

Rembrandt van Rijn notes

From Wikipedia:

After a brief but important apprenticeship of six months with the famous painter Pieter Lastman in Amsterdam, Rembrandt opened a studio in Leiden in 1624 or 1625, which he shared with friend Jan Lievens. In 1627, Rembrandt began to accept students.

At the end of 1631 Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam, then rapidly expanding as the new business capital of the Netherlands, and began to practice as a professional portraitist for the first time, with great success. He initially stayed with an art dealer, Hendrick van Uylenburg, and in 1634, married Hendrick's cousin, **Saskia** van Uylenburg. Saskia came from a good family: her father had been lawyer and *burgemeester* (mayor) of Leeuwarden. When Saskia, as the youngest daughter, became an orphan, she lived with an older sister in Het Bildt. Rembrandt and Saskia were married in the local church of St. Annaparochie without the presence of Rembrandt's relatives. In the same year, Rembrandt became a burgess of Amsterdam and member of the local guild of painters.

In 1635 Rembrandt and Saskia moved into their own house, renting in fashionable Nieuwe Doelenstraat. In 1639 they moved to a prominent house (now the **Rembrandt House Museum**) in the Jodenbreestraat (becoming the Jewish quarter); the mortgage to finance the 13,000 guilder purchase would be a primary cause for later financial difficulties. Rembrandt should easily have been able to pay the house off with his large income, but it appears his spending always kept pace with his income, and he may have made some unsuccessful investments. It was there that Rembrandt frequently sought his Jewish neighbors to model for his Old Testament scenes. Although they were by now affluent, the couple suffered several personal setbacks; their son Rumbartus died two months after his birth in 1635 and their daughter Cornelia died at just three weeks of age in 1638. In 1640, they had a second daughter, also named Cornelia, who died after living barely over a month. Only their fourth child, Titus, who was born in 1641, survived into adulthood. Saskia died in 1642 soon after Titus's birth, probably from tuberculosis.

During Saskia's illness, Geertje Dircx was hired as Titus' caretaker and nurse and also became Rembrandt's lover. She would later charge Rembrandt with breach of promise and was awarded alimony of 200 guilders a year. Rembrandt worked to have her committed for twelve years to an asylum or poorhouse at Gouda, after learning she had pawned jewelry that had once belonged to Saskia that he had given to her.

In the late 1640s Rembrandt began a relationship with the much younger Hendrickje Stoffels, who had initially been his maid. In 1654 they had a daughter, Cornelia, bringing Hendrickje a summons from the Reformed Church to answer the charge "that she had committed the acts of a whore with Rembrandt the painter." She admitted this and was banned from receiving communion. Rembrandt was not summoned to appear for the Church council because he was not a member of the

Reformed Church. The two were considered legally wed under common law, but Rembrandt had not married Hendrickje, so as not to lose access to a trust set up for Titus in the son's mother's will.

Rembrandt lived beyond his means, buying art (including bidding up his own work), prints (often used in his paintings), and rarities. There was a court arrangement to avoid his bankruptcy in 1656, by selling most of his paintings and large collection of antiquities. The sale list survives and gives us a good insight into Rembrandt's collections, which apart from Old Master paintings and drawings included busts of the Roman Emperors, suits of Japanese armor among many objects from Asia, and collections of natural history and minerals; the prices realized in the sales in 1657 and 1658 were disappointing. Rembrandt was forced to sell his house and his printing-press and move to more modest accommodations on the Rozengracht in 1660. The authorities and his creditors were generally accommodating to him, except for the Amsterdam painters' guild, who introduced a new rule that no one in Rembrandt's circumstances could trade as a painter. To get round this, Hendrickje and Titus set up a business as art-dealers in 1660, with Rembrandt as an employee.

In 1661 Rembrandt (or rather the new business) was contracted to complete work for the newly built city hall, but only after Govert Flinck, the artist previously commissioned, died without beginning to paint. The resulting work, *The Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis*, was rejected and returned to the painter; the surviving fragment is only a fraction of the whole work. It was around this time that Rembrandt took on his last apprentice, Aert de Gelder. In 1662 he was still fulfilling major commissions for portraits and other works. When Cosimo III de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany came to Amsterdam in 1667, he visited Rembrandt at his house.

Rembrandt outlived both Hendrickje, who died in 1663, and Titus, who died in 1668, leaving a baby daughter. He died within a year of his son, on October 4, 1669 in Amsterdam, and was buried in an unmarked grave in the *Westerkerk*.

In a number of biblical works, including *The Raising of the Cross*, *Joseph Telling His Dreams* and *The Stoning of Saint Stephen*, Rembrandt painted himself as a character in the crowd. Durham suggests that this was because the Bible was for Rembrandt "a kind of diary, an account of moments in his own life."



May.2014, LONDON (AP) — Scientific tests have confirmed that a painting donated to Britain's National Trust is a **Rembrandt** self-portrait. The portrait was long thought to be the work of one of Rembrandt's pupils. But last year Ernst van de Wetering, the world's leading Rembrandt expert, declared it genuine. It was **painted in 1635, when Rembrandt was 29.**

Cambridge University experts analyzed the cell structure of the wooden panel the portrait is painted on — poplar or willow, a type Rembrandt favored — and used X-rays to reveal changes to the composition over time, also typical of the artist. The pigments, including blue mineral azurite and blue cobalt, were consistent with those used by Rembrandt. "The varnish was so yellow that it was difficult to see how beautifully the portrait had been painted," said David Taylor, paintings and sculpture curator at the National Trust. "Now you can really see all the flesh tones and other colors, as well as the way in which the paint has been handled — it's now much easier to appreciate it as a Rembrandt."

The painting was given to the trust in 2010 by the estate of Edna, Lady Samuel of Wych Cross, whose property-developer husband was a major collector of Dutch and Flemish art. It hangs in Buckland Abbey, the former home of 16th-century seafarer Francis Drake. The painting's value has been as much as 30 million pounds (**\$50 million**) — but the trust, whose mandate is to safeguard Britain's heritage, is **not allowed to sell it.**