



Recent Acquisitions: Fine and Applied Arts

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I CLAUS ('CLAES') SLUTER (Haarlem c. 1350/60-1406 Dijon) and workshop, execution
LOUIS MARION DE SEMUR (Dijon 1793-1873 Dijon), restoration top section baldachin
Segment of the Arcature of the Tomb of Philip the Bold, Dijon, c. 1397-98, installed 1410, and
restored c. 1819-23
Marble, alabaster, iron, h. 72.5 cm

Circa 1397, the Haarlem sculptor Claes Sluter and his team started work on the impressive tomb for Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy (1342-1404), with its renowned procession of sculpted *pleurants*, or mourners. After Sluter's death in 1406, the tomb was completed by his nephew Claux van de Werve (c. 1370-1439), who remained faithful to the master's concept and style. A surviving remnant of that ducal tomb, one of the most important funerary ensembles from the late Middle Ages, is this delicate Gothic baldachin, which once formed part of the arcature lining the tomb's perimeter. The arcade formed the architectural decor for the funeral procession of alabaster mourners symbolically escorting the deceased to his final resting place. With great plasticity and naturalism, Sluter breathed new life into the traditional funerary theme of statically depicted weepers, making this the most striking and innovative aspect of this spectacular

tomb. This spaciousness and depth were achieved in part through an ingenious staggering of elements in the series of baldachin arches surmounting the figures: a conjoined double baldachin repeatedly alternating with a diagonally placed, deeper-lying single baldachin.

The newly acquired arcature segment belongs to the latter baldachin type. It is a historically layered example of Gothic funerary micro-architecture, composed of two diagonally placed pointed arches with openwork trefoil motifs surmounted by an à jour-carved frieze of delicate, interlinked lancet arches lending the object an exceptionally airy character. The whole rests on a slender, diagonally placed colonette in the middle. Two more massive, clustered pillars – actually arising from the projecting double arches – were then added on either side, likewise positioned at an angle, thus creating a new Gothic niche. Circa 1826, not long after the

tomb's restoration, the piece was mounted in this form onto a moulded marble base and rear panel likely made by Louis Marion de Semur, a local sculptor involved in the tomb's restoration.

Up until the French Revolution, the tombs of Philip the Bold and his son John the Fearless in the abbey church of Champmol remained in a reasonably complete state. After the suppression of the monasteries and the confiscation of their furnishings in 1789-90, however, both tombs were moved to the former Benedictine abbey church of St Bénigne in Dijon in 1792. Overseen by the sculptor Claude-François Attiret (1728-1804), this painstaking enterprise was completed by the end of July, with both tombs rebuilt in their new designated locations, where they stood only for a brief time. One year later, they were denounced as symbols of feudalism under the Ancien Régime, with the sculptures damaged beyond recognition the following day and the tombs themselves ultimately dismantled. An inventory from September 1794 listing the tomb remnants housed in the former ducal palace in Dijon revealed, along with other objects, the presence of 'a large quantity of pieces of Gothic architecture serving to frame all the small Carthusians placed under these tombs and sculpted with great delicacy'. These likely also included elements of the arcature segment now acquired by the museum. All remnants were kept in storage up until the initiative to restore the tombs.

During the tomb's restoration in the years 1819-26, five original arcature segments were deemed unusable due to their damaged state. The Rijksmuseum baldachin was most recently discovered (and at this time unpublished), with the remaining four respectively preserved in: the Musée du Louvre, Paris; the Mayer van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp; the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon; and the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, New York (see Baron, Jugie & Lafay 2009, appendix 2, nos. 7, 8, 9, 10). The Rochester and Amsterdam segments are most complete and moreover identical in assembly and mounting. In addition, both are furnished with a similar handwritten label, affixed to the bottom of the baldachin's base. Judging by the handwriting, the two baldachins must have been held in the same collection around 1900.

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LITERATURE:

Unpublished

Most recent literature on tombs and restoration:

Susie Nash, 'The two tombs of Philip the Bold', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 82 (2019), pp. 1-111.

Joan A. Holladay and Susan L. Ward, *Gothic Sculpture in America, III: The Museums of New York and Pennsylvania*, New York 2016 (*Publications of the International Center of Medieval Art*, vol. 6), no. 94

Sophie Jugie, *The Mourners: Tomb Sculptures from the Court of Burgundy*, New Haven/Londen 2010, pp. 118, 119

Françoise Baron, Sophie Jugie and Benoît Lafay, *Les tombeaux des ducs de Bourgogne: Creation, destruction, restauration*, Paris 2009

PROVENANCE:

Dijon, abbey church of the Chartreuse de Champmol, 1410-1792; Dijon, former Benedictine abbey church of St Bénigne, 1792-93; damage, dismantling and storage in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, 1793-1819; remnant after the restoration of the tomb, 1819-23; ...; private collection, Belgium, c. 1900; ...; art market, Brussels, 1995; private collection, Ghent, 1995-2023; their sale, Bruges (Rob Michiels Auctions), 15 December 2023, no. 1013 to dealer Sam Fogg, London, 2023-25; from whom purchased for the museum as a gift of H.B. van der Ven, The Hague, 2025

(inv. no. BK-2025-8).



- 2 Triptych: workshop of BALDASSARE UBRIACHI ('EMBRIACHI')
 Painting exterior: attributed to workshop of Rossello di Jacopo Franchi (c. 1376/77-1456)
Triptych with Virgin and Child, Flanked by Saints, first quarter fifteenth century
 Wood, bone with remnants of blue paint and gilding, iron and tempera, h. 38 cm

The present triptych is a typical example of a work made in the Embriachi workshop, active in the final decades of the fourteenth and the early fifteenth century in Florence and Venice. The workshop was founded by Baldassare Ubriachi, a Florentine nobleman and entrepreneur whose surname later evolved into a generic name for objects carved in bone and framed by geometric intarsia (*alla certosina*) in wood. The actual work was overseen by one Giovanni di Jacopo, also known as the *maestro de' miei lavori dell'osso* (master of my works in bone). Thanks to an efficient, standardized production line and a relatively limited repertoire, the Embriachi workshop marketed small-scale altars like the present one, intended for private use, but also a vast selection of objects secular in nature, such as mirrors and engagement/marriage caskets (*forzierini*), often decorated with mythological scenes. The workshop sometimes also produced monumental altars for highly prestigious clients, including Duke Philip the Bold of Burgundy (1342-1404), his brother Jean duc de Berry (1340-1416) and Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1351-1402), Duke of Milan. The success of Baldassare Ubriachi's enterprise lay in the maximum effect of luxury achieved by means of an efficient, serialized production combined with relatively simple, low-cost materials – bovine bones and tinted woods, partly polychromed and partly gilded – further bolstered by a sophisticated marketing strategy to facilitate distribution across much of Europe.

The excellent condition of the Rijksmuseum triptych – with its crowning prophets, fleurons and original iron lock for the outer panels still fully intact – possibly suggests it was made for a monastery. This notion is additionally supported by the iconography of the carvings: flanking the Virgin and Child in the centre are St Anthony Abbot, St John the Baptist, the apostle Bartholomew and St Catherine of Alexandria, all associated with a life of asceticism and martyrdom and more closely aligned with monastic life versus that of the devout layperson. The exterior of the triptych's outer panels bears an enigmatic depiction of

the head of a man wearing a hood, encircled by an aureole of light rays – a blessed or holy monk? The back of the altar is painted in imitation porphyry. As far as is known, the painted decoration of the outer wings is unique within the Embriachi group. The brisk, fairly simple painting style is in keeping with the altar's character and can be tentatively attributed to a Florentine *bottega* from the first quarter of the fifteenth century. One possibility is the workshop of the painter Rossello di Jacopo Franchi, to whom the rather uniform painting on seven other Embriachi altars has also been attributed (Tomasi 2007, p. 172; my thanks to Belle Röling and Machtelt Brüggem Israëls).

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LITERATURE:

- Michele Tomasi, *Monumenti d'Avorio: I dossali degli Embriachi e i loro committenti*, Pisa 2010, pp. 66-83
 Michele Tomasi, 'Angeli per gli Embriachi', in Daniele Parenti and Angelo Tartuferi (eds.), *Nuovi studi sulla pittura tardogotica: Intorno a Lorenzo Monaco*, Livorno 2007, pp. 168-75
 Michele Tomasi, *La bottega degli Embriachi*, Florence 2001 (*Specchio del Bargello*, vol. 49)
 Elena Merlini, 'I trittici portabili delle "Bottega degli Embriachi"', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 33 (1991), pp. 47-62
 Julius von Schlosser, 'Die Werkstatt der Embriachi in Venedig', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen der allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 20 (1899), pp. 220-82

PROVENANCE:

- ...; Lodewijk Benjamin de Hoop (1903-2002), Wassenaar and 's-Gravenwezel (Belgium); his widow and heirs; from whom to dealer A. Dullaert, Gorssel, 2024; from which purchased by the museum with the support of the Friends Lottery, 2024 (inv. no. BK-2024-116).



