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Amsterdam's marks 750th birthday with Rembrandt, Vermeer in Dutch Old Masters exhibition

75 paintings from a private collection of Dutch Old Masters depicting daily life on show to mark 750th anniversary of Amsterdam's founding



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Food, drink, reading books and raising children – everyday life in the 1600s is the focus of perhaps the biggest exhibition of the year for fans of the Dutch Old Masters.

For the celebration of Amsterdam's 750th anniversary this year, a large private collection of Dutch Old Masters is making available 75 of its works, including 18 Rembrandts.

The “From Rembrandt to Vermeer, Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection” is on show until August 24 at the H’ART Museum in the city centre.

The museum describes the exhibition as “a unique and intimate glimpse into the 17th-century Netherlands through the eyes of the great Dutch Masters”, and depicting many women, from wealthy matrons to goddesses to ordinary citizens.



“Particularly noteworthy is the inclusion of a painting by Maria Schalcken, one of the few women in her time known to be working as a painter,” it adds.

Other artists include Frans Hals, Jan Steen, Ferdinand Bol, Gerard Dou and Frans van Mieris. The exhibition includes the only Vermeer still in private hands – *A Young Woman Seated at the Virginals*.

The exhibition sketches many facets of Amsterdam life, highlighting everything from food and drink to ageing, parenting and the art of portraiture and self-portraiture, the curators say.



A museum staff member examines the painting *A Young Woman Seated at the Virginals* by Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer in the H'ART Museum in Amsterdam. Photo: EPA-EFE

It includes character studies of people from various backgrounds, at the market, in the pub or in their homes. The focus is formed by 17 paintings and one drawing by Rembrandt, who moved to Amsterdam from Leiden in 1630.

The US-French art collector Thomas Kaplan has been fascinated by Rembrandt since childhood and has assembled “The Leiden Collection” in the artist’s honour.

Alongside famed museums like the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Mauritshuis in The Hague, visitors can also consider visiting Rembrandt’s birthplace of Leiden, home to the Museum de Lakenhal, where a permanent exhibition focuses on the painter and his connection to the Dutch Golden Age.