

AUTHENTICATION IN ART

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Rembrandt? The Case of Saul and David

11 June - 13 September 2015

The Mauritshuis has one of its most famous Rembrandts back. The full attribution of the painting *Saul and David* to Rembrandt is the exciting conclusion of eight years of research by a large team of international experts under the leadership of the Mauritshuis. The painting has been carefully restored and is the centrepiece of the exhibition *Rembrandt? The Case of Saul and David*, which is presented in the exhibition hall of the Mauritshuis from 11 June to 13 September 2015.

Exhibition

Rembrandt? The Case of Saul and David lets visitors become acquainted with the latest restoration techniques and research methods. Through four interactive lectures, you will follow the fascinating discoveries of the research team that worked on the restoration. Using our iPads, you can take a look behind the layers of paint and unravel the mysteries of the case of Saul and David yourself.

Of course, Rembrandt's *Saul and David* is the centrepiece of the exhibition. The painting is visible to the public for the first time since 2007. The exhibition also features six loans (including Rembrandt's *David Playing the Harp to Saul* from the Städel Museum, Frankfurt) and a 3D reconstruction of *Saul and David* in the painting's original size.

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The research on the painting resembled a crime scene investigation in many ways. Indeed, the masterpiece was likely cut into two pieces between 1830 and 1869, and later reassembled. Using

the latest equipment and research methods clearly showed that the current painting consists of no fewer than fifteen different pieces of canvas: two large pieces from the original canvas (one with Saul and one with David), complemented by an old canvas (a copy of a portrait of Anthony van Dyck) and other strips on the edges of the painting. In addition, the research shows that the original painting was larger. The exhibition features a 3D reproduction of the original format.



Origin



The painting *Saul and David* first emerged in 1830 at an auction in Paris. It then remained on the market for years. In 1898, the director of the Mauritshuis, Abraham Bredius, bought the painting. There was no doubt in his mind that this was one of Rembrandt's most important paintings. After his death in 1946, Bredius left the painting to the museum. *Saul and David* was considered one of the most beautiful works by Rembrandt, and was a favourite of the visitors of the Mauritshuis.

In the sixties and seventies, Rembrandt's oeuvre was examined in a new light. Horst Gerson, Rembrandt expert and authority in his time, wrote off many of Rembrandt's paintings, including *Saul and David*. Opinions about the attribution have varied widely ever since: is it really by Rembrandt? By a pupil? Or perhaps both? To solve the mystery once and for all, the Mauritshuis decided to research and restore the painting again in 2007.

This study and its results are the subject of the exhibition *Rembrandt? The Case of Saul and David*.

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