

# REMBRANDT

*The master of light and shadow*





# EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

The exhibition is dedicated to the graphic work of Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669), one of the foremost figures in the history of European art.

Many of the plates from which these prints were taken have been lost or irreparably damaged, and only a few European museums preserve etchings of truly outstanding quality.

The exhibition is therefore a unique opportunity to closely explore a master who turned etching into a personal, free, and revolutionary language—one capable of uniting direct observation, psychological intensity, and exceptional sensitivity to light.

PROJECT AVAILABLE FROM  
MAY 2026

# EXHIBITION CONCEPT



The exhibition was conceived with the aim of bringing the public closer to Rembrandt's printmaking, a body of work comprising more than three hundred plates that the artist regarded as **an autonomous and central field of research within his practice**.

For Rembrandt, **etching is a laboratory — a space of continuous experimentation where drawing, light, material, and invention intertwine**.

The exhibition path focuses on several key elements.

It traces the artist's **technical evolution** through etchings, burins, and drypoints that document different stages of his career;

It highlights his **continual state variations**, revealing the creative process and the freedom with which Rembrandt worked repeatedly on the same plate;

It highlights the **influences and legacy** of the artist;

It creates a **dialogue** with a technique that has been an identifying Dutch practice for centuries, from Renaissance workshops to contemporary artists.

The result is a **portrait of Rembrandt close to our modern sensibility**: an experimenter, restless, capable of transforming a line into meaning and light into a spiritual dimension.

# SECTIONS



## THE PORTRAIT

In seventeenth-century Holland, portraiture was a highly sought-after genre, closely linked to bourgeois and Protestant culture. Rembrandt initially used it as an exercise, particularly through numerous self-portraits that explore expression and identity. His portraits combine realism, psychological introspection, and often theatrical costumes. From 1639 onward, he depicted friends, collectors, and acquaintances, capturing their quirks and personalities with unique depth.

## THE FIGURE, THE BODY, THE SPACE

Rembrandt regards Nature as the only true master, dedicating himself to the direct study of landscape, the human body, and everyday figures. His prints depict models, nudes, bathers, passersby, and beggars, rendered without idealization and often without narrative context. Each figure becomes an opportunity to investigate reality and the human condition.

## THE NIGHT

Rembrandt is considered the absolute master of black, able to master the technical challenges of depicting night both in painting and printmaking. Through the expressive use of drypoint and deliberately “dirty” plates, he achieves very dark tones and atmospheres of great intensity. His nocturnal prints, often depicting sacred episodes as well as street scenes, culminate in the masterpiece *The Star of the Magi*, one of the first nocturnal urban landscapes in the history of printmaking.





# SECTIONS

## **SACRED HEROES**

A significant portion of Rembrandt's work is devoted to subjects from the Old Testament. As was the case for German printmakers of the Reformation, he found in the Bible stories that were emotionally rich, dramatic, and narratively vivid. Rembrandt transforms each narrative into an exploration of emotion, landscape, and human character.

## **THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The New Testament and the Life of Christ form one of the main threads in Rembrandt's work, with the artist revisiting the same subjects in different compositional solutions throughout his career. The graphic journey, from the large-scale scenes of the 1630s to the delicate plates of the 1650s, reflects the artist's stylistic and experimental evolution.

