

# EZINE 9 SUMMER 2017

## EDITOR'S NOTE

## Dress

Our clothes do so much for us. They protect us from extreme weather conditions, enable us to perform physical activity, help us look attractive or impressive, and project our individual and collective aesthetic values. Yet few of the shirts, dresses, shoes, belts and scarves that we use to perform our daily offices and celebrate more significant milestones will survive to enrich history's account of our times. In what circumstances do these functional garments become worthy of preservation? In which cases do we recognize clothing designers as artists? And how do collections of this type function in the general ecosystem of historically significant objects, artifacts and such luxury goods as paintings, tapestries, sculpture and jewelry? Costumes preserved from decades and centuries past tell us how people lived and how wealth and power were asserted. The production and distribution of clothing is also bound up with the parallel histories of agriculture, industry and trade. [Bert Watteuw](#) gives a preview of a forthcoming volume of proceedings from the 2014 conference (*Un*)*dressing Rubens: Fashion and Painting in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp*, which treats the intersection of these related fields. New readings of important archival documents shed light on the crucial role of the textile trade in Antwerp, and more specifically on the significance of garments and accessories to the household of Peter Paul Rubens and his contemporaries.

Other articles in the present issue not only demonstrate the range of collections that inform our understanding of Dutch and Flemish dress but also offer different approaches to the study and display of these important yet often marginalized objects. The planned reopening of the Gruuthusemuseum in Bruges offers a chance to reimagine the story of lace, as [Aleid Hemeryck](#) recounts in her article. The production and use of lace are essential to the history of Bruges. As Hemeryck's commentary reveals, this ornamental textile is at the basis of discussions of local and regional cultural history, discussions that provide opportunities to consider the variety of technical refinement in the production of lace and its relevance to contemporary fashion and design.

As a category of costume history, armor – in some ways the very opposite of lace, with its lightness and openwork – allows us to consider the history of dress more specifically in the context of warfare and sport. [Stefan Krause](#) describes highlights of the field-defining armor collection of the [Kunsthistorisches Museum](#) (Vienna), including the armor of Maurits of Orange. He also reminds us that armor is a powerful vehicle for the study of fashion trends in early-modern Europe and at the same time preserves the virtuosity of its makers. It stands to reason that fashions in armor should be considered alongside textile fashions. This is evident from Krause's reflections on the recurrent challenge of displaying plate armor, complete with the textile garments that would have accompanied it, on lifelike mannequins. Similar challenges are discussed by Madelief Hohé of the [Gemeentemuseum](#) in The Hague, who is [interviewed in this issue](#) of the eZine.

The Modemuseum (Fashion Museum) in Hasselt provides an interesting counterpoint to costume collections held by more broadly oriented institutions such as the Gemeentemuseum or indeed the Kunsthistorisches Museum. As [Karolien De Clippel](#) states in her overview of the Modemuseum collection, her institution is alone in the Low Countries in its dedication to collecting dress to the exclusion of other objects of design or applied art. De Clippel outlines the role of the Modemuseum in preserving local history, and also points out the need to interpret its collection with a view to placing it in the larger history of Western fashion from 1750 to the present. Like Madelief Hohé, De Clippel emphasizes the necessity for increased digitization of permanent collections and greater accessibility through web-based platforms. Indeed, while special exhibitions have garnered widespread praise and sparked enthusiasm – particularly those featuring contemporary designers – more research on permanent holdings of historical dress can help increase our knowledge of these important and beautiful objects, which have much more in common with conventional objects of fine art than previously assumed.

Recent monographic exhibitions have brought the display of clothing closer to the core of contemporary museum practice. These include the blockbuster projects mounted by the Costume Institute at the [Metropolitan Museum](#) (*Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty*, 2011) and the [Victoria and Albert Museum](#) (*Vivienne Westwood*, 2004), to name but two leading institutions in this field. The success of such exhibitions has encouraged curators of more conventional media to incorporate garments in their displays – to wit, *Impressionism, Fashion, Modernity* (2013), an exhibition organized by the [Art Institute of Chicago](#), which included garments and fashion accessories alongside the paintings in which they were depicted. The

advent of private museums funded by luxury clothing brands such as Prada, Louis Vuitton, and Marciano suggests that those with a close eye on fashion may have an increasing influence on the status of costume and textiles within the broader landscape of museum culture. Whether these forces will align to augment the study and presentation of more historical collections of dress remains to be seen.

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## WELCOME

**Fit for a King**

Back from Poland after a very successful [CODART TWINTIG congress](#), I continue to reflect on the many impressions I brought home with me. Most memorable are always the encounters with our members, who flocked to Warsaw from the remote corners of the world to meet with one another. Every year it's a privilege to talk with them about their new publications and exhibitions, and the role our network plays in the realization of their projects. This year we were also able to offer a number of exceptionally interesting excursions, in addition to compelling lectures, stimulating statements, and the short but powerful contributions made in the Speakers' Corner. In Warsaw, we undertook several in-depth visits to the museums that were our partners this year: the [National Museum in Warsaw](#), the [Royal Palace](#), the [Printroom of the University of Warsaw](#) and the [Royal ?azienki Palace](#). An account of the last-mentioned visit is included in [this eZine](#). There were also a couple of spectacular excursions to Cracow. Surely one of the high points of our days in Poland was climbing the scaffolding behind the thirteen-meter-tall Veit Stoss Altarpiece in St. Mary's Basilica, which enabled us to stand face to face with the fifteenth-century figures that are otherwise barely visible from down below.

In addition to all the Dutch and Flemish art we saw in Warsaw and Cracow, there was also time to see pictures that originated in Poland. The court painter Marcello Bacciarelli made many portraits of the last Polish king, Stanis?aw August Poniatowski. One of his most flamboyant state portraits hangs in the Royal Palace in Warsaw, where the opening of the CODART TWINTIG congress took place and where we gathered for the Speakers' Corner. Bacciarelli did his utmost to portray His Majesty in all his glory. The monarch wears an ermine-lined cloak decorated with golden eagles, a silver-colored jacket with gold embroidery, and knee breeches with matching hose and shoes. On his breast gleams the diamond-studded chain and cross of the Polish Order of the White Eagle; in his right hand he holds a ceremonial sword, its hilt shaped like an eagle's head. Next to him, the state insignias lie on a red velvet cushion. His attire was made by his own tailor, Christian Lange, possibly to the king's own designs. Stanis?aw August was extremely pleased with the portrait and had a number of copies made to give away as gifts.

"As far as my appearance is concerned, I find that the portrait Bacciarelli painted of me in my coronation costume is the best likeness," he later observed in his *Memoires*. "I would be satisfied with my figure if only I were one *cal* (ca. 2.5 cm, or 1 inch) taller, if my legs were better shaped, my nose less aquiline, my hips narrower, my gaze sharper, and my teeth slightly larger." In spite of these shortcomings, the king still thought he cut a noble figure. Indeed, his whole body language radiates so much distinction that he succeeds in becoming the majestic focus of attention.

Bacciarelli and Stanis?aw August became good friends. The Italian was not only a confidant of the king, but also his most important advisor when it came to assembling his art collection, many pieces of which we were able to see in Warsaw. Bacciarelli continued to portray his patron until

1793, the year in which the Second Partition of Poland put an end to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and two years before the king was forced to flee to Russia, where he spent the last years of his life. Dating from that year of disaster, 1793, is the most enigmatic portrait that Bacciarelli painted of the king, a work that now hangs in the National Museum in Warsaw. It differs in every way from the glorious portrait the court painter had made of his friend and patron some thirty years earlier, shortly after his accession to the throne. In this later portrait, Stanis?aw August sits at a desk, wearing a sky-blue, fur-lined cloak over a lace blouse. Bacciarelli did not conceal the fact that the king had aged by many years. His hair is whiter, his lips thinner, his look much less resolute. His crown lies on the desk; a globe stands behind him. His right hand rests on an hourglass, a symbol of Freemasonry; his left hand, with the royal signet ring on the little finger, rests on some papers, no doubt official documents of some kind. Never before had anyone portrayed the king looking so vulnerable. If there is one thing that is clear from these portraits, it is this: clothes make the man.

What significance does clothing have in paintings? How did artists present the latest fabrics and fashions in their artworks? What role does fashion play in our museum collections, and how should we display such coronation costumes, lace collars and pieces of armor to the public? I am proud to present you with this unusual issue of our eZine, which, for a change, is not about paintings, prints or drawings, but focuses instead on a particular sector of the applied arts. I wish you much reading

pleasure. And please make a note of the next congress: CODART 21 in Bruges, 11-13 March 2018. Save the date!

## CURATOR'S PROJECT

**Tasseled Buttons and Braided Cords: Loose Ends from Antwerp Archives on Rubens's Wardrobe and a New Book on Dress and Painting in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp**

The international trade in raw materials for the textile industry, the local processing of wool, silk and dyes, and the sale and export of finished textiles were vital to the economy of early-modern Antwerp. In the sixteenth century, the urge to show off newly acquired riches was so great that the authorities attempted to curb the public display of status-enhancing finery by implementing sumptuary laws, which in fact proved to have little effect. The fortunes made in the textile trade were quickly converted into ever newer fabrics and fashions. Moreover, textiles and clothing were increasingly documented in paintings and portraits, which are now fundamental sources for fashion history, because original articles of clothing are so rare. The flourishing of early-modern Southern Netherlandish painting is tightly interwoven with the developing textile industry, a symbiotic relationship of which Flemish tapestries are the most striking product. Before Rubens settled in his house and gardens on the Wapper, near the Tapissierspand (Tapestry Hall), the spot had been – appropriately enough – a bleaching field. It was on this white canvas that the artist would embark on a career without equal when he returned to Antwerp from Italy in 1608.

