



# Recent Acquisitions: Women in the Rijksmuseum Collection

• MATTIE BOOM, MAARTJE BRATTINGA, JEROEN TER BRUGGE,  
JAN VAN CAMPEN, EVELINE DENEER, SARA VAN DIJK,  
LUDO VAN HALEM, CHARLES KANG, MANON VAN DER MULLEN,  
SHEILA REDA, HANS ROOSEBOOM, FRITS SCHOLTEN  
AND MAREN DE WIT •

## 1 *Baluster*

Japan, 1636-39

Wood (cherry or plum) and lacquer, h. 55 cm

In 2021 the Rijksmuseum acquired a baluster from the Japanese lacquer balustrade once owned by Amalia van Solms (1602-1675), the wife of Stadholder Frederick Henry (1584-1647). The balustrade was installed in the most important reception room in the princess's apartment in Huis ten Bosch as a partition between the bed of state, the piece of furniture which, above all others, represented princely dignity, and the area where important visitors were received. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the balustrade was a true object of interest. At the end of the eighteenth century, however, it was sold by the French rulers. Elements of it have been found in nineteenth-century French furniture, but this is the only known intact example.

From the sixteen-thirties onwards, Amalia gave Asian luxury goods a new role in European court life. She herself undoubtedly bought precious Asian objects, but she also received gifts from the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and from high-ranking VOC officials. It was in

that period that those VOC officials, after striving for thirty years to create a trading network in Asia, had established the contacts that enabled them to acquire Chinese porcelain and Japanese lacquerware of the highest quality. In this case, Amalia discussed her wish for a balustrade with Philips Lucasz (?-1640), the director-general of the VOC, who was in the Netherlands at the time. Back in Batavia, he saw to it that the order was placed in Japan. In 1639 the balustrade was shipped from Japan and arrived in Amsterdam by way of Batavia in 1641, in the period that Amalia was drawing up the plans for the palace of Huis ten Bosch. It was there that the balustrade was placed.

It is surprising that the VOC had access to workshops that were able to carry out such a complicated commission – it was after all an entirely European shape. Moreover it involved the use of very high quality lacquerwork. Gold was sprinkled on to a black background and landscapes and figures – with different colour nuances and in various degrees of fineness – were created in cartouches with gold filings sprinkled

in the wet lacquer. There are also traces of inlay work with gold foil. Two wide bands at the top and bottom close off the decoration of the top section of the baluster. These bands have a 'tile pattern' of small areas of black and originally silver (but now grey oxidized) tiles. There are also traces of silver oxidization in other places in the baluster – it must have been a spectacular sight with strong visual contrasts when it was installed.

Anthony Wells-Cole made a convincing and detailed reconstruction of the entire balustrade on the basis of old descriptions and from the fragments incorporated in French furniture. There were six compartments with seven and eight spindles alternating, with a somewhat larger one between them. The entire balustrade stood on a plinth, and the rail on the top was interrupted by round knobs on the larger balusters. The Rijksmuseum example is one of the small spindles.

In itself the baluster is evidence of the VOC's extraordinary power, which allowed it to purchase very high quality, costly Asian objects, the love of Asian luxury goods in the Netherlands in general, and Amalia's role in championing that love. It is of great significance that this baluster can now be displayed in the museum.

JVC

#### LITERATURE:

- Sale cat. Rouillac (Chateau d'Artigny), 19 June 2022, under no. 78  
 Anthony Wells-Cole, 'Amalia van Solms's Lost Lacquer Bed-Rail: Form and Decoration', in Gabriela Krist and Elfriede Iby (eds.), *Investigation and Conservation of East Asian Cabinets in Imperial Residences (1700-1900): Laquerware and Porcelain. Conference 2013 Postscripts*, Vienna, Cologne and Weimar 2015, pp. 41-52  
 Anthony Wells-Cole, 'Reconstructing Amalia van Solms's Japanese Bed-Rail: A Personal View', in Miko Vasques Dias (ed.), *Reproduction and Reconstruction in Furniture Conservation: Proceedings Eleventh International Symposium on Wood and Furniture Conservation, Amsterdam, 9-11 November 2012*, Amsterdam 2013, pp. 5-12  
 Cynthia Viallé, 'Two boxes and Two Balustrades: Private Orders for Fine Japanese Export Lacquer', in Shayne Rivers et al. (eds.), *East Asian Lacquer: Material Culture, Science and Conservation*, London 2011, pp. 26-30  
 Oliver Impey and Christiaan Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer 1580-1850*, Amsterdam 2005, pp. 85-96, 98-101

#### PROVENANCE:

- Lacquer workshop Kyoto, 1636-38; purchased by the VOC for Amalia van Solms, 1639; sold at auction, The Hague (Commissie van Superintendentie), 16 August 1797, no. 162; ...; art market, France; dealer Guus Röell, Maastricht/Amsterdam; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of H.B. van der Ven, The Hague, 2021 (inv. no. BK-2021-18).



## 2 CORNELIA DE RIJCK (Amsterdam 1653-1726 Amsterdam)

*A Small Tortoiseshell, a Dryas Iulia, a Heliconius Sara, a Large Tortoiseshell, a Heliconius Erato, a Comma, a Utetheisa Ornatrix and a Hypocrita Bicolora, c. 1700*

Watercolour and bodycolour, 280 x 200 mm

Signed, lower right: *Cornelia de Rijck*

Watermark: posthorn within a shield surmounted by a crown

This new acquisition depicts European and South American butterflies, arranged symmetrically and shown from above and below, with the exception of the blue and white moth in the centre. Cornelia de Rijck made the drawing when she had just married her second husband, the Amsterdam collector of curiosities Simon Schijnvoet (1652-1727). After her marriage she stopped painting birds and concentrated on copying insects. Before this drawing came onto the market, all we knew of De Rijck's drawn oeuvre was a book of Surinamese insects; 116 of the original 120 sheets are held in the Kungliga Vetenskapsakademien in Stockholm. It is unlikely that our drawing is one of the four missing sheets: aside from anything else, the butterflies do not all originate from Suriname.

At first sight it might seem random to combine butterflies from different continents – as if De Rijck considered aesthetics more important than scientific arrangement – but that was certainly not the case. Her composition accurately follows the ordering of her husband's cabinet of curiosities, which he had conceived in accordance with the latest theological and scientific theories. These stated that nature had been created perfectly symmetrical, but it had descended into chaos with the Fall of Man. It was mankind's job to restore order by rearranging nature on the basis of geometrical principles. Contemporaries praised the organization of his cabinet of curiosities, and collectors from across Europe visited it frequently.

De Rijck and Schijnvoet's circle of acquaintances included the famous scientist and artist Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717), known for her studies of the metamorphosis of the caterpillar and Surinamese flora and fauna. Merian lived near the couple from 1691 onwards and regularly visited them. As developments in botanical science took off at an extraordinary pace, more female contemporaries turned to drawing insects. The study material was readily to hand and it was easy to work from home. Studying God's creatures was seen, moreover, as a virtuous occupation that would lead to greater insight

into and appreciation of His creation. Strikingly, Merian and De Rijck took a different approach within the genre: they both worked true to nature and paid attention to detail, but placed the butterflies on the paper quite differently. While De Rijck meticulously copied the specimens from the drawers of the butterfly cabinet, Merian worked from living examples and presented them in the context of their natural habitat and at different stages of life, visualizing all the scientific knowledge she had built up.

Given her close ties with Merian, De Rijck must have been aware of this new form of scientific illustration. She must have taken a different approach deliberately. As 'the wife of', De Rijck had an important role in her husband's collecting practice, which is demonstrated by this drawing. It is probably an exact image of a drawer in the butterfly cabinet. In documenting it, she made a substantial contribution to the perpetuation of these exceptional butterflies and recorded the symmetrical arrangement that had brought the cabinet international fame.

SR

## LITERATURE:

Claus Virch, *The Artist and the Animal: A Loan Exhibition for the Benefit of the Animal Medical Center*, exh. cat. New York (M. Knoedler & Co.) 1968, no. 42, p. 41

## PROVENANCE:

...; Kate Schaeffer-Born (Schaeffer Galleries), New York; her daughter, Cornelia Bessie (1929-2020); her sale (†), New York (Christie's), 28 January 2021, no. 71; from which purchased by the museum, with the support of the I.Q. van Regteren Altena Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, in honour of Jane Turner, 2021 (inv. no. RP-T-2021-113).



- 3 Spinner: MARGRIETA VAN KUIJK (Ochten 1715-1786 Arnhem)  
 Weaver: Anonymous  
*Tablecloth and Napkin with Rose Motifs*, c. 1750-85  
 Linen damask, 165 x 300 cm and 118 x 87.5 cm

At first glance this tablecloth with the accompanying napkin looks like ordinary eighteenth-century table linen. The motif of strewn rosebuds and rose stems in blossom enclosed by a garland of roses, is quite commonplace. What elevates this acquisition above ordinary table linen is a note written around 1865-66 that has been preserved with the cloth:

*Dit taavel laaken met 12 servette | van het zelfde patroon, of werk, die moete | gegeven worden aan G: De Veer: Aard, Zoon | thlol cand aan de Hoogeschool te Utregt. | niet om de waarde, maar om de oudtheijd | ik kan berekene dat zij meer dan twe honderd | jaare ouwd zijn, zijn over over groot moeder | Margrieta de Veer geb. van Kuijk | heeft het Vlas gesponne, waar van ze geweven zijn | dat zijn drie geslagte vroeger, en nu van mijn | groot Vader tot deze Neef G: De Veer is weer het | vierde geslagt, hij is de klijn Zoon van G: De Veer A.Z | dat mijn broeder was | Margrieta de Veer | wed. J. Steegman.*

This tablecloth with 12 napkins in the same pattern, or work, which must be given to G. De Veer, Aard's son, *candidatus theologiae* at the college in Utrecht, not because of the value, but because of the antiquity. I can reckon that they are more than two hundred years old; his great-great-grandmother Margrieta de Veer née Van Kuijk spun the flax they are woven from; this is three generations earlier, and now from my grandfather to this nephew G. De Veer is again the fourth generation, he is the grandson of G. De Veer A.Z, who was my brother, Margrieta de Veer, widow of J. Steegman.

The text gives us both the full provenance of the damask and the name of the flax spinner, although the writer makes an error with the dating. The table linen was not two hundred, but around a hundred years old at the time of writing. Margrieta van Kuijk was born in Ochten in 1715 and at some point moved to Nijmegen. According to the marriage registers of the Dutch Reformed congregation, in 1745 she married Gerrit de Veer (1699-1784) from Arnhem, where they settled (Nijmegen Regional Archive, 510, inv. 1178, fol. 214; Gelderland Archive,

0176, inv. 138, 29 May 1745). It is rare enough to know the identity of a weaver of a set of eighteenth-century linen damask, but knowing the spinner's name is actually unique.

Spinning flax, the plant fibre from which linen is made, was primarily women's work, as Elise van Nederveen-Meerkerk explains in her doctoral thesis *De draad in eigen handen* on the role of women in the textile industry in the time of the Republic. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a number of Northern Netherlandish towns and cities had flourishing linen weaving mills, which needed a lot of thread. The weaving itself – certainly in the case of a patterned fabric like damask – was work for specialists and organized in guilds. Spinning was simpler, almost unregulated and could easily be done at home. All that was needed was a spinning wheel. This is why spinning was an attractive source of income for many women. This was true of unmarried women and widows who were the sole breadwinners, but certainly also of married women like Margrieta, who were responsible for looking after the children and had no opportunity to work outside the home.

A few of the twelve napkins mentioned in the note have survived, one of which has been gifted to the museum (shown here). Together with the tablecloth it forms a unique historical ensemble. Even though we do know the names of some flax spinners from the archives, it is impossible to identify their individual work. It is also usually impossible to find out from documentary sources what quality of thread a spinner supplied and what it was used for. This could vary from lace and linen damask to plain linen, both fine and coarse.

This is good quality thread, suitable for fine table linen. Such high quality obviously requires greater skill than a thick, irregular thread, which tells us that Margrieta must have been an experienced spinner. It is the married, working women like her who do not feature in the records. They were not registered in a guild and it was the husband who was listed as the head of the family and the breadwinner in censuses or tax records. This damask, though, showcases this women's work.

SVD



BK-2021-190

PROVENANCE:

Margrieta van Kuyk-De Veer (1715-1786); her son Aart de Veer (1747-1820); his daughter Margrieta de Veer (1794-after 1871); gift from Margrieta de Veer to her nephew Gerrit Willem Aart de Veer (1846-1901), c. 1865-66; his son Aart Anton de Veer

(1871-1932); his son Gerrit Willem Aart de Veer (1904-1971); his son Aart Anton de Veer (b. 1940); gift from Aart de Veer to the museum, 2021

(inv. nos. BK-2021-189 and BK-2021-190).

- 4 MARIA KATHARINA PRESTEL, née HÖLL (Nuremberg 1747-1794 London)  
*The Rustic Singers (Les Chanteurs rustiques)*, 1775 and *The Flemish Drinkers (Les Buveurs Flamands)*,  
 c. 1775 (both after Johann Albrecht Dietzsch)  
 Etching and aquatint, 324 x 259 mm (plate mark), state 2(2) | 320 x 254 mm (plate mark)  
 Inscribed, lower left: *J.A. Dietsch del.*; lower centre: *J:G:Hertel: exc.*; signed, lower right: *Marie  
 Catherine Prestel sculp.*

From a young age Maria Katharina Höll (1747-1794) and her sister Elisabeth Christina (1749-after 1808) took lessons from various artists, Maria Katharina concentrating above all on landscapes, botanical drawings and still lifes. When she was twenty-two, she continued her tuition as a pupil of Johann Gottlieb Prestel (1739-1808), an artist who had just set himself up in Nuremberg. Höll and Prestel found that they had a growing liking for printmaking: they experimented with printing techniques like the relatively new aquatint, printed in colour and tried different types of paper. They married in 1772 and immediately decided to open a workshop, followed two years later by an art dealership.

Both artists selected their subjects with care. They made their names as printmakers with three suites of more than a hundred reproductions after drawings from some well-known and lesser-known private collections. Although it is only Johann Gottlieb's name that graces the title prints, most of the prints were made by Maria Katharina. Before beginning the first series in 1776, Maria Katharina Prestel completed these two pendants as part of a group of six prints after drawings by Johann Albrecht Dietzsch (1720-1782). In his drawings it was abundantly clear that Dietzsch had drawn his inspiration from seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting, from artists like Adriaen van Ostade (1610-1685) and Adriaen Brouwer (c. 1604-1638). Prestel probably knew her fellow townsman through his by that time famous sisters, the artists Barbara Regina (1706-1783) and Margaretha Barbara Dietzsch (1726-1795), who trained Maria's sister and perhaps Maria as well.

Reproductive prints like these became increasingly popular among buyers over the course of the eighteenth century. In order to create them, artists needed a wide range of technical skills to convincingly imitate different drawing materials like ink washes and chalk using printing techniques. A further challenge for printmakers lay in the inevitable choices involved in omitting certain details in the reproduced designs. Perfecting the creation process was often a lengthy matter, and the prints were consequently relatively expensive.

In the period when the two prints were created, the couple's reputation was already fairly well established locally and regionally thanks to their characteristic style, which at that time was known as the 'Prestel Manner'. In 1775 a critic wrote of Johann Gottlieb Prestel that he reproduces 'the hardest drawings accurately' (*die schwersten Zeichnungen akkurat hinaus*). Nevertheless, the market in and around Nuremberg proved too small for their ambitions and there was little profit to be made from it. In 1782 Maria Katharina travelled to Frankfurt ahead of her family to try their luck there, but the situation turned out to be no better. In the meantime England beckoned; it was a place where reproductive prints had become extraordinarily popular. The Prestels mutually took the drastic decision Maria Katharina would emigrate. In 1786 Maria Katharina once again left her family behind and went to London, where she made a successful living after specializing in reproductions after paintings, which were marketed by leading publishers. Her four children stayed behind with their father and some of them would visit her at different times and in different combinations. Johann Gottlieb and his wife probably never saw one another again due to her untimely death in 1794.

MvdM

#### LITERATURE:

- Druckgraphik des 15.-19. Jahrhunderts*, sale cat. Berlin (Galerie Bassenge) 2021, auction no. 117 (9 June 2021), p. 325, no. 5617 (inv. nos. RP-P-2021-112 and RP-P-2021-113)  
 Joseph Kiermeier-Debre et al., *Kunst kommt von Prestel: Das Künstlerehepaar Johann Gottlieb und Maria Katharina Prestel*, Cologne/Böhlau 2008, p. 218, cat. no. 2200a (inv. no. RP-P-2021-112) and p. 219, cat. no. 2207 (inv. no. RP-P-2021-113)  
 Claudia Schwaighofer, *Das Druckgraphische Werk der Maria Catharina Prestel: Werkverzeichnis*, Munich 2003, unpagged, no. 15 (inv. no. RP-P-2021-112) and no. 16 (inv. no. RP-P-2021-113)

#### PROVENANCE:

- ...; Princes of Liechtenstein Collection; ...; sale, Berlin (Galerie Bassenge), 9 June 2021, no. 5617, to the museum with the support of the F.G. Waller-Fonds (inv. nos. RP-P-2021-112 and RP-P-2021-113).



J. A. Dieffen Del.

J. G. Hertel. exc.

Marie Catherine Prostel sculp.

Les Chanteurs rustiques.



*J. A. Dieffen Del.*

*J. G. Heret. exc.*  
**Les Buveurs Flamands**

*Marie Catharine Prostel sculp.*

## 5 Glass blower: ANONYMOUS

Glass engraver: DAVID WOLFF (1732-1798)

*Goblet with the Portrait of Elizabeth Wolff-Bekker, c. 1786*

Stipple engraving on lead glass, height 17.7 cm

Inscription, on the back of the goblet:

WOLF STIPTE DEES BEELDNIS OP HEINSIUS LAST:

EEN VROUW, NEERLANDS WONDER, WIEN DE EEREKROON PAST,

'T IS BEKKER, WOLFS WEDUW, DIE SCHEPPENDE GEEST,

VAN PROBUS G'EERBIEDIGT, VAN KALCHAS GEVREESD.

Thanks to a very generous benefactor, the Rijksmuseum was able to acquire this glass with a stipple engraving of a portrait of Elizabeth Wolff-Bekker, known as Betje Wolff. Its pendant, a similar glass with the portrait of Agatha Pieters (Aagje) Deken (inv. no. BK-16528), has been in the museum's collection since the nineteen-fifties and the Rijksmuseum had previously tried to acquire this glass with Betje Wolff's portrait. Both glasses were engraved after a print of a double portrait by Antoine Alexandre Joseph Cardon (1772-1813), based on a painting by Willem Neering.

The glasses are exceptional because they feature portraits of eighteenth-century women. Aside from Wolff and Deken, Wilhelmina of Prussia is the only other contemporary woman portrayed on glass. Stipple engravings frequently do show women, as personifications, or occasionally on a friendship glass, in genre scenes, but stippled portraits of women are extremely uncommon. This immediately raises the question as to why these glasses were made. The glass with the portrait of Betje Wolff is far more elaborately decorated than the one featuring Aagje Deken and contains an inscription on the back that gives more information:

Wolf stippled this portrait at Heinsius's request:

A woman, a marvel of the Dutch, worthy of the crown of honour,

It is Bekker, Wolf's widow, that creative mind,  
Honoured by Probus, feared by Kalchas.

The first line refers not just to the maker of the glass (WOLF – David Wolff, the glass engraver), but to the client, HEINSIUS. This probably alludes to Pieter Heijnsius (1729-1802), a patriot from The Hague and the father-in-law of Isaac van Cleef, the publisher of the books by Wolff and Deken.

The vast majority of stipple engraved portrait glasses were used in the *Patriottentijd*. The Orangists made toasts with portraits of William v,

his wife or a double portrait of both, while the patriots used glasses with portraits of the Amsterdam burgomaster Hendrik Hoof, or predecessors like Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. Pieter Heijnsius must have admired the outspokenness of the enlightened Betje Wolff and raised this glass in her honour.

MB

## LITERATURE:

Maartje Brattinga, 'Een onvoltooide stippelgravure van David Wolff?', *Vormen uit Vuur* 248 (2022), pp. 4-7Pieter Cornelis Ritsema van Eck and Henrica M. Zijlstra-Zweens, *Glass in the Rijksmuseum*, coll. cat. Amsterdam 1995, vol. 2, p. 451F.G.A.M. Smit, *Uniquely Dutch Eighteenth-Century Stipple-Engravings on Glass: A Systematic Catalogue with Keys for the Identification of the Engraved Glasses*, Peterborough 1993, p. 119*The Guépin Collection of 17th and 18th century Dutch Glass*, sale cat. Amsterdam (Christie's), 5 July 1989, no. 107, p. 96P.J. Buijnsters, *Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken: Schrijvers prentenboek 20*, The Hague 1979, p. 56P.J. Buijnsters, *Bibliografie Betje Wolff and Aagje Deken*, Utrecht 1979, p. 202Daniel Herman Gerard Bolten, *Een Glasie van vriendschap: De glazen van de collectie Guépin*, exh. cat. Delft (Het Prinsenhof) 1969, p. 46Wilfred Buckley, *D. Wolff and the Glasses that He Engraved*, London 1935, p. 26J. Dyserinck, *Tentoonstelling van handschriften, boeken, portretten enz. van Elizabeth Wolff en Agatha Deken gehouden te 's Gravenhage bij gelegenheid der onthulling van den gedenksteen ter harer eere op het kerkhof 'Ter Navolging' te Scheveningen*, exh. cat. The Hague 1895, p. 56

## PROVENANCE:

...; Collection of F.P. Bodenheim (1876-1946), Amsterdam,? sold after his death; ...; acquired by A.J. Guépin (1897-1964), Eindhoven; sale, Amsterdam (Christie's), 5 July 1989, no. 107, fl. 218,500, to art dealer Heide Hübner, Würzburg; from whom acquired by Dr Wolf-Horst Röhl; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of H.B. van der Ven, The Hague, 2020

(inv. no. BK-2020-107).





6 GEORGE SAND (pseudonym of Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin, Paris 1804-1876 Nohant-Vic)  
*Landscape with a Coalpit near Commentry*, 1861  
 Watercolour and gouache on paper, 118 x 147 mm

Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin is best remembered as a writer who attained international renown under her pen name George Sand. She is equally celebrated for having pushed gender boundaries in a conservative society – often wearing men’s clothing and smoking cigars in public – as well as for her relationships with such period luminaries as Frédéric Chopin. Lesser known, however, is her work as a watercolourist. This new acquisition is both representative of and exceptional among her output.

Sand’s most notable watercolours involve a procedure known as *dendrite*, which she developed in the eighteen-sixties. She began by applying different hues of diluted watercolour or gouache to a sheet of freshly moistened and stained paper and pressing it with another sheet of paper, sponges or rags. As the wet pigments settled on paper, they left random patterns that evoked trees and geological formations. She then used brushes and pencils to develop the composition into a landscape – often imaginary – by further defining forms and adding details. This technique thus incorporated chance elements more openly into the act of drawing. It foreshadowed practices by later artists such as the Surrealist decalcomania, which also used randomly distributed pigments as a basis for creative elaboration.

The mottled patches of greys and browns in the fore- and middle ground of this new acquisition demonstrate the creative potential of Sand’s technique, as they seamlessly form the barren landscape topped with industrial structures against dusk sky. At the same time, the drawing is exceptional among her *dendrites*. It not only departs from the more commonly found scenes of lush mountains and forests, it is also identifiable as a specific site, even if she likely did not draw *in situ*. Furthermore, the subject matter is a testament to her interest in geology, an interest that can be dated to around 1860.

The depicted scene was hitherto understood as factories in Montluçon in central France, based on an inscription on the verso by Sand’s great-grandson, Georges Smeets-Dudevant-Sand. However, an archival record allows us to identify the subject matter more precisely. On 16 February 1861, during a journey to the south of France,

Sand visited a coalpit in Commentry, located near Montluçon and a key source of coal at the time. Her journal entry from that day includes a description that matches the drawing: ‘shaft descending 200 metres ... appearance of excavations, vast and very picturesque open-air dig, one side curiously stratified, the other calcined, offering the appearance of red and black volcanic rocks all dotted with fumaroles’ (Bibliothèque nationale de France manuscrits, NAF 13656, fol. 5r).

Combining chance elements with geographical and historical specificity, this *dendrite* offers a glimpse of emerging modernity – when coal was becoming the main source of energy for industries and railways – from the perspective of a woman writer and artist ahead of her time. Her moody landscape is all the more poignant today, as we collectively aim to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

CK

LITERATURE:

Ulrich Luckhardt (ed.), *Wortkünstler|Bildkünstler: von Goethe bis Ringelnatz. Und Hertha Müller*, Ostfildern 2013, pp. 143-44, 149

PROVENANCE:

? Inherited by the granddaughter of the artist, Aurore Dudevant-Sand (1866-1961), Nohant-Vic; her son, Georges Smeets-Dudevant-Sand (1911-1970), Paris/Gargilles-Dampierre; from whom given to Jean Boissieu, 1957; ...; the dealer Jill Newhouse Gallery, New York; from whom purchased by a private collection, Switzerland; sale, Berlin (Galerie Bassenge), 11 June 2021, no. 6770, to the museum, with the support of the Otto van Noppen Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds  
 (inv. no. RP-T-2021-259).



## 7 JULIA MARGARET CAMERON, née PATTLE (Calcutta 1815-1879 Dikoya Valley, Sri Lanka)

*Mary Mother*, 1867

Albumen print, 331 x 278 mm

Inscribed, in ink, on the mount, lower left: *From life registered photograph copy right*; signed and dated, lower right: *Julia Margaret Cameron. 1867.*; titled, lower centre: *Mary. Mother.*

Julia Margaret Cameron is one of the few female photographers to have been unreservedly included in the canon of international photography. It took a while before she occupied the place she always knew was hers. In the relatively short time she worked as a photographer – between 1864 and 1875 – she built up a substantial oeuvre of lyrical portraits, biblical and allegorical groups (more than 1,200 images) bringing chiaroscuro and drama into her photographs. In doing so, she leaned heavily – and she often wrote this below the photographs – on the work of artists such as Rembrandt and Raphael. In her time, however, her work was unclassifiable and she encountered strong criticism in photographic circles for her use of blurring, unusual poses and the compositions of her extreme close-up portraits. This, though, is precisely why her photographs cannot be compared with any other nineteenth-century photographic work we know of: completely original, full of passion, large and monumental. This 1867 work, a portrait of her maid Mary Hillier, was part of a series that she herself called the ‘Raphaelesque Madonnas’.

In 1863 her daughter and son-in-law gave the overactive and artistically gifted Cameron a camera. ‘It may amuse you, Mother, to try to photograph during your solitude at Freshwater.’ It was intended to dispel the loneliness and the boredom of their restless forty-eight-year-old mother, who was now living alone on the Isle of Wight. Her husband had returned to Ceylon to tend his coffee plantations; her two sons and her daughter had left home. She did not hesitate and immediately set up a ‘light house’ and a darkroom and started experimenting, working on large wet collodion glass negatives measuring 30 x 24 centimetres. Her manuscript *Annals of My Light House* (1874), in which she documents her experiences with photography, is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The catalogue raisonné of her work shows that her photographs were printed many times and given to friends as presents. We know, for instance, of eleven other prints of *Mary Mother*, including some in albums. It was not long before Cameron

submitted her work to photography exhibitions in England and throughout Europe, including the international photography exhibition in Berlin in 1865, the 1867 international exposition in Paris and the photography exhibition in Groningen in the Netherlands in 1869. Her work attracted attention and was reviewed favourably in art magazines in particular. It was also sold at selling exhibitions and through London art dealers such as Colnaghi and William Spooner.

MB

## LITERATURE:

Julian Cox and Colin Ford, *Julia Margaret Cameron: The Complete Photographs*, Los Angeles/Bradford 2003, cat. no. 101, pp. 156-57

## PROVENANCE:

...; sale, London (Christie's), 21 May 2003, no. 39; ...; J. Janse-de Ronde Bresser, Amsterdam; by whom given on loan to the museum  
(inv. no. RP-F-2017-206-50).



8 Assembly: Attributed to MARY GEORGINA, LADY FILMER, née CECIL (London 1838-1903 London)  
*Page from a photograph album with four photographs (unmounted cartes-de-visite) and with decorative borders applied in ink*

Three albumen prints and one sheet of collodion printing-out paper, all approx. 60 x 90 mm

Inscribed, in ink, below the photographs: names of portrayed persons; inscribed, with pencil, top centre: *Mother* [...]; *Countess* [...]; lower left, page number: *101*

'Sally & Self' is written below one of the photographs pasted on an album page that the Rijksmuseum purchased in 2018. The picture of two women seated at a table was undoubtedly taken in a professional photographer's studio: the whole setting with curtains, a table, chairs etc. is exactly the sort of arrangement found in countless portrait studios in the early eighteenth-sixties. Printed in the small, cheap *carte-de-visite* format (approx. 6 x 9 cm), photographs like this were produced in their millions at that time, in England and many other western countries. Collecting and exchanging these little portraits became a craze, known as 'cartomania'. People who had their portrait taken by a photographer usually ordered six or twelve prints, stuck one of them in an album, swapped the rest with friends and acquaintances, pasted portraits of them in the album too, and often bought portraits of famous people they didn't know personally, from monarchs and politicians to dancers and clergymen, at photographers, book shops and art dealers.

This cartomania gave rise to countless albums that were passed around in family circles. Many of these albums look the same on the inside: one, two or four portraits on each page, sheets of white card, sometimes decorated with a couple of simple gold frames. That was what it usually was: simplicity and uniformity prevailed.

The loose album page that the Rijksmuseum acquired (along with five others that undoubtedly came from the same album) is unusual in that the photographs are accompanied by hand-drawn decorations: on this sheet red and white decorated frames around the photographs and green calligraphy scalloped with gold-rimmed leaves and red berries. This is a relatively rare addition, which is mainly found in albums put together by women from the upper classes in Victorian England. It is obvious that the drawn decorations on this page were done by the woman who alluded to herself as 'Self'. When the museum purchased the sheet it was unclear who she was, but we now know that it must have been Mary Georgina Caroline, Lady Filmer (née Cecil, 1838-1903). This is clear

from, among other things, comparison with a portrait of a woman of that name in an album that has been in the collection of the Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum since 1982 (inv. no. P1982.359.49). The likeness is unmistakable; she even has her head tilted to one side in the same way. 'Sally' can be identified as Lady Filmer's younger sister Anna Maria Frances, Lady Langham (1841-1876).

The album in the Fogg Museum was put together by Lady Filmer herself and bears the title 'My Book'. In the nineteen-seventies two or three albums owned by Lady Filmer were sold at sales in London and New York, one of which found its way to the Fogg Museum. At least one album was broken up after the sale and the six pages that the Rijksmuseum acquired may have come from that. They were in the estate of Harry Lunn (1933-1998), a famous photography dealer who was already active in the early nineteen-seventies.

Like those in the album in the Fogg Museum, the photographs on the six sheets that the Rijksmuseum acquired are pasted on to the pages in a regular, symmetrical pattern. In themselves the photographs are nothing special, but it is the decorations that set these album pages apart from the vast majority of nineteenth-century portrait albums. The rarity of such sheets and the fact that Lady Filmer must have been the person who put them together make these pages a memorable acquisition.

HR

PROVENANCE:

...; Harry Lunn, Brooklyn; his widow Myriam Lunn, Brooklyn; from whom purchased by the museum, 2018 (inv. no. RP-F-2018-79-4).

Mother of Countess of Mark



Lady Mary Prater

Mrs. Biddispl



Lady Alice Hill



Lady & Self



Mrs. Elizabeth

Mrs. Inward

Lady Emily King

101

## 9 JOHANNA CROISET VAN DER KOP (The Hague 1861-1943 Utrecht)

*Still Life with a Chinese Pot and a Metal Bowl*, before 1897

Pen and black ink over pencil, 210 x 344 mm

Very little is known today about the life and work of Johanna 'Jo' Croiset van der Kop. One of five daughters of a wealthy merchant from The Hague, she studied at the local art academy, graduating in 1884. During these years she became friends with the couple Sientje and Hendrik Willem Mesdag, who were about thirty years her senior. Sientje, in particular, guided Johanna's first steps on the path of an artistic career. Together, the women undertook excursions in the Dutch countryside searching for inspiration for their work (see no. 11). Through the Mesdags Johanna also met Barbara van Houten, Sientje's niece and daughter of the minister Samuel van Houten, who introduced her to the art of etching.

The Print Room recently acquired a sketchbook, three etchings and a number of drawings made by Johanna between around 1880 and 1900, which shed valuable light on her almost entirely forgotten oeuvre. Hardly any of her works found their way into Dutch public collections. A rare exception seems to be an etching of a still life with two Japanese bronzes, bought by Sientje and Hendrik Willem Mesdag and still held in the Mesdag Collection (The Hague, inv. no. hwm0021). All the items in the present acquisition come from the artist's estate, thus filling a considerable gap. Her personal style, characterized by the skilful use of fine, linear hatching and strong chiaroscuro, is reminiscent of Barbara van Houten's.

During the eighteen-nineties, Johanna regularly participated in exhibitions in the Netherlands and abroad, where she presented mostly etchings and watercolours. Until 1897, when she married the German actor Max Behrend and moved to Germany, Johanna seems to have been very close to the Mesdags and their niece. At the *Exhibition of Women's Labour* in The Hague in 1898, when Sientje was a member of its selection committee, she received particular praise for an etching representing a clock and a chair in a corner of the Mesdags' house. Two drawings, one in the sketchbook attributed to Johanna and another in a recently acquired sketchbook by the Mesdags (see no. 11), show a clock seemingly identical to the one that decorated a corner of the Mesdags' interior, which must have been the one captured in print by Johanna. These drawings suggest that

Johanna worked in close contact with the older couple, perhaps even sharing drawing supports. The drawing reproduced here seems to confirm this closeness. The pot and the bowl strongly resemble those painted by Sientje in her painting *Still Life with Bronze Pot, Copper Bowl and Vase* (1887, The Mesdag Collection, The Hague, inv. no. hwm0251C). Both objects belonged to the Mesdag couple, and are still held in the Mesdag Collection today.

Despite the physical distance after their marriage, Johanna and her husband maintained warm relations with the Mesdags. The postcard Sientje sent Johanna in 1906, commemorating one of their trips to the Dutch countryside (see fig. p. 87), is touching evidence of this.

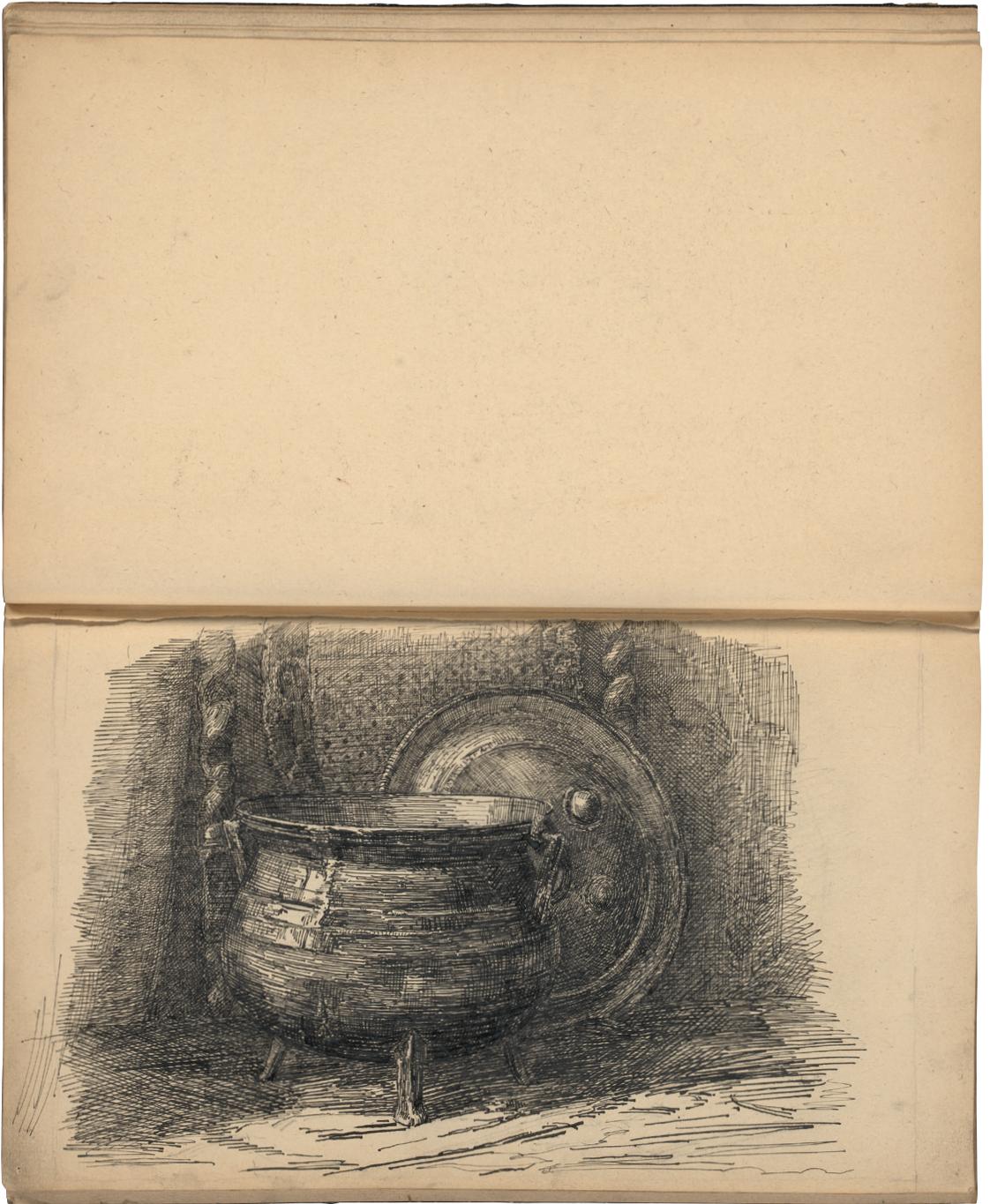
ED

## LITERATURE:

[Anne Gerritsen], 'Portret van een kunstenaarsvriendschap: Een verzameling werken van het echtpaar Mesdag uit de nalatenschap van Johanna Behrend-Croiset van der Kop', website Vendu Rotterdam, [vendurotterdam.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Collectie-Mesdag.pdf](https://www.vendurotterdam.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Collectie-Mesdag.pdf) (consulted 17 August 2022)

## PROVENANCE:

Johanna Behrend-Croiset van der Kop and Max Behrend; to their son E.R. Behrend; ...; anonymous sale, Rotterdam (Vendu Notarishuis), 10 December 2020, no. 189, to the museum, purchased with the support of the J.A.J. en M.A. Risseeuw Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds (inv. nos. RP-T-2020-218 to 227 and RP-P-2020-7584 to 7586).



RP-T-2020-218

10 BERTHA EVELYN JAQUES (Covington, OH, 1863-1941 Chicago, IL)

*Photogram of Leaves of a Tree*, c. 1900-10

Cyanotype, 247 x 152 mm (image), 303 x 253 mm (sheet)

Inscribed, on the cardboard, in pen, lower left: *Tree – in Gov. Cleghorn’s Place – Honolulu*

While the American Bertha Evelyn Jaques was originally known primarily as an etcher, her fame in that field was gradually surpassed by her activities as a photographer. A photographer, though, who did not use a camera; as far as we know she only made photograms. To make these, all one needs is a sheet of photographic paper, an object to put on it and sunlight. As the light only acts on the paper where it is not covered by the object, the light-sensitive layer will only partially be affected; this is what creates the image. In the case of a photogram, a sharply defined silhouette emerges after the sheet is developed. The photogram is an old, simple photographic technique that can produce beautiful, intriguing, and sometimes slightly mysterious images. In many cases, cyanotype paper was used for making photograms; this turns blue after it is exposed to sunlight and developed in water. The covered and therefore unexposed areas remain white in the end result, producing a powerful, high contrast blue and white image.

Bertha Jaques’s photograms are by no means always dated, but she seems to have made them mainly in the first decade of the twentieth century. Of the five cyanotype photograms by her hand that the Rijksmuseum has acquired since 2013 only one is dated (September 1910, inv. no. RP-F-2013-16). Jaques is said to have produced more than a thousand cyanotype photograms, but in the absence of a good overview this can only be an estimate. It is striking, however, that she appears to have concentrated exclusively on images of flowers and plants; they also feature in many of her etchings. Jaques’s membership of the Wild Flower Preservation Society of America established in 1902 may well have been the reason behind her choice of this subject. The aim of this society was ‘to encourage the preservation and protection of native plants, promote the enactment of laws furthering such preservation, organizing local societies, and to publish, print and disseminate literature to educate the public’, according to the website of the New York Botanical Garden, which houses a part of the society’s archives.

Even though many museums have purchased Jaques’s photograms (although seldom more than a handful) little detail is known about this part of

her oeuvre. For example, we do not know whether she regarded her photograms primarily as works of art in their own right that she made for the sake of the aesthetics, or whether they were also part of her efforts for the Wild Flower Preservation Society of America. In her treatise ‘The Botanical Art of Bertha Evelyn Jaques’, Meichen Liu writes that she ‘never explicitly wrote about her intent in producing these cyanotypes’. Liu believes, however, that they served ‘as an effort to preserve the ephemeral and endangered beauty of the natural world in artistic form’.

Bertha Evelyn Jaques can be compared with the British artist Anna Atkins, who between 1843 and 1853 self-published a small edition of a book of cyanotype photograms of British seaweed, which was intended as a supplement to an unillustrated textbook on the subject. There is no way of knowing whether Jaques had a similar motive. Nowadays the work of both artists is mainly appreciated in photographic circles for its essential, intrinsic beauty.

HR

PROVENANCE:

...; private collection, Illinois; from which purchased by photography dealer Hans P. Kraus Jr. Inc., New York; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of Baker McKenzie, 2019

(inv. no. RP-F-2019-269).



Tree - in  
Gov. Cleghorn's place -  
Honolulu.

## II SIENTJE MESDAG-VAN HOUTEN (Groningen 1834-1909 The Hague)

*Memory of Putten: Drawing on a Postcard to Johanna Croiset van der Kop, 1906*

Pen and black ink, brush and black and grey ink on cardboard, 90 x 139 mm

Inscription, beneath the drawing: *Herinnering aan Putten. Gegroet | Laan van Meerdervoort 9 | S.M.vH*

On this small postcard, the artist Sientje Mesdag-Van Houten reminded her good friend Johanna Croiset van der Kop (1861-1943) of the trips they used to make together years earlier, from The Hague to the rural region of the Veluwe and the village of Putten. The two women studied the landscapes in search of artistic inspiration and motifs they would use later in their paintings and drawings. The postcard is part of an undocumented ensemble of correspondence, seven sketchbooks and various drawings by Sientje and her husband, the marine painter Hendrik Willem Mesdag (Groningen 1831-1915 The Hague), from between around 1870 and 1910, acquired recently by the Print Room from the estate of Johanna Croiset van der Kop. It mainly contains sketches of landscapes, seashores, trees, people and animals, which offer a fascinating and intimate perspective of the couple's life and work.

Both turned to art relatively late, but established a respectable reputation as artists, patrons and art collectors in their own time. Whereas Hendrik Willem went down in history as a famous marine painter and frontman of the Hague School, Sientje, like so many women artists, was reduced by posterity to a place in her husband's shadow – until recently. Today there is a growing interest not only in her art, but also in the exceptional position she occupied in the art world of her time.

Sientje did not devote herself fully to her art until 1871, after the death of her son and only child Klaas. She became known for her portraits and still lifes, but also made many paintings of the heath landscapes of Drenthe and Gelderland, with their sheep, shepherds and huts. Sometimes her husband accompanied her on her study trips to the countryside. Remarkable similarities between drawn accounts of an excursion to Gortel (Gelderland) in one of the acquired sketchbooks (inv. no. RP-T-2020-204) and in another sketchbook kept in the Panorama Mesdag (The Hague, inv. no. 14), suggest the couple actually worked side by side during this trip.

On other occasions, Sientje travelled in the company of female friends and fellow artists, like Johanna Croiset van der Kop (see no. 9). Sientje was very invested in the careers of her

female colleagues. As a teacher, patron and president of 'Onze Club' – a society of artistic and intellectual women – she actively supported many young female artists, Thérèse Schwartz, Suze Robertson, Anna Abrahams, Barbara van Houten and Johanna Croiset van der Kop among them. She encouraged these women in their artistic ambitions and, together with her husband, purchased their work before art dealers came to appreciate it.

As this small postcard beautifully illustrates, social networks and friendships were vital to the activity of women artists in the Dutch fin de siècle. In this realm, Sientje Mesdag-Van Houten appears to have occupied a pivotal position that we are only just beginning to realize. There is still much more to learn, and the present acquisition will no doubt prove valuable in the process.

ED

## LITERATURE:

[Anne Gerritsen], 'Portret van een kunstenaarsvriendschap: Een verzameling werken van het echtpaar Mesdag uit de nalatenschap van Johanna Behrend-Croiset van der Kop', website Vendu Rotterdam, [vendurotterdam.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Collectie-Mesdag.pdf](https://www.vendurotterdam.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Collectie-Mesdag.pdf) (consulted 17 August 2022)

## PROVENANCE:

Johanna Behrend-Croiset van der Kop and Max Behrend; to their son E.R. Behrend; ...; anonymous sale, Rotterdam (Vendu Notarishuis), 10 December 2020, nos. 181-85, 187-88, 191-92, to the museum, purchased with the support of the J.A.J. en M.A. Risseeuw Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds (inv. nos. RP-T-2020-201 to 207, RP-T-2020-213 to 217, RP-T-2020-228 to 232 and RP-D-2020-22 to 26).



RP-T-2020-214

12 BAUMANN & KNAUBER-Fabriek Amsterdam  
*Women's Suffrage Pin*, c. 1909-19  
 Copper, copper alloy and enamel, 2.9 x 1.8 x 0.7 cm

When women in the Netherlands were granted the right to vote in 1919, it was the culmination of more than thirty years of struggle. Using 'propaganda', the *Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht* (the Association for Women's Suffrage) tried to mobilize the population for the cause. Badges and ribbons were produced for the Congress of the World Women's Suffrage Union, which was staged in Amsterdam in 1908, and in the same year the Gorinchem branch of the association proposed a national badge as well: 'e.g. to get a little flag proclaiming "Vrouwenkiesrecht" made, which can be worn by the members'. The central committee approved the proposal. In January 1909 a number of designs were ready and from the June of that year onwards, the members were able to order the flag that had been selected. The badge was manufactured by Baumann & Knauber, 'Fabriek van Insignes, Medailles enz.' founded in 1902, which was located in Suikerbakerssteeg in Amsterdam. Between 1909 and 1919 there were regular advertisements for the badge in the association's monthly magazine *Maandblad van de Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht*. The badge cost 25 cents and a discount was offered for the purchase of more than ten. The sale price was 2½ cents more than the cost of production and the difference was paid into the national propaganda fund. We do not know whether there was more than one issue of the badge. In order to celebrate the success of Universal Women's Suffrage and to honour her role in it, Dr Aletta Jacobs, the *éminence grise* of the women's movement, was presented with a special version of the badge during the victory celebration on 27 September 1919: 'Little Maja Ketelaar handed Mrs Jacobs the badge of the Society in gold and enamel on a skilfully crafted cushion'. With that, the circle was complete. After all, the principal aim of the Association for Women's Suffrage had been achieved with the Dutch government's acceptance of Universal Suffrage in 1919. The society was continued under the name *Nederlandsche Vereeniging van Staatsburgeressen* (Dutch Society of Female Citizens). The badge gradually fell into disuse but a few still wore it, aware of the years of struggle and to underline the right to vote. There was a revival when a replica of the badge, slightly different

in size, was produced on the occasion of the celebration of the centenary of women's suffrage.

In the canon of the Dutch struggle for women's suffrage, most of the women in the spotlight came from the upper classes of society and/or had had higher education. In fact, though, the signatories of the people's petition for the enactment of women's suffrage (1913) show that sympathizers came from all walks of life. One representative from a lower social class was the original owner of the badge, Klaasje Tuinder (1884-1962) from the island of Texel. She lost her father, a fisherman who died in an accident at sea in 1886, when she was very young. His death meant that the family with five young children lost its breadwinner; the widow managed to survive with a little assistance from a fund for fishermen's widows and orphans and any paid work she could get. Klaasje got the chance to train as a kindergarten teacher. She never married and taught in Den Burg (Texel) for her entire working life. In her family she was known as 'the feminist' and wearing the women's suffrage badge would have helped contribute to that image. The Texel/Den Burg branch of the Association for Women's Suffrage was founded on 22 May 1909. Until 1919 countless demonstrations were staged, and Aletta Jacobs, president of the national Association from 1903 to 1919, was among the speakers on several occasions. P.J. Oud, who for some years was a tax collector on Texel and later became a prominent (liberal) politician, was also an 'extraordinary member' of the island's branch. He became one of its leading lights. As a man he had no seat on the management committee; it was women from the island's upper class who ruled the roost. Klaasje was not involved either, because of her humble origins. She died in 1962 while living with her niece's family. Until 2022 the great-granddaughter of Klaasje's sister, Alida Witvliet-Tuinder (1878-1949), wore the badge on polling days.

JtB

#### LITERATURE:

Mineke Bosch, *Strijd! De vrouwenkiesrechtbeweging in Nederland, 1882-1922*, Hilversum 2019  
*Texelsche Courant*, 1909-19  
*Maandblad van de Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht/ Staatsburgeressen*, volumes 12-23 (1907-19)



PROVENANCE:

Klaasje Tuinder (1886-1962); her niece Petronella Boogaard-Witvliet (1902-1969); her daughter Ada Laan-Boogaard (1939-2020); her daughter Dr Cora A. Laan, Vlaardingen; donated by her to the Rijksmuseum, 2022

(inv. no. NG-2022-24).

## 13 Models: SARA DE SWART (1861-1951), Netherlands or Capri (?), after 1910 (?)

Casting: FONDERIA ARTISTICA LAGANÀ, Naples, c. 1924

*Seventeen Chess Pieces in Medieval Style*Bronze, *cire perdue* cast, with a brown and partly light green patina, h. 8.7-18.7 cm

Signed, on the back of larger and the side of smaller figures: S and FOND:[eria] ART[istica]

LAGANA NAPOLI (scratched into the casting models and cast with them) and MADE IN ITALY (scratched into the metal afterwards)

This curious ensemble of chess pieces in medieval style was made by Sara de Swart, an artist better known for her full social life than for her work. This is due in part to the small oeuvre she left, in part to its limited artistic quality. De Swart, who came from the upper middle class in Arnhem, was a wealthy woman, and sculpture was essentially a hobby for her, not motivated by a compelling artistic drive or financial need. With her close ties to the artistic and literary avant-garde in Amsterdam in the late nineteenth century (known as 'Tachtigers' or 'movement of Eighty'), and her role as the patron of this group, Sara de Swart was later dubbed the 'muse of the Movement of Eighty' by the poet Jan Engelman. In 1889 she settled in Paris, attracted by the city's effervescent artistic climate, and met, among others, Auguste Rodin, Émile Bernard and Odilon Redon, from whom she purchased works. The belief that De Swart actually worked with Rodin herself, however, is a stubborn misconception.

In her own work, De Swart was influenced chiefly by the style of the sculptor Lambertus Zijl, with whom she took lessons for some time. She confined herself mostly to small reliefs and statuettes of people and animals. These chess pieces occupy a conspicuous place in her modest oeuvre as one of De Swart's most original creations. The set is idiosyncratic in its approach, in part because of the diversity of the clothes and the tellingly characterized figures, which were inspired by a medieval princely court with courtiers and soldiers. There are seventeen pieces, eight of which are illustrated here. The most successful are the king (18.9 cm) and the queen (16.9 cm) with their royal features. The two bishops (14.3 and 14.7 cm) were modelled as wise old men in long cloaks, each with an arm around a child, the two knights (13.0 and 13.8 cm) were designed as seated men, and the two castles (10.4 and 10.7 cm) as kneeling horsemen, behind a *pavise*. There are also nine assorted pawns (8.7-12.4 cm). The shape



of the pieces and their execution in bronze suggest that it was never the intention to make a complete, playable set. What's more, none of the pieces are the same.

The chess pieces were cast after 1920, when De Swart and her partner Emilie van Kerckhoff settled on Capri, although they may go back to models created earlier in clay or wax. The bronzes were bought there by the American couple Vernon Ames Wright and his wife Grace Tileston Wright-Clarke. Wright was the president of the Otter Tail Power Company in Minnesota and lived on Capri with his wife and children from around 1923 to 1925. It was there they had met De Swart.

FS

LITERATURE:

Jaap Versteegh, *Fatale kunst: Leven en werk van Sara de Swart (1861-1951)*, Nijmegen 2016, p. 119 (fig.)

Jaap Versteegh, 'Tentoonstellingen maken is net werken', *Origine* 2015, no. 4, p. 56 (with fig. together with the owners before last)

PROVENANCE:

Purchased from the artist by Vernon Ames Wright (1863-1938) and his wife Grace Tileston Wright-Clarke (1874-1950), Capri and Fergus Falls (Minnesota), c. 1923-25; their son Cyrus G. Wright (1904-1996); his son, the ceramist Malcolm Wright (1939), Shelburne (Vermont, USA), 2021; from whom purchased by the art dealer Pygmalion, Maarssen, 2021; from which purchased by the museum with the support of the Otto van Noppen Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds and the Knecht-Drenth Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2021 (inv. nos. BK-2021-212-1 to 17).



## 14 CHARLEY TOOROP (Katwijk aan Zee 1891-1955 Bergen, North Holland)

*Self-Portrait with Flowers*, 1933

Oil on canvas, 40.3 x 35.5 cm

Signed, on the front, bottom left: C. Toorop

Inscribed, on the back: *Charley Toorop 1933 Zelfportret Bergen*

Between 1914 and 1955, to the best of our knowledge, Charley Toorop painted seventeen self-portraits as well as some double or group portraits in which she pictured herself with children and friends. With intervals of sometimes one year, sometimes several, these paintings create a record of the life of a woman, a mother and an artist as she became inexorably older. 'Few have subjected themselves to such fierce self-examination as she did,' remarked the journalist Bibeb in an interview a few months before Toorop's death (*Vrij Nederland* 11 June 1955).

This self-examination in paintings is almost entirely in Dutch museum collections. One exception was the 1933 *Self-Portrait with Flowers*, whose whereabouts were unknown. Probably the most recent painting in Toorop's major exhibition at the Goudstikker gallery in Amsterdam, which ran from 12 November to 5 December 1933, it was missing from the exhibition that followed in the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, which opened on 9 December, so it would seem safe to assume that Goudstikker had sold it. After that, the portrait appeared in public just once more – in 1966 at a commemorative exhibition marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of Toorop's birth at Galerie Nova Spectra in The Hague. It then disappeared from view again until the Rijksmuseum was able to acquire it in 2021.

The pose Toorop chose for *Self-Portrait with Flowers* does not often appear in her self-portraits. She usually painted herself full face or occasionally in three-quarter view, turned to the right. Here we see her from the side, her head turned towards us, looking from the corner of her eyes. She would seldom paint herself this way again. The 1938 *Self-Portrait with Hat and Veil* (Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, inv. no. A 2907), a three-quarter portrait facing left, is somewhat comparable, but it was only in the *Self-Portrait* of 1954-55 (Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar, inv. no. 021302), the last that she painted, that she adopted the same position.

There is a direct link to a key work from Toorop's oeuvre – *The Meal Among Friends* (Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, inv. no. 2045 MK) of

1932-33. She added herself to this monumental group portrait at the end, on the extreme right in the middle row. The pose is identical to *Self-Portrait with Flowers*, which raises the question as to whether this portrait followed on from *The Meal Among Friends* or had in fact served as an example for it.

At the exhibition in 1933 *Self-Portrait with Flowers* went virtually unnoticed – as did its singular character. It was the first time – and would be the last – that Toorop painted herself in the evening under electric light. The bright bulb lighting her face from the front is reflected in the dark glass behind her. The light puts a shine on her severe bob hairstyle, and emphasizes the red of her lipstick and the blush on her cheeks. Toorop here is uncompromisingly a modern woman who wants to stand in the full light.

LVH

## LITERATURE:

Nico J. Brederoo, *Charley Toorop: Leven en werken*, Amsterdam 1982, p. 219, cat. no. 1933-7 (fig.)

Ed Wingen, 'De onverzettelijkheid van Charley Toorop. Nova Spectra "viert" haar verjaardag', *De Telegraaf* 26 October 1966 (fig.)

Anoniem, 'Beheersing en expressie', *Het Vaderland* 21 October 1966 (fig.)

R.E. Penning, 'Onverzettelijke kracht bij Charley Toorop. Jubileumexpositie bij Nova Spectra', *Haagsche Courant* 12 October 1966 (fig.)

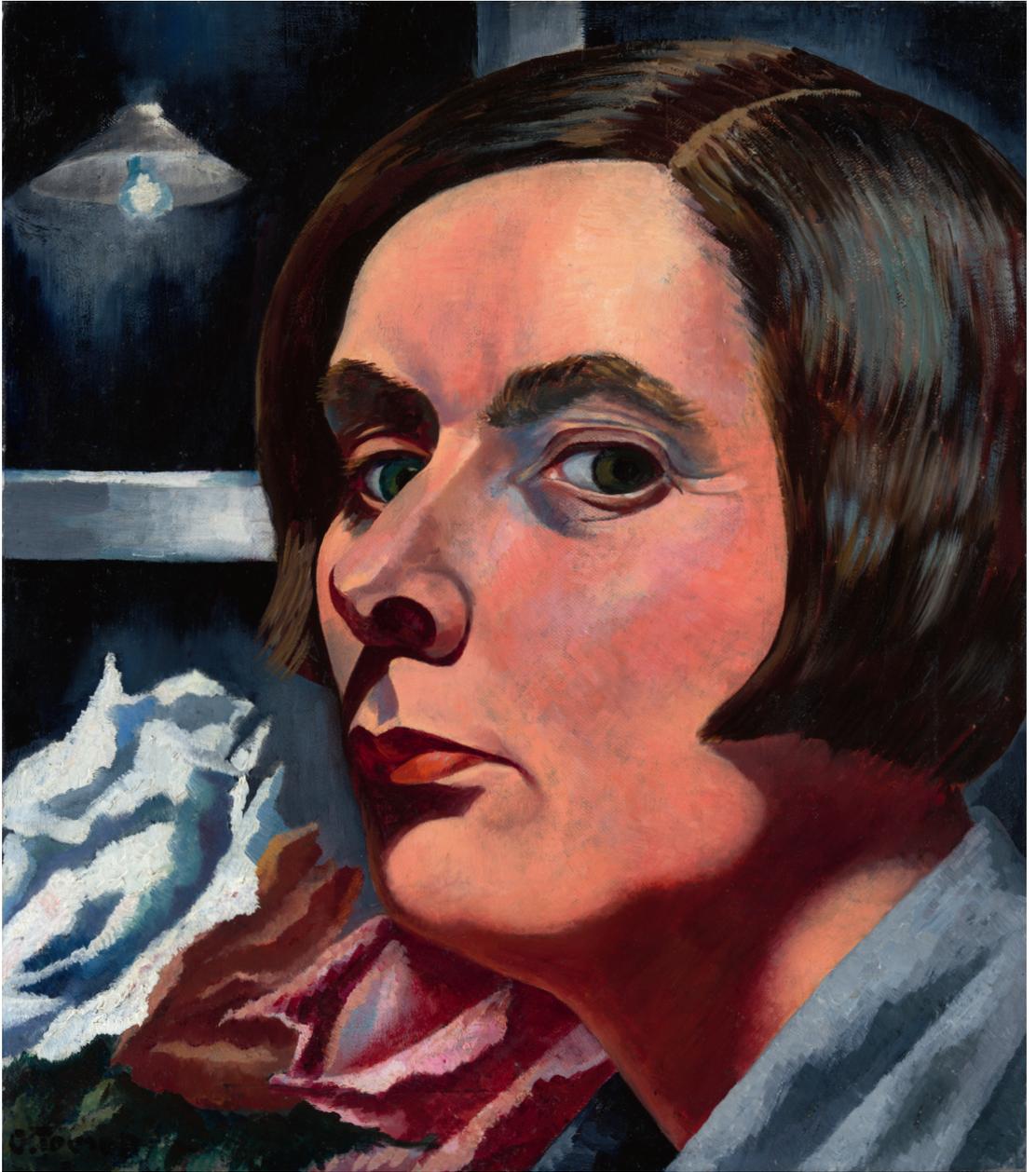
*Herdenkingstentoonstelling Charley Toorop bij haar 75ste geboortjaar 1891-1955*, exh. cat. The Hague (Galerie Nova Spectra) 1966, unpagged (fig.)

Jan Engelman, 'Bij Goudstikker: Charley Toorop en Wolf Demeter', *De Tijd* 25 November 1933

*Charley Toorop: schilderijen en teekeningen*. Wolf Demeter: *plastic en teekeningen*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Kunsthandel J. Goudstikker N.V.) 1933, p. 8 (cat. no. 39)

## PROVENANCE:

Willem Henri Boom (1894-1965) and Louise Marie Boom-De Hoop Scheffer (1894-1989), Hengelo-Beckum 1933?-89?; by descent Anna Petronella Hardick-Boom (1925-2021), Delden 1989?-2021; by descent her children; purchased by the museum with the support of Pon Holdings B.V. through Perspective Fine Art B.V., Amsterdam (Hendrik Groenewald), 2021 (inv. no. SK-A-5087).



- 15 *Headdress (angisa), worn during the independence of Suriname*  
 Jeruzalem Bazaar, Tourist Information Center Wakapasi Paramaribo, c. 1975  
 Cotton, 109 x 107.5 cm

On special occasions Surinamese women wear an *angisa*. This headdress is made from a cotton fabric that is first soaked in a paste of *gomma* (bitter cassava and candle grease) and then folded and pinned into the desired shape. In Suriname the tradition of wearing *angisas* began in the early nineteenth century on the plantations and traces its roots back to Africa. Women would receive old pieces of cloth from their enslavers and would tie them around their heads. The head wraps, folded in various styles, functioned as a means of communicating with one another. It is well known that enslaved people were not allowed to speak openly and freely. This headdress became a way of displaying thoughts and emotions, without the overseers understanding the message. Many Afro-Surinamese women (living in Suriname or the Netherlands) wear an *angisa* to this day and view it as an important way of expressing their identity.

One such *angisa* was recently gifted to the Rijksmuseum. It was made to mark the celebration of Surinamese independence, *Srefidensi*, on 25 November 1975. At its centre is a depiction of the State House, Suriname's parliament building, where the independence documents were co-signed by the Netherlands. Another historic date, 15 February 1974, is written in small characters below the State House. This was when Henck Arron's government first expressed its desire for Suriname to become independent.

The sentence 'Mi Lobi Switi Sranang' written at the top of the headscarf translates to: I love wonderful Suriname. Three other prominently placed words 'vrijheid, gelijkheid, broederschap' – freedom, equality, brotherhood – expressed Suriname's desire to be placed on an equal footing with the Netherlands. The slogan is also Haiti's national motto, Haiti being the first independent Black Republic, which had achieved its independence two centuries earlier. In a circle around the State House we see eight Surinamese women in different national dress. They represent the diverse demographic of Suriname, clockwise from the top: Arawaks (descendants of the indigenous population), 'Creoles' (descendants of enslaved peoples; here the woman is wearing an *angisa*), Jews, Chinese, Dutch, Javanese,

Hindus and 'Marrons' (descendants of Africans, who had escaped slavery on the plantations).

The name of the manufacturer, Jeruzalem Bazaar is written on the back on the upper left corner. The Jeruzalem Bazaar probably purchased the original design from C.J. Abboud's shop and started reselling it at various locations. Abboud's original design features the leaf motif of the *palulu* flower along the hem, which symbolizes eternal youth and everlasting beauty. In Abboud's version the hem is stitched around the motif of the *palulu* flower to give an edging of loose leaves. Our headdress, however, has a straight square hem.

Until recently the Rijksmuseum's collection contained only illustrations of *angisas*, mainly in photo stories, such as those of Vincent Mentzel portraying Afro-Surinamese women wearing *angisas* around the time of Surinamese independence (inv. no. NG-2011-18-28-25). The acquisition of this *angisa* is consequently a valuable addition to our collection. The headdress depicts the intertwined history of Suriname and the Netherlands.

MDW

LITERATURE:

Christine van Russel-Henar, *Angisa Tori: De geheime taal van Suriname's hoofddoeken*, Paramaribo 2008, p. 105

PROVENANCE:

Purchased in the Tourist Information Center Wakapasi, Paramaribo, by M. Schilder (Amsterdam), 2007; her gift to the museum, 2022

(inv. no. NG-2022-6).