- 3 Circle of PIETER COECKE VAN AELST (Aalst 1502-1550 Brussels)
Triumph of Chastity (Castitas) from Petrarch's 'I Trionfi', c. 1530
 Glass, vitreous paint and silver stain, lead, diam. 23.2 cm

In the sixteenth century, painted and silver-stained glass roundels adorned countless windows in ecclesiastical and public secular buildings, as well as private homes. They were often conceived as a series, enabling a story to be told distributed across multiple windows in a room. The present roundel with the *Triumph of Chastity* very likely belonged to a series centred on Petrarch's (Francesco Petrarca 1304-1374) famous allegorical poem, *I Trionfi*. The series begins with triumphant Love, which Chastity conquers but only before succumbing to Death. Fame then vanquishes Death but falls in defeat to Time. Ultimately, Divinity triumphs over all.

In the present roundel, above in the clouds, the personification of Chastity with her flowing hair triumphs over lustful love, embodied by Cupid. Chastity has blindfolded him and tied his hands behind his back, so he can no longer shoot his love arrows. Appearing below in an interior space are three examples of chastity, all described in Petrarch's poem. Left of centre, we see a depiction of the Old Testament story in which Joseph manages to escape the seduction of the wife of his enslaver, Potiphar, the captain of pharaoh's guard (Genesis 39:6-20; Petrarch, *I Trionfi*, 'Trionfo della Castità' I, 193). Here the scene symbolizes male chastity. After several failed attempts to seduce the handsome Joseph, Potiphar's wife makes one last try, seizing him by his mantle. Joseph escapes her grasp, lets his mantle fall to the ground and flees the room. Potiphar's wife subsequently twists the story around, falsely accusing the young man of rape and presenting the mantle as evidence, a lie that ultimately lands Joseph in prison.

Right of centre, we witness the scene of Verginia's public killing by her father, Lucius Verginius, so that she would not have to marry Appius Claudius Crassus.* This Roman consul and decemvir had managed to ensnare Verginia in his power by nefarious means (Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, III, 44-48; Petrarch, *I Trionfi*, 'Trionfo della Castità' I, 136). The father saw his daughter's death as the only way to liberate her. Both Livy and Petrarch compare Verginia to the beautiful Lucretia (Livy I, 57-59; Petrarch, *I Trionfi*, 'Trionfo della Castità' I, 132), whose story is accordingly depicted in the background far right. After being raped by Sextus Tarquinius

Superbus, son of the last Roman king, the virtuous noblewoman Lucretia commits suicide. We witness the moment Lucretia leans into a sword in the presence of her maidservants, with whom she was chastely spinning wool when attacked in her home. Verginia and Lucretia shared the same fate, as victims of their chastity.

We can identify the subject of our roundel indeed as Petrarch's *Triumph of Chastity* thanks to two related workshop drawings and a second surviving glass roundel, showing other triumphs described by Petrarch.** All are nearly the same in size and share a similar composition containing the characteristic semicircular wreath of billowing clouds. In the execution of the lines and detailing, the workshop drawings of *The Triumph of Love* (Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, inv. no. z 02730, diam. 231 mm) and *The Triumph of Divinity* (Bremen, Kunsthalle, inv. no. 1951/21, diam. approx. 236.5 mm) quite closely approximate the present roundel. While the latter displays a nuanced use of silver stain for the yellow hues and a convincing rendering of movement, light and shadow, the roundel of the *Triumph of Love* (Rochester (NY), Memorial Art Gallery, inv. no. 2023.5, diam. 23.8 cm), though following the composition of the Cologne drawing, is less refined and stylistically very different, suggesting it was produced at a later time in another workshop. On stylistic grounds, the series' original design can be situated in the Antwerp workshop of Pieter Coecke van Aelst circa 1530.

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* I wish to thank prof. dr. em. Ilja Veldman for the correct interpretation of this scene.

** My thanks to Kees Berserik (The Hague) for drawing my attention to the drawings.

LITERATURE:
 Unpublished

PROVENANCE:
 ...; sale, Bath (Auctioneum), 2 November 2024, no. 26 (as early 19th c.), to dealer Sam Fogg Ltd, London, 2024; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of the Van Litsenburg Fonds, 2025 (inv. no. BK-2025-25).



- 4 ELIAS DE WITTE ('Elia Candido') (Bruges, in or before 1548-1574 Florence)
Dancing Spiritello, second half sixteenth century (after c. 1567)
 Bronze, h. 18 cm
 Inscription, old number in white paint, on back of left upper leg: C.071

Inspired by classical Roman examples, this small bronze *spiritello* poses in a subtle contrapposto, balancing with one foot standing on a small sphere. The model is convincingly attributed to the Flemish-Florentine sculptor Elias de Witte, also known as 'Candido', son of a Bruges tapestry weaver working for the Medici court. The young Elias is first mentioned in the membership roster of the Accademia del Disegno in Florence in 1567, followed four years later by his formal appointment as *accademico*. Stylistically, his work is closely related to that of his compatriot Giambologna and training in the master's *studiolo* is tenable. Most famous is Elias's bronze statue of *Boreas*, the personification of the North Wind in the *studiolo* of Francesco I de' Medici (1573), a prestigious commission demonstrating the high regard for his talent at the Florentine court. The present *spiritello* is attributed to Elias based on the clear stylistic and compositional similarity to the *Boreas*, despite the difference in scale. Due to his premature death, Candido left behind only a small oeuvre, including a running *spiritello* as a pendant of this bronze.

A direct link exists between the present bronze statuette and two boys painted in mirror image, holding a cartouche bearing the Medici coat of arms, in a stained-glass window in the Biblioteca Laurentiana (1568) in Florence, made by another Fleming active in the city: Gualtieri di Giovanni Battista Fiammingo d'Anversa. This Antwerp painter was summoned to Florence through the mediation of Elias de Witte's uncle, Adriaan de Witte (1510-after 1568), chaplain of the ducal guard and an art agent acting on the Medici family's behalf. It would appear Gualtieri incorporated Elias's *spiritello* composition in the Medici window, possibly at the instigation of the sculptor's uncle. If an accurate scenario, the statuette's invention would have been conceived shortly before 1568, situating the model at the onset of Candido's brief career.

The specific alloy consistency of the present bronze indicates it was cast in Candido's time (XRF measurement, Arie Pappot, 2024). In some respects, the statuette deviates from the five other known versions of the model, including

the presence of the wings and the leafy sprigs in the figure's hands, and the absence of a laurel wreath in the hair. Noteworthy is the thick, verdigris patina that has formed on the statuette, also frequently encountered with excavated Roman bronzes, which may very well have been applied to evoke the look of a pastiche of an ancient work. Such an all'antica finish was highly prized in Candido's time, but no less so in the time of the bronze's earliest known owner, Count Galeotto Ridolfini, a renowned eighteenth-century Italian collector of Roman-Etruscan antiquities, who maintained it was a work from classical Antiquity.

FS

LITERATURE:

Patricia Wengraf (ed.), *European Bronzes and Terracottas: Patricia Wengraf Celebrates 40 Years of Fine Sculpture*, London 2018, no. 10 (running *spiritello*)
 Gert Jan van der Sman and Bouk Wierda, 'Wisselend succes: De loopbanen van Nederlandse en Vlaamse kunstenaars in Florence, 1450-1600', in Frits Scholten, Joanna Woodall and Dulcia Meijers (eds.), *Art and Migration: Netherlandish Artists on the Move, 1400-1750 | Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 63 (2013), pp. 170-239, esp. pp. 181-83
 Alessandro Cecchi, 'Pietro Candido fra Firenze e Volterra: la formazione e l'attività fiorentina (1568-1586)', in Mariagiulia Burrelli and Alessandro Cecchi (eds.), *Pieter de Witte/Pietro Candido, un pittore del Cinquecento tra Volterra e Monaco*, exh. cat. Volterra (Palazzo dei Priori) 2009, pp. 17-35

PROVENANCE:

...; Count Galeotto Ridolfini (1690-1769), Cortona, c. 1750-69; his grandson Galeotto Anton Maria Ridolfini Corazzi, placed in the Museo Ridolfini-Corazzi, Cortona, -1826; from which purchased by Colonel J.E. Humbert for the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden, July 1826 (inv. no. C071 (as Roman, 600-100 BCE)); transfer to the Rijksmuseum, 2024 (inv. no. BK-2024-22).



- 5 *Design for the Crown of Emperor Rudolf II*
Prague, c. 1600
Watercolour and gold on vellum, 385 x 293 mm
Inscribed, lower right: NK (in monogram)

This watercolour is the earliest-known image of the crown made in 1598-1602 for Emperor Rudolf II of the Holy Roman Empire (1552-1612), almost certainly by his court goldsmith, Jan Vermeyen (before 1559-1606). Generally regarded as the most beautiful crown in the Western world, it is kept in the Weltliche Schatzkammer in Vienna.

It is constituted of three parts: the diamond-set circlet surmounted by eight fleurs-de-lis with rubies and spinels, which in itself constitutes a royal crown; the imperial arch running from front to back; and the mitre, denoting the emperor's God-given grace.

Since the watercolour deviates in many respects from the crown as executed, its status and function are the subject of ongoing research. It shows two of the four golden reliefs with scenes from the life of Rudolf II mounted on the mitre. To the left the coronation of Rudolf II as emperor in Regensburg cathedral is depicted, and to the right his ride up Coronation Hill in Pressburg (Bratislava) at his coronation as king of Hungary. On the crown, however, these two reliefs are positioned, in the same order, on the right-hand side. Since the two reliefs are shaped differently, they can never have been mounted as shown in the image. The differences in the enamelled decoration of the bands running along the mitre are even more conspicuous. Whereas on the crown the bands are decorated with ornamental patterns, in the watercolour they display the arms of Austria and Hungary amidst further heraldic devices. Astonishingly, much of the heraldry is rendered incorrectly. For example, the coat of arms of Hungary, shown to the right, is surmounted by an archducal coronet and surrounded by the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece, both of which are inappropriate here (by contrast, for the Austrian inescutcheon, shown to the left, they are correct).

A careful weighing of all the arguments suggests that the watercolour was produced during the process of designing and making the crown, as a kind of intermediate stock-taking of ideas to be discussed. It does not look like a goldsmith's drawing and was probably executed

by a painter, likely a specialist in miniatures. He must have worked in close collaboration with Vermeyen, as the watercolour demonstrates an intimate knowledge of goldsmithing techniques, including particular details that are characteristic of Prague production at the time. It must be assumed that he received only vague instructions on the heraldry, presumably as this matter could easily be rectified at a later date.

Even though the watercolour does not show the crown as executed, it was copied in Prague in 1610 by the little-known painter David Hartmann (Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, inv. no. KKsgb6220). He altered the background, but meticulously followed the depiction of the crown itself. In addition, the image presented in the watercolour served as the model for the imperial crown on top of the tower of the Westerkerk in Amsterdam, which was erected in the sixteen thirties.

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- * I thank Paulus Rainer (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) for his valuable advice.

LITERATURE:

François Antonovich, *Des Flandres de Charles Quint à la Florence des Médicis et à la Prague de Rodolphe*, exh. cat. Léon (Musée de l'Institut Biblique et Oriental) 2014, pp. 546-47
Prag um 1600: Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Rudolfs II., exh. cat. Essen (Villa Hügel) 1988, no. 336 (Rudolf Distelberger, on the watercolour in Copenhagen)

PROVENANCE:

...; François Antonovich (1934-2023), Paris; his sale, Paris (Vermot & Associés), Hôtel Drouot, 15 March 2024, no. 34, to the museum with the support of the Decorative Art Fund/Rijksmuseum Fonds and H.B. van der Ven, The Hague (inv. no. RP-T-2024-81).



NK

6 Attributed to HANS COENRAEDT BREGHTEL (Nuremberg 1609-1675 The Hague)

Book Clasps, 1655

Bible published in Dordrecht by Hendrik and Jacob Keur, and in Amsterdam by Marcus Doornick, 1686

Large folio with four plates, bound in a gold-stamped, cowhide leather binding on wooden cover boards, 49.5 x 51 x 13 cm

In 1655, the collected works of the poet Jacob Cats (1577-1669), a renowned luminary in the Netherlands, were published by J.J. Schipper in Amsterdam. Cats stipulated that various presentation copies be made with a dedication. Schipper produced seven presentation copies: one copy destined for each of the cities Brouwershaven, Zierikzee and Middelburg in Zeeland and Dordrecht in Holland; one for the States of Holland and West Friesland; a copy for the States General; and lastly, a copy for the poet himself. Cats supplied the book clasps. As expressed in the poet's own words, they jointly conveyed 'how all temporal matters – to wit: youth, lust, nobility, wealth, fame – decay along with the world'. They were considered so remarkable that in 1656 Schipper subsequently included a description and illustration of them in Cats's *Ouderdom, Buytenleven en Hofgedachten op Sorgh-Vliet*. The fact that five of the seven presentation copies still survive today – three with the original silver fittings – also affirms the high esteem with which these books were long regarded.

Schippers's 1656 foreword lauds Cats as the inventor of the iconographic programme of the book clasps. He does not name the person responsible for actualizing Cats's ideas. The nearly identical fittings on the recently acquired Van Hoecke-Breghtel Statenbijbel suggest that Cats collaborated with Hans Coenraedt Breghtel, then the leading silversmith in The Hague. Breghtel would have translated the poet's ideas into designs and executed the definitive silver-work.

The production of seven presentation copies required that identical fittings be made; as was customary, these were cast in silver. By contrast, those on the Van Hoecke-Breghtel Statenbijbel are embossed, and moreover a fraction larger. From this, it may be concluded that these are the casting and presentation models from 1655, left behind in Breghtel's workshop. Adriaen van Hoecke, who assumed the running of his father-in-law's studio in 1682, would have taken the prototype fittings and applied them to the binding of the new family bible.

The hinged anchor plates and miters depict pairings of allegorical symbols. Vanitas/Vanity and Veiled Truth/Fragility of Existence represent the futility of earthly pursuits; the Phoenix and Ouroboros represent Resurrection and Eternity. The larger size of the medallions on the clasps allowed space for more elaborate depictions: Fame and Eternity triumph over Death and the Last Judgment, respectively. By applying the fittings to a bible, Van Hoecke linked the admonishment conveyed therein to the message of the Gospel. In the bible's daily use, the family was simultaneously reminded of the life of their father, father-in-law and grandfather, and the remarkable works Hans Coenraedt had achieved.

DJB

LITERATURE:

Jan van Burg, *Onze bijzondere Statenbijbel, dichter bij het zilver van de dichter*, independently published, Hoek van Holland 2020
 Jet Pijzel-Dommisse, 'Hans Coenraedt Breghtel en kwabornament in Den Haag', *Tijdschrift voor Interieurgeschiedenis en Design* 42 (2020), pp. 39-60
 Jet Pijzel-Dommisse, *Haags Zilver*, coll. cat. The Hague (Kunstmuseum Den Haag) 2005, pp. 33, 36-37, figs. 24, 25 en 26
 J.H. Landwehr, 'De present-exemplaren van "Alle de wercken" van Cats uit 1655', *De Boekenwereld* 14 (1997-1998), pp. 16-20

PROVENANCE:

Adriaen van Hoecke (Brouwershaven 1635-1716 The Hague) and Johanna Breghtel (?-1679); their daughter Maria van Hoecke (1671-1730), The Hague, 1716; her brother ds. Marinus van Hoecke (21 December 1662-24 November 1737); through the families Lieshout, Blom and Wijnandts van Resandt to Juana Van Burg-Vervloet (1942-2022); by her heirs presented to the State in lieu of inheritance tax (inv. no. BK-2024-13).



7 *Swaddling Blankets (Doopluren)*

Netherlands, 1680-1700 and 1700-20

Resp. silk and wool, 40 x 50 cm; cotton and wool, 46 x 52 cm

Swaddling, an ancient custom found across cultures, was a practice not only meant to keep babies warm, it was also long thought to protect them from mishaps and even ensure straight, well-formed limbs. Bands of cloth were used to wrap the child; an alternative was a tightly fastened blanket. Families of all social classes participated in this act, though the materials, decoration, and style varied widely, ranging from plain linens and other heavier weaved fabrics for the poor to richly worked fine cottons and silks for the wealthy.

In the seventeenth century, a baby in an elite household would fall asleep in its swaddling clothes lying in a wicker basket, wrapped in a beautifully crafted *doopluier*. More than one blanket was usually required for a single child, as is suggested in Justina Siegemund's midwifery manual, first published in 1690. It was considered best to swaddle an infant almost immediately after birth, with a rotation of several blankets therefore essential to ensure good hygiene practices.

These two recently acquired blankets enrich our understanding of the practice of swaddling through their materiality. Produced in the Netherlands, both blankets were probably sewn by a skilled woman, either for personal use at home or for a customer. When handmaking blankets, women combined the roles of mother and maker, shaping the material environment their child would experience. Another consideration was also relevant. In his 1678 manual for new fathers, Hieronymus Sweerts advised wealthy husbands to ensure a child's swaddling blanket was more lavish than that of the child before, to represent increased grandeur. Embroidery and trims were to surpass those used for earlier siblings. Belonging to the same family, these two blankets perfectly demonstrate this practice.

