Patrick Bade | Rembrandt, Part 2

- Welcome and happy Hanukah to everybody. Slightly belatedly. On the screen, you can see on the left, a self-portrait that Rembrandt made in 1650, where you can see he's very handsomely dressed with and very luxurious clothing. There are a number of self-portraits particularly the 1650s, where he seems quite concerned to assert his status. There's no way he would've worn clothes like this while he was actually painting, 'cause you would get paint all over everything.

*Visuals are displayed throughout the presentation.*

The little pen and ink sketch you see on the right hand side, I think is probably a more accurate record of how he would've dressed in his studio. In this painting painted somewhat earlier, he has awarded himself a gold chain. Now, the first great artist to be given a gold chain was Titian, who was appointed a member of the Order of the Golden fleece by the emperor, Charles V, and given this gold chain. There are two self-portraits by Titian, where he very discreetly shows the gold chain peeping through from under his coat. Although Rembrandt's chain, as I said, was self awarded, he wears it rather more ostentatiously.

He's not quite such a showoff as Van Dyke who got his gold chain from King Charles I of England. This is another self-portrait from this middle period. This is 1640. Your image is bit cropped to the bottom, so you can't quite see how he is resting his arm on a sill. It's the sill that is inscribed with his name and the date. It's rather nice that this picture is in the National Gallery in London, as is the picture that probably inspired it, which is another Titian. This is the man with a blue sleeve, which in the past was thought to be also a self-portrait. There've been lots of theories about the identity of this handsome man by Titian.

This is a reminder that although Rembrandt was sometimes criticised in his time for ignorance of Italian art and classical art, he was criticised for the fact that he never went to Italy, but Italy came to him, because as I mentioned, Amsterdam was the centre of the art trade. This painting by Titian was sold in Amsterdam around this time. It seems very likely that that Rembrandt saw it. He certainly saw this painting, which is the portrait of Baldassare Castiglione, the author of Il Cortegiano, The Courtier, by Raphael. And that came up for sale in Amsterdam and Rembrandt attended the sale. We know that because he made this little, rapid pen and ink sketch, and he gives you the date on it. He also notes the enormous sum of money that this picture fetched, which was 3,500 Gilders.

In fact, I think the pose and the dressing with, of course, the beret and the way the beret is silhouetted against the light background is actually really a combination of influences of Titian and Raphael. Rembrandt, I've have already made a comparison with Picasso in that Rembrandt and Picasso are artists who are constantly changing. They're both artists of immense curiosity. They look at everything, great things and not so great things. Somebody once asked Picasso why he was looking at a rather second grade picture. Picasso said, "I'm learning how not to paint a picture."

There is evidence of Rembrandt looking at all sorts of things we wouldn't really expect him to be interested in. This is a drawing he's made after Paul no sorry, Mantegna's reconstruction of a lost antique painting by Appelles, of which there was a famous description. It's the Calumny by Appelles. It's the origin of the subject. Here is something you really wouldn't expect. This is Rembrandt making a copy of a mogul miniature. He's somebody of encyclopaedic interest and curiosity. These two paintings show how he imagined Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. We've got quite detailed descriptions of what was in that temple from the Bible.

Really, that was all he had to go on. He certainly knew that it didn't look like a whitewashed Calvinist church, but he has to imagine what it really did look like. On the left hand side, you have the presentation of Jesus in the temple, and on the right hand side you have the story of the woman taken in adultery. You see this wonderful, vast, dark, mysterious spaces in the background. This imagination, this imaginary altar, like nothing that really exists, but having a decidedly baroque rhythm to it. In this painting, I think that's what really first attracts you is actually the spatial setting and the vocation of Solomon's temple.

But in the end, as always, with Rembrandt, it's the human story. I see. I've cropped it very badly. Sorry, I'm going to have to really shrink these pictures. Must remember to do that next time. But anyway, you can look them up for yourself. But this is the very moving way. The gesture of the repentant woman and the Pharisees who are accusing her. In the end, it's of course, the drama. Here, you can see rather better. Human drama, which is always the thing that interests Rembrandt most. It's Rembrandt is at his most baroque. As I've said many times already, baroque is an operatic style. It's a dramatic style.

Baroque artists tend to choose the high point of the drama, and to emphasise the most sensational aspects of the story. This is the Abraham sacrificing Isaac. Talk about last minute. The angel really does leave it to not just the last minute, to the last second before Abraham is about to slit the throat of his son. It has some of that brutality, which we know from Italian baroque paintings, the gesture. It's incredibly brutal gesture of the hand of Abraham over the face of his son. And that is reminiscent of Caravaggio's equally dramatic and brutal depiction of the same subject.

This is a picture in the National Gallery of Belshazzar's Feast, again, of course from the Bible. The writing on the wall appears very dramatic. This, again, is extremely operatic. Notice how all the mouths are open. When I look at this picture, I can almost hear in my mind how Verdi would've set this scene. He loves these ensembles or trios, quartets, quintets, whatever. When you have a high pointer, had their hearts out. This has indeed a very operatic quality to it. Perhaps the most sensational picture that Rembrandt ever painted is the Blinding of Samson. This was painted to curry favour with a very influential intellectual and courtier, man called Christiaan Huygens. We know that he had a taste for very violent and sensational pictures, and that he used to like to hang them behind curtains.

When he had guests over, at the right point in the evening, he would whip back the curtain. Everybody would react with shock and horror. The Blinding of Samson, I don't think he's ever been depicted quite so graphically. The dagger plunged into the eyeball. It's probably a good thing that this is not a terribly high definition reproduction, or you might all be recoiling from the screen, but amazing details, like notice his toes curling with excruciating agony. The other wonderful thing in this painting, in fact, I don't think I do have it.

Yes, you can see this a little bit better here. Well, you can see in the original, the dagger going through the eyeball is so graphically depicted. But I'd like you to concentrate here on the face of Delilah. Like Caravaggio, he has this wonderful ability to depict mixed emotions. What is that emotion on her face? It's a mixture of triumph and horror and repulsion and fascination. He painted, unlike Rubens of course, who painted for all the royalty of Europe, the French royal family, the English royal family, the Spanish royal family. Anybody who'd be willing to pay him. Rembrandt had, I suppose, more restrictive clientele.

But he did have one very important commission from the Stadtholder of Holland, Frederick Henry, the prince of Orange, and this was in 1533. And he was commissioned to paint a whole series of the Passion of Christ from Nativity through to Resurrection. These paintings hang in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. What we have here, we have on the right hand side, I've got them the wrong way round, really. Should be the raising of the cross on the left. And the descent, Christ's dead body taken down from the cross, is here on the right. Now, somebody last week in the questions suggested that Rembrandt was an atheist. No, he certainly wasn't an atheist. He was a profoundly, profoundly religious man.

Here, you see how he's shown himself as one of the brutal men who are raising the cross. This is not unique. There are other artists who've done this earlier in the 15th and 16th century are showing themselves as contributing to the crucifixion of Christ. And the message here is, "Yes, I am a sinner, and through my sins I have contributed to the necessity of the crucifixion." And here, we've got Spanish artists. These are roughly contemporary paintings. This is on the right hand side, who also shows himself, actually with his palette, contemplating the crucified Christ. Rembrandt was certainly aware of the depiction of the same subjects by Rubens in Antwerp Cathedral, raising and descent from the cross.

Here, we got the descent. Rembrandt on the left, and Rubens on the right. In some ways, Rembrandt's a version of the subject is a tribute to Rubens. But it's also I think a critique of Rubens. Rubens depicts a very muscular, very beautiful, very graceful Jesus taken down from the cross in a very unlikely pose that has a sort of balletic grace to it. This is a Jesus who spent an awful lot of time in the gym, perfecting his body. Rembrandt's version is a lot more brutal, a lot more real, with the sagging dead body of Christ. Now that was, I suppose, the reason why some people at the time criticised Rembrandt for what they saw as his lack of knowledge and his lack of taste, his lack of knowledge of the classical tradition where beauty is the primary concern.

Rembrandt is much more concerned, I would say, with truth than with beauty in any conventional sense. He was certainly interested in the human body. He was interested in anatomy. As you can see here, he made life drawings, which was the principle method of gaining an understanding of the human body. But instead of hiring some beautiful athlete to come and take his clothes off, presumably one of his studio assistants has just been told, "Get your kit off, stand there."

Rembrandt depicts him very much as he was, rather than trying to idealise him. In 1639, Rembrandt was at the absolute peak of his success. He was earning a lot of money as the most fashionable portraitist in Amsterdam. He was able to buy a magnificent, very large townhouse in the Jewish quarter of Amsterdam. That house still exists, although it's been gutted. Some rooms have been, as you can see here, reconstructed from drawings. The upper drawing presumably shows his wife Saskia after one of her children has been born.

That underneath is a reconstruction, based on that drawing. So, this is when Rembrandt came into very close contact with his Jewish neighbours. We know that he made friends among them, in particular the very celebrated Dr. Efraim Bueno. He belonged to a highly cultured Sephardi family. And it's thought that Dr. Bueno may have given Rembrandt his professional services. This very sympathetic little portrait on the left hand side may have been made and given in thanks for those services. And on the right hand side, Rembrandt also made an etched portrait of Dr. Bueno. The other very important member of the Dutch Jewish community of whom Rembrandt made a portrait is Rabbi Menasseh Ben Israel.

I think many of you know all about him through Judy's lectures, 'cause he played a very important role in the reintroduction of Jews to this country. He petitioned to Cromwell, and Cromwell allowed the Jews back into England in 1653 after they'd been banished for several centuries. But Rembrandt was obviously very fascinated by his Jewish neighbours. I think these portraits are not only some of his greatest portraits, I think they're some of the most moving portraits ever made in the Western tradition.

He obviously had enormous sympathy for these people and enormous curiosity. You have to imagine a man like this. He would've looked rather like those blonde Hapsburgs would've looked so exotic in Spain. This rather swarthy man would've looked very exotic in Holland in the the 17th century. What makes these portraits so special? I think it's also because the Orthodox Jews in Amsterdam in the 17th century were outsiders. I think that's often the most powerful. The most human portraits are of outsiders. Because in a way, the artist is not fixated on the mask, on the social position, on the clothing.

He's really looking at the human being. I think that's true of certain portraits of Velasquez, of the court dwarves and his black servant and so on. Certain artists later on. Jericho, I mentioned this painting, Mad People, they're able to see just the human being, not the social person at all. Here is another. I find them fascinating, sympathetic. He hasn't idealised them, they're not particularly beautiful, and of course very remarkably. You have to stop and think how revolutionary this was

in the 17th century. His understanding and his realisation that Jesus Christ was a Jew, and that he paints him as such, not as a blonde, blue-eyed northern European.

This is of course the standard European view of a very Aryanized version of Jesus. Rubens on the right hand side. And one of those kitsch postcards. Trudy and I are always searching for most outrageously kitsch bad taste postcards we can send each other. I think we both have quite a big collection of these things. Here are two more of the same. Look at this. Isn't that wonderful? What a very beautiful and moving depiction of the face of Jesus Christ. Wonderful to see it close up, and you can see this is painted on a panel.

You can even see some of the wood grain coming through. And you can see all this fascinating buildup of paint that you get with Rembrandt. Look at the way the light is depicted on the cheek, on the side of the nose. And again, this business of scraping through the wet paint for the hairs of the beard. Now it wasn't just in 1639 that Rembrandt first became interested in the Jewish community. The very first painting I showed you that we think he painted, a Balaam picture in the Musee Cognacq-Jay, was of a Jewish subject from the Bible. And all the way through his career, he paints a lot of these subjects, and often very unusual subjects.

He obviously knew the Bible inside out. And so, this is a drawing on the left hand side, wonderful drawing. Look at that calligraphic rhythm. This is a pen and ink drawing, has an almost Oriental quality, tremendous panache, an energy of his drawing where he conveys this very elaborately embroidered dress that the bride is wearing. Around the same time he made that drawing, he made this etching of a Jewish bride. This is mid 1630, so before he actually moved to the Jewish quarter. On here, I've got a comparison here of the Rembrandt Jewish bride and a Jewish bride depicted by Delacroix when he made his North African journey in 1634. He painted a very famous picture, of course, of a Jewish wedding.

And when Europeans went to Oriental countries and they watched the customs of the Sephardi Jews, they were very fascinated by them. If this is something that interests you, I strongly recommend that you read Guy de Maupassant's travel book written in 1889, which is From Tunis To Kairouan. He spends a lot of time in that short book describing the appearance, the customs of the Jews of Tunis. They in fact comprised a third of the population of Tunis, and there's this wonderful description. You can find it actually on the internet. You don't have to, if you Google, "Guy de Maupassant From Tunis To Kairouan."

He describes the very young Jewish girls pre-puberty. He said, "Like many little Salomes, so graceful, and running around the streets of the Jewish quarter." And then, as they come towards marriageable age, they're confined and they live this very sedentary life and they're deliberately fattened up. They're fed with a very, very fattening diet 'cause they want to make them as fat as possible for the wedding. He says they land up looking like great pagan idols, bejewelled and wearing these very, very elaborate clothes. And so, I think he probably made those studies of Jewish brides when he was thinking of painting this picture of the wedding feast of Samson.

It's not just the clothing of the Jewish bride, and this rather immobile, idol-like pose that makes me think that he'd studied Jews for this. Also, this detail of Samson engaged with this very, very animated conversation with lots of gesticulation. I think this is something he probably observed in the Jewish community. So, he continues throughout his life, right to the end, painting a great many Jewish subjects. This is obviously Moses, this painting, which was very movingly described by Kenneth Clark in Civilization. And then, to my absolute astonishment, this picture was de-Rembrandted by the Rembrandt Commission, but I think it's come back again, and I think, "Who else could paint this but Rembrandt?" This is Saul and David.

I remember Kenneth Clark saying, "Look at the face of David, a young Jewish boy concentrating on his music." And he said, "How often one has seen that in the concert hall." This is perhaps the grandest, most regal of all the Rembrandt self-portraits. It dates from 1658 and again, he seems to be quite lavishly clothed, although this is shortly after his bankruptcy of 1656. Of course, it was a terrible thing for him. But fascinating for us, because we have an inventory of the contents of his house. I've just been making an inventory of this house because my sister keeps saying to me, "Please don't die before. I don't want to have to deal with all of that." An inventory is a very interesting thing. It tells you an awful lot about a person.

And what it tells us about Rembrandt, and I can identify this, he was a compulsive collector and a most terrible spendthrift. The amount, the stuff in his house, the antique armour, the gold chains, the fur coats, the jewellery, he just accumulated an enormous amount of stuff. That obviously contributed to his bankruptcy. Now this. Look at his face. You've got the lavish clothing. But in the end, it's the face that compels you. This is the tragic Rembrandt, in inverted commas, and a lot of people have written about this increasing sense of sadness, melancholy, tragedy that comes into his self-portraits from this time. This is painted the following year. It's a much simpler, less lavish self portrait.

Now, look at that. Isn't that amazing? I talked about this crust of paint you get with Rembrandt. See how the paint has been built up? With a detail like this, it's so amazing. In fact, you can see it's on a coarse canvas. In the cheeks in either side where the paint is a bit thinner, you can see what's called the tooth of the canvas coming through. But in the highlit areas of the nose, that paint surface has been really built up with many little dabs of impasto. That's dense, thick paint. There was a joke in Holland in the 17th century that you could pick up a Rembrandt self-portrait by the highlight on the nose, which is obviously an exaggeration, but when you look at this, you can see what they meant.

Somebody asked me at the end last time about Rembrandt's painting of flesh tones, and I don't know where that person is, but if you are in London at the moment anyway, it's until next Wednesday you can go to the National Gallery and you could go and see this picture dating from the beginning of the 1660s of Margaretha Trip. I would say go and have a very careful look at this hand, her right hand. It is an absolute marvel. You do this thing that I was suggesting of going very close and then walking back. When you get very close to that, you can see it's a similar technique of thousands and thousands of little touches of blueish, yellowish, pinkish,

fawnish paint.

If you get very close, 'cause you're aware of it being paint, and you get to a certain distance, it is the most incredible illusion of slightly parchment-like elderly flesh stretched over a bony hand. Margaretha Trip was the matriarch of one of the richest families in Holland, the Trip family. There were numerous portraits commissioned of her. She probably didn't commission this one herself. It's thought that her sons commissioned this picture, and that they were building in Amsterdam in the early 1860s.

There are two portraits of her by Rembrandt, and there are various portraits of her by other artists that would make a very fascinating little exhibition to get together all the portraits of Margaretha Trip. In fact, earlier this year, we did have the opportunity of comparing the two Rembrandts that belong to the National Gallery and a portrait of her by Dau. No, by Nicolaes Maes, which comes from the National Gallery in Budapest. Here, we again look at this detail of the eye. This very fascinating paint technique.

She was a clearly a very formidable woman. She was very elderly, very old in her 80s. In the 17th century, that was really ancient. Not many people survived to that age. You can see she'd long lost her teeth. She was one of those very determined, tough women who established a look at a certain time in her life and when she was young. So, she was 80 in 1660. She's wearing a great big ruff, which is a 16th century fashion that lasts until the 1620s and disappears after 1630. She's wearing a fashion that was 40 years out of date, but she obviously liked it and she hung onto it.

Here, you've got the comparison of the Nicolaes Maes portrait of Margaretha Trip on the left hand side. And Rembrandt. So unfair. Nicolaes Maes is a wonderful artist, but who can possibly compare with Rembrandt? Of course, Maes is completely outclassed here. You see that yet again, when you get a little closer to the faces. This is another very famous painting of Rembrandt in the Louvre dating from about 1650, the Flayed Ox. That was actually acquired by the Louvre in the middle of the 19th century. At the time, it was considered so shocking that they didn't dare put it on public display. It is a shocking picture. It's quite monumental.

What is it about? Why did he paint this? Some people have theorised that it's a reference to the killing of the fatted calf in the parable of the prodigal son. Other people have seen it as a kind of secular crucifixion. It has horrific, tragic quality to it. It's certainly enough to make you into a vegetarian. Since the 19th century, since it was acquired by the Louvre, of course it's become very famous and influenced many, many other artists who've tried to capture its power. And so, the realist artists, the middle of 19th century, who believed that there's no such thing as an ugly subject, you have to find beauty in the most banal and the most horrific subject.

And so, we have a comparison here, the Rembrandt on the right and the German artist, Lovis Corinth, who I mentioned last week. He was a great admirer of Rembrandt. This is a painting of the late 19th century. And then of course, the famous Flayed Ox pictures and dead animal

pictures of Chaim Soutine. Rembrandt was not a man who shied away from the darker, more brutal side of life. All of life is in his work. You can say he very rarely does something you could describe as pretty. The painting of the young girl at Dulwich, that somebody mentioned last week is one of the few pictures by Rembrandt that I would describe as pretty, although it's of course a lot more than that too. This is a drawing he made of the last woman in Holland to be executed. This was in 1664.

She was a young woman who got into dispute with her land lady, and had become so angry that she thwacked her over the head with an axe, and the woman fell down the stairs, and broke her neck and died. She was publicly strangled and hung up for display with the axe with which she had committed the murder, and Rembrandt went to see her, and he made these two drawings. I think he's an artist who's interested in every aspect of life. He has no illusions about sex. He really showed this is a pretty earthy, nitty, gritty, truthful, I suppose depiction. Sex is sometimes an uncomfortable, and undignified thing. And he's happy to show it as such.

Now, really, this is unintentional self-censorship because I've clipped the bottom of this. This is an etching of the good Samaritan. In this, the dog is shitting or defecating, whatever you want to call it, in the lower part of the picture. But I've successfully managed to cut that off. To return to something a little more heartwarming after the death of his very much loved wife Saskia, he entered a relationship with a younger woman called Hendrickje Stoffels. And he made many, many paintings of her. I think you can really sense his love for her. These are paintings that are absolutely brimming with love and affection.

Here, you can make perhaps an interesting comparison with Rubens. Both of them given the second chance for love in their life, Rubens marrying the teenage Helena Fourment and painting this slightly porny page three picture of her wearing a fur coat. And you can make interesting comparison with Rembrandt's Bathing Woman, which is generally thought to be a painting of Hendrickje Stoffels. This is in the National Gallery. Again, a painting so worth studying for its extraordinary technique. Look at that. That is so impressionist, it's so Manet, so 19th century or even beyond that.

It could even be expressionist, with the incredible boldness and freedom with which the paint is applied. This is her hand. This is another painting. This is believed to be his son Titus. I think that's pretty clear that it's his son Titus as a child studying. Think of your grandchildren doing their homework, concentrating very hard on his homework. This was in a show about five years ago, the National Gallery, of late Rembrandt. It's a very moving picture, very touching picture. But actually, what I found most mesmerising about this picture.

This is going to come up properly? Yes, yes. Look at this, the desk. What an incredible piece of painting that pinkish paint, the pale, pinkish paint. You can see him manipulating the wet paint and painting wet into wet. It's just amazing. You could just cut that out and have it as a fabulous piece of abstract painterly painting. Now, he's a wonderful draughtsman, but I showed a few of his drawings last week. This is a study in red chalk and black chalk for the sacrifice of Isaac that

I showed you earlier. Tremendous energy and freedom is a wonderful German word. I like to use this, Schwung. This has Schwung, it has rhythm and vitality and energy. This again, almost like an Oriental, this is presumably again Hendrickje who's having a little nap. She's having a sleep, and this is a brush drawing and has all the economy of an Oriental brush drawing. You think, how long did he take to do this? Seconds probably. She's so perfectly caught.

His curiosity, an elephant would've been. Remember of course, Holland has this trade with the world. There are all sorts of exotic animals and exotic things being brought back all the time. But certainly, an elephant would've been of great interest. And again, with this black chalk, how well he's managed to capture that wrinkled texture of the elephant skin. Landscape. Somebody asked me about landscapes. There are very few oil landscapes by Rembrandt, and I can't say I think they show him at his best. I don't think he's as good a landscape in oils as Rubens was. But he's a fabulous landscapist when he goes out into nature with a pen in his hand, and he does these, again, very rapid, very economical drawings of the Dutch landscape.

Little peasant's hut like this, again done in a matter of a few minutes with great confidence and great energy. This is an etching, and I mentioned last week, we know more about Rembrandt than we do about other Dutch artists in the 17th century. He was a phenomenon, and people found him interesting. There are an enormous number of anecdotes that come down to us about Rembrandt. One of them is about this etching, that he was invited to go on a picnic with some wealthy friends. And when they sat down to have the picnic, they discovered that they'd forgotten to bring the mustard. And of course, you can't have a picnic without mustard.

So, a servant was dispatched to get the mustard and Rembrandt whipped out a little prepared copper plate. And he apparently, according to this anecdote, which some modern historians have doubted, but these anecdotes always tell you. is full of them. They may not be strictly true, they may be invented, but they tell you something about the artist, to make this etching in the time it took to fetch the mustard. Rembrandt is one of the greatest print makers, if not the greatest in the western tradition, and his medium was etching. Even when his paintings began to go out of fashion, he moved against fashion, shall we say, after 1640. The taste in Holland was for increasingly smooth, licked paintings and brighter colours.

The big influences were Van Dyke and French painting. And he moved in the opposite direction, with his paintings becoming darker, but very, very much more freely painted, very boldly painted, the late ones. But the etchings never went out of fashion. They were always appreciated and they always went for quite large sums of money. In fact, the common name for this print is the Hundred Gilder Print, because a copy of it sold for what was seen as an absolutely enormous sum of money for a print in the 17th century. The subject of it is the passage in the New Testament when Jesus asked people to bring the little children to him.

You see, they're bringing the sick and the dying and the children to Jesus. This is one of his most elaborate and most highly finished prints. But even in this, you can see that there are areas on the left side of the print which are much less detailed, much less highly finished. It's not

an equal finish over the whole print. Now, I've had an email correspondence with Ron Gornstein. One of the things I love about doing these lectures, it's been a real joy to come into contact with so many people through the lectures. And Ron is an extremely knowledgeable collector. So, I've enjoyed my correspondence with him.

He said that following a question last week, I should say something about the dangers of collecting prints. It's not something to be gone into lightly without quite a lot of specialist knowledge or advice. And so, there's this question of copy. I think somebody said they had a copy of a print. Now, we need to define that very carefully. With an etching, you have a copper plate, there's layer of wax on it, and the needle draws through the wax, and then the acid is put on it and it eats away the metal where the wax has been removed.

And you can also work dry point, working directly, not needing the wax into the metal plate. And then an edition is taken. Now, from the 19th century onwards, it's a lot easier and simpler, because you will have a limited edition. There will be say 20 or 50 or 100 or whatever it is copies taken from the original plate. This was not the case in 17th century. You just kept going until the plate wore out. But one of the things you really need to consider when buying a Rembrandt etching is at what point in the condition of the plate was this print taken? You want it to be as fresh and crisp and clear as possible, but that clarity and freshness is going to diminish as the plate continues to be used.

And then, there comes a point where it really can't be used anymore unless it's reworked. Now Rembrandt a long time, his prints were popular. And so, there are prints that he reworked himself that's called a state. This is the three crosses, and there are five different states of the three crosses. This is an earlier one, and he reworked it so heavily. This is a later one. And you can see it's hardly even recognisable. It is the same metal plate, but he's very, very heavily reworked it. He's introduced this rather interesting exotic figure of a man, extraordinary, on horseback, with an exotic hat on the left hand side that he seems to have borrowed from pisanello metals, again showing the breadth of his interests.

So, there's all that to take into account. The actual quality of the print, which state it is. Now, in some cases, the plates continue to be used after the artist died. This is the case with Goya's prints. They were using the original plates, but of course they were being reworked from time to time right up to the 1930s. So you can have a Goya etching, which, strictly speaking, is a real Goya. It's taken from his plates, but it doesn't really have a lot to do with him. And a Goya print like that will not be worth a lot of money. So, you'd need to be very careful about that. And then of course, there is the other problem of fakes and facsimiles. And here, the piece of advice that I would give you is never lay out a lot of money for any work on paper without seeing it out of its frame and with the glass removed.

Especially in the 19th century, facsimiles of Rembrandt prints, facsimiles of drawings could be made of such high quality that under glass, it's almost impossible to tell whether they're a facsimile or the real thing. And there've been endless scandals, with auction houses and dealers

being caught up in these scandals of facsimiles being sold as the real thing. If you take it out from under the glass, what you need to do is to wiggle it around a bit, get the light, try and get the light bouncing off it. If you see that, well of course if it's a real print, there will be an indentation into the paper. If it's facsimile, there probably won't be. The other thing is that if it's a facsimile, it's quite likely that the light will bounce off. It will reflect off it. If you see that, you should think, "Ah, this is probably not the real thing."

Anyway, to move on: late Rembrandt, we really getting towards the late. He died at 63. When he was my age, he'd been dead for several years. But the late paintings seemed to encapsulate the wisdom of the ages. They have this very, very moving human quality to them. This is a late portrait. It's also a commission from the Trip family. This is Jacob Trip. And all his late portraits have this rather melancholy feeling to them. People have written so much about these late portraits. That Rembrandt doesn't just paint a likeness, he paints more than a likeness. He seems to reach beyond the surface to paint the soul or the psyche. And you can say, "Well, that's ridiculous. How can you?" We've got a panel or we have a canvas and we have sticky, muddy stuff that's smeared on the surface.

How is it that you can stand in front of a painting by Rembrandt and feel that this is a human being that you know? And don't just know what they look like. You know what they are like beneath the surface And it's a kind of a miracle. I think that other artists occasionally have it. But I think the two artists who can do this to the highest degree for me are Rembrandt and Velasquez. Now, look at this as a piece of dazzling, amazing free painting. We love this today. Of course, it's exciting, it's brilliant. But as I said, he was going against fashion at the time. By the time he painted this in the 1660s, what most wealthy people wanted in Holland was something very smooth, very licked.

So Mr. Trip must have been actually a rather exceptional person in persisting with commissioning Rembrandt when he was a man so out of fashion. This is another one of my very favourite Rembrandts, of the two Negroes. And it's another case, I think, where he's painting these would've been slaves at one point, probably were still slaves. How it's the other, in inverted commas. People who are different. I've been having endless conversations about this subject, well have an endless conversation about it with Judy and also with my sister sometimes, about racism and tribalism and how it's instinctive.

It seems to be with most human beings to distrust, to dislike the other, and to stereotype the other. And Rembrandt and Velazquez do not do this. They're interested in the other, and they can do enormously sympathetic portraits of people who are different. This is one of the most extraordinary late masterpieces of Rembrandt. It's now in the National Gallery in Sweden. It was one of his biggest pictures, maybe the biggest. It was commissioned for Amsterdam Town Hall. It's an incident in ancient Dutch history at the time of the Romans.

The conspiracy against the Romans, it's called the Conspiracy of Claudia Civilis. It's such an amazing picture. It's so timeless, it's so out of its time. It was delivered to the Amsterdam Town

Hall and it was installed. But I think people, they were shocked by it. They couldn't grasp it. "What is this?" They thought. And in fact, there were protests against it and it was taken down and returned to Rembrandt. He had this enormous painting. What to do with it? He was trying to sell it, so he himself cut it down. So, that's all we have now is a fragment.

I really regret that, 'cause when you see this drawing of the whole composition, you see against these great cavernous spaces in the background. I bet they were wonderful, mysterious, light and shadowy spaces in the background. And look at this. My god, it's so expressionist, so 20th century, so ahead of its time. I wanted to say last week that I wanted to end on this painting. It is for me one of the most beautiful, moving paintings ever created. I told you that the Velazquez, when I first saw it, and this is the other. I can't think of any other painting that captures love or affection between two human beings in the way that this does.

It's always been known as the Jewish bride, but we don't actually have any specific evidence of the identity of the man and the woman. Well, not even definitely that they are Jewish, but I like to think that they are. But look at those faces and the extraordinary affection and love between them that is pressed on the faces. Again, it's a combination. And the gesture of the hands, that gesture of affection. But it's also the most dazzling piece of virtuosity in paint. Look at that sleeve. Great lumps of impasto there. You feel almost you could pick up the paint by the highlights. These thick lumps of paint in highlights on the sleeve. I leave you with this image, which is possibly the last of his self-portraits, age 63 in the National Gallery.

Before I come out of my share, I just want to say that the next two talks are going to be given by my former colleague from Christie's, Ian Cox. Wendy said to me she would like to include in these series from time to time lectures on interiors and decorative arts. I thought I should really get somebody who is a proper specialist to do this. Ian Cox is a very knowledgeable, wonderful lecturer. I think you're really going to enjoy him. He's going to do a talk on Italian furniture and interiors on Wednesday. And then on Sunday, he'll be talking about Northern European furniture and interiors. So, I am now coming out of my share, and let's see. I can see, yes, we have some questions already coming up. Stop share.

Q&A and Comments:

Q: How did they get their paints and mix them?

A: The limited number of colours you could get. There were some very exotic ones. Of course, the most famous being lapis lazuli for the blue that had to come all the way from Afghanistan, and would arrive in Venice. It's often said that one of the reasons that Venetian paint is so interesting colour was that the more exotic pigments that came from the Far East or the Middle East came across the Mediterranean through Venice. You never get a pure lapis blue with Rembrandt. He's predominantly using earth colours, which are actually very cheap there, from the soil. I suppose there were merchants you could buy them from, but with somebody like Rembrandt who had a large studio, certainly going back to the renaissance, grinding colours,

mixing paints was something that studio assistants would learn to do.

Q: Rembrandt well beyond the description of the temple in the Bible. He had to have knowledge from commentaries, which must have been explained to him by learned Jews.

A: That's a very interesting point, very interesting idea. I wish we knew more about that, but let me see.

Q: Repeat the name of the writer in Tunis.

A: Guy de Maupassant, famous for his short stories, but I think you'll love that. It's wonderfully written, wonderfully vivid description of Jewish life in North Africa.

Q: When I return. Is that the 23rd?

A: The last one I do before Christmas is going to be Frans Hals. I thought that was a good festive artist to do for the holiday season.

Q: Yeah. The, Jewish bride - was this done from a biblical orientation?

A: The Jewish bride is what I was talking about at the end. It's a mysterious picture. There are some people who think it is actually illustrating a biblical story, and traditionally it is, or it could be. They're very individualised faces, so it could be a commission. I don't think we really know the answer to that one, as people have different theories.

Q: The three trees etching landscape, does it have significance?

A: The three trees. You've got the three crosses, I suppose. Sorry, yes. Jan Six, not Jacob Trip. That was a senior moment. It's three trees. Etching landscape. Does it have? Yes, I think it could have symbolic, but again, I think there are different interpretations of it. I'll tell you, it has a significance for me 'cause that was the first Rembrandt I ever saw. It was that my grandparents lived in Bognor Regis. And they actually had Jewish neighbours on either side, and there was an elderly man and my mother said to me, "Oh, he has a Rembrandt." I would have been about five years old at the time. So, I cheekily went round and I said, "Where's your Rembrandt?" And he showed me that print.

Q: Artists made their own paints. Did this limit their colours?

A: There's a big literature on the history of colours, and different colours available at different times, different places. And of course, new colours invented in the 18th, and many, many new pigments invented in the 19th century. It's quite a complicated subject. You probably need a lecture on that subject, but I think probably not for me. It needs to be somebody a little bit.

Q: Is it correct that Menasseh Ben Israel helped Rembrandt with the Hebrew words in his painting?

A: I don't know the answer to that. I'm not sure that anybody knows the answer to that.

How did artists? Well your plate has got worn. You would rework the plate with a burin. I suppose you could re-coat it with wax. I imagine a lot of the reworking was done with a burin, a dry point rather than a proper etching through the wax. "How did so many end up in the?" Funny enough, I'm reading a book about that at the moment. Again, a book that I very, very strongly recommend to you. It's been sitting on my shelves for most of my adult life. And by chance yesterday, somebody very, very kindly recommended me to go to the show of the Woburn Pictures.

Anybody who wants my email, please have it. It is pjspage@aol.com. But I give Judy full permission to give it to anybody who wants it. Yes. The Woburn Pictures which are on show at the Queen's house, and I thought, "It's a long journey." So I picked up. It's called Diary of an Art Dealer, and it's by Rene Gimpel, G-I-M-P-E-L. And he was one of these great Jewish dynasties of art dealers. Tragically he died in a concentration camp in 1945. But his diary runs from the end of the First World War till 1939, and he sold pictures to Frick.

It's wonderfully vivid. I've managed to get through quite a lot of it in one day. It really is, and is very, very vividly written and lots of descriptions of what Frick was like and what he paid for the pictures. A lot of the Frick collection, of course, Rene Gimpel was the brother-in-law of Duveen. And Duveen of course was the most important dealer who sold to Frick and the other so-called robber barons.

Q: Did Rembrandt have help with the paint?

A:  Yes, he certainly did. And that's an extremely fraught issue with the attribution of paintings. How much they're by Rembrandt, how much they're by assistants, Do you know, this was something I meant to bring up and it's very, very interesting. You might know more about this than me.

Q: How do you think that Rembrandt got those very intense young Jewish men, obviously very pious from the way they're dressed and so on. How on earth did he get them to sit for him?

A: Considering that, as you say, graven images were forbidden. Again, we'd love to know more about it. I don't think there's any documentary evidence.

Q: Do you know what the circles represent at the back of the self portrait in Kenwood House?

A: No, I don't. I bet there are theories out there, but I don't know them.

Q: The Jewish bride wears her rings on her little finger of her left hand. Does that say something?

A: And again, I'm afraid not to me, but it might.

Q: How old was he when he died?

A: 63.

Guy de Maupassant. You can read it either in the original French, but it has been translated into English. In French it's called Tunis A Kairouan, and in English that would be From Tunis to Kairouan. And it's a quite a short book. Very brilliant. I think you'll really enjoy it.

Q: In Israel there is a mollusk that excreted a blue dye.

A: Yes, there are different blues. I don't really know enough about it to say if Rembrandt used that or not.

Q: Do you know what the inscription in Hebrew means on the right hand corner of the Jewish painting?

A: I don't, I'm afraid.

Q: And did he use multiple models for the group paintings?

A: Yes he did. Yes he did. So am I through all of those questions?

- [Judy] That like it was the questions, Patrick.

- Sorry?

- [Judy] That looks like that's all the questions.

- I think it is all the questions. Yeah.

- [Judy] Yeah.

- Yeah.

- [Judy] Super. Thank you very much, Patrick. Thank you to everybody who joined us today, and we'll see everybody on Monday for Trudy Gold.

- Yeah.

- [Judy] Thank you Patrick.

- Thanks everybody.