

Rare Rembrandt acquisition on display at Louvre

Temporary exhibition of Dutch masterpieces includes 95 artworks

February 16, 2019 | Samihah Zaman,



A visitor admiring an artwork from the collection of Dutch Golden Age's Exhibition at the Louvre Abu Dhabi. Image Credit: Abdul Rahman /Gulf News

Abu Dhabi: The Louvre Abu Dhabi's first exhibition of the year will focus on 17th century Dutch masters and their skilled works, with the museum's latest acquisition – a portrait by Rembrandt van Rijn – holding pride of place.

Having opened to the public on February 13, the Rembrandt, Vermeer and the Dutch Golden Age exhibition is displaying Rembrandt's "Head of a young man, with clasped hands: Study of the figure of Christ", along with 94 other paintings and artworks.

"We acquired the work of one of the period's greatest artists in time for it to be displayed during this exhibition. The piece truly represents a breakthrough in art because it depicts a sacred religious subject in a humane, everyday manner that is breathtaking," Dr Souraya Noujaim, director of the museum's scientific, curatorial and collection management department, told *Gulf News*.



Rembrandt van Rijn, (1606-1669) — Self-Portrait

Image Credit: Abdul Rahman/Gulf News

The piece, which was acquired for \$12 million (Dh44 million) in November 2018, is in the galleries dedicated to the temporary exhibition till it ends on May 18, before being moved to the Louvre Abu Dhabi's permanent galleries. It is the first Rembrandt to be held by a museum in the Gulf, although a few prints by the master were on loan to the Louvre Abu Dhabi, and on display, when the museum first opened.

Manuel Rabaté, museum director, said the collection of works highlights the Louvre Abu Dhabi's "commitment to bringing key moments in art and history to a new global audience, and further cement the museum's mission to become a centre for cultural exchange".

The pieces that will be on display include works from The Leiden Collection, which celebrates 17th century Dutch and Flemish art, the Musée du Louvre in Paris, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam – national museum of the Netherlands, and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the national museum of France.

A total of 22 Rembrandts are featured, including many examples of the self-portraits that were the artist's hallmark. Showcasing his mastery of light and shadow, the artworks trace his development from a young painter to an expert painter and printmaker who excelled in portraiture while also producing large, imposing historic art.

Johannes Vermeer's captivating "The Lacemaker" is also hung next to "Young Woman Seated at a Virginal" in the exhibition, accentuating the fact that both pieces are painted on canvas cut from the same bolt, even though the first is now held by the Musée du Louvre while the other is part of The Leiden Collection.

Other works by Rembrandt's students and peers, such as Jan Lieven's "Boy in a Cape and Turban" and Ferdinand Bol's "Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well", make up the rest of the exhibit.

Stressing on the trade that marked the halcyon days of the Dutch, the show opens with a rare, intricately-carved ship, on loan from the Rijksmuseum.

A series of talks, workshops and film screenings will also be held alongside the exhibition to enrich visitors' experience of the art.