

# The Frick Collection: Detail Report

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## The Virgin and Child with St. Barbara, St. Elizabeth, and Jan Vos

Jan van Eyck (Netherlandish, ca. 1395–1441)

**Date** ca. 1441–43

**Medium** Oil on masonite, transferred from panel

**Dimensions** 18 5/8 × 24 1/8 in. (47.3 × 61.3 cm)

**Credit Line** Purchased by The Frick Collection, 1954

**Accession Number** 1954.1.161

Currently On View

Second Floor, Room 33, Sitting Room

**Commentary** This painting was probably commissioned from Jan van Eyck by the Carthusian monk Jan Vos following the latter's appointment as prior of the Charterhouse of Bruges (Genadedal) in April 1441. Technical examination suggests that Van Eyck laid out the essential design for the figures and the execution was left to a skilled assistant—possibly because of the master's death in June of that year. Astonishing in its myriad details, the panel depicts Jan Vos seeking the intercession of the Virgin and Child, under the protection of two female saints. The panel was probably intended as Vos's memorial, to be displayed in the church after his death to commemorate him and attract prayers for the repose of his soul. In 1443, Vos secured an indulgence for the painting, ensuring that anyone who said the Ave Maria in front of it—the first line is inscribed on the Cloth of Honor behind the Virgin—would receive forty days off their time in purgatory. The indulgence, meant to call attention to the memorial and increase prayers for Vos's salvation, was only valid as long as the panel remained in the Carthusian order. Today, on the walls of The Frick Collection, the Virgin has therefore long lost its power of spiritual remission.

**Collection History** Baron James de Rothschild, Paris (about 1850). Rothschild family. Knoedler. Frick, 1954. Source: Paintings in The Frick Collection: American, British, Dutch, Flemish and German. Volume I. New York: The Frick Collection, 1968.