

Rembrandt

Aestas Infinity



12 PLATES • 2 COVERS • 16:9 • HOUSE OF GOLD • LTD 100

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Twelve plates

Twelve paintings in the order they were made, 1628 to 1669, and two covers. The line under the title says whether the plate is after the painting or only set beside it.

About this edition. Twelve plates and two covers after Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669), in order of date: the young self-portrait of 1628, Jeremiah, the Anatomy Lesson, Belshazzar’s Feast, Danaë, the Night Watch, Aristotle with a Bust of Homer, Bathsheba, Jacob Blessing, the Apostle Paul, the Syndics and the Prodigal Son. Each plate is lit by one gold light and says what it adds. The essay that comes first takes about six minutes to read; each plate takes one.

Read the essay first

13 Front cover

The cover. The mark, declared.

01 The first watch

After Self-Portrait as a Young Man, Rijksmuseum.

02 The prophet and the ruin

After Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem.

03 The lesson

After The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp.

04 The writing on the wall

After Belshazzar’s Feast, National Gallery.

05 The gold arrives as dust

After Danaë, Hermitage.

06 The company

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After Self-Portrait as the Apostle Paul, Rijksmuseum.

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The seal.

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Rembrandt

Leiden, 15 July 1606. Amsterdam, 4 October 1669.

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn was born in Leiden, the son of a miller, and studied there and then in Amsterdam under Pieter Lastman. He moved to Amsterdam in 1631 and made his name with the Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp in 1632. In 1634 he married Saskia van Uylenburgh, who died in 1642, the year of the Night Watch. In 1656 he was declared insolvent, and his house and collections were sold. He lived his last years on the Rozengracht with Hendrickje Stoffels and his son Titus, and he outlived both of them. He died on 4 October 1669.

This book is twelve paintings in the order they were made, and two covers. Each plate has a painting behind it, in a museum. The frame is not that painting. Where the two disagree, both facts are printed. The pictures themselves were made with AI tools; the methods stay private.

The House of Gold

One light, and what it leaves.

Rembrandt's light is gold: a single lamp, one side of a face, the rest allowed to go brown and black. The edition takes that literally. Every plate is lit by one gold light in a room of panelling and heavy cloth, with gold dust hanging in the air and crimson in the cloth. Every figure is clothed, including the two whom Rembrandt painted naked, Danaë and Bathsheba, and the line under those plates says so. No text sits inside any picture.

The gold dust, the panelling and the rooms are added. The faces, the gestures and the groups are Rembrandt's. The line under each plate says which is which.

Leiden and the first years

1628 to 1636.

The Self-Portrait as a Young Man of 1628 is a small panel, 22.5 by 18.6 centimetres, painted in Leiden, in which the face is half in shadow. Jeremiah (1630) is a prophet who rests his head on his hand over a burning city. The Anatomy Lesson (1632) brought him the Amsterdam surgeons' guild. Belshazzar's Feast and Danaë, both of the later 1630s, are the large histories of his early Amsterdam years.

The Night Watch

1642.

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The Militia Company of Captain Frans Banninck Cocq, known as the Night Watch, was painted in 1642 for the hall of the civic guard in Amsterdam. It was cut down on all sides in 1715 to fit a new wall, and the name comes from the darkened varnish, not the scene. It is now in the Rijksmuseum.

After the bankruptcy

1653 to 1669.

Aristotle with a Bust of Homer (1653) was made for a Sicilian collector, and the Bathsheba (1654) and Jacob Blessing (1656) belong to the years when his money failed. The Apostle Paul (1661), the Syndics (1662) and the Return of the Prodigal Son (about 1668–69) are the late paintings: a tired face, a table of inspectors, a father's hands. They are broader in handling than the early ones, and quieter.

The mark

Gold that does not announce itself.

The mark of this edition is a small gold crack in the shape of an infinity sign, in the lower right corner of every picture. It is there on all twelve plates and both covers, never large and never labelled. House of Gold keeps its gold by not announcing it. Look for it, and then look at the picture.

What the museums hold

Paintings, not pictures of paintings.

A painting changes in its own museum. The Night Watch was cut down in 1715. Danaë was attacked with acid in 1985 and restored over years. Belshazzar's Feast has been dated anywhere from the middle to the late 1630s. A plate may move a painting again. What it may not do is put a new object in the frame and let the reader think Rembrandt put it there. Where a plate adds something, the line under the picture says so.

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01 The first watch

1628 · RIJKSMUSEUM

After Self-Portrait as a Young Man, 1628. Oil on panel, 22.5 × 18.6 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-A-4691. The face and the shadow across it are Rembrandt's. The candle, the red panelling and the gold dust are added.

