

## NEWS RELEASE

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### For Immediate Release

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### N.C. Museum of Art Presents Largest Collection of Authentic Rembrandts for U.S. Audience

*Rembrandt in America features more than 30 paintings by Rembrandt and explores the intriguing and often controversial history of collecting Rembrandt paintings in America*

**RALEIGH, N.C.**—A groundbreaking new exhibition brings together the largest number of authentic Rembrandt paintings from American collections ever before assembled. Organized and presented by the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, *Rembrandt in America* is the first major exhibition to explore how the desire for Rembrandt paintings by American collectors in turn fueled critical connoisseurship and research about the artist's work.

*Rembrandt in America* premieres at the North Carolina Museum of Art October 30, 2011, and then travels to the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts in 2012.



The exhibition will present more than 30 autograph paintings by the Dutch master on loan from private collections and more than two dozen American art museums. It includes some of his finest masterpieces from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

"This exhibition is a visual treat of some of Rembrandt's finest paintings now residing in American collections. The show also offers a rare opportunity for visitors to follow the evolving opinions of scholars regarding what makes for an authentic painting by Rembrandt," said Dennis P. Weller, curator of Northern European Art at the North Carolina Museum of Art.

The history of Rembrandt collecting in the United States began in the late 19th century, when wealthy American Industrialists cultivated a passion for collecting European Old Masters, especially Dutch. America's greatest Industrialists, such as J. Paul Getty, Andrew Mellon and George Eastman, desired these works of art as trophies for their collections, and so a collecting frenzy erupted and paintings by Rembrandt left Europe in substantial numbers for America.

In this highly competitive and lucrative market many of the pictures that came to America were misattributed to Rembrandt by scholars and art dealers. In many respects, America became the proving ground for new Rembrandt discoveries and reattributions.

*Rembrandt in America* includes works such as the recently-cleaned, matching portraits of the Rev. Johannes Elison and his wife, Maria Bockenolle, from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Painted in 1634 during Rembrandt's early years as a successful portrait painter in Amsterdam, they are the only full-length portraits by Rembrandt residing in the United States.



Other highlights of the exhibition include Rembrandt's moving depiction of the Roman heroine, *Lucretia* (1666), from the collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; *Joris de Cauerii* (1632), a portrait of a gentleman, which displays Rembrandt's masterful handling of light and texture from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; and *Young Man in a Black Beret* (1666), from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, a superb example of the artist's expressive style.

By highlighting a number of works misattributed to Rembrandt, as well as a handful of paintings for which scholarly opinion has wavered over the years, this exhibition empowers viewers to develop their own skills in connoisseurship. Furthermore, *Rembrandt in America* occurs at a time when a heightened scrutiny of Rembrandt authenticity continues to impact the discipline and significantly affect the art market.

"Rembrandt collecting has always been a challenging field and questions of authenticity have plagued Rembrandts for centuries, even during the artist's own lifetime," said Jon L. Seydl, the Paul J. and Edith Ingalls Vignos, Jr. Curator of European Paintings and Sculpture (1500-1800) at the Cleveland Museum of Art. "American audiences will now enjoy not only the opportunity to surround themselves with so many of Rembrandt's works but also the chance to explore why some works attributed to him have been reconsidered."

Each venue will display 15 to 20 other Dutch paintings that were previously attributed to Rembrandt at some point during their history in American collections, but have since been ascribed to his pupils and contemporaries. These include paintings by Jan Lievens and Govaert Flinck, among others.

In the exhibition, *The Feast of Esther* (circa 1625) and *Young Man with a Sword* (c. 1633-1645) from the North Carolina Museum of Art are two such paintings formerly attributed to Rembrandt that are now assigned to other artists. In the 1950s the North Carolina Museum of Art's first director and Rembrandt expert William Valentiner recommended the acquisition of both paintings as Rembrandts. Valentiner was responsible for greatly expanding the Rembrandt oeuvre. For much of the last fifty years, many of his attributions have been questioned by other scholars, notably the Rembrandt Research Project.

*The Feast of Esther* is now assigned to the hand of Jan Lievens, Rembrandt's younger colleague. The painting shares many similarities with other examples from Lievens' oeuvre and has a grandeur of invention and boldness that Rembrandt did not achieve. *Young Man with a Sword* has since been identified as a product of the Rembrandt School. The imagery and stylistic elements, such as the weakness in the structure of the shoulders and face, indicate that the work is not by Rembrandt himself, while the dramatic chiaroscuro and romantic costume point to a competent painter well versed in Rembrandt's artistic interests.

One of the most important painters in the history of European art, Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) is renowned for his uncanny ability to depict light and shadow, to capture the emotions of his sitters and to intimately share historical and religious stories. He was born in 1606 in Leiden, in the Dutch Republic, now The Netherlands, and spent most of his career in Amsterdam.



While the primary focus of the exhibition is on the history of Rembrandt collecting and connoisseurship as it relates to his works residing in America, the show also explores his work across various genres, his artistic evolution, and his influence on other artists of the day. Included in this exhibition are a number of important portraits from Rembrandt's prosperous early career in Amsterdam as the city's most sought-after portrait painter, as well as character studies, historical and biblical scenes, and three of his celebrated self-portraits.

"Rembrandt's development as a painter, from brash young artist to confident master to resolute observer of timeless humanity, is well documented in this exhibition with works spanning nearly the full extent of his remarkable career," said Thomas E. Rassieur, curator of prints and drawings at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

*Rembrandt in America* is accompanied by a 240-page catalog authored by Dennis P. Weller, Thomas E. Rassieur and George Keyes, former chief curator at the Detroit Institute of Arts. An introduction focusing on Rembrandt as a cultural phenomenon is followed by essays devoted to his life, the controversies associated with his workshop, and the pursuit of Rembrandt in America. Published by Skira Rizzoli, the catalog contains 150 color illustrations and is available in hardback and paperback. *Rembrandt in America* is organized by the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Tour Schedule:

**North Carolina Museum of Art**

October 30, 2011–January 22, 2012

**Cleveland Museum of Art**

February 19–May 28, 2012

**Minneapolis Institute of Arts**

June 24–September 16, 2012 March 1, 2011

Visitor Information:

**Location**

*Rembrandt in America* will be located in East Building's special exhibition gallery.

**Hours**

Tuesday–Thursday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Friday 10 a.m.–9 p.m.

Saturday–Sunday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

**Tickets**

\$18 Adults

\$15 Seniors, Students 13+, groups of 10 or more

\$12 Children 7-12

Free Children 6 and under

Tickets will go on sale beginning September 15. Purchase timed tickets online at [ncartmuseum.org](http://ncartmuseum.org), by phone at (919) 715-5923, or in person at the Museum Box Office in East Building.

## Group Tours

Docent-led and self-guided group tours of *Rembrandt in America* are now being booked. For adult groups including tours and tour/lunch packages, contact Christine Molesky at 919-664-6785 or [christine.molesky@ncdcr.gov](mailto:christine.molesky@ncdcr.gov). For student groups, contact Jen Coon 919-664-6820 or [jcoon@ncartmuseum.org](mailto:jcoon@ncartmuseum.org). Reservations are required and space is limited.

## Audio Tours

Acoustiguide audio tours for *Rembrandt in America* are available at the Visitor Welcoming Station at the entrance to the exhibition gallery. The cost is \$5 per wand. The audio tour may also be downloaded free of charge for use on handheld MP3 device beginning October 20.

## Image Captions:

Rembrandt van Rijn, *Flora*, circa 1654, oil on canvas, 39 3/8 x 36 1/8 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Archer M. Huntington, in memory of his father, Collis Potter Huntington, 1926 (26.101.10), © 2010 The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, New York

Rembrandt van Rijn, *Joris de Caulerij*, 1632, oil on canvas transferred to panel, 40 1/2 x 33 1/4 in., Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Roscoe and Margaret Oakes Collection, 66.31

Circle of Rembrandt van Rijn, *Young Man with a Sword*, circa 1633–45, oil on canvas, 46 1/2 x 38 in., North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation

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The North Carolina Museum of Art's permanent collection spans more than 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the Southeast. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum recently opened its new gallery building, home to the permanent collection. The North Carolina Museum of Art, Lawrence J. Wheeler, director, is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, Beverly Eaves Perdue, governor, and an agency of the Department of Cultural Resources, Linda A. Carlisle, secretary. Admission to the Museum's permanent collection and Museum Park is free. Museum hours are Tuesday–Thursday and Saturday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.; Closed Monday. For more information about the Museum, visit [www.ncartmuseum.org](http://www.ncartmuseum.org)