

Young Woman in a Broad-Brimmed Hat

A Newly Acquired Painting by Caesar Boetius van Everdingen

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he rise in prominence and popularity of Caesar Boetius van Everdingen (Alkmaar 1616/1617-1678 Alkmaar) these past few decades is astonishing. In 1991, the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam acquired Van Everdingen's painting, Young Woman Warming her Hands, now often referred to as 'Allegory of Winter' or 'Young Woman as Winter', which has become one of his most popular works in the collection (fig. 1).1 At the time, Albert Blankert dedicated a groundbreaking article to the purchase, with a critical history of Van Everdingen and the man who rediscovered him, Vitale Bloch.2 In 1936, Bloch had given his article the programmatic title, 'Pro Caesar Boetius van Everdingen'.3 Blankert himself had already taken up the cudgels for the painter by including three of his works (including two large canvases) in the 1980-81 exhibition Gods, Saints and Heroes.4 The 1999-2000 exhibition Dutch Classicism, essentially also curated by Albert Blankert, firmly established Van Everdingen's reputation. Fourteen works were brought together there (including 'Allegory of Winter') – the largest group of paintings by one artist and essentially the highlight of the exhibition.5 Eventually, in 2002, Paul Huys Janssen published his monograph on Caesar van Everdingen with a catalogue raisonné containing



Fig. 1
CAESAR BOETIUS
VAN EVERDINGEN,
Young Woman
Warming her Hands,
c. 1645-50.
Oil on canvas,
97 x 81 cm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum.

Purchased with the support of the Vereniging Rembrandt, with additional funding from the Prins Bernhard Fonds, sK-A-4878. sixty-one confirmed works and some seventy paintings documented only in such sources as inventories, sale catalogues, etc.⁶

It is, therefore, still possible to discover as yet unknown or long-lost works by Caesar van Everdingen. One of these paintings was put up for auction in London in December 2009. Its striking motif and light colours aroused great interest, and the Rijksmuseum was able to purchase it using lottery funds from the BankGiro Loterij (fig. 2).7 The restoration had been made possible by the Irma Theodora Fonds. The painting can be identified with a work that until now was only known from the inventory of the artist's estate (drawn up after his death on 13 October 1678). A painting vaguely listed there as '15 Head of a woman CVE f 12' is recorded as having devolved to his widow Helena van Oosthoorn.8 It was only when the work was described in more detail in an extract, 'Valuation of the [paintings] Aunt Helena kept', that identification was possible: '15 A head CVE no. 15 wearing a large, wide hat of woven material'.9 There can be no doubt about the creator of this unsigned painting: several pentimenti, which tell us that the artist made a number of changes to its design, confirm that it is an original.10

The composition of Young Woman in a Broad-Brimmed Hat is relatively simple: a young woman stands before us, viewed from a slightly low angle, her upper body and head against a bright, cloudy sky. She is wearing a broad-brimmed, disc-shaped hat, woven in a radial pattern with silvery grey and orange strips of fabric. The hat has ribbons to fasten it under the chin, but they are hanging loose. One has snaked on to the girl's bare shoulder. Her white, silky, shimmering garment is reminiscent of the draped folds found in ancient Roman sculptures. The garment is fastened around her waist with an orange sash, which flutters in the wind towards the left.

Van Everdingen repeats this orangey red in the hat. The girl holds a small, intricately woven basket of plums with both hands. There is a backdrop of trees towards the bottom of the painting. Their position makes it clear that the horizon is very low. The painter evidently conceived this painting to be hung high on a wall.

The use of light is striking: the broad-brimmed hat casts a shadow on the girl's forehead, eyes and neck, and yet numerous reflections of light illuminate that part of her face. The line of her chin, the area around her eyes and parts of her forehead are indirectly lit. When the light is reflected at a short distance, it becomes very bright, even glowing. The nostrils, for example, light up in red, reflected from the cheeks, and the folds in the silver material take on a warm, sometimes even yellow light." This powerful use of reflected light is found in other paintings by Van Everdingen, but in this case, in conjunction with the shadows cast by the brim of the hat, it serves primarily to reinforce the impression of bright sunlight.

Until now, this area of seventeenthcentury Dutch painting has been seriously under-represented in the Rijksmuseum's collection. Paintings of Dutch Classicism are characterized by bright colours and a clearly defined style that evokes Antiquity.12 Caesar van Everdingen is one of the most prominent exponents of this style. He met the architect of Dutch Classicism. Jacob van Campen (1596-1657), in 1640, when the latter designed the organ case for the Grote Kerk in Alkmaar. Van Everdingen was commissioned to paint the huge organ shutters, and stayed with Van Campen in Randenbroek near Amersfoort in 1642-43. He returned to Alkmaar in 1644 and completed the work there. 13 His relationship with Van Campen landed him other important commissions, when the latter was given artistic direction of the design for

Fig. 2
CAESAR BOETIUS
VAN EVERDINGEN,
Young Woman in a
Broad-Brimmed Hat,
c. 1650.
Oil on canvas,
91.9 x 81.7 cm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
purchased with
the support of
the BankGiro Loterij,
SK-A-5005.



the Oranjezaal in the Huis ten Bosch. Between 1648 and 1650 Van Everdingen painted two large canvases and part of a ceiling painting. ¹⁴ In 1648, presumably for this reason, he moved to Haarlem, where other artists – among them Pieter de Grebber and Salomon de Bray – were also working on the

project. Van Everdingen had finally joined the ranks of outstanding history painters of his time. In 1658 he returned to Alkmaar, where he lived and worked until his death in 1678. Paul Huys Janssen roughly dates the painting *Young Woman Warming her Hands* to the period 1645 to 1650 – the



Fig. 3 Detail of fig. 2.

early period, in other words, when Van Everdingen was working on the organ and for the House of Orange. The painting discussed here, *Young Woman in a Broad-Brimmed Hat*, was most likely also conceived during this period, under the influence of the stadholder's court in The Hague.



Fig. 4
JACOB VAN CAMPEN,
Triumphal Procession
with Bounty from East
and West, c. 1650-51.
Oil on canvas,
380 x 205 cm.
The Hague,
Paleis Huis ten Bosch,
Oranjezaal, sc/1295.

The Motifs

The title in the December 2009 sale catalogue, Girl Holding a Basket of Plums, focused on the small wickerwork basket in the young woman's hands (fig. 3). The description in the catalogue suggests that the basket may have come from Brazil. Johan Maurits von Nassau-Siegen (1604-1679) was appointed Governor-General of Dutch Brazil in 1637. In 1644 he returned to the Netherlands, bringing with him a collection of curiosities, artefacts and pictorial documentation. Among the entourage that accompanied him to Brazil was Albert Eckhout (c. 1610-1666), whose large illustrations of native peoples dating from 1641-43 include woven baskets with similar patterns. 16 The fascination with this alien culture was reflected in the Oranjezaal in Huis ten Bosch, to which Jacob van Campen contributed a large painting, Triumphal Procession with Bounty from East and West. A white woman stands to the right of centre in this painting, holding aloft a similar kind of basket containing lemons (fig. 4).17 Van Campen created a decorative frieze for his own country estate, Het Hoogerhuis near Randenbroek, with mock reliefs and niches, in which he also depicted baskets of this kind (fig. 5).18 Whether these woven patterns really originated in Brazil is now the subject of debate. Similar baskets have been found in West Africa, along the coast between the mouths of the Niger and Congo rivers, and it has proved impossible to establish with certainty whether two baskets held by the Royal Danish Kunstkammer in Copenhagen originate from Africa or Brazil.19

The large hat in the painting is in keeping with this sense of exotic foreignness, even though it had been part of the tradition of Western art for much longer than these baskets. It is typical of the attire worn by gypsies, which can be traced back to Egypt, their presumed country of origin.



Fig. 5
JACOB VAN CAMPEN,
Niche with Fruit Still
Life, c. 1645-50.
Oil on panel,
97 × 172.1 cm.
Detail from the
decorative frieze for
Het Hoogerhuis
near Randenbroek.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
on loan to Museum
Flehite, Amersfoort,
SK-A-4254-7.

