



Symposium Medieval miniatures from Byvanck to the RKD

Tuesday 18 March 2025

KB-auditorium
Prins Willem-Alexanderhof 5

Programme

- 13:30-14:00** Registration
- 14:00-14:15** Welcome – Chris Stolwijk (general director, RKD)
- 14:15-14:45** Systematic Studies of Dutch Medieval Manuscript Illumination: Past and Present – James Marrow (professor emeritus of Art History, Princeton University)
- 14:45-15:15** Manuscript Illumination in the Northern Netherlands: Patterns of Production and Demand – Anne Margreet As-Vijvers (senior curator of Medieval Manuscript Illumination, RKD)
- 15:15-15:45** Coffee and Tea
- 15:45-16:15** Multi-Tasking Manuscript Illuminators in the Fifteenth-Century Netherlands and Europe – Thomas Kren (curator emeritus, Department of Manuscripts, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles)
- 16:15-16:45** A Well-Marked Path or Labyrinth? Medieval Manuscripts and Linked Data – Mariken Teeuwen (senior researcher, Huygens Instituut, KNAW Amsterdam, and professor for the Culture of Writing in the Middle Ages, Leiden University)
- 16:45-17:15** Official launch of Medieval miniatures from Byvanck to the RKD
- 17:15-19:00** Drinks

Abstracts

- **Systematic Studies of Dutch Medieval Manuscript Illumination: Past and Present (James Marrow)**

This talk will begin with brief comments on Willem De Vreese, who, around 1900, described and analyzed an extremely large number of Dutch-language manuscripts in his efforts to create a documentary system for sources of the Middle-Dutch language (the *Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta*), and on the pioneering work by A.W. Byvanck and G.J. Hoogewerff, who, in the 1920s, published the first corpus of Dutch miniature painting. The focus will then be primarily on the work of the Alexander Willem Byvanck Genootschap and other initiatives begun by Anne Korteweg, curator emerita of the KB National library in The Hague, before concluding with some thoughts about the significant role the RKD will play in facilitating research on Dutch illuminated manuscripts.

- **Manuscript Illumination in the Northern Netherlands: Patterns of Production and Demand (Anne Margreet As-Vijvers)**

Owing to the members of the Alexander Willem Byvanck working group and other prominent scholars, important aspects of the history of manuscript illumination in the northern Netherlands have been outlined. With the Byvanck Database published online, it is worth taking a closer look at some manuscripts produced in different cities and regions. Case studies from major and minor centres of book production reveal patterns of production and demand, with urban and monastic illuminators playing different roles. What kind of books did each of them produce? What kind of illumination did they offer? Either pen-flourishing or painting, or both? How did customers either save money or splurge on a prestigious manuscript?

- **Multi-Tasking Manuscript Illuminators in the Fifteenth-Century Netherlands and Europe (Thomas Kren)**

Many manuscript illuminators often wore more than one artistic hat. Some were trained as goldsmiths or as painters in oil on panel, while others were active in polychroming sculpture and wall painting. Noble rulers in the Netherlands and France engaged illuminators to execute ephemeral decorations for court festivals, but also to design works on a vast scale such as tapestries. Quite a few came from

artist families where a parent practised one specialty and the offspring another, or two siblings different media. The illuminators' astonishing degree of innovation across media resulted from the interchange of ideas among media, for example, with painting in oil on panel, metalwork, and even print making. This talk will consider the documentary and stylistic evidence for the range of creative activities of artists who illuminated manuscripts, such as the Nijmegen-born Limbourg Brothers, the Utrecht artist the Master of Evert Zoudenbalch and artists from the Burgundian Netherlands such as Simon Marmion and the Vienna Master of Mary of Burgundy.

- **A Well-Marked Path or Labyrinth? Medieval Manuscripts and Linked Data (Mariken Teeuwen)**

Linked Data is booming as a model for opening up cultural heritage online, compliant with the FAIR principles (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reuse of digital assets). The Internet of Things and Semantic web support this: the goal is to present data online for many users, who have different characteristics and backgrounds. It is achieved by the use of agreed and shared terminology (*Termin Network*), persistent identifiers, thesauri, classification systems, and reference lists. This is the theory, but how does it pan out in practice?

This paper will explore how the concept of Linked Data could be incorporated in the prototype portal for eCodicesNL, a virtual library for digitised medieval manuscripts in Dutch collections, with a decent set of description data and a relatively simple search interface. Within that project, which nodes do we see in the web of data that are useful to be linked? What could we do, for example, with illumination, the key focus of the RKD Byvanck project? Which steps do we identify as necessary to create a meaningful collection? What are the resources we can use and what are their limitations? Is the path well-marked, or are we in danger of getting lost?