

Press Release

Free E-book on Painting Frames and Supports

Brussels, 15 April 2015: The Royal Institute For Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) publishes the free e-book *Frames and Supports in 15th- and 16th-Century Southern Netherlandish Painting* by H el ene Verougstraete. This e-book is published with the support of The Getty Foundation as part of the Panel Paintings Initiative.

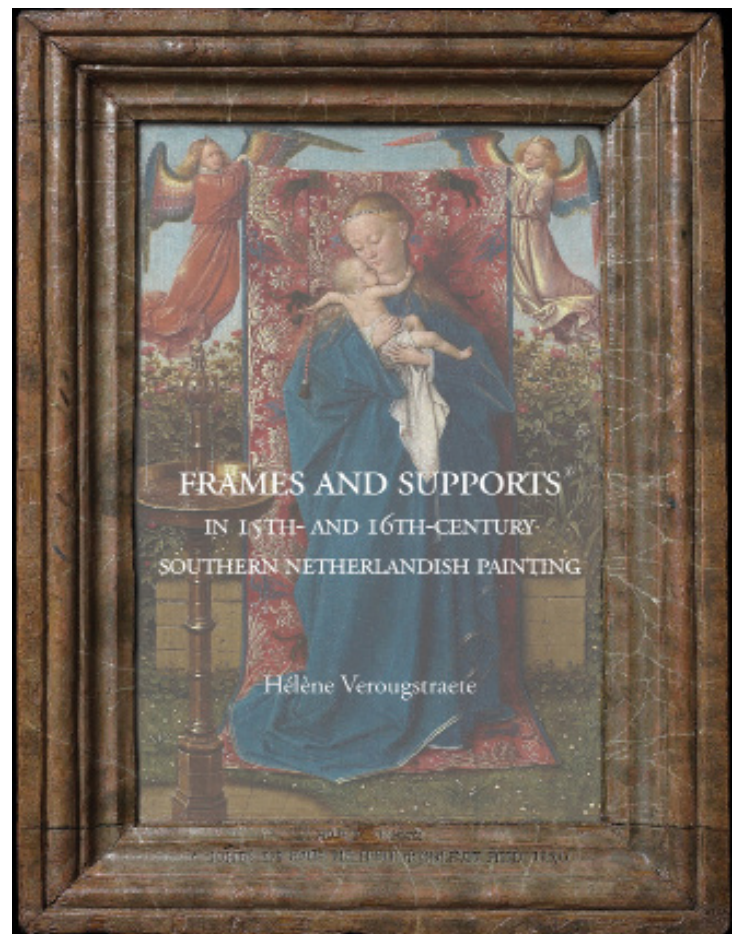
Contributions to the Study of the Flemish Primitives, vol. 13
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710 pages, 700 illustrations and 1500 diagrams
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<http://org.kikirpa.be/frames>

This free e-book, written by scholar H el ene Verougstraete, serves as an important resource for conservators and scholars who study and care for old master paintings on wooden panels. The publication is an updated study based on Verougstraete's 1989 doctoral thesis, which was originally prepared in French with black and white pictures. The new e-book has been fully translated into English and features over 2,000 crisp, full-color illustrations and diagrams presented in a searchable, zoomable interface.

Verougstraete's technical study is unique because it was the first in-depth documentation of Netherlandish panel paintings with "engaged" frames. This practice of fusing together the frame and the wooden painting support was common in the 15th and 16th centuries, though over time these two elements were often separated. Thanks to Verougstraete's research, scholars and conservators have had a valuable record to guide the structural treatment of wooden supports for works of this period and the selection of historically accurate frames to replace those that were removed and lost. However the first edition was published in French with a small print run, both of which have limited its accessibility. The new expanded and translated edition, which is freely accessible to conservators, scholars, and the general public, sheds further light on how artists collaborated with woodworkers to create painting supports.

The first section of the book examines craftsmen and corporations, the wood, tools and their use, cutting and drying, the joinery of panels and frames, reinforcements, canvas and related auxiliary supports, the mouldings and decoration of frames, markings and inscriptions, the closing, hinging and suspension systems and finally some problems specific to large dimension works. It also analyses in depth a selection of



masters and masterpieces. The second section presents a catalogue of works with a description of their main characteristics, classified by place of conservation.

Both editions include an exhaustive study of the frames of the Van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece*. For the current edition, diagrams retrace the chequered story of the presentation of this masterpiece in the Vijd Chapel over the centuries, synthesizing various sources of information: archival sources, the documented history of the altarpiece, the examination of the frames, scientific imagery and the critical review of old photographs.

About the author:

Hélène Verougstraete is professor emerita of the Université catholique de Louvain (UCL) and of its sister university, the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KU Leuven). After an internship in restoration of works of art at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) in Brussels, she devoted her PhD in Art History (1987) to the frames and supports of 15th and 16th century paintings in the southern Netherlands. She went on to teach mediaeval art and the technical examination of easel painting, and directed the Laboratoire d'étude des œuvres d'art (UCL). Between 1975 and 2006 she co-organized with Roger Van Schoute the biennial Symposium for the Study of Underdrawing and Technology in Paintings. With her team at the UCL she prepared the catalogue *Fake or not Fake. Restaurateurs ou Faussaires des Primitifs Flamands (Het verbaal van de restauratie van de Vlaamse Primitieven)* for the exhibition of abusive restorations, especially those of Jef Van der Veken (Bruges, 2004-2005).

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The book is also downloadable as PDF at www.kikirpa.be/uploads/files/frames.pdf

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The **Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA, Brussels)** is a federal scientific institution responsible for the documentation, study and conservation-restoration of Belgium's cultural and artistic heritage. Art historians, photographers, chemists, archaeologists, engineers and conservator-restorers carry out interdisciplinary research on the materials and techniques used in works of art and cultural artefacts and on the materials and methods used in conservation-restoration. The KIK-IRPA is a unique resource for scientific, photographic and technical documentation of the cultural heritage of the country. www.kikirpa.be



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