



Rembrandt *Hoogstraten*

COLOUR AND ILLUSION

Edited by Sabine Pénot

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HANNIBAL

*For if I am deceived, I am.
For he who is not, cannot be deceived;
and if I am deceived,
by this same token I am.*

Wolfgang Kemp after St Augustine of Hippo





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Foreword

Samuel van Hoogstraten began his training in Rembrandt's studio in Amsterdam at the age of 15. The exhibition *Rembrandt – Hoogstraten. Colour and Illusion* and the present accompanying volume show the two painters in dialogue, with Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn being seen from the perspective of his pupil, in his rear-view mirror, one might say. Numerous autonomous works by Van Hoogstraten combine with the reflections on the practices, teaching methods, and art theory prevalent in the master's studio contained in Van Hoogstraten's famous *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst: anders de zichtbaere werelt (Introduction to the Academy of Painting; or, The Visible World)* to give us a refreshingly novel view of an ostensibly long familiar subject. Conversely, the same is true with regard to perspective painting: in this context, when the two are compared with an informed or indeed simply intuitive eye, the younger, less art-historically prominent artist turns out to be the livelier and more significant one.

The focus of our major autumn 2024 exhibition is on illusionistic motifs and on the technical and

intellectual means that were required for a mastery of the genre of illusionism in a wide range of variants. Free of ideological restrictions, Van Hoogstraten changed his style with ease a number of times, developing it and adapting it to circumstances. This indicates that he was an artist with a rich sense of humour, which however went far beyond humorous motifs or surprising details. That he repeatedly varied the means at his disposal attests to his sure mastery of painting technique, which he very largely acquired during the first-rate and far-sighted training he received in Rembrandt's studio.

The Vienna exhibition shows Van Hoogstraten's work interlaced with that of Rembrandt – almost half of the works exhibited are by the great master, including masterpieces on loan from Madrid, Berlin, Dublin, Edinburgh, Stockholm, London, and Warsaw. In combination with works from our own Rembrandt holdings, not least the *Large Self-Portrait* dated 1652, the loans have enabled us to achieve a well-balanced presentation of the two artists' respective oeuvres. While the importance of

Rembrandt is in every respect confirmed, it is also well complemented by the recognition accorded to the special achievement of his pupil.

The findings resulting from scientific analysis by conservators in preparation for the exhibition have resulted in new attributions that we are now able to publish. One Rembrandt from our own holdings that has been regarded as such only on the strength of tradition can now be securely presented as *Titus van Rijn, the Artist's Son, Reading*, and we have dispelled the long-standing and justifiable doubts as to whether the *Small Self-Portrait* is really a work from the master's hand. The list of such advances could be extended much further – yet another reason for reading the present lavishly produced catalogue all the more attentively.

The exhibition that will subsequently be mounted in Amsterdam will focus entirely on Van Hoogstraten, and will indeed be the first ever exhibition to be devoted exclusively to his work. Among the paintings to be shown in Amsterdam are two of the artist's principal works held by the Picture Gallery of the Kunst-historisches Museum Vienna: *Old Man at a Window* and *Inner Courtyard of the Vienna Hofburg in a Feigned Picture Frame*.

Research results from both exhibitions are being incorporated into the first ever *catalogue raisonné* of the oeuvre of Van Hoogstraten, which is at present being compiled with the assistance of an international team of experts in a project initiated by the Rembrandthuis in Amsterdam in cooperation with the RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History. Another of our esteemed partners is the Dordrechts Museum in Van Hoogstraten's home town of Dordrecht; the museum boasts the world's largest collection of the artist's works, seven of which are being loaned for the exhibition. Finally,

mention must be made of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, where research has been conducted into the still largely mysterious relations between Van Hoogstraten and the Jesuits in the Vienna of his time.

In recent years, a reconfiguration of this field of scholarship has been taking place, following the death of Ernst van de Wetering, who as the long-standing director of the Rembrandt Research Project (RRP) was for many decades *the* authority in Rembrandt research. With the present meticulously organized and both academically and visually convincing exhibition, Sabine Pénot, Curator for Dutch Painting of the Picture Gallery of the Kunst-historisches Museum, has made an important contribution to Rembrandt scholarship. This is a source of particular pleasure to me and it is my wish that it will encourage all scholars active at museums never to lose sight of the importance of object-based research. I offer you my warmest thanks, dear Sabine, for your commitment to this project, which I am sure will be followed by further milestone undertakings in the tried-and-tested team format that we value so highly.

In this exhibition as so often before, the Kunst-historisches Museum has set great store by contemporary forms of communication. In an innovative exhibition design that takes full consideration of the various pictorial formats, one can admire the roughly sixty paintings, drawings, and prints with the help of a wide variety of media options. I wish all our visitors great pleasure and a wealth of inspiring discoveries in this fascinating juxtaposition of works by Rembrandt and his highly talented pupil.

Sabine Haag
Director General

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all colleagues involved. Special mention must be made of the lending institutions that have entrusted us with an impressive number of masterpieces. Our cooperation partner, the Rembrandthuis with the curators David de Witt and Leonore van Sloten, made a significant contribution to the success of the project – I am very grateful to them for our wonderful collaboration.

I would like to thank the international Rembrandt experts for the fruitful exchange on the paintings, especially on the Rembrandt collection held at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna. The Conservation Department of the Picture Gallery (head: Elke Oberthaler; conservators: Eva Götz, Ina Slama) and the Scientific Laboratory (head: Martina Griesser with Nikoletta Sarfi, Sabine Stanek, and Katharina Uhlir) of the Kunsthistorisches Museum have made a significant contribution to the research of the works by restoring five paintings (figs. 20, 21, 88, 89, 120) and analysing the museum's own holdings. The technological analyses of the paintings were carried out in the most fruitful interdisciplinary collaboration with John Delaney and Kathryn Dooley (National Gallery of Art, Washington) as well as with Koen Janssens, Frederik Vanmeert, and Steven De Meyer (University of Antwerp).

I want to express my gratitude to the authors of this book for their profound contributions. I would like to thank Rafael Kopper for his commitment to the publication, Annette Van der Vyver and John Nicholson for their meticulous copy-editing of the texts, and our translators, Ted Alkins, Susanne H. Karau, Sophie Kidd, and Sigrid Kullmann for their excellent work. Stefan Zeisler and his team are to

thank for the stunning appearance of this catalogue: Michaela Noll for the splendid and sensitive layout; Michael Eder, Thomas Ritter, and Jakob Gsöllpointner for the image editing; Andreas Uldrich for his photographic documentation of the restorations of the paintings from the Kunsthistorisches Museum's collection.

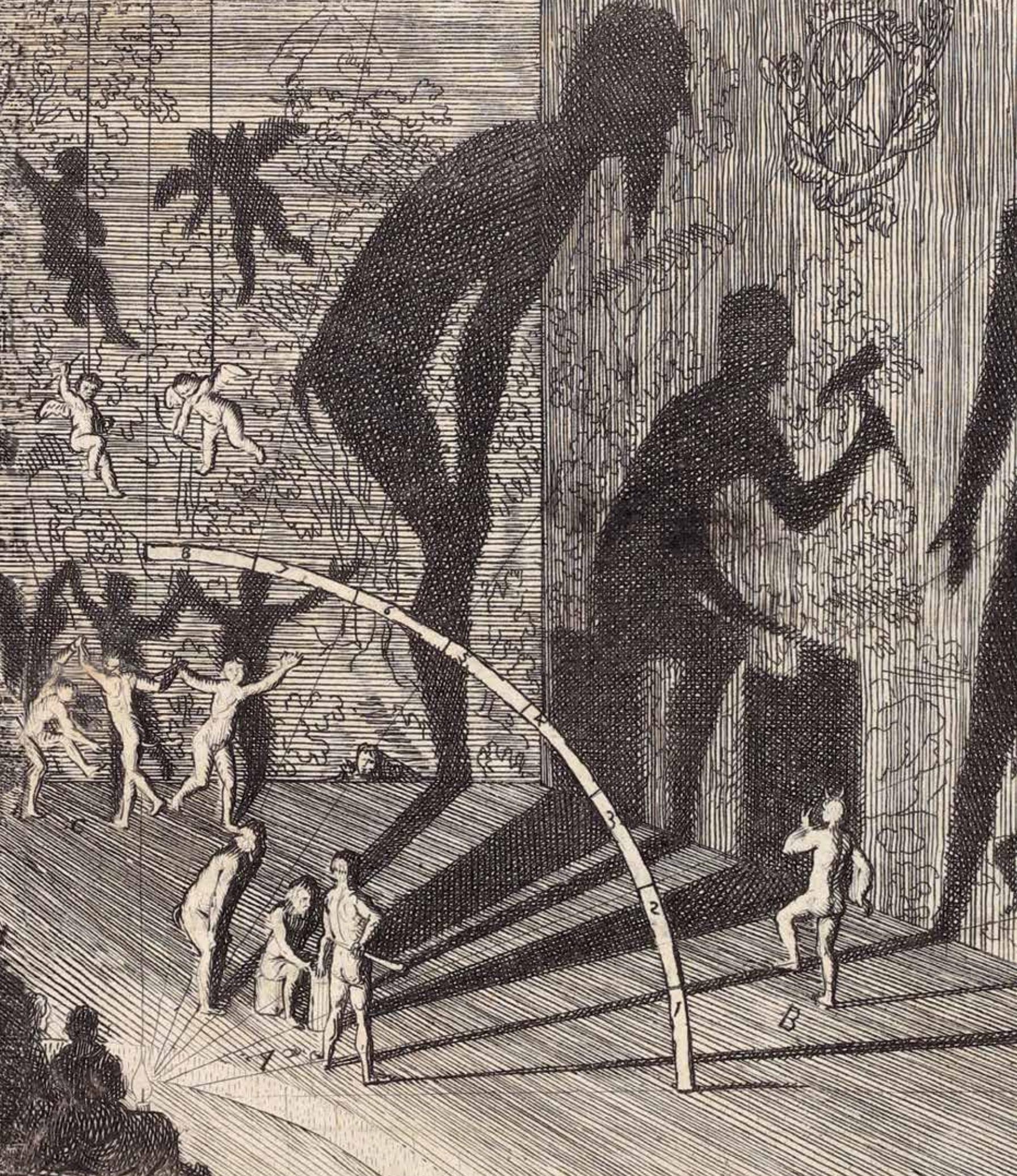
I would like to thank Christine Surtmann for her support during the early stages of the project, Sonja Kocian for her support in working with the conservation studio, and Tina Seyfried for obtaining the image rights. I thank Daniel Uchtmann and his colleagues from the education department, Selin Stütz-Staudinger, Claudia Hogl, and Magdalena Ölzant, for their excellent collaboration on the exhibition didactics. Nikolaus Keusch and Esther Winterer were responsible for the efficient exhibition management, the architects Serenella Zoppolat and Tilo Perkmann for the wonderful exhibition architecture, Anja Gasser for the graphic design. I would like to thank Helen Farnik for the effective lighting of the exhibition.

My special thanks go to Codart and their unique network of curators. The director of the Picture Gallery of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Peter Kerber, has been extremely supportive of the project. The curatorial assistant of the exhibition project, Angelina Illes, has done an outstanding job. I would like to thank Sabine Haag for her support and the trust she has placed in me over the years.

I would also like to thank my family for their patience and understanding.

Sabine Pénot





Rembrandt – Hoogstraten.

Colour and Illusion: An Introduction

Deception can become a proof of existence. While often credited to René Descartes, this realization in fact long predates him. As Wolfgang Kemp has pointed out, it was Augustine who was the first to note: ‘For if I am deceived, I am. For he who is not, cannot be deceived; and if I am deceived, by this same token I am.’¹

In the present volume, Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (fig. 1) and his work are explored from the perspective of his most important and exceptionally innovative pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten (see fig. 25). In 1678, near the end of his life, Van Hoogstraten published his opus magnum, the *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst: anders de zichtbaere werelt (Introduction to the Academy of Painting; or, The Visible World)*, one of the most ambitious treatises on painting published in the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century (fig. 2). There he reflects upon his time in Rembrandt’s studio, giving us unique insights into the great master’s work, his workshop practice, training methods, and approaches to art theory. This extraordinary connection between the two artists

occupies a permanent place in the Rembrandt literature. In the early 1990s, Ernst van de Wetering began to interpret the *Inleyding* as a source for understanding Rembrandt’s art.²

Van Hoogstraten’s multi-faceted oeuvre attests to the influences of his teacher Rembrandt, but also to his competitive spirit and the independent paths taken by his talented pupil. For his part, Rembrandt reacted to impulses supplied by his pupil Van Hoogstraten. The concept of *aemulatio* or contest between artists is fundamental to seventeenth-century Dutch art. A native of Dordrecht, Van Hoogstraten, who was always out to compete with his contemporaries,³ would probably have relished the idea of being measured retrospectively against his erstwhile master.

From the multiplicity of possible themes relating to the two artists, the chosen focus will highlight two essential aspects of their oeuvre: colour and illusion. These determine the choice of works and the focus of the essays. The selected paintings simultaneously afford a comprehensive overview of the creative oeuvre of both artists and offers the



opportunity of presenting the holdings of Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten in the Kunsthistorisches Museum side by side in a single exhibition, and to contrast and compare them in the present publication.

