



Guidelines for selecting documentation for *The Rembrandt Database*

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Introduction

This document provides criteria and advice that can help during the selection process and provides a list of the kinds of documents that are relevant for presentation in *The Rembrandt Database*. Ultimately it is the decision of the collaborating institution as to which documents will be selected and presented in *The Rembrandt Database*. In case of doubt the RKD is available to discuss the selection.

It is useful to keep in mind that there are two options for presentation in The Rembrandt Database and/or storage:

1. Present the digitized document together with a description of the document (metadata) online and digitally store the document for the long term and your own use;
2. Present only the metadata online without presenting the digitized document and digitally store the document for your own use;

Selection of documentation

It is important to be critical when you are selecting documentation for *The Rembrandt Database*. The following should always be kept in mind if you are selecting documents for presentation in *The Rembrandt Database*, Is the document/image:

- of added value
- of good quality/legible/highest quality possible
- is the metadata known (type of research, researcher and the date of creation)
- restricted by copyright laws

Digital and analogue documents

During the selection process you will need to go through both your analogue and digital documentation. Make sure that there are no overlaps with the analogue and digital material (do not select both the digital and analogue version of the same photograph for example).

Missing or damaged documents

In the case where a document is missing from your files: you know of its existence, but it is not physically available: If the metadata of the document is known it can still be referred to in the database. During the selection process, add a remark, that the document itself is missing; the metadata will appear in *The Rembrandt Database*, together with the text “no file available”.

If a document was cropped or damaged this does not mean you can not select it. Only in the case that a document was cut or damaged in such a way that the information is no longer understood or if the document could be misinterpreted, then do not select it.

What if the examination was carried out but not documented?

If the research was not documented you may still want to include the research as metadata only. Include the information about the research (such as the research type, date, researcher’s name, location and reason for research) in your metadata list or inventory.

Material in external institutions

The documentation you are gathering might not only be in your institution, but also in other institutions. Make an overview of what exists in other institutions, or what should be in other

institutions. If you wish to include documentation from external institutions in your selection, contact the concerned institution first and discuss the possibilities to digitize the documents (if necessary) and present them in *The Rembrandt Database*. Please let us know when we can be of assistance in contacting the external institution.

Sensitive/confidential material

We encourage the partnering institutions to be as complete and generous as possible in presenting their documentation in *The Rembrandt Database*. As previously stated, it is the institution's decision to present a document or not. *The Rembrandt Database* will respect each institution's decisions, principles or protocols in this matter.

Quality

The documents must be of the highest quality possible/available; this is also the case for analogue documentation that will be digitized.

Art historical related documentation

If you have art historical documents that also describe technical examination, physical aspects of the painting or conservation (this, for example, might be the case in archival documents) include these in your selection for presentation.

Documents about the frame

Only include documentation about the frame in your selection if the frame is original or of historical importance.

Dates

In general: if you do not know at all when a document was created, do not select it for presentation. However, always try to find this important piece of information (or in some cases you can estimate the date by looking at the document) and once you do find it, include the document in your selection. If you do not know the date, but the document is too important to be left out, try to estimate the date of the document, for instance in the sense that it should have been created before or after a certain date.

Copies

In many cases copies of one document or similar documents exist. For example, a normal light photograph was printed several times sometimes at different time periods from the *same* negative or several details were photographed as well as the overall. You do not need to include all these copies/similar documents. Pick the document/image that seems to be the best and of the highest quality.

Documents not suitable for presentation in The Rembrandt Database

Most of the documentation that will be included and presented in the database is related to research and the physical state of the painting (such as art historical and technical studies and treatment). Documents that do not need to be included are for instance condition reports made for purpose of loans, correspondence about loans, or (in most cases), e-mail exchange about the painting. Also be critical about written documents; in many cases the information in notes, correspondence or drafts is already included in a more formal texts written at a later stage.

What to select and not to select for presentation in *The Rembrandt Database*

| <i>Do select</i> | <i>Do not select</i> |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all documentation (image and text) concerning technical research, conservation and treatments• related archival documents about the physical state of the painting: treatment, technical examination, etc.• Documents showing the researchers/ conservators at work (not too many and only if the painting in question is visible)• reconstructions• pdf's of publications about the painting (<u>if permission to present the document is granted!</u>)• documentation about the frame, when it is original or of historical importance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• individual images if a good quality digital assembly was/can be created• derivatives of original documents (unless that is the only documentation available)• documentation for which permission has not been granted• art historical documentation• draft versions of reports/publications etc.• documentation about comparable artworks• condition check reports, loan forms etc.• documents without a date (unless they are of added value, or unless you know the approximate period in which they were created)• documents for which it is unclear which research/analytical method was used |