

Hieronymus Bosch

Aestas Infinity



12 PLATES · 2 COVERS · 16:9 · EDITION 02 · LTD 100

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Twelve plates

One painting for each sign, and two covers. The line under the title says whether the plate is after the painting or only set beside it.

About this edition. Twelve plates and two covers after Hieronymus Bosch (about 1450–1516): the Garden of Earthly Delights, the Haywain, the Table of the Seven Deadly Sins, the Stone of Madness and eight more panels from Madrid, Lisbon, Vienna, Rotterdam, Paris, Washington and Frankfurt. Each plate adds the same two people and the same hidden mark. The essay that comes first takes about eight minutes to read; each plate takes one.

Read the essay first

13 Front cover

The cover. The eye, declared.

01 Aries · The hollow tavern

After The Garden of Earthly Delights, Hell, Prado.

02 Taurus · The hay wagon

After The Haywain Triptych, central panel, Prado.

03 Gemini · The hollow tree

After the Temptation of Saint Anthony, Lisbon.

04 Cancer · The bird on the throne

Set beside the Last Judgment, Vienna.

05 Leo · The table and the eye

After the Table of the Seven Deadly Sins, Prado.

06 Virgo · The wheat and the barber

Set beside The Wayfarer, Rotterdam.

07 Libra · The scales

Set beside the Ship of Fools, Louvre.

08 Scorpio · The stone of madness

After the Extraction of the Stone of Madness, Prado.

09 Sagittarius · The burning city

Set beside Death and the Miser, Washington.

10 Capricorn · The green well

Set beside the Adoration of the Magi, Prado.

11 Aquarius · The jug and the wagon

Set beside Ecce Homo, Frankfurt.

12 Pisces · The fountain

After The Garden of Earthly Delights, Paradise, Prado.

14 Back cover

The seal.

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Bosch

's-Hertogenbosch, about 1450 – 1516.

Jheronimus van Aken, called Bosch, was born about 1450 in 's-Hertogenbosch in Brabant and died there in 1516. He signed a few panels with the name of his town. About twenty-five works are accepted as his today, most of them oil on oak. One of his clients was the Confraternity of Our Lady of the same town.

A great fire went through the town in 1463, when he was about thirteen. Burning towns stand in the background of many of his panels. The monsters are the town's own: a landlord with a tavern in his belly, a wagon of hay that everyone pulls at, a surgeon who sells a cure for a stone that was never there.

Philip II of Spain collected Bosch with an appetite no one has matched, and most of what the Prado holds came to it by way of El Escorial. Fray José de Sigüenza wrote about the paintings there in 1605. That is why six of the twelve plates are after paintings now in Madrid. The other six are set beside panels in Lisbon, Vienna, Rotterdam, Paris, Washington and Frankfurt.

This book is twelve plates after twelve different paintings, one for each sign of the zodiac, and two covers. Each plate adds the same two people and the same hidden mark. Where a plate is after a painting, the line under it says so. Where it is only set beside one, it says that instead. The pictures themselves were made with AI tools; the methods stay private.

The pair

They are not in Bosch.

A man and a woman in heavy cloth hold each other, stay warm and do not perform. They are not lovers in a Renaissance nude. They are two who have decided to stay together while the world takes what it can. Each plate gives them a sign, and the sign is a posture, not a symbol: Aries listens, Taurus pulls, Gemini mirrors, Cancer crouches, Leo sits, Virgo watches, Libra balances, Scorpio cares while cutting, Sagittarius watches the fire, Capricorn climbs, Aquarius pours, and Pisces stands in the water.

The eye

A mark that replaces the lion.

Edition 01 carried a stone lion. This edition carries none. Its guardian is an eye: a dragon's eye with an infinity sign in the iris, inside a ring of twelve small signs. The idea comes from the Prado's table, where the eye of God keeps watch and warns, Cave cave Dominus videt. Here the eye keeps time

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instead.

In plates 01 to 12 it is hidden: in a wall, a wagon's board, a tree, a throne, a table, a workbench, a wheel, a stone table, a block of stone, a trunk, a wagon's hub and a pool. You have to look. On the front cover and the back cover it is declared. The edition is built as a search and then a seal.

What the museums hold

Panels that were moved, cut and cleaned.

Bosch's panels have been moved and changed. The Haywain was broken up in the Peninsular War and put together again in 1914. The Ship of Fools lost its lower third, which is now in Yale. The Wayfarer was the outside of a triptych whose inside is in three other cities. The central panel of the Vienna triptych was restored in the 1930s. Even the attribution moves: the Table of the Seven Deadly Sins has been doubted since 1898, and the Prado still holds it for Bosch.

A plate may move a painting again. What it may not do is put a new object in the frame and let the reader think Bosch put it there. Where a plate adds something, the line under the picture says so. Where the book and the museum disagree, both facts are printed. Look at the picture first.



01 The hollow tavern

ARIES

After The Garden of Earthly Delights, right wing: Hell, 1490–1500. Oil on oak, Museo del Prado, P002823. The Tree-Man is Bosch's. The pair and the eye are added.

The Garden of Earthly Delights in the Prado

A man and a woman hold each other on the ground, his forehead against hers, both in heavy wool trimmed with fur, a ram stitched in gold on his cloak. Above them a pale torso has cracked open on a lit tavern, and a knife stands between two great ears. At the right, in a stone wall, a round eye is cut into the masonry. Gold dust hangs in a red dark.

In Bosch the Tree-Man closes the Hell wing of the Garden: a hollow body with a tavern inside it. The Prado dates the triptych to 1490–1500 and says Engelbert II of Nassau commissioned it. The Duke of Alba took it in Brussels in 1568, Philip II bought it in 1591 and gave it to El Escorial, and it has been in the Prado since 1933.

The pair and the eye are not in Bosch. The tavern is a place you cannot leave; here two people sit on the near side of it and hold on. The eye in the wall is this edition's mark: a dragon's eye with an infinity sign in the iris, ringed by twelve small signs.

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02 The hay wagon

TAURUS

After The Haywain Triptych, central panel, 1512–1515. Oil on oak, Museo del Prado, P002052. The wagon is Bosch's. The bull-headed pair and the eye are added.

The Haywain Triptych in the Prado

A hay wagon stands in red dusk, its load heaped high. Beside it a man and a woman in fur-trimmed cloaks, both with the heads of bulls. A castle and a river lie behind them. On the wagon's top board is a small roundel with an eye in it, an infinity sign and a ring of signs. Gold dust drifts across the dark.

In Bosch's central panel a crowd tears at the hay while the wagon rolls on. The Prado dates the triptych to 1512–1515, and its first sure record is the Alcázar inventory of Madrid in 1636. It was broken up during the Peninsular War and put together again in the Prado in 1914. The version in El Escorial is a copy, probably the one Philip II bought in 1570.

Bosch's wagon is ringed by grasping hands. This one is ringed by none: the two beside it do not reach for the hay. The bull heads, the roundel and the eye are the plate's own. Taurus is weight, and the refusal to grab.

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03 The hollow tree

GEMINI

Set beside the Triptych of the Temptation of Saint Anthony, central panel, about 1501. Oil on oak, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, inv. 1498. The saint and the demons are not in this frame.

The Temptations of Saint Anthony in Lisbon

Two people in hooded cloaks stand close, their outlines joined into one dark mass. Behind them a dead tree has been hollowed into a tower, and a round dial is set in its bark with an eye at the centre and a ring of signs around it. Under a red sky towns burn, and small winged things cross the smoke.

The Lisbon triptych is signed, and the museum places it about 1501. Its central panel shows Saint Anthony tormented by demons in a landscape of ruins and fire. A long tradition says Damião de Góis bought it between 1523 and 1545, but it is only documented in the Royal Palace in Lisbon in 1872, and it was given to the museum in 1911. At least sixteen copies and versions are known.

The plate keeps the burning country and drops the saint. The two in front mirror each other, which is the sign of Gemini, and neither looks at the fire. The hollow tree and the dial are added.

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04 The bird on the throne

CANCER

Set beside the Last Judgment triptych, Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna. The throne, the bird-headed lord, the pair and the eye are added.

Bosch's Last Judgment in Vienna (CODART)

On a stepped dais a bird-headed figure in a red robe sits on a carved throne, a gavel in one hand and a crown on its head, a halo of light behind it. Gears and a dragon's eye are set in the throne's base, and a band of signs runs around the dais. At the foot of the steps a man and a woman crouch close together, crabs stitched on their clothes and crabs on the stone. The city behind them is on fire.

Vienna holds the second-largest work Bosch left: a Last Judgment triptych at the heart of the Akademie's picture gallery. Tree-ring dating suggests it was painted from the 1480s or 1490s on. In 2017 the Bosch Research and Conservation Project examined it and scanned it with macro X-ray fluorescence, and its central panel was restored in the 1930s. Its size rules out the Last Judgment that Philip the Fair ordered in 1504.

The plate does not copy the Vienna panels. It borrows the idea of a judge: a seat above the people who wait below it. The bird, the throne and its mechanism are added. Cancer is the shell: two people closing round each other while the procedure goes on overhead.

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05 The table and the eye

LEO

After the Table of the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things, about 1500. Oil on wood, Museo del Prado, P002822. The table is Bosch's. The pair and the dragon's eye are added.

The Table of the Seven Deadly Sins in the Prado

A man and a woman sit on either side of a round table, hooded, eyes down, their sleeves almost touching. Eight small scenes are set around the tabletop like the hours of a clock, and in the centre a dragon's eye lies coiled in an infinity sign. Stars are stitched on the man's cloak. The light is red and low.

In the Prado's tabletop the centre is the eye of God. In its pupil Christ rises from the tomb, and beneath him is written *Cave cave Dominus videt: Beware, beware, the Lord sees*. Seven scenes of the sins run around it, and four corner roundels show death, judgment, hell and heaven. The panel is signed. Its authorship has been questioned since 1898, and the Prado holds that it is Bosch's. Philip II sent it to El Escorial in 1574 and kept it in his private apartment.

The plate keeps the circle and changes the pupil. Christ is gone, and a dragon's eye takes his place. Bosch's eye warns. This one only keeps time. The eight small scenes are painted fresh; they are not a copy of the Prado's sins.

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06 The wheat and the barber

VIRGO

Set beside The Wayfarer (The Pedlar), about 1500. Oil on panel, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 1079. Bosch's man is walking away. In this frame two people stay in a room and watch.

The Pedlar in Rotterdam

Sheaves of wheat hang from a beam over a small red-curtained room. A man in black and a woman in red stand watching while a barber-surgeon in a pointed hat works at the shaved head of a seated patient. On the bench in front of them lie gears, small dials and an eye. Ears of wheat, the sign of Virgo, are everywhere.

Bosch's Wayfarer is a round panel about seventy-one centimetres across: a thin man walking away from an inn, fending off a dog with a stick, with a gallows on the hill behind him. It was the outside of a triptych whose inner wings are the Ship of Fools, the Allegory of Gluttony and Lust, and Death and the Miser. The wood of three of the panels comes from the same tree. Plates 07 and 09 are set beside two of those wings.

The plate does not copy the pedlar. It keeps the idea of a person who stays and looks closely, which is Virgo, and puts the wheat where the road would be. The room, the operation and the watchers are added. The eye lies on the workbench.

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07 The scales

LIBRA

Set beside the Ship of Fools, about 1490–1500. Oil on oak, Musée du Louvre, RF 2218. The ship is not in this frame: here is a wheel of small rooms and a pair of scales.

