

# FLORIDA WEEKLY®

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 25-OCTOBER 1, 2025

NAPLES EDITION

Vol. XVIII, No. 48 • FREE

## VISIT NAPLES' PURRFECT PALACE:

Felines rule at the House of Siberians | **A20**



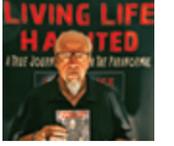
## IN THE FRAME:

Viewing Southwest Florida through multiple lenses | **A24**



## A HAUNTING

READ: Living a paranormal life | **A36**



# MAHJONG MANIA

The ancient pastime has turned into a modern craze across Florida

BY CARLIE ADMIRE  
FLORIDA WEEKLY

IT MAY HAVE STARTED with tea and chatter around Grandma's kitchen table, but today, mahjong mingles together cocktails, rooftop lounges and community connection. What was once a quiet and tucked-away leisure activity has quickly become a coastal craze across Florida.

Mahjong was once labeled a gambling game and even banned in China for being too "bourgeois." These days, mahjong has gone far beyond the game room, evolving into a lively social setting complete with themed sets, Z8stylish accessories and even trendy mahjong brunches.

SEE MAHJONG, A8 ▶



DAVID WISHTISCHIN / FLORIDA WEEKLY

The first player to complete a hand of four sets and a pair wins the game.

## Art as a Journey

From Rembrandt to Lempicka, museums take Floridians across cultures and centuries

BY ROGER WILLIAMS

roger.williams@floridaweekly.com

Airports can send Floridians off to faraway countries and cultures, but the true passport to other worlds is found in the galleries of a great art museum.

Without going more than a few miles — the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, say, or the Baker Art Museum, part of Artis-Naples, or to many others both north and south — a traveler can cross not only culture but time, and do so with travel guides whose names remain bright threads sewn into the fabric of the world.

A round-trip ticket from Miami to Amsterdam these days, for example, will run you somewhere between about \$500 and \$1500. A general admission ticket to the Norton or the Baker is \$18 or \$10, respectively, unless you're old or young. Then it's even less.

They tend not to say much, those bright-thread travel guides, whether living or not. A picture, after all, is worth a

SEE ART, A6 ▶



THE LEIDEN COLLECTION, NEW YORK / COURTESY PHOTO

Rembrandt van Rijn's "Self Portrait with Shaded Eyes."

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
FORT MYERS, FL  
PERMIT NO. 715

VISIT THE SAVONA & LUCCA MODEL HOMES

MiomarLakes.com  
239.425.2340

## Nerano

LUXURY COACH HOMES



MIOMAR LAKES BEACH & GOLF CLUB The #1 Community in the USA—We are where you want to be®

# ART

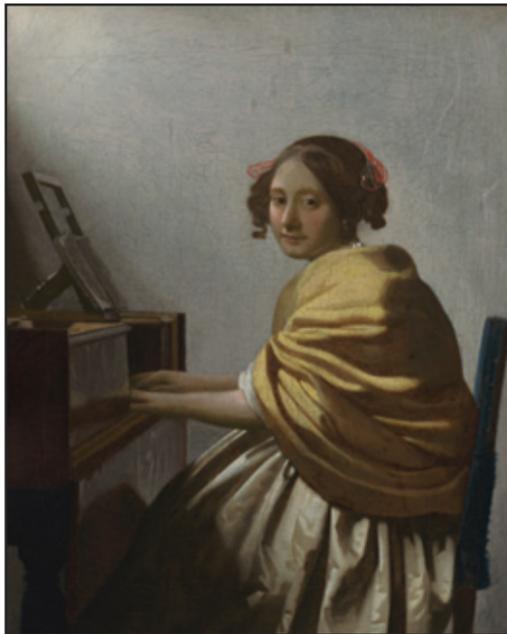
From page 1

thousand words and a sculpture is probably worth a good 900 or so. But travelers to the Norton, the state's largest art museum with a permanent collection of about 8,200 works, join guides like Auguste Renoir, Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso, and, starting next month, some guy named Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn in a first and only exhibit of its kind in the United States.

Put on your traveling shoes. It opens October 25. "Art and Life in Rembrandt's Time: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection" is described as an exhibition of one of the world's most important private collections of 17th-century paintings ever organized in the United States. The presentation offers a glimpse at more than 70 works by 27 artists.

At the Baker, meanwhile, travelers can get a tour of her one-time world, both difficult and glorious, with the late art deco painter Tamara de Lempicka, who gypsied her way in hard times from Russia to Paris to the United States. Or they can wait until November to see contemporary artist Linling Lu, whose trans-genre paintings were done in an intimate dance with classical music, opening in November. It's called "Linling Lu: Fugue in Three Voices."

Her inspiration comes from three composers whose work will be featured by the Naples Philharmonic in their 2025-26 Masterworks season. That's coming off a recent exhibit at the Phillips in Washington, D.C., in a synchronicity celebrated at the Baker. There, visi-



LEFT: Johannes Vermeer's "Young Woman Seated at a Virginal." RIGHT: Gerard ter Borch the Younger's "Elegant-Woman."

tors were recently inspired by American composer George Gershwin, who shared (courtesy of the Baker) his art collection and his personal artwork.

The Baker focuses on multidisciplinary programming in traveling exhibits and the 3,000-object permanent collection specializing in modern and contemporary art.

It's more than just a feast for the senses in any good art museum, explains Courtney McNeil, director and chief curator at the Baker. The museum recently earned accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums, an achievement years in the making, held by less than 5% of American museums.

She suggests that art museums nour-

ish the intellect as well as the heart and soul. They offer "spaces to expose yourself to new ideas, new perspectives — to become more open-minded, empathetic and thoughtful citizens of the world."

Maybe that's a viral condition. Perhaps you go to an art museum, refuse to wear a mask, catch the empathy virus, and spread it around.

At the soon-to-open exhibit of Rembrandt and the 17th century Dutch artists, who were painting themselves and "humanity in all its facets" about the time the Puritans were learning to grow corn and stay alive in New England and New Amsterdam (New York) 400 years ago, The Leiden Collection spans this Dutch view of the world: "from portraits

and character studies to genre scenes and historical subjects," the museum explains.

Remarkably, 17 Rembrandt paintings will appear. And old as they may be on the calendar, they are also as new as any young creature in a hospital nursery.

"One of the most remarkable facts about Rembrandt and his circle is that their artworks continue to connect with audiences, hundreds of years after they were painted," said Elizabeth Nogrady, Curator of The Leiden Collection, in a public announcement. "These artists had an uncanny ability to tap into the continuity of human experience, which makes them continually relevant — even

in very different times."

For everybody. In the world. It's coming off exhibits at the Louvre in Paris, the Pushkin and Hermitage museums in Russia, the National Museum of China, and Louvre Abu Dhabi.

"An exhibition like 'Art and Life in Rembrandt's Time' has never been seen before in our region. Viewers will be enthralled not only by the artistry of Rembrandt, but also the depth of talent of other 17th-century Dutch artists," said Ghislain d'Humières, Kenneth C. Griffin Director and CEO of the Norton Museum of Art.

SEE ART, A9 ►

## Senior living with peace of mind— NO MATTER THE WEATHER.



"This is a really well-built building. Hurricane Ian proved that. The hurricane was hitting us with the force that it did, and **we could hardly hear a thing. You felt so safe.**"

—Robert D.,  
Community Resident

Call **1-800-538-6714** or visit  
**SienaLakesNaples.com**  
for your FREE brochure.

You can feel confident and secure at Siena Lakes,<sup>SM</sup> North Naples' premier senior living community. We've got you covered in hurricane season and beyond.

- **Freedom from worries** – Our quality construction means you and your loved ones can relax knowing you're safe and comfortable during and after the storm.
- **You don't have to go it alone** – Our dedicated employees and full-time maintenance team work around the clock in severe weather.
- **Life doesn't stop for the storm** – Every building on our campus is connected so you're just steps away from amenities like the fitness center, restaurants, medical center, and more.

  
**Siena Lakes**  
BY ERICKSON SENIOR LIVING®

North Naples  
SienaLakesNaples.com



# ART

From page 6

That's not an overstatement. "Special highlights include Vermeer's 'Young Woman Seated at a Virginal,' circa 1670 – 1675 — the sole example of the artist's work in private hands...and 'Hagar and the Angel,' circa 1645, the only privately-held painting remaining of Carel Fabritius — Rembrandt's greatest pupil and the inspiration for Donna Tartt's 2013 acclaimed novel 'The Goldfinch,'" says the Norton.

In Tartt's novel, a character offers this insight, likely as true now as it was in the so-called age of Rembrandt: "I had the epiphany that laughter was light, and light was laughter, and that this was the secret of the universe."

You might not discover this unless you travel to an art museum, in this case, the Norton.

Other works will include those of his teacher, Pieter Lastman, and students such as Ferdinand Bol, Govaert Flinck, and Arent de Gelder, along with Leiden artists Jan Lievens, Gabriel Metsu, Frans van Mieris and Jan Steen.

It took a Florida boy, Thomas Kaplan, and his wife, if we can put it that way, to put together the 220-piece Leiden Collection for the world and now the Sunshine State.

"Since the day Daphne (Racanti Kaplan) and I founded The Leiden Collection, we conceived of it as a lending library for some of the world's most consequential artists," Kaplan said in a statement. "After nearly 15 years of anonymous lending to over 80 museums, armed with a message of Rembrandt as 'The Universal Art-



The Norton Museum of Art is the state's largest art museum with a permanent collection of about 8,200 works.

COURTESY PHOTO

ist,' the Collection has spent the better part of the past decade traveling the world. We are particularly thrilled to be the first to share Rembrandt and Vermeer with my home state of Florida, where I spent a truly wonderful part of my youth. We hope visitors will be as moved as we are by the enduring power of Rembrandt, his students, and his peers."

The Norton has been doing this kind of thing for a long, long time — by Florida standards, not by Dutch standards: 85 years. Now, it offers work from Europe-

an, Modern, Asian and Contemporary Art and Photography. It reinstalls modern and contemporary exhibits so works "speak" to each other, bringing new pieces into the proverbial conversation for all visitors, explains Scott Simmons, the museum's public relations director and a former journalist at the Palm Beach Post and Florida Weekly.

The Norton has the kind of roots that other museums in Florida may often envy. "When word got out two years ago that I had taken a job at the Norton, some

of my dad's elementary school classmates from Pahokee emailed me to muse that they'd gone on field trips to the Norton nearly 80 years ago," Simmons said.

"It touched me deeply to think the art and the museum have inspired people for decades."

Besides the Leiden Collection, this fall, the Norton offers new works from artists still alive: Leslie Hewitt's Achromatic Scales, Anastasia Samoylova's Atlantic Coast, and Shara Hughes's Inside Outside. ■



*Go Wild for Wellness at Arbor Trace!*

**Community Health Fair  
Free & Open to the Public**

**Wednesday, October 8 • 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
1000 Arbor Lake Drive, Naples**

Swing by and explore a jungle of health and wellness resources!

Meet dozens of healthcare practitioners and community organizations ready to share their "survival tips" for living your healthiest, happiest life.

Connect with local experts

Discover products & services for every stage of life

Enjoy a complimentary light lunch

It's informative. It's engaging. It's a wild adventure you don't want to miss!

**Reserve Your Spot: Call 239-598-2929 or email  
info@arbortracenaples.com  
Learn more at arbortrace.com**





**100% Equity**  
**55+ Active Living Community**  
**ARBORTRACE.COM**  
**239-598-2929**

*Live your life long the Gulf*



**MCNEIL**

Earn nearly ~~\$450~~  
**\$600 extra every year!**

**Introducing LMCU's new  
4.00% APY\* Max Checking account.**

One of America's best high-yield checking accounts\*\* just got even better. We've raised the interest rate without adding any monthly fees\*\*\* or minimum balance requirement — at LMCU, we call that **re-setting the bar.**

**Get started at [Go.LMCU.org/MaxChecking](https://Go.LMCU.org/MaxChecking) or a branch near you.**

Federally insured by NCUA. \*APY = Annual Percentage Yield. Rate as of 09/01/2025 and subject to change after account opening. 4.00% APY is earned on balances \$15,000 and below, some requirements apply. Interest not paid on balances over \$15,000. Nearly \$600 is earned at 4.00% APY on balances of \$15,000. Fees may reduce earnings.\*\*Bankrate, February 2025. \*\*\*Overdraft/returned item fees may apply. \$5 membership required if not a member.

