

Van Eyck painting on loan for first time

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is lending its fifteenth-century crown jewel by Jan Van Eyck to another museum for the first time. From 1 February, the painting *The Three Marys at the Grave*, the only work by Jan van Eyck in the Netherlands, can be seen in the major Van Eyck exhibition in Belgium.

The Three Marys at the Grave by van Jan van Eyck was once in the collection of Daniël George Van Beuningen. The art collector acquired it in London for £250,000, his most expensive purchase ever. Van Beuningen had a great love of Early Netherlandish painting, which formed the core of his collection. Van Eyck was one of the great innovators of this period and his painting was without doubt Van Beuningen's most important purchase. This large panel is the only work by Jan van Eyck in the Netherlands.

Curator Friso Lammertse: 'The Three Marys at the Grave is now one of the jewels in the museum's collection. The representation of light and shadow and the beautiful landscape show what a revolution Van Eyck brought about in painting at the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is not for nothing that the panel has been called **the most important fifteenth-century Flemish painting in the Netherlands.**'

Fragile

The Three Marys at the Grave (1425-1435) is a rare and fragile panel that, because of its great importance, has never left the museum. The painting was conserved in 2012 and can now be loaned on an exceptional basis. Only twenty works by the Flemish master have survived. The exhibition *Van Eyck: An Optical Revolution* in Ghent brings together works from all over the world, including *Portrait of a Man with a Blue Chaperon* (c.1428-30) from Romania and *The Annunciation Diptych* (c.1433-35) from Spain.

Arab influence

In 2012, the museum's curator of historical design, Alexandra van Dongen, made an important discovery. The blue-and-white apothecary jar held by one of the Marys in the painting was an import from Damascus in Syria. The painting thus shows that there was an exchange between different cultures in the fifteenth century. Furthermore, Syrian potters in Damascus copied the art of Chinese porcelain. The apothecary jar in Van Eyck's painting is the earliest known depiction of Arab pottery in European visual art.

The Three Marys at the Grave on ARTtube

In the lead-up to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen's major exhibition *The Road to Van Eyck* in 2012, *The Three Marys at the Grave* was restored and the process was recorded. In the film, available on ARTtube, curator Friso Lammertse sets out to investigate the painting and is confronted with some big surprises. [See the film here.](#)

Boijmans in Transit

Over the course of its 170-year history, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen has amassed a world-class collection of 151,000 works of art. The museum settled in its present location in the Museumpark in 1935. Many decades and millions of visitors later, the building is outdated and requires extensive renovation and modernisation. While the museum is closed, its world-famous collection remains visible in Rotterdam and further afield. Masterpieces from the collection can be seen in exhibitions in the Netherlands and abroad, and artworks are also being shown in classrooms in schools throughout Rotterdam. In the meantime, the construction of Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen is progressing steadily. The world's first publicly accessible art storage facility will open in 2021 and will house 151,000 works of art.

Note for editors

For more information, see the media kit: https://boijmans.pr.co/media_kits or contact the Marketing and Communications department, tel +31 (0)10 441 9561 or email pressoffice@boijmans.nl. 'Van Eyck: An Optical Revolution in Ghent: press preview on Wednesday 29 January: soetkin.bruneel@stad.gent.