



‘I cut from paper all that pleases the eye’: Revisiting the Life and Art of Papercut Virtuoso Elisabeth Rijbergh

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The art of papercutting occupies a special place within the Rijksmuseum’s highly diverse collection of works on paper. Where prints and drawings are created by applying ink or chalk to the paper, papercut art is produced by means of the removal of material: refined motifs that arise from the meticulous cutting and clipping of sections of paper. The resulting papercut composition was typically mounted on contrasting paper or textile, or, in the case of flat papercuts, pressed between two panes of glass set within a frame. Yet the discipline of papercutting was not solely limited to two-dimensional depictions. Its domain also included works conceived in three dimensions: paper dioramas – paper-cut scenes presented in layers, mounted in a framed, recessed space behind glass – and even three-dimensional objects.

In its paper collection, the Rijksmuseum holds works by renowned, lesser-known and anonymous Dutch papercutting artists active in the period that this art form enjoyed widespread appreciation, beginning in the seventeenth century and continuing well into the nineteenth century. Artists like Johannes van Achelom (c. 1640–1703/1711) and Johanna Koerten (c. 1650–1715) even achieved international renown, with their works drawing princely admirers and sometimes selling for prices surpassing those

< Fig. 1
ELISABETH RIJBERGH,
*Boy with Flower
Vase*, 1701.
Diorama of paper,
parchment and
feathers on a
black-velvet backing,
234 x 195 x 37 mm
(without frame).
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. BK-NM-267.

obtained for oil paintings.¹ Interest in the art form began to gradually diminish in the course of the nineteenth century, however, reaching a nadir in the early twentieth century, by which time papercutting had virtually disappeared from the public memory altogether.

Within this context, the present article focuses on the Rotterdam papercut artist Elisabeth Rijbergh (1672–1721), who, working from her art cabinet situated on the city’s prominent promenade De Boompjes, produced and sold highly refined paper compositions, ranging from pleasure gardens and warships to portraits and landscapes. Although highly respected in her own day, Rijbergh fell into obscurity shortly after her death. For many years, it was thought that her entire oeuvre had been lost. This situation has changed with the recent identification of a signed paper diorama – as it turns out, long registered under an erroneous name – held in the collection of the Rijksmuseum (fig. 1).² This remarkable find allows the first close examination of one of Rijbergh’s works and sheds new light on her working methodology, style and position within the art of Dutch papercutting.

The present article begins with an expansion of Rijbergh’s existing known biographical data on the basis of new archival findings, followed by a detailed analysis of the recently discovered dio-

rama, addressing matters of technique, material, theme and provenance. This analysis, together with the now more complete biographical context, will then be applied as convincing grounds for the near certain attribution of two related dioramas in the Rijksmuseum collection to Rijbergh. On the basis of these findings, a coherent picture of Rijbergh's cutting methods and the functioning of her art cabinet will be presented.

Elisabeth Rijbergh

Until recently, the life and work of Elisabeth Rijbergh was only fragmentarily documented. What was known had chiefly been learned through a number of contemporary travelogues.³ Supplementary archival research, however, now enables a far more detailed reconstruction of the course of Rijbergh's life.

According to the Rotterdam baptismal registers, Elisabeth (who also went by the name 'Lisbeth') was baptised on 27 November 1672.⁴ Her parents, Jan Pieter Rietberch (also documented as 'Jan Pieterz. Rijbergh') and Aefije Joris, married in 1661. Jan died before 1702; Aefije is known to have still been living in 1709. Elisabeth had two brothers: Pieter (1665-?) and Joris (?-?).⁵

The earliest known documented account of a person paying a visit to Rijbergh's art cabinet is recorded in Gerrit van Spaan's (1651-1711) *Beschrijvinghe der stad Rotterdam* (1698). Van Spaan describes Rijbergh as a gifted papercut artist, residing on Rotterdam's De Boompjes, near the Nieuw Oost-Indisch Huis (New East India House). Above the entrance to Rijbergh's residence, a sign hung inscribed with the following remarkable saying:

I cut from paper all that pleases the eye,
Or what our witty brain shows us in
imitation of art:
Even if bitter envy roars with jaws wide
open;
My art shall not come to lie in shifting
sands as a consequence.⁶

Van Spaan's description is more than just laudatory. He also recounts how Rijbergh once received a highly prestigious visitor: in 1695, Elector Palatine Johan Willem (1658-1716) reportedly presented the artist with a gift of four silver-gilt, lidded vessels – each adorned with the portrait of a Roman emperor – and a silver service bearing the elector's coat of arms, all in exchange for one or more works of papercut art.⁷ This anecdote attests to the considerable appreciation for and market value of Rijbergh's art.

Van Spaan furthermore explicitly praises the quality and diversity of Rijbergh's oeuvre, referring among other things to:

royal Warships and Yachts with a quiet
and a hollow sea; as well royal and
princely country houses such as Het
Loo, Honselaarsdijk and others;
furthermore trees, vistas and portraits
in flat and raised [form].⁸

But foreign visitors also recorded their impressions. The German man of letters Johann Burkhart Mencke (1674-1732), writing of his visit to Rijbergh's art cabinet on 8 August 1698, reports that 'Papier-Schnitzerin' Rijbergh (he calls her 'Elisabeth Rhyndaaers') cut entire battle scenes as well as portraits from paper, which she sold for amounts between 800 and 1000 guilders.⁹

The art connoisseur Zacharias von Uffenbach (1683-1734) is known to have made two visits to Rijbergh's art cabinet, in 1705 and again in 1710. He praised the artist for the precision of her figures, ships and flower still lifes with lace borders, which he described as 'gar schön gemacht'. During his second visit, Von Uffenbach viewed eleven framed works, among them a depiction of Het Loo Palace. He noted that there were only two new works since his previous visit: a view of Scheveningen and a herring catch. Noteworthy is his observation that the cabinet was 'billig zu bewundern',¹⁰

thus indicating that Rijbergh charged an (inexpensive) entrance fee, unlike another Rotterdam papercutter, Gillis van Vliet (c. 1643-1701), who practiced the art merely as a pastime and neither sold his works nor asked a fee to view them.¹¹ In the end, Von Uffenbach decided against purchasing any of Rijbergh's creations, deeming 600 guilders 'gewis gar viel Geld' for such a small piece.

Another noteworthy source is the account of one Charles Ellis, an English cleric who wrote of his admiration for one of Rijbergh's works when visiting The Hague in 1699:

a piece of Art, that of its sort I believe never was parallell'd, which is perform'd by one Elizabeth Pyberg, who cuts in Paper not only Towns, as Loo & Honslerdyke, but Faces to an extream likeness; She has done King William and Q. Mary better than any Limner I ever saw, and refuses 1000 Gilders for the pieces, it is so curious that I could not believe the Queen's Drapery not to be Point, till I had most exquisitely enquir'd into it.¹²

Although Ellis recorded the artist's name as 'Elizabeth Pyberg', both the content and the references to the double portrait of William III and Mary II, and paper-cut renderings of Het Loo and Honselaarsdijk, eliminate any doubt that Elisabeth Rijbergh is the artist in question. Ellis's account moreover suggests that work Elisabeth had produced was kept at this time in The Hague, possibly at the home of her brother Pieter.¹³

The portrait of the royal couple is again mentioned in 1707, this time by Joseph Taylor, a British traveller, who encountered the papercut work in Rijbergh's cabinet on the Boompjes:

At the Bombkeys [Boompjes], very neat fronting the Maese. I went to see the famous works in paper, representing King William and Queen Mary with their several palaces and their curiosities, which indeed are very curiously done.¹⁴



This description indicates that the double portrait had found its way back to Rijbergh's art cabinet, where by this time it was garnering notoriety among British visitors.

