

PRESS RELEASE



Isaac Lazarus Israëls – *Arntzenius sisters*, 1925 -1930
oil on canvas
Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem
Photography Ton van der Heide



Armando – *Flag 5*, 1982
oil on canvas
Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem
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VIRTUOSO PAINTERS AT THE FRANS HALS MUSEUM

The exhibition *Virtuoso! Israëls to Armando*, which will be held at the Frans Hals Museum as of 29 June, is all about masterfully, accurately and lively painted, in short *virtuoso* art. Dutch artists have traditionally been true masters of this genre, with housemaster Frans Hals as shining example. Starting point of the exhibition are the Dutch Impressionists, including old masters such as Isaac Israëls and Thérèse Schwartz. But also expressionists such as Karel Appel and Alphons Freijmuth often painted in a virtuoso manner. Colossal abstract canvases full of dynamism by Ger Lataster, Armando and others form the Grand Final of this pure viewing experience of a full century of Dutch virtuoso art.

How did the virtuoso painting style manifest itself over the years? And which artists succeeded in finding further innovation or a deepening of their painting style along the way? Is virtuosity still alive in contemporary painting? These questions form the basis for the extensive exhibition *Virtuoso! Israëls to Armando* at the Frans Hals Museum's Hal location, which runs from 29 June through 3 November. The focus is on Dutch painters for whom the free, expressive and striking touch was essential in the past hundred years.

WHAT IS VIRTUOSO PAINTING?

The first time a work of art made with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) was auctioned at Christie's, in 2018. Could that work be regarded as virtuoso art? Would a creative child or a painting monkey be able to match it? The exhibition focuses on the question of what virtuosity exactly is and how it can be recognized. And, as practice makes perfect, what is the relationship between talent and skill through practice? What can be expressed with striking brushstrokes, and how personal are those strokes? Can virtuoso paintings be copied, and what about counterfeits? And what do we learn from experiments with painting monkeys and young children about the origin of the art of painting and about creativity?

With films of, for example, the artist Karel Appel at work and various other documentation material, various backgrounds of virtuoso painting are explored. With the exhibition comes an amply illustrated bookazine, designed by Studio Room, with texts by Antoon Erftemeijer and Lars Been, curators of the exhibition. In a podcast that can be listened to in one of the exhibition rooms, artists and the exhibition organizers explain what it means to paint virtuoso.

A CENTURY OF VIRTUOSO PAINTING

Lively and dynamic painting had unprecedented highlights in the 20th century, in which Dutch painters certainly pulled their weight. Exceptionally virtuoso are the striking impressions of human figures and city scenes by Isaac Israëls, a painter who later found kindred spirits in Kees Verwey and Hans Bayens. No less daring are the portraits that Thérèse Schwartz painted in her dashing style. The free working method of children was a source of inspiration for the Cobra artists including Karel Appel and Kees van Bohemen and like-minded artists such as Jef Diederer and Pieter Defesche. The expressive painting style received renewed attention in the 'New figuration' movement in the 1960s and '70s by Alphons Freymuth and others. The highly abstracted if not completely abstract works of Ger Lataster, Kees Buurman, Jan Cremer and Armando show other dimensions of virtuosity, partly inspired by Oriental calligraphy and Zen art. Remarkable virtuoso painters of the last decades of the 20th century are Adine Engelman, Harrie Peters, Frank van Hemert and Lei Molin. That masterful – or *virtuoso* – painting is still alive today, becomes clear from work by Peggy Franck and Evi Vingerling, among others.

NOTE FOR THE EDITOR, NOT FOR PUBLICATION:
Images above are clickable to be downloaded as accompanying illustrations .

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www.franshalsmuseum.nl

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This exhibition is made possible in part by the Gifted Art Foundation, the Mondriaan Fund, the Association of Friends of the Frans Hals Museum, the BankGiro Lottery and the Municipality of Haarlem.

HAARLEM'S HEROES IN THE HOF LOCATION

During the running time of the *Virtuoso!* exhibition at the Frans Hals Museum's HAL location, there is a collection presentation entitled *Haarlem's Heroes: Other Masters* in the HOF location. The Frans Hals Museum is about more than just Frans Hals. Its collection comprises works by a large number of other masters from the 16th and 17th centuries. In this entirely renewed presentation, the museum highlights these 'other heroes', all from its own collection: Hendrick Goltzius, Karel van Mander, Jan Porcellis, Salomon van Ruysdael, Nicolaes Berchem and many others. In *Haarlem's Heroes: Other Masters* the work of the old masters is presented in a contemporary manner. On the basis of topical themes such as gender, religion and background, it is investigated why an artist is sometimes 'in' or 'out'.

VIRTUOSO! ISRAELS TO ARMANDO

29 June - 3 November 2019

Frans Hals Museum - HAL
Grote Markt 16
Haarlem