

Alfred Bader

Alfred Bader Fine Arts

[Oud Holland]

2010

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2010

Oud Holland

Quarterly for Dutch Art History

Edited by the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD)

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Boekbespreking van Pieter Biesboer e.a, *Painting in Haarlem 1500-1850. The collection of the Frans Hals Museum*, Haarlem: The Frans Hals Museum, 2006;

Jonathan Bikker e.a, *Dutch paintings of the seventeenth century in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Volume 1 – Artists born between 1570 and 1600*, 2 vols., Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2007;

Walter Liedtke, *Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 2 vols., New York: Metropolitan Museum, 2007.

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makes clear the provisional nature of our understanding, despite the increased knowledge we have gained, thanks in large part to the old and new membership of the Rembrandt Research Project. Despite criticism of earlier volumes of the *Corpus* for prose that was prolix and often dry and for the controversial nature of their authors' decisions, the intention of the RRP was always admirable: the various members of the team aimed to set forth as rationally as possible the evidence used in discussions that led to the decisions of where to place each painting, in category A, B, or C. The foregrounding of evidence and reasoning in Rembrandt connoisseurship had been sadly lacking for several generations; the overly pithy comments found in Gerson's catalogue of Rembrandt paintings do not provide information on what he often found "wanting" in a painting attributed to Rembrandt. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century Rembrandt connoisseurs, such as Cornelis Hofstede de Groot and Abraham Bredius, had presented their arguments for the attribution of a painting to Rembrandt (or the opposite) at greater length, especially in periodicals like *Oud Holland*, but they rarely made explicit the criteria that they considered crucial. In a sense they couldn't do so for the criteria tended to shift from painting to painting, even with the most respected connoisseurs. A basic requirement of connoisseurship today should be that such criteria are described in full and then applied as consistently as possible. Vol. IV of the *Corpus* is most successful in doing just that in part because there is now one clear leader in Ernst van de Wetering to provide such a consistent vision of Rembrandt as a painter.²

Van de Wetering and the current members of the RRP are clearly concerned about the issue of subjectivity in the practice of connoisseurship. Van de Wetering recently elaborated upon his case for having developed a more objective form of connoisseurship than that practiced in the past in the article 'Connoisseurship and Rembrandt's paintings: new directions in the Rembrandt Research Project, Part II', *Burlington Magazine* 60 (February 2008), pp. 83-90. He argued that the consideration of a wider array of types of evidence has enabled to new RRP to approach questions of

authorship with a greater degree of objectivity than has been true for traditional connoisseurship. The kinds of evidence used include the presumed function of each painting (which is one reason for the thematic and chronological approach in Vol. IV); the results of dendrochronological analysis; the relationship of individual pieces of canvas to others used by Rembrandt or his workshop at approximately the same time; the presence of quartz particles in the ground of some paintings on canvas; the lay-in and build-up of paintings as revealed through X-radiography and infrared reflectography; and the inclusion of several subtle but unmistakably distinctive anatomical features of Rembrandt's face, such as the hooded right eyelid (seen as the left eye in authentic Rembrandt self-portraits because of his reliance on a mirror image) and the furrowing of the area between his eyebrows. These examples by no means exhaust the list of kinds of evidence now used by the RRP to assist in the process of deciding if a painting was by Rembrandt or not. They go well beyond the typical criteria used for such decisions in the past by 'intuitive' connoisseurs, as Van der Wetering characterizes the approach of Max J. Friedländer and other traditional connoisseurs of Old Master paintings. Yet the analysis in this volume is at its best when the most subtle kind of connoisseurship is depended on, one attuned to the intricacies of Rembrandt's techniques and the artist's ability to constantly develop new solutions. There is nothing to be scoffed at in a practice of connoisseurship honed over decades, tested by the results of scientific examination, and applied with a scholarly integrity that can admit error in previous conclusions and acknowledge an inability to fully plumb yet the significance of new findings.

This book is a milestone not just for Rembrandt painting connoisseurship, with all its attendant headaches of multiple versions of certain compositions and lack of solid documentation for a "core" oeuvre of any extent; it offers a model for others working in the area of Old Master painting connoisseurship. The connoisseurship of the new RRP embodied in Vol. IV of the *Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* is one that validates the importance of this practice and provides rich and stimulating results for other scholars to ponder.

CATHERINE B. SCALLEN

NOTES

¹ The Rembrandt Research Project team for volume four included Karin Groen, Peter Klein, Jaap van der Veen, Marieke de Winkel, Paul Broekhoff, Michiel Franken and Lideke Peese Bronkhorst, working under the leadership of Ernst van de Wetering.

² As in the previous *Corpus* volumes, the category of working conditions lists who among the RRP members have seen the works. Van de Wetering is the only member of the new RRP who has seen the full range of accessible paintings catalogues in Vol. IV.

Pieter Biesboer, Hans Bloemsma, Marius van Dam, Ella Hendriks, Neeltje Köhler, Koos Levy-van Halm, Epco Runia, Anja Seidenkranz, Bert Sliggers, Pieter van Thiel, Irene van Thiel-Stroman, Jan Torringa and Willem van de Watering, *Painting in Haarlem 1500-1850. The collection of the Frans Hals Museum*. Haarlem: The Frans Hals Museum, Ghent: Ludion, 2006. 772 pp., 679 black and white ill. ISBN 90-5544-634-3, € 150.

Jonathan Bikker, Yvette Buijnen, Taco Dibbits, Jan Piet Filedt Kok, Everhard Korthals Altes and Gerdien Wuestman, *Dutch paintings of the seventeenth century in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Volume 1 – Artists born between 1570 and 1600*, 2 vols., Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum and Nieuw Amsterdam; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007, 1060 pp. (2nd volume not paginated), 644 col. ill., 171 black and white ill., ISBN 978-90-8689-027-9.

Walter Liedtke, *Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 2 vols., New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007, hardcover, 1083 pp., 250 col. ill., 255 black and white ill., hardcover, ISBN 978-1-58839-273-2 (Metropolitan Museum of Art), 978-0-300-12028-8 (Yale University Press).

In the age of the internet the scholarly collection catalogue remains a vital vehicle for representing museum collections. More than mere reservoirs of data, they present collections in terms of their cohesiveness, significance and history. Great works of art, though they stand on their own, nonetheless inspire the timeless human urge to assemble and build connections and new meanings. Collection catalogues fulfil the institution's responsibility not only to share information and knowledge with its public, but also to reflect on, defend and promote the cultural entity of which it is steward. In recent years three of the world's most important museums with holdings of historical Dutch paintings have published major collection catalogues. In 2006, the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem presented a single large volume that covers the entire collection of early modern paintings, from 1575 to 1850. The following year the Rijksmuseum published a two-volume set devoted only to painters born in the 30 year span between 1570 and 1600. Not long after, a two-volume set appeared on all of the Dutch paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Each of these publications qualifies as a project of extraordinary dimensions, two of them engaging a team of authors over a multi-year span, and the third reflecting decades of work of one of the foremost curators in the field. They bring varying emphases to bear on aspects such as technical research, archival evidence, secondary literature, artists' biographies, connoisseurship, social context and iconography. The most lavish of the three is certainly the Metropolitan Museum catalogue, with over a thousand pages devoted to 228 paintings. The Rijksmuseum devotes similar space to nearly double the number of

works, and the Frans Hals Museum covers just under thrice the tally in a fewer number of pages, and only with the more significant works engages the high expectations for content that have developed for this type of publication.

As outlined in one of the four introductory essays in the Haarlem catalogue, by Koos Levy-van Halm, a city museum of art emerged in Haarlem relatively late, long after the establishment of the Nationale Konst-Galerij in the Trippenhuys, the forerunner to the Rijksmuseum. It sprang out of the desire to preserve the city's formidable artistic heritage, much of it already assembled in the Prinsenhof. The militia pieces in the Calivermen's headquarters were suffering vandalism in their now-abandoned location, lending urgency to the cause. Spurred by the political provocations of Victor de Stuers, and the local initiative undertaken by archivist Adrianus Johannes Enschedé, Haarlem's city government outfitted quarters for a gallery attached to the city hall that opened in 1862. An irregular history of oversight ensued, with a committee but not always a director, who was furthermore often expected to undertake the restoration of paintings personally. In 1913 the institution adopted the striking building and ringing name that it has today, and was already set on the course of professional direction and expansion that has continued to the present, with staff, and with a collection over four times as large as the original one.

In a separate essay the same author, joined by Neeltje Köhler and Epco Runia, surveys the history of Haarlem institutional patronage of artists: the Holy Spirit Almshouse, the St Elizabeth Hospital, and of course the Old Men's Home, besides others. Expanding on the brief introduction of the Prinsenhof and the militias in the previous essay, this broader social history addresses the remarkable production of militia pieces in the city during the seventeenth century, arguably its most prominent legacy.

Preceding these, the catalogue opens with an essay outlining a "Haarlem school of painting". The author, Pieter van Thiel, is retired curator from the Rijksmuseum and specialist on Haarlem Mannerism, and specifically the work of Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem. He begins with Albert Ouwater as a founding figure of the Haarlem school (unfortunately not represented in the collection), mentioning in passing Dirk Bouts who left Haarlem for Flanders in the same period. For the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Van Thiel proceeds according to subject matter, moving from history painting to still life. This authoritative and balanced history closes with an overview of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, highlighted by the versatile talent of Wybrand Hendricks, who also served as keeper at the Teylers museum.

The author's explanation of the mannerist aesthetic could have benefitted from greater nuance. The assertion of extensive symbolism of details in history paintings obscures their important function in providing plausible description of setting, in keeping with rising antiquarian interest. The same applies to the distinction of history painters as working from the imagination, certainly a common theoretical trope, but not a historical absolute; we now appreciate the

role of fantasy and invention also in Dutch landscape and even still life. Van Thiel rightly ponders the remarkable rise of low-life genre in Haarlem, and the precise role of the itinerant luminary Adriaen Brouwer, a topic that still calls for research and a monographic exhibition.

The abovementioned problems may have arisen in part from the translation. When artists such as Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem are described as rendering the human body perfectly, a rather indefensible statement, it appears that the author likely intended the much more palatable notion of depicting the ideal human body, which is what theory typically prescribed. Indeed, problematic translations surface regularly throughout the publication. "Oriented on" is given where "oriented to" is meant, "idol" instead of "lodestar", and in several locations the thoroughly antiquated verb "limn" is given for "paint", inappropriately plucked from the thesaurus for such an internationally oriented publication, many of whose readers will be non-native speakers. Elsewhere, we read "contrary to this painting" instead of "in contrast to this painting", and covering layers are "juxtaposed" to ground layers, instead of superimposed on them. The obscure term "obviate" is incorrectly used to express "render unnecessary".