The earliest of the two blankets (1680-1700) is made of quilted silk and fine wool. While eighteenth-century quilted garments are comparatively common, seventeenth-century quilted objects remain much scarcer. The once rectangular silk blanket reveals the slight reworking of the blanket's original form; the hook and eye fastenings are of later date. The central floral motif, enclosed within a circular pendant, is bordered by a floral trail. Such a style is reminiscent of seventeenth-century



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domestic textiles. The second, slightly later blanket (1700-1720) is worked in *trapunto*, a more three-dimensional form of quilting, and is very finely constructed from a delicate cotton. It has a slight cinch at the mid-point, before flaring out to a rounded bottom. The design's exotic, paisley-like flourishes suggest inspiration drawn from Indian textiles, reflecting the global exchanges that shaped Dutch culture.

These blankets illuminate the ceremonial role of *doopluren*: objects that combined practical necessity with status display, serving as visible emblems of family respectability. Long after their first use, they were preserved and reused within the same family, thus attesting to their emotional and symbolic significance. Indeed, the Rijksmuseum's earlier acquisition of a padded silk blanket from 1675-1700 (inv. no. BK-2017-17), preserved in pristine condition within the Teding van Berkhout family, confirms that such textiles were and still are treasured heirlooms.

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LITERATURE:

Bianca C. du Mortier, 'Doopluier or padded cover', *Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 66 (2018), no. 3, pp. 282-83
An Moonen, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse quilt*, Arnhem 2008, pp. 90-91, no. 1

PROVENANCE:

...; through the Doets family;
inv. no. BK-2024-119 (cotton): D. de Vries (Zeist), P.K. de Vries and G.D. de Vries; Adriana Helmina de Vries-Doets (sister of H.J. Lind-Doets);
inv. no. BK-2024-120 (silk): H.J. Lind-Doets, Beverwijk;
by whom donated to the museum, 2025.

8 *The Ehrenfeld Collection of Flutes*

Thirty-five flutes, c. 1680-c. 1880

Woodwinds form a major part of the Rijksmuseum's collection of musical instruments, which in recent years has been enriched through important acquisitions. The most recent of these is the Ehrenfeld Collection of Flutes. The collection is named after Herman Ehrenfeld (1896-1983), flautist in the Utrechtsch Stedelijk Orkest from the early nineteen thirties onwards, and the first – and for many years, only – Dutch flautist to focus on early instruments. Ehrenfeld began collecting and performing on historical flutes in the nineteen forties. In 1952, he acquired several instruments at the auction of the collection of Willem Mengelberg (1871-1951), the celebrated chief conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra. By 1962, Ehrenfeld had assembled the core of his collection, comprising more than twenty flutes.

After Ehrenfeld's death in 1983, his widow, Guus Ehrenfeld-ten Bosch (1910-2003), established the Ehrenfeld Foundation with the aim of preserving her husband's collection. She served as its director until 2000, when succeeded by Willem Kroesbergen, who then enhanced the collection with ten nineteenth-century flutes from his own collection. In 2007, the foundation appointed conductor and organist Ton Koopman as curator. The instruments remained in his care up until the foundation's dissolution and their transfer to the Rijksmuseum in 2023.

Today, the Ehrenfeld Collection comprises thirty-five flutes, the majority of which date from the eighteenth century. The collection's centre-piece is a flute by Richard Haka (c. 1646-1702) (inv. no. BK-2023-24-19), the foremost seventeenth-century woodwind maker in Amsterdam. Made of unstained boxwood and fitted with a single brass key, the flute combines the elegant simplicity of renaissance instruments with early baroque-design innovations. Distinguished by its oval emouchure hole, slightly conical bore, remarkable length and finely turned details, it is one of the earliest one-keyed examples known to date and among the only three surviving three-piece flutes from the seventeenth century. Preserved in exceptional condition, it is also the sole known flute by Haka. Its acquisition marks the Rijksmuseum's seventh instrument by this maker – three shawms, two oboes, one oboe/shawm hybrid, and the present flute –

thus forming the largest group of Haka instruments held in a single collection.

In addition to the Haka flute, the Ehrenfeld Collection includes instruments by Dutch flute makers Willem Beukers (1666-1750), Jan Beuker (c. 1737-1816), H. van Elwe (active in the eighteenth century), Robbert Wijne (1698-1774) and Johannes Christiani (1786-1858). It also features German examples by Johannes Scherer (1664-c. 1722), Gottlieb (1706-66/68) and his son Johann August Crone (1727-1804), Carl Augustin II Gresner (1757-1814), G.M. Ulrich (?-after 1782), Johann Gottlieb Freyer (c. 1764-1808), Friedrich Gabriel August Kirst (1750-1806) and Heinrich Friedrich Meyer (1814-97). English makers include George Astor (1752-1813), Christopher Gerock (active c. 1804-37), Button & Whitaker (active c. 1808-14), Andrew Kauffmann (active c. 1807-27), Metzler & Co. (active c. 1833-after 1936), and Keith-Prowse (active c. 1829-after 1950). Representing the French school are three flutes made by members of the Thibouville family (active in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) and Martin frères (active c. 1840-1927).

Many of the baroque flutes in the Ehrenfeld Collection include multiple *corps de rechange* – interchangeable middle joints that alter the instrument's length, allowing players to adapt to different pitches. Together, the flutes in the Ehrenfeld Collection provide a broad overview of the instrument's development from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, illustrating innovations and experimentations that ultimately led to the modern orchestral flute.

GPDS

LITERATURE:

Giovanni Paolo Di Stefano 'The Ehrenfeld Collection of Flutes at the Rijksmuseum', in M. Martens, S. Deters and G. P. Di Stefano (ed.), *Prospects and Challenges of Museum Accessibility, Diversity and Equity*, Paris 2025, pp. 142-46
 Giovanni Paolo Di Stefano, 'Een Utrechtse fluitencollectie', *Tijdschrift Oude Muziek* (2024), no. 3, pp. 10-11
 Kate Clark and Amanda Markwick (eds.), *The Renaissance Flute: A Contemporary Guide*, New York 2020, pp. 219-26
 Jan Bouterse, *Dutch Woodwind Instruments and Their Makers, 1660-1760*, Utrecht 2005



BK-2023-24-19



BK-2023-24-1



BK-2023-24-8

Catalogus van de Kunstveiling 109 bestaande uit de nalatenschap van wijlen Prof. Dr. J.W. Mengelberg, sale cat. Amsterdam (S.J. Mak van Waay), 25 March 1952, pp. 63-64
 Herman Ehrenfeld, 'Het kopiëren van houten blaasinstrumenten uit de 18de eeuw', *Mens en melodie* (1962), no. 17, pp. 316-17

PROVENANCE:

...; Herman Ehrenfeld, Guus Ehrenfeld-ten Bosch and Willem Kroesbergen; by whom to the Ehrenfeld Foundation; from which donated to the museum, 2024
 (inv. nos. BK-2023-24-1 to 35).



BK-2023-24-2



BK-2023-24-4



BK-2023-24-6



BK-2023-24-7



BK-2023-24-9



BK-2023-24-10



BK-2023-24-13



BK-2023-24-17



BK-2023-24-26

9 WILLEM ADRIAENSZ ROUKENS (Nijmegen 1662-1737)

A Set of Three Toilet Boxes, c. 1687-95

Silver, respectively 10 x 26 x 20.5 cm, 6.2 x 14.5 x 10.5 cm and 6.4 x 14.5 x 10.7 cm, alloy c. 870/1000, weight 1281, 326 and 320 grams

All hallmarked on the bottom: maker's mark WR in oval [Lemmens 1983, p. 22; Scheffler II, no. 1350], attributed to Willem Adriaensz Roukens; two additionally with crowned O = duty-mark Koninkrijk Holland, 1807

The present ensemble comprises the core of a toilet set. The rectangular box was for holding hair combs; the oval boxes for hair and powder. Together they offer a unique insight into the oeuvre of an almost forgotten Nijmegen artist, of which this trio is the seminal example still known to us.

The reputation of the eighteenth-century silversmith Willem Roukens was rediscovered thanks to the publication of Roelof van Eynden's (1747-1819) *Geschiedenis van de Vaderlandsche Schilderkunst* in 1816. As early as the seventeenth century, Van Eynden began actively collecting information on Dutch artists, specifically those who approached their work from a classicist perspective. Most important, in his estimation, were the painters Gerard de Laresse, Adriaan van der Werff and Jacob de Wit. In his overview, Van Eynden also incorporated classicistic silversmiths. Virtuoso silversmiths/designers of the seventeenth century, such as the Lutmas and the Van Vianens, were long considered canon. Just as the cited painters and silversmiths, Roukens chose the pictorial tradition of antiquity as his starting point, was adept at drawing and modeling, and enjoyed major successes with his art abroad. Van Eynden was unquestionably well informed. Like Roukens, he was born and raised in Nijmegen. He had admired various examples of Roukens's work in art collections in Gelderland and specifically mentioned drawings, models, embossed plaquettes and several large objects in gold and silver.

