

From Icon to Art in the Netherlands

Abstracts of Baltimore/Washington Conference Papers

Rogier van der Weyden: Sculpture and Painting in Early Netherlandish Art

Chairs: Mark Tucker (Philadelphia Museum of Art), Lloyd DeWitt (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

The Walters Art Museum, Graham Auditorium

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New Findings on the Function of Rogier van der Weyden's Philadelphia Crucifixion

Mark S. Tucker, Philadelphia Museum of Art

The two panels that together form the Philadelphia *Crucifixion*, long attributed by many scholars to Rogier van der Weyden, have until recently eluded any convincing identification with prevalent forms or display contexts. Technical and stylistic observations arising from the present study suggest, however, the panels' origin in a specific tradition with which they had not previously been associated: paintings made for the wing exteriors of Netherlandish *carved* altarpieces. The identification of the Philadelphia panels as wings—and more specifically wings integral to a sculptural project—is supported by the occurrence of a combination of features of carpentry, scale, proportions, and pictorial style.

The technical evidence of the panels' having been altarpiece wings includes the original thinness of the oak panel stock, which is consistent with that specified traditionally for large wings. That the panels had imagery on their reverses and that they were elements of a *carved* altarpiece in particular is a horizontal row of original dowel holes that pass through the face of the panels near their bottom edges. Such dowelling, atypical of the construction, framing, or mounting of Netherlandish panel paintings, indicates the presence of an original engaged member spanning the reverse of the panel. This position of this lost element falls proportionally within the range occupied by a standard feature of the Netherlandish carved altarpiece *caisses*: the integral shelves that support the sculpture and coincide with the upper horizontal edge of the openwork tracery panels that typically span the bottom of carved altarpiece interiors. A precedent for this type of dowel joinery is found in the wing *caisses* of the 1400-10 Hakendover altarpiece. Another is provided by the Frankfurt Flémalle *Virgin and Child*, which (along with the shared stylistic convention for carved altarpiece exteriors of the large scale figures' depiction before a cloth-draped wall in a shallow exterior space) exhibits a horizontal row of dowel holes posited by Kemperdick in 1997 to be an indication of that panel's origin in a carved retable. The structural evidence that the Philadelphia *Crucifixion* was not an independent work, but a counterpart to sculpture, introduces for consideration highly specific challenges of creation and presentation, and a new potential for comparison with other works. The stylistic breadth and austerity of the Philadelphia *Crucifixion* are particularly noteworthy in light of Philippot's observation

that carved altarpiece paintings reflect a distinct tradition, with idiomatic conceptual preferences stemming from their function as integrated components of the specific encompassing conception of those altarpieces.

Beyond the structural evidence, comparisons with key formal and stylistic features of the Philadelphia panels can be found on the exterior paintings of a wide sampling of Netherlandish carved altarpieces. Traits noted as consistent with the distinct traditions of carved retable exterior paintings include large overall size, the breadth of the composition (particularly the large scale of the figures relative to format) and its continuation across adjacent panels. Also consistent are the Philadelphia panels' full coloring (in contrast to the tendency toward the grisaille of many solely painted altarpieces' exteriors) and the placement of the scene before a wall draped with cloths of honor, creating a shallow, space comparable to that of the interior sculptural compartments. The linking of the painting's space to the same constraints, forms, and artifice of the carved interior acknowledges sculptural space on its own terms, and ties it, in turn, to the illusionistic capacities of painting.

Comparative study of carved altarpiece forms also supports inferences about the appearance of the proposed altarpiece from which the Philadelphia panels came, based upon the most prevalent traits of such altarpieces. As for format, the most common overall shape for large carved altarpieces is the so-called "inverted T," but whether or not a raised center section was present, the lower, main tier, over which the panels would have closed, is almost invariably a horizontal rectangle; the Philadelphia panels together, however, form very nearly a square, so it is likely they were two of four large panels spanning the main tier of the closed altarpiece. As for subject, the altarpiece was probably a narrative cycle with large sculpture groups, the general type being suggested by the partially visible Passion retable depicted beyond the choir screen in the Antwerp *Triptych of the Seven Sacraments*.

One aspect of the Philadelphia painting that is not typical of carved altarpiece exteriors is the Crucifixion subject; however, the observation by Griet Steyaert that the wing exteriors of the small carved altarpiece now in the Brussels Centre Public d'Action Sociale (CPAS), which show a divided Crucifixion scene reminiscent of the Philadelphia panels, shows that other examples of the subject and form on wing exteriors did exist. If the Philadelphia panels were two of four across, the subject(s) and position of the two lost panels—both to one side, or one to either side of the Philadelphia pair—remains undetermined, though some evidence for the latter arrangement does exist.

The identification of the Philadelphia *Crucifixion* as wing exteriors of a carved altarpiece introduces the possibility of better-informed analysis and interpretation. Long praised as an independent work, the newly proposed context may clarify the distinction of the painting as an image made to mediate between the exterior world and the higher sanctity of an altarpiece interior, or between private worship and formal ritual. Long appreciated in its own right as a transfixing object of contemplation and devotion, the Philadelphia painting might now be appraised equally for its deeply considered relationship to the sculpture revealed when the wings were opened. In fact, perhaps the greatest achievement of this work, as we may now regard it, is the way it was conceived

to serve both its static function—as a powerful devotional image—and its transitional function—as an allusion, foil, and threshold to sculpture.

If, as proposed, these large-scale and boldly composed panels came from a sculptural high altarpiece of extraordinary size, they occupied the face of the altarpiece most constantly on view and thus were its most dominant imagery. As such, and vital to the potency of the altarpiece as a whole, these panels would have been the conspicuous representation of the artist's eminence and creative authority over a monumental project, accounting for the inventive composition and, for an altarpiece exterior, an unusually high standard of painting.

Sculpture and Painting / Sculptors and Painters: Wall-mounted memorials in the Burgundian Netherlands

Douglas Brine, Courtauld Institute of Art, London

In the Burgundian Netherlands it was common, for those who could afford it, to be buried within a church or cloister and for the grave slab to be accompanied by a memorial tablet (or 'epitaph') attached to the wall above. Such memorials operated in conjunction with grave slabs as a means of reminding the living to pray for the deceased interred below, usually church canons or wealthy members of the urban laity. The memorial typically consisted of a rectangular stone slab on which were carved representations of the deceased, often presented by their patron saints, kneeling in prayer before a devotional image, most commonly the Virgin and Child or the Trinity. The scene would be accompanied below by an inscription that identified the deceased, stated their dates of death and entreated the beholder to pray to God for their souls.

Although a number of scholars have been struck by the formal connections between these sculpted reliefs and contemporary early Netherlandish paintings, the reasons for these links remain largely unexplored and wall-mounted memorials are generally absent from histories of early Netherlandish art. However these works offer a wealth of evidence pertaining to the theme of the interrelation of painting and sculpture at this time. The aim of this paper is to use wall-mounted memorials as a means to examine more closely the connections between painting and sculpture and between painters and sculptors in the fifteenth century, particularly in relation to Rogier van der Weyden, the painter who, perhaps above all others, was most influenced by, and had most influence on, contemporary sculpture.

Despite the appalling levels of loss and destruction in the region, a surprisingly large number of fifteenth-century wall-mounted memorials have survived: my research has arrived at a figure of nearly 250 objects in the southern Netherlands alone. Although most of these memorials were relief sculptures it is abundantly clear from documentary sources and a few surviving works that they could take the form of panel paintings as well. Rogier van der Weyden himself is recorded as having produced one such memorial painting, which formerly hung in Sinte-Goedule church, Brussels, above the grave of Willem van Masenzele (d. 1452).

Painters were also involved in the production of sculpted memorial tablets, especially in their polychromy. A severely damaged memorial in Saint-Quentin church, Tournai,

made in commemoration of the fishmonger Jean de Bury (d. 1436) is recorded as having had part of its inscription gilded by ‘master Rogier the painter’, identifiable as the young Rogier van der Weyden. A few years later, in 1440, Rogier was paid for polychroming a memorial relief, carved by Jan van Evere and commissioned by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, for the Minorite church in Brussels to commemorate Marie d’Evreux, Duchess of Brabant (d. 1335), and her daughter, Marie de Brabant, Duchess of Guelders (d. 1398), both of whom were buried there. Rogier was paid forty *ridders* for the polychromy of the sculpture, which featured the two duchesses with the Virgin, plus an additional six pounds for painting *die pourtraiture* of the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy on the sculpture’s shutters. It seems to have been relatively common for sculpted wall memorials to have had painted wings attached. Although none of these winged memorials survive intact, several existing examples have hinges on them, indicating that they did originally have shutters. One such work, the sculpted memorial of Jean du Sart, originally from Saint-Nicolas church in Tournai, as well as having had wings, appears to have been designed by a painter. It shows a Nativity scene that derives from that in Rogier’s *Bladelin’ Triptych* in Berlin. However, the Tournai memorial is actually rather closer to some of the workshop variations of the composition, such as those in the *Sforza Triptych* (Brussels) and the *Cloisters Nativity Altarpiece* (New York), suggesting that the sculpture’s designer had access to Rogier’s workshop patterns. In view of the date of the memorial sculpture – 1456 (well within Rogier’s lifetime) – it seems possible that one potential conduit for the transmission of this design was Rogier’s nephew, Louis le Duc, who registered as a master in Tournai in 1453, after having presumably trained with his famous uncle in Brussels.

Iconic Transitions and the Interdependence of Painting and Sculpture in the Early Netherlandish Canon

Carol J. Purtle, University of Memphis

Following the fundamental tenets of the Conference theme, this presentation concentrates on several important points of convergence where sculptors and painters were engaged on common projects. It also considers the roles of the two disciplines in figure development and placement within iconic devotional objects of the early years of the fifteenth century (i.e. before the death of Jan van Eyck in 1441).

Though the economic and cultural conditions of the early fifteenth century determined that sculpture was the more costly and precious medium to both commission and collect, this presentation will simply acknowledge the fact without discussing its economic development or rationale. While later generations of academics have separated the study of different media, the person deciding to commission a work in the early fifteenth century was likely thinking of an art object rather than of a work from the hand of only one artist. We have a number of examples illustrating the close working relations among painters, sculptors, jewelers and metalworkers. Though we find painters working on 3-dimensional figures rather regularly, particularly to cover them in polychrome or gold, most such projects would clearly have remained visible as works of sculpture alone.

There is, however, a more basic level at which both painters and sculptors would have found themselves dependent on graphics. At this level we find evidence that sculptors drew figures for painters, and the works of painters gave graphic inspiration to sculptors. Among those figuring prominently in this discussion are Malouel, Sluter, the Limbourgs, Campin and Van Eyck. The most complete discussion is reserved for the practice of Jan van Eyck, as he was among the first to develop iconic characters who could move in and out of paintings wearing robes of double-cut velvet or natural stone with equal aplomb.

Key to a further consideration of the relationship between painting and sculpture is the transitional development of the iconic image and its fundamental orientation toward maintaining an intimate spatial relationship between the devotional image and the viewer. Within spaces that revealed objects ripe for close inspection, recognition of the principal characters remained of utmost importance. Thus techniques were developed whereby painted figures were turned to imitation sculpture without losing their identity or liveliness. These techniques are fundamental to many characters we take for granted in well-known works today, though it is quite possible that they have not yet been identified with their counterparts in another medium. This presentation proposes to reveal some of these relationships and to place in a developmental perspective the movement toward the imitation of sculpture as a stylistic sub-text of painting.

Brussels stone sculpture in the period of Rogier van der Weyden

Bart Fransen, KIK/IRPA and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

The relationship between the innovative pictorial language of Rogier van der Weyden and the sculpture in Brabant, and more precisely in Brussels, has already been studied by several art historians. It has mainly been explored from a pictorial point of view, starting from the well-known oeuvre of the Brussels city painter. It is also noteworthy, however, that most sculptures in which the so-called Rogerian influence has been observed, date after the painter's death in 1464.

My own research is centred on the sculpture existing in the Brussels area during the period of Rogier's lifetime, some of which have never been published in art historical literature. These pieces consist mainly of the monumental stone apostle statues from Nivelles and Anderlecht, as well as decorative architectural elements like the capitals from the former Carthusian monastery of Scheut and those of the Brussels Town Hall, the design of which is usually attributed to Rogier himself.

This presentation will compare the styles of these contemporary works to the paintings Rogier produced while in Brussels, confirming similarity in some aspects and denying it in others.

Grisaille and the Thresholds of Early Netherlandish Triptychs

Lynn F. Jacobs, University of Arkansas

The phenomenon of grisaille is one of the most intriguing issues in the nexus of ties between sculpture and painting within early Netherlandish art. Everyone who studies

Flemish painting is aware that grey-monochrome, pictorial imagery – which imitates sculpture to varying degrees – is often found on the exterior of triptychs. But, as Shirley Blum noted in her 1969 *Early Netherlandish Triptychs*, “the reasons for its [grisaille’s] use are not yet fully understood.” And they remain so even today.

To be sure, a number of theories regarding the use of grisaille on triptych exteriors have been advanced over the years. Hans Belting’s view, proposed in his 1994 *Die Erfindung des Gemäldes*, probably comes closest to representing the current scholarly consensus. Belting argues that grisaille was used to establish an antithesis between triptych exteriors – which were conceived as closed stone walls that limited the view to empirical perception, either of living people (e.g., donor portraits) and/or of stone figures (in grisaille) – and triptych interiors, which display the transcendent, visionary world that starts where empirical perception ends. I agree with Belting that grisaille could and often did serve to distinguish and divide the exterior from the interior of the triptych. But in this paper, I will argue that grisaille also could be used to create links between these two zones of the triptych. And these links had significant implications for the meaning of the work.

On my view, the terminology used in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to refer to triptychs, that is, the term “painting with doors,” expresses the then-contemporary sense that the fundamental role of the format was to create doors that delimit thresholds between different zones. Netherlandish artists negotiated these thresholds carefully and consciously, because the meaning of the triptychs, at least in part, was bound up in the ways in which these built-in boundaries were structured. Very often artists tried to illustrate meaning-laden connections between the different zones of the triptych by creating visual links across the thresholds between them.

This paper will examine the treatment of grisaille on the exteriors of several fifteenth and sixteenth century triptychs (from Campin through Bosch) and assess ways in which the treatment of grisaille helps break down the divisions between exterior and interior to create connections that are essential to the meaning of the whole. A major focus of the analysis will be on how the growing pictorialism of the grisaille over the course of the fifteenth century (that is, the increasing sense of animation and color) represents an increased concern for unification across the threshold between exterior and interior. The paper will also consider how grisaille images sometimes break down another threshold – that is, the one between the art work and the viewer – through projection forward in space. The paper will also examine how the relations of exterior and interior within early Netherlandish painted triptychs compare to those in sculpted altarpieces of the time.

Printmaking in Northern Europe 1450–1700: Medium, Market, and Message

Chair: Stephanie S. Dickey (Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario)

Thursday, November 9, 2006

Philips Galle, His Descendants, and Print Workshops in Antwerp

Karen Bowen, Independent Scholar

Around 1570, Philips Galle, a respected engraver and print publisher in Haarlem, moved his business to Antwerp, then an important center of print production. Filling, in part, the gap in the Antwerp print publishing world left by the death of Hieronymus Cock, Galle maintained his business through the turbulent war years in Antwerp, up until the end of the sixteenth century. With each generation of Philips Galle's successors, however, his original, successful print workshop devoted to the production and sale of independent prints broke apart and devolved into more specialized types of print workshops. In this talk, I will examine the changing array of activities and associated revenues of the workshops run by his successors. Due to the familial bonds that linked them, these workshops provide especially telling comparisons. They not only document the co-existence of distinct types of print workshops in seventeenth-century Antwerp, but also reveal differences in their social status and economic standing.

The evidence of these diverging branches of the Galle family of engravers and print publishers stems from the rich archival records of the Plantin-Moretus Press, which document the working relationship between the Galles and the Moretus family of book publishers to whom they were related by marriage. Although these documents are primarily transactions concerning the production of books with engraved illustrations, they nevertheless reveal two basic stages in the ever altering activities taken on by the Galle print workshops. The first transition was from Philip Galle's general refusal to work on any print project that he, himself, would not control, to his sons's (Cornelius I's and Theodore's) willingness to assist the Moretuses regularly with the illustration of their books: hence, they made and printed engravings that they would not control. The second essential change was the gradual specialization by the next generation of Galles (Cornelius I's son and grandson Cornelius II and III and Theodore's son Jan) in essentially just one aspect of the Moretuses' production of illustrated books, namely, either the engraving (and reworking) of the plates needed to illustrate the texts, or the printing of them. They represented, thus, two distinct types of print workshops: one run by a trained artist who (together with his workshop) actively produced new engravings (and reworked worn ones), and another run by a figure of no particular personal artistic renown that saw primarily (if not exclusively) to the printing of existing copperplates, either from his own stock for sale via his own shop, or others' plates, like a book publishers', for publications beyond the print workshop's control.

While this reduction of Philips Galle's grandsons' activities is also suggested by what is known of their own production of independent prints, it is only via the records of the Plantin-Moretus Press that one can begin to evaluate the financial implications of the decision to specialize in this manner. On the one hand, these records reveal that engravers associated with the independent type of print workshop could earn a superior wage that not only kept pace with general wage increases, but might also rise beyond that in accord with the reputation of the given artist. Those associated with the service type of print workshop, on the other hand, appear to have worked at a low, day laborer's

wage that did not necessarily keep pace with general price increases and was more readily suppressed due to external forces. The unexpected paradox suggested by the records of the Plantin-Moretus Press, however, is that the superior wage of skilled, respected engravers did not necessarily guarantee a regular, greater annual income.

Consequently, this discussion will provide a well documented example of the changing faces of print workshops that were probably more common than currently acknowledged – the Collaert family of engravers is, for example, likely another case in point. It will also provide rare evidence of the financial advantages and disadvantages of at least two types of workshops and illustrate what various members of one established family of engravers and print publishers were willing – or simply able – to do for family, fame, or basic economic survival.

Lottery Dials: The Interactive Print as Intervention

Suzanne Karr Schmidt, Yale University

An astonishing number of fortune-telling books and single-sheets equipped with movable dials appeared in Germany in the sixteenth century, a craze that began in earnest with two heavily illustrated works from Strasbourg in 1539. These texts built upon a German manuscript tradition with built-in dials decorated with angels, who purported to tell the player's fate without the damning use of the dice necessary to most other popular forms of gaming. This talk will discuss several types of books and ephemeral Northern single-sheet prints with lottery dials—and the sets of Epiphany Crowns that were cut out and worn. By placing all these in the context of advertising, morality and civic (dis)obedience—from actual lotteries held by town councils and the fines levied against actual gamblers, we will begin to understand their subversiveness.

These 'interactive' books and prints have rarely survived, due to their frequent demise via their intended use, but as this talk will suggest, they were once pervasive, and engaged in a close interplay with each other. For instance, in 1539, the Strasbourg artist Heinrich Vogtherr designed the interactive mechanism for both his own piously inspired lottery, and a satirical lottery book by Jörg Wickram. The latter would prove to be immensely popular, going into at least twenty editions into the seventeenth century, while a Protestant lottery wheel by Hans Rudolph Manuel Deutsch commenting on the decline of the Catholic clergy was copied in several Northern versions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and even in Italy, in Andrea Andreani's chiaroscuro Memento Mori Wheel of Fortune. Seen as a group, these prints—with their parts to cut out and wheels to turn—demonstrate some of the little-known capabilities of early modern printmaking.

Hendrick Goudt, 'constrijcken Plaestsnijder tot Utrecht'

Tico Seifert, Freie Universität Berlin

The printed oeuvre of Hendrick Goudt (1583-1648) consists of only seven engravings after paintings by Adam Elsheimer. The impact of these masterpieces however was enormous. Goudt did not alone spread Elsheimer's works all over Northern Europe. At

the same time his chiaroscuro engravings strongly influenced landscape paintings and prints and the genre of night scenes.

Goudt's life and work has not been researched thoroughly so far. Many of what we know about him was published in 1675 by Joachim von Sandrart. His account of Goudt's works and fame is regarded as the earliest surviving.

In my paper I will present hitherto overlooked verses by Balthasar Gerbier. In his lamentation poem on the death of Hendrick Goltzius, published as early as 1620, the painter and diplomat dedicated sixteen lines to the Utrecht engraver and his masterpieces. Gerbier's praise seems to be the only account of Goudt's fame printed within the latter's lifetime. It allows us to glance at the high esteem the „plaetsnijder tot Utrecht“ was held in by his contemporaries.

The central part of my paper focuses on Goudt's engraving after Elsheimer's so-called *Small Tobias*. This print, made in Rome in 1608, is the most famous by Goudt next to his *Flight into Egypt*.

I will examine the genesis of the *Small Tobias* engraving within the context of Elsheimer's painting and etching, Goudt's own pen drawing on parchment, as well as a proof and the different states of his engraving. The comparison of these works show the artist in the difficult process between invention and reproduction. Furthermore an unique impression of an unfinished –m and unnoticed – engraving of the *Small Tobias* sheds new light on the means of reproductive prints.

In 1609 the *Small Tobias* print was mentioned in the correspondence of Elsheimer's friend Johannes Faber. Goudt's engraving was even printed on parchment and on silk. Some of these collector's items are documented in inventories in the 17th-century. These circumstances encourage some hypotheses on the commission of this highly elaborate engraving.

My paper presents the printmaker Goudt „at work“ and reveals among others the earliest source on his fame. The results form part of a larger research on life and art of Hendrick Goudt.

Marketing Naval Heroes: Portrait Prints during the Anglo-Dutch Wars

Vanessa Schmidt, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

The Anglo-Dutch Wars (1652-74) were controversial and costly for the Dutch. The proponents of the war effort in Amsterdam commissioned and used works of art to help garner support for their cause. In particular, there was significant attention given to the promotion of naval heroes and the Admiralty. The naval board of the Amsterdam Admiralty commissioned, amongst other things, tombs, monuments, medals and history paintings, and built a vast complex of buildings, which incorporated architectural sculpture and paintings. During this period, series' of portrait prints of naval heroes also appeared, as early as 1652. This paper will suggest that these prints were part of a larger campaign. Placing these portrait prints within the iconography of

the naval hero brings out how portrait prints presented a significant modification of the image of the admiral as it was presented to the local Amsterdam elite in the form of monuments and paintings in public spaces. Unlike the lofty associations with ancient history and aristocratic traditions of the war hero of the official commissions, these prints portrayed home grown, rough-and-ready defenders of the people. In a significant adaptation of European traditions of portrait print series of rulers and intellectuals, tradition, the Admirals in these print series' are in the humble costume of the average seaman, depicted on a ship's deck at work and in action, and possess exaggerated facial expressions and ruddy features that, while they are truthful likenesses, make these men look more common. The inclusion of poems in vernacular Dutch adds to this emphasis on the familiar.

As the leading members of Amsterdam's Admiralty board, members of Amsterdam's ruling elite were responsible for the direction and content of the naval hero iconography of this period. In tandem with the larger campaign, these admiral portrait prints must be understood as political propaganda aimed at a wide audience; moreover, the images of these men were surely accessible to a wide range of socio-economic groups. The messages and undertones of these prints are overwhelmingly republican in nature and are particularly relevant to the political situation in the city, where political leaders were at odds with The Hague orangists during this stadholderless period. This paper will demonstrate how print publishers – Blooteling, in particular – met the demands of their patrons through innovative changes to painted exemplars and substantially helped to promote the war effort beyond Amsterdam.

Designer and Engraver, the Nature of Their Exchange

Nadine Orenstein, Metropolitan Museum of Art

The relationship between the designer and the engraver in 16th- and 17th-century Netherlandish prints is often taken for granted: one artist created a design and handed it to an engraver who would indent the drawing, transfer it to a printing plate, and recreate it as faithfully as possible in print. Upon closer examination, however, this relationship seems to have varied given the parties involved. Some painters appear to have had a great interest in the appearance of the prints created after their designs while others seem to have had little. In the catalogue to our exhibition on Pieter Bruegel the Elder's drawings and prints, for instance, I proposed that the painter adapted his style of drawing in small ways to the engraver he was working with at the time.

Engravers also participated in larger or smaller ways in the production of a print. It may seem like sacrilege to scholars of drawings to write the following but drawings – even by famous artists - appear to have at times been marked up by engravers in order to translate the design into the graphic language that would help them engrave the lines and cross-hatchings of the print. An important point to note in this respect is that from the mid-sixteenth century on, drawings for prints rarely looked like the final product. Typically they were drawn with washes; almost never with cross-hatching.

This talk will discuss through several of examples the nature of the exchange between designers and engravers; how they worked together and the variations in this

relationship. If I get up the courage, I will propose here my theory that the engravers of Van Dyck's Iconography series touched up the master's drawings with washes.

The Bible and Spiritual Enlightenment: Defining Dutch and Flemish Religious Devotion

Chair: Shelley Perlove (University of Michigan-Dearborn)

Friday, November 10, 2006

The Painting *St. John The Baptist, St. Barbara and Two Donors of the St. Martin Church in Bratislava: The Case of a Corrected Image*

Ingrid Ciulisova, The Slovak Academy of Sciences-Institute of Art History

In 1927 Gizela Weyde and Otto Benesch introduced the painting *St John the Baptist, St Barbara and Two Donors* (oak, 90×75 cm) into relevant art historical literature. This painting was a donation from Countess Maldeghem-Bethlen in the late nineteenth century to the chapel of St Mary in Bratislava (Pressburg, Poszony). It has been recognized that the panel in its present form is a junction of two former altar wings with arched tops (each of 90×28cm) and the additional central panel (90×19cm) of different pictorial quality. Both scholars devoted their attention primarily to the adapted altar wings. In a joint work with Gizela Weyde, Otto Benesch supported an attribution to Hugo van der Goes and Colyn de Coter (G. Weyde, O. Benesch, 1928). He believed that while the panel with St Barbara was the work of Colyn de Coter the panel with St John the Baptist and the Donor might have been started by Hugo van der Goes and later completed by Colyn de Coter. Maquet-Tombu was inclined to consider both side panels as the workshop Colyn de Coter (J. Maquet-Tombu, 1937) C. Périer-d'Ieteren attributed the painting to Colyn de Coter and claimed it an early Coter work from around 1500 (C. Périer-d'Ieteren, 1981, 1982, 1985). M. Comblen-Sonkes and Jarmila Vacková agreed and claimed it an authentic work of Colyn de Coter (J. Vacková - M. Comblen-Sonkes, 1985, including a detailed analysis of earlier literature; also J. Vacková, 1985, 1989).

Despite scholarly discussions of attribution, no serious attention has been paid to the central part of the painting and to the pictorial concept of the whole panel in its present form. The painting shows two kneeling donors in the foreground. While praying, they are turned towards the crucifix standing on a marble plinth of an unidentifiable architecture (an altar?). There are no indications of the identity of the donors, who were presumably man and wife and who were probably named after their patron saints. The saints presenting the donors are shown behind the kneeling couple. Behind the man is St John the Baptist, holding the Lamb of God and behind the woman stands St Barbara with a leaf and a tower. The background of the panel is completed by a dramatically rendered sky with clouds.

While both side panels can be considered, at a first glance, as fine examples of Netherlandish devotional art of around 1500 the central part of the painting recalls another ideological concept. What we see here is no longer the biblical scene of the

Crucifixion, as depicted in many Netherlandish paintings, but portrays the office of prayer. The typical naturalistic landscape with Jerusalem is missing, and the terrestrial world is replaced by that of an unearthly one. In conformity to the doctrine of the Reformation the crucifix at the center of the pictorial composition serves as a visible sign of the message proclaimed by the word in the sermon.

It seems to be highly probable that the man who commissioned the painting and agreed to have the older altar wings reused may have been an ancestor of the couple whose portraits are depicted on the panels. Indubitably, he wished to keep them present in general memory. However, in the new ideological context of the Reformation he decided retrospectively to change the devotional context of the worshippers. By agreeing to incorporate the older panels with the portraits of his ancestors into the new pictorial composition, he radically modified their former devotional function. From this point of view the Bratislava panel in its present arrangement offers insight into practices used during the era of religious reform.

God-Given Senses: Biblical Narratives in the Backgrounds of Prints of the Five Senses

Sharon Assaf, Tel Aviv University

Scenes from the Genesis story in the Old Testament paired with narrative scenes from the New Testament fill the backgrounds of a number of engraved series on the theme of the five senses designed by the leading Flemish artist of the second half of the sixteenth century, Maarten de Vos. The relationship of these background scenes to the personification of each sense featured in the foreground, has until now been explained in terms of each narratives' suitability in demonstrating the physiological expression of each of the senses, while the correlation between the Genesis scenes and the New Testament parallels has not been credibly explained.

Rather than being simply demonstrations of the physical qualities of the senses, I propose an analogical interpretation for the background biblical scenes that would have allowed for the contemporary viewer to uncover in each print a comprehensive moralizing allegory about the efficacy of man's five senses. In each scene the viewer is challenged to define the relationship between the personification and the two background scenes, while taking into consideration the pose, gesture and dress of the main figure, as well as other incidental details besides the familiar traditional animal attributes that accompany the personifications. The viewer might judge the scene *in bono* or *in malo*, depending upon how he interprets each of the visual elements, alone and in combination.

The correlation between a number of the Old and New Testament scenes and their connection to the particular sense is elucidated especially through John Calvin's commentaries on Genesis and the Gospel of John. Calvin's interpretations of the biblical narratives were lessons in social and spiritual ethics in praise of sobriety, diligence and labor in the service of God, for the glory of God, and for the benefit of man. By combining the moral lessons of Calvin's commentaries with the relevant sense the

educated burgher, for whom these prints were intended, could find a new relevance to the benefits that man's God-given senses can impart in negotiating the pleasures and temptations of the temporal world. That Calvin's commentaries would necessarily have been consulted in order to elucidate the meaning of the background biblical scenes in their relation to each other and to the personification may, furthermore, point to a more fluid relationship among the Protestant and Catholic audiences in Antwerp in their reception of moralizing prints in the last decades of the sixteenth century.

**Mapping the Passion in the Era of Confessional Clashes:
Branteghems *Leven Ons Heeren Christi* as a model for the *Evangelicae
historiae imagines***

Birgit Ulrike Münch, University of Trier

My paper examines images concerning the Passion of Christ in the 16th century as well as changes and continuities in passion iconography during the era of confessional clashes. Until recently, the focus of research has been directed almost exclusively on the question of specific Protestant or Catholic iconographic traditions. But contrary to this approach, a trans-confessional analysis seems to be necessary to fully understand the single passion-iconographies.

Although the importance of the picture as an educational aid is obvious since the ideals of the antique "ars memorativa", I try to figure out that the passion-cycles for a post-Reformation readership serve a higher didactic function: within the illustrations of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation we find - to a higher degree - *tituli* as well as *didascaliae* to ensure the reader's correct comprehension of the Latin or vernacular passion texts. Another novelty has to be mentioned concerning the 16th century passion prints: From the 1520s onwards – and at the beginning only in Protestant bibles – one finds geographical and cycle bible-maps which show the Christ's *Via dolorosa* and authentic replications of the historico-topographical settings (buildings, streets), the *Volto Santo* as well as correct descriptions of the historically verifiable circumstances of the crucifixion: These images mark the beginning of a new interest in an objective New-Testament biblical archaeology of the Early Modern era.

The famous *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* written by the Jesuit Hieronymus Nadal forms an ideal paradigm to demonstrate the validity of two hypotheses: First, that passion iconography is a steadily evolving history of a pictorial subject, which is dominated by continuity rather than a break in tradition up to the end of the 16th century. And second, that the three main purposes of these images – aesthetic, devotional, and didactic – are neatly combined in this work from the printing-press. The work was published in Antwerp in 1593 and contains 153 large-format copperplate engravings which illustrate the life of Christ with a narrative style involving multiple scenes. The *inventor* of the copperplate engravings has hitherto remained unknown in art historical research. The original aim of the book was to introduce young Jesuit students by picture and word to the meditation on the Gospel pericopes recited in the liturgy of the eucharist. A short title above each individual engraving points to the topic of the respective pericope. To illuminate the path that the viewer has to take with his

eyes as they wander through the multi-scenic illustrations, the different actions, persons and locations are marked by letters or *didascalìa*, just as prescribed by the Jesuit meditation practice following the doctrines for contemplating Biblical texts as promulgated by Ignatius of Loyola. These doctrines ask for an imaginary scenic visualization of the Gospels. Although we know of three series of preparatory sketches, the drawing patterns of the *Evangelicae* have to this point remained unknown. The author Nadal himself could not have worked without access to a detailed corpus of pictures as a basis for conceptualizing these complex images, and even more so for writing down the meditations for the panoramic pictures. As scholarship has primarily – and without success – tried to find his forerunner in so-called high art such as Dürer’s series, the huge amount of devotional literature was not enlisted in this task. Nonetheless, it is possible to clearly assign the drawing pattern to the passion images of the *Evangelicae historiae imagines*: In 1537 a book about the *Vita Christi* was printed in Antwerp by Mattheus Crom. Its author was the Carthusian Willem van Branteghem of Aalst. A Netherlandish edition of the same work – also printed by Crom – was entitled: *Dat leven ons Heeren Christi*. The book contains 186 woodcuts, which were designed by Lieven de Witte, an artist from Ghent, who is mentioned in a laureate poem written by the humanist Georgius Cassander. After the sermon the believer should consult the text and the images to memorize what he had just heard. From my perspective, it is absolutely certain that Nadal used this Netherlandish book as the pattern for the *Evangelicae historiae imagines*. This is so clear to me because every one of the 153 scenes of the Jesuit book has its direct predecessor in Branteghem’s Gospel’s compilation, even so rarely illustrated biblical passages as the Passover meal.

My analysis of Nadal’s work makes it clear that it is absolutely necessary to compare the different passion cycles, even if they differ in the confessional orientation of their respective inventor and primary audience. Only this type of scrupulous comparison can shed new light on the genesis and dependencies of different passion iconographies, such as Nadal’s famous book. It was especially these dependencies that were at times suppressed in the interests of confessionally bound religion, because they did not comply with the image confessors painted of this faith. In the specific case of the *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* a book published over fifty years before Nadal’s work formed the pattern for the latter. In a broader sense our understanding of the so-called confessionally oriented image cannot stop with pointing out the specifically Protestant or Catholic characteristics of a work of art. Instead, it must also at times bridge the gap between these confessional camps.

Imitation and Incarnation in Hendrick Goltzius’s *Annunciation* of 1594

Walter S. Melion, Emory University

Hendrick Goltzius’s *Annunciation* of 1594, the frontispiece to the *Life of the Virgin*, introduces the series’ key themes: it exemplifies the engraver’s *virtus imitativis* (imitative virtue) and then converts this exemplary virtue into an analogical allegory of his *imitatio Christi per Virginem* (imitation of Christ through the Virgin). The *Annunciation* constitutes an amalgam of Italian *maniera* associated with Raphael, that coalesces into an image of the Virgin as epitome of lyrical beauty in all its forms – *grazia* (grace), *leggiadria* (charm), and *venustà* (seductive beauty). The imitative

process that bodies forth this new image of the Virgin functions as a figure of the Incarnation mystery by which the divine Word is made flesh through Mary, becoming the *imago dei*

Unlike the five prints that follow, all of which demonstrate Goltzius's mastery of *distinctio*, the art of excerpting and aggregating sources into a new whole whose ordered parts are clearly discernible, the *Annunciation* cannot be clearly identified with a specific master; instead Goltzius imitates the Italian method of emulative invention, showing how the perfections of Raphael, Titian, Correggio, and the Zuccari can be compounded into an epitome of beauty that seems entirely unified and unprecedented. Indeed, the prominent sewing basket beside the Virgin emblemizes this method of imitation that stitches together various references, assembling them into a beautiful composite, an exquisite chimaera.

My paper argues that Goltzius diverges from the imitative method he displays elsewhere in the series, to make a crucial doctrinal point about the Incarnation: namely, that this mystery incorporates three kinds of conjunction (*commixtio*), that of God with Man, of the Virgin Mary with Mary as Mother, and of faith with the heart that believes in the conjunction of God and Man, of Virgin and Mother. Just as the newly conceived Christ bodies forth the very principle of Incarnation, by which the *distinctio membrorum* (division of parts) becomes indiscernible, so the *Annunciation* conjoins various Italianate styles into an image whose parts are virtually indistinguishable. The Virgin's changing form in the prints that follow can be construed as a pictorial allusion to the notion, codified in the meditative tradition, that Mary neither possesses nor acquires beauty, but rather finds or discovers it, for she claims no property over grace, but rather distributes it mercifully to all supplicants. In the famous words of Bernard, she has been made all things to all—*omnibus omnia facta est*. Fashioned from the signature styles imitated by the protean Goltzius, Mary appears in a multiplicity of forms (*formae*, in Latin; *maniere* in Italian; *handelinghen* in Dutch) connoting her universal grace and beauty. In accordance with the standards of *distinctio*, these styles are seen to be found rather than invented. Portrayed in light of a canon consisting of different vernacular styles, the Virgin appears *omnibus omnia facta* (all things to all), the copious source of all discernible beauty. The meditative treatises familiar to Goltzius's dedicatee, Wilhelm V Duke of Bavaria, Ludolphus of Saxony's *Vita Christi* and especially Jesuit texts by Franciscus Costerus and Petrus Canisius, will prove central to my discussion, since the Wittelsbach court was steeped in the ways and means of Catholic reform piety. In sum, I present Goltzius as a case study of the ways that imitative theory and practice can function as an allegory of the faith they serve to represent.

The Temple of Solomon: Its Interpretation by the Jesuit Fathers during the Early Seventeenth Century in the Low Countries.

Piet Lombaerde, Universiteit Antwerpen

From the end of the sixteenth century there was a revived interest by the Jesuit fathers in the architecture to the Temple of Solomon. The writings of the Jesuits were very explicit regarding the structure, measurements, and ornaments of the Temple in the

period of the Counter-Reformation. Although the first Jesuit churches in the Low Countries were strongly influenced by Gothic principles, the Jesuits tried to introduce after 1600 the first Early Baroque principles in the architecture and decoration of their new churches. The divine Temple was for them very useful as a model for a new architecture. This search for an original and modern architecture can be compared with the many interpretations and descriptions of the Jerusalem Temple by the Protestants in the Northern Netherlands.

This paper discusses two important interpretations by the Jesuit fathers: the reconstruction of the Temple by Juan Bautista Villalpando, who was also involved in the project of the Escorial; and the description of the Temple by Benedictus Arias Montanus. Villalpando was most appreciated in the Northern Netherlands for his description of the Jerusalem Temple. The introductory text by Salomon de Bray to the book *Architectura Moderna* (Amsterdam, 1630) and the theoretical writings of Nicolaus Goldmann (c. 1658) on the Temple were also consulted with interest. Vitruvius was considered the link between the Old Testament Temple and current architectural theory. For this reason Vitruvius's theory was integral to new interpretations on architecture.

The Jesuit Church of Antwerp, built between 1613-22 by the Jesuit father François de Aguilón and by the Jesuit brother and architect Pieter Huyssens, reflects contemporary interests in the Temple. Both Jesuits, with the help of the famous painter P.P. Rubens, created a synthesis of the Temple descriptions of Villalpando and Montanus. The result was the new Jesuit Church in Antwerp (St. Carolus Borromeus Church), the first Early Baroque construction in Antwerp.

Artistic Consciousness and the Emerging Art Theoretical Discourse in Painting, 1400–1700

Chairs: Natasha Seaman (Independent Scholar),

Todd Richardson (Universiteit Leiden)

Friday, November 10, 2006

Windows and Mirrors, Portals and Doors: Openings to Early Netherlandish Painting

Heike Schlie, Universität Dortmund

Early Netherlandish artists concentrated highly on the border between the space of the spectator and the fictional space of the painting itself. Their efforts might be compared to Leon Battista Alberti's invention of the central perspective and show quite clearly the theoretical consciousness about the conditions of their art and the demands of a new aesthetic. In the North, written treatises on art and the nature of images do not exist from this period, but the paintings themselves, I contend, employ a variety of self-referential strategies that are much more complex, diverse, fruitful, and intellectually ambitious than has been discussed up until now. Moreover, I suggest that some of these works

were intentionally commenting upon that art theory that turns out to be a very modern image critique within the image (*Bildkritik*), which bears surprising parallels to the theory of modern art at the beginning of the 20th century.

The problem of a lack of art theoretical writing in the North in the 15th century is not merely the absence of art theory itself, but a lack of a source of contemporary speech of the 15th century which would allow historians to speak adequately about the achievements and innovations of early Netherlandish art. The Albertian treatise tells art historians not only what Alberti thought the image to be and to look like, but also gives them a sense of the criteria for talking about pictures of that time. Recent research on concepts of the image in the 15th and 16th century show that such criteria exist not exclusively in written art theory, even when Italian art is concerned; there are concepts which can only be grasped by investigating the pictures very intensely, without looking through Albertian lenses or the Albertian window.

I tried to show in my lecture that throughout the middle ages, long before Alberti, the window has been the device and metaphor for the border between the real and the fictional, as the opening to what I call the medial space. All visual media and even books could have this special notion of medial space through which the eye and thought has to move. Early Netherlandish artists stick to this notion of the window or door and the performance of seeing through it. Even in cases where these „openings“ don't define the border of the painting in which they occur, they are very often used as veritable metaphors of „painting“ or „picture“ in the paintings themselves. When the artists began to strive for a more naturalistic looking image, still needing to make the non-visible perceptible, it was now also a product of the perspective of the beholder, created with and confronted by another concept of cognition as well as another form of imaginative experience and performance of seeing. The beholder again had to go literally with active eyes through portals and windows, but it was much more suggestive and effective as imaginative experience than older concepts because the portal or window was now related to the real space of the beholder, so that there was necessarily an increased awareness of where the eyes are, an awareness of the own body. The new tension between the “real space” and the “pictorial transcendent” raised new questions and theorems that were also semiotic in nature.

There are parallels between the Albertian concept of linear perspective and the pictorial strategies the early Netherlandish painters developed in order to define the threshold between real and pictorial space. However, their purpose was different. Alberti didn't plead for an ambiguous painting but for a perfect mimesis based on rhetoric and other principles of the *artes liberales*. The early Netherlandish window is an ambiguous one which oscillates between seeing and veiling. There is always a tension between the potential to grasp into the painting and the holy scene, and the perception of the image being just out of reach; in short a tension between accessibility and inaccessibility. The early Netherlandish painting says that a picture can never be what it shows, can never grant accessibility, but is able to communicate this limitation and its reasons in a visible way.

Nevertheless, it can be shown that the Netherlandish artists, especially Jan van Eyck, were also interested in defining their art as being close to the *artes liberales*. This discourse did not include notions of space based on geometry but merely a complex idea of painting being *ascientia litteralis*. One of the most obvious examples is the drawing of St. Barbara by van Eyck, in which he compares his work as painter, his conceiving of a painting with the work of an architect. Jan van Eyck based his complex idea on metaphors of building used by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas for the explanation of knowledge and cognition. He signs the drawing on the threshold, on the “Wasserschlag” of one of the first frames which imitates a gothic window. “Entering” the image is compared to entering the ecclesiastical building under construction behind the Saint – and the artist is the one who “built” our threshold to the heavenly realm.

Picturing the Intermediary. Artistic Consciousness in Representations of Saint Luke Painting the Virgin in Netherlandish Art: The Case of Van der Weyden’s Saint Luke

Annette de Vries, University of Groningen

Although the visual representation of *Saint Luke painting the Virgin* was more dispersed in terms of time, geography and genre, art historical research in the last three decades has concentrated mainly on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century northern panel painting. An inclination can be discerned to interpret those paintings as a kind of northern pictorial counterpart to the written art treatises of the Italian Renaissance. No doubt this approach has enriched our perception of representations of *Saint Luke painting the Virgin* as exponents of a growing artistic consciousness of the artist. At the same time, however, it also has shifted the attention away from the religious forces at work in this process of artistic self-assertion. My aim is to point out that an approach that considers (interrelated) notions of religious and artistic mediation is fruitful for our comprehension of the phenomenon of artistic consciousness in representations of *Saint Luke painting the Virgin*. This is demonstrated by considering closely the ‘founding image’ of this pictorial motif, Rogier van der Weyden’s *Saint Luke drawing the Virgin* (c. 1435), in relation to one of its possible artistic prototypes, Van Eyck’s *Rolin Madonna*.

There are some obvious pictorial differences between those two paintings which are relevant to our understanding of Van der Weyden’s *Saint Luke*: first, the inversion of the leading figures; second, the transfer of the red garment; and third, the inclusion of the iconographical type of the *Maria Lactans*. Van der Weyden’s ‘amendments’ all seem to emphasize the importance of the depicted figures – Saint Luke and the Virgin – as religious mediators, thus underscoring the devotional connotations of the painting. The Virgin is situated at the dexter or right side of Saint Luke, following a format of figural positioning that was to become predominant in fifteenth-century devotional diptychs. Moreover, Saint Luke is dressed in the red or scarlet hue of the garment of the Virgin in the *Rolin Madonna*. The colour red had a wide range of symbolic connotations (expensive, high grade, elevation). I suggest that Van der Weyden consciously tries to evoke the devotional, intellectual and virtuous connotations paired with the colour red to underscore Saint Luke’s importance as a religious mediator. On the other hand, his choice of a *Maria Lactans* focuses the attention on the mediating role of Mary. Van der

Weyden favors this popular devotional type of Madonna above the traditional prototype of the frontal Virgin *Hodegitria* (which in the Byzantine tradition always had been associated with the legend of Saint Luke). In late medieval time the nursing Mary had strong devotional connotations stressing the intercessory role of Mary (redemption of mankind by Christ as human, the role of Mary's breasts in pleading on behalf of humankind, spiritual nourishing).

By picturing the protagonists Saint Luke and the Virgin Mary as religious mediators *par excellence* Van der Weyden gradually comes forward as a mediator in his own right. The fact that Saint Luke portrays the Virgin by way of a silverpoint drawing is essential in this context. It directly refers to contemporary artistic practice in which the use of models and prototypes was widespread. Van der Weyden's *Saint Luke* bears ample testimony of the transfer of functional roles from saint/religious story to painter/artistic practice, all focusing on the notion of visibility and accessibility. To sum up: Van der Weyden's *Saint Luke drawing the Virgin* reveals artistic consciousness by commenting upon artistic traditions and by doing so presents a visual argument for the role and function of the artist and his art, one at that time still predominantly religiously defined.

Rubens and the Decorum of Flesh

Suzanne Walker, Tulane University

If decorum was central to early modern art theory, its visual qualities resisted clear definition in words. The criteria of appropriateness or decency were abstract, and threatened to lead to a hermeneutic circle, in which the definition of decorum depended on the individual interpretation of an event, figure, or action. This led to incontrovertible but fruitless assertions that the figures in a painting should be portrayed in a manner consistent with their status. More specific examples of decorum were not necessarily more helpful. Writers such as Giovanni Battista Armenini and Franciscus Junius tended to concentrate on transient qualities, such as facial expression, hand gestures, or costume. Such recommendations suggest that the artist is like the director of a play, with a given set of actors whom he may costume and pose as he chooses. But the artist could not take the figure for granted, especially in the context of an aesthetic that was deeply invested in the representation of the human body. The verbal descriptions of art theory, perhaps inevitably, glossed over the pictorial problem of building a properly decorous figure out of line and color.

Peter Paul Rubens developed an approach to decorum that treated its relationship to the body at a more fundamental level. As a practicing artist, Rubens was well aware of the importance of the torso, the source of bodily force and motion, to the construction of the human figure. In Rubens's oeuvre, the torso became a central locus of the characterization of the figure in the context of decorum. This paper examines the decorum of flesh in Rubens's early works, concentrating on his images of the dead Christ. In a series of Lamentations from the 1610s, the body of Christ is disjointed and disproportionate, with narrow shoulders, twisted midsection, and slack, paunching belly. Rather than failures of anatomy, these features are better understood as embodying the passivity and absence of autonomy of the victim's corpse. By taking

decorum beyond the relatively superficial elements of gesture and costume, and extending it to the actual anatomy of the figure, Rubens's paintings generate a visual discourse of the decorum of the body. If almost none of Rubens's reported writings on art have survived, his works themselves provide a model for thinking about the intertwining of anatomy and action in the theoretical construct of decorum.

Rembrandt and the Rules of Art Revisited

Eric Jan Sluijter, Universiteit van Amsterdam and Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Since Jan Emmens's influential book *Rembrandt en de regels van de kunst*, it has been generally taken for granted that, because of the fact that classicist art theory took hold in Netherlandish art literature after c. 1670, the criticism of Rembrandt's art - which was seen as issuing from a purely classicist standpoint - came into being only after Rembrandt's death. Jan Emmens maintained, for example, that the remarks Joachim von Sandrart put into Rembrandt's mouth are plainly anti-classical, "which was impossible in the Netherlands in 1637-45, since classicism did not yet exist." Emmens's argument was so convincing that scholars no longer asked themselves whether these discussions might possibly reflect long-standing controversies. This is all the more remarkable because an alternative style in history painting, which existed during the whole of Rembrandt's career, has been given close attention lately and, paradoxically, has been labeled "Dutch classicism". The differences in style between these "classicists" and Rembrandt and his followers have been, however, discussed only in twentieth-century "Wölfflinian" terms of style, without taking into account how Rembrandt and his contemporaries would have thought and talked about stylistic distinctions. In this paper I argue that the criticism voiced by Von Sandrart in particular, stemmed not so much from theoretical ideas developed only in the later 17th century as from ongoing debates that had already been raging during, and even before, Rembrandt's lifetime. Such debates were rooted in discussions that had arisen in 16-century Italy and were hotly discussed in Rome as well as in Amsterdam during the first decades of the 17th century. The diverging opinions were first outlined by Vasari when he wrote about his visit with Michelangelo to Titian's studio when the latter was working on a *Danaë*, and which were in extenso repeated by Van Mander.

By comparing Rembrandt's etching of a *Woman on the Mound*, its Italian models and the conventions in the depiction of nudes in the Netherlands in the first decades of the 17th century from which Rembrandt consciously deviated, and by examining paintings by Rembrandt and Von Sandrart from the 1630s and early 1640s in relation to Jacques de Ville's fierce reaction to the "from life" ideology (in an obscure but enlightening pamphlet of 1628), as well as Von Sandrart's remarkably acute description of Rembrandt's manner of painting, the terms are explored in which Amsterdam artists in the period c. 1630-1650 thought about history painting and how their views are reflected in their works. It is demonstrated that the ideas which Emmens saw as the "plainly anti-classical remarks that Von Sandrart put into Rembrandt's mouth" were burning issues in the 1630s and '40s in Amsterdam. Von Sandrart's opinions about Rembrandt's art were not the result of later classicist prejudices, but based on his knowledge and experience from the period in which he knew Rembrandt in Amsterdam (1637-1645).

The presence in Amsterdam of a highly ambitious and competitive personality like Von Sandrart (who came freshly from Rome and was well informed of the latest developments there), might have worked as a catalyst and would have given the ongoing discussions a more consciously “classicist” tone. Finally, Rembrandt’s *Danaë* and Jacob van Loo’s reaction to it, a *Cimon and Ephigenia*, are considered – paintings of which the rivaling “handeling” and the contrasting connotations of the subjects seem to have an almost manifesto-like quality. It must have been fascinating for the Amsterdam connoisseurs to see and discuss the completely different means by which painters like Rembrandt and his followers, on the one hand, and Von Sandrart and Van Loo, on the other, succeeded in not only reaching their goals but also visually commenting on those artists whose goals were different from their own.

‘Schieten zonder wit’ - A New Interpretation of Rembrandt's ‘Nightwatch’
Jürgen Müller, Technische Universität Dresden

Looking Backwards: The Meaning of Copying

Chairs: Ariane Mensger (Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe), Dagmar Eichberger (Kunsthistorisches Institut der Universität Heidelberg)
Friday, November 10, 2006

Shared images, shared thoughts: Johanna the Mad and four tapestry variations of the Mystic Grapes

Elisabeth Cleland, Metropolitan Museum of Art

In 1532, Johanna the Mad presented her daughter-in-law, Isabella of Portugal, with a small devotional tapestry, exactly replicating another tapestry which Johanna retained in her own collection. This example of the use of a replica art work to forge a link between the two women serves as the culmination of a fascinating sequence of commissions involving Johanna, her mother, Isabella the Catholic and her sister, Katherine of Aragon. Four surviving miniature tapestries, each less than a metre square, can be associated with these commissions. Each repeats variations of the same design. Sumptuously woven in silk and glittering with gold and silver metal-wrapped threads, these jewel-like objects illustrate the theme of the Mystic Grapes, or the Infant Christ squeezing the grapes of the Eucharist.

The material discussed in this paper develops my recent research undertaken at the Metropolitan Museum on the nature of the links between these tapestries. Setting these commissioned copies alongside Isabella the Catholic’s sophisticated use of painted copies of her prized Netherlandish works, most famously van der Weyden’s *Miraflores*

altarpiece, this paper explores the production of copies and replicas motivated by the original work's associations of ownership and location.

These costly tapestry copies by Netherlandish weavers were created in a conscious effort by the three women to retain their strong familial bond across Europe, as Johanna left Castile for the Southern Netherlands to marry Philip the Fair and Katherine settled in England as the bride, first of Prince Arthur, then of Henry VIII. Small and portable enough to travel with their owners, they could serve daily in the women's devotional rituals and, as such, with each praying to variations of the same work, enabled them to retain a shared visual and spiritual experience, linking mother and daughters despite their geographical separation.

Netherlandish tapestry design in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries involved a nuanced interplay between the role of painters and weavers. Commonly, cartoons reused existing designs and motifs, often more familiar in panel paintings, sometimes as homage to the original work, but more often than not for the more practical motives of successful workshop patterns and easily transferable design tools. However, this group of four versions of the same sumptuous devotional tapestry represents a third, rather more unusual, circumstance. These tapestries were copied and replicated by two generations of patrons, long after the design itself will have appeared old-fashioned. Motivation to replicate the weavings combined familial ownership association and devotional efficacy, rather than being purely a matter of visual success or aesthetic appreciation. As such, they prove more than worthy of study.

Contextualising copies: Investigating copies and reproductions after Early-Netherlandish masters in the light of the reception of their art in the second half of the 16th century

Joris Van Grieken, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

A copy or a reproduction can tell us a lot about the appreciation, which copyists and their patrons had for the original that was copied. This seems to be specifically demonstrable in cases where the original and the copy are remote in time and context. The needs and conditions which formed the basis of the original's creation, could hardly have been the same in another era and under different circumstances.

In order to obtain a usable analysis of this differentiation, it is necessary to group and contextualise copies. This process of contextualisation is not easy in all cases. Some copies are artistically and historically documented. For others one has to rely on the study of materiality, working-methods and style, before a geographical and chronological situation is possible. Finally the reconstruction of a good part of the socio-cultural network, in which copies originated and functioned, is unavoidable. This approach can provide new insights into the reception of Early-Netherlandish art in the second half of the sixteenth century.

This period, which resulted into the publication of Van Mander's 'Schilderboek' in 1604, is very significant for the formation of an historical vision on the artistic past of the Low Countries. The modest amount of written sources offers a rather limited view on the

evolution of this process of early art-historical realisation. Moreover, the risk is run that opinions, tastes and appreciations of specific 16th century literary circles get overemphasised to the disadvantage of those of other sections of society. By involving figurative sources as painted copies and graphic renditions or reproductions our insight can become more nuanced.

My paper will consider two different clusters of works, on the hand of which the significance of copies and (reproductive) prints in the debate on reception will be revealed. The first consists of copies and a print after the famous 'deposition' by Rogier van der Weyden. The second cluster comprehends two related representations of a Calvary, executed in an early-Netherlandish style, of which numerous painted and printed versions can be dated in the second half of the sixteenth century. These two opponent groups will demonstrate different aspects of the late 16th-century view on 15th-century Netherlandish art.

The True Copy: Imitation and Truth in Pieter Bruegel's *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows*

Catherine Levesque, The College of William and Mary

In his short biography of Pieter Bruegel Carel van Mander notes that, "In his will he left his wife a painting of a Magpie on the Gallows. By this magpie he meant the babbling of tongues, which he thus delivered to execution." This "babbling of tongues" is generally interpreted as gossip but such chattering without meaning or reason might - I think - signify superficial imitation more generally. This emphasis makes sense since imitation appears as a leitmotif in Bruegel commentary, from Ludovicco Guicciardini's 1567 praise of the artist as a "grand imitatore della scienza & fantasie di Girolamo Bosco" to Ortelius' epitaph praising his friend as "not just the best of painters but 'nature's painter,' worthy of being imitated by all." The proposed paper seeks to relate the role of mimesis, imitation, and copying in Bruegel's *Magpie on the Gallows* to the humanist understanding of these concepts in his day. If, as I believe, this painting directly addresses imitation as the repetition of a half truth or a truth ill understood, it also presents an ideal of true imitation that is an underlying theme in a number of paintings and prints by and after Bruegel.

In *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* Bruegel situates the figures and motifs to accommodate a perceiver who must observe the world of the picture from many perspectives - one who has traveled about and used his eyes. This point of view takes into account the defecator, the two observers, and the dancers. Figures who - to paraphrase the sixteenth-century natural historian Conrad Gesner - contract or expand our view of nature. Moreover, the viewer moves visually across a foreground painted in thick dark textured brown strokes beyond the gallows, cross, and mill to the outermost borders of this world (the *eschata*), a luminous thinly painted distance where earth, sea, and sky meet. Bruegel sets out these extremes and invites us to explore the juxtaposition and the interaction between them. According to my reading of the *Magpie on the Gallows*, Bruegel encourages the viewer to emulate the artist who, in the creation of his work, drew on both *phantasia* (the process of discovery and judgment through which

models of various objects and courses of events are created) and *scientia* (speculative reason or inductive study of the rational). Here, the viewer, like the artist, moves from *contemplatio* to *actio*, from appreciation of natural art (nature copying God) to comprehending invented or practical art (the artist copying nature). This understanding of the artist's active ability to remake natural effects in works of art through deep understanding of natural causes bears directly on the qualities of imitation and natural painting so remarked on by Bruegel's contemporary commentators. It also accords with the humanist view whereby pursuit of the arts might lead to "prudence and experience." In short, true looking, like a true copy, realizes the ethical as well as the technical potential of the original. My interpretation of the *Landscape with the Magpie on the Gallows* gives new poignancy and significance to the copies after this painting by Bruegel's sons Pieter and Jan and, perhaps, suggests why so many subsequent artists were inspired to work "after Bruegel."

Why did Rembrandt copy almost two dozen Moghul miniatures?

Zirka Z. Filipczak, Williams College

To copy Moghul miniatures was a strange move for a seventeenth-century artist, and to draw so many of them even stranger. The standard explanation for these unusual copies from the 1650s is that Rembrandt recorded contemporary and recent Indian attire since he believed it continued that worn in biblical times. Yet his copies omit much of the clothing's detailing. Also, why make almost two dozen copies when only two of his compositions incorporate specifically Moghul dress?

The explanation I propose for the numerousness of the copies is that Rembrandt also became interested in the different body language found in these miniatures. From early in his career his works stood out for "thoughtful consideration of the various passions...[revealed through] the distinctive movements of the body" (Van Hoogstraeten, 1678). In keeping with the dominant Early Modern theory of the relationship between and internal passions and physical actions he reportedly urged pupils to act out situations before depicting them. To his and other European eyes the figures in the Moghul miniatures must have seemed strangely rigid and enigmatic. These products of an unfamiliar culture held Rembrandt's attention at a time when his own work increasingly explored what feelings could be conveyed with minimal physical action. Even though his copies look more naturalistic, they retain much of the stiffness. My thesis is that Rembrandt copied to expand his repertoire of poses and gestures beyond the familiar European tradition of body language. For example, two of his works contain a delicate gesture conventional in Moghul culture but non-existent in European art.

Another perplexing aspect of the copies is that several drawings resemble each other quite closely and one pauses to distinguish them. Why copy such close variations of poses if the interest lies in acquiring new stances and gestures? The repetition itself seems to have been important. By drawing similar images over and over Rembrandt gradually absorbed the unfamiliar and highly restrained body language, its rhythm and its general feel. He then creatively transformed this influence to develop new ways to convey the passions of the mind with minimal actions of the body.

Reproducing the Golden Age. Copies after 17th-century Dutch genre painting in the first half of the 18th century.

Junko Aono, University of Amsterdam

Although a considerable number of copies after 17th-century genre painting were made during the first half of the 18th-century, until now little attention has been paid to these reproductive works, which were dismissed as an uninspired repetition of the art of the Golden Age. However, during the first decades of the 18th century painters and collectors began to look back to the 17th century as a glorious past and to realize that they shared a common exalted heritage of painting. What function and meaning did copies have in the specific context of the earliest reception of the art of the Golden Age? This paper aims to reconsider the importance of copying after 17th-century genre painting from the point of view of artists and collectors in the first decades of the 18th-century.

One of the contemporary remarks on the production of copies is found in Johan van Gool's discourse on its commercial misuse in the mid-18th century. By criticizing art dealers for selling copies as originals at high prices to collectors, Van Gool argues that painters passively made copies that were commissioned by art dealers for only a small amount of money and therefore they themselves did not take the initiative in producing copies. However, several examples of copies made by Nicolaas Verkolje (1673-1746) and Louis de Moni (1698-1771) shed a new light on the painters' involvement in this reproductive activity. By identifying original paintings and their copies by means of sales catalogues and inventories, it becomes clear that well-known painters were consciously and actively engaged in reproducing certain types of 17th-century genre painting which enjoyed great popularity among collectors. One of the most popular themes was the candlelight scene. Nicolaas Verkolje, for example, executed splendid mezzotint prints after 17th-century candlelight paintings by Gerrit Dou and Godfried Schalcken. By doing so, Verkolje contributed to the popularity of the original paintings and the candlelight subject in particular, and at the same time he produced candlelight pieces after his own design, which were still strikingly similar to those of his 17th-century masters. The same is true of Louis de Moni, who executed a number of copies after 17th-century painters and specialized in genre painting in a similar way. Furthermore, contemporary documents reveal that painters were also involved in the selling of copies. De Moni, this time as an auctioneer, even sold copies by Willem van Mieris after his father Frans van Mieris that passed as originals.

Consequently, these examples illustrate how painters deliberately took advantage of the situation in which 17th-century art became glorified and was considered superior to contemporary art. In this context, copies seem to have fulfilled various functions: they were substitutes for certain types of 17th-century paintings that became less available and therefore enthusiastically sought after by collectors; they demonstrated which kind of 17th-century themes were popular in those days and they validated early 18th-century painters' own works that showed similar styles and motifs; and finally, they enhanced the value of original paintings as the art of a venerated past. By using reproductive methods effectively, early 18th-century painters found new ways to cope with and claim a pictorial tradition that was in the process of being canonized. This reconsideration will

contribute to further discussion about the function and meaning of copying as a homage to the art of earlier periods.

The Dutch in the World: Art and Collecting in a Global Milieu

Chair: Julie Hochstrasser (University of Iowa)

Friday, November 10, 2006

Nicolaes Witsen and his Circle: Globalization, Collecting, and Art Patronage in Amsterdam circa 1700

Rebecca Parker Brienen, University of Miami

My paper will be a preliminary case study of the art patronage and collecting practices of Nicolaes Witsen (1641-1717) and his circle. Thirteen times burgomaster of Amsterdam, Nicolaes Witsen was also a director of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), a confidant of Dutch Stadhouder Prince Willem III, and a personal friend of Peter the Great. Witsen's political position, financial resources, and overseas contacts allowed him to send artists around the world to make eyewitness representations of exotic places and peoples for his cabinet of curiosities.

Unlike the images produced between 1637-1644 in the colony of Dutch Brazil, which circulated only among the highest-ranking European nobility, the natural history and ethnographic illustrations collected and commissioned by Witsen became objects of fascination in cabinets of curiosities in the Dutch Republic and important commodities in a world-wide scientific network.

Nonetheless, of the artists supported by the Witsens, including Cornelis de Bruijn, Herbert de Jager, Michel van Musscher, Dirk Valkenburg, and Maria Sibylla Merian, only Merian and de Bruijn have received serious attention from scholars. In the case of de Bruijn, however, the focus has been on his travel accounts, not the illustrations that he produced for them or for collectors like Witsen.

Given the importance of the Dutch in the production of knowledge about the world in the long 18th century—in the form of books, maps, paintings, and prints--it is critical to investigate what a central figure like Witsen deemed visually significant. It is equally important to examine how his collecting practices were influenced by his multiple roles: connoisseur, scientific amateur, statesmen, and director of the VOC.

This topic builds on my earlier work on the ethnographic and natural history illustrations produced by painters and naturalists in the colony of Dutch Brazil (*Visions of Savage Paradise: Albert Eckhout, Court Artist in Colonial Dutch Brazil*, AUP, in press). With Witsen, however, I have exchanged the tropical courtly context of Dutch Brazil for the middle-class, mercantile city of Amsterdam. Because of the large scope of this topic, in my HNA paper I will focus on my recent research on Witsen and his circle (especially that conducted during the summer of 2006), identify some preliminary

results and trends of that research, and address early 18th century collecting practices as a product of globalization more generally.

The Role of the Netherlands in the “Tupinambization” of Early-Modern European Collections

Amy Bueno, University of California, Santa Barbara

The Tupinambá of coastal Brazil were among the earliest New World cultures encountered by Europeans. In this presentation I will discuss the 16th- and 17th-century Tupinambá feathered capes now located in Copenhagen (*Nationalmuseet Etnografisk Samling*) and Brussels (*Musées Royale d'Art et d'Histoire*) as examples of the key role played by the Low Countries in the early-modern acquisition and dissemination of knowledge concerning Brazil. A close material, cultural and archival analysis of these Dutch-procured Brazilian objects held in early-modern *Kunstammern* helps resituate a culture that had a profound effect on European perceptions of the New World.

In particular, I wish to consider how the Copenhagen and Brussels capes reveal the process by which exotica objects entered European collections via major trading networks. Within Europe's early-modern *Kunstammern* tradition, the Netherlands had a key role in the establishment of a Brazilian material and visual identity in Europe. Count Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen's brief colonization of Pernambuco, Brazil (1630-1654) helped establish an ongoing cultural exchange of visual material and artifacts that eventually led to the royal gift of Tupi artifacts to King Frederick III of Denmark upon his return to European soil. Copenhagen's ethnographic museum now houses the largest repository of Tupi artifacts in the world. Nassau's involvement in the trade and dissemination of Brazilian culture may also be responsible for the Brussels piece. However, recently discovered archival material suggests the possibility that the Brussels cape could also have arrived via Antwerp mercantile traders on the coast of Brazil. These vast networks of material exchange represent an important part of understanding the colonial process and the role of Non-western art and artifacts in the pre-history of European ethnography and natural history.

Jan Weenix and the Dutch Taste of the Orient

Anke van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, Salisbury University

This paper focuses on a small selection of paintings by the Dutch artist Jan Weenix. While he is mostly known for his still life paintings with dead game and Italianate scenes with Roman ruins, he also painted some portraits. Interesting is that some of the commissioned portraits show a touch of the orient, and give us – directly and sometimes indirectly- clues as to the world-wide trade that was going on in the Netherlands in the 1600s.

The paper is based on the idea of “the return to the object,” and therefore takes the paintings themselves as a starting point of the discussion. One such instance is a 1637 painting was made by his father, Jan Baptist Weenix, that he painted to commemorate the visit of ambassador Johan van Twist to the Sultan of Visiapoer where he tried to

establish trade relations. Van Twist served as Governor-General of Malakka, from 1641 until 1642.

Jan Weenix had his father as a teacher and was clearly influenced by his style. In one of his paintings for instance, Agneta Block is depicted, with her husband and children in a garden at her newly built house the “Vijverhof,” near Loenen aan de Vecht, where she built a tropical plant garden. It is known that she cultivated exotic plants, like coffee, tobacco, oranges and bananas and was the first to succeed in growing a flowering pineapple from Suriname. I focus on her botanical collecting successes. Agneta Block was the cousin and close friend of Joost van den Vondel, who mentions her botanical collecting activities in some of his poems. Being a painter herself, she commissioned hundreds of drawings and paintings of her flowers and plants. Despite her good intentions, wishes and stipulations in her will to keep the collections for posterity, nothing remains today of her collection. In 1717 Czar Peter the Great visited her house, but it was torn down in 1819.

In another portrait, Jan Weenix was commissioned to depict a Turkish merchant who is inspecting his goods. The fascinating question is that, as far as we know, Jan Weenix only left Holland to paint in Germany. So where did he see or meet the subject of this painting? While it will be difficult to determine who the patron of the scene is, it will be fascinating to disclose the circumstances of the commission.

Other paintings discussed in the context of the Dutch and the Orient are still lifes that depict exotic birds like a White Cockatoo, a Red Macaw, in other words, birds that Weenix did not have direct access to. Or did he? The question remains, where he might have seen this, if indeed he created the paintings from direct observation.

Appropriation, Elevation and Re-presentation: The Evolution of Chinese Objects in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Art

Candace Q. Huey, Chabot College

This paper investigates the twin discourses of aesthetic and economic value of imported material goods within seventeenth-century Holland, examining the evolution of seventeenth-century Netherlandish representations of Chinese objects in both visual and textual sources. Initially linked with Dutch political pursuits and notions of masculinity, a shift occurs in the reception and imaging of Chinese objects, specifically porcelain and silk, which eventually evolves into feminized objects confined within the domestic realm. The domestication of Chinese objects is indicative of the developing material culture, which comments on Dutch perceptions and projections of the exotic *Other* as dangerous yet desirable.

“Let us now travel into Cathay, so that you may learn something of its grandeurs and its treasures.”- Marco Polo (1305).^[1] Marco Polo characterizes China (Cathay) as an illustrious land filled with a plethora of exoticism. Adding to Marco Polo’s hyperbolic assessment of China, the Jesuit accounts in the Renaissance commented on the country’s material wealth, sophisticated government and dynamic empire.^[2] In the seventeenth century, European explorers and merchants comprehended China as a setting for lucrative ventures. Although few texts focused on the Chinese empire

exclusively, the Europeans often conflated their characterizations of China with the East. Dutch perceptions of the East were paradoxical in nature: a complex layered picture of fact and fiction, a blurring of positive and negative impressions. On one hand, the Dutch perceived China to be a great empire that rivaled their own in vitality and sophistication. Yet on the other, China was comprehended as part of an 'idol worshipping' East, and therefore inevitably set in opposition to and inferior to 'Christian' West.

Throughout the seventeenth century, two major Chinese commodities imported by the Dutch were porcelain and silk. My aim is to explore Chinese objects through notions of exoticism in seventeenth-century Netherlandish painting. They were viewed and valued for their beauty, rarity, exoticism, and quasi- sacred,^[3] highly skilled, refined, and curious attributes. This characterization of porcelain and silk will be made evident through the examination of visual and textual sources and their analogous relationship to *net* painting (the privileged Netherlandish style of painting).^[4]

By considering and critiquing Netherlandish re-imaging porcelain and silks, through the lens of twentieth-century art and anthropological theory (e.g., Alfred Gell, Edward Said, etc.), I will illustrate a notable shift in how art functioned to primarily reflect seventeenth-century Dutch culture (i.e. desires, values) and second, proliferate this contemporary lifestyle insofar that painting became a visual mechanism which worked to fuel their proto-capitalist and mercantilist nation. Such a focus on Chinese commodities ultimately becomes a revealing commentary on seventeenth-century Dutch self-imaging and culture.

^{1.} M. Polo, *De regionibus orientalibus libri III*. 3vols. Brandenburg, 1671.

^{2.} M. Ricci, ed. and trans. Louis Gallagher, *China in the Sixteenth-Century: The Journals of Matteo Ricci, 1583-1610*, New York, 1953, 30.

^{3.} 'Quasi-sacred' > is meant to connote associations to an ecclesiastical space or religious characterization.

^{4.} *Nettiytch* or neat, illusionist painting was privileged by Karel van Mander, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, from the first edition of the *Schilder-boek*, 1603-04, Trans. Hessel Miedema, Doornspijk, 1994.

Dissection, Self-Mutilation and Painted Tea Cups Collecting Chinese Export Ware in Seventeenth-Century Holland Dawn Odell, Virginia Polytechnic and State University

Tea, rather than porcelain, was the commodity most heavily imported from China into the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but porcelain is the material good that survives in large quantities today, and its decorated surface presents some of the most important visual evidence for how aesthetic taste was

articulated, commodified and exchanged between China and Europe in the early modern period. Inspired by new methodological approaches employed by historians of Chinese art to re-frame how we understand the status and meaning of decorated porcelains in the Ming and Qing dynasties, my paper will examine several examples of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Chinese export ware special ordered for the Dutch market. These wares include tea sets decorated with images of violent self-mutilation, Crucifixions, and dissected fetuses, among other surprising motifs. Many of these pieces show almost no evidence of wear, suggesting that their purpose was aesthetic (display) rather than practical (use). But can such a division between purposes be sustained? To what degree were viewers in both China and Europe conditioned to read the imagery decorating ceramics, even those ceramics permanently set on a shelf or fixed to a wall, as narrative fields intersecting with their lives as users (as well as viewers) and referencing rituals of consumption?

In responding to these questions, and drawing connections between the objects' implied use and the imagery decorating their surface, I also intend to emphasize the degree to which the decoration on porcelain must be understood not simply as pattern but as a means of conveying more complex narrative significance. The surface of porcelain, I argue, becomes an innovative venue for imagery derived from sources – scientific, historical, popular and fine art – formerly considered distinct fields of representation. In a sense, rules had not yet been established for this new kind of object, which was shaped, decorated, and marketed specifically to travel across cultural boundaries while emphasizing certain aspects of cultural distinction. Finally, my paper will address some of the ways in which the collection and display of Chinese porcelain in Holland, while appearing to promote the translation of visual style from one culture to another also welcomed the aesthetic concerns of the socially elite (as opposed to the culturally foreign) into a domestic sphere created by a middle-class merchant economy. In this context, to appreciate a piece of porcelain was not merely to approve of a picture affixed to a plate but to invent anew what it means to consume a work of art as an aesthetic object.

Unfolding the Early Netherlandish Diptych

Chairs: John Hand (National Gallery of Art), Ron Spronk (Harvard University Art Museums)

Saturday, November 11, 2006

The Early Franco-Flemish Diptychs: The 'Soissons' Ivories

Sarah M. Guérin, University of Toronto

Appropriation and Transformation: the Precedents for French Gothic Diptychs, and the Rhetoric of Patronage

After a nearly two-hundred-year hiatus, two centres in Northern France began producing ivory diptychs in the Gothic style. This phenomenon raises several questions:

why, circa 1240, was the diptych form again a desirable one? What meaning did this format have, and what function did it perform? The first Gothic diptychs were members of the so-called “Soissons” group of ivories, which were made in both Paris and Amiens and retain a remarkable level of similarity of form and iconography despite their geographic distance.

The precedent and model for the French Gothic diptychs can be identified as Byzantine rather than western European. This argument is based both on the dissimilarity of the Gothic diptych form to that of the Western European precedents – Consular diptychs and Carolingian, Ottonian and Romanesque book covers – and on the similarity of size, format and use to the inward facing diptychs of the Middle Byzantine era, for example an early eleventh century diptych from Constantinople which depicts scenes from the life of Christ (St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, ω 13).

Almost certainly commissioned by members of the court of Louis IX, the first Gothic diptychs participated in the dominant pattern of patronage during the reign of the saintly King of France. This form of patronage sought to emulate the arts of Byzantium with the purpose of relocating the centre of Christianity from Constantinople to Paris, replicating the movement of the precious relics of the Passion from the Imperial Palace in Constantinople to the Ste.-Chapelle in Paris. Yet as private works of art the ivory diptychs were meant to convey a very different message than that of the public works. The Byzantine ivory diptychs were intended for personal use in the context of private devotion and image veneration, and this purpose was transferred to the French imitations: the commission of a devotional object was, for members of the French court, a means of demonstrating that they were in their private devotion just as Christian and pious as the Byzantine court.

Sin and Redemption in Late-Medieval Drama: Hugo van der Goes's Vienna Diptych

Mark Trowbridge, Marymount University

Tactility and Devotion in Personal Devotional Portrait Diptychs

Jessica Buskirk, University of California, Berkeley

There is some evidence that devotional diptychs like Hans Memling's *Martin van Nieuwenhove Diptych* (1487) were intended to be set up on a flat surface with their wings at an angle to each other, giving them an identity as three- (rather than two-) dimensional objects. This paper looks at Memling's habit of fictively crossing the boundary of the picture plane with illusionistic ploys such as fake frames in light of the diptych's actual three-dimensional status. Conceived of as an object in the round, the diptych joins other artifacts in fifteenth-century devotional material culture that were intended to be manually manipulated, like rosary. The tactile character of the diptych, I

argue, deepened the emotional resonance that already adhered in their images of Madonna, Child and patron.

Jan van Scorel's Tambov/Berlin Diptych

Molly Faries, Indiana University

This presentation focused on Jan van Scorel's diptych with the *Madonna and Child* in the Tambovskaja Kartinnaja Galereja in Tambov, Russia, and the *Portrait of a Man* in Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie. Since this diptych was not included in the exhibition, the paper reviewed the technical documents consulted and generated before and during the Amsterdam "Art Before Iconoclasm" show in 1986, the only time the two panels have ever been exhibited together. IR, IRR, X-ray, measurements, and stereomicroscopic examination confirmed that the two panels formed a diptych. Not only was the composition of the colors (especially in the backgrounds) the same in both paintings but IRR (in particular the documentation of the Madonna done in 2000 in Utrecht) also revealed extensive underdrawing and subtle compositional changes that enhanced the inter-relatedness of the figures across space. Although there are fewer changes in the portrait, those in Mary and the Christ child affect the space precisely at the juncture of the two panels.

The second part of the paper discussed the feasibility of identifying the donor of the diptych as Simon van Sanen, one of the Scorel's important patrons during his Haarlem period, 1527-30. The endeavor is made possible by the existence of a related portrait in Frankfurt (possibly the same person as the Berlin donor) and an identified portrait of Simon in a Haarlem portrait series of Commanders of the Order of St. John. As can be surmised from technical study, the latter portrait has to have been taken from a specific model that was used not only once but twice as positions were shifted in the series. Visually, the three portraits definitely share some features, and eventually, facial recognition techniques might determine the quantitative probability of a match. Some initial comparative work has been done using the 3-D modeling program, Maya. Further comparisons using Photoshop established that the proportional relationship of the features was the same in the three presumed portraits of Simon and that this differed in a random selection of around twenty other portraits. A convincing identification of the portrait in the Tambov-Berlin diptych as Simon van Sanen would be significant, since he was the donor of two other key works by Scorel, the *Baptism of Christ* (Haarlem, Frans Halsmuseum) and *Mary Magdalene* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum).