



Rembrandt: Portraits in print (OCULI: Studies in the Arts of the Low Countries)

Stephanie S. Dickey

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Rembrandt: Portraits in Print is the first monograph devoted to Rembrandt's etched portraits of himself and his contemporaries. Between 1633 and 1665, Rembrandt etched less than two dozen formal portraits, yet this small body of work includes some of his most finely crafted and widely sought-after prints. Rembrandt depicted influential preachers of the Remonstrant, Reformed and Mennonite faiths as well as prominent citizens such as the tax administrator Jan Wtenbogaert, the wealthy connoisseur Jan Six, the physician Arnout Tholinx and the landscape painter Jan Asselijn. Most of these men participated in a circle of artists, poets and patrons who thought of themselves as a "Dutch Parnassus." For this community of art lovers, the celebration of individual character and accomplishment, in products ranging from imposing portrait sculptures to witty occasional verses, was a central preoccupation. In this context, Rembrandt's portrait prints construct nuanced personal tributes to individuals who appreciated both their allusive content and their pictorial finesse. At the same time, Rembrandt had to compete in a market populated by professional printmakers and publishers for whom celebrity portraiture functioned as a lucrative commodity. In a series of ambitious self-portraits, he stakes his claim to artistic excellence and personal fame. This book brings together contextual evidence such as preparatory studies, inscribed copies, and literary responses to illuminate the creation and reception of Rembrandt's etched portraits. His contribution to graphic portraiture emerges as a unique blend of innovative technique, thoughtful characterization, emulation of artistic tradition and bold competition with contemporary trends.

Stephanie S. Dickey received her PhD from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, in 1994. She is associate professor of art history at Herron School of Art, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Her publications on Rembrandt and Dutch art of the seventeenth-century have appeared in the *Art Bulletin*, the *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* and elsewhere.

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