



Peasant Family on the Tramp

Date

c. 1652

Primary Maker

Rembrandt Harmensz Van Rijn

Medium

Etching

Description

Rembrandt was both a painter and a printmaker; his etchings are renowned. Unlike most artists, who entrusted others to create prints after their works, Rembrandt began making his own prints when he was only twenty years old. He subsequently produced many original prints, not based on paintings or drawings but invented specially for the medium in question. In addition to his biblical scenes, Rembrandt was known for his depictions of common and even poor people—a rare choice in Dutch art of the time. There was little sympathy for paupers in Holland, and the artist may have been influenced by Jacques Callot's images of beggars, although, unlike the Frenchman, Rembrandt emphasized his subjects' humanity and dignity. Etching enables a much more

fluid line than the labor-intensive process of engraving, and Rembrandt used this quality to advantage in *Peasant Family on the Tramp*, where the unsteady contour lines that distinguish the figures—characteristic of the artist's style—resemble marks made by a pencil and emphasize the humbleness of the subject. Beside and behind the primary figure appear a woman and a child, lightly bitten into the plate and adding to the sense that the print is akin to a sketch, with the same liveliness. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

Dimensions

Sheet (trimmed within edges of plate): 4 7/16 × 3 5/8 in. (11.3 × 9.2 cm)