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Introduction: Global art history and the Netherlands

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Is there such a thing as ‘global Netherlandish art’? A starting point for bringing the topic into focus is 8 September 1640 in Beijing, on the eve of the fall of the Ming dynasty. European missionaries had managed to penetrate the Forbidden City after a protracted attempt to impress the Chinese with their knowledge of astronomy. Now the Cologne-born Jesuit Johann Adam Schall von Bell handed the Chongzhen Emperor 48 miniature paintings based on a choice selection of Netherlandish artists that included Jacques de Gheyn, Hendrik Goltzius, Karel van Mander, Johannes Stradanus, and Maerten de Vos.

The original miniatures do not survive, but Schall had reproductions made in a Chinese printing workshop, copies of which now reside in different European libraries (figs. 1, 2).¹ The works in *Images in a booklet presented to His Majesty, or Jincheng shuxiang*, pose a scholarly challenge in the dimensions of technique, style, iconography, and reception, all of which do not easily fit the standard toolkit for studying Netherlandish works. The Chinese images imitate sophisticated European devotional art in a coarse woodcut technique, but on a finer paper than that of European make. In terms of style, they follow the original compositions, including linear perspective, but the figures’ bodily features, faces, and draperies are rooted in a local tradition. Chiaroscuro is all but absent. As to iconography and reception, the subsequent events evidence a complete mismatch between Western and Chinese interpretations.

The *Jincheng shuxiang* was obviously part of the large Jesuit project to convert the Celestial Empire, which, incidentally, involved an unprecedented circulation of artistic, technical, and scientific knowledge. The Jesuits used the arts to invigorate their telling of the gospel, while the emperor recognized the value of their advanced astronomy. They also sent elaborate accounts of their Chinese experience back to Europe – to report to their superiors and to advertise their costly mission to potential patrons. It is difficult to assess the truthfulness of their accounts. Schall wrote that when the miniature paintings were presented at the imperial court, no less than 50 noblewomen, ‘having deeply examined what they had seen’, wanted to be baptized as Christians on the spot.² To attract additional converts, the booklet was then displayed in a hall named the Palace of Great Virtue in a three-day ceremony.³

Chinese sources, however, paint a somewhat different picture. What the missionaries proudly presented as their Chinese ‘proselytes’ were often literati who out of interest in foreign science – from illustrated

Detail fig. 6

1
 Chinese artist after Hendrik Goltzius, *Christ crowned with thorns*, 1640, woodcut, J.A. Schall von Bell, *Jincheng shuxiang* ([Beijing?] 1640), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cabinet des estampes, Oe 165: Chinois 6757 I-II (photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France)



books and maps to state-of-the-art physics and mathematics – played the part the Europeans desired.⁴ If anything, the set of 48 Sino-Netherlandish engravings illustrates how the Westerners' overstretched ambitions contributed to internal friction at the imperial court. Such friction would result in the fall of the Ming within four years and the emperor's suicide.

The images were used by a Muslim astronomer at the court, Yang Guangxian, to discredit Schall and the missionaries. He interpreted Goltzius's rendition of the Passion as evidence that Jesus was a 'subversive rebel leader' who was convicted and executed for his crime, akin to the leaders of notorious and outlawed quasi-religious sects in Ming China.⁵ Mother Mary was obviously a similarly immoral woman who had



2

Hendrik Goltzius, *Christ crowned with thorns*, 1597, engraving, 201 x 134 mm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (image in the public domain)

conceived out of wedlock. Yang republished some of the woodblock prints in his notorious anti-Christian work *I cannot do otherwise* (*Budeyi*, 1665), which continued to have 'an important influence on the [Chinese] anti-Christian movement of the 19th century'.⁶ In fact by 1644 one of the 'subversive rebels', the peasant leader Li Zicheng, successfully besieged Beijing. This was a moment with global repercussions, which left its mark on the arts in the Netherlands. The emperor's suicide, after first killing his own daughter, was depicted by an Amsterdam printmaker in 1660 and portrayed on the stage by no less than the Dutch 'Prince of Poets', Joost van den Vondel.⁷ Johan Nieuhof's famous travelogue, based on an embassy of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to Beijing in 1655, also depicted the



3

Johan Nieuhof, *The suicide of the Chongzhen emperor*, 1665, hand-coloured engraving. J. Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham* (Amsterdam 1665), University of Amsterdam, Special Collections (photo: Institute of Art History, University of Amsterdam)

scene (fig. 3). The VOC found that the new Qing dynasty embraced the Jesuits but ignored the Dutch. Nieuhof painted a dark picture of Father Schall, blaming him for the Company's failure to open up China to free trade. This unfavourable image was broadcast to a wide audience when Nieuhof's book, first published in 1665 and furnished with more than a hundred illustrations apparently done 'after life' in China, became the most important European account of the Middle Kingdom since Marco Polo.

