



**A Peter Greenaway Film; Produced by Kees Kasander. Filmed
on location in Poland and Wales and Amsterdam from
September 4th 2006**

SYNOPSIS

The year 1642 marks the turning point in the life of the famous Dutch painter, Rembrandt, turning him from a wealthy respected celebrity into a discredited pauper. At the insistence of his pregnant wife Saskia, Rembrandt has reluctantly agreed to paint the Amsterdam Musketeer Militia in a group portrait that will later be come to be known as The Nightwatch. He soon discovers that there is a conspiracy afoot with the Amsterdam merchants playing at soldiers manoeuvring for financial advantage and personal power in, at that time, the richest city in the Western World. Rembrandt stumbles on a foul murder. Confident in the birth of a longed-for son and heir, Rembrandt is determined to expose the conspiring murderers and builds his accusation meticulously in the form of the commissioned painting, uncovering the seamy and hypocritical side to Dutch Society in the Golden Age.

Rembrandt's great good fortune turns. Saskia dies. Rembrandt reveals the accusation of murder in the painting and the conspirators plan revenge. They set out to discredit him at home and abroad. They plant a treacherous mistress, Geertje, to seduce him. They try to blind him. They plan his social and financial ruin, and to create the circumstances for his slide into penury, insult his young mistress Hendrickje, conspire to destroy his son, and bring Rembrandt to his knees. The bold and courageous painting of the Nightwatch, exceptional in aesthetics and content, is Rembrandt's most celebrated painting, it consolidated his reputation as a master-painter but it also destroyed him socially and financially.

TAGLINE

A theatrical, ironic costume drama of Rembrandt, his women and a conspiracy of foul murder in The Nightwatch, the painting that both made and ruined him.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Four ideas about Rembrandt, couched almost as questions, were germinal to NIGHTWATCHING, and I suppose I have been thinking about them, on and off, ever since I was at art school in the mid-sixties, when Rembrandt's reputation was unassailable amongst my lecturers. The ideas could be summarised under the headings

of money, sex, conspiracy and the very condition of painting. The first question is social, the second question voyeuristic, the third question is intellectual, and the fourth question is philosophical, and probably, though a general public might not see it as such, the last question is the most important.

The first question is how could so seriously rich and respected a painter in mid-life, end his life in penury? The second, what was the significance and influence of the three different women in Rembrandt's life, and with a painter whose insight into character and an inner life is considered so relevant, how did his private domestic life influence his painting? The third question is how do we hope to find a way to understand the Nightwatch with its many curious visual anecdotes, unexplained activities, breaks with traditions and the persistent and prevalent sensation that we are being told something, but we do not know quite what?

And finally, the last question - and that is - what in fact does painting do? And of course such a question is also relevant to cinema. What in fact does cinema do?

If we visit each question again. It is difficult to understand why a man so rich - considered to be a guilder millionaire in the 1640s, with all the trappings of fortune - big house, smart, good family wife, large atelier, many pupils, printing shop - should end up so badly. Financial mismanagement surely cannot entirely be blamed. There are no records of real wanton spending or abject drunkenness, and his output was continuous and prolific, even after the bankruptcy declaration. Rembrandt would have had to squander money very vigourously to be so high and then fall so low, and there is no evidence. Many have blamed political and social change economically altering the market, but other painters did not fail, and the success of the Dutch painting school continued to develop for another generation until the French marched into Holland in 1674. Some have blamed a change in artistic fashion - a move towards more Italianate models, but Vermeer follows Rembrandt in the century and he succeeded with non-Italian characteristics. Some have suggested Geertje stole and spent and squandered, but it is not easy to see that she could have created such a financial problem. More understandably, some have suggested that Rembrandt began to speculate on the shipping and trading markets - a quick way to loose money. Such speculating was often necessarily keep secret to avoid exploitation and market competition - such secrecy could explain why there are no ready records to prove the theory entirely, though there are some telling comments in various bureaucratic documents. It could be that Rembrandt was persuaded to speculate against his better judgement, and there is some recently uncovered evidence to suggest this.

To find a consistent way to suggest this change in fortune - this film follows the painting of The Nightwatch's manufacture from start to finish, and offers to suggest a possible plausible reason why Rembrandt was ruined, by suggesting a concerted social and financial vendetta, of which high-minded Calvinism could be responsible, through envy that a painter, an out-of-town, lowly craftsman could play the markets like a merchant and strut successfully on the stage made for them and not for him. Most of all it speculates on how a quite tightly-knit society, through a concerted effort, could punish a man who broke the rules of Dutch community. Rembrandt exhibited overt success, lived openly in sin with a servant, was not prepared to kneel before patrons. They were mortified that he could criticise, mock and scorn their self-righteousness and taint them with moral crimes and possibly include them in severe accusations of criminality, all publicly displayed in a painting commissioned by them for all to see. They curiously paid for their immorality to be advertised - a severe and mocking accusation. In sum, their

arrogant murder of a rival who stood in their way to preferment was perceived by Rembrandt who used the Nightwatch as a J'accuse indictment. That first brave J'accuse indictment by Zola in the anti-Semitic Dreyfus Affair may well have led to Zola's death by asphyxiation by person or persons unknown when the stove chimney to his bedroom was blocked and his rooms filled with carbon monoxide. This Rembrandt J'accuse indictment could well have led to Rembrandt's death; it certainly seems to have heralded his social and financial ruin.

The second question - about Rembrandt's women - reveal three different sorts of classic gender relationships - with Saskia, a dynastic marriage of convenience that became a business partnership, and the painted evidence shows this. The second, with Geertje, on the rebound from Saskia's death, and with Rembrandt suffering great misery, was a long carnal affair, like a long drinking binge to shut out and blot out unhappiness, pushed to the limits of excess, grimy, dirty, self-humiliating, subsequently regretted and vigorously denied, was also revealed in the work. And thirdly, the relationship with Hendrickje - twenty years younger than him, and a servant in economic dependence, a classic older man exploiting his lust, finding a free house-manager and unpaid baby-minder, and unprotesting bed-partner, the classic older man younger woman sentimental relationship that reprises a father daughter relationship, and a master pupil relationship.

