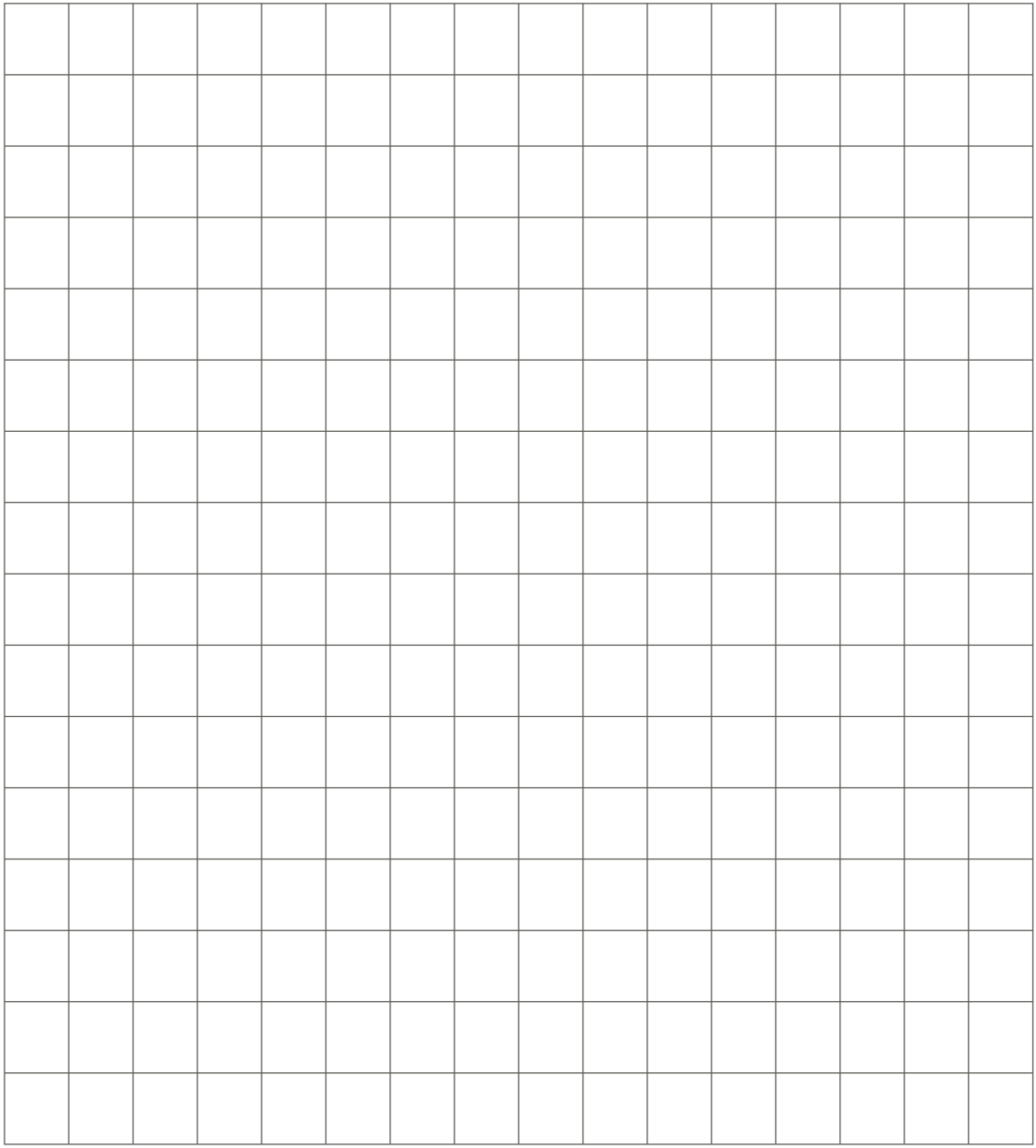

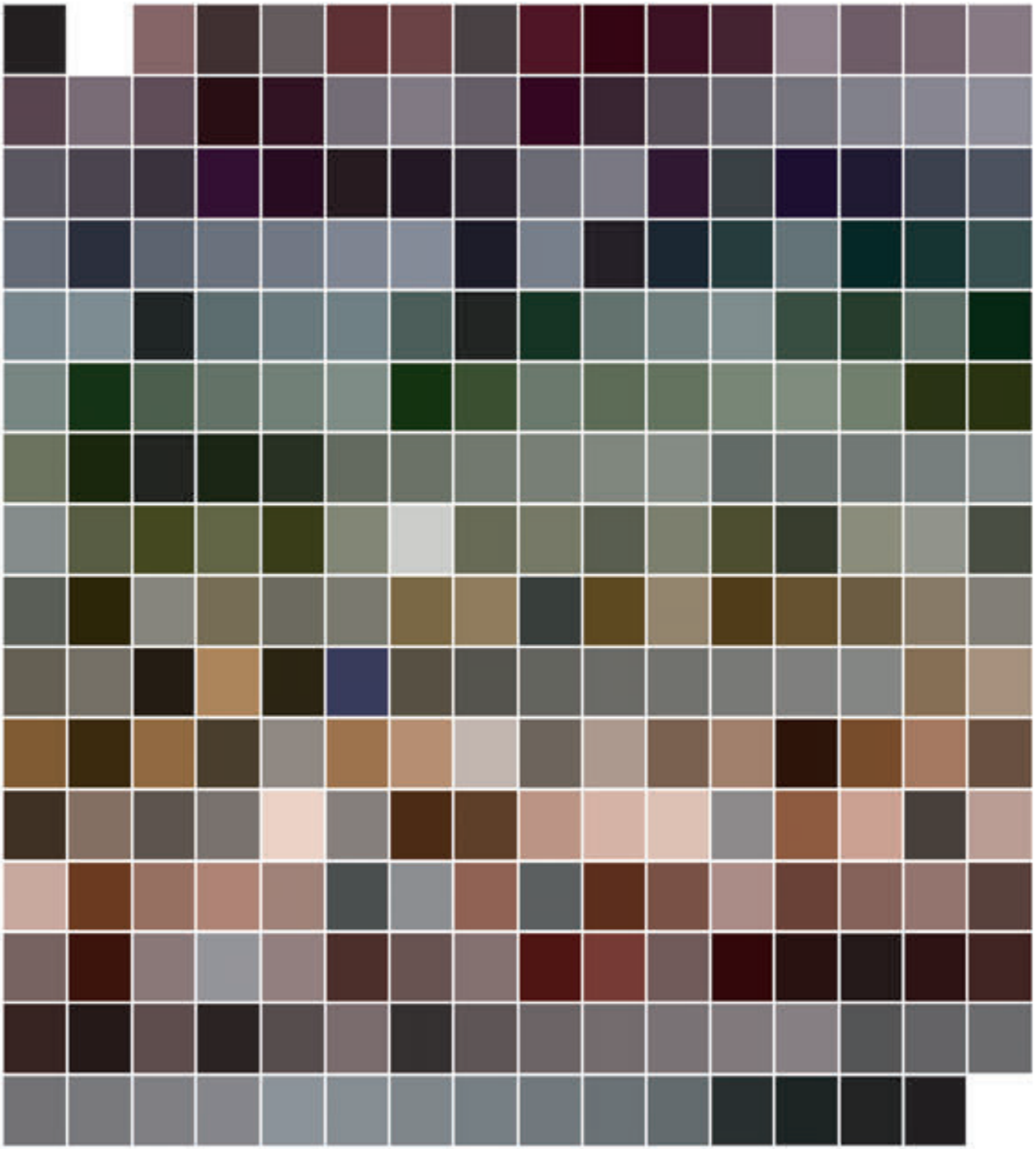

# *Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat*

Travis Murphy

# Table of Contents


# Section I

## *Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat*

Primed Canvas

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Photoshop File
Size Initially: 10.7 MB
On disk
( 11, 224, 889 bytes)
Name: white canvas. psd

File from a Digital
Photograph
Sony Cybershot Camera
5 Mega pixels

Grey Paper/ Photo
Backdrop

Photographic Digital File
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Photoshop File
Size Initially: 13.8 MB
On disk
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Name: greypaper. psd

File from a Digital
Photograph
Sony Cybershot Camera
5 Mega pixels

Poster of *Self Portrait*
*in Scarf and Grey Coat*
Colour Palette on Easel
84.4 cm × 66 cm

