

ed.: 82–83, repros.).

1948 Widener: 48–49, repros.

1952 Behrman: 17–24 (also 2nd ed., 1972: 16–22, repros.).

1965 NGA: 111, nos. 663–664.

1966 Bauch: 23, no. 446, 26, no. 528, color repros.

1968 NGA: 97, repros. 663–664.

1968 Gerson: 158–159, color repros., 450, nos. 411–412, repros., 504.

1969 Gerson/Bredius: 255, repro., 313–314, repros., 575, no. 327, 582, no. 402.

1969 Haak: 293–295, repros. 489–490, color. repros. 490 a & b (details).

1969/1982 Kitson: 44, color repro. (*Portrait of a Woman*, 89, no. 44) [also 1982 ed.: no. 46, repro. (*Portrait of a Man*), color repro. (*Portrait of a Woman*)].

1969 Washington: nos. 14–15.

1975 NGA: 288–289, repros.

1975 Wright: 119–122, pls. 99–100.

1977 Bolten and Bolten-Rempt: 166–168, repros., color pl., 203, repros.

1983 Van Eeghen: 27–125, repros. 25–26.

1984/1985 Schwartz: 344–345, color repros.

1985 NGA: 332–333, repros.

1986 Guillaud and Guillaud: 377–378, color repros.

1986 Tümpel: 328–329, color repros., 413, no. 221, 416, no. 250.

1986 Sutton: 314.

1937.1.72 (72)

Rembrandt van Rijn

Self-Portrait

1659

Oil on canvas, 84.5 x 66 (33¼ x 26)

Andrew W. Mellon Collection

Inscriptions

At center left: *Rembrandt f. 1659*

Technical Notes: The original support, a tightly, plain-woven fabric with fine threads, has been lined, with the tacking margins trimmed, and a coating of white lead applied to the back of the lining. The double ground consists of a thick, reddish brown lower layer and a very thin, light gray layer.¹ The design was then sketched in a transparent brown underpaint layer intentionally left visible in the proper right sleeve and in the nostrils, mouth, and neck bordering the collar. The exposed areas of the brown sketch are abraded, which has diminished their significance.

The figure is painted with opaque, broad, flat brushstrokes, while the background and hands are thinly painted. Hair has been articulated by fine brushstrokes and lines incised with the butt end of a brush into the still-wet paint. Highlights of the face were first created overall with heavy short strokes of richly impasted paint, with individual brushstrokes swirled wet into wet rather than blended. Once dry, the paint was reworked with unblended, short, distinct

strokes of darker colors following the initial brushwork pattern, which were softened with half-shadow mid-tones. Strokes of white paint under the beret indicate that Rembrandt initially planned a lighter color beret than the present black one.

While the face and hands are largely intact, most of the figure and the background at the left are extensively abraded. The left collar and background adjacent to the proper right cheek are quite damaged and now obscured by black overpaint. The painting underwent treatment in 1992 to remove discolored overpaint. The blackish paint to the left of the figure and a patchy semi-opaque coating, applied in a prior restoration to disguise abrasion, were left in place where they could not be safely removed.

Provenance: George, 3rd Duke of Montagu and 4th Earl of Cardigan [d. 1790], by 1767;² by inheritance to daughter, Lady Elizabeth, wife of Henry, 3rd Duke of Buccleuch of Montagu House, London; John Charles, 7th Duke of Buccleuch; (P. & D. Colnaghi & Co., New York, 1928); (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); sold January 1929 to Andrew W. Mellon, Pittsburgh and Washington; deeded 28 December 1934 to The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.

Exhibited: *Winter Exhibition of Old Masters*, Royal Academy, London, 1872, no. 181. *Rembrandt. Collection des oeuvres des maîtres réunies, à l'occasion de l'inauguration de S. M. la Reine Wilhelmine*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1898, no. 102. *Exhibition of Works by Rembrandt*, Royal Academy, London, 1899, no. 6. *The Thirteenth Loan Exhibition of Old Masters: Paintings by Rembrandt*, Detroit Institute of Arts, 1930, no. 62. *A Loan Exhibition of Sixteen Masterpieces*, Knoedler Galleries, New York, 1930, no. 8. Amsterdam 1935, no. 26. *Loan Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings and Etchings by Rembrandt and His Circle*, Art Institute of Chicago, 1935–1936, no. 6. New York 1939, no. 307. Washington 1969, no. 19. *Masterpieces of Western European Painting of the XVIth–XXth Centuries from the Museums of the European Countries and USA*, Hermitage, Leningrad, 1989, no. 13. *Dutch Art and Scotland: A Reflection of Taste*, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1992, no. 53.

THE FACE is familiar, as is the searingly penetrating gaze with which the sitter stares directly out at the viewer. No question it is Rembrandt, late in his life, at a time when he has suffered through the cruel indignities of failure after so many years of success. Indeed, this portrait, painted in 1659, dates to the year after Rembrandt's possessions and his house on the Sint-Anthonisbreestraat had been auctioned as a result of his insolvency. It may well have been one of the first works he painted in the small house on the Rozengracht in the painters' quarter of Amsterdam where he had moved when his fortunes and his prospects were at a low ebb. In the following year Rembrandt set up a business agreement with his son Titus and Hendrickje Stoffels that prevented him from being sued by any of his dissatisfied creditors for recovery of debts.³

Rightly or wrongly it seems almost impossible to ponder this work without interpreting it in light of what is known about Rembrandt's life. This inclination is felt in part because of the extensive biographical information that has come down to us, through which we feel a closer contact with the man and his life than we do with most artists of this period. It also seems possible to interpret Rembrandt's mood in such paintings because he painted, drew, and etched so many self-portraits that changes in his appearance can be measured and analyzed by comparing one to the other. Even more significantly, however, we read these images biographically because Rembrandt forces us to do so. He looks out at us and confronts us directly. His deep-set eyes peer intently. They appear steady, yet heavy and not without sadness. As Hofstede de Groot remarked in reference to this painting when it was shown in the 1898 Rembrandt exhibition in Amsterdam, "It would be difficult to find in any of his paintings a pair of eyes that peer at us more sharply or penetratingly."⁴ Émile Michel, in his review of the exhibition, was even more expressive about the forcefulness of Rembrandt's gaze through the heavy wrinkles that had come to age his face so prematurely.⁵

While the observations of Hofstede de Groot and Michel seem entirely appropriate to the image, too often this painting has been subjected to overly

romantic interpretations, in which authors have tried to read into this somber image Rembrandt's own reflections upon the profound tragedy of his life.⁶ Interpreting paintings on the basis of an artist's biography is dangerous, particularly with an artist whose life has been romanticized to the extent that Rembrandt's has.⁷ In this instance the inclination to interpret this image as a tragic one has been reinforced by the thick layers of discolored varnish that had given the portrait a heavy, brooding quality. With the removal of the discolored varnish during restoration in 1992, the fallacy of such interpretations became particularly apparent. With the rich range of pinks and other flesh tones on his face once again visible, Rembrandt's state of mind seems to have improved remarkably. While the thick impastos and bold strokes he used to model his face still create the dynamic vigor of the head, apparent now as well is the economy with which Rembrandt handled his paint: he has allowed a greenish gray imprimatura layer to read as the shadowed area around the eyes. Finally, the firmness of his touch is accented by the wiry rhythms in his mustache and in the hair protruding from under his beret, which he has delineated by scratching the wet paint with the blunt end of his brush.

An added benefit from the restoration was the removal of overpaint that had flattened the appearance of Rembrandt's torso. With the three-dimensional character of this portion of the painting restored, the head seems far more firmly planted on the body than previously. The light that so effectively illuminates the head now also accents Rembrandt's left shoulder and, to a lesser extent, his broadly executed clasped hands. The x-radiograph of the head, which reveals the vigorous, almost sculptural character of Rembrandt's handling of paint, also indicates, through the density of the paint in the beret, that Rembrandt initially painted the beret a different color (fig. 1). It may well have been white since the upper ridges of a whitish paint layer can be seen through the overlying black paint.

Although Rembrandt's pose seems so appropriate to the forcefulness of his gaze, quite surprisingly, it was inspired by Raphael's portrait of Balthasar Castiglione (fig. 2). The memory of Castiglione's direct gaze and clasped hands, which Rembrandt first saw when the painting appeared in an auction in Amsterdam on 19 April 1639,⁸ must have remained deeply ingrained in his mind for the intervening twenty years. This famous work had made a tremendous impact on Rembrandt, for he even made a rough sketch after it at the sale (Albertina, Vienna, Ben. 451). In that same year, 1639, Rembrandt etched a

Fig. 1. X-radiograph of head in 1937.1.72





Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait*, 1937.1.72



Fig. 2. Raphael, *Balthasar Castiglione*, c. 1514–1515, oil on panel, Paris, Louvre, © Photo R.M.N.

self-portrait that was in part inspired by Raphael's image and in part by Titian's portrait, then known as *Ariosto*, which was in Amsterdam in the Alfonso Lopez Collection (National Gallery, London, inv. no. 1944).⁹ In the following year, 1640, Rembrandt painted a self-portrait (National Gallery, London, inv. no. 672) that reflected in composition and intellectual concept both the Raphael *Balthasar Castiglione* and Titian's *Ariosto*. In this 1640 *Self-Portrait*, Rembrandt, dressed in a fanciful historicizing costume, portrayed himself with all of the elegance and dignity of the renowned Renaissance men of letters thought to have been depicted by Raphael and Titian.¹⁰