The topic of Van Thiel's opening essay indicates the dual character of this publication. It presents, alongside a complete catalogue of the collection, an overview of the achievements of painters in and from Haarlem, along the lines of exhibitions devoted to painting in Utrecht, Dordrecht in 1992 and in The Hague in 1999. Van Thiel's and Levy-van Halm's essays are joined by a groundbreaking overview of findings of technical research, both also devoted primarily to Haarlem artists. This focus is even more significant in the following section, which presents biographies of artists in the collection, but only those active in Haarlem. Thus the reader who is expecting a straightforward collection catalogue is directed back to the title, whose first part duly emphasizes those works specifically linked to the city.

Those recent exhibitions on distinct civic contexts for art production yielded rich insights on the many links between artists and works of one locale, in contrast with the more nationally oriented approach inherited from the nineteenth century. Here too we discover technical aspects that have a local character, as indicated in the analyses by Ella Hendricks in the final essay. The lingering predilection in Haarlem for panel supports is already familiar to specialists, but not necessarily so the fact that quality of the wood often proves to have been less than optimal, and below prescribed standards, in a number of cases, including ones for works by Hals and Saenredam. While analysis of canvas typically concedes the spotlight to dendrochronological dating of wood panels, Hendricks delivers a notable revelation about cloth supports in Haarlem: in this city artists pioneered the use of single strips ahead of their counterparts in Amsterdam and The Hague, being earlier in their adoption (around 1650) of the wide three-ell (210 cm) strip. Other notable observations relate to individual practice, for instance the link between Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen and Jan van Scorel that is revealed in the grounds they used. Quartz-containing grounds

emerge in the paintings of Jan de Bray, and Frans Hals favoured thick light grounds, which serves as a critical piece of evidence against the attribution of the famous *Portrait of Jacobus Zaffius* to this master, as it features a flesh-coloured oil ground. Even more significantly, Hendricks finds multiple indications that Hals indeed worked in a quick and direct way. Occasionally, Hendricks dwells on quirky topics, such as irregular top edge of a militia piece that was fit between ceiling beams, and a wooden guild panel, both of which demonstrate colourful exceptions rather than more widely applicable observations of patterns of technique.

After the four introductory essays comes the section of artists' biographies, gathering together material that is typically linked with the respective entries on paintings. Here, however, the authors treat only the artists of the abovementioned Haarlem school. There are 92 biographies of artists active in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by Irene van Thiel-Stroman, and 24 of artists from the nineteenth century, by Bert Sliggers. The earlier artists take priority, receiving much more space than their later counterparts. This section showcases an intensive campaign of archival research by Van Thiel-Stroman, which has yielded numerous discoveries. Cornelis Bega's background in the Begheyn family reveals links to Willem Claesz. Heda and Pieter de Grebber, as well as his natural grandfather Cornelis van Haarlem. Likewise, documents now indicate the marriage and burial of the parents of the Berckheydes (even while the poor translation obscures Houbraken's account of them gaining practice in depicting figures by offering to paint portraits inexpensively). For Hendrick Heerschop the biography supplies a birth and death date, and there is new material for Cornelis Holsteyn, Judith Leyster, Pieter Molijn, Jan Mostaert, Adriaen van Ostade and Thomas Wijck. Unfortunately, major figures as Adriaen Brouwer and Hercules Seghers associated with Haarlem are passed over, along with other Haarlem artists who are likewise not represented by works in the catalogue. More significantly, there are no biographies at all for the many non-Haarlem artists, leaving the reader to consult other sources for this important information. It also bears mentioning that the emphasis here is on family background and milieu, with little or no comment on artistic achievement or development.

The catalogue of the complete collection covers over six hundred paintings, over half of which originate in the seventeenth century, and about a sixth in the eighteenth century. The entries on individual works carry through with the priority on the "Haarlem School" by devoting substantial space and research to those works made by Haarlem artists, as well as those portraying its citizens. The museum's unparalleled forté is its wonderful collection of militia portraits by Frans Hals and others, which the authors regard as a local tradition. This overview makes clear the shift that took place in 1619, when the officers of the militias began to be portrayed exclusively (with only one later exception). A related strong point is the regent portrait, led by several celebrated examples by Hals. The entry on the 1641 portrait of the regents of the St Elizabeth's Hospital intelligently poses the question of why Hals only portrayed the males, but virtually supplies its own answer by observing the "stoutness" of Hals' figures, surely desired for its capacity to conjure masculine vigour while

leaving the refined restraint of Verspronck to present the regentesses of the same institution. At the same time, the literature lists appear to be on the spare side, and one searches in vain for Thoré-Bürger's famous pronouncements on Hals, or a reference to John Berger's controversial revisitation of the interpretation of the "drunk" sitter in the 1664 portrait of the Hospital's Regents.

Several entries also draw attention to a lesser-known Haarlem specialty, the weaver's workshop, whose principal champions were Dirck Bleker and Pieter van Roestraten. The museum's splendid holding of paintings by Maerten van Heemskerck is duly celebrated in a series of substantial entries. A welcome bonus is the "catalogue within a catalogue" of works in the Town Hall, civic commissions for decorative works by artists such as Adriaen Backer, Theodorus (Dirck) Ferreris and Pieter de Grebber, that are not part of the museum's collection, although intertwined with its history nonetheless. We could not otherwise hope for such definitive published documentation of these works in the foreseeable future.

This monumental publication does betray haste in its preparation, especially when measured against the considerable scholarly depth of the writers, and the findings of their research. One regularly encounters references to more research that needs to be done on a given work. Fortunately there are only a few errors in illustrations: a repeated illustration of Vermeyen's *Holy Family* appears in the place of the work by Claes Gorisz, and the numbered overlay of Jan de Bray's regent portrait switches the designations for Pieter de Ridder and Cornelis van Zoon. Most serious is however the problematic translation, which does not seem to have proceeded beyond the draft stage, and here and there obscures or confuses the writers' intent.

With over six hundred paintings to present, the editorial decision to emphasize "The Haarlem School" emphasis is a credible method of applying contemporary standards of thorough analysis in this publication, only to part of the collection. Very few notable works are thus short-changed, with only Michiel van Mierevelt receiving less attention than his stature dictates. One third of the entries contain no text at all, usually on account of the works' modest significance. Many others, especially portraits, contain only a few lines, typically only supplying the sitter's identification.

A more consistently exhaustive approach characterizes the presentation of the collection in the first of the new series of Rijksmuseum catalogues devoted to their seventeenth century paintings. It supersedes the 1976 catalogue "All the Paintings in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam" (together with its supplement volume of 1992) which listed the entire paintings collection, a milestone unto itself, but one that could only supply basic information in addition to small illustrations. The present volume (which is divided into two "sub-volumes", sure to distress some bibliographers) is the first of a series of partial catalogues of the seventeenth-century paintings. It covers the paintings by artists born before 1600, and anonymous works that fall within the corresponding period of productivity, to be followed by one on artists born before 1625, and further catalogues whose content range remains to be finalized. The second sub-volume contains only large-scale colour illustrations of the paintings, the first

the entry text and illustrations: 476 pages devoted to 450 works. The structure of the project includes an advisory committee (seasoned scholars Rudi Ekkart, Peter Hecht and Volker Manuth joining author Jan Piet Filedt-Kok) who have also shaped the research and texts and contributed to content.

In contrast with its Haarlem counterpart, the catalogue entries are prefaced by only a single essay by the team's senior author, Filedt Kok. It covers three areas: the growth of the collection, its publication in catalogues, and the roles played by successive directors in both, chiefly by moving step-wise chronologically in each area. Tracing the collection's origins in around two hundred works from the house of Orange and the City of Amsterdam, and the museum's roots in the Nationale Konst-Gallery in the Huis ten Bosch in The Hague founded during the French Revolution-oriented Batavian Republic in 1800, the essay could draw on considerable research by various scholars, in particular Elinoor Bergvelt. Many decades separated the initial surge in acquisitions, and the astonishing wave of very large and important bequests that started with L. Dupper Wz in 1870. Two main figures are mentioned: the French critic Thoré-Bürger and the banker and culture Czar Victor de Stuers, whose now-famous 1873 article "Holland op zijn smalst" (Holland at its most narrow-minded) did much to spark the foundation of the Haarlem civic museum as well. It could be added that Thoré-Bürger was but one of an army of French critics (Baudelaire, Fromentin, the brothers Goncourt) who embraced the Dutch tradition as a "people's art" that served as inspiration for Realists, members of the *Société des Aquafortistes*, and the Impressionists.

Subsequent collection policy generally stipulated a representative collection with examples of work by every known artist. This was interrupted by Frederik Schmidt-Degener who emphasized selection aimed at an optimal aesthetic experience, in acquisitions and in display. More recent acquisitions have however again been attuned towards gaps in the collection.

This collection has been catalogued many times, yielding a history of development of approach to the task. Already in its earliest phase in the Huis ten Bosch it was published in a catalogue in 1809 by the first director, Cornelis Apostool. Subsequent catalogues saw increasing professionalization and emphasis on thoroughgoing research, in which a major stride was made by Abraham Bredius in 1887. The scope would also vary between selective and comprehensive. Complete coverage was possible in the most recent catalogue of 1976 (and its supplement of 1992) only with the minimum required data and postage-stamp-sized illustrations. Filedt-Kok's run through the collection's cataloguing history ends up delivering an *apologia* for the format selected here, naming the 1960 catalogue of Dutch Paintings in the National Gallery in London as a model for conciseness, and referring to the tradition of citing sale prices.

Fortunately the editor did not sacrifice content in the process. The entries assemble a comprehensive range of material, including notably the results of a recent campaign of technical examination of each work, a thorough list of literature, iconographic sources, and biographical details of all known portrait sitters. All authors contributed in a substantial way, but the lion's share fell to research

curator Jonathan Bikker: nearly half of the entries (mainly the Caravaggisti, Rembrandt-school and "Pre-Rembrandtists", and many of the portraits, including Frans Hals and most militia pieces), as well as the task of editing. A further hundred seventy entries across various categories were divided between Yvette Bruijnen and Gerdien Wuestmann, with another forty going to Everhard Korthals Altes. Filedt-Kok focuses on still life and peasant genre in around twenty entries, and Taco Dibbits on Poelenburgh and the Bamboccianti in around a dozen. The core contribution is the updating and critical review of scholarly opinion, especially of the better-known works. Fresh viewpoints and new insights and revisions of traditional viewpoints surface regularly (or in the case of portraits previously thought to be by Anthonie Palamedesz. of the De Witte family of Zierikzee, are pushed to the following volume as a result of reattribution and new identifications). In the entry on Nicolaes Pickenoy's militia portrait of the officers of the 4th district (not. 236), Bikker makes numerous corrections in analysis, identifications, and the location of the background setting. The hard-charging spirit of the project is seen in challenges to existing attribution, to Pickenoy for instance for

nos. 237 and 238. Jacob Gerritsz. Cuy's portrait of a young woman as a shepherdess is convincingly reinterpreted as referring to fertility and the metaphor of "good soil". Archival research led Bikker to trace the likely path of Hals' portrait of Isaac Massa and Beatrix van der Laenen to the Six family through Pieter Six, neighbour of Beatrix's family in Lisse. For Ter Brugghen, Bikker proposes an earlier dating for the *Incredulity of St Thomas* (no. 37), and reverses the order of the pair of *Heraclitus and Democritus*. Hals' Equestrian Portrait of Pieter Schout receives a completely new interpretation, with reference to the cavalcade of Prince Willem III in 1660. The name of *The Leeuwarden Series* is now given to what was known as *The Honselaersdijk Series* of portraits, and its growth is traced from origins as a group of portraits of commanders involved in the struggle against Spain, later expanded with portraits of subsequent commanders in the States Army. On Van Goyen's technique, Wuestmann steadfastly discounts Melanie Gifford's assertion that he intended the wood grain to show through as part of his finished image (nos. 93, 95), an effect we can only ascribe with any certainty to changes in the paint layer over time, especially the very common decrease in opacity. Indeed

¹ Here attributed to Roelof van Zijl.
Jesus Among the Doctors, around 1630, oil on canvas, 165 x 208.5 cm. Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, acc. no. 14-033.



an attitude of caution in the face of scholarly speculation generally prevails, also seen in the questioning of the legends surrounding Johannes Torrentius, concerning his Rosicrucianism, and even his own assertion of unorthodox painting technique, as brought into question in recent analyses by Arie Wallert. Only occasionally is it clear that some further progress lies close to hand: in the entry on Roelof van Zijl the link to Jan Pynas is noted in the sources, and it turns out that the Rijksmuseum's painting of *Elisha and the Bears* is closely related to an unpublished depiction of the same theme by the elder Pynas, which does much to shore up the still-limited evidence for the attribution (which consists only of a poorly-illustrated signed and dated painting, untraced since the 1920s). The dependence on Van Baburen is correctly emphasized, counter to previous opinion, and it resurfaces more clearly in a depiction of *Jesus Debating with the Elders* by the same hand, now in Kingston, itself directly derived from the Van Baburen in Oslo (fig. 1).¹

Like the Frans Hals Museum, the Rijksmuseum is presenting the results of a major campaign of technical analysis in this catalogue. This material is largely sequestered in a block in the header to each entry. All works receive updated condition comments. For the large portion of the panel paintings this section includes the results of the dendrochronological analysis carried out by Pieter Klein. As with recent catalogues published in Frankfurt and Stockholm, Klein's language rings familiar in the verbatim account, and unfortunately in some cases the conflict with the date in the entry goes unmentioned (no. 268, for instance). Some panels were passed over for this treatment, mostly those that are clearly dated. A chart at the back of the catalogue recapitulates the dates of the panels and the paintings on them, and allows for insights into the practice of panel use, in particular the wide range of time between felling and use (in the cases of dated paintings). Significantly, some of the canvas supports are also described, although the results do not undergo further analysis as they do in the Haarlem catalogue. In a number of cases, most notably Gerard Donck's significantly altered family portrait, x-rays are published, whereas invasive methods such as pigment samples and analysis do not play a similar role here for obvious reasons.

Turning to the 2007 catalogue of the Dutch paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, it is notable that there is not the same emphasis on technical observations and research. Overall, the conception of this publication is less scientific (in the English sense of science versus art, and not in the Continental sense of science as "scholarship") and more literary in tone than its Haarlem and Amsterdam counterparts. The author, Walter Liedtke, has incorporated the findings of technical research into the running text of his entries, and only condition is commented separately and systematically, in concise paragraphs in the tombstones heading each entry. Ten years previously, the exhibition *Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt* cast Liedtke opposite the museum's conservator Hubertus von Sonnenburg, who clearly foregrounded technical observations as a method to reaching conclusions about authorship. Thus Liedtke's more integrated approach, calling on technical evidence where needed, should come as no surprise, all the more so because

this publication represents specifically his life's work, and contrasts with the Haarlem and Amsterdam catalogues in carrying the voice of the single author. It encapsulates the findings of a series of large exhibitions curated by him, in whole or part, that cover major areas of the history of Dutch art at a swath (Rembrandt and followers, and Vermeer and the Delft School).

Indeed, the entry texts are longer than in the other two catalogues reviewed here, also delivering commentary on the shaping of the collection. This topic is not given a preceding essay like those penned by Filedt Kok and Levy-Van Halm, but is addressed in the brief author's preface, which serves primarily to explain and defend the format and approach of the catalogue. The end result is to foreground the works of art more individually, with thorough discussion of acquisitions, scholarly problems and debates, to which the author adds comments and conclusions. To a certain extent the author is also foregrounded, in skilfully crafted writing that adopts colourful turns of phrase, *bon mots*, thoughtful interpretations, humour, and extending to occasional audacity, making this a singularly readable text, even if one does not agree with every word. Pearls for a portrait are "raided from Maes's wardrobe," and a Japanese gown is made of "something like molasses"; Rembrandt's son Titus becomes a "master of disguise" as scholars spot him a little too often in the master's late paintings. The versatile voice of Henry James, and a local tradition of outspoken cultural criticism, loom in the background, but Liedtke's effort is also a pedagogical nod to a thriving contemporary lay audience in New York, for whom the significance of a Dutch painting is not always self-evident, and for whom many explanations of terms, details and research methods are welcome nuggets of self-betterment.

It was not a Thoré-Bürger, or a Victor de Stuers who sparked the acquisitive frenzy that resulted in this collection of Dutch paintings, the most substantial in North America, and one of the greatest in the world. The "1871 Purchase" by the newly-established museum's first Vice-president William T. Blodgett consisted largely of Netherlandish paintings, and Liedtke adduces the column that Henry James published on this event to outline a democratic Yankee preference for the everyday, and suspicion of pomp or refinement, both attitudes that favoured Dutch art of the seventeenth century, echoing in their own way the anti-Academic fervour of the French artists of Impressionism and the Etching Revival. This group set the tone for many subsequent donations from the benefactors of America's Gilded Age. Their penchant for portraits, Liedtke speculates, lay in the embodiment of politeness or in wishful genealogies; to this could be added a third ground: homage to self-made wealth. Liedtke's brief review of the major donations that shaped this astonishing collection, rich in works by Hals, Rembrandt and Vermeer, also points out the lacunae that formed, for example Mannerism and Caravaggist genre scenes, as further indications of Yankee taste.

The preface expends some effort justifying the one truly novel feature of the entries: the descriptive literature lists. The main reason given for them is to spare the reader the trouble of searching all the titles for possible new contributions to the discussion (indeed one of the main hazards of the comprehensive literature list), more often absent than not, but the rigorous scholar will feel compelled to do so

anyway. The brief comments accompanying each literature citation nonetheless add up to a lavish contribution to each entry, and these sections occasionally outstrip the text itself in length. Similarly extensive are the biographies, which go much beyond the conciseness practised by the Amsterdam team, and approach the Haarlem artists' biographies by Van Thiel-Stroman in length. However, it should be noted that the collecting of big names by the museum's donors resulted in many works by a smaller group of more famous artists, and relatively few little-known artists, leaving room and reason for fuller accounts. Less robust is the citation of copies, which are not given separate lists in the catalogue, something often quite useful. In a similar vein, comparative works are often not cited at great length, leaving the reader to confirm which one is meant and where it has been published. The texts are generally generous in length; the author's examination of Gerrit Dou's *Self Portrait* is cheekily over-the-top, featuring an illustrated mini-catalogue of eight of his other known Self-Portraits, delivering a quiet reminder that a catalogue raisonné on this important artist is still lacking.

The history of research carried out within the Metropolitan Museum of Art, often as part of exhibition projects, also results in substantial texts that regularly grapple with scholarly opinion. Liedtke defends several attributions to Hals against Klaus Grimm's expulsions of six New York paintings from the oeuvre, including the *Smoker* and the *Boy with a Lute*, scathingly pointing out that Grimm often had not seen the originals. As the entry to the Dou indicates, Rembrandt and his associates and followers have become one of the author's specialties. He does not hesitate to turn around and question the generosity of Ernst van de Wetering in assigning a role to Rembrandt in several of the weaker works in his style, including the *Jesus and the Samaritan Woman*, and he challenges the defence of the *Christ with a Staff* (no. 174) by Van de Wetering and Christopher Brown. Liedtke's dismissal of De Gelder's role in the execution of the *Jesus* does merit comment here: he supports it only by pointing out that the artist was a teenager at the time, but the age of 16 was not at all unusual for finishing training. De Gelder likely went to Rembrandt before the departure for England in 1662 of his first teacher Samuel van Hoogstraten, who himself had entered Rembrandt's workshop at the beginning of his teenage years. In an entry on Govert Flinck the author mulls over recent speculation that he stayed in Leeuwarden until 1635, which it should be noted is based on an absence of evidence, but the testimony of his close bond with Jacob Adriaensz. Backer still suggests he would have followed him to Amsterdam in 1633, even if he would have started his study under Rembrandt only in 1635. The thriving circle of artists around Backer that formed a parallel universe to that of Rembrandt in Amsterdam is receiving increasing attention of late, and the recent catalogue of Backer's paintings published by Peter van den Brink does not give the nod to the female portrait tentatively assigned to him here in the lead entry, which indeed lacks the bravado and smoothness that mark Backer's brush handling even in his early days.

Liedtke takes up works in the public domain and eye, often commented upon, and does so with notable vigour of inquisitiveness and criticality. In this context it is notable that he mocks Howard

Hibbard for parroting previous remarks on the Dou *Self-Portrait*. There are numerous insights and developments, including the interpretation of the medal in the early still life by Jacques de Gheyn, culled from maritime military history and linked to Juvenal (although a contemporary translation is not cited). The adducing of Albrecht Dürer to elucidate the girl's expression in Jan Steen's *Doctor's Visit* is another highlight. The author also tactfully spars with the Slade School painter-educator Lawrence Gowing and his bombastic use of the word "primitive" for all but the early work of Vermeer. It is illuminating to compare entries on two works by Paulus Bor that formed a pair, the *Disillusioned Medea* (in New York) and *Cydippe with Acontius's Apple* (in Amsterdam), in the respective entries by Liedtke and Bikker. Each author rightly address both works in order to clarify the one in their collection, addressing the iconographic analysis by Helene Mazur-Contamine. Where Liedtke expands on the figure of Medea and the story, Bikker more tersely and systematically responds to the various points raised by Mazur-Contamine about the identification of the main figures and the statue, doubts by Van Gelder and Blankert about the attribution, and Giltaij's objection to the pairing of the two paintings. The Amsterdam team evidently anticipates a primarily scholarly readership, whereas Liedtke speaks to a wider range including graduate students (witness elsewhere a digression on the history of measurements), the interested lay person, in addition to art historians.

Illustrations form an important component of the Amsterdam and New York catalogues, consistently with their generous space allowances. Both feature full page colour illustrations of all the works, but the Rijksmuseum catalogue goes a step further by rotating horizontal images to fill the page. These appear in a separate volume, a choice that does in turn saddle the reader with two large tomes at a time. Unsurprisingly, given the larger number of entries, illustrations in the Haarlem catalogue range from an eighth to half of the page, according to priority indicated roughly by entry length. Disappointingly, not a single work is illustrated in colour, perhaps the clearest indicator of the constraints facing this production.

The scholarly study of Dutch Art marks an important milestone with the publication of these three catalogues. They represent important resources which supply scholars with the entire known provenances, a great deal of condition information, serious bibliographies, and informed and judicious discussions of the works' salient aspects and the scholarship to date. The major caution goes to the user of the Haarlem catalogue, which offers much less material on works deemed lower priority, primarily those not representing Haarlem's flowering in the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century. This imbalance proceeds from the dual identity of this publication: it functions at the same time to represent "The Haarlem School", a goal pursued with a set of extensive biographies of Haarlem artists, and essays on its history, its civic patronage, and technical aspects of Haarlem practice. A more even-handedly exhaustive approach to all the works catalogued characterizes the Amsterdam catalogue, and with a wide range of talent supported by an actively contributing committee, it yields the expected new insights on attributions,

subject matter, patronage and function, alongside critical review of scholarly opinion, making it a vital text that will serve for decades, and invite debate and response. The same applies to Walter Liedtke's cataloguing of the Dutch paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, whose centrepiece is an extensive discussion of the interpretation of Rembrandt's *Aristotle with the Bust of Homer*. Independent archival research even surfaces, in particular in the two Dutch publications. The review of the extensive literature is most confidence-inspiring in the Amsterdam and New York catalogues. And lastly, it bears mentioning that the authors here generally exercise a laudable caution with respect to attributions, laying aside the traditionally defensive optimism of museums concerning their own works.

These three publications are not precisely comparable; the generous conditions enjoyed by Walter Liedtke for his text were out of reach for the cataloguers of the massive collection in Amsterdam, who present twice as many works in the same space, and still have far to go. The Haarlem volume is more parsimonious again, resorting to prioritization not evident in the other two catalogues. The Haarlem editors do give significant space to technical aspects in the entries and in an essay (with notable observations on canvases), an area of research that is also represented strongly in the Amsterdam volumes, but remains more in the background in the New York catalogue. The Frans Hals Museum has likely seized on a trend for collection catalogues, at least where the focus is more on specialist readers.

DAVID DE WITT

NOTES

¹ Jan Symonsz. Pynas, *Elisha and the Bears*, oil on canvas, Milwaukee, with Alfred Bader Fine Arts, in 2006; on the *Jesus among the Doctors*, see: David de Witt, *The Bader Collection: Dutch and Flemish Paintings*, Kingston, 2008, p.17, no. 2 (as Follower of Dirck van Baburen).

OVER DE AUTEURS / ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Susan Anderson (1972) behaalde in 2007 haar Ph.D. aan The Institute of Fine Arts van de New York University met haar proefschrift *Witty and Lascivious Amusements: The Drawings of Cornelis Dusart and the Dawn of the Eighteenth Century*. Als specialist op het gebied van Nederlandse tekeningen is zij momenteel als onderzoeksmedewerkster werkzaam in het Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, waar zij zal bijdragen aan de binnenkort te verschijnen catalogus met hoogtepunten van Nederlandse en Vlaamse tekeningen uit de collectie. Onlangs nog werkte zij mee aan de tentoonstelling *The Language of the Nude: Four Centuries of Drawing the Human Body* (2008). De laatste jaren heeft zij regelmatig lezingen gegeven over de tekeningen van Cornelis Dusart.

Ben Broos (1944) studeerde kunstgeschiedenis in Utrecht en promoveerde op 'Rembrandtstudies' in 1977. Hij was (hoofd) conservator van het Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen 'Mauritshuis' van 1986 tot 2001. Hij schreef tal van artikelen over zeventiende-eeuwse schilder- en tekenkunst, kunstenaars en kunstverzamelaars en teksten voor tentoonstellingscatalogi (Bakhuizen, Bloemaert, Feitama, Hals, Potter, Rembrandt en zijn leerlingen, Vermeer, Waterloo, Weyerman). Voor het Amsterdams Historisch Museum schreef hij *Rembrandt en tekenaars uit zijn omgeving* (1981) en *Nederlandse tekenaars geboren tussen 1600 en 1660* (1993, met Marijn Schapelhouman); voor het Mauritshuis schreef hij onder andere *De Rembrandt a Vermeer* (1986), *Meesterwerken in het Mauritshuis* (1987), *Paintings from England* (1988, met Beatrijs Brenninkmeyer), *Hollandse Meesters uit Amerika* (1990), *Liefde, list en lijden* (1993), *Johannes Vermeer* (1995, met Arthur Wheelock), *Portraits in the Mauritshuis* (2004, met Ariane van Suchtelen) en bijdragen in *Mauritshuis in focus*. Voor het Rembrandthuis schreef hij *Rembrandt en zijn voorbeelden* (1986) en *Rembrandts schatkamer* (1999, met Roelof van Gelder en Jaap van der Veen). In de *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis* verschenen sinds 2000 diverse artikelen over Saskia Uylenburgh en haar familie. In het Rembrandtjaar 2006 verscheen *Het Rembrandt Boek*. In voorbereiding is *Saskia, de vrouw van Rembrandt* (boek en tentoonstelling).

