



**Samuel van Hoogstraten**

(Dordrecht 1627 – 1678 Dordrecht)

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### How to cite

Bakker, Piet. "Samuel van Hoogstraten" (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/samuel-van-hoogstraten/> (accessed July 04, 2025).

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Samuel van Hoogstraten served two muses: that of Pictura and that of Poetry. Although many examples of his achievements in both art forms have been preserved, each had a different significance for him. According to Arnold Houbraken (1660–1719): “he sacrificed his best hours to the first, and his spare time to the second.”<sup>[1]</sup> Even if, for Van Hoogstraten, primacy resided with painting, his present fame rests largely on one of his writings—not one of the many poems or plays he penned during his life, but *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst*, the most extensive seventeenth-century painting treatise to appear after Karel van Mander’s *Schilder-boeck* of 1604.<sup>[2]</sup> *Inleyding*, in which Van Hoogstraten refers regularly to his teacher Rembrandt, was published mere months before his death in 1678 by his younger brother, François van Hoogstraten (1632–96), a bookseller in Rotterdam.<sup>[3]</sup>

*Inleyding* was intended as a manual, but, as Van Hoogstraten stated in his preface, “even though this work is merely an *Introduction*, we would argue that not only will it help pupils to attain the height of art with a more secure footing, but even masters of art will garner a lightness to instruct its [Art’s] disciples well.”<sup>[4]</sup> Van Hoogstraten also had pupils, possibly including Jacobus Levecq (1634–75) and Nicolaes Maes (1634–93), and certainly Godefridus Schalcken (1643–1706) and Arent de Gelder (1645–1727).<sup>[5]</sup> Houbraken too, studied with Van Hoogstraten and wrote extensively in his *Schouburgh* about his experience in the latter’s workshop.

Van Hoogstraten was born in Dordrecht in August 1627. His parents were the Mennonite silversmith Dirck van Hoogstraten (ca. 1596–1640) and Mayken de Koning (1598–1645).<sup>[6]</sup> Soon after his birth, the family moved to The Hague, where Samuel received his first painting lessons from his father. The family returned to Dordrecht in August 1640, just a few months before Dirck died. Around 1643 Samuel moved to Amsterdam to complete the second part of his training under Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69).<sup>[7]</sup> While working in the master’s shop he met his “fellow pupil” Carel Fabritius (1622–54),<sup>[8]</sup> whose exceptional skill in rendering perspectival through-views he praises in *Inleyding*.<sup>[9]</sup> Van Hoogstraten’s pupillage with Rembrandt probably lasted until 1646, but he may still have been working in his studio in 1647, even though we have no information about him in those two years.<sup>[10]</sup> The earliest evidence of Van Hoogstraten’s return to Dordrecht is a poem he wrote about the physician Bernardus Pandelaert (ca. 1600–53) dated 19 January 1648. Three months later, in April, he was baptized into the Mennonite community in Dordrecht. In 1651 he ran afoul of Mennonite proscriptions when two fellow believers caught him carrying arms in daylight, which was strictly forbidden.

On 16 May 1651 Van Hoogstraten left Dordrecht for a lengthy sojourn abroad. His first destination was Vienna. On 6 August he was granted an audience with Emperor Ferdinand III (1608–57), who was greatly impressed by his art.<sup>[11]</sup> He showed the emperor and his entourage three paintings he had brought with him from Dordrecht, including a *trompe-l’oeil* still life of the kind he “painted so naturally that many were deceived by it.”<sup>[12]</sup> The emperor himself, after studying the still life at length, conceded that Van Hoogstraten “was the first painter to have deceived him.”<sup>[13]</sup> The emperor admired the picture so much that he was reluctant to give it back. In exchange for it, he presented Van Hoogstraten a gold chain and a medallion of honor, which from that point on figured as the artist’s personal trademark in many of his *trompe-l’oeil* still lifes.

Although Van Hoogstraten’s fame as a painter rests primarily on this genre, it was only a small part of his entire oeuvre. Houbraken noted that even though such paintings were lucrative at the time, Van Hoogstraten had “too great a mind to stop there,” painting “portraits, histories, and perspectives in rooms for which a hole was made in the room’s outer wall in order to look into the interior.” No examples of these rooms have come down to us, but Houbraken saw a number of them “that

were painted in a small space depicting an entire palace with vaulting, and galleries with marble colonnades.”<sup>[14]</sup>

