

More than just a pretty picture: the Rijksmuseum activities to develop new digital strategies for museums and new resources for Art History

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Between 2003 and 2013 the main building of the Rijksmuseum was closed for extensive renovations. During this decade - with the rise (even explosion) of digitization, online communication and social media – the Rijksmuseum started to focus on new ways of sharing its collections with the museums audiences: both art historians and the general public. Even though the museum has a beautiful building and excellent exhibitions, staff realised that most of our objects will never be on display and most of the (potential) audiences will never be able to visit the museum. Most Art Historians also will never be able to study the museum objects: touch them or zoom in on them.

This presentation will focus on the Rijksmuseum digital activities: Rijksstudio for the general audience; the Rijksmuseum API for automatic distribution of data; Linked Open Data as technique for (automatic) enhancement and translation tool; new tools for scientific research (paint sample database, collection catalogues online, niche source tools) of digital information. And it will zoom in on the results of the museums open, free, digital strategies.

The presentation will end with reflections on the question how the Rijksmuseum's high quality, freely sharing digital strategy helps research, researchers and the museum to further develop the field of (Digital) Art History.