

# CODART-TEFAF SPECIAL

## WELCOME

### Welcome!

We proudly present the first issue of CODART's eZine. For years you've been used to a beautifully designed, printed CODART *Courant*, filled with information on Dutch and Flemish art in museums worldwide. Technological advancements, however, have meanwhile made it possible to present this information in another way. Our new eZine combines the quality of the printed *Courant*, the content of the website, and all the advantages of the latest developments in media technology. The eZine will be enhanced, for example, with high-quality images, videos, links and all the other extras that a digital format has to offer. To guarantee the high quality of the eZine's offerings, our staff will be enriched by an editorial board: [Erik Löffler](#), Curator of Dutch and Flemish Old Master Drawings and Prints at the RKD, [Vanessa Paumen](#), Coordinator at the Flemish research center for the arts in the Burgundian Netherlands, Groeningemuseum, Musea Brugge, Bruges, and [Tico Seifert](#), Senior Curator of Northern European Art at the Scottish National Gallery. They have not only declared their willingness to serve as editors, but have already begun work on the autumn issue.

What can you expect in this issue? To begin with, every article has features that a printed newsletter cannot offer. The interview with Peter van den Brink, for example, contains a link to his museum's website. If you're interested in Gregor Simoons's Hermitage project, you can start by watching a short film about it. And if you want to fill your screen with the splendid works in the Mauritshuis's collection, click on Edwin Buijsen's article "The Mauritshuis ... on tour." The applied arts are spotlighted in both the interview with Gregor Simoons and the article by Femke Diercks on the decorative arts in Leiden's Museum De Lakenhal. Maria Gordusenko, head of the department of European arts at the Ekaterinburg Museum of Fine Arts, gives an account of the recent CODART*focus* meeting held at the Museum aan de Stroom (MAS) in Antwerp. Naturally CODART could not have developed the eZine without help from outside. In fact, it is a Gesamtkunstwerk that represents the efforts of various parties, beginning with the website design company Occhio, which for years has been responsible for the concept and development of our award-winning website [www.codart.nl](http://www.codart.nl). Now, in developing our eZine, Occhio has taken care to preserve the look and feel of the printed *Courant*. Among the others who have helped to create the eZine are the members of the program committee, who gave both solicited and unsolicited advice at an early stage, and the members of the website committee, who were requested to take a critical look at our eZine concept. A number of other CODART members were asked to voice their opinions as well. In addition to offering advice on the eZine's content, all of these people urged us to produce a printed version.

Their wish has been fulfilled: if you don't want to read the eZine on your computer screen or iPad, but prefer a paper version to peruse in the train or on the beach, just click on print in the black bar. Finally, the development of the eZine would not have been possible without additional funding. We are therefore indebted to the [Mondriaan Foundation](#), the [Prince Bernhard Cultural Foundation](#), the [Dioraphte Foundation](#) and the [Friends of CODART Foundation](#) for their generous support.

Furthermore, this first issue of the eZine is the product of close collaboration with The European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF), now celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary, and we are proud to have Ben Janssens, Chairman TEFAF Maastricht, to offer you a [word of welcome](#). As you will see, various CODART members share their thoughts about their collaboration with the Fair and what it means to their institutions. In addition to an interview with Peter van den Brink, who stresses the importance of the TEFAF, we include an interview with Patrice Marandel, chief curator of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, who reports on LACMA's recent TEFAF acquisitions, and another with Christopher Brown, director of the Ashmolean Museum, who talks about his work on the vetting committee.

This first issue of our eZine will be launched with all due ceremony during the CODART VIJFTIEN congress in Brussels. Meanwhile we are already looking forward to the next CODART*focus* meeting, which will take place at the National Gallery in Prague to mark the exhibition *Rembrandt & Co*. It is planned for 14 May, so save the date!

Gerdien Verschoor

Reactions to this eZine or contributions to future issues may be e-mailed to [ezine@codart.nl](mailto:ezine@codart.nl).

## CURATOR'S COLLECTION

**Decorative Art in the Museum De Lakenhal**

Among CODART members the [Museum De Lakenhal](#) in Leiden is probably best known for its Old Masters, which include works by Lucas van Leyden, the young Rembrandt and the Leiden 'fine painters'. Successful shows on such themes as [Rembrandt's landscapes](#) and, more recently, the exhibition on [Lucas van Leyden](#) organized by CODART member [Christiaan Vogelaar](#), have been critically acclaimed. But the museum's collection is much, much broader. Even though the decorative arts are not the primary field of interest of most members of CODART, it is the focus of this short contribution.

The museum owes its name to the original function of its premises on the Oude Singel in Leiden. The building was designed in 1640 by Arent van 's-Gravensande as a Lakenhal (Clothmakers' Hall), where the meetings of the governors and syndics of the cloth industry were held, cloth was inspected and sold, legal redress could be sought, and the guild's administration was kept. The building, an example of Dutch classicist architecture, provides suitable accommodation for the museum that presents the history of the city that was so closely tied to the textile industry. In 1868, after the building had ceased to serve its original purpose, its attic was designated to store the collection of historical artefacts that had gradually been taking shape at the town hall.

As is the case with many city museums, the municipal collection formed the basis of the Museum De Lakenhal. Among its treasures were Lucas van Leyden's painting of the *Last Judgment*, as well as fine pieces of the Leiden civic plate, including a ewer and basin produced in 1641 by the Leiden silversmith Frans Maerschallck. The basin is decorated with a gold medal featuring the coat of arms of the city of Leiden and with an engraved escutcheon, likewise displaying the city arms, supported by a lion with a raised scimitar. The ensemble also contains four large salt-cellars, crafted by the Leiden master Barend Gast, which are circular and lobed in shape and surmounted by round finials.

This type of object can also be found in seventeenth-century paintings. Eight candlesticks that correspond in size and design to the lobed form of the salt-cellars were commissioned in 1662 by the burgomasters of Leiden from an artisan in The Hague. This demonstrates the strong ties between the craftsmen of Leiden and those of neighboring artistic centers, such as Amsterdam and The Hague. Another highly important piece that was transferred from the town hall to the Lakenhal was the so-called Lanckaert tapestry. This tapestry was commissioned from the Delft weaver Joost Jansz Lanckaert in 1587, fifteen years after Leiden had been freed from the Spanish, when rebel Sea Beggars claimed the city for William of Orange. The tapestry depicts the route taken by the Sea Beggars on their march to liberate the city, and can thus be seen as the Leiden authorities' declaration of allegiance to the Prince of Orange. The border was designed by the Leiden painter and magistrate Isaac Claesz van Swanenburg.

The building designed by Van 's-Gravensande is more than mere accommodation for the museum's collection; it is also part of that collection. This is demonstrated by the many parts of the collection that form a fixed part of the building. Located on the first floor of the old Lakenhal is the so-called Governors' Chamber, where the governors and syndics of the cloth industry assembled. Even though the chamber has undergone inevitable changes over the years, various elements of its interior recall its original purpose and sumptuous furnishings. The consoles of the ceiling, which consists of secondary and sleeper beams, were carved by the Leiden wood-carver Albert Goosman. Above the mantelpiece hangs a portrait of five governors of the textile guild by the hand of Carel de Moor (1692). Its original frame contains the carved and gilded family arms of the governors portrayed, as well as the coat of arms of the city of Leiden, executed by the wood-carver Hendrik van Dijk. In the so-called Syndics' Chamber on the other side of the large hall, the syndics (cloth inspectors) once assembled. One is reminded of the room's function by the group portrait, specially made for the Syndic's Chamber by Jan de Baen (1675), with its carved, semicircular frame, made to fit the form of the barrel vault of the ceiling and the decorated wall-paneling below. Both frame and decorations were executed by Albert's younger brother Gerrit Goosman. In the 1930s this room was furnished with gilded leather wall-covering of 1649, which had been removed from the commissioner's house known as the "Delftse Schouw," likewise designed by Van 's-Gravensande and situated on the tow path running alongside the River Vliet between Leiden and Delft. Even though it was not originally made for its present home, this wall-covering looks splendid in combination with the seventeenth-century chairs with "barley-sugar" twisted legs and the high desk with

auricular carving by Gerrit Goosman.

One of the syndics in Jan de Baen's group portrait is Willem van Heemskerck, a cloth merchant who occupied a special place in the guild and the decorative arts of Leiden. Although his own textile business went bankrupt, Van Heemskerck held various prestigious offices in the guild, including that of syndic. In addition, he was an amateur poet and glass calligrapher. Van Heemskerck's calligraphy with its characteristic swirling letters is well represented in the Lakenhal's collection by fifteen pieces, including this *roemer*.

Another category of objects that entered the museum's collection shortly after it was founded came from hospitals and almshouses that closed their doors in the nineteenth century. These items include an engraved glass that must have been used for toasts by the regents of the "Sint Catharina en Caecilia" hospital. The glass was engraved by Willem Robart for the regent Jan Alesoon. The two figures on the goblet, an old man and a madwoman, personify the two institutions that had been responsible for the care of the sick and elderly in Leiden since the Middle Ages. Robart based these figures on drawings (now kept in the Regionaal Archief Leiden) made by Frans van Mieris the Younger, numismatist, historian, painter and grandson of the famous Leiden "fine painter." The glass was probably bequeathed to the hospital when Alesoon stepped down in 1747.

A generous bequest and subsequent donation by Carel and Cornelis Pape made it possible to add a new wing to the museum in 1921. While the Hartevelt Gallery, which opened in 1890, was the domain of painting, the Pape Galleries focused on the decorative arts. In accordance with the then prevailing ideas in the field of museology, two rooms were furnished as period rooms to provide suitable décor for the decorative arts.

The so-called Yellow Pape Gallery in the style of Louis XVI came from the house at Leidse Breestraat 24. The contents of this house were auctioned off in 1918, and the wall-paneling was installed in the museum soon after. The rooms in the house did not correspond exactly to the space in the museum, however, so the paneling had to be adapted to its new surroundings. The second period room was supplied with wall-paneling with elaborate carving in the style of Louis XIV, as well as an overdoor, an overmantel and a ceiling painting by Anthony Elliger (1739). The room did not come from a house in Leiden, however, but from premises in Arnhem, but this was no reason for the then director, J.C. Overvoorde, to reject this beautiful example of the Louis XIV style. The Pape Wing was built to accommodate the collection of Carel Pape, but its opening prompted the acquisition of further examples of applied art. The objects collected in this period – which included many smaller pieces of furniture, as well as various bequests and donations – were mainly of illustrative value in portraying "daily life" in various periods. They were seldom of exceptional quality, and did not always have an obvious connection with Leiden.

In recent years the applied arts have played a relatively modest role at Museum De Lakenhal. The collection has been enriched with several specific purchases and loans from Leiden artists, including a toilet mirror and two sauce boats made by Hendrik Fortman, a member of the famous family of silversmiths, as well as with purchases that fall outside the direct sphere of CODART, such as the substantial collection of earthenware from the Amphora factory in Oegstgeest, which produced pottery in the style of Rozenburg. Recent trends have caused the collection of decorative arts to retreat somewhat from public view for the benefit of a more modern museum display. Important pieces, such as the goblet presented by Elizabeth of Bohemia in 1641 to the city of Leiden as a token of her gratitude for providing her children with accommodation, have been relegated temporarily to the depot. The goblet, which is nearly eighty centimeters high, was executed by the Nuremberg-born Hague silversmith Hans Coenraet Breghtel in an elaborate auricular style. The cartouches all around contain minutely stippled allegorical representations, and a statue of the Winter Queen herself appears on the lid. The goblet will soon be on public display again.

In 2010 the project *Werk in Uitvoering (Work in Progress)* prompted the museum to focus on its own collection: more than 13,000 objects were brought out of the depot and into view. A conveyor belt – which carried the objects past staff members, who described, examined and photographed them all – was visible to the public. This gave visitors a unique glimpse behind the scenes at the museum, and they were asked to give their opinion of the museum and its collection. This brought a number of long-lost treasures to light, and provided a wealth of information and valuable insights into the appreciation, history and formation of the collection. In accordance with the project, the museum will focus on the presentation of its own

collection in the first half of 2012. All of this will strengthen the Museum De Lakenhal in its preparations for the planned renovation and extension. The new exhibition space will provide the permanent collection, including the decorative arts, with much more room.

A member of CODART since 2009, [Femke Diercks](#) was Junior Curator of Decorative Arts at Museum De Lakenhal in Leiden until 1 February 2012 and is currently Junior Curator of Glass and Ceramics at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

## CURATOR'S PROJECT

### **The Mauritshuis ... on tour**

The [Mauritshuis](#) will begin its ambitious plans to extend and renovate its historic city palace on the Hofvijver (Court Pond) in The Hague on 2 April 2012. The project will take about two years to complete, during which time important parts of the collection will be on display elsewhere, and so will remain largely accessible to the public. A selection of the museum's highlights will be shown at the [Gemeentemuseum](#) in The Hague, a traveling exhibition will take a large number of masterpieces to Japan and the United States, and various groups of paintings will be lent to museums in the Netherlands and Belgium. The team of Mauritshuis curators, consisting of CODART members [Quentin Buvelot](#), [Epcó Runia](#), [Ariane van Suchtelen](#), [Lea van der Vinde](#) and assistant curator [Geerte Broersma](#), have been working hard to make these complex plans a reality.

### **Extension and Renovation**

Building work will commence in the spring of 2012. An underground foyer will link the Art Deco building at Plein 26 to the seventeenth-century city palace. The design by the architect Hans van Heeswijk focuses on brightness and light; it does justice to the museum's international stature while preserving the characteristics of its historic building. By doubling its surface area, the museum will be able to extend its facilities to include a new exhibition space, an auditorium for lectures and conferences, a library/documentation center and an educational area. The entrance to the underground foyer will be in the forecourt, and will provide access to both the city palace and the new wing. As a result, visitors will no longer have to use the service entrance. While work is being done on the extension, the old premises will be renovated. The "new" museum is expected to open its doors to the public in mid-2014.

### **Masterpieces at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague**

More than one hundred masterpieces from the Mauritshuis will be exhibited in a separate wing of the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague from 24 April 2012 until the building project is completed. This will allow the core of the collection to remain on display in the city and to be shown under the same roof as the highlights of modern painting from the collection of the Gemeentemuseum. It will be a unique experience for both the public and the curators to see such famous masterpieces as Vermeer's *View of Delft*, Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson* and *The Bull* by Paulus Potter in the sleek museum designed by the architect H.P. Berlage, rather than in the intimate, domestic atmosphere of the Mauritshuis. This will literally shed new light on our Old Masters, since the Gemeentemuseum has pitched glass roofing, which allows daylight to enter through glass ceilings which are covered with translucent veils that direct the light to the walls.

### **Traveling Exhibition**

A number of paintings, including Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* and *The Goldfinch* by Carel Fabritius, will go on tour to Japan and the United States. The traveling exhibition will provide information about the history of the Mauritshuis and the building project, which will acquaint a large international public with the Mauritshuis of the past, present and future. In the second half of 2012 nearly [fifty works](#) will be shown at two venues in Japan: the [Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum](#) and the [Kobe City Museum](#). Thirty of these paintings, supplemented by five others from The Hague, will begin their [tour](#) of the United States in early 2013, starting at the [de Young Museum](#) in San Francisco and continuing on to the [High Museum of Art](#) in Atlanta. To round up the tour, ten highlights from the traveling exhibition will be on display at [The Frick Collection](#) in New York: a special event, since both museums are known for their relatively small collections of extremely high-quality works.

### **Ensembles**

Closer to home, "ensembles" will be lent to museums in the Netherlands and Belgium. These groups consist of paintings (and in one case also sculptures) that form a cohesive whole and also fit in with the collection of the host museum. Amsterdam portraits will be lent to the

[Amsterdam Museum](#), art works related to the House of Orange will have a temporary home at [Het Loo Palace](#), early Netherlandish paintings will spend some time at the Groeningemuseum in Bruges, and such Dordrecht masters as Aert de Gelder and Aelbert Cuyp will go to the [Dordrechts Museum](#). The host museums will display these loans in various ways,

either alongside their permanent collections or in special presentations. The [Rijksmuseum Twenthe](#) in Enschede, for example, is planning to organize an exhibition centered on a number of landscapes from the Mauritshuis, the focal point being Jacob van Ruisdael's *View of Bentheim Castle*.

### **Conservation Projects**

The temporary closure of the Mauritshuis will also provide an opportunity to carry out several large conservation projects that have long been pending. The renovation of the city palace will necessitate the temporary removal of nearly all the ceiling- and wall-paintings, which will be housed elsewhere for the duration, including the monumental paintings produced in 1718-1719 for the Golden Room by the Venetian artist Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini. These works may have been executed in the Netherlands, but are characterized by a typically Venetian panache and palette, and so represent something uniquely Italian on Dutch soil. During the closing of the Mauritshuis, Pellegrini's paintings will be examined and treated. There are also plans to examine and conserve three richly decorated, seventeenth-century trophy frames, including the one now surrounding Ferdinand Bol's portrait of Michiel de Ruyter.

We hope to welcome the public to the newly renovated and enlarged Mauritshuis by mid-2014. In the meantime, important parts of our collection will be available to a broad public. In addition, nearly 150 works from the Mauritshuis, including paintings by Jan Steen, Paulus Potter and Frans van Mieris, have been on permanent display at the Prince William V Gallery on the Buitenhof since September 2010. This unique space offers visitors the opportunity to enjoy the atmosphere of the princely, eighteenth-century picture gallery that forms the basis of the present-day collection of the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis.

For more information please visit [www.mauritshuisbouwt.nl](http://www.mauritshuisbouwt.nl).

[Edwin Buijsen](#) is Head of Collections of the Mauritshuis in The Hague and has been a member of CODART since 2005.



## CURATOR'S PROJECT

*Jordaens and the Antique: A Master Reborn*

*Jordaens and the Antique*, on view at the [Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium](#) in Brussels from 12 October 2012 through 27 January 2013 and at the [Fridericianum](#) in Kassel from 1 March through 16 June 2013, offers an entirely new vision of the Antwerp painter Jacob Jordaens and his engagement with the cultural legacy of antiquity. Building on the rich holdings of the two partner institutions, the exhibition will include paintings, drawings, prints, books, sculpture and tapestries from major museums around the world that situate Jordaens's lively antique themes in their proper visual context – works not only by the master himself but also by such illustrious contemporaries as Peter Paul Rubens, Abraham Janssen, Hendrick van Balen and Hendrick Goltzius. A follow-up to the highly successful in-house production *Rubens: A genius at work* (14 September 2007 – 28 January 2008), *Jordaens and the Antique* represents the fruit of four years of in-depth research – funded in part by the Belgian Federal Science Policy's [Inter-University Attraction Poles program](#) – and of an extensive restoration campaign that has enjoyed the generous support of the [Fondation Inbev-Baillet Latour](#).

Of the well-known trio of Flemish Baroque masters – Rubens, Van Dyck, Jordaens – the last-mentioned is without doubt the one whose image and art-historical significance is most in need of revision. It has been nearly twenty years since the last retrospective on Jordaens opened in Antwerp at the [Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten](#) in 1993. Rightly praised for its synthetic approach, this exhibition presented the familiar image of Jordaens as a rather one-sided follower of Rubens who felt more at home with popular genre subjects like *The King Drinks* and *As the Old Sing, So the Young Pipe* because he lacked the intellectual rigor to tackle more sophisticated subjects.