Rudi E.O. Ekkart (1947) studeerde kunstgeschiedenis in Leiden en was daarna verbonden aan het Academisch Historisch Museum in Leiden, Rijksmuseum Meermano in Den Haag en het Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, waar hij sinds 1990 directeur is. Sinds 2004 is hij tevens bijzonder hoogleraar kunstgeschiedenis aan de Universiteit Utrecht. Daarnaast bekleedt hij diverse functies in de kunsthistorische en museale wereld en is hij redacteur van *Oud Holland*. Hij publiceerde sinds 1970 talloze boeken, catalogi en artikelen, onder andere over de Noord- en Zuid-Nederlandse portretkunst en portreticonografie.

Marijke C. de Kinkelder (1948) is sinds 1971 werkzaam bij het Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie. Na haar opleiding aan de Koninklijke Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten in Den Haag kwam zij te werken op de afdeling Oude Nederlandse Schilderkunst

van het RKD alwaar zij zich heeft gespecialiseerd op het gebied van de zeventiende-eeuwse landschapschilderkunst. Op haar naam staan artikelen in *Oud Holland* en bijdragen aan diverse museumpublicaties, kunsthandelcatalogi, Saur's *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon* en natuurlijk de databases van het RKD.

Anna Koopstra (1980) studeerde kunstgeschiedenis aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. In 2004 studeerde zij *cum laude* af met een scriptie over materieel-technisch onderzoek naar de werken van Jan van Eyck. Van 2005 tot 2008 was zij als assistent-conservator werkzaam in het Suermondt-Ludwig Museum in Aken. Daar maakte zij onder andere de tentoonstelling *Seitenwechsel*, over de achterkanten van schilderijen uit de eigen collectie (2006) en was zij als auteur verantwoordelijk voor de entries van de Hollandse en Vlaamse schilderijen in de bestandscatalogus over naorlogse verliezen (*Schattengalerie. Die verlorenen Werke der Gemäldesammlung*, München 2008). Van 2008 tot 2010 was Koopstra als Sifka Foundation interdisciplinary Fellow verbonden aan The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, waar zij meewerkte aan een grote overzichtstentoonstelling van de schilder Jan Gossart, die vanaf het najaar van 2010 in New York en Londen te zien zal zijn.

Fred G. Meijer (1955) is sinds het doorlopen van de Reinwardt Academie voor Museologie te Leiden werkzaam op de afdeling Oude Nederlandse Schilderkunst van het RKD. Hij heeft zich daar gespecialiseerd op het gebied van de Nederlandse schilderkunst van de zeventiende eeuw, met nadruk op het stilleven. Hij publiceerde artikelen en boekbesprekingen en leverde bijdragen voor lexica, tentoonstellings- en collectiecatalogi. Hij schreef catalogi van de collecties van Nederlandse zeventiende-eeuwse stilleven in het Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (1989) en het Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Ward Bequest, 2003) en was A. van der Willigens medeauteur van *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-Life Painters Working in Oils 1525-1725* (2003). Momenteel bereidt hij monografieën en oeuvrecatalogi voor betreffende Jan Davidsz. de Heem en David de Coninck.

Catherine B. Scallen is Associate professor kunstgeschiedenis aan de Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, waar ze sinds 1995 lesgeeft. Haar onderzoek is gewijd aan de kunst en de historiografie van Rembrandt van Rijn, wat onder meer resulteerde in haar boek *Rembrandt, Reputation, and the Practice of Connoisseurship*, Amsterdam, 2004.

David de Witt (1967) werkt sinds 2001 als Bader Curator of European Art bij de Agnes Etherington Art Centre aan Queen's University at Kingston in Canada. Hij promoveerde aan dezelfde universiteit (2000) op een monografie over het leven en werk van de Amsterdamse schilder Jan van Noordt, waarvan in 2007 een handelseditie verscheen bij McGill-Queen's University Press. De Witt publiceerde artikelen over Jan Lievens en Rembrandt, en in 2008 de bestandscatalogus van de Nederlandse schilderijen in de Bader Collectie, die bestaat uit een aantal schenkingen en een legaat aan Queen's University.

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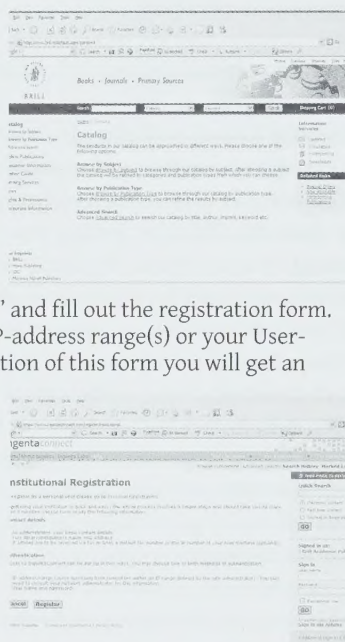
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