

# The Rembrandt Database



## Guidelines for the presentation of paintings in *The Rembrandt Database*

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### Content

Introduction.....	2
Step by step, activities for the Rembrandt Database .....	2
1. Partner: Preparatory activities.....	2
2. RKD & Partner: Agreement for collaboration .....	2
3. RKD: Data entry of art historical information .....	2
4. Partner: Inventory of documentation.....	2
5. Partner: Inventory of contextual information .....	3
6. Partner: Selection of documentation .....	3
7. Partner: Digitization / digital photography.....	3
8. Partner: Transfer of digital files to RKD .....	3
9. RKD: Data entry selected documentation .....	3
10. RKD: Online records.....	3

## Introduction

These guidelines describe the process of contributing documentation to *The Rembrandt Database*. It explains the various phases of the process from the inventory and selection of documentation until the presentation on the website. Please, consider these guidelines as advice, not as obligations.

Collaboration in *The Rembrandt Database* involves:

- The online presentation of a selection of existing conservation and technical documentation – together with its metadata – on (a selection of) paintings by and/or (formerly) attributed to Rembrandt on the website [www.rembrandtdatabase.org](http://www.rembrandtdatabase.org);
- The online presentation of the most recent art historical information of those paintings on the same website;

All collaborations are coordinated by the RKD. A RKD associate will guide you through the process. We will always try to make the process the least time-consuming for you.

## Step by step, activities for the Rembrandt Database

### 1. **Partner: Preparatory activities**

Before starting the actual collaboration, it is important that you (and other colleagues involved) familiarize yourself with:

- These guidelines;
- The organization of the documentation within your institution and possible other locations where documentation might be kept.
- Possibilities for digitization (in house or outsourced) and relevant issues .

### 2. **RKD & Partner: Agreement for collaboration**

- Before starting the practical work, RKD and partner institution will enter into an agreement to determine mutual responsibilities. There is no need to wait to start working on the RDb until the agreement has been signed (which is nothing but a formality); in principle you could even start immediately.

### 3. **RKD: Data entry of art historical information**

- Art historical data like attribution, provenance, relationships to preparatory works and copies, exhibition history and bibliographies will be recorded in the database by the RKD associate(s)(in English).
- If different opinions on the attribution have been published, RKD will list them all (with reference to their sources) and will present the current attribution in your institution as the first.
- The curator of Rembrandt and Rembrandt school at the RKD will edit the data entry done by the RKD associate(s)
- You and your colleagues will be asked to review the information as it has been entered in the RKD database.

### 4. **Partner: Inventory of documentation**

- The actual project activities for the partner start by making a survey of the documentation of your paintings and where it is kept. If you want, the RKD can provide you with a format for gathering/inventorying the analogue and digital research documents, and its metadata.
- It is key that you obtain a (quick) overview of what you have that will help to make a selection and to identify possible issues that need extra attention in the next steps (such as missing metadata, digitization issues, etc.).
- Examples of documentation to include in the list are: treatment reports and proposals, photos, research results, spectra, etc. about the painting, samples;

Please note:

- Recent documentation might exist in digital format only.
- If research or treatment was not documented, a document is missing or a document is illegible due to damage, it can still be interesting to note this on the list. It could be presented in the database with metadata only.

#### **5. Partner: Inventory of contextual information**

- Make a list of the history of conservation and research for each painting to get an overview of what has happened to a painting and why (technical) documentation was created.

#### **6. Partner: Selection of documentation**

- Indicate what you would like to include and exclude in *The Rembrandt Database*. If you want, you could use the '*Guidelines for selection*'. Please take into account that you can also decide to include metadata of some documents (basic descriptions of the documents and where they are kept), without showing the actual documents in a digital online version.
- For each document, check if you have all information needed to properly describe the document in the database (such as date, creator, description of detail, etc.)
- Also consider restrictions like copyright, confidentiality, embargoes, museum protocols, etc. that might apply to your selection and note these clearly together with the other metadata. In case of external copyright holders: try to obtain a license for presenting this documentation (see sample letter on *The Rembrandt Database* website).

#### **7. Partner: Digitization / digital photography**

- Digitize all documents that have been selected for presentation and for which no digital files already exist.
- *The Rembrandt Database* does not impose standards, but encourages partner institutions to digitize documentation at the highest possible quality, given the availability of in-house equipment and budget. If you want you could use our '*Guidelines for digitization*'.
- Make notes of equipment used for the digitization and other information about the digitization process that might be interesting to you or to users of *The Rembrandt Database* (such as the creator of digital files, date of digitization, etc.).

#### **8. Partner: Transfer of digital files to RKD**

- Send all digitized and born digital files to the RKD. Do not forget to include existing digital born files. Depending on the amount of files, the transfer can be done by We-transfer, ftp server, during a meeting, or by sending an external hard disk by regular (secured) mail.

#### **9. RKD: Data entry selected documentation**

- The RKD associate(s) will enter the data and metadata in the database.
- You and your colleagues will be asked to review the information and documentation. The RKD associate(s) will process your corrections and additions as soon as possible.

Please note:

- Information in the database can always be updated or extended in the future, if desirable.

#### **10. RKD: Online records**

- RKD and the partner will decide in mutual agreement when to launch the records. The launch can be followed by some publicity, both by the RKD and by the partner institution.