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A Portrait in Oil

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Preface

Few modern authors have written so authoritatively about complex subjects as Simon Schama. Yet, as Schama confessed in his chronicle of revolutionary France, *Citizen*, the attempt comes with the risk of public failure.

> You are not thinking hard enough if you are sleeping well. And you would have to be unhinged to take on a subject like the French Revolution, or Rembrandt, and not feel some trepidation. There is always the possibility that you will crash and burn, and the whole thing will be a horrible, vulgar, self-indulgent mess.

Apart from the fact that it was an unconventional interpretation of the various French Revolutions that led the way to my acceptance to Oxford as an undergraduate, and that Rembrandt has been a lifelong passion, for even deeper reasons I can relate to the unease expressed by Professor Schama. Running the risk of being “a horrible, vulgar, self-indulgent mess,” this particular history is born of the same desire that underlies the broader ambition of the entire Catalogue Project: that is, to provide as much beneficial scholarly interpretation, as well as the most transparent and illuminating primary source material available, to those who can use it to greatest effect. By making all this information available in as accessible a fashion possible, to specialists and the general public alike, my hope is that this endeavor also will assist in stimulating broader interest in Rembrandt and the Old Masters. Fortune may well be capricious, and she has certainly been merciless to many. Still her dominance has been the defining feature of my life and she has been far kinder to me than I ever dreamed. Knowing that, as Marcus Aurelius expressed so well, “Short is man’s life, and narrow is the corner wherein he dwells,” I believe that, whereas many aspects of a person’s destiny are charted by reason and character, in determining to what extent he or she breaks out of that narrow corner, *La Fortuna* often has the last word. The improbable journey my wife Daphne and I embarked upon in the art world has heretofore not been told because Daphne and I didn’t wish it to be. Neither of us is a stranger to the spotlight. Though by nature Daphne is far more private than I am, when it came to acquiring “stuff,” I have entirely shared her approach. There are other aspects of my life of which I am candidly more comfortable sharing than the pursuit of objects. And so, whenever it was deemed necessary or even worthwhile to shed light on our multiple enthusiasms, I chose interests other than art. When the time came to consider the publication of our Collection, however, Daphne and I had a choice: remain the private, discrete lenders to museums we had always been, or broadcast our love for Old Masters, sharing our conviction that classical art is, like classical values, important, timeless and universal. Our passionate sense of mission in providing a service to those who share our interest in Rembrandt and the Dutch Golden Age offset the downside of drawing attention and ultimately

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made for an easy decision. The intent of this essay is to open a window onto collecting Old Masters during the first decades of the twenty-first century. What follows is a broad survey seen through a collector's eyes. As a first person account, it is what historians would call a "primary source." We hope it can therefore prove to be of some use to others. As the Collection was shaped by my and my wife's tastes, the views expressed are our own and, by definition, subjective. Moreover, many of the anecdotes described, particularly when it comes to the acquisition of fine art, can come only from those having the means to indulge their passions. Nobody is more keenly aware than we are that the blessings of Fortune have rained upon us in almost comical torrents and that all that separates collectors of Rembrandt and those who share a similar admiration of the Master from Leiden is the gold that allows us to vigorously indulge and extol our passion."

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Rembrandt's Ghost

I have long held that collecting Rembrandt is not an accomplishment to be praised. Rather, in the sense that *ars longa vita brevis*—art is long, life is short—it is a privilege that bestows responsibility. One has only to look at the range of artists who have cited Rembrandt as a key influence to know the debt that is owed to him. Once again quoting Simon Schama, this time his 2007 *New Yorker* article, "Rembrandt's Ghost":



Fig 1. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Young Lion Resting*, RR-100

> Constantly measuring himself for admission to the pantheon, Picasso evidently felt that taking down the masters also meant taking them on, and

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> in his time he had mixed it up with, among others, Grünewald, Poussin, Cranach, Velázquez, Goya, and El Greco. At the end, though, it was Rembrandt of whom, according to his friend and biographer Pierre Cabanne, he spoke 'ceaselessly.'

Professor Schama went a step further:

> …Picasso dryly commented to his mistress Françoise Gilot that 'every painter takes himself for Rembrandt.' He was right. No artist in the Western canon, not Raphael, not Michelangelo, not even Goya, has been so compulsively co-opted as heroic alter ego as Rembrandt. Painters like Turner, Delacroix, and Van Gogh, who self-consciously saw themselves as Rembrandt's apostles, believed that he, more than any other artist, had modeled forms with light and color rather than with line. The luminous shimmer of paint, not the hard-edged purity of classical sculpture, was their lodestar, and no one, they thought, had liberated its radiance quite like Rembrandt.



Fig 2. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Minerva in Her Study*, RR-107

Liberating this radiance is key. Generations of artists from Francisco Goya to Frank Auerbach and Francis Bacon have been lavish in acknowledging Rembrandt's unique influence. So too have contemporary artists, including a number who visited our Collection at the Leiden Gallery in New York. Our objective when we inaugurated the Gallery was that it would remain open until it no longer was a "gallery"—that is, when the vast majority of the original works were in museums and the space was filled predominantly with framed digital reproductions. When that happened, we indeed converted the Gallery to offices for one of our family businesses. Though I do not regret for a moment the ethos of lending that led to its demise, I miss the Leiden Gallery. Apart from being able to enjoy the beauty of even the reproductions, the Gallery served as something of a beta site to test some of our theses about how to best present the Old Masters in today's world. We had interesting participants in this exercise. Jeff Koons, an occasional collector of Old Masters himself, came by after finishing his morning workout. Rachel Feinstein and John Currin (who revealed an enviable appreciation of the work of Rembrandt's last pupil, Arent de Gelder) enjoyed lunch there with Sharon and Richard Hurowitz. And Damien Hirst did not simply visit; he generously sketched his own rendition of our Rembrandt drawing of *Young Lion Resting* [fig num="1"] for us to auction for the conservation of big cats. Other than the power of the works themselves, I believe it is fair to say that these artists were all most taken by the way the paintings were lit. Seeing Rembrandt's masterpieces in the Leiden Gallery's darkened rooms they, as with all our visitors, experienced an unexpected sensory impact that we had created by adding modern accents to the paintings' surroundings. The walls were a contemporary shade of white, the floors were Brazilian hardwood and the furniture, eschewing the antique, was of twentieth-century design, from Carlo Mollino and Jacques Adnet to a sitting area designed by Joaquim Tenero. Of greatest importance, and as a break from convention to allow viewers to see

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the beauty of the Old Masters in a new light, both literally and figuratively, each painting was individually illuminated to accentuate its radiance. This made the paintings “pop” off the walls. Our inspiration was fellow collector Charles Hack, who lit several of his paintings in precisely this way. The impact was so striking that we were often asked whether the paintings were somehow “backlit,” an impossible feat. Some purists found our presentation to be discomfortingly dramatic. This pleased me to no end, as in all our pursuits we believe that it is good to shake things up a bit so that people can see things in different ways. Our basic premise is that Old Masters can confound and astound in equal measure, and they should be displayed in a way that best accomplishes this tension. Of course, Rembrandt and peers can succeed on their own terms and in any kind of setting. They are self-evidently powerful and do not need special effects. For better or worse, however, we live in a world dominated by the sound bite and a perpetual assault on the senses. The sensibilities of the present art-viewing generation are thus likely not as genteel as those of its predecessors. Unable to deliver the sensational to the same extent as contemporary art, to make the Old Masters “connect” with the viewer’s modern eye one looks to rely on the relative advantages of the Masters: beauty, storytelling, and the peephole into western culture and the universal themes of civilization. I am sometimes disappointed by those museums that have sizable budgets and yet keep the Old Masters in a staid setting, conforming to a predisposition that they should be held in a more dignified pose than modern art. From my experience, what happens in such instances—there are of course notable examples where this is not the case—is that the Old Masters’ walls become corridors between more visually dramatic exhibitions rather than a destination in and of themselves. It does not have to be that way. Indeed, having had so many guests from all walks of life visit the Leiden Gallery while it was still open, I have witnessed their sense of wonder at the effect of a more modernist presentation. Their astonishment was often accompanied with a variation of a four-letter expletive. As such we call this reaction and its variants the “F Factor.” It’s a reaction that I relish for the simple reason that it proved a point we hoped to make: given the opportunity, the “shock and awe” that can be delivered by the Old Masters’ talent and expression can inform and indeed exceed that of their artistic heirs, as well as their current descendants. A visit by Zeng Fanzhi, the renowned Chinese artist, underscored this point. Accompanied by guests Wendi Deng and Larry Gagosian, he silently stood in front of every single painting, studying each in great detail. Possessed of a prodigious memory, he told his translator to inform me that he had seen *Minerva in Her Study* [fig num="2"] when we had loaned it to the Prado some years earlier. Candid in saying that Rembrandt was his greatest influence, he was equally direct in saying that he wished to bring a greater appreciation of Rembrandt to China itself, where Rembrandt and Vermeer are the most admired of the Old Masters. Rembrandt is ecumenical in his talent and impact and hearing this reaction therefore was, for my ears, *musica celestial*. It is not an accident that, having debuted at one of the world’s premier museums, The Louvre, The Leiden Collection will make its way in 2017 to both Shanghai and Beijing."

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The Imprinting of Youth



Fig 3. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, 1653, oil on canvas, 143.5 x 136.5 cm, Purchase, special contributions and funds given or bequeathed by friends of the Museum, 1961, 61.198, www.metmuseum.org

The title of this essay has been appropriated from an autobiography of the same name, published in 1965 by the son of the variegated Armenian oil tycoon and art collector, Calouste Gulbenkian. Hailing from a family as extraordinary in its achievements as what would politely be described as its eccentricities, Nubar Gulbenkian’s life was a rich tapestry, as intricately complicated in its construction as it was colorful. In my sense of self, I believe I am as far removed from Nubar as I could imagine … though coincidentally I should note that his father’s Rembrandts, which reside in their eponymous museum in Portugal, are quite spectacular. Nonetheless, and for all these reasons, I annexed the title for its wonderful turn of phrase, the nod it provides to the improbable role hydrocarbons as well as paintings have played in my life and Daphne’s … and for the more prosaic memories the book itself conjures for me. I was given *A Portrait in Oil* by my father, Jason, when I was a teenager. My father was an uncommon man, charismatic and complicated. A gifted draftsman, he had been given a scholarship to New York’s School of Music and Art, one of Fiorello LaGuardia’s more hopeful experiments. Though he chose not to pursue art other than as a pastime because, as he put it, “when I realized I was not going to be Rembrandt, I couldn't see the point,” his interest in the artist remained throughout his life. In light of my own ardor for

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Rembrandt, this admission quite obviously left its imprint on me. Suffice to say that I've always had an unusually strong connection to Rembrandt, being a direct influence from my father from a very young age. What sealed my love for Rembrandt and Dutch art came from my mother, Lillian, who for both Daphne and me remains the paragon of an easygoing and joyful nature. Whether it was her taking me to museums or to the Amazon jungle to search for jaguars, she was always up for an adventure and for sharing experiences with her son. This created a fertile opportunity for a youthful and impressionable mind. For me, like most people perhaps, art appreciation requires connecting with the art itself. From the age of six, my mother began regularly taking me to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to see masterpieces firsthand and to take art classes. After my first encounter with the master of light and shadow, and a cursory survey of the rest of the museum's treasures, my mind settled into a fixation on Rembrandt. In retrospect, having already developed a similar preoccupation with big cats and military history, a pattern of developing "enthusiasms" began at a tender age. To my mother's credit, having opened this world to me and finding her son transfixed by the chiaroscuro of the Old Masters, she made several attempts to broaden my horizons. They failed. The pivotal attempt was a visit to the Museum of Modern Art, which ended abruptly when I stood in front of a white canvas with only a hint of artistic intervention. Apparently my response upon gazing up at the image was a deep sigh followed by a request: "Please take me back to the Rembrandts." I have often asked myself why I was so moved by Rembrandt at such a young age. Was it the visual drama of the chiaroscuro? Was it that he was, as Turner said, the greatest colorist? Precocious as I may have been, I was still not remotely well tutored to understand that, as Kenneth Clark put it in his masterful *Civilization*, "The psychological truth of Rembrandt's paintings goes beyond that of any other artist who has ever lived." That would come. Regardless of the cause, the effect was that, by the weekend that followed the aborted field trip to the MOMA, I was back contemplating *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer* [fig num="3"]. My mother and I would complete our weekend ritual with a Sabrett hot dog on the steps of the Met. The power of condiments being what it is, for years I freely associated the finest art with mustard, sauerkraut and sweet relish. It was not without foundation therefore that, at nine years of age, when invited by my parents to suggest a city in Europe to visit, I chose Amsterdam. When asked why, my response was "Because that is where Rembrandt lived." In later years, as a schoolboy in Switzerland and then a college student in England, I made it a point to funnel my flights through Amsterdam. Notwithstanding the additional delights of the city that tugged at my senses as I matured, I invariably made pilgrimages to the Rijksmuseum as well as the nearby Van Gogh Museum. Returning now to the revitalized Rijksmuseum, under the talented and dynamic stewardship of Taco Dibbits, is always a fond and nostalgic experience. In due course, in my twenties I finally expanded my interests in art from antiquities and Baroque Art to impressionists and post-Impressionists including Van Gogh and, ultimately, to all forms of painting. Unlike some other observers of contemporary art, I elected not to dismiss the

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3 string(10025) "

A Thyssen-Bornemisza Provenance

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4 string(5814) "

A Fortuitous Robbery

A month or so after leaving Dubrovnik, I received a call from Norman Rosenthal. As fate would have it, he had been standing behind a police cordon near the back of the Royal Academy, there having been an armed robbery on Bond Street, when he turned and saw a dealer acquaintance. He asked if the gentleman happened to know of a Gerrit Dou for sale. In fact, said the dealer, he had one in stock, held in partnership with several other dealers. The painting, he explained, was not given full attribution to the Master because, unlike all the known works in Dou's *oeuvre*, this rather tiny oval was not painted on wood panel, but rather *cuivre argentée,* or silver-plated copper. The foremost expert on the artist, Dr. Ronni Baer, currently the Senior Curator of European Paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, had demurred on providing attribution in light of the fact that it was anomalous to the point of being unique. Norman asked for the data sheets and images, and phoned me to ask where he should send them. I was enormously excited, and we agreed to connect at the Venice Biennale, where I was taking my family on vacation. When we met, he gave me the packet of information on the painting and I was intrigued. I showed the illustration to Daphne. She liked the image and urged me to see it for myself. Taking the Eurostar from Paris, I arrived at the Gallery and was shown the painting. I was immediately charmed by the appearance. It certainly looked like a Dou, and a beautiful jewel at that. Fully signed and in mint condition, the enamel-like portrait was of an identified sitter, Dirck van Beresteyn [fig num="4"], who hailed from a distinguished Dutch family. Undeterred by its unconventional support, I actually found the idea that the work had been painted on silver-copper alloy to be an omen that my instinct was right, silver being the metal on which I had made my fortune. It also made sense to me that a prosperous family wishing a small image might provide a more expensive metal support on which the artist might ply his trade. So sure was I that this was from the Master's hand that I not only agreed to buy the painting, but also said that I would gladly purchase more of these "not-Dou Dous," as well as fully attributed works of course, that the dealer could find for me. I was amazed that I now had a painting by Rembrandt's first pupil. One painting was an accident, I told Daphne, whereas two would be a collection. With her blessing, I waited for another call. It did not take long for the phone to ring. The same dealer had another jewel-like oval by Dou, this one on panel and fully attributed by Dr. Baer and one of her mentors, Dr. Arthur Wheelock, the Curator of Northern Baroque Art at the National



Fig 4. Gerrit Dou, *Portrait of Dirck van Beresteyn*, GD-111



Fig 5. Gerrit Dou, *Portrait of a Woman in Profile*, GD-110

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Gallery in Washington, D.C. *Portrait of a Woman in Profile* [fig num="5"] is small, at about 5 inches around, similar in size to the *Portrait of Dirck van Beresteyn*. A beautiful image of a woman turning towards the light and wearing a fur jacket so lush that I felt I could run my hands through it, the painting had been exhibited at the National Gallery in Washington at the Dou retrospective in 2000. In addition to being taken by its virtuosity, my wife's mother Mira's prediction about my being engrossed by the history of our pictures—a feature that is, by definition, essentially absent in contemporary art—rose to the fore. I was further intrigued by the provenance, coming as it did from the family of the assassinated Jewish Foreign Minister of the Weimar Republic, Walter von Rathenau. It resonated with me that the painting had been on loan to the Rijksmuseum until 1940, at which point this work, together with a Rembrandt in the same family's possession, was removed and taken, of all places, to Oxford, where it lay in a safe deposit box for more than 60 years. It later transpired that some of the salient details regarding the dealer's purchase of the painting from a colleague turned out to be untrue. Accepting certain assurances regarding the terms of their agreement at face value, I ended up paying more for the masterpiece than I perhaps should have. Upon finding out the true story, I reacted by severing my relationship with the offending dealer. It was his loss, as he chose to be the primary exception in my experience with dealers. In retrospect, it was my luck that he revealed himself so early in my collecting and gave me the invaluable lessons I needed to define my *modus operandi*. I presume he likely felt that my youthful exuberance would, like many collectors, burn itself out quickly. "Make as much as you can while you can," the refrain of the cynical, surpassed any sentiment of taking a more optimistic and long-term perspective. The beneficiaries of his folly were his competitors from whom we purchased art over the next five years at an average rate approaching a painting a week. That early lesson was highly beneficial. I thereafter insisted that all dealers behave in an "open book" manner; they would reveal their costs and terms of purchase, and we would then work out a fair price. Payment was immediate, often before they themselves would have to pay, and the volume more than made up for the margin on any single piece. Negotiations rarely lasted more than a few minutes. It was a system that worked well for all concerned and has remained something of a "gold standard" for me when it comes to enjoyable business relations."

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5 string(22771) "

A Swindle of Dealers



Fig 6. Frans van Mieris, *Death of Lucretia*, FM-103

Before June 2003, we had acquired only the two paintings by Dou. I saw my task that summer as studying contemporaries spawned by Rembrandt and Dou, the artists who had become known as "the Leiden School" and the fine painters called "*fijnschilders*." I began with the student whom Dou himself referred to as "the Prince" of his pupils, Frans van Mieris the Elder, as well as Gabriel Metsu, one of the more eclectic and evocative of those who came under Dou's influence. To acquaint myself with these Masters, I obtained from the London bookseller, Thomas Heneage, several important reference works: Otto Naumann's two-volume catalogue *raisonné* of Van Mieris; and the single volume on Metsu by Frank Robinson. I read each of the books, twice, while laid up in the South of France with a broken knee. Though entirely different in approach, each author brought a great deal of enthusiasm to my project. Otto's work, still to my mind the best survey of its kind, was professorial yet spirited. It gave life and luster to a Master whose precision was so highly valued that it is said he came to be the most highly compensated artist in Europe. Frank's volume more than made up for its eccentricities as a formal reference work by its soulful portrayal of a brilliant artist who came, in my eyes at least, to bridge Leiden with multiple other schools. The booming and joyful voice of the author emerged from the page to give life to a painter who, at his best, evoked

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the magic of Vermeer. Upon returning to New York, I did not wait long to explore who had what I was seeking. When I walked into Otto Naumann's Upper East Side gallery in September, I came with a recommendation from Norman Rosenthal and the suggestion of Jack Kilgore, whom I had called looking for *fijnschilders*. Otto's well-kempt and distinctive beard set him apart from other dealers, giving him an air of erudition that was not remotely an affect. He looked the part because the part was made for him. Trained like so many other scholars and curators by the great Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, Otto had an expertise, a passion for his craft, an entrepreneur's courage and a scholar's intense curiosity that made him unique in the world of Dutch Old Masters: a true connoisseur whose often brilliant insights and eye are as valued in the trade as any curator's. As I was to learn, Otto's extraordinary niche was Rembrandt and his School. As a principal, intermediary or simply friendly adviser, he played a role in most of our purchases of Rembrandt, as well as our Vermeer, our Fabritius, all our Van Mierises, and countless other works. In short order, we became very good friends. First, however, we had business to conclude. When I introduced myself, telling Otto that I had read his catalogue of Frans van Mieris, he chuckled with characteristic self-deprecation and, in something of an apology, said that it was a bit dated. He then asked if I had really read it, which I found a quirky but charming way to court a potential client. Having an academic background myself, and understanding how limited the audience can be for a scholarly study on which one has spent years, I assured him that I not only had read it, but that I had devoured it twice. With that, I asked him whether he happened to have any paintings by the Master in stock. He looked me in the eye as if to test my seriousness and said that he had a work that had been in the collection of the financier Saul Steinberg. I asked if I could see it and he brought it out of his office at the back of the gallery. Propping it up, I quickly recognized the painting as one of Mieris' last masterpieces, *Death of Lucretia* [fig num="6"], and said that it was even more magnificent than I could have guessed from his catalogue's color plate, one of the only paintings to be given that more expensive finish. Having put to rest any lingering suspicion that I might have been kidding about reading his book, I asked the price. He told me. I made a counter-offer. He found a common ground I thought reasonable and I agreed. The negotiation had not taken more than a minute. Immediately, I thrust my hand towards him to shake on the deal. Otto took my hand and then did something that is "classic Otto." Exhibiting a mix of boyish puckishness and the unsure reaction of someone who fears he might have been "punk'd" (in my time, we made references to a television show called Candid Camera), he furrowed his brow and said, "Wait a minute. Did you *really* just buy that painting?" Again, I found myself assuring him that the deal was real. I asked him to give me his bank's wire-transfer details, so eager was I to ensure that nobody else could possibly trump my purchase. It was my turn to ask for reassurance that the deal was "done." He said it was. I then asked if he had any more Van Mierises. He nodded that he did. He had found a painting in a little auction in France where its true value was unrealized, and said that it was being cleaned and restored by Nancy Krieg, an expert who subsequently became an esteemed colleague and our own



Fig 7. Frans van Mieris, *Portrait of a Fifty-Two Year Old Man*, FM-104



Fig 8. Frans van Mieris, *Young Woman Feeding a Parrot*, FM-112



Fig 9. Gabriel Metsu, *Old Woman at Her Meal in an Interior*, GM-102

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go-to restorer. He said he could show it to me in a week if I was interested. Revealing a trait that I refer to as Otto's incredibly charming "pathological honesty," he offered proactively that the painting had been purchased inexpensively and that he was afraid to ask its real value in light of that. I told him to let me be the judge of a fair price and that, having made my living by discovering things and then revaluing them materially higher, I did not begrudge a man reaping an outsized profit for having paid his dues in becoming an expert, and then being able to parlay that expertise into an outsized financial gain. For reasons that I was never able to understand, collectors often have an aversion to paying profits to dealers that they do not begrudge to auction houses. For myself, putting a face to a transfer of wealth makes the experience more, not less, satisfying. Otto Naumann and I met the following week and I purchased *Portrait of a Fifty-Two Year Old Man* [fig num="7"] for a multiple of the price Otto had paid. With the exuberance of a man who believed he had unlocked the secrets of alchemy, he invited me to lunch. I suggested one of my two favorite restaurants in the city, Nello. This was to become a wonderful ritual that often followed a purchase (and in due course preceded and accompanied a purchase) along with a fine bottle of wine. I remember the detail of my having red snapper as Otto for his part ordered pasta with truffles. We had a great time until the bill arrived. Otto gasped when he saw the price that had been charged for the truffles. In due course, due to similar near-coronary episodes that led to a mini scandal of price gouging that made its way into the press, Nello made a better effort to inform people of the price of their tubers. In the moment, however, I had to point out to my lunch companion that he should simply enjoy the experience and that, having made a decent killing with the sale of the painting, the cost of his pasta was but a rounding error. Tranquilized by my allusions to his successful morning, Otto noted the point and laughed. Thus began an excursion into Frans van Mieris that continued unabated until the assemblage of his work reached a crescendo with the purchase of one of his most iconic masterpieces, *Young Woman Feeding a Parrot* [fig num="8"], from Lord Samuel's collection. To Otto's mind and eye this was the Holy Grail, the greatest of the Master's works in private hands, and its inclusion in our Collection was something that he regarded as a personal triumph. So did I. It was at a different lunch not long after that I met another dealer who was also to become a friend, Salomon Lilian. Known to all as "Boedy," he had an office in New York managed by none other than the woman who was to become our curator, Dominique Surh. Told that the eponymous firm of Salomon Lilian had a painting by Metsu of *Old Woman at Her Meal in an Interior* [fig num="9"], I made an appointment to view the painting. Having been taken by Frank Robinson's narrative about Metsu's sensitive portrayals of women in Dutch society who had been widowed or were downtrodden, I was keen to acquire a powerful expression of this aspect of his work. As it happened, it was the only Metsu on the market. Dominique suggested that Boedy and I meet when he arrived in New York, and we arranged to have lunch in the now departed Grill Room of my other favorite New York restaurant, The Four Seasons. I liked Boedy immediately. The embodiment of enthusiasm and



Fig 10. Gabriel Metsu, *Woman Cleaning Fish,* GM-100



Fig 11. Jan Steen, *Old Woman with a Fur Cap Holding a Jug and Singing*, JS-100



Fig 12. Jan Steen, *Woman Counting Coins*, JS-101

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salesmanship, superlatives such as “spectacular impasto,” “thick in the paint,” and “mint condition” peppered his descriptions of his inventory, images of which he had brought with him to show me. To his credit, he spoke with equal delight of the excellent examples of other dealers’ stock as well, a generosity of spirit I appreciated. Trained by Robert Noortman, one of the last of the Old Masters’ impresarios who took the great Duveen as his role model, Boedy knew Rob’s adage well: “Paintings aren’t bought, they’re *sold*.” Boedy certainly knew how to sell a painting. Despite this skill and our dozens of transactions together, he very rarely “sold” me a painting. When he realized that my own enthusiasm rivaled his, and that my conviction in my own taste required neither his agreement nor his cheerleading, he gave me the space to make my own decisions, a valuable trait that comes from good manners and sound negotiating practice. By the end of lunch, I had purchased Boedy’s Metsu and set him on the search for more. Boedy had a saying that, whenever he saw a painting exhibited as “private collection,” he considered it to be for sale. Armed with that assumption, he approached other collectors who might be willing to part with individual paintings. In short order, I had purchased my second Metsu, an excellent representation of *Woman Cleaning Fish* [fig num="10"] that he pried from the collection of a friendly Amsterdam banker in exchange for something that client wished to purchase. Such was my initial experience with a triangulated trade in the art world. Before long, I had added through Boedy my first paintings by Jan Steen: *Old Woman with a Fur Cap Holding a Jug and Singing* [fig num="11"], which he had in his inventory; and *Woman Counting Coins* [fig num="12"], which came up at auction. Boedy Lilian was the first dealer who purchased for me at auction. Prior to meeting him and for the first few months after my summer immersion into the *fijnschilders,* I was like an unattended child in a candy store. I searched the internet for auctions where I could bid on the works of artists on my expanding list of targets. But I did not merely look. I bought too. Some of those purchases were so dreadful that I now wince when I see them. Seeing the name Brekelenkam in a Sotheby’s catalogue, I purchased *Hermit Kneeling before an Open Book and Skulls* [fig num="13"]. It was so tempting. A Dou pupil for a few thousand dollars! What could go wrong? A more execrable work of art I cannot imagine. I console myself that I did not see the actual work before I paid £2,268. Another painting acquired from a Swiss auction house, *Portrait of a Man* [fig num="14"] by Caspar Netscher, was a mediocre work by a fine artist and cost what one would expect of a four-hundred-year-old relic with modest resale value. At the same auction, I purchased my one still life [fig num="15"] attributed to Godefridus Schalcken, another Dou pupil who had made my list. It is now attributed to the “Dordrecht School,” which is a kind way of saying it is pretty, but also pretty worthless. I got what I paid for. Would I have purchased these works if I had seen them in the flesh rather than in the sumptuous isolation of their catalogues? I would certainly like to think not. Like a child, I had touched the hot stove of the Old Masters and been singed. But in doing so I had learned a valuable lesson: Ask a good dealer to view the painting if I could not view it myself. I wish I could say that I never repeated that error, although in the end the sillier acquisitions were



Fig 13. Quiringh van Brekelenkam, *Hermit Kneeling before an Open Book and Skulls*, 49.1 x 39.4 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, QB-101



Fig 14. Caspar Netscher, *Portrait of a Man*, 1680, oil on canvas, 48.9 x 40.1 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, CN-106



Fig 15. Dordrecht School, *Still Life with Peaches, Grapes, and Melon and a Butterfly on a Stone Plate*, GS-100

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rare and accounted for less than 0.25% of the value of the Collection. Still, there is no excuse for sloppiness when there are people willing to help. Boedy for one has a great eye and the energy to see everything even remotely interesting. He steered me in the right directions. *Woman Counting Coins* by Jan Steen [fig num="12"], a subtle image I admire often, marked a turning point in my approach to auctions. Boedy and I became great friends. After my wife and I met his vivacious wife, Lorraine, whom I nicknamed "JLo" for her great spirit, we two couples would see each other often. We rejoiced in the birth of their sons, Max and Tom, and our children played together. Daphne and I continue to see them in both New York and Paris. Not long after making the acquaintance of Otto Naumann and Boedy Lilian, I came to meet another dealer, Johnny van Haeften, whose larger than life personality led to one of the most enjoyable relationships of my adult life. The charmingly prophetic art critic of the *International Herald Tribune*, Souren Melikian, described Johnny:



Fig 16. Godefridus Schalcken, *Lovers (Prodigal Son)*, GS-129

> The specialist in Flemish and Dutch pictures, who runs a gallery at 13 Duke St. in London, rates among the shining lights in his field. The erudite connoisseur is also an adroit businessman, straight as a rod, who enjoys the rare privilege in the art trade of being liked by (almost) all his colleagues and clients.

For one not given to brevity, I find this an admirable summing up. For me, however, it was more than that. I found in Johnny a supremely witty and kindred spirit in the art world. An exceptional entrepreneur, he took a long-term view of both our professional and personal relationships and became an enthusiastic partner with my wife and me in our art endeavors. Putting aside the obvious financial interest he had in our association, as to the objective itself of building a collection that would compare favorably to those of museums, he "got it." That does not mean that he was in any way less loyal to his other clientele. Like his peers, he was a happy purveyor of exquisite works to the major collectors in the space, including of course Eijk and Rosemarie van Otterloo, whose commitment to collecting was at least as firm as Daphne's and mine. Although I ultimately became enthralled with Johnny's good nature and ethics, our first encounter was a duel of sorts. I say "of sorts" because it was an unwitting test in which two bidders drew blood without precisely knowing against whom they had done so. The object in question was a truly beautiful painting by Godefridus Schalcken, an artist who was an early addition to our list. This interest was kindled primarily by his trademark handling of candlelight in creating an illusion favored by his teacher, Gerrit Dou. A beautiful example of this genre had come up for auction at Doyle auction house in New York. Entitled *Lovers* [fig num="16"], the combination of the nocturnal scene's beauty and a great "Cook Collection provenance" was irresistible. One of England's greatest, the quality of the Cook Collection was such that even now the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. has no fewer than twenty-four works with the Cook provenance. Provenance is not remotely determinative to us in the decision to acquire a painting. An interesting history does, however, make the experience a great deal more evocative. To know that

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the great and the good, the humble and the villainous, once owned and regarded a painting is often moving. It takes us to other places and times. Being a historian by avocation if not vocation, any time I can connect to the past and its participants in a colorful and deep-seated way is stirring. Candidly, though there are doubtless other factors at work, it is perhaps one of the key reasons that, while I can enjoy contemporary art, I have no desire to collect it. By definition, there is something missing in the *story* to the painting. Stories that connect us to a long chain of collectors similarly provoked in some fashion by an image are certainly part of the joy that can be had by collecting the Old Masters. This is invariably the case for me, even when the recounting of a list of a work's deceased past owners is a salutary reminder that, whereas art is long, life is short. I asked Boedy to bid on the painting on our behalf. What had not been ascertained beforehand was that Johnny van Haeften had set his sights on the same painting. Although I won, the cost was far greater than had I let Johnny bid for me and given him a profit. In that sense, though the seller did considerably better than expected, both Johnny and I suffered. He did not make money, and I had over-used financial firepower. When the auction was over, Johnny apparently stalked off, stunned at what had transpired and exclaiming: "What is the world coming to when collectors outbid dealers!" Johnny van Haeften and I met later than evening at the annual New York dinner for clients, curators and friends given by Otto Naumann and his lovely and gracious wife, Heidi. By that time, we had both become aware of the role the other had played at the sale. As I greeted the many people to whom I was being introduced, a distinguished, beautifully dressed gentleman with a handsome shock of hair and a wide grin came over. With eyes and a smile that betrayed genuine sheepishness, he extended his hand and said, in perfectly accented English, "I am sooooooo sorry for what happened today. It is a beautiful picture and I simply didn't know of your interest." He warmly expressed his delight at finally meeting the collector he had heard about, albeit under the less than ideal circumstances of having crossed swords. I responded with equal warmth that it was a pleasure to meet him as well, that there was no way he could have known of my interest in the picture, and that I was simply happy to have the privilege of owning precisely the kind of Schalcken I was seeking. As we parted to take our seats, I added that "It would be nice for both of us, however, if that kind of thing didn't happen again, don't you think?" Johnny gave a big smile, chuckled and commented that he completely agreed. From those memorable beginnings began a warm friendship and collaboration. It yielded many of our finest works, and for Johnny an interest in more than a hundred of our purchases. Moreover, it colored forever my positive view of the collecting process. Rarely did our negotiations last more than a few minutes and, Johnny being among the most ethical of men, never—not one single time—were we disappointed by the results. In later years, when asked what it was like to work with dealers, I said without the slightest hesitation, "I would take the ethics of Duke Street over those of Wall Street any day of the week." This observation recalls a very meaningful anecdote from my own career. When I retired from my first business in 2004, I had the opportunity at a party thrown by George Soros on his brother Paul and Daisy Soros'

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anniversary to thank our host for a decade of partnership. Daisy was and remains one of our closest friends and Paul, who was as honorable a gentleman as he was truly brilliant, had become a mentor to me. Though the venture in which we were co-investors was of monumental importance to me personally, I had no clue as to whether George would even recall the investment. Happily, I was to find out when he greeted me. "*It is I who should thank you, Tom. My brother tells me that you are one of the only partners we have who hasn't given us one day of aggravation in ten years."* I wandered with a slight grin back to our table and recounted the exchange to Daphne. She smiled and said that she now knew what I would want engraved on my tombstone. She knows me well, and how I regard a true partnership: a partner is one who looks after your back without ever having to be asked to do so. That's how I treat all my personal and business relationships, and I was overjoyed to meet a soulmate in Johnny."

A Swindle of Dealers

Before June 2003, we had acquired only the two paintings by Dou. I saw my task that summer as studying contemporaries spawned by Rembrandt and Dou, the artists who had become known as "the Leiden School" and the fine painters called "*fijnschilders*." I began with the student whom Dou himself referred to as "the Prince" of his pupils, Frans van Mieris the Elder, as well as Gabriel Metsu, one of the more eclectic and evocative of those who came under Dou's influence. To acquaint myself with these Masters, I obtained from the London bookseller, Thomas Heneage, several important reference works: Otto Naumann's two-volume catalogue *raisonné* of Van Mieris; and the single volume on Metsu by Frank Robinson. I read each of the books, twice, while laid up in the South of France with a broken knee. Though entirely different in approach, each author brought a great deal of enthusiasm to my project. Otto's work, still to my mind the best survey of its kind, was professorial yet spirited. It gave life and luster to a Master whose precision was so highly valued that it is said he came to be the most highly compensated artist in Europe. Frank's volume more than made up for its eccentricities as a formal reference work by its soulful portrayal of a brilliant artist who came, in my eyes at least, to bridge Leiden with multiple other schools. The booming and joyful voice of the author emerged from the page to give life to a painter who, at his best, evoked the magic of Vermeer.

Upon returning to New York, I did not wait long to explore who had what I was seeking. When I walked into Otto Naumann's Upper East Side gallery in September, I came with a recommendation from Norman Rosenthal and the suggestion of Jack Kilgore, whom I had called looking for *fijnschilders*. Otto's well-kempt and distinctive beard set him apart from other dealers, giving him an air of erudition that was not remotely an affect. He looked the part because the part was made for him. Trained like so many other scholars and curators by the great Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, Otto had an expertise, a passion for his craft, an entrepreneur's courage and a

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scholar's intense curiosity that made him unique in the world of Dutch Old Masters: a true connoisseur whose often brilliant insights and eye are as valued in the trade as any curator's. As I was to learn, Otto's extraordinary niche was Rembrandt and his School. As a principal, intermediary or simply friendly adviser, he played a role in most of our purchases of Rembrandt, as well as our Vermeer, our Fabritius, all our Van Mierises, and countless other works. In short order, we became very good friends.

First, however, we had business to conclude. When I introduced myself, telling Otto that I had read his catalogue of Frans van Mieris, he chuckled with characteristic self-deprecation and, in something of an apology, said that it was a bit dated. He then asked if I had really read it, which I found a quirky but charming way to court a potential client. Having an academic background myself, and understanding how limited the audience can be for a scholarly study on which one has spent years, I assured him that I not only had read it, but that I had devoured it twice. With that, I asked him whether he happened to have any paintings by the Master in stock. He looked me in the eye as if to test my seriousness and said that he had a work that had been in the collection of the financier Saul Steinberg. I asked if I could see it and he brought it out of his office at the back of the gallery. Propping it up, I quickly recognized the painting as one of Mieris' last masterpieces, *Death of Lucretia* **(fig 6)**, and said that it was even more magnificent than I could have guessed from his catalogue's color plate, one of the only paintings to be given that more expensive finish. Having put to rest any lingering suspicion that I might have been kidding about reading his book, I asked the price. He told me. I made a counter-offer. He found a common ground I thought reasonable and I agreed. The negotiation had not taken more than a minute. Immediately, I thrust my hand towards him to shake on the deal. Otto took my hand and then did something that is "classic Otto." Exhibiting a mix of boyish puckishness and the unsure reaction of someone who fears he might have been "punk'd" (in my time, we made references to a television show called Candid Camera), he furrowed his brow and said, "Wait a minute. Did you *really* just buy that painting?" Again, I found myself assuring him that the deal was real. I asked him to give me his bank's wire-transfer details, so eager was I to ensure that nobody else could possibly trump my purchase. It was my turn to ask for reassurance that the deal was "done." He said it was.

I then asked if he had any more Van Mierises. He nodded that he did. He had found a painting in a little auction in France where its true value was unrealized, and said that it was being cleaned and restored by Nancy Krieg, an expert who subsequently became an esteemed colleague and our own go-to restorer. He said he could show it to me in a week if I was interested. Revealing a trait that I refer to as Otto's incredibly charming "pathological honesty," he offered proactively that the painting had been

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purchased inexpensively and that he was afraid to ask its real value in light of that. I told him to let me be the judge of a fair price and that, having made my living by discovering things and then revaluing them materially higher, I did not begrudge a man reaping an outsized profit for having paid his dues in becoming an expert, and then being able to parlay that expertise into an outsized financial gain. For reasons that I was never able to understand, collectors often have an aversion to paying profits to dealers that they do not begrudge to auction houses. For myself, putting a face to a transfer of wealth makes the experience more, not less, satisfying.

Otto Naumann and I met the following week and I purchased *Portrait of a Fifty-Two Year Old Man* **(fig 7)** for a multiple of the price Otto had paid. With the exuberance of a man who believed he had unlocked the secrets of alchemy, he invited me to lunch. I suggested one of my two favorite restaurants in the city, Nello. This was to become a wonderful ritual that often followed a purchase (and in due course preceded and accompanied a purchase) along with a fine bottle of wine. I remember the detail of my having red snapper as Otto for his part ordered pasta with truffles. We had a great time until the bill arrived. Otto gasped when he saw the price that had been charged for the truffles. In due course, due to similar near-coronary episodes that led to a mini scandal of price gouging that made its way into the press, Nello made a better effort to inform people of the price of their tubers. In the moment, however, I had to point out to my lunch companion that he should simply enjoy the experience and that, having made a decent killing with the sale of the painting, the cost of his pasta was but a rounding error. Tranquilized by my allusions to his successful morning, Otto noted the point and laughed. Thus began an excursion into Frans van Mieris that continued unabated until the assemblage of his work reached a crescendo with the purchase of one of his most iconic masterpieces, *Young Woman Feeding a Parrot* **(fig 8)**, from Lord Samuel's collection. To Otto's mind and eye this was the Holy Grail, the greatest of the Master's works in private hands, and its inclusion in our Collection was something that he regarded as a personal triumph. So did I.

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Seasons. I liked Boedy immediately. The embodiment of enthusiasm and salesmanship, superlatives such as “spectacular impasto,” “thick in the paint,” and “mint condition” peppered his descriptions of his inventory, images of which he had brought with him to show me. To his credit, he spoke with equal delight of the excellent examples of other dealers’ stock as well, a generosity of spirit I appreciated. Trained by Robert Noortman, one of the last of the Old Masters’ impresarios who took the great Duveen as his role model, Boedy knew Rob’s adage well: “Paintings aren’t bought, they’re *sold*.” Boedy certainly knew how to sell a painting. Despite this skill and our dozens of transactions together, he very rarely “sold” me a painting. When he realized that my own enthusiasm rivaled his, and that my conviction in my own taste required neither his agreement nor his cheerleading, he gave me the space to make my own decisions, a valuable trait that comes from good manners and sound negotiating practice.

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and said, in perfectly accented English, “I am soooooooo sorry for what happened today. It is a beautiful picture and I simply didn’t know of your interest.” He warmly expressed his delight at finally meeting the collector he had heard about, albeit under the less than ideal circumstances of having crossed swords. I responded with equal warmth that it was a pleasure to meet him as well, that there was no way he could have known of my interest in the picture, and that I was simply happy to have the privilege of owning precisely the kind of Schalcken I was seeking. As we parted to take our seats, I added that “It would be nice for both of us, however, if that kind of thing didn’t happen again, don’t you think?” Johnny gave a big smile, chuckled and commented that he completely agreed. From those memorable beginnings began a warm friendship and collaboration. It yielded many of our finest works, and for Johnny an interest in more than a hundred of our purchases. Moreover, it colored forever my positive view of the collecting process. Rarely did our negotiations last more than a few minutes and, Johnny being among the most ethical of men, never—not one single time—were we disappointed by the results. In later years, when asked what it was like to work with dealers, I said without the slightest hesitation, “I would take the ethics of Duke Street over those of Wall Street any day of the week.”

This observation recalls a very meaningful anecdote from my own career. When I retired from my first business in 2004, I had the opportunity at a party thrown by George Soros on his brother Paul and Daisy Soros’ anniversary to thank our host for a decade of partnership. Daisy was and remains one of our closest friends and Paul, who was as honorable a gentleman as he was truly brilliant, had become a mentor to me. Though the venture in which we were co-investors was of monumental importance to me personally, I had no clue as to whether George would even recall the investment. Happily, I was to find out when he greeted me. “*It is I who should thank you, Tom. My brother tells me that you are one of the only partners we have who hasn’t given us one day of aggravation in ten years.”* I wandered with a slight grin back to our table and recounted the exchange to Daphne. She smiled and said that she now knew what I would want engraved on my tombstone. She knows me well, and how I regard a true partnership: a partner is one who looks after your back without ever having to be asked to do so. That’s how I treat all my personal and business relationships, and I was overjoyed to meet a soulmate in Johnny.

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The Funnel Comes to Leiden

All three dealers are great wits, Johnny most of all. When in a discussion about big cats I informed Johnny that a group of tigers is known as a “streak,” as a group of lions is called a “pride,” he remarked with a straight face that a group of art dealers is known as a “swindle.” It was Johnny who gave us the nickname “The Funnel.” Other than being a reference to the volume of our

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purchases, it also made light of the fact that Daphne and I were insatiable. From 2003 until 2008, we were on a tear, procuring works from the Dutch Golden Age at an average rate of one a week. Though we were more catholic in our tastes, the word on the street at first was that we were solely buyers of the Leiden School, small format fine manner paintings related to Dou, Van Mieris and their contemporaries. The Collection certainly began that way, and it was deliberate that the first paintings were by Dou, Van Mieris, Steen, and Metsu. If anyone had to guess what we aspired to create, the answer might well have been the private equivalent of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie's exceptional assemblage of *fijnschilders*. After our initial purchases in 2003, we soon acquired Dou's *Portrait of a Man with a Hat* [fig num="17"], painted early in the artist's career. Portraits, which were not really his stock-in-trade, did not come up often. With the unusual exception of *Portrait of a Gentleman with a Walking Stick* [fig num="18"], whose pendant resides at the Norton Simon Museum in California [fig num="19"], it was not until 2009 that we were presented with another portrait, *Portrait of a Lady, Seated with a Music Book on Her Lap* [fig num="20"], which we readily acquired from the De Villeneuve collection as it was clearly a work made in the artist's elegant mature style. A blitz of purchases in 2006 and 2007 led to the acquisition of the cornerstone masterpieces of our Dou collection, among them Dou's *Old Man Praying* [fig num="21"]. As a study in prayer and venerable devotion, it is one of the most moving and powerful images from the hermit genre for which the artist was coveted (a theme we revisited with Willem van Mieris' *Hermit Praying in the Wilderness* [fig num="22"]. The painting also possessed an exceptional provenance, having been in the collection of Lothar Franz von Schönborn, who was not only the Elector of Mainz but also the Archbishop of Bamberg. Soon after, we acquired a very special image of *Cat Crouching on the Ledge of an Artist's Atelier* [fig num="23"]. The provenance alone was incredibly evocative for a collector of *fijnschilders*: having found its way into the collection of King Augustus II, it was thereafter housed for more than a century in the Dresden Gemäldegalerie; as previously noted, Dresden is home to the most important museum collection of *fijnschilders* and, at that time, was one of the collections we most sought to emulate. That it was a cat, of course, made it clear that it was "meant to be" in light of our interest in felids of all kinds. This latter aspect was highlighted in 2008 when we acquired *Goat in a Landscape* [fig num="24"] with which to pair it. Both pictures share a defining feature in that they utilize the animal in the foreground to lead us to another reality. The cat is a gateway to an artist at work in his studio and the goat, a rare, playful and sexually charged creature already pregnant with deep iconographic implications, leads us to lovers near a tree in the background. In quick succession came *Herring Seller and Boy* [fig num="25"], in quality, narrative and condition a remarkable example of the niche market scene for which Dou is most famous. A masterpiece of detail often compared to a similar work in the Queen of England's Collection, it is Dou at the height of his powers. One can literally make out the scales of the herring that had fallen off the fish. 2007 brought another trove of Dou paintings starting with *Old Woman at a Window with a Candle* [fig num="26"], an excellent



Fig 17. Gerrit Dou, *Portrait of a Man with a Hat,* GD-100



Fig 18. Gerrit Dou, *Portrait of a Gentleman with a Walking Stick*, GD-113



Fig 19. Gerrit Dou, *Portrait of a Lady*, ca. 1635–40, oil on panel, 49.2 x 38.7 cm, The Norton Simon Foundation, Pasadena, CA, inv. no. F.1969.43.P

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representation of the “nocturne” scenes which Dou and then Van Mieris made popular, and which spawned the career of Godefridus Schalcken. It recalled a similar-themed painting of a young woman in a window niche that now resides at the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid. *Young Woman in a Niche with a Parrot and Cage* [fig num="27"] capped off a banner acquisition year for Dou, displaying equal virtuosity to *Old Woman at a Window with a Candle*, not simply with the rendering of the parrot, but also with the birdcage itself being so well finessed that one easily “feels” the smoothness of the metal. *Scholar Sharpening His Quill* [fig num="28"], acquired through George Gordon’s good offices at Sotheby’s, conveys the best of Dou’s skills and then some. It is a most popular image, as the focus of the sitter at a precise moment of concentration is almost excruciating. So exact is the rendering that, if one looks closely enough—and, let there be no doubt, enticing the viewer to lean in to look closer is one of Dou’s objectives—one can see that the knife is literally midway through the quill. Within a millisecond the task at hand will be finished and we will experience the satisfaction of the impending and successful conclusion. The Scholar’s earring is also a lovely touch. As important as was the purchase of *Scholar Sharpening his Quill*, the decisive Dou acquisition of 2009 was what is arguably his most important work in private hands, *Scholar Interrupted at His Writing* [fig num="29"] Subjective as this may be, Dou’s most signal and eternal accomplishment for me is his virtuoso capability to capture a precise instant where time stands still, where one’s breath needs to become more shallow to steady the eye and take in the *mise en scene*—where one can *feel* the moment. Similar in this respect to Vermeer, he pulls this off with a talent that is sheer genius. With *Scholar Interrupted at His Writing* we see the precise moment of what I call “arrested irritation.” The scholar is hard at work, and he has been interrupted. As if telling the artist “OK, take your picture already so I can get back to work,” the expression is less one of indulgence than frustration. In this snapshot Dou evokes, from a distance of four centuries, the master portrait photographer Yousuf Karsh at his best, as when in 1941 he snatched Winston Churchill’s cigar to capture the ultimate moment of human pique if not outright belligerence, that inkling into character that seems to explain so much about the person and his time. The artist chronicler Arnold Houbraken wrote that sitters for Dou had to “wait for the dust to settle” before he would begin painting, and that this may well have contributed to a sense of quiet despair at the artist’s manner. I am convinced that this anecdote evinces a different nuance: Dou was simply *that good*. That he was perhaps a touch more methodical in his approach was likely driven both by personality and a sense that it was quality and patience that were the integrated factors accounting for his reputation and financial success. He was famous for a reason, and to be known as the paradigm of perfection was a personal profile that was good for business. Few works combine so many facets of Dou’s technical talent, intellectual prowess and brilliant ability to seize a moment as well as is the “Sudeley Dou.” In a word, down to his signature on the piece of paper lodged in the book, it is to our eyes a perfect masterpiece possessing in multitudes all the aspects of Dou’s quality and patience that so thrilled me in my youth. A



Fig 20. Gerrit Dou, *Portrait of a Lady, Seated with a Music Book on Her Lap*, GD-116

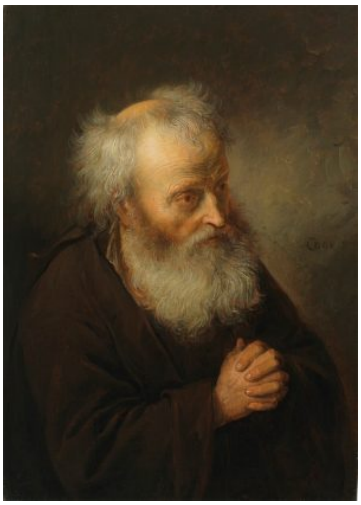

Fig 21. Gerrit Dou, *Old Man Praying* , GD-107



Fig 22. Willem van Mieris, *Hermit Praying in the Wilderness*, WM-100

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testament to his own sense of quality and patience, it was Johnny van Haeften's tenacity that enabled us to procure this masterpiece from the trustees of Sudeley Castle. Only Frans van Mieris the Elder could so consistently emulate the consummate talent of his Master and, in the best and most constructive spirit of *aemulatio*, surpass it such that the Master would come to be influenced by the pupil. For this and many other reasons, Van Mieris is a favored artist in our Collection. Our objective from the outset was to create the most comprehensive assemblage of his works in private hands … and we succeeded. With a breadth that spans work likely emanating from within Dou's studio, such as *Elderly Couple in an Interior* [fig num="30"], to one of the most iconic of all *fijnschilder* images, *Young Woman Feeding a Parrot*, through to the masterpiece of his last years, *Death of Lucretia*, our Collection uniquely presents the entirety of Van Mieris' artistic arc. As such, it represents an exceptional educational opportunity for scholars and viewers to readily absorb the quiet power of his work and influence. For all the many technical reasons that account for his being perhaps the highest compensated artist of his time, I suspect that one of the most significant reasons that he was so prized is that Van Mieris is that rare artist who gives joy. Though certainly there is an enchantment to the eye, there is much more to his art than that. There is intelligence, a vibrancy and immediacy to his characters that is charmingly "in the moment." The twinkle in the eyes—one of his signature features—perfectly embodies the notion that the eyes are the windows into the soul. One sees the power of his brush, if not the brushstrokes themselves, in the tenderness of *Child's Lesson* [fig num="31"], which likely portrays a mother about to surrender her child to the priesthood. The warmth of the moment is accentuated by the rendering of the details and the shaded way in which the boy's head is portrayed. One observes it in Bathsheba's eyes in *Woman with a Lapdog, Accompanied by a Maidservant* [fig num="32"] when she contemplates the naughty and fateful implications of the letter she has received from King David. And one encounters it again in the man's bemused expression in *Woman Reading and a Man Seated at a Table* [fig num="33"] a beautiful piece that came to us from the collection of Lord Lansdowne. Even when conveying a portentous narrative or allegory, Leiden painters specialized in adding textures to their images, enabling them to display their talents with brio. Few did this to greater effect than Van Mieris. It is hard not to admire within the drama of his *Death of Lucretia* [fig num="6"] the panoply of exquisitely rendered surfaces, from the smooth wood of the lute and frayed silk of the chairs to the luminous satin of Lucretia's dress. A viewer feels that he can literally count the knots in the carpet. His other works from that period display a similar delectation. The *roemer* in the foreground of *Man Tuning a Violin* [fig num="34"] is so shimmering that it glistens. Still it does not distract from the actions, and particularly the expression, on the face of the man stylized to an almost grotesque effect. Interestingly, for me this convincing depiction of a man listening to a musical note conveys two completely different impressions. While his eerie smile indicates satisfaction with the pitch he has created, his face also evinces the wincing of an artist experiencing a painfully discordant note. Either way one



Fig 23. Gerrit Dou, *Cat Crouching on the Ledge of an Artist's Atelier*, GD-108



Fig 24. Gerrit Dou, *Goat in a Landscape*, GD-114



Fig 25. Gerrit Dou, *Herring Seller and Boy*, GD-106

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chooses to view the moment, there is absolutely no doubt that Van Mieris' intelligence established a connection between subject and viewer that few painters have achieved. Another exceptional and highly successful painting by Van Mieris is *Traveler at Rest* [fig num="35"], a rare work on copper. Everything about its execution is sublime. Yet the apogee of Van Mieris' ability to convey interiority is represented by *Young Woman Feeding a Parrot.* The most important of his works not permanently housed in a museum, it is iconic within Van Mieris' *oeuvre* as well as within the narrative of the *fijnschilders* themselves. Considered a masterpiece of the Leiden School, variations on the painting abound, and for many reasons. The combination of mood, atmosphere and technique are exquisitely blended into a whole whose ability to awe has survived centuries of varying tastes. Though in a different realm, it is akin to the reaction one experiences with Vermeer's *The Milkmaid* [fig num="36"]. *Young Woman Feeding a Parrot* [fig num="8"] is a painting with a glorious royal Bavarian provenance, and it appears to have been a favorite of its owners. When Lady Samuel donated the bulk of the magnificent collection of her late husband, Lord Harold Samuel, to the City of London's Mansion House, this painting was held back until her own passing. As with Dou at his finest, one is drawn deeper into the painting to behold its wonders, of which there are many. The demeanor of the sitter fuses with the perfect rendering of fabrics, furs and, indeed, all of the textures playing within the picture frame. The interplay with the parrot is sublime. Among the dozen or so virtuoso details are the exquisite, almost imperceptible wooden shavings that have collected in curlicues beneath the parrot's perch. Combined, these elements engender a sublime moment of magic, delectation and a quiet, eternal power. Though represented differently, the same talent is also present in Van Mieris' formal portraits. The stately and yet soulful pose of *Portrait of a Lady* [fig num="37"] in her fashionable shot silk gown was an image regarded as so precious that at an 18th century auction it commanded a higher price than a Vermeer. We want to know more about her. We learn more about Van Mieris' subjects in *Portraits of a Thirty-Year-Old Man & Twenty-Five-Year-Old Woman* [fig num="38"] that we acquired through a private sale negotiated by Sander Bijl soon after we began collecting. The two pendants are a charming portrayal of a couple at a turning point, the woman indicating with apparent gratification that she is with child, and the husband emanating serenity and satisfaction with their state of affairs. Van Mieris' "*Self-Portrait" with a Plumed Beret* [fig num="39"] is a beautiful expression of a man unafraid to be in on his own joke. In this regard, he is akin to Jan Steen, whose *Self-Portrait with a Lute: Sense of Hearing* [fig num="40"] is an admirable exercise in self-deprecation. Similar in mirthful effect to Steen's particularly brilliant self-portrait with a lute in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection, the artist clearly does not take himself too seriously. Though a serious self-portrait does exist, one surmises that it is not for Steen to adopt the fashion of his fellow artists to elevate their rising status in society. One has no difficulty imagining these kindred spirits enjoying each other's company in Steen's tavern in Leiden. I am, of course, speculating, but the sense of wit and storytelling conveyed through their brushes must surely have been a translation



Fig 26. Gerrit Dou, *Old Woman at a Window with a Candle*, GD-103



Fig 27. Gerrit Dou, *Young Woman in a Niche with a Parrot in a Cage*, GD-105



Fig 28. Gerrit Dou, *Scholar Sharpening His Quill*, GD-104

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of their amusing character traits. Still, one gets the impression that they would have been great drinking companions. Self-portraits are especially coveted as the artist will sometimes throw all he has into the effort. Michiel van Musscher 's *Portrait of the Artist in His Studio* [fig num="41"] is an excellent case in point. Bridging a Leiden refinement with a Delft-ish softness, the painting is an exquisite work, possessing a freer brushwork that renders it one of his finest works and arguably his best self-portrait. Rich in lustrous tapestries and silks, and accompanied by exceptional elements with his beautifully executed face, it is a masterpiece of Dutch art. Musscher's self-portrait may be atypical in its perfection, but it was not so in terms of his ambition. He was expressing himself as he wished to be seen by his peers and patrons, an established track for painters on the ascendant. As far as fantastical self-portraits go, however, I do not believe anything can surpass that of Pieter van Laer's [fig num="42"]. When I first laid eyes on it at Richard Feigen's office, my heart skipped a beat as Richard casually referenced the story of an artist in deathly fear as the devil came for his soul. A keen student of art history with a great eye and a passion for vigorous debate, Richard had no difficulty selling the narrative. The man whom I affectionately took to calling Ricardissimo became a close friend from the moment we met. Ironically, that first encounter was at a small dinner hosted by Otto Naumann at the Chateau Neercan outside of Maastricht, and it was not so pretty. We engaged in a shouting match regarding politics that apparently caused a stir in a wide radius around our table. Not understanding that people like us welcome and indeed thrive on robust polemics, bystanders thought we were engaged in an altercation. Before Otto could express his regrets for introducing us, he watched incredulously as we simultaneously got up and hugged, expressing mutual admiration for a thoroughly enjoyable joust, and apologized to those whose tranquil meals we had interrupted by our display of animal spirits. We have been great friends ever since. Though not a collector of the Italianate school to which Pieter van Laer, known as *Il Bamboccio* for his hunchback, gave his name, I found his sheer terror irresistibly convincing. I also found it sufficiently frightening to judge it unsuitable for a gallery frequented by my small children. Walter Liedtke and Keith Christiansen were great admirers of the work, and so it went on loan to the Met where, other than for temporary exhibitions elsewhere, it has stayed. Those who see the picture cannot easily forget it. When we bought the painting, I asked Richard where he had displayed it, being that it was in his personal collection. When he told me that it had been hanging in his bedroom, I cheekily told him that I guessed this explained a lot, and then predicted good tidings for him romantically. Though other factors have certainly been in play, we at least partially credit this painting's removal from his hearth with the success of Richard's marriage to the beautiful, elegant and talented Isabel. As self-portraits provide direct insight into the artist's personality, Jan Steen's multi-figure depictions of daily life and didactic allegories reveal the human condition of his contemporaries. For as long as I can remember—certainly since my youth—I have adored Jan Steen. Steen seemingly had the capacity to achieve any effect he wished and with an unusually deep connection to humanity, be it an irreverently indulgent observation of its weaknesses or the



Fig 29. Gerrit Dou, *Scholar Interrupted at His Writing*, GD-102



Fig 30. Frans van Mieris, *Elderly Couple in an Interior*, FM-100



Fig 31. Frans van Mieris, *Child's Lesson (Hannah Entrusting Her Son Samuel into the Care of the High Priest Eli?)*, FM-102

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subtle and admiring highlighting of its strengths. Simply put, there is an intelligence to his work that never fails to move and impress. His genre scenes rival, and often surpass, Brueghel for ingenuity and humor. Moreover, Steen's bravura capacity to display a diversity of talents that run the gamut of stylistic trends from Leiden, his hometown, to Amsterdam, Haarlem and Delft, is astonishing. With obvious insight into the human condition, he seemed to enjoy being able to convey a determined capacity to match his contemporaries' foci on their own terms. As we became aggressive collectors of Steen, our eclectic representation of his works ultimately enabled us to acquire several of his greatest masterpieces, including *Prayer Before the Meal* [fig num="43"]. To my mind, *Prayer Before the Meal* is among the most eloquently reflective works in all of the Dutch Golden Age. Though I keep a framed digital reproduction of it over my desk, we have never exhibited the original in our Gallery, as the painting went directly from the auction house to the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., where it currently resides under Arthur Wheelock's loving eye. Our earliest acquisitions of Jan Steen's compositions, *Woman Counting Coins* [fig num="12"] and *Old Woman with a Fur Cap Holding a Jug and Singing* [fig num="11"], display women in diametrically opposite activities and even in two very different styles, the brushwork being tight and loose respectively. The gravity of *Quaker Funeral* [fig num="44"] similarly contrasts with the more humorous and aromatic *Man Swaddling a Child* [fig num="45"]. Enjoying this variety became one of the joys of our collecting. To think that the same mind that produced such a sublime vignette as *Prayer Before the Meal* could also produce *Tooth Puller* [fig num="46"] and choreograph *Interior with Women Thrashing a Man* [fig num="47"]—a painting that makes me laugh out loud—is marvelous. Could three people be more differently portrayed? Judging from the violence, laughing and facial expressions, the baser aspects of the peasants' relationship is likely no less visceral than the more elevated scene in *Prayer Before the Meal*. An objective observer would say that the comparison between the paintings is akin to comparing a whale to a minnow. These examples, however, are a testament to the eclectic abilities and insights—and demonstrable lack of conceit and affectation—that make the world of Steen so pleasurable. In the quest for total immersion in Steen's James Thurber-like world, the entirety of the floor leading to my office was devoted to his works, with *Sacrifice of Iphigenia* [fig num="48"] formerly of the Goudstikker collection and the Rijksmuseum, and arguably the most important of Steen's history paintings, being the first image that our visitors would see when they entered. Across from this monumental work hung *Lazarus and the Rich Man (or "In Luxury Beware")* [fig num="49"]. Having graced the dining room of the financier Saul Steinberg, it is a particular favorite aesthetically as well as thematically. On opposing walls were the monumental *Peasants Merrymaking Outside an Inn* [fig num="50"] and the highly suggestive *Banquet of Anthony and Cleopatra* [fig num="51"], acquired from Bob Haboldt via Boedy Lilian. All of these paintings display a magisterial array of figures in various attitudes, ranging from the heartbreaking grief on the face of King Agamemnon, the riotous



Fig 32. Frans van Mieris, *Woman with a Lapdog, Accompanied by a Maidservant (probably Bathsheba with King David's Letter),* FM-105



Fig 33. Frans van Mieris, *Woman Reading and a Man Seated at a Table*, FM-107



Fig 34. Frans van Mieris, *Man Tuning a Violin*, FM-111

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decadence of Anthony and Cleopatra's court, an intricately woven village scene and, pointedly, the proud rich man raising his goblet in Lazarus' parable. In terms of being captivated by the world of a brilliantly informed mind and hand, it was as close to a sensory experience as one can imagine. Gabriel Metsu was an artist with an arc almost equally as broad as Steen's. He was someone we had aspired to collect from the moment I read Frank Robinson's biography. In his day, Metsu enjoyed an elevated position in the Dutch firmament. "Why buy a Vermeer when a Metsu is available?" was a question that was asked, and one that continued to be asked, by dealers as late as the turn of the 19th century. Those who have seen the magnificent paintings bequeathed by Lord Alfred and Lady Alice Beit to the National Gallery of Art in Ireland would not need to ask how such a remark could be made, as these masterpieces reflect why Metsu merits inclusion in the highest rank of Dutch artists. To this I would also add *The Sick Child* [fig num="52"] in the Rijksmuseum. It is a favorite of his works and arguably the most beautiful allegory of the pieta and maternal devotion in the Dutch era. We could not obtain such museum-held masterpieces because they will never come onto the market. They nonetheless represent the lodestar that gives Metsu's admirers the conviction that their aesthetic appreciation and intellectual affection for Metsu is well placed. Every time I see the reds or oranges that Metsu boldly displayed—or sometimes simply insinuated—into his works, I smile in acknowledgement of a friend who has individualistically made his presence known to me. Gabriel Metsu richly merits his recent renaissance. Adriaan Waiboer, Curator of Dutch Art at the National Gallery of Art in Dublin, is a new champion for the artist, a development already resulting in a definitive catalogue *raisonnée* as well as the most important exhibition of Metsu's work in modern times. He is a first-rate mind who, after finishing his doctorate, maintained a genuine passion for the artist—easier said than done for anyone who has had to study a subject day in and day out for years. The fruits of his collaborations with Arthur Wheelock in particular show a promising career path indeed for this fine representative of the next generation in Old Masters scholarship. We initially collected Gabriel Metsu because he was a student of Dou. One of our original purchases was a severely abraded image of *Woman Drawing Wine from a Barrel* [fig num="53"], a rare work by Metsu that can be directly linked to a specific painting of Dou and therefore deemed a "document" worthy of restoration. However, in short order we came to see Metsu as a multi-talented figure bridging several genres within the Dutch scene while creating his own personal style and narrative. No work reveals Metsu's remarkable originality more than his nude self-portrait in *Hunter Getting Dressed after Bathing* [fig num="54"]. Here he takes modesty (or immodesty, depending on one's point of view) to a new level in a painting unique in the whole of the Dutch school. It is a stunningly powerful piece, and my first utterance when Ben Hall brought it to Otto Naumann's gallery for me to see was incredulity. As a highly personal capstone to the largest and most diverse collection of Metsu, it is hard to match. The earliest of Metsu's works in The Leiden Collection is *Woman Selling Game from a Stall* [fig num="55"]. Even intuitively, within the context of his life's work, this massive image is an



Fig 35. Frans van Mieris, *Traveler at Rest*, FM-122



Fig 36. Johannes Vermeer, *The Milkmaid*, ca. 1660, oil on canvas, 45.5 x 41 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-A-2344



Fig 37. Frans van Mieris, *Portrait of a Lady*, FM-109

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extraordinary testament to his wide field of vision. Clearly influenced by Jan Baptist Weenix, what is so impressive about the painting is the broad brushwork and courage conveyed by an artist so early in his career. We see this ambition again in the Collection through the more introspective representation of *Woman Reading a Book by a Window* [fig num="56"] painted during the artist's late Leiden period. A "transitional piece," it is bolder brushed than his most Dou-influenced pictures and, similarly, in a larger format. It is also the earliest of Metsu's known paintings to show a contemporary Dutch interior. Its representation of a wistful or contemplative moment conjures the atmosphere, if not the unique transcendence, of *Man Writing a Letter* [fig num="57"] in the National Gallery in Dublin. Compared with the tighter technique and smaller scale of the Leiden-inspired years, such as the severe *Public Notary* (the same sitter of which is rendered so well in The Louvre's *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* [fig num="58"], *Kitchen Maid Preparing Carrots* [fig num="59"], the very beautiful and classically "Metsu"*Young Man Smoking and A Woman Pouring Beer* [fig num="60"], and the meticulous *Smoker Seated at a Table* [fig num="61"] rendered flawlessly on copper, these larger formats brim with bravado. Being able to show the Master's career arc in full, the range and depth of our collecting style has paid scholars many dividends. The perfection of the exquisitely rendered, Delft-ish *Elegant Lady Writing at Her Desk* [fig num="62"] reinforces various angles on the interior life of women that distinguishes Metsu's *oeuvre*. Of course, there was more to his ambition than to impart a moral. Enchanting the eye was very much one of his goals. The work contains objects rendered with a similar exactitude to that of Willem Kalf, of whom Goethe was to say: "If I had to choose between the golden vessels or the picture..., I would choose the picture." In this instance, it is the silver of the inkwell, not a golden vessel, in its context of lush carpets, soft fur collars and a dog's coat, all so rich that one wishes to caress each in turn, that is perfection itself. The tactile impact is accentuated by the moment of interruption conveying a welcome respite if not actual amusement on the part of the sitter, whose wonderfully individualized face and pose bespeak an independent character. The quiet eloquence of *Young Woman at an Interior, Reading a Letter* [fig num="63"] also reinforces this narrative, albeit in more muted terms. We are grateful to Dr. Peter Sutton, Director of the Bruce Museum of Art and Science in Greenwich, for his friendly counsel in our acquisition of both these works, the latter coming from the collection of Ambassador William Middendorf, a fun and highly intelligent man who is quite an accomplished draughtsman in his own right, as anyone who has seen his sketchbook can attest. As they were most encouraging to us from the outset of our collecting, I should add that Peter Sutton and his wife Bug are among the wittiest and most knowledgeable figures in the Old Masters world. Peter is one of our generation's leading scholars of Dutch and Flemish art, with multiple talents beyond that. His tenure at the Bruce is a fine case in point, and one that has been a boon to us on a deeply personal level. His championing of the concept of utilizing art in the pursuit of worthy causes enabled Dominque Surh and me to have the opportunity to launch a major initiative at the Bruce



Fig 38. Frans van Mieris, *Portrait of a Thirty-Year-Old Man and a Twenty-Five Year Old Woman*, FM-110.a/b



Fig 39. Frans van Mieris, *"Self-Portrait" with a Plumed Beret*, FM-108



Fig 40. Jan Steen, *Self-Portrait with a Lute: Sense of Hearing*, JS-115

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on the work of the wildlife artist Robert Dallet for the benefit of Panthera, the wild cat conservation charity my wife and I co-founded together with Alan Rabinowitz. Created in partnership with Hermes, Pierre-Alexis Dumas (Hermes' Artistic Director and a member of the founding family that has run the company for six generations) and the team at Panthera, and curated by Dominique, the initiative was a great success. Museums can be obtuse institutions. Only someone with Peter's drive and vision could accomplish such a feat, one for which we are eternally grateful as it successfully wedded art, which Leonardo da Vinci called "the queen of all the sciences," with our great passion for advancing wildlife conservation. If art is indeed the queen of all the sciences, then the Leiden School was at the forefront of the merging of art and science. The use of artificial light in a painting to illuminate the subject matter was not invented in Leiden, of course, but it was given added impetus by the school of painting that bears its name. Leiden itself was a university as well as a mercantile town renowned for its contributions to science, including in optics, and a theme that successfully intersected art and science was sure to be given a warm reception. Rembrandt and then Dou understood this and led the way. Godefridus Schalcken, however, turned it into a cottage industry. With Schalcken's painting *Lovers* [fig num="16"], acquired in the auction in which Johnny van Haeften was the unwitting under-bidder, we had an exceptional example of a nocturne. We nonetheless continued to be unabashedly eager collectors of the genre that was the primary source of Schalcken's fame. An etching made by Schalcken of his Master, Gerrit Dou, presented to us as a gift by Sir Norman Rosenthal, bridged most elegantly the two artists for our Collection. What I termed Schalcken's "bread and butter" images, including *Girl with a Candle* [fig num="64"], *Nocturnal Interior with a Toper* (now attributed to the school of Godefridus Schalcken) [fig num="65"], and the perennial crowd-pleaser, *Young Man Blowing a Torch to Light a Candle* [fig num="66"], joined the Collection as they came on the market. The delight they represented was enhanced by a rare ink, chalk and wash drawing of *Young Boy, Dressed in a Blue Robe, Holding a Lighted Torch* [fig num="67"]. We particularly coveted certain exceptional compositions, such as *Conversion of Mary Magdalen* [fig num="68"], painted for Johann Wilhelm, the Elector Palatine in Dusseldorf, and the exquisite *Young Man and Woman Studying a Statue of Venus, by Lamplight* [fig num="69"], even before they came up for sale. Enjoyed not just by collectors of genre scenes or allegories but even as portraits, Schalcken received commissions in which the theme was advanced, including that of *James Stuart, Duke of Lennox and Richmond, with his Greyhound by Candlelight* [fig num="70"]. As our interest in the artist grew, we acquired a wider variety of his works (and even an excellent example now attributed to his sister Maria, *Boy Offering Grapes to a Woman* [fig num="71"]. The range of his work showed that whereas Schalcken saw the nocturne as a franchise from which he would become quite wealthy, he was the opposite of a "one-trick pony." *Portrait of Barthout van Slingelandt* [fig num="72"] on copper is perfection itself. As with his *Diana and Her Nymphs in a Clearing* [fig num="73"] and *Parable of the Lost Piece of Silver* [fig num="74"] (the latter being a candlelight scene in which the



Fig 41. Michiel van Musscher, *Portrait of the Artist in His Studio*, MM-103



Fig 42. Pieter van Laer, *Self-Portrait with Magic Scene*, PvL-100



Fig 43. Jan Steen, *Prayer Before the Meal*, JS-116



Fig 44. Jan Steen, *Quaker Funeral*, oil on panel, 46 x 84.3 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, JS-113

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artist has charmingly given himself a cameo appearance), the capacity to pivot from a near *sfumato* in his nocturnes to a highly refined classicism is carried off with ease. That Schalcken could have painted in as wide a range as he liked is undisputed. That he chose to use his skills to make an exceptionally successful career is equally reasonable. As Rembrandt, who was buried in a pauper's grave, surely would attest, there was little temporal glory in one's lifetime for not giving the consumer what he or she wanted.

It was not long before our eyes wandered away from Leiden. This process began with some good news, as our initial experience in reattribution was a positive one. On my first visit to Maastricht, accompanied by Norman Rosenthal, we visited the booth of Johnny van Haeften, who told us that he also had some things in the back room. "What's this?," asked Norman, pointing to a painting of a sleeping soldier being awakened. Johnny explained that it was a canvas given to Caspar Netscher, painted after a Gerard ter Borch of a similar subject now in the Taft Museum. "It's very, very good," responded Norman. Johnny agreed with Norman and said that, whereas the fair's Vetting Committee had regarded it as a Netscher, he too felt it was Ter Borch, Master and not pupil. I could not claim to parse the differences and said simply, "If it's not Ter Borch, then at worst it's a beautiful Netscher and a great subject." With that, I purchased the work confident that, come what may, I had a fine painting. Not long after, Dominique Surh took it upon herself to research the painting. Her research was a fine example of forensics (her discovery of the presence of an almost imperceptible clay pipe stem on the floor of an etching after the painting by William Chevalier in 1834 was a most revealing clue) as well as scholarship. Ultimately, Dr. Marjorie Wieseman, the expert on Netscher and Curator of Dutch and Flemish Painting at the National Gallery in London, concluded that *Lady Tickling a Sleeping Soldier* [fig num="75"] was painted by Ter Borch himself and, moreover, that the painting was actually the prime version of the image that had found its way to the Taft Museum.

