

ART



扬·利文斯(1607-1674)  
《玩牌者》  
1625年  
帆布油画  
97.5×105.4厘米

# THE LEIDEN COLLECTION AND REMBRANDT 莱顿收藏与伦勃朗的故事

编辑：文/马雪莲 图片提供：莱顿收藏

伴随着火热的夏日，京城艺术界迎来了一项盛事。2017年6月17日，中国国家博物馆“伦勃朗和他的时代：美国莱顿收藏馆藏精品展”隆重开幕，展出了包括11幅伦勃朗真迹的七十余幅荷兰“黄金时代”油画作品。究竟是谁，能有拥有如此众多的经典画作？《时装男士》杂志有幸在巴黎卢浮宫（即此次巡展的第一站举办地）倾听“莱顿收藏”的创始人Thomas Kaplan亲自讲解这些油画背后的故事。





伊萨克·德·汝德维尔 (1612–1648)  
《身着东方传统服装的伦勃朗肖像》  
1631年  
木板油画  
70.8×50.5厘米



扬·利文斯 (1607–1674)  
《身着斗篷和头巾的男孩 (巴拉丁的鲁伯特王子肖像)》  
1631年  
木板油画  
66.7×51.8厘米

## “匿名收藏者”的现身

一直以来，莱顿收藏 (The Leiden Collection) 都是一个神秘的存在，“直到6个月之前，我们还依然是一个秘密、匿名的状态。这是我们有意为之。十多年中，我们一直都是古典画作的最大私人买家。我们知道，一旦我们的收藏与公众公开，就会改变我们在艺术界的地位。作为收藏者，我们想保持低调。”从2003年美国收藏家托马斯·S·卡普兰博士 (Dr. Thomas S. Kaplan) 与妻子达芙妮·莉卡纳蒂·卡普兰 (Daphne Recanat Kaplan) 创建莱顿收藏以来，以“莱顿”命名，即是在向伦勃朗的故乡、艺术大师绘画生涯的诞生地致敬。创立至今，莱顿收藏拥有超过250幅油画和素描艺术作品，是目前全球拥有十七世纪荷兰艺术画作数量最多、最重要的私人收藏之一。

自幼年起，托马斯·卡普兰就深深痴迷于伦勃朗·范·莱茵 (Rembrandt van Rijn) 的绘画作品，八岁时就曾请求家人带他去阿姆斯特丹，“因为伦勃朗曾经住在那里”。于是，当他从朋友诺曼·罗森塔尔爵士 (Sir Norman Rosenthal) 处惊讶地得知，他从小喜欢的艺术画作，尤其是大名鼎鼎的伦勃朗流派的作品在市面上仍有购买渠道，便与妻子一同踏上了荷兰艺术品的收藏之旅。

卡普兰为莱顿收藏购入的第一批画作来自伦勃朗的门生格里特·德奥 (Gerrit Dou) 和他作为“精细绘画” (fijnschilders) 的追随者们，包括弗里斯·范·米里斯、哥德福里德斯·斯哈尔肯和加布里埃尔·梅曲的创作。“精细绘画”是当时风靡一时的绘画形式，德奥和米里斯等人当年的油画售价甚至超过了伦勃朗和鲁本斯等大师，直到摄影术的发明，情况才发生了变化。目前莱顿收藏中的“精细绘画”作品超过了世界上任何私人收藏家或公共收藏机构。

当然，对卡普兰夫妇吸引力最大的，依然还是伦勃朗。要知道，目前存世的伦勃朗作品只有350幅，而莱顿收藏就拥有其中的11幅。2006年，卡普兰夫妇购入了他们第一幅伦勃朗作品——素描《静卧的幼狮》。卡普兰说：“我收购的最早的伦勃朗画作其实

不是油画，而是一幅小狮子的素描。伦勃朗画过6幅狮子素描，其中有2幅在卢浮宫，2幅在大英博物馆，1幅在荷兰，余下的就是我们的这一幅。”在画商向卡普兰出售这幅画时，他咨询了夫人的意见，他的夫人达芙妮说：“这是一幅伦勃朗的画，而且画得是一只狮子，它又那么美。如果它不是属于你的，那又应该属于谁呢？”要知道，托马斯·卡普兰可是一位极富激情的野生动物，尤其是大型猫科动物保护者，于是，他买下了这幅结合了他两大爱好的画。

之后，他们又购得了伦勃朗的油画作品《戴白帽的女子》，画中那位年长女子被卡普兰看作是他的“初恋”。在国博的展览中，还有另一幅伦勃朗晚年作品，画中的老妇人被认为与《戴白帽的女子》中的是同一个人——伦勃朗的女管家。

2003年至2008年的五年间，卡普兰夫妇开启了高速购买模式，“我们平均每周会收入一幅画。”随着时间的推移，莱顿收藏中伦勃朗流派的画作成为除国家级博物馆之外，数量最多、范围最广和内涵最深刻的收藏系列，其中不乏私人收藏中最顶级的作品。此后，卡普兰夫妇专心购买稀有和意義重大的画作，例如卡尔·法布里蒂乌斯的《夏甲与天使》(这是私人藏品中，伦勃朗最著名的门生唯一一幅作品)、扬·斯坦的《餐前祈祷》、唯一幅属于私人收藏的维米尔的作品《坐在维金纳琴旁的年轻





约翰内斯·维米尔(1632-1675)  
《坐在维金钢琴旁的年轻女子》  
1670-72年  
帆布油画  
25.5×20.1厘米



伦勃朗·范·莱登(1606-1669)  
《书房中的女神密涅瓦》  
1635年  
帆布油画  
139×116.5厘米

格罗特·特·德奥(1619-1675)  
《荷马毛毯的序》  
1633-32年  
椭圆形木板油画  
26.3×21.2厘米



伦勃朗·范·莱登(1606-1669)  
《衣服被剪毁的自画像》  
1634年  
木板油画  
71.1×56厘米



女子》(这幅作品与现存于卢浮宫的《织花边的女工》完成于同一匹帆布,和2016年购入的伦勃朗作品《昏迷中的病人》(嗅觉的寓言))。

## 每幅画都是一个故事

令人意外的是,虽然托马斯·卡普兰身负企业家、国际投资人、慈善家和艺术品收藏家等多重身份,莱顿收藏还拥有三百余幅藏品,但他似乎对每幅画都了然于胸,就像是他的孩子一样。

“为什么伦勃朗画了那么多自画像呢?当然,这不是因为他是个自大狂,而是因为当时他已经是个名画家了。拥有一幅伦勃朗的《自画像》,就如同拥有一幅莫奈的《睡莲》或是安迪·沃霍尔的《汤罐头》一样,这是证明自己很有品位的事情。另外,画家也需要用创作来赚钱。伦勃朗在自己的工作室里总会摆一幅自己的自画像,原因有两个,一是他可以拿给客户看,让他们了解自己请他来画肖像,最终的效果将是怎样的。这就像是一个样本。另一个就是如果有人想买,那就方便地买下那一幅。”

除了伦勃朗的自画像,莱顿收藏中还有一幅出自伦勃朗学生伊萨克·乔尔德维尔的《身着东方服饰的伦勃朗之画像》,这是了解伦勃朗早期教学方式的一个重要参考。“当时伦勃朗给了他学生一幅自画像,让他照着临摹。”而作为参考的那幅伦勃朗全身像《自画像》(1631年)现在收藏在巴黎小皇宫。“后来伦勃朗发现自己不喜欢他自画像里的样子,于是就在前面加了一条长卷毛的贵宾犬。之后,他再也没画过带腿的全身像。”卡普兰说,“于是,乔尔德维尔这幅画之所以重要的一个原因就是它是现在

