



Recent Acquisitions: Dutch History

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AND HARM STEVENS •

- 1 *Concretion with Chinese Porcelain and Individual Small Vases*, c. 1700
Organic material, porcelain, approx. 22.5 x 13 x 10 cm (concretion)

Between 1644 and 1793, the Dutch East India Company (voc) lost no fewer than thirty-four ships while anchored or seeking refuge from storms in Table Bay near Cape Town, South Africa. It was a fate also destined to befall the *Oosterland* on 24 May 1697. During a violent storm that battered the returning voc fleet, another ship waiting in the bay for favourable weather, the *Kallendijk*, broke free from its anchor cables. The adrift ship struck the *Oosterland*, which in its turn also broke free. Whereas the *Kallendijk* managed to re-anchor, the *Oosterland* sank not far off the South African coast, at the mouth of the Salt River. In the nineteen nineties, surviving components of the *Oosterland*'s shipwreck were archaeologically examined. The ship's partly dredged-up cargo included dyes and Chinese porcelain. Of the latter, notable was the relatively large quantity of miniature vases. Circa 1700, these objects were highly popular in Western Europe, commonly displayed in art cabinets and on small decorative consoles flanking fireplace overmantels, alongside larger porcelain pieces.

Formed by the deposition of organic material (oil, beeswax and resin), the present concretion, recently acquired by the museum, contains a large hexagonal vase (without a lid) adorned with floral motifs. Also visible are the imprints of two other (large) vases. At least four smaller vases are similarly embedded in the material. Eight additional miniature vases were separately retrieved from Table Bay, three of which are similar in shape and decoration to those in the concretion. Contrary to what was long believed by the donor's family, these objects probably also came from the *Oosterland*. In 1848, the local diver who salvaged the objects passed them on to John Montagu (1797-1853), then the colonial secretary of the Cape Province. Since that time, the Montagu family always assumed that all the objects were dredged from the shipwreck of the *Jonge Thomas*, another voc ship that sank in Table Bay, on 1 June 1773, likewise at the mouth of the Salt River. At the time of its discovery, the *Jonge Thomas* was likely the only voc wreck of note, with its sinking and spectacular rescue operation widely reported in various publications.

Several factors, however, indicate that the retrieved objects could not have originated from this ship. First, being an outbound ship, it is improbable that the *Jonge Thomas* was carrying Chinese porcelain, with cargo of this kind typically transported only on returning ships like the *Oosterland*. Moreover, by the seventeen seventies, the porcelain remnants in and around the concretion had been out of fashion for years. Virtually identical examples, dating from circa 1700, are found in the well-documented porcelain collection of Augustus the Strong (1670-1733), Elector of Saxony, in Dresden. In this light, the *Oosterland* is the most probable candidate with respect to the ensemble's provenance.

JTB

LITERATURE:

John Montagu; 'The wreck of the *Jonge Thomas*: Some recovered treasures', *Antiques in South Africa* (1981), pp. 83-85

PROVENANCE:

...; John Montagu (1797-1853), Cape Town (South Africa), 1848; through inheritance to John Francis Vaughan Montagu (1877-1960); John Edward Coley Montagu (1910-1983), 1960; David Vaughan Montagu (1948-2021), Epsom, 1983; Laura Catherine Anne Montagu, Hollandsche Rading, 2021; by whom gifted to the museum, 2025 (inv. nos. NG-2025-10 to -18).





- 2 Engraved: ANONYMOUS, Amsterdam
Medal of Jan Jacobsen Huijser, 1718
 Silver, diam. 61 mm, mass 51.35 grams

The obverse of this recently acquired silver medal prominently depicts a robust, eighteenth-century three-master, executed in meticulous detail. The vessel in question, a 'spiegelretourschip' (transom return ship), was commonly used by the Dutch East India Company at the time. The ship is out at sea, with the ocean waves closest to the viewer engraved thicker than those in the distance, thus creating a greater illusion of depth. The anonymous engraver has rendered the ship in a somewhat simplified manner. The anchor is disproportionately large, taking up one-third of the hull and leaving space to show no more than four gunports. The inscription on the ornately lettered reverse reads: 'Den 2 April / Ao 1718 / Jan Jacobsen / Huyser'.

The present medal was previously attributed to the Grootshippersgilde (Great Skippers' Guild) of Harlingen, but research arising from the donation to the Rijksmuseum proves otherwise. In fact, Jan Jacobsz Huijser (recorded in the archives with an 'ij' versus a 'y') was an Amsterdam native who lived and worked in the city all his life. Born circa 1676, he was the son of Jacob Dircksz Huijser († 20 April 1717), a ship's carpenter and shipyard owner. Having the same profession as his father, Jan bought and sold various properties on the island of Wittenburg (nearby today's Central Station), where many private shipyards were located at the time. On 16 May 1701, he married Giertje Albers. The couple had children, all of whom died young. The last documented mention of Jan Jacobsen Huijser occurs on 25 November 1756, marking the sale of his parental home near the Haarlemmerpoort.

It remains unclear why the medal was made. Was it perhaps related to a ship's launching or some kind of family event? Unfortunately, no business archive of this ship's carpenter survives, with the first option therefore unverifiable. With respect to Jan's family, however, there are indeed a number of possibilities. In fact, it appears Jan had a brother, Lodewijk Jacobsz, who married twice. Lodewijk married his first wife, Geesje Barents Verhagen, on 22 May 1717, with the couple's first child, Cornelis Elias, born nine months after the wedding and baptized on 4 February 1718. Five years later, on 25 March 1723,

Lodewijk married his second wife, Aaltje Pieters van Meppelt. Two children were born from this marriage, Cornelis and Jacob, both of whom were still minors at the time of Lodewijk's death in 1743 and subsequently placed in the guardianship of their uncle, Jan.

Although archival sources provide no additional insight, Jan was clearly concerned about his brother's children's fate. Accordingly, it may very well be the case that, in 1718, Jan – expressing pride in the family's first offspring – commissioned the present medal as a godfather's baptismal gift. But then one problem remains: the silver medal clearly bears the date 2 April, not 4 February. The name of the month, written out in full, makes the substitution of the '4' for the '2' less likely. Could the engraver possibly have made a mistake during the medal's production, stemming from a date written in numerals? Or was Jan appointed as the child's guardian two months after the birth, at which moment he commissioned the medal? For now, it appears the truth will remain shrouded in the veil of history.

JP

LITERATURE:

Dirk Arnold Wittop Koning, *De penningen der Noord-Nederlandse ambachtsgilden*, Amsterdam 1978, no. 3.1
 Jacob Dirks, *De Noord-Nederlandsche Gildepenningen 2*, Haarlem 1879, pp. 272–76, plate 121.7–11

PROVENANCE:

...; sale, Veldhoven (Karel de Geus), 2 April 2012, no. 1111;
 purchased by Munthandel Verschoor, Strijen; ...; sale, Zürich (Nomos), 30 November 2021, no. 358; ...; sale, Amsterdam (Schulman BV), 28 March 2024, no. 1266; gift of H.B. van der Ven, The Hague, to the museum, 2024 (inv. no. NG-2024-37).



3 ANONYMOUS, Friesland (Wommels?)

Handball Trophy, 1756

Silver, diam. 4 cm

Inscription: WOM 1756

Obviously never actually played with, this silver handball was a prize awarded to the winner of a handball tournament. In the past, this game – ‘kaatsen’, as it is called in Dutch – was very popular in the Netherlands. The sport originated in France, from where it travelled north at some point in the second half of the fifteenth century, via the Southern Netherlands. As early as the seventeenth century, country estates and towns had their own specially constructed handball courts to host the games of the nobility and bourgeoisie; ordinary people played in the streets. There were many variations of the game. When played in the open air, for example, one simply hit the ball with the bare palm of the hand. Soon, however, rackets were introduced when playing on a covered court equipped with a net – a clear precursor of today’s tennis. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, interest in the game sharply declined, except in the province of Friesland. There handball would grow to become the ‘national’ sport and an important part of Frisian cultural heritage.

In Friesland, the tradition of honouring the winner of a handball match with a trophy ball likely arose circa 1700. Written sources indicate that, between 1750 and 1850, approximately two hundred silver and twenty-six gold handballs were awarded. Certain is that many more existed, as a great number of the competitions where such balls were awarded would not have been publicized. Only six of the approximately twenty surviving silver balls date from before 1760. The oldest known silver handball – from the Frisian town of Oosterend – dates from 1750. Not one gold handball has survived to the present day.

Engraved with the year 1756, this recently acquired silver handball ball dates from several years later than the oldest surviving ball from Oosterend. Surmounting the numbers of the year are the letters WOM, presumably an abbreviation of Wommels. This Frisian village has a certain reputation for holding handball competitions that dates back centuries, as we know that two silver Wommels handballs were already awarded there in 1753. The Rijksmuseum ball is richly ornamented. The top is adorned with an engraved scene with

two handball players, while the rest of the ball is embossed with decorative volutes, masks, flowers and vines, and the ‘stitching’ found on actual leather handballs. A table with drinking utensils probably alludes to the commissioner of the ball. In the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, local innkeepers typically provided these trophy balls, hoping to draw more customers by organizing handball competitions at their accommodation. The purchase price of a silver ball was easily compensated by the additional drink sales such tournaments generated. The winner was also expected to buy a round of drinks; when short of funds, he was obligated to return his newly won prize to cover the bill, leaving the innkeeper with a prize for the following event.

The present silver handball is a relevant acquisition for the Rijksmuseum, which wants to give greater attention to sports and leisure activities. In the last few centuries, these have grown in importance as part of Dutch culture. This eighteenth-century handball is an early example, representing an era when sports and games were far less institutionalized compared to now. Furthermore, the Rijksmuseum wishes to place greater emphasis on regions outside the Randstad. The Rijksmuseum, after all, is the museum of all the Netherlands. A handball is an excellent symbol of Frisian heritage, befitting this endeavour for more diversity in the museum’s presentation. And it was also viewed this way in the past: the visitor’s guide to the *Historische Tentoonstelling van Friesland* (Historical Exhibition Friesland), organized in 1877 by the Fries Genootschap to mark the association’s fiftieth anniversary, provides a good impression of what was then already seen as Frisian cultural heritage. Under the rubric ‘Prizes won in a handball or kolf match’, we find a silver ball carrying an image ‘with bottle etc., marked Woms 1756’. Clearly, these words can only be referring to the Rijksmuseum ball.

JDH/PB



LITERATURE:

Pieter Breuker, 'De PC-keningsbal en syn foargongers', in idem, *Lytse bal, grut spul: Artikels oer keatshistoarje en keatskultuer*, Leeuwarden 2018, pp. 284-92
 Johan R. ter Molen (ed.), *Fries Goud en Silver*, Bornmeer/Gorredijk 2014, part 2, p. 472
Gids voor de bezoekers der Historische tentoonstelling van Friesland, Leeuwarden 1877, p. 266, no. 6

PROVENANCE:

E.R. Matena; exhibited at the Historische Tentoonstelling van Friesland, Leeuwarden, 1877; ...; sale, Wommels (Veilinghuis Ald Fryslan), April 2013, no. 104; ...; sale, Wommels (Veilinghuis Ald Fryslan), 29 April 2024, no. 224, to the museum
 (inv. no. NG-2024-9).

- 4 *Letter of Marque Granted by Stadholder William v to Jan Pieter Jansen, in Tinned-Iron Skippet, 1781*
 With signature and seal of Stadholder William v, The Hague
 Parchment, wax, iron and tin, 37.8 x 47.7 cm, seal diam. 11.0 cm

For centuries, warring countries issued so-called letters of marque (or commission) to inflict maximum damage on their enemies. With such a letter, a nation legitimized and encouraged the holder to seize an enemy ship and its cargo, and to take its crew captive. Without this authorization, the 'prize' could be adjudicated as unlawful and forfeited.

On 6 October 1781, Stadholder William v, the then admiral-general of the Dutch fleet, granted the present letter of marque to Jan Pieter Jansen, captain of the *Zwaluw*, a Dutch snauw built in Amsterdam in 1772. Born in Saaksum, a village near Groningen, Jansen had been serving for several months as *uitlegger* captain of this ship (a small, auxiliary support vessel) with the Admiralty of Amsterdam, in which capacity he came to play an active role in the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780-84). The *Zwaluw* was not heavily armed, carrying only ten pieces. It was therefore highly manoeuvrable and capable of surprising larger and more cumbersome merchant vessels. From extant sources there is no evidence that, in possession of the present letter of marque, Jansen was successful in this endeavour.

What experience Jansen did have in privateering was as a victim. Up until early 1781, he was sailing the Mediterranean Sea on the *St. George* in his original role as a captain of Dutch merchant ships. On a return trip from Smyrna (present-day Izmir), Jansen and his ship – carrying a valuable cargo of 'bale goods' (cotton and mohair) worth 17,000 pounds sterling – were taken on 14 February at Civitavecchia by the *Fame*, a ship originating from Dublin. The owners of the *St. George* subsequently claimed the loss with the States General, placing the blame on Rear Admiral Jan Binkes, the Dutch navy commander of a small squadron stationed in Livorno, for failing to intercede against the English privateers. For Jansen, this unfortunate event would have marked a turning point in his career. Undoubtedly after a brief period of captivity, he joined the Dutch fleet in the role of captain, as explained above, but later took a position on shore with the Admiralty of Amsterdam. On 26 July 1795, Jansen died at his home on Grote Kattenburgerstraat near

the Admiralty shipyard, by then working as an assistant equipage master. The compiled estate inventory of Jansen and his widow, Marritje Rutgers, reveals little about his maritime career. Uncertain is whether the letter of marque was still in his possession at this time.

Original Dutch letters of marque are very rare, especially those preserved in the good condition of the present letter. Printed on parchment, the letter is signed by Stadholder William v and folded into a practical size. The names of the ship and its captain, along with the date, are handwritten and appear in their designated places. The great seal of William v, with tail attached, is protected by a contemporary, round tin skippet. The seal shows the crowned coat of arms of the Prince of Orange upheld by two lions rampant, around which is draped the English Order of the Garter bearing the motto 'HONI - SOIT * QUI * MAL - Y * PENSE' (Shame on him who thinks evil of it). Below the escutcheon is the device of the House of Orange-Nassau, 'JE MAINTIENDRAI' (I will maintain), with a text inscribed in a band lining the seal's outer perimeter: 'SIGILLUM * GULIELMI * D * G * PRINCIPIS * AURIACI * ET * NASSOVII' (seal of William, by the grace of God, Prince of Orange and Nassau). The letter of marque's remarkable condition can be attributed to a second (square) tinned-iron container in which it is held. This is perhaps the original encasement in which the document was carried on board the *Zwaluw*.

JTB/JP

LITERATURE:
 Unpublished

PROVENANCE:
 ...; sale, Amsterdam (Schulman BV), 27 March 2024,
 sale no. 378, lot. no. 1325, to the museum
 (inv. no. NG-2024-38).



WILLEM, by de gratie Gods, Prince van Oranje en Nassau, Graaf van Catzenbogaen, Vianden, Dietz, Spiegelberg, Buuren, Leerdam en Culenburg, Marquis van Veere en Vlissingen, Baron van Breda, Dieft, Beilstein, der Stad Grave en Lande van Kuyk, Ysselstein, Kranendonk, Eindhoven en Liesveld, Onafhankelijk Heer van de vrye en Souvereyne ErfHeerlykheid Ameland, Heer van Boreuto, Bredevoort, Lichtenvoorde, 't Loo, Geertruidenberg, Klundert, Zevenbergen, de Hooge en Laage Zwaluwe, Naaldwyk, Polanen, St. Maertensdyk, Soest, Baren en Ter Eem, Willemstad, Steenberg, Montfort, St. Vith, Butgenbach en Daasburg, Erf-Burggraaf van Antwerpen, Erf-Marichalk van Holland, Erf-Stadhouder, Erf-Gouverneur, Erf-Capitein en Admiraal-Generaal der Vereenigde Nederlanden, Erf-Capitein Generaal en Admiraal van de Unie, Ridder van den Koninkband en van den Zwarten Adelaar, &c. &c. &c.

