

## Antwerp Conference Workshop Summaries

### **Observation and Experience: Art, Science, and the Production of Natural Knowledge, 1580-1720**

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Four short papers on specific objects and practices opened the workshop, aimed at examples of overlap between scientific and artistic pursuits in northern Europe. After a brief introduction by the organizers, Pamela Smith spoke about Wenzel Jamnitzer, Ria Fabri shared recent work on Flemish perspective cabinets, Anne Goldgar summarized her research on tulips and collecting, and Susan Koslow spoke on Rembrandt's Aristotelianism. The discussion which followed focused largely on early modern definitions of epistemology rather than visual representation per se; much comment arose on how writers such as Palissy, Paracelsus, Nicéron, and Kirchner (on how we know the natural world) may have impacted the strategies of making pictures or organizing objects in collections. A key (unresolved) point of debate related to the precise nature of the information art works provided. Regarding botanical illustrations, for example, discussants argued about what conditions existed for such images to be understood as art objects, as sources of scientific information, or both.

### **Rubens's Allegorical Inventions**

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The goal of our workshop was to examine Rubens's varied approaches to allegory. Walter Melion provided an excellent background on the use of allegory in Jesuit literature, focusing on Hieronymus Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*. As it was shown during the discussion, the importance of this meditation manual for Rubens's religious paintings is yet to be fully explored. Lisa Rosenthal suggested a more complex application of allegory in the Siegen *Occasio*, where, as she has argued in a recent publication, the artist uses conventional symbolic language to thematize the construction of pictorial allegory itself. Lucy Davis addressed the difficulties presented by Munich *Silenus* as a painting that defies any conclusive interpretation as a mythology or allegory. Cordula van Wyhe presented a version of a forthcoming article on *The Garden of Love* as an allegorical statement on the ideals of chastity associated with the Brussels court under the Archduchess Isabella. The lively dialogue after these presentations underscored the centrality of allegory for Rubens's oeuvre and pointed to possible venues for further research, one of which is certainly his exceptional skill at making his inventions rewarding for a wide range of audiences.

### **Diptychs, Pairing and Duality in Netherlandish Art**

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The workshop centered on the theme of pairs A? both literal and figurative pair A? and how they convey meaning. The most obvious example of this pairing is the diptych, a form that becomes rather popular in fifteenth-century Netherlands. A Several speakers offered summaries of work in progress to the workshop participants; these came from a variety of perspectives. Among the issues raised were: the origin of the diptych form, its function as a religious object, its association with the Burgundian dynasty (L. Gelfand), its function as a gendered object (A. Pearson), and Asian themes in a particular diptych of 1499 (N. Ninagawa). Conversation ensued from the assembly of scholars in the room, with questions and comments directed towards the presenters. Two further groups of presenters were included, with time for questions addressed to them too. Among the topics raised in these parts of the workshop were: aspects of the manufacture and marketing of diptychs (R. Spronk), plans in the works for an international exhibit of diptychs (J. Hand); the terminology for diptychs found in fifteenth-century documents (L. Jacobs); paired prints (W. Gibson); duality and pairing in narrative structures in illuminations (L. Deam); and a seventeenth-century altarpiece format that depends on paired structures (A. Delvingt). The aim was to offer as much conversation on the issue as possible and to bring both theoretical and technical issues together in a single conversation.

### **Antwerp and Amsterdam: Artistic Exchange c.1580-1675**

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This workshop proposed a critical analysis of interactions between seventeenth-century artists and artistic communities today designated as "Dutch" and "Flemish." The discussion focused primarily on issues of style,

workshop practice, market, etc., rather than on political identity, which was considered elsewhere (see the workshop by Haeger, Courtright and Koslow). The workshop began with a general discussion based on the following questions:

1. Can we define a typical "Dutch" style, or are there too many differences between regions or even between individual workshops? How much has "Hollandocentrism" colored, perhaps unfairly, our picture of Dutch art as practiced throughout the United Provinces? How much do particularities of subject, rather than style, affect our picture of the "Dutchness" of Dutch art?
2. Are there unifying stylistic factors that can be seen as distinctive for Flemish art? Is there a "Flemish" style, or just a "Rubens" style?
3. What conclusions can be drawn from personal interactions between artists north and south of the political divide? How permeable were the borders of artistic exchange?

Stephanie Dickey presented a general introduction, using as a focal point passages from Arnold Houbrake's *Groote Schouburgh*. Writing long after the official establishment of the Republic, Houbrake discusses various Flemish artists alongside their Dutch contemporaries as examples of the greatness of Netherlandish art. Also, however, in presenting the rationale for the choice of artists he includes (1753 ed., I, pp. 6-7), Houbrake considers artists from 'Dutch' cities such as Deventer and Leeuwarden no less, nor more, foreign to Holland than those of Brabant, Prague and Cologne. His approach thus argues both for a broad acceptance of Dutch and Flemish artists as part of the same tradition, and for the persistence of Hollandocentrism as an organizing principle.

Five short presentations presented case studies of work in progress on interactions between artists in Flanders and the Netherlands. Axel Rasmussen discussed architectural interiors by Bartholomeus van Bassen in which staffage is provided sometimes by Dutch and sometimes by Flemish figure painters. A Dennis Weller discussed the impact of the Bruegelian tradition on the genre paintings of Jan Miense Molenaer. Karolien De Clippel presented evidence of the impact of Rembrandt's prints on the Antwerp genre painter Joos van Crasebeeck. Thomas Dering discussed the Van Dyckian qualities of drawings by Govert Flinck. Shelley Perlove discussed Flemish influence on Jan Lievens's portrait of the Jewish physician Ephraim Bueno.

The general discussion that followed focused on evidence for, and against, the concept of a 'continuous Netherlands', in which artistic collaboration and market exchange moved freely between Catholic south and Protestant north. Examples presented, especially Van Bassen's free cooperation with both Dutch and Flemish figure painters, raised intriguing questions about whether our modern scholarly tendency to separate the two traditions should be re-evaluated. In a valuable concluding remark, Hans Vlieghe summed up an important theme that emerged in the discussion: for both Dutch and Flemish artists, the Netherlandish tradition of Van Eyck, Bruegel and Rubens – not the classical and Italian Renaissance tradition – provided an essential role model. This shared heritage underlies the communal interests and cooperative practices of Dutch and Flemish artists in the seventeenth century.

### **Scherpenhevel: Space, Image and Ritual**

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The workshop began with four short papers, structured so as to move from the interior decoration of the pilgrimage church and its architecture towards its wider cultural significance. Each of these papers was followed by a short discussion stimulated by the appointed respondent, Luc Duerloo. Margit Thofner, the workshop organizer, gave the first paper. She considered the fact that a currently lost *Nativity of Christ* was originally made by Theodor van Loon to form part of the altar-piece cycle at Scherpenhevel. Her chief point was that this change of plans served to foreground a particular characteristic of the painting cycle: its privileging of a personal and physical experience of the Divine. Joris Snaet gave the second paper, focusing on the architectural precedents for the church at Scherpenhevel as well as on its marked impact on ecclesiastical architecture in the Low Countries. The third paper was given by Cordula van Wyhe, who discussed the dissemination of the Scherpenhevel cult in Bellefontaine in the Franche-Comté and in Cologne. She argued that, in both of these locations, the Scherpenhevel cult was reformulated and represented to serve the political concerns of those promoting it. Finally, Maarten Delbeke considered Pope Alexander VII's appropriation of the Scherpenhevel cult. He demonstrated how the cult was reshaped to become part of the cultural and political life of Alexander's court. Several interesting points were raised in the lively closing discussion. Perhaps the most important amongst these were the exact ritual usages that the pilgrimage site was built to cater for, as well as the problem of accounting for the hugely varied range of visitors to the site and the equally varied range of meanings that this generated.

## **Problems and Practice in the Printing and Illustration of Books in 16th- and 17th-Century Antwerp**

Plantin-Moretus Museum

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This workshop consisted of three presentations and a concluding examination of the various prints, books, drawings, and plates discussed. Karen Bowen began with a discussion of the wages paid to engravers who worked for the Plantin-Moretus Press c.1570 and c.1615, with special attention paid to the case of the Wierix brothers. This issue is significant because the production and printing of engravings as book illustrations represented a significant added cost and complication to the entire printing process. Bowen demonstrated that the wages paid to engravers varied from individual to individual (even among engravers working on prints for the same publication), where the differences may have reflected the relative experience and fame of the artists concerned. Bowen concluded by providing a sampling of book illustrations and independent prints executed by the Wierix brothers and argued that there was no significant difference in quality between the original impressions from the two sets of prints. Rather, that any bias that book illustrations are generally of lesser quality is more likely due to the very worn (later) states in which scholars often see a particular book illustration for the first time.

Dirk Imhof, curator at the Plantin-Moretus Museum, then presented a few, rare examples of authors' influence on the selection and appearance of the illustrations contained in their publications from c.1590-1600. Focusing on the example of the Jesuit author Thomas Saily, Imhof demonstrated that while Saily was concerned with the precise appearance of some images (providing, for example, either sample drawings or prints), in other cases, any 'devout' image would do to satisfy popular demand. In the case of an exceptional book of hours produced specially for the Archdukes Albrecht and Isabelle, Imhof showed examples of how 'censors' at their court in Brussels 'corrected' proofs of certain images and how these corrections were incorporated in the final images.

Anne-Marie Logan then examined some preliminary drawings for book illustrations. Thanks to the rich holdings of the Plantin-Moretus she was able to show examples by Bolswert and Rubens that began with preliminary drawings, followed by prints, and included even the original copper plates. We all appreciated having her knowledgeable views on the attribution and function of all of the works considered. Finally, throughout the entire workshop, both the speakers and the audience benefited from a lively and interesting exchange of questions and thoughts from all present. Our warm thanks to all who came and made this such an enjoyable session.

## **Art and Corporate Identity: Guild Patronage in the Early Modern Netherlands**

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This workshop explored the role of artwork in promoting corporate interests among trade and shooters guilds. James Bloom discussed appropriations from elite traditions of tapestry and manuscript illumination in the Master of Frankfurt's *Festival of the Archers*, suggesting that this work offered unexpected insight into the progress of panel painting's status among the arts. Anne Woollett explored the Oude Voetboeg's 1590 altarpiece as a commission crafted to underscore the guild's orthodoxy in Counter-Reformation Antwerp and, in so doing, to bolster its political prominence. Natasja Peeters analyzed the choice of artists for Antwerp's St. Luke's Guild altarpiece commission of 1602, and posed the intriguing problem of why the guild waited so long after 1585 to undertake this important project. Ron Spronk offered a caution against too hasty assumptions that St. Luke imagery (such as Rogier van der Weyden's) was always a product of St. Luke's Guild commissions. Joost vander Auwera urged us to look beyond paintings when considering corporate collections, and demonstrated that documentary sources often reveal the greater relative value of media such as silver work and regalia related to ritual and ceremony. Charlotte Houghton discussed the functional nature of the collection of the Antwerp Butchers' Guild as inventoried in its Vleeshuis in 1641, and related the guild's patronage patterns to moments of political crisis for the organization. Alison Kettering noted striking differences in corporate group portraiture traditions between the Northern and Southern Netherlands, and suggested that this cultural divide merited more focused study. Ensuing discussion raised A? though by no means resolved A? such issues as the differing needs and patronage patterns of militia versus trade guilds, the varying function of works aimed at self-identification within the organization or at external group promotion, and the extent of corporate resources invested in artistic production and consumption.

## **Constructing Political Ideologies and National Identities in Netherlandish Art**

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This workshop included four short presentations that provided very different ways of exploring the questions involved. Leopoldine Prosperetti and Susan Koslow focused on representations of the sovereign that draw upon traditional Habsburg strategies. Koslow focused on the state portrait, demonstrating its use as a diplomatic instrument and in furthering dynastic aims and contrasting this image of embodied sovereignty with the diverse symbols of the Dutch Republic whose form of government did not invest power in a single person. Prosperetti, on the other hand, examined several pictures by Jan Brueghel in which, she argued that the Archdukes appear as embodiments not of dynastic power but of divine favor who procure protection for their subjects by their devout nature. Thus, the pictures can be seen as a manifestation of the benefits of Habsburg piety, displays of which constituted an important means for achieving religious uniformity which was essential to the unity and identity of the state.

Like religion, language is unquestionably a potent force in achieving unity and identity, and the study and standardization of language is often linked to emerging civic and national entities. In his paper, David Levine explored this development in the northern Netherlands and examined the connection between the style of Frans Hals and the Dutch characterization of their language, acknowledging its roughness and lack of elegance, while celebrating its ingenious structure. Perry Chapman also considered the role of a kind of language in her exploration of the emergence of the sorts of images that participate in the formation of an imagined community and a sense of patriotic identity during the Twelve Year Truce. Among other things, she argued that a vernacular allegory developed, one which replaced the Renaissance humanist language of erudite symbolic representation with a native pictorial idiom of mundane motifs.

In the discussion that followed, various issues raised by the presentations were debated. The most debated was the question regarding what the term national identity signifies and whether or not we can use it in the context of the seventeenth-century Netherlands.

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### **The Patronage of Flemish Late Baroque Sculpture, c.1640-1710 : A Tour of Antwerp Churches**

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The workshop was divided in two, with a visit to the Sint-Jacobskerk and the Sint-Pauluskerk. A visit to the churches allowed those not familiar with the seventeenth-century religious context in Antwerp to get a feel for the original spaces in which the sculpture functioned. But the workshop was primarily aimed at raising the practical, historiographic and methodological problems in the study of late baroque sculpture in Antwerp. As a special aspect, patronage was used to introduce the issues, although the field is still bare land and seriously needs further study. The greatest needs were found in the lack of interdisciplinary studies that allow historians, anthropologists and art historians to study the sculpture (e.g. the writing of patrons' biographies must precede any discussion of their sculpture patronage) and the placing of the Antwerp sculptural production in a proper international context, weighing the different sources of input on an artistic and practical level as well as from the patrons' point of view.

### **Early Collections and Collecting Activities North of the Alps**

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Three short presentations on aspects of Renaissance collections created the framework for a lively exchange of ideas. The material selected for presentation covered three different social groups and thus provided a good cross-section of collecting activities during the first half of the sixteenth century: Flemish and Spanish high nobility, German merchants and Flemish burghers from Antwerp. Marie-Tere Alvarez (J. Paul-Getty Museum, Los Angeles) discussed parameters of collection research in regard to MencA-a de Mendoza, the wife of Henry III of Nassau. She also presented her new findings on Jan Gossaert's portrait of a Spanish nobleman in the J. Paul-Getty Museum (now identified as Juan de Zuniga). MencA-a de Medoza's Renaissance collection and her art patronage are the focus of a major research project undertaken by Alvarez and an international team of scholars. Mark A. Meadow (UC Santa Barbara) discussed the pivotal role of the south German Fugger family in the rise of early modern collections in the Habsburg Empire and compared the international networks of well-established merchants with those of the leading courts of Europe. Individuals such as Hans Jacob Fugger competed with the high nobility in their quest for collectible items of all kinds, including book, art objects and curiosities. This investigation is part of a larger research initiative at UCLA entitled: 'Microcosms: Objects of Knowledge.' Maximiliaan P. J. Martens and Nastasja Peeters (both Rijksuniversiteit Groningen) provided an overview of their archival research into sixteenth-century art collections in Antwerp before Iconoclasm. Based on their evaluation of judicial inventories dating from the 1530s and 1540s first statistical data could be presented on the following aspects: number of art objects/paintings in urban households grouped according to size and wealth of the owner, location of the objects, artistic category and subject matter. Written resuma(C)es of current research projects were submitted by: Jochen Luckhardt, Ariane Mensger, Noelia GarcA-a PA(C)rez and Luisa Wood Ruby.

### **Dulle Griet in the Museum Mayer van den Bergh**

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The workshop took place before BruegelA?s painting in the Mayer van den Bergh. Organizers Jane Carroll and Alison Stewart offered a brief introduction that welcomed discussion and overlapping interpretations for BruegelA?s painting. The workshop was centered around four papers addressing specific aspects of meaning in BruegelA?s work, with each presentation followed by questions and discussion initiated by workshop attendees. Walter Gibson began by addressing the central figure of 'Dulle Griet' as the stock figure of the quarrelsome, headstrong women who dared to confront the devil himself as seen in proverbs and literature of the time. Yona Pinson turned to an interpretation of folly, human desire, and avarice for the entire painting as seen in individual details (e.g., egg shells and coins). Margaret Carroll stressed the importance of viewing the painting first-hand for its threatening, war-like effect, in which the townA?s walls are breached, the town sacked and looking like Hell. Louise Milne addressed madness within folk mythology including dreams and nightmares explored in the next generation by William Shakespeare. For Milne, 'Dulle Griet' is Lady Antwerp before the gates of Hell while women exercise carnivalesque license. Discussion after each presentation and at the very end stressed the centrality of Antwerp, shipping and commerce, money and capitalism, and BruegelA?s use of Boschian imagery.

### **Weighing Relationships: Form, Content and Function in Paintings by Jan van Eyck**

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This workshop featured short paired presentations on three Eyckian paintings: the *Van der Paele Madonna* (Carol Purtle, Maryan Ainsworth), the *Rolin Madonna* (Philippe Lorentz, Hugo van der Velden), and the *Arnolfini Double Portrait* (Anne van Buren, Bernhard Ridderbos). In each case, views about the form, content and purpose of these works were presented, offering different and sometimes divergent perspectives on significance and meaning. These

presentations served to demonstrate anew the importance of a wider view of iconology which studies the symbolic meanings of Eyckian works as a matter, not only of content, but also of form and function. A? incorporating the results of technical and archival investigation.

The large number of knowledgeable participants assured a rich and varied discussion, unfortunately cut short by the constraints of time. Among the topics introduced, in addition to different interpretations of a number of issues involved in the London double portrait, were technical observations based on the IRR of the *Van der Paele Madonna* seen in relation to earlier interpretations, and, concerning the *Rolin Madonna*, the significance of Rolin's cloth of gold, the situation of the commission, and once again the time of day revealed by the position of the moon in the sky. (This last study was accompanied by information on software designed to indicate the position of the moon on any historical date given.) Among other unresolved questions were those raised about the relation of a fully finished frame to the function and meaning of the work. Participants pointed out that the Rolin panel is fully painted with faux-marble finish on the back, whereas the center panel of the Dresden triptych, a work traditionally assumed to be designed for mobile use, remains unfinished in this manner.