In Rembrandt's 1659 *Self-Portrait*, all compositional references to Titian's portrait have disappeared, particularly the stone parapet upon which the artist rests his arm in the 1639 etching and the 1640 painting.¹¹ Perhaps at this later moment of his life he was drawn to Raphael's painting because of its self-contained composition, which he must have felt appropriate for expressing the quiet intensity with which he wished to imbue his self-portrait; perhaps he remembered the subdued colors of Cas-

tiglione's costume or the effective way in which Raphael used the beret to frame his head. Clearly Rembrandt has adapted all of these aspects of Raphael's painting in his self-portrait, while at the same time transforming the nature of his image through dramatic light effects and the rich impastos of his paint.

Most fundamentally, however, Rembrandt returned to Raphael's prototype because he found in it a vehicle for expressing his perception of himself as a learned painter, a theme that in one way or another underlies a number of his late self-portraits, particularly his magnificent paintings in the Frick Collection, c. 1658 (inv. no. 06.1.97), and in the Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood, c. 1665 (inv. no. 57). In all three of these works Rembrandt projects a strikingly positive self-image, in which allusions to his self-esteem as an artist are conveyed through pose, costume, and expression.¹²

Notes

1. Pigment analysis is available in the Scientific Research department (30 July 1992).

2. This early provenance is established by presence of a mezzotint after the portrait by R. Earlom (1743–1822), dated 1767. See Charrington 1923, no. 49.

3. Strauss and Van der Meulen 1979, 462–465, doc. 1660/20.

4. Amsterdam 1898, 13. "Het zou moeilijk wezen in al zijn schilderijen een paar oog en te wijzen, die ons scherper en doordringender aanzien."

5. Michel 1898, 478–479, 480. "Sous l'influence d'une vie trop casanière, une graisse malsaine envahit les chairs flasques et boursoufflées; des rides nombreuses et profondes sont creusées sur son large front. . . . Avec leur paupières épaissies, les yeux, devenus plus petits, ont conservé leur étincelle et sous les sourcils en broussaille, le regard interrogateur et pénétrant du peintre persiste, obstiné, ardent comme le charbon sous la cendre. Sans l'abattre, les soucis et les malheurs n'ont fait qu'épurer en lui la passion de son art qui le soutient et cet amour de la nature qui lui permet de découvrir des trésors de beauté et de poésie là où les autres passent indifférents."

6. Perhaps the most insupportable claims about this painting were suggested by John Walker (Walker 1976, 270), who wrote, in part: "[Rembrandt] saw a mouth and a chin weak, infirm of purpose, manifesting that flaw in his character which had ruined his life. His hands are grasped as though in anguish at the spectacle of a self-ruined man. There exists no painting more pitiless in its analysis or more pitiful in its implications."

7. For the nature of these myths see Slive 1953; and Emmens 1968.

8. The painting was acquired by Alphonso Lopez, a Portuguese Jew who lived in Amsterdam from 1636 to 1640. See Strauss and Van der Meulen 1979, 177, doc. 1639/8. Lopez had a large collection which included Titian's *Ariosto* and *Flora* (see Washington 1991–1992). He was also known to Rembrandt since he bought directly from the artist his early *Balaam and the Ass* (*Corpus* 1082–, 1: A2).

9. B. 21.
10. For a discussion of the relationship of Rembrandt's self-portraits from 1639 and from 1640 to Raphael and Titian, see De Jongh 1969, 49–67; Chapman 1990, 72–78.
11. Van Rijckevorsel 1932, 150, however, did suggest the additional influence of Titian's *Portrait of 'Ariosto'* (National Gallery, London, see above) on Rembrandt's 1659 *Self-Portrait*. The illusionistic format of self-portraiture was put in the context of the northern portrait tradition by Stephanie Dickey during a Rembrandt symposium held in Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, January 1992.
12. For a discussion of various interpretations of these paintings see Chapman 1990, 94–95, 97–101.

