



Gary Erbe

Title

Virtuoso

Medium

Oil on canvas

Date

1982

Dimensions

32 × 22 in. (81.3 × 55.9 cm)

Accession number

2010.14

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Credit Line

Purchased with the Museum Volunteers' Fund, 2010

Web Description

Gary Erbe works in the tradition of "trompe l'oeil" painting. A French term meaning "to fool the eye," it applies to art that cleverly fools viewers into thinking they are looking at actual objects rather than representations of them. Part of a long tradition of illusionism dating to antiquity, trompe l'oeil's popular appeal has endured through centuries. In *Virtuoso*, the artist endeavors to bridge the gap between traditional realism and modernism. The violin and sheet music recall William Harnett's famous painting *The Old Violin* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), as well as the Cubist collages of Picasso. The painting compels us to believe that we are looking at an actual collage of various patterns and textures fashioned into the shape of a violin.