



A Family Portrait in Silver Grey

The Intriguing Painting Technique of Pierre-Paul Prud'hon Revealed by the Restoration of the Portrait of *Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck with his Wife and Children* (1801-02)*

• EVA VAN ZUIEN •

The Rijksmuseum has an almost life-sized portrait of the Schimmelpenninck family painted by the French artist Pierre-Paul Prud'hon in 1801-02. Shortly after it was made the painting was exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1802. Afterwards it remained in the Schimmelpenninck family until it was given to the Rijksmuseum in 1929. The family portrait is the only painting by Prud'hon in a Dutch public collection. It was restored and investigated in 2010-11.¹

The Schimmelpenninck Family

Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck was born into a well-to-do middle class family in Deventer in 1761. After studying law in Leiden, Schimmelpenninck wrote a dissertation on political theory titled *Verhandeling over eene wel ingerigte volksregeering* (Treatise Concerning a Well Constituted People's Regime), and dedicated it to the fatherland. It was acclaimed by the patriotic press as 'the handbook of every citizen'. After completing his studies, Schimmelpenninck worked as a lawyer in Amsterdam, where he married Catharina Nahuys (1770-1844) in 1788. She was a member of the wealthy aristocratic Nahuys dynasty and brought her husband a large fortune and important connections.

Schimmelpenninck's political career began after the French invasion of the

Detail of fig. 1

Republic of the Seven United Netherlands in 1795.² A National Assembly on the French model, made up of delegates from all over the country, was set up in the new Batavian Republic.³ The first Dutch chamber of representatives was established, and Schimmelpenninck became an influential figure in it. In 1798 he went to Paris as ambassador to protect the interests of the Batavian Republic.

After Napoleon Bonaparte's coup d'état in 1799, Schimmelpenninck came under his influence. In 1805 Napoleon, who had crowned himself emperor in 1804, commissioned him to write a new constitution for the Netherlands. After the draft had been approved, the emperor appointed Schimmelpenninck to the post of grand pensionary. Schimmelpenninck established himself in the magnificent palace of Huis ten Bosch in The Hague. Under the terms of the new constitution, his power was comparable to Napoleon's as first consul. During the brief period Schimmelpenninck was grand pensionary, he implemented a number of important reforms, including a new nationwide tax system.

In 1806 the emperor decided that his brother Louis Bonaparte should assume power, and he duly became the first King of Holland. Schimmelpenninck had to step down and in 1810 the kingdom was incorporated into the

huge French empire and came under its control. In that same year Napoleon recalled Schimmelpenninck to Paris, where he was given an honorary post as a member of the Senate. After the emperor was defeated in 1815 and the Netherlands had become a monarchy under William I, Schimmelpenninck took a seat in the Upper Chamber from 1815 to 1821. He died in Amsterdam in 1825.

Two children, a daughter and a son, were born to his marriage to Catharina Nahuys. In 1810 their daughter Catharina (1790-1842) married Salomon Dedel (1775-1846), a member of a leading family of regents. After studying law, their son Gerrit (1794-1863) went to work for the firm of Van Staphorst & Co, one of the leading merchant and banking houses in Amsterdam. After a short-lived marriage to a girl from a lower class, he remarried, this time to a daughter of the Prussian general, Baron von Knobelsdorff, and resumed his place in society. Gerrit acquired an important position in the *Nederlandsche Handelsmaatschappij*, a state-owned organization established in 1824 to expand existing trade relations, and was later elevated to the Dutch aristocracy. In 1836 he became a member of the Upper Chamber of the States-General and was an envoy in St Petersburg and London.

The Family Portrait and Prud'hon

In 1801, during his time in Paris as the ambassador of the Batavian Republic, Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck commissioned the painter Pierre-Paul Prud'hon to paint a family portrait (fig. 1). The artist portrayed Schimmelpenninck and his wife and children in an intimate setting, in which Rutger Jan figures as a family man rather than a diplomat. The harmonious scene is set in a park landscape. Rutger Jan sits in a relaxed pose and gazes contemplatively ahead with a book

in his hand, possibly a reference to his famous dissertation. He wears a chestnut-brown coat, grey pantaloons and black shoes. His wife Catharina stands beside him, her hand resting on his shoulder. She looks at their two children, Gerrit and Catharina, who stand on the left. The woman and her daughter are dressed in the latest French fashion, which favoured long, slender silhouettes with high waists, short sleeves and translucent fabrics. Plainness was the rule, with simple hairstyles and little jewellery. The girl holds a garland of yellow and blue wild flowers, which is being nibbled by a black goat. The green landscape is encircled by tall trees and a lake can be seen in the distance. Upper right in the painting we can just see a corner of a classical building.

In 1930 Frederik Schmidt-Degener, the then director of the Rijksmuseum, devoted an article to the family portrait in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*. After a detailed description of the painting he described the relationship between Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck and the French artist Pierre-Paul Prud'hon, who had painted the family portrait with so much dedication: 'Prud'hon used all his artistic integrity in the execution of this important commission.'⁴ In 1963, Frithjof van Thienen admired the painting for its silvery colour scheme and its poetic atmosphere. 'It seems as if we are looking through a light, silvery mist ... what a poetic man this painter must have been. Here we feel an atmosphere of stillness, of tranquillity – which I would like to term silent poetry.'⁵ Who was this respected French painter to whom Schimmelpenninck entrusted this commission?

Pierre Prud'hon (1758-1823) was born in Cluny. From 1774 to 1778 he studied under François Devosge, portraitist and history painter in Dijon, after which he continued his training in Paris. During this time he admired

Fig. 1
PIERRE-PAUL
PRUD'HON,
*Rutger Jan
Schimmelpenninck
with his Wife and
Children*, 1801-02.
Oil on canvas,
263.5 x 200 cm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. SK-A-3097;
gift of Mr and
Mrs Drucker-
Fraser, Montreux.
Photograph taken
after the 2010-11
restoration.



Peter Paul Rubens's work so greatly that he added 'Paul' to his forename.⁶ After winning the Prix de Rome in 1884, Pierre-Paul Prud'hon spent four years in Italy, where he became inspired by the work of Leonardo da Vinci and Correggio. Later their influence can be seen primarily in his drawings. Prud'hon's oeuvre is made up of mythological scenes, allegorical tableaux and portraits.⁷

Prud'hon worked as an artist during the turbulent times of the French Revolution and Napoleon's empire. At that time French painting was dominated by the Neoclassical works of Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), who painted theatrical scenes of heroism and patriotism with sculpted forms, sharp outlines and polished surfaces. By contrast Prud'hon's work is tranquil and poetic, executed with a



Fig. 2
PIERRE-PAUL
PRUD'HON,
Empress Josephine
at Malmaison, 1805.
Oil on canvas,
244 x 179 cm.
Paris, Musée du
Louvre, inv. no. RF 270.
Photo: RMN-GP
(Musée du Louvre)/
Gérard Blot.

freer handling of the paint. According to contemporary descriptions Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck was a melancholic and moderate man, and this is perhaps why he did not favour the fiery style of painting practised by David, who had portrayed other envoys from the Batavian Republic.⁸ Schimmelpenninck was evidently pleased with Prud'hon's work, for some years later he requested the artist to paint portraits of his children again. This time they were two equestrian portraits of Catharina and Gerrit, which are now in a private collection.⁹

Shortly after it was made, the large portrait of the Schimmelpenninck family was submitted to the Paris Salon of 1802 under the title *Un tableau de famille*.¹⁰ By then Prud'hon had turned forty, but he was still endeavouring to make his name as a portraitist. He must have attracted attention when he presented the impressive family work at the Salon. Soon afterwards he used the composition again when he painted his most famous portrait, *Empress Josephine at Malmaison*, in 1805 (fig. 2). Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), painter and admirer of Prud'hon, considered the portrait of the empress to be one of Prud'hon's best works. 'We have only to cite one that sums up the qualities of all the others: it is that of the Empress Josephine. He has combined a perfect likeness with a sense of exquisite nobility in the pose, in the expression and in the attributes ... this portrait is one of his masterpieces.'¹¹

Technique

The research and restoration of the portrait of *Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck with his Wife and Children* have given us an insight into Prud'hon's painting process. An extensive preparatory phase of sketching preceded the painting stage. Prud'hon was not only a celebrated painter, he was also one of the greatest draughtsmen of his time. His drawings of nudes, in black and white chalk on a light blue or grey



background, are famous. As in many of his paintings, chiaroscuro and soft outlines were characteristic features of his works on paper.

