

Biography: The Life of Rembrandt

Rembrandt van Rijn is the best-known and was the most influential artist active during the Dutch Golden Age. His incomparable gifts as a painter, printmaker, and draftsman are well documented, as are events in his life. Born in Leiden and the son of a miller, Rembrandt began his artistic training in his hometown and moved to Amsterdam for a brief time to study with the history painter Pieter Lastman. Rembrandt then became an independent master in Leiden about 1625. By the time he relocated to Amsterdam in the early 1630s, his reputation as an artist and teacher was well established. At first Rembrandt flourished in Amsterdam, as success in his personal and professional lives catapulted him to the position of the city's most important portrait and history painter during the 1630s and 1640s. During these years he married Saskia van Uylenburgh, bought a large house (today the Rembrandt House Museum), and oversaw a large workshop with many students. Rembrandt's good fortune eventually abandoned him, and as his career progressed, his financial circumstances deteriorated. Declaring a form of bankruptcy in 1656, Rembrandt died in Amsterdam on October 4, 1669. He was buried four days later in a rented grave within the city's Westerkerk (West Church).