The three silver toilet boxes clarify the basis for Van Eynden's appreciation. All the representations are derived from classicistic inventions directly based on antique funerary sculpture. The reliefs adorning the sides of each box can be linked to children's series by the Flemish sculptor François Duquesnoy from the sixteenth thirties; the depictions on the lids of the boxes are associated with inventions and motifs by the French painter Simon Vouet, a sensation in Rome in that same decade. The scenes on the

two small boxes are directly adopted from print examples: both the Venus and Adonis and Venus and Mars repeat inventions of Vouet from 1638 (inv. nos. RP-P-OB-43.063 and -43.064, respectively). For the Ariadne and Bacchus on the large box, only general parallels can be found. This composition may be considered Roukens's own invention. One final aspect, characteristic of the late seventeenth-century Dutch interpretation of classicism, is the limited role of ornament, with the viewer's full attention thus drawn to the depicted scenes.

DJB

LITERATURE:

- Hildegund Bemann, *Rheinisches Tafelsilber: Silbernes Prunk- und Tafelgerät des nördlichen Rheinlandes von 1550 bis 1800*, Rheinbach-Merzbach 1992, p. 316, no. 387
 J. Lemmens, *Nijmeegs Zilver 1400-1900*, Nijmegen 1983 p. 50
Historisches Weseler Silber, coll. cat. Wesel (Städtisches Museum) 1982, pp. 9, 10
 Abraham Cornelis Beeling, *Dutch Silver 1600-1813*, Leeuwarden 1982, p. 21
 Abraham Cornelis Beeling, *Nederlands Zilver 1600-1813*, vol. 2, Heerenveen 1980, pp. 134-35

PROVENANCE:

- Bacchus and Ariadne, inv. no. BK-2025-16: ...; dealer A.C. Beeling, Leeuwarden, 1980-83; private collection United States, until 2024; sale, New York (Sotheby's), 16 April 2024, no. 6;
 Venus and Adonis, inv. no. BK-2025-17: ...; sale, English and Foreign Silver, London (Christie's), 23 July 1980, no. 26; ...;
 Venus and Mars, inv. no. BK-2025-18: ...; from circa 1960 collection Harold Black, London; ...;
 respectively from 2024, 2015 and 2017 in the collection of the dealer Jacob J. Roosjen, Breukelen; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of The Friends Lottery, the Judy van Heuzen-Dijksma Fund and a private individual.



10 *Cup and Saucer (Trembleuse) of Chalcedony Glass*

Venice, c. 1730

Blown glass, chalcedony glass (agate glass), aventurine glass

Saucer: h. 2 cm x diam. 12 cm; cup: h. 9 cm x diam. 7 cm

This cup and saucer are made of chalcedony glass, a dichroic glass type that displays different colours depending on the angle of the light. When light reflects off these pieces, one sees a marbled pattern of the colours brown, yellow and blue. But as soon as light shines through, the colours shift: the objects glow a fiery red. The iridescent gold flecks on the surface further enhance this shimmering effect. Chalcedony glass has its roots in antiquity. During the Renaissance, it was reinvented by the Venetians, followed by a second revival in the first half of the eighteenth century. Given their form and the presence of aventurine glass, the present cup and saucer can be dated to this last period.

The earliest written mention of chalcedony glass occurs in the fifteenth century. During the Renaissance, glass production and alchemy were closely intertwined, with the imitation of precious materials essential to glassmaking. With its marbled pattern and purplish-brown hue, chalcedony glass resembles the semi-precious stone agate, for which reason it is sometimes called agate glass. Even the widely popular Venetian *crystallo*, the most transparent glass produced during this period, derives its name from its close resemblance to rock crystal.

In the eighteenth century, as English and Bohemian crystal gained prominence, Venice lost its monopoly on transparent glass. Seeking to reclaim distinction, the Venetian glassblowers turned to two non-transparent types of glass: *lattimo*, a milky white glass that imitates porcelain, often decorated in the same manner as its ceramic counterpart and a popular Grand Tour souvenir; and the marbled, multi-coloured chalcedony glass. Manufacturing the latter involves a complex process. Silver and other ingredients, added to the molten glass, never completely form a homogenous mass. This makes the glass difficult to shape. Chalcedony glass cools quickly; colour variations in the object arise from the diverging cooling rates of its components. In the case of the present cup, the base is therefore considerably darker, while the interior, formed from a second layer of chalcedony glass, is lighter than the rest of the vessel.

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, chalcedony glass was commonly combined with iridescent aventurine glass, an imitation of aventurine quartz that obtains its shimmer by adding copper oxide. The recipe for this glass type was said to be one of the secrets of the Miottis, a renowned and influential family of Venetian glassblowers. Small fragments of aventurine glass are rolled into the hot, molten chalcedony glass at the end of the glassblower's blowpipe; when the mass is further heated and blown, they obtain an oval form. In the present cup and saucer, these appear as golden, shimmering flecks.

In the eighteenth century, chalcedony glass was used for bottles and flasks, but also introduced for new applications such as this trembleuse. Commonly made in ceramics, a trembleuse (a nineteenth-century term derived from the French verb *trembler*) referred to a cup and saucer with a precisely fitted, recessed impression or raised well that holds the cup in place. This form became fashionable for serving chocolate at the end of the seventeenth century. The present trembleuse of chalcedony glass is a clear example of a luxury, utilitarian glass object, illustrating the role of glass in high society encounters in the eighteenth century. At the same time, the material alludes to the alchemical traditions underlying early glassmaking.

MB

LITERATURE:

Anna-Elisabeth Theuerkauff-Liederwald, *Venezianisches Glas der Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg: Die Sammlung Herzog Alfreds von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha (1844-1900): Venedig, A la façon de Venise, Spanien, Mitteleuropa*, coll. cat. Coburg (Veste Coburg) 1994

Bill Gudenrath, 'Beaker with chalcedony Glass and Aventurine chalcedony Glass', *The Techniques of Renaissance Venetian Glassworking*, Corning Museum of Glass, February 2016, renvenetian.cmog.org (on the methodology of making chalcedony glass)

PROVENANCE:

...; dealer Frides Lameris; from which purchased by the museum with the support of Mr. E.S. Kok and Ms. M.W.A.M. van den Leuvert, 2025

(inv. no. BK-2025-19).



II JEAN-HENRI RIESENER (Gladbeck, Westphalia 1734-1806 Paris)

Drawing for a fall-front desk on stand (*secrétaire en bonheur-du-jour*) decorated with Japanese lacquerware, c. 1784

Pen and black ink, brush in grey and yellow, remains of a sketch in graphite, 235 x 370 mm

Inscription: *sceretair en bonheur du jour de vieux lac. 3 pied 6 po de large sur 4 pied 1#0 po de haut.;*
water mark: Honig & Zoonen

This drawing by the Parisian cabinetmaker Jean-Henri Riesener shows a fall-front desk on stand (*secrétaire en bonheur-du-jour*) now in the collection of the Getty Museum in Los Angeles (inv. no. 71.DA.104). The three-quarter view combines the clarity of a technical drawing with a spatial feeling of perspective, which, along with the dimensions indicated by the cabinetmaker, make it easy to grasp the form of the desk as well as its decoration.

Riesener also carefully rendered the patterns of foliage on the inset panels of Japanese lacquer and indicated the finely chased medallion and mounts in the drawing in yellow wash. This combination of Asian lacquer and very finely gilt bronze was characteristic of the furniture he supplied to Queen Marie-Antoinette of France, although the desk in the Getty has not been traced in the royal accounts. As a favourite of the queen, and *ébéniste ordinaire du mobilier de la couronne* from 1774, Riesener was the pre-eminent cabinetmaker in late eighteenth-century France.

The appearance of this drawing along with three other sheets and a letter by Riesener at auction constitutes a rare and remarkable discovery of documents relating to the career of this important cabinetmaker (sale, Paris (Daguerre), 26 November 2024, nos. 47-51). In the letter, dated 3 October 1798, Riesener appeals to Ferdinand Guillemardet, French ambassador to the Court of Spain in Madrid, for help in finding buyers for his furniture, for which purpose he enclosed the four drawings. This included the desk depicted in the Rijksmuseum drawing, as well as a commode and another desk (*secrétaire en armoire*), for which Riesener was asking a total price of 40.000 livres. These were similarly decorated with Japanese lacquer and gilt bronze and probably represent the major part of a celebrated suite of furniture supplied by Riesener in 1783 to Marie Antoinette's *cabinet interieur* at Versailles (along with an *encoignure*, or corner cupboard), now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (inv. nos. 20.155.11, 12). The fourth drawing, the only one rendered in red ink, depicted the jewellery cabinet of the Comtesse de Provence (sister-in-law to the queen) now in the Royal Collec-

tion at Windsor Castle (inv. no. RCIN 31207), for which Riesener was asking 30.000 livres.

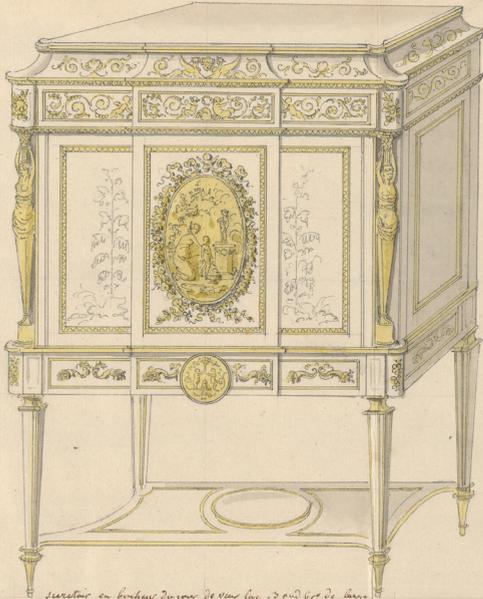
The fall-front of the desk in the Rijksmuseum drawing is decorated with a large oval medallion that depicts a mother leading her infant child to an altar with a statue. The same iconography, called the *Sacrifice to Love*, occurs in similar medallions on two fall-front desks in the Wallace Collection (inv. nos. F302, F303). Riesener supplied these two pieces in 1783 for Queen Marie Antoinette's private rooms at the Château de Marly and her boudoir in the Petit Trianon. There is evidence suggesting that these medallions were fitted at later stages, replacing earlier decorations of the fall-front. The discovery of the present drawing, however, suggests that the medallion of the desk in the Getty Museum was already in place during Riesener's lifetime, and probably formed part of his original design.

At the time Riesener wrote the letter, his client base had been decimated by the French Revolution, while a struggling economy and heavy taxation had significantly cooled the market for luxury goods. The financial need of the new regime led to the sale of formerly royal possessions, which enabled Riesener to buy back some of the furniture he had once supplied to the crown. In a postscript, he mentions that his wife had urged him to write Guillemardet. In his letter, Riesener also refers to this 'precious furniture ... you have seen in my home', suggesting that the drawings the aging cabinet maker sent were in fact draughted records of furniture pieces realized in the past, not drawings made at the time of writing for advertising purposes.

AD

PROVENANCE:

Sent in 1798 by Jean-Henri Riesener to Ferdinand Guillemardet (1765-1809) in Madrid; by descent in the Guillemardet family; sale, Paris (Daguerre) 26 November 2024, no. 50, to the museum, as a gift of H.B. van der Ven, The Hague (inv. no. RP-T-2024-270).



*Secrétaire en bois de noyer de 1750 ans - 3 pieds 6 pouces de large
sur 4 pieds 10 pouces de haut -*

12 DAVID OYENS (Amsterdam 1842-1902 Brussels)

Père et Fille, 1878

Oil on canvas, 69.8 x 54.7 cm

Signed and dated, lower left: *David Oyens*. 78.

The twins David and Pieter Oyens were born in Amsterdam in 1842 as sons of a banker. Unsited as businessmen and having failed to become gentlemen farmers, they decided on an artistic career; both were talented draughtsmen. The two inseparable brothers began their artistic training with the painter Jean François Portaels (1818-1895) in Brussels in 1860. Portaels's studio was known as a gathering place for young men leading a bohemian lifestyle, with contemporary sources often citing it as a breeding ground for modernism. Artists such as James Ensor (1860-1949), Theo van Rijsselberghe (1862-1926) and Jan Toorop (1858-1928) studied under his direction. Portaels gave the Oyens brothers a thorough education, while allowing them enough freedom to develop their own style.

At the time, artists started reading Charles Baudelaire's and Camille Lemonnier's art criticism. The two critics argued that one should represent the human soul against the background of modernity. Modern art had to be truthful, or in other words: an honest and exact representation of one's surroundings. The young artists attending Portaels's atelier adopted these ideas. The twins began painting scenes from everyday life, in intimate contemplation of people of flesh and blood. They often depicted each other in the setting of their studio, in the company of models and compatriots. In their search for sincerity, however, they did not neglect their Dutch predecessors and were inspired by Rembrandt and Frans Hals, and particularly Johannes Vermeer. Pieter Oyens wrote: 'Vermeer succeeded in turning nothing into seemingly interesting masterpieces of poetry and truth'.

In the 1878 painting *Père et Fille*, David Oyens visualized a scene from one of his favourite books, Alphonse Daudet's *Le Nabab*, published earlier that same year. Oyens was so intrigued by one scene in Daudet's expressive literary tableau – a father walking with his daughter, after just having lost his entire fortune – that he created his own depiction. Remarkable is the bold cropping of the image, akin to a photographic snapshot. Some ten years later, the artist George Hendrik Breitner would become famous in part thanks

to this very practice. In 1878, however, such a paring down was unusual in the Netherlands and Belgium, whereas in France, impressionists like Edgar Degas had already made it common practice. David Oyens wrote:

I have mainly endeavoured to express life. As a spectator, I find that if each person can create their own story in their own way when looking at a painting, this is fine proof of its success. In this group in particular, I have tried to express two people passing by, something fleeting, but at the same time, through the gaze of the young woman, I have tried to leave a lasting impression.

And indeed, viewers of the painting feel as if they are sitting at a table on a cafe terrace, watching the steady stream of people passing by. Their attention is drawn to the top-hatted man lost in thought. A glance so piercing that the scene stays with the viewer long after the couple's disappearance into the crowd.

MJ

LITERATURE:

- De gebroeders Oyens: David en Pieter Oyens – Een Nederlandse schilderstweeling in Brussel*, exh. cat. The Hague (Gemeentemuseum) 2008, pp. 14-15, 136
- Saskia de Bodt, *Halverwege Parijs. Willem Roelofs en de Nederlandse schilderskolonie in Brussel 1840-1890*, Ghent/Amsterdam 1995, p. 161, fig. 146
- Exposition d'Oeuvres d'Art: Cercle Artistique et Littéraire*, exh. cat. Brussels (Cercle Artistique et Littéraire) 1878, no. 167 (as *Père et fille*)
- M. Véry, 'Exposition du Cercle Artistique et Littéraire III, Peintres de genre', *L'Artiste* 3, 27 May 1878, p. 161

PROVENANCE:

- The artist (1878-1902); his widow C.E. Oyens-Voûte, Brussels 1902-17; sale, Studio David Oyens, Amsterdam (Frederik Muller & Cie), 15 May 1917, no. 2 (as *De Wandeling*), to art dealer Caramelli & Tessaro, Amsterdam, 1917-32; ...; J. Kerstens, Tilburg, ?-1987; sale, Amsterdam (Christie's), 22 September 1987, no. 286 (as *A Portrait of a Gentleman with a Top Hat and his Wife*), to Fred Hendriks, Geldrop, 1987-2022; from whom to a private collector; by whom loaned to the museum, 2025
- (inv. no. SK-C-1851).



13 WOBBE ALKEMA (Borger 1900-1984 Kampen)

Composition, 1924

Oil on panel, 58,5 x 58,5 cm

Signed, bottom right: W.ALKEMA '24

With the debut of the monthly magazine of constructivist art *De Driehoek* in Antwerp on 1 April 1925, Flemish readers were introduced not only to the avant-garde in their own country, but also to the artistic vanguard from the northernmost city in the Netherlands. A striking woodcut with circles and triangles by the Groningen artist Wobbe Alkema adorned the columns of this new magazine, founded by the artist Jozef Peeters (1895-1960) together with poet Paul van Ostaijen (1896-1928) and writer Eddy du Perron (1899-1940).

Peeters was formerly chief editor of the Antwerp art magazine *Het Overzicht*, which came to Alkema's attention in Groningen, sparking an artistic affinity. Although the inspiration he derived from the geometric abstraction of *De Stijl* had already led to far greater abstraction in his work, for Alkema the path taken by Piet Mondrian and other artists was overly strict and intellectual. He was more drawn to the much freer Flemish approach to constructivism, characterized by its undogmatic geometry composed of diagonals and circles – shapes that were taboo, or at least disputed, among the artists of *De Stijl*.

In the summer of 1924, Alkema cycled from Groningen to Belgium to seek out like-minded artists, among them Peeters in Antwerp and Felix De Boeck (1898-1995) in Drogenbos near Brussels. In the ensuing six years, up until 1930, Alkema would create approximately twenty compositions with overlapping circles, triangles, rectangles, squares and lines carefully balanced within the picture plane, but with a dynamic achieved by means of repetition, contrast and diagonal lines. In these works, the colour palette varies, but virtually always with a glowing warmth arising from mixed colours such as purple, brown, orange, green, ochre or pink. Alkema also produced linocuts and woodcuts of several of these compositions. Besides the aforementioned woodcut in the first issue, *De Driehoek* published three more of these prints.

Alkema travelled again to Belgium in the summer of 1925, this time by train to meet with Van Ostaijen. In the fall of that same year, the poet

briefly ran the Brussels art gallery A la Vierge Poupine, together with Geert van Bruaene (1891-1964). Greatly impressed by Alkema's work, Van Ostaijen received two prints from the artist. In his turn, he sent Alkema a copy of his groundbreaking and compelling sound poetry collection titled *Bezette Stad* (1921), to be circulated and sold among interested parties in Groningen. Although undocumented, Alkema's 1924 *Composition*, now acquired by the Rijksmuseum, may possibly have passed through Van Ostaijen's hands or belonged to his estate. Hidden from view in a private New York collection until its sale at auction in 2024, the painting was hitherto unknown in Alkema's oeuvre.

