

Rembrandt's life & work

Important dates

1568-1648 The Revolt of the Netherlands or Eighty Years War-a long-drawn-out struggle between the Northern Netherlands and Spain.

1602 The establishment of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), a trading association set up by a number of Dutch cities. The Company's ships sailed to far eastern countries, where spices, porcelain, precious fabrics and other goods were bought.

1606 Rembrandt was born in Leiden on 15 July, the ninth child of Harmen Gerritszoon van Rijn and Neeltje Willemsdochter van Suydbroeck.

1609-1621 A pause in the hostilities between the Netherlands and Spain following the negotiation of a cease-fire that was to last twelve years and became known as the Twelve Years' Truce.

1613-1620 Rembrandt attended the Latin School in Leiden.

1620 Rembrandt was enrolled at the University of Leiden, but he never attended any lectures there.

1620-1623 Rembrandt studied art with the Leiden painter Jacob van Swanenburgh.

1621 The establishment of the West India Company (WIC), a Dutch trading association that sent ships to countries in North America, South America and East Africa.

1624 Rembrandt set up his own studio in Leiden. He collaborated closely with his friend Jan Lievens.

1625 During this period Rembrandt studied for six months with Pieter Lastman in Amsterdam.

1626 Rembrandt settled again in Leiden. As well as drawing and painting, he now started to produce etchings.

1628 Rembrandt took on his first pupils. Constantijn Huygens, secretary to stadholder Frederick Henry, visited Rembrandt's and Lievens's studio and admired their work.

1631 Rembrandt met the Amsterdam art dealer Hendrick van Uylenburgh. After this meeting, Rembrandt started to spend much more time in Amsterdam.

1632 Rembrandt went to lodge with Hendrick van Uylenburgh and painted his first group portrait: The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp.

1632-1646 Rembrandt painted for stadholder Frederick Henry a series of pictures about Christ's Passion.

1634 On 22 June Rembrandt married Saskia van Uylenburgh in the church in Sint Annaparochie in the Province of Friesland. Saskia was Hendrick van Uylenburgh's niece.

1635 Rembrandt and Saskia rented a house in Nieuwe Doelenstraat in Amsterdam. Their first son, Rombartus, died when he was just two months old.

1637 Rembrandt and Saskia moved to a house known as de Suyckerbackerij (the confectioner's shop) on the Binnen Amstel in Amsterdam.

1638 The birth of a daughter, Cornelija, who lived for less than a month.

1639 Rembrandt bought a house in the Breestraat in Amsterdam (today the street is called Jodenbreestraat and the house is Museum Het Rembrandthuis) for 13,000 guilders. He was allowed to pay the sum in instalments. He was commissioned to paint The Night Watch.

1640 A second daughter, also named Cornelija, survived for only a few weeks.

1641 A son, Titus, was born in September.

1642 Rembrandt completed The Night Watch. Saskia fell ill. She died on 14 June at the age of 29 and was buried in the Oude Kerk. Geertje Dircx came to live in the house as a nursemaid for Titus. She became Rembrandt's mistress. Their relationship would later end in discord.

1647 Hendrickje Stoffels came to work as a servant in Rembrandt's house. She became Rembrandt's new mistress.

1648 Peace with Spain. A new Town Hall was built on the Dam in Amsterdam.

1650 Rembrandt had Geertje committed to an institution in Gouda.

1652-1654 The first Anglo-Dutch War.

1653 The plague raged in Amsterdam. Rembrandt incurred huge debts in order to pay off what he owed on his house.

1654 A daughter was born to Rembrandt and Hendrickje. She was named Cornelia.

1655 The building of the new Amsterdam Town Hall was completed.

1656 Rembrandt was no longer able to pay his debts. A group of judges of the High Court of Holland officially declared that Rembrandt was bankrupt. An inventory of his possessions was drawn up.

1656-1658 Rembrandt's house and possessions were sold at a series of auctions.

1660 Rembrandt, Hendrickje, Titus and Cornelia were living in a rented house on the Rozengracht in Amsterdam, where Hendrickje and Titus set up as art dealers.

1661 Rembrandt painted a large work for the new Amsterdam Town Hall, The Conspiracy of Julius Civilis. The burgomasters were not satisfied with it and it was returned to Rembrandt.

1662 Rembrandt painted The Syndics.

1663 The plague again swept Amsterdam. Hendrickje died and was buried in the Westerkerk.

1665 Rembrandt produced his last etching, a portrait of the physician Jan Antonides van der Linden.

1665-1667 The second Anglo-Dutch War.

1666 Rembrandt painted The Jewish Bride.

1668 On 28 February Titus married Magdalena van Loo, but he died just a few months later and was buried in the Westerkerk.

1669 Magdalena van Loo gave birth to a daughter, Titia. Rembrandt painted two more self-portraits. He died on 4 October and was buried in the Westerkerk.