Photographic Digital File
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Photoshop File
Size Initially: 5.8 mb
On disk
(6, 078, 167 bytes)
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File from a Digital
Photograph
Sony Cybershot Camera
5 Mega pixels

Image of *Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat* with palette from Rembrandt's *Self Portrait with Beret and Upturned Collar*

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Photoshop File
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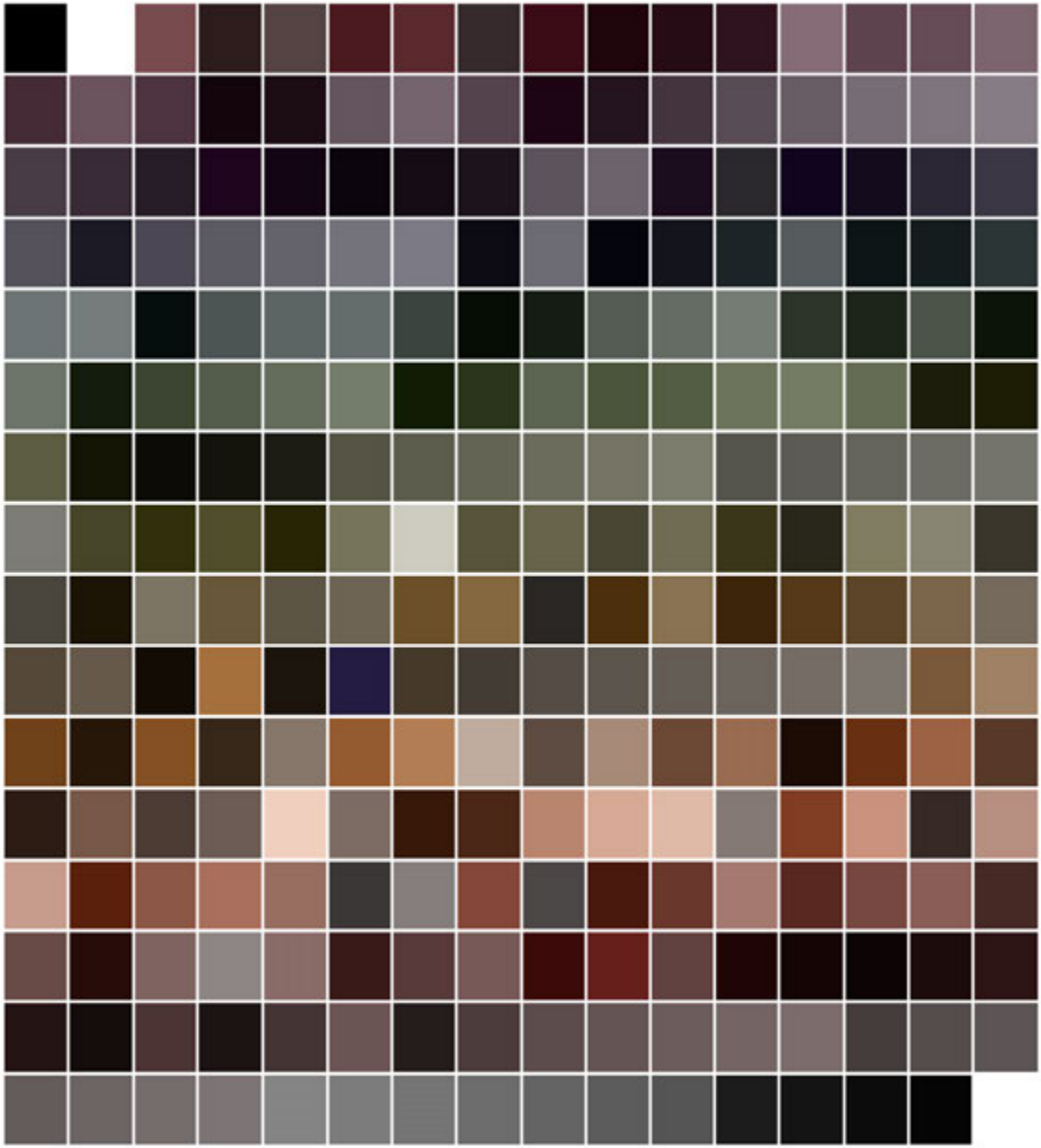

*Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat* Overlay On Rembrandt's *Self Portrait with Beret and Upturned Collar* at 31 % Opacity

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*Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat*, 2005

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Name: self imposed rem.psd

File from a Digital Photograph
Sony Cybershot Camera
5 Mega pixels

Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self Portrait with Beret and Up-turned Collar*, 1659.

Photographic Digital File
Kind: Adobe Photoshop File
Size Initially: 13.8 MB
On disk
(14, 553, 665 bytes)
Name: rembrandt.psd

File from a Digital Photograph
Sony Cybershot Camera 5 Mega pixels of a 84 CM × 66 CM Poster printed on photopaper (glossy)

Oil Painting, 84.4 CM × 66 CM
National Gallery, Washington D.C.
1937.1.72. (72) / PA

Rembrandt's *Self Portrait with Beret and Upturned Collar* Overlay On *Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat* at 56% Opacity

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Kind: Adobe
Photoshop File
Size Initially: 42.4 MB
On disk
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Name: big overlay2. psd

Colour Table of Digital File:
Derived from *Self Portrait in Beret and Upturned Collar*, Rembrandt van Rijn, 1659.

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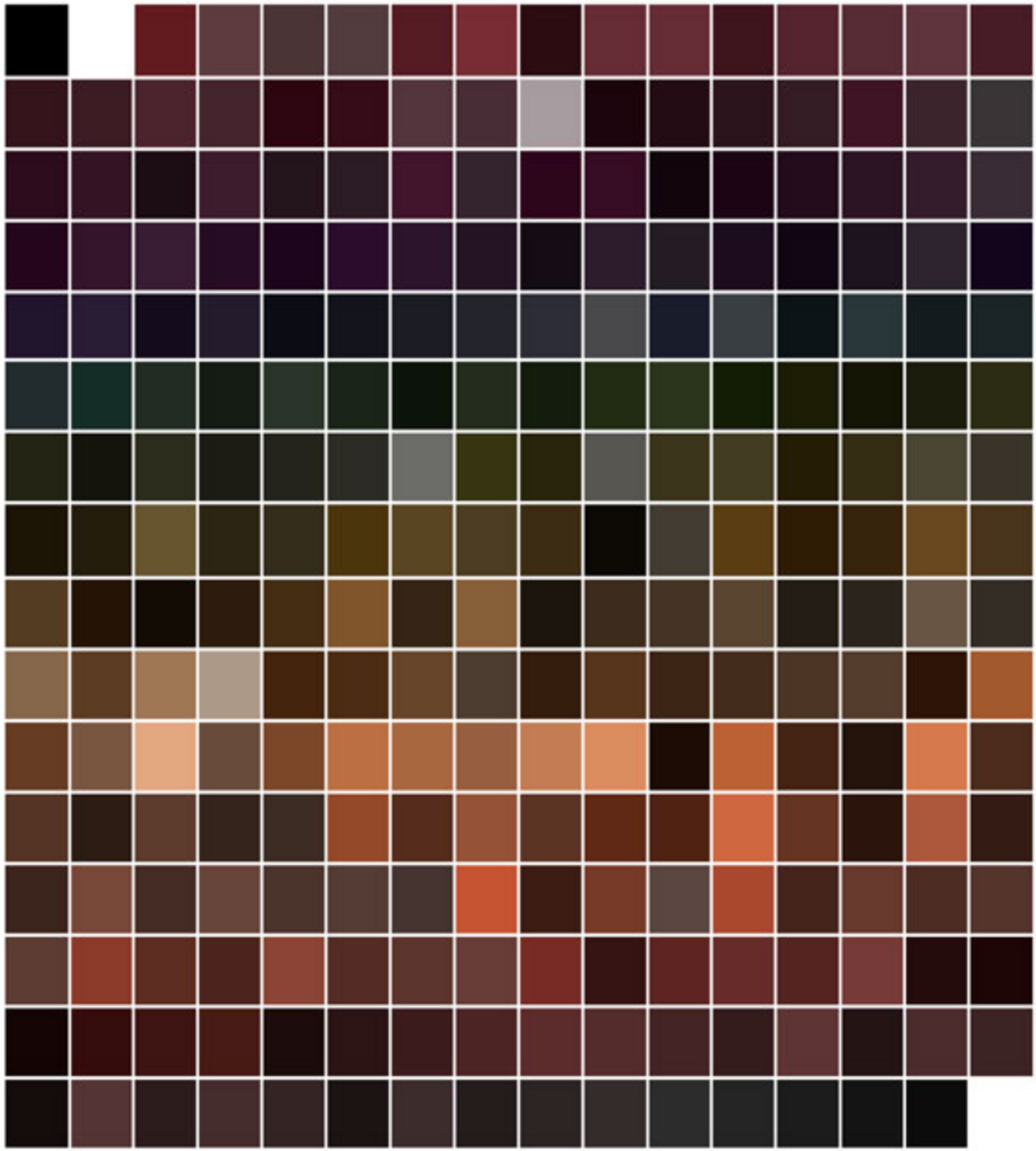

