

## 66 - Annunciation Triptych (Merode Altarpiece)

Workshop of Robert Campin. 1427-1432 C.E., Oil on wood.

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- Netherlandish
- Triptych: three part panel that is hinged And can be closed or open for display
- Probably commissioned for private use (size)
- About 25 inches square (central panel)
  - Side panels are about 25 x 11 inches
- The [portraits of the donors](#) are in the left panel; the figure of the female donor, and the servant behind her, appear to have been added to the painting after completion by a different artist, perhaps after the donor married
  - They are identifiable as bourgeoisie from nearby [Mechelen](#) who are documented in Tournai in 1427, by the [coats-of-arms](#) in [stained-glass](#) in the window of the central panel
- The central panel shows an [Annunciation to Mary](#) or, strictly, the moment before, as Mary is still unaware of the angel. A tiny figure of Christ, holding a cross, flies down towards Mary, representing her impregnation by God
- An unusual scene of [Saint Joseph](#) at work as a carpenter occupies the right-hand panel
  - A further unusual feature is that although Mary and Joseph do not marry until after the Annunciation, here they are shown apparently living together at that point
- There is another version of the central panel in [Brussels](#), which may represent the original version by Campin. The work was owned by the aristocratic [Belgian Arenberg](#) and [Mérode](#) families before reaching the art market
- Loaded with symbolism: much of it debated and over –evaluated
- Associated with Mechelen (town) – and many visual references to this