The Ship of Fools in the Louvre

A great disc fills the frame, ringed with the twelve signs. Small rooms crowd inside it, and four round windows at its edges show a deathbed, a judgment, a fire and a gathering of the blessed. At the centre, under a dragon's eye coiled into an infinity sign, a man and a woman stand holding a pair of golden scales, one pan each.

The Ship of Fools is about two-thirds of the left wing of a triptych: a boat full of eaters and drinkers, adrift. The lower third is in Yale as the Allegory of Gluttony and Lust. The Louvre dates it to about 1490–1500 and has it from Camille Benoit's gift of 1918. Death and the Miser, in Washington, was the right wing.

The plate does not copy the ship. It keeps the ship's question, how much can two people carry, and turns it into scales. Libra is balance, which is not symmetry but a load shared. The wheel, the windows and the eye are added; the windows echo the corners of the Prado's table in plate 05.

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08 The stone of madness

SCORPIO

After The Extraction of the Stone of Madness, 1501–1505. Oil on Baltic oak, Museo del Prado, P002056. The surgeon and the patient are Bosch's. The street, the pair and the eye are added.

The Extraction of the Stone of Madness in the Prado

In a street of timbered houses a surgeon in a dark, star-spangled robe and a pointed hat works at the head of a patient tied into a chair, his white shirt open. A friar stands beside them holding a flask. At the right a man and a woman watch, she holding her own hands; a scorpion is stitched on his cloak and the sign of Scorpio on her sleeve. On the stone table in front of them sits a small mechanical creature with an eye.

The Prado's panel is a circle set in a rectangle, inside a border of gold Gothic lettering that reads: Master, cut the stone out quickly, my name is Lubbert Das. The surgeon wears an upside-down funnel, which marks him as a fraud, and what he lifts from the patient's head is a flower. The scene is out of doors, on a small rise above a plain with two cities.

The plate moves the operation into a town and puts a pair beside it, in the place of the people who paid. The cutting goes on, and they watch it with care, not mockery. Scorpio is what a person endures to be cured, and what a person can be sold.

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09 The burning city

SAGITTARIUS

Set beside Death and the Miser, about 1485–1490. Oil on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1952.5.33. The deathbed is not in this frame.

Death and the Miser at the National Gallery of Art

A man in a dark hooded cloak and a woman in ochre stand on a hillside, he holding a long staff, arrows worked into the stitching of both cloaks. Below them a town burns from end to end and the smoke leans across the sky. Small figures run between the houses. On a block of stone at the right a round eye is carved, with a ring of twelve signs around it.

Bosch's panel shows the last moments of a miser: Death enters at the left holding an arrow, and the dying man is caught between an angel and a demon. It is about 93 centimetres high and 31 wide, and it came to Washington through the Samuel H. Kress Collection in 1952. It was the right wing of the triptych whose left wing is the Ship of Fools, plate 07.

Death carries an arrow, and so does Sagittarius. That is the only link, and it is the plate's. The deathbed is gone. What is left is distance: two people who can see what is burning and stay on the near side of it. The town and the eye are added.

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10 The green well

CAPRICORN

Set beside the Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi, about 1494. Oil on oak, Museo del Prado, P002048. The stable and the Magi are not in this frame.

The Adoration of the Magi in the Prado

A man in a brown hood and a woman in a long red gown with gold embroidery stand beside a low stone well in a wild garden. Red-leaved plants, reeds, a stream, grey rocks and a blue mountain far off. Gold dust floats between them. High among the leaves a round eye is carved into a trunk, small enough to miss.

Peeter Scheyfve and Agnese de Gramme of Antwerp commissioned the Prado's Adoration of the Magi about 1494, and they kneel on its wings under their saints and their coats of arms. In the doorway of the ruined stable behind the Virgin stands a half-naked figure usually read as the Antichrist, and wheat is stored above him. Philip II acquired the triptych, and it now hangs with the Garden and the Haywain.

The plate takes none of that. It borrows only the open country around the stable: ground, water, a place to stop. Capricorn is the climb, and the slow one. The well, the pair and the eye are added.

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11 The jug and the wagon

AQUARIUS

Set beside Ecce Homo, about 1475–1490. Oil on oak, Städel Museum, Frankfurt, inv. 1577. Bosch's crowd is not in this frame. Here the load is water.

Ecce Homo in the Städel

A woman pours water from a jug into a stream while a man in a dark cloak steadies her hands. The hems of their clothes are wet. Behind them a hay wagon stands in the red dusk with a roundel cut into its side, and under it a small mechanism of gears and curling hooks with a red eye at the hub. The sky is full of sparks.

Bosch's *Ecce Homo* shows Christ presented to a crowd, with the words *ecce homo* written in gold above Pilate's head. It is about 71 by 61 centimetres, and the Städel dates it between about 1475 and 1490. The Städel acquired it in 1917, and the overpainting that had covered it was then removed.

The crowd is the part of the panel this frame leaves out, and the wagon of plate 02 comes back in its place. What the pair hold is water, which can be given away without being lost. Aquarius is carrying without owning. The wagon, the jug and the eye are added.

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12 The fountain

PISCES

After The Garden of Earthly Delights, left wing: Paradise, 1490–1500. Oil on oak, Museo del Prado, P002823. The fountain is Bosch's idea. The basin, the pair and the eye are added.

The Garden of Earthly Delights in the Prado

A man and a woman lean together at the edge of a round stone basin, their cloaks darkening where they touch the wet ground, fish sewn in gold on his sleeve. Lily pads cover the water, and among them a small mechanical creature lies half sunk with an eye glowing in it, an infinity sign. The rim of the basin is cut with the twelve signs. Fruit hangs from the trees, and a blue plain lies far off.

On the left wing of the Garden Bosch paints Paradise: a pink fountain rising from a pool, animals among them an elephant and a giraffe, and God presenting Eve to Adam. The outside of the triptych, closed, shows in grisaille the third day of creation, when the waters were separated from the land.

The fountain becomes a plain stone basin, and the only strange thing in it is the eye. Pisces closes the circle where the water starts. Nothing is explained. The water only moves.

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14 The eye, from behind

BACK COVER

Frame 14 of 14. Made for this edition. It is not after any single painting.

The Table of the Seven Deadly Sins in the Prado

A large eye, darker than on the front cover, sits in a ring of twelve signs against a burning city. Spikes stand from its scaled lid. Inside the iris an infinity sign glows gold. There is no one in the frame. The pair have gone, and what is left is what watched.

The front cover declares the mark and the twelve plates hide it. The back cover confirms it. In the Prado's table the eye at the centre says that the Lord sees. This edition keeps the eye and changes what it does: it does not catch anyone, it keeps time.

The eye is this edition's own. It is not Bosch's, and it is not in any museum. It stands as a seal, and as the mark of the run of one hundred. Look at the picture first.

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Colophon

Edition 02 was made by Aestas Infinity in 2026. It is a book in the archive. It is not a chapter of any series.

Twelve plates and two covers, each at 16:9. The words sit under the picture. The front cover is the dragon's eye with the infinity sign in its iris, and the back cover is the same eye seen from behind. AI tools were used in making the covers and the plates; the methods stay private. The plates are new pictures made after, or beside, the paintings named under each one. They are not reproductions.

The file is a narrow page so it can be read on a phone without sliding sideways. A word in amber opens another plate, the painting in the museum, or a page of the archive. The line at the top of a page is the same kind of link, kept small. On a plate, the line under the text moves to the previous picture or the next.

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The paintings named here are in the [Museo Nacional del Prado](#), Madrid; the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon; the Gemäldegalerie of the Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna; the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; the Musée du Louvre, Paris; the National Gallery of Art, Washington; and the Städel Museum, Frankfurt. This book is a reading of those works. It is not a reproduction of them, and it does not take their place.

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Hieronymus Bosch

Aestas Infinity

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The cover is the dragon's eye,
and the infinity sign in its iris.

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