

As part of an ongoing project, *Siccatifs Mystiques*, we are looking for 1 research assistant (m/f/x):

Our references	Activity group	Recruitment category(ies)	Applications open to
RICH_1SIC_FRB	I. Scientific research and experimental development	SW1	7/04/2026

Job description

Purpose of the position

The *Siccatifs Mystiques* project aims to contribute to the understanding of the van Eyck's painting technique through the study of the formation of metal carboxylates in oils prepared with different siccatives detected in the Ghent altarpiece. To contribute to this project, you will work within the Materials Science for Conservation Research (MatCoRe) unit to study the formulation of oils prepared with various types of siccatives, characterizing their rheological properties, drying rate, and microstructure.

Outcome areas

- The collaborator will develop experimental activities dedicated to the study of drying agents used in 15th-century Flemish oil paintings, in accordance with the objectives of the "Siccatifs Mystiques" project, funded by the Comhaire Fund of the King Baudouin Foundation.
- S/he will be responsible for the following experimental tasks:
 - (i) Preparation of linseed oil according to various historical drying agent recipes, with and without water;
 - (ii) Evaluation of their chemical, rheological, and drying properties using microFTIR, SEM-EDX, ICP-MS, rheometry, and microcalorimetry, in collaboration with the VUB and Paris-Sorbonne;
 - (iii) Processing and interpretation of analytical data.
- The collaborator will also be required to perform ab initio modeling of the prepared drying oils in order to predict the stability of the experimentally identified metallic carboxylates and their interaction with water.
- The results obtained must be communicated through a scientific publication in an international journal as well as through an oral presentation at a specialized conference.

Employer

There is 1 position open in the MatCoRe unit in charge of the project, at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (address: Jubilee Park 1, 1000 Brussels).

The activity group for the position is: I. Scientific research and experimental development

Department of Laboratories / Materials Science for Conservation Research Unit

(MatCoRe): The MatCoRe unit currently comprises a senior researcher, a research assistant, two doctoral students, and students working on their master's theses or research internships. This unit conducts cutting-edge research at the interface between materials science and cultural heritage, structured around two main scientific themes. The first focuses on the creation, transformation, and degradation of historical oil paintings, seeking to decode the complex molecular processes that govern the formation of the paint film, its aging, and the appearance of alteration phenomena linked to metallic carboxylates. Particular attention is paid to the origins of oil painting in Flanders and to how the molecular and microstructural evolution of a paint film influences its micro- and macroscopic properties, as well as its reactivity and degradation behavior. The second focus is on improving conservation-restoration practices by developing innovative materials, methodologies and treatments for cultural heritage, with a strong commitment to sustainability, safety and eco-responsibility.

Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage: the RICH *is the federal scientific institution that catalogues, studies and preserves Belgium's cultural and artistic heritage for future generations.*

[The art of heritage | KIK-IRPA](#)

Skills

Behavioural skills

- You analyze data in a focused manner and critically assess information.
- You handle and solve problems independently, explore alternatives and implement solutions.
- You work in a structured manner, respecting priorities and deadlines.
- You create and improve team spirit by sharing your opinions and ideas and helping to resolve conflicts between colleagues.
- You act with integrity, in accordance with the organization's expectations, respecting confidentiality and obligations, and avoiding any form of partiality.

Technical skills

- You possess strong knowledge of computational chemistry, with expertise in *ab initio* simulations of complex chemical systems, particularly using density functional theory (DFT).

- You have in-depth knowledge of heritage science and the analytical methods used to analyze diverse heritage materials.
- You possess extensive knowledge of the chemistry of oil-based paint systems, pigment-oil binder interactions, and the different types of metallic carboxylates found in oil paint layers.

Assets

- Knowledge of French, Dutch and English is an asset given the multilingual and international context.

Conditions for consideration

Degree must have been conferred by the closing date for applications

- You hold an **academic master's degree in science** from a Belgian university, **specialising in chemistry, physics or materials physics and chemistry**, or an equivalent degree from a foreign university.

Do you wish to apply but your diploma is not written in French or Dutch?

We invite you to contact the person listed in the 'Contacts' section (selection procedure) to find out if you need to take a language test: Article 7 - Level 1/A.

If necessary, you can register by clicking on the link: www.travaillerpour.be/fr/tests-et-certificats/linguistique/inscription.

In this case, obtaining the language certificate is a prerequisite for selection. For this purpose, the selection committee is responsible for verifying the diploma. Therefore, please register for the language test as soon as possible.

Experience required

- You have practical experience with microscopic (OM-POL/UV and SEM-EDX), elemental (e.g., XRF and ICP), molecular (μ -FTIR, MRS), rheological, structural (XRPD), and thermal analysis methods in the field of material and technical studies of cultural heritage and, more specifically, paint layers.
- You have practical experience using software such as OPUS, Matlab, Jupyter, QuantumEspresso,

Job offer

Contract and category

You will be hired on a fixed-term contract for 12 months, part-time (80 %) as research assistant with the corresponding SW10 salary scale if you do not have at least two years of recognised scientific experience.

Minimum remuneration: EUR 37.890,91 (SW10) (gross annual salary 80 % position at the current index, excluding statutory allowances).

You will be hired on a fixed-term contract as an assistant with the corresponding salary scale SW11 if you have at least two years of recognised scientific experience.

Minimum remuneration: EUR 44.817,95 (SW11) (gross annual salary 80 % position at the current index, excluding statutory allowances).

Benefits

We offer you an interesting job with a social impact, which comes with a number of benefits:

- A good work-life balance
 - (if applicable) flexible working hours of 38 or 40 hours (with compensatory adjustment) per week
 - (if applicable) option of taking compensatory leave for overtime worked
 - (if applicable) offices closed between Christmas and New Year's Day
 - (if applicable) possibility of working from home
 - 21 days of paid leave
 - easy commuting using public transport
- numerous opportunities for self-growth
 - numerous opportunities for training and apprenticeship (during working hours)
- Financial benefits
 - possibility of receiving a bilingualism bonus
 - affordable hospitalisation insurance
 - supplementary pension (occupational pension)
 - free use of public transport for commuting between your home and the place of work
 - meal vouchers
 - (if applicable) work from home/office allowance
 - possibility of receiving a bicycle allowance for travel via bicycle
 - Benefits and offers via the Benefits@Work card
 - a range of fringe benefits (subject to conditions)

Conditions for employment

If you are selected through this procedure, you must – in order to be hired – fulfil the following requirements on the date of selection:

- Enjoy full civil and political rights
- Have fulfilled military service requirements
- Behave in a manner fitting of the requirements of the position
- Hold the necessary degree(s)
- Have the necessary skills and fulfil the requirements listed in the job profile

Procedure

Step 1 – Verification of the participation conditions

You will be considered in the selection procedure if you fulfil all of the required conditions. Verification will be carried out by the selection board on the basis of the application documents you have submitted. The board will decide whether the qualifications, awards and experiences you have submitted meet the requirements of the position. If they do, you will be invited to continue to the next step of the procedure.

Depending on the number of applications received, the selection board reserves the right to limit the number of applicants eligible for the next step by selecting those applicants it deems most suitable for the position.

Step 2 – Interview

The interview will take place at [Click or tap here to enter text..](#) Further details will be sent to you by one of our employees via email.

The selection board assesses whether the qualifications, awards and experience you included in your application documents meet the requirements for the position.

If you fail to attend

If you fail to attend the additional evaluation and/or interview, you will be automatically excluded from the remainder of the selection procedure unless you provide evidence, within three days, that your absence was justified for one of the following reasons:

- illness
- emergency relating to a member of your household (= anyone who lives with the applicant) or family (= spouse or legal cohabitant of the applicant, parents or grandparents of the applicant)
- mandatory presence at your workplace
- disruption or delay to public transport of at least 30 minutes
- force majeure

If applicable, you may request, within 10 days of the interview date, to be interviewed by the board. A new date will then be offered to you.

Notification

If you are not selected in a step, the procedure will end and you will not be invited to any subsequent evaluations in the same selection procedure.
For each step, you will receive a notification of the result.

Equal opportunities and reasonable accommodations

The Federal Administration has an active diversity policy.

Do you live with a disability, with learning difficulties or an illness? If so, you can request accommodations for the selection procedure. Please contact the individual listed under the “Contact persons” section.

Facilities provided for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding

Are you pregnant or breastfeeding your child? If so, you can request access to the relevant facilities. Please contact the individual listed under the “Contact persons” section.

Final result

What happens if you are selected?

Following the selection procedure, an unranked group of applicants will be placed on a short-list. These applicants will be those deemed most suitable to fill the open position in accordance with the conditions for consideration.

How long will this list remain valid?

The short-list of selected applicants will be valid for 1 year, will be created.

Apply

Do you want to apply? Send your application documents by email to vacature@kikirpa.be, including the selection reference in the subject line.

Your application documents must include:

- an updated CV
- a cover letter
- a copy (or copies) of the degree certificates with all associated annexes if any of these documents are not written in French, Dutch, German or English, a translation must also be provided
- any other document proving relevant experience, such as:
 - academic activities carried out with attestations as supporting documents (attestations issued by employers, authorities that provided grants, etc.)
 - a list of any scientific papers published

The closing date for sending your application is 7/04/2026 (inclusive).

Applications that do not follow the indicated procedure will not be considered.

Contact persons

Concerning the position:

For more information about the position, please contact:

Dr. Francisco Mederos-Henry
Head of the MatCoRe unit
T +32 (0)2/739.68.32
@ francisco.mederos@kikirpa.be

Concerning the selection procedure:

For more information about the selection procedure, please contact:

Marc Van Puyenbroeck
Human Resources
T +32 (0)739 67 50
@ HR@kikirpa.be

If you want to request a reasonable accommodation for the selection procedure or access to facilities for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding, please also contact this person.