

Topic Page: [Eyck, Jan van, 1390-1440](#)

Definition: **Eyck, Jan van** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Flemish painter. His best-known work is the altarpiece for the Church of St Bavon, Ghent, which includes the *Adoration of the Lamb* (1432) and the *Arnolfini Wedding* (1434). He is said to have perfected the manufacture and technique of oil paint. His brother, **Hubert van Eyck** (c.1370-1426) is thought to have worked in Ghent and assisted Jan on the St Bavon altarpiece. No other works are definitely his, and some art historians think he never existed.



Image from: [Portrait of Margaretha van Eyck by Jan van Eyck \(1390-1441\) in Bridgeman Images: DeAgostini Library](#)

Summary Article: **Eyck, Jan van (c. 1390–1441)**

from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Flemish painter, who gained in his lifetime a Europe-wide reputation. One of the first painters to use oil paint effectively, he is noted for his meticulous detail and his brilliance of colour and finish. He painted religious scenes like the altarpiece *The Adoration of the Lamb* (1432; St Bavo Cathedral, Ghent), and portraits, including *The Arnolfini Wedding* (1434; National Gallery, London), which records the betrothal of the Bruges-based Lucchese cloth merchant Giovanni Arnolfini to Giovanna Cenami.

Unlike his presumed elder brother **Hubert van Eyck** (died 1426), Jan is a clearly defined historical figure. He worked as a miniaturist 1422–25 in The Hague for John, Duke of Bavaria and Count of Holland (died 1425), and then entered the service of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, as court painter and *valet de chambre*. Philip employed him not only in Burgundy but also abroad: van Eyck was sent with the embassy to Portugal in 1428 to paint the portrait of Joao I's daughter Isabella, whom Philip subsequently married. He settled in Bruges about 1430, still working for the duke, but employed also by the wealthy burgesses of Bruges and the Italian merchants who resided in this international seat of trade. Among his portraits are *Madonna with Chancellor Rolin* (1435/37, Louvre, Paris), *Madonna with Canon van der Paele* (1436, Groningen Museum, Bruges), and *Man with a Turban* (1433, National Gallery, London), thought by some to be a self-portrait. He and his brother may also have illuminated the Turin-Milan Book of Hours (destroyed in the 20th century).

Jan (and perhaps his brother) improved on the already existing technique of oil painting, which allowed subtler effects of tone, colour, and detail than the egg-tempera technique then in common use. However, the brilliance of colour and perfection of enamel-like surface attained by Jan must be attributed also to his superbly skilled and methodical handling of paint, skills acquired as an illuminator.

Jan van Eyck's works were influential not only in the Low Countries where they were often copied by artists like Gerard David, but in Germany, Spain, and Italy. Alfonso V was one of the early collectors of his paintings but examples of his work also soon entered the collections of the Medici in Florence (*St Jerome in his study*) and the d'Este in Ferrara. Elements of his works were imitated by Italian artists like Piero della Francesca, Sandro Botticelli, and Andrea Mantegna.

images

Eyck, Jan van Flemish Madonna and Child

Eyck, Jan van The Man in a Turban

APA

Chicago

Harvard

MLA

Eyck, Jan Van (C. 1390–1441). (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/eyck_jan_c1390_1441



© RM, 2018. All rights reserved.



© RM, 2018. All rights reserved.

APA

Eyck, Jan Van (c. 1390–1441). (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/eyck_jan_c1390_1441

Chicago

"Eyck, Jan van (c. 1390–1441)." In *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon. Helicon, 2018. https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/eyck_jan_c1390_1441

Harvard

Eyck, Jan Van (c. 1390–1441). (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. [Online]. Abington: Helicon. Available from: https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/eyck_jan_c1390_1441 [Accessed 18 December 2018].

MLA

"Eyck, Jan van (c. 1390–1441)." *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon, 2018. *Credo Reference*, https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/eyck_jan_c1390_1441. Accessed 18 Dec. 2018.