

Celebrating Rembrandt: Etchings from the Morgan
July 15 through October 1, 2006

Exhibition Labels

To celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Rembrandt (1606–1669), the Morgan presents selected etchings from its exceptional holdings. Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913) laid the foundation for this collection—the finest in North America—when he acquired his first etchings from Theodore Irwin, Sr., in 1900 and George W. Vanderbilt in 1906. Today the Morgan has most of the known etchings by Rembrandt, many of superb quality, as well as multiple, often exceedingly rare impressions of various states. This exhibition showcases some of the most celebrated etchings in the collection along with a few lesser-known and rarely exhibited examples.

Rembrandt's career as a printmaker paralleled his work as a painter. From his youth in Leiden to his later years in Amsterdam, he created some three hundred etchings and drypoints. His fascination with the world around him, his technical brilliance, and his desire to capture a wide array of subjects enabled him to create etchings unrivaled in their dramatic intensity, penetrating psychology, and touching humanity. This exhibition celebrates Rembrandt's skill as a master storyteller and is organized according to some of the recurring themes of his work, including portraiture, the Bible, everyday life, the nude, and landscape.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Self-Portrait in a Soft Hat and Embroidered Cloak, 1631

Bartsch 7. White and Boon 7. Tenth state of eleven.

Etching

This is Rembrandt's first etched self-portrait proper, as opposed to earlier character studies based on his own features. Made the year he moved from Leiden to Amsterdam, it marks a departure in his self-depictions; here he is portrayed as a member of the wealthy merchant class, with a touch of the courtier. Running to eleven states, its execution occupied him for considerable time. The present state is the tenth, to which he added folds and a lace pattern to the collar as well as the signature at upper right.

RvR 8. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1900; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Self-Portrait with Saskia, 1636

Bartsch 19. White and Boon 19. Third state of three.

Etching

This is the only etching in which Rembrandt portrayed himself with his first wife, Saskia van Uylenburgh. Both are dressed in historical costume; he wears a sixteenth-century hat with a notched rim and a feather and Saskia, a veil. In addition to being a literal representation of the married couple, this scene may allude to the prevalent Dutch theme of love as the source of artistic creativity.

(P) 1949.5. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1900; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

The Artist's Son, Titus, ca. 1656

Bartsch 11. White and Boon 11. Only state.

Etching

Titus, born in 1641, the fourth child of Rembrandt and Saskia, was the only one to survive to adulthood. Here his eyes are downcast, his expression pensive. Known in only a few impressions, this etching is usually dated to about 1656, a year after the signed and dated painted portrait in the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam. It is executed in the economical vocabulary of parallel shading strokes often seen in other etchings of the 1650s.

RvR 13. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

An Elderly Woman (Rembrandt's Mother, Head and Bust), 1628

Bartsch 354. White and Boon 354. Second state of two.

Etching and drypoint

During Rembrandt's early years, his family often served as ad hoc models. This delicate portrait of his mother is one of the two earliest dated etchings by the artist. It is also one of the most sensitively observed. The sitter's wrinkled face attests to the passage of time and the marks of a long, full life. Respectful of his mother's dignity, Rembrandt captured the irregularities of her highly expressive face with fine lines, dots, and flicks of the etching needle.

RvR 470. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1900; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Saskia with Pearls in Her Hair, 1634

Bartsch 347. White and Boon 347. Only state.

Etching

Rembrandt's adored first wife, Saskia, was one of his favorite models. They were engaged as Saskia approached her twenty-first birthday and married the following year, on 22 June 1634. Rembrandt made this delicate etching of her the year they were married. She is elegantly dressed in a lace bodice with puffed sleeves and adorned with pearls—a double-strand necklace, earrings, and embellishments in her soft, wispy hair.

RvR 461. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

The Great Jewish Bride, 1635

Bartsch 340. White and Boon 340. Fifth state of five.

