

The Rijksmuseum Bulletin, volume 72 (2024)/1

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New Rijksmuseum Bulletin

The Rijksmuseum Bulletin is a quarterly, peer-reviewed journal presenting scholarly articles that contribute to historical and art-historical research into the Rijksmuseum collections. In addition, there are short notices and acquisition descriptions that highlight interesting features of objects on display or in depot. The Bulletin is read by an international audience of curators, scholars, students, art professional and enthusiasts. For viewing the open access publication, see <https://bulletin.rijksmuseum.nl/>.

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The Horse Aquamanile in the Rijksmuseum: A 'New' Andalusian or Fatimid Bronze

Joanna Olchawa

One of the very remarkable vessels used for the medieval ritual of handwashing is the horse aquamanile in the Rijksmuseum's collection of European vessels, traditionally regarded as a thirteenth-century bronze from 'Lotharingia'. Because of its small size and unusual stylized form, with the emphasized handle and spout on its back, there is effectively no comparable object in the museum's collection, nor for that matter in the larger corpus of Western European bronzes. More plausible is an entirely new perspective on the aquamanile, namely as an 'Islamic' object cast between the tenth and twelfth centuries in al-Andalus or in a region under Fatimid rule. This article demonstrates the significance of the unique aquamanile in Amsterdam in two key aspects: it can be added to the narrow corpus of twenty-one extant bronze vessels used for the Islamic ritual of lavation yet is the only horse-shaped aquamanile known in that context; as such, it allows the concrete study of the transcultural transmission of ideas and, by way of this mediating function, sheds light on the genesis of horse aquamanilia in Western and Central Europe.

Short notice

The Provenance of the Visitation Panel by Francisco Niculoso: From the Royal Realm to a Public Representation

Vera Mariz

A small tile panel created by the Italian ceramic painter Francisco Niculoso (active 1498-1529) from the private collection of Ferdinand Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (1816-1885), king consort to Queen Maria II of Portugal (1819-1853), was in 1902 acquired by the Rijksmuseum. Although the ownership history of this Visitation panel is not fully documented, this essay provides a more compre-

hensive understanding of its historical narrative, by exploring the various contexts of acquisition and collecting. The panel's journey from Lisbon to Amsterdam vividly illustrates the remarkable fluidity and permeability that defined the boundaries of art markets and museums around the turn of the twentieth century.

Black Women in the Rijksmuseum's Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Collection

Stephanie Archangel and Maria Holtrop

The few studies of the depiction of Black people in Western art have focused primarily on the rendering of Black men. This article discusses the depictions of Black women in the Rijksmuseum's collection, specifically in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, from the moment that Europeans and Africans met until about 1660, when representations became increasingly stereotyped. Black women in this period are depicted in a number of genres. The illustrations in travel journals and separate drawn records are concerned primarily with the differences in status between local inhabitants: the more clothes they wore, the higher their status. Yet the texts accompanying these depictions link nakedness to barbarity and lewdness. That nudity was retained as the way to represent allegorical Africa, in the form of a nearly naked Black female surrounded by wild animals, as was also prescribed in the iconographic manual by Cesare Ripa. When she was positioned in the company of the other continents, she was assigned a subordinate role as being less civilized and ripe for the taking. The Black woman also has a minor part as the allegory of Night or Darkness. In Biblical scenes the Black female is an individual character in some cases while in others she is a bystander, like white onlookers. There are no examples known of Black women who commissioned portraits themselves. There are, however, tronie that were intended to represent African facial features and a black skin, sometimes including an 'exotic' costume. Two etchings of Black females in everyday clothing might depict members of the Black communities that had settled in Antwerp, like they did in Amsterdam. Such illustrations made from life are too few in number, however, to express with subtlety the image of the Black woman countering the predominant image of her as an 'exotic', sexual apparition. It is possible that this analysis can be adapted on the basis of research into depictions in other – non-Northern-European – collections.

Short notice

A Trip to Jerusalem: Viewer Participation in Gerbrand van den Eeckhout's Last Supper of 1664

Bram de Klerck

Medieval and Renaissance depictions of the episodes of Christ's Passion often seem to invite the devout beholder to participate in the events portrayed. To explain how such an approach can be extended to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Netherlands, this essay shows how Gerbrand van den Eeckhout's Last Supper invites the beholder to take the seat that Judas has left vacant. A comparison with other Last Supper scenes shows how effectively Van den Eeckhout's composition invites viewers into the imaginary space and time represented in the painting.

Recent Acquisitions: Fine and Applied Arts

Jonathan Bikker, Mattie Boom, Maartje Brattinga, Alexander Dencher, Mels Evers, Josephina de Fouw, Tess Graafland, Ludo van Halem, Mayken Jonkman, Friso Lammertse, Suzanne van Leeuwen, Frits Scholten and Matthias Ubl

Reference:

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2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/41479>>.