Willem de Rooij
Dirk Valkenburg

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Dirk Valkenburg

A Critical Analysis of Visual Culture in the Early Modern Netherlands

Edited by Willem de Rooij and
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Foreword
Bart Rutten

The meaning of art is never fixed, and how it shifts over time has always fascinated me. Works from the past continually take on new resonances as our world changes, shaped by shifting cultural contexts and the questions we bring to them. What once appeared incidental can become central. A small Surinamese red pepper in a still life, for example, might once have been read as a local flourish; today, it can speak of global trade, colonial exploitation and the complex entanglements of power and culture. Such details can 'reappear' over time, charged with new significance in ways the philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman – drawing on Aby Warburg – has called an artwork's 'afterlife':

> [T]he history of art invented by Aby Warburg combines, in its fundamental concept – *Nachleben*: 'afterlife' or 'survival' – precisely the powers to *adhere* and to *haunt* that inhere in all images. By contrast with phenomena of 'rebirth' and the simple transmission through 'influence,' as we say, a *surviving image* is an image that, having lost its original use value and meaning, nonetheless comes back, like a ghost, at a particular historical moment: a moment of 'crisis,' a moment when it demonstrates its latency, its tenacity, its vivacity, and its 'anthropological adhesion,' so to speak.[1]

At the Centraal Museum, this transhistorical approach is essential to our work: we see art from the past through the lens of the present, connecting historical images to urgent contemporary conversations. This publication, *Dirk Valkenburg* – which accompanies the exhibition *Valkenburg*, first conceived by Willem de Rooij over a decade ago, when I was at the Stedelijk Museum – exemplifies this approach.

Considered from a traditional art-historical perspective, the name of Dirk Valkenburg has often been eclipsed by his better-known contemporaries, such as Jan Weenix and Melchior d'Hondecoeter. Yet, in today's interconnected world, his work demands renewed attention – not just for the works he made during his time in Suriname, at the time of the Dutch colonial empire, but for the broader visual record he left of a globalized early modern reality that thus has much to say about our own time.

In a museum context, the stillness of a hunting scene, the opulence of a game piece or the quiet intimacy of a portrait cannot be read in isolation. These images are bound to the networks of trade, resource extraction, and human labour that made them possible. A dead hare in Valkenburg's hunting still life is more than an emblem of abundance; it is also a witness to the hierarchies, exploitations and ambitions of its age. The same is true of the faces of those portrayed – as well as those, enslaved or exploited, that

have *never* been portrayed – visages that bear, all the same, directly or indirectly, the imprint of the systems of power in which they lived.

This is where De Rooij's perspective as a contemporary artist is vital – he exposes these questions in unrelenting fashion. Through long-term research and precise artistic choices, De Rooij brings together and reactivates 30 paintings and drawings by Valkenburg. Drawing on his experience with time based media, he employs montage as a method of letting new meanings unfold in between appropriated objects. By doing so, he does not simply present the works as historical artefacts; he exposes the values, prejudices and structures embedded in their making, showing how the concerns of the early eighteenth century are not relics of the past but continuities in our globalized reality.

That is why I am in no doubt that future generations will also continue to consult this volume, featuring essays by fifteen international thinkers that reflect on Valkenburg's work through art history, queer studies and BIPOC perspectives, as well as the first catalogue raisonné of the artist's work. I am very grateful to De Rooij, who initiated this adventure with us. With this exhibition, and certainly with this publication, we will have an impact beyond the duration of the exhibition, through the book's distribution in academic communities and libraries worldwide. It is partly for this reason that we have also committed, in addition to a physical version, to publishing an open access version that will offer audiences easier access to what we consider an important endeavour.

This way of thinking about art from the past has reinforced my conviction that we, as a museum, can play a meaningful role by combining contemporary art with contemporary perspectives on the past. Thus, to bring Valkenburg's work to the stage of the museum today is to acknowledge that relevance is not static. It shifts with our collective awareness, our global entanglements and our changing sense of what matters. De Rooij's project invites us to look at art not only for its technical mastery or place in a stylistic tradition but for what it can reveal about the intertwined histories that have shaped the world we inhabit. This legitimises the passing of artworks from generation to generation. It also legitimises our continuing curiosity about the ways in which objects we think we know appear to us – and that artists, above all, are the ones we consult in this process.

This publication is the result of the efforts and determination of many people and institutions. First of all, I would like to thank Willem de Rooij for his great passion and perseverance in this project. He developed the idea for this book for more than fifteen years, and it is his enthusiasm and intelligent perspective that have now finally been captured. I am also very grateful to co-editor Karwan Fatah-Black, whose expertise in colonial history proved to be invaluable.

A big thank you to AUP who, through Anja van Leusden, immediately agreed to our collaboration proposal, believing in this book's importance and necessity for dissemination to academic and general libraries far and wide. We are grateful to

the RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, where, under the critical leadership of Sabine Craft-Giepmans, Head of Research and Development, De Rooij's initial research on Dirk Valkenburg's oeuvre could grow into the first catalogue raisonné, presented in this volume.

In the final lines of this foreword, I would like to thank the funds that supported this publication. First of all, Hartwig Art Foundation, with which we have a long-standing partnership in presenting important Dutch artists, including in relation to this publication and the exhibition. We also thank the Mondriaan Fund for supporting this project, as well as Het Cultuurfonds and the Kees Eijrond fund, for providing financial support especially for the publication.

1 Didi-Huberman 2005.

Designing Difference
Willem de Rooij and Karwan Fatah-Black

Introduction

Dirk Valkenburg's paintings occupy a unique position within the canon of image production in the Dutch empire. Yet, with the exception of one work, his oeuvre has remained largely undervalued and underexamined – overshadowed by predecessors such as Albert Eckhout (c. 1610–1664/66) and Frans Post (1612–1680), and contemporaries like Melchior d'Hondecoeter (1636–1695) and Jan Weenix (1640/41–1719). As a result, Valkenburg's work has until now not been subject to a comprehensive exhibition nor in-depth academic analysis. *Valkenburg*, an exhibition by contemporary artist Willem de Rooij at the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, brings together thirty works by Dirk Valkenburg for the first time. Following earlier installations such as *Intolerance* at Berlin's Neue Nationalgalerie, De Rooij employs the artistic strategy of appropriation to interrogate the historical functions of visual culture. Through his precise juxtaposition of artworks, the installation *Valkenburg* examines how the representational strategies of the early modern Dutch elites normalized and legitimized colonial ideology. In doing so, the installation enables a critical exploration of the 'white gaze' – a condition that shaped both Valkenburg's paintings and the extractive practices of colonialism he depicted – as well as De Rooij's own position as an artist within this constellation. The present publication, as a pendant providing further depth to the installation's objective, features fifteen new essays by international scholars and writers, as well as the first catalogue raisonné of Valkenburg's oeuvre. Together, these contributions explore Valkenburg's work and legacy through diverse disciplinary lenses, including art history, anthropology, postcolonial studies, and queer and BIPOC studies.

