

# Recent Acquisitions: Women in the Rijksmuseum Collection

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EVELINE SINT NICOLAAS •



I ALEIJDA WOLFSEN (Zwolle 1648-1692 or The Hague 1645-1707 Spaarnwoude)  
*Seated Woman Dressed in Yellow Holding Sheet Music in her Hand*, 1667  
Oil on panel, 26.7 x 21.5 cm  
Signed and dated, bottom left: *A Wolfsen. fec | 1667*

In 2023, the Rijksmuseum acquired the present genre painting, signed A(leijda) Wolfsen and dated 1667. The panel shows a woman sitting at a table, holding a book of sheet music in her hands. A lute lies next to her on the table; a framed painted portrait of a mother with her two children hangs on the wall behind her. Applying convincing brushstrokes, Wolfsen captures the glimmering satin of the woman's vividly coloured dress. With an illuminated foreground strongly contrasted against the dark background, the composition draws all attention to the woman herself, who appears to have suddenly been disturbed while reading her sheet music. This gives the image a spontaneous and lively character. A possible pendant of this painting shows a woman making her toilet (present whereabouts unknown): both were held in the Cologne collection of H. Neuerburg in the early twentieth century and possibly sold together.

Because the seventeenth-century archives mention two different 'Aleijda Wolfsens' – one active in Zwolle (1648-1692) and the other in The Hague (1645-1707) – it is unclear which of the two created the present painting. In fact, the two women were second cousins, both possibly trained by Caspar Netscher (1639-1684). In 1667, the Aleijda Wolfsen in Zwolle married Pieter Soury, the mayor of that city, with whom she bore fifteen children. Unknown is whether she came from an artistic background; certain is that she knew the Zwolle painter Gesina ter Borch (1633-1690), to whom her father dedicated a laudatory poem (inv. no. BI-1887-1463-9). Born in The Hague in 1645, the other Aleijda attended the baptisms of Netscher's children in 1673 and 1678. Her brother Everard (also) probably studied under Netscher. She never married, and upon her death, she bequeathed paintings to her brother Zeger. Unclear is whether these were painted by Aleijda herself.

The present painting leaves no doubt that its maker was familiar with the work of Netscher: the painting on the wall in the background is a partial copy of Netscher's 1667 family portrait, now housed in the Baltimore Museum of Art (inv. no. 1944.103). Also, the painting's lobed frame is a common aspect of Netscher's oeuvre,

to be observed in his *Young Woman with a Letter and Medallion* from 1667 (Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, inv. no. GK 291).

Regardless of which of the two women is concerned, the present panel is the first genre painting by Aleijda Wolfsen in a Dutch museum – all others held in Dutch public collections are portraits, with the earliest dating from 1670. A comparison of the paintings produced under this name, dating from 1667 to 1691, reveals five different variations in signature and style, confirming the possibility that two different painters named Aleijda Wolfsen may have been active in the seventeenth century. If this was the case, it would suggest that, unlike many other women painters, Aleijda from Zwolle remained active after her marriage.

TvR

My thanks to Saskia Zwiers of Het Vrouwenhuis Zwolle and Lara Yeager-Crasselt of the Baltimore Museum of Art

#### LITERATURE:

Saskia Zwiers, *Wolfsen, Aleijda*, in *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*, 2022 (<https://resources.huysgens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/Wolfsen>) (consulted 1 September 2024)  
Egbert Jan Wolleswinkel, 'Er was eens een penseelprinses... en zij heette Aleijda Wolfsen', *Jaarboek Die Haghe* (2015), pp. 72-95  
Marjorie E. Wieseman, *Caspar Netscher and Late Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*, Doornspijk 2002, p. 211, under cat. no. 59  
Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris the Elder*, Doornspijk 1981, vol. 2, p. 168, cat. no. C121 (under a section listing paintings with rejected attributions to Frans van Mieris)  
Jacob Campo Weyerman, *De levens-beschrijvingen der Nederlandsche konst-schilders en konst-schilderessen*, The Hague 1729, vol. 4, p. 336

#### PROVENANCE:

...; collection Matthieu Neven, Cologne, c. 1879; collection A. Haanen, Cologne, 1898; sale, Cologne (Lempertz), 26 October 1910, no. 156, as Frans van Mieris, fl. 700; collection Dr. H. Neuerburg, Cologne; ? sale, Cologne (Lempertz), 3 October 1913, no. 712, as Frans van Mieris, to an unknown buyer; ...; sale, London (Sotheby's), 29 October 1980, no. 10, bought in; sale, London (Sotheby's), 15 April 1981, no. 56, bought in; sale, London (Sotheby's), 7 April 1982, no. 67, £1320, to an unknown buyer; ...; sale, Cologne (Sotheby's), 18 November 2023, no. 67, to the museum with the support of the Women of the Rijksmuseum Fund, 2023  
(inv. no. SK-A-5114).

## 2 GESINA TER BORCH (Zwolle 1631-1690)

*Portrait of Moses ter Borch as a Two-Year Old*, in or after 1667

Oil on canvas, 56.2 x 45 cm

Signed, lower right: *Gesina Ter Borch*; inscribed, upper left: *Ao.i647. | Ætatis. Suae. 2.*

In March 2024, the Rijksmuseum acquired the only signed oil painting by Gesina ter Borch. She was the most gifted female member of the Ter Borchs, a family of artists chiefly active in Zwolle. Six of the family's seven artists worked as amateurs; the renowned Gerard ter Borch II, Gesina's younger half-brother, was the only exception. Gesina is the best-documented seventeenth-century Dutch woman artist. As one of the very few paintings for which her authorship is unquestionable, the present work forms the core piece in an oeuvre comprising mainly drawings, watercolours, poems and exercises in chirography. Since 1887, all her works on paper have been preserved in the Rijksmuseum, together with the remainder of the Ter Borch family workshop legacy. This material also contains the world's largest collection of drawings by Gesina's younger brother, Moses ter Borch, as well as two painted self-portraits.

Moses's paintings and drawings reveal that he was a promising artistic talent. His ambition lay elsewhere, however, as he enlisted in the navy to fight against the British during the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-67). On 2 July 1667, the twenty-two-year-old Moses was fatally wounded during the storming of Landguard Fort, one of the last campaigns of the war fought just off the British coast, and buried ten days later in Harwich. Moses's death had a great impact on the family, and Gesina wrote a poem about her loss (inv. no. B1-1890-1952-108). She also painted several allegorical watercolours featuring her brother's full-length portrait (inv. nos. B1-1887-1463-79, -81, -83). In addition, Gesina collaborated with her half-brother Gerard on a stately memorial portrait with vanitas symbolism painted in oil, likewise full length, acquired by the museum in 1995 (inv. no. SK-A-4908).

In the newly acquired oil painting by Gesina ter Borch, Moses's attire displays the fashion worn circa 1667, indicating a dating in or shortly after that year. Therefore, this portrait must have been painted in memory of his tragic death as well. The emphasis, however, is entirely different from the other painted portrait: here Gesina celebrates

her young brother's patriotism, courage and fighting spirit. The painting is backdated to 1647 in its inscription, and shows Moses at the mere age of two, beating his drum and surrounded by toy weapons. At that time, the Netherlands was still caught up in its independence struggle from Spain. With this artist's ploy, Gesina evoked the impression that Moses was prepared to throw himself into the fray and give his life for his country even as a toddler. From the portrait, we therefore learn that Moses's patriotism, then considered the highest male virtue, was innate. The iconography of this painting is unique, amply demonstrating not only Gesina's ability to powerfully visualize and convey the implications of a moving event through allegory, but also vividly showing the great depth of her love for her youngest brother.

ES

## LITERATURE:

Adam Eaker, *Gesina ter Borch*, London 2024, p. 116Carla van de Puttelaar with Fred G. Meijer, *Gesina ter Borch (1631-1690): A Testimony of Love*, sale cat. Amsterdam (Zebregs&Roëll) 2024Jeannie Dumesnil, 'A Paris, place Furstenberg, un appartement digne des souvenirs qu'évoque celle-ci', *L'oeil* (October 1965), pp. 13-18, esp. p. 15, fig. 4Sturla Jonasson Gudlaugsson, *Gerard ter Borch*, part 2, The Hague 1960, p. 286, no. 9

## PROVENANCE:

Collection Gesina ter Borch (1631-1690), Zwolle; ? her sister Catharina ter Borch (1634-1704), Zwolle; ? her niece, Hillegonda Schellinger (1674-1750), Zwolle; ...; ? sale David van der Kellen jr (1827-1895), Amsterdam et al. [section David van der Kellen jr], Amsterdam (J.C. van Pappelendam and G.J. Schouten), 30 March 1874 sqq., no. 102 ('Portrait d'enfant. Toile. Hauteur 54, largeur 45 cent.'). fl. 36, to A. Wolff; ...; collection Jean Jacques Loynel d'Estrie (1920-1995), Paris, by 1965; by descent through the family; ? from a member of the family to antiques dealer, Paris; from whom to Zebregs&Roëll, October 2023; from whom purchased by a private collector, Netherlands; from whom on consignment to Zebregs&Roëll; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of the Women of the Rijksmuseum Fund, 2024 (inv. no. SK-A-5124).





*N. 1647.  
Fiat is. suc. 2.*



- 3 JOHANNA KOERTEN (Amsterdam 1650-1715)  
*Portrait of Galenus Abrahamsz (1622-1706)*, 1692  
 Cutting, 204 x 182 mm  
 Signed, lower right: *J: Koerte*; and dated, lower left: *i692*; inscriptions, encircling the oval:  
*Doctor GALENUS ABRAHAMSZ, Leeraar; below: Zie hoe de Wijsheyd speeld in het doorzigtig Weezen |*  
*Des schrand'ren Arts, die Ziel, en Liqhaam kan geezezen*

The present portrait of the seventeenth-century preacher Galenus Abrahamsz was made by means of a special technique, achieved by cutting out lines in a sheet of paper using a fine, razor-sharp knife. The portrait is signed by Johanna Koerten, an artist who acquired great fame with her paper-cutting technique. Born in 1650, Johanna grew up in an Anabaptist milieu in Amsterdam. Her mother, Ytje Cardinaels (1624-1694), came from a prominent family of teachers; her father, Jan Koerten (1622-1651), was a textile merchant, as was Johanna's subsequent stepfather, Zacharias Rosijn. In 1691, at the age of forty-one, Johanna married Adriaan Blok (c. 1653-1726), an Anabaptist, and like her father and stepfather, a textile merchant.

As early as 1721, Johanna was included in the *Groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konst-schilders en schilderessen* by the artists' biographer Arnold Houbraken. He relates that Johanna was highly skilled at embroidery, bobbin lace, glass engraving, flower arranging and watercolour painting; she was also an adept singer. However, Houbraken credited her placement alongside other artists to her incomparable mastery of paper incising and cutting. Koerten's main specialty was 'flatwork', a technique that entailed incising the paper line by line, but which did not involve additional cutting in relief, as with so-called 'relief work'. Koerten produced cut portraits of well-known contemporaries, including Tsar Peter the Great (inv. no. KOG-ZG-I-18A-117) and Stadholder-King William III, but she also produced cuttings of biblical and mythological scenes, allegories, landscapes and cityscapes.

Johanna's work was on display at her Amsterdam home, where it attracted attention from within the Dutch Republic and abroad. Besides acquaintances in her Anabaptist circle, a range of dignitaries, scholars, poets, artists and connoisseurs came to see her works, including the Elector Johan Willem van der Palts (1658-1716) and Jan Six (1618-1700), the then mayor of Amsterdam. Because visitors wrote their names in Koerten's guestbook, we are well informed of

their identities. After Johanna's death in 1715, her husband Adriaan Blok continued this tradition, resulting in the now famous *Stamboek*, containing all sorts of written annotations, autographs, poems and drawings. In 1735, Blok published a printed version of all the contributions written in the original *Stamboek* (Rijksmuseum Library, no. 321 E 12).

As far as can be ascertained, this portrait of the Anabaptist preacher and physician Galenus Abrahamsz from 1692 is Koerten's earliest dated work. Given the great precision of its execution, it was by no means the first cutting she made. Like many of her other works, she based her design on a print – in this case, an anonymous engraving datable before 1685 (inv. no. RP-P-2020-4141). Koerten drew the individual lines on a sheet of paper using black chalk and then cut the lines precisely along their top and bottom edges. Placed between two glass plates, the final product was subsequently framed. When viewed against a black background, the cutting resembles a regularly printed engraving. However, that was not the only way in which it could be seen. The portrait is preserved in its original frame, which has a small hatch door in the back that can be easily removed. The portrait was meant to be viewed with a lighted candle placed behind the opened hatch, to which the verse 'Het doorzigtig wezen' ('the translucent being', see above) below the likeness refers. Given that only fifteen works by Johanna Koerten survive today, the present portrait is a highly fortuitous addition to the Rijksmuseum collection.

EH

#### LITERATURE:

- Henk van Ark, 'Geleerde heren, Abrahamsz, Bogaert en van Hoogstraten', in <https://knipperslexicon.nl/publicatie/geleerde-heren-abrahamsz-bogaert-en-van-hoogstraten-koertenkoerier-7/> (consulted 24 August 2024)  
 Jan Peter Verhave, *Het scherp van de Snede: Vier eeuwen papierknipkunst in Nederland*, Zwolle 2023, pp. 34-41 (ill.)  
 H.W. Meihuizen, 'Een verloren gewaand portret', *Algemeen Doopsgezind Weekblad* 11 (1956), no. 28, p. 5



PROVENANCE:

...; Herman Ijsbrand Groenewegen (1862-1930); by descent to Anton Salomon van Nierop and hence through the family; from which purchased by the museum with the support of the Women of the Rijksmuseum Fund, 2024 (inv. no. RP-P-2023-114).

## 4 MARIA SIBYLLA MERIAN (Frankfurt am Main 1647-1717 Amsterdam)

*Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium. in qua erucæ ac vermes Surinamenses ... in quibus reperta sunt ... omnia in America ad vivum naturali magnitudine picta atque descripta per Mariam Sibyllam Merian*

Amstelodami: sumtibus auctoris, ... venditur & apud Gerardum Valk, 1705

iv unnumbered pages, 60 pages, 60 engraved and hand-coloured plates; folio; bound in contemporary blindstamped parchment by the Quatrefoil Bindery, Amsterdam

Maria Sibylla Merian was a German artist and entomologist long active in the Netherlands, renowned for her detailed observations, illustrations and descriptions of the metamorphosis of caterpillars into butterflies. She was among the first researchers to visualize the entire metamorphic cycle on a single plate, set against the background of the host plants on which the caterpillars fed. *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium*, published in Amsterdam in 1705, is Merian's most important book, an exquisite work on the natural life of Suriname. It comprises sixty pages of text with descriptions of the country's flora and fauna, supplemented with sixty engraved and hand-coloured plates. With the acquisition of a first edition, the Rijksmuseum has enriched its collection with this masterpiece of Dutch book production in the early eighteenth century.

Born in Frankfurt, Merian was the daughter of the famous engraver and publisher Matthäus Merian der Ältere and Johanna Sibylla Heim, a Dutchwoman. After her father's death, Merian received lessons in drawing and painting from her mother's second husband, Jacob Marrel, a German still-life painter who frequented Utrecht, and one of his students, Abraham Mignon. In 1665, Merian married the painter Johann Andreas Graff. The couple's two daughters, Johanna Helena (1668-c. 1723-30) and Dorothea Maria (1678-1743), would later come to play a major role in Maria Sibylla's book production activities. In 1691, Merian and her daughters moved to Amsterdam, where they came into contact with renowned naturalists and collectors. Through the art cabinets of Nicolaes Witsen, Frederik Ruysch, Levinus Vincent and others, she garnered her knowledge of tropical flora and fauna.

From an early age, Merian raised caterpillars; she observed the caterpillars' pupation and recorded their metamorphosis in the form of sketches. In the foreword to *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium*, she writes that the dearth of knowledge on the origin and pupation

of the prepared insects she encountered in art cabinets had inspired her to make a journey to Suriname herself. To study the insects there, Merian departed for Paramaribo in 1699, together with her daughter Dorothea. In her endeavour, she was assisted by the local population, who provided specimens of plants and animals.

Published in 1705, the book *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium* was the result of Merian's extensive fieldwork, which she had documented through detailed sketches and notes. The text was available in either Latin or Dutch, according to the buyer's wish, with engraved plates or counterproof impressions. Merian and her daughters were responsible for a major share of the process of making, publishing and selling the book, and also for the hand-colouring of the prints, the majority of which were engraved by Joseph Mulder, Daniël Stopendaal and Pieter Sluyter. Caspar Commelin, botanist at the Amsterdam Hortus, assisted with the Latin nomenclature. In the book's foreword, Merian writes that, for many plants, she chose to retain the names 'as they are given by the inhabitants and Indians in America'.

The present copy acquired by Rijksmuseum contains the Latin-language text, with hand-coloured engraved plates. When comparing the illustrations to those found in other surviving copies, one occasionally encounters minor differences, e.g. the colour of a caterpillar's eyes. In general, however, it appears Merian's original sketchbook, titled the *Studienbuch*, now preserved in the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg, was faithfully followed. The copy acquired by the Rijksmuseum has an early eighteenth-century parchment binding attributable to the Quatrefoil Bindery, identified by a blind stamp embossed on the front cover. Other known copies of Merian's works were also bound by this Amsterdam bindery.

AA



2 METAMORPHOSIS INSECTORUM SURINAMENSIVM.  
EXPLICATIO FIGUR. II.

**H**ic Ananas est maturus, qui antequam comedatur, pelle sua nudandus est, quippe hanc pollicem castitiae adaequans si tenuiter auferatur, fibrilla quamdam retinet inter edendum linguam cum aliquo doloris sensu inherentes. Gustu fructus hic novae mala panica, ribesia, poma atque pyra inter se mihi refert, omnium enim horum fructuum saporem quasi in uno illo simul reperies. Odor ejus fortis est ac gratus, integrum conclave suavitate sua replens, si diffusetur fructus. Corona qua regitur, item gemina ad latus excrefcentia, teres mandata, novae producant plantas, quae zizaniarum in modum late crescunt, tenui hujusmodi germinio spatium sex mensium ad perfectam maturitatem nanciscendam requirente. Tam crudus, quam coctus conceditur fructus; & quod inde sine praelo sive igne potest elici vinum ac spiritus ardens, utraque gratissimo sapore alia id genus omnia superant.

Eruca huic infidens Anaxae anno 1701. à me in graminibus illi proximis reperta est, sub initium mensis Maji: colore gaudet subviridi, atque per universam corporis longitudinem litra rubra & albicante insignitur. Die Maji 10. in nympham transfigurata, ulterius die 18. Maji in elegantissimum mutabatur papilionem diurnum, flavescentem, palcherrime splendens viridibusque maculis ornatum, qualis & in aëre volitans & fructus infidens exhibetur.

In Corona hujus Anaxae rubicundus haeret vermiculus, tenuissimam nectens telam, cui parva involuta est nymphe: ille ipse vermiculus est, qui Coccinellam devorari cujusmodi plures non solum ipsi collegi, verum etiam inter Coccinellam ad nostras regiones delatam invenire liceat: veltati cuilibet novitatis avido in rei examine parabit. Supra telam nunc dictam istius vermiculi in corona fructus quadam haeret aurelia, in cuius aperta pelle reperi Coccinellam, quae in summitate coronae depicta exhibetur, nihilque aliud est, quam corpus binorum Scarabaeorum, alterius volitantis, alterius sedentis, qui in eadem Tabula representantur, nigricante alarum aliis rubicundarum limbo. Atque haec ad ornamentum Figuræ solum addidi, ex ficcata enim Coccinella tantummodo collecta fuit, neque ad metamorphoses Americanas spectant: idemque ab aliis Naturæ curiosis observatoribus notatum est. Inter illos vid. Leuwenhoekius Epistol. 60. & 28. Novemb. 1697. pag. 144 usque ad 144. item Blankardus de Insectis pag. 215.

Quod si oculo per microscopium armato papilionem aspicias, firmacum pulvisculis, quo obducuntur alae, uti squame pilicium apparet, quibus squamula tres quasi dentes habet longioribus pilis instructis, omnesque eo sunt ordine posita, ut sine magno labore numerari possent: at corpus ipsum plenus facit interstitiis pilis.



## LITERATURE:

Bert van de Roemer et al. (eds.), *Maria Sibylla Merian: Changing the Nature of Art and Science*, Tiel 2022  
 Marieke van Delft and Hans Mulder (eds.), *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium | Verandering der Surinaamsche insecten | Transformation of the Surinamese insects: 1705*, Tiel/The Hague 2016

## PROVENANCE:

Purchased by the museum with the support of The Friends of the Lottery and through the Rijksmuseum Fonds: the Women of the Rijksmuseum Fund, the Estate of S.L.R. Zimmerman-Taylor, the Joost and Carin Scholten Fonds and M.C.E. Aarts (Rijksmuseum Research Library, GF 392 H 1, inv. no. BI-2024-2536).

- 5 ANNA MARIA VAN LENNEP-LEIDSTAR (Istanbul 1738-1802 Izmir)  
*Embroidered Silk Cloth or Bedspread made for Elizabeth Clara Morrier-van Lennep, c. 1768-78*  
 Silk and cotton, 150 x 150 cm

For generations, female descendants of Elizabeth Clara Morrier-van Lennep have preserved this richly embroidered cloth or bedspread. Recently, this unique object was reunited with other family heirlooms held in the collection of the Rijksmuseum.

Flowers, fruits and insects, embroidered in varying pastel shades, adorn the cloth's cream-coloured silk basis and frame the central monogram ECM, placed within an embroidered double wreath. Blue ribbons bind the inner laurel wreath; the outer wreath is surmounted by grapes and strawberries, and a pear on which a large dragonfly has landed. The flowers and fruits embroidered along the cloth's four sides all differ; those in the corners appear in combination with butterflies and bees.

The embroidery's detail, variation in colour and the wide array of flowers and insects attest to the great dedication and love with which this cloth or bedspread was made. This is confirmed by a nineteenth-century handwritten note in English, attached to the reverse: 'Quilt worked by Mrs David van Lennep & presented to her daughter Elizabeth Clara (b. 1760) on her wedding (February 1778 at Smyrna) to Isaac Morier, British Consul at Constantinople. This quilt took ten years to work.'

Mother and daughter are known to us through a large family portrait preserved in the Rijksmuseum, attributed to Antoine de Favray and probably painted between 1769 and 1771 (inv. no. SK-A-4127). The family portrait shows Anna Maria Leidstar and her husband, David George van Lennep, together with the seven children living at this time. The family's eldest daughter, Elizabeth Clara, whose married initials are embroidered in the centre of the acquired cloth, stands between her father and the children's governor. The textile merchant Justinus Leidstar, Elizabeth's grandfather on her mother's side, appears far left, wearing an impressive fur coat.

Anna Maria Leidstar was born into a family of textile merchants of Dutch origin, then residing in Constantinople (present-day Istanbul), the capital of the Ottoman Empire. When the Leidstar company went bankrupt in 1739, the family relocated to Angora (present-day Ankara), where they would remain for many years. Father Justinus was actively involved in the native Angora goat wool trade.

In 1757, Anna and her father moved to the Turkish port city Smyrna (present-day Izmir). There she met the Dutch merchant David George van Lennep, whom she married one year later. Van Lennep was involved in the exportation of figs, citrus fruits and luxury textiles, including silk and Angora wool, and the importation of cotton, linen, coffee, sugar, spices and other luxury items. Over time, he came to be known as the uncrowned king of the Dutch community. In 1784, the traveller Mathieu Dumas lauded Anna Maria Leidstar for her beauty and wisdom: 'Various families requested her mediation and the local men asked for her advice on important matters.' Thanks to the festivities and receptions they organized, the couple soon belonged to the city's Levantine elite. This group was primarily composed of families with Dutch roots who no longer spoke the language and were increasingly oriented to Turkish customs and dress. That the latter also applied to the Leidstar family is evident in the Rijksmuseum family portrait, in which Anna Maria and her daughter Elizabeth Clara wear silk dresses with Turkish belts, sable and ermine vests, with Turkish jewellery adorning their head and hair.

If indeed Anna Maria worked on her daughter's wedding gift for a period of ten years, this implies she began embroidering when Elizabeth Clara was eight years old. The silk basis for the embroidered piece would likely have been obtained through her husband's business contacts. These contacts also led to Elizabeth Clara's introduction to her husband, Isaac Morier (1750-1817). In 1773, the Swiss-born Morier became a British subject to enable his hiring by the Levant Company. He was subsequently employed with the Van Lennep trading house, where he met his future bride, Elizabeth Clara. On 18 February 1778, Morier and Van Lennep married at Smyrna. It was then that the couple received the present embroidered cloth or bedspread – a precious wedding gift from mother to daughter, evidently also cherished by the many generations who kept it in the family.

ESN

LITERATURE:  
 Unpublished



## PROVENANCE:

Elizabeth Clara Morier-van Lennep (1760-1834); Frances Horatia Morier (1815-1906); Walter Edward Grimston (1844-1932); Mary Noel Grimston (1881-1937); Miriam Gepp (1906-1996); Helen Harrison; Rachel Matcham; her sale, Gloucestershire (Dominic Winter Auctioneers), 21 July 2023,

no. 621, to White Rose Fine Art; from which purchased by the museum with the support of the Maria Adriana Aalders Fonds, the Sara Geertruida Aalders-Huender Fonds, the Women of the Rijksmuseum Fund and the Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2024 (inv. no. NG-2024-14).



6 *Almanak voor vrouwen door vrouwen MDCCXCII*

Te Amsterdam: by de Wed. J. Dóll, 1792

8, 14, 99 pages; 16mo; bound in silk, painted with the scene of a landscape on the front cover and a flower basket on the back cover; in a cardboard case adorned with decorative paper

From 1792 to 1823, the *Almanak voor vrouwen door vrouwen* was published annually by Catharina Dóll-Egges (1750-1824). It contained anonymous contributions from approximately one hundred Dutch women writers, including renowned authors like Aagje Deken, Petronella Moens, Betje Wolff and Maria Petronella Elter. As far as can be ascertained, no public collection holds a complete series with every volume. For most of the years, only a few copies survive. Prior to this acquisition, the Rijksmuseum Research Library owned eight volumes from the series, covering the years 1797, 1799, 1800, 1804, 1806, 1807, 1809, and 1823. With the addition of the newly acquired 1792 volume, the collection now includes nine volumes. Copies from the series' inaugural year are exceedingly rare. The acquired book is the only complete copy in any public collection; the only other known copy of this edition is incomplete.

In 1770, Catharina Egges married publisher-bookseller Jan Dóll. Upon her husband's death in 1781, Catharina continued her husband's bookstore and publishing house. In the foreword of the first volume, she writes that her motivation for publishing the *Almanak voor vrouwen door vrouwen* was the success of an almanac she had begun publishing two years before, titled *Almanak van vernuft en smaak*. The introduction of new and different titles confirms that the almanac was a highly suitable genre for reaching a specific group. The series' long-running circulation confirms the commercial success of the *Almanak voor vrouwen door vrouwen*. For more than thirty years, Egges's almanac provided a platform for the Dutch women writers of her day, while simultaneously engaging an entire generation of female readers.

While the present volume includes a calendar with holidays, eclipses, annual fairs and available postal services (including Amsterdam and the United States) – all customary elements of an almanac – the largest section is devoted to literary contributions of prose and poetry. Several authors can be identified by their initials. The writer Adriana van Overstraten (1756-1828), for example, penned verses on topics as diverse as domestic life, a sleeping child and Jacoba of Bavaria, the

fifteenth-century countess of Holland, Zeeland and Hainaut. The poem 'Aan \*\*\*' is undoubtedly attributable to Maria Petronella Woesthoven (1760-1830). Other pieces were dedicated to historical figures like Kenau Simonsdochter Hasselaer, the sixteenth-century heroine of the Haarlem Resistance. The engravings, after the painter Willem Kok (1761-1806), include a portrait of Hasselaer and the scene of a mother who catches her daughter in the company of a man.

The quality of the bindings in which almanacs are bound can vary; though generally simple (paper or cardboard), some feature a slightly more luxurious execution in leather. Bound in a contemporary silk binding and adorned with Greek meander motifs and watercolours on the front and back covers, the copy acquired by the Rijksmuseum, besides being the first in the series, is remarkable for its beauty. The cardboard case, covered with decorative paper, indicates the almanac was not just a reference work intended for daily use, it was also an object highly cherished by its anonymous eighteenth-century owner.

AA

## LITERATURE:

Myriam Everard, *Egges, Catharina*, in *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*, 2017 (<https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/Egges>) (consulted 1 September 2024)

Myriam Everard, 'Catharina Dóll-Egges te paard: Uitgeefsters tijdens de patriottentijd en de Bataafse Republiek', *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse Boekgeschiedenis* 12 (2005), pp. 79-94

## PROVENANCE:

Purchased by the museum with the support of the Women of the Rijksmuseum Fund, 2023

(Rijksmuseum Research Library, 304 A 18, inv. no. BI-2023-4011).



- 7 GEORGINE ('GEO') ELISABETH SCHWARTZE (Amsterdam 1854-1935)  
*Portrait Bust of Francesca Riozzi-Gualano (1862-1946)*, 1885-86  
 Marble, h. 63 cm  
 Signed, on the reverse: *Georgine Schwartz*; inscribed, on the base: *Francesca*

The name of the introverted young woman portrayed in this marble bust is inscribed on the base: Francesca. It was sculpted by 'the first woman sculptor of any significance in our country', Georgine Schwartz. The bust was first shown at the 1886 *Tentoonstelling van Kunstwerken van Levende Meesters* (Exhibition of Works of Art by Living Masters) in the Rijksmuseum and again in 1914, as part of the Dutch entry to the Venice Biennale. As Schwartz's autonomous works reveal, besides being a technically gifted sculptor, polished in her early years at the Amsterdam Rijksacademie studying with Frans Stracké, she was also an artistically original talent with a growing penchant for naturalism. This is certainly evident in this tender portrait, regarded as one of the most successful works in her oeuvre. It can also be observed in other works, including the moving and highly inventive marble funerary monument she made for her sister Thérèse in 1922, four years after the latter's death (Amsterdam, Nieuwe Oosterbegraafplaats).

Francesca Gualano, as the sitter was known by her full name, led an adventurous life. She was born in 1862 in San Vincenzo a Voltorno, a village in Ciociaria, an impoverished rural region located south-east of Rome. She is depicted wearing the local attire of her native region, including a puffed-sleeved vest adorned with lace and embroidery and the characteristic white, lace-trimmed cloth worn flat on the head called a *pane*. In search of a better life, Francesca left home in the early eighteen eighties and ultimately found her way to Brussels. There she married Carmine Riozzi, likewise from the Ciociaria region. Circa 1884, Francesca and Carmine moved to the Netherlands, where they later found success as pioneers of the travelling cinema. Operating a cinematograph, the Riozzi family showed movies to captive audiences at local fairs throughout the Netherlands up until 1940.

Francesca and Carmine's first contact with the sculptor Georgine Schwartz occurred shortly after the couple's arrival in Amsterdam, at which time they also met Georgine's sister, Thérèse, and their niece Lizzy Ansingh, both well-known

female painters. Nineteenth-century artists avidly sought models of Italian origin, with people from Ciociaria particularly desired for their 'proud facial features, powerful bodies, noble gait', as one anonymous columnist in *Le Journal des artistes et amateurs* (1829) described them. The *ciociarelli* were associated with exotic, unspoiled beauty and authenticity, but also the classical Romans, from whom it was believed they directly descended. In painted and sculpted depictions, sitters invariably posed in their regional dress, as did Francesca. In 1958, the 83-year-old Lizzy Ansingh vividly recalled Francesca in a letter to the latter's son: 'I can still see that beautiful mother in Italian costume. She was drawn and painted often!'. And sculpted, we might add.

FS

LITERATURE:

P.K. van Daalen, *Nederlandse beeldhouwers in de negentiende eeuw*, The Hague 1957, p. 70  
*XI. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della città di Venezia*, exh. cat. Venice (Biennale di Venezia) 1914, p. 149 (no. 85)  
*Tentoonstelling van Kunstwerken van Levende Meesters, te Amsterdam, in den jare 1886*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Vereniging tot Bevordering van Beeldende Kunsten) 1886, p. 42

PROVENANCE:

Georgine Schwartz (1854-1935), Amsterdam, 1886-1935; her niece, Lizzy Ansingh (1875-1959), Amsterdam, 1935; by whom donated to the eldest child of the sitter, Alfonso Domenico Riozzi (1886-1958), Breda, 1946; by descent through the family, 1958-2023; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of the Women of the Rijksmuseum Fund, 2023 (inv. no. BK-2023-16).





## 8 THÉRÈSE SCHWARTZE (Amsterdam 1851-1918)

*Self-Portrait*, 1885-88

Pastel on paper, laid down on canvas, 600 x 450 mm

The Rijksmuseum holds a rich collection of works by the celebrated portraitist Thérèse Schwartze, including eight paintings and five pastels. The acquisition of this early self-portrait marks an important addition, as it depicts the artist at the beginning of a highly successful career. Although the pastel is unsigned, Schwartze can be easily identified as the sitter. The technical handling bears the hallmarks of her style: broad strokes and soft contours, which together deliver a powerful yet flattering likeness.

This undated pastel is likely related to Schwartze's famous self-portrait in oil from 1888, submitted to the self-portrait gallery of the Uffizi in Florence (inv. 1890, no. 3122). When she became the first Dutch woman to enter this pantheon of artists, she was thirty-seven years old. In the pastel, she appears somewhat younger. Unusual in both works is the choice of yellow, used for the scarf in the painting and recurring in the garment in the pastel. It is thus likely that she produced the pastel after returning from her sojourn in Paris in 1885 but before painting her self-portrait for the Uffizi in 1888. Other early pastel portraits by the artist also date from this time period.

The present work displays Schwartze's early virtuosity in pastel, a medium she sometimes chose for single-figure portraits instead of oil paint. She achieved a striking contrast between the refined depiction of the face and the quick execution of the costume and hair. The latter not only enlivens an otherwise static composition, but also brings the face sharper into focus. This contrast also demonstrates the artist's prowess with the medium. A pastellist typically has two options: repeatedly switching between pointed pastel sticks of different tonalities for minute rendering or using blunt pastel strokes for a more graphic quality. Schwartze relied on both methods for a complementary effect – an effect that she would continue to employ in her later works. Her treatment of the yellow garment draped over the shoulder is further evidence of the artist's understanding of the medium and its effect. XRF imaging reveals complex layers of darker pigments beneath the fast and dry application of yellows. As the darker colours

peek through the bright top layer, they achieve a rich sense of depth and luminosity reminiscent of lush velvet.

In 1874, at the age of twenty-three, Thérèse Schwartze took over the studio of her late father and teacher, the painter Johan Georg Schwartze (1814-1874). Serving as the family's breadwinner, she built a thriving practice as a portraitist, deriving success from her flattering style. Her sitters appreciated her ability to capture their likeness and personality. This skill brought her international fame, further bolstered when the House of Orange joined her clientele. Towards the end of her life, she owned three adjacent properties on Amsterdam's Prinsengracht, where she kept two studios: a 'dirty' studio for painting, and a 'presentation' studio for receiving clients.

A 1913 photograph (RKD, image no. 109773) shows various works by Schwartze's father hanging in one of her studios, including the portrait (inv. no. SK-A-2819) he painted of her when she was sixteen years old in 1868. This painting also shows her wearing a yellow shawl. In 1917, one year before her death, Schwartze made another portrait of herself, again in pastel, wearing a black hat (inv. no. RP-T-2009-41). With three (self-) portraits now in the collection, the Rijksmuseum can show the artist at different stages of her life: as a young woman classically posing for her father, as an emerging talent with a direct and inquisitive gaze, and as an established artist at the end of her life, expressing the wisdom of a lifetime.

CK/JR

## LITERATURE:

Unpublished

## PROVENANCE:

...; Van Lennep family, Heemstede?; ...; gifted to or purchased by Stichting Nieuw Unicum, after 1953; from which purchased by the museum with the support of the Women of the Rijksmuseum Fund, 2023 (inv. no. RP-T-2023-36).





9 JAN SLUIJTERS (Den Bosch 1881-1957 Amsterdam)  
*Portrait of Gesina Antonia Milgens (1881-1932), c. 1919*  
 Watercolour with charcoal and chalk, 760 x 550 mm

Gesina Antonia ('Tonía') Milgens is portrayed in this watercolour by Jan Sluijters from circa 1919 as an embodiment of the 'New Woman'. Her modern, tight-fitting, multi-coloured blouse with circle-like patterns, the *bandeau de tête* that pushes her dark hair down around her eyes, and her pronounced jewellery accessories give her a fashionable and remarkable appearance.

Recently, art historian Esther Schreuder has managed to retrieve significant biographical information concerning Milgens from the archives, substantially enriching the picture of the woman portrayed. Tonía Milgens (Tonía de Meijere-Milgens from 1908; Tonía Stieltjes-Milgens from 1922 on) was born the daughter of the beer brewer Christiaan Anthony Milgens and Maria Heidman, a domestic servant. Born into slavery in Suriname in 1837, Anthony Milgens obtained his freedom papers in 1862, circa twenty years prior to Tonía's birth, and later left for Amsterdam. Tonía herself grew up in Kattenburg, a low-income neighbourhood in Amsterdam. At a young age, she had an eye condition that left her partially blind. Some of her sight eventually returned in her right eye, but in the left eye, she wore a glass prosthesis for the remainder of her life. In 1904, Milgens became a servant in the household of Floor Wibaut, a social democrat city councillor, and the feminist Mathilde Wibaut-Berdenis van Berlekom. It was likely in this liberal milieu that the seeds of Milgens's political activism were sown. Milgens became involved in two organizations: the Sociaal Democratische Vrouwenpropagandaclub (Social Democratic Women's Propaganda Club) and the Algemeene Nederlandsche Dienstbodenbond (General Netherlands Domestic Servants' Union) 'Allen voor Elkander'. In 1906, Milgens was elected chair of the Amsterdam branch of the latter organization, making her the first union president of colour in the Netherlands. In that function, and in her position as director of the mediation office of the domestic servants' union, Milgens represented the interests of the largest group of working women in Amsterdam. Furthermore, she advocated the rights of working class women in general, including the universal suffrage cause in the Netherlands. In 1908, Milgens married the photographer Jan de Meijere. From that moment on, she gradually

abandoned her activities as a servant, trade unionist and activist, and became more involved in left-wing oriented, artistic circles. Tonía Milgens is thought to have met the artist Jan Sluijters in 1918 or 1919. By then, she had divorced De Meijere and was in a relationship with the engineer Wim Stieltjes, whom she married in 1922.

By this time, Sluijters was already a celebrated artist, considered 'the' portrait painter of the Netherlands, in whose oeuvre portraits of people of colour formed an important element. Sluijters is generally believed to have been interested in Milgens's charismatic personality and appearance. Both were also socially engaged; Sluijters expressed this, for example, in his political illustrations. Consequently, Milgens was to become one of Sluijter's favourite models. In the period circa 1919 to 1924, he produced at least twelve portraits of her: eight paintings and four works on paper. In these works, Milgens is portrayed in various ways: occasionally naked or dressed in translucent clothing, always wearing striking jewellery and accessories and with an intriguing glance. Invariably, Sluijters placed special emphasis on Milgens's eyes, as he did by emphasizing the bright blue of her eye prosthesis in the present watercolour.

The watercolour is likely one of Sluijters's early portraits of Milgens. Convincing similarities can be observed in his paintings *Tonía Stieltjes* (dated 1919, Drents Museum) and *Portrait of Tonía Stieltjes in a Green Blouse* (undated, Kröller-Müller Museum), in which Milgens wears the same multi-coloured blouse, headband and red necklace. The latter work was purchased by Héléne Kröller-Müller in 1920 and is assumed to have been created not long before its acquisition.

MA

#### LITERATURE:

Esther Schreuder, *Tonía Stieltjes: Activiste, model en wilskracht dokter*, Zwolle 2023, p. 175  
 Jacqueline de Raad, 'On "painting from negroes" and Jan Sluijters' favourite model Tonía Stieltjes', in Esther Schreuder and Elmer Kolfin (eds.), *Black is Beautiful: Rubens to Dumas*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (De Nieuwe Kerk) 2008, pp. 125-35  
 Anita Hopmans, *Jan Sluijters 1881-1957: Aquarellen en tekeningen*, Den Bosch 1991, p. 207



PROVENANCE:

...; Douwes Fine Art, Amsterdam, year unknown; private collection, United States, 1991; anonymous sale, Amsterdam (Christie's), 6 December 1995, no. 169, to unknown buyer; by descent through the family to the last owner; his/her sale, Amsterdam (Christie's), 16 November 2023, no. 63, to the

museum with the support of the Knecht-Drenth Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds and the Women of the Rijksmuseum Fund, 2023

(inv. no. NG-2023-72).

10 FUJIO YOSHIDA (Fukuoka 1887-1987 Tokyo)  
*Myōga Ginger*, 1953  
 Colour woodblock print, 375 x 250 mm

Throughout the twentieth century, the Yoshida family has been a household name in the world of Japanese printmaking. In 2022, print and installation artist Ayomi Yoshida (1958) donated seventeen artworks on paper to the Rijksmuseum, all from her own family collection, representing different generations of printmakers. The donated works were produced by three women artists: Ayomi Yoshida herself, her mother Chizuko Yoshida (1924-2017) and her grandmother Fujio Yoshida (see also nos. 11, 12). The donation spans the entire twentieth century and is an important addition to the Rijksmuseum collection of Japanese prints, which chiefly comprises the work of male printmakers.

Growing up in a family of artists, Fujio Yoshida learned drawing and painting from an early age. At the age of twelve, she was accepted to the Fudōsha, a prestigious private art school in Tokyo where students received lessons in painting and drawing in an academic, realistic style. In the then highly patriarchal Japanese society, it was unusual for women to pursue a career as an artist. As such, Fujio Yoshida was the sole female student at the school. As she wrote in her diary: 'A single woman painting among all these men must have been a curious sight. I was embarrassed to see villagers come check me out whenever we painted outdoors' (translation Ayomi Yoshida).

Four years later, in 1903, Fujio Yoshida travelled to the United States together with her adoptive brother and later husband, Hiroshi Yoshida (born Ueda, 1876-1950), where they organized sales exhibitions of their work under the name 'Two Artists Exhibition'. Fujio Yoshida's watercolours of Japanese landscapes painted in a realistic style were well received by the American public. After organizing exhibitions in Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and other American cities, the two artists travelled to Europe, including a visit to the Netherlands. Via Egypt, Singapore and Hong Kong, they returned to Japan in 1907.

After the United States, success followed Fujio Yoshida in her native Japan as well. Directly upon her return, several of her watercolours were shown at the Bunten, then one of the most important art organizations in the country. Membership in this and other similar organizations was essential for

an artist, serving as a gateway to the network of exhibitions, dealers and collectors. Soon after the Bunten, Yoshida showed her work at various exhibitions organized by other leading Japanese art organizations.

Women's social standing in Japan improved, albeit slowly. The year 1918 marked the founding of the Shuyōkai, an association established to recruit, train and support talented female painters. Fujio Yoshida assumed an active role, organizing events such as benefit evenings. Meetings were frequently held at her studio in Tokyo, which, via the network built during her travels in the US and arising from her numerous exhibitions in Japan and abroad, grew to become a centre of international cultural exchange.

For many years, Fujio Yoshida produced primarily figurative works. In the nineteen forties, however, she developed an interest in abstract art. Her husband, by this time a pivotal figure in the world of Japanese printmaking, was strongly opposed to this new art movement. To avoid confrontation, Fujio Yoshida began creating abstract works in the attic, secretly at night. She studied flowers and plants through a water-filled glass vase and took the distorted images as the starting point for her abstract oil paintings, which she began to show publicly in 1949.

Inspired by her son Hodaka (1926-1995) and daughter-in-law Chizuko Yoshida, in 1953 Fujio Yoshida embarked on a series of woodblock prints based on her oil paintings. Today, these enlarged and abstracted renderings of flower and plant shapes are her best-known works. Thanks to Fujio Yoshida's granddaughter, five prints from this series – including the print *Myōga Ginger* shown here – and two of her early watercolours are now held in the collection of the Rijksmuseum.

MJ

#### LITERATURE:

- Marije Jansen, 'Drie generaties vrouwelijke prentkunstenaars', *Aziatische Kunst* 2 (2024), pp. 42-51  
 Satoshi Sato (ed.), 歴史が見落とした画家吉田ふじを展 / *The Lost History of an Artist*, Tōmi 2014  
 Lauren W. Allen (ed.), *A Japanese Legacy: Four generations of Yoshida Family Artists*, Chicago/Minneapolis 2002, cat. no. 119





PROVENANCE:  
Donated to the museum by A. Yoshida, Tokyo, 2022  
(inv. no. RP-P-2020-53).



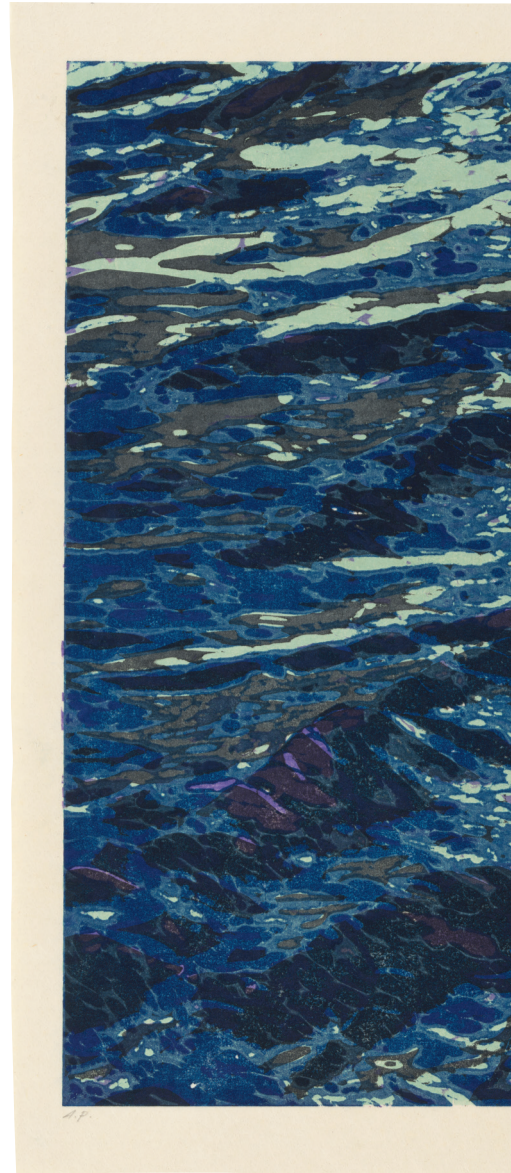
## II AYOMI YOSHIDA (Tokyo 1958)

*Surface K.Y.*, 1987

Colour woodblock print, 445 x 670 mm

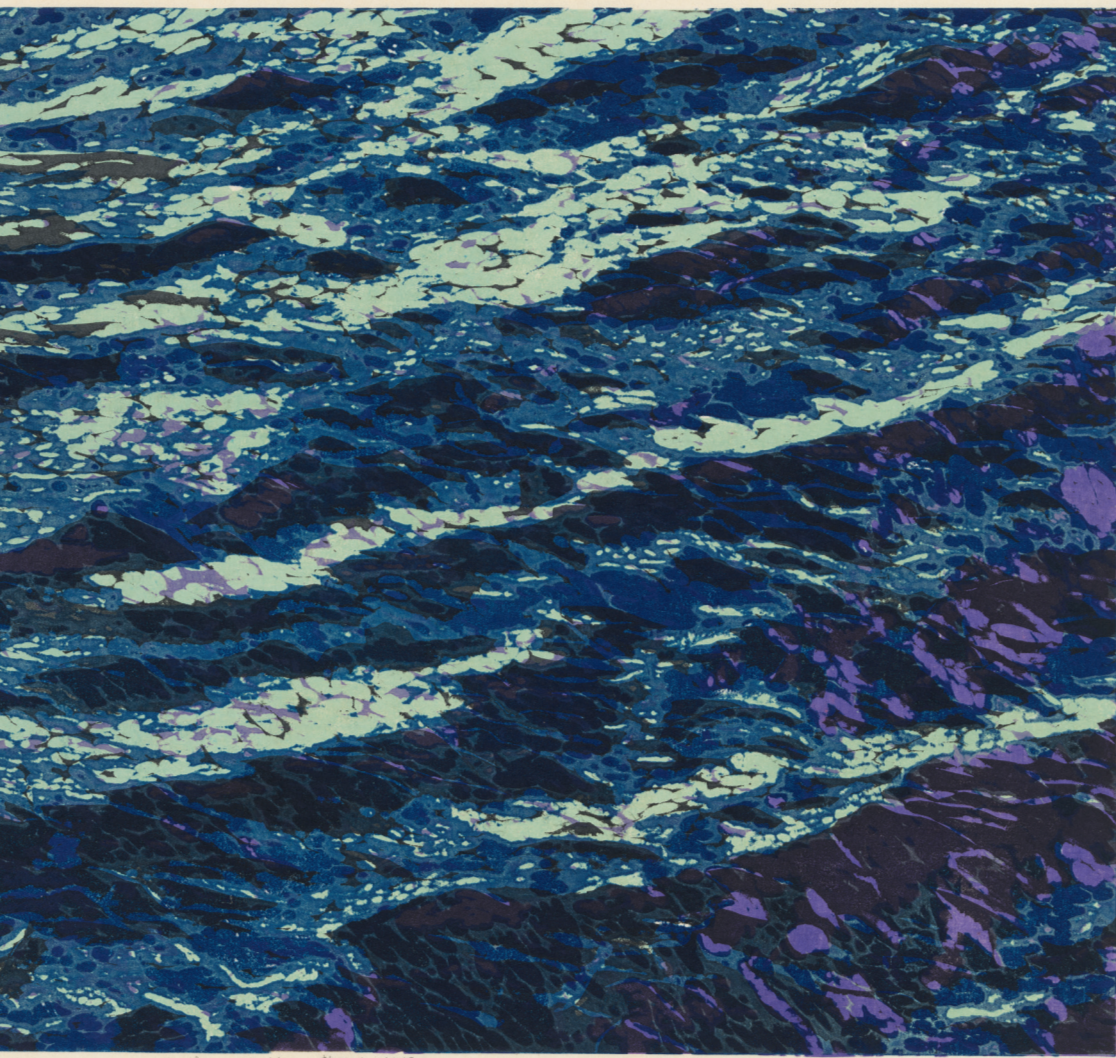
Ayomi Yoshida was raised in a family of influential Japanese printmakers, including her parents Chizuko and Hodaka Yoshida and her grandparents, Fujio and Hiroshi Yoshida. Faced with pressure to uphold the family legacy and a sense that her work would always be compared to that of her family's, Ayomi decided against pursuing a career in printmaking. When making a woodblock print at the age of twenty-one, however, she became intrigued by the demanding process this entailed. The resounding success of these early attempts at printmaking inspired her commitment to what would be a fortuitous career. In 2022, Ayomi Yoshida donated seventeen works to the Rijksmuseum, produced by her grandmother, mother and herself over the course of the twentieth century. Collectively and individually, these form an important addition to the museum's collection of Japanese prints (see also nos. 10, 12).

Ayomi Yoshida uses the traditional technique of woodblock printing – a medium applied for generations by artists in the Yoshida family – in innovative ways. Patterns and textures play an important role in her work and water is a recurring theme, as exemplified by *Surface K.Y.*, one of her earlier prints. In this woodblock print, Ayomi Yoshida visualizes the surface of the water at that point where the Kanda River flows through the Yanagibashi district of Tokyo. The print's title refers to the location depicted. As the river connects both the place of her birth and the place where she later settled, it holds a special meaning for her. During walks along its banks, she began to notice that the water surface looked different every time – instead of being blue or colourless, the water's appearance depended on the circumstances, e.g. the time of day or the weather. Its colour was also affected by what lay beneath the surface or what lined the shore. For one year, she took photos of the water surface at fixed locations; based on these images, she produced a set of four wood blocks for each location. She then printed the patterns in various colour combinations. In the print shown here, the sun illuminates the surface of the water, interrupted by a dark shadow cast by buildings standing on the river's bank. In a second print, also donated to the



museum (inv. no. RP-P-2020-65), the lightest colour is a shade of blue. Although she utilized the very same four blocks, the changing combination of colours results in an entirely different image of the water surface. Even the pattern, though exactly the same in both prints, appears to have changed.

Since the late nineteen nineties, Ayomi Yoshida has also been working as an installation artist,



Surface K.Y. 神田川. 柳橋辺り

*[Handwritten signature and date]*

constantly utilizing elements and techniques of the woodblock printing process in new ways and often on a large scale. With her art, she aims to show that Japanese woodblock prints not only belong to the past, but are also of today and for the future.

MJ

LITERATURE:

Marije Jansen, 'Drie generaties vrouwelijke prentkunstenaars', *Aziatische Kunst* 2 (2024), pp. 42-51  
Lauren W. Allen (ed.), *A Japanese Legacy: Four generations of Yoshida Family Artists*, Chicago/Minneapolis 2002

PROVENANCE:

Donated to the museum by the artist, Tokyo, 2022  
(inv. no. RP-P-2020-66).



## 12 CHIZUKO YOSHIDA (Yokohama 1924-2017 Tokyo)

*Drift Ice B*, 1995

Colour woodblock print and photoengraving, 680 x 510 mm

In 1949, Chizuko Yoshida (born Inoue) made her breakthrough with her oil painting *My World*. It was the first abstract painting ever shown at the annual exhibition of the Taiheiyō Gakai (Pacific Painting Association), a prestigious art institution in Japan oriented to figurative painting. At the time, the submission of an abstract work painted by a woman, only twenty-five years of age, created quite a stir, and led to her instant recognition. In the nineteen fifties, Chizuko Yoshida turned to printmaking and she is now considered one of the most innovative Japanese print artists from the second half of the twentieth century.

Thanks to the donation of seventeen works on paper by Chizuko's daughter, Ayomi Yoshida (1958), three generations of women print artists from the Yoshida family are now represented in the collection of the Rijksmuseum (see also nos. 10, 11). The seven prints by Chizuko Yoshida provide an overview of her entire career as a print artist, an oeuvre of work in which the visualization of sound and music are seminal. One of her earliest prints, titled *Rain B*, depicts the sound of falling and splashing raindrops in the form of musical notes.

Although the focus in Chizuko Yoshida's preliminary education lay on realism, she began to paint expressionist works in 1941, under the mentorship of painter and printmaker Kitaoka Fumio (1918-2007). In 1948, she joined the Seiki no kai (Century Society), an avant-garde artists' group formed around the writer and art critic Okamoto Tarō (1911-1996), who inspired her shift to abstract expressionism. Chizuko Yoshida also attended seminars given by Onchi Kōshirō (1891-1955), the most important abstract printmaker in Japan at this time. Her interest in printmaking was further sparked when invited to a dinner in 1951 as the youngest artist and the only woman in the presence of the then six most important printmakers in Japan. Two years later, she would permanently relinquish her brush for the wood gouge.

In 1954, Chizuko Yoshida was asked to join the Japan Print Association, the premier organization for printmakers in Japan, then boasting sixty-two members, four of whom were women. By 1956, this number had grown to nine women, who went

on to found the Joryū Hanga Kyōkai (Women's Print Association) in that same year. This very first association for female professional printmakers – sometimes derisively nicknamed 'mama-san hanga-ka' (mama printmakers) – successfully paved the way for more women to pursue careers in printmaking. According to her daughter, Chizuko Yoshida saw herself as a role model, showing 'that it was possible to be both an artist and a mother' at a time when women were meant to devote their time and effort solely to raising children in the home. Chizuko Yoshida travelled the world together with her husband, print artist Hodaka Yoshida, and their two children, as well as her mother-in-law, print artist Fujio Yoshida. The impressions Chizuko Yoshida gained during these travels were reflected in her work in the form of new ideas and techniques. After her abstract period, the nineteen seventies and eighties were characterized by a more figurative style. Representative of this period is Chizuko Yoshida's most famous work, *Valley of Butterflies* (1979), in which she combines colour woodblock printing with photoengraving. In the nineteen nineties, her work again became more abstract. Regarding her print *Drift Ice B*, produced after a trip to northern Hokkaido at the age of 71, Chizuko Yoshida wrote in her diary: 'I wanted to create a work that would reflect the sight of drifting ice and the sounds of the floes crashing together' (translation Ayomi Yoshida).

MJ

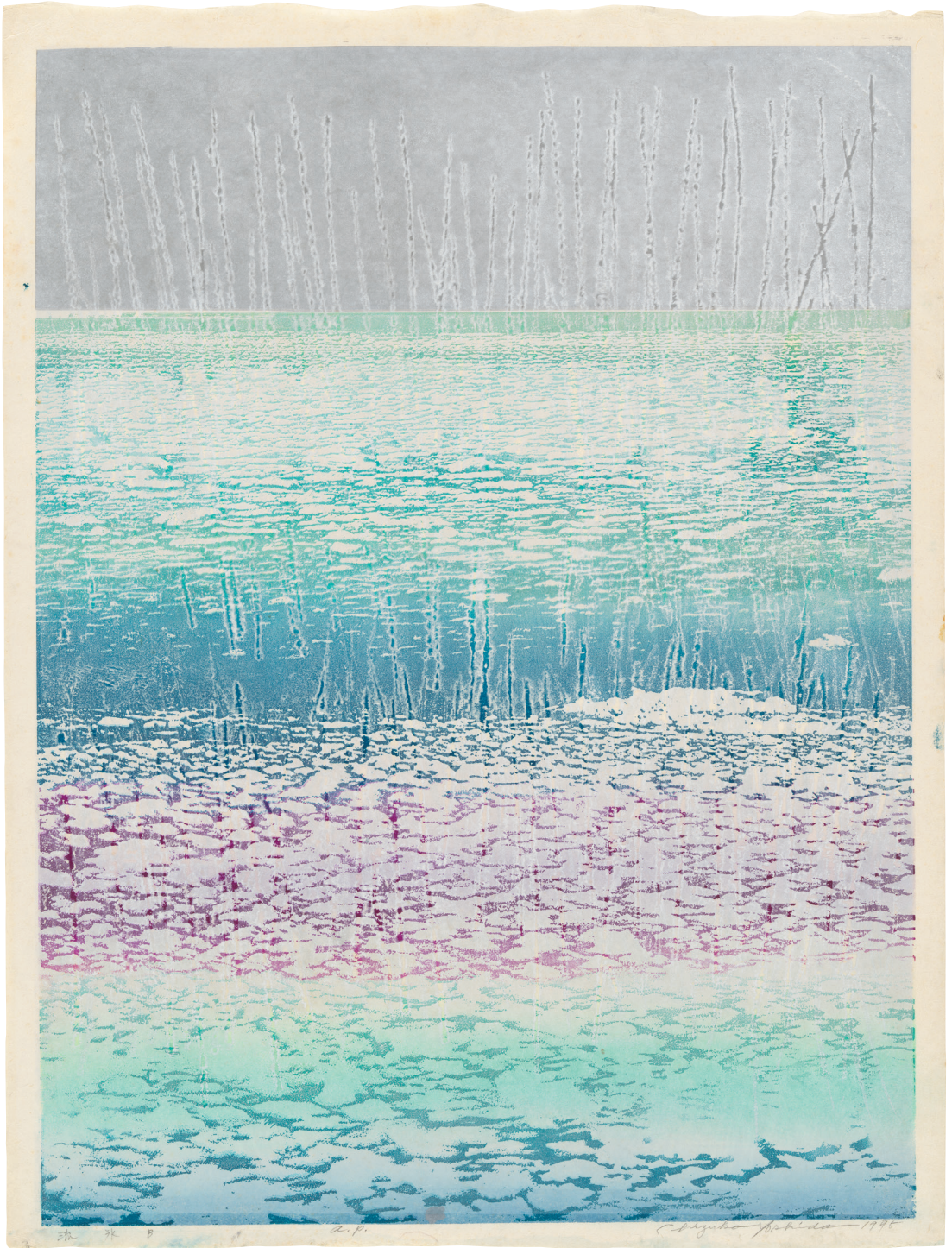
## LITERATURE:

Marije Jansen, 'Drie generaties vrouwelijke prentkunstenaars', *Aziatische Kunst* 2 (2024), pp. 42-51, fig. 5  
 Lauren W. Allen (ed.), *A Japanese Legacy: Four generations of Yoshida Family Artists*, Chicago/Minneapolis 2002

## PROVENANCE:

Donated to the museum by A. Yoshida, Tokyo, 2022  
 (inv. no. RP-P-2020-64).





## 13 MARIA ROOSEN (Oisterwijk 1957)

*Untitled (Mirror Breasts)*, 1995

Glass, approx. 96 x 55 x 55 cm

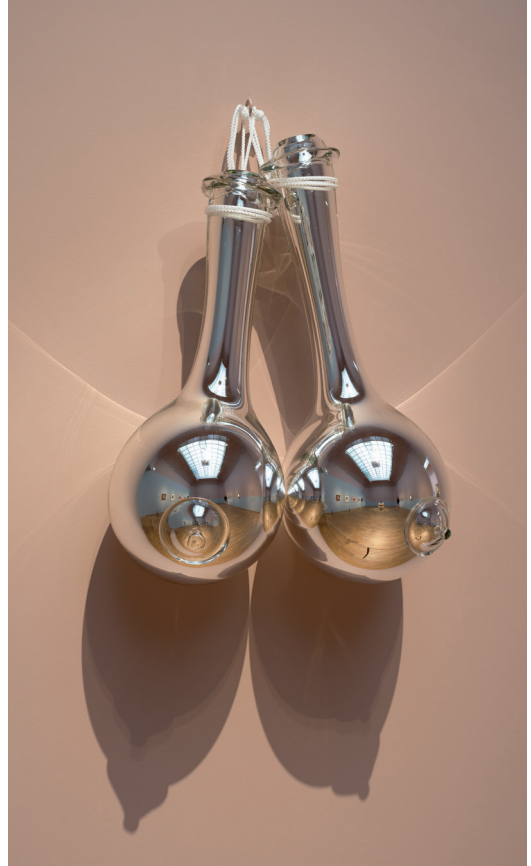
*Untitled (Table)*, 1998

Glass and table, 125 x 190 x 102 cm

In 1993, artist Maria Roosen approached Bernard Heesen of glass-blowing company De Oude Horn to produce glass forms in the shape of breasts. As an important part of the creation process, she embraced chance, visible in the glass-blown breasts' organic shape, determined by gravity, and the thickness of the top edge from which the glass hangs to cool, a practical limitation. Coincidence and technical factors influence not only the final form, but also the fundamental concepts underlying Roosen's work. Reflecting on the making of the glass breasts, she observed: 'When the glassblower, a large man with chest hair and an open shirt, was standing there holding the pink [glass] breast, I saw the visual: the physicality and how one relates to it, that's so important to me.'

Shortly after this project's completion, Roosen was invited to represent the Netherlands at the 46th Venice Biennale, held in 1995, together with artists Marlene Dumas and Marijke van Warmerdam. On this occasion, she presented a pair of breasts made of mirrored glass and installed on the pavilion floor. When mounted on a wall, Roosen's mirrored breasts intriguingly reflect and distort the onlooking viewers and their surroundings. One year later, the same mirrored breasts were exhibited in the Galerie Fons Welters, where they were hung from a living plum tree in flower. Roosen's presentation merged fruit, growth and decay – in this period, already recurring themes in her work – in a literal form. In the ensuing years, living trees were a common element in her work.

When Roosen began experimenting with glass circa 1990, she first developed a series of large glass pitchers. For the 1992 exhibition *Peiling 92* in Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, the artist distributed them across the floor and filled them with milk. While pitchers of milk and other comparable shapes perhaps evoke associations with fertility and sexuality, Roosen is above all fascinated by the tension between everyday objects and visual art. As she once observed: 'There is nothing more beautiful than a tool, for example a hammer, in use for centuries and without any unnecessary decorations. For this reason, utilitarian objects are simply just beautiful things.'



Three years after *Untitled (Mirror Breast)*, Roosen created *Untitled (Table)*, a work composed of eight coloured-glass objects arranged on a tabletop painted dark green. Every object is organic in shape: some lean precariously against the table, others ostensibly fall through various holes in the tabletop. Seven of the objects are similar in shape; though differing in size, all consist of a round sphere with a long, winding tail. These forms, frequently recurring in Roosen's sculptures, are referred to as spermatozooids. Unlike the others, the eighth one resembles a utilitarian object: a pink pitcher with a large handle. The table's angular legs – taken from a well-known design by the Dutch twentieth-century designer Wim Rietveld –



enhance the contrast between the spermatozoa and the table itself. Roosen had copies made from the original table legs, long kept in her studio but in fact possessions of her husband, which now form a permanent element in this work of art.

In the discourse of physicality, gender and identity in the nineteen nineties, themes also explored by her contemporaries, Roosen's sculptures offer an innovative perspective. With the Rijksmuseum's acquisition of these two key works from her early oeuvre, an important new voice has been added to the collection of twentieth-century art, in which influential artists like Marlene Dumas, Kinke Kooi and Ferdi are already represented.

ME

LITERATURE:

- Maria Roosen, *VUUR*, 2017, pp. 60-61 (ill.)  
 Maria Roosen, *Monster*, Hanne Hagens and Wim Van Mulders (eds.), Amsterdam 2009, p. 32 (ill.)  
 Jennifer Allen, Hans den Hartog Jager, Liedeke Kruk, Wiebo van Mulligen, *Maria's*, Amsterdam 2005, pp. 78, 79 (ill.)  
 Anke Bangma (ed.), *Dumas, Roosen, Van Warmerdam*, Rotterdam 1995, pp. 99-100 (ill.)

PROVENANCE:

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