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EDITOR'S NOTE

Art and Architecture

Victoria Sancho Lobis

The question of place is a common theme in studies of Netherlandish art. One reason for this is the wealth of landscape subjects in Early Modern paintings, prints, and drawings. Another is the abiding interest in drawing geographical distinctions: that is, between schools linked to particular cities (Haarlem, Dordrecht, Brussels) or regions (Dutch versus Flemish). By contrast, the subject of *space*—its design and its decoration—attracts far less attention within our field. The content of the present issue is therefore a very welcome corrective, and will undoubtedly spark further reflections on subjects relating to Dutch and Flemish architecture and design. [Oliver Kik](#) draws our attention to a number of important architectural drawings. The examples he provides compel us to ask why such drawings have not been treated in the past as especially worthy of preservation or scholarly scrutiny. Clearly, we can learn a great deal from them, both about the ways in which major buildings were commissioned and about the processes of design and construction.

The [interview with Judikje Kiers and Thijs Boers](#) shows that focusing on historic sites may guide and indeed transform museum policy. The premise that the building in which Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder is located is itself the most important object in the museum's collection leads to a radically different approach: the historic site is no longer viewed as a mere backdrop but recast as experience. My colleagues at

the [Art Institute](#) pursued this strategy in the recent exhibition [Van Gogh's Bedrooms](#), which included a recreation of the space depicted in the artist's paintings of his bedroom in the "Yellow House" in Arles.

[Yvette Driever](#) reflects on the reconstruction of a historic site from a different angle. The Valkhof Citadel in Nijmegen was immortalized in a series of drawings produced by the artist and politician Hendrik Hoogers at the end of the eighteenth century shortly before the structure was demolished. These drawings added to what was already an abundance of paintings, prints, and drawings prominently featuring the citadel - by Jan van Goyen, Aelbert Cuyp, and others. Plans were already being drawn up for the citadel's reconstruction around 1900. Still, even though recent years have witnessed an upsurge of interest in this idea, no progress has been made in reconstructing part or all of the structure. The Museum Het Valkhof therefore remains a historic site that preserves the memory of a space rather than providing access to it.

[Piotr Oczko and Jan Plus](#) offer a rare glimpse of the use of Dutch tiles in Poland, which not only shows the decorative arts functioning in their intended spaces but also demonstrates the popularity of this art form beyond the Low Countries. This brief survey is a preview of their forthcoming book.

Taken together, these texts suggest avenues for further research while at the same time inviting us to aspire to a more three-dimensional mindset, even when interpreting two-dimensional objects.

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WELCOME

“The Beautiful is Secret” . . .

. . . That was the wonderful title of the valedictory lecture given by Peter Hecht, who bade farewell as professor of art history at Utrecht University on 29 June 2016. In his lecture he took us on a lightning tour of his career in art history and the developments in Dutch art history. Just as I borrowed the title of my Foreword from Peter Hecht, he in turn borrowed it from Jan Emmens, who added sarcastically: “It should not be talked about. What is talked about ceases to be beautiful. It is no longer secret.” And that is why art historians are generally advised against getting into discussions about quality.

That reminds of the Dutch writer Cees Nootboom, whose essays constantly return to the theme of what is beautiful (and hence secret?) in art. Not as a “connoisseur,” but “merely” as a “viewer” (as he himself repeatedly emphasizes), he finds himself again and again amazed at what art can achieve. “You’d like to be able to smell the hay between the men and women in the grass, that day when the wheat was harvested, hundreds of lives are held up to you but you can’t get in, that world is so big and full that you refuse to believe that it consists of nothing more than a layer of paint less than a millimeter thick.” On other occasions he puts it more metaphysically: “Sometimes an artwork works like a guided missile and reaches that exact place in your inner being where the same sort of secret plays itself out,

you know what it’s about, in a platonic sense the possibility exists that you may at some point find a formula for it, you have to keep looking for it, but until you’ve found it you must not shroud the secret, and you must certainly not insult it by thinking up some *rough-and-ready* formula for it. Look, listen, read: it always works.”

It is the curators who help him in that endeavor. Time and again Nootboom mentions the explanatory notes he reads, and the catalogs he purchases, seeking – and benefiting from the expertise of the exhibition’s curator, who tells the “story” of the exhibition – to unravel the mysteries of the artworks on display. Because it may be so that the beautiful is secret, but that does not relieve art historians of the responsibility of continuing their quest for meaning and order.

There are many ways of discussing meaning and order. At the last CODART congress, we took as our point of departure the theme *Connoisseurship: Between Intuition and Science*. The concept of “quality” was raised there, in a circuitous way. What or who determines my judgment? Is it the other famous (older!) connoisseur whose judgment it is? Is it my own accumulated experience of looking, my “looking hours”? Is it the “hard evidence” derived from technical research on materials? And when we have disentangled all those factors, have we found a formula, are we any closer to the secret that Nootboom describes?

“Great art wraps you in mysteries, then you have to deal with them,” he says. I totally agree. It is the wonderful task of an art historian, and more specifically of a curator, to tell Nootboom and all those others who are “merely” looking at art as museum visitors the stories that go with those mysteries. And it is CODART’s role to continue to nurture and inspire curators as they fulfill this task. So please save the dates of two upcoming events: the [CODARTfocus meeting in Dresden](#), 13-14 November this year, and the CODART TWINTIG congress in Warsaw, 21-23 May 2017!

Gerdien Verschoor

The quotations from Cees Nootboom (translated into English here by Beverley Jackson) have been taken from 'De blinde mannen van Bruegel,' 'De filosoof zonder ogen,' and 'Een koningin lacht niet,' published in *Wat het oog je vertelt: Kijken als avontuur*, Amsterdam/Antwerp 2016

CURATOR'S PROJECT

The Valkhof Citadel**Is it possible to reconstruct the citadel on the basis of paintings, prints and drawings?****Yvette Driever**

At a stone's throw from the museum known as **Het Valkhof** is the park after which the museum is named. This was once the site of a proud medieval citadel where emperors, dukes and stadholders came to stay. After a period of decline and political unrest, virtually the entire Valkhof citadel was demolished in 1797.

Nowadays the St Nicholas Chapel and St Martin's Chapel (also known as the Barbarossa ruins) remain as testaments to the hill's illustrious past. Over the past century, there have been frequent calls for the citadel's reconstruction. Since we have few precise details about the building's façade, the various reconstruction initiatives tend to be based on the many depictions of the Valkhof citadel.

The Valkhof citadel was built on a hill during the rule of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I or "Frederick Barbarossa" in the twelfth century. The citadel, with its thick walls and high tower, was built from tufa stone. Frederick I was not the first person to live on the site: in the eighth century Charlemagne had a palace built there on the remains of a Roman settlement.

The Valkhof citadel was a major landmark in Nijmegen, depicted in countless paintings, prints and drawings. The best-known image is probably one painted by Jan van Goyen. Van Goyen came from The Hague and visited Nijmegen only twice. Nonetheless, in the two decades from 1633 to 1654 he depicted the Valkhof over thirty times. His views of the Valkhof citadel are not entirely correct, topographically speaking, but that did not stop them soaring to almost instant popularity. The scenes he painted included a view of the River Waal and the Valkhof citadel (1641) in front of the town hall – a work commissioned by the Nijmegen city council (fig. 1). To Van Goyen, the citadel towering over its surroundings was mainly an attractive picture, in which aesthetics mattered more than topographical or architectural accuracy.

Other landscape painters emulated Van Goyen's pictures of the citadel. Some, like Aelbert Cuyp, made realistic, accurate sketches of the Valkhof during visits to Nijmegen (fig. 2). Others contented themselves with imitating Van Goyen's composition without visiting the site themselves. Some of these imitations are wildly unlike the topographical reality. Recognizable elements such as the giant tower or donjon are emphasized or enlarged to achieve a beautiful cityscape.

From citadel to city park

In 1797 it was decided that the dilapidated citadel should be demolished. The building was being eroded by thefts of tufa stone, columns, and other structural fragments. The Nijmegen politician Johannes In de Betouw vehemently opposed demolition and did his utmost to ensure the preservation of the two chapels. In this he was supported by the politician and artist Hendrik Hoogers, who immortalized the Valkhof in a series of drawings before it was torn down. In de Betouw and Hoogers took a particular interest in the chapels because they believed them to date from Roman times. By pressing this point home, they managed to spare the "pagan" chapels from demolition.

One of the reasons for demolishing the building was the large quantity of tufa stone that could be harvested. However, the political events of the late eighteenth century also played a role. Under the influence of the French Revolution, the Netherlands too was in the throes of a modernizing drive that meant a break with the past. The "imperial" Valkhof was seen as a symbol of the *ancien régime*.

With demolition looming, efforts were made – for the first time – to get the Valkhof classified as a protected historic building. This led to restoration work being carried out at the city's expense: the chapels were turned into museums and the Valkhof became a *lieu de memoire*. After the citadel was eventually torn down, a city park was created on the site after a design by the landscape architect Johann David Zocher. The Valkhof Park, designed in the style of a romantic English

landscape garden, was a place in which to meditate about the city's illustrious past. Poplars framed the silhouette of the Valkhof citadel. The chapels became silent witnesses to the grandeur in which the Valkhof had once bathed.

Hoogers had made drawings of the Valkhof when the citadel was still standing, but he also depicted the new park. In a watercolor dating from 1805 we see an idealized image of the Valkhof Park with the archeological discoveries that the demolition had unearthed. The loss of the citadel, whose demolition the artist had sought to prevent, is tangible. Hoogers's image depicts the rich past of the Valkhof (fig. 3).

Reconstruction

Starting in the twentieth century, plans were put forward for the rebuilding of the Valkhof citadel. The construction of the Waal Bridge in 1936 provided the impetus for an initial reconstruction plan. The Nijmegen architect Charles Estourgie proposed that as a counterpart to the modern bridge, the Valkhof citadel be restored and rebuilt. The plans were rejected at the last minute, because of fears of damage

to existing structures and foundations. In 1949 the Catholic University was searching for new premises, after a large proportion of the university buildings had been destroyed in the war. The daily newspaper *De Volkskrant* launched a plan to rebuild "Charlemagne's citadel." The Catholic University could occupy premises in the new Valkhof citadel, using the donjon for its library and the St Nicholas chapel as its house chapel. However, the university decided instead to build a new campus outside Nijmegen city center.

The artist Cornelis Springer based his reconstruction of the Valkhof on the situation that existed in the Carolingian period. Springer painted an imaginary picture of the Valkhof in 1862, over sixty years after the citadel's demolition. He relied on an eighteenth-century work by Cornelis Pronk, but refashioned the architecture of the buildings in an invented Romanesque style. Springer painted the ninth-century palace with Charlemagne in the courtyard. Depicted on the left is the St Nicholas Chapel, which was built some two hundred years after Charlemagne's death. Clearly, this painting is intended more as an impression of the citadel's illustrious past than as a serious reconstruction (fig. 4).

In any reconstruction of the Valkhof citadel, anachronisms such as those in Springer's painting are probably unavoidable. The paintings, prints and drawings of the citadel were produced from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, when the originally Romanesque citadel had already been "embellished" with Gothic lancet windows and step gables. Any reconstruction plan must answer the question: which citadel must be rebuilt? Since there are no surviving architectural plans or foundations, architects' sole resort is to depictions.

In spite of all such discussions and problems, the Valkhof Society, founded in 1978, put forward a steady stream of reconstruction initiatives over the years (fig. 5). The fact that the park not only enjoys national heritage status but is also registered as a protected archeological site further complicated matters. The Valkhof Society would sometimes gain support from the Municipal Executive, but each plan would eventually run up against the objections of national and municipal heritage bodies.

The most important points of criticism cited possible damage to the Valkhof Park and the lack of data on the original Valkhof Citadel, which made it almost impossible to achieve a reliable reconstruction. The objections of the national heritage agency were highlighted on several occasions by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, which refused to issue a license for a project that risked damaging a national protected archeological site. This flat refusal dried up support for the reconstruction plans among local politicians.

Focus on the Donjon

A number of private individuals and contractors seized the opportunity presented by the 2000th anniversary celebrations of the city of Nijmegen in 2005 to erect a temporary reconstruction of the Valkhof's donjon. The 45-meter tower consisted of a scaffolding structure with a tarpaulin shell. An elevator took some 60,000 visitors up to the high viewing point. From then on, the Valkhof Society focused exclusively on the reconstruction of the donjon. It managed to collect enough signatures among visitors to the site to force a municipal referendum on the reconstruction of the donjon: this went ahead in 2006, and 60% of those who took part voted in favor of reconstruction.

When Culture Minister Maria van der Hoeven responded that she would not automatically refuse to grant a license for the project, the city council decided to draw up a Plan of Action. A permanent structure, unlike the temporary donjon, might pose a risk to the park. The city council therefore commissioned a study of the park's history, the possible remains of old foundations, and the donjon's original appearance.

Research into the citadel's original appearance revealed that the drawings made by Hoogers provided the most accurate record (fig. 6). His drawings were therefore used not only for the new donjon's design, but also to determine its precise location, since examinations of the soil proved inconclusive in this regard. Hoogers is one of the three artists who depicted the donjon, the Valkhof chapels, and the adjacent Belvedere at the same time. For the research project, Hoogers's image was projected onto a specially developed computer model of the surviving structures in their present setting. This comparison revealed that even Hoogers had been swayed by aesthetic considerations and had not sought to achieve complete accuracy. In addition, tests on the soil do not resolve the question of the donjon's original position. The many images of the Valkhof citadel certainly give us an

idea of what the donjon looked like, but do not establish either its precise location or its precise appearance.

Ten years have passed since the referendum, but still no construction work has started on the Valkhof site. The economic crisis is partly to blame. The city council supports the reconstruction of the donjon, which could be a powerful symbol of Nijmegen's rich past. However, much remains to be done before the foundations can be laid. In fact, it is an open question whether the reconstruction of the citadel, or part of it, will ever materialize at all. In the meantime, we can gain a good impression of the citadel's importance by looking at the paintings, prints, and drawings in the collection of Museum Het Valkhof.

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CURATOR'S COLLECTION

The Building as a Museum Object: Museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder**Judikje Kiers and Thijs Boers Interviewed by Gerdien Verschoor and Michiel Franken.**

Although many museums are located in historic buildings, there are few that see the edifice itself as the most important object in their collection. In the case of [Museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder \(Our Lord in the Attic\)](#) in Amsterdam, where [Thijs Boers](#) was appointed as “curator of the building” in 2006, this is indeed the case. The decision to classify the building as an object led to interesting choices in its restoration and the addition of a new annex, altogether a fifteen-year operation that was completed last year under the supervision of conservation architect Frederik Franken.

The historic complex consists of the seventeenth-century canal house with two smaller dwellings behind it, overlooking the adjacent alley, the high point – literally – being a seventeenth-century Catholic attic church. From the crowded red light district in the oldest part of Amsterdam, visitors enter the sleek white interior of a new building, designed by Felix Claus, which contains all the museum's amenities. An underground passage beneath the alley leads to the staircase in the historic building, which visitors can only ascend after putting on protective slippers. Then they set off on a tour of the rooms of the historic premises, a trip through time, from the seventeenth-century *Sael* with its original yellowish stucco, the room in which the first priest

Petrus Parmentier worked and slept, right up to the attic church, which, with its woodwork painted in cardinal purple and rush mats, looks today as it did around 1860, the last period in which the church was still used as such.

When Thijs Boers and Judikje Kiers took up their positions at Museum Ons' Lieve Heer op Solder, they encountered a historic edifice with aspirations to be an art museum. In the rear annex was a picture gallery, and art exhibitions were frequently organized throughout the complex. Although questions were raised as to the museum's precise identity, there was not as yet any active quest for answers.

A building as a museum object. When was that idea first proposed?

Judikje Kiers: “When I accepted this appointment I considered it important to raise the museum's national and international profile. Given my own background in

education, I was eager to connect with students. Another preoccupation was: “What does the public want?” We developed a mission, or vision, that revolved around the nucleus of this site: keeping alive the memory of Amsterdam's Roman Catholic heritage. We would reach out to the public by forging links with today's world.”

Thijs Boers: “This clear course soon boosted visitor numbers. So much so that the museum's success endangered the structure – the influx of visitors exacerbated the existing wear and tear. It became increasingly clear to us that this building is our *Night Watch* – a unique object that attracts visitors, but also an object that must be treated with great care.”

JK: “Together with the [Cultural Heritage Agency](#) we conducted research to establish how many visitors were acceptable if we were to deal responsibly with our greatest

asset. This study culminated in a risk analysis in which we carefully determined the core values of our collection in terms of immovable property and hence the risks of a diminution of value. This enabled us to formulate the core values of our museum. Appointing Thijs as “curator of the building” was the logical next step.

TB: “Another thing that helped us to determine the building's value was an architectural historical study, including a color-historical study. These studies adopted an integrated approach to the entire building and enabled us to formulate the four core values of the museum.”

What are those four core values? And how did they help to shape your ideas?

JK: “Authenticity (every part of the building is really old), active experience (we did not want to place the building under a

bell jar), historical value, and social value. Throughout the process we always kept these values in mind. We decided to jettison everything that did not belong or that was not necessary: we cherished authenticity and gave priority to active experience.”

TB: “This brought into even sharper focus that the building was our most important museum object. Clearly, then, we would need other premises in which to install the necessary amenities. Also, making the building our central concern raised a new question: who lived there?”

JK: “Exactly – every choice we made raised new questions and opened up new areas of enquiry. Sometimes we found new information in the archives, such as the reference to

rush mats in the church accounts. Sometimes new information emerged from the complex itself, such as an original door that had been used in the construction of a little loft in our cycle shed. Another discovery was an extremely large cesspit with revealing contents from the years 1700-1775, when the complex backed onto a beer house. This enabled us to tell a much richer story. We also conducted a number of visitor studies to identify, for instance, the items that attracted most attention. We found that the confessional was a focal point: people would begin to talk to each other here about their own memories of confession. Here again we saw that active experience was a core value of our museum. Furthermore, all these personal stories made their own contribution to the collection.

TB: “Of course we thought about that: how can we revive the experiences of that time? Before people pass out of the new building with its modern facilities into the ‘museum object,’ we ask them to put on slippers. Besides serving to protect the historic floors and rush mats in the church, this *rite de passage* also sharpens visitors’ sense of awareness, prompting them to ask ‘what is this place I am visiting?’”

JK: “The most important object in our collection is the house with the attic church. Taking that as our core value made it much easier for us to focus on projects that would truly enhance the house and the church. We scarcely made any purchases and did not allow ourselves to be tempted to launch projects that did not fit with these core values.”

With today’s hindsight, would you do anything differently?

JK: “One important lesson that we learned was to keep weighing different options consistently. For instance, we deliberated endlessly about whether or not to use the rush mats, which do an immense amount to boost the core value of ‘active experience,’ but which require a great deal of maintenance and present a high risk of attracting moths. That is just one example: we all have to ensure that we and our colleagues stay sharp, that we check all the risks whenever we get enthusiastic about something. I think that we did weigh all those decisions carefully. So to answer your question – no, in hindsight, I would not do anything differently.”

A partnership between museum director, curator, and conservation architect. That must sometimes have led to heated debate.

JK: “There was one thing about which we all agreed: there was no self-interest involved. All our work was in the service of the building and we must be faithful to that cause. Even so, we had to make a number of concessions. For instance, we thought it was a great pity that we were not allowed to use white lead any more. This meant that titanium white had to be used in the cardinal purple in the church instead of the authentic dye mixture. White lead is poisonous and prohibited, but it should be possible to obtain an exemption for situations like this. Yes, we did have a great many discussions; we deliberated for a long time, for instance, about the restoration of the staircase and the re-partitioning of the church floor. But we always succeeded in reaching agreement and as a team we are all proud of the result.”

TB: “We learned a lot from looking at other, similar projects and solutions. The fact that the original front door of the [Rembrandt House](#) is now closed led us to decide that our front door must be open. In [Dennis Severs’ House](#) in London we saw the gas lighting and candles. We also saw the rush mats, which are still made by hand in England, in a number of country houses, such as [Hardwick Hall](#). When we visited [Sir John Soane’s Museum](#), we were struck by the amount of love and attention to detail that could be lavished on the interior and the maintenance of a house.

Of course we had discussions, but we were always able to resolve our differences. What mattered most to me was our relationship with the public. As an academic, I was always asking the question: can we provide firm evidence? The architect was less concerned with such issues, and focused primarily on the materials. But together we were successful: now you pass from a new building, with all the necessary facilities, into what is literally and figuratively a completely different world.”

Judikje Kiers served as director of [Museum Ons’ Lieve Heer op Solder](#) from 2001 to 2016. At the end of 2009 she was also appointed director of the [Biblical Museum / Cromhout House](#). On 1 March 2016 she became director of the [Amsterdam Museum](#).

[Thijs Boers](#) held a variety of positions at Museum Ons’ Lieve Heer op Solder from 2001 to 2013. In 2006 he was appointed curator of the buildings. Since 2013 he has been curator of the Amsterdam Heritage Museums, which includes the Amsterdam Museum and the Biblical Museum / Cromhout House in addition to Museum Ons’ Lieve Heer op Solder. Thijs Boers became a CODART member in 2016.

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Gerdien Verschoor is Director of [CODART](#) since 2008.

CURATOR'S PROJECT

Dutch Tiles in Poland: A Short Survey**Piotr Oczko and Jan Pluis**

From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, Dutch tiles enjoyed great fame throughout Europe. Millions were imported from the Netherlands to decorate the walls of aristocratic palaces, mansions, and even churches. Tiles also served as “emissaries” of Dutch culture by popularizing the image of the country even more successfully than travel writings, because they adorned thousands of rooms and conveyed images of the country’s landscape and also of its customs. From the seventeenth century onwards the Netherlands had close to 200 tile factories (*tegelbakkerijen*), the most important centers being Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Harlingen, Makkum, and Bolsward. Surprisingly, Delft played only a marginal role. It produced mainly plates, dishes, jugs, vases, and decorative objects, with tiles being just a tiny fraction of the output. Yet such was Delft’s fame that the tiles produced in the Netherlands became known by the historically inaccurate term “Delft tiles.”

Whereas tiles largely served practical purposes in the Dutch Republic, in other European countries Dutch tiles were primarily decorative. They graced aristocratic palaces, staircases, fireplaces, and churches, sometimes covering the walls or even whole interiors, including ceilings. However, it must be emphasized that this trend had nothing to do with the fascination with Dutch bourgeois culture. Blue painted tiles were simply associated with the fashionable Chinese and Chinese-esque objects (*chinoiserie*); they had already been used as such in the Trianon de Porcelaine built in Versailles in 1670-1674. Numerous Dutch tiled interiors are still found in France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Russia, Latvia, Estonia, and the Czech Republic, not to mention places in South America, North Africa, and even India.

The repository of Dutch tiles in present-day Poland has largely remained undiscovered. That said, it should be borne in mind that the country’s present surface area is not the same as that of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the past, whose borders changed multiple times over the centuries. The last such change, after the Second World War, resulted in a loss of 48% of the territory in the East, followed by the incorporation of the former German regions such as Lower Silesia, Opolian Silesia, parts of Pomerania, and East and West Prussia. This means that some of the tiled interiors presented in this article originally belonged to the sphere of German rather Polish culture.

The enduring fondness for Dutch tiles in Poland started in the end of the seventeenth century, probably inspired by the taste of Queen Marie Casimire Louise de La Grange d'Arquien, the French wife of King John III Sobieski of Poland. Marie Casimire greatly admired Versailles and

aspired to have Dutch tiles in most of her palaces. Aristocracy, gentry, clergymen, and affluent townspeople soon followed suit: inventories list hundreds of interiors decorated with Dutch tiles. Unfortunately, many of these

rooms have been lost. The impressive display of over 45,000 tiles at the castle in Wiśniowiec (Vyshnivets) in present-day Ukraine was destroyed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Porcelain Room in Kraków (demolished in c. 1911) is known only from a sketch. In the following account, the authors review a selection of the surviving interiors in Poland, focusing on the most representative examples. It should be noted that some of the interiors were reconstructed after the Second World War.

1. Warsaw, the Faience Room in Wilanów Palace

Originally the residence of the Sobieski royal family, the room is decorated with 56 tile pictures representing flower vases with Chinese motifs (Amsterdam) and 476 single tiles, depicting biblical scenes, landscapes, sea creatures, genre scenes, and horsemen (Amsterdam and Utrecht). All dated c. 1690.

2. Warsaw, Two Interiors in the Żazienki (Royal Baths) Palace

Before the Second World War, three of the rooms in this palace were decorated with Dutch tiles: a Dutch Room, a Bathroom, and a Bacchus Room. All were destroyed by the Nazis. Two interiors were reconstructed using modern copies in

the 1950s.

3. Nieborów, a Palace Staircase

This staircase is decorated with some 10,000 tiles (landscape and shepherd tiles) from Amsterdam and Utrecht, dating from c. 1700-1720.

4. Basilica of Pułtusk, the Chapel of St. Francis

The chapel has approximately 2,000 tiles from Amsterdam: mostly blue tiles depicting landscapes, and eleven purple ones depicting Biblical scenes, dating from c. 1710-1730. They initially adorned the chapel in the Bishop's Palace in Pułtusk, from where they were moved to their present location in 1786.

Another example of Dutch tiles in Polish church interiors may be found in the sacristy of St. Anna's Church in Warsaw: a small section of wall decorations, probably the remnant of a larger decoration.

5. Gardzienice, Interior of an Annex in the Palace Complex

Here we find an unusual display of 500 tiles on the walls (landscape and shepherd tiles from Utrecht, c. 1720-1730).

6. Kraków, Fontana's Room in the "House Under the Pear"

This room is decorated with 1,056 Dutch tiles and stuccos made by the Italian artist Baldassare Fontana, around 1698-1702. (Shepherd tiles, Harlingen, c. 1690-1700; landscapes and genre scenes, Amsterdam, c. 1690-1700).

7. Wrocław (Breslau), The Beyersdorfs' Room in the former Royal Palace

This room in what is now Wrocław municipal museum has around 2,000 eighteenth-century tiles from various Dutch and Frisian workshops. The room was originally part of the rich patrician house in Blücherplatz, from where it was moved to its present location in 1898.

8. Pakosów (Wernersdorf)

This room in a former palace of a linen magnate, now a luxury hotel, is embellished with shepherd, landscape, and biblical tiles, made in Amsterdam, c. 1740-1760.

9. Krzyżowice (Schlanz), the Former Palace of the Euleburg Family

This former palace is now used as a school. Two interiors are decorated with tiles: the hall (shepherd, landscape, and biblical tiles, Utrecht, c. 1730-1750) and a former dining-room, now staff room (miscellaneous tiles, primarily made in Makkum, c. 1730).

10. Wiśkszyce (Wiegenschütz), Kitchen in the Basement of a Palace dating from 1871

This kitchen is now part of a hotel restaurant (the tiles originate from the workshop of Jan van Hulst, Harlingen, c. 1890).

The kitchen interior in Wiśkszyce exemplifies the nineteenth-century historical revival that rekindled interest in Dutch tiles all over Europe, especially in Germany. The former library of the palace in Mosty (Speck), Pomerania (tiles from Makkum, Tichelaar's workshop, c. 1900) is another example. It should also be noted that a factory in Nieborów produced an abundance of imitation Dutch tiles and delftware at the end of the nineteenth century.

