



# Editorial

There are two leading articles in this issue of *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin*. Anna A. Ślaczka, curator of South Asian Art at the Rijksmuseum and a specialist in the sculpture of the region, investigates the identification and iconography of the local Tamil deity Karuppannasamy. A rare small copper alloy figure of this god was recently donated to the museum. Anna's is real pioneering work, as the use of her own photographs testifies. The subject is little studied, particularly not in the field, where investigation can lead to new discoveries and questions. The other article, by a team of scientists and researchers in the fields of art history, religion and costume, investigates the puzzling overpainting of a portrait by Govert Flinck. This research is a satisfying example of interdisciplinary collaboration and innovative methodology, with carefully drawn conclusions.

A glance at the list of authors reveals an interesting culture shift taking place in the humanities. As Ślaczka's research wonderfully illustrates, there is still, quite literally, a world out there for the individual art historian to discover – venturing out on to unknown paths, putting together known data and fresh experiences. At the same time, art historians are increasingly collaborating with scientists to shed new light on familiar subjects. This involves working together and getting to know one another's methods, and accepting different disciplinary conventions.

The extensive list of authors of 'The Hidden Youth of Dirck Jacobsz Leeuw' demonstrates the importance attached to each member of the research team and his or her contribution. Whereas the humanities traditionally consider an author to be the person who investigates and writes, one could argue that in the 'scientific' world writing in itself is considered secondary to carrying out the research, or parts of it. It is the difference between *author* and *actor* – an important issue now that technical research and, for instance, the analysis of digitally retrieved data are gradually incorporated into our methodologies.

The Netherlands Institute for Conservation, Art and Science (NICAS) was founded recently. This innovative centre is the result of collaboration between the Rijksmuseum, the University of Amsterdam, Delft University of Technology, the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and the NWO (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research) Physical Sciences Division. This new institute aims at art historical research enhanced by science; the Dirck Leeuw portrait research is an excellent example. In this *Bulletin* we present two articles that reflect two different approaches to art historical analysis. Is a single author with one voice, though perhaps more capable of writing a glowing and persuasive article, in danger of presenting a singular and thus limited point of view? Does teamwork lead to more angles and perspectives, but perhaps restrict the article to the presentation of results? Food for thought.