

Press release
New exhibition
From April 25 to September 2, 2024

REMBRANDT

Etchings from the Boijmans Van Beuningen

*A great master of the Dutch Golden Age
is honoured in Québec City*

Parc des Champs-de-Bataille
Québec (Québec) G1R 5H3

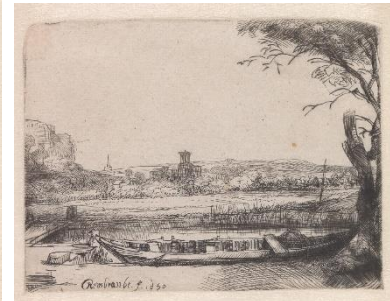
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Québec City, Wednesday, April 24, 2024 ✦ The indispensable, timeless work of Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), the great master of 17th century European art, will be presented at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) from April 25 to September 2, 2024.

In an exclusive Canadian engagement through an outstanding loan from a prestigious Dutch museum, the *Rembrandt. Etchings from the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen* international exhibition of a scope rarely seen in Canada assembles 80 etchings of one of the greatest engravers of all time in an unforgettable intimate experience.

Art that transcends the centuries

A major figure of the Dutch Golden Age, Rembrandt contributed decisively to the flourishing of Baroque Art and is recognized for his highly personal treatment of chiaroscuro and his very modern humanism. His art is celebrated for its vivid imagination and striking emotional richness and has been universally admired since the 17th century.

Rembrandt achieved notoriety during his lifetime through his engraved work, which was much more extensively disseminated in Europe than his paintings and drawings. Generations of enthusiasts, artists, and collectors have admired the remarkable fluidity of his strokes and his outstanding mastery of light.

Rembrandt, the absolute master of engraving



Trained as a painter, Rembrandt was self-taught as an engraver. He readily drew inspiration from the work of his contemporaries and reinvented the technique. Spurred by a desire to secure a place among his most illustrious predecessors, the artist revolutionized the art of engraving by adopting a resolutely experimental approach and by developing the process to the utmost. Like Albrecht Dürer, Käthe Kollwitz or Francisco de Goya and Pablo Picasso, Rembrandt ranks among the foremost masters in the history of European engraving. He produced some of the most celebrated works in the medium and his impact on the discipline is still relevant today.

Rembrandt produced 300 engravings between 1625 and 1665. Most of the works are etchings, a complex technique in which the image is etched on a copper plate using an acid. For Rembrandt, etching was a full-fledged art form equal to painting that he researched passionately throughout his career. Almost all his prints are original works independent of his paintings. Moreover, one section of the exhibition explains the creative process surrounding his works to reveal the complexity of this technique that the Dutch artist mastered perfectly.

An array of themes selected

The exhibition includes all the subjects that Rembrandt broached over time, i.e., portraits and self-portraits, religious and mythological scenes, genre scenes, landscapes, nudes, and study sheets. His self-portraits reconstitute the artist's biography while his religious prints propose a unique, truly spectacular interpretation of the Bible. Certain of Rembrandt's religious works are among his most ambitious. His landscapes reveal an artist of great sensitivity. His portraits and genre scenes display the full diversity of Dutch society at the time. All or almost all the themes afforded Rembrandt a pretext for innovation.



Rembrandt and etchings

Most of Rembrandt's works are etchings, a technique in which the image is etched on a copper plate using an acid (the *aqua fortis* of the ancient alchemists). The artist draws his design using a metal point on a metal plate that has been varnished beforehand. The plate is then placed in an acid bath that etches away the areas that the drawing exposes, leaving the other parts intact. The hollows are then inked and placed on a press to make several paper prints.



Among the various engraving techniques, etching is the means of expression that painters favour since it achieves effects similar to those of a pen nib and affords a freedom of execution similar to that of drawing. Etchings emerged in the late 15th century but blossomed through Rembrandt's innovations.

Several remarkable engravings by Rembrandt

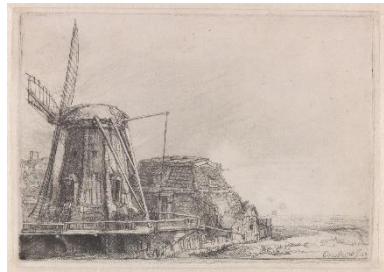
The works selected for the Québec City exhibition will offer a panorama that reveals Rembrandt's outstanding skill as an engraver in the human, aesthetic, and technical dimensions of engraving. Moreover, the exhibition includes the artist's greatest masterpieces and several other outstanding works.