The relationships of course are more complicated than that. They always are. To fit them into a surer context for the purposes of the film, (and not to be completely deny the historical facts) it is considered indeed that both Geertje and Hendrickje are long time members of Rembrandt's household and well known to Saskia, though there never was any thought of impropriety when Saskia was alive. Availability was a key to Rembrandt's association with Geertje and Hendrickje. His money and social standing should surely have made him seek partners further up the social ladder. Did he prefer not to for shaming himself with social superiors, was his background as a miller's son with minimum education make him wary of the educated women - and many Dutch women of no particular social advantage were formidably educated as the high percentage of letter-writing in contemporary Dutch painting would suggest. Or was it the crippling financial arrangements made by Saskia at her death that meant Rembrandt would lose half his fortune to his very young son in the event of his remarriage - another indication of Saskia's wise level-headedness as a business partner in their dynastic marriage.

Rembrandt has been castigated for painting 'real' women - eschewing the heroic traditions where every woman has to be a Juno, a Minerva, a Venus - complaints of flaccid bellies, drooping breasts, and the marks of garters on a calf are frequent. Did his wives sit for him? What sort of sexual manners, habits, fantasies, relationships did they enjoy? The Dutch are supposedly contradictory - calvinist and yet extremely tolerant, sensuous and then very matter-of-fact, fastidious and then flagrant. In the end Rembrandt painted very sensuous erotic paintings of women, surely from personal experience. Few would suggest that his vision and his experiences came from the copy-books.

The third question was intellectual and sought answers to the many mysteries and queries and puzzles in the painting. Here is a list of some of those mysteries



1. Is it significant that Banning-Cocq wears a satanic black outfit?
2. Is it significant that Willem van Ruytenburch is dressed in brightly-lit angelic gold? An iconoclast at the Rijksmuseum thought so when he slashed both figures with the evil versus good paradigm in mind.
3. Is it not curious that there is such a difference in height between the two men? Willem van Ruytenburch hardly comes up the Banning-Cocq's throat. Surely simple propriety could have equalled out the heights of the two men - Willem looks demeaned by being made a 'shorty'.
4. The outstretched hand of Banning Cocq does not seem to fit so well into Banning-Cocq arm or sleeve. Is there a reason for this?
5. There is a very demonstrative shadow of Banning Cocq's hand on Willem's belly. Is this a deliberate provocation of a sexual nature?
6. The head of the lance held by Willem van Ruytenburch seems to be a flagrant genital substitute - complete with dominant penis and a suggestion of testicles - could this really be so accidental?

7. Banning-Cocq limply holds a glove by the finger with exaggerated distasteful nonchalance in his right hand. The held glove is a right hand glove. Since his right hand is already gloved - and his left-hand very extravagantly ungloved - this held glove cannot be his. Who's is it? And what is it doing here? What is going on? There are three musketeers in the picture - all copied with Rembrandtian panache from a military hand-book.

8. The musketeer loading the musket is ostensibly doing it the wrong way around - an image of incompetence? Or has Rembrandt been admonished for making Dutch military secret too public for the Spanish?

9. The musketeer firing the musket in the centre of the painting is fully dressed in armour, has an obscured face, is obviously a youth, is firing in a crowded melee with great danger to everyone, is not so securely balanced on his feet and wears an oak leaf twig on his helmet - too many mysteries here to suggest arbitrary concerns - a figure like this would take a day - several days to paint. We are surely sincerely meant to take careful note.

10. There is a man in the centre of the painting making an ambiguous gesture - is he avoiding the firing, helping it, aiming it to shoot?

11. Then the curiosity everyone sees - the girl in the brightly painted dress - is it a girl - some say it is a dwarf - perhaps they are thinking of Spanish painting - say Velasquez's or Ribera's Court dwarfs? And Rembrandt orders Spanish prints through the print shops in Antwerp. Spain is the traditional enemy. Is she all that is left of the Spanish threat for these useless merchants playing at soldiers - the enemy is now no more than a plaything, a female dwarf, as in the Spanish court itself. Is the enemy now a Spanish dwarf? She is crowned, she has a chicken dangling at her waist - a spiteful bird with claws, the cockerel crowing his empty macho cock-a-doodle-doo - metaphor for the ultimate cuckold. There is a money bag at her waist - paying off the Spanish threat rather than fight it - are there accusations of cowardice here? And she ostentatiously brandishes a goblet. What does all this mean? Dutch painting is full of signs and symbols, metaphors and emblems, allegories and referred narratives - here surely are they all again. How are they to be interpreted?

12. And this brightly-lit girl has a companion with a hidden face - what are both these girls doing? Running away? Running to? Just running?

13. There is someone else running away - the powder boy on the left - is he a messenger of some sort - a whistle blower, a sneak? A witness eager to tell what he has seen?

14. There is a one-eyed man at the very back of the crowd in the centre peering over everyone's shoulder - is it a Rembrandt self-portrait? Rembrandt, it is said, after more than a few people have scrupulously studied his 57 self-portraits, had a lazy eye, an astigmatism in his left eye, his sinister eye, but this is his right eye - right for left - because Rembrandt had to paint his self-portrait in a mirror.

And on we go.

15. The only figures looking significantly directly 'at the camera' at us, are Jacob de Roy in the black hat centre right - and Rembrandt - could this be significant? Are these two people the only two 'in the know'?

16. The composition of the painting centres strongly on the two central figures, Banning-Cocq, Willem van Ruytenburch, and the man in the middle of them, Jongkind. The pointing hands, the gestures, the compositional lines - are they more than just compositional - are they accusational? And if a little of the painting is removed, cut off from the left hand side of the painting - these characters become even more central. And a little of the left hand side of the painting was cut off. In 1715. The painting stayed under Banning-Cocq control. Did they cut off this portion for merely practical considerations, or is there a more important reason?

17. There is a man - Bloemfeldt - with his comedy hat and false moustache -centre. What is an actor doing in this painting?

18. There are exactly 13 pikes in the picture - thirteen was an unlucky number in the mid-17th century - accidental?

And my fourth question. When is a painter not a painter? It is the old perennial problem about painting (and cinema), especially illusionistic baroque painting, indeed all painting before the 1860s - why does all painting deny itself and pretend to be something else, why does it always use every trick in the book to be pretend to be 'real', even right down to the outstretched hand of Banning-Cocq that is so praised for breaking the painter's picture surface - the very thing it should not do. And therefore was Rembrandt really a painter at all - was he not - like so many of his contemporaries - a man of the drama stage, composing frozen moments of illusionistic and manipulative theatre, and in so doing prophesying the cinema medium? There is certainly some suggestion that cinematic film noire arose from these tenebrist and post-tenebrist painters - Caravaggio in the South, Rembrandt in the North, and all their numerous followers and imitators - deep chiaroscuro expressionist lighting, moving into a modern world with sharper architectural components and greater possibilities of artificial light - stronger, more directable, bigger in possible scale, but exaggeratedly fashioned in black and white because good colour was not available.

CAST / MAJOR CHARACTERS & THE FAMILY

Rembrandt van Rijn	aged 36 through to 41	Martin Freeman
Saskia Uylenburgh	aged 21 through to 30	Eva Birthistle
Geertje	aged 37 through to 42	Jodhi May
Hendrickje Stoeffels	aged 15 through to 21	Emily Holmes
Gerard Dou		Toby Jones
Marieke	aged 12 (unknown)	Natalie Press

THE FOUR MAJOR CHARACTERS

Rembrandt van Rijn

Unlike Vermeer, Rembrandt is difficult to construct in any way other than his received reputation, which suggests a ribald sort of man, sensuous, sensual, even carnal, probably not so clean, humorous, with a mean streak, prone to changing mercurial

emotions, not an intellectual though had intellectual pretensions, a social-climber, certainly inefficient with money, probably too generous, and an optimistic spendthrift easily manipulated. Maybe he spent his money like a provincial, eager to show how successful he had been. This is likely to maybe alienate the Dutch sense of modesty and their sensitivity over the concept of the embarrassment of riches. He has a very good eye for copying and the main chance, and the easy abilities of natural talent to do so quickly. He is often unashamedly a poseur, happy to assume disguises, enjoys dressing up, and challenging others to better his abilities. One can imagine spasms of anger and fits of melancholy, considerable alcohol drinking. By no means handsome in any conventional way, stocky, pot-bellied, hirsute, squat, large hands, splayed fingers, paint-filled finger-nails, not especially sexually endowed. Somehow his insight into psychological character seems at variance with his rougher, blunter, more scurrilous opportunistic characteristics. Sometime his paintings seem at variance with his personality - his profundity in painting seems to outstrip his profundity as a person. We are not a little suspicious of his need for self-advertisement, which at times makes him seem superficial.

With licensed evidence from his work and life, this project posits Rembrandt as highly talented, discovered as a young prodigy to be exploited by Amsterdam dealers, is very ambitious to better himself as a provincial, to be the local boy made good, certainly with great promise, who marries opportunistically, assumes arrogance by obvious commercial success, then on the death of his dynastically-arranged marriage-partner, Saskia, is easily seduced into carnality with Geertje, and finds a truer, prouder love, as a mature man, with a younger woman in later life. He remains the provincial in his love life, finding satisfaction in less experienced women (and servants) than himself. He feels easier with female servants than he might with bourgeois female equals and certainly than with his aristocratic female sitters.

Saskia Uylenburgh

Niece of the painting-dealer Uylenburgh, an orphan of sorts, her parents died when she was a young teenager. She was pushed forward as a likely family pawn to keep the money-spinning Rembrandt within the family circle. Personable, quiet, serious, understanding her marriage-contract role, she is Rembrandt's reward for bourgeois services, and is dutifully affection to him as a bourgeoisie spouse, an affection which he happily reciprocates but probably patronises. Being associated with dealers and painters, she understands his role, and hopes through him, to live a balanced, money-comfortable life with children. She sees his painting as a bourgeois trade, seeing the necessity of pleasing clients, staying in with the establishment, encouraging Rembrandt to behave, and not rock the boat. Her inability to wean healthy children beyond two years old is a misery, though there is no evidence to suggest she could not conceive, and her urban-living ill-health is at a contrast to Rembrandt's provincial rude health. She is very proficient at house-keeping and financial management in a large house with many servants and many family members and frequent live-in apprentices and pupils. She is literate and has large family connections.

Geertje Dircks

Geertje is undoubtedly a servant on the make. Widow of a trumpeter associated with the army, quay-side and canal-side shipping and tavern-keeping. She is sensuous and know how to sexually excite and please. She seduces Rembrandt, winning his interest through caring for his sickly infant son. He is stimulated by her carnality and reaches excitements he has never experienced before. She hopes to marry him, but it is an extravagant hope.

A gossip, she knows his business, alienates his bourgeois sitters by her pretensions, which he initially forgives or pretends not to notice because of the sexual rewards of her company. She is a comfortable bounce-back candidate to mop up his disagreeable inconvenient grief over Saskia's death, and she takes advantage of her sexual fascination to dig deeper and deeper into Rembrandt's life. The young child Titus undoubtedly learns to love her and depend on her and she takes him off Rembrandt's hands. When she overplays her success by wearing Saskia's clothes and jewels, Rembrandt realises she is exploiting him and begins to doubt her motives. Persuaded by his bourgeois friends to repudiate her as a lower-class companion, who would scarcely be able to comprehend his activity as painter, he begins to despise her. His carnality for her body becomes coarser, their sexual activity cruder, until his pretensions for refinements become offended and he begins to repudiate her. They begin to quarrel, and she gradually becomes a nag and a scold, accusing him of staying out late, over-spending money, excess drinking. These quarrels are patched up by sensuous love-making, but he tires of her body which she imagines will always attract him. She grows sloppy, not caring to be so clean and her caring for Titus ceases to be so perfect. She insults him in public and the quarrels begin to erode their relationship. He catches her pawning Saskia's jewellery for sums that are ridiculous because she does not understand their bourgeois value, and there is suddenly no way back. He throws her out. She brings in her relatives, especially her army-serving trumpeter brother, a drunkard, who insults Rembrandt and blackmails him, and ultimately attacks him in the street, attempting to blind him. Furious, Rembrandt is obliged to pay her off, a private arrangement which is seen as an attempt to silence her.

