

Willem de Rooij *Dirk Valkenburg*

A Critical Analysis of Visual Culture
in the Early Modern Netherlands

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Dirk Valkenburg: A Painter in Amsterdam and Suriname

Mark Ponte

Painter Dirk Valkenburg from Amsterdam was one of the few European artists in the early modern era to have lived in Suriname. Who was Dirk Valkenburg, how did he come to be in Suriname, and what was his relationship with the other 'Surinamese' artists at that time?

Valkenburg (fig. 1) was born in Amsterdam in February 1675, where he was baptized in the New Church at the Dam.¹ His biography was penned in the mid-eighteenth century by art historian Johan van Gool (1685–1763).² Van Gool had become familiar with the painter's work through an estate auction of the lawyer Joan van Vliet (1682–1750).³ He saw several of Valkenburg's paintings there and was impressed. Van Gool noted that Valkenburg's father, Gijsbert Pietersz Valkenburg, recognized his son's artistic talent at an early age. As was common at the time, he entrusted his son's training to a painter, initially Kuilenburg, a painter about whom nothing else is known. Kuilenburg proved to be inadequate to the task, after which Valkenburg was apprenticed to portrait painter Michiel van Musscher (1645–1705). After the completion of his apprenticeship with Van Musscher, Valkenburg moved to Kampen with his parents, where his father had been appointed the city's schoolmaster. There, Valkenburg was apprenticed to painter and burgomaster Bernard Vollenhove (c. 1633–1694). According to Van Gool, his last and perhaps most influential master was the 'great art-hero', Jan Weenix (1641–1719) on Amsterdam's Binnen Amstel street, where Valkenburg lodged for two years. Here, he learned to paint birds and animals.

In 1695, after completing his training with Weenix, Valkenburg travelled eastwards, first to Gelderland and Overijssel, where he is said to have painted quite a few portraits of 'distinguished folk' and many a mantel and door painting. From there, he continued eastwards on a tour of various royal residences. In Augsburg, he painted for Baron Johann Anton I Knebel von Katzenelnbogen. The baron apparently recommended him to Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden, known as 'Turkish Louis' because, in 1689, he had led the imperial army to victory against the Turks at Niš in present-day Serbia. According to Van Gool, Von Baden offered him the title of court painter, with an annual salary of no less than 2,000 thaler (equivalent to 3,000 guilders; see Hartkamp in this volume, p. 62). Valkenburg declined the offer, however, and left for Vienna, where Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein is said to have 'showered him with favours'.

Around 1700, Valkenburg returned to his hometown. The few surviving records shed little light on his private life. In 1702, he

married Margaretha Cleijnman, a widow seventeen years his senior.⁴ The marriage was her third and would remain childless. In January 1703, the couple witnessed the baptism of Gijsbert, the son of Pieter Valkenburg, Dirk's brother.⁵ Far more important, of course, was the painter's registration as a citizen of Amsterdam on 23 March 1703.⁶ This was a prerequisite for becoming a member of the Guild of St Luke and establishing a studio as an independent painter. Unfortunately, the guild's archives have been lost.

Animals and Plants

In the seventeenth century, there was great interest in the Republic in animals and plants from the conquered and colonized territories in Asia, Africa and the Americas. Sailors, traders and migrants brought live and stuffed birds, monkeys and other animals, both on their own initiative and to order. Plants and seeds were collected, to be grown in orangeries and botanical gardens. In 1678, silk merchant and art collector Philips de Flines hired Coert Hendrickxsz to sail from Amsterdam to Suriname with captain Paulus Jansz to catch 'all kinds of birds, beasts and animals' for De Flines.⁷ From 1699 to 1701, the famous painter and scientist Maria Sibylla Merian stayed in Suriname with her daughter, Dorothea Maria Graff, to study the flora and fauna. The Sociëteit van Suriname's (Suriname Company, or SvS) archives contain an extensive list of plants and seeds from 1706 that were sent from Suriname to the Republic in that year, including pineapple plants, 'plants of the bananas', 'fruit of the Dead Sea apple' and the 'sweet beans of the Indigeneous peoples, known as *wijke bockies*'.⁸

In the work of Valkenburg, like in that of his master, Weenix, we encounter animals from the Americas. Valkenburg depicted Caribbean birds in at least two paintings before he left for Suriname. One painting, dated 1701, shows a number of ibises, the American purple gallinule (*blaw kepanki*) and other West Indian birds in a fictitious landscape. Another painting from that period features the 'king of the *wouwouwen*', the South American king vulture. Valkenburg himself owned a painting by Weenix of this imposing vulture, with its colourful head. There was no need for Amsterdam's painters to leave the city to draw these animals; Valkenburg and Weenix undoubtedly saw the birds with their own eyes at the Blauw Jan menagerie on Amsterdam's Kloveniersburgwal (fig. 1). This well-known inn, founded by Jan Barentsz Westerhof, initially kept birds, but the menagerie later grew to encompass animals from all over the world. Patrons could admire animals that were exotic for most residents of Amsterdam while enjoying a drink at the establishment. Around 1700, the king vulture became a major showpiece and can be seen in gouaches by Jan Velten (active from 1690–1709) and in a drawing and prints by Isaac de Moucheron (1667–1744).⁹ From 1694 and possibly earlier, Weenix lived on Binnen Amstel street, not far from the menagerie on Kloveniersburgwal.¹⁰

The Blauw Jan was not only a menagerie but also a kind of art museum. A lesser-known fact is that Westerhof had a large collection of paintings, according to an estate inventory drawn up

after the death of his wife, Anna Schoddenburgh, that included works by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669), Frans Hals (1582–1666), Allaert van Everdingen (1621–1675) and Ferdinand Bol (1616–1680).¹¹ Among these paintings, works featuring animals stood out. Westerhoff also owned several paintings by and after the Antwerp painter Frans Snijders (1579–1657), including an eagle, a fighting rooster and turkey, birds and dogs. Works by Valkenburg's contemporaries also hung there: 'a *flaminge*' (flamingo) by Melchior d'Hondecoeter (1636–1695) and 'Two flower garlands by Verbrugge with staffage by the young Weenix',¹² alongside works by his father, Jan Baptist Weenix (1621–1659). A live flamingo could also be admired at the Blauw Jan.

At Amsterdam's fairs, people could observe and study animals from South America and the rest of the world. In 1704, artist Willem Hendrik Wilhelmus van Royen (1672–1742), a pupil of d'Hondecoeter, saw a South American tapir at the fair on Amsterdam's Botermarkt (now Rembrandtplein). He made a drawing of it, placing the animal in an imagined landscape.¹³

Valkenburg's estate inventory, drawn up after his death, shows that his studio on Kerkstraat, near Leidsestraat, held various painted 'models of animals' for copying, both by Valkenburg and by Weenix: 'A piece with models of animals and flowers by the deceased', on the other side of which was 'a model with various birds, parrots, magpies, etc.'¹⁴; and 'a model of falcons & magpies & monkeys by Weenix'.¹⁵ He is likely to have been taught to work from models by Weenix, one example being the model of a squirrel monkey in the collection of the Rijksmuseum.¹⁶ Valkenburg's estate inventory also included 'a painting of a peacock, with staffage by Weenix with landscape animals, etc., by the deceased'.¹⁷ This may be the painting that is now in the Wallace Collection, London, in which one can recognize the squirrel monkey from the model in the Rijksmuseum.

To Suriname

In late February 1706, Valkenburg and the secretary of Amsterdam, Jonas Witsen (1676–1715), visited the notary Hendrick Outgers, who had an office near the commodity exchange on Rokin street, close to the Dam. The contract (fig. 2) that was signed at this Amsterdam office made Valkenburg, in addition to being a painter, a participant in the transatlantic slavery system:

In the manner and subsequent conditions undertaken by Mr Jonas Witsen, painter Dirck Valkenburg, born in Amsterdam, hereby binds and hires himself for a period of four consecutive years to depart by ship, the first of which will leave this spring, for Suriname, in the service of the aforementioned Mr Jonas Witsen, and during the aforementioned period to serve as bookkeeper or writer and painter on those of his plantations in Suriname where his services are required.¹⁸

Through his marriage to Elisabeth Basseliers, Witsen, the scion of an influential Amsterdam family, had come into possession of three plantations in Suriname: Waterland, on a bend of the Suriname River, some 35 kilometres by boat from Waterkant street in Paramaribo,

and the plantations of Palmeneribo and Surimombo, some 35 kilometres further away. He managed these overseas possessions from Amsterdam.