11. The City of Gdańsk (Danzig)

Gdańsk presents us with an unparalleled phenomenon. With its characteristic architecture and its close cultural and

commercial ties with the Low Countries, Gdańsk became almost a Netherlandish city in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It also served as the gateway through which Dutch tiles were imported to this part of Central Europe. It is estimated that at least six million tiles were transported to Gdańsk in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From archival

inventories, drawings, and etchings, we know of at least twenty Dutch-tiled interiors. The real number is undoubtedly much larger. With the destruction of the old city centre of Gdańsk at the end of the Second World War, these magnificent rooms were also destroyed. Today only seven tiled interiors survive in Gdańsk, in the form of reconstructions, using historical tiles or modern replacements.

12. Żużawy Wiślane (Werder)

This is another fascinating region for the study of Dutch tiles in present-day Poland. Located in the delta area of the Vistula River, Żużawy Wiślane was colonized by the Dutch Mennonites from the sixteenth century onwards. These

immigrants, specialists in water engineering, transformed their new motherland into a near-replica of Holland, complete with polders, dykes, and windmills. Many of the beautiful arcade houses (Vorlaubenhäuser) of their descendants were richly decorated with Dutch tiles. Only two such interiors survive to this day, both damaged and greatly modified. They are located in the village of Żużawki (Fürstenwerder). The photograph below shows the remains of a typical interior of one of these houses (now divided into two rooms, with landscape tiles from Utrecht, c. 1730, and rare landscape and genre tiles from Amsterdam, c. 1770).

13. Sink in the Castle of the Teutonic Knights in Malbork (Marienburg)

This is an extraordinary example. The sink is a mock-medieval structure, a fantasy conceived by Conrad Steinbrecht, an avid restorer of historic buildings in the late nineteenth century. It was made of some 600 Dutch tiles of various kinds, purchased from an antiquarian in Gdańsk. The diversity of these ceramic objects, which range in date from the seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, provides a wealth of information about the importation of Dutch tiles into the territory that is now Poland.

Dutch tiles are also found in Polish museums, where the largest and most important collections are in the National Museum in Gdańsk, the Museum of Archaeology and History in Elbląg, and the District Museum in Toruń. The National Maritime in Gdańsk and the Museum of Architecture in Wrocław also boast some rare pieces, as do other institutions and private Polish collections.

The above overview presents only a limited selection of the Dutch tiles that can be seen in Poland. A much more wide-ranging discussion, including interiors that are less well known, will be the subject of the forthcoming book by Piotr Oczko and Jan Pluis, to be published by the Malbork Castle Museum. The book will also examine the historical contexts, and matters of attribution and dating, in more depth.

[Piotr Oczko](#) is an Associate Professor at the Department of International Polish Studies at the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the [Jagiellonian University](#). He has been an associate member of CODART since 2013.

Jan Pluis is a leading documentalist and researcher of Dutch tiles.

CURATOR'S PROJECT

The Renovation of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp**Elsje Janssen**

The [Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp](#) (KMSKA) is currently undergoing renovation. It is a major operation. The majestic, iconic building at Leopold De Waelplaats dates from the late nineteenth century. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it became apparent that numerous shortcomings would have to be addressed if the building could continue to be used responsibly as a museum: roofs were leaking, the indoor climate was less than ideal, galleries needed modernization, there was too little space, and so on. In 2003, the then Government Architect of Flanders announced a competition for a renovation design. The firm Claus and Kaan Architects (now Kaan Architects) was selected and the details of a master plan were worked out. In 2011, the KMSKA closed to the public, signaling the start of a major renovation and restoration project in which numerous parties are collaborating.¹

Demolition and Construction

The first phase involved the removal from the heart of the building of a reinforced concrete bunker (5.5 m. wide, 21 m. long and 9 m. high) that had been built in the 1950s, during the Cold War. The bunker had been built to protect the

museum's art in the event of a nuclear attack. Its walls were between 0.75 m and 1.5 m thick: 550 m³ of reinforced concrete, with a total weight of 2,150 tons. Removing the concrete was a completely manual operation and obviously very time-consuming. In the resulting space, a fully climate-controlled painting depot was built. In the next phase, all the artworks were removed from the museum galleries and some of them stored in the new depot. This was necessary in the case of monumental paintings by Pieter Paul Rubens and others, which were too large to leave the museum. They were lowered on cables through openings in the depot ceiling and the floor of the gallery just above the depot – a system that had been constructed for this purpose when the museum was built and that remained in use over the decades (in both World Wars for instance). Another part of the art collection was transferred, along with the restoration studio, to a hired state-of-the-art new depot built outside the

city. In addition, numerous artworks were moved on long-term loan to other institutions: the Cathedral and the Rockox House being the primary locations in Antwerp, along with international museums such as the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and The Metropolitan Museum in New York.

All in all, then, a great deal of work had to be done in the museum before the actual renovation and restoration of the exhibition rooms could even begin. The next phase started with the removal of extra rooms that had been added over the years, along with false ceilings, old technical equipments, and large quantities of asbestos. Doorways were bricked up and new connecting passages were constructed in the walls. In the meantime, from the outside it looked as if nothing was going on in the museum, until a large crane arrived. Set up in the space that had been cleared, it towered over the surrounding roofs. In the middle of the museum, along two

sides of the central "Rubens and Van Dyck Galleries," a four-story structure was built: 835,000 kg of steel, serving as the skeleton for the "vertical museum." Lift shafts and new staircases were put in place. Above this structure, a completely new story was added.

"Feel, see, work"

The new KMSKA consists of three functional, related zones that provide congenial surroundings for old and new alike: "feel, see, work." The "feel" section is the entrance to the museum, the block for public facilities including the visitors' desk, ticket checks, and the museum's main inner street. This provides access to the café, the shop, museum workshops, the auditorium, the library and reading room, the interactive information zone, and support functions. The "work" or "back office" area is at the rear of the building. The long foyer or "back street" here is the counterpart to

the "main street" at the front. This area is not open to the public. It contains the staff entrance and leads to the offices and

canteen, as well as providing access to the security department and diverse collection rooms and depots. The “see” area is the building’s central section, with all the rooms that are used for the collection. These are the old restored museum galleries and the new vertical museum. This part also includes an area not open to the public, with depots and rooms used for collection management and research.

The new museum is inserted, as it were, into the old one. The two are separated, although they are connected. This preserves the authenticity of the nineteenth-century rooms and other spaces and shows proper respect for the historic building. On the first floor, where the museum entrance is located, a large, long staircase in the new part of the building leads directly to the fourth floor. A third floor has also been added. This consists of three exhibition areas, two of them on the north and one on the south side. These are connected by a newly-constructed, invisible passage between the Rubens and Van Dyck galleries (the latter having been shortened by 2.9 m for the purpose). The vertical museum contains mezzanines allowing daylight to stream down into the galleries below and enabling visitors looking up or down to take in several stories at once.

All in all, with this renovation the KMSKA will acquire 40% additional exhibition space. The operation increases the number of rooms from 37 to 50, with a total exhibition surface area of 7,400 square meters.

Old and New Exhibition Spaces

The most important factor in museum architecture, of course, is ensuring that the paintings and other artworks can be displayed to the best possible effect in the different exhibition spaces. The new KMSKA will be architecturally eclectic, with its new hybrid of classical nineteenth-century rooms and a sleek twenty-first-century section. The rooms in the old part are 5.5, 7 and 12 meters in height, while the new ones range from 3 to 14 meters in height. Conspicuously large volumes. It is a big challenge to decide which works can be hung where and how they can best be combined. Furthermore, arranging the circulation of visitors around the building poses problems of its own. On the second floor, with the Rubens and Van Dyck galleries, there is none of the new architecture to be seen. The rooms have vertical and horizontal axes: it is here that the art dating from the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries is displayed. The

KMSKA’s collection (totaling over 8,000 artworks) dates from the fourteenth to the late twentieth century. Although the center of gravity lies squarely with work by Flemish and Belgian artists, the museum also possesses an important and varied collection of artworks by international masters. The new arrangement will be based on themes. This means that the Old Masters will not be displayed according to century or “school.” Works will be grouped together on the basis of universal themes such as “mother and child,” “suffering,” “evil,” “power,” “morality,” and so on. The theme “body,” rather than focusing solely on portraits, will include works that highlight how the body is experienced and how it is viewed. Still lifes and landscapes – genres of which the KMSKA possesses an extremely rich collection – as well as sculptures, will also naturally receive the attention and space they deserve. Within the diverse themes, connections will at times be demonstrated between older and twentieth-century works. This will display the museum’s splendid collection from a fresh new angle and delight its visitors.

For decades, the painting depot and the restoration studio were located in the front section of the museum, which was closed to the public. The renovation reinstates the original route around the museum. The monumental rooms, with their stately columns, will again become a “salon” assigned to nineteenth-century art: the Academy painters, pleinairists, and naturalists. The restoration studio will now be located in the rear of the building, and visitors will be able to watch the conservators at work from the adjacent passage.

The studio will be beside an “activities area” that will be incorporated into the visitors’ standard route.

The vertical museum will include separate rooms on the first floor for the James Ensor collection – the largest in the world, with 37 paintings and over 600 drawings. The work of Rik Wouters will also be displayed separately – in one of the smaller rooms on the third floor, where there will also be a print room and a gallery for small scale twentieth-century sculpture and changing presentations. The twentieth-century art collection will be displayed – under the headings “light,” “color,” and “form” – on the first and fourth floors.

