Alfred Bader

Alfred Bader Fine Arts

[Low-Life in the Lowlands: 17th Century
Dutch and Flemish Genre Painting - the
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee]

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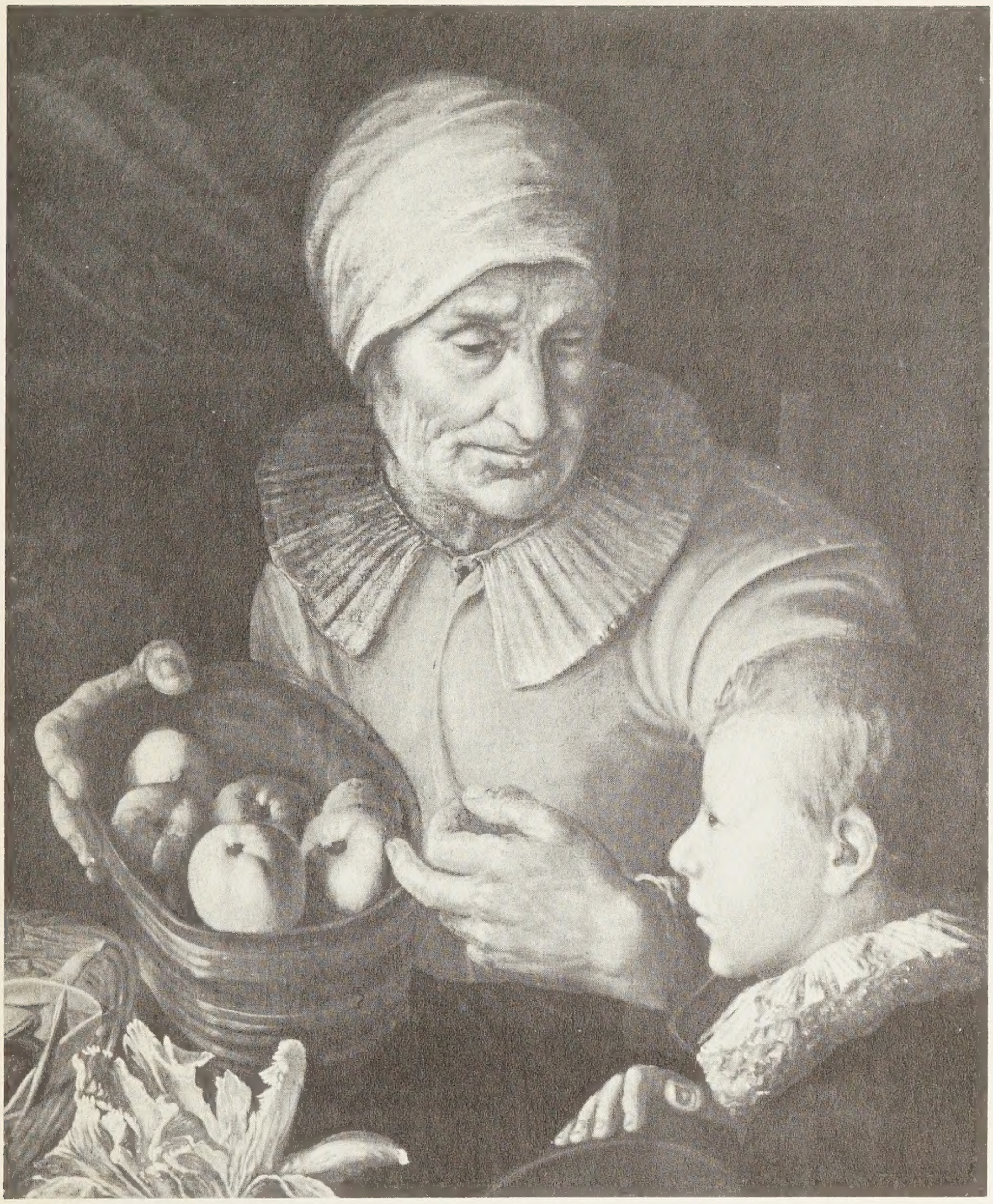

LOW-LIFE IN THE LOWLANDS

17TH CENTURY DUTCH AND FLEMISH GENRE PAINTING

This deals
with some of
Alfred's paintings

Cover: Hendrik Bloemaert, *Grocery Seller with Boy,* 1623 (cat. 3)

Photography: Andrei P. Lovinescu

LOW-LIFE IN THE LOWLANDS

17TH CENTURY DUTCH AND FLEMISH GENRE PAINTING

Organized by

Mark Chepp, Verna Curtis, Marilyn Giaimo

February 29 - March 22, 1974

Paintings from the Collections of

Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Flagg Marquette University
Milwaukee Art Center Milwaukee Public Museum A Private Collection

ART HISTORY GALLERIES

Department of Art History
College of Letters and Science
The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

PRÈFACE

"Who has hung these flies?" bellowed Louis XIV when confronted with a group of Dutch low-life paintings. The sun king's unfelicitous remark is but one of many salvos in a critical arsenal directed at genre painting. Actually, art theoretical thought of antiquity provided a critical legacy for seventeenth century theorists. Aristotle's admonishment that "the young must not look at the works of Pauson" or Horace's condemnation of the slave Davus as a "rascal and dawdler" for admiring genre scenes, is reiterated in Albani's characterization of genre as "monstruous abortions" or Mancini's disparaging "più casuale" in reference to Netherlandish market scenes.

The attitude towards genre has changed since Louis' time, as we respond to the dynamic vitality of Brouwer or the elegant precision of Dou and his followers. And of course, major masters who painted genre scenes, Hals, Rembrandt and Vermeer, are hardly flies. Recently we have also learned to look at seventeenth century genre painting as something more than, to use Passeri's description of Van Laer's low-life, an "open window on reality". Indeed one of the purposes of this exhibition is to further clarify the relationship of genre painting to the emblematic tradition.

But genre painting also seems to be related to another literary mode, comedy. Brouwer's sobriquet "grillorum pictor", that is a painter who emulated the comic stage characters, "grylloi", painted by the ancient genre painter Antiphilos, is but one indication of this association. In fact since low-life painting was considered ignoble rather than noble, and since it treated base actions and characters rather than elevated deeds and personages, it was considered to resemble comedy by sixteenth and seventeenth century art and literary theorists. Yet similar to comedy, and in this way very much like an emblem, the low-life scene was meant to provide instruction as well as delectation.

These important theoretical and iconographic considerations have been explored by the graduate students, Mark Chepp, Verna Curtis and Marilyn Giaimo, involved in preparing this exhibition, which is an extension of my course on Baroque genre painting offered in the fall semester of 1973 at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The students have also investigated some of the more thorny problems concerning the pictorial sources for seventeenth century Netherlandish genre painting.

Special thanks are due to Assistant Professor, John Lloyd Taylor, Director of the Art History Gallery, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for his assistance in the preparation of the exhibition, and to Professor Jack Wasserman, Chairman of the Department of Art History, for his encouragement of the project. It is a great pleasure to acknowledge the generosity of the lenders, Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Flagg, the Milwaukee Art Center, the Milwaukee Public Museum, Dr. John Pick, Chairman, the University Committee of Fine Arts, Marquette University, and an anonymous lender.

The exhibition can be viewed as a demonstration of the cooperative interaction between gallery and classroom, university and community. Hopefully we have provided a rough map for some of the still uncharted terrain of genre painting.

Barry Wind
Assistant Professor
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> Dutch painting, as one very soon perceives, was not and could not be anything but the portrait of Holland, its external image, faithful, exact, complete, lifelike, without any adornment. The portrait of men and places, of bourgeois customs, of squares, streets and countryside, of sea and sky--such was bound to be, reduced to its primary elements, the program of the Dutch school . . . .
>
> Eugene Fromentin, Les Maitres d' Autrefois, 1876

Today, seventeenth century Netherlandish genre paintings are generally seen in the same way that Fromentin described them a century ago. The immediacy of commonplace subject matter, rendered realistically and usually on a small, intimate scale seems to indicate a simple joy, on the part of these artists, in depicting their world as they themselves saw it. Whether the image is that of an outdoor festival, the local alchemist or a tavern interior, the emphasis is upon clarity and seemingly straightforward imagery. Yet, Fromentin's description does not take into account the various narrative and literary traditions of the seventeenth century.

Scholars have long recognized that there are two broad categories into which most genre paintings can be placed. First, there are the so-called "low-life" scenes; that is, those scenes which emphasize the coarse, more vulgar side of life, usually in a comic manner. Conversely, there is a second category which depicts the quieter, more noble or more poetic aspects of everyday life.[1] Our ability to separate genre paintings in this way tends to indicate that they are more than mere, random images of day to day existence. For example, might not the comic element seen in Brouwer's Tavern Interior (cat. 7) or the noble theatricality of the Two Boys Contemplating a Skull (cat. 4) be indicative of a covert meaning in these works? In the same vein, certain themes, such as alchemy, and specific motifs, such as peasants and their activities, are repeated throughout the century. This thematic and iconographic selectivity might also be evidence of a hidden, narrative content. In short, genre paintings, more often than not, hint at a secondary level of meaning. In light of this, perhaps

it is time to re-examine and re-evaluate our attitudes toward genre painting.

It is useful to investigate the development, since the seventeenth century, of our current use of the term "genre". The word "genre" means, simply, "sort or kind." It was employed in the seventeenth century, for example, describing types of painting.[2] For example, there was a genre of still-life, or a genre of animal paintings, or a genre of kitchen scenes, and so on. However, after the middle of the eighteenth century, French writers began to change their use of the term until "genre" came to be a category unto itself, rather than just another name for "category." Greuze, for instance, was admitted to the French Academy in 1769 as a "painter of genre." His didactic paintings of bourgeois subjects required a classification of their own because they did not readily fit into other descriptive categories, such as still-life or landscape.[3] This tendency toward viewing genre as a catch-all category, generally containing scenes from everyday life, was eventually applied to seventeenth century Netherlandish painting as well. Nineteenth century writers, through common usage, solidified this definition of the term. Although some writers noted the inadequacy of the term "genre,"[4] the "slice-of-life" definition became a common part of art historical vocabulary by the beginning of the twentieth century.

Just as the definition of "genre" changed from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, so did the nature of the criticism of this type of painting. Seventeenth century critics tended to castigate scenes from everyday life, based upon traditional arguments of realism versus idealism. Since antiquity, theoreticians had argued that it was the artist's duty to filter reality through his imagination to create ideality. That is why, for instance, Aristotle writes that Pauson, a low-life painter, was less admired than Polygnotus, a history painter.[5] Pauson simply painted everyday reality as he saw it; Polygnotus, since he had to invent scenes, re-arranged and idealized

nature to fit his elevated themes.