唯一一幅的伦勃朗全身像,拥有很高的史料价值。”

扬·利文斯这位与伦勃朗同时期的画家,同样也是莱顿收藏的重要关注对象。馆藏6幅利文斯巅峰时期的油画作品,包括著名的《自画像》和《披披肩、戴头巾的男孩》(这两幅都在国博展览中展出)。“他们是好朋友,共同使用一个工作室,而同时也是竞争对手。那时候人们都在观望,看这两个年轻人谁要有前途。”卡普兰饶有兴趣地介绍,“你知道吗?他们都曾经为对方当过模特。在利文斯的《打牌者》这幅画中,你可以看到伦勃朗‘出镜’,这是伦勃朗第一次为别人做模特,而我们都认为,伦勃朗《听觉的寓言》中的年轻乐师描绘的也正是年轻时的利文斯。”

《听觉的寓言》是伦勃朗早期的作品《感官寓言》系列中的一幅,这个系列共包括五幅,而今能找到的三幅全属于莱顿收藏。关于2016年购入的伦勃朗作品《昏迷中的病人》(嗅觉的寓言),莱后也有一个故事。

“直到两年前,人们只知道这个系列中只有两幅存世,另外的三幅早已失传不见。而当这一幅《嗅觉的寓言》两年前出现时,人们并不知道它究竟是什么。那是一个离经

约不远的小镇上举办的拍卖会,这幅画被标记为‘欧洲大陆画派’,起拍价只有500美元。”参与拍买的竞标者中有几位与卡普兰保持了长期的合作关系的画商,他们认出这幅画属于伦勃朗《感官寓言》系列,于是价格一路飙升,从500美元飞涨到1百万美元。第二天,买下画的法国画商就将画转手卖给了卡普兰。

花了多少钱呢?

“通常我不愿意讲我花了多少钱买了画,这不是我的方式。但我愿意给你们一些细节,因为我曾经在接《纽约时报》的记者采访时让他猜过一次价格,跟他说,‘如果你猜对了,我会确认这个价格。’结果他猜了五百万。很幸运,他猜对了!”

除了这个令人不可思议的价格差,这幅画还有一个重要意义,之后他们发现这幅画上有伦勃朗的签名,而同系列的其他几幅都没有。于是,这幅画成为了目前已最早有伦勃朗亲笔签名的画作。这也对人们研究伦勃朗早期签名留了一个重要证据。

“画背后的这些有趣的故事正是古典画作吸引人的一个重要原因。”卡普兰说。

## 分享是最大的美德

与大多数收藏家不同的是,卡普兰并没有把买来的这些艺术品放在家里。“我们家里没有一幅自己的收藏。它们都在博物馆。”

自莱顿收藏创立之初起,卡普兰夫妇便开创了迄今为止独一无二的“借閱图书馆”,“我们的原则就是,从私人手中购得画作,然后跟公众分享。”我们以匿名的方式,将我们的画借给各大博物馆,供公众鉴赏与参观,而不只是自己欣赏。”多年来,莱顿收藏共出借藏品172次,不断为世界各地的临时特展和博物馆的永久馆藏提供藏品支持,其中包括纽约大都会艺术博物馆、华盛顿国家美术馆、波士顿美术馆、荷兰国立博物馆、巴黎卢浮宫博物馆等多家重要展馆。

2017年1月,莱顿收藏后上线藏品目录,旨在成为同类中最全面、最易于读者理解的学术性参考目录。艺术爱好者能够从线上藏品目录获取所有作品的图文信息,并且研读有关莱顿收藏、荷兰艺术黄金时代的学术论文和个人研究。

经过十余年的匿名借閱,直到今年,莱顿收藏才第一次作为一个整体概念在公众面前呈现。“现在我觉得举办巡展恰逢其时,可以让公众进一步接触、了解这些古典大师,这是我们的愿景,也是我们的理想。”莱顿收藏的首展选择了巴黎卢浮宫:卢浮宫是卡普兰夫妇第一次带孩子欣赏艺术展的地方,也是全家一直以来最喜爱的博物馆。