Etching, with some drypoint and burin

Rembrandt often cast Saskia in various roles—an aristocratic beauty, a biblical heroine, a martyred saint, or a classical goddess. Here, he portrays her as grand and stately, as seen in the final state of the so-called *Great Jewish Bride*, the title given this work by early writers who believed the subject was the daughter of the Portuguese physician Ephraim Bueno (Bonus). Recently it has been proposed that she is more likely Esther, the celebrated Old Testament heroine.

RvR 453. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

The Great Jewish Bride, 1635

Bartsch 340. White and Boon 340. Second state of five.

Etching, with some drypoint and burin

This impression from the incomplete plate reveals that Rembrandt began with a study of Saskia's head and abundant hair. She is situated in a stone niche and brightly illuminated from the left. The light plays over her face, and her unruly tresses cascade down her shoulders, in contrast to the hard, gritty surface of the walls. At this point she lacks, with the exception of the diadem in her hair, the attributes of Esther, the Old Testament heroine.

RvR 452. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Jacob Caressing Benjamin, ca. 1645

Bartsch 33. White and Boon 33. First state of two.

Etching

As described in Genesis, Joseph's brothers requested that their youngest sibling, Benjamin, the patriarch Jacob's son, join their trip to Egypt in search of grain to alleviate the famine in their land. Their father Jacob refused to let him go. Rembrandt focuses on the love and concern of the elderly father for his young boy. Simple gestures communicate their deep bond—the father's hands that tenderly cradle the child's head and the boy's trusting innocence as he leans against his father's knee.

RvR 40. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Abraham Entertaining the Angels, 1656

Bartsch 29. White and Boon 29. Only state.

Etching and drypoint on Japanese paper

In this interpretation of Genesis 18:1–15, three strangers, God's messengers, deliver the news that the ninety-year-old Abraham and his barren wife Sarah are to have a child. Abraham, holding a jug at right, modestly bows to his guests. Ishmael, his son with his maid Hagar, plays with a bow and arrow alongside the house. Behind the partially open door, Sarah listens intently. The arrangement and manner of seating of the central group derive from Indian miniatures that Rembrandt may have owned.

RvR 37. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Abraham Casting Out Hagar and Ishmael, 1637

Bartsch 30. White and Boon 30. Only state.

Etching with touches of drypoint

Believing they were unable to have children of their own, Sarah sent Abraham to her maid Hagar, who eventually bore him a son, Ishmael. Years later, after the birth of Isaac, Sarah asked Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away into the desert (Genesis, 21:1–21). Rembrandt set the drama within a domestic setting, in this case the back door of a house. Abraham gestures to the grief-stricken Hagar, though in the end remains at home with his wife and son, seen peering from the window and door, respectively.

RvR 38. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Abraham's Sacrifice, 1655

Bartsch 35. White and Boon 35. Only state.

Etching and drypoint

God tested Abraham's faith by demanding that he kill his son Isaac (Genesis 22:1–19). The angel has just arrived on the scene, and Abraham and the kneeling Isaac, barely discernible in the folds of his father's robe, are frozen in the shaft of light from above. The angel restrains Abraham, firmly grasping both arms, but it is not clear whether Abraham, obviously in a state of distress, actually sees the angel as he grasps his knife with one hand, masking his son's eyes with the other.

RvR 43. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

The Angel Appearing to the Shepherds, 1634

Bartsch 44. White and Boon 44. Third state of three.

Etching, burin, and drypoint

With a blast of light in the night sky, the angel arrives to proclaim the birth of the Messiah. The terrified herdsmen and their flocks run for cover, and others drop to their knees, stunned by the unexpected vision. With its rich deep blacks, extended tonal range, and nocturnal glow, this etching, seen here in an early impression, represents one of Rembrandt's earliest pictorial successes in the medium. To achieve subtle nuances and a full tonal range, he used a fine network of etched hatching, which he then reworked with the burin, subtly rendering degrees of darkness.

RvR 65. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

The Adoration of the Shepherds, ca. 1656–57

Bartsch 46. White and Boon 46. Fourth state of eight.