During these 'constructivist' years, Alkema often favoured a square picture plane. Seven of the twenty painted compositions completed between 1924 and 1930 are square, as are three of the four prints in *De Driehoek*. Two other works from 1924 – *Symmetrical Composition* and *Composition with Blue Triangles* (private collections) – are closely related to the painting in the Rijksmuseum's collection, also with overlapping triangles and similar in size. While Alkema indeed relied on purely geometric forms for his compositions, it remains debatable whether he truly succeeded (or wished to succeed) in avoiding any suggestion of the outside world. The way in which the geometrical forms are placed next to and overlap each other – or in which colour and line horizontally divide the picture plane in two – consistently evokes the impression of a landscape, or more specifically, an urban landscape of rising towers, chimneys, masts and trees amidst the overlapping contours of building facades. Flattened into angular forms, such a cityscape might very well have resonated with the author of *Bezette Stad*.

LVH

LITERATURE:

Anna Smit-Loor, *Beeldtaal*, sale cat. Ommen (Mark Smit Kunsthandel) 2025, pp. 42-43 (fig.)



PROVENANCE:

...; ? collection Paul van Ostaijen (1896-1928), Antwerp; ...; private collection, The Netherlands; from which to a New York City private collection; their children; their sale, Boston (Grogan & Company Auctioneers), 2 November 2024, no. 134, \$59,375.00, to Mark Smit Kunsthandel b.v., Ommen; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of Pon Holdings b.v. and made possible in part by Mrs. M. Mees, 2025 (inv. no. SK-A-5140).

14 Designer: CHRIS LEBEAU (Amsterdam 1878-1945 Dachau)

Manufacture: L. MOSER UND SÖHNE

Vase, 1929

Blown glass, h. 36.5 cm x diam. 20.1 cm

Signed on the bottom: – CHRIS – LEBEAU – JANUARI – 1929 – BÖHMEN – N° 39 – V

The present vase was made in January 1929, during the final period of Chris Lebeau's activity in the art of glassblowing. This versatile Amsterdam artist had begun his adventure in glass only five years before, on 1 December 1923, at the funeral of the artist Karel de Bazel. It was there that he crossed paths with P.M. Cochius (1874-1938), the ambitious and idealistic director of Glasfabriek Leerdam, who invited Lebeau to come create designs for his glass factory, like De Bazel before him.

In 1924, Lebeau produced a series of 'vormglas' – glass objects formed with a mould – on behalf of Glasfabriek Leerdam. A year later, he began work on what were to be his first unique pieces, created in close collaboration with the factory's glassblowers. Glass designer Andries Copier (1901-1991) had already been producing unique pieces for Leerdam since 1923. This was pioneering work in a country like the Netherlands, where no tradition of art glass had previously existed. The majority of these objects were created outside the factory's regular operating hours, in the evening. They were very experimental in character, with various decoration techniques developed during the making process.

Both designers worked with craquelé, a process that entails exposing the hot, molten glass to the vapour of a metal chloride, causing a thin iridescent layer (akin to a soap bubble) to form on the glass. As the glass is further blown, this layer bursts open, resulting in small metal particles visible across the surface in fragmentary form. However, this technique – along with other issues – eventually led to the end of the collaboration. A disagreement arose when Lebeau exhibited several of the pieces with craquelé, but without naming Copier as the technique's developer. Lebeau then decided to cease his activities at Leerdam.

Seeking a new collaboration, Lebeau approached L. Moser und Söhne, a glass factory in Adolf near Winterberg (now Vimperk in the Czech Republic), where the glassblowers were more skilled. Lebeau would make three separate sojourns in Bohemia, the first in January 1926, even after Cochius asked him to return to Leerdam. In Bohemia, glassblowers practiced their art when standing, unlike

in Leerdam, where the hot molten glass was modelled while sitting in a special glassblower's chair. The standing method allowed Lebeau to play a far more active role on the work floor and model the glass himself. Always equipped with his own 'explosives case' of chemicals, Lebeau drew sketches in the train and managed to further refine the craquelé method. The present vase displays a special combination of various decorative techniques. A subtle colour gradient, ranging from pink on the bottom to yellow at the top, has been applied by means of colour powders. A regular pattern of round and oval air bubbles is created in an internal layer. Additionally, Lebeau has used black antimony craquelé, a form of craquelé achieved by exposing the hot glass bubble to a vapour of antimony chloride prior to expanding the bubble by blowing.

Upon Lebeau's return, his life partner at this time, Ditte van der Vies-Heyting (1877-1942), exhibited the series of 'hand-formed glass' at the De Bron art gallery in The Hague. The exhibition was received with wide acclaim. An issue of *Wendingen* devoted to the series praised Lebeau's spirit of free experimentation and high technical refinement. Works described as 'vases where air bubbles were arranged into beautiful arabesques' possibly refers to the present object, as well as a similar, white vase in the Kunstmuseum The Hague. Subsequent attempts to organize a sojourn in Bohemia proved futile. For this reason, the present vase is among the last pinnacle works of Lebeau's glass art.

MB

LITERATURE:

Mechteld de Bois, *Chris Lebeau (1878-1945)*, exh. cat. Assen (Drents Museum) 1987
Just Havelaar, 'Lebeau's Glas', *Wendingen* 10 (1929), no. 2, pp. 2-18

PROVENANCE:

...; dealer Frans Leidelmeijer, Amsterdam; from which to A.A. Streefland, Koog aan de Zaan; by whom donated to the museum, 2024
(inv. no. BK-2024-90).



15 NICOLAAS WARB (Sophia Elisabeth Warburg) (Amsterdam 1906-1957 Hilversum)

Fraction de la réalité, 1950

Oil on multiplex, 147 x 115 x 5 cm

In the words of the Dutch painter Nicolaas Warb: 'Abstract painting attempts to convey only sensations, vibrations arising from "relations" between straight lines, curves, masses, colours and voids'.

After studying at the Amsterdam Rijksakademie, Sophia Warburg moved to Paris in 1929, where she worked as a stylist for various fashion houses. Much of her free time she devoted to music; only rarely did she paint. This changed upon meeting the Belgian artist Georges Vantongerloo (1886-1965) in 1939, who inspired Warburg to return to the visual arts. Under his influence, she began creating abstract-geometric compositions, made up of thin lines and planar fields. In the nineteen forties, Warburg's style rapidly evolved to include freer colour planes, organic lines and rounder forms.

Shortly after her marriage to the Breton artist Francis Nicolas, whom she had met around the outbreak of the Second World War, Warburg chose to continue her artistic career under the pseudonym Nicolaas Warb. The decision to change her surname was possibly motivated by the strong Germanic connotations of her maiden name, ill-placed in wartime. Warb also adopted her husband's surname, slightly modified by doubling the 'a', as her new, self-chosen first name, based on her conviction that she would then be taken more seriously by the French critics. Warb questioned whether, being a woman, she would truly be respected as a full-fledged artist.

In the foreground of her painting *Fraction de la réalité*, Warb painted two large triangular planes – one dark blue, the other dark yellow – distinctly separated by stark lines and sharp angles. Over the top left corner of the yellow form, she painted a combination of smaller planes in the colours red, brown, dark blue and light yellow. On the left, the points of three red triangles meet. To create a contrast, Warb placed a light blue form on the left, set against a lighter background, thus breaking with the painting's dark palette and the overall strict geometry: the edges are rounded, the colour soft. Originally, the light-yellow form in the foreground, now clearly discoloured, was most likely brighter and deeper in colour. This discolouration has revealed a lighter underlayer, suggesting that Warb had applied several

successive layers, one on top of the other. Initial research indicates that she probably first painted a fluorescent yellow in the canvas's centre, which she subsequently painted over in a more muted yellow and white. It appears that Warb was applying Goethe's theory of the interplay of transparent and opaque paint layers, as outlined in his *Zur Farbenlehre* (1810). Future technical research, including macro X-ray fluorescence scans, will provide greater insight into the artist's intriguing working method.

Warb very likely exhibited her *Fraction de la réalité* at the 1952 Exposition Société des Artistes Indépendants (Salon des Indépendants) in Paris. The exhibition catalogue cites two works submitted by the artist. However, the title of work number 2668 – the same number inscribed on the sticker on the reverse of the now acquired painting – is listed as *Presence Invisible*. Conceivably, Warb changed the title after its showing at this exhibition and subsequently painted the new title, *Fraction de la réalité*, on the reverse. Additional research into this internationally active artist, scarcely represented in the Netherlands, is certain to shed new light on mid-twentieth-century developments in abstract art.

