

Guides to Research at Hirsch Library

Rogier van der Weyden. *The Virgin and Child*, c.1461-62.

Netherlandish. Oil on oak panel, 32 x 23 cm.

Accession #: 44.535

Welcome to the Hirsch Library. We trust that you have selected the object you wish to write about, and will spend a good deal of time looking at the object first-hand. The cultural backgrounds and descriptions in books and journals will be far more helpful if you absorb such material already having begun looking at the panel on the second floor of the Beck Building.

Below are some suggestions for reading on the Late Mediaeval/Northern Renaissance art, about the medium and technique of panel painting, and about the “subject” of the picture. By describing the subject matter, and the technique the artist used, you should be able to come up with your assessment of the content—that is, the meaning, or the “soul” of the work. Note how much of the language and thinking about painting around 1500 has been defined in terms of (and in favor of) the Italian artists. You may wish to read about similar pictures by the same artist (*e.g.* in the Huntington Library & Museum), or other depictions of the Madonna and Child. What follows below is hardly a comprehensive list, even in English. We welcome your own suggestions of titles to add to the library, and how to improve this list, so please let us know what you find most helpful!

“Reference” books you will find in the main floor reading room, and “Ready reference” behind the information desk. For items from the main stacks, please jot down the titles and call numbers, and the library staff will retrieve them for you. If you need help with terms & techniques, symbols, or abbreviations, please ask. Librarians can show you how to “browse” our holdings using the catalog.

For clarification on distinctions between the terms “Netherlandish,” “Flemish,” “Burgundian” and “Belgian,” or “*ca.*,” please ask at the reference desk.

General Reading on Netherlandish Art

“The Renaissance Outside of Italy” in Gardner’s <i>Art through the Ages</i> , p. 707	N 5300 .G25 1991
“The Fifteenth Century in Europe” in Honour & Fleming, <i>The Visual Arts: A History</i> .	N 5300 .H68 1999
Stockstad, <i>Art History</i> , p. 619 on Flemish panel painting.	N 5300 .S63 1997
Snyder, <i>Northern Renaissance Art</i> . Chapter 6.	N 6370 .S6 1985
“Late Gothic,” in Janson’s <i>History of Art</i> , Chapter 15.	N 5300 .J3 2001 Ref.
Craig Harbison. <i>Mirror of the Artist: Northern Ren. Art in Its Historical Context</i> .	N 6370 .H26 1995
Stechow, ed. <i>Northern Renaissance Art, 1400-1600: Source & Documents</i> .	N 6370 .N67 1989
“Belgium,” in the <i>Dictionary of Art</i> , volume 3.	N 31. D5 1996 Ref.
Dunkerton. <i>Giotto to Dürer: Early Renaissance Painting in the Nat’l Gallery</i>	ND 170 .N37 1991
Verdon. <i>Christianity and the Renaissance</i> .	N 7956 .A1 C47 1990
Black, <i>et al.</i> <i>Cultural Atlas of the Renaissance</i> .	CB 361 .C85 1993 Ref.

Passages specifically on the Houston Madonna

- A Permanent Legacy: 150 Works from the Collection of the MFAH*, p. 108 N 576 .H7 A63 Ready Ref
The MFAH: A Guide to the Collection, p. 26. N 576 .H7 A6 Ready Ref.
Catalogue of the Edith A. and Percy S. Straus Collection, p. 19. N 576 .H7 A7 1945 Ref.
Norma Ory. Images of Childhood. N 7640 .I53 1981
Erwin Panofsky. *Early Netherlandish Painting*, vol. 1, p. 296-298. ND 635 .P35 1953

On Rogier van der Weyden

- “Weyden, van der” in *The Dictionary of Art*, volume 33. N 31 .D5 1996 Ref.
Rogier van der Weyden/Rogier de le pasture: Official Painter to the City of Brussels, Portrait Painter of the Burgundian Court. ND 673 .W4 1979
Max Friedländer. *Van Eyck to Bruegel*. vol. 1, p. 16-25. ND 635 .F713 1969
Otto Pächt. *Early Netherlandish Painting: From Rogier ...* p. 11-76. ND 635 .P3213 1997
Library Ephemera File on Rogier van der Weyden. Files – “Weyden”

Technique, Iconography, Theory, Society, and the Function of Altarpieces

- Cennino Cennini. *The Craftsman's Handbook.* ND 1130 .C3822
Bruce Cole. *The Renaissance Artist at Work.* N 6370 .C56 1983.
Northern Renaissance Paintings: The Discovery of Invention. N 729 .A3 FILE
Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture (“Madonna Types”) N 7830.M87 1996 Ref.
Gertrud Schiller. *Iconography of Christian Art.* (section on Mary typology) N 7830.S35132
Hans Belting. *Likeness and Presence.* N 7850. B4513 1994
David Freedberg. *The Power of Images.* N 71 .F65 1989.
J. Pelikan. *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture.* BT 610 .P45 1996
Melissa Katz, ed. *Divine Mirrors: The Virgin Mary in the Visual Arts.* N 8070 .K3 2001
Ellington. *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary ...* N8070 .E44 2001

Web sites are usually a misfortunate diversion in this area, but you might check:

witcombe.sbc.edu/ARTHmedieval.html#LateGothic (Recommended by The Fogg Art Museum on its own “Investigating the Renaissance” page)

To track down articles in **journals**, use the Wilson Art Index, the Bibliography of the History of Art, and leads you gain from citations in your reading. You could browse **exhibition catalogs**, or books about the holdings of **other museums**: the entries written about similar objects could help you to look and think, and provide examples of how to write about art. To find books, use keywords in the **on-line catalog**. Once you zero-in on titles you like, pay attention to how those items are cataloged, and use their subject headings to find similar books. Use the **bibliographies** of books and articles to find other sources.

For guidelines about writing it may be helpful to look at **Sylvan Barnet's A Short Guide to Writing about Art**, which includes tips for looking, reading, and writing about art. Ask for it at the reference desk.

At every stage of your work, please allow the **library staff** to help you. The Library phone number is 713-639-7325.