

# ***Rembrandt Reframed***

**Printmaking Educational Activities**

**Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum**

## **Introduction:**

Rembrandt Reframed: Charles Humes, Jr., Jennifer Printz, and Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz

This exhibition presents 22 prints by Dutch artist Rembrandt van Rijn (b. Leiden, 1609–d. Amsterdam, 1699) from the collection of the Georgia Museum of Art. One of the most significant European artists active in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Rembrandt pushed the boundaries of printmaking far beyond artists before him. He used the etching needle as he did a paintbrush, seeing the possibilities for creating tone, depth, and texture. The prints presented in *Rembrandt Reframed* were produced posthumously and speak to the enduring interest in the artist's work. Following Rembrandt's death, the French dealer Pierre-François Basan purchased a collection of Rembrandt's copper plates and in 1786 proceeded to release the first posthumous prints by the Dutch artist. Shortly thereafter, the plates came into the possession of Basan's son Henri Louis who continued to release prints from the plates until approximately 1808. Basan's prints are appreciated for their high quality.

This exhibition brings together the work of three contemporary artists with distinctly different practices. Reframed in the context of Rembrandt's prints Charles Humes, Jr., Jennifer Printz, and Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz challenge us to consider the ways in which they share approaches but also depart dramatically in technique and concept from the Old Master.

**Charles Humes, Jr.** (b.1952) melds religious imagery and his own lived experiences in paintings and prints. This exhibition includes a series of Humes' etchings. Humes' body of work includes religious imagery, as did that of Rembrandt. As opposed to creating a synthesis of religious experience and contemporary life, Rembrandt tended to focus on illustrating scenes from the Bible's Old and New Testaments.

**Jennifer Printz** (b.1975) incorporates drawing, printmaking, and photography in her professional practice. In a suite of etchings created specifically for this exhibition, Printz expands on the possibilities of the medium. Rembrandt is well known for his attention to detail and intricate lines. While Rembrandt and Printz share a technical rigor, Printz's abstract etchings expand traditional representation and reflect the unseen structures of the universe.

**Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz** (b.1973) intertwines performance and portraiture, much as Rembrandt often donned costumes from decades prior, presenting himself as a character in his portraits. While Rembrandt created portraits that cast individuals in archetypal roles, he also rendered portraits of family members including his mother and wife, Saskia. Family is paramount to Raimundi-Ortiz. This exhibition includes portraits of Raimundi-Ortiz's son.

We are grateful to the Georgia Art Museum for their generous loan of these prints. Our thanks go to members of the Frost Art Museum for their support of this exhibition. The Patricia &

Phillip Frost Art Museum FIU receives ongoing support from the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council; the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; the Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs; the Florida Council on Arts and Culture and the State of Florida.

**Works:**



**The Artist's Mother: Head and Bust Three Quarters Right 1628**

The woman in this print appears in several early etchings by Rembrandt. She has been identified since the late seventeenth century as Rembrandt's mother Neeltgen Willemsdr. van Zuytbroeck (ca. 1568–1640). In such early prints, when Rembrandt was still exploring the medium of etching, he was nonetheless able to beautifully capture the woman's age and expression with limited linework.

**Essential Questions**

What can we learn from Rembrandt's etching process and use of light?

Why was Rembrandt's printmaking process so unique?

What central themes did Rembrandt explore in his works?

What are two characteristics always prominent in Rembrandt's works?

## The Various Types of Printmaking Styles

- Intaglio Printmaking
- Relief Printmaking
- Lithography
- Serigraphy (Screen Printing)
- Monotype

**Vocabulary** – brayer, block, collagraph, creating tone, depth, etching, ink, intaglio, linoleum, lithography, monoprint, proof, relief, serigraph, and texture

**Discuss:** Explore Rembrandt Reframed and his exploration as an Old Master printmaker. Compare and contrast the works of Rembrandt and contemporary printmaking artists Charles Humes, Jr., Jennifer Printz, and Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz. Discuss the context of the prints by an Old Master in comparison to the approaches that depart dramatically in technique by these contemporary artists.

