



# GALLERY OF THE GOLDEN AGE

HERMITAGE  AMSTERDAM

RIJKS MUSEUM

PRESS RELEASE

Amsterdam, 12 February 2014

**Amsterdam Museum, Hermitage Amsterdam and Rijksmuseum join forces to create a portrait gallery.**

This morning, Wednesday 12 February, Paul Spies (Amsterdam Museum), Cathelijne Broers (Hermitage Amsterdam) and Martine Gosselink (Rijksmuseum) sealed a joint project with a triple handshake: a permanent exhibition of over thirty huge 17th- and 18th-century group portraits. Provisionally titled *Gallery of the Golden Age*, this will be the first presentation of so many group portraits of this size in a single show. These paintings are unique in the art world and they portray a characteristically Dutch burgher society. This unprecedented joint project will enable the three Amsterdam museums to treat the public to paintings which have rarely been exhibited because of their size. The presentation opens in late November 2014 in Hermitage Amsterdam.



*Martine Gosselink, Cathelijne Broers & Paul Spies*

Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson of Dr Deijman* and civic guard portraits by masters such as Govert Flinck and Nicolaes Pickenoy are just some of the major works to feature in the new presentation. These and other *Night Watch* contemporaries from the Amsterdam collection of the Rijksmuseum and Amsterdam Museum have seldom been shown because of their size, and never together.

Group portraits such as these were extraordinary even when they were painted: unlike surrounding countries, in the Netherlands portraiture was not confined to nobles and churchmen; here it was the third estate that ruled, and it was the burgher who commissioned art. In many cases, portraits show burghers doing their civic duty, as guardsmen or as governors of charities. These group portraits of ostensibly ordinary people are of course interesting from an art-historical perspective; and even more so as testimony to the typical group mentality of the Dutch.



*Nicolaes Eliasz. Pickenoy, Banquet of the Civic Guard Company of Captain Jacob Backer and Lieutenant Jacob Rogh, 1632, height 198 cm, width 531 cm, Amsterdam Museum collection*

Hermitage Amsterdam director Cathelijne Broers: “We are always looking for opportunities to attract a wider audience by joining forces with other partners. Combining with Amsterdam Museum and Rijksmuseum - the two generous lenders – enables us to bring together a unique collection of paintings that few people have ever seen, alongside the major exhibitions that we have regularly hosted since 2009. These works need a big gallery to be shown in, and the Hermitage has the required space in its 17th-century building, from the time when these group portraits were painted.”

Amsterdam Museum director Paul Spies: “This project is the realisation of a long-nurtured dream. These paintings are some of the finest works owned by the city of Amsterdam, yet because of their size they are almost impossible to show. Our joint project will make them accessible to everyone in Amsterdam and to visitors and tourists alike in the best possible way.”

Rijksmuseum director Wim Pijbes: “The Gallery of the Golden Age brings cultural entrepreneurship, cooperation and presentation of forgotten museum treasures together in an innovative way for a broad audience.”

-----  
Note to editors, not for publication: More information available from Anna Brolsma, Amsterdam Museum, +31 (0)622911821. Visual material available at [www.amsterdammuseum.nl/galleryofthegoldenage](http://www.amsterdammuseum.nl/galleryofthegoldenage).