Schall's gift to the Chongzhen Emperor and its fateful afterlife illustrate how extending the analysis of Netherlandish art to a global dimension poses a range of questions exceeding matters of technique, style, and iconography. The booklet can first of all be characterized by 'transmediality': the Netherlandish copper engravings had been downsized to miniature format, rendered in paint and gold on parchment by a Munich artist in 1617; these works were subsequently enlarged to the format of Chinese woodblock print. But the images raise more profound questions about cultural translation and visual literacy, about the role of artists and artworks as cultural mediators, about the institutions and networks they were connected to, and about world views that were affected by the circulation of knowledge between Europe and East Asia.⁸ The images evidence that Netherlandish 'influence' did not meet a passive recipient, as the works were adapted and appropriated in ways

that were not intended. They illustrate in what measure Netherlandish art, rather than easing its way from centre to periphery, had to prove its new relevance in contexts with stronger traditions. Visual and material culture were in constant flux relative to time and local circumstances.⁹ Can the currently fashionable concept of 'global art history' be of help in understanding individual artworks in such a wide-ranging context?

The local and the global

A 'global' approach in art history can be conceived in various ways. The present book does not intend a revival of the old tradition of comparative art history that explores commonalities in artworks on a global scale.¹⁰ Neither does the volume presume that the 'history of global art' can be written only from a specific disciplinary perspective called 'global art history', which would run the obvious danger of a Eurocentric fallacy, supposing that Western methods and ideals can be transposed unproblematically on other regions.¹¹ The editors of the current issue of the *NKJ* have merely envisaged a shift in focus and an exploration of how Netherlandish artworks and artists were historically connected to different regions in a global context. And vice versa: we are interested in exploring how images and objects from all over the world were understood and incorporated by early modern Netherlandish artists. The volume's approach thus gravitates toward cross-cultural interactions via multiple routes, channels, and zones of contact, and toward the various kinds of agency allotted to craftsmen, merchants, buyers, and patrons from different regions who were involved in the making, remaking, consumption, and understanding of the works concerned.

Art historians have come relatively late to such a global perspective, in comparison to scholars of social and political history.¹² Historians who, in their global approaches, haven't taken account of the arts have mostly focused on socio-economic aspects: artworks were elements in the global flow of trade that intensified from the late sixteenth century onward. But it is not immediately clear how this insight benefits an art historian's questions about style and meaning. The central challenge of an approach focusing on cross-cultural interactions seems to be how to integrate macro-historical and long-distance approaches with the micro-historical analysis of individual works and their makers. To continue with the example of the *Jincheng shuxiang*, a careful case study could be undertaken comparing materials, styles, and themes of the Chinese images with the Netherlandish originals, yet the significance of such a close reading for the historical context – a century of Catholic ambition to penetrate to the centre of Chinese power, one of the driving forces for the European expansion – is not immediately evident, other than as illustration.

Jincheng shuxiang also poses a second, related question. This was not a Dutch book. Chinese artists made it on the basis of a Bavarian example, for a Chinese audience, on commission of European Jesuits who drew their members from a variety of regions – including, obviously, the Northern and Southern Netherlands (Schall's successor at the Beijing Observatory was a

Fleming, the famous Ferdinand Verbiest). Talking about 'global art' and maintaining a focus on the Netherlands seems profoundly paradoxical. Yet there are various reasons why the Low Countries provide an interesting lens through which to study incipient early modern globalization.¹³

Netherlandish prints, like those copied in the *Jincheng shuxiang*, were allotted a key role both in the Jesuit mission and in the VOC's search for suitable export markets. The Jesuits adapted at least three other books with Netherlandish prints for a Chinese audience and used similar examples for their proselytization in the Americas. What is more, the Dutch voyage of discovery of a northeastern passage to Asia carried a stack of prints by some of the same artists, including Goltzius and De Gheyn, intended for trade with East Asia. After this failed mission, the VOC, sailing southward, brought similar images to India, where they were copied by local artists, and farther to Siam and Japan.¹⁴ The imagery could eventually be effective without the involvement of Netherlanders: the Chinese imitations of *Jincheng shuxiang*, for instance, seem to have made their mark on late eighteenth-century painters at the Korean court.¹⁵ This raises the question of the extent to which Netherlandish graphic art that was comprehensible in different religious and cultural settings can be characterized as a visual *lingua franca*, to use a concept from recent analyses of 'world literature'.¹⁶

The literary metaphor is more relevant for prints than for material culture, which was handled and worked with, rather than discussed, and affected daily household life. Yet a similarly global appeal can be observed in relation to the blue-and-white aesthetic of Chinese porcelain, itself derived from a Persian tradition. Tens of millions of pieces of porcelain were imported by the VOC to the Netherlands, where it became a standard fixture in still-life paintings, and to other European countries.¹⁷ In contrast to the neighbouring nations, in the Dutch Republic owning Chinese ceramics, or its local imitations, was not an aristocratic privilege. Eventually, the popular Dutch Delftware imitations of the Asian originals ended up in the trading posts of the West Indies, South Africa, and Japan. The mixture of European and non-European elements that these imitations sometimes demonstrate has been described as a characteristic of a 'global' style, also recognizable in colonial furniture in Southeast Asia or architecture in viceregal America.¹⁸

These examples suggest that focusing on the Netherlands is more than a simple heuristic to frame a very large topic into a manageable size. In the closing essay of this volume, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann sketches some of the geographical, historical, political, and cultural factors that may explain the worldwide relevance of the art of this area. Perhaps the Low Countries, as a contested fringe area of the Habsburg Empire marked by internal fault lines, demonstrated exceptional artistic flexibility and productivity in the first period of intensive exchange between Europe and the rest of the world.

