

NEWS RELEASE

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Joslyn Art Museum Unveils New Frame for Rembrandt's *Portrait of Dirck van Os*

(Omaha, NE) – Earlier this week, at a special reception honoring past presidents of the Joslyn Art Museum Association (JAMA), the Museum presented its Rembrandt *Portrait of Dirck van Os* (ca. 1658) in a seventeenth-century Dutch style frame. The portrait was previously displayed in a carved and gilded French Louis XIV frame, which accompanied the picture when it was acquired by the Museum in 1942 from Schneider-Gabriel Galleries in New York City. The recent conservation of the picture, which placed the portrait firmly among Rembrandt's late autograph works, and preparation for the reinstallation of Joslyn's European galleries, set to begin early next year, prompted the decision to replace the frame with a more historically appropriate and aesthetically suitable selection.

Extensive research into the history of Dutch frames was conducted and several prominent framers in both New York City and London were consulted on the project. Due to the rarity of antique Dutch frames meeting the size requirements of the

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(PICTURED ABOVE) Rembrandt van Rijn (Dutch, 1606–1669), *Portrait of Dirck van Os*, ca. 1658, oil on canvas, Joslyn Art Museum, Museum purchase, 1942.30; Photograph by René Gerritsen

painting, the decision was made to commission a reproduction of an original design. The frame was generously funded by JAMA, a group that also contributed to the painting's conservation in 2013. Rembrandt's *Portrait of Dirck van Os* is on view in Joslyn's Hitchcock Gallery (gallery 3).

About the Frame

Very few paintings in museum collections retain their original frames. Former owners and cultural institutions frequently changed frames according to prevailing contemporary taste. The former Louis XIV frame surrounding Joslyn's Rembrandt portrait, characterized by ornate carving and gilding with varying patterns and scrollwork, detracted from the sobriety and dignity of the sitter. Seventeenth-century Dutch frames are less ornate than Italian and French examples of the same period, relying on the warm black and brown tonalities of the wood and the use of broad, flat, and curved surfaces to reflect light rather than ornate carving and gilding. This more restrained style reflects the conservative Protestant atmosphere of the Netherlands as well as the strong mercantile culture in which exotic and expensive wood, such as ebony, were imported through the Dutch East India Company. While examples of French Louis XIV frames were available in Holland after mid-century, the use of dark ebony frames was much more prevalent.

Dirck van Os III (1590-1668) was the Dijkgraaf, or commissioner, of the Beemster north of Amsterdam, a low-lying stretch of land that had been reclaimed from a former lake. Aged 70 at the time of this portrait, Van Os had been in the position for 40 years and was an honored member of the community. Rembrandt renders the respected elder with sensitivity, imbuing Van Os with an inner presence and quiet authority by means of pose, expressive brushwork, and evocative contrasts of light and shade. The new frame both enhances and complements Van Os's high status and the distinguished manner he projects while providing a balanced historical perspective.

About Rembrandt

Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669) was the most acclaimed painter of the Dutch Golden Age, an era marked by Holland's prominence in trade, global exploration, science, and art. Portraiture sprang to life as a new class of prosperous citizens desired likenesses to hang in fashionable mansions, and civic and professional organizations commissioned life-size group portraits to commemorate their roles as members of the Dutch Republic. Rembrandt garnered fame for his profound ability to express mood and feeling in his portraits and historical and religious paintings, although his inventiveness as a draftsman and printmaker is equally notable. Shedding the static, idealized poses favored during the Renaissance, his keen appreciation of the subtleties of expression, gesture, and emotion reveal the personality and likeness of his sitters far beyond their physical appearance.

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Our Mission — Joslyn Art Museum collects, preserves, and interprets the visual arts of the highest quality, fostering appreciation and enjoyment of art for the benefit of a diverse audience.

Our Vision — To be cherished and respected as a premier art museum.

Joslyn Art Museum showcases art from ancient times to the present. The Museum was a gift to the people of Omaha from Sarah Joslyn in memory of her husband, George, who made his fortune as president of the Western Newspaper Union. The

Museum's original 1931 building is one of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in the nation, with 38 types of marble from seven countries. The Walter and Suzanne Scott Pavilion, a 58,000-square-foot addition built in 1994, was designed by renowned British architect Norman Foster as his first U.S. commission. The Museum features galleries, a 1,000-seat concert hall, fountain court, education technology gallery, lecture hall, classrooms, sculpture garden, café, shop, and Art Works, an interactive space for art exploration.

General Museum Admission: Free (additional charge for some special exhibitions).

Regular Museum Hours: Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am–4 pm; late 'til 8 pm on Thursday; closed Monday and major holidays.

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