Although it is true that – unlike Rubens – Jordaens does not seem to have attended a prestigious Latin school, his approach to the antique was highly personal and laced with subversive humor. In a broader metaphorical sense, one might say that Jordaens played Diogenes to Rubens's Seneca, taking the stance of the irreverent, unwashed Cynic striding proudly through the sun-drenched marketplace – in sharp contrast to the dry, academic Stoic, dying in splendid isolation at Nero's capricious orders. A thoroughgoing knowledge of the Latin language and its literature was not needed to pull it off, since nearly all the classics were available in translation – and Jordaens seems to have read them assiduously. From Aesop's fables to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Homer's *Odyssey*, with detours through Philostratus's arcane *Images* and Lucian's satirical *Prometheus*, he consistently selected subjects that would showcase his natural talent for observation and lively brushwork, qualities that did not depend on antiquity at all.

Even his failure to make the requisite pilgrimage to Italy was not an insurmountable obstacle. His was a virtual Rome, a lively if artificial construction cobbled together from readily available material: engraved and sculptural reproductions, gems and coins. These were supplemented when needed with studies after the antique made in situ by other artists, notably Rubens, in whose studio Jordaens probably worked as an independent collaborator between ca. 1615 and ca. 1620, and Abraham Janssen, whose influence on Jordaens is less well known and begins to emerge here for the first time.

In response to the spaces in which it will be shown, the exhibition is divided into nine roughly chronological ensembles that illustrate different facets of Jordaens's engagement with antiquity. The first examines his decision to remain in Antwerp – out of love: he married his master's daughter – and the resources available to him there, whether through the city's learned collectors or handy reproductions. The second ensemble acquaints us with Jordaens's training – possibly in Rubens's studio – through an exceptional group of studies from live models, at times posing like famous antique statues.

The third and largest group of works presents a concise overview of the variety of mythological subjects Jordaens painted in the course of his career, and of his evolving attitude toward antiquity and its presentation in paint. Other ensembles are more tightly structured around specific themes, for which striking groups of paintings and drawings survive: Jordaens's numerous, philosophically charged renditions of Aesop's fable "The Satyr and the Peasant," for example, or his magnificent visual odes to the earth's fertility and abundance.

Also included are his large-scale mythological cabinet paintings, which pay homage not only to Hendrick van Balen but also to Titian – a previously unsuspected influence on Jordaens's work of the 1630s and 1640s. His boisterous bacchanals, which



survive in smaller numbers, exude a spirit of irreverence bolstered by a style and specific motifs that owe a great deal to relief carvings found on Roman sarcophagi. The exhibition would not be complete without examining Jordaens's career as a designer of tapestries, in which classical mythology and history are well represented. Panels from his *Life of Alexander the Great* and the *Life of Odysseus* will be shown together with preparatory drawings made in conjunction with their design. Also on display are colorful *modelli* and refined anatomical studies that crop up among Jordaens's later drawings – a dual testament to his increasingly commercial studio and to his lasting passion for making sensitive studies from life.

*Jordaens and the Antique* is organized by [Irene Schaudies](#), Project Researcher at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels, and [Joost Vander Auwera](#), Senior Curator in the Old Masters Department, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, with the collaboration of [Justus Lange](#), Curator, Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue written by Irene Schaudies and Joost Vander Auwera, with contributions by Justus Lange and Timo Trümper and thematic essays by such distinguished authors as Koenraad Brosens, Ulrich Heinen and Nico Van Hout. Published by Mercatorfonds, it is available in four languages (Dutch, English, French and German).

The catalogue is aimed at the broadest possible public, but academics, museum curators and restorers will have the opportunity to share their more specialized insights into Jordaens's artistic and intellectual approach, market strategy, style and technique at a two-day international symposium in Brussels, planned in cooperation with Birgitt Münch from the Universität Trier to coincide with the exhibition (December 2012).

Irene Schaudies, Project Researcher at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts in Belgium, Brussels, has been an associate member of CODART since 2010.

## TEFAF SPECIAL

**Christopher Brown talks about his membership of the vetting committee**

Christopher Brown is director of the [Ashmolean Museum](#) in Oxford. He was previously curator of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch and Flemish paintings and then Chief Curator of the [National Gallery](#), London, where he worked from 1971 to 1998. He is the author of numerous articles, books and exhibition catalogues on Dutch and Flemish paintings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly the work of Rubens, Van Dyck and Rembrandt. He has been a CODART member since its beginning in 1998, and a member of the TEFAF vetting committee since 1995.

**When did you first visit TEFAF?**

I have been going for a long time, I think since the first TEFAF in 1988. At the time I was curator of seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish paintings at the National Gallery and was also the Chief Curator there. It was clear to me that this was the premier fair for this area of painting and so it was natural for me to visit it.

**What made you decide to become a member of the TEFAF vetting committee?**

I was invited to join the vetting committee and I suppose that this was because of my consistent attendance at TEFAF. I thought it would be interesting to join and it does make you concentrate very hard on what is at the Fair. There are some key decisions to be made and you really do work very, very hard.

**What are the main advantages of becoming a vetter?**

Certainly from my present position as a museum director and during the last two years when I have been a builder (the Ashmolean Museum has just completed a major extension project), actually having two days to do nothing but look at the best pictures available on the art market is very enjoyable and provides a good balance in your life. It takes me back to my roots and it is very good for your knowledge. I think it is important for representatives of any sizeable museum to know what is on the market and to have good relations with the key dealers at TEFAF. Working with colleagues from other museums is also a great pleasure. Many of them are very old friends.

**How has the composition of the Old Masters vetting committee changed since you have been a member?**

My memory is that at the beginning the committee had one or two dealers and auctioneers on it. Basically a view was taken that the integrity of the process depended on nobody having any potential conflict of interest. Now the vetting committee has no dealers who exhibit at the Fair and no auctioneers, and that seems to me to be right because perception is very important.

**What does the vetting entail and how does it work?**

In the last couple of years the quite large Old Masters Committee has been divided in two. In the early years the great majority of what we saw were Dutch and Flemish paintings, but then the dealers started bringing more and more Italian and southern European pictures to the Fair. Two years ago we split and there is now a southern European group and a northern European group. I think that in terms of getting round a lot of stands it is much more efficient. We start out with the stands that have more pictures in our areas and then we go to more general dealers and to the antiques section, where there may be just a few. All decisions are made by lunchtime on the second day. Exhibitors have the right to appeal and these are heard on the Wednesday afternoon. We go back to the stand and have a discussion and the dealer makes a presentation. In my experience not a lot of opinions get significantly changed.

