

PROGRAM

Reflecting on Rembrandt

*A Virtual Symposium reflecting on the exhibitions and research of the
2019 Rembrandt anniversary year. Co-sponsored by The Leiden Collection and
the Drawing Institute of the Morgan Library & Museum*

Friday, October 30, 2020

11am – 1pm EST



Welcome and Introduction: Reflecting on Rembrandt

John Marciari

Charles W. Engelhard Curator and Head of the Department of Drawings and Prints
Morgan Library & Museum, New York

Lara Yeager-Crasselt

Curator, The Leiden Collection, New York

Reflecting on the Ashmolean's Young Rembrandt exhibition

An Van Camp

Christopher Brown Curator of Northern European Art
Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford

The *Young Rembrandt* exhibition – which despite being closed during lockdown has reopened at the Ashmolean Museum (University of Oxford) until 1 November – allowed for new research into Rembrandt's early career between 1624 and 1634. This decade, so often overlooked by the public and researchers, has revealed how Rembrandt was not a born genius but instead honed his skills through experimentation and failure. By examining Rembrandt's development across the three media he worked in – drawing, printmaking and painting – closer correspondences were found regarding his early workshop practice. Further material-technical research on a small panel painting in the Ashmolean's collection has led to a new attribution to Rembrandt's Leiden workshop. While this new research did not make it into the catalogue on time, it will be continued and will include other trionies from other collections, which were in the past rejected from Rembrandt's workshop for stylistic reasons.

Long Live Rembrandt! The Rijksmuseum and the Year of Rembrandt

Pieter Roelofs

Head of Paintings and Sculpture, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Rembrandt Drawings: New Directions

Ilona van Tuinen

Curator of Drawings, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Recent publications and exhibitions devoted to Rembrandt's drawings or in which they have featured, along with a symposium at the Rijksmuseum earlier this year devoted specifically to the technical study of his drawings, demonstrate that this is an exciting and transformative moment for the field. On the one hand, Peter Schatborn's much-anticipated 2019 Taschen publication of the complete drawings, and Martin Royalton-Kisch's ongoing, online revision of Otto Benesch's *The Drawings by Rembrandt* present a drastic (albeit not always uniform) reduction of the corpus of accepted drawings, which is forcing museum curators to rethink their collections. On the other hand, relatively new, non-invasive imaging techniques, such as macro-XRF and multi-modal forensic imaging, have already yielded brand new insights into Rembrandt's supports, drawing media and the original appearance of his drawings, which have far-reaching consequences for the way in which we understand and describe this part of his oeuvre. This paper aims to review the current state of research of the field of Rembrandt drawings as well as discuss the promising new directions it is taking, pleading for the interrelation between traditional connoisseurship and material technical research.

Break (5 minutes)

2019 @ The Rembrandt House Museum

Leonore van Sloten

Curator, Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam

How did Rembrandt make his paintings, drawings and prints? And how do we investigate this today? To mark the Rembrandt Year 2019, the Rembrandt House Museum staged the exhibition *Rembrandt Laboratory. Rembrandt's Technique Unravelling* in collaboration a.o. with the Netherlands Institute for Conservation, Art and Science (NICAS). In a simulated laboratory setting, visitors to the exhibition were able to act as real detectives and take a look behind the scenes at present-day scientific materials analyses within the context of Rembrandt's former home and workshop. The exhibition aimed to inform museum visitors about different aspects of technical research in Rembrandt's oeuvre and show how a multidisciplinary collaboration between science, technical research and archival, stylistic, and historical research are crucial to enhance our knowledge.

In her talk, exhibition curator Leonore van Sloten will not only look back on this exhibition project, but also more broadly on the museum's other contributions to the Rembrandt Year. These include the exhibition *Rembrandt's Social Network*, which presented Rembrandt the man, surrounded by his family, friends and business associates, as well as *Inspired by Rembrandt*, in which the museum reflected on its own collection and those graphic artists who were strongly influenced by Rembrandt's etchings. This project formed the starting point of a new series of thematic exhibitions to be held in the future.

The museum is also actively exploring exhibition subjects related to social issues. In 2019 the museum team prepared *HERE. Black in Rembrandt's Time*, which focused on the presence of black people in Dutch 17th-Century art, but also in Rembrandt's city and – more specifically – in his neighborhood. The opening of *HERE* in March 2020 formed the launch of 'Musea Bekennen Kleur' – a network in which twelve Dutch museums connect in their quest for more diversity and awareness within and through the museum field. Rembrandt's life and art can be a starting point for a vast variety of future exhibitions on themes which are trending topics (worldwide) nowadays, with which the Rembrandt House hopes to intensify its role in society.

Why Rembrandt Now?

Stephanie S. Dickey

Bader Chair in Northern Baroque Art, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

The 350th anniversary of Rembrandt's death has been honored with so many museum exhibitions that the schedule stretches from 2018 to 2021. 2019 was also an anniversary year for Leonardo da Vinci, as 2020 is for Raphael. While the value of celebrating such well-known artists has long been taken for granted, recent events have accelerated a shift in the cultural landscape. In many university curricula, especially in North America, the study of the European "old masters" has yielded to a broader analysis of visual arts traditions in relation to social, environmental, and political concerns. Museums are seeking creative ways to make the presentation of historical art and artists meaningful, relevant, and inclusive for diverse populations of visitors. Taking the "Rembrandt Year" as a focal point, this talk offers some thoughts about the challenges of teaching and exhibiting old art in new ways. How can we prepare the next generation of art historians to engage with objects as well as ideas, in ways that are impactful both for fellow specialists and for broader audiences? How can we keep the study of Rembrandt and other historical artists fresh and inspiring for the present, and for the future?

Reflections and Conclusions

Arthur K. Wheelock Jr.

Senior Advisor, The Leiden Collection

Former Curator, Northern Baroque Painting, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Larry Silver

Farquhar Professor of Art History, emeritus, University of Pennsylvania

Discussion and Q & A with speakers

End



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For more details and registration information, go to:
themorgan.org/programs/reflecting-rembrandt