



Cultural Heritage Agency
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science



Traces of Slavery and Colonial History in the Art Collection

October 2020





Preface

Imagine more than 100,000 works of art. That is how extensive the collection managed by the Cultural Heritage Agency is. The objects are given on loan to museums, public buildings, ministries, and embassies of the Netherlands. They include paintings, sculptures, and installations as well as furniture, jewellery, and posters. Making this collection accessible and increasing its visibility is an important task of the Cultural Heritage Agency.

A question that we have encountered more and more in recent years is to what extent slavery and our colonial past is visible in heritage collections. It is a question that stems from a need for recognition and acknowledgement, one that is also related to broader social developments towards greater awareness of our shared history. To answer this question, a one-sided perspective and an ostensibly neutral description of the art objects no longer suffice. By creating an opportunity for multiple viewpoints, layers of meaning are added to this heritage. It provides opportunities to make our shared history appealing and recognisable to all people in society.

With a collection of more than 100,000 works of art, investigating their relationship with our colonial and slavery past is a substantial task that is far from complete. However, the initial results, which can be read in this e-zine and via Collectie Nederland, show the benefits of these efforts. I therefore sincerely hope that this will inspire other collection managers to 'just get started' as well.

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science,
Ingrid van Engelshoven



In a different light

Hanna Pennock

Over a year and a half ago (spring 2018) we at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) began a new study of our collection. The question was: do we have objects in our collection that are linked to slavery and our colonial past? How do you find relevant objects if you search for what has not been specifically named and described? This required an approach that resulted in a pilot study. We are presenting the results here; you can find the Dutch version online in an [e-magazine](#).

We are happy to share our approach and findings – you can read a report here about how our search went, how we were advised, and the search terms that we used. In this publication we also show a ‘virtual exhibition’ of 25 objects that are representative of the many ‘discoveries’ in the collection.

For a theme like this, multiple viewpoints are very important. We were inspired by the [Many Lenses](#) project of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., where curators of three museums focused on objects from their collections from different angles. The Mauritshuis in The Hague also offered different perspectives in the exhibition *Shifting Image. In search of Johan Maurits*, in the spring of 2019. Such examples show how valuable it is to look at your objects or have them looked at from various perspectives.

To achieve these multiple viewpoints, the 25 objects in this publication have each been described by three different authors. A total of 31 curators, specialists, and people from various backgrounds, both young and not so young, contributed. The assignment had an open description: write a piece about this object from your own viewpoint, knowledge, and perspective. The authors were given a brief summary of information about the object and did not know each other’s descriptions. With their knowledge, ideas, and feelings, they added new layers and meanings to the objects, giving a voice to these long silent witnesses from the past. The results are unexpected and sometimes confrontational. They offer new insights and are often cause for reflection. It was an adventure for all of us, including the authors who often spontaneously indicated how they had enjoyed writing about ‘their’ objects.



The many items that we uncovered with the pilot study have been made available on the website collectienederland.nl and are therefore accessible to those who want to conduct further research. For us, the work has only just begun. Now we must adjust titles and descriptions where they are incomplete, outdated, offensive, or derogatory. We are hoping that researchers, students, volunteers, and interested parties add to these from all angles and perspectives. That will allow us to enrich the objects with knowledge and context.

We cordially invite you to browse through the texts and allow these diverse stories to surprise you. We have ordered the objects arbitrarily and have not organized the three texts per object according to any fixed pattern.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all authors who contributed to this publication: Jessica de Abreu, Anniek Bakker, Aspha Bijnaar, René Dekker, Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis, Luc Eekhout, Oscar Ekkelboom, Mitchell Esajas, Karwan Fatah-Black, Lucy Geurts, Alexandra van Kleef, Elmer Kolfin, Fransje Kuyvenhoven, Margot Langelaan, Lisa Lambrechts, Yuri van der Linden, Martijn Manders, Wim Manuhutu, Tirzo Martha, Nathalie Menke, Dorian Meijnen, Ineke Mok, Tom van der Molen, Hanna Pennock, Eveline Sint Nicolaas, Dineke Stam, Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo, Simone Vermaat, Jovanka Wanadya, Mercedes Zandwijken, and Simone Zeefuik.

Note to the second edition:

In the first edition the word 'slave' was still used in a few places, while nowadays it is increasingly being replaced by 'enslaved'. In consultation with the authors, this has been adjusted in this second edition. We have taken the opportunity to make some minor corrections at the same time.



With this article, the Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE) would like to share the knowledge and experience that it has acquired. It serves as an inspiration for museums and other institutions to search their own collection for traces: for objects that are related to slavery and the colonial past.

‘Just get started’

Pilot Study - Traces of Slavery and Colonial History in the Art Collection

Aspha Bijnaar

‘We started from scratch, just by researching, by finding things. We had some trepidation, but approached things calmly.’ This is how one of the employees described the attitude and feelings at the start of the search for traces of slavery and the colonial history in the collection managed by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE). The RCE State collection contains more than 100,000 objects, including paintings, furniture, sculptures, ceramics, drawings, prints, and posters. The RCE has made this collection digitally accessible at collectienederland.nl and gives it on loan to museums, castles, historic houses, heritage organizations, ministries, the Dutch High Councils of State, and embassies of the Netherlands. It was the Minister of Education, Culture and Science’s interest in the search through the RCE State collection for objects that may be related to slavery and the Netherlands’ colonial past, that resulted in this exploration. The study was conducted by Simone Vermaat and Margot Langelaan, senior curator and researcher at the RCE respectively, under the supervision of their colleague Hanna Pennock. As the RCE had not previously engaged in a project like this, and it was unclear how many objects would be found, the organization opted to begin a pilot study. The study was conducted from June 2018 to July 2019 and was part of the [RCE’s Shared Cultural Heritage programme](#).

Growing attention to slavery and the colonial past

These are turbulent times for the museum sector in the Netherlands. In October 2019, the Amsterdam Museum announced it would ban the term ‘Golden Age’ as a synonym for the ‘17th century’. Because poverty, war, forced labour, and human trafficking are the dark side of the national pride, military glory, and economic prosperity from this period in our history, the term ‘17th century’ is more appropriate than



‘Golden Age’, according to the Amsterdam Museum. The news caused a huge sensation and triggered an intense discussion.

The history of slavery in the Netherlands and its legacy have been the subject of fierce social debate for years, including the topic of heritage and how it is preserved and presented by museums. Whose story do the museums tell, which museum objects bear witness to this, and what perspectives are we lacking? Since the first Dutch slavery exhibition was held in the Amsterdam Maritime Museum under the title ‘Slaven en Schepen’ (Slaves and Ships) in 2001, it has become increasingly clear that museums contain objects that deal with the Netherlands’ past of slavery and colonialism. Following the Maritime Museum, more and more museums and other cultural institutions are composing exhibitions about this chapter in our history, enabling this heritage to be better displayed, and improving access to it. Examples of this are the Tropenmuseum, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (NiNsee), Kunstmuseum Den Haag, Amsterdam Museum, Museum Hindeloopen, Amsterdam City Archives, Mauritshuis, Museum Van Loon, Centraal Museum Utrecht, and many others. The Rijksmuseum is currently working on a major exhibition on slavery that will open in the autumn of 2020.

The need to search more explicitly for slavery and colonial heritage first became clear when, in 2003, commissioned by the Museumvereniging (Museums Association), four researchers thoroughly explored the collections of a number of museums, libraries, and archives¹. As it turns out, even in places where the researchers did not expect it at all, they found objects that were related to the slavery and colonial past of our country. This resulted in the study’s slogan: ‘the history of slavery in the Netherlands is everywhere, if you look carefully.’ The results of this study were published in 2007 in a book that was given the telling name *Op zoek naar de stilte. Sporen van het slavernijverleden in Nederland* (In Search of Silence. Traces of the History of Slavery in the Netherlands). After that, books and guides were published about various places in the Netherlands that uncovered traces of slavery and colonialism: about Helmond, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Groningen, The Hague, Haarlem, and Leiden.

The RCE’s study is in keeping with a trend in which museums and other cultural institutions recognize the elements of colonialism and slavery present in their heritage collections. In doing so, they are able to tell stories from different perspectives and reach a more diverse audience. Diversity, inclusiveness, and multiple viewpoints are key to this approach.

While the RCE prepared for the study, there was some scepticism in addition to enthusiasm. What were the benefits of doing this study? What were we expecting to find? Perhaps a few items in a collection of more than 100,000 objects? Was that really something we should talk about? An advisory board was formed that

¹ | *The initiative for this study came from the late Waldo Heilbron (director of the Suriname Museum) and Alex van Stipriaan (professor of Caribbean History at Erasmus University Rotterdam).*

has provided critical and supportive direction to the researchers. Nobody knew what the team was going to find in the art collection, let alone how to tackle the study. Neither Pennock, Vermaat, nor Langelaan had specialist knowledge of slavery and the colonial past, but they were familiar with the subject. They were just going to get started.

Advisory Board

To support this study, the RCE put together an advisory board consisting of professionals from the world of science and museums, whose work pertains to slavery, colonialism, and their histories. The members are diverse in age, background, specialization, approach, and strategy. The expectation was that each of these professionals would look at the study, terminology, and findings with their own eyes, so that more objects could be catalogued. The members met at the conference tables and in the depots to think critically and constructively about the progress of the study and to look at the objects.

There were four meetings with the advisory board in which the progress of the study, any problems, and potential solutions were discussed. The advisory board also provided search terms, and objects were presented during the meeting: which items belong and which do not? Should we include furniture and other applied art objects? What should we do with the countless ceramic and ivory objects? How should we register the objects that are related to Orientalism? What can we see on a painting or piece of furniture, no matter how minute, that provides us with information about slavery or the colonial past? [image 1]

One of the researchers summarizes the benefits of the advisory board as follows: ‘Many museums do not dare to be vulnerable. The impression is that museums know everything. But that is often not the case. We need to be more daring, be more open. It always results in something.’ The advisory board also discussed the extent to which derogatory and offensive terms in the title of an object should be changed. It was decided that a title that was clearly given to the object by the artist himself would be included in the registry with quotation marks, such as the painting ‘Sneeuwneger’ ([‘Snow Negro’](#)) by Lucebert. Adjustments in the collection registration system will follow later, after this pilot study. Furthermore, it was valuable for the researchers and for the members of the advisory board to know what projects regarding slavery and the colonial past the members of the advisory board were working on. ‘This exchange added context to the importance of this pilot study,’ the researchers say.

The study through search terms

The most important question that the researchers were confronted with was: how do you start searching in a collection of no less than 100,000 objects, which are primarily classified by origin and creator? With this study a new question was posed to the collection. They were looking through the lens of a theme that had



1. Bartolomeo Bettera,
Still Life with Musical
Instruments, Astrolabe,
Globe, and Candlestick,
17th century)
Oil on canvas, 91 x 132 cm
Object number NK2133
Photo: Wendy Oakes

never been discussed before. As such, objects would not be easy to find in the collection registration system, because they were not recorded with keywords that directly refer to slavery or the colonial past.

Prior to the study, Dineke Stam and Ineke Mok wrote a plan of action at the request of the RCE: [Verborgen in het volle zicht. Plan van aanpak voor de pilot Slavernij in de collectie van de Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed](#) (Hidden in plain sight. Plan of action for the pilot Slavery in the collection of the Cultural Heritage Agency). In this plan they included a list of search terms that Langelaan and Vermaat could use. The document also contains a great deal of useful information about the social debate on slavery and colonialism, and activities and current developments in the field of art, culture, and heritage. The two researchers also gave a workshop on this theme for the team of curators, conservators, and other staff of the Art Collections department of the RCE.



2. 'Raffles chair', 19th century
Teak wood and bamboo,
57 x 57 x 83.5 cm
Object number R3561

The search terms included in this plan of action provided the researchers with a limited number of hits, because this specific terminology was not used in the collection descriptions. A Rijksmuseum list was used at the time as well. This list included terms that museum professionals are trying to move away from in the registration process, preferring to begin using less offensive terms. These are terminology changes that the Rijksmuseum had been implementing since 2015 to replace contested formulations and terms such as 'negerinnetje' (negro girl) and 'Hottentot' with more neutral and respectful words. In 2018, the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen published [Words Matter. An Unfinished Guide to Word Choices in the Cultural Sector](#). This source was also used to search the collection. The advisory board was also asked to provide search terms. During the study, the list was further updated with terms that came up through association or discovery, such as 'kleurling' (coloured), 'Aboriginal', 'Kaukasisch' (Caucasian), 'inboorling' (native), 'knecht' (servant). The new term combined with various search entries on 'title', for example 'raffles chair' [image 2], or on 'description', such as with Lucebert's drawing 'pen drawing of an Indian with feather headdress' [image 3], or on 'material' produced extra results. 'It is therefore advisable not to get stuck in a fixed set of terms. Even if that set has produced a lot of results,' warn the researchers.



3. Lucebert, *untitled* (pen drawing of an Indian with feather headdress), 1977
India ink on paper, 27 x 21 cm
Object number AB20266
© Stichting Lucebert
(Lucebert Foundation)

The new search terms have been added, so that an [extensive list](#) is now available. ‘Such a list is neither exhaustive nor complete,’ the researchers note. ‘It will be updated constantly as more slavery and colonial heritage is catalogued.’

In addition to the general search, there was also a specific search for hits in the C collection. This sub-collection mainly consists of (family) portraits, ancient art, and other objects acquired through legacies. The search in the collection of portraits, including searching manually in boxes with the original inventory cards, produced a good many results: portraits of governors and other notables, posing or not posing with an anonymous black person in the background. In some of these portraits, such as [Anna de Bye’s](#), it was noticeable that the black person was not included in the description. Let alone that there was anything else mentioned about him. Yet, this inconspicuous and unknown black person could be a reference to our slavery or colonial past.



4. Johan Marinus de Vries,
Morocco, 1953
Oil on canvas, 35 x 48 cm
Object number AB2332
© Johan Marinus de Vries
heirs

The old inventory cards often included additional information about the positions that a historical person had held, with which organizations, and in what period he had served. Further research must show whether these historical persons played a role in slavery and the colonial past of the Netherlands. An example is the portrait of [Arnold van Tets](#). One of the researchers: ‘The more we know about the person, the better the RCE can put the object into context and the better we can loan these pieces in the future.’ Sometimes an old black and white photo on the inventory card provided more information than a poorly legible digital scan in the registration system. If we had the object in house, it was looked at in the depot for further study. That meant just looking at it carefully and wondering: what do the palm trees or the sailing ship say in this painting? [image 4 and 5]



5. Frederik Willem Camp,
Ships on the River, 1876
Oil on canvas, 50 x 76 cm
Object number R2641
Photo: Margareta Svensson



6. Crossfoot cabinet,
late 17th century
Tropical woods and ivory,
145.5 x 55 x 193 cm
Object number R4385

During the study it became clear that using different search strategies simultaneously worked better than following predetermined steps. The approach consisted of searching the collection registration system, checking the inventory cards and documentation and, if possible, looking at the object in the depot. Because all staff of the Art Collections department were aware of the study, they regularly drew the researchers' attention to objects that could possibly be of interest. [image 6] For example, during the daily collection activities, objects were noticed that could not have been 'found' in any other way.

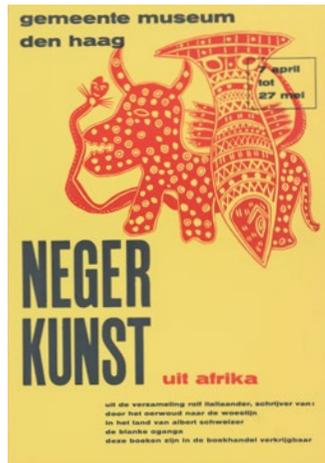
The research based on these entries produced circa 2000 highly diverse objects, dating from the 17th to the late 20th century, in all parts of the collection. The 'material' search entries produced many hits: objects made of tropical wood, ceramics, and porcelain, objects made of ivory or in which ivory has been incorporated. [image 7] Although many of these types of material are related to past trade, this does not mean that the object in question comes directly from, or is related to, the history of colonialism or slavery. During discussions with the advisory board it became clear that we still know little about the context of applied arts and crafts (such as furniture, silver, lacquerware, porcelain, and earthenware). Objects of this kind actually form the material result of the complex exchange of people, objects, materials, and knowledge between East and West, the Netherlands and Asia in particular. But to determine the relationship of these objects to slavery, colonialism, or 'simply trade' and by whom and for whom they were made, more specialist research is needed. For these reasons, objects made of ivory, ceramics, and tropical woods were not included in the pilot study. An exception to this are two porcelain [sugar casters](#) from the 17th century, which have a direct relationship with slave labour on the sugar plantations, and a plate from De Porceleyne Fles from 1917 that also has a direct connection: created as a commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Suriname colony. [image 8]



7. Hand fan, early 19th century
Ivory, textile, metal, mother
of pearl, 17.5 cm
Object number C779
Photo: Margareta Svensson



8. Leon Senf for De Porceleyne
Fles, Plate as a
commemoration of the 250th
anniversary of the Suriname
colony, 1917
Glazed earthenware,
diameter 22 cm
Object number AA2453



9. Poster 'Negerkunst uit Afrika' ('Negro Art from Africa'), 1957
Ink on paper, 50 x 35.5 cm
Object number ABAF4994
© Kunstmuseum Den Haag

Slavery or colonial history?

Doubts about the historical context were also strongly present in many of the 20th-century works of art that the researchers found, such as paintings and posters. Particularly in objects from the 1950s and 1960s, there were stereotypical images and words, such as 'negerkunst' (negro art), [image 9] '[kannibalen](#)' (cannibals) and '[negervrouw](#)' (negro woman). Stereotypes of people of colour belong to our colonial heritage and slavery past. Do we register such objects as referring to slavery or referring to colonialism? This is an important question because most of the findings from this study were made in the period after the abolition of transatlantic slavery, i.e. after the 1860s.

Another way to catalogue

It is a challenge to make the objects related to slavery and the colonial past that have been discovered, easy to find in the collection database. On the one hand, the record per object would have to be updated with keywords in the fields that could be searched. On the other hand, an arrangement would have to be created through which all these different objects could also be found and searched as a sub-collection and to which new 'finds' could be added. After having obtained advice from the Rijksmuseum and the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, it was decided to register according to the collection thesaurus. A separate tab has been created in the registration system with the name 'Thema' (Theme). Two general themes have been created: 'Verband houdend met slavernij' (Connected to slavery) and 'Verband houdend met het koloniale systeem' (Connected to the colonial system). The objects that were found will be added to these two themes. The 20th-century objects can then be classified under the specific theme 'Doorwerking van slavernij' (Effect of slavery), a specialization of the general theme 'Connected to slavery'. This will enable researchers, students, curators, and exhibition makers to find objects that are related to slavery and the colonial past in the database. The next phase, after this pilot study, is the adjustment of titles and descriptions in the collection registration system that are incomplete, outdated, offensive, or derogatory.

Virtual exhibition

A general impression of what the Traces of Slavery and Colonial History in the Art Collection study has produced can be seen in the virtual exhibition, which features a selection of 25 significant objects related to slavery or the colonial past, which are representative of our research. The presentation is a cross section of the discoveries by type of object, theme, and period. Each individual object has been described by various experts from different angles: from an (art) historical perspective, from the specific perspective and



10. China cabinet (detail of the fittings), c. 1700 detailfoto van het beslag op deze kast
Object number NK253
Photo: Margareta Svensson

knowledge of the author, or from an emotional perspective. A total of 31 authors wrote about the objects. This is a first step for the RCE in presenting heritage from multiple viewpoints.

Eye opener

For the researchers, the project was an eye opener: it was educational to search and question the collection from a perspective other than the museological and art-historical one. ‘The collaboration with the advisory board, discussing objects, terms, and concepts was of an immense value. By informing colleagues, the project also contributed to a broader general awareness of topics that we actually know very little about. And it resulted in a lot of colleagues who were contributing ideas or watching along enthusiastically. For example, a preservation staff member pointed out to us the special fittings of a 17th-century china cabinet [image 10] and a conservator pointed out a painting entitled ‘Doctor Verwoerd’ that clearly referred to the founder of Apartheid. [image 11] Two objects that would otherwise not have been associated with the pilot study. The study is not finished yet. We are aware that objects will pop up regularly that we have not looked at from this perspective yet. It has changed our view for good.’

Tips from the researchers

- Use a [list of terms](#) as a start. Use them to search in your own collection and update the list with new terms that you come across.
- Our approach is not a model: look for the approach that suits the way you interact with the collection and the way the collection is catalogued.
- Just start the study and do not assume in advance that there is nothing to be found. Almost every museum has objects that are related to slavery or the colonial past.
- Describe your working method as clearly as possible.
- Do not be afraid to be vulnerable as a museum, approach us and colleagues from other museums with questions.
- Consider to put together an advisory board.
- Consider this study as a process in which you will involve colleagues from your institution. This enables the museum sector to acquire more knowledge about this theme, increasing both the knowledge of and sensitivity to the subject.



11. Wim Bosma,
Doctor Verwoerd, 1961
Oil on panel, 121 x 100 cm
Object number SZ17477
Photo: Margareta Svensson



RCE staff

Hanna Pennock (Project Manager)

Simone Vermaat (Senior Curator)

Margot Langelaan (Researcher)

Cor Mulders (Registrar)

Members of the Advisory board

Aspha Bijnaar (EducatieStudio)

Mitchell Esajas (The Black Archives)

Karwan Fatah-Black (University of Leiden)

Richard Kofi (Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen)

Elmer Kolfin (University of Amsterdam)

Robin Lelijveld (Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen)

Wim Manuhutu (Migratie Museum (Migration Museum))

Ineke Mok (Bureau Cultuursporen (Cultural Traces Bureau))

Eveline Sint Nicolaas (Rijksmuseum)

Dineke Stam (Cultuurengo)

Anonymous, *East Indiaman*
the Jonge Lieve, 1774
Photo: Paul van Wel



East Indiaman

Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis



After studying Art History, Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis worked in The Hague for the National Library of the Netherlands and the Iconografisch Bureau. With the support of the Dutch Research Council (NWO), he wrote his dissertation on the Utrecht painter and architect Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638). Since 2002 he has been curator of historic art at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

“Beneath this ship portrait it reads: ‘de JONGELIEVE opderhee van TEXEL. UITGERUSTVOORBATAVIA inano 1774’ (the Jonge Lieve on the roadstead in Texel, bound for Batavia, anno 1774). The ship, commissioned by the VOC was built in 1759-1760 and was over forty metres long and almost twelve metres wide. The painting was donated to the State of the Netherlands in 1946 by a descendant of one of the passengers of the ship, lawyer Jan Jansz. Wichers. The Jonge Lieve departed Texel on 15 September 1774 with more than 230 people on board. Wichers boarded the Overhout ship at the Cape of Good Hope and arrived in Batavia on 19 June 1775. There he became counsel of justice at Batavia castle.

The Jonge Lieve sailed to the East seven times between 1761 and 1777 and visited Batavia, Ceylon, Canton, and the Coromandel coast. It mainly transported money, gold, and ship’s masts on its outbound journey, and brought back merchandise such as tea, pepper, textiles, tin, and porcelain on the return voyage. The Jonge Lieve rarely transported enslaved people. The employees of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) were not allowed to bring enslaved persons to the Netherlands, unless as supervisors of children. Jeremias Carolusz, for example, accompanied six-year-old Librecht van Bazel in 1764, and in 1770 Philander accompanied seven-year-old Johan Willem Schreuder.



Anonymous, *East Indiaman the Jonge Lieve, 1774*
Oil on canvas, 138 x 134 cm
Object number C603
On permanent loan to
Museum Kaap Skil, Texel
Photo: Paul van Wel



Tom van der Molen

“This portrait of VOC ship the Jonge Lieve, was painted as a commission for Johan Wichers (1749-1816). He was named counsel of justice in Batavia and sailed aboard this ship in 1774 for that reason. The Wichers family from Groningen was very closely involved in the colonial trade. In Batavia, Johan Wichers would have met his namesake and cousin Johan Wichers (1748-1822), who had arrived there as an undermerchant in 1773. The brother of the latter, Jan Gerhard Wichers (1745-1808), was governor of Suriname from 1784 until 1790.

The painting must have reminded Wichers and his descendants of the honourable start of his career in Asia. However, the reality of the boat trip was much grimmer. There were outbreaks of various illnesses, and 10 people did not survive the journey. The voyage to Batavia lasted 295 days, with 231 crew members on board, of which the Dutch were a minority. The rest of the crew came from other parts of Europe, but there were also sailors from Colombo, the Cape Colony, Ambon, and Batavia.

After a stopover in the port city of Praia on the Cape Verde islands, 17 black stowaways were discovered on the way to the Cape of Good Hope, including two who had been enslaved. They were fleeing the islands’ famine. Upon arrival in the Cape Colony, they proved not to be the only stowaways in those years: dozens of Cape Verdeans sailed to the southern tip of Africa the same way, much to the displeasure of the authorities. An attempt was made to have them shipped back by Portuguese ships, but they refused. The Cape Verdeans remained in the Cape Colony.”

...231 crew members on board, of which the Dutch were a minority. The rest of the crew came from other parts of Europe, but there were also sailors from Colombo, the Cape Colony, Ambon, and Batavia.



Tom van der Molen is an art historian specialized in 17th-century painting. As curator of the Amsterdam Museum, he works on a wide range of topics that touch on the history of Amsterdam and its inhabitants, including slavery and colonialism.



Martijn Manders



Martijn Manders is a maritime archaeologist and leader of the Maritime programme at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands. He has also been appointed as a senior lecturer at the University of Leiden for maritime and underwater archaeology and cultural heritage management.

“This is a painting of the Jonge Lieve, a Dutch East India Company (VOC) East Indiaman. It was under charter of the VOC for 22 years, from 1759 to 1781. East Indiamen were specially designed for use by the VOC. They could carry a lot of cargo, but also crew and soldiers, sometimes even over 400 of them! In addition to being trade ships, they were formidable warships. The VOC deployed them to protect its trading posts and its monopoly on trade routes, but also to expand their influence.

The Jonge Lieve made many voyages. This included both return voyages – from the roadstead in Texel to Batavia and back – and inter-Asian voyages to China and India. In the end, the ship was taken out of service and dismantled in Batavia.

In this painting, the Jonge Lieve radiates power and adventure with its fluttering flags and full sails. The cannons have been moved into position, ready to fire. What we do not see are the poor living conditions, specifically those of the soldiers. Only a few of them ever made it back from the East. For most sailors, a job with the VOC was not their first choice – in fact, it was usually their last option.

The ship represents power and adventure. However, it is also a symbol of the oppression of peoples with whom the VOC ‘did business’ and of those on board, many of whom had no place in society upon their return. Anything to turn a profit.”

Cas Oorthuys (1908-1975), *Armed Dutch rubber planter poses in front of a pumping unit along a river, Indonesia (1947)*
© Cas Oorthuys / Nederlands Fotomuseum



Armed Dutch Rubber Planter



Dorian Meijnen



Dorian Meijnen obtained a Master's in Museums and Collections from Leiden University. She focused on interiors from the 1950s in museological collections. For the collection of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, she devises solutions for objects that currently lie dormant in the depot.

“The photo ‘Loopt de planter gewapend rond’ (The planter walks around armed) is part of the photo series *De Staat in wording* (A Nascent State), in which photographer Cas Oorthuys sided with the Republic of Indonesia in 1947, at a time when the Dutch State did not yet officially recognize it as such. The entire series of the *De Staat in wording* was a plea for a peaceful solution between the two parties and thus fits within the Oorthuys’ politically engaged body of work.

In this photo we see a planter walking across his land with a gun in his hand. The photo was taken just before the first police actions. Oorthuys captured an important moment in the charged history of the decolonization of the Dutch East Indies. It would eventually take until 27 December 1949 for the

Netherlands to officially transfer sovereignty to the Republic of Indonesia. These photographs are not so much an important part of Dutch history and the collection of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands because of their visual elements, but because of their value to historical documentation. The photo was part of a larger purchase in 1988 in which a selection of photos was acquired from various series by Cas Oorthuys to represent his body of work.”



Cas Oorthuys (1908-1975),
Armed Dutch rubber planter poses in front of a pumping unit along a river, Indonesia (1947)
Gelatin silver print on baryta paper, 60 x 42.5 cm
Object number K88384
On permanent loan to Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
© Cas Oorthuys / Nederlands Fotomuseum



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo

“This photo was taken during the period after the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence in 1945. Tensions between the new Republic of Indonesia and the Netherlands were high. In our history lessons in Indonesia, we learned to call this period ‘Agresi Militer’, while in the Netherlands it was called the ‘Bersiap period’.

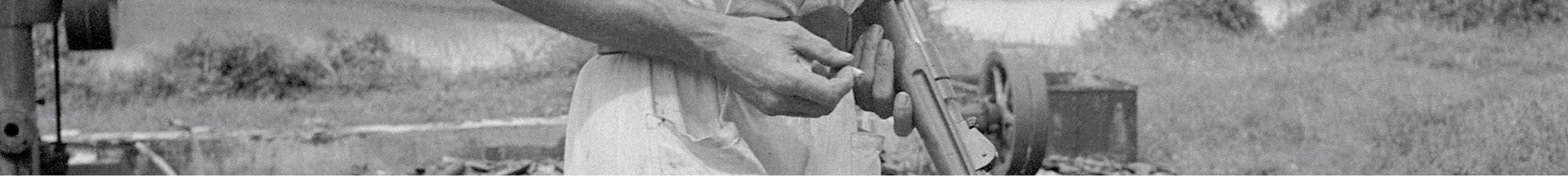
I found the word ‘bersiap’ very fascinating because it sounds Indonesian, but it does not exist in Indonesian vocabulary. ‘Siap’, ‘bersiap-siap’, ‘siap-siaga’, and ‘persiapan’ exist, but ‘bersiap’ does not. I think the Dutch have invented this word. I think that any Indonesian native speaker, including myself, would say that it is not in the Bahasa Indonesia dictionary.

The planter in the photo looks more like a soldier than a planter. If he had to walk around his plantation with a long rifle, the situation must have been very dangerous. He also looks very intense and alert. Moreover, the plantation looks more like a messy and neglected area rather than green and fertile soil.”

The planter in the photo looks more like a soldier than a planter.



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo is the founder of Heritage hands-on. She studied Sociology, Urban Planning, and Sustainable Development, and is preparing a dissertation at Leiden University about developments in heritage in Indonesia. Hasti received the UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award and fellowships from LEAD (Leadership for Environment and Development) and Salzburg Global Seminar.



Oscar Ekkelboom



Oscar Ekkelboom participates in the Master's programme *Curating Art and Cultures* at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and works as a curator in training at the Rijksmuseum's 20th century department. Before that he studied Art History in Nijmegen. His research focuses on artistic expressions of trauma and cultural memory in the 20th and 21st centuries.

“Cas Oorthuys published this photo of an armed planter in *Een staat in wording* (A Nascent State, 1947). In this book the Dutch photographer reports on a journey that he took through Java and Borneo from January to March 1947. The report is a plea for the peaceful independence of Indonesia.

The capitulation of Japan and the end of the Second World War did not mean the end of the violence on Java and its surrounding islands. On 17 August 1945 Sukarno proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, which resulted in a political and military conflict that would last four years.

The situation that arose cannot be oversimplified as a dichotomy of perpetrators and victims, but instead it is characterized by chaos and violent excess from various camps. One consequence was that planters were put in an uncomfortable position, where they were freed from Japanese domination, but no longer enjoyed the privileges of the Dutch colonial regime.

Oorthuys' photo depicts a planter, neither guilty nor innocent. He is neither the perpetrator nor the victim, but a complicated subject, a man who benefited economically from the situation in colonized Java. He is prepared to protect his company, himself, and his family against acts of violence that frightened all residents of Java.”

Anonymous, *Sugar Casters*,
c. 1700-1720



Sugar Casters



Karwan Fatah-Black



Karwan Fatah-Black is a lecturer and researcher at Leiden University and secretary of the Royal Netherlands Historical Society. He is specialized in the history of colonialism, slavery, and early modern globalization. He is also a member of the Commissie ter Herijking van de Canon (Canon review committee).

“Although still expensive, porcelain sugar casters were an economical alternative to their silver counterparts. There was a revolution in the consumption of sugar, coffee, and tea around the year 1700. They had been luxury products until the end of the 17th century, but increasing availability caused a substantial shift in European consumption patterns. We know from estate inventories that even the poor in the Republic drank coffee and tea with sugar in those days. The invention of breakfast was facilitated by the large trading companies. The Dutch East India Company (VOC), which had become rich and famous thanks to trading in spices for a small elite class, shifted its attention to accessible luxury for the masses. Entire islands in the Caribbean were deforested and cultivated for sugar production. Sugar casters bring these worlds together: increasing consumption of a product produced by enslaved persons that retains a luxurious appearance thanks to exotic motifs on the casters.”



Anonymous, *Sugar Casters*,
c. 1700-1720
Porcelain, silver, h. 17 cm
Object number AB1573-A-B
On permanent loan to Zeeuws
Museum, Middelburg



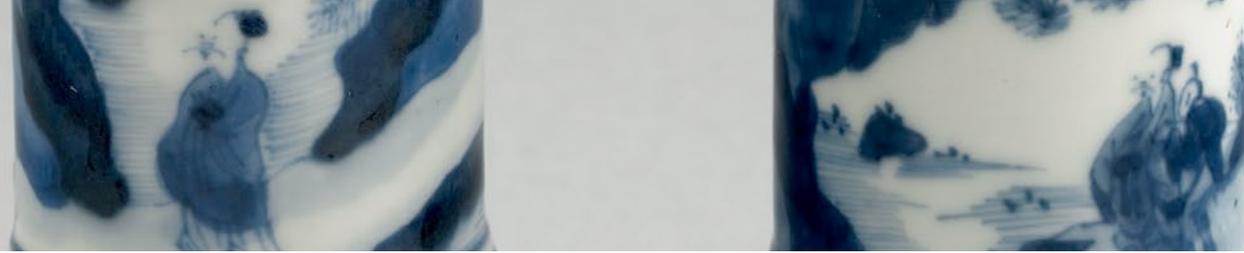
Aspha Bijnaar

“Dutch ladies of status thoughtlessly stir their *cup of joy* with silver teaspoons. In addition to cocoa, coffee, and tobacco, sugar was an important commercial product during the transatlantic slave trade. Sugar was scarce, delicate, and expensive. However, Surinamese writer Cynthia McLeod wondered what ‘The Cost of Sugar’ was in her book of the same name, which was a bombshell when it was released in Paramaribo in 1987. The book also became a bestseller in the Netherlands and was adapted into a film in 2013. I was about 21 years old and did not put it down until I finished reading it. On sugar plantations, those who had been enslaved squeezed the juice from the sugar cane that had just been harvested, before being cooked in ‘kapa’, large iron pans. This was risky and precise work. The boiler kept the fire going. Because the substance was not allowed to burn, others constantly stirred the contents of the pan. A ‘bosroman’, a brush man, used a large brush during this cooking process to push the sugar that crystallized on the walls of the ‘kapa’ back into the glowing centre, all the while being spattered with hot sugar crystals that left burns and scars on his skin. *Peroen Peroen*, a famous children’s song from slavery time, describes this: ‘Bosroman peni, Bosroman bron’, or: ‘The brush man is speckled, the brush man is burned.’”

...all the while being spattered with hot sugar crystals that left burns and scars on his skin.



Aspha Bijnaar is an independent researcher and director of the EducatieStudio foundation. She studied Sociology and obtained her PhD in 2002 at the University of Amsterdam. As an independent researcher, writer, and concept developer, Bijnaar has worked on various scientific publications, exhibitions, theatre performances, and curricula in the field of slavery, its heritage and legacy, and WW2. Photo: Leon Coetzier



Margot Langelaan



Margot Langelaan is an advisor at the Art Collections department of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands where she conducts research into traces of the colonial past. She previously worked as a curator and director in museums and was a project leader for the Art & Architecture Thesaurus.

“These casters are made of Chinese porcelain from the Qing Dynasty period. They are glazed and decorated with an underglaze of blue on white. There are beautifully shaped holes for the sugar to be cast and a silver knob sits atop of the caster itself. The decoration shows Chinese ladies lingering out in nature.

For centuries, China was a mysterious country for Europeans, but Dutch East India Company (VOC) trade increased their familiarity with it. It was not long after Chinese porcelain was first imported that the demand for it grew. As a result, the porcelain was imitated and Delft Blue was created.

The sugar casters were collected by Willem H. Bal (1880-1962). He was an antique dealer and possessed a substantial collection of Eastern porcelain and Delftware. Bal was a striking figure who travelled by bicycle from Middelburg through the province of Zeeland in search of special pieces. Bal and his sister Susanne donated their collection to the Dutch State. The Bal collection gives an impression of the items shipped by the VOC and private individuals. The objects, including the sugar casters, have been on loan to the Zeeuws Museum since 1963.”

Toni Burgering (1937-2017), *'Black
Beauty on Stars & Stripes'*, 1966
Photo: Margareta Svensson



'Black Beauty on Stars & Stripes'



Simone Vermaat



Simone Vermaat studied Art History at Leiden University with a specialization in modern art. She is a senior curator for the 20th century and collection advisor at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

“In 1966 the young artist Toni Burgering had his first solo exhibition at Galerie Delta in Rotterdam. Burgering, said to be striking in appearance and wearing a yellow suit, presented paintings of scantily clad women which were clearly inspired by American pin-ups or playmates, under the title ‘The Tony story’. This painting, entitled *Black Beauty on Stars & Stripes* according to the catalogue, shows us a black woman lying in a provocative pose on the American flag. In the same year, Burgering submitted this painting to the BKR committee (the Visual Artists Subsidy Scheme) in Rotterdam, after which it was handed to the State. The painting has not left the depot since then, and that may have to do with its direct, explicit nature and the discomfort that the work might cause to some viewers. At the same time, the depiction also strongly refers to the (worldwide) protests against the Vietnam War and the rise of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. The pin-up girl phenomenon can be seen as a symbol for the objectification of women, but also for emancipation and female sexuality. In short, it is not easy to find the right context in which this multifaceted work can be displayed.”



Toni Burgering (1937-2017),
'Black Beauty on Stars & Stripes',
1966
Oil on canvas, 128.5 x 158.5 cm
Object number SZ29912
© Toni Burgering heirs
Photo: Margareta Svensson



Simone Zeefuik

“The title with which the painting was included in the collection database is *Negervrouw met Amerikaanse vlag* (Negro woman with American flag). The word ‘neger’, roughly equivalent to the English ‘Negro’, is the colonial term used to describe Black people in Eurocentric texts and it is racist. The term first appeared in a Dutch dictionary in 1644. According to the definition, the word meant ‘the cargo of a slave ship’. The combination with the word ‘woman’ shows a colonial and extremely topical ideology where ‘woman’ refers to ‘white woman’. This makes this painting part of the phenomenon in which non-Black artists exoticize, fetishize, and sexualize Black women. Why did Burgering not choose a naked white woman?”

Toni Burgering began his artistic career at the Barneveld cinema and the Grand Theater in Amersfoort where he created his first portraits of film stars. In addition, the born and raised Barnevelder made a poster for the local chipper *De Straaljager*, a mural in the old BDU building, and was also responsible for the design of the Barneveld town hall.

Het Algemeen Dagblad/Rotterdams Dagblad commemorated Burgering as a neon artist. One of his most famous works of art in the port city is the line of poetry written in neon lighting ‘Alles van waarde is weerloos’ (Everything of value is defenceless) by Lucebert on the roof of the insurance company Nieuw Rotterdam.”

The pin-up girl phenomenon can be seen as a symbol for the objectification of women, but also for emancipation and female sexuality.



Simone Zeefuik is a writer, programmer, and organizer. In her work she focuses on representation, inclusiveness, and Black Joy in relation to museums, film, theatre, and protests against #FortEU's colonial asylum policy. Among other things, she is a programmer at Bijlmer Parktheater in Amsterdam and guest lecturer in the Afro-Dutch Studies course initiated by Zawdie Sandvliet.



Aspha Bijnaar



Aspha Bijnaar is an independent researcher and director of the *EducatieStudio* foundation. She studied Sociology and obtained her PhD in 2002 at the University of Amsterdam. As an independent researcher, writer, and concept developer, Bijnaar has worked on various scientific publications, exhibitions, theatre performances, and curricula in the field of slavery, its heritage and legacy, and WW2. Photo: Leon Coetzier

“Flags: we stand respectfully when they are raised, we wave them on national holidays, or we burn them as a form of protest. So why is a black woman lying on the flag of the United States, with her fertile lap on the area where the white stars are depicted? The painting was made in 1966, two years after the Civil Rights Act was passed. This Act brought an end to state-regulated racial segregation by banning the most important forms of discrimination against African-Americans. Racism and discrimination have nevertheless remained a strongly present dimension in American society. Unlike the Caribbean colonies where the former oppressor lives on the other side of the Atlantic, blacks in America live side by side with their former oppressors. That makes the heritage of racism and discrimination much more tangible than in Suriname, Aruba, and Curaçao. For many residents of the United States, the flag stands for the personal freedoms and rights that the Constitution and Declaration of Independence guarantee. The woman in the painting is black, attractive, and naked. She is vulnerable in her nakedness. She is lying in a graceful pose on the flag as if she were lying on a carpet, with backside and vulva exactly on the starry sky that symbolizes the 50 states of America. It is as if she wants to say: we blacks are also constantly building a new future for America and therefore have just as much right to the liberties that America is proclaiming.”

Brandy Bowl, 1735
Photo: Zeeuws maritiem
muZEEum



Brandy Bowl



Mercedes Zandwijken



Mercedes Zandwijken was born in Amsterdam to Surinamese parents. She is the initiator of and the driving force behind the organization of countless Keti Koti Tables in which rituals, dialogue, and a reconstructed meal for the enslaved serve as means to reflect upon the contemporary consequences of the Dutch history of slavery.

“Brandy: a soothing sip for the Dutch East India Company or a scathing swig for the enslaved?”

This brandy bowl from the Dutch East India Company (VOC) could have been filled regularly with brandy. Brandy was drunk with cane sugar, which was processed by someone who was enslaved. Time and time again it is strange to imagine that, in a period where civilized luxury objects such as this brandy bowl were made, horrible atrocities were carried out by those who used them at the same time. Horrors that were legitimized by the Dutch State. In spite of the fact that, at the time, enough abolitionists opposed it to make humanity aware of the double standard of morality at play. In his novel *Candide ou l'optimisme* (1759), for example, Voltaire describes how Candide encounters a horribly mutilated black man on his way to ‘the city’ (sic) of Suriname: he is missing his left leg and right hand. He turns out to be an enslaved man of the merchant Vanderdendur, whose abuse resulted in those injuries. ‘That is common here. When we work in the sugar factory and our finger enters the mill, they cut off our hand; if we want to run away, they cut off our leg. Both happened to me. That is the price you pay for your sugar in Europe,’ Voltaire notes. The merchant Vanderdendur may very well have been the owner of such a brandy bowl.”



Brandy Bowl, 1735
Tin, 3.9 x 24 x 12.5 cm
Object number R6313
On permanent loan to Zeeuws
maritiem muZEEum,
Vlissingen
Photo: Zeeuws maritiem
muZEEum



Dineke Stam

“The Dutch East India Company (VOC) Middelburg division had existed for 133 years in 1735, so it is unlikely that the brandy bowl was made to celebrate an anniversary. If that were the case, silver would have been used instead of tin. Was the bowl used by the crew of a VOC ship, for the daily nightcap of gin? Or would the carpenters, sailmakers, blacksmiths, painters, coopers, and other shipwrights have drunk from it?”

The Zeeland Chamber was the most powerful department in the VOC after Amsterdam. In the period from 1602 to 1799, the Zeeland Chamber built roughly 336 East Indiamen at the Middelburg VOC shipyard. They embarked on 1147 voyages to the East. What is less well known is that the VOC also traded and used people. For example, the ship *Nieuw Seelant* arrived in Batavia on 25 December 1622 with a thousand captured men and women purchased on the coast of Coromandel. On average, the VOC purchased between 2500 and 4000 people per year. The rich cargo that VOC ships brought from the Dutch Indies to Zeeland was the source of poverty and loss of freedom elsewhere.”



Dineke Stam is a historian. She worked as a researcher and exhibition curator at the Anne Frank House until 2001. She was later the national project leader for Intercultural Programmes in the Heritage Sector at the Museums Association. Since 2005 she has been an independent researcher, publicist, curator, and advisor in the cultural and heritage sector, with expertise in the history of slavery, the shoah, and gender and women’s history.



Martijn Manders



Martijn Manders is a maritime archaeologist and leader of the Maritime programme at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands. He has also been appointed as a senior lecturer at the University of Leiden for maritime and underwater archaeology and cultural heritage management.

“This tin brandy bowl was made for the Dutch East India Company (VOC), especially for the Chamber in Middelburg, Zeeland. Brandy bowls were used for important events, such as birth announcements, the birth itself, marriages, and anniversaries, but they were also used for birthdays, religious holidays, and New Year's Day. Brandy bowls with horizontal handles like these were used a lot on the other side of the Netherlands, in Friesland, to present *boerenjongens* (raisins in brandy) at the birth of a child. The host made a toast, after which the bowl was passed on to the guests.

This bowl was dug up from the remains of the VOC ship *'t Vliegende Hert* that was built for the Zeeland Chamber in 1729. It sank on the way to the Dutch East Indies, 18 km from the port of Vlissingen (Belgian waters in the present day).

Rich families had the brandy bowl made from silver. This bowl is a bit simpler. What would they have raised a toast for? Perhaps the birth of children far away from home in the Dutch Indies or Patria?”

*What would they have raised a toast for?
Perhaps the birth of children far away from
home in the Dutch Indies or Patria?*

AAN DE FIRMA GEO. WEHRY & CO
door het personeel te AMSTERDAM

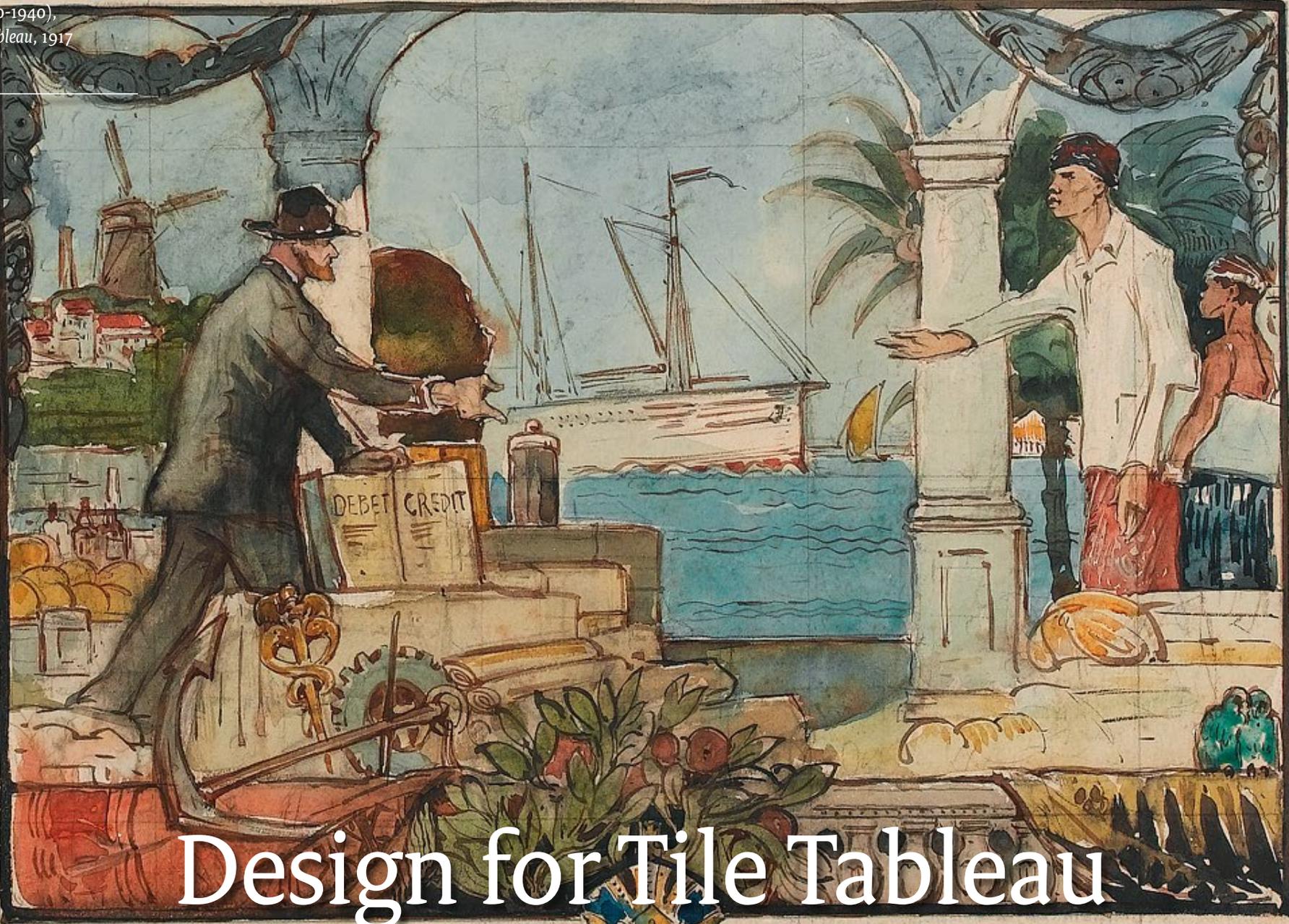
Leon Sest (1860-1940),
Design for Tile Tableau, 1917



BATAVIA



SEMARANG



Design for Tile Tableau



SOERABAYA



CHERIBON



AMSTERDAM



TANDJONG PRAK



PADANG



Yuri van der Linden



Yuri van der Linden studied Modern Greek in Athens and Art History in Amsterdam. Since 2001 he has been working at the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (now the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands), initially as a registrar and then moving on to a curator position in 2016. He also provides guided tours of the Rijksmuseum and is a member of the Collections Board for the Royal Antiquarian Society (KOG).

“On a terrace by the water, bordered by a gallery with arches supported by pillars, are two men who seem as if they are about to shake hands. The one on the left is dressed in Western clothing, while the man on the right is wearing a white jacket and batik pants, which identifies him as an inhabitant of the Dutch East Indies. The man on the left is surrounded by bales and barrels, and in the foreground is a caduceus, the staff of the merchant god Mercury. Coconuts and bananas are displayed in the foreground. The view on the left shows factories and a mill, and on the right a village with palm trees, while in the centre a cargo ship connects the two scenes.

This design by the artist Leon Senf is intended for a tableau of four by five tiles. The tile tableau would, according to the inscription, be offered by the staff of the trading company Geo. Wehry & Co. on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the company. This design, from October 1917, features a decorative border around the central depiction described above, which bears an inscription and the coats of arms of the cities with which the company maintained trade contacts. A month later, Senf further elaborated on the central depiction, simplifying the front left display. Leon Senf worked as a designer for the Delft earthenware factory *De Porceleyne Fles*, whose company collection was acquired in 1986 by the State and the Delft museum Het Prinsenhof. It is not known whether the tile tableau was ever actually created and if so, if it still exists today.”



Leon Senf (1860-1940),
Design for Tile Tableau, 1917
Watercolour, pencil, chalk on
paper, 50.3 x 65.5 cm
Object number AA3175

Leon Senf (1860-1940),
Design for Tile Tableau, 1917
45,1 x 59,3 cm
Object number AA4869



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo

“We have never been taught that the Dutch came to the Dutch East Indies to trade. What we were taught was that the Dutch came to occupy us. Yes, there were negotiations between the Dutch and royal families in many areas of the Dutch East Indies, but it was abundantly clear that the result of the negotiations had to be in favour of the Dutch. This would otherwise result in war and oppression.

The Indonesian in this depiction has an assistant with a dark skin colour. In the past, the rude term for assistant was ‘jongos’ for men or ‘babu’ for women. These assistants must have belonged to a lower social class, because they had dark skin and bare chests. People from the upper class never had dark skin and wore different types of attire. It is possible that the boy here is the son of the older man. It was normal for sons to assist their fathers. We never learned that there was slavery in the Dutch East Indies, only forced labour that was totally different from slavery.

The goods traded here are not only agricultural products, but also two exotic parrots. The CITES legislation for the protection of flora and fauna had not yet been introduced at that time, of course.”

People from the upper class never had dark skin and wore different types of attire.



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo is the founder of Heritage hands-on. She studied Sociology, Urban Planning, and Sustainable Development, and is preparing a dissertation at Leiden University about developments in heritage in Indonesia. Hasti received the UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award and fellowships from LEAD (Leadership for Environment and Development) and Salzburg Global Seminar.



Wim Manuhutu



Wim Manuhutu studied History at Utrecht University where he specialized in the history of Indonesia. From 1987 to 2009 he was director of the Moluccan Historical Museum. He is now active as Manuzu in the field of heritage, culture, and diversity. He is also a teacher at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Photo: Maria Lamslag

“This design for a tile tableau symbolizes the trade relationship between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies colony. The Dutch figure, recognizable by the mill in the background, is clearly a representative of modernity and progress. He has a ledger in his hand and around him are goods packed in boxes and barrels that have been transported from the Netherlands to the Indonesian archipelago. Using the steamship – also a symbol of modernity – the journey between the Netherlands and the Indonesian archipelago was made much faster.

The adult Indonesian figure, traditionally dressed and facing the Dutchman, slouches somewhat with hand outstretched, which may express respect or submission. The younger person standing behind him may also have a ledger in hand. It symbolizes the idea that there is an equal relationship between the two partners.

The design drawing was made in the time of the Ethical Policy, in which the civilization mission of the Netherlands went hand in hand with exploiting raw materials and establishing the Dutch authority on the borders of the Dutch East Indies by using military force; a process called ‘pacification’.”

Anonymous,
Portrait of Arnold van Tets
(1684-1724), early 18th century

A portrait painting of a man with a large, voluminous, light-colored wig. He is wearing a dark coat over a white cravat. The background is dark and textured.

Portrait of Arnold van Tets

Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo is the founder of Heritage hands-on. She studied Sociology, Urban Planning, and Sustainable Development, and is preparing a dissertation at Leiden University about developments in heritage in Indonesia. Hasti received the UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award and fellowships from LEAD (Leadership for Environment and Development) and Salzburg Global Seminar.

“I lived in Cirebon and visited Banten often, but it is hard to imagine that a person with long, golden hair and a heavy, black velvet uniform also lived in these areas. It must be terrible to wear such a thick material in a tropical climate. In my mind Cirebon and Banten are two coastal cities under a burning sun, always hot and humid.

Nowadays they are industrial cities with enormous, constant freight traffic, asphalt roads with many holes; dusty and soulless. Cirebon connects West and Central Java; Banten connects Java and Sumatra. They are the primary arteries of economic activity, but certainly not cities made to be lived in.

Banda used to be a reason why Europeans came to the Dutch East Indies. It is rather sad to see Banda now compared to its heyday during the golden 17th century of spices. An analogy for today’s Banda is a magnificent old lady who has lost her wealth and power.

Arnold van Tets must have been a very important officer, with three positions at the highest rank and strategic trading locations in the Dutch East Indies. However, I have never seen his name in any history books.”



An analogy for today’s Banda is a magnificent old lady who has lost her wealth and power.

*Anonymous, Portrait of Arnold van Tets (1684-1724), early 18th century
Oil on canvas, 47 x 38.5 cm
Object number C563*



Ineke Mok

“Is this a colonial portrait? It cannot be deduced from the painting; there is no castle of Batavia or plantation in the background, no seascape with mercantile ships, no parrot, nor globe. Only Van Tets himself is depicted, the light falls fully on his pale face, long blonde wig with curls, and white scarf. Is it his dressing gown, perhaps a Japanese morning coat of silk or velvet, that betrays a connection with the Dutch East India Company (VOC)? Or the dark blue colour that could be achieved with indigo from Curaçao?”

For the reason of the portrait, I think we should look at his mother, Maria van Rossen. Her husband, the barber surgeon and *poorter* Willem van Tets, had already died in 1690, after which she remained in the Warmoesstraat in Amsterdam with four little girls and a boy: Arnold. Almost twenty years later, she threatens to lose her only son as he prepares to depart for Batavia. With a portrait she can keep him close.

For her, Van Tets remains unchanged, while her son will become mired in the colonial reality of exploitation and slavery, in which he actively participates; Van Tets becomes the Resident of Cheribon and is appointed as governor of Banda in 1724. He dies there the same year. His only son and later his only grandson follow in his footsteps: Lambert Jacob is appointed governor-general for the Dutch West India Company (WIC) at the Elmina fort (he dies there during the year of his appointment). Grandson Arnoldus Adrianus acquires capital as a merchant in Batavia, becomes mayor in Dordrecht, and receives roughly 33,000 VOC guilders each year through the Chamber of Amsterdam. He not only commissioned a portrait of himself, but also of his two wives and eight children. He owed the gratitude for his fortune to the colonies, also through his wife. It all started with his grandfather, Arnold van Tets.”



Ineke Mok, [Cultuursporen.nl](https://www.cultuursporen.nl), wrote her dissertation on the history of the construction of racial thinking in the Netherlands. As an independent researcher, she develops programmes on the Holocaust, racism, representation, and sexual diversity. She is specialized in the history of Dutch slavery and focuses on a broader audience, including the field of education.



Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis



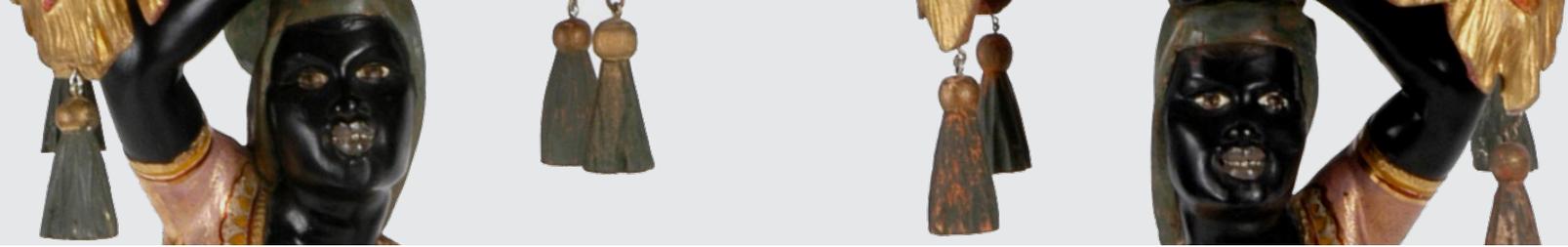
After studying Art History, Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis worked in The Hague for the National Library of the Netherlands and the Iconografisch Bureau. With the support of the Dutch Research Council (NWO), he wrote his dissertation on the Utrecht painter and architect Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638). Since 2002 he has been curator of historic art at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

“In 1709, in Batavia, Arnold van Tets married the 14-year-old Adriana Dudde, daughter of a dean and elderman; she was born and raised there as well. In the same year, Arnold obtained the rank of sub-merchant as a garrison accountant in Semarang. Four years later he became a merchant and administrator there and in 1717 the chief (or governor) of Cirebon in Central Java. In 1720 he became chief merchant, governor, and counsel of Bantam, an important port city on the north-west coast of Java, which had been a protectorate of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) since 1680. Finally, in 1724, Van Tets became governor of Banda, a group of islands near Ambon. Banda was the only source for the spices nutmeg and mace. The VOC had a monopoly on these spices since the beginning of the 17th century and had earned huge sums of money, especially from nutmeg. It was the population of the Banda islands which in 1621, commanded by Jan Pietersz. Coen, was almost entirely wiped out during an extremely cruel punitive expedition. In order to be able to grow the nutmeg afterwards, the VOC brought in enslaved people from other parts of the Dutch East Indies, the Coromandel Coast, and Madagascar. Van Tets had only been the governor there for a very short time. He died a month after arriving.”

A Set of Guéridons, 1860



Guéridons



Simone Zeefuik

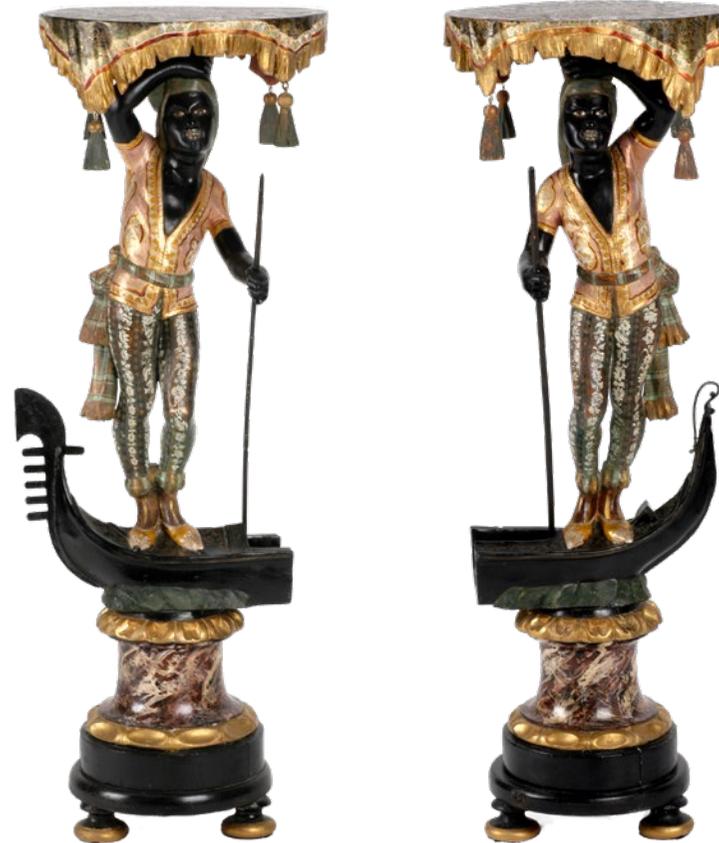


Simone Zeefuik is a writer, programmer, and organizer. In her work she focuses on representation, inclusiveness, and Black Joy in relation to museums, film, theatre, and protests against #FortEU's colonial asylum policy. Among other things, she is a programmer at Bijlmer Parktheater in Amsterdam and guest lecturer in the Afro-Dutch Studies course initiated by Zawdie Sandvliet.

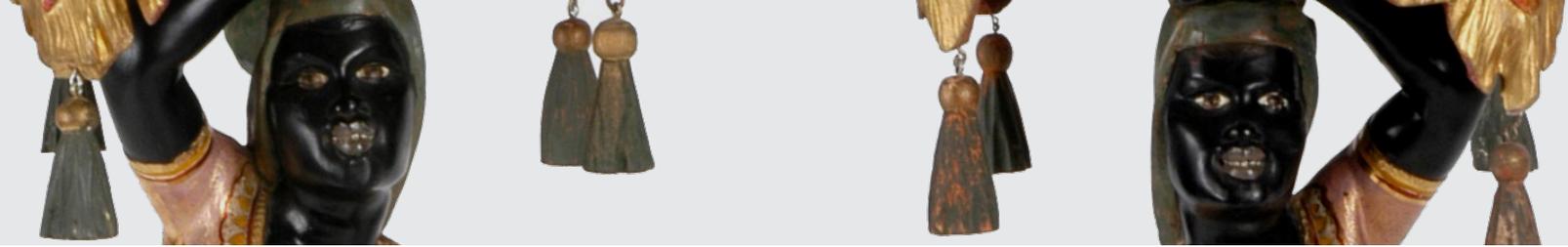
“The Black, Muslim Africans who are known for, among other things, the clothes these two figures are wearing, are also called Moors. This originally Greek term mainly refers to Black Muslims from the Maghreb, in north-west Africa. Their attire for men is characterized by the ‘cheche’ or ‘haouli’ (turban) and ‘boubous’, such as those worn in Mauritania.

During the 7th century, the Moors occupied both Spain and Portugal and enriched the knowledge of the local population in the areas of philosophy, science, agriculture, and astrology. Their architecture defines the streets in various villages and towns on the Iberian Peninsula to this day.

In the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, white Europeans illustrated the wealth they acquired through slavery with depictions of Black people. Consider, for example, the faces of Black persons on the facades of houses or on family coats of arms. For these guéridons they used sculptures of whole figures. They show how white Europeans saw Black and non-Black people of Colour.”



A Set of Guéridons, 1860
Polychrome and gilt
limewood, 98.5 x 35.5 cm each
Object number KP1235-A-B
On permanent loan to
Heeswijk Castle,
Heeswijk-Dinther



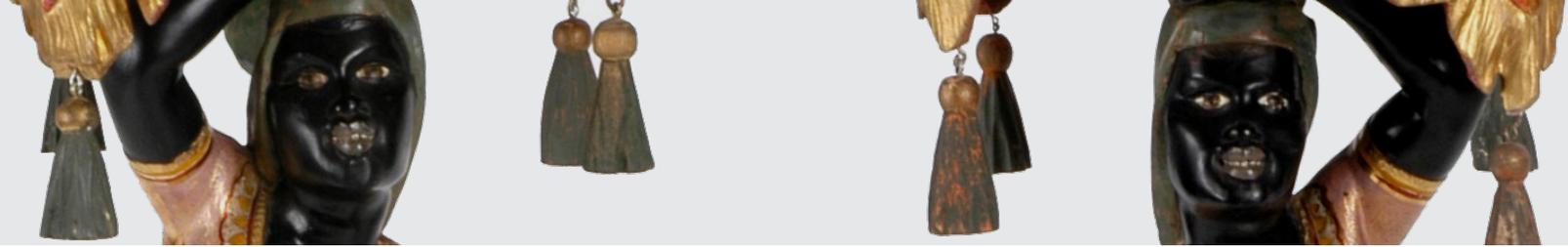
Simone Vermaat

“A guéridon is actually nothing more than a small round side table with one leg, on which candlesticks or vases were placed. This type of furniture originated in the 17th century and was brought over from France to the Netherlands, but these two guéridons were probably made in Italy. This furniture type likely owes its name to an African or Asian character (Guéridon) from a contemporary popular comedy. The name Guéridon then became an eponym for people of African or Asian descent in the service of wealthy Europeans, regardless of whether or not it was voluntary. When furniture makers replaced the simple legs with human figures, they often used decorative, richly dressed ‘Moors’ for this, although there are also examples with nymphs, a Bacchus, or caryatid-like figures. The English name of this furniture type is ‘Blackamoor’. The figures are depicted in different ways. As servants or enslaved persons, they wear the round tabletop on their arm, back, or head. Or, as is the case here, as Venetian gondoliers standing on the stern of a gondola. The luxurious appearance of the clothing refers to the wealth and status of the Venetian(?) family in whose home this furniture once stood. At the same time, these guéridons make it clear to us in a direct way how people from Africa or Asia were portrayed in a stereotypical and caricatured fashion by the still mostly white Europeans, waiting on them hand and foot.”

During the 7th century, the Moors occupied both Spain and Portugal and enriched the knowledge of the local population in the areas of philosophy, science, agriculture, and astrology.



Simone Vermaat studied Art History at Leiden University with a specialization in modern art. She is a senior curator for the 20th century and collection advisor at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



Luc Eekhout



Luc Eekhout worked as a historian in the Royal Netherlands Navy and was successively director of the Nationaal Rijtuigmuseum (National Carriage Museum), the Eindhoven Museum, Museum Kempenland, and Heeswijk Castle. At an international level he is active, among other things, as chairman of the International Council of Museums, National Committee The Netherlands.

“Heeswijk Castle was purchased in 1835 by Baron André van den Bogaerde van Terbrugge, governor of North Brabant. He expanded the castle and filled it with art and antiques. For example, a distinguished dining room was created, which was decorated in Chinese style by his sons in 1870. 18th-century hand-painted Chinoiserie wallpaper and a lacquer mirror were placed on the walls, and hand-painted silk curtains were hung in front of the windows. Lacquered furniture, 70 Chinese porcelain figurines, and a Venetian glass chandelier completed the room. The family opened the castle to visitors and thousands came to visit this ‘Musée de Bogaerde’ by steam tram. In 1885, a guest wrote about the Chinese dining room, describing it as ‘mouthwatering for enthusiasts’.

During the museum restoration of the dining room in 1996-2000, the Heeswijk Castle Foundation was able to fill the gaps in the porcelain collection with loans from Museum Huis Van Gijn in Dordrecht. Two guéridons from the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands are an addition in line with the Venetian chandelier: Moors on the front of a Venetian gondola. In fact, they are *Fremdkörper* in this room, but at the same time they are an illustration of the eclectic 19th-century passion for collection that characterizes Heeswijk Castle. Curious, colourful, and decorative.”

Johan Marinus de Vries
(1892-1982), *Portrait of Esseline
Polanen*, 1958
© Johan Marinus de Vries heirs

A portrait painting of a woman with dark skin and hair styled in an updo. She is wearing a light-colored, patterned blouse. The background is a plain, light color. The painting is signed in the bottom right corner.

Portrait of Esseline Polanen



Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis



After studying Art History, Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis worked in The Hague for the National Library of the Netherlands and the Iconografisch Bureau. With the support of the Dutch Research Council (NWO), he wrote his dissertation on the Utrecht painter and architect Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638). Since 2002 he has been curator of historic art at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

“Esseline Juliette Polanen (1909-2004) graduated from the Medical School in Paramaribo in 1935 and from the School of Optics in New York in 1944. She became the first coloured, certified pharmacist, and the first optician in Suriname. She started her pharmacy in 1936 in her familial home on Burenstraat in Paramaribo and in 1946 she opened her optician’s shop there.

Esseline was also committed to the cultural life in Paramaribo. She received painters and writers at home and from 1951 she was, for many years, a board member of the *Cultureel Centrum Suriname* (Cultural Centre of Suriname - CCS), which was supported by Sticusa. The main task of this foundation was to promote cultural traffic between Suriname and the Netherlands. In 1955, Sticusa invited the Dutch textile artist Leentje de Vries-Hamburger to give lectures on needlepoint and knitting art in Suriname. Esseline must have come into contact with Leentje via Sticusa in Paramaribo. They soon became friends. During one of Esseline’s many visits to the Netherlands, Leentje’s husband Johan painted this portrait of her. Sitting in a chair, Esseline posed in their house on the Doornweg in Wassenaar.”



Johan Marinus de Vries
(1892-1982), *Portrait of Esseline Polanen*, 1958
Oil on canvas, 68 x 51 cm
Object number AB2319
© Johan Marinus de Vries
heirs



Aspha Bijnaar

“The name Polanen is not just any name in the Afro-Surinamese community. It is a legacy. The Polanen family have been active for years in the Evangelical Brotherhood as ministers, both in Suriname and in the Netherlands. About 40% of the Afro-Surinamese in Suriname are members of this community. However, it is mainly men who go down in social history as Polanen pastors. The women from this family are much less well known. That is why it is wonderful to be able to see a Polanen woman being immortalized for once. Her hair is neatly cut and she wears a floral dress in calming colours. The gold jewellery looks modest. Ms Polanen exudes serenity and grace. These traits were exactly what the Evangelical Brotherhood preached to its followers. This denomination, formerly known as Hernhutters or the Moravian Brotherhood, began its missionary work among enslaved people in Suriname in the 1830s. Before that, the majority of this community practised the African-Surinamese Winti religion. After initial scepticism, plantation owners and the government supported the Christianization of enslaved people because they realized that evangelized souls would not take revenge as retribution for all the violence and humiliations that came with plantation life. Moreover, after the abolition of slavery in 1863, enslaved people were forced to work for another ten years under State supervision in a new form of forced labour. The Evangelical Brotherhood had made quiet, active, and disciplined people of them through Christianization.”



Aspha Bijnaar is an independent researcher and director of the EducatieStudio foundation. She studied Sociology and obtained her PhD in 2002 at the University of Amsterdam. As an independent researcher, writer, and concept developer, Bijnaar has worked on various scientific publications, exhibitions, theatre performances, and curricula in the field of slavery, its heritage and legacy, and WW2. Photo: Leon Coetzier



Mitchell Esajas



Mitchell Esajas studied Business Administration and Anthropology. He is co-founder of New Urban Collective, a network for students and young professionals from various cultural backgrounds, and of The Black Archives. This archive focuses on the history, culture, and literature of black people in the Netherlands.

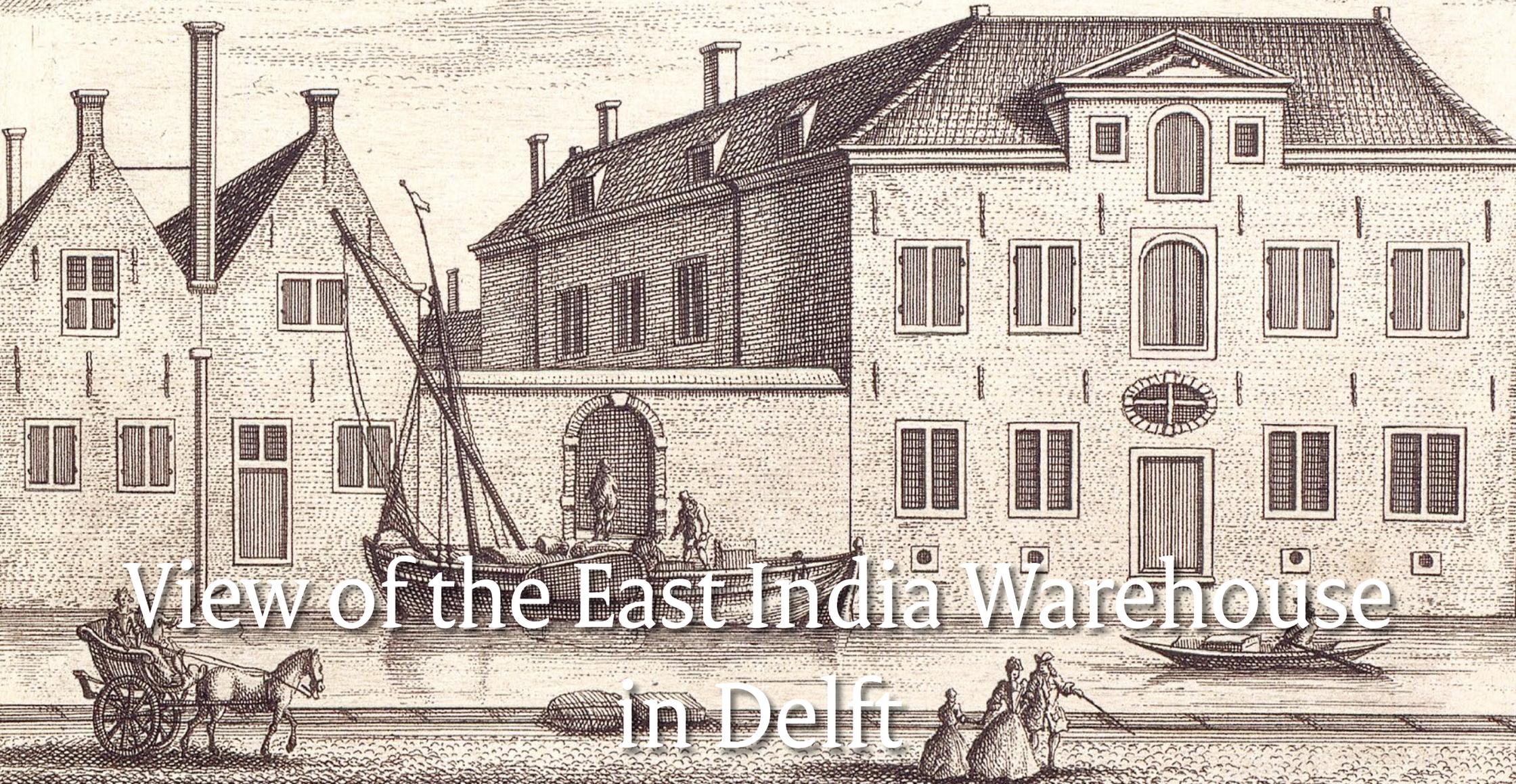
“The father of Esseline Polanen, Rudy Polanen, was the first Afro-Surinamese to work as a head teacher in Suriname. He was also a well-known pastor from the Evangelical Brotherhood. For me, this painting reflects the ambivalent position of the church in Surinamese history. On the one hand, faith was a means of keeping enslaved people in an inferior position by teaching them that their own faith was pagan. On the other hand, it gave them the opportunity for social mobility.

Esseline was a pioneer, a trailblazer. She obtained her *Acte van Bevoegdheid* (document of competence) to become a pharmacist of the *Geneeskundige Commissie van de Kolonie Suriname* (Medical Commission of the Colony of Suriname) and later also her *Acte van Bevoegdheid tot Opticien* (document of competence to be an optician) which made it possible to produce glasses for the first time in Suriname. She moved in the same circles as other female pioneers such as Dr. Sophie Redmond, the first black woman doctor in Suriname.

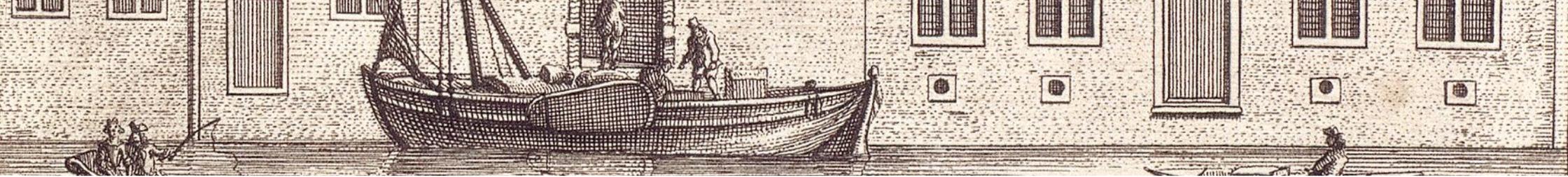
Paintings from the 1950s in which Surinamese persons are portrayed in a dignified manner are rare. The artist Johan de Vries lived in the Netherlands his entire life and is not known for frequently creating portraits of dark-skinned people. Yet this is a beautiful and worthy portrait of a middle-class woman.”

Paintings from the 1950s in which Surinamese persons are portrayed in a dignified manner are rare.

Anonymous, View of the East
India Warehouse in Delft,
second quarter of the 18th
century



View of the East India Warehouse in Delft



Eveline Sint Nicolaas



Eveline Sint Nicolaas is a senior curator of history at the Rijksmuseum. In 2018 her book *Ketens en banden. Suriname en Nederland sinds 1600* (Shackles and Bonds: Suriname and the Netherlands since 1600), on the Suriname collection of the Rijksmuseum was released. Eveline leads the team of curators who are preparing an exhibition on the history of Dutch slavery in autumn of 2020. She is also chairman of the Terminology work group at the Rijksmuseum.

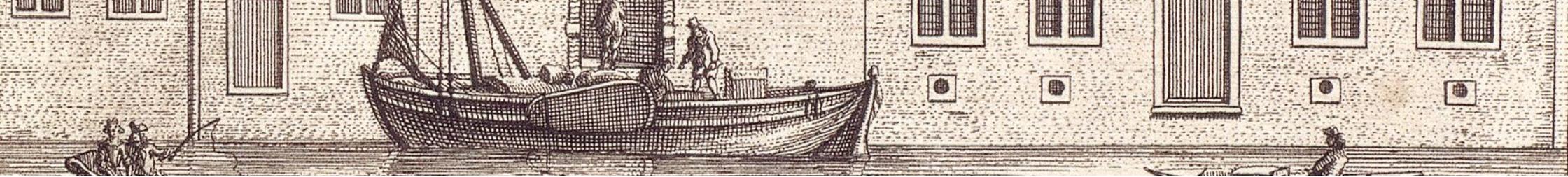
“If I had been asked to write something about this etching of the East India warehouse in Delft a few years ago, it would have been a very different text. I would have looked at the role of the warehouse as a place where spices and luxury goods such as silver and porcelain were stored. Products that had come from Asia to the Netherlands with the Dutch East India Company (VOC) ships to find their way from the warehouses to traders and private individuals. The publication *Kleurrijke tragiek: de geschiedenis van slavernij in Azië onder de VOC* (Colourful Tragedy: the History of Slavery in Asia under the VOC) of Matthias van Rossum (Verloren 2015) and the increasing attention to the role of slavery within the Asian colonial system have completely changed how I look at this etching today.

More and more is coming to light about VOC employees who went to Asia as the crew of merchant ships and tried to get in on the trade of humans there. People who were enslaved were bought, chained, and transported in the hold of the ships, in between the official merchandise. At a next stop they were sold again for the officers' own gain. This trade of humans fell outside the administration of the trading company and provided the VOC officers with additional income with which they returned to Amsterdam, Hoorn, Rotterdam, and Delft. Enslaved people who were part of the domestic staff in Indonesia were also taken on to play the same role in the Netherlands. For example, Wange from Bali (1798-1869), an enslaved boy, arrived in Delft at the beginning of the 19th century from what is now Jakarta. In 1866 he wrote his [memoir](#), a unique source in which we can read how he fell into the hands of a slave trader as a child. How would Wange have looked at this etching of the East India warehouse?”



How would Wange have looked at this etching of the East India warehouse?

Anonymous, *View of the East India Warehouse in Delft*, second quarter of the 18th century
Etching, 17 x 19.8 cm
Object number AA5682



Wim Manuhutu

“In addition to Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Hoorn, Enkhuizen, and Middelburg, Delft was one of the six places with a division – called a Chamber – of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). With one representative on the general administration, the *Heren Zeventien*, Delft was one of the smaller Chambers.

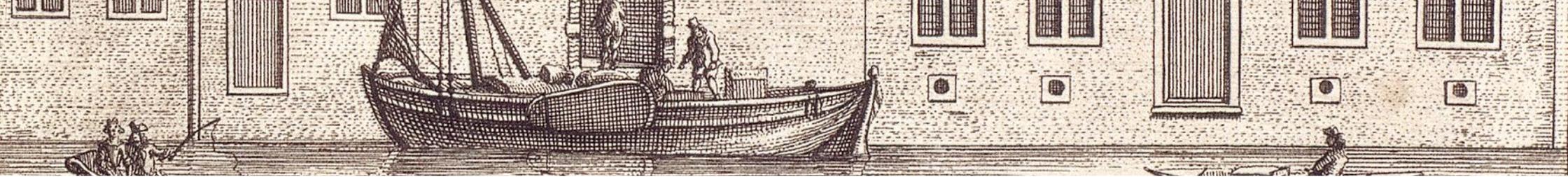
The East India Warehouse on the Oude Delft dates from 1653 and was one of the warehouses of the Delft Chamber. In addition to spices, silk and tea from Asia, porcelain from China was stored in the warehouses. The VOC had depictions made to order on porcelain in China, however, when the supply of porcelain stopped for a few decades, an industry of pottery also developed in Delft. This laid the foundation for the famous Delft Blue.

The significance of the VOC to Delft was great. The city supplied a relatively large proportion of sailors for VOC ships that departed from Delfshaven three times a year in the 18th century. The construction and maintenance of ships created many jobs. The VOC was by far the largest employer for Delft.”



Wim Manuhutu studied History at Utrecht University where he specialized in the history of Indonesia. From 1987 to 2009 he was director of the Moluccan Historical Museum. He is now active as Manuzu in the field of heritage, culture, and diversity. He is also a teacher at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Photo: Maria Lamslag



Margot Langelaan



Margot Langelaan is an advisor at the Art Collections department of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands where she conducts research into traces of the colonial past. She previously worked as a curator and director in museums and was a project leader for the Art & Architecture Thesaurus.

“In 1631, the Chamber of Delft bought two houses on Oude Delft and had them converted into its own *Oost-Indisch Huis* (East India house). Warehouse wings were added to the rear, which extended as far as the city wall. In 1653, the *Oost-Indisch Pakhuis* (East India warehouse) was erected on the other side of the Oude Delft and was expanded around the year 1700.

The Dutch East India Company (VOC) was an important employer for Delft. Many residents worked in the warehouses and shipyards or went on long sea voyages. The import of spices, silk fabrics, porcelain, tea, and other products brought wealth to the city. The scenes in this *Gesigt van het Oost-indies Pakhuys* (View of the East India Warehouse) reflect this: in the surroundings of the warehouse we see figures who are busy with various activities. Goods are being loaded or unloaded on a sailboat. The rower in his boat rides along relaxed. A horse pulls a carriage along the quay, with a walking couple and child ahead of it completing the scene.

This print was made with the etching technique. As early as the 15th century it was discovered that grooves could be made on a polished metal plate using a chemical treatment. The artist draws the scene in the etching ground with an etching needle. By using different needles, variation in line thicknesses and patterns is created. After completing the drawing on the plate, prints on paper are made by using a press. This makes substantial circulation and distribution possible.”

Abraham Bloemaert (1566-1651),
The Baptism of the Chamberlain,
1620-1625
Photo: Centraal Museum Utrecht

The painting depicts a dramatic baptism scene. In the center, a Black man, the Chamberlain, is seated on a white horse, wearing a red and blue robe with gold embroidery. He is being baptized by a white, bearded man in a brown and yellow robe. The Chamberlain's eyes are closed in a state of spiritual ecstasy. To the left, two other Black men stand, one in a yellow and red turban and the other in a white turban. In the background, a large group of Black men on horseback, some holding spears and a red umbrella, are visible against a cloudy sky. The overall composition is dynamic, with strong contrasts of light and shadow.

The Baptism of the Chamberlain



Dineke Stam



Dineke Stam is a historian. She worked as a researcher and exhibition curator at the Anne Frank House until 2001. She was later the national project leader for Intercultural Programmes in the Heritage Sector at the Museums Association. Since 2005 she has been an independent researcher, publicist, curator, and advisor in the cultural and heritage sector, with expertise in the history of slavery, the shoah, and gender and women's history.

“This colourful scene from 1624 depicts a biblical story from the Acts of the Apostles. Somewhere between Jerusalem and Gaza a ‘Moorman’ and the Apostle Philip meet. The ‘Moorman’ is the chamberlain and treasurer of the Queen of Ethiopia. They travel together for a bit and talk about Jesus. Then the chamberlain asks to be baptized by him.

This baptismal story is often depicted, just as it was by Rembrandt in 1626. The chamberlain in this painting by the Utrecht painter Abraham Bloemaert looks like a Roman army leader. African warriors on horseback watch the baptism.

In a 1745 painting from the Rijksmuseum by Jacob de Wit with the same subject, the military appearance has completely disappeared. This canvas hung in the reception room of the merchant Beuning, a prominent member of the Moravian Church, whose missionaries were the first in Suriname to preach to the enslaved people on the plantations. Two Africans are depicted with a silver collar. On an 18th-century Amsterdam facade, even the chamberlain is wearing this type of collar. This change in imaging has to do with slave trade and slavery, in which chains and collars were used. If an African was baptized in the Dutch Republic, the story of the chamberlain was often the baptismal text, such as with the Christianization of Accra Doura, who was purchased in Africa. After his baptism in Weesp in 1754, his name was Abraham Johannes.”



Abraham Bloemaert (1566-1651), *The Baptism of the Chamberlain*, 1620-1625
Oil on canvas, 219 x 153.6 cm
Object number NK1731
On permanent loan to
Centraal Museum Utrecht
Photo: Centraal Museum
Utrecht



Jessica de Abreu

“A man of African descent kneels on the bank of a stream and is baptized by an old white man. The African man is the chamberlain from the entourage of the Queen of Ethiopia, the white man is the apostle Philip. This is just as the drops of water touch the chamberlain’s forehead, and he is looking at the sky in ecstasy, holding a hand to his chest. His clothing looks regal and has a military style. The main garment that he wears is red, with a vivid blue cloak and high sandals. His white turban with red feather and his sword lie on the floor. His clothing shows yellow and gold details that confirm his high status. The apostle performs the baptism, barefoot and dressed in a matte robe. During the baptism, the chamberlain is surrounded by combatants in armour and white horses. They too seem to be blissful and have their eyes fixed on the heavens. The ecstasy in the facial expressions can be interpreted as praising Christianity.”



Jessica de Abreu studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and Culture, Organization and Management at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her work focuses on the African diaspora, postcolonial perspectives, and intersectionality. She is a co-founder of The Black Archives, a historical archive that focuses on black history in the Netherlands and beyond. Photo: Marcel Wogram



Lucy Geurts



Lucy Geurts completed her Master's in Art Sciences in 2018 at KU Leuven in Belgium. She is specialized in Dutch and Flemish art from the 16th and 17th centuries. She is currently working as a curator in training in historic art at the Centraal Museum Utrecht.

“The Acts of the Apostles (8:26-40) describe how the apostle Philip meets the chamberlain of the Ethiopian queen en route from Jerusalem to Gaza. This chamberlain, already a religious man, then decides to be baptized in nearby waters. This makes him one of the first ‘non-Jews’ to be converted to Christianity through evangelism. This Bible story enjoyed unprecedented popularity in the Northern Netherlands during the early 17th century. At that time, when the transatlantic slave trade was growing steadily, the story can be interpreted as a legitimation to subject people of colour to Christianity. Baptism would also purify the sinful ‘black’ soul.

In this painting, Abraham Bloemaert emphasizes the baptism in the centre using a sharp angle of incidence for the light and a diagonal composition. Although the chamberlain is shown to be superior in wealth and military position – his turban and scimitar lying beside him – he submits himself to receive holy baptism. The retinue in the background bear witness to a theatrical and public event. He probably drew inspiration for the clothing and weapons of the stereotyped soldiers, with which Bloemaert attempted to create an ‘exotic context’ for the viewer, from depictions of Persians and Indians.”

Baptism would also purify the sinful ‘black’ soul.

Sirih Box, first half of the 18th
century
Photo: Kunstmuseum Den Haag



Sirih Box



Jovanka Wanadya



Jovanka Wanadya conducts research into the political and legal consequences of (post-) colonial heritage practices in present-day Indonesia as a sinologist and Master's student in Anthropology at National Taiwan University. She pays special attention to the management of UNESCO sites such as Borobudur and Sangiran, but is also intrigued by the social dynamics between the Taiwanese Aborigines and the Han Chinese people.

“In the colonial period, chewing sirih was a popular pastime among the indigenous population, especially the men. Workers in particular had sirih leaves with them, so that the stimulating effect made the hard work somewhat bearable. Women were more concerned with the sale of this stimulant. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) had a lucrative trade in sirih and sirih boxes throughout the Indian archipelago and elsewhere in Asia.

This box is made of tropical ebony in the Dutch East Indies and contains silver ornaments. Most sirih boxes date from the 18th century; they can also be made of tortoise shell, ivory, or mother of pearl and are therefore very expensive. There is a possibility that sirih boxes were also made on the Chinese mainland by Chinese craftsmen. Given the materials and the labour-intensive process, only wealthy Europeans were able to purchase or have such boxes made. These luxurious objects were often placed in the reception area of houses, so that guests were impressed by the prosperity of the host. Less prosperous people also had sirih boxes, but made from simpler materials, of course.”



Sirih Box, first half of the 18th century
Ebony, silver, metal,
12 x 25.2 x 15.7 cm
Object number AB24358
On permanent loan to
Kunstmuseum Den Haag
Photo: Kunstmuseum
Den Haag



Wim Manuhutu

“A sirih box contains the necessities for chewing sirih and pinang. This is a hospitality ritual that is widespread in Southeast Asia and on many islands in the Indonesian archipelago.

The leaf of the betel tree (sirih) is put in the mouth together with the areca nut (pinang) and some lime (kapur), after which everything is chewed but not eaten. The nut gives off a red colour which stains the mouth. Both the leaf and the fruit have a slightly stimulating effect that also suppresses the feeling of hunger.

The Sirih-Pinang ritual has traditionally been a way to welcome guests, show respect, and create a good atmosphere together.

The joint chewing of sirih and pinang is seen in some communities of the archipelago as a necessary step in discussing traditions. This is the case, for example, in the Moluccas and in Papua.

In colonial society, it was not customary for Europeans to actively participate in the ritual, but the possibility of the ritual was always taken into account when meeting Indonesian guests in a traditional setting. That is why it was also advisable for European officials to have a sirih box at hand to offer guests.”



Wim Manuhutu studied History at Utrecht University where he specialized in the history of Indonesia. From 1987 to 2009 he was director of the Moluccan Historical Museum. He is now active as Manuzu in the field of heritage, culture, and diversity. He is also a teacher at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Photo: Maria Lamslag



Eveline Sint Nicolaas



Eveline Sint Nicolaas is a senior curator of history at the Rijksmuseum. In 2018 her book *Ketens en banden. Suriname en Nederland sinds 1600* (Shackles and Bonds: Suriname and the Netherlands since 1600), on the Suriname collection of the Rijksmuseum was released. Eveline leads the team of curators who are preparing an exhibition on the history of Dutch slavery in autumn of 2020. She is also chairman of the Terminology work group at the Rijksmuseum.

“The fact that very expensive boxes were made for storing the various ingredients and the necessary tools shows that the chewing of sirih was also done among the higher classes. Pleasure would have been the reason for using it, instead of hard work or hunger. Offering sirih was a special sign of hospitality.

These kinds of boxes can be found in a number of museums in the Netherlands, where they are often included in the collection as an example of a luxury product that was used in Asia by high colonial society or as a diplomatic gift. But can we also look at these boxes differently? For example, who made them? This box was made in the 18th century in Batavia, the administrative centre of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) region. There was a large craftsmen’s quarter in the vicinity of the castle where guns were cast, silversmiths were at work, but also, for example, furniture makers and lacquerers. One of those silversmiths is known to have had enslaved people working for him. These were skilled craftsmen who were registered as silversmiths. Perhaps the silver of this beautiful sirih box has been forged by an enslaved person? With that knowledge I look at this sirih box much differently.”

The Sirih-Pinang ritual has traditionally been a way to welcome guests, show respect, and create a good atmosphere together.

Dolf Henkes (1903-1989),
'Negro Boy – Curaçao', 1946
© Cultural Heritage Agency of
the Netherlands, bequest Dolf
Henkes



'Negro Boy – Curaçao'



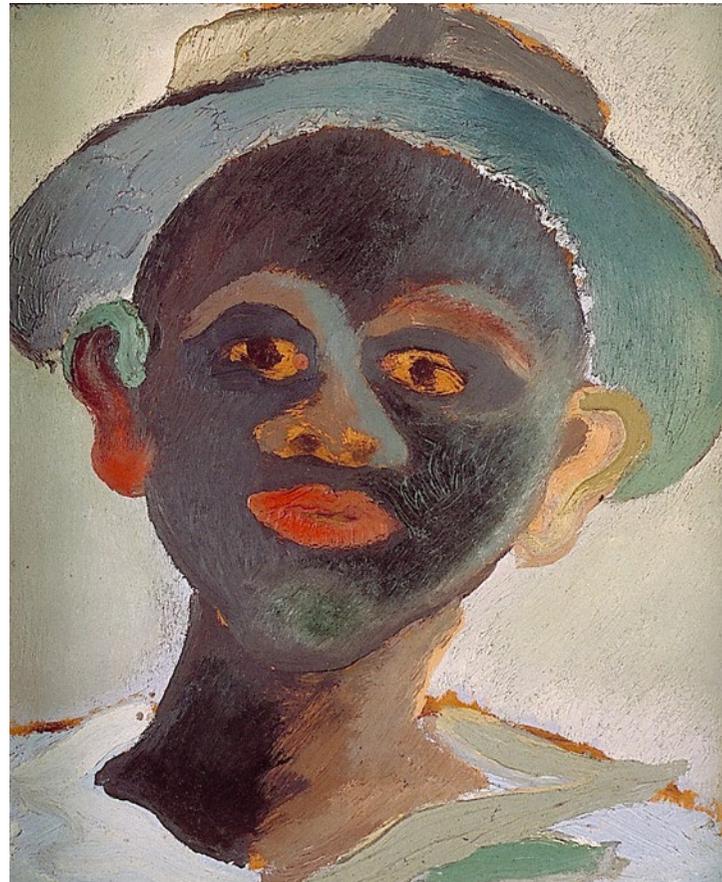
Tirzo Martha



Tirzo Martha's urge and need to create art stems not from his ability to be creative, but from his humanitarian and social involvement. His work is absolute chaos consisting of objects, materials, and emotions that are brought together in a baroque form: a rough composition that bears the beauty of people's hopes and dreams.

"History is nowadays often complemented by many words such as 'research', 'our past', 'consciousness' and the like. The subject history has therefore set goals for itself, such as being able to explain the phenomena we see today. A history is based on facts and perspectives presented through research conducted by historians. Remarkably often, documents on history lack the human element, the person who writes and who is being written about, their feelings, purpose, involvement, attitude etc. with regard to what has been written. It seems that people and their senses have been completely forgotten in these pieces from a too contemporary perspective.

The painting '*Negerjongen – Curaçao*' ('Negro Boy – Curaçao') is a good representation of the painter and his personal perception of the boy at that time. Instead of written words, a source is displayed through an image. Despite his choice of title, he shows more than just what can be expressed by words."



It seems that people and their senses have been completely forgotten...

Dolf Henkes (1903-1989),
'*Negro Boy – Curaçao*', 1946
Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 cm
Object number AB13199
© Cultural Heritage Agency of
the Netherlands, bequest Dolf
Henkes



Aspha Bijnaar

“It is a ‘negro’ and it is a boy from Curaçao. What’s the boy’s name? We will never know. The painting was made in 1946, 83 years after the Netherlands abolished slavery in its colonies, which included Curaçao. The boy is looking at you with his lively eyes. A penny for his thoughts – but it is certain that slavery was just one grandparent ago for him, better put using the incomparable words from a 2006 Kroesje poster: *‘De slavernij is pas twee bejaarden geleden’* (Slavery was but two grandparents ago). No doubt this boy has had a grandfather or grandmother who has experienced slavery personally. In 2005 I interviewed 71-year-old Frans in Suriname who had spent a large part of his youth on the Surinamese plantation Liefdenshoek. There he lived with his parents, uncles, aunts, and grandparents. He remembered his grandfather as a light brown, tall man who always stood straight as an arrow. He had a special memory of his grandfather’s back. He and his brothers were always playing with it, stroking, caressing, scratching, climbing. ‘But grandpa, how did you get that big scar in the middle of your back?’ he once asked him. ‘My dear child,’ the grandfather replied, ‘I was beaten by the master.’ ‘But why, what did you do?’ the grandson asked. ‘It was slavery, boy, that is how things went in those days.’ The grandfather and his peers never spontaneously said anything more about that time. The tradition of the great silence, the great forgetting that immediately manifests itself in a people after traumas such as slavery and war, took place here. Frans never forgot the scar on his grandfather’s back though.”



Aspha Bijnaar is an independent researcher and director of the EducatieStudio foundation. She studied Sociology and obtained her PhD in 2002 at the University of Amsterdam. As an independent researcher, writer, and concept developer, Bijnaar has worked on various scientific publications, exhibitions, theatre performances, and curricula in the field of slavery, its heritage and legacy, and WW2. Photo: Leon Coetzier



Nathalie Menke



Nathalie Menke studied Art History and European Studies on Society, Science and Technology. In 2002, she mapped out Dolf Henkes' oeuvre for the 100-year Dolf Henkes Foundation. She is a loan advisor to the Art Collections department of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and is a board member of the Dolf Henkes Foundation.

“The Rotterdam artist Dolf Henkes boarded the boat to Curaçao at the end of 1945 at the invitation of his Rotterdam friend, mission doctor and artist Chris Engels. The reason for this visit was a commission for a wall painting in the chapel of the Saint Elisabeth Hospital in Otrobanda. Henkes was to stay in Curaçao until 1947.

Henkes was able to provide for his living in that period because Engels introduced him to the Curaçao establishment. He received commissions for portraits of the governor and his wife, the portrait of Father Hulsman, wall paintings at Hato airport, and colour designs for the interior of Zeemanshuis (seamen's institute) Stella Maris.

After dark years of war in Rotterdam, the colours, the light, and the everyday life made a deep impression. And just like in Rotterdam, ordinary people were an important source of inspiration for him. This boy's portrait is one of the many anonymous portraits that Henkes made in addition to commissioned work. In this free work he experimented with colour, technique, and form.

In Curaçao Henkes walked among the predominantly white elite who had control of the government, cultural life, and the economy, but he also had an eye for the colourful population. He drew and painted both worlds. His oeuvre therefore is a testimony to the social relations in Curaçao in the second half of the forties.”

Ferdinand Heilbuth (1826-1889),
A Stroll in the Bois de Boulogne, 1860



A Stroll in the Bois de Boulogne

Simone Zeefuik



Simone Zeefuik is a writer, programmer, and organizer. In her work she focuses on representation, inclusiveness, and Black Joy in relation to museums, film, theatre, and protests against #FortEU's colonial asylum policy. Among other things, she is a programmer at Bijlmer Parktheater in Amsterdam and guest lecturer in the Afro-Dutch Studies course initiated by Zawdie Sandvliet.

“This painting by Heilbuth shows a white child with her white nanny and a Black boy. The position of the boy in relation to the two figures in front of him, in conjunction with his skin colour and the fact that he is clearly carrying the girl’s things provide important information about the place imposed upon him in this company. Heilbuth lived in one of the four centuries in which white Europeans enslaved, bought, sold, and treated Black people as commodities. A normalized part of this human trafficking for the vast majority of white Europeans was the ‘gifting’ of Black children to white families. The current description in the database of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE), ‘Nanny with girl and coloured boy’, is part of a belief that white people are the only people in the world whose skin colour should not be mentioned. This misconception is based on the false confidence that being white is considered normal and neutral.”



Ferdinand Heilbuth (1826-1889), *A Stroll in the Bois de Boulogne*, 1860
Oil on canvas, 97 x 75 cm
Object number R818
On permanent loan to a non-museum organization



Dineke Stam

“Ferdinand Heilbuth painted elegant women in open-air settings; their names are seldom mentioned. It is also not known who is depicted on this canvas. The central figure in the painting is the young girl. It looks as if she were born into a wealthy European family. She is out and about with two servants in the Bois de Boulogne in Paris. An adult maid, a white woman, carries her hoop. A small dark man with a striking hat walks behind her and holds her red cloak or blanket.

From the 17th century onward, it often happened that people from Africa, Asia, or the Americas worked in European courts. Esther Schreuder has described the life story of two of them in her book *Cupido en Sideron. Twee Moren aan het hof van Oranje* (Balans 2017) (Cupido and Sideron, two Moors of the Court of the Netherlands). At a young age, they were given as gifts to Stadtholder Willem V to serve as a ‘court Moor’ in the extensive court. Perhaps something similar happened to the man of colour in this painting. Or was he taken by a plantation or slave owner from one of the French colonies before the abolition of slavery in 1848?”

Or was he taken by a plantation or slave owner from one of the French colonies before the abolition of slavery in 1848?



Dineke Stam is a historian. She worked as a researcher and exhibition curator at the Anne Frank House until 2001. She was later the national project leader for Intercultural Programmes in the Heritage Sector at the Museums Association. Since 2005 she has been an independent researcher, publicist, curator, and advisor in the cultural and heritage sector, with expertise in the history of slavery, the shoah, and gender and women’s history.



Hanna Pennock



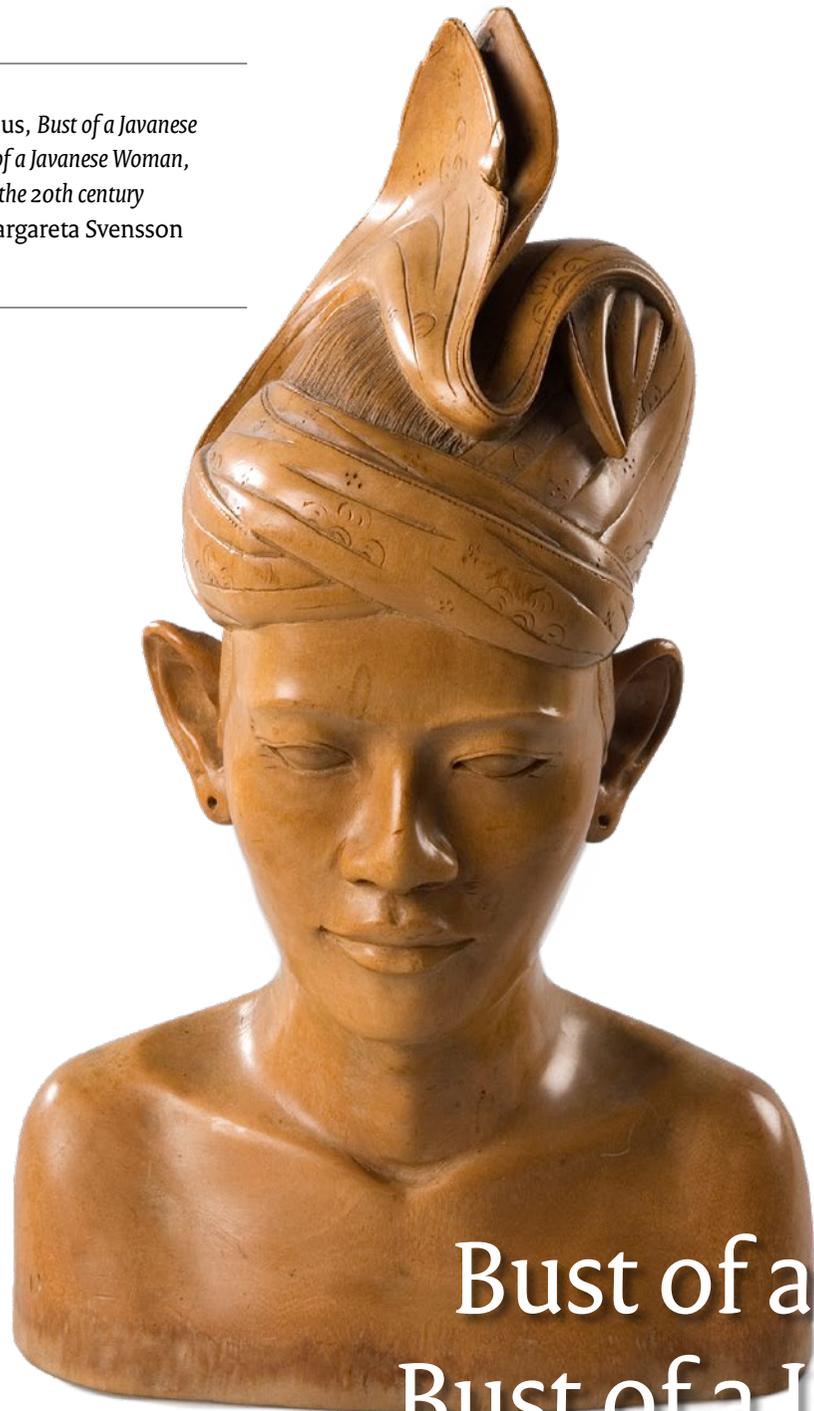
Hanna Pennock is an art historian specialized in the 19th century and modern art. She is a senior advisor at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and is project leader of the study *Traces of Slavery and Colonial History* in the Art Collection as well as this publication.

“The shining centrepiece of this carefully composed painting is the girl in her white dress. She pulls a toy bunny (also white) that is beating on a drum. She is walking hand in hand with a nanny, who carries her hoop. It is a summer stroll in one of the Parisian parks in the mid-19th century. A boy is walking behind her, carrying her shawl.

This is a genre painting, an anecdotal scene, pleasant and without any intention of social criticism. Perhaps the painter worked from life using live models. However, his figures are not recognizable people – they are types. The canvas was painted in the studio: open-air painting was still hardly practiced at the time.

So what is that black boy doing there, that ‘young negro servant’ as he was described on the inventory card at the private donation in 1955? We don’t see him in any other depictions. Did he even exist? The German genre painter Heilbuth copied his *Stroll in the Bois de Boulogne* from a famous painting by his compatriot Ludwig Knaus (1829-1910) who had settled in Paris in 1852. In 1855, Knaus showed *La Promenade* at the Salon where the French State purchased the canvas for 8,000 francs. He made several versions of it, one of which is in the Louvre. And this depiction is still popular: you can find a lithograph, a *Kunstdruck*, or a poster of it on the internet at a bargain price.”

*Anonymous, Bust of a Javanese Man;
Bust of a Javanese Woman,
first half of the 20th century*
Photo: Margareta Svensson



Bust of a Javanese Man;
Bust of a Javanese Woman



Jovanka Wanadya



Jovanka Wanadya conducts research into the political and legal consequences of (post-) colonial heritage practices in present-day Indonesia as a sinologist and Master's student in Anthropology at National Taiwan University. She pays special attention to the management of UNESCO sites such as Borobudur and Sangiran, but is also intrigued by the social dynamics between the Taiwanese Aborigines and the Han Chinese people.

“These busts, as well as the [water buffalo](#), the [Landscape with sawas](#) and the [sirih box](#), were transferred to the Netherlands by the Dutch High Commissioner in Jakarta in the 1960s. The objects are part of the so-called National Collection of the Dutch East Indies. In the broadest sense of the interpretation, this was a loose art collection from the Dutch colonial administration that was located in the government palaces in Jakarta (Batavia) and Bogor (Buitenzorg). Only a few days after the transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of Indonesia on 27 December 1949, these objects were removed from the buildings. Their provenance is cumbersome and curious. The National Collection mainly consists of governor-general portraits, but also a selection of decorative and functional objects, such as sculptures and weapons.

These two busts were made during the 20th century from young, tropical djatihout ('kayu jati') or palm wood and were used as interior decoration. The Balinese characteristics of these busts can be seen in the headdresses: the man wears an 'udeng' and the woman a 'selendang'. An 'udeng' is worn exclusively by men (regardless of his caste) and exists in various colours and patterns. The function of an 'udeng' is primarily to protect the head from the sun, but must also be worn during religious ceremonies. It may be that the person depicted has been someone who has often done work in the heat. No motif can be determined from the 'udeng' of the male bust. Given the simple finish of the 'udeng', the man may be an average Balinese. The 'selendang' can be translated loosely as 'a wrap' and is multifunctional. A 'selendang' is part of the traditional dress of various ethnicities in Indonesia and is only worn by women. In this case the 'selendang' is wrapped around the head to keep the long hair of the woman in order.”



Anonymous, *Bust of a Javanese Man; Bust of a Javanese Woman, first half of the 20th century*
Palmwood, 34 x 20 x 16 cm (man) and 27 x 21 x 15 cm (woman)
Object number R3511; R3512
Photo: Margareta Svensson



Dorian Meijnen

“These two palmwood busts were shipped from the Jakarta High Commissioner to the Netherlands in 1961. They were made in the first half of the 20th century, but the artist is unknown. This may imply that these busts were not so much appreciated because of their artistic qualities, but were intended for a faster market, such as tourists.

The busts form a whole in all kinds of ways. The fact that the faces, shoulders, and chest are almost identical suggests that this is not so much about representing a specific person as a generalized image of a Javanese man and woman. The only form of decoration is a decorated cloth, which we call an ‘udeng’ for the man and a ‘tenguluk’ for the woman. The fact that both headwear contain the same pattern only suggests more coherence. What is missing in these busts is the large traditional ear ornament (‘soeweng’). What remains is a stretched ear lobe, without an earring.”



Dorian Meijnen obtained a Master's in Museums and Collections from Leiden University. She focused on interiors from the 1950s in museological collections. For the collection of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, she devises solutions for objects that currently lie dormant in the depot.



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo is the founder of Heritage hands-on. She studied Sociology, Urban Planning, and Sustainable Development, and is preparing a dissertation at Leiden University about developments in heritage in Indonesia. Hasti received the UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award and fellowships from LEAD (Leadership for Environment and Development) and Salzburg Global Seminar.

“The style of headscarf of this pair is typical of many areas in Indonesia, not only on Java, as it can also be found on Bali or Sumatra. The man’s headscarf is probably from Bali. A Balinese headscarf (‘udeng’) has different colours for different ceremonies. The woman’s headscarf has no specific style and can come from anywhere. It is a style that is often used by married women, mothers, and grandmothers. Unmarried and young women usually wear their headscarves in a different way.

Every region in Indonesia has different styles of headscarves, and sometimes there are multiple styles in each region. For example, in West Java there are at least 12 headscarf styles for men, each with a name and purpose. In Central Java there are at least 4 types of headscarves (‘blangkon’) for men. These days, a headscarf is mostly worn in rural areas and is seen as a symbol of a traditional lifestyle of the past. The spiritual purpose of wearing a headscarf is to chase away demons. It also has practical uses, such as for packing something or as a cushion when carrying objects on the head. A headscarf can also be a sign of a social position in daily life, or during a ceremony.”

These days, a headscarf is mostly worn in rural areas and is seen as a symbol of a traditional lifestyle of the past.

Nicolaes van Ravesteyn
(1661-1750), *Portrait of Anna de Bye*
(1636-1713), *Wife of Jacob van den
Steen*, c. 1690



A portrait painting of a woman, Anna de Bye, seated and looking towards the viewer. She is wearing a dark, off-the-shoulder dress with a white lace collar and a pearl necklace. Her hands are resting on her lap. To her left, a still life arrangement includes a basket of fruit, a white cloth, and a dark object. The background is dark with a red curtain on the right.

Portrait of Anna de Bye

Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis



After studying Art History, Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis worked in The Hague for the National Library of the Netherlands and the Iconografisch Bureau. With the support of the Dutch Research Council (NWO), he wrote his dissertation on the Utrecht painter and architect Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638). Since 2002 he has been curator of historic art at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

“Next to a wealthy woman is a coloured boy holding a wicker basket with grapes, apples, and other fruit in his hands. He looks up towards the lady. She looks at the observer without paying attention to him. The boy, whose name is unknown, wears a cravat knotted around his neck and a gold ring in his right ear. Anna wears a precious pearl necklace and earrings. Pearls were mainly collected by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) from the Gulf of Mannar, between South India and Sri Lanka.

The painting, together with ten other portraits, was donated to the State in 1971 by the Van den Steen van Ommeren family and is one of a group of six portraits attributed to Nicolaes van Ravesteyn. It dates from around 1690. Anna de Bye, Lady of Wayesteyn, was 54 years old and a widow at the time. Whether she actually had a coloured servant is not known. Of the more than thirty portraits that are attributed to Nicolaes van Ravesteyn, six include coloured servants. In addition to the portrait discussed here, there are five of high-ranking officers. Four of them are Scottish state officials, including Hugh Mackay of Scoury, the brother-in-law of Anna de Bye. The fifth is the presumed portrait of Anna's son-in-law Isaac de Perponcher Sedlnitsky, commander of Hulst.”



Nicolaes van Ravesteyn (1661-1750), *Portrait of Anna de Bye* (1636-1713), *Wife of Jacob van den Steen*, c. 1690
Oil on canvas, 85 x 74 cm
Object number C2014



Jessica de Abreu

“A white woman with a pearl necklace is mainly concerned with straightening her scarf that is slipping off her shoulders onto her dress. A little black boy looks up at the lady; she looks straight ahead. The boy is wearing dark clothing with a white collar.

We see twilight in a forest behind the boy; we see a shimmering red curtain behind the lady. It can be observed in various ways how the portrait is primarily focused on the woman. Despite the presence of the boy in the background, the light of the painting is entirely focused on the lady and her dress. This makes the boy stand out less in the dark background, causing him to slowly disappear from our focus. In Western imaging, a young person of African descent was both a servant who once existed, and a status symbol. The lady is Anna de Bye, who was the wife of Jacob van den Steen and came from a wealthy family. The name of a young black servant as in this white portrait often remains unknown.”



Jessica de Abreu studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and Culture, Organization and Management at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her work focuses on the African diaspora, postcolonial perspectives, and intersectionality. She is a co-founder of The Black Archives, a historical archive that focuses on black history in the Netherlands and beyond. Photo: Marcel Wogram



Karwan Fatah-Black



Karwan Fatah-Black is a lecturer and researcher at Leiden University and secretary of the Royal Netherlands Historical Society. He is specialized in the history of colonialism, slavery, and early modern globalization. He is also a member of the Commissie ter Herijking van de Canon (Canon review committee).

“The Republic of the United Netherlands was involved in overseas warfare, colonization, and slavery for military-strategic and economic reasons. In doing so, the Republic followed the paths that had previously been followed by the Portuguese and Spaniards. But looking at this portrait, the question arises of whether there was also a cultural dimension to the desire to govern slave colonies overseas. Black servants were a popular element in portraits of nobility, merchants, and administrators among the courts of Frederik Hendrik and William III. Along with pearls and exotic fruits, the subjects showed to their peers that they knew the ways of the world and that they also had authority in that world. Was the Amsterdam purchase of Suriname motivated solely by the potential benefits that it would bring, or was the aim to provide the patroness of Amsterdam with a black servant of her own?”

... looking at this portrait, the question arises of whether there was also a cultural dimension to the desire to govern slave colonies overseas.

Leo Eland (1884-1952),
Landscape with Sawahs, 1917
Photo: Margareta Svensson



Landscape with Sawahs



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo is the founder of Heritage hands-on. She studied Sociology, Urban Planning, and Sustainable Development, and is preparing a dissertation at Leiden University about developments in heritage in Indonesia. Hasti received the UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award and fellowships from LEAD (Leadership for Environment and Development) and Salzburg Global Seminar.

“In primary school, during the first drawing lesson, every Indonesian child is instructed to draw two inverted triangles as a symbol of two mountains. It often features a sunrise between the two mountains. The rest of the page is for the ‘sawah’, the rice field, depicted as geometric lines with some farmers bending their bodies to plant the ‘padie’. Blue skies with clouds and flying birds usually provide the finishing touch. It is exactly as this painting essentially shows, although this depiction shows more advanced painting skills.

The rice field, the mountains, the blue sky, birds, and the farmers are a symbol of natural wealth, hardworking labour and rural life in Indonesia. Paintings such as these with a detailed frame hung in the home of conservative old-style Indonesians. This type of landscape painting is still offered for sale by street vendors in tourist areas such as Yogyakarta or Denpasar.”



Leo Eland (1884-1952),
Landscape with Sawahs, 1917
Oil on canvas, 59 x 118 cm
Object number R3573
On permanent loan to a
non-museum organization
Photo: Margareta Svensson



Wim Manuhutu

“This work by Leo Eland, who was born in Salatiga (Java), fits in with the tradition of the *Mooi-Indië* (beautiful Indies) movement that was popular with the European public in what was then the Dutch East Indies. The landscapes often show nature or a rustic environment: farmers are working on the ‘sawah’. Such depictions sketch an image of the colony where natural beauty and social tranquility predominate. In this regard, this movement can be considered as confirmation of the status quo.

That is also the reason why an emerging group of Indonesian artists began to rebel against the *Mooi-Indië* movement already in colonial times, because they felt that it was ignoring what was actually happening. These artists wanted to realistically portray the lives of the population. After the independence of Indonesia, the work of the *Mooi-Indië* artists fell into oblivion for decades, outside of a small circle of enthusiasts. That has now changed. With the rise of a wealthy middle class in Indonesia, there is now also renewed interest in the genre, which is reflected in rising prices on the art market.”



Wim Manuhutu studied History at Utrecht University where he specialized in the history of Indonesia. From 1987 to 2009 he was director of the Moluccan Historical Museum. He is now active as Manuzu in the field of heritage, culture, and diversity. He is also a teacher at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Photo: Maria Lamslag



Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis



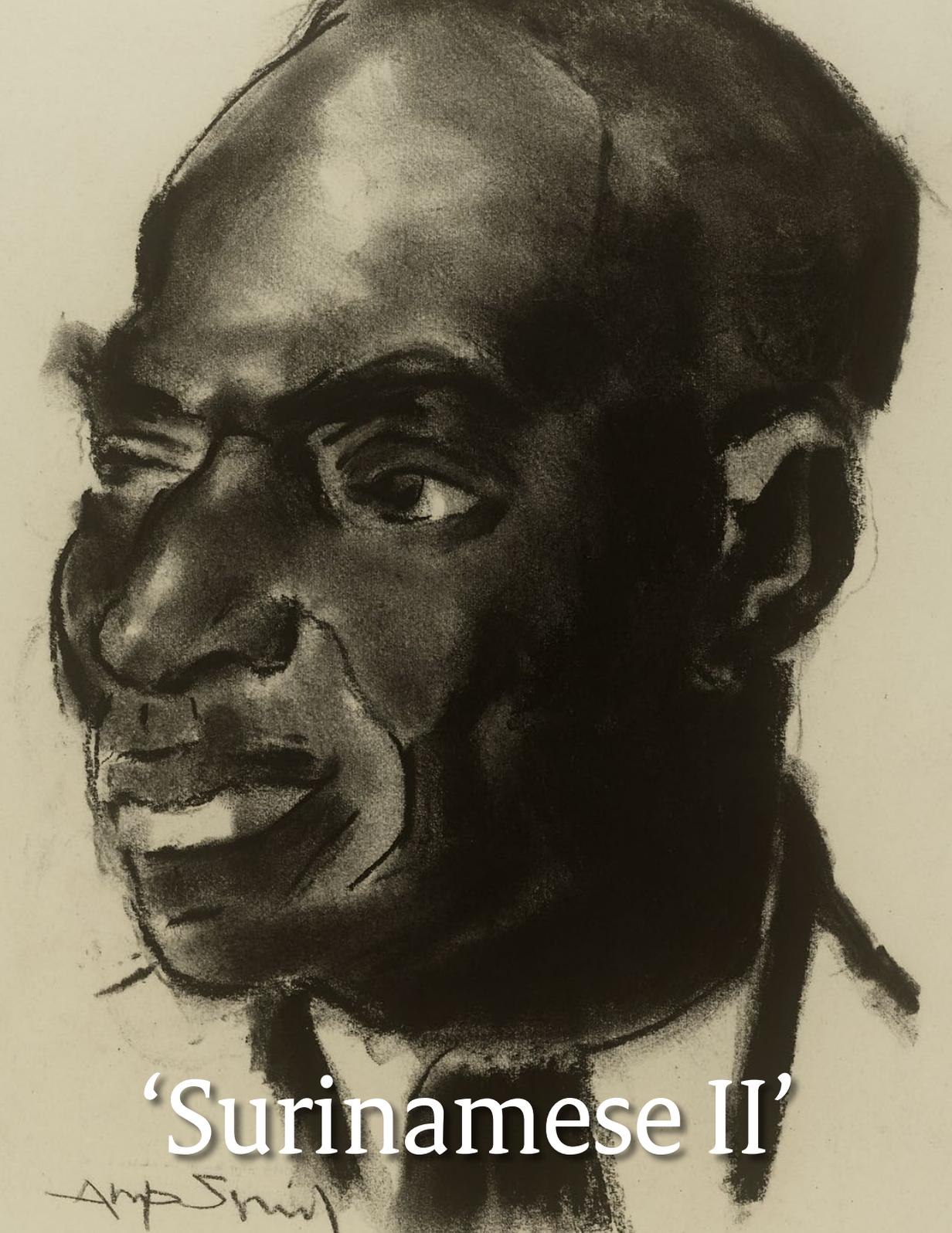
After studying Art History, Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis worked in The Hague for the National Library of the Netherlands and the Iconografisch Bureau. With the support of the Dutch Research Council (NWO), he wrote his dissertation on the Utrecht painter and architect Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638). Since 2002 he has been curator of historic art at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

“Leo Eland is one of the best known *Mooi-Indië* (beautiful Indies) painters. The vast majority of his work represents landscapes of Java and Sumatra. He and his twin brother Arthur were born in 1882 in Salatiga in Central Java. Their father was a KNIL (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army) officer. Eland started as a draftsman at the topographical department near Batavia and only started painting at a later age. He received advice from his friend, the painter Charles Dake Jr. He would make dioramas with him in 1915 for the World Exhibition in San Francisco. Eland later made other large dioramas for international exhibitions. These dioramas depicted Indian landscapes with painted backgrounds and sculpted figures to scale. The largest, in New York in 1939, was 32 by 10 metres. In 1920 Eland left the Indies and settled in The Hague. There he opened an art gallery in 1936 where he almost exclusively showed his Indian landscapes. These were mostly based on photos, for example those of photographer C.B. Nieuwenhuis, with whom he had made a journey through Kerenci in Sumatra in 1919.

This *Landscape with Sawahs* comes from the State collection in the Dutch East Indies. Around 1949/1950 it hung at Rijswijk Palace in Jakarta and in 1961 it was sent to the Netherlands by the High Commissioner as part of the [National Collection of the Dutch East Indies](#).”

Such depictions sketch an image of the colony where natural beauty and social tranquility predominate.

Amp Smit (1903-1976),
'Surinamese II', 1950-1957



'Surinamese II'

Amp Smit



Aspha Bijnaar



Aspha Bijnaar is an independent researcher and director of the *EducatieStudio* foundation. She studied Sociology and obtained her PhD in 2002 at the University of Amsterdam. As an independent researcher, writer, and concept developer, Bijnaar has worked on various scientific publications, exhibitions, theatre performances, and curricula in the field of slavery, its heritage and legacy, and WW2. Photo: Leon Coetzier

“We are looking at a black man – a Surinamese man as revealed in the title. His head has a distinct shape and his face bears striking features. The artist paid specific attention to facial expression. He is wearing a necktie over a light-coloured shirt. His hair is carefully coiffed and neatly parted. The picture was drawn in the 1950s, a quarter of a century before the massive migration of Surinamese people to the Netherlands would begin. The Surinamese who came here in the 1950s were highly educated, were from better backgrounds, and came here to work or study. They ended up in legal professions, academic education, or civil service. A second group of immigrants were those who travelled to the Netherlands in the 1960s for a better economic future. This group became teachers, nurses, and labourers. When Suriname became independent in 1975, many Surinamese people did not trust the new future that would accompany it and bought a one-way ticket to the former homeland that had colonized them for centuries. They arrived at Schiphol en masse. Fortunately, the integration of the Surinamese worked out well. According to statistics, they are now one of the best integrated groups in the Netherlands.”



Amp Smit (1903-1976),
'Surinamese II', 1950-1957
Chalk on paper, 42.5 x 36 cm
Object number SZ10046



Fransje Kuyvenhoven

“When I saw this portrait I immediately thought of Sonny Boy, the main character from Annejet van der Zijl’s bestseller. The man in the drawing has no name, the drawing is called ‘*Surinamese II*’. Another drawing of him exists in the State collection, ‘*Surinamese I*’. The title is strange to say the least, because what modern portraits are called ‘Dutch’ or ‘Italian’? The man in the drawing, wearing a fitted white shirt with a necktie, smiles affectionately, as if he is looking at something with slightly disguised pleasure.

His identity remains unknown: inquiring with the artist’s family yielded nothing. Could he be a musician, enjoying his concert, looking at another band member, ready to begin his riff at the right time?

The creator Antonie Theodorus ‘Amp’ Smit was a versatile artist whose output included chalk and charcoal drawings, which he primarily worked on from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s. This drawing was acquired in 1958 for the State collection through the Beeldende Kunstenaarsregeling (Visual Artists Subsidy Scheme, BKR) which Smit used for years. Only one other similar drawing by Smit is known (to me) – a charcoal drawing – a full-length portrait of a dark-skinned man, a guitarist wearing a tuxedo, from the 1950s as well.”



Amp Smit (1903-1976),
'*Surinamese I*', 1950-1957



Art historian Fransje Kuyvenhoven is curator at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE). She is particularly interested in the origin of works of art. She likes nothing more than being in the depot and the archive and publishes her findings for a broader audience, including on the RCE website. Photo: Koos Breukel



Mitchell Esajas



Mitchell Esajas studied Business Administration and Anthropology. He is co-founder of New Urban Collective, a network for students and young professionals from various cultural backgrounds, and of The Black Archives. This archive focuses on the history, culture, and literature of black people in the Netherlands.

“This drawing of a dark-skinned man in a suit with a necktie and short hair reminds me of the fate of Surinamese migrants. Before the Second World War it was mainly the people from the upper class of Suriname who could afford to cross the ocean. Small numbers of stowaways also found their way to the Netherlands. Because of discrimination and a lack of education, they found it difficult to find work and some ended up as jazz musicians in the entertainment industry. Well-known Surinamese jazz musicians from this period are Teddy Cotton, Kid Dynamite, and Max Woiski Sr. They often dressed in suits, just like the person in this drawing.

After the war, more and more people from the working class migrated to the Netherlands to help with the reconstruction. More and more Surinamese people came to the Netherlands to study too. A movement for independence emerged among the changing and growing group of Surinamese people in the Netherlands. In the 1950s they organized commemorations and parties celebrating the abolition of slavery (Keti Koti), during which they visited Hotel Krasnapolsky in Amsterdam for the annual emancipation celebration, decked out in suits. This man could be one of the post-war workers who had dressed up nicely for a special occasion, perhaps a Keti Koti celebration.”

This man could be one of the post-war workers who had dressed up nicely for a special occasion, perhaps a Keti Koti celebration.

Marcus Lodovicus Antonius
Clifford (1670/75-1738),
Adriana Wilhelmina Burlamacchi
(1684-1760), 1730
Photo: Margareta Svensson



Adriana Wilhelmina Burlamacchi



Simone Zeefuik



Simone Zeefuik is a writer, programmer, and organizer. In her work she focuses on representation, inclusiveness, and Black Joy in relation to museums, film, theatre, and protests against #FortEU's colonial asylum policy. Among other things, she is a programmer at Bijlmer Parktheater in Amsterdam and guest lecturer in the Afro-Dutch Studies course initiated by Zawdie Sandvliet.

“This portrait of an unnamed Black child holding a basket of flowers next to Adriana Wilhelmina Burlamacchi illustrates a colonial and extremely dominant philosophy. The boy is wearing a silver collar, something Black people who were made into property and owned by white Europeans had to wear.

If the boy really existed, it is important not to label him with ‘name unknown’ and to reflect on what it means that his name is unregistered. The way in which he is now described in the collection records is extremely problematic: ‘Negro boy in white-red striped coat and silver collar.’ The n-word, the colonial term used to describe Black people in Eurocentric texts, is a racist word.

In the background of the portrait we see a park with a statue of Mercury, the Roman god of profit, trade, and travellers. Can we assume a connection with colonialism and the slave trade here?”



Marcus Lodovicus Antonius Clifford (1670/75-1738),
Adriana Wilhelmina Burlamacchi (1684-1760), 1730
Oil on canvas, 132 x 98 cm
Object number LM03297
Photo: Margareta Svensson



Lisa Lambrechts

“The title of this painting is exemplary of the Western art-historical narrative, which traditionally focuses on the white person portrayed. We do not gain any knowledge from the title about the presence of the black servant in the portrait. In the 17th century, however, Clifford made the choice to portray this black boy by Adriana’s side. His presence must therefore be regarded as an essential part of the portrait and its narrative. A very similar boy is also present in three other portraits of Clifford. Did this boy really exist or was he merely a figment of the artist’s imagination? This always seems to be the key question when writing about these types of figures that appear frequently in Dutch painting from 1660 onwards. Research into the archives of those who commissioned the portraits can lead to new insights. Baptism, marriage, and burial registers and notarial archives in particular deserve special attention and may yield interesting findings. It is important that we do not immediately dismiss these figures as secondary characters or imaginary additions. We must seriously consider the possibility that it concerns people of flesh and blood. In this way we can arrive at innovative multi-perspective narratives about these types of depictions.”

*We must seriously consider the possibility
that it concerns people of flesh and blood.*



Lisa Lambrechts is an art historian and is, due to her Belgian-Salvadorian background, interested in (post-)colonial themes. Her Master’s thesis on the representation of black people in 19th-century Belgian art was awarded the DiverGent Thesis Prize. For her Master’s in Curating Art and Cultures at the University of Amsterdam, she works as a curator in training at the Slavery Exhibition in the Rijksmuseum, which will open in 2020.



Margot Langelaan



Margot Langelaan is an advisor at the Art Collections department of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands where she conducts research into traces of the colonial past. She previously worked as a curator and director in museums and was a project leader for the Art & Architecture Thesaurus.

“Adriana Burlamacchi (1684-1760) married Johan Cornelis d’Abblain (1663-1721) at the age of sixteen. Her husband came from a distinguished family and left for the Dutch East Indies at a young age. During their marriage he was the regent of a children’s home in Haarlem, acting governor of the Cape of Good Hope, and counsel to the Dutch East Indies in Batavia where he died in 1721. Adriana was already a widow in this painting.

Next to Adriana is a dark-skinned person in a Moorish robe of gold and orange striped silk. He offers a basket of flowers and she holds a white flower in her hand. Clifford often painted portraits of distinguished people with the same background, gestures, and context. The French garden with conifers and the statue of Mercury, the god of commerce, are recognizable. The same dark-skinned servant also appears in another painting by Clifford.

Is the boy meant as an ornament? Or as a symbol of status? The care with which he is depicted is remarkable. The wealthy liked to be portrayed together with a servant wearing a Moorish costume. Despite the beautiful clothing and elegant posture, the boy gives the impression of subservience. The silver band around his neck is notable. This kind of band is called a ‘slave band’. We would like to know more about who this boy actually was.”

Lucebert (1924-1994),
'Snow Negro', 1974
© Stichting Lucebert (Lucebert
Foundation)



'Snow Negro'

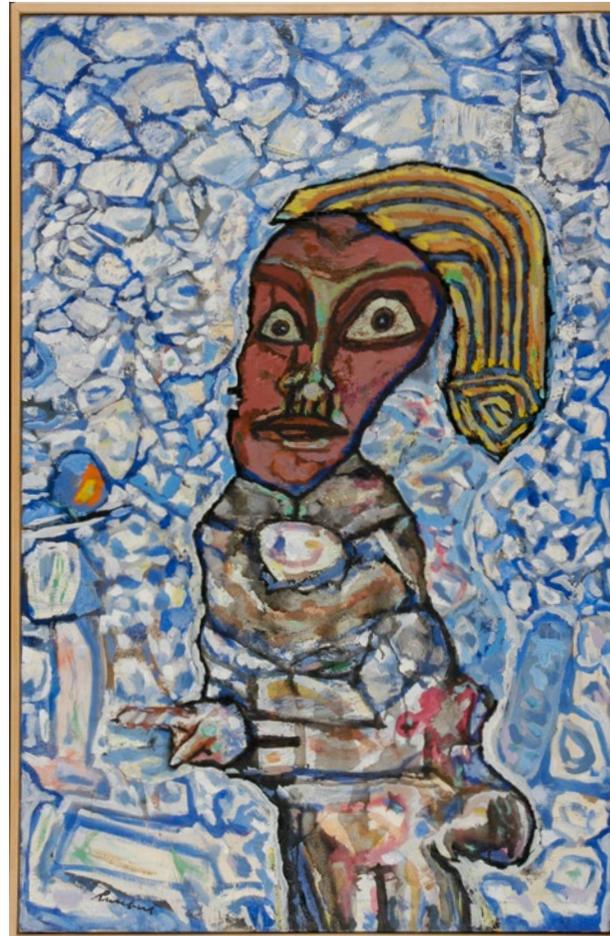


Simone Vermaat



Simone Vermaat studied Art History at Leiden University with a specialization in modern art. She is a senior curator for the 20th century and collection advisor at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

“Lucebert, pseudonym of Lubertus Swaanswijk, first emerged as a poet and later as a visual artist. He received widespread appreciation both domestically and abroad for his poems as well as his visual art. During his working life, he alternated between periods of intensive writing and painting. He drew every day, sometimes simple doodles on the handwritten first drafts of his poems, but he also made ‘poetry drawings’. Painting and poetry were separate activities for him, but the representations and titles of his paintings are often just as expressive and associative as his verses. His canvases are inhabited by mythical creatures and animals with portly figures. By the end of the 1960s, those creatures had become more monstrous and often bear distorted or caricatural features. They are strange and puzzling combinations of fantasy and reality, with something ominous to them. The painting ‘Sneeuwneger’ (‘Snow Negro’) with its odd title and alienating depiction is representative of his work from this period. For Lucebert, just like for his peers, the use of the word ‘Negro’ was not yet contested. Earlier, in 1959 Lucebert wrote the poem ‘*Er is een grote norse neger in mij neergedaald*’ (‘A big surly Negro descended on me’), addressing the Dutch slavery past. The painting is one of more than 200 paintings and 2000 works on paper that the Stichting Lucebert (Lucebert Foundation) donated to the State in 2006.”



Lucebert (1924-1994),
‘Snow Negro’, 1974
Oil on canvas, 100 x 65 cm
Object number AB18703
© Stichting Lucebert
(Lucebert Foundation)



Elmer Kolfin

“In 1974, Lucebert painted this work of a man with a frightened stare in a red-brown, mask-like face and a daft, yellow headdress enclosed by white fragments against a blue background. He titled it himself: ‘Sneeuwneger’ (‘Snow Negro’). As a double talent, poet and painter/illustrator, Lucebert did not handle language lightly. The title is alienating and associative. The combination of snow with black people is surprising. These types of clashes were just what Lucebert was after. He was affected by the fate of black people in a white world. The fact that he used a word that was common at the time, but not anymore, does not change that. Six years before he gave this painting its title, he said in an interview: ‘I am concerned about the Negroes. They have remained vulnerable in our society. They bear the brunt of us whites. It’s incomprehensible and outrageous... In a sense, they represent nothingness in our society. They are made jesters by white people.’ Based on the odd hat, the strange title, and the undertone of fear, he was still of the same opinion in 1974. Nothing had happened that would make him think differently. In that respect, despite adjustments to the language, not much has changed yet.”

These types of clashes were just what Lucebert was after. He was affected by the fate of black people in a white world.



Elmer Kolfin works as an art historian at the University of Amsterdam. His specialty is Dutch art from the 17th century. He regularly publishes on the depiction of black people in art and was (co-)curator of exhibitions on the same subject in 2008 (*Black is Beautiful*, De Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam) and in 2013 (*Slavernij verbeeld* (Slavery depicted), Special Collections, University of Amsterdam).
Photo: Gillissen



Aspha Bijnaar



Aspha Bijnaar is an independent researcher and director of the *EducatieStudio* foundation. She studied Sociology and obtained her PhD in 2002 at the University of Amsterdam. As an independent researcher, writer, and concept developer, Bijnaar has worked on various scientific publications, exhibitions, theatre performances, and curricula in the field of slavery, its heritage and legacy, and WW2. Photo: Leon Coetzier

“It takes some effort to see what you are looking at. A man with a jacket. He’s wrapping his arms around himself, pressing his jacket against his body. It is cold; it is snowing. The few blacks in the Netherlands only knew the snow in the textbooks from their home country in the former colonies. There, children were mainly taught about the homeland (the Netherlands): they had to memorize the names of all provinces and important rivers. They read books about Miep who ate *hutspot* (stew) or about Floris playing in the snow. It must be a strange feeling for a newly immigrated Surinamese or Antillean person to feel snow firsthand. The word ‘negro’ is usually associated with tropical areas such as Africa and the Caribbean, with nature, the wilderness, cheerfulness, and a desire to dance. Both the word and the associations with the word are seen as outdated, offensive, or derogatory nowadays. However, in the 1970s, such formulations were hardly contested. As such, Lucebert was free to title this painting ‘Sneeuwneger’ (‘Snow Negro’), as if he wanted to capture the contrast: a warm blooded ‘negro’ in the cold little country of the Netherlands.”

Ambrosius Bosschaert the
Younger (?-1645),
*Still Life with Fruit, Flowers and two
Cockatoos*, 1635
Photo: Centraal Museum Utrecht



Still Life with Fruit, Flowers and two Cockatoos



Lucy Geurts



Lucy Geurts completed her Master's in Art Sciences in 2018 at KU Leuven in Belgium. She is specialized in Dutch and Flemish art from the 16th and 17th centuries. She is currently working as a curator in training in historic art at the Centraal Museum Utrecht.

“Ambrosius Bosschaert the Younger was trained in painting by his father Ambrosius the Elder (1573-1621) and his uncle Balthasar van der Ast (1593/4-1657). He specialized in the still-life genre, in particular those of flowers and fruits. Although this ‘fruytage’ seems to be painted from nature, it is anything but. The arranged types of flowers and fruits grow in different seasons and are native to various countries.

Animal species, such as the two birds in this painting, were also brought from America, Asia, or Oceania by Dutch sailors and trading companies in the hope of selling them for a pretty penny in Europe. Keeping exotic bird species in aviaries and menageries was initially reserved for nobility, but from the second half of the 17th century the rich Dutch bourgeoisie could also afford this luxury. The marriage of the ‘Old World’ and the ‘New World’ in this painting thus bears witness not only to the many dubious trade relations that the Northern Netherlands maintained at the time, but also to the widespread interest in the ‘exotic.’”



Ambrosius Bosschaert the Younger (?-1645),
Still Life with Fruit, Flowers and two Cockatoos, 1635
Oil on canvas, 109.3 x 163.3 cm
Object number NK1828
On permanent loan to
Centraal Museum Utrecht
Photo: Centraal Museum Utrecht



Ineke Mok

[Fragment from a (fictitious) letter addressed to the painter Ambrosius Bosschaert II in Arnemuiden, 1635, in a modern translation. Signature illegible.]

Arnemuiden, 1635

*Dear Sir, Ambrosius Bosschaert,
Visiting my brother in the city, I recently admired a beautiful painting of yours. The fruits, the flowers, and the lizard came across as lifelike to me, as well as the lovely shell shaped like a horn, which one likely would not encounter on our beaches in Zeeland. I would like to ask you to create a similar still life for my wife. I also have a request that may seem strange to you: I would like to see the piece enlivened with one or more parrots. My wife is enchanted by these curious and wonderful birds and I was able to surprise her years ago with two specimens, a red macaw and a blue-and-yellow macaw, both from our fertile Berbice Colony. With a few cockatoos from the Moluccas, they reside in the aviary where my wife spends many hours every day.*

I hope to welcome you soon. On that occasion I can release the macaws for you in our newly built orangery so that you can also see them flying around. I can also show you the yellow-green calabashes, the seeds of which have been sent to me from the Americas as well. They are particularly large this year.



Ineke Mok, [Cultuursporen.nl](https://www.cultuursporen.nl), wrote her dissertation on the history of the construction of racial thinking in the Netherlands. As an independent researcher, she develops programmes on the Holocaust, racism, representation, and sexual diversity. She is specialized in the history of Dutch slavery and focuses on a broader audience, including the field of education.



René Dekker



René Dekker has been working as an ornithologist at Naturalis since 1991. He has been active as a birdwatcher since early childhood, a hobby that has brought him to the farthest corners of the world, including being surrounded by cockatoos in Indonesia and macaws in South America.

“Cockatoo or macaw. There is literally a world of difference. Cockatoos can be found from the Philippines, through East Indonesia to Australia. Macaws, on the other hand, live in Central and South America. This work by Bosschaert tells a very different story than the title *Still Life with Fruits, Flowers, and two Cockatoos* suggests. In fact they are not cockatoos, but macaws. There is no link to the Dutch East Indies and the Dutch East India Company (VOC), but with our earliest colonization of parts of South America. The depiction of this blue-and-yellow macaw and scarlet macaw from 1635 is one of the first of both species in Dutch painting. The birds are found in Suriname, but Europeans did not colonize it until 1650. Neither of the macaws could have come from former Dutch-Brazil, the northeast corner of Brazil where Johan Maurits landed in 1637. They are not native to this area. Furthermore, Bosschaert painted this work two years earlier. Where both species do exist and the specimens in the painting seem to come from, is British Guyana. The Netherlands founded a trading post there in 1616. The colourful macaws that easily survive the long sea voyage to the Netherlands are still popular as pets.”

In fact they are not cockatoos, but macaws. There is no link to the Dutch East Indies and the Dutch East India Company (VOC), but with our earliest colonization of parts of South America.

Georg Baus (1889-1971),
Bei den Kannibalen von Papua, 1936



‘Bei den Kannibalen von Papua’

Alexandra van Kleef

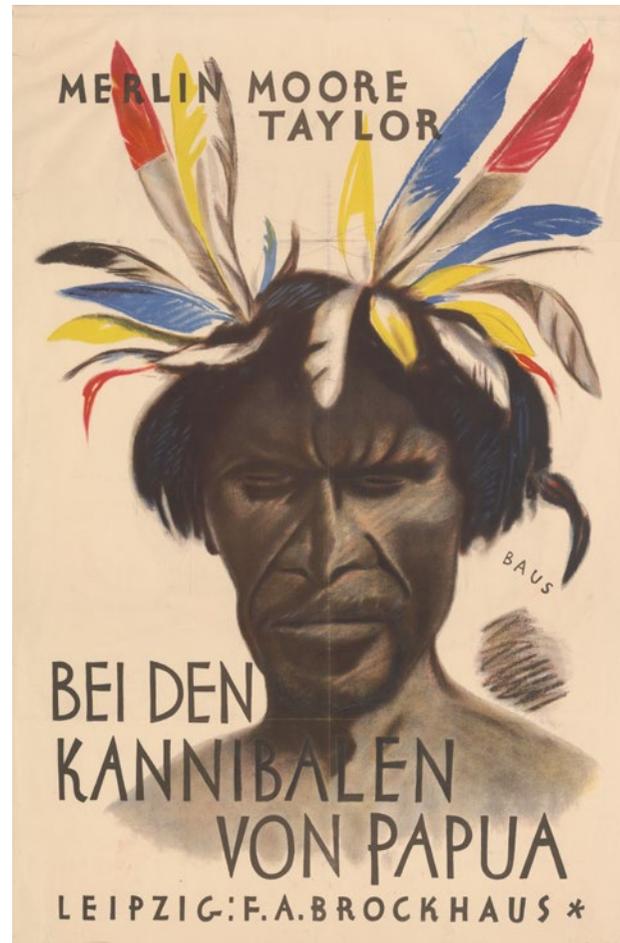


Alexandra van Kleef is an art historian specialized in collection management. She works in the art collections department of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands as a project manager for the relocation of the collection to the new CollectieCentrum Nederland. Together with the South African Museums Association, she also provides training in collection management and preservation in South Africa.

“The RCE has a large collection of posters, more than 6000 in total. They have very diverse subjects such as advertisements, exhibition announcements, and political themes. They can also be posters about the publication of a book, as is the case here.

Merlin Moore Taylor (1886-1939) was an American journalist from Batesville, Arkansas, and the writer of the book *Where Cannibals Roam* (1924), a description of Papua New Guinea. The poster was made for the German translation from 1925: *Bei den Kannibalen von Papua. Auf unbekanntem Pfaden im Innern Neuguineas*. The book was released again in America in 1926, with the title *The Heart of Black Papua*.

The book paints a clear portrait of the time, a time of voyages of discovery in an area where people from the Western world had hardly ever been before. The different titles and the writing style make it seem like an exciting adventure book: unknown terrain, dark jungles, and cannibals. The unfamiliarity ensures that the country and its inhabitants are seen as strange and even frightening.”



Georg Baus (1889-1971),
Bei den Kannibalen von Papua,
1936
Lithograph, 75.1 x 50.1 cm
Object number ABAF5130



Simone Zeefuik



Simone Zeefuik is a writer, programmer, and organizer. In her work she focuses on representation, inclusiveness, and Black Joy in relation to museums, film, theatre, and protests against #FortEU's colonial asylum policy. Among other things, she is a programmer at Bijlmer Parktheater in Amsterdam and guest lecturer in the Afro-Dutch Studies course initiated by Zawdie Sandvliet.

“Titles such as ‘Bei den Kannibalen von Papua’ (Where Cannibals Roam) are conceived by and intended for people who can only see populations to which they do not belong through the lenses of fear, astonishment, and ridicule. The illustration is the work of the German artist Georg Baus. From 1912 until the start of the first European war, also known as the First World War, he worked for F.A. Brockhaus, the publishing company that published the book *Bei den Kannibalen von Papua*.

In addition to *Bei den Kannibalen von Papua*, the journalist Merlin Moore Taylor (1886-1939) wrote several books, essays, and articles about Papua. The English editions were titled *The Heart of Black Papua*, *The White Gold Pirate*, and *The Place of Madness*.

The style in which the person is drawn shows the imagination and expectation of colonial ideas that form the basis of Eurocentric behavioural and social sciences. This approach to Black and non-Black population groups legitimizes and propagates the myth that whiteness and everything that goes with it is superior.”



Anniek Bakker



In June 2019 Anniek Bakker obtained a degree in collection management from Reinwardt Academy. For her graduation thesis she engaged in the in-depth study of drawing attention to the human zoo at the World Exhibition of 1883 in Amsterdam.

“This poster was meant to promote Merlin Moore Taylor’s book. A book that now gives an outdated and controversial impression of (a group of) Papuans. In a certain way these Papuans are exhibited to the public by this poster. Prejudices can arise from the depiction and the title. It is a complex object. The most striking thing about the drawing on the poster are the man’s features. His nose is large, but why is this emphasized? The colour around the eyes has been made darker which gives him an unfriendly and ominous appearance. The feathers, which are placed on top of his head, evoke a sense of ‘primitiveness’.

Because of the image that the poster creates of the Papuans, it resembles the phenomenon of the human zoo. The human zoo is an exhibition in which people with different ethnic backgrounds are exhibited to an audience. This was often the result of the culture in question being filtered through a Western lens. To what extent is this Papuan literally exhibited, both on the book and the poster, based on a Western viewpoint?”

To what extent is this Papuan literally exhibited, both on the book and the poster, based on a Western viewpoint?

Jos Seckel (1881-1945),
Javanese Nanny, n. d.



Javanese Nanny



Margot Langelaan



Margot Langelaan is an advisor at the Art Collections department of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands where she conducts research into traces of the colonial past. She previously worked as a curator and director in museums and was a project leader for the Art & Architecture Thesaurus.

“The beautiful appearance of the lady in the portrait fits with the stylized and colourful background of the painting. We do not know who this Javanese nanny was. In the early 20th century there were many nannies from the Dutch East Indies, also called ‘baboes’, in The Hague. It was preferred that the ‘baboe’ have a barely noticeable, yet careful presence. She was often dependent on the family with whom she came from the Dutch East Indies and stayed with them until old age.

The artist Jos Seckel lived and worked in The Hague at the time and was active there as a board member of the Verlotingsfonds (Lottery fund) of the artists society Pulchri Studio. The nannies were certainly a part of Seckel’s environment. He is also listed in the *Sumatra Post* as a member of the jury for an exhibition in Amsterdam. There were close contacts with the overseas territory. The painting *Javanese Nanny* was purchased by the government in 1939 with money from the Zomerzegelfonds (Summer stamp fund). Social considerations were of great importance when spending this fund: this is the way artists were supported. The art was often considered for the decoration of public spaces. *Javanese Nanny* was among the purchases from category A, the highest rated category.”



Jos Seckel (1881-1945),
Javanese Nanny, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 131 x 67 cm
Object number K339



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo is the founder of Heritage hands-on. She studied Sociology, Urban Planning, and Sustainable Development, and is preparing a dissertation at Leiden University about developments in heritage in Indonesia. Hasti received the UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award and fellowships from LEAD (Leadership for Environment and Development) and Salzburg Global Seminar.

“This lady must play an important role in a family with small children. She typically takes over the parenting role from the mother. Someone who sleeps, cares, and plays with the children, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This task only stops when she gets too old and is sick or dies. She usually remains single throughout her life and fully devotes herself to the adopted family she lives with.

My family had a nanny in Bandung, Indonesia. She raised me until she was too old to work, but she stayed with us until she died. Sometimes I went to her kampong on the outskirts of Bandung. We used public transportation, an ‘angkot’ (from ‘angkutan kota’, a small bus that can stop anywhere because there are no specific stops), and walked across long rice paddies to reach her modest hut. It was hot and tiring, but I always felt safe when I held her hands. I called her Enek, a short form of ‘grandma’ in Sundanese.

My Enek wore a ‘kebaya’, a long batik cloth that was worn like a sarong and her hair was always in ‘sanggul’ style. She looked exactly like the nanny in this painting. The only difference is that my Enek was Sundanese, West Javanese. The nanny in the painting must be from Central or East Java. When the term Java was used by the Dutch, it usually meant Central or East Java.”



Wim Manuhutu



Wim Manuhutu studied History at Utrecht University where he specialized in the history of Indonesia. From 1987 to 2009 he was director of the Moluccan Historical Museum. He is now active as Manuzu in the field of heritage, culture, and diversity. He is also a teacher at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Photo: Maria Lamslag

“In the colonial society of the Dutch East Indies, all (Indo) European families who could afford it had Indonesian servants who performed all kinds of tasks within the household. The female servants were usually referred to with the general term ‘baboe’. The daily care of the children was also the job of a female servant. That is why in Dutch East Indian literature she often plays a role in the childhood memories of authors. As a rule, servants were left behind when a family went to Europe for leave or after the end of employment or retirement. In some cases they were brought along. The so-called ‘sea baboes’ then lived with the families or in a guest house with colleagues. This was the case in The Hague, for example. It is possible that Seckel – who worked in Rotterdam and The Hague – asked one of them to act as a model for him. She is dressed in ‘sarong’ (wrap skirt) and ‘kebaya’ (white collarless blouse). Nowadays the term ‘baboe’ is no longer used because of the negative connotation of subservience in a colonial environment, but ‘pembantu’ (help) is used.”

As a rule, servants were left behind when a family went to Europe for leave or after the end of employment or retirement. In some cases they were brought along.

Anonymous,
Water Buffalo with Boy on its Back,
first half of the 20th century



Water Buffalo with Boy on its Back



Jovanka Wanadya



Jovanka Wanadya conducts research into the political and legal consequences of (post-) colonial heritage practices in present-day Indonesia as a sinologist and Master's student in Anthropology at National Taiwan University. She pays special attention to the management of UNESCO sites such as Borobudur and Sangiran, but is also intrigued by the social dynamics between the Taiwanese Aborigines and the Han Chinese people.

“A ‘kerbau’ or water buffalo is a pack animal that is used to cultivate the rice paddies. The boy is dressed, but barefoot, and sits on a bundle of firewood. In the rural East Indies, children often helped out on the land and worked almost as hard as the water buffalos. This is still the case today. The ‘sawah’ (rice paddy) is too muddy to wade through, which is why the boy does not wear footwear. In the 19th century in particular, at the time of major construction projects or harvests, workers or farmers had to facilitate the water buffalos themselves. With maximizing profit in mind, the colonial government did not offer any support. As a result, native workers were frequently at a disadvantage. They received no financial compensation and risked their entire livelihood by using their own water buffalo or tools. Another indication of the boy’s socio-economic background is his simple clothing. The Dutch Ethical Policy in the first half of the 20th century led the colonial government in the East Indies to require conventional dress. Indigenous people were only allowed to wear ‘indigenous’ or non-Western clothing, such as a sarong, kebaya, or whatever one could afford.”

The ‘sawah’ (rice paddy) is too muddy to wade through, which is why the boy does not wear footwear.



Anonymous, *Water Buffalo with Boy on its Back*, first half of the 20th century
Bronze, 18 x 30 x 16 cm
Object number R3509



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo



Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo is the founder of Heritage hands-on. She studied Sociology, Urban Planning, and Sustainable Development, and is preparing a dissertation at Leiden University about developments in heritage in Indonesia. Hasti received the UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award and fellowships from LEAD (Leadership for Environment and Development) and Salzburg Global Seminar.

“A buffalo, a boy and his ‘seruling bamboo’ (bamboo flute) are typical elements in Indonesian art, they are the subject of paintings, sculptures, sketches, films, stories, and much more. We call the boy ‘penggembala kerbau’, buffalo herder. He is depicted with a bare torso, in the context of a ‘sawah’ (rice paddy). The flute is made of bamboo which is associated with bamboo bushes that are commonly found in the countryside. The buffalo is the family’s most valuable treasure and is often described in children’s stories and traditional beliefs as an animal with spiritual power. The boy generally represents the stereotype of a modest and obedient son who does his part after returning from school in the afternoon.

The painters Sudjono Abdullah and Basoeki Abdullah are known for their works titled *Penggembala kerbau*. Sapardi Djoko Damono wrote a novel called *Hujan Bulan Juni* about the holy Kyai Slamet, a white buffalo from Keraton Kasunan, Surakarta, which is consecrated several times a year through ceremonies.”



Oscar Ekkelboom



Oscar Ekkelboom participates in the Master's programme Curating Art and Cultures at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and works as a curator in training at the Rijksmuseum's 20th century department. Before that he studied Art History in Nijmegen. His research focuses on artistic expressions of trauma and cultural memory in the 20th and 21st centuries.

"A boy sits upon an ox. It is a common theme in East Asian visual culture, but examples that are as detailed and true to nature as this one are rare. Especially in the Meiji period (1868-1912), the ox with 'bokudo', a young ox herdsman (with flute), became a popular subject in Japan.

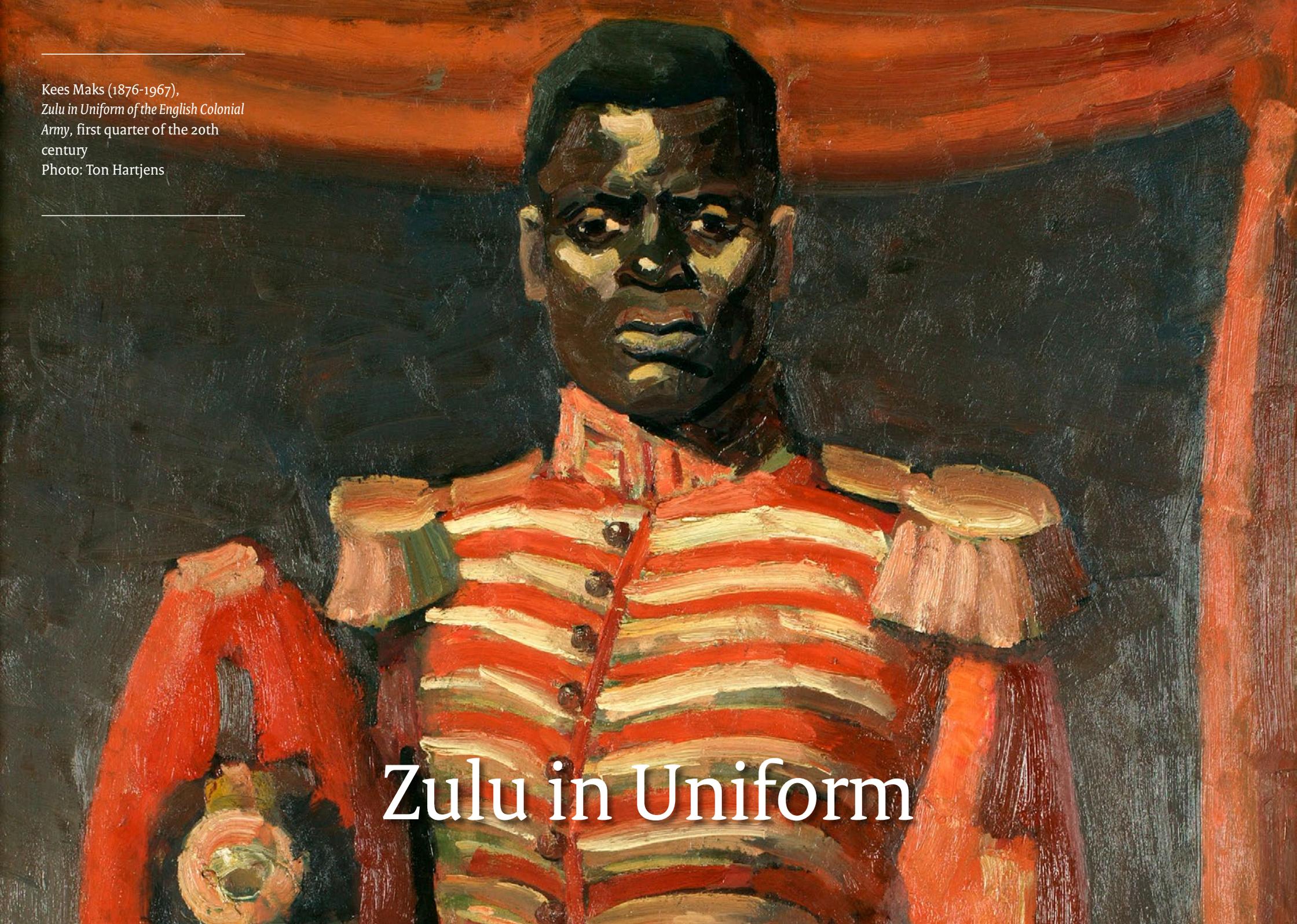
The visual tradition has a long history that dates back to the 12th century. The Chinese Buddhist Zen master Kuòān Shīyuǎn (also: Kakuan Shien) compiled poems and illustrations in *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*. The canonical story illustrates the ten stages of the Zen practitioner in order to completely purify and enlighten the mind.

In poetry, the wild ox symbolizes the boy's inferior spirit. By catching and controlling the ox, the boy achieves self-awareness. The meaning of Zen lies in this allegory. After taming the ox, the boy can calmly ride home on the animal. This bronze sculpture depicts that stage of *The Ten Oxherding Pictures: Riding the Ox Back Home*."

*Mounting the Ox, slowly I return homeward.
The voice of my flute intones through the evening.
Measuring with hand-beats the pulsating harmony,
I direct the endless rhythm.
Whoever hears this melody will join me.*

(Translation: D.T. Suzuki, *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*, 1948)

Kees Maks (1876-1967),
*Zulu in Uniform of the English Colonial
Army*, first quarter of the 20th
century
Photo: Ton Hartjens

A painting of a Zulu soldier in a red and white striped uniform, standing against a dark background. The soldier is depicted from the waist up, wearing a red and white striped tunic with a red sash and a red and white striped shawl. The background is dark and textured, with a vertical red stripe on the right side. The painting is signed 'Kees Maks' in the bottom right corner.

Zulu in Uniform

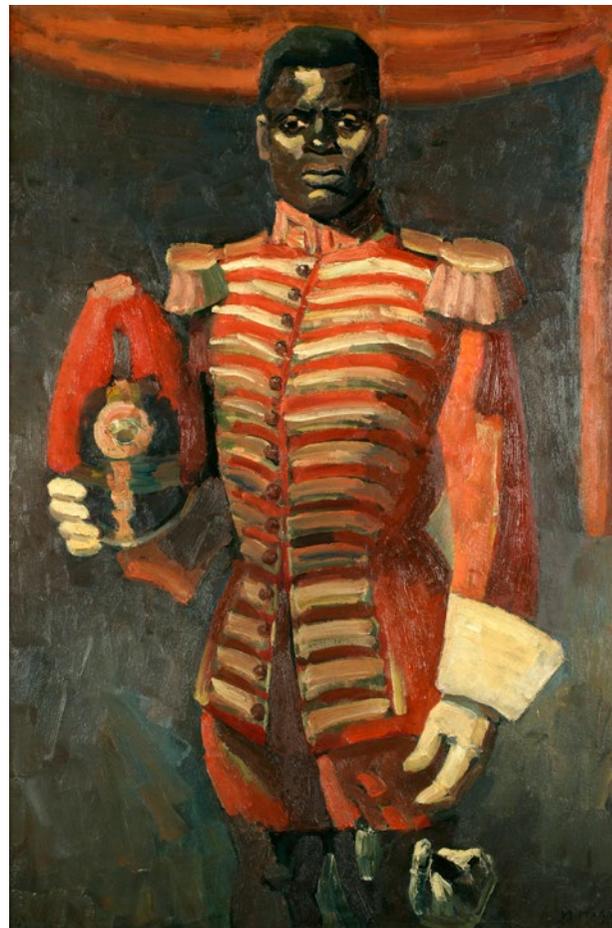
Dineke Stam



Dineke Stam is a historian. She worked as a researcher and exhibition curator at the Anne Frank House until 2001. She was later the national project leader for Intercultural Programmes in the Heritage Sector at the Museums Association. Since 2005 she has been an independent researcher, publicist, curator, and advisor in the cultural and heritage sector, with expertise in the history of slavery, the shoah, and gender and women's history.

“Was the man depicted here one of the millions of soldiers from the British and French colonies in Africa and Asia who fought in the First World War? Given the date of the exhibition, in 1915 in the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and Pictura in The Hague, it could be possible. In that case he is a person in a long history of colonial wars. ‘Subjects’ of the colonies were contract soldiers, often as a means of exchange to free themselves from slavery. More than 3,000 Ghanaian soldiers fought in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army between 1831 and 1872. Nearly 180,000 men freed themselves from slavery by fighting for American independence (1775-1783).

But we don't know for sure if the man pictured here was really a soldier. Perhaps he was one of the ‘characters, quite coincidentally chosen from the atmosphere of rough carnivals, recruited from the night cafes and the music halls, the Zulu negro in his colourful general's uniform with a lot of gold, like the doorman of an obscure café chantant’, as a journalist suggested in 1915. In that year it is known as ‘Zoeloe neger’ (Zulu negro), later Maks entitles the canvas ‘Zoeloe Opperhoofd’ (Zulu chief) (1923) in his scrapbooks and simply ‘Zoulou’ (1929). It was not until 1955 that it was titled ‘Zoeloe in uniform van het Engels Koloniaal Leger’ (Zulu in uniform of the English Colonial Army).”



Kees Maks (1876-1967),
*Zulu in Uniform of the English
Colonial Army*, first quarter of
the 20th century
Oil on canvas, 132.6 x 89.5 cm
Object number AB2038
On permanent loan to
Museum De Wieger, Deurne
Photo: Ton Hartjens



Jessica de Abreu



Jessica de Abreu studied Social and Cultural Anthropology and Culture, Organization and Management at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her work focuses on the African diaspora, postcolonial perspectives, and intersectionality. She is a co-founder of The Black Archives, a historical archive that focuses on black history in the Netherlands and beyond. Photo: Marcel Wogram

“The man has a straight back, looks dead ahead, and has a penetrating look in his eyes. His left arm hangs alongside his body and he holds a helmet in his right arm, suggesting that he is in military service. The uniform implies that he would have cooperated with the English. Is this man of Zulu descent, as the title suggests?”

Although perhaps not directly intended by the painter, this painting gives a complex perspective on the colonial war between the Zulu nation and the English colonial powers in the 19th century. In 1879, the bloody war broke out between the British and the Kingdom of Zulu, an area around what is now called South Africa. During the first battle at Isandlwana, the British army was defeated by the Zulus. Shortly thereafter, the Zulus were in turn defeated at KwaJimu (or Rorke’s Drift), ending the war in the destruction of their capital, Ulundi. As a result, the kingdom of the Zulus became part of the British colonial kingdom. The Zulu is now one of the largest ethnic groups on the southern end of the African continent, with around 12 million people.”



Simone Vermaat



Simone Vermaat studied Art History at Leiden University with a specialization in modern art. She is a senior curator for the 20th century and collection advisor at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

“Kees Moks lived a life equally as cultured as the subjects of his painting. In a large studio on the Prinseneiland in Amsterdam, he painted, in addition to many Amsterdam cityscapes, the special world of theatre, dance, circus, and music hall. He preferred larger formats that he thought would fit his subjects. He travelled and worked in Madrid, Rome, and Paris, but although he was admitted as a member to the Parisian Salon d’Automne, his home base remained Amsterdam. For his paintings, he scanned the nightlife for suitable models: a nightclub dancer, a Spanish dancer, or a circus artist, whom he had brought to his studio to pose for him. It therefore seems likely that the black man in this portrait would have posed for Moks, but who was he? And why did Moks choose to portray him in this striking red uniform with gold braiding, which seems to have a ceremonial function and is certainly not a British colonial uniform? During the Zulu wars, the Zulus fought primarily against the British, not alongside them. Or could Moks have been influenced by the coverage of these wars and the photographs of Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo, one of the last Zulu kings who died in 1913? Coincidentally, this is also the period when Moks painted the portrait. Or is this person just one of the many circus artists that Moks loved to paint? Shortly after the artist’s death, his widow donated seven large paintings to the State, including this intriguing portrait.”

*And why did Moks choose to portray him in this striking red uniform with gold braiding?
(...) Is this even a British colonial uniform?*



Search Terms

The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands used a list of search terms when searching through the collection. The list was compiled from the perspective of the researchers with the aim of having as broad a scope as possible within the usual museum collection registry. The search terms have been organized thematically into the categories Persons Involved, Functions, and Related Terms; Personal Names; Organisations Involved and Related Terms; Geographical Names and Places; Colonial System; and Products and Materials. Within this, the terms are arranged alphabetically, with derivative terms grouped together. Categories that are still missing are plant, tree, and animal species. This list can be used by museums and other keepers of collections, which will certainly lead to many additions. Many terms are specific to Dutch history; perhaps [the search term list](#) can serve as an inspiration for the same study of international collections.



Colophon

Traces of Slavery and Colonial History in the Art Collection, 2020

Authors: Jessica de Abreu, Anniek Bakker, Aspha Bijnaar, René Dekker, Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis, Luc Eekhout, Oscar Ekkelboom, Mitchell Esajas, Karwan Fatah-Black, Lucy Geurts, Alexandra van Kleef, Elmer Kolfin, Fransje Kuyvenhoven, Margot Langelaan, Lisa Lambrechts, Yuri van der Linden, Martijn Manders, Wim Manuhutu, Tirzo Martha, Nathalie Menke, Dorian Meijnen, Ineke Mok, Tom van der Molen, Hanna Pennock, Eveline Sint Nicolaas, Dineke Stam, Hasti Tarekat Dipowijoyo, Simone Vermaat, Jovanka Wanadya, Mercedes Zandwijken, and Simone Zeefuik.

Editors: Hanna Pennock, Simone Vermaat and Miriam Windhausen

Translation: Taalcentrum VU, Amsterdam

Coordination and final editing English translation: Hanna Pennock

Coordination photography: Cor Mulders

Design: WIJZ Werkt!, Amsterdam

Disclaimer

The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands has endeavoured to secure the rights to the illustrations in accordance with legal provisions. Those who nevertheless wish to assert certain rights may contact the Cultural Heritage Agency.

© Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands

P.O. Box 1600

3800 BP Amersfoort

The Netherlands

www.cultureelerfgoed.nl