In devising the “way-finding” around the museum, we focus both on the easiest route around the displays for visitors as well

as on the most responsible routes for transporting the artworks to their exhibition places. A study of these factors

revealed that the nineteenth-century rooms on the first floor are the most suitable for temporary exhibitions, since these three sections allow for both small and large exhibitions, besides which they are easily accessible. The exhibition plan for 2019 to 2024 is currently being prepared. The size and content of the exhibitions, as well as the type of show (monograph, thematic, etc.) will be considered and the changing displays reviewed. These decisions will naturally take into account the capacity of the rooms and realistic scheduling, including matters of logistics. It is a challenge to imagine how all this will work when we are not yet entirely accustomed to the building itself.

Please be Patient

It may be closed, but the KMSKA still dominates Antwerp's southern district. Passers-by see a building and its gardens wrapped in banners and a huge crane towering over the roofs. When the museum reopens in 2019 it will be as an open house for art, a high-profile international scholarly institution that aspires to an active role in society, a creative hub in a network of cultural actors.

In the meantime, you are welcome to visit the website www.hetnieuwemuseum.be, where you can follow the progress of the renovation work as described above. You can also view the artworks can be viewed in diverse locations around Belgium and elsewhere (see exhibitions at www.kmska.be).

[Elsje Janssen](#) is Director of Collections at the [Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp](#). She has been a member of CODART since 2011.

Notes

¹ The renovation project was commissioned by the Vlaamse Overheid - Departement Cultuur, Jeugd, Sport en media (Culture, Youth, Sports and Media Department of the Government of Flanders) - Stafdienst Infrastructuur (Infrastructure Executive), Fonds Infrastructuur (Infrastructure Fund); responsibility resides with Het Facilitair Bedrijf - Afdeling Bouwprojecten (Services Company, Building Projects Unit); the architect Dikkie Scipio is assisted by the Bureau Bouwtechniek (Construction Technology Bureau) and other research offices (stability, technology, restoration); the contractor is Artes Roegiers.

CURATOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Arthur K. Wheelock Jr.

[Arthur K. Wheelock Jr.](#) has served as curator of northern baroque painting at the [National Gallery of Art](#) for over forty years, and during that time he also has been Professor of Art History at the University of Maryland, a wonderful combination of museum and academic careers. He has benefitted not only from the support of his museum colleagues, but also from the insights of students, interns and assistants who have worked with him over the years. He is enormously proud of their many achievements, and delighted that so many of them are members of CODART.

When I reflect back on my career, I marvel at the many changes that have occurred in curatorial life. When I arrived at the Gallery in 1973 as a David E. Finley Fellow, the museum, having been founded in 1941, was only 32 years old. The Gallery was a relatively quiet institution, although its dynamics were changing due to the leadership of its new director, J. Carter Brown. The collection of Dutch and Flemish paintings was then largely concentrated on the works of Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Aelbert Cuyp, and Anthony van Dyck, thanks to the generosity of the Mellon and Widener families, with a few other masterpieces donated by other donors, including the Kress Collection. While significant in quality, the collection was actually rather small, consisting of 72 Dutch and 35 Flemish paintings.

During my six-month residency as a Finley Fellow in 1973-74, Bob de Vries, former director of the [Mauritshuis](#), was the visiting “Kress Professor.” He was a great mentor, and we initiated two projects that played important roles in my life: studying the Gallery’s Vermeer and Rembrandt paintings. We took the Vermeer paintings to the recently established conservation laboratory to assess their condition, techniques, and attribution, and we also travelled to other museums to study their Vermeer paintings. The manuscript I wrote about those experiences has formed the basis of much of my subsequent Vermeer research. The early 1970s were a period of great turmoil in Rembrandt studies. The Gallery’s Rembrandts were covered with discolored varnish and difficult to assess because the galleries were dimly lit. To study these paintings, we took strong lights and ladders

into the galleries, and we were sometimes accompanied by Seymour Slive and Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, who jointly served as advisors to this project.

My fellowship ended in the spring of 1974, at which time the Gallery asked me to stay on as a research curator to continue the Rembrandt project. A year later the Gallery opened a curatorial position for the Dutch and Flemish paintings, for which I was hired. At the same time I joined the art history department at the University of Maryland as an Assistant Professor. Much of my early curatorial career at the Gallery was devoted to filling files and learning about the collection. I also helped develop a conservation program for the Dutch paintings, particularly the Rembrandts, in hopes that technical examinations and conservation treatments would help resolve some of the attribution questions swirling around these works (among others, Rembrandt’s *The Mill*).

In 1995, when I had finished the systematic catalogue of the Gallery’s Dutch paintings, a large number of the works had been restored and almost twenty paintings had been added to the collection. The Dutch catalogue went out of print in 2006, but, thanks to a grant from the [Getty](#), we were able to publish a revised and updated online catalogue in 2014. Learning how to move into the digital age was a complex process, and it required years of work from a dedicated team of museum professionals to make this transition. The hard work paid off, and the catalogue received the 2014 George Wittenborn Memorial Book Award as the best art publication in the United States. We continue to amend this catalogue when new information becomes available, when paintings are conserved, or when entries on new acquisitions are completed. We have also created videos and other digital features to complement the written text.

Paralleling my work on the Dutch paintings were efforts to expand the character of the Flemish collection, which was heavily weighted towards works by Anthony van Dyck. The collection of Rubens painting, anchored by *Daniel and the Lions’ Den*, was good, but it reached another level in the 1990s with the acquisition of two important works by that master, Rubens’s early masterpiece, *The Fall of Phaeton*, and *David and Abigail*, a lovely oil sketch from around 1630. We were also able to make acquisitions of paintings by artists not previously represented in the collection, among them Jan Brueghel,

Adriaen Brouwer, and Frans Snyders.

Prior to our large Van Dyck exhibition in 1990, I was particularly engaged in Van Dyck studies, and, in anticipation of that show, the Gallery restored over ten of that artist's masterpieces in its remarkable collection. Research and writing for that catalogue provided me an excellent foundation for my next major project, which was to write a catalogue of the National Gallery's Flemish paintings. In conjunction with that project, which occupied much of my time in the late 1990s, we continued our conservation projects related to paintings by Rubens and Van Dyck. By 2003, when we published the Flemish catalogue, most of the Gallery's paintings by those masters had been conserved.

Exhibitions have been an important focus during my career, and I have helped mount over 40 exhibitions of Dutch and Flemish paintings at the National Gallery. Many of these were organized in collaboration with other museums in the United States and Europe, as with *Gods, Saints and Heroes*, which we organized in 1980 with Detroit and the Rijksmuseum. Among the other major exhibitions I have curated at the Gallery are: *Anthony van Dyck* (1990); *Johannes Vermeer* (1995); *Jan Steen* (1996); *Aelbert Cuyp* (2001); *Gerard ter Borch* (2004); *Rembrandt's Late Religious Portraits* (2005); *Jan Lievens* (2008); *Dutch Cityscapes* (2009); and *Joachim Wtewael* (2015). These exhibitions would not have been successful without the close personal contacts and collaborations I have enjoyed with colleagues from other museums and universities.

I am currently planning other exhibitions, including *From Drawings to Paintings in the Age of Rembrandt*, which the Gallery is organizing with *Fondation Custodia*, Paris. This fascinating exhibition, which examines the interrelationship of Dutch drawings and paintings, will be presented at the Gallery in the fall of 2016 and in Paris in the spring of 2017. The concept of the show owes much to Peter Schatborn, but it is a truly collaborative effort with contributors from both sides of the Atlantic. Another upcoming exhibition focuses on the relationships that existed among Dutch high-life genre painters, among them Vermeer, Ter Borch, Dou, Van Mieris, Steen, Metsu, and De Hooch. This show, which owes its inspiration to *Adriaan Waiboer*, will open at the Louvre in the spring of 2017 before travelling to Dublin and Washington.

As mentioned above, an incredibly rewarding aspect of my curatorial life has been the opportunity to make acquisitions of paintings that help enrich and expand the character of the Gallery's outstanding collection of Dutch and Flemish paintings, which is now more than double the size it was in the early 1970s. Some of these were acquired with funds donated to the Gallery by private individuals, while others were gifts. The construction of the Dutch and Flemish Cabinet Galleries in 1995 provided us the opportunity to acquire and display small-scale works, including still lifes, portraits and genre scenes, but also to mount small-scale exhibitions. In addition, in recent years we have also acquired important biblical and mythological scenes and Italianate paintings, types of paintings that were outside the canon of works collected by Mellon and Widener. Dutch Caravaggism was also absent from the Gallery's collection,

and, hence, the recent acquisitions of Hendrick ter Brugghen's *The Bagpipe Player*, 1624, and Gerrit van Honthorst's *The Concert*, 1623, have helped to add an entirely new dimension to the presentation of Dutch art at the Gallery.

This past year have seen a number of other welcome acquisitions, including paintings by Rembrandt, Cuyp, Van Goyen, Steen, Ter Borch, and Dou that have come to the Gallery from Washington's Corcoran Gallery of Art after that institution closed in the fall of 2015. The most significant recent acquisitions, however, are two spectacular genre scenes that came to the Gallery thanks to the generosity of Lee and Julie Folger/The Folger Fund. The first of these is Jacob Ochtervelt's *A Nurse and a Child in the Foyer of an Elegant Townhouse*, 1663, arguably Ochtervelt's finest painting. In this work Ochtervelt masterfully contrasts the privileged world of the patrician family with the uncertainties of the life of the poor. The second acquisition is Frans van Mieris's beautifully refined *Soldier Smoking a*

Pipe, c. 1657. The soldier is most likely a member of the Leiden militia company, if one judges from the trumpet, banner and armor on the floor, although his knowing gaze, paired with the deck of cards, half glass of beer, and empty chair, invite the viewer to imagine a humorous, if unexplained, storyline.

