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Portrait of a Man with a Hat

Gerrit Dou
(Leiden 1613 – 1675 Leiden)

ca. 1635
oil on panel
37.5 x 31 cm
GD-100

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How to cite

Rahusen, Henriette. “Portrait of a Man with a Hat” (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/artwork/portrait-of-a-man-with-a-hat/ (accessed November 06, 2026).

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In this bust-length portrait, an earnest young man, who wears a heavy black cloak and has just taken off his right glove, turns toward the viewer. This subtle indication of movement energizes the triangular form of the sitter's body. Within a painted oval surround, the intense black of the man's wide-brimmed hat and the folds of his white, pleated collar dramatically frame his pale face and wispy, reddish-brown hair. Despite his rather refined features, the man's expression is slightly unsettling, likely due to the fact that his eyes do not seem to focus.[1]

Gerrit Dou tackled portraiture only in the first fifteen or so years of his career.[2] A single, oft-repeated, eye-witness account of the artist's working methods has perhaps skewed our impression of the limitations of Dou's abilities as a portraitist: according to Joachim von Sandrart, who visited Dou's studio in 1639, the artist's meticulous and thus very time-consuming manner of painting not only diminished the pool of potential patrons willing to endure multiple lengthy sittings, but also caused sitters' lively faces to morph into expressions of tedium and annoyance.[3] Van Sandrart's comments may help explain the general lack of commissioned portraits from Dou's later years, but rarely do Dou's portraits convey "tedium and annoyance." Indeed, the artist's careful observations of the physiognomy and expressions of his sitters are always engaging and compelling, as, for example, with this young man's slightly quizzical expression. Dou's portraits, however, seldom reveal much about the sitter's interests and occupation, since he generally refrained from including personal attributes such as those that do appear in his self-portraits.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, this portrait was variously attributed to a number of artists, including Frans Hals (1582/83–1666) and Thomas de Keyser (1596–1667).[4] In 1888, Wilhelm Bode correctly attributed the portrait to Dou and used the man's costume to date the painting circa 1634–35.[5] Other scholars, including Willem Martin and Cornelis Hofstede de Groot in the early twentieth century and, more recently, Werner Sumowski and Ronni Baer, have concurred with this attribution and date.[6]

This work appears to be the earliest surviving portrait by the Leiden master, created just a few years after Dou completed his studies with Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69).[7] It is therefore not surprising that several elements in this portrait echo Rembrandt's early portraits. Even though the painted oval surround was a common framing feature at the time, Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait* of 1630–31 **(fig 1)** likely provided Dou with an

Comparative Figures



Fig 1. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1630, oil on panel, 70 x 57 cm, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, inv. no. WAG1011, Courtesy National Museums Liverpool



Fig 2. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Portrait of Jacob de Gheyn III*, 1632, oil on panel, 29.9 x 24.9 cm, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, inv. no. DPG99, By Permission of the Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery

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immediate example of this pictorial device. Rembrandt's *Portrait of Jacob de Gheyn III,* 1632 **(fig 2)**, also demonstrated to Dou how to place a figure against a neutral background while focusing light on the face and creating halo effects around the sitter's head.[8] The multilayered "falling ruff" collar is characteristic of collar styles in the early to mid-1630s, a transitional phase between the elaborate pleated and starched ruff collars worn in earlier decades and the simple flat damask ones that soon after would come into fashion.[9] Rembrandt wears the same type of substantial lace collar in his *Self-Portrait as a Burger*, 1632 **(fig 3)**.[10]



Fig 3. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait as a Burger*, 1632, oil on panel, 64.4 x 47.6 cm, The Burrell Collection, Glasgow, inv.nr. 35/600, © CSG CIC Glasgow Museums and Libraries Collections

- Henriette Rahusen, 2017

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Endnotes

1. It is possible that the unidentified sitter had a divergent or outward squint (*exotropic strabismus*) of his left eye.
2. Ronni Baer, *Gerrit Dou 1613–1675: Master Painter in the Age of Rembrandt*, ed. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. (Exh. cat. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art; London, Dulwich Picture Gallery; The Hague, Mauritshuis) (New Haven, 2000), 34.
3. Ronni Baer, *Gerrit Dou 1613–1675: Master Painter in the Age of Rembrandt*, ed. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. (Exh. cat. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art; London, Dulwich Picture Gallery; The Hague, Mauritshuis) (New Haven, 2000), 34–35 and note 94. Joachim von Sandrart, *Joachim von Sandrarts Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste von 1675: Leben der berühmten Maler, Bildhauer und Baumeister,* ed. Arthur R. Peltzer (Nuremburg, 1675–79, reprinted in Munchen, 1925), 195–96.
4. Theophile Bürger first associated the portrait with Gerrit Dou when it was in the collection of Lothar Franz Von Schönborn in Pommersfelden. He attributed the painting to “Ecole de G. Dou (?).” See Hôtel Drouot, *Galerie de Pommersfelden: Catalogue de la collection de tableaux anciens du château de Pommersfelden à M. le comte de Schönborn* (Paris, 1867), 17, no. 25 (Portrait de jeune homme). According to the notes, the portrait had been listed as by Frans Hals in a catalogue (either Drouot or Pommersfelden) of 1857 as no. 108. A handwritten notation next to the 1867 catalogue entry indicates the hammer price was 610 French francs. For this information, see Wilhelm von Bode, *Die Grossherzogliche Gemälde-Galerie zu Oldenburg* (Vienna, 1888), 35 and 40. Click here for an online version of the sales catalogue of 1867.
5. Wilhelm von Bode, *Die Grossherzogliche Gemälde-Galerie zu Oldenburg* (Vienna, 1888), 35 and 40. According to Bode, the portrait entered the Oldenburg Gallery as a work by Thomas de Keyser. Bode rejected that attribution in favor of Dou, noting that it has “all the characteristic artistic components of a work by Gerard Dou.” The 1888 catalogue includes a reproduction of L. Kuhn’s print after the portrait. Click here for the online text.
6. Wilhelm Martin, *Gerard Dou,* trans. Clara Bell (London, 1902), 132, no. 147. Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century Based on the Work of John Smith,* ed. and trans. Edward G. Hawke, 1: 450–51, no. 339, as by Dou, 8 vols. (London, 1907–28), originally published as Beschreibendes und kritisches Verzeichnis der Werke der hervorragendsten höllandischen Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts, 10 vols. (Esslingen and Paris, 1907–28).
7. Ronni Baer, “The Paintings of Gerrit Dou (1613–1675),” 3 vols. (PhD diss., New York University, 1990), 3: no. 13. Fourteen-year-old Gerrit Dou entered the studio of Rembrandt on

