



Prayers and Portraits: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych (National Gallery of Art, Washington)

John Oliver Hand, Prof. Ron Spronk, Catherine A. Metzger

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The diptych—comprising two hinged panels that can be opened and closed like a book—was prevalent in Netherlandish art and depicted subjects ranging from secular portraiture to religious personages and stories. This lavishly illustrated book, the first ever to examine this painting format, examines approximately forty Netherlandish diptychs from the 15th and 16th centuries. Featuring magnificent works by Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Hans Memling, and Hugo van der Goes, among others, the book covers a wide variety of topics, including painting techniques, workshop practice, and the art market in the Netherlands of the time.

With fascinating discussions on each of the featured paintings, *Prayers and Portraits* reunites a number of diptychs that have long been separated. Essays examine the works in the context of contemporary texts and religious practices in northern Europe, incorporating new technical information and research. They also offer invaluable insights into the social status and aspirations of the sitters.

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, in association with the Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge.

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