

# Art detectives look through the layers of 'lost' works

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Images show a montage of details from all four paintings. Credit: University of Glasgow

Art Historians and scientists from the University of Glasgow have completed an international research project to trace the origins of four previously misattributed paintings.

The two year study which was funded by the European Culture Fund and

the British Academy traced the paintings, which were previously thought to be by Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder, back to workshops in 16th-century Antwerp.

The [project](#), entitled 'Bosch and Bruegel: Four paintings magnified', involved the collaboration of conservators, conservation scientists and [art historians](#) from around Europe. Researchers used state of the art infra-red imaging, X-[radiography](#), dendrochronology, [pigment](#) and binding-medium analysis to investigate the works, which all depict Christ driving the Traders from the Temple.

The groundbreaking technology used on the project gave the team a rare glimpse inside the artist's studio of the era by allowing the experts to look through the layers of paint to see the secrets of composition. This close analysis yielded a greater understanding of materials, techniques and studio practice of the time.

Dr Erma Hermens, Senior Lecturer in Technical Art History, who led the project at the University of Glasgow, said: "Dr Erma Hermens, Senior Lecturer in Technical Art History, who led the project at the University of Glasgow, said: "The theme of Christ driving the Traders from the Temple was popular in the 16th-century merchant and bankers' city of Antwerp and works by Bruegel and Bosch were widely admired, imitated, copied and faked.

"This unique interdisciplinary and international research project made full use of the University of Glasgow's state of the art scientific research facilities, its unique strength in technical art history, and collaboration with colleagues from Copenhagen and Tallinn, to unlock the many secrets in this intriguing story of the making and meaning of these four paintings, and what a great story it is."

Councillor Archie Graham, Chair of Glasgow Life said: "Everyone loves

a good detective story, especially one with such an international flavour. Working with other international museum organisations on this world class research project and using state of the art techniques, many of the mysteries of this painting are revealed in this exhibition at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. The exhibition represents a detailed examination of the most up to date methods there are of learning even more about objects in Glasgow's collection."

The findings are showcased in a book 'On the Trail of Bosch and Bruegel: Four paintings under cross-examination', and a multimedia exhibition, 'Art Detectives: Investigating Bosch and Bruegel', organised together with Glasgow Museums, which will open in the Kelvingrove Museum on Thursday 22 November 2012, following exhibitions in Tallinn and Copenhagen.

The research used specialist technical art history facilities in Denmark, Estonia and Scotland, including Scanning Electron-Energy Dispersive X-ray Microanalysis at the University of Glasgow's Imaging Spectroscopy and Analysis Centre (ISAAC).

**More information:** Dr Erma Hermens's staff page:  
[www.gla.ac.uk/schools/cca/staff/ermahermens/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/cca/staff/ermahermens/)

Provided by University of Glasgow

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