Actors' categories for Global Netherlandish Art?

Decades of postcolonial critical theory have raised awareness of the problematic nature of the vocabulary traditionally used in discussing Europe

versus the wider world. Terms such as ‘the exotic’, ‘the Orient’, ‘Chinoiserie’, and the ‘East-West’ dichotomy in general are deemed to reflect Eurocentric biases. Yet projecting back the alternative terminology of postcolonial critical theory onto the early modern situation only adds to the confusion. Not infrequently this attempt is motivated by a postmodern ethos of cosmopolitanism, looking for examples of ‘cultural hybridity’ in periods and civilizations where hybridity would not have been recognized, let alone been evaluated positively. Other concepts such as imperialism and colonialism may be similarly inappropriate, as in the case of the Dutch Republic, which nominally was neither an empire nor did it aim at establishing colonies.

Ideally, global art history integrates art historical methods from different regions in its analysis; even more ideally, these methods would be rooted in historical texts rather than in the terminology of modern scholarship. Can we define actors’ categories for Global Netherlandish Art? In the present volume, the essay by Ching-Ling Wang explores an early eighteenth-century Chinese artist’s statement on his own appreciation for both Western and traditional Chinese painting; but such explicit sources are rare.

Historians looking for the early modern vocabulary used by Europeans to express their reaction to foreign natural specimens and works of artifice have focused on ‘curiosity’. *Curiositas* was slightly suspect in theological terms, as it could detract from studying scripture.¹⁹ The objects of curiosity were called ‘sinnelickheden’ (appealing to sensory delight), ‘sonderlingheden’ (special things), ‘rariteyten’, and ‘exotica’.²⁰ Sources that evidence early attempts at establishing commonalities between European and foreign arts are harder to find. Among early modern theorists of art, the Portuguese Francisco de Holanda was the first to discuss the arts of Asia at some length.²¹ In the Netherlands, the chapter on colour in Karel van Mander’s *Grondt der edelvry schilderconst* (1604) referenced examples from Peru and Java to argue that ‘in the whole world, among various peoples [...] the essence and properties of colour are manifest’.²² His example was followed in 1678 by Samuel van Hoogstraten who included more material on East Asia, admiring Chinese pictographic writing and the great social status allotted to artists in Japan.²³ This author seems to introduce the concept of a ‘global’ art explicitly in the self-portrait in his treatise, where he puts a globe, carried by Atlas, at his side as a reference to the ‘entire visible world’ that is the painter’s remit – ranging from the East to the West Indies, something that set the Dutch tradition apart from the ancients and Southern Europe (fig. 4). Van Hoogstraten marvels at a similarly global outlook evident in Rembrandt’s painting *The preaching of Saint John* (now in Berlin), which includes ‘listeners from all kinds of nations’: more than 80 figures are depicted, including one wearing Japanese armour and another with the accoutrements of a Brazilian Indian (fig. 5).²⁴ When Andries Pels deemed the term ‘schilderachtig’ – picturesque – relevant to describe Rembrandt’s interest in such objects ‘that ever came hither from the Four Continents’, he seems to have alluded to the specific role of artists, as they explored the cultural dimension of the Dutch encounter with the globalizing world much more explicitly than poets and playwrights did (bar exceptions such as Vondel’s aforementioned piece).²⁵

4

Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Self-portrait with Atlas carrying a globe*, 1678, engraving, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderconst* (Rotterdam 1678), University of Amsterdam, Special Collections (photo: Institute of Art History, University of Amsterdam)



HOOGSTRAETEN, DIE 'T PENSEEL VERWISSELT MET DE PEN,
WIL DAT ZYN VADERLAND HEM OUS NAER 'T LEEVEN KEN,
MIN IN ZYN BEEID, DAN KONST OP LOU TRE REEDENS GRONDEN,
GEROENT IN GEBARSHOF TE RYOOMELEN BINNEN LONDEN.
J. Oudaan.



