

Rembrandt House Museum

English



museum
Rembrandt
huis

Rembrandt

Self-portrait, Leaning on a Stone Sill, 1639

Etching and drypoint, 205 x 164 mm

Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam



Rembrandt House Museum

English

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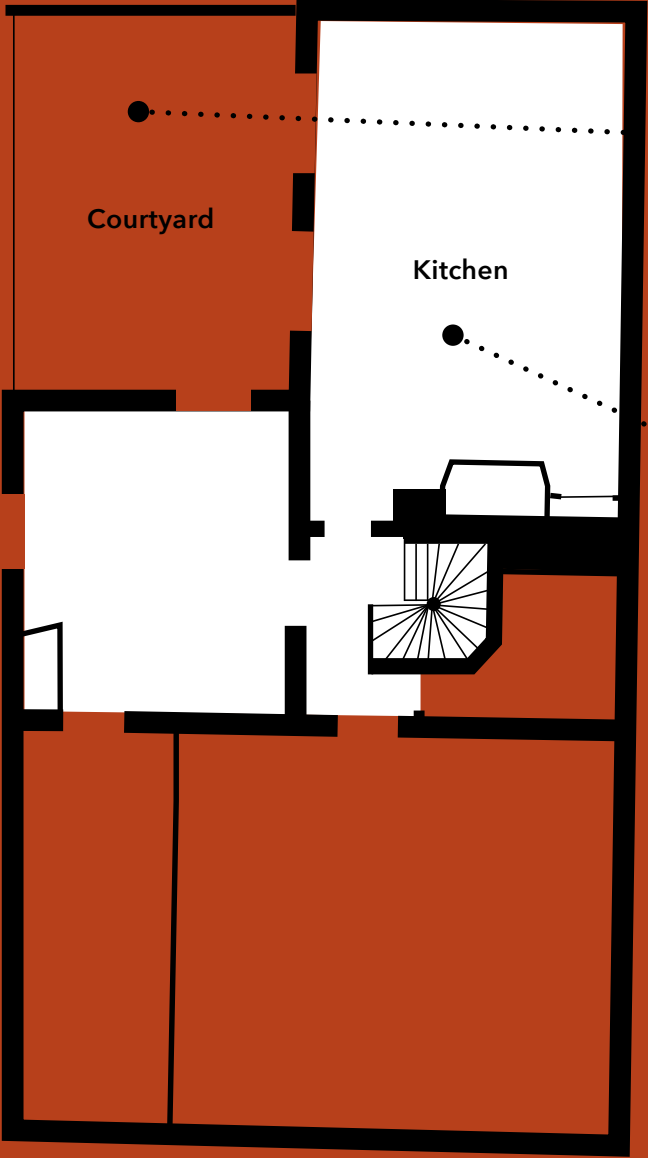
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Introduction

In 1639, Rembrandt, the most important Dutch painter of the seventeenth century, moves into the monumental building at number 4 Jodenbreestraat, in the heart of Amsterdam. He is a young man of 33, and newly married to Saskia. The couple are crazy about each other. Amsterdam is booming: trade by sea is becoming increasingly important, the city is growing dramatically and many people are making money hand over fist. Rembrandt is one of them. In a short amount of time, he makes a name for himself and becomes the society painter of the moment: everyone who is anyone wants to be painted by Rembrandt. This house is perfect for the ambitious couple. It is spacious, with room to live and work.

Rembrandt has it all when he moves into the house on Jodenbreestraat: the love of his life, a luxurious lifestyle and a successful career. But it doesn't stay that way. Setbacks are to come, both personal and financial. Nineteen years later, at 52 years of age, he is forced to leave his house. Today, the house has been restored to the way it was in Rembrandt's time. You can see how he lived and worked; in good times and in bad times, too. This is the story of Rembrandt and his house.



-1



The kitchen is located in the basement. You wouldn't run into Rembrandt here. It was the maid's domain. She cooked the food and cleaned. It was hard work, because it must have been hot and stuffy here. Fortunately, this house did have running water: from the pump, in the corner near the sink. That was quite a luxury in those days.

The housemaid slept here too, in the bedstead. If that bedstead seems a bit cramped to you – you're correct. People used to sleep in a half-sitting position. They believed that sleeping lying down was life-threatening. After all, what would happen if blood rushed to your head?

It was very common for well-to-do Amsterdammers to have servants in their homes. Often these were unmarried women who came from outside the city. We know who two of Rembrandt's housemaids were: Geertje Dircx and Hendrickje Stoffels. Later, they would both play an important role in Rembrandt's life.



Kitchen



One of the housemaids was Geertje Dircx, a widow from North Holland. An argument between Rembrandt and Geertje took place on Tuesday 15 June 1649, in the kitchen. It is recorded in an archive document. It literally states that Geertje violently and unreasonably lashed out at Rembrandt. A personal

disagreement got completely out of hand. You will find out a bit later what it was about. Ultimately, Geertje is locked up in a 'house of correction' – a kind of work prison. And Rembrandt cooperated in having her imprisoned. Was Rembrandt a nice man? He certainly wasn't nice to Geertje Dircx.



Rembrandt

A Woman in Bed
(*Geertje Dircx?*), c. 1645

Oil on canvas,
81.1 x 67.8 cm

National Galleries of
Scotland, Edinburgh
Presented by William
McEwan 1892

Treasures from the Cesspit

Nearly all the items that Rembrandt had in his house are gone. Except for a very few which are on display in the cabinet in Rembrandt's kitchen. These objects were excavated from the cesspit outside, in the courtyard. The cesspit was the pit under the outdoor toilet. It was also a place to put rubbish, such as leftover food

and broken pottery. The display case contains a jug with the handle broken off, a toy marble and a butter paddle. So, they must have belonged to Rembrandt and his family. Several pipes were also found in the cesspit. It might well be that Rembrandt once lit them!

Rembrandt's things:
German jug, pot lid,
Italian bowl, tin
spoon, butter paddle,
lace bobbin, toy
marble, hot-coal
vessel and pipes.
On loan from
Collectie
Monumenten en
Archeologie,
Amsterdam



What Did They Eat at Rembrandt's House?

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The housemaid prepared meals under the mantel in the kitchen. What did she make? Probably a lot of one-pot meals on the cooker, with meat, fish, vegetables, turnips and tubers. And on the spit, over the open fire, meat or poultry would have been roasted. And she undoubtedly made *poftertjes* (mini pancakes); a *poftertjes* pan hangs from the mantel.

Potatoes were not yet popular in Europe. But many spices from Asia

were being used at that time: nutmeg, mace, cloves and pepper. They were so sought-after that the Dutch were prepared to sail to Indonesia to get them, and to fight to get them, if necessary.

And what did Rembrandt prefer to eat? A contemporary said of him that he preferred not to interrupt his work to eat and was often content with bread and a piece of cheese, or a salty herring.



What Did They Drink?

Water pipes and sewers did not exist in the seventeenth century. Rainwater came from the pump in the kitchen. The pump no longer works, but water would flow from the copper tap if you moved the lever back and forth. The water was used for cooking and cleaning. Dutch housewives were famous for their cleanliness.

The water was not suitable for drinking as it could be polluted. Coffee and tea were not yet known in Holland. People usually drank beer, even children. Fortunately, it was usually 'thin beer', which contained very little alcohol. There was wine, too, but it was much more expensive because it had to be brought from Germany or France.



Next to the kitchen is a small courtyard. You could dry laundry there or slaughter a chicken. And in the corner is an outdoor lavatory, where the inhabitants went to the toilet. Perhaps there was also a doghouse here because Rembrandt loved dogs. You often see them in his artworks, for example, in a small etching of a sleeping dog.

It has long been thought that Rembrandt painted *The Night Watch* in this courtyard, under a roof that would have been here. In any case, the studio upstairs was not big enough for this huge painting. It is an interesting theory, but there is no evidence for it. Frankly, we just don't know where Rembrandt made *The Night Watch*.

