The Rembrandt Book by Gary Schwartz

With international attention focused on the 400th anniversary of Rembrandt von Rijn's birth, the world's leading Rembrandt expert weighs in with a penetrating—and accessible—examination of the Dutch master's life and art from both the biographical and the art historical perspective.

Rembrandt was an esteemed artist in his own time as well as in the present, yet there is much debate over how many paintings and drawings can really be attributed to him, and popular scholastic opinion varies widely. In his lively text, accompanied by 700 full-color illustrations, Gary Schwartz addresses the central controversies, providing art historians, students, and art lovers with essential new insights to help clarify the mysteries surrounding the great painter.

My Personal Review:
"The Rembrandt Book" is a welcome reprise of Schwartz's now out of print "Rembrandt: His Life, His Paintings." Published to coincide with "Het Rembrandt Jaar" (the 400th anniversary of Rembrandt's birth) this new volume is probably the best general introduction to Rembrandt available in English. Schwartz, an American who has lived in Holland for decades, was a student of the great Leonard Slatkes and has contributed to the academic study of Rembrandt both through his work as a writer and as a publisher. (He runs the Dutch academic press Sdu.) He also knows how to appeal to a general audience: he produces a regular column on cultural matters for one of the Dutch daily papers. "The Rembrandt Book" gives readers all of these sides of Schwartz at once: the scholar, the popularizer, the creative book designer (the book has a wonderfully dynamic layout). Schwartz offers a very accessible and largely narrative approach to Rembrandt, but he does not shy away from connoisseurship issues, and he has the authority and credibility to weigh in on some of the more hotly
disputed attributions. Every student of Dutch painting should read this book.

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