

Title of presentation

Rembrandt or not? The Rembrandt research project at the National Gallery of Denmark

In 1911 the Royal Collections in Copenhagen had eight pictures listed as authentic works by Rembrandt. As the Rembrandt studies progressed over the following decades, the amount of Rembrandt-paintings grew and in 1931 it allegedly was brought up to 10 authentic Rembrandts at the National Gallery of Denmark. However, by 1987 all supposed Rembrandts at the museum had again been rejecting as authentic. This talk will focus on how connoisseurship combined with a thorough (scientific) understanding of the build-up of painters' materials and paint layers and their characteristic handling together with the final touches will better enable us to fully comprehend a painting. It will become obvious that it is vital to integrate information from under the skin of the paint with the final paint layer as in most cases neither of these two elements taken alone is sufficient to decide 'Rembrandt or Not Rembrandt'. Recent studies have with the aid of interdisciplinary collaboration and technical analysis resulted in two reattribution's representing Rembrandt's early as well as his late work.

Author Biography

Dr. Jørgen Wadum is keeper of conservation at the National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen. He trained as a flower painter, an art historian and as a paintings conservator. Since the 1980s he has specialized in the painting techniques of 16th and 17th-century Dutch and Flemish artists. He has published and lectured extensively internationally on a multitude of subjects related to this and other issues of importance for the understanding and preservation of our cultural heritage. Wadum holds positions in several international organizations and committees. He is the co-chair of the Panel Paintings Advisory Group, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles.