

North Carolina Museum of Art Announces *Small Treasures: Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals, and Their Contemporaries* and Related Events

Small Treasures is first major exhibition to focus on small-scale paintings from the Dutch and Flemish Golden Age

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 17th-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.

“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.”

Highlights of the exhibition include:

- **Rembrandt van Rijn**, *Bearded Old Man* (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.

(continued)

- **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.

Related Events

Lecture: “Public and Private: The Very Large and the Very Small in 17th-Century Dutch Paintings”

Friday, September 19, 11 am (repeated on November 14)

East Building, Museum Auditorium

\$25 Members, \$30 Nonmembers

Dennis P. Weller, Curator of Northern European Art

Highlighting the masterpieces in *Small Treasures*, this lecture examines how Dutch painters navigated between the demands of large-scale public art and smaller images destined for private use. Many painters, including Rembrandt van Rijn, Frans Hals, and Jan Steen, excelled in both arenas, while others—among them Gerrit Dou and Johannes Vermeer—focused on modest-sized pictures that invite a closer look.

The discussion continues over a catered lunch. Registration and payment for the combined program required by 4 pm on the Tuesday before the event.

All-Day Seminar: Celebrating the Painters of *Small Treasures*

Saturday, October 11, 9 am–3 pm

East Building, Museum Auditorium

\$100 Members, \$115 All others

Advanced ticket required: visit the Box Office or call (919) 715-5923.

Join Dennis P. Weller for an exclusive curator’s tour of *Small Treasures* and richly illustrated lectures, including one devoted to Johannes Vermeer. Enjoy morning coffee, a Dutch lunch, a complimentary copy of the exhibition catalogue, and a closing reception/book signing with Dutch and Flemish treats. Part of the proceeds support programming and acquisitions of Northern European art.

BIG NIGHT: *Small Treasures* Opening

Saturday, October 11, 7 pm

East Building

\$40 Members, \$50 Nonmembers

Celebrate the opening of *Small Treasures: Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals, and Their Contemporaries* with hors d’ouvres, live music, and tiny treasure-seeking adventures.

Humber Endowed Lecture and Book Signing: “Telling Portraits: Stories Behind the Faces”

Wednesday, October 15, 7 pm

East Building, Museum Auditorium

Free for members; ticket from Box Office required

\$7 Nonmembers

Susan Vreeland, Author

Bestselling author Susan Vreeland tells how her popular historical novels find authenticity in thorough, deliberate research. With *Small Treasures* in mind, Vreeland discusses her Vermeer-inspired book *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* and

elaborates on the significance of portraits in her character portrayals. Vreeland concludes with insights about her latest novel, *Lisette's List*.

Book signing follows the lecture; purchase your favorite Vreeland book from a local bookstore and bring it with you.

Ensemble Vermillian: Music from the Low Countries in the Time of Vermeer

Sunday, October 19, 3 pm

Museum Auditorium, East Building

\$12 Museum members, seniors, youth 7–18, college students with ID

\$14 Nonmembers

Frances Blaker, recorder; David Wilson, baroque violin; Margaret Carpenter, soprano; Billy Sims, theorbo; John O'Brien, harpsichord; Barbara Blaker Krumdieck, baroque cello

Complementing the exhibition *Small Treasures*, the distinguished Ensemble Vermillian, based in Davidson, N.C., explores symmetry, contrast, and ornamentation, characteristics of both the art and music of 17th-century Dutch and Flemish culture. Like the paintings in the exhibition, the baroque selections in this concert are intimate works created for close quarters.

Art+Cuisine: *Small Treasures* Close Up

Wednesday, October 29, and Thursday, October 30, 6:30 pm

West Building

\$125 Members, \$150 Nonmembers

Curator Dennis Weller introduces us to Dutch and Flemish painters who rendered their sitters in stunning detail. This event features a walking tour of the exhibition, cocktails, and a three-course Dutch-inspired dinner with wine. Seating is limited; advance registration is required. Business attire suggested.

Fall Family Day: Strike a Pose!

Saturday, November 1, 1–4 pm

Free, for all ages

Explore portraits big and small during an afternoon of art making, dance performances, and family tours. Activities include a photo booth with props and costumes, miniature self-portrait art stations, tours in the galleries, and performances by the Cary Ballet Company. The event is an opportunity to visit the exhibition *Making Faces* (see below) and meet the artists in it.

Lecture: "All Art Work Great and Small: Making Exhibitions a Reality at the NCMA"

Friday, December 5, 11 am

East Building, Museum Auditorium

\$25 Members, \$30 Nonmembers

From *Small Treasures* to *Porsche by Design*, Chief Registrar Maggie Gregory takes you for a behind-the-scenes look at the extensive planning and preparation that go into bringing special exhibitions to the NCMA.

The discussion continues over a catered lunch. Registration and payment for the combined program required by 4 pm on the Tuesday before the event.

Special documentary screening in association with *Small Treasures: Tim's Vermeer*

Friday, December 5, 8 pm

East Building, Museum Auditorium

\$5 Members, youth 7–18, college students with ID; \$7 All others

Tim's Vermeer (2013) Directed by Teller; written by Penn Jillette. Tim Jenison, Penn Jillette, Martin Mull, David Hockney. (80 min.) PG-13

Many have speculated that the Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer must have used optical devices to achieve such stunning photorealism in his masterpieces. In *Tim's Vermeer* inventor Tim Jenison attempts to reproduce a Vermeer painting and to unlock the artist's secrets. Obsession and art intermingle in this intriguing documentary by Penn and Teller.

Introduced by *Small Treasures* exhibition curator Dennis Weller.

Lecture: "Through the Looking Glass: Materials and Techniques of Artists Featured in *Small Treasures*"
Friday, December 12, 11 am
East Building, Museum Auditorium
\$25 Members, \$30 Nonmembers

Conservator Noelle Ocon talks about the materials and particular techniques used to create seemingly miraculous small paintings.

The discussion continues over a catered lunch. Registration and payment for the combined program required by 4 pm on the Tuesday before the event.

Special Family Tours: *Small Treasures*
Saturday, December 13, and Sunday, December 14, 11 am and 2 pm
East Building
For families with kids (or grandkids) age 6–12

Explore the exhibition *Small Treasures* during an interactive tour led by Museum family guides. Discover different types of portraits including group and individual portraits, self-portraits, allegorical portraits, and *tronies*, a Dutch word for *faces* or *character studies*.

Tours are free; exhibition tickets are required for entry. Visit the Museum Box Office to sign up for tours and to purchase exhibition tickets, or call (919) 715-5923. Space is limited.

Related Exhibition

Making Faces: A Portrait of the NCMA's Youth Artists
October 12, 2014–January 4, 2015
East Building, Studio 3
Free

Portraits created by youth artists, ages 4–14, who participated in youth and family programs over the past year. The exhibition features works in clay, collage, conté crayon, mixed media, paint, and wire. Interactive components invite families to discover works in the collection and contribute to a virtual exhibition of NCMA selfies. Look for our new Pop-Up Art Cart for family-friendly art making and scavenger hunt games.

About *Small Treasures*

Small Treasures is organized by the North Carolina Museum of Art. In Raleigh generous support is provided by the Ron and Jeanette Doggett Fund. This exhibition is also made possible, in part, 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. Research for this exhibition was made possible by Ann and Jim Goodnight/The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fund for Curatorial and Conservation Research and Travel.

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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, 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.