The seventeenth-century art theorist and artists' biographer Giovanni Pietro Bellori reports in his life of Anthony van Dyck that the artist's father was a textile dealer and his mother a talented embroiderer. She used a needle to paint landscapes and figures, thus fanning the artistic flames of her son. According to Bellori, Van Dyck was always splendidly and sumptuously attired in costly suits and courtly costumes, wearing gold chains and a plumed hat, and always going about with a retinue of servants in tow. Bellori thought that the flamboyant, high-society lifestyle of the fashionable portrait painter was the reason for his small legacy. Peter Paul Rubens, according to Bellori, chose clothing that was dignified and noble. In individual self-portraits (fig. 1), Rubens is discreetly and elegantly dressed in black, without affectation: the emphasis lies on his features, not on his clothing, which plays an important and colorful role mainly in the early *Self-Portrait with his Wife, Isabella Brandt, in the Honeysuckle Bower* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek). The deep purple coats in which Rubens presents himself in the portrait with Helena Fourment in New York (fig. 2) and in the *Adoration of the Magi* in Madrid (fig. 3) are not showy, but their color is costly and rich in meaning. After all, the Greek painter Parrhasius had also decked himself out in purple robes. Rubens's understated wardrobe is in stark contrast to Rembrandt's fantastical experiments, which have been the focus of studies by art and costume historians such as Marieke de Winkel.<sup>1</sup> The portrait specialist Van Dyck, too, has already been examined in this respect by Emilie Gordenker.<sup>2</sup>

Rubens is regarded, above all, as a painter of the female nude, but Jakob Burckhardt rightly remarked: 'Rubens has an inexhaustible variety of movement in his draped female figures, as can be seen, for instance by the most cursory glance at the gallery of the Luxembourg, and as for clothing as such, both idealized, so-called classical drapery and the elegant and opulent dress of his time, he is and remains our most important source of information. True, the great total

pictorial effect to which all this is subordinated is, as a rule, of such a nature that the spectator only becomes aware gradually of these precious details. We must further note the perfect ease with which all his figures, male and female, wear their clothes, whatever they may be, for they look as if they had never worn anything else, even to the heroic battle habit somewhat casually adopted from roman monuments, and to all the glittering splendor of velvet, silk and jewelry which the eye takes in by the way as if they could not be otherwise.'<sup>3</sup>

Thoroughgoing study of costume was an integral part of Rubens's activities as a painter, and a condition of the natural, could-not-be-otherwise effect that Burckhardt so rightly admires. Rubens's so-called *Costume Book* in the British Museum is a repertory of Burgundian and exotic costumes that provided inspiration for figures in painted compositions.<sup>4</sup> From his study of the classics, Rubens obtained information about the clothing of the Romans, which he then integrated into history paintings by depicting details gleaned from literary sources, such as the nails in the sandals of Roman legionaries. Details of this kind were certainly noted and admired by an intellectual public who relished his antiquarian references. Rubens, his brother Filip, a historian, and his son Albert shared a scholarly interest in costume history. A study by Albert, *De re vestiaria veterum*, published posthumously in 1665, unraveled the meaning of various types of Roman togas.

Meanwhile, the Antwerp archives contain threads of interest that can provide us with information on the personal wardrobes of Rubens and his contemporaries. From the settlement of Rubens's estate, documented in the *Staetmasse* of 20 November 1645 and preserved in the Antwerp Felixarchief (fig. 4), it appears that the artist's clothing was sold after his death on 30 May 1640 for 1,093 guilders.<sup>5</sup> As mourning clothes, his widow bought gloves and fans, two pairs of mourning shoes, stockings for herself and the children, and a mourning *huik* (a mantle to cover the head, which could be worn as a veil). Mourning collars and cuffs of linen were purchased for the children, and the household staff also wore mourning clothes bought at the heirs' expense. The bier, the house and the choir of the St.-Jacobskerk were hung with fabrics purchased from Peeter Vermeulen and David De Schot, dealers in wool and silk. According to the *Staetmasse*, Vermeulen and particularly De Schot, a seller of silk cloth, supplied large amounts of fabric to the Rubens household even before his death. The same document mentions current accounts with the linen dealer Adriaen van Leemput, the hat seller Jan Municx (who also served the ladies of the Moretus family), the shoemaker Hans Hermans, the tailors Bertram del Baren and Christoffel Notarp, various washerwomen, an anonymous furrier, and finally, the silk seller Cornelis van Wyck.

Seven *Grootboecken* (account books) kept by Cornelis van Wyck, which record the sale of lace, ribbon, buttons and other silk accessories to the Antwerp elite for the period 1600-46, are preserved in the Plantinian archives.<sup>6</sup> Van Wyck, who managed his business well, was buried in 1661 in a chapel built at his expense in the choir of the Victorine convent.<sup>7</sup> In 1629 he served as burgomaster of the city, and from December 1638 as almoner. The holder of this prominent position was required to spend a great deal of money from his own pocket, and in this capacity Van Wyck clothed foundlings, lunatics and the poor. He kept precise

records of expenditure for large amounts of bread, linen, woolen cloth, shoes and woolen blankets.<sup>8</sup> Contrasting with the painstaking documentation of these necessities are the *Grootboecken*, which paint an equally detailed picture of the luxury business that made Van Wyck's generosity possible. With such names as Christyn, Tucher, Godines, Van der Goes, Reyniers, Happaert, Valckenisse, Ximenez, Della Faille, Brant, Tassis, Respaigne, and Vinck among his clientele, Van Wyck supplied his wares on credit to the most notable families of Antwerp. Rubens and Jan Brueghel were among his regular customers, and other of his clients are known from their portraits, painted by Rubens, Cornelis de Vos and Anthony van Dyck.

Antonio de Tassis (fig. 5), for example, appears in Van Wyck's account books between 1630 and 1634 as a buyer of silk ribbon, galloon, satin, lace, braided cords, and buttons intended for his daughter Marie. The portrait that Van Dyck painted of her in this period (fig. 6) probably displays ribbon from Van Wyck's colorful shop, where *passemblerie* (trimmings of gold or silver lace) was sold by the ell and decorative buttons by the dozen. Only a few years later, Marie died of complications after giving birth to twins. An inventory drawn up in July 1638, after her death, allows us to join her widower, a notary and her father in sifting through her possessions.<sup>9</sup> In one drawer we find an old piece of gold braid, in another two fans. It is possible that the contents of the drawers reminded the new grandfather of carefree times in Van Wyck's shop, and the fans made him think of his daughter's pose in Van Dyck's portrait of her.

Many details from Rubens's own account of his dealings with Van Wyck – which include bills for ells and ells of ribbon in hues of mother-of-pearl, golden yellow, incarnadine, dove gray, light blue and violet – call to mind the French-inspired clothing that Helena Fourment wore when Rubens portrayed her. A succession of purchases made in the course of the preparations for Rubens's marriage to Helena Fourment on 6 December 1630 can be followed in detail. The 'wide yellow shoe ribbon' ('gheel breet schoenlint') bought earlier by Rubens recalls the bow on Nicolaas Rubens's shoe in the portrait in Liechtenstein (fig. 7). The money spent on Van Wyck's wares by Nicolaas de Respaigne (fig. 8), who is exotically attired in

his portrait, do not differ from the sums expended by his fellow townsmen. Where loose ends of silk thread remain stuck between the pages of Van Wyck's ledgers, the handwriting flows almost seamlessly into the materiality of his merchandise (fig. 9). Such archival discoveries are, in essence, insignificant – no more than footnotes to the larger narratives of art history. Even so, Van Wyck's bulky ledgers serve to weave Rubens and his family into the social fabric of Antwerp and evoke a whole procession of well-known sitters.

This autumn Brepols will publish the proceedings of the conference *(Un)dressing Rubens: Fashion and Painting in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp*, which took place on 8 and 9 May 2014 at the Rubenianum and was co-organized by the University of Leuven. This publication, edited by [Lieneke Nijkamp](#) and Abigail Newman, contains contributions by Bianca du Mortier, [Karen Hearn](#), Pilar Benito, [Hannelore Magnus](#), Susan Miller, Johannes Pietsch, Frieda Sorber, Isis Sturtewagen, [Sara van Dijk](#), Susan Vincent, [Bert Watteuw](#) and Philipp Zitzlsperger. From the perspective of their own disciplines, the authors elucidate Rubens's use of textiles and clothing as bearers of meaning in individual paintings, and examine in detail both the wardrobes of Rubens's contemporaries and characteristic elements of the seventeenth-century silhouette. The various approaches to the subject are based on iconographic, textile-historical, archaeological, archival and literary source material.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Marieke de Winkel, *Fashion and Fancy: Dress and Meaning in Rembrandt's Paintings*, Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Emilie Gordenker, *Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) and the Representation of Dress in Seventeenth-Century Portraiture*, Pictura Nova VIII, Turnhout 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, *Erinnerungen aus Rubens*, Basel 1898, p. 80 (English translation taken from *Recollections of Rubens*, London 1950, pp. 39-40).

<sup>4</sup> See Kristin Lohse Belkin, *The Costume Book*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 24, Brussels 1978.

<sup>5</sup> Antwerp, Felixarchief, N 1894. Transcribed in full in Pierre Génard, 'De Nalatenschap van P. P. Rubens', in *Antwerpsch Archievenblad* 2, Antwerp 1865, pp. 69-163, esp. p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus. Plantinian Archives 1251, 1253, 1255, 1257, 1266, 1273, 1285.

<sup>7</sup> Verzameling der graf- en gedenkschriften van de provincie Antwerpen (Collection of epitaphs and obituaries of the province of Antwerp), Antwerp 1856-1903, vol. 4, p. 398.

<sup>8</sup> Cornelis van Wyck, Boek gehouden als bouwmeester en aalmoezenier (Accounts kept as architect and almoner), Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Plantinian Archives 1193, fols. 33-91.

<sup>9</sup> Erik Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, Brussels 1984-2009, vol. 4, p. 166.

