

Hermitage shows Rembrandt and contemporaries from The Leiden Collection

SATURDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2023 | ANP



Self-portrait, Rembrandt van Rijn - Credit: [Foundation Rembrandt Research Project / Wikimedia Commons](#).

An exhibition on Rembrandt and his contemporaries from the Leiden Collection, one of the largest private collections of 17th-century Dutch art, opens on Saturday at the Hermitage in Amsterdam. A total of 35 paintings are on display, many of which have not been seen in the Netherlands for decades.

Amsterdam mayor Femke Halsema has already officially opened the exhibition on Thursday. From Saturday, the doors will be open to the public until Sunday, August 27.

Because of the war in Ukraine, the Hermitage broke ties with the Russian state museum of the same name in St. Petersburg earlier this year and has since started international collaborations with other cultural institutions. These included the exhibition Love Stories, which was created in collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery in London. Previously, the Dutch Heritage Amsterdam series featured masterpieces such as Vermeer's Milkmaid from the Rijksmuseum and Rembrandt's Self-Portrait from the Mauritshuis.

The Leiden Collection, founded in 2003 by American couple Thomas S. Kaplan and Daphne Recanati Kaplan, consists of some 250 paintings and drawings and is named after Rembrandt's hometown. Since 2017, the founders have toured the world with the masterpieces, including Paris, Shanghai, Moscow and Abu Dhabi.

The 35 paintings are history paintings based on stories from the Bible, classical history and mythology. For the Dutch artists of the seventeenth century, it was a challenge to depict history paintings in a very naturalistic way. This allowed viewers to clearly relate to the emotions and passions they were seeing. At the time, history painting was considered "the noblest and most prestigious form of painting."

The focus of the exhibition in Amsterdam is Rembrandt's work Minerva in Her Study (1635). Another notable work, for example, is Bust of a Bearded Old Man (1633), his smallest known painting that fits in the palm of a hand. In addition to works by Rembrandt (1606-1669), the exhibition features paintings by his teacher Pieter Lastman, students and successors such as Ferdinand Bol and Arent de Gelder, and contemporaries such as Carel Fabritius and Jan Steen.

This year, the Hermitage will present a multi-year exhibition program. The museum is considering continuing under a different name. Nothing is known about that yet, a spokesperson said, so the Hermitage Amsterdam will remain in operation for the time being.