

6月初的一天，午夜12点已过，长安街上驶过一辆大车，最终停在国家博物馆门前。

几个人轻手轻脚地从车厢里搬出几个大箱子，一路朝国博南8展馆而去。接下来差不多一个星期里，几乎每天晚上都有人往这个展馆里搬进大箱子，三个、四个、十来个……这些来自法国和美国的箱子里装着74幅17世纪荷兰艺术家画作，其中有11幅伦勃朗的真迹，还有一幅首次在中国展出的维米尔作品《坐在维金纳琴旁的少女》，他与伦勃朗、梵高被并称为“荷兰三大画家”。剩下的作品大多来自伦勃朗的老师和学生，画作包含历史和社会风俗等主题。



画布上的不是油彩，是荷兰最棒的100年

货真价实的伦勃朗，终于来到中国

● 本刊记者 毛晨钰 / 文

《博物馆上光影的自画像》

与这些箱子一同抵达国博的还有几位海关人员。原本按照规定，进出口物品都必须经过海关开箱抽检，但因为展品的特殊性，海关人员专门到已经设定好恒温恒湿状态的展厅进行现场查验。

对大部分国内观众而言，这是目前为止中国规模最大的伦勃朗画展。国博策展人赵若洞连续几天凌晨两点下班，开箱那天，揭开封条、取出展品时，她真切感受到：伦勃朗来了！

“低地”

2016年上半年，国博收到了一份由美国莱顿收藏馆寄出的展出资料，上面提出想将国博作为他们即将开始的全球巡展的第二站。

从2017年6月到2018年2月，从北京到上海，
被“坑”了好多次的中国观众终于可以看到一场货真价实的
伦勃朗画展



《画家笔下的狮子》

在此之前，这个私人收藏馆在观众眼中几乎是隐形的。自从2003年创办以来，他们向世界各地约25家博物馆无偿借出了170多次展品，在拥有者那一栏始终写着匿名的“私人收藏家”。在莱顿策展人劳拉看来，收藏馆创办者托马斯·S·卡普兰之所以这样做，是“想让人们把更多注意力放到作品而非拥有者之上”。

托马斯是个不折不扣的伦勃朗“迷弟”。自从6岁时在大都会艺术博物馆第一次与伦勃朗见面，他就被伦勃朗作品中迷人的明暗对比所吸引，甚至一度很想去阿姆斯特丹，“因为伦勃朗曾经住在那里”。

2003年，托马斯先收藏了伦勃朗学生的一幅作品，此后便以“伦勃朗”为原点，一并收藏了他的老师、同窗和学生的作品，甚至以

伦勃朗的家乡——莱顿作为收藏馆的名字。之后，托马斯一直在丰富馆藏，14年间，他一共收藏了11幅伦勃朗油画。他将这种近乎狂热的收藏观称为“突袭伦勃朗”。

去年年初，藏在展品后面的托马斯终于决定不再隐姓埋名，“因为把这些艺术家呈现给更多的人是一种使命。”他选择亮相的方式是办一场世界巡展。他和收藏馆的专家盘点了自己所拥有的画作，它们大多是17世纪的荷兰艺术家作品，展现了那个时代的“清晰脉络”。因此，这次展出也被命名为——“伦勃朗和他的时代”。

去年年底，赵若澍接到了筹备伦勃朗画展的通知，她最先接待的是莱顿收藏联络人马克西姆和一位以色列安全顾问。在一番考察之后，他们对国博展厅的硬件设施和安保相当放心。马克西姆从这时开始就一直留在北京，“他老跑来，时不时就在各个场馆转悠”。



《穿金边斗篷的少女》

今年2月,莱顿收藏馆先在巴黎卢浮宫进行了“试水”,这也是卢浮宫历史上第一次举行由外国收藏家举办的展览。被送去卢浮宫苏利庭院的画作有33幅,展出的3个月里,卢浮宫门前的观众等上两个小时就为了一睹伦勃朗及荷兰黄金时代的画作,因为很少有人专门收藏展出这一时期的作品。

