

[Gallery 1]

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Rembrandt as a Young Man, c. 1630
Oil on wood panel
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Evander B. Schley, 53.18

(Not in catalogue)

Generally accepted as an authentic self-portrait until 1969, this painting was subsequently attributed to a 17th-century follower, or perhaps an even later imitator. At the time, scholars argued that the broad brushstrokes were more indicative of Rembrandt's later style and thus inconsistent with Rembrandt's youth in the portrayal. Intensive study of Rembrandt's early work has since revealed that he tested his hand at both broad and fine brushwork. The painting is now widely accepted as originating in Rembrandt's immediate circle in the early 1630s, but some scholars believe it is the work of a pupil. Comparison to a small drawing now in the British Museum offers compelling evidence that the painting is indeed Rembrandt's autograph self-portrait. The two works share many characteristics. Note especially in the drawing the broad, ropey strokes of gray wash applied over fine pen work. In the painting the outlines of the facial features and the handling of the hair are strikingly similar to those in the drawing.

Rembrandt van Rijn



Self-portrait, c. 1628-29
Pen and ink with brush and gray wash
British Museum, London

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



The Three Singers (Hearing), c. 1624/25
Oil on wood panel
Private collection, New York

Part of a series depicting the five senses, this work represents hearing. The paintings were completed shortly before Rembrandt's brief training with Pieter Lastman in Amsterdam, making them Rembrandt's earliest known paintings. The glow of an unseen candle to the left reveals Rembrandt's early interest in the effects of light and shadow. The ages of the singers suggest an alarming chorus comprising cracking adolescent notes as well as voices past their prime. In all of the paintings surviving from the series, Rembrandt suggested the downside of each of the senses.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



The Operation (Touch), c. 1624/25
Oil on wood
Private collection, New York

Like the adjacent *Three Singers (Hearing)*, this work belongs to a series representing the five senses—in this case, touch. Rembrandt drew on a popular Dutch allegory in which madness or foolishness is cured by removing a stone from the head, a procedure usually performed by a medical fraud on an unfortunate patient.

Even as a teenager, Rembrandt experimented with various ways of handling paint to describe textures. Here, he accentuated wrinkles and rough clothing with thick, sculptural strokes of paint, but he also used the finest tip of his brush to pick out the gleaming reflections on the surgical instruments.

The Operation and *The Three Singers* have only recently found general acceptance as authentic Rembrandts. During the 18th century they were set into larger panels and extensively covered with new paint. Only when these additions were removed could the pictures be assessed.

Attributed to Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



A Scholar by Candlelight, c. 1628/29
Oil on copper
Collection of Isabel and Alfred Bader, Milwaukee

A 1790 print after this painting credited Rembrandt as the artist, but this attribution remains hotly contested. Critics cite the weak transition in the shadows on the wall and the vague treatment of the figure's face as evidence for an attribution to a pupil or follower of Rembrandt. Conversely, scholars who favor the Rembrandt attribution cite the subtle lighting of the book's pages and the modeling of the globe at the right. Are we looking at one of Rembrandt's earliest attempts to paint an atmospheric, candlelit space, or is this perhaps an early work by his extremely talented student, Gerrit Dou?

The co-owner of this picture, Alfred Bader, is one of the most astute collectors of our time. He has a knack for discovering underestimated paintings that eventually become more fully appreciated, and we would do well to see this as a picture that may illuminate Rembrandt's development.

Jan Lievens
Dutch, 1607–74



The Feast of Esther (Wrath of Ahasuerus), c. 1625
Oil on canvas
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, 52.9.55

In the biblical account, Queen Esther alerts her husband, King Ahasuerus, that his chief advisor, Haman, has conspired to exterminate the Jews in his kingdom (Esther 7:1–6). Here, the king clenches his fists in anger and glares at the traitor who, in darkness, appears startled.

Today it is virtually impossible to imagine this work as by Rembrandt. However, when rediscovered in the 1930s, the bold coloring, dramatic narrative, and varied brushwork led to an attribution to the young Rembrandt. Further research in the late 1970s established the artist as Jan Lievens, Rembrandt's contemporary and close associate. Lievens was precocious, well trained, and probably disconcerting to the as-yet inexperienced Rembrandt. Lievens's work here is undeniably impressive, yet despite its bravura qualities, it is superficial in its melodrama and caricatured actors.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Girl Wearing a Gold-Trimmed Cloak, 1632
Oil on oval wood panel
Private collection, New York

This beautifully preserved work fully conveys the palpable sense of human presence that Rembrandt could conjure. It was once considered a portrait of Rembrandt's sister, Lysbeth, but no documentation supports the claim. Since the figure wears a type of embroidered cloak popular a century earlier, scholars now consider the work a *tronie* (character study). The mixture of convincing, sober, lifelike face with understated, playful costume suggests that the painting depicts one of Rembrandt's intimates. Even if we could identify the sitter, we still would not know whether the picture is a personal portrait or a *tronie* based on a handy model.

Throughout his life Rembrandt was interested in exotic goods from distant lands. This picture is painted on a mahogany panel, perhaps recycled from a shipping crate. Rembrandt enlivened the picture with greatly varied brushstrokes: wispy in the hair, extremely fine in the face, slashing and jabbing in the smocking, and gracefully dancing in the embroidery. This painting or a similar one became a model for students to use as a point of departure in developing other pictures, such as the other painting of a red-haired young woman nearby.

Workshop of Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Young Woman, 1632

Oil on oval wood panel

Allentown Art Museum, Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1961, inv.61.35

Dimestore magnate Samuel H. Kress bought a great number of paintings, but this one was perfumed with the scent of royal ownership so he bought it in 1926. By 1935, buyer's remorse seems to have set in. Kress had the painting analyzed by Alan Burroughs, a pioneer in the scientific examination of paintings (who had been a curator here at the MIA before moving on the Harvard's Fogg Art Museum about 1926). The report containing the bad news went unpublished for decades. Except for some passages in the headdress, gold chains, and bow, the figure is thinly painted, which is uncharacteristic of Rembrandt. The awkwardly placed facial features and the stark, frontal lighting make the head appear flat. When compared to the nearby work by Rembrandt, this painting is readily seen as a workshop product.

Attributed to Isaac de Joudreville
Dutch, 1613–48



Bust of a Young Man with a Gold Chain, 1632
Oil on oval panel
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Bequest of John L. Severance, 1942.644

With a fortune built from dealing in linseed oil, salt, and distilled air, John L. Severance became one of Cleveland's greatest philanthropists. He bequeathed his Rembrandt to the Cleveland Museum of Art. In 1982, the experts of the Rembrandt Research Project confirmed the authenticity but only by stretching the evidence. Noting the lack of both plasticity and subtlety, they overruled the inscribed date of 1632 and backdated the work to 1629. As their work continued, the project members gained greater appreciation for Rembrandt's student, Isaac de Joudreville. Only one painting signed by Joudreville exists, but it shares the very qualities that made the experts hesitant about this painting.

Workshop of Rembrandt, possibly Isaac de Joudreville
Dutch, 1613–48



Bust of a Young Man in a Gorget and Plumed Cap, c. 1631/32

Oil on oak panel

The San Diego Museum of Art, Anonymous gift to Fine Arts Gallery, San Diego, 1939

At first glance, this painting may appeal for its dashing mustachioed sitter with his decorated armor and bejeweled plumed beret. Upon closer inspection, however, its shortcomings become apparent. The restricted brushwork, unrefined modeling, and schematic shading of the face, as well as the cursory treatment of the decoration of the gorget (neck armor) reveal an assistant's hand. A product of Rembrandt's workshop during the transitional period when he split his time between Leiden and Amsterdam, this panel may be by Isaac de Joudreville.

Such a hypothesis invites comparison to the nearby painting of a young man wearing a gold chain, a work also assigned to Joudreville. The tight brushwork, schematic shadows, and limited sense of space all seem familiar. The treatment of the goldsmith's work, the cursory decoration on the sitter's accessories, and the almond-shaped eyes all speak to the possibility of shared authorship.

This painting was anonymously given to the Fine Arts Gallery, San Diego, by Anne and Amy Putnam, who purchased it immediately after receiving an unexpected bequest of \$5,000,000 from their late uncle. The highly cultured and reclusive sisters went on to donate many magnificent gifts to the Fine Arts Gallery until Amy took a dislike to its director and his interest in contemporary art. Later in the exhibition is the Putnams' spectacular Saint Bartholomew, which comes from the Timken Museum of Art, an institution built near the Fine Arts Gallery to house the sisters' collection without the intrusion of modern art.

Possibly workshop of Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Bust of a Young Man, 1629 or later
Oil on oak panel

Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Bequest of James P. Warburg, 1969.56

The fortunes of this painting have plummeted over time. First published in 1930 as an early Rembrandt self-portrait, this painting was deemed by the Rembrandt Research Project in the 1980s to be an unsuccessful imitation of the master's painterly, late style, though curiously presented in the form of an early tronie (character study). Project members noted the failure of the coarse scratch marks on the scarf to suggest form, the broad highlights on the cheek, and the weak transition into shadow. Though few would now return the portrait to Rembrandt, its relationship to his early studio should be assessed in light of increasing awareness of his early, rough style. Rather than being an imitation of an early self-portrait using an anachronistic late style, this may be an early student's attempt to work in the rough style. Perhaps paintings like this prompted Rembrandt to urge his students to begin with a fine style before progressing to a rough one.

This painting was acquired by financier Paul Warburg in 1929, the year he warned America of the hazards of rampant stockmarket speculation.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of an Old Man, 1632

Oil on cradled oak panel

Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Bequest of Nettie G. Naumburg, 1930.191

Until the 1960s, this *tronie* (character study) was considered authentic. But scholars began questioning its attribution, suggesting other possibilities: Jan Lievens (1607–74), who also used this sitter as a model; a combination of Lievens and Rembrandt; a workshop product touched up by Rembrandt; and a copy by an assistant after a Rembrandt original. The Rembrandt Research Project practically wrote an obituary for the painting, dismissing it once and for all from the roll Rembrandt's works. Well, it's back. The signature is authentic, and the fine modeling of aging skin, the soft, wispy brushwork of the hair, and the moving interiority of the figure point to Rembrandt's authorship. This exhibition provides a rare opportunity to compare this painting to other authentic works as a means of testing the attribution.

The painting seems unfinished, but Rembrandt signed it, as is often the case with his paintings. Could a client have seen the painting and wanted it immediately? Another possibility is that Rembrandt had achieved his aims and was ready to move on. He would later tell his students that a picture is completed when the artist's intention is fulfilled.

Aaron Naumburg made a fortune selling fur to hatmakers. He and his wife, Nettie, completely outfitted the lower floor of their grand triplex apartment with English Gothic, Tudor, and Jacobean furnishings and art treasures. Nettie bought this Rembrandt in 1928, the year her husband died. She left the rooms and their contents, including *Portrait of an Old Man*, to Harvard University's Fogg Art Museum.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Old Man with a Gold Chain, c. 1631

Oil on wood panel

The Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Kimball Collection, 1922.4467

The balding old man in this ambitious fantasy portrait (tronie) appears in several of Rembrandt's etchings and paintings of about 1630 to 1631. The grizzled hair and careworn terrain of his face imply his victories have been hard won, yet Rembrandt's artistry leaves no doubt that his subject retains a powerful spirit. The torque of the subject's spiral pose fills him with energy. The curvature of his chain reveals the broad mass of his upper body. Bright light enters from the left, energizing the picture, catching his earring, reflecting off his gorget (neck armor), and brightly illuminating the sitter's right side, while leaving his left side in transparent shadow.

Rembrandt's varied brushwork further animates the surface; short strokes describe the texture of the face, while long, decisive strokes suggest folds in the neck. Rembrandt's brush danced over the background to allow the warm brown underlayer to show through the gray paint. Around the outer contour of the man's body, Rembrandt overlapped layers of paint, partly to find the optimal outline and partly to create a halo of radiant light.

Why would Rembrandt put so much energy and labor into a large tronie at this juncture of his career? Perhaps he intended the imposing picture as an advertisement. Rembrandt may have taken the painting to Amsterdam to show potential patrons the astonishing skill he could bring to his portraiture. Anyone seeing this picture would know that the young newcomer was capable of producing an animated yet dignified likeness, somewhere on the cusp of truth and flattery.

Evalyne Cone Kimball, widow of Chicago piano mogul William Kimball, bought Old Man with a Gold Chain in 1913 or 1914. In 1916, she lent her best paintings to the Art Institute of Chicago. It seems that she was in the throes of dementia and became distressed by the absence of the pictures. They were returned to her home, but by 1920 she was declared incompetent. The paintings were returned to the museum, and her mansion was closed. She died the following year.

[Gallery 2]

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Man, Probably a Member of the Van Beresteyn Family, 1632
Oil on canvas
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O. Havemeyer Collection,
Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 29.100.3

The poses and expressions in this portrait and its companion (at right) show Rembrandt at his most restrained and conservative. Paired portraits of the time would have been displayed side by side, as they are here. Rembrandt lit them consistently from the upper left, suggesting the couple stands together in the same space.

Doubts about Rembrandt's authorship emerged in the mid-1980s. Subsequent study indicated that he did indeed complete this painting, but his assistants collaborated on parts of the other. In the 17th century it was not unusual for an artist to lavish more care on the husband's portrait when making a marital pair. Especially convincing are the texture of the man's hair and the area surrounding his eyes, the delicate collar, and the shadow on the wall.

The van Beresteyn family sold the portraits in the 19th century, but the family seems to have lost all records that would link the paintings to their ancestors. The American sugar baron Henry Havemeyer bought the paintings in 1888. His widow, Louisine, left them—along with hundreds of other objects—to the Metropolitan Museum.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Woman, Probably a Member of the Van Berestejn Family, 1632
Oil on canvas
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O. Havemeyer Collection,
Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 29.100.4

When Rembrandt arrived in Amsterdam, Hendrick Uyenburgh put him in charge of a large studio that probably had several assistants in place. The young artist was unaccustomed to organizing such a work force, resulting in this painting's awkwardness. Particularly disturbing is the clumsy foreshortening of the sitter's right arm. X-rays and autoradiographs reveal even more problems. Originally, the woman's left arm hung lifelessly at her side. Rembrandt seems to have salvaged the painting by reconfiguring the area so her hand would rest on a table. Assessment of the overall disjointedness of the head, collar, and body is complicated by past cleaning, which has worn down the painting's surface, most obviously in the modeling of the face and hair on her right side.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of Marten Looten, 1632
Oil on wood panel
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of J. Paul Getty, 53.50.3

Marten Looten is among Rembrandt's earliest portraits of an identified sitter. Painted soon after the artist's arrival in Amsterdam, this work exemplifies Rembrandt's fresh approach to portraiture. He infused the successful grain merchant with palpable life. Looten has just opened a letter bearing his name, and his intense gaze and slightly parted lips suggest interrupted movement.

As with the other large portraits made when he was establishing his reputation in Amsterdam, Rembrandt took great care in his painting of Looten. Yet, he did not belabor it. Some passages he left very thinly painted or only cursorily described. There is no detail in the ear to distract us from the subject's gaze.

Rembrandt had difficulty settling on the contours of the figure. X-rays reveal adjustments to the sitter's right index finger, the hat, and the outline of the mantle. Rembrandt took the unusual step of painting over the background a second time to conceal his missteps.

Oil tycoon J. Paul Getty donated this painting, the first Rembrandt on the West Coast, to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art prior to establishing his namesake museum.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Joris de Caulerij, 1632

Oil on canvas, mounted on wood panel

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Legion of Honor, Roscoe and Margaret Oakes Collection, 66.31

Joris de Caulerij, a militia musketeer, holds a muzzleloader in his right hand while a large sword, with only its hilt visible, hangs at his left hip from an elaborate, gold-tooled shoulder strap. Rembrandt intensely lit only portions of the sitter's face and shoulder and allowed a soft glow to emanate from behind him, but he kept much of De Caulerij in shadow. This innovation—a sitter emerging from the darkness into the light—adds both spatial depth and a sense of drama.

While the other men pictured in this gallery gesture elegantly to their chests, De Caulerij's arms form a more aggressive pose, emphasizing his military role.

Among Rembrandt paintings in American museums, this one is unusual for the number of times it changed hands between its importation in 1890 and donation in 1966. Its first American owner was Charles Yerkes, a corrupt schemer who at the time was trying to monopolize Chicago's streetcars. Yerkes later moved to New York and London, but the painting returned to Chicago via Belgium in 1924, to join the collection of George Rasmussen, founder of the National Tea Company. The following year Rasmussen's Lake Forest home—along with this painting—narrowly escaped destruction when fire swept through several outbuildings. After Rasmussen's death in 1936, Wall Street stockbroker Edwin Levinson bought the portrait. Upon his death, Levinson's daughters quickly sold the painting, which went to oilman Roscoe Oakes and his wife, Margaret, who became major benefactors of the San Francisco museums.

Attributed to Govaert Flinck
Dutch, 1615–60



Portrait of a Woman in Profile, 1636

Oil on wood panel

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Gift in memory of Mae Cadwell Rovensky, 1961.191

Once considered an autograph portrait of Rembrandt's wife, Saskia, this painting has since been attributed to Govaert Flinck, who trained with Rembrandt during the 1630s. The translucent shawl indicates a deft hand, but other details are unlike Rembrandt's work, including the porcelain-smooth treatment of the skin, the thin application of paint, the jeweled cross, and the red highlights in the skirt folds.

Flinck was one of Rembrandt's most accomplished pupils, who followed the master's style for over a decade. Eventually, he discarded Rembrandt's style in favor of superhuman baroque spectacles. Flinck won the job of providing a series of huge murals for Amsterdam's new town hall, but he died shortly thereafter.

Maisie Caldwell Manwaring Plant Hayward's second husband, Morton Plant, heir to a vast railroad fortune, gave her \$5,000,000 when they were married in 1914. His extravagance did not stop there. He built a stately townhouse in midtown Manhattan, later trading it to the Cartier jewelry company for \$100 and a fabulous pearl necklace. Maisie bought this picture during her marriage to William Hayward, a World War I hero and commander of the Harlem Hellfighters, an African American regiment. After Hayward's death, Maisie met John Rovensky, an enterprising banker who had taken control of American Car and Foundry. When Maisie died, Rovensky gave the painting to her hometown museum.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Man in a Red Doublet, 1633
Oil on wood panel
Private collection, New York

Rembrandt's Dutch sitters from the 1630s usually wore somber clothing. This unidentified sitter's bold red jacket and stark collar imply ceremonial military associations. The longer cut of one of his curls may be a lovelock, an effort to appear romantic. Rembrandt's command of light gives life to the skin, and the shadows at the upper left and along the bottom edge provide depth and energy.

David Loew, son of MGM's founder, gave up his own film production career to become an artist. Shortly after his own solo show of paintings in Los Angeles in 1953, he sold this painting to Fort Worth newspaper publisher, Amon Carter, who died within a year of the purchase. Carter's descendants put it up for auction in 1998, when two lenders to this exhibition, Alfred Bader and Otto Naumann, Ltd., bought it for resale. Las Vegas casino impresario Steve Wynn bought it for his Bellagio Gallery of Fine Arts. Wynn returned it to the auction block in 2001, when Dutch art dealer Robert Noortman bought it. Noortman then sold his business to Sotheby's and the man in red went with it. The painting returned to America when its current owner bought it in 2008.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of Anthonie Coopal, 1635
Oil on mahogany panel
Private collection, New York

Anthonie Coopal was related to Rembrandt through marriage: Coopal's brother married Rembrandt's sister-in-law. Opinion is divided on the painting's authorship. The format recalls Rembrandt's portraits of the 1630s. However, skeptics point to the lack of three-dimensional space, the stark shadow on the lace collar, the amount of black over white painting in the lace, the shape of the hands, and the straight, thick brushstrokes defining the face. This exhibition offers a rare opportunity to compare this work to many other paintings securely attributed to Rembrandt.

Nazi forces seized this painting from Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, from the Viennese branch of the family, in 1938. Allied forces recovered it and returned it to the baron's heirs in 1946. Through a Viennese art dealer who had immigrated to New York, they sold it to Baron and Baroness Charles Neuman de Vegvar, of Greenwich, Connecticut, in 1947. The painting stayed in the family for 60 years until it was sold to Otto Naumann, Ltd., and on to the present owner.

Rembrandt van Rijn and workshop
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Woman, 1635 or earlier
Oil on oak panel

The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Collection, 1944.90

The condition of a work of art strongly affects perception of its value. This has considerable condition problems. Past restorations solved some issues, but in a few cases, treatments obscured more than they revealed. As a result, the attribution has long been contested; the current condition has hindered the ability to see the picture properly and perhaps even resolve the debate.

The Cleveland Museum of Art has decided to learn from the present exhibition before carrying out any further restoration. Its conservators and curator are studying other paintings by Rembrandt and his studio, as well as surveying conservation treatments on other works. Eventually, the conservators will retreat this painting and reassess the attribution based on this research.

Elisabeth Severance Allen Prentiss, daughter of the secretary-treasurer of Standard Oil, bought this painting in 1919, eventually bequeathing it to the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Circle of Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Young Man with a Sword, c. 1633–45

Oil on canvas

North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 60.17.68

The earthy palette, strong contrasts, and varied brushwork all suggest Rembrandt's authorship. However, the signature and date at the upper right are a later addition. On closer inspection, the structure of the face is problematic, the lighting of the clothing is uneven, and incisions in the hair do little to imply three-dimensional form. These qualities point away from Rembrandt, but we are left with the question of whether this painting originated in his circle.

A key document in helping us to understand the painter's closeness to Rembrandt and the basis of the subject is a Rembrandt etching dated 1634. The composition of the painting derives from that of the etching. Rembrandt himself was not happy with his design, and after taking a few impressions, he cut the copper plate down to a bust. The extreme rarity of the larger composition suggests the painter must have been close to Rembrandt's immediate circle.

Under director Wilhelm Valentiner, one of the most authoritative voices in Rembrandt connoisseurship in the early 20th century, this painting was acquired as a Rembrandt by the fledgling North Carolina Museum of Art.

[image and captions, below]



Rembrandt van Rijn
Man with a Plumed Cap and Lowered Sabre, 1634
Etching, 1st state
British Museum, London



Rembrandt van Rijn
Man with a Plumed Cap and Lowered Sabre, 1634
Etching, 3rd state
British Museum, London

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Minerva in Her Study, 1635
Oil on canvas
Private collection, New York

This is a love letter from Rembrandt to his wife, Saskia. He cast her in the role of Minerva, the Roman goddess of war, wisdom, and the arts. The viewer has interrupted her studies, for which she put aside her martial attributes: the helmet, spear, and shield.

Although recognized as a Rembrandt in the mid-1920s, the work fell out of favor for decades. Subsequent research has reestablished its authenticity. Recent cleaning of this exceptionally well preserved painting brought to light the sumptuously textured and luminous garments.

Rembrandt loved to play cameo roles in his art, and here he pictured himself as the screaming, snake-haired, severed head of Medusa. Rembrandt may well have been aware that Caravaggio, his Italian forebear, also deeply committed the use of dramatic lighting, had earlier painted his self-portrait as Medusa.

New York businessman Jules Bache appears to have owned this painting around 1929. It probably then returned to Munich. From there its travels are uncertain, perhaps the Netherlands, Stockholm, and London. From 1975 to 1988 it was in Paris as part of the collection of Baron Marcel Biche (maker of Bic pens and an America's Cup yachtsman). The painting then went to Tokyo, when the Ishibashi Foundation, funded by the founder of the Bridgestone tire company, purchased it to hang in the Bridgestone Museum. In 2001, it came back to New York, where Otto Naumann, Ltd., offered it until the present owner bought it in 2008.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Self-Portrait with Shaded Eyes, 1634
Oil on wood panel
Private collection, New York

This painting was once considered the work of Rembrandt's assistant, Govaert Flinck (1615–60), but a photograph of the work taken around 1935 reveals how different the painting appeared at that time (see photo A). A later collector noticed that much of the tall hat was painted over an older surface and, thus, had the overpaint removed (see photo B). In 1995 further study revealed that the additions had been made in Rembrandt's studio over an authentic self-portrait. A subsequent owner removed all the alterations to uncover the underlying painting by Rembrandt. Not only have the clothes and hair changed dramatically, but also the arrangement of shadows across the face. Rembrandt may have instructed an assistant to revamp his portrait into a fantasy tronie to make it more marketable.

Here Rembrandt painted himself at a happy juncture in his life. His work in Hendrick Uylenburgh's studio had proved a great success, and that year he married Saskia.

Las Vegas casino operator Steve Wynn bought this painting in 2003 and resold it to the current owner five years later. Wynn has owned at least three of the paintings in this exhibition.

[images and captions below]



photo A 1935



photo B 1950

[Gallery 3]

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portraits of Reverend Johannes Elison and Maria Bockenolle, 1634
Oil on canvas
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, William K. Richardson Fund, 56.510, 56.511

These lively portraits demonstrate how Rembrandt varied his presentation to suit his clients' tastes and societal positions. Johannes Elison was a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Norwich, England. Rembrandt surrounded him with both printed books and manuscripts to underscore the preacher's erudition. Elison sits angled toward the viewer, resting his left hand on his chest, as if about to speak. His wife, Maria Bockenolle, is much more demure in gesture and gaze. Hers is clearly a supporting role. Her wide-brimmed hat over a small white cap was an English fashion she adopted; in Amsterdam such headgear was out of place and would have seemed mannish. Both are dressed in suitably somber attire, but the yards of fabric, knotted buttons, and fine smocking tell us these clothes are hardly modest. The couple's son was a wealthy merchant and probably ordered these paintings while his parents visited him in Amsterdam. As full-length portraits, they would have been unusually expensive. Only three full-length portrait pairs by Rembrandt are known to survive.

The marvelous black-in-black painting is seen here as if for the first time. A graying layer of varnish had obscured these canvases for decades, but they were cleaned immediately prior to this exhibition.

Rembrandt van Rijn and workshop
Dutch, 1606–69



An Old Lady with a Book, 1637

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Andrew W. Mellon Collection 1937.173

The black cap indicates this woman is a widow. Her spectacles reveal she is a close reader of the Bible she holds on her lap. The sitter does not look out at the viewer, unlike typical Rembrandt portraits in this period. Rather, she appears lost in thought, contemplating scripture. This complex, unsettling portrayal of inner reflection, as well as the painterly execution of the face and hands, point to Rembrandt's authorship. Some have suggested the less-fully realized areas, such as the costume, chair, and background, indicate collaboration with a studio assistant. The powerfully illusionistic book is an early example of the trompe-l'oeil (eye-fooling) illusionism that would engage Rembrandt more fully in the coming decade.

Banker Andrew Mellon bought this painting when he was Secretary of the Treasury. It was part of the enormous gift of art and money he donated to found the National Gallery of Art.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Study of an Elderly Woman in a White Cap, c. 1640
Oil on wood panel
Private collection, New York

Once believed to depict Rembrandt's companion, Geertje Dirckx, this painting is now considered a study of light, costume, and character. The freedom of the wet brushwork, particularly in the bonnet, exemplifies Rembrandt's deft touch. The face in shadow and the modest clothing suggest this panel was not a commissioned portrait, but more likely a portrayal of one of Rembrandt's domestic workers. The bonnet's flap has been turned back to reveal an oorijzer, a sturdy clip used to hold the cap in place.

Eldridge Johnson, co-founder of the Victor Talking Machine Company, America's leading producer of phonographs and records, was in possession of this painting by 1930. In 1971, his descendants sold it through a dealer to Fort Worth oilman and rancher Howard Walsh and his wife, Mary. The Walsh Family Art Trust sold it at auction in 2006, to the present owner.

Rembrandt van Rijn (?) and workshop
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Man Reading, c. 1648

Oil on canvas

The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Mass., no. 841

This enigmatic work has been variously attributed to Rembrandt, his student, Carel Fabritius (1622–54), and anonymous workshop artists. The unusual format makes it exceptionally difficult to judge whether the work is an idiosyncratic portrait or a tronie. Cast entirely in shadow, save for the carefully modeled hand, the sitter is softly illuminated by light reflecting off his book. That illumination is intellectual or spiritual as well as optical, for the sitter's place-marking fingers tell us how intensely he reads.

Sterling Clark, heir to the Singer Sewing Machine fortune, bought the painting in 1928 and in 1955 placed it in his newly founded museum, where it has hung in relative obscurity ever since.

Follower of Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Woman (Hendrickje Stoffels?), c. 1653
Oil on canvas
Collection of Isabel and Alfred Bader, Milwaukee

In 1649 Hendrickje Stoffels entered Rembrandt's household as a housekeeper. Soon thereafter she became his mistress and de facto wife, bearing him a daughter, serving as a model, acting as stepmother to Rembrandt's son Titus, and managing Rembrandt's business from 1660 until her death in 1663. While no definitive portrait of Hendrickje exists, many women in Rembrandt's late works have similar cheekbones and dark, almond-shaped eyes. Nevertheless, most scholars agree that a studio assistant made this work because of the stiff, crosshatched brushstrokes in the face and the ineffective use of the butt end of the brush to depict fur.

Norton Simon built a business empire after transforming Hunt's Foods into a household name. He became a voracious art collector, eventually taking over the Pasadena Art Museum and refashioning it as the Norton Simon Museum. When he and his wife, Lucille, divorced in 1970, this painting went to her. She died in 2000; two years later, the painting was auctioned. A consortium of dealers bought it and sold it to the Baders.

Follower of Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of an Old Man in a Cape, c. 1650–55

Oil on canvas

Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Gift of William A. Coolidge, 1985.101

Wearing a large, floppy beret and heavy cloak, the seated man looks past the viewer in quiet contemplation, his eyes cast in shadow. His introspection, combined with powerful lighting, echoes Rembrandt's depictions of aged men during the late 1650s. Considered a Rembrandt as late as 1969, the picture's broadly painted clothing, underdeveloped foreshadowing of the arm, and vacancy of personality suggest that the author was a follower of Rembrandt, imitating the master's distinctive style.

Workshop of Rembrandt van Rijn, possibly Ferdinand Bol
Dutch, 1616–80



Portrait of a Young Man in a Broad-brimmed Hat, 1643

Oil on canvas

Shelburne Museum, Vermont, Electra Havemeyer Webb Collection, 27.1.1-150

Despite the signature at the lower right, little in this painting indicates Rembrandt's hand. The distant expression; the flatness of the collar and ruffs; the smooth, satiny handling of the coat; and the precious, tentative gestures of the sitter's hands all point to Ferdinand Bol (1616–80), a skillful Rembrandt pupil. However, Bol had struck out on his own by the date inscribed in the lower right, suggesting another assistant in Rembrandt's studio made the work.

Purchased in the 1890s by New York sugar mogul Henry O. Havemeyer, this work hung with seven other Rembrandts in his home's "Rembrandt Room" (though some of these works have now lost their earlier attributions).

Circle or follower of Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Old Man Wearing a Red Hat, 1650
Oil on canvas
Baltimore Museum of Art, The Jacob Epstein Collection, 1951,1951.108

This work was considered a beautifully executed and authentic Rembrandt in the early 20th century, but awkward passages, especially the structure of the eyes, have led away from an attribution to the artist. The painting has practically fallen out of the Rembrandt literature in recent decades and has not appeared in a major American exhibition since 1930. Including the picture here raises questions about how our understanding of Rembrandt has evolved.

George Gould, son of robber baron Jay Gould, bought the painting in 1909; shortly after George's death in 1923, Jacob Epstein bought it. Epstein had built his Baltimore Bargain House into a giant wholesale distribution company and became a major philanthropist. His collection was one of the most important gifts ever received by the Baltimore Museum of Art.

[Gallery 4]

Follower of Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



The Death of Lucretia (?), c. mid-1640s
Oil on canvas
The Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of James E. Scripps, 89.44

Purchased in 1888 by newspaper publisher James Scripps, a founder of Detroit's art museum, this painting is among the works optimistically given to Rembrandt during the late 19th century. The rich palette, dramatic use of light, and incisions in wet paint contributed to this initial attribution to Rembrandt. However, in 1934 William Valentiner overturned the Rembrandt attribution. The stiff poses and lack of pathos depart from the emotional complexity so characteristic of Rembrandt's historical subjects.

The subject may be Lucretia, an ancient Roman noblewoman who committed suicide rather than risk dishonor to her family (see Rembrandt's painting of Lucretia in the next gallery). This identification has been questioned, however, because the bizarre costumes are more biblical than antique.

Workshop of Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



The Lamentation, c. 1645–50

Oil on canvas

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, the State Museum of Florida, Sarasota,
Bequest of John Ringling, SN252

Circus impresario John Ringling bought this puzzling painting in 1929. The figures vary quite a bit from one another and may even be executed by different artists under Rembrandt's direction. However, the painting's condition—including the thick varnish and partly sunken color—hampers a full assessment of the attribution, despite skillful passages, such as the cloth folds beneath Christ's hand. The artists followed Rembrandt's ambitious approach to storytelling, but elements such as the despondent girl leaning against the cross do not correspond with the biblical narrative.

Workshop of Rembrandt van Rijn, probably Constantijn Daniel van Renesse
Dutch, 1626–80



The Descent from the Cross, c. 1650/52

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Widener Collection, 1942.9.61

This painting has long puzzled scholars, because the composition recalls Rembrandt's work of the 1630s, while the broad application of paint relates more closely to his work of the 1650s. National Gallery curator Arthur Wheelock developed the theory that the painting was begun around the mid-1630s and then reworked around 1650, when it was also significantly cropped along the bottom and the left. Wheelock has proposed that these changes were probably made by Constantijn Daniel van Renesse, a pupil working under Rembrandt, perhaps in response to a commission or to make the picture smaller and more marketable. Since so few paintings by Renesse are known, the attribution remains tentative, but the striated folds, smooth planes of color, and splotches of light on the faces appear in Renesse's other paintings.

The composition relates to two prints from the 1630s, one based on Peter Paul Rubens's design and the other based on Rembrandt's. Perhaps Rembrandt initiated work on the painting in the '30s and abandoned it in favor of a different solution.

Horse racing legend Joseph Widener bought this painting with some of the vast wealth he inherited from his father. Shortly before his death, Widener gave it, along with some 2,000 other works of art, to help establish the National Gallery.

Left, an engraving by Rembrandt after Peter Paul Rubens;
right, an etching by Constantijn Daniel van Renesse after Rembrandt.



Follower of Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



An Elderly Man in Prayer, c. 1661 or later
Oil on canvas
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund, 1967.16

Soon after being purchased by the Cleveland Museum of Art, this painting engendered doubts about its authorship. Though the spiritual subject and rapid application of paint have a strong Rembrandt flavor, direct comparison to more certainly attributed paintings distances this picture from his work. Points of comparison include the hair, the facial structure, the garments' texture, and the buildup of paint forming the hands. One wonders if this picture will some day be linked to one of Rembrandt's students.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Philemon and Baucis, 1658
Oil on wood panel, transferred from panel
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Widener Collection, 1942.9.65

The story of Philemon and his wife, Baucis, comes from *Metamorphoses*, a narrative poem by the ancient Roman poet, Ovid. At the left, the old couple provides hospitality to two strangers who are actually the gods Jupiter and Mercury. Other households in the town had refused hospitality to the disguised deities, but this humble pair gives shelter and offers to slaughter their only goose. Jupiter halts the sacrifice with a simple gesture and reveals the gods' identities. While the mortals' generosity would eventually be rewarded, Rembrandt focuses attention on the luminous flash of realization within the darkness of the modest home. Rembrandt's contemporaries would have seen parallels to the biblical story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

Philemon and Baucis was the first autograph Rembrandt history painting to come to America. In 1893, the unscrupulous streetcar tycoon Charles Yerkes, bought the painting. After Yerkes's death, Otto Kahn, a highly respected aesthete banker and railroad builder, bought it. After a few years, Kahn sold it to Joseph Widener, the millionaire playboy cofounder of the National Gallery of Art.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Saint Bartholomew, 1657

Oil on canvas

The Putnam Foundation, Timken Museum of Art, San Diego, 51.001

According to medieval tradition, the apostle Bartholomew preached the Gospel in Asia and the Caucasus, where he was eventually beheaded. Here he leans forward, firmly grasping a knife, the instrument of his martyrdom. Rembrandt portrayed the saint as fully prepared for martyrdom. The brushwork varies between the loosely defined garments to the more sculptural execution of the apostle's craggy face. Rembrandt produced the knife with just two slashing brushstrokes.

Take the rare opportunity to compare this painting to another version of Saint Bartholomew by Rembrandt, which hangs nearby. That painting shows the martyr in a very different frame of mind, painted in a very different style. Rembrandt appears to have chosen his method of painting to suit the emotional content of each work.

The reclusive heiresses Amy and Anne Putnam (who had earlier been major donor to the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery), acquired the painting for their foundation, which became the Timken Museum of Art, the institution created to allow their paintings to be shown in isolation from contemporary art.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Saint Bartholomew, 1661
Oil on canvas
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 71.PA.15

Saint Bartholomew looks out, lost in contemplation of the consequences of his religious conviction. Expressive daubs of thick, unblended paint describe the figure's face and left hand, while thinly layered brushstrokes depict his clothing. Rembrandt worked from a model, rather than a classical ideal, characterizing the saint's humility and fallibility, even revealing a note of doubt.

Compare this painting to Rembrandt's earlier rendition of Saint Bartholomew, which hangs nearby. The emotional content and technique of the two pictures are strikingly different. In making this painting much more an interior drama, Rembrandt shifted the emphasis from the martyr to the man. In the other painting, he emphasized the knife, while in this painting he drew attention to the weathered skin.

Attributed to Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Man in a Red Cap (an evangelist?), c. 1660–62
Oil on canvas
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 2113

Is this work a portrait, a religious subject, or even a tronie? Rembrandt's late paintings often blur the boundaries. Here, the figure's identity is especially difficult to determine because nothing is known about the painting's early history, nor do the books or clothing point to a specific historical figure or profession. As a result, the man has been called an evangelist, an accountant, and a magistrate, but he also may be sitting for a portrait wearing historical clothing.

The thickly applied paint has suffered from abrasion and compression. Because the artist's hand has been so compromised, recent attribution debates—with strong opinions for and against Rembrandt—cannot easily be resolved.

This painting is the only one in the exhibition that has permanently returned to Europe after having been in American collections. Its first American owner, linseed oil baron P. C. Hanford, suffered financial reversals and committed suicide in 1894. A later owner, Charles Schwab, head of Bethlehem Steel, squandered most of his fortune and lost the rest in the Great Depression. The painting had probably hung in "Riverside," his 75-room mansion, which Andrew Carnegie said made his own home look like a shack.

[Gallery 5]

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Self-Portrait, 1659

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Andrew W. Mellon Collection, 1937.1.72

Rembrandt made many self-portraits in his later years, sometimes casting himself as a historical character. Most compelling of all, however, are those studies in which he simply portrays himself as a man—confident, aged but unbent, unencumbered by worldly ambition.

Of course, all Rembrandt's self-portraits reveal only what he wanted viewers to see; yet these direct gazes into the mirror are convincing self-examinations that reveal a complex range of human emotion. In this picture, Rembrandt stares down at the viewer, embodying regret but not despair, a world of memories and self-knowledge, a compulsion to communicate, and a trademark combination of impulsiveness and perfectionism.

This is one of three paintings in the exhibition that belonged to Andrew Mellon, a prime mover in the creation of the National Gallery of Art.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Man with Arms Akimbo, 1658
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Otto Naumann, Ltd., New York

In the 19th century, this magnificent painting was known as *The Dutch Admiral*. Twentieth-century scholars found no evidence for the identification and assigned it a generically descriptive title, *Portrait of a Man with Arms Akimbo*. That gave rise to further questioning. Is it a portrait at all? Could it be a *tronie*? Some observers have recently noted that the man's broad sash is of a type commonly worn by 17th-century ship captains, thus suggesting a return to the 19th-century viewpoint.

This picture speaks to the ongoing opportunities for collectors of Rembrandt paintings. It has long been in America but has rarely been on public view. Huntington Hartford, the art-loving, eccentric heir to the A&P supermarket fortune, bought the painting in 1939. He gave it to Columbia University with the intent that it be sold to help fund medical research. Instead Columbia personnel hung it in the university president's office, until Vietnam-era student sit-ins gave rise to fears for its safety. Columbia sold it in 1974 to Seward Johnson, son of the founder of Johnson & Johnson. Johnson's third wife, Barbara Piasecka, a former chambermaid 42 years his junior, inherited the picture in 1983 and sold it at auction in 2009. Las Vegas mogul Steve Wynn bought the painting, had it cleaned of its disfiguring old varnish, and resold it to the current owners. For a price, it can be yours.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Lucretia, 1666
Oil on canvas
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, The William Hood Dunwoody Fund, 34.19

In a tragic event from Roman history, Lucretia, the virtuous wife of a nobleman, commits suicide to dispel all notion that her encounter with Tarquin, son of the tyrannical king, was anything but rape. Rembrandt shows the blood saturating her gauzy undergarment as she pulls the bell cord to summon her family. The expression of profound despair betrays not the slightest bit of melodramatic excess. Rembrandt painted his heart out in this picture. Lucretia's suffering in the face of unjust power parallels the abuse that his beloved Hendrickje endured before the church council. He painted the picture with such speed and certainty that he probably completed it in a single day. His technique looks back directly to that of his Renaissance idol, Titian. In Titan's Venice an unmarried woman could live with dignity as a courtesan, but Hendrickje had been condemned as a whore.

Herschel Jones, publisher of the Minneapolis Journal, bought the painting in 1927, about a year before his death. His widow, Lydia, sold it the MIA in 1934. Jones never had the titanic wealth of many Rembrandt collectors, but he was an avid collector of books and prints. He and his family also gave the MIA the core of its remarkable collection of prints.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of Titus, the Artist's Son, 1660
Oil on canvas
Baltimore Museum of Art, The Mary Frick Jacobs Collection, 1938.206

Rembrandt's only child to survive into adulthood, Titus died one year before his father. Along with Rembrandt's mistress, Hendrickje, Titus assumed control of his father's business in 1660.

This painting has not been widely exhibited since the 1960s, and few have seen it since conservation treatments in 1992 and 1997 removed overpaint and thick varnish that once obscured much of the original brushwork. Against many dissenters, Baltimore Museum of Art retains an attribution to Rembrandt. This exhibition opens up the first major reconsideration of the work's authorship in decades. Whether the thumb's visible corrections are by Rembrandt or by another artist has yet to be determined, but the figure's relaxed pose and amused expression suggest familiarity between painter and subject.

Texas banker and railroad tycoon James Stillman bought this painting shortly before his death in 1918. Stillman's son, Charles, placed it on indefinite loan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Nine years later the painting was auctioned off and wound up in the hands of Baltimore's grand dame, Mary Sloan Frick Garret Jacobs.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Young Man Seated at a Table (possibly Govaert Flinck), c. 1660

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Andrew W. Mellon Collection, 1937.1.77

The tousled hair, untied shirt tassels, and open collar reveal a deliberate carelessness. This demeanor, according to one conduct book of 1657, was preferable to one of “too much preciseness and neatness.” Short, loosely blended brushstrokes in the face and subtle highlights around the eyes heighten the sitter’s liveliness. The pose—with torso turned and one arm akimbo—recalls the immediacy of Rembrandt’s portraits of earlier decades. The sitter may be Govaert Flinck, Rembrandt’s former student and assistant who built his own spectacular career and died in 1660.

Today, venture capitalists call to mind Silicon Valley and lavish lifestyles of the 1970s. In Andrew Mellon’s time it was the Ohio River Valley, and the coke was fuel. This painting was part of his enormous gift that founded the National Gallery.

Workshop of Rembrandt van Rijn (?)
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Man, c. 1655–60

Oil on canvas

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the Hanna Fund, 1950.252

The Cleveland Museum of Art purchased this work as an autograph Rembrandt in 1950, confidently asserting the sitter was a Jewish scholar, perhaps even the 17th-century Dutch Sephardic philosopher, Baruch Spinoza. By the 1960s few maintained the Rembrandt attribution, and by the 1990s the sitter's Jewish identity had also fallen away. The painting has not been in a major exhibition in decades, and relatively few scholars have studied the portrait carefully. Including it here allows for a new assessment of the attribution.

Banker, railroad developer, and aesthete, Otto Kahn, bought this picture in 1910. Forty years later, his children gave it to the Metropolitan Opera, of which Otto had been chairman. Within a year, Cleveland bought it.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Young Man, 1666

Oil on canvas

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, Purchase Nelson Trust, 31-75

By the 1660s Rembrandt had departed from the precision of his earlier portraits and moved toward a rougher style—layered and broadly executed. This mode diverged sharply from the smooth, taut, and elegant manner that dominated Dutch portraiture at the time. Little is known about Rembrandt’s patrons during his final decade, but the number of portraits shows that he was still in demand, contrary to a persistent notion that he was isolated and out of step with contemporary tastes.

Publisher of the Kansas City Star, William Rockhill Nelson had moved to town when the place was still raw and ugly. He vigorously campaigned for civic improvements, including an art museum. His heirs eventually put his estate to that use, and this splendid painting was purchased while the museum was under construction.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–69



Man in a Fur-Lined Coat, c. 1655–60
Oil on canvas
The Toledo Museum of Art, Clarence Brown Fund, 1977.50

The subject matter of many late paintings by Rembrandt remains under debate. Far from contemporary Amsterdam fashion, this man's fur-lined coat, red garment, and embroidered collar may signify an Old Testament persona. Or the unconventional clothing may indicate a portrait in the guise of a historical figure—the most widely embraced interpretation. In any case, this portrait of a man looks upon his viewers with suspicion.

Railroad builder James Ross bought the painting in the 1890s. Ross gave large amounts of money to the Montreal Art Association and helped it build the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, but his heirs auctioned the painting in London. The canvas crossed the ocean again, when Boston automobile dealer turned Massachusetts Governor, Alvan T. Fuller, bought it—shortly after he oversaw the notorious Sacco and Vanzetti executions of 1927. Long after his own death, Fuller's charitable foundation sold the painting to Toledo.

Rembrandt van Rijn (?)
Dutch, 1606–69



Portrait of a Young Man in an Armchair, c. 1660–65

Oil on canvas

Memorial Art Gallery, George Eastman Collection of the University of Rochester, N.Y., 68.98

The traditional attribution to Rembrandt has been criticized, but this painting is difficult to evaluate because of its condition. The hands, for example, have been stripped back to the underlayers, their original subtlety and complexity lost through previous cleanings. The sitter's relaxed pose, along with the broad and vibrant brushstrokes, invests him with life. The young man gazes out fixedly with parted lips, as if about to speak.

In 1890, George Eastman, the inventor of the first ready-to-use point-and-shoot camera and founder of Eastman Kodak Company, visited Holland and fell in love with the country as he rode through the tulip fields. In 1911, the year he acquired this portrait, he organized a vast tulip display in his Rochester greenhouses.