

伦勃朗来了

■ 本报记者 施晓琴

伦勃朗·范·莱茵——西方油画史乃至整个人类绘画史上被公认的荷兰17世纪最伟大的现实主义绘画大师，他在绘画史上的地位与意大利“文艺复兴三杰”不相上下。一周前，美国“莱顿收藏”机构带着伦勃朗的11幅画作，及其同时代其他优秀艺术家的作品共70余幅，来到了中国的国家博物馆展出。这是“莱顿收藏”中“伦勃朗时代”的首次全球巡展，也是荷兰黄金时代画作在中国有史以来最大规模的一次展示。“莱顿收藏”管理人劳拉·耶格尔以“伦勃朗和他的时代”为主题，精选了他们具有代表性的肖像画、历史画及风俗画，向中国观众重现了荷兰黄金时代的艺术创造力。

美术史上的一座高峰

伦勃朗1606年生于荷兰西部城市莱顿，强烈的艺术爱好使得他14岁时中断了学业转而从师专门学习绘画，19岁便开始了独立创作的绘画生涯。此后在他充满戏剧性遭遇的一生当中，为人们留下了一笔数量惊人的艺术遗产，其中油画约575件，素描约1000件，腐蚀版画375件，作品总计近2000件。这些作品在当时曾不完全被荷兰人民认可，但其死后直到今天都雄辩地表明：他是欧洲最伟大的肖像画家和宗教题材画家，最杰出的风景画家和风俗题材画家，最富有历史反省精神的历史画家。法国艺术理论家丹纳评价道：“倘把人比作一根链条，那么他（指伦勃朗）是铸造了这一头，希腊人铸造了另一头，所有佛罗伦萨、威尼斯、法兰德斯的艺术家的都在这两者之间。”

17世纪的荷兰肖像画在西方艺术史上有着极为重要的地位，这个时期许多暴发户把自己的画像留给后人以供炫耀，还有一些市政官员、地方委员会和董事会也热衷于为自己画像立传，因此当时的画家们有很多机会来体现自己的才能，作品只要投其所好便能换来可观的订金。伦勃朗虽然也免不了接收肖像画的订件，但与别人不同的是，在他的作品中并没有完全听从订件者的意愿，而十分有自己的想法，尤其在他艺术道路的中、晚期做了大胆的尝试和超越，他的才华终于锋芒四射、卓尔不群。

今天来看，伦勃朗创造了最丰富的表现技法、最独特的绘画语言方式，他善于通过捕捉人物面部表情的细微变化揭示画中人物的性格特征和内心活动，善于利用光线塑造形体，通过光线的明暗对比处理复杂的画面，并有意识地使用厚涂法和油画颜料本身的质地来表现人物的质感，创造出了用黑暗来表现光明的“紫金色黑暗”这种伦勃朗式的独特艺术风格。此外，伦勃朗以他对现实生活深刻理解的诚实，赋予了他所描绘的人物和主题以真切的情感与生命，他笔下的人物有了灵魂，他的画有了更深刻的思想与人文体现。也正是这一点，使得伦勃朗在西方艺术史上占据了无与伦比的崇高地位。

在全世界各大博物馆举办的伦勃朗特展，大都聚焦于他黄金期和晚年的成熟作品。而他在初出茅庐，还未曾离开家乡莱顿前往阿姆斯特丹闯荡时的早年作品极少能一睹真容。本次特展中呈现的11幅创作于1624至1645年的伦勃朗作品，恰恰集中反映了他从早期创作到功成名就的20余年中绘画技巧的成熟与改变，并映射出伦勃朗前半生最意气风发的人生境遇和创作状态。例如，此次展出的《眼罩蒙上阴影的自画像》是伦勃朗众多自画像中较为经典的一幅，画面中的他充满自信地直视着观众，眼神坚定而又有所隐藏，画面技法的处理凸显出了他的与众不同，而自信积极的形象也与他正处于意气风发的28岁完全吻合。

伦勃朗与他的黄金时代

17世纪的荷兰刚从西班牙殖民统治中独立起来，成为当时海上强大的国家之一。革命的胜利促进了经济、文化的繁荣昌盛和科学技术的不断发展，人们的思想和言论都相对自由了许多。此时富裕起来的商人、市民阶层热衷于购买绘画以装饰他们的住宅和公共建筑。正是这样的现实需求，带来了荷



玩牌者(油画)约1625年 扬·利文斯 莱顿收藏

兰美术创作的繁荣，除了伦勃朗外，也涌现出了一批精通肖像画、风俗画、风景画和静物画等绘画艺术的重重量级艺术家，如哈尔斯、维米尔、扬·利文斯等，而画史上著名的荷兰画派就诞生于这一时期，这是荷兰艺术史上的黄金时代。

此时的荷兰画家都有很强的民族自豪感，他们的绘画开始摆脱天主教和宫廷贵族的束缚，而为新兴的资产阶级服务。他们不熟悉也不喜欢贵族化的形而上的宏大题材，而更愿意画身边的生活趣事，善于表现生活的平凡与宁静，其中约翰内斯·维米尔是最著名的代表。这次维米尔《坐在维金纳琴旁的年轻女子》作品的亮相，也是展览的亮点之一。维米尔一生只活到43岁，在他存世的30余幅作品中大部分都是风俗画，由此可见这幅唯一由私人收藏的代表其成熟风格的作品首次来到北京展出的重要意义。维米尔的画作大多取材于平凡的日常生活，却展现出抒情诗般的意境。他的画作被誉为古典的、超越时间限制的、纪念碑式的作品。虽然英年早逝且被淹没达两个世纪，但他留下的《戴珍珠耳环的少女》《倒牛奶的女仆》等作品已成为今天无法逾越的经典。

伦勃朗定居阿姆斯特丹后，在他的周围逐渐形成了由他的弟子们组成的艺术圈。这些弟子们大多有着非凡的艺术天分，继承和发展了伦勃朗的艺术风格。此次展览也展出了伦勃朗流派的其他知名艺术家，如卡尔·法布里蒂乌斯、科瓦特·富林克和斐迪南特·波尔的作品。其中，着重展出了荷兰“精细绘画”的创作，包括伦勃朗的第一任学生格里特·德奥以及弟子弗里斯·范·米里斯和艾特弗里德·沙尔肯的作品。在这些作品中，很明显能看出荷兰的艺术家在当时不像其他欧洲中心城市艺术家那样受到国王或天主教会的庇护，和他们为所有社会阶层作画的特点。当时荷兰的艺术家们就会经常性地进行观念与传统的交流，此次展览无论从展览板块划分还是作品中，也为大家呈现出了这种场景，观者能看到他们对于传统的重视，和对经典的传承。

伦勃朗与中国

策展人劳拉·耶格尔表示荷兰共和国与中国的17世纪关系史构成了此次展览的背景。她说，在17世纪荷兰艺术家、学者和公民的生活与想象中，中国占据了显著的位置。这一时期，荷兰共和国相较于其他欧洲国家，对中国的文化、哲学和历史表现出更加浓厚的兴趣，这体现在许多“第一”上：1655年，约翰内斯·布劳出版了第一幅详细的中国地图；1667年，荷兰诗人兼剧作家约翰斯特·范登·冯德尔创作了第一部完全将背景设置在中国的欧洲戏剧《崇祯皇帝》，并将中国描述为“高贵的钻石，闪耀着神圣之光”；1657年，中国哲学家孔子的著作第一次被翻译成外文——荷兰文。17世纪初，荷兰所建立的庞大的全球贸易网络创造了这些“第一”。该公司将中国艺术和文化——特别是中国最有名的瓷器带回了荷兰。到1638年，已有300多万件中国瓷器被运往荷

兰。这种珍贵的工艺品在荷兰深受艺术家们的喜爱，在荷兰绘画中也被视为地位、财富和深谙世事的象征。伦勃朗也是其中之一，他将瓷器摆放在阿姆斯特丹的工作室，同时工作室里还有一个装着矿石的中国碗和一个装满肖像铸件的中国篮子。