"

The Funnel Comes to Leiden

All three dealers are great wits, Johnny most of all. When in a discussion about big cats I informed Johnny that a group of tigers is known as a "streak," as a group of lions is called a "pride," he remarked with a straight face that a group of art dealers is known as a "swindle." It was Johnny who gave us the nickname "The Funnel." Other than being a reference to the volume of our purchases, it also made light of the fact that Daphne and I were insatiable. From 2003 until 2008, we were on a tear, procuring works from the Dutch Golden Age at an average rate of one a week. Though we were more catholic in our tastes, the word on the street at first was that we were solely buyers of the Leiden School, small format fine manner paintings related



Fig 45. Jan Steen, *Man Swaddling a Child*, oil on panel, 33 x 26 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, JS-114



Fig 46. Jan Steen, *Tooth-Puller*, oil on panel, 38.6 x 30.5 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, JS-109



Fig 47. Jan Steen, *Interior with Women Thrashing a Man ("Peasants Fighting")*, JS-103

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to Dou, Van Mieris and their contemporaries. The Collection certainly began that way, and it was deliberate that the first paintings were by Dou, Van Mieris, Steen, and Metsu. If anyone had to guess what we aspired to create, the answer might well have been the private equivalent of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie's exceptional assemblage of *fijnschilders*.

After our initial purchases in 2003, we soon acquired Dou's *Portrait of a Man with a Hat* **(fig 17)**, painted early in the artist's career. Portraits, which were not really his stock-in-trade, did not come up often. With the unusual exception of *Portrait of a Gentleman with a Walking Stick* **(fig 18)**, whose pendant resides at the Norton Simon Museum in California **(fig 19)**, it was not until 2009 that we were presented with another portrait, *Portrait of a Lady, Seated with a Music Book on Her Lap* **(fig 20)**, which we readily acquired from the De Villeneuve collection as it was clearly a work made in the artist's elegant mature style.

A blitz of purchases in 2006 and 2007 led to the acquisition of the cornerstone masterpieces of our Dou collection, among them Dou's *Old Man Praying* **(fig 21)**. As a study in prayer and venerable devotion, it is one of the most moving and powerful images from the hermit genre for which the artist was coveted (a theme we revisited with Willem van Mieris' *Hermit Praying in the Wilderness* **(fig 22)**. The painting also possessed an exceptional provenance, having been in the collection of Lothar Franz von Schönborn, who was not only the Elector of Mainz but also the Archbishop of Bamberg. Soon after, we acquired a very special image of *Cat Crouching on the Ledge of an Artist's Atelier* **(fig 23)**. The provenance alone was incredibly evocative for a collector of *fijnschilders*: having found its way into the collection of King Augustus II, it was thereafter housed for more than a century in the Dresden Gemäldegalerie; as previously noted, Dresden is home to the most important museum collection of *fijnschilders* and, at that time, was one of the collections we most sought to emulate. That it was a cat, of course, made it clear that it was "meant to be" in light of our interest in felids of all kinds. This latter aspect was highlighted in 2008 when we acquired *Goat in a Landscape* **(fig 24)** with which to pair it. Both pictures share a defining feature in that they utilize the animal in the foreground to lead us to another reality. The cat is a gateway to an artist at work in his studio and the goat, a rare, playful and sexually charged creature already pregnant with deep iconographic implications, leads us to lovers near a tree in the background. In quick succession came *Herring Seller and Boy* **(fig 25)**, in quality, narrative and condition a remarkable example of the niche market scene for which Dou is most famous. A masterpiece of detail often compared to a similar work in the Queen of England's Collection, it is Dou at the height of his powers. One can literally make out the scales of the herring that had fallen off the fish.



Fig 48. Jan Steen, *Sacrifice of Iphigenia*, JS-112



Fig 49. Jan Steen, *Lazarus and the Rich Man or "In Luxury Beware"*, JS-112



Fig 50. Jan Steen, *Peasants Merrymaking Outside an Inn (Previously "Fair at Warmond")*, JS-108



Fig 51. Jan Steen, *Banquet of Anthony and Cleopatra*, JS-107

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2007 brought another trove of Dou paintings starting with *Old Woman at a Window with a Candle* **(fig 26)**, an excellent representation of the "nocturne" scenes which Dou and then Van Mieris made popular, and which spawned the career of Godefridus Schalcken. It recalled a similar-themed painting of a young woman in a window niche that now resides at the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid. *Young Woman in a Niche with a Parrot and Cage* **(fig 27)** capped off a banner acquisition year for Dou, displaying equal virtuosity to *Old Woman at a Window with a Candle*, not simply with the rendering of the parrot, but also with the birdcage itself being so well finessed that one easily "feels" the smoothness of the metal. *Scholar Sharpening His Quill* **(fig 28)** , acquired through George Gordon's good offices at Sotheby's, conveys the best of Dou's skills and then some. It is a most popular image, as the focus of the sitter at a precise moment of concentration is almost excruciating. So exact is the rendering that, if one looks closely enough—and, let there be no doubt, enticing the viewer to lean in to look closer is one of Dou's objectives—one can see that the knife is literally midway through the quill. Within a millisecond the task at hand will be finished and we will experience the satisfaction of the impending and successful conclusion. The Scholar's earring is also a lovely touch.



Fig 52. Gabriel Metsu, *Sick Child*, ca. 1664–66, oil on canvas, 32.2 x 27.2 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, SK-A-3059

As important as was the purchase of *Scholar Sharpening his Quill*, the decisive Dou acquisition of 2009 was what is arguably his most important work in private hands, *Scholar Interrupted at His Writing* **(fig 29)** Subjective as this may be, Dou's most signal and eternal accomplishment for me is his virtuoso capability to capture a precise instant where time stands still, where one's breath needs to become more shallow to steady the eye and take in the *mise en scene*—where one can *feel* the moment. Similar in this respect to Vermeer, he pulls this off with a talent that is sheer genius. With *Scholar Interrupted at His Writing* we see the precise moment of what I call "arrested irritation." The scholar is hard at work, and he has been interrupted. As if telling the artist "OK, take your picture already so I can get back to work," the expression is less one of indulgence than frustration. In this snapshot Dou evokes, from a distance of four centuries, the master portrait photographer Yousuf Karsh at his best, as when in 1941 he snatched Winston Churchill's cigar to capture the ultimate moment of human pique if not outright belligerence, that inkling into character that seems to explain so much about the person and his time.



Fig 53. Gabriel Metsu, *Woman Drawing Wine from a Barrel*, 36.8 x 33.3 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, GM-112



Fig 54. Gabriel Metsu, *Hunter Getting Dressed after Bathing*, GM-106

The artist chronicler Arnold Houbraken wrote that sitters for Dou had to "wait for the dust to settle" before he would begin painting, and that this may well have contributed to a sense of quiet despair at the artist's manner. I am convinced that this anecdote evinces a different nuance: Dou was simply *that good*. That he was perhaps a touch more methodical in his approach was likely driven both by personality and a sense that it was quality and patience that were the integrated factors accounting for his reputation and financial success. He was famous for a reason, and to be known as the

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paradigm of perfection was a personal profile that was good for business. Few works combine so many facets of Dou's technical talent, intellectual prowess and brilliant ability to seize a moment as well as is the "Sudeley Dou." In a word, down to his signature on the piece of paper lodged in the book, it is to our eyes a perfect masterpiece possessing in multitudes all the aspects of Dou's quality and patience that so thrilled me in my youth. A testament to his own sense of quality and patience, it was Johnny van Haeften's tenacity that enabled us to procure this masterpiece from the trustees of Sudeley Castle.

Only Frans van Mieris the Elder could so consistently emulate the consummate talent of his Master and, in the best and most constructive spirit of *aemulatio*, surpass it such that the Master would come to be influenced by the pupil. For this and many other reasons, Van Mieris is a favored artist in our Collection. Our objective from the outset was to create the most comprehensive assemblage of his works in private hands … and we succeeded. With a breadth that spans work likely emanating from within Dou's studio, such as *Elderly Couple in an Interior* **(fig 30)**, to one of the most iconic of all *fijnschilder* images, *Young Woman Feeding a Parrot*, through to the masterpiece of his last years, *Death of Lucretia*, our Collection uniquely presents the entirety of Van Mieris' artistic arc. As such, it represents an exceptional educational opportunity for scholars and viewers to readily absorb the quiet power of his work and influence.

For all the many technical reasons that account for his being perhaps the highest compensated artist of his time, I suspect that one of the most significant reasons that he was so prized is that Van Mieris is that rare artist who gives joy. Though certainly there is an enchantment to the eye, there is much more to his art than that. There is intelligence, a vibrancy and immediacy to his characters that is charmingly "in the moment." The twinkle in the eyes—one of his signature features—perfectly embodies the notion that the eyes are the windows into the soul. One sees the power of his brush, if not the brushstrokes themselves, in the tenderness of *Child's Lesson* **(fig 31)**, which likely portrays a mother about to surrender her child to the priesthood. The warmth of the moment is accentuated by the rendering of the details and the shaded way in which the boy's head is portrayed. One observes it in Bathsheba's eyes in *Woman with a Lapdog, Accompanied by a Maidservant* **(fig 32)** when she contemplates the naughty and fateful implications of the letter she has received from King David. And one encounters it again in the man's bemused expression in *Woman Reading and a Man Seated at a Table* **(fig 33)** a beautiful piece that came to us from the collection of Lord Lansdowne.

Even when conveying a portentous narrative or allegory, Leiden painters specialized in adding textures to their images, enabling them to display their talents with brio. Few did this to greater effect than Van Mieris. It is hard not to admire within the



Fig 55. Gabriel Metsu, *Woman Selling Game from a Stall*, GM-114



Fig 56. Gabriel Metsu, *Woman Reading a Book by a Window*, GM-105



Fig 57. Gabriel Metsu, *Man Writing a Letter,* ca. 1664-66 oil on panel 52.5 x 40.2 cm, National Gallery of Ireland, NGI.4536

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drama of his *Death of Lucretia* **(fig 6)** the panoply of exquisitely rendered surfaces, from the smooth wood of the lute and frayed silk of the chairs to the luminous satin of Lucretia's dress. A viewer feels that he can literally count the knots in the carpet. His other works from that period display a similar delectation. The *roemer* in the foreground of *Man Tuning a Violin* **(fig 34)** is so shimmering that it glistens. Still it does not distract from the actions, and particularly the expression, on the face of the man stylized to an almost grotesque effect. Interestingly, for me this convincing depiction of a man listening to a musical note conveys two completely different impressions. While his eerie smile indicates satisfaction with the pitch he has created, his face also evinces the wincing of an artist experiencing a painfully discordant note. Either way one chooses to view the moment, there is absolutely no doubt that Van Mieris' intelligence established a connection between subject and viewer that few painters have achieved.

Another exceptional and highly successful painting by Van Mieris is *Traveler at Rest* **(fig 35)**, a rare work on copper. Everything about its execution is sublime. Yet the apogee of Van Mieris' ability to convey interiority is represented by *Young Woman Feeding a Parrot.* The most important of his works not permanently housed in a museum, it is iconic within Van Mieris' *oeuvre* as well as within the narrative of the *fijnschilders* themselves. Considered a masterpiece of the Leiden School, variations on the painting abound, and for many reasons. The combination of mood, atmosphere and technique are exquisitely blended into a whole whose ability to awe has survived centuries of varying tastes. Though in a different realm, it is akin to the reaction one experiences with Vermeer's *The Milkmaid* **(fig 36)**. *Young Woman Feeding a Parrot* **(fig 8)** is a painting with a glorious royal Bavarian provenance, and it appears to have been a favorite of its owners. When Lady Samuel donated the bulk of the magnificent collection of her late husband, Lord Harold Samuel, to the City of London's Mansion House, this painting was held back until her own passing. As with Dou at his finest, one is drawn deeper into the painting to behold its wonders, of which there are many. The demeanor of the sitter fuses with the perfect rendering of fabrics, furs and, indeed, all of the textures playing within the picture frame. The interplay with the parrot is sublime. Among the dozen or so virtuoso details are the exquisite, almost imperceptible wooden shavings that have collected in curlicues beneath the parrot's perch. Combined, these elements engender a sublime moment of magic, delectation and a quiet, eternal power.

Though represented differently, the same talent is also present in Van Mieris' formal portraits. The stately and yet soulful pose of *Portrait of a Lady* **(fig 37)** in her fashionable shot silk gown was an image regarded as so precious that at an 18th century auction it commanded a higher price than a Vermeer. We want to know more about her. We learn more about Van Mieris' subjects in *Portraits of a Thirty-Year-Old*



Fig 58. Gabriel Metsu, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, 1653, 134 x 165 cm, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris



Fig 59. Gabriel Metsu, *Woman Preparing Carrots*, oil on panel, 27.6 x 24.8 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, GM-107



Fig 60. Gabriel Metsu, *Young Man Smoking and A Woman Pouring Beer*, GM-108

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Man & Twenty-Five-Year-Old Woman **(fig 38)** that we acquired through a private sale negotiated by Sander Bijl soon after we began collecting. The two pendants are a charming portrayal of a couple at a turning point, the woman indicating with apparent gratification that she is with child, and the husband emanating serenity and satisfaction with their state of affairs.

Van Mieris' "*Self-Portrait" with a Plumed Beret* **(fig 39)** is a beautiful expression of a man unafraid to be in on his own joke. In this regard, he is akin to Jan Steen, whose *Self-Portrait with a Lute: Sense of Hearing* **(fig 40)** is an admirable exercise in self-deprecation. Similar in mirthful effect to Steen's particularly brilliant self-portrait with a lute in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection, the artist clearly does not take himself too seriously. Though a serious self-portrait does exist, one surmises that it is not for Steen to adopt the fashion of his fellow artists to elevate their rising status in society. One has no difficulty imagining these kindred spirits enjoying each other's company in Steen's tavern in Leiden. I am, of course, speculating, but the sense of wit and storytelling conveyed through their brushes must surely have been a translation of their amusing character traits. Still, one gets the impression that they would have been great drinking companions.

Self-portraits are especially coveted as the artist will sometimes throw all he has into the effort. Michiel van Musscher's *Portrait of the Artist in His Studio* **(fig 41)** is an excellent case in point. Bridging a Leiden refinement with a Delft-ish softness, the painting is an exquisite work, possessing a freer brushwork that renders it one of his finest works and arguably his best self-portrait. Rich in lustrous tapestries and silks, and accompanied by exceptional elements with his beautifully executed face, it is a masterpiece of Dutch art. Musscher's self-portrait may be atypical in its perfection, but it was not so in terms of his ambition. He was expressing himself as he wished to be seen by his peers and patrons, an established track for painters on the ascendant.

As far as fantastical self-portraits go, however, I do not believe anything can surpass that of Pieter van Laer's **(fig 42)**. When I first laid eyes on it at Richard Feigen's office, my heart skipped a beat as Richard casually referenced the story of an artist in deathly fear as the devil came for his soul. A keen student of art history with a great eye and a passion for vigorous debate, Richard had no difficulty selling the narrative.

The man whom I affectionately took to calling Ricardissimo became a close friend from the moment we met. Ironically, that first encounter was at a small dinner hosted by Otto Naumann at the Chateau Neercan outside of Maastricht, and it was not so pretty. We engaged in a shouting match regarding politics that apparently caused a stir in a wide radius around our table. Not understanding that people like us welcome and indeed thrive on robust polemics, bystanders thought we were engaged in an altercation. Before Otto could express his regrets for introducing us, he watched



Fig 61. Gabriel Metsu, *Smoker Seated at a Table*, GM-111



Fig 62. Gabriel Metsu, *Elegant Lady Writing at Her Desk,* GM-110



Fig 63. Gabriel Metsu, *Young Woman Seated in an Interior, Reading a Letter*, GM-103

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incredulously as we simultaneously got up and hugged, expressing mutual admiration for a thoroughly enjoyable joust, and apologized to those whose tranquil meals we had interrupted by our display of animal spirits. We have been great friends ever since.

Though not a collector of the Italianate school to which Pieter van Laer, known as *Il Bamboccio* for his hunchback, gave his name, I found his sheer terror irresistibly convincing. I also found it sufficiently frightening to judge it unsuitable for a gallery frequented by my small children. Walter Liedtke and Keith Christiansen were great admirers of the work, and so it went on loan to the Met where, other than for temporary exhibitions elsewhere, it has stayed. Those who see the picture cannot easily forget it. When we bought the painting, I asked Richard where he had displayed it, being that it was in his personal collection. When he told me that it had been hanging in his bedroom, I cheekily told him that I guessed this explained a lot, and then predicted good tidings for him romantically. Though other factors have certainly been in play, we at least partially credit this painting's removal from his hearth with the success of Richard's marriage to the beautiful, elegant and talented Isabel.

As self-portraits provide direct insight into the artist's personality, Jan Steen's multi-figure depictions of daily life and didactic allegories reveal the human condition of his contemporaries. For as long as I can remember—certainly since my youth—I have adored Jan Steen. Steen seemingly had the capacity to achieve any effect he wished and with an unusually deep connection to humanity, be it an irreverently indulgent observation of its weaknesses or the subtle and admiring highlighting of its strengths. Simply put, there is an intelligence to his work that never fails to move and impress. His genre scenes rival, and often surpass, Brueghel for ingenuity and humor. Moreover, Steen's bravura capacity to display a diversity of talents that run the gamut of stylistic trends from Leiden, his hometown, to Amsterdam, Haarlem and Delft, is astonishing. With obvious insight into the human condition, he seemed to enjoy being able to convey a determined capacity to match his contemporaries' foci on their own terms. As we became aggressive collectors of Steen, our eclectic representation of his works ultimately enabled us to acquire several of his greatest masterpieces, including *Prayer Before the Meal* **(fig 43)**. To my mind, *Prayer Before the Meal* is among the most eloquently reflective works in all of the Dutch Golden Age. Though I keep a framed digital reproduction of it over my desk, we have never exhibited the original in our Gallery, as the painting went directly from the auction house to the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., where it currently resides under Arthur Wheelock's loving eye.

Our earliest acquisitions of Jan Steen's compositions, *Woman Counting Coins* **(fig 12)**



Fig 64. Follower of Godefridus Schalcken, *Girl with a Candle*, GS-101



Fig 65. School of Godefridus Schalcken, *Nocturnal Interior with a Toper*, oil on panel, 26.7 x 21.6 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, GS-125



Fig 66. Godefridus Schalcken and Studio, *Young Man Blowing a Torch to Light a Candle*, GS-106

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and *Old Woman with a Fur Cap Holding a Jug and Singing* **(fig 11)**, display women in diametrically opposite activities and even in two very different styles, the brushwork being tight and loose respectively. The gravity of *Quaker Funeral* **(fig 44)** similarly contrasts with the more humorous and aromatic *Man Swaddling a Child* **(fig 45)**. Enjoying this variety became one of the joys of our collecting. To think that the same mind that produced such a sublime vignette as *Prayer Before the Meal* could also produce *Tooth Puller* **(fig 46)** and choreograph *Interior with Women Thrashing a Man* **(fig 47)**—a painting that makes me laugh out loud—is marvelous. Could three people be more differently portrayed? Judging from the violence, laughing and facial expressions, the baser aspects of the peasants' relationship is likely no less visceral than the more elevated scene in *Prayer Before the Meal*. An objective observer would say that the comparison between the paintings is akin to comparing a whale to a minnow. These examples, however, are a testament to the eclectic abilities and insights—and demonstrable lack of conceit and affectation—that make the world of Steen so pleasurable.

In the quest for total immersion in Steen's James Thurber-like world, the entirety of the floor leading to my office was devoted to his works, with *Sacrifice of Iphigenia* **(fig 48)** formerly of the Goudstikker collection and the Rijksmuseum, and arguably the most important of Steen's history paintings, being the first image that our visitors would see when they entered. Across from this monumental work hung *Lazarus and the Rich Man (or "In Luxury Beware")* **(fig 49)**. Having graced the dining room of the financier Saul Steinberg, it is a particular favorite aesthetically as well as thematically. On opposing walls were the monumental *Peasants Merrymaking Outside an Inn* **(fig 50)** and the highly suggestive *Banquet of Anthony and Cleopatra* **(fig 51)**, acquired from Bob Haboldt via Boedy Lilian. All of these paintings display a magisterial array of figures in various attitudes, ranging from the heartbreaking grief on the face of King Agamemnon, the riotous decadence of Anthony and Cleopatra's court, an intricately woven village scene and, pointedly, the proud rich man raising his goblet in Lazarus' parable. In terms of being captivated by the world of a brilliantly informed mind and hand, it was as close to a sensory experience as one can imagine.

Gabriel Metsu was an artist with an arc almost equally as broad as Steen's. He was someone we had aspired to collect from the moment I read Frank Robinson's biography. In his day, Metsu enjoyed an elevated position in the Dutch firmament. "Why buy a Vermeer when a Metsu is available?" was a question that was asked, and one that continued to be asked, by dealers as late as the turn of the 19th century. Those who have seen the magnificent paintings bequeathed by Lord Alfred and Lady Alice Beit to the National Gallery of Art in Ireland would not need to ask how such a remark could be made, as these masterpieces reflect why Metsu merits inclusion in the highest rank of Dutch artists. To this I would also add *The Sick Child* **(fig 52)** in



Fig 67. Godefridus Schalcken, *Young Boy, Dressed in a Blue Robe, Holding a Lighted Torch*, ca. 1692, brown ink, gray and blue washes, red chalk, black chalk underdrawing, GS-112



Fig 68. Godefridus Schalcken, *Conversion of the Magdalen*, GS-114



Fig 69. Godefridus Schalcken, *Young Man and Woman Studying a Statue of Venus, by Lamplight,* GS-103

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the Rijksmuseum. It is a favorite of his works and arguably the most beautiful allegory of the pieta and maternal devotion in the Dutch era. We could not obtain such museum-held masterpieces because they will never come onto the market. They nonetheless represent the lodestar that gives Metsu's admirers the conviction that their aesthetic appreciation and intellectual affection for Metsu is well placed. Every time I see the reds or oranges that Metsu boldly displayed—or sometimes simply insinuated—into his works, I smile in acknowledgement of a friend who has individualistically made his presence known to me.



Fig 70. Godefridus Schalcken, *James Stuart, Duke of Lennox and Richmond, with is Greyhound by Candlelight*, GS-109

Gabriel Metsu richly merits his recent renaissance. Adriaan Waiboer, Curator of Dutch Art at the National Gallery of Art in Dublin, is a new champion for the artist, a development already resulting in a definitive catalogue *raisonnée* as well as the most important exhibition of Metsu's work in modern times. He is a first-rate mind who, after finishing his doctorate, maintained a genuine passion for the artist—easier said than done for anyone who has had to study a subject day in and day out for years. The fruits of his collaborations with Arthur Wheelock in particular show a promising career path indeed for this fine representative of the next generation in Old Masters scholarship.



Fig 71. Attributed to Maria Schalcken, *Boy Offering Grapes to a Woman*, GS-113

We initially collected Gabriel Metsu because he was a student of Dou. One of our original purchases was a severely abraded image of *Woman Drawing Wine from a Barrel* **(fig 53)**, a rare work by Metsu that can be directly linked to a specific painting of Dou and therefore deemed a "document" worthy of restoration. However, in short order we came to see Metsu as a multi-talented figure bridging several genres within the Dutch scene while creating his own personal style and narrative. No work reveals Metsu's remarkable originality more than his nude self-portrait in *Hunter Getting Dressed after Bathing* **(fig 54)**. Here he takes modesty (or immodesty, depending on one's point of view) to a new level in a painting unique in the whole of the Dutch school. It is a stunningly powerful piece, and my first utterance when Ben Hall brought it to Otto Naumann's gallery for me to see was incredulity. As a highly personal capstone to the largest and most diverse collection of Metsu, it is hard to match.



Fig 72. Godefridus Schalcken, *Portrait of Barthout van Slingelandt (The Hague 1645–1711)*, GS-102

The earliest of Metsu's works in The Leiden Collection is *Woman Selling Game from a Stall* **(fig 55)**. Even intuitively, within the context of his life's work, this massive image is an extraordinary testament to his wide field of vision. Clearly influenced by Jan Baptist Weenix, what is so impressive about the painting is the broad brushwork and courage conveyed by an artist so early in his career. We see this ambition again in the Collection through the more introspective representation of *Woman Reading a Book by a Window* **(fig 56)** painted during the artist's late Leiden period. A "transitional piece," it is bolder brushed than his most Dou-influenced pictures and,

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similarly, in a larger format. It is also the earliest of Metsu's known paintings to show a contemporary Dutch interior. Its representation of a wistful or contemplative moment conjures the atmosphere, if not the unique transcendence, of *Man Writing a Letter* **(fig 57)** in the National Gallery in Dublin. Compared with the tighter technique and smaller scale of the Leiden-inspired years, such as the severe *Public Notary* (the same sitter of which is rendered so well in The Louvre's *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* **(fig 58)**, *Kitchen Maid Preparing Carrots* **(fig 59)**, the very beautiful and classically "Metsu"*Young Man Smoking and A Woman Pouring Beer* **(fig 60)**, and the meticulous *Smoker Seated at a Table* **(fig 61)** rendered flawlessly on copper, these larger formats brim with bravado. Being able to show the Master's career arc in full, the range and depth of our collecting style has paid scholars many dividends.

The perfection of the exquisitely rendered, Delft-ish *Elegant Lady Writing at Her Desk* **(fig 62)** reinforces various angles on the interior life of women that distinguishes Metsu's *oeuvre*. Of course, there was more to his ambition than to impart a moral. Enchanting the eye was very much one of his goals. The work contains objects rendered with a similar exactitude to that of Willem Kalf, of whom Goethe was to say: "If I had to choose between the golden vessels or the picture…, I would choose the picture." In this instance, it is the silver of the inkwell, not a golden vessel, in its context of lush carpets, soft fur collars and a dog's coat, all so rich that one wishes to caress each in turn, that is perfection itself. The tactile impact is accentuated by the moment of interruption conveying a welcome respite if not actual amusement on the part of the sitter, whose wonderfully individualized face and pose bespeak an independent character. The quiet eloquence of *Young Woman at an Interior, Reading a Letter* **(fig 63)** also reinforces this narrative, albeit in more muted terms. We are grateful to Dr. Peter Sutton, Director of the Bruce Museum of Art and Science in Greenwich, for his friendly counsel in our acquisition of both these works, the latter coming from the collection of Ambassador William Middendorf, a fun and highly intelligent man who is quite an accomplished draughtsman in his own right, as anyone who has seen his sketchbook can attest.

As they were most encouraging to us from the outset of our collecting, I should add that Peter Sutton and his wife Bug are among the wittiest and most knowledgeable figures in the Old Masters world. Peter is one of our generation's leading scholars of Dutch and Flemish art, with multiple talents beyond that. His tenure at the Bruce is a fine case in point, and one that has been a boon to us on a deeply personal level. His championing of the concept of utilizing art in the pursuit of worthy causes enabled Dominque Surh and me to have the opportunity to launch a major initiative at the Bruce on the work of the wildlife artist Robert Dallet for the benefit of Panthera, the wild cat conservation charity my wife and I co-founded together with Alan Rabinowitz. Created in partnership with Hermes, Pierre-Alexis Dumas (Hermes'



Fig 73. Godefridus Schalcken, *Diana and Her Nymphs in a Clearing*, GS-106



Fig 74. Godefridus Schalcken, *Parable of the Lost Piece of Silver*, GS-108



Fig 75. Gerard ter Borch, *Lady Tickling a Sleeping Soldier*, GB-104

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Artistic Director and a member of the founding family that has run the company for six generations) and the team at Panthera, and curated by Dominique, the initiative was a great success. Museums can be obtuse institutions. Only someone with Peter's drive and vision could accomplish such a feat, one for which we are eternally grateful as it successfully wedded art, which Leonardo da Vinci called "the queen of all the sciences," with our great passion for advancing wildlife conservation.

If art is indeed the queen of all the sciences, then the Leiden School was at the forefront of the merging of art and science. The use of artificial light in a painting to illuminate the subject matter was not invented in Leiden, of course, but it was given added impetus by the school of painting that bears its name. Leiden itself was a university as well as a mercantile town renowned for its contributions to science, including in optics, and a theme that successfully intersected art and science was sure to be given a warm reception. Rembrandt and then Dou understood this and led the way. Godefridus Schalcken, however, turned it into a cottage industry. With Schalcken's painting *Lovers* **(fig 16)**, acquired in the auction in which Johnny van Haeften was the unwitting under-bidder, we had an exceptional example of a nocturne. We nonetheless continued to be unabashedly eager collectors of the genre that was the primary source of Schalcken's fame. An etching made by Schalcken of his Master, Gerrit Dou, presented to us as a gift by Sir Norman Rosenthal, bridged most elegantly the two artists for our Collection.

What I termed Schalcken's "bread and butter" images, including *Girl with a Candle* **(fig 64)**, *Nocturnal Interior with a Toper* (now attributed to the school of Godefridus Schalcken) **(fig 65)**, and the perennial crowd-pleaser, *Young Man Blowing a Torch to Light a Candle* **(fig 66)**, joined the Collection as they came on the market. The delight they represented was enhanced by a rare ink, chalk and wash drawing of *Young Boy, Dressed in a Blue Robe, Holding a Lighted Torch* **(fig 67)**. We particularly coveted certain exceptional compositions, such as *Conversion of Mary Magdalen* **(fig 68)** , painted for Johann Wilhelm, the Elector Palatine in Dusseldorf, and the exquisite *Young Man and Woman Studying a Statue of Venus, by Lamplight* **(fig 69)**, even before they came up for sale. Enjoyed not just by collectors of genre scenes or allegories but even as portraits, Schalcken received commissions in which the theme was advanced, including that of *James Stuart, Duke of Lennox and Richmond, with his Greyhound by Candlelight* **(fig 70)**. As our interest in the artist grew, we acquired a wider variety of his works (and even an excellent example now attributed to his sister Maria, *Boy Offering Grapes to a Woman* **(fig 71)**. The range of his work showed that whereas Schalcken saw the nocturne as a franchise from which he would become quite wealthy, he was the opposite of a "one-trick pony." *Portrait of Barthout van Slingelandt* **(fig 72)** on copper is perfection itself. As with his *Diana and Her Nymphs in a Clearing* **(fig 73)** and *Parable of the Lost Piece of Silver* **(fig 74)** (the latter being

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a candlelight scene in which the artist has charmingly given himself a cameo appearance), the capacity to pivot from a near *sfumato* in his nocturnes to a highly refined classicism is carried off with ease. That Schalcken could have painted in as wide a range as he liked is undisputed. That he chose to use his skills to make an exceptionally successful career is equally reasonable. As Rembrandt, who was buried in a pauper's grave, surely would attest, there was little temporal glory in one's lifetime for not giving the consumer what he or she wanted.

It was not long before our eyes wandered away from Leiden. This process began with some good news, as our initial experience in reattribution was a positive one. On my first visit to Maastricht, accompanied by Norman Rosenthal, we visited the booth of Johnny van Haeften, who told us that he also had some things in the back room. "What's this?," asked Norman, pointing to a painting of a sleeping soldier being awakened. Johnny explained that it was a canvas given to Caspar Netscher, painted after a Gerard ter Borch of a similar subject now in the Taft Museum. "It's very, very good," responded Norman. Johnny agreed with Norman and said that, whereas the fair's Vetting Committee had regarded it as a Netscher, he too felt it was Ter Borch, Master and not pupil. I could not claim to parse the differences and said simply, "If it's not Ter Borch, then at worst it's a beautiful Netscher and a great subject." With that, I purchased the work confident that, come what may, I had a fine painting. Not long after, Dominique Surh took it upon herself to research the painting. Her research was a fine example of forensics (her discovery of the presence of an almost imperceptible clay pipe stem on the floor of an etching after the painting by William Chevalier in 1834 was a most revealing clue) as well as scholarship. Ultimately, Dr. Marjorie Wieseman, the expert on Netscher and Curator of Dutch and Flemish Painting at the National Gallery in London, concluded that *Lady Tickling a Sleeping Soldier* **(fig 75)** was painted by Ter Borch himself and, moreover, that the painting was actually the prime version of the image that had found its way to the Taft Museum.

