

***Small Treasures* Is First Major Exhibition to Focus on Small-Scale Paintings  
from the Dutch and Flemish Golden Age**

*Works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, and other Old Masters invite audiences to look closely at vivid details and incredible technique exhibited in tiny paintings*

**Raleigh, N.C.**—More than 60 small paintings by many of the greatest masters from the Dutch and Flemish Golden Age will come together for the first time this October for *Small Treasures: Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals, and Their Contemporaries* at the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA). These small-scale works—most of which are less than 10 in. tall and wide—were an important part of many artists’ practices but have historically been overlooked by scholars and museum exhibitions. The NCMA will give them overdue attention with *Small Treasures* and its accompanying catalogue, which will be the first publication to exclusively explore these small-scale works and will include full-size reproductions of each of the paintings in the exhibition. *Small Treasures* will be on view at the NCMA from October 11, 2014, through January 4, 2015.



Curated by Dennis P. Weller, the NCMA’s curator of Northern European art and a specialist in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch and Flemish art, *Small Treasures* will show the breadth of style and content that artists employed for these small works and the myriad purposes they served. Many Dutch and Flemish artists painted small-scale works in order to do focused studies on specific painting techniques and subjects. Frans Hals’s striking 6 1/2 x 5 in. *Portrait of Samuel Ampzing*, for example, was used as a study for a noted reproductive print. Often, Dutch and Flemish painters created small self-portraits they could use as “calling cards” with potential patrons. Artists whose self-portraits will be featured in *Small Treasures* include Gerrit Dou (4 7/8 x 3 1/4 in.), Frans van Mieris (4 1/2 x 2 7/8 in.), and Jan Steen (9 1/4 x 7 1/2 in.). The majority of the works in *Small Treasures* are painted on panel or copper, materials with very little texture that allowed for minute details to be brought to life with incredibly small paintbrushes. The works in the exhibition range in size and shape, from Van Mieris’s tiny, oval-shaped self-portrait to a detailed, rectangular history scene by Peter Paul Rubens that measures 9 3/8 x 7 5/8 in.

“These small paintings include amazing details that pull viewers in and reintroduce them to some of the most iconic names in Dutch and Flemish painting,” said Dennis P. Weller. “I’ve always been interested in these works, which were prevalent in artists’ practices but have been left out of much modern research and are much less frequently displayed than larger paintings from the same period. By bringing so many of them together, we will not only begin to rectify the absence of scholarship in this area; we will invite our audiences to experience a large exhibition that encourages intimate experiences with art in a way that little else can.”

“At the NCMA we are committed to advancing scholarship and providing compelling experiences for our visitors,” said Lawrence J. Wheeler, director of the North Carolina Museum of Art. “*Small Treasures* does both of these things: it allows our spectacular curatorial team to bring to light new research that deepens our understanding of one of the most beloved periods of art history and invites our visitors to have close looking experiences with masterpieces by artists whose names will excite them and whom they have yet to meet.”

Additional highlights of the exhibition include:

- **Rembrandt van Rijn**, *Portrait of an Old Man with a Beard* (c. 1630), 7 1/4 x 6 11/16 in.—Recently accepted as an autograph work by Rembrandt, this painting is an example of a *tronie* (Dutch for *character study*). Painted only a year or two prior to the painter’s move from his hometown of Leiden to Amsterdam, this small panel exhibits Rembrandt’s deep reservoir of skills, as the expressive features of the old man are coarsely painted yet highly descriptive.

- **Johannes Vermeer**, *Girl with the Red Hat* (c. 1665–66), 9 1/2 x 7 1/8 in. (pictured above)—This image of a girl wearing an exotic, red-feathered hat and cool blue brocade robe shows her looking out with an intimacy and expectancy unique to Vermeer's oeuvre. This is the smallest work Vermeer is known to have painted.
- **Johannes Vermeer**, *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* (c. 1670–72), 9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in.—Owing to advances in the technical examination of paintings, as well as better scholarship on Vermeer's working process and knowledge of his late pictures, opinion regarding the authenticity of this work has undergone correction in recent years: *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* is now fully accepted as a Vermeer.
- **Adriaen Brouwer**, *Youth Making a Face* (c. 1632–35), 5 3/8 x 4 1/8 in.—Portraying the bold antics of a youngster, Brouwer's sparkling painting technique is on view here and shows developments from his earlier work, likely the result of spending time in Haarlem under the influence of Frans Hals.
- **Anthony van Dyck**, *Portrait of Nicholas Rockox* (1636), 6 in. diam. (round)—This rare grisaille oil sketch of one of Antwerp's most important politicians and patrons shows van Dyck's masterful ability to portray intimacy. The work is a comparatively recent addition to the oeuvre of Van Dyck, as it was only rediscovered at an auction in 1989.

Seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish painting advanced styles and techniques that left a lasting impact on the history of painting. Though such small works were commonly painted by the most notable artists from that era, previous scholarship devoted to Dutch and Flemish small portraiture has largely lagged behind studies devoted to other genres of the period. The research conducted in preparation for *Small Treasures* will play an important role in bringing to the surface the history and depth of these small works and an understanding of the important role they played for artists and patrons alike.

### ***Small Treasures: Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals, and Their Contemporaries***

October 11, 2014–January 4, 2015

East Building, Level B, Meymandi Exhibition Gallery

Ticketed

Tickets go on sale to members on August 1, 2014, and to the general public on August 15, 2014.

### **Hours**

Tuesday–Thursday 10 am–5 pm

Friday 10 am–9 pm

Saturday–Sunday 10 am–5 pm

Closed Monday

### **About the Exhibition**

*Small Treasures: Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals, and Their Contemporaries* is organized by the North Carolina Museum of Art. This exhibition is made possible by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources; the North Carolina Museum of Art Foundation, Inc.; and the William R. Kenan Jr. Endowment for Educational Exhibitions.

### **Photo caption:**

Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with the Red Hat*, circa 1665–66, oil on panel, 9 1/2 x 7 1/8 in., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Andrew W. Mellon Collection, 1937.1.53

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### **About the North Carolina Museum of Art**

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 South. 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 opened West Building, home to the permanent collection, in 2010. 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, Pat McCrory, governor, and an agency of the Department of Cultural Resources, Susan Kluttz, secretary.