The drawings often served as preliminary studies for his paintings. The large portrait of the Schimmelpenninck family was likewise prepared on paper. Prud'hon started with quick sketches of his subject, roughly establishing the form. There is one such study for the family portrait in the Rijksmuseum's collection. It is a loose sketch in black and white chalk on blue paper, in which Prud'hon studied Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck in two different poses (fig. 3). The artist used the pose with drooping shoulders and the book on Rutger Jan's lap in the final composition of the painting. After he had made the sketches, he focused on capturing the personalities. Each member of the

Fig. 3
PIERRE-PAUL
PRUD'HON, *Two
Studies of Rutger Jan
Schimmelpenninck
and a Sketch of his
Wife*, 1798-1801.
Black and white
chalk on blue paper,
266 x 205 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.
RP-T-1996-92(R).

family's face was meticulously rendered in pastels on a neutral background. The pastels of the four family members stayed with the painting for a considerable time and are now in a private collection (fig. 4). These drawn portraits are completely finished and hardly resemble studies at all. The sitters' faces are almost identical to those in the painting; only the colour of the clothes differs. Prud'hon made similar detailed portraits in pastel as preliminary studies for other paintings in his oeuvre.¹²

It was not just the individual elements that Prud'hon studied; before he started painting his final portrait he thought through the entire composition on a small scale. Such an oil sketch on canvas of the Schimmelpenninck family portrait has survived (fig. 5).¹³ The artist adopted the composition of the sketch in the final painting, although certain passages were changed. For example, the goat in the oil sketch is white, as opposed to black in the large portrait. Prud'hon also decided to

Fig. 4
PIERRE-PAUL
PRUD'HON,
*Study of Catharina
Nahuis*, c. 1801.
Pastel, 405 x 325 mm.
Private collection.



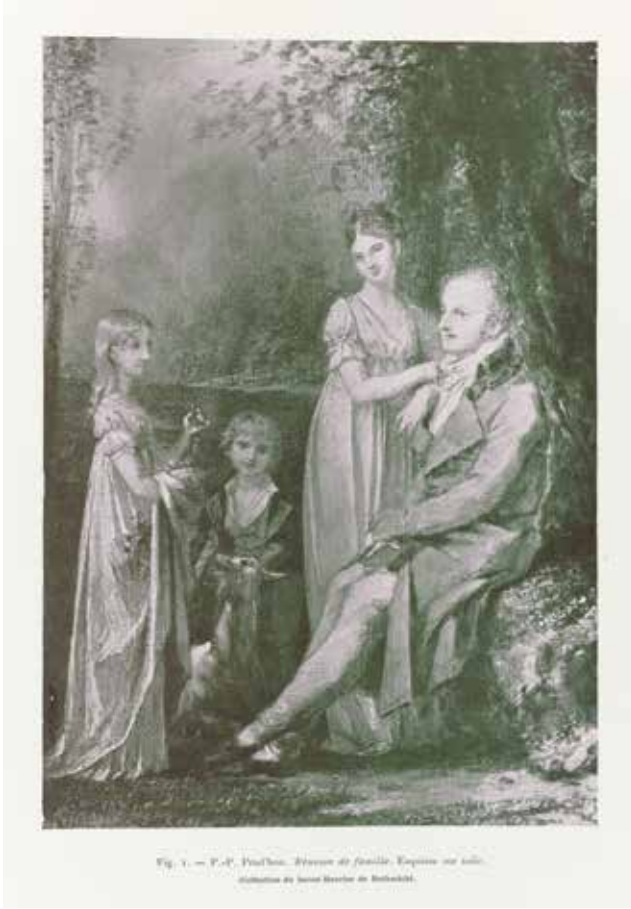


Fig. 5
PIERRE-PAUL
PRUD'HON, *Study
of Rutger Jan
Schimmelpenninck
with his Wife and
Children*, c. 1801.
Oil on canvas,
exact size unknown.
Private collection.

Fig. 6
*Pentimento in
Catharina Nahuys's
dress, before the
2010-11 restoration.*
Photo: Atelier
Boersma.

change Catharina's pose. In the first stage he portrayed her as he had in the sketch, with one arm across her breast reaching towards her husband's shoulder and the other resting lightly on the same shoulder. As he painted, Prud'hon changed the concept: the right arm was depicted as a downward-hanging vertical and the left hand was shifted to Rutger Jan's other shoulder, so that all we see now are the tips of her fingers. Before the restoration, the arm that was painted initially was visible as a *pentimento* – a change to the composition made by the artist while he was painting. The arm could be seen as a faint horizontal band across Catharina's dress (fig. 6). Prud'hon may have altered her pose

because it was too intimate. Later authors were by no means all impressed with this adjustment. Schmidt-Degener described the alteration as 'no great aesthetic improvement', and according to the art historian Adolph Staring, Catharina's revised pose was less natural and more isolated compared with the oil sketch, where she is leaning on her husband's shoulder in an engagingly intimate way.¹⁴

The Louvre has fifty paintings, oil sketches, pastels and drawings by Prud'hon. The works were produced in different periods of his career and give us an insight into his working methods. For his masterpiece *Empress Josephine at Malmaison* – very similar to the family portrait in terms of size

and composition – the artist went through the same thorough preparatory process: swift chalk sketches of the empress's pose, detailed pastels of the face and oil sketches of the entire composition.¹⁵

Once the preliminary work had been completed, Prud'hon painted the family portrait on a large linen canvas.¹⁶ Examination of paint cross-sections revealed that the canvas was prepared with a light-coloured oil-based ground made up of more than one layer.¹⁷ Infrared reflectography shows the artist's elaborate underdrawing on the ground.¹⁸ All the figures were drawn with loose sketchy lines in a dark drawing material, probably pencil. In spite of the sketchiness, Prud'hon devoted attention to details. Rutger Jan's eyes, nose, mouth and ears were rendered spontaneously (fig. 7). Shadow areas

are indicated by swift hatching, for example under the nose and chin. In the infrared reflectogram we see again that Catharina's pose had initially been planned differently. The artist depicted her in the pose which she also adopts in the preliminary oil sketch: with her right arm across her breast, reaching towards her husband (fig. 8).

A number of Prud'hon's paintings in the Louvre collection were found in the artist's studio after his death. Some of the works have survived in an unfinished state. These are a valuable source for the study of the artist's painting technique. One example is the painting of *Minerva Sheds Light on Science and the Arts*, which shows the underpainting stage (fig. 9).¹⁹ A roughly painted sketch, called an *ébauche*, was applied on a light ground. Prud'hon blocked in the effect of light and dark in uniform tones before the



Fig. 7
Infrared reflectogram of Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck with his Wife and Children revealing the underdrawing of Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck's face.

Fig. 8
Infrared reflectogram of Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck with his Wife and Children revealing the underdrawing of Catharina Nahuys's arm.

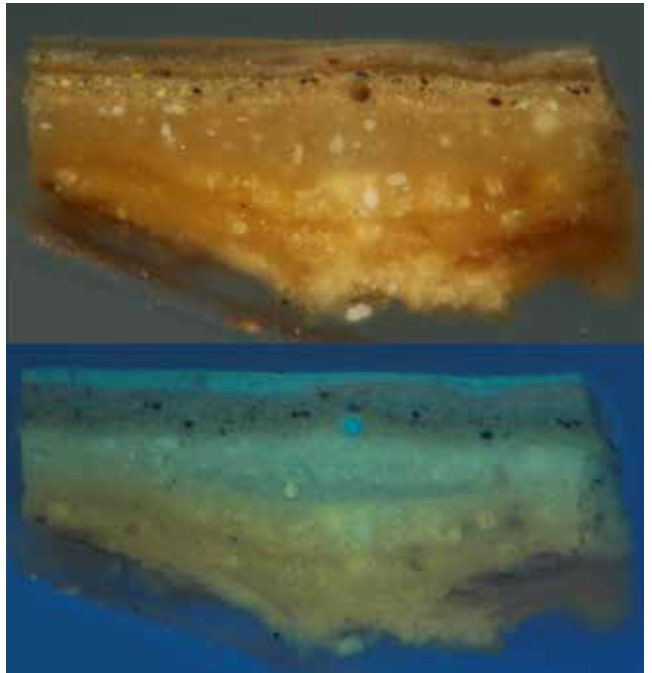


Fig. 9
 PIERRE-PAUL
 PRUD'HON,
*Minerva Sheds
 Light on Science
 and the Arts.*
 Oil on canvas,
 68 x 80 cm.
 Paris, Musée
 du Louvre,
 inv. no. RF 208.
 Photo: RMN-GP
 (Musée du Louvre)/
 Daniel Arnaudet.

Fig. 10
 Paint cross-section
 taken from Catharina
 Nahuys's dress in
 normal light and
 ultraviolet light
 (below) showing
 the build-up of
 paint layers.
 Photo: Atelier
 Boersma.

subtleties of the colours and outlines were added. In the underpainting stage the figures were usually modelled like a grisaille.²⁰ However no grey undermodelling was encountered during the examination of a paint cross-section taken from the flesh colour in the portrait of *Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck with his Wife and Children*.²¹

Prud'hon worked out the composition by alternating opaque and transparent layers of paint. Catharina Nahuys's dress was painted in thin layers to create the effect of translucent fabrics. This build-up of thin oil-rich layers can be seen in a paint cross-section from this area (fig. 10).



Delacroix wrote about Prud'hon's use of glazes, which left the underpainting partially visible. 'He went over this preparatory layer with glazes or light impasto which veiled it to some extent, but without causing it to disappear altogether.'²² Prud'hon completed his painting by accentuating certain details with thick brushstrokes over the smooth paint layers. This impasto can be observed in the leaves on the trees, the edge of Rutger Jan's collar and his daughter's garland of flowers.

According to Delacroix, Prud'hon always strove for perfection in his work, which meant that he continued to adapt and change. This is why there are so many *pentimenti* to be seen in his paintings. Various alterations can be detected in the portrait of the Schimmelpenninck family: as well as in Catharina's arm we can see *pentimenti* in her daughter's forearm and chest and above Rutger Jan's knee. During the restoration it was discovered that not only had Prud'hon made changes to parts of the image while he was painting it, but he appears to have returned to the painting later for some retouches. In young Gerrit's face and

certain other areas we can discern original brushstrokes, which stand out under ultraviolet light because of their dark colour in comparison with the surrounding paint.

During this exhaustive process, the artist not only sought the best form and composition, he also experimented with materials and techniques in order to achieve them. This has had an impact on the condition in which some of his paintings are now – the family portrait among them.

The Paint Layer

There are various areas in the portrait of *Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck with his Wife and Children* where the paint layer has contracted and extensive cracks have appeared. This phenomenon can be observed particularly in areas of darker colour, such as Rutger Jan's chestnut-brown jacket, his son Gerrit's blue-black trousers and the brown trees in the background. The top layer of paint has formed islands and the underlying layers are revealed in the cracks between them (fig. 11). This phenomenon, known as 'drying cracks' reduces the legibility of the

Fig. 11

Detail of Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck's chestnut-brown coat showing drying cracks in the paint layer. Photo: Atelier Boersma.



composition because shapes are interrupted and areas of colour are less uniform than the artist had intended. Furthermore, some of the cracks had been retouched during an earlier restoration. These retouches have darkened over time, making the drying cracks even more pronounced.

Other famous works by Prud'hon also contain drying cracks, among them the 1808 *Justice and Divine Vengeance Pursuing Crime* in the Louvre and *Venus and Adonis* of 1810 in the Wallace Collection in London.²³ This phenomenon was visible soon after the paintings were made; it was remarked upon at the time. The historian Prosper Mérimée wrote about Prud'hon's works in *De la peinture à l'huile*, a treatise on art techniques and materials published in 1830. According to Mérimée, the cracks were caused by applying varnish at too early a stage, on a paint layer which had not completely dried.²⁴ Delacroix, however, maintained that the phenomenon had to do with Prud'hon's elaborate working methods. He believed that the paintings the artist worked on the longest were the most degraded.²⁵

Drying cracks have occurred in paintings from the moment oil was first used as a binding medium – in other words ever since the fifteenth century. In the nineteenth century the phenomenon took on a more extreme form, and it is associated with works by artists like Prud'hon, his contemporaries and later nineteenth-century French painters such as François Gérard (1770-1837) and Théodore Géricault (1791-1824). Artists were experimenting with new materials and innovating their painting methods. One of these innovations was the use of the brown pigment bitumen, which was prized for its intense colour. It was generally cited as the cause of the cracks, because of its poor drying characteristics. Clément claimed that in Prud'hon's case, too, bitumen was the reason for the development of

cracks in the paint layer: 'Like most of the artists at the beginning of the century, he used a lot of bitumen and, besides, the thick paint of his manner, which caused his painting to darken and crack, particularly in the shadows.'²⁶ Technical research into some of Prud'hon's paintings in the Louvre that show drying cracks has, however, discovered no evidence of bitumen.²⁷ According to this research, the reason for the cracking lies in the combination of the binding medium and siccatives in the paint layers.