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Leiden…and Beyond

Serendipity aside, the purchase of *Lady Tickling a Sleeping Soldier* led us to become committed collectors of Ter Borch's work and began our excursion into Zwolle and Deventer. One of the most famous artists of his time, Ter Borch's artistic path was an important parallel to Frans van Mieris the Elder's … or perhaps the other way around, depending on who is writing the history. Otto Naumann would quip that Sturla Gudlaugsson, the former director of the Mauritshuis as well as the widely appreciated expert on Ter Borch, would ascribe the works about which he was unsure in his dating as being close—but invariably before—those of a similar subject matter painted by Van Mieris. I



Fig 76. Gerard ter Borch, *The Reading*

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am not sure if that particular shortcut was always accurate, but there was certainly a strong connection between the two and they undoubtedly saw each other's work. While I can cite many instances, The Leiden Collection owns a particularly lovely example. In Van Mieris' *Child's Lesson* [fig num="31"], the shaded face of the boy is practically indistinguishable from Ter Borch's *Reading Lesson* [fig num="76"], a tenderly rendered painting at The Louvre. This kind of cross-pollination between Ter Borch's world and Leiden encouraged us to seek greater exposure to those artists linked to Leiden, even if they were not from the city. Though we ultimately acquired a broad range of Ter Borch's works, from *Guardroom Interior with Soldiers Smoking and Playing Cards* [fig num="77"] to stunning portraits, I am especially fond of the painting sold to us by Richard Feigin, a very important Ter Borch on panel called *Musical Company* [fig num="78"], whose previously unknown signature Boedy Lillian found the first time he took *off* his glasses. An important transitional work for the artist from his guardroom scenes to snap shots of everyday life, this painting is a steppingstone to his signature high life era. It is also the first known portrayal of a domestic scene picturing the artist's sister, Gesina. With Netscher, the range was equally broad. Covering portraits from Ter Borch's studio through to historical scenes, including his version of *Lucretia* [fig num="79"], we kept on the lookout for important pieces. As with Ter Borch, they were rare. *Two Women in an Interior with a Basket of Lemons* [fig num="80"] is a delightful genre scene. The most ambitious work we saw, however, came from Robert Noortman via Boedy Lilian, who was given *Sarah Leading Hagar to Abraham* [fig num="81"] for us to inspect. I have always taken great delight in this image, which incorporates aspects of multiple schools. Thus, whereas Netscher took every opportunity to show his virtuoso ability to convey textures and finery, he also displayed an almost Rembrandt School color palate and brush work in important parts, particularly the faces of both Abraham and Sarah. Above all, I enjoy the rather lascivious undertones of the portrayal of the characters: A coquettish, Dutch-looking Hagar being presented enthusiastically by Sarah, who appears more procuress than matriarch, to a very appreciative and highly engaged Abraham. The relationship among Sarah, Abraham and Hagar was a theme well represented by artists during this period. Perhaps, however, none presented the moment in which this triangular relationship begins in such a prurient fashion. The Ter Borch/Netscher nexus highlights another aspect of our collecting: a sense of obligation to history, as well as a desire that the public have access to the artists and artworks we collect. The acquisition of the Craeyvanger portraits [fig num="82"], the only known surviving commission of ten individual portraits from that single family, is a case in point (click here to read about the pendant portraits of Willem Craeyvanger and Christine van der Wart, and here to read about the portraits of the Craeyvanger children). Practically unknown to art historians when they came up at auction after 350 years of ownership by the Craeyvangers, they were an exciting discovery. Representing a unique insight into the studio practices of the artists who painted all but one of them, Gerard ter Borch and his pupil Caspar Netscher (Paulus Lesire having painted the father), the perfectly

Lesson, ca. 1652, oil on panel, 27 x 25 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Peintures, Bequest of Louis La Caze, 1869, MI 1006, Photo: Gérard Blot. © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY



Fig 77. Gerard ter Borch, *Guardroom Interior with Soldiers Smoking and Playing Cards*, GB-101



Fig 78. Gerard ter Borch, *Musical Company*, GB-105



Fig 79. Casper Netscher, *Lucretia,* CN-109

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preserved works are excellent examples of paintings that are not simply beautiful art, but historical documents. We were well into acquiring portraits by Ter Borch, our pendants of *Elegant Man* and *Elegant Woman* [fig num="83"] being particular favorites, as is *Portrait of Andries de Graeff* [fig num="84"], the oft-painted Burgomaster of Amsterdam. Equally, Netscher's *Portrait of Susanna Huygens* [fig num="85"] is one of our finest of the artist's works in terms of execution and the significance of the sitter, she being the daughter of the influential political figure and contemporary art connoisseur Constantijn Huygens. Persuaded to buy this cornucopia by Johnny van Haeften, we did so on condition that he secure them a place in museums. The idea that these important paintings would be brought into the public domain after centuries, only to be hoarded, was not an option for us. Fortunately, Johnny's instincts about the demand for the series were spot on. Beginning with Oxford's Ashmolean, then the Mauritshuis, and continuing on to Nijmegen, Istanbul, Aachen, Maastricht and Ter Borch's hometown of Zwolle, these paintings have been on loan from the time we first acquired them, delighting viewers with a unique window into Dutch family life in the seventeenth century. There necessarily are significant omissions in our Collection. These omissions reflect our intentional focus on genre scenes and allegorical and historical renderings. For example, there are no landscapes or maritime scenes. Other than a one-off from the a Dordrecht School, the only examples of still life are found within portraits or genre scenes as incidental aspects often designed to make a referential point about the sitter and/or to display the artist's virtuosity on his own terms. Examples are contained within Willem van Mieris' *Portrait of Dina Margareta de Bye* [fig num="86"] Pieter van der Werff's *Portrait of a Boy with a Miniature Three-Master* [fig num="87"] and a beautifully atmospheric painting by Cornelis De Man entitled *Pharmacist Dr. Ysbrand Ysbrandsz (1634/35-1705) in an Interior* [fig num="88"]. Within our Collection, the painting that shows still life to its boldest effect is a masterpiece by the pre-Rembrandtist Abraham Bloemaert. His *Lot and his Daughters* [fig num="89"] depicts succulent oysters, luscious fruits, and wine in gilded vessels conspiring with other sensual idioms to create a scene of preordained seduction. The monumentality of the work, whose correct attribution to the artist was confirmed only with the discovery of the signature in 2004, helps explain its description as a "grand gallery picture" when it came up for auction in 1811 with a provenance that included England's King Charles II. Frans van Mieris' pupil, Carel de Moor, set a similarly image-rich buffet of still life effects in his most ambitious composition, the equally monumental *Diana Sleeping after the Hunt* [fig num="90"] In my mind's eye, I particularly like to pair this massive representation of the goddess with my personal favorite among the early, softer works of Willem van Mieris, *Diana, Goddess of the Hunt* [fig num="91"] the virtuosity of his technique on the small copper support being as exquisite as his father's in its brilliant effect. Being able to find museum-quality pieces to represent an artist can be extraordinarily challenging. Sometimes the only solution is a painting that is a pendant to a museum's works. Such is the case of a subtle painting by Jacobus Vrel in our



Fig 80. Caspar Netscher, *Two Women in an Interior with a Basket of Lemons*, CN-108



Fig 81. Caspar Netscher, *Sarah Leading Hagar to Abraham*, CN-106

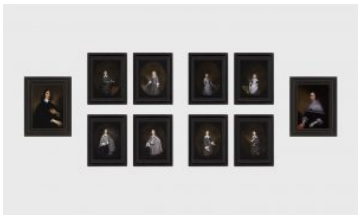

Fig 82. Caspar Netscher and Gerard ter Borch, *Portrait of Willem Craeyvanger and Christine van der Wart* and *Craeyvanger Children*, PaL-100 and CN-100.e and GB-110.a-d/CN-111.a-d



Fig 83. Gerard ter Borch, *Pair of Portraits: Elegant Man and Elegant Woman*, GB-108.a/b

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Collection, *Interior with a Sick Woman by a Fireplace* [fig num="92"]. The pendant, having been acquired in the seventeenth century for the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm by his curator David Teniers, resides at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Few artists are as immediately recognizable to the *aficionado* as Jacobus Vrel. His style, while somewhat Delft-ish, remains unique within the Dutch school. He creates an atmospheric mood that is—to borrow the most-used and yet quite apt adjective applied to him—as "enigmatic" as he was. Having two in the Collection to represent his works is particularly satisfying. In some cases, we wanted only one representative example of an artist's work, and found precisely what we were looking for. Jacob Ochtervelt's self-portrait as a *Singing Violinist* [fig num="93"] is a fine case in point. I found it as engaging as his self-portrait in Glasgow and, if anything, as close as could be in theme to one of my all-time favorite images, Dou's *Violin Player* [fig num="94"] now in the Prince of Liechtenstein's Collection at Vaduz Castle. Another equally striking instance, in that we found something that we did not even know existed, is Jacob van Loo's *Young Man Reading* [fig num="95"]. It is among the most poetically atmospheric and evocative images I have seen. Atypical for the artist in its style, Van Loo reaches an exceptional spot in terms of depth, capturing a sublime moment of youth. In somewhat similar fashion, Michiel Sweerts' *Portrait of a Young Boy with a Hat* [fig num="96"] evokes an innocence and sweetness that can draw a sigh. Having two sons, and knowing how fleeting is this innocent period in their lives, makes these paintings all the more moving. The knowledge that Sweerts' piece is among his most iconic works, similar to another portrait of a young boy at the Wadsworth Athenaeum, compounded the attraction when Christie's presented the painting to us in Paris. We have always been partial towards Sweerts, but examples of his work, particularly this Italianate period, are rare. The other example of this distinctive artist in our Collection is the deeply moving *Allegory of Winter* [fig num="97"]. Among some Dou pupils there are other challenges for a collection of paintings from the Leiden School. Truly desirable paintings by some of the smaller masters of the *fijnschilders* come up rarely. Fine quality paintings by Quiringh van Brekelenkam are as rare as hens' teeth, primarily due to condition issues. *Fisherman and his Wife in an Interior* [fig num="98"] ranks among his best work and, remarkably, is in mint condition. Pieter van Slingelandt is equally scarce in any state, and we are fortunate to have his *Portrait of a Man Reading a Book* [fig num="99"] on copper. Another copper that is the single representation of the Dou pupil Peter Leermans is *Portrait of a Man,* a beautifully executed painting of exceptional quality. The sole example in our Collection of *fijnschilder* minor master Jan van Staveren is *Esther and Ahasuerus,* no doubt Van Staveren's most ambitious work and the best representation of this Dou pupil to come onto the market since we've been collectors. However, in terms of the execution of this particular subject matter, to which we are partial, I much prefer those paintings we have of two artists who are not *fijnschilders* at all: Geltzius Geldorp and Frans Francken the Elder. Both pictures are also in excellent condition. There was another example of Van Staveren we acquired that I



Fig 84. Gerard ter Borch, *Portrait of Andries de Graeff*, GB-106



Fig 85. Caspar Netscher, *Portrait of Susanna Doublet Huygens*, CN-102



Fig 86. Willem van Mieris, *Portrait of Dina Margareta de Bye*, WM-102

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thought exceeded the power of his biblical scene. The quietly piercing eyes of *Bust of an Old Man* [fig num="100"] were highly compelling when I saw them. Sold to me as a Van Staveren, I accepted the attribution, recognizing that it was the best *tronie* by the artist that I had seen. The portrait's power caused me to re-evaluate the artist more favorably. I say this with amusement now because it was elevated, to my pleasant surprise, to "Attributed to Dou" during the cataloging process. One of the strictest adherents to the Dou style, and probably the best imitator of the Master, was his nephew, Dominicus van Tol. We have several examples of his work in the Collection, one of which may be his most evocative, *Boy with a Mousetrap by Candlelight* [fig num="101"]. For many years, it was held to be by Dou, and I understand why. It is, as they say, that good. Ronni Baer nonetheless refused to accept it as a Dou despite the perennial importuning of collectors and dealers. When, over a dinner I brought up the subject, she sighed "Not you too, Tommy!" When I told her not to fear and that I indeed agreed with her, it was as if the weight of decades had been lifted from her. When she asked whom I thought it might be by, and I proposed Van Tol, her eyes lit up and she agreed. "Yes, that's it. It all makes sense now." In due course, we added two other paintings by Van Tol, *Children at a Window Blowing Bubbles* [fig num="102"] and *Woman in a Niche Spinning* [fig num="103"], the latter being given to us as a gift by Boedy Lilian. An artist who has been underrated but who deserves a closer look is Jacob Toorenvliet. Though he will always remain a lesser master to Dou, some of his best works are truly beautiful. Be it *Rommel Pot Player* [fig num="104"], the impressive *Alchemist* [fig num="105"], *Allegory of Painting* [fig num="106"], or *Doctor's Visit* [fig num="107"], which is so beautifully executed that it would be accounted a resounding masterpiece by any of his contemporaries, this is a Dou pupil who could both enchant the eye and convey a complex narrative with great aplomb. Our efforts have been bent to finding the right paintings by the right masters to fit our collecting goals, and sometimes a single painting will do. This is not to say that the only reason we might have a single example of an artist's output is because we have not made the effort. Putting aside the obvious instances where there is only one example to be had, such as Vermeer and Fabritius, there are many causes for low representation. In a few cases, it is a matter of failing to find available works by the artist that are sufficiently compelling. Sometimes it is because we feel the artist has a fatal flaw. One such artist is Eglon van der Neer who, although by all other measures is deserving of similar accolades to his finest peers, I find impaired in one important way. Enormously talented in expressing textures and details for which the fine manner painters were renowned, it is nonetheless rare to find an example where his figures themselves reveal an inner life. Most of Van der Neer's works, certainly those that have come on the market in recent times, portray lifeless eyes. It is not an accident that the single work of his in our Collection, *Lady Playing a Lute in an Interior* [fig num="108"] shows a sitter whose eyes are downcast. It is an exquisite example of the genre and one I believe to be his most successful work. By design or good fortune, the solemnity of the moment is both enhanced and sealed by our inability to penetrate the lady's gaze. Another artist whose works come up with



Fig 87. Pieter van der Werff, *Portrait of a Boy with a Miniature Three-Master*, PW-101



Fig 88. Cornelis de Man, *Pharmacist Dr. Ysbrand Ysbrandsz. (1634/35–1705) in an Interior,* CdM-100



Fig 89. Abraham Bloemaert, *Lot and His Daughters*, AB-100

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regularity, but whose characters usually lose us, is Gerbrand van den Eeckhout. On the other hand, when the narrative and technique click, we rise to the occasion. We have an example that we like very much, *Simeon in the Temple* [fig num="109"]. It has a rare power in the same way as does Pieter de Grebber's *Finding of Moses* [fig num="110"], and the one representation of the Rembrandt pupil Willem de Poorter that we purchased, *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* [fig num="111"], in each case not simply because of its importance to the monotheistic narrative. Another example is to be found in Adriaan van der Werff's *Self-Portrait as a Merry Toper* [fig num="112"]. It is more amusing—to our taste, at least, as we are aware he remains a popular artist—than most of his other works. And it is on silver, which is exceedingly rare. I was often asked until what date in the Golden Age our collecting extended. Though we bought the occasional outlier here and there, the reality was that the upper boundary was approximately 1700. The way in which I answered the question "why" was to show two pendant pairs of portraits by Willem van Mieris, which we displayed in juxtaposition. The first pair, *Pendant Portraits of Samuel van Acker and His Wife* [fig num="113"] was from approximately 1683. The second, *Pendant Portraits of an Elegant Couple* [fig num="114"], was from 1708. It is perhaps harder to believe that the sitters in these pictures were from the same country than that their images were painted by the same hand. Yet of course they were, in both aspects, just simply during different periods. The earlier pair of sitters, down-to-earth and modest, were treated with a style much softer and more sober than the brittle, bewigged and far more pretentious pair who exemplified the Continental style prevailing post-1700. As the Dutch culture had degenerated somewhat from a touch too much prosperity, so too had the painting technique, and it is no accident that our Collection ends with the *Pendant Portraits of an Elegant Couple*. There was a certain fortuitous symmetry with this decision. Having established a connection to the Van Mieris family, we went out of our way to acquire examples from the two lesser-known sons. Though they did not belong in the same firmament as Frans the Elder and Willem, Jan was quite good and Frans the Younger capable enough. In any event, that mattered less to us than showing respect to the Elder by including them in our homage to the family. Jan van Mieris' *Courtesan Counting Money* [fig num="115"], which was practically given away at auction but which we quite like, as well as *Woman Holding a Dog in a Landscape* [fig num="116"], are both well executed. Frans van Mieris the Younger's *Fish Seller and a Poultry Seller in an Arched Window* [fig num="117"] is too hard for our taste. It is nonetheless commendable and actually better than some of the *fijnschilder* paintings I have seen by more commercially successful artists."



Fig 90. Carel de Moor, *Diana Sleeping after the Hunt*, oil on canvas, 158.4 x 145.7 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, CM-101



Fig 91. Willem van Mieris, *Diana Goddess of the Hunt*, WM-101



Fig 92. Jacobus Vrel, *Interior with a Sick Woman by a Fireplace*, JV-100

Leiden…and Beyond

Serendipity aside, the purchase of *Lady Tickling a Sleeping Soldier* led us to become committed collectors of Ter Borch's work and began our excursion into Zwolle and Deventer. One of the most famous artists of his time, Ter Borch's artistic path was an

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important parallel to Frans van Mieris the Elder's … or perhaps the other way around, depending on who is writing the history. Otto Naumann would quip that Sturla Gudlaugsson, the former director of the Mauritshuis as well as the widely appreciated expert on Ter Borch, would ascribe the works about which he was unsure in his dating as being close—but invariably before—those of a similar subject matter painted by Van Mieris. I am not sure if that particular shortcut was always accurate, but there was certainly a strong connection between the two and they undoubtedly saw each other's work. While I can cite many instances, The Leiden Collection owns a particularly lovely example. In Van Mieris' *Child's Lesson* **(fig 31)**, the shaded face of the boy is practically indistinguishable from Ter Borch's *Reading Lesson* **(fig 76)**, a tenderly rendered painting at The Louvre. This kind of cross-pollination between Ter Borch's world and Leiden encouraged us to seek greater exposure to those artists linked to Leiden, even if they were not from the city. Though we ultimately acquired a broad range of Ter Borch's works, from *Guardroom Interior with Soldiers Smoking and Playing Cards* **(fig 77)** to stunning portraits, I am especially fond of the painting sold to us by Richard Feigin, a very important Ter Borch on panel called *Musical Company* **(fig 78)**, whose previously unknown signature Boedy Lillian found the first time he took *off* his glasses. An important transitional work for the artist from his guardroom scenes to snap shots of everyday life, this painting is a steppingstone to his signature high life era. It is also the first known portrayal of a domestic scene picturing the artist's sister, Gesina.

With Netscher, the range was equally broad. Covering portraits from Ter Borch's studio through to historical scenes, including his version of *Lucretia* **(fig 79)**, we kept on the lookout for important pieces. As with Ter Borch, they were rare. *Two Women in an Interior with a Basket of Lemons* **(fig 80)** is a delightful genre scene. The most ambitious work we saw, however, came from Robert Noortman via Boedy Lilian, who was given *Sarah Leading Hagar to Abraham* **(fig 81)** for us to inspect. I have always taken great delight in this image, which incorporates aspects of multiple schools. Thus, whereas Netscher took every opportunity to show his virtuoso ability to convey textures and finery, he also displayed an almost Rembrandt School color palate and brush work in important parts, particularly the faces of both Abraham and Sarah. Above all, I enjoy the rather lascivious undertones of the portrayal of the characters: A coquettish, Dutch-looking Hagar being presented enthusiastically by Sarah, who appears more procuress than matriarch, to a very appreciative and highly engaged Abraham. The relationship among Sarah, Abraham and Hagar was a theme well represented by artists during this period. Perhaps, however, none presented the moment in which this triangular relationship begins in such a prurient fashion.

The Ter Borch/Netscher nexus highlights another aspect of our collecting: a sense of obligation to history, as well as a desire that the public have access to the artists and



Fig 93. Jacob Ochtervelt, *Singing Violinist*, JO-100



Fig 94. Gerrit Dou, *Violin Player*, 1653, oil on panel, arched top, 31.7 x 20.3 cm, The Princely Collections, Vaduz-Vienna



Fig 95. Jacob van Loo, *Young Man Reading*, JvL-100

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artworks we collect. The acquisition of the Craeyvanger portraits **(fig 82)**, the only known surviving commission of ten individual portraits from that single family, is a case in point (click here to read about the pendant portraits of Willem Craeyvanger and Christine van der Wart, and here to read about the portraits of the Craeyvanger children). Practically unknown to art historians when they came up at auction after 350 years of ownership by the Craeyvangers, they were an exciting discovery. Representing a unique insight into the studio practices of the artists who painted all but one of them, Gerard ter Borch and his pupil Caspar Netscher (Paulus Lesire having painted the father), the perfectly preserved works are excellent examples of paintings that are not simply beautiful art, but historical documents. We were well into acquiring portraits by Ter Borch, our pendants of *Elegant Man* and *Elegant Woman* **(fig 83)** being particular favorites, as is *Portrait of Andries de Graeff* **(fig 84)**, the oft-painted Burgomaster of Amsterdam. Equally, Netscher's *Portrait of Susanna Huygens* **(fig 85)** is one of our finest of the artist's works in terms of execution and the significance of the sitter, she being the daughter of the influential political figure and contemporary art connoisseur Constantijn Huygens. Persuaded to buy this cornucopia by Johnny van Haeften, we did so on condition that he secure them a place in museums. The idea that these important paintings would be brought into the public domain after centuries, only to be hoarded, was not an option for us. Fortunately, Johnny's instincts about the demand for the series were spot on. Beginning with Oxford's Ashmolean, then the Mauritshuis, and continuing on to Nijmegen, Istanbul, Aachen, Maastricht and Ter Borch's hometown of Zwolle, these paintings have been on loan from the time we first acquired them, delighting viewers with a unique window into Dutch family life in the seventeenth century.



Fig 96. Michiel Sweerts, *Portrait of a Young Boy with a Hat*, MS-101



Fig 97. Michiel Sweerts, *Allegory of Winter*, oil on canvas, 72.9 x 58.4 cm, MS-100



Fig 98. Quiringh van Brekelenkam, *Fisherman and His Wife in an Interior*, 1657, QB-100

There necessarily are significant omissions in our Collection. These omissions reflect our intentional focus on genre scenes and allegorical and historical renderings. For example, there are no landscapes or maritime scenes. Other than a one-off from the a Dordrecht School, the only examples of still life are found within portraits or genre scenes as incidental aspects often designed to make a referential point about the sitter and/or to display the artist's virtuosity on his own terms. Examples are contained within Willem van Mieris' *Portrait of Dina Margareta de Bye* **(fig 86)** Pieter van der Werff's *Portrait of a Boy with a Miniature Three-Master* **(fig 87)** and a beautifully atmospheric painting by Cornelis De Man entitled *Pharmacist Dr. Ysbrand Ysbrandsz (1634/35-1705) in an Interior* **(fig 88)**.

Within our Collection, the painting that shows still life to its boldest effect is a masterpiece by the pre-Rembrandtist Abraham Bloemaert. His *Lot and his Daughters* **(fig 89)** depicts succulent oysters, luscious fruits, and wine in gilded vessels conspiring with other sensual idioms to create a scene of preordained seduction. The monumentality of the work, whose correct attribution to the artist was confirmed only

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with the discovery of the signature in 2004, helps explain its description as a "grand gallery picture" when it came up for auction in 1811 with a provenance that included England's King Charles II. Frans van Mieris' pupil, Carel de Moor, set a similarly image-rich buffet of still life effects in his most ambitious composition, the equally monumental *Diana Sleeping after the Hunt* **(fig 90)** In my mind's eye, I particularly like to pair this massive representation of the goddess with my personal favorite among the early, softer works of Willem van Mieris, *Diana, Goddess of the Hunt* **(fig 91)** the virtuosity of his technique on the small copper support being as exquisite as his father's in its brilliant effect.

Being able to find museum-quality pieces to represent an artist can be extraordinarily challenging. Sometimes the only solution is a painting that is a pendant to a museum's works. Such is the case of a subtle painting by Jacobus Vrel in our Collection, *Interior with a Sick Woman by a Fireplace* **(fig 92)**. The pendant, having been acquired in the seventeenth century for the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm by his curator David Teniers, resides at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Few artists are as immediately recognizable to the *aficionado* as Jacobus Vrel. His style, while somewhat Delft-ish, remains unique within the Dutch school. He creates an atmospheric mood that is—to borrow the most-used and yet quite apt adjective applied to him—as "enigmatic" as he was. Having two in the Collection to represent his works is particularly satisfying.

In some cases, we wanted only one representative example of an artist's work, and found precisely what we were looking for. Jacob Ochtervelt's self-portrait as a *Singing Violinist* **(fig 93)** is a fine case in point. I found it as engaging as his self-portrait in Glasgow and, if anything, as close as could be in theme to one of my all-time favorite images, Dou's *Violin Player* **(fig 94)** now in the Prince of Liechtenstein's Collection at Vaduz Castle. Another equally striking instance, in that we found something that we did not even know existed, is Jacob van Loo's *Young Man Reading* **(fig 95)**. It is among the most poetically atmospheric and evocative images I have seen. Atypical for the artist in its style, Van Loo reaches an exceptional spot in terms of depth, capturing a sublime moment of youth. In somewhat similar fashion, Michiel Sweerts ' *Portrait of a Young Boy with a Hat* **(fig 96)** evokes an innocence and sweetness that can draw a sigh. Having two sons, and knowing how fleeting is this innocent period in their lives, makes these paintings all the more moving. The knowledge that Sweerts' piece is among his most iconic works, similar to another portrait of a young boy at the Wadsworth Athenaeum, compounded the attraction when Christie's presented the painting to us in Paris. We have always been partial towards Sweerts, but examples of his work, particularly this Italianate period, are rare. The other example of this distinctive artist in our Collection is the deeply moving *Allegory of Winter* **(fig 97)**.

Among some Dou pupils there are other challenges for a collection of paintings from



Fig 99. Pieter van Slingelandt, *Portrait of a Man Reading a Book*, PvS-100



Fig 100. Attributed to Gerrit Dou, *Bust of an Old Man*, JvS-101



Fig 101. Domenicus van Tol, *Boy with a Mousetrap by Candlelight*, DT-100

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the Leiden School. Truly desirable paintings by some of the smaller masters of the *fijnschilders* come up rarely. Fine quality paintings by Quiringh van Brekelenkam are as rare as hens' teeth, primarily due to condition issues. *Fisherman and his Wife in an Interior* **(fig 98)** ranks among his best work and, remarkably, is in mint condition. Pieter van Slingelandt is equally scarce in any state, and we are fortunate to have his *Portrait of a Man Reading a Book* **(fig 99)** on copper. Another copper that is the single representation of the Dou pupil Peter Leermans is *Portrait of a Man,* a beautifully executed painting of exceptional quality. The sole example in our Collection of *fijnschilder* minor master Jan van Staveren is *Esther and Ahasuerus,* no doubt Van Staveren's most ambitious work and the best representation of this Dou pupil to come onto the market since we've been collectors. However, in terms of the execution of this particular subject matter, to which we are partial, I much prefer those paintings we have of two artists who are not *fijnschilders* at all: Geltzius Geldorp and Frans Francken the Elder. Both pictures are also in excellent condition.

There was another example of Van Staveren we acquired that I thought exceeded the power of his biblical scene. The quietly piercing eyes of *Bust of an Old Man* **(fig 100**) were highly compelling when I saw them. Sold to me as a Van Staveren, I accepted the attribution, recognizing that it was the best *tronie* by the artist that I had seen. The portrait's power caused me to re-evaluate the artist more favorably. I say this with amusement now because it was elevated, to my pleasant surprise, to "Attributed to Dou" during the cataloging process.

One of the strictest adherents to the Dou style, and probably the best imitator of the Master, was his nephew, Dominicus van Tol. We have several examples of his work in the Collection, one of which may be his most evocative, *Boy with a Mousetrap by Candlelight* **(fig 101)**. For many years, it was held to be by Dou, and I understand why. It is, as they say, that good. Ronni Baer nonetheless refused to accept it as a Dou despite the perennial importuning of collectors and dealers. When, over a dinner I brought up the subject, she sighed "Not you too, Tommy!" When I told her not to fear and that I indeed agreed with her, it was as if the weight of decades had been lifted from her. When she asked whom I thought it might be by, and I proposed Van Tol, her eyes lit up and she agreed. "Yes, that's it. It all makes sense now." In due course, we added two other paintings by Van Tol, *Children at a Window Blowing Bubbles* **(fig 102)** and *Woman in a Niche Spinning* **(fig 103)**, the latter being given to us as a gift by Boedy Lilian.

An artist who has been underrated but who deserves a closer look is Jacob Toorenvliet. Though he will always remain a lesser master to Dou, some of his best works are truly beautiful. Be it *Rommel Pot Player* **(fig 104)**, the impressive *Alchemist* **(fig 105)**, *Allegory of Painting* **(fig 106)**, or *Doctor's Visit* **(fig**



Fig 102. Domenicus van Tol, *Children at a Window Blowing Bubbles*, oil on panel, 27 x 21.6 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, DT-101



Fig 103. Domenicus van Tol, *Woman in a Niche, Spinning*, oil on panel, 20.3 x 16.5 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, DT-103



Fig 104. Jacob Toorenvliet, *Rommel Pot Player*, JT-101

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107), which is so beautifully executed that it would be accounted a resounding masterpiece by any of his contemporaries, this is a Dou pupil who could both enchant the eye and convey a complex narrative with great aplomb.

Our efforts have been bent to finding the right paintings by the right masters to fit our collecting goals, and sometimes a single painting will do. This is not to say that the only reason we might have a single example of an artist's output is because we have not made the effort. Putting aside the obvious instances where there is only one example to be had, such as Vermeer and Fabritius, there are many causes for low representation. In a few cases, it is a matter of failing to find available works by the artist that are sufficiently compelling. Sometimes it is because we feel the artist has a fatal flaw.

One such artist is Eglon van der Neer who, although by all other measures is deserving of similar accolades to his finest peers, I find impaired in one important way. Enormously talented in expressing textures and details for which the fine manner painters were renowned, it is nonetheless rare to find an example where his figures themselves reveal an inner life. Most of Van der Neer's works, certainly those that have come on the market in recent times, portray lifeless eyes. It is not an accident that the single work of his in our Collection, *Lady Playing a Lute in an Interior* **(fig 108)** shows a sitter whose eyes are downcast. It is an exquisite example of the genre and one I believe to be his most successful work. By design or good fortune, the solemnity of the moment is both enhanced and sealed by our inability to penetrate the lady's gaze.

Another artist whose works come up with regularity, but whose characters usually lose us, is Gerbrand van den Eeckhout. On the other hand, when the narrative and technique click, we rise to the occasion. We have an example that we like very much, *Simeon in the Temple* **(fig 109)**. It has a rare power in the same way as does Pieter de Grebber's *Finding of Moses* **(fig 110)**, and the one representation of the Rembrandt pupil Willem de Poorter that we purchased, *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* **(fig 111)**, in each case not simply because of its importance to the monotheistic narrative. Another example is to be found in Adriaan van der Werff's *Self-Portrait as a Merry Toper* **(fig 112)**. It is more amusing—to our taste, at least, as we are aware he remains a popular artist—than most of his other works. And it is on silver, which is exceedingly rare.

I was often asked until what date in the Golden Age our collecting extended. Though we bought the occasional outlier here and there, the reality was that the upper boundary was approximately 1700. The way in which I answered the question "why" was to show two pendant pairs of portraits by Willem van Mieris, which we displayed in juxtaposition. The first pair, *Pendant Portraits of Samuel van Acker and His Wife* **(**



Fig 105. Jacob Toorenvliet, *Alchemist*, JT-107



Fig 106. Jacob Toorenvliet, *Allegory of Painting*, JT-106



Fig 107. Jacob Toorenvliet, *Doctor's Visit*, JT-102

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fig 113) was from approximately 1683. The second, *Pendant Portraits of an Elegant Couple* **(fig 114)**, was from 1708. It is perhaps harder to believe that the sitters in these pictures were from the same country than that their images were painted by the same hand. Yet of course they were, in both aspects, just simply during different periods. The earlier pair of sitters, down-to-earth and modest, were treated with a style much softer and more sober than the brittle, bewigged and far more pretentious pair who exemplified the Continental style prevailing post-1700. As the Dutch culture had degenerated somewhat from a touch too much prosperity, so too had the painting technique, and it is no accident that our Collection ends with the *Pendant Portraits of an Elegant Couple*.

There was a certain fortuitous symmetry with this decision. Having established a connection to the Van Mieris family, we went out of our way to acquire examples from the two lesser-known sons. Though they did not belong in the same firmament as Frans the Elder and Willem, Jan was quite good and Frans the Younger capable enough. In any event, that mattered less to us than showing respect to the Elder by including them in our homage to the family. Jan van Mieris' *Courtesan Counting Money* **(fig 115)**, which was practically given away at auction but which we quite like, as well as *Woman Holding a Dog in a Landscape* **(fig 116)**, are both well executed. Frans van Mieris the Younger's *Fish Seller and a Poultry Seller in an Arched Window* **(fig 117)** is too hard for our taste. It is nonetheless commendable and actually better than some of the *fijnschilder* paintings I have seen by more commercially successful artists.



Fig 108. Eglon van der Neer, *Lady Playing a Lute in an Interior*, EN-100



Fig 109. Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, *Simeon in the Temple*, GE-100



Fig 110. Pieter de Grebber, *Finding of Moses*, PG-100



Fig 111. Willem de Poorter, *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, WP-100

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Fig 112. Adriaen van der Werff, *Self-Portrait as a Merry Toper*, oil on panel, 16.8 x 13.2 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, AWe-100

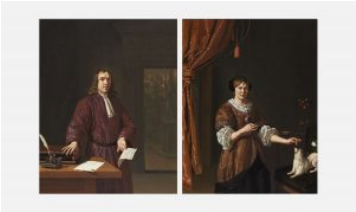

Fig 113. Willem van Mieris, *Pendant Portraits of Samuel van Acker and His Wife (?)*, WM-106.a/b



Fig 114. Willem van Mieris, *Pendant Portraits of an Elegant Couple*, WM-103.a/b



Fig 115. Jan van Mieris, *Courtesan Counting Money*, JM-101

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Fig 116. Jan van Mieris, *Woman Holding a Dog in a Landscape*, JM-100



Fig 117. Frans van Mieris the Younger, *Fish and Poultry Seller in an Arched Window*, 1730, oil on panel, 40 x 33.3 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, FM-113

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Opportunity Knocks

The acquisition of our first piece by Arent de Gelder within a year and a half of our beginning to buy art should have put paid to any notions that we were focused collectors of *fijnschilders.* But at the time this was not widely appreciated, and what we knew to be a desire to capture the arc of Rembrandt and his pupils' careers and their numerous interrelationships with contemporaries, was little understood by the market, which sometimes found our selections to be promiscuous. In truth I reckon that, at the time, to those not privy to our vision, our seemingly intemperate pursuit of several schools of this period's art may have come across as haphazard. Putting aside a few mistakes at the outset, this was not actually the case. Other than to my dealer friends, however, I made little effort to explain what we were trying to accomplish. It has always been my nature to see "the big picture" in whatever



Fig 118. Dr. Thomas S. Kaplan in the Leiden Gallery, photograph by Sueraya Shaheen

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quest I am on, and to extrapolate how events will play out over time to weave our desired narrative. My colleagues refer to these exercises as “tapestries.” In our minds’ eyes, we could clearly see how our Collection would gel. When the time would come, as they say in the movies, all would be revealed. That time arrived in February 2006 upon completion of the Leiden Gallery space, lovingly designed by Mira and Daphne with the fine architect George Sawicki, with Dominique Surh orchestrating the construction. To celebrate, we held a cocktail party in the space and dinner at Nello. Though we reserved the modest-sized restaurant for the occasion, and both Nello Balan and the ever-wonderful George Nickolas were magnificent, what was so astonishing was the fact that most of the universe of the Dutch Old Masters world could fit into such a small space. Clearly our sector represented a niche within the broader art community. That suited us just fine. I gave a speech with thanks to the assembled crowd. After naming as many individuals as I could, I concluded by saying that any failure to provide an acknowledgement was in no way to be taken as a sign of ingratitude. The same sentiment applies to this personal history as well. I visited the Gallery on my own quite often [fig num="118"], though on many other occasions for business meetings and to further philanthropic goals. Because of the value of our paintings, we maintained a museum-quality security system, allowing us to entertain a wide variety of business colleagues, personal friends, ambassadors, Sheikhs, economists and magnates. Arabs, Jews and Iranians mixed freely, united in the common enjoyment of art resonating with our shared heritage. Great collectors and friends, including Helen and Sam Zell, and John and Jennie Paulson, came by for drinks. On occasion, my personal assistant, Felicity Twort, would arrange a quiet lunch there with fellow conservationists, including Julian Robertson and Rick Gerson, or with political and military leaders. These included my “amigo” and comrade General David Petraeus, who was particularly taken with Rembrandt’s *Minerva in Her Study* [fig num="2"] and kept a photograph of him with The Goddess of Wisdom and War in his office at the Central Intelligence Agency. Another particularly cherished memory is of his Israeli counterpart and aspiring artist, the late Meir Dagan, beaming with joy as he held our Vermeer. Whether I was there or not, tours were arranged through Felicity. Dominique and I also regularly gave Gallery talks about the Collection. Museum directors, curators, dealers, collectors, students and teachers all made their way to the Gallery to immerse themselves in the Dutch Golden Age. For my part, speaking to children about the art and what it means was always the most fun. Though I am sure it made an impression on my guests, the simple truth is that the Gallery was the only meeting place where I could work in private away from the frenetic action at our family office. And I enjoyed it tremendously. I’m happy to say that for similar reasons my close business associates, Ali Erfan, Bill Natbony, Igor Levental, Mark Wallace, Eric Vincent, Avi Tiomkin and our Chief Geologist Larry Buchanan (himself an accomplished artist in his own right), would also host meetings in this lovely setting. I spent many an animated—and bonding—moment with them as well as with my brothers-in-arms, Harley Tropin, Tucker Ronzetti and Brian Stack. Under the amused gaze of Frans van Mieris the Elder and around our



Fig 119. Jan Lievens, *Boy in a Cape and Turban (Portrait of Prince Rupert of the Palatinate)*, JL-104

Fig 120. Jan Lievens, *Self-Portrait*, JL-105



Fig 121. Jan Lievens, *Head of an Old Woman: Rembrandt’s Mother*, JL-103



Fig 122. Jan Lievens, *Card Players*, JL-102

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Teneiro table, there were times when I hosted government emissaries who attempted to cajole me to invest in mining in a variety of provocative jurisdictions, including Afghanistan. Though their entreaties were not a stretch of the imagination due to our eclectic holdings at the time, we demurred. Notably, far more successful and enduring partnerships were created at that same Toneiro table with Emirati and Saudi colleagues. The space also saw frequent use as a venue for causes we hold dear, including our beloved Panthera and the 92nd Street Y, an outstanding institution on whose board I have the great privilege of serving. Being a past President, the Gallery frequently welcomed the 92nd Street's Y's Executive Directors, Sol Adler and the astonishingly innovative Henry Timms. Strategic planning sessions often included my esteemed predecessors, Fred Mack, Mike Goldstein, Matthew Bronfman, Phil Milstein and Dan Kaplan, as well as my successors, Stuart Ellman and Marc Lipshultz. When we were just becoming collectors, a reappraisal was occurring with regard to one of Rembrandt's most gifted contemporaries, Jan Lievens. Rembrandt and Lievens are believed to have shared a studio in Leiden after both apprenticed with Pieter Lastman, and if Constantijn Huygens's famous comparison of the two is accurate, Rembrandt and Lievens were certainly colleagues. If, however, the well-considered observation that they appeared in each other's paintings whilst Rembrandt was in Leiden is taken into account, Rembrandt and Lievens may well also have been great friends. Regardless, there was in Leiden a point in time, I believe, when Lievens was in some respects the equal to his older studio mate, if not indeed his better. That we were able to acquire a number of Lievens' most stunning works was the product of tremendous luck, deft footwork on the part of our closest dealers, and good timing. The prices of Lievens' paintings were already turning higher in 2003, driven by the purchase by the dealer Luca Baroni of *Portrait of a Young Man in Profile* for the then-record price of over $1 million. Why the artist was getting his due at that time remains a mystery. Suffice it to say that we didn't wait to find out. Lievens was on the move and we wanted excellent representations of the artist before this reappraisal gained further traction. This marked the beginning of an ambitious foray into the broader Rembrandt School. We were not alone in our bias towards the artist. The most famous passage concerning Rembrandt and Lievens came from Huygens, the advisor to the Prince of Orange, and the Stadholder of Holland, Frederik Hendrik. Writing in his autobiography of this "noble pair of youths from Leiden," he remarked that their "astonishing beginnings" suggested that their potential was essentially limitless. He distinguished between their talents as follows:

> Rembrandt surpasses Lievens in his sure touch and in the liveliness of emotions. Conversely, Lievens is superior in invention and a certain grandeur of his daring themes and forms. Due to his youthful spirit, Lievens breathes only that which is magnificent and lofty. He is not content with equaling the true scale of objects and figures in his paintings, but depicts them larger than life. By contrast, Rembrandt, wrapped up in his own art, loves to devote himself to a small painting and present an



Fig 123. Hendrick ter Brugghen, *Allegory of Faith*, HBr-100



Fig 124. Jan Lievens, *Bookkeeper at His Desk*, JL-101



Fig 125. Gerard ter Borch, *Portrait of a Lady*, oil on canvas, 41.9 x 33 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, GB-102

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effect of concentration which one would seek in vain in the largest pieces of other artists.



