

omy by dissecting their deceased patients, thereby compensating for their distance from recognized centers of learning like Edinburgh or Philadelphia.

This project is especially strong as Hogarth reaches across otherwise separate fields—the British Caribbean in the final decades of debates over the slave trade and emancipation and the newly independent slaveholding United States—to demonstrate the way that medicine tied the Greater Caribbean region together. Hogarth also effectively engages with efforts by historians of slavery to study silences in the archive (of which there are always many). Although she recognizes the unavoidable need to read “black people’s bodies . . . [as] objects of the physician’s gaze” (p. 13), she works where possible to explain how black individuals pushed back on these white supremacist views, as in the poignant case of Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, black Philadelphians who criticized published claims of black immunity to yellow fever (p. 31). Likewise, Hogarth’s analysis of the fragmentary evidence for studying public and private hospitals is so insightful in part because she relentlessly questions the modern associations between hospital and refuge. She instead shows how proslavery officials in Jamaica built institutions that would allow them to sidestep abolitionist critiques and how enslaved people would have recognized the punitive similarities between hospitals and workhouses. In her chapters on *Cachexia Africana*, Hogarth might have benefited from a more in-depth transnational approach, especially since the alternate French name for the resulting illnesses of dirt-eaters, *mal d’estomach*, suggests conversations that would have reached across linguistic boundaries, and we know that French medicine was in vogue in the early nineteenth-century United States. Nonetheless, Hogarth does a fine job of reading the growing secondary literature on race and medicine beyond the British Atlantic, comparing her study’s findings with the long (and richly documented) tradition of charity hospitals throughout the Catholic Atlantic World and of African-descended healers in places like French St. Domingue. One final benefit to the study is its framing around issues of interest to today’s medical practitioners—Hogarth’s historical study questions attempts to research and market drugs on the basis of an imprecise and problematic concept of “race” instead of building professional and popular literacy in the stronger science of genetic propensities.

**Kristen Jean Block**

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**Gero Seelig.** *Medusa’s Menagerie: Otto Marseus van Schrieck and the Scholars.* With **Eric Jorink; Bert van de Roemer; Karin Leonhard.** 224 pp., illus., bibl., index. Munich: Hirmer Publishers, 2017. \$45 (cloth). ISBN 9783777428987.

In recent years, the historiographies of art and science have grown closer together, and the importance of images and artworks in writing a general history of knowledge is commonly recognized. The seventeenth century has been the focus of special attention. A review essay by Alexander Marr (*Renaissance Quarterly*, 2016, 69[3]) outlined how the analysis, which was initially limited to cabinets of curiosities, has shifted to “knowing images”: drawings, prints, paintings, and their epistemic status. A classic in this context was Svetlana Alpers’s *The Art of Describing* (Chicago, 1983), which argued that the art of the Dutch Golden Age, in contrast to the “narrative” ambitions of Italy, aimed at inventorying the optical variety of the visible world in a manner that resonated with Francis Bacon’s empiricism.

Owing to her cavalier use of sources and theories, Alpers’s approach did not immediately catalyze more research into the knowledge-related elements in Dutch painting. Scholars have also been wary of a teleological take on the “modernity” of Dutch art, especially after Boudewijn Bakker’s *Landscape and Religion from Van Eyck to Rembrandt* (Ashgate, 2012) argued that the idea of nature as the Second Bible inspired the new genres without the need of explicit biblical iconography. Eric Jorink’s *Reading the Book of Nature in the Dutch Golden*

*Age* (Brill, 2010) demonstrated that the same religious outlook lay at the heart of the New Science in the Dutch Republic, again putting art and science on a par—but in a manner quite different from Alpers.

It is difficult, however, to pinpoint the individual cases where painting and scholarship overlapped and to what extent the idea of the Book of Nature was more than a formula. Yes, botanical and zoological illustrations played an obvious role in the advancement of learning; but explanations of how innovations in Dutch painting, such as the virtuosic rendition of surface textures and of the most transient aspects of the visible world, were related to the activities of microscopists and lens grinders, and, ultimately, the ideas of Descartes and Spinoza, remain elusive.

Luckily, there is a new poster child for the debate on Dutch art and science: Otto Marseus van Schrieck. This formerly little known master (apart from the excellent unpublished dissertation by Doug Hildebrecht [Michigan, 2004]) was honored with an exhibition in the Staatliches Museum Schwerin and Rijksmuseum Twenthe in Enschede in 2017–2018. It showcased Marseus's innovative genre of the *sottobosco*: bushy undergrowth depicted from a vantage point close to the ground, featuring close-up images of insects, snakes, and salamanders. Some of these creatures, such as toads and chameleons, had rarely been depicted before; natural philosophy had put these chthonic animals low on the chain of being and associated them with transience and decay. Marseus, also known as the Sleuth ("Snuffelaer"), kept live snakes in his house in a wetland area near Amsterdam and developed new techniques, such as pasting butterfly wings directly on the paint layer. The works appealed to Dutch scientists and to a European elite, most famously Grand Duke Fernando II de' Medici.

Curator Gero Seelig has produced a very handsome catalogue that portrays Marseus within his scholarly network, with vignettes devoted to Johannes Hudde, Frederik Ruysch, Levinus Vincent, and Agnes Block. Most striking, perhaps, was Marseus's enduring friendship with Jan Swammerdam, who shared his fascination with insects. As Eric Jorink, who contributed a chapter to *Medusa's Menagerie*, argues, Marseus's and Swammerdam's works demonstrate the same shift from belief in the occult (such as spontaneous generation) toward emphasis on the rational order of things. A chapter by Bert van de Roemer highlights the argument that besides the Bible and the natural world, the realm of art was a third "book" through which the powers of the Creator were evident. Karin Leonhard delves deeper into Marseus's involvement with chemistry (or alchemy): ideally, he painted stones with a mineral pigment, plants with a vegetal one, and used a toxic color for a poisonous mushroom; the paintings demonstrate his understanding of how these elements interact in nature.

It may be, however, that in focusing on science we miss the artistic point. In contrast to his contemporaries who also depicted insects, such as Jacob Hoefnagel and Jan van Kessel, Marseus presented his animals in dramatic choreographies that could not happen in nature, such as frogs fighting with butterflies. Contemporary epigrams (by Jan Vos and Salvator Rosa) did not speak of science in regard to Marseus's works: rather, they addressed the power of painting as comparable to that of Medusa, conceiving of the artistic experience as a shock reaction—a reciprocal movement when the artwork comes alive while the viewer remains "petrified," dumbstruck with amazement. Marseus's obsession with painting snakes might be interpreted in light of the quintessential struggle of art since antiquity—infusing lifeless matter with breath and movement. His crawling critters posed a new challenge that, in terms of the serpentine iconography, referenced explicitly the classical pedigree of the agency of the seemingly alive image. There was a scientific context for these paintings, certainly, but science has a hard job explaining the formal decisions that Marseus made in terms of color, space, movement, light, and surface texture—in short, what turned his paintings into such compelling visual spectacles.

**Thijs Weststeijn**

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