**What kind of experts are on the committees (there are some 170 experts on 29 committees)?**

There are a lot of museum people on the committee. There are also two restorers who look at the condition of paintings. Condition is important and many of the big decisions are about condition.

**What are the principal problems encountered by the vettors of Old Master paintings?**

Attribution and condition are the two main problems. I was involved last year in a big discussion about Van Dyck. There are issues about Van Dyck – is it circle of Van Dyck, is it studio, or is it by the master? These are the questions that an art

historian wrestles with all the time. Then there is the whole question of condition. A painting may unquestionably be by a particular artist, but maybe it has been badly treated and is a shadow of its former self. I think that is very important, because for the private purchaser, buying at TEFAF should be a sort of guarantee.

### **What are the different outcomes of vetting, and what happens to the objects that are rejected by the vetting committee?**

Most dealers are highly knowledgeable and know exactly what they have got. But some can be over-enthusiastic about works on their stand and we have to say that a picture should be re-attributed as studio or as being by a follower. This makes it easier for the purchaser to know the status of an object. At this point the dealer has options. In certain cases the dealer will say 'I don't agree with what is being said' and will take it off the stand. There are instructions to remove things that are deeply feeble and they are taken away to a locked store. People have to do what they are told.

### **How do you deal with disagreements between members of the vetting committee? Is a vote taken or does a consensus emerge after discussion?**

It has sometimes come to a vote. You hope that you can get a consensus but people sometimes take strong positions.

### **Why is vetting so important for TEFAF?**

I think that it is a guarantee for the purchasers. They can be assured that a robust vetting procedure has been followed and that what is written on the label is as correct as it can be and that the condition of the piece is satisfactory.

### **How do TEFAF exhibitors perceive the vetting?**

They know what the procedure is. There is no question that they know what they are in for and that what is on their stands is going to be subjected to serious questioning and discussion. Some of them don't like it when things go against them and there are occasions when people get upset about it. But that is the deal.

### **It is quite special to have so many different experts together in one place. Do you have an example of what can come from this synergy between experts?**

There is good discussion and people do change their minds. This is a genuine process and I think it comes from working as a group.

### **How has TEFAF changed over the years?**

It has got bigger and has moved from being a specialist fair in the Dutch and Flemish field to a much broader range of art. Italian and French dealers have joined and so have the Spanish. But although it has become a very large fair, I think it has maintained a very high standard.

TEFAF interview with [Christopher Brown](#), Director at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and member of CODART since 1998.

## TEFAF SPECIAL

**Jean-Patrice Marandel on LACMA business at TEFAF**

Jean-Patrice Marandel, a member of CODART since 1999, is a valued member of the Vetting Committee of The European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF), held each March in Maastricht (Netherlands). Since 1993 he has been the Robert H. Ahmanson Chief Curator of European Art at the [Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#) (LACMA). Born in Paris, he graduated from the Institute d'Art et d'Archéologie, Université de Paris-Sorbonne with a "diplôme d'études supérieures" in art history. He went to the United States in 1967 for a summer internship at the [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#) and again in 1969 with a grant from the French government as a Focillon Fellow at Yale University. After a successful career as a researcher and curator at various museums (including [The Art Institute of Chicago](#) and the [Detroit Institute of Arts](#)), he moved to LACMA in 1993.

Among the exhibitions Patrice Marandel has organized are *The Golden Age of Naples, Naples Under the Bourbons* (1732-1805). During his Detroit tenure he organized *Symbolism in Polish Painting* (1890-1914), which traveled to Warsaw in 1984, and he collaborated on Francois Boucher, a retrospective of the French artist, which traveled to New York and Paris in 1986. In 2010 he presented an exhibition of Renoir's late work and is currently organizing the exhibition *Caravaggio and his Legacy*.

LACMA recently underwent a major reinstallation of its Old Master paintings. Marandel chose to arrange his galleries in the style of the grand European galleries of centuries past. Such arrangements integrate sculpture, paintings and objects of decorative art in one and the same installation. This way of presenting a permanent collection is also making a comeback in Europe, at the new [Rijksmuseum](#) in Amsterdam, for instance, and at the [Bode Museum](#) in Berlin. In February 2010 a group of thirty CODART members visited LACMA under the guidance of Marandel and Amy Walsh, Curator of Dutch and Flemish Paintings, during a study trip to Southern California. At that time the European galleries were still in the midst of renovation, but fortunately the Dutch and Flemish galleries had been completed.

Throughout his career at LACMA and elsewhere, Marandel has been responsible for the acquisition of some of the finest European paintings and sculptures for those museums' permanent collections. His knowledge of European art and his eye for quality serve him well as a member of the Old Master Vetting Committee at TEFAF, to which he was appointed in 2005. He is among the 175 leading experts who serve on the TEFAF's prestigious vetting committees. His colleagues also come from such institutions as Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum and Washington's [National Gallery of Art](#). This year, before the Fair opens, the twenty-nine specialist committees will rigorously inspect every item for authenticity, quality and condition. According to Marandel, "Being part of the Vetting Committee myself, I am highly familiar with the process. As a buyer I do find it reassuring to have the works "vetted," in particular in those areas where I am perhaps less familiar with the material."

"I've been going to TEFAF for about fifteen years now," Marandel says. "I had heard of it as a fair offering essentially Dutch pictures – collectors' pictures: small-sized, precious cabinet pictures. Friends told me at about that time, fifteen years ago, that the Fair had expanded tremendously and was still expanding, and now included all kinds of paintings, as well as sculptures, objects, furniture and so on, well beyond the narrow field of Dutch cabinet pictures. Ever since then, TEFAF has been one of the highlights of my year. I believe I have bought at least one painting or sculpture every year at the Fair."

Among the significant acquisitions of Northern European art he has made at the Fair are two important seventeenth-century altarpieces. In 2002 he spotted the powerful *Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence* by Salomon de Bray on the stand of the New York dealer Jack Kilgore. Painted in 1652, the year De Bray was working on the Oranjezaal, the dramatic altarpiece was a major addition to LACMA's collection.

In 2008 Marandel found a mid-seventeenth-century triptych by Jan Boeckhorst, complete with wings that bear the symbols of the four evangelists painted to resemble bronze or gold relief on the exterior. Known as the *Snyders Altarpiece*, it was commissioned in about 1659 to hang above the grave of Maria Snyders, sister of the still-life painter Frans Snyders. Until 2007 the altarpiece had remained in the possession of the beguinage in Antwerp where Maria Snyders had lived. In that year it was sold at a small auction in Antwerp to the London dealer Moatti Fine Arts Ltd., who exhibited it at TEFAF.