Witsen commissioned Valkenburg to make faithful artistic depictions from life of his properties in Suriname. Unlike his late wife, Witsen had never been to Suriname, and he was keen to have an accurate impression of his possessions in the Amsterdam colony. Valkenburg would thus be free to 'stay at each plantation in turn for a period of time, in order to paint all three plantations from life, as well as other rare birds and vegetation'. Under contract to Witsen, Valkenburg was to paint exclusively for him and was forbidden to accept other commissions or sell works, be they watercolours, drawings or other artworks. Each artwork was to be sent to Amsterdam as soon as it was completed, taking care to protect it from vermin.

What motivated Valkenburg to go to Suriname is difficult to ascertain. According to Van Gool, his unhappy marriage to Cleijnman was the main reason for his departure to the other side of the ocean. We will probably never know whether this really was the case. Their marriage would indeed end in divorce in 1716, but that was years after Valkenburg's return to the Netherlands. Perhaps it was his keen interest in birds and other animals, which he had already developed in Amsterdam. The fixed salary may have been an attractive prospect, too, although he had previously turned down a much more generous salary from Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden. Finally, his contract with city secretary Witsen may have offered a way into Amsterdam's economic and administrative elite, a bonus that Witsen may have promised him verbally.

With his departure for Suriname, Valkenburg joined a small group of artists who went to Suriname to paint in the early modern period. He was preceded by the aforementioned Maria Sibylla Merian and her daughter, Dorothea Maria Graff. According to Weyerman, the enigmatic landscape painter Nicolaas or Gerard Edema (1652/56–1700/07) sailed to Suriname and the English West Indies to paint the rocks and cliffs there. No Surinamese works by Edema are currently known. After Valkenburg, Johanna Helena Graff (1668–1723) – Merian's other daughter – and, several decades later, the American portrait painter John Greenwood (1727–1792), would live and work in Suriname. As far as is known today, Valkenburg was the only painter to do so on commission.

For his work in Suriname, Valkenburg would receive an annual salary of 500 guilders in the first two years and 600 guilders in the last two years, although he did not last that long in the colony. An undisclosed bonus would also follow if Valkenburg behaved 'as required'. Witsen would cover all of the material costs (canvas, brushes, paint and oil). Remarkably, Valkenburg was also promised an enslaved servant, whom he was to treat 'not as a slave but as a child', and not 'severely'. In Suriname, enslaved errand boys and girls were called *futubois*. Valkenburg may already have been acquainted with the phenomenon of the *futuboi*, for an Indigenous Surinamese servant lived in Witsen's household. On 24 November 1705, a burial was held for Karwatte van Ornak, from Witsen's household, who was likely the figure of Trawatte, an Indigenous man



Fig. 1 Jan Velten, *Menagerie Blauw Jan* from the album *Wonders of Nature*, 1695–1709. Gouache on paper, 59 × 64 cm. Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Artis Bibliotheek, AB shelf no. 238.

in maniere en op (indietten naarvolgende
 heeft den heer Jonas Witsen aengenoemen op
 Dirk Valkenburg Const. verdoet geboort van Amster-
 dam, wie sich zelven verbind en verzuurt by voeten voor
 den tijd van vier achter en volgende jaaren om met een
 schip te gaan in dit Voortjaar het eerste sal voortbreken
 naar Kinnamen, in dienre van den gemelde heer Jonas
 Witsen, en gedurende de gemelde tijd te dienen als
 boekhouder of schryver en Const. schilder op sodanig
 en van tijd tot Plantagen op Linnamen daer te
 zijn dienre vereygt sal worden. Vanter Onderdeit
 werwaerts hy Valkenburg op de voort tijd van
 Passagie gelt sal getruwe portreert worden. Het den
 Valkenburg ook vrystaen van den Enen Plantagie op
 den andere voor enige tijd hy verdoet teneemen om so
 de Plantagen alle drie naer te Leven als andere
 maer Vogels en gewassen te kunnen uptelideren
 en verbind sigt geen Schilderige waterwerk of tekeninge
 of andere konst by hem te maaken in de voort tijd
 te sellen verkoopen of voor andere te schuldren als
 door voort tleer Witsen ook de Gek. Leden de
 stikken water wef of tekeninge of andere Const.
 door hem gemaakt sloo dra valt op te lynde en bequaem
 toe trouwportering met verortge lynde van alle
 ongedurven over te senden.