Etching, drypoint, and burin

Rembrandt often chose to portray emotionally charged events from the life of Christ. In this depiction of the shepherd's visit to the newborn, the natural sequel to the *Annunciation to the Shepherds* (also on view), the figures' faces are illuminated by a lantern carried by one of the shepherds. A secondary light source at right reveals the emotional center of the

composition: the reclining Virgin, who drowsily pulls back the blanket in order to reveal the swaddled, sleeping child.

RvR 68. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1922; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

The Flight into Egypt (A Night Piece), 1651

Bartsch 53. White and Boon 53. First and fifth states of six.

Etching, burin, and drypoint

Christ's parents, alerted by an angel in Joseph's dream, flee with the child into Egypt in order to avoid persecution by King Herod. The first state (at left) shows Rembrandt's fascination with the dazzling patterns of light and shadow thrown by the lantern and the rays of streaming moonlight. As he worked more on the plate, the darkness deepened to virtual obscurity. By the fifth state (at right), the glow of Joseph's lantern provides the only relief from the gloom of night.

RvR 82 and RvR 84. Both purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1922; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Presentation in the Temple (in the Dark Manner), 1654

Bartsch 50. White and Boon 50. Only state.

Etching, drypoint, and engraving on Japanese paper

As in many of Rembrandt's biblical etchings from the 1650s, darkness and light shape a mysterious and dramatic narrative. Christ's parents have brought the newborn child to the temple to be presented to the priest as required by law. Simeon, eyes closed in a moment of revelation, kneels before the seated high priest with the infant, whose face is veiled in shadow, in his arms. Christ's parents bow their heads reverently at left, while Anna peers down from upper right.

RvR 78. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

The Entombment, ca. 1654

Bartsch 86. White and Boon 86. First and third states of four.

Etching, drypoint, and burin

This etching, the *Presentation in the Temple* (also on view), and two others are virtually the same size, suggesting that Rembrandt intended to produce a series about the life of Christ. Here he experimented with diverse paper types and gradations of surface tone by varying the inking and wiping of the plate. The first state, at left, on Japanese paper, was executed primarily in etching; shadow and volume were achieved through simple hatching. In the dramatically different second state, at right, the artist used drypoint and burin to fill the background with a fine mesh of shading.

RvR 133 and RvR 135. Both purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Christ Returning from the Temple with His Parents, 1654

Bartsch 60. White and Boon 60. Only state.

Etching and drypoint

In 1654 Rembrandt created a group of six horizontal etchings on the theme of the childhood of Christ. This example—the last, most elaborate in the sequence—relates to the story of Christ’s earthly parents, who, after a three-day search, finally found their young son conversing with the Hebrew elders in the temple (Luke 2:48–51). Now on the road back to Nazareth, the young Christ gazes upward at his mother’s downcast face. His father, firmly gripping his left hand, marches him forward.

RvR 93. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Christ Preaching (“The Hundred Guilder Print”), ca. 1648

Bartsch 74. White and Boon 74. Second state of two.

Etching, drypoint, and engraving

This is an especially brilliant impression, printed on white European paper, of Rembrandt’s most famous etching. With its monumental scale, extraordinary technical virtuosity, and emphasis on human suffering, it represents a high point in his career as an etcher. The multitude follows Christ beyond the borders of Judea, where he heals the sick, preaches to the people, and answers the questions put to him by the Pharisees. Here Rembrandt explored a full range of technique as well as a spectrum of human emotion.

RvR 115. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Christ Presented to the People, 1655

Bartsch 76. White and Boon 76. First state of eight.

Drypoint on Japanese paper; strip added to the top before printing

This large-scale print was radically revised between the first and the seventh states. It depicts the moment following the interrogations, trials, and persecutions that ensued after Christ’s arrest. The turbaned Pilate, the Roman governor, asks the people to choose between Christ and Barabbas. Taking Lucas van Leyden’s celebrated engraving of the subject from 1510 as his starting point, Rembrandt situated the principal figures on a massive stone platform. The eager spectators represent a cross section of the Dutch populace.

RvR 118. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Christ Presented to the People, 1655

Bartsch 76. White and Boon 76. Eighth state of eight.

Drypoint

By the eighth state, seen here, the composition underwent radical revision, becoming increasingly more complete with a perceptible shift in mood. Rembrandt scraped away the crowd in front of the podium, intentionally retaining the abrasions. He added two dark arches, reminiscent of dungeon windows, at the base of the platform. Several of the figures were redrawn, and some figures were added. Set off by deeper shadows and

additional modeling, Christ is further isolated from the crowd.

RvR 119. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Christ Crucified Between Two Thieves (“The Three Crosses”), 1653

Bartsch 78. White and Boon 78. First state of five.

Drypoint and burin

Often considered a pair with *Christ Presented to the People* (also on view), this work depicts the moment of Christ’s death and the emphatic reactions of the people who witnessed it. The kneeling centurion raises his arms in an act of recognition and obeisance, while other figures are fleeing or being led away in shock. In this exceptional impression of the first state, the surface tone left along the foreground and at the sides reinforces the effect of a central shaft of light.

RvR 122. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1900; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Christ Crucified Between Two Thieves (“The Three Crosses”), 1653–55

Bartsch 78. White and Boon 78. Fourth state of five.

Drypoint and burin

This etching underwent a dramatic plate revision that radically changed its subject’s mood and tenor. The “darkness over all the earth,” described by Luke (23:44–48), obscures many of the participants, some of whom have been removed by scraping and burnishing while others have been added, such as the mounted soldier in front of the thief on the left. The image of Christ, now the focal point, is sharply focused and rendered in three dimensions. The pervading darkness threatens to extinguish his light.

RvR 124. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Beggar Man and Woman Behind a Bank, ca. 1630

Bartsch 165. White and Boon 165. Fifth state of nine.

Etching, drypoint, and burin; inscribed upper right, in brown ink, *P. mariette 1667*

During the Leiden years, from about 1629 to 1631, Rembrandt produced a large number of etchings of street people and beggars. These were inspired by the well-known series of etchings by Jacques Callot published in 1622–23. The elderly figures emerging from behind a darkened bank were heavily reworked in drypoint. Their expressive faces recall Rembrandt’s early self-portraits.

RvR 240. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

The Skater, ca. 1639

Bartsch 156. White and Boon 156. Only state.

Etching and drypoint

Rembrandt continued to make studies of individual figures after he moved to Amsterdam in 1631. In this small print, he depicted a familiar Dutch subject, the skater, moving briskly across a frozen canal.

RvR 231. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1900; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Beggars Receiving Alms at the Door of a House, 1648

Bartsch 176. White and Boon 176. First state of three.

Etching, drypoint, and burin

Rembrandt's interest in beggars as a pictorial motif continued well into the 1650s. In this monumental depiction composed with great care, a man and a woman with a boy and an infant stand before a house. The dweller, a bearded man wearing a house cap, appears at the door and places a coin in the woman's outstretched hand. The old man, who may be blind, holds a hurdy-gurdy, which is partly concealed by the little boy's head and shoulders.

RvR 257. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

The Monk in the Cornfield, ca. 1646

Bartsch 187. White and Boon 187. Only state.

Etching and drypoint

This exceedingly rare etching of a monk and a milkmaid engaged in sexual intercourse is part of a long artistic tradition that satirizes the unchaste behavior of the clergy. Lying at the edges of a field of tall corn, the couple remains oblivious to the farmer wielding a sickle at left. The milkmaid, having set aside her jug, pulls the robed monk to her with her right hand and heel. Conspicuously placed in the foreground is the monk's discarded prayer book, still in its leather pouch.

RvR 265. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

The Hog, 1643

Bartsch 157. White and Boon 157. First state of two.

Etching and drypoint

Rembrandt's portraitlike depiction of this weighty, trussed, and tethered sow is suggested by the description of her bristly coat as well as the careful rendering of her eye and expression. In the background, the father prepares for the slaughter, while at left, a young child, encouraged by the smiling mother, reaches out to pat the hog. With a straw or pin, the contented boy plays with an inflated bladder, a seventeenth-century Dutch *vanitas* symbol alluding to the brevity of life.

RvR 232. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1900; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Self-Portrait Leaning on a Stone Sill, 1639

Bartsch 21. White and Boon 21. First state of two.

Etching

With his permanent move to Amsterdam in about 1633, Rembrandt's etched self-portraits became more elaborate. Formal portraits by Renaissance artists Titian and Raphael were the point of departure for the present work, among his very finest etched portraits. He depicted himself with a cool, detached air, dressed regally in opulent sixteenth-century costume and standing behind a stone wall upon which he casually rests his elegantly clothed arm, his eyes challenging the viewer.

RvR 25. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Self-Portrait, Etching at a Window, 1648

Bartsch 22. White and Boon 22. First and second states of four.

Etching, drypoint, and burin on Japanese paper

This portrait print, in rare first and second states, is the first that Rembrandt made after the *Self-Portrait Leaning on a Stone Sill* of 1639 (also on view). Here he cast himself in quite a different role—an artist rather than a gentleman, busy at work in a dark, shadow-filled interior illuminated only by an open window. His expression is heavy with the cares of the world, as he firmly grasps his etching needle or pen.

First state: RvR 27. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1923.

Second state: RvR 28. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906.

Both gifts of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Jan Six, 1647

Bartsch 285. White and Boon 285. Second state of four.

Etching, drypoint, and burin on Japanese paper

Rembrandt etched the likeness of several learned men, mainly Dutch luminaries and others who played a significant role in his life. Jan Six, Rembrandt's patron and close friend, was a member of one of the leading families of Amsterdam, becoming a burgomaster in 1691. A notable collector, he was also interested in the arts, especially poetry. In 1647 Rembrandt made this etching of Six reclining gracefully against a windowsill, reading by sunlight, the warmth of which is suggested by yellow-toned Japanese paper.

RvR 400. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1909; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Clement de Jonghe, 1651

Bartsch 272. White and Boon 272. First and third states of six.

Etching, drypoint, and burin; first state on Japanese paper

An avid collector of Rembrandt's prints, de Jonghe was a noted print seller, map seller, and publisher in Amsterdam. Rembrandt produced four states of this etching, transforming the conception of the sitter (the fifth and later states are now considered posthumous). The subject is viewed straight on. In the first state, at left, printed on Japanese paper, the artist used open parallel hatching and lightly etched it over all with stipples suggesting the texture of skin. By the third state, at right, the shadowing of the sitter's face was intensified, making his features stronger and more sculptural. The shadows cast by the hat around the eyes and mouth impart an air of mystery.

First state: RvR 368. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1910; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Third state: (P)1947.5. Purchased in 1947.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Arnold Tholinx, ca. 1656

Bartsch 284. White and Boon 284. First state of two.

Etching, drypoint, and burin

Dr. Tholinx was inspector of the Amsterdam Collegium Medicum, the Company of Physicians, and one of Rembrandt's patrons. Around 1656, when the artist was having financial troubles, Tholinx commissioned this portrait print as well as a portrait in oil (Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris). Impressions of the first state are extremely rare, which indicates that few were ever made. The plate would have been the property of the sitter; therefore, its print run would have been limited.

RvR 399. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Adam and Eve, 1638

Bartsch 28. White and Boon 28. Second state of two.

Etching

The homely protagonists in this etching of 1638 are a far cry from the elegant depictions of the couple featured in more conventional treatments of the subject. Well past her prime and somewhat brutish in appearance, a rotund Eve proffers the forbidden fruit to her accepting partner. The menacing, dragonlike serpent hovers expectantly in the shadowy tree above. In the background, a lightly etched elephant is seen frolicking in the airy, sun-filled landscape of Eden in the moment preceding the Fall.

RvR 36. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Diana at the Bath, ca. 1631

Bartsch 201. White and Boon 201. Only state.

Etching

This frank depiction of the female nude was made early in Rembrandt's career, around 1631, the year in which he moved to Amsterdam. During this period he began to display a greater interest in mythological subjects, yet his approach was unconventional—only the quiver and arrows at left identify the subject as the goddess Diana.

RvR 285. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Reclining Woman, 1658

Bartsch 205. White and Boon 205. Second state of three.

Etching, drypoint, and burin on Japanese paper

This is among Rembrandt's most atmospheric etchings of female nudes. She stretches languorously in the intimate dark of her curtained bed. We do not see her face; instead the focus is on the volume and shape of her body and the pattern it makes against the bright sheets. Much of the impact depends on the careful inking and delicate wiping of the plate to model the figure combined with a meticulous fusion of etching, drypoint, and burin.

RvR 291. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1905; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Woman Sitting, with a Hat Beside Her, 1658

Bartsch 199. White and Boon 199. First state of two.

Etching and drypoint

During the last decade of his life, Rembrandt returned to producing etchings of the female nude. They form an extraordinary group, inventive and technically superb, reflecting his lifetime of experience and innovation in the medium. It is not known who modeled for these works, though early sources identify her alternatively as “Rembrandt’s concubine” or “the Jewish fiancée.” The inscription *Voor’t Chirurg* (for the surgeon) found on the back of an impression of the print in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, has led some scholars to conclude that Rembrandt gave the work to the surgeons’ guild in gratitude for the use of their facilities to draw nudes.

RvR 282. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Jupiter and Antiope, 1659

Bartsch 203. White and Boon 203. First state of two.

Etching, drypoint, and burin

Compared to Rembrandt’s treatment of the same subject almost thirty years earlier, this later print, based on Annibale Carracci’s 1592 etching of the same subject as well as other Italian and antique prototypes, presents a more intense, close-up view of the voyeur and his subject. This beautiful impression on white paper, unusually rich in drypoint and subtle chiaroscuro resulting from the film of ink left over the entire plate, attests to Rembrandt’s mastery of the print medium.

RvR 288. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1900; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Small Gray Landscape (House and Trees Beside a Pool), ca. 1640

Bartsch 207. White and Boon 207. Only state.

Etching

This small etching captures all the mystery of dusk as the setting sun casts long shadows across a pond. As in the evening, forms emerge after the eye adjusts to the darkness. Only then does one see the outline of the shore, house, trees, figures walking, and finally, the woman washing clothes in the lower left corner. Rembrandt used latticework of uniformly etched lines and in this example left a thick film of ink on the plate, enhancing the gray tonality.

RvR 293. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

The Three Trees, 1643

Bartsch 212. White and Boon 212. Only state.

Etching with drypoint and burin

This is Rembrandt’s largest and most ambitious landscape etching. The scene conveys nature’s capricious power over man. The fisherman and his companion at left, the lovers in the bush at right, the farmer with horse and buggy, and the little artist sketching on a hill at right will soon be engulfed by the impending storm. The print, complex in

conception and execution—it combines etching, drypoint, and engraving—approximates the theatrical language of Rembrandt’s most dramatic paintings.

RvR 299. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1900; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Cottages and Farm Buildings with a Man Sketching, about 1642–45

Bartsch 219. White and Boon 219. Only state.

Etching

Rembrandt captured the spirit of the Dutch countryside in some thirty etchings made from around the early 1640s to the early 1650s. This dilapidated farmhouse is typical of those found in the region surrounding Amsterdam. An outhouse is visible at left, and nearby, laundry has been hung to dry. Birds hover around the open hatch on the roof, while an artist is busy at work at lower right.

RvR 309. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Six’s Bridge, 1645

Bartsch 208. White and Boon 208. Third state of three.

Etching

The immediacy of atmosphere and the informal—yet realistic—composition gives this print the quality of a page from a landscape sketchbook. The etching replicates the sketchiness associated with Rembrandt’s landscape drawings of around the same period. The spontaneous style may have inspired the story that the etching was made after a wager by Jan Six that Rembrandt could not make a print in the time it took a servant to fetch a pot of mustard from the nearest village.

RvR 294. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1900; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Landscape with Trees, Farm Buildings, and a Tower, ca. 1651

Bartsch 223. White and Boon 223. First state of four.

Etching and drypoint

This site has been identified as farm buildings and the so-called house with the small tower on the road south of Amsterdam toward Amstelveen. The accuracy of the depiction and sense of immediacy suggest the plate was done at least partly outdoors. This fine impression of the first state contains surface tone (ink left on the flat surface of the copperplate before printing) in the foreground, enhancing the chiaroscuro effects of the late afternoon sun.

RvR 314. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1922; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Landscape with a View Toward Haarlem (“The Goldweigher’s Field”), 1651

Bartsch 234. White and Boon 234. Only state.

Etching and drypoint

In this panoramic view, fields, trees, grasses, and buildings are reduced to their most basic forms, while shorthand accents made in etching and drypoint give the impression of movement and depth in the open countryside. The view is from the dune Het Kopje, looking down over Haarlem and its environs. The traditional title derives from an

eighteenth-century identification of this as the country estate of the Amsterdam receiver-general, Jan Uytenbogaert, portrayed by Rembrandt as a goldweigher in an etching of 1639.

RvR 330. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Clump of Trees with a Vista, 1652

Bartsch 222. White and Boon 222. Second state of two.

Drypoint

Considered Rembrandt's last landscape print, this was executed entirely in drypoint. In the second state, exhibited here, the artist cut the plate down at the lower edge, completed the foliage, and added his signature. He used drypoint and burr to create rich contrasts and elaborate tonal effects. The tree at left stands out against the wall of black denoting a dense thicket at left, while at right, the network of flickering leaves and branches engulfs the farmhouse.

RvR 313. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1900; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

St. Francis Praying Beneath a Tree, 1657

Bartsch 107. White and Boon 107. Second state of two.

Drypoint and etching on Japanese paper

In this last print in which landscape plays a prominent role, Rembrandt depicted in drypoint and etching an aged St. Francis kneeling at the foot of a huge tree with a split trunk. Instead of portraying the miracle of stigmatization, when Christ appeared to the saint in a vision, Rembrandt chose the quiet moment just before, when the vision of the crucifix, seen here almost life size, appeared to the praying saint. He took special care in the printing of this impression, inking and wiping the surface tone to create a veil of mystery.

RvR 171. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1900; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

St. Jerome Reading in an Italian Landscape, ca. 1653

Bartsch 104. White and Boon 104. First state of two.

Etching, drypoint, and burin on Japanese paper

This is one of seven etchings of St. Jerome made by Rembrandt. In this early impression he fully exploited the possibilities of the technique, from the finest etched line in the figure of the saint to the soft black in the drypoint passages of the lion's mane. The landscape reflects an appreciation of sixteenth-century Venetian art, known through such engravings as those by Cornelis Cort after Titian and Giulio and Domenico Campagnola. The Italianate qualities are enhanced further by the yellow-toned Japanese paper, which evokes a warm, sunny day.

RvR 165. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1606–1669

Self-Portrait Leaning Forward, ca. 1627–28

Bartsch 5. White and Boon 5. Third state of three.

Etching

RvR 4. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1923; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Self-Portrait, Frowning, 1630

Bartsch 10. White and Boon 10. Second state of three.

Etching

RvR 11. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Self-Portrait, Open-Mouthed as if Shouting, 1630

Bartsch 13. White and Boon 13. Second state of three.

Etching

RvR 14. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Self-Portrait, Curly Hair and White Collar, ca. 1630

Bartsch 1. White and Boon 1. Second state of two.

Etching

RvR 1. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

Self-Portrait in a Cap, 1630

Bartsch 320. White and Boon 320. Only state.

Etching

RvR 442. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan in 1906; gift of J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1924.

These small etchings made before the mirror are among Rembrandt's earliest efforts at recording his own likeness. Dating from the Leiden years—about 1627–30—they display a range of techniques and facial expressions. The boyish study on the far left shows his youthful anxiousness, emphasized by the frenzied quality of the etched line. The next one depicts him in a perturbed mood, staring disapprovingly at the viewer. Next, at right, his brow is furrowed, and he appears to be shouting. In the more finished example at the far right, he employed dramatic side lighting and high contrasts of light and shadow. In the example below, he expresses surprise and wide-eyed wonder.