



Maria Schalcken

(Made? 1645/50 – before 1700 Dordrecht)

How to cite

Libby, Alexandra. “Maria Schalcken” (2017). In *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed. Edited by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady with Caroline Van Cauwenberge. New York, 2023–. <https://theleidencollection.com/artists/maria-schalcken/> (accessed April 17, 2026).

A PDF of every version of this biography is available in this Online Catalogue's Archive, and the Archive is managed by a permanent URL. New versions are added only when a substantive change to the narrative occurs.



Little is known about the life and career of Maria Schalcken. Sister and pupil of the genre painter Godefridus Schalcken (1643–1706), she was likely born sometime between 1645 and 1650 in Made, near Geertruidenberg, where her brother was born. Daughter of the clergyman Cornelis Schalcken (1610–74) and Aletta Lydius (1612–78), she presumably moved with her parents to Dordrecht in 1654 after her father became rector of the Latin school there. In 1656 Godefridus began his apprenticeship to Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627–78) and then went to study in Leiden with Gerrit Dou (1613–75) around 1663. Although it is not certain when Godefridus returned to Dordrecht, Maria must have begun her studies with her older brother soon thereafter, probably around 1665.^[1] In 1682 Maria married the Dordrecht merchant Severijn van Bracht (1658–after 1700), at which point she seems to have given up painting. The couple had at least one daughter, Anna (b. 1683), and a son, Cornelis (b. 1685). Maria died around 1700.

Only two paintings can be firmly attributed to Maria Schalcken, which makes an assessment of her style difficult.^[2] Nevertheless, she appears to have fully absorbed the principles of fine painting her brother taught her. Her smooth execution and meticulous detail are the hallmark qualities of the Leiden *fijnschilder* tradition to which Godefridus belonged. Like him, she concentrated on scenes of everyday life. She was purported to be so successful “that her detailed and exemplary cabinet pieces became positioned in reputable art collections.”^[3] It has been suggested that, given the strong affinities between her work and that of her brother, she may have executed some of the paintings currently attributed to Godefridus.^[4]

- Alexandra Libby, 2017

Endnotes

1. On Maria Schalcken's biography, see Frederik J. Duparc et al., *Golden: Dutch and Flemish Masterworks from the Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo Collection* (New Haven, 2011), 279, which incorrectly states that she was never married. See also Marloes Huiskamp, "Schalcken, Maria," in *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland* (2014). <http://resources.huylgens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/MariaSchalcken>.
2. See note 8 in the entry *Boy Offering Grapes to a Woman*, attributed to Maria Schalcken in this catalogue.
3. "Dat hare uitvoerige en mals geschilderde kabinetstukjes in aanzienlijke kunstverzamelingen zijn geplaatst geworden." See Roeland van Eijnden and Adriaan van der Willigen, *Geschiedenis der vaderlandsche schilderkunst, sedert de helft der XVIII eeuw* (Haarlem, 1816), 1: 186.
4. "Dat hare uitvoerige en mals geschilderde kabinetstukjes in aanzienlijke kunstverzamelingen zijn geplaatst geworden." See Roeland van Eijnden and Adriaan van der Willigen, *Geschiedenis der vaderlandsche schilderkunst, sedert de helft der XVIII eeuw* (Haarlem, 1816), 1: 186.

Literature

- Van Eijnden, Roeland and Adriaan van der Willigen. *Geschiedenis der vaderlandsche schilderkunst, sedert de helft der XVIII eeuw*. Haarlem, 1816, 1: 186.
- Duparc, Frederik J. et al. *Golden: Dutch and Flemish Masterworks from the Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo Collection*. New Haven, 2011.
- Huiskamp, Marloes. "Schalcken, Maria." In *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*. 2014. <http://resources.huylgens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/MariaSchalcken>.