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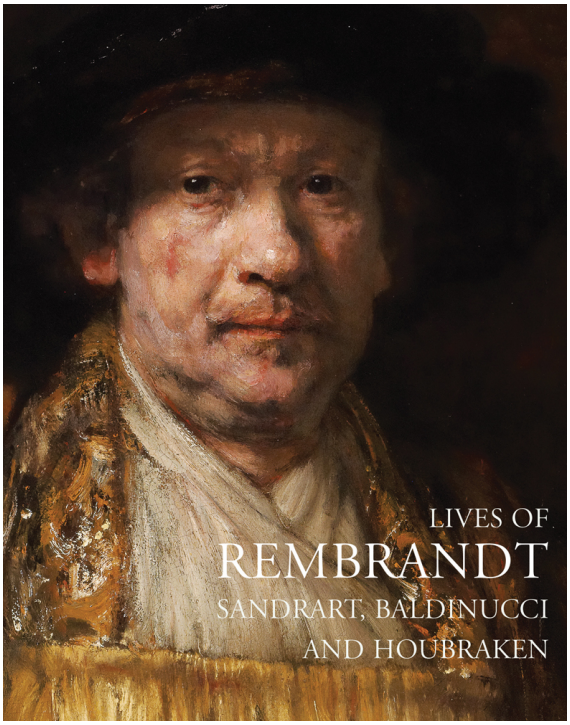

Lives of Rembrandt

Filippo Baldinucci

Joachim von Sandrart

Arnold Houbraken

Edited by Charles Ford

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- Presents three very different biographies of Rembrandt by contemporaries
- An introduction by Charles Ford situates these biographies in the context of 17th-century appreciation of art, and the trajectory of Rembrandt's career

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (c.1606-1669) was the most talked-about painter of the 17th-century – and quite possibly of the following centuries too. His prodigious talent, extraordinary emotional truth, and reckless disregard of artistic convention astonished, delighted and often dismayed his contemporaries; and the full gamut of these reactions is revealed in the three early biographies published here for the first time in their entirety in English. Sandrart, a German painter and writer on painting, actually knew Rembrandt in Amsterdam; Baldinucci, also an artist contemporary with Rembrandt, was one of the greatest early connoisseurs of prints; and Arnold Houbraken, who studied under some of Rembrandt's pupils, wrote the earliest major biographical account of the artists of Holland. These extraordinary documents give a vivid picture of Rembrandt's shattering impact on the art world of his time – not only as a painter, but as a supremely successful manipulator of the market, a dangerous example to the young, and an unavoidable challenge to any sense of decorum and rule-giving. Rooted firmly in the 17-century realities of Rembrandt's life, they bring into sharper focus the qualities of originality and psychological acuity that remain Rembrandt's trademark to this day. The introduction by Charles Ford situates these biographies in the context of 17th-century appreciation of art, and the trajectory of Rembrandt's career. The translations have been specially prepared for this edition by Charles Ford, aided by Ulrike Kern and Francesca Migliorini, and in part following the work of Tancred Borenius.

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