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State of the Art



SINT-BAAFS LAM GODS

JANUARY 2020

Return of
the Lamb

8 OCTOBER 2020

Opening "Lam Gods
Sint-Baafs"

www.sintbaafskathedraal.be

LAM GODS SINT-BAAFS 2020

Press text short

JANUARY 2020: Return of the Lamb

As a prelude to the opening of the new Visitor Center in St Bavo's Cathedral, you can go and, admire the newly restored panel showing the Lamb from January 2020 until June 2020 in the cathedral. The return of the Lamb is linked to an exhibition displaying works of art by Kris Martin, Lies Caeyers and Sophie Kuijken. The artists' works are located inside as well as outside the walls of the cathedral and are inspired by the shape, technology and content of the Ghent Altarpiece.

8 OCTOBER 2020: Opening of "Lam Gods Sint-Baafs"

On 8 October 2020, a brand new Visitor Center will open in St Bavo's Cathedral, the home of the Ghent Altarpiece, where the restored panels of the altarpiece and other authentic art treasures may be admired in all their splendor. With the help of Augmented Reality you will be able to travel deep into the past and experience the eventful history of the Ghent Altarpiece and the cathedral as if you had been there yourself.

In a tour of thirty minutes or an hour, a virtual storyteller takes you in tow. You can see the different construction phases of the cathedral, walk around in the van Eyck studio, learn all about the iconography of the Ghent Altarpiece and get to see the highlights of the eventful history of the altarpiece. As the highlight of the tour, the visitor is led to the choir aisle where the real Ghent Altarpiece may be seen.

The tour is available in 9 different languages. Based on your own knowledge about the Ghent Altarpiece and the cathedral, you can opt for the "standard" or "master of detail" tour. An adapted family tour is provided for children and families.

LAM GODS SINT-BAAFS 2020

Extensive file

Saint-Bavo's cathedral through the ages

The origin of our church can be dated back to the chapel of Saint John the Baptist, consecrated in 942 by Transmarus, bishop of Tournai and Noyon . Traces from a later Romanesque church can still be seen today in the richly decorated crypt of the cathedral.

Ghent, which in the Middle Ages was one of the most important cities in Western Europe, could easily afford to build newer and grander churches. Over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the church was rebuilt in the gothic style. By the middle of the 16th century the church had more or less its current exterior look. The aftermath of the rebellion against emperor Charles V in Ghent in 1539 saw the dissolution of the centuries-old abbey of Saint Bavo. The abbot and monks became canons in a Chapter that was attached to what then became the church of Saint Bavo. In 1559 the diocese of Ghent was founded and the church finally became a cathedral. The rich baroque interior of the church shows the influence of one of the longer ruling bishops of Ghent, Antonius Triest.





The Ghent Altarpiece (Lam Gods)

The Ghent Altarpiece was painted in 1432 by Hubert and Jan van Eyck for the St Bavo's Cathedral in Ghent. It was commissioned by Joos Vijd and Elisabeth Borluut, whose portraits can be found on the exterior side panels.

The main theme is the glorification or the heavenly apotheosis of man's salvation and sanctification by the sacrifice of Christ. This subject is treated in a more visionary than narrative or dramatic manner. It is painted on oak panels; the paint consists of mineral pigments in a cement of drying oil.

"A most beautiful, extremely important painting"

This is what Albrecht Dürer wrote in 1521 after viewing the Mystic Lamb in the Saint Bavo cathedral. Millions of visitors from all over the world have followed in the footsteps of this early "culture" tourist. Each person approaches the painting from his/her own background and perspective. In 2018, St Bavo's Cathedral reached the milestone of 1 million visitors for the first time.

JANUARY 2020: Return of the Lamb

The second phase of the restoration campaign of the Mystic Lamb - the treatment of the Ghent Altarpiece - will be completed by the end of 2019. In January 2020, the Lamb will return to St. Bavo's Cathedral. The return of the Lamb is linked to an exhibition displaying works of art by Kris Martin, Lies Caeyers and Sophie Kuijken. The artists' works are located inside as well as outside the walls of the cathedral and are inspired by the shape, technique and content of the Ghent Altarpiece.

SHAPE Kris Martin- "Altar"

In 2014, Kris Martin produced a metal frame that mimics exactly the shape of the frames of the Ghent Altarpiece (1432) of the Van Eyck brothers. "Altar" is an empty frame that invites the visitor to take a look at the landscape through the "window". The framing changes as you stand close or further out. It creates a kind of tableau vivant.

