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from
THE FRICK COLLECTION

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**FRICK TO SHOW CONTEMPORARY DIGITAL WORK
IN CONJUNCTION WITH OLD MASTERS
FROM THE MAURITSHUIS**

ROB AND NICK CARTER'S *TRANSFORMING STILL LIFE PAINTING*

October 22, 2013, through January 19, 2014



Still from Rob and Nick Carter, *Transforming Still Life Painting*, 2012, 3-hour looped film, frame and Apple Mac, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague, © Rob and Nick Carter

In a fairly unprecedented move for The Frick Collection—a museum known for its Old Masters—a contemporary digital work by British husband and wife team Rob and Nick Carter will be shown as a complement to *Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Hals: Masterpieces of Dutch Painting from the Mauritshuis*. By presenting this contemporary work alongside fifteen celebrated seventeenth-century Dutch paintings, the Frick offers an opportunity to consider the way in which Dutch Golden Age works continue to influence artists today. Indeed, the Carters' work, *Transforming Still Life Painting*, a digitally rendered film, is their twenty-first-century rejoinder to the *vanitas* tradition. The work is directly inspired by Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder's (1573–1621) *Vase of Flowers in a Window* of about 1618 (a painting in the Mauritshuis's collection but not included in the present exhibition). The famous still life features a vase of fastidiously described flowers displayed on a windowsill, behind which a bright sky and picturesque seventeenth-century landscape are visible. The

Carters' mesmerizing film literally transforms the genre by animating the *nature morte*. In the course of three hours, Bosschaert's image changes gradually before our eyes: flowers wither, insects devour the tender foliage, and darkness descends on the distant mountains and river. Like the Old Master painting, which urged viewers to consider the future

of the delicate bouquet, the film depicts the transient nature of earthly existence—a timeless message conveyed by modern means. *Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Hals* will be on view in the Oval Room and East Gallery from October 22, 2013, through January 19, 2014, and *Transforming Still Life Painting* will be shown during the same period in the Frick’s Multimedia Room, off of the nearby Garden Court. With this presentation, the work makes its U.S. debut.

Comments Frick Director Ian Wardropper, “We look forward to the fall exhibition of superb Dutch masterpieces coming from the Mauritshuis. In discussing with that institution the idea of borrowing this contemporary take on another icon from its collection, we were intrigued by the dialogue the juxtaposition of the works might facilitate. Indeed, Frick exhibitions have looked at the work of painters and draftsmen such as Picasso in light of Old Master paintings, and we have invited many artists to speak over the years as part of our Artists, Poets, and Writers Lecture Series, but it’s rare for us to have the opportunity to show truly contemporary work alongside directly-related Old Masters.”

ABOUT ROB AND NICK CARTER

Rob and Nick Carter have been collaborating for more than fifteen years. Their oeuvre blurs the use of a variety of media, including painting, sculpture, installation, neon, digital imagery, and photography. In development for more than three years, *Transforming Still Life Painting* is a digitally engineered work, a painting presented as a film. They created it in concert with MPC, a leading innovator in the field of digital visual effects.

EXPERIENCING THE WORK



Still from Rob and Nick Carter, *Transforming Still Life Painting*, 2012, 3-hour looped film, frame and Apple Mac, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague, © Rob and Nick Carter

At first glance the Carters’ work appears to be a conventional masterpiece displayed in a simple dark frame, the kind favored by the Dutch during the seventeenth century. However, those who are drawn in for extended viewing may notice that the time of day depicted subtly changes. A seamless loop, the film lasts three hours, during which time the painted scene that begins in early-morning darkness subsequently appears as if at noon (at that point, it most closely resembles the original) and later, at dusk. When the loop ends, the bouquet is seen against a starry, night-time backdrop. Every flower is based on time-lapse footage. A tulip, for instance, will appear drooping and closed at the start of the sequence, slowly following the sun through the day. More easily observed activity occurs every few minutes, dramatically breaking the illusion of the still, painted plain. A butterfly lands on the bouquet; snails, dragonflies, and other creatures come to life through animation as well. The transformation of a

traditional seventeenth-century still life into a contemporary work involving movement and slow change also functions as a subtle play on how technology may alter our viewing experience today, inspiring a lengthier, closer level of observation.

WORKING METHODS AND THE CREATION OF ILLUSION, THEN AND NOW

The Carters' collaboration with a staff of technical artisans at MPC makes for an interesting comparison to the working methods of the seventeenth-century artist. At the time of Bosschaert's death in 1621, he employed more than one thousand people in his studio. They made accurate recordings of exotic botanical species for the master's reference, and the works that resulted were true collaborations.

Despite the realism of the Carters' digital painting and the Dutch work upon which it is based, both are illusions. The Carters' work suggests a painting but is a film, and both are fictive views. Bosschaert sought to improve upon every composition in order to make them more opulent and elegant than reality. The bouquet he depicted could never have existed as we see it: the flowers shown were not all in season at once, and many of their properties were altered or enhanced to better fulfill the client's expectations. The Carters rely on illusion as well, by recreating Bosschaert's imaginary bouquet, and also by using modern technology to transform what appears initially as a still panel into an animated version. Through this concurrent presentation, visitors to *Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Hals* will have the opportunity to enjoy the power of Dutch still-life painting as created for seventeenth-century audiences, while considering how these works still captivate artists today who have at their disposal an ever-broadening range of tools.

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone: 212.288.0700

Web site: www.frick.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

Where: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

Hours: open six days a week: 10am to 6pm on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11am to 5pm on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11 a.m. to 5 p.m.) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day (special hours for the run of the exhibition, specific to those galleries, will be posted online shortly)

Admission: \$20; senior citizens \$15; students \$10; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The installation of the Carters' work is included in admission to the museum. Admission also includes the special exhibition *Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Hals: Masterpieces of Dutch Painting from the Mauritshuis*, however timed tickets are required for the works in that show, and information is available on the Frick website.

PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection.

Subway: #6 local (on Lexington Avenue) to 68th Street station; **Bus:** M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 72nd Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 70th Street

Tour Information: included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

Museum Shop: the shop is open the same days as the Museum, closing fifteen minutes before the institution.

Group Admission for the Permanent Collection: Please call 212.288.0700 for details and to make reservations.

Public Programs: A calendar of events is published regularly and all content is available online.

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For further press information, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Head of Media Relations & Marketing or Alexis Light, Manager of Media Relations & Marketing

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