



# Short notice

## Gerrit Lundens, His Copy after *The Night Watch* and the Derivatives in His Oeuvre

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Research into the scaled-down copy after *The Night Watch* (fig. 1) and the oeuvre of the artist who most probably painted it, Gerrit Lundens (1622-1686), led to new insights into its maker.<sup>1</sup> This article focuses not on the importance of the copy as documentary evidence of the original appearance of Rembrandt's civic guard portrait,<sup>2</sup> but on its significance as a 'conduit' of knowledge of seventeenth-century painting methods. A virtually unknown painting by Lundens, *The Fair-Goers* (fig. 2), prompted the research and turned out to be a key piece.

### Attribution Thanks to Provenance and Derivatives

The copy is not signed, but is traditionally attributed to Gerrit Lundens on the grounds of a description in the catalogue of Pieter van der Lip's sale in 1712: 'The militia piece, in which Captain Benning Kok, with his guard, is painted in detail by Gerard Lundens, the best of his known work.'<sup>3</sup> It is highly probable that it is this copy that is listed in the estate inventories of Catharina Hooft of 1691 and her son Pieter de Graeff of 1707, although the artist's name is not given.<sup>4</sup> Catharina Hooft must have inherited the work from her

< Fig. 1  
GERRIT LUNDENS  
(attributed to),  
Copy after  
*The Night Watch*,  
c. 1642-49.  
Oil on panel,  
66.5 x 85.5 cm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. SK-C-1453;  
on loan from the  
National Gallery,  
London. Bequeathed  
by the Rev Thomas  
Halford, 1857.

cousin Maria Overlander, who was married to Frans Banninck Cocq, the principal figure in *The Night Watch*. The childless Maria left the states of Purmerland and Ilpendam and the family portraits to Catharina in 1678.<sup>5</sup> If the copy of *The Night Watch* was indeed part of this inheritance, it must have come from the estate of Frans Banninck Cocq, who had died earlier.

This supposition is confirmed by the watercolour after *The Night Watch*, attributed to Jacob Colijn (1614/15-1686), which is pasted in Banninck Cocq's album held in the archives of the Rijksmuseum (fig. 3). The reduced number of pikes leaning against the city wall in the background on the right appears in the same simplified way in the watercolour and in the painted copy after *The Night Watch*.<sup>6</sup> In both works, the pikeman Walich Schellingwou is placed higher than in Rembrandt's *Night Watch* (see below).

'Gerard Lundens' is listed as the maker of the copy in the 1712 sale catalogue. As was so often the case, Lundens probably trained with a member of his family, his brother-in-law Abraham van den Hecken (1615-1655/1669). Van den Hecken married Catharina Lundens when her brother Gerrit was thirteen,



Fig. 2  
 GERRIT LUNDENS,  
*The Fair-Goers*,  
 c. 1642-49.  
 Oil on panel,  
 54 x 83 cm.  
 Private collection.



Fig. 3  
 JACOB COLIJN  
 (attributed to),  
*Copy after  
 The Night Watch*,  
 c. 1653-55.  
 Charcoal and  
 watercolour,  
 14 x 18 cm.  
 Amsterdam,  
 Rijksmuseum,  
 inv. no. SK-C-1102,  
 Album of Frans  
 Banninck Cocq,  
 vol. 2, fol. 142; on  
 loan from Jonkheer  
 J. de Graeff, Delft.



Fig. 4

GERRIT LUNDENS,  
*The Wedding*, 1649.  
 Oil on panel,  
 85 x 117 cm.  
 Current where-  
 abouts unknown.



the ideal age to begin an apprenticeship as an artist. This suggestion is supported by the similarities between his early genre paintings and works by Van den Hecken.<sup>7</sup> Since 1643, the year notice of his marriage was given, Lundens appears in records as a painter.<sup>8</sup>

According to the German art historian Gustav Glück, Lundens was no more than twenty-seven when he painted the copy of *The Night Watch*.<sup>9</sup> Glück came to this conclusion by way of another painting by Lundens, *The Wedding* (fig. 4), which is signed and dated 1649.<sup>10</sup> The composition contains elements that also appear in *The Night Watch*. This means that Lundens must have copied Rembrandt's masterpiece between 1642 and 1649 and thus become familiar with its composition.<sup>11</sup>

Frans Banninck Cocq probably commissioned Rembrandt to paint the company of which he was captain for the civic guard headquarters.<sup>12</sup> We do not know why Lundens was given the commission to make the copy after *The Night Watch*. Arguments put for-

ward in the past, such as Lundens's skill in painting miniature portraits, are not convincing.<sup>13</sup> Only three of the miniature portraits attributed to him are dated, and all those in 1650, at least a year after the copy was supposedly made.<sup>14</sup>

### Lundens's Copy

If the copy is viewed with the naked eye, it appears to be a very accurate rendition of *The Night Watch*. Parallels and differences come to light when projections of the original and the reproduction are superimposed at the same magnification. The long pole holding the standard and one of the vertical outlines of the right-hand pilaster of the gate in the background consistently line up. It is quite likely that Lundens used these lines as anchor points in establishing the composition. When the two projected versions are slid one over the other, one part of the two compositions always coincides. Each of these parts is about a sixth of the whole, which means that Lundens most likely reproduced *The Night Watch* in six

pieces. The different sections from which the composition seems to have been made and the slightly distorted heads of some of the members of the company in the copy strongly suggest the use of an optical instrument.<sup>15</sup>

One significant difference between the reproduction and the original is the position of the pikeman Walich Schellingwou. Lundens painted his portrait higher in the composition than Rembrandt did, perhaps to compensate for the omission of the cartouche bearing the names of the members of the company.<sup>16</sup>

### Crowd Control

An analysis of Lundens's oeuvre, which comprises some hundred and fifty paintings, signed by or attributed to

him and a few drawings, reveals that there are at least ten works in which parts of the compositions correspond with parts of *The Night Watch*.<sup>17</sup> The subjects of these derivatives differ: five weddings, two scenes at the fair, a history painting, a guardhouse and a procession with a *Zwarte Piet* (see appendix). Aside from the last two, all the compositions, like that of *The Night Watch*, feature a crowd of people with a scene involving a few figures in the foreground.

Of the ten derivatives, *The Fair-Goers* is the most closely related genre work (fig. 2).<sup>18</sup> In one of the newspaper reviews of the exhibition *Zeventiende-eeuwse meesters in Gelders bezit* in 1953 it was even jokingly described as 'plagiarism' because of the parallels



Fig. 5  
Detail of  
*The Fair-Goers*  
(fig. 2).



with *The Night Watch*.<sup>19</sup> Aside from the compositional elements, Lundens also borrowed a number of details almost literally from the civic guard portrait. He copied Rembrandt's organization of a chaotic crowd, in which the suggestion of movement and the illusion of depth are created by the placement of the figures, the use of colour and the lighting.

As in *The Night Watch*, the central tableau in *The Fair-Goers* is flanked by dark scenes on either side. In the centre stands a woman wearing a black dress fastened with red lacing (fig. 5). She stretches out her left hand, like Banninck Cocq, who is also dressed in dark clothes with a red detail, his sash (fig. 6). Slightly behind this woman and to her left stands her

partner, dressed in light clothes like Banninck Cocq's lieutenant, Willem van Ruytenburgh, who is positioned just behind him. There are two more conspicuous similarities in Lundens's work. First of all, there is the dark leg, almost in silhouette, of a pickpocket at the fair, contrasting with the pale yellow gown of the woman to the left of centre of the composition. This corresponds with the young militiaman's leg, which stands out against the cream-coloured dress worn by the girl darting between the guardsmen. Secondly, the sleeve of the dark red dress worn by a visitor to the fair seen from behind echoes the compositional element of the stock of the weapon held by the musketeer, likewise dressed in red, in *The Night Watch*.

Fig. 6  
Detail of the copy  
of *The Night Watch*  
(fig. 1).



The viewer's eye is led into the fair-ground scene by the pale yellow dress worn by the woman a little way behind the principal figures in the foreground. Lundens repeats this artist's trick by painting a second woman in a white dress in the background, creating a line of sight towards the entrance to the tent. When the deepest point in a dark scene is a light colour, the viewer feels as if he can look into the picture and the illusion of space on a flat surface is created. Here Lundens used the art theoretical approach to the three-dimensional effect of planes of colour described by Samuel van Hoogstraten, which Rembrandt likewise used in *The Night Watch*.<sup>20</sup>

Both painters placed the crowd at different levels in the picture plane. Figures at the back in *The Night Watch* stand on a couple of steps to bring them higher. Lundens painted a hill in the background on which spectators stand watching a recitation on a stage. In the foreground, at the same level as the running dwarf on the left in *The Night Watch*, Lundens painted a boy picking up apples from the ground in the shade of the waffle stall. It is clear that in the conception and organization of their figure paintings, both Rembrandt and Lundens applied a number of rules set out in the chapter on *Ordinantie* (arrangement) in Karel van Mander's didactic poem.<sup>21</sup> Rembrandt also derived the positioning of figures at different levels from the history works painted by his teacher, Pieter Lastman (1583-1633), who depicted hierarchies in scenes arranged in a circular form, with background figures, a central point and a dark foreground.<sup>22</sup>

The way Lundens employed these painting techniques in *The Fair-Goers* – the same ones Rembrandt used in *The Night Watch* – is evidence of the thorough knowledge of the civic guard portrait he acquired while he was copying it and his possible familiarity with Van Mander's handbook for artists.