5

Rembrandt, *The preaching of Saint John*,
c. 1634-1635, oil on canvas laid on panel,
62.7 x 81 cm, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie,
Staatliche Museen (photo: Institute of Art
History, University of Amsterdam)

A salient example is the many hundreds of paintings depicting Chinese porcelain. Artists from the overheated Dutch art market, moreover, often became migrants themselves – Rembrandt’s own daughter, who married a painter, ended up in Batavia.²⁶

Rembrandt’s Amsterdam rival Joachim von Sandrart professed to collect Chinese paintings (apparently given to him by Chinese visitors) and discussed a Chinese painter in his treatise; a scholar from his circle, Isaac Vossius, was even more explicit in preferring Chinese works above the European tradition.²⁷ When Willem Beurs’s treatise on oil paint, *De groote waereld in ’t kleen geschildert* (1692), discussed periods of bloom and decline of artistic traditions, he stated his admiration for Chinese civilization that, as Europeans were by then beginning to realize, went farther back than the Western classics and even challenged the Christian chronology of Creation.²⁸

Contemporary Chinese theories of art, by contrast, remained dismissive of the European tradition and even failed to appreciate linear perspective, which was introduced at the imperial court by Ferdinand Verbiest, the aforementioned Flemish missionary.²⁹ In Japan, Gerard de Laresse’s *Groot*



6

Frans Francken the Younger, *Allegory of the abdication of Emperor Charles V in Brussels*, c. 1630-1640, oil on panel, 134 x 172 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (image in the public domain)

schilderboek (1707) drew attention as part of *rangaku*, 'Dutch studies' or Western knowledge, but it was the book's images rather than its text that were appreciated.³⁰ The Americas proved even less receptive than East Asia: the massive import of devotional art, in print and paint, from the Southern Netherlands to the overseas Habsburg dominions did not result in written reflections.³¹ Only in 1801 did the Brazilian friar José Mariano da Conceição Veloso translate De Lairesse's theory into Portuguese.³²

It will be clear that, despite the variety of utterances, the written sources pertaining to the arts do not present anything approaching a coherent 'global consciousness', let alone a groundwork for global art history. In fact in early modern Europe, conceptions of 'the global' were usually of a political nature rather than a cultural one, as Sanjay Subrahmanyam has pointed out: they were, for instance, expressed in the many representations of the power of sovereigns over the Four Continents (fig. 6).³³ In light of the Netherlands' key position in global networks, there are remarkably few artistic reflections on this theme by Dutch artists. The paintings in the Oranjezaal in the Huis ten Bosch palace, which celebrate the power of Stadholder Frederik Hendrik, show a single scene with



goods from the East and West Indies offered to the Dutch ruler (fig. 7). But when Stadholder William III of Orange became king of England, no representations were made of his even farther-reaching global dominion that conjoined the Dutch and English proto-colonial projects in Asia, Africa, and the Americas.³⁴

The back story of aesthetics

Political, social, and economic aspects are probably more essential to global art history than to the field's more traditional approaches, since individual objects are analyzed in relation to long-distance developments and exchanges across regions and cultures. Any attempt to understand the role of the early modern Low Countries in regard to Asia will find it hard to avoid, for instance, the debate about the 'Great Divergence'. This discussion in recent economic history argues that European imports, especially from East Asia, contributed to a craving for luxury goods – including artworks – that laid the basis for the industrial revolution.³⁵ Allegedly, consumption of luxuries stimulated the development of Western capitalism when workshops and traders were able to gradually amass capital to expand their businesses, emerging as large, industrial firms catering to a mass market. The Netherlandish chapter in this story is evident, as free markets for art and luxuries originated in Antwerp and Amsterdam while at the same time the VOC flourished as the first joint stock company with tradable shares. These two Dutch developments may have contributed to the transition from a world made up of dispersed, fragmented, and largely unregulated economies to an integrated system of corresponding markets subject to trade regulations. As Immanuel Wallerstein famously argued, this 'world system' meant that wealth accumulated in the hands of a small group of Europeans, with Asia turning into a periphery. Western civilization soared while other regions such as China, which had been dominant before 1500, stagnated. If all this is true, the simple porcelain cup in a Dutch home – and even the ubiquitous blue-and-white tiles modelled on Chinaware – can be interpreted as a marker of an epochal global development that, although sparked by the confrontation with Asia, resulted in Western supremacy.

Taking this into account for our art historical ruminations, one might want to point to the well-known observation by Gayatri Spivak that it 'should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering imperialism'.³⁶ Something similar could be argued for Netherlandish art from the early modern period: the wealth of Dutch citizens, which financed the art market, derived in part from their ability to project maritime and military power to East Asia. This is not a superficial realization. As recently as 2015, a major exhibition in Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum, *Asia in Amsterdam: The culture of luxury in the Golden Age* – which showcased high-quality ceramics, textiles, jewellery, and other applied arts imported from Asia in the seventeenth century – willingly ignored this political dimension. '[T]he relationship between power and trade in exotic wares [was] underplayed', was one critic's understatement: 'Aesthetics always has a back story; sheen and nacreous splendour invite us to reflect on it'.³⁷

7

Jacob van Campen, *Gifts from the East and West, part of the triumphal procession of Frederik Hendrik, 1649-1651*, oil on canvas, 383.5 x 204.5 cm, The Hague, Oranjezaal, Huis ten Bosch (photo: Institute of Art History, University of Amsterdam)

There is apparently a danger inherent in studying the global dimension of Netherlandish art: reinforcing, instead of deconstructing, a Eurocentric bias. And in fact, a focus on ‘global Netherlandish art’, rather than documenting the cultural intermingling that came with global exchange, often entails the analysis of how citizens in the Low Countries wanted to see and show themselves. There are, for instance, very few visual representations of Dutch slavery in East Asia, where it was more substantial than in the Americas.³⁸ In Dutch paintings, the toil or forced labour that went into the cultural flowering is usually invisible – the sumptuous still lifes bearing no trace of the hardship endured by the VOC sailors and the brutality with which trade deals were enforced in Asia.³⁹ Thus the artworks are not immediately accessible documents for the writing of social and economic history: ‘the use of depicted objects as evidence of material culture at a particular time is problematic and can never be definitive because of the nature of pictorial representation’.⁴⁰ This is not to say that representations cannot carry very explicit messages about the social world, as is the case in some Dutch art featuring newly imported luxuries such as porcelain. Not only in the Oranjezaal does the glory of Dutch rule involve goods from the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Paintings such as Juriaen van Streeck’s *Still life with a moor*, featuring Chinese porcelain and what may be a black slave, could confirm the self-image of the Dutch viewers, whose new nation was the centre of a maritime empire, stretching from the West to the East Indies, and a main player in incipient global capitalism after 1500 (fig. 8). Incidentally, the painting also illustrates the curious dynamic in which a piece of foreign material culture could be adopted to articulate a local sense of identity – a dynamic with a long afterlife, as pseudo-Chinese Delftware is seen as something quintessentially Dutch to the present day.

Chapters in this volume

The case studies in this volume come from the Northern and Southern Netherlands and relate to all continents with the exception of Australia. They zoom in on people, practices, objects, and materials and evoke issues of cultural representation, cultural exchange, imitation, appropriation, and misunderstanding. Some individuals seem to have travelled out of curiosity, others were forcefully displaced; some artworks were designed as mediators of cultural knowledge, but at other moments this mediation would have been implicit – the object’s foreign origin was not emphasized or recognized. At times a locally made work was understood as foreign.

The volume opens with a cultural encounter that ended in disaster. Nicole Blackwood analyzes Cornelis Ketel’s portrait of an Inuk man, violently captured on Baffin Island in 1576. The man was brought to England following an expedition to find the Northwest Passage to China. Although he suffered from a bitten-out tongue, fractured ribs, and the onset of a life-threatening illness he was triumphantly displayed along the Thames. Ketel was ordered to paint the man’s likeness in his native clothes and also pictured him wearing English dress. These works became the basis for multiple portraits intended for the Cathay Company and the royal



8

court. The chapter reconstructs their appearance, context, and location and considers how Ketel's objects promoted the expeditions that resulted in the first attempt at an overseas English colony. But the images were not only intended to document and legitimize the European exploits in the New World. In 1577 Ketel's two full-length pictures were sent back to Baffin Island as visual aids in communication with the Inuit. Eventually, the mutual failure to decode the foreigners' intentions had dramatic results.

Juriaen van Streeck, *Still life with a moor*, undated, oil on canvas, 90.5 x 80 cm, formerly Amsterdam, with art dealer Salomon Lilian (photo: Institute of Art History, University of Amsterdam)

Elsewhere in the Americas, Netherlandish art made a more benign impression. An image in painting (1581) and print (1584) of *Saint Michael the Archangel* by Maerten de Vos became widely available, copied in various media both by European migrants and by indigenous artists. To explain this success, Stephanie Porras focuses on the notion of virality, which helps to identify the structural conditions that encouraged the copying, adaption, and circulation of De Vos's works: the artist's design, the existing trade network, and the system of artistic patronage in the American viceroalties. De Vos's early travels and career experience in Italy, as well as his familial knowledge of the Antwerp export economy, shaped his appreciation for, and exploitation of, the mobility of artistic styles and objects; but the adaptation of his work by artists throughout New Spain and Peru followed its own dynamic. Porras shows how the case of *Saint Michael the Archangel* complicates traditional ideas on the global reception of European prints. The interpretation of the adaptations by indigenous masters as no more than artefacts of Christian conversion appear to be too simplistic, and so does the dichotomy of copy versus original: the 'original' of De Vos's image resides in Cuautitlán, not Antwerp. Porras concludes that a major factor for Netherlandish images to 'go viral' was the need for acceptable images for worship.

Worship, idolatry, and the overseas world remained interconnected themes in Antwerp throughout the following decades, as Christine Göttler argues. The city's dominant position in Portugal's seaborne trade had made it into an international hub. The influx of foreign artefacts inspired a new culture of collecting 'special' or 'precious' things. A case in point are krisses, or ceremonial knives, from Java. They may be characterized as 'nomadic' objects whose status and meaning changed in European collections. Javanese culture valued krisses as sacred, apotropaic objects and as symbols of status and wealth. Europeans, by contrast, associated the ceremonial knives with idolatry because of their demon-shaped hilts. Travelogues portray the kris as a signal of the violent and heathen underside of the prosperous island of Java. The chapter focuses on a depiction of a *kunstkamer* by Frans Francken the Younger to explore how the kris could be contextualized in the physical space of a collection and in the virtual space of a painting, print, or book. Francken's work evidences complex relations between curiosity, connoisseurship, and idolatry. In Antwerp, with its history of iconoclasm, it was Counter-Reformation spirituality that increased sensitivity regarding the potential of artefacts to shape or unsettle religious or cultural identities.

At least one Antwerp artist took special care to acquire up-to-date knowledge of art and idolatry in the overseas world. Barbara Uppenkamp posits that Peter Paul Rubens's well-known knowledge of the cults, habits, and costumes of the ancients was paralleled by his interest in Asia. This combination reflected a general European trend: ideas on the pantheon of antiquity determined the understanding of foreign religions. Two altar paintings for the Augustinian church in Prague and the Jesuit church in Antwerp illustrate how Rubens's sources of information ranged from the humanistic luminaries Claude Fabri de Peiresc and Lorenzo Pignoria to a Dutch travelogue by Willem Lodewijcksz (1598) and Theodor de Bry's

monumental *India orientalis* (1599). In the Prague *Martyrdom of Saint Thomas*, Rubens emphasized that the apostle Thomas had come to India as an architect to create a palace in the classical Roman style for the king. His martyrdom, resulting from his refusal to worship a local idol, was relevant in light of the defence of righteous image worship at the Council of Trent. In Antwerp Rubens portrayed Francis Xavier – who reportedly made tens of thousands of converts in India, Southeast Asia, and Japan – as the apostle's successor, consistent with Jesuit doctrine: the saints of early Christianity and the overseas missionaries were fighting similar demons.

Among the onlookers Rubens depicted in *The miracles of Saint Francis Xavier*, one figure has drawn the particular attention of art historians. On the basis of his dress, facial features, and curious hat, he has been connected to a drawing in the Getty Museum known as the 'Korean man'. Thijs Weststeijn and Lennert Gesterkamp suggest that the drawing was, in turn, based on a work by another artist. This was a portrait of an individual: a Chinese merchant who travelled on a VOC ship – in fact the first East Asian to visit Europe whose identity is documented in such detail. The new conclusion is based on an *album amicorum* of the Middelburg lawyer Nicolaas de Vrise (1595-1609). An inscription in Chinese and an additional explanation in Latin identify the sitter as the Chinese merchant Yppong, who arrived in Middelburg on 31 May 1600. Additional Dutch and Chinese sources document Yppong's career after his return to Southeast Asia, as a middleman for the VOC. The chapter's findings inspire the observation that the common tendency to study images in relation to other images rather than to historical reality may be counterproductive. Too much fear of a positivist 'fallacy' may confirm the dynamic of Orientalist or 'exotic' projections, whereas an encounter between individuals actually took place.

The role of VOC employees in mediating between Europe and Asia, despite being prohibited to engage in private trade, comes to the fore in Ebeltje Hartkamp-Jonxis's analysis of ivory caskets and cabinets made on Dutch commission in Ceylon. The chapter proposes, on the basis of archival sources and the cabinets' iconography and style, two centres of production: the former province of Matara on the southwest coast, and Jaffna at the island's northern tip. Whereas the decorations dating between the 1640s and 1675 are in the Sinhalese iconographic and stylistic tradition, later cabinets bear witness to a taste for pseudo-Asian designs, determined by European patronage. Fifteen cabinets represent Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. According to Christian legend, the first man arrived in Ceylon after his expulsion from Paradise, crossing a chain of limestone shoals called Adam's Bridge. On the island's highest mountain, known as Adam's Peak, the first man supposedly left his footprint. Adam and Eve would have been buried in a complex of Buddhist cave temples at Mulgirigala. Learned correspondence on this topic between the theologian and linguist Willem Konijn, stationed in Galle, and the VOC director Nicolaas Witsen in Amsterdam, reflect the latter's interest in visual themes that were recognizable throughout the world.

Witsen's global network returns in the chapter by Julie Hochstrasser, who explores a previously little studied set of drawings (now in the National

Library of South Africa) offering a remarkably detailed representation of the Khoikhoi, the aboriginal people of the Cape of Good Hope. The works may have been part of Witsen's formidable scientific collection since he commanded a number of VOC officials at the Cape, who could provide him with textual and visual information about the Netherlands' most important African possession. In any case the drawings, made 'ad vivum', consciously departed from the biased European stereotype of the native people of the south of Africa. The chapter compares the images' manner of representation to a manuscript letter – which treats the Khoikhoi in extensive detail and explicitly empathizes with them – by Johannes de Grevenbroek, who may also have been the artist. The drawings, which were not deduced from any text but rather inspired careful notations on their margins, strike a balance as neither demonizing their figures nor sterilizing them as scientific specimens. Hochstrasser contrasts this quality of 'empirical vision' with the stereotypes of the Khoikhoi replicated in the 'iconic circuit' of European maps and printwork.

The iconic circuit made possible by the technology of print, and its thematic and stylistic limits and possibilities, comes to the fore in the chapter by Ching-Ling Wang. The parallel rise of print culture in seventeenth-century China and the Netherlands must probably be attributed to historical contingency. Incidentally, however, woodblock prints made in workshops in Suzhou incorporated elements from Dutch graphic art. Focusing on a newly discovered Suzhou print, *Herdning a bull in a forest* in the Berlin National Library, Wang identifies an appropriation from a work by Abraham Bloemaert of 1610-1611. This citation may be related to the marketing strategy of the workshop owner and to his intended public. The artist whose name is attached to the image, Han Huaide, explained that he 'followed the authentic Western methods' to achieve lifelikeness. At the same time, however, he highlighted the pedigree of his work in 'family tradition', as a successor to the ancient Chinese master Han Gan. Thus the artist appealed to different Chinese urban and elite publics. The print, although not made for export, arrived in Europe where Western viewers, like their Chinese counterparts, may have recognized and appreciated the hybrid combination of traditional and foreign elements.

The Western adaptation of Asian applied arts in the early eighteenth century comes into view in Annemarie Klootwijk's description of the development of the Dutch taste for lacquered objects. Asian lacquer was prized for its lustrous surface, precious decorations, and striking durability, resistant even to fire. When it became less of a rarity, the European market desired customization. Western imitations responded to this demand. Since the authentic ingredients of lacquer could not be shipped, local varnishes and techniques of 'japanning' were used with varying success. Contemporary sources praised the similarities of japanning to Asian lacquer or even its exceeding quality, while inventories often labelled Dutch japanned objects as Asian. Relatively few Dutch objects are extant. The chapter focuses on a japanned *hoekbuffet*, or corner buffet, now in Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum. Klootwijk complements her analysis of material, technique, and style with an identification of a broad range of graphical sources for the

decoration, from travelogues to ornament prints and Stalker and Parker's *Treatise of japaning and varnishing* of 1688. In addition, advertisements in Dutch newspapers allow her to reconstruct the varied landscape in which imitation lacquer workshops flourished, churning out hybrid combinations of Eastern and Western surfaces, shapes, styles, and themes.

The concluding chapter by Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann reflects on the volume's topics and assesses the role the Low Countries can play in the project of writing a history of world art. He emphasizes the importance of the French Annales School, which proposed writing about interconnected, crossed, or entangled histories rather than charting one-way influences. In this context, he proposes to emulate Fernand Braudel's conception of an 'Italian model' of cultural dominance in Renaissance Europe in terms of a 'Netherlandish model' with a wider, global remit.⁴¹ This model sees the Dutch role in cultural circulations as an essentially mediating one, carrying and transmitting objects and ideas between and among other countries – in a polycentric world rather than one dominated by a single centre and periphery. After giving a birds-eye panorama of how the Low Countries – from the Duchy of Burgundy to the later Dutch Republic – engaged with the wider world, DaCosta Kaufmann singles out the Leiden painter Philips Angel who joined the VOC and sailed to Ceylon, Batavia, and the Persian court at Isfahan where he became drawing master to Shah Abbas III. Angel's illustrated manuscript of Hindu iconography, portraying the 10 avatars of Vishnu, illustrates the malleability of Netherlandish art in a global frame of reference.

Notes

- 1 See Schall 1640. Three other copies are in the Biblioteca Nazionale, Rome, VE 72 B.299, and the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Sin. 107 and 108. The Bavarian book with miniatures has not been located.
- 2 Standaert 2007, 51; Schall 1942, 48-49.
- 3 Standaert 2007, 52.
- 4 Hart 2013, 8-9. Actually, the account in Yang Guangxian's *Budeyi* (see below, note 6) confirms this: 'there always have been Chinese scholars who were willing to endorse the missionaries' writings and were attracted by their "ingenious instruments"; Standaert 2007, p. 55.
- 5 Standaert 2007, 54.
- 6 Menegon 1998, 314.
- 7 Martini 1660, fig. 6; Van den Vondel 1667.
- 8 The relevance of cultural translation in relation to the Goltzius images (figs. 1, 2) is nowhere so explicit as in the Chinese text when it explains that Jesus was given a 'bamboo' staff as if he held the power; Standaert 2007, 278.
- 9 For material culture, this point is elaborated in Gerritsen & Riello 2015.
- 10 As has been done in Summers 2003 and Bell 2007. Clunas 2013 identifies Franz Kugler as an important predecessor; for others, see DaCosta Kaufmann's chapter in this volume.
- 11 Elkins 2007. A 'global art history' that integrates methods and ideals from various cultural traditions (and spells out issues of commensurability between methods and approaches) is of course theoretically possible but has not yet been realized. Cf. Wang 2014, 392: 'Without the expertise of non-Western artistic traditions, it is insufficient to answer the question regarding the commensurability or incommensurability of major concepts and terms from different artistic traditions'. In the field of contemporary art, 'world art studies' discuss related issues, but it seems that one should examine critically to what extent the contemporary globalized world is grafted on to, and relevant to the understanding of, the early modern phase of global interconnectivity. See Zijlmans & Van Damme 2008.
- 12 In historical scholarship the foundation of the *Journal of World History* in 1990 was a defining moment; for overviews of recent approaches and bibliography, see Conrad 2016 and Berg 2013. In art history, an early reflection is Nelson 1997; more recent, Wang 2014. For the history of science, see Huff 2012.
- 13 It is of course debatable whether the term 'globalization' is relevant. Gunn 2003 coined the phrase 'first globalization', differentiating the early modern era from the modern one.
- 14 Braat 1998, IJzerman 1926.
- 15 Standaert 2007, 55-56.
- 16 In this context, Beecroft 2015 differentiates local, translocal, cosmopolitan, and vernacular 'literary ecologies'.
- 17 Van Campen & Eliëns 2014.
- 18 Snodin 2009. In some ways the hypothesis of a 'global Baroque' is a return to the tradition of comparative art history; see above, note 10.
- 19 Daston & Park 1998.
- 20 For these different terms, see Swan 2013.
- 21 Deswarte-Rosa 1992.
- 22 '[D]e Weerelt over aller weggen, By alderley Volck [...] Streckt den aerdt der Verwen-cracht en gheneghen, Soo oock haer wercking en bedienings pleghen'; Van Mander 1604, chap. 13, paragraphs 22-23.
- 23 Van Mander 1604 refers to Jan Huygen van Linschoten's translation of José de

- Acosta, *Historie natuarael ende morael vande Westersche Indien* (Enkhuizen 1598) and to his own translation of Girolamo Benzoni, *De historie van de nieuwe weerelt, te weten, de beschrijvinge van West-Indiën* (Haarlem 1610). Van Hoogstraten read these two authors and also François Caron, *Beschrijvinghe van het machtigh koninckrijcke Japan* (Amsterdam 1648); his references to a number of Chinese cities and landscapes probably came from Johan Nieuhof or Olfert Dapper. See his description of the physical appearance of the Chinese, Van Hoogstraten 1678, 131, 48-49; Dapper 1678, 405; and cf. Van Hoogstraten 1678, 230, 334.
- 24 '[T]oehoorderen van allerleye staeten'; Van Hoogstraten 1678, 183.
- 25 '[W]at ooit uit 's waerelds vier gedeelten herwaarts kwam'; Pels 1681, 36.
- 26 DaCosta Kaufmann & North 2014, 184.
- 27 Weststeijn 2012.
- 28 'Wie weet, zeggen vele, wat'er by de vernuftige Chinesen te voren gebloeit heeft, die ook haare Koningen zoo veele duizenden van jaren optellen, dat'er Adam niet eens omtrent en zou komen, als men naa agteren reekenen zal'; Beurs 1692, 'Voor[r]eden, unpaginated [pp. 12-13].
- 29 Sullivan 1997, 58, 80, quoting the artists Wu Li (1632-1718) and Zou Yigui (1686-1772).
- 30 Morishima Chūryō and Ōtsuki Gentaku's *Kōmō Zatsuwā* (Red-hair miscellany, 1787), included a section on European art, which was lavishly illustrated by the images taken from De Lairese; see Kobayashi-Sato 2014, 283.
- 31 Latin America was marked by a 'complete lack of theoretical treatises [...] written [...] during the entire viceregal period'; Mundy & Hyman 2015, 303.
- 32 De Lairese 1801. An earlier Spanish (manuscript) translation of the remarks on painting by the Italian scientist Francesco Lana de Terzi (1631-1687), *El arte maestra. Discurso sobre la pintura*, is in the Biblioteca Nacional, Mexico City.
- 33 Subrahmanyam 2005, pointing out that this was not a European limitation; it can also be observed in the Ottoman and Mughal empires.
- 34 For this profoundly understudied topic, see Boxer 1989. A different category of Netherlandish artworks, art cabinets containing a variety of *naturalia* and *artificialia*, can be interpreted as conveying a 'global' message related to knowledge rather than politics (although an art cabinet survives dedicated to Stadholder William III, decorated with Chinese images based on the books of Johan Nieuhof and Olfert Dapper, from the studio of Hendrik van Soest, Antwerp, c. 1695, now Spoelberch Collection, Catholic University of Leuven).
- 35 Pomeranz 2000, Batchelor 2006. On the relation between trade and knowledge in this context, see Cook 2007.
- 36 Spivak 1985, 243.
- 37 Swan 2016, 18.
- 38 Van Rossum 2015. West Indian slaves and free Africans were represented, most famously by Rembrandt; see Kolfin 2010.
- 39 Cf. Hamann 2010. For the Dutch self-presentation via images of the overseas world, see Schmidt 2015.
- 40 Umberger & Bavuso 2010, 54.
- 41 Braudel 1989.

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