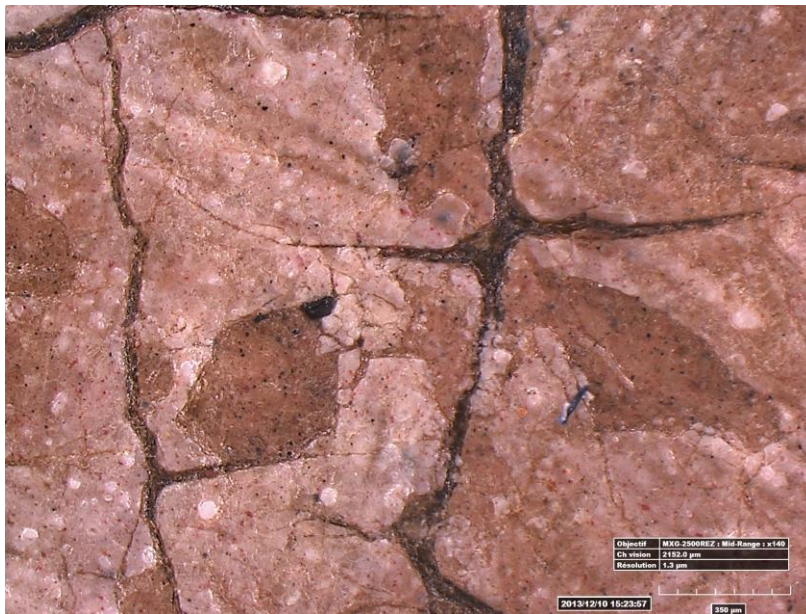
6



3D image and profile of overpaint on Jood Vijd's red drapery

© Hirox

7



Overpaint highlights on Elisabeth Borluut's hand, containing large lead white aggregates and flowing over the age cracks (magnification x140)

© Hirox



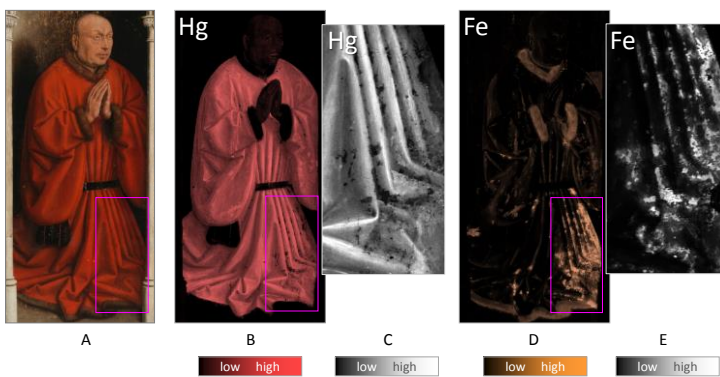
8



The panel 'Elisabeth Borluut' (A) and several elemental distributions obtained by means of MA-XRF (University of Antwerp): lead (B), calcium (C) en copper (D). In the copper distribution, the small area where the overpaint layer was removed is clearly visible.

© University of Antwerp

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The *Joos Vijd* panel (A) and different elemental distributions obtained by means of MAXRF (University of Antwerp): mercury (B, C) and iron (D,E). In the mercury distribution, a number of lacunae are visible in the original vermilion red layer that were filled in with an iron-rich material and overpainted.

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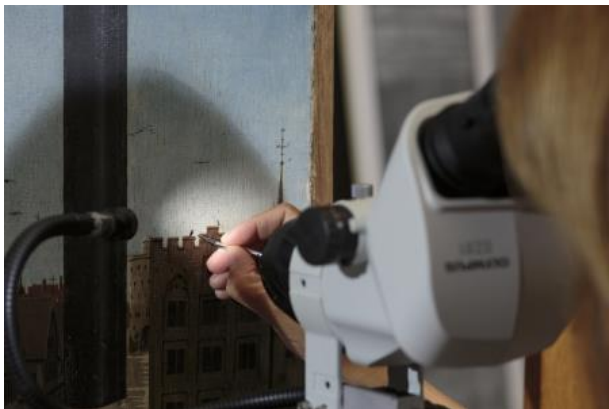
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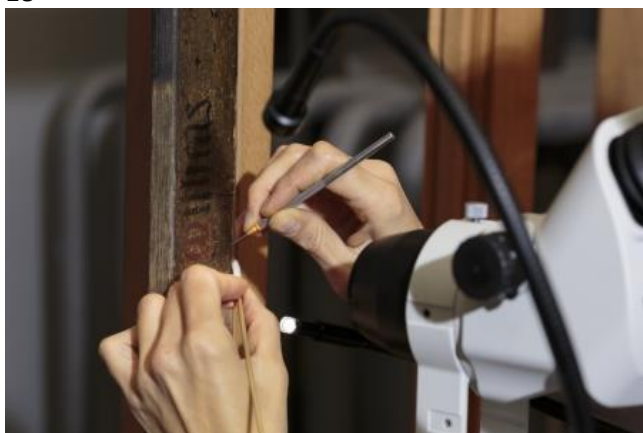
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## 11 Nota's