有了卢浮宫办展的经验,托马斯决定把中国展办得更大,以此呈现一个更全面的荷兰黄金时代。在赵若涓看来,这是很有必要的。长期以来中国观众对英美艺术更感兴趣,在欧洲则倾向于关注德法两国,对荷兰知之甚少。它在中国观众眼中,是个名副其实的“低地”。而在自媒体“博物馆有得聊”资深艺术讲师廖帆看来,这次“伦勃朗和他的时代”中的“时代”,也正是“荷兰最棒的100年”。

在挑选国博展出作品之前,莱顿收藏馆花了很长时间研究17世纪荷兰与中国的关系。他们特别为这次展览准备了一个新目录,上面增加了40多幅展品,大多反映了荷兰社会风俗。展品的运输和保险费用都由莱顿收藏馆承担,这在整个展出行业中都是非常罕见的,而最珍贵的作品保费高达数亿美元。

布展花了10天时间,对于国博来说这并不算短,通常他们只需要3天左右就能完成布置完一个展览。整个筹展过程更是花了一年多的时间,上一次如此耗时的展览是引起极大轰动的“大英博物馆100件文物展”。

当最后一颗钉子敲入展墙,最后一盏照明灯调整好角度,70多幅作品尽数归位时,策展人劳拉难掩激动,“我从没有看到这么多莱顿收藏的画作同时出现在一起。它们聚在一起让我看到了真正的荷兰黄金时代”。

“老有名了”

正式开展前,荷兰大使馆却有些忐忑。他们不失礼貌又小心翼翼地国博表示了自己的担心:中国观众会不会不了解伦勃朗?国博颇有些“嗤之以鼻”,赵若涓说国博给出的回复是:“伦勃朗在中国老有名了”。在之前的国内展览中,哪怕只有一两幅伦勃朗作品,都能引来众人争相参观,更不要说这次一下子来了这么多。

2007年,伦勃朗真迹第一次来中国,当时在伦勃朗作品收藏方面“财大气粗”的荷兰阿姆斯特丹博物馆一下子拿出了伦勃朗的2幅油



1



2

画和20幅铜版画。尽管如此,对于更期待看到伦勃朗油画作品的中国观众而言,这实在是“太小气了”。

伦勃朗二度来华是大都会博物馆2013年在国博举办的“道法自然”展览,那次展出的127幅作品中只有一幅伦勃朗作品《美罗拉》,这也是展出的唯一一幅肖像画。同时展出的还有梵高等艺术家作品。在3个月的展览中,参观人数超过了32万,不过最受欢迎的还是两幅梵高作品。

《美罗拉》出现在展览的第一章节,但由于实在太少,淹没在茫茫展品中,甚至有网友抱怨,头一回去看压根儿没发现,又专门冲着伦勃朗去看了第二回。两年后,伦勃朗再次在上海龙美术馆展出了一组素描人物像。

对于中国观众来说,上一次一下子展出超过10幅顶级油画大师真迹的专题展览还是2014年的上海莫奈特展。当时展出了40幅莫奈作品,极其罕见。但展览过后,比莫奈更耐人讨论的是这场展览的举办场地竟然是在一家商场,主办人更曾在采访中坦言,是把提供展品的外方“骗”过来的。

人流量大且存在安全隐患的商场不仅让外方心惊胆战,就连观众都忍不住质疑:主办方真的敢把真迹放到这儿来吗?虽然展出期间观展人数达到了40万,也引发了上海各大商

场的效仿,但这次展览还是被一部分人视为“营销活动”而毁誉参半。

在很难看到西方大师作品的中国,更多所谓的“XX展”其实颇有“挂羊头卖狗肉”之嫌,有的索性就是有名无实。

最坑的是2015年在上海举办的梵高艺术大展。

花大价钱买票入场的观众发现,所谓的“梵高展”其实没有一幅真迹,只是将3000多幅与梵高有关的高清画面投影到35幅巨幕上。有人认为这能让梵高作品“活”起来,但是更多人则并不买账。这种借助多媒体和灯光音效打造的名家作品展在中国屡见不鲜。

