



Jheronimus Bosch

Visions of genius



13 Feb to 8 May 2016
Den Bosch, The Netherlands
www.hnbm.nl

Press release

Hieronymus Bosch exhibition at Noordbrabants Museum attracts 421,700 visitors

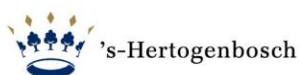
Den Bosch, Netherlands, 9 May 2016 – The exhibition called '*Jheronimus Bosch – Visions of genius*' drew a record number of visitors to the Noordbrabants Museum in Den Bosch. Between 13 February and 8 May 2016, 421,700 people visited the overview exhibition, described by the UK daily newspaper The Guardian as 'one of the most important exhibitions of our century'. It was easily the best-visited exhibition in the almost 180-year history of the Noordbrabants Museum. To date only exhibitions in Amsterdam and The Hague have attracted such visitor numbers in the Netherlands. The exhibition was the high point of the 'Hieronymus Bosch 500' national event year being celebrated in the Netherlands throughout 2016 to mark the 500th anniversary of the artist's year of death.

The exhibition was based on the Bosch Research and Conservation Project (BRCP), the most extensive and internationally focused research ever conducted into the oeuvre of Hieronymus Bosch. The vast majority of his surviving paintings and drawings were on show: 17 out of only 24 remaining paintings and 19 out of 20 drawings. Nine of the exhibited paintings were restored in preparation for the exhibition. Never before had so many works of Hieronymus Bosch come back to 'his' city Den Bosch, the place where the paintings and drawings were created more than 500 years ago.

It was fantastic to see that Hieronymus Bosch, the most intriguing late medieval Netherlandish painter, is still admired to this day by such a large and global public and that Bosch fans literally came from far and wide to 'his' Den Bosch. At the Noordbrabants Museum, we are very proud that we achieved such tremendous visitor figures and that we were able to contribute to associating Den Bosch definitively and internationally with its greatest son. The exhibition in the Noordbrabants Museum has permanently given Bosch his place in the hall of fame of Dutch art history, along with greats like Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Vermeer and Mondrian.

Charles de Mooij, Director of the Noordbrabants Museum

The exceptionally high number of visitors is attributable to a combination of factors. They included the exceptional works of Bosch, the return of his legacy to the city of his birth, the embedding of the exhibition in the Bosch 2016 year with numerous Bosch-related activities and the extensive scientific research that was conducted by BRCP. The huge and unanimously-praising attention in the international media also contributed significantly to the success. The Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions (NBTC) has calculated that internationally alone the media value generated by the opening of the exhibition already stands at €6.6 million. A media value in excess of €13 million has been generated in the Netherlands. Not only experienced museum visitors, but also people who would not normally be inclined to visit a museum wanted to experience the unique feel of the exhibition. In a visitor survey conducted by TNS NIPO for the Noordbrabants Museum, no less than 81% of people



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who visited the exhibition gave it a score of 8 or higher, with 11% awarding it a 10. Besides being impressed by the actual exhibition, visitors were particularly satisfied with the hospitality and service-providing mindset of the museum's staff.

Out of the 421,700 visitors, 86% used the free captions booklet (six languages), 60% the audio tour (six languages) and 18% the App (two languages). More than two-thirds of all users were clearly highly satisfied with these information aids and scored them 8 or higher. The exhibition catalogue, called '*Hieronymus Bosch – Visions of Genius*' (Mercatorfonds, €24.95), obtainable in English, German, French and Dutch, was in the CPNB list of the sixty best-selling books in the Netherlands for two weeks.

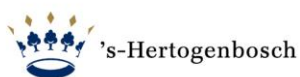
The Bosch Shop sold a total of 360,000 articles. They included 108,000 postcards, 8,000 refrigerator magnets and more than 6,000 copies of a special edition of the *Suske en Wiske* (Spike and Suzy) comic. The most popular postcards were those of the right-hand panel of *Visions of the Hereafter* from the Museo di Palazzo Grimani in Venice, the middle panel of *The Haywain* from the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid and the *Ship of Fools* from the Musée du Louvre in Paris.

