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Portrait of Rembrandt in Oriental Dress

Isaac de Jouderville
(Leiden ca. 1612 – 1648 Amsterdam)

ca. 1631

oil on panel

70.8 x 50.5 cm

false signature and date in dark paint, upper left corner: "Rembrandt ft. 1641"

IJ-100

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Portrait of Rembrandt in Oriental Dress is a fascinating workshop copy by Isaac de Jouderville, executed toward the end of his apprenticeship with Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69) from 1629 to 1631.^[1] Based on Rembrandt's own full-length self-portrait, signed and dated 1631 in the Petit Palais in Paris (**fig 1**), Jouderville's larger panel differs from its prototype in its cooler tonalities, more exaggerated chiaroscuro, and crisper silhouette. The most obvious difference between the two paintings, however, is that Jouderville's version does not depict the large dog in the foreground of Rembrandt's painting. Rembrandt added the curly, long-haired poodle at a later date, probably in 1633.^[2]

As in Rembrandt's original, Jouderville has portrayed the artist gazing at the viewer as he stands in *contrapposto*, with one hand resting on a cane and the other held akimbo. His fanciful costume includes a turban with a feathered *aigrette*, a velvet cloak closed at one shoulder with buttons, and a short silk tunic with golden brocade and fringe, tied by a sash at the waist.^[3] The fascination with exotic dress is evident in other works by Rembrandt from this period, as in *Man in Oriental Costume* ("The Noble Slav"), 1632, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and *Daniel and Cyrus before the Idol Bel*, 1633, in the J. Paul Getty Museum.^[4] Rembrandt, however, portrayed himself in oriental dress only on this one occasion.^[5]

For most of its recorded history, *Portrait of Rembrandt in Oriental Dress* was considered to have been painted by the master. This attribution was based largely on its Rembrandtesque style and subject matter; the "signature" and date at the upper left—"Rembrandt ft. 1641"—were apparently added in the nineteenth century.^[6] In 1983, Ernst van de Wetering proposed that *Portrait of Rembrandt in Oriental Dress* was painted by an apprentice in Rembrandt's workshop and suggested Jouderville as the most likely candidate.^[7] Van de Wetering's proposal is convincing, for Jouderville's *Bust of a Young Man* from the early 1630s in the National Gallery of Ireland, one of his few signed paintings, shares a number of stylistic features with the present work (**fig 2**). The overly emphasized highlights of the richly appointed fabric, the frizzy hair, and the thin contour of light around the figure leave little doubt that these two paintings are by the same hand.

The reason for Rembrandt's choice to portray himself in exotic costume is difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, it is significant that Rembrandt felt the

Comparative Figures



Fig 1. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Artist in Oriental Costume, with a Poodle at His Feet*, 1631, oil on panel, 66.5 x 52 cm, Musée du Petit Palais, Paris, no. 925



Fig 2. Isaac Jouderville, *Bust of a Young Man*, ca. 1631–35, oil on panel, 48 x 37 cm, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, NGI.433



Fig 3. Isaac Jouderville, *Man in Oriental Costume*, 1631–35, oil on panel, 48 x 37 cm, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, NGI.433

composition was worthy of being replicated by a workshop apprentice.^[9] Because Rembrandt and Jouderville were in both Leiden and Amsterdam in 1631, it is also unclear in which city the prototype and this copy originated. In the summer of 1631, Rembrandt began his business arrangement with the Amsterdam dealer Hendrick Uylenburgh, and he received a number of portrait commissions requiring his presence in Amsterdam.^[10] Scholars have suggested that Jouderville may have accompanied Rembrandt to Amsterdam as an assistant in Uylenburgh's workshop, since the last payment receipt pertaining to Jouderville's apprenticeship with Rembrandt is dated 19 November 1631.^[11]

