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The Supper at Emmaus *by* Rembrandt

Heliogravure on Paper - Main Subject: Religion & Belief

Item Number
2847521017

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$800

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Dimensions (As Shown)
6.3W x 6.75H Inches
16W x 17.14H cm

Medium
Heliogravure on Paper

Edition
- Edition Size is Unknown

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About Rembrandt

Rembrandt was a Dutch baroque artist who ranks as one of the greatest painters in the history of Western art. His full name was Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, and he possessed a profound understanding of human nature that was matched by a brilliant technique - not only in painting but in drawing and etching - and his work made an enormous impact on his contemporaries and influenced the style of many later artists. Perhaps no painter has ever equaled Rembrandt's chiaroscuro effects or his bold impasto.

Born in Leiden on July 15, 1606, Rembrandt was the son of a miller. Despite the fact that he came from a family of relatively modest means, his parents took great care with his education. School did not interest him, and he soon left to study art-first with a local master, Jacob van Swanenburch, and then, in Amsterdam, with Pieter Lastman, known for his historical paintings. After six months, having mastered everything he had been taught, Rembrandt returned to Leiden, where he was soon so highly regarded that although barely 22 years old, he took his first pupils, among them Gerrit Dou.

Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam in 1631; his marriage in 1634 to Saskia van Uylenburgh, the cousin of a successful art dealer, enhanced his career, bringing him in contact with wealthy patrons who eagerly commissioned portraits. In addition, Rembrandt's mythological and religious works were much in demand, and he painted numerous dramatic masterpieces such as The Blinding of Samson.

Because of his renown as a teacher, his studio was filled with pupils, some of whom were already trained artists. In the 20th century, scholars have reattributed a number of his paintings to his associates; attributing and identifying Rembrandt's works is an active area of art scholarship. In contrast to his successful public career, however,

Despite Rembrandt's financial success as an artist, teacher, and art dealer, his penchant for ostentatious living forced him to declare bankruptcy in 1656. An inventory of his collection of art and antiquities, taken before an auction to pay his debts, showed the breadth of Rembrandt's interests: ancient sculpture, Flemish and Italian Renaissance paintings, Far Eastern art, contemporary Dutch works, weapons, and armor.

Unfortunately, the results of the auction-including the sale of his house-were disappointing. These problems in no way affected Rembrandt's work; if anything, his artistry increased. His personal life, however, continued to be marred by sorrow, for his beloved Hendrickje died in 1663, and his son, Titus, in 1668. Eleven months later, on October 4, 1669, Rembrandt died in Amsterdam.

Rembrandt may have created more than 600 paintings as well as an enormous number of drawings and etchings. Not every early portrayal, however, can be interpreted as objective representation, for these pictures frequently served as studies of various emotions, later to be incorporated into his biblical and historical paintings. The self-portraits also may have served to demonstrate his command of chiaroscuro; thus, it is difficult to tell what Rembrandt looked like from such a self-portrait as the one painted about 1628 (Rijksmuseum, on loan from the Daan Cevat Collection, England), in which deep shadows cover most of his face, barely revealing his features. On the other hand, in none of these youthful self-portraits did he attempt to disguise his homely features.

Heliogravure on Paper

Heliogravure is the oldest procedure for reproducing photographic images. It was first invented in the early 19th century by Joseph Nicéphore Niepce, of France, and later perfected by Talbot, Niepce de Saint-Victor, Baldus and Klic.

The process involves two distinct steps. First, in a complex photochemical procedure that creates the intaglio surface, the photographic image is fixed and etched upon a specially prepared copper plate. The finished plate is then placed on a hand-turned press, and the image is printed onto dampened etching paper using special inks.

Heliogravure belongs to the same family of intaglio printing techniques as engraving, etching and aquatint. As such, it requires an especially good quality of thick paper, one that can draw out the ink from the furthest recesses of the etched copper. In like manner, the plate embosses the finished prints, for its form is impressed into the dampened paper as they pass together through the rollers. Printed by hand in limited quantities, each heliogravure is considered an original, and its value is accordingly assured.

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