The same sentiment is echoed even into the late seventeenth century. The Dutch critic Pels, for example, objected to Rembrandt's use of naturalistic imagery.[6] Likewise, De Piles, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, criticized Rembrandt's realistic portrayal of common subject matter.[7] De Piles, however, also takes a very sympathetic attitude toward the work of the genre painter, Pieter Van Laer. This apparent dichotomy is symptomatic of an eighteenth century critical shift away from the traditional censure of naturalistic images. Furthermore, it can also be linked to growing Longinian sentiments during the eighteenth century.[8]

During the nineteenth century, critical attitudes were reversed from those of the seventeenth century. Overall, there was a growing awareness among early nineteenth century writers of the social, religious and economic interrelationships in the seventeenth century Netherlands.[9] However, this awareness was colored by nineteenth century social concerns, based largely upon the writings of Marx. The result, as seen in Thoré-Bürger's revival of Vermeer in 1866, was an application of nineteenth century socialist concepts to the criticism of seventeenth century Dutch painting.[10] Vermeer was a "good" artist precisely because he did not idealize reality, choosing to portray commonplace people and events just as he saw them. Like the changing definition of "genre," the changing critical approach to this type of painting during the nineteenth century seems to have obscured the way in which the seventeenth century Dutch viewed their own paintings.

Historians in the early part of the twentieth century corrected many of the misconceptions that their predecessors had fostered. For example, in Panofsky's Studies in Iconology (1939) or Lee's essay, "Ut Pictura Poesis" (Art Bulletin, 1940), we find a more objective attitude, than that of the nineteenth century,

toward viewing art within the context of the cultural milieu that produced it. Since then, scholars have applied this principle to scenes from everyday life, as well as to elevated painting. The nineteenth century's misreading of "genre" is being remedied today by a careful scrutiny of seventeenth century sources in trying to determine the original, conceptual intent of these Dutch scenes. We need only compare Thoré-Bürger's explication of Vermeer (1866) with that of Walsh (1973).[11] Whereas Thoré-Bürger viewed Vermeer through the eyes of a nineteenth century socialist, Walsh attempts to logically place him as a seventeenth century link in the development of a Netherlandish tradition. It, thus, becomes necessary to look to sources in the seventeenth century, both in literature and art, in order to determine any symbolic intent on the part of the "genre" painters.

M.C.

If we apply Lee's association of tragedy and elevated painting to comedy and low-life, we have a theoretical justification for symbolism in genre painting.[12] Just as Lee brings our attention to the fact that the elevated mode of tragedy was viewed in terms of a speaking picture, we should logically be able to think of comedy in terms of a visual image with narrative intent. Indeed, seventeenth century theoreticians such as Mancini and Félibien categorize low-life painting within the realm of history, but certainly on a less noble level,[13] an idea which seems to conform with the notion of painting as narrative.

With the association of low-life painting to traditional narrative established, we look to sixteenth century theory for a further alliance of this kind of painting and the comic theater.[14] In the Northern theorist Johann Stigel's preface to the Riccius edition of Terence of 1568, in fact,

comedy is called a talking picture,[15] thus confirming the link of comedy and painting.

Indeed, an investigation of sixteenth century theory reveals references to comic painting. The late sixteenth century Bolognese theorist Paleotti describes low-life scenes of gluttony, drunkenness and dissipation as "pitture ridicole."[16] The purpose of depicting such boorish scenes is to cleanse the soul and thus to serve as a "means for a better Christian life."[17] This idea of carthарsis, which implies an instructive intent, could also apply to the comic distortions of grotesque figures in both low-life painting and stage comedy.[18]

The general disposition of seventeenth century writers on art, however, was not to theorize, but to select artists and to both appreciate and evaluate their work on the basis of its quality and character.[19] In general, we find simple references, such as the description of Vermeer's "Lacemaker" in the 1696 sale as a "a young lady working,"[20] rather than an analytical approach in terms of iconography or style.

In the seventeenth century Netherlands, in fact, an absence of critical writing about contemporary painters is characteristic. Slive takes particular note of this Dutch reticence in writing in his evaluation of the art criticism about Rembrandt.[21]

We do find, however, a few references in seventeenth century Northern literature which contain clues about potential covert meanings in low-life painting. Carel Van Mander in his biography of Netherlandish artists, <u>Het schilderboeck</u> of 1604, and Arnold Houbraken in his extensive study of the lives and works of seventeenth century painters, <u>De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Kontschilders en Schilderessen</u>, first published in 1718, both refer to the popular designation of Pieter Brueghel as "Pier den Droll."[22]

John Evelyn, an English traveller to the Netherlands in 1641, referred to

the Dutch use of the term "drolleries" to describe a certain strange and funny type of low-life painting.[23] Late seventeenth and early eighteenth century English dictionaries relate these clownish characters to the buffoon or libertine type from the stage.[24] This alliance could well be an indication of popular connotations associated with characters in genre paintings. By implication, then, low-life aspects depicted by seventeenth century Netherlandish painters are not merely documentary in intent: they also have a covert meaning.

If this alleged symbolism in the imagery of genre works exists, a knowledge of its implied language is essential. Montagu's study of the painted enigmas commissioned by French Jesuit scholars as visual riddles to challenge their students, reveals that the exercise of searching for deeper meanings in pictures was a popular seventeenth century pastime.[25] Scholars as well as artists were preoccupied with games involving the philosophical questions, what is real and what is illusionary. Like the seventeenth century student, then, we can apply such questions to Dutch paintings. Is the Verhout painting (cat. 17), for instance, simply a portrait, or does the man looking into an empty jug hint at something more? Perhaps Verhout has other intentions: to portray an individual and to allude to the transience of life.[26]

In order to test such hypotheses about the meanings of these paintings, we compare specific motifs with similar ones in other paintings and look to other seventeenth century sources.[27] The emblematic tradition certainly is a key to our understanding of the meanings of objects as well as of gestures and actions of individuals in paintings. The inscriptions associated with emblems add further substance to our understanding.[28] As Praz emphasizes, many emblem books were published in the seventeenth century, and these served as sources of ideas for artists.[29]

Other cultural indicators such as the theater and literature are also

valuable tools for an understanding of visual symbols in paintings. The Rederijkers, members of different craft guilds who recited poetry and produced plays, counted a high percentage of painters in their membership.[30] The list included such illustrious names as Frans Hals, Dirck Hals, Adriaen Brouwer and Johannes Vermeer the Younger.[31] Though there is no documentary evidence that Jan Steen was a member, many of his works portray scenes from the life of the Rederijkers. We also find Rederijker attributes,such as pitchers of wine and tobacco pipes, as well as known comic characters from the stage, like the poultry seller, in his paintings.[32] Indeed, Heppner maintains that Jan Steen "...has handed down to us the best picture of the stage and the actors of his day, and only a realization of this will make clear what otherwise is difficult to understand in his work."[33]

Certain comic types such as those depicted by Steen, have recognizable counterparts on the stage in England, France, Holland and Italy.[34] The "doctore," the fool cum doctor of love from the Commedia dell' Arte, was taken over in Dutch plays. In paintings by Steen, a similar distracted doctor dressed in old-fashioned clothes sets the stage for the scene of the doctor's visit.[35]

Moralizing and didacticism, such as that towards the doctor, is likewise echoed in literary sources. Since the fifteenth century, collections of proverbs like the Proverbia Communia were common in the Netherlands. The range of sayings was enormous, though many echo such common beliefs as, the poor are no good or industry is a virtue. It is not hard to find a common bond between "The industrious hand never suffers want"[36] and Vrel's intent woman who darns socks (cat. 19). Warnings to idle folk who drink and make merry at village festivals are also clear in the writings of such social commentators as Sebastian Brant.[37] A propensity for moralizing even made the Dutch poet Jacob Cats popular.[38] The following choice lines from one of his poems must

have touched a special chord in Dutch hearts:

> When Cupid open'd shop, the Trade he chose
> Was just the very one you might suppose.
> Love keep a shop? - his trade, Oh! quickly name!
> A Dealer in tobacco - Fie for shame!
> ....
> And thousands enter daily at his door!
> Hence it was ever, and it e'er will be
> The trade most suited to his faculty: -
> Fed by the vapours of their hearts desire,
> No other food his Votaries require;
> For, that they seek - the Favour of the Fair,
> Is unsubstantial as the smoke and air.[39]

The material as well as the theoretical basis for our twentieth century evaluation of genre painting gains its impetus from sixteenth and seventeenth century sources. The recognition of comic as well as moralizing elements in low-life painting and the synthesis of history and genre painting have become the basis of our search for symbols in other comtemporary sources. Unlike the theorists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we have not ignored the covert meanings in works such as those chosen for this exhibition, rather we have consciously sought to uncover them. Yet we must heed Professor Slive's warning not to overemphasize allegorical or moral significance, for the Dutch took "...unprecedented pleasure in perceiving and painting the harmony of colors, the sparkling play of light, the mystery of shadow, and intangible space."[40] Let us respond to their achievements.

V.C.

One of the most interesting aspects of seventeenth century Dutch genre painting is its great diversity, a characteristic which is well demonstrated by this exhibit. Yet, two stylistic currents are readily discernible; a large figured style and a small figured one. The former generally depicts half-length figures close to the picture plane. Often, a single motif is presented, at other times, a grouping of three or four persons. While symbols may be

incorporated into the work, the figure is the dominant element of the painting. In the small figured style, whether set in a landscape, a tavern, or the interior of a middle-class home, what is most noticeable is the interrelationship of figure and landscape. Often, a great number of people are depicted, all busily engaged in seemingly mundane activities.

The sources of these two styles are varied and complex. To explain this diversity, it is necessary to trace the influences which were responsible for their distinctive stylistic qualities. A lack of documentation has been a continuous stumbling block prohibiting the establishment of absolute conclusions. Therefore, many hypotheses must remain conjectural.

It has been suggested that Caravaggio was an important influence on the large figured style, popularized in Utrecht by Hendrick Terbrugghen (1588-1629), Gerrit van Honthorst (1590-1656), and Dirck van Baburen (1590/5-1624), artists influential for Hals and Rembrandt.[41] Yet, the local tradition should not be ignored.[42] To begin with, large, half-length figures, close to the picture plane, can be traced to Dutch art as far back as the early sixteenth century, when Marinus van Roemerswael produced a number of works utilizing these compositional elements.[43] Terbrugghen and Honthorst owe many of their motifs to artists such as Dürer, Cornelis van Haarlem, and Lucas van Leyden.[44]

The dramatic lighting effects of Utrecht artists such as Terbrugghen and Honthorst also may have been inspired by artists other than Caravaggio. One must take into account Venetian sources such as those stemming from Bassano, as well as the Northern penchant for artificial illumination.[45]

In any event, the problems of stylistic sources are well represented in this exhibit. The painting by the Utrecht artist, Hendrick Bloemaert, Grocery Seller With Boy, (cat. 3) with its half-length figures and incisive realism superficially recalls Caravaggio. Yet, the color relates to late

sixteenth century Mannerist prototypes. The realistic peasant types as well as the monumental half-length mode can also relate to works by Aertsen and Beuckelaer.[46]

The Utrecht style was transmitted to Frans Hals, particularly in his silver tonalities derived from Terbrugghen. Rembrandt's chiaroscuro effects relate to the Utrecht painters generally, and to Honthorst specifically.

Hals is probably most popular for his rowdy, down-to-earth images which are full of immediacy and a zest for life, and yet are combined with a didactic intent. The artist's technique which conveyed this verve, by means of quick parallel brushstrokes and lively cross-hatching, has generally been attributed to Venetian sources.[47] But Hals' early development, which was to form the basis for his mature style, has also been connected with the native tradition. The influence of Dutch artists such as Dirck Barendsz., Cornelis Ketel, and Hendrick Goltzius, in relation to the rounded figures, rigid poses, sharp delineation of the figures and pasty quality of the paint can be seen in Hals' early work.[48]

The relationship of Van Mander to the development of Hals' style is another example of the continuation of tradition. Van Mander, who was Hals' teacher from 1600-1603, may have spurred the artist's interest in flickering light effects.[49] In addition, Hals' tight, pyramidal compositions may look back to his teacher, and to Goltzius.[50]

Hals, in his later style, created more sober and controlled compositions which are almost monochromatic in color. In a like manner, Rembrandt developed from a more dramatic to a more controlled style, which can be related to the influences of French trends, which permeated Europe in the second half of the seventeenth century.

In Rembrandt's technique, a general development can be discerned, beginning

with a method characterized by tiny brushstrokes and a finely glazed quality, which has been related to the influence of his Italian trained teacher, Lastman, to one characterized by an increasingly free and impressionistic use of the brush in which form merges with shadow. It is in this latter quality that Rembrandt remained outside of the mainstream of the classical currents spreading through Europe.

Rembrandt's influence upon his students seems to depend upon when they came in contact with him. The Quillcutter, by Lesire (cat. 11) in this exhibit, has been so closely connected to Rembrandt's early style, in its tiny brushstrokes and finely glazed quality, that at one time it was attributed to the master.[51]

It has been pointed out that there are two main styles in Dutch genre painting. The small figured style has a long tradition in the Netherlands, a tradition which has iconographic and stylistic implications for artists of the seventeenth century. Bosch's paintings, for example, presenting a multitude of figures in a panoramic scene, are like satirical sermons castigating the follies of mankind.[52] Pieter Brueghel the Elder continued the Boschian style and iconography.[53] The Gamblers Quarrel, (cat. 9) by Pieter Brueghel the Younger, a copy after a lost work by his father, illustrates the moralizing qualities inherent in this type of genre scene.

Adriaen Brouwer, working in the small figured style, can be considered a part of this iconographic tradition. Brouwer was in Haarlem and Amsterdam in 1625 and 1626, and his style owes a debt to Hals not only in his feeling for the brush, but also in his portrait-like characterizations.[54] These qualities are evident in Brouwer's Tavern Interior,(cat. 7). Ostade, Teniers and Craesbeeck continued in his style, although they toned down Brouwer's overtly vulgar aspects. The Teniers (and assistant), (cat. 15) and the Bega, (cat. 1) illustrate the scope of individual styles which have Brouwer

at their fulcrum. Jan Steen, too, can be associated with this tradition, as well as Gerard Thomas, whose Doctor's Office, (cat. 16) recalls the puns, jackanapes and charlatans found in Steen's *oeuvre*.

Steen's compositions recall the French inspired structuralism already noted in the late styles of Hals and Rembrandt. A major source of French influence may be Abraham Bosse, a Gallic theoretician and artist, whose prints, as well as his famous treatise advancing his theories, could have been known in Holland.[55]

Steen's structuralism, of course, also links him to De Hooch, Vermeer and the school of Delft. "Elevated" genre scenes, with their emphasis on the more poetic aspects of everyday life are exemplified by the work of Vermeer. The Delft emphasis in general, and Vermeer's in particular, on poetic quietude, geometric structure and scenes of domestic tranquillity can be seen in the Vrel painting, Woman Darning Socks, (cat. 19). Verhout's Man With A Wine Jug (Portrait of Cornelis Abrahamsz Graswinckel),(cat. 17) with its feeling of serene order, certainly reflects the more controlled compositions of the second half of the seventeenth century.

In concluding this study of genre painting, the work of Pieter Van Laer and his followers should be considered. Van Laer, originally from Haarlem, arrived in Rome in 1625, where he developed his open air street scenes. His subjects, the common people of Italy involved in ordinary activities of work or play,seem to have no literary connotations.[56] Van Laer was nicknamed "Bamboccio", ("Big Silly Baby"), and his works were given the disparaging title, *bambocciate*.[57] In spite of this, these *bambocciate* were well received by patrons. In this exhibit, the genre-landscape by Verlinden, (cat. 18) not didactic, probably devoid of any secondary meaning, brings us full circle to Fromentin and his theories on genre, pure and simple.

M. G.

Notes

1. In the nineteenth century, for example, Kugler described the differences between these two categories. E. Head, ed., Kugler's Handbook of Painting: The German and Dutch Schools, London (1854), pp. 266-267.

2. Cf. F. Baldinucci, Notizie dei Professori del Disegno, XII, Milan (1812 ed.), p. 75. As far as can be determined, the term first appears specifically referring to low-life painting in C. Watelet, "Genre", Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences des Arts et des Métiers, VII, Paris (1757), p. 597. (My thanks to Dr. Barry Wind for pointing out these passages, as well as those cited in notes 5 and 6).

3. H. Osborne, The Oxford Companion to Art, Oxford (1970), p. 465.

4. For instance, Head (1854, p. 266) notes that "the term 'Genre' is really more negative than positive, and is generally applied to works of a small size which do not fall into any other definite class. . ."

5. Aristotle, Politics, VIII, v, Cambridge (1959 ed.), p. 659. See further, The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art, K. Jex-Blake trans., Chicago (1968), pp. 103-105, 151-153, 221. It is interesting to note that Bellori, in his Le Vite de Pittori, Scultori e Architetti Moderni, Rome (1672), p. 5, related Pauson to the seventeenth century genre painter, Pieter Van Laer.

6. A. Pels, Gebruik en Misbruik des Toonels, Amsterdam (1681), pp. 35-36.

7. S. Slive, "Realism and Symbolism in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting", Daedalus, XCI, (1962), p. 477.

8. R. Lee, Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting, New York (1967 ed.), pp. 26-27.

9. For example, Hegel, in his Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik of the 1820's, as cited by S. Slive, "Notes on the Relationship of Protestantism to Seventeenth Century Dutch Painting", Art Quarterly, XIX, (1956), p. 5.

10. W. Bürger (Etienne Jos. Theoph. Thoré), Van der Meer de Delft, Paris (1866). This,furthermore, was predated by a revival of interest in the Le Nains in the wake of political developments in 1848. See S. Meltzoff, "The Revival of the Le Nains", Art Bulletin, XXIV, (1942), pp. 259-286.

11. J. Walsh, "Vermeer", Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, XXXI, (1973).

12. This premise was one of the foundations of Professor Barry Wind's course on Baroque genre painting offered in the fall semester of 1973 at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I would like to gratefully acknowledge Dr. Wind's assistance with the following section on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as his special help in citing the sources in the next six footnotes.

13. G. Mancini, Considerazioni Sulla Pittura, L. Salerno and A. Marcucci, ed., I, Rome (1956), p. 113, and A. Félibien, Entretiens sur les vies et sur les Ouvrages, IV, Paris (1725 2nd ed.), p. 215.

14. This idea is sanctioned by antique writers, e.g. Pliny's description of "grylloi". *Pliny's Chapters on Art* , (1968), pp.145-147.

15. M. Herrick, *Comic Theory in the Renaissance*, Urbana (1950), p. 74.

16. G. Paleotti, *Discorso Intorno alle Imagine Sacre e Profane*, Bologna (1582) in P. Barocchi, *Trattati d'Arte dell'Cinquecento*,II, Bari (1960), pp. 395-396.

17. Literary theorists such as Trissino in *La Poetica*, Venice (1562), pp.30-32, also advocated a moral tone in comedy.

18. Trissino (*Ibid*., p. 37) and Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'Arte*, II, Rome (1844 ed.), p. 223, also substantiate this.

19. E. Holt, ed., *Literary Sources of Art History*, Princeton (1947), p. 319.

20. P. Bianconi, *The Complete Paintings of Vermeer*, New York (1967), p. 93.

21. S. Slive, *Rembrandt and his Critics*, The Hague (1953), pp. 1-3.

22. C. Van Mander, *Dutch and Flemish Painters*, C. Van de Wall trans., New York (1936), p. 153 and A. Houbraken, *Groote Schouburgh der Niederlandischen Maler und Malerinnen* in M. Pangerl, *Quellenschriften Für Kunstgeschicte*, XIII-XIV, Vienna (1878), p. 44.

23. E. S. de Beer, ed., *The Diary of John Evelyn*, Oxford (1955), p. 39.

24. W. Skeat, *An Entymological Dictionary of the English Language*, Oxford (1882), p. 180.

25. J. Montagu, "The Painted Enigma and French Seventeenth Century Art", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXXI, (1968), p. 332.

26. With regard to depicting portraits, Van Mander agreed with traditional theorists that nature should be studied, but he felt that artists should improve upon nature and should work from their imagination ("uyt den geest"). (S. Slive, *Frans Hals*, I, London (1970), p. 14). Many portraits indeed do contain multivalent symbolism. Cf. *Ibid*., pp. 77-83

27. Motifs with symbolic content are not only found in genre and portrait painting. but also may appear in representations of still-life. Bergstrom isolates selected still-life elements and discusses their traditional connotations in terms of such ideas as *vanitas*. I. Bergstrom, *Dutch Still-Life Painting in the Seventeenth Century*, New York (1956).

28. In this regard, E. de Jongh's *Zinne en Minnebeelden en de Schilderkunst van de Zeventiende Eeuw*, Amsterdam (1967), is extremely useful for an understanding of the iconography of seventeenth century Dutch paintings.

29. The extensive bibliography of sixteenth and seventeenth century emblem books published in M. Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth Century Imagery*, Rome (1964), indicates their profusion.

30. A. Heppner, "The Popular Theater of the Rederijkers in the Work of Jan Steen and his Contemporaries", Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, III, (1939-1940), p. 23.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., pp. 24-25, 47-48.

33. Ibid., p. 48.

34. S. Gudlaugsson, Ikonographische Studien über die Holländische Malerei und das Theater des 17. Jahrhunderts, Würzburg (1938), p. 30.

35. Ibid.

36. R. Jente, ed., Proverbia Communia; a fifteenth century collection of Dutch proverbs together with a Low German version, Bloomington (1947), p. 187.

37. S. Brant, Ship of Fools, R. Zeydel trans., New York (1944), pp. 96-97, 224-241.

38. P. Zumthor, Daily Life in Rembrandt's Holland, New York (1963), p. 212.

39. J. Brooks, Tobacco, II, New York (1938), p. 138. My thanks to Dr. Wind for suggesting this source to me.

40. S. Slive, (1962), p. 500.

41. S. Slive, J. Rosenberg and E. H. ter Kuile, Dutch Art and Architecture: 1600-1800, Baltimore (1966), pp. 21-23.

42. The further investigation of the local tradition was suggested by Professor Barry Wind.

43. Bergstrom, (1956), illustration, no. 2, p. 7.

44. See: J. R. Judson, Gerrit van Honthorst, The Hague (1959), p. 44, and B. Nicolson, Hendrick Terbrugghen, London (1958), p. 4.

45. Judson, (1959), pp. 21, 29, 63, and 85.

46. Ibid., pp. 78-79, note 3.

47. Slive, (1966), p. 39.

48. Ibid., p. 30.

49. Pointed out by Professor Barry Wind. See: Masterpieces of Renaissance and Baroque Art from the Collection of Colonel Frank W. Chesrow, Southern Illinois University (Jan. 31-Mar. 5, 1965), p. 10, illustration no 9, Karel van Mander, "The Feast of Ahasuerus".

50. S. Slive, Frans Hals, I, London (1970), p. 38.

51. Cited in personal correspondence in the possession of the present Milwaukee owner from: W. Valentiner, 1938; A. Bredius and M. Freidlander, 1950; and H. Voss, 1952; all attributing this painting to Rembrandt's early period.

52. Osborne, (1970), p. 466.

53. W. Stechow, Pieter Brueghel the Elder, New York (1969), pp. 20-21.

54. Slive, (1966), p. 110.

55. Pointed out by Professor Wind. See; C. Goldstein, "Studies in Seventeenth Century French Art Theory and Ceiling Painting", Art Bulletin, XLVII, (Je. 1965), pp. 231-234 and 242-244.

56. Professor Wind has pointed out, however, that in a general way, Van Laer's themes, and those of his followers, can be connected to the popular literary mode of "Romanza" and "Pastoral". Cf. F. Haskell, Painters and Patrons, New York (1963), p. 140.

57. Slive,(1966), p. 172.

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CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION

1. CORNELIS PIETERSZ BEGA (Dutch, 1631-1664)
The Alchemist, c. 1660
Oil on canvas, 16 1/4" x 15" (41.3 x 38.1 cm)
Lent anonymously

Provenance: Private Collection, Milwaukee
Collection Charles Sheepshanks, England
Collection John Sheepshanks, England

Cornelis Bega worked in Haarlem in the 1650's and 1660's and was a pupil of Adriaen van Ostade. The Alchemist is typical of Bega's style which is characterized by small refined paintings revealing colors that have deepened with age and flesh tones that often have a reddish undertone (Bernt, I, 1969, p. 8).

It is interesting to note that an almost identically executed alchemist exists in the collection of Fisher Scientific Company in Pittsburgh ("Cornelis Bega's Alchemist. . .," 1971, pp. 17-19). The Fisher painting on wood panel is slightly smaller and is signed as well as indistinctly dated. According to this article, both paintings are authentic, and the painting on panel was done after the one on canvas because of certain details which are missing on the panel, and which the artist may have purposefully omitted in copying (Ibid., 1971, p. 19).

The subject of the alchemist is, indeed, a fascinating one. Although alchemy is, in fact, the precursor of modern chemistry, it was hardly a respected profession in the seventeenth century. The path to producing gold was elusive and fraught with costly researches and misadventures. The alchemist's fortunes were frequently consumed in their furnaces. They were scorned by those who called them "puffers" because of the noise of the bellows they used for their fires (De Givry, 1931, p. 375). Artists, such as Teniers and Brueghel, frequently ridiculed the alchemist in paintings such as an engraving after David Teniers' The Pleasure of Fools by J. Basan, where "puffer" becomes ape, a typical symbol of folly.

A sixteenth century engraving by Cock after Pieter Brueghel the Elder's Interior of a Puffer's Laboratory, 1558, depicts a typical "puffer's" laboratory with equipment such as the vase or philosophic egg, a glass and earthenware vessel which was essential for the production of the philosopher's stone. A similar instrument is also seen in Bega's painting. As the "puffer" plies his trade in the Brueghel, his wife bewails her empty purse, and his chidren search the empty cupboards for food. Like the Bega, not only is the alchemist's shop in disarray, but he too somewhat ragged and disheveled.

This painting tells us about the social position of the alchemist in seventeenth century Holland, and it also describes the physical operation of his craft in the exquisite detail of Bega.

V.C.

2. Circle of CORNELIS BEGA (Dutch, Mid-17th Century)
Figures before a Fireplace, c. 1660
Oil on canvas, 21 1/4" x 19 1/2" (54 x 49.5 cm)
Lent anonymously

Provenance:	Private Collection, Milwaukee Private Collection, Chicago Boer Gallery, Amsterdam Dorotheum Gallery, Vienna Collection Count Lamberg, Vienna

Scholars generally attribute Figures before a Fireplace to an unknown artist around Bega. In a letter to the present owner dated May 16, 1967, Slive ascribes this painting to the "Circle of Bega," and likewise, in a letter dated June 13, 1967, Stechow writes that the artist "seems close to Bega." In fact, the painting was auctioned as C.P. Bega in Vienna in the 1930's.

Gudlaugsson, however, in a letter of April 3, 1967, ascribes the painting to Johannes Natus whose Interior with a Smoker and Drinker (Bernt, II, p. 830) resembles Figures before a Fireplace with its smoker holding a pipe and sitting beside a table. The two individuals are not the same types, however, and the free style of Natus contrasts with the detail and clarity of this painting.

Figures before a Fireplace is closer to the style of Bega's Tavern Scene of 1662 in the City Art Gallery, York, England, although it lacks the refinement of the master. The compositional arrangement of large figures in the foreground of an interior, the careful placement of objects such as a hat and the precise handling of drapery folds are related in both paintings. The use of cold steel blue in Figures before a Fireplace, which is characteristic of Bega (Bernt, I, p. 8), also supports the attribution to Circle of Bega.

The smoker and newspaper reader typify the seventeenth century Dutch tavern environment. Brooks writes that "... before the century had closed, the Dutch held one of the first places as a nation of smokers (Brooks, II, 1938, p. 136). Tobacco thus provided a subject for poets as well as others who took to publishing polemics against its use. The view of Roemer-Visscher's emblem from Sinnepoppen, 1614, "There's often something new, but it's seldom anything good" was echoed in numerous satirical pamphlets, such as one in Nuremberg in 1658, which even supported the popular belief that smoking was directly fatal (Bergstrom, 1956, p. 156).

V.C.

3. HENDRIK BLOEMAERT (Dutch, 1601-1672)
Gorcery Seller With Boy
Oil on canvas, 28" x 23" (71.1 x 58.4 cm)
Lent anonymously

Provenance:	Private Collection, Milwaukee Collection Robert Cole, Piedmont, California

Hendrick Bloemaert was a son and pupil of the Mannerist painter, Abraham Bloemaert. Hendrick travelled to Italy in 1627, and returned to his native city of Utrecht to become a master of the Guild of Saint Luke in 1630. In 1665, he was listed as a member of the Utrecht Painters' College (Moes, I, 1910, p. 127).

While the colors of Hendrick's early works are reminiscent of the Mannerist palette of his father, his half-length presentations are similar in pose and subject matter to those of Honthorst (Ibid.). Although Caravaggio can be suggested as a source for the composition and realistic treatment of the old woman in Grocery Seller With Boy, Flemish influences can also be cited. Indeed, the subjects depicted by Honthorst and Bloemaert seem to be derived from a type presented by Pieter Aertsen and his followers in the sixteenth century (Judson, 1959, p. 79, no. 3). Aertsen's Old Peasant, 1545, now in the Musée des Beaux-arts, Lille, is an example of this type of characterization. Aertsen painted a number of monumental old men and women with motifs such as fruit, flowers, and viands. These scenes may be allegories of the seasons (Slive, 1966, p. 103). The incisive realism of Aertsen's subjects, the pose and iconography, which may be seasonal, can be compared with Bloemaert's painting. On the other hand, there is another tradition of market scenes with sensual connotations seen in, for example, Beuckalaer's Fishmarket, in Naples, or Aertsen's Butcher Shop, in Uppsala, to which Bloemaert's painting may be related. Motifs such as the apples, lettuce, and beans seem to underscore this association. Apples were long associated with lust (Panofsky, 1972, p. 87). Beans had lewd connotations (Gibbons, 1968, p. 102, no. 67), as did lettuce (Alciphron, 1949, pp. 291-293). One must also take into account descriptions by such antique writers as Athenaeus (VI, 1930, 131) of erotic encounters between old women and young boys in the market place, as well as the suggestive finger gesture.

M.G.

4. Attributed to PAULUS BOR (Dutch, ? - 1669)
or to LEENDERT VAN DER COOGHEN (Dutch, 1610-1681)
Two Boys Contemplating a Skull, c. 1620-1680
Oil on canvas, 40" x 32" (102 x 81.6 cm)
Lent anonymously

Provenance: Private Collection, Milwaukee
Agnew and Sons, Ltd., London

It is tempting to suggest that this is a representation of the graveyard scene from "Hamlet." The feathered hats and striped doublets worn by the boys are often seen as theatrical costumes. The two boys could be Hamlet and Horatio contemplating the skull of "poor Yorick." However, images of theatrical types with skulls can be found elsewhere in the seventeenth century. For example, Hendrick Goltzius' 1614 drawing, New York, of a young man holding, not only a skull, but also a tulip, has been shown by Slive (1970, I, p. 89) to be an image of vanitas. Further, the black costume worn by Hamlet throughout the play has here been replaced by a much more generic theatrical garb. Although this might possibly be a Hamlet representation, it probably should be seen in terms of a long-standing, general vanitas tradition in the North.

The theme of vanitas, the emphasis upon the transience of life and worldly pursuits, is common in the seventeenth century (Bergstrom, 1956, 154-190). The symbols in this painting are quite explicit. The contrast of the young, healthy,

boy staring at a skull stresses the fleeting quality of time and ever-present death. The tulip, next to the skull, is a more particular symbol. During the seventeenth century, "tulipmania" swept across Holland. Tulips were bought and sold on a speculative amrket; fortunes were made on one day and lost on the next. Bulbs from the Semper Augustus, a tulip with alternating red and white stripes, were especially valuable (Zumthor, 1963, pp. 49-52). As a result of this tulip fever, they became a symbol in paintings and prints of the folly of pursuing material wealth. Roemer-Visscher's 1614 emblem depicting tulips carries the inscription, "A Fool and his Money are soon Parted."

The attribution of this painting to Van der Cooghen was first suggested by Slive ("Notable Works ...," 1969, Plate XXXIV) and is extremely tenuous. Very little is known about him outside of the facts that he was born in Haarlem in 1610, died there in 1681 and was a pupil of Jordaens in Antwerp. Jordaens' influence can be seen in the large figures disposed parallel to the picture plane and a sense of flattened form in some areas, for example, in the black and red doublet. Furthermore, a certain painterly quality in other areas, such as the sleeve of the boy in the foreground, could also point to a Jordaens influence. A comparison between this painting and that of Van Der Cooghen's <u>Vinne Family Portrait</u> in London (Valentiner, 1932, 212-16; Jirmounsky, 1932, 263-64) reveals some general similarities. The sense of monumentality in the figures, the planar composition and a certain feeling of flatness in the drapery all relate to elements in the <u>Two Boys Contemplating a Skull</u>.

However, another attribution has been advanced by Stechow in a correspondence with the present owner. A certain quality in the <u>Two Boys Contemplating a Skull</u> has led him to suggest the Bentveughel, Paulus Bor, who returned to his native Amersvoort from Rome in 1628. He bases this upon an assertion by Nicolson that it was probably done by the same hand that painted the York (England) Art Museum's Bathsheba, cat. no. 851. Since Stechow believes the <u>Bathsheba</u> to be by Bor, the implication, then, is that the <u>Two Boys Contemplating a Skull</u> is also by his hand.

M.C.

5. Attributed to QUIRINGH GERRITSZ VAN BREKELENKAM (Dutch, c. 1620 - c. 1668)
<u>Musical Duo</u>, c. 1650
Oil on wood, 10 1/4" x 8 1/2" (26 x 21.6 cm)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Flagg, Milwaukee

Provenance: Collector's Corner, New York

Iconographically, <u>Musical Duo</u> can be related to Brouwer's <u>Tavern Interior</u> (cat. 7). The duet between the man playing a stringed instrument and the woman playing a wind is more than a musical interraction and seems to allude to an erotic encounter. The instruments, nevertheless, are significant, as these frequently appear in representations of the Prodigal Son and serve as warnings against a lazy and sinful life (Bergstrom, p. 156). In <u>vanitas</u> allegories too, music is often performed by someone personifying lust.

Still life objects associated with temporality and prodigality, a pipe, a candle and wine, are also present here. It is interesting that bread, whose

symbolic significance may be traced to the sixteenth century when it was considered an aphrodisiac in an erotic game (cf. the still life in Dosso's rhomboid allegory of the late 1520's,Laughter, Jealousy, Fear and Anger in the Cini Collection in Venice, rests beside a glass of wine on the table.

The attribution remains problematic. Brekelenkam, a pupil of one of Rembrandt's more famous followers, Dou, frequently painted scenes of bourgeois society and small shopkeepers. Brekelenkam's subject matter, which does not include the representation of indoor peasant scenes, his compact structure and his use of color have been related to Vrel (cf. cat. 19) (Regnier, 1968, p. 279, Nash, 1972, p. 242 and Bernt, I, p. 19).

Yet Brekelenkam may have painted vulgar subjects. A scene similar to Musical Duo, but larger in size (16 1/4 x 25 inches), appears in the Park-Bernet catalogue of March, 1964. Signed almost illegibly, Interior with Boors by Brekelenkam depicts two couples gathered around a low table, an observer through a window and a couple before a hearth in the background. The typologies of the two older men in floppy hats, looking lasciviously at a protesting girl, resemble the man playing the stringed instrument in Musical Duo. A similar barrel with a bowl underneath it occupies the lower left hand corner in each. Small delicately painted objects on the floor in front and careful white highlights on parts of a garment, on a nose or on a jug are evident in both. Musical Duo also has the grey, red and brown tones which Bernt finds characteristic of Brekelenkam's style (Bernt, I, p. 19).

But on the basis of a poor photograph in the Park-Bernet catalogue of 1964, one cannot make a definitive attribution to Brekelenkam. The attribution of this painting, thus, remains uncertain. One wonders whether the indistinguishable marks at the woman's waist could be part of a signature which would resolve this problem.

V.C.

6. Attributed to JAN GERRITSZ VAN BRONCHORST (Dutch, 1603-1663)
or to CAESAR VAN EVERDINGEN (Dutch, c. 1617-1678)
Two Girls, c. 1630-1650
Oil on canvas, 24" x 29" (48.5 x 73.7 cm)
Lent anonymously

Provenance: Private Collection, Milwaukee
Schaeffer Gallery, New York
Arcade Gallery, London
Christie's, London

In general, scholarly opinion attributes Two Girls to the Utrecht School which flourished in the 1620's and 1630's. Not only the subject of large figures in a pastoral setting, but also the smooth careful modelling of the figures, the use of blond light and the contrasts of light and dark reflect stylistic qualities of Utrecht painters, such as Honthorst, Terbrugghen and Baburen. In 1951, in fact, this painting was sold as a Terbrugghen in London.

In a letter to the present owner dated January 18, 1963, Walther Bernt unequivocally places this painting within the Utrecht School and ascribes it to

Caesar van Everdingen because of a similar composition of Ceres and Pomona in Dresden. In addition, the painting was exhibited as an Everdingen at the Arcade Gallery in 1952.

Kurt Bauch, however, in a letter of January 23, 1956, attributes the painting to the master of Everdingen, Jan Gerritsz van Bronchorst, who was born in Utrecht in 1603, and who worked in Amsterdam from 1647 until his death in 1661. He bases this attribution on the artist's characteristic broad handling of paint and the strong modelling of the women's faces. The present owner of the painting concurs with Bauch's opinion.

A definitive statement as to the authorship of this painting is hardly possible from a photographic comparison. The respective styles of Everdingen and Bronchorst with regard to the use of pastel colors, blond lighting, subtle lights and darks for the modelling of flesh and strong contrasts to delineate drapery folds are strikingly similar. Both artists likewise depict three-quarter length figures in their compositions (Von Schneider, 1967, pp. 31-34). Another complication with regard to style is the addition of the vine with leaves on the left hand side which, the present owner believes, was made within the last fifty years.

If one could unravel the mysterious circumstances surrounding this fragment, more substantive clues as to its authorship might appear. Several versions of this painting may have existed at one time. Gerson, in a communication with the owner of the painting, dated February 1, 1963, has produced a photograph of a similar, but larger painting signed by Bronchorst from a private collection in Budapest. This painting was in Vienna in 1917. The current owner has also seen a similar larger version at de Boer's in Amsterdam. At present, one cannot know whether the fragment Two Girls is part of the Budapest painting or is a third version.

The meaning of the subject matter is somewhat easier to discern. Though the two women figures could have a mythological source, as Bernt and Bauch suggest in their letters of attribution, this does not seem likely. The subject of Ceres and Pomona, for instance, does not seem possible as attributes usually accompanying such depictions, fruit and sprigs of wheat, are not present here.

A more likely possibility is that this painting is in the general pastoral mode which was popular in Utrecht and which became an established interest in the cultural life of the upper and middle class Dutch people in 1635 (Louttit, 1973, p. 318). The popularity of the pastoral was manifest in dress, poetry, and plays as well as in painting which Honthorst's Sheperdess Adorned with Flowers, 1627, in the Seattle Art Museum, exemplifies (Gudlaugsson, 1948, p. 226).

A love of youth and nature characterized the idealistic tenor of the pastoral mode. Pastoral subjects suited their romantic landscape setting, and women in the pastoral normally wore dresses that exposed a good deal of the bosom (Louttit, 1973, p. 318, also cf. Crispijn de Passe's long pastoral elegy about the beauty of breasts printed in Louttit, Ibid., p. 325). The depiction of one girl is such a costume, in the act of grooming her nude friend in a wooded setting could well fit into this tradition.

V.C.

7. ADRIAEN BROUWER (Flemish, 1606-1638)
Tavern Interior, c. 1632-1638
Oil on wood, 6 1/4" x 8 1/4" (15.9 x 21 cm)
Lent by the Milwaukee Art Center

Provenance: Private Collection, Milwaukee
Parke-Bernet, New York
Drey Gallery, New York

The typologies of the two primary figures are interesting. As the young woman plays distractedly upon her flute, the man surveys her with a lustful grin on his face. The depiction of erotic encounters in Brouwer's work is uncommon (Knuttel, 1962, p. 113). But when they occur, as in the London Tavern Scene of the mid 1630's, the setting is a tavern. Even though this scene is not as explicit as the London painting, the traditional symbols of wine and music, employed as catalysts to love-making, are present. This tradition can be traced back to Brueghel. For instance, in his Peasants Dancing of 1568, Vienna, we also see music, drinking and overt love-making in the left background. The folly of these idle pastimes is emphasized by the fact that the peasants have turned their backs on the church in the distant background and ignore the little shrine to the Madonna and child on the tree at the right (Hughes and Bianconi, 1967, p. 110). Brouwer's Tavern Interior seems to continue this tradition in a less obviously symbolic way.

The attribution of this panel to Brouwer is probably correct. The style of dress, hairdo and facial features of the young woman closely approximate those of the woman in the London Tavern Scene. Similarly, the disposition of the capped head and typology of the grinning man could be related to a study of the head of a young man by Brouwer in Oosterbeek. Perhaps most telling, however, are the respective psychologies represented. Knuttel (1962, footnote, p. 27) suggests that Brouwer achieves a deeper psychological insight into men than he does into women. Something of that tenor is present here. The woman, shown in profile, seems rather blank as she mechanically plays the flute. On the other hand, the expression on the man's face is extremely lively and tells the viewer a great deal about the lascivious nature of the character being represented.

Perhaps most revealing, however, is the rapid, loose brushwork. Knuttel (1962, p. 95) notes a tendency during Brouwer's last years (1632-38) toward more atmospheric compositions and a toned-down color palette. The figure emerging from the background depths,the facile handling of light and dark contrasts in the drapery and the absence of his former, brighter color scheme are all evidence that Tavern Interior dates from Brouwer's late phase of development.

M.C.

8. School of ADRIAEN BROUWER (Flemish, Mid-17th Century)
Tavern Interior, c. 1640
Oil on wood, 7 1/2" x 9 3/4" (19 x 24.8 cm)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Flagg, Milwaukee

Provenance: Beckhardt Gallery, New York

The delineation of Brouwer's original works from those of his students and followers has been explored by Knuttel (1962, pp. 28-61). Although the small figure style and low-life iconography indicate that this Tavern Interior is Brouwer inspired, it cannot, on the basis of technique, be included in the master's oeuvre. The rendering of the figures is flat and awkward. This is especially evident in the background group; it is difficult to distinguish whether the figure on the right is, indeed, a person or just some sacks piled on top of barrels. Even in his earliest phase of development, Brouwer was not as unaccomplished as this. Moreover, the psychological insight into the characters that Brouwer was always able to convey (cf. Brouwer's Tavern Interior, cat. 7) is totally absent in this rather lackluster, amorous couple. Finally, the localized color scheme plus lifeless brushwork indicate a painter less skillful, even, than Brouwer's recognizable followers, not to mention Brouwer himself.

The theme of erotic encounters in a tavern was certainly popular in the seventeenth century as seen in a number of examples in this exhibition. Chalk tally marks on the wall (which was the method of determining a customer's bill) and the presence of wine establish the fact that this is a tavern. The "chin-chucking" motif in the foreground couple is rather common, seen also, for example, in the background couple in Brouwer's early Pancake Woman, Philadelphia. As in Brouwer, this artist is using lower class characters, in a rather comic manner, to convey a moralizing image castigating coarse love-making. However, the impact of Brouwer, both in terms of stylistic immediacy and humorous vulgarity, is simply absent.

M.C.

9. PIETER BRUEGHEL, THE YOUNGER (Flemish, 1564-1638)
Gambler's Quarrel, 1620 or 1626
Oil on wood, 16" x 21" (40.6 x 53.3 cm)
Lent by the Milwaukee Public Museum

Provenance: Collection I.A. Dinerstein, Milwaukee

The Gambler's Quarrel, known in many copies and a number of variations, appears to be based upon a late, unfinished work by Pieter Brueghel the Elder. A print by Lucas Vosterman of this compositional scheme bears the inscription "Pet. Brueghel inuent." And a letter from Lord Arundel, written between 1626 and 1630, describes the original as "... a peece of painting begunne by Brugels and finished by Mostard; being a squabbling of clowns fallen out at Cardes, which is in stamp by Mr. Lucas Vosterman ... " (Hughes and Bianconi, 1967, p. 114). The original painting can be traced from that point up until 1655. Since then, it has been lost.

The painting must have been readily accessible to any number of artists, judging from the copies surviving today. It probably passed on to Brueghel's son, Jan, in whose house all the copyists, including Jan himself. Pieter the Younger, Vosterman and even Rubens, could have seen it (Gluck, 1943, p. 183). Stylistically, the copies fall into three categories, those in the styles of Jan, Pieter the Younger, and Rubens. The Milwaukee version of Gambler's Quarrel appears to be closest, in style, to those of Pieter the Younger,

judging from the reproductions presented by Marlier (1969, pp. 264-274). Complicating matters even further, Marlier divides these copies by Pieter the Younger into two categories based upon size dimensions. The Milwaukee painting is an example of the small format, of which several exist today.

Since Mr. Dinerstein left no records concerning The Gambler's Quarrel, it is difficult to determine its provenance. None of the versions of this painting published thus far conform to its dimensions, nevertheless, the attribution of the painting to Pieter the Younger is quite possible. It is similar to the Prague version discussed by Marlier (1969, p. 271), which is also on wood and of approximately the same dimensions (42 x 57). The background scene of dancing peasants, the signature and date on the barrel, the same placement of disarrayed cards and even the chalk tally marks on the top of the barrel all correspond in the two.

The Gambler's Quarrel is rather archaic in terms of both style and iconography. Because Pieter the Elder painted the original in 1569, we see a Mannerist approach to composition. The large, entangled group of figures in the foreground is contrasted by the diminutive group in the background. Middle ground, here, is purposefully ambiguous to create a visual tension. This tension, then complements a corresponding tension conveyed in the theme. The festive, dancing peasants in the background are unaware of the fight taking place. Typically, peasants are used to transmit a didactic message; gambling mixed with drinking (cf. the barrel and winejug at lower right) will end in this foolish, irrational behavior.It is a humorous image, but also one tinged with tragedy. One of the scattered cards is an ace of spades, traditionally seen, as in Holbein's Gamblers, from the "Dance of Death" series, as a symbol of death. The didacticism goes beyond humor to a more serious level; not only does the vice of gambling cause one to lose his money and to quarrel, but it can also cost him his life. When Pieter the Elder first devised this image in the mid-sixteenth century, it was new and innovative. By the time his son was copying and re-copying it some fifty years later, it had become rote and passé.

M.C.

10. Attributed to JOOS VAN CRAESBEECK (Flemish, 1605-1654/61)
A Surprised Man (Possibly Adriaen Brouwer), c. 1635
Oil on wood, 13 1/4" x 9 3/4" (33.7 x 24.8 cm)
Lent anonymously

Provenance: Drey Gallery, New York

It is tempting to identify this painting of a surprised man as being a portrait of Adriaen Brouwer rather than a genre scene. The wide-eyed, open-mouthed expression closely approximates a known self-portrait by Brouwer, the central figure in the Smokers, New York (Knuttel, 1962, p. 23). The facial expression, the distinctive beard and upturned moustache are similar in each, as are the disheveled hair and general bone structure of the face. In addition, the subdued tonality and rapid brushwork seem to indicate someone familiar, not only with the master himself, but also with his technique of painting.

But, is it a self-portrait? Interestingly, hardly anyone thinks that it is one. Both Valentiner and, later on Paul Drey reject an attribution to Brouwer with the curious argument that Brouwer would only portray himself blowing smoke out of his mouth, but not shouting. This, of course, is based upon the self-portrait in the New York Smokers. However, the image of a "smoke-blower" is certainly not a requirement of a Brouwer self-portrait, as seen in the more subdued Self-Portrait by Brouwer, today in The Hague. Whether or not the Milwaukee panel is a self-portrait is, indeed, questionable, but it seems that the attribution to Brouwer should not be rejected on such tenuous grounds.

Everyone agrees that, if the painting is not by Brouwer himself, it must be by someone close to him and fairly accomplished with a brush. Stechow, in 1967, suggested Joos Van Craesbeeck, a pupil and good friend of Brouwer. This is entirely possible. Craesbeeck could have based this portrait upon that in the New York Smokers; another Portrait of Brouwer by his hand, today in The Hague, is similar in many respects to Brouwer's own Self-Portrait at the same location already mentioned (Knuttel, 1962, pp. 182-183). Another, perhaps less likely candidate would be David Teniers, another of Brouwer's students. Valentiner (1949, pp. 89-91) has shown that his The King Drinks, Los Angeles, derives directly from Brouwer's New York Smokers, although Teniers' intention of portraying Brouwer specifically is unlikely. Could the Milwaukee painting be a study for The King Drinks? Or, might it not be a portrait of Brouwer, either by Teniers or Craesbeeck? If the work is by either of these two, it must have been done prior to Brouwer's death in 1638, while their style of painting was still very close to the master's. Or, indeed, is it not even possible that it is a self-portrait by Brouwer himself? The painting presents many problems. It also suggests many potential solutions, none of which,at this point, can be easily ignored.

Iconologically, this may be more than just a portrait. Although the expression on the face is certainly individualistic, we cannot tell if the man is simply expressing surprise, or if he is shouting it out. If he is shouting, the image could be seen as an allegory of the senses, specifically that of hearing. Presenting allegories in the guise of genre-like portraits was not unknown in the seventeenth century (cf. Verhout's Portrait of Cornelis Abrahamsz. Graswinckel, cat. 17). Like most other seventeenth century paintings, even simple images, such as portraits, must be seen as possibly reflecting a multiplicity of hidden meanings.

M.C.

11. PAUL DE LESIRE (Dutch, 1611- ?)
The Quillcutter, c. 1630
Oil on canvas, 32" x 24" (81.3 x 61 cm)
Lent anonymously

Provenance: Private Collection, Milwaukee
Private Collection, Switzerland
Galerie Claude Levin, Paris

Paul Lesire, or, Paul de Lesire, was probably a pupil of J.G. Cuyp, but was influenced early in his career by Rembrandt, especially in his half-length portraits. Later, he was influenced by B. van der Helst. In 1631, Lesire

became a master at Dordrecht. In 1648, he worked at The Hague (Bernt, II, 1970, p. 71).

This work has only recently been attributed to Paul Lesire by the present Milwaukee owner when a cleaning brought out the monogram: P. D. L. The letters closely compare with a fully signed work by Lesire owned by the lender. However, the painter of the Quillcutter worked in a style so similar to Rembrandt's that it had been attributed to the master by a number of eminent art historians including W. Valentiner, A. Bredius, M. Freidlander, and H. Voss, in correspondence now in the possession of the present owner. The Quillcutter can be related stylistically and iconographically to Rembrandt's early work of, for example, The Two Disputing Sages, 1628, now in the National Gallery, Melbourne. Similarities in subject matter, technique, brushwork, fine glazing, color tonalities and channeled light can be pointed out. The artist's treatment of the drapery and hands, however, seems to lack the finesse of the master's touch.

Most of the scholars painted by Rembrandt early in his career were vanitas themes, which were also typical subjects for his students. Six vanitas dating from Rembrandt's early Leyden period, 1625-1629, utilized motifs such as worn, dog-eared books scattered carelessly over a table which also contained writing materials (Bergstrom, 1956, p. 164). In addition, a number of vanitas produced during this period were lost, although they were described in old inventories and catalogues (Bredius, 1922, p. 175). This fact, along with the close stylistic resemblance of The Quillcutter to that of the early Rembrandt explains, in part,why Lesire's painting had been attributed to the master. While it is most probable that The Quillcutter presents a message of the transitory nature of learning and of life itself, the action of a man cutting a pen also can be associated with the virtue of Practica. Its emblematic meaning was utilized by a number of Rembrandt's students, including Gerard Dou. Indeed, the presentation of a quillcutter, popular in the seventeenth century, usually identified the sitter as a man of letters (Dutch Genre Drawings, 1972, pp. 29-30).

M.G.

12. JAN MIENSE MOLENAER (Dutch, c. 1600/10-1668)
Children with Animals, c. 1630
Oil on wood, 11 3/4" x 15 5/8" (29.8 x 39.7 cm)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Flagg, Milwaukee

Provenance: Park-Bernet, New York

Children were a conspicuous part of Dutch society. Zumthor writes that " ... the Dutch town swarmed from morning onwards with children from three to six years old, of all classes of society, mixed into a playing, yelling, fighting mass," a phenomenon that astonished European visitors because of its concomitant rowdyism and disrespect towards adults (Zumthor, 1963, p. 99).

Pieter Brueghel's Children's Games of 1560 in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna establishes a precedent in Netherlandish painting for depicting malevolence in children. Brueghel posits children in the guise of adults in what has been accepted as a panorama of folly rather than a dictionary of

games (Stechow, 1969, p. 64). Games involving animals, however, are not apparent in his eighty identifiable illustrations.

Inspired by Brueghel, Jacob Cats' engraving for his poem on children's games in Silenus Alcibiadis sive Proteus ..., published in Amsterdam in 1622, which does depict them playing with animals, seems to reflect a moralizing attitude (Slive, 1962, p. 491). Common Dutch games included forms of torturing animals, and it is noteworthy that this kind of amusement was also enjoyed by adults who engaged in such tavern sport as "cat," which involved striking a keg with a cat inside until the cat died (Zumthor, 1963, pp. 168-169). The group in Children with Animals and in Children Playing with a Dog, c. 1630, by Molenaer seem greatly amused by the plight of a frightened or tortured animal, thus validating Cats' moral intent.

Groups of children with animals seem to have been a popular theme in genre painting; Maes, as well as Molenaer, depicts such scenes. Several studies by Molenaer, A Group of Children in the Widener Collection in Philadelphia (Bredius, 1908, p. 45), Children Playing with a Dog, and Children with Animals are similar three-quarter views of mischievious-looking boys and girls ranging from those who seem very young to those in their later teens. The typologies are so similar that it seems plausible that the same model was used (cf. the children holding dogs in Children Playing with a Dog and Children with Animals).

In addition, the compositional arrangement of the four children and the half light and half dark background in Children with Animals is close to a mirror image of that in Children Playing with a Dog. The flat application of color and the treatment of vertical drapery folds are further stylistic similarities between the two depictions.

Large figures broadly handled seem characteristic of Molenaer's early style in Haarlem around 1630. His descriptive paintings such as The Dentist in the Brunswick Gallery (Wilenski, pl. 93) and Three Little Musicians sold at Christie's,London, in 1931 (Fierens, 1933, pl. III) date from this period. This early dating can, perhaps, explain the treatment of the small child on the left and the sleeve of the older girl on the right.

V.C.

13. JAN MIENSE MOLENAER (Dutch, c. 1600/10-1668)
Merry Company, c. 1640
Oil on wood, 11 3/4" x 14 5/8" (29.8 x 37.2 cm)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Flagg, Milwaukee

Provenance: Schaeffer Gallery, New York

A painter of both bourgeois and peasant life, Jan Molenaer was a follower of Frans Hals, although it is not certain whether he was apprenticed to the master (Rosenberg, Slive, ter Kuile, 1966, p. 107). Molenaer worked in Haarlem until about 1636 when he married Judith Leyster, one of Hals' most precocious pupils, and they moved to Amsterdam for about ten years (Nash, 1972, p. 250).

The subject and composition of this tavern interior are common in Molenaer's oeuvre. The Merry Company seems to belong to Molenaer's later period, around 1640 in Amsterdam, when his paintings underwent a change through Ostade's influence, resulting in a greater fluidity of paint and a preponderance of browns, but without the power of design and the psychological insight of Ostade (Wilenski, 1928, p. 234 and Rosenberg, Slive, ter Kuile, 1966, p. 108).

The subject of tavern merrymaking includes varied activities of the men and women participants. In this scene, drinking and cardplaying predominate, though there is evidence of smoking from the still life objects on the table at the right and love-making by the obscene gesture of the slouched man in a cap also at the right. This figure makes the same vulgar sign as Hanswurst, the popular lustful buffoon from the stage, characterized by Hals in his Shrovetide Revellers, c. 1613-1615 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The verse beneath Roemer-Visscher's emblem on drinking and gambling, "The worst things please the most people " (Bergstrom, 1956, p. 157) may be applied to Molenaer's Merry Company. Such activities are commonly associated with the merry company theme, one of whose purposes was to warn against the immorality of such behavior.

V.C.

14. MATHYS SCHOEVAERDTS (Flemish, 1665- ?)
Vine Harvest Village Feast, 17th Century
Oil on canvas, 22 7 /8" x 18 1/2" (58 x 47 cm)
Lent by Marquette University

Provenance: Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Flagg, Milwaukee

Mathys Schoevaerdts was a pupil of F. Boudeyns in 1682, a master of the Brussels Guild in 1690, and he became its dean in 1692 (Andorfer, III, 1910, p. 239). Stylistically, Schoevaerdts seems to have been influenced by artists such as Jan Brueghel. Like Brueghel, Schoevaerdts depicted landscapes filled with many small, animated figures, all painted in bright and varied colors (Bernt, III, 1970, p. 314). Similarities to David Teniers the Younger, 1610-1690, can also be suggested, especially in the brightly metallic greens and blues utilized by Schoevaerdts, and in the doll-like characterizations of the subjects. Since Teniers died just at the time when Schoevaerdts was in his thirties, it is most probable that his work had an impact upon the younger artist.

The title of the painting in this exhibit, Wine Harvest, Village Feast, calls attention to the fact that two separate but related events are taking place. It is most probable that Schoevaerdts is following a tradition which contrasted virtuous industry with sinful idleness. This type of contrast was depicted by Pieter Brueghel the Elder (Stechow, 1969, pp. 30-31), for example, in his print, Kermess at Hoboken, 1558-59, in which gluttonous indulgence and lewd interactions are presented. However, Brueghel's vitriolic,castigating characterizations contrast greatly with Schoevaerdts' presentations of generally

humorous peasants who can be more closely related to those of Teniers (See: Wilenski, II, 1960, fig. 567, *Woodlandscape With Peasants Dancing*, by L. van Uden and Teniers).

M.G.

15. DAVID TENIERS, THE YOUNGER (With Assistant) (Flemish, 1610-1690)
Tavern Interior, c. 1645
Oil on canvas, 28" x 17 1/2" (7.1 x 44.5 cm)
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Flagg, Milwaukee

Provenance: Beckhardt Gallery, New York

Knuttel's (1962, p. 51) general description of a typical compositional scheme by Teniers fits this painting quite closely. The recession of space into the right background, the half-open door through which a person enters and the pots and pans along the wall appear in many of his works. In addition to this, the "slick," rapid handling of paint, for instance, in the extensive use of white highlighting strokes, is typical of his technique.

Teniers' debt to Brouwer is evident in his use of the tavern interior as a stage upon which peasants indulge themselves in all the familiar vices, such as drinking, smoking and cardplaying. Unlike Brouwer's peasants, however, Teniers' are sweeter and rather more anecdotal. After Brouwer's death in 1638, the zestful, penetrating style he had fostered was mitigated by his students and followers. Even though the source for Teniers' *Tavern Interior* can be found in Brouwer (cf. his *Tavern Interior* cat. 7) and ultimately in Brueghel (cf. *Gambler's Quarrel*, cat. 9), the hard hitting rowdiness is nowhere to be found. Gambling in the Teniers painting is merely picturesque; in Brueghel, it had been a severe moral statement upon the evils of mixing gambling and drink. Although the intended didactic message is probably present in Teniers' *Tavern Interior*, the moralizing punch of Brueghel or Brouwer is lost.

There seems to be more than one hand at work in this painting. Most of the figures in the painting are analogous to other figures by Teniers, such as the man behind the foreground table, holding up a glass of beer, who has a counterpart, for example, in a similar figure in the Louvre of the late 1630's. However, other areas of the painting, such as the crowded space at the extreme left, are too awkward to be by Teniers himself. Because he produced many paintings during his long career, it is quite possible that he used assistants to help satisfy a growing bourgeois taste for scenes like this. Even though this work seems to date rather early, it appears as if Teniers already had found it necessary to employ help in finishing his paintings.

M.C.

16. Attributed to Gerard Thomas (Flemish, 1663-1720)
Doctor's Office, Late 17th - Early 18th Century
Oil on canvas, 25" x 30" (63.5 x 76.2)
Lent anonymously

Provenance: Private Collection, Milwaukee
Cohen's, Inc., Georgetown, D.C.

Gerard Thomas, a pupil of Godfried Maes in 1680, seemed to be most strongly influenced, in his feeling for the brush and atmospheric quality, by D. Ryc a follower of Brouwer (Bode, 1909, p. 277). This painting, *The Doctor's Office*, was verbally attributed to Thomas in 1970 by Dr. W. Bernt (correspondence with Milwaukee collector). A comparison with another painting attributed to Thomas, *The Doctor* in Vienna (Bernt, III, 1970, no. 1174) closely resembles, stylistically as well as compositionally, the painting in this exhibit. Since *The Doctor* was not reproduced in color, it has not been possible to compare the palettes. There are enough obvious similarities, however, to warrant the verbal attribution assigned to the Milwaukee painting by Dr. Bernt. Considering the artist's dates of birth and death, *The Doctor's Office* has been placed in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

Most of Gerard Thomas' small figured genre scenes take place in middle class interiors. The artist was fond of painting doctors, alchemists and artists working in their studies. Like the alchemist, the doctor was associated with dishonesty, knavery, and foolishness (*Ibid.*). In the fifteenth century, a number of prints were produced in which the doctor was presented as a charlatan who relieved the peasants of both pain and money (Judson, 1959, p. 79). By the seventeenth century, Dutch artists painted genre scenes which were humorous allusions to the maladies of the lovesick who were suffering: "from an illness which no medicine could cure" (Slive, 1966, p. 136). Jan Steen's painting, *The Sick Lady*, 1665, now in the Van der Hoop Collection,Amsterdam, is an amusing pictorial interpretation of the moral: "Every cure is here in vain--she suffers naught but loves great pain" (Haak, 1967, p. 67). In Thomas' work, the doctor is holding what appears to be a urine specimen. The weeping young lady is most likely pregnant. Humorous associations linking the doctor with amatory symbols were very much a part of the emblematic tradition in Holland. Often, cupid was presented in the role of a doctor (Von Monroy, 1964, fig. 39).

A possible connection with the Italian Commedia dell'Arte has been suggested by Professor Wind. The doctor as a theatrical figure of fun perhaps originated in Bologna in the early 1500's (Ducharté, 1966, p. 196). Originally, he was dressed all in black, in a costume closely resembling that of the Bolognese man of science and letters. With time, the costume was modified, as illustrated by an early seventeenth century print of Doctor Strummolo, from the Commedia dell'Arte, 1610, Bologna. The similarities between the attire depicted in the print with that of the doctor in this painting, as well as the physician in Steen's work, are obvious. The concept of the doctor as an amusing pictorial character strongly indicates a connection between the Commedia dell'Arte and seventeenth century Dutch genre painting.

M.G.

17. CONSTANTYN VERHOUT (Dutch, active second half 17th Century)
<u>Man with A Wine Jug</u>
<u>Portrait of Cornelis Abrahamsz Graswinckel</u>, c. 1660
Oil on wood, 13 1/2" x 11" (34 x 28 cm)
Lent anonymously

Provenance: Private Collection, Milwaukee
Dominion Gallery, Montreal
Collection R.H. Ward, London
J. Leger and Son Gallery, London
Collection Graswinckel Family, Delft

"The Verhout portrait of an unpretentious brewer is a beautiful piece of still life painting and as original, daring, and elegant a work of art as anything I know. It is also, for all its intense simplicity and tiny format, as classical and potent as the finest Greek statue of the late archaic and early classical period. It is utterly clean and fresh, and as moving and great a piece of human creation, technique and insight as possible to make", Mr. Anthony Clark (Director, Minneapolis Institute of Arts).

Nothing is known about the artist, Constantyn Verhout, until he came to live in Gouda in about 1660. It has been documented that a certain Johannes Verhout was sent to study, in 1663-65, under Konstantyn Verhout of Gouda, "who was an excellent painter of modern subjects" (Bredius, 1922, p. 176). A still life listed in an inventory of Engelbert Graswinckel of Delft, 1738, cites C. Verhout as its painter. Another inventory, that of Jacob Touw of Delft, 1682, lists "een out patrootje," ("an old fellow") van C. Verhout. Whether the Touw inventory is in reference to the portrait in this exhibit is uncertain. It is possible that there is another signed <u>Portrait of Cornelis Graswinckel</u>, identical to the one in this exhibit with one exception: the "lost" painting contains a coat of arms in the right background (Correspondence to the anonymous Milwaukee collector from the Graswinckel family). In addition to the Milwaukee painting, the only other known, signed work by Verhout is the <u>Sleeping Student</u>, 1663, in the National Museum of Stockholm (Bredius, 1922, p. 176).

The subject of the Milwaukee painting was a brewer from Delft, who lived from 1582 to 1664. He was the "Kerkmeester" of the Niewe Kerk where Vermeer was baptized as well as the "Kerkmeester" of the Dude Kerk where the artist was buried. One can probably assume that the brewer was acquainted with both Fabritius and Vermeer (Pointed out by the Milwaukee owner of the Verhout). Cornelis Graswinckel was called the "Delft Israelite" because of his looks and clothing. In a home for the aged in Delft, supported by the Graswinckel family, there is another portrait of the brewer, in which he is wearing a skull cap (Correspondence to the Milwaukee collector from the Graswinckel family).

While Verhout's style differed from Vermeer's, aspects such as the serenely contemplative mood, the carefully ordered composition, the clarity with which the figure stands out from the background, and the subtle tonal gradations found in the brewer's coat and in the background, connect this painting to the quietly controlled style of the last half of the seventeenth century.

The Verhout painting may be more than just a portrait of a brewer, however straightforward the artist's presentation. Perhaps a connection can be made to the multi-levels of meanings found in other Dutch portraits of the seventeenth

century with genre-like qualities, portraits which sometimes carried emblematic or *vanitas* connotations (Slive, I, 1970, pp. 25-26, and 66-68). It is most probable that this painting too, contains *vanitas* symbolism. Earlier, Dou had painted a *vanitas* still life in which the pipe particularly can be connected to Verhout's imagery (Dou's work of 1613-1628 is now in the Gemelde-Gallerie Dresden). In addition, the broken pottery,the cracked wall, the books and the scissors are traditional symbols of the transitory (Bergstrom, 1956, p. 155). A coat of arms, which is depicted in the "lost" portrait of the brewer, and which may be suggested on the jug on the shelf, is also a *vanitas* symbol of earthly wealth and power (*Ibid.*).

M.G.

18. ABRAHAM VERLINDEN (Dutch, active 1627-1659)
Norwegian Lumber Loading Station, c. 1640-1650
Oil on wood, 12 3/4" x 20 1/2" (32.8 x 52 cm)
Lent anonymously

Provenance: Private Collection, Milwaukee
Private Collection, Boston

This is the only known, signed work by the artist and may be the only one in existence anywhere. Abraham Verlinden was a landscape and seascape painter, working in Rotterdam in the first half of the seventeenth century. A reference to the artist was made in an inventory from Rotterdam in 1631, which listed five landscapes by A. Verlinden. The artist died in 1659, leaving a small estate, many debts, anda number of children. One of them, William Verlinde (n) also became a painter (Bredius, III, 1915, pp. 1629-30).

The painting in this exhibit probably depicts merchants in the process of buying wood. Since it is a view of ordinary people at work in a natural setting, it can be described as a genre-landscape. Pieter Brueghel's panoramic scenes filled with poeple perhaps forecasted the landscape-genre works of the seventeenth century (Clark, IX, 1954, p. 15). However, Brueghel's paintings were laden with symbolic meanings which differentiated them from those of later Dutch artists who had depicted nature for its own sake.

Like Pieter Van Laer, Verlinden probably intended to present a simple, honest view of everyday life in natural surroundings (See, for example, Van Laer's *Workshop* of c. 1630, now in a private collection in Rome, reproduced in the *Enclyclopedia of World Art*, II, pl. 94). Whereas Van Laer's figures are placed in an Italian setting, Verlinden's are placed in a Northern vista.

Verlinden's painting closely resembles those produced by the artists of Holland in the 1640's. At that time, Scandinavian scenes were very popular with Dutch painters. Verlinden's work, with its forests bordering the shore seems to be Norwegian in character. With its subdued coloring, The *Norwegian Lumber Loading Station* can be related to the monochromatic but luminous palette of artists such as Jan Van Goyen.

M.G.

19. JACOBUS VREL (Dutch, c. 1634-1662)
Woman Darning Socks, c. 1654-1662
Oil on wood, 11 1/2" x 9 1/2" (28.2 x 24.1 cm)
Lent anonymously

Provenance: Private Collection, Milwaukee
Collection A. Bontoux, Chicago
Collection J. Schoenemann, New York
Collection R. H. Ward, London

Stylistically, this painting seems to fit into the Delft school of c. 1660. The quietude of the image recalls the poetic sobriety of Vermeer and, in fact, this painting was attributed to Vermeer in the early 1930's. Valentiner, in a 1937 letter, gave the *Woman Darning Socks* to Jacobus Vrel, an obscure Delft painter who was re-discovered during Thoré-Bürger's Vermeer revival of 1866. Rosenberg and Slive (1966, p. 127) date Vrel's active years to between 1654 and 1662.

Valentiner bases the attribution solely upon the color scheme, relating it to a signed Vrel in Detroit known as *Maternal Care*. Other points of similarity between the two works can be found. The disposition of the seated woman in the Detroit panel closely approximates that of the *Woman Darning Socks*. The style of dress is the same in both as is the artist's method of painting the folds of the drapery. There is a strong sense of planarity in each. And, finally, the activities of the two figures, one darning socks and the other combing a little girl's hair, both emphasize a seemingly trivial, domestic chore.

Nevertheless, the differences are equally apparent. Valentiner (1929, pp. 87-92), Briere-Misme (1935, pp. 97-114; 157-172) and Régnier (1968, pp. 269-282) all mention Vrel's stress upon rectilinear, geometric composition and use of exterior views through doors and windows. These traits are evident in the *Woman Darning Socks*. Valentiner (1929, p. 87) wrote that Vrel's interiors were typically "... high, simply, planned rooms, constructed almost wholly of horizontal lines,with finely observed lighting and white washed walls." This is hardly the case with the Milwaukee panel. Both Briere-Misme (1935, p. 162) and Régnier (1968, pp. 276-77) emphasize the flat, blank quality of the wall behind the seated woman in the Detroit painting. However, in the *Woman Darning Socks*, that wall has become a hazy void into which even the orthogonals of the floor disappear. Furthermore, the figure here seems to be much too large in relation to the dimensions of the panel. Along with this, the panel is only about one-third to one-fourth the size of the other known Vrel interiors.

In light of these questions, one can propose the following suggestions. For instance, the work, though not by Vrel, might be by someone close to him. Or, if it is by Vrel himself, as the color and brushwork in the drapery would tend to indicate, this might be a preparatory study, for a larger, lost work. Finally, it could also be a collaboration between Vrel and some unknown painter. In short, the style of painting and iconography argue in favor of Vrel; the composition does not.

Iconologically, the scene seems to illustrate the virtue of domestic industry. This theme is common and can be found in any number of variations in

contemporary paintings and prints. Walsh (1973), for example, describes Vermeer's Lacemaker of the early 1660's (Paris) in terms of exhibiting "blameless wifeliness." De Brune's 1624 emblem of a couple busy at their chores carries the inscription, "What profit in rest?". It would appear that the Woman Darning Socks is also exemplifying similar domestic industriousness.

M.C.

20. THOMAS WYCK (Dutch, 1611-1677)
The Alchemist, after 1642
Oil on wood, 21 1/2" x 19 1/2" (54. 6 x 49.5 cm)
Lent anonymously

Provenance: Private Collection, Milwaukee
Dorotheum Gallery, Vienna
Collection L.L.D. Phillips, Exeter, England

Thomas Wyck was a member of the Haarlem Guild in 1642, and became its dean in 1668. He lived for several years in Italy, where he studied under Pieter Van Laer. His style can be related to the small figured genre scenes of Van Laer, and is reminiscent of Bega (Bernt, III, 1970, p. 142).

The alchemist at work was one of Wyck's favorite subjects, which he placed in and architectural setting characterized by pillars and looped drapery. Books, globes, papers and implements of his trade were scattered about the room (Nicolson, 1954, p. 78). There is usually a sharp light directed through a side window where it falls upon objects sparkling with reflections (Bernt, III, 1970, p. 170). While most of the paintings have darkened with age, the motifs and tools are depicted with great accuracy (Ibid.). Probably none of Wyck's paintings were dated by the artist. It is most likely, however, that Wyck produced the majority of his works after he was accepted by the Haarlem Guild. For this reason, The Alchemist has been assigned to the period beginning in 1642.

In the sixteenth century, the alchemist was depicted in a number of prints by Pieter Brueghel the Elder as a dishonest charlatan. With his greedy nature, he was closely associated with Avarice, the most evil of the Seven Deadly Sins, depicted first by Bosch in the fiteenth century and then by Brueghel, with a clearly didactic, satirical intent (Stechow, 1969, p. 25). In the seventeenth century the transience of human life was symbolized by skulls, skeletons, and instruments for measuring time. Clocks, hourglasses and candles were included in the latter category (Bergstrom, 1956, p. 154). Wyck's Alchemist is perhaps the only painting which depicts the exact moment when lead is transformed into gold. Nevertheless, vanitas is the dominant theme here. Motifs such as a skull and crossbones, a skeleton and a flickering candle are present. The macabre action of the skeleton playing a wind instrument, a symbol of the fleeting duration of human pleasure, strongly underscores the probable didactic intent of the artist. A globe, the carelessly placed open books, and the scientific instruments are all vanitas symbols of the transience of earthly existence (Ibid.). In this respect, Wyck's paintings offer a contrast with the pure genre scenes of his early teacher, Pieter Van Laer.

M.G.