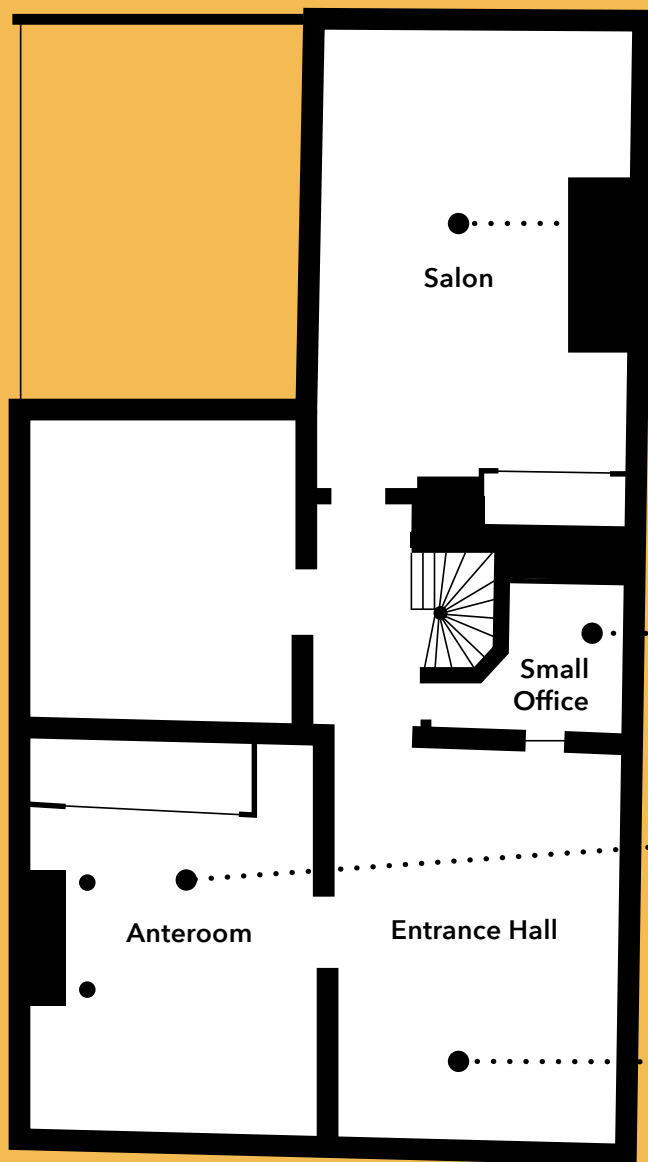


Rembrandt, *Sleeping Dog*, c. 1640. Etching and drypoint, 39 x 81 mm. Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam



Courtyard





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Imagine you were visiting Rembrandt. You would have entered through the front door and arrived in the entrance hall, or as it was known then: the 'voorhuys'. It was a single, richly furnished space with a high ceiling. It was a room that would have exuded success. Business went well in the first years that Rembrandt lived here.

This space also served as a shop because Rembrandt was not only an artist, but an art dealer. He sold his own work and the work of other painters, too. Different paintings hang here now than in the past; works by Rembrandt's predecessors, including those of his first teacher, Pieter Lastman. This gives a good idea of what this space must have looked like in Rembrandt's time.

Near the window, there is a chair on a wooden platform - it was known as a 'solder'. It helps you get a good view of the street outside, because there was a lot to see. All sorts of different people lived in this neighbourhood: artists, merchants, immigrants - rich and poor lived side by side. There were Jewish and Black communities living in the neighbourhood, as well as Flemish and German people. The woman Rembrandt lived next door to was from Venice. You can see many of these people in Rembrandt's artworks.



Entrance Hall



Unknown pupil of Rembrandt*Head of Jesus, 1655*

Oil on canvas, 33 x 28 cm

On loan from Rijksdienst voor
het Cultureel Erfgoed (RCE)

Rembrandt and his pupils made various studies of the head of Jesus; full of emotion and expression. This study, painted 1655, was painted by an unknown pupil, who probably

sat next to Rembrandt while they both painted from the same model.

The model was probably a young Jewish man from the neighbourhood. At the time, Jesus was still often depicted as a white man with long hair. But Rembrandt was looking for a new type of Jesus, one that would be more historically accurate. For that reason, he probably hired one of his Jewish neighbours to sit as a model.



Ephraim Bueno

Many Portuguese Jews lived in Rembrandt's neighbourhood. They came to Amsterdam for business and for religious freedom because they were not allowed to practice their religion in Portugal. In fact, they could be persecuted for it. Some Jewish neighbours visited Rembrandt's house and commissioned portraits from him. One of them was Ephraim Bueno, a well-known doctor from Portugal. Rembrandt made an etched portrait of him.

For a long time, experts thought Rembrandt had friendly connections with his Jewish neighbours. Whether this was really the case, we can't say for certain. However, it is striking that his paintings feature so many Jewish people. They are probably people living nearby who sat as models for him. Rembrandt often incorporated impressions from his surroundings into his work.



Rembrandt
*Ephraim
Bueno*, 1647
Etching, drypoint
and burin,
241 x 177 mm
Rembrandt
House Museum,
Amsterdam

There were also Black people living in Rembrandt's neighbourhood. They formed in a close-knit community, arriving here either as sailors, from Africa or South America, or from Portugal, as servants of a Jewish family. Rembrandt painted some of them, like the two men in the painting made in 1660. Black people were often stereotyped in traditional European painting, but Rembrandt painted his neighbours just as they were.

Unfortunately, we do not know who these two men are. This is because they did not commission the painting. Rembrandt probably hired them as models. Names of models were not usually recorded. Nevertheless, we have indications that they are Bastiaan and Manuel Fernando, two brothers from São Tomé (off the coast of Gabon). We know from archives that they lived a little further down the street.



Rembrandt
Two African Men, 1661
Oil on canvas,
77.8 x 64.4 cm
Mauritshuis,
The Hague

Pieter Lastman (1583-1633)

The Crucifixion, 1616

Oil on canvas (transferred to panel), 116.5 x 158.5 cm
Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam

This is a painting by Rembrandt's teacher, Pieter Lastman. Rembrandt studied under him for six months, near here, in Anthoniebreestraat. Lastman was a history painter who portrayed biblical stories and classical mythology. This is one of his most ambitious paintings: large format and with many different people in it.

The crucifixion of Jesus is depicted here. Lastman placed him exactly in the middle, high up on the cross. To the left of the cross stands his mother, Mary, in the blue robe. She looks up desperately at her son, her hands folded. Below the cross are more mourning women. One has even fainted.

Jesus is illuminated by a beam of sunlight, but the scene is otherwise dark. Lastman worked from a biblical description which describes a sudden darkness falling during the day, like a solar eclipse. Strong light-dark contrasts are rare with Lastman, but Rembrandt later made them his trademark.



Pieter Lastman (1583-1633)*Paulus and Barnabas in Lystra, 1617*

Oil on panel, 95.5 x 133 cm

On loan from the Amsterdam Museum

This is another fine example of the work of Pieter Lastman, Rembrandt's teacher. He painted a biblical story set in Lystra, a city in Turkey that no longer exists today. Paulus and Barnabas went there to convert the inhabitants to the Christian faith. They healed a paralysed man and are then worshipped as gods. Roses are thrown onto the street and a bull is brought in for a sacrificial feast. Paulus and Barnabas make it clear that they disapprove. You can see this on the right. One tears his clothes and the other makes a warding-off gesture towards the priest.

This painting shows what Lastman was good at: busy compositions with many people and details, painted in bright, fresh colours. Rembrandt's early paintings, for example, *History Painting* of 1626, are very similar to Lastman's.

**Rembrandt***History Painting, 1626*

Oil on panel, 90.1 x 121.3 cm

Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden
(on loan from RCE)

Jan Tegnagel (1584-1635)

The Meeting of Jacob and Rachel at the Well, 1615

Oil on canvas, 106.5 x 146.5 cm

Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam

Purchased with the support of

Vereniging Rembrandt, 2005

Jan Tegnagel belonged to the generation of painters active in Amsterdam before Rembrandt. He lived nearby, in the Anthoniebreestraat. This painting by Tegnagel shows the biblical story of Jacob, who meets his cousin Rachel at a well. The two greet each other with a kiss. Jacob's bag

and walking stick are at his feet; he has had a long journey. Rachel holds a shepherd's staff because she is tending the sheep and goats. The two fall in love with each other and will marry years later.

This biblical story is set in Haran, on the border of present-day Turkey and Syria. Tegnagel, of course, had no idea what it looked like there. He created a landscape more reminiscent of the surroundings of Rome. He knew that region well because, like many other Dutch painters, he had been there to study Italian art and antiquities.



From the entrance hall you can enter the anteroom. In Rembrandt's time, it was called a 'sijdelcaemer'. This was the place to receive visitors, such as a client who wanted a portrait made. Commissions were discussed and prices negotiated here. When the sale was agreed, they would drink a cold glass of wine from the marble wine cooler.

Networking was more or less part of the business. But in Rembrandt's case, it wasn't heartfelt - he probably thought it was just a waste of time. He preferred to just keep working on his art. His wife Saskia must have been much more socially adept. Coming from a distinguished family, she knew how things were done, and certainly would have had a positive influence on his commercial success. Friendliness and sociability were more likely to come from Saskia. She also had a close relationship with her sisters; Hiskia who lived in Friesland and Titia from Zeeland. They would sleep in the bedstead in this room when they visited.



Anteroom



One of Rembrandt's most famous clients was Jan Six. He came from a wealthy Amsterdam family. The two were also friends. Six was a true connoisseur of art. Rembrandt made an etching of him nonchalantly leaning against the windowsill, reading. It is a very special portrait because we do not see Six formally posed, but engaged in an activity that is true to his character.

Rembrandt had few other friends. He mainly spent time with people he could discuss art with. The friendship with Six will cooled down over time. They both went their separate ways: Six joined the municipal council of Amsterdam and increasingly gained prestige. On the other hand, Rembrandt increasingly withdrew from society.



Rembrandt
*Portrait of
Jan Six, 1647*
Etching, drypoint
and burin,
245 x 191 mm
Rembrandt
House Museum,
Amsterdam

**Rembrandt's Guild of
Saint Luke funeral token, 1634**

Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam

Rembrandt must have held this token regularly. It is his token of the Saint Lucas Guild, the professional association of painters. If you wanted to work as an independent painter in Amsterdam, you had to be a member of the guild. On one side is his name, on the other the year 1634.

The tokens were used when one of the guild members had died. Then, a servant would go round all the members to give everyone their own token. At the funeral, the tokens were then taken back. This is how the guild checked that whether everyone had fulfilled their obligation to be present.

The token shows Rembrandt Hermans, not Rembrandt van Rijn, as we know him today. At that time, surnames were not officially recorded and people sometimes changed their names. Hermans is short for 'son of Harmen'. That was the name of Rembrandt's father.



Abraham van Dijck (c. 1635-1680)*The Old Painter, 1657*

Oil on panel, 38.5 x 36.5 cm

Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam

Rembrandt and his pupils made many paintings depicting men's heads. These paintings apparently sold well in the market. They are not ordinary portraits; they do not aim to capture the appearance of a particular individual. This type of painting was frequently based on a model, but also involved some creative licence. The aim was to create a beautifully characterful head that is interesting to look at. Such a painting is called a 'tronie', an old-fashioned word for 'head'.

This head study was created by one of Rembrandt's pupils, Abraham van Dijck. He painted many old people, often as dozing in a chair. But this is not just any old man, it is a painter. Look bottom right and you will see that he holds a palette and brushes. In seventeenth-century art, old people often symbolise the finality of life: ultimately, everyone dies. But the artist can capture life and thus preserve it. A well-known Latin proverb states: *ars longa, vita brevis*. Freely translated: art lasts longer than a lifetime. And that is almost certainly the subject of this painting: the old painter's life is almost over, but art lives on.



Studio of Rembrandt
after Rembrandt,
Old Man with Cane,
after 1645

Oil on canvas, 177.5 x 148.5 cm
On loan from Rijksdienst voor het
Cultureel Erfgoed (RCE)

This painting must have been made in Rembrandt's studio. It was painted by a pupil who copied an artwork painted by Rembrandt. That original is in a museum in Portugal today.

Copying was a standard part of the curriculum for apprentice painters. We do not know which of his pupils made this copy. Pupils never signed their own names on artworks. It must have been one of his better students, in any case. Just look at how the old man's hands are rendered. You can see his protruding veins. This painting is not a portrait, it is merely a head study. The old man recalls a biblical figure. His head is slightly tilted and he is leaning on his cane, as if he has already seen everything there is to see.



Rembrandt did his paperwork and wrote letters in the small office. Those writings have almost all disappeared. Only seven letters have survived, but they are only about business.

These letters from Rembrandt are all addressed to Constantijn Huygens, the stadholder's secretary in The Hague. They concern the delivery of paintings (a series on the passion of Christ) that the Court had commissioned Rembrandt to make. He wrote that 'The Entombment' and 'The Resurrection of Christ' were ready, after some delay. He needed more time because he wanted to give the figures in the paintings 'the maximum and the most natural mobility'.

For Huygens himself, he made a painting of Samson, as a gift. But it is questionable whether Huygens accepted the painting; we do not have Huygens' replies, only Rembrandt's letters.



Letter from Rembrandt
to Constantijn Huygens,
12 January 1639
Koninklijke Verzamelingen,
The Hague



Small Office



Rembrandt's living room was the family's private space. The adults would sit and talk by the fire, while children played in a corner. Back then, there were no separate bedrooms. Rembrandt and Saskia slept here too, in the bedstead.

Love and suffering happened here. For instance, a son was born here. They named him Titus, after Saskia's sister Titia. It was a happy occasion. However, Saskia herself did not fare well. She became ill and nine months later she died. She was not yet thirty.

Rembrandt made a drawing in this room: Saskia is lying on the bed, while another woman keeps watch and does a sewing task. We think it's one of her sisters. Perhaps she's on a maternity visit, or sick call.

After Saskia's death Rembrandt became involved with Geertje Dirckx, one of the housemaids we met downstairs. We already mentioned the disagreement between Geertje and Rembrandt in the kitchen. What was the reason for that quarrel? Despite promising to do so previously, Rembrandt did not want to marry her. He offered her financial compensation. But she would not consider it.

Geertje was forced to make way for a new maid who had arrived at the house: Hendrickje Stoffels. Rembrandt's relationship with Hendrickje lasts until her death, and he has another daughter: Cornelia. Her cradle must also have stood here.

Rembrandt

Saskia in Bed, c. 1641
Pen and (brown and grey ink) wash on paper,
142 x 177 mm
Fondation Custodia,
Collection Frits Lugt,
Paris



Salon



Rembrandt's wife Saskia Uylenburgh came from a wealthy family of regents and clergymen. She grew up in Friesland and probably met Rembrandt in Amsterdam while visiting relatives here. When the two married, they were 22 and 27. They were a close couple and enjoyed great social success. Saskia died young, so she lived in this house for just three years.

Rembrandt seems to have been proud of Saskia, this is clear from the portrait. He gave Saskia an almost regal look - he put her on a pedestal. After Saskia's death, Rembrandt kept this portrait with him for a long time, as a reminder of his great love to whom he owed so much.



Rembrandt

*Portrait of Saskia Uylenburgh, 1633-1642. Oil on panel, 99.5 x 78.8 cm
Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Museen, Kassel*

Birth and loss

Titus was not Rembrandt and Saskia's first child. The couple had had three babies before him: a boy named Rumbartus, named after Saskia's father; and two girls, both named after Rembrandt's mother, Cornelia. But none of their first three children lived longer than a few months.

Infant mortality was high at the time. Of course, that didn't mean that the parents' grief was lessened in any way. Fortunately, their son Titus survived. Thirteen years later, there was joy in the house again with the birth of the third Cornelia, the daughter of Rembrandt and Hendrickje.



Abraham van Dijck (1635-1680)?*Portrait of Saskia Uylenburgh, c. 1652*

Oil on canvas, 167.5 x 121.5 cm

On loan from the Koninklijk Museum voor
Schone Kunsten, Antwerp

This portrait of Rembrandt's wife, Saskia Uylenburgh, also used to hang in this house. It is a loose copy of a painting Rembrandt had made

of his wife years earlier, shortly after her death. Rembrandt was very attached to it, but he had to sell it because he needed money. He sold it to his friend Jan Six and had one of his pupils make this copy. That pupil was probably Abraham van Dijck. This was Rembrandt's way of keeping a memento of the woman he had loved so much.



Hendrickje Stoffels

After Saskia, Hendrickje Stoffels was Rembrandt's second great love. She came from Gelderland and came to this house as a maid. There is an age difference of 20 years between them. They had one daughter together, Cornelia, but never married. The church strongly disapproved of their relationship, calling it 'whoredom'. But Rembrandt and Hendrickje didn't let this bother them.

Hendrickje's role in Rembrandt's life seems to have been mostly supportive, behind the scenes. But later, when Rembrandt has financial difficulties, she sprang into action. Together with Titus, she started an art gallery where they sold Rembrandt's work to keep their heads above water. Hendrickje died suddenly, aged 36, during a plague epidemic.



Rembrandt
*Lighting Study with
Hendrickje Stoffels
as Model, c. 1659*
Oil on panel,
73.9 x 51.2 cm
Städel Museum,
Frankfurt am Main (on
permanent loan BRD)

Studio of Rembrandt

The Holy Family at Night,

c. 1642-48

Oil on panel, 76.4 x 93.8 cm

On loan from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

For a long time, the painting *The Holy Family at Night* was considered to be a masterpiece by Rembrandt. But it has since been established that a pupil painted it. Indeed, the people are painted somewhat carelessly, and are precisely outlined. Rembrandt would never do such a thing.

But whether it is by Rembrandt or not – the painting certainly is atmospheric. Baby Jesus is in the cradle, and Mary

is reading a book by the light of a candle. Her mother, Anna, sits alongside them, occasionally pulling the rope she is holding to rock the cradle. Joseph is almost invisible, but he is on the left, crouching under the stairs.