Van Hoogstraten left Vienna in 1652 and traveled via Venice and Genoa to Rome, where he joined the Bentveughels (“Birds of a Feather”) and was given the Bent nickname “Batavier” (Batavian). In 1653 he was back in Vienna, and in the fall he followed Emperor Ferdinand to Regensburg for an Imperial Diet. In Regensburg he met an acquaintance of Joachim von Sandrart (1606–88), the learned Benedictine monk and abbot Gabriel Bucelinus (1599–1681), who was also there between the fall of 1652 and the spring of 1654. Bucelinus helped Van Hoogstraten secure the commission to paint an altarpiece for the St. John Church at Feldkirch, which he worked on together with Nicolaes Roosendaal (1634/35–86) in Vienna.<sup>[15]</sup> The abbot included Van Hoogstraten in his *Pictorum Europae Praecipuorum Nomina*, a manuscript with the names—in his view—of the leading artists in Europe.<sup>[16]</sup> After returning to Vienna from Rome, Van Hoogstraten was joined by his brother Jan (1629/30–54), also a painter, who lived with him until his sudden death in 1654.

Van Hoogstraten was back in Dordrecht in 1656 and joined the Broederschap der Romeynen, a society of individuals who had visited Rome. Soon thereafter he was invested as master of the Mint of Holland. In the same year he married Sara Balen (d. 1678), a niece of the town historian Matthijs Balen (1611–91), who would later write *Beschryvinge der stad Dordrecht* (1677) and for which Van Hoogstraten would design the prints. In September 1656 Van Hoogstraten was expelled from the Mennonite community for unbecoming behavior. Shortly thereafter, in January 1657, he and his wife joined the Dutch Reformed Church. In this year Van Hoogstraten painted two group portraits, including one (now lost) of the Broederschap der Romeynen, and one of his fellow masters of the Mint. This was followed in 1674 by a second portrait of the officers and masters of the Mint, in which he featured himself displaying the medallion and chain awarded him by Emperor Ferdinand III.<sup>[17]</sup>

From 1662 to 1667 Van Hoogstraten lived in London, where he had contact with members of the Royal Society. For Thomas Povey (1613/14–ca. 1705), secretary of the Duke of York, he made a perspective painting, which Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) admired in his famous diary.<sup>[18]</sup> Van Hoogstraten was back in the Republic at the end of 1667, and was recorded in January 1668 as a member of Pictura, the painters’ confraternity in The Hague. The elite of the court city lined up to sit for him; for example, the tax collector Maarten Pauw (1616–80) and his family sat for the artist eight times. In 1671 Van Hoogstraten purchased a house in Dordrecht along the Steegoversloot, where Levecq, Maes, and Abraham van Dijck (1635–80) lived as well. In 1673 he was elected provost of the Mint. He suffered a serious illness in the last years of his life, and died on 19 October 1678. Van Hoogstraten was buried in the Munterskapel; his wife died a mere month later. On 21 March 1679 “many splendid paintings” were auctioned in his house.<sup>[19]</sup>

- Piet Bakker, 2017

## Endnotes

1. “De eerste offerde hy zyn beste uren, de tweede zyne uitspanningen op.” Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; rev. ed., The Hague, 1753; reprint, Amsterdam, 1980), 2: 156.
2. For a survey of Van Hoogstraten’s publications, see Michiel Roscam Abbing, *De schilder & schrijver Samuel van Hoogstraten 1627–1678. Eigentijdse bronnen & oeuvre van gesigeneerde schilderijen* (Leiden, 1993), 83–87.
3. Van Hoogstraten mentions Rembrandt on pages 13, 75, 176, 183, 191, 212, 228, 257, 268, 273, and 291; see Michiel Roscam Abbing, *De schilder & schrijver Samuel van Hoogstraten 1627–1678. Eigentijdse bronnen & oeuvre van gesigeneerde schilderijen* (Leiden, 1993), 78.
4. “Schoon dit werk maer een *Inleiding* is, zoo maecken wy ons sterk, dat niet alleen de leerlingen hier door zullen geholpen worden, om met een zekerder voet nae den top der konst op te stappen: maer dat zelfs meesters in de konst hier uit een lichtigheit zullen raepen, om haere Discipelen wel te onderwijzen.” Van Hoogstraten, 1678, in his preface “Aen den lezer” (To the Reader). An analysis of Van Hoogstraten’s ideas is found in Celeste Brusati, *Artifice and Illusion: The Art and Writing of Samuel van Hoogstraten* (Chicago, 1995), 218–60.
5. For Maes’s and Levecq’s supposed apprentices, see Michiel Roscam Abbing, *De schilder & schrijver Samuel van Hoogstraten 1627–1678. Eigentijdse bronnen & oeuvre van gesigeneerde schilderijen* (Leiden, 1993), 41. For Maes’s teachers, see the biography of Nicolaes Maes in this catalogue. See also the biographies of Godefridus Schalcken and Arent de Gelder in this catalogue.
6. Unless otherwise noted, all biographical information on Samuel van Hoogstraten is taken from Michiel Roscam Abbing, *De schilder & schrijver Samuel van Hoogstraten 1627–1678. Eigentijdse bronnen & oeuvre van gesigeneerde schilderijen* (Leiden, 1993), 31–82.
7. The exact dates of Van Hoogstraten’s stay with Rembrandt are not known. He would have entered the master’s workshop in 1642 or 1643, and left it in 1646 or 1647. See Walter Liedtke, “Rembrandt’s ‘Workshop’ Revisited,” *Oud Holland* 117, nos. 1–2 (2004): 68.
8. “Mijn meedeelerling.” Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst. Anders de Zichtbaere Werelt* (Rotterdam, 1678; reprint, Doornspijk, 1969), 11. It is assumed that Fabritius spent some time with Rembrandt from the second half of 1641 until around April 1643; Walter Liedtke, “Rembrandt’s ‘Workshop’ Revisited,” *Oud Holland* 117, nos. 1–2 (2004): 68. See also the biography of Carel Fabritius in this catalogue.
9. Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst. Anders de Zichtbaere Werelt* (Rotterdam, 1678; reprint, Doornspijk, 1969), 274.
10. The exact dates of Van Hoogstraten’s stay with Rembrandt are not known. He would have entered the master’s workshop in 1642 or 1643, and left it in 1646 or 1647. See Walter Liedtke, “Rembrandt’s

‘Workshop’ Revisited,” *Oud Holland* 117, nos. 1–2 (2004): 68.

11. Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; rev. ed., The Hague, 1753; reprint, Amsterdam, 1980), 2: 157. It is not known who introduced him at the court in Vienna. Perhaps someone in Dordrecht wrote him a letter of introduction. It seems to have been a single meeting; there is nothing to indicate that Van Hoogstraten was active as a court painter in Vienna.
12. “Zoo natuurlyk schilderde dat hy er velen door bedroog.” Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; rev. ed., The Hague, 1753; reprint, Amsterdam, 1980), 2: 157.
13. “Der eerste Maler [ist] die mir betrogen heft.” Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; rev. ed., The Hague, 1753; reprint, Amsterdam, 1980), 2: 158.
14. “Te grooten geest [had], om zig daar mee op te houden” / “maakte voornamentlyk zyn werk van Pourtretten, Historien, en Perspectiven in Kamers (waar toe dan een gat in den muur buiten het vertrek om door te zien gemaakt werd) te schilderen” / “die in een kleen vertrek geschildert, een geheel paleis, met overwelfde bogen, en Galeryen, onderschraagt van marmere kolommen vertoonden.” Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam, 1718–21; rev. ed., The Hague, 1753; reprint, Amsterdam, 1980), 2: 158.
15. For Nicolaes Roosendael and his Vienna period, see the biography of Jacob van Toorenvliet in this catalogue.
16. For this list, see Robert Schillemans, “Gabriel Bucelinus and ‘The Names of the Most Distinguished European Painters,’” *Hoogsteder-Naumann Mercury* 6 (1987): 25–37.
17. *The Mintmasters and Wardens of the Mint of Holland in Dordrecht*, signed and 1657 (Dordrechts Museum); Werner Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandt-Schüler*, vol. 2, *G. van den Eeckhout – I. de Joudreville* (Landau, 1983), no. 877; *The Mintmasters and Wardens of the Mint of Holland in Dordrecht*, signed and dated 1674 and 1677 (Dordrechts Museum); Werner Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandt-Schüler*, vol. 2, *G. van den Eeckhout – I. de Joudreville* (Landau, 1983), no. 878.
18. *View Through a House*, signed and dated 1662 (National Trust, Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire); Werner Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandt-Schüler*, vol. 2, *G. van den Eeckhout – I. de Joudreville* (Landau, 1983), no. 895. See Michiel Roscam Abbing, *De schilder & schrijver Samuel van Hoogstraten 1627–1678. Eigentijdse bronnen & oeuvre van gesigeneerde schilderijen* (Leiden, 1993), 61, doc. 73.
19. “Eene partij schoone schilderijen.” Michiel Roscam Abbing, *De schilder & schrijver Samuel van Hoogstraten 1627–1678. Eigentijdse bronnen & oeuvre van gesigeneerde schilderijen* (Leiden, 1993), 82. This auction was announced in the *Opregte Haarlemse Courant* of 16 March 1679.

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