Rapid ticket sales

Even before King Willem Alexander of the Netherlands opened the exhibition on 12 February 2016, more than 142,000 tickets had already been sold online. Television reports by Dutch public broadcaster NOS about the Royal opening reached over 1,3 million viewers and enormously boosted ticket sales. Barely four weeks later, all 300,000 online tickets had been sold. As the exhibition could not be extended, the museum decided on three occasions to extend its opening hours to absorb the sustained big demand for tickets. The opening hours were increased from 70 to 86 hours, then to 98 hours and finally to 119 hours per week. The museum is normally open 36 hours per week. In the final two weeks of the exhibition, the museum was open every day for 17 hours, from 08:00 to 01:00 hrs. The Bosch exhibition was open to visitors 39 hours uninterrupted in the final weekend, a rare occurrence for any museum although seen occasionally at museums in London and Paris. It meant that in the final week the Noordbrabants Museum was open for an impressive 124 hours.

Worldwide interest

In addition to the numerous Dutch visitors, many interested people from all over the world travelled to Den Bosch to visit the exhibition. In the online ticket shop, 23% of all orders were placed in countries outside the Netherlands. In total, online tickets were sold to people from 81 countries. Most tickets were bought by visitors from neighbouring countries, with 7% of all tickets being sold in Belgium, 6% in Germany, 4% in the United Kingdom and 2% in France. But some exhibition visitors came from much farther away, including people from the United States, South Africa, Australia, Russia, Argentina, China and Japan. This was reflected by a substantial increase in foreign hotel reservations in Den Bosch. In the first weeks of 2016, the city regularly figured among the top three destinations booked through Holland.com and Booking.com. The exhibition attracted a host of famous foreign visitors, including artists Anish Kapoor and Damien Hirst, actors John Lithgow and Patricia Arquette and musicians David Byrne and Jools Holland.



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More exhibitions inspired by Hieronymus Bosch

After '*Jheronimus Bosch – Visions of genius*', the Noordbrabants Museum will maintain an extensive focus on the inspirational legacy of Hieronymus Bosch throughout Bosch Year in 2016. This will include monumental mosaic panels of Jan Fabre and masterpieces from the Brukenthal collection. Between 2011 and 2013, Belgian artist Jan Fabre (Antwerp, 1958) made a series of monumental 'mosaic panels' entitled '*Tribute to Hieronymus Bosch in Congo*'. The series will be on display from 11 June until 18 September 2016 in an exhibition called '*Jan Fabre: Tribute to Hieronymus Bosch in Congo*'. Additionally, Fabre has created with decorative bird sculptures a modern interpretation of the *Garden of Earthly Delights* for display in the museum's garden gallery. An exhibition called '*Van Eyck, Brueghel, Jordaens – Masterpieces from Romania*' runs from 18 June until 9 October 2016. Fifty top works will be on show from the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu, Romania, including works of Flemish Primitives and South Netherlandish and Dutch masters from the 15th to the 17th century. The selection includes exceptional loaned works of Jan van Eyck, Hans Memling, Jacob Jordaens, David Teniers, Leonaert Bramer and Pieter Brueghel the Younger. Together with Bosch, they elevated the art of painting in the Low Countries to the very highest level.

'Visions of genius' goes to the cinema

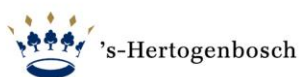
The Noordbrabants Museum is also delighted to confirm that the international cinemas series EXHIBITION ON SCREEN is in the process of making a film about the recent Bosch exhibition. This feature-length film will be seen in 2017 in over 2,000 cinemas in 42 countries in South America, North America, Europe, Africa and Australia. Recent films have covered major exhibitions at the Rijksmuseum, National Gallery in London, MoMA, Musée d'Orsay, Van Gogh Museum and many more. Award-winning film directors David Bickerstaff and Phil Grabsky are making the film - and plans are to have a VIP premiere followed by a 4-week release in Den Bosch in November.