“我们是美国人,首个展览在法国举办,主题是荷兰绘画,讲述的则是所有文化中的共同点,伦勃朗是世界性的,这是最重要的一点。不论是美国人、法国人、中国人、荷兰人、俄罗斯人、阿拉伯人、犹太人……伦勃朗是全世界的宝贵财富,因此他如此特别。在这样一个时刻,我们都在寻求一个能使我们所有人团结起来的媒介。这就是我们来到这的原因。”



莱顿卡普兰

托马斯·S·卡普兰博士(Dr. Thomas S. Kaplan)是美国企业家、国际投资人、慈善家和艺术品收藏家。他目前担任纽约The Spectrum Group LLC集团主席,集团业务集中于自然资源领域,经营内容集投资、咨询和资产管理于一体。

卡普兰博士1962年出生于美国纽约,在牛津大学获得历史系本科、硕士和博士学位。1993年,

卡普兰博士开始在自然矿产领域进行投资,并创立了黄金集团金矿集团(The Spectrum Group)公司。有趣的是,在小亚细亚的土耳其发现的世界上第一枚金币是由该公司制造的。The Spectrum Group公司控制了土耳其地区的优质金矿资源,因此该公司的资本也日益雄厚。而卡普兰家族也借此成为世界上最成功和最富有家族之一。

卡普兰夫妇参与的慈善事业遍布全球,他们积极为世界各地的博物馆提供和修复艺术品的借閱支持,另外他们还设立全球野生动物保护的积极倡导者和主要资助者之一。过去十年在环保方面的投入超过1亿美元。2006年,夫妇二人创建Panthera基金会,旨在保护大型濒危猫科动物和他们赖以生存的生态系统。



伦勃朗和他的时代  
莱顿莱顿收藏馆藏展  
2017年6月1日至9月3日  
中国国家博物馆

## 为什么偏爱伦勃朗

至于为什么伦勃朗对卡普兰有着那么大的吸引力,这位英国收藏家有着非常独到而深刻的见解:“收藏伦勃朗并不需要什么天赋,成为伦勃朗才需要真正的天赋。伦勃朗改变了艺术史的进程,永远改变了油画的面貌。他不单只是他那个时代绘画界的佼佼者,而是他对整个绘画方式带来了革命性的改变。”

在众多古典画家之中,什么使伦勃朗如此与众不同、独树一帜?

“在伦勃朗之前,西方古典艺术有着一套传统的定义‘美’和‘真实’的方式。而伦勃朗则重新定义了艺术家如何诠释‘美’,即呈现给人们真实的样子,不论是形体还是内在。在那个时代,这绝对是颠覆性的。”卡普兰接着说,“他打破了传统,用不同的方式来看待‘美’,给予艺术家表达自己真实感受的权力,这一点改变了整个艺术。如果你们看到未来之后发生的事,看到整个西方艺术所发生的改变,像是戈雅、毕加索、梵高、德拉克洛瓦,都曾为伦勃朗着迷,因为他们认为,他给予了他们按照自己意愿创作的自由。”

《书房中的女神密涅瓦》集中体现了伦勃朗的艺术追求。“这幅画描述的这位女神,即是智慧女神,也是女战神。对于伦勃朗来说,在艺术上的最高成就,就是能画出这样一幅作品。虽然他画的很多肖像画是为了赚钱,但他的内心的目标,还是能画出这种有历史感的作品。”

这幅画中女子的容貌可以说打破了人们的传统思维模式。“伦勃朗有能力画出任何他想画出的事物,他可以画一个传统意义上的美丽女子,也画出一个非常有那个时期荷兰特色的女子。而伦勃朗说他并不在意是不是遵循传统习惯,而就是要展示他眼中看到的真实。他选择了他想画的。这是一个非常典型的荷兰女人,可以看出她很强势。她是一个真实的存在。对画家来说,真实就是美。当时也有很多评论家认为他的画的不美,但是伦勃朗并不在乎。这需要很大的勇气。”