Oriental Costume, ca. 1631–35,
oil on panel, 66 x 50 cm, private
collection

Jouderville's *Portrait of Rembrandt in Oriental Dress* is a relatively rare example of the type of didactic exercises that must have been an integral part of Rembrandt's workshop practice.^[12] We know that making painted copies after Rembrandt's work, both as an exercise in imitation and as emulation of the master's style, was an important part of Rembrandt's method of instruction. Nevertheless, very few direct copies after his paintings, such as this one, survive.^[13] Jouderville was more likely to make variants of Rembrandt's compositions. His *Man in Oriental Costume* (**fig 3**), for example, is loosely based on Rembrandt's self-portrait in Paris (**fig 1**). A painting convincingly attributed to Jouderville, *Bust of a Young Woman* in Chapel Hill (RR-104, fig. 3), is similarly derived from one of Rembrandt's paintings from the early 1630s, *Portrait of a Girl Wearing a Gold-Trimmed Cloak*, in the present collection (RR-104).^[14] Jouderville was also able to adapt pictorial elements in Rembrandt's paintings to create his own independent works, as in his *Minerva in Her Study* in Denver, which draws freely on Rembrandt's *Old Woman Reading* in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.^[15]

X-radiographs of Rembrandt's Paris self-portrait have revealed that the master made a number of changes to this work. Initially he shortened the length of his legs and painted his feet anew, but then he added the poodle, which covers his feet.^[16] Because of the close correspondence between the longer legs in Rembrandt's original and those in Jouderville's copy, the Rembrandt Research Project concluded that Jouderville's variant must represent the original appearance of Rembrandt's painting. Thus, aside from its own intrinsic qualities, this portrait is a fascinating document of Rembrandt's only known effort to paint a full-length self-portrait.



-Dominique Surh

Endnotes

1. For a discussion of the sources documenting Jouderville's apprenticeship with Rembrandt, see the biography of the artist by Piet Bakker.
2. Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 6 vols., ed. Josua Bruyn et al. (Dordrecht, Boston, and London, 1982–2014), 1:374–82; 2:840.
3. Marieke de Winkel, *Fashion and Fancy: Dress and Meaning in Rembrandt's Paintings* (Amsterdam, 2006), 260–61, notes the Turkish costume is also found in three other paintings by Rembrandt and was depicted by the Italians as well.
4. Walter Liedtke, "Man in Oriental Costume," in *Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 2:554–67, no. 142.
5. On Rembrandt's self-fashioning, see Marieke de Winkel, "Rembrandt's Clothes: Dress and Meaning in His Self-Portraits," in Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 6 vols., ed. Josua Bruyn et al. (Dordrecht, Boston, and London, 1982–2014), 4:45–87. For the depiction of exotic Turkish dress in Rembrandt's paintings, see also Marieke de Winkel, *Fashion and Fancy: Dress and Meaning in Rembrandt's Paintings* (Amsterdam, 2006), 260–61; and *Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 1:380.
6. The earliest mention of the painting, in the Le Rough collection sale in Paris, 27 April 1818, no. 46, describes the work in detail yet makes no mention of a signature at the upper left, suggesting that it was added later.
7. Ernst van de Wetering, "Isaac Jouderville, a Pupil of Rembrandt," in Albert Blankert et al., *The Impact of Genius: Rembrandt, His Pupils and Followers in the Seventeenth Century* (Exh. cat. Amsterdam, Waterman Gallery; Groningen, Groninger Museum) (Amsterdam, 1983), 66.
8. Van de Wetering suggested that the Paris *Self-Portrait* (A40) should be categorized as one in which Rembrandt used his own face without originally intending the painting to be a self-portrait; see Ernst van de Wetering, "Rembrandt's Self-Portraits: Problems of Authenticity and Function," in Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 6 vols., ed. Josua Bruyn et al. (Dordrecht, Boston, and London, 1982–2014), 1:380; 4:182.
9. On the growing market for artists' self-portraiture in the seventeenth-century, particularly Rembrandt's, see Ernst van de Wetering's chapter "Rembrandt's Self-Portraits: Problems of Authenticity and Function," in Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 6 vols., ed. Josua Bruyn et al. (Dordrecht, Boston, and London, 1982–2014), 4:89–317.

