



THE LEIDEN
COLLECTION





Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak

Rembrandt van Rijn
(Leiden 1606 – 1669 Amsterdam)

1632

oil on oval panel

59 x 44 cm

signed and dated in dark paint along the
background, center right: “RHL van Rijn / 1632”
RR-104

How to cite

Manuth, Volker. “Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak” (2017). In *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed. Edited by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady with Caroline Van Cauwenberge. New York, 2023–. <https://theleidencollection.com/artwork/young-girl-in-a-gold-trimmed-cloak/> (accessed September 03, 2025).

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One of the miracles of Rembrandt van Rijn's paintings of individuals is that the expressions of his sitters never seem frozen. Even their personalities seem to evolve as one interacts with their gazes. These qualities are particularly evident in this charming depiction of an elegantly robed young girl with curly, somewhat frizzy blond hair. Although she stares directly at the viewer from the center of this oval panel, the slight twist of her body, with one shoulder higher than the other, helps soften her formal appearance. Light falling from the upper left also enlivens her presence by picking up nuances of her features, including her pronounced forehead, her somewhat asymmetrical eyes, the slight pout of her mouth, and the beginnings of a double chin. The shaded right side of her face, moreover, seems to recede more deeply into space than her lit side, a subtle difference in structure that adds character to her face. Even the color shifts in the other background, as Rembrandt plays with light against dark and dark against light, help create the sense that she is a living and breathing individual with a personality far more lively than first intimated by her restrained pose.

Rembrandt enhanced the pictorial character of the image with his distinctive painting techniques. He modeled the girl's flesh tones with smoothly blended strokes, and rendered her blond hair with flowing, individual touches of the brush. He vigorously applied heavily laden paint to create the pattern of radial pleats of the white blouse, whereas he picked out the decorative motifs of the gold embroidery on her black gown with thick highlights. Finally, Rembrandt's carefully placed accents lend weight and substance to the strand of pearls in her hair and the single pearl hanging from her right ear.

Rembrandt painted *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak* in 1632, soon after he moved from Leiden to Amsterdam, at a time when his portraits and *tronies* (imaginative character studies of individual figures) were in great demand.^[1] It is oftentimes difficult to tell the difference between these two types of paintings, as Rembrandt infused both with personal characterizations that seem distinctive and reflective of a specific individual. This issue is particularly relevant for *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak*, which has often been identified as a portrait but should instead be considered a *tronie*.

The sitter is most frequently identified as Saskia Uylenburgh, Rembrandt's first wife.^[2] However, Rembrandt and Saskia probably did not meet until a year after this painting was executed.^[3] Moreover, a comparison of the sitter in this painting and the silverpoint drawing Rembrandt made of Saskia in Friesland in 1633 on the occasion of their engagement (**fig 1**) reveals clear differences. The girl in the Leiden Collection painting, for instance, has a more rounded head and more childlike

Comparative Figures



Fig 1. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Portrait of Saskia van Uylenburgh*, 1633, silverpoint on vellum, 185 x 107 mm, Kupferstichkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, inv. KdZ 1152, © Foto: Kupferstichkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Fotograf/in: Jörg P. Anders



Fig 2. Rembrandt van Rijn, *A Young Woman in Profile with a Fan*, 1632, oil on canvas, 72 x 55 cm, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, inv. NM 583, photo: Erik Cornelius / Nationalmuseum

features. Another proposed identification for the sitter is Rembrandt's younger sister Elisabeth (Lysbeth).^[4] However, Rembrandt executed this painting in Amsterdam and Lysbeth apparently spent her whole life in Leiden, where she was buried in the Pieterskerk in 1655.^[5]

It is highly unlikely, indeed, that Rembrandt has here painted a formal portrait of a specific individual, family member or not.^[6] Even apart from the problems inherent in the above proposed identifications, there is the issue of the figure's dress. Her outfit, with its high-necked, pleated, white blouse and dark cloak edged with gold embroidery, as well as the string of pearls in her hair and her pearl ear drops, harkens back to elegant sixteenth-century fashions.^[7] Such imaginative, fanciful outfits are characteristic of the *tronies* that Rembrandt and Jan Lievens (1607–74) depicted in Leiden during the late 1620s and early 1630s. These paintings, which came in different sizes and different degrees of finish, included depictions of young girls, wrinkled graybeards, weathered soldiers, and exotic potentates. They were made, in part, in preparation for history paintings, but also as works to be sold on the open market.

