



## *The Wallace Collection lends* *The Laughing Cavalier*

**In autumn 2023, the Wallace Collection will lend its most iconic painting, *The Laughing Cavalier*, for the first time since 1888.**

Next year, Frans Hals's (1582/3–1666) most famous and beloved painting, *The Laughing Cavalier* (1624), will temporarily leave the Wallace Collection to join world-class exhibitions on the artist at the National Gallery (London) and the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam).

The historic purchase of *The Laughing Cavalier* in 1865 by the 4th Marquess of Hertford (1800–1870), one of the founders of the Wallace Collection, was instrumental in the revival of Frans Hals during the 19th century. Prior to this, Hals had been lost to obscurity. At the famous Pourtalès-Gorgier sale in Paris, Lord Hertford sensationally outbid Baron James de Rothschild, paying the astronomical sum of 51,000 francs for the picture (more than six times the estimate). The publicity around the sale led to the immediate fame of the painting and of Hals, causing prices of his works to soar.

*The Laughing Cavalier* is admired throughout the world. He has featured in countless advertisements, books, plays, street art and even the London taxi 'knowledge' test. Despite his fame, we know little about the creation of the painting or the identity of the sitter. He is neither 'laughing' nor a 'cavalier'. His catchy moniker was earned rather late, in 1888, and the painting has never been renamed. Hals's exquisite portrait reveals how he revolutionised male portraiture, he infused his works with a vitality and animated presence that was at the time entirely new.

The 'most handsome man in art history' will take part in *The Credit Suisse Exhibition: Frans Hals* from 30 September 2023 – 21 January 2024 at the National Gallery, before travelling to Amsterdam to join the Rijksmuseum's version of the show from 16 February 2024 – 9 June 2024.

In 2021 *The Laughing Cavalier* was the centrepiece of the Wallace Collection exhibition *Frans Hals: The Male Portrait* (22 September 2021 – 30 January 2022). This exhibition brought together a careful selection of Hals's best male portraits to explore his transformative approach to portraiture. This was the first time *The Laughing Cavalier* had been displayed alongside other works by Hals. This exhibition can still be explored virtually on the Collection's 'Virtual Exhibition' webpage.

Director of the Wallace Collection, Dr Xavier Bray, says: 'I'm delighted that our newly revised loan policy permits such exciting collaboration. It will be thrilling to view *The Laughing Cavalier* in new contexts, to share him with more of the world, and to see him in his homeland of Holland.'

[HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES FOR MEDIA USE CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE](#)

#### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

##### ***Frans Hals: The Male Portrait – A Virtual Tour***

As a result of a special collaboration between the Wallace Collection and Vortic, *Frans Hals: The Male Portrait* can be enjoyed as a 3D virtual tour. Explore the paintings alongside audio guide commentary from contributors, Grayson Perry, Dr Xavier Bray and Dr Lelia Packer.

<https://www.wallacecollection.org/art/exhibitions-displays/virtual-exhibitions-frans-hals/>

#### **Loans at the Wallace Collection**

The Wallace Collection has been permitted to lend works of art since 2019, following a reinterpretation of Lady Wallace's bequest and the granting of an Order from the Charity Commission. Each temporary loan is carefully considered and only granted for the advancement of scholarly research or to allow artworks to reach new audiences.

#### **About the Wallace Collection**

As one of Britain's preeminent cultural institutions, the Wallace Collection is home to one of the most significant ensembles of fine and decorative arts in the world. Highlights include oil paintings from the fourteenth to the late nineteenth centuries by artists such as Titian, Velazquez, Rubens and Van Dyck; princely arms and armour; and one of the finest collections of eighteenth-century French paintings and decorative arts. Visitors can also enjoy superb medieval and Renaissance objects, including Limoges enamel, maiolica, glass and bronzes. Displayed at Hertford House, former home to Sir Richard and Lady Wallace, this outstanding collection is displayed in a manner designed to evoke the lives and tastes of its founders, creating a special ambiance that remains an essential part of its charm.

[www.wallacecollection.org](http://www.wallacecollection.org). The Wallace Collection is open daily, 10.00-17.00.

Instagram: @wallacemuseum / Facebook: @wallacecollection / Twitter: @WallaceMuseum / YouTube: TheWallacecollection

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES**

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