Among the essential engravings, *Christ Blessing the Children and Healing the Sick* (circa 1648) is one of the most celebrated prints of all time and attests Rembrandt's considerable mastery. The work display great virtuosity. The extremely varied strokes and subtle light effects made it an immediate success. Dubbed *The Hundred Guilder Print*, it reached an unrivalled price on the art market during the artist's lifetime. It is worth noting that at the time, for 100 florins (the currency of the Netherlands), it was possible to purchase an oil painting by the artist, whereas his prints usually cost pennies.



The Three Crosses (1653) ranks among Rembrandt's most experimental, surprising engravings. The print was not produced by means of etching but instead by dry-point engraving on the copper plate. The exceptional light makes the silhouettes emerge from deep darkness, an effect that is extremely hard to obtain. The work is structured by powerful contrasts of shadow and light that help create an inspired, visionary atmosphere.



The Mill (1641) is noteworthy for the refinement of the details that Rembrandt represents in the work. In his rendering of this landscape, the artist, a miller's son, who was thoroughly familiar with Dutch windmills, succeeded in making the engraving especially touching. The print enjoyed immense success and Rembrandt made several printings of it.



Rembrandt's mother served as a model in several etchings, including *The Artist's Mother in a Cloth Headdress, Looking Down* (1633). He did not seek to idealize the mother of 10 children who was 65 years old when he produced this work. In point of fact, Rembrandt did not produce her portrait but instead "tronies," studies of facial expressions that enabled him to explore the representation of an array of expressions and emotions.

*Three Studies of Heads, One Sleeping** (1637), one of the most astonishing facets of Rembrandt's output, is a print and not a drawing. The women's faces with varied expressions exactly resemble the sketches that Rembrandt drew at the same period. The artist's engravings include several works of this type and Rembrandt deemed them completed works.

In *Adam and Eve** (1638), another surprising engraving, Rembrandt decided to show Adam and Eve at a certain age with bodies much less idealized than was usually the case in art at the time. Hence, the artist sought to show the consequences of their sin and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden as described in Genesis. The gestures and gesticulations

of the characters express hesitation, judgment, and scepticism. In this way, Rembrandt added a psychological dimension to the Old Testament story.

*Saint Jerome Writing Under a Willow Tree** presents a serene rural scene and is one of the seven representations that Rembrandt made of Saint Jerome between 1629 and 1654. Saint Jerome enjoyed exceptional renown in Protestant countries, as Rembrandt's interest in this intellectual attests.

The print *The Great Jewish Bride* (1635) was thus named in the early 18th century. Specialists now believe that the work represents the Old Testament heroine Esther. Saskia, Rembrandt's wife, was probably the model. The homogeneous lighting and meticulous attention to the rendering of textures are fascinating and reveal the extent to which the artist mastered single and cross-cutting while skilfully combining etching, dry point, and engraving.

The exhibition also displays several works by other artists from whom Rembrandt drew inspiration and the work of some of his students and collaborators. Visitors can also examine several posthumous printings of the master's works and compare the original prints and the later versions. The exhibition is sure to please engraving enthusiasts.



Three major works presented above, from left to right : *Three Studies of Heads, One Sleeping, Adam and Eve Saint Jerome Writing Under a Willow Tree.*

Québec works that echo Rembrandt

This major exhibition is enabling the MNBAQ to highlight a selection of works from its collections since Rembrandt's art has inspired many artists since the 17th century. Throughout the exhibition, visitors can admire the works of Québec artists who have drawn inspiration from Rembrandt or Dutch Art from the Golden Age, whether from an iconographic or a stylistic standpoint. The works eloquently show how images and ideas circulated between Europe and North America, thus establishing a productive dialogue between works from different periods and indeed up to contemporary art. The parallels are presented on panels separate from the walls devoted to Rembrandt's engravings.

The 15 works from the MNBAQ's collections that accompany the exhibition have been produced by **Martin Bourdeau, Clarence Gagnon, Betty Goodwin, Cornelius Krieghoff, Joseph Légaré, Adrian Melaer, Ernst Neumann, William Notman, Amélie Proulx, Jocelyn Robert, Robert Savoie, and Harven van Steenwyck.**

An audio guide to enhance the exhibition experience

Visitors who wish to examine in greater depth the exhibition can do so with the audio guide created by the MNBAQ. They can discover Rembrandt's creative genius and why the modernity of his printed works fascinates as much as it does today. The circuit is available free of charge in English and in French on mobile devices. It highlights the key engravings assembled at the MNBAQ, the themes that Rembrandt explored during his prolific career, his sources of inspiration, and the personal life of this ambitious, fervid artist. It proposes a fascinating voyage to the heart of Rembrandt's life.

To listen : <https://www.mnbaq.org/activite/audioguide-rembrandt-etchings-from-the-museum-boijmans-van-beuningen-1296>



Rembrandt's Life

1606

Birth of Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn in Leiden (Netherlands). He is the ninth of ten children born to miller Harmen Gerritszoon van Rijn and Neeltgen Willemsdochter van Zuytbrouck, a baker's daughter. The family name van Rijn, meaning "from the Rhine," alludes to the river running beside the family mill.



1620

Having studied at the town's Latin School for several years, Rembrandt enrolls at Leiden University.

1624

After completing an apprenticeship with the painter Jacob van Swanenburg and pursuing his training in the Amsterdam studio of history painter Pieter Lastman, Rembrandt establishes himself as an independent artist in Leiden and produces his first works.

1628

Rembrandt executes his first dated etchings – two portraits of his mother – and his first self-portraits.

1631

Rembrandt moves to the bustling and cosmopolitan city of Amsterdam, where he resides with the art dealer Hendrick Uylenburgh.

1632

Rembrandt receives his first major commission, *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (The Hague, Mauritshuis).

1633

Rembrandt begins signing his paintings with his first name only, emulating such great painters of the Italian Renaissance as Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael.



1634

Rembrandt marries Saskia Uylenburgh, his art dealer's niece and the wealthy heiress to a former mayor of Leeuwarden. The artist is made a citizen of Amsterdam and joins the city's painters' guild. His studio attracts numerous students.

1639

Rembrandt and Saskia purchase, on credit, a sumptuous house in the centre of Amsterdam, now the Museum Rembrandthuis (Rembrandt House Museum). The artist becomes a keen collector of art works and curiosities.

1642

Saskia dies at the age of thirty from tuberculosis, less than a year after giving birth to the couple's son, Titus. Rembrandt completes *The Night Watch* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum).

1648

Rembrandt publishes his most famous etching, *The Hundred Guilder Print*.

1653

Faced with financial difficulties after years of extravagant spending, the artist appeals to his friends for loans. He executes *The Three Crosses*, one of the high points of his work as a printmaker.

1654

Birth of Cornelia, the daughter of the artist and his young servant, Hendrickje Stoffels. Accused of fornication, Hendrickje is summoned before the church council.

1656

The artist declares insolvency and his possessions are inventoried. Over the next two years his large art collection, which includes several thousand prints by Northern and Italian artists, will be sold off.

1658

The artist and his family move into a modest house in the Jordaan district. Following Rembrandt's bankruptcy, his young son Titus and his common-law wife Hendrickje take formal charge of his art business.

1662

Rembrandt undertakes his last major painting commission, *The Syndics of the Amsterdam Drapers' Guild* (Rijksmuseum).

1663

Hendrickje dies of the plague.

1665

Rembrandt produces his last etching, a portrait of Jan Antonides van der Linden.



1667

The Florentine Duke Cosimo III de' Medici visits Rembrandt, referring to him as a "famous painter."

1668

Titus marries, but dies in the fall of the same year.

1669

Death of Rembrandt at the age of sixty-three. His final paintings are self-portraits.

The Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, in a nutshell

The works in this exhibition are drawn from the celebrated print collection of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, founded in 1849. Its collection comprises more than 150 000 artworks created from 1350 to the present and includes some of Europe's biggest groupings of Flemish and Dutch, Impressionist, and Surrealist painting. The museum is closed for several years to undergo major renovations. In 2021 it inaugurated the world's first publicly accessible art storage facility, where its complete collection is accessible to the public.

To obtain additional information, please visit

<https://www.boijmans.nl/en>



museum
boijmans **B** van
beuningen



Credits

The exhibition has been made possible by an exceptional loan of artworks from the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. It has received financial support from the Québec government and Québec City under the *Agreement on Cultural Development*. The contribution comes from the *Mesure d'aide financière à l'intention des musées d'État pour des expositions internationales majeures*.

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From April 25 to Septembre 2, 2024

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Page 1 – Photos from top to bottom and left to right: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait with Saskia*, 1636. Etching, 90 x 92 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, MS 640 (PK), from the estate of H.M. Montauban van Swijndregt, 1929 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink // Rembrandt van Rijn, *Landscape with Three Gabled Cottages beside a Road*, 1650. Etching and drypoint, 162 x 204 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 2002/323 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink // Rembrandt van Rijn, *Canal with a Large Boat and a Bridge*, 1650. Etching and drypoint, 82 x 108 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 2009/330 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

Page 2 – Photo: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Woman Bathing her Feet at a Brook*, 1658. Etching and drypoint on Japanese paper, 160 x 80 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 1997/318 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

Page 3 – Photos from top to bottom: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Fourth Head of a Man in Eastern Costume*, about 1635. Etching, 154 x 115 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 2022/342 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink // Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Artist Drawing from the Model*, about 1639. Etching and drypoint, 229 x 183 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 1994/315 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

Page 4 – Photos from top to bottom: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ Blessing the Children and Healing the Sick* (“*The Hundred Guilder Print*”), about 1648. Etching, engraving and drypoint, 278 x 392 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 1971/292 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink // Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Three Crosses*, 1653. Drypoint, 384 x 451 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 1974/295 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink // Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Windmill*, 1641. Etching and drypoint, 145 x 208 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 2007/328 (PK), donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink // Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Artist’s Mother in a Cloth Headdress, Looking Down: Head Only*, 1633. Etching, 42 x 43 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 2030/350 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

Page 5 – Photos from top to bottom: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Three Heads of Women: One Asleep*, 1637. Etching, 100 x 90 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 2032/352 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink // Rembrandt van Rijn, *Adam and Eve*, 1638. Etching, 154 x 116 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 1951/272 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis,

1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink // Rembrandt van Rijn, *Saint Jérôme écrivant sous un saule*, 1648. Eau-forte et pointe sèche, 177 x 132 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 1979/300 (PK). Don du Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

Page 6 – Photos from top to bottom: Jocelyn Robert, *Automoiré n° 6*, 2018. Digital inkjet print, 1/3, 106,7 × 78,7 cm. MNBAQ, purchase (2019.864) © Jocelyn Robert / Photo: MNBAQ, Denis Legendre // Amélie Proulx, *From the Zenith to the Nadir II*, 2017. Porcelain, 60 cm (diameter) × 5 cm (depth). MNBAQ, purchase for the Prêt d'œuvres d'art Collection (CP.2018.252) © Amélie Proulx / Photo: MNBAQ, Denis Legendre

Page 7 – Photo: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait with Raised Sabre*, 1634. Etching and burin, 121 × 99 cm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 1948/269 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

Page 8 – Photos from top to bottom: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Abraham Entertaining the Angels*, 1656. Etching and drypoint, retouched with brush and grey ink, 159 x 132 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 1952/273 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink // Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ Presented to the People*, 1655. Drypoint, printed on vellum, 354 x 432 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 1973/294 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

Page 9 – Photo: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Cornelis Claesz Anslo, Preacher*, 1641. Etching and drypoint, 187 x 155 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 2014/334 (PK). Donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink // Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Photo: Aad Hoogendoorn

Page 10 – Photos from top to bottom: Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ Preaching ('La Petite Tombe')*, circa 1657. Etching and drypoint, 155 x 207 mm. Collection Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, DN 1966/287 (PK), donation Dr. A.J. Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1923 / Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

General Information

OPENING HOURS OF THE MNBAQ*

Until June 21, 2024

Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday until 9 p.m.

Closed on Monday, except May 20, 2024

From June 22 to September 2, 2024

Monday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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** During the construction of the Riopelle Space, only the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion is open.*

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