伦勃朗的时代,尤其是他的艺术探索,对于之后的艺术发展起到了至关重要的作用。在那段被称为荷兰绘画黄金时代的时期,大量绘画作品和艺术家的爆发式出现。在那之前,欧洲绘画的主要主题依然是宗教。在那之后,在绘画主题和技法上,都展开了更加广阔的一片天地。

“我们坚信艺术是一种连接人与人之间的强大力量,不但是个体之间,更是文化之间。我们也相信,在建立这种连接方面,伦勃朗有着独一无二的独特地位和作用。他不只是一位荷兰艺术家,也是属于中国的艺术家。我们这次巡展的目的是在于实现一个长期影响,帮助人们了解伦勃朗的艺术。如果我们能够鼓励中国的观众欣赏伦勃朗及其同时代画家,将真看作为艺术史上重要的一环,那我们就做了一件有历史意义的事,这是我们的目标。我们希望建立起这样一座桥梁。”



L'Officiel Hommes	August 2017	Ma Xuelian
<b>"The Leiden Collection and Rembrandt"</b>		
<p><i>Along with a blistering hot summer, the Beijing art world has ushered in a great event. On June 17, 2017, the National Museum of China held the grand opening of "Rembrandt and His Time: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection." Over seventy oil paintings from the Dutch Golden Age are on display, including eleven authentic Rembrandts. Given the fame of this particular artist, how could anybody possibly own so many prestigious paintings? L'Officiel Hommes magazine was fortunate enough to participate in a conversation with the Collection's founder, Dr. Thomas S. Kaplan, as he told the story of these paintings at the Louvre in Paris – the first stop for this traveling exhibition.</i></p> <p><i>An "anonymous collector" steps forward</i></p> <p>The Leiden Collection had always led a mysterious existence. "Until six months ago, we still maintained a secret, anonymous status. This was our intention. For over a decade, we were the largest private collectors of classical paintings. We knew that once our collection would be made open to the public, our position in the art world would change immediately. As collectors, we wanted to keep a low profile." Since 2003, when American collectors Thomas S. Kaplan and his wife, Daphne Recanati Kaplan, began building The Leiden Collection, they used the name of Leiden in homage to Rembrandt's hometown and the birthplace of the master's painting career. From the time of its establishment to date, The Leiden Collection has assembled over 250 oil paintings and sketches. It currently represents one of the largest and most important private collections of 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch art in the world.</p> <p>Ever since he was a little boy, Thomas Kaplan has been in love with Rembrandt van Rijn's paintings. At age eight, he asked his parents to take him to Amsterdam "because Rembrandt lived there." Years later, when learning to his astonishment from his friend Sir Norman Rosenthal that the artwork he had so admired since childhood was still available on the market, especially works from the celebrated Rembrandt school, Dr. Kaplan and his wife set out to collect Dutch masterpieces.</p> <p>The first batch of paintings that the Kaplans acquired for The Leiden Collection were by Rembrandt's pupil Gerrit Dou and his followers, dubbed the <i>Fijnschilders</i> ("fine-painters"), including Frans van Mieris, Godefridus Schalcken, and Gabriel Metsu. <i>Fijnschilderen</i> represented a form of painting that enjoyed great popularity in its day. Prices for oil paintings by Dou, Mieris, and others in fact exceeded those by masters such as Rubens and even Rembrandt, at least until the invention of photography when circumstances changed. The Leiden Collection now possesses more works by <i>fijnschilders</i> than any other private collector or collecting institution in the world.</p> <p>Of course, Rembrandt remains the Kaplans' favorite artist. Only 350 or so paintings by the master have survived, and The Leiden Collection owns eleven of them. The Kaplans bought their first Rembrandt in 2006, the drawing <i>Young Lion Resting</i>. "The first</p>		