The room where this Biblical scene takes place looks quite seventeenth-century in style. The painter probably chose that so that the audience of the time could better relate to it. But that makes it enjoyable for us, too. You can imagine Rembrandt's family also sitting together like this in the evening. Sitting reading, or with some knitting, with the shutters closed in a candlelit room, and the sound of the cot softly creaking when rocked.



Ferdinand Bol (1616-1680)

*Elisha Refusing the Gifts
of Naaman, 1661*

Oil on canvas, 167 x 263.5 cm

On loan from the Amsterdam Museum
(Restored with support from Vereniging
Rembrandt)

This large painting, *Elisha Refusing the Gifts of Naaman*, was created by one of Rembrandt's most successful pupils: Ferdinand Bol. It originally hung in the nearby leper house, which was at the end of the street. It was a hospital for people with leprosy and other infectious diseases.

The painting depicts a biblical story that is, quite appropriately, about leprosy. To the right of centre are

the warlord Naaman from Syria and Israel's prophet Elisha. Naaman was suffering from leprosy, from which Elisha had cured him. To express his gratitude, Naaman offers her precious gifts, but Elisha refuses to accept them... The painting served as a warning to the trustees of the leper house: like Elisha, they should do their work out of charity, not to become wealthy.

Bol made this painting about 20 years after his apprenticeship with Rembrandt. His style had since that time become brighter, with many shades of pink. This appealed to buyers, while Rembrandt's dark colours were now regarded as a bit old-fashioned.



Ferdinand Bol (1616-1680)*Shepherdess in a Landscape*, c. 1641

Oil on canvas, 124.5 x 115 cm

Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam

Gift of Willem Jan and Karin Hoogsteder, courtesy of the Hoogsteder Museum Foundation

A shepherdess, sheep, green hills and a small temple painted by Ferdinand Bol. A fantasy landscape like this had to evoke simplicity and tranquillity. It helps that the young shepherdess looks at us and, in a way, invites us to sit with her.

Bol probably painted this dreamy painting shortly after his apprentice-

ship with Rembrandt, drawing inspiration from a painting by his teacher. Both artworks have a similar layout, with a view into the distance on the left and a large tree encircling the scene on the right.

**Rembrandt***Christ Appears to Maria Magdalena as a Gardener*, 1638

Oil on panel,

61 x 50 cm

The Royal Collection

Trust/H.M. King

Charles III



Philips Koninck (1619-1688)

River Landscape, 1676

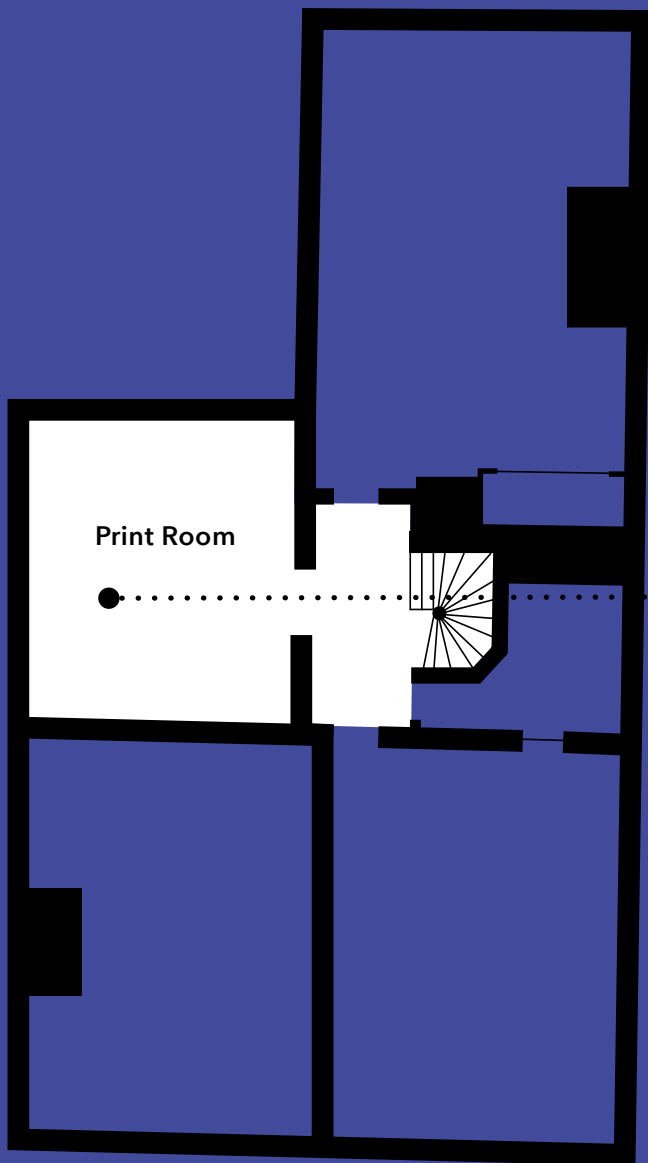
Oil on canvas, 112 x 131 cm

On loan from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

The painter Philips Koninck was a friend of Rembrandt's. They sometimes took walks together around Amsterdam, drawing pictures. And they both loved the work of the mysterious landscape painter Hercules Segers.

Koninck painted many such expansive landscapes. He gives us a bird's-eye view, looking out over a plain with a river. In the foreground a road with travellers on it, and a pleasure boat on the water. The landscape looks a bit like the Rhine valley or the Gelderland valley, in the centre of the Netherlands. But in fact, it is completely made up. The main purpose of such a painting was to enable city dwellers to enjoy the beauty of nature.





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Rembrandt made more than 300 different etchings. Each one is a true work of art. He printed them in editions ranging from ten to several dozen. He experimented with different techniques and with different types of paper. The etchings were much less expensive than the paintings and must have sold well.

The Rembrandt House Museum has one of the largest collections of Rembrandt etchings in the world. But we can't show them all because light damages the paper. That is why you will find a few original etchings displayed under covers in the print room.



Print Room

Schwarzmaßig Industrieshop

[illegible]

Threefold Lambdas

Kanawhaquah often went out the back wall. The only way to walk to the end of the street is to reach the city limits. Outside the city were the potato lands and other fields, with little houses, villages and pastures. His wife was a sister of his mother, which meant that she was his daughter and his wife. The two were not married but lived as one. He was a man of his word and his reputation was such that he was a man of his word. He was a man of his word and his reputation was such that he was a man of his word.



View of Amsterdam, c. 1640-50
Impression from a reproduction plate



The Overall, stay
African via one reproduction phase
The Overall, stay
Reproduction from a reproduction phase



Rembrandt*Self-portrait, Wide-eyed and Open-mouthed, 1630*

Etching and drypoint, 51 x 46 mm
Rembrandt House Museum,
Amsterdam

There is no seventeenth-century artist whose appearance we know as well as we do Rembrandt's. In fact, he made

self-portraits all his life: paintings and etchings, too. He made most of his etched self-portraits between 1628 and 1630. All are small format works. Sitting in front of a mirror, he tried out different facial expressions. He wasn't vain about it, he did not 'iron out' his frown lines, the bags under his eyes or his tangled hair. These early self-portraits were an exercise in portraying different emotions.



Rembrandt***Self-portrait, Leaning on a Stone Sill, 1639***

Etching and drypoint, 205 x 164 mm
Rembrandt House Museum,
Amsterdam

How different to Rembrandt's 1639 self-portrait! He made this etching the same year he moved

into the monumental house on Jodenbreestraat, now Rembrandt House Museum. It was a kind of calling card: a portrait of the artist by the artist. And Rembrandt knew exactly how he wanted to present himself: as a successful entrepreneur and artist. He adopted the stately pose from paintings by artists with whom he wanted to compare himself, such as Titian.



Rembrandt*The Three Trees*, 1643

Etching, drypoint and
burin, 213 x 279 mm
Rembrandt House Museum,
Amsterdam

This is one of Rembrandt's most famous etchings. This may be due to the dramatic effect of the threatening sky in the background and the sunlight shining through it. A group of trees can be seen in the foreground. They stood on the Diemerzeedijk, not far from Rembrandt's house. Rembrandt often went outdoors to study nature and the city. He always had a sketchbook in his pocket on his many walks. This allowed him to capture special views like this one immediately and elaborate on them later, in his studio.





Rembrandt

The Fall of Man, 1638

Etching, 162 x 116 mm
Rembrandt House Museum,
Amsterdam

Much of Rembrandt's work consists of biblical scenes. Here, he depicts the Old Testament story of the fall of humanity. According to the Bible, Adam and Eve, the first humans, were driven out of paradise when the serpent tempted Eve to eat of

the forbidden fruit. Rembrandt depicted Adam and Eve very realistically, as ordinary, not particularly young people with non-idealised bodies. If you look closely, you can see another playful element in the background: an elephant! This must be Hansken, the only elephant to be toured through Europe in the seventeenth century. Rembrandt saw Hansken during the autumn fair in 1637 at the Botermarkt (today's Rembrandtplein) and made several drawings of her.