Since the mid-sixteenth century, books on the history of fashion have identified this hat as part of the dress of Egyptian women: the disc is made of wickerwork, wrapped with strips of cloth and fastened to the head with a ribbon.20 Because of this presumed origin, the hat can be found in numerous pictures of biblical stories that take place in Egypt, such as The Finding of Moses and The March of the Israelites through the Red Sea.21 Mary, mother of Jesus, wears it in several versions of *The Flight into Egypt* (fig. 6).22 The Sibylla Egyptica also wears a similar head covering (fig. 7). It resurfaces repeatedly in depictions of biblical stories in which a large

Fig. 7
SIMON FRISIUS,
Egyptian Sibyl,
c. 1600-29.
Engraving and etching,
149 x 113 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
RP-P-OB-52.298.





Fig. 6
ANTWERP SCHOOL,
The Flight into Egypt,
c. 1630-c. 1650.
Oil on panel,
17.6 x 41.8 cm.
Lid of a painted
cabinet decorated
with scenes from
the life of the Virgin.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
BK-NM-1014.



number of people from different nations or tribes are said to be represented, such as *The Dance Around the Golden Calf* and *John the Baptist Preaching*. Abraham Bloemaert gives an 'Egyptian woman' a prominent place lower left in his painting of John the Baptist (fig. 8).²³

Caesar van Everdingen liberates his *Young Woman in a Broad-Brimmed Hat* from this narrative context.

Louise Hollandine, Princess Palatine (1622-1709) does likewise in her *Self-Portrait as a Gypsy*, in which she wears a similar hat (fig. 10).²⁴ This painting must have been conceived in the environment of the House of Orange, in light of the artist's age in 1645-50, in other words at about the same time as Van Everdingen's painting.

The princess's self-portrait reflects a royal fashion – that of the masquerade during festivities and pageants.



Fig. 8

ABRAHAM

BLOEMAERT,

St John the Baptist

Preaching, 1595-1600.

Oil on canvas,
139 x 188 cm.

Amsterdam,

Rijksmuseum,

SK-A-3746.

Fig. 9 Detail of fig. 8

Participants wore costumes with attributes from different countries. but also depicted other groups, such as professions, continents of the Earth and the like.25 For example, in the mid-1650s a ballet was performed in honour of Princess Henriette Catherine of Oranien Nassau's birthday, danced by both Princes Palatine. The third act featured 'un Egyptien & une Egyptienne' who performed and predicted the future. In the fourth act an astrologer chased away the two gypsies. In the fifth act, the four continents - including Africa and America – offered their gifts.²⁶ There are other portraits, too, that depict princesses dressed up as 'Indians' (American as well as Brazilian).27 It is interesting in this context that among Van Everdingen's lost works there is one of 'an Indian prince', documented in 1734, and one entitled The Indian Widow that was sold at auction in 1803.28 His Young Woman in a Broad-Brimmed Hat reflects a serious interest in things foreign and exotic, led by

Fig. 10
LOUISE
HOLLANDINE,
Self-portrait, 1641.
Oil on panel,
74.5 × 59 cm.
Auction London,
Sotheby's, 27. October
2010, lot no. 33.



the court in The Hague, not least with the paintings for Huis ten Bosch. It is therefore probable that Van Everdingen's painting, *Young Woman in a Broad-Brimmed Hat*, was conceived under the influence of this environment, that is to say, around 1650.

Personification or Tronie?

We are, of course, left with the question as to whether Caesar van Everdingen used this motif and these features as concrete attributes of a personification. In the case of the painting Young Woman Warming her Hands (fig. 1), we can interpret the picture symbolically as 'winter'. There are many series of paintings of the personifications of the four seasons, in which winter is a poor old man or woman, who warms his or her hands over a fire. They are old because winter is the last stage of the annual cycle, poor because nature does not bear fruit during this time, and so on.29 Van Everdingen plays with the traditional symbolism in his painting: we see a young, opulently dressed woman wearing silk, ermine and gold jewellery, warming her hands. There is only one other example of this, which stems from a later date (fig. 10).30 What is more unusual is Van Everdingen's notion of having the woman shield off the brazier.31 Did he have another meaning in mind?32 If we go by the inventory of his estate, on the other hand, we find two paintings called 'A winter', both designated as works by 'CVE', one valued at 18 guilders (no. 17) and one at 12 guilders (no. 19). His widow, Helena van Oosthoorn, gave both to relatives. They are presumably the Rijksmuseum work (fig. 1) and the inferior copy, apparently by the painter's own hand, in the City Art Gallery in Southampton.33 The inventory does not mention any 'spring', 'summer' or 'autumn', however. Of course, these could be concealed in other, less specific descriptions such as 'Head of a Man', 'Head of a Woman'



Fig. II

PAUL VAN SOMER
(ED.), Winter,
c. 1674-94.
Etching, 183 x 131 mm
(trimmed).
London, The
British Museum,
1863,0808.86.

or 'A Small Head' (nos. 5, 15, 22).34 Young Woman in a Broad-Brimmed Hat (fig. 2), the Rijksmuseum's new acquisition, is no. 15. It is almost the same size as 'The Allegory of Winter' and has a distinctly summery atmosphere. But does that mean it is intended to convey 'the summer' or a 'summer scene'?35 The writer of the inventory, after all, refers to the painting only as a 'tronie' - a depiction of an interesting head, without identifying the figure with any specific historical person or allegorical personification.36 The emphasis in a 'tronie' is the appeal of the composition, the light and the special additional features. In the case of the Young Woman in a Broad-Brimmed Hat, there is the

added feature of the attractive woman - her good-humoured, sensual aura. In that respect, she belongs among the many portrayals of shepherdesses, harlots and female musicians that were painted by artists such as Abraham Bloemaert, Paulus Moreelse, Gerrit van Honthorst, Jan van Bijlert and others at the time. Her clothing evokes frivolity, in the tradition of hats decorated with feathers or flowers, and barely covered breasts. Some of these seductive girls offer fruit with strong sexual connotations - much like Van Everdingen's Young Woman in a Broad-Brimmed Hat presents her plums.37 In this respect, this summery 'tronie' is extremely attractive in more ways than one.

NOTES

- 1 Sale The Hague (Glerum), 25 November 1991, no. 123. Purchased with the support of the Vereniging Rembrandt, and with thanks to the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, 1991.
- 2 Albert Blankert, 'Vrouw "Winter" door Caesar van Everdingen', Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum 39 (1991), pp. 505-23.
- 3 Vitale Bloch, 'Pro Caesar Boetius van Everdingen', *Oud Holland* 53 (1936), pp. 250-62.
- 4 Albert Blankert et al., God en de Goden.

 Verhalen uit bijbelse en klassieke oudheid door
 Rembrandt en zijn tijdgenoten, Amsterdam
 (Rijksmuseum) 1981 (also, Gods, Saints
 and Heroes: Dutch Painting in the Age of
 Rembrandt, Washington (National Gallery of
 Art; The Detroit Institute of Arts) 1980-81),
 pp. 214-19, nos. 56-58.
- 5 Albert Blankert et al., Hollands Classicisme in de zeventiende-eeuwse schilderkunst, Rotterdam (Museum Boymans Van Beuningen) 1999-2000 (also, Frankfurt am Main (Städelsches Kunstinstitut) 2000), pp. 172-227, nos. 28-41.
- 6 Paul Huys Janssen, *Caesar van Everdingen* 1616/17-1678. Monograph and Catalogue Raisonné, Doornspijk 2002. Reviewed by Friso Lammertse in *Oud Holland* 117 (2004), pp. 262-67.
- 7 Sale London (Sotheby's), 9 December 2009, no. 18, unsigned and undated. Private collection, Vienna. There is a fragment of an as yet unidentified sticker printed in red on the stretcher: '...RT / ...]elle... / MONTE....'. An old label on the frame mentions 'Jan de Bray' as the artist (Haarlem, c. 1627-97 Amsterdam). There is no reference to this picture in the literature on De Bray.
- 8 '15 Een vrouw trooni cve f 12'.
- 9 'Tacsatie van 't geen helena muet heeft gehouden'. '15 Een trooni CVE No 15 met een groote Bree hoet op van gevlogten tuijg f 42' Huys Janssen, op. cit. (note 6), p. 127, no. L 10, pp. 180-83. This identification with the catalogue of the estate was not in the sale catalogue of 9 December 2009. The picture may resurface in Helena van Oosthoorn's estate in 1694 as 'head of a woman with a cup in her hand' ('een vrouwe tronie, met een kop in de hand'), see Huys Janssen, op. cit. (note 6), p. 191.
- 10 Part of the top of the tree at lower left was lowered, and the outline of the shoulders and of the raised arm was corrected. See also the article by Erika Smeenk-Metz, Manja Zeldenrust and Arie Wallert elsewhere in this issue.

- II See also the description of the reflections by Erika Smeenk-Metz, Manja Zeldenrust and Arie Wallert.
- 12 See the exhibition *Hollands Classicisme* ..., op. cit. (note 5).
- 13 Jacobine Huisken et al., Jacob van Campen. Het klassieke ideaal in de Gouden Eeuw, Amsterdam (Stichting Koninklijk Paleis) 1995, pp. 143-48; Huys Janssen, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 34-36, 61-63, no. 1.
- 14 Huys Janssen, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 39-41, 95-100, nos. 37-40, with additional literature.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 78-79, no. 21. Albert Blankert suspects that Van Everdingen's model may have been Helena van Oosthoorn, whom he married in 1646. Based on the picture's iconography, which could also signify 'the fire of love', Blankert dates the painting around 1646.
- 16 Cf. his Black Woman with Basket and Child (1641), Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen. Quentin Buvelot et al., Albert Eckhout. Een Hollandse kunstenaar in Brazilië, The Hague (Mauritshuis) 2004, pp. 76-78, where she is described as Afro-Brazilian, while the basket is described as African.
- 17 Huisken et al., op. cit. (note 13), pp. 79-81, 108-09, no. 8. Here, the baskets are described as African.
- 18 Ibid., pp. 107-08, no. 6.
- 19 Bente Dam-Mikkelsen and Torben Lundbæk, Etnografiske genstande 1 Det kongelige danske Kunstkammer 1650-1800 | Ethnographic Objects in The Royal Danish Kunstkammer 1650-1800, Copenhagen (Nationalmuseet) 1980, p. 50, inv. nos. EHC37 and EHC38.

 Cf. Huisken, op. cit. (note 13), p. 76, fig. 60; Buvelot et al., op. cit. (note 16), pp. 40-43, fig. 43.
- 20 Marieke de Winkel, Fashion and Fancy.

 Dress and Meaning In Rembrandt's Paintings,
 Amsterdam 2006, pp. 266, 330-31, notes
 349-52, with fig. 149 from Zacharias Heym's
 Drachtthoneel, Amsterdam 1601, and other
 source citations.
- 21 For example, Pieter de Grebber, *The Finding of Moses* (1634), Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, 1372; Maerten Pepijn, *March of the Israelites through the Red Sea* (c. 1630), Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, GK 836; Jacob Jordaens, *Moses and his Ethiopian Wife* (c. 1650), Rubenshuis, Antwerp, 595.
- 22 In addition to many small depictions, there are also life-size ones, e.g. by Jacob Jordaens,

- The Rest on the Flight into Egypt, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent; Jordaens, Holy Family with St Elizabeth and the Infant St John, Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten, Brussels; Jordaens, Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me, St Louis, Missouri, Museum, etc.
- 23 Cf. Lucas van Leyden, *Triptych with the Dance*Around the Golden Calf, c. 1530, Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum, SK-A-3841.
- 24 Sale London (Philips), 18 December 1984, no. 5; sale London (Sotheby's), 27 October 2010, no. 33 (sale at Ashdown House, The Winter Queen and the Earl of Craven). Els Kloek et al., Vrouwen en kunst in de republiek een overzicht, Hilversum 1998, fig. p. 83, no. 13; J.R. Judson and R.E.O. Ekkart, Gerrit van Honthorst, Doornspijk 1999, p. 274, under no. 361.
- 25 Marika Keblusek and Jori Zijlmans, Vorstelijk Vertoon. Aan het hof van Frederik Hendrik en Amalia, The Hague (Haags Historisch Museum) 1997-98, pp. 41-42.
- 26 Boutade Dansée pour Solenniser Le Jour de la Naissance De Son Altesse Mademoiselle, Koninklijk Huisarchief, A 14 XIV-D-10. With sincere thanks to Marieke de Winkel, who came across the manuscript in the archives and made the information available to me (letters dated 17 March 2010 and 10 June 2011).
- 27 Cf. the portrait of Mary Henrietta Stuart (Mary of Orange), wife of Stadholder William II of Orange, painted by Adriaen Hanneman (The Hague, Mauritshuis, inv. no. 429), and that of Sophia of Hanover, painted by her sister Louise Hollandine 1645-50 (Westfalen, Anholt, Fürstliche Salm-Salmsche Sammlung), both of which depict striking South American headdresses. See exh. cat. Zo wijd de wereld strekt. Tentoonstelling naar aanleiding van de 300ste sterfdag van Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen op 20 december 1979, The Hague (Mauritshuis) 1979-80, p. 209, cat. nos. 273, 274.
- 28 Huys Janssen, op. cit. (note 6), p. 129, no. L 30 at the Six sale in Amsterdam (Schoemaker... ten Brink), 12 May 1734, no. 249; ibid, p. 131, no. L 48 sale London (Christie's), 22-23 April 1803, No. 92.
- 29 See also Blankert, op. cit. (note 2), ibid., with pictorial examples by Abraham and Hendrick Bloemaert.
- 30 With thanks to Jonathan Bikker, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, for this reference. Blankert reproduced a sheet by Wenceslaus Hollar dating from 1643 in the catalogue *Hollands Classicisme* ... 1999-2000, p. 174, fig. 28b, which until then was the only young

- representation of winter however, without attributes and fashionably dressed in an abundance of fur.
- 31 Blankert, op. cit. (note 2), p. 513, Blankert suggests that she is actually holding her skirt up over the brazier to warm her lower body as well. However, hot air rises so this would be ineffectual anyway, and it would be quite improper for a lady to sit at the table like that.
- The chaste vestal virgins in ancient Rome, for example, were given the task of keeping alight the holy fire that was in their keeping ('het Heylighe Vyer dat by hun was te bewaeren'); if it were extinguished, this would be an evil omen ('quaedt voorteecken') for all of Rome. Quoted from Heydensche Afgoden, Beelden, Tempels en Offerhanden; met de vremde ceremonien naer elcks Landts wijse, Haarlem (Vincent Casteleyn) 1646, pp. 97-103. On p. 101, the author talks about the apprentice girl of the virtuous virgin Aemilia. The fire had been extinguished, yet 'when she laid the finest linen that she had on the hearth, fire immediately sprang forth from it' ('alsse het fijnste lynwaet datse hadde, op den Heert gheleydt heeft, is terstont Vyer daer uyt voort ghekomen'). See new publication by E.K. Grootes, Deventer 1987, pp. 54-55-
- 33 Huys Janssen, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 78-80, no. 21. Van Everdingen is not known to have produced winter landscapes.
- 34 'Een mans troni', 'Een vrouw trooni', 'Een tronitie'.
- 35 In the series of personified seasons, summer is usually represented by the goddess Ceres, whose attributes include ears of corn, cornucopia with fruit and a sickle.

 Illustrative scenes with summer activities have a stronger presence later. Cf. De Vier Jaargetijden in de kunst van de Nederlanden 1500-1750, Den Bosch (Noordbrabants Museum) 2002, e.g. pp. 74, 135.
- 36 For a detailed discussion of this see Dagmar Hirschfelder, Tronie und Porträt in der niederländischen Kunst des 17. Jahrhunderts, Berlin 2008.
- 37 On plums held in the hands of shepherdesses and courtesans see Het gedroomde land. Pastorale schilderkunst in de Gouden Eeuw, Utrecht (Centraal Museum) 1993, p. 136.