直到这次,中国观众终于第一次在家门看到了数量最多的、货真价实的伦勃朗。

据廖帆介绍,国内研究伦勃朗的人历来不少。代表中国艺术主流方向的《美术》杂志从1950年创刊以来就没有间断过对伦勃朗的报道,学者恨不得能把每幅作品看个底朝天,找出伦勃朗之所以伟大的秘诀,“像他这样的大师是很难归纳出一个‘法’来的。因为除非你曾在他的工作室学习观摩,否则怎么知道他如何调色运笔。”

事实证明了荷兰大使馆的多虑,正式开展前一天,国博公众号发布了展讯,瞬间获得了6万多人关注,底下的评论大多都是“冲着伦勃朗也要去”。

“柔软的还击”

摸准了中国观众的心理，莱顿收藏馆这次将所有作品分为6个单元，前3个单元有将近一半都是伦勃朗的作品。打头的是一幅由伦勃朗学生临摹的作品，画中正是伦勃朗本人。

紧接着的是一字排开的3幅作品，它们同属于伦勃朗的《五感寓言》系列，分别通过乐师、医生等职业刻画听觉、嗅觉、触觉、视觉和味觉感官。3幅作品中最瞩目的要数《失去知觉的病人（嗅觉的寓言）》，画中老妇人拿着一包盐凑近晕倒的年轻人，想要使他苏醒，而医生却在一边束手无策。

创作这个系列作品时，伦勃朗不过19岁，正在阿姆斯特丹学画。而这幅作品的发现也十分离奇。

2015年9月22日，新泽西一家拍卖公司的会场里，当这幅没有标题和作者的油画被摆上展台的时候，拍卖公司只敢估价500美元。所有人看起来都兴趣缺缺，除了两个电话竞拍者。拍卖公司总监回忆起当时的情形，说“一切都很突然”，叫价从3万涨到5万，有人将其形容为“一场豪赌”。最终一个法国人以87万美元买下了这幅画。



在拍卖抛落后，专家的鉴定结果才姗姗来迟——这是伦勃朗的早期作品《五感系列》之一。这幅原本长宽不过二三十厘米的作品在此之前被嵌在另一块画板，由他人补上空白位置，所以看起来不那么像伦勃朗的手笔。

流散了近3个世纪的画作又露面了，拍卖会中瞬间爆发出了掌声和欢呼：人们发现了至今为止伦勃朗最早的作品，这个消息也迅速登上了各大媒体的头条。

《嗅觉寓言》由法国人买下没多久，一转手就以500万美元的价格卖给了托马斯。当人们将覆盖在油画上的黄色污垢和颜料去除后，右上方隐约出现“RHF”的字样。2015年之前，这幅画从未在展览中出现过。在国博，每个观众来到它前面都恨不得把鼻尖贴上隔离玻璃，只求能将这幅最早带有伦勃朗签名的作品看得再仔细一些。

在这幅早期作品中，伦勃朗最为人津津乐道的明暗对比并不明显。想要见识这种技法的观众会在另一幅作品面前驻足良久。

那是《穿金边斗篷的少女》。画中的少女看起来不过十来岁，脸颊饱满红润，嘴唇微微掀起，还有一点双下巴。身子微扭，左肩高于右肩，一头金色卷发向上飘起。她黑色斗篷上的金边在光线下熠熠生辉。

而这幅画能在今天于中国展出，还要感谢把它偷走的大盗。

1975年4月，《穿金边斗篷的少女》正在波士顿美术博物馆展览。有两个人在中午时分买票进场，其中一人穿着粗花呢西装，软呢帽子压得很低。他们直走到这幅画之前，将它从墙壁上取下带走。尽管警察朝他们开了3枪，这俩人还是把画带走了。