Rembrandt

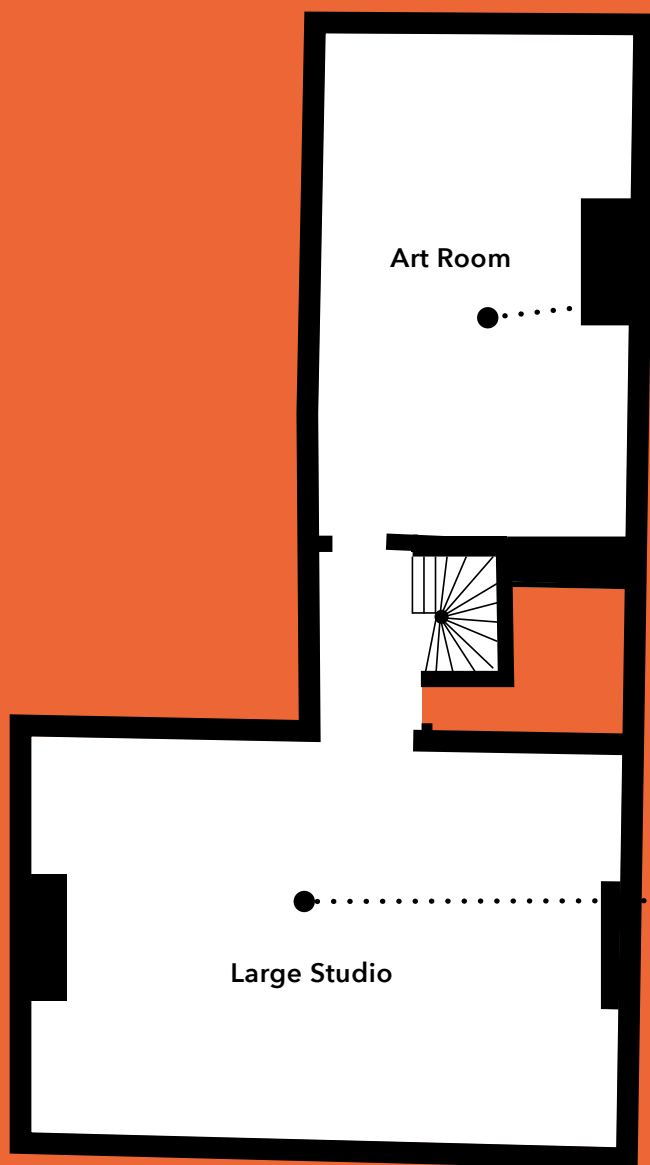
*Beggar Woman,
Leaning on a Stick, 1646*

Etching and drypoint, 82 x 63 mm
Rembrandt House Museum,
Amsterdam

A beggar woman leans on a walking stick. Her right hand is outstretched and her face expresses concern.

Rembrandt made a large number of studies of beggars and street figures. Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries, he did not emphasise their physical limitations for entertainment. On the contrary, his etchings show these people in all their humanity, just as they are.





1



Rembrandt made his paintings in the studio. It is an ideal space for a painter because there are four north-facing windows. Artists love this kind of sunlight because it changes less throughout the day and is much more even. We know roughly what the studio must have looked like, thanks to a drawing Rembrandt made of this space. It is the corner by the window on the far right.

Rembrandt was a driven artist, always at work and always looking to improve. In this room, he experimented with dramatic lighting and loose brush strokes. And he looked for the best way to portray people realistically - with emotional expression, character and depth.

Rembrandt did dozens of paintings here, but he could have made many more. After Saskia dies and he completed *The Night Watch* in the same year, he was unsure of how to go on. He ended up having an artistic crisis and seeking a new way to paint. He wasn't looking for a way to make more money - it arose from his own artistic drive. This kind of thing was very unusual at the time and only became known through later artists, such as Vincent van Gogh. As a result, and for a period of ten years, Rembrandt produced far fewer paintings; sometimes only a few a year. Of course, this also meant he had much less income.

Rembrandt

Model in Rembrandt's Studio, c. 1654

Pen and (brown and white) wash on paper, 205 x 190 mm
Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford



Large Studio



Rembrandt was not easy to have a good relationship with, but his son Titus was. Titus became an art dealer and worked closely with his father. He sold Rembrandt's prints and won commissions for him, too.

Rembrandt painted several portraits of Titus. A great example is the painting made around 1650. Titus is seated and looking very relaxed:

he's smiling and has a hand under his chin. This is unusual because seventeenth-century portraits are typically very solemn. Titus seems relaxed in the presence of his father. They must have had a good relationship. He was also a great help to Rembrandt. At the end of Rembrandt's life, the cheerful Titus maintained relations with the outside world.



Rembrandt
Titus, the Artist's Son, c. 1660
Oil on canvas,
81.3 x 68.7 cm
The Baltimore
Museum of Art,
Baltimore: The
Mary Frick Jacobs
Collection

The Painter's Easel (reconstruction)

Rembrandt often painted on canvas made of linen. That canvas would be stretched with strings onto a wooden frame. Before Rembrandt started painting, the canvas was covered in two layers of primer oil paint. In the reconstruction of the painter's canvas, a grey layer is applied over a brownish-red ground layer. The canvas rests on an easel, which is adjustable in height.

The easel is positioned so that the light falls on the canvas optimally: from the left, so that Rembrandt, who was right-handed, was not bothered by the shadow of his hand. The palette with the paint is on the small table in front of the easel. And there is a container to wipe off the brushes and catch any excess paint. Those brushes were usually made of hog's bristle. Rembrandt had them in various sizes: fine ones for precision work and larger ones for the broader strokes for which he is so famous.



Two Pots, c. 1640-1655

On loan from Collectie Monumenten
en Archeologie, Amsterdam

These two pots were excavated from the cesspool in the courtyard of the house. These types of pots were usually used in kitchens for cooking in - they were called 'grapen' (three-legged pots). But these two were used, here, in the workshop.

Chemical tests have proved that. The white stuff in one pot is a mixture of glue and chalk. Rembrandt applied this mixture to wooden panels to create a smooth surface to paint on. On the inside of the other pot are remnants of a greyish mixture of quartz, clay and brown ochre. From 1640 onwards, Rembrandt often used that combination as a primer for his canvases. In summary, these pots were used here in the studio: either by an assistant, or possibly by Rembrandt himself.



Rembrandt's Beret

Rembrandt loved old garments. According to a contemporary, he even hung them up in his studio. This kind of beret was part of that. A century earlier, berets were extremely fashionable, but in Rembrandt's time hardly anyone wore them. Yet you often see them on Rembrandt's self-portraits.

Why? It was good for sales. This kind of clothing from the dressing-up box made the painting more fanciful and thus more attractive to the buyer. In addition, when wearing a beret, Rembrandt looked just like his great predecessors, including Dürer. He was, in essence, positioning himself among the greats.

Since Rembrandt, artists and berets have become more or less associated with one another. Ever seen a cartoon of an artistic painter? Chances are that the artist was probably wearing a beret. That's thanks to Rembrandt.

Rembrandt
Self-portrait, 1640
Oil on canvas,
91 x 75 cm
The National
Gallery, London



Rembrandt
Self-portrait, 1659
Oil on canvas,
84.5 x 66 cm
National Gallery of
Art, Washington



Rembrandt
Self-portrait, 1669
Oil on canvas,
65.4 x 60.2 cm
Mauritshuis,
The Hague



Making Paint like Rembrandt

Paint didn't come in tubes in Rembrandt's time, as it does now. Paint tubes did not yet exist in the seventeenth century. Rembrandt either made his paint himself or had an apprentice do it for him.

To make paint you mix oil and pigment. The oil you use is linseed oil. This oil is made by pressing linseed, the seed of the hemp plant. To add colour to paint, you need a pigment, or coloured powder. Rembrandt used various raw materials for this. From yellow and red clay earth, for example, he made yellow and red ochres. Rembrandt also extracted pigment from the roots of a plant: the rose madder plant. For the colour carmine red he used a certain kind of bug: cochineal lice. And finely ground cobalt glass provided a blue colour called smalt. Rembrandt also used chemically derived colours. Lead,

for example, provided the lead white.

To mix the paint, Rembrandt used a stone runner, a palette knife and a rubbing stone as a work surface. To make paint, he placed a small pile of pigment on the large stone. Then he made a dimple in it, into which he poured a small amount of linseed oil. With the palette knife, he mixed everything together. He then used the grindstone to rub the paint over the grinding slab. To do this well, you have to use a figure-of-eight movement when rubbing.

Once the paint was finished, Rembrandt put it on the palette with his palette knife. Then he was ready to start work on another masterpiece. And when he was finished? He then stored the remaining paint in jars with a leather lid, or in dried pig's bladders.



Rembrandt's Artistic Development

1625-1631

Rapid Development

Rembrandt paints biblical scenes and head studies. Experimentation, especially with large light-and-dark contrasts and the depiction of emotions.

Rembrandt, *Self-portrait*, c. 1628
Oil on panel, 22.6 x 18.7 cm
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



1631-1635

Society Painter

Rembrandt paints mostly portraits of scholars, regents and wealthy citizens in the Amsterdam studio of Hendrick Uylenburgh.

Rembrandt, *Marten Soolmans* (left) and *Oopjen Coppit* (right), 1634
Oil on canvas, both 207.5 x 132 cm
Joint purchase by the State of the Netherlands and the Republic of France, Rijksmuseum Collection/Louvre Museum



1635-1642

Great Fame

Rembrandt paints portraits as well as large history paintings. He aims to depict a lot of action and movement, which culminates in *The Night Watch*.

Rembrandt, *Officers and other archers of district II in Amsterdam, led by captain Frans Banninck Cocq and lieutenant Willem van Ruytenburch*, known as '*The Night Watch*', 1642. Oil on canvas, 379.5 x 453.5 cm
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



1643-1652

The Searching Years

Rembrandt is painting less often. He is mainly painting small history pieces for collectors, a few landscapes and studies.

Rembrandt, *The Woman Taken in Adultery*, 1644. Oil on panel, 83.8 x 65.4 cm
The National Gallery, London



1658-1669

The Later Years

In his later years Rembrandt became very active again. He undertook portrait commissions and received important assignments from the government. Some of his most famous masterpieces are created during this time.

Rembrandt, *Sampling Officials of the Drapers' Guild*, also called '*The Syndics*', 1662. Oil on canvas, 191.5 x 279 cm
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Rembrandt was an avid collector. And the art room was his private museum. Busts portraying Roman emperors, butterflies from the tropical rainforest, a headdress from Brazil, daggers from Java, swords and spears from Central Africa. Don't forget the ceiling, from which stuffed crocodiles, fish, armadillos and more hung. However, the most precious items are in the leather-bound albums. These contained prints and drawings by Italian and German artists such as Michelangelo, Titian and Dürer.

Rembrandt painted and drew copies of many of these objects. They served as examples, in an era when photographs did not yet exist. It was through this collection that he got to know worlds he would never see in real life. Rembrandt never travelled abroad.

Rembrandt was able to amass this collection because Dutch sailors brought these kinds of objects from across the world. They are an example of the wealth of Holland that was generated through slavery, world trade and colonisation. Some items in Rembrandt's collection would have been purchased, but others were simply taken or looted.

Rembrandt's passion for collecting cost him dearly. And it continued, even when the income from his work declined. Of course, this could not go on for long. The debts were piling up, higher and higher.



Art Room



Abraham Francen was a close friend of Rembrandt who continued to support him until the end. Francen was an apothecary by profession, but his real passion was collecting art. This is also how he was portrayed by Rembrandt, surrounded by his collection.

Several Amsterdam collectors opened their homes, as a kind of museum. Rembrandt probably didn't. It seems that he only allowed his friends to view his collection with him. Friends like Abraham Francen.

Rembrandt

Portrait of Abraham Francen, c. 1657

Etching, drypoint and burin,

158 x 208 mm

Rembrandt House Museum,

Amsterdam



Rembrandt's Shell: **Conus Marmoreus**

Rembrandt had dozens of corals, rocks and shells in his collection, including the marvellous 'conus marmoreus'. This shell is found only in tropical seas. Sailors returning from colonial territories in India or Indonesia often brought back such rarities. You could buy them at auctions or in shops, including here, near Rembrandt's house.

Rembrandt made a famous etching of the shell. No doubt he chose this shell for his etching because of its unusual black-and-white pattern. After all, in an etching, everything is black and white.



Rembrandt

The Shell (Conus Marmoreus), 1650
Etching, drypoint and burin,
97 x 132 mm
Rembrandt House Museum,
Amsterdam



A Japanese Helmet

Zunari type, early seventeenth century (early Edo period)

Metal, silk and lacquer work
Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam

We know that Rembrandt also kept a Japanese helmet in this room. He made a drawing of it on a sheet of paper that he had previously used to practise drawing a Biblical murder scene.

This kind of zunari helmet was worn by Japanese warriors, the samurai. On both sides is a bar to which decorations could be attached. In the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic was the only Western country trading with Japan. There was therefore a lively interest in everything to do with that country in Amsterdam. Rembrandt, for instance, also had Japanese paper in his house. He sometimes printed an etching on it, for an extra luxurious copy.



Rembrandt

Jael Kills Sisera, and a Sketch of a Japanese Helmet, c. 1658

Pen and (brown ink) wash on paper, 192 x 174 mm

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (gift of C. Hofstede de Groot, The Hague)



A Headdress from Brazil

Mid-twentieth century (?)

Rembrandt House Museum,
Amsterdam

This headdress belongs to the Kayapo, one of the original peoples living in the Brazilian Amazon. Important men wore such ornaments during ceremonies. They are made from feathers of the macaw, a species of parrot.

These types of headdresses first arrived in Holland in the seventeenth century. Sailors brought them with them after the Dutch colonised north-eastern Brazil. The Dutch made a great deal of money from the production of sugar, which was destined for the European market. Besides sugar, all sorts of rarities also reached Amsterdam, such as headdresses. The feathers, which were so much more colourful than those of European birds, must have been quite special to the Dutch.





Classical Busts

Bust of Homer, 20th century

Plaster copy
Rembrandt House Museum,
Amsterdam

Rembrandt had several busts of philosophers and emperors from classical antiquity. There were many of them in circulation. They were copies, usually of plaster - or of marble, the more expensive option. We know from an archive source that Rembrandt buys marble statues. He spends 186 guilders on them; more than half a year's salary! When it came to his collection, Rembrandt was not stingy.

One of the busts in the cabinet of curiosities is that of the Greek poet, Homer. We also find the bust of Homer in Rembrandt's paintings. For example, in a painting of the Greek philosopher Aristotle. There Aristotle rests his hand on the bust of Homer and looks at the image thoughtfully.



Rembrandt

Aristotle with the Bust of Homer, 1653

Oil on canvas,
63 x 136.5 cm
The Metropolitan Museum
of Art, New York



Bird of Paradise from New Guinea

Rembrandt House Museum,
Amsterdam

Like many other seventeenth-century collectors, Rembrandt had a stuffed bird of paradise. This bird, with its magnificent tail feathers is found only in New Guinea. It was thought that birds of paradise had no legs. As a result, they could never rest and would have to fly all their lives. However, in reality, it was during the taxidermy process in Asia, that the legs were cut off or sewn into the body. Rembrandt made two studies of his bird of paradise. And again, in both drawings: no legs.



Rembrandt

Two Studies of a Bird of Paradise, c. 1639

Pen and (brown ink) wash
on paper, 181 x 154 mm
Musée du Louvre, Paris
Photo (C) RMN-Grand
Palais (musée du Louvre)/
Jean-Gilles Berizzi.

Valuable Albums

Art books (reconstruction), 20th century

Most of Rembrandt's collection consisted of art books. These were large, leather-bound albums in which drawings and prints were kept, similar to today's photo albums. The art books must have contained hundreds of drawings and prints. He made many of the drawings himself, but there

were also prints by and in the style of other artists.

This collection helped him to get to know all kinds of artists: Italians, such as Rafael and Michelangelo, and also Flemish artists, like Rubens. Sometimes Rembrandt was inspired by a print. For example, Rembrandt made his own version of a print that the Italian artist Carracci had made 70 years earlier. It was doubtless copy of a print in the collection.

