



## **The Slaughtered Ox**

by Rembrandt van Rijn

This was painted in 1655. Today art historians argue about what this painting represents, if anything. Is it just a realistic picture of a butchered ox? It is possible it represents the fatted calf killed by the father in the Biblical parable of the Prodigal's Son? Rembrandt often picked one detail out of a larger story and highlighted it. Some say it represents Christ, since the killing of the fatted calf is symbolic of the atonement of Christ, who died to forgive sins. Finally, it could also be a philosophical statement on the frailty of life, vanitas, a common motif in Rembrandt's day. It is possible that Rembrandt meant all these things or none of them. Perhaps he wanted each viewer to interpret it in his own way.



## **Self Portrait with Beret and Turned Up Collar**

by Rembrandt van Rijn

This was painted in 1659. Rembrandt painted many self-portraits all through his career. This one was done when the artist was aging. You can see the effects of age and life experience in his face. The colors are all somber and the overall effect is one of calm and wisdom. This is one of only two self-portraits in which the artist is turned to the left. As he was a right handed painter placing the mirror on the side of the easel to get this view would have meant his painting arm and shoulder impeded his efforts.





## **The Storm on the Sea of Galilee**

by Rembrandt van Rijn

In this only sea scape by Rembrandt fisherman on a boat in a storm at sea fear for their lives. This painting depicts the story of the Disciples of Christ from the Bible who plead with Jesus to calm the storm, which he did. It represents faith and the power of God to calm not only the elements, but the storms of our lives, a common Reformation theme.

It was painted in 1633 and was stolen from the Isabelle Art Museum in Boston, Massachusetts in 1990 along with several other valuable paintings. It is still missing.



## **Abduction of Europa**

by Rembrandt van Rijn

Rembrandt only rarely painted mythological themes, this is one of them. It was painted in 1632 for Jacques Specx of the Dutch East India Company. Europa, who was a treasure, was taken from Asia to Europe by a bull, really Zeus. The bull represents a ship in Rembrandt's interpretation. Even so Specx removed treasure from Asia and brought it to Europe. In the background you see a modern Dutch port, complete with crane, again alluding to Specx's career.





## The Anatomy Lesson of Doctor Nicolaes Tulp

by Rembrandt van Rijn

This was painted in 1635 when Rembrandt was only twenty-seven years old. At this time by law a corpse could only be dissected once a year and the dissection was always of an executed criminal. This scene would have taken place in a crowded theater full of spectators, doctors, and members of the public. The body would have been prepared ahead of time by junior assistants, so no dissection tools appear in the painting. The man on the right is Doctor Tulp who was the City Anatomist. The other doctors shown paid to have their portraits included in the painting. It hung in the Amsterdam Guild of Surgeons after it was painted.



## The Night Watch

by Rembrandt van Rijn

This was painted in 1642. It is one of the most famous paintings in the world. It is huge at almost 12x15 feet. It uses both the technique of chiaroscuro, the effects of light and dark, and the impression of movement to create drama.

The painting was done at the time of the Dutch wars against the Spanish Catholics. It symbolically shows the uniting of the Dutch Protestants and Catholics in their fight for freedom. The man in black with a red sash represents the Protestants and the man in yellow the Catholics. The girl, brightly lit, in the background is a sort of mascot for the militia company that is being depicted. She has a dead chicken hanging from her belt, representing the company, and wears yellow, the color of victory. She also holds the militia's goblet.

# Rembrandt Art Cards

Rembrandt was one of the greatest painters to ever live. He painted during the Dutch Golden Age. His early works were definitely Baroque in style, with flamboyant gestures and big emotionality. Later after personal tragedy hit Rembrandt in 1642 with the death of his wife and the loss of his personal fortune his style grows quieter and more contemplative, though he still employs many of the Baroque techniques of dark and light and high contrasts.

Print these art cards and descriptions onto white card stock. Cut the cards out on the solid lines.

Help your kids become familiar with these paintings and artists by playing matching games, sorting the cards, and quizzing over them.

1. Place the cards face down, with images in one group and description cards in another group. Choose one card from each group. Determine if they match. You can read the description of the painting to see if they do.
2. Arrange the paintings in order of date. Which were painted first? Can you see a progression of techniques or style in the cards?
3. Hold up an image card and see if your child can remember the title of the painting. After these are mastered, use the image cards to memorize the titles and artists together. Finally master the titles, artists, and a little information about the painting.
4. Go online and find more art by the same artists. Can you tell which artist painted the piece just by looking at the style?