

**Contact:** Karen Frasca  
617.369.3442  
kfrasca@mfa.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, OPENS TRANSFORMED DUTCH GALLERY**

**Seven Paintings by Rembrandt among the Highlights of the Art of the Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Gallery**



*Artist in his Studio*, about 1628, Rembrandt  
Harmensz. van Rijn

BOSTON, MA (May 8, 2013)—The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), has unveiled one of its grandest spaces, the new Dutch and Flemish gallery, which has opened to the public after a nearly year-long renovation. The transformed Art of the Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Gallery features seven paintings by Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn. These are among approximately 30 paintings in the gallery illustrating the full range of art production in the Netherlands. Included are fine landscapes, still lifes, genre scenes, portraits, and religious histories by acclaimed artists, such as Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck, Jan Steen, and Jacob van Ruisdael. Canvases of varying size, including monumental paintings, are installed on damask-covered walls, while smaller

works by Rembrandt, his students, and associates are displayed in cases. Complementing the paintings in the gallery are decorative art objects, including Dutch furniture, Delft pottery, and silver. The renovation of the Art of the Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Gallery was made possible by Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo.

Also reopened is a companion gallery, the Leo and Phyllis Beranek Gallery, where approximately 20 works are displayed. In addition to showcasing Dutch and Flemish art from the Museum's holdings, both galleries highlight loans from important collections, including 18 works lent by the Van Otterloos, continuing the Museum's long-standing relationship with these noted supporters. The MFA also has opened the Alan and Simone Hartman Galleries featuring two 18<sup>th</sup>-century period rooms from Great Britain—Newland House Drawing Room and Hamilton Palace Dining Room—as well as a gallery for British Art 1560–1830.

"Through this transformation of the Museum's Dutch and Flemish galleries, made possible by Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo, we have the opportunity to showcase seven of the finest paintings by Rembrandt and illustrate his influence on a number of his contemporaries," said Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director of the MFA. "These paintings and a splendid array of

other important works are presented in a beautiful new space that highlights the breadth of artistic expression in the Netherlands at its pinnacle in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. I greatly appreciate the generosity of our lenders, who have enabled us to share these treasures with our visitors."



*Reverend Johannes Elison and Mevr. Johannes Elison*, both 1634,  
Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

Twenty-seven works from the Museum's own collection are hung in the two galleries, including Rembrandt's *Artist in his Studio* (about 1628), Rubens's *The Sacrifice of the Old Covenant* (about 1626), and Van Dyck's *Peeter Symons* (about 1630–32). Also on view are the recently conserved paintings *Interior of the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam* (1677) by Emanuel de Witte and Jan den Uyl's *Breakfast Still Life with Glass and Metalwork* (about 1637–39). Two additional works that were restored, Rembrandt's pendants *Reverend Johannes Elison* and *Mevr. Johannes Elison* (both 1634), flank an exquisitely carved oak cupboard (about 1610–20) measuring more than 7-feet tall and 5-feet wide, on top of which a garniture, or display, of Delftware is presented. This arrangement

is on view in the Art of the Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Gallery.

Complementing the MFA's works are paintings lent by the Van Otterloos, such as *Portrait of Aeltje Uylenburgh* (1632), among the finest Rembrandt paintings in private hands; *Dog at Rest* (1650) by Gerrit Dou; *Portrait of a Preacher* (about 1660) by Frans Hals; and *Still Life with Seashells* (1698) by Adriaen Coorte. Works lent by a private New York collector include *Minerva* (1635), a nearly life-sized depiction of the goddess from a group of mythological and historical female figures painted by Rembrandt between 1633 and 1635, which makes its Boston debut at the MFA. Among the other works lent by the collector are *A Scholar Interrupted at His Writing* (about 1635) by Gerrit Dou, *A Young Woman Feeding a Parrot* (1663) by Frans van Mieris the Elder, *Sacrifice of Iphigenia* (1671) by Jan Steen, and *Venus and Cupid* (1658) by Rembrandt's student, Ferdinand Bol.

Also showcased is Joos de Momper's monumental painting (6 feet by 8 ½ feet) *Mountain Landscape with Travelers* from the collection of Horace Wood ("Woody") Brock, which last was displayed at the MFA in 2009. It is shown with the poetic *Orpheus Charming the Animals* (about 1640) by Aelbert Cuyt from the Van Otterloo Collection, and *Landscape with Gentlefolk and Gypsies* by Jan Wildens, a recently conserved painting and the first Flemish work to enter the MFA's collection (in 1873).

