Since the mid-nineteenth century the Rijksmuseum has had in its collection a modest portrait of a man (fig. 1). The work has long been attributed on sound grounds to the colourful Amsterdam painter Cornelis Ketel (1548-1616), an attribution that has so far never been questioned and is not a subject of discussion here.\(^1\) We see a friendly looking man, dressed in black and wearing a loosely pleated white ruff in a style that came into fashion around 1600.\(^2\) From the tight confines of the picture plane he looks out at us, seemingly daydreaming, while he holds up a figurine in his right hand. When the work was acquired on 27 April 1858 at the sale of the collection of the Amsterdam lawyer and politician Maurits Cornelis van Hall (1768-1858), it was recorded as the portrait of ‘P. van Vianen, eminent art chaser’, painted by ‘Lutma the Younger’.\(^3\) The attribution and identification were not entirely plucked out of thin air, but were based on the supposed resemblance between the man on the canvas and an engraving that Abraham Lutma had made round 1650 after a self-portrait by the Utrecht-born silversmith Paulus van Vianen (1550-1613) (fig. 2). With some stretch of the imagination, one could perhaps see the same person in Ketel’s portrait and Lutma’s print, provided one was prepared to overlook several differences, such as the handlebar moustache, the long goatee and the different hairstyle. The Van Vianen in the print looks more like the man in a small round friendship portrait that Hans van Aken made in Prague in 1613 (fig. 3).\(^4\) Aside from the painter himself we see the sculptor Adriaen de Vries and Paulus van Vianen – as a portrait on the easel. This was probably just after Van Vianen’s
death. The three had been close friends during the time they spent working at the court of Emperor Rudolf II in Prague. A copy of the miniature tondo was subsequently drawn by Johannes Lutma the Elder and produced as a print by his son Jacob. It is clear, however, that the Paulus van Vianen in this little painting does not have any convincing features in common with the man in Ketel’s portrait. Apart from the difference in age – Ketel’s subject is in his thirties, Van Aken’s is middle aged – in Van Aken’s little portrait we are not seeing the round eyes with the slight squint or the full, obviously blond beard of Ketel’s sitter; furthermore, his Van Vianen has a thinner, sharper nose, his hairline is receding and his moustache is more compact, thicker and darker.

Probably for the lack of any better idea, the identification as the silversmith clung obstinately to Ketel’s canvas. When the brothers Paulus and Adam van Vianen were taken into the pantheon of Netherlandish artists that graced the newly built Rijksmuseum, for instance, the painter Georg Sturm (1855-1923) based his portrait of Paulus in the wall painting of the

---

**Fig. 3**
HANS VAN AKEN,
Self-Portrait with Adriaen de Vries and Paulus van Vianen,
Prague, 1613.
Oil on copper, diam. 9.5 cm.
Arnsberg, Archiv des Freiherrn von Fürstenberg-Herdringen.

**Fig. 4**
GEORG STURM,
detail of Practitioners of the Decorative Arts, showing Paulus and Adam van Vianen, c. 1892.
Oil on canvas.
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (front hall).
Practitioners of Decorative Art in the entrance on Ketel’s painting (fig. 4).7 It was not until 1976 that someone aired the first misgivings about the accuracy of the identification,8 followed eight years later by Johannes ter Molen in his dissertation on the Van Vianens: ‘Finally, a portrait of a man holding aloft a gilded Venus figurine in his right hand is regarded as a portrait of Paulus van Vianen. The features of the person in this canvas attributed to Cornelis Ketel do indeed bear some resemblance to the silversmith’s self-portrait as engraved by Abraham Lutma. Nevertheless, such a hypothesis, given the equally evident similarities to other portraits from the period around 1600, should be treated with a degree of caution.’9

Aside from the question as to whether ‘some resemblance’ provides sufficient grounds for an identification, there is the matter of when Ketel could have painted Paulus van Vianen. The silversmith had left his homeland around 1590 and lived abroad ever since. In 1603 he had arrived in Prague by way of France, Italy, Germany and Austria, and he died there ten years later.10 Because Ketel spent his whole career in Amsterdam after 1581, it is not possible to pinpoint a moment when the paths of the painter and the silversmith might have crossed after Van Vianen left the country.11 What is even more odd is that no one seriously queried whether the figurine Ketel’s man holds in his hand is a likely attribute for a goldsmith, particularly for Paulus van Vianen, whose fame rests not on free-standing statues but on figure reliefs chased in silver or gold.12

We may also question whether what the man is holding is in fact a gilded figure, as Ter Molen believed; it looks more like a small bronze or, even more probably, a modello in reddish-brown wax. The graceful, mannered pose and elegant proportions of the little female figure, the marked contraposto and long legs are very striking. With her hands modestly covering her breast, she reminds one of a large bronze Venus by the Venetian sculptor Alessandro Vittoria (1525–1608), although her engaged leg and free leg are reversed. Given the fame and influence of Vittoria’s invention, it is quite possible that a model inspired by his Venus is the little figure in Ketel’s portrait (fig. 5).13 Be that as it may, the fact that the man holds a statuette in bronze or wax marks him out as a sculptor rather than a silversmith, even taking into account that around 1600 the work of the silversmith could be highly sculptural and the boundaries
between the two disciplines were not always so sharply defined. Statues, busts and antique fragments feature almost without fail as attributes in sculptors’ portraits, and the sitters often clasp statuettes or small models as a symbol of their trade.\(^{14}\)

Among the sculptors in the Dutch Republic around 1600 there is one man who is such an obvious candidate for Ketel’s portrait that it is surprising his name has never been suggested before. He is the Amsterdam city sculptor Hendrick de Keyser (1565-1621). The two artists’ worlds constantly overlapped and they were good friends, as evidenced by the fact that in 1610 and in 1613 De Keyser witnessed wills for Ketel, who suffered strokes in those years.\(^{15}\) Their friendship is specifically mentioned in De Keyser’s biography in *Architectura Moderna* (1631): ‘and [he, De Keyser] had among other things very close friendships ... especially with the wonderful Cornelis Ketel’.\(^{16}\)

Artistically, too, their paths must have crossed all the time. In the light of his experiments with finger painting, for instance, it comes as no surprise that Ketel the painter had also tried his hand at sculpture, and it would have been very strange if his sculptor friend had not helped him.\(^{17}\) According to Karel van Mander, Ketel began modelling in 1595, scarcely four years after De Keyser had settled in Amsterdam.\(^{18}\) At the same time, the two artists worked for the same clients, among them the wealthy, art-loving wine assessor and vintner Vincent Jacobsz Coster (1553-1608/10), who also owned a popular pleasure ground and inn on Prinsengracht, known as Het Oude Doolhof.\(^{19}\) Ketel painted a portrait of Coster, which we still know thanks to Jacob Matham’s 1602 engraving of it (fig. 6).\(^{20}\) Allowing for the reversal caused by the print, the vintner’s pose is very like that of the man with the ‘Venus’ statuette. An appropriate glass of ‘Rhenish wine’ has replaced the little nude figure. Hendrick de Keyser also made Coster’s portrait – twice, in fact: in a terracotta surviving as a fragment and in a white marble bust dating from 1608.\(^{21}\)

Van Mander’s long biography of Cornelis Ketel also mentions two portraits he painted of his friend De Keyser, one as usual with a brush, and the other with his fingers.\(^{22}\) The latter work has disappeared without trace, but may we not see in the head painted with the brush – ‘a very good likeness’, according to Van Mander – our supposed portrait of Paulus van Vianen? The tight framing of the portrait would certainly suggest that the sitter was a member of Ketel’s circle of friends.\(^{23}\) There is just one undisputed portrait of Hendrick de Keyser that could confirm this supposition, and that is the engraving...
Jonas Suyderhoef made of a portrait
Thomas de Keyser drew of his father –
which has also been lost (fig. 7).
This print dates from shortly after
De Keyser’s death in 1621, but
Thomas’s drawing must have been
done from life. We see in the engraving
the same man as in Ketel’s
painting, albeit considerably older.
Although he has become fuller in the
face over the years, his features are
unmistakably those of the man on
Ketel’s canvas: the oval face ending
in a pointed beard, the chevron
moustache, the full head of curly
hair, the oblong forehead with the
straight hairline are all identical.
Based on this resemblance, the
pictorial tradition of the sculptor’s
portrait, the ties of friendship
between painter and sitter and the
fact that at least two portraits of the
Amsterdam city sculptor by Ketel
are documented, there is sufficient
reason to regard this canvas as ‘the
head of the very skilful sculptor
Hendrick de Keyser, Master Builder
of the City of Amsterdam, a very
good likeness’, that Van Mander
referred to in 1604.\textsuperscript{24} It would then
have been made around 1600 – in
any event after October 1591, when
De Keyser settled in Amsterdam, but
before the publication of \textit{Het Schilder-
Boek} in 1604. A date around this time
is a good fit for De Keyser’s estimated
age in the painting.

There is more to the fact that Ketel
showed the versatile sculptor proudly
holding up a wax or bronze figure
than simply a mark of his trade. It
also reflects De Keyser’s increasing
focus in the early years of the seven-
teenth century on the cabinet sculpture
genre, which was rare in the Republic.\textsuperscript{15}
In 1604 it had led among other things
to a small silver group of St Martin
and the Beggar that he designed as
the cover of Ernst Jansz van Vianen’s
guild cup for the Haarlem brewers,
and in 1611 to a bronze Mercury.\textsuperscript{16}
While we do not know of a ‘Venus’
in De Keyser’s modest body of work
in this still new genre – although she
may have been among the ‘models,
patterns, papers, drawings and sculp-
tures’ mentioned in his 1621 will –
there is nevertheless a strong indica-
tion that he did make such a standing
nude female figure.\textsuperscript{27} According to
an engraved advertisement dating
from around 1625, in Vincent Coster’s
pleasure ground, which was mean-
while under new ownership and
had been renamed Nieuwe Doolhof,
there was a fountain with the figures
of Orpheus and Eurydice on a revolv-
ing platform (fig. 8). The violin-playing
Orpheus, with Cerberus at his feet,
has already been recognized as an
invention by Hendrick de Keyser, but until now his female pendant has eluded identification. However, the pose of the Eurydice, seen from the back, resembles that of the little ‘Venus’ figure in Ketel’s portrait so strongly that the notion that this is a variant of the same model is justified (figs. 9, 10). Everything goes to suggest that De Keyser, commissioned by the art-loving Coster, made both bronze statues for the Orpheus fountain in his Het Oude Doolhof, probably not long before he also made Coster’s portrait busts. De Keyser’s terracotta likeness of its owner must also have been in this same pleasure ground – at least that is where the fragment of it was found in 1986. Ketel’s two portraits of Hendrick de Keyser were not the only artists’ portraits he painted. Just before he mentions the artist’s head of De Keyser, Van Mander explicitly describes Ketel’s ‘portraits of some painters and art lovers’ as ‘very nicely handled and well drawn’. In painting these works, he was engaging in a still relatively young genre, which also caught on with other Dutch painters around 1600. Its emergence reflects the strong ties of friendship among many artists, and is eloquent testimony to their growing self-assurance.
In 1858 the Rijksmuseum acquired a modest portrait of a man (inv. no. SK-A-244) that has since then been attributed on good grounds to the colourful Amsterdam painter Cornelis Ketel (1548-1616). Until now it has been regarded as a likeness of the goldsmith Paulus van Vianen, an identification for which there is no plausible evidence.

The author suggests that the man should be identified as the Amsterdam city sculptor Hendrick de Keyser. Arguments in favour of this, aside from the convincing similarities between the man’s features and a portrait engraving of De Keyser, are the close friendship between Ketel and the sculptor, and the typical sculptor’s attribute – a statuette – that the man holds in his hand. This figurine – probably a model in reddish-brown wax – bears a strong resemblance to a statue of Eurydice that Hendrick de Keyser made for a fountain in Het Oude Doolhof, a pleasure ground in Amsterdam.

According to Karel van Mander, in the biography of Ketel in his 1604 Schilder-Boeck, Ketel made De Keyser’s portrait twice. He painted one portrait with his fingers, the other with a brush, which was described as ‘the head of the most artistic sculptor Hendrick de Keyser ... a very good likeness’. It is safe to assume that the latter work is the portrait in the Rijksmuseum.


11 In his list of portraits by Ketel, Karel van Mander refers to two portraits of goldsmiths, but 'Andries Vreicksen' is the only one mentioned by name, see Karel van Mander, Het Schilder-Boeck, Haarlem 1604, fols. 275v-276r. This is the goldsmith Andries Frerixsz or Andries Frederiks Valckenae (1566-1627), whose daughter Machtelt married Thomas de Keyser in 1626. Another member of the family was Sijmen Sijmenss Valckenaer (died 1629), likewise a goldsmith in Amsterdam, whose estate included 'a copper statue of Hercules, standing on a wooden base' ('een copere beelt van Hercules, staende op een houte voet'), probably the Hercules Pomarius by Willem van Tetrode. See also Egbert Jan Wolleswinkel, 'De schoonfamilie van de (portret)schilder Thomas de Keyser', De Nederlandsche Leeuw 118 (2001), pp. 309-28.

12 In 1675, for instance, Joachim von Sandrart (1606-1688) wrote that 'with his hammer he could produce from a single piece of silver complete scenes, vessels, fine basins such as Diana's bath with numerous nude female figures, animals, landscapes, in perfect beauty, composition and elegance' ('vermittelst seiners Hammers, allein aus einem Stuck Silber ganze Bilder, grosse Geschirr, schöne Handbecken, wie auch das Bad Dianae mit manigfaltigen nackenden Weibsbildern, Thieren, Landschaften, in volkommenster Zier, Zeichnung und Anmutigkeit zuwegen bracht'), see Ter Molen 1984 (note 5), vol. 1, p. 17.


14 Kanzenbach 2007 (note 9), pp. 124-64, figs. 56-68.

15 A.D. de Vries, 'Biographische aanteekeningen betreffende voornamelijk Amsterdamse schilders, plaatsnijders, enz. en hunne verwanten', Oud Holland 3 (1885), pp. 55-80, esp. pp. 74-75. In March 1610 Ketel was still 'physically hale and hearty' ('cloeck ende gesont van lichaem'), but in November-December of that year he was 'lying sick in bed' ('sick te bedde liggend') and in 1613 'physically weak, sitting in a chair because of his stroke, but still sound in heart' ('swack van lichaen, overmits sijn beroertheydt in stoel zittende, nochtans gesont van harten').


18 Van Mander 1604 (note 11), fols. 278r-v: 'In 1595, for the first time, he felt an inclination to model or work in clay and from one lump made a group of figures, namely four nude men, three of them having bound one hand and foot ... These four figures perform very fine actions, work as a whole, and can be seen in his shop, a thing that garners great admiration from all those who understand art, even the best sculptors. Since then he has also helped himself in his paintings and drawings by modelling in wax, which is practised by the Italians and is useful.' ('Eerstlijck. Ao. 1595 drongh hem ’t ghenehegen te bootseren oft wercken van aerde, en maecckte uyt eenen clomp een gro[e]p beelden, te weten, vier naeckte Mannenekens, de dry hebbeen eenen aen handen en voeten ghebonden ... Dese vier beelden doen seer aerdige actien, comen seer geheel, en zijn op zijnen winckel te sien, een dinghen dat allen Const-ver -standigen, oock den besten Beeldt-snijders, hoogh verwonderen toelangt. T’sindert heeft hy bock met het bootseren van wasch, in zijn schilderijen en teyckenen toelangt. T’sindert heeft hy oock met het bootseren van wasch, in zijn schilderijen en teyckenen beholpen, het welck by d’Italianen ghebruyckt, en voorderlijck is.’)

In 1608 Ketel witnessed Coster’s will, see Ger Luijten and Ariane van Suchtelen (eds.), *Dawn of the Golden Age: Northern Netherlandish Art 1580–1620*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1993, p. 585.

Van Mander 1604 (note 11), fol. 276v: ‘Sixth, a very well-done head, being the likeness of Vincent Jacobsen the wine assessor, of Amsterdam, with a good Frankfurt Rhenish wine in his hand, extraordinarily pure, whose proper posture is even recognized from a distance.’ (‘Sest, een seer wel gedaen tronie, wesende t’Conterfeytsel van Vincent Iacobsen de Wijn-peyler, van Amsterdam, met eenen goeden Franckfoorder Rijnsche Wijn in de handt, uytnemende suyver, welcke oock haren welstandt van verre niet en weyghert.’) See exh. cat. Amsterdam 1993 (current note), no. 258.


Van Mander 1604 (note 11), fol. 276v: ‘Among others there is also the head of the very skilful sculptor Hendrick de Keyser, Master Builder of the City of Amsterdam, a very good likeness’ (‘Onder ander isser oock de tronie van seer Const-rijcken Beeldtsnijder Hendrick de Keyser, Bouw-Meester der Stadt Amsterdam, seer wel ghelijckende’), and fol. 278v: ‘likewise the excellent sculptor De Keyser, previously done of him as an apostle with the brush’ (‘s’ghelijcx den uytnemenden Beeldt-snijder de Keyser, voorhenen van hem met den Pinceelen tot een Apostel gedaen’). It would seem, though, that Van Mander made a mistake in his second reference, when he described the portrait painted with the brush as a *porträt historié* – De Keyser dressed as an apostle (fol. 278v). Two pages earlier he had described that same brushwork portrait simply as ‘a head … a very good likeness’. It is therefore likely that it was the finger-painted portrait that depicted De Keyser as an apostle, particularly since it was immediately followed by another religious finger-painting (*The Virgin, St John and Christ the Saviour*).

Van Thiel 1980 (note 8), pp. 114–15 and fig. 3.