



Royal Institute for  
Cultural Heritage

*Twenty-third Art History Seminar of the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage  
(KIK-IRPA)*

**International Conference, Brussels, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (2 days - 2 venues)**

**The Archduchess Isabella (1566-1633)**

**Artistic Agency between Madrid and the Southern Netherlands**



Willem van Haecht, *The Gallery of Cornelis van der Geest* (detail), 1628, Antwerp, Rubenshuis  
(Photo: CC-BY KIK-IRPA, Brussels)

The twenty-third Art History Seminar of the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) is organised in collaboration with the research project [AGENART](#) at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM). It will take place on 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage and at the Instituto Cervantes, both in Brussels, highlighting various fascinating aspects of the artistic patronage of the remarkable woman who was the Archduchess Isabella, who lived in Madrid and Brussels between 1566 and 1633.

The Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia of Austria (Valsaín, 1566 - Brussels, 1633) sovereign (1599-1621) and governess (1621-1633) of the Southern Netherlands, was not only a prominent political figure, but an active artistic and cultural agent throughout her life, commissioning some of the most important works by artists such as Rubens or Callot, promoting religious foundations, architectural and urban projects.

Born to Philip II and his third wife, Isabel de Valois, the Infanta married quite late for the standards of her time, and this caused her to remain in Madrid for half of her lifetime. There, she accompanied her father in the years of construction of the Monastery of El Escorial and advised on the assembly of one of the continent's most important collections of relics and artworks, and its library and prints. After marrying her cousin Archduke Albert of Austria, she moved to Brussels where the couple would use art as a means of showing the splendour and prosperity of their dominions to the rest of the European courts, with which they always wanted to be compared in spite of being dependent on Madrid. On Albert's death in 1621 without succession, Isabel lost her sovereign condition and was demoted to governess by her young nephew, the Spanish king Philip IV. This last period of her life saw her realise the most ambitious artistic commissions she ever undertook.

This conference will address for the first time Isabel's artistic and cultural agency, by analysing works of art and architecture commissioned, promoted and collected by her in different media during her youth in Madrid and her married life and widowhood in Brussels.



Workshop of Peter Paul Rubens, *Portrait of Archduchess Isabella*, Private collection (Photo: CC-BY KIK-IRPA, Brussels, negative no. X044853)



## Day 1 – Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024

**Instituto Cervantes**, conference room

Avenue Louise 140, 1050 Bruxelles – Louizalaan 140, 1050 Brussel

09:00 Registration & coffee

09:30 Opening session by the Director of Instituto Cervantes in Brussels & Cultural Councillor of the Spanish Embassy, **Christina Currie** (Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, KIK-IRPA)

09:50 Introduction to the colloquium by **Eduardo Lamas** (Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, KIK-IRPA)

10:00 Morning session • **Plenary lecture**

10:00 **Luc Duerloo** (Universiteit van Antwerpen) • *Curating Images and Memories : the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia and the Beyond*

10:40 Discussion

10:55 Coffee break

11:20 Section 1 • **The years at the Spanish Court** • Chairman: Didier Martens (Université libre de Bruxelles)

11:20 **Elisa García Prieto** (Centro de Información Documental de Archivos, Alcalá de Henares) • *El aprendizaje de la vida cortesana: Isabel Clara Eugenia de Austria en la Corte de Madrid*

11:40 **Almudena Pérez de Tudela** (Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo el Real de El Escorial) • *La formación de una gran mecenas y coleccionista: los años de Isabel Clara Eugenia en la corte española (1566-1599)*

12:00 **Marina Sánchez Montero** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) • *The Flemishness of the Escorial*

12:20 Discussion

12:35 Lunch break

## Workshops

- 14:00 Workshop by **Daan Van Heesch** (Royal Library of Belgium, KBR) on a selection of prints and drawings related to Isabella's artistic patronage  
Workshop at the Cabinet of Drawings at the Royal Library
- 15:00 Workshop by **Stéphane Demeter** (urban.brussels) on *Rue Isabella*  
Workshop at the Coudenberg Palace
- 16:00 Workshop by **Isabelle Lecocq** (Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, KIK-IRPA) on the cathedral stained-glass windows  
Workshop at the Cathedral St-Michael and Gudule



Théodore Van Loon, *Joachim and Anne Meeting at the Golden Gate*, Scherpenheuvel, Kerk Onze-Lieve-Vrouw (Photo: CC-BY KIK-IRPA, Brussels)



## Day 2 – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2024

**Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA)**, conference room  
Parc du Cinquantenaire 1, 1000 Bruxelles – Jubelpark 1, 1000 Brussel

09:00 Welcome coffee

09:30 Section 2 • **A Sovereign of the Southern Netherlands and her Court** • Chairman: Joost van der Auwera (Royal Academy of Archaeology and History of Art of Belgium, ARAHAB-KAAKB)

09:30 **María Cruz de Carlos Varona** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, UAM) • *Isabella and Rubens*

09:50 **Géraldine Patigny** (Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, KIK-IRPA) • *Sous le patronage des archiducs : la sculpture à la cour de Bruxelles, des de Nole à du Quesnoy*

10:15 **Sabine van Sprang** (Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium) • *L'Infante Isabelle et les tableaux de Theodoor van Loon à Montaigu*

10:40 Discussion

10:55 Coffee break

11:15 Section 3 • **A Court without Sovereign: governess of the Southern Netherlands** • Chairwoman: Natasja Peeters (War Heritage Institute, Brussels)

11:15 **Cécile Vincent-Cassy** (Cergy-Paris Université) • *L'humble tante veuve : l'Infante Isabelle Claire Eugénie, tertiaire franciscaine, par Antoon Van Dyck*

11:40 **Isabelle Lecocq** (Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, KIK-IRPA) • *Le mécénat d'Isabella dans l'art du vitrail*

12:00 **Rocío Martínez López** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) • *Following the image of infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia: the influence of the Infanta's example in the government of the Southern Netherlands (XVII-XVIII centuries)*

12:20 Discussion

12:30 Lunch break

## Workshops

- 14:00 Workshop on a manuscript depicting the Stations of the Cross in Ekkerghem that belonged to the Infanta Isabella, by **Peter Schmidt** (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) Photo-Bibliothèque / Foto-Bibliotheek (1<sup>st</sup> floor)
- 14:30 Workshop on the altarpieces by Frans Pourbus II and Rubens in Aalst (Belgium), by **Karen Bonne** (Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, KIK-IRPA) & **Roger Carrasquer** (Universitat Politècnica de València): *Two commissions recommended by Albrecht and Isabella?* Salle Rubens / Rubenszaal (groundfloor)
- 15:00 Closing remarks by **María Cruz de Carlos Varona** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)



Robert De Nole, *St Matthew, evangelist*, Scherpenheuvel, Kerk Onze-Lieve-Vrouw (Photo: CC-BY KIK-IRPA, Brussels)



## Organisation

This conference is organised by the [Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage](#) (KIK-IRPA, Brussels) in collaboration with the research project [AGENART: La agencia artística de las mujeres de la Casa de Austria, 1532-1700](#) (ref. PID2020-116100GB-I00) from [Universidad Autónoma de Madrid](#).

Organising committee: María Cruz de Carlos Varona (UAM); Oliver Kik (KIK-IRPA); Eduardo Lamas (KIK-IRPA); Isabelle Lecocq (KIK-IRPA); Géraldine Patigny (KIK-IRPA).

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This conference is organised under the auspices of the [Royal Academy of Archaeology and Art History of Belgium](#) (ARAHAB-KAAKB) and the [Belgian Committee for Art History](#) (BCK-CBHA).



**AGENART**

La agencia artística de las mujeres de la Casa de Austria, 1532-1700  
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