Celebration of Bosch Year throughout 2016

The 'Hieronymus Bosch 500' national event year will be celebrated throughout the remainder of 2016. Visitors to Den Bosch will be treated to a cultural experience with a rich and varied programme for anybody interested in Hieronymus Bosch, his world and his work. The city will be completely dedicated to the mediaeval artist, with festive events such as special music, dance, theatre and circus productions, exhibitions, themed routes and festivals.

Facts & Figures

1 December 2015	Start of online ticket sales
12 February 2016	Official opening by King Willem-Alexander, 142,000 tickets sold
10 March 2016	300,000 online tickets sold
	First extension of opening hours, from 70 to 86 hours per week
17 March 2016	350,000 online tickets sold
	Second extension of opening hours, from 86 to 98 hours per week
8 April 2016	380,000 online tickets sold
	Third extension of opening hours, from 98 to 119 hours per week, and 124 hours in the final week
8 May 2016	Closing of exhibition, having attracted 421,700 visitors



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Approximately 15,000 primary and secondary schoolchildren visited the exhibition.

- Besides visiting 'Jheronimus Bosch' more than 35,000 people visited an exhibition called '*The Fish Pond Song*' in the Stedelijk Museum 's-Hertogenbosch.
- The website was visited more than 2,050,000 times since the start of online ticket sales.
- After announcement of the loaning of *The Haywain* from the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, at the end of August 2015, the number of likes on Facebook surged 148% to 9,170. The number of followers on Twitter rose 35% to 5,365.
- More than 260 people signed up as a new Friend of The Noordbrabants Museum.

This resulted in:

- a temporary increase in staff from 50 to more than 300
- 1,550 coat racks, 200 more than usual
- 350 seats in the museum restaurant, 270 more than usual
- 14,800 *Bossche Bol* pastries were served in the museum restaurant during the exhibition

Information for visitors to the Noordbrabants Museum

The Noordbrabants Museum will be closed from 9 to 23 May 2016. This is due to the dismantling of the Bosch exhibition, preparations for our summer programme and the putting back of our permanent collection.

From 24 May to 3 June 2016, the Noordbrabants Museum will have limited accessibility. It will be possible to visit the collections of old art, flower still-life works and Roman archaeology. The museum will be open from Tuesday through Sunday from 11:00 to 17:00 hrs. Admission will be free in this period.

From 4 June 2016, the Noordbrabants Museum will be completely reopened to the public. The museum will be open from Tuesday through Sunday from 11:00 to 17:00 hrs.

Ticket prices for the Noordbrabants Museum

Adults: €12

Friends: free

Members of Museumkaart, Vereniging Rembrandt and ICOM: free

Children aged 4 to 17: free

Combined ticket for the Noordbrabants Museum and Stedelijk Museum 's-Hertogenbosch

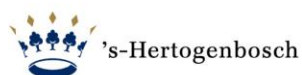
Adults: €15

Friends: free

Members of Museumkaart, Vereniging Rembrandt and ICOM: free

Children aged 4 to 17: free

Stedelijk Museum 's-Hertogenbosch, the museum restaurant and the museum shop will be open again to the public from 10 May 2016. Opening hours are Tuesday through Sunday from 11:00 to 17:00 hrs.



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Acknowledgements

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Watch 'Jheronimus Bosch – Visions of genius' in numbers



(Link: <https://youtu.be/Zx8QA94cptk>)

--- NOTE TO EDITORS (not for publication) ---

High resolution imagery is downloadable from the online press file www.hnbm.nl > [press](#)

For questions about the exhibition, please contact:

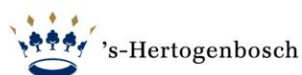
The Noordbrabants Museum, Communication and Marketing Department

Neeltje van Gool, T +31 (0)73-6877 815 or pers@HNBm.nl

For information about Bosch 500, please contact:

Stichting Jheronimus Bosch 500, Communication Department

T +31 (0)73-6875 690 or info@bosch500.nl



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