

# 'Largest-ever' Vermeer show coming to Dutch Rijksmuseum

Amsterdam's famed Rijksmuseum unveiled plans yesterday to stage the largest-ever exhibition of Johannes Vermeer's paintings, including his iconic "Girl with the Pearl Earring". The groundbreaking show in early 2023 will bring works from museums across the globe together under one roof, to shed light on the life and career of the elusive 17th century Dutch master. It is expected to better the exhibition by the Rijksmuseum's sister Mauritshuis museum in The Hague in 1996, which at the time with some 22 works was the most ambitious display of Vermeers to date.

"With loans from all over the world, this promises to be the largest Vermeer exhibition ever," the Rijksmuseum said. "It promises to have more works" than the 1996 exhibition, Rijksmuseum director Taco Dibbits told AFP, but he added "we will not have them all." Today some 35 works have been attributed to Vermeer, renowned for his mastery in the use of light, which can be seen in his works like the "Milkmaid", one of four Vermeers belonging to the Rijksmuseum. "I was always amazed that over nearly a century of organizing exhibitions at the Rijksmuseum, who has four fantastic Vermeers, we have never had a monographic exhibition about him," Dibbits said.

"The Girl with a Pearl Earring", the much-loved masterpiece which inspired a best-selling novel and a 2003 Hollywood film starring Scarlett Johansson, will be on loan from the Mauritshuis, which will collaborate with the Rijksmuseum on the show. Very little is known about Vermeer (1632-1675), who lived a life of modest means in the historic city of Delft during the Dutch "Golden Age" of painting. "For centuries little importance was attached to his work's name," the Rijksmuseum said, until his rediscovery in the 1870s.

Both museums "will research Vermeer's artistry, his artistic choices and motivations for his compositions, as well as into the creative process of his paintings," the Rijksmuseum said. Other works on loan will include "Lady Writing a Letter with her Maid" from The National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin and "Woman Holding a Balance" from The National Gallery of Art in Washington. "Vermeer is somebody who is clouded in mystery, there are so few written sources about him," Dibbits said. "If you want to get to know him better, you need his work and there is something incomparable between sourcing Vermeer and putting all his works together," Dibbits said. The Vermeer exhibition will run from February 10, 2023 to June 4 that year. —AFP



## Meghan Markle urges tabloid shake-up after second privacy win

Meghan Markle yesterday called for a reform of tabloid newspaper culture after winning a second court victory against a British newspaper group for breaching her privacy. But Associated Newspapers indicated her high-profile win may not be the end of the matter, as it said it may now take the case to the country's highest court. Three judges at the Court of Appeal in London threw out the news group's challenge to a February ruling in the High Court over the publication in 2019 in the Mail on Sunday of a letter she wrote to her estranged father.

The Duchess of Sussex, who is married to Queen Elizabeth II's grandson, Prince Harry, said she hoped the ruling would embolden others to hold tabloids to account. "This is a victory not just for me, but for anyone who has ever felt scared to stand up for what's right," she said in a statement. "While this win is precedent setting, what matters most is that we are now collectively brave enough to reshape a tabloid industry that conditions people to be cruel and profits from the lies and pain that they create."

Associated, which also publishes the Daily Mail and MailOnline, appealed the lower court ruling, arguing the judge should have only made his judgment after a full trial hearing. The publisher had been ordered to pay hundreds of thousands of pounds in interim legal costs and to print a front-page statement acknowledging her legal victory. But that was put on hold while the appeal was heard.

### 'Personal and private'

Associated said it was "very disappointed by the decision" and was considering an appeal to the Supreme Court. "It is our strong view that judgment should be given only on the basis of evidence tested at trial, and not on a summary basis in a heavily contested case, before even disclosure of documents. "No evidence has been tested in cross-examination, as it should be," it added. The three appeal judges agreed with the lower court judge that the contents of the letter were



In this file photo Duchess of Sussex Meghan Markle smiles during the 2021 Global Citizen Live festival at the Great Lawn, Central Park in New York City. —AFP

"personal, private, and not matters of legitimate public interest".

Judge Geoffrey Vos, the most senior civil judge in England and Wales, told court the Mail on Sunday articles "interfered with the duchess' reasonable expectation of privacy" and it was "hard to see" if a trial could have changed that. He said the key point was that the articles "focused on revealing the contents of the letter" rather than providing Thomas Markle with a chance to respond to claims made about him in an article in US magazine People.

The articles "were splashed as a new public revelation of extracts from the duchess's letter to her father, rather than her father's answers to what People magazine had written", said Vos. The original judge "had been right to decide that just one paragraph of the letter could have been justifiably deployed to rebut the allegation in People magazine", he added. Lawyers for Associated had argued that Markle wrote the correspondence to her father knowing it was likely to be leaked, despite claiming the opposite. The letter to her father was written in 2018 after her wedding and asked him to stop talking to tabloids and making false claims about her in interviews. —AFP

## Wife of 'godfather of Black music' fatally shot in Beverly Hills home

The wife of the man known as the "godfather of Black music" was shot and killed Wednesday in a break-in at the couple's Beverly Hills home, police said. Jacqueline Avant, 81, was found in her home with fatal gunshot wounds, Beverly Hills Police Chief Mark Stainbrook told a press conference. Avant was the wife of Clarence Avant, a music executive with stints at Motown and other labels who helped mentor an array of African American artists and was inducted earlier this year into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The couple's daughter, Nicole Avant, is married to Netflix CEO Ted Sarandos.

Stainbrook said no one else had been hurt in the incident and that he did not believe it was a random attack, though the motive was not immediately clear. There had "apparently" been a security guard at the property during the attack, Stainbrook said, declining to offer further details. Police in Beverly Hills, an upmarket area of Los Angeles that is home to the rich and famous in the US entertainment industry, said officers were called to the house after 2:00 am. "Police units arrived and discovered a victim with a gunshot wound," an earlier press release said. —AFP



In this file photo Jacqueline and Clarence Avant attend the NMAAM 2016 Black Music Honors in Nashville, Tennessee. —AFP