事实上，当时很多荷兰人也收集来自中国的其他物品。如奥兰治王子的秘书康斯坦丁·惠更斯从荷兰的贸易使馆处收集了一系列描绘中国服装、城市、寺庙、风景以及船舶的图画；伦勃朗在阿姆斯特丹的竞争对手之一、德国画家兼理论家约阿希姆·冯·桑德拉特也收集了大量中国画。1678年，伦勃朗的学生塞缪尔·范·霍赫斯特拉滕在著作中评论道，中国人“用有意义的图画而非字母著书；目前，在绘画艺术方面，他们表达自己的方式已经赶上我们了”。他的观察也反映了他对中国书法和艺术的熟悉程度，并且据记载，在当时的荷兰学术界，中国书法也是他们经常讨论的话题，在一些文字记录中也展现出了荷兰艺术家当时对中国和中国文化的开放态度的钦佩之情。

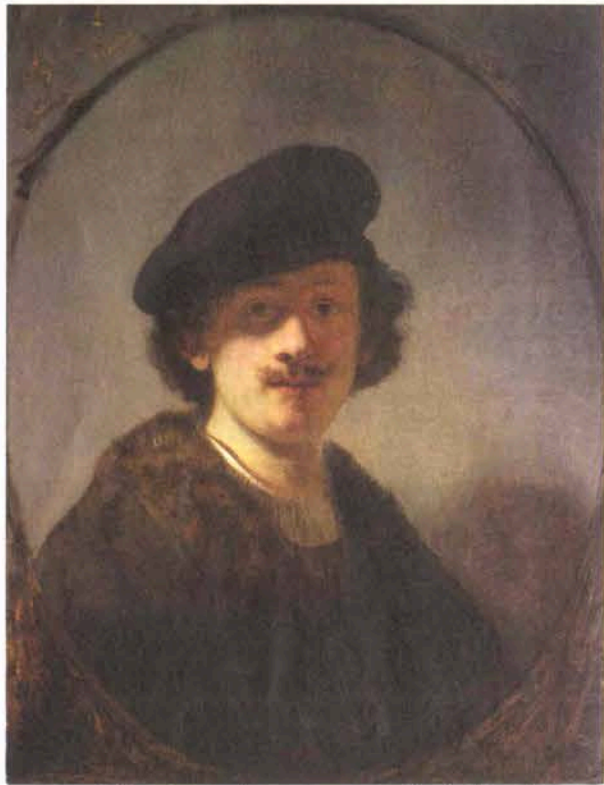
而在中国，伦勃朗及荷兰艺术家也深刻地影响着我们的艺术家。比如从1950年代代表着中国艺术主流方向的《美术》杂志创刊大力弘扬现实主义的那一刻开始，伦勃朗就始终占据着他们的外国美术板块。可以说，除了“文革”期间停刊的十年外，《美术》杂志对于伦勃朗的报道就没有间断过。作为中国美协的机关刊物，它对于伦勃朗的介绍和报道代表着国家的认可，这不仅与其杰出的绘画艺术有关，也符合当时的国情。伦勃朗对美丽和真理的洞察和表现力，对现实、人性的思考和批判，在艺术追求上的执着精神都是中国美术界所看重的地方，直至今今天也依然值得学习。

作品之外的启示

一个好的展览不仅可以让人欣赏到水平精湛的作品，更能引发观者的情感共鸣和对现实的思考。“莱顿收藏”的创始人托马斯·卡普兰说，伦勃朗是全世界的，他属于我们大家。戈雅、梵高、德拉克洛瓦、毕加索、特纳和培根等世界闻名的艺术大师均受到过伦勃朗的启发。而灵感与启示，今天仍然存在。

画家靳尚谊回忆第一次出国看欧洲原作，伦勃朗是他的至爱。靳尚谊说：“在荷兰博物馆我看到有很多和伦勃朗风格差不多的画家，但以前都没听说过。他们的风格跟伦勃朗相似，也是透明画法，但仔细看他们的画比伦勃朗确实是差一点，也正是这一点差距导致这些画家从艺术史中消失了。这就是艺术的残酷性。我们每个人都不能降低标准，只能力求做到最好，不能凑合。学习时一定要选择历史上最好的画家研究，并且要经常研究那些最好的画家的最好作品，这点是不能含糊的。做到做不到是另外一回事，但是要求不能降低，心中要知道什么是最好的。”事实上，这种专注和对自己高要求的精神也体现在维米尔等同时代的其他荷兰画家之中，因此，在追求艺术的道路上树立高标准、追寻经典与传统中的精华十分必要与重要。

伦勃朗对艺术和生活的认识和理解指引着他的创作。伦勃朗曾经说“绘画固然是取决于你所看到的，但更取决于你如何看。一个高明的画家从一家普通的乡村肉店扶梯里所挂的一头死公牛身上得到的启示，要比一个拙劣的画家从拉斐尔故乡的村庄里五六所美丽的教堂上所得到的启示还要多”，这是他在启发我们用思考的眼光看待事物、发现问题；伦勃朗说“意大利人生活在意大利，他们对意大利的事物具有他们自己的思想感情，我们生活在荷兰，我们要从我们国家的熟悉事物中获得灵感，而不是从千里之外去找一些东西”，这是他在告诉我们创作时应该立足于本民族、深入生活，扎根人民，关注与我们息息相关的事物；伦勃朗说“我只画使我感动的东西，正像希腊人用斧头砍大理石一样，正像老斯惠林克人在风琴上奏出的音调一样”，这是他在强调只有打动自己的作品才可能打动别人，要善于挖掘、表现那些生活中的真、善、美……当你走近他的作品，走近他，你一定还能看到更多。



眼部蒙上阴影的自画像(油画) 1634年 约翰内斯·维米尔 莱顿收藏馆



坐在维金纳琴旁的年轻女子(油画) 约翰内斯·维米尔 莱顿收藏馆

“Rembrandt is here”

Rembrandt van Rijn is widely regarded as the greatest Dutch realist master of the 17th century, the most important in the history of western oil painting, and possibly in all of history. He is regularly compared to the three greatest artists of the “Renaissance” period. A week ago, the American “Leiden Collection” came to the National Museum of China with more than 70 paintings, including 11 works by Rembrandt, as well as pieces by other outstanding artists of the same period. This exhibition is the first global tour of the “Rembrandt era” for the Leiden Collection. It also happens to be the largest ever show of Dutch Golden Age paintings hosted in China. Based on the theme of “Rembrandt and His Time”, the curator of The Leiden Collection, Lara Yeager-Crasselt, carefully selected representative portraits, historical paintings and genre paintings, to showcase the artistic creativity of the Dutch Golden Age to Chinese viewers.

A Highlight in Art History

Rembrandt was born in 1606 in the western Dutch city of Leiden. A strong passion for art made him leave school at 14 to study painting, and he began an independent creative painting career at the age of 19. Throughout his dramatic life, he built a staggering amount of artistic heritage, including some 350 paintings, 1,000 drawings, and 375 etchings, for a total of nearly 2,000 pieces. These works, at the time, were not fully appreciated by the Dutch people. But after his death, and up to today, Rembrandt has been recognized as the most significant European portrait painter and painter of religious themes. He is also the most accomplished genre subject painter, as well as the greatest historical subject painter with introspective spirit. A French art critic once said: “If we compare the human race to a chain, then he (Rembrandt) casted one end of this chain and the Greeks casted the other. All the artists from Florence, Venice, and Flanders stand in between”.

Dutch portraits of the 17th century occupy a very important place in the history of Western art. Many of the *nouveau riche* of this period wanted to show off by leaving their portraits for future generations, while some municipal officials, local council and board members were also keen to portray themselves. Painters at that time therefore had plenty of opportunities to display their talents, and their works could be exchanged for considerable sums. Rembrandt inevitably received commissions. But unlike other artists, he did not always fully follow the wishes of those who placed the order. Instead, he pursued his own ideas. Especially in the middle and later stages of his career, he made bold attempts to surpass his contemporaries. From today’s point of view, Rembrandt has created the most expressive technique, conveying messages using a unique language. He is an expert in capturing subtle changes in the facial expressions of the characters, representing their characteristics and inner thoughts. He is also the master of using light to depict shapes, processing complex scenes with contrasting light and consciously employing a thick coating of paint. He created a unique “Rembrandt style”, characterized

by dark colors contrasting with brighter ones. Rembrandt, with his deep understanding of real life, conferred upon his characters and themes the very feelings of real life. His subjects had souls and his paintings conveyed a profound human sensation. This is why Rembrandt enjoys such high status in the history of Western art.