The same model appears in two other paintings that Rembrandt executed in 1632: *A Young Woman in Profile with a Fan* in Stockholm (**fig 2**) and *Bust of a Young Woman in a Cap* in a private collection in Switzerland.^[8] In the Stockholm painting she is shown in strict profile to the left and wears similar clothing and pearl jewelry.^[9] In the other painting, likewise signed and dated 1632, she wears a plumed beret.^[10] A fourth painting depicting the same model, *Bust of a Young Woman* in Chapel Hill (**fig 3**), was executed by one of Rembrandt's studio assistants, probably Isaac de Jouderville (ca. 1612–48).^[11] The presence of these four paintings featuring the same model by Rembrandt, and his workshop makes it highly unlikely that *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak* was a commissioned portrait. Interestingly, the same model, in a nearly identical costume, appears in two of Rembrandt's history paintings from the early 1630s: as Europa in *The Rape of Europa*, in the J. Paul Getty Museum, and as the woman (Esther?) in the Old Testament scene in Ottawa (**fig 4**).^[12]

In the eighteenth century, *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak* was part of the distinguished collection of Jean de Jullienne (1686–1766) in Paris, where it was considered a pendant to the Chapel Hill painting, which is likewise oval in shape and has exactly the same dimensions.^[13] The first mention of these paintings as pendants occurs in the *Catalogue des Tableaux de M. de Jullienne*, ca. 1756, a room-by-room inventory of the paintings displayed in Jullienne's Parisian hotel, illustrated with 152 miniatures in pen and watercolor (**fig 5**).^[14] It is unlikely, however, that these works were conceived as pendants. Not only were they executed on different types of wood (the Leiden Collection painting is on Spanish cedar, whereas the Chapel Hill painting



Fig 3. Isaac de Jouderville / Circle of Rembrandt van Rijn, *Bust of a Young Woman*, 1632, oil on panel, 59.4 x 43.2 cm (oval), Morehead Planetarium and Science Center, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. Image courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, N.C.



Fig 4. Rembrandt van Rijn, *A Woman at Her Toilet*, 1632/3, oil on canvas, 109.2 x 94.4 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, inv. 6089, photo © National Gallery of Canada



Fig 5. French School, *Catalogue des tableaux de Mr. de Jullienne*, p. 68, ca. 1756, pen and black ink, gray wash, and watercolor, over black chalk, on paper, 196 x 260 mm, Morgan Library & Museum, New York, inv. no. 1966.8.



is on oak), they differ stylistically and qualitatively.^[15] Even though Rembrandt's pupil, presumably Isaac de Jouderville, must have had access to the same model, the physiognomic details of the Chapel Hill painting are softer and less vividly defined, and the lighting does not similarly set off the head and upper body from the background.^[16] Most importantly, she lacks the compelling presence that so endears her to all viewers of Rembrandt's subtle masterpiece in the Leiden Collection.

The journey of *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak* through to its accession by the Leiden Collection is extremely well documented and quite fascinating. Sold in Paris in 1767 after the death of Jean de Jullienne, the painting spent more than a century in France before Furst Johannes II, prince of Liechtenstein acquired it by 1891. Between 1908 and 1929 it was in the collection of the Rt. Reverend Georgius Schmid von Grunneck, the bishop of Chur in Switzerland. In 1929, Robert Treat Paine II, a descendant of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, purchased the painting and then generously placed it on long-term loan at various museums so that it could be studied by scholars and enjoyed by a wide public. In 1975, however, *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak* was stolen from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the brazen character of the theft brought the painting great notoriety. The theft had been orchestrated by Myles J. Connor Jr., who, wearing a beard, glasses, a tweed suit and a fedora, escaped with the work, aided by accomplices firing shots at the steps of the museum.^[17] A year later the painting was recovered in dramatic fashion by state and federal officials who returned it to the museum, where it stayed until the family put it up for auction in 1986. That sale (to a private collector) compounded the painting's fame because it sold for \$10.5 million—a record for a work by the Dutch artist and the second highest price ever paid at auction for an Old Master painting.^[18] In 2007 this masterpiece was acquired in a private sale by the Leiden Collection (see Provenance).

