



Recent Acquisitions

• DIRK JAN BIEMOND, PIETER ROELOFS, EVELINE SINT NICOLAAS
AND LUDO VAN HALEM •

1 *Chain of the Marksmen's Guild of St George of Zevenbergen*

Breda or Bergen op Zoom, c. 1520-41

Silver, parcel-gilt and enamel, 38.5 x 35 cm, 1,593 grams (excl. shield)

Marked on the back of the large segments and on the pendant shield: city assay mark three St Andrew's crosses in a shield (Breda or Bergen op Zoom); maker's mark, an 'O' with a bow above in a shield (unidentified (exh. cat. Breda 2000, no. 4))

This marksmen's chain is one of the largest and heaviest late medieval examples we know of – and one of the most ambitious. The iconographic programme, the way it was transformed into a coherent design and the range of techniques used place the chain in a class of its own.

The pictorial language alludes to the markmen's guild in various ways. From 1496 to 1560 the manor of Zevenbergen belonged to the De Glymes van Bergen family (Kort 1987; Kort 1998), and because the civic guard derived their legitimacy from the town and its lord, it is natural that the markmen's guild, the town and its lord were all represented by their coat of arms. The sculptural rendering of St George and the rabbit mountains refer respectively to the guild's patron saint and the town's name. The militia's objective is symbolized by the branches filled with birds. In medieval handbooks an oak leaf was associated with steadfastness in belief, storks and their young with piety and allegiance to church and lord. Together they signify the militia's main task: the defence of Church and State.

The execution reflects the hesitating reorientation towards Classical Antiquity that can be identified in various media in the Low Countries around 1520. The updated guild rules, in which the chain is mentioned for the first time (1541 regulations, arts. 5 and 6), gives a *terminus ante quem* of

21 June 1541. The year 1546 engraved on the back of the chain was probably not added until 1619. A surviving account shows that the pendant medallion was also radically changed at that time and given a new inscription (account 1619).

The rules for assaying gold and silver in the Duchy of Brabant originally only required a maker's mark and a city assay mark; it was up to the towns themselves whether they added a date letter or not (Placaet 1489, art. 3; Placaet 1551, no. 9). Bergen op Zoom and Breda bore the same arms in the sixteenth century, so the assay mark in this form could be used in both places. For the time being both are candidates, since gold- and silversmiths guilds were active in Bergen op Zoom from 1396 and in Breda from 1484 respectively. The lack of a date letter limits the possibilities. The date letter was introduced in Bergen op Zoom in 1522 (Keur 1522, arts. 2 and 3), which means that if the chain was made there it must have been before that. Should the chain prove to have been made later, the artist has to be sought in Breda. A date letter was not made compulsory there until 1552 (Keur 1552, art. 28).

DJB





LITERATURE:

Muntplacaet, 14 December 1489; Placaet op 't stuck van de Gout-smeden, 13 April 1551, J. de Goesin, *Groot-Placaetboek van Vlaenderen, behelsende alle de Placaeten, Ordonnantiën ende Decreten, geëmaneert voor de provincie van Vlaenderen*, vol. 1, Ghent 1662

Letters patent of the Goldsmiths of Bergen op Zoom, granted by Jan III De Glymes van Bergen and the Town of Bergen op Zoom, 1522 (Het Markiezenhof, archive Bergen op Zoom, inv. no. SA3022, fols. 139-146v)

Letters patent of the St George's Guild of Zevenbergen, granted by Cornelis de Glymes van Bergen of Zevenbergen, 21 June 1541, copy made by J. Hetterschey, 15 March 1775 (National Archives of the Netherlands, Nassause Domeinraad, inv. no. 7442)

Letters patent of the Goldsmiths of Breda, granted by William, Prince of Orange and the Town of Breda, 2 December 1552, *Out Keur-Boeck, Inhoudende Verscheydene Ordonnantiën en Privilegiën*, fols. 278 recto, 285 verso (Stadsarchief Breda, dept. 1a, inv. no. 2)

Receipt for Joost Moermans for works carried out on the silver of the St George's Guild of Zevenbergen, agreed by the Town Council of Zevenbergen, 1619 (Regionaal Archief West Brabant, Stadsbestuur van Zevenbergen, inv. no. 834)

L.-A. Delaunay, *Étude sur les anciennes compagnies d'archers, d'arbalétriers et d'arquebustiers*, Paris 1879, cat. no. 47

F.A. Nelemans, 'Het gilde van Sint Joris te Zevenbergen', *Gens Nostra. Maandblad van de Nederlandse Genealogische Vereniging* 2 (1947), pp. 191-97

A. Delahaye, 'Het St. Jorispilde of de vroedschap van Zevenbergen', *Publicaties van het archivariaat 'Nassau-Brabant'* 24 (1973)

J.C. Kort, 'Repertorium op de grafelijke lenen in Holland ten Oosten van het Vlie, 1280-1649', *Ons voorgeslacht. Maandblad van de Zuidhollandse Vereniging voor Genealogie* 42 (1987)

J.C. Kort, 'Repertorium op de grafelijke lenen in Zuid Holland, op Voorne, Putten, en ten zuiden van de Grote Waard, 1280-1649', *Ons Voorgeslacht. Maandblad van de Zuidhollandse Vereniging voor Genealogie* 53 (1998)

J.P. van Rijen, *Zilver en zilversmeden uit de Baronie van Breda*, exh. cat. Breda (Breda's Museum) 2000, cat. no. 4

PROVENANCE:

Made for the St George's Guild of Zevenbergen, in or before 1541; sold by the guild to S.W. Josephus Jitta of Amsterdam, 1874 (exh. cat. Breda 2000, no. 4); Alphonse de Rothschild Collection (1827-1905), Paris, 1879; De Rothschild Collection, Paris, 1973 and 2000 (Delahaye 1973; exh. cat. Breda 2000, no. 4); sale, De Rothschild, Paris (Christie's), 6 November 2014, no. 338; purchase made possible by H.B. van der Ven, 2014 (inv. no. BK-2014-29).

2 JAN ASSELIJN (Dieppe after 1610-1652 Amsterdam)
The Breach of St Anthony's Dike near Amsterdam, 1651
 Oil on canvas, 85.5 x 108.2 cm

In the early spring of 1651 the Netherlands was struck by the St Peter's Flood. A severe north-westerly storm caused catastrophic flooding in the Wadden area and the low-lying surroundings of Amsterdam. The Dutch had not witnessed such a serious storm tide for decades. During the night of the fourth to the fifth of March several dams to the east of Amsterdam were breached, among them St Anthony's Dike – the location of the present-day Zeeburgerdijk – near the village of Houtewael, also known as Oetewaal. A breach of more than thirty feet wide left most of the city under water.

Several artists – among them Jan van Goyen, Willem Schellinks and Jan Asselijn – were eyewitnesses to the dramatic flooding and its aftereffects. Asselijn made no fewer than five paintings recording the event, this canvas being the most impressive. While the paintings in the Staatliche Gemäldegalerie in Schwerin and in the Amsterdam Museum show the moment after the storm and the sea wall breach, and the canvas in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin depicts the subsequent repair of the sea wall, in the Rijksmuseum painting Asselijn concentrated on the last stage of the breach. In the centre of the scene the violence of the water whipped up by the storm has washed away a substantial part of the dike. Large sods of grass litter the flooded ground. True, the water is no longer streaming through the gap at its most forceful, but it is still pouring steadily from the Zuiderzee on to the lower lying land. On the right the dark rainclouds move away. The poses of the men on the left, the flapping cloak of the foremost figure in particular, tell us that the storm has still not run its course. The vivid red stands out in stark contrast against the bright blue of the clearing sky.

Jan Asselijn was one of the leading Italianate landscape painters of the first half of the seventeenth century. After a prolonged stay in France and Italy he returned to Amsterdam in 1647. The painting, signed lower right with the monogram 'JA (in ligature)/1651', is the only dated work from the last two years of Asselijn's life. He died eighteen months after the dike breach and was buried in Amsterdam on 3 October 1652. There is



a smaller, non-autograph copy of the painting in the Rijksmuseum in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin. A 1782 print of an identical scene by Jean Jacques de Boissieu reveals that the canvas was in the Tronchin Collection in Geneva at that time.

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LITERATURE:

A.C. Steland-Stief, *Jan Asselijn nach 1610 bis 1652*, Amsterdam 1971, pp. 82, 162 (under no. 225), engraving illustrated as pl. LVI

PROVENANCE:

Jean-Robert Tronchin (1710-1793), Geneva, 1782; thence by descent to Henri-Charles-Auguste Tronchin (1853-1924); by whom bequeathed to Jacqueline-Madeleine de Hillerin

de La Touche de Boistissandeau, née Tronchin (1912-1955); thence by descent until the 1980s; private collection, Switzerland, until 2014; sale, London (Sotheby's), 3 December 2014, no. 6; art dealer Haboldt & Co., Paris/New York; from whom purchased with the support of the Scato Gockinga Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, ING, the Turing Foundation and an anonymous donor, 2015 (inv. no. SK-A-5030).

3 *Snuff Box with Venus, Cupid and a Turkey*

c. 1750

Tortoiseshell, gold and ivory, gouache, 6 x 8.5 x 3 cm

The recent gift of a snuff box owned by Cornelis Calkoen (1696-1764) is a fine addition to a group of his personal effects from the period when he was an ambassador in Istanbul already in the Rijksmuseum's collection. In 2011, for example, the museum acquired two embroidered letter cases, a dagger, a walking stick and a diamond ring from the Calkoen family. Calkoen lived in the capital of the Ottoman Empire from May 1727 until the summer of 1744. The snuff box can be seen in the 'Turkish Cabinet' (room 1.3), which also contains his collection of paintings, in the Rijksmuseum's permanent display.

The snuff box is made of tortoiseshell with gold inlay work in the form of vines and bunches of grapes. On the inside of the lid there is a scene in gouache on ivory with a large turkey preening itself beside a graceful Venus, while Cupid holds it on a chain. As is usual with snuff boxes, a glass plate protects the decoration from the tobacco in the box. The design may have been derived from the myth of Leda and the swan. The turkey (*kalkoen* in Dutch) is an allusion to the ambassador's surname. The artist had evidently been given clear instructions by the client. The turkey, for instance, is a very robust specimen. (It was said of Cornelis Calkoen that the circumference of his arm was equal to the girth of a normal man's waist.) The rest of the image also appears to have been based on the ambassador's personal life. Calkoen never married, but there was certainly a woman in his life during his time in Istanbul; she was known as Beyaz Gül – 'white rose' in Turkish. Her lowly origin as a former slave from Circassia (a region in the northwest of the Caucasus) made it impossible for the ambassador to marry her. This is why Cupid restrains him with the chain.

The reference to Beyaz Gül and the shape and workmanship of the snuff box make a date around the middle of the eighteenth century likely. We do not know whether Calkoen bought the box himself or if it was a gift. In any event the design is evidence of a sense of humour. The snuff box and the accompanying story have been handed down in the family for generations. In the inventory of Nicolaas Calkoen (1753-1817) the box is

mentioned as *Een hoornen dito met gouden scharnier* (a horn ditto, with a gold hinge).

ESN

LITERATURE:

E. Sint Nicolaas, *An Audience with the Sultan: The 'Turkish' Paintings of Ambassador Cornelis Calkoen (1696-1764)*, Amsterdam 2012, fig. on p. 60

PROVENANCE:

By descent it has remained in the family; gift of the heirs of J.C.A. Besier - Th. à Th. van der Hoop, The Hague, 2014 (inv. no. NG-2014-20).



4 EDGAR FERNHOUT (Bergen 1912-1972 Bergen)

Self-Portrait, 1937

Oil on canvas, 40.3 x 35 cm

When he chose a career as a painter Edgar Fernhout followed in the footsteps of his grandfather Jan Toorop (1858-1928) and his mother Charley Toorop (1891-1955), both leading figures in the art world of their day. He had no formal art education. In 1952 he wrote that he had 'always been surrounded by paintings and people who painted and that was how I learned the trade'. Although he did have a few lessons from drawing teacher Jan Uri (1888-1979), and his mother gave him tips and commented on his work, his 'training' was essentially looking and doing.

He painted still lifes and landscapes, but the self-portrait was one of his favourite genres, primarily because of the concentrated looking it requires. His first self-portrait dates from 1927, when he was fifteen years old. He painted his likeness every two years or so, the last time in 1953-54. He then took a radical step, breaking away from recognizable images and painting almost abstract landscapes in which the atmosphere was rendered with seemingly loosely-painted strokes of colour.

The *Self-Portrait* that the Rijksmuseum acquired from a private owner in 2014 is an exception in this series of self-portraits. Aside from the 1932 *Double Portrait* with his girlfriend (and later wife) Rachel Pellekaan (Centraal Museum, Utrecht), it is the only self-portrait in which he painted himself full face. In her studies of Fernhout, Mieke Rijnders pointed out that this *Self-Portrait* of 1937 is based on a strict arrangement of horizontal and vertical lines that produce subtle shifts in tension in the frozen image. For instance, the mid-line of the face is exactly on the vertical axis but the transition between the wall and the window behind him has shifted slightly. The piercing eyes, which hold the viewer's gaze, have been placed just above the horizontal axis.

Fernhout's mother described this rigid organization as 'Mondrianism' – a cutting observation. Although Charley Toorop owned two neo-plastic paintings by Piet Mondrian (and slatted furniture by Gerrit Rietveld) it was not intended as a compliment. Fernhout was wounded to the quick by this remark. To avoid constant confrontation with such well-intentioned but nonetheless

demotivating comments, he fled to Alassio on the Italian Riviera in 1936. The clear light of the Italian north coast, and the works of Piero della Francesca, Bellini, Raphael and others, which he could now see with his own eyes for the first time, inspired him enormously. In the first half of 1937 he painted the *Self-Portrait*, an amalgam of the modern trend towards abstraction and the need to continue a long painters' tradition that is unique in the talented young painter's oeuvre.

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LITERATURE:

- K. Niehaus, 'Nieuwe werken uit Italië door Edgar Fernhout', *De Telegraaf*, 2 October 1937 (with fig.)
 D.A. Klomp, *In en om de Bergensche School*, Amsterdam [1943], pp. 241-43 (ill. mistakenly as a drawing)
 A. van den Berk et al. *Edgar Fernhout. Schilder*, The Hague 1990, p. 37
Studioso (ps by A. de Visser), *Edgar Fernhout*, Nijmegen 1995, pp. 10-11 (with fig.)
 M. Rijnders, 'Zelfportret 1937', in M. Bosma (ed.), *Vier generaties. Een eeuw lang de kunstenaarsfamilie Toorop|Fernhout*, exh. cat. Utrecht (Centraal Museum) 2001, pp. 102-04 (with fig.)
 M. Rijnders and A. van den Berk, *In het licht van Alassio. Edgar Fernhout Neo-realist*, exh. cat. Arnhem (Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem) 2002, pp. 34-35, 166-67, cat. no. 61 (with fig.)

PROVENANCE:

- Edgar Fernhout, after 1937; John Fernhout, until 1987;
 Douwes Fernhout, 1987-89; his sale, Amsterdam (Sotheby's), 10 April 1989, no. 321; Friso Wiegiersma, 1989-2006; heirs of Friso Wiegiersma, 2006-14; purchased with the support of the Knecht-Drenth Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2014
 (inv. no. SK-A-5029).