Although Mérimée did not blame Prud'hon's use of materials for the cracking, he described how Prud'hon prepared his paint according to a special recipe. In his description Mérimée explained how Prud'hon made his medium by dissolving granules of mastic in alcohol while it slowly heated up. The impurities were filtered from the solution and pure wax was added. This mixture had to be melted and then immersed in cold water. After the substance cooled, it could be kneaded into little balls and kept until it was required for painting. Before it was put on the palette, the material had to be melted slowly in bleached siccativ oil, after which it could be thinned with oil if need be.²⁸

Analysis, by instrumental method, of two scrapings from the paint layer in the portrait of *Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck with his Wife and Children* indicated that Prud'hon used a mixture of binding media for the preparation of his paint that seems to correspond with Mérimée's description of the recipe.²⁹ The analysis showed a complex mixture of a drying oil, beeswax and resin. Painting with this mixture of binding media in combination with certain dark pigments probably led to cracks in the paint layer at an early stage. Prud'hon's choice of materials affected the condition of his paintings. What implications did this have for the restoration?

Restoration

The family portrait was in average condition before restoration. The composition was hidden under a thick layer of yellowed varnish so that the characteristic colour palette and the three-dimensionality had disappeared. The original 'silver-grey tone' – the reason the painting was so admired in the past – was no longer visible. Local slightly raised paint and old discoloured retouches were further reasons for

restoring the painting (fig. 12). Besides that, the old relining had come loose along the edges.

During the treatment, the paint layer was stabilized and the edges of the canvas were reinforced. Before work on cleaning the painting began, the old varnish layer on the painting was investigated. Based on the examination of the yellowed varnish layer under ultraviolet light and analysis of cross-sections of the painting, it was



Fig. 12
Rutger Jan
Schimmelpenninck
with Wife and
Children before the
2010-11 restoration.
Photo: Atelier
Boersma.



Fig. 13
Detail of young
Catharina
Schimmelpenninck's
arm during the
restoration.
Photo: Atelier
Boersma.

established that there were remnants of an older varnish under the topmost layer. Varnish removal tests indicated that in some areas the paint layer was susceptible to organic solvents; the dark passages and the thin glazes proved to be particularly soluble. Past restorers must have encountered this sensitivity and this may be why the painting was partly cleaned at that time and why old varnish was left on the paint layer in places.

The solubility of the paint layer could be explained by Prud'hon's use of oil as well as wax and resin as binding media in his paint. For this reason a method of thinning down the yellowed varnish was developed during the restoration treatment. The top part of the varnish layer was reduced with a fast evaporating solvent mixture, after which the rest of the varnish was gradually thinned down using two less polar mixtures (fig. 13). This process had to be repeated in places where remnants of the older varnish were present. The aim was to achieve the same level of thinning of the old varnish everywhere. Colours containing lead white were less

susceptible to solvents than darker passages and the total removal of the varnish would certainly have been possible in the light areas. However, the old varnish layer in the light areas was reduced to the same level as in the dark colours in order to avoid making the contrast between the warm landscape and the cooler figures greater than the painter had intended. In the sky area, for example, the varnish was not completely removed. The balance in the painting was maintained by leaving a very thin layer of varnish all over the paint surface.

After the removal of the varnish, the painting was found to be in good condition. The cool colours and subtle nuances can be seen again. Before the treatment mother and daughter's dresses appeared to be yellow due to the old varnish; after the restoration young Catharina's silver dress now contrasts beautifully against the peachier tone of her mother's gown. The contrast with the background has become greater, emphasizing the figures still more. The landscape, with the light filtering through the leaves, is tranquil and mysterious.



Fig. 14
Detail of Gerrit Schimmelpenninck's trousers during the restoration. Photo: Atelier Boersma.

The removal of the yellowed varnish and the discoloured retouches left the drying cracks more visible in places. After the old retouches were removed, the original shape of Gerrit's dark trousers was interrupted by disturbing cracks which revealed the light ground layer (fig. 14). The different shades of brown of the underpainting visible in the craquelure in Rutger Jan's chestnut-brown jacket were also obtrusive. These aspects created a dilemma during the retouching process. On the one hand the introduction of a lot of new material was not desirable, but on the other improving the legibility of the family portrait so that it would regain its impact was of the highest priority.

For this reason, the light-coloured cracks in the paint layer were inpainted in the colour of the surrounding, intact paint. The cracks were not filled before the retouching. As a consequence, the texture of the contracted paint has remained visible, but this is not disturbing. Because of their matching colour the cracks are lost in the larger form of the composition.

It was not just the drying cracks that were hindering the legibility of the painting; some of the *pentimenti* stood out more after the removal of the varnish. The most noticeable, Catharina's horizontal arm which shows through her dress, was retouched so that it recedes into its surroundings and will not distract viewers when they look at the masterpiece. After retouching, a thin final varnish layer was applied on the surface.

The restoration has revealed Prud'hon's characteristic painting style and fine silvery tone that he had intended. It returned the family portrait to its full splendour and has also taught us more about the artist's painting technique; it has shown us Prud'hon's elaborate preparation method and his use of a special recipe to make his paint. Now, attention can focus on the intriguing way in which Prud'hon depicted Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck and his family. The painting's Empire-style frame – most likely original – was recently restored by Hubert Baija, senior conservator of frames and gilding in the Rijksmuseum. Picture and frame in their full glory will be shown as the final work in the eighteenth century room in the new Rijksmuseum's permanent display.

NOTES

- * With thanks to the Stichting dr. Hendrik Muller's Vaderlandsch Fonds for their financial contribution towards the restoration.
- 1 The restoration and research were undertaken by Eva van Zuien and Johanneke Verhave, supervised by Annetje Boersma, independent paintings conservator in Rotterdam. With thanks to members of the Rijksmuseum's staff – Jenny Reynaerts (Senior Curator of 18th- and 19th-Century Paintings), Manja Zeldenrust (Head of Painting Conservation), Willem de Ridder (Senior Conservator of Paintings) – and Rene Boitelle (Conservator of Paintings at the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam) for their valuable contributions and involvement during the restoration.
 - 2 D.P. Blok (ed.), *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden. Volume 11 – Nieuwste tijd*, Bussum 1983, pp. 158-86.
 - 3 J.J. Kloek and W.W. Mijnhardt, *1800. Blauwdrukken van een samenleving*, The Hague 2001, p. 29. In September 2012 Uitgeverij Balans, Amsterdam, will be publishing a book by E. Hagen, *President van Nederland. Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck (1761-1825)*.
 - 4 'Prud'hon a mis toute sa probité d'artiste dans l'exécution de cette importante commande', F. Schmidt-Degener, 'Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck et Pierre-Paul Prud'hon', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 72 (1930), pp. 85-96. Summary in J.F.L. de Balbian Verster, 'Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck en de zijnen bij het schilderen van P.P. Prud'hon (1801) in het Rijksmuseum', *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum* 31 (1934), pp. 136-50.
 - 5 'Het lijkt of wij door een lichte, zilverige mist heenzien... wat moet deze schilder een dichterlijk man zijn geweest. Wij voelen hier een sfeer van stilte, van rust, van – wat ik zou willen noemen: geluidloze poëzie.' Professor F.W.S. van Thienen, 'Pierre-Paul Prud'hon (1758-1823) Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck met zijn familie', *Openbaar Kunstbezit* 7 (1963), pp. 19a-19b.
 - 6 C. Clément, *Prud'hon, sa vie, ses œuvres et sa correspondance*, Paris 1872, p. 32.
 - 7 S. Laveissière, *Prud'hon ou le rêve du bonheur*, exh. cat. Paris/New York (Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais/The Metropolitan Museum of Art) 1997-98.
 - 8 For a character sketch of Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck see M.R.A. Staring, *Franse kunstenaars en hun Hollandse modellen in de 18de en in den aanvang des 19de eeuw*, The Hague 1947, p. 116. Aside from Schimmelpenninck two other envoys of the Batavian Republic in Paris sat for a prominent French painter: Jacob Blauw (1756-1829) and Caspar Meyer (d. 1800), were portrayed by Jacques-Louis David. See Staring 1947, p. 107.
 - 9 D. Hannema, *Oude kunst uit Twents particulier bezit*, exh. cat. Almelo (Kunstkring De Waag) 1953, cat. nos. 37 and 38.
 - 10 P. Sanchez and X. Seydoux, *Les catalogues des Salons des Beaux-Arts. Volume 1 – 1801-1819*, Paris 1999, p. 43. For a list of paintings by Prud'hon which were exhibited in the Paris Salons from 1791 to 1824, see C. Blanc, *Histoire des peintres français au dix-neuvième siècle*, Paris 1845, pp. 262-65.
 - 11 'Nous n'en citerons qu'un seul qui résume les qualités de tous les autres: c'est celui de l'impératrice Joséphine. Il a su joindre à une ressemblance parfaite un sentiment d'élévation exquis dans la pose, dans l'expression et dans les accessoires... ce portrait est un de ses chefs-d'œuvre.' E. Delacroix, 'Peintres et sculpteurs modernes. II. Prudhon', *Revue des Deux Mondes* 16 (1846), pp. 432-51, esp. p. 444.
 - 12 See for example cat. nos. 102 and 132 in S. Laveissière, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 180-82, 191.
 - 13 J. Guiffrey, *L'œuvre de Pierre-Paul Prud'hon*, Paris 1924, pp. 246-47.
 - 14 Balbian Verster op. cit. (note 4), p. 141; Staring op. cit. (note 8), p. 118.
 - 15 Laveissière, op. cit. (note 7), cat. nos. 126-33, pp. 188-92.
 - 16 In the past the painting was relined with a glue lining. We know that Prud'hon used the maximum width of a roll of linen, approximately 208 cm, for the original canvas because there are no seams in the canvas and the selvages of the fabric are present on both sides.
 - 17 Paint samples were taken, examined and photographed in the studio of Annetje Boersma in Rotterdam. The samples were embedded in EasySections and PolyPol resin followed by cutting and dry polishing with Micromesh.
 - 18 Infrared reflectography was carried out with an Osiris scanning InGaAs camera. With thanks to Arie Wallert, Rijksmuseum.
 - 19 S. Laveissière, op. cit. (note 7), cat. no. 107, pp. 152-53.