Voor welken dienre den gemelde Valkenburg sal
 genieten in door den gemelde H. Witsen of tusschen
 gevolmagten betaelt worden de twee eerste jaaren
 en Salmen van Vrijthoudt quiddens ieder jaar een
 voort de Twee laatste jaaren ses Souders gulden
 ieder jaar te betaalen. Doel Voo hy sigt colokte
 sal boest en sijn elven gedragt als behoort belooft
 tleer Witsen op het Exporeren van sijn tijt ac
 hem Valkenburg of vroms ten derceering te laken genieten
 naar sijn do; wel gevallen. Welken penninggen
 voorn den hem Valkenburg of sijn ordres sal
 worden betaelt.

who had been brought to Amsterdam by Joan van Scharphuysen, the ex-governor and former owner of Witsen's plantations. Trawatte was freed in Van Scharphuysen's will.¹⁹ Maria Sibylla Merian was also assisted in Suriname, and later, in Amsterdam, by an Indigenous Surinamese woman who shared her knowledge with Merian. Years later, Valkenburg would include such servants as motifs in the background of some of his paintings, such as in the pleasure garden depicted in *Cat and Dog, with a Dead Cock, Knife and Fruit in a Park Landscape* (cat. 52). We do not know of any portraits by Valkenburg in which the subject is flanked by a servant of colour in the manner that Weenix painted.²⁰

As the plantation bookkeeper and artist, Valkenburg received a higher salary than most of the other Europeans there, along with preferential treatment. This becomes clear when we compare his contract to that of fellow Europeans from the same period. In the months and years before the contract with Valkenburg, Witsen had agreed to several contracts with other Europeans to travel to his plantations in Suriname. On 4 July 1705, Witsen agreed to a contract with carpenter and millwright Casper Delling for a wage of 36 guilders a month, increasing to 40 guilders for the last two years. The contract that was made a week later with Jan van Voorst, who was to work on the plantations as a bookkeeper and writer, shows that Valkenburg's contract was mainly about producing works of art. For bookkeeping and writing on the plantations, Van Voorst was awarded a much more modest salary of just 100 guilders a year. Both the millwright and the bookkeeper were, like Valkenburg, to be freely supplied with food, drink and accommodation. Valkenburg clearly received preferential treatment when it came to housing, too: he would have a 'decent room' at his disposal in the director's house and could also dine at the director's table. In addition, none of the other employees were contractually assigned a *futuboi*.

In addition to being an artist, Valkenburg, like the others with whom Witsen agreed contracts, became a plantation employee. As such, he was a privileged accomplice to a system whereby crops, especially sugar, were grown for the European market by enslaved people who had been stripped of virtually all their rights.

Valkenburg left for Suriname in late April or early May 1706. It is not known on which ship. In June that year, there were no fewer than eight ships at anchor in Paramaribo, all of which were heading back to Amsterdam.²¹ Under favourable conditions, the direct journey to Suriname took around six weeks.

In Suriname: Gathering and Rebellion

Valkenburg settled in Palmeneribo upon his arrival to Suriname. There, he probably concentrated on his painting at first. It cannot be said with certainty how many artworks he made in Suriname in the service of Witsen. At present, eight paintings are attributed to this period. In the catalogue of an auction that was held after the death of Witsen's grandson (1733–1788), also called Jonas, like his father and grandfather, ten paintings were listed, including six views of plantations.²² Today, we know of seven works painted by

Valkenburg in Suriname that can be assumed, with some certainty, to have been among the group auctioned in 1790. These paintings, drawings and surviving archival material offer a unique insight into plantation life in Suriname in the early eighteenth century.

To begin with, three views of plantations were made.

Indigenous, Enslaved and European People Navigating the Suriname River in Front of the Waterland Plantation, Suriname (cat. 68) shows several vessels, including a tent-boat with five enslaved people and a dugout canoe with fourteen Indigenous Surinamese. The tent-boat flies a Dutch flag. It was in this boat, or one of its type, that Valkenburg probably travelled between the plantations and to and from Paramaribo. We can see a pontoon, used to transport goods by enslaved people, and a small dug-out canoe carrying a Black man. This may have been the man's own boat, like the one belonging to the enslaved Mingo at the Palmeneribo plantation.

Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation in Suriname, hanging in the Rijksmuseum (cat. 69), focuses on an Indigenous family seen from the back. The painting shows five people, including two children. One of them is sitting in a hammock. On the right, we see a house, similar to those in several of the drawings. To the left and right, we see palms with orange awara fruit, some of which have fallen to the ground. It is unclear which plantation the houses in the background are from. It may be Palmeneribo; a similar house and family can be seen on the left in the drawing *People Navigating the Suriname River in Front of the Surinombo Plantation, Suriname* (cat. 58). They do not match the plantation houses in Waterland and Surinombo, but the buildings could also belong to a neighbouring plantation.

These images are tranquil, idyllic and give a one-sided view of the situation. Suriname has breathtakingly beautiful nature, but on the plantations that were cultivated in these natural surroundings, enslaved African and Indigenous people lived and worked under an oppressive regime. These were the people who had to grow sugar for Witsen; sugar that Witsen sold in Amsterdam for a lot of money.

A letter written by Valkenburg to the colonial administration in Paramaribo and the interrogations of a number of enslaved people reveal a very different reality of plantation life from that shown in his paintings and drawings.²³ In this ten-page epistle, Valkenburg reports extensively on the unrest at the Palmeneribo plantation, naming many of those involved. In addition to the estate inventory that was drawn up after his death, the letter is the most detailed document that we have of Valkenburg's life, which gives a good insight into how he lived in Suriname. In 1707, 156 enslaved people lived on the Palmeneribo plantation, including 26 children under twelve.²⁴ They included first-generation enslaved people, such as Joseph from the Congo;²⁵ others had been born in Suriname, such as the brothers Mingo,²⁶ Baratham²⁷ and Wally.²⁸ Charl had been born in the neighbouring colony of Cayana (French Guiana).

No other painting from the early modern Dutch Caribbean portrays Black people in as much detail as Valkenburg's third plantation scene, *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70). During the months that

Valkenburg worked on Palmeneribo, he evidently got to know the enslaved people on the plantation. In his letter, Valkenburg mentions the names of various leading figures on the plantation: the brothers Mingo, Wally and Baratham, Charl and Joseph, Mary, Mingel, Lafortuijn, Papa Jack, Mingo Barie and Joseph Schoonmoeder. We learn yet more names from the interrogations of the rebels arrested during the aforementioned unrest at Palmeneribo: Tama, Tobie, Michiel, Andre, Kleijne Jack, Louwittie, Christiaen,²⁹ Claas, the boy Quassie,³⁰ Papa Kees, Papa Wil, Mando, Hari, Prins, Jappij and Dorinda from Surimombo. Many of these people must have been portrayed in the painting, yet we do not know who is whom.

Taken together, the letter, interrogations and painting form a unique combination. In the letter, Valkenburg describes the conditions at the Palmeneribo plantation and the unrest and disturbances that occurred as a result of changes to the plantation regime demanded by Witsen. Unrest had broken out on the plantation after its director, Christiaan Westphael, read out Witsen's new orders. Previous 'privileges', such as free Saturdays, were revoked. The freedom of movement of the enslaved people was also severely curtailed. For example, Mingo had been used to taking his own dugout canoe to visit his wife on another plantation, but he henceforth needed permission to do so. The director had already shot some of the enslaved people's pigs, goats and fowl because they were no longer allowed to roam freely. When Mingo nevertheless took his canoe to visit his wife, the director smashed the boat. Mingo thereupon went to the homes of the enslaved people and assembled the elders, Jems, Toonie, Jobbe, Joris and Naco. The whole group went to seek redress from director Westphael, who opened fire and shot Charl 'under the foot'.³¹ The group had had enough and demanded another director. Some of the men went on strike by hiding in the forest for five days. There, they apparently made the decision to kill the director if he misbehaved again.

The letter largely omits the role that Valkenburg himself played in the events. In a notable exception, Valkenburg writes that he slapped the enslaved man Wally in the face for impudence. After interrogation, and based on written statements by Valkenburg and overseer Westphael, the rebels Mingo, Baratham, Charl, Joseph and Wally – the man whom Valkenburg had slapped – were sentenced to a gruesome punishment: death by burning alive.

The other paintings by Valkenburg that have survived from his time in Suriname mainly depict fruits and reptiles. Two of these still lifes are set in a plantation landscape, described in the 1790 auction catalogue as 'West Indian landscapes, with staffage in the foreground of various kinds of fruits, flowers and other vegetation, masterfully fine paintings' (cats. 71–72). The other canvases are models, including numbering. Remarkably, one of the paintings (cat. 74), featuring a snake, lizard and various fruits, was painted over a landscape with dogs, a landscape that is not immediately reminiscent of Suriname. Could this work have been painted over another work in Amsterdam? Was it an exercise before leaving for Suriname or made after his return? The surmise that the artist painted new Surinamese *models* once he was back in Amsterdam is reinforced by

the fact that just two models of 'various Surinamese fruits, snake and lizard' are mentioned in 1790, whereas we now know of three (cats. 73–75). The combination of fruits with reptiles is reminiscent of the work of Dorothea Maria Graff.

On 3 March 1800, the substantial art collection of Cornelis Ploos van Amstel was auctioned, including drawings described as 'one-and-twenty works showing various views of plantations in Paramaribo'. Of these 21 auctioned drawings, we know of 11 today. They are extremely precise drawings, some with numbers and explanations, and offer a unique sense of Surinamese plantations in the early eighteenth century. It could well be that these drawings were made in close collaboration with skilled workers on the plantations. The drawings also show Black and Indigenous Surinamese.

Not long after the uprising in 1707, Valkenburg decided to return to Amsterdam. Van Gool attributes this decision to illness brought on by the climatic conditions. It may well have been that the uprising by the enslaved people on the plantations also played an important role. Due to these circumstances, plantation tasks may have come to weigh much more heavily than artistic ones.

Portrait Painter to the Amsterdam Elite

Back in the Netherlands in 1707 or 1708, Valkenburg devoted himself to painting hunting scenes, landscapes, and, especially, portraits. He established his studio on Kerkstraat, between Spiegelstraat and Leidsestraat. Valkenburg's contact with city secretary Jonas Witsen probably played an important role in his clientele. As one of Amsterdam's better and more expensive portrait painters, he focused on the economic elite, but clients from intellectual circles also beat a path to Valkenburg's studio, such as burgomaster Bernard Nieuwentijt of Purmerend (cat. 83), the Lutheran preacher Johannes Hermanus Manné (fig. cat. 30, p. 506) and the biologist, physician and anatomy professor Theodorus Muykens. In the 1710s, Valkenburg painted many wedding portraits of people from the highest echelons of Amsterdam society: burgomasters, aldermen and directors of the Sociëteit van Suriname (Suriname Company, or SvS) and the Geoctrooieerde Westindische Compagnie (Dutch West India Company, or WIC). He was clearly a go-to painter for wealthy Amsterdam administrators seeking a wedding portrait in those days. When the commissioner and alderman Jan Corver wed a young regent's daughter in 1713, Sara Maria Trip, they had their portraits painted by Valkenburg. Sara Maria's father, Jan Trip, was burgomaster fifteen times, director of the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company, or VOC), and later, also director of the SvS. A few years later, the gigantic sum of capital they bequeathed was used to found the Corvershofje almshouses. Today, Valkenburg's portraits of Corver and Trip are lost and only known through painted copies by Jan Maurits Quinkhard (1688–1772), which were specially commissioned in 1744 to be hung at the Corvershof as a tribute to their patrons (figs. cat. 26–27, p. 505).

Another subject, Gerrit Corver (1690–1756), was also a city administrator for Amsterdam who held many positions in his

lifetime and had major interests in trade in Suriname. He was burgomaster ten times and director of the SvS between 1738 and 1750. In 1745, he was the most important investor in the Watervliet slave ship, in which 462 enslaved people were deported to Suriname that year. At least 62 did not survive the journey. Years earlier, in 1714, Corver had married Margaretha Munter, the granddaughter of Willem Piso, the naturalist and personal physician of Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen in Brazil. She and her husband, too, had her portrait painted by Valkenburg, at present also only surviving through copies by Quinkhard (figs. cat. 28–29, p. 505).

In 1715, Munter's sister, Sara Munter (cat. 89), married Jan Wolters (cat. 88), who would become an alderman in 1720, director of the WIC in 1732, and director of the VOC in 1735. His father was Louis Wolters, a merchant on Herengracht in Amsterdam, lieutenant of the civic guard in 1677, and church warden in Amsterdam's Nieuwe Kerk in 1682. Dirck Alewijn, who was portrayed by Valkenburg, married Brechtje van Loten in 1717; her father Jacob had interests in the WIC and the slave trade. Alewijn's witness was his uncle and the governing burgomaster, Hendrick Bicker.³²

Meanwhile, the marriage of Valkenburg and Cleijnman could not be salvaged. There had been 'various difficulties' and 'domestic ado' between the pair for some time, and on 25 June 1716, agreements regarding the separation of their table, bed, house and goods were recorded by notary Isaac Angelkot at the corner of Torensteeg and the Singel canal. The deed also contained a list of goods that had been brought into the marriage by Cleijnman and thus left with her, including eight paintings: 'a painting of Venus, a still life, five paintings with glass' and the 'little painting by the late Smit'. On 1 July, the divorce was officially pronounced by the alderman of Amsterdam.³³ Valkenburg promised to pay for an annual maintenance of 100 guilders. He also covered the household's debts, except for a loan of 400 guilders. The matter did not end there, however. In 1718, the divorced couple were called to account by the church council of the city's Reformed Church. Their behaviour led to the imposition of a censure, meaning that they could not take Holy Communion.³⁴ Meanwhile, they continued to argue between themselves. In May 1719, Valkenburg had his regular notary record a statement concerning accusations that Cleijnman had made about him when the quarterly alimony was paid at her house a few months previously. According to Cleijnman, Valkenburg was carrying on with a 'fat whore' who lived near the Weteringspoort, he was drinking too much, and he was also living in 'whoredom and fornication' with his housekeeper.³⁵ On 6 September that year, Valkenburg again visited notary Angelkot on the Singel, this time to draw up a new will, expressly annulling the previous will with his ex-wife. He appointed his father, who still lived in Kampen, as his heir.³⁶

Indirect Contact with Maria Sibylla Merian

Although there is no written evidence of direct contact between Maria Sybilla Merian and Valkenburg, there are several indirect indications that they moved in the same circles and may have

worked together. When Merian departed for Suriname in 1699, she entrusted her affairs to her good friend, Michiel van Musscher,³⁷ one of Valkenburg's masters, and her son-in-law, Jacob Hendrick Herrolt. In the preface to her book *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* (1705), Merian wrote that she had studied Witsen's art collection (as well as those of others).³⁸

In 1706, before Valkenburg left for Suriname, he drew up a mutual will with his wife, Cleijnman.³⁹ A notable witness to this event was the painter Albert van Spiers (1665–1718), a native of Amsterdam and a pupil of Gerard de Lairesse (1641–1711). After a stay in Rome and Venice, Van Spiers had settled in Amsterdam's Jordaan district, where he specialized in decorative paintings for Amsterdam's elite. In 1704, he drew the cover page for a book of botanical drawings commissioned by Agnes Block (1629–1704). The drawings in this book were made by Johanna Helena Graff. In 1711, Graff and her husband Herrolt left for Suriname, where her mother and sister had previously lived.⁴⁰ Naturally, mother and daughter continued to correspond with each other after Graff left for Suriname. On 29 August 1712, Merian wrote to the London-based apothecary and botanist James Petiver that she had received several animal specimens preserved in alcohol from her daughter, including spiders, fish, sharks, small iguanas and snakes.⁴¹

Yet, surely the most important indication of direct contact between the two artists is the fact that in their later years, both lived and worked in Amsterdam's Kerkstraat, between Leidsestraat and Spiegelstraat. Merian lived there from at least 1704⁴² until her death in 1717, opposite the warehouse known as the Vergulde Arend (the Gilded Eagle). Valkenburg also lived and worked in that street during the last part of his life. Likewise, the professor and physician Caspar Commelin also lived nearby, who had worked with Merian on her publications about Surinamese insects. He was also Valkenburg's doctor, as shown by an outstanding invoice in the estate inventory. Also within walking distance was the sizable house belonging to Witsen at Keizersgracht 674, next to what is today the Museum van Loon.

75 Paintings

Valkenburg remained active as a painter until his death in 1721. On 1 February 1721, he was buried in Amsterdam's Westerkerk.⁴³ Shortly after his death, Angelkot and sworn assessor Catharina Maria Muijlman drew up an inventory of the paintings, household effects, liabilities and assets that Valkenburg left behind.⁴⁴ The estate contained 'skilful paintings, both by the deceased and by other distinguished Masters', as well as fine paper-art, painters' tools, hunting equipment and so forth.⁴⁵ More specifically, it included 75 paintings by Valkenburg as well as d'Hondecoeter, Weenix, Snijders and other well-known painters. The aforementioned items, such as the hunting equipment, were used in his paintings until the very end of his life. On Friday, 21 April 1721, the paintings and the rest of the estate inventory were sold in the house on Kerkstraat where Valkenburg had died.

- 1 SAA, acc. no. 5001, inv. no. 44, 17 February 1675, p. 426.
- 2 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2.
- 3 Sale: Joan van Vliet, Amsterdam, 16–17 December 1750.
- 4 SAA, acc. no. 5001, inv. no. 534, 29 April 1702, 179; SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 5335, 12 May 1702, pp. 385–387.
- 5 NHA, acc. no. 2142, inv. no. 30, 31 January 1703, p. 10.
- 6 SAA, acc. no. 5033, inv. no. 13, 23 March 1703, p. 141.
- 7 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 4088, 23 November 1678 (my translation).
- 8 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 233, 28 May–23 June 1706, 328–330 (my translation).
- 9 SAA, Collection Atlas Dreesmann, 010094000143.
- 10 Later in the eighteenth century, people were also exhibited, including the members of the Mohawk Sychecta. There are no indications that the first owner, Westerhof, already displayed people there.
- 11 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 4448B, 18 July 1698, f. 11v–20v.
- 12 Ibid., 18 July 1698, f. 18v (my translation).
- 13 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-T-1940-602.
- 14 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 24 April 1721 (my translation). See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-5053.
- 17 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 24 April 1721 (my translation). See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.
- 18 Ibid., inv. no. 3369, 24 and 26 February 1706, pp. 1, 147–1, 149 (my translation).
- 19 Van der Molen 2018; SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 3377, 15 September 1699, p. 69; SAA, acc. no. 5001, inv. no. 1070, 24 November 1605, f. 56v.
- 20 See, for example, Jan Weenix, *Portrait of a Man with a Black Servant*, 1685, Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts Budapest, inv. no. 238.
- 21 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 233, 23 June 1706, f. 331.
- 22 Van Eeghen, p. 65.
- 23 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 234, after 4 July 1707, ff. 269–274.
- 24 Ibid., inv. no. 235, 1707, scan 67. In 1706, there were 148 enslaved people, including 20 children aged under 12, and 3 white personnel. NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 234, 1706, f. 62.
- 25 Ibid., 18 July 1707, f. 255.
- 26 Ibid., 18 July 1707, f. 256.
- 27 Ibid., 8–9 August 1707, f. 258v.
- 28 Ibid., 8–9 August 1707, f. 257.
- 29 Ibid., 8–9 August 1707, ff. 259–259v.
- 30 Ibid., 2 August 1707, ff. 253v–254.
- 31 Ibid., 2 August 1707, f. 255v (my translation).
- 32 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 9085, authorization 16 August 1720. Paesie 2005, p. 172.
- 33 Ibid., inv. no. 8473, 3 March 1721.
- 34 Ibid., acc. no. 376, inv. no. 18, pp. 397 and 404.
- 35 Ibid., acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8467, 18 May 1719, p. 91.
- 36 Ibid., inv. no. 8470, 6 September 1719, p. 186.
- 37 Ibid., inv. no. 4830, 23 April 1699, pp. 184–187.
- 38 Merian 1705.
- 39 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 3370, p. 27 April 1706, pp. 409–411.
- 40 Beer 2022.
- 41 London, British Library, Manuscript Collections. Shelfmark: Sloane MS 4065, f. 58.
- 42 *Amsterdamse courant* 1704, 11 December 1704, p. 2.
- 43 SAA, acc. no. 5001, inv. no. 1103, 1 February 1721, f. 46v.
- 44 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.
- 45 *Amsterdamse courant* 1721, 22 April 1721, p. 2.