

BRUGGE

MUSEA  
BRUGGE

01/10 /2020  
– 01/02/2021

# MEMLING NOW

Follow Hans, influencer  
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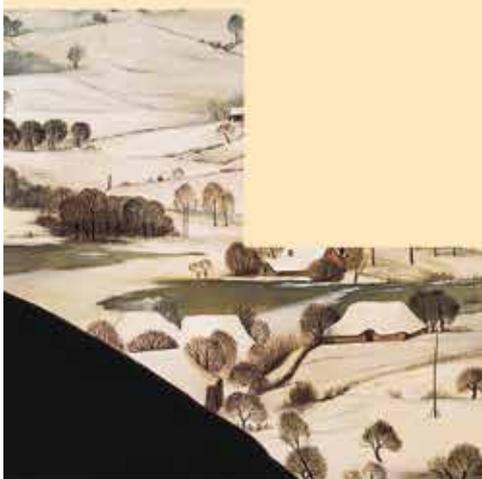
EXPO SINT-JANSHOSPITAAL

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FLEMISH  
MASTERS  
2018-2020



Knack



# EXHIBITIONS IN PICTURESQUE BRUGES, THE CRADLE OF THE FLEMISH MASTERS

## Burgundian Bruges, Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling

During the late Middle Ages, Bruges was a cosmopolitan city and a melting pot of nationalities and commerce. With the decline of the cloth industry, our city changed its focus to the production of luxury goods such as gold, illuminated manuscripts, lace, paintings etc. These luxury goods found their way to every corner of Europe.

As a result of the Burgundian court's complex marriage policy, Bruges became part of the county of Flanders. The Burgundian Dukes found Bruges to be an appealing place and enjoyed staying in the luxurious Prinsenhof (now the Dukes' Palace, a unique five-star hotel). The flamboyant Dukes, with their impeccable taste, commissioned the most renowned painters including Jan van Eyck, who based himself in Bruges and became the court painter for Duke Philip the Good. Commissioned by the Duke, he travelled

and made pilgrimages, expanding his international fame and clientele. He painted his masterpiece, 'Madonna with Canon Joris Van der Paele', for the canon of the church of Saint Donatian. Another of his well-known pieces is his portrait of his wife, 'Margaretha van Eyck'. The court painter Van Eyck had a huge influence on both local and international painters including Hans Memling, a citizen of Bruges who created unique panels for rich fellow citizens of Bruges as well as Spanish and Italian merchants and bankers. He was also commissioned by St. John's Hospital to make the 'Ursula Shrine' and the 'Johannes Altarpiece'. There were many paintings created in Bruges by the Flemish primitives which remain in the city to this day; they can be seen at the Groeningemuseum, Sint-Janshospitaal and other locations in the city





### **Gruuthuse Palace and other monuments**

The Burgundians were an inspiration to many significant families. The powerful lords of Gruuthuse built a gothic palace on the banks of the Reie. Jan IV Van der Aa-Van Brugghe began building a manor house in 1425 and his descendant, Lodewijk van Gruuthuse, added the crowning glory with an imposing late 15th century chapel. The splendid palace in the city – which is today the Gruuthusemuseum – is now gleaming following a thorough restoration. During the same period, the Adornes – an Italian merchant family – built

the oriental-style Jerusalem Chapel. During the course of the 15th century, the gothic City Hall – a source of inspiration for architects in Brussels, Ghent and Leuven – was also completed and the construction of the Beguinage (which has been a UNESCO world heritage site since 1998) was in full swing. Thanks to modest donations from the Dukes, wealthy guilds and patricians, embellishments were also added to St. James's Church. The gothic architecture of Bruges' Golden Era defined the way the city looks today.

### Italians and the 'beurs'

Many street names, such as Spanjaardstraat, Engelsestraat, Oosterlingenplein and Spinolarei, are a reminder of the various nationalities who made their home in the trade metropolis of Bruges. A colourful collection of foreign merchants found their way here to the most southerly office of the German Hanseatic League. The Italian tradesmen boosted commercial activity in the city as well as ensuring that the financial sector flourished. During the Middle Ages, Bruges was the financial capital of the world. In the area around the Beursplein, close to the Van der Buerze family's inn, the Italians introduced new financial tools such as bills of exchange and bank accounts. The 'beurs' (or stock market) was born.