Over the years I have been fortunate to have received a number of honors, including being named Knight Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau by the Dutch government and Commander in the Order of Leopold I by the Belgian government. Other awards include the College Art Association's Award for Distinction in Scholarship and Conservation; the Johannes

Vermeer Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Dutch Art; and the Dutch-American Achievement Award, presented by The Netherlands American Amity Trust. In 2008 the University of Maryland created a doctoral fellowship in my name. In 2015 I received a lifetime achievement award from my alma mater, Williams College.

It has been a great privilege to have been able to spend my entire career at the National Gallery, and I relish the excitement of discovery that regularly comes my way. Much of the enjoyment comes from the close relationships I have with colleagues from around the world, many of which are strengthened through CODART. Without question, the network of friends and ideas that CODART encourages is one of its great contributions to our field.

[Arthur K. Wheelock Jr.](#) is Curator of Northern Baroque painting at the [National Gallery of Art](#). He has been a member of CODART since 1998.

CURATOR'S COLLECTION

Architectural Drawings from the Low Countries in Belgian Collections: Fifteenth to Sixteenth Centuries

Oliver Kik

In an often-quoted passage from his *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, Giorgio Vasari describes drawing as the Father of all three arts. Vasari was well aware of the double meaning of the term *disegno*, referring both to the practice of drawing and to the intellectual design process. Although architectural drawings have attracted some scholarly interest from architectural historians, relatively few studies in the Netherlands are devoted to the tradition of architectural drawing as compared to drawings in the other two areas of the Vasarian triad.¹

The first attempts to systematically preserve and archive architectural designs were not made until the seventeenth century, when municipal and other local authorities in the Dutch Republic saw value in retaining these works for posterity. Before that time, very few Netherlandish architectural drawings from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had been preserved after the intended edifice was built – possibly owing to a belief that the drawings had already served their purpose. In Italy, by contrast, far more architectural drawings have been preserved. The designers of major Italian building projects, such as Michelangelo, Raphael and Bramante, were already recognized as great

artists in their time, and their drawings and sketches had a greater chance of survival as a result. A different attitude towards preservation was also evident in the German and Austrian Bauhütte, where the majority of gothic architectural drawings, both elevations and geometrical ground plans, were preserved in church and episcopal archives on site. The [Akademie der Bildende Kunst](#) in Vienna still holds 428 gothic drawings, most of which are related to the design of St. Stephen's Cathedral in that city and its interior sculptural and micro-architectural program. Compared to these collections, the number of extant Early Modern architectural drawings in the Low Countries is only meager.

A drawing on parchment of the belfry tower in Ghent, datable to between 1314 and 1323 and kept in the city's [STAM Museum](#), is the oldest known Netherlandish architectural drawing (fig. 1). This unattributed sheet shows an early design for the belfry tower, which was altered during the building process, and most likely functioned as a presentation drawing.

Presentation drawings such as this one often served multiple goals. First, they could be used as working drawings on the actual building site. Although the drawing was made without what would become traditional measuring tools, its proportions were geometrically rendered according to *ad quadratum* methods. Second, and most significantly, this drawing served to inform the Ghent city officials of the proposed design and thus functioned as a *vidimus* drawing.² The draftsman included many figurative details such as gargoyles and a painted frieze on the fourth level, which were non-essential for the technical process but engaging for those who had commissioned the project. A third goal would have been to inform the citizens of Ghent about the upcoming project. The inscription at the bottom of the drawing, stating that this is the design for the belfry ('dbweerp van den belfroete') seems to point towards this more public audience. Drawings of this kind were often displayed to raise funds for the project.

Contemporaneous with the Ghent town hall drawings is an elevation drawing attributed to Joos II (or Josse) Metsys, brother of the famous Antwerp painter Quinten Metsys, which is now in the collection of [Museum M](#) in Leuven (fig 3). The drawing (c. 1505-1525), executed in brown ink on parchment, shows an unrealized design for the west tower complex of St. Peter's Church in Leuven on five large pieces of parchment, measuring 276 cm in total. It is the only well-preserved Netherlandish gothic design drawing able to rival German elevation plans of this period. For this plan, Metsys based himself on an earlier drawing made in 1481

by the Leuven architect Gillis Stuerbout, perhaps in collaboration with his brother, the painter Hubert Stuerbout (also in the collection of museum M, though badly damaged). Metsys's plan applies the same measurements but provides a stylistic update of the earlier plan, by adding more flamboyant octagonal gothic towers, in keeping with contemporary architectural projects such as the Antwerp Church of Our Lady or the intended spire of the Church of St. Rumbold in Mechelen.

Ornamental details such as the tracery and balconies are quite often added only to one half of the architectural drawing, since the other half can be mirrored. Here, however, the full and equal ornamental representation on both sides of the drawing indicate that this drawing also functioned largely as a showpiece for those who had commissioned the design and possibly for a wider audience.

In addition, this large parchment drawing provided the basis for one of the only extant sculpted architectural models known to have been created as part of a planning process. Studies of building contracts have shown that the use of models for an architectural or large sculptural projects was rather common practice, at least from the fifteenth century onwards. Most of these models were constructed in wood, however, and have not been preserved. In 1524 Leuven city council concluded a contract with Joos Metsys for the construction of a stone model for the upper three floors of the west tower. Since Metsys was advanced in years, the actual execution of the model in precious Avesnes stone was left to his son-in-law, Jan Beyaert. In contrast to the drawing, the 8.27-meter high model includes only the middle

and north towers, since the south tower would have been identical. Combined with the elevation drawing, the viewer would have had sufficient information to complete the mental picture. The model was to be delivered to Leuven town hall, probably for the public to witness and marvel at the building project. Had it been completed, the building would have soared to a full 175 meters, making it almost 30 meters higher than Strasbourg cathedral and hence the tallest building in Europe.

In sixteenth-century contracts the term *metselrye* not only encompassed architecture, but also sculpture and what is known today as “micro” architecture. One of the most striking examples in this category is the design for one of the major projects of the early Renaissance in the Low Countries: the rood screen of the collegiate church of St. Waudru in Mons. Although the building itself was demolished at the end of the eighteenth century, the design is still best understood through the original architectural drawing, dated 1535 and today preserved in the archives of Mons (fig. 4). Mary of Hungary’s favorite sculptor and architect, Jacques Du Broeucq, was contracted to supply most of the sculptural work, including the high relief elements and the free-standing statues of the Virtues. Although the micro-architectural framework and the drawing have been attributed to the same artist, this attribution remains disputable. The design depicts the rood screen with three large barrel vaults, executed wholly in the antique style, akin to the architectural ornamental style of Jean Mone, who also worked in the Habsburgs’ courtly circles. Interestingly, the sculptures of the Virtues seem to have been drawn by a different hand; space is left for them in the architectural design. They may have been included by Du Broeucq. Minor differences between the drawing’s right and left halves point to its use as a preliminary design, offering the chapter of St. Waudru different options before execution.

Since most of the architectural drawings to have survived are presentation drawings, they give a distorted image of the output of practical working drawings. They were often not executed by artists but rather drawn by city engineers or land surveyors. Despite their lack of aesthetic appeal, they can often provide us with additional art historical data. A well-known case is the ground plan of the house of the famous Antwerp publisher and printmaker Hieronymus Cock, which belongs to the [Antwerp City Archives](#). The ground plan of Antwerp’s most prolific print enterprise, Aux Quatre Vents, was executed in March 1573, three years after Cock’s death (fig 5). Since the exact measurements are indicated in Antwerp feet, the drawing gives us an indication of the actual and – surprisingly small – size of the print shop and publishing house.

Scholarship on the architectural drawing practice in the Low Countries is still in its early phase, and should by no means be restricted as a field of architectural history. Architectural design exceeds the boundaries between different crafts, so meticulously guarded by guild organizations. Especially during the sixteenth century, designing practice becomes a shared responsibility of master builders, sculptors, goldsmiths, engravers and painters alike. This might be best illustrated by the 1549 introduction to Pieter Coecke van Aelst’s Vitruvian booklet, ‘*Die inventie der Colommen*’, which he addresses to all painters, sculptors, stonecutters and all who derive pleasure from antique edifices.

Oliver Kik is currently completing his doctoral dissertation "Between the Lines" at the universities of Leuven and Utrecht, on the architectural design process in the Low Countries between 1480 and 1560.

Notes

¹ One of the earliest treatments of the Netherlandish architectural design practice was R. Meischke, ‘Het Architectonische

ontwerp in de Nederlanden gedurende de Middeleeuwen en de Zestiende Eeuw', *Bulletin Koninklijke Nederlands Oudheidkundige Bond* 5 (1952), pp.162-230. More recent publications are M. Hurx, *Architect en aannemer. De opkomst van de bouwmarkt in de Nederlanden 1350-1530*, Nijmegen 2012, and E. Gerritsen, *Zeventiende-eeuwse architectuurtekeningen. De tekening in de ontwerp- en bouwpraktijk in de Nederlandse Republiek*, Zwolle 2006.