The ‘power of colour’ in Rembrandt’s oeuvre merits special attention. In the early eighteenth century, De Laire points to the popularity of Rembrandt, an artist he commends ‘in regard to both his naturalness and his force of projection [that is, the ability to bring things forward out of the picture plane]’. Some people might therefore wonder: ‘Was there ever a Painter who came so close to nature in the power of colour (*kracht van coloriet*), by his fine light ... And is this not enough to entice the whole world?’⁴

The deceptively convincing rendering of reality has been regarded as a desirable aspiration of painting since the ancient legend of the rival artists Zeuxis and Parrhasius. From the 1630s, the art of illusionism was especially prized in painting from the Dutch Republic, especially with regard to the

blurred divide between the pictorial space and that of the viewer. This phenomenon culminates in the paintings produced by Netherlandish artists in the following decades, with Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten as its most prominent representatives. Both artists had a keen interest in the natural sciences that finds expression in their works and plays a central role in the *Inleyding*: ‘The art of painting is a science for depicting all the ideas or mental images, which the entirety of visible nature can provide, and for deceiving the eye with outline and color.’⁵

Not least the most astonishing and fascinating aspect in all this is that both Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten took illusion to such extremes that they moved away from the formal conventions of presentation, treating certain paintings as illusionistic objects (see **fig. 3**). Sometimes they dispensed with a conventional frame, taking precise account of where the picture was intended to hang. In addition, the creation of illusion ideally aimed at stimulating as many of the viewer’s senses as

1

Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait Wearing a Hat and Two Chains*, 1642/43, panel, 72 × 54.8 cm. Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, inv. 331 (1976.90)

2

Hoogstraten, title page of the *Inleyding*, c.1678, print, 190 × 145 mm. Amsterdam, Museum Rembrandthuis, inv. ND1130.H65



3

Hoogstraten, *Feigned Letter-Rack Painting* (detail from fig. 72), 1666/78, canvas, 63 × 79 cm. Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, inv. 2620

possible.⁶ This led to the making of three-dimensional images, suggesting – or even creating (see fig. 119) – specific effects of movement and sound.

The seventeenth-century fascination with illusion is not without parallel in our own times and would seem to be a timeless phenomenon. Thus, when contemplating an ‘eye-deceiving still life’ (see figs. 11, 72) today we still have the rarefied feeling of having a similar experience as the individuals for whom they were originally intended – like none other than Emperor Ferdinand III. Today the experiential-critical intellect is awake to the commonplace nature of sense deception. Especially at a time in which virtual reality and AI-generated worlds of imagery are becoming ever more ubiquitous, the encounter with the seventeenth-century originals that – even though inspired by technical achievements – were created wholly by the human hand is more fascinating than ever before.

Wolfgang Kemp’s recent publication entitled *Die ehrbaren Täuscher. Rembrandt und Descartes im Jahr 1641* [The Honourable Deceivers: Rembrandt and Descartes in the Year 1641] has demonstrated the topicality of the themes explored here.⁷ The cover of his book, which deals with the subject of illusion in the work of Rembrandt and Descartes with a focus on hypermimetic motifs in seventeenth-century Dutch painting, shows Rembrandt’s *Girl in a Picture Frame* (see fig. 79), which we have also chosen for the cover of the present catalogue.

QUESTIONS OF ATTRIBUTION

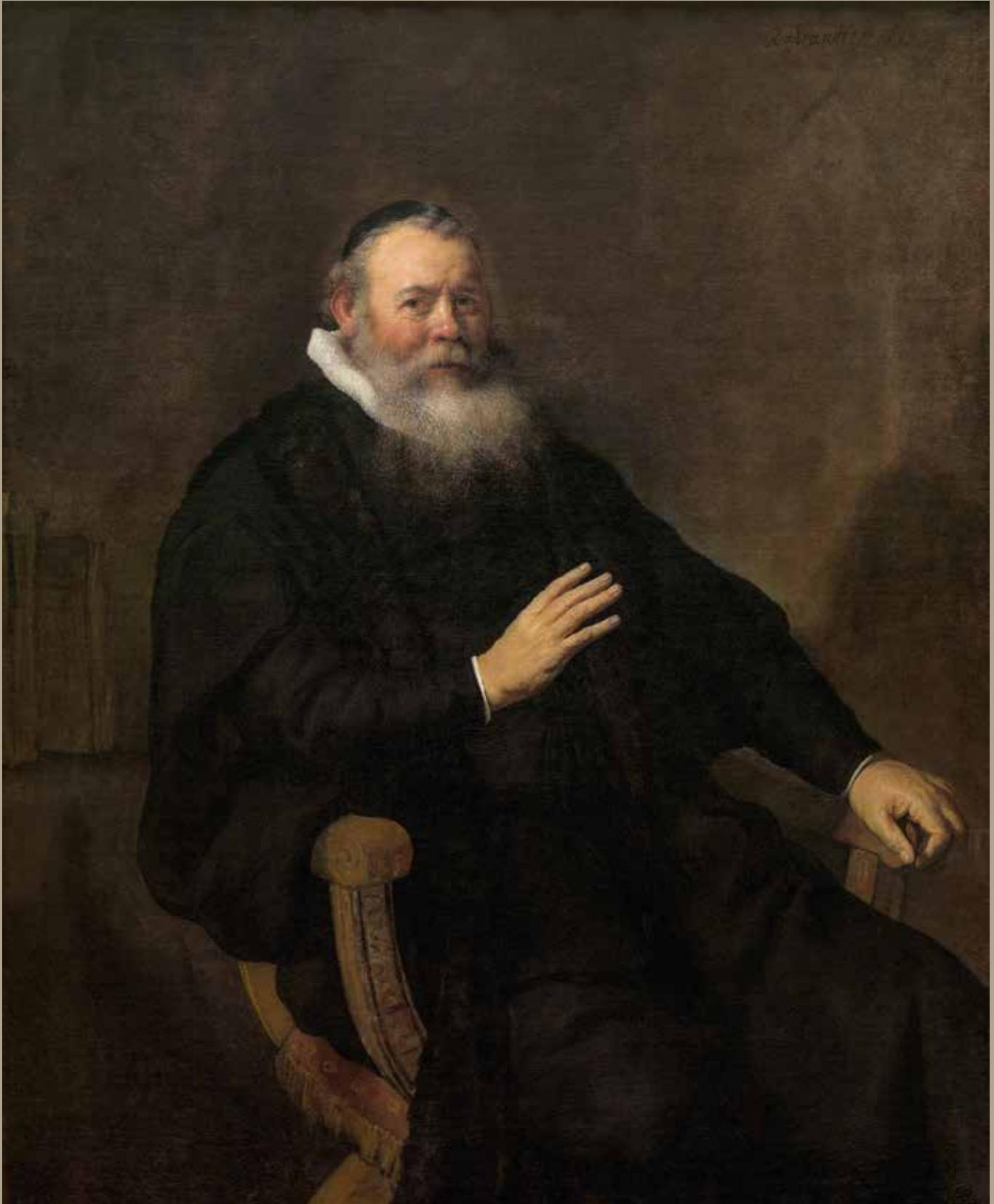
What constitutes a work by Rembrandt today, ten years after publication of the final volume of Ernst van de Wetering’s *Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*? Like every Rembrandt collection, that of Vienna’s Kunsthistorisches Museum has been subject to fluctuating attributions over the course of time. In preparation for the present exhibition, the works attributed to Rembrandt in the Picture Gallery have been analysed with state-of-the-art technology. These investigative procedures on the paintings are the result of interdisciplinary collaboration: colleagues from the University of Antwerp and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, were enlisted

for highly specialized analyses,⁸ and a new evaluation of the attributions and datings was conducted in exchange with internationally renowned Rembrandt experts. Paintings by Samuel van Hoogstraten were also investigated with the aim of achieving a better understanding of the commonalities and differences in painting technique.

