



# PRESS RELEASE

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## THE FRICK COLLECTION

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FRICK EXHIBITION REUNITES STUNNING PAIR OF COMMISSIONS

***THE CHARTERHOUSE OF BRUGES: JAN VAN EYCK, PETRUS CHRISTUS, AND JAN VOS***

September 18, 2018, through January 13, 2019



Jan van Eyck and Workshop, *The Virgin and Child with St. Barbara, St. Elizabeth and Jan Vos*, ca. 1441–43, oil on panel, 8 5/8 x 24 1/8 inches, The Frick Collection, New York

For the first time in twenty-four years and only the second time in their history, two masterpieces of early Netherlandish painting commissioned by the Carthusian monk Jan Vos will be reunited for *The Charterhouse of Bruges: Jan van Eyck, Petrus Christus, and Jan Vos*. These works, The Frick Collection's *Virgin and Child with St. Barbara, St. Elizabeth, and Jan Vos*, commissioned from Jan van Eyck and completed by his workshop, and *The Virgin and Child with St. Barbara and Jan Vos* (known as the Exeter

Madonna, after its first recorded owner), painted by Petrus Christus and now in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, will be shown with a selection of objects that place them in the rich monastic context for which they were created. The exhibition will explore the works' patronage, function, reception, and spiritual environment, offering a focused look at devotional practices in Bruges during the mid-fifteenth century. *The Charterhouse of Bruges: Jan van Eyck, Petrus Christus, and Jan Vos* will be on view in the museum's Cabinet Gallery and is organized by Emma Capron, the Frick's 2016–18 Anne L. Poulet Curatorial Fellow.



Petrus Christus, *The Virgin and Child with St. Barbara and Jan Vos*, c. 1445–50, oil on panel, 7 5/8 x 5 1/2 inches, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

In 1441, Jan Vos was elected prior of the Bruges Charterhouse of Genadedal, an important monastery patronized by the dukes of Burgundy and some of the city's foremost patrician families. Vos commissioned at least four works during his decade-long tenure at the helm of the prestigious charterhouse, but only the Frick's *Virgin and Child* and the Exeter Madonna survive today. Though different in scale, the two panels share remarkably close imagery, composition, and fine execution. Each depicts Vos being introduced to the Virgin by St. Barbara within an elaborate

portico that opens onto a panoramic cityscape. Both panels achieve remarkable monumentality while incorporating myriad minute details. Together, they afford rare and valuable insights into the patronage of leading monastic figures in fifteenth-century Bruges.

The Carthusian Order is known for its strict adherence to the principles of austerity, silence, and seclusion, with its monks entirely removed from worldly affairs and their lives dominated by solitary prayer in their cells. These ascetic ideals belied the order's complex attitude toward devotional works: at once valued as vital tools, elaborate images were at times shunned as distracting luxuries. Nonetheless, late medieval charterhouses became filled with sculpture, illuminated books, tapestries, and panel paintings, material accumulation often bolstered by lay patronage.



Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a Carthusian*, signed and dated 1446 on the lower edge of the fictive frame, oil on panel, 11 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Jules Bache

The charterhouse of Genadedal is a prime example of that phenomenon. In addition to the splendid Frick and Exeter Virgins, another panel can be connected to the monastery: Petrus Christus's *Portrait of a Carthusian* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The portrait, arguably one of the most beautiful created during the early Renaissance, will be part of the Frick exhibition. By discussing the Frick and Exeter Virgins in conjunction with manuscripts from the monastery's library, sculptures, and other devotional aids, the exhibition will show how such images shaped the order's contemplative life, liturgical services, and commemorative activities. The imagery of the two paintings also will be examined in relation to the centrality of the Virgin in Carthusian worship.

Despite their similarities and though they were both intended to be seen within the confines of the charterhouse, the Frick and Exeter Virgins served entirely different functions. The Exeter Madonna's diminutive size points to its use as an object of private devotion for Vos, meant for the intimacy of his cell, while the Frick Virgin was first described in contemporary documents as a memorial to Vos. It was to be displayed in a public part of the monastery, where, it was intended to prompt prayers for the repose of his soul.

*The Charterhouse of Bruges: Jan van Eyck, Petrus Christus, and Jan Vos* will be accompanied by a fully illustrated scholarly catalogue published by The Frick Collection in association with D Giles Ltd., London. It will include essays by Maryan Ainsworth, Curator of European Paintings, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Till-Holger Borchert, Director, Musea Brugge, Bruges; and Emma Capron, Anne L. Poulet Curatorial Fellow, The Frick Collection. Major funding for the exhibition is provided by Howard S. Marks and Nancy Marks and an anonymous gift in memory of Melvin R. Seiden. Additional support is generously provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the General Delegation of the Government of Flanders to the USA, Harlan M. Stone, an anonymous donor, and the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. The accompanying catalogue is partially underwritten by the Flemish Research Centre for the Arts in the Burgundian Netherlands, Musea Brugge.

## INTERACT

   /FrickCollection

## BASIC INFORMATION

**General Information Phone:** 212.288.0700

**Web site:** [www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)

**Building project:** [www.frickfuture.org](http://www.frickfuture.org)

**E-mail:** [info@frick.org](mailto:info@frick.org)

**App:** [frick.org/app](http://frick.org/app)

**Museum address:** 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue

**Hours:** Open six days a week: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day

**Admission:** \$22; senior citizens \$17; students \$12; Pay-what-you-wish hours on Wednesdays from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. **PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS:** Children under ten are not admitted to the museum

**First Fridays:** Museum admission and gallery programs are free from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the first Friday evening of the month (except January and September)

**Subway:** #6 local to 68th Street station; #Q to 72nd Street station; Bus: M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 72nd Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 70th Street

**Tour Information:** Included in the price of museum admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

**Shop:** The shop is open the same days as the museum, closing fifteen minutes before the institution.

**Group Museum Visits:** Please call 212.288.0700 for details and to make reservations.

**Public Programs:** A calendar of events is available online

**Library address:** 10 East 71st Street, near Fifth Avenue

**Hours:** [www.frick.org/visit/library/hours](http://www.frick.org/visit/library/hours)

**Admission:** Open to the public free of charge

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