

# **The Rembrandt Database**

## **Inter-institutional Research Resource on Paintings by Rembrandt**

### **Introduction**

*The Rembrandt Database* is a pilot project of the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD) and the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis in The Hague, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It is part of a larger initiative of the Mellon Foundation to create new digital assets that interface with those of other institutions and to foster international collaboration and the sharing of information and expertise (see <http://mac.mellon.org/issues-in-conservation-documentation>). The pilot project was launched in March 2008 and is expected to be completed in August 2010. Thereafter, the goal is to further develop it as an ever-changing and growing research resource on Rembrandt incorporating conservation, technical, and art-historical information from multiple institutions and serving as an independent, collaborative, multi-lingual tool to advance the fields of conservation and art history.

The point of departure for developing this resource is the already existing extensive network of RKD databases of artists, works of art, literature and technical documentation that will be adapted and expanded. The information from these RKD databases and digitized documentation files will – in due time – be presented through the website [www.rembrandtdatabase.org](http://www.rembrandtdatabase.org) (.com/.net/.eu/.nl). Conservation and technical documentation, scientific data and art historical information will be integrated for dissemination at different levels of interpretation.

### **Database contents**

The pilot will include a test group of nineteen paintings by or (formerly) attributed to Rembrandt in the collection of the Mauritshuis. In the last ten years the most important works in this group, including Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp* (1632), *Homer* (1663) and the late *Self portrait* (1669), have been treated and thoroughly investigated with a range of technologies, generating new insights, documentation, and analytical data. This material (images and searchable text files) will be incorporated, in the database, together with documentation on the cross sections from all the Mauritshuis Rembrandt paintings. The database will be expanded by the inclusion of similar documentation on a selection of Rembrandt paintings from other important collections (initially The Metropolitan Museum, The National Gallery London, the Louvre and possibly the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden), as well as associated documentation from the archives of the Rembrandt Research Project. All information in the database will be presented in English, as well as in the national language of the contributing institution.

### **Digitization and long-term storage**

All analog conservation and technical documentation will be digitized within the scope of the pilot project for preservation purposes. The *Rembrandt Database* will present a selection of this documentation online, while a complete set of digital files for each painting (including raw material) would be kept in long-term storage. Advised by the RKD's photographic department, new high resolution photographs of the paint cross sections will be taken by the scientists who analyzed the samples. Following the recommendations of a Mellon-funded committee on the digitization of x-rays, and those of other experts, a proposal for scanning the x-radiographic documentation from the Mauritshuis is currently being drawn up.

An important aspect of the project is the long-term sustainable storage of digital files in high resolution. First steps have been taken to establish this facility at the RKD and to develop a digital infrastructure to enable the retrieval of stored files. Digitization of analog documentation of partner institutions outside the Netherlands will be carried out by them in-house or by outside organizations such as NEDCC. For all material that has yet to be digitized, the RKD and the Mauritshuis will offer guidelines based on existing procedures for large-scale digitization projects in the cultural heritage field in the Netherlands and abroad.

## User interface development

A comprehensive outline for the user interface of the new *Rembrandt Database* has been developed by the project team, describing the desired structure, functionalities and layout of the resource (see attached proposals for the user interface of several screens after page 3). This outline includes functionalities for visual browsing/searching (free and/or controlled), text searching, sorting, filtering, comparing and zooming. A provisional version of the outline has been presented to conservators, curators and other colleagues, who gave feedback. After “Version 0” of the interface – which will include documentation for a small test group of three paintings – is launched (probably in April 2009), extensive testing with potential users will be undertaken, and further feedback will assist the development of “Version 1”, which is intended to include annotation tools, explanatory texts, summary descriptions (for both specialists and a broader audiences), and the capacity to download and print selected content.

If you are interested in participating in any of the user tests,  
please contact Sytske Weidema at [weidema@rkd.nl](mailto:weidema@rkd.nl)  
Thank you!

## Database development

From the start the RKD and Mauritshuis were convinced that modification and amplification of the existing RKD databases would be more efficient and beneficial than creating an entirely new database for the Rembrandt pilot. The existing RKD database of Technical Documentation has already proven its suitability for storing and structuring metadata of conservation documentation on works of art from multiple institutions. Moreover, with the *Rembrandt Database* established as an integral part of its existing database infrastructure, the RKD will be able to take full responsibility for the maintenance and future expansion of this resource. Software for the existing databases has been developed by the RKD in close consultation with Adlib Information Systems. The custom-made software solutions are based on the application ‘Adlib Museum’ (used by many other institutions and museums, both in and outside the Netherlands).

The basic Adlib Museum application is subject to a license, but custom-made additions are not, and customization of the databases will be the result of input from both the RKD and Adlib. The RKD and the Mauritshuis fully endorse the guiding principle of the Mellon Foundation in stimulating the use of open source solutions in order to achieve the greatest possible scholarly and educational benefit. Therefore, in agreement with Adlib, the user interface will be developed in such a way that widespread and cost-free use by the scholarly and educational communities will be safeguarded. Software developed within the project will not be commercially exploited and both data and applications will be interoperable. For certain features of their project, the RKD and Adlib are investigating the possibility of using open source solutions or developing certain components of their project in open source.

## Future plans and developments

During the pilot and thereafter, RKD and Mauritshuis will collaborate closely with the Metropolitan, the National Gallery London, the Louvre, the C2RMF (and possibly the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden). A select number of the Rembrandt paintings in these four collections will be incorporated as test cases for the future incorporation of all their Rembrandt documentation. After completion of the pilot RKD is prepared to take full responsibility for the maintenance of the database, and the Mauritshuis (together with international partners) will assume responsibility for updating and expanding the data on their Rembrandt paintings on a regular basis. In the course of the pilot phase, RKD and Mauritshuis will actively approach other collections with important holdings of Rembrandt paintings. They will be kept informed about the progress of the pilot and will be invited to participate in follow-up projects to

further expand the content. These projects would be coordinated by the RKD, and the Mauritshuis would serve in an advisory capacity. It is expected that additional museums will digitize (parts of) their conservation documentation and make the related art-historical information and files available online. Ideally, recorded data can be aggregated by others, making it possible to build multi-institutional online databases on subjects across collections and 'institutional boundaries' without having to rerecord the data. Protocols for such interactions already exist (such as the protocol developed by the Open Archives Initiative), but XML-standards will need to be better established and applied by the museum community. RKD and Mauritshuis will closely follow international developments in this direction and hope to gain a better understanding of the possibilities and the issues involved in data sharing through collaboration with its initial partners.

### **Project team members**

- Wietske Donkersloot, Project manager / Coordinator Technical Documentation Department (RKD & Mauritshuis), [donkersloot@rkd.nl](mailto:donkersloot@rkd.nl) – on maternity leave 20 April-10 August 2009
- Sytske Weidema, Mellon Fellow / Interim Project Manager 20 April-10 August 2009 (RKD & Mauritshuis), [weidema@rkd.nl](mailto:weidema@rkd.nl)
- Tamar Weidema, Project associate (RKD & Mauritshuis), [t.weidema@rkd.nl](mailto:t.weidema@rkd.nl)
- Michiel Franken, Curator of Technical Documentation (RKD), [franken@rkd.nl](mailto:franken@rkd.nl)
- Edwin Buijsen, Head of Collections (Mauritshuis), [Buijsen.E@mauritshuis.nl](mailto:Buijsen.E@mauritshuis.nl)
- Petria Noble, Head of Paintings Conservation (Mauritshuis), [Noble.P@mauritshuis.nl](mailto:Noble.P@mauritshuis.nl)

Questions, comments...?  
Do not hesitate to contact us!

### **Attached proposals for the user interface of several screens**

- Opening page to browse by painting
- Opening page for one painting
- Page to browse a specific type of documentation related to one painting
- Page to zoom into one file
- Page to compare and zoom into multiple files

# The Rembrandt Database

Inter-institutional research resource for art historical, conservation and technical documentation on Rembrandt paintings [pilot version]

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Contact](#)

Search:  [▶](#) | [Advanced](#)

- Browse by painting**
- Browse by documentation type
- About Rembrandt
- Favorites (0)
- Images selected for comparison (0)

Home > [Browse by painting](#)

## Browse by painting



Filter by:      Sort by: [Title](#) | [Artist](#) | [Dating](#) | [Collection](#)      Display as: **[Small images](#)** | [Large images](#) | [List](#)

### Attribution

- [Rembrandt \(12\)](#)
- [Possibly Rembrandt \(3\)](#)
- [Rembrandt studio \(2\)](#)
- [Anonymous Rembrandt follower \(6\)](#)
- [Manner of Rembrandt \(1\)](#)
- [After \(3\)](#)

### Dating

- [1625-1630 \(1\)](#)
- [1631-1640 \(12\)](#)
- [1641-1650 \(5\)](#)
- [1651-1660 \(6\)](#)
- [1660-1669 \(3\)](#)

### Collection

- [The Hague, Mauritshuis \(19\)](#)
- [New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art \(3\)](#)
- [London, The National Gallery \(3\)](#)
- [Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister \(1\)](#)
- [Paris, Musée du Louvre \(1\)](#)

### Support

- [Canvas](#)
- [Copper](#)
- [Panel](#)



**Portrait of an elderly man**  
Rembrandt  
dated 1667  
The Hague, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis  
(36) files online



**Saul and David**  
Rembrandt studio or Circle of Rembrandt  
c. 1650-1655  
The Hague, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis  
(350) files online



**Self-portrait**  
Rembrandt  
dated 1669  
The Hague, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis  
(65) files online



**Simeon's song of praise**  
Rembrandt  
dated 1631  
The Hague, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis  
(650) files online



**Study of an old man**  
Rembrandt  
dated 1650  
The Hague, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis  
(35) files online



**Susanna**  
Rembrandt  
1636  
The Hague, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis  
(583) files online



**'Tronie' of a man with a feathered beret**  
Possibly Rembrandt or Circle of Rembrandt  
c. 1635-1640  
The Hague, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis  
(53) files online



**'Tronie' of an old man**  
Possibly Rembrandt and/or Rembrandt studio  
c. 1630-1631  
The Hague, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis  
(63) files online

Displaying 9-16 of 27 images

◀◀ Previous | Page **2** of 3 | Next ▶▶

# The Rembrandt Database

Inter-institutional research resource for art historical, conservation and technical documentation on Rembrandt paintings [pilot version]

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Contact](#)

Search:  [▶](#) | [Advanced](#)

[Browse by painting](#)

[Browse by documentation type](#)

[About Rembrandt](#)

[Favorites \(0\)](#)

[Images selected for comparison \(0\)](#)

[Home](#) > [Browse by painting](#) > [Susanna](#)

## Susanna



**Susanna**  
Rembrandt  
Dated 1636  
Royal Picture Gallery  
Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv. no. 147

[Provenance](#) |  
[Exhibitions](#) |  
[Publications](#) |  
[Related works of art \(1\)](#) |

[Technical documentation](#) |  
[Examination methods used](#) |  
 [Reports \(50\)](#) |  
 [Imaging studies \(310\)](#) |  
 [Sample analyses \(139\)](#) |  
 [Support analyses \(2\)](#) |  
 [Conservation history](#) |

[Current attribution](#)  
[Dating](#)  
[Remark dating](#)

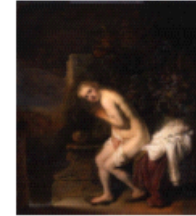
[Title](#)  
[Other/former title](#)  
[Subject keywords](#)  
[Iconclass-code](#)

[Support/technique](#)  
[Format/dimensions](#)  
[Remark format](#)

[Signature/inscription](#)

### Rembrandt <sup>in2</sup>

1636  
The last digit of the year in the dating is on a later added strip. The dating is known to be 1636 because a signed drawn copy of the painting by Willem de Poorter is dated in this year.  
Susanna  
Batseba (was incorrectly called)  
Old Testament & apocrypha, bathing, young woman, nude  
**71P412** <sup>in2</sup>  
Susanna bathing, usually in or near a fountain and sometimes accompanied by two female servants  
Oil paint on panel (oak)  
Vertical, 47,2 x 38,6 cm  
At a later date a strip was added to the right of the painting. The strip measures 4.6 cm at the top and 4.1 cm at the bottom. cf. lit.: Noble, Van Loon (2005)  
Recto: Signed and dated lower right: *Rembrant f//163[6]*. Please note: [ant f] and [6] on later added strip



[zoom in & more info](#)

Photo front, normal light, 2004

[add image to comparison](#)

# The Rembrandt Database

Inter-institutional research resource for art historical, conservation and technical documentation on Rembrandt paintings [pilot version]

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Contact](#)

Search:  [▶](#) | [Advanced](#)

- [Browse by painting](#)
- [Browse by documentation type](#)
- [About Rembrandt](#)
- [Favorites \(0\)](#)
- [Images selected for comparison \(0\)](#)

[Home](#) > [Browse by painting](#) > [Susanna](#) > [Normal light images](#)

## Normal light images



Sort by: [Date](#) | [Front/Back](#) | [Detail/overall](#)      Display as: [Small images](#) | [Large images](#) | [List](#)



**Susanna**  
Rembrandt  
Dated 1636  
Royal Picture Gallery  
Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv. no. 147

[Provenance](#) | [Exhibitions](#) | [Publications](#) | [Related works of art \(1\)](#)

- [Technical documentation](#) |
  - [Examination methods used](#) |
  - [Written documentation \(50\)](#) |
  - [Imaging studies \(310\)](#) |
    - [Normal light images \(234\)](#) |
    - [Photomicrographs \(50\)](#) |
    - [Transmitted light images \(3\)](#) |
    - [Raking light images \(7\)](#) |
    - [Ultraviolet fluorescence images \(8\)](#) |
    - [Infrared studies \(4\)](#) |
    - [Radiographic studies \(2\)](#) |
    - [Other \(2\)](#) |
  - [Sample analyses \(139\)](#) |
  - [Support analyses \(2\)](#) |
- [Conservation history](#) |



[zoom in & more info](#)  
Photo front, before conservation,  
February 2002

add image to comparison



[zoom in & more info](#)  
Photo front, before conservation, detail  
February 2002

add image to comparison



[zoom in & more info](#)  
Photo front, before conservation, detail  
February 2002

add image to comparison



[zoom in & more info](#)  
Photo front, before conservation, detail  
February 2002

add image to comparison



[zoom in & more info](#)  
Photo front, after conservation,  
October 2002

add image to comparison



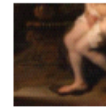
[zoom in & more info](#)  
Photo front, after conservation, detail  
October 2002

add image to comparison



[zoom in & more info](#)  
Photo front, after conservation  
October 2002

add image to comparison



[zoom in & more info](#)  
Photo front, after conservation, detail  
October 2002

add image to comparison

Displaying 209-216 of 234 files      [◀](#) [◀](#) Previous | Page **27** of 30 | Next [▶](#) [▶](#)

# The Rembrandt Database

Inter-institutional research resource for art historical, conservation and technical documentation on Rembrandt paintings [pilot version]

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Contact](#)

Search:  [▶](#) | [Advanced](#)

[Browse by painting](#)

[Browse by documentation type](#)

[About Rembrandt](#)

[Favorites \(0\)](#)

[Images selected for comparison \(0\)](#)

[Home](#) > [Browse by painting](#) > [Susanna](#) > [Normal light images](#) > [Photo front, before conservation, February 2002](#)

## Photo front, before conservation, February 2002



painting size:  
47.2 x 38.6 cm

+ zoom in

zoom out -

Add image to comparison

Hide text (show full screen image)

### File description

File type	Black and white photo
Front/back	Front
Light	Normal light
Date	February 2002
Status painting	Before conservation
Size original document	20 x 30 cm
Maker	Brandon, E.
Whereabouts	Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague
Location	Conservation studio

### Related research & related files

Related research	Conservation and technical examination
Researcher	Noble, P.
Research begin	February 2002
Research end	October 2002
Research location	Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis
Reason/objective	See <a href="#">technical examination report</a>
Related files	<a href="#">Black and white photos (30)</a> Whole painting and details; before and after treatment

### Remarks

(0) remarks | [Add a remark](#)

[go back](#)

# The Rembrandt Database

Inter-institutional research resource for art historical, conservation and technical documentation on Rembrandt paintings [pilot version]

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Contact](#)

Search:  [▶](#) | [Advanced](#)

- [Browse by painting](#)
- [Browse by documentation type](#)
- [About Rembrandt](#)
- [Favorites \(0\)](#)
- [Images selected for comparison \(7\)](#)

[Home](#) > [Images selected for comparison](#) > [Image comparison](#)

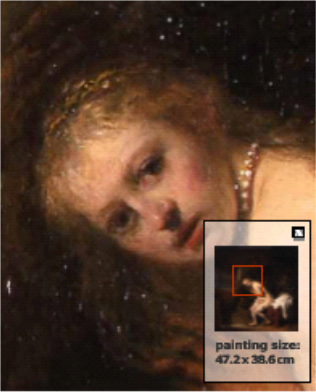
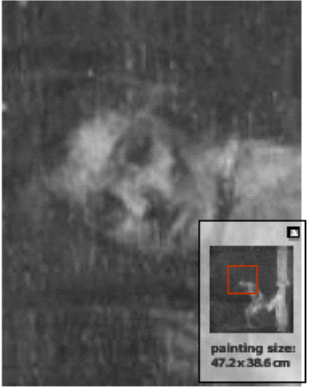

## Image comparison



[Connect all images and zoom in simultaneously](#) | [Disconnect all images and zoom in one by one](#)

<a href="#">delete image from this comparison</a> <input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">delete image from this comparison</a> <input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">delete image from this comparison</a> <input type="checkbox"/>
		
<a href="#">+ zoom in</a> <a href="#">zoom out -</a>	<a href="#">+ zoom in</a> <a href="#">zoom out -</a>	<a href="#">+ zoom in</a> <a href="#">zoom out -</a>
Rembrandt, Susanna Photo front, normal light, 2004	Rembrandt, Susanna X-radiograph, 1978	Rembrandt, Susanna Infrared photograph, 2002

[Connect all images and zoom in simultaneously](#) | [Disconnect all images and zoom in one by one](#)

<a href="#">delete image from this comparison</a> <input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">delete image from this comparison</a> <input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">delete image from this comparison</a> <input type="checkbox"/>
		
<a href="#">+ zoom in</a> <a href="#">zoom out -</a>	<a href="#">+ zoom in</a> <a href="#">zoom out -</a>	<a href="#">+ zoom in</a> <a href="#">zoom out -</a>
Rembrandt, Susanna Photo front, normal light, 2004	Rembrandt, Susanna X-radiograph, 1978	Rembrandt, Susanna Infrared photograph, 2002