The restoration of the pendant portraits of a married couple (see figs. 88, 89), the *Prophetess Anna* (see fig. 20), and the so-called *Small Self-Portrait* (see fig. 21)⁹ yielded new findings in respect of their attribution. Revised attributions and new datings have been included in the present volume. This is particularly pertinent in the case of the *Portrait of a Woman* (see fig. 89) from the pair of portraits of a married couple, here presented as a work by Rembrandt and his studio,¹⁰ and the *Prophetess Anna*, published in this volume as a work by Rembrandt with reworkings by his studio.¹¹ The X-ray and infrared images clarify a complex creative process in various stages, revealing early changes in the composition.

Of particular interest for our chosen focus are the illusionistic effects in the above-mentioned portraits of a married couple, effects that can be compared to those in the *Portrait of Joris de Caullery* (fig. 4) and the *Portrait of a Clergyman* (fig. 5). Rembrandt’s *Titus van Rijn, the Artist’s Son, Reading* (see fig. 19), classified by Van de Wetering as a study in light,¹² is a telling example of the decisive impact of lighting on the plasticity of the rendering. Equally effective is the use of light in the *Prophetess Anna*. The light concentrates the viewer’s attention on the red-rimmed eyes of the elderly prophetess with her slightly open, sunken mouth. The incidence of light captures the decisive moment when this otherwise decontextualized figure recognizes the infant Redeemer. The fine painterly quality of the face, the psychological moment, and the impactful lighting all speak in favour of an attribution to Rembrandt. The identity of the painter who carried out the final reworking of the composition is the subject of current research. The painting is contrasted with the *Half-Length Portrait of a Man in Oriental Costume* (fig. 6),







4

Rembrandt, *Portrait of Joris de Caullery*, 1632, canvas mounted on panel, 102.9 × 84.3 cm. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, inv. 66.31

5

Rembrandt, *Portrait of a Clergyman*, 1637, canvas, 132 × 109 cm. Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts – Flemish Art Collection, inv. 705

6

Rembrandt, *Portrait of a Man in Oriental Costume*, 1633, panel, 85.8 × 63.8 cm. Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen – Alte Pinakothek, inv. 421

a powerful demonstration of Rembrandt's manner of painting. As a *tronie* of an oriental man in life size, the subject, very popular in seventeenth-century Holland, offered the opportunity of depicting precious foreign apparel and exotic-looking jewellery.

THE EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

The endeavours made by Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten to achieve the ideal of rendering nature as deceptively realistic as possible, and thus create a convincing illusion, constitutes the common thread running through the essays in this volume. They also seek to explain the fascination with illusion and the spirit of the times – which is occasionally humorous in its intent – and demonstrate their relevance for our own day. The aim is to reveal the experimental character of these two artists' works and the illusionistic artistic devices that they employed.

The catalogue begins with a timeline compiled by Angelina Illes that marks the most important events in the lives and creative oeuvre of Rembrandt and Samuel van Hoogstraten, providing insights into the very different careers of our two protagonists. The essays and excursions that follow explore the exhibition's themes and re-evaluate the links between the two artists on the basis of recent scholarship.

My essay focuses on the history of collecting, examining the esteem in which Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten were held in the Habsburg patrimonial lands and collections over the course of the centuries.

Volker Manuth examines the function of self-portraits in the oeuvre of both artists, elaborating correspondences in terms of form and content, as well as differing intentions. Whereas the experimental character and creative force stand out in Rembrandt's self-portraits, which are representative examples of his painting style, Van Hoogstraten is increasingly intent on propagating his erudition and social ascent as painter and writer.

Jonathan Bikker explores the question of whether Van Hoogstraten can ever have regretted having studied under Rembrandt. He demonstrates that

Van Hoogstraten's *Inleyding* – as an instructive aid for aspiring artists – offers a relatively detailed assessment of Rembrandt's style and unique insights into his teaching methods. Van Hoogstraten names Rembrandt more frequently than any other Netherlandish artist, but not without criticizing him on occasion.

In an excursus on history painting Volker Manuth compares the approach of the two artists to *istoria*, the genre that occupied the highest position in the hierarchy of painting at the time. Rembrandt's original ambition was to become a history painter, whereas Van Hoogstraten used the genre in particular to display his skill and knowledge as a *pictor doctus*.

Celeste Brusati offers a concise and focused introduction to the complex of themes and structure of the *Inleyding*, underlining its continued topicality with regard to reflections on illusion. She also points out how the illusions created in painting could paradoxically be sources both of knowledge and of epistemic doubt.

David de Witt devotes his essay to the exploratory approach taken by both Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten. In their striving for the figurative creation of a deceptively real rendering of the 'visible world', they stake a claim to being universal artists. De Witt also demonstrates how Van Hoogstraten learned illusionistic devices from Rembrandt and successfully developed them.

Leonore van Sloten pursues the passion for illusion in the oeuvre of Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten. She explains Rembrandt's attempts at creating multisensory paintings, some of which even suggest speech to the viewer. Her essay also shows how Van Hoogstraten was adept at using the experience he gained in Rembrandt's studio in his own striving for perfect spatial illusion.

Marieke de Winkel demonstrates how Rembrandt made deliberate and effective use of accessories as devices for creating depth in his compositions, and in doing so questions the hitherto predominant opinion that they are to be understood as possessing a symbolic meaning. De Winkel also devotes an excursus to the use of jewellery and attributes in the oeuvre of Rembrandt and Van





7

Hoogstraten, *View of the North Transept of Westminster Abbey in London*, 1662/67, canvas, 156 × 110 cm. Dordrechts Museum, inv. DM/984/588

8

Hoogstraten, *The Doctor's Visit*, 1660/78, canvas, 69.5 × 55 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, on loan from the City of Amsterdam (A. van der Hoop Bequest), inv. SK-C-152

Hoogstraten against the background of the latter's instructions for their use in the *Inleyding*.

In his essay, Christian Tico Seifert focuses on Rembrandt's *Young Woman in Bed* (see fig. 104). His interpretation of the nude as the biblical figure of Sarah waiting for Tobias on their wedding night is based on convincing art historical analysis supported by conclusions drawn from scientific investigations and historical documents. Presenting a decontextualized protagonist, the painting was probably created by Rembrandt as an illusionistic object.

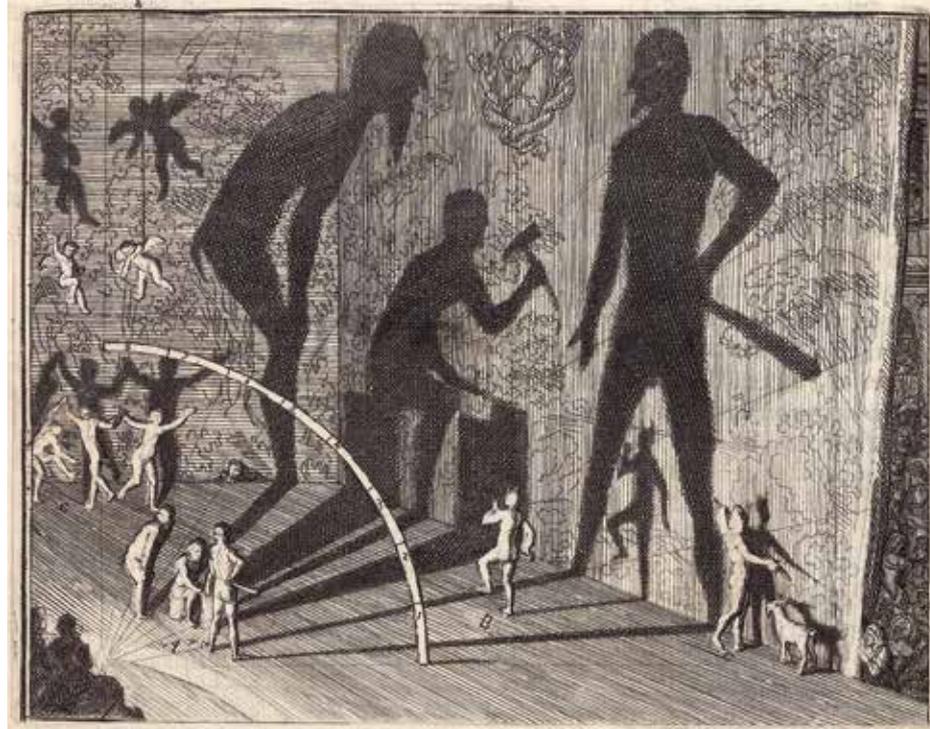
Taking as his starting point Van Hoogstraten's famous account of how he experimented with

the camera obscura at the Jesuits in Vienna, Paolo Sanvito explores the artist's experiences, connections, and contacts with Jesuit scholars, and in this context examines the progress made in the science of optics at the University of Vienna during Van Hoogstraten's stay in the city.

The catalogue concludes with two case studies on paintings by Van Hoogstraten held in Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum in the form of a collaborative essay. Erma Hermens examines the technical correspondences between the paintings of Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten, focusing especially on the priming layer. A sequence of images compiled by

9

Hoogstraten, 'Shadow Dance'
from the *Inleyding*, 1678, print,
98 × 127 mm. Vienna, MAK –
Museum of Applied Arts,
inv. BI 2967



the conservation studio of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in collaboration with Elke Oberthaler, Eva Götz, and Ina Slama presents the results of scientific analyses. These concern on the one hand the original aspect of colour in paintings by Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten, and on the other the structure of the application and structure of the paint layers in respect of the creation of illusionistic effects and the strategies deployed to stage light through intensification of colour.

TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION

As mentioned above, Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten have never before come 'face to face' with each other so directly, warranting a brief overview of the exhibition.

At first the roles are clearly assigned: Rembrandt has the distinct advantage of greater renown, Van Hoogstraten for his part the promising status of 'outsider'. Most people will come for Rembrandt,

but at the same time will discover Van Hoogstraten's art. To stand beside Rembrandt on equal terms is granted to very few artists. Nonetheless, we are confident that Van Hoogstraten will hold his own.

At the beginning we encounter our protagonists Rembrandt and Samuel van Hoogstraten in self-portraits created when Van Hoogstraten was apprenticed to Rembrandt. At the start of his career, Van Hoogstraten shows a clear stylistic affinity with Rembrandt. Here the multiple strands of the exhibition's theme are introduced – threads that are subsequently spun out to guide the visitor through the exhibition, beginning with the importance of the *Inleyding* as a source for understanding Rembrandt's art and Van Hoogstraten's contribution to his teacher's posthumous renown. Rembrandt's paradigmatic painting of *The Holy Family with a Curtain* (see fig. 78) introduces the theme of illusion. Praised by Van Hoogstraten, Rembrandt's gift of rendering emotion and its importance for history painting is explored in the

example of his *St John the Baptist Preaching* (see **fig. 43**), the only one of Rembrandt's paintings to be mentioned in the *Inleyding* by name apart from *The Night Watch* (see **fig. 45**).

The second gallery in the exhibition is devoted to the theme of liminal experience between the pictorial space and that of the viewer. Both Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten present immensely striking figures in scant spatial depth, creating through the eyes as 'windows to the soul' a subtle exchange of glances between viewer and subject. Never before have all of Rembrandt's paintings of this type been assembled in one exhibition. These fascinating illusionistic liminal experiences with depictions of individuals who positively burst the limits of the painted frame are counterposed with examples of what was to become Van Hoogstraten's trademark – the trompe-l'oeil letter-rack that transports the illusionistic subject into the genre of the still life.

The third room is devoted to the portrait in the oeuvres of Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten and also illustrates the eclecticism of Rembrandt's pupil with paintings from all kinds of genres. Still lifes, architectural compositions, mostly done during the time Van Hoogstraten spent in England (cf. **fig. 7**), genre paintings (cf. **fig. 8**), and allegories attest to the extraordinary range of his oeuvre, as well as to the international reach of his works even during his own lifetime, which extended as far as Sweden.

Accompanying the main path through the exhibition, a series of side-rooms offers enriching insights into additional themes such as perspective, colour, illusion, and light and space, as well as considerations of the original form in which the paintings were displayed. Insights into workshop practices as described in the *Inleyding* are compared to the results of scientific investigations undertaken on paintings by Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten.

The final gallery is devoted to history painting – the genre that, as noted above, occupied the highest position in the hierarchy of painting at the time. At the end of the exhibition Rembrandt and Van Hoogstraten meet again in the form of late self-portraits. The brunaille (see **fig. 31**) as preliminary

study for the self-portrait done for the *Inleyding*, which makes such an essential contribution to the posthumous fame of his master, brings the exhibition full circle.

An interactive space at the exhibition exit offers visitors the opportunity to experiment with the concept of perspective. A 3D reconstruction of Van Hoogstraten's *Perspective Box* (see **fig. 16**), an interactive projection of his 'Shadow Dance' (**fig. 9**), in which the visitor can actively participate, and a virtual hands-on letter-rack with objects from compositions by Van Hoogstraten and twenty-first-century objects build a bridge from the seventeenth century to our modern age.

- 1 Kemp 2023, 96–7; Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate Dei*, XI, 26: 'Si enim fallor, sum. Nam qui non est, utique nec falli potest; ac per hoc sum, si fallor.'
- 2 Van de Wetering 1991/92; Van de Wetering 2011, in particular 15–28.
- 3 Horn 2013b, 247–8.
- 4 See Weststeijn 2008, 227 and n. 79: the quotation comes from De Lairese 1740 (1707), I, 325.
- 5 Van Hoogstraten 1678 (2021), 79; Van Hoogstraten 1678, 24.
- 6 Kemp 2023, 118.
- 7 Kemp 2023.
- 8 Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna: Michael Eder, Eva Götz, Martina Griesser, Angelina Illes, Elke Oberthaler, Sabine Pénot, Nikoletta Sarfi, Ina Slama, Sabine Stanek, Katharina Uhler, Andreas Ulldrich; University of Antwerp: Koen Janssens, Frederik Vanmeert, Steven De Meyer; National Gallery of Art, Washington: John Delaney, Kathryn Dooley; a detailed publication of the scientific findings is to follow.
- 9 The *Small Self-Portrait* had not been treated in any detail in the art historical literature, as overpainting made stylistic assessment difficult. Thanks to its restoration (Ina Slama) the powerful impact of Rembrandt's painting can now be experienced unimpeded.
- 10 Scientific analysis reinforces the assumption that both paintings (fig. 88, restoration by Eva Götz, and fig. 89, restoration by Ina Slama) were made at the same time and that their composition was laid down by Rembrandt. Whereas Van de Wetering in *Corpus*, vi, attributes only a very small portion to Rembrandt, it transpires that he was in fact responsible for substantial passages such as the face in the *Portrait of a Woman* (restoration by Ina Slama). Nonetheless, entrusting the execution of particular parts, for example, costumes, to assistants was common practice in Rembrandt's studio.
- 11 In *Corpus*, iii, C 89, the panel is described as a 'half-length figure of an old woman, presumably the prophetess Anna' and classified as category C, with its attribution to Rembrandt rejected: 'Painting, Rembrandt's authorship of which cannot be accepted.' The painting is not included in *Corpus*, vi (restoration by Elke Oberthaler).
- 12 See *Corpus*, vi, nos. 307, 676.

Comparative Timeline

1606

1612



Although no documents provide a certain date of Rembrandt's birth, he is presumed to have been born on **15 July 1606** in Leiden, the last but one of a total of ten children named in the sources as born to the malt miller Harmen Gerritsz. van Rijn (1567/68–1630) and his wife Neeltgen Willemsdr. van Zuytbroeck (c.1568–1640).

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669)

1614

From 1612/13 to 1619/20 he attended the grammar school (or 'Latin school') in Leiden. At the age of 14 he became the first amongst his siblings to attend the local university, where he is recorded as a student from 20 May 1620. He later broke off his academic studies and started training as a painter.

1622

From around 1622 to 1624 he completed his basic training under his first teacher Jacob Isaacsz. van Swanenburgh (1571–1638) in Leiden, where he encountered Italian art.

In 1624/25 he completed a six-month apprenticeship in Amsterdam under his second master, the well-known history painter Pieter Lastman (1583–1633), from whom Rembrandt learned techniques for, among other things, depicting dramatic narratives and realizing powerful chiaroscuro effects.

field of Flemish and Dutch works, which predominate by far in the collection, reflecting also the situation in the fine arts market: ‘This is explained not only by the collector’s personal taste but also by the situation in the art market: Italian paintings were regarded as extremely expensive, whereas Netherlandish paintings, thanks to the active agency of Flemish dealers, could be purchased relatively easily and at more favourable prices.’⁸⁰

A painting by Rembrandt is also among the works: ‘No. 100 A panel by Reinbrandt, an old German man with a woman and a child lying in a wicker basket beside her, quite estimable, at 50 thalers’.⁸¹ The valuation of the scene – probably an unrecognized Holy Family – is on the low side, which also corresponds to other paintings by Rembrandt on offer at the Vienna branch of the Antwerp art dealers Forchouldt. Only a few works by Rembrandt are recorded there, with tronies predominating, and the prices are set low. By contrast, there are large numbers of Flemish-style works by Dutch artists, mainly genre and rural scenes, for example by Adriaen van Ostade.

In 1679 Prince Karl Eusebius von Liechtenstein bought Rembrandt’s *Self-Portrait with Plumed Hat*.⁸² Four other paintings had been offered for sale to the prince in 1673, but no purchase is attested.⁸³ A further work, at the time attributed to Rembrandt, was offered to the Liechtensteins, but not purchased at this time: ‘No. 70 Diana with several hounds by Rennbrandt’.⁸⁴

Interestingly, seventeenth-century Austro-Bohemian collections already contain copies of paintings by Rembrandt. Count Humprecht Jan Czernin von Chudenitz,⁸⁵ for example, purchased two copies of Rembrandt for his collection between 1664 and 1669, that is, during the master’s lifetime: one of the *Man in Oriental Costume* (Chatsworth),⁸⁶ and one painted by Willem Drost after a portrait of Titus. Czernin acquired the first copy in Venice, the second later on in Prague.⁸⁷ The collection of Prince Paul Esterházy contained a late seventeenth-century copy after Rembrandt, albeit in this case after an etching, the *First Oriental Head* of 1635.