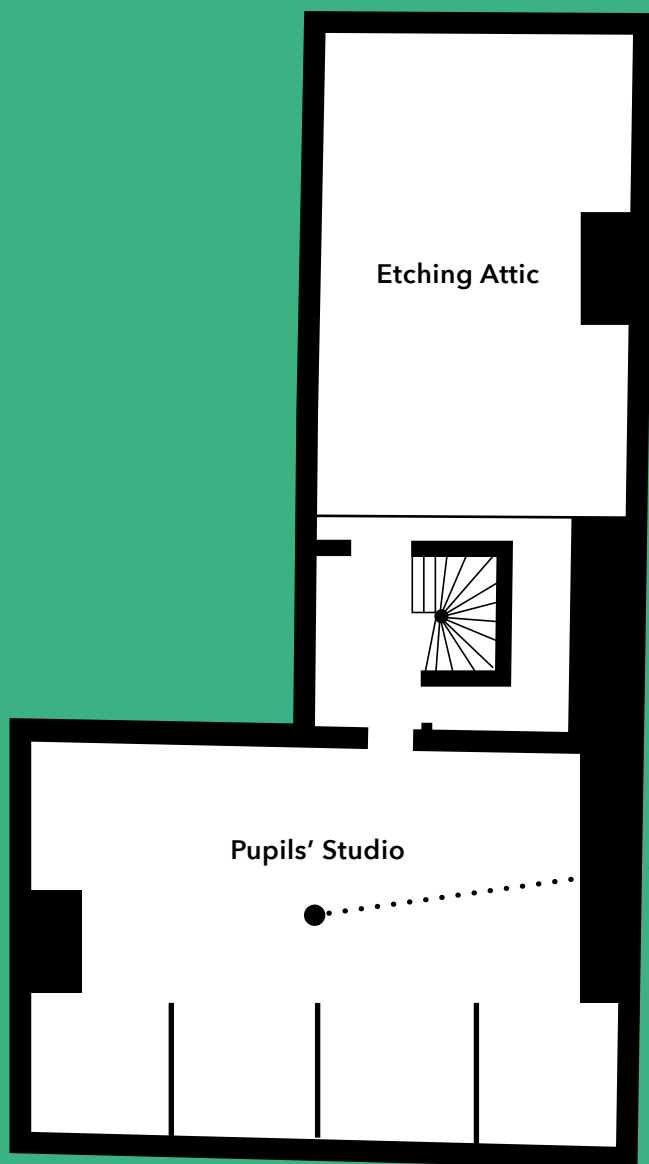




Annibale Carracci, *Jupiter and Antiope*, 1592
 Etching, 154 x 225 mm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Rembrandt, *Jupiter and Antiope*, 1659
 Etching, drypoint and burin, 138 x 205 mm. Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam





2



Rembrandt also gave lessons.

There were no art academies in the seventeenth century. You learned your trade from a master painter.

Rembrandt's pupils were usually quite advanced. They had already learned to paint somewhere else but hoped to learn the tricks of the trade from the great master. Not just anyone could learn from Rembrandt. You had to pay hefty tuition fees, about 50 guilders a year. And you would also collaborate on his paintings. This was clever thinking on Rembrandt's part. He had about three pupils a year, which meant he was soon bringing in half a year's salary.

Rembrandt had a special studio for his pupils, on the floor above his own studio. They worked in separate cubicles, just like in an old-fashioned office space. They made drawings, for example of a statue. And apprentices would also study prints and drawings. Another standard part of the apprenticeship was copying paintings created by the master. That is how pupils gained painting experience. And if the copy was successful, it could be sold and Rembrandt could earn money from that, too.

But it was to no avail in the end. Rembrandt incurred many debts that he could not repay. On the brink of bankruptcy, he was forced to sell all his belongings, including the house.



Pupils' Studio



Rembrandt had many pupils who went on to become famous themselves, including Ferdinand Bol, Govert Flinck, Gerrit Dou and Nicolaes Maes. One important pupil who was taught in this house was Samuel van Hoogstraten. He later wrote a handbook for painters, in which he incorporated Rembrandt's lessons. As a result, many of Rembrandt's ideas were recorded for later generations.

According to Van Hoogstraten, Rembrandt was a strict teacher. And by the looks of it, he was not the only one who thought so. Another pupil made a drawing of Rembrandt: Willem Drost. His drawing portrays Rembrandt as a resolute man in a work coat, his hands firmly on his hips.

Samuel Hoogstraten

Self-portrait, c. 1644

Oil on panel, 63 x 48 cm

Museum Bredius, The Hague



Willem Drost

Portrait of Rembrandt, c. 1650

Pen and (brown ink) wash

on paper, 203 x 134 mm

Rembrandt House Museum,
Amsterdam

Music in the Studio

Rembrandt had several musical instruments in his house; both wind and string instruments. They were not kept in the living quarters, but in the studios. It is therefore unlikely that the family played them. In fact, they were part of the art collection and could serve as objects to be

painted. But perhaps Rembrandt or one of his assistants, also played them occasionally – making music while painting. If not, there was always the tolling of bells at the Zuiderkerk, nearby. These bells still sound today, every fifteen minutes.



Drawing like Rembrandt

Rembrandt and his pupils made many drawings, for example as practice, or to work out an idea. In the pupils' studio there is a display case containing the materials they used. You will find ink there, for example. It was made either from soot from the chimney, boiled in water, or from ground gallnuts, boiled in water and gum arabic. In the display case are also tools used to apply the ink to the paper: a reed pen, a goose feather and brushes made of hog bristles.

Sometimes Rembrandt and his pupils also used chalk to draw with: red, black and white. These soft stones are cut into narrow pens. Because this material comes off on your hands, you use a reed holder, or wrap the marker in a piece of paper. Rembrandt also sometimes used a silver stylus while drawing. It is a thin bar of silver, in a holder. He used silverpoint on smooth parchment, made of animal skin.

From left to right: goose feather, reed pen and brush, red chalk, black chalk, white chalk, silverpoint



Pen in ink on paper

Rembrandt

*Three Women and a Child
by a Door*, c. 1645
233 x 178 mm
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Pen and ink wash on paper

Rembrandt

*Young Woman Seated
by a Window*,
c. 1638
175 x 134 mm
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Red chalk on paper

Nicolaes Maes

Old Woman with a Cap,
c. 1653-57
156 x 119 mm
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Black and white chalk on blue paper

Govert Flinck

Seated Female Nude, 1647
315 x 265 mm
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Silverpoint on parchment

Rembrandt

Portrait of Saskia Uylenburgh, 1633
185 x 107 mm
Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin,
Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin



Etching like Rembrandt

Today, the second floor of the museum houses an etching attic, where etching demonstrations are held, every day. Rembrandt was as famous for his etchings as he was for his paintings. Etching is a special printing technique. It allowed Rembrandt to make several prints from one drawing. But how did he do it?

First, Rembrandt chose a copper plate. On it, he would apply an etching ground: a mixture of wax, resin and bitumen. Once the etching ground was applied, he set to work making the image. He scratched the image into the etching ground with an etching needle, uncovering the copper plate wherever he makes a line. These lines, unprotected by the ground, would then be cut-out or incised: the copper plate with etching ground was placed in a bath of hydrochloric acid, or on an inclined surface with a drip tray, after which the acid was poured over it. The longer the plate was exposed to the acid, the deeper the lines would be. When the incising process was finished, he removed the etching ground.

Once the incised copper plate was completely clean again, the lines could be filled with a special, thick

ink, which consisted of soot, (linseed) oil and turpentine. Just as with his paint, Rembrandt made his ink himself in his workshop. The ink was smeared over the cleaned copper plate. When all the lines were properly filled, the excess ink could be removed with a cloth.

Finally, Rembrandt placed the inked copper plate and a wet sheet of paper in a printing press. The pressure of the press transfers the image to the paper, albeit in mirror image, but very precisely. Several dozen prints could be made from a single plate in this way. After printing, the print was hung on a line to dry. The etching was then ready to be sold.

Rembrandt liked to experiment and was not easily satisfied. After a printing, he often made changes to the copper plate again, and then made several more prints. This is why we have several 'states' of many of his prints; in which something was changed each time. Rembrandt sometimes applied finishing touches used the engraving burin, which produced thin, sharp lines. But he also often worked with a 'drypoint', with which he drew directly on the plate, a technique that produces broad, velvety lines.