### City of Letters & Handmade in Bruges

The city's tradition of manuscripts, incunables and books can still be seen today. Nowadays, many renowned stone carvers and calligraphers keep Bruges' reputation as a "city of Letters" alive and well. The libraries of the English Convent and the Carmelite Convent will be open to the public from 20 February 2020. The project 'Sacred Books | Secret Libraries' will centre on the themes of silence, authenticity and books. Visitors will be able to experience the unique intertwining of the city and religious life in Bruges and will be given a glimpse behind closed doors.

Only the very best materials were good enough for the Burgundian princes: gold, crystal, diamonds and rubies, silk and ivory. For them, beautiful objects and luxurious items were a way to display their power. Nowadays, with the support of 'Handmade in Brugge', traditional craftspeople still work with sustainable, precious materials such as textiles, leather, lace, silver and gold.

### The Year of Van Eyck

2020 will be 'The Year of Van Eyck', and the theme of the Burgundians and the Flemish primitive painters will continue. The Palace of the Lords of Gruuthuse – the ultimate Burgundian city palace – opened its doors again last spring, following a thorough year-long restoration. Visitors are treated to a custom-made museum experience and can learn about the history of Bruges from the Middle Ages to the current day thanks to a selection of masterpieces.





The recently renovated late Medieval chapel of Lodewijk van Gruuthuse – which is unique in Europe – is an absolute must-see. It was built by Burgundian knight Lodewijk van Gruuthuse as an oratory and connected his palace directly to the gothic choir of the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk (Church of Our Lady), so that he could follow the service from the comfort of his own private chapel without needing to leave his home.



## THE MAIN EXPOS OF 2020 IN BRUGES

**FLEMISH  
MASTERS  
2018-2020**



Musea Brugge is the umbrella organization of the 14 municipal museum locations, with a wide variety of permanent and temporary projects. Every year, some 900,000 local and foreign guests visit one of these museums. Also in 2020, Musea Brugge presents a series of temporary exhibitions. Two of these are part of the overall project “Flemish Masters”, supported by Toerisme Vlaanderen. Numerous works by Flemish Masters can be admired all over the world, yet you can only truly experience them to the fullest where they were created, in the unique setting of Flanders. Bruges is a city that will capture your heart. It is a city of human proportions, but one that can never be truly fathomed. Its history has made it great, a fact that garnered it the title of a Unesco World Heritage City. Retaining the mysteries of the Middle Ages and unashamedly exuberant, Bruges has been an international metropolis for centuries.

Until 6 September, 2020 the Groeningemuseum hosts the exhibition

### **VAN EYCK IN BRUGES.**

#### **IN BRIEF**

This exhibition is devoted to two masterpieces by the Burgundian court painter from Bruges: Madonna with Canon Joris Van der Paele and Portrait of his wife Margaretha van Eyck.

The exhibition will familiarise you with Jan van Eyck’s Bruges period and uses authentic documents to demonstrate what kind of lifestyle the artist led in Bruges and where he lived. The exhibition also focuses on Joris van der Paele who had an impressive career at the Roman Curia during the extremely turbulent 15th century. He bore witness to the power-games which were played out between the pope and the antipope and was involved with negotiations concerning the Hundred Years’ War and the councils.

The Groeningemuseum has been renovated this winter; the rooms have been completely refreshed and the permanent display has also been redesigned. This is equally worth a visit!

#### PRACTICAL INFO EXHIBITION

Title	Van Eyck in Bruges
Location	Groeningemuseum, Dijver 12, 8000 Bruges
Dates	until 8 November, 2020
Opening times	Tuesday to Sunday from 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tickets	€ 12 (26-64 y.)   € 10 (>65 y. & 18-25 y.) [incl. permanent collection] free -18 years old
Scenography	Koen Bovée, Bruges
Info	<a href="http://www.museabrugge.be">www.museabrugge.be</a>
Reservations	Due to the corona measures, Musea Brugge temporarily uses a system of reservations. We advise to book your visit through <a href="http://www.museabrugge.be/reservatie">www.museabrugge.be/reservatie</a>
Group visits	Due to the corona measures, group visits are temporarily not possible.
Audioguides	Due to the corona measures, audioguides are out of use. Free audiotour in the permanent collection via <a href="http://www.museabrugge.be/groeningetour-en">www.museabrugge.be/groeningetour-en</a>

At Sint-Janshospitaal, between 1 October, 2020 and 1 February, 2021, the exhibition **MEMLING NOW: HANS MEMLING IN CONTEMPORARY ART** will be on display.