**Connect:** View Rembrandt Reframed at the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum. View video [Rembrandt and Printmaking](#). Discuss the multi-step printmaking process and techniques Rembrandt perfected.

**Studio Experiences:** Explore a variety of printmaking process with a change in rigor, media material, and composition themes.

### Elementary

- Grades 2 & 3
  - **Relief Printing** – Explore the Dutch landscape. Have students create a contour line drawing of Dutch inspired imagery on tagboard. Have students cut out their designs and re-arrange/glue onto another tagboard piece to create the printing plate. Ink the relief plate and pull some prints.
  - **Crayon Etching** - Explore Rembrandt’s artwork themes. Create a sketch of a landscape, architecture scene or portrait. Using white drawing paper, add crayon in a heavy format. Students can focus on a color scheme such as cool or warm colors. Add heavy coat of black wash or tempera over the heavy crayon. Use an etching tool to scratch out the sketch design of a landscape, architecture scene or portrait. Removing the ink and allowing the crayon colors to appear.
  - **Benchmarks** – VA.2.C.1.1, VA.2.C.1.2, VA.2.F.1.1, VA.2.F.1.2, VA.2.S.1.1, VA.2.S.1.2, VA.3.S.3.1, VA.3.S.3.2, VA.3.S.3.3, and VA.3.S.3.4
- Grades 4 & 5
  - **Styrofoam Printing** - Explore Rembrandt’s artwork themes. Create a sketch of a landscape, architecture scene or portrait. Transfer the sketch design onto the Styrofoam plate. Ink the Styrofoam plate design and pull some prints.

- **Gel Printing** - Explore Rembrandt's artwork themes. Create a sketch of a landscape, architecture scene or portrait. Transfer the sketch design onto the Gel plate. Ink the gel plate design and pull some prints.
- **Acrylic Gel Medium Transfer Printing** - Explore Rembrandt's artwork themes. Create a sketch of a landscape, architecture scene or portrait using oil pastels, tempera paint or color sticks. Photograph the images and print in color. Apply 4-6 coats of acrylic gel medium to the printed image, allowing for each thin coat about 10-20 mins to dry between coats. Allow 48-72 hours for the image to dry completely. Place the gelled image in a tray with water to allow for the paper to dissolve. Once the paper is dissolved the acrylic gel transfer process is complete.  
[Acrylic Gel Medium Transfer Video](#)
- **Benchmarks** - VA.4.C.1.1, VA.4.C.1.2, VA.4.F.1.1, VA.4.F.1.2, VA.4.S.1.1, VA.4.S.1.2, VA.4.S.2.1, VA.4.S.2.2, VA.5.C.2.1, VA.5.C.2.3, VA.5.O.1.2, VA.5.S.1.1, VA.5.S.1.4, VA.5.S.2.2, VA.5.S.3.1, VA.5.S.3.2, VA.5.S.3.3, and VA.5.S.3.4

### Middle School

- Grades 6-8
  - Easy Cut and Linoleum Printing – Use an Easy Cut or Linoleum Block to create a reduction print. Explore Rembrandt's artwork themes. Create a sketch of a landscape, architecture scene or portrait and transfer the design onto the Easy Cut or Linoleum Block. Carve out all the negative spaces using a linoleum cutting tool. Select the printing inks and prepare the printing station. Ink the Easy Cut or Linoleum plate and pull some prints. Continue to carve out the design and pull layered prints in a variety of ink colors.
  - **Benchmarks:** VA.68.C.1.3, VA.68.C.2.3, VA.68.C.3.4, VA.68.H.1.3, VA.68.H.1.3, VA.68.O.1.2, VA.68.S.1.4, VA.68.S.2.2, VA.68.S.2.3, VA.68.S.3.2, and VA.68.S.3.3

