

**Dr. Mitzi Kirkland-Ives**

**Judith Enyeart Reynolds College of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities Research  
Symposium**

**Time and Date of Talk: March 28, 12:15-1:15 PM, TBD**

**Title of Talk:** “The Art of the Deal: Painting, Patronage, and International Business in Fifteenth-Century Flanders.”

**Speaker Biography:** Mitzi completed a PhD in the History of Art Architecture at UCSB, and has published works on fifteenth-century Flemish art including *In the Footsteps of Christ: Hans Memling’s Passion Narratives and the Devotional Imagination in the Early Modern Netherlands* with Brepols, edited *Audience and Reception in the Early Modern Period* with Routledge, and *Death, Torture, and the Broken Body in European Art, 1300-1650* with Ashgate. She has written the entries on Hans Memling and on Rogier van der Weyden for the *Oxford Bibliographies in Renaissance and Reformation*, and published articles with the *Sixteenth Century Journal* and *Viator*. She is currently finishing *Memling and the Merchants*, contracted with Reaktion Books, from which this talk is adapted.

**Abstract of Talk** (150-250 words): In the late medieval era and early Renaissance, Bruges was a commercial capital of northern Europe, serving as a distribution point for goods transported from the Baltic to the eastern Mediterranean and beyond. The communities of merchants and bankers hosted by the city arrived from Florence, Venice, Castile, Biscay, Portugal, and cities of the northern German Hanseatic League like Lübeck, and congregated at its marketplaces, plazas, and at the proto-stock exchange known as the Beurse, and mingled among one another at their nation-houses and the city’s churches, inns, and brothels. This emergent social class of urban entrepreneurs formed the core of Hans Memling's clientele, himself an immigrant from southern Germany who had arrived in the city to pursue a career in the twilight of the Burgundian era. While his predecessors in the city, like Jan van Eyck, had served the ducal court and civic government, Memling's work was commissioned almost exclusively by this merchant class, serving their devotional needs while publicly proclaiming their ambitions in a conspicuously gorgeous manner. Individual cases include the Florentine Tommaso Portinari (branch manager for the Medici bank), the Greverade brothers of Lübeck, the Venetian diplomat Bernardo Bembo, and the Bruges merchant and politician Willem Moreel; these stories feature lapis lazuli imported from Afghanistan and carpets from Armenia, corporate backstabbing, state-sponsored piracy in the North Sea, the imprisonment of the future emperor by artisan guilds, and several decapitations.

**Interdisciplinarity:**

It deals with intersections between various aspects of cultural history: the arts, religion, travel and trade, communication, and economic history.