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The Anatomy Lesson of Nicolaes Tulp, painted by Rembrandt in 1632



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The Anatomy Lesson of Nicolaes Tulp by Rembrandt (1632) belongs to a famous series of anatomy lessons commissioned by the Amsterdam Guild of Surgeons in the 17th and 18th centuries. The painting shows Nicolaes Tulp, born as Claes Pieterszn but known by his adapted name Tulp (the tulip was chosen as a family emblem), dissecting the forearm of an executed criminal (Adriaan Adriaenszn). The corpse is surrounded by seven surgeons intensely observing Tulp's demonstration. The masterpiece is exhibited in the Royal Cabinet of Paintings in Museum Mauritshuis in The Hague, The Netherlands.

Read more about the colourful characters and fascinating events surrounding this painting in an [essay online](#).

The art of surgery in BJS

In this issue of BJS, we publish a vignette connecting surgery and art. An essay is available [online](#), free to download.

It is a pleasure to ponder the individualism required to perform surgery in this era of standardization, protocols, and team approach. As doctors we learned about biological systems and their seemingly endless interconnections. To be a surgeon we had to learn to practise a craft that, despite the science and heritage passed down by innumerable generations, had unpredictable results as reliant on the patient as the operator. The intimacy of the dynamic interplay between patient and individual surgeon is as tangible yet indefinable as between artist and the medium in which masterpiece unfolds. Both require dedication, training, and precision in addition to dexterity, vision, and indomitable spirit. A degree of creative optimism, manifest in the attention to detail driven by an insatiable need to do better, is apparent in all who master either art or surgery. BJS seeks to explore the artistic side of surgeons in this new section. We welcome submissions of images or articles connecting art and surgery (from historical perspectives to modern works). For an informal presubmission discussion please contact BJS Managing Editor, Alison Cherrie (alcherri@wiley.com).

D. C. Winter
BJS Editor