Allen den geenen, die deeze jegenwoordige zullen zien of hooren leezen, salut; Doen te weten: dat wy, Ons betrouwende op de bekwaamheid, vroomheid, en experientie ter Zee van den Persoon van *Jean Pieter van der Meer*, denzelven gestelt, gecommiteert en geautoriseerd hebben, gelyk Wy hem stellen, committeren, en autoriseren by deeze, tot Uitlegger Capitein op het Schip *de Nieuwe Holland* geveende hem volkomen magt, authoriteit, en speciaal bevel, van zich met zyn voorrethene Schip te laten gebruiken tegeens alle Vyanden van dezen Staat en huns; Afschreuten, alle Zeerovers, en andere diergelyke, die de Navigatie en Commercie der Vereenigde Nederlanden, poogen te infestieren; Welverstaande, dat hy, onder pretext van deeze, niet zal mogen beschadigen eenige Kooptieden of Ingezeeten van de meergemelde Vereenigde Nederlanden, noch Vrienden van deezen Staat, of den geenen, daar meege dezelve in eenige Alliantie of Neutraliteit staat; tot welken einde hy gehouden word, zich te reguleren naar den Articubrief of Ordonnantie, hem by gemelde Collegie ter Admiraliteit *de Nieuwe Holland* albereids voorgeshouden, of nog voor te houden; gelyk meede alle Buiten of Prinzen, die hy zoude mogen komen te veroveren, behoort te leveren in handen van de Gecommitteerde Raden ter Admiraliteit van het zelve Collegie, of daar hy dezelve Buiten of Prinzen zal inbrengen, omme by hen behoortlyke kennisse genomen te worden, van de deugdelijkheid of ondeugdelijkheid der zelve, en behoortlyke verdedeling daar van gemaakt te worden, achterevolgende de Ordonnantie, daar op gemaakt, of alsnog te maken: Des word hy ook gehouden, in den Scheep-Krygsraad, voor zoo veel hy, t'eeniger tyd, daar toe beroepen zoude mogen worden, Regt en Justitie te helpen administreezen, conform den voorz. Articubrief en andere Wetten, of Ordres, het Stuk van de Krygsdiscipline te Water concernerende, albereits gearresteert, of nog te arrestieren, alles op den Eed, by hem in handen van de Gecommitteerde Raden ter Admiraliteit, daar onder hy resorteert, en dewelke daar toe by Ons mits deeze geautoriseerd worden, te praetereen: Verzoekende daar omme alle Koningen, Republiken, Potentaten, en alle andere Persoonen, van wat staat, digniteit, ampt en conditie dezelve zouden mogen wezen, den voornoemden *Jean Pieter van der Meer* voor Uitlegger Capitein op het voorsz. Schip ten dienste van den Staat der voornoemde Vereenigde Nederlanden, als voren, te erkennen, en hem dienvolgende alle faveur en goetse bevorderinge te betonen, het welk Wy jegens een iegelyk, naar zyne hooghheid, staat en qualiteit, willen verdienen en erkennen: Ordonnerende en bevelende daar nevens wel expresselyk alle Oversten, Lieutenant- en Vice-Admiralen, Capiteinen, Bevelhebberen, en voorts allen anderen, in der voornoemde Vereenigde Nederlanden dienst, en onder Onze gehoorzaamheid wezende, den meergenoemden *Jean Pieter van der Meer* voor Onzeff gebeden Uitlegger Capitein te houden en te erkennen, en hem, in het volbrengen van deezen zynen Last, alle hulpe en assistentie te verlenen: Des ter oorkonde hebben Wy deeze met Onzen Name onderteekent, en met Ons Zegel doen bekrachten. Gegeven *aan de Gecommitteerde Raden* den 6^{ten} October 1785.

W. van Oranje



HOOGHEID
DE GECOMMITTEERDE RADEN

5 ADMIRALTY SHIPYARD ROTTERDAM

Half Model of the Ship of the Line Kortenaar, 1795

Wood, paint, h. 39.2 cm, w. 129.1 cm, d. 14.6 cm

Inscription, on oval label: *1. Kortenaar 68st, GB 1795*

The present half model, constructed mainly from oak, shows the starboard side of the ship of the line Kortenaar, complete with frames, wales and (fairing) battens – without further planking – at an approximate scale of 1:48. The model has a round tucked stern and hollow counter, with no indication of the gunports – as is often the case with such models – taffrail or quarter-galleries. At the round aft end of the hull is a square-headed rudder. The model was built in agreement with the original construction drawings (lines plan and frames list) preserved in the Nationaal Archief in The Hague. The Kortenaar, a third-rate ship of the line, measured 180 feet in length, 48 feet in breadth and 21.5 feet in depth (approximately 51 x 13.5 x 6 meters) and was designed with sixty-eight ‘pieces’ (cannons). It was built in 1795 according to a design by Pieter Glavimans Jzn (1755-1820) at the naval shipyard of the Admiralty on the Maze (Rotterdam) and demolished in 1806 at Surabaya (East Java). The ship was the second ship of the line to be named after Egbert Bartholomeusz Kortenaar (c. 1604-1665), who succumbed during the Battle of Lowestoft against the English and was seen as a role model for the Dutch navy in recognition of his loyalty, courage and leadership.

The construction method and finishing of the present object clearly bear the hallmarks of the half models from the Navy Models Room, transferred to the Rijksmuseum by the Royal Netherlands Navy in the period 1882-89. Other corresponding details include the (suspension?) holes in the wall mount and the oval, black-painted nameplate bearing the ship’s name and year, executed in the style likewise found on other half models from the Navy Models Room. In fact, the museum possesses a second model of the Kortenaar, albeit with a different finishing (inv. no. NG-MC-268). The Navy Models Collection also contains other duplicates of ships, such as the Wrecker (inv. nos. NG-MC-269, -270). The existence of two half models of the same ship possibly indicates that other admiralty shipyards required access to half models built elsewhere, a practice confirmed by later documentation. Another possibility is that various construction

designs or design modifications were visualized by such means. In the case of the present model, the painted numeral ‘1’ on the label points to the presence of additional versions or copies.

Not all the objects in the Navy Models Collection were relocated to the Rijksmuseum: prior to 1882, various pieces had already been lost or were left behind at one of the naval bases. A number of the models ended up in other museums or in private hands, by all appearances so too this half model of the Kortenaar. At some point, the model entered the possession of Gerrit Hieter (1884-1969), ship’s carpenter and later sergeant torpedo maker employed at the naval base in Willemsoord (Den Helder). When passed down through inheritance to Hieter’s son, and later a granddaughter, the model ended up in Canada, where it was used to decorate a coat rack. This decorated furniture piece recently entered the possession of a private individual, who, after



removing this later addition, then sold it as a half model to the Rijksmuseum. Over the years, the model also sustained other physical damage: not only had insects eaten through the wood, but at some point, the ship's original white hull was repainted green. A subsequent restoration has now returned the half model to its original appearance.

JTB

LITERATURE:

Johan Marinus Obreen, *Catalogus der verzameling van modellen van het Departement van Marine*, The Hague 1858, p. 49

PROVENANCE:

Admiralty shipyard Rotterdam, 1795; ...; Gerrit Hieter, Amsterdam; his son Evert Hieter (USA), 1969; his daughter Gerda Dewitte-Hieter, Hamilton (Canada); acquired by Mark Reesor, Toronto (Canada), 2021; by whom sold to the museum, 2024 (inv. no. NG-2024-34).



