



Smithsonian Associates

Hieronymus Bosch: Heaven and Hell

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Tuesday, April 30, 2024 - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. ET

Biography: Hieronymus Bosch was born c. 1450 in the town of 's-Hertogenbosch (Bois-le-Duc) in northern Brabant. His true name was Joen or Jeroen van Aken. Both his grandfather Jan van Aken (d. 1454) and his father, Anthonius van Aken (d. c. 1478), were painters, and we may assume that he received his first instruction from his father. Sometime before 1481 Bosch married Aleyt van der Meervenne, a woman of wealth and property. In 1486/1487 Bosch is listed for the first time as a member of the religious confraternity of the Brotherhood of Our Lady. It has recently been shown that *The Garden of Earthly Delights* hung in the Brussels palace of Hendrik III of Nassau by 1517 and was probably commissioned by him. This provides important evidence that Bosch's paintings were ordered by learned secular patrons as well as by religious institutions. Hieronymus Bosch died in 1516; on 9 August of that year his funeral mass was attended by members of the Brotherhood of Our Lady.

Source: Hand, John Oliver, and Martha Wolff. *Early Netherlandish Painting. The Collections of the National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalogue*. Washington, D.C., 1986: 15.

Online resources:

[Bosch Research and Conservation Project \(BRCP\)](#)

[Hieronymus Bosch, General Resources](#), ColourLex

[Interactive exhibit of the Garden of Earthly Delights](#)

Books on Bosch and Northern Renaissance:

Nils Büttner, *Hieronymus Bosch: Visions and Nightmares*, London: Reaktion, 2023

Bosch's paintings have elicited a number of responses over the centuries. Some have tried to explain them as alchemical symbolism, others as coded messages of a secret cult, and still others have tried to psychoanalyze them. Analyzing his life and paintings against the backdrop of contemporary Dutch culture and society, Büttner offers one of the clearest biographical sketches to date alongside beautiful reproductions of some of Bosch's most important work.

Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *The Northern Renaissance*, Phaidon Press, 2004

Jeffrey Chipps Smith analyses key conceptual aspects of that period, such as the Protestant Reformation and the discovery of the Americas, offering the reader insights into domestic, civic and court life as illustrated by some of the most exquisite artworks by artists such as Van Eyck, Dürer and Holbein.