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14 February 1628 and stayed with him until Rembrandt's departure for Amsterdam in 1631.

8. Bruyn, Josua, et al. *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings.* Vol. 2: *1631–1634*. Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (The Hague, 1986), 219–22, no. A56 (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, inv. 99).
9. The disappearance of the millstone or ruff collars occurs around the year 1630. Members of the older generation nevertheless continued to wear variations of the millstone collars. See, for example, Govaert Flinck's *The Governors of the Kloveniersdoelen* of 1642 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), in which three of the five men portrayed wear ruff collars and the two youngest sport the new flat collar.
10. Bruyn, Josua, et al. *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings.* Vol. 2: *1631–1634*. Stichting Foundation Rembrandt Research Project (The Hague, 1986), no. A 58.

Provenance

- Count of Schönborn, Schloss Weissenstein, Pommersfelden, Germany, by 1719, as by Frans Hals; (his sale, Pommersfelden Collection, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 17–18 May 1867, no. 25 [to Oldenburg], as by school of Dou).
- Oldenburg Gallery, Oldenburg, Germany [as by Thomas de Keyser from 1867 until 1888, when attributed to Dou].
- [Zacharias Max Hackenbroch (1884–1937), Frankfurt am Main, by 1924].
- Henry Karl Janssen (1866–1948), Wyomissing, Pennsylvania; by descent to Helen Janssen Wetzel, Spring Township, Pennsylvania (her sale, Sotheby's, New York, 9 October 1980, no. 7).
- Private collection, New York; (sale, Sotheby's, New York, 7 June 1984, no. 75; sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 July 1986, no. 157 [Johnny van Haeften Ltd., London, by 1992]).
- Private collection, Germany [Salomon Lilian B. V., Amsterdam, 2004].
- From whom acquired by the present owner in 2004.

Exhibition History

- Leiden, Museum de Lakenhal, "Gerrit Dou: The Leiden Collection from New York," 9 March–31 August 2014 [lent by the present owner].
- Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, on loan with the permanent collection, August 2015–August

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2016 [lent by the present owner].

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Versions
Engraved

1. L. Kühn, after Dou, *Bildniss Eines Jungen Mannes,* engraving. In Wilhelm von Bode, *Der grossherzogliche Gemälde-Galerie zu Oldenburg* (Vienna, 1888).

Technical Summary

The painting is executed on a rectangular panel made from a single plank of vertically grained oak. The plank was obtained from a tree of eastern Baltic origin, with a fell date of 1617 and a projected use date of 1617–49.[1] The back of the panel is beveled on the top and left edges, as viewed from the reverse. A 0.8-cm-wide, unpainted wooden shim with vertical grain has been added to the right edge with six metal brads. The panel exhibits both a convex and a concave warp in the horizontal direction, forming an S-shape along the top and bottom edges. It also has a vertical convex warp on the left side. The right side remains in plane. There are no wax seals or panel maker’s marks, but there is a round, illegible import stamp on the reverse.

A light-colored ground has been thinly and evenly applied with vertical brushstrokes. It extends to, but not over, the edges of the panel. The artist applied a thin, transparent, brown imprimatura over the ground. The portrait was executed in a light-colored, feigned oval, but the paint covers a rectangular area with black spandrels around the oval. The paint does not extend to the panel edges. A 0.5-cm border of imprimatura remains on the top, left, and bottom edges. The border is not present on the right edge, but traces of the imprimatura along this edge suggest that it once

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had a similar border, which has been trimmed and replaced by the wooden shim.

The portrait is thinly painted with relatively little planning, as evidenced by the numerous artist's changes revealed by infrared reflectography and X-radiography. The sitter's white ruff was widened; his black cloak originally had a black collar that extended beyond the sleeves; his proper right eyebrow was more angular; his nose was straighter; and the proper left profile of his face is now more defined in the area where the chin meets the cheek. In addition, no reserve was left for the sitter's gloves. In contrast to these changes, the X-radiographs show a sharp, thin, white line around the face and hat of the sitter, which probably corresponds to the planning stage. Six or seven fingerprints are visible in the lower left corner. Unfortunately, the paint in this area is not original, so the fingerprints are unlikely to belong to the artist.[2]

The painting is in good condition. There are numerous small, subtle areas of inpainting that cover abrasion along the wood grain.

Technical Summary Endnotes

1. Ian Tyers dendochronological report, November 2010.
2. John Twilley scientific examination report, 31 January 2013.

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