## CURATOR'S COLLECTION

**Modemuseum Hasselt and the Role of Object-Based Research for a Better Understanding of Dress and Fashion**

Clothing and fashion are among the largest industries in the world, employing approximately 75 million people worldwide. In Belgium, too, fashion and textiles are important sectors. In January 2015, for example, some 33,000 men and women – of an active work force of five million – were working in the fashion and textile industries. In Belgium, moreover, household expenditure on clothing and footwear averages 4.6 percent (about the same as the amount spent on education).<sup>1</sup> Finally, since the late 1980s, Belgian designers have been creating a *fiore* on the international fashion scene and occupying important positions in French couture houses.<sup>2</sup> Although at a slower pace than in France, Scandinavia and the Anglo-Saxon world, fashion has gradually come to be viewed in Belgium, too, as a relevant subject of research and object of collecting. In Belgium, the Modemuseum Hasselt (Fashion Museum Hasselt) has played a pioneering role in these developments: it seeks to boost interest in fashion both by expanding its collection and by offering a variety of attractive, compelling and low-threshold exhibitions that are solidly underpinned by research. The Fashion Museum Hasselt, which is the only museum in the Low Countries devoted exclusively to clothing and fashion,<sup>3</sup> opened its doors to the public on 8 May 1988. Its holdings, the core of which consists of the collection once owned by the Romanian scenographer and costume designer Andrei Ivaneanu (1936-1989), comprises approximately 18,000 items of clothing and accessories.

Together they recount the history of Western fashion from 1750 to the present. Even though everyday apparel and anonymous garments are sometimes essential in illustrating the history of fashion (especially before 1850), our collecting policy with regard to post-1850 objects focuses on important designers that have had a great impact on the course of fashion history, such as Worth, Beer, Poiret, Lanvin, Chanel, Nina Ricci, Givenchy, Balenciaga, Dior, Cardin, Courrèges, Paco Rabanne, Valentino, Westwood, Prada, Gucci, Versace and Comme des Garçons.

The Fashion Museum Hasselt wishes, moreover, to devote attention specifically to fashions connected with the city of Hasselt, the province of Limburg and, by extension, the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion. Concretely, this means that we collect items of clothing and accessories by Hasselt fashion stores of past and present, as well as garments worn by inhabitants of Hasselt. This local fashion story is then embedded in that of Belgian fashion production and distribution. Implicit in this approach is our policy of collecting items of apparel from large department stores such as Maison Hirsch & Co, Vaxelaire-Claes and such fashion houses as Natan and Liétart. Our regional anchoring is also visible in the sub-collection of contemporary fashion in which creations by designers with Limburg roots and international allure, such as Martin Margiela and Raf Simons, are given special attention. Finally, the Fashion Museum Hasselt seeks to remedy the imbalance in fashion history, which is largely a story of trends in feminine clothing, by including men's fashions as well. In contrast to what is commonly thought, the design of men's clothing

has in the past often been exceptionally creative and innovative, and this sector is certainly just as dynamic and lucrative today.

The same is true of fashions for children and young people, which are also actively collected to complete the story. In the spring of 2018, the Fashion Museum Hasselt will devote an exhibition called *Forever Young* to this neglected part of fashion history. This show is an especially captivating inducement to reveal socio-cultural connotations and constructions of youth and youthfulness in the Western world.

Partly because fashion collections have only recently begun to gain attention – and the corresponding funding – they lag behind in the preservation, research and presentation of their holdings. One consequence of this is that most museums in the Low Countries that have fashion collections do not have spaces reserved for the permanent display of these collections. This is because, until very recently, fashion played a subordinate role in the museum landscape, and also because textiles and clothing place high demands on climatological and lighting conditions, which museums are not always equipped to deal with. As a result, fashion museums and collections in Belgium and the Netherlands generally make their objects accessible to the public only in temporary exhibitions and on their websites, or via aggregators such as [Modemuze](#) and the [Europeana Fashion portal](#). The Fashion Museum Hasselt has opted to organize two large exhibitions a year: one of them is an

exhibition with a popular theme designed to attract new targetgroups to the museum; the other, an exhibition, based on our own collection, that zooms in on socio-cultural, material and technical aspects of historical fashion and links them to the present-day situation.

Another consequence of this lag in development is the fact that all the clothing collections in the Low Countries have only one – and sometimes not even one<sup>4</sup> – curator for the complete collection, which often encompasses objects from a wide geographical area and spanning a very long period, beginning with the seventeenth and/or eighteenth century and ending yesterday. The situation is no different at the Fashion Museum Hasselt, where I now work as curator. After more than fifteen years in academia, including seven years as an associate professor in the Department of History and Art History at Utrecht University, I switched over to the museum world in February 2015. This changeover was prompted by an awareness that dress and fashion are enormously understudied in the Low Countries and by the fact that fashion curation is still a discipline-in-the-making in which I might be able to make a difference, given my background and my love of object-based research.

A crucial element in the dissemination of knowledge about fashion is the digitization of fashion collections. Before I began to work at the Fashion Museum Hasselt, much work had already been done in the area of collection registration. A small part of our holdings had been made accessible via the [museum's own website](#) and [Erfgoedplus](#).<sup>5</sup> Since 2015 we have been working on wider diffusion through the [Europeana Fashion portal](#), a platform that provides online

access to content from forty public and private fashion collections and now contains more than one million records, varying from historical clothing and accessories to catwalk photos, drawings and sketches, videos and fashion catalogues. Our goal is to have 8,000 records online by the end of the year. In preparation for this, pieces from the collection are photographed and their registration is checked, corrected and, wherever necessary, supplemented. For a medium-sized museum like ours, this is an immense, time-consuming task, but well worth the effort, for the benefits are huge. Not only does it enable us to share the knowledge to be gained from our collection with as many people as possible, but it also stimulates research and facilitates lending to exhibitions. Furthermore, as the quality of the data itself is continually enhanced, our knowledge of our own collection expands accordingly.

As part of the Europeana project, for instance, we studied an ensemble of four dresses from the second half of the nineteenth century that had been donated to the museum in 1992. Genealogical research, to which the descendants made a significant contribution, enabled us to trace the original wearer of one of the dresses.

This and the other three dresses are relevant to our collection because of their historical ties to Hasselt and because they were the property of the Croonenberghs, Haumonts and Herves, families with a long tradition in the local gin distillery, textile and clothing trade, and the legal profession. These findings are part of broader research into the history of Hasselt fashions – a project in which Master's students also take part – whose objective is to study the history of local fashions more closely, put the pieces in the collection into a clearly defined context, strengthen ties to the local community and, ideally, generate new donations.

In short, as a curator at the Fashion Museum Hasselt, I aim to continue the thorough examination of the pieces in our collection and to make the findings accessible via museum websites, digital platforms and exhibitions, vehicles that are crucial in making broad sections of the public aware of fashion and deepening their understanding of this undervalued but fascinating subject of research.

Karolien De Clippel is Curator at Fashion Museum Hasselt.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> FashionUnited, Rijksdienst voor Sociale Zekerheid, OEC, OECD. See [Fashion United, 2015](#). This percentage is lower than in the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain.

<sup>2</sup> Raf Simons with Dior and Calvin Klein, Kris Van Assche with Dior, and Anthony Vaccarello with Saint Laurent.

<sup>3</sup> Other museums in Belgium with relevant holdings of clothing and fashion are MoMu in Antwerp, which collects not only clothing but also flat textiles, tools and raw materials; the *Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire* (Royal Museums of Art and History) (KMKG) in Brussels, which have a 'lace and costume' collection that is administered by the Department of West

European Textiles and the Museum voor het Kostuum en de Kant (Museum of Costume and Lace) in Brussels. Unlike the holdings of the Fashion Museum Hasselt, these collections always combine clothing and fashion with flat textiles and/or lace.<sup>4</sup> For example, the costume and lace collection in the KMKG has not had a specialized curator since the end of 2015. At the departure of Marguerite Goossens, long curator of this sub-collection, her position was left vacant.<sup>5</sup> [Erfgoedplus](#) is a heritage database that provides online access to the collections of two Belgian provinces: Limburg and Vlaams-Brabant.

## CURATOR'S COLLECTION

## Fashion in Steel and Silk

Armor is steel clothing. Like shirts and trousers, it offers protection to the human body: textiles help to insulate the body from the cold and shield it against the sun; metal absorbs the blows of swords and lances. But like clothes made of costly silk or wool, bespoke armor once served to enhance the wearer's image and display his social rank. Plate armor was one of the most expensive and most noble articles of men's clothing in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It was worn not only in battle but also at triumphal processions, parades and festive tournaments. Armor documented its wearer's high social standing and his political and military power.

It therefore stands to reason that armor was subject to the same trends in fashion as textile clothing. Indeed, the stylistic changes of textile fashions are closely mirrored in armor. For example, in the late fifteenth century, Burgundian noblemen wore long pointed shoes and tight-fitting clothes that emphasized elegance and weightlessness and accentuated the wearer's figure. The armor produced north of the Alps around 1480 looked exactly the same; even the elegant poulaine (the long, pointed toe of a shoe) was molded in steel. But in the early sixteenth century the influence of the Italian Renaissance grew stronger, and round, voluminous forms became fashionable. Once again, the new style was enthusiastically taken up in both textile clothing and armor.

Regardless of its form or shape, a piece of armor or article of clothing reflects the *Zeitgeist*, expressing the period's taste and ideals. A good example is the Hercules Armor, made about 1555/60 for Archduke (later Emperor) Maximilian II; its entire surface is covered with ornamentation and mythological scenes (figs. 1, 2, 6, 10). Maximilian's armor

symbolizes the universal claim to power of the Habsburg Empire under Emperor Charles V, a claim buttressed by references to antique precursors, alleged ancestors and the Catholic faith.

Maximilian's Hercules Armor is one of the great masterpieces of the refined and sophisticated style typical of the armorers active in Flanders and northern France in the 1550s and 1560s. One of the most important centers of this style was Antwerp, and one of its leading master's was Eliseus Libaerts (before 1530 – after 1569), to whom some art historians attribute the Hercules Armor now in Vienna. We know that Libaerts produced similar works for the courts of Sweden and Saxony in the 1560s, among them the armor made for Eric XIV of Sweden (1533-1577) in 1560/62 (Stockholm, Livrustkammaren, inv. no. 2505) and the so-called Hercules armor for man and horse (1563/65; Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, inv. no. 100).

In contrast, the Dutch armor made for Maurits, Prince of Orange in ca. 1590 (figs. 3-5) is characterized by a sober elegance and dispenses almost entirely with decoration. Only the engraved ornamental decor, the golden yellow studs and the originally blued (but now darkened) surface testify to the fact that this armor, too, reflects a specific aesthetic ideal – that of the approaching Golden Age of Dutch art, the time of Rembrandt, Hals and Vermeer.

The armor made for Prince Maurits came into the possession of the Habsburgs in the late sixteenth century. Archduke Ferdinand II, ruler of the Tyrol (1529-1595), acquired it for his so-called Armory of Heroes (Heldenrüstkammer) at Ambras Castle, which, at his death in 1595, comprised the arms and armor of some 180 famous European military commanders of the Renaissance (fig. 7). In 1806, during the turmoil of the Napoleonic Wars, the armor came to Vienna as part of the Ambras Collection and subsequently ended up in the [Kunsthistorisches Museum](#).

The great differences in style between the armors commissioned by Emperor Maximilian and Prince Maurits of Orange, respectively, are only partly explained by their different purposes – one a protection in war, the other a status symbol. Maximilian's magnificent armor was designed to denote his exalted rank at court or in similar settings – see, for example, the likeness of Archduke (later Emperor) Matthias as governor of the Spanish Netherlands (fig. 8) – but it could also function as a full-fledged, protective steel garment.

Prince Maurits's armor, on the other hand, features the latest technical developments in battle armor of the late sixteenth century. Not only is it equipped with short, knee-length cuisses (to protect the front of the thighs), it was also bullet-proof, as

shown by the small dent on the breastplate. Such a dent on the breastplate was not the result of a hit in battle but rather the armorer's seal of quality. It served to verify that the armor was proof against firearms, which were rapidly becoming increasingly powerful. Yet contemporary Dutch armor intended mainly to document the wearer's elevated social rank would not have looked much different. The armorer might have added some etched and gilt decor, without however undermining the essentially appearance nature of the harness. The main difference, as will be discussed below, consisted of elaborate embellishments and trappings, including costly and colorful textiles, feathers and even pieces of jewelry (fig. 9).

Steel and textiles could not differ more in character: one is hard and cold, the other soft, subtle and warm. And yet it is precisely these two contrasting materials that are combined in late-medieval and Renaissance fashion in complex and sometimes surprising ways. In fact, even now, in the twenty-first century, we still find echoes of the intimate connection of steel and fabrics popular in the early-modern era.

Today the jacket is ubiquitous in leisure and business clothing, but the origins of this garment go back very far indeed, to military clothing of the fourteenth century. The undergarment worn beneath the steel breastplate that came back into use in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had to fit snugly against the body. For this reason it was cut to fit the figure exactly, in stark contrast to contemporary civilian clothing, which was generally loose-fitting. Such unprepossessing, purely practical articles of clothing developed from the mid-fourteenth century onwards into an independent, refined civilian overgarment – the doublet (*Schecke* in German, *pourpoint* in French). The silk doublet of Charles of Blois, duke of Brittany, which is now in Lyon dates from precisely this time and documents this influential innovation in fashion born of the interaction of armor and textiles.

In later times, too, fashions in clothing imitated plate armor. The jerkin, for example, worn by both men and women until late in the sixteenth century, took the form of a stiff textile breastplate. The ideal of beauty as represented by the armored body is undeniable here. Jerkins were padded – sometimes very thickly indeed – with horsehair, wool, cotton and old rags, as seen, for instance, in Hendrick Goltzius's *Standard Bearer* of 1587.

To stabilize the shape of these jerkins, supports made of wood, whalebone and even metal were integrated into the garment. Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571) reports in his *Autobiography* that, during a knife attack in Rome, the blade of the murder weapon screeched to a halt in the victim's jerkin. The fact that the victim remained unharmed suggests that he was wearing a pretty solid jerkin. And we know that in 1549 Eleanor of Toledo (1522-1562) ordered two iron corsets from Master Lorenzo, one of the armorers working at the Medici court.

The influence was reciprocal, however, for it can also be shown that textiles had an impact on metalworking. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century armorers always tried to mitigate the hardness and rigidity of steel by imitating contemporary fashions. For example, they decorated the surface of plate armor with patterns that recalled costly silk fabrics, as seen on an armor (French, ca. 1555/60; Paris, Musée de l'Armée, inv. no. G 119) commissioned by Francis II of France (1544-1560).

They also imitated the structure of mail in order to create the illusion of mail worn underneath the armor, seemingly shining through at the neck or the knees. They likewise etched ornaments in the shape of chains and medallions onto the surface of the armor. For example, a breastplate, probably made by a Netherlandish armorer for the young Philip the Fair in 1488/90, displays the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Collection of Arms and Armor, inv. no. A 109a).

Etching was one of the most important techniques for decorating armor. Metal etching – i.e. an artistic process that involves using strong acid or mordant to incise a drawing onto a metal ground – is known mainly from printmaking and was made famous by artists such as Rembrandt. Yet this technique was invented by armorers. Swordsmiths were first recorded using the etching technique in the late thirteenth century, and armorers in southern Germany and the Low Countries were experimenting with it as early as the 1470s. It was not until shortly before 1500 that the etching technique originally developed for the decoration of arms and armor was first used in printmaking. The earliest extant etchings are by Daniel Hopper (1471-1536), a native of Augsburg who worked both as a printmaker and a decorator of armor. Karel van Mander records in his *Schilder-boeck* (Haarlem 1604) that Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533) was introduced to the technique of etching by an armorer: "He supposedly learned engraving from someone who etched armor, biting into it with acid, and also

had some instruction from a goldsmith.”

Every armor, in fact, represents a symbiosis between steel and textiles, for armor required both textiles and leather in order to function at all. Leather straps joined together its countless individual steel pieces, turning them into a flexible whole. The padded lining enhanced the wearer’s comfort and, during battle, cushioned enemy blows. Moreover, custom-made armor was always lavishly embellished and fitted with costly, colorful fabrics, only a few examples of which have been preserved.

With his above-mentioned blue armor Maurits of Orange, would have sported high leather boots, colorful breeches and a ruff – nothing of which has survived. In a later portrait by Michiel van Mierevelt (fig. 9) Maurits wears a golden armor with costly accessories such as a brightly colored sash, a rapier, a plumed helmet and a gold chain with a medallion.

The Franco-Flemish mannerist Hercules Armor produced around 1555/60 for Archduke (later Emperor) Maximilian II (figs. 1, 2, 6, 10) features a small capsule at the neck that once held a plume that was worn on festive occasions, possibly augmented with gold agrafes. In addition, the small holes visible on the crest of the helmet suggest the attachment of additional trappings and adornments, probably another plume or feathers. Records document that other armors were embellished with, for example, diadems, laurel wreaths or earrings. In the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, plate armor was a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total work of art, rich in color, form and texture.

The working methods of armorers and tailors were also more similar than one might at first assume. For example, armorers made use of the same aids as tailors in their endeavors to supply well-fitting (steel) attire. Armorers also relied on paper patterns when producing the individual pieces comprising an armor. They used jerkins and breeches to gauge the wearer’s proportions – we know, for example, that this was the case for the armor commissioned by Emperor Maximilian in 1512/14 for his grandson Charles V. But unlike tailors, armorers were often confronted with the problem that their clients were unavailable for a first fitting or even a first measuring. Armorers required a well-equipped workshop and running water for their turning-lathes, which made them far less mobile than tailors, or their peripatetic noble clients.

This created potentially expensive problems. It was often difficult for an armorer to determine from the breeches sent by his client “whether the feet were crooked or straight,” to quote from documents relating to an armor commissioned in 1557/58 for Duke August, Elector of Saxony. Only in exceptional circumstances did an armorer take to the road to measure the girth and inner leg of a king or emperor. It was for this reason that Eliseus Libaerts journeyed in 1562 from Antwerp to Stockholm, Jörg Seusenhofer in 1539 from Innsbruck to Paris, and Kolman Helmschmid in 1529 from Augsburg to Madrid. Philip II of Spain decided to take the opposite approach to ensure that the armor he was ordering would be a perfect fit. In Spain, he had wax casts made of his legs that were then sent as a model to his armorer in Augsburg.

But the apex of this complex relationship between steel and textiles in the early-modern period are armors produced around 1510/20 that reflect and imitate the formal vocabulary of contemporary male fashion. Such armor was not simply decorated with textile patterns; its steel parts might also comprise slashed or puffed hose, helmets shaped like hats, even poncho-like steel cloaks. In these cases, the rigid steel assumes the pliable shape of a soft textile. Such armor is made of steel but conceived like fabric.

It was probably a Flemish master who, in 1515, fashioned an armor for Henry VIII of England that included what was then a highly fashionable, knee-length pleated tonlet. The most famous example of such costume-like (but fully functional) Renaissance armor was produced in Augsburg in 1523: the Landsknecht armor of Wilhelm von Rogendorf (fig. 11). Its steel sleeves feature heavy, soft folds and numerous slashes. Rogendorf’s armor is a *tour de force* of metalworking, unequalled in technical virtuosity and artistic bravura.

Works of this kind might seem curious, even outlandish, to twenty-first-century viewers. After all, our modern ideas about armor have been strongly influenced by misconceptions dating back to the nineteenth century and reinforced by plays and Hollywood films in the twentieth century, and we still cling to the inaccurate image of pitiable knights, weighed down by crushingly heavy, squeaking armor.

The leading armorers of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance were highly paid and respected artists, some of whom were even elevated to the nobility. Armors produced by these masters usually cost much more than a painting or a piece of

sculpture. Worn in triumphal processions, parades, masquerades and tournaments, these extremely elegant and fashionable articles of clothing were laden with symbolism. They were, in fact, fashion made of steel.

### **The Collection of Arms and Armor of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna**

The Collection of Arms and Armor in Vienna is one of the most important and best-documented collections of its kind in the world. It comprises the rich holdings of arms assembled by the Habsburgs at Ambras Castle near Innsbruck and the former imperial armory in Vienna. Reflecting the long and rich history of the House of Habsburg, the collection contains pieces from nearly every part of Europe.

The Collection of Arms and Armor also houses one of the most important collections of late-medieval Burgundian weaponry, as well as a number of works by Netherlandish masters of armory and metalworking of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Among them the lavishly decorated Burgundian rapiers, swords, knives and daggers made for Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy (1396-1467), for the young Emperor Maximilian I (1459-1519) and for Philip the Fair (1478-1506), as well as a tournament harness by Master “h” (Netherlandish, ca. 1500), pieces of a plain armor (Netherlandish, ca. 1585) made for Alessandro Farnese, governor of the Spanish Netherlands (1545-1592), and a richly damascened (i.e. inlaid) Netherlandish armor of ca. 1570.

One of the fundamental problems of presenting a collection of historical armor is the frequently inferior quality of the figurines used to display it. Contemporary sources bear witness to the importance once attached to the elegance and sumptuous appearance of armor. At a tournament, ill-fitting armor sometimes resulted in the loss of points. But in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries most armors were displayed on anatomically incorrect figurines that did not do justice to these magnificent steel garments.

A main focus of the Collection of Arms and Armor of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna is the improvement of the installation of our collection. We have collaborated with sculptors to design new figurines that correctly reflect human anatomy and proportions. Each of these life-size, “made-to-measure” wooden sculptures is produced for a particular harness, allowing us to present these restored armors in natural and lively poses.

### **About the author**

Stefan Krause, Curator of the Collection of Arms and Armor of the [Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna](#), has published widely on the social, artistic and political aspects of late-medieval and Renaissance arms and armor. His latest publication is *Fashion in Steel: The Landsknecht Armour of Wilhelm von Rogendorf* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

*This text was translated from German by Diane Webb and revised by Agnes Stillfried.*

## CURATOR'S PROJECT

**An Innovative Presentation of Lace in a Renewed Gruuthusemuseum**

The Gruuthusemuseum is fortunate to have a beautiful collection of textiles. It also boasts several costumes, pieces of embroidery, more than thirty tapestries (mostly from Bruges) and some 250 fabrics and standards (flags), but the collection of lace, comprising around 1,200 pieces, is by far the most important sub-collection. It provides an overview of centuries of lace-making techniques and lace of various kinds. The origins of the lace collection go back to the earliest days of the museum, with the gift of the Liedts collection to the city of Bruges.

In 1887, it came to the attention of the Société Archéologique de Bruges (Society of Antiquaries of Bruges) that Baron Amedée Liedts was looking for a place to house the lace collection of his late wife, Augusta, who had met a tragic and untimely death. Her collection consisted of around 300 pieces of historical lace made between the sixteenth and the nineteenth century. The chairman of the Society, who knew the Baron personally, got in touch with him to discuss the terms of a possible gift. In his first letter, the chairman praised Bruges as a city that “is visited by so many foreigners throughout the year, and is known internationally for its lace industry in particular.” Moreover, he could offer the Baron a room in Gruuthuse Palace, which had been purchased by the city and was under restoration to accommodate the Society’s museum.

The Baron, with the artistic riches of Bruges at the back of his mind, expressed his delight at the proposal, and although a number of obstacles presented themselves, these were overcome and he eventually donated the lace collection to the city of Bruges. The records of the Society reveal that the Baron insisted on installing the lace himself in the Gruuthusemuseum. In October 1889, the lace rooms (one gallery and two adjoining salons) on the first floor of the Reie Wing opened their doors to the public. They featured a display of various techniques (embroidered lace, needlepoint, bobbin lace) and different types of lace (from Flanders, Brabant, Mechelen, Valenciennes, Binche, etc.). Straightaway a catalogue was published: *Collection d’anciennes Dentelles flamandes Madame Augusta, Baronne Liedts, donnée à la ville de Bruges* (Musée de Gruuthuse) (Bruges, 1889). The museum was therefore known in its early years as the ‘Musée des Dentelles’ (Lace Museum) or the ‘Musée des Dentelles et d’Antiquités’ (Museum of Lace and Antiquities).

Later on, the lace collection was supplemented with other important gifts and purchases. The most recent – the acquisition of the Verstraete-Lamoral collection – dates from 2010. This collection of some 340 pieces, including a great deal of twentieth-century lace, is a wonderful addition to the Liedts collection.

Lace was always on display in the Gruuthusemuseum until the beginning of the 1990s, when it was transferred to the nearby Arentshuis. In the past decade, pieces of lace from the museum’s collection have been shown at various temporary presentations in the Gruuthusemuseum. When the ongoing restoration is complete, the Gruuthusemuseum will again devote a complete room to its lace collection.

On the route through the museum, the lace room follows a room that evokes the domestic life and home furnishings of well-off people living in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The room featuring lace and textiles is both a sequel and an enrichment to that period room. Most of the lace that will be on display dates from the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, with a few pieces from the early nineteenth century. Some articles of clothing and accessories will also be part of the exhibit.

The lace and textile room primarily tells a story about fashion, that is, the wearing of lace. It does not elucidate the production of lace and its socio-economic repercussions. This aspect of lace-making is shown in other places in Bruges, such as the Volkskundemuseum (Folklore Museum) and the Kantcentrum (Lace Center). The Gruuthusemuseum refers visitors to these places.

Throughout the centuries, men and women have embellished their clothing with lace accessories and embroidery, and this story is richly illustrated in the lace room. The beautiful, refined finish of all these works is striking. Worldly fashions are the focus of the display, although it is certain that ecclesiastical and civil dignitaries also sported lace on their robes, and they, too, would have chosen it from pieces similar to the examples presented in this room. Central to the exhibit will be display cases in which a number of garments and pieces of lace are presented three-dimensionally. This presentation will

feature, in particular, gentlemen's waistcoats from the eighteenth century and a lady's jacket, as well as lace collars, cuffs, caps, lappets (the long streamers attached to the back of a cap), aprons, fans and a shawl.

These pieces will engage in a dialogue with portraits from the [Groeninge collection](#): likenesses of ladies and gentlemen of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Lace accessories occur in all of these paintings. Close scrutiny will reveal that there is sometimes an almost exact correspondence between the "portrayed" lace and the showcased pieces.

There is a good chance, however, that many of those visiting the Gruuthusemuseum will be searching for more. After all, Bruges is still a city linked to lace, and the courses given in the Kantcentrum are attended by enthusiasts from all over the world. For such visitors there will be a display case, more discreetly placed but richly stocked, in which various kinds of lace and lace-making techniques are presented.

Some of the objects lend themselves to further explanation, because they are connected either with present-day trends or with the history of Bruges, which forms the context of, or backdrop to, the works displayed in the Gruuthusemuseum. An eighteenth-century gentleman's waistcoat, splendidly decorated with embroidery and lace, will be part of the lace presentation. The alterations made to this waistcoat in the nineteenth century show that it is possible to extend the life of a beautifully made article of old clothing. It is also in keeping with the current call for more sustainability when it comes to attitudes to clothing and home furnishings.

Another piece that tells a story is the *Benediction Velum with the Instruments of the Passion*, a piece of cloth made with the techniques of bobbin lace and lacies (lace made by darning patterns on net). A remarkable and exceptional fact is that this piece is dated. Not only does it bear the year 1599, but it also displays initials and escutcheons, which have been identified. They appear to belong to an abbess and sister of the Spermalie Convent (Sisters of the Infant Jesus), which had been founded several years earlier within the town walls of Bruges. The sister in question was miraculously cured of the palsy; the documentation of the investigation into this case is still preserved in the Rijksarchief (National Archives). It is also interesting to see how a piece of textile can help to illustrate the "cloisterization" of the city of Bruges in the sixteenth century, a subject that is explored elsewhere in the museum. A piece that tells such a story is a thought-provoking digression in this fashion room.

What is the state of contemporary lace-making in a lace town like Bruges, where members of various societies and those attending training courses engage creatively with this technique every day? The city project 'Kantlijnen' (2007)

gave rise to a dialogue between traditional lace and contemporary lace, design and fashion. At the Gruuthusemuseum, the collection of historical lace was confronted with the work of young fashion and product designers. The exhibition 'Kantje boord' (2014) at the Volkskundemuseum (Folklore Museum) was the result of a collaborative effort with the local institutions offering instruction in lace-making. Both of these perspectives will be integrated into the presentation of the new Gruuthusemuseum, thus bestowing the lace and textile room with modern-day dynamism.

This dynamism will continue throughout the completely renewed Gruuthusemuseum. At the moment, the museum is still in the midst of thorough restoration and radical changes to the (re)installation of the collection, which will turn both the museum and the surrounding site into a place where cultural heritage and innovation come together.

The beginning of Gruuthuse Palace as a museum was marked by a lace presentation in 1889 and an exhibition of applied art in 1902. This edifice thus houses a long tradition,

the principles of which are fully incorporated in the new museum concept, which rests on the following three pillars.

The first pillar is the Gruuthuse Palace as a monument. The perception of this Burgundian palace – with its many rooms and winding staircases, and its rich finishing and polychromy – will also be reflected in the scenography, which will radiate a warm atmosphere. The second pillar is the valuable Gruuthuse collection: objects of applied art, connected with this palace for more than a century, are integrated into the presentation of paintings from the Groeninge collection, manuscripts from the Bruges heritage libraries and archival documents.

The lace and textile room is a fine example of this integrated approach. Finally, the presentation of the objects is as significant as it is innovative. Throughout the museum,

objects take on meaning in the context of the history of Bruges, which constitutes the third pillar. The timespan runs from the heyday of the late Middle Ages to the revival of Bruges around 1900. That chronology is set by the narrative related by the objects in the collection. Nevertheless, the modern-day city also receives attention, thanks to the dynamic effect of the whole. The story thus comes full circle, because the narrative line is inherent in the building itself, which has gone from being the Burgundian palace of the nobleman Louis de Gruuthuse to serving as a pawnshop (House of Mercy), only to assume the role of a museum after the substantial renovations carried out at the end of the nineteenth century.

A new element is now being added to the narrative. In the renewed Gruuthusemuseum, the collection will take on meaning in a historical context, but the museum also seeks to remain relevant to present-day visitors and the city of today. On its historic site – with the Gruuthusehof and the adjacent Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk (Church of Our Lady) – modern visitors' facilities will function as a new architectural beacon in the city and serve to unite the old and the new. We look forward to the new elan of the Gruuthusemuseum and its festive reopening at the end of 2018!

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## CURATOR'S INTERVIEW

**Madelief Hohé Interviewed by Katrien Lichtert**

As curator of the collection of Fashion and Costumes at the [Gemeentemuseum](#) in The Hague, Madelief Hohé is responsible for one of the largest and most prominent collections of Western fashions in Europe. She studied art history at Leiden, at that time the only Dutch university that offered a specialism in the applied arts. One of her instructors there was Professor Irene Groeneweg, still an eminent specialist in the field of costume history. This course of study was a very conscious choice on the part of Hohé, who had been inspired by her visit to an exhibition at the Musée Galliera in Paris when she was sixteen. In those days there was little interest in costume in the Netherlands, and it was seldom the subject of exhibitions. In Paris she saw that things could be different: "That was a real eye opener, and a good reason to study in Leiden." After receiving her degree from Leiden University, Hohé took up an internship at [The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) in New York, after which she began working at the Gemeentemuseum on a project-by-project basis. She was eventually given a permanent job as collection assistant and later appointed to the position of curator. At the Gemeentemuseum she has realized a number of large projects, including the recent exhibitions *Hubert de Givenchy - To Audrey with Love* (2016) and *The Chanel Legend* (2013-14).

**The Gemeentemuseum's costume collection is one of the largest in the Netherlands. How many objects does it contain? What are the challenges of curating such an extensive collection?**

We're not sure of the exact number, but our holdings comprise over 50,000 objects, including more than 15,000 fashion prints and drawings.

The size of the collection is a plus point as far as I'm concerned. It's a great privilege and a wonderful opportunity to work with such a large a varied collection. Of course there's always room for improvement, but actually you should look at it as a work in progress, with priority given to the core collections, which contain the most important pieces.

**The focus of the collection is on costumes and accessories from the second half of the eighteenth century, but you also have pieces from the period before 1750. What are the highlights of these sub-collections? Could you single out a piece or two and tell us why they're important?**

Our collection includes complete costumes from around 1750 and onwards for men, women and children, as well as single items of apparel, accessories, fashion prints and drawings from ca. 1600.

The earliest pieces in our collection date from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. They are relatively few in number compared with later periods, and there are no complete costumes, only individual items such as a single glove or a doublet. Complete figures can be presented only from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards.

A large part of our collection is accessible via [Modemuze](#), linked to [Europeana Fashion](#), where you can see a few of the earliest pieces from our collection.

**Do we know anything about the original owners, the people who first wore these oldest pieces of clothing? How much is known about the provenance of the items in this sub-collection?**

We generally know very little about where these early pieces came from. The earliest collectors attached little importance to the origin or provenance of these articles of clothing. Their intrinsic value was the prime consideration; where a piece of clothing came from, who made it, and who had worn it was of little importance. The scholarly approach that is now common, including our interest in the provenance of these objects, was unfortunately unknown in those days.

**What are the specific challenges in exhibiting costumes?**

All of our costumes and accessories are fragile. We are very selective with regard to the pieces we display, precisely because of their fragility. One difficulty is not always being able to judge how an article of clothing will react to being taken out of storage. You have to look at it like this:

whenever we remove pieces from the depot to show them to the public, we are turning a two-dimensional object into a three-

dimensional presentation. That inevitably puts a strain on the object. Then it's a question of weighing up the situation: how important is it to display this piece within the framework of that particular project? The same is true of works on loan. The institutions that ask us to lend them pieces from our collection must comply with the strictest norms of climate and lighting control. In principle, the requirements are the same as those stipulated for prints and drawings (50 lux).

**How do you and your staff treat the objects you present in the Gemeentemuseum? You must uphold equally high standards, I assume. Does this mean that the most important pieces usually remain in the depot?**

No, not necessarily. We look at this piece by piece. The difficulty is not knowing what effect our actions will have on the object in question. When a piece has been restored, for example, the material around the restored area can suffer damage when the item is taken out of the storage box and presented to the public. In general, you can say that eighteenth-century pieces are fairly strong and in relatively good condition, in contrast to pieces from around 1900, the fabric of which is often of much lesser quality. Naturally this influences the manner of presentation. In some cases you can opt for "flat presentation," for instance, whereby we present the clothing as though in a coffin, so that it suffers less stress.

**How important is the presentation and the question of *mannequinage* (i.e. presenting the clothing on a dummy, or mannequin). I imagine that you don't always know exactly how certain items of apparel were worn. What do you do if there is no visual or written documentation to go by?**

The main thing is to listen to the piece of clothing. This might sound crazy, but it stands to reason: once you start examining a piece, you often realize automatically how it works. It falls into place by itself.

A certain amount of caution is called for, moreover, as regards the relevance of visual sources to the original functioning of the costumes. Nineteenth-century fashion prints, for example, are not at all true to life; such prints were like the "photoshop" of today. If you use these prints as the basis of your presentation, you end up with a distorted picture: the waist is often inordinately accentuated, the skirt made to look extra wide, so it's important to take that into consideration. It's best to proceed from the article of clothing itself, to listen to it and feel what works best. Everything depends on good mannequins that are adjustable in height, so that they can be adapted to the period in which the garment was made. The mannequin serves the clothing, not the other way around. Just as the mannequin is adjusted to fit the costume, the costume was originally adjusted to fit the proportions of its first owner. This quest enables you to come closest to the original wearer – altogether a fascinating process.

An appropriate example is a dress that needed restoration. Our restorer was having trouble finding the correct fit, until she had the idea to attach a small cushion to the mannequin's stomach, and the whole dress appeared to fall into place. The wearer was pregnant, it seems, and the tailor had designed the dress with a view to concealing her pregnancy: her round belly was visible only from the side; looking at her from the front, you couldn't tell she was pregnant. This made-to-measure quality actually holds true for all costumes. You have to listen to the garments and let them tell you their story. Over the years we've learned a great deal about *mannequinage*. We also have an army of mannequins, which aren't always easy to stow away but are certainly good to have in store.

**One last question, if I may, about the meaning and the 'reading' of costumes in visual sources. I'm under the impression art historians not specialized in costumes – which includes myself and most of the members of CODART – frequently miss things. We see depictions of clothing but often fail to notice their significance, because we can't 'read' them. For example, visual artists of the late Middle Ages and the early-modern era sometimes portrayed figures in old-fashioned or archaizing clothing, as seen in Marinus van Reymerswaele's *Tax Collectors* or the well-known print after Bosch's *The Blue Barge*. In these works the reference is rather blatant, but there are certainly more subtle allusions in other artworks that are not obvious to us. What do you, as a specialist, think about this?**

I couldn't agree more. Sometimes I despair at the thought of how little we actually know. Just think of all the small codes we now take for granted and understand immediately: what your hair looks like, which shoes you're wearing, etc.

Things were certainly no different in the early-modern period. It's a great pity that often we no longer know how to 'read' such nuances. With regard to early-modern times, travel accounts are a welcome source in this context. Travelers often

jotted down things they observed, things that were different from what they were used to at home. Different modes of dress are among the first things travelers notice, so these accounts can teach us a lot. Costume books are another good source, but here, too, there are many subtle layers of meaning that modern-day viewers can no longer detect. I think that an interdisciplinary approach to the sources could be of help. Perhaps this interview should serve as an appeal for more collaboration between costume historians, iconographers, social historians and other specialists.

Madelief Hohé is Curator at the [Gemeentemuseum](#) in The Hague.

Katrien Lichtert is Curator at the [Museum van Oudenaarde en de Vlaamse Ardennen](#) in Oudenaarde, Belgium. She has been an Associate Member of CODART since 2016.

## CURATOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT

**Adam Eaker, Assistant Curator of European Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art**

The curatorial offices for the department of European paintings at [the Met](#) lie behind a discreet pair of gray doors in Gallery 628, overlooked by most visitors to the museum. Flanking the doors is something far more interesting: a pair of splendid full-length portraits of English noblemen by Anthony van Dyck. Passing through these doors every day on my way to work, I never grow tired of these magnificent portraits of elegant aristocrats from the seventeenth century. They seem to me like the perfect guardian spirits to watch over my days at the Met, where I joined the staff as Assistant Curator of Northern Baroque Painting one year ago.

It's often said that you can't claim to be a New Yorker until you've lived in the city a full decade; likewise, I've been told you're considered a newcomer at the Met for at least ten years. It therefore seems a bit premature to reflect on my time at the museum, and all the more so given the legacy of my predecessor, [Walter Liedtke](#). Walter's tragic death curtailed a career of nearly four decades at the Met, during which time he made an immeasurable contribution to the study of Dutch and Flemish art. I knew Walter only slightly, but I will never forget the fall afternoon when he took me to tea with the collector June Weldon in her apartment on Park Avenue, where her wonderful pictures included several oil sketches by Van Dyck. It is hard to accept that, just three years later, both Walter and Mrs. Weldon are gone, and all the paintings we admired that afternoon have been sold. That day, as we continued our discussion on the subway, I could never have believed that I would soon inherit Walter's work at the Met. It's a bittersweet pleasure now to get to know him better through his writing, consulting on a near daily basis his magnificently thorough catalogue entries and witty correspondence in the curatorial files.

My route to Dutch and Flemish art was a circuitous one, although as long as I can remember I have had a taste for "Northern" things—whether Old Norse myths or cold weather. As a child, I often visited Washington's National Gallery on field trips or with my parents. I was particularly fascinated by Rubens's painting of the Genoese marchioness Brigida Spinola-Doria and kept a small reproduction of her portrait in my room. In college, my academic focus was on Germany, where I had lived briefly in high school. My coursework ranged from eighteenth-century literature to medieval sculpture, but I wrote my senior thesis on Hans Holbein the Younger's *Georg Gisze*, again drawn to a compelling portrait from the past. After graduation, I worked as an assistant on an exhibition of nineteenth-century drawings for the Yale Center for British Art, and then lived for a year in Hamburg, interning for a dealer in Old Master drawings. It was not till my first year of graduate school at Columbia that a seminar on Rubens, taught by my future adviser David Freedberg, shifted my focus decisively

to the Low Countries. I studied Dutch in Amsterdam and Ghent before a fellowship from the Belgian American Educational Foundation allowed me to spend a year as a visiting scholar at the [Rubenianum in Antwerp](#). Looking out on the rain that seemed to fall every day on the garden of the [Rubenshuis](#), I worked on a dissertation about Van Dyck and savored my immersion in the academic, artistic, and culinary riches of Belgium.

I returned to New York when the stars aligned to offer me the chance to co-curate an [exhibition on Van Dyck's portraits](#) at the [Frick Collection](#). The nearly three years I spent there transformed my professional life. Although I had always intended to pursue an academic career, I discovered that I loved the collaborative, public-facing aspects of museum work and the concrete satisfaction of assembling an international loan exhibition. My co-curator on the Frick show, Stijn Alsteens, was at that time curator of Northern

European drawings at the Met. He has been an invaluable mentor, friend, and traveling companion, who also provided a key introduction to the museum where I would later come to work.

I'm often asked by friends outside the museum world what a typical day in the life of a curator looks like. Unfortunately, there's no single answer to their question. While occasionally I have a whole day of uninterrupted research or writing, more often I'm in meetings, discussing, for example, the conservation of a picture or strategies for fundraising. I serve as the departmental liaison to our volunteer docents, so I may also conduct a training for them, or meet with one of the many international colleagues who pass through New York. I've also been fortunate to do a great deal of travel since beginning

work at the Met, with courier trips taking me to Madrid, Copenhagen, and Naples.

One of my major projects at the moment concerns the impending closure of the European paintings galleries for the replacement of our skylights. The first galleries to be affected will be those containing Dutch and Flemish art, and I am currently hard at work finding alternate spaces in the museum to display the paintings under my care.

Even in a collection as rich and varied as the Met's, Dutch and Flemish painting stands out as a gem. The museum has avidly collected in this area since its founding in 1870. New York collectors of the Gilded Age had a particular identification with Dutch art of the seventeenth century. In many cases, these collectors were themselves descendants of New York's early Dutch settlers, and they took pride in their heritage, with its associations of entrepreneurship, exploration, and thrift. Few of the paintings contained in the museum's "founding purchase" rank among our treasures today, but the gifts of such collectors as Benjamin Altman or Henry Marquand (who acquired the Van Dyck duke who greets me every day) soon created a collection of Dutch and Flemish art that can hold its own with any in the world. These paintings remain among the most beloved works at the museum, with the Met's five paintings by Vermeer particularly treasured by our visitors.

As rich as our collection is, I've had great pleasure in temporarily expanding it with several long-term loans from private collections, among them Rubens's sumptuous *Lot and His Daughters*, which sold last summer for a record price at Christie's. Prior to its installation in our galleries, Rubens's picture had never been shown in a museum before. I get a thrill every time I see a cluster of visitors marveling over this new arrival, wrapped up in a discussion about the artist's technique or, perhaps, his unsettling subject matter.

In future exhibitions, I hope to expand the definition of "Northern Baroque" painting to include my interest in English and Scandinavian painting, and to explore the global reach of Dutch culture in the seventeenth century. I also look forward to collaborating with colleagues around the world on exhibition projects and collections research. Although I haven't yet had the chance to participate in a CODART congress, I intend to do so in the near future. As a relative newcomer to the field, I'm grateful for the rich network of colleagues that this organization provides.

[Adam Eaker](#) is Assistant Curator of European Paintings at the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#). He has been a Member of CODART since 2014.

## FRIENDS

### Jacques Schraven Interviewed by Gerdien Verschoor

Jacques Schraven joined CODART as a Patron in 2016. Trained as a lawyer, during his long career Schraven did legal, financial and commercial work for a number of businesses, but mainly for Shell, becoming President Director of Shell Nederland. He worked for Shell in Curaçao, Venezuela, Argentina and the United Kingdom, among other places. From 1999 to 2005, Schraven was chairman of the Dutch employers' organization VNO-NCW. He is currently chairman of the Supervisory Board of Tata Steel Nederland B.V. In addition to holding several other positions in the business sector, Schraven fulfills supervisory roles at SEO (the Stichting Sociaal Economisch Onderzoek, or Socio-Economic Research Foundation), The Hague Institute for the Internationalization of Law (HiiL) and De Baak, Management Centrum VNO-NCW. He was also a member of the Supervisory Board of the Mauritshuis at the time of the museum's privatization and later chairman of the Friends of the Mauritshuis. Jacques Schraven is married to Gien Swart, who was present at this interview. They have a daughter and two sons.

Jacques Schraven was almost the first to sign up for the CODART TWINTIG Congress in Warsaw, which he attended as a Patron – reason enough for an interview.

### **You are a lawyer by profession and spent years in the world of business. What turned you into a collector?**

JS: I certainly wouldn't call myself a collector. In my view, collectors are professionals who target acquisitions

according to a preconceived plan, and seek the advice of experts. A collector also sells works in order to buy other works, thus "perfecting" his collection. My collecting style, on the other hand, is purely intuitive.

### **Let me put it another way: when did you start to buy art, and why?**

In 1995, Frits Duparc asked me to join the Supervisory Board of the Mauritshuis. The museum was being privatized and thus had to raise its own revenues. The Board was composed of a number of experts on art, such as Egbert Haverkamp Begemann and later Christopher Brown, people from the public sector, and a number of people from the business world, such as myself. At that time I already had an Old Master hanging on my wall, namely a small landscape by Adriaen Baudewijns. That was an impulsive purchase; I was still just a young man of thirty-four! That landscape is still hanging here, in my house, just as I bought it, in the old frame and uncleaned. During my time with Shell in London, I spent my lunch hour visiting auction houses to see what was on offer. It was then that I bought my first Bakhuizen.

### **An Old Master ...**

Yes, but before joining the Supervisory Board of the Mauritshuis, I was interested in modern art. In fact, modern art still appeals to me. I love Picasso's ever-changing work, and I also find the work of Klimt and Schiele moving.

GS: And we also have a pastel by Isaac Israëls, *Two Bar Maids in a Parisian Café*. That work made such an impression on me, I simply had to have it. We both like magic realism, and also Sluijters and Gestel. And sometimes we buy contemporary art as well. We've bought works by Aat Verhoog, Hermanus Berserik, Ab Overdam and Lux Buurman, for example. Actually, her work is directly related to the Old Masters.

JS: But because of Frits, Christopher and Egbert, I lost my heart to the Old Masters. I became much more involved with them from an art-historical viewpoint, for one reason because we members of the Board were also responsible for approving purchases. In that period the museum made some spectacular acquisitions, including a magnificent landscape by Hobbema, a flower still life by De Heem, and *The Old Man* by Rembrandt. I learned a lot from discussing such things as whether the quality of a prospective purchase was

high enough to justify spending all our available funds on it, instead of buying another work that would fill a gap in the collection.

### **If you had become a member of the Supervisory Board of a museum of modern art, would you have**

### **begun to collect modern art?**

JS: Yes, perhaps, but Frits Duparc happened to be the one who infected me with the collecting virus. When I was with Shell, we set up a prize for young artists, and made it possible for the winners to exhibit their work throughout the country. But with contemporary art it's much more difficult to decide what will stand the test of time. It was easier for Shell to contribute to other projects, such as our sponsorship of the publication *The Paintings of the Willem van de Velde: A Catalogue of the Paintings of the Elder and Younger Willem van de Velde* by Michael S. Robinson. A mouth-watering project.

### **You two have travelled a lot and have lived abroad for long periods. Has that influenced your view of art?**

JS: Yes, of course. We spent thirteen years in London, for example, and we visited many of the city's museums. We also lived in Argentina, which was once a rich country. It still has a number of interesting museums, although music is a much more important part of the culture there.

### **Could you tell us more about your collection?**

JS: Gladly. As you can see, we mostly have Old Masters on the wall, and here and there a modern or even contemporary accent. I happen to be keen on ocean sailing, which explains my preference for the work of Bakhuizen, for example, by whom I own two paintings. But I also love landscapes, such as this small painting, which depicts the bleaching fields and the church of Haarlem. It was long attributed to Rembrandt because in 1651 he made an etching called *The Goldweaver's Field* with the same view. The experts now maintain that it's by Philips Koninck, who worked in Rembrandt's studio. We also have a lovely landscape by Salomon van Ruysdael and a number of watercolors by Balthasar van der Ast. I must admit, it's always tempting to visit the PAN and TEFAF.

GS: The Van der Ast was my choice. But at a certain point I said: no more!

### **And in spite of that “no more” – are you still dreaming of certain acquisitions?**

JS: Oh yes, I still regret not buying a Coorte when the opportunity presented itself. And I'd very much like to add a flower still life or a basket of fruit by De Heem to our collection, but we've agreed to take it slowly!

### **In all the years that you've been going to museums, have you noticed any particular developments, also internationally?**

JS: Something that is really noticeable is that museums are getting better and better at telling their “stories,” and this holds true for everything, from the hanging and the lighting to the wall texts and visitor support. The catalogues have become works of scholarship, and the curators have become better at communicating with the public and helping them to understand what are sometimes complex subjects.

Visiting exhibitions has therefore become a much more enriching experience. The downside is that other people have also noticed this, so museums can be very crowded nowadays. Still, it's fantastic, of course, that there are so many more visitors. Attendance numbers have doubled at the Mauritshuis since I've been on the Supervisory Board.

It's also good that museums are making greater efforts to make contact with the public, also outside opening times, such as by holding private views for businesses. Of course those visits are reserved for the happy few, but they are certainly appreciated and the museum benefits as well.

It all used to be more passive, but the museum world has become so much more dynamic and professional. And you see more and more young, enthusiastic curators.

