Authentication - Is this Rembrandt real?

Around 300 Prints have been attributed to Rembrandt. That's far fewer authentic prints than was once believed. Careful research and cataloging have provided tools for curators, collectors, and art dealers to authenticate prints they believe might be by Rembrandt - to prove if they are states (different stages or versions of an authentic print), fakes (copies), or restrikes (prints pulled from Rembrandt's printing plates after his death).

By comparing such things as size, paper, images, light and dark areas, heaviness of line and shading, and the presence or absence of certain details that may have been added or removed, it is possible to tell not only if a print was made by Rembrandt, but when it was made, which state or version it is, how many others exist, and where they might be now. All of these factors help determine the rarity and value of a print.

Subject Print:

Self Portrait in a Flat Cap and Embroidered Dress

Original printing date 1642

Catalogues raisonnés numbers:
H157 BB38-1 NU/B 156 B26

Read the entries below for this print from three authoritative catalogues raisonnés and note qualitative differences in description.

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REMBRANDT, published 1912 and 1923

REMBRANDT IN A FLAT CAP, AND EMBROIDERED DRESS.

B. 26

Hind, published 1912 and 1923

REMBRANDTS ETCHINGS

138. THREE HEADS OF WOMEN, ONE LIGHTELY ETCHED.


[67.5 x 87.5 mm.] Gently etched Rembrandt / 306.


2. Rembrandt's etching that bears / etched images across the plate below.

Modern, retouched: Rembrandt / 306.

140. THREE HEADS OF WOMEN, ONE LIGHTLY ETCHED.


[67.5 x 87.5 mm.] Gently etched Rembrandt / 306.

1. With the upper head (portrait of Saskia) only.

2. The slight head added.

The subject study, if not the two subjects, is certainly taken from Saskia.

141. STUDY OF SASKIA AS S. CATHERINE (THE 'LITTLE JEWISH BRIDE').


[67.5 x 87.5 mm.] Gently etched Rembrandt / 306.

194. SHEET WITH TWO STUDIES: A TREE, AND THE UPPER PART OF A HEAD OF REMBRANDT WEARING A VELVET CAP.


[80 x 67 mm.] The head about 1642; the tree possibly later.

Prof. W. Martin has noted that a similar head of Rembrandt occurs in the Night-Watch of 1642, behind and to the r. of the standard bearer.

146. REMBRANDT IN VELVET CAP AND PLUMES, WITH AN EMBROIDERED DRESS: BUST.


[94 x 103 mm.] Printed Rembrandt / 351.

Modern: Rembrandt / Rembrandt.

Rembrandt makes a unique first state of a falcked impression in Berlin.

147. REMBRANDT IN A FLAT CAP WITH A SHAWL ABOUT HIS SHOULDERS.


[8 0 x 83 mm.] About 1642.

The signature Rembrandt / 351, and illegible traces of a date, etched in the master's hand. (N.B.—The signature Reumbaut on the Bust of Rembrandt impressions, is apparently not derivable on on impressions before II.)

The signature Rembrandt's etched by another hand.

Modern, retouched: Rembrandt / Rembrandt.

The style of execution would seem to place this etching about 1642, though as a portrait it might well be ten years later. There is a certain degree in the work, which may have escaped Van der Goes's doubts as to its authenticity.