References

- 1829–1842 Smith, 7 (1836): 88, no. 215.
 1868 Vosmaer: 493 (also 1877 ed.: 358, 560).
 1883 Bode: 542, 585, no. 197.
 1885 Dutuit: 43, 61, 70, no. 165.
 1886 Wurzbach: no. 160.
 1888 Champlin and Perkins: 4: 24.
 1893 Michel, 2: 235 (also 1894 English ed.).
 1897–1905 Moes: 315, no. 60.
 1897–1906 Bode, 6 (1901): 13–14, no. 431, repro.
 1898 Michel: 467–480.
 1899 Bell: 83–84, 145 (also 1907 ed.: 79–80, 126).
 1899a Hofstede de Groot: no. 33, repro.
 1902 Neumann: 488 (also 1922 ed.: 2: 540, 542).
 1906 Veth: 161–162.
 1906 Rosenberg: 404, no. 343, repro. (also 1908 ed.: 562, no. 403, repro.; and 1909 ed.: 562, no. 403, repro.).
 1907–1927 HdG, 6 (1916): 273–274, no. 554.
 1909 Knackfuss: 158–159, pl. 164.
 1913–1915 Graves, 3 (1914): 1010.
 1921b Valentiner: 403, repro.
 1923 Meldrum: 137, 199, pl. 339.
 1929 Rutter: 64–67, repro.
 1931 Valentiner: no. 141, repro.
 1932 Van Rijckevorsel: 150.
 1935 Bredius: 4, 51, repro. (also 1936 English ed.: 4, 51, repro.).
 1941 NGA: 164, no. 72.
 1942 Borenius: 35, no. 81, repro.
 1943 Benesch: 21–33, fig. 11.
 1948 Rosenberg: 30–31, color frontispiece (also 1964 rev. ed.: 47, frontispiece).
 1949 Mellon: 87, repro.
 1960 Roger-Marx: 13, repro., 64, 96.
 1960 Baird: 8, 14, 15, repro.
 1965 NGA: 109, no. 72.
 1966 Rosenberg and Slive: 71–72, pl. 50.
 1966 Bauch: 17, no. 330, repro.
 1967 Erpel: 46, 184, pl. 56.
 1968 NGA: 97, no. 72, repro.
 1968 Gerson: 443, no. 736, repro., 503.
 1969 Gerson/Bredius: 47, repro., 551.
 1972 Roberts: 353–354.
 1975 Wright: 98–99, pl. 81.
 1975 NGA: 284, 285, repro.
 1977 Bolten and Bolten-Rempt: 199, no. 486, repro.
 1978 Clark: 30, 31, repro.
 1982 Wright: 32, repro., color pl. 88.
 1984/1985 Schwartz: 352, color repro. 417.

- 1985 NGA: 328, repro.
 1986 Tümpel: 368–369, color repro., 427, no. A 72.
 1986 Guillaud and Guillaud: no. 739, color repro.
 1986 Sutton: 314, repro.
 1992 Edinburgh, no. 53, color repro.

1937.1.77 (77)

Rembrandt van Rijn

A Young Man Seated at a Table (possibly Govaert Flinck)

c. 1660
 Oil on canvas, 109.9 x 89.5 (43¼ x 35¼)
 Andrew W. Mellon Collection

Inscriptions

At center right: *Rembrandt 166*[?]

Technical Notes: The support, a medium-weight, plain-weave fabric, has been lined with the original tacking margins trimmed. A row of later tacking holes along the left and top edges of the original support suggest a prior reduction in size, although cusping at right and bottom indicate that the present dimensions are close to or slightly smaller than the original dimensions. Large complex tears are found in the lower right background and between the hands.

The double ground consists of a thick, red brown lower layer followed by a slightly thinner pearly gray layer. Paint is applied as dry to fluid pastes, with glazes and scumbles, occasionally incised with the butt end of a brush. Brushstrokes have been worked wet into wet or drawn over dry impasto to create texture, although lining has flattened the texture. The x-radiograph shows changes in both hands, with the proper right hand loosely sketched and the proper left hand either lower, reconfigured, or both (fig. 1).

Paint loss is confined to the tears and the edges, where sections of the original fabric have been torn away. Overpaint on the hands, background, hair, and face suggest that these areas may have suffered from abrasion. A discolored varnish layer obscures the surface. No treatment has been carried out since acquisition.

Provenance: Possibly Gustaf Adolf Sparre [1746–1794], Göteborg and Castle Kulla Gunnarstorp, near Helsingborg; by inheritance to his wife [d. 1830], Castle Kulla Gunnarstorp; by inheritance to her grandson, Adolf de la Gardie [1800–1833], Castle Kulla Gunnarstorp; by inheritance to his father, Jacob, Count de la Gardie, Castle Kulla Gunnarstorp; Carl, Count de Geer, Leustra, before 1855; by family trust to his granddaughter, Elizabeth, Countess Wachtmeister [1834–1918], Castle Wanås, Sweden;¹ Count Carl Wachtmeister [Wachtmeister Trust], Wanås, until 1926; (Duveen Brothers, New York and London); sold December 1926 to Andrew W. Mellon, Pittsburgh and Washington; deeded 28 December 1934 to The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh.