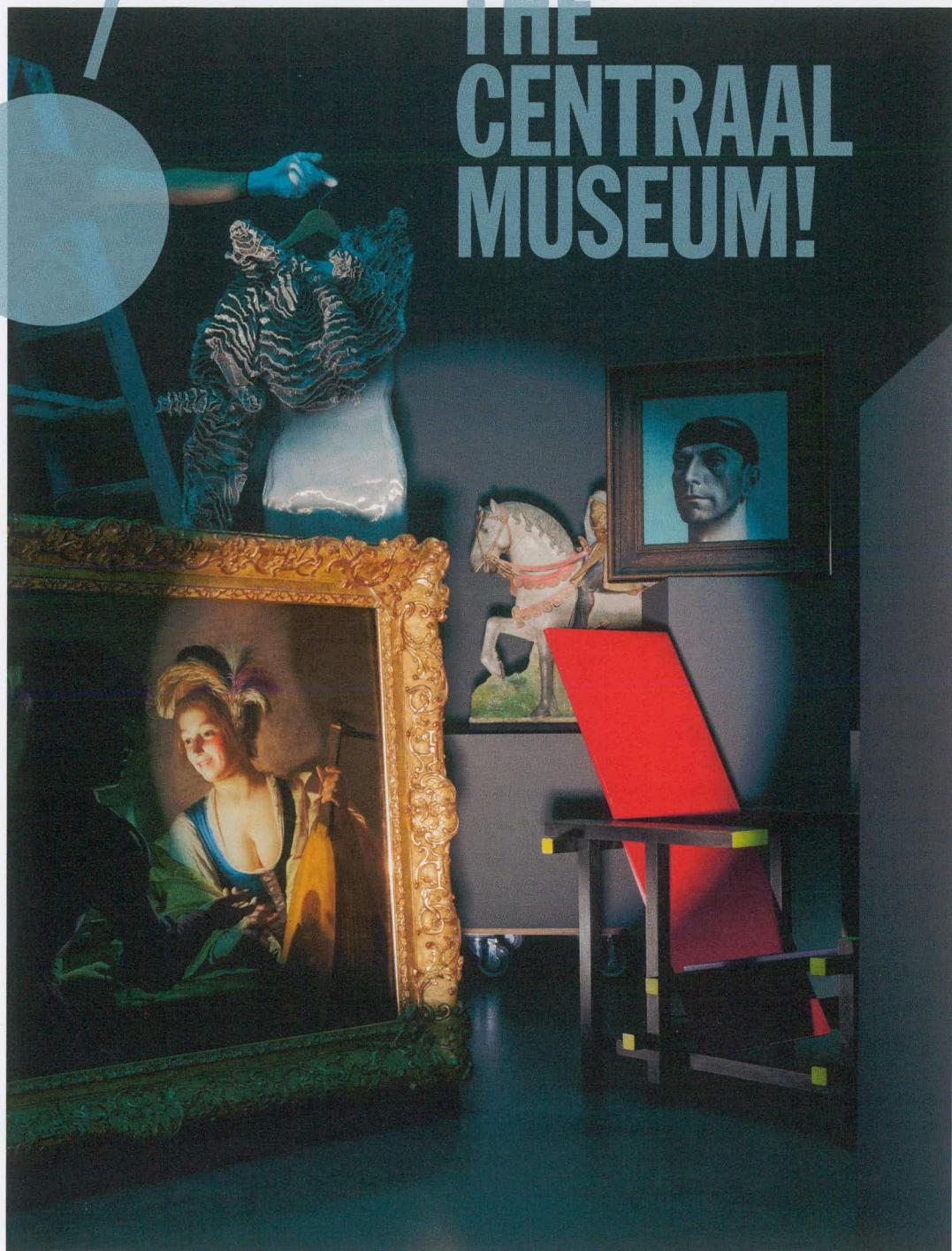
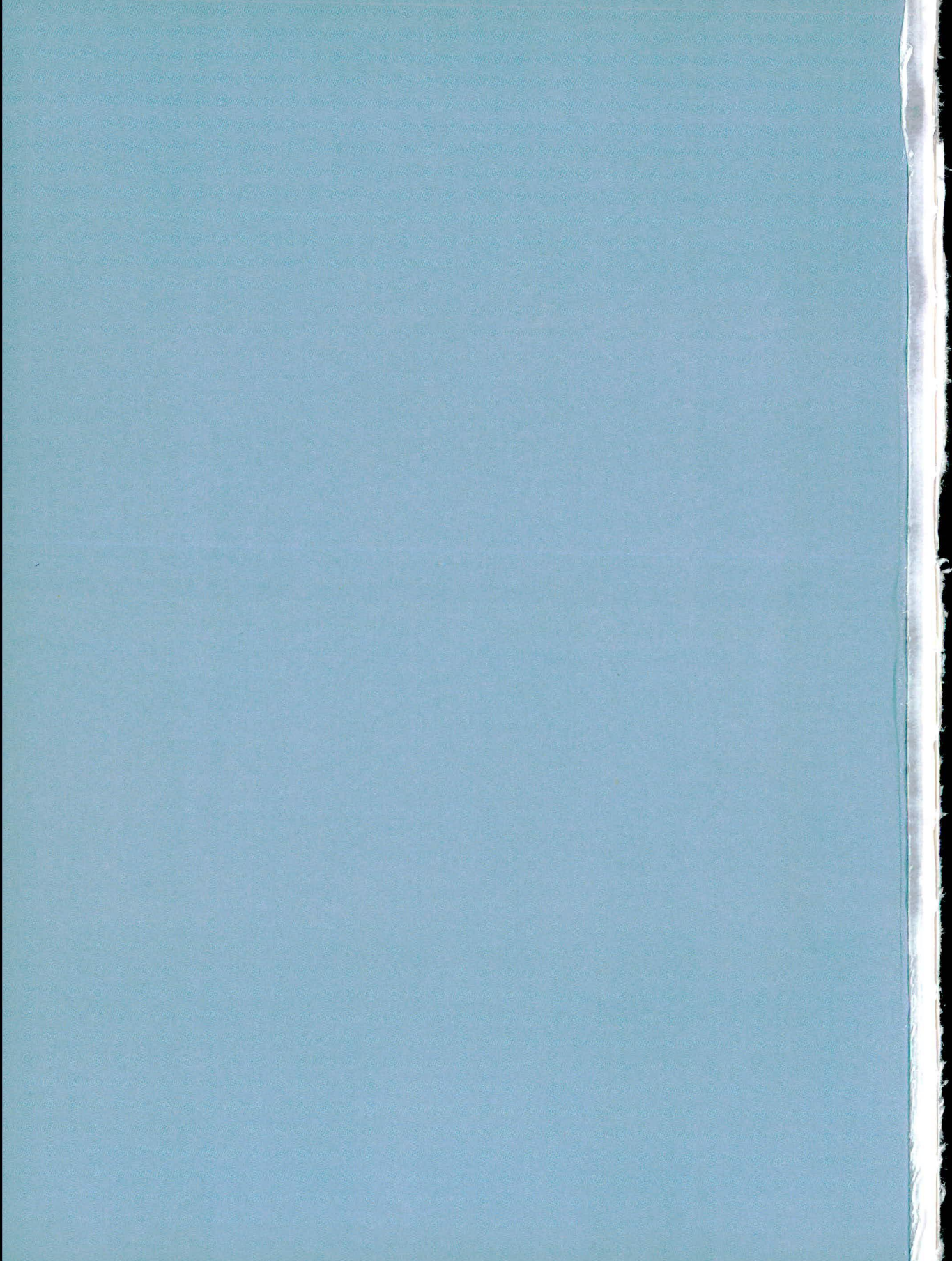


MUSEUM

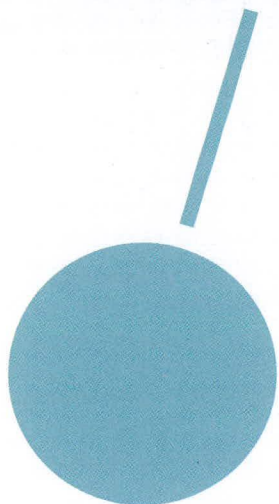
THIS IS
THE
CENTRAAL
MUSEUM!



CENTRAAL
MUSEUM



MUSEUM



**THIS IS
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CENTRAAL
MUSEUM!**

**CENTRAAL
MUSEUM**

THIS IS THE CENTRAAL MUSEUM!

Utrecht attracts. For over 2000 years it has attracted artists, craftsmen, fortune seekers, politicians, philosophers, scientists and the religiously inspired: the brave, the daredevils, the inquisitive. All found a home here, and all left something behind that makes Utrecht what it is today. The what and the how differ from object to object, and it are these stories behind the objects that bring Utrecht to life. Take the Utrecht ship, for instance: impressive for its monumental form and unique construction. But it are the scrape marks underneath, caused by the rocky bottom of the Rhine, that testify to how this ship once made long journeys. Utrecht was a perfect come-and-go place, where boatmen could depart from and return to, without any major obstacles. It is for the same reason that the *Leipziger Messe* temporarily took refuge in Utrecht in 1917; and thanks to its huge success and the far-sighted vision of the local city council, Utrecht became the permanent home base for the trade fair four years later.

With works such as *Madonna with wild roses*, the painter Jan van Scorel introduced the Italian Renaissance art to the northern Netherlands. Scorel established a workplace in Utrecht in 1530 whose fame soon spread far and wide. Scorel was a humanist and a man of great erudition. He furthermore pursued his artist's vocation in a rather special manner. We know a lot about this because the Centraal Museum manages the largest remaining collection of his works. The same goes for the oeuvres of fellow Utrecht artists such as Abraham Bloemaert and Joachim Wtewael. And following in their footsteps, we have the collections of top pieces by the Utrecht Caravaggist painters like Hendrick ter Brugghen and Gerard van Honthorst, or of the Italianate painters such as Jan Baptist Weenix.

This is the Centraal Museum! is about art and culture, as a commemoration of events, buildings and people. It are the objects, the works of art, the designs and historic items, that tell us the stories. Many of these tales literally have Utrecht as their subject: the cultural wealth of the city, its artistic domains, the open space it offered and still offers to countless nationalities and identities. Pyke Koch's *Self-portrait with black headband* vividly captures in a single visual element the complicated period of the Dutch national-socialist movement NSB and the German occupation. Gerrit Rietveld created an oeuvre that put the world on a different footing visually, while that other famous son of Utrecht Dick Bruna pursued his own artistic development with utmost consistency within the same domain. The surrealists expressed their era and the particularity of Utrecht in their very own way. Han Schuil's work *Blast* is a striking image of a quintessentially Dutch phenomenon – natural light – but brushes up against surrealism as well, and thus seems to encompass this all. Work by an American artist like Duane Hanson adds depth and reflection. Contemporary fashion and design are art forms that slipped into Utrecht, so to speak, to make and shape local history here. Viktor & Rolf, Alexander van Slobbe, Jurgen Bey, Joris Laarman; their concern is not fashion and design as such, but to discover and explore new directions. And it is along such directions that Utrecht will find expression over the years to come.

All of this has become part of the museum's collection through the efforts of many, among which the collectors and art enthusiasts. Sometimes entire collections, created by private persons or by public bodies, have been gifted or transferred to the Centraal Museum, such as the collection of the Van Baaren Museum Foundation, the collection of contemporary drawings owned by the Province of Utrecht, and the sketches from the monumental Van Doesburg collection of the Cultural Heritage Agency.

A selection of the major pieces is on display in Utrecht's old inner city. The museum is a complex of interconnected buildings, of which the oldest core section is the remnant of the medieval Sint Agnieten convent. Before the museum moved into the building in 1920, a large-scale reconstruction project connected the convent's chapel and adjoining halls to the new wing. In 1983 the world-famous Rietveld Schröder House was brought under the museum's management (on loan), and in 1987 the former artillery stables were taken into use as exhibition halls. In 1990 the museum expanded across the street, where the *dick bruna* house was created in the building opposite. The result is confusing, but also surprising. At first glance, the museum's collections seem as diverse as the building itself. The five collections managed by the museum – the old, modern and contemporary art, the applied arts, the costumes and the department of city history – practically always have one common denominator, and that is the city of Utrecht. The city's history constitutes the oldest core of the museum. In 1838, at the instigation of Mayor H.M.A.J. van Asch van Wijck, the collection of antiquities was put on public display in a number of chambers in the town hall. This laid the foundation for the oldest city museum in the Netherlands. Over a period of almost 175 years, the Centraal Museum has evolved from a small historic city museum into one of the ten largest art museums in the Netherlands, with a collection of over 48,000 objects. The majority of these objects were published between 1995 and 2007 in a series of collection catalogues, *De verzamelingen van het Centraal Museum Utrecht* – nowadays directly accessible via the museum website.

This is the Centraal Museum! reveals the diversity and the quality of the vast collection. We have deliberately chosen to compile the selection of 50 major works proportionately from the five different sub-collections. The selection was made in consultation with the team of curators. By exploring these iconic art objects at some depth, *This is the Centraal Museum!* offers an inside look at how their own aesthetic qualities and unique perspectives infuse the city of Utrecht with deeper emotion and significance. 'The Centraal Museum is a publicly appealing platform for art and design, for the past, the present and the future, for practice and reflection' – this is our mission. But it's actually more than just a mission. It is the Centraal Museum!

Edwin Jacobs
Director, Centraal Museum

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01

THE UTRECHT SHIP

c. 997 – c. 1030

oak

1780 x 380 cm

conveyance 1930

inventory number

6463



Safely tucked away in the cellars of the Centraal Museum lie the remains of an almost 18-metre long boat. These are the remains of a boat that was found in 1930 during construction work in the Utrecht district of Zuilen. The remains were brought to the museum, pieced together and conserved. The tar-based substance creosote was used for the conservation, with a typical smell that many visitors always remember. Since it went on display in 1936, the vessel has been one of the most popular exhibits.

The boat was initially thought to be of Roman origin, but a subsequent analysis on the basis of tree-rings (dendrochronology) determined that it was constructed at around the year 1000. The new dating was part of a comprehensive restoration and research project in the years 1998-2000, funded by the European Commission. The restoration work was carried out by the National Museum of Denmark, and the dat-

ing was performed by the National Agency for Archaeological Research, now the Cultural Heritage Agency. Loose pieces of wood were fixed in place and the surface was impregnated with the synthetic resin PEG. Additionally, a new and flexible framework of stainless steel was constructed to support the boat, and since then it is shielded off by a glass wall. In 2012 the 'ideas factory' Monobanda devised an art project involving the ship, entitled *Licht op hout* ('light on wood').

A remarkable feature of the vessel is that its bottom board consists of a single piece of oak wood. It is a hollowed-out and then bent tree trunk, to which the beams and planks were subsequently attached. This freight vessel plied the Rhine river, moving forward by a combination of sailing, pulling, punting and rowing. Its sturdy bottom made it suitable for waters hiding dangerous rocks, as in the area of the Loreley. Utrecht was probably the boat's home harbour, where goods

brought from upstream were traded or consumed, such as wine, grains and tuff stone. With all the church-building activity in Utrecht (the Romanesque Dom church, the St-Jan and St-Pieter church and the Paulus monastery), stones were in great demand. On its return journey upstream the boat likely transported locally produced goods such as cheese and salt, and imported Scandinavian products like furs and pitch. The boat has acquired a presence in the cityscape through a steel replica that marks the location where it was found at Van Hoornekade.

RdB

JAN NUDE

active in Utrecht
1446-1494

**FIVE DOM
SCULPTURES**

c. 1450-1451

Baumberger limestone, polychrome
Saint Martin

72,5 x 92 x 14,5 cm
Saint Pontian of
Spoleto

68,2 x 33,7 x 12,7 cm
Saint Agnes

66,4 x 36,3 x 10 cm
Saint Paul

67 x 34 x 12 cm
Saint Mary

Magdalene
68,9 x 30,3 x 12 cm

purchased 1838

inventory numbers
1788/001-005



In the Middle Ages, the diocese of Utrecht was an important centre of sculpture. With more than forty churches and chapels, there was great demand for sculptures to venerate the countless saints. Little remains of this religious art, however. Mob rage in the sixteenth century frequently targeted the churches, with entire church interiors wrecked and sculptures demolished. Whatever remained intact after these iconoclastic furies disappeared with the advent of the Reformation (in Utrecht in 1580).

As part of preparing the Dom church for Protestant services, the Dom chapter in charge of the cathedral took the initiative of having all sculptures removed by a contractor. A small selection of sculptures was thus safely stored in the chapter's archive. Following the abolishment of the Dom chapter in 1811, the sculptures were offered for sale. They were purchased by the Utrecht architect Christiaan Kramm, who sold them on to the municipal coun-

cil in 1838. These five Dom sculptures thus lie at the very basis of the collection of the Centraal Museum.

The central figure is Saint Martin, the patron saint of the cathedral and of the city of Utrecht. The saint is depicted as a Roman officer on his horse, cutting a piece from his mantle for a beggar with a mangy dog. Two other saints of the group that are closely associated with the Dom church are Saint Agnes and Pontian of Spoleto. Both their names were tied to the consecration of the Dom in July, commemorated annually with festivities. The Dom owned important relics of Pontian. He is depicted here as a knight, and for that reason the figure was long thought to represent Saint George but without the customary dragon. Agnes is portrayed in a long fashionable dress with her symbol, the lamb. The two other saints, Mary Magdalene and the apostle Paul, were not specifically associated with the

cathedral but were simply popular. The sculptor furnished them with their traditional symbols: an ointment jar and a sword. Over time Paul's sword went missing, but aside from that the sculptures have been preserved remarkably intact. Even the original polychrome can still be seen to some extent.