### High School

- Grades 9-12
  - **Etchings** - Create a sketch of a landscape, architecture scene or portrait and transfer the design onto the metallic etching plate. Using an etching needle, gently scratch away parts the design, thereby exposing the metal beneath. Once the design is etched into the metal plate, dip the plate into the acid tray. The chemical reaction on the incised lines of the plate prepares it for printing. Ink etching plate and pull some prints.
  - **Benchmarks:** VA.912.C.1.2, VA.912.C.1.4, VA.912.C.2.1, VA.912.C.2.4, VA.912.C.3.1, VA.912.C.3.5, VA.912.F.1.2, VA.912.H.2.1, VA.912.H.3.1, VA.912.H.3.3, VA.912.O.1.3, VA.912.O.3.1, VA.912.S.1.1, VA.912.S.1.4 VA.912.S.2.1, VA.912.S.2.4, VA.912.S.3.1, VA.912.S.3.5, VA.912.S.3.7, VA.912.S.3.9, VA.912.S.3.11

**Assess/Connect:** Self-Assessment and Critique, have students respond to their work through a self-assessment worksheet with the following questions:

- What did you learn through the printmaking process/style you explored?
- Why did you choose your theme? What inspired your composition?
- What would you have done differently in your printmaking process?

## Resources

[National Gallery of Art: Rembrandt van Rijn](#)

[Rembrandt's Printmaking Process: 17<sup>th</sup> Century Etching](#)

[Rembrandt & Printmaking](#)

[Relief Printing Lino Cut](#)

[Rijks Museum: Rembrandt](#)

[The Getty: Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn](#)

[https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rembp/hd\\_rembp.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rembp/hd_rembp.htm)

Video: <https://www.christies.com/features/Alexander-Massouras-demonstrates-how-Rembrandt-made-his-greatest-works-7517-3.aspx>

Recycle - Repurpose and recycle your printmaking blocks into stamps, re-use to print with markers or print onto clay.

**More Information:**

Source: <https://artist.christies.com/harmensz-van-rijn-rembrandt--48887.aspx>

**Harmensz. van Rijn Rembrandt**

The son of a miller, Rembrandt was born in Leiden, where he studied painting first with Jacob van Swanenburgh and then with Pieter Lastman in Amsterdam. He opened a workshop in Leiden in around 1624, shared with his friend Jan Lievens, where he aimed to establish himself as a history painter, winning the admiration of the poet and courtier Constantijn Huygens. Seeking to develop his career, he moved to Amsterdam in 1631 and joined the Guild of Saint Luke in 1634, in which year he also married his wife Saskia. She died in 1642 shortly after the birth of their son Titus, by which point Rembrandt was already in financial straits due to excessive spending on paintings, antiquities and props for his history pictures. By 1656 he was close to bankruptcy and was forced to sell much of his collection, before being obliged in 1660 to move to more modest accommodation. The last few years of his life were dogged by financial difficulties and darkened by the death of his beloved son Titus in 1668, whom he survived by only a year.

**Etchings: (Website inks will expand to offer more in depth information)**

Rembrandt created some 300 [etchings](#) and [drypoints](#) from about 1626 to 1665. His career as a printmaker ran parallel to his [career as a painter](#)—he rarely treated the same themes in both media and only occasionally did he reproduce his paintings in prints. Above all, he was a great innovator and experimenter in this medium, often handling traditional materials in unconventional ways. His impact on [printmaking](#) is still reflected in etchings produced today.

Rembrandt began etching early in his career while he was still in Leiden. His own face is a common feature in his earliest prints, which were probably meant as studies of varied expressions rather than self-portraits. He also often portrayed family and people he knew around him (*The Artist's Mother*, [18.72](#)). In later years, he still etched unconventional and beautiful introspective portraits like that of the goldsmith Jan Lutma the Elder (1656; [20.46.18](#)), in which he evoked the shifting play of light on the sitter.

Once he had moved from Leiden to Amsterdam, Rembrandt tried his hand at creating larger, highly finished prints related to paintings like *The Good Samaritan* (1633; [41.1.53](#)), but he soon turned away from such formal and polished uses of printmaking meant to publicize a painter's work. Many of his prints are small and sketchy. In *Sheet with Two Studies* ([1970.705](#)), he even treated the printing plate like a drawing book, compiling seemingly unrelated and half-finished images.

