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Internationally renowned *St. Luke Painting the Virgin* by Maarten van Heemskerck originally two paintings

Iconic highlight to be shown at first ever Heemskerck retrospective in Haarlem and Alkmaar (28 September 2024 – 19 January 2025)

The iconic *St. Luke Painting the Virgin* (1532) by Maarten van Heemskerck (Heemskerck, 1498 – Haarlem, 1574) has been thoroughly examined and restored ahead of the first ever retrospective of the artist's work. During the process, it became clear that the painting originally consisted of two parts, which were joined using a connecting section added in the late 16th century, after the iconoclasm. The background was also found to have been overpainted in the 17th century. The overpainting has now been removed, revealing the original colours, which give the work more depth and spatiality, and make it even more enthralling. In technical terms it is a very complex process to remove a 17th-century overpainting from an original 16th-century paint layer. Following extensive research, however, the team succeeded in performing what can rightly be called a groundbreaking restoration. The conservation work has also given us more information about the artist's studio practice, and how innovative he was for his time. The painting will be shown as two separate parts for the first time in four centuries, along with 132 other works, including 49 paintings by this enterprising artist, in the exhibition *Maarten van Heemskerck*.

Lidewij de Koekoek – director of the Frans Hals Museum: *"These discoveries give us important new insights into the work and studio practice of Van Heemskerck. He is rightly regarded as one of the most important 16th-century artists of the Northern Netherlands. Along with Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar and Teylers Museum, we will be hosting the first ever retrospective of work by this artist – and not before time!"*

Exhibition

The Maarten van Heemskerck retrospective will be at the Frans Hals Museum, Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar and Teylers Museum from 28 September 2024 to 19 January 2025. Each of these museums will showcase a distinctive period in the life of this influential and successful 16th-century artist, 450 years after his death. The exhibition will feature important items from the museums' own

collections alongside works that are rarely provided on loan, from The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza (Madrid), The National Gallery (London), the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam), the National Museum in Warsaw, the Kupferstichkabinett (Berlin), and other institutions. This retrospective will highlight the innovative, expressive and theatrical nature of the work of this Dutch renaissance artist.

The Frans Hals Museum will focus on Heemskerck's earliest known work, combined with that of contemporaries like Jan van Scorel and Jan Gossart. Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar will tell the story of Heemskerck's trip to Italy, showing how this experience resulted in works which were bold and spectacular in their day. With more than 60 high-quality Heemskerck prints, Teylers Museum will be highlighting the artist's entrepreneurial success. Many hundreds of prints of his designs were distributed throughout the Netherlands.

Extensive research was conducted before the exhibition and, as well as *St. Luke Painting the Virgin*, several other works have also recently undergone conservation work. A detailed publication on the artist's life and work, written by Heemskerck specialist Ilja Veldman, will also appear in conjunction with the exhibition. Drawing on recent research, it contains a host of new revelations, including amended attributions and identifications of portrait subjects, plus new information on Heemskerck's network and process.

The exhibition is sponsored by the Turing Foundation and the Culture Fund.

Note for editors

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