"To have the opportunity to fill these galleries with important loans that complement our own superb collection is a curator's dream," said Ronni Baer, William and Ann Elfers Senior Curator of Paintings, Art of Europe, at the MFA. "I love the way the warm gray damask makes the blue skies in the landscapes come alive. And the installation enables us to tell different kinds of stories, from how Rembrandt made his successful move from Leiden to Amsterdam to the use of gesture in portraits and narratives."

The Art of the Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Gallery also highlights nearly 60 decorative arts objects. On view in four cases is a selection of recently acquired Delft ceramics (from the G. Ephis Collection of more than 70 works), among them *Pair of tulip vases as triumphal arches* (about 1690), which recalls Baroque festival architecture. There are also pairings of Delft with examples of Chinese and Japanese porcelain that inspired them. Silver, as well, is represented in the gallery, where notable works include a *Layette Basket* (Dutch, 1666–67), marked by Adriaen van Hoecke, and a rare *Ewer and Basin* (1632) by Christiaen van Vianen, with curves and lobes resembling the human ear.



*Pair of tulip vases as triumphal arches,*  
about 1690

The Museum's new Art of the Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Gallery, with its 31-foot-high ceilings, has been dramatically enhanced and features new decorative elements, including a warm gray Gainsborough silk damask fabric on the walls and a freshly painted cove and ceiling. State-of-the-art cases constructed by Italian manufacturer Goppion have been added to display small canvases and decorative art objects. Refurbished skylights and the addition of LED lighting improve illumination in the gallery, and new graphics enhance the appreciation of the art on view.

### Background on Art of the Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century

In the late 16th century, after many years of war, the mostly Protestant Northern Netherlands secured its independence from Spain and formed a self-governing republic. In the subsequent "Golden Age" (from about 1625–75), the Dutch Republic (also called Holland, after its most influential province) witnessed unprecedented prosperity, thanks largely to the sea-faring merchants who made the country Europe's center of international trade. Large numbers of paintings were made for an active and varied market. Portraits continued to be commissioned and were a reliable source of income for many artists, including Rembrandt. New genres of paintings were also developed, among them landscapes and seascapes, still lifes, scenes of everyday life, and church interiors. The demand for art was so great that many artists specialized.

The Southern Netherlands, comprised mostly of present-day Belgium and Luxembourg, remained under the rule of Catholic Spain. Although it did not experience the huge economic expansion of the Dutch Republic, Flanders—a large region in the north of the country—was also an important center for art production. The Habsburg Archdukes Albert and Isabella presided over a thriving court in Brussels and supported many court artists, among them Peter Paul Rubens. The Flemish city of Antwerp flourished as a center of production, and painters there produced works in many of the new genres, indicating that the cultural divide between north and south was not as firm as the political boundaries.

### Complementary Exhibition *Rembrandt the Etcher: The Dialogue of Darkness and Light* August 10, 2013–February 17, 2014

Etching as a printmaking medium emerged in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century in Germany and Italy, but its full creative potential only was realized with Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn's activity as an etcher from 1630 to 1661. The exhibition of 45 works, drawn primarily from the MFA's collection, will explore the unprecedented range of subject matter, format, and graphic vocabulary in the nearly 300 etchings that Rembrandt made during his career. Among the works on view in *Rembrandt the Etcher* will be Old and New Testaments narratives—some of the most insightful Biblical illustrations ever conceived—as well as self-portraits, landscapes, nudes, and scenes of everyday life. *Presented with support from The Bruce and Laura Monrad Fund for Exhibitions.*

*The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), is recognized for the quality and scope of its encyclopedic collection, which includes an estimated 450,000 objects. The Museum's collection is made up of: Art of the Americas; Art of Europe; Contemporary Art; Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa; Art of the Ancient World; Prints, Drawings, and Photographs; Textile and Fashion Arts; and Musical Instruments. Open seven days a week, the MFA's hours are Saturday through Tuesday, 10 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.; and Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. – 9:45 p.m. Admission (which includes one repeat visit within 10 days) is \$25 for adults and \$23 for seniors and students age 18 and older, and includes entry to all galleries and special exhibitions. Admission is free for University Members and youths age 17 and younger on weekdays after 3 p.m., weekends, and Boston Public Schools holidays; otherwise \$10. Wednesday nights after 4 p.m. admission is by voluntary contribution (suggested donation \$25). MFA Members are always admitted for free. The MFA's multi-media guide is available at ticket desks and the Sharf Visitor Center for \$5, members; \$6, non-members; and \$4, youths. The Museum is closed on New Year's Day, Patriots' Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. For more information, visit [www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org) or call 617.267.9300. The MFA is located on the Avenue of the Arts at 465 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115.*

###