Fig 126. Jan Lievens, *Fighting Card Players and Death*, JL-107

Such sharp insights by a famous and influential contemporary were priceless references, and not simply helpful for the career of the young artists, but for historians as well. Even a quick glance at our Collection reinforces Huygens' acute observations. In terms of the "grandeur of his daring themes and forms," *Boy in a Cape and a Turban* [fig num="119"] was our first of five major works by Lievens, and his stunning *Self-Portrait* [fig num="120"] would rank among the most iconic paintings of the period, and for good reason. They are indeed "magnificent and lofty," creating a visceral connection with the viewer that I have seen firsthand, to material effect. The catalyst for our deciding to become a lending library for Dutch paintings, with the most liberal of lending policies for museum exhibitions, began with a Lievens. It derived from an experience in which I was able to witness a moment of connection between a young girl on a school field trip and our *Boy in a Cape and a Turban.* I was standing with Scott Schaeffer, the Senior Curator of Paintings at the Getty Museum, who had organized a study day for scholars at the museum centered on our painting and the interrelationship between it and the Getty's own works by Rembrandt and Lievens. Watching the eyes of the young girl meet those of our "Boy," as she nodded silently in acknowledgment of the universal self-importance and anxieties that define youth, was a revelation for me. I leaned in to Scott as we watched the moment unfold, while whispering, "I get it," and telling him that from now on all of our art would be available for borrowing. The face of the "Boy," presumed to be Prince Rupert of the Palatinate, had thus launched the most enduring contribution of our efforts, and the beginning of a journey that ran parallel to our collecting, as this "epiphany" was merely a year into our project. Over the next decade or so, over 170 of our works would be lent to more than 40 museums internationally, always, as at the Getty, anonymously. This policy was not without some dissonance. I encountered early on a resistance, particularly among curators, to the idea of displaying at the Leiden Gallery framed digital reproductions in place of the originals out on loan. Some expressed surprise that we were not living with the paintings, while others questioned how we could get along with digital images. Though in time our policy increasingly came to be seen as admirable, my standard response was that, whereas I would not judge the habits of others, for us it was unconscionable not to loan paintings if museums felt that they had a public who wished to see them. Often this required Dominique Surh to referee the selections and divine how to apportion the paintings fairly. But the principle that our paintings were to be loaned and that we could live with copies was and will always be standard operating procedure. In the same way that we had no desire to name the Collection after ourselves but rather as an homage to Rembrandt's birthplace, and lent anonymously, we tried to balance discretion with a broader mission to give back to the Old Masters at least as much as we felt we received. In addition to Lievens' *Boy in a Cape and a Turban* being the face that launched a thousand ships, the circumstances surrounding its acquisition are indelibly etched in my

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memory. An electrifying experience, it marked the turning point in our collecting. With this painting, we migrated from purchasing art that was not simply beautiful, stunning even, to acquiring a painting that is so demonstrably a masterpiece as to become iconic. *Boy,* not surprisingly in light of its crossover appeal (the previous owner was reputed to be a collector of modern art), was the cover lot on Christie's 2004 New York auction. Daphne thought the beauty of the image was priceless. Indeed, the image was so powerful that I fully expected the price to exceed our budget. My dealer comrades and I obsessed for weeks over how high the price might reach, agreeing that it would set a record for Lievens. In the event, huddled with Johnny van Haeften in his London office while he discussed the group bid with Otto and Boedy in New York, we waited anxiously as the auction commenced. When the hammer came down on our winning bid, Johnny and I literally leapt from our chairs, hugged and danced around the office as we were fueled from the adrenaline rush. Though it had indeed fetched a record price for the artist at the time, we believed that it would one day be seen as a "gift." A celebration was in order. Sarah, Johnny's most adorable and beautiful wife and partner, apologized for not having much in the way of nourishment in the gallery other than wine and dark chocolate. We took it … lots of it. Overcome with flavonoids of every complexion, and the sheer joy of knowing that we had acquired a masterpiece that would be the capstone of any Lievens' collection, not to mention of that particular era in Leiden, we were swept up in a moment of euphoria that to this day is unforgettable. The story of Lievens' *Self-Portrait*, recounted elsewhere, more than merits additional color, as its acquisition was not solely an example of *buona fortuna*, but speaks volumes about Johnny van Haeften. It was during the auction week in New York in 2005 that Johnny asked if we could meet at his hotel, as he had something to show me that he thought I would like. When presented with the first image of *Self-Portrait*, it is fair to say I was bowled over, literally falling back onto a sofa, with my legs splayed in a very compromised fashion. Clutching the transparency of the Lievens, I remarked "How's this for a negotiating position?" Johnny quickly explained the status of the painting and why it was available. An estate sale of sorts, the painting had first been offered to the National Gallery in London. On the grounds that the museum already had a self-portrait of the artist, the National Gallery had passed on the opportunity, opening a window for us. For reasons that can only be labeled serendipitous, he was able to secure the painting long enough to show it to me. I immediately recognized it as a great masterpiece, one of Lievens' very finest works. The power of the young man's personality and beauty, which always reminds me of my own sons, Leonardo and Emmanuel, was striking, unforgettable in its timelessness. Imprinted with *elan* reminiscent of a sexy French radical from 1968, this outstanding example of the young Lievens' vigor was the quintessential nod to Huygens' observation that "Lievens breathes only that which is magnificent and lofty." A deal was reached on price that likely set yet another new record. It was then that the National Gallery, with a new curator who realized that this was the superior self-portrait, decided that the museum had made an error and tried through surrogates to stop the painting's export. The rationale given to justify

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to be delicious when I saw it at the exhibition of Lievens' work at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Johnny van Haeften compounded the enjoyment of the purchase by presenting me with an engraving after the work."

Opportunity Knocks

The acquisition of our first piece by Arent de Gelder within a year and a half of our beginning to buy art should have put paid to any notions that we were focused collectors of *fijnschilders.* But at the time this was not widely appreciated, and what we knew to be a desire to capture the arc of Rembrandt and his pupils' careers and their numerous interrelationships with contemporaries, was little understood by the market, which sometimes found our selections to be promiscuous. In truth I reckon that, at the time, to those not privy to our vision, our seemingly intemperate pursuit of several schools of this period's art may have come across as haphazard. Putting aside a few mistakes at the outset, this was not actually the case. Other than to my dealer friends, however, I made little effort to explain what we were trying to accomplish. It has always been my nature to see "the big picture" in whatever quest I am on, and to extrapolate how events will play out over time to weave our desired narrative. My colleagues refer to these exercises as "tapestries." In our minds' eyes, we could clearly see how our Collection would gel. When the time would come, as they say in the movies, all would be revealed.

That time arrived in February 2006 upon completion of the Leiden Gallery space, lovingly designed by Mira and Daphne with the fine architect George Sawicki, with Dominique Surh orchestrating the construction. To celebrate, we held a cocktail party in the space and dinner at Nello. Though we reserved the modest-sized restaurant for the occasion, and both Nello Balan and the ever-wonderful George Nickolas were magnificent, what was so astonishing was the fact that most of the universe of the Dutch Old Masters world could fit into such a small space. Clearly our sector represented a niche within the broader art community. That suited us just fine. I gave a speech with thanks to the assembled crowd. After naming as many individuals as I could, I concluded by saying that any failure to provide an acknowledgement was in no way to be taken as a sign of ingratitude. The same sentiment applies to this personal history as well.

I visited the Gallery on my own quite often **(fig 118)**, though on many other occasions for business meetings and to further philanthropic goals. Because of the value of our paintings, we maintained a museum-quality security system, allowing us to entertain a wide variety of business colleagues, personal friends, ambassadors, Sheikhs, economists and magnates. Arabs, Jews and Iranians mixed freely, united in the common enjoyment of art resonating with our shared heritage. Great collectors and friends, including Helen and Sam Zell, and John and Jennie Paulson, came by for

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drinks. On occasion, my personal assistant, Felicity Twort, would arrange a quiet lunch there with fellow conservationists, including Julian Robertson and Rick Gerson, or with political and military leaders. These included my "amigo" and comrade General David Petraeus, who was particularly taken with Rembrandt's *Minerva in Her Study* **(fig 2)** and kept a photograph of him with The Goddess of Wisdom and War in his office at the Central Intelligence Agency. Another particularly cherished memory is of his Israeli counterpart and aspiring artist, the late Meir Dagan, beaming with joy as he held our Vermeer. Whether I was there or not, tours were arranged through Felicity. Dominique and I also regularly gave Gallery talks about the Collection. Museum directors, curators, dealers, collectors, students and teachers all made their way to the Gallery to immerse themselves in the Dutch Golden Age. For my part, speaking to children about the art and what it means was always the most fun.

Though I am sure it made an impression on my guests, the simple truth is that the Gallery was the only meeting place where I could work in private away from the frenetic action at our family office. And I enjoyed it tremendously. I'm happy to say that for similar reasons my close business associates, Ali Erfan, Bill Natbony, Igor Levental, Mark Wallace, Eric Vincent, Avi Tiomkin and our Chief Geologist Larry Buchanan (himself an accomplished artist in his own right), would also host meetings in this lovely setting. I spent many an animated—and bonding—moment with them as well as with my brothers-in-arms, Harley Tropin, Tucker Ronzetti and Brian Stack. Under the amused gaze of Frans van Mieris the Elder and around our Teneiro table, there were times when I hosted government emissaries who attempted to cajole me to invest in mining in a variety of provocative jurisdictions, including Afghanistan. Though their entreaties were not a stretch of the imagination due to our eclectic holdings at the time, we demurred. Notably, far more successful and enduring partnerships were created at that same Toneiro table with Emirati and Saudi colleagues. The space also saw frequent use as a venue for causes we hold dear, including our beloved Panthera and the 92nd Street Y, an outstanding institution on whose board I have the great privilege of serving. Being a past President, the Gallery frequently welcomed the 92nd Street's Y's Executive Directors, Sol Adler and the astonishingly innovative Henry Timms. Strategic planning sessions often included my esteemed predecessors, Fred Mack, Mike Goldstein, Matthew Bronfman, Phil Milstein and Dan Kaplan, as well as my successors, Stuart Ellman and Marc Lipshultz.

When we were just becoming collectors, a reappraisal was occurring with regard to one of Rembrandt's most gifted contemporaries, Jan Lievens. Rembrandt and Lievens are believed to have shared a studio in Leiden after both apprenticed with Pieter Lastman, and if Constantijn Huygens's famous comparison of the two is accurate, Rembrandt and Lievens were certainly colleagues. If, however, the well-considered

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observation that they appeared in each other's paintings whilst Rembrandt was in Leiden is taken into account, Rembrandt and Lievens may well also have been great friends. Regardless, there was in Leiden a point in time, I believe, when Lievens was in some respects the equal to his older studio mate, if not indeed his better. That we were able to acquire a number of Lievens' most stunning works was the product of tremendous luck, deft footwork on the part of our closest dealers, and good timing.

The prices of Lievens' paintings were already turning higher in 2003, driven by the purchase by the dealer Luca Baroni of *Portrait of a Young Man in Profile* for the then-record price of over $1 million. Why the artist was getting his due at that time remains a mystery. Suffice it to say that we didn't wait to find out. Lievens was on the move and we wanted excellent representations of the artist before this reappraisal gained further traction. This marked the beginning of an ambitious foray into the broader Rembrandt School.

We were not alone in our bias towards the artist. The most famous passage concerning Rembrandt and Lievens came from Huygens, the advisor to the Prince of Orange, and the Stadholder of Holland, Frederik Hendrik. Writing in his autobiography of this "noble pair of youths from Leiden," he remarked that their "astonishing beginnings" suggested that their potential was essentially limitless. He distinguished between their talents as follows:

> Rembrandt surpasses Lievens in his sure touch and in the liveliness of emotions. Conversely, Lievens is superior in invention and a certain grandeur of his daring themes and forms.
>
> Due to his youthful spirit, Lievens breathes only that which is magnificent and lofty. He is not content with equaling the true scale of objects and figures in his paintings, but depicts them larger than life. By contrast, Rembrandt, wrapped up in his own art, loves to devote himself to a small painting and present an effect of concentration which one would seek in vain in the largest pieces of other artists.

Such sharp insights by a famous and influential contemporary were priceless references, and not simply helpful for the career of the young artists, but for historians as well. Even a quick glance at our Collection reinforces Huygens' acute observations. In terms of the "grandeur of his daring themes and forms," *Boy in a Cape and a Turban* **(fig 119)** was our first of five major works by Lievens, and his stunning *Self-Portrait* **(fig 120)** would rank among the most iconic paintings of the period, and for good reason. They are indeed "magnificent and lofty," creating a visceral connection with the viewer that I have seen firsthand, to material effect.

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The catalyst for our deciding to become a lending library for Dutch paintings, with the most liberal of lending policies for museum exhibitions, began with a Lievens. It derived from an experience in which I was able to witness a moment of connection between a young girl on a school field trip and our *Boy in a Cape and a Turban.* I was standing with Scott Schaeffer, the Senior Curator of Paintings at the Getty Museum, who had organized a study day for scholars at the museum centered on our painting and the interrelationship between it and the Getty's own works by Rembrandt and Lievens. Watching the eyes of the young girl meet those of our "Boy," as she nodded silently in acknowledgment of the universal self-importance and anxieties that define youth, was a revelation for me. I leaned in to Scott as we watched the moment unfold, while whispering, "I get it," and telling him that from now on all of our art would be available for borrowing. The face of the "Boy," presumed to be Prince Rupert of the Palatinate, had thus launched the most enduring contribution of our efforts, and the beginning of a journey that ran parallel to our collecting, as this "epiphany" was merely a year into our project. Over the next decade or so, over 170 of our works would be lent to more than 40 museums internationally, always, as at the Getty, anonymously.

This policy was not without some dissonance. I encountered early on a resistance, particularly among curators, to the idea of displaying at the Leiden Gallery framed digital reproductions in place of the originals out on loan. Some expressed surprise that we were not living with the paintings, while others questioned how we could get along with digital images. Though in time our policy increasingly came to be seen as admirable, my standard response was that, whereas I would not judge the habits of others, for us it was unconscionable not to loan paintings if museums felt that they had a public who wished to see them. Often this required Dominique Surh to referee the selections and divine how to apportion the paintings fairly. But the principle that our paintings were to be loaned and that we could live with copies was and will always be standard operating procedure. In the same way that we had no desire to name the Collection after ourselves but rather as an homage to Rembrandt's birthplace, and lent anonymously, we tried to balance discretion with a broader mission to give back to the Old Masters at least as much as we felt we received.

In addition to Lievens' *Boy in a Cape and a Turban* being the face that launched a thousand ships, the circumstances surrounding its acquisition are indelibly etched in my memory. An electrifying experience, it marked the turning point in our collecting. With this painting, we migrated from purchasing art that was not simply beautiful, stunning even, to acquiring a painting that is so demonstrably a masterpiece as to become iconic. *Boy,* not surprisingly in light of its crossover appeal (the previous owner was reputed to be a collector of modern art), was the cover lot on Christie's 2004 New York auction. Daphne thought the beauty of the image was priceless.

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Indeed, the image was so powerful that I fully expected the price to exceed our budget. My dealer comrades and I obsessed for weeks over how high the price might reach, agreeing that it would set a record for Lievens. In the event, huddled with Johnny van Haeften in his London office while he discussed the group bid with Otto and Boedy in New York, we waited anxiously as the auction commenced. When the hammer came down on our winning bid, Johnny and I literally leapt from our chairs, hugged and danced around the office as we were fueled from the adrenaline rush. Though it had indeed fetched a record price for the artist at the time, we believed that it would one day be seen as a "gift." A celebration was in order. Sarah, Johnny's most adorable and beautiful wife and partner, apologized for not having much in the way of nourishment in the gallery other than wine and dark chocolate. We took it … lots of it. Overcome with flavonoids of every complexion, and the sheer joy of knowing that we had acquired a masterpiece that would be the capstone of any Lievens' collection, not to mention of that particular era in Leiden, we were swept up in a moment of euphoria that to this day is unforgettable.

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Ultimately, we acquired several more paintings of the artist, as well as a powerful red and black chalk drawing of *Head of an Old Woman: Rembrandt's Mother* **(fig 121)** , one of our few works on paper, which shows the artist's exceptional draftsmanship. All of our Lievens' acquisitions were memorable. *Card Players* **(fig 122)** set a record in 2007 for a painting sold at auction in the Netherlands. We felt it was a must, if for no other reason than its monumental representation of the state of play in Leiden, when Lievens was experimenting with the use of artificial light, shadows and bold colors to create an effect that Rembrandt himself was seeking to match. It was clear to me that in this painting Lievens was being influenced by, if not directly trying to emulate, the Utrecht Caravaggists. Indeed, when Johnny van Haeften offered us Hendrick ter Brugghen's beautiful *Allegory of Faith* **(fig 123)**, we immediately recognized that this was a perfect connection between the Leiden School and Utrecht. Simply put, as Rembrandt was regarding Lievens, so too was Lievens regarding Ter Brugghen. To our good fortune, we discovered after the fact that the central image of this multi-figure delight is a portrait of Rembrandt himself, rendering the oil painting of *Card Players*, in addition to its artistic merits, an important historical document. That purchase was followed by a private transaction with Boedy Lilian for *Bookkeeper at his Desk* **(fig 124)**. This study of an old man in isolation with his volumes is a beautiful example of a theme that helped shape the friendly rivalry of Rembrandt and Lievens. The gist was that, by conveying the poignancy and fragility that comes with aging, a condition often associated both with wisdom and diligence, one was able to prove one's abilities to convey mood and emotion and to demonstrate the technical skill required to convey senescence. One of my greatest friends and a role model for me on many levels, Michael Steinhardt, said that for him this was the most moving painting in the Collection. A perennial favorite of a number of my fellow collectors, including Jacqui Safra, this powerful image on panel was a perfect representation of the Rembrandt-Lievens competition, and was the centerpiece of a multi-picture deal with Boedy Lilian that also included Dou's *Portrait of a Gentleman with a Walking*

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Stick **(fig 18)** and a fine portrait of a woman by Gerard ter Borch **(fig 125)**.

Though I generally eschewed the later Lievens, one painting from his Antwerp era tempted me. Having a soft spot for the macabre, I found his *Fighting Card Players and Death* **(fig 126)** to be delicious when I saw it at the exhibition of Lievens' work at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Johnny van Haeften compounded the enjoyment of the purchase by presenting me with an engraving after the work.

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The Honor Code



Fig 127. Frans Hals, *Portrait of Samuel Ampzing*, FH-100



Fig 128. Frans Hals, *Portrait of Conradus Viëtor*, FH-101

One weekend, I drove with Otto Naumann to the house of Jim Mullen and Nola Anderson outside of Boston to see their art collection and spend the evening with close friends, including the vivacious Rachel Kaminski and the Museum of Fine Arts' Ronni Baer. By this time, Ronni and I were great pals. After having heard her name when we made our very first purchase of the Beresteyn Dou on silvered copper, we had thereafter met over lunch through Otto Naumann, who had undertaken to introduce a passionate new Dou collector to the Dou expert. It had been a memorable lunch, for when I told her that we owned two Dous, one whose attribution she did not accept and one that she did, she surprised Otto and me by saying that she had changed her mind about the copper Dou. It was indeed a Dou, just simply unique in his *oeuvre*. "Congratulations," she told me with a smile. Otto (who had been a part owner of the painting when it was sold) was plainly surprised, but with characteristic generosity of spirit was happy for me. Still, he was curious and asked Ronni, "Why didn't you tell us that you had changed your mind?," to which Ronni responded with arched eyebrows: "Otto, *you* are a dealer and *I* am a curator. It is not *my* job to inform you that I have changed my mind. It is *your* job to ask me whether I have changed my mind." Needless to say, a tasty lunch had become ambrosial. The festive mood was accentuated when we found out that Ronni and I had deeper roots. My aunt and her parents both harkened from Silver Spring, Maryland, where they were best friends. In fact, until we connected the dots, I had not recognized that I had known her parents decades before I knew Ronni. After commenting to my aunt one evening after I had returned from the National Gallery in Washington that I loved their Dou painting of a hermit, she had put me in touch with Ronni, who at the time was living in Atlanta, writing her doctorate on Dou. A smaller world could not be imagined. I should add that this call took place in 1988. I thus apparently called Ronni, fully fifteen years before becoming a collector, to ask her if she was planning a catalogue *raisonné* of this artist that I so enjoyed. Both of us had forgotten the telephone exchange until our lunch with Otto. As Ronni has gone on to great things in her career, including an acclaimed exhibition entitled "El Greco to Velazquez," for which she was knighted by the King of Spain, the definitive catalogue on Dou, though promised, has been put on the back burner. As Otto had neglected to do with his painting, however, the question about the catalogue remains a query I make with regularity, as Ronni and her husband, Stephen, have become beloved

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friends and, enjoying their company immensely, I see them as often as possible. Reunited again in Boston with the Mullens, we all dined under the gaze of their masterpiece by Frans Hals. The next day, the group was invited to join the Van Otterloos for lunch and a tour of their magnificent collection. As a broad and carefully chosen assembly of Dutch Golden Age pictures, it is exquisite and, quite simply, the best encyclopedic survey of the period in private hands. That it is stewarded by genuinely engaged and passionate collectors committed to promoting their culture's continuity and importance is particularly gratifying to a fellow traveler. More than that, it puts our own sense of mission in good company. A couple of years later, I returned the favor of plundering the Mullens' wine cellar when Jim joined a tour of the premier wineries of Tuscany that I had managed to win at a charity auction. The parched group comprised our swindle of dealers: Johnny, Otto, Boedy, Jack and Konnie Bernheimer, as well as Jim and me. I wanted to repay them all for their kindness, loyalty and generosity of spirit. Spirits were indeed the watchwords of the adventure and, although crisp memories of our trip (or rather stumble) through the vineyards of Tuscany remain hazy for all the participants, we universally recollect that we enjoyed each other's company enormously. In terms of good company, it would be hard to top the relationship we developed with another of Otto's acquaintances, Jaqui Safra. One of the kindest and most generous of men, my wife and I count Jaqui and his partner, Jean Doumanian, among the closest, most joyful and warm-spirited couples we know, and the time we spend with them is always remarkable for their wonderful sense of humor and humanist spirit of decency. Otto brought us together, believing that two rapacious collectors should meet each other. Ironically, Jaqui, who was one of the biggest buyers at the height of his collecting, almost never bought privately. He preferred auctions where, despite sincere and valiant attempts to keep a low profile, he made waves with some extraordinary purchases. With a few notable exceptions, his collection does not include many paintings from our school. His collecting era preceded ours and we never crossed paths as bidders. In terms of volume and eclecticism, however, he put us in his pocket. This prompted an interesting conversation on the merits and demerits of each of our collecting styles. We hit it off immediately, make it a point to see each other often, and have been avid proponents of each other's interests and causes, from art research, to the 92nd Street Y, to wildlife conservation. Nicer people and better friends would be hard to find. As with Jaqui, Jim, Rose-Marie, Eijk and other fine people including Susan and Matt Weatherby, we enjoy a warm and friendly relationship with our fellow collectors. Unlike the contemporary and modern art crowd, or so I have been told (and have certainly witnessed first-hand in the competition by contemporary art collectors for prime pieces in 20th century design), we encountered very little competition from our peers in the Old Masters world. There are, I believe, several reasons for this. First is that nobody was collecting the Rembrandt School with the breadth and depth that we were. The Van Otterloos, for example, had a beautiful Rembrandt, as did the notable collector of Rubens, Mark Fisch, and they did not necessarily wish for more than one



Fig 129. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Seated Man, Half-Length, at Work*, RR-106



Fig 130. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Study of a Woman in a White Cap*, RR-101



Fig 131. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait with Shaded Eyes*, RR-110

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representation. The same applied to Van Mieris, Metsu and most other artists in our purview; for these collectors a single example was sufficient. Apart from this arithmetic factor, there was the psychological. It is not a conceit to suggest that lovers of antique art have a less sharp-elbowed sensibility than those who collect art that is edgier. If a collector knows that a peer absolutely loves a piece and is willing to pay a handsome price, in my experience those who admire the work less vigorously tend to recede from the quest. It is an etiquette genteelly unstated, rather than formal. We most certainly have stepped aside in favor of collectors who coveted a particular piece more than we did. The reason was that we could see that it would mean more to their collections than it would to ours. What might be a nice fit for us could be a perfect fit for others. Similarly, we made it a point not to compete with museums if we knew they had made a bid to acquire something, or were planning to bid at auction. There were lapses, of course, but they were most often out of ignorance. And in the case of an unintended competition with The Louvre, to be described later, we made up for it with a loan and subsequent gift of the object of their desire. This kind of honor code prevailed in the way our cadre of dealers dealt with purchases at auction. When I asked a dealer to bid for us, it was understood that, if the object in question were something on which the dealers themselves would be bidding for their own account, for stock or for a client, they would add a commission to our purchase. If it was something of importance to us, but which otherwise would not have been something they needed for their own inventory, they did not charge us. It was an honor system that never lapsed, and worked for the auction houses as well. As someone who did not generally enjoy bidding at auction, the auction houses did better having us participate in the auction through the dealers than not. Had it not worked that way, we might have purchased fewer paintings. Generally speaking, while we greatly enjoyed our relationships with the auction houses, we preferred the “certainty of transaction” that came with working with our dealers. This fidelity was doubtless materially reinforced by the principle that “we dance with the one who brought us.” If we purchased a painting from a private collection through a dealer and the next painting came through the auction house, we insisted that the auction house go through the dealer if the transaction was private. It was not enough for us that the commercial terms had led the sellers to switch their allegiance. The principle was that the intermediary who had created the relationship with the owner of paintings should not be circumvented unless the dealer had somehow fouled his own nest. Call it honor, loyalty or “what goes around comes around,” but we firmly believe in judging character and integrity through behavior, particularly where money is involved. Whereas we would not claim to be unblemished, it is not for nothing that the motto of our family business is *“Intelligence is a commodity; character is a currency.”*
Though I know we would have paid less on occasion by buying at auction rather than in a private transaction, this was not always the case. One such occasion was at an auction in 2007 of one of our favorite objects, a copper oval masterpiece painted by the ingenious Frans Hals depicting the preacher *Samuel Ampzing* [fig num="127"], for which I had left a bid with

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Johnny van Haeften in London. At my request, Boedy Lilian called me when the lot came up so that I might listen to him recount the bidding. I had left a bid I felt would not be exceeded and, anyway, as was his wont, I knew that Johnny would use good judgment in exceeding that bid if warranted by the circumstances. As I listened, the bidding blew through my upper limit and well beyond what I knew Johnny would take it upon himself to pay. Indeed, there came a moment that the time between bids became extended and I could tell that Johnny was prudently going to surrender the piece. At that point, being Johnny against one other bidder, I told Boedy to tell Johnny to go higher. He told me he was unable to do so, being at the back of the room, while Johnny was wedged into one of the rows nearest the auctioneer. This was Johnny's normal position, enabling him to bid by raising one or more of his pronounced eyebrows. I told Boedy to go to him. Boedy said he would not, that *it just wasn't done.* Such a breach of protocol would infuriate Johnny, he added. I said *"Boeddddddyyyy ……GO TO JOHNNY AND TELL HIM TO GO HIGHER!"* I heard a deep sigh and the muffled sound of Boedy making his way through people and chairs. In one of the more amusing episodes of auction house antics, Boedy climbed over some spectators and said he needed to speak to Johnny. Apparently, Johnny was flabbergasted by this untimely intervention and, not realizing Boedy's mission, told him in no uncertain terms to go away. It was at that moment that Boedy told him that these were my instructions: go higher; win. Johnny had the presence of mind to ask Boedy how he knew this, at which point I could hear Boedy say, "Because Tom is on the phone with me." I can only imagine the wide-eyed look of bewilderment on Johnny's face, and the equally apologetic look on Boedy's—not to mention the bemusement of the auctioneer and onlookers. Suffice it to say that Johnny acquired the painting against a fine New York collector. As neither of us had ever met, no offense was taken and, at a cocktail party, we both posed arm-in-arm in front of the painting. Within a year, a much larger but endearingly bravura painting by Hals of a not dissimilar theme, *Portrait of Conradus Viëtor* [fig num="128"], was added to the Collection prior to its relocation to the Getty Museum, where it has been on long-term loan. Our first Rembrandt was a spectacularly riveting drawing, *Young Lion Resting* [fig num="1"]. When Otto Naumann approached me with the work, then being handled by the Herring Brothers in New York, he said he knew we were not buyers of works on paper, but that he had seen something he thought we should at least consider. Otto knew of our keen interest in big cats and together with Jack Kilgore had accompanied me on a trip to our ranches in the Pantanal region of Brazil. There, Panthera, the big cat conservation charity we had founded with Alan Rabinowitz, has a program to secure jaguars, their ecosystems, and the people who live within them. Since Panthera had arrived on the scene in 2006, the number of jaguar sightings had multiplied exponentially. Profiled on *60 Minutes* by Tom Anderson and the late Bob Simon, regarding the scope of our work there was a unique experience, and one that drew renowned conservationist heroes including Doug and Kris Tompkins, Michael Cline, Judy and Michael Steinhardt, Hank and Wendi Paulson and their son Merritt, and Rhett and Angela Turner. When Daphne and I traveled with Orianne,

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Leonardo and Emmanuel to Brazil to visit the ranches—and especially the school that we had built for the cowboys' families—it was an exceptionally inspiring experience for our children to see conservation and community empowerment in action. Being up close and personal with jaguars could be quite bonding. Undeterred by close proximity, one of the big cats had swum towards the boat of my dealer friends one evening, eliciting animated commentary all around. Also with us on that trip was the dynamic U.S. Undersecretary of State for Environmental Affairs, Claudia McMurray, on whose watch the Bush Administration helped fund Panthera's efforts to promote the creation of a Jaguar Corridor that now runs continually the length of the Americas, from Mexico to Brazil. Joining us in these experiences were my friends Simon Marsh, Matt Bostock, Luke Hunter, Dr. Paul Klotman, Ali Erfan, Itzhak Dar, Mohamed Khashoggi, Aamer Sarfraz, Dr. Bassem Masri, Josh Fink, Mark Jupiter, Jonathan Powell, Bob Quartermain and Johnny van Haeften's colleague, Dave Dallas and his lovely wife, Serena. The Rembrandt lion was in elevated company. One of six known images of big cats sketched by Rembrandt, this was the only one in a private collection. The others are in the British Museum (which has two), The Louvre, Rotterdam's Boijmans Museum, and Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum. When I saw *Young Lion Resting*, I realized that Otto Naumann was on to something. The cat's eyes were mesmerizing, and the bold and expressive strokes seeming to connect the viewer with the impulsive recesses of Rembrandt's mind were hugely impressive. I understood immediately why collectors I greatly respect, including Michael and Judy Steinhardt, George Abrams and, of course, Leon and Debra Black, so happily gravitated towards works on paper. The life forces of artist and animal together were amazingly expressed. As we subsequently embarked on the sideline of collecting art depicting big cats, a task few artists can accomplish well, even with works of Delacroix and great *animaliers* like Gustave Surand and Geza Vestagh, the unique, preternatural abilities of Rembrandt shone through. This reaction was perhaps most evocatively echoed by one of the field's great experts on drawings, the British Museum's Martin Royalton-Kisch. Soon after purchasing *Young Lion Resting*, I ran into Martin at Maastricht and asked if I might stop by the museum to view their two examples of lions. I didn't have to say what had spurred the interest. Without skipping a beat, he smiled and said he knew why I was interested in inspecting the drawings. I must be looking at buying the one for sale. I confessed that we had already acquired it. With unbridled excitement, he recalled seeing the drawing for the first time. He memorably described the moment the lion was placed in his palms: "It was as if someone had placed a hand grenade in my hands and pulled out the pin. It's those eyes … those eyes." As this was most likely the third in the series with the British Museum's, he was a touch wistful, but most generous in his enthusiasm for our having it. The credit for this purchase goes to Daphne, who upon seeing the drawing with our daughter Orianne at the Herring's gallery, delivered her endorsement with a classic line: "It's a Rembrandt. It's a lion. And it's beautiful. If it's not for you, then who is it for?" With the admonition that I should not be too "cute" in the negotiating, as I would likely not see anything

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like that again, I immediately empowered Otto to negotiate the purchase, which he did expertly. There are few artists who could interpret the interior life of a human being with the flair and expertise that Rembrandt brought to the character of that big cat. In due course, we added another drawing by Rembrandt, *Seated Man, Half-Length, at Work* [fig num="129"], which was subsequently loaned to The Louvre for an exhibition on "Rembrandt and the Face of Christ." Whereas the price paid for the Rembrandt lion was more than had been paid for other drawings by Rembrandt, a number of important acquisitions came into the Collection for prices considerably less dear than we had expected. Our first Rembrandt painting, for example, an oil sketch entitled *Study of a Woman in a White Cap* [fig num="130"], was purchased for a price so reasonable that it caused me, in one of the rare instances where I myself bid on the phone, to yelp loudly with joy when the gavel came down. Apparently Christie's Ben Hall, who was on the phone with me, winced and pulled the phone away from his ear, to the amusement of those who were watching him represent the winner. I was sitting in Otto's office at the time, he being at the auction itself. One always remembers one's first, and I have had a particular fondness for that painting ever since. At the time there was considerable discussion about *Study of a Woman in a White Cap*. Like Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait With Shaded Eyes* [fig num="131"], at some point in its life it had been over-painted to suit another sense of taste and had experienced a thorough restoration, in both cases undertaken by Martin Bijl, the former restorer of the Rijksmuseum, under the supervision of one of the preeminent Rembrandt scholars of his generation, Ernst van de Wetering. As with *Self-Portrait With Shaded Eyes*, where it took six years to remove the layers of added paint with a scalpel, the final result was a success, restoring the original, and resoundingly soulful, sense of interior life to the sitter. Two great connoisseurs helped galvanize our commitment to *Study of a Woman in a White Cap*, the most expensive of our purchases up to that point. The first was Manuela Mena, a Chief Curator at the Prado (and wife of Norman Rosenthal), whose eye I have found to be exceptional and counsel always crisp and, in a word, right. The other person whose opinion mattered to us at pivotal moments was Dr. Arthur Wheelock. Though we had met before, we became much closer the night before the Sotheby's auction, when we dined together as guests of fellow collector Linda Kaufman. When I asked Arthur's opinion of the painting, the trenchant and yet poetic manner in which he conveyed how this piece had moved him left an indelible impression on me, not simply about the power of Rembrandt's brush, but about Arthur himself. I left the dinner determined to break through our own glass ceiling and have that painting. I also left understanding how fortunate are the great scholars who have learned from Arthur as a professor of art history at the University of Maryland. It is not a coincidence that so many of the successes in my universe of associates in the Old Masters world consider Arthur to be *sui generis* … professionally, intellectually and, of even greater importance, in terms of character. Arthur has been honored with too many awards to cite. Ranging from recognition for having overseen some of the most important exhibition catalogues ever written on Baroque art to national distinctions conferred by the Dutch and Belgian

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governments, Arthur's list of accomplishments is extraordinary. Though the prospect of a catalogue of our own Collection was only to surface years later, when the time came to ask someone to undertake the task, I am happy to confess that Arthur's name was first. The end result is a testament to Arthur's forbearance of our shortcomings, primarily my preoccupation with other commercial and extracurricular pursuits that distracted me, which he bore with stoic equanimity. Fortunately, I had the good offices of our family's trustee and *consigliere*, Bill Natbony, to see to it that when intercession was needed to get my focus returned to all things Rembrandt, Arthur knew to whom he could make a call. It helped lubricate the process through which Bill himself became enamored of Dutch art, his growing sensibility providing an aesthetic edge to his counsel on our project. Linda Kaufman, our dinner hostess before the Rembrandt auction, became a fast friend from the moment we met in Maastricht in 2004, after her husband George had passed. By all accounts they made a formidable team, creating the premier collection of early American furniture as well as pursuing a mutual interest in Dutch art. Among the most energetic and forceful personalities in our space, she made me an early conscript to the cause of the Chrysler Museum, her local museum in Norfolk, Virginia. Framed enthusiastically in terms such as "Your Vermeer will be the first Vermeer exhibited in Virginia," her enthusiasm was irresistible. Indeed, our pet name for her became Whirlwind, for the impression she creates the moment she enters a room. WW, as I took to referring to her, is possessed of a rare good nature, always trying to connect people with their shared interests, and is the refined yet exceptionally energetic archetype of the Old Masters collector."

The Honor Code

One weekend, I drove with Otto Naumann to the house of Jim Mullen and Nola Anderson outside of Boston to see their art collection and spend the evening with close friends, including the vivacious Rachel Kaminski and the Museum of Fine Arts' Ronni Baer. By this time, Ronni and I were great pals. After having heard her name when we made our very first purchase of the Beresteyn Dou on silvered copper, we had thereafter met over lunch through Otto Naumann, who had undertaken to introduce a passionate new Dou collector to the Dou expert. It had been a memorable lunch, for when I told her that we owned two Dous, one whose attribution she did not accept and one that she did, she surprised Otto and me by saying that she had changed her mind about the copper Dou. It was indeed a Dou, just simply unique in his *oeuvre*. "Congratulations," she told me with a smile. Otto (who had been a part owner of the painting when it was sold) was plainly surprised, but with characteristic generosity of spirit was happy for me. Still, he was curious and asked Ronni, "Why didn't you tell us that you had changed your mind?," to which Ronni responded with arched eyebrows: "Otto, *you* are a dealer and *I* am a curator. It is not *my* job to inform you that I have changed my mind. It is *your* job to ask me whether I have changed my

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mind." Needless to say, a tasty lunch had become ambrosial. The festive mood was accentuated when we found out that Ronni and I had deeper roots. My aunt and her parents both harkened from Silver Spring, Maryland, where they were best friends. In fact, until we connected the dots, I had not recognized that I had known her parents decades before I knew Ronni. After commenting to my aunt one evening after I had returned from the National Gallery in Washington that I loved their Dou painting of a hermit, she had put me in touch with Ronni, who at the time was living in Atlanta, writing her doctorate on Dou. A smaller world could not be imagined. I should add that this call took place in 1988. I thus apparently called Ronni, fully fifteen years before becoming a collector, to ask her if she was planning a catalogue *raisonné* of this artist that I so enjoyed. Both of us had forgotten the telephone exchange until our lunch with Otto. As Ronni has gone on to great things in her career, including an acclaimed exhibition entitled "El Greco to Velazquez," for which she was knighted by the King of Spain, the definitive catalogue on Dou, though promised, has been put on the back burner. As Otto had neglected to do with his painting, however, the question about the catalogue remains a query I make with regularity, as Ronni and her husband, Stephen, have become beloved friends and, enjoying their company immensely, I see them as often as possible.

Reunited again in Boston with the Mullens, we all dined under the gaze of their masterpiece by Frans Hals. The next day, the group was invited to join the Van Otterloos for lunch and a tour of their magnificent collection. As a broad and carefully chosen assembly of Dutch Golden Age pictures, it is exquisite and, quite simply, the best encyclopedic survey of the period in private hands. That it is stewarded by genuinely engaged and passionate collectors committed to promoting their culture's continuity and importance is particularly gratifying to a fellow traveler. More than that, it puts our own sense of mission in good company.

A couple of years later, I returned the favor of plundering the Mullens' wine cellar when Jim joined a tour of the premier wineries of Tuscany that I had managed to win at a charity auction. The parched group comprised our swindle of dealers: Johnny, Otto, Boedy, Jack and Konnie Bernheimer, as well as Jim and me. I wanted to repay them all for their kindness, loyalty and generosity of spirit. Spirits were indeed the watchwords of the adventure and, although crisp memories of our trip (or rather stumble) through the vineyards of Tuscany remain hazy for all the participants, we universally recollect that we enjoyed each other's company enormously.

In terms of good company, it would be hard to top the relationship we developed with another of Otto's acquaintances, Jaqui Safra. One of the kindest and most generous of men, my wife and I count Jaqui and his partner, Jean Doumanian, among the closest, most joyful and warm-spirited couples we know, and the time we spend with them is

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always remarkable for their wonderful sense of humor and humanist spirit of decency. Otto brought us together, believing that two rapacious collectors should meet each other. Ironically, Jaqui, who was one of the biggest buyers at the height of his collecting, almost never bought privately. He preferred auctions where, despite sincere and valiant attempts to keep a low profile, he made waves with some extraordinary purchases. With a few notable exceptions, his collection does not include many paintings from our school. His collecting era preceded ours and we never crossed paths as bidders. In terms of volume and eclecticism, however, he put us in his pocket. This prompted an interesting conversation on the merits and demerits of each of our collecting styles. We hit it off immediately, make it a point to see each other often, and have been avid proponents of each other's interests and causes, from art research, to the 92nd Street Y, to wildlife conservation. Nicer people and better friends would be hard to find.

As with Jaqui, Jim, Rose-Marie, Eijk and other fine people including Susan and Matt Weatherby, we enjoy a warm and friendly relationship with our fellow collectors. Unlike the contemporary and modern art crowd, or so I have been told (and have certainly witnessed first-hand in the competition by contemporary art collectors for prime pieces in 20th century design), we encountered very little competition from our peers in the Old Masters world. There are, I believe, several reasons for this. First is that nobody was collecting the Rembrandt School with the breadth and depth that we were. The Van Otterloos, for example, had a beautiful Rembrandt, as did the notable collector of Rubens, Mark Fisch, and they did not necessarily wish for more than one representation. The same applied to Van Mieris, Metsu and most other artists in our purview; for these collectors a single example was sufficient. Apart from this arithmetic factor, there was the psychological. It is not a conceit to suggest that lovers of antique art have a less sharp-elbowed sensibility than those who collect art that is edgier. If a collector knows that a peer absolutely loves a piece and is willing to pay a handsome price, in my experience those who admire the work less vigorously tend to recede from the quest. It is an etiquette genteelly unstated, rather than formal. We most certainly have stepped aside in favor of collectors who coveted a particular piece more than we did. The reason was that we could see that it would mean more to their collections than it would to ours. What might be a nice fit for us could be a perfect fit for others. Similarly, we made it a point not to compete with museums if we knew they had made a bid to acquire something, or were planning to bid at auction. There were lapses, of course, but they were most often out of ignorance. And in the case of an unintended competition with The Louvre, to be described later, we made up for it with a loan and subsequent gift of the object of their desire.

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This reaction was perhaps most evocatively echoed by one of the field's great experts on drawings, the British Museum's Martin Royalton-Kisch. Soon after purchasing *Young Lion Resting*, I ran into Martin at Maastricht and asked if I might stop by the museum to view their two examples of lions. I didn't have to say what had spurred the interest. Without skipping a beat, he smiled and said he knew why I was interested in inspecting the drawings. I must be looking at buying the one for sale. I confessed that we had already acquired it. With unbridled excitement, he recalled seeing the drawing for the first time. He memorably described the moment the lion was placed in his palms: "It was as if someone had placed a hand grenade in my hands and pulled out the pin. It's those eyes … those eyes." As this was most likely the third in the series with the British Museum's, he was a touch wistful, but most generous in his enthusiasm for our having it.

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Whereas the price paid for the Rembrandt lion was more than had been paid for other drawings by Rembrandt, a number of important acquisitions came into the Collection for prices considerably less dear than we had expected. Our first Rembrandt painting, for example, an oil sketch entitled *Study of a Woman in a White Cap* **(fig 130)**, was purchased for a price so reasonable that it caused me, in one of the rare instances where I myself bid on the phone, to yelp loudly with joy when the gavel came down. Apparently Christie's Ben Hall, who was on the phone with me, winced and pulled the phone away from his ear, to the amusement of those who were watching him represent the winner. I was sitting in Otto's office at the time, he being at the auction itself. One always remembers one's first, and I have had a particular fondness for that painting ever since.

At the time there was considerable discussion about *Study of a Woman in a White Cap*. Like Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait With Shaded Eyes* **(fig 131)**, at some point in its life it had been over-painted to suit another sense of taste and had experienced a thorough restoration, in both cases undertaken by Martin Bijl, the former restorer of the Rijksmuseum, under the supervision of one of the preeminent Rembrandt scholars of his generation, Ernst van de Wetering. As with *Self-Portrait With Shaded Eyes*, where it took six years to remove the layers of added paint with a scalpel, the final result was a success, restoring the original, and resoundingly soulful, sense of interior life to the sitter.

Two great connoisseurs helped galvanize our commitment to *Study of a Woman in a White Cap*, the most expensive of our purchases up to that point. The first was Manuela Mena, a Chief Curator at the Prado (and wife of Norman Rosenthal), whose eye I have found to be exceptional and counsel always crisp and, in a word, right. The other person whose opinion mattered to us at pivotal moments was Dr. Arthur Wheelock. Though we had met before, we became much closer the night before the Sotheby's auction, when we dined together as guests of fellow collector Linda Kaufman. When I asked Arthur's opinion of the painting, the trenchant and yet poetic manner in which he conveyed how this piece had moved him left an indelible impression on me, not simply about the power of Rembrandt's brush, but about Arthur himself. I left the dinner determined to break through our own glass ceiling and have that painting. I also left understanding how fortunate are the great scholars who have learned from Arthur as a professor of art history at the University of

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Maryland. It is not a coincidence that so many of the successes in my universe of associates in the Old Masters world consider Arthur to be *sui generis* … professionally, intellectually and, of even greater importance, in terms of character.

Arthur has been honored with too many awards to cite. Ranging from recognition for having overseen some of the most important exhibition catalogues ever written on Baroque art to national distinctions conferred by the Dutch and Belgian governments, Arthur's list of accomplishments is extraordinary. Though the prospect of a catalogue of our own Collection was only to surface years later, when the time came to ask someone to undertake the task, I am happy to confess that Arthur's name was first. The end result is a testament to Arthur's forbearance of our shortcomings, primarily my preoccupation with other commercial and extracurricular pursuits that distracted me, which he bore with stoic equanimity. Fortunately, I had the good offices of our family's trustee and *consigliere*, Bill Natbony, to see to it that when intercession was needed to get my focus returned to all things Rembrandt, Arthur knew to whom he could make a call. It helped lubricate the process through which Bill himself became enamored of Dutch art, his growing sensibility providing an aesthetic edge to his counsel on our project.

Linda Kaufman, our dinner hostess before the Rembrandt auction, became a fast friend from the moment we met in Maastricht in 2004, after her husband George had passed. By all accounts they made a formidable team, creating the premier collection of early American furniture as well as pursuing a mutual interest in Dutch art. Among the most energetic and forceful personalities in our space, she made me an early conscript to the cause of the Chrysler Museum, her local museum in Norfolk, Virginia. Framed enthusiastically in terms such as "Your Vermeer will be the first Vermeer exhibited in Virginia," her enthusiasm was irresistible. Indeed, our pet name for her became Whirlwind, for the impression she creates the moment she enters a room. WW, as I took to referring to her, is possessed of a rare good nature, always trying to connect people with their shared interests, and is the refined yet exceptionally energetic archetype of the Old Masters collector.

10 string(7697) "

La Fortuna Winks Again

Interestingly, our next Rembrandt acquisition was one of his formative works painted when, having left the studio of Pieter Lastman, Rembrandt was regarding the very experimentation with color and light that Lievens displayed in *Card Players*. *Stone Operation (Allegory of Touch)* [fig num="132"] marked our first foray into the now famous "Five Senses" series that are his earliest known autograph works. The three extant works in the series had already been accepted by the Rembrandt Research Project when we started to buy them. In due course, we added *Three Musicians (Allegory of Hearing)* [fig num="133"],

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acquired through Johnny van Haeften's good offices in a trade with Baron Willem van Datum. He and his wife, an elegant couple of the first order, paid us the honor of visiting our Gallery to see their painting with its sibling. They wished, quite genuinely, to see for themselves that a painting for which they had a great deal of affection had, in their words "found the right home." The memory of our lunch to celebrate our friendship will always stay with me. The world assumed that the remaining two Senses were lost forever, so that having this pair created a wonderful cornerstone to a collection that serves an homage to Rembrandt. The juvenilia clearly hint at the genius of the Master, especially as he successfully achieved his desired effect of conveying the senses themselves. One can *feel* the pain of the patient in *Stone Operation*, his tightly clenched fist evoking the excruciating sensation he is experiencing. Similarly, one *hears* music in *Three Musicians*. For such a young artist, these accomplishments are extraordinary. From our standpoint as well, it was remarkable to learn after the fact that the central figure in the latter painting is now believed to be Jan Lievens himself. As Lievens had placed Rembrandt in *Card Players,* so too had his friend Rembrandt placed Lievens in one of his own earliest works. Ultimately, the fourth of the Senses, *Unconscious Patient (Allegory of Smell)* [fig num="134"], created a sensation when it re-emerged at an obscure auction in New Jersey in 2015. It appeared suddenly, without any hint of forewarning, surprising our dealers, none of whom saw it coming. Though amorphously classified by the auction house as being "Continental School" and estimated at $1,000-$1,500, it was nonetheless identified correctly as a Rembrandt by two parties who bid the painting to nearly a million dollars. At the time, nobody knew who had made this very clever purchase. Through a quirk of circumstances, an exceptionally talented alumna of The Leiden Collection, Ilona van Tuinen, now at the Morgan Library and Museum, came to learn the identity of the buyers. With the permission of her then employer, the Frits Lugt Collection in Paris, she relayed our interest to the new owners and we fortuitously were given the first look. I could not wait to see it. I did so only a few short days thereafter, when Ilona accompanied Bernard Gautier of the Parisian gallery Talabardon et Gautier, French dealers with which we had never previously engaged, to meet me in New York. The moment *Unconscious Patient* was placed in my hands, I recognized it as genuine and one of the two pieces from the series that were missing and presumed lost forever. To my mind at least, it also was the most beautiful of the known suite. We bought it on the spot for a multiple of the purchase price. Talabardon et Gautier had taken a risk, even taking out a loan to pay for their speculation. Like explorationists in my businesses, I begrudged them nothing for deservedly profiting, and profiting handsomely, for their acumen. *Unconscious Patient* was a momentous revelation in its own right. As we were to learn to our astonishment and delight, unlike the others in the series, this one contained an additional surprise. As I was sitting on a runway in London, I received an e-mail from Ambrose Naumann, Otto's son, with whom I had deposited the painting after leaving for an extended business trip immediately after the purchase. Ambrose informed me of his discovery:



Fig 132. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Stone Operation (Allegory of Touch)*, RR-102



Fig 133. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Three Musicians (Allegory of Hearing)*, RR-105



Fig 134. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Unconscious Patient (Allegory of Smell)* , RR-111

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> Having been the first to inspect your picture, I will bask in the glory of being the one to have discovered that it is signed! Congratulations!

Ambrose added an image of the signature, which clearly was genuine. I was beside myself: “This is HUGE!!!! INCREDIBLE!!!! THANK YOU!!!!!....Otto, is this the earliest known signature of Rembrandt!!!!!????” To which Dominique Surh, who, being copied on the e-mail chain, was experiencing the same joy as I, replied to the group, “Yes! It’s the earliest!!! And it’s the one signature of the series!!!” In a stroke, the authorship of all three Senses panels in The Leiden Collection, as well as the excellent example in the Lakenhal Museum, was confirmed. But the revelation felt so much more personal to all of us. The “sensation” we felt, that Rembrandt was literally reaching out to some of his most zealous admirers four hundred years later, was intoxicating. Beaming in my seat on the plane, but wanting to shake off the excitement with a brisk walk, I sent a quick note to Daphne, informing her that “Kaplan Luck strikes again,” took a few deep breaths, and settled in with a double bourbon—neat—as soon as the aircraft reached cruising altitude. As part of our understanding with Bernard Gautier, we had agreed that he and his partner could take the picture to show at the Maastricht Art Fair, so long as the organizers of the Fair were properly informed that the painting had been sold, thus creating no confusion on the part of buyers. Professionally, it was a smart move for them. We anticipated that showing the painting would create some nice buzz for the Fair. This was a vast under-appreciation on our part. By the time the painting reached Maastricht, the word had gotten out that we had been the buyers and that it was Rembrandt’s earliest signed work. The crowds at Talabardon et Gautier were the heaviest at the Fair, as the picture became an attraction in its own right. The enthusiastic reception for the painting was accompanied by extraordinary media coverage. Rembrandt is still Rembrandt, and a multilingual torrent of articles told the story … or at least part of it … around the world. When the dust settled, it was with great pleasure that the three paintings were given on loan to the ever grateful and ever gracious Anne Woollett at the Getty Museum, the venue of our very first loan of Lievens’ *Boy in a Cape and a Turban* [fig num="119"]. With a very generous loan by Christiaan Vogelaar of the Lakenhal of their own *Sense of Sight (Spectacle Seller)* [fig num="135"], the trio became a quartet upon their arrival at Oxford’s Ashmolean and subsequent exhibition at the Rembrandthuis in Amsterdam. I am grateful for Anne Woollett, Xa Sturgis and David DeWitt for the enthusiasm they have shown, and generated, for the series. We are looking forward to showing our trio and the Lakenhal’s painting during the world tour planned for the Collection beginning in February 2017."



Fig 135. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Spectacles Seller* (*Allegory of Sight*), ca. 1624 oil on panel 21 x 17.8 cm (8 ¼ x 7 in Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden, S 5697

La Fortuna Winks Again

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Operation (Allegory of Touch) **(fig 132)** marked our first foray into the now famous "Five Senses" series that are his earliest known autograph works. The three extant works in the series had already been accepted by the Rembrandt Research Project when we started to buy them. In due course, we added *Three Musicians (Allegory of Hearing)* **(fig 133)**, acquired through Johnny van Haeften's good offices in a trade with Baron Willem van Datum. He and his wife, an elegant couple of the first order, paid us the honor of visiting our Gallery to see their painting with its sibling. They wished, quite genuinely, to see for themselves that a painting for which they had a great deal of affection had, in their words "found the right home." The memory of our lunch to celebrate our friendship will always stay with me.

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A Schooling in Rembrandt

The case of *Unconscious Patient (Allegory of Smell)* was "open and shut." Everyone immediately accepted it as a Rembrandt, even though it had been previously unknown in the Rembrandt canon. Not surprisingly, paths to Rembrandt attribution have not always been so linear. A fine case in point is *Portrait of Antonie Coopal* [fig num="136"]. Attributed for centuries to Rembrandt and culminating in its ownership by the Viennese Baron Alphonse de Rothschild (from whom Adolf Hitler stole the painting), and then de-attributed during the pendulum swing that saw a number of previously accepted paintings by the Master rejected, its re-attribution to Rembrandt is a premier example of the power of persistence and conviction. Related by marriage to Rembrandt's wife Saskia, Antonie Coopal was a celebrity in Holland due in large part to his Scarlet Pimpernel-like bribery of the Spanish garrison at Antwerp that led to a major Dutch victory. When we purchased the painting as "Rembrandt School," we loved it for its power. It "owns" a wall. If it was not a Rembrandt-in-fact, we felt it nevertheless was a magnificent portrait worthy of inclusion in our Collection. In this respect, it was similar to the experience we had with our first Ter Borch that had mistakenly been attributed to Netscher. At the time, we did not question its attribution, as we thought the chances of purchasing a Rembrandt for the price of the School was too good to be true. When we hung the painting in our Gallery, however, it became apparent that there was a distinct lack of consensus on the picture's School status. We discovered that some scholars, notably Gary Schwartz, had already published the painting as an autograph work of the Master. To our delight, curator after curator who visited our Gallery said without hesitation that they felt it was painted by Rembrandt. We accordingly decided to put it on our "Rembrandt Wall" next to the imposing image of *Minerva in Her Study* [fig num="2"], ostensibly painted in the same year. Side-by-side, both paintings from 1635 looked astonishingly like they came from the same hand. We became bolder in questioning the attribution. The unusual mahogany support on which *Portrait of Antonie Coopal* was painted, the personal narrative of the sitter and his relationship to Rembrandt, the fact that it looked



Fig 136. Rembrandt van Rijn and Studio, *Portrait of Antonie Coopal*, RR-103



Fig 137. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Portrait of Philip Lucasz*, 1635, oil on panel, The National Gallery, London, NG 850 © The National Gallery, London

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like a fine Rembrandt (a not insignificant detail!), led us to conclude that the idea that it had been painted by a student was terribly unconvincing. As one wit put it: “If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and tastes like a duck…it’s a duck.” Thus began the reappraisal. The Rembrandt Research Project initially stood its ground, but the ground was shifting beneath its feet. The late Walter Liedtke had no doubt that it was by Rembrandt, and borrowed it for the Metropolitan Museum labeling it as by Rembrandt. Similarly, Christopher Brown, the former Curator of Dutch Art at the National Gallery in London, remains among the leading scholars of the period and similarly has expressed no reservations. Indeed, in asking for the painting for loan to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, he casually remarked that the resemblance between the Coopal and the National Gallery’s *Portrait of Philip Lucasz* [fig num="137"], a portrait of similar dimensions and touches executed in the same year, were so close that he felt Rembrandt executed the one immediately after the other. The only question he asked, somewhat rhetorically, was which one preceded the other. As to them being by the same hand, he had no doubt. Interestingly, when we loaned the painting to the Wadsworth Athenaeum for their exhibition of “Rembrandt’s People,” an unusual exercise in showing genuine Rembrandts with “also-rans” which had been rejected, the reviewer of the show for the *New York Times* pointed specifically to *Portrait of Antonie Coopal* as being the example from which one could get a “good sense” of Rembrandt’s emergence as “one of the first artists to push European art away from idealism and on the path to realism.” In a fine insight that points to the effect Rembrandt achieved by striving “to capture the personal style and spirit of the sitter, who is shown as a dashing young man with curling blond hair…,” he seized upon one of the aesthetic achievements of the young Rembrandt—to render with his brush the inner life of his subjects in a way that few others ever accomplished. The exercise that brought matters to a head was the suggestion that we test Christopher Brown’s thesis and take the painting to the National Gallery in London to see whether *Portrait of Antonie Coopal* and *Portrait of Philip Lucasz* are both by Rembrandt’s hand. Marjorie Wieseman, the Curator of Dutch and Flemish Paintings at the museum, was kind enough to let us use the Conservation Department’s quarters to set the paintings side-by-side. Multiple experts came for the comparison, as did I. A cynic might suggest the invitation itself was to prove once and for all that I was mistaken. I’m not a cynic, fortunately. During the event, when I entered the room and examined both paintings next to each other, I could feel a broad smile forming. Apparently, when I turned around, I muttered, “This is going to be a good day indeed.” I no longer had any doubt that the two paintings were the product of the same hand. As the examination progressed, opinions gelled that *Coopal* was indeed a fine Rembrandt portrait, succeeding in conveying a bravura impression of Coopal that was youthful, dashing and charismatic. Was the lace collar nevertheless painted by the workshop? Likely so. Arthur Wheelock, who had arrived expecting to observe some glaring differences in the paintings, concluded that the most important part of the painting, Coopal’s face, was without a doubt by Rembrandt. It was indeed a good day.

Taking *Coopal* to London to be paired with a fully accepted Rembrandt no



Fig 138. Attributed to Gerrit Dou, *Self-Portrait (?) at an Easel*, GD-112



Fig 139. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Head of a Girl*, RR-112



Fig 140. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Holy Family*, 1645, oil on canvas, 116.4 x 96.4 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. 741

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doubt was a risky move. However, my concept of risk is that there is no risk in the truth. I confess that this is, as the saying goes, “easy for me to say.” We have multiple paintings of the artist and, after all, we had not paid the price the artist should command. But the fact is that I hope I will never lose the integrity of the scholar. Whereas I am only human and would love to have had our painting attributed to Rembrandt (who wouldn’t, really?), more than that I genuinely wanted to find out and was fully prepared to accept the verdict. Despite the favorable outcome, the day nevertheless was far from perfect, as our dear friend, Walter Liedtke, was not there to enjoy it with us. Walter had loved *Coopal*. Aside from his being a proponent of the painting, his all-too-recent death in a horrible train accident left a void not only in our hearts, but also in art scholarship and connoisseurship. Walter was an unusually elegant man, elegant in his thinking, his manners, his erudition and his appearance. He was among the very best of museum curators, always deporting himself with balance, dignity and great wit. A highly cultured man, he and his lovely wife, Nancy, would regularly attend important lectures and conversations with me at the 92nd Street Y. Walter was unfailingly charming and gracious. Like Scott Schaeffer, Christopher Brown and Ronni Baer, he was a most enthusiastic borrower of our works for the Met, which regularly houses a number of our paintings. Hearing of his death was, to everyone in our circle, a body blow. Despite a most beautiful memorial given by Tom Campbell, with truly inspiring eulogies from his closest colleagues, Walter’s sudden loss is one from which it will take our community quite a long while to recover. I told Arthur Wheelock at the outset of our journey together on The Leiden Collection catalogue that I would accept the conclusion of scholars regarding our paintings’ attributions. The mutual respect that Arthur and I have for each other made that exercise in potential conflict a risk we were both prepared to take. In fact, and to my great discomfort, during the course of the exercise, several paintings have seen their attributions change to a less desirable status. A notable example is the *Self-Portrait (?) at an Easel* [fig num="138"], which had been given to Dou himself when we purchased it and that now has been “Attributed to Dou.” The attribution had been the object of dispute for generations, and ranged at different times from being a self-portrait of Rembrandt himself; a portrait of Rembrandt by Dou; a portrait of Dou by Rembrandt; and, my personal favorite, a collaboration between the Master and Dou, who painted all but the face, which was painted by Rembrandt himself. Lest one think I conceived of this partisan confection on my own, the origin of the thesis was the scholar Kurt Bauch in 1966. As I believe that the face was painted by a more confident and fluid hand than that which painted the still life aspects, the theory has some merit. Alas, as so little is known of the early Rembrandt Studio, a theory it must remain for now. I accepted the disestablishment of certainty to be a reasonable and fair outcome. I might *feel* that it is by Dou, but this was not, as *Portrait of Antonie Coopal,* a “quacking, waddling, delicious duck.” A happier outcome, however, was found in another of our paintings that has recently been given to Rembrandt. *Head of a Girl* [fig num="139"], now reattributed to the Master, has been, with the aid of technology, shown to be most likely the



Fig 141. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Return of the Prodigal Son,* ca. 11668, oil on canvas, 262 x 205 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, ГЭ-742, HIP / Art Resource, NY



Fig 142. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Study of a Man with Curly Hair*, RR-123



Fig 143. School of Rembrandt van Rijn, *Bearded Man in a Fur Hat*, RR-118

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compositional oil sketch for the wonderful *Holy Family* [fig num="140"] in the Hermitage Museum, one of our personal favorite paintings in one our favorite museums. As with *Return of the Prodigal Son* [fig num="141"], I spent a great deal of time in front of this painting in St. Petersburg, explaining its nuances to my children. The face of Mary is simply gorgeous. The joint entry on our oil sketch by the Morgan Library's Ilona van Tuinen and Arthur Wheelock makes for a narrative as fascinating as it is convincing. Apart from the fact that the painting is beautiful and, once again, looks like a Rembrandt, there is the additional feature that infrared analysis of details in the painting clearly show it is likely a compositional sketch, whose changes match those in the underpainting of the *Holy Family* itself. In other words, rather than being a copy *after* Rembrandt, it is the sketch the Master used *before* painting *Holy Family* and shows that, after having indeed painted the image we see here, he changed his mind about certain aspects for the final product. There are a number of very fine paintings likely from Rembrandt's and Lieven's studios, and now within our Collection, that remain a mystery, holding attributions like "Circle of" and "School of." A few are later *tronies*, like *Study of a Man with Curly Hair* [fig num="142"] and the particularly compelling *Bearded Man in a Fur Hat* [fig num="143"]. Others are incredibly refined Dou-like works by sitters who appear in multiple Leiden artists' paintings, such as *Elderly Man* [fig num="144"], sometimes called *Rembrandt's Father*. Some are clearly from the early studio, where still so little is known, such as *Two Old Men Disputing ("St. Peter and St. Paul")* [fig num="145"]. In the case of the latter painting, I felt from the outset that the painting deserves to have a "name" attached to it, and saw the early Dou as plausible, while others have seen Lievens instead. The catalogue entry states that it had long been given to Rembrandt:

> When *Two Old Men Disputing* was sold in Paris in 1787, it was attributed to Rembrandt, but it was sold as a work by Lievens when it changed hands the following year. Over one hundred years later, the Duke of Westminster sold it once again as a work by Rembrandt, an attribution that was maintained for the greater part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By 1980, however, attribution questions resurfaced and the painting was sold as by a 'follower of Rembrandt, possibly Lievens.'

It is indeed now believed to be very possibly by Jan Lievens. For a collector of the entire Leiden era, such disputes are a source of joy rather than frustration. Similarly, two other paintings from that period, *Rembrandt's Mother* [fig num="146"] and the haunting *Bust of an Old Woman* [fig num="147"], represent other conundrums. Both are difficult renderings to enjoy. They're not remotely pretty. *Rembrandt's Mother* in particular is a very complex work that I originally thought was hideous in appearance, but came to adore and decided to buy. Having proven through dendochronological analysis that the support on which our work was painted came from a panel cut from the same tree as one of Rembrandt's self-portraits from around 1628, this somewhat supports the conclusion that *Rembrandt's Mother* is from a "name" artist. It is to my mind so ahead of its time that the artist is most likely someone from

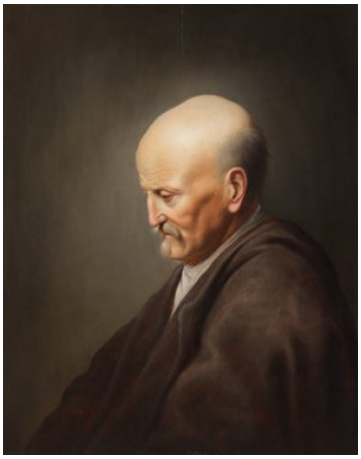

Fig 144. Leiden School, *Elderly Man*, GD-109



Fig 145. Leiden School, possibly Jan Lievens, *Two Old Men Disputing*, GD-101



Fig 146. Studio of Rembrandt van Rijn, *Rembrandt's Mother*, JL-106

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whom we hear at some later date. This is pure conjecture, of course. What I believe most strongly is that, with its thick impasto and impulsive calligraphic carvings into the paint and wood, it evokes a convincingly Rembrandtesque rejection of classism, and indeed de-objectification, to an extent that iconic contemporary artists like Lucien Freud and Jenny Saville could appreciate. My father, who had a very good eye, declared it one of his favorite works when he saw it for the first time. Other ambiguously attributed compositions are much more complex, such as *Jacob Shown Joseph's Bloody Coat* [fig num="148"], purchased from the Earl of Derby through the skillful London dealers, Simon Dickinson and Hugo Nathan. The attribution, which I disbelieved, had been given as Gerbrand van den Eeckhout. It was unlikely, I thought, that Eeckhout was capable of such expressionistic brushwork and the sensational depiction of emotion. It could simply be my own prejudice, but the gut-wrenching collapse of Jacob in sorrowful mourning was simply too well done. Of course, it could be an Eeckhout, in which case it would be perhaps his finest work and a masterpiece, but I thought this unlikely. My point is that it did not bother me that we had no conviction as to who painted the scene. I knew it was too well executed not to be a "name" and, in any event, that hardly mattered. As a work of art, it spoke volumes and was truly magnetic. It was the quintessential story of "buy what you love and you can never go wrong.""



Fig 147. Circle of Rembrandt van Rijn, *Bust of an Old Woman*, RR-122



Fig 148. Circle of Rembrandt van Rijn, *Jacob Shown Joseph's Bloody Coat*, GE-101

A Schooling in Rembrandt

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Related by marriage to Rembrandt's wife Saskia, Antonie Coopal was a celebrity in Holland due in large part to his Scarlet Pimpernel-like bribery of the Spanish garrison at Antwerp that led to a major Dutch victory. When we purchased the painting as "Rembrandt School," we loved it for its power. It "owns" a wall. If it was not a Rembrandt-in-fact, we felt it nevertheless was a magnificent portrait worthy of inclusion in our Collection. In this respect, it was similar to the experience we had with our first Ter Borch that had mistakenly been attributed to Netscher. At the time, we did not question its attribution, as we thought the chances of purchasing a Rembrandt for the price of the School was too good to be true. When we hung the painting in our Gallery, however, it became apparent that there was a distinct lack of consensus on the picture's School status. We discovered that some scholars, notably

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Gary Schwartz, had already published the painting as an autograph work of the Master. To our delight, curator after curator who visited our Gallery said without hesitation that they felt it was painted by Rembrandt. We accordingly decided to put it on our "Rembrandt Wall" next to the imposing image of *Minerva in Her Study* **(fig 2)**, ostensibly painted in the same year. Side-by-side, both paintings from 1635 looked astonishingly like they came from the same hand. We became bolder in questioning the attribution. The unusual mahogany support on which *Portrait of Antonie Coopal* was painted, the personal narrative of the sitter and his relationship to Rembrandt, the fact that it looked like a fine Rembrandt (a not insignificant detail!), led us to conclude that the idea that it had been painted by a student was terribly unconvincing. As one wit put it: "If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and tastes like a duck…it's a duck." Thus began the reappraisal.

The Rembrandt Research Project initially stood its ground, but the ground was shifting beneath its feet. The late Walter Liedtke had no doubt that it was by Rembrandt, and borrowed it for the Metropolitan Museum labeling it as by Rembrandt. Similarly, Christopher Brown, the former Curator of Dutch Art at the National Gallery in London, remains among the leading scholars of the period and similarly has expressed no reservations. Indeed, in asking for the painting for loan to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, he casually remarked that the resemblance between the Coopal and the National Gallery's *Portrait of Philip Lucasz* **(fig 137)**, a portrait of similar dimensions and touches executed in the same year, were so close that he felt Rembrandt executed the one immediately after the other. The only question he asked, somewhat rhetorically, was which one preceded the other. As to them being by the same hand, he had no doubt.

Interestingly, when we loaned the painting to the Wadsworth Athenaeum for their exhibition of "Rembrandt's People," an unusual exercise in showing genuine Rembrandts with "also-rans" which had been rejected, the reviewer of the show for the *New York Times* pointed specifically to *Portrait of Antonie Coopal* as being the example from which one could get a "good sense" of Rembrandt's emergence as "one of the first artists to push European art away from idealism and on the path to realism." In a fine insight that points to the effect Rembrandt achieved by striving "to capture the personal style and spirit of the sitter, who is shown as a dashing young man with curling blond hair…," he seized upon one of the aesthetic achievements of the young Rembrandt—to render with his brush the inner life of his subjects in a way that few others ever accomplished.

The exercise that brought matters to a head was the suggestion that we test Christopher Brown's thesis and take the painting to the National Gallery in London to see whether *Portrait of Antonie Coopal* and *Portrait of Philip Lucasz* are both by

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Rembrandt's hand. Marjorie Wieseman, the Curator of Dutch and Flemish Paintings at the museum, was kind enough to let us use the Conservation Department's quarters to set the paintings side-by-side. Multiple experts came for the comparison, as did I. A cynic might suggest the invitation itself was to prove once and for all that I was mistaken. I'm not a cynic, fortunately. During the event, when I entered the room and examined both paintings next to each other, I could feel a broad smile forming. Apparently, when I turned around, I muttered, "This is going to be a good day indeed." I no longer had any doubt that the two paintings were the product of the same hand. As the examination progressed, opinions gelled that *Coopal* was indeed a fine Rembrandt portrait, succeeding in conveying a bravura impression of Coopal that was youthful, dashing and charismatic. Was the lace collar nevertheless painted by the workshop? Likely so. Arthur Wheelock, who had arrived expecting to observe some glaring differences in the paintings, concluded that the most important part of the painting, Coopal's face, was without a doubt by Rembrandt. It was indeed a good day.

Taking *Coopal* to London to be paired with a fully accepted Rembrandt no doubt was a risky move. However, my concept of risk is that there is no risk in the truth. I confess that this is, as the saying goes, "easy for me to say." We have multiple paintings of the artist and, after all, we had not paid the price the artist should command. But the fact is that I hope I will never lose the integrity of the scholar. Whereas I am only human and would love to have had our painting attributed to Rembrandt (who wouldn't, really?), more than that I genuinely wanted to find out and was fully prepared to accept the verdict.

Despite the favorable outcome, the day nevertheless was far from perfect, as our dear friend, Walter Liedtke, was not there to enjoy it with us. Walter had loved *Coopal*. Aside from his being a proponent of the painting, his all-too-recent death in a horrible train accident left a void not only in our hearts, but also in art scholarship and connoisseurship. Walter was an unusually elegant man, elegant in his thinking, his manners, his erudition and his appearance. He was among the very best of museum curators, always deporting himself with balance, dignity and great wit. A highly cultured man, he and his lovely wife, Nancy, would regularly attend important lectures and conversations with me at the 92nd Street Y. Walter was unfailingly charming and gracious. Like Scott Schaeffer, Christopher Brown and Ronni Baer, he was a most enthusiastic borrower of our works for the Met, which regularly houses a number of our paintings. Hearing of his death was, to everyone in our circle, a body blow. Despite a most beautiful memorial given by Tom Campbell, with truly inspiring eulogies from his closest colleagues, Walter's sudden loss is one from which it will take our community quite a long while to recover.

I told Arthur Wheelock at the outset of our journey together on The Leiden

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Collection catalogue that I would accept the conclusion of scholars regarding our paintings' attributions. The mutual respect that Arthur and I have for each other made that exercise in potential conflict a risk we were both prepared to take. In fact, and to my great discomfort, during the course of the exercise, several paintings have seen their attributions change to a less desirable status. A notable example is the *Self-Portrait (?) at an Easel* **(fig 138)**, which had been given to Dou himself when we purchased it and that now has been "Attributed to Dou." The attribution had been the object of dispute for generations, and ranged at different times from being a self-portrait of Rembrandt himself; a portrait of Rembrandt by Dou; a portrait of Dou by Rembrandt; and, my personal favorite, a collaboration between the Master and Dou, who painted all but the face, which was painted by Rembrandt himself. Lest one think I conceived of this partisan confection on my own, the origin of the thesis was the scholar Kurt Bauch in 1966. As I believe that the face was painted by a more confident and fluid hand than that which painted the still life aspects, the theory has some merit. Alas, as so little is known of the early Rembrandt Studio, a theory it must remain for now. I accepted the disestablishment of certainty to be a reasonable and fair outcome. I might *feel* that it is by Dou, but this was not, as *Portrait of Antonie Coopal,* a "quacking, waddling, delicious duck."

A happier outcome, however, was found in another of our paintings that has recently been given to Rembrandt. *Head of a Girl* **(fig 139)**, now reattributed to the Master, has been, with the aid of technology, shown to be most likely the compositional oil sketch for the wonderful *Holy Family* **(fig 140)** in the Hermitage Museum, one of our personal favorite paintings in one our favorite museums. As with *Return of the Prodigal Son* **(fig 141)**, I spent a great deal of time in front of this painting in St. Petersburg, explaining its nuances to my children. The face of Mary is simply gorgeous. The joint entry on our oil sketch by the Morgan Library's Ilona van Tuinen and Arthur Wheelock makes for a narrative as fascinating as it is convincing. Apart from the fact that the painting is beautiful and, once again, looks like a Rembrandt, there is the additional feature that infrared analysis of details in the painting clearly show it is likely a compositional sketch, whose changes match those in the underpainting of the *Holy Family* itself. In other words, rather than being a copy *after* Rembrandt, it is the sketch the Master used *before* painting *Holy Family* and shows that, after having indeed painted the image we see here, he changed his mind about certain aspects for the final product.

There are a number of very fine paintings likely from Rembrandt's and Lieven's studios, and now within our Collection, that remain a mystery, holding attributions like "Circle of" and "School of." A few are later *tronies*, like *Study of a Man with Curly Hair* **(fig 142)** and the particularly compelling *Bearded Man in a Fur Hat* **(fig 143)**. Others are incredibly refined Dou-like works by sitters who appear in multiple

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Leiden artists' paintings, such as *Elderly Man* **(fig 144)**, sometimes called *Rembrandt's Father*. Some are clearly from the early studio, where still so little is known, such as *Two Old Men Disputing ("St. Peter and St. Paul")* **(fig 145)**. In the case of the latter painting, I felt from the outset that the painting deserves to have a "name" attached to it, and saw the early Dou as plausible, while others have seen Lievens instead. The catalogue entry states that it had long been given to Rembrandt:

> When *Two Old Men Disputing* was sold in Paris in 1787, it was attributed to Rembrandt, but it was sold as a work by Lievens when it changed hands the following year. Over one hundred years later, the Duke of Westminster sold it once again as a work by Rembrandt, an attribution that was maintained for the greater part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By 1980, however, attribution questions resurfaced and the painting was sold as by a 'follower of Rembrandt, possibly Lievens.'

It is indeed now believed to be very possibly by Jan Lievens. For a collector of the entire Leiden era, such disputes are a source of joy rather than frustration.

Similarly, two other paintings from that period, *Rembrandt's Mother* **(fig 146)** and the haunting *Bust of an Old Woman* **(fig 147)**, represent other conundrums. Both are difficult renderings to enjoy. They're not remotely pretty. *Rembrandt's Mother* in particular is a very complex work that I originally thought was hideous in appearance, but came to adore and decided to buy. Having proven through dendochronological analysis that the support on which our work was painted came from a panel cut from the same tree as one of Rembrandt's self-portraits from around 1628, this somewhat supports the conclusion that *Rembrandt's Mother* is from a "name" artist. It is to my mind so ahead of its time that the artist is most likely someone from whom we hear at some later date. This is pure conjecture, of course. What I believe most strongly is that, with its thick impasto and impulsive calligraphic carvings into the paint and wood, it evokes a convincingly Rembrandtesque rejection of classism, and indeed de-objectification, to an extent that iconic contemporary artists like Lucien Freud and Jenny Saville could appreciate. My father, who had a very good eye, declared it one of his favorite works when he saw it for the first time.

Other ambiguously attributed compositions are much more complex, such as *Jacob Shown Joseph's Bloody Coat* **(fig 148)**, purchased from the Earl of Derby through the skillful London dealers, Simon Dickinson and Hugo Nathan. The attribution, which I disbelieved, had been given as Gerbrand van den Eeckhout. It was unlikely, I thought, that Eeckhout was capable of such expressionistic brushwork and the sensational depiction of emotion. It could simply be my own prejudice, but the gut-wrenching

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collapse of Jacob in sorrowful mourning was simply too well done. Of course, it could be an Eeckhout, in which case it would be perhaps his finest work and a masterpiece, but I thought this unlikely. My point is that it did not bother me that we had no conviction as to who painted the scene. I knew it was too well executed not to be a "name" and, in any event, that hardly mattered. As a work of art, it spoke volumes and was truly magnetic. It was the quintessential story of "buy what you love and you can never go wrong."

12 string(9177) "

The Paternal Admonition



Fig 149. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Portrait of an Old Man (Possibly a Rabbi)*, RR-109



Fig 150. Pieter de Hooch, *Soldier Visiting a Woman in an Elegant Interior*, oil on canvas, 72.8 x 64 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, PH-100

There are some collectors who search for buried treasure, hoping that re-attribution will render a purchase a windfall. We are not among those. We have never set out to be clever. We buy what we love. If we are able to see what others do not, so much the better. But the amateur enthusiast who consciously seeks to outwit dealers and auction houses is playing a fool's game. As the expert eyes that fall on a painting are at least as seasoned as our own, and by the nature of their vocation likely to be more so, we assume that we will not have any more advantage than a player at a casino. This is not to say that collecting Old Masters is a gamble, although positive (and negative) surprises clearly happen. In our case especially, it stands to reason that having acquired hundreds of paintings, some might merit new interpretation. In fact, it is precisely because the pendulum has swung so far towards conservatism in attributions in the buyer's favor that the educated consumer can actually benefit. There was a time when the market was awash with Rembrandts that had wrongly been attributed to the Master. As Wilhelm von Bode put it: "Rembrandt painted 700 pictures. Of these, 3,000 are still in existence." However, even Von Bode was not conservative enough in his estimates. Nonetheless, the reaction that followed several high profile and embarrassing downgrades (a phenomenon which led to the creation of the Rembrandt Research Project in order to arrive at a definitive corpus) resulted in some genuine Rembrandts being put into a purgatory, with others being axed from the canon completely. As with most purges, some good was expelled with the bad. In the same way as modern forensics and DNA analysis have changed the nature of criminology, so too have cold cases been reopened in the Old Masters. As eyewitness accounts are often the most unreliable basis for convicting a criminal, so too can connoisseurship be unreliable. Different periods in time convey a different *zeitgeist* and sensibility that can color a determination of authorship. Historians are well aware that, by and large, history is a subjective endeavor by virtue of the fact that the historian must discriminate between facts in order to identify which are the most reliable and, of even more significant import, which should be bestowed greater or lesser emphasis. The same process takes place in business. In most instances, different participants will interpret the most objective of facts differently. How can that be? It comes down to discernment. One might call it instinct, a "blink" moment, or simply the sense of recognition that comes from being so

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harmoniously “in the groove” that the confidence level becomes one of “metaphysical certitude.” I have felt this several times in my business career. In each instance, my “aha” moments were met with an incredulity matched in direct proportion to my own conviction. This became such a pattern that I would include the admonition that “intelligent people say you must be crazy” to the boxes of anecdotal items on the checklist preceding our important investment decisions. Though I would not necessarily recommend this exercise to others, in that confluence of occasionally idiosyncratic variables that make up my own intellectual process, it has come to be a valued, if not quite determinative, predictor of success. In terms of how this has worked out for us as collectors, perhaps the most conspicuous example is of a beautiful Rembrandt once attributed to Samuel van Hoogstraten. When my eyes first landed on *Profile of an Old Man (Possibly a Rabbi)* [fig num="149"], I knew with a sense of “metaphysical certitude” that the painting was by Rembrandt. The economy of brush strokes, the richness of the chiaroscuro, the perfection of the image all evidenced the Master’s hand. Why did I feel so confident? A reasonable explanation is that, living intimately with dozens of examples of the Master and his pupils, proximity had sharpened my senses to nuances. Regardless, without knowing that the image before me was of a work that had a long history of being called a Rembrandt, I casually told the dealer who had it that the picture was not painted by Van Hoogstraten, but rather by the Master himself. This was hardly the way to negotiate if one were trying to subversively “steal” an undervalued asset. To hammer home the point, I remarked, “While I feel I am a decent businessman, if this is a Van Hoogstraten, then I am Bill Gates and Warren Buffett rolled into one. Trust me, I’m not. This is not a student, it’s a Rembrandt.” This is who I am. My candor can get the better of me but, in this instance, did not work against me, and the painting in due course was re-attributed to the Master well after I had purchased it. I had the picture in the Leiden Gallery for only a short time when I received a visit from the Getty’s Curator, Scott Schaeffer. As would other curators, Scott regularly visited the Gallery to forage for new loans. Scott and I were friendly and shared a similar sensibility across the board. Within seconds of entering the space, across the room something caught his eye and he did a beeline directly to the newest acquisition. It was as perfect a “blink moment” as I can recall. Never having seen the painting before, he gasped audibly, “Is that what I think it is? Is it Rembrandt?” I nodded and told him the story, concluding with, “Feel free to take it with you if you’d like.” Within days, the painting was off to Malibu. Not all such impulse buys end so happily. Everything that I ever touched in an effort to acquire a representation of Pieter de Hooch was a waste of time and money. *Soldier Visiting a Woman in an Elegant Interior* [fig num="150"], purchased at the Dorotheum auction house, was inelegant to say the least. What possessed me to compound the mistake by then buying a copy of that work as well, by his aforementioned pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten, remains a mystery to me. My dealer friends were unanimous in their admonitions. I remember yammering something at the time that it was amusing to have the same painting by two well-known artists, a concept that should have remained on the drawing board. The crescendo of my



Fig 151. Attributed to Pieter de Hooch, *Interior Scene with a Man at a Writing Table*, 1683, oil on canvas, 43.2 x 38.1 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, PH-101



Fig 152. Ferdinand Bol, *Young Man as a Hunter*, oil on canvas, 128.3 x 103.2 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, FB-101

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misadventure with the artist, however, was my purchase of *Interior Scene with a Man at a Writing Table* [fig num="151"]. I thought it was interesting, even if it clearly had condition issues. We had no De Hooch's in the Collection, and in frustration I concluded even an inferior example would be better than none. The sentiment was misguided and we paid for my folly. During the restoration, the head of the central figure came right off! This was an awkward development, but I could only laugh. With poetic justice, my own thoughtlessness and indiscipline had resulted in an apt and well-deserved punishment. I should add that the affection we have for our painters and the sense of responsibility this bestows have carried us into places where other collectors have feared—or simply have not been motivated—to tread: restoration for its own sake. There is a reason for this, of course. It is axiomatic that the better the condition of a painting, the more desirable it is. Everyone wants a painting in perfect state, the way it left the studio or, to use Boedy Lilian's expression, "in mint condition." Sometimes one is faced with the choice of making compromises. If the artist's works are particularly scarce, it is the choice of whether or not to have a representation of that master in the Collection. If the artist is well represented, it is for the work's historical significance (our first Metsu, for example) or an abiding love for the artist and righting the wrong that came from the accidents or mishandling that often happen with centuries' old art. Such was the case with a Ter Borch we acquired at auction in Paris. Badly damaged in a fire and abraded, we nonetheless undertook a restoration way out of proportion to any financial value simply out of respect for the artist's surviving works. A similar, but particularly colorful, outcome resulted from the restoration of Ferdinand Bol's *Young Man as a Hunter* [fig num="152"]. It had needed some work, but the end result was so divorced from the original in its Italianate smokiness that we nicknamed it *The Bolissimo.* For a brief period, I kept it in my office as something of a self-deprecation regarding my attempts to pay misguided obeisance to an artist I love. Once I felt I had punished myself enough, we sent it to storage. In retrospect, though perhaps worthy as a sentiment, this kind of endeavor was a misguided waste of energy."

The Paternal Admonition

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13 string(11503) "

"The Raid on Rembrandt"

Being an historian by training and avocation, it is not a surprise that history and Rembrandt share a common denominator for me. It was spot-on of Walter Bagehot to note that, "The best history is but like the art of Rembrandt; it casts a vivid light on certain selected causes, on those which were best and greatest; it leaves all the rest in shadow and unseen." In appreciating the imperative of discrimination that unites the historian with the artist, it becomes readily apparent that objectivity is often quite subjective. During the Maastricht Fair when we acquired our first Ter Borch, and years before buying an example of the Master, we acquired our first image of Rembrandt: Isaac de Jouderville 's *Portrait of Rembrandt in Oriental Dress* [fig num="153"], an exceptional work. It was painted by one of Rembrandt's earliest pupils after a self-portrait of Rembrandt. Presumably his teacher told him to copy the original as an exercise, which was a common studio practice. The result is perhaps De Jouderville's finest work. It is certainly his most important. Rembrandt subsequently changed his mind about the image on his own self-portrait. Perhaps he did not like the look of his legs. For reasons known only to him, as anyone visiting the original Rembrandt at the Petit Palais in Paris can see, his legs were over-painted with a large poodle. The changed original rendered his student's painting the only full-length image of the Master extant and, especially for our Collection, a highly symbolic historical artifact. It never fails to confound me that the masterpieces we have acquired remain in private hands and are not in museums. I am reflexively impacted by the full force of this anomaly every time I gaze upon the awesome *Minerva in Her Study*.



Fig 153. Isaac de Jouderville, *Portrait of Rembrandt in Oriental Dress*, IJ-100

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Norman Rosenthal calls it our Mona Lisa. I confess that when I first saw her in Otto Naumann's gallery, I was blown away by her presence and by the fact that something so grand was even available for purchase. That sense of awe has only increased, dramatically in fact, over time. Having lived with a reproduction of the painting for almost the entirety of our ownership, my heart skips a beat when I see her in the multiple museum settings she has graced. The thickness of the paint, the wet-in-wet handling of the butt of the brush, the majesty of the Goddess of Wisdom and War, all coalesce into an iconic masterpiece I can scarcely believe we own. Lest my pride be rewarded by the fate of Arachne, the Lydian girl from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* whose presumption Minerva punished by transforming her into a spider, I remain humbled by the honor of viewing it at all. Admittedly, I feel the same emotion when surveying the other examples of the series that she completes, be they in the Prado, Met or Hermitage. Rembrandt famously prized history paintings as the pinnacle of his artistic pursuit. Knowing how highly he himself would have regarded the significance of this work only accentuates our own regard for it. The same can surely be said for the stunning oval of *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak* [fig num="154"]. Though I have stood in front of the original only a few times since she was acquired, each occasion is a revelation. The most memorable of these occurred when I saw her with Daphne in George Wachter's offices at Sotheby's in New York. He did not have to sell the painting's qualities. We both knew we were taking in an extraordinary experience, especially with the painting not having been seen in public since its sensational auction at Sotheby's in 1985. Having been given the first offer by George, due as much to our ability to act quickly and discretely as to our appetite, we took the opportunity seriously. The provenance, from Jean de Jullienne and Johannes II, the Prince of Liechtenstein, through to its violent theft from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and then disappearance for two decades after its record-breaking sale in 1985, made for a fascinating history, worthy of a memoir of its own. Still I hesitated. It was a big leap financially. The next night, however, as Daphne and I were walking to the cinema, I asked her what she thought we should do about *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak*. With a similar sense of decisiveness that she had displayed with our first Rembrandt purchase of the recumbent lioness on paper, she remarked that the painting was as good as it gets. To rub it in a bit, she smiled and said that she was surprised I had not already said yes to George. I did so the next morning. At that time, I also rang Otto Naumann to tell him that I had a pleasant surprise for him and told him to make his way to George's office for a treat. As he left the Sotheby's building after viewing the painting, he called to tell me that this was as important a purchase as we were ever going to make, and that he felt privileged to be able to see the picture first. In fact, Otto went beyond the congratulations to assist me in some important aspects of the transaction. Before we concluded the deal, George invited Otto and me to come see the painting in natural light as the sun was setting. With the oval portrait propped up on a stand, we stood with glasses of wine, quietly making merry when the parting of the clouds cast a shadow on the painting. As if by magic, the girl was transformed and the richness of the chiaroscuro created



Fig 154. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Young Girl in a Gold-Trimmed Cloak*, RR-104



Fig 155. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Portrait of a Man in a Red Coat*, RR-108



Fig 156. Johannes Vermeer, *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal*, JVe-100

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one of the most dramatic moments I have experienced as a collector. Otto and I exclaimed some pleasurable expletives and George beamed. He knew his art, and he certainly knew how to please a client. Not long after, George and I had occasion to celebrate over lunch, giving him the opportunity to see how far our appetites might extend. Never one to feel threatened by a good time, I asked what was on his mind. He told me that Rembrandt's *Portrait of a Man in a Red Coat* [fig num="155"], a half-share in which Sotheby's had acquired when Rob Noortman sold his firm to the auction house, was in need of a new home. Having already made up our minds to buy any Rembrandts remaining on the market, this was music to my ears. Doubtless accentuated by the boldness of the generous red coloring, as with *Minerva in Her Study*, the "wall power" of the painting was thrilling to behold. We worked out a fair price and George executed the transaction flawlessly. I could not believe our good fortune in finding a new home for *Portrait of a Man in a Red Coat* in our Collection. Then again, however, it was good fortune that paid for the purchases. Having been the beneficiary of one of the most dramatic natural gas discoveries in decades, and selling it in 2007 before the Financial Crisis, we had the capital to pursue our collecting with the same single-minded focus we had used in building our businesses and in striving to change the game in environmental philanthropy. We knew what we wanted next: Rembrandt's *Self Portrait with Shaded Eyes* [fig num="131"], then in the possession of Steve Wynn. At the time he had bought the painting in 2003, Wynn was quoted as saying that he purchased it for "people to see Rembrandt in relation to the Impressionists, post-Impressionists and early Modernists" that he normally collected. More prosaically, he added that "[t]hey've got enough Rembrandts in the Netherlands…. I decided we needed one here in Las Vegas." But now it was 2008, an interesting time economically. Although Wynn was interested in selling the painting, he insisted on divesting it together with his Vermeer, *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* [fig num="156"]. We at first balked at the idea, but it was not long before it dawned on us that, treasured as the self-portrait would be, the even greater coup would be the acquisition of the only Vermeer in private hands, among the holiest grails of the Old Masters. Once we had agreed on price, I asked Otto Naumann to fly to Las Vegas to inspect both works before we wired the funds. While in China on business, I received an unexpected call from Otto. With great excitement, he said that he felt compelled to call to tell me something important. Unnoticed by both of us, only when in front of the Rembrandt did he realize that the painting was dated 1634. He recalled an episode in the Leiden Gallery when he and Jack Kilgore joked that we were the only collectors who were collecting Rembrandt's paintings by the years they were painted and that, possessing examples from 1632, 1633 and 1635, we were missing "a 1634." "You're not going to believe this, Tom, but it's a 1634 … the year you're missing!" Clearly a bit giddy by the magnitude of the transaction, he congratulated me on a great deal and I went back to the business my dear friend and colleague, Ali Erfan, and I were working on in Asia. While additional Rembrandts would follow this purchase, I find *Self Portrait with Shaded Eyes* particularly resonant. This feeling does not follow simply from

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ownership. Whenever I look at Rembrandt's self-portraits, I sense that I am peering into the eyes of a man who was truly transcendent. The great Rembrandt scholar Ernst van de Wetering has rightly compared Rembrandt to Shakespeare and Beethoven in his being one of the very rare artists that changed the world. He puts the argument for the Master as follows:

> Through his work, Rembrandt contributed to a new sense of freedom and independence. This was inspired by the unconventional sketchiness of his drawings and etchings and many of his paintings, the sovereignty with which he left many of his works unfinished, the intensity and the love with which he perceived and depicted both the world around him and the intimacy of domestic life; all this helped liberate artists throughout the world from the imperative rules of art and the formalisms associated with them. The liberation (symbolized by the beret that Rembrandt introduced as the artist's attribute) has entered the spirit of countless non-artists without their being aware of it. Whoever sees Rembrandt's work recognizes the best of himself in it. Like other great artists who have changed the world, so with Rembrandt: it is in the end the magic of an exceptional personality that counts, a magic that cannot be caught in psychological terms or pinned down by however much art historical research. Throughout the world, when people see Rembrandt's works, this magic lifts their spirit and leads them to self-reflection.

"

"The Raid on Rembrandt"

Being an historian by training and avocation, it is not a surprise that history and Rembrandt share a common denominator for me. It was spot-on of Walter Bagehot to note that, "The best history is but like the art of Rembrandt; it casts a vivid light on certain selected causes, on those which were best and greatest; it leaves all the rest in shadow and unseen." In appreciating the imperative of discrimination that unites the historian with the artist, it becomes readily apparent that objectivity is often quite subjective.

During the Maastricht Fair when we acquired our first Ter Borch, and years before buying an example of the Master, we acquired our first image of Rembrandt: Isaac de Jouderville's *Portrait of Rembrandt in Oriental Dress* **(fig 153)**, an exceptional work. It was painted by one of Rembrandt's earliest pupils after a self-portrait of Rembrandt. Presumably his teacher told him to copy the original as an exercise, which was a common studio practice. The result is perhaps De Jouderville's finest work. It is certainly his most important. Rembrandt subsequently changed his mind about the image on his own self-portrait. Perhaps he did not like the look of his legs. For reasons known only to him, as anyone visiting the original Rembrandt at the Petit Palais in Paris can see, his legs were over-painted with a large poodle. The changed

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original rendered his student's painting the only full-length image of the Master extant and, especially for our Collection, a highly symbolic historical artifact.

It never fails to confound me that the masterpieces we have acquired remain in private hands and are not in museums. I am reflexively impacted by the full force of this anomaly every time I gaze upon the awesome *Minerva in Her Study*. Norman Rosenthal calls it our Mona Lisa. I confess that when I first saw her in Otto Naumann's gallery, I was blown away by her presence and by the fact that something so grand was even available for purchase. That sense of awe has only increased, dramatically in fact, over time. Having lived with a reproduction of the painting for almost the entirety of our ownership, my heart skips a beat when I see her in the multiple museum settings she has graced. The thickness of the paint, the wet-in-wet handling of the butt of the brush, the majesty of the Goddess of Wisdom and War, all coalesce into an iconic masterpiece I can scarcely believe we own. Lest my pride be rewarded by the fate of Arachne, the Lydian girl from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* whose presumption Minerva punished by transforming her into a spider, I remain humbled by the honor of viewing it at all. Admittedly, I feel the same emotion when surveying the other examples of the series that she completes, be they in the Prado, Met or Hermitage. Rembrandt famously prized history paintings as the pinnacle of his artistic pursuit. Knowing how highly he himself would have regarded the significance of this work only accentuates our own regard for it.

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We knew what we wanted next: Rembrandt's *Self Portrait with Shaded Eyes* **(fig 131)**, then in the possession of Steve Wynn. At the time he had bought the painting in 2003, Wynn was quoted as saying that he purchased it for "people to see Rembrandt in relation to the Impressionists, post-Impressionists and early Modernists" that he normally collected. More prosaically, he added that "[t]hey've got enough Rembrandts in the Netherlands…. I decided we needed one here in Las Vegas." But now it was 2008, an interesting time economically. Although Wynn was interested in selling the painting, he insisted on divesting it together with his Vermeer, *Young Woman Seated*

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at a Virginal **(fig 156)**. We at first balked at the idea, but it was not long before it dawned on us that, treasured as the self-portrait would be, the even greater coup would be the acquisition of the only Vermeer in private hands, among the holiest grails of the Old Masters.

Once we had agreed on price, I asked Otto Naumann to fly to Las Vegas to inspect both works before we wired the funds. While in China on business, I received an unexpected call from Otto. With great excitement, he said that he felt compelled to call to tell me something important. Unnoticed by both of us, only when in front of the Rembrandt did he realize that the painting was dated 1634. He recalled an episode in the Leiden Gallery when he and Jack Kilgore joked that we were the only collectors who were collecting Rembrandt's paintings by the years they were painted and that, possessing examples from 1632, 1633 and 1635, we were missing "a 1634." "You're not going to believe this, Tom, but it's a 1634 … the year you're missing!" Clearly a bit giddy by the magnitude of the transaction, he congratulated me on a great deal and I went back to the business my dear friend and colleague, Ali Erfan, and I were working on in Asia.

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Staples and Café Viennoise

Among the paintings that we loaned to The Louvre for their 2017 exhibition with Washington, D.C.'s National Gallery of Art is one of the great rarities of the Old Masters, the only remaining mature Vermeer in private hands. It also happens to be a painting that, coincidentally, was painted on canvas drawn from the same bolt of cloth as one of The Louvre's own Vermeers, *The Lacemaker* [fig num="157"]. A highlight of our Collection, as it would be of any, *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* is a charmingly evocative image that speaks to this great Master's ability to convey the solemnity of a precise moment in time. Our painting has the charm and poignancy of Vermeer, if not the transcendent complexity of his more iconic pieces, and in terms of theme and execution fits very naturally into the body of his late works, including those at the National Gallery in London and Kenwood House. As described above, we were indeed fortunate to be in the right place at the right time in 2008 to acquire simultaneously both a Rembrandt and a Vermeer from Steve Wynn. One might think it fanciful to suggest that *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* can hold her own with Vermeer's transcendent, *sui generis* pieces like *The Milkmaid* [fig num="36"], or *The Astronomer* [fig num="158"], or *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* [fig num="159"], any of which could well be the most expensive artwork ever to sell at auction … if any of them could ever be put on the auction block. And yet somehow she does. Having seen the painting in multiple settings and venues, including with other Vermeers from the artist's finest period at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, she is elevated by her siblings' presence. At the National Gallery in London's charming exhibition entitled "Vermeer and Music: The Art of Love and Leisure," which included four Vermeers, *The Observer's* Laura Cumming, in her review of the show, put her feelings this way:

> Silence, stillness, time in sweet abeyance: the atmosphere one associates with Vermeer's art might seem at odds with the theme of this show. But his compositions are based on harmonies, melodies, repeating motifs and infinitely subtle tonal variations. The music is all in the painting. This is especially apparent in a rarely shown work on loan from a private collection in New York—*Young Woman Seated at a Virginal*. The painting is so pure in its muted glimmers, soft tones and sparkling highlights, and so empty of everything except the girl and her virginal, that all the emphasis is upon the moment's single note. The wall behind her, pale and luminous, is as fine as air itself. Everything resonates. The whole painting enhances the intimacy of her solo performance.

Ms. Cumming's observations elegantly sum up my own impression of, and affection for, the painting. To be able to own it is a privilege. The great collector, Eijk van Otterloo, pulled me aside at a seminar one day to tell me



Fig 157. Johannes Vermeer, *The Lacemaker*, ca. 1669–70, oil on canvas, 23.9 x 20.5 cm., Musée du Louvre, Paris, Gianni Dagli Orti / The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY



Fig 158. Johannes Vermeer, *The Astronomer*, ca. 1668, oil on canvas, 51 cm × 45 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. R.F. 1983-28



Fig 159. Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, ca. 1665–66, oil on canvas, 46.5 x 40 cm, Royal Gallery of Pictures Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv.

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that he felt the acquisition of the Vermeer was a brilliant purchase and that he did not even know it was for sale. I told him I was flattered, but that outcome was dumb luck on our part. Steve Wynn is the one who decided to link it to the purchase of Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait with Shaded Eyes* [fig num="131"]. Regardless, he said, I was very fortunate. With the passage of time, recalling once again Napoleon's dictum that he would take lucky generals over smart ones, and relishing the sobriquet "lucky" above all, I came to understand that this purchase was, as they say, meant to be. Immediately upon its purchase, *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* was sent directly to an exhibition at the National Museum in Western Art in Tokyo where she had been promised on loan, and it was a long time until I saw her again. Some years later, one of my dearest friends, Josh Fink, and I found ourselves in the Greenwich home of one of the preeminent collectors of our era, Steve Cohen. Before dinner, we had drinks in his living room, a space adorned with some of the most exquisite art in the world. I remarked on the incredible Gauguin and Van Gogh in close proximity to each other and asked if he would share how he came to acquire them. He said that they had been purchased, together, from Steve Wynn. He had sought one, but the hotelier had insisted that they be bought together. "He stapled them," said Steve. I did not know what to make of the expression and asked what he meant by "stapled." The thought briefly crossed my mind that this great art lover who had famously put his elbow through a Picasso might have somehow disfigured these paintings accidentally with office supplies. Steve said that he meant that Steve Wynn preconditioned the sale of the one on the other. Without thinking, I exclaimed "Oh, I was stapled as well!" He asked which paintings and answered the question himself: "Don't tell me one of them was the Vermeer?" I replied "Yes," surprised that he knew of it. "Now *that* is a rare work. Unique if I'm not mistaken. You were very lucky." Once again, I took the compliment and, once again, I acknowledged that my pursuit of the Rembrandt had put me in the right place at the right time. Like Steve Cohen, we too had been stapled by Steve Wynn. As Steve Cohen acknowledged with his own purchases, we could not have been happier with the arrangement. In a final twist to the story, Johnny van Haeften reminded me that I had borrowed his paddle at the 2004 auction at which Steve Wynn had acquired the Vermeer and that I was the first to open the bidding. Forsaking the privilege of bidding for the first Vermeer to appear at auction in 80 years, at least for posterity, seemed to be uninspired. Not that I expected ever to write about it. Though years would pass before we would acquire *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal*, the fact that I had placed the first bid on the painting and ultimately the last adds a pleasant symmetry to a fine outcome. Weeks after our dinner, Steve Cohen came to visit the Gallery on a Saturday when he was in New York. About mid-way into the space, he stopped, looked around the myriad paintings appearing to glow under the lights and pronounced with genuine wonder: "Tom, this is f---ing CRAZY. It's amazing." He could not believe that a collection like we had assembled had been so under-the-radar. I laughed at his enthusiasm, only to stop when he admitted that when he first thought of collecting, it was with Old Masters that he thought he would begin. The mere thought that Steve Cohen might have

670



Fig 160. Carel Fabritius, *Hagar and the Angel*, CF-100



Fig 161. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis*, 1662, oil on canvas, 196 x 309 cm, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm (Photo: Cecilia Heisser / Nationalmuseum)



Fig 162. Arent de Gelder, *Old Testament Figure, Probably King Solomon*, AG-104



Fig 163. Arent de Gelder, *Edna Entrusting Tobias with Sarah*, AG-103

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been our competitor caused my collecting life to flash before my eyes, but then he added offhandedly that, in the end, his taste was modern, and was indeed already moving from impressionism and modernism to more and more of a contemporary sensibility. I replied that it was our good fortune that he had pivoted away from Old Masters. Any ambitions we might have had to build the kind of collection we assembled would have failed if Steve Cohen, with his fine eye and considerable capital, had been in competition with us. For a collector of the Rembrandt School, as glorious as a purchase of the Master always represents, the Holy Grail of acquisitions is of a Carel Fabritius. This is not simply because Fabritius was so good—Sir Norman Rosenthal put it eloquently when he said that "each of his paintings is an adventure"—but that he is the rarest of the great Masters. Only thirteen of his paintings remain. Having now become more well-known due to the commercial success of the best-selling novel, *The Goldfinch*, Fabritius had an early and dramatic death in 1654 when a portion of Delft that included his studio was destroyed by a gunpowder magazine explosion. The acquisition of the only Fabritius remaining in private hands is a tale of initiative and lateral thinking by my dealer friends. During the financial crisis, Otto Naumann took the bold step of buying real estate on the island of Nantucket. As an afterthought, he reckoned he needed to pay for it. Thinking on his feet, he asked himself what our Collection might be missing. A painting by Carel Fabritius made great sense, and he looked at the catalogue of the artist to see where any might still exist in private ownership. Of the 13 surviving works of the artist, he noted that the only one that might be remotely available was in the Schonborn-Buchheim collection in Vienna, on loan to the Residenzgalerie Salzburg. Having been persuaded by Otto that it could not hurt to ask if the painting might be available, despite its having been in the same family for more than two centuries, the talented and reliable Austrian dealer Roman Herzig made a call to the Count. With wit and some creativity, a win-win multi-lateral deal was worked out with the House of Schonborn, the Prince of Liechtenstein, and some other interested parties, and we were able to add this key painting to the Collection. Prior to confirming the purchase, I had asked that I be able to inspect the painting in Austria. Flying to Vienna from Paris, I will never forget viewing *Hagar and the Angel* [fig num="160"] for the first time. It was a revelation. I found the painting, particularly the pathos, emotional gratitude and sense of relief emanating from Hagar's gestures, so compelling and magnetic that I sat in front of the masterpiece for what seemed like hours. Roman Herzig remarked afterward that he had never seen a collector as moved as I had been when beholding the Fabritius. I understood immediately why Fabritius was regarded as the greatest of Rembrandt's pupils. He had developed his own style and executed it brilliantly. To this day, *Hagar and the Angel* remains nonpareil in its ability to move me, and I particularly enjoy using it as an entry point into the Rembrandt School with my Muslim friends, an experience that has enabled me to gain even greater insights into this momentous turning point for the Arab world. I often wonder if Rembrandt saw it and what his opinion might have been. In the best spirit of *aemulatio*, one would hope that, if he did, Rembrandt applauded his pupil's successes as



Fig 164. Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus*, SH-101



Fig 165. Attributed to Pieter Verelst, *Portrait of a Man (possible Self-Portrait)*, PV-100

Fig 166. Pieter Lastman, *David Gives Uriah a Letter for Joab*, PL-100

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he would his own. However, my imagination cries out for an enterprising screenwriter to script a story of a Fabritius-Rembrandt rivalry—a la Mozart-Salieri—leading to a mysterious gunpowder magazine explosion!
Following *Hagar and the Angel's* arrival in New York, Tom Campbell at the Metropolitan Museum graciously blessed the painting's restoration by his exceptionally gifted conservator, Michael Gallagher. That process is revealed at greater length elsewhere in the catalogue. Since then, the Fabritius has been hanging at the Met, where it is enjoyed by museum-goers who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to see it. Carel Fabritius was a generational talent and being able to participate in the dissemination of his work has been a great privilege for us. If a film of Rembrandt's students were ever produced, I would cast Rembrandt's last pupil, Arent de Gelder, in a leading role. Much remains unknown about this fascinating artist, whose loyalty to Rembrandt and understanding of the Master's thinking late in his career was profound. Scott Shaeffer, who shares my affinity for De Gelder, has discussed this artist with me at length and with great admiration. What we do know is that "he got it," and that his art reflects a freedom from the prevailing conventions that both continued the Master's thrust towards free expression and presaged Goya and the impressionists. It took guts for De Gelder to continue on this path at that time. Rembrandt never lost his celebrity status, but that is not to say that the last phase of his trajectory was beloved by his clientele. The horrifying story of how one of Rembrandt's grandest masterpieces, *The Conspiracy of Claudius Civilus* [fig num="161"], was rejected by the overseers of the newly-built Town Hall in Amsterdam is a case in point. It was emblematic of his status, which was sufficiently esteemed for him to have been asked to contribute to the assembled installations, but no longer so exalted that his work could not be rejected for being too avant-garde for the audience to appreciate. The cutting down of this great work to a quarter of its original size was a final indignity, in some respects a metaphor for the impoverished Rembrandt himself who, several months later, had to sell his deceased wife Saskia's grave. I loved to show visitors to the Gallery how far Rembrandt's technique had evolved during his career. I accentuated this evolution by facing the first of our Arent de Gelder acquisitions obtained through Otto Naumann, *Old Testament Figure, Probably King Solomon* [fig num="162"], with the wall of paintings dedicated to Gerrit Dou. A less subtle contrast in styles was hardly possible. Whereas Dou took pride in not exhibiting any more brushwork than necessary, the semi-anarchic strokes committed by De Gelder, with the brush itself or its butt, scribbling wet-in-wet with the abandon of Cy Twombly on amphetamines, is breathtaking. Dou exhibits photographic perfection. De Gelder eschews it all. Wild strokes abound. A shock of orange on the sleeve comes out of nowhere. In an earlier time, this imaginative touch would have been seen as vandalism or the product of a disturbed mind. Yet from De Gelder, it's masterful. I adore his art. In short order, *Edna Entrusting Tobias with Sarah* [fig num="163"] joined the Collection. Formerly in the great entrepreneur and connoisseur Alfred Bader's collection, it's a tender and energetic interpretation of the biblical story. It was nearly two years later when a picture by De Gelder, the beautiful *Judah and*

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Tamar, came up at auction. Acquired for us by Johnny van Haeften and Otto Naumann, the picture is an unusually enchanting portrayal of two lovers that belies the less than straightforward, indeed rather disturbing, nature of the story itself. Paintings by some very fine Rembrandt pupils were also difficult to find in the Rembrandtesque manner that we most appreciated. Not surprisingly, when they left the Master's studio, these artists often developed their own styles. That was all well and good, but it meant that examples that would fit our narrative were harder to come by. We were able to acquire only one fine example of the multi-talented Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus* [fig num="164"], as well as by the accomplished Pieter Verelst, whose *Portrait of a Man (possible Self-Portrait)* [fig num="165"] is a particular favorite for its smooth execution, dramatic use of shadow and strong sense of personality. Nicolaes Maes is another artist whose works we sought. Maes' *Woman with Three Children and a Goat* is a very worthy Rembrandt-influenced work, likely painted within the master's studio or just upon leaving it, and with a great and lively provenance that includes the Rothschilds and J. Pierpont Morgan. Still, having an excellent interior scene from the artist's most distinctive period, circa 1655, would certainly fill a gap in the Collection. No discussion of the Rembrandt School would be complete without acknowledgement of Rembrandt's own Master. One of the most splendid paintings in our Collection is our single example of Pieter Lastman's work, *David Gives Uriah a letter for Joab* [fig num="166"], a painting that displays the very best of his towering power. Having hung in the Mauritshuis for 60 years before its restitution to the Goudstikker family, the story of David and Uriah is a searing indictment of the corruption that can pollute even the greatest of men. With a brilliance that elucidates the talents that drew his pupils, Lievens and Rembrandt, toward him (and which also explains his influence on them after they had left his studio), he conveys a vivid narrative with the most liquid brushwork. The best of his masterpieces in private hands, the painting made its way to the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. immediately upon its purchase. We are particularly grateful to Ben Hall at Christie's and Otto Naumann for navigating this very important private sale, as well as the Goudstikker family, who visited us after the transaction. With Jan Steen's *Sacrifice of Iphigenia* [fig num="48"], the family has entrusted two prized works to us, and we accept with deep humility the responsibility that comes from this incredible saga."

Staples and Café Viennoise

Among the paintings that we loaned to The Louvre for their 2017 exhibition with Washington, D.C.'s National Gallery of Art is one of the great rarities of the Old Masters, the only remaining mature Vermeer in private hands. It also happens to be a painting that, coincidentally, was painted on canvas drawn from the same bolt of cloth as one of The Louvre's own Vermeers, *The Lacemaker* **(fig 157)**. A highlight of our Collection, as it would be of any, *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* is a charmingly evocative image that speaks to this great Master's ability to convey the solemnity of a

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precise moment in time. Our painting has the charm and poignancy of Vermeer, if not the transcendent complexity of his more iconic pieces, and in terms of theme and execution fits very naturally into the body of his late works, including those at the National Gallery in London and Kenwood House.

