

PRESS RELEASE

REMBRANDT'S *THE BLINDING OF SAMSON* WILL BE RESTORED

EXTENSIVE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION MEASURES PLANNED

Frankfurt am Main, 30 September 2025 The Städel Museum is delighted to announce the start of extensive conservation and restoration measures, supplemented by intensive scientific research, on one of the most important works in its collection: *The Blinding of Samson* (1636) by Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn. This monumental history painting, measuring over two metres in height and more than three metres in width, is one of the central masterpieces of European art history. Previous restorations and natural ageing processes have left their mark on the painting. The conservation and restoration measures now planned, which will take place over the next three to four years, offer a great opportunity to bring Rembrandt's masterpiece back to life in all its depth and expressiveness.

Philipp Demandt, Director of the Städel Museum: "Rembrandt's *The Blinding of Samson* is a masterpiece of international standing and one of the key works in our collection of 17th-century Dutch painting. We are therefore all the more grateful to Bank of America for making this urgently needed restoration possible as part of its Art Conservation Project. This funding is a vital contribution to the preservation of our cultural heritage and ensures that this extraordinary work will continue to be experienced in all its splendour in the future."

Planning for this project began as part of the exhibition "Call Me Rembrandt! Creativity and Competition" (2021–22). **Jochen Sander, Head of German, Dutch and Flemish Paintings before 1800**, emphasizes: "With the special exhibition, 'Call Me Rembrandt! Creativity and Competition', and the accompanying research colloquium, 'Rembrandt in the Mirror of New Technological Investigations', the results of which were recently published in 'ArtMatters. International Journal for Technical Art History', we have not only opened up new perspectives on Rembrandt's work but also laid the foundation for a further research project. This project is the logical next step in the scientific examination of a major work in our Old Masters Collection."

**Städelsches Kunstinstitut
and Städtische Galerie**

Dürerstraße 2
60596 Frankfurt am Main
Telephone +49 (0)69-605098-268
presse@staedelmuseum.de
www.staedelmuseum.de

PRESS DOWNLOADS
newsroom.staedelmuseum.de

PRESS AND
ONLINE COMMUNICATION
Franziska von Plocki
Telephone +49 (0)69-605098-268
plocki@staedelmuseum.de

Elisabeth Pallentin
Telephone +49 (0)69-605098-195
pallentin@staedelmuseum.de

Carolin Fuhr
Telephone +49 (0)69-605098-234
fuhr@staedelmuseum.de

“Our goal is to restore Rembrandt’s painting to its original intensity while ensuring the long-term preservation of the painting’s substance. Every measure will be carefully tailored to the original techniques and materials in order to preserve the work as intended by the artist’, explains **Stephan Knobloch, Head of Art Technology and Restoration at the Städel Museum.**

Planned Conservation Measures

The project will begin with a series of comprehensive art technological investigations. These will include X-ray imaging, infrared reflectography, UV and raking light examinations, as well as microscopy and micro-X-ray fluorescence analysis. The aim is to gain a precise understanding of Rembrandt’s original painting technique and subsequent interventions. Based on these findings, the picture support will undergo conservation treatment, non-original materials from previous restorations will be removed, the paint layer will be stabilized, and the appearance will be carefully restored in accordance with Rembrandt’s original artistic intention. Finally, a new frame based on a historical model will provide the work with an appropriate external appearance.

Beyond restoring the aesthetic appeal of the painting, the measures also aim to conserve it for the long term. The knowledge gained in the course of the restoration process will also benefit art-historical and conservation research, as well as future conservation projects. Having been returned to its former glory, the restored painting is expected to be on display again in three to four years.

Discover Rembrandt’s *The Blinding of Samson* digitally

Rembrandt’s *The Blinding of Samson* (1636) is widely regarded as one of the most impressive history paintings in European art. With dramatic lighting, a dynamic composition and great emotional depth, Rembrandt captures the moment of utter defeat: The superhumanly strong Old Testament judge Samson, betrayed by his beloved Delilah, is blinded by the Philistines. This monumental work impresses not only with its narrative power, but also with its extraordinary painterly sophistication, which demonstrates Rembrandt’s mastery of the medium of painting at all levels.

During its absence, the painting can be experienced online: it is available in high resolution in the Digital Collection, accompanied by extensive information on its creation, visual language and art-historical significance, as well as a series of lectures with contributions related to its conservation and restoration.

Current research findings are presented in the essay “On the Genesis of *The Blinding of Samson*: New Technical Findings in Context” by Mareike Gerken and Jochen Sander in the latest special edition of “ArtMatters. International Journal for Technical Art History”.

The Städel podcast series, “Blinded by Rembrandt”, is dedicated to the masterpiece in four episodes (in German). In it, the journalist Michel Abdollahi delves deeper into the painting *The Blinding of Samson*, while also discussing important questions facing humanity. The accompanying Digital@ and film for the successful exhibition “Call Me Rembrandt! Creativity and Competition” also provide in-depth insights into Rembrandt’s success story, from ambitious artist in Leiden to famous master in Amsterdam.

The ongoing conservation and restoration of the painting will also be documented on the Städel Museum’s social media channels, as well as on Städel Stories. Visitors can regularly gain behind-the-scenes insights there.

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Information: [staedelmuseum.de](https://www.staedelmuseum.de)

Visitor Services and Guided Tours: +49 (0)69-605098-200, info@staedelmuseum.de

Location: Städel Museum, Schaumainkai 63, 60596 Frankfurt am Main

Head of Collection: Prof. Dr. Jochen Sander, Head of German, Dutch and Flemish Paintings before 1800

Conservators: Stephan Knobloch, Head of Art-Technology and Conservation - Paintings and Modern Sculptures (Städel Museum), Linda Schmidt, certified conservator (Städel Museum)

Sponsored by: Bank of America Art Conservation Project

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STÄDEL STORIES: For more stories and background information on the collection and the special exhibitions, read, watch and listen to stories.staedelmuseum.de (in German).