Image of Rembrandt's *Self Portrait with Beret and Upturned Collar* with palette from *Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat*

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Photoshop File
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On disk
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Poster of Rembrandt
Colour Palette on Easel
84.4 cm × 66 cm

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Photoshop File
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File from a Digital
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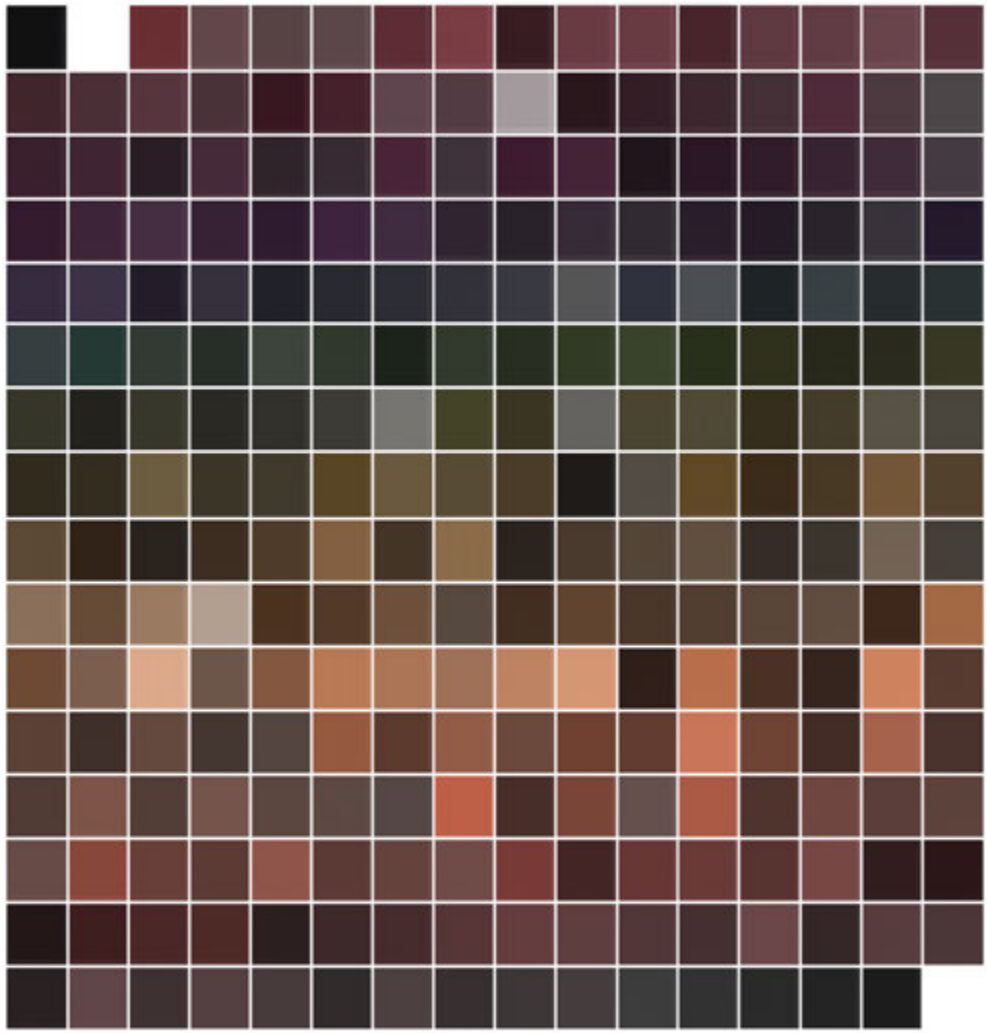
Sony Cybershot Camera
5 Mega pixels



Unprimed Canvas
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File from a Digital
Photograph
Sony Cybershot Camera
5 Mega pixels

Primed Canvas #2

Photographic Digital File
Kind: Adobe
Photoshop File
Size Initially: 10.7 MB
On disk
(11, 224, 889 bytes)
Name: white canvas2. psd

File from a Digital
Photograph
Sony Cybershot Camera
5 Mega pixels

# Section II

# A Critical Introduction to the Handbook for *Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat*

## *Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat*

*Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat* investigates the methodology for painting a "self-portrait" in light of recent theories about the cessation of the artistic subject as an autonomous, creative individual. Several proponents of the death of the subject, from Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, to Frederic Jameson examined within this text, offer critical discussion about the possibility of the true 'subject' in the world, the image, and within art. This discussion introduces the project and guidebook that follows. The subsequent demise of 'humankind', as alluded to by these and other authors, and the simulacral paradigm, identify two of the foremost theories that have subverted ideas about the artist's role and identity. In the wake of the humanist subject, art and its practitioners sought new methods that fractured the progressive-linear model of modernism. Some artistic turns involved appropriation and simulation of history within art. Examined within this text, a 'traumatic' response to the notions of 'real' and 'illusion', offers insight into the condition and the possibilities of and for the contemporary subject. *Self Portrait with Scarf and Grey Coat* gauges these possibilities. It subjects the attributes and

identifiers of self to scrutiny, constructing the image through a deconstructive process of digitization, that then builds toward a 'subject'. This process, in effect, echoes major postmodern trends in art and philosophy; particularly deconstructionism and identity politics. Yet, the final painting of the 'self' consists of a colour image, its aesthetics determined by a computer algorithm. In this manner it becomes devoid of the self-conscious stimuli and internal, autonomous inspiration that comprises the project of the modern human. This provides a method for dealing with painting, wherein a contemporary technology replaces the human at a crucial stage, determining the image, but redefining the artist's role as the artisan behind the final production, not its exclusive, autonomous creator.

The project simulates Rembrandt's *Self Portrait with Beret and Upturned Collar* from 1659, a painting that now hangs in the National Gallery of Art in Washington. I achieve this simulation by situating myself in the pose that the Dutch painter strikes in his own self-portrait, mimicking the lighting effects within the painting on both the background and figure, and attempting to reconstitute the facial expression of Rembrandt, with particular attention to what I define below as the 'gaze'. The scenario for my self-portrait has involved setting up a studio-quality photographic portrait. The Rembrandt is also photographed in the same studio setting and by the same camera. This Rembrandt image, however, is a poster created to scale with the original painting. Here, the Rembrandt image and my self-portrait are coterminous, their equivalency determined by the digital-photographic process and media as 'digital file'. Although I have displaced the original by virtue of using a photographic depiction of it, both my self portrait and his resemble each other in form, insofar as they both represent bit map images in the computer imaging software. The Rembrandt image shot in the studio derives from a poster of the original

painting, a poster published to-scale with the painting and purchased over the Internet from My Art Prints in the United Kingdom.

The state of the primitive art of painting at the burgeoning of the new millennium, is one confounded by a previous century's prodding and deconstruction, parody and annihilation. Painting has endured a succession of declarative moratoriams, cynical reason, ironical turns and an emptying-out of form and content that would seem to seal its demise. The essential issue at the heart of its' reasoning, is the dislocation of the centered, autonomous subject, leaving any artist seeking to participate in its enterprise, in a state of subjective indeterminacy. For this project, which entails a guide to recreate a Rembrandt self-portrait through a photographic and digital set of parameters which are then utilized to create a painted portrait, the content centers around comprehension of the terms 'self' and 'subject'. Let us first look at how these terms may be defined within the lifetime of the 17th- century Dutch painter Rembrandt van Rijn.

More than any other painter, the Baroque artist Rembrandt (1609-69) has earned esteem for his ability to render the human portrait, and he enjoys special renown for his many self-portraits. Rembrandt's own self-portraits have been examined for meaning from many different perspectives, but for my purposes I consider only how Rembrandt has presented an image of himself as a notation of the 'individual'. Reputable Rembrandt scholar and historian Ernst van de Wetering posits a multiplicity of functions within the self-portraits by the painter. While self-portraiture constitutes an artist's way of practicing on a model always on hand, there must also exist other reasons that painters have portrayed their own likenesses. Collectors attach value to the artist's self-portrait. No longer do patrons in the 17th-century want to possess their own depictions; instead, patrons want to own a painting done by a certain artist of themselves

because such images become a symbol of social status. Wetering attests that no other painter of this age recorded his own likeness with as much frequency as Rembrandt: there are forty paintings, thirty-one etchings and a handful of drawings that comprise this inventory (Buvelot, White 10) . The term "self-portrait" does not in existence in Rembrandt's day, according to Wetering, and he adds, " inherent in the concept of self-portrait in the 19th and 20th-centuries was a form of self awareness that had a specific existential connotation, because from the end of the 18th- century the experience of one's own individuality was very different to that current in Rembrandt's own century " (Buvelot, White 17) . Wetering does not specify whether or not Rembrandt's enterprise as self-portrait painter represents a quest to contemplate the inner-self by analyzing the subject through its outward depiction. He cautions that a Romantic reading of the self-aware Rembrandt probing the deepest of human musing may be the product of a post-Romantic scholastic venture (Buvelot, White 17 -20) . Art historian Svetlana Alpers depicts Rembrandt as a skillful creator of a tangible world that might embody the artist's own inner life, but Alpers also argues that in the painter's day, the individual comes to be defined in essentially economic terms. The individual defines himself or herself by the right to property, and thus, by extension, the individual becomes cognizant of the vessel by which that right to ownership manifests itself – through the image of self. The historian maintains that in Rembrandt's later pictures the "roles" that he assumes, the costumes, and the theatricality seem to fall away as the painter zeroes in more closely upon himself, and his own image, so that, for example, the paint in the 1659 portrait is more thick and more gestural. Alpers determines that Rembrandt is not, "defining himself professionally as a painter, but defining the self in paint" (Alpers 114-16) . Alpers continues:

> The 19th-century credited Rembrandt with being uniquely in touch with something true about the individual human state. I would put it differently. Rembrandt was not the discoverer, but one of the inventors of that individual state. And so his late works became a touchstone for what Western culture, from his day until our own, has taken as the irreducible uniqueness of the individual (Alpers 86 – 7) .

These notions of uniqueness and individuality now scrutinized through a theoretical 20th– century framework, enable us to comprehend the state of the 'self', the 'subject', and the possibilities for the creativity of the artist and painter.

Walter Benjamin's seminal text "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", for example, questions notions inherent in the individual artist's capacity to implement authentic, unique modes of production. Art, via machination – the logic of industrialism – dismisses the original genius and the art object's " aura of authenticity" (Benjamin 218 – 220) . The machine vanquishes the autonomous object of `beautiful semblance', and in its wake, a 'parody' that gazes endlessly into its refractory continuum of self reflection. Benjamin notes that the portrait represents the early object of photography, enabling an 'immortal' semblance of the person depicted within its inventory of light. He states: "The cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuge for the cult value of the picture. For the last time the aura emanates from the early photographs in the fleeting expression of a human face...[but] as man withdraws from the photographic image, the exhibition value for the first time shows its superiority to the ritual value" (Benjamin 226) . Here, Benjamin identifies a break in meaning.

At this dislocation of the ritual value of an image (capturing the portrait), an exhibition value takes on a 'superior' eminence. The photograph becomes a document of history, the image an arbiter of both conscious and unconscious political agency. Benjamin determines that, "when the mechanical age of reproduction separated art from its basis in cult, the semblance of its autonomy disappeared forever" (Benjamin 226) .

Frederic Jameson underpins the phenomenon of the 'death of the subject' in a 1983 text entitled "Postmodernism and Consumer Society":

> this new component is generally called the "death of the subject", or, to say it in a more conventional language, the end of individualism as such. The great modernisms were...predicated on the invention of a personal, private style, as unmistakable as your fingerprint, as incomparable as your own body. But this means that the modernist aesthetic is in some way organically linked to the conception of a unique self and private identity, a unique personality and individuality, which can be expected to generate its own unique vision of the world and to forge its own unique, unmistakable style (Jameson 114) .

In Richard Kearney's The Wake of Imagination, the author cites the project of postmodernism as a dismantling of the modern ideology of progress and its totalizing or universalizing doctrines, in favour of pluralism and a multiplicity of historical experiences. His scheme for reinterpreting the self and its artistic project falls within a sphere of both "poetics" and "ethics". His attempts at a

resolution respond to the dismissal of the humanist subject. He avows that structuralism has denounced the subject as an illusion buried in unconscious signifiers while, "poststructuralists went further still in declaring the human self to be a 'desiring machine' which exults in schizophrenic disorder. One thus finds the self being portrayed as a `dispersed decentered network of libidinal attachments, emptied of the ethical substance and psychical interiority, the ephemeral function of this or that act of consumption, media experience, sexual relationship, trend or fashion' (Kearney 394 – 5).

Kearney eludes to Paul Ricoeur's concept of the 'depth hermeneutic' of historical imagination; a hermeneutic that necessitates a reinterpretation of our cultural memory. His project conforms to the political imperative of postmodernism, and represents an imaginative recollection that deciphers methods for anticipating the future. Kearney notes that a multiplicity of narratives might surface, "[as] the project of freedom can easily degenerate into empty utopianism unless guided in some manner by the retrieval of past struggles for liberation" (Kearney 393).

Kearney's "ethical" imagination refuses the totality of the post-structural argument that the self is merely a 'reified technique' or 'commodified desire'. His ethical self may be derivative of Walter Benjamin's political agent who engages in the new dilemma of art-making and creativity. Kearney denotes the 'narrative self' as a project that constantly re-interprets itself:

> Ethics, in other words, presupposes the existence of a certain narrative identity: a self which remembers its commitments to an other (both in its personal and collective history)...this narrative self is not some permanently subsisting substance (idem). It is to be understood as a

> perpetually self-rectifying identity (ipse) that knows its story, like the imagination narrating it, is never complete. It is because it is inseparable from a poetical-critical imagination which sustains it, that the self's commitment to the other – the other who addresses me at each moment and asks me who I am and where I stand – is never exhausted (Kearney 395) .

Hal Foster, in his 1997 text The Return of the Real, posits a neo-avant-garde genealogy of skepticism that greets a dominant ideology with suspicion when manufacturing its own illusionism or realism. An attitude of skepticism toward the image has a long and varied history, but one which I address here only in terms of tangential prerogatives issuing forth from Modernism. Foster offers, what could be designated the real-illusory conflict as a constant within all sign-manufacture. Within the notions of what Foster terms 'minimalist' and 'pop' genealogies, he illuminates a dichotomy of meaning that perforce revalues the parameters of the signs that artists create, as well as their referents. Foster promulgates:

> Our two basic models of representation miss the point of this pop genealogy almost entirely: that images are attached to referents, to iconographic themes or real things in the world, or, alternately, that all images can do is represent other images, that all forms of representation (including realism) are auto-referential codes. Most accounts of post-war art based in photography divide somewhere along this line: the image as referential or as simulacral. This

> reductive either/or constrains such readings of this art, especially in the case of pop – a thesis that I will test initially against the "Death in America" images of Andy Warhol from the early 1960s, images that inaugurate the pop genealogy (Foster 128) .

Foster depicts Barthes' post-structural reading of Warholian pop as an attempt to "de-symbolize" the object. The art object is a vehicle for the commodified culture, valuable in multiples, but without intrinsic meaning; a simulacral surface where the artist does not stand behind his work, as Barthes testifies. The artist is a mere simulacral surface without intention, signification, or interior 'meaning'. Foster continues: "this simulacral reading of Warhol is performed by Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Jean Baudrillard, for whom referential depth and subjective interiority are also victims of the superficiality of pop....but where Barthes and others see the avante-gardist disruption of representation, Baudrillard sees an 'end of subversion', a total integration of the commodity-sign" (Foster 128) .

Foucault's concept of the structural unconscious touches upon ideas of my refashioning the Rembrandt self-portrait. No longer situated within the modern arena of 'creative consciousness', but situated instead within the 'structure' of an epistemological unconscious, the human imagination falters. Foucault's critique instigates a call for the real to be subverted by the imaginary (illusory), and vice-versa, in a heterotopic expose of thought. No longer do the real and 'unreal' codify definitive grounds, but both notions become unfixed. In accordance with Foucault's call for the end of the brief project of `man', or humankind, Jacques Derrida concurs that there exists no primordial 'presence', no point from which to transcend to a similar plateau of non-presence (from point zero to point zero).

Without the original (in the form of 'truth', 'reality', 'idea', etc.), there can be no "re-presentation" in the sense of recasting or remaking the original (Kearney 281 – 2) .

In the project of this book, the Rembrandt self-portrait is the copy of the mirror into which the painter peers in the process of creating his own likeness. Yet, even here there is another turn: this self-portrait from 1659 does not portray the usual right cheek of the sitter, but the left; generally an anomaly in self-portraiture, and especially within the inventory of Rembrandt's fully realized self-portraits. The photographic representation of my own self-portrait is a popular cultural presentation of the self, but also simulacral in its famous positioning of the figure (the Titian model, itself based on a historical lineage in painting). The simulation indeed follows in a Derridean model of 'mimesis without origin', or 'mime without end'. Through the deconstruction of both representations I derive a common structural element: the colour palettes, as determined by Adobe Photoshop's colour-reduction algorithm. This structural denominator posits both images within the same field of materiality and language. The high art icon of painting, the pinnacle of autonomous selfhood, finds itself subsumed into the repeatable paradigm of contemporary portraiture.

The images trade only colour palettes, while the underlying grid which comprises their bitmap imaging remains essentially unchanged. Hal Foster offers several ways of reading images that deals with the notion of the subject, or artist, behind the work. He cites Barthes' reading of the Warholian "de-symbolizing" of the symbol, arguing that by corrupting the bond between the real and the sign, Warhol drains meaning from his work, connoting that *this differs from meaning by having none*. *Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat* relies on a reading of the duality of the image as both an allusion to past and present notions of 'self', and the possibility of a meaningful subject

through overlaying and juxtaposing the iconic humanist painting with the contemporary photographic portrait.

## Gaze

The gaze, in this project is the point of fixity. I overlay the studio-quality photographic portrait onto the scanned Rembrandt Self-Portrait aligning the two images along the axis of the eyes and nose – the mimetic or simulated gaze of the painter. In search of the lost self, the gaze becomes a concept that binds together notions of vision, optics, a neurological determining of data and the synthetic processing of knowledge. The gaze is the sight where we "see the world". This is the place where colour, as light wavelengths, is determined in the brain: a subjective knowledge of materiality.

One moment in the production of the *Self-Portrait with Scarf and Grey Coat* issues forth as a multiplicity of gazes. Through the transparent layers of the imaging software, the painter looks directly into the character in the photographic self-portrait, a character who simultaneously looks outward again towards the viewer, or reader of the outward image. The painter looking back at the painter looking forward, looks forward.

## Scarf and Grey Coat

The scarf and coat worn in the studio photographic portrait mimics the language-identifiers of Rembrandt's many self portraits, beyond the mere categories of date and size. The portrait from 1659 has several titles, including *Self Portrait turned to the Left*, but the National Gallery in Washington, where the painting exists, defines it as a *Self Portrait with Beret and Upturned Collar*. I have used props common to my everyday experience and habit – props that envelop outward

signifiers and exterior attribution. I have chosen the grey coat as a personal (interior) identifier. When my grandfather passed away several years ago I adopted his grey coat, which fit perfectly. It has become a proud memento and a symbol, if only personally, of a familial lineage of flesh and blood as my genetic makeup resembles my grandfather's more than any figure in my family tree. Among other signifiers, clothes connote style, prestige, etc. The scarf is purely a utilitarian item of winter clothing, but one selected for its aesthetic relation to the grey coat.

Handbook for the Artist

The most formative text for painters of 15th-century Florence, Cennino Cennini's *Il Libro Dell' Arte*, provides an inventory and application manual for artists. This guide book or hand book would seem a satirical enterprise today. A guide or manual disseminates a closed system of operability akin to a classical grid, with order substantiated from governing laws encoded by cultural authority. The individual artist becomes a progenitor of the theoretical constructs that govern work. The guide book communicates in a dialogue with other theories by other artists, while critical theory operates within a closed system of historical documentation. In the Rembrandt project, I pay attention not only to a perceivable signpost in the historical evolution of painting-language landscape (The Genius, Rembrandt) but also to the autonomous art object of un-reproducibility in which a deconstructed image becomes a painting again through stages that include the commodified poster, the photograph, the digital file, the colour palette, and the final painting.

The mainstay of the postmodern image is its ironical parlaying of the iconic (high art) vision into an anonymous, consumerist stratagem. The Rembrandt, as a painting of a

genius, and the guidebook as instruction for becoming the genius constitute relics, assigned to an historical location from which our own ordering must conjecture. The guidebook is, therefore, an ironic device, but one that can be followed by any consumer who plays into a category of becoming-Rembrandt. The image becomes a painting project for which no separation between the artist's and the Rembrandt image exists. The 'subject', then, has the capacity to reify both essential items culled from the hegemony of a contemporary state of art: the Rembrandtian art of painting, and the usable handbook for artists.

The tools that I have laying around the house or studio (from art supplies to basic computer software), used to create the project symbolizes the generic condition of Western consumer society. What I have 'laying around' puts itself at the disposal of artistic meaning, creating the possibility of a common denominator of the 'imago'. The accessible reproducibility of these tools permits me to exchange the autonomous genius of 'Rembrandt as everyman' for the delimitation of 'everyone-as-Rembrandt'.

## Conclusion

The poster of the Rembrandt painting is translated back into the unique medium of paint – unique in the sense that reproduction in paint does normally reside among contemporary technologies of replication. Hal Foster conjectures that the author is reborn through the traumatic discourse of art while the subject retains its position of post-structuralist critique (as a missing person, since no one resides at the moment of trauma), popular culture reifies the subject as 'witness, testifier, survivor' (Foster 130) . He states:

> In trauma discourse, then, the subject is evacuated and elevated at once. And in this way trauma discourse magically resolves two contradictory imperatives in culture today: deconstructive analyses and identity politics. Here the return of the real converges with the return of the referential... (Foster 168)

*Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat* removes the artist's responsibility for the aesthetics of the resultant image, however involved the artist in the initial conception of the project. I have intended at least initially, to allow the gaze – the window through which we conceive ourselves – to determine the properties of the process, assigning a role to technology and aesthetics, and removing the hand of the artist from a crucial stage of the operation (the algorithmic determination of palette colour and uploading of palettes into decisive files). I plan to re-institute the manual operation of the painter's enterprise in the final stage when I repaint the resultant photographs on canvas in my own hand.

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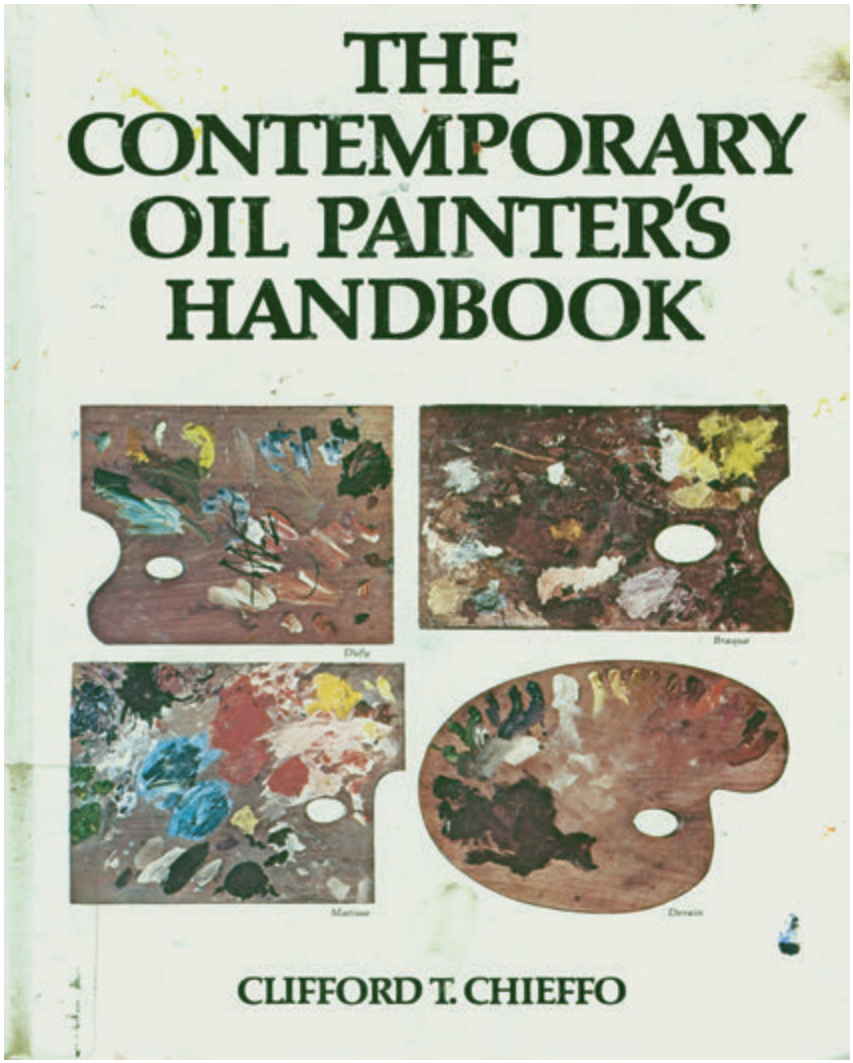


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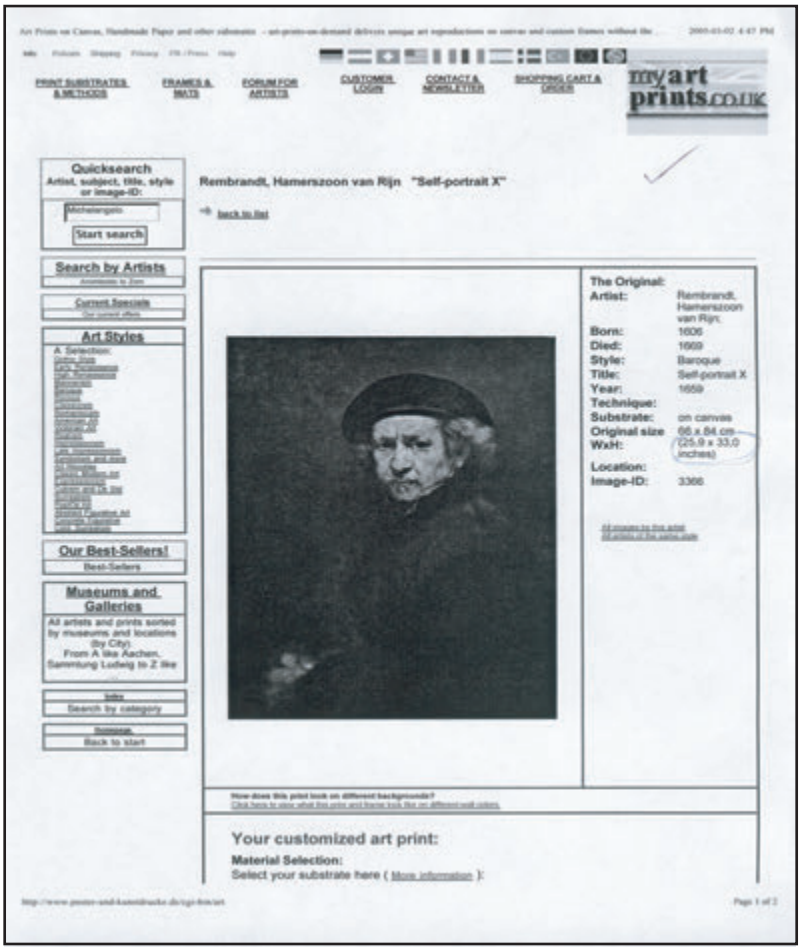
# Section III
# A Handbook

## How to Paint A
## *Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat*

Above: Pages 1 and 2 from the National Gallery's loan contract for images owned by the Gallery. Below: order form and price page from a UK company My Art Prints, which produces to-scale posters of original artwork.




# Step 1

Rembrandt van Rijn,

*Self-Portrait in Beret and Upturned Collar,* 1659
The National Gallery, Washington, D.C.
#1937.1.72 (72) PA

Oil Painting, 1659
84.4 × 66 CM

At the outset of a portrait project like this one, obtain permission from the gallery or owner of the painting you wish to use. For any usage, printing and copying, you must obtain written consent of the gallery, and agree to the terms and conditions of lending. For the Rembrandt painting, I sought permission from the National Gallery in Washington. Only the Gallery's Visual Services Department permits its reproduction.

# Step 2

Now obtain a reproduction in the same dimensions as the original painting. Photograph this in an identical manner as the self-portrait you do in succeeding steps. Order a poster as a suitable replica of the original. The poster mimics any colour-monitored reproduction derived from the source of the painting, and suffices as a desirable commodity.

# Step 3

Now you must decide on the attributes that you wish to select from the painting in order to properly mimic the painted self-portrait in a modern photographic studio setting. These attributes determine the dress or costume, the appearance of the face, the posture or pose of the sitter, the lighting effects, the background and the colour scheme, or palette. Here is a breakdown of the self-portrait by Rembrandt into its constituent parts, used to determine the choices made for the photographic portrait.


1


2


3


4

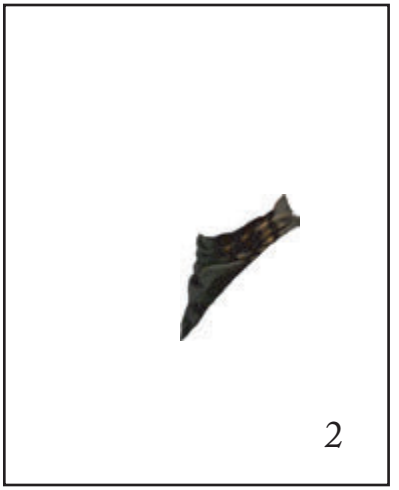

5

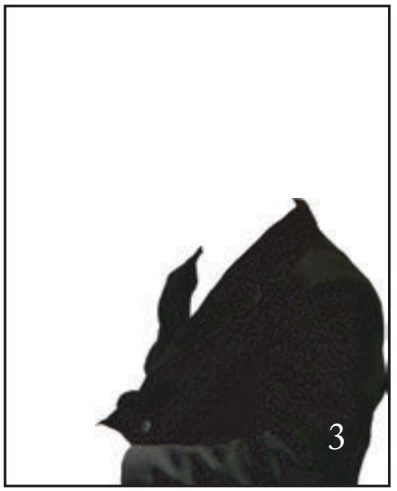

6

Images:
1. Background
2. Beret
3. Coat/ Costume
4. Pose
5. Gaze
6. Detail of Gaze

# Step 3 (cont.)

The choices presented here define the photograph (steps 4 - 6) and parallel Rembrandt's portrait. Choose the attributes and items for your portrait that address these constituent parts and other variables that may come into play. Take cues from the original painting. If the figure in the painting wears a costume or item that does not resemble an outfit worn by you or would detract from the picture then discard it. You want your photograph to be truly yours!





Images:

1. Background
2. Scarf
3. Coat/ Costume
4. Pose
5. Gaze
6. Detail of Gaze

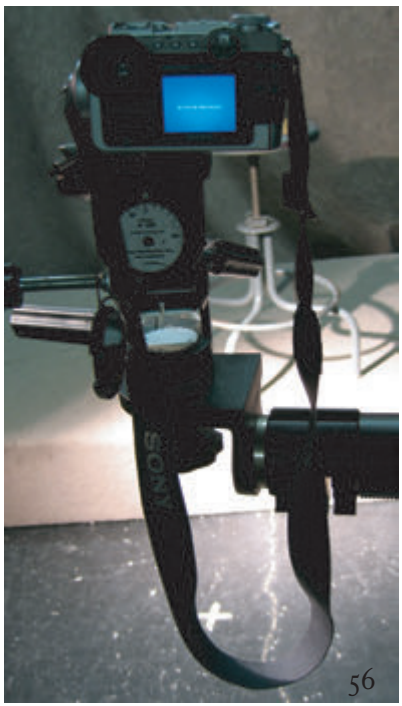
# Step 4

Now you are ready to set up the studio for the photoshoot. You need a backdrop, professional lighting, screens, reflectors, a stool, a chair or various props, a photographer, a camera, and most importantly - you! Take your time with the lighting and set-up, and make sure to have a good representation of the painting you want to simulate so that you can pay close attention to details. and blinders. You can position the lights, two Lowell DP 1000 Watt Lights as shown in the upper photos, to suit your lighting needs, and a third source of lighting can be achieved with reflectors by bouncing light from these two lights onto the background or person in the photo. A white reflective surface is the key to achieving excellent reflective light. The stool, initially used in the studio to complete the self-portrait, positions the sitter to the camera's eye. Using a standard three-quarter portrait framing, the stool adjusts to the specific height determined by the photographer. This screen diffuses light from a Lowell lamps and make it easy to create shadow or soften the figure, as was necessary in replicating the painting by Rembrandt. Direct light from these lamps is too bright and creates a harsh over-exposure. Finally, this chair, used in the photoshoot, did not factor in to the final image. It remains debatable if the Rembrandt contains a small allusion to a red chair in the painting, or if the area continues his red sash.

The large crane the camera attaches to in this photo (above) typifies a professional studio crane that moves easily on wheels around the room. Its sturdiness makes shooting accurate and effortless when you press down on the camera to fire a shot. The multi-pod system easily clamps most professional cameras into place. The image on the right shows the digital display on the back of the camera, handy when we matched the Rembrandt self-portrait to the sitter's pose.

## Step 4 (cont.)

Now, you're ready to shoot. Establish the lighting and configure the portrait to simulate your painting. Photograph at a suitable exposure for the lighting decided upon. You can use a timer on the camera, but to have a photographer on hand to guide you in mimicking the painted self-portrait limits any chance of error. The Sony Cyber-shot used in the photoshoot to derive the self-portrait in the pose of Rembrandt, has a 10 × precision digital zoom, a Carl Zeiss lens and easy transportability. The use of a digital camera in this portrait transfers the image directly to the photo-imaging software.





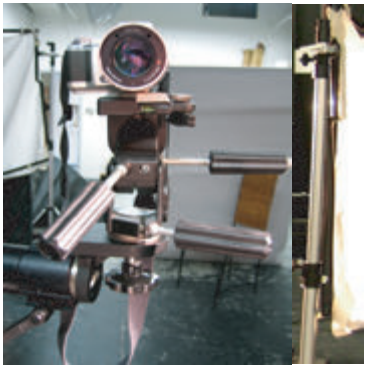



## Step 5

Once you have taken as many pictures as you desire, you can easily view them on screen by plugging the camera directly into a USB port. To the left the final six images offer insight into the subtle differences from one photograph to the next. To select the photo that best suits the project, whether from a Rembrandt self-portrait from 1659, or another painting, the criteria laid out prior to the photoshoot becomes important (the criteria decided upon in Step 3). I chose the portrait from the six pictured here, determined by the expression of the face, and particularly the eyes. The lighting and the shadows also had to maintain the integrity of the original painting, while the colour of the grey coat and the grey background had to be a suitable replica of Rembrandt's colour palette, which ties the figure in with the environment. Once you have decided upon a portrait, its alteration and modification determine a perfect picture! Below: The photograph chosen for the project.

portrait_1.psd

 Above: The final six photographs from the photoshoot.



# Step 6

The studio remains intact for the photoshoot of the Rembrandt poster, which intends to record the Rembrandt painting printed to-scale with the original (84.4 × 66 cm). The difficulty in attempting to achieve a perfect image stems from the reflective surface of the ordinary poster, printed on semi-gloss photopaper. To the left, we prepare the studio and lighting to obtain an image of the Rembrandt poster without a reflective glare, as well as colour match the photo to the poster's representation of colours. The photo below shows the studio crane that held the camera extremely still while pictures were being taken.






# Step 6 (cont.)

To capture the integrity of colour quality desired from the poster image, we overcame many obstacles. Firstly, the glare on the gloss paper made it almost impossible to get an entire area without some kind of reflection. Light reflecting from the surface makes it extraordinarily difficult to capture its true colour. Our solution to the problem involved photographing the poster, moving it slightly, and continuing until we photographed every part of the surface without any glare. Following this, I mapped together the pieces in computer imaging software.

Above: the photograph as pieced together in photoshop and flattened. The colour corrected to match the original poster of the painting.





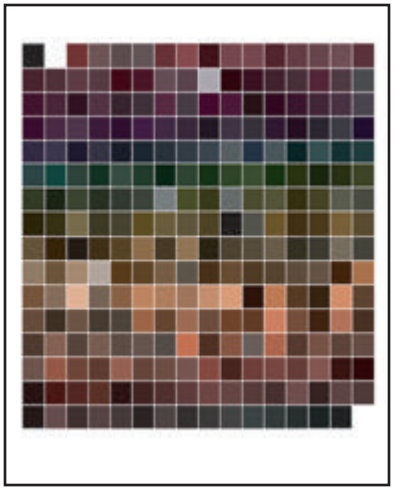


# Step 7

Once you have decided upon a photograph, correct the image to the scale and proportion desired. Photograph 1 on the left shows the original photo before alteration. Photograph 2 shows the final product following several alterations in photoshop. I cut the picture and and reformatted it to mimic Rembrandt's posture more closely. Frame 3 on the left shows two layers in photoshop. I set my self-portrait on a layer above the Rembrandt self-portrait and then adjusted the opacity to allow the top image to become transparent while positioning the photograph. This process made it easy to line up my photograph with Rembrandt's so that our eyes would align. Note the difference in figures in frames 1 and 2. Though the self-portrait in frame 2 appears smaller, there is no change in scale. Portions of the image selected and altered using a scaling tool called transformation. This allows each section to be distorted, skewed, rotated, or adjusted according to dimensions along the x and y axis. In frame 5, a portion selection remains in colour. This section drew closer to the upper torso to shorten the figure, and brought the hands closer to the head as in Rembrandt's own portrait. Frames 4 and 6 show layers of painting with a brush tool at 10% opacity to smooth out the image and imitate Rembrandt's use of shadow.

# Step 8

Once the decision is made regarding the images for your project, derive the colour palette from both files to begin the process of swapping colour palettes. Under Image, go to Mode > Indexed Colour and hit Enter. The image slightly pixelates and a window pops up. Now choose Local (perceptual) colour. The software then computes an algorithmic colour reduction of 256 predominant colours within the image.View the Colour Table via the Mode index. On the right a representation of that colour reduction and the resultant palette from *Self Portrait in Sacrf and Grey Coat* appears. Follow the same procedures for the other image. The Rembrandt file accompanies its colour palette shown here on the left, at the bottom. While the colour table remains open (which means you can see it in the pop up window), select Save. Name the palette (eg. "self_portrait_palette.act") and keep it in a folder with all your files for the project. Next, choose Load from the Colour Table Window. Only the ".act" files show up, as the Colour Table can only access these file types. The Rembrandt palette selected in this project (eg. "rembrandt_self-p_palette.act") automatically loads into the *Self Portrait with Scarf and Grey Coat* file to produce the image pictured on the left.



Above: The materials used to build the canvas. This view also shows the backside of the canvas with support beam.

# Step 9

Now, get set to build a canvas in the age-old tradition of painters. To begin this process you need either a wood support or a stretcher and canvas. To mimic the Rembrandt, in this case, I opted for a wood panel cut to the proportions of the Rembrandt original (84.4 cm × 66 cm). I constructed the canvas board on a plywood stretcher, with crossbar. You can purchase the wood cut to the size you need, or measure and cut yourself. Next, you need gesso to prime the surface of the wood. If using canvas, size the material before applying gesso (with a glue and chalk), but with the wood surface you can apply the gesso directly. You can do as many gesso layers as you see fit, but usually three or four suffices to cover the wood grain and allow for a brilliant surface for the application of colour. The canvas pictured on the easel has been gessoed sixteen times. An easel supports the new canvas in the photograph, but a makeshift easel might do as well. Simply nail into a wall with large enough nails to support the weight of the canvas, set the canvas over the nails by the top cross beam, the same way you would hang a picture. The inventory of materials in this step involves wood, glue, three-quarter inch nails (enough for every two inches of the canvas perimetre), a hammer, sandpaper, gesso, and a large, flat brush. On the left is a tub of gesso and a 3 inch house painting brush.

# Step 10

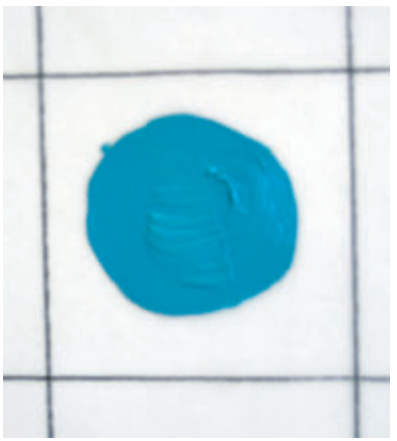
To make a painting, you need paint. If painting a Rembrandt you might want to purchase Rembrandt quality paints by the Dutch company Talens. First buy the primary colours for mixing your colour palette. If you need to consult a colour wheel, do so. You may find it easier to see the values and hues that you need to adopt. Consult a Munsell colour chart if you need some assistance. When squeezing the tube oil onto your wooden or wax paper palette, be careful the oil does not run all over. Put the oil paint onto a sheet of paper, or industrial paper towel to absorb the excess oil before putting it on your palette.


# Step 11

Once you have all the paints you need, you must purchase materials to mix your paints, and the tools of application: the brushes. Most artist supply stores carry the brushes shown here, among various other brushes and tools. For our purposes, a few clean, flat brushes suffice to execute the painting. The brushes range from a large broad-bristled gesso and underpainting brush in the foreground of the top photo, to a finer-haired round point brush for more intricate detail. The method for painting this portrait, however, only requires the painter to fill in one taped-off square portion at a time. Each square represents a pixel of colour as shown in the following step. To ensure the oil covers the designated area well use a soft-haired brush. Choose from any of the brushes displayed below. Use any of the three types of palette knives displayed on the left. A household spoon measures any spirits, resins, or oils added as mediums to paint mixed on the palette.

# Step 12

Match the oil paint directly to the photoshop colour files. I enlarged the colour table from *Self Portrait in Scarf and Grey Coat,* to a poster. This poster measures equal dimensions to the Rembrandt original. Shown here, the poster covers the surface of the canvas. The square colours on the poster allow enough surface area to properly mix the oil paints to match the hue, tone and value of the print. I drew the charts, shown in the middle of the page, in accordance with the dimensions of the print. I drew 256 squares in pencil on geofilm, a suitable paper to sustain oil colours. The pencil grid intends to give a further colour chart for mixing paint during the painting of the portrait.

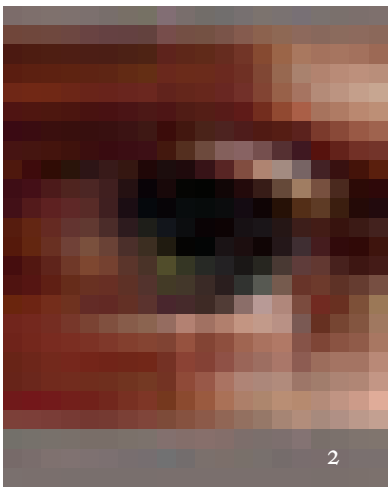


Above: Detail of geofilm sheet. A paint daub from the poster colour chart.

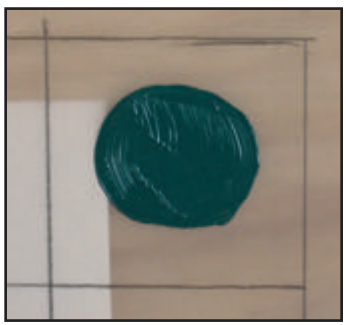
# Step 13

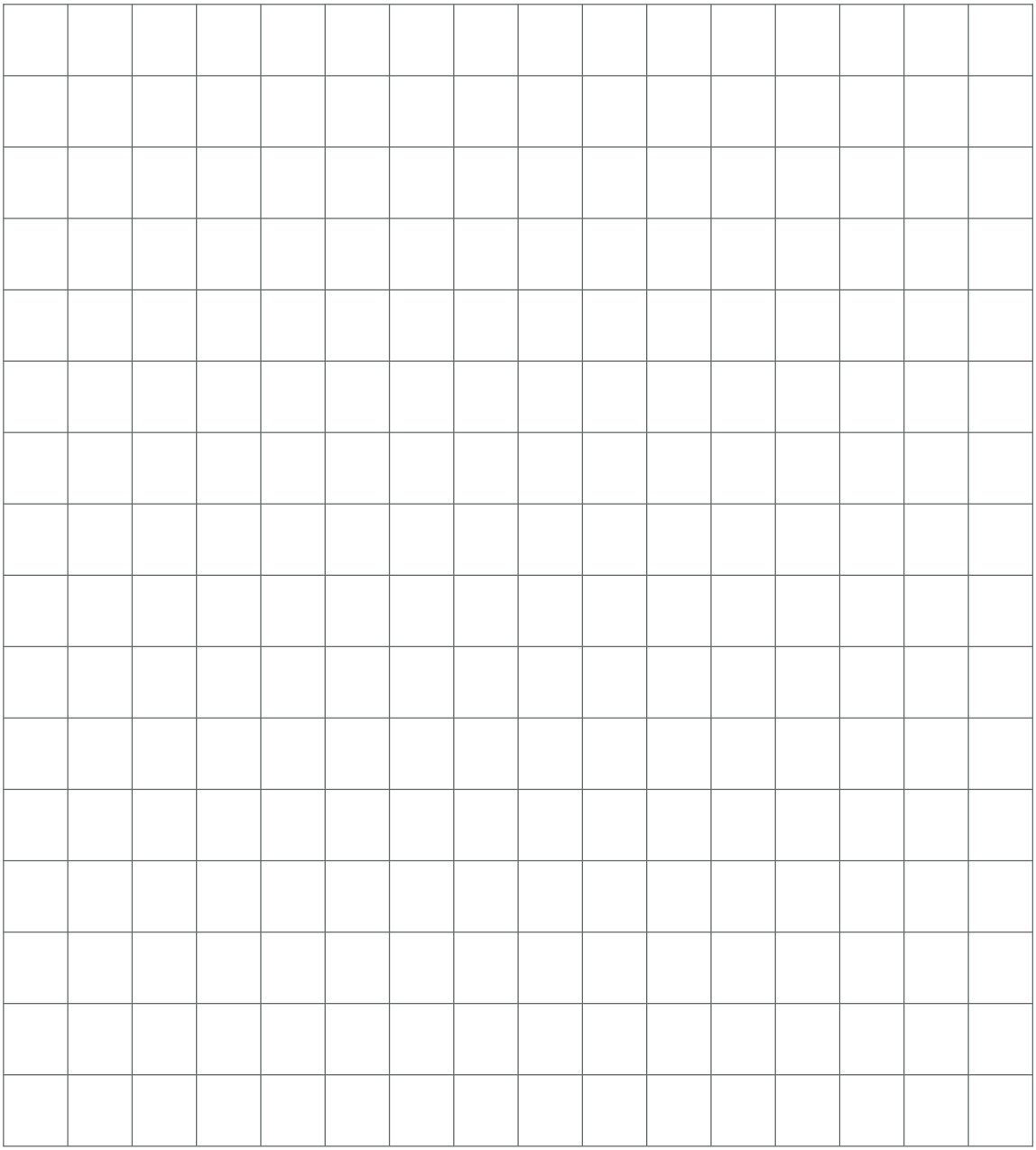
The final stage of the project involves printing the image at a very low resolution. Image 1 (below) crops Rembrandt's eye to reveal the square pixelations that comprise the image. Image 2 (below right) also reveals the low resolution necessary to see the pixel boxes. Once you have a poster-sized output at a low resolution, you can begin painting! Simply tape off the canvas into squares on a pencil grid of 256 boxes. The colour-matched paints now fill in the squares as indicated on the new print-out. Within a matter of time the squares fill in and you complete your own self portrait!

1



2





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