To judge by the derivatives in his oeuvre, Lundens also used the copy of *The Night Watch* he was probably commissioned to paint as an exercise. Lundens developed into a proficient genre painter and portraitist. He undertook portrait commissions for wealthy Amsterdam citizens and produced many paintings of genre scenes, which sold very well.

## APPENDIX

Composition of the 'Night Watch'  
in paintings by Gerrit Lundens

LUNDENS ARCHIVES NO.	TITLE	FORMAT	SIGNATURE/ DATE	PROVENANCE
H 5	<i>Copy of The Night Watch by Rembrandt</i>	Panel, 66.5 x 85.5 cm	(date 1642-49)	London, The National Gallery, on loan to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2019
K 2	<i>The Fair-Goers</i>	Panel, 54 x 83 cm	<i>G Lundens</i>	<i>Zeventiende-eeuwse meesters uit Gelders bezit</i> , exh. cat. Arnhem (Gemeentemuseum) 1953, no. 38 Private collection
H 2	<i>The Wedding</i>	Panel, 59.5 x 117	<i>G Lundens 1649</i>	Tritsch Collection, cat. 1907, p. 6 with illustration
H 9	<i>Bridal Couple Dancing with Fiddler</i>	Canvas, 50 x 64.5 cm	<i>G Lundens f 1675</i>	Amsterdam, art dealer J. Rosenthal, December 1968
H 12	<i>Bridal Couple Dancing with Cellist</i>	Canvas, 47 x 61 cm	<i>G Lundens</i>	Sale London (Sotheby's), 19 March 1975, no. 54 with illustration
H 13	<i>Bridal Couple Dancing</i>	Canvas, dimensions not available	<i>G Lundens</i>	Ms Meyer Collection, Dordrecht
H 15	<i>Wedding with Bridal Couple and Man with Meat on a Spit</i>	Panel, 50 x 66 cm	(traces of a signature)	Sale London (Christies), 14 December 1990
D 16	<i>Musicians in the Street with Zwarte Piet</i>	Panel, 76 x 60 cm		Sale London (Christies), 1937
D 17	<i>The Rape of the Sabine Women</i>	Canvas, 100 x 124.5 cm	<i>G Lundens 1654</i>	Sale Lucerne (Fischer), 18 June 1963, no. 1847. Sale Zurich (Eberhart Auktionen), advertisement in <i>Die Weltkunst</i> , 1 March 1997
K 1	<i>Man with a Bear at a Fair</i>	Canvas, 83 x 85 cm	<i>G Lundens 1659</i>	Sale London (Christies), 16 December 1977. Photograph: The National Gallery, London, 1980
S 8	<i>Man Pays Woman in Barn Interior</i>	Panel, 54.5 x 47 cm		Sale Amsterdam (Sotheby's), 1999



- 1 Results of the research into the life and work of Gerrit Lundens (1622-1686) previously appeared in Harriet Stoop-de Meester, *Gerrit Lundens en De Nachtwacht*, Amsterdam 2004 (thesis University of Amsterdam, supervisor Professor Ernst van de Wetering); and in Harriet Stoop-de Meester, 'Kopie nach Rembrandts "Die Kompanie des Kapitäns Frans Banning Cocq", genannt: "Die Nachtwache"', in Ernst van de Wetering et al., *Rembrandt, Genie auf der Suche*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (the Rembrandt House Museum)/Berlin (Gemäldegalerie) 2006, pp. 312-13.
- 2 Thanks to the painted copy of *The Night Watch*, the original composition of the civic guard portrait has survived after parts of the canvas were cut off in 1715 when the painting was installed in Amsterdam Town Hall. J. Bruyn et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 3, Dordrecht 1989, p. 482.
- 3 'Het Doelen Stuk, daar in komt Capiteyn Benning Kok, met zijn Burgerij, door Gerard Lundens uytvoerig geschildert, 't best van hem bekend.' Sale cat. Pieter van der Lip, Amsterdam, 14 June 1712, no. 27.
- 4 Abraham Bredius, 'Iets over de copie van Gerrit Lundens naar Rembrandt's "Night Watch"', *Oud Holland* 30 (1912), pp. 197-200.
- 5 H.P. Moelker, *De Heerlijkheden Purmerland en Ilpendam*, Purmerend 1978. The pendant portraits of Frans Banninck Cocq and Maria Overlander and those of her parents Volckert Overlander and Geertruyd Hooft were part of Catharina Hooft's estate. See F.G.L.O. van Kretschmar, 'Aantekeningen bij de portretten Hooft', *Jaarboek Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie en het Iconographisch Bureau* 35 (1981), pp. 123-24.
- 6 Bruyn 1989 (note 2), p. 483.
- 7 Stoop-de Meester 2004 (note 1), p. 12.
- 8 Amsterdam City Archives, Doop-, Trouw-, Begraafboeken (DTB), 459/145, 11 April 1643.
- 9 Gustav Glück, *Niederländische Gemälde aus der Sammlung des herrn Alexander Trisch in Wien*, Vienna 1909, p. 18.
- 10 See also Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, *Rembrandt: The Nightwatch*, Princeton 1982, p. 19 and fig. 90.
- 11 Dendrochronological research by Professor Peter Klein, Hamburg, 2003, indicates that the wood of the panel on which Lundens painted the copy was ready for use (including two years drying time) in 1610, see RKD/technical Lundens. According to Haverkamp-Begemann 1982 (note 10), p. 19, note 36, two authors were sceptical about Glück's hypothesis: A. van Schijndel and H.H. Merstens, 'De restauraties van Rembrandt's Nachtwacht', *Oud Holland* (1947), p. 12, mention Glück's dating but do not adopt it and give 1655 as the *terminus ante quem*, without explaining their reasons. Neil MacLaren, *The Dutch School*, cat. London (National Gallery) 1960, pp. 345-46, gives two reasons why the copy must have been painted much later than 1649. Firstly, he argues, if the cartouche was added to *The Night Watch* much later than 1642, when it was finished, the copy could also be of a later date. He goes on: 'It is notoriously difficult to determine the authorship of copies after other masters where the copyist has little individuality, as is obviously the case here. On the other hand, there seems to be no certain work by Lundens of sufficient quality to suggest he could have made a copy of this standard of execution. His original works are handled very carelessly.' MacLaren moreover asserts that Lundens was not capable of painting certain elements as they are rendered in the copy. In his view, the painting style means that the work probably has to be dated later in the seventeenth century. The watercolour sketch in Banninck Cocq's album confuses MacLaren because of the similarities to the copy. This sketch must have been made before Banninck Cocq's death in 1655 and the copy, according to MacLaren, after that, for the reasons he states. MacLaren's doubts about the copy were refuted by Christopher Brown in the revised text of the National Gallery catalogue in 1991. The refined style in which Lundens painted *The Fair-Goers* is an additional argument for disputing MacLaren's second reason.
- 12 Haverkamp-Begemann 1982 (note 10), pp. 10-15.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 14 See among others Gerrit Lundens, *Portrait of a Fifteen-Year-Old Boy*, SK-A-4337 and Gerrit Lundens, *Portrait of a Fifty-Year-Old Woman*, SK-A-4338, both Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The portrait miniatures attributed to him can likewise not be dated before 1650.
- 15 David Hockney, *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters*, New York 2001. These observations and a further three scaled-down copies of seventeenth-century group portraits that are sometimes attributed to Lundens suggest that follow-up research into the copying techniques Lundens may have used could prove fruitful.

- 16 The cartouche in *The Night Watch* listing the names of the men in the group portrait was not copied in the reproduction. Underdrawing visible in the infrared images of the copy shows that Lundens did draw the escutcheon, but subsequently painted the pilaster of the city gate over it. The cartouche was added to *The Night Watch* before Lundens copied the painting between 1642 and 1649.
- 17 The research into the derivatives is part of the author's ongoing study of Gerrit Lundens's oeuvre.
- 18 Provenance *The Fair-Goers: ...*; J. van der Hoeven (1801-1886), exh. cat. Leiden 1850, no. 73 (Lundens (G.), *Eene Boeren-kermis*); *ibid.*, exh. cat. Rotterdam 1907, no. 30 (Gerrit Lundens, *Kermis*, panel, 53 x 83 cm); Mrs A.J. van der Hoeven-van Stolk (1843-1937), exh. cat. Arnhem 1953 (Lundens, Gerrit, *Kermistafreel*, panel, 54 x 83 cm); Mrs E.H. Manger Cats-van der Hoeven (1901-1986); anonymous private collection (1986-present).
- 19 Kasper Niehaus, 'Zeer schone werken van zeldzame schilders', *De Telegraaf*, 30 July 1953, p. 5; F.P. Huygens, 'Uit kastelen en Gelderse huizen kwamen fraaie kunstwerken te voorschijn', *Algemeen Dagblad*, 25 July 1953, p. 11; Frans Hannema, 'Expositie zeventiende-eeuwse meesters in Arnhems museum', *de Volkskrant*, 31 August 1953, p. 7.
- 20 Ernst van de Wetering, *Rembrandt: The Painter at Work*, Amsterdam 1997, pp. 186-87.
- 21 Karel van Mander, *Den grondt der edel vry schilder-const* (transl. H. Miedema), Utrecht 1973, pp. 126-55.
- 22 B.P.J. Broos, 'Rembrandt and Lastman's *Coriolanus*: The History Piece in 17th-Century Theory and Practise', *Simiolus* 8 (1975-76), p. 203.