



Cornelis Bisschop

(Dordrecht 1630 – 1674 Dordrecht)

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A native of Dordrecht, Cornelis Bisschop was born to an affluent family in February 1630. His father, Jacob Dionysz Bisschop (d. 1648), was a tailor and proprietor of a well-known Dordrecht inn on the Wijnstraat, *De Pauw* (“The Peacock”).^[1] His mother, Anneke van Beveren (d. 1667), came from Utrecht.^[2] According to Arnold Houbraken, Bisschop studied with Ferdinand Bol (1616–80), a close associate and former pupil of Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69). Bol, also from Dordrecht, was living in Amsterdam by the late 1630s, and it is presumed that Bisschop entered his studio in Amsterdam sometime in the late 1640s. During his time there, Bisschop likely also met two other Dordrecht artists who had formerly worked with Rembrandt, Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627–78) and Nicolaes Maes (1634–93).^[3] Bisschop returned to Dordrecht by 26 October 1653, the day he married Geertruyt Botland (d. 1653), also from Dordrecht.^[4] The couple’s first child was born less than six months later, and their family would ultimately grow to include eleven children by 1674, the time of Bisschop’s early death at the age of forty-four.

Bisschop’s oeuvre consists of religious and mythological paintings, portraits, genre scenes, and *trompe l’oeil* images. During the 1650s and 1660s his paintings reflected the influence of Rembrandt and artists in his circle both in their subject matter and style, which is characterized by a warm palette and rich light effects.^[5] During the 1660s Bisschop shifted his focus to *trompe l’oeil* illusionism, perhaps through the inspiration of Van Hoogstraten. Both artists produced *chantourné* pictures (images cut in the shape of the persons or objects they represent), and numerous anecdotes exist describing how these illusionistic images fooled unsuspecting houseguests. According to Houbraken, visitors to Bisschop’s home were even known to offer tips to one of his dummy boards.^[6]

Bisschop enjoyed success over the course of his career, and he executed works for both local and international collectors. Among his most important Dordrecht commissions was his thirteen-figure portrait of the regents of the Holy Sacrament Hospital, which he completed in 1671. His work was also sought out by the French diplomat Bathasar de Monconys (1611–65), who purchased one of his paintings for the collection of Louis XIV (1638–1715) in 1663.^[7] Almost certainly because of his abilities in creating *trompe l’oeil* images, Bisschop was invited by King Charles V (1680–1729) of Denmark to become a court painter in Copenhagen in 1674.^[8] The artist died before he could travel to Denmark.

- Alexandra Libby, 2017



Endnotes

1. Clotilde Brière-Misme, “Un petit maître hollandais, Cornelis Bisschop (1630–1674),” *Oud Holland* 65 (1950): 24.
2. Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; rev. ed., The Hague, 1753; reprint, Amsterdam, 1980), 2: 220; For biographies of Bisschop, see also Walter Liedtke, “Cornelis Bisschop,” in *Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 2006), 1: 35–36; David de Witt, *The Bader Collection: Dutch and Flemish Paintings* (Kingston, 2014), 62.
3. Werner Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandt-Schüler*, vol. 3, *B. Keil – J. Ovens* (Landau, 1983), 1961; Walter Liedtke, “Cornelis Bisschop,” in *Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 2006), 1: 35.
4. Clotilde Brière-Misme, “Un petit maître hollandais, Cornelis Bisschop (1630–1674),” *Oud Holland* 65 (1950): 27.
5. Walter Liedtke, “Cornelis Bisschop,” in *Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 2006), 1: 35.
6. Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; rev. ed., The Hague, 1753; reprint, Amsterdam, 1980), 2: 220.
7. Bathasar de Monconys, *Journal des voyages de monsieur de Monconys* (Lyon, 1665), 128.
8. Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; rev. ed., The Hague, 1753; reprint, Amsterdam, 1980), 2: 222.

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