Valkenburg (1675–1721) was born in Amsterdam (fig. 1), the son of a midwife and a schoolteacher. Having trained in the artist workshops of Michiel van Musscher (1643–1705) and Weenix, among others, his early work focused on hunting still lifes and portraits of elite patrons – most of whom were directly involved in the colonial project. In 1696, like many of his contemporaries, Valkenburg set out for Italy. Along the way, he painted hunting still lifes for prestigious clients, among them Baron Johann Anton I Knebel von Katzenelnbogen in Augsburg and Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein in Vienna. Reportedly homesick, Valkenburg returned to Amsterdam instead of completing his journey to Rome.[1] Following his growing reputation abroad, the court of Stadtholder-King Willem III commissioned new works from him, but these

remained unrealized due to the monarch's untimely death in 1702. Valkenburg also declined an offer to become court painter to King Frederik I of Prussia in Berlin as he was unwilling to leave his native Netherlands. Not long after, however, Valkenburg set off on another journey – allegedly, in part, to escape his unhappy marriage.[2]

In 1706, Amsterdam plantation owner and art collector Jonas Witsen (1676–1715) commissioned Valkenburg to document his holdings in Suriname – as Sarah Thomas suggests in her essay, most probably to reassure Witsen that his enterprise was 'manageable, lucrative, and had a future'. During this trip, Valkenburg produced several paintings, eight of which survive today, depicting Indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans within plantation landscapes, alongside detailed renderings of local fruits and reptiles. *Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation in Suriname* (cat. 69) portrays a group of Indigenous people living just outside one of Witsen's estates. Serving as a kind of pendant, *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70; the title hereafter will appear in shortened form) – which shows a group of enslaved African people gathered outside a hut – is the only known image created on location at a Caribbean plantation during this period. Since Valkenburg's death, it has remained his most well-known work and is widely seen as uniquely important for the study of colonial visual culture and the African diaspora in the Americas. Valkenburg also produced a series of drawings of plantation buildings and industrial installations for sugar refining – works that often include depictions of the labourers who likely built, and certainly, operated them. In colonial archives, historian Frank Dragtenstein has uncovered documentation of a revolt by enslaved workers at the Palmeneribo plantation in June 1707 and their subsequent escape into the rainforest. His findings reveal how deeply and directly Valkenburg was implicated in the regime he worked for.

Valkenburg returned to Amsterdam in 1708, weakened and in poor health. There, his late works included hunting still lifes, animal paintings and portraits of prominent magistrates, such as Jan Wolters, as well as intellectuals and artists like Bernard Nieuwentijt and Jan Goeree. Valkenburg died of a stroke on 2 February, 1721, at the age of 46.

Valkenburg was a skilled and meticulous craftsperson. His still lifes reflect the influence of his teacher and mentor, Weenix, and d'Hondecoeter, while his Suriname works evoke the Brazilian landscapes of Post and Eckhout. However, Valkenburg's oeuvre is especially significant for its extraordinary range, spanning hunting still lifes, animal paintings, portraits, botanical studies, landscapes, and pseudo-scientific and cartographic drawings. While the colonial implications of botanical studies and cartographic drawings have been the subject of scholarly interest, animal paintings and hunting still lifes have remained comparatively underexamined. His oeuvre therefore invites a more integrated visual analysis of how decorative and documentary genres operated in concert to normalize and aestheticize imperialism, offering insight into the mechanics of the white gaze. Simultaneously, Valkenburg's career reveals his deep connections with artistic, political, commercial and administrative



Fig. 1 Anonymous, *Portrait of Dirk Valkenburg*, c. 1715. Pencil, brush and brown and grey wash on paper, 199 × 163 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-T-1940-322.



Fig. 2 Jan Weenix, *Still Life with Dead Hare and Birds*, 1681. Oil on canvas, 123.5 × 110.4 cm. Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, inv. no. 863.

elites across Europe. Tracing these networks enhances our understanding of the sociopolitical frameworks that informed and sustained the visual economy of the Dutch empire.

Patronage and Patriarchy

Valkenburg's patrons were financially and socially implicated in the colonial enterprise, as Sabine Craft-Giepmans concludes in this volume. Based in Amsterdam and surrounding regions, they belonged to the administrative and mercantile elite, deeply embedded in the power structures of the Admiralty, the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie and the Geoctrooieerde Westindische Compagnie (respectively, the Dutch East India Company, or VOC, and the Dutch West India Company, or WIC). The formal portraits he made of them stand out for their standardized composition and symbolic function, as they followed strict conventions in size, posture, costume and gesture. As a result, sitters often appear nearly interchangeable. A stand-out subgenre within Valkenburg's portraits are the so-called marriage portraits: diptychs that present heterosexual couples as distinct individuals as well as powerful social units. Marriages among influential families were rarely first-generation wealth affairs. More often, they cemented the long-standing privileges of families whose fortunes had accumulated over decades – if not centuries – through inherited positions, business liaisons and repeated strategic unions. Marriage portraits made these unions visible, bridging private arrangements and public expressions of authority and influence.

Joan van Akerlaken and Petronella Merens exemplify this dynamic (cats. 77, 78). Akerlaken's father, Christoffel, was chief bookkeeper of the VOC. After Christoffel van Akerlaken's death, Joan's mother remarried Cornelis de Groot, mayor of Hoorn and director of the VOC chamber there. This second marriage brought Akerlaken into Hoorn's tightly knit regent class. Joan later married Petronella Merens, his stepfather's niece – an alliance that further consolidated the families' wealth and influence. Akerlaken studied law and went on to serve as alderman, councilor and eventually mayor of Hoorn. Valkenburg portrayed Akerlaken and Merens in 1711, affirming their status in a visual language that echoed their accumulated social, economic and political capital.

Jan Jacob Braems, who Valkenburg portrayed in 1714 (cat. 79), together with his wife Maria Uylenbroek (cat. 80), was born in Batavia from the second marriage of senior bookkeeper Daniel Braems to Maria Paviljoen.

Similarly, the marriage of Jan Wolters and Sara Munter reveals the closeness of Valkenburg's clients to colonial power (cats. 88–89). Sara Munter was the daughter of Cornelis Munter, director of both the WIC and the Sociëteit van Suriname (Suriname Company, or SvS) and a commissioner of the Hortus Medicus. Munter's 1715 marriage to Wolters, later alderman of Amsterdam and administrator of both the WIC and VOC, resulted in one of Valkenburg's most striking marriage portraits. The couple appears confidently posed in a fantasy landscape, ornately dressed, with Munter holding a green parakeet that must have been imported from the Americas.

Through these works, Valkenburg not only captured likenesses but created visual testaments to a society shaped by inherited privilege, patriarchy and colonial wealth. Here, portraiture, like marriage, functions as a tool of consolidation, reinforcing social order and preserving status across generations.

Hunted Life

Hunting still lifes form the core of Valkenburg's artistic legacy. The theme gained popularity in the second half of the seventeenth century through the work of Weenix (figs. 2–3), and as his apprentice and assistant, Valkenburg co-developed visual strategies for representing it. Hunting, both visually and socially, functioned as an assertion of power and class, serving as a kind of social choreography mapping hierarchies and defining group identities. As Maurice Saß notes in his essay in this volume, it fostered bonds among elite hunters, while starkly excluding others. In this way, hunting became a ritualized performance of status and a means of legitimizing class distinctions. Access to hunting grounds required specific permits and land ownership, both indicators of high social standing. Those denied such privileges might instead purchase paintings of hunt-related themes – depictions of dead hares would then be aspirational objects and symbols of the class they hoped to join. Thus, hunting still lifes were not merely decorative; they could also be expressions of social ambition.