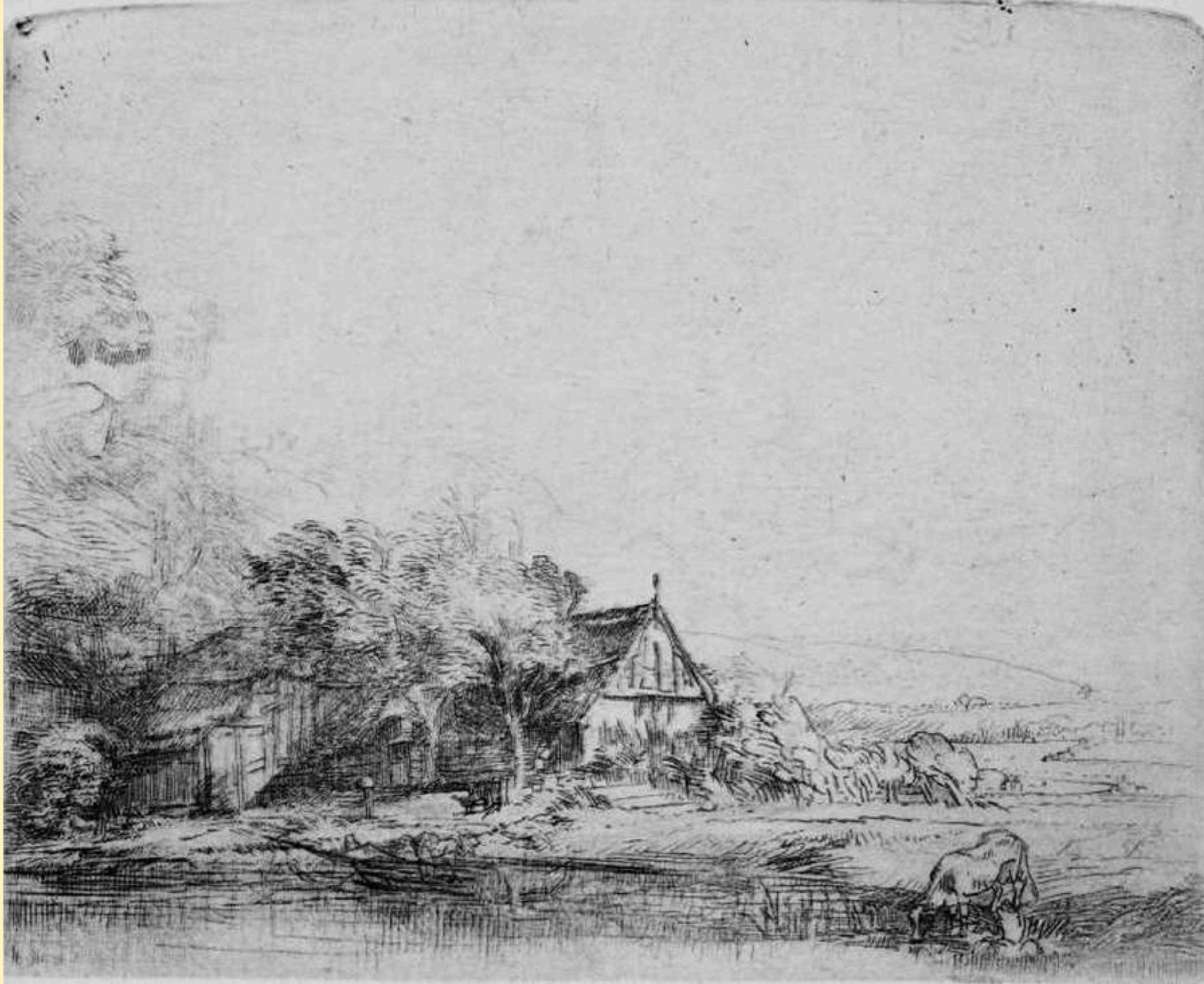
## **ARTISTS AND THINKERS**

The final section highlights the theme of creation in Rembrandt, depicting artists and philosophers, culminating in the celebrated print *The Scholar in His Study*, admired by generations of poets and artists. Works such as *The Model in the Studio* reflect metanarratively on the creative process and the limits of figurative art. With *The Scholar in His Study*, Rembrandt breaks the boundary between scene and viewer, making his art vibrant and present beyond time.



# SOME ARTWORKS





### **Landscape with a Cow Drinking**

c. 1650

Etching and drypoint, 103 × 130 mm  
V/V, 18th-century impression

Rembrandt created a large number of landscape prints, which, even during his lifetime, were among the most sought-after and admired segments of his work. This sheet, dating from the artist's mature period, is perhaps based on a sketch from life and depicts a tranquil corner of the countryside around Amsterdam. To add a touch of exoticism to the composition, Rembrandt included a cliff on the left—an incongruous feature in the otherwise flat Dutch landscape.

**Self-Portrait with Saskia**

1636

Etching, 104 mm

IV/IV, 18th-century impression

Rembrandt married Saskia van Uylenburgh (1612–1642) in 1634. She was the daughter of a wealthy bourgeois family and the cousin of one of Amsterdam's leading art dealers; the union, with her substantial dowry, brought the artist comfort and social respectability, securing his entry into the highest circles of Dutch society. This intimate double portrait, created two years after their marriage, shows the couple posed in front of a mirror while Rembrandt etches the plate that we now see before us.



*Self-portrait with Saskia*



RM - 1631

### **The Artist's Mother**

1631

Etching, 94 × 66 mm

IV/VI, 18th-century impression

In this print as well, Rembrandt depicts his mother, captured with an especially intimate and contemplative gaze. According to historical sources, Neeltgen was a pious, loving woman devoted to her family. Her recurring presence in the artist's early works reflects Rembrandt's interest in portraying old age, as well as the deep bond between mother and son.

*The Artist's Mother*

## Jan Uytenbogaert, the Gold Assayer

1639

Etching and drypoint, 250 × 204 mm

III/III

This print is one of the first instances in which Rembrandt made extensive use of drypoint, employed not for correction but to emphasize the softness and richness of surfaces. The large and ambitious image depicts Jan Uytenbogaert (1608–1680), General Receiver of Taxes in the Dutch Republic and, as indicated by the painting shown behind him, a refined collector of prints and paintings. The official's direct involvement had enabled Rembrandt to receive payment from Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange, for several commissioned paintings, allowing him to purchase the famous Amsterdam house on the Jodenbreestraat, now known as the Rembrandthuis.



Rembrandt f. 1639

Jan Uytenbogaert, the Gold Assayer

Rembrandt f. 1639



**Seated Female Nude (“Woman Bathing Her Feet in a Stream”)**

1658  
Etching, burin, and drypoint, 160 × 80 mm  
(18th- or 19th-century impression)

Another well-known image from Rembrandt’s printmaking oeuvre, this Seated Female Nude belongs to his late period and represents a masterpiece of chiaroscuro and luminous rendering. The softness of the tones blends naturally with the female body, evoking depth and adding mystery to the scene. Although it is commonly referred to as “Bather,” the subject of the work remains uncertain: the presence of foliage suggests an outdoor setting, yet the clearly visible chair places the scene inside the studio or its immediate surroundings.

*Seated Female Nude (“Woman Bathing Her Feet in a Stream”)*

### **The Star of the Magi. Night Scene**

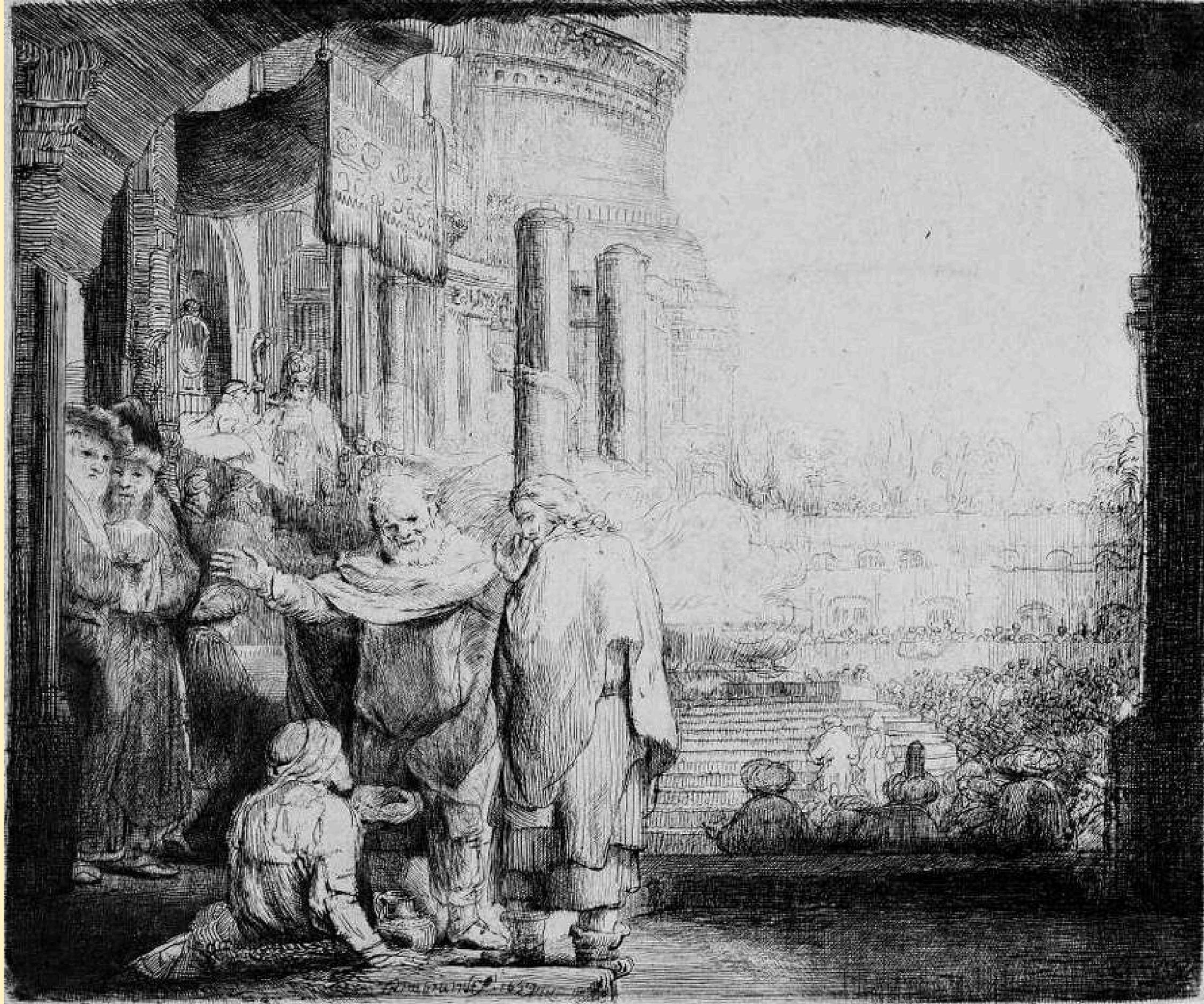
c. 1651

Etching with drypoint retouches, 94 × 143 mm  
II/IV, 18th-century impression

The scene depicts a traditional Dutch popular festival that commemorated the journey of the Magi to Bethlehem. The celebration consisted of a procession of singers following a star-shaped lamp. Unlike the Magi, who brought gifts, it was the singers who received small presents from the public. Rembrandt likely based his image on an engraving of the same subject by Jan van de Velde II (c. 1593–1641) created around 1616, but unlike van de Velde, he immerses his figures in the darkness of night, producing an extraordinary display of luminous virtuosity.



*The Star of the Magi. Night Scene*



**Peter and John Healing the Lame Man at  
the Temple Gate**

1659

Etching, drypoint, and burin, 180 × 215 mm  
VI/VI, 18th-century impression

This plate belongs to the final years of Rembrandt's career and depicts the last biblical subject he treated before his death. On the left side of the scene, two richly dressed men watch the miracle with suspicion; they will later report it to the priests and the captain of the temple, leading to a confrontation between the latter and the apostles.

**The Scholar in His Study (“Doctor Faustus”)**

c. 1652

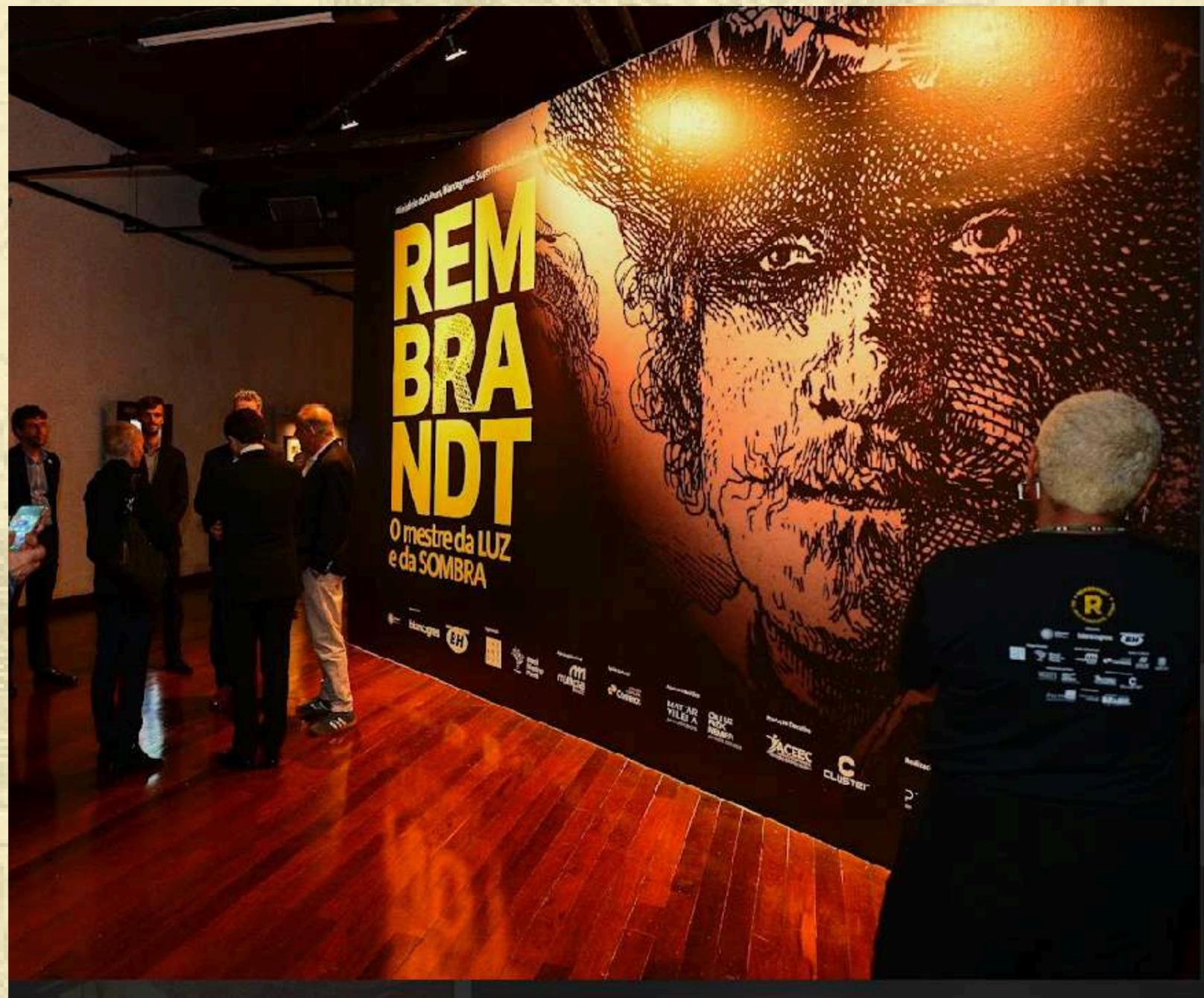
Etching, burin, and drypoint, 210 × 160 mm

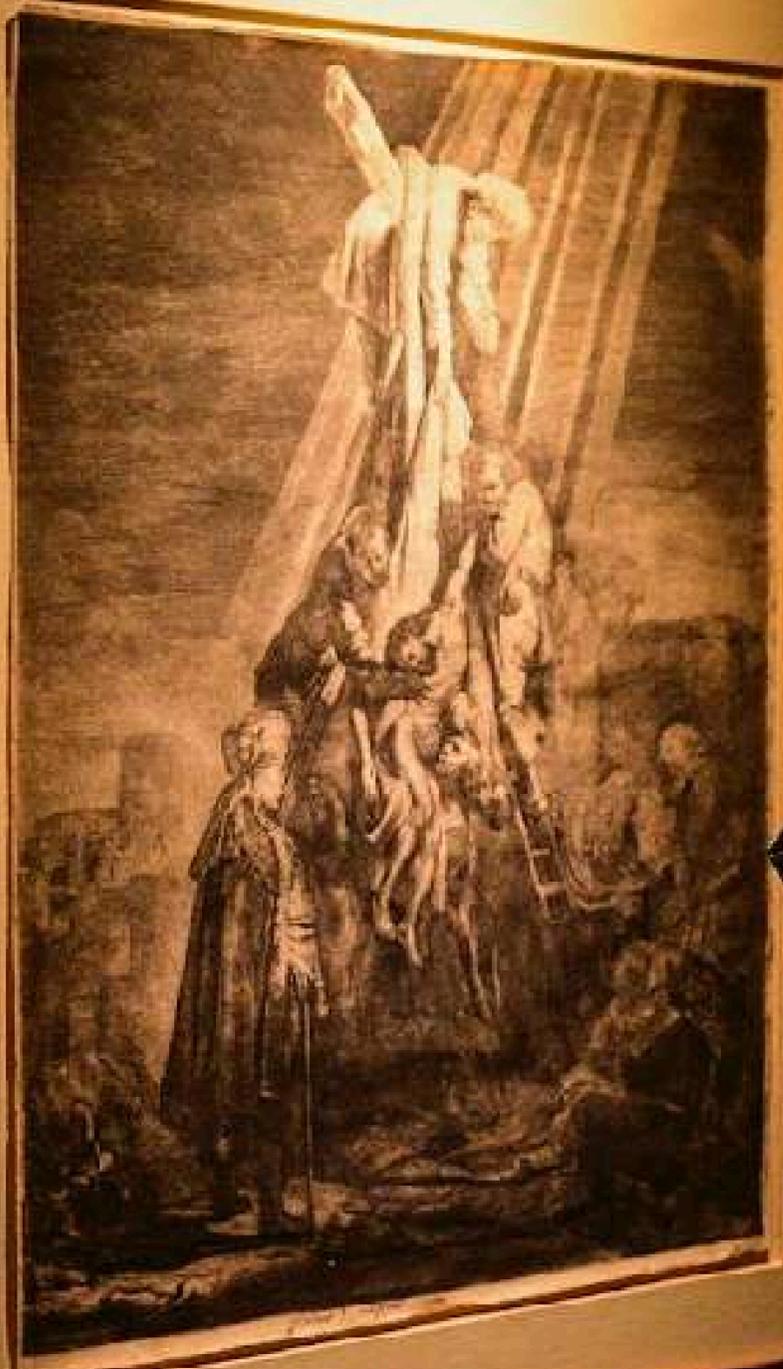
VI/VII, 18th-century impression

This is one of Rembrandt’s most famous prints, and it has long challenged—and continues to challenge—scholars and viewers attempting to decipher its hidden meanings. Known at the end of the seventeenth century under the ambiguous title *The Alchemist at Work*, the print was (incorrectly) celebrated by Goethe as a depiction of Doctor Faustus, the magician who sold his soul to the devil in exchange for glory and power. It is, in fact, more likely a variation on the theme of the *Scholar in His Study*, imbued with mysterious and esoteric meanings that remain unidentified.



*The Scholar in His Study (“Doctor Faustus”)*







Rembrandt, 1674.

# THANK YOU



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