## IN BRIEF

This exhibition departs from the paintings of Hans Memling, one of the most important painters in Burgundian Bruges.

He painted a series of works for the medieval Sint-Janshospitaal. These are considered to be masterpieces amongst the artwork of the Flemish primitives: such as one impressive altarpiece, two triptychs and of course, the world-renowned Ursula Shrine. Throughout the centuries, Memling has had a great influence on other masters, including Dürer and Raphael. His work is a source of inspiration for contemporary artists too: this exhibition shows how he continues to affect artists even today. For visitors and specialists, this exhibition is a unique opportunity to rediscover his work and renew insights.

As well as a range of portraits by Joseph Kosuth – one of the forefathers of conceptual art – there will also be works on display by African-American painter Kehinde Wiley, who painted the official portrait of Barack Obama. The exhibition also includes work by the Iranian painter Aydin Aghdashloo and Syrian-American artist Diana Al-Hadid. Belgian artist David Claerbout will be creating new work for this project.

You also come eye to eye with the work of Hans Memling himself. The museum owns six masterpieces by this 15th-century master. For the exhibition these are completed by two loans.



## PRACTICAL INFO EXHIBITION

Title	Memling Now. Hans Memling in Contemporary Art
Location	Sint-Janshospitaal, Mariastraat 38, 8000 Bruges
Dates	from 1 October, 2020 until 1 February, 2021
Opening times	Tuesday to Sunday from 9.30 a.m. to 17 p.m.
Tickets	€ 12   € 10 (red) [incl. permanent collection] free -13 years old
Info	<a href="http://www.museabrugge.be">www.museabrugge.be</a>
Group visits	(information subject to change) guided tour € 80/ max. 10 persons reservations via <a href="http://www.visitbruges.be/ticketshop">www.visitbruges.be/ticketshop</a> NL / FR / EN / DE / ES / IT
Audioguides	(information subject to change) Free / NL / FR / EN / DE



Aydin Aghdashloo, Years of Fire and Snow I, 1979, The Farjam Collection, Dubai

## MORE INFO

Art inspires. Artists, both past and present, consciously and actively allow themselves, to a greater or lesser degree, to be inspired by the work of their predecessors. This is the rationale behind the exhibition 'Memling Now'. The unique masterpieces of the 15th century painter Hans Memling in the Sint-Janshospitaal in Bruges have inspired painters throughout the subsequent centuries, including famous artists like Pieter Pourbus, Joshua Reynolds and James Ensor. What's more, Memling still inspires artists today.

### Hans Memling

Between 1474 and 1490, Hans Memling painted a number of works in Bruges that were clearly connected with the ideas of some of his predecessors and contemporaries. For example, his paintings in the Sint-Janshospitaal were inspired by the work of Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden. Both of these great painters belonged to the generation that preceded Memling's own, but their compositions are clearly recognisable in some of their young successor's finest masterpieces. Memling's 'Adoration of the Magi' triptych is based on van der Weyden's 'St. Columba' altarpiece in Cologne and his monumental 'Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine' would have been inconceivable without the example of Van Eyck's 'Madonna with Canon Joris van der Paele'. In turn, the 'Apocalypse' scene in the right panel of this imposing Memling triptych is thought to have possibly inspired Albrecht Dürer to create his series of biblical woodcuts depicting 'The End of Days'.

### Memling now

Interesting though it would be, the 'Memling now' exhibition does not focus on Memling's artistic impact across the centuries. Instead, for this exhibition Musea Brugge has invited a select group of contemporary artists who have found – and still find – inspiration in Memling's work and has asked them to take part in a new project that combines the modern with the traditional. Their 'Memling Now' contributions will be woven into the existing museum display in the St.-Janshospitaal. The unique context, the genius loci, of a centuries-old hospital building in combination with the works of modern art that will be on show has created

a high level of expectation amongst all those involved in this ambitious project. From 1 October 2020, the general public will also be able to enjoy this remarkable artistic experiment: an interaction between five contemporary artists and five hundred years of art and history in one of Europe's oldest and best preserved care institutions. The exhibition includes both existing works and new creations.

