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The Rijksmuseum Bulletin, volume 72 (2024)/2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Portraying Women in Revolt: How Pieter Isaacsz Represented the Myth of Papirius and the Uprising of the Women of Rome
Fabio Pauletta and Maartje van Gelder

The present article analyses the painting The Uprising of the Women of Rome on the Capitol by the Dutch-Danish painter Pieter Isaacsz (1569-1625). This work depicts the mythical story of the Roman boy Papirius, who, after attending a meeting of the Roman Senate, lied to his inquisitive mother to safeguard political secrets, falsely telling her that the senators were deliberating the introduction of systematic bigamy. Enraged, his mother then marched to the Capitol, leading a crowd of elite married women in protest. In the (limited) visual tradition of this classical story, it is always the boy – and therefore, the sound and sensible political actions of men – who takes centre stage, set against the foolish and rebellious behaviour of the women. Isaacsz painted this obscure story twice, approximately ten years apart. The paintings differ in composition and style, but especially in the second painting, the women – not Papirius – have assumed the leading role. In Uprising of the Women, we see the women entering the Capitol in protest: they are in the foreground, with all men relegated to the margins. Based on an analysis of the literary tradition and representation of the Papirius myth, the painter's sources of inspiration and a comparison of the two paintings, we investigate why Isaacsz chose to place the protesting women in the foreground of his later, Amsterdam painting, thus turning the spotlight on female agency.

A Toast to 'Neerlands Wonder': Elisabeth Wolff-Bekker's Portrait Stipple-Engraved on Glass
Maartje Brattinga

Most eighteenth-century glass goblets with stippled-engraved decorations were used during the Patriot struggle to toast their political leaders. In 2020, the Rijksmuseum acquired an exceptional glass with the stipple-engraved portrait of the renowned Dutch author Elisabeth Wolff-Bekker. Research into the glass's provenance revealed it was formerly in the possession of Christiaan Nis-

sen and his wife, Magdalena Greeger, a couple with whom Wolff-Bekker shared a close bond. This friendship endured up until Nissen caused the author's financial downfall in 1791. An inscription on the glass names the engraver who decorated it, David Wolff, and the person who commissioned it, likely Pieter Heijnsius, a wealthy master carpenter and stalwart Patriot from The Hague. Pieter's daughter, Maria Heijnsius, was married to Isaac van Cleef, Wolff-Bekker's publisher. As the publicist of Wolff-Bekker's work, Van Cleef also commissioned the portrait print of Wolff-Bekker that served as the model for the portrait on the glass. Heijnsius and his son-in-law were good friends and both were members of the same Patriot society. Van Cleef was a central figure in Wolff-Bekker's circle of enlightened admirers. The inscription on the glass also provides insight into Wolff-Bekker's reputation. It is true that Wolff-Bekker was a supporter of the Patriot movement, but the latter part of the inscription necessitates a more nuanced interpretation of a toast made with this glass. Wolff-Bekker's admirers were drawn by her literary talent as 'Neerlands wonder', but even more so by her opposition to the Calchas figures of her day: the hypocritical ministers set on deceiving and inciting the people. This reflects Wolff-Bekker's reputation as a defender of virtue and combatant of hypocrites arising from her polemical writings published in the seventeen-seventies and later.

'Confusingly Unique': A Labelling History of Willem van Genk
Jos ten Berge

Given the reception of his work, transfer of the custody of the drawing Moscow (c. 1955) by Willem van Genk (1927-2005) to the Rijksmuseum is more remarkable than it might seem. A 'labelling history' shows that the man and his work were volleyed back and forth between the categories of psychiatric art, hobbyist art, naive art, art brut and outsider art – this, even though the artist himself would most likely have preferred to be recognized simply as 'an artist'. The Rijksmuseum finally succeeded in doing so (albeit perhaps unwittingly). At the same time, Van Genk's 'case history' reveals aspects of recent Dutch art history that have long been overlooked, such as the remarkable enthusiasm for naive art in the late nineteen-sixties. It also highlights some of the problems that can arise from our urge to categorize and label, both within and outside art history.

Acquisitions Rijksmuseum Research Library: History of Science
Alex Alsemgeest and Jan de Hond

In this series acquisitions from the Rijksmuseum Research Library are introduced. These books show how, in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, science and art were intertwined. A scientist's observations were communicated through visual means. Yet some were relevant not only as conveyors of knowledge, but also important because of their aesthetic quality.

Reference:
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