

AMSTERDO

REMBRANDT'S FORGOTTEN MASTERPIECE RETURNS HOME



One of the most important Dutch artists in history, Rembrandt Van Rijn, will have one of his paintings returned to the Netherlands temporarily. 'The Conspiracy of the Batavians under Claudius Civilis', now owned by the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts and hung in the National Museum in Stockholm, will be displayed in an extremely rare showcasing at the Rijksmuseum from the 21st of March. The canvas painted in 1661-1662, is on loan while the National Museum is being renovated. . The painting depicts the one-eyed Batavian leader, Claudius Civilis addressing other chieftains and warriors over a meal.

Rembrandt was under commission by the Amsterdam City council to paint 'Claudius Civilis' for the new town hall (now the Royal Palace). Originally the largest painting ever created by Rembrandt measuring a monumental 550cm wide by 550cm tall, this towering canvas was the last secular history painting he finished. However, the painting was rejected by the council and returned to the artist. It is unknown whether he was ever paid for his work. Previously in the shape of a lunette, the painting was cut down drastically to a quarter of its original size in order for it to be sold, leaving only the most significant narrative fragment. The painting was eventually auctioned and purchased by Nicholaas Kohl and wife Sophia Grill in 1734 and presumably taken to Stockholm.

In 1865 it was given to the National Museum of Art in Stockholm on long term loan. Since 1662 no one knew where the painting had ended up, and was all but forgotten in the Netherlands for nearly a century. By sheer coincidence it was rediscovered in Stockholm in 1892.

It has now made its way back to the country of its making. To commemorate 400 years of bilateral relations between Sweden and the Netherlands 'The conspiracy of the Batavians under Claudius civil' will be on display in the Gallery of Honour at the Rijksmuseum. This is certainly a rare and timely opportunity for those residing or visiting the city of Amsterdam to view one of Rembrandts most prestigious paintings.



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