With overhunting depleting deer and other large game in parts of the Netherlands, hunters turned their focus to the hare. Valkenburg painted them in near-mechanical repetition, surrounded by hunting paraphernalia and weapons. Hanging upside down – a pose associated with butchering – they evoke desire, control, murder and consumption and apparently appealed to his clients.

Valkenburg's relationship with his mentor, Weenix, endured throughout his life and beyond. In his text, Matthies Klink reveals how, after Valkenburg's death, many of his works were falsely signed with Weenix's name to fetch higher prices at auction. This posthumous reattribution underscores the role of traditional mentor-pupil hierarchies in shaping art history. Yet, the relationship between Valkenburg and Weenix suggests a more complex picture – one in which authorship, originality and artistic value were fluid to an extent that seems far reaching to the contemporary eye. Weenix appears to have run a larger workshop; the stylistic variety in his oeuvre possibly reflects the contributions of multiple assistants. There is no evidence that Valkenburg had pupils or employed a team. However, his repertoire of distinct motifs suggests a deep reliance on standardized models, as confirmed by his estate inventory. Julie Hartkamp, in this volume, describes how his refined finish and consistent style were the result of a systematized process – demonstrating that repetition functioned as both an artistic strategy and an economic necessity.

Valkenburg and his surrounding artistic circles were instrumental in developing several branches of decorative art that were interconnected in terms of style and iconography. These subgenres included hunting still lifes, bird paintings and animal paintings. The artists among these circles were linked not only by professional relationships but also, often, by family ties. D'Hondecoeter and Weenix, for example, were first cousins who trained together in the studio of Jan's father, Jan Baptist Weenix (1621–1659). Artists such as Willem Hendrik Wilhelmus van Royen (1672–1742), Adriaen Coorte (1665–1707) and Valkenburg himself fulfilled a range of roles within this network as assistants, students or collaborators. Some works attributed to Weenix and d'Hondecoeter are difficult to distinguish, even for specialists. Their assistants not only painted for them but also reused motifs originally created by their mentors in their own signed works. One example is the king vulture in Valkenburg's lost painting, *King Vulture on a Stone Plinth, with a Dog in a Park Landscape* (cat. 43), a motif similarly employed in several works signed by Weenix. This exchange of motifs among the artists testifies to a porous spectrum of authorship – and underscores the importance of studying these artists in dialogue rather than as isolated 'geniuses'.[3]

In addition to his hunting still lifes featuring hares, Valkenburg produced fewer but larger, more complex canvases. Drawing on the baroque spectacles developed by d'Hondecoeter and Weenix, Valkenburg situated his subjects before fantastical classical gardens adorned with ruins, castles and temples. These architectural references evoke the ancient world as both a formal ideal and a symbol of cultural refinement, in keeping with contemporary humanist and early Enlightenment values. Classical motifs were increasingly adapted to affirm social hierarchies and emerging systems of categorization. Within this framework, the colour white – as seen in marble structures, ivory carvings, birds or other animals – took on symbolic associations of purity, civility and refinement, foreshadowing its later entanglement with ideologies of European superiority. A telling example is Weenix's *Dog Protecting a Guinea Fowl* (fig. 3).

Valkenburg's more complex compositions feature a wider variety of animals – both living and dead – surrounded by symbolically charged paraphernalia. One significant example is *Still Life with a Dead Heron, Hare, Hoopoe and Other Fowl, with a Dog, Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape* (cat. 15). Painted for the court of Liechtenstein, it depicts an ornate rifle from the princely armoury, crafted by Johann Michael Maucher (1654–1701). Like Valkenburg's painting of it, the rifle is still in Liechtenstein's Princely collections. It is decorated with an ivory carving of the goddess Fortuna, represented here as a nude female figure. Her presence not only alludes to the shifting fortunes of the hunt but also symbolizes the princely hunter's power to decide the fate of his prey. The rifle's presence in Valkenburg's painting demonstrates how patrons could request specific visual elements to be part of compositions they would order at a painter's studio. It also reveals

how themes such as hunting, the stylized domination of land and animals and the sexualization of the female body were tightly interwoven into this broader visual and ideological framework.

Many of d'Hondecoeter's works feature exotic birds imported from Africa, Asia and Australasia, on the one hand, and from the Americas, on the other, reflecting Dutch trade routes. These birds – expensive and rare – served as status symbols for wealthy citizens, who displayed their affluence through ownership. D'Hondecoeter's elaborate group portraits – gatherings of birds from disparate continents in improbable constellations – were themselves status symbols depicting status symbols. In *The Threatened Hen* (fig. 4), the birds appear anxious, engaged in cross-species bickering or a territorial dispute – perhaps echoing the tense and rapidly shifting socio-economic fabric of Amsterdam, where d'Hondecoeter lived and worked.[4]

Valkenburg's *Birds from Various Continents in a Landscape* (cat. 41) also confronts birds from across the globe, but in contrast to d'Hondecoeter's scenes, Valkenburg's birds here appear calm, isolated and individually rendered. As in the semi-public aviaries or zoos where Valkenburg likely observed them, noted in Mark Ponte's essay, each bird is presented for admiration, emphasizing its 'exotic' qualities – exotic here meaning unfamiliar to the Dutch viewer. The aim seems to be the display of difference: the stark contrast among the birds and between them and local species. This insistence on difference plays a crucial role in legitimating the imperial project, wherein representing the foreign as fundamentally distinct supports narratives of dominance and control.

Coloniality

While Enlightenment ideals professed universality, they often operated in exclusionary ways, reinforcing a worldview in which whiteness was equated with reason, civilization and even humanity. In Valkenburg's work and worldview, legality, science and Protestantism intersected to support systems of classification and empirical reasoning that reinforced notions of difference and upheld existing hierarchies. As Lilia Moritz Schwarcz points out in her text, the famous Amsterdam mapmaking Visscher dynasty first began their colonial map enterprise by creating biblical maps.

Valkenburg's portraits of academics and artists reflect these entanglements. Religious scholar Bernard Nieuwentijt, for instance, bridged empirical scientific thought and religious doctrine by asserting God's active role in scientific inquiry. His position mirrored Dutch social preferences for consensus and found resonance in Valkenburg's Amsterdam. Although Nieuwentijt did not write extensively about colonialism, his philosophies – straddling religion and science – ultimately served the prevailing power structures.

Valkenburg's *Portrait of an Unknown Man* (cat. 90) possibly depicts Joan van Vliet, a lawyer in Valkenburg's circle who facilitated connections with affluent patrons. Born on the Moluccan island of Ambon to a family of high-ranking VOC administrators, Van Vliet was directly linked to the imperial economy.





Fig. 3 Jan Weenix, *Dog Protecting a Guinea Fowl*, c. 1680. Oil on canvas, 124 × 147 cm. Utrecht, Centraal Museum, inv. no. 29837, on loan from Dr Ernst Krijgers Janzen.

Fig. 4 Melchior d'Hondecoeter, *The Threatened Hen*, 1681. Oil on canvas, 115.5 × 141 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-174.



Fig. 5 Triple press. Wood, 55.5 × 68.5 × 34 cm. Museu Afro Brasil, on loan from a private collection (formerly collection Emanoel Araujo).

When Valkenburg was sent to Suriname to document the plantations of his wealthy patron, Witsen, his resulting works reflected the rigid hierarchies of both social and scientific classification. Earlier paintings rendered imported animals and fruits as visual vessels of fantasy – such as the coconuts researched by Benjamin Schmidt in this volume. Valkenburg's botanical studies and precise technical drawings of plantation geography and production facilities suggest a more documentary aim but are in fact equally idealized. The tidy plantations are set in idyllic landscapes, and Indigenous and enslaved people appear mostly as incidental figures used to mark scale or illustrate labour, or rather, productivity. The artist chose to not depict the hardships of their constrained and controlled lives. *Indigenous, Enslaved and European People Navigating the Suriname River in Front of the Waterland Plantation, Suriname* (cat. 69) stratifies the colony's ethnic and social groups through the types of boats they sail. In the conversation with Renzo Duin described in this book, Hedi-Kabiten Mutu Poeketi – chairman of the Sa'amaka village leaders and representative of the Surinamese Maroon communities in Europe – identifies the Maroon vessel in the foreground as a *boto oso* (boat house). The central boat, a pinnace rowed by enslaved Africans and likely carrying a European elite, is also called a *boto oso*, though it features a more solid wooden structure. It is escorted by a large canoe operated by fourteen Indigenous sailors, a vessel the Karina peoples refer to as a *kanawa*. The serene calm of the water – reflecting its surroundings – negates the reality of the ever-moving Suriname River, suggesting Valkenburg's idealization of the scene. In this volume, Karin Amatmoekrim reviews the quizzical rendering of the Dutch flag in this painting.

The Museu Afro Brasil in São Paulo houses extensive collections of historical objects made by enslaved Africans (fig. 5). Exhibits include agricultural and domestic tools, along with jewelry that reflects goldworking traditions of the Ashanti region – skills that were adapted and preserved by enslaved African artisans in Brazil. Some enslaved women, adorned with these fine jewels, became status symbols for the elites that held them captive. The museum also preserves instruments of torture – such as shackles, ball-and-chains and muzzle devices – that speak to the brutal realities of slavery. While enslaved artisans were often skilled blacksmiths and metalworkers, the specific origins of these objects are difficult to trace. These artefacts bear witness to both the violence of enslavement and the artistic and technical sophistication of those forced to labour under it. While such material culture is relatively abundant in Brazil, it remains far scarcer in Suriname, where preservation efforts were more limited.

One of Valkenburg's most complex works is a 1708 technical drawing of a wooden sluice on one of Witsen's plantations, Palmeneribo (cat. 65). The drawing combines schematic precision with a striking use of light, elevating it beyond mere technical illustration. Equally notable is the subject it depicts: the carefully constructed sluice, like the objects at the Museo Afro Brasil likely built by enslaved African carpenters who either brought their

expertise from home or acquired it on the plantation. In the Netherlands – a swampy river delta – sluices were essential to converting waterlogged terrain into arable land. As Alex van Stipriaan notes in this book, sluices and dams are central not only to Dutch identity but also to the imaginations of the enslaved. Water management, still a key Dutch export today, was critical both in domesticating the Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt delta and in facilitating irrigation and resource extraction in Suriname's jungle. In this drawing, Valkenburg captures the collision of African and European knowledge, human ambition and environmental constraint, and technical precision and artistic vision to lay bare the convergence of ingenuity and violence.

Cultivated Instincts

In Valkenburg's work, most animals are portrayed as wild and driven by predatory instincts. These interpretations reinforce a racialized hierarchy by positioning animals in direct opposition to the figure of the white man – typically the invisible hunter in hunting-related imagery – who is constructed as rational, self-controlled and guided by morality, religion and science. This juxtaposition exemplifies the mechanism of 'othering': the portrayal of the 'other' as fundamentally and essentially different from the self. Once animals are categorized as inherently different – and therefore inferior – to the white man, the implications are far-reaching. This framing legitimizes violence: animals can consequently be hunted, domesticated or owned; their territories can be invaded and exploited; and their lives can be taken without consequence.

A particularly perverse conundrum in some of Valkenburg's works lies in how animals are made to appear *complicit* in violence – simply by being present as observers – thereby blurring the line between victim and predator and reinforcing their portrayal as naturally violent. This ambiguity is especially visible in his depictions of cats. Treasured as pets in the home, yet admired as ruthless killers in the field, they're often seen snooping around the remains of animals too large for them to have killed themselves. The bloodthirsty owl in *Eurasian Eagle-Owl and Pigeon in Flight, with a Dead Hen and Animal Remains in a Landscape* (cat. 50) is iconographically unparalleled, exalting the act of killing by surrounding a murdered hen with scattered bones.

When animals are framed as primitive, they are dialectically linked to the tradition of framing females as adjacent to animals: instinctive, lustful. The women in Valkenburg's paintings are dressed in the fashion of the time, which meant that, as opposed to the portraits of men with their elaborate suits and shirts with high-fitting collars, the women wear dresses that show ample cleavage, so that much visual and symbolic prominence is given to their conspicuous bosoms. With a contemporary eye, it is therefore easy to understand these portraits of females as vectors of sexual messaging, whereas the pictures of men make a much more formal impression, rather expressing will and intent, and therefore, controlled power. The seductive, insinuated innocence of these privileged female subjects does not do justice to their stake in both the patriarchal

and colonial projects. As mentioned, many of them were directly involved in the slave trade, either as plantation owners, holders of stocks and bonds or through marriage and inheritance – examples include the aforementioned Sara Munter and Petronella Merens. That means that even though their objectification aligns with the way both animals and non-European human subjects are depicted in Valkenburg's pictorial universe, their role is complicated in a way that those other roles are not.

Valkenburg's paintings *Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation* (cat. 69) and *Gathering of Enslaved People* (cat. 70) are among the most significant artworks produced in the Caribbean during this period, as they depict Indigenous inhabitants of Suriname and enslaved Africans on location – at a time when few such representations existed, if any at all. *Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation* portrays a group of five Lokono individuals gathered around domestic structures in an almost informal arrangement so understated it risks being overlooked. The restraint in composition, colour and light might be seen as mirroring the perceived modesty of the people depicted. Engaged in a quiet moment of domestic introspection, they were captured from a considerable distance, suggesting they may have resisted allowing the artist to come closer.

As discretely subdued and ambiguously intimate as *Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation* is, *Gathering of Enslaved People* presents a striking contrast. It shows several sparsely clad enslaved Africans participating in a moment of exuberant collective action or ritual involving music and dance – rendered as a sensational spectacle of sexualization, admiration, excitement and awe. As Valkenburg's most famous and arguably most complex painting, *Gathering of Enslaved People* has, as Rebecca Parker Brienen lays out in her essay, been subject to multiple interpretations, which is reflected in the many titles the work has held over the years. This heavily loaded work encapsulates many of his artistic trademarks: meticulous attention to detail, dramatic lighting, masterful composition, a rich palette, while epitomizing the complexities of projection and objectification. As Will Furtado Fredo notes in this volume: 'The sensuality of Valkenburg's painting asks what happens *inside* of us, when race play happens *to* us.'

Notably, both scenes depict the dwellings of the individuals shown, while in the distant background, the formal structures of the plantation – likely including the manager's house – can be seen as faint outlines. Like a panopticon, the owner is implied to be omnipresent. What remains unseen in these images, however, is the reality of frequent Indigenous raids and strikes on Dutch plantations. In response, as Renzo Duin describes in this volume, plantation owners fortified their homes – not just to protect themselves but also the enslaved peoples they owned, who could be caught between rebellion and repression. The figures in *Gathering of Enslaved People* are believed by some scholars to have participated in the 1707 revolt on Palmeneribo – a rebellion in which Valkenburg himself played an active role by attempting to physically stop the revolting enslaved people, to which he testified later in a report to the court in Paramaribo.

Confronting the divergent genres in Valkenburg's work with one another highlights the visual appeal of his images. At their best, they are compelling to look at – because of Valkenburg's considerable artistic skills that render surfaces and objects vivid and attractive or perhaps because the scenes depicted are spectacularly dangerous (wild animals), horrific (decaying hunting trophies), scandalous (minimally dressed non-Europeans), or erotic (minimally dressed non-Europeans, and white women). Valkenburg's spectacles of horror and delight skillfully entice us into alignment with the underlying hierarchies, all of which can be reduced to a single system: the othering of subjects in relation to the white male patron and the white male painter. This visual rhetoric reinforces a hierarchy of classified differences – between man and woman, European and non-European, human and animal. In this dynamic of objectification, no one emerges victorious. What persists from these interconnected social templates is a deeply embedded web of iconographic conventions that permeates both the Dutch psyche and the national visual 'archive'. One example can be seen in a political rally in The Hague, where, on September 20, 2025, extreme- and far-right factions carried the so-called *princevlag* or *prinsenvlag* – a sixteenth-century Dutch flag variant historically linked to xenophobic nationalism, for instance, apartheid South Africa and the NSB, the Dutch Nazi party active in the 1930s and 1940s (fig. 6). Many of these flags were creative but unhistorical concoctions, emblazoned with VOC logos that invoked the legacy of the Dutch East India Company to support calls for a migration ban. This is how visual clichés – rooted in the iconography of empire – continue to echo in the present, perpetuating hierarchies and difference.

Some Words of Thanks

Research for the installation *Valkenburg* and this book began in 2006, when Willem de Rooij started exploring the work of Melchior d'Hondecoeter. This led to the 2010 exhibition *Intolerance* at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, which has expanded into a broader long-term study of artists in d'Hondecoeter's circle – such as Weenix, Valkenburg, Coorte and Willem Frederik van Royen (c. 1645–1723) – resulting in a series of subsequent installations combining original works and reproductions.[5] Over nearly two decades, the project has grown through numerous collaborations: Mieke Bal, Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Janneke Wesseling notably supported De Rooij's 2010 PhD bid on the subject at Leiden University; from 2014 to 2020, plans for a related exhibition and publication at the Stedelijk Museum were developed with Ann Goldstein, Taco Dibbits, Beatrix Ruf, Bart van der Heide and Bart Rutten; finally, in 2018, a symposium initiated by De Rooij, the Society of Arts of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and Wayne Modest at the Research Center for Material Culture (RCMC), together with Leiden University, revealed wide academic interest in rethinking Valkenburg's work – many contributors to that symposium now appear in this book.



Fig. 6 Far-right protesters at a political rally in The Hague carrying *Prince's Flags* adorned with VOC logos.

Among the many individuals who shaped this project, Bart Rutten stands out. His early engagement with Valkenburg as a former curator at the Stedelijk Museum laid essential groundwork. As the current director of the Centraal Museum, his full and unequivocal support in January 2020 became both the motor and the fuel of the exhibition *Valkenburg* and this volume. Critically, his support enabled De Rooij to invite Karwan Fatah-Black as co-editor. From early 2021 to late 2024, we developed the core of this publication together with Mathias Danbolt at the University of Copenhagen. Danbolt's expertise in Nordic colonialisms and extensive network helped define our editorial direction, leading to a multidisciplinary approach with a global scope. Together, we selected most of the authors, who contributed a remarkably dense, insightful body of research and remained committed through multiple rounds of editing. Eveline Sint Nicolaas and Elmer Kolfin graciously advised and oversaw the editorial process throughout.

In September 2023, a partnership between the Centraal Museum and RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History was established to facilitate the production of the catalogue raisonné. Building on De Rooij's initial research, Sabine Craft-Giepmans and Matthies Klink supported Julie Hartkamp in her extensive research and meticulous archival work. Hartkamp also oversaw the full production of the publication, managing every detail with tireless dedication. Her sharp eye and efficient coordination achieved more in a short time than we thought possible.

On behalf of Hartkamp, we thank Dorothy Traag and Eliza Zschuschen, Heads of the National Herbarium of Suriname, Anton de Kom University of Suriname, and anthropologist Renzo Duin, for their expertise in identifying the flora and fauna depicted in the Suriname works. At the RKD, we thank Angela Jager, Yvonne Bleyerveld, Ellis Dullaart, Sabine van Beek, Rudy Jos Beerens, Vera Hendriks and Marieke de Natris for sharing their art historical expertise on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch painting and drawing and for their editorial assistance. At the Centraal Museum, we thank Chantal Perlee for her editorial assistance on the provenance history and Liesbeth Helmus for sharing her art historical expertise.

The book's essays and texts were edited by Mark Soo with Alejandra Espinosa, of linguistic.services. Their characteristic mix of precision and tact brought clarity and coherence to the final volume.

Finally, the publication was designed by Helmut Völter, who managed – through humour, patience and level-headedness – to navigate the complexity of the content and transform it into an elegantly legible object.

We are deeply grateful for the inspiration, enthusiasm, patience and academic rigour that shaped this volume, and we sincerely thank all our collaborators for helping make Dirk Valkenburg's work accessible – enabling international audiences to critically engage with it in both the broadest and most profound ways.

1 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2.
2 Ibid., p. 484.
3 See the exhibition *King Vulture* at the Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna, and the catalogue essay 'Intolerance' by de Rooij and Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer in exh. cat. Berlin 2010, vol. 1.
4 De Rooij and Meyer-Krahmer, 'Intolerance', in exh. cat. Berlin 2010, vol. 1.
5 These include *King Vulture* at Steirischer Herbst (2022) and the Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna (2023), and *Root* at Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin (2023).

ESSAYS

Life and Work

Dirk Valkenburg: A Painter in Amsterdam and Suriname

Mark Ponte

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

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

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

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

married Margaretha Cleijnman, a widow seventeen years his senior.[4] The marriage was her third and would remain childless. In January 1703, the couple witnessed the baptism of Gijsbert, the son of Pieter Valkenburg, Dirk's brother.[5] Far more important, of course, was the painter's registration as a citizen of Amsterdam on 23 March 1703.[6] This was a prerequisite for becoming a member of the Guild of St Luke and establishing a studio as an independent painter. Unfortunately, the guild's archives have been lost.

Animals and Plants

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

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

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

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

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

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

To Suriname

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

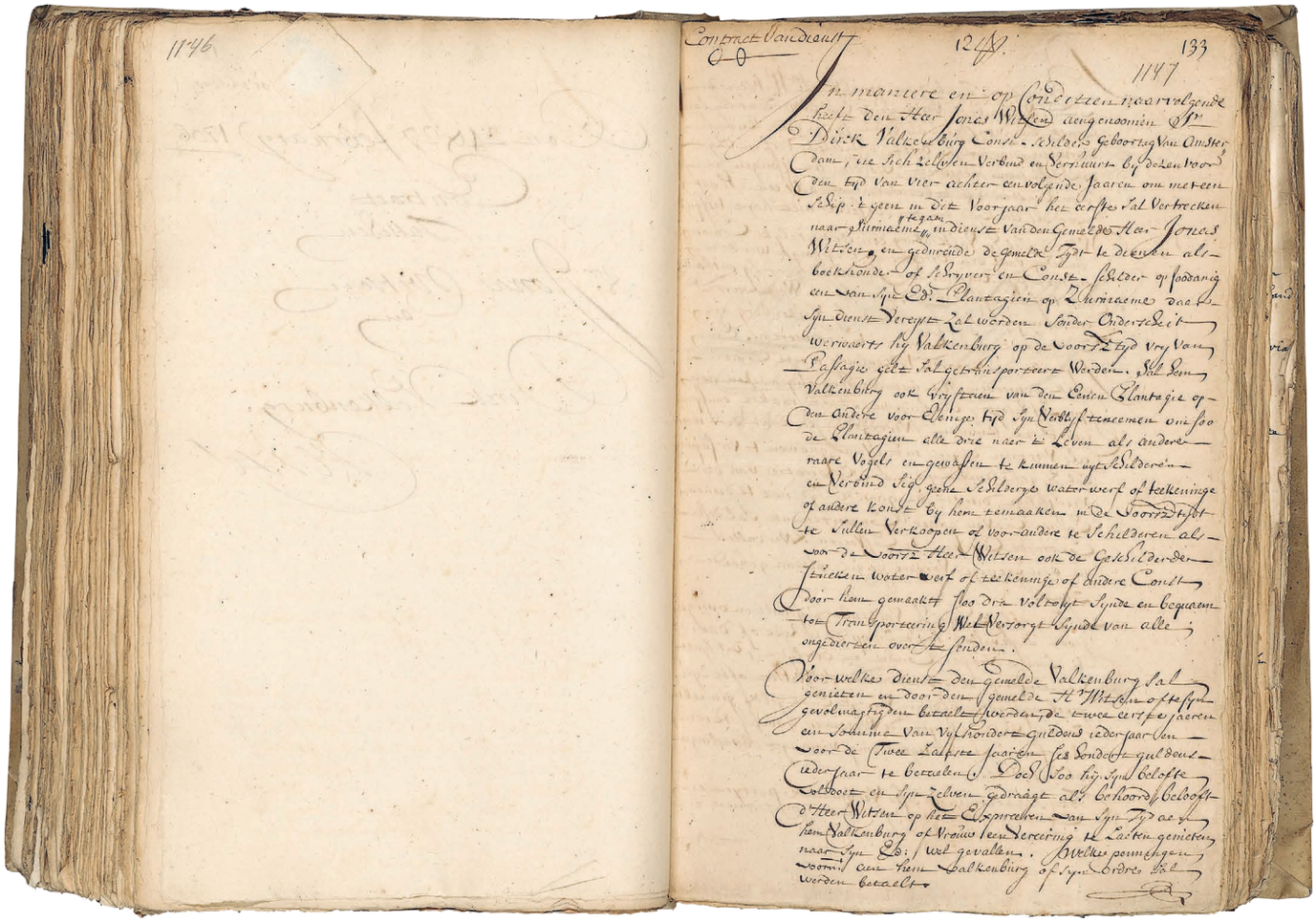

Fig. 2 *Agreement of services by Dirk Valkenburg for Jonas Witsen*, February 1706. Amsterdam, SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 3369, f. 133.

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

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

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

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

In Suriname: Gathering and Rebellion

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

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

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

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

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

A letter written by Valkenburg to the colonial administration in Paramaribo and the interrogations of a number of enslaved people reveal a very different reality of plantation life from that shown in his paintings and drawings.[23] In this ten-page epistle, Valkenburg reports extensively on the unrest at the Palmeneribo plantation, naming many of those involved. In addition to the estate inventory that was drawn up after his death, the letter is the most detailed document that we have of Valkenburg's life, which gives a good insight into how he lived in Suriname. In 1707, 156 enslaved people lived on the Palmeneribo plantation, including 26 children under twelve.[24] They included first-generation enslaved people, such as Joseph from the Congo;[25] others had been born in Suriname, such as the brothers Mingo,[26] Baratham[27] and Wally.[28] Charl had been born in the neighbouring colony of Cayana (French Guiana).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Portrait Painter to the Amsterdam Elite

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

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

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

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

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

Indirect Contact with Maria Sibylla Merian

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

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

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

Yet, surely the most important indication of direct contact between the two artists is the fact that in their later years, both lived and worked in Amsterdam's Kerkstraat, between Leidsestraat and Spiegelstraat. Merian lived there from at least 1704[42] until her death in 1717, opposite the warehouse known as the Vergulde Arend (the Gilded Eagle). Valkenburg also lived and worked in that street during the last part of his life. Likewise, the professor and physician Caspar Commelin also lived nearby, who had worked with Merian on her publications about Surinamese insects. He was also Valkenburg's doctor, as shown by an outstanding invoice in the estate inventory. Also within walking distance was the sizable house belonging to Witsen at Keizersgracht 674, next to what is today the Museum van Loon.

75 Paintings

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

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

The Rebellion at Palmeneribo
Frank Dragtenstein

The rebellion at Palmeneribo on 19 June 1707 might, at first glance, appear unremarkable: another uprising of enslaved African and Indigenous people on one of Suriname's many plantations nearly three centuries ago. Compared to others that followed later in the century, it was relatively restrained. The plantation was neither looted nor set ablaze; no director or other Europeans were killed; and the enslaved population did not permanently abandon the estate.

Yet, this rebellion is distinctive for two reasons. First, it is rare for the origins and course of an early eighteenth-century plantation uprising to be reconstructed from such well-preserved records. Second, the Palmeneribo revolt is documented not only in written accounts but also in contemporary visual representations. In the year of the uprising, Dutch artist Dirk Valkenburg produced drawings of the plantation and a painting depicting its inhabitants. Together, these sources shed light on the motives and perspectives of both the enslaved and the plantation owners.

This essay offers a detailed account of the events, showing how, in the early eighteenth century, the first generation of the enslaved sought either to make their bondage more bearable or to escape it – finding that life in the forest was a less obvious choice than it might seem. It also provides a rare glimpse of daily life on a sugar plantation, in which the main characters become something more than anonymous figures whose names are usually left unknown.

Palmeneribo

Palmeneribo was a large sugar plantation on the Suriname River (cat. 64), adjacent to the Jewish settlement of Jodensavanne in the district then known as Thorarica.[1] In 1707, the year of the rebellion, it was worked by 156 enslaved people and managed by three Europeans.[2] The estate comprised both high and low ground: the principal buildings, including the director's house, stood on a hill overlooking the river.[3] From the houses, a citrus tree-lined avenue descended to the valley and the sugar mill (cats. 62–63). Behind the trees flanking the avenue lay fields of bananas, other fruits and vegetables. A large fishing pond and wide freshwater ditches provided irrigation. At high tide, river water flowed through a sluice into a creek; at low tide, the creek was closed and the mill lock opened, releasing water to power the mill, which crushed cane for boiling and refining into sugar.

The plantation's origins are sometimes misattributed, and the date of its establishment is somewhat uncertain. Contrary to the assertion of Dutch author Frederik Oudschans Dentz, Palmeneribo was not founded by the Zeeland Reformed minister, planter and

merchant Reverend Johannes Basseliers but by Joan van Scharphuysen. Van Scharphuysen was a member of the Governing Council as early as 1677 and, within a few years, had become one of the colony's most influential planters. Between 1689 and 1696, he served as governor and owned both Palmeneribo and Waterland, the latter worked by about 80 enslaved people.