- Volker Manuth, 2017

Endnotes

1. Reliably signed and dated paintings by Rembrandt of single figures that most likely originated in Amsterdam before 1632 are the *Portrait of Nicolaes Ruts*, Frick Collection, New York, inv. 43.1.150 (see Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 2: 1631–1634, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project [The Hague, 1986], no. A43), and the *Portrait of a Man at a Writing Desk*, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. 741 (see Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 2: 1631–1634, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project [The Hague, 1986], no. A44). Both are dated 1631.
2. See Émile Michel, *Rembrandt, sa vie, son oeuvre et son temps* (Paris, 1893), 560; see also Kurt Bauch, *Rembrandt: Gemälde* (Berlin, 1966), 24, no. 452 (as Saskia).
3. Saskia did not move from Friesland to Amsterdam until after her marriage to Rembrandt in 1634. For a biography of Saskia, see Ben Broos, *Saskia. De vrouw van Rembrandt* (Zwolle, 2012), esp. 116–26.
4. This identification was suggested as early as 1883 by Wilhelm von Bode, *Studien zur Geschichte der holländischen Malerei* (Braunschweig, 1883), 598, no. 311. See also Eugène Dutuit, *Tableaux et dessins de Rembrandt* (Paris, 1885), 53, and Adolf Rosenberg, *Rembrandt: Des Meisters Gemälde* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1904), 26. The year of Lysbeth's birth is unknown, but there is information indicating that she was younger than Rembrandt. This can be deduced from the inventory of the estate of Rembrandt's mother, who was buried on 29 July 1640 in Leiden. The document (dated 2 November 1640) includes the names of her four living children, who are listed according to age. Elisabeth is mentioned at the end of this list, after her brothers Adriaen, Rembrandt, and Willem; see Walter L. Strauss and Marjon van der Meulen, *The Rembrandt Documents* (New York, 1979), 191, 1640/9.
5. See P. J. M. Baer, *De Leidse verwanten van Rembrandt van Rijn en hun Leidse afstammelingen tot heden* (Leiden, 1992), 2.
6. Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 2: 1631–1634, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (The Hague, 1986), 170; see also Dagmar Hirschfelder, *Tronie und Porträt in der niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 2008), 121–22; Franziska Gottwald, *Das Tronie: Muster–Studie–Meisterwerk* (Berlin, 2011).
7. In seventeenth-century inventories *tronies* are frequently described as foreign, outlandish, Turkish, or “antique,” a term that did not necessarily refer to classical antiquity but to the past in general. See Jaap van der Veen, “Faces from Life: Tronies and Portraits in Rembrandt's Painted Oeuvre,” in *Rembrandt: A Genius and His Impact*, ed. Albert Blankert (Exh. cat. Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria; Canberra, National Gallery of Australia) (Zwolle, 1997), 69–80.
8. For the painting in Stockholm, see Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 2: 1631–1634, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (The Hague, 1986), A49; for the painting in a private collection in Switzerland, see Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*,

- vol. 2: *1631–1634*, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (The Hague, 1986), C61, and Ernst van de Wetering et al. *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 4: *Self-Portraits*, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (Dordrecht, 2005) (Corrigenda et addenda), 4: 629–35.
9. As pointed out in Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 2: *1631–1634*, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (The Hague, 1986), 2: 163, the depiction of the model in profile can be related to Rembrandt's *Portrait of Amalia van Solms*, also from 1632. The portrait is in Paris (Musée Jacquemaert-André, no. 423); see Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 2: *1631–1634*, Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 2: *1631–1634*, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (The Hague, 1986), 2: A61.
 10. In 1986 the Rembrandt Research Project described this painting as an old imitation, but in 2005 it reversed this opinion and argued that the painting was autograph. See Ernst van de Wetering et al. *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 4: *Self-Portraits*, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (Dordrecht, 2005) (Corrigenda et addenda), 4: 635. The following summarized opinion appears in volume 2 (1986) of the *Corpus* (see C61): “An old imitation, probably done outside Rembrandt's circle” (p. 695).
 11. For the painting in Chapel Hill (Morehead Planetarium, University of North Carolina), see Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 2: *1631–1634*, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (The Hague, 1986), 2: C58.
 12. Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 2: *1631–1634*, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (The Hague, 1986), 2: A47 and A64.
 13. See sale catalogue Jean de Jullienne, Paris (Remy), 30 March–22 May 1767 [Lugt 1603], lot 131. The sale catalogue describes them as being on “oval panels of identical dimensions” (59.4 x 43.2 cm).
 14. See Andreas Henning, “Pastels in Jean de Jullienne's Collection as Recorded in the 1767 Sale Catalogue,” in *Jean de Jullienne: Collector and Connoisseur*, ed. Christoph Martin Vogtherr, Andreas Henning, and Jennifer Tonkovich (Exh. cat. London, Wallace Collection) (London, 2011), 58, 67, 139.
 15. Whether or not these works were both originally painted as ovals or were later reshaped to turn them into pendants is not known.
 16. Josua Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 2: *1631–1634*, Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (The Hague, 1986), 2: 681.
 17. Miles J. Connor, *The Art of the Heist: Confessions of a Master Art Thief, Rock-and-Roller, and Prodigal Son* (New York, 2009), 171–210; Anthony M. Amore and Tom Mashberg, *Stealing Rembrandts: The Untold Stories of Notorious Art Heists* (New York, 2011), 118–41.
 18. The previous record price for an Old Master painting was set in 1985, when the J. Paul Getty Museum paid \$11,700,000 for Mantegna's *Adoration of the Magi* (Christie's, London, April 18, 1985, lot 16). The previous auction record for a Rembrandt was set in 1961, when the Metropolitan Museum of Art paid \$2,300,000 for *Aristotle With a Bust of Homer* (Parke-Bernet, New York, November 15, 1961, no. 7), the last great work by the artist to have come up at auction prior to *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak*.

