

# Artists IN FOCUS

Rembrandt van Rijn: Creator of Rembrandt Lighting



## What We Learned:

- Rembrandt was born July 15, 1606, in the Netherlands. Although he had 8 siblings, his parents were prosperous enough to send him to school.
- He left school to become an art apprentice, and by age 19 he was a master painter.
- Rembrandt created approximately 600 paintings, 300 etchings, and 1,400 drawings.



## Art Activity:

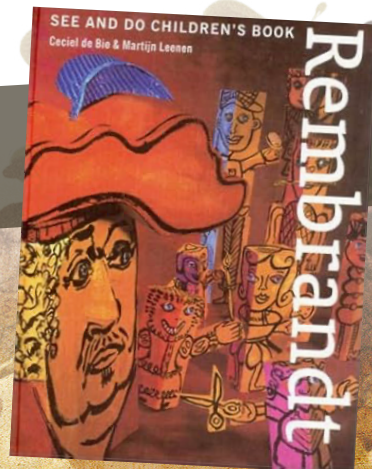
### *Chiaroscuro & Rembrandt Lighting*



The lighting technique Rembrandt used in his portraits was so unique it was named after him - Rembrandt Lighting. It is even used today by photographers to produce dramatic portraits. Rembrandt Lighting is characterized by an illuminated triangle (also called a "Rembrandt patch"). Rembrandt lit his subjects so that one side of the subject's face was well lit, and the other side of the face was in shadow except for the eye and a small triangle of light under the eye. The students were given a line drawing portrait of Rembrandt to complete by using the shading techniques of Rembrandt Lighting.

## Book Nook

*Rembrandt See and Do Children's Book*  
By Ceciel de Bie & Martijn Leenen



# For Parents

Rembrandt is considered one of the greatest painters and printmakers in European art history and the most important in Dutch history. His family owned a mill along the Rhine River, and they were wealthy enough to send Rembrandt to school. However, he left the University of Leiden at the age of 15 to become an art apprentice. By age 19 he had become a master painter. Rembrandt married a wealthy young lady, Saskia. He used her as a model and included her in many of his paintings. They had four children but only a boy, Titus, survived. Saskia died after Titus was born. His nurse, Hendrickje Stoffels, eventually became Rembrandt's common-law wife, and they had a little girl. Unfortunately, Rembrandt was not good with money. He spent lavishly and had to file for bankruptcy. When he died in 1669 at the age of 63, he was very poor and was buried in an unmarked grave.

**Please note:** As M&G's host location for *Homeschool Days*, Mack Library will feature books each month for parents to reference as resources. We hope these additional features will further support your teaching at home.



## *Connections at Home:* **Light and Dark Self-Portrait**

Rembrandt painted many portraits and self-portraits. He also created a unique lighting technique called Rembrandt Lighting. Try drawing your own self-portrait in an interesting way using light and shadows.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

- Have someone take pictures of you in different types of light. Get creative! Stand outside, sit by a window, go into a room with dim light, etc.
- Choose the picture you like best. Look for the one that has the best light and shadows.
- Use paint, pastels, colored pencils, or charcoal.
- Working from your photo, make a self-portrait of your own.
- Be sure to contrast the light and dark parts in your portrait.

## **Simplified Etching Project:** *Ink Pen Etching*

Rembrandt is known as a master painter, but he became internationally known because of his etchings. He is one of the most famous printmakers of all time.

He began an etching using a flat sheet of copper plate, covered with resin and beeswax. Then, Rembrandt would draw into the wax exposing the copper. Once the image was complete, he immersed the copper plate in an acid bath, which would etch (or bite) the exposed copper creating the image grooves in the plate. The wax would be removed, and the plate covered in ink. Finally, it went through the printing press transferring the image onto a sheet of paper.

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## DIRECTIONS:

All you need for an ink pen sketch is a pen and paper. Draw a basic shape of an animal or object, like the four examples of a napping dog above. Use directional lines to outline your drawing to give volume. Then, using the cross-hatching technique that Rembrandt used on his etchings, fill in space to show shadows and leave white space to show lighter areas.

## Additional Resources

To learn more about Rembrandt, click on the links below:

- To learn about *The Head of Christ* from the school of Rembrandt in M&G's collection, click, listen and look: <https://museumandgallery.org/head-of-christ-rembrandt-harmensz-van-rijn-school-of/>
- For the read aloud book, *Rembrandt and the Boy Who Drew Dogs*, follow this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-q4rKsJhu4U>
- View a children's video about the life of Rembrandt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NR5sC5fu8-8>
- To learn 10 fast interesting facts about Rembrandt, watch this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVP2vzFjLBU>
- Rembrandt's etchings were as expressive as his paintings: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hItS1U5IenE>
- Watch this video to see the interesting process of etching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxYT6k8o338>
- For a quick video about Rembrandt Lighting, follow this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqC-zJ2wgnY>
- Rembrandt at the Met: [https://www.metmuseum.org/TOAH/hd/rmbt/hd\\_rmbt.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/TOAH/hd/rmbt/hd_rmbt.htm)

Due to the changing nature of web resources, M&G strongly urges you as the parent to preview these sites before your child accesses them. The fact that these sites are available on this handout does not imply that M&G endorses their content from the standpoint of morals, philosophy, theology, or scientific hypotheses.

### M&G Educational Mission:

Through tours, events, and publications, the Museum & Gallery seeks to partner with educators in fulfilling all of the National Visual Arts Content Standards. By integrating art into the core curriculum, M&G's goals are to teach children to value the arts, to communicate through the arts, to become creative problem solvers through the inclusion of STEAM-related concepts and fully-developed STEAM units, to understand history and culture in light of the arts, to improve literary interest and understanding through visual storytelling, to critique the arts, and to develop an aesthetic awareness of the arts. Through fulfilling the mission, M&G is able to help develop citizens who have the ability to think, feel, and understand the world in which they live.

