

Unknown Rembrandt Painting in Rembrandt House Museum

On Friday 2 December 2011 an unknown painting by Rembrandt is being presented in the Rembrandt House. The small panel, *Old Man with a Beard* was painted by Rembrandt around 1630, at the end of his time in Leiden. The Rembrandt House has the painting on loan from a private collector.

The research into the painting and the attribution to Rembrandt will be explained at length during the presentation by Ernst van de Wetering (Emeritus Professor of Art History at the University of Amsterdam and head of the Rembrandt Research Project), Martin Bijl (restorer), Joris Dik (professor at the Delft University of Technology) and Koen Janssens (professor at the University of Antwerp). Images of the painting will also be available at the presentation.

Ernst van de Wetering is convinced of the authenticity of this work on the grounds of the technical similarities in painting style to Rembrandt's paintings dating from around 1630. There is also a copy of the painting that must have been made by one of the pupils in Rembrandt's studio. The same image appears in a reproductive print of 1633, with an inscription stating that it was made by Rembrandt. Over and above this, technical research has shown that there is an unfinished self-portrait by Rembrandt under the paint surface.

The self-portrait was revealed when the painting was scanned at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York and ESRF in Grenoble, using Macro-scanning X-Ray Fluorescence spectrometry (XRF), a technique developed by Professor Koen Janssens (University of Antwerp) and Professor Joris Dik (Delft University of Technology). XRF technology detects the pigments in hidden layers of paint, making it possible to record overpainted compositions photographically. This new technology has previously resulted in spectacular discoveries in paintings by Francisco Goya and Vincent van Gogh. From 1 May to 1 July 2012 the Rembrandt House Museum is staging a special exhibition of research into ten paintings by Rembrandt and his contemporaries using XRF technology.