The appreciation for Rijbergh's work also resounds in later sources. The Zeeland biographer Pieter de la Rue (1695-1770), writing between 1721 and 1740, praised her cuttings in relief (*opwerk*), which he viewed as superior to the flat papercuts of her more famous Amsterdam colleague Johanna Koerten.¹⁵ This comparison emphasizes both Rijbergh's technical originality and her enduring reputation. The contrast between the two artists is evident, for example, in Koerten's *Portrait of Galenus Abrahamsz* from 1692 (fig. 2), recently acquired by the Rijksmuseum, a finely delicate, flat cutting unlike Rijbergh's more three-dimensional style.¹⁶

Fig. 2
JOHANNA KOERTEN,
*Portrait of Galenus
Abrahamsz*
(1622-1706), 1692.
Cutting, 204 x 182 mm
(without frame).
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-P-2023-114,
purchased with the
support of the
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Rijksmuseum Fund.

Koerten, though primarily known for her flat work, is likewise documented as having created dioramas (*verheeven*) – possibly with moving parts – though no examples of these are known to have survived.¹⁷ Koerten's renown was chiefly derived from her virtuoso flat papercutting and her entrepreneurial spirit: in the early sixteen nineties, she opened her own cabinet on the Nieuwe Dijk in Amsterdam, which served as an exhibition space and meeting place for collectors and artists. The younger Rijbergh would undoubtedly have been inspired by Koerten's successful model. Contemporary accounts nevertheless reveal that not everyone deemed Rijbergh's works superior: Von Uffenbach, for example, preferred Koerten's papercuts.¹⁸ These varying assessments qualify De la Rue's praise and point to recognition for both artists in the discourse on papercutting.

Notarial documents confirm that Rijbergh remained unmarried – a status consistent with terms like *dogter* (daughter) and *Jungfer* (miss) used by contemporaries when referring to her. They also offer insight into her international renown.¹⁹ A deed from 1699, for example, reveals her 'liberal gift' of two large and two smaller pieces to one Hendrick Michel, a 'comforter of the sickly' about to depart for the East Indies. Witnesses report that the cuts were carefully packed in wooden cases and stored in Michel's cabin, to be sold upon arrival in Batavia, where indeed one piece is documented as having been purchased by a local high-ranking tax official for the amount of 200 ducats (approximately 600 guilders).²⁰

Unfortunately, the transaction landed Rijbergh in financial difficulty. Michel had paid her partly in kind, embroiling the artist into long-drawn-out legal disputes with creditors, as confirmed by witness accounts from the period 1702–05.²¹ These debts she had largely repaid by the end of her

life. While her artistic practice failed to yield a lasting wealth, the above-cited travelogues confirm Rijbergh was able to sell her works for substantial sums and that she also derived an income from the entrance fees she charged visitors to see her art cabinet. Her cabinet on the Boompjes – a prestigious location, inhabited by influential Rotterdam families – suggests a certain level of prosperity.²²

The Fate of Rijbergh's Cabinet

On 21 September 1721, only nine days prior to her death, Elisabeth Rijbergh drew up a will, together with her brother Pieter. Adrianus van Nimwegen (c. 1680–after 1735) was appointed executor, with power of attorney to sell the estate of the surviving sibling.²³ Nine days later, on 30 September, Rijbergh was listed as deceased in the Rotterdam tax collector's register, described as an 'elderly daughter'.²⁴ Regarding her financial situation at the time, Rijbergh's will provides no more than scant information: a bequest of fifty guilders, awarded to two nieces and one Elisabeth Groenevelt, a former creditor. Remarkably, there is no explicit mention of Rijbergh's collection of papercuttings. Aware of the art cabinet's worth, Pieter would presumably have taken measures to ensure the works were excluded from his sister's estate prior to her death.

Several weeks later, on 17 October 1721, an advertisement appeared in the *Haagsche Courant*, in which Van Nimwegen offered the papercuttings of the deceased Rijbergh.²⁵ Consisting of fifteen works, large and small – 'depicting figures in various postures, landscapes, ships sailing at sea' – the collection was praised as 'a delightful work of art worthy of hanging in a prince's cabinet'. Only four of the works actually found a buyer.²⁶ In a determined effort to generate a greater profit, Pieter Rijbergh transferred the eleven

remaining works into the possession of Willem van Sassegem, an itinerant enterpriser from the Southern Netherlands. Unfortunately, the terms of the notarial deed, signed and dated 29 August 1722, were rather vague.²⁷ Shortly thereafter, Van Sassegem exhibited Rijbergh's works in the Amsterdam stock exchange building on the Rokin, specifically in the fencing school above the western gallery.

Upon learning of Van Sassegem's exhibition, Pieter Rijbergh demanded the papercuts be immediately returned. A heated confrontation ensued, with Peter accusing François Waart, the notary responsible for certifying the transfer, of robbery, calling him a 'thief of thieves' and threatening to 'cut him into pieces'. Refusing to return the works, Van Sassegem filed an official complaint at the Amsterdam municipal court, supported by the testimony of two witnesses.²⁸ In the end, a compromise was reached, allowing Van Sassegem to exhibit and exploit the eleven works for a period of one year, on the condition that he remit twenty

guilders per month and return the pieces undamaged.²⁹ After one year, the works were then to be returned to Pieter Rijbergh.

The fate of this group of unsold works is unknown, with no trace of them found in the archives after this time. The same applies to the works in documented sales, including those acquired by Elector John William of the Palatinate and the tax official in Batavia. Eventually, Rijbergh's work was dispersed or lost, and her name – once celebrated – soon faded from cultural memory.

The Discovery: Diorama of Boy with Flower Vase

Thanks to large-scale digitization projects in the museum sector, researchers and the public have far greater access to an ever-increasing number of artworks stored in museum depots, including those of the Rijksmuseum. When conducting a search in the museum's online collection database, Jan Peter Verhave, co-author of the present article, came across the



Fig. 3
Detail of *Boy with Flower Vase* (fig. 1): removed from its frame and seen at an angle from above. Lying on the table, next to the dog, are a pair of scissors and individual flowers.



Fig. 4
Detail of *Boy with Flower Vase* (fig. 1): removed from its frame and seen from above. Carpet cut from parchment, with the cut-out signature in the central medallion: 'Elisabeth Rijbergh fecit 1701'.

brief description of a paper diorama, attributed to one 'Elisabeth Aübergh', based on a name concealed in the papercutting.³⁰ A physical inspection of the work itself, however, quickly revealed it was clearly signed with the name Elisabeth Rijbergh. Also cut into the paper was the year in which the diorama was made, 1701, a date coinciding with the active period of the Rotterdam artist. In short, this digital discovery has led to the revelation of the first work attributable with certainty to Elisabeth Rijbergh (fig. 1).

The signed diorama entered the collection of the Rijksmuseum in 1875, when transferred from the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden (Royal Institute of Rarities), then housed in the Mauritshuis in The Hague, together with ten other papercuttings.³¹ This institution was dissolved in the same year, with its collection of curiosities, decorative arts and ethnographical objects subsequently distributed among various museums.³² Archival documents in the Noord-Hollands Archief show that the diorama entered the Koninklijk Kabinet in 1821, received as a donation by J.C. Andriessen of Middelburg, together with a second paper-cut diorama. In his accompanying letter to the director, Andriessen wrote: 'Should they prove unsatisfactory, then at least the frames, which are bone dry, will burn beautifully.'³³ Currently, the provenance of the diorama prior to its donation is still unknown.

After its recent discovery, the diorama – which had never been exhibited since its transferral to the Rijksmuseum's depot in 1875 – was restored and thoroughly examined. The fragile condition required the opening of the original frame for conservation purposes, enabling close examination of the work (fig. 3). This yielded valuable insights into Rijbergh's technique, use of materials, style and subject matter. It also brought previously hidden details to light.

The diorama's paper-cut scene shows a young boy standing next to a table on which rests a lush, towering bouquet of flowers in an elegant vase. The disproportionately large bouquet evokes associations with seventeenth-century prints of floral still lifes and a flat cutting by Gillis van Vliet.³⁴ Perching on the boy's nearest arm is a small land fowl, with which he tries to draw the attention of an inquisitive Kooikerhondje that has jumped up onto the table. The interaction between the three actors – child, bird, dog – brings a lively, playful dynamic to the scene. Moreover, a paper-cut pair of scissors lying on the table betrays that the boy has just committed a small, mischievous infraction, confirmed by the presence of a few individual flowers evidently cut from the bouquet. Framed by curtains, akin to a stage decor, the scene has a distinctly theatrical character.

With technical mastery, Rijbergh ingeniously transforms her paper medium into a convincing representation of

luxurious fabrics. The clothing of the boy, for example, is created by taking carefully shaped pieces of paper and elegantly folding them around his flat, two-dimensional body. Delicately cut floral tendrils adorn his attire, finished with a subtly perforated paper collar, in imitation of luxurious brocade and lace. Rijbergh applies a similar technique to evoke the tactility and texture of an opulent, damask tablecloth covering the table, creating a decorative vine motif achieved by means of roughening, scratching and embossing the paper. Emblazoned on the tablecloth's front is a highly ornate representation of a family coat of arms, upheld by two putti (fig. 5). Along the tablecloth's border, Rijbergh cut and perforated the paper, producing a lace-like floral pattern. This detail brings to mind Charles Ellis's remark in admiration of Rijbergh's work: 'It is so curious

that I could not believe the Queen's Drapery not to be Point', specifically referring to costly needlepoint lace of the seventeenth century.³⁵

The carpet covering the 'floor' of the depicted scene – an element cut from one sheet of paper – testifies to Rijbergh's great mastery of the refined, two-dimensional art of papercutting as practiced by contemporaries like Koerten and Van Vliet. Gracefully intertwining vines encircle three medallions, each bearing a paper-cut inscription. In the centre medallion, one finds the artist's signature: 'Elisabeth Rijbergh fecit 1701'. The two outer medallions hold the following verse: 'How shall I rightly, after love and duty/ greet you with this small gift' (fig. 4).³⁶ However, Rijbergh breaks with past conventions by assigning the flat cutting a functional role in a three-dimensional setting – introducing an innovative twist to papercutting.

Fig. 5
Detail of Boy with
Flower Vase (fig. 1):
tablecloth and family
coat of arms.



As Van Spaan indeed observed, Rijbergh worked both ‘in the flat and in the raised’.³⁷ In this diorama, one encounters both techniques. The whole is constructed from individual, separately cut elements – each conceived and executed as independent pieces – only later assembled into a composition. Unlike flat work, typically executed from a single sheet of paper, Rijbergh’s method gave her greater control, as it allowed her to rework separate elements, reducing the risk of error. The method is highly akin to that applied by Van Vliet in a recently discovered diorama from 1681.³⁸ The technical similarity of the two dioramas suggests that Rijbergh may have found inspiration in Van Vliet’s flat cuttings as well as his dioramas.

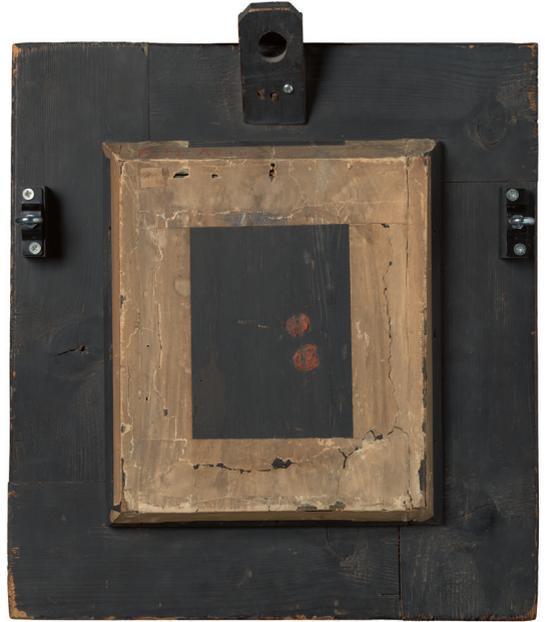
Nearly everything in the scene is cut, carved or modelled in paper; only in a few places have additions been made with draughting implements. The putti’s faces are drawn in pen and ink; the boy’s face, that of the dog, the grotesque heads on the flower vase and the coat of arms are rendered in black and brown chalk. The boy’s face,

with its characterful expression, is particularly striking. A pronounced degree of three-dimensionality occurs in various elements, like the dog that protrudes from the picture plane, thanks to the addition of its parchment ears and paws. Other materials are used to enhance the overall *trompe-l’oeil* effect: real feathers complete the boy’s hair and hat; also, the dog’s fur is made of soft down. Other details include the curtains, gathered with braided rope used for the tiebacks with tassels meticulously cut from paper.

The papercut scene is mounted on a black-velvet backing, which in turn is affixed to a laminated-paper base. The reverse is covered with blue paper. Above the bottom edge is a plateau of folded paper, painted black, attached to the whole by means of glue and sewn with thread (fig. 6). The boy stands on a separate, smaller plateau of unpainted paper. The curtains and the flower vase have been sewn to the velvet-covered base, likewise with thread. These constructions are in keeping with how the whole has been fitted into its concave-profiled frame

Fig. 6
Detail of *Boy with
Flower Vase* (fig. 1):
side view without
frame.





with a pinewood core (fig. 7).³⁹ Veneered in walnut, the frame has a profile comprising four integrated parts: a narrow inner edge, slightly convex in form; a wide, rising concave profile; a flat ledge; and a wide, slightly convex outer edge. The back of the frame is recessed to accommodate the cutting's relief. Black-velvet fabric, like the background of the diorama, lines all four sides of the frame's interior. The original wooden mounting hook remains intact (fig. 8).⁴⁰ The precision of the fit and the matching finishing of the frame's interior indicate that the cutting was made to fit the frame, with Rijbergh likely to have added the finishing touches herself.

The paper used for the cutting has discoloured, now a noticeable yellow-brown. This discolouration is less pronounced in those areas unexposed to light, such as the curtain behind the boy, pointing to a prolonged exposure to light. Several details display virtually no discolouring, and as a result, stand out sharply. As revealed by material-technical research, these areas of white contain collagen, indicating that they

were made with parchment.⁴¹ These include the boy's limbs, the dog's body, the coat of arms on the tablecloth's front, and the carpet with its carved medallions. Today, the paper and parchment can clearly be distinguished – a result of the aging process. Unclear is why two different materials were used. Since the colour difference is certain to have arisen with the passing of time, considerations of an aesthetic nature can be deemed unlikely. Conceivably, Rijbergh may deliberately have chosen parchment, a material firmer than regular paper, for elements meant to project from the background, with the latter more suitable for conveying softer forms, e.g. the draperies and other textile elements.

The original owners of the present papercutting can be identified by the family coat of arms adorning the tablecloth front (fig. 5). The coat of arms is vertically divided, showing: on the left, a sixteen-spoke wheel, emblem of the Hogendorp family in Rotterdam, and on the right, three ram's heads, referring to the Roosmale family.⁴² In 1701, only one married couple in Rotterdam bore

Fig. 7
Black Profiled Frame
with Diorama: Boy with
Flower Vase, c. 1701.
Veneered wood
and glass,
447 x 406 x 90 mm
(outer dimensions).
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. SK-L-7065.

Fig. 8
Reverse of Black
Profiled Frame (fig. 7).

this combination as its coat of arms: Willem van Hogendorp (1656/57-1733) and Wendelina Roosmale (1658-1711), married in 1689. Van Hogendorp was a director of the Rotterdam Chamber of the Dutch East India Company, known to have paid regular visits to the Nieuw Oost-Indisch Huis on the Boompjes, near Rijbergh's studio. It is therefore very likely that the Hogendorp-Roosmales commissioned the present diorama, with the depicted boy probably being their son Diederik Willem (1696-1761), then five years of age. The prominent position of the family coat of arms suggests the diorama entered private ownership directly after its making and was therefore never exhibited in Rijbergh's cabinet during her lifetime or exhibited in Amsterdam after her death.

The floral diorama with the boy serves as a physical manifestation of the admiration of contemporaries for Rijbergh's work, as recorded in travelogues. What previously existed only in words can now be experienced by the twenty-first-century beholder. Inscribed with the year of its making, cut into the paper, the present work sheds light on a specific moment in the artist's career, providing a rare, tangible benchmark in what otherwise remains a largely unknown oeuvre. By 1701, then twenty-nine years of age, Elisabeth Rijbergh had already established herself on the Rotterdam Boompjes, where she received her admirers. The technical refinement of the diorama's execution and its well-conceived composition reveal a confident, experienced paper-cut artist, in full mastery of her medium.

Two Other Dioramas in Light of the Rediscovered Work

Finding the signed diorama prompted a renewed effort to seek out other works possibly by Rijbergh's hand within the collections of the Rijksmuseum and other Dutch institutions. Two paper dioramas in the Rijksmuseum collection were the only works identified that

display noteworthy commonalities in style, technique and material with the signed diorama. Both are moreover housed in similar wooden frames; one of the works shares the same provenance. For a more in-depth comparison and much-needed conservation treatment, the two dioramas in question were likewise removed from their frames in the conservation studio. Neither is signed or dated. Yet considering the visual consistency of the paper-cuts, the form of presentation in deep, black frames, and finally, the shared history of provenance, an attribution to Rijbergh is highly plausible, albeit without verifiable proof.

The first of these two dioramas – donated by J.C. Andriesen together with Rijbergh's signed diorama to the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden in 1817 – depicts a spring or summer landscape filled with flora and fauna (fig. 9).⁴³ At the foot of a hilltop castle, a stream winds its way through trees in which birds are nesting; a monkey,

Fig. 9
Attributed to
ELISABETH RIJBERGH,
*Landscape with
Animals*, c. 1695-1700.
Diorama of paper and
parchment on black
silk, 236 x 203 x 40 mm
(without frame).
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. BK-NM-268.





squirrel, marten and peacock can be discerned moving in the branches. In the left foreground, goats and rabbits can be seen frolicking in the grass. Yet this otherwise idyllic scene is disturbed by a threatening element in the background: a wolf being held at bay by a shepherd and his dog (fig. 10). his subtle build-up of tension in an ostensibly serene tableau conveys a narrative sensitivity that also characterizes the signed work by Rijbergh.

The themes may differ, but this diorama has several elements in common with the signed work. The Kooiker and the land fowl with which the young boy plays in the floral diorama find their counterparts in another dog front centre and a peacock, elaborately executed with each of the feathers of its full, fan-shaped tail individually cut from paper (fig. 11). In its technique, the work also closely echoes the working method Rijbergh applied in the signed diorama: the stream is formed from folded and modelled paper, comparable to the boy's attire and the curtains. Grass, wildflowers and tree branches are cut and clipped with the same precision as the floral elements in the bouquet. The dog, though not covered

in feathers, is similarly cut from parchment, with an eye drawn with pen and ink and separately attached, paper-cut ears. Similarly, the majority of the birds are three-dimensional, possessing loose wings that protrude outwards and suggest movement.

Yet this landscape diorama also contains techniques not found in the signed work: battlements made by folding the paper, perforated patterns as a brick motif, flowers with blind embossing, and flakes of scraped paper meant to imitate moss and goat hair. Again, paper and parchment were used. The paper has sustained heavily discolouring: as a result, the white parchment of the dog in the foreground now stands out more strongly than was originally intended. The diorama is also very similar in its construction: a plateau cut from sturdy paper has been sewn with thread to a cardboard backing, in this case covered with black silk (fig. 12). The frame – with stained black walnut veneer – is constructed in essentially the same manner as that of the signed diorama, made from a similar wood type and with a similar profiled moulding and a recessed space to accommodate the relief; it even has the original

Fig. 10
Detail of *Landscape with Animals* (fig. 9): shepherd, dog and wolf.

Fig. 11
Detail of *Landscape with Animals* (fig. 9): peacock.



Fig. 12
Detail of *Landscape with Animals* (fig. 9):
side view without frame.

Fig. 13
Black Profiled Frame with Diorama: Landscape with Animals, c. 1700.
Veneered wood and glass, 451 x 412 x 117 mm.
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-L-7066.

Fig. 14
Reverse of *Black Profiled Frame* (fig. 13).

wooden mounting hook, identical to that of the other diorama frame (figs. 13, 14).⁴⁴

Just as with the signed work, the frame's interior has been finished with the utmost care, in such a way that the papercutting visually continues in the frame. Additionally, the frame is actively integrated in the composition: attached to the 'ceiling' of the frame is a strip of paper from which a paper bird hung. During the conservation phase, this bird, which at some point had fallen into the foreground, was returned to its proper place. It now hovers once again above the treetops, reinforcing

the illusion of movement and depth. Although no contemporary source refers to this landscape diorama explicitly, early descriptions mention the importance of landscapes within Rijbergh's oeuvre.⁴⁵

Unlike the first, reference is perhaps indeed made to the second of the two newly attributed dioramas in the documentary sources. Its larger size and the grander scope of its composition, depicting the scene of a palace and a garden abundant with animals, distinguishes it from the others (fig. 15). In the palace forecourt, a pelican and a peacock can be seen, while playful



Fig. 15
 Attributed to
 ELISABETH
 RIJBERGH,
Honselaarsdijk Palace,
 in or before 1698.
 Diorama of paper
 on black-painted silk,
 232 x 314 x 41 mm
 (without frame).
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum,
 inv. no. BK-NM-265.



monkeys climb the facade. In the garden, a crane, chickens and peacocks with peachicks wander about. Squirrels and birds fill the trees, a butterfly adorns the fence and crickets hide in the foliage. Monumental trees behind the palace heighten the impression of a vast princely domain. Early accounts, such as those of Gerrit van Spaan and Charles Ellis from 1698, mention having seen papercut representations of the palaces Het Loo and Honselaarsdijk in Rijbergh's art cabinet. The building in this second diorama greatly resembles print depictions of the latter, Honselaarsdijk, Stadholder Frederick Hendrick's hunting lodge near Naaldwijk (fig. 16).⁴⁶ A remarkable agreement can especially be observed in the building's main facade, with its large windows and a pediment surmounted by three statues. The wide stone staircase, lined with life-size sculptures on either side, displays evident parallels. At the same time, the maker has also taken creative liberties: the facades are overgrown with

vines, while the side wings recall the open galleries on the palace's rear facade, as opposed to the building's actual side wings that one might expect, thus creating a more dynamic composition (fig. 17).⁴⁷ The multitude of animals in the garden, in fact, closely aligns with the historical context: Honselaarsdijk Palace was known for its menagerie of exotic, non-indigenous animals.⁴⁸

Likewise apparent in this diorama, as with the signed work, is the technical mastery of paper. Here too, one observes a rich variety of technique, involving cutting, scratching, perforating, stamping, modelling and scraping (fig. 18). Several figures correspond to elements from the landscape with the shepherd, such as a marten made from a double-folded piece of paper with an incised back and the peacock with a tail made of individually cut feathers (figs. 11, 19). As in Rijbergh's signed diorama, here human figures are also dressed in attire cut from paper. The raiment of a man standing beneath the gallery on the right includes a striking,

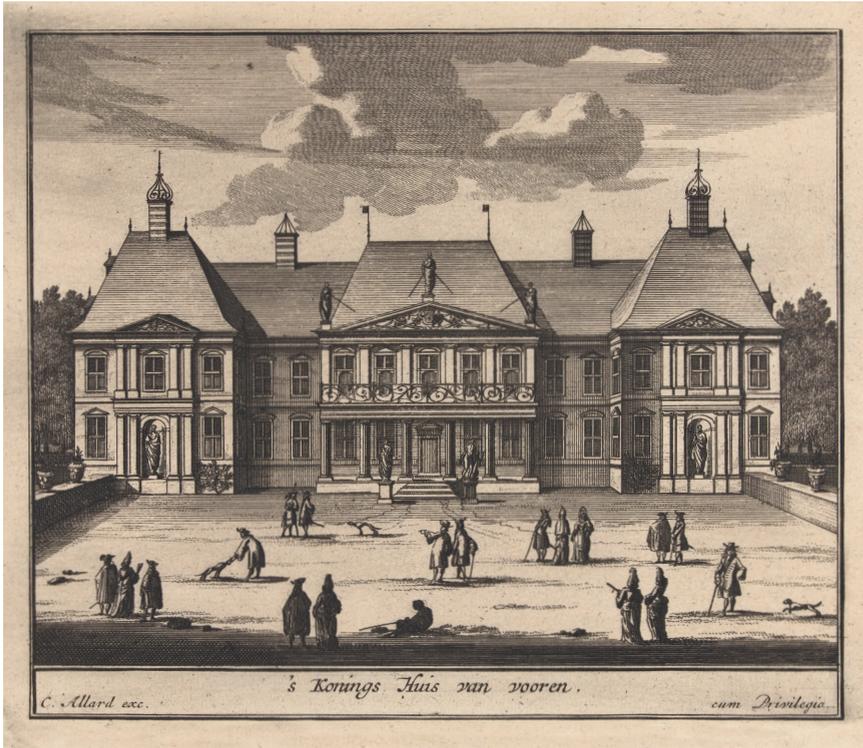


Fig. 16
 CAREL ALLARD,
 Honselaarsdijk Palace
 from the Front
 (series: Hollands
 Lustpark besluitende
 zyn Britannische
 majesteits hof-gebouw
 tot Honslaarsdyk),
 1689-1702.
 Etching and engraving,
 60 x 190 mm.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum,
 inv. no. RP-P-1911-2897,
 gift of M. Onnes
 van Nijenrode.



Fig. 17
 CAREL ALLARD,
 Honselaarsdijk Palace
 from the View of the
 Inner Courtyard of
 Honselaarsdijk Palace
 (series: Hollands
 Lustpark besluitende
 zyn Britannische
 majesteits hof-gebouw
 tot Honslaarsdyk),
 1689-1702.
 Etching and engraving,
 60 x 190 mm.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum,
 inv. no. RP-P-1911-2893,
 gifts of M. Onnes
 van Nijenrode.

Fig. 18
Detail of
Honselaarsdijk
Palace (fig. 15)
photographed in
raking light: palace
facade with vines.



Fig. 19
Detail of
Honselaarsdijk
Palace (fig. 15):
peacock.



ornate lace collar and a separately modelled waistbelt from which a sword hangs. On the left, a man holding a whip wears a hat and a jacket with turned-up coat fronts (fig. 20). Two additional standing figures can be seen between the arches. Also in this case, the paper is heavily discoloured due to prolonged exposure to light.

Like the first, the use of drawing materials is minimal in this second diorama. The figures' eyes are depicted with no more than small perforations and an occasional dot in brown ink. Inside the palace, one discerns a painted blue-and-white tile floor. On its surface, a scene unfolds, typical of Rijbergh's humorous narrative style: with broom in hand, a woman chases away mice that were feasting on delicacies on the dressed palace tables (fig. 21). Those particularly attentive will not fail to notice a sleeping figure lying on a bed, visible through a window on the top floor.

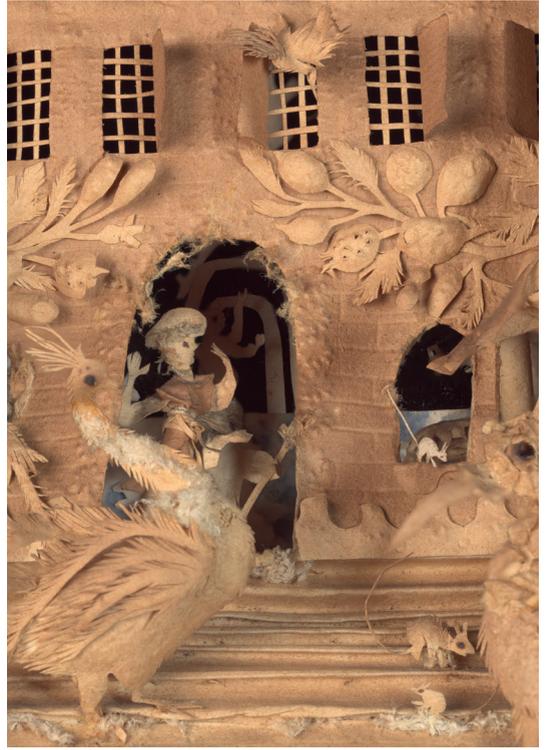


Fig. 22
Detail of Honselaars-
dijk Palace (fig. 15):
side view without
frame.

For the casual observer, such meticulously executed details remain largely unnoticed; when the cutting is in its frame, some are even entirely concealed from view. The hidden details underscore a working method characteristic of all three dioramas: a scene

built up step by step with individual elements. The construction of this last diorama is very much like that of the other two dioramas: a thick cardboard base, covered with black textile, to which a plateau of sturdy paper is attached by means of sewing thread (fig. 22).



< Fig. 20
Detail of
Honselaarsdijk
Palace (fig. 15):
man with whip.

Fig. 21
Detail of
Honselaarsdijk
Palace (fig. 15):
woman standing in
the door opening.

Fig. 23
Black Profiled Frame
with Honselaarsdijk
Palace, in or before
1698.
Veneered wood
and glass,
446 x 524 x 105 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. SK-L-7064.

Fig. 24
Reverse of Black
Profiled Frame
(fig. 23).

The black, wooden frame, with its deeply recessed construction and wooden mounting hook, is virtually identical to the frames described above (figs. 23, 24).⁴⁹ And here too, the artist added a finishing touch, hanging two small birds from the ‘ceiling’ of the frame.⁵⁰

A paper label on the back of the frame of this third diorama bears the following inscription: ‘Maria van Assendelft / widow of van der Lely / age 76 years / 1714.’⁵¹ Maria van Assendelft (1638-1731) was the wife of Adriaen van der Lely (1630-1703), an influential official and cashier with the VOC. Towards the end of his career, Van der Lely was working at the VOC office on the Rotterdam Boompjes, nearby Rijbergh’s cabinet. That Maria would have encountered the artist’s work there is most plausible. As the label suggests, the diorama was in her possession as early as 1714. The diorama remained in the Van der Lely family up until J. van der Lely, Maria’s great-grandson, donated it to the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden in the nineteenth century.⁵² Within the family, the diorama was long thought to have been made by Maria herself. Given the strong agreement between this diorama and the other two dioramas, however, the attribution to Rijbergh is tenable. Together, the three dioramas demon-

strate an exceptional mastery of paper and a keen sense of narrative composition.⁵³ Whether concerning a floral still life, a threatening landscape or a palace garden full of animals, one encounters the same attention to detail, use of materials and effect of spatial depth. Only one work is signed, but the visual and technical consistency underscores the likelihood that all three dioramas were produced by one and the same maker.

Conclusion

The discovery of Elisabeth Rijbergh’s signed diorama marks an important starting point in the research of this largely forgotten artist. With her name until recently preserved only in historical travelogues and no surviving tangible work to substantiate her once-acclaimed reputation, the floral still life papercut with boy and dog – together with the landscape and the ‘Honselaarsdijk diorama’ – constitutes a concrete, richly detailed confirmation of Rijbergh’s artistry. Based on stylistic, material and technical similarities – and particularly the strong agreement in the construction and original frames – the two previously anonymous paper-cut works from the Rijksmuseum collection can now be attributed to Rijbergh with virtual certainty.



Rijbergh's hand is recognizable by her meticulous technique, her sparing use of colour, the subtle use of parchment and her playful incorporation of illusion and humour. Each paper-cut scene requires careful observation, and rewards the viewer with manifold narrative layers and a treasure trove of hidden discoveries. The signature on the floral still life serves as a reference point for the attribution of the other two works, while archival data – e.g. the citation of Rijbergh's diorama featuring Honselaarsdijk Palace in a 1698 travel account – further contribute to the dating and localization within the course of her career.

The discovery also facilitates a better interpretation of Rijbergh's artistic practices, likewise in comparison to those of contemporaries Koerten, Van Vliet and others. The three dioramas appear to demonstrate her ability to operate within the free market and on commission, an aspect previously gleaned only indirectly from contemporary written sources. The now-known portion of Rijbergh's oeuvre is not only technically masterful, but also commercially embedded in and moreover geared towards a public and clientele with an affinity

for spectacle, refinement and entertainment. Accordingly, the research presented here not only helps to define the broader scope and visibility of Rijbergh's oeuvre, but also reveals new perspectives on the role and status of papercutting in the broader perspective of Dutch art history.

For over a century, the three dioramas – all originating from the former Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden – remained unseen in the depot of the Rijksmuseum. This article underscores the importance of digitization, technical research and painstaking provenance research in bringing artists otherwise long forgotten back into the purview of art history. Rijbergh's creations – lauded in her own day and available for viewing in exchange for a fee – continue to evoke wonder in the beholder today. Her own words once adorning the entrance to her art cabinet – 'I cut from paper all that pleases the eye' – remain as true as ever.

ABSTRACT

This contribution highlights the work of Elisabeth Rijbergh (1672-1721), a Rotterdam papercut artist who enjoyed great renown in her day. From her art cabinet, Rijbergh showed her complex papercut depictions to the public for a fee and sold her works to a clientele willing to pay considerable sums. These images were highly diverse, ranging from scenes of gardens and landscapes to battle scenes and portraits. Although Rijbergh's name was preserved in historical travelogues, she essentially fell into obscurity. Over the years, her reputation faded, with her oeuvre thought to have been lost. The recent discovery of a signed and dated papercut held in the Rijksmuseum collection – a diorama long attributed in error – has produced new insights into Rijbergh's work. Supplementary stylistic and material-technical research has moreover facilitated the attribution of two additional, previously anonymous dioramas. Together, these three papercuts offer the first tangible insight into Rijbergh's technical skill, narrative power and artistic strategies. With humour, illusion and refinement, she transformed paper into vibrant, narrative worlds that once captivated and still amaze viewers today. The present study places this woman artist again in the art historical spotlight, showing that Rijbergh's dioramas are not just visual spectacles for enthusiasts to behold, they also provide a window into the creative versatility of late seventeenth-century Dutch art.

NOTES

- 1 For Van Achelom, see Joke and Jan Peter Verhave, 'De Nederland-Italiaanse knipkunstenaar Joannes van Achelom omstreeks 1700', *Oud Holland* 128 (2015), pp. 147-60. For Koerten, see idem, 'Joanna Koerten en haar schaar van bewonderaars', *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 42 (2016), pp. 147-80; Martha Moffitt Peacock, 'Paper as Power: Carving a Niche for the Female Artist in the Work of Joanna Koerten', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek Online* 62 (2012), no. 1, pp. 239-65: <https://doi.org/10.1163/22145966-06201010> (consulted 31 March 2025).
- 2 Jan Peter Verhave, *Het Scherp van de Snede: Vier eeuwen papierknipkunst in Nederland*, Zwolle 2023, pp. 42-47, esp. pp. 46-47.
- 3 Marja Volbeda, 'Rijberg, Elisabeth', in *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*: <http://resources.huylens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/Rijberg> (last updated 13 January 2014). Initially, Rijbergh was assumed to be the woman depicted in a painting by Nicolaas Juweel in the Museum Rotterdam, inv. no. 67112. Recently, however, another interpretation has been posited, with the woman in the painting identified, not as Rijbergh, but instead as Alijda, Juweel's daughter. See Jan Peter Verhave, 'Een mysterieuze maakster van mobiles', *Rotterdams Jaarboekje* 13th series, vol. 2 (2024), pp. 240-51.
- 4 Jan Peter Verhave, 'Nieuws over Elisabeth Rijberg', *Knip-Pers* 38 (2021), pp. 5-8; Jan Peter Verhave, 'Rotterdamse Raadsels', in Verhave 2023 (note 2), pp. 42-47. We wish to thank several genealogists, who, in response to a request posted on the website of the *Stamboomforum*, contributed to the tracing of documents concerning Elisabeth Rijbergh. They wish to remain anonymous.
- 5 Stadsarchief Rotterdam (henceforth NL-RtSA), Notariële archieven (Notarial archives, henceforth NA, accession no. 18), inv. no. 1639, akte no. 48, fol. 144, notary Gerard Blokhuis (Blockerus), 7 January 1702.
- 6 'Ik snijde van papier al wat het ooge streeld, Of wat een geestig brein ons na de konst afbeeld: Al brult de bitze nijd met opgesparde kaken; Mijn konst en zal niet ligt daar door in 't voetzand raken'; Gerrit (Gerard) van Spaan, *Beschryvinge der stad Rotterdam, en eenige omleggende dorpen, verdeeld in 111. boeken*, Rotterdam 1698, pp. 424-25, esp. p. 424. Von Uffenbach affirms that the verse hung above the entrance to Rijbergh's cabinet both in Dutch and French. See Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen, Holland und Engelland*, 3 parts, Ulm 1754, part 3, p. 266. Johann Burkhard Mencke provides the French-language version of the verse: 'En coupant le papier je represente aux Jeux/ Tout ce que pourroit peindre un art ingenieux:/ Et bien que contre moy se dechaine l'Envie/ Sans en craindre les traits, je passeray ma vie' (By cutting the paper I represent to the Eyes/ All that an ingenious art could paint:/ And though Envy rages against me/ Without fearing its barbs, I will pass my life); Johann Burkhard Mencke, *Das Holländische Journal, 1698-1699*, Hildesheim/Zürich/ New York 2005, p. 111 (orig. p. 79r).
- 7 Van Spaan 1698 (note 6), pp. 424-25. For the Boompjes and the Oost-Indische Huis, see <https://stadsarchief.rotterdam.nl/zoek-en-ontdek/themas/oostindisch-huis> (consulted 2 July 2024).
- 8 'konstige Oorlogschepen en Jagten met een stille en holle zee; voorts koninklijke en prinselijke lusthuizen zoals Het Loo, Honselaarsdijk en anderen; voorts geboomten, verschieten en portretten in 't plat en verheven'. Van Spaan 1698 (note 6), p. 424.
- 9 Mencke 1698 (2005) (note 6), p. 111 (orig. p. 79r).
- 10 Von Uffenbach 1754 (note 6), part 3, pp. 266-67.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Letter from Charles Ellis to Edward Tyson, 16 June 1699, in: 'An extract of a letter to Dr Edward Tyson from the Reverend Mr Charles Ellis', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London: giving some account of the present undertakings, studies and labours of the ingenious in many considerable parts of the world* 23 (1702-1703), p. 1418. See also *The London Magazine, or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer* (December 1783, p. 566), in which the death is announced of 'Mr. P.A. Pyberg, limner, descended from the famous Elisabeth Pyberg, of the Hague, who, in paper, formed the faces of King William and Queen Mary with such exquisite ingenuity, that 1000 guilders were offered for them, which she refused'.
- 13 An announcement in the *Opregte Haerlemsche Courant* (5 September 1699, p. [2]) possibly also refers to the papercut portraits of the royal pair, 'te sien en te koop [is] een Konst-Werck, voor desen noyt in Europa gesien. Indien eenig Konst-lievende Liefhebber kan vertonen, dier gelijcke oyt gesien te hebben of voort te brengen, sal een premie van 100 Gulden

- genieten. Dit werk bestaet uyt Papiere Snijwerck en alles corporeel en naer 't Leven.' (to be seen and to buy[is] an Art-Work, before this never seen in Europe. When an Art-loving Enthusiast can show, to have ever seen or presented anything like it, then [he] shall enjoy a premium of 100 Guilders. This work consists of Paper Cutwork and all corporeal and after Life.)
- 14 Kees van Strien, *Touring the Low Countries: Accounts of British Travellers, 1660-1720*, Amsterdam 1998, p. 327.
- 15 Pieter de la Rue, *Mengeling van aantekeningen over zaaken en gevallen van verscheiden aardt*, handwritten notes, Amsterdam University Library: Hs. XIV G 1 t/m 5. See also Henk van Ark, 'Wat De la Rue in Amsterdam zag', *Welkom in Papyria* 10 (2015), pp. 49-52. De la Rue's remark concerns Rotterdam papercutting and almost certainly refers to Rijbergh's works, but possibly also those of her fellow townsman, Gillis van Vliet.
- 16 Erik Hinterding, 'Johanna Koerten, *Portrait of Galenus Abrahamsz*, 1692', in 'Recent Acquisitions: Women in the Rijksmuseum Collection', *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 73 (2025), no. 1, pp. 86-111, esp. pp. 89-90.
- 17 *Catalogus Van een overheerlyk konstkabinet papiere snykonst, door wylen Mejuffrouw Johanna Koerten ... met de schaar in papier gesneeden, benevens de relative stamboeken, waar in zijn extra fraaije teekeningen, portraiten, miniaturen en prenten*, Amsterdam c. 1744. See for example: '19 Een Zee met een Oorlog Schip en zyn Sloepen, en verdere Scheepen, verheeven, in dito.' (A Sea with a War Ship and its Sloops, and further Ships, raised, in ditto); '22 Een Kabinetje met Spiegels, waar in een Zeetje met een Jagt, dat beweeglyk is.' (A Cabinet with Mirrors, in which a Sea(scape) with a Yacht, that moves).
- 18 Von Uffenbach 1754 (note 6).
- 19 NL-RtSA, NA, inv. no. 1794, deed no. 130, notary Arnoldus de Guylicher (Guylicker), 29 April 1709.
- 20 NL-RtSA, NA, inv. no. 1643, deed no. 44, fols. 140-144, notary Gerard Blokhuis (Blockerus), 4 August 1704; inv. no. 1645, deed no. 191, fols. 719-720, notary Gerard Blokhuis (Blockerus), 3 October 1705. A 'liberal gift' is a voluntary contribution with no formal obligation of a payment or service in return, but whereby some kind of exchange is nevertheless expected. According to historical data from the Wisselbank (Exchange Bank) and coinage of the Dutch Republic, the 'Silver Rider' ducaton, introduced in 1659, had an approximate value of 63 stuivers in the provincial currency (at the time approximately equivalent to 3 guilders).
- 21 NL-RtSA, NA, inv. no. 1645, deed nos. 43, 66, 83, 177, notary Gerard Blokhuis (Blockerus), 3 August 1702, 15 August 1702, 25 October 1703, 11 March 1704.
- 22 Van Spaan 1698 (note 6), pp. 424-25. For the Boompjes and the East India House, see <https://stadsarchief.rotterdam.nl/zoek-en-ontdek/themes/oostindisch-huis> (consulted 2 July 2024).
- 23 NL-RtSA, NA, inv. no. 2219, deed no. 48, fols. 578-580, notary Willem Boon, 21 September 1721.
- 24 NL-RtSA, Oud Archief van de Stad Rotterdam 1340-1813 (accession no. 1-01), 30 September 1721.
- 25 D.S. van Zuiden, 'Advertentie-sprokkelingen', *Oud Holland* 58 (1941), p. 94.
- 26 'verbeeldende Posturen, Landschappen, Schepen in Zee zeylende'; 'overheerlyke Kunst, waerdig in een Vorsten Kabinet te hangen'. *Haagsche Courant* 17 October 1721. In 1710, Von Uffenbach viewed eleven pieces at Rijbergh's cabinet. This implies that, between 1710 and 1721, Rijbergh produced at least four new pieces.
- 27 NL-RtSA, NA, inv. no. 1834, deed no. 201, fols. 440-441, notary François Waart (Waerts), 29 August 1722.
- 28 'dief der dieven'; 'aan stukken te snijden'. City Archives Amsterdam, Notariële archieven (Notarial archives, accession no 5075), inv. no. 8299, deed no. 323553, notary George Wetstein, 14 October 1722.
- 29 NL-RtSA, NA, inv. no. 2012, deed no. 190, fols. 819-821, notary Johan Obreen, 4 November 1722.
- 30 Verhave 2023 (note 2), pp. 42-47, esp. pp. 46-47.
- 31 The ten other papercuttings that came to Amsterdam are: the diorama *Paleis Honselaarsdijk* (inv. no. BK-NM-265 (fig. 15 in the present study)); *The Grote Kerk in Rotterdam* (inv. no. BK-NM-266); the diorama *Landscape with Animals* (inv. no. BK-NM-268 (fig. 9 in the present study)); the *Harbour View* attributed to Derrick Patijn (inv. no. BK-NM-269); two elements for a commemorative monument by Johannes Hubertus Reygers (inv. nos. NG-NM-276-1 and -2), three floral bouquets (bloemruikers) by Hendrik van Irkhoven (inv. nos. BK-NM-278 to -280), and a papercutting attributed to Jan Steffens (inv. no. BK-NM-307).

- 32 Justine Rinnooy Kan and Sheila Reda (eds.), *Het verdwenen museum: Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden in het Mauritshuis*, exh. cat. The Hague (Mauritshuis) 2024.
- 33 'Voldoen ze niet, dan zullen ten minste de lijsten, welke poederdroog zijn, heerlijk branden'. Haarlem, Noord-Hollands Archief (henceforth NL-HlMNH), Rijksmuseum en rechtsvoorgangers te Amsterdam (henceforth RMA, accession no. 476), inv. no. 851 Stukken betreffende de schenking van kunst- en andere voorwerpen van Europese herkomst, 1815-1825: 'Nr. 11 Twee keer ingelijste knipsels door J.C. Andriesen te Middelburg [geschonken], 1821' (Two times enframed papercuttings [donated] by J.C. Andriesen of Middelburg). This concerns the signed diorama by Rijbergh and the *Diorama with Landscape* (inv. no. BK-NM-268). The other enframed papercuttings were in fact acquired by the Koninklijk Kabinet only later. See for example NL-HlMNH, RMA, inv. no. 852 Stukken betreffende de schenking van kunst- en andere voorwerpen van Europese herkomst, 1826 – ca. 1880.
- 34 A strong parallel can be observed, for example, with the engraving *Flower Piece with Irises* by Adriaen Collaert, published by Philips Galle; Ann Diels and Marjolein Leesberg, *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450-1700: The Collaert Dynasty*, vol. VI (Marjolein Leesberg and Arnout Balis (eds.)), Ouderkerk aan den IJssel 2005-06, p. 256, no. 1586. Gillis van Vliet, *Bloemstuk*, 1674, private collection, see Verhave 2023 (note 2), pp. 24-27, esp. p. 27.
- 35 See note 12.
- 36 'Hoe sal ik recht na liefde en plicht/ medt dese klijene gift u groete'.
- 37 'in 't plat als in het verheven'. Van Spaan 1698 (note 6), p. 424.
- 38 Verhave 2023 (note 2), p. 26.
- 39 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-L-7065.
- 40 On the wooden plank are two red lacquer seals, both of which are illegible due to sustained damage.
- 41 Fiber Optics Reflectance Spectroscopy analysis conducted on 24 September 2025 by Francesca Gabrieli and Leila Sauvage. Protein is detected on the white parts of inv. no. BK-NM-267.
- 42 The coats of arms appear in an album with a map of the city Rotterdam; see Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-AO-13-87. Our thanks to John Tholen at the Bibliotheek Rotterdam and Maretta Johnson with Atlas van Stolk for their help in ascertaining these Rotterdam coats of arms.
- 43 See note 31.
- 44 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-L-7066.
- 45 See for example Van Spaan 1698 (note 6), p. 424.
- 46 See Vanessa Bezemer-Sellers, 'Honselaarsdijk bij Naaldwijk', in Jos Stöver et al., *Kastelen en buitenplaatsen in Zuid-Holland*, Zutphen 2000, pp. 314-19; Th. Morren, *Het Huis Honselaarsdijk*, Leiden 1908.
- 47 Morren 1908 (note 46), pp. 48-49.
- 48 *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59; Rebecca Joslyn Tucker, *The Art of Living Nobly: The Patronage of Prince Frederik Hendrik (1584-1647) at the Palace of Honselaarsdijk during the Dutch Republic*, New York (diss. New York University) 2002.
- 49 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-L-7064.
- 50 During the recent restoration, it became clear that the frame had been opened before, so that the glass could be adjusted, and in order to glue the two birds to the velvet backing, presumably after they had fallen off. Remnants of the strips for hanging the birds can still be seen on the frame's 'ceiling'.
- 51 'Maria van Assendelft/ wed[uwe] van der Lely/ out 76 jaren/ 1714.'
- 52 NL-HlMNH, RMA, inv. no. 851: '1. Een geknipt landschap, vervaardigd door M. van Assendelft, en een buks, afkomstig van S. van der Lelij, door J. van der Lelij van Oudewater, z.d.' (1. A cut landscape, produced by M. van Assendelft, and a box (or musket), originating from S. van der Lelij, by J. van der Lelij van Oudewater, undated).
- 53 In later eras, paper dioramas like those of Rijbergh, Koerten and Van Vliet continued in the form of so-called *bavelaartjes*: small viewing boxes containing miniature scenes, carved from wood and (whale) bone made by Cornelis Bavelaar (the Younger) and his father, the sculptor Cornelis Bavelaar (the Elder). Joannes Franciscus Bavelaar, son of Cornelis the Younger, represented the third and last generation of this artisanal tradition, which began to flourish c. 1800. See Ingrid W.L. Moerman and J.Th.A. Peskens, *Leven in miniatuur: Bavelaar's kijkkastjes. Diorama's in been en hout uit de eerste decennia van de negentiende eeuw*, Zutphen 1983.

Photographs of the Rijksmuseum cuttings have been placed in the Rijksmuseum Research Data Repository at https://doi.org/10.82382/R1JKS_RD/BQ6Zxz.