

VISITFLANDERS presents this year's cultural highlights in Flanders

From Jan van Eyck to James Ensor

VISITFLANDERS are pleased to present, this year's upcoming cultural highlights at Berlin's ITB fair, located at the Culture Lounge. As part of its special thematic project, "**Flemish Masters 2018-2020**", 2020 also marks a special focus on Van Eyck and the opening of a brand-new visitor centre in the St. Bavo's Cathedral in Ghent. In addition, VISITFLANDERS looks forward to another special opening, namely, the James Ensor Experience Centre in Ostend.

Theme year 2020: More van Eyck, than ever seen before.

In 2020, Flanders and the city of Ghent in particular, will celebrate the Flemish Master Jan van Eyck (ca. 1390-1441). As a painter, Van Eyck not only heralded the start of Early Netherlandish painting, but also created the Ghent Altarpiece, one of the most famous masterpieces in the history of art. From 1 February onwards, visitors to Ghent have not only been able to admire the artist's oeuvre in first-class exhibitions, but have also be able to enjoy an all-encompassing sensory experience, at concerts, festivals, city tours and events. The return of the **Ghent Altarpiece** from 1432 to its ancestral place in St. Bavo's Cathedral, will be the focal point of the Van-Eyck-year. Years of extensive restoration have brought to light, exquisite, finer details of this work of art. These new aspects will be initially presented in a high-profile exhibition. From 8 October onwards, the Ghent Altarpiece will be displayed **in the new visitor centre in St. Bavo's Cathedral**. This exhibition will tell the history of the Ghent Altarpiece in a contemporary and modern way. Visitors can embark on a journey through time with VR-glasses and immerse themselves in the history of the masterpiece. Furthermore, an extensive supporting programme of art, theatre, dance, design, fashion, cuisine and music will bring the numerous facets of van Eyck to life. Other highlights include the exhibitions such as "**Van Eyck. An Optical Revolution**" from 1 February to 30 April at the Museum of Fine Arts and "**Kleureyck**" from 13 March to 6 September at the Design Museum in Ghent. In September, **Arvo Pärt's Commissioned Composition** for choir and organ will be premiered in St. Bavo's Cathedral. Moreover, acclaimed director **Milo Rau** will bring the Adoration of the Mystic Lamb to the theatre stage. From 28 March to 1 November, a sophisticated and large-scale video production, will present the Ghent Altarpiece via a very special interpretation entitled "**Lights on Van Eyck**". In addition, visitors can enjoy Ghent's "**7 Senses Tour**", aimed to provide a unique sensory tour of the city, themed around the world of van Eyck. And for a more contemporary experience, a visit to the city's special **Van Eyck shop**, offers the chance to muse and purchase a selection of high-quality products, inspired by the special theme year, and exclusively created by local craftsmen and manufacturers

2020's cultural highlight: Dive into James Ensor's world

This year, the city of Ostend has dedicated itself to its famous resident painter, James Ensor (1860-1949). On 19 May, the **James Ensor Experience Centre** will open its doors for the first time. The new centre is an addition to the original James Ensor House, which has been closed since 2017 and offers an interactive introduction to the life and work of the most significant representative of Belgian Symbolism. Ensor is also regarded as the most innovative figure of Flemish painting in the late 19th century. It will be the first time that individual rooms in Ensor's apartment, will be accessible to the public. Amongst other things, the new Centre will provide the opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in the world of the painter and make acquaintance with his atelier, in five interactive adventure rooms.

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