Provenance

- Louis Charles Gilbert (d. 1727), Paris; to Count Henry D'Hoym.
- Count Henry D'Hoym (1694–1736), Paris, 5 June 1726.
- Jean de Jullienne (1686–1766), Paris, by 1756 (his sale, Pierre Remy, Paris, 30 March–22 May 1767, no. 131, with *Young Woman with a Necklace*, now in Chapel Hill, N.C. [to Vincent Donjeux for 1,210 livres]).
- [Vincent Donjeux, Paris.]
- Louis César de La Baume Le Blanc (1708–80), Duke of Vaujours, Duke of Vallière (his sale, A. Paillet, Paris, 21 February 1781, no. 47, with *Young Woman with a Necklace*, now in Chapel Hill, N.C. [to Solier for 2,000 livres]).
- (Sale, A.J. Paillet, Paris, 20–24 March 1787, no. 25 [to Paillet for 1,000 livres].)
- Charles-René-Dominique Sochet Chevalier Destouches (1727–94) (his sale, A. J. Lebrun, Paris, 21 March 1794, no. 16 [Basan for 651 francs]).
- Count Givoanni Battista de Sommariva (1760–1826), Milan (his sale, Charles Paillet, Paris, 18–23 February 1839, no. 90 [to Géunin for 5,100 francs]).
- Valpinçon (his sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 7– 9 March 1881, no. 20 [to Charles Sedelmeyer for 8,450 francs])
- [Charles Sedelmeyer, Paris; to Pierre-Eugène Secrétan for 15,000 francs.]
- Pierre-Eugène Secrétan (1836–99), Paris, by 1883 (his sale, Paris, Charles Sedelmeyer, 1–4 July 1889, no. 154 [to Charles Sedelmeyer for 29,500 francs]).
- Johann II (1840–1929), Prince of Liechtenstein, Vienna, by 1891.
- Georg Schmid von Grüneck (1851–1932), Bishop of Chur, Switzerland, by 1908 [to Robert C. Vose Gallery]
- [Robert C. Vose Gallery, Boston, 1929.]
- Robert Treat Paine II (1861–1943), Boston, 1929; by descent to his son Richard Cushing Paine Sr. (1893–1966); by descent to his heirs, by April 1973 (sale, Sotheby's, London, 10 December 1986, no. 44; to private collection).
- Private collection (private sale, Sotheby's, New York, 29 November 2007, no. 99).
- From whom acquired by the present owner in 2007.

