

# LOUVRE

Press release

Acquisition

March 10–June 13, 2016

Denon wing, 1st floor, room 13



Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669)

Left

*Portrait of Maerten Soolmans*

1634, oil on canvas, 210 cm x 135 cm.

Acquired by the Dutch State for the Rijksmuseum.

© RMN-Grand Palais / Mathieu Rabeau

Right

*Portrait of Oopjen Coppit*

1634, oil on canvas, 210 cm x 133 cm.

Acquired by the French Republic for the Musée du Louvre.

© RMN-Grand Palais / Mathieu Rabeau

The acquisition of the *Portrait of Oopjen Coppit* for the Musée du Louvre has been generously supported by the Banque de France.



**Musée du Louvre**

**Practical information**

**Opening hours**

Every day from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., except Tuesday.  
Night opening until 10 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays.

**Admission**

€15 (permanent collections + exhibitions)

Free for visitors under the age of 18, 18-25 year-old residents of the European Union, teachers with a "Pass Education" card, unemployed individuals, holders of the Youth, Professional, Family, and Ami du Louvre cards.

**Further information:** [www.louvre.fr/en](http://www.louvre.fr/en)

**Online ticket sales:** [www.ticketlouvre.fr](http://www.ticketlouvre.fr)

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# RIJKS MUSEUM

## Portraits of Maerten Soolmans and Oopjen Coppit by Rembrandt

### An Exceptional Acquisition Exhibited at the Musée du Louvre

The portraits of Maerten Soolmans and his wife Oopjen Coppit, two masterpieces by Rembrandt painted in 1634, have been jointly acquired by the Louvre and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. They will be exhibited for the first time to the public at the Musée du Louvre from March 10 to June 13, 2016, then at the Rijksmuseum for three months.

Francois Hollande, President of the French Republic, and Their Majesties the King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, during Their state visit to France were present at the Louvre for the unveiling of these paintings on the morning of March 10.

This unprecedented joint acquisition, backed by an intergovernmental agreement, was made on February 1, 2016 by the French and Dutch States on behalf of the Musée du Louvre and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

The Louvre benefited from the generous support of the Banque de France to make the acquisition.

The paintings are the only examples of full-length portraits by the greatest painter of the Dutch Golden Age. They bear witness to the artist's unrivaled skill in representing the subtlety of materials and employing the greatest economy of means to create a symphony of black and white hues.

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**Rembrandt van Rijn** (1606-1669)  
*Portrait of Maerten Soolmans* (detail)  
Acquired by the Dutch State for the Rijksmuseum.  
© RMN-Grand Palais / Mathieu Rabeau



**Rembrandt van Rijn** (1606-1669)  
*Portrait of Oopjen Coppit* (detail)  
Acquired by the French Republic for the Musée du Louvre.  
© RMN-Grand Palais / Mathieu Rabeau

### **An Innovative Joint Project**

An intergovernmental agreement sealing the joint acquisition of these masterworks by Rembrandt was signed in Paris on February 1, 2016 between the French and Dutch Ministers of Culture. In a concerted effort to create a shared heritage, France and the Netherlands each acquired one of the two Rembrandt paintings: while the Netherlands acquired the portrait of Maerten Soolmans, France acquired that of his wife, and the two paintings may never be separated. This unprecedented arrangement reflects the two countries' high esteem for these two extraordinary works, their wish to strengthen ties between institutions, and the prohibitive cost of the acquisition. The joint endeavor between the two museums and ministries is a singular example of European cooperation to protect cultural heritage, thanks to which the pair of portraits by Rembrandt, a great European mind of the 17th century, is guaranteed to remain in Europe.

Since the two paintings were classified "Works of Major Heritage Value," the French State was able to benefit from the sponsorship of the Banque de France to acquire the portrait of Oopjen Coppit.

On March 10, 2016, Francois Hollande, President of the French Republic, Their Majesties the King Willem -Alexander and Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, Audrey Azoulay, Minister of Culture and Communication, and Jet Bussemaker, Minister of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands, gathered at the Musée du Louvre to celebrate the entry of the portraits into the national collections of the two countries.

The works will first be put on display for three months at the Musée du Louvre, in immediate proximity to the Grande Galerie (Denon wing, 1st floor, room 13, while the Dutch painting rooms on the 2nd floor of the Richelieu wing undergo renovations). They will then go to the Rijksmuseum for another three-month showing before undergoing conservation treatment in the Netherlands.