### **Sponsorship, private views, – what is your vision of the cooperation between businesses and museums?**

JS: As a businessman, I'm a great advocate of businesses taking responsibility as corporate citizens. Culture is an integral part of that. For instance, Shell collaborates intensively with the Mauritshuis, the Gemeentemuseum, the Vredespaleis, to name only a few examples in The Hague. The Van Gogh Museum has received material help with paint analysis; that research was also of interest to Shell's chemical department. We've collaborated in a similar way with the Mauritshuis. In addition to such cultural-scientific projects, though, I think it important that businesses provide an example of good citizenship by supporting projects in the field of education, research and sports. Businesses can support projects that would otherwise be impossible to realize. It's a pity that there is not yet broad support for sponsorship from businesses, and that, in contrast to sponsorship from private individuals, the authorities do not actively promote it.

Naturally, the risk of sponsorship from businesses is that the sponsorship budget decreases in times of economic decline. You can't be seen to be spending money on other things if you're forced to reduce staff. As a museum, therefore, you shouldn't be dependent on the business world, because it would make you much too vulnerable. I'm glad that museums themselves have become so much more enterprising, but it must be said that the sharp decrease in government support of such institutions is bad policy. Sponsorship must take place in a wise and well-considered way, but it can never take the place of government funding.

### **Last year you became a Patron of CODART. Why?**

GS: Because it's a unique way to come into contact with curators. I hope that we "amateurs" will be able to learn a lot from them and support their work.

JS: Curators form the bridge between us and art as we perceive it, but our knowledge is naturally much more limited. Not only can they teach us a lot about art history in general, but what a curator has to say about a certain object of art can make it much more interesting.

I think it is very good that CODART aims to support the quality and professionalism of the curatorial profession by bringing fellow curators together. The more frequently curators come into contact with each other and see other places, the more they learn about best practices. In the business world, too, I've seen that such contacts can have an enormous impact on your professional practice and your career. CODART's activities also contribute to good contact and better understanding between curators and museum directors, which is crucial to the development of interesting exhibitions.

*Jacques Schraven has been a Patron of CODART since 2016.*

## CODART ACTIVITIES

**King Stanisław August Poniatowski's Collection of Paintings, or the European Enlightenment in the Palace on the Isle at the Royal Źazienki Museum**

The Royal Źazienki in Warsaw—the summer residence of Stanisław August Poniatowski—was one of the partners of the CODART TWINTIG Congress held on 21–23 May. The participants had the opportunity to become acquainted with the Museum, which is situated in seventy-six hectares of gardens, during the dinner held in the Old Orangery and, above all, during an excursion to the Palace on the Isle that was devoted to a discussion on the attribution of two paintings from the Stanisław August collection: *Portrait of Jaqueline van Caestre* and *Portrait of Jean Charles de Cordes*. The painting collection of Poland's last king was also the subject of two talks during the Speakers' Corner. Cooperating with CODART and participating actively in the Congress have contributed significantly to the Museum's long-term research project on the painting collection of King Stanisław August. This collection, which the king continued to assemble throughout his reign (1764–1795) was one of the largest and most significant collections of paintings of the eighteenth-century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The inventories drawn up successively in the years 1783, 1784, 1793, 1793–95 and 1795 provide us with the fullest picture of the king's collection.

In the year of his abdication (1795), the collection comprised 2,478 works by the most important European artists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; they were displayed in the royal residences, mainly in the Palace on the Isle in the Royal Źazienki and the Royal Castle in Warsaw. The majority of these works were by Dutch and Flemish artists, the most valuable of which include two paintings by Rembrandt van Rijn, *Girl in a Picture Frame* and *Scholar at His Writing Table*. Artists such as Albert Cuyp, Willem van Honthorst, Ferdinand Bol, Govaert Flinck, Jan Steen, Gabriel Metsu, Adriaen van Ostade, Jan Brueghel, Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck and Jacob Jordaens were represented in the collection, as were French, German, English and Italian artists. In creating his collection, Stanisław August sought advice from his most trusted advisor, Marcello Bacciarelli, who was responsible for amassing a collection based on the example of the courts of Rome, Dresden and Vienna.

The history of the collection is just as turbulent as that of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, to which it is inextricably linked. The collection now on display in the Palace on the Isle contains 137 paintings, though originally there were more than 300. Today we know of approximately 400 paintings from the king's collection, which are either scattered among museums in Poland and abroad or in the

hands of private collectors. The fate of nearly 2,000 of the paintings, sold or dispersed after 1795, is unknown.

Today the Royal Źazienki is a modern museum based on Stanisław August's Enlightenment ideals, and its main purpose is to spread knowledge about the king's collection. The Museum accomplishes this goal not only by making the interior of the residence and the collections accessible to the public, but also by conducting research, conservation and educational programs and by organizing exhibitions. Cooperating with foreign partners, including CODART, is important to the development of these programs.

Since 2011, the Museum has been carrying out research into Stanisław August's collection of paintings. This was motivated by the exhibition *Rembrandt and Others. The Royal Collection of Stanisław August Poniatowski* held at the Palace on the Isle and organized in cooperation with the Royal Castle and National Museum in Warsaw. For the first time since the Second World War, paintings from the king's collection – a selection based on the inventory titled *Catalogue des Tableaux appartenant à Sa Maj. Le roi de Pologne 1795* – were exhibited in accordance with eighteenth-century guidelines for hanging art. The work carried out in conjunction with the comprehensive catalogue produced to accompany the exhibition revealed the collection's lack of systematization and just how much information has been lost. The only monographic publication dealing with the collection as a whole is a catalogue compiled by Tadeusz Małkowski, published in Lwów (now Lviv, Ukraine) in 1932 and titled *Galeria Stanisława Augusta* (The Stanisław August Gallery). The research begun in 2013 ultimately led to the publication in 2015 of a new scholarly catalogue of the Źazienki collection by [Dorota Juszczyk](#) and

Hanna Ma?achowicz, curators of paintings at the Royal Castle in Warsaw. The publication, which appeared in both Polish and English, discusses the 137 paintings now on display in the Palace on the Isle. Its authors placed special emphasis on archival research and thorough study of the provenance of each painting. The results of the most recent research are also available on the [museum's website](#). Each catalogue entry is accompanied by a high resolution image of the painting, and catalogue numbers appearing on the recto of paintings are also visible (in the bottom right- or left-hand corner). Soon the Museum will also include on the website photographs of the backs of the paintings, with all other additional numbers and ownership marks, as well as scans of the eighteenth-century royal inventories.

Since 2016 a further stage of this research is being carried out in cooperation with the Royal Castle in Warsaw (Dorota Juszcak). The aim is to find as many paintings as possible from the Stanis?aw August gallery – works that are now in museums in Poland and abroad or in private collections.

This catalogue, work on which is planned to continue until 2020, will provide detailed information about the paintings, the state of research, verification and confirmation of their attributions, and a compilation of all known sources. Cooperation on this project with curators associated with CODART is of key importance, since paintings bearing red inventory numbers on the front may well be scattered among many European galleries.

It should also be borne in mind that publication of the catalogue did not close avenues of research, at least regarding the attribution of the paintings in the collection. The *Portrait of Jaqueline van Caestre* and *Portrait of Jean Charles de Cordes* have been included in 'The Jordaens Van Dyck Panel Paintings Project (JVDPPP)'. In May of this year, Dr. Johannes Edvardsson performed additional dendrochronological tests on the paintings, which are now attributed to the workshops of P.P. Rubens and A. van Dyck. For many years the ?azienki paintings were thought to be eighteenth-century copies of a pair of portraits in the Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique in Brussels. In 2014, however, Tomasz Wa?ny, who conducted dendrochronological analysis for the catalogue then being compiled, dated them to around 1622. Although we must still wait for Dr. Edvardsson's final report, we now know that the two ?azienki paintings were executed on supports that are very similar to those of the Brussels portraits. Their dating to approximately 1618–1620/22 has also been confirmed.

The preliminary results of the dendrochronological tests were presented during the Attribution Session at the CODART TWINTIG Congress (21–23 May 2017). Members of CODART were given the opportunity to view the paintings close up (they were removed from the walls for this very purpose) and to become acquainted with the materials compiled in the course of conservation work carried out on the paintings in 2010. Dr. Joost Vander Auwera, senior curator at the Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique in Brussels – which has two similar portraits – undertook a comparative analysis of the Brussels and Warsaw portraits. Owing to the artist's skill, his fluid and seemingly careless brushwork, and his use of certain techniques, Dr. Vander Auwera would be inclined to attribute the paintings to Anthony van Dyck. One of the most important ways of spreading knowledge about King Stanis?aw August's collection is by holding temporary exhibitions, such as those organized by the Museum and accompanied by educational programs. In 2016, thanks to cooperation with CODART, a series of "one painting" exhibitions was inaugurated at the Palace on the Isle; these shows illustrate the common impetus for collecting in Europe in the Age of Enlightenment and the important role played by the fine arts at ducal and royal courts.

The first exhibition in the series was *Dutch and Flemish Paintings at the Royal ?azienki*, where works were shown from one of the most important Dutch museums – the Mauritshuis in The Hague. Two paintings were on display in the Palace on the Isle: Abraham Mignon's *Flowers in a Glass Vase* and Gonzales Coques's *Interior with Figures in a Picture Gallery*. These works from the collection of William V, prince of Orange-Nassau and stadholder of the Dutch Republic, were exhibited in the Picture Gallery along with paintings from the Stanis?aw August collection and thereby subsumed into its aesthetic and ideological context. The exhibition was an invitation for viewers to discuss the works by Dutch masters in the Stanis?aw August collection and the history of their acquisition. Both collections were built up at the same time and were largely created from scratch. The Stanis?aw August collection of paintings is of vital importance to the cultural heritage of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the eighteenth century. Although it was one of the largest collections in Poland and belonged to the last Polish king, we still have a lot to learn about it, and are therefore unable to fully appreciate "what exactly the Stanis?aw August gallery was," although we should be aware that it is of the "utmost importance to the history of the artistic culture of the second half of the eighteenth century in Poland." Thanks to CODART TWINTIG, curators from around the world have learned something about Stanis?aw August's collection. Let us hope that this knowledge will lead to

new information about paintings, formerly among the king's holdings, that are now housed in European collections. Another welcome outcome would be cooperation in organizing exhibitions dedicated to Stanisław August's collection and those formed at other European courts.

Izabela Zychowicz is Deputy Director of the [Royal Łazienki Museum](#).