



Rembrandt in a Red Beret

The vanishings and reappearances of a self-portrait

Gary Schwartz

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- A story almost too unlikely to be true
- For nearly 100 years in the collection of the King of The Netherlands and in 1921 stolen to turn up in 1945 Dayton Ohio

Rembrandt in a red beret: the vanishings and reappearances of a self-portrait follows the fortunes of a fascinating painting along two lines. First is the history of the painting as a precious collector's object, a story almost too unlikely to be true. In 1823 it was bought by the future King Willem II as one of his first purchases for the greatest collection of paintings ever assembled by a Dutch individual. For nearly a hundred years it remained with his heirs, coming to Weimar. Then, in 1921 it was stolen from the Weimar Museum, to turn up in 1945 in Dayton, Ohio, owned by a man who said he bought it in 1934 from a German sailor on the New York waterfront. What followed is revealed in this book for the first time, based on declassified U.S. government information. In 1947 the U.S. government seized the Rembrandt under such strict terms that 20 years later, when it wanted to return it to Germany, it was forced to go into legislative and diplomatic gymnastics to do so. Upon its return, an heir to the Weimar title sued for its restitution, and after seven years of one trial after another, she got it. She sold it in 1983 to the private collector who still owns it. Since 1921 it has been on public display only for 10 days in Dayton (1947) and 10 weeks in Washington (1967). The book also traces the critical history of the painting as a Rembrandt. In 1969 his authorship was disputed by Horst Gerson, an opinion that was seconded by the Rembrandt Research Project. Examining all the evidence and arguments, the eminent Rembrandt specialist Gary Schwartz comes to the conclusion that there is no reason not to accept the painting for what it looks like – a self-portrait of the great master, painted by his own hand.

Gary Schwartz, born in 1940 in Brooklyn, New York, has lived in the Netherlands since 1965. Besides writing books about Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Saenredam, Rembrandt van Rijn and Johannes Vermeer, and more than 500 articles and columns, he was active as a translator, editor and author.