In the seventeenth century there were probably more paintings by Van Hoogstraten than by Rembrandt in Austria and Bohemia. Rembrandt’s pupil enjoyed great popularity in imperial court

circles, bringing him numerous prominent commissions. Rembrandt by contrast was not to the taste of Ferdinand III and Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, but was nevertheless represented as an important master with one or two examples in their collections. In the Viennese art trade, which stood under Flemish influence, his paintings were not strongly represented. Rembrandt’s printed graphic work on the other hand was evidently highly popular and played a fundamental role in the dissemination of his oeuvre. It also found its way into still-life depictions, for example in Johannes de Cordua’s *Vanitas Still Life on the Death of Emperor Ferdinand III* (fig. 18).⁸⁸

THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES: THE HEIGHT OF REMBRANDT HOLDINGS IN VIENNA

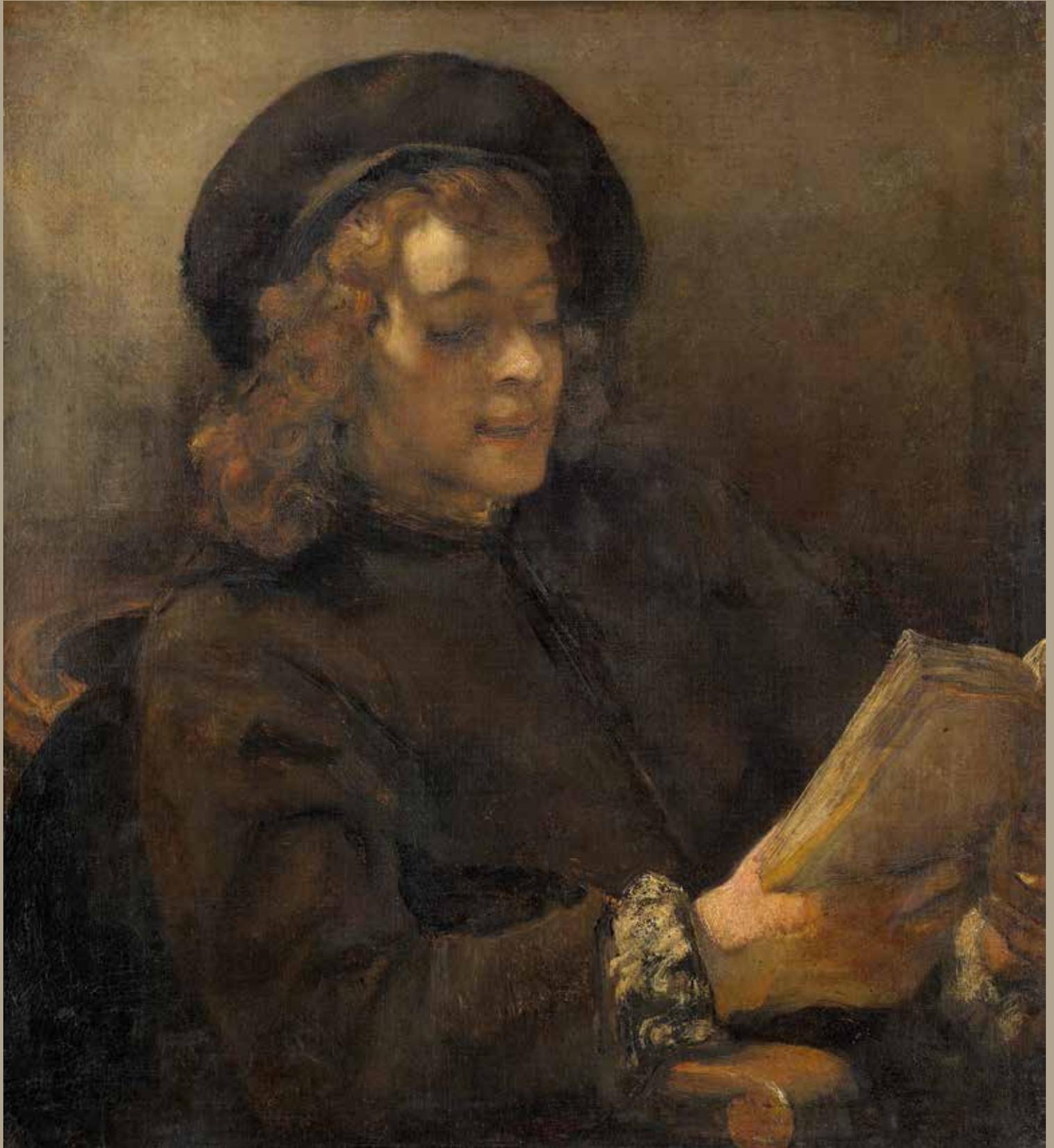
The tide turned in the eighteenth century, when the majority of the Kunsthistorisches Museum’s Rembrandt paintings were purchased for the imperial collection, with aristocratic collections being no less assiduous in acquiring works by the master.

Under Emperor Charles VI there were already seven paintings attributed to Rembrandt in the Stallburg, which are recorded in the first two illustrated volumes of the Storffer inventory as being distributed between various rooms. The *Astrologer* from Leopold Wilhelm’s collection, here titled ‘Philosopher’, was integrated into the hang. Of these works attributed to Rembrandt, just two are today regarded as being by the artist’s own hand: *Titus* (fig. 19) and the so-called *Large Self-Portrait* (see fig. 28), both of which are verifiable in the imperial collection from 1720.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, under Joseph II, four further paintings by Rembrandt were acquired and/or brought to Vienna. *The Prophetess Anna* (fig. 20) was taken to Vienna from the palace at Pressburg in 1772; in the inventory of 1772 the panel is recorded under the number 15 as ‘An old woman, Rembrand’s mother’. Rembrandt’s paired *Portrait of a Man* and *Portrait of a Woman* (see figs. 88, 89), and the so-called *Small Self-Portrait* (fig. 21) are recorded in the

19

Rembrandt, *Titus van Rijn, the Artist’s Son, Reading*, c.1658, canvas, 71.5 × 64.5 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, Picture Gallery, inv. 410





20

Rembrandt,
The Prophetess Anna,
c.1635, with later
additions by the
Rembrandt workshop,
dated 1639, panel,
78.8 × 60.8 cm
(cut down to an oval).
Vienna, Kunsthisto-
risches Museum, Picture
Gallery, inv. 408

gallery from 1783. Moreover, in the 1772 inventory Jan Lievens's *Portrait of Rembrandt* is suddenly ascribed to Rembrandt himself: 'A wreath of flowers with a portrait of a man by Rheinbrand'.

Anton von Perger enthuses in particular about Rembrandt's pair of portraits: 'These two likenesses are of such extraordinary perfection that several connoisseurs, led astray by Rembrandt's habitually broad brush, held them to be works by another master.'⁸⁹ The 'extraordinary perfection' could have been the motivation for what was regarded as a particularly expensive acquisition. This impression can be ascribed to Rembrandt's illusionistic style of painting, using an economy of means to achieve the greatest possible effect. Scientific analysis and the stylistic similarity of the pendant paintings provide evidence that the two works were painted at the same time and reinforce the attribution to Rembrandt of the female portrait, albeit with participation by Rembrandt's studio in the execution of parts of her elaborate apparel.

