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Clark Art Institute's Rembrandt painting attributed to artist as debate continues.



WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS.- The Clark Art Institute's painting *Man Reading* has been unequivocally attributed to the great Dutch Master Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669) by Ernst van de Wetering, long-time head of the Netherlands-based Rembrandt Research Project, in the project's sixth and final volume published this week. The attribution of the painting, as well as the verification of many other works attributed to Rembrandt, however, continues to be the subject of scholarly debate. In light of this debate, the Clark has installed the painting, which is on view for the first time since the July 2014 reopening of the newly renovated Museum Building. The painting will be on view until early January. *Man Reading* was acquired by Sterling Clark in 1923 and entered the museum's collection in 1955 as a work by "Rembrandt School," a term used to indicate that a work was considered a product of the artist's followers. In 2011 the Clark changed the designation of the work to "attributed to Rembrandt van Rijn," acknowledging van de Wetering's scholarship and the increased likelihood that the work was painted by Rembrandt and not his students. "Ernst van de Wetering is a leading Rembrandt scholar, and his certainty that *Man Reading* was created by the artist himself is an important piece of the attribution puzzle," said Richard Rand, Robert and Martha Berman Lipp Senior Curator at the Clark. "But as important as van de Wetering's opinion is, it does not end the debate. We are comfortable with stating the painting is attributed to Rembrandt, but we will continue to review scholarship related to the painting." For centuries, the painting was thought to portray an individual, but recent research suggests it may be a *tronie*—a type of image in which seventeenth-century Dutch artists explored facial expressions and costumes. The richly textured surface and the contrast of warm light and soft shadows are typical of paintings by Rembrandt and his students, who learned the master's techniques by copying his work.

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