

You Won't Believe How Much The Louvre Abu Dhabi Paid For This Rembrandt Painting

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Photo: Ismail Noor

Art aficionados, rejoice: The Louvre Abu Dhabi has acquired a rare oil sketch by renowned Dutch master, Rembrandt van Rijn that dates back to the 17th century. The centuries old painting,

entitled “Head of a young man, with clasped hands: Study of the figure of Christ”, belongs to a series of oil sketches known as Rembrandt’s “Face of Jesus” group.

The Abu Dhabi outpost of the prestigious museum acquired the work at a Sotheby’s auction in December for approximately US \$12.1 million, well over its estimate of US \$8 million. Appearing on the market for the first time in 60 years, the painting had until recently been on display in the late artist’s house in Amsterdam. It will be featured in the exhibition “Rembrandt, Vermeer & the Dutch Golden Age: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection and the Musée du Louvre,” which runs at the Emirati museum from February 14th to May 18th, before joining the museum’s permanent 650-piece collection.

The rare Rembrandt is one of the most high-profile acquisitions for the museum.

In a press statement, the director of Louvre Abu Dhabi, Manuel Rabaté, said: “With this latest acquisition, the first ever Rembrandt joining a museum collection in the Gulf, our visitors can experience the power of his creations first-hand, initially in our opening exhibition for 2019 and following that in our galleries.”

What’s more exciting is that the 17th-century piece won’t be the only Rembrandt on display at the Jean Nouvel-design art institution during the four-day exhibition. The overall exhibit will feature 95 artworks, including 16 paintings by the Dutch artist. There will also be 22 paintings, drawings, and prints produced by Rembrandt and his workshop in addition to artworks created by Rembrandt’s students and contemporaries in the Netherlands.

The exhibition, which includes masterpieces from The Leiden Collection, Musée du Louvre, and loans from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Rijksmuseum, will also give visitors and art buffs the chance to get up close and personal with Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer's "The Lacemaker" (acquired from the Musée du Louvre) and "Young Woman Seated at a Virginal" (The Leiden Collection), which will hang next to each other for what is believed to be the first time in 300 years.

The Dutch Golden Age was a period during the 17th century, when the newly-independent Dutch Republic established itself as a global leader in trade, science, and the arts. Regarded as the most prosperous state in Europe at the time, it was a period of great wealth for the Dutch Republic. During this time, Rembrandt and Vermeer were at the forefront of a new artistic movement marked by an artistic interest in humanity and scenes of daily life. The focus of this exhibition, which is the third international exhibition of the museum's 2018-2019 cultural season "A World of Exchanges", is to shed light on Rembrandt's career and the artistic traditions of the *fijnschilders* (fine painters) in the Netherlands and the overall impact that they've had on art today.

Entrance to the exhibition is free with the purchase of a museum ticket.