The work was previously shown in London, Rome and New York, and for the first time in Ghent in 2020. "Altar" will be set up on Sint-Baafsplein, between the Belfry and St Bavo's Cathedral. This is a different version from the work that may be seen on the beach of Ostend.



TECHNIQUE AND MATERIALS Lies Caeyers & Sophie Kuijken- 'Als ich can'

The purpose of the second part of the expo is to highlight both the painting legacy of the van Eyck brothers and the fascinating master / student relationship. That is why a duo exhibition has been opted for.

The results of the master-student trajectory of artist Lies Caeyers (° 1982, lives and works in Ghent) and master-painter Sophie Kuijken are exhibited. Minister Sven Gatz launched a new subsidy in May 2018 with which he wants to support the transfer of craftsmanship.

Craftsmanship is seen as a form of intangible cultural heritage that is in the minds and hands of people: knowledge and skills with roots in tradition. The subsidy is aimed at professionals who want to train someone for a few months to teach him or her the tricks of the trade. In December 2018, 27 master-apprentice trajectories received a scholarship for passing on craftsmanship, a.m. Lies Caeyers and Sophie Kuijken for the trajectory "Als ich can, a passing on of traditional oil painting techniques with the view of finding a new application."

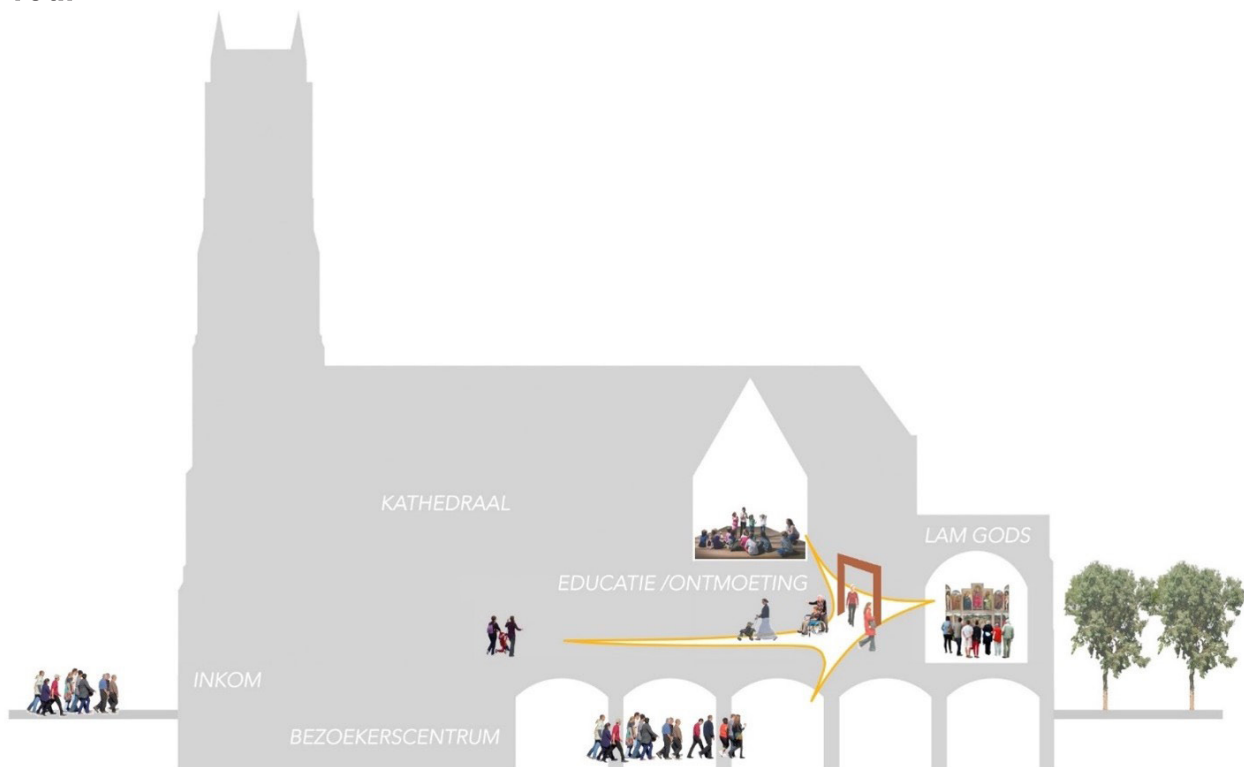
The working title of this trajectory is a reference to van Eyck's well-known inscription "Als ich can", Middle Dutch for "If I can" (= to the best of my ability).