10. Jaap van der Veen, "Hendrick Uylenburgh's Workshop 1631–1638," in *Uylenburgh and Son: Art and Commerce from Rembrandt to De Lairese, 1625–1675* (Zwolle, 2006), 126–35.
11. Jaap van der Veen, "Hendrick Uylenburgh's Workshop 1631–1638," in *Uylenburgh and Son: Art and Commerce from Rembrandt to De Lairese, 1625–1675* (Zwolle, 2006), 136; see also Piet Bakker's biography of Jouderville in the present catalogue.
12. For the dates of Jouderville's apprenticeship with Rembrandt, and the documentary evidence that suggests he went to Amsterdam to continue his tutelage with Rembrandt, see Piet Bakker's biography of Jouderville in the present catalogue.
13. Ernst van de Wetering, "Isaac Jouderville, a Pupil of Rembrandt," in Albert Blankert et al., *The Impact of Genius: Rembrandt, His Pupils and Followers in the Seventeenth Century* (Exh. cat. Amsterdam, Waterman Gallery; Groningen, Groninger Museum) (Amsterdam, 1983), 66; Toshiharu Nakamura, "Rembrandt's Workshop and Rembrandt as a Teacher," in *Rembrandt, His Teachers, and Pupils* (Exh. cat. Tokyo, Bunkamura Museum of Art; Chiba, Kawamura Memorial Museum of Art; Yamaguchi, Yamaguchi Prefectural Museum of Art) (Tokyo, 1992), 199–209; Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 5 vols. (The Hague, 1982–[2011]), 4:182, fig. 145.
14. Ernst van de Wetering, "Isaac Jouderville, a Pupil of Rembrandt," in Albert Blankert et al., *The Impact of Genius: Rembrandt, His Pupils and Followers in the Seventeenth Century* (Exh. cat. Amsterdam, Waterman Gallery; Groningen, Groninger Museum) (Amsterdam, 1983), 59–69. For the *Young Woman with a Necklace* in Chapel Hill, see Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 6 vols., ed. Josua Bruyn et al. (Dordrecht, Boston, and London, 1982–2014), 2:680–84, no. C58.
15. Ernst van de Wetering, "Isaac Jouderville, a Pupil of Rembrandt," in Albert Blankert et al., *The Impact of Genius: Rembrandt, His Pupils and Followers in the Seventeenth Century* (Exh. cat. Amsterdam, Waterman Gallery; Groningen, Groninger Museum) (Amsterdam, 1983), 66; Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 6 vols., ed. Josua Bruyn et al. (Dordrecht, Boston, and London, 1982–2014), 1:502–7, C9.
16. A revision involving the adjustment of the legs was also found in an X-radiograph of Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait* in Liverpool (A33) from about the same time as the self-portrait in the Petit Palais. See Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 6 vols., ed. Josua Bruyn et al. (Dordrecht, Boston, and London, 1982–2014), 2:840.
17. The signature of the Paris self-portrait, which reads, "Rembrant.f 1631" is highly revealing of its period of execution. Not only was it painted on top of an original "RHL" monogram, but there was only a short period between 1632 and 1633 in which Rembrandt used this form of signature. It therefore seems likely that Rembrandt backdated the painting to 1631, while

adding a new signature, in 1633. See Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 6 vols., ed. Josua Bruyn et al. (Dordrecht, Boston, and London, 1982–2014), 1:379; 2:840; 4:182–83.

Provenance

- Madame Lerouge, Paris (her sale, Paris, 27 April 1818, no. 46, as by Rembrandt [for 2,460 francs to Bruno]).
- G. Couteaux, Paris.
- Chevalier van Deuren de Beauré (his sale, Paris, 26 February 1844, no. 45, as by Rembrandt).
- Alexandre Tardieu (his sale, J., Paris, 4 February 1851, no. 14, as by Rembrandt [to Etienne Leroy]).
- François Nieuwenhuys Collection, Paris, by 1852.
- Piérard de Valenciennes (his sale, Paris, 20–21 March 1860, no. 66, as by Rembrandt).
- Édouard Kums, Antwerp (his sale, Antwerp, 17–18 May 1898, no. 126, as by Rembrandt [for 22,000 francs to Le Roy, Paris and Bruxelles]).
- A. M. Byers, Pittsburgh, by 1900.
- Baron Arthur de Schickler, Paris, by 1916 [Edouard Jonas Gallery, New York, 1927].
- Private collection, Switzerland, by 1936.
- M. C. de Coppet, Ghent.
- Private collection [Emmanuel Moatti, Paris, 2004].
- From whom acquired by the present owner in 2004.