As described above, we were indeed fortunate to be in the right place at the right time in 2008 to acquire simultaneously both a Rembrandt and a Vermeer from Steve Wynn. One might think it fanciful to suggest that *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* can hold her own with Vermeer's transcendent, *sui generis* pieces like *The Milkmaid* **(fig 36)**, or *The Astronomer* **(fig 158)**, or *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* **(fig 159)**, any of which could well be the most expensive artwork ever to sell at auction … if any of them could ever be put on the auction block. And yet somehow she does. Having seen the painting in multiple settings and venues, including with other Vermeers from the artist's finest period at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, she is elevated by her siblings' presence. At the National Gallery in London's charming exhibition entitled "Vermeer and Music: The Art of Love and Leisure," which included four Vermeers, *The Observer's* Laura Cumming, in her review of the show, put her feelings this way:

> Silence, stillness, time in sweet abeyance: the atmosphere one associates with Vermeer's art might seem at odds with the theme of this show. But his compositions are based on harmonies, melodies, repeating motifs and infinitely subtle tonal variations. The music is all in the painting.
>
> This is especially apparent in a rarely shown work on loan from a private collection in New York—*Young Woman Seated at a Virginal*. The painting is so pure in its muted glimmers, soft tones and sparkling highlights, and so empty of everything except the girl and her virginal, that all the emphasis is upon the moment's single note. The wall behind her, pale and luminous, is as fine as air itself. Everything resonates. The whole painting enhances the intimacy of her solo performance.

Ms. Cumming's observations elegantly sum up my own impression of, and affection for, the painting. To be able to own it is a privilege. The great collector, Eijk van Otterloo, pulled me aside at a seminar one day to tell me that he felt the acquisition of the Vermeer was a brilliant purchase and that he did not even know it was for sale. I told him I was flattered, but that outcome was dumb luck on our part. Steve Wynn is the one who decided to link it to the purchase of Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait with Shaded Eyes* **(fig 131)**. Regardless, he said, I was very fortunate. With the passage of time, recalling once again Napoleon's dictum that he would take lucky generals over

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smart ones, and relishing the sobriquet “lucky” above all, I came to understand that this purchase was, as they say, meant to be.

Immediately upon its purchase, *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* was sent directly to an exhibition at the National Museum in Western Art in Tokyo where she had been promised on loan, and it was a long time until I saw her again. Some years later, one of my dearest friends, Josh Fink, and I found ourselves in the Greenwich home of one of the preeminent collectors of our era, Steve Cohen. Before dinner, we had drinks in his living room, a space adorned with some of the most exquisite art in the world. I remarked on the incredible Gauguin and Van Gogh in close proximity to each other and asked if he would share how he came to acquire them. He said that they had been purchased, together, from Steve Wynn. He had sought one, but the hotelier had insisted that they be bought together. “He stapled them,” said Steve. I did not know what to make of the expression and asked what he meant by “stapled.” The thought briefly crossed my mind that this great art lover who had famously put his elbow through a Picasso might have somehow disfigured these paintings accidentally with office supplies. Steve said that he meant that Steve Wynn preconditioned the sale of the one on the other. Without thinking, I exclaimed “Oh, I was stapled as well!” He asked which paintings and answered the question himself: “Don’t tell me one of them was the Vermeer?” I replied “Yes,” surprised that he knew of it. “Now *that* is a rare work. Unique if I’m not mistaken. You were very lucky.” Once again, I took the compliment and, once again, I acknowledged that my pursuit of the Rembrandt had put me in the right place at the right time. Like Steve Cohen, we too had been stapled by Steve Wynn. As Steve Cohen acknowledged with his own purchases, we could not have been happier with the arrangement. In a final twist to the story, Johnny van Haeften reminded me that I had borrowed his paddle at the 2004 auction at which Steve Wynn had acquired the Vermeer and that I was the first to open the bidding. Forsaking the privilege of bidding for the first Vermeer to appear at auction in 80 years, at least for posterity, seemed to be uninspired. Not that I expected ever to write about it. Though years would pass before we would acquire *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal*, the fact that I had placed the first bid on the painting and ultimately the last adds a pleasant symmetry to a fine outcome.

Weeks after our dinner, Steve Cohen came to visit the Gallery on a Saturday when he was in New York. About mid-way into the space, he stopped, looked around the myriad paintings appearing to glow under the lights and pronounced with genuine wonder: “Tom, this is f—ing CRAZY. It’s amazing.” He could not believe that a collection like we had assembled had been so under-the-radar. I laughed at his enthusiasm, only to stop when he admitted that when he first thought of collecting, it was with Old Masters that he thought he would begin. The mere thought that Steve Cohen might have been our competitor caused my collecting life to flash before my

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eyes, but then he added offhandedly that, in the end, his taste was modern, and was indeed already moving from impressionism and modernism to more and more of a contemporary sensibility. I replied that it was our good fortune that he had pivoted away from Old Masters. Any ambitions we might have had to build the kind of collection we assembled would have failed if Steve Cohen, with his fine eye and considerable capital, had been in competition with us.

For a collector of the Rembrandt School, as glorious as a purchase of the Master always represents, the Holy Grail of acquisitions is of a Carel Fabritius. This is not simply because Fabritius was so good—Sir Norman Rosenthal put it eloquently when he said that "each of his paintings is an adventure"—but that he is the rarest of the great Masters. Only thirteen of his paintings remain. Having now become more well-known due to the commercial success of the best-selling novel, *The Goldfinch*, Fabritius had an early and dramatic death in 1654 when a portion of Delft that included his studio was destroyed by a gunpowder magazine explosion.

The acquisition of the only Fabritius remaining in private hands is a tale of initiative and lateral thinking by my dealer friends. During the financial crisis, Otto Naumann took the bold step of buying real estate on the island of Nantucket. As an afterthought, he reckoned he needed to pay for it. Thinking on his feet, he asked himself what our Collection might be missing. A painting by Carel Fabritius made great sense, and he looked at the catalogue of the artist to see where any might still exist in private ownership. Of the 13 surviving works of the artist, he noted that the only one that might be remotely available was in the Schonborn-Buchheim collection in Vienna, on loan to the Residenzgalerie Salzburg. Having been persuaded by Otto that it could not hurt to ask if the painting might be available, despite its having been in the same family for more than two centuries, the talented and reliable Austrian dealer Roman Herzig made a call to the Count. With wit and some creativity, a win-win multi-lateral deal was worked out with the House of Schonborn, the Prince of Liechtenstein, and some other interested parties, and we were able to add this key painting to the Collection.

Prior to confirming the purchase, I had asked that I be able to inspect the painting in Austria. Flying to Vienna from Paris, I will never forget viewing *Hagar and the Angel* **(fig 160)** for the first time. It was a revelation. I found the painting, particularly the pathos, emotional gratitude and sense of relief emanating from Hagar's gestures, so compelling and magnetic that I sat in front of the masterpiece for what seemed like hours. Roman Herzig remarked afterward that he had never seen a collector as moved as I had been when beholding the Fabritius. I understood immediately why Fabritius was regarded as the greatest of Rembrandt's pupils. He had developed his own style and executed it brilliantly. To this day, *Hagar and the Angel* remains nonpareil in its

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ability to move me, and I particularly enjoy using it as an entry point into the Rembrandt School with my Muslim friends, an experience that has enabled me to gain even greater insights into this momentous turning point for the Arab world. I often wonder if Rembrandt saw it and what his opinion might have been. In the best spirit of *aemulatio*, one would hope that, if he did, Rembrandt applauded his pupil's successes as he would his own. However, my imagination cries out for an enterprising screenwriter to script a story of a Fabritius-Rembrandt rivalry—a la Mozart-Salieri—leading to a mysterious gunpowder magazine explosion!

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No discussion of the Rembrandt School would be complete without acknowledgement of Rembrandt's own Master. One of the most splendid paintings in our Collection is our single example of Pieter Lastman's work, *David Gives Uriah a letter for Joab* **(fig 166)**, a painting that displays the very best of his towering power. Having hung in the Mauritshuis for 60 years before its restitution to the Goudstikker family, the story of David and Uriah is a searing indictment of the corruption that can pollute even the greatest of men. With a brilliance that elucidates the talents that drew his pupils, Lievens and Rembrandt, toward him (and which also explains his influence on them after they had left his studio), he conveys a vivid narrative with the most

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The French Connection

Rembrandt's self-portraits, which marked his ascendancy as an artist and personality, set the standard for his students and the generations who followed. Of course most self-portraits of the era were meant to convey the arrival of the artist. An excellent example of this is found in *Self-Portrait* [fig num="167"] by Govaert Flinck, fashioned after a Rembrandt that in turn was influenced by Raphael and Titian. In perfect condition and visually stunning, it is likely the best of the artist's works in private hands. It was also the first painting sold to us by Rob Noortman's son William, who had been introduced to me by our mutual friend Josh Fink. When the Villeneuve family decided to sell part of the collection that Will's father had been instrumental in creating, they sought him out first. Will thought of us for this painting, the prime example of a key Rembrandt pupil at the highest point of his Master's influence, and we were most grateful. Will confessed years later that he had purposely taken a suite—for an hour—at the Bristol hotel in Paris so that he could make the Flinck the centerpiece of the room and create just the right *mise en scene* to entice me with the self-portrait's forceful presence. I could only smile at the salesmanship and remark wistfully that his father would have been supremely proud of him. The decision was really an easy one. The power of the brushwork, coloring, spirit, image—in a word, everything—was masterfully virtuoso. Though nothing can match *Self-Portrait*, it was nicely reunited with *Portrait of a Man in Profile* [fig num="168"] which, having been exhibited at The Louvre, is now attributed to Flinck, as well as *Portrait of a Man with a Hat* [fig num="169"], which had been acquired by J. Paul Getty for his museum and deaccessioned decades later. The latter is another painting whose pose descended from a specific Rembrandt, and we were happy to see it go on loan to the major Flinck exhibition held in 2015 at the Museum Kurhaus in Kleve, a show for which our self-portrait of the artist served as the face. Daphne and I have most enjoyed witnessing the recent reappraisal of Ferdinand Bol, who is finally receiving the accolades he so richly deserves. We have collected the artist in depth, from his most Rembrandt-influenced masterpieces to one of the most beautiful of his later, more international style, *Venus and Cupid* [fig num="170"], itself the precursor to his greatest masterpiece from that era, *Venus and the Sleeping Mars,* in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum in Brunswick. The monumental *Angel Appearing to Elijah* [fig num="171"] is so



Fig 167. Govert Flinck, *Self-Portrait*, GF-103



Fig 168. Attributed to Govaert Flinck, *Portrait of a Man in Profile (Previously "Portrait of a Jew in Profile")*, RR-121

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grand that it takes my breath away. It is so much informed by Rembrandt in execution, as well as in the sensitive treatment of the subject matter, that I imagine the Master nodding with approval when he saw it. Alas, I myself have seen the painting only a few times, as after being purchased at auction and cleaned, it was sent directly to the Getty Museum and has resided there ever since. In light of the enormous wall space it consumes, it is a testament to the quality and power of the image that the museum has not sent it back to us! Each of Bol's works in the Collection resonates strongly with Daphne and me. The pensive *Scholar at His Desk* [fig num="172"] is one of our most cherished examples of a subject that was a clear favorite among his contemporaries. It softly recalls the desire to convey erudition and the technical prowess one needed to succeed in achieving it. Our *Scholar in His Study* [fig num="173"] by Sir Godfrey Kneller, a pupil of both Rembrandt and Bol, also wonderfully pursues this theme. Bol's *Scholar in His Study*, enhanced by the physical resemblance of its subject to Otto Naumann, reminds me of my friend contemplating attributions. *Man with a Fur-Trimmed Hat* [fig num="174"], which came to us through Johnny van Haeften, displays a crisp, more refined brushwork. The richness in the handling of the passages of fur gives the man's presence an exceptional immediacy, suggesting that he is about to present the pelt he is holding through the picture plane and into the viewer's hands. Being able to cap the Rembrandt-era of Bol's *oeuvre* with *Self Portrait, Behind a Parapet* [fig num="175"], where the artist was then only 32 years old, was another gift. Being the largest collection of the artist's paintings other than that at the Hermitage, it was only fitting we should strive to find a self-portrait. This painting in particular recalls the aforementioned *Self-Portrait* by Flinck [fig num="167"] for its appropriation of its pose from Rembrandt's own self-portrait of 1640 [fig num="176"] in the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., in which the Master is standing behind a parapet. It is not only evocative but enjoys an unusual history, having been in the collection of the esteemed opera singer Lauritz Melchior and his wife before making its way to the Los Angeles County Museum, from which it was deaccessioned, fortunately for us. Museum tastes are of course impossible to divine. While LACMA was divesting their Bol, The Louvre was looking to acquire one. One of our finest examples of Bol, *Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well* [fig num="177"] came to us via a French auction in 2008. We acquired this masterpiece together with its export license, enabling us to remove it from France with the assistance of Johnny van Haeften, Boedy Lilian and Otto Naumann. Soon after its purchase, Boedy alerted us to the fact that the painting had been underbid by The Louvre itself. Impressed with the fact that the museum had been willing to buy the artwork amidst a global financial crisis, we contacted Blaise Ducos, The Louvre's Curator of Netherlandish Art, and asked if it might not be better for the museum to save its resources for another acquisition and simply borrow the painting. He loved the idea and, after vetting it with the museum's President-Director, accepted the offer on behalf of The Louvre. Unbeknownst to us, unlike the 40-some museums with which we have had lending relationships, The Louvre does not make it a practice to borrow paintings from private collections other than for temporary



Fig 169. Govaert Flinck, *Portrait of a Man with a Hat*, GF-100



Fig 170. Ferdinand Bol, *Venus and Cupid*, 1658, oil on canvas, 114.3 x 91.4 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, FB-102



Fig 171. Ferdinand Bol, *Angel Appearing to Elijah*, FB-104

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exhibitions. Apparently, our proposed loan engendered a great deal of internal debate as to whether an exception should be made. So when Blaise told us that The Louvre accepted our offer, we did not quite understand its significance. Told some years later of the exception made for *Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well*, Daphne and I determined that the painting should be donated to the museum. Having been given a pride of place in their Rembrandt galleries from the time it was cleaned, we knew this masterpiece would be given its due in a museum that holds great sentimental attachment for us, as it does for so many around the world. We also were committed to giving back to a country that has given us so much joy, including the place of birth of our eldest children. Beginning with France's Ambassador to the United States, Jean-David Levitte, and then his successors, François Delattre and Gérard Arau, we have closely engaged with the country on a number of projects and, at the same time, have developed truly great friendships with these excellent men. Nurtured by our close friends Ron Agam and James Lieber, one of those engagements was a close collaboration with France's dynamic Cultural Attaché in New York, Antonin Baudry, an exceptional talent who went on to become President of the Institut Français before setting himself off on a new course in the arts. As The Louvre itself had been our children's first successful museum experience, donating the Bol to France seemed the natural thing to do. Donating the Bol also resonated with the decision we had previously made to gift our Spitfire Mark1, the earliest known flying example of the aircraft, to the United Kingdom's Imperial War Museum at Duxford. Restored together with a second example of this iconic fighter plane under the supervision of my great friend, the late Simon Marsh, we had agreed that Duxford was the natural home for the airplane that had been piloted by Geoffrey Stephenson when he served as the commander of RAF Duxford, the forward Spitfire squadron that had covered the evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940. Stephenson himself had been shot down in this last phase of the Battle of France, but survived and went on to become the personal pilot of King George VI and then Air Commodore. The 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain made it a perfect moment to say our "thank you" to Britain, as both Americans and Jews, for holding the line against barbarism after the fall of France. In the presence of a great fellow wildlife conservationist, His Royal Highness Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and with my family and Simon's as well as assembled guests in attendance, we handed over the elegant and lethal aircraft on a sunny July day in 2015. We sold our other Mark1 that evening at Christie's London to benefit environmental charities and the Royal Air Force Benevolent Association. The Louvre had asked to exhibit our Collection for the first time some years before we told them of our intentions to donate *Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well*. The enterprising Blaise Ducos and his boss, Vincent Pomerade, knew that other museums had asked for the opportunity to be the venue for our "premiere," and had hoped that our devotion to the museum would make a difference as to which one would be chosen. It did. We only thus added to everyone's delight when we surprised The Louvre with the decision to gift the painting, and we agreed with the museum's President-Director, Jean-Luc Martinez, and the Director of the Department of Paintings,



Fig 172. Ferdinand Bol, *Scholar at His Desk*, 1652, oil on canvas, 127 x 135, Presented by Miss E.A. Bennett, 1862 (NG679), National Gallery, London, © National Gallery, London / Art Resource, NY



Fig 173. Godfrey Kneller, *Scholar in his Study*, GK-107



Fig 174. Ferdinand Bol, *Man with a Fur-Trimmed Hat*, FB-105

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Sébastien Allard, that the handover should take place during their exhibition of highlights from our Collection, accompanying a parallel exhibition of Dutch Art in the Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer, to which we lent additional paintings. We owe a debt of gratitude to Blaise for his pair of initiatives that have forever wed us to the greatest of museums. This “coming out” will launch a tour that will then take the Collection to Beijing and Shanghai, with the valiant assistance of Johnny van Haeften and all our friends at Christie’s, including Jussi Pylkkanen, Jinqing Cai, Max Parr, Ben Hall and Henry Pettifer, amongst others, before heading to further Asian venues, and then to Abu Dhabi and points beyond. The United Arab Emirates is a nation that has captured my heart both for its courageous and enlightened leadership and, as exemplified by the idealistic phenomenon of Louvre Abu Dhabi, an exceptional commitment to building bridges celebrating the universal values that unite humanity at the exact moment nativists of all descriptions are trying to demolish them. The UAE is a rare beacon of hope to be supported and encouraged, and we feel privileged to play our part together with the exceptionally dynamic and passionate Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi, Jean-François Charnier."



Fig 175. Ferdinand Bol, *Self-Portrait, Behind a Parapet*, FB-107



Fig 176. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait at the Age of 34*, 1640, oil on canvas, 102 x 80 cm, National Gallery, London, NG672, © National Gallery, London / Art Resource, NY



Fig 177. Ferdinand Bol, *Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well,* FB-106

The French Connection

Rembrandt’s self-portraits, which marked his ascendancy as an artist and personality, set the standard for his students and the generations who followed. Of course most self-portraits of the era were meant to convey the arrival of the artist. An excellent example of this is found in *Self-Portrait* **(fig 167)** by Govaert Flinck, fashioned after a Rembrandt that in turn was influenced by Raphael and Titian. In perfect condition and visually stunning, it is likely the best of the artist’s works in private hands. It was also the first painting sold to us by Rob Noortman’s son William, who had been introduced to me by our mutual friend Josh Fink. When the Villeneuve family decided to sell part of the collection that Will’s father had been instrumental in creating, they sought him out first. Will thought of us for this painting, the prime example of a key Rembrandt pupil at the highest point of his Master’s influence, and we were most grateful. Will confessed years later that he had purposely taken a suite—for an hour—at the Bristol hotel in Paris so that he could make the Flinck the centerpiece of the room and create just the right *mise en scene* to entice me with the self-portrait’s forceful presence. I could only smile at the salesmanship and remark wistfully that his father would have been supremely proud of him. The decision was really an easy one. The power of the brushwork, coloring, spirit, image—in a word, everything—was masterfully virtuoso.

Though nothing can match *Self-Portrait*, it was nicely reunited with *Portrait of a Man in Profile* **(fig 168)** which, having been exhibited at The Louvre, is now attributed to Flinck, as well as *Portrait of a Man with a Hat* **(fig 169)**, which had been acquired by J. Paul Getty for his museum and deaccessioned decades later. The latter is another

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painting whose pose descended from a specific Rembrandt, and we were happy to see it go on loan to the major Flinck exhibition held in 2015 at the Museum Kurhaus in Kleve, a show for which our self-portrait of the artist served as the face.

Daphne and I have most enjoyed witnessing the recent reappraisal of Ferdinand Bol, who is finally receiving the accolades he so richly deserves. We have collected the artist in depth, from his most Rembrandt-influenced masterpieces to one of the most beautiful of his later, more international style, *Venus and Cupid* **(fig 170)**, itself the precursor to his greatest masterpiece from that era, *Venus and the Sleeping Mars,* in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum in Brunswick. The monumental *Angel Appearing to Elijah* **(fig 171)** is so grand that it takes my breath away. It is so much informed by Rembrandt in execution, as well as in the sensitive treatment of the subject matter, that I imagine the Master nodding with approval when he saw it. Alas, I myself have seen the painting only a few times, as after being purchased at auction and cleaned, it was sent directly to the Getty Museum and has resided there ever since. In light of the enormous wall space it consumes, it is a testament to the quality and power of the image that the museum has not sent it back to us!

Each of Bol's works in the Collection resonates strongly with Daphne and me. The pensive *Scholar at His Desk* **(fig 172)** is one of our most cherished examples of a subject that was a clear favorite among his contemporaries. It softly recalls the desire to convey erudition and the technical prowess one needed to succeed in achieving it. Our *Scholar in His Study* **(fig 173)** by Sir Godfrey Kneller, a pupil of both Rembrandt and Bol, also wonderfully pursues this theme. Bol's *Scholar in His Study*, enhanced by the physical resemblance of its subject to Otto Naumann, reminds me of my friend contemplating attributions. *Man with a Fur-Trimmed Hat* **(fig 174)**, which came to us through Johnny van Haeften, displays a crisp, more refined brushwork. The richness in the handling of the passages of fur gives the man's presence an exceptional immediacy, suggesting that he is about to present the pelt he is holding through the picture plane and into the viewer's hands. Being able to cap the Rembrandt-era of Bol's *oeuvre* with *Self Portrait, Behind a Parapet* **(fig 175)**, where the artist was then only 32 years old, was another gift. Being the largest collection of the artist's paintings other than that at the Hermitage, it was only fitting we should strive to find a self-portrait. This painting in particular recalls the aforementioned *Self-Portrait* by Flinck **(fig 167)** for its appropriation of its pose from Rembrandt's own self-portrait of 1640 **(fig 176)** in the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., in which the Master is standing behind a parapet. It is not only evocative but enjoys an unusual history, having been in the collection of the esteemed opera singer Lauritz Melchior and his wife before making its way to the Los Angeles County Museum, from which it was deaccessioned, fortunately for us.

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Museum tastes are of course impossible to divine. While LACMA was divesting their Bol, The Louvre was looking to acquire one. One of our finest examples of Bol, *Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well* **(fig 177)** came to us via a French auction in 2008. We acquired this masterpiece together with its export license, enabling us to remove it from France with the assistance of Johnny van Haeften, Boedy Lilian and Otto Naumann. Soon after its purchase, Boedy alerted us to the fact that the painting had been underbid by The Louvre itself. Impressed with the fact that the museum had been willing to buy the artwork amidst a global financial crisis, we contacted Blaise Ducos, The Louvre's Curator of Netherlandish Art, and asked if it might not be better for the museum to save its resources for another acquisition and simply borrow the painting. He loved the idea and, after vetting it with the museum's President-Director, accepted the offer on behalf of The Louvre. Unbeknownst to us, unlike the 40-some museums with which we have had lending relationships, The Louvre does not make it a practice to borrow paintings from private collections other than for temporary exhibitions. Apparently, our proposed loan engendered a great deal of internal debate as to whether an exception should be made. So when Blaise told us that The Louvre accepted our offer, we did not quite understand its significance. Told some years later of the exception made for *Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well*, Daphne and I determined that the painting should be donated to the museum. Having been given a pride of place in their Rembrandt galleries from the time it was cleaned, we knew this masterpiece would be given its due in a museum that holds great sentimental attachment for us, as it does for so many around the world. We also were committed to giving back to a country that has given us so much joy, including the place of birth of our eldest children. Beginning with France's Ambassador to the United States, Jean-David Levitte, and then his successors, François Delattre and Gérard Arau, we have closely engaged with the country on a number of projects and, at the same time, have developed truly great friendships with these excellent men. Nurtured by our close friends Ron Agam and James Lieber, one of those engagements was a close collaboration with France's dynamic Cultural Attaché in New York, Antonin Baudry, an exceptional talent who went on to become President of the Institut Français before setting himself off on a new course in the arts. As The Louvre itself had been our children's first successful museum experience, donating the Bol to France seemed the natural thing to do.

Donating the Bol also resonated with the decision we had previously made to gift our Spitfire Mark1, the earliest known flying example of the aircraft, to the United Kingdom's Imperial War Museum at Duxford. Restored together with a second example of this iconic fighter plane under the supervision of my great friend, the late Simon Marsh, we had agreed that Duxford was the natural home for the airplane that had been piloted by Geoffrey Stephenson when he served as the commander of RAF

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Duxford, the forward Spitfire squadron that had covered the evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940. Stephenson himself had been shot down in this last phase of the Battle of France, but survived and went on to become the personal pilot of King George VI and then Air Commodore. The 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain made it a perfect moment to say our "thank you" to Britain, as both Americans and Jews, for holding the line against barbarism after the fall of France. In the presence of a great fellow wildlife conservationist, His Royal Highness Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and with my family and Simon's as well as assembled guests in attendance, we handed over the elegant and lethal aircraft on a sunny July day in 2015. We sold our other Mark1 that evening at Christie's London to benefit environmental charities and the Royal Air Force Benevolent Association.

The Louvre had asked to exhibit our Collection for the first time some years before we told them of our intentions to donate *Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well*. The enterprising Blaise Ducos and his boss, Vincent Pomerade, knew that other museums had asked for the opportunity to be the venue for our "premiere," and had hoped that our devotion to the museum would make a difference as to which one would be chosen. It did. We only thus added to everyone's delight when we surprised The Louvre with the decision to gift the painting, and we agreed with the museum's President-Director, Jean-Luc Martinez, and the Director of the Department of Paintings, Sébastien Allard, that the handover should take place during their exhibition of highlights from our Collection, accompanying a parallel exhibition of Dutch Art in the Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer, to which we lent additional paintings. We owe a debt of gratitude to Blaise for his pair of initiatives that have forever wed us to the greatest of museums.

This "coming out" will launch a tour that will then take the Collection to Beijing and Shanghai, with the valiant assistance of Johnny van Haeften and all our friends at Christie's, including Jussi Pylkkanen, Jinqing Cai, Max Parr, Ben Hall and Henry Pettifer, amongst others, before heading to further Asian venues, and then to Abu Dhabi and points beyond. The United Arab Emirates is a nation that has captured my heart both for its courageous and enlightened leadership and, as exemplified by the idealistic phenomenon of Louvre Abu Dhabi, an exceptional commitment to building bridges celebrating the universal values that unite humanity at the exact moment nativists of all descriptions are trying to demolish them. The UAE is a rare beacon of hope to be supported and encouraged, and we feel privileged to play our part together with the exceptionally dynamic and passionate Director of Louvre Abu Dhabi, Jean-François Charnier.

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Buy What You Love

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"Something like ninety-nine per cent of all collectors—the rich, those who are interested and will support museums in the future—are collectors of contemporary art." So said Philippe de Montebello, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Director for three decades and one of the keenest observers of the art world. I suspect he was right. I also suspect the vast majority of the contemporary art coveted today will have little value generations hence. This is not remotely because I believe that there is something inherently wrong or overvalued with contemporary art. All art is contemporary in the era in which it was created. Constantijn Huygens and Jan Six were contemporary art collectors. My doubts derive simply from the fact that, statistically, most art will ultimately be seen to have been banal or derivative. As our friend Richard Feigen has said, "Those artists who change the arc of art history will endure." Others will be culled by future generations who focus on what ended up mattering. Old Masters present the best case in point. Of the millions of artworks created during the Dutch Golden Age, I would be surprised if even 1%-5% turned out to be worth more than kindling. Though most of those millions found buyers, the act of being sold did not confirm longevity. Each generation redefines what its predecessors found to be important. Over time, works that were regarded as moving in their day have not survived the passage to subsequent generations. New techniques, technical innovations and, of even greater impact, changes in the *zeitgeist* and even the idea of what constitutes art itself have changed. For that reason, the *fijnschilders*, whose work was felt by contemporaries to be the apogee of realist perfection and who were the most generously compensated artists in Europe, were laid low by the advent of Impressionism. The pivot of taste towards free expression was antithetical to the realist ethos for which Leiden was most renowned, and logically crippled the fundamental underpinnings of the market. Superimposed onto this was the emergence of photography, the final nail in the coffin of unseen brushwork. Only recently has a reappraisal taken place. Some would say our collecting has had a hand in that. Insofar as the market is concerned, the point is taken, as The Leiden Collection has purchased a substantial portion of the remaining works that are not in museums. Even so, we attribute a good chunk of the reappraisal to a reaction against the concept that everything is art if you call it so, and that a museum ratifies that assertion simply by putting it into its galleries. There is always going to be an interest in art that defines an era. This is even truer in the case of art in the Dutch Golden Age, as the Golden Age produced one of the greatest explosions of creativity in modern history, with Leiden being one of those centers where creativity meshed symbiotically with a heightened appreciation of precision and scientific advancement. But that is not to say that prices need to reflect that. Rembrandt never "went away" in the same fashion as the *fijnschilders*. Although only a few hundred Rembrandt paintings exist and perhaps several dozen remain in private hands, it is still possible to buy paintings by one of history's greatest "brand names" at prices far less than that of a Warhol, by whom there are *tens of thousands* of pieces. Some artists are so beyond the realm of brilliance as to be in another firmament altogether. The opportunity to add an important object from one such transcendent figure came by chance to us and proved impossible to



Fig 178. Leonardo da Vinci, *Head of a Bear*, ca. 1490, silverpoint on pale pink preparation, 7 x 7 cm, © The Leiden Collection, New York, LD-100



Fig 179. Leonardo da Vinci, *Lady with an Ermine*, 1489–90, oil on panel, 54 x 39 cm, Czartoryski Museum, National Museum, Kraków, photograph: Frank Zöllner (2000). *Leonardo da Vinci, 1452–1519,* Taschen



Fig 180. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Jan Six*, 1654, oil on canvas, 112 x 103 cm, Collectie Six, Amsterdam

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resist. *Head of a Bear* [fig num="178"] by Leonardo da Vinci, offered to us jointly by Johnny van Haeften and Christie's, came with an excellent provenance. It hailed from the collection of Sir Thomas Lawrence and, then, the connoisseur Colonel Norman Colville. We soon discovered that one of the owners, his descendant Jonathan Colville, was someone who, like us, was a donor to Professor David MacDonald's Wildlife Conservation Unit at Oxford University, an exceptionally talented group whose center we subsequently endowed. We liked that coincidence, though it helped that our elder son is named Leonardo. What sold us on this deviation from our collecting pattern was that, in addition to being beautiful, it was indeed a large predator produced by one of the great geniuses of history. The opportunity to pair it with another exceptionally powerful work on paper of a carnivore, Rembrandt's *Young Lion Resting* [fig num="1"], produced by another artistic genius, made it foreordained. Soon after receiving a poor fax reproduction of the drawing and while we were pondering the purchase, I found myself in a bookstore in Aspen, Colorado. There, when thumbing through a catalogue on the complete works of Leonardo da Vinci, I landed upon the precise page displaying this image. Daphne came over and, seeing the figure, commented that it was a particularly beautiful drawing and why couldn't we find something like that. I felt a chill as I turned to her and remarked that we had been offered that precise drawing only several days earlier and I was going to bring the prospect to her when I had a better image to show her. Here it was. She smiled and said that she guessed I now had my answer. Several years later, the National Gallery in London put on a fantastic exhibition of Da Vinci, curated by Luke Syson. We were asked to loan our drawing, which we naturally did. After the catalogue was sent to us, I was thumbing through it and came across our drawing with the curator's note that this work was now identified as the precedent model for the head of the ermine which Leonardo used in his famous *Lady with an Ermine* [fig num="179"], a beloved favorite of many (myself included) which graced the cover of the exhibition catalogue. Especially in light of the fact that this was the first time I had heard of this important revelation, I was stunned and immediately placed the pages in such a way that I could make the comparison for myself. There it was, as clear as day, with the entry making quite clear that "the distinctive shape of this bear's head with its pointed snout, broad cranium and rounded ears seems to have served as a source for the head of the ermine in the portrait of Cecilia Gallerani," the beloved mistress of Ludovico Sforza. The same was equally apparent with the paws of the bear, which had been sold separately from the head to the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh. Not having an ermine as a model, Leonardo transformed our respective bear drawings into this phantasmagorical version of the species. He did so beautifully, with the body parts being "characterised by their energised luminosity, with touches of metalpoint evoking the play of light and shade reminiscent of that on the dense fur of the animal cradled in Cecilia Gallerani's arms." In the end, after this penultimate sale by the Colville family, they parted with the last of their masterpieces, Raphael's black chalk preparatory drawing, *Head of a Muse,* for nearly 30 million pounds, a record price for any drawing at auction. It went to

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17 string(2894) "

Short is Man's Life and Narrow is the Corner in which he Dwells

I like to think of that extraordinary episode as a metaphor for our experience in the art world. That it took place in Amsterdam, the place where I told my parents I wanted so much to visit as a nine year old boy because "that is where Rembrandt lived," makes it all the more poignant to me now. It so aptly recalls Seneca's advice to "hang on to your youthful enthusiasms—you'll be able to use them better when you're older." Continuing to be somewhat defined by my youthful enthusiasms, I am grateful to what this experience with the Old Masters has given to us, and has added to my life on so many levels: astonishment in the sensual adrenaline rush that comes from being buyers and, even more so, lenders; an absolutely elevating intellectual engagement; and relationships marked by an ethical paradigm and camaraderie I have enjoyed enormously. Ultimately, however, as epitomized by that delicious tartufo in Amsterdam, its moment is meant to dissolve into evanescence. In the blink of an eye we shall be gone, like our fellow collectors before us and, like them, barely remembered, if at all. But the art and its deep pockets of genius shall remain. So it has always been and so shall it ever be. This is the manner in which such experiences are meant to conclude. Evoking again the sentiments of Marcus Aurelius, our stake in eternity is not much more than a grain of sand on a vast beach. To have the opportunity to live a life as rewarding as we have, to perhaps break out of that narrow corner for a fleeting moment, has been one of the great joys—and privileges—of our lives. It is our hope that by sharing the catalyst for these emotions, we will have elevated indulgence into something greater. For our passion, at the end of the day, has not actually been about the pigmented pieces of canvas or wood panel we have accumulated. It has been about the feeling that these artists have evoked in us, as it has to the myriad personalities who experienced them through the centuries as collectors or admirers. By taking these works from the private realm, assembling them into an organic whole that creates a narrative, and returning them to the public domain, we believe we have done a service to the museums whose gaps we have strived to fill and whose audiences they serve. Moreover, we want to extend that sense of mission to parts of the world that crave new experiences and might see in our Collection not just a window into a bygone culture, but a shared humanity that binds us all in a universal civilization. The intention is by definition as loftily ambitious as an early Lievens and a mature Rembrandt. Maybe it will work, and maybe it won't. But we will have to try. As the great Emperor knew so well: "A man's worth is no greater than his ambitions.""

Short is Man's Life and Narrow is the Corner in which he Dwells

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I like to think of that extraordinary episode as a metaphor for our experience in the art world. That it took place in Amsterdam, the place where I told my parents I wanted so much to visit as a nine year old boy because "that is where Rembrandt lived," makes it all the more poignant to me now. It so aptly recalls Seneca's advice to "hang on to your youthful enthusiasms—you'll be able to use them better when you're older." Continuing to be somewhat defined by my youthful enthusiasms, I am grateful to what this experience with the Old Masters has given to us, and has added to my life on so many levels: astonishment in the sensual adrenaline rush that comes from being buyers and, even more so, lenders; an absolutely elevating intellectual engagement; and relationships marked by an ethical paradigm and camaraderie I have enjoyed enormously. Ultimately, however, as epitomized by that delicious tartufo in Amsterdam, its moment is meant to dissolve into evanescence. In the blink of an eye we shall be gone, like our fellow collectors before us and, like them, barely remembered, if at all. But the art and its deep pockets of genius shall remain. So it has always been and so shall it ever be. This is the manner in which such experiences are meant to conclude. Evoking again the sentiments of Marcus Aurelius, our stake in eternity is not much more than a grain of sand on a vast beach. To have the opportunity to live a life as rewarding as we have, to perhaps break out of that narrow corner for a fleeting moment, has been one of the great joys—and privileges—of our lives. It is our hope that by sharing the catalyst for these emotions, we will have elevated indulgence into something greater. For our passion, at the end of the day, has not actually been about the pigmented pieces of canvas or wood panel we have accumulated. It has been about the feeling that these artists have evoked in us, as it has to the myriad personalities who experienced them through the centuries as collectors or admirers. By taking these works from the private realm, assembling them into an organic whole that creates a narrative, and returning them to the public domain, we believe we have done a service to the museums whose gaps we have strived to fill and whose audiences they serve. Moreover, we want to extend that sense of mission to parts of the world that crave new experiences and might see in our Collection not just a window into a bygone culture, but a shared humanity that binds us all in a universal civilization. The intention is by definition as loftily ambitious as an early Lievens and a mature Rembrandt. Maybe it will work, and maybe it won't. But we will have to try. As the great Emperor knew so well: "A man's worth is no greater than his ambitions."

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