6 STRUCK: HENDRIKUS DE HEUS (1764-1836), Amsterdam

Award Medal for the Vaccination of More than One Hundred Citizens against Cowpox, 1825

Gold, diam. 40 mm, mass 29.72 grams

In the eighteenth century, smallpox resulted in the death of tens of thousands of people. The tide turned in 1796, when the English physician Edward Jenner took a sample of the smallpox virus from an infected girl and injected it into a healthy boy. Although the boy initially fell ill, he recovered quickly. When Jenner attempted to reinfect the child, it turned out he was immune. After treating several others in the same way and with the same results, the vaccination was proven effective.

It would be several more years before the vaccination was widely accepted in the Netherlands. In 1808, Louis Napoleon, the then king of Holland, instituted a vaccination programme to highlight its value and necessity. As an additional incentive, every year he also awarded – per department (province) – three gold medals, each weighing ten ducats. These were bestowed on three physicians or surgeons who had vaccinated the largest number of people without charge. The *Commissie voor Geneeskundig Onderzoek en Toevoorzigt* (Committee for Medical Research and Supervision) in each department provided the vaccines and selected the winners.

The medal dies were made by Hendrikus de Heus. The date on the medal – MDCCCIX (1809) – marks the first year it was awarded. In 1814, sovereign William I determined that the award be continued unchanged. This was followed in 1818 by his decree abandoning the medal's valuation in gold (the ducat being a commercial coin, fluctuating with the price of gold) and replacing it with the Dutch national currency (50 guilders). The king's decision not only circumvented higher production costs stemming from the rising price of gold, but also ultimately resulted in a slight cost reduction: a ten-guilder gold coin, weighing 6.729 grams and containing 90% gold, versus the ducat, weighing 3.515 grams and containing 98.6% gold, resulting in a savings of 4.4 grams of fine gold per medal. A metal analysis of the present medal conducted by the museum (XRF-measurements, Joosje van Bennekom, 2024) revealed that the 1818 decree must have indeed had a net positive effect on the Dutch national treasury, as approximately 98% gold was measured (29.12 grams fine), which

indicates that ducats may have been melted down during the medal's production, with a total savings of around 1.5 ducats in gold.

The medals were awarded until 1834. The recipient of the present medal, awarded in 1825, was Bernhardus Bos (c. 1799-1864), son of the Nieuw-Beijerland surgeon Gerrit Bos. Bernhardus, a surgeon and obstetrician in Ridderkerk, lived with his family in the doctor's house on the Molendijk. The medal's obverse bears a full-bodied depiction of a cow – carrier of the cowpox virus – facing left, surmounted by the hovering, winged figure of Fame (with trumpet and staff of Aesculapius) and encircled by the inscription (translated from the Latin): 'fame now spreads across the world'. On the reverse, an oak wreath encircles an inscription with the recipient's name in punched letters – 'AAN B. BOS HEELMEESTER TE RIDDERKERK 1825.' (To B. Bos Surgeon in Ridderkerk 1825) – accompanied by an outer inscription (translated from the Latin): 'for the free-of-charge vaccination of more than 100 citizens in one year'. The majority of these medals, containing the precious metal gold, undoubtedly found their way into the melting pot. As one of the few surviving pieces, the present medal now graces the Rijksmuseum's collection as a testimony of the development of Dutch healthcare.

JP

LITERATURE:

M.T.C.F.N. Nahuys, *Histoire numismatique du royaume de Hollande, sous le règne de S. M. Louis-Napoléon, roi de Hollande ...*, Amsterdam 1858, pp. 174-81, plate 12.80

PROVENANCE:

Awarded to Bernhardus Bos, Ridderkerk, 1825; by descent through the Bos, Kolff and Helb families to H.A. Helb, Wassenaar; by whom donated to the museum

(inv. no. NG-2024-17).



7 MINTED: JOHANNIS PETRUS SCHOUBERG (1798-1864), Utrecht, '1853'

Reworked: anonymous, c. 2000

Kingdom of the Netherlands, William III, Half Guilder

Silver, diam. 22 mm, mass 4.99 grams

For coin collectors, quality and rarity go hand in hand. A rare coin even of modest quality can still obtain a fair sum, while a piece in mint quality of which millions exist can be virtually worthless. The mintage of this recently acquired half guilder from 1853 numbers no more than 1,711 pieces, with those of top quality countable on one hand. This makes the coin a highly desirable object for collectors.

The criminal world, however, never sleeps. Cunning forgers seize upon the passion – or greed – of the coin collector, a story likewise associated with the present half guilder. Purchased in good faith at an auction for the price of a few thousand guilders at the beginning of this century, the coin was undetected as counterfeit by both the auctioneer and the buyer. When offered again at auction in 2023, the half guilder was finally discovered for what it was – a forgery. For the sake of completeness, it remained listed in the sale catalogue but accompanied by a clear statement that it would not be sold.

The present coin was designed by Johannis Schouberg, 'first die cutter' at 's Rijks Munt (now the Royal Dutch Mint) in Utrecht from 1845 to 1852. At first glance, the silver piece appears as it should. The obverse bears a portrait of the monarch, with on the reverse the crowned coat of arms of the Netherlands accompanied by the marks of the mint master (sword, Herman Adriaan van den Wall Bake) and the mint (staff of mercury, 's Rijks Munt). The coin is not a cast – as is common with forgeries – and clearly originates from the official mint. It therefore comes as no surprise that the fraud went unnoticed for so many years.

In fact, the present coin is a much more common specimen from 1857-59 that looks identical, except for the year. It is one of the approximately 14 million that were minted in this period. At some later stage, likely around 2000, the last digit of the year was altered. A detailed examination reveals that the original digit has been filed away, with a numeral '3' from another coin – for example, an 1863 half guilder – soldered into the vacant space. The modification can be seen under a microscope:

sides of the digits, normally arising from the material displacement that occurs during production. Moreover, a detail photo shows there is a fraction of space between the coin's surface and the digit. Given the miniscule dimensions – no more than a few millimetres in length, with a height of less than one millimetre – this alteration is an impressive feat.

Another indication that the present coin is counterfeit is the absence of a faintly discernible numeral four beneath the five – a characteristic found on all other known genuine 1853 coins. This detail is the result of the 's Rijks Mint reusing an old die, whereby a '5' is superimposed over the '4' in the die. This modification of the year was necessary for King William III's visit to the Utrecht mint in September 1853, with the genuine coins possibly struck solely during his visit.

The present half guilder perfectly exemplifies a modern collector's forgery. The coin was donated to the Rijksmuseum because it illustrates the exquisitely cunning craftsmanship of the avaricious counterfeiter. It also demonstrates the pitfalls prone to those in the collector's world, serving as a reminder that they can never afford to let their guard down.

JP





LITERATURE:

Fritz Rudolf Künker and Laurens Schulman, *Auktion 393. Munten van Nederland en de Nederlandse overzeese gebiedsdelen sinds 1795: De verzameling Lodewijk S. Beuth*, part 1, sale cat. Osnabrück September 2023, no. 3528

PROVENANCE:

...; Sale Coin Investment 57, 2001 Sassenheim, lot 953; Lodewijk S. Beuth (1900-1982) Collection; donated to the museum by H.S.L. Beuth, Amsterdam, 2024 (inv. no. NG-2024-62).

8 SELOMOH DEL CASTILHO (1826-1914)

Portrait of Sophie Oostvriesland (1807-1882)

Paramaribo, 6 May 1857

Daguerreotype (copper), paper, leather; plate 80 x 69 mm, in closed etui 92 x 82 x 18 mm, in open etui 92 x 166 x 12 mm

Signed, inside of etui: *Daguerreotypist S. del. Castilho*Signed, on copper plate: *S del Castilho fecit. De 6 mei 1857*

On 6 May 1857, Sophie Oostvriesland sat to have her portrait taken in the studio of photographer Selomoh del Castilho, located on the corner of Heerenstraat and Kerkplein in Paramaribo, Suriname. Wearing a polka-dot dress and an angisa (folded headscarf), Sophie calmly gazes at the camera. In the photo, Del Castilho accentuated her various pieces of jewellery with gold paint. Although certain to have been brief, the moment was very meaningful. The existence of a portrait of an Afro-Surinamese woman from this period of Dutch colonial history is exceptional.

The costly daguerreotype was likely commissioned by Egbert van Emden (1799-1864) and his second wife, Abigael Joseph de la Parra (1811-1881). Sophie worked as a servant in their household on the Wagenwegstraat, no. B190. The names of Sophie and her mother, Jeanette, appear almost at the top of the list of the seventeen enslaved people recorded as 'property' of Egbert van Emden in the Dutch colonial government's first official slave register, compiled in 1830. This Jewish Amsterdam jurist arrived in Suriname in 1819. Seven years later, in 1826, he married Gracia de la Parra (1804-1827) in Paramaribo. At this time, Sophie and her mother were possibly already working in the Van Emden household. When Gracia died shortly after giving birth to her son, Evert Adolf, the twenty-year-old Sophie became the baby's nurse. For a period of ten years, Evert was in her care day and night, up until he was sent to the Netherlands for his education in 1837. Together with his second wife, Gracia's cousin Abigael de la Parra, Egbert van Emden fathered an additional sixteen children between 1829 and 1850. Even after Evert's departure, 'Sophietje', as the family called her, therefore always had plenty to do in the Van Emden household.

The present photo never left the Van Emden family's possession. The identification of the sitter as Sophie is based on the special place she held in the family and her ostensible age. According to the Dutch slave registers, Sophie

was born in 1807. The photo was therefore possibly taken to mark her fiftieth birthday. On 23 February 1856 Sophie was manumitted at the request of Egbert van Emden, thereby officially liberating her from slavery, a telling sign of her significance for the family. On this occasion, he determined that she be given the surname Oostvriesland, a reference to the historic region around the city of Emden, from where his forebears originated. Accordingly, at the time the photo was taken Sophie was a free person.

In 1882, Sophie died at the house on Wagenwegstraat, after having cared for and lived with the Van Emden family for more than fifty-five years. Abigael van Emden had passed the year before, preceded in death by her husband Egbert, who himself passed during a trip to the Netherlands in 1864. That Sophie's portrait has always remained in the possession of the descendants of Egbert and his son Evert illustrates the family's affection for Sophie. During a visit to the Netherlands in 1841, Evert received a letter from his brother that perhaps confirms these feelings were mutual: 'Dear Evert, your beloved Sophietje, and black brother and boss Adriaan and the other house servants ask me to send you their greetings.'

The descendants of Egbert van Emden and Sophie Oostvriesland eventually came into contact after the television broadcast of Ida Does's documentary 'Amsterdam, Sporen van Suiker' (Amsterdam, Traces of Sugar) in 2017. Sophie is the great-great-great-grandmother of Noraly Beyer, a former Dutch television newsreader in the Netherlands. The donation of the portrait of Sophie Oostvriesland is an important addition to the existing visual sources in public collections documenting Suriname's colonial history – a history from which the names and faces of many of those enslaved are absent.

ESN



LITERATURE:

Carl Haarnack, Eveline Sint Nicolaas and Garrelt Verhoeven,
Suriname in beeld: Fotografie in Suriname 1845-1975,
 Amsterdam 2025, pp. 35-36

PROVENANCE:

Egbert van Emden, Suriname; Evert Adolf van Emden
 (1827-1900), Netherlands; Helena Jacobina Losecaat Vermeer-
 Van Emden (1863-1958), Netherlands; Petronella Mathilde de
 la Hayze-Losecaat Vermeer (1899-1983), Netherlands; Helena
 Corbett-de la Hayze (1938), Heiloo; donated to the museum
 by the family De La Hayze-Corbett-Ploos van Amstel, 2025
 (inv. no NG-2025-19).

9 W.I.L. CRAMER, Paramaribo

Album with Drawings of Surinamese Fruit: Tamarind Tree, 1872

Paper, body paint, 357 x 433 mm

Inscribed, on the first page: *Surinaamsche Vruchten Lotje's Souvenir opgedragen aan Mevrouw M. v E.*Signed and dated on cover: *W.I.L. Cramer jr, 1872*

The album *Surinaamsche Vruchten Lotje's Souvenir* contains eleven loose sheets with drawings of Surinamese fruits and their corresponding flowers by W.I.L. Cramer Jr. and was dedicated to Mathilda Ida van Emden-Zaal (1839-1874) in 1872. The drawings are of an avocado, cashew, hibiscus, two types of mango, pomegranate, sapodilla, 'awarra' fruit, chili pepper, tamarind, and 'paramarkusa', commonly known as passion fruit. All are based upon drawings made by the Surinamese artist Gerrit Schouten (1779-1839) between 1823 and 1824.

Born in Paramaribo on 9 October 1839, Mathilda Zaal was the tenth child of the preacher Joost Zaal and his wife, Jacobina Helena Masman. During a visit to the Netherlands, Mathilda met her future husband Evert Adolf van Emden (1827-1900), also born in Suriname but on leave in the Netherlands. After marrying in Amsterdam on 19 June 1862, the couple returned to Paramaribo together. Evert would go on to hold various administrative functions there, including that of government secretary.

The present album is signed and dated 1872, a difficult year for Mathilda and Evert: in October, the youngest of the couple's four children, Anna Maria, died just a few weeks in advance of her first birthday. In July 1873, the family moved to The Hague. It was perhaps for this reason that the album of drawings was given, though this would then have occurred months before the family's actual departure to the Netherlands. The name in the title, Lotje, also raises numerous questions. 'Lotje' probably refers to the person from whom Mathilda received the album. No one in Mathilda's family, e.g. a sister or sister-in-law, bore the name of Charlotte, from which the nickname Lotje might be derived. Research into the couple's immediate contacts in Paramaribo and attempts to connect the name to the creator of the drawings also proved futile. Another possibility is that Lotje was an unlikely nickname for Mathilda herself; her second birthname Ida could be lengthened into Idalette of Idalotta. Whatever the case may be, the inclusion of forget-me-nots suggests the album was a memento to

someone (in this case Mathilda) parting ways for an extended period of time.

The cover of the album bears the name of the artist who made the enclosed drawings: W.I.L. Cramer Jr. This would invariably be Willem Johannes Lancaster Cramer (1851-?), listed in the 1891 Surinamese almanac as a drawing teacher in Paramaribo. Perhaps Mathilda received drawing lessons from Cramer. Today held in the collection of the Surinaams Museum in Paramaribo, Gerrit Schouten's original drawings, which served as Cramer's models, originated from the collection of the *Surinaamsche Koloniale Bibliotheek*, established in 1857. Unknown is whether the drawings were already part of that collection in 1872. Egbert van Emden, Evert's father, also had an extensive library, to which Willem Cramer possibly had access. Finally, Cramer's service as a witness at the civil registrar's office confirms he was friends with Hendrik Samuel Schouten (?-1893), son of Gerrit Schouten's brother. Accordingly, he could also have obtained access to Schouten's work through Hendrik. Regardless, there is no doubt that Cramer had Schouten's drawings directly in front of him, though his drawings are by no means exact copies after the original: he consistently drew a segment of the plant's stem, including the flower and the fruit, but left out other components. With the tamarind tree, for example, he copied only part of the branch and omitted the illustration of the separate fruit.

In the end, Mathilda's enjoyment of the album with drawings was short-lived. On 9 August 1874, she died at the young age of thirty-four in The Hague. In 2025, her souvenir of Suriname was donated to the Rijksmuseum, together with the portrait of Sophie Oostvriesland (inv. no. NG-2025-19) and a photo album of cityscapes by Selomoh del Castilho from 1868 (inv. no. NG-2025-20).

ESN



LITERATURE:

Clazien Medendorp, Gerrit Schouten (1779-1839): *Botanische tekeningen en diorama's uit Suriname*, Amsterdam/Paramaribo 1999

PROVENANCE:

Mathilda Ida van Emden-Zaal, Suriname; Evert Adolf van Emden, Netherlands; Helena Jacobina Losecaat Vermeer-Van Emden (1863-1958), Netherlands; Petronella Mathilda de la Hayze-Losecaat Vermeer (1899-1983), Netherlands; Laurentia Adriana de la Hayze (1925-2021), Netherlands; Hester Helena Thérèse Ploos van Amstel-de la Hayze (1958), Gouda; donated to the museum by the family De La Hayze-Corbett-Ploos van Amstel, 2025
(inv. no. NG-2025-21).

10 *Portrait of a Javanese Man*, c. 1890-1900

Carte-de-visite, 10.5 x 6.2 cm (card), 9.6 x 6 cm (photo)

A carte-de-visite is a small photograph glued onto a piece of cardboard. Cartes-de-visite were commonly made to be handed to someone as a means to connect. In this case, the mounted photo is of a man gazing confidently at the camera. The man sits with his legs wide apart on a chair in front of a hanging canvas, with his bare feet firmly planted on the ground. His powerful pose is reminiscent of Asian monarchs' portraits. He wears a uniform jacket of Western origin over a white shirt and a sarong and the hilt of a kris can be discerned behind his right shoulder.

Three oval stamps on the reverse of the carte-de-visite possibly reveal more about the sitter's identity. Two were made with the same stamp bearing the text 'Sastrohadiredjo, geb: Blitar'. The third, larger stamp in the centre reads 'Tan Tok Ping, Probolinggo'. Blitar and Probolinggo are towns in East Java, respectively in the south and on the northern coast. Sastrohadiredjo, according to newspaper and government almanac entries, was a Javanese man employed with the administration of the Dutch East Indies in and around Blitar between 1896 up until his death in 1931. He is possibly the person in the photo, either born (geb[oren]) or stationed in this area (geb[ied]). Sastrohadiredjo's obituary confirms that he began his career around 1896. Perhaps at this time he had the present carte-de-visite made, to be distributed in his network.

The administration in the Dutch East Indies was organized hierarchically, with the governor at the top. Beneath the governor was the so-called *resident*, charged with the administration of one specific region. Next in line was the *regent*, who as the local head exercised authority under the resident's supervision. Below this level, the colonial administration entailed various functions, including the *wedono* (district head), *desahoofd* (village head) and *jaksa* (public prosecutor). The men holding the two higher positions were of European descent, and in most cases Dutch; the others were Indonesian. During his career, Sastrohadiredjo fulfilled a number of these positions: from 1903, assistant *wedono*; from 1912, *jaksa*; from 1914, deputy head *jaksa*; and from after 1916 to 1931, *wedono* in a number of places in East Java. Nothing is known about other aspects of Sastrohadiredjo's life.

The name Tan Tok Ping, presumably that of the photographer, appears only a few times in local newspapers. In 1893, the Dutch government granted a Chinese merchant with this name a permit to transport coffee and salt in Probolinggo. That same year, he won the bronze medal for his arak (a spirit) at the *Pasaroeansche Tentoonstelling* in Pasuruan, in the category 'European and Chinese industry'. Three years later, he was declared bankrupt as a merchant in Probolinggo. This Tan Tok Ping, though involved in the mercantile trade, is nowhere mentioned in connection with photographic activity. According to Liesbeth Ouwehand, a specialist in the historical photography of Southeast Asia, many Chinese merchants in the Dutch East Indies sidelined as photographers after 1890. Perhaps Tan Tok Ping pursued photography as a side gig during his regular work or as a new source of income when faced with bankruptcy. This theory is tenably supported by the relative simplicity of the carte-de-visite itself, with the photographer's name merely stamped – not pre-printed – and what in the photograph appears to be a makeshift studio.

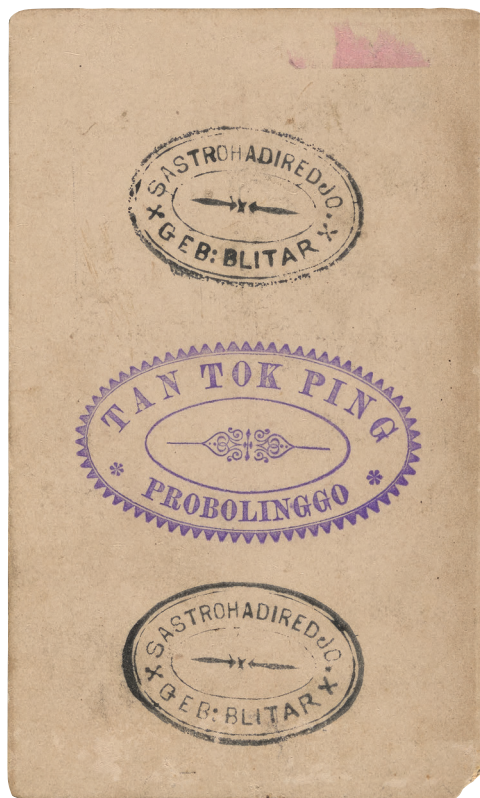
MH

LITERATURE:

Liesbeth Ouwehand, 'Chinese Photographers and their Clientele in the Netherlands Indies, 1890-1940', *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* 2017 (18), no. 2, article 3

PROVENANCE:

...; anonymous sale, Groningen (Klinkhamer), 21 februari 2017, no. 253, the entire photo album, € 50, to a private collector; by whom, this photo only, donated to the museum, 2025 (inv. no. NG-2025-57).



II ALETTA H. JACOBS (Sappemeer 1854-1929 Baarn)

De vrouw. Haar bouw en haar inwendige organen: aanschouwelijk voorgesteld door beweegbare platen en met geïllustreerden, verklarenden tekst. Een populaire schets

Deventer: Æ. E. Kluwer [1899], first edition

45 pages, 3 unnumbered pages, 1 unnumbered leaf with fold-out plates; h. 27 cm

'The sheer unfamiliarity of many, even of those learned, with the ingenious makeup of their own bodies has struck me on numerous occasions. Especially among women, I was frequently witness to the inadequate knowledge of the body in general and the structure, the location and the working of her reproductive organs in particular'.

Thus begins the book *De vrouw. Haar bouw en haar inwendige organen*, a concise, popular science book on the anatomy of the female body by Dr Aletta Jacobs, first published in 1899. Not only was Jacobs the first female student to graduate university in the Netherlands, she also actively dedicated herself to the women's suffrage movement, along with various other social causes. From 1879 on, she worked as a physician in her own practice on the Herengracht in Amsterdam, providing free walk-in consultations as well as information on physical hygiene, childcare and contraception.

With her book *De vrouw*, here represented by this first edition copy recently acquired by the museum, Jacobs wished to give women greater insight into their own bodies, in terms that they could easily understand. She placed primary emphasis on her belief that, barring a few minor exceptions, women's and men's bodies were not essentially different. Outside the medical world, this approach was by no means generally accepted; nevertheless, it was critical to Jacobs's emancipatory message. Interestingly, the opposite view prevails in the current discourse: slowly but surely, it has become clear that the female body is entirely different than that of the male, right down to the cellular and tissue level. An awareness of these differences is essential to providing women with the appropriate medical treatment and therefore a key element in today's striving for equality.

Jacobs's book consists of three parts. The first section covers nearly the entire body: skin, skeleton, muscles, circulatory and nervous systems, digestion, and the respiratory and urinary systems. In the second section, comparable in length, Jacobs discusses the reproductive organs and likewise addresses associated topics such as menstruation, repro-

duction and pregnancy. She also mentions the location and function of the clitoris, the 'tickler' (kittelaar) as she calls it, where 'the feeling of pleasure resides'. The book's third section comprises a model of a woman's body, terminating mid-thigh, with several layered, fold-out paper illustrations, showing the muscles, the circulatory and nervous systems, the skeleton and the contents of the thoracic and abdominal cavities. When these are closed, the reader sees a naked woman wearing a loincloth. Her hair is neatly pinned back, with her face also made up, complete with blush, red lips and eyeliner. When raised up, a paper flap showing the right breast reveals the underlying breast tissue. For Jacobs, these pictures of the anatomy of the female body were extremely important. In the foreword to the third edition, she discloses that these nearly had to be discarded due to cost considerations, a situation she described as 'wholly undesirable'.

In subsequent editions, Jacobs's various forewords provide insight into the book's reception. In 1910, she wrote enthusiastically: 'That this book is already on its fourth edition within a period of relatively few years proves that today's women and girls no longer wish to be uninformed when it comes to the structure of their bodies and the location and working of their reproductive organs.' She was also pleased that the publisher had managed to lower the price of this fourth edition, making it more affordable for women of limited financial means, for whom Jacobs professed her book was ultimately intended. In the end, six editions of *De vrouw. Haar bouw en haar inwendige organen* were published.

MH

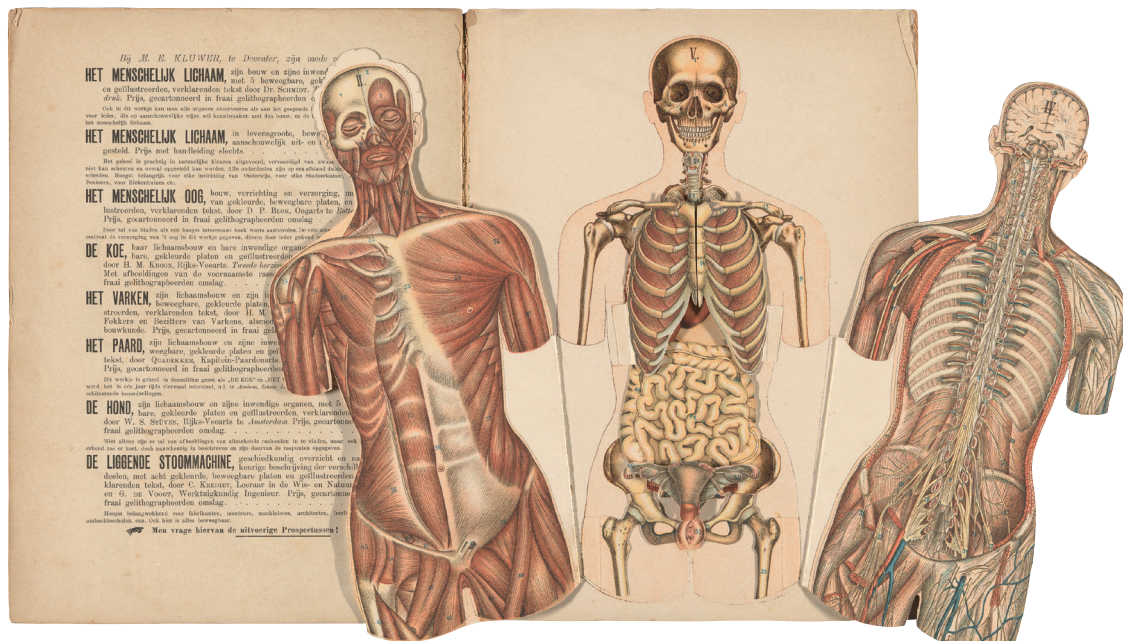
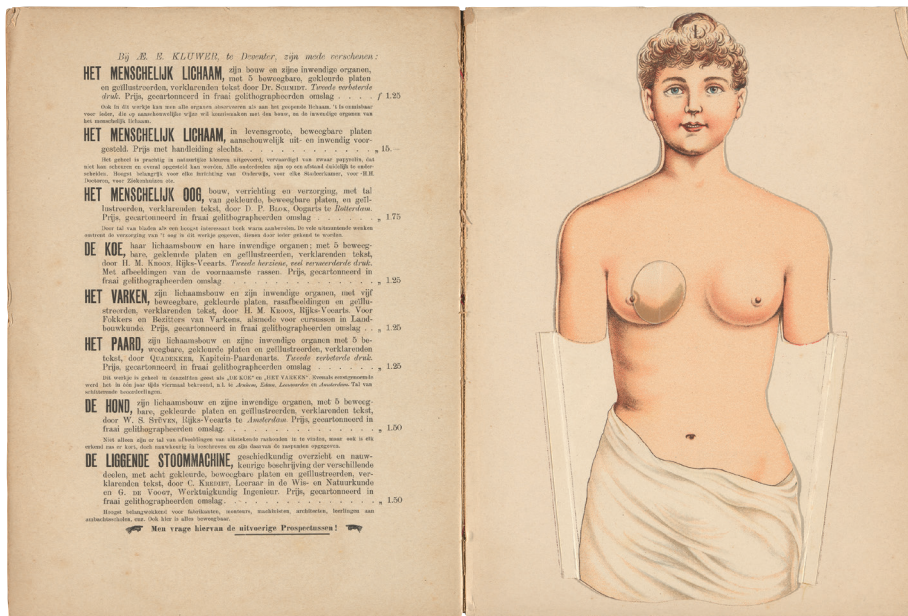
LITERATURE:

Rina Knoeff, "'De vrouw. Haar bouw en haar inwendige organen' – Aletta Jacobs' emancipatoire anatomie', www.historici.nl, March 2022

PROVENANCE:

...; Gedrukt en Geknipt Antiquariaat, Deventer; from which purchased by the museum, 2025

(Rijksmuseum Research Library 307 F 32).



12 ANTOINETTE (NETTY) DAGEVOS (Rotterdam 1930-1994 Amsterdam),
 ROBERT JASPER GROOTVELD (Amsterdam 1932-2009)
Face Mask, 1966
 Papier-mâché, paint, lacquer, 33.5 x 32.5 x 11 cm

The present mask is made of papier-mâché, a technique involving strips of newspaper soaked in wallpaper paste and laid over a plaster mould. In this case, the plaster mould is the imprint of a human face. The papier-mâché forms a wide border around the face part of the mask; both are painted with green and red paint. Holes have been cut out for the eyes. It remains a mystery whose face the mask depicts, but we do know by whom it was made: Netty Dagevos and Robert Jasper Grootveld, together involved in a romantic relationship from 1963 onwards and sharing a living place in Amsterdam. Dagevos also produced other casts of body parts. Thanks to her training as a sculptor at the Rotterdam Art Academy, she was highly proficient in producing good moulds.

Circa 1960, Robert Jasper Grootveld began to develop a highly idiosyncratic repertoire in Amsterdam centred on illegal street activism – for instance, he wrote the word ‘Cancer’ in chalk on tobacco advertising signs – and happenings. Grootveld targeted the false seduction of advertising and admonished against addiction. As a self-proclaimed ‘anti-smoking magician’, he took a bold stance on behalf of ‘the addicted consumer of tomorrow’. In 1965, Grootveld’s alliance with the anarchist youth movement Provo led to his becoming the public face of the rebellious, ludicrous ‘Magical Centre Amsterdam’, a slogan for the city he coined himself in 1962 and which he said had come to him in a vision. He would announce this in the street: ‘We need a hundred prophets in the magical centre of Amsterdam and they must turn Amsterdam into a truly crazy city where everything is possible.’

In 1964, when the bronze statue *Het Lieverdje* in the middle of Amsterdam’s Spui square entered the picture, and Grootveld’s happenings – held every Saturday at midnight – started to become public manifestations of the Magic Centre Amsterdam, Grootveld explained what was going on during a television segment: ‘Around this statue you have to create a circle, a magic circle, that you make continually wider; around this image, you have to start sacrificing images, pure images, so that other artists come with other

pure images, until it becomes an avalanche, a tidal wave that displaces other false images, the false images of the dope syndicates!’ Initially, it was Aat Veldhoen’s (1934-2018) rotaprints that were distributed around the city as pure images. Other images were added later, albeit on a much smaller scale than the Veldhoen prints, including face masks like the present one and, for example, papier-mâché imprints of Grootveld’s hands and buttocks, so that even more people could participate in the happenings. Grootveld’s biographer Eric Duivenvoorden writes that, in 1965, the artist was working with papier-mâché masks during performances for students, instructing them in ‘the mystery of the newspaper image’: wearing masks, they accompanied him during the incantations he was conjuring.

In the last ten years, the Rijksmuseum has acquired several rare fragments from Grootveld’s visual oeuvre. Among these are his scrapbook with photographs (inv. no. NG-2017-2), various documents from the period 1955-circa 1963, and Grootveld’s anti-smoking painting, titled *Klaas komt toch!* (1963, inv. no. NG-2016-7). Until recently, this painted face mask was hanging in the office of playwright and theatrical director Wilbert Bank, who purchased the mask directly from Grootveld in 1966 for two-and-a-half guilders. Before this, Bank had twice attended and participated in the artist’s happenings around the Lieverdje statue on the Spui, where he joined other attendees in crying out ‘uche uche uche’. As Banks recalls, ‘Those were memorable evenings’.

HS

LITERATURE:

Eric Duivenvoorde, *Magiër van een nieuwe tijd: Het leven van Robert Jasper Grootveld*, Amsterdam 2009, pp. 290-91

PROVENANCE:

Purchased from the artist by Wilbert Bank, 1966-2025;
 by whom donated to the museum
 (inv. no. NG-2025-9).



13 MARWAN MAGROUN (Rotterdam 1985)

Intimacy, 2023

Photography, 550 x 450 mm

Rotterdam. On a bed, in soft daylight, a couple sits close together. Tahar Romdhane and Amina Dhaoui met in Tunisia and married in 2003. Dhaoui holds Romdhane's arm and leans on his shoulder in a gesture of trust. Their eyes radiate calm, but also pride. Rarely are migrant elders photographed in this way. Romdhane and Dhaoui pose confidently, as if to say, 'We've always been here'. The photo was taken by Marwan Magroun as part of his six-part photography series titled *Intimacy*, recently acquired by the Rijksmuseum.

Magroun is a Tunisian-Dutch photographer and filmmaker, and from 2022 on, the official 'Photographer of the Netherlands'. Dhaoui is his mother, Romdhane his stepfather. Since becoming a full-time photographer in 2017, Magroun has created several groundbreaking projects in which migrants play a central role. His multimedia project *The Life of Fathers*, for example, explores the lives of single fathers with a migrant background through a photo series and documentary. For this project, he was awarded the 2020 Zilveren Camera Paul Peters Fotoprijs, among other awards.

With *Intimacy*, Magroun captures the intimate, everyday moments of elderly migrants. He focuses on people born elsewhere, who either by necessity or choice, came to the Netherlands and settled there permanently to raise children and grandchildren. Magroun's photographs open doors to worlds normally inaccessible to the Rijksmuseum. His subjects come from countries as diverse as Suriname, Indonesia, Cape Verde, Afghanistan, Georgia and Tunisia. Magroun photographed his sitters in the warmth of their own home environments: living rooms, bedrooms and working spaces. The intimacy of the photos reveals the trust between the photographer and his sitters. Some couples, like Auta Teofista Coronel-Évora and João Pires Évora, who met in Cape Verde on the island of Santo Antão, sit affectionately on their living room sofa. Naïda and Rasul Sarwary, co-owners of a specialty coffee and tea shop, are photographed standing hand in hand, welcoming in front of the fireplace.

In the Netherlands, migrants are often photographed in connection with themes such as integration, impoverishment, deprivation and

criminality – in other words, not in a loving way. This shapes and confirms the public perception of these groups, resulting in a void that Magroun wished to fill by photographing these couples on their own terms. With this, he aims to 'broaden the spectrum of images of the Netherlands', and in doing so, ensure that people with a migrant background come to be seen differently by their fellow countrymen. In Magroun's view, it is also essential that 'the descendants of first-generation migrants have images of their (grand)parents that do justice to how these elders see themselves.' Although commonly preserved in personal photo albums and family archives, such images were missing from the collection of the Rijksmuseum. With *Intimacy*, Magroun bridges this gap and offers an insider's perspective that transcends the traditional perspective. This enriches the collection, with the museum thus contributing to a more complete picture and a greater self-representation of various groups within the Dutch population.

GEH

LITERATURE:

'Fotograaf des Vaderlands Magroun ving alledaagse intimiteit migrantenouderen', in *One World Magazine* (2023), online

PROVENANCE:

Purchased from the artist, with five other photographs, by the museum, with the support of Fonds 1975/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2024

(inv. nos. NG-2024-74 to -79).



NG-2024-74

14 Design: MARC RUYGROK (Voorburg 1953), Den Oever
 Cast: ROYAL EIJSBOUTS KLOKKENGIETERIJ, Asten
Colonialism 2025
 Bronze, diam. 70 mm, mass 138.87 grams

Nearly ten years ago, the Vereniging voor Penningkunst (Dutch Association for Medallist Art) lent a large quantity of medals on long term to the Rijksmuseum. The loan comprised every single medal issued by the association since its founding in 1925. Recently, it was decided that the loan be turned into a donation, a transfer celebrated at the museum on 11 June 2025, coinciding with the centenary of the association's founding.

Medals are a manifestation of autonomous art: often confused with coins, they are not legal tender. From the time of its founding in 1925, the association has commissioned about two medals each year. Over time, a wide range of artists have thus become involved in medal art, many of whom have since made a name for themselves, including Chris van der Hoef, Gra Rueb, Piet Esser, Charlotte van Pallandt, Theo van de Vathorst and Louise Metz. Medals are by no means limited to those commissioned by the association: dozens of medallists are currently active in the Netherlands.

Each of the association's medals reflects the era in which it was made. Collectively, these medals represent not only developments in artistic style – art movements like Art Deco or the New Objectivity – but also changing notions of what a medal should look like. In the last one hundred years, the production method has changed, evolving from struck to cast medals, the techniques have become more diverse and experimental medal art has emerged. What was once simply a flat, round shape has increasingly become a hand-held sculpture: medals are now small, three-dimensional objects in all shapes and sizes, but always fitting in the palm of one's hand.

Each medal has its own theme. A number of the themes chosen in the past would now be considered unacceptable. These days, the glorification of colonialism and the exaltation of individuals once propagated as 'heroes' raises eyebrows, particularly when discriminating against minority population groups. The association's decision this year to reflect on its history – with its latest medal representing this retrospective evaluation – is therefore a praiseworthy move.

The medal in question – *Colonialism 2025* – is a creation of the artist Marc Ruygrok. The production process entailed making a wax model with a 3D printer (to which the stripes on the reverse attest). From this model, a mould was created with which the finished medal was cast at the bell foundry Royal Eijsbouts Klokkengieterij in Asten. Due to the combination of holes and the raised lettering, the medal proved difficult to make. Nevertheless, the result is impressive. The medal itself is a clear response to various association medals honouring the colonial system. The year '2025' in the title highlights the fact that the medal represents the association's current vision. Moreover, the unpatinated, gold-like bronze colour of the obverse is meant to resemble tinsel, symbolizing the superficial allure of colonial wealth. The holes in turn convey the age-old aphorism: all that glitters is not gold. They symbolize leg, arm and neck shackles, the existence of which arose from colonialism, racism and slavery. On the medal's reverse, the sheen has vanished entirely, with the black patination further emphasizing the dark side of colonialism.

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LITERATURE:

Paul C.H. Albers, 'Colonialism 2025', *De Beeldenaar* 49 (2025), no. 2, pp. 59-60
 Paul C.H. Albers, 'Het koloniale verleden van de vpk', *De Beeldenaar* 47 (2023), no. 6, pp. 257-61

PROVENANCE:

Purchased by the museum from the Vereniging voor Penningkunst, 2025
 (inv. no. NG-2025-46).