一年后，联邦官员在波士顿一家餐厅的停车场开秘密会议，一位头戴滑雪面罩的男子突然出现。他威胁官员交出汽车后备箱的钥匙并进入餐厅等待电话指令。不久，官员就接到了男子打来的电话，让他们去后备箱取东西。揭开包裹着的棕色厚布，他们看到了一张少女的脸。

很多年后，这位臭名昭著的艺术品盗贼坦言，当年归还这幅画是为了能够减免因另一起艺术盗窃而被判的服刑年限。这幅重新回到博物馆的画在1986年被再次拍卖，当时拍卖方报出了1050万美元的价格，这是那一年荷兰艺术家作品的最高价。

2007年，托马斯买下了它，并借给洛杉矶、布达佩斯等地的博物馆展览。今年2月，它也出现在了巴黎卢浮宫的展墙上。四个月后，又出现在了中国国家博物馆的展馆中。

画中，少女的眼神有些调皮，直直望向你，似有话要跟你说。在赵若涌看来，这是“能够透露出人类灵魂的光”。拉德堡德奈梅亨大学教授沃尔克认为这就是伦勃朗肖像画的过人之处，“在他的画中，每个形象都不是静止的，而是活生生的，他们能够跟观众交流。”

9月3日是此次画展在国博展出的最后一天。早在联系国博展出的同时，莱顿收藏也在同时和龙美术馆沟通。20天后，伦勃朗和其他17世纪荷兰画家会一同走进上海龙美术馆，在这里展出到明年2月25日。

现在，策展人劳拉正忙着为上海展馆设计布展，值得期待的是，为了进一步加深中国观众对荷兰艺术的理解，上海展览会再增加4幅作品，其中包括一幅伦勃朗的素描《正在休息的年轻狮子》，这也是托马斯获得的第一幅伦勃朗作品。

上海展结束后，这些作品将会去往巡展的终点站阿联酋阿布扎比卢浮宫。这是托马斯最理想的展览，“战乱正在破坏人类价值和自由，这个展览会是一次柔软的还击。”^④



VISTA	26 September 2017	Mao Chenyu
<p>“The Authentic Rembrandts are Finally Here in China”</p>		
<p><i>What lies on these canvases are not just colors, but indeed the best 100 years in the Netherlands</i></p> <p><i>From June 2017 to February 2018, in Beijing then Shanghai, Chinese viewers who have been “cheated” many times in the past finally will be able to experience a genuine Rembrandt exhibition</i></p> <p>One early morning at the beginning of June, a large van drove through Chang’an avenue and ultimately stopped in front of the National Museum of China.</p> <p>Several people proceeded to unload a few sizable boxes from the van with extreme caution and to head silently towards the South Exhibition Hall No.8. Every night during the week that followed, additional large boxes would be moved into the museum – sometimes three, sometimes four, sometimes a dozen. These arrived from France and America and contained 74 paintings produced by 17th century Dutch artists. Among them, 11 authentic works by Rembrandt as well as <i>Young Woman Seated at a Virginal</i> by Vermeer which would be exhibited in China for the first time. Vermeer has been regarded as one of the three “greatest Dutch masters”, together with Rembrandt and Van Gogh. Most of the other pieces were painted by Rembrandt’s teachers and students, covering themes such as history and social customs.</p> <p>Along with these boxes came several Chinese customs officers. In accordance with regulations, imported and exported goods had to be opened for inspection and pass through customs. Given the special nature of the shipment, customs officers arrived directly at the exhibition hall and performed the inspection on site where temperature and humidity are held constant. For most Chinese viewers, this by far represents the most significant Rembrandt exhibition ever staged in the country. Having worked until 2am for several days, Zhao Ruojuan, Curator at the National Museum of China, truly felt the arrival of Rembrandt when she broke the seals to open the boxes and revealed the exhibits.</p> <p><i>“Low Countries”</i></p> <p>Sometime during the first half of 2016, the National Museum of China received word from the American Leiden Collection suggesting that it wished to make the museum its second stop on the global tour that the exhibition was about to begin.</p> <p>Prior to that, this private collection had been almost invisible to viewers as such. Since its establishment, the Collection had loaned to some 40 museums around the world on more than 170 occasions. In the owner’s column, an anonymous “private collector” would invariably be referenced. To Lara Yeager-Crasselt, Curator of The Leiden Collection, the intention of Thomas S. Kaplan was always to encourage people “to pay more attention to the pieces themselves, rather than the owner”.</p>		

Thomas is a genuine devotee of Rembrandt. Ever since he “met” Rembrandt at the Metropolitan Museum of Art at the age of 6, he had remained attracted to the mesmerizing contrast of light and shadow so prominent in the master’s works. As a young boy, he even insisted on visiting Amsterdam because “Rembrandt had lived there”.

In 2003, Thomas acquired a piece by one of Rembrandt’s students. From that point onwards, he set off on a journey to collect works by Rembrandt’s teachers, peers, and students. He even named his collection after Rembrandt’s hometown of Leiden and proceeded to add to it continuously. Over the past 14 years, Thomas has assembled 11 oil paintings by Rembrandt – occasionally referring to his frenzied collecting style as “the Raid on Rembrandt.”

Early last year, Thomas finally decided to come out of anonymity, “because it is simply a duty to introduce these artists to the greatest numbers.” Organizing a global tour is how he chose to reveal himself. Along with experts in the field, he also created an inventory of his paintings – centered on Dutch artists from the 17th century – in order to shed more light on the “vivid context” which characterizes this particular period. Hence the present exhibition was named “Rembrandt and His Time.”

Towards the end of 2016, Zhao Ruojuan received formal notice regarding the preparation for the Rembrandt exhibition. She held an initial meeting with representatives of The Leiden Collection who, upon inspection of the facilities, felt very comfortable about both the level of facilities and safety characteristics of the museum. One of these representatives, Maxim Parr, who has remained in Beijing since, would visit often and walk around the various halls.

In February of this year, The Leiden Collection held its “coming out party” at The Louvre Museum in Paris, which represented the first exhibition ever organized by foreign collectors at the iconic museum. Thirty-three paintings were exhibited in the Sully Wing. Throughout the three-month duration of the show, visitors occasionally waited in line for over two hours, just to see the works by Rembrandt and other artists from the Dutch Golden Age. Exhibitions covering this particular era are indeed quite rare.

Equipped with the experience of having exhibited at Le Louvre, Thomas decided to make the China show even more significant, with an eye to displaying as comprehensive a review of the Dutch Golden Age as possible. To Zhao Ruojuan, this effort directly addresses a major need. For a long time, Chinese viewers indeed have shown greater interest for art works originating from America as well as France, Britain, and Germany in Europe – yet know very little about the Netherlands. In the eyes of the Chinese public, the denomination of “low countries” is quite justified. According to senior art lecturer Liao Fan, the specific period which the “Rembrandt and His Time” exhibition focuses on truly represents “the best 100 years in the Netherlands.”

Prior to selecting the works that would compose the National Museum of China exhibition, The Leiden Collection spent a long time studying the history of, and the relationship between, the Dutch Republic and China in the 17th century. The team developed a special catalogue for the occasion, which included another 40 works to reflect the social customs of Dutch society. The Leiden Collection covered all shipping and insurance costs – a rarity in the exhibition industry.

Setting up the exhibition required 10 days of work – longer than usual for the museum, which typically takes about three days to prepare for most shows. The entire preparation process took over a year, similar to the time necessary to organize the sensational “British Museum: A History of the World in 100 Objects” exhibition. As the final nail was hammered into the wall, the angle of the last lights adjusted, and the more than 70 works put in place, exhibition curator Lara could not contain her excitement: “I have never seen so many works of The Leiden Collection under one roof. This assemblage shows me the real Dutch Golden Age.”