Rembrandt was fascinated with subjects from the Old and New Testaments and, as in *Abraham and Isaac* ([29.107.26](#)), enjoyed revealing the realistic human emotion and narrative detail inspired by these stories. [Landscapes](#) were another favorite print subject. *The Three Trees* ([29.107.31](#)), in which he evoked the typically blustery and rainy Dutch weather, is the most intensely dramatic of these works. He created landscape prints at two different moments in his career, one group in the 1640s and another in the 1650s, at which time he reprinted many of the prints from the earlier group. Many of his landscapes, for instance *The Windmill* (1641; [41.1.12](#)) or *Clump of Trees with a Vista* ([20.46.4](#)), appear to have been created outside in nature, although in most cases he composed them in the studio from drawings that he made in the countryside around Amsterdam.

Rembrandt owned a large collection of prints by such earlier masters as [Albrecht Dürer](#), Lucas van Leyden, and Antonio Tempesta, and he often drew inspiration from their work. For instance, the *Beggar Leaning on a Stick, Facing Left* ([26.72.156](#)) and other such seemingly naturalistic studies of people on the street were no doubt created on the model of the Frenchman Jacques Callot's series of etchings of beggars (1620–23).

By the 1650s, Rembrandt began to treat the printing plate much like a canvas—leaving some ink or tone on the surface of the plate in order to create “painted” impressions of prints in which each impression would look different depending on the way he had inked the plate. For example, *The Entombment* (ca. 1654; [20.46.17](#)) was printed in the first state without plate tone so that only the etched lines are visible. In the second state, however, he produced subtle, moody impressions of the same image by leaving a good deal of ink on the surface of the printing plate and then wiping it away in certain areas to create highlights, as he did on the body of Christ and a few of the figures around him in the Metropolitan Museum's impression ([23.51.7](#)). The *Reclining Female Nude*, also known as the “*Negress*” *Lying Down* (1658; [29.107.28](#)), received its title due to the rich, dark tone that Rembrandt achieved by combining layers of etching and drypoint lines with plate tone. He also experimented with the differing effects that could be obtained by printing on various types of papers and other supports. He printed the impression of the second state of *The Three Crosses* on vellum ([41.1.31](#)), a surface that brings a warm overall tone to the image and emphasizes the richness of the ink Rembrandt left on the surface of the plate and the velvety burr created by his drypoint lines.

Rembrandt often dramatically reworked his late prints, creating almost entirely new visions of a subject with each state. Since he preserved so many stages of his working process, the present-day viewer can in a certain sense bear witness to it. As the plate of *The Three Crosses* was wearing down, Rembrandt chose to create a very different version of the scene in a fourth state by scraping and polishing away large portions of the foreground and drawing with drypoint new figures and emphatic hatching in its place. He shifted the moment in the story and created an even more dark and dramatic biblical representation. He also reworked various states of *Christ Presented to the People*, another large print composed entirely in drypoint. The second state, printed on warm-toned japan paper ([41.1.34](#)), displays a lively assortment of figures in the foreground, each one reacting to the scene in a different manner. He erased the entire group in

a later state so that by the eighth state, there is nothing separating the direct confrontation of Christ and the viewer. By the 1650s, Rembrandt had avid fans of his prints as far [south](#) as Italy, who collected many states and varied impressions of these remarkable works.

---

**Citation**

Orenstein, Nadine. "Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669): Prints." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–.

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rembp/hd\\_rembp.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rembp/hd_rembp.htm) (October 2004)

**Source:**

[https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rembp/hd\\_rembp.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rembp/hd_rembp.htm)





The Good Samaritan 1633

This etching depicts the final scene in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) in which the Samaritan stopped to help a traveler who had been attacked by robbers. Here he has brought the wounded man on

horseback to an inn and pays for the man's care and lodging. This is one of two etchings in which Rembrandt reproduced his own paintings. The Good Samaritan repeats with several variations the composition of his painting in the Wallace Collection, London. Among Rembrandt's additions here to the largely empty foreground that appeared in the painting is the defecating dog that adds a note of everyday reality to the biblical scene.