- 20 J. Guiffrey, *P.P. Prud'hon. Peintures, pastels et dessins*, Paris 1924, p. 6.
- 21 See note 17.
- 22 'Il revenait sur cette préparation avec des glacis ou de légers empâtements qui la voilaient en quelque sorte, mais sans la faire entièrement disparaître.' Delacroix, op. cit. (note 11), p. 439.
- 23 For a description of the condition of the painting of *Venus and Adonis* in the Wallace Collection see J. Ingamells, *The Wallace Collection. Catalogue of Pictures. Volume III – French before 1815*, London 1989, p. 322.
- 24 M.J.F.L. Mérimée, *De la peinture à l'huile ou des procédés matériels employés dans ce genre de peinture depuis Hubert et Jean van Eyck jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris 1830, p. 34: '... and it is not the use of this varnish to which we must attribute the cracks that have destroyed some of these pictures. They would have been preserved like many other of his paintings if he had been careful not to varnish them until after they were completely dry.' ('... et ce n'est pas à l'emploi de ce vernis qu'il faut attribuer les gerçures qui ont détruit quelques uns de ces tableaux. Il se seraient tous conservés comme beaucoup d'autres de ses tableaux, si on avait eu l'attention de ne les vernir qu'après leur complète dessiccation.')
- 25 Delacroix, op. cit. (note 11), p. 439.
- 26 'À l'exemple de la plupart des artistes du commencement du siècle, il employait beaucoup le bitume et, en outre, des pommades de sa façon, qui, dans les ombres surtout, ont noirci et craquelé sa peinture.' Clément, op. cit. (note 6), p. 381.
- 27 S. Laveissière, *Prud'hon. La Justice et la Vengeance divine poursuivant le Crime. Les dossiers du département des peintures*, Paris 1986, p. 93. For more research into paintings by Prud'hon see A. de Brem, *Le larmoyeur d'Ary Scheffer*, Paris 1989, p. 49.
- 28 Mérimée, op. cit. (note 24), pp. 63-64.
- 29 Amsterdam, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, analysis and report by H. van Keulen, 23 November 2011. 'Scraping 52-8 (flesh colour from Gerrit's neck) and 52-9 (brown tree trunk with GC-MS (Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry) shows a complex mixture of a drying oil, beeswax and resins. Drying oil and beeswax both contain fatty acids. After correction for the fatty acid content of the beeswax, the PS ratio of the paint on the tree trunk was around 4.2. This points to poppy oil as the binding agent in the paint.

The binding agent in the paint on the boy's neck is linseed oil. A large amount of colophony was present, possibly 30% in proportion to the oil. Markers for old dammar resin are present. There are also indications of the presence of amber.'