TEFAF exhibitors frequently sell paintings to American museums in ways that many European curators find curious. Unlike European museums, which often rely on government funds, the American system is based entirely on private funding. At LACMA, for example, support for its acquisition of Old Master paintings and sculpture comes primarily from the Ahmanson Foundation, a private organization established by one of the original founders of the museum in 1965.

American curators and museum directors, even entire boards of directors, often bring wealthy donors to Maastricht to educate and advise them about their own collections, as well as to pitch the idea of buying a major work of art for their museum. “It may be a peculiarity of the museum for which I work, but the interest in Maastricht cannot be described as ‘Institutional.’ The Board – as a body – is not invited to visit Maastricht, but a number of individuals on the Board always express an interest in going. Some Board members are well aware of the fact that the best finds of the year might be made at TEFAF. By now the Fair is well known among collectors and art patrons.”

Mr. Marandel’s international background and education have enabled him to see the different systems that govern European and American museums, but the main focus of his work is European art in American museum collections. “I’m afraid that my ‘French background’ is irrelevant: I’ve lived for almost fifty years in America, and I never worked as a curator in France. My museum experience is completely American. I’m aware of the different rules under which my French colleagues work; I’m also aware of the restrictions of my own job.

We all manage to work within those different constraints, and in the end we all manage to acquire works of high quality.” But, like most art historians who visit the Fair, Mr. Marandel constantly seeks new challenges. “As a TEFAF veteran, I follow my own path through the fair. I enjoy having enough time to discover areas that are outside my specialization, the decorative arts in particular.”

TEFAF in cooperation with [Jean-Patrice Marandel](#), Robert H. Ahmanson Chief Curator of European Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and member of CODART since 1999.

## TEFAF SPECIAL

**In close proximity to TEFAF**

After completing his studies in art history in Groningen, Peter van den Brink worked briefly at museums in Delft and Utrecht before beginning in 1991 as a researcher at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. Starting in 1997 he worked for more than eight years at the [Bonrefantenmuseum](#) in Maastricht, serving as Chief Curator for the last six years of this period. In this capacity he published a number of articles and organized various exhibitions, including [Brueghel Enterprises](#) in Maastricht and Brussels in 2002 and [ExtravagAnt!](#) in Maastricht and Antwerp in 2004-05. One of his specialisms, early Netherlandish paintings and drawings, was highlighted in the latter exhibition in particular, but the scope of his publications extends far beyond this field. Since 2005 Van den Brink has served as director of the Municipal Museums of Aachen (Germany), one of which is the [Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum](#). As both art historian and museum director, he attaches great importance to The European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF).

Van den Brink first visited TEFAF while working as a researcher at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. He quickly realized the importance of good relations and mutual understanding between museums, scholars and art dealers. The significance of TEFAF lies primarily in the art it offers. For dealers, TEFAF is the ideal place to showcase their most important works, and many save their best pieces for the Fair, because this is where all the important buyers congregate. Over the years Van den Brink has established a rapport with many dealers. He characterizes these ties as a form of reciprocity: dealers call upon museums for expertise and authority, but they also share their information about the art market and potential lenders and donors.

Van den Brink always finds it exciting to see what surprises the Fair has to offer. This year he expects, for the first time in years, many more works from private collections. For decades, art dealers have maintained ties to various families, some of them aristocratic, who now find themselves forced by the economic malaise to sell part of their collection. A dealer can make sure this happens quietly and discreetly, without all the commotion of an auction. Such discretion is also advantageous for museums, since it gives them time, when considering a purchase, to carry out additional research, conduct unhurried negotiations, and make the necessary financial arrangements.

The day of the private viewing is largely taken up with socializing, networking, and making appointments for the rest of the week. Everyone you want or need to do business with is in Maastricht for these few days. Lenders, sponsors and partners – often it is possible to carry on three-way conversations.

Things that are difficult to talk about on the telephone or by e-mail are discussed here in person, over lunch, dinner, breakfast, a cup of coffee or a drink. On the opening day there is little time to see the art. Peter van den Brink makes up for this in the following days, alternately viewing the art and giving tours of the Fair. Since becoming the director in Aachen, Van den Brink gives a tour of the Fair on the first Friday for the board and sponsors of the German States Cultural Foundation (Kulturstiftung der Länder) in Berlin. For the first time, this will be followed on the first Saturday by an introductory lecture on the Fair for some two hundred clients of a Swiss bank. In the second week of TEFAF he usually gives a tour for clients of the Savings Bank (Sparkasse), a loyal sponsor of his museums in Aachen.

Even though Van den Brink thinks of himself as a small fish in a big pond, he buys something at TEFAF almost every year. In 2007 he purchased, on behalf of his museum, a painting by Cornelis Bega from Noortman Master Paintings for 150,000 euros. That work now features in the exhibition, which opens on the eve of TEFAF 2012, on this seriously underrated artist: [Eleganz und raue Sitten](#) (*Elegance and Boorish Manners*). Last year Van den Brink spotted a *Last Judgment* by the Amsterdam painter Nicolas Elias, called Pickenoy, which was offered by Bob Haboldt. It is the intention that this splendid work, one of the rare history paintings by this artist who is known mainly as a portraitist, will be purchased by the Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum. At the Fair, such potential purchases are carefully inspected by the museum's conservators and then taken as quickly as possible to Aachen.

TEFAF is extremely important as a meeting place. For the sales of Old Masters, everyone goes in January to New York, in July to London, and in March to Maastricht. As director of the Municipal Museums of Aachen, Van den Brink is well aware

that for his museums this is one of the most important times of the year. Every year the Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum holds a large exhibition that officially opens on Wednesday, the day before the private viewing of TEFAF, but on the Tuesday evening there is always a preview for TEFAF dealers, who are thus forced to take the night off. These Tuesday evenings are very popular among the art dealers, who can take a leisurely look at the exhibition and of course enjoy a glass of wine and the accompanying appetizers. No wonder they show up in force, because it's their last opportunity to relax before the stress of TEFAF sets in. Naturally such an evening provides an opportunity to discuss other topics as well. The exhibition in Aachen traditionally holds its festive opening on the Wednesday evening before TEFAF starts, and this event attracts a large and diverse public, including people from Van der Brink's native village of Meerssen (just outside Maastricht), politicians and journalists from Aachen, and collectors and art historians from around the world – between 800 and 1,000 people. Members of CODART, [HNA](#) and [ANKK](#) receive invitations by e-mail to this opening, which is usually a very enjoyable affair that is increasingly viewed as the kick-off to TEFAF. The exhibition often presents a surprising overview of a slightly lesser-known artist. After [Hans von Aachen](#) (recently celebrated by the English magazine *Apollo* as the best exhibition of 2010-11) and [Joos van Cleve](#), this year the spotlight will focus on the Haarlem painter Cornelis Bega in a show titled *Eleganz und raue Sitten (Elegance and Boorish Manners)*. This painter, draftsman and etcher – unknown to most people and known to most CODART members only as a follower of Ostade – is a tremendous discovery. The presentation in Aachen of the best of his oeuvre will put him on the map as an artist whose sympathy for those less fortunate than himself is plainly evident in his paintings. Equally brilliant with chalk, burin and brush, he demonstrates his incredible refinement as both a colorist and a painter of the human condition.

TEFAF coincided with a special event in 2009, when the exhibition [\*The great virtuoso from Amsterdam: Jacob Adriaensz. Backer\*](#) was mounted in cooperation with the Rembrandthuis. Van den Brink worked for years on this project, which resulted in a successful exhibition that was accompanied by an extensive catalogue. This achievement also provided a reason to hold the CODART TWAALF congress in 2009 in Aachen and Maastricht. These congresses are held every year during TEFAF, the perfect time for CODART members to meet one another and exchange ideas.



## FRIENDS

**Gregor Simoons of Gregor's Framing (Gregor's Lijsten) interviewed by Gerdien Verschoor**

Driving into the small industrial zone in the Veluwe region of the Netherlands, you have no idea that Old Masters are within easy reach, and even after entering the premises of [Gregor's Framing](#), it isn't immediately clear what kind of workshop this is. The production line of a picture frame for a Cuyp from the [Dordrechts Museum](#) or for a Rembrandt from the [Hermitage](#) fits nicely into one large, well-ordered workspace.

In the Netherlands serious research has been going on since the 1980s on seventeenth-century Dutch picture frames, research that resulted in 1984 in the catalogue *Prijs de lijst* and an exhibition of the same name in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The English translation of this publication appeared in 1995 under the title *Framing in the Golden Age*. Over ten years later, in 2009, the then ICN (now the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, or the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands) launched the four-year research project *Picture Frames in The Netherlands*. The project has established a platform for organizing bi-annual meetings, where presentations are given on the history and restoration of frames and discussions take place about the way frames are handled in museums (for the blog and the wiki, visit [www.collectiewijzer.nl](http://www.collectiewijzer.nl)).

Exactly ten years after the appearance of *Prijs de lijst*, Gregor Simoons set up his frame-making business in a small industrial premises in Spankeren. He and his team of six assistants make frames for museums, private collectors and art dealers. In 2009 he received a large commission from the Hermitage in St. Petersburg to produce eighteen frames for paintings by Dutch masters. This project, partly financed by the Dutch Friends of the Hermitage, was set up in cooperation with CODART member [Irina Sokolova](#), Curator of Dutch Paintings at the State Hermitage Museum. The result was a special exhibition, mounted by the Hermitage at the end of 2011, on the frames themselves and Simoons's company. It was also in 2011 that Gregor Simoons decided to become a patron of CODART, which is reason enough for us to interview this exceptional craftsman.

**How did you happen to start up such a specialized business?**

"I come from a family of framemakers, and I've been fascinated by frames since I was a child. But it soon became apparent that my fascination for picture frames went much further than what I could learn at home. There's no formal course of education for framemakers, so I decided to train for a time with a number of framemakers in the Netherlands and abroad. I spent about six years doing this, learning the craft like a true journeyman: each workshop had its own specialism, and I mastered them all. Not only that, but I was constantly experimenting with my own formulas and compounds, and so I learned to make frames that closely resemble authentic frames."

**Authentic frames? Don't you need originals as examples?**

"Of course! Whenever I walk around a museum, or visit a depot, first I look at the frames and afterwards the paintings. If I have permission, I take photos of the picture frames and use them later as models. I also collect molds: my collection of molds and ornaments for picture frames is probably the largest in the Netherlands. A couple of years ago, for instance, I received a bequest from Mr. de Jong of Amsterdam that consisted of hundreds of molds from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By making silicon impressions of them, I can reconstruct frames and ornaments very precisely. For seventeenth-century frames I consult publications, such as the book *Framing in the Golden Age*. Customers can also choose from existing models here in the workshop."

**Apart from museum curators, are there people who notice the difference between any old frame and a real Simoons frame?**

"I have three kinds of clients: museums, private collectors and art dealers. All my clients receive personal treatment. Private collectors often choose a frame that suits their furnishings or matches the frames of other paintings in their collection. An art dealer will ask for a frame that makes a painting look as spectacular as possible. Museums, on the other hand, are mainly interested in the historical appropriateness of the frame. That development started years ago; today more and more museums are aware of the historical context of the picture frame. Together with a museum, mostly with the curator in charge, I design a frame which, historically seen, is best suited to the painting they want framed. The kind of wood, the ornamentation and

the color all play an important role. Naturally it is museum people who first notice the quality of a frame, but I'm sure that museum-goers are also receptive to quality, even if they aren't always aware of it: a good frame enhances the 'aura' of a painting."

### **In your opinion, what are the characteristics of a good frame?**

"I think it's important to enhance the painting's 'aura.' It's hard to describe how to bring that about, but I can see immediately whether or not a painting has a good frame. I want people to be able to look *inside* a frame. That's why its construction is important, the type of wood, the colors. It often takes a long time to agree on something with a museum, but again and again it proves possible to supply a museum with a frame that I can put my hallmark on. It might be a very simple oak frame, or a gilded frame with specific ornamentation from the period and the country where the painting originated."

### **So you actually represent the Formula One of framemaking.**

"Yes, that's what I'm striving for. That's why we are always doing research and I often travel around to study old frames. And I always consult my assistants about ways to improve the production line and the working environment. For instance, we've developed a special technique for gilding. We do as much as possible by hand. I personally put the finishing touch on a frame by fashioning and adapting the frame to the painting it was made for, by giving it a coat of patina, for instance. The result is a custom-made frame that is perfectly suitable in color and feels right for the painting. I'm convinced that this personal treatment adds a lot to my frames. There is one thing I can't reconstruct, though, and that is time itself, which is why I can achieve only 97% of the effect of an original frame – even though I strive for 100%."

