



About the conference

In the spring of 2023 the first phase of the project *Decoding Memling* commenced, a research project initiated by Musea Brugge to study the 9 works by Hans Memling in its collection. Following the Closer to Van Eyck website, [Closer to Memling](#), in collaboration with other institutions, aims to document the core works in Memling's oeuvre in high resolution and with various imaging techniques. Via the website, the resulting images will be made available to all. This will allow us to come closer to Memling's work than ever before.

Closer to Memling can also aid study of the paintings by Hans Memling—the artist who was active in Bruges from 1465 to his death in 1494—in other ways. In comparison to his contemporaries, Memling's oeuvre survives in relatively large numbers; Dirk de Vos's 1994 monograph of the artist listed some 90 paintings. While a group of key works can be seen in Bruges to this day (in Museum St. John's Hospital and in the Groeningemuseum), others are spread over more than 50 public institutions in at least 17 countries, on 4 different continents. By being able to digitally compare Memling's works, we therefore not only come closer, but we also reach farther, in terms of easier (digital) accessibility to the locations where these works are physically located.

In the 30 years since De Vos's monograph and the landmark exhibition in Bruges, exhibitions with- and studies on Memling's works have of course continued. Recent projects include the restoration of one of his largest works, but also the recently launched IOHANNES project from KIK-IRPA and UCLouvain (in collaboration with Musea Brugge) that, between 2024-2029, will study the devotional context of the fifteenth-century paintings of the Saint John's hospital, which includes 6 works by Hans Memling. In light of these recent developments, it seems pertinent to reassess Memling's oeuvre and the questions it poses—and whether these are still the same, or new ones.

For this reason, Musea Brugge, in collaboration with the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA, Brussels), is organising a two-day conference devoted to new and ongoing research on Hans Memling. The conference will also conclude the first phase of the *Closer to Memling* project and celebrate the opening, in November 2025, of BRON Research Centre.

The aim of the conference is to highlight and stimulate new interdisciplinary research on the painter by leading and new scholars in the field. The programme will include papers that 'zoom in' (case studies of individual paintings) and focus on subjects like attribution, organisation of the workshop, or patronage, but also studies that 'zoom out', by addressing broader cultural historical and historiographical issues, and everything in between. Contributions will draw upon a variety of disciplines, including (technical) art history, (social; cultural) history, conservation, and conservation science.

Practical information: [Conference page](#)