

PRESS RELEASE

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Famous 'last' self-portrait by Rembrandt presented to Dutch Heritage Amsterdam exhibition

The masterpiece from the Mauritshuis now temporarily on view in Amsterdam | Until 24 July

The *Self-portrait* (1669) by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606 – 1669) from the Mauritshuis in The Hague is now temporarily on view in Amsterdam. The masterpiece is the focus of the third presentation of *Dutch Heritage Amsterdam*. The poignant work by the Dutch master was most likely his very last self-portrait. The painting was handed over last Tuesday by Martine Gosselink, director of the Mauritshuis, to Annabelle Birnie, director of Hermitage Amsterdam. The *Self-portrait*, which was probably still on Rembrandt's easel at the time of his death, can be seen exclusively in the Hermitage Amsterdam for four weeks, until Sunday 24 July 2022.



Images: Sam Tobiana. Photo 1 f.l.t.r.: Birgit Boelens (exhibition curator), Annabelle Birnie (director Hermitage Amsterdam), Martine Gosselink (general director Mauritshuis).

The third edition of *Dutch Heritage Amsterdam* has an immersive design, with the *Self-portrait* playing the starring role. Upon entering, visitors are met with about eighty pairs of eyes; a gallery of Rembrandt's self-portraits. There is also seventeenth century music. This is how the visitor is guided to the masterpiece. In the fun studio space, attention is given to the process of making paint with pigments. The etching technique, which Rembrandt is famous for, is also presented. A biographical film about the artist is shown in the cinema room, and in the last room of the presentation, all of Rembrandt's self-portraits are presented chronologically as a film reel. We see him progress from youth to old age. His style also develops. In his early works we see Rembrandt experimenting with his own face (tronies). Later portraits exude the air of a successful artist, posing confidently in beautiful clothing. The paintings from the last year of Rembrandt's life are different. They seem to be a pure representation of reality, full of self-awareness. In the exhibition, there is a special puzzle and a colouring activity for children about the different stages in Rembrandt's life.

About *Self-portrait* (1669) by Rembrandt van Rijn

No other seventeenth-century artist produced as many self-portraits as Rembrandt van Rijn. This self-portrait dates from 1669, the last year of Rembrandt's life. One is inclined to see an old man. Yet despite his grey hair and ageing skin, it is not apparent that his end is near. On the contrary, the master was at his best here, painting himself honestly and strikingly.

Rembrandt understood better than anyone how paint could be used to represent a three-dimensional head on a flat canvas. He barely worked out some areas of his painting, while paying a lot of attention

to the most expressive parts. Detailed is not the word to describe this painting - if you stand right in front of it, you see nothing but smudges and splotches of paint. But when you take a step back, it is inescapable: it is Rembrandt who looks at you penetratingly.



Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-portrait*, 1669. Mauritshuis, Den Haag
Purchased with the support of Vereniging Rembrandt and private individuals, 1947

About Dutch Heritage Amsterdam

The series comprises four separate masterpieces and museum collaborations. It is a programme featuring world famous crowd favourites in the Hermitage building. Johannes Vermeer's *The Milkmaid* from the Rijksmuseum launched the series. This was followed by Vincent van Gogh's *The Yellow House (The Street)* from the Van Gogh Museum. Currently on view is *Self-portrait* by Rembrandt van Rijn's from the Mauritshuis (until Sunday 24 July). *The Tower of Babel* by Pieter Bruegel from Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam will conclude the series (Tuesday 26 June to Sunday 28 August). Read more at dutchheritageamsterdam.nl. Starting 17 September the exhibition LOVE STORIES – ART, PASSION & TRAGEDY from the National Portrait Gallery, London will be on view in the Hermitage Amsterdam.

Now on view in the Hermitage building

There is much more to experience at the museum. The Amsterdam Museum is showing a new collection presentation about the city's well-known and lesser-known history called *Panorama Amsterdam: a living history of the city*, alongside various temporary exhibitions. These include *Welcome to the Northside* and *Colonial Stories: work in progress*. Museum of the Mind presents the exhibitions *Democracy* and *For the Love of Art* with a very surprising art collection that gives a glimpse into the lives of the artists. In the museum's courtyard there is a market with fresh and local produce every Saturday.

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Visual material

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