Following restoration, the *Small Self-Portrait* is an object lesson in Rembrandt's use of luminous colours. The unusually small format and the narrow focus that this creates⁹⁰ makes it more intimate and immediate than any other of the artist's portraits. The rendering of the skin with its broad brushstrokes displays a palette with nuances of pink, red, and blue tones. The shirt (*hemdrock*) was overlaid with a red lake of an intense luminosity.⁹¹ And precisely these red tones can be found at various places in the composition, as a visually linking element: the brown smock that served Rembrandt as working dress seems to be covered in red and ochre dabs of paint, calling to mind the observation made by Bernhard Keil and reported by Baldinucci that Rembrandt used to wipe his brushes clean on his clothes.⁹² Particles of red pigment around the head-dress may also indicate the erstwhile presence of a red scarf. The stylistic similarity to Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait* in the Frick Collection suggests a date of 1655/57.

Tasked with reinstalling and cataloguing the imperial paintings gallery, Christian von Mechel chose Rembrandt as the first painter to be dealt with in the section devoted to Netherlandish painting. All

the works attributed to Rembrandt around 1780 were hung in the first gallery of the Netherlandish Schools in the Upper Belvedere. A photograph taken before 1891 shows the Rembrandt paintings displayed on one wall grouped around *The Prophetess Anna*,⁹³ whose interpretation as Rembrandt's mother is an early example of the myths that were starting to accrete around the artist's family. Mechel's catalogue of 1783 lists nine paintings as works by Rembrandt.⁹⁴ Around a century later, deattributions had left only seven in Engerth's catalogue of the Netherlandish Schools (1884), mirroring the selection for the hanging in the newly opened Kunsthistorisches Museum.

Aristocratic collections in Austria and Bohemia also evince keen interest in Rembrandt's art during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and overall they had a breathtaking number of masterpieces of the by then universally acclaimed Dutch artist.

Among the private collections of the eighteenth century Theodor von Frimmel mentions the collection of the Kaunitz family, albeit remarking in relation to the naming of Rembrandt in their holdings: 'As far as the name Rembrandt is concerned, which is listed without reference to a particular picture, the same circumspection is required as with Raphael and Leonardo.'⁹⁵ That Rembrandt is now named in the same breath as Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci speaks volumes about the degree of fame that his work had now attained.

The gallery of Prince Eugene of Savoy contained Rembrandt's *Visitation* (today in the Detroit Institute of Arts).⁹⁶ From 1783 to 1805, the Vienna collection of Armand-François-Louis de Mestral de Saint-Saphorin included Rembrandt's *Old Woman Praying*,⁹⁷ before the painting passed into the ownership of Count Johann Rudolf Czernin von und zu Chudenitz in 1805.⁹⁸ Saint-Saphorin also possessed a copy of an early self-portrait by Rembrandt.⁹⁹ In the Bruckenthal gallery, Frimmel mentions: 'By the great [master] Rembrandt, a cadet, a veritable jewel in its pose, power, and strength'.¹⁰⁰

However, the most spectacular acquisition had already been made before 1731 by the collection of the Schönborn family in Vienna with Rembrandt's masterpiece *The Blinding of Samson*.¹⁰¹ According to Vincenzo Fanti in 1767, there were an astonishing

twelve paintings by Rembrandt in the Liechtenstein Collection.¹⁰² Attributed at the time to Rembrandt, the early Self-Portrait by Van Hoogstraten (see fig. 25) was one of these acquisitions. The Lamberg Collection records Rembrandt's *Portrait of a Young Woman* (1632) at the latest from 1798.¹⁰³

Towards the end of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century (but before 1819), Friedrich Johann von Nostitz purchased Rembrandt's *A Scholar in His Study* for his Prague collection.¹⁰⁴ Another impressive acquisition, made at almost the same time, were the three paintings by Rembrandt purchased by Countess Ludwika Lanckorońska in 1815. From this time Rembrandt's *Girl in a Picture Frame* (see fig. 79) and its putative pendant *Scholar at his Writing Table*, and an *Apostle Paul* were located in Vienna (today all three paintings are held at Warsaw Castle). In the middle of the nineteenth century (1856) the Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck came into possession of Rembrandt's *Old Man with a Fur Cap* (1630), thanks to a legacy from the former private collections of Josef Tschager.¹⁰⁵

By contrast, works by Van Hoogstraten were no longer or only very rarely acquired after the seventeenth century. One exception in this respect, in all likelihood deriving from the collection of Georg Ludwig von Sinzendorf, is the *Trompe-l'oeil Still Life* (see fig. 13) bequeathed to the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna by Wolfgang von Wurzbach-Tannenberg in 1957. Some attributions to Samuel van Hoogstraten fell into obscurity in the eighteenth century, as in the case of the above-mentioned *Self-Portrait* or the *Trompe-l'oeil Still Life of a Letter-Rack* in Prague, before being re-identified in the course of the twentieth century.¹⁰⁶

TWENTIETH CENTURY: LOSSES OF REMBRANDT HOLDINGS

The importance of Vienna as a location of outstanding masterpieces by Rembrandt wanes during the course of the twentieth century. As Renate Trnek observed in the 1990s:

Today there are only a very few places in Austria where the painting of the 'Golden Age' of Dutch

art and culture in the seventeenth century can be studied, now that all the important private collections assembled by the great families of the nobility and in the nineteenth century by the Viennese patrician classes have been scattered to the four winds, as happened at the very latest by the end of the Second World War.¹⁰⁷

As early as the 1920s, in an article on Vienna's immense wealth of treasures in this field, Frimmel voices his regret at 'the most recent exsanguination of our stock of valuable paintings' and asks the question of whether the 'good reputation' of Vienna as a location of outstanding paintings has not perhaps been entirely obliterated.¹⁰⁸ In this context he cites the sale of the *Blinding of Samson* from the Schönborn collection to the Frankfurt Städel Museum in 1905. Although the Antiquities and Monuments Office held it to be a 'duty of honour ... to preserve [Austria's] possession of works by this artist as something sacrosanct',¹⁰⁹ the sale to Frankfurt – with the vendor citing the unwillingness of the Republic of Austria to pay an appropriate price – was completed in a short space of time.

The Lanckorońska art collection was seized by the Gestapo and following restitution bequeathed to Warsaw Castle. Rembrandt's *Old Woman Praying* from the Czernin Collection was purchased by the Residenzgalerie Salzburg in 1980. The Liechtenstein Collections sold three Rembrandts after 1945,¹¹⁰ though in 1995 Prince Hans-Adam II von und zu Liechtenstein acquired the *Cupid with a Soap Bubble* (1634). In 1942 the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna purchased the *Portrait of the Artist in a Fur Coat with Gold Chain and Earring* as a work by Rembrandt from the Mendelssohn Collection; the panel is here attributed to the circle of Rembrandt in the second half of the seventeenth century.

With reference to the holdings of Dutch paintings in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Trnek remarks that they are 'overshadowed by the unique collection of Flemish paintings, which were far more to the taste of the – Catholic – imperial house'.¹¹¹ This is especially true of the holdings of Rembrandt in comparison with the vast holdings of works by Rubens. As for Van Hoogstraten, Johann Rudolf





Alonso Sánchez
1649