She declares a breach of marriage contract, and is listened to by cousins on the local social administration board who make Rembrandt's unofficial payments to her official. Rembrandt is forced to pay a higher annuity. Geertje alienates further bourgeois contacts who lock her up in a house of correction and ultimately assist Rembrandt in keeping her there providing he pays for her keep and contributes to their charities. She turns to religion to become self-righteous and artificially pious, and thereby further alienate the Amsterdam religious communities against him.

Hendrickje Stoffels

A servant who, aged 14, once accompanied the family when Saskia was alive. Now 20 to Rembrandt's 40 years, she becomes a maid-servant. Blithe, gay, happy to be of service, she is watched by a morose Rembrandt, struggling with Geertje's intransigence. He surreptitiously uses her as model, then asks her to pose in domestic duties. She is totally unflirtatious, but irritates Geertje's jealousy to make Rembrandt aware of her body. She treats him like an uncle, careful and studious to look after him. She is deeply curious of his activity as a painter. She respects and admires his reputation. He impresses her and he knows and exploits it. One day he kisses her and the event disturbs her. She is frightened and is ready to leave. He encourages her to stay and is sympathetic to his bachelor loneliness and unhappiness. She is attacked by Geertje and her brother, and rescued by Rembrandt. On a rainy night, she sleeps with Rembrandt and the affair begins. Rembrandt is never parted from her. They eat together, she spends the day in the studio. He draws and paints her incessantly. They regularly sleep together, she becomes pregnant. She is dragged before the local church elders and is defiant to them but tearful and vulnerable on her return to Rembrandt. They are now irrevocably united. Rembrandt learns seriously to want to protect her. He falls in love with her, a love she entirely reciprocates and is deeply grateful for.

NIGHTWATCHING BIOGRAPHIES

PETER GREENAWAY

Writer/Director/Painter/Curator

Peter Greenaway was born in Wales and educated in London. He trained as a painter for four years, and started making his own films in 1966. He has continued to make cinema in a great variety of ways, which has also informed his making of installations for the Palazzo Fortuny in Venice to the Joan Miro Gallery in Barcelona. He has curated exhibitions from the Boymans –van Beuningen Gallery in Rotterdam to the Louvre in Paris. He has regularly been nominated for the Film Festival Competitions of Cannes, Venice and Berlin, published books and written for the theatre and opera. His first feature film, *THE DRAUGHTSMAN'S CONTRACT*, completed in 1982, received enormous critical acclaim and established him internationally as one of the most original and important film makers of our times, a reputation consolidated by the films, *THE COOK*, *THE THIEF*, *HIS WIFE & HER LOVER* and *THE PILLOW-BOOK*.

MARTIN FREEMAN

Martin Freeman is best known to audiences for playing the central character of Arthur Dent in Disney's recent success "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" and as Tim in the runaway hit BBC comedy series "The Office." Television credits also include "Charles II" and "The Robinsons" for BBC and "Hardware" for ITV.

Other film credits are "Ali G Indahouse", "Love Actually" (both for Working Title), "Confetti" for Wasted Talent, "Hot Fuzz" for "Shaun of the Dead" director Edgar Wright and Anthony Minghella's "Breaking and Entering".

Martin has enjoyed a high profile theatre career, including work with Kathy Burke at the Royal Court, the sell-out run of a new play, "Blue Eyes & Heels" at Soho Theatre and the highly acclaimed "The Exonerated" at the Riverside Studios last year.

Other credits due for release later this year are: Jake Paltrow's "The Good Night" (with Gwyneth Paltrow, Penelope Cruz and Simon Pegg) first screened at last year's Sundance Film Festival; a UK independent film called "The All Together" for Lionsgate; "Dedication", a New York independent film for Plum Pictures – jointly acquired by First Look Studios and The Weinstein Company

EVA BIRTHISTLE

Eva Birthistle was born in Dublin and moved to Northern Ireland for most of her childhood before returning to Dublin to train at The Gaiety School of Acting. Upon graduating, Eva worked in short films and soon landed a part in one of Ireland's favourite TV soaps, *Glenroe*. Moving to London, more TV work soon followed, including Jimmy McGovern's stirring docudrama *Sunday* and John Strickland's *Trust*. Eva was offered her first feature film, *All Soul's Day* by Alan Gilson in 1997, which was closely followed by work on Peter Sheridan's *Borstal Boy*, *Saltwater* for Conor McPherson, *The American* alongside Matthew Modine and Diana Rigg, and *Timbuktu* again for Alan Gilson.

It was Eva's portrayal of Roisin in Ken Loach's *Ae Fond Kiss*, however, that really caught the industry's attention. When the film premiered at the Berlin Film Festival, Eva was selected to represent the UK as one of Europe's Shooting Stars, promoting top European talent. Then followed a succession of awards and nominations. Eva was joint winner with Kate Winslet of the British Actress of the Year Award at the London Film Critic's Awards and was awarded the Best Actress title at the 2004 Irish Film and Television Awards for her performance. Eva was also nominated in the same category at the 2004 Scottish BAFTAs and at the 2004 British Independent Film Awards.

Next, Eva played the female lead, Eily Bergin, in Neil Jordan's *Breakfast on Pluto* with Liam Neeson and Cillian Murphy. Set in the 1970's, *Breakfast on Pluto* follows the exploits of foster child Patrick 'Kitten' Braden (Murphy) as he grows up and he leaves behind his small-town life in Ireland for London, where he's reborn as a transvestite cabaret singer. The film was first shown at the New York Film Festival in October 2005, was released in the US in November 2005 and in the UK in January 2006.

Eva's next film *Middletown* premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in April 2006. It was filmed in Ireland and directed by the BAFTA-nominated Brian Kirk. The film is an atmospheric and explosive drama that tells the tale of one cleric's (Matthew MacFadyen) chilling determination to rid a rural town of its corruption and sin. Eva plays Caroline, the long suffering wife to the cleric's brother (Daniel Mays.) It is an explosive tale of the ambition and betrayal threatening to tear one family apart forever. "Eva Birthistle gives another rich performance as the independent quick-to-anger Caroline" said the Irish Independent and the Irish Times wrote "The uniformly fine performances notably include Birthistle's Feisty portrayal of the only person with the temerity to stand up to his (MacFadyen's) character." Eva won Best Actress at the 2007 Irish Film and Television Awards for her performance. The film was released in the UK in March 2007.