Self-Portrait as a Young Man at the Rijksmuseum

A young man with thick curls and a dark cap looks out of the shadow, one side of his face lit and the other lost. He wears a heavy dark coat with a fur collar. A candle burns on the wall at the upper right beside red panelling, and fine gold dust hangs in the air. In the lower right corner, almost out of sight, is a small gold crack in the shape of an infinity sign.

Rembrandt painted this panel in Leiden in 1628, when he was about twenty-two. It is only 22.5 by 18.6 centimetres. He shadows the eyes with his own cast shadow and scratches the curls into wet paint with the wrong end of the brush. It is the first of about eighty self-portraits in paint, etching and drawing that run across his working life.

The plate enlarges the small panel into a room and lights it with a candle. The face, the cap and the shadow stay. The red panelling, the candle, the dust and the gold mark are added.

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02 The prophet and the ruin

1630 · RIJKSMUSEUM

After Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem, 1630. Oil on panel, 58 × 46 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-A-3276. The prophet and the burning city are Rembrandt's. The ruin in the foreground and the gold dust are added.

Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem at the Rijksmuseum

An old man in a blue robe sits on the ground at the left with his head on his hand, his eyes closed. Behind him a city lies in fallen columns and broken arches, with a fire still burning in its streets. A gold bowl lies on a carpet in front of him. Gold dust drifts over the stones, and a small gold mark sits among the rubble.

The Rijksmuseum's Jeremiah is signed and dated 1630, and measures 58 by 46 centimetres. The prophet rests his head on his hand, the old pose of melancholy, and mourns Jerusalem burning behind him. In the foreground lie gold vessels, which he ignores. The Rijksmuseum bought the panel in 1939 with the help of private donors and the Vereniging Rembrandt.

The plate keeps the prophet, the pose and the fire, and spreads the ruin across the ground. In the panel the surroundings are barely painted, a smoky nothing. Here the rubble is detailed. The broken city, the bowl and the dust are added.

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03 The lesson

1632 · MAURITSHUIS

After The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp, 1632. Oil on canvas, 169.5 × 216.5 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague. The group and the lit arm are Rembrandt's. The dust and the gold mark are added.

The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp at the Mauritshuis

Seven men in black coats and white collars lean over a body laid under a cloth of dark gold, and the man in the wide black hat lifts the muscles of its forearm with a pair of tongs. Every face is turned a little differently. Gold dust floats over the table, and in the lower right corner a small gold mark sits on the edge of the stage.

The surgeons' guild of Amsterdam commissioned the Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp in 1632, and it is signed and dated that year. It is 169.5 by 216.5 centimetres. The body was Aris Kindt, a thief hanged on 31 January 1632. The painting is the work that made Rembrandt's name after his move from Leiden. The Mauritshuis acquired it in 1828.

The plate keeps the men, the arm and the cloth. The surgeons look at the flesh, and none of them looks at the dead man's face. The dust and the gold mark are added, and the body remains fully covered.

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04 The writing on the wall

1636–38 · NATIONAL GALLERY

After Belshazzar's Feast, about 1636–38. Oil on canvas, 167.6 × 209.2 cm, National Gallery, London, NG6350. The king, the guests and the writing are Rembrandt's. The cracked plaster, the red table and the dust are added.

Belshazzar's Feast at the National Gallery

A king in a gold-and-red robe and a jewelled turban turns from a feast and points, his other hand knocking over a goblet. A woman in white recoils from the table. At the upper right a hand has just written four lines in Hebrew letters on a cracked wall. Gold coins and fruit lie on the red cloth, and the room is lit only by the writing.

The National Gallery dates Belshazzar's Feast to about 1636–38 and gives it as 167.6 by 209.2 centimetres. In the book of Daniel a hand writes the words on the wall of the Babylonian palace as the king feasts from the vessels taken from the Temple, and that night he is killed. Rembrandt wrote the Hebrew in a vertical arrangement, a puzzle of its own, and is said to have taken advice on it from the Jewish scholar Menasseh ben Israel.

The plate keeps the king, the guests and the writing. The red cloth runs across the whole table, and the plaster behind the letters is cracked. The crack, the cloth and the dust are added. It is the one plate where the crimson is not only a drape.

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05 The gold arrives as dust

1636–C. 1643 · HERMITAGE

After Danaë, 1636, reworked about 1643. Oil on canvas, 185 × 203 cm, State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. The bed, the curtain and the raised hand are Rembrandt's. The woman is clothed in the plate; in the painting she is naked. The dust is added.

Danaë at the Hermitage

A woman lies propped on a heavy bed under a gold-edged canopy, wrapped in a crimson and gold robe, her arm half raised towards the light. Curtains fall on either side. Gold dust drifts down from above, and a small gold mark is cut into the foot of the bed at the lower right.

In the Hermitage's Danaë, signed and dated 1636, the princess is naked on a bed, shut in a tower, and a golden light from the upper left touches her as Jupiter arrives in a shower of gold. Rembrandt reworked it about 1643. The canvas is 185 by 203 centimetres. In 1985 a visitor threw acid on it and cut it with a knife, and it took years to restore.

The plate keeps the bed, the curtain and the light, and dresses the woman, so that the gold is not a visit but a weather. The robe and the dust are added. Gold arrives as dust here, not as a shower.

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06 The company

1642 · RIJKSMUSEUM

After The Night Watch (the Militia Company of District II under Captain Frans Banninck Cocq), 1642. Oil on canvas, 379.5 × 453.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-C-5. The captain, the lieutenant and the company are Rembrandt's. The gold dust and the wet street are added.

The Night Watch at the Rijksmuseum

A man in black with a red sash and a wide white collar steps forward with his hand out, and beside him a man in pale yellow carries a long staff. Behind them a militia company crowds under a stone arch, with drums, pikes and a flag. Gold dust hangs in the lamplit air, and the street is wet.

Captain Frans Banninck Cocq's militia company commissioned the Night Watch in 1642 for the hall of their civic guard in Amsterdam. It is 379.5 by 453.5 centimetres. It was cut down on all sides in 1715 when it was moved to the Town Hall. It was not a night scene: darkened varnish gave it the name, which is now the one everyone uses.

The plate keeps the captain, the lieutenant and the crowd behind them, and takes the daylight out of the scene. The wet street, the lamps and the dust are added. The red sash is the only red the plate allows on a body.

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07 The hand on the head

1653 · METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

After Aristotle with a Bust of Homer, 1653. Oil on canvas, 143.5 × 136.5 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 61.198. The philosopher, the bust and the chain are Rembrandt's. The panelling and the dust are added.

Aristotle with a Bust of Homer at the Met

A bearded man in a black hat and a dark robe with gold edges rests one hand on the head of a white marble bust and holds a heavy gold chain with the other. Red curtains hang behind him, and tall gold panels stand along the wall. Gold dust floats between his hand and the stone.

Don Antonio Ruffo of Messina commissioned Aristotle with a Bust of Homer from Rembrandt in 1652, and the artist sent it in 1654. It is dated 1653 and measures 143.5 by 136.5 centimetres. In 1961 the Met bought it for 2.3 million dollars, then the highest price ever paid for a painting.

The plate keeps the hand on the head and the chain. In the painting the philosopher looks into a middle distance, weighing the poet's fame against the chain's value, and the plate does not decide it for him. The panelling and the dust are added.

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08 The letter

1654 · LOUVRE

After Bathsheba at Her Bath, 1654. Oil on canvas, 142 × 142 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris. The pose, the letter and the old servant are Rembrandt's. The woman is clothed in the plate; in the painting she is naked. The dust is added.

Bathsheba at Her Bath at the Louvre

A woman in a pale gold gown sits at the edge of a bath, a letter held loosely in her hand, her head bowed. A servant kneels at her feet in the shadow at the left. Red curtains frame the room, and gold dust lies on the stone of the bath. A small gold mark is at the base of the stone.

The Louvre's Bathsheba is dated 1654 and measures 142 by 142 centimetres. In it Bathsheba, naked, holds the letter in which King David summons her, and she knows what answering it will cost her husband Uriah. The model is traditionally said to be Hendrickje Stoffels, who lived with Rembrandt after his wife's death.

The plate keeps the letter, the bowed head and the servant, and clothes her. The gold dust is on the stone, not on her skin. What the plate holds is the moment before the decision. The gown and the dust are added.

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09 The crossed hands

1656 · KASSEL

After Jacob Blessing the Children of Joseph, 1656. Oil on canvas, about 175 × 210 cm, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Kassel. The group and the crossed hands are Rembrandt's. The panelling and the dust are added.

Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Kassel

An old man with a white beard raises one hand over a kneeling boy, and a second boy in a gold tunic kneels in front with his hands together. A man in a brown tunic and red cloak stands at the right with his head bent. Tall gold panelling stands behind them, and gold dust drifts through the light from a lamp.

In the Kassel painting, dated 1656, the dying Jacob crosses his arms to bless Joseph's younger son, Ephraim, with his right hand, over the older Manasseh, as told in Genesis 48. It is about 175 by 210 centimetres. It was painted in the year Rembrandt was declared insolvent.

The plate keeps the old man, the boys and the father, and the hands that cross. The blessing is the gesture and nothing else. The panelling, the lamp and the dust are added.

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10 The apostle

1661 · RIJKSMUSEUM

After Self-Portrait as the Apostle Paul, 1661. Oil on canvas, 91 × 77 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-A-4050. The face, the turban and the book are Rembrandt's. The panelling and the dust are added.

Self-Portrait as the Apostle Paul at the Rijksmuseum

A man with deep lines in his face, in a gold-brown turban and a heavy cloak, holds an open book against his chest and looks out wearily. Tall gold panels stand behind him, and dust hangs in the light across his forehead. A small gold mark is at the lower right.

Rembrandt painted himself as the Apostle Paul in 1661, at fifty-five. The canvas is 91 by 77 centimetres. Paul's attribute, the sword, is visible in the original at the fold of his cloak, and the book is the book of his letters. By then Rembrandt had been insolvent for five years and lived on the Rozengracht with Hendrickje and his son Titus.

The plate keeps the face and the book, and gives the room the gold panelling that the painting leaves dark. The face is tired, and the plate does not mend it. The panelling and the dust are added.

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11 The inspectors

1662 · RIJKSMUSEUM

After The Sampling Officials of the Amsterdam Drapers' Guild (The Syndics), 1662. Oil on canvas, 191.5 × 279 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-C-6. The five men and the table are Rembrandt's. The curtain, the dust and the gold mark are added.

The Syndics at the Rijksmuseum

Five men in black coats and wide black hats sit and stand behind a table covered in red cloth, and all of them look up at once. An open book lies before them, and a small gold coin purse spills on the red cloth. A heavy curtain falls behind. Gold dust drifts over the table, and a small gold mark sits at the lower right.

In 1662 the officials who tested the cloth of Amsterdam's drapers' guild, the *staalmeesters*, commissioned this portrait of themselves. It is 191.5 by 279 centimetres. The man at the left rising from his chair makes the composition feel like a moment taken in the middle of a meeting, when someone has just entered the room.

The plate keeps the five men, the table and the look up. The red cloth is the only strong colour. The curtain, the dust and the gold mark are added.

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12 The return

C.1668–69 · HERMITAGE

After The Return of the Prodigal Son, about 1668–69. Oil on canvas, 262 × 205 cm, State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. The father, the son and the embrace are Rembrandt's. The columns, the gold dust and the gold mark are added.

The Return of the Prodigal Son at the Hermitage

An old man in a red cloak with a gold edge bends over a kneeling younger man in rags and holds him by the shoulders, his head on the boy's chest. Gold columns stand in the dark behind, and gold dust hangs in the air around the two. A small gold mark is at the lower right.

Rembrandt painted the Return of the Prodigal Son in the last years of his life, about 1668–69. The canvas is 262 by 205 centimetres. In the parable of Luke 15 a father embraces his son who has wasted his inheritance. Rembrandt's wife Saskia had died in 1642, Hendrickje in 1663 and his son Titus in 1668, and he died himself on 4 October 1669.

The plate keeps the two, and removes the onlookers. The columns and the dust are added. Gold does not announce itself here. It only ages.

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14 Judgment and mercy

BACK COVER

Frame 14 of 14. Made for this edition by combining two works: The Syndics (1662) and The Return of the Prodigal Son (about 1668–69). It is not after any single painting.

The Syndics at the Rijksmuseum

At the right, in the dark, five men in black hats sit around a table. At the left a father in a red cloak bends over a kneeling son. Gold dust settles over both tables, and a small gold mark sits at the lower right.

The front cover puts the young man of 1628 beside the company of 1642: the face that watched itself, and the militia that wanted to be seen. The back cover closes with the inspectors who measure cloth and the father who measures nothing. Between the two covers are the bankruptcy of 1656 and the burials.

The mark is this edition's own. It is not Rembrandt's, and it is not in any museum. It stands as a seal, and as the mark of the run of one hundred. Look at the picture first.

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Colophon

This edition, House of Gold, was made by Aestas Infinity in 2026. It is a book in the archive. It is not a chapter of any series.

Twelve plates and two covers, each at 16:9. The words sit under the picture. The front cover and the back cover are new pictures, each carrying the same small gold crack in the shape of an infinity sign. AI tools were used in making the covers and the plates; the methods stay private. The plates are new pictures made after, or beside, the paintings named under each one. They are not reproductions.

The file is a narrow page so it can be read on a phone without sliding sideways. A word in amber opens another plate, the painting in the museum, or a page of the archive. The line at the top of a page is the same kind of link, kept small. On a plate, the line under the text moves to the previous picture or the next.

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The paintings named here are in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; the Mauritshuis, The Hague; the National Gallery, London; the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Louvre, Paris; and the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Kassel. This book is a reading of those works. It is not a reproduction of them, and it does not take their place.

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Rembrandt

Aestas Infinity

HOUSE OF GOLD · TWELVE PLATES · LTD 100

NUMBER

_____ / 100

YEAR

2026

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