

Our artist today is Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669)

We are only going to spend 5-10 minutes talking about Rembrandt and his artwork. Rembrandt was a fabulous painter and deserves much more time than that but we have something special planned for our composer.

Rembrandt was born in Holland. He was a master at painting light and shadow. Rembrandt knew how to use color so that we could see strong beams of light and deep, soft shadows. This light and shadow helps to give depth and shape to figures and to call attention to particular areas of the canvas.

We are going to study his painting known as “*Night Watch*”. “*Night Watch*” is like a nickname, no one can agree on what the real name is, but it is often called “*The Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq*”. It was the Captain and 17 of his men whom commissioned (anyone know what that means?) Rembrandt to paint them. A common thing to do during that time.

Rembrandt painted the men life size on a 13’ x 16’ canvas. However, about two feet from both sides had to be cut off to hang it in the appointed place. It is a daylight scene, but because of layers of varnish it seems dark or at night.

I am now going to show you the painting. I want you to study the painting but remember what caught your eye first. (Show it, wait a moment, then ask:)

Where were your eyes drawn first? (To the three lighted figures among the crowd)

1. The girl in a yellow dress
2. The man dressed in black with a red sash (Captain Cocq)
3. The yellow dressed militiaman – (Captain Cocq’s lieutenant)

What elements did Rembrandt use? (color) He uses color to create light, shadows, and depth so the painting seems almost real. Rembrandt also created a sense of motion – everyone is busy and you can see that the company is getting ready to move out. The Dutch militiamen were called *Arquebusiers* (Are-k-boo-zee-ays) after the Arquebus (are-k-booz) a sixteenth-century long-barreled gun.

This painting is like a find-it game. Rembrandt included a number of symbols of the *Arquebusiers* in the painting: (what would that mean?)

1. The puff of gunpowder over the yellow-hatted man – coming from an arquebus
2. The girl in yellow dress in the foreground is a focal point of symbolism:
She is holding the militia's goblet.
The chicken hanging from her girdle by its claws. The claw was the emblem of the Kloveniers (group of militia shooters), whose name derives from the Dutch word *klauw*.
3. The helmet with an oak leaf - a traditional symbol of the Arquebusiers.
4. The color yellow is often associated with victory.
5. Behind the lighted men is the company's flag
6. The 18 men’s names are on the shield

There are many more hidden symbols and details that you may want to take a closer look at some day.