² A *vidimus* was a preliminary drawing made for the approval of the commissioner. The drawing could also be supplemented by additional detail drawings or sketches.

FRIENDS

Salomon Lilian Interviewed by Gerdien Verschoor

Salomon Lilian founded his company, Salomon Lilian Dutch Old Master Paintings, in 1989. It is based in Amsterdam and also has a branch in Geneva. Lilian specializes in paintings by the Dutch Old Masters and publishes an annual catalog with essays about the most important items in his collection. Salomon Lilian became a CODART business sponsor in 2015.

Barely had I crossed the threshold of his business on Spiegelgracht in Amsterdam before Lilian started giving me the first lesson in my life in *feeling* a work of art. “Just touch that,” he said. “These buttons on this portrait of Cornelis de Vos. Do you feel it? The three-dimensionality of the painting, the material, the paint that is here in the buttons on the canvas. That’s what art is about, as far as I’m concerned: of course it’s about the picture itself and its significance, but above all it’s the material quality that transcends that picture. And just feel the back! It still has the original stretcher and the original nails. Touching a painting like that gives you a gut feeling for it.”

In a museum you would ...

... never be able to touch that painting. That’s why I’d never want to work in a museum. As a dealer – or a collector of course – you have far more freedom in how you handle your works of art. And that physical contact, that touch, is something I find particularly important. And this too, for instance. [produces cotton pads and a bottle of turpentine

and casually wipes clean the surface of a new purchase, *The Backgammon Players* by Willem Duyster.] Just look at the three-dimensionality that suddenly leaps out at you! That’s another big difference from a museum, of course: as an art dealer you put your own money into a painting; time and again you take a big risk, so you have to be confident you know who painted it, and how.

You were originally destined to follow in your father’s footsteps as an optician. It is remarkable that although you eventually chose a different profession, it was one in which looking is so important.

It’s true. My father had an optician’s shop and he suddenly died when I was nineteen. So I qualified as an optician as quickly as possible and took over the business. But I soon realized that this was not my calling. It was through the antiques firm of my mother’s family, the Stodels, that I first

became inspired to study art history. Those were very tough years, dividing the week between working at the optician’s and studying. Looking back, I think it’s a pity I had so little time for real student life, and never joined a fraternity, for instance.

Did you know from the outset that you would focus on the Old Masters?

Yes, that was clear from the beginning. Mainly through the Stodels’ influence, but then I met Rob Noortman quite early on, and he encouraged me to stay focused on the Old Masters. In 1990 I got a credit starter loan from the bank and the government, which enabled me to set up my own business. It was incredibly hard at the beginning. The art trade is very closed; people don’t like newcomers, so they mess you around, and you have to be able to take it. And I had zero experience. So I started off with two major mistakes. My first purchase was a *Winter Landscape* by Gerrit van Battem, which I bought for 30,000 guilders. When I took the painting to the conservator he gave me my first lesson in looking – unfortunately it turned out that the entire sky section had been painted with new, twentieth-century paint. I was eventually able to sell the painting, but I had to accept a loss.

So your credit went up in smoke.

Yes, and after that I made another, similar, mistake, with a *Seascape* by Pieter Mulier the Elder. That painting turned out to have been cut down. Today I’d see that straight away, from the traces of sawing and from the composition, but as I said, I was still learning how to look. Still, I did learn – by trial and error.

When did you have your breakthrough?

It was at the 1991 [PAN art fair](#), where Salomon Stodel had given me wall space to hang my Old Masters, that I met Rob Noortman, who offered to help me. I had discovered a painting by Pieter Claesz, which Noortman and I purchased for

100,000 guilders and Noortman sold for over a million. So then I could get moving. We bought and sold several other paintings together, and then in 1992 I was given my own stand at the PAN, I met clients, went to [TEFAF](#), and the business really took off. Art fairs obviously have tremendous added value, since they enable you to reach a wide international public in one fell swoop.

You mentioned the errors you made at the start of your career, about learning how to look. We hear it said more and more often, that university students don't learn how to look.

It's true. The practice of looking still receives little attention – let alone the idea that students would ever be allowed to touch a painting. How many hours does the average student spend at museums, art fairs, private art galleries, with real paintings? Who teaches them to look at artworks and draw their own conclusions? I found it exciting to see [Fritz Koreny](#) doing just that at [CODART NEGENTIEN](#) in Madrid. You may not always agree with his conclusions, but even so: it was a fantastic lesson in looking.

Perhaps art dealers like you should give guest lectures at universities. To keep young people connected to the Old Masters.

Well I've never thought about it, but it would be interesting, teaching students much more about the everyday practice of looking at artworks. I do that now, but in a different way:

I hire young art historians and train them. What they bring the firm is an enormous amount of expertise, and what they learn here is how to look. Without someone like [Jasper Hillegers](#), who has been working for me since 2010 and was recently also appointed curator at the [Frans Hals Museum](#), we would never have been able to identify the subject in Pickenoy's portrait. His academic approach opened my eyes. Collaboration with scholars is essential to the art trade – I consider it crucial to the significance of my work to ensure that we can provide that depth of knowledge about every painting.

You belong to the younger generations of art dealers, but now a new generation is making its presence felt.

Yes, some interesting young people have appeared in the art trade who have a really good eye. Jan Six, whose firm is affiliated to Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox in London, is based in Amsterdam, and so is Niels de Boer, of the art gallery P. de Boer. I hope that Sander Bijl will also come to Amsterdam. Now that older dealers in London, such as Johnny van Haeften, are retiring, and people like Richard Green are buying fewer Dutch Old Masters, there is plenty of momentum – and Brexit has reinforced this trend – to restore Amsterdam's position as the center of trade in Old Masters. The reopening of the Rijksmuseum has also provided a tremendous impulse, attracting far more potential clients, including some from China. We've left the dark days behind us: a new era has dawned.

A new era – but all the art dealers are men!

Yes, I have no idea why women don't venture into this field. You must have a good eye, be able to make purchases, but you also have to have good business sense, to have a good grasp of all the fiscal and accounting aspects of your company. We've certainly seen a whole new generation of women curators establish themselves, so it's a mystery to me why we don't see them in the art trade. Perhaps it really is a question of daring?

Have you noticed any other new trends?

Yes, in two areas. First of all, there's a new generation of younger collectors, particularly in the US. Last year I sold a painting for the first time to collectors who usually only buy modern art. Old Masters are cheap in comparison to modern and contemporary art, and you see bankers and hedge fund managers getting interested in investing in Old Masters. There are also a lot of potential clients in Asian countries: people who see that Old Masters are cheap now and that the prices will rise. When the Leiden Gallery starts putting on exhibitions in the Far East, as Tom Kaplan plans

to do, when people over there see that you can buy ten Rembrandts in the space of ten years – that will change the market.

What about content?

For a dealer it's important to find artworks that fit the *Zeitgeist*. Why is contemporary art all the rage right now? Because it hits you – wham! – really directly. Cabinet paintings demand a completely different approach to looking: you have to go

right into the painting, as it were: you have to make an effort, and it requires more knowledge, which people often don't have nowadays. Still, paintings by Old Masters that make a gesture, that reach out to you in a sense, much as contemporary artworks do – works like that are starting to stir up more interest among collectors, including new ones. People want paintings that have an immediate impact. As a dealer you have to dare to acknowledge that and go in search of paintings like that. The Duyster is an example of that, and so is *The Owl* by Dirk Valkenburg, which I presented at the TEFAF in March.

How do you see the curator's role here?

A good example was the exhibition *The Discovery of Everyday Life: From Bosch to Bruegel* at [Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen](#) last year. Every painting there looked really contemporary: they were all striking images. The exhibition was framed by a good narrative and it was accompanied by an excellent, in-depth catalogue. In my view, that belongs to the core tasks of today's curator. Curators must try to get the public engaged in that knowledge by telling an interesting story.

“The beautiful is secret” was the title of Peter Hecht's valedictory lecture. That may be so, but that does not absolve us art historians of the duty of setting out to illuminate artworks. Can you illuminate the most beautiful paintings here on Spiegelgracht? Or is the essence of their beauty, for you too, a secret?

I can articulate what it is that makes a painting “beautiful” in

my eyes. A painting must be sexy, must appeal to the senses. That may come from its chiaroscuro or from a loose, vigorous style of painting – it has to have a certain tension that is difficult to put into words. Take the first painting you touched this morning: those buttons, that material, and the sky, they all add real excitement to the painting. Or this *Portrait of Dirck van Dans* by Pickenoy: he meets our gaze with such self-assurance. Marvelous! But to my mind, this Lievens, *Saint Simeon and the Christ Child*, is another example. Lievens signed the painting with his Latin name, “J. Livius,” so he was really proud of it. It is actually more suited to a museum than the art trade, with that strange rather unattractive Christ Child and Simeon's bad teeth. But it has precisely that tension I was talking about, and someday I'll find a good home for it.

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CODART NEGENTIEN CONGRESS

19-21 June, Madrid

Video recordings of the lectures and an article by Fenna Poletiek on the congress theme

The CODART NEGENTIEN Congress, which was held in Madrid from June 19 through June 21, 2016, was attended by 136 CODART members. The event was organized in partnership with [Museo Nacional del Prado](#), [Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza](#), [Museo Lázaro Galdiano](#) and [Patrimonio Nacional](#), and focused on the issue of art-historical attributions and its significance for curators.

The congress theme, *Connoisseurship: Between Intuition and Science*, was discussed from a variety of vantage points in lectures, statements, and a debate.

We are pleased to enclose a video recording of the keynote lecture *Connoisseurship: A Personal View* by Professor Christopher Brown of the University of Oxford, former Director of the Ashmolean Museum. In his speech Brown draws on his personal experience as Curator of the Dutch and Flemish collections at the National Gallery, and subsequently as Director of the Ashmolean Museum, to highlight the central issues relating to connoisseurship.

Also enclosed is an article by Fenna Poletiek. She spoke at the congress on how cognitive psychology can help art historians by attribution questions.

Are you interested in the recordings and texts of the other lectures and statements? They are available through the [link](#).

Authentication by the Crowd: How Lay Students Identify the Style of a 17th Century Artist by Fenna Poletiek and Kerwin J.F. Olfers

Our ability to learn how our environment works, effortlessly, without intention or instruction, and even without knowing what we have learnt, is essential to survival. Using their “implicit learning” skills, children eventually know how to attract their mother’s attention, master the rules of social interaction, the highly complex, abstract rules of language (Gomez & Gerken, 1999), and develop the ability to recognize the structure of visual displays (Jiang & Song, 2005).

We propose here to look at the recognition of artistic style as a special case of this implicit learning skill. Indeed, the ingredients are almost the same. First, learning the unique features of a style requires heavy exposure to exemplars of that style. Children pick up language rules as they hear language in which these rules are applied. Studies suggest that expertise, in general, derives more from training with, and exposure to, materials related to that expertise, and probably less than folk psychology suggests from innate ability (Ericson, Krampe & Tesch-Roemer, 1993). Second, the process of learning a style is much like a child’s gradual understanding of grammar, in the sense that it is mainly unintentional. We don’t typically listen to language with the intention of identifying the grammatical rules that the speaker is applying; we are focused on meaning. Similarly, art historians look at paintings by a variety of painters for different purposes: they may enjoy them, be assessing their quality, looking at the colors and the brushstrokes, or reflecting on the meaning the artist has sought to convey. All this means that learning different styles is something that occurs incidentally, as a side-effect of exposure rather than as a deliberate endeavor.

In support of the incidental learning hypothesis, studies of implicit learning of a simple artificial language suggest that an *explicit* learning instruction (for instance, “try to identify the grammatical rules underlying the sentences you are going to hear”) does not enhance learning (Reber, 1989). Instead, experiments of this kind tend to encourage people to “memorize” the materials they are exposed to. Paradoxically, doing your best to learn what you want to learn is not always a guaranteed path to expertise; the best way is through seeing, using, or enjoying the materials.

It is not only the learning process that is implicit. The same typically applies to the resulting knowledge, especially when that knowledge is abstract and complex. In the sentence “the man the child cries, runs,” we know *immediately* that

something is wrong; but we will need time to identify the rule that is being violated, if indeed we can do it all. Moreover, if we come up with some syntactical explanation of the violation, can we be sure it is correct? Art historians probably recognize this experience of *knowing immediately* that a painting is not a true XX, but finding it hard to articulate the particular stylistic characteristic that has been violated, thus leading to that firm conclusion. The phenomenon is as mysterious as babies learning their mother tongue or recognizing the visual characteristics of their mother's face.

In sum, we can discern two similarities between implicit learning and connoisseurship in art. First, acquiring expertise is not necessarily helped by meta-knowledge or by a focused effort to identify the presumed specific structural features underlying the materials we are trying to master. Simple exposure seems to work very well. As the Dutch soccer legend Johan Cruyff used to say: ambitious young players should maximize their contact with the ball, not with the coach. Second, even those who have become experts may well be poor at explaining exactly where their expertise lies. This touches on the question of whether art connoisseurs should be required to *explain* their stylistic assessments – and what the status of such explanations should be. Do we know what we know well enough to describe it precisely?

To investigate the analogy between style recognition and the general mechanisms underlying implicit learning, we carried out an experiment, using the so-called Artificial Grammar Learning paradigm (Pothos & Bailey, 2000). We wanted to find out whether young adults without any background in art or art history could learn to recognize the style of a particular 17th-century Dutch painter after having been exposed to a number of his paintings. After this training, we tested whether they could tell the difference between 1) other paintings by that artist and 2) similar paintings by other Dutch artists from the same period.

Experimental setup

The experiment involved 23 participants with an average age of 22. Pictures of paintings were presented on a computer screen. The material, consisting of photographs (with documentation) of 17th-century paintings, was provided by CODART, in collaboration with the Museum [Boijmans Van Beuningen](#) (Rotterdam, Netherlands): 75 paintings assigned to Van Goyen and 25 attributed to contemporaries, all representing landscapes, with or without humans, animals, water, boats, and depicting different seasons: winter, autumn, or summer. Importantly, these features were distributed randomly over the paintings of all artists, ensuring that one feature could not be fully indicative of one particular artist.

In the training phase, 50 paintings by Van Goyen were displayed on a computer screen, one at a time. Participants were informed that all these paintings were by the same artist, and were asked to just “look at them.” In the subsequent test phase, 25 paintings attributed to Van Goyen and 25 paintings not attributed to Van Goyen were presented in random order. The non-Van Goyens came in three categories. First, artworks painted in the “manner of Van Goyen” that are not attributed to any specific artist. The second group included items painted in the “manner of a specific [other] artist” that are not attributed to any specific artist. And the third category were paintings attributed to specific painters other than Van Goyen (e.g. Cuyp). All the paintings in the test phase were roughly similar in style and themes, presenting no obvious anomalies. Participants could press “yes” if they believed that a painting was made by the “same artist as the painter who made the first collection of paintings they saw before,” or “no” if they believed another artist made it. Participants were encouraged to do their best, but not to spend too much time on their decision – just to “follow their first hunch.”

Results and Conclusions

The average proportion of correct ratings (that is, the number of actual Van Goyens attributed to Van Goyen by the participants, and the number of *non*-Van Goyens *not* attributed to Van Goyen) was 56.4%. That was significantly better than chance ($p < .01$) indicating that the participants' classifications could not be explained by mere guesswork. Both the actual Van Goyens and the works “in the manner of Van Goyen” were endorsed as Van Goyens in 58% of cases on average. Non-Van Goyens or paintings categorized as “in the manner of a specific artist” were rated as not by Van Goyen in 43% of cases. Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of times the participants rated paintings as work by Van Goyen, averaged for each catalogued category of paintings.

Hence, the paintings that were either by Van Goyen or made in the manner of this artist were quite reliably separated from similar-looking works produced by contemporaries, suggesting that our lay students learned – though not perfectly – the *style* of Van Goyen by just looking at fifty of his paintings. Also, this style (the “manner of Van Goyen”) was quite

consistently detected by both the art historian experts making the catalogue attributions and our lay participants. Fig. 2 shows the mean ratings (over all participants) of each individual painting, with the catalogued actual works of Van Goyen on the left and paintings by other artists or without verified attribution on the right.

Interestingly, our experimental setup allows us to identify the paintings that elicit rating errors, both the missed hits (the Van Goyens typically rated as non-Van Goyens), and the false alarms (the non-Van Goyens typically rated as Van Goyens). In fact we can potentially derive from these items the key features of Van Goyen's style. Fig. 3 shows four samples of crucial paintings in a Latin square: the upper left square contains four paintings actually by Van Goyen that are typically recognized as Van Goyens. The upper right cell contains four non-Van Goyens often misidentified as Van Goyens. In the lower left cell are the Van Goyens misidentified as non-Van Goyens, while the lower right cell has the correctly-judged non-Van Goyens. The false alarms express characteristics in non-Van Goyens that are assumed to be typical of Van Goyen; the missed hits express features that people do not associate with Van Goyen's style.

The overview of our results in fig. 3 might be further interpreted by art experts interested in crucial features distinguishing Van Goyen's style from others. More generally, our procedure – that is, recruiting laypersons' implicit learning skills – might be used to supply corroborative arguments in cases of attribution problems. Suppose that experts question that a particular work is by Artist A. A sample of lay persons could first be “trained” by exposure to paintings by A and subsequently tested with other paintings: by 1) A (half of the test items), 2) paintings by A's contemporaries B, C, D etc. that look as much like A's paintings as possible, and 3) the target painting.

Two analyses of the data will be useful for the attribution issue: first, the participants' overall accuracy in detecting A from non-A paintings, and second, the proportion of attributions of the target painting to artist A. The diagnostic value of the rating of the target work increases as the participants are better able to distinguish A from non-A. For example, if the average percentage of accurate ratings in the test phase is 80%, and the proportion of attributions of the target item to A is 75%, this would support the reliability of attributing the painting to A. However, if the overall rating performance is 52%, the same attribution of 75% of the target work conveys little information. The procedure will be more useful as more participants are tested, because of the general principle that a greater number of participants will increase the test's validity. We are currently preparing an experiment in our laboratory to explore this exciting approach.

In sum, our experiment not only demonstrates that lay students can acquire the ability to recognize Van Goyen's style, but it also suggests a promising new approach to attribution questions, which simply draws on the implicit learning skills of ordinary lay people.

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