

The Human Figure Review



The human figure has been an important subject for artists for over 2000 years - since primitive man carved stone fertility goddesses, and ancient Greeks first carved figures in marble. Their timeless, great sculptures set the standard for the representation of the figure for many centuries. In the 19th century, when artists such as the Impressionists began to depict the figure in a modern way (no longer idealized, and wearing the clothes of 19th century Europe), the figure remained an important subject of art. Modern art in the 20th century continued to question the centuries-old artistic traditions, and depicted the figure in ways that were sometimes hard to even recognize - but still the figure was depicted. Now, in the early 21st century, artists are still using the human form in their work, albeit in unexpected and sometimes provocative ways. The human form is us - and will probably always be

represented in some way in art.

Rembrandt van Rijn

1606-1669

Rembrandt was born in Leiden on July 15, 1606- his full name Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn. He was the son of a miller. Despite the fact that he came from a family of relatively modest means, his parents took great care with his education. Rembrandt began his studies at the Latin School, and at the age of 14 he was enrolled at the University of Leiden. The program did not interest him, and he soon left to study art - first with a local master, Jacob van Swanenburch, and then, in Amsterdam, with Pieter Lastman, known for his historical paintings. After six months, having mastered everything he had been taught, Rembrandt returned to Leiden, where he was soon so highly regarded that although barely 22 years old, he took his first pupils.

In contrast to his successful public career, however, Rembrandt's family life was marked by misfortune. Between 1635 and 1641 his wife Saskia gave birth to four children, but only the last, Titus, survived; her own death came in 1642- at the age of 30. Hendrickje Stoffels, engaged as his housekeeper about 1649, eventually became his common-law wife and was the model for many of his pictures. Despite Rembrandt's financial success as an artist, teacher, and art dealer, his penchant for ostentatious living forced him to declare bankruptcy in 1656.

These problems in no way affected Rembrandt's work; if anything, his artistry increased. His personal life, however, continued to be marred by sorrow. His beloved Hendrickje died in 1663, and his son, Titus, in 1668- only 27 years of age. Eleven months later, on October 4, 1669, Rembrandt died in Amsterdam.



An Old Woman at Prayer (commonly called "Rembrandt's Mother")
c. 1629-1630
Salzburger Landessammlungen-Residenzgalerie, Salzburg



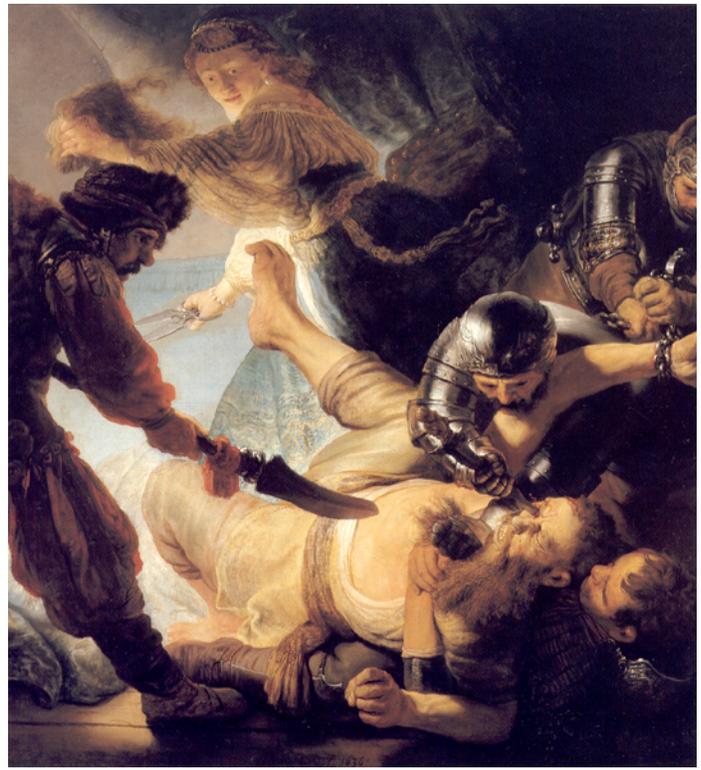
A Bust of an Old Woman: "The Artist's Mother"
c. 1629-31 61 x 47.3 cm.
Her Magisty Quenn Elizebeth II



Bust of an Old Man (commonly called "Rembrandt's Father")
1630
Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck



The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple
1631 25 5/8 x 18 7/8 in.
Mauritshuis, The Hague



The Blinding of Samson
1636 236 x 302 cm.
Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt



A Young Woman in Profile with a Fan
1632 72.5 x 54.8 cm.
Nationalmuseum, Stolckholm



A Polish Nobleman
1637 96.7 x 66.1 cm.
National Gallery of Art,
Washington



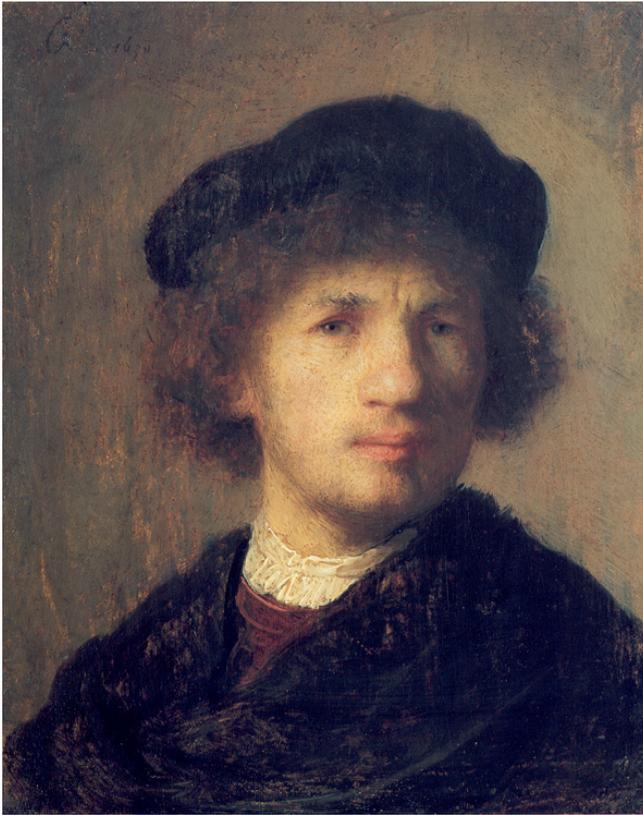
The Night Watch
1642, 363 x 438 cm.
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Lucretia
1664 120 x 101 cm.
National Gallery of Art, Washington D. C.



Portrait of a Boy
c.1665-1660
Norman Simon Museum of Art, Pasadena



Self Portrait
1630 15 x 12.2 cm.
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm



Self Portrait, Wide-Eyed
1630 etching 51 x 46mm.
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Self Portrait with Helmet
1634 80.5 x 66 cm.
Staatliche Museen Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte
Meister, Cassel



Portrait of Rembrandt
c. 1640
92.3 x 76.4 cm.
Bedfordship, Woburn Abbey



Self Portrait with Beret and Turned-Up Collar
1659 84.4 x 66 cm.
National Gallery of Art, Washington



Self Portrait
1669 63.5 x 57.8 cm.
Mauritshuis, The Hague