RdB

ANONYMOUS UTRECHT

DOM CABINET

c. 1500 – c. 1550

oak

wrought iron

233 x 255,5 x 57 cm

on loan 1901

inventory number

859



This monumental cabinet comes from the Dom Church. It was built in the first half of the sixteenth century using very high quality oak wood and furnished with hinges, handles and locks of wrought iron. The board at the centre of the cabinet can be folded open and used to lay books and papers on. The cabinet was probably built for the administration and the archives of the five collegiate chapters in Utrecht. These ecclesiastical boards managed the estates of the collegiate churches: the Dom, the Sint-Salvator church, the Sint-Pieter church, the Sint-Jan church and the Sint-Maria church. The Dom chapter held a central position, for instance chairing the meetings. The chapters were abolished in 1812, after which the cabinet was transferred to the museum. A second archive cabinet owned by the chapters ended up in Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum.

Large cabinets were very rare in the Middle Ages. The majority of people owned little more than a few chairs,

a table, a bed and some chests to store things in. A lot of furniture was lost over the course of time. The Dom Cabinet is unique in this respect, and is considered a top item internationally. The cabinet probably owes its preservation to its important function.

When the city archivist Samuel Muller was given the cabinet in loan for the city collection, it had been painted a red-brown colour and fitted with an extra door and a cornice. Parts of the cabinet were decayed or damaged, and the lid was split in half. Muller had the cabinet restored so thoroughly that we no longer know for sure what it looked like originally. Traces of paint on the inside suggest that it may have been painted. Muller wanted the Utrecht museum to show how people had lived in the town throughout the ages. To this end he built a number of period rooms, starting in the Middle Ages and ending in the nineteenth century. His collection policy for

applied arts was aimed at furnishing these period rooms as fully and authentically as possible. However, his criteria were not the ones we hold today. He placed the Dom Cabinet in the gothic style room, with medieval ceramics on the open shelves. Yet in a true medieval living room this massive archive cabinet would have looked decidedly out of place.

lvZ

JAN VAN SCOREL

Schoorl 1495 –
Utrecht 1562

THE LOKHORST TRIPTYCH

c. 1526
oil on panel
95,7 x 160,5 cm
(shut)
95,7 x 323,5 cm
(open)

gift 1941

inventory numbers
6078a and 7991



In 1518, Jan van Scorel left Utrecht to travel to Italy via Germany and Austria. From Venice he embarked on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. There he made pen drawings which he later used for the view on Jerusalem, on the central panel of this triptych. In 1522 Scorel settled in Rome, where the Utrecht Pope Adrian Florisz Boeyens (1459-1523) appointed him to succeed Raphael (1483-1520) as 'conservator' of the Vatican's art treasures.

After the Pope's death in 1523, Scorel returned to Utrecht. According to his biographer Karel van Mander he took up residence with Herman van Lokhorst, deacon of the St-Salvator church and canon of the Dom church. It was he who commissioned Scorel to paint this *Triptych with the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem*. It is Scorel's first major known work after his return from Rome, and it shows the influence of his Italian stay. Scorel adopted the diagonal setup of the composition on the central panel from

Michelangelo's *The Great Flood* on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (1508-1512), and the Italianate figures are influenced by Raphael's work.

The patron and his forebears are depicted on the outside of the wings. The two Latin inscriptions report the names and death dates of the depicted people and the context of the commission. It transpires that Herman van Lokhorst was having his forebears' tomb in the Dom church restored. This restoration probably motivated the commission for the triptych. The saints painted on the inside of the wings -- Agnes, Pope Cornelius, Abbot Antonius, Sebastian, Gertrude of Nivelles and finally Christopher -- offered protection against fever, the pest or a sudden death. In that event, Agnes would represent purity.

Christ's entry into earthly Jerusalem is a suitable image for a memorial tablet. It refers to the entry of

the soul into celestial Jerusalem and the triumph over death. The Liturgy of the Dead still invokes the image of the heavenly city of Jerusalem to mark the moment that the body is carried from the church.

LMH

ANONYMOUS NORTHERN NETHERLANDS

TRIPTYCH WITH THE LAST SUPPER

c. 1521
oil on panel
165 x 108 cm
(shut)
165 x 217 cm
(open)

on loan Cultural
Heritage Agency
1946
on loan Van Baaren
Museum Foundation
Utrecht 2010

inventory number
31199



The Triptych with the Last Supper is one of the few remaining Utrecht altar pieces. The people depicted all had ties to the Carthusian monastery Nieuwlicht, founded in 1393 just to the north of Utrecht along the Vecht river. The triptych was probably created for an altar in this monastery.

The main image is of the last supper. Christ, with his favourite disciple John the Evangelist at his breast, reaches towards the lamb on the plate set before him on the table. Between the thumb and index finger of his right hand he holds the sacramental bread. Judas is seated opposite him. The money pouch in his left hand identifies his role as treasurer, and also refers to the silver coins he received in return for the betrayal. The scene is set on an open gallery with lots of Renaissance motives which continue on the side panels. Through open arch windows with gothic trefoil frames we see a wide open landscape with some rocky out-

crops in the distance. Several other events are depicted both in the gallery and the landscape. On the far left we see Christ on the Mount of Olives; on the left of the centre panel we Judas's betrayal and the washing of the feet at the last supper; on the right panel we see Christ bearing the cross. We are thus seeing part of the Passion of Christ in chronological order. The patrons are shown on the wings. They have been identified through the two coats of armour on the centre panel, which belonged to the Pauw and Zas families. These families were bonded together through the marriage of Ghijsbertus Pauw and Adriana Zas. On the left wing we see their sons Jacobus and Vincentius Pauw, together with their cousin Petrus Zas. The saints behind them are Lawrence or, and more likely, Vincent of Saragossa and Sebastian. The figure on the right wing is probably their aunt Digna Zas, their mother's sister. The saints George and John the Evangelist are positioned behind

her. By shutting the triptych, the saints Nicholas and Catherine become visible. They are set in a hilly landscape with again large rock formations in the distance.

The altar piece was part of the famous collection of the Jewish art collector Jacques Goudstikker. In 2010 it was purchased from his heirs by the Van Baaren Museum Foundation, who then loaned it to the Centraal Museum to add to its collection.

LMH

ANONYMOUS

**FUNERAL PALL
DECORATIONS OF THE
PORTERS' AND GRAIN
WEIGHERS' GUILD**

1611

silver

purchased 1857

inventory numbers

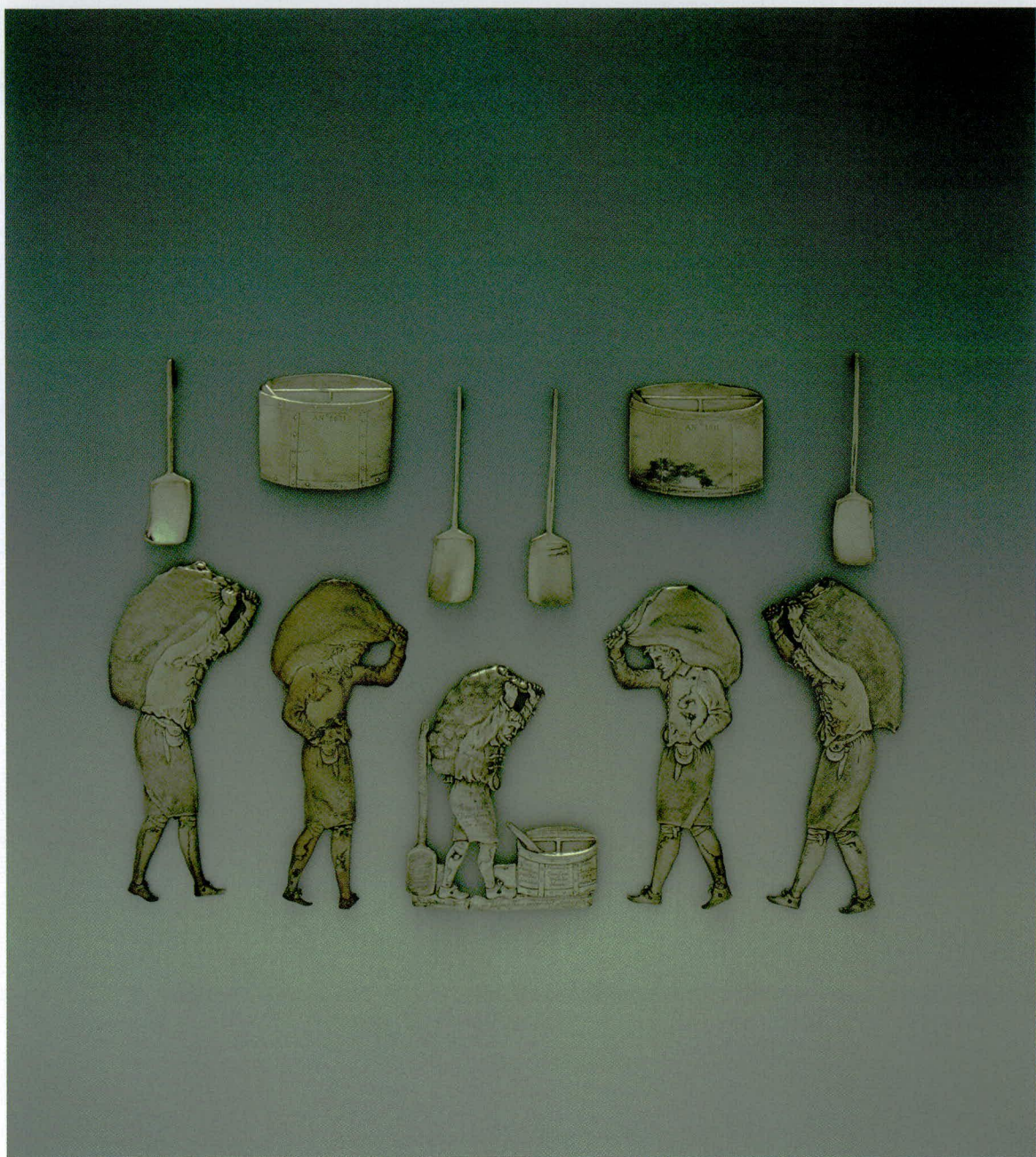
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Employers want to have skilled personnel and get good prices for their products; customers want to have guaranteed good quality; and employees want to have proper working conditions and provisions in the event of illness and old age. This was important to people in the Middle Ages, too. That is why fellow tradesmen formed artisan guilds, first in Italy but later elsewhere as well. The guilds drew up quality codes, regulated working hours, organised training programmes, and provided care arrangements for the sick and elderly. They also formed a political lobby to pressure the city administration into adopting favourable measures. A craftsman or trader began his career as an apprentice to a guild member, eventually becoming a journeyman (compagnon). Those aspiring to independence (a master) first had to prove their competence with a 'master's piece'. After this piece was approved and the guild dues were paid, they were welcomed as member of the guild. This was easier to achieve for the offspring of guild members than for outsiders, of course.

In Utrecht the first guilds emerged in the late thirteenth century. They quickly gained in influence and even acquired the right to elect the city council. One important duty of the Utrecht guilds was to guard the city wall. Each guild was responsible for a certain section of the wall between two towers. The Smeetoren (the tower of the smith's guild) was one such tower. Of the 21 guilds in Utrecht, the smith's guild was the wealthiest and most powerful. At the guild house it ran a care home for elderly members, named the Eloyen Gasthuis after their patron saint, Saint Eloy.

The guilds not only looked after their members during their life, but also after their death. A proper funeral was very important to people in those days. Guilds had their own funeral vaults and colleagues would carry the coffin, which was covered by a black pall and decorated with silver pins. The Centraal Museum possesses thirteen pall decorations of the porters' and grain weighers' guilds: they depict porters carrying sacks, grain measuring units and shovels. The role of the guilds changed after the Middle Ages. They lost their political influence and, with the Reformation, also their religious role. Their function as a trade organisation remained, but their closed character was increasingly criticised. Their attempt to fight off competition from fellow tradesmen from outside the city was especially frowned upon. The guilds were officially abolished at the start of the nineteenth century.

RdB



ANONYMOUS

CUPBOARD

c. 1620 - c. 1630
oak, ebony, walnut
and black-stained
pear wood
255 x 215 x 82 cm

on loan 1940
legacy 1952

inventory number
8441

DRAW-LEAF
TABLE

c. 1620 - 1628
oak, black oak,
ebony and a
light-coloured
unidentified wood
88 x 202,5 x 88 cm

on loan 1940
gift 1963

inventory number
8465



This remarkable table appears on a portrait painted by Joachim Wtewael in 1628 of his daughter Eva. It is clearly recognisable thanks to the ebony-inlaid panel of the table leg that just peeps from under the table cloth. The model of the table, which can be extended on two sides, is not uncommon. In 1621 the engraver Crispijn van de Passe II published a series of design prints for tables in Utrecht. Many of these tables have a similar undercarriage with baluster legs. The table stands out for its luxurious decoration, however. Only two other pieces of furniture with comparable decoration have been preserved: a room panelling from Dordrecht and a cupboard in a castle in Gelderland.

The table was probably built especially for Wtewael. The Utrecht artist had a keen interest in applied art. Trained as a glass painter, he designed stained glass and also made the design for a new type of salt cellar, for example. Wtewael

may well have contributed to the design of this table as well.

The table is likely the 'large draw-leaf table' mentioned in the 1669 inventory of the house of Jacob and Aletta Martens at Janskerkhof in Utrecht. Aletta Martens, born Pater, was the granddaughter of Joachim Wtewael. Through her the table came into possession of the Martens family, and it was ultimately donated to the museum by the family Martens van Sevenhoven. The oakwood cupboard decorated with ebony, walnut and pear wood derives from the same estate. The cupboard and table both have a scale pattern frieze with glued-on droplets of ebony. Nevertheless, they were not built as an ensemble. After a long journey through Italy and France, Wtewael settled in Utrecht in 1592. It seems that he had his house at the Oude Gracht (now no. 58), purchased in 1596, splendidly decorated using the wealth he earned through the flax trade. It is exceptional to know so much about the

owner, the dating and the place of manufacture of early seventeenth-century furniture from the civilian domain. Their relatively unscathed condition, their beauty and the precious materials make these top items all the more admirable.

lvz

ADAM VAN VIANEN

Utrecht c. 1569 –
Utrecht 1627

DRINKING BOWL ON FOOT

1620
silver
height 18 cm
dish diameter
21 cm

gift 1936

inventory number
7895



The foot and dish of this tazza are decorated with tales from Ovidius's *Metamorphoses*. The foot depicts the moment that Apollo embraces the nymph Daphne and she turns into a laurel tree. The dish shows a hilly landscape with Apollo on the left, Cupid on the right of the brook, and in the background the defeated dragon Python.

This type of drinking bowl emerged at the start of the sixteenth century as a utensil, but as time passed they increasingly evolved into autonomous works of art.

The silversmith Adam van Vianen was born in Utrecht, as was his brother and fellow silversmith Paulus. Even during their lifetime their fame spread far and wide for the exceptional quality of their work. Their craftsmanship was unparalleled. The items were not cast, but were pressed into form from a flat silver sheet. The fine details were subsequently refined using an chasing punch.

The Van Vianens introduced significant stylistic innovations in the jewellery craft; for example the so-called auricular ornament. This style of ornamentation is based on the folds of skin, bones and other organic elements, sometimes still recognisable as such. It is often in the form of abstract fluid decoration, as in the rim of the dish. Another progressive feature is the highly accurate rendering of the landscape, based on sketches made in the outdoors. The combination of mythological figures in realistic landscapes was also popular among painters of that period.

Jewellers added a year letter and master's mark to their work. This mainly served to guarantee the silver content and hence the value of the item. However, Adam and Paulus saw themselves more as artists and therefore signed and dated their works in full. Their clientele consisted of worldly and religious leaders throughout Europa. They often created works on com-

mission. Paulus, born shortly after 1570, left Utrecht at an early age. Via Fontainebleau, Munich and Salzburg he arrived at the court of Rudolf II in Prague in 1603. There he worked until his death in 1613 as *Kammergoldschmied*, a position of high esteem. Adam remained in Utrecht but delivered work to the same high and mighty circles. It is not known for whom this tazza was created.

lvZ

JOACHIM WTEWAEEL

Utrecht 1566 –
Utrecht 1638

THE KITCHEN MAID

c. 1620 – c. 1625
oil on canvas
131 x 100,5 cm

purchased with
support of the
Rembrandt
Association 1999

inventory number
28599

While the kitchen maid skewers a plucked chicken, she looks straight at the viewer. She is standing behind a low table carrying a slab of meat, a straw basket containing various cabbages and a bunch of carrots. Two cucumbers lie in front of the basket, and next to her on the right is a second, much higher table covered by a white cloth. Two tin plates with fish, a large clump of butter, a knife, a bun and glass of wine together form a small 'banquet'. The shallow straw basket contains two large cheeses stacked on top of each other, with a large green earthenware jug on the right. A cupboard against the wall carries a pile of earthenware plates. Various jugs hang on hooks and there's a chandelier with unlit candle on the shelf. We see a similar kitchen arrangement near the large fireplace in the background. A man and woman are eating and conversing at the table, while a second woman stokes up the fire. This scene depicts Christ's visit to the home of the two sisters Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42). In the Bible book, Christ praises the contemplative Mary, who listens to his words calmly and attentively while Martha, the industrious housewife, is fussing about. In response to Martha's rebuke to Mary for being idle, Christ says that actually Mary has made the better choice.

Wtewael's kitchen pieces belong to the tradition of the by then outdated sixteenth century market and kitchen pieces by the Amsterdam painter Pieter Aertsen and his nephew Joachim de Bueckelaer. The composition of *The Kitchen Maid* in fact draws directly from De Bueckelaer's *The Cook* from 1574. This painting similarly shows a kitchen maid in the foreground in contemporary dress, skewering a chicken. In the background on the right we see the same Biblical scene of Christ visiting Mary and Martha. The tradition of the kitchen piece was continued in Utrecht as a simpler genre piece, dispensing with the religious scene. Hendrick Bloemaert painted *The Cook* in 1634 and Andries van Bochoven, a pupil of Wtewael, portrayed his sister Hildegonda as a cook in 1632.

LMH



DIRCK VAN BABUREN

Wijk bij Duurstede?
c. 1595 -
Utrecht 1624

YOUNG MAN WITH JEW'S HARP

1621
oil on canvas
84 x 70,7 cm

purchased 1953
restored with the
support of the
Victor Foundation
Heiloo

inventory number
11188



Dirck van Baburen is considered one of the most progressive painters in post-1620 Utrecht art. He lived and worked in Italy from around 1615 to 1621. His first known work following his return to Utrecht is *Young Man with Jew's Harp*. The painting is dated 1621 and, along with the *Flute player* by Abraham Bloemaert and the two flute players painted by Hendrick ter Brugghen, it belongs to the earliest known northern Netherlandish examples of a musician portrayed as a half-figure. The Jew's harp otherwise never occurs among the Caravaggist painters of Utrecht. The youth's posture is typical when playing this instrument: it is pressed against the lips with the left hand while the index finger of the right hand vibrates the metal tongue, which is bent into a right angle at the end. The mouth cavity serves as sound box.

The idea of depicting a musician by himself and as a half-figure derives from Caravaggio (1571-1610) and his successors. Since Bloemaert

never travelled to Italy, he must have picked up the theme through others. The honour of having introduced the genre in northern Europe falls to his pupil Baburen, or possibly to Ter Brugghen as well. The theme became highly popular, not only in Utrecht but also in other towns like Haarlem and Leiden. Frans Hals, for example, painted his famous *Jester with a Lute* around the year 1623.

Young Man with Jew's Harp is an intimate, almost sultry painting, with all the typical Caravaggist features. A canvas-filling young musician with bare shoulder, wearing a dashing beret with feathers. He is illuminated indirectly by a smoky candle behind the fluttering music pages he is playing from. The suggestive shadow of the ear of the chamberstick on the crumpled music page is a sophisticated demonstration of mastership. This is Baburen at his best.

LMH

HENDRICK TER BRUGGHEN

The Hague 1588 -
Utrecht 1629

THE CALLING OF SAINT MATTHEW

1621
oil on canvas
129,2 x 162,6 cm

purchased with the
support of the
Rembrandt
Association 1925

inventory number
5088

Like so many artists in his time, Hendrick ter Brugghen travelled to Italy where he saw the work by Caravaggio (1571-1610). Inspired by the wondrous beauty of the work, he returned to Utrecht in 1614. In the years that followed he established a reputation as the most gifted and original of the north-Netherlandish Caravaggisti, as these followers of Caravaggio were known. His masterpiece *The Calling of Saint Matthew* unmistakably bears the stamp of the Italian grand master.

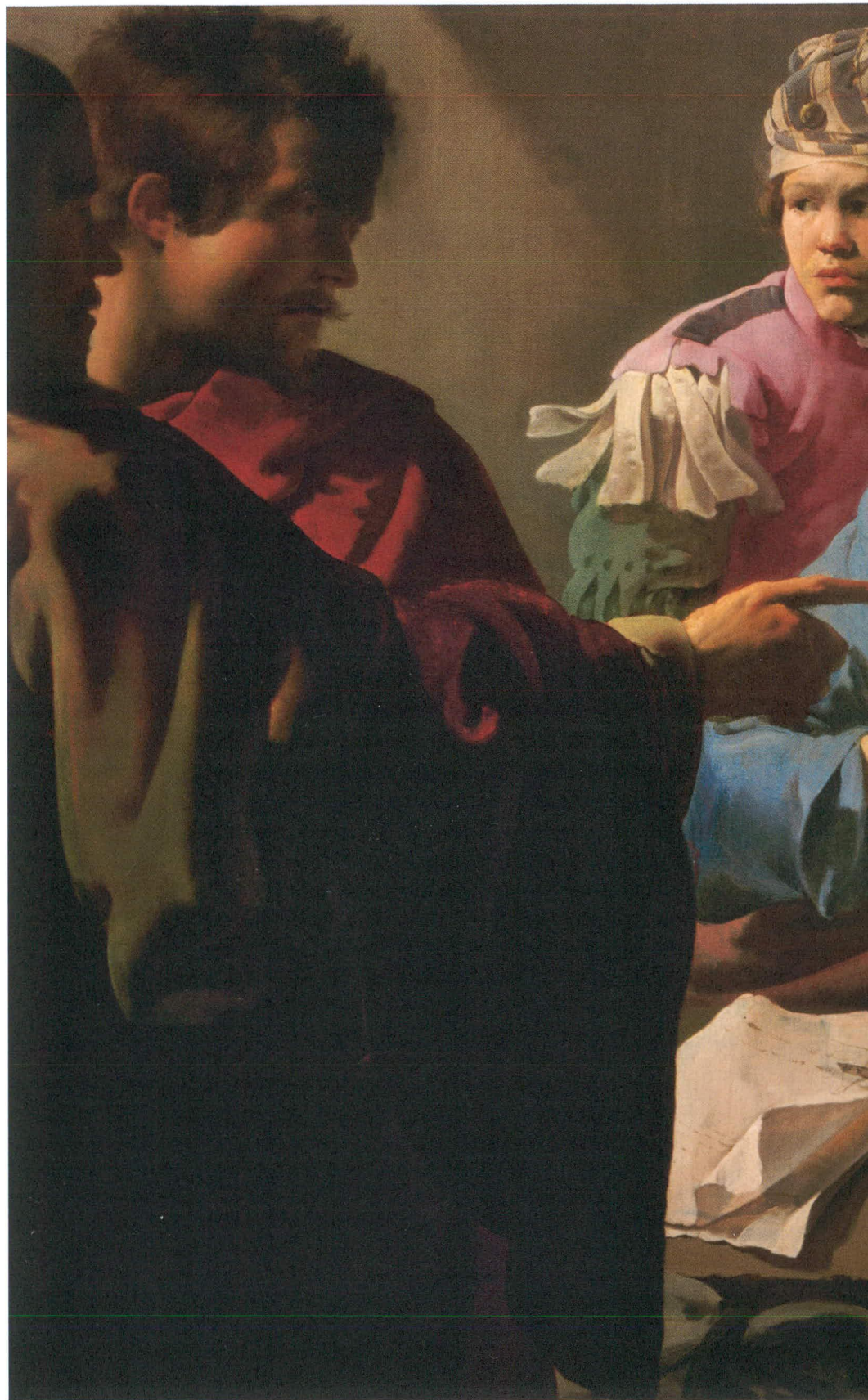
Ter Brugghen painted two versions of *The Calling of Saint Matthew*. The immediate example for both works is the large piece that Caravaggio painted around 1600 for the Contarelli chapel of the San Luigi dei Francesi church in Rome. This painting was an immediate success upon its completion. Ter Brugghen adopted Caravaggio's choice for the most dramatic moment of the story, as well as his arrangement of the figures around a table. The realistic rendering of the faces also reveals Caravaggio's influence.

What Ter Brugghen did not adopt is the dramatic illumination of the scene. It is particularly the strong light-dark contrasts, a style known as *chiaroscuro*, to which Caravaggio thanked his fame. Ter Brugghen also did not portray his figures full-sized, as did Caravaggio, but as half-figures. The foreground has been omitted, making the composition more compact. Finally, Ter Brugghen's use of colour differs from Caravaggio. Whereas the Italian painter opts for warm brown shades, Ter Brugghen juxtaposes blue and violet, and pink next to creamy white tones. Ter Brugghen's gentle illumination has no hint of Italian drama, but instead exudes cool northern harmony. It imparts to the painting the silver-like glow that has made it so famous.

The Calling of Saint Matthew is about Christ that appoints a toll collector as an apostle. Ter Brugghen painted precisely the moment of

the calling. The work therefore belongs among a series of paintings dedicated to the theme of conversion or a sudden religious insight. Particularly during the first half of the seventeenth century, there was a strong demand among Catholic circles for paintings with this theme. It was the period in which the clandestine churches were being decorated, following their establishment from the year 1581 on, after the Reformation had banned Catholic services.

LMH





**GERARD VAN
HONTHORST**

Utrecht 1592 -
Utrecht 1656

THE PROCURESS

1625
oil on panel
92,3 x 126 cm

purchased with
the support of
the Rembrandt
Association 1951

inventory number
10786



The procureess arranges paid love by setting up men with women of questionable repute. Once the men can no longer resist the temptation of the services offered by the ladies, she cashes in on their wallet. The elderly woman on the left has achieved her goal. With satisfaction, she points at the young girl at the table who is gazing rapturously at the man opposite her. Her colourful dress, the feathers in her hair and her décolletage clearly distinguish her from the average citizen. The feathers are a refer-

ence to her frivolous character, while the lute that she holds by the neck had a clear sexual significance in the seventeenth century. The young man is stretching out his hand to offer her some coins; the candlelight causes the shadows of his hand and that of the girl to merge on the lute.

Scenes of men being seduced by women are closely related to the depictions of the New Testament theme of the prodigal son (Luke 15:13). Of all the parables, this



is the most frequently portrayed story in the visual arts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. The scene in which the young man squanders his inheritance cavorting with ladies of pleasure in an inn was extremely popular. The theme of the procuress was introduced in Utrecht by Dirck van Baburen. In 1662 he painted the same elderly woman as Honthorst, demanding payment from a customer who already has his arm around a lute-playing prostitute by pointing at her open palm.

The theme is very well suited to a candlelight setting, and Honthorst used this to create one of his most beautiful night-time pieces. Night-time scenes, illuminated only by a single candle or torch, were the specialism of 'Gherardo della Notte', as Honthorst was admirably referred to in Rome. The dramatic yet natural illumination painted by Caravaggio (1571-1610) had inspired him to paint such scenes with artificial lighting.

His night-time pieces earned him quite a reputation, not just in Italy but also in northern Europe.

LMH

ROELANT SAVERIJ

Kortrijk 1578 -
Utrecht 1639

LARGE FLOWER STILL LIFE WITH CROWN IMPERIAL

1624
oil on panel
157 x 106 cm

purchased 1918

inventory number
2310

Roelant Saverij painted at least twenty flower pieces, two of which are part of the Centraal Museum's collection. One is a small painting on copper from 1603 that is reckoned among the earliest flower pieces of the northern Netherlands. The second is this majestic flower piece that Saverij painted in Utrecht in 1624. It is the largest painting he ever made.

The *Large Flower Still Life with Crown Imperial* is not only impressive for its size but also for the huge variety of flowers depicted. The bouquet consists of 63 different flowers. The crown imperial at the top is surrounded by irises, tulips, roses, anemones, larkspur, forget-me-nots, cornflowers, poppies, grape hyacinths and many more. Aside from the expensive cultivated flowers, the bouquet also contains many wild flowers. This preference for wild varieties and for plants that only have a decorative leaf shape such as the ferns is typical for Saverij. Because all the flowers are different and it moreover contains 44 species of animals, it has also been referred to as the painted collection: as a two-dimensional overview of an extremely valuable seventeenth century collection.

The crown imperial held a particular significance for Roelant Saverij. It had already been described as the *Corona Imperialis* by European writers at the imperial courts of Vienna and Prague at the end of the sixteenth century. The flower was apparently associated with Emperor Rudolf II (1552-1612), in whose service Saverij had worked. Clearly, the painter was eager to let everyone know that he had worked for such an illustrious client, seeing the name he gave to his huge house at Boterstraat in Utrecht: 'het Keijzers-wapen' ('the Emperor's Coat of Arms'). The house included a large botanical garden. Until around 1550, gardens in Europe were only planted with indigenous species. The increasing availability of exotic species such as the tulip, but also the iris, the crown imperial and for instance the rose, transformed the appearance of these gardens. Saverij must also have bought many of these costly imported plants, for when the flowers and plants from his garden were sold along with his house in 1638, they fetched the huge sum of 400 guilders.

LMH



ABRAHAM BLOEMAERT

Gorinchem 1566 –
Utrecht 1651

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

1624
oil on canvas
189,8 x 215,2 cm

purchased 1918

inventory number
2575



Depictions of events surrounding the birth of Christ were very popular in the seventeenth century. The adoration of the three kings was a particularly favourite theme. As a devoted Catholic, Abraham Bloemaert painted various versions of this event. Following the reformation, Catholic church services were barely tolerated in Utrecht. It is not surprising, then, that several of Bloemaert's religious commissions came from the Catholic southern provinces. It is not known who commissioned the creation of *The Adoration of the Magi*. Here, Mary is holding the Christ child on her lap, while Joseph looks on from behind the corner of the stable. The child stretches its hand out to Melchior, who is offering a chalice filled with golden coins, symbolising Christ's kingship. The elderly king is wearing a gorgeous choir cape made of red velvet brocade with a pattern of flowering pomegranates. The pomegranate is a symbol of the resurrection. An early sixteenth-century chasuble has been preserved made

of exactly the same material. Bloemaert must have used the chasuble, or possibly the choir cape that went with it, as an example.

Behind Melchior we see a middle-aged Balthazar bending towards the baby boy. The myrrh that he holds refers to the death of the redeemer. Caspar is the youngest of the three, and his gift consists of frankincense, symbolising divinity. Aside from the three age periods, the three kings also represent the three human races and the three continents that were familiar in the Middle Ages. The white Melchior represents Europe, the brown Balthazar represents Asia, and Caspar, depicted here as a Moor, stands for Africa. This symbolism demonstrates that Christ has appeared to the whole of humanity, of all nations and ages.

In between the heads of Balthazar and Caspar we see the face of a young man with moustache and pointed beard. This figure has been interpreted as a self-portrait, yet

Bloemaert was already aged 58 when he made this painting, and it is improbable that he would paint a much younger version of himself. The figure is more likely the person who commissioned the painting. The painting has been shortened on the right-hand side, as is revealed by a copy made of the original in the atelier and by a preliminary sketch for the painting, which is also part of the collection of the Centraal Museum.

LMH

15

PAULUS MOREELSE

Utrecht 1571 –
Utrecht 1638

PORTRAIT OF PHILIPS RAM AND PORTRAIT OF ANNA RAM-STRICK

1625
oil on canvas
129,2 x 102,3 cm

on loan Cultural
Heritage Agency
2008

inventory numbers
30548 and 30549



Paulus Moreelse is acknowledged as one of the leading portrait painters of his generation. The majority of his clients hailed from the upper class, to which Moreelse belonged as well. Though not of noble descent, he was part of the wealthiest and most influential citizenry, just like Philips Ram (1585-1632). Moreelse and Ram knew each other as members of the city administration. Moreelse and Ram both held various governance positions in the period 1618 to 1632. Ram married Anneken Vossen in 1605. After she died he remarried on 23 May 1619. Ram and his second wife Anna Strick (1591-1637) had their portraits painted in 1625, when Moreelse made his most accomplished works. The quality of these portraits is indeed exceptional.

They are two knee-length pieces. In conformity with heraldic convention, the wife stands to the left of the husband. Both strike an elegant pose, and their dress is distinguished. Both are wearing black,

clearly offsetting the white linen collar en white batiste cuffs. He is wearing a silk gambeson, baggy breeches and a cape around his shoulders. She is dressed in a silk dress with a black and gold brocade corset. The background is painted a neutral grey-green. Over a hundred portraits by Moreelse have been preserved, and the most beautiful ones date from after 1615. The majority consists of individual portraits with corresponding counterpart, as in this case. During his finest period, Moreelse developed a basic concept that he also applied for the portraits of Philips Ram and Anna Strick. The bearing of many of the portrayed people is therefore similar, but the details differ. The quality of rendered textiles is high in this period, and the corporeality of the figures only increases over subsequent years. This is achieved in part by a more refined contrast between light and shadow.

LMH

JAN BAPTIST WEENIX

Amsterdam 1621 -
De Haar 1659

VIEW OF AN ITALIAN HARBOUR

1649
oil on canvas
115,4 x 168,1 cm

on loan Cultural
Heritage Agency
1948

inventory number
10248



Most of the seventeenth-century painters specialised in a certain theme, but Jan Baptist Weenix practised several genres simultaneously. He painted (group) portraits, still lifes, animal pieces and interiors, but also Italianate landscapes and port scenes. The Italianate paintings earned him the greatest acclaim. He is viewed as both inventive and versatile, and as the most skilled colourist of all Italianate painters.

Weenix returned from Italy in 1647. From that year on he signed his work, as with this painting, as 'Gio(vanni) Batt(ist)a Weenix'. It marks the start of a period in which he pursued more monumental compositions with figures on a grand scale. He frequently painted this type of port scene, composed of a foreground with figures and behind them the sea with ships and large buildings. He did not devise this type of composition, however, as similar scenes can be found in the work of the Antwerp painter Paulus



Bril (1554-1626). The monumental effect in this painting is created by the block-shaped building with tall colonnade at the back and the royal steps leading down to the port, flanked by the obelisk. The splendid sky completes the grandeur of the port scene. The painting is richly detailed without detracting from the overall harmony of the image. Freight is being loaded and offloaded along the broad stretch running along the waterside. Packed mules, horsemen and pedestrians weave their way through the throng.

Further from the waterside, waiting soldiers are killing time playing cards. The harbour itself is crowded with lots of large and small sailing boats. Weenix probably painted the statues depicted in the painting after his own sketches made in Rome, or after drawings made by others, circulated widely at the time. At the top of the steps to the port we see the 'Dioscuri'. These are found in Rome at the end of the Cordonata, the long sloping steps leading up to Piazza del Campidoglio.

The Dioscuri (literally 'Sons of Zeus') are the twin brothers Castor and Pollux. They were known as two young valiant horsemen and as patrons of sailors. This makes their position at the top of the entrance to the port very appropriate.

LMH



17

JOOST CORNELISZ DROOCHSLOOT

Utrecht after 1585
Utrecht 1666

VIEW OF THE CITY OF UTRECHT

1650-1665
oil on canvas
78,4 x 237,2 cm

gift before 1838

inventory number
2298

Whereas Amsterdam was expanding rapidly around 1650, constructing one encircling canal after another, construction in Utrecht remained within the medieval city walls. The room freed up by the demise of the monasteries was sufficient to accommodate the growing population. Nevertheless, city planners looked enviously at Amsterdam, wishing to pursue a comparable expansion plan. Architect, painter and politician Paulus Moreelse had already made such a plan in 1624, and forty years later his son Hendrick once again rolled it out on the table.

New neighbourhoods were to arise to the west of the city. The axis of the new area would be formed by the Leidsche Rijn, a canal created by straightening the course of the Oude Rijn river. This canal reduced the travel time to Leiden by horse-drawn boat to eight hours, making it a veritable high-speed link in those days. Moreelse's plans seemed destined to be realised,

until an economic crisis intervened. Soon after Utrecht was occupied by the French army of King Louis XIV and then struck by a tornado in 1674, so that there was neither the money nor the need to embark on any urban expansion. The population shrank and there were enough damaged houses that required reparation.

The Utrecht painter Joost Cornelisz Droochsloot recorded the existing situation during the time the city's expansion was under discussion. In the foreground we see the agrarian landscape and the meandering Oude Rijn. A number of defensive towers are clearly visible: the Plompstoren to the north (on the left), the Smeestoren and the Bijlhouwerstoren to the south (on the right). Owing to the excellent wind conditions, several windmills were built on top of the city walls, while a large number of church towers are visible in the town itself. Some of these still stand today: the Dom Tower, the Buurkerk,



Geertekerk and St-Nicolaaskerk towers. Others were toppled in the 1674 tornado, such as the towers of the Sint-Janskerk and the Sint-Pieterskerk. The Jacobikerk tower lost its spire, not to be replaced until 1953. Some of the churches depicted here survived the storm, but not later human demolition.

With this painting, Droochsloot recorded a panorama that seemed on the verge of changing forever. The expansion plan was dropped, but the skyline was to change dramatically anyhow a few years later, due to the tornado. Unaware of this impending peril, the painter recorded the existing situation for all subsequent generations.

RdB

ANONYMOUS

MEN'S
GAMBESON

c. 1660 – c. 1670
chamois, silver

on loan 1923

inventory number
4461

This gambeson is one of the few seventeenth-century garments in a Dutch museum collection. Leather or textile was a valuable possession for many, and for that reason often worn until threadbare, or it was reused. It is therefore quite exceptional that this thick leather gambeson has been preserved, and in such a good condition too.

This type of garment was mainly worn by horsemen, soldiers and sailors from the second half of the sixteenth century on. The thickness of the material protected the wearer against all forms of danger from the world around. The gambeson was sometimes worn in combination with a cuirass (a type of harness). There are dozens of paintings from that time showing people wearing this tunic.

A gambeson like this was always made of leather, but the model was nevertheless subject to fashion. Its longer front panels allow us to date this exemplar to between 1660 and 1670. The long sleeves are remarkable. These are made of thinner leather than the rest, facilitating movement. The sleeves have deep incisions at the back. The lace closure of braided metal thread with silver fourragere pins running vertically down the front is purely decorative, as the coat has an inside hook-and-eye fastening, with hooks and eyes alternating to prevent the gambeson from falling open due to sudden movements.

NB



ANONYMOUS

GUERIDON

c. 1670 – c. 1680

walnut

89 x 73 x 59 cm

conveyance 1838

inventory number

1017



Ever since the establishment of the museum in 1838, its collection has contained a small table that the very first catalogue reports as having been used during the peace negotiations held in the years 1712-1713, in the city hall of Utrecht. These negotiations culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht on 11 April 1713; an event that assured the city an international reputation. This treaty ended the War of the Spanish Succession. But it also put an end to a long period of religious wars in Europe, and had major consequences for the overseas territories (Canada, South America). That is why this peace treaty remains of immense historical significance.

According to the 1838 catalogue, the table was used to receive the credentials presented by the negotiators from the various European nations, upon their arrival in Utrecht. This cannot be verified, however. What we do know is that the city secretary who organised

the convention, Everard Harskamp, searched far and wide for round tables to use for the talks. After all, a round table emphasises the equivalence between the participants and encourages mutual respect. Because of the 'SE' mark (*Stads Eigendom*, or City Property) and the city's coat of arms it is certain that the table was present in the city hall in the eighteenth century. The furniture became part of the museum's collection as part of the overall city hall belongings.

With respect to the dating of the table, it may indeed have played a role in the peace negotiations in 1712-1713. The walnut piece is dated as originating from between 1670 and 1680. It is a so-called gueridon with an oval tabletop and a richly decorated foot. Its maker probably hailed from Utrecht.

RdB

ANONYMOUS

DOLL'S HOUSE

c. 1670 – c. 1690
oak, walnut, olive
and rosewood,
glass, diverse
materials for the
interior
206,5 x 189 x 79 cm

gift 1866

inventory number
5000



This doll's house is a lifelike but at the same time idealised representation of an Amsterdam patrician's home. It is moreover a miniature art collection. Its original owner, a high-class Amsterdam lady by the name of Petronella de la Court, decorated the ten compartments of the house as a kitchen, nursery, garden, salon, hall topped by an office, a provisions and maids' room, children's room, bedroom and a laundry room. In the kitchen we see a maid sitting by the fire, baking waffles. The nursery, temporarily furnished for mother and child, is entirely white. The nurse is seated with semi-bared breast, as she is also the one who breast-feeds the child. The garden, which would actually be located behind the house, is shown adjacent to the nursery. Above the nursery are two reception rooms: a salon to receive and entertain guests with card games, music and dance, and an art room especially for the gentlemen. Here we see the home owner's art collection.

The room is full of exotic miniature art pieces. Even the beautifully decorated cabinets are filled with miniature prints and medals. The master of the house is evidently a wealthy man. Dressed in a Japanese robe, a costly silk dressing gown, he is seated at his desk tending to business correspondence. Below, in the hall, we see the messenger boy, a servant and a child in a walking rack. The private chambers and working rooms are located on the top floor: the provisions room to the left with sleeping space for servants, flanked by the children's and sewing room. The adjacent bedroom is lavishly furnished with a silk four-poster bed and silver toiletry items. In the top right corner we see the laundry room, where clothing and linen laundered out of doors is pressed, ironed and folded.

The doll's house and a large part of the interior was built to order, but Petronella also bought miniature furniture pieces, panelling and sil-

ver items directly from specialised traders. Everything has been made as lifelike as possible, even what is not visible, such as the dolls' underclothing. Decorating a doll's house took years to complete. The dating of some of the items indicates that Petronella devoted some twenty years to it. Following her death, the doll's house was passed down the generations until it was gifted to the city of Utrecht in 1866.

lvZ

ANONYMOUS

JAPANESE ROBE
OR DRESSING
GOWN

c. 1725 - c. 1775
silk, tie-dye
technique

gift 1937

inventory number
8141



From 1609, the Netherlands maintained exclusive trade relations with Japan for a period of almost 250 years. This made it possible to exchange gifts such as books and textiles. From the seventeenth century on, the so-called *Japansche rock* (Japanese robe) was a much-loved garment. This comfortable dressing gown for gentlemen was originally worn only indoors or at informal events.

The form of the gown is derived from the traditional kimono with shawl collar, but it lacks the typical long sleeves. The padded dressing gown in the collection of the Centraal Museum is made of light-blue silk and is partly hand-painted and partly printed. The gown was probably decorated using the *shiborizome* (tie-dye) and *katazome* (stencil) techniques. For the latter technique, stencils cut from mulberry leaves are fixed to the textile. The textile is then coated with a paste of steamed rice flour and rice bran. The stencils are then removed and

the textile dried and coated again, this time with a glue-like fluid obtained from soybeans.

In Japanese, the combination of several techniques was poetically referred to as *tsujigahana* ('flowers at crossings'). At first glance, the pattern of large and small flowers seems to repeat itself, but a closer look reveals that each flower is different and that various butterflies and dragonflies are depicted as well. One or two flowers can be identified with some certainty, such as the chrysanthemum and the *Paulownia*. The decoration also includes a single bolt of lightning, which is the only motif that has sharp edges.

NB

ANONYMOUS

COURT TRAIN

c. 1810
moire silk,
velvet, embroi-
dery, beads, silk
satin

gift 1975

inventory number
19760



The lavender-coloured *Manteau de Cour* of moire silk in the collection of the Centraal Museum is the only example in the Netherlands to date of a court train from this period. The 305 centimetre-long train has a woven-in scatter motif and a border of vine leaves and stylised flower motifs. The train can be attached to a gown by means of a hook beneath the rosette on the back.

This remarkable garment (without the gown) was presented to the Centraal Museum in 1975 by Baroness W.E. Taets van Amerongen-Rutgers van Rozenburg. Upon its transfer, she mentioned that the train derived from her 'great-grandmother Elisabeth Both Hendriksen-Winter (1786-1809)', respectively 'of the court of Louis (?) Napoleon'. It is uncertain, however, whether detachable court trains were used in this period. Etiquette books from this time do not offer conclusive evidence: the *Etiquette du Palais Royal de*

Hollande from 1808 does not explicitly mention such a train. The embroidered border with ivory-coloured chenille and pearl-coloured beads is remarkably broad, measuring 26 cm at its widest point. This may point to the garment's royal origins, as the *Cérémonial de l'Empire Français* from 1805 states that all ladies granted access to the court wear a garment of the same form as that of the Empress and that, if the ladies choose to have an embroidered border, this may not exceed one decimetre in width.

How credible is the claim that this garment was worn at the court of Louis Napoleon (1778-1846)? In 1806 Louis Napoleon became King of Holland. Four years previously he married Hortense de Beauharnais (1783-1837), the first Queen of Holland. Hortense paid a brief visit to Utrecht in early 1807. In 1810 she again visited Utrecht, where she stayed in the chambers furnished for her in the palace that Louis had created at the Drift/

Wittevrouwenstraat. Audiences were held in Utrecht on 15 and 18 April, but it is impossible to determine who wore what at these occasions. In 1810 Louis renounced the Dutch throne. Their marriage was not a happy one: Louis went to live in Germany while Hortense and the children returned to France. If this court train did belong to her, it may have been left behind following her sudden departure on 23 April of that year.

NB

**PIETER
GERARDUS
VAN OS**

The Hague 1776 –
The Hague 1839

**THE COSSACKS
ENTERING
UTRECHT IN
1813**

1816
oil on canvas
161 x 190 cm

on loan 1980

inventory number
22306



Utrecht was once a French town. Between July 1810, when Napoleon conquered the Netherlands, and November 1813, when the French troops withdrew, the 'city of the Dom' was part of the great French empire with Paris as its capital. The emperor even visited the city in person, in October 1811. But he brought bad news: in order to cut costs, the university had to shut its doors. This not only affected the professors and students, but also the boarding house landlords, book traders and tavern owners. And things were already going poorly, with an economic slump and, even worse, the military conscription of Dutch young men. Elderly men were required to fulfil local guard duties in the National Guard.

At the time of Napoleon's visit to Utrecht, it seemed that French rule would last forever. Yet just over one year later, the situation had changed dramatically. The emperor's campaign against Russia had ended in spectacular failure, and a spirit of

resistance had begun to take hold. The Russian Czar Alexander I wanted to topple Napoleon, and following a crushing defeat at Leipzig in October 1813, Napoleon was forced to withdraw ever further. By half November his forces withdrew from Amsterdam, and two weeks later the French marshal Gabriël Molitor realised that Utrecht could not be held either. In the early morning of 28 November the French left the city through the Tolsteeg city gate. And just in time too: as the afternoon began, a unit of Cossacks showed up at the Wittevrouwen gate to announce the arrival of the Russian-Prussian army, in pursuit of the French.

Van Os recorded the scene on a canvas that he later offered to the Russian czar. On a rock in the foreground he added a dedication to Alexander I. At the centre of the painting we see three Cossacks on horseback galloping along the Biltstraat to the Wittevrouwen gate. A rooster (symbolising France) flees

in alarm, while citizens of Utrecht stand cheering along the roadside and on the city walls. On the bridge, members of the National Guard (in French uniform) await the liberators. The painting long remained in possession of the czars, only entering the art market after the Russian Revolution. It was acquired by the Utrechtse Gereformeerde Burgerweeshuis, who loaned it to the Centraal Museum in 1980.

RdB

JOHAN HEINRICH NEUMAN

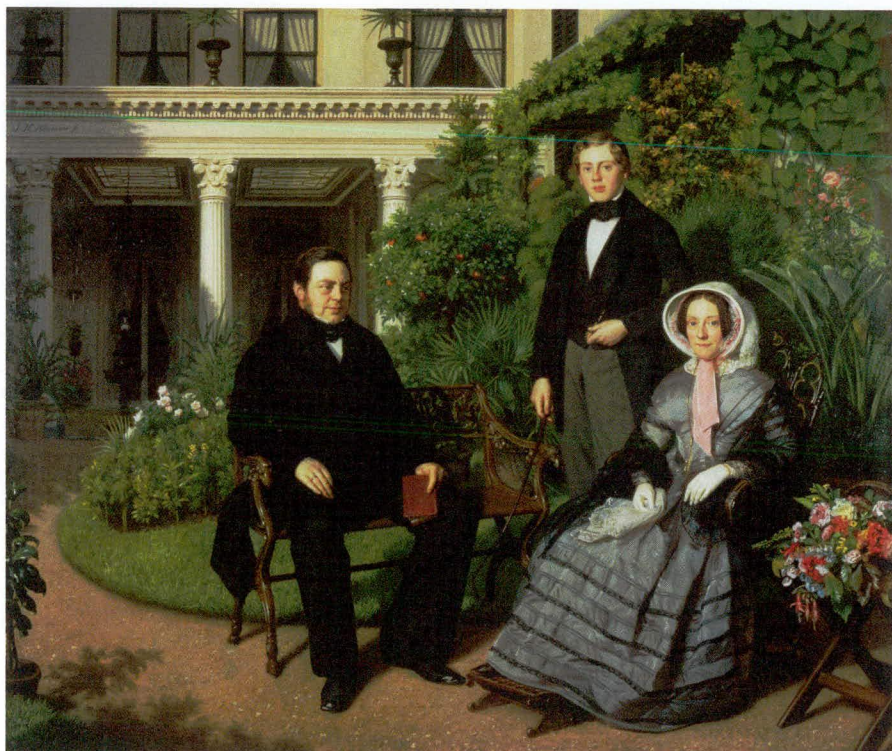
Cologne 1819 -
The Hague 1898

PORTRAIT OF THE METELERKAMP FAMILY

1851-1852
oil on canvas
102,1 x 113 cm

purchased 1981

inventory number
23057



This group portrait shows the Utrecht family Metelercamp in the rear garden of their own home. That is what makes this such a remarkable painting. There are countless well-executed portraits from the first half of the nineteenth century, but rarely are the people portrayed so informally in the open air.

Metelercamp is approaching the age of fifty, and his wife, one year younger, is seated next to him. Their son Johannes stands in between them, with a riding whip in hand. Just as the whip refers to the young man's pastime, the book in Mr Metelercamp's left hand indicates his erudition. His wife, more devoted to domestic matters, has a basket of freshly cut flowers on the folding table next to her.

Mr Alexander Hendrik Metelercamp (1804-1871) was a canton judge. He was promoted in 1829, a member of the Utrecht City Council and of the States Provincial. On 3 June 1830 he married Catharina Gerarda Johanna Verloren (1805-1877), and

their son Johannes Jacobus was born in 1835 (died 1899). The family resided at Nieuwegracht in Utrecht, at the current number 56. It was a large patrician's house from the end of the eighteenth century with a nineteenth-century rear extension. The premises extended to the street behind. It was a wealthy neighbourhood, mainly home to prominent and upper class people.

It was popular to combine different style elements in the period that this portrait was made. This painting, too, shows all sorts of styles. The rear facade of the house is entirely classic, whereas the window division on the ground floor is gothic. The large bird cage on the veranda has a rustic foot and resembles a gnarly old tree trunk. Metelercamp is seated on a cast iron bench made after a design by the famous architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841) from around 1825. The garden bench and the foot support beneath his wife's feet, also made of cast iron, can be termed classic,

but her rattan chair is executed in gothic style. The painting itself, finally, is held in a gilded rococo frame with flower motifs.

LMH

25

**JAN HENDRIK
VERHEYEN**

Utrecht 1778 -
Utrecht 1846

VIEW OF THE CHANCEL AND TOWER OF THE DOM CHURCH IN UTRECHT

approx. 1830
oil on canvas
108,5 x 129,8 cm

purchased
with support of
the Rembrandt
Association 1997

inventory number
28157



26

**F.C.E. VAN
EMBDEN**

? 1767 - ? 1846

L.M. KOENTZ

? - ?

ARCHITECTURAL MODEL OF THE DOM CHURCH IN UTRECHT

1830
limewood and
maplewood, zinc
78 x 110 x 105 cm

1838-1840
maplewood
200 x 36,5 x
36,5 cm

purchased 1836 and
1840

inventory numbers
494 and 495



Utrecht changed rapidly in the nineteenth century. Many buildings were demolished, including the city walls with towers, various churches, hospices and many dwellings. New buildings arose, such as the Winkel van Sinkel and the Courthouse. Other buildings were given a new facade, such as the town hall. The space left by the city walls was turned into a park in English landscape style by the architect J.D. Zocher.

Mayor H.M.A.J. van Asch van Wijck was a proponent of the renewal, but he also sought to (partially) preserve the architectural heritage. He collected building fragments from demolished buildings and he encouraged restorations. In the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century, the Dom Church and Dom Tower underwent thorough restoration. The rubble that had remained where it lay after the storm had destroyed the nave of the Church was finally removed, creating a spacious square named Munsterkerkhof, today called

Domplein. A vegetable market was set up on the square, but this was discontinued soon afterwards as the location proved too windy.

Painters recorded the gradually disappearing city scape, among them Jan Hendrik Verheyen. Verheyen was a specialist in the topographical genre. His works are often infused with some fantasy, but this view of the Dom from the rear is fairly accurate, even if painted from a very low angle. The exaggerated perspective emphasises the monumental character of the cathedral. The chancel with its arches, the flying buttresses, the ambulatory, the (then white-plastered) consistory set against the upper part of the northern transept are painted in great detail. The tower is visible behind the church roof, from the clock in the second section upward.

The painting dates from shortly after the restoration of the Dom Church and the construction of Munsterkerkhof. It is a lively street

scene, with the vegetable vendor as a striking detail, referring to the market held here for some time. Near the bottom-right corner we see a member of the 'Compagnie Vrijwillige Jagers'. This was a military unit of the Utrechtse Studenten Corps (student fraternity) that took part in the 1830-1831 war against the Belgians, after their secession from the Netherlands. This detail suggests that the painting can be dated to the summer of 1830.

RdB

Ever since construction began in the fourteenth century, the Dom Tower has been the symbol of Utrecht. Even when it was only half-way finished, visitors came from far and wide to see the tower. The tower was part of an ambitious construction project: a cathedral in French gothic style. The first stone was laid in 1254, but the project had to be suspended several times due to a shortage of funding. In 1517 this happened again, but this time for good. The nave (the long rectangular part leading away from the tower) remained unfinished. The buttresses, the arches and the vault were still lacking, so that the high but slender building had a weak construction.

The tower was originally part of the church, but on 1 August 1674 that changed with a bang, quite literally. A ferocious tornado hit the city that day, carving out a path of destruction. The nave of the church collapsed, and the gaping hole in what remained of the church was bricked

up. The maintenance of the remaining church and tower was insufficiently rigorous, and decay set in. Around 1825 it was clear that a thorough restoration was required. By then the church and tower had acquired a new owner; like most church towers in the Netherlands, it was now owned by the national government who used it for the new communications system, the telegraph. The church had passed into the hands of the Dutch Reformed church community.

It was also the Reformed community that initiated the major restoration works, for which the Belgian architect Tieleman F. Suys was commissioned. For the restoration Suys had the city architect F.C.E. van Emden construct a model. The model is detailed to such an extent that we can even see the pastor in the pulpit. Suys also designed a new entrance, soon dubbed the 'puist van Suys' ('puist' = pimple) by the local population. After the Dom Tower was struck by lightning

in 1836, the city council proposed a partial demolishment, but Mayor H.M.A.J. van Asch van Wijck pushed for restoration instead. Architect L.M. Koentz constructed a model for that purpose, which, as city property, became part of the Centraal Museum's town history collection, along with the model of the church.

RdB

JAN ADOLF HILLEBRAND JR.

Leeuwarden 1818 -
Scheveningen 1887

SILVER CABINET

approx. 1840
mahogany, oak,
amboina and pine-
wood, ivory,
polished glass
230,5 x 138 x 59,5 cm

gift 1941

inventory number
8618

J.A. Hillebrand Jr. had been trained as a furniture maker by his father, but the conditions of the trade had changed drastically by the time he exercised his occupation at the start of the nineteenth century. The guilds had been abolished in 1818, so there were no longer strict regulations in place to protect local craftsmen. The best way for an up-and-coming furniture maker to demonstrate his artisanship was to take part in the national industry expositions. This silver cabinet is probably the furniture piece that was exhibited in 1844

at the Friesian art and industry exposition, held in Leeuwarden, where it was described as 'A Gothic, Renaissance-style decorated silver cabinet of mahogany... decorated with cylindrical columns and inlaid with ivory marquetry. Gothic spires adorn the antique top, the doors of the upper cabinet have white polished glass with antique Gothic figures, and the inside is fully lined with scarlet.' Everything about the cabinet suggests that it served as a show-piece. The materials are costly, and the design is self-consciously historical. Such neostyles, as they were sometimes referred to, were very popular throughout Europe roughly between 1835 and 1895. It was not unusual for historical styles to serve as a source of inspiration, but in the nineteenth century this went hand in hand with a nostalgic longing for the past. In order to evoke the atmosphere of 'the olden days', styles were sometimes combined at will. Thus, for this cabinet the young Hillebrand fused together Gothic and Renaissance ornamentation. Hillebrand was proud of his work. In around

1840 he had an almost full-figure portrait made of himself, standing by a table in a posh interior, leaning on a large book with protruding sheets of paper. These are probably design drawings or prints, like the ones lying on the table next to the silver ink set and a drawing pen. Behind him we see the silver cabinet that is now in the possession of the Centraal Museum. Here stands a self-assured entrepreneur who sees himself more as an artist than as an artisan.

There was a comparable cabinet at the same exposition but decorated even more lavishly, and it was bought by King William II. This furniture piece is now part of the Rijksmuseum collection, on loan. The cabinet belonging to the Centraal Museum cost 650 guilders and was probably purchased by the forebears of Mr Ribbius Peletier, who gifted it to the museum in 1941.

lvZ



CAREL ADOLPH LION CACHET

Amsterdam 1864 –
Vreeland 1945

ROOMINTERIOR FROM THE HOME OF THEODOR GEORGE DENTZ VAN SCHAIK

c. 1907-1910

on loan 1959



All elements of this room, including the fixtures (ceiling, the panelling) and the mobile items like tables, chairs, lamps and the rug: all were carefully harmonised in terms of material, colour and shape. C. A. Lion Cachet, who designed and partially executed the interior, wanted to create a *Gesamtkunstwerk* in the new style that was becoming increasingly popular toward the end of the nineteenth century: *the art nouveau*. This style resolutely broke with the historical styles of the preceding periods. Some artists, designers and architects used simple shapes and geometrical surface decorations, others took nature as their cue for an exuberant, highly stylised design approach. In the Netherlands, H.P. Berlage and Jacques van de Bosch were leading proponents of the first approach; Lion Cachet belonged to the latter group. A versatile craftsman, he designed wall paper, carpets, ceramics, furniture and print work. He liked to work with exotic and costly materials, and preferred

exclusive handwork over the mechanical production of objects. For example, he applied the Indonesia batik technique to leather and parchment. The interiors that he designed for the luxury passenger ships of the Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland, among others, were famous. Naturally, his circle of customers consisted of an elite group of wealthy individuals.

This room was designed for the home of Theodor George Dentz van Schaik at Frederiksplein 48-50 in Amsterdam. The interior decoration is exceptionally costly. The walls are made of cork clad with gold-leaf. This material is also found in the ceiling of batiked parchment, decorated with cranes and lines from the poem 'Hooger Licht' by Willem Bilderdijk. In the uniform border of the deep pile carpet, little tufts of brown wool simulate dirty dog paws. Dentz van Schaik's collection of oriental porcelain forms a gorgeous contrast with the warm oak and calamander wood of the

wall cabinets. Lion Cachet also enlisted the help of fellow decorative artists. Jan Eisenlöffel designed the lamps and Lambertus van Zijl created the copper doorknobs in this room. The house was demolished in 1959 and the various parts of the interior were entrusted to different museums.

lvZ

THE HOUSE OF WORTH

Paris 1858 -
Paris 1956

BALL GOWN

1886
silk satin,
silk velvet

gift 1984

inventory numbers
24808/001-002



The Englishman Charles Frederick Worth (1825-1895) is seen as the father of *haute couture*. Worth worked in Paris from 1845 on, first as a shop assistant, only later becoming an independent fashion designer. In 1858 he and his business partner Otto Bobergh opened the fashion warehouse *Worth & Bobergh*. He rapidly built up a circle of well-to-do customers, including actresses and members of royalty. He consequently focused mainly on evening dress, court dress and for instance masquerade costumes. Demand for his designs grew steadily. In 1867, Isaac Singer's sewing machine was taken into service in his ateliers, which made it easier to satisfy the demand. Eventually Worth had an atelier employing some 1200 seamstresses. Worth was the first fashion designer to associate his name with a design by means of a label: before that time, the dressmaker was generally anonymous.

Today the 'labelling' of clothing is an intrinsic part of the industry, where the valuation of a garment depends less on the design than on the label.

Maison Worth continued after the couturier's death, to finally close only in 1956.

NB

Gifted to the Centraal Museum in 1984, this two-part gown was designed in 1886. Thanks to his background in the silk trade and drapery shops, Worth was very knowledgeable about materials, which shows in this gown. The highly detailed ball gown is made of ivory-coloured silk satin with multi-coloured in-woven flowers on the skirt. At the back there's a queue that leads on to an ivory-coloured train. The bodice is reinforced on the front and back with bonings, and it closes at the front with a cord. The décolletage and the small sleeves are trimmed with ivory-coloured machine-made lace. A striking element is the sharply pointed dark-green velvet decoration around the waist. A label is attached to the inside of the waistband, reading '*PARIS Worth PARIS*'.

THEO VAN DOESBURG

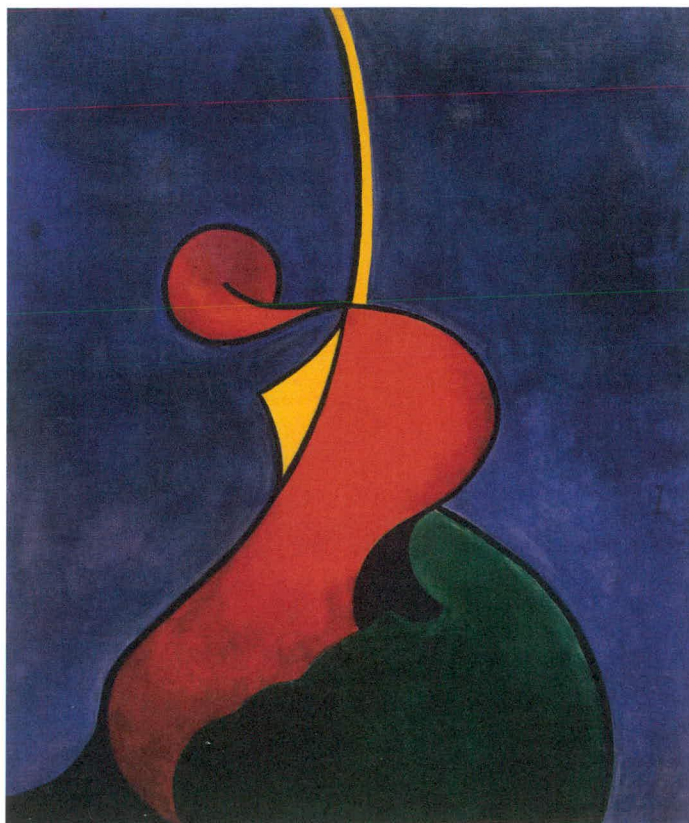
Utrecht 1883 –
Davos 1931

MOUVEMENT HÉROÏQUE

1916
oil on canvas
142 x 116 cm

on loan Cultural
Heritage Agency
1985

inventory number
25282



In July 1916 Theo van Doesburg wrote to architect J.J.P. Oud, assuring the latter that he would be moved to actually see *Mouvement héroïque*, for 'I believe it to be my best work for this reason: that years of pent-up life have been poured into it.' Years of pent-up life? But then the artist had channelled these years in a very rational fashion, as infra-red studies have revealed that the composition was created using a ruler and compass. The painting thus hardly qualifies as an eruption of unfettered expression.

The exaggeration in his letter is typical for Theo van Doesburg. He was born as Christian Emil Küpper, but later assumed the name of his stepfather. He was to adopt yet other names at a later stage: I.K. Bonset, the Dadaist, and Aldo Camini, poet of Italian descent. Van Doesburg clearly liked to play with identities; that he originally aspired to become an actor is telling. Van Doesburg was a man of

many talents: art theorist and critic, poet, organiser, performer and visual artist – but he was certainly not a charlatan. He pursued all his roles with gusto, and was much concerned to persuade others of his 'mission' and his views. That is why he was not averse to exaggeration, and at times would manipulate the facts to his advantage.

In 1916 he was only starting out on his career as an avant-garde artist. He had long clung to the belief that abstract art was based on a misconception, and applied himself to making naturalistic paintings in the style of the Hague School. However, his views were altered radically after he met Erich Wichman and Janus de Winter in Utrecht, who painted aural portraits and 'mind forms'. In 1915 he tried it out for himself, but also experimented with swift sketches of figures in motion, probably inspired by the figures in the painting *La Danse* by Henri Matisse (1910), of which he owned a reproduction. He decided to con-

tinue on this path. A drawing made with pastel crayon is a preliminary study for the painting *Mouvement héroïque*. Van Doesburg dated the preliminary study as 1913, but this is very implausible, also seeing his other work from that year. The spring of 1916 seems much more likely. Perhaps Van Doesburg twisted these facts to support his contention that the final painting of 1916 contained 'years of pent-up life'.

MB

ERICH WICHMAN

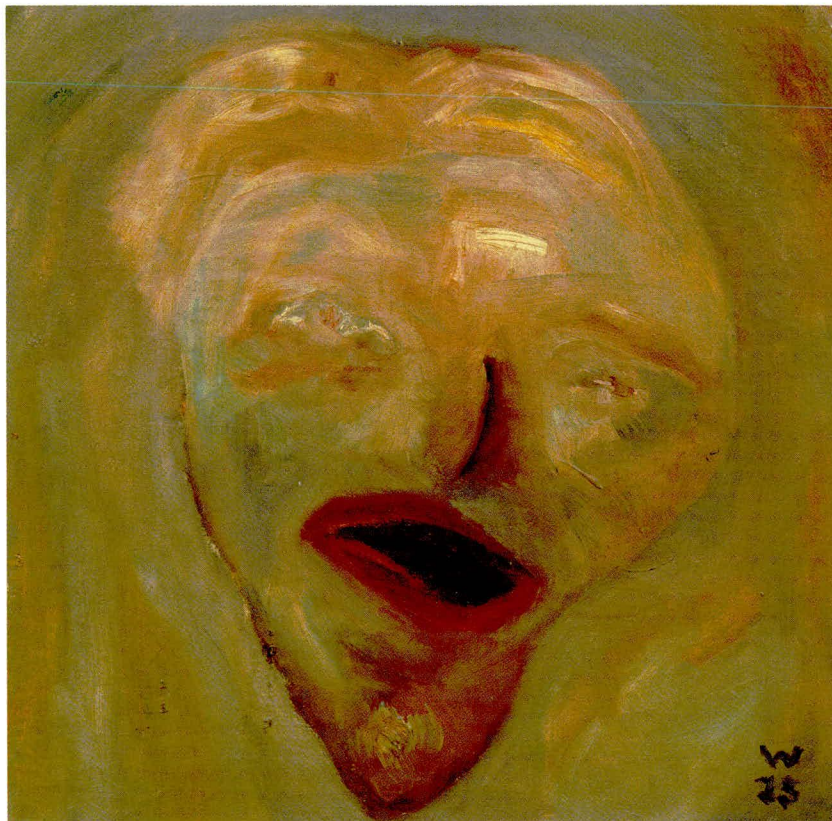
Utrecht 1890 -
Amsterdam 1929

SELF-PORTRAIT

1925
oil on canvas
46,5 x 46,5 cm

purchased 1972

inventory number
17623



Erich Wichman was an intelligent, unconventional individual who brought himself to ruin early in life through physical neglect and alcohol. But he left his mark as a writer, visual artist and political activist. As a writer he wrote provocative prose and poetry in which he poked fun at the pettiness of Dutch society. He saw Utrecht as 'Holland at its narrowest'. In his political activities, Wichman sought to shake up and provoke the status quo; he believed that parliamentary democracy bred bland mediocrity and spiritual decay. This explains his attraction to Italian fascism and its leader Benito Mussolini. In 1927 he was co-founder of *De Bezem*, a Dutch fascist movement and weekly magazine by the same name.

Wichman decided to become an artist at a time – around 1910 – in which the visual arts were shaking off all sorts of conventions and pursuing experimentation instead. He not only started painting but also

experimented with all sorts of chemical procedures, facilitated by the owner of a silver factory, Carel Begeer. In 1922 he hit upon the theme that was to dominate his further work: the mask. He made a first series of masks of ceramics and enamel in Vienna. That is also where he wrote the explanatory notes *About my Romantic Masks* for publication in a magazine. As sources of inspiration he named Van Gogh, Munch and a Japanese mask he had seen at an exhibition and that 'stared at me tragically, as if it were leading me towards some grand torture and now looked over its shoulder, to see why I was tarrying...' One year on, Wichman elaborated the mask theme in three litho maps: *De Idealisten I*, *Uit de Akasha-kroniek* and *De Idealisten II en Verdere Kanttekeningen*.

Wichman led a foot-to-mouth existence, perpetually short of money. A gift by a friend allowed him to make another series of paintings in 1925, of which the *Self-portrait* is one.

This, too, is a mask as Wichman understands it: not meant to hide but rather to reveal. The blood-red mouth seems like a gaping open wound in the pale face. It is a portrait of a tormented spirit.

MB

JOHANNES HENDRIKUS MOESMAN

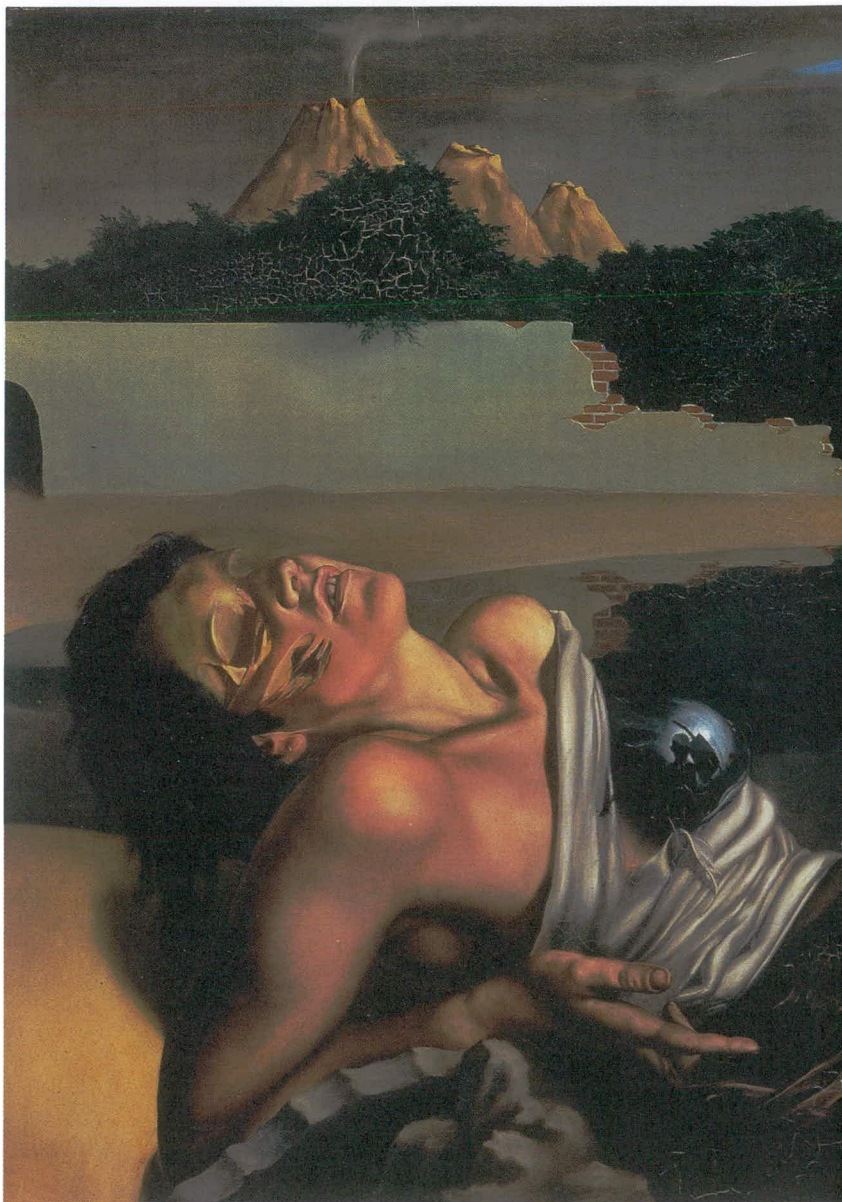
Utrecht 1909 –
Tull en 't Waal
1988

SELF-PORTRAIT

1935
oil on canvas
98,8 x 139,8 cm

purchased 1970

inventory number
1647



In 1932, J.H. Moesman began work on the painting that he completed in 1935 and named *Self-portrait*. It was initially a different painting: a photo from around 1932 reveals that the woman's face was intact and she was only wearing a shirt that covered the upper half of her body. A naked thigh filled the lower edge of the canvas. Moesman made significant changes to the picture in 1935: the thigh was covered by the pale brown skirt from which a red poppy protrudes, the face was partially gouged, and from

between the swathes around the torso a metallic breast reflects the silhouette of the artist. The landscape with the lake, the sky and the strange flesh-like volcanoes half hidden by the trees remained unchanged.

The key to understanding the picture lies in the detail of Moesman's self-portrait in the woman's breast. It invokes Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* in which the painter depicted himself in the mirror in the background.



Moesman's *Self-portrait* can be seen as a bitter variation. In the late 1920s the painter had become romantically involved with a girl a few years his junior, Lenie van Geelkerken (1913-1947), much to her parents' disapproval. Lenie urged Moesman to create a painting that would represent their impossible love; perhaps she had read Mary Kennedy's bestseller *The Constant Nymph*, in which an unhappily married composer and a young girl fall in love and decide to flee together. However, during their

flight the girl falls ill and dies in the arms of her lover. The novel was adapted for the stage in 1926; Moesman found a photo of the death scene in a magazine, which he used as a model for his composition. It was after Lenie van Geelkerken definitively ended the relationship in 1935 to marry someone else that Moesman made the changes to the painting. It is thus a tragic portrait of a love that died.

MB

PYKE KOCH

Beek 1901 –
The Hague 1991

**SELF-PORTRAIT
WITH BLACK
HEADBAND**

1937
oil and tempera on
panel
52 x 49 cm

gift 1938

inventory number
8235



In the mid-thirties of the previous century, Pyke Koch painted three self-portraits, the only ones in his entire oeuvre. He destroyed the first one, and the last one was gifted to the Centraal Museum in 1938 by the patronage association *Genootschap Kunstliefde* 'on behalf of the citizens of Utrecht', on the occasion of the museum's 100-year anniversary. The portraits are visually related: the head is slightly turned, it ends at the neck, and the chin is somewhat raised. Koch had added the black headband because he felt that his forehead formed too much of an uninterrupted surface on the earlier portrait from 1936 – or so he said, years later. It may be so, but ideological motivations might also have played a role. The stylised eyebrows and lips, the rigid look in his eyes and the closely trimmed hair suggest that this is an idealised portrait. The black headband helps create a combative image.

During these years, Koch drew inspiration from the Italian painters of the early Renaissance. The soft-blue background and the way the corporeality of the head is achieved through fine hatching are reminiscent of the work by the fifteenth-century painter Piero della Francesca. The head with headband may well have been inspired by Piero's fresco cycle *The Legend of the True Cross* in the San Francesco church in Arezzo. This legend recounts how the mother of the Byzantine emperor Constantine found the cross that Jesus Christ was crucified on. In his fight for supremacy with a rival emperor, Constantine invoked a higher goal: to vanquish the heretics and to spread the true faith. A number of Della Francesca's frescos feature figures with (white) headbands: soldiers fighting for the true faith.

In his 1937 self-portrait, Koch portrays himself as a soldier in the service of a 'true faith', or a higher goal. His crusade was devoted to

nothing less than the preservation of western civilisation. Deeply impressed by Oswald Spengler's book *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, a bestseller in the twenties and thirties, he was convinced that only a new strong leader, a new Caesar, could rescue western culture from moral bankruptcy. He saw that leader in the Italian 'Duce', the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

MB

GERRIT THOMAS RIETVELD

Utrecht 1888 –
Utrecht 1964

RED-AND-BLUE CHAIR

designed approx.
1923
beech wood,
plywood
88 x 60 x 84 cm

gift 1958

inventory number
12577



This chair is so special that it was included in the 2006 canon of Dutch history. It is considered an icon of De Stijl, a Dutch avant-garde movement from the early twentieth century, named after the same-titled magazine founded in 1917. What strikes the observer first are the colours of the chair. De Stijl propagated the use of the primary colours red, yellow and blue, in combination with the so-called 'non-colours' white, grey and black, as the only way to achieve pure, elementary and harmonious forms.

Rietveld joined De Stijl in 1919. Around that time he built the chair in an unpainted version. He wanted to create a furniture piece that 'stands freely and clearly in space'. The back and the seat are two loose boards that extend beyond the attachment points on the frame. The wooden bars, connected using round pins, also extend beyond the framework. The overall effect is indeed that of a spatial association of loose elements. Rietveld made

this painted version about five years later. By painting the back and the seat red and blue respectively, he emphasises their mutual independence. The yellow colour on the cut ends of the bars suggests that they could, in principle, extend indefinitely. All in all, the colours reinforce the effect of a spatial entity composed of loose parts.

Rietveld also painted the chair in other colours, such as entirely white, entirely red, and grey with white squares, but it is the red-and-blue version that became world famous. Its popularity only grew in the second half of the twentieth century; before that time it was known internationally to just a small circle of avant-garde artists and art enthusiasts. Of course, colour photographs hardly existed at the time. The chair was admired especially for its revolutionary form, and was seen as an experiment for cheap mechanised production lines. In the early fifties, De Stijl was rediscovered through exhibitions in

Amsterdam, Venice, New York, Rome and various other cities. Rietveld was seen as one of the leading artists of this movement. His work, especially the Rietveld-Schröder house and the red-and-blue chair, is considered on a par with Mondriaan's paintings.

lvZ

GERRIT THOMAS RIETVELD

Utrecht 1888 -
Utrecht 1964

THE RIETVELD SCHRÖDER HOUSE

1924

on loan
Rietveld
Schröderhuis
Foundation 1983

The 'Schröderhuis' is Rietveld's most important architectonic design. It almost defies belief that this was his first commission to design a new house. Before that time he had designed a number of shop renovations and interiors, and he had acquired a bit of a name thanks to his revolutionary furniture pieces in the years 1918-1923. He was granted the assignment by Truus Schröder-Schräder. Her husband had died in 1923, leaving her with three children aged 11, 10 and 5. The house where they lived at the time, a stately nineteenth-century dwelling at Biltstraat in Utrecht, was too large and moreover did not suit the life she sought. Rietveld had renovated a room in this house in 1921, to her complete satisfaction. It probably emerged at that time how much their ideas and opinions converged. In 1924 she again called on Rietveld's help, this time to find a new dwelling which he could then renovate. When this proved unsuccessful, Truus heeded Rietveld's advice to have a new house built on a small plot of land on the edge of town.

From the outside, the house forms a striking contrast with the row of red brick houses along Prins Hendriklaan to which it is attached. The three facades are designed to form three-dimensional compositions of planes and lines in white, grey and black with red, blue and yellow highlights. Rietveld had started using these colours under influence of De Stijl. The spatial construction with horizontal and vertical surfaces is reminiscent of his experimental furniture designs of the preceding years.

The interior is hugely surprising. The ground floor has a fairly traditional layout with a small study, an atelier with storage space, a maid's room and a large kitchen. From the small central hall, a three-stepped platform and a spiral staircase brings one to the large open living-annex-bedroom on the top floor. Here again, everything is painted in the colours of De Stijl. Wardrobes and beds are partly fixed in their place and incorporated into the colour and spatial composition. Sliding walls can turn the space into various separate rooms. The open space and colourful but otherwise sparingly decorated interior are not only revolutionary innovations in terms of style, but are also expressive of an entirely different conception of life and domesticity.

lvZ



GERRIT THOMAS RIETVELD

Utrecht 1888 –
Utrecht 1964

ZIG-ZAG CHAIR

c. 1932
pinewood, chalk,
varnish
78,4 x 37,4 cm

on loan 1988
gift 1991

inventory number
26101



Rietveld said about this chair that it '... is basically a partition in space that leaves the space intact. It's not a chair, but rather a bit of constructional fun. I always called it the little zig-zag.' Here again we see Rietveld's tendency to not take himself too seriously, as this design is far from just a bit of fun. The zig-zag chair comes a close second to his red-and-blue chair in the list of best-known Rietveld designs, and with good reason. Space is an essential ingredient of his work, in both his architectonic and his furniture designs. Already in 1919 he mentioned this in his explanation of the batten armchair, the unpainted predecessor to the red-and-blue chair. The zig-zag chair fits within a wider international trend of chairs that seem to float due to the fact they do not rest on four legs. The first and best-known of these so-called Freizwinger is Mart Stam's chair without back legs from 1926, which was later taken into production by the Thonet company.

The zig-zag chair was one of Rietveld's several attempts to machine-build a chair from a single sheet of material, which would considerably lower the costs. Rietveld spent many years tinkering on the design for the zig-zag chair. Its shape was probably inspired by a design by the Rasch brothers from Germany, who were the first to present a comparable model in 1926. Rietveld tried out several materials and built prototypes made of fibre, plywood, metal tubes, and other materials. From a constructional point of view, they all turned out to be too weak. However, a construction made of four pieces of durable (Bruynzeel) three-ply wood joined together by a traditional dovetail joint reinforced with screws proved to do the trick. This version of the chair was taken into production by Gerard van de Groenekan, then by Metz & Co, and it is still manufactured today by Italian furniture maker Cassina.

After 1933, Rietveld devised various variations on this model: zig-zag chairs with armrests, with round holes in the backrest, with a reclining backrest, etc. Such additions do detract from the 'partition in space' notion, however. The exemplar pictured here is from the Rietveld Schröder House, and it is special on account of the finish. The wood has been rubbed with chalk and subsequently sealed using transparent varnish. The graining of the wood is therefore still visible, and the surface assumes a light pastel wood complexion, making the object seem less heavy.

lvZ

CAREL WILLINK

Amsterdam 1900 –
Amsterdam 1983

**LANDSCAPE
UNDER A
RAINY SKY**

1943–1946
oil on canvas
114 x 143 cm

on loan Van Baaren
Museum Foundation
1980

inventory number
22135



A vast panoramic view unfolds in *Landscape under a Rainy Sky*. The viewer's vantage point is up on an imaginary hill that is out of sight, from where a colossal palace can be seen towering over the treetops, as well as a river valley to the right with a factory in the distance, perhaps a brickyard, illuminated by bright rays of sunlight. Ominous thunder clouds loom in the sky.

This painting is a masterpiece by Carel Willink, one of his best. It is not only a demonstration of his exquisite mastery of the painter's craft, but also an expression of Willink's love of seventeenth-century landscape paintings by Poussin and Lorrain. But it would never have occurred to a seventeenth-century painter to paint a classical palace and a factory side by side in one and the same landscape. Willink's painting is thus actually a montage of two images, which is a technique he had used frequently in the 1920s. His paintings from that period tend to resemble painted

collages, but after 1930 Willink became seriously dedicated to mastering the painting techniques that made the montages of different images seamless and flawless. Willink thus created credible images of a non-existent reality, of his own *vision* of the world.

In 1943, World War II was raging in Europe. Nazi Germany had conquered a huge part of the continent, but at the end of that year the German army's progress was halted near Stalingrad in the Soviet Union. That was also the year Willink started on this painting. He had initially painted a man on a horse in the foreground and named the painting *The Message*. These are significant details that seem to suggest that Willink meant for the palace to represent Hitler's *Tausendjährige Reich*, standing there seemingly untouchable, though new tidings were imminent: the messenger was on his way. Does the brickyard in the sunlight perhaps symbolise a new age of

rebuilding? Or might it be a poorly lit concentration camp? After the war, Willink painted over the horseman. The messenger had done his duty and had become redundant. The painting was given the neutral title of *Landscape under a Rainy Sky*. But the tension in the image remains.

MB

DICK BRUNA

Utrecht 1927

MIFFY

1955

printed on paper
and cardboard
20 x 15 cmon loan Dick
Bruna/Mercis bv
2000inventory number
Bruna0888

That Dick Bruna would succeed his father at the helm of the A.W. Bruna & Zoon publishing house was inevitable. But seeing as he lacked any kind of business acumen and was only interested in art, he eventually ended up at the family-run company's book cover and poster design department. Inspired by the works of Picasso, Léger, and particularly Matisse, whose art had impressed him during his apprenticeship in Paris, he drew simplified figures using single lines and separate coloured areas. Posters designed by Willem Sandberg for the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam were also an example for him: not needing to draw figures in perspective came as a real liberation to him.

Alongside his work at the publishing company, he started making his own picture books in 1952; these were borne out of a desire to create 'simply nice pictures', but that had to be good enough to hang independently on the wall. In 1953 the first two books were published in upright format: *De appel* and *Toto in Volendam*. The pictures are direct; Bruna would cut out the shapes, paste them on an evenly coloured background, and sometimes trace the contour lines in black ink.

Miffy was born in 1955, when Bruna made up stories about a white rabbit for his children during a holiday. When he started drawing the rabbit, he decided it would be a female rabbit because a dress would make for a visually more attractive geometric shape than a pair of trousers. Bruna told each story using two lines of rhyme under each picture. In 1959 Bruna decided to change the format of the books. He had noticed that small children's hands struggled with the tall upright format. Besides, graphically it seemed to make more sense to have a four-line rhyme on the left-hand page and the picture on the right-hand page. That is when the books changed to their square shape. Bruna tweaked miffy slightly several times over the years. In 1963 her head took the shape of a horizontal oval with pointy ears, while everything became a bit rounder in 1979. In 2001 Bruna altered the proportion between head and body to make miffy look more like a toddler. Bruna has produced more than thirty miffy books that have been translated into many languages.

MB

DICK BRUNA



NIJNTJE

IN DE DIERENTUIN

JAN JANSEN

Nijmegen 1941

**PAIR OF
WOMEN'S
SHOES**

1973-1975

rattan, suede

purchased 1975

inventory number
19883

Shoe designer Jan Jansen sees a shoe as a sculpture. Jansen does not make a shoe, but he shapes a shoe. As he puts it, the aim is 'to make something that doesn't exist yet, to come up with technical innovations, for that keeps it interesting'. And he only creates three or four models on the same last. Jansen barely ever compromises on the original idea for his design, making the actual realisation of the design often quite a challenge for manufacturers. Jansen initially acquired his technical know-how in

the Netherlands and Italy. Departing from that technical background, he never fails to devise innovative and unique silhouettes and constructions and to apply unusual materials. That is how the revolutionary floating heel, the Woody clog, and the bamboo shoe came about.

Jansen designed *Rattan*, as the bamboo shoe is officially called, in 1973. This design was Jansen's international breakthrough and brought him recognition as an inno-



vative designer. This shoe consists of an open bamboo construction shaped like a platform sole with a wedge. Certain essential sections of the bamboo are wrapped in thin strips of the same material. The top is made of beige suede with a number of indentations along the edge. The shoe is done up with a strap over the instep. This version was made by Raffaello Galgani. In 1974, the museum organised a large anniversary exhibition entitled *De schoenen van Jan Jansen 1964-1974* (Shoes by Jan Jansen).

Jan Jansen meanwhile has almost fifty years in the shoe design business under his belt. He remains faithful to the same way of working, with small-scale production. His clientele has long extended beyond a circle of friends and family, as was the case in the early years of his career. Jan Jansen can rely on a loyal fan base; his shoes are popular with real shoe lovers who wish to stand out from the crowd. Jan Jansen's shoe designs rarely make it into the fashion mainstream; his unusual and artistic

shoes are often far ahead of fashion trends.

NB

DUANE HANSON

Alexandria,
United States,
1925 - Boca Raton,
United States,
1996

DERELICT
WOMAN

1973
polyester resin,
fibre glass, oil
paint, fabric
54 x 79 x 131 cm

purchased by
Hedendaagse
Kunst-Utrecht
(HK-U) 1975
transferred to the
Centraal Museum
1989

inventory number
28871



In 1969 and 1970, Duane Elwood Hanson created *Bowery Derelicts*, a group of sculptures depicting three scruffy tramps passed out in the street, surrounded by garbage. It was a scene he saw every day from his studio window in the Bowery neighbourhood of New York City. Hanson achieved the staggering lifelike quality of this group of sculptures by making plaster casts of carefully selected models and filling the resulting moulds with polyester. He then painted them, gave them hair, and dressed them. *Bowery Derelicts* was his last group sculpture; in the early 1970s his attention shifted to the 'petty' tragedy of individuals from lower social classes, of the people who lost out in their pursuit of the *American Dream*. Hanson chose to depict these figures in an introverted state, in what resembles a still life. The isolation of *Derelict Woman* makes for an even more poignant image. This sculpture is so lifelike with her bruise-ridden body, down-trodden shoes and dishevelled hair

that people felt impelled to add 'attributes' beyond what the artist had included in his work: an empty cigarette pack and a bottle of beer, suggesting that this tramp had passed out after drinking and smoking too much. The image does not need any more props; its power to trigger empathy in the beholder resides in the frugality of the representation.

Hanson's sculptures were first displayed in Europe at the fifth *Documenta* in 1972. They were presented alongside works by Chuck Close, Richard McLean, Malcolm Morley and others under the header of 'photorealism' or 'hyperrealism'. This inspired Wouter Kotte, then the head of the small Utrecht-based institution for contemporary art (HK-U) that existed alongside the Centraal Museum until 1989, to set his sights on purchasing one of Hanson's sculptures, to add a touch of social commitment to his collection of American photorealism.

He finally managed to purchase *Derelict Woman* at a gallery in Hamburg in 1975.

MB

TEJO REMY

Nijmegen 1960

**'YOU CAN'T LAY
DOWN YOUR
MEMORY'**

1991

Maple, birch
plywood, various
other types of
wood, iron, burlap
120 x 110 x 66 cm

purchased 1997

inventory number
28186

Tejo Remy designed this chest of drawers as part of his final examination for the Utrecht School of the Arts, together with the milk bottle lamp and the rag chair. His inspiration for his graduation project came from the story of Robinson Crusoe. Remy did not so much wish to design, but rather to improvise – to create objects from available materials and items. Nevertheless, each of the second-hand drawers does fit very snugly into a new and hand-somely built cherry wood box. Every drawer differs from the others in both shape and origin. Stacked and bound together with a burlap belt, they form a unique cabinet. If the second-hand components were personally provided by the owner of the resulting furniture piece, each drawer will be imbued with a personal memory. One such owner even had a television set included at the centre of the cabinet. Usually the future owner is unknown, but even then the preceding history of the piece lives on, so that we realise that it is a link in a

chain of use and reuse of materials.

The peculiar shape of the cabinet raises some obvious questions; such as whether it is in any way practical or functional? The answer depends on how we define these terms. The drastic social changes in the early twentieth century had spawned a new set of aesthetic values and norms in the visual arts, design, and architecture. Functionality was considered synonymous with smoothness, austere outlines and industrial production. Storage furniture was not meant to stand out. A modern interior at the time tended towards empty space, with just a few fine furniture pieces or artworks – an ideal rooted in modernism. But half a century later, artists, designers and architects began to question these basic aesthetic assumptions, claiming for example that beauty is also a function. They saw the uniformity of all those anonymous industrial products as a drawback. Tejo Remy was

one of the Dutch designers who took the discussion one step further in the late eighties, by creating objects with highly unusual forms. This chest of drawers is not likely to tire the viewer anytime soon, and the fact that each drawer can have a different function is quite practical. It is not without reason that 'You Can't Lay Down your Memory' has become one of the great international design icons of this period.

lvZ

VIKTOR & ROLF

Viktor Horsting,
Geldrop 1969 and
Rolf Snoeren,
Dongen 1969

**HYÈRES:
SEQUIN DRESS**

1993
wool jersey,
sequins, polyester

purchased with
the support of
the Mondriaan
Fund 2000

inventory numbers
28662/001-003

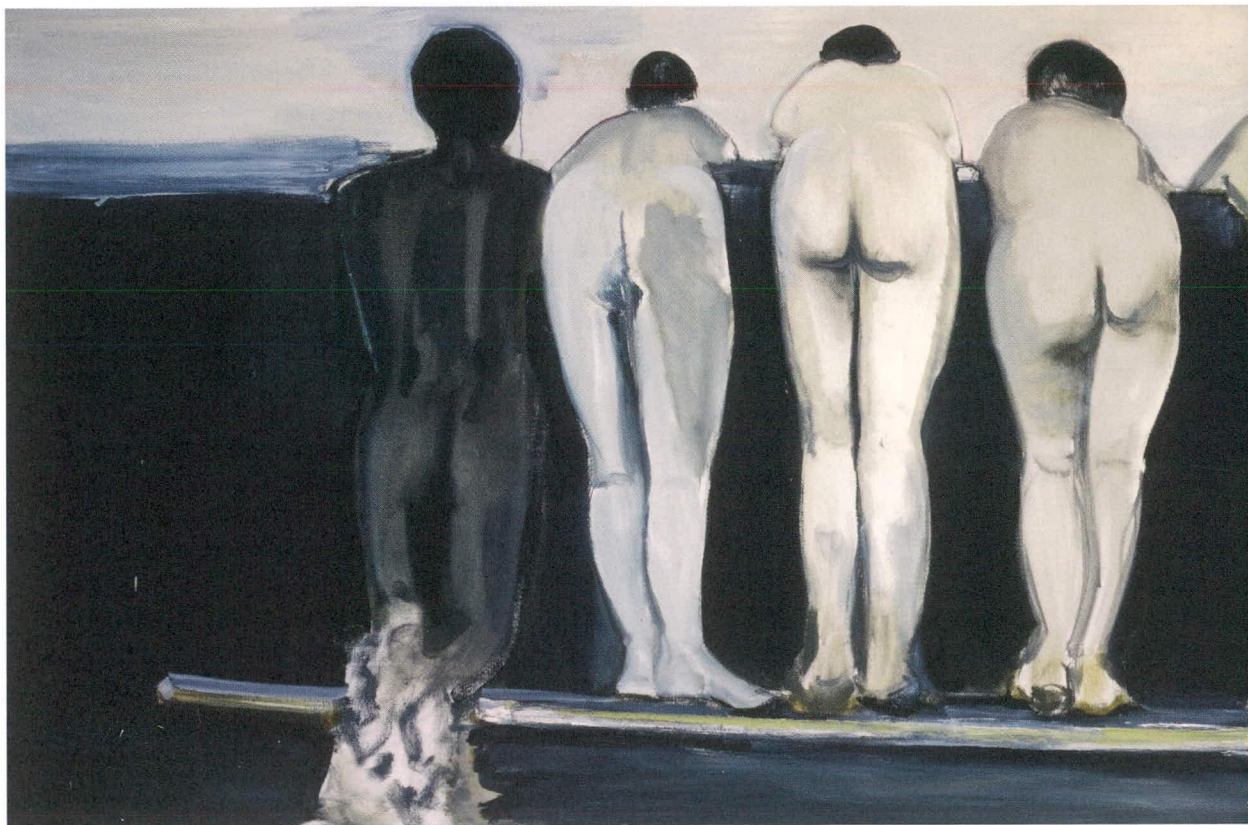
Ever since their graduation from the fashion design academy in 1992, Viktor & Rolf have worked together on all of their collections. Their breakthrough occurred in 1993 in Hyeres, France, where they won three prizes at the *Salon Européen des Jeunes Styles* with this blue-grey sequin dress. The fabric is frayed and torn, and the ground around the dress is littered with loose bits of fabric and sequins, giving the impression that the dress is falling apart. The model wears a black blindfold. Plain black cloth has been added around the neck and chest areas, adding emphasis and volume to the design. With these elements, Viktor & Rolf aim to create the illusion that the dress has been unearthed after thousands of years, but that the design has yet not lost its lustre, just as archaeological objects may keep their beauty over time.

The sequin dress display several features that also characterise Viktor & Rolf's later creations. Magnification, repetition, and accentuation of certain forms are the most significant of these features, and define their signature style. The magnification of (parts of) a design visualises their urge for creative freedom, and may be seen as a metaphor for Viktor & Rolf's desire to be acknowledged. After all, Dutch fashion designers have played but a marginal role in the international world of fashion since the 1950s. But in the past twenty years, the Netherlands has begun to claim an increasingly prominent role, thanks in part to Viktor & Rolf. Today, Viktor & Rolf are full-fledged participants during international Fashion Weeks, and have gained

international fame for their conceptual and innovative designs. They often explore the boundaries between fashion, art and performance, and their shows are usually spectacular, only rarely taking the traditional form of a line of models parading down the catwalk to exhibit the collection. Viktor and Rolf prefer to, for instance, dress a model (Maggie Rize) layer by layer like a Russian Babuschka doll (autumn/winter 1999/2000); in the end, the model was wearing seventy kilos of clothing. In other cases they choose to add an extra element, such as during the presentation of their *Bluescreen* collection (autumn/winter 2002/2003), during which they used bluescreen technology to project video images onto blue-coloured parts of clothing.

NB





43

MARLENE DUMAS

Cape Town,
South Africa, 1935

GROUP SHOW

1993
oil on canvas
100 x 300 cm

purchased with
the support of the
Mondriaan Fund
1994

inventory number
27849

In 1993, Marlene Dumas painted two versions of *Group Show*. One was sold to the Centraal Museum in 1994 while the other was exhibited in New York that same year at the exposition *Not From Here*, Dumas's first solo exhibition at Jack Tilton Gallery. The version acquired by the museum is thought to be the first; it was purchased in April, and was therefore no longer available for the Tilton exhibition. It seems Dumas was quite intent on exhibiting a group show of naked buttocks in New York, painting a second version to complement two other paintings: one, a frontal portrait of a row of shivering nude boys entitled *Young Boys* (1993-1994); the other, a painting full of dark heads with eyes lighting up entitled *Night Time* (1993). Dumas based the first *Group Show* on a photograph. It shows ten people leaning forward over a wall, the leftmost one kneeling down. It is unknown whether she based the second painting on a different photograph, or simply took the liberty to rear-

range the figures; either way, the leftmost figure is absent, the others have somewhat different stances, and the colours are darker.

Dumas frequently engaged with the theme of group portraits. In 1987, she used a school picture from her own youth in which the behaviour of school girls and boys in uniform is portrayed in a somewhat unsettling manner. Clearly, Dumas does not like groups. The theme of *Group Show* seems to be that, even in such an individualistic profession like the visual artist's, one cannot avoid group events entirely. Dumas offers an ironic comment: the figures have turned away from the viewer, showing their naked bums.

When Dumas returned to painting in 1984 after a period in which she mainly produced drawings and collages, corporeality became her favourite idiom. After painting a series of faces based on polaroid portraits, she moved on to painting



the human body. *The Particularity of Nakedness*, a portrait of a recumbent man looking back at the viewer, was the first painting in which she linked the body to the conflict between the private and the public. In 1992, she painted a girl spreading open a white cloth around her waist, naming the piece *Give the People What They Want*. One year later, she provoked audiences with *Group Show* by showing us what we do not want to see – a group exhibition of buttocks.

MB

MARTIN MARGIELA

Leuven 1957

'STOCKMAN' WAISTCOAT

spring/summer

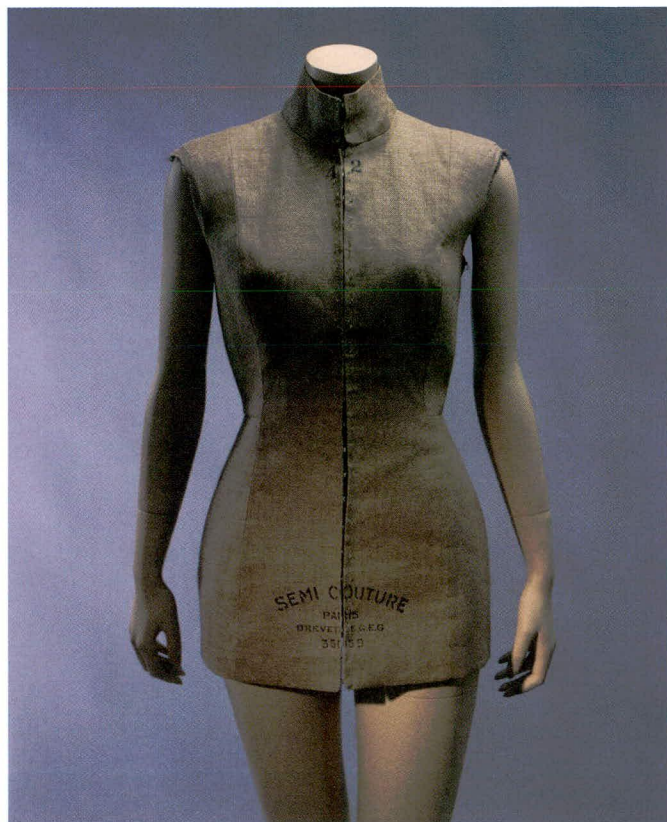
1997

linen, cotton

purchased 1998

inventory number

28346



The Flemish fashion designer Martin Margiela studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. In 1988, he established *Maison Martin Margiela*. Though he has been involved in the fashion trade for over twenty-five years, his face is known to very few people. Margiela has chosen to remain anonymous since 1994, never allowing himself to be photographed or granting interviews. Furthermore, he communicates solely in the first person plural, emphasising the team and its creations, rather than the designer himself. This philosophy is also illustrated by the black bars over the eyes of his fashion show models, or the uniform white coats worn by employees in his stores. Connoisseurs can recognise garments designed by *Maison Martin Margiela* by the four white stitches used to attach the brand label on the inside, which are visible on the outside. This also applies to the 'Stockman' waistcoat from the summer 1997 collection. In this

design, Margiela plays with the iconography of the tailor's workshop, as the waistcoat resembles the indispensable jute-like tailor's dummy. The high neckline bears the size designation 42, there are no sleeves. The lower edge of the bodice bears the words 'SEMI COUTURE' and 'Paris'. This design invokes high fashion and the art of the trade through reference to 'les icones' (the essential tools of a tailor's trade).