CONTENT

Inside the cathedral near the Villa Chapel, an educational section on the message of the Ghent Altarpiece and in particular the central panel with the restored Lamb. That Lamb is looking at us penetratingly today. Does it hold the key for us, late modern people of the 21st century, to get in touch with what Van Eyck masterfully depicted through this masterpiece and through the special aesthetic experience? What appeal can be made by contemporary masterpieces for modern man?

8 OCTOBER 2020: Opening "Lam Gods Sint-Baafs"

Tour



Visitors will go on a fascinating journey through the long, rich and eventful history of the Ghent Altarpiece and Ghent's cathedral thanks to Augmented Reality glasses, which will allow them to experience these masterpieces from up close. In a nutshell, the Visitor Center will showcase the soul of both the masterpiece and the impressive cathedral blended into one.

'Standard' tour (30 or 60 min): You have heard of the Ghent Altarpiece, and the Van Eyck brothers also ring a bell, but your knowledge does not extend much further? Then we recommend the "standard" tour.

'Master of detail' tour (30 or 60 min): You are familiar with the masterpiece of the van Eyck brothers. You know that the Ghent Altarpiece consists of twenty panels and that St. Bavo's Cathedral was called St. John's Church until the 16th century? Then you undoubtedly go for the "Master of detail" tour.

'Family' tour (30 min): For children and their parents. We bring the story of the Mystic Lamb and St. Bavo's Cathedral easily accessible and with Augmented Reality additions: Do you see the thief walking away with the panel of the Just Judges?

The tour begins in the crypt and culminates in a visit to the one and only Ghent Altarpiece that may be admired in the Sacrament Chapel.

Thanks to a newly constructed tower adjoining the cathedral all levels inside the cathedral are easily accessible by means of an elevator.

Highlights of the new Visitor Center

Welcome by Bishop Triest (Scene in Augmented Reality)

No bishop - literally - left his mark on St Bavo's Cathedral more than Bishop Antoon Triest. From 1621 he held the bishop's office here for 36 years.



On his arrival, the consequences of the looting of the Iconoclasms of 1566 and 1578 were still palpable. Triest made it his personal mission to furnish the cathedral in accordance with the spirit of the age with baroque art of the highest quality. One example is the altarpiece the "Conversion of Bavo" by Pieter Paul Rubens. After his death he left part of his personal fortune so that this work could be continued. And as of June 26, 2020, the virtual version of Bishop Triest will welcome visitors to the crypt.

Masterpiece: Conversion of the Saint Bavo (Peter Paul Rubens)

This monumental altarpiece, originally destined for the main altar of St Bavo's Cathedral, has special artistic value. In his composition, Rubens suggests the spiritual distance that arose between the converted Saint Bavo and the world.



Masterpiece: Evangelarium

The Evangelarium from around 800 is the oldest document in St Bavo's Cathedral. It contains the four gospels, relating the life and the message of Jesus Christ.



Ghent anno 1430 (Scene in Augmented Reality)

This scene takes place around 1430, in the midst of major Gothic renovations. The new choir was already completed, as you can see, but the construction of the choir chapels was still in full swing. Powerful and wealthy citizens gladly contributed to this. The same applies to the Vyd - Borluut couple. Sir Vyd and his wife remained childless and decided to invest a fortune in the building and decoration of a chapel on the south side of the choir: the Vyd Chapel. For the showpiece of the chapel, they commissioned Hubert van Eyck to paint a new altarpiece. This became - you guessed it - the Ghent Altarpiece.





The studio of van Eyck (Scene in Augmented Reality)

You walk around in the studio of Jan van Eyck where you can see his apprentices with grinding stones and mortar and pestle preparing the dyes for the oil paint. Jan van Eyck himself is busy with the final details of the portrait of Sir Vyd, who is posing. Vyd's wife, Elisabeth Borluut, and the then pastor of St John's Church, Johannes Van Impe, are also present. It is the pastor who helped to prepare the theological program for the altarpiece.

Iconography of the Ghent Altarpiece (Scene in Augmented Reality)

The altarpiece looks like a secret box in which the treasures are patiently waiting for decipherers. Folded open, the artwork displays an idealized field full of figures: saints, martyrs, clergymen, hermits, 'Just Judges', knights of Christ and an angel choir. All figures are on their way to pay tribute to the central figure, a lamb standing on a sacrificial altar.