Exhibition History

- The Edouard Jonas Galleries, New York, 1927.
- Amsterdam, Museum het Rembrandthuis, on loan with the permanent collection, 1995–2007.
- London, National Gallery, “Rembrandt by Himself,” 9 June–5 September 1999; The Hague, Mauritshuis, 25 September 1999–9 January 2000, no. 29b [lent by the Museum het Rembrandthuis, inv. 276].
- Norfolk, Virginia, The Chrysler Museum, on loan with the permanent collection, 2010–2011

[lent by the present owner].

- Brooklyn, New York, Brooklyn Museum, on loan with the permanent collection, March 2013–March 2016 [lent by the present owner].
- Paris, Musée du Louvre, “Masterpieces of The Leiden Collection: The Age of Rembrandt,” 22 February–22 May 2017 [lent by the present owner].
- Beijing, National Museum of China, “Rembrandt and His Time: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection,” 17 June–3 September 2017 [lent by the present owner].

References

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- Hofstede de Groot, Cornelis. *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century Based on the Work of John Smith*. 8 vols. London, 1907–27, 6:199, under no. 350, as a copy after Rembrandt. Translated from *Beschreibendes und kritisches Verzeichnis der Werke der hervorragendsten holländischen Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts*. 10 vols. Esslingen and Paris, 1907–28.
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- Bruyn, Josua, et al. *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*. 5 vols. The Hague, 1982–[2011], 1: under A40, 381, fig. 7; 2:840; 3:17, fig. 4.
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Museum of Art. Tokyo, 1992.

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- Franken, Michiel. “Learning by Imitation: Copying Paintings in Rembrandt’s Workshop.” In Ernst van de Wetering et al. *Rembrandt: Quest of a Genius*. Exh. cat. Amsterdam, Museum het Rembrandthuis; Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Zwolle, 2006, 160, fig. 172.

Versions

Versions and Copies

1. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Artist in Oriental Costume, with a Poodle at His Feet*, 1631, oil on panel, 66.5 x 52 cm, Musée du Petit Palais, Paris, inv. no. 925.
2. After Rembrandt, *The Artist in Oriental Costume*, oil on panel, 35 x 29 cm, Musée d’Archéologie et des Beaux-Arts, Vienna (Isère), no. 80; Corpus A40, Copy 2.
3. After Rembrandt, *The Artist in Oriental Costume*, oil on canvas, 30.5 x 24 cm, present whereabouts unknown, formerly estate of F. Mogin-Zorn (sale, Brussels, 26–27 November 1974); Corpus A40, Copy 3.

Versions Notes

Technical Summary

The support is a rectangular composite panel comprising two vertically grained oak planks of similar widths.^[1] The vertical panel join left of center extends through the feather plume and the

figure's proper right eye, torso, and proper right shoe. There are no bevels, and the panel has been thinned and cradled. There are eight import stamps, six paper labels, two paper label remnants and two small red wax dots, but no obvious panel maker's mark.

A light-colored ground has been thinly and evenly applied. The paint has been applied smoothly along the background depicted in shadow and with short strokes of thicker paste and low brushmarkings along the background and foreground depicted in highlight. The figure's drapery is painted in low impasto.

The painting is inscribed in dark paint along the upper left corner, although this is thought to be a later addition.

No underdrawing is readily apparent in infrared images captured at 780–1000 nanometers. A compositional change visible in the infrared images is the lower edge of the figure's drapery, which was shortened during the paint stage. The X-radiograph reveals a halo of radio-opaque paint surrounding the upper half of the figure and a rectangular form along the upper left quadrant that was painted out during the paint stage but whose warm underlayer shows through.

The painting has not undergone conservation treatment since its acquisition in 2004 and remains in a good state of preservation.

Technical Summary Endnotes

1. The characterization of the wood is based on visual examination only. Bevels cut along the lower edge of the panel reverse between the fixed vertical cradle members suggest the panel had previously been prepared for dendrochronology sometime prior to its acquisition.