



Art sensation in Amsterdam

Leiden Collection returns with Rembrandt and Vermeer

By Jessica Weiser | 03.02.2025, 08:00 o'clock

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Rembrandt van Rijn (1606 – 1669): Young Lion Resting, ca. 1638–42 PHOTO: THE LEIDEN COLLECTION

The Leiden Collection will present masterpieces by Rembrandt and Vermeer from April 2025. Experience a collection of such iconic Old Masters for the first time.

[The H'ART Museum announces that the blockbuster exhibition "From Rembrandt to Vermeer. Masterpieces from the Leiden Collection" will be on display in Amsterdam from April 9 to August 24, 2025.](#) 75 paintings by 27 artists will travel to Amsterdam as part of the celebrations of the city's 750th anniversary. Among the works returning to their country of origin are 17 masterpieces by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) and the only privately owned painting by Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675). For the first time, such a large number of masterpieces from the Leiden Collection, including all of Rembrandt's, will be on public display in Europe. Vermeer's Young Woman at the Virginal (1672-75) will also be on display as part of the exhibition. The painting has recently been restored and placed in a contemporary frame, providing a rare opportunity to admire this late work by the Delft master.

The Leiden Collection, founded in 2003 by Dr. Thomas S. Kaplan and his wife Daphne Recanati Kaplan, comprises around 250 paintings and drawings. It is one of the largest and most important private collections of Dutch painting of the 17th century. "From Rembrandt to Vermeer" was co-curated by Birgit Boelens and Elizabeth Nogrady; Boelens is curator of the H'ART Museum, Nogrady of the Leiden Collection. With this exhibition, they are continuing the partnership established in 2023 with the very successful show "Rembrandt and his Contemporaries". The collectors have committed to this much larger exhibition next year to celebrate the anniversary of the city of Amsterdam.



Gabriel Metsu (1629–1667): *Woman Selling Game from a Stall*, ca. 1653–54 PHOTO: THE LEIDEN COLLECTION

The extremely lively works in the exhibition illustrate the unique focus of the Leiden Collection, which is dedicated to the representation of man in all his facets. Thematically, "From Rembrandt to Vermeer" is divided into the everyday life and life of people in Amsterdam in the 17th century and in other urban centres of the Netherlands. An important part of this exhibition is portrait painting, in which characteristic features are expressed. On display are both the very formal portraits of wealthy citizens and tronies or character studies of people from different social classes, as well as self-portraits by various artists.

"From Rembrandt to Vermeer" is also dedicated to topics as diverse as the preparation and marketing of food, men playing cards, young people reading and women writing letters or making music. The religious aspects of family life in the 17th century are also depicted, in prayer scenes or in moralizing motifs that hung in the houses.

Rembrandt van Rijn is the focus of the exhibition. The impressive holdings of the Leiden Collection include works from all of the master's creative periods, but especially from the 1630s, shortly after he moved from his hometown of Leiden to Amsterdam. Works by Amsterdam artists closely associated with Rembrandt, including his teacher Pieter Lastman, as well as students and followers such as Ferdinand Bol, Govaert Flinck and Arent de Gelder - are also on display.

Another central aspect of this exhibition are works by Leiden artists on different themes. Many of them shared a studio or were apprenticed to another artist, drawing inspiration from the imagery of their predecessors and colleagues. Groundbreaking works by Rembrandt's friend and rival Jan Lievens, his pupil Gerrit Dou and artists who painted in Dou's Fijnschilder tradition, such as Frans van Mieris the Elder and Godefridus Schalcken, are also on display. Also on display are exceptional paintings by Dutch masters who worked in Utrecht, Haarlem, Deventer and The Hague: Hendrick ter Brugghen, Frans Hals, Jan Steen, Gerard ter Borch and Caspar Netscher, and Johannes Vermeer from Delf



Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675): Young Woman Seated at a Virginal, ca. 1672–75 PHOTO: THE LEIDEN COLLECTION

A deep passion for Rembrandt

Dr. Thomas S. Kaplan says: "It is incredibly significant to be back at the H'ART Museum on the occasion of the 750th anniversary of Amsterdam. This great city is the place where Rembrandt began his career and where he created many of his most lasting and momentous works. My wife and I could not think of a more fitting tribute to the master than to bring all his paintings from the Leiden Collection back to their homeland on the occasion of this anniversary. We look forward to sharing these masterpieces with visitors from Europe."

Dr. Kaplan's collecting activity began with a small work by Gerrit Dou, Rembrandt's first student in Leiden. The Leiden Collection, named after Rembrandt's birthplace, focuses primarily on the works of Rembrandt and his successors, highlighting the personalities and themes that shaped Dutch painting over five generations. The first work by Rembrandt to be included in the collection was the captivating, life-based sketch *Resting Young Lion* (1638-42), which will be featured in the exhibition alongside the master's 17 other paintings. This drawing is of particular importance to Kaplan, who is also the founder of the Panthera organization, which works worldwide for the conservation of big cats and their ecosystems.

Art and life in Rembrandt's time

The exhibition is accompanied by a 150-page, bilingual (Dutch/English) and fully illustrated catalogue, which includes entries for each painting. Edited by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., the volume contains introductory essays by Wheelock and Kaplan, as well as texts describing the many aspects of life in the 17th century. The authors of these essays are Els de Baan, who has researched women's clothing in the Dutch Republic in the 17th century; Han Bakker, who gives an overview of literary culture and intellectual climate in the Netherlands and Amsterdam in particular; Wouter van Elburg, who offers readers a tour of different types of canal houses built in the 17th century; Janny van der Heyden, who describes food markets in the Netherlands around 1600; Weixuan Li, who has studied the interiors of Dutch houses; and Leonore van Sloten, who sheds light on the role of music in the paintings of the Leiden Collection.