Each figure is unique and shows the details of a portrait. The secret weapon that made such detailing possible was oil paint. The Ghent altarpiece was the first large oil painting that acquired international fame.

Among other things you get an answer to the question of what is so special about the Lamb, why all those people come to worship it and why the first human couple Adam and Eve are depicted here. And you can zoom in on the most remarkable details that can be seen on the Ghent Altarpiece.



The sheen on these gems reflects the daylight entering the Vyd Chapel. You can see the entire gothic stained glass window of the chapel reflected in the blue sapphire.

History of the Ghent Altarpiece (Scenes in Augmented Reality)

In fact, it is almost a miracle that the Ghent Altarpiece is still here. Over the centuries it survived the Iconoclasm, a move to Paris after the French Revolution and, in the nineteenth century in Berlin several panels were cut longitudinally in half. In 1934 the panel of the Just Judges was stolen; we are still looking for it. And during the Second World War, the Ghent Altarpiece was nearly blown up in the salt mine of Altaussee.



The festive arrival of the Ghent Altarpiece at St Bavo's Cathedral after the Second World War 30 October 1945.

Restoration campaign of the Ghent Altarpiece (Scene in Augmented Reality)



The restoration campaign of the Mystic Lamb started in September 2012. Financing is provided by the Government of Flanders and the Baillet Latour Fund. The restoration is being carried out by the “Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage” (KIK – IRPA). Restoration of the painting is necessary in order to prevent further hardening of the coats of varnish which may threaten the picture itself. At the same time the wood panels are being strengthened. Old touchups and paint-overs are removed. Following that, new touchups are applied where necessary and a new coat of varnish applied. The restoration is carried out in a studio with a glass wall at the Ghent Museum of Fine Arts (MSK), allowing visitors to view the treatment in progress.

The current phase of the campaign – the treatment of the central panel ‘The adoration of the Mystic Lamb’ and its side panels – will be completed in time for the start of the Van Eyck year 2020.

At the end of 2016 the restored panels and frames of the exterior side panels (phase 1) were highly praised upon their return to St Bavo’s Cathedral. After the Van Eyck year, the upper tier of the interior panels of the altarpiece will be treated: the final stage of an unprecedentedly spectacular restoration campaign.

The most notable result of the restoration so far concerns the view of the Lamb itself. The figure of the Lamb, as well as large areas of the painting as a whole, had been overpainted some time after the painting had been completed by Van Eyck. After intensive research and consultation with experts, the restoration team of the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA, Brussels) removed the old overpaint that masked the main figure of the Ghent Altarpiece for nearly five centuries. As such, the well-known Lamb – an impassive and rather neutral figure, with a broad forehead and large ears – has given way to the Van Eyck original. With its intense gaze the Van Eycks’ medieval Lamb, characterized by a pronounced snout and large, frontal eyes, draws the onlooker into the ultimate sacrificial scene.





Masterpiece: the Ghent Altarpiece in the Sacrament chapel

The visitor enters the chapel through the doors of the original chapel enclosure.

The visitor then proceeds through an air lock and a glass partition extending to the ceiling into the easternmost part of the chapel. The Ghent Altarpiece is presented in a glass enclosure such that everyone is able to admire the inner and exterior panels of the painting.



Practical information

Adres

Lam Gods Sint-Baafs
Sint-Baafskathedraal
Sint-Baafsplein
9000 Gent

Tarieven

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|---|---------------------------|
| Visit with Augmented Reality device | 12 EURO |
| <i>(Available in Dutch, English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese)</i> | |
| Lam Gods only | 8 EURO |
| 0-6 years | Free (without AR glasses) |
| -12 years | 6 EURO |
| Secondary Schools Students | 7 EURO |
| College students | 10 EURO |

Opening hours

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Monday | 10 am- 5 pm |
| Tuesday | 10 am- 5 pm |
| Wednesday | 10 am- 5 pm |
| Thursday | 10 am- 5 pm |
| Friday | 10 am- 5 pm |
| Saturday | 10 am- 5 pm |
| Sunday (and holidays) | 1 pm- 5 pm |

Cash register closes at 4 pm (60 min tour) and 4:30 pm (30 min)
Open every day of the year except January 1.

More info

www.sintbaafskathedraal.be

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