

BJU painting joining Rembrandt exhibit



GEORGE GARDNER / Staff

Security director Jim Jackson, left, and curator John Nolan remove a painting titled "Head of Christ" from the Bob Jones University Museum and Gallery at Heritage Green. The painting is being loaned to the Louvre in Paris for a special exhibit in April called "Rembrandt and the Face of Jesus." Story, Page 3A

BJU painting heads to Louvre

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With gloved hands, John Nolan carefully held the gilded frame while an assistant clipped the wires that held the painting in place. When it was free, Nolan slowly lowered the centuries-old artwork into the custom-made crate that will carry it across the sea.

"Head of Christ" is headed from the Bob Jones University Museum and Gallery at Heritage Green to the Louvre in Paris for an exhibit called "Rembrandt and the Face of Jesus."

"It's a lot of responsibility every time you touch this thing, so you never want to be lax and not feeling like it's important," Nolan said.

The artwork, believed to be by one of Rembrandt's students, dates to the mid-17th century and is part of a series that redefined the look of Jesus.

"Up until Rembrandt, when artists painted Christ, they painted him as Anglo-Saxon," Nolan said. "But Rembrandt broke with tradition completely with this series of heads and changed the image of Christ to a Jewish-looking

man."
"Head of Christ" and the seven other works that will compose the centerpiece of the exhibit are all images of the same model, who is believed to have been a man living in the large Jewish community near Rembrandt's studio. The BJU piece, which the museum acquired in 1963, is the only one of the eight central works to have been painted by a student.

Nolan said the special exhibit is a unique opportunity for these paintings to be viewed together in a way they likely haven't been

since Rembrandt's lifetime. "Rembrandt and the Face of Jesus" will include 50 works by Rembrandt and his students. After three months in Paris, the exhibit will go to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and then the Detroit Institute of Art. "Head of Christ" will return to Greenville in February 2012.

"It's sort of a feather in our cap as far as a museum of that caliber wanting to borrow something from this little museum in Greenville to include in an exhibit like that," Nolan said.