Basic Detail Report

Title
Three Trees (The) (H. 205; B. 212)

Artist
Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

Date
1643

Dimensions
Overall: 8 5/16 x 10 7/8 in. (21.1 x 27.7 cm)

Medium
Etching, drypoint, and engraving

Classifications
Prints

Credit Line
The Grace J. Hitchcock Collection

Object number
1981.171

Exhibition History
TMA Rembrandt What Was He Thinking Mar. 3-May 28 2006 TMA The Painter Was a Printmaker: June 23 - Sept. 9, 1984. TMA, The Dramatic Image: Baroque Prints of the 17th Century, February 25 - July 31, 2011. Hitchcock Memorial Show I & ll: Feb. 25 - Mar. 28, 1982 Apr.24 - June 27, 1982 The Face of Man and of the Land and Rembrandt and Durer

TMA, *Paper Roses: Garden-Inspired Works on Paper*. Feb. 21-May 18, 2014.

Collections
Works on Paper

Label Text
The Three Trees is at once Rembrandt's largest and most confusing landscape print. Using a varied etched line and emphatic drypoint work, the artist has created a landscape undergoing dramatic atmospheric change. Sunlight dominates the background, silhouetting the three trees and illuminating a city in the distance; while in the foreground, almost directly overhead, an isolated storm breaks. Inexplicably, the people and animals throughout the landscape—look for the artist sketching and the lovers hidden in the bushes—seem unaware of the changing weather. There might be a practical explanation for the drama and confusion. The overly dark and obscured foreground suggests that the plate used for this print was left too long in the acid bath that "bites" the etched lines deeply enough to hold ink (please see the Understanding Printmaking brochure for an explanation of the etching process). The lines were too deeply bitten and consequently some details, such as the fisherman and his wife, were obscured. The plate was

heavily scraped and burnished in the area of the sky. This was probably done to lighten it after the initial over processing. The clouds and diagonal sheets of rain were added after the plate had been scraped—perhaps to unify the print and justify the darkness below. An unfortunate mistake might have resulted in one of Rembrandt's most noteworthy prints.

Not On View