

PROGRAM HNA Conference 2022

***Thursday 2 June 2022, Amsterdam, Roeterseilandcampus A-building, REC-A
Afternoon (14:00-17:15)***

Confronting Gender in the Collection: Approaches to Studying Women and Their Relationship with Art Objects

SESSION ORGANIZERS

Samantha Chang, University of Toronto

Elizabeth Honig, University of Maryland

Catherine Powell, University of Texas at Austin | Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society

Lauryn Smith, Case Western Reserve University | Cleveland Museum of Art

Thijs Weststeijn, Utrecht University

What role does gender play in the creation, acquisition, and use of objects? To what extent does gender impact collecting, patronage, display practices, and the visualization of artworks? This session confronts the impact of early-modern women as conscious patrons and collectors and evaluates their contributions via household ledgers, auction records, inventories, and correspondences. It also considers how gender could affect both the subject matter of paintings and the perception and viewing dynamics of more traditional narratives. This panel fosters discussion on new methodologies for analyzing women as patrons, collectors, and consumers of art. In doing so, we continue the effort to reframe the debate on gender and consumption and consider new models for studies of this nature.

SPEAKERS

Robbert Jan van der Maal, *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* (The Royal Netherlands Society for Genealogy and Heraldry)

Judith Noorman, University of Amsterdam

Household Heroine. A Newly Discovered Ledger and Approaches for Studying its Richly Documented Art Purchases

In 1635, a Dutch painter was approached by a regular client who commissioned him, amongst others, to paint their portrait into a Biblical scene. They haggled over the price, and a deal was made.

This anecdote is taken from the pages of a newly discovered seventeenth-century ledger, the subject of this paper. In its circa 200 pages, the owner documented, in great detail, no fewer than circa 100 art purchases and commissions, along with all other household purchases, large and small, made between 1623 and 1646. The household ledger, which had been hidden in a family archive, is a unique discovery that allows rare insight into scarcely documented art purchases, and into art as part of the much larger category of household consumption. What is more, the owner is, perhaps surprisingly, a woman: an independently wealthy, Catholic woman who never married and whose identity will be disclosed as part of this paper.

First, this paper provides a brief overview of the many art purchases that are documented in the ledger, sifting through its detailed references to prices, restorations, provenance, shops, artists' names, subject matter, raw materials, delivery costs, frames, and much more. Based on this rich documentation, we illustrate the various ways in which a woman could act on the art market: as a patron, consumer on the open market, spontaneous purchaser at fairs, and curator of the family history. Second, this amply documented study case is used to outline promising approaches for studying 'normal' women (i.e. burgers), who are often absent from studies about early modern collecting, as opposed to their aristocratic sisters, such as Amalia van Solms and Elizabeth Stuart. To study these women and their impact on the art market, it is necessary 1) to expand the definition of art as separate from other luxury goods, and 2) to expand art historical methodologies to include household consumption theory. Cultural historians have shown long since that women ruled the household in the Dutch Republic, which was, at the time, the most important economic site and the place where art was sold and consumed. This is amply underscored by the household ledger under discussion. With these new perspectives on art and household consumption, more women consumers can be brought into the light, which will, in turn, bring us closer to understanding women's roles on the art market and in Dutch society of the seventeenth century.

Sander Karst, Utrecht University

Van Roestraeten's Still Lifes with Exotics as a Reflection of Women's Changing Social Position in England at the End of the Seventeenth Century

The decades following the restoration of the English monarchy in 1660 were marked by major social and economic changes in England. After the Puritan regime of Cromwell, a more libertine wind now blew through the country. In combination with a general increase in prosperity and an increased social mobility, this led to women being able to enjoy more

autonomy and occupy a more prominent place in society. In my paper, I will show how women's changing social position reshaped the English art world and, specifically, how this is registered in the oeuvre of London-based Dutch still life painter Pieter Gerritsz. Van Roestraeten (1630–1700).

During these years people from almost all walks of life started buying paintings to decorate their homes. The growing demand resulted in several Dutch artists emigrating to England in order to tap into this new market. The new market that now emerged was segmented with auctions being organized that were aimed at the English elite and auctions aimed at a more mixed audience, offering more affordable work, including work by Dutch migrant artists. In the paper, I will show that the market was not only segmented based on value and social position, but also based on the gender of potential buyers. As a result of their increased autonomy, women from well-to-do households now often had their own apartment or 'closet' in the house that was used and decorated according to their own preferences. As a result, women increasingly entered the market for luxury goods. I will show that dealers and auctioneers responded to this by explicitly addressing women as well and by adapting their supply. Around 1690, there were auctioneers, for example, who advertised that the auctions they organised were suitable for 'Persons of Quality, and Gentry of either Sex' or that the paintings they offered were suitable for decorating 'ladies closets'. One auctioneer reserved a separate domain for women at his auction house: 'for the Ladies (when drawn) there will be a separate Apartment'. In addition to paintings, auctioneers started to offer exotics at their auction, such as 'Indian Screens stained on Sattin (...), very pleasant for Ladies Closets', 'Rich Tea-Tables', and 'japan work and other curiosities'. Novel products from Asia, such as Chinese porcelain and Japanese lacquerwork, were especially popular among women.

One painter whose work was regularly offered at auctions explicitly aimed at women was Van Roestraeten. He introduced a new sub-genre around that time: still lifes with cups of China porcelain and Yixing teapots often displayed on tables made of Japanese lacquerwork, precisely the kind of exotic objects that were popular among women. In my paper, I will argue that he thereby responded to the growing and idiosyncratic demand for luxury products among women, just like the auctioneers with whom he did business. His paintings thus document how—at a time that women gained more autonomy—a female-oriented space arose in which both paintings and exotics gained popularity.

Lauryn Smith, Case Western Reserve University | Cleveland Museum of Art

A Room of One's Own: The Cabinets of Amalia van Solms-Braunfels (1602–1675), Princess of Orange

Amalia van Solms-Braunfels, Princess of Orange, first arrived in the United Provinces as a lady-in-waiting of the 'Winter Queen,' Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia. By 1626, she had married Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange and Stadholder of the United Provinces, and

produced their first child and heir, Willem II. Under the princely couple, the United Provinces flourished as a cultural and global power. The strength and wealth of the United Provinces, and by association the House of Orange-Nassau, is embedded in Amalia's *cabinets*; intimate spaces in her apartments where she carefully curated ensembles of decorative and fine art objects. These spaces housed luxurious decorative objects imported from East and West Asia, islands in the Atlantic, and the Americas, displayed alongside works produced by contemporary Dutch and Flemish artists, including Sir Peter Paul Rubens, Rembrandt van Rijn, and Adam van Vianen. While Amalia is now recognized by scholars as an active patron, the scope of studies focused on her cultural agency continues to be mostly limited to her widowhood. This is in part due to the difficulty of detangling Amalia's individual interests and projects from that of her husband and other influential figures, such as Constantijn Huygens, with traditional methodologies. This presentation examines Amalia's cabinets in one of the primary residences from her marriage, The Stadtholder's Quarters, to investigate how the princess cultivated and utilized her robust social network to assist her in her cultural pursuits and acquire artworks. It interrogates how, once acquired, objects were employed by Amalia in ensembles within the most intimate spaces of her residences to construct her various identities- as wife, mother, consort, and princess- and further the status and prestige of the evolving House of Orange-Nassau. Examining Amalia's cabinets, highly personal spaces within her apartments, overcomes the challenges associated with assessing agency traditionally, as well as uncovers Amalia's early artistic interests and motivations as a collector and patron.

Sandra F. Racek, Northwestern University | Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Hendrick Goltzius's Vertumnus and Pomona (1613) and the Erotics of Mutability

This paper will focus on gender role-play in Hendrick Goltzius's 1613 depiction of *Vertumnus and Pomona*, inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and the sexualized dynamics of viewership. According to Eric Jan Sluijter's landmark essay, "Vertumnus and Pomona by Hendrick Goltzius (1613) and Jan Tengnagel (1617): Constants and Contrasts in Form and Subject" in the Rijksmuseum Bulletin, *Vertumnus and Pomona* was "the most frequently depicted mythological subject in the Northern Netherlands [between 1590-1670]", and seventeenth-century literate (even if not Latin-educated) viewers would have known the narrative. Compositionally, the large canvas stages an intimate encounter with the monumental figures. Though the early provenance of the work is not known, most viewers would have understood that the leering old woman is Vertumnus, the god of seasons who can change appearance at will, and that he has transformed himself to seduce Pomona, the goddess of fruit, who secludes herself in her garden and refuses to engage male suitors.

They would have also recognized and perhaps even delighted in the misunderstanding that structures the tense interaction between the figures: unaware that her companion is the mutable god, Pomona raises her sickle toward the woman who is acting incongruously for

her gender and age. In this paper I identify and unpack how Goltzius's rendering invited viewers to consider the dynamics of viewership vis-à-vis the depicted sensual encounter between Pomona and Vertumnus. By analyzing Vertumnus's cross-dressing as both the means for erotic access to Pomona and a display of his mutable identity, I argue that Goltzius's 1613 painting visually exemplifies eroticized conceptions of the dynamics of viewership solicited by virtuosic mutability of artistic skill, for which Goltzius was celebrated in his lifetime.

My analysis of Goltzius's painting is drawn from my dissertation, "Dressed for Deceit: Male Cross-Dressing in Mythological and Pastoral Art in the Netherlands (1600-1680)", which explores the intersection of seventeenth-century debates concerning the credibility of appearances and permissible transgressions of normative gender roles through fantasy depictions of male-female cross-dressing, a practice rarely permissible and seldom documented in seventeenth-century Holland. Much Netherlandish art theoretical writing of the seventeenth century focuses on the power of credible likeness by describing art making and viewing through explicitly erotic language. Karel van Mander uses such rhetoric in *Den Grondt* where he advises artists to design images that operate by enticing the gaze of art lovers, while also inviting viewers to be wary of the pleasurable seductive power of art. He notes that a noble and worthy artist is one "who with his artistic work can open a sweet impulse to the eyes of men so that their hearts are lured from their dwelling places and remain attached to it." Landmark scholarship by Elizabeth Honig, Eric Jan Sluiter, Angela Vanhaelen, Bronwen Wilson, Thijs Weststeijn and others address issues of discernment and the moral, metaphysical, and material implications raised by the seventeenth-century tradition of understanding visual encounters in erotic terms. Honig's investigation of the female gaze through the work of Gesina ter Borch, in particular is foundational for drawing attention to the social construction of gendered viewing practices. This paper builds on that scholarship and addresses the erotics of Vertumnus's mutable identity conveyed through cross-dressing.

Open Session: Seventeenth-Century Dutch and Flemish Art

SESSION ORGANIZERS

Jasper Hillegers, Salomon Lilian Gallery, Amsterdam

Angela Jager, RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, The Hague

This session welcomes papers on any aspect of Dutch and Flemish art of the seventeenth century.

SPEAKERS

Marina Daiman, Rubenianum, Antwerp

Rubens's Adoption and Uses of Red Chalk

While red chalk was already used in the Low Countries in the sixteenth century, Rubens apparently imported the technique from Italy. His red chalk drawings, including those by others that he retouched, number about 250 and represent a significant portion of his graphic output. This paper will consider Rubens's adoption of *matita rossa* and his uses of this medium over the course of his career. Some of the earliest examples include two portrait studies for an altarpiece in Santissima Trinità in Mantua. While Rubens's handling is here somewhat hesitant, the artist already introduced the combination of three chalks that would later become one of his signature modes of using the medium.

During his sojourns in Rome Rubens copied in chalk Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. While it has been suggested that Rubens does not show the full command of the medium in his copies of the prophets and sibyls, I will argue his rigorous use of hatching, avoidance of stumping, and discrete areas of red and black seek to imitate chalk drawings of Cavaliere d'Arpino. Conversely, it is tempting to speculate that Rubens's choice of red chalk alone in his other copies after Michelangelo has to do with the drawings by that artist in *matita rossa* that he acquired.

Red chalk disappears from Rubens's drawings after his return to Antwerp in 1608 even as he continues to use black chalk extensively. The medium resurges again just under a decade later, and I will examine possible reasons for its reappearance. Furthermore, in the last decade of Rubens's life red chalk appears more frequently in his compositional drawings, until then nearly the exclusive purview of pen and ink. I will investigate the likely impetus behind this development and consider the artist's preferences of certain media for specific types of drawings.

Gerlinde Gruber, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

The Art Historian's Perspective on Macro-XRF Scanning: Rubens' Het Pelsken and Two Versions of Rubens' Head of Medusa

Over the last years, the Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM) in Vienna has initiated several collaborations with the University of Antwerp to do Macro-XRF scanning of paintings. This paper will present the MA-XRF findings from two highly different projects, on Rubens' *Het Pelsken* (the little Fur) and on two versions of Rubens' famous *Medusa* (at the KHM and the Moravská Galerie, Brno). In this presentation, I will present both the important contributions that MA-XRF scanning can have for art history - the scanning depicted the complex fountain behind *Het Pelsken* - but will also point to its limitations.

It would be important to demonstrate this to our discipline, as there is a certain tendency to use technical analyses to resolve attribution-issues, which is often not possible. For example, one of the key questions that Rubens' *Head of Medusa* poses is in regard to the possibility of

a collaboration between Rubens and Frans Snyders. And although the Macro- XRF scans clearly show that the painting in Brno was the prototype, only a stylistic analysis can help in clarifying the authorship.

Eric Jan Sluijter, University of Amsterdam **Nicolette Sluijter-Seijffert**, independent researcher

Six (or Ten?) Painters in Competition. A Joseph-Cycle of 1655

Six paintings of the same size (canvas, c. 112 x 90 cm), all signed and dated 1655, executed by five painters working in Amsterdam and one in Haarlem, render an episode from the story of Joseph.¹ One of them was Rembrandt, who contributed *Joseph Accused by the Wife of Potiphar* (Berlin); the others were Barthomeus Breenbergh, Salomon de Braij, Govert Flinck, Nicolaes van Helt Stockade and Salomon Koninck. Most likely the series originally consisted of ten paintings, as we will argue. We already discovered the name of a seventh contributor (Carel van Savoyen from Antwerp, working in Amsterdam for most of his career) and the subject of his painting, but not yet the painting itself, and we are still searching for more contributors and their works.

Pressing questions are: who commissioned this series and what was the context of the commission? Does the fact that the very idiosyncratic composition by Breenbergh appears to have been conceived before the other ones give an indication? Why were these particular painters chosen? How would this series have functioned? Is there a relation to the activities of the Amsterdamse schouwburg and to the performances of Vondel's Joseph- trilogy in the mid-1650s?

We will also examine the implications of a group of renowned history painters creating in a deliberately competitive situation works of art that offered connoisseurs the pleasure of comparing, contemplating and valuing their manners. It is striking that each of these artists seems to emphasize self-consciously the characteristics of his specific manner. What did this display of such significantly divergent styles and artistic ideals mean to artists and connoisseurs?

¹ Tom van der Molen was the first to realize that these six paintings belonged together: "Painted theatre: Flinck, Rembrandt and other artists paint Vondel's Joseph trilogy", in: Stephanie Dickey (ed.), *Ferdinand Bol and Govert Flinck. New Research*, Zwolle 2017, pp. 82-97.

Netherlandish Art and the Eschatological Imagination: Space, Time and Experience of the Other World(s)

SESSION ORGANIZERS

Christine Göttler, Universität Bern

Anna Pawlak, Eberhard Karls Universität, Tübingen

In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there were radical shifts in the ways in which the world beyond death was imagined, represented, and conceived in its spatial and temporal as well as its material and affective dimensions. The Protestant Reformation rejected Purgatory, the most recent addition to the eschatological landscape construed as an intermediary site that still allowed communication between the living and the dead. In response to Protestant criticism, Catholic reformers began to promote the purgative rather than punitive aspects of a stay in Purgatory, relocating it from a realm near Hell to one near Heaven. The increasingly global dissemination of Christian doctrines further broadened the imagery of eschatology, accommodating it to that of other belief systems. Finally, a growing curiosity in realms not accessible to human eyes—the outermost reaches of the heavens, and the innermost depths of the earth—gave rise to a whole new genre of spatial and cosmological reflections and representations. With their changing political and confessional loyalties along with their highly developed printing culture and artistic traditions, the Netherlands (under Burgundian, Spanish and Dutch rule) provides a particularly interesting case to study the shifting foci and norms of eschatological imageries and imaginaries. Combining image, language and object-centered perspectives, the session seeks to shed more light on the formation, reception, and transmission of extra-temporal and extra-spatial worlds. Its focus is on the sensual and affective components of these two worlds, whether future or parallel, and their multiple links with the actual world that created them. Conceptualizations and imaginations of the hereafter can be helpfully understood as ‘chronotopes’ in the sense used by Mikhail Bakhtin, in that they reconfigure spatial and temporal relations and experiences. How was the specific ‘materiality’ of the ‘world beyond’ explored in different visual and textual media in both the Spanish Netherlands and the Dutch Republic? Were there parallels or intersections in the imagination of other worlds beyond the space of the known, both ‘real’ and eschatological? We are particularly interested in contributions that engage with the roles of emotions, affects, and perceptions—sensations generally associated with human bodies—in a world beyond the visible and tangible and beyond time and space. How were the otherworldly loci described and imagined in exegetical, didactic, and devotional literature? In what ways did these images and texts evoke the spatio-temporal dimensions and affective atmospheres and ambiances of these places never seen by human eyes? How did people conceive of the possibility of communication between this world and other-worldly spheres, or among the latter (e.g., between heaven and hell)? What elements of the visual language of eschatology

successfully permeated confessional and religious boundaries, and which were adapted and transformed? Among other topics, papers may address configurations of otherworldly spaces in religious didactic and religious subversive genres or ones that engage with the use of eschatological imaginings in spaces of leisure and recreation such as theatres, gardens, and parks.

SPEAKERS

Minou Schraven, VU University, Amsterdam | Amsterdam University College

Ecstasy as the Gateway to the Celestial World. The Sermons and Blessed Beads of Juana de la Cruz (d. 1534) between Spain, Rome and the Spanish Netherlands

For thirteen long years, the Spanish mystic Juana de la Cruz (1481-1534) had a weekly appointment with Christ. Surrounded by her fellow nuns in a Franciscan convent near Toledo, Juana would go in ecstatic rapture and visit the celestial realm. Occasionally, high-placed visitors would assist at these raptures, among them a young Charles V and Cardinal Francisco de Cisneros. While Juana lay motionless on the ground, a low-register voice, claiming to be that of Christ, would recount Juana's experiences and the teachings she received while in Heaven: about 72 of these Sermons have come to us. In these Sermons, Juana (in the voice of Christ) re-narrated key events of the Gospel, providing a range of details that go beyond the canonical texts. What's more, she mixed in extensive descriptions of the events taking place in Heaven while she was there. In these *figuras* (pageants), Christ emerges as strikingly human, playing cards, engaging in horse-races, or making music with angels and saints. At the same time, he is suffering throughout: the food and drink consumed during the festive banquets is taken from his wounds. He also visibly suffers each time a soul is liberated from Purgatory.

Strikingly, Juana would take large amounts of rosaries and beads on her journeys to Heaven to have them blessed. Once back on earth, they would smell "most deliciously", as they had been "in the most holy hands of Our Lord Jesus Christ." The fame of these *cuentas benditas* would spread wherever Spanish nuns took them, as far as New Spain, the Far East, and the Spanish Netherlands. With the support of King Philip III of Spain, Juana's canonization process started in Rome in 1619: she would eventually be declared *Venerable*. In this very period, Antonio Deza's biography *Vida y Milagros [...] de la Bienaventurada Virgen Sor Juana de la Cruz* (Lerida, 1610) was translated in several languages: Italian (Padua 1617), English (St Omer, 1625), German (Munich, 1619), Polish (Krakow, 1621) and Dutch (Brussels, 1627). Based on a close reading of the Sermons, this paper will explore how Juana envisioned the time and space of the celestial realm and the life and nature of its inhabitants, among them Christ, Mary, the angels and the Saints. We will also unpick the mechanisms enabling Juana and the devotional objects to travel between this and the other world, and the particular

role of miracle-working Marian images in Juana's convent. Secondly, we will see how these constructs have been mediated in Deza's biography and in the records of Juana's canonization process. In line with post-Tridentine sensibilities, Deza clearly refrained from elaborating too much on Juana's revelations about the scriptures, the daily life in the celestial realm, or the make-up of Purgatory. Instead, he took great care to set Juana's *cuentas* apart from devotional objects blessed by the Pope in Rome. What does this tell us about the ways that early modern Catholics imagined the celestial realm and the conferral of celestial powers and blessings onto devotional objects?

Anna-Claire Stinebring, Metropolitan Museum of Art | University of Pennsylvania

Entangled Bodies at the End Times: The Rockox "Last Judgment"

A dense thicket of bodies overwhelms the foreground of the central panel of the monumental Rockox *Last Judgment Triptych*. The c. 1537-39 altarpiece, commissioned by Adriaen Rockox and Catharina van Overhoff for their family chapel in the Antwerp Sint-Jacobskerk, is a *prestige collaboration* between two major Antwerp artists: Jan Sanders van Hemessen, who painted the nearly life-sized muscular foreground bodies; and (I contend) the young Pieter Aertsen, who was responsible for the more loosely painted small figures in the background and upper registers of the center panel. In comparison to its Netherlandish precursors, notably Bernard van Orley's 1525 *Last Judgment and Seven Acts of Mercy*, the Rockox *Last Judgment* stands out for its resistance to imposing orderly divisions between the damned and the elect. The full perilousness of the eschatological scene is magnified by Van Hemessen and Aertsen's double vision of a panoramic environment almost entirely composed of carnal, fallen bodies: bodies viewed at alarmingly close range and bodies comprising a remote yet extending field. This landscape of bodies is designed to appear infinite through its drastic modulation of scale. A collaboration between two artists best known for their development of genre imagery, the Rockox *Last Judgment* envisions an otherworldly space emphatically implicated with the material realities of the here-and-now. Almost none of the figures instantiate a Pauline vision of resurrected bodies that "rise in incorruption (I Corinthians 15:42)." Two of the only remaining standing foreground figures, at far-left, hold poses that broadcast bodily shame and that echo the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise. Their presence conflates the beginning and ending of historical time in the Christian tradition and emphasizes the first pair's legacy of mortality and Original Sin. Only a select number of Aertsen's most wispy figures climb heavenward. In rendering heaven, Aertsen manipulated color and scale to communicate the majesty yet remoteness of the ethereal realm. In contrast to the distant heaven, hell is placed on earth. Its billowing smoke merges with the dark clouds of the nocturnal landscape above the donor portraits on the triptych wings, stressing the high stakes of the family's devotion. The memorial function of the altarpiece in the Rockox chapel, which served as a family burial place, was already activated at its inception through the generic profile portrait of the daughter Anna, who died in 1535 at age 25. Anna alone enacts a visionary experience of the apocalyptic scene, serving

as a link between it and the family's finite, historical plane of existence. She stares calmly ahead at the central panel's profoundly pessimistic view of the possibility of salvation. The Rockox *Last Judgment Triptych* brings into focus the urgency of doctrinal and devotional debates in Antwerp religious life at the outset of the Reformation, specifically as they played out in period conceptualizations of the end times and bodily resurrection. Focusing on the case study of the triptych and its patronage, this paper examines early modern imaginings of supernatural space and time that do not free the body from its worldly entanglements.

Walter S. Melion, Emory University, Atlanta

***“Purga aciem mentis”*: Visual Purgation in the Eschatological Spiritual Exercises of Jan David, S.J.**

Designed and engraved by the Galle family of Antwerp, the extensive print series around which Jan David, S.J.'s innovative emblem books are organized all conclude with eschatological images having to do with the spiritual exercise of purgation—the freeing of one's bodily and spiritual senses from sinful impulses, in anticipation of one's imminent death and of final judgment. These emblems consistently turn on *paradoxa* that assist the votary visually and affectively to experience something beyond the realm of human experience, to see what cannot be seen, to partake in time of a state of salvation or damnation that is timeless. In the *Veridicus Christianus* (True Christian, 1601), the final emblems concern the nature of eternity and its relation to terrestrial affairs. In the *Occasio arrepta, neglecta* (Opportunity Seized, Neglected, 1605), the final emblem depicts the book's protagonists—five wise and five foolish boys—respectively translated to heaven and hell, from where they are seen eternally to dwell on the consequences of having snatched or shirked temporal opportunity. In the *Pancarpium Marianum* (Marian Garland, 1607), the final emblems focus on apocalyptic *tituli* of the Virgin, who exemplifies the dual power of embodied grace, as encapsulated in the epithet *rapiens*: Mary, exemplum and personification of grace, jointly exercises the power to 'capture by force' and to 'capture'. In the *Duodecim specula* (Twelve Mirrors, 1610), the final emblem conflates the prophet Daniel with the evangelist John, showing how both were divinely inspired to demonstrate how purging of the mind's eye is the necessary step toward achieving the beatific vision in this life. These emblems, in various ways, allow the reader-viewer to reflect on the nature of the relation between present and future experience, between a prevenient and everlasting state of grace, and on the thoughts and emotions, texts and images that preview the eternal future of the embodied soul from its present contingent circumstances. In particular, my paper looks closely at the images collaboratively designed by the Galles and David to represent how the end of the world and its perpetual aftermath may be imagined.

“Technical Art History” is Art History

SESSION ORGANIZERS

Melanie Gifford, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Abbie Vandivere, Mauritshuis | University of Amsterdam

The exploration and examination of the material nature of artworks is frequently characterized as “technical art history.” We suggest that such research is an aspect of art history, rather than a separate discipline. Art objects are important primary sources. Studying how artworks were made provides invaluable first-hand documentation when artists left no written record of their thoughts. Evidence such as compositional changes or the adoption of new materials, for example, can help us trace the direction of artistic influence or emulation; we can even uncover direct personal relationships. Understanding the practical changes that resulted in an artistic innovation can shed light on market forces as well as the personal creative process.

This roundtable seeks ways to integrate material evidence into the wider practice of art historical study, from introductory classes to scholarly research. How can we lower the barriers to such evidence being used routinely in all sorts of art historical undertakings? One challenge is that scholars trained in the humanities may have little experience interpreting material evidence, just as scientific researchers have limited exposure to interpreting cultural contexts. We in the humanities are less accustomed to collaboration across disciplines; while most scientific scholarship is carried out by research teams, scholarship in art history traditionally appears as single-author publications (and this is sometimes a requirement for academic tenure).

In this roundtable, we will brainstorm ways that art historians of all levels could use research into artistic techniques as routinely as they would the work of specialists in iconography or archival research. How and when should we introduce students to the fundamentals of interpreting technical evidence? How can we open our accustomed research frameworks to cross-disciplinary collaboration? How can we frame our questions in ways that communicate outside our field? Can stepping outside our comfort zone make our work accessible and meaningful to wider audiences?

This session is structured to facilitate active discussion between panel and participants. Our panelists will be art historians, conservators, and scientists, bringing a range of perspectives. Panelists will introduce themselves with 5-minute case studies that highlight their approach to collaboration and/or communication across disciplines, then our panel will consider:

- How do you frame your research questions?
- How does this impact your research collaborations?
- How do you (or do you) try to share your findings across disciplines?

Our audience will join in:

- What is your experience with incorporating material evidence into your work?
- If not, what is holding you back?
- What resources would help?

We hope our audience, too, will be on a continuum, from experienced collaborators to interested bystanders.

Workshop at the Amsterdam Hermitage: *Netherlandish Art in the Context of a Modern City Museum: Panorama Amsterdam* (max. 20 participants), with Tom van der Molen, Amsterdam Museum

Until 2025 Amsterdam Museum's location in the former Civic Orphanage will be closed for renovation. During this period the museum will be housed temporarily in *Amsterdam Museum on the Amstel*. In the collection presentation *Panorama Amsterdam* a wide selection of Amsterdam's huge collection is shown. The visitor can walk chronologically through the history of Amsterdam, from the 16th century to the present. Inside a space in the middle of the room, we focus on themes that are closely related to the city but are not always included in its traditional "grand" history. Works by artists such as Rembrandt, Ruisdael, Van der Heyden, Van der Helst and Berckheyde and many more function within a layered, sometimes critical context. Curator Tom van der Molen gives a tour through the exhibition and elaborates on and discusses choices made and their consequences.

Workshop at the Artis Library (max. 15 participants): ***The Discovery of Nature***, with Hans Mulder, Artis Library

In the sixteenth century an increasing number of studies appeared in which animals and plants were described and depicted after life. In the following centuries research into the natural world deepened and the art to capture its miracles came close to perfection. During this presentation and workshop in Artis Library you will have the opportunity to see and discuss some of the most beautiful examples of the representation of nature, as discovered and observed by artists and scientists.

This workshop will be led by Hans Mulder (1961), who is keeper of Artis Library, and curator for natural history at the Library of the University of Amsterdam. He teaches and publishes on natural history and the history of the book. Mulder co-edited the facsimile of Maria Sybilla Merian's *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium* (2016) and wrote *De ontdekking van de natuur* ("*The Discovery of Nature*", 2021), for which publication he received recently the prestigious Jan Wolkersprijs for the best book on nature in the Netherlands.

KEY NOTE LECTURE, 16:00-17:15

Jan Blanc, University of Geneva

Dutch Seventeenth Century or Dutch Golden Age? Words, Concepts and Ideology

Historians of seventeenth-century Dutch art have long been accustomed to studying not only works of art and artists, but also archives and textual sources. This essential work enables them to avoid developing anachronistic points of view by placing the ideological frameworks of their time in the past. For them, it is a question of reconstructing the categories, thanks to which and through which works of art were considered, conceived, produced and received during the seventeenth century. This reconstruction is obviously not entirely possible, because the historian, with his or her necessarily limited knowledge and often different methods, always stands between the past and the present. However, when it comes to developing a historical discourse on the past – other discourses are naturally possible and even legitimate – it is essential to strive towards this reconstruction, bearing in mind the words of the French historian Paul Veyne: “Les historiens racontent des événements vrais qui ont l’homme pour acteur; l’histoire est un roman vrai” (“Historians tell true events in which man is the actor; history is a true novel”).

Within these categories, the notion of “golden age” occupies, as we know and recent events have shown, a crucial place and, even today, a considerable performative power, whether taken in its positive senses (the apogee of a civilization) or negative senses (the favourable mask behind which less glorious realities are hidden). Our aim is not to re-discuss these questions for our time, but to contextualize them historically, by showing, in the wake of the research project *A Golden Age? Rethinking 17th-century Dutch painting (2017–2021)*, how and why the notion of the Golden Age is not a recent invention, but has slowly been shaped, since the sixteenth century, to become a model of explanation and action for the society of the United Provinces. The question remains, however, for art historians to account for the plurality and contradictions of this model, but also to ask whether it is appropriate to retain the use of this notion, that is more normative than descriptive.