

Marks and brands on 16/17th century paintings (The Hague, 30 Oct 25)

The Hague

Deadline: Feb 28, 2025

Angela Jager

Marks and brands on 16th and 17th century paintings on panel and copper.

In November 2024, the RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History launched the Marks on Art database, a pioneering resource for studying marks on artworks, now available to scholars worldwide. This database opens new avenues for research into the significance and identification of various marks, materials, and production processes. To celebrate this release and the forthcoming publication of the revised and expanded edition of Jørgen Wadum's influential article, 'The Antwerp Brand on Paintings on Panel' (1998) in *RKD Studies* (Autumn 2025), the academic committee invites submissions for an upcoming conference that will highlight and expand research on marks on paintings.

Conference

The Marks on Art conference, to be held on 30 October 2025, will focus specifically on marks and brands on the reverses of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish paintings on panels and copper supports. Lumberjacks marked planks for transport. Panel and copperplate makers often marked their products with a personal monogram. Marks by the local Guild of Saint Luke ensured the quality of the materials used. Together, these and other marks provide unique information about the artwork's dating and place of origin, shedding light on attribution, authenticity and the production process.

We invite 20-minute papers that explore the following themes and questions:

- Studies of various marks and their significance in the historical, commercial, and technical contexts of artworks, or cross-cultural or historical studies that highlight the evolution of such marks in art production, distribution, and attribution.
- Specific panel makers or copperplate makers; their workshop practices, the origins of their materials, specializations (specific sizes, formats, provenance of the material), and the significance of these factors for the production and trade of paintings.-
- Relationships between painters/dealers and support makers, including questions of preferred collaborators and motivations behind these choices. Were choices for supports based on quality, availability, or proximity?
- Examination of (international) trade networks for supports and their materials, and how international commerce affected the production, availability, and use of supports across regions and

times.

- Connections to dendrochronological studies (e.g. Dendro4Art): to explore wood provenance and age analysis; investigations into the timelines from tree felling to panel production to painting.
- Digital innovations: exploring the potential of online databases and Artificial Intelligence in identifying and cataloging marks, including the use of image recognition software. Papers might examine the application of these technologies for historical research and the authentication of marks and to analyze trends across artworks.

Proposals

Please submit a preliminary title, abstract (max. 300 words) and a short bio by 28 February 2025 to Angela Jager (jager@rkd.nl). The academic committee will select the successful papers. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by 31 March 2025. Selected presentations will be considered for publication in Marks on Art: New Insights vol. 2. Please contact the organizers with any questions concerning the conference and this call for papers.

Academic committee: Moorea Hall-Aquitania, Angela Jager, Suzanne Laemers, Margreet Wolters

Reference:

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