Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) is known for his vivid interpretation of themes from the Hebrew Bible. His reputation as a painter of histories, based on literary and pictorial sources, was formed early in his career. Female figures that are essential to the narrative of ancient Israel are prominently depicted in various roles: mothers, wives or lovers of patriarchs, heroes and kings. In line with moralistic attitudes in art of the time, Rembrandt often cast these women in roles of corrupting influence or precipitating fateful events. Yet in the master’s late works we discover a deep understanding of human nature. An example is the couple Isaac and Rebecca, shown in a tender embrace (above). Dr. Anat Gilboa will discuss Rembrandt’s development of the female figure in relation to the Jewish, biblical and pictorial tradition.

Dr. Anat Gilboa is an art historian, specializing in early modern art and Jewish and Israeli art. She has taught at universities in Israel, Canada and the US. Her research has resulted in a book and in various publications in American and European journals and conferences.

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