The conservation project will be overseen by a Franco-Dutch committee headed by Sébastien Allard, Director of the Department of Paintings at the Musée du Louvre, and Taco Dibbits, Director of Collections at the Rijksmuseum.

According to the agreement signed by the Louvre and the Rijksmuseum, the works must always be shown together, alternately at the Louvre and the Rijksmuseum, for long periods of time (five years followed by eight years). They may not be lent to other institutions.

## Two Rare Works by Rembrandt

Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669) painted the double portrait of Maerten Soolmans and his wife Oopjen Coppit in 1634. At 28 years of age, the artist was in the prime of his career, as shown by his two *Self-Portraits* in the Louvre's collections from the same period.

The paintings are an exception in Rembrandt's oeuvre, being the only full-length pendant portraits known by the artist. This type of work, usually reserved to more southern European courts, and Flanders in particular, was very rare for its time in Holland. By choosing this type of portrait, the couple most likely wanted to showcase their social status. Indeed, they belonged to the highest class of the Amsterdam bourgeoisie. In June of 1633, Maerten Soolmans (1613–1641), son of a refugee from Antwerp, married Oopjen Coppit (1611–1689), whose hand in marriage was one of the most sought-after in the city.

For this prestigious commission, Rembrandt creates a dialogue between the two portraits by introducing a movement: Maerten Soolmans holds out his glove, a sign of fidelity, to his wife who descends a stair toward him. A large curtain in the background unifies the two paintings, just like the light that falls harshly on Maerten's right shoulder and more softly on Oopjen's large lace collar. During this period, all the genius of the Amsterdam master lay in his skillful handling of a concentrated palette centered around black, white, and gray, to brilliant effect. The sumptuous black clothing, the most expensive fashion of the time, offers the artist the chance to render materials in a brilliant show of bravura: Maerten's satin-edged, starched garment contrasts with the featherweight silk and quilted satin and tulle of Oopjen's dress, whose swelling waistline hints at pregnancy. The elaborate bows on the couple's belts create a sort of garland that unites the spouses. The precision and painstaking attention to detail are evident in the patterns on the husband's breeches, the extravagant decoration of his shoes, and Oopjen's fan.

The two sitters wear very different expressions—Maerten's is more generic, while Oopjen appears more melancholy and genteel. Maerten's flesh tones, dominated by pink tones, are on the harsh side, while Oopjen's palette is more transparent and subdued.

## The Long Franco-Dutch Story Behind Two Paintings

In 1877, the collection of Willem van Loon, of which the portraits of Maerten Soolmans and Oopjen Coppit were the uncontested stars, went on sale. The Dutch government tried to acquire the works, but the price reached unprecedented highs. Deemed exorbitant by the press, the sale caused quite a stir in Europe at the time. A consortium from the Rothschild family, headed by Baron Gustave, acquired a lot of 68 Flemish and Dutch paintings from the Van Loon collection, including the two portraits now jointly owned by the Louvre and the Rijksmuseum. The paintings therefore left the Netherlands for France. Rarely exhibited, they became as famous as they were mysterious.

In the spring of 2014, when the Rothschild family decided to part with the works, there was a repeat performance, albeit in reverse, of the Van Loon sale of 1877.

While France searched for a way to keep the two prestigious works on French soil, the Netherlands was looking for a way to bring the lost works back to Dutch soil. After much thought and discussion, a European solution involving a joint Franco-Dutch acquisition seemed the best answer. The arrangement allows the works to be admired by visitors from all over the world in two of Europe's largest museums.

The Louvre's acquisition is a watershed moment for the museum's Dutch paintings collection. Although the museum boasts one of the world's most complete, if not the most complete, collections after that of the Rijksmuseum, there was still an important gap, now filled by these portraits. Indeed, despite the museum's impressive collection of masterworks by Rembrandt, including *Bathsheba*, which recently underwent conservation treatment, and several self-portraits, large-scale compositions by the artist were lacking. The portraits of Maerten Soolmans and Oopjen Coppit will join the Louvre's world-class collection of large 17th-century Flemish, Italian, and French portraits, while they will take their place among other works by the master at the Rijksmuseum. Thus, the two museums are committed to a long-term collaboration.