“Always well regarded”

Before the official opening, the Dutch embassy politely expressed its concern: “would Chinese viewers understand Rembrandt?” Zhao Ruojuan responded: “Rembrandt has always been very well regarded in China.” In past exhibitions, even one or two Rembrandts only would draw huge crowds. This time around, many such works would be displayed under the same roof.

In 2007, when authentic works by Rembrandt made their first appearance in China, the renowned Amsterdam Museum presented two of its oil paintings and twenty etchings. For Chinese visitors who had longed to experience Rembrandt, this was simply “not enough.”

The second occasion took place in 2013, when the “Dao Fa Zi Ran” exhibition was held at the National Museum of China. Among the 127 pieces on display, only one of them was by Rembrandt – *Flora*, which was the only portrait painting in the exhibition. Works by Van Gogh and other artists were also featured. During the three months of exhibition, over 320,000 people visited. The most popular works turned out to be the two Van Goghs.

Flora was arranged to be shown at the first stage of the exhibition. Yet it became almost invisible to some viewers who later complained that they had completely missed it and had to go back to find it! Two years later, a selection of sketches by Rembrandt was displayed at the Long Museum in Shanghai.

The last themed exhibition available to the Chinese public by an oil painting master comprising more than 10 masterpieces on display was the “Monet Special Exhibition” in Shanghai. Over 40 works by Monet were featured – an extremely rare feat. Following the show, however, what remained in people’s minds was that the chosen venue was in fact a shopping mall! The host even admitted in an interview that they had deliberately misled the foreign exhibitor.

Not only did the large flow of people, coupled with significant security risks, made the foreign exhibitor extremely concerned, but visitors also could not help but question how did the organizers dare display these works in such a location. Although the show ended up attracting some 400,000 people, which led to some “copy-cat” activities by other major shopping malls in Shanghai, it was generally considered a “marketing stunt” and received rather mixed reviews.

Given that opportunities to see western masters remain pretty rare in China, the public is often presented with so-called “special exhibitions” which in fact are typically but a pretty name with no authentic art work on display.

The biggest scam of all: the 2015 “Van Gogh Exhibition” in Shanghai

People who had spent hard-earned money on tickets were greeted by just 35 gigantic high-definition screens which displayed the images of some 3,000 works related to Van Gogh. Not one authentic work by the master was actually present. Some argued that the screens had brought his works to life, but others could hardly agree. This type of exhibition, in which masterpieces are staged using multimedia, lighting, and sound effects, are common in China.

This time around, the Chinese public is finally presented with an opportunity to experience the largest exhibition of authentic works by Rembrandt, right at their doorstep.

According to Liao Fan, Rembrandt has always been a subject of great interest and research in China. The “Art Magazine,” which covers mainstream Chinese art, has never stopped reporting on Rembrandt since its first publication in 1950. Scholars remain keen on thoroughly studying every piece of his work, hoping to discover the secret of his greatness. “It is difficult to generalize the method used by such masters. In fact, barring any study or firsthand exposure in his studio, how could one really know the way his paintings manipulate colors?”

The facts proved that the Dutch embassy’s concerns were unfounded. The day before the official opening, the National Museum of China released the news which instantly gained 60,000 followers online – most of the comments saying “I will go, just to see Rembrandt.”

“A gentle riposte”

Having understood the tastes of the Chinese public, The Leiden Collection decided to organize the works into 6 sections, with almost half of the first three dedicated to Rembrandt. The lead painting was a copy by one of Rembrandt’s students – a portrait of the master himself.

Following were three pieces from “The Five Senses” series, which comprise paintings depicting the senses of hearing, smell, touch, sight, and taste through professions such as musicians and doctors. *Unconscious Patient (Allegory of Smell)* is the most prominent of the three and represents an old lady trying to wake up an unconscious young man using smelling salts, while the doctor standing by appears rather useless.

Rembrandt was only 19 when he produced this series of paintings during his studies in Amsterdam. The discovery of this particular piece also tells an interesting story.