### Five artists, three continents

Five contemporary artists from three different continents are participating in this exhibition. They will not only display some of their existing works, but have also created new pieces especially for 'Memling Now'.

'Wildfire' by David Claerbout is one of these new creative commissions, which takes as its starting point the shocking experience of the great forest fires that have devastated parts of California and Australia in recent years, which must be regarded as a direct consequence of global warming. The traumatic and life-threatening sea of fire has been 'frozen' by David Claerbout, so that it seems to acquire an almost crystalline quality. In this way, the artist connects with Memling's imagination of what the Apocalypse would be like, whilst at the same time also exploring in his own way – either consciously or unconsciously – concepts such as Purgatory.

Diana Al-Hadid comes originally from Syria, but when she was a child moved with her family to the United States, where she has developed an impressive artistic career. She is one of the most productive artists of our time and has been creatively engaging with the work of Hans Memling for decades. Her art has redefined the boundaries between painting and sculpture, particularly in her three-dimensional wall objects and her various monuments. She has always been intrigued by Memling's allegorical depictions of women and has re-interpreted his themes in her own authentic feminist manner in her own work. Her participation in 'Memling now' combines some of her older work with a new creative commission.

Some years ago, **Kehinde Wiley** created a furore in the United States with his Memling project. This son of a Nigerian father and an American mother is today one of the international art world's great superstars. He is renowned for his creative dialogues with the Old Masters to produce portraits of Afro-American models that have allowed the under-privileged masses of today to stake their claim to the ownership of history. This series, which has already been exhibited in the Brooklyn Museum of Art, will now be confronted directly for the first time with the art of Hans Memling, which offers an interesting and exciting range of presentational possibilities.

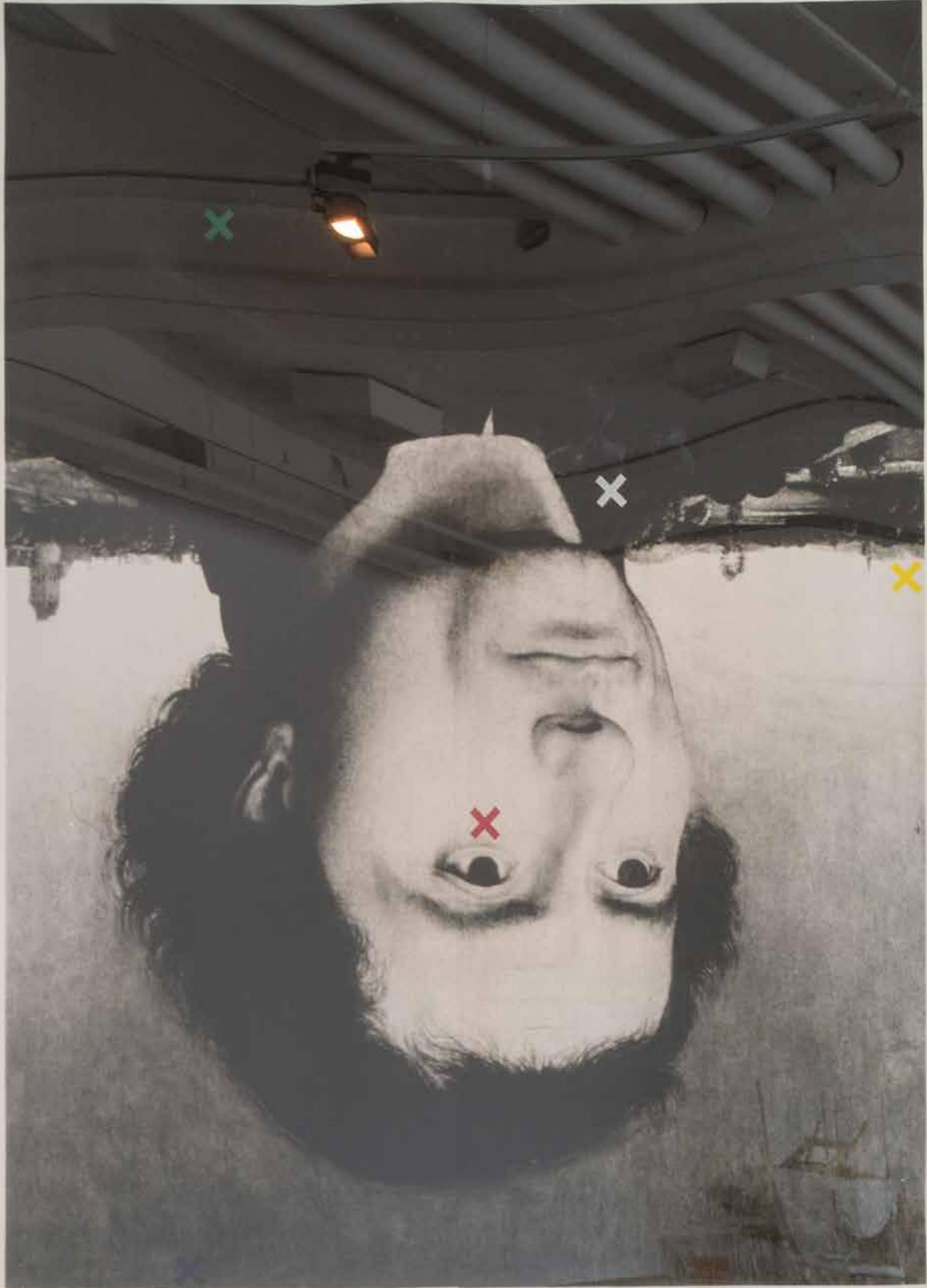
In conjunction with the 'Memling now' exhibition, a number of workshops will be organised.

**Aydin Aghdashloo** is an Iranian artist with Azerbaijani roots. He is well-known as a painter, graphicist, writer, lecturer and curator. During the 1970s, his 'seemingly' naturalist

style was regarded as an artistic reaction to the neo-traditionalist and nativist movement that dominated Iranian Modernism at that time.

**Joseph Kosuth** is an American artist who is regarded as one of the foremost exponents of conceptual art in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1981, he began to make use of the theories of Sigmund Freud in series like 'Cathexis', which depicts a text with inverted reproductions of the paintings of Old Masters, each marked with a coloured X. He created them for 'documenta' by Rudi Fuchs in 1982. This was intended as an ironic satire on the revival of 'traditional' painted art that was taking place at that time. Memling was one of the artist's treated in this way: pictures of artworks, such as his portraits were displayed upside down in conservative wooden frames. In psychoanalysis, cathexis is also defined as the process of investing mental or emotional energy in a person, object or idea.





XXXXXX To suggest a recognition of limits is to provide more (this 'picture', that 'meaning') than another construction, also here before you, which can be seen as being inside an order or outside a location.



Kehinde Wiley, Portrait of Jacob Obrecht, Courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, California



Hans Memling, diptiek met Maarten van Nieuwenhove, 15de E.

## EXCEPTIONAL LOAN

In the 15th and 16th centuries, works of art with allegories of chastity were often given as wedding gifts. Inspired by the verses of the Italian poet Petrarch (*Trionfo della pudicizia*), these depictions were intended to exalt virtue. Ladies in the company of unicorns are symbols of purity. This traditional scheme gives way here to a depiction in which the woman is inaccessible due to her position on the top of a mountain guarded by two lions. She is inviolable, her virtue is guaranteed.

This work inspired Diana Al-Hadid very directly in the creation of various sculptures a few years ago. For example, her *Citadel* (2017-2018) by Madison Square Park pond (New York) is a recognizable monumental three-dimensional interpretation of Memling's work. The virtuous young woman seems to be stuck in a mountain of amethyst that girdles her like a voluminous skirt and hides her body completely under the folds. In Al-Hadid's work, the boundaries between figure and landscape, architecture and location, interior and exterior, painting and sculpture, movement and standstill are blurred. This confusion of boundaries is an integral part of her work.



**Hans Memling, Allegory of Chastity**  
(1480 or later)

Collection Institut de France, Musée Jacquemart-André, Parijs

## DONATION

The portrait of Francisco de Rojas, painted by Hans Memling in the 15th century, is returning to the city of Bruges, where it was painted. It was donated by American philanthropist Bill Middendorf and will be kept at St. John's Hospital (the Memling Museum). The donation was made with guidance from King Baudouin Foundation US, part of the King Baudouin Foundation network.

Press file: [www.museabrugge.be/en/pers](http://www.museabrugge.be/en/pers)

**Hans Memling, Portrait of Francisco (?) De Rojas, c. 1470, oil on wood (marouflaged).**  
Donation from William J. Middendorf to the King Baudouin Foundation United States



## IN THE MARGIN OF THE EXHIBITION

### LECTURE 'WILDFIRE (MEDITATION ON FIRE)' BY DAVID CLAERBOUT



David Claerbout's video installations travel the world. He made his new creation 'Wildfire (Meditation on Fire)' for the exhibition 'Memling Now' at Sint-Janshospitaal. In this lecture he talks about his working process, the complexity of digital media and his digital image practice. The changes within our visual culture and the effects of an increasingly digital environment on our physical and sensory reflexes are also being taken into account.

Saturday 10 October 2020 at 20:00 hrs at the Concert Hall of the Concertgebouw, 't Zand 34, 8000 Bruges. Lecture in Dutch.

Tickets € 9 via In&Uit or reservation via [www.concertgebouw.be](http://www.concertgebouw.be)



Top: David Claerbout, Antwerpen 2017 ©Koos Breukel  
Bottom: David Claerbout, Wildfire (Meditation on Fire) 2019-2020, single channel video projection, 3D animation, video, color, stereo sound, Collection Musea Brugge

## PUBLICATION MEMLING NOW

DUTCH/ENGLISH

80 p., full colour

Price: € 20, for sale at the Museum shop

Pdf on request via [musea.communicatie@brugge.be](mailto:musea.communicatie@brugge.be)

## THIS EXHIBITION IS SUPPORTED BY



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## MORE INFO

All **arrangements** can be made via the press officer of Musea Brugge,  
[sarah.bauwens@brugge.be](mailto:sarah.bauwens@brugge.be) or t +32 50 44 87 08.

**Press visits** to the exhibitions are possible with an appointment: see on the website  
[museabrugge.be/en/pers](http://museabrugge.be/en/pers). The press file can be consulted there, and texts can be copied.

For the **foreign press**, the **Visit Bruges press department** is also available with up-to-date and personalized information about the city. They will be happy to assist you with introducing subjects and contacts, applying for permits and organising your trip.

Contact: [toerisme.pers@brugge.be](mailto:toerisme.pers@brugge.be)

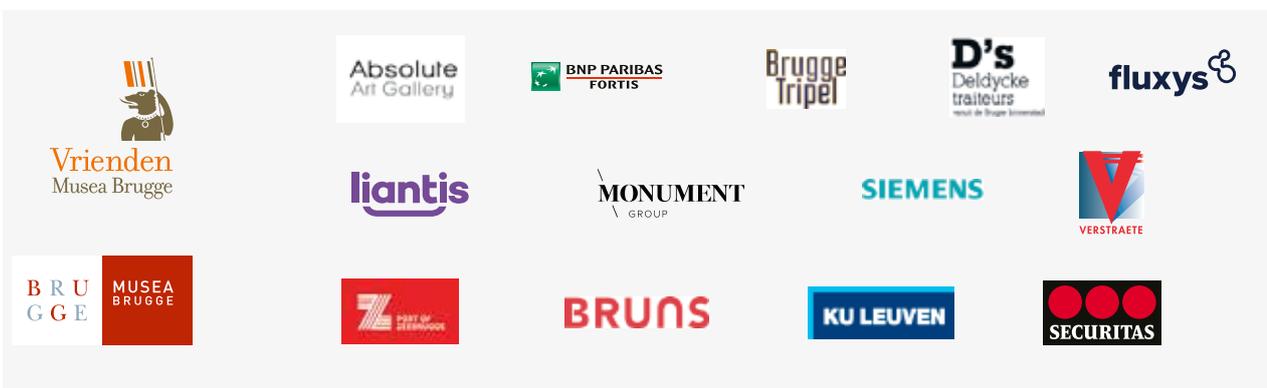
## REQUEST

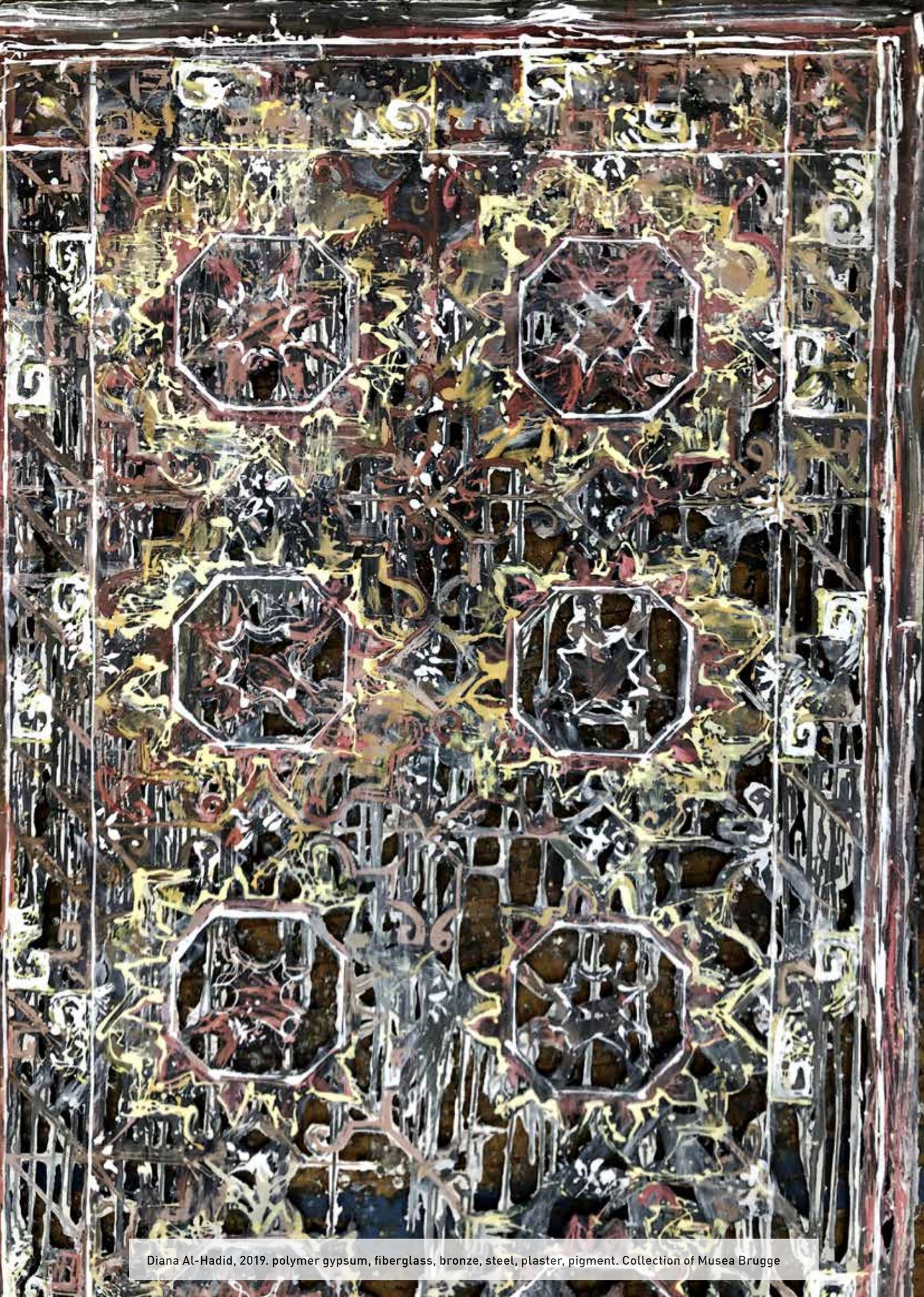
We collect every possible **review** of our museums and events. Therefore we would like to ask you to send a copy of any article you publish, or a link to the relevant broadcast, to [sarah.bauwens@brugge.be](mailto:sarah.bauwens@brugge.be).

Thank you for your cooperation and interest.

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## Special Benefactors





Diana Al-Hadid, 2019. polymer gypsum, fiberglass, bronze, steel, plaster, pigment. Collection of Musea Brugge