



DUTCH MASTERS RE-VISITED

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As of Monday, 30 September, the Amsterdam Museum wing of Hermitage Amsterdam will include a new exhibition: *Dutch Masters Re-Viewed*. Curated by Jörgen Tjon a Fong (Urban Myth), this presentation complements the Amsterdam Museum's permanent exhibition at Hermitage Amsterdam, '*Portrait Gallery of the 17th Century*' (formerly known as '*Portrait Gallery of the Golden Age*'). Surrounded by the huge group portraits in the grand hall, *Dutch Masters Re-Visited* shows 13 portraits of prominent Dutch citizens posing as people of colour who, based on historical research, are known to have lived in the 17th- and 18th-century Netherlands. The exhibition will run until 2 February 2020.

Viewing the subjects depicted in the works presented in '*Portrait Gallery of the 17th Century*', one could easily (and erroneously) assume that at the time the Netherlands' entire population was white. After all, everyone included in these group portraits is white. But while they may not be depicted in these works,

the city of Amsterdam was also home to people of colour. White people and people of colour have been living together in the Netherlands for centuries. And in the 17th and 18th centuries, Amsterdam in particular was a home to people from all corners of the globe. Theatre maker Jörgen Tjon A Fong of Urban Myth, who curated *Dutch Masters Re-Visited*: "I was amazed to discover this vibrant community of people with non-Western roots living in 17th-century Amsterdam.

They could be found in all walks of life. A lot of people aren't aware of this. So far, these individuals' stories have been left untold. It's important that we start doing so – to paint a more complete picture of our past. In the photo exhibition *Dutch Masters Re-Visited* various historical people of colour who so far have remained hidden from view are given a face. By doing so, this part of our history can become visible to all citizens of Amsterdam and the rest of the Netherlands."

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PHOTO PORTRAITS OF WELL-KNOWN DUTCH CITIZENS

In *Dutch Masters Re-Visited*, prominent Dutch people of colour, including footballer Ruud Gullit, rapper Typhoon, comedian/presenter Jörgen Raymann, singer Berget Lewis, politician Sylvana Simons and hospitality tycoon Won Yip, will be taking on the role of historical Dutch citizens of colour.

Photographers Humberto Tan, Ahmet Polat, Stacii Samidin and Milette Raats portrayed their well-known sitters in the style of Rembrandt and his contemporaries, against the backdrop of special locations like the Rijksmuseum, Internationaal Theater Amsterdam, Museum van Loon, Hortus Botanicus and the Amsterdam Museum's own building.

The sitters have certain things in common with the individuals they portray. For example, Humberto Tan has photographed footballer Ruud Gullit in the role of Jacob Rühle (1751-1828). Jacob Rühle was the son of WIC employee and slave trader Anthony Rühle and the African woman Jaba Botri. In 1798 the fabulously wealthy Jacob moved to Amsterdam. Here, he eventually headed the family business – with great success. Like Rühle, Ruud Gullit is the son of a white and a black parent. *Dutch Masters Re-Visited* puts a face to Rühle's name, telling his story together with 12 other people of colour who lived in the Netherlands of the 17th and 18th centuries.

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GROUP PORTRAITS FROM THE 17TH CENTURY

Since November 2014, the Amsterdam Museum and the Rijksmuseum have jointly presented the largest collection of group portraits in the world, in the permanent exhibition '*Portrait Gallery of the 17th Century*' at Hermitage Amsterdam. Displayed on the walls of an impressive grand hall, these group portraits of Amsterdam militiamen and regents form the heart of a presentation dealing with life in the Dutch cities and towns of the 17th century. In this setting, the 13 photo portraits of 17th-century people of colour shown in the exhibition *Dutch Masters Re-Visited* enter into dialogue with the group portraits, which exclusively feature white men and women.

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AN INCLUSIVE MUSEUM

Dutch Masters Re-Visited is the first in a series of temporary exhibitions presented as a complement to the permanent exhibition '*Portrait Gallery of the 17th Century*'. In this series, the Amsterdam Museum will be inviting contemporary creators to realise exhibitions or interventions based on constantly shifting perspectives. As such, they offer contemporary views on the museum's other exhibitions that expand or counter their context and enter into dialogue with the City of Amsterdam's historical collection.

As part of its on-going effort to become more inclusive and provide room for perspectives that have so far remained underrepresented, the Amsterdam Museum has distanced itself from the term 'Golden Age' for the 17th century, changing the name of its exhibition '*Dutchmen of the Golden Age*' to '*Portrait Gallery of the 17th Century*'. On Sunday, 29 September, during the official opening of Dutch Masters Re-Viewed, the Amsterdam Museum will be organising a symposium for professionals from the field and the general public about the implications of the term 'Golden Age', as well as discussing which stories from the 17th century should be recounted, and by whom, and how to approach this as inclusively as possible.

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PRESS

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Ruud-Gullit - as Jacob Rühle (1751-1828) - photographer: Humberto Tan. (4mb)

Antonie Rühle, Jacob's German father, met the African Jaba Botri while working as a slave trader in Elmina (Ghana). Elmina was the centre of trade in people enslaved by the Dutch West India Company (WIC). When he was 10, Jacob moved with his family to

Amsterdam, where he was christened. Later on, he managed the family business from his home at Amstel 87: holdings in Elmina and Suriname and a brickyard in the Zuid-Holland town of Zwammerdam. In Amsterdam, the Rühles were members of the upper middle class. Although he himself had African origins, Jacob Rühle was also active as a slave trader and slaveholder.



Typhoon (Glenn de Randamie) – as Elieser (birth year unknown-1629) – photographer: Humberto Tan. (5.15mb)

Elieser was buried in the Portuguese-Jewish cemetery Beth Haim in Ouderkerk aan de Amstel on 27 March 1629. He was a black man and a member of the household of poet and merchant Paulo de Pina, a pseudonym of Rohiel Jesurun. Jesurun had

previously moved to the Netherlands from Spain, possibly accompanied by Elieser. Elieser's headstone is marked 'S(epultura) do bom servo Elieser': the grave of the loyal servant Elieser. Was 'servo' used in the sense of 'household servant' or 'servant of God'? Or of 'enslaved individual' – although this tended to be indicated by the term 'escravo'? Whatever the case, the headstone shows that Elieser, a man of colour, was of the Jewish faith.



José Montoya – as Jean Rabo (1714-1769) – photographer: Milette Raats (2.08mb)

In 1729, Jean Rabo professed his Christian faith during a ceremony at The Hague's Hofkerk. 'The Moor', as he was called in contemporary documents, had African origins. He was a member of the court of the later Stadtholder Willem IV. In 1747, Willem

promoted Rabo to chamberlain soon after moving into the Stadtholder's Palace in The Hague. After Willem IV's death, Rabo entered the employment of his widow. Jean Rabo drowned at the age of 55 in the court capital in what appears to have been an accident. The court contributed to the costs of his funeral service.

Note for the Editors / not intended for publication:

For further information, visual materials or to request an interview please contact press officer Kim Koopman via k.koopman@amsterdammuseum.nl or +31 [0]6 - 22 92 77 29. Press is welcome to visit the exhibition. Please contact Kim Koopman.

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The grand hall at Hermitage Amsterdam, with the Amsterdam Museum's permanent exhibition 'Portrait Gallery of the 17th Century' (formerly called 'Dutchmen of the Golden Age') – photographer: Joel Frijhoff. (14mb)



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