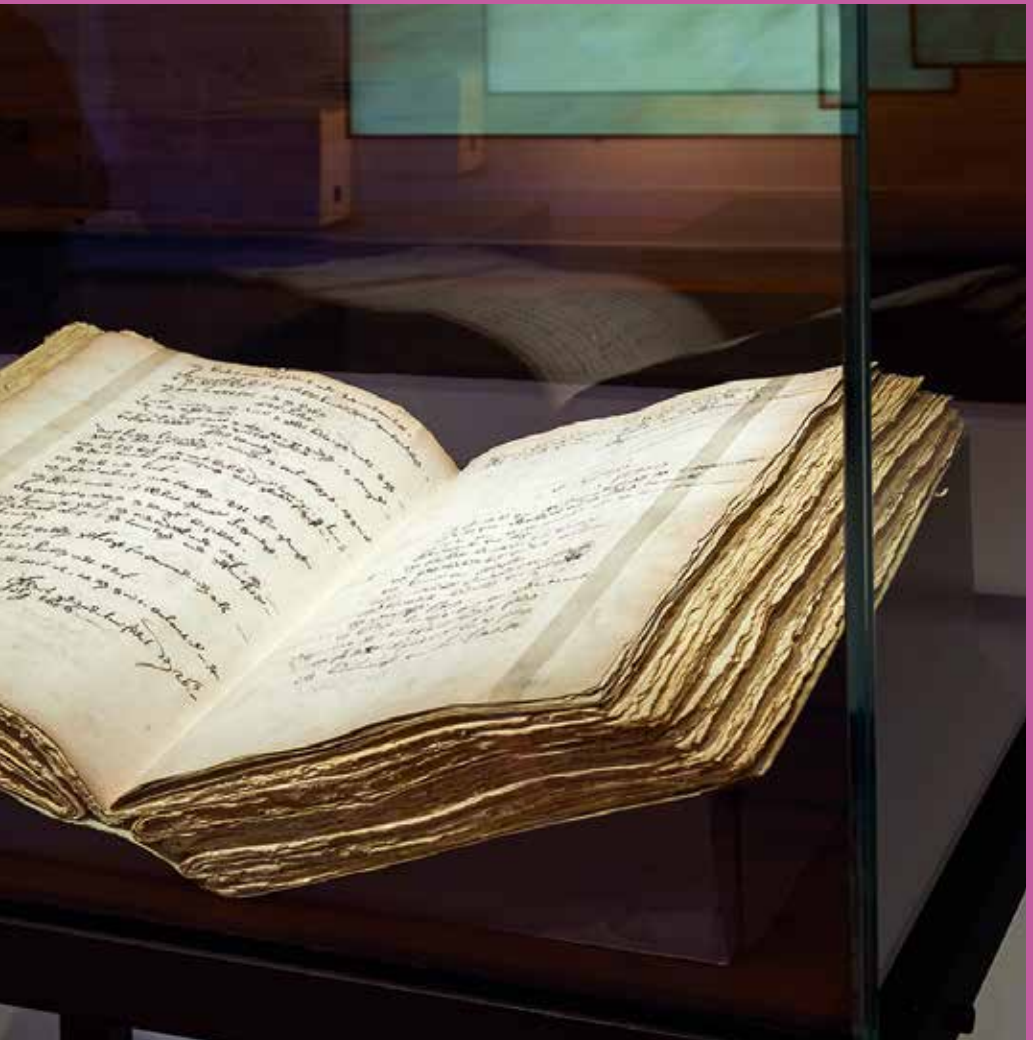


When Rembrandt moved into this house, he was successful, rich and famous. But 19 years later, things were very different. He had serious money problems. The exact cause? It's hard to say. The expensive collection was a problem, as was his reduced income. What is certain is that he could not pay his creditors and was forced to sell his belongings and his house. At the age of 52, he moved out, along with Hendrickje, 6-year-old Cornelia and his son Titus, who was 17 at the time. It must have been a huge setback for Rembrandt.

But without the forced sale of Rembrandt's belongings, this museum would not exist. In a sense, we owe the museum's existence to a single document: the list drawn up before the sale, which shows all Rembrandt's possessions - room by room. You can see a reproduction of that estate inventory in the display case in the museum's epilogue room. Thanks to this list, it was possible to reconstruct Rembrandt's home and world. All the rooms are named, and there is a list of what was in each room, down to the colour of the chair upholstery. And so, you can still get very close to Rembrandt today.



Epilogue Room



In 1658, Rembrandt moved into a rented house on the other side of town, on the Rozengracht. It was here that he created some of his most famous works, such as *The Sampling Officials* and *The Jewish Bride*. Although his loose style since gone out of fashion, he was still a well-known artist. And he still occasionally received portrait commissions from wealthy citizens. In the final years of his life, Rembrandt lost his wife and son. Hendrickje died during a plague epidemic. Titus died a few years later. Shortly afterwards, Rembrandt himself also died, on 4 October

1669. Fourteen-year-old Cornelia was the only surviving member of the family. Rembrandt lived to be 63 and continued to paint tirelessly until the end.

At the time of his death, Rembrandt was no longer a very celebrated painter. But since then, in our time, he has become once again widely admired for his lively paint strokes, crisp lines and exciting use of light. But especially for his ability to depict people just as they are. People of flesh and blood who evoke sympathy and emotion.



Rembrandt
Self-portrait, 1669
Oil on canvas,
65.4 x 60.2 cm
Mauritshuis,
The Hague

A Statue for Rembrandt

Although Rembrandt was not forgotten after his death, he did not really become famous until the mid-19th century. That's when a statue was erected to him, on Rembrandtplein, not far from his former house on Jodenbreestraat. It is a massive honour, as usually only monarchs and military leaders are accorded statues.

From the large statue, smaller versions were cast and sold to enthusiasts. Rembrandt has been made a little more handsome than he actually was. His round face has been made a bit thinner. He looks boldly into the distance and wears his coat like a classic toga. Rembrandt is every inch a national hero here.

Louis Royer, *Model for the Statue of Rembrandt*, 1852
Bronze. Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam



After Rembrandt's departure, the house was occupied by Jewish families for many years. It was split into two houses, each with its own front door. In the 19th century, there was even a small, domestic synagogue in it. By now, people had even forgotten that this had been Rembrandt's house. It was only discovered around 1900. Rembrandt was now a national

hero, but his former house was falling into disrepair. This all changed with Rembrandt's 300th birthday in 1906. Some artists and art lovers had the idea of turning the house into a museum. Private individuals donated money, the City of Amsterdam gave their support and the building was renovated. On 10 June 1911, the Rembrandt House opened its doors as a museum for the first time.



The Rembrandt House after the 1906-1911 renovation

Rembrandt's Life

1606 Born in Leiden as the second-youngest child of a prosperous miller.

1613 7 years old
Attends the Latin School for about seven years.

1620 14 years old
Enrols at Leiden University (two years).

1622 16 years old
Starts a three-year apprenticeship with painter Jacob van Swanenburg in Leiden.

1625 19 years old
Starts a six-month apprenticeship with Pieter Lastman in Amsterdam.

1625 19 years old
Settles in Leiden as an independent painter. Works closely with Jan Lievens.

1631 25 years old
Moves to Amsterdam and works in Hendrick Uylenburgh's painting studio.

1634 28 years old
Marries Saskia Uylenburgh, niece of his employer.

1635 29 years old
Settles in Amsterdam as an independent painter.

Rembrandt
Self-portrait,
c. 1628
Oil on panel,
22.6 x 18.7 cm
Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam



Rembrandt
Self-portrait with Cap,
c. 1635
Etching,
49 x 44 mm
Rembrandt House
Museum,
Amsterdam



- 1635** 29 years old
Birth of a son,
Rumbartus, who lives
only two months.
- 1636** 30 years old
Birth of a daughter,
Cornelia, who lives
one month.
- 1639** 33 years old
Buys this house where
he will live and work.
- 1640** 34 years old
Birth of second a
daughter, Cornelia,
who only lives two
weeks.
- 1641** 35 years old
Birth of son Titus,
who survives.
- 1642** 36 years old
Saskia dies.
- c. 1645** 39 years old
Becomes romantically
involved with Geertje Dircx,
Titus' nanny.
- 1649** 43 years old
Begins a relationship
with the housemaid
Hendrickje Stoffels,
they remain together
until the end of her life.
They never marry.

Rembrandt
*Self-portrait,
Leaning on a
Stone Sill, 1639*
Etching and
drypoint,
205 x 164 mm
Rembrandt House
Museum,
Amsterdam



Rembrandt
*Self-portrait with
Flat Cap, c. 1642*
Etching,
93 x 62 mm
Rembrandt House
Museum,
Amsterdam



Rembrandt
*Self-portrait,
Etching at a
Window, 1648*
Etching,
160 x 130 mm
Rembrandt House
Museum,
Amsterdam



- 1654** 48 years old
Birth of daughter
Cornelia.
- 1656** 50 years old
Relinquishes his assets
(cessio bonorum) due to
impending bankruptcy.
Everything is inventoried
and sold.
- 1658** 52 years old
Is forced to sell house
and moves to a rented
house on Rozengracht.
- 1663** 57 years old
Hendrickje Stoffels,
Rembrandt's second
great love, dies.
- 1668** 62 years old
Son Titus dies.
- 1669** 63 years old
Rembrandt dies and is
buried in Amsterdam's
Westerkerk. His daughter
Cornelia, aged 14, is
left as the only surviving
family member.

Rembrandt

Self-portrait, 1658
Oil on canvas,
133.7 x 103.8 cm
The Frick Collection,
New York. Photo:
Michael Bodycomb



Rembrandt

Self-portrait, 1669
Oil on canvas,
65.4 x 60.2 cm
Mauritshuis,
The Hague



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In 1639, Rembrandt, the most important Dutch painter of the seventeenth century, moves into the monumental building at number 4 Jodenbreestraat, in the heart of Amsterdam. Rembrandt has it all when he moves into the house on Jodenbreestraat: the love of his life, a luxurious lifestyle and a successful career. But it doesn't stay that way. Setbacks are to come, both personal and financial. Nineteen years later, at 52 years of age, he is forced to leave his house. Today, the house has been restored to the way it was in Rembrandt's time. You can see how he lived and worked; in good times and in bad times, too. This is the story of Rembrandt and his house.

