

Early Netherlandish art: the Van Eycks and their contemporaries

Start date 10 January 2020 **End date** 12 January 2020

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ

Tutor Dr Sophie Oosterwijk **Course code** 1920NRX023

Director of ISP and LL Sarah Ormrod

For further information on this course, please contact the Lifelong Learning team Zara Kuckelhaus, Fleur Kerrecoe
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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Sophie Oosterwijk was born in Gouda (Netherlands). She studied English at Leiden University and Medieval Studies at the University of York before completing her PhD in the History of Art at Leicester; she also has a second PhD in Middle English literature from Leiden University.

She has published widely on her specialist research subjects: medieval iconography, medieval sculpture and tomb monuments, the image of the child in western art, and the *Danse Macabre*. Her publications include two co-edited volumes entitled *Monumental Industry. The production of tomb sculpture in England and Wales in the long fourteenth century* (with Sally Badham: Shaun Tyas, 2010), *Mixed Metaphors. The Danse Macabre in medieval and early modern Europe* (with Stefanie Knöll: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), and more recently (with Sally Badham) a major survey article on precious-metal effigial tombs in medieval Europe 1080-1430 published in the journal *Church Monuments*. The latter project has since led to further articles and conference papers.

Sophie has taught at the universities of St Andrews, Leicester, Manchester and Nottingham, Sotheby's Institute of Art, and other organisations. She was also for many years Editor of the journal *Church Monuments* and during 2011-2013 the Coordinator of Tomb Monuments for the MeMO (Medieval Monuments Online) project at Utrecht University. She currently lives in the Netherlands and works as a free-lance lecturer and researcher. She is also an Hon. Research Fellow at the University of St Andrews and Vice President of the Church Monuments Society.

A regular guest lecturer at Madingley Hall, Sophie has previously taught weekend schools on Early Netherlandish art in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (including Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel), 'memento mori' themes in medieval and renaissance art, and Dutch portraiture, genre, still life and history painting (Hals, Vermeer, Rembrandt) in the seventeenth century.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Session 1 Introduction – art and society in the Burgundian Netherlands
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 2 Painting and sculpture in the early fifteenth century
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 3 The enigma of Robert Campin/ the Master of Flémalle
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Session 4 The art of Hubert and Jan van Eyck
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Session 5 Hubert and Jan van Eyck – the Ghent Altarpiece
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 6 The Van Eycks and their contemporaries
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 7 Jan van Eyck: influences and successors
12:45	Lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course aims to offer an introduction to Early Netherlandish art by Hubert and Jan van Eyck and their contemporaries in the first half of the fifteenth century. This will include not only panel painting but also manuscript illumination, early printing, sculpture and other media in order to give students a more comprehensive idea of the art produced in this period. These works will be studied in the historical and religious context of Burgundian culture and society. Conservation will also be discussed, notably the ongoing conservation and cleaning of the famous *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* (or *Ghent Altarpiece*).

Content:

The time of Hubert and Jan van Eyck is often described as the 'Northern Renaissance'. This may be a somewhat misleading term for a period that Johan Huizinga regarded instead as the waning of the Middle Ages, yet we can observe a marked change towards a greater sense of naturalism or 'realism'. While taking the art of the Van Eycks as the main focus, we shall also be looking at some of the artists preceding him as well as at the work of his (near-)contemporaries, e.g. Robert Campin and Rogier van der Weyden. The course will focus not just on panel painting but also include art in other media, from sculpture to manuscript illumination, printing and embroidery. Moreover, we shall study works for public and private use, from devotional imagery to portraits. In this way, the course is intended to offer a better insight into both the milieus in which artists worked and their patrons' demands and expectations. This will include the specific purposes and locations for which some of these works of art were created, adding to students' appreciation of art production in this very rich artistic era and the people who lived and worked in it.

Presentation of the course:

The course will be in the format of PowerPoint lectures with some class discussion, both on issues raised by the tutor and questions asked by students. Students will be asked to consider questions as to how a work was made and what materials were used. Advice will be given about places to visit in order to see the works studied during the course.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. recognise the types of work created in this period as well as some of the artists and their stylistic influences;
2. identify some of the subject matter, iconography composition and techniques of the art from this period;
3. understand some of the reasons for the creation of some of these works;
4. achieve a better understanding of Early Netherlandish works of art in their social and historical context.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. An additional reading list will be offered as a handout to students attending this course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Borchert, T.H.	<i>The Age of Jan van Eyck 1430-1530 The Mediterranean World and Early Netherlandish Painting</i>	Ludion, Ghent-Amsterdam, 2002.
Campbell, L.	<i>The Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Schools</i>	National Gallery Catalogue, 1998
Dhanens, E.	<i>Hubert and Jan van Eyck</i>	London, 1982
Foister, S., S. Jones & D. Cool	<i>Investigating Jan van Eyck</i>	Brepols, 1999.
Harbison, C.	<i>The Art of the Northern Renaissance</i>	Everyman Art History, 1991, 1995.
Harbison, C.	<i>Jan van Eyck: The Play of Realism</i>	Reaktion, 2011.
Nash, S.	<i>Northern Renaissance Art</i>	Oxford History of Art, OUP, 2008.
Nuttall, P.	<i>From Flanders to Florence: The Impact of Netherlandish Painting 1400-1500</i>	Yale University Press, 2004.
Smith, J.C.	<i>The Northern Renaissance, Art & Ideas</i>	Phaidon, 2004.
Snyder, J.	<i>Northern Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, the Graphic Arts from 1350 to 1575.</i>	New York, 1985. 2004 Prentice-Hall, 2 nd ed.
For the historical background:		
Huizinga, J.	<i>The Waning of the Middle Ages: a Study of the Forms of Life, Thought, and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries (or the revised translation, <i>The Autumn of the Middle Ages</i>)</i>	1924, multiple editions
Prevenier, W.	<i>The Burgundian Netherlands</i>	Cambridge U.P., 1986
Vaughan, R	series of four books on the Valois Dukes of Burgundy: Philip the Bold, John the Fearless, Philip the Good and Charles the Bold.	The Boydell Press.

Website addresses

Many museums have websites with illustrations and details of the works in their collection. For example, see <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/>. Very useful is also the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History (Metropolitan Museum, New York): <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>.

The Ghent Altarpiece is currently undergoing major restoration: see the innovative web application <http://clostovaneyck.kikirpa.be/>.

For a comparison of other artefacts of the period with a similar commemorative context in the Northern Netherlands, see the website and searchable database of the MeMO (Medieval Memoria Online): <http://memo.hum.uu.nl/pages/products.html>.

Exhibitions

To celebrate the (near-)completion of the restoration of the *Ghent Altarpiece* there will be two exhibitions in Ghent and Bruges:

- *Van Eyck. An Optical Revolution* (Ghent, 1 February – 30 April 2020):

<https://www.mskgent.be/en/exhibitions/van-eyck>

- *Jan van Eyck in Bruges* (Bruges, 12 March – 12 July 2020):

<https://www.museabrugge.be/en/calendar/exhibitions/jan-van-eyck-in-bruges-1>

A new study by Till-Holger Borchert *et al.*, *Van Eyck*, will be published by Thames & Hudson in February 2020.

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee, lunch and dinner will be provided as outlined in the timetable. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 17 December 2019