



# Editorial

## Ceci n'est pas une pipe

In the Rijksmuseum's collection, which is more than two hundred years old, there are objects which have traditionally been ascribed a meaning or function that had to be revised after further research. One of the most spectacular examples in recent years is the decorated elk antler, for decades thought to be a nineteenth-century curiosity, until Jan de Hond and Frits Scholten probed further and discovered that it is an object made for the funerary chapel of Louis the Pious (778-840) in the eleventh or twelfth century. This story was published in *The Burlington Magazine* CLV (2013), no. 1323.

In this issue of *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* there are other objects whose function, attribution or identification prove not to be what had been thought. Two came from our own collection. Frits Scholten now joins forces with Ruurd Halbertsma to arrive at a new interpretation of two bronze tritons, which had been assumed to be highly decorative – albeit rather painful – doorknobs made in the sixteenth century. The reference to these objects as 'antiquities' in the sale catalogue for Nicolaes Witsen's famous collection put the authors on the right track: the 'sixteenth-century doorknobs' proved to be Roman appliques for a funerary litter, and so fifteen centuries older than had been thought.

Sometimes a discovery comes out of the blue. Travelling through Suriname, Eveline Sint Nicolaas visited the former Mariënbosch plantation. When she got back to the Netherlands, she recognized the plantation in a painting in the Rijksmuseum, which had always been associated with the name Meerzorg.

Connoisseurship and sound research into materials and techniques underpinned a new attribution of the magnificent portrait of Joost Aemsz van der Burch (c. 1490-1570), councillor to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, at the court in Brussels – one of the surprises on the art market in 2015. The attribution to Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen is convincingly refuted by Molly Faries and Matthias Ubl; they recognize the hand of Jan van Scorel.

In this issue, nothing is what it seems. This is true of ceramic restorations that are often done in a material and technique that differ from the original. Taking a number of examples in the Rijksmuseum, Isabelle Garachon explains what we know about these 'marriages'.

And then, in the front matter, another change. After almost twelve and a half years as one of the editors and having reached retirement age, senior curator of drawings Marijn Schapelhouman is stepping down. And although we extend a warm welcome to his successor Erik Hinterding, curator of prints, it will not be the same without Marijn. However, he will remain associated with the museum to make a valuable contribution to the series of seventeenth-century drawings collection catalogues.

Even this departure is not what it seems. Fortunately.