ME

LITERATURE:

- Marianne Bierenbroodspot, *Nicolaas Warb (1906-1957) en haar interpretatie van de kleurenleer van Goethe: Een aanzet tot een catalogue raisonné*, Amsterdam (master's thesis Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) 2006
- Mariette Niermeyer, 'Nicolaas Warb', in Jonneke Fritz-Jobse and Frans van Burkom (eds.), *Een nieuwe synthese 1945-1960: Geometrisch abstracte kunst in Nederland*, The Hague 1988, pp. 288-92
- Nicolaas Warb, *Aperçus et pensées sur la peinture abstraite*, independent publication, Paris 1942

PROVENANCE:

- Collection of the artist; from whom to Jacques Wormser, Mougins, c. 1952; by descent through the family to a private collection, Paris; from whom to a private collector, Switzerland, until 2025; from whom, through the mediation of the dealers Meredith Rosen Gallery and Galerie Knoell, to the museum, 2025
(inv. no. SK-A-5138).



16 WESSEL COUZIJN (Amsterdam 1912-1984 Haarlem)

Cast: Bronze foundry A Cire Perdue Fa. M.N.R. Joosten

Auschwitz, 1966-67

Bronze, painted iron, 262.5 x 362 x 265 cm

Inscribed in the model and cast in the bronze: *CIRE PERDUE JOOSTEN* and *COUZV* [sic]

When awarded the David Roëll Prize for his entire oeuvre in 1966, Wessel Couzijn was still working on a new, monumental sculpture. The laureate was reported in several Dutch news publications, including the Amsterdam newspaper *Het Parool*, where the story was accompanied by a photo of Couzijn in his Amsterdam studio, aiming a flaming blowtorch at a bronze cast by the Joosten bronze foundry in nearby Soest. According to the article, the artist already had a title in mind for this work in progress: *In Memoriam*. As Couzijn explained, the title reflected a poignant memory from some ten years before, made during a visit to Auschwitz, the concentration and extermination camp where countless people were imprisoned under inhumane conditions and ruthlessly murdered.

The new work, under its definitive title *Auschwitz*, attracted widespread attention when exhibited at a major retrospective of Couzijn's work in the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 1968. Much impressed by the sculpture's dramatic power, art critic Walter Barten, writing in the Dutch opinion magazine *Elseviers Weekblad*, described it as: 'Two stove guards out of which the bronze surges and churns'. He continued: 'The German helmet cries out victory above the convulsing life between the brutally and mercilessly realistic stove guards. Around this sculpture, all artistic considerations vanish, even the museum atmosphere's aggravating sterility no longer matters. ... This bronze with two stove guards, likely never to overcome its museum status, deserves a central place in our society'.

An attempt to honour this call ensued. In the same year, plans were announced for the creation of a new Amsterdam Theaterschool, a merging of several local stage and theatre schools, housed in a new building to be erected on the city's Jonas Daniël Meijerplein. In accordance with these plans, *Auschwitz* was purchased by the Dutch state for the amount of 110,000 guilders (today equivalent to approximately €290,000), jointly financed by the City of Amsterdam, the ministry of Education and Science and the ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work. As stated in a ministerial letter addressed to the sculptor: 'the monument shall be

installed, either inside the building in such a way that it is visible from the public thoroughfare, or placed in a space of the building readily accessible to the public'.

In the end, nothing came of the plans. The new building failed to materialize, with Couzijn's monumental sculpture therefore denied 'a central place in our society'. Ownership of the work was transferred to the Theaterschool, but under the supervision of the Dienst Verspreide Rijkscollecties (Office for Dispersed State-Owned Collections) it was assigned to the Kröller-Müller Museum as a long-term loan. Although occasionally on display, loaned out for exhibitions and even featured in a theatrical production, Couzijn's *Auschwitz* gradually disappeared from the nation's collective memory. Transferred to the Rijksmuseum by the legal successor of the Theaterschool, its museum status is now definitive – entirely in line with Barten's prescient observation.

The biography of Couzijn's sculpture calls for a more detailed investigation and description. *Auschwitz* is not just a testimony of the deep scars left by World War II in Dutch post-war society, but how it was handled also remarkably illustrates the history of Holocaust remembrance in the Netherlands.

LVH

LITERATURE (selection):

Marianne Brouwer and Rieja Brouns (eds.), *Sculpture in the Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller*, Amsterdam 1992, pp. 74-75, cat. no. 263 (fig.)

Ida Boelema (ed.), *Couzijn. Beeldhouwer / sculptor*, Weesp 1986 (pp. 31, 58-59, 98, cat. no. B87, fig.)

André Rutten, "'Brave New World' onthult Auschwitz', *Trouw* 6 October 1983

Couzijn. Beelden 1948-1968, exh. cat. Groningen (Groninger Museum voor Stad en Lande) 1969, unpagged, cat. no. 12 (fig.)

Couzijn. Beelden, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Stedelijk Museum) 1968, unpagged, cat. no. 9 (fig.)

Walter Barten, 'Wessel Couzijn', *Elseviers Weekblad* 8 June 1968 (fig.)

Cor Blok, 'Wessel Couzijn. Beelden 1959-1968', *De Groene Amsterdammer* 8 June 1968 (fig.)

Ben Dull, 'Beeldhouwer Wessel Couzijn: "Ik ga de ruimte te lijf"', *Het Parool* 5 November 1966 (fig. detail)



PROVENANCE:

Purchased by the Dutch State from the artist, 1970;
transferred to the Theaterschool, Amsterdam; on long term
loan to the Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, 1975-2024;
acquired by the Rijksmuseum with the support of PON
Holdings B.V., 2024

(inv. no. BK-2024-121).

17 BEN AKKERMAN (Enschede 1920-2010)

Untitled, 1985/1994

Acrylic paint on canvas and panel, 142 x 76 cm

On the reverse: *Akkerman – Enschede 1985-'94*

'Yellow, I find it to be an incredibly intriguing colour', Ben Akkerman remarked during an interview in *NRC Handelsblad* with art critic Betty van Garrel after receiving the 1994 PC Kunstprijs for his 'exemplary' oeuvre. The full-page interview closed with a description of 'a lozenge-shaped painting in a very pronounced yellow with a delicately worked paint surface, hanging above the living room sofa: "That painting is a few years old ... I was actually no longer interested in working with that unorthodox shape. I was ready to saw it in two, but then I'm just tenacious, and this is what came of it. I do like that strange, yellow colour, though there are quite a few who don't share my view... When I first saw that yellow, I thought – something I don't say that often – it has something akin to spring. It's the spring of a painter in his old age.'"

No image accompanied the newspaper interview, but all indications are that Akkerman was discussing the painting recently acquired by the Rijksmuseum, donated by Mr and Mrs Ot and Anneke van der Sluis through the meditation of the BorzoGallery in Amsterdam. Darker layers of colour, possibly applied at some previous time, can just vaguely be seen through the yellow of the distinctly elongated, lozenge shape, thus ostensibly explaining the dual dating on the painting's reverse. A pattern of opaque nubs overlies the somewhat transparent yellow background, giving the paint surface that particularly delicate, subtle impression that caught Van Garrel's attention. The two densities of paint – in the colour Akkerman described as 'primrose yellow' – blend to create the 'transparent atmosphere' he sought to attain in his paintings.

Akkerman's quest began in his youth, sparked by his fascination with the atmosphere in the seventeenth-century landscape paintings of Salomon van Ruysdael and Jan van Goyen seen at the Rijksmuseum Twenthe in his native Enschede. The scenery around this city close to the German border became the subject of Akkerman's earliest, still figurative paintings and drawings, which, nevertheless, eventually became increasingly stylised.

Employed as a civil servant with the municipality of Enschede for most of his life, Akkerman

never received any formal art training. Working in his spare time and post-retirement, the artist built a small but highly consistent oeuvre of no more than 150 paintings and several hundred drawings. Akkerman's earliest works were sheltered from the influence of the art world, untouched by the fickleness of successive groups and movements. It was not until the mid-nineteen seventies, when first represented by the leading Amsterdam gallery Art & Project in the Netherlands and internationally, that Akkerman's work would find its place in the art world, where Minimal Art and Fundamental (or Radical) Painting prevailed at the time. In these later years, the landscape as a source of inspiration for his compositions became less visible. Elements betraying any kind of link to reality began to disappear. His paintings transformed into objects – typically square, but sometimes lozenge-shaped and even octagonal – composed of countless paint layers, applied with an endless perseverance and patience in search of that intangible atmosphere.

LvH

LITERATURE:

Ben Akkerman: Schilderijen en tekeningen, exh. cat. Enschede (Rijksmuseum Twenthe) 1996, p. 49 (ill.), p. 100
Betty van Garrel, 'Een benadering van het paradijs', *NRC handelsblad* 3 February 1995

PROVENANCE:

Collection of the artist; from whom to the De Back collection, c. 1995-96; from which purchased by Ot and Anneke van der Sluis, Amsterdam, 1996-2025; by whom donated to the museum, 2025
(inv. no. SK-A-5136).

