

Rembrandt's European Papers (The Hague, 24–26 Oct 18)

RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, The Hague, Oct 24–26, 2018
Deadline: Oct 15, 2018

Loes Barnard

Seminar: Rembrandt's European Papers

The RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History invites MA-students, PhD-students, art historians, conservators, and researchers to attend the seminar Rembrandt's European Papers on the theory of Computer-Assisted Classification of Watermarks and Chain Line Patterns for Moldmate Identification.

Beginning with assertions about the similarity of paper sold in the same batch, assumptions about the purchase and use of paper by Rembrandt's studio, and claims about the retention of a sheet of paper's physical dimensions during an existence over hundreds of years including decay and preservation, Rembrandt scholars have devised a strategy for estimating the production date of the various impressions of Rembrandt's prints that relies on matching watermarks and chain line patterns in their antique laid paper supports made in Europe.

The basic premise is that the unique pair of watermarks in a pair of molds used in making European paper in the 17th century was only purchased for Rembrandt's use in one sale and employed in one contiguous time interval. Thus, sheets of paper identified as made on the same pair of twin molds as evidenced by matching watermarks and surrounding chain line patterns should all have the same year (plus or minus one) of creation. This provides a chronology offering valuable insights into Rembrandt's artistic development and production patterns.

Professor C. Richard Johnson Jr.

This seminar is organized on the occasion of the visit of the RKD Visiting Fellow in Computational Art History, Professor C. Richard Johnson Jr. (Jacobs Technion-Cornell Institute, Cornell Tech, New York City).

Program

This 2-day short course offers an introduction to computer-assisted classification of watermarks revealed by radiographic imaging. The course is divided into 4 segments of one and a half hours each. Each segment will include lectures and training exercises.

The technical concept of a decision tree (similar to the parlor game of 20 Questions) is embedded in an interactive interrogatory relying on human responses to a series of Yes/No questions, as described in: A. C. Weislogel, C. R. Johnson, Jr., et al., "Decision Trees and Fruitful Collaborations: The Watermark Identification in Rembrandt's Etchings (WIRE) Project at Cornell" in: Lines of Inquiry:

Learning from Rembrandt's Etchings, Ithaca [NY] 2017, pp. 32-57.

The underlying decision tree concept has broad utility in image classification of a variety of maker marks found in the supports of art works, including, for example, panel maker marks and guild brands. This short course will prepare the students to be sophisticated users of this emerging technology and potentially to pioneer its use in other cultural heritage applications.

Wednesday 24 October

13:00-14:30 Session 1: Converting identified watermarks into chronology of Rembrandt's impressions

14:30-15:00 Coffee Break

15:00-16:30 Session 2: Types, variants, sub-variants, and twins

Thursday 25 October

13:00-14:30 Session 3: Scale-invariant features, decision trees, and decision tables

14:30-15:00 Coffee Break

15:00-16:30 Session 4: Watermarks in drawings by Rembrandt and his pupils

Friday 26 October

16:00-17:00 RKD Public Lecture: Prof. Rick Jonson, Rembrandt's European Papers: Computer-Assisted Classification of Watermarks and Chainline Patterns for Moldmate Identification

17:00-18:00 Drinks

Apply

This seminar is free of charge; coffee, drinks and Public Lecture are included. To apply for the seminar, please send a motivation letter (max ½ A4) and your Curriculum Vitae to Sabine Craft-Giepmans (craft@rkd.nl). Deadline for submission is 15 October 2018. After your submission we will contact you soonest to inform you on your admission to the seminar. The number of attendants is limited to 20.

Bringing your own laptop with internet connection is recommended. The spoken language will be English.

For more information:

<https://rkd.nl/nl/over-het-rkd/actueel/agenda/536-seminar-rembrandt-s-european-papers>

Reference:

ANN: Rembrandt's European Papers (The Hague, 24-26 Oct 18). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 9, 2018 (accessed Jan 18, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/19180>>.