

# The New York Times

## *What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in November*

by Blake Gopnik (November 10, 2023)



Rineke Dijkstra's "Night Watching," 2019, three-channel HD video installation, with sound.  
Credit: Rineke Dijkstra; Photo by Lewis Ronald

### MIDTOWN

#### **Rineke Dijkstra**

Through Dec. 20. Marian Goodman, 24 West 57th Street, Manhattan; 212-977-7160; mariangoodman.com.

In her entrancing 2019 video, "Night Watching," receiving its East Coast premiere at Goodman, Rineke Dijkstra documents the making of "The Night Watch," one of Rembrandt's greatest works. Of course, the paint was dry by 1642. What Dijkstra does is let us witness that utterly inanimate object — just a bunch of dead pigments on canvas — being made into living art, thanks to the viewers who engage with it as that.

Dijkstra made a record of that transformation, from object to art, at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum, when she set up cameras in front of Rembrandt's painting and pointed them at people whom she invited to observe it.

Contemplating "The Night Watch" — or so we believe; Dijkstra never turns her lens toward the painting — a group of Japanese businessmen consider the picture in terms of the money Rembrandt might have made from it. "The gross profit margin must have been high," one says.

A half-dozen young artists also take in the old masterpiece, imagining what it must be to have a reputation like Rembrandt's. The anxiety of his influence rages among them.

Observing the rich and powerful men in the Rembrandt, a posse of Dutch women of power and wealth — tweed, pashmina, pearls — discuss gender roles in the Dutch Golden Age.

All these people must be witnessing art, because they have their own views of the object before them.

Then we realize: As we wrestle with our viewpoint on their reactions, we're making Dijkstra's document into art.