Margiela's other designs similarly show that he is a conceptual thinker who takes creativity to extremes. He often pushes the boundaries of fashion, for instance by re-using materials to symbolise the aging process of a garment. A striking example of this is his duvet coat (autumn/winter 1999-2000, also in the Centraal Museum's collection), consisting of an actual duvet to which sleeves have been attached. It forms an ensemble with a second-hand bedsheet cover and a plastic covering that can be

used as a rain coat.

Margiela's style is often characterised as destructive. This does not refer to the process of making or remodelling of clothing, but rather to the 'constructedness' of a design, for instance expressed by purposefully leaving it unfinished.

NB

ERIK VAN LIESHOUT

Deurne 1968

EDIT SUITE

2009

plywood, pine
wood, metal, neon
light, coals
200 x 152,5 x 101 cm

purchased 2010

inventory number
31284



Erik Gerardus Franciscus van Lieshout began his career as a draughtsman but came to fame with videos, which he showed in endearing self-built booths. His work consists of a protracted research into what it is like to be in someone else's shoes. He wishes to experience this physically, and each time seeks to create the conditions to make this possible. In 2011 he was asked to make a film about a run-down shopping centre in Rotterdam. This prompted him to open up a shop there, in order to experience 'from the inside out' what it is like to run a business surrounded by unemployed people, loitering youths and security cameras. The ideal shopping centre that the architect had envisioned in the 1960s had degenerated into 'a mini police state, with security guards constantly keeping an eye on you', Van Lieshout said. A similar study underlies *Edit Suite*.

The sculpture consists of clumsily imitated Rietveld furniture – two so-called Berlin chairs and an upside down divan table – and a row of coals, as a reference to the film *Misère au Borinage* by Joris Ivens (1933). Both Rietveld and Ivens were socially engaged artists. Rietveld designed furniture that was meant to be affordable for everyone through cheap production processes; Ivens's *Borinage* film addressed the deplorable poverty in the Belgian mining district of the same name. But both projects took a different twist: they turned out to be avant-garde works of art for the elite.

Edit Suite may be regarded as a re-enactment: by reconstructing the works of Rietveld and Ivens, Van Lieshout seeks to recall and re-engage with the commitment and the ideals of twentieth-century modernism.

MB

HUSSEIN CHALAYAN

Nicosia, Cyprus,
1970

KINSHIP JOURNEYS

2003
installation
with trampoline,
confessional/
altar, boat-shaped
coffin, sofa, and
digital clock

purchased
with support of
the Mondriaan
Fund 2003

inventory numbers
29637/001-005



In 2003, Chalayan presented *Kinship Journeys* at the *Woman by exhibition* at the Centraal Museum. This installation went on to feature at Chalayan's prêt-à-porter fashion show in Paris. *Kinship Journeys* exemplifies this fashion designer's conceptual way of working. His collections and fashion shows always have a message or deeper meaning, but also: 'my work is always based on an idea and I eventually use the human body as a model', which essentially makes him a fashion designer. Chalayan dares to venture across the boundaries of fashion design and to integrate fashion into other disciplines to express his ideas. The titles of his creations often allude to the story he wishes to tell with his collections, such as *Before Minus Now* (2000) or *Ambimorphous* (2002). His subject matter is often closely linked to developments in the world or to what moves him personally. Themes such as travel, ethnicity and alienation often feature in his designs, as do curiosity about new

technologies and the interplay between the real and the virtual world.

Kinship Journeys consists of a number of objects including a trampoline, a confessional, a boat-shaped coffin, a sofa and a digital clock, all made of meranti wood. The various elements refer to Catholic customs. The confessional has drawers where you can plant a seed, along with your name. The scrolling marquee then tells you that your sins 'will manifest themselves either as fruit or a flower'. The trampoline comes with a model dressed in black, with two large black balloons lifting the shoulder bands of the model's dress. The boat-shaped coffin refers to both mortality and salvation. At first sight, the other garment incorporated into the installation seems like a regular dress. But as soon as the pockets are unzipped, it turns out to be a multifunctional piece of clothing, as already suggested by its name, *Airbag Dress*. The pockets basically

turn into a life jacket. Each object comes with 'user' instructions.

NB

JORIS LAARMAN

Borculo 1979

BONE CHAIR

2007

aluminium

76,5 x 44,8 x 77 cm

purchased 2007

inventory number

30239



The second industrial revolution around the turn of the 20th century drastically changed the approach to consumer goods. Artisanry was abandoned, and all efforts were devoted to designing objects fit for mechanised production. Aesthetic values also changed. 'Less is more' became the motto of the industrial designer. Timeless and functional goods were preferred over decorative and unique goods made using traditional methods.

Today we are seeing a similar revolution in the approach to design. Joris Laarman is a prime example of a designer who is inspired by new scientific developments. It is not without reason that he has named his studio the Joris Laarman Lab. In 2003 he made quite an impact with his graduation project, the 'Heatwave' radiator. This radiator with rococo curls is a functional *tour de force* as the fanciful shape creates a far greater heat-emitting surface, making the radiator all the more effective. The equally imagi-

native shape of the frame of Laarman's *Bone Chair* was made using a computer program that imitates the growth of bones. Bones are thin where they can be, and thick where they need to be.

German biomechanics professor Claus Mattheck developed this software for car maker Opel to enable them to make parts that are both lighter and stronger. Laarman first made a paper model for the *Bone Chair*, which he subsequently went on to turn into a ceramic mould printed in 3D, which was used to cast the aluminium chairs.

One of Laarman's most recent projects was developed in collaboration with the University of Twente. It is a lamp that is partially made of Chinese hamster egg cells that were genetically modified with the light-emitting gene of a firefly. Some people reject this as scary or morally reprehensible, but Laarman's pertinent reply to such objections is always: 'Do you know what's really scary? Leather shoes.

We kill animals on a huge scale for food and other resources. But the line of cells used for this lamp has been in existence since 1957. Not one animal has suffered for it.'

lvZ

HAN SCHUIL

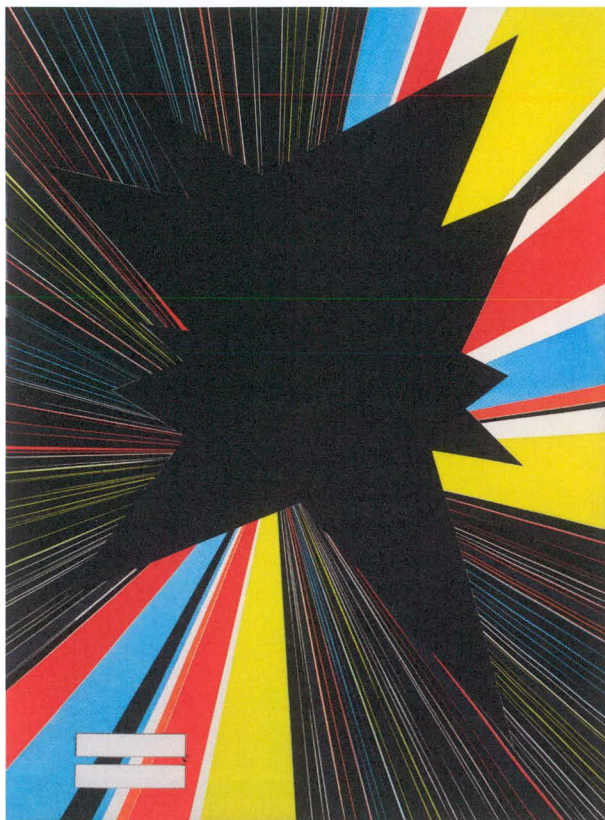
Voorschoten 1958

BLAST IV

2009–2010

alkyd and lacquer
on aluminium
173 x 124,5 cm

purchased 2011

inventory number
31574

Odd and seemingly rather trivial things tend to catch Han Schuil's eye and capture his attention. Such as a spot of rust on a storage shed, the truncated shape of a water tower, a road marking, a speed skater's streamlined suit, or a cartoon character's big eyes. These are images he works with: he isolates a pattern, simplifies and transforms it, and so construes a composition for a painting. The basic image needs to be clear and direct, Schuil says; it just has jump out at the viewer. 'What I am after is an image that has the impact of a traffic sign and the intensity of a Flemish Primitive painting', he once described his style. In order to achieve that, he switched from linen to aluminium nearly thirty years ago, with a view to eliminating 'brush strokes' as a means of expression; it is all about shapes and colours for him, and these are simply more intense on aluminium.

In 2008, Schuil created a new dynamic composition named *Blast*. The subject matter, a schematic drawing of an explosion, is well-known in the world of comics. In painting, such a central motif in the shape of a star with irregular edges and light beams right up to the edges of the picture is highly unusual; it is as if the vanishing point of the perspective explodes right before the beholder's eyes - or as if the image spits a profanity, *blast!*, in your face. The image does indeed jump out at the viewer, leaving you feeling the effect. That is the power of painting: it withdraws from the realm of words and written language to form a figurative language that cannot be heard or read, but only viewed and experienced.

'There's no such thing as abstraction', Schuil claimed in an interview (2009). 'I look for an image that stuns me. That stuns you. This puts an end to the usual harping on about abstracting motifs from reality. Then you're talking about una-

voidable clarity. The difference between abstract and figurative is irrelevant.'

MB

KLAVERS VAN ENGELN

Niels Klavers,
Raamsdonkveer 1967
and Astrid van
Engelen, Harmelen
1970

INSTALLATION

2009
silk voile

gift 2012

inventory numbers
31655/001-018



Niels Klavers and Astrid van Engelen make up the design duo *Klavers van Engelen*, and are often referred to as 'the architects of fashion'. In 2012, the Centraal Museum was able to acquire a substantial part of their recent collections and installations. This was a valuable addition to the designs from the early days of their collaboration, which the museum already had in its collection. In 1998, Niels Klavers established himself with his experimental and conceptual collections, such as *Show me your second face* (1998) and *Ceci n'est pas un pantalon* (2000/2001). Astrid van Engelen was involved in the design work from 1998 on, initially as an assistant but soon enough as a fully-fledged co-designer. Initial collections were not so much concerned with the wearability of the clothes, but rather with exploring the shape of specific garments. One Van Engelen blouse, for example, had four instead of two sleeves; the two surplus sleeves could be wrapped around

the body. Variations using patterns opened up a host of possibilities for new designs. Niels Klavers for instance converted the pattern for a single pair of trousers into a skirt and a top. Anyone with a keen eye will spot the trouser leg reflected in the eventual skirt: a minimalist principle with maximum effect.

Despite the fact that their collections earned both national and international acclaim, Klavers and Van Engelen took a five-year break after 2002. But they picked up the thread again in 2007, under the label of *Klavers van Engelen*. One major difference with respect to their earlier designs is that the clothes they design have become more wearable. But their signature style has remained: sophisticated, idiosyncratic, avant-garde, and elegant. This clearly comes to the fore in their first joint collection (autumn/winter 2008/2009), which later came to be known as the millstone collar collection. Folds in the fabric create pleats that are remi-

niscent of this typical seventeenth-century fashion accessory. This shape, in an abstract form, is incorporated further into for instance a waistcoat, the ends of sleeves, a cutaway at the centre of a dress. This was worked out even further, and in a sublime manner, in the installation they created for the 2009 Arnhem Fashion Biennale. This installation is made up of eight designs in fluorescent colours, made of transparent silk voile. Garments are modelled on white mannequins that are lit up from inside. This outward-shining light quite literally highlights the technical refinement of the stitches and finish.

NB

50

IRIS VAN HERPEN

Wamel 1984

DRESS FROM THE ESCAPISM COLLECTION, LOOK 11

2011
plastic
(polyamide powder)

purchased 2011

inventory number
31458

Fashion designers generally only start developing their own signature style after graduating from fashion school. Iris van Herpen is no exception to the rule. Yet only five years have elapsed since she started her own self-named label, and Van Herpen's creations are already shown, exhibited and sold domestically as well as internationally. *Escapism* was the title of her first collection, which was featured at the Paris Fashion Week. *Escapism* refers to what she calls 'our addiction to constantly escaping from reality and seeking refuge in digital entertainment, which is a key part of everyone's world nowadays'. This collection saw Van Herpen explore the boundaries between the virtual and the real world, resulting in sublime and almost avatar-like designs in grey, black, and white. The shapes of her designs are sculptural and highlight particular body parts, such as a shoulder or hips.

The human body (in motion) is always Van Herpen's starting point when making a design. She recently claimed that she needs 'the limitations imposed by the human body; hence fashion'. Van Herpen often combines her artisan know-how with the possibilities offered by new technologies. For the realisation of the extremely thin two-piece white dress from the *Escapism* collection, she teamed up with British architect Daniel Widrig. She used a special 3D printing method to make this dress, known as 'selective laser sintering'. This involves a laser beam that hardens layers inside a white polyamide granule, so that the design is created invisibly. The dress is then an archaeological object hidden within the powder, which must then be carefully removed. The design is subsequently subjected to a sandblasting treatment. Despite the use of innovative technologies, it is a rather laborious exercise: handicraft, new style.

In 2011 and especially for the Centraal Museum, Van Herpen designed a piece of jewellery to be worn on the upper body. This skeleton-like creation saw her go one step further in combining design and new technologies. This time, she partnered with architect Isaie Bloch. The end result is equally subtle as it is extreme, a design that links the inner self to the outer self.

NB



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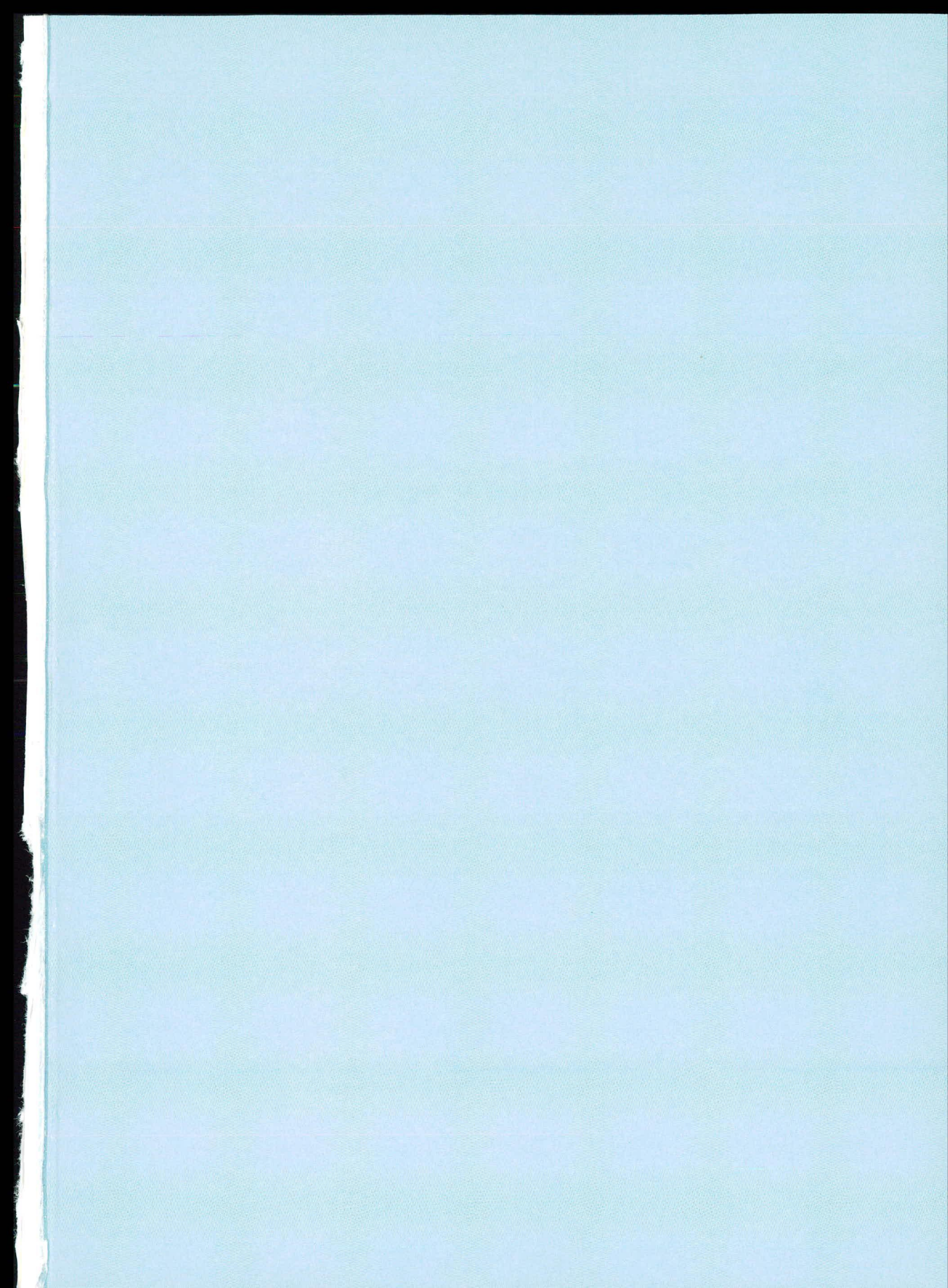
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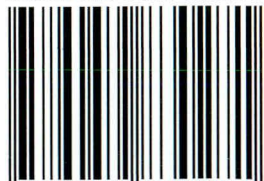
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