Rembrandt that I acquired,” recounts Dr. Kaplan, “actually was not an oil painting, but a small drawing of a lion. Rembrandt made six such drawings of lions, of which two are in the Louvre, two are in the British Museum, one is in the Netherlands, and the remaining one is ours.” When the art dealer offered to sell the drawing to him, Thomas asked his wife Daphne for her opinion. She responded: “It’s a Rembrandt, it’s a lion, and it’s beautiful. If it’s not for you, then for whom is it?” Thomas Kaplan is also known to be very passionate about protecting wildlife, particularly big cats, so he ended up buying this drawing that combines his two great “obsessions”.

Shortly thereafter, the couple acquired an oil painting by Rembrandt, *Study of an Old Woman in a White Cap*, depicting an older woman who Kaplan looks upon as his “first love.” Another work by Rembrandt is featured in the National Museum of China’s exhibition, representing an old woman who is believed to be the same as the one in *Study of an Old Woman in a White Cap* – Rembrandt’s housekeeper.

In the five years from 2003 to 2008, the Kaplans went on an acquisition spree. “We were acquiring on average one painting per week.” Over time, Rembrandt school paintings from The Leiden Collection became the largest, widest in scope, and deepest in content of any collection outside of national-scale museums – including many of the finest works belonging to any private collection. The Kaplans focused on purchasing rare and significant pieces, such as *Hagar and the Angel* by Carel Fabritius (the only work by Rembrandt’s most renowned student still in private hands), Jan Steen’s *Prayer Before the Meal*, Johannes Vermeer’s *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* (produced from the same bolt of canvas as *The Lacemaker*, currently at the Louvre, and the only Vermeer in a private collection), and Rembrandt’s *Unconscious Patient* acquired in 2016.

#### *Every painting is a story*

Surprisingly, although Thomas Kaplan is many things – entrepreneur, international investor, philanthropist, and art collector – and The Leiden Collection comprises over 250 pieces, he seems to know everything about each of them, as if they were his children.

“Why did Rembrandt paint so many self-portraits? Not because he was a narcissist of course, but because he was already a famous painter at the time. To possess a Rembrandt Self-Portrait was the equivalent of having one of Monet’s Water Lilies or Andy Warhol’s Soup Cans. It was evidence that you had good taste. Furthermore, painters had to be creative to make money. Rembrandt would always keep a self-portrait in his studio, for two reasons. First, to show potential customers a preview of what the final result would look like if they were to hire him – it was a sample. Second, in the event that someone would want to buy a self-portrait, they could conveniently buy that one.”

In addition to self-portraits by Rembrandt, The Leiden Collection also features *Portrait of Rembrandt in Oriental Dress* by Rembrandt’s student, Isaac de Jouderville. This piece constitutes an important reference in order to understand Rembrandt’s teaching methods in his earlier period. “At the time, Rembrandt would give his student a self-portrait and instruct him to follow the blueprint to make a copy.” The full-length Rembrandt Self-

*Portrait* (1631) that was used as the initial reference now belongs to the collection of the Petit Palais in Paris. Later on, however, Rembrandt found that he did not like how his legs looked in this self-portrait, and decided to paint in a wavy-haired poodle. He would not paint any more self-portraits that included his legs after that,” said Kaplan. “One reason why the work by Isaac de Jouderville is so important is because it represents the only full-length portrait of Rembrandt, and thus has great historical value.”

Jan Lievens, a contemporary of Rembrandt, is another important focus of attention in The Leiden Collection. The 6 paintings by Lievens from his peak period include the famous *Self-Portrait* and *Boy in a Cape and Turban* (both of which are on display at the National Museum of China). “They were good friends, used the same studio, but they were also rivals. People at the time were all watching to see which of these two young men had the brighter future.” As Kaplan explains with rapt interest: “Did you know? Both of them had served as models for the other. In Lievens’ painting *Card Players*, one can see Rembrandt making a cameo appearance. This represents the first time that Rembrandt served as someone else’s model. And it is also believed that the young musician depicted in Rembrandt’s *Three Musicians (Allegory of Hearing)* is the young Lievens.”

*Three Musicians (Allegory of Hearing)* belongs to “The Five Senses” series of paintings from Rembrandt’s early period. This series includes five paintings, three of which belong to The Leiden Collection. The piece *Unconscious Patient (Allegory of Smell)* comes with an interesting story as well.

As of two years ago, people thought that there were only three surviving paintings in this series – the other two having long been lost. So when that particular painting resurfaced, nobody knew what to make of it. It appeared at an auction held in a small town near New York, and was catalogued as “Continental School, Nineteenth Century” with an initial asking price of \$500.” Among the bidders in attendance at the auction were dealers who knew of Kaplan’s collection. They recognized that this painting belonged to “The Five Senses” series. At that point, the price soared from \$500 to \$1 million. The very next day, the French dealer that had bought the painting sold it to Kaplan.

*For how much?*

“I am usually not inclined to say how much I have paid for a particular painting. It is not my way. But I am willing to share a few details, because I once allowed a New York Times reporter to whom I was giving an interview to guess the price. I said, ‘If you guess correctly, I will confirm that price.’ He guessed \$5 million. He was lucky and right!”

Apart from the incredible price discrepancy, this piece is also important because Rembrandt’s signature was later discovered on the painting – a characteristic that the other three works from the series do not enjoy. As a result, it is now considered to be the earliest known work signed by Rembrandt. The piece also provides significant evidence for those studying Rembrandt’s early signature. “These captivating stories behind the paintings represent a major reason why people are so attracted to them,” said Kaplan.

*Sharing is the greatest virtue*

Unlike the vast majority of collectors, the Kaplans did not hang their paintings at home. “We do not have a single painting of our own there. They are all in museums.”

Since The Leiden Collection’s inception, the Kaplans have created a “lending library” – a concept that remains unique to date in the Old Masters. “Our principle is to acquire works from the private domain and to share them with the public. We use an anonymous approach, lending our paintings to major museums and allowing the general public to enjoy them.” Over the years, The Leiden Collection has lent works on 172 occasions, constantly contributing pieces from the Collection to support special temporary exhibitions as well as permanent collections at institutions all over the world. These include the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands, the Louvre in Paris, and many other renowned exhibition halls.

In January 2017, The Leiden Collection launched an online collection catalogue with the objective of establishing the most comprehensive and user-friendly academic reference of its kind. Art lovers are now able to retrieve all of the graphic information from the Collection, access academic essays, and consult expert studies on both The Leiden collection and the Dutch Golden Age.

After over a decade of anonymous lending, The Leiden Collection is now appearing before the public as a conceptual whole. “We think it was the right time to hold a traveling exhibition, allowing the public further contact with, and greater understanding of, these Dutch masters. This is our vision and our ideal.” The Louvre was chosen as the first stop on this international tour. The iconic museum happens to be the first place where the Kaplans took their children to appreciate art, and it has been the family’s favorite ever since.

“We are Americans, the first exhibition was held in France, and the theme was Dutch painting. This speaks to the sense of commonality that characterizes all cultures. Rembrandt is universal. That is the most important point. Whether people are American, French, Chinese, Dutch, Russian, Arab, Jewish... Rembrandt represents a treasure for the whole world. This is why he is so special. In a time like this, we are all searching for a medium that can bring people together. That is why we have come here.”

*Why the preference for Rembrandt*

As to why Dr. Kaplan is so attracted to Rembrandt, the American collector offers a very unique and profound explanation: “It doesn’t take a genius to collect Rembrandt, but it takes a genius to be Rembrandt. The master changed the course of the history of art, and changed forever the face of oil painting. Not only was he the greatest painter of his age, but he also brought revolutionary changes to how painting is approached.”

Among the many classical painters, what makes Rembrandt so different from the others, what makes him so unique? “Before Rembrandt, classical Western art had a set of traditional ways of defining ‘beauty’ and ‘realism.’ Rembrandt actually redefined how artists interpret ‘beauty,’ by choosing to show people as they truly are, whether in terms of their bodily form or their inner self. In that era, this was absolutely disruptive,” Dr. Kaplan said. “Rembrandt broke with tradition and used different approaches to look at ‘beauty,’ allowing artists the right to express what they really felt. This changed all of art. If one looks at the developments that came afterward, at the changes that occurred throughout Western art, such as with Goya, Picasso, Van Gogh, Delacroix – all had been fascinated with Rembrandt at one time, because they felt that he gave them the freedom to create according to their own wishes.”

*Minerva in Her Study* exemplifies Rembrandt’s quest. “The painting depicts the goddess of wisdom and war. For the master, the ability to paint a work such as this one constituted the highest degree of artistic accomplishment. Many of the self-portraits that he produced were to earn money. In the master’s heart, his ultimate goal was to be able to paint this kind of historical work.”

The depiction of the woman’s face in this painting arguably broke the traditional paradigm. “Rembrandt could paint anything that he wanted to paint. He could paint a beauty in the traditional sense, or paint a woman who very much displayed the characteristics of a Dutch woman of the day. But Rembrandt did not care about following the traditional practice; he simply wanted to show reality as he saw it. He always painted what he wanted to paint. This is a very typical Dutch woman, and one can see that she is very strong. She has a real presence. To a painter, reality is beauty. There were a lot of critics at the time who thought that Rembrandt did not paint beautifully, but he did not care. That took a lot of courage.”

The Rembrandt era, especially the sense of exploration that so characterized it, played a crucial role in subsequent artistic developments. This period, which came to be known as the Dutch Golden Age, witnessed an explosive emergence of paintings and artists. Prior to it, the vast majority of themes in European painting remained religious in nature. Afterwards, broader horizons had opened for both the themes and techniques of painting.

“We firmly believe that art represents a powerful force to connect people and cultures, even more so than organizations. We also believe that Rembrandt has a unique position and role to play in building those connections. He is not only a Dutch artist, but in fact belongs to Chinese artists as well. The goal of this travelling exhibition is to create a long-term impact, helping people understand Rembrandt’s art. If we can encourage Chinese audiences to appreciate Rembrandt and his contemporaries, and the role they played as a critical link in the history of art, then we will have achieved something of historical significance. This is our ambition. We hope to build these kinds of bridges.”

*Who is Dr. Kaplan?*

Dr. Thomas S. Kaplan is an American entrepreneur, international investor, philanthropist,



and art collector. He currently serves as the Chairman of The Electrum Group LLC in New York. The Group combines investment, advisory services, and asset management activities, with a focus on the natural resources sector.

Dr. Kaplan was born in New York in 1962. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees, as well as a PhD in history, from the University of Oxford. In 1993, Dr. Kaplan began investing in the minerals field. He named his company after electrum, a naturally occurring alloy of gold and silver. Interestingly, the first coin in history, discovered at the site of ancient Lydia in Anatolia, was made from electrum. The Electrum Group controls high-quality gold and silver mineral resources companies in North America, among others. As a result, the Kaplan family has become a major player in the industry.

The Kaplans participate in philanthropic causes on an international scale. They provide support to museums around the world, including loans of precious art pieces. They are also among the most vocal advocates for, and most significant sponsors of, global wildlife conservation efforts, having contributed over \$100 million to environmental causes in the past decade. In 2006, the couple established Panthera, an organization that aims to protect endangered big cats and the ecosystems on which they depend for their survival.

*National Museum of China*

*June 17, 2017 – September 3, 2017*

*“Rembrandt and His Time: Masterpieces from the Leiden Collection”*