### **You've expanded your trade into an international business that collaborates with important museums. How did you succeed in doing that?**

"Those contacts were initially established through my customers, particularly private collectors. It was a collector who put me in touch with Irina Sokolova of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, a museum with which we've built up a close and very special working relationship. In consultation with Irina, I suggested replacing the gilded and richly ornamented frames that had been commissioned by Catherine the Great with the plain black and dark brown frames that seventeenth-century paintings originally had. We've meanwhile provided new frames for twenty-seven Dutch paintings, and it's incredible to see what such a frame adds to an Old Master. It was a great honor to have the Hermitage in St. Petersburg devote an exhibition to my frames in late 2011. What made this exhibition so special were the wall texts accompanying the frames, which provided information about their production. For that matter, it's certainly no coincidence that Irina Sokolova is a member of CODART, because CODART also played a role in consolidating my contacts in the museum world."

### **CODART?**

"Yes, because CODART enables me to do targeted networking. I like to attend CODART meetings and events, where I'm also welcomed as a patron, such as the CODART*focus* meeting in Antwerp last October, or the 'friends afternoon' organized at the [Rembrandthuis](#) in December. I not only see other CODART friends, but also meet kindred spirits, such as curators, with whom I can share my 'eccentricity.'"

### **Are we standing beside the production line of a future multinational company?**

"I'd very much like to go on expanding and perfecting my collaboration with museums. What I find particularly inspiring is being on the same level with art historians and being able to discuss my obsession with them, and I'm happy that my frames can give an added dimension to their collection. But I don't care about getting rich and heading a large international company. What really makes me happy is to put my hallmark on a frame that is historically sound and lends luster to a splendid work by an Old Master."

Did you find this interview inspiring? Would you like to support the Friends of CODART? Do you know anyone interested in becoming a patron? If so, please don't hesitate to contact [friends@codart.nl](mailto:friends@codart.nl).

## CODART ACTIVITIES

### *CODARTfocus in Antwerp*

On 10 October 2011 the recently opened Antwerp museum **MAS** (Museum aan de Stroom) welcomed participants to the CODART*focus* event. This international meeting of specialists in Dutch and Flemish art was held in the best tradition of CODART, providing participants with an in-depth visit to a specific exhibition and the opportunity to discuss the exhibition, as well as the concept behind the new museum, with the curator and other representatives of the MAS.

It is important to underline the uniqueness of the event and the special atmosphere that was created for those attending the meeting. That day the museum was open only to participants of the CODART*focus* meeting, providing a favorable setting for scrutinizing works of art and taking part in professional discussions. It was also the perfect opportunity to meet new people, since this CODART*focus* proposed a broader scope: those invited to attend included not only museum curators but also members of academia. The international group of participants consisted of scholars and curators from the United States, Russia, Romania, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The modern building that houses the MAS museum is impressive in itself. Indian stone not only creates a striking, decorative effect, but also emphasizes the new museum's significance to the cityscape. The building reflects an unusual and creative approach that has been applied to the entire museum and its presentations.

The MAS seeks to do justice to the image of Antwerp, a seaport open to the world. Naturally the new museum aspires to be a focal point of the city, by virtue of its proximity to the city as well as its exhibitions. Those attending the CODART*focus* meeting visited the exhibit *Masterpieces in the MAS. Five Centuries of Images in Antwerp*. This part of the program was under the supervision of Nico Van Hout, curator of the part of the exhibition organized by Antwerp's Royal Museum of Fine Art (KMSKA). The group was therefore treated to an introduction to the exhibition given by the curator himself. *Five Centuries of Images* is actually a collaborative effort of such leading Antwerp museums as the previously mentioned KMSKA, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MHKA) and the Museum Plantin-Moretus. The city's historical heritage, presented in all its manifestations, underlines the role of the city from the art-historical perspective. Paintings, prints and sculptures are combined with pieces of furniture, curiosities and natural specimens from the collections of aristocrats and wealthy merchants. The participants of the CODART*focus* meeting discussed the desirability of exhibiting paintings and sculptures by contemporary Flemish artists alongside historical objects. Even though the idea of juxtaposing contemporary and classical pieces caused consternation among some specialists, many colleagues appreciated the complex and unconventional forms of expression chosen by contemporary local artists. From time to time the guided tour became a platform for discussion, and the colleagues shared their opinions on certain aspects of the exhibit and particular works of art.

Another point of discussion was the route taken by visitors. To be sure, non-standard planning and numerous rooms permit the display of certain groups of art works in close proximity to one another. On the other hand, it is difficult to discover the connection between these small exhibition areas. The program of the CODART*focus* meeting also included a visit to the MAS's Visible Storage and to another exhibition: *Display of Power*.

We were introduced to Chris De Lauwer, curator of the Asian collection, Els De Palmenaer, curator of the African collection, and Annemie De Vos, curator of the Vleeshuis collection and the City Hall of Antwerp collection. During a visit to the MAS's Visible Storage, the participants were introduced to this new approach in presenting art works to the public.

The objective of CODART*focus* meetings is to spend one day making an in-depth visit to an exhibition, a newly installed permanent collection, or a recently opened museum. In this way CODART seeks to give its members an opportunity to present – and discuss with fellow art historians – their own museum, permanent collection or special exhibition. CODART*focus* meetings provide occasions for members to get together in smaller groups throughout the year, not just at the annual conference. Sometimes non-members are invited to *focus* meetings; these guest participants are often specialists in their field, whose expertise adds depth to the discussions.

[Maria Gordusenko](#), Head of the Department of West European Art at the Ekaterinburg Museum of Fine Arts in Ekaterinburg

and has been a member of CODART since 2005.

Save the date!

### CODARTFOCUS TO PRAGUE, 14 MAY 2012

From 9 February to 27 May 2012 the [National Gallery](#) in Prague presents the exhibition *Rembrandt & Co.: stories told by a prosperous age* to mark the publication of its illustrated summary catalogue Dutch Paintings of the 17th and 18th Centuries.

The new catalogue and exhibition are the perfect occasion to visit Prague and the exquisite collection of its National Gallery. CODART member Anja Ševčíková of The National Gallery in Prague therefore takes this opportunity to invite us to a one-day CODARTfocus meeting.

On Monday, 14 May 2012 the museum opens its doors exclusively to CODART. The program includes a presentation of the collection catalogue, a tour of the exhibition *Rembrandt & Co.: stories told by a prosperous age* (with loans from the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Amsterdam Museum, Gemäldegalerie Berlin, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum Braunschweig, Szépművészeti Múzeum Budapest, Regional Gallery Liberec and the Lobkowitz Collection Prague), a lecture on the restoration of Frans Hals's *Portrait of Jaspas Schade*, as well as some unsolved mysteries from the storage rooms.

Our program will possibly be expanded to include a visit to the [Lobkowitz Collection](#) on Sunday, 13 May.