On 22 September 2015, at an auction house in New Jersey, this painting without a name or attribution was initially priced at \$500. It did not attract much attention, apart from two telephone bidders. The director of the auction house recounted: “everything happened so suddenly”. The price jumped from \$30,000 to \$50,000, and the bidding was described as “an extraordinary gamble.” A French gallery eventually bought it for \$850,000.

The experts’ verdict only came after the auction ended. This painting in fact turned out to be one of the early works by Rembrandt, part of “The Five Senses” series. Originally just twenty to

thirty centimeters wide, the piece was embedded in another drawing board with the blank space filled by someone else. As such, it did not look like an authentic Rembrandt.

The reappearance of a painting that had been lost for three centuries caused an eruption of applause and cheers in the auction house. The discovery of an early Rembrandt also made headlines in various media.

Soon after *Unconscious Patient (Allegory of Smell)* was acquired by the French gallery, it was resold to Thomas for approximately 5 million dollars. When people removed the yellow residue on the canvas, a “RHF” signature was revealed on the upper right corner – leading experts to conclude that this piece represented the Dutch master’s earliest signed work. Prior to 2015, this painting had never been exhibited. At the National Museum of China, visitors were seen trying to press their noses against the glass just to gain a better view.

In this early work, Rembrandt’s renowned use of contrasting light and shadow is not so obvious. Viewers that are keen on being exposed to this particular technique will have to seek out another painting.

The one we have in mind is *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak*, which depicts a teenage girl with plump, rosy cheeks and highlights the slight pouting of her mouth as well as an apparent double chin. Her body seems somewhat twisted, with the left shoulder higher than the right. Her golden locks are lifted by wind while the golden trim on her cloak shines through the darkness.

Ironically, we have robbers to thank for this painting appearing in China.

In April 1975, *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak* was on display at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Two people came in around noon, one of them wearing a tweed jacket and a hat that was kept very low. They headed straight to the painting and removed it from the wall. Although the police fired three shots at them, the two men got away with the picture.

A year later, a man wearing a ski mask suddenly appeared while some federal police officers were holding a secret meeting in the car park of a restaurant in Boston. He threatened them to surrender the keys to the trunk and directed them to the restaurant for further instructions. Before long, the officers received a call instructing them to uncover an item in the trunk. As they lifted a brown wrapping cloth, they saw the face of a young girl.

Many years later, the infamous art thief admitted that the painting had been returned as a way to reduce his prison sentence in relation to another art theft. The painting, which was returned to the museum, was auctioned again in 1986. The auctioneer reported a price of \$10.5 million – the highest price paid that year for the work of a Dutch artist.

Thomas acquired the piece in 2007 and loaned it shortly thereafter to museums in Los Angeles, Budapest, and other cities. In February this year, *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak* appeared at The Louvre in Paris. Four months later, it stands in the exhibition hall of the National Museum in China.

The girl's expression is a little mischievous, staring right at the viewer as if about to say something. To Zhao Ruojuan, this painting "radiates the (kind of) light that reveals the human soul". Professor Walker of Radboud University Nijmegen adds to the praise, noting that "in Rembrandt's paintings, each image is dynamic and engages the viewer."

September 3 will mark the last day of the exhibition at the National Museum of China. In parallel, The Leiden Collection has been in contact with the Long Museum. Only twenty days later, Rembrandt and other 17th century Dutch masters will walk into the Shanghai institution, where the show will be held until February 25th 2018.

At the moment, curator Lara is busy setting up the exhibition in Shanghai. Four additional pieces will be on display at the Long Museum, in order to further deepen the Chinese public's understanding of Dutch art. This includes a sketch by Rembrandt, *Young Lion Resting*, which also happens to be the first piece by the master ever acquired by Thomas.

After Shanghai, these works will continue their global tour and ultimately appear at The Louvre Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. This actually represents Thomas' ideal exhibition: "As war destroys human values and freedoms, this effort constitutes a gentle riposte."