Palmeneribo bordered Surimombo (cat. 58), a smaller sugar plantation with roughly 100 enslaved Africans. Surimombo was established around 1671 by Basseliers, who had arrived in Suriname in 1668, soon after the Dutch seized the colony from the English. Initially appointed pastor by the Zeeland authorities to serve the colony's 362 Christians, Basseliers abandoned the ministry after financial setbacks to become a planter.[4] Married to Sara van Scharphuysen, Joan's sister, he received assistance from his brother-in-law in developing Surimombo, which bordered Jodensavanne.[5] In 1684, Basseliers expanded his holdings, likely crossing to the left bank of the Suriname River, and purchased an unknown number of African people, including five of the 373 men, women and children landed at Paramaribo from the slave ship Juffrou Geertruiyt.[6]

Basseliers died in 1689, and his widow Sara continued to operate the plantation and ship sugar to Holland. By 1690, she was among Suriname's six largest sugar exporters. On her death, management of Surimombo passed to her brother Johannes, who also oversaw Palmeneribo and Waterland.[7] After Johannes's death in 1699, his nineteen-year-old niece, Elisabeth Basseliers – daughter of Johannes Basseliers and Sara van Scharphuysen – inherited Surimombo, Palmeneribo and Waterland.[8] In 1701, she married Jonasz Witsen, bailiff and dike warden of Amstelland. Elisabeth died the following year, during childbirth, and Witsen inherited the plantations.[9]

The Plantation Managers

At the time of the 1707 uprising, only three Europeans lived on Palmeneribo – half the number required by a 1700 ordinance for proper plantation management, according to the administration in Paramaribo.[10]

The first was the plantation director. In 1706 this post was held by one Quirijn de Thuijnhuijsen, succeeded later that year by Christiaan Westphaal.[11] Little is known about Westphaal, but testimony from the enslaved suggests he had some medical knowledge.[12] The second was Jan van der Beek, an administrator and overseer who likely resided at neighbouring Surimombo but regularly stayed at Palmeneribo and Waterland; he appears to have maintained a reasonable rapport with Palmeneribo's enslaved community. The third was Dutch artist Dirk Valkenburg – bookkeeper, writer and painter – whom Witsen commissioned to spend four years in Suriname to document his tropical holdings and oversee financial accounts.

Shortly before or in the year of the uprising, he painted *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70), the well-known painting of the African

inhabitants of Palmeneribo making music and dancing. Through this image, Valkenburg brings the plantations and their inhabitants to life. In Suriname's history, it is rare to find faithful visual portrayals of plantations and their inhabitants. Portraits of governors and estates exist, but images of African individuals – especially of those central to plantation life – are virtually unknown. No painted portraits exist of heroes such as Boni and Baron. On the other hand, the names or other details of persons who were nevertheless immortalized are usually not given. Valkenburg's work stands apart in its attention to detail and individuality. In *Gathering of Enslaved People*, figures are rendered with distinct physical features and expressions: a man stands apart, staring into the distance, seemingly preoccupied; a seated woman inclines her head towards a child beside her. Even though the scene centres on music and dance, the faces of the enslaved convey concern rather than unrestrained joy.

Valkenburg not only witnessed the 1707 rebellion but became directly involved, later submitting a written report to the Paramaribo administration. His time in Suriname was short-lived; by 1708 he had returned to the Netherlands, exhausted.[13]

The Causes of the Rebellion

When Christiaan Westphaal assumed management of Palmeneribo, he was likely acting under Witsen's instructions to restore discipline and increase sugar production. To that end, he tightened work rules and demanded greater output from the enslaved. Testimony suggests this was resented. Wally, one of the eventual rebels, was heard saying, 'We don't want an officer who makes us go to work so early and makes us walk so fast'.[14] He urged others to avoid the cane fields, adding that since 'the old master', Van Scharphuysen, had died in Holland, they need not work so hard.

Van Scharphuysen had granted his enslaved workers the rare privilege of free Saturdays as well as Sundays. Until Westphaal's arrival, they had enjoyed these days without interference, using the extra time to tend provision gardens and raise pigs, goats and chickens – activities in which they were relatively successful. To the new director, however, the livestock were nothing but a nuisance.

Due to the heavy work, more men than women were needed on sugar plantations. Palmeneribo was no exception. Two leaders of the uprising had wives and partners on the nearby plantation of one Josua Serfatin Pina. Such inter-plantation relationships with wives and children were sustained through regular visits, often on the free Saturday. In 1706, Pina's plantation had 96 enslaved people, 28 of them children under twelve – a proportion suggesting either a larger female population or lower infant mortality than on Witsen's estates.

After receiving instructions from Witsen, Westphaal moved to restrict this freedom of movement. No one was permitted to leave Palmeneribo without his explicit permission or a signed pass, nor to travel the Suriname River by *korjaal* (canoe). Witsen's orders mirrored measures already being discussed in Paramaribo to curb uprisings and river escapes, which were sometimes aided by Maroons

returning from the forest to raid fields or retrieve relatives.[15] But by 1706, it was clear that the inexperienced Westphaal was ill-equipped to manage these growing tensions.

The Rebellion Leaders

Although Valkenburg's paintings give faces to some of Palmeneribo's residents, most of the 156 enslaved people remain anonymous. It is likely that the *pree* (ceremony) depicted on *Gathering of Enslaved People* (cat. 70) features some of the uprising's leaders, their wives and partners and other participants. Many of these men and women were from the Loango region (today in or near the Democratic Republic of Congo). Kaási, the principal leader of the Maroons in Suriname during the first half of the eighteenth century, was also from Loango and may have escaped from Palmeneribo.[16]

Three brothers – Mingo, Wally and Baratham – emerged as key figures in the resistance to Westphaal. They were joined by Charle, transported from Cayenne, and a youth named Joseph, remembered primarily for his later testimony. The brothers were '*criole-negroes*' (Creoles),[17] a term used for people of African descent born in Suriname, distinguishing them from the African-born majority.

The belief that Creoles more readily adapted to enslavement than African-born captives did not apply to Mingo and his brothers. In 1702, Mingo was briefly imprisoned at Fort Zeelandia for attempting, with Charle, to steal barrels of salted meat from Surimombo.[18] He frequently refused orders from the *basya* (African foreman) or the plantation director, sometimes declaring he would rather be killed than comply. He resisted punishments such as the *langa wipi* (whip). On one occasion, after being overpowered and bound for flogging, he was freed in an unguarded moment by Baratham, sparking uproar among the enslaved.[19]

Wally also commanded respect, encouraging slower work and openly challenging Kees, a prominent African loyal to Westphaal. Kees, armed with a rifle, allegedly poisoned the son of another enslaved man and may have been socially isolated from the wider community. When Wally demanded a firearm as well, Westphaal tried to beat him with his walking stick. But Wally broke the stick in two and threw it at his feet – an act for which he was not punished. Wally appears to have freely visited his beloved on Pina's neighbouring plantation, a relationship he maintained despite Westphal's restrictions.

Charle's early history in Suriname is unclear, but his record included several serious offences. He incited revolt at Waterland and attempted to lead escapees to Cayenne. Captured near the Cottica River, he avoided execution only through the intervention of an unknown carpenter. He was accused, without evidence, of poisoning a *basya* he disliked. Alongside Mingo and Baratham, he broke into the Surimombo warehouse in search of salted meat. In 1705, he persuaded Thuijnhuijsen, Westphaal's predecessor, to appoint him as a *basya*.[20] He used the role to punish opponents and undermine the director, leading to his removal and replacement by the Coromantine, Claas. Charle made repeated but unsuccessful attempts to regain the position.

Although Baratham was one of the plantation's leading figures, his role in the 1707 rebellion appears smaller than that of his brothers. Notably, in about 1702, he freed Mingo from being flogged by using a knife fastened to a long stick to cut his bonds.[21]

The Rebellion According to the Administrators

The events leading to the 19 June 1707 uprising make clear that Westphaal's authority on Palmeneribo was tenuous at best. Testimonies from both Jan Visbeek, director of neighbouring Surimombo, and from Westphaal himself, allow the day to be reconstructed in detail.

Visbeek identified Mingo as the instigator, citing an incident from April 1707.[22] Mingo had moored his *korjaal* at Surimombo near Visbeek's residence and passed by without greeting him. When ordered to stop and remove his hat – 'as one should when speaking to a white man' – Mingo refused, saying the path was open to all and he would not seek permission to use it. Visbeek demanded that he return to his boat and leave immediately; Mingo replied that he would leave at his own convenience. Enraged, Visbeek struck him with a stick. Mingo snatched it away, assumed a fighting stance, then restrained himself and continued towards Pina's plantation. Visbeek threatened to have Mingo's *korjaal* destroyed, prompting him to return to the river, swearing as he departed.

In the aftermath, Charle, brandishing a knife, vowed to 'cut down' anyone who tried to seize him. In June, after Westphaal punished a man named La Fortuyne for sexual relations with Mingiuel's wife, Charle confronted the woman, took all her linens, and, when Westphaal tried to punish him, evaded capture. Papa Jack later reported that Charle, infatuated with Mingiuel's wife, had threatened to leave for the forest with others if she was not given to him, promising to return with Maroons to liberate the rest – and kill anyone who refused to join.

Westphaal reported that it was hard for him to stop men from leaving the plantation without passes.[23] On 7 June, one enslaved man moored a *korjaal* and entered without permission[24]; when approached, he fled. That same day, Westphaal met Mingo returning from an unauthorized absence. Ordered to stop, Mingo walked on. Retrieved by another man, he apologized – but as on previous occasions, he ignored such warnings thereafter. Westphaal threatened that another violation would mean the destruction of his *korjaal* and, if he could not be caught, a shot to the legs.

On the morning of 18 June, Valkenburg was seated in the *voor galdery* (veranda) when Mingo and his companion Tam returned from a night away. They passed the house without speaking. Incensed, Westphaal smashed Mingo's *korjaal* with an axe. On learning of it, Mingo ran towards the planter's house, cursing, pulling his hat low, and striking his own head. Westphaal swung at him with a stick but missed. Mingo retreated to the slave quarters, shouting that unless given a new boat, he would cut his own throat. Charle taunted that Westphaal was 'not man enough' to punish him.

The next morning, Joseph and Charle, speaking for the group, demanded an explanation and compensation for Mingo. Westphaal

responded: 'Since I can never punish you as you deserve, and you boast of it, saying I am not man enough to master you, I will take you now at once.'[25] He seized his rifle and shot Charle in the legs with buckshot. Stones were thrown; Westphaal claimed Mingo struck the *basya*'s leg. On this occasion, Dirk Valkenburg had smacked Wally in the face. The following day Westphaal received word that twelve of the enslaved had left Waterland. He gave some bottles of rum to the inhabitants of Palmeneribo to keep them quiet. In his report, he noted that Mingo was the troublemaker and that in his judgment, he could not go unpunished.

In his report to the Governing Council, Valkenburg traced the conflict further back. As early as November 1706, Westphaal had ordered the *basya* to tell the enslaved to pen their pigs, which were damaging cane and pasture. Repeated warnings failed, and threats to shoot the animals were carried out, creating deep resentment. The killing of one of Baratham's chickens escalated tensions. When told to be quiet and leave, Baratham threw a chicken toward the director, saying, 'Since you shot it, eat it'.[26]

Valkenburg also addressed the consequences of Witsen's sailing ban. He argued that Westphaal had long had difficulty in carrying out Witsen's orders and called Mingo 'the greatest cause and hindrance of this'. 'Admonitions and threats' did not help to get him in line. He further recounted that, on the Saturday in question, after seeing his destroyed *korjaal*, Mingo very confidently walked up to Westphaal, perhaps deliberately knocking into him. The latter tried to hit him with his cane. Enraged, Mingo repeatedly shouted, 'Nu wanti dat'. Westphaal and Valkenburg tried to catch him, but to no avail. Mingo picked up the stick, upon which he was ordered to bring it to the director's residence. Cursing, he broke it into pieces. Valkenburg explained this cursing as words he did not understand. At the sight of the remains of his korjaal, Mingo stamped with rage and hit his head with his fist. Swearing and cursing, he ran to the slaves' quarters. Moments later, Westphaal was told that Mingo wanted to cut his neck. He was apparently stopped, however, because on that day, nothing else happened.

The next morning a crowd appeared in front of the director's residence, demanding an explanation. Wally also appeared on the veranda, at which Valkenburg was located. Valkenburg said, 'Dog thou art of this trouble and uprising with thy brother Mingo, etc., again the cause, and thou hast so long been the ruin of brave negroes, and the innocent are repeatedly beaten by your rogue behaviour'.[27] He further pointed out that Wally boasted of the fact that they could neither catch nor punish him. Valkenburg, who had a machete in his hand, said that, through his anger, he 'wanted to cleave his head in'. Wally retorted. This was too much for Valkenburg, and he slapped Wally in the face.

Wally then departed the veranda and called out to Mingo. 'You no (na) man', he said.

'Mi(na) man', Mingo replied.

'You go dan', Wally replied.[28] Then they all ran after Wally, shouting that they were going to the forest. The next day, they left the plantation *en masse*.

The Insurgents' Testimonies

At Fort Zeelandia on 16 and 18 July 1707, three leaders of the rebellion – Mingo, Charle, and Joseph – were interrogated by public prosecutor Cornelis D'huybert in the presence of the Governing Council, comprising P. Amsincq and A. Wiltens.[29] Wally and Baratham remained on Palmeneribo at the time. The insurgents' statements differed little from those given by the administrators.

Mingo admitted that he had previously attempted to escape after Westphaal shot their pigs, goats and chickens. He confirmed that Westphaal had banned the enslaved from keeping large numbers of pigs, claiming they damaged cane fields and gardens. Following a conflict between Baratham and Westphaal, Mingo and others had spent a week in the forest before returning to the plantation. Armed with bows, arrows, lances and two sabres, they had gone to the director's residence, where a man named Jack addressed Westphaal on their behalf: 'We don't want you any longer as director or master, or we will leave the plantation.' Mingo said that after Westphaal destroyed his *korjaal*, he convened a *krutu* (deliberation) with five elders – Jems, Toonie, Jobbe, Joris and Naro – to complain about the director. The next day, the group approached the 'great house' to demand an explanation.

Joseph testified that in December 1706, he and others had left the plantation on Baratham's advice, taking rifles, bows, arrows and lances, staying away for five days. He offered no reason for not joining the Maroons. His account matched Mingo's regarding the events after the *korjaal*'s destruction, adding that he personally would have preferred to remain on the plantation if Westphaal had agreed to pay compensation.

Charle's statement diverