

**Dutch Masterpiece by Cornelis van Haarlem Donated
To Worcester Art Museum by Collector Hester Diamond**

Gift Follows Ms. Diamond's Gift of Veronese Masterpiece in 2013

***Paris and Oenone* Continues Initiative to Grow and Diversify
WAM's Encyclopedic Collection**



WORCESTER, MA – March 2, 2016 – The Worcester Art Museum (WAM) today announced the acquisition of Cornelis van Haarlem's *Paris and Oenone* (1616), an important example of Dutch Golden Age painting, given to the Museum by New York collector Hester Diamond. The painting joins two others by Cornelis van Haarlem in WAM's collection—*The Wedding of Peleus and Thetis* (1593) and *Venus and Cupid* (1602)—making the Museum's holdings of paintings by the artist the most comprehensive in the nation. The gift follows Ms. Diamond's 2013 landmark gift of Paolo Veronese's *Venus Disarming Cupid* (circa 1560), further enhancing the Museum's Old Masters collection.

Paris and Oenone is among a series of works Cornelis van Haarlem created during his lifetime that illustrate his fascination with love stories from ancient Greek and Roman mythology. The larger-than-life painting features Paris, the son of King Priam of Troy, as he courts Oenone, the daughter of the river god Cebren, by carving her name into a tree. The bucolic scene represents an important transition in the artist's stylistic evolution. While his early work was characterized by the highly refined and elegant Mannerist style that he helped develop, with intricate works done on paper, wood, and metal, *Paris and Oenone* represents the artist's newfound interest in the monumental. It captures a new engagement with large-scale canvases and classicizing subjects drawn from antiquity, as well as the change to a much more naturalistic, lush palette.

"*Paris and Oenone* represents a crucial chapter in the history of Dutch painting, and the trajectory of this pioneering artist's own career. This incredible gift, an excellent example of monumental history painting, adds tremendous dimension to our holdings of Dutch pictures and

connects beautifully with Ms. Diamond's previous gift of work from the Italian Renaissance," said Matthias Waschek, C. Jean and Myles McDonough Director of the Worcester Art Museum. "We are truly grateful to Ms. Diamond for her continued generosity, and to her stepdaughter Rachel Kaminsky, who is a valued board member and has shown a tremendous commitment to enhancing the Museum's collections. We are thrilled to create a new installation that accentuates the large-scale nature of the painting and offer our visitors a more comprehensive view of art historical masterworks."

"In giving *Venus Disarming Cupid* to the Worcester Art Museum in 2013, I was pleased to have found an opportunity for this masterpiece to be embraced by its public and new custodians, enriching the collection as much as the experience of its visitors," said Ms. Diamond. "It's in the same vein that I am donating this beloved work by Cornelis van Haarlem. I look forward to seeing how the Museum incorporates the painting into their galleries to honor its significance and its potential to spark new ideas and connections."

Born in Haarlem, Netherlands in 1562, Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem was raised by the painter Pieter Pietersz, after his parents fled the city in 1568 when it was attacked by the Spanish army during the 80 Years' War. Between 1580 and 1581, he studied in Rouen, France, and Antwerp, before returning to Haarlem where he joined Hendrick Goltzius and Karel van Mander in forming their own Haarlem Academy. Together, these artists helped develop Dutch Mannerism, defined by their intricate compositions with twisted, elongated nudes in complex poses. He later abandoned this style, and began working in the Netherlandish realist tradition. His work shaped the style and what came to be known as the Dutch Golden Age period of painting.

In *Paris and Oenone*, the artist conveys the tale with both elegance and eroticism. The painting reflects recurring motifs in Cornelis van Haarlem's oeuvre, including such characters as the child and hound, which surround the figures, and Oenone's pose, which depicts her leaning on her elbow with her left hand raised towards the sky. The painting also exemplifies the dominant use of nude figures in the artist's work.

Image credit line:

Cornelis van Haarlem, Netherlands, 1562-1638, *Paris and Oenone*, 1616, oil on canvas, Gift of Hester Diamond

About the Worcester Art Museum

Founded in 1896, the Worcester Art Museum's encyclopedic 38,000 piece collection covers 51 centuries of art. Highlights include the Medieval Chapter House, Renaissance Court, and Worcester Hunt Mosaic, as well as the recently integrated John Woodman Higgins Armory Collection of arms and armor. The Museum is internationally known for its collection of European and American art. It was the first in America to acquire paintings by Monet and Gauguin and one of the first to collect photography. As the first U.S. museum to focus on collaborating with local schools, it has been at the forefront of engaging audiences and giving them a meaningful and personal experience.

The Worcester Art Museum, located at 55 Salisbury Street in Worcester, MA, is open Wednesday through Friday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.;

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and every third Thursday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is \$14 for adults, \$6 for children 4-17, \$12 for seniors 65+, and \$12 for college students with ID. Members and children under four are free. Parking is free. For more information, visit worcesterart.org.

CONTACT:

Worcester Art Museum

Julieane Frost

508-793-4373

JulieaneFrost@worcesterart.org

PAVE Communications & Consulting

Alina E. Sumajin

alina@paveconsult.com

646-369-2050