

## Life Stories: Frans Hals

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| <b>Dates</b>    | Tuesdays 14, 21 and 28 November 2023 |
| <b>Times</b>    | 18.00–20.00 GMT                      |
| <b>Location</b> | Online (Zoom Webinar)                |
| <b>Tutor</b>    | Clare Ford-Wille                     |
| <b>Level</b>    | All Levels                           |

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Frans Hals, *The Laughing Cavalier*, 1624

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### Course Description

Frans Hals's internationally famous and enigmatic painting of *The Laughing Cavalier* is one of the Wallace Collection's greatest treasures. The painting's immediacy and remarkable vivacity are the hallmarks of Hals's extraordinary work, qualities which led him to become a leading painter of his generation.

As the painting embarks on its exceptional, first-ever loan to exhibitions in London and Amsterdam, we'll look in depth at *The Laughing Cavalier* alongside a wide selection of Hals's works, and the times in which he lived. Focusing on his long career in the Dutch Republic, we'll discuss his innovative depictions of men, women and children, his use of extraordinary brushwork, expressive colour, and dramatic light effects. We'll also learn why he inspired 19th century avant-garde painters, including Manet and Van Gogh.

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### **Session One: Early Life and Work of Frans Hals in Haarlem (1611-1624)**

We'll begin by looking at the tumultuous political and religious situation during the time Hals was born in Antwerp, at the end of the 16th century. We'll learn how Haarlem – a key trading and artistic centre in Holland – was to have such an important impact on his artistic career. We'll also discuss the degree to which Hals's training led to his subsequent creation of highly innovative portraits and genre subjects, which culminated in his iconic painting, *The Laughing Cavalier*.

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### **Session Two: From Militia Company to Regents and Regentesses (1624-1645)**

How did Hals's sparkling brushstrokes create a living individual as never before? In our second session, we'll see how Hals radically transformed the traditional style of militia group portraits into innovative portrayals of lively groups of Dutch officers. We'll also learn that despite needing to create more restrained images during the middle of the century, his last male and female regent groups were no less animated or inventive.

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### **Session Three: The Later Portraits and Influence (1645-1666)**

Hals continued to paint exceptional portraits into his old age, employing a vivacious technique. In our final session, we'll explore his relevance to a selection of Dutch painters in the Wallace Collection including Rembrandt and Adriaen Brouwer, as well as Judith Leyster and her husband Molenaer. Numerous 19th-century artists including Manet and Van Gogh found his work inspirational, and so we'll also consider how Hals's originality and experimentation inspired artists beyond his own times.

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### **Course Tutor**

Clare Ford-Wille lectures regularly for many institutions including the Victoria & Albert Museum, the National Trust and the Art Fund, as well as leading groups to places of art historical interest in Europe, Armenia and the USA. For many years she was also an Associate Lecturer at Birkbeck College, University of London.

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### **Previous Skills, Knowledge or Experience**

None required. This course is designed as an introduction to the subject.

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### **Joining Information and Format**

This course will be taught through [Zoom Webinar](#). Each course session duration is 120 minutes, including a five-minute break and time for Q&A with the tutor.

Tickets are for all dates. Ticket holders will be emailed the Zoom link, Webinar ID and Passcode 24 hours in advance of the first course session, which should be retained for accessing all sessions of the course.

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### **Course Recording**

This course will be recorded. Within 48 hours of each course session, ticket holders will be emailed a link to view the recording, which will be available for two weeks only.

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