Exhibition History



- Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, January 1930–February 1944, on loan with the permanent collection [lent by Robert Treat Paine II].
- Worcester, Mass., Worcester Art Museum, “Rembrandt and His Circle: A Loan Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings, and Etchings,” 4 February–1 March 1936, no. 3 [lent by Robert Treat Paine II].
- Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, “Art in New England: Paintings, Drawings, Prints from Private Collections in New England,” 9 June–10 September 1939, no. 98 [lent by Robert Treat Paine II].
- Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 7 July 1966–20 September 1986, on loan with the permanent collection [lent by Richard Cushing Paine and heirs].
- Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, November 2007–October 2011, on loan with the permanent collection [lent by the present owner].
- Raleigh, North Carolina Museum of Art, “Rembrandt in America: Collecting and Connoisseurship,” 30 October 2011–22 January 2012; Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art, 19 February–28 May 2012; Minneapolis, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 24 June–16 September 2012, no. 12 [lent by the present owner].
- Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, on loan with the permanent collection, September 2012–September 2014 [lent by the present owner].
- Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum, “Rembrandt and the Dutch Golden Age,” 31 October 2014–15 February 2015, no. 95 [lent by the present owner].
- Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, on loan with the permanent collection, February 2015–June 2016 [lent by the present owner].
- Paris, Musée du Louvre, “Masterpieces of The Leiden Collection: The Age of Rembrandt,” 22 February–22 May 2017, no. 20 [lent by the present owner].
- Beijing, National Museum of China, “Rembrandt and His Time: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection,” 17 June–3 September 2017, no. 14 [lent by the present owner].
- Shanghai, Long Museum, West Bund, “Rembrandt, Vermeer and Hals in the Dutch Golden Age: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection,” 23 September 2017–25 February 2018, no. 14 [lent by the present owner].
- Moscow, The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, “The Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer: Masterpieces of The Leiden Collection,” 28 March 2018–22 July 2018, no. 50 [lent by the present owner].
- St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, “The Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer: Masterpieces of The Leiden Collection,” 5 September 2018–13 January 2019, no. 50 [lent by the present owner].
- Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi, “Rembrandt, Vermeer and the Dutch Golden Age. Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection and the Musée du Louvre,” 14 February–18 May 2019, no. 18 [lent by the present owner].
- Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, “Rembrandt and Amsterdam Portraiture, 1590–1670,” 18 February–30 August 2020, no. 31 [lent by the present owner].

- Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, “Rembrandt in Amsterdam: Creativity and Competition,” 16 July–6 September 2021, no. 81 [lent by the present owner].

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Versions

Version

1. J.F. Grueber, possibly Johann Friedrich Gruber (d. 1681), n.d., medium and dimensions unknown, whereabouts unknown, previously Chauveau collection, Paris.

Technical Summary

The support is a single plank of vertically grained, oval-shaped Spanish cedar.^[1] The slightly irregular shape of the oval and small losses along the outer edges of the paint suggest the panel may have been trimmed just slightly after the paint dried, but also opens the possibility that the support was originally rectangular even if the composition was oval. The panel is unthinned and uncradled and has no bevels. Remnants of eight straight pieces of old paper tape create a hexagonal border along the outer edge of the oval panel reverse. Small black dots of resin or gum exude from and stain the panel reverse along the cedar's pores. Five red wax seals, two white wax drips each with a horizontal thread embedded across them, one import stamp, three paper labels, and a numerical inscription are located along the panel reverse but there are no stencils, panel maker's marks or machine tool marks. Two narrow parallel bands of adhesive residue above and below the two white drips and four pinholes along the ends of both strips suggest a rectangular label of some sort had previously been adhered to the panel reverse. An additional short white string is embedded and connects the two red wax seals below the white wax dots.

A light-colored ground has been thinly and evenly applied followed by a pale brown imprimatura. The paint has been built up in successive thin layers and smoothly applied with lively brushwork through the background and with thicker paint, with some use of impasto through the figure's white shirt, flesh tones, and gold brocade trim. A granularity along some paint passages and pinpoint losses through others could benefit from further investigation. There is evidence of a now missing brush hair between the figure's eyes and a fiber of unknown origin caught in the paint along the lower part of figure's dress.

Infrared images captured at 900–1700 nanometers reveal lines of preparatory drawing, and compositional changes visible in the images include a slight shift in the position of the face around the chin and proper left eye.

The painting is signed and dated in dark paint along the background, center right.

The painting has not undergone conservation treatment since its acquisition in 2007 and remains in a good state of preservation.^[2]

Further technical information about this artwork is available in The Rembrandt Database.

Technical Summary Endnotes



1. The characterization of the wood is based on Regis B. Miller's June 2012 wood identification report. The panel thickness was not measured.
2. Entry based on an examination report prepared by Yvonne Szafran, head of paintings conservation, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2011.