The Rembrandt exhibitions held by the world's major museums tend to focus on works from his golden time and later years. His earlier works, produced before leaving his hometown of Leiden for Amsterdam, are in fact rarely seen. The present exhibition at the National Museum of China showcases 11 paintings by Rembrandt from 1624 to 1645, documenting the evolution in his painting skills from the early works to the peak of his success some twenty years later, including the vigorous spirit characterizing the first half of his life. Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait with Shaded Eyes* represents one of the more classic pieces among his self-portraits. In the picture, the master stares sternly right into the viewer's eyes with poise, but also a hint of reservation. His distinctive technique and confident portrayal indeed reflect the spirit of the 28-year-old man.

Rembrandt and His Golden Time

In the 17th century, the Netherlands was freed from Spanish colonial rule and became one of the greatest maritime powers of the time. The victory of the revolution unleashed an era marked by economic prosperity and the continuous development of culture, science, and technology. People enjoyed both freedom of thought and speech. At the time, wealthy businessmen and townspeople were eager to buy paintings in order to decorate their homes and public buildings. It is in fact this new demand that brought about the flourishing of Dutch arts and creativity. In addition to Rembrandt, a number of significant artists also emerged, whose works included portraits, genre paintings, landscapes, and still life paintings. These include Frans Hals, Vermeer, and Jan Lievens. The famous Dutch School was born in this period, which is also known as the Dutch Golden Age.

In that era, painters had a strong sense of national pride. Their works began to escape the bondage of the Catholic Church and the royal court, and started to focus on the new bourgeoisie. They shunned aristocratic and metaphysical subjects, and preferred to produce paintings that depicted the enjoyment of every life, illustrating normality and quietness. The appearance of *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* by Johannes Vermeer was one of the highlights of this exhibition. Vermeer only lived for 43 years. Most of his 30 or so works out there happen to be genre paintings. This particular piece clearly shows his maturity in terms of style and remains the only one in private hands, which stresses the significance of the Beijing exhibition. Most of Vermeer's paintings were drawn from ordinary daily life, but displayed a lyrical artistic conception. His works are regarded as classical, timeless, and monumental. The master's early death, and the fact that his paintings remained relatively unknown for almost two centuries, did not affect the colossal status enjoyed by works such as *Girl with a Pearl Earring* and *The Milkmaid*.

After settling down in Amsterdam, Rembrandt formed a circle of followers. They were mostly extraordinary talents, who inherited and developed the master's artistic style. The exhibition also features works by other renowned artists from the Rembrandt School,

such as Carel Fabritius, Govert Flinck, and Ferdinand Bol. Within that group, special emphasis is given to the students of Rembrandt who were fine painters (known as the *'fijnschilders'*), including Gerrit Dou, Frans Van Mieris, and Gottfried Schalken. Looking at these works, it becomes evident that Dutch artists at the time were not sponsored by the king or the Catholic Church, unlike artists from other central European cities, and that they painted for all social strata. Dutch artists would frequently exchange ideas and traditional values with each other. Indeed the layout of the exhibition is intended to show visitors these individuals' affection for tradition and heritage.

Rembrandt and China

Curator Lara Yeager-Crasselt mentioned that the history of relations between the Dutch Republic and China in the 17th Century constituted the background of the exhibition. She indicated that in the lives and imaginations of artists, scholars, and citizens of the Netherlands in the 17th Century, China stood in a very prominent position. During this period, the Dutch Republic showed greater interest in China's culture, philosophy, and history, than for arguably any other European country – a reality which was reflected in many “firsts”: in 1655, Johannes Blaeu published the first detailed map of China; in 1667, the Dutch poet and playwright Joost van den Vondel created “Emperor Chongzhen” which was the first European play entirely based on China, describing the country as a “precious diamond shining divine light”; in 1657, the works of Chinese philosopher Confucius were translated into foreign languages – including Dutch for the first time. At the beginning of the 17th century, the immense global trading network developed by Dutch companies made these “firsts” possible. Companies brought Chinese art and culture, especially the most famous porcelain of China, back to the Netherlands. By 1638, about 3 million pieces of Chinese porcelain had been shipped to the Netherlands. Regarded as symbols of status, wealth, and knowledge, these precious works of art were beloved by Dutch artists. Rembrandt was one of them. He placed the porcelain in his studio in Amsterdam, together with a Chinese bowl filled with ore and a Chinese basket filled with portrait casts.

Dutch people were also keen to collect Chinese objects. The secretary to the Prince of Orange, Constantine Huygens, collected a series of pictures depicting Chinese clothing, cities, temples, landscapes, and ships from the Dutch trade embassy. One of Rembrandt's rivals then, the German painter and theorist Joachim von Sandrart, also collected a large number of Chinese paintings. In 1678, a student of Rembrandt, Samuel Van Hoogstraten, commented in his book that the Chinese “use meaningful pictures instead of letters to write books. At present, in the art of painting, their way of expressing themselves is just as commendable.” This observation also indicated his familiarity with Chinese calligraphy and art. It is documented that Chinese calligraphy was a topic of discussion for academics at the time of the Dutch Republic, while some writings recorded the admiration that Dutch artists had for China and the openness of Chinese culture.

Similarly, Rembrandt and the Dutch artists had a profound influence on our artists in China. For example, since the launch of the mainstream Chinese art magazine “Art” in 1950, realism has always been a major topic, and Rembrandt a part of their foreign art

section. Aside from the 10 years of interruption to its publication caused by the “Cultural Revolution”, “Art” never stopped writing about Rembrandt. As the magazine of the Chinese Artists Association, its introduction and coverage of the Dutch master also signified his recognition by the country. This was not only due to his outstanding paintings, but also his alignment with the then prevailing national conditions. Rembrandt’s insight, his expression of beauty and truth, his critical thinking about reality and human nature, and his spirit dedicated to the pursuit of art, are highly appreciated by Chinese artists. And they are still learning from him today.

Beyond Inspiration

A great exhibition not only shows people exquisite works, but it also arouses emotional resonance in the viewers and provides them with food for thought. The founder of The Leiden Collection, Thomas Kaplan, stated that Rembrandt belongs to the world, and therefore belongs to all of us. Goya, Van Gogh, Delacroix, Picasso, Turner, Bacon, and other world-renowned masters were all inspired by Rembrandt. And the inspiration and revelation still live on today.

Recalling his first trip overseas to see European paintings, Jin Shangyi, an oil painter, said that Rembrandt was his favorite. Jin declared: “I saw a lot of paintings of similar style to Rembrandt in Dutch Museums, which were by much less well-known artists. Their style is similar to Rembrandt but their works were much less refined under close observation. That’s why their names are unknown. This is the cruelty of the art world. We all have to try our best and not lower our standards. We have to regularly learn from the best in history. Whether or not we can do it is another matter. But we cannot lower our standards. We must know what the best is.” In fact, this kind of attention to detail is also reflected in the works of other Dutch artists of the same period as Vermeer. Therefore, setting high standards, following the essence of classics and tradition, remains central to the pursuit of art.

Rembrandt’s understanding of art and life serves as the compass of his work. He once said: “Paintings certainly draw from what you see, but they also draw from your perspectives. A brilliant painter can get more inspiration from a dead bull hanging in the butcher’s shop of an ordinary village, than a poor painter can get from five or six beautiful churches in Rafael’s hometown.” It was Rembrandt who inspired us all to look at things and see problems in a reflective fashion. “The Italians live in Italy,” he declared, “and they have their own thoughts and feelings about Italy. We, who live in the Netherlands, should draw inspiration from what surrounds us, and not things thousands of miles away.” Rembrandt was telling us to look to our own cultures and lives, and pay attention to what truly matters to us. He also said: “I only paint things that move me. Just like the Greek man cutting marble with an axe, or the old man playing the organ.” He was trying to emphasize that only the works that touch oneself can impress others. A great artist excels at finding truth, good, and beauty in life. When one gets closer to one’s works, to oneself, more will be discovered.