In late 2006, Eva was seen in the hit BBC mini-series, *The State Within*, a tightly-plotted conspiracy thriller. Set in the diplomatic worlds of Britain and the U.S, the six-part series takes place over 17 days in the life of the British Ambassador to the United States. Eva plays Jane Lavery, a human rights lawyer assigned to Luke Gardner (Lennie James), a British paratrooper, awaiting execution on Death Row in Florida. She co-stars alongside Jason Issacs, Sharon Gless and Ben Daniels.

In September 2006, Eva started shooting the new Peter Greenaway film, *Nightwatching*. Based on the work of Rembrandt, Eva will star alongside Martin Freeman, Natalie Press and Jodhi May.

In February 2007, Eva began work on *The Last Enemy*, a five part drama for the BBC by acclaimed screenwriter Peter Berry, shot on location in London and Romania. Directed by Iain B MacDonald, Eva plays Government Minister Eleanor Brooke and appears alongside a highly talented British cast, including Benedict Cumberbatch, Max Beesley and Robert Carlyle. The series is due to be broadcast in late 2007 on BBC One.

JODHI MAY

JODHI MAY made her acting debut at the age of 12 in the Working Title film *A World Apart*, directed by two time Academy award winning Cinematographer Chris Menges, JODHI received international critical acclaim when she won the Best Actress Award at the Cannes Film Festival for this performance & the film won the Prix Du Jury. She also

won the Evening Standard award for Best Newcomer the same year. She went on to star alongside Daniel Day Lewis in Michael Mann's highly acclaimed *The Last Of The Mohicans* & then starred in *Sister My Sister*, produced by the veteran producer of the award winning *Dangerous Liaisons*, Norma Heyman. For this, JODHI was awarded Best actress at the Valladolid International Film Festival.

She then resumed her studies & went onto read English at Oxford University. While at Oxford she played the lead in *The Gambler*, for Film Four opposite Michael Gambon as Dostoevsky's long suffering wife almost twenty years his junior, "May has a pale strength and beauty that tames the tattered literary lion." wrote *The Hollywood Reporter*. She also starred alongside Rufus Sewell in *The Woodlanders* released in the same year, before completing her degree.

Since graduating from Oxford, JODHI'S other feature film credits include the award winning, BAFTA nominated, *The House of Mirth*, based on the Edith Wharton novel, adapted and directed by the acclaimed British auteur of *Distant Voices Still Lives* and *The Neon Bible*, Terence Davies. JODHI starred alongside Gillian Anderson, Dan Aykroyd, Eric Stoltz, Laura Linney, and Anthony LaPaglia.

In 2001 she went to live in Paris for six months to work with the legendary theatre director Peter Brook at the Bouffes du Nord Theater. She played one of the three leads opposite Theatre de Complicite's Katherine Hunter in a French language production of Caryl Churchill's *Far Away*. *The Independent* described her as "superb". In the same year she won the lead in the National's Theatre's World Premier of Christopher Hampton's *The Talking Cure*. Directed by the Oliver Award winning director of *All My Sons*, Howard Davis, JODHI starred opposite Ralph Fiennes as Jung's young patient and lover Sabina Spielrein. *The Guardian* referred to her performance as "a superb blend of intensity and vulnerability". Shortly after JODHI went on to play the title role of Nina, in the noted German director Peter Stein's production of *The Seagull*, starring alongside Fiona Shaw, Ian Glen & Cillian Murphy, *The London Times* referred to her Nina as "a disturbing mix of adolescent siren and Shakespeare's wide eyed Miranda. You Feel this Nina's hungers and terrors, and at the end her total devastation".

JODHI'S leading roles in Television include BBC2's *Signs and Wonders* starring opposite James Earl Jones, Nick Dear's adaptation of Henry James' celebrated novel *The Turn of the Screw* which also starred Colin Firth, and *The Other Boylen Girl* for the BBC, an entirely improvised film in which JODHI played the lead role of Anne Boylen, also starring Natasha McElhone, and Jared Harris. *The Daily Telegraph* described her Anne Boylen as a "metamorphoses from plain little sis to incandescent seductress to hollow eyed Martyr" Other television credits include the Award winning *Warriors* directed by Peter Kosminsky, starring Ioan Gruffud, and Matthew McFadden, *Tipping The Velvet* directed by Geoffrey Sax (*Stormbreaker*), *Daniel Deronda* directed by Tom Hooper (HBO's *Elizabeth I*), starring alongside Hugh Dancy & Romola Garai. More recently she played the lead in Stephen Poliakoff's latest film, *Friends and Crocodiles*, opposite Damian Lewis (*Band of Brothers* HBO, and Keane.)

Recent British feature films include, *The Best Man*, directed by Shooting Fish's Stefan Schwartz, starring Stuart Townsend, and the opening film in competition at the Sundance Film Festival in 2005, *On a Clear Day*, produced by Icon and starring Peter Mullan, Brenda Blethyn, and Billy Boyd, and released by Focus Films.

In 2006 JODHI completed a successful three month West End run, playing the lead in the critically acclaimed *Blackbird*, a new play directed by Peter Stein and written by David Harrower (*Knives and Hens*) in which a woman returns to confront a pedophile. In its review *The Guardian* wrote that “Jodhi May captures brilliantly the tension between revenge and fulfillment”. Current projects include *The Amazing Mrs Pritchard* for the BBC starring alongside Jane Horrocks and Janet McTeer.

EMILY HOLMES

Emily was born in Ottawa and raised in Toronto, Ontario. Emily decided she wanted to be an actress while watching “Dress Up Day” on *Polka Dot Doors* at the tender age of four. Emily’s first role was that of Mother Goose in Kindergarten. Her dream matured and she attended University of British Columbia and graduated with a degree in fine arts in 2000. Since then there has been no stopping young Emily as she carves a niche for herself in the International Film and Television market.

Most recently Emily completed two leading roles in feature films for release in 2007. The first was Peter Greenaway’s new film *Nightwatching* opposite Martin Freeman which was shot in Poland, Wales and Amsterdam. After that Emily was off to Morocco to shoot *Prisoners Of The Sun* with John Rhys Davis, David Charvet and Carmen Chaplin. Last summer she was part of the ensemble cast for cult favorite *Snakes on A Plane*. Emily also costarred in the critically acclaimed French Canadian film *Famila*.

Emily has had leads in several Movies of The Week including the backdoor Pilot for CBC, entitled *Jinnah on Crime* and the lead role of the daughter to Markie Post and John Larraquette in Fox Family’s “Til Dad Do Us Part. Emily’s television series credits include guest stars on *Smallville*, *Dead Like Me*, *The Collector* and *Stargate SG1*. She also guest starred on three episodes of Steven Spielberg’s *Taken* as well as Dreamworks miniseries *Into the West* .

NATALIE PRESS

Natalie Press became the hottest rising star in British cinema with the UK release of the multi-award winning coming-of-age film, *My Summer Of Love*, in late 2004. Natalie played the lead role of Mona, a working class tomboy whose life is transformed by her encounters with an alluring, privileged outsider, who arrives in her Yorkshire town for the Summer. The film was the critical success of the year, winning the Best British Film award at the BAFTAs and the Edinburgh Festival and Natalie’s performance was met with universal praise. She won the award for Best Breakthrough at both the Evening Standard Film Awards and the London Film Critics Circle Awards and was nominated in the Best Actress category at the British Independent Film Awards and the London Film Critics Circle Awards. At the end of 2005, Natalie was the only British woman nominated in the Best Actress category at the European Film Awards.

The Times heralded Natalie’s “intoxicating... mesmerising performance” and the Evening Standard called her “indecently talented” and wrote that “the performances shine, particularly that of Press, who invests Mona with a gamine-like quality that never strays towards either sentiment or false charm”. Elle agreed, claiming that “on the strength of Natalie’s performance we’ll be seeing a lot more of the girl, with the other-worldly Sissy Spacek looks and the raw talent of a young Samantha Morton”. Time magazine called her “remarkable”. The bidding war for the US rights to the film was won by Focus Features and they released the film in America in June 2005. The film and Natalie’s

performance were critically lauded in the States and the New York Times picked Natalie as one of their "Five Actors To Watch Of Summer 2005".

While *My Summer Of Love* was impressing feature film audiences, Natalie's performance in Andrea Arnold's short film, *WASP*, was getting a similar response at festivals around the world. Natalie plays the central character, Zoe, the teenage mother of four who refuses to let the burden of her young children get in the way of a night on the tiles. The Guardian raved that the film "benefit[ed] hugely from a remarkable lead performance by Natalie Press". The film won over 10 Best Short Film awards around the world, including at the Toronto and Sundance Film Festivals and achieved global recognition when it won the Best Short Film Oscar at the 2005 Academy Awards.

Natalie continued to add to her diverse catalogue of roles and was seen in several high-profile projects during 2005. She played a young self-harmer opposite Timothy Spall in the BBC's *Mr. Harvey Lights A Candle*, broadcast in March 2005 and was also seen opposite Rhys Ifans in *The Undertaker*. Her film, *Chromophobia*, co-starring Penelope Cruz, Ralph Fiennes and Kristin Scott Thomas was the closing night film of the 2005 Cannes Film Festival.

Never content without challenging herself, Natalie next took the lead role in the independent feature, *Song Of Songs*, which premiered at the 2005 Edinburgh International Film Festival. Debut writer/director Josh Appignanesi teamed with producer Gayle Griffiths for this dark melodrama set in the closed world of Orthodox Jews. Natalie showed a completely different side to her talents with a powerfully controlled portrait of a deeply religious, masochistic woman in her mid-twenties, alongside new face, Joel Chalfen. Variety hailed a "powerful performance by the increasingly estimable Natalie Press" and The Times called hers a "terrific performance". The Observer raved about "a beguiling central performance from Natalie Press", adding "Song Of Songs confirms her as a star". The film also screened at the 2005 London Film Festival, ahead of a February 2006 release.

Natalie's next project, *Red Road*, garnered a tremendous response after its debut at the Cannes Film Festival in March 2006. Co-starring alongside Kate Dickie, Martin Compston and Tony Curran, Natalie plays April, a young woman who has drifted from London to Glasgow in search of her real family after years spent living in foster care. The film is produced by Lars von Trier as the first part of a projected trilogy, and won the Prix du Jury at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival. It was released in the UK in October 2006 after its UK premiere at the London Film Festival. *Red Road* went on to win five Scottish BAFTA awards, including 'Best Film'. Later in 2006, Natalie won the Breakthrough Award at the 2006 Glamour Awards in London.

In September 2006, Natalie started work on the new Peter Greenaway film, *Nightwatching*. The film focuses on Rembrandt's creation of his famous 'Night Watch' and the effects it had on his personal life. Natalie will star alongside Martin Freeman, Eva Birthistle and Jodhi May.

TOBY JONES

British actor based in London. He trained at the Ecole Internationale du theatre in Paris under Jacques Lecoq.

Toby has extensive experience on stage having performed a number of times at The National Theatre. He has most recently performed with the international theatre company Complicite in Simon McBurney's celebrated production of "Measure for Measure" by William Shakespeare (2004) in which "*Jones struts his wonderful comedic stuff...*" (*Spectator, Rachel Halliburton*). He has written several shows including "Wanted Man" ('a domestic epic' set in a garden shed) and "Missing Reel" (the true story of his deletion from both the film and place "Notting Hill"). These shows were developed at the National Theatre Studio where Toby has directed, acted and taught for several years.

In 2001 Toby starred with Hamish McColl and Sean Foley in the comedy hit "The Play What I Wrote" directed by Kenneth Branagh. The show was hugely successful breaking the record for advance sales for a West End play. The show went on to win the Olivier award for Best Comedy and Jones won an Olivier for Best Actor in a Supporting Role. Sheridan Morley described Jones as "*mesmeric, a greater comic than his apparent masters,*" Matt Wolf commented on the play and on Jones' performance in *Variety* writing that "*the confusion is both alleviated and heightened by Toby Jones, who is a prodigious talent.*" The *Spectator* described Toby as "*an almost supernaturally gifted comic: he only has to appear on stage to have the audience in stitches...*" The show ran for a year before transferring to Broadway in 2003 where it was nominated for a Tony. Toby played Arthur in the show which chronicled the shifting relationship between a double act. Every night the show featured a special guest star whom Arthur had to imitate with little success. Over 50 different celebrities eventually performed in the show including: Ralph Fiennes, Sting, Ewan McGregor, Bob Geldof, Kevin Kline, Nathan Lane, John McEnroe, Glenn Close and Holly Hunter. Some easier to imitate than others.....

In 2005 Toby played Truman Capote in Doug McGrath's much awaited forthcoming film about the writer entitled "Infamous". He stars as the lead opposite Sandra Bullock, Sigourney Weaver, Daniel Craig, Isabella Rossellini, Gwyneth Paltrow, Hope Davis and Jeff Daniels. Warner Bros Independent will release the film in the U.S in September this year. Advance screenings of the film have created an incredible buzz within the media. Recently David Thomson from *The Independent on Sunday* talked about it as "*The best new film I've seen this year.....Toby Jones is Capote without the least hint of impersonation. He looks and sounds not only more like the real Truman...he is the man.*" Obvious comparisons are going to be drawn with '*Capote*' the 2005 Oscar winning film but critics have already had their say on this... "*believe me this is a better performance than Philip Seymour Hoffman's...*" (*Independent on Sunday*.)

Toby also stars in "A Painted Veil," a drama set in London in 1922 about a restless married woman Kitty Fane (Naomi Watts) who, after cheating on her conservative scientist husband Walter (Edward Norton) embarks on a journey to the Far East to battle cholera. The journey becomes an odyssey of self-discovery, and of meeting and befriending people along the way. Toby plays her loyal friend and confidant who guides her on this journey. *Empire Magazine* says that Toby's performance is 'terrific' and goes further saying 'Toby Jones is a raffish delight as the deputy commissioner....'

Later in 2005 Toby played Robert Cecil in the HBO/Channel 4 hit production "Elizabeth 1" with Helen Mirren and Jeremy Irons. This received critical acclaim in both the UK and US. Specifically to Toby, Robert Bianco from *USA Today* comments on his portrayal of Cecil at '*particularly fine work...*'

More recently in 2006 Jones has played the Duke of Clarence in Michael Apted's forthcoming film "Amazing Grace" about the slavery reformer William Wilberforce and has recently finished playing William Hogarth in a new channel 4 Drama, "A Harlots Progress" about the painter – his life and work. This is set for transmission on Channel 4 in November 2006.

Jones' other film credits include: "Mrs Henderson Presents"(2004), "Ladies in Lavender"(2003), "Finding Neverland"(2002), "Ever After" and in 2002 Toby voiced the character of Dobby in "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets".

This summer he will play the lead role of Franklin Franklin in Jonas Akerlund's new film "Small Apartments"

PETER GREENAWAY INTERVIEW Q&A

How did you come up with the idea and how long have you been working on the script?

I suppose I would really have to take the back story all the way back to, I suppose, the 1960's when I was at art school in East London. All my lecturers favoured Rembrandt which was a good excuse for me to hate him. So in a sense, I've come as it were, from left a field. But I think the power of his influence obviously can not ever be ignored, so it needs to be examined. I think probably, you could say, although there are many, many, many painters, though they are of course viable and exist on the periphery of most people's knowledge of Western arts since the Renaissance. The **securious** position for Rembrandt; he seems to push all the right buttons – he's democratic, he's a republican, he's humanitarian and he's almost post feminist. He's certainly post Freudian, he paints children with shitty nappies, he paints old people, he paints the girl next door, he doesn't hide anything, and he's interested I think in a certain amount of Italian heroics. But there's a familiarity about him. You don't need a PHD in classical literature to understand him. He makes an immediate appeal, and to have survived 400 years, because 2006 represents his 400th Birthday, with that reputation in tact, I think it's quite a surprising thing to do. I have to come clean and I think the problem with my favourite Dutch painter, isn't Rembrandt but is Vermeer, but in a curious way I have done Vermeer, that sounds very arrogant, but we've made films about Vermeer and we've made an opera about Vermeer so in a way I need perhaps to turn my attention to his far more illustrious almost contemporary and as a filmmaker I think you'd have to put other people in the same bracket but there's a way you can look at Rembrandt's paintings and almost imagine cinema being a product of the 17th century. Its a world created entirely of light, Rembrandt starts by basically a black screen so its going into a dark cinema and he paints the light into it, so again that's obviously what cinema does and the other notion about these very singular flash frozen frames so a lot of his paintings and certainly The Night watch feels in certain sorts of circumstance like a frozen frame, so the definition of the cinema as a world painted by light, conceived of as singular moments of time, and Rembrandt is doing that way back in the 1600's.

How much of the film have you based on historical fact and how much have you created for the purpose of the story?

There's no such thing as history; there's only historians; so whether you're Ridley Scott or Walter Scott you know you are playing games with history and you fashion it and manipulate it the way you want to, I suppose the supreme example of that is

Shakespeare, who got every single king wrong starting with Richard 3rd but he was not writing history, he was writing fiction which is needed to entertain but also of course it was all political propaganda and there's a way I suppose that the very best history is always very good PR. Let me reply to your question that if you challenge me on your facts I will prove that you can't disprove what I say.

Can you outline the plot to Night watching?

Well, if you look at The Night watch painted in 1642, it contains 34 people all rushing about in an apparently organised mêlée, apparently all about to set off for musket practise but right in the foreground there's a adolescent dressed very elaborately in a soldiers uniform. His face is hidden so we can't identify him- but he is firing the musket and it would be like firing a musket at Piccadilly station in the rush hour – an extremely stupid thing to do. There must be something important, there must be some reason and I suppose the origin of my interest is to explain what is happening there. Where is someone firing the musket and what was the intention and where has the bullet gone and if you examine, I think historians have said there are 51 mysteries inside this night watching painting and boldly I will say that my theory solves all the mysteries in one fell swoop. It's a sort of CSI crime scene investigation. Maybe when you go and see the original Night watching painting, in the Rijks museum in Amsterdam, there ought to be a police caution saying don't come too close because you will be tampering with the evidence, there's every reason to believe that Rembrandt was often a satirist, a whole series of paintings where he's poking fun at people, laughing at tradition, so its not as though the Night watch was a total abhoration – he's done this sort of thing before. Our contention is that it's like a finger, an accusatory finger, like J'acusse? it's an accusation against the very rich, the very super rich plutocracy; the 12 ruling families that basically ruled Amsterdam in the 1640's, and at the centre of that conspiracy everybody negotiating to find a better position for themselves I suppose in Dutch society, in the centre of all that there's an act of violence and it explains this gunshot. If you think of Amsterdam in the 1640's, it's a city on the make. Its just come out of a long guerrilla war with the Hapsburgs in Spain and you can almost say if you want to find an analogy, it's a bit like Russia now, you know the foxes have gone into the hen house, all sorts of people are making money very quickly, not too many questions are being asked, a lot of bribery and coercion and pressures going on and its pretty certain that the 12 ruling families of Amsterdam have the city under their thumb it didn't last for too long, because eventually the Jewish prudence took over, the city began to be better policed and I don't think that the activities that Rembrandt is accusing these people of could've happened 30 years later. For about 2 generations 1600-1650 Amsterdam really was and this is often surprising, the centre of the Western world rich, powerful and very influential, enormous amounts of trade with the old world and the whole of the new world is opening up. The Dutch don't talk about it very much but in the centre of Amsterdam there is a famous square called the Dam and every single day you could go and buy a black slave in that centre it was the centre of the slave trade for at least 80 years.

What do you mostly identify with, in Rembrandt and the time he lived?

I think a lot of my cinemas (stories), starting with the Draftsman Contract are very much about the outsider, about the artist as outsider, sometimes rather pathetically trying to become part of the establishment and probably getting all of the vocabulary wrong, making a mess of it, I don't know if anyone ever remembers the Draftsman Contract anymore but the central character was a draftsman trying to ape his elders and his betters but he always got it wrong when everybody was dressed in black he was dressed

in white and then when everybody else was dressed in white he found himself dressed in black – it's the problem with the outsider. I think Rembrandt is an outsider, he's the son of a miller, he comes from Leiden, not from the big city of Amsterdam, trying to find a position for himself, because he was enormously talented and because, as always happens like this, he meets the right people, he gets into a very good position with the chattering classes very early on. He only meets the intellectuals after having painted the Night watch, before that it's all the rich and famous who want their portraits taken and they all rushed to Rembrandt because he obviously managed to put forward a positive and real, I won't say flattering because I don't think he necessarily flattered people but the Dutch, being very practical pragmatic people like to see themselves as they are and I think Rembrandt had the talent to do that so he became very rich very quickly. It's fascinating, it's a sort of phenomenon which is familiar with other sorts of activities and its true of London now as it was in Amsterdam in the 1640's.

Can you describe the relationship between Saskia and Rembrandt and how she was instrumental in the commission of 'The Night watch'?

Yeah, sometimes that can be sort of looked at sort of systematically and that's probably dangerous but the 3 relationships he has with the three major women in his life represents three types of peer bonding. The first one is very much of a dynastic marriage, Saskia's relative who introduced him to Saskia, was a picture dealer and for Rembrandt that was a good thing, he was a good guy to have in the family bringing in the money. There's every reason to suppose it started off as a dynastic marriage but I think and I argue this in the dialogue of the script was it really a passionate love affair or not but they got on very well. She was an extremely good business woman, looked after his atelier, looked after his finances, certainly looked after his household that's not so surprising because there is a degree of sophistication and literacy. The second one I suspect was really and utterly a con relationship really pushing a sexual union, a sexual adventure to the extreme almost as though Rembrandt on the rebound after the death of Saskia was really experimenting in a way he could never sexually experiment ever with Saskia and the third one I think is a classic sentimental relationship between an older man and a younger woman, there's 20 years difference between them, of course it was a sexual adventure for him but she was also looking for protection, there was virtually no economic independence for a female in those days, so there were certain sorts of mutual benefit but the sad thing is that all the people around him, his children, all the women of his life they all died before he did, so he ends up as a lonely old pauper virtually in a very modest apartment in the south end of Amsterdam, a long way from the big rich house he once had in the fashionable quarter in the early days of his career.

How will you visually create the world of night watching?

Well you know how historical films are made, we don't have Hollywood budgets we can't hide all the TV aerials in Amsterdam. It's impossible to do that and also having made so many movies that have a certain sort of relevance to these problems I'm never convinced – either the art department over does it so your aware that suddenly all of these streets are covered in sand 'what's that doing there'. It's obviously the art department messing about. All the guttering gets hidden and immediately my eye goes to the hidden guttering so I'm not ever going to be able to suspend disbelief. So I'm not going to play it that way. We are going to take all our cues from the paintings which are very much about light and dark, shadowy corners, a lot of low light, a lot of darkness, a lot of artificial light and were going to construct our pictures largely in studios a slight theatrical edge to it all, because of Rembrandt's figures in the night watch posed, their

obviously posing, they are people who want to be looked at so we want to try and get that self consciousness into a lot of the acting style as well.

How did you go about casting Rembrandt?

Well there have been a number of films about Rembrandt but he's normally pictured as a benign old man. Think of a film with **Charles Laughton** with **Alexander Korda** and I think **Klausa Maria Brandauer** has done one for a recent version for a French TV film. But in 1642 Rembrandt is only 34 so we need to find a much younger person and we think we have found him in Martin Freeman. There's even a sort of physical likeness.

What are the main themes and issues that the film deals with?

Sex and death, what else is there to talk about? Balzac once said money and I suppose money is lurking in the background but money can always be broken back down into sex and death can't it, if only to avoid one and pay for the other so they are the perennial subject matters. There right in the centre of the frame.

What can we expect from the sound and the music?

I deliberately avoided those difficulties of trying to find contemporary music; contemporary to the time that is, contemporary to 1642. There aren't really any great Dutch composers so I can't play those games very well but for a long time now I've been utilising the music of an Italian composer called **Giovanni Solimar**, I suspect you haven't heard of him but I think he's particularly appropriate for influence in this film.

What would you like the modern audience to take away from watching this film?

Well they obviously have to be entertained but I hope they are entertained on a lot of different levels. I don't want people to regard it as you know the cultural polemic about the conditions of painting in the early 17th century. It needs very much to be a story with empathy and sympathy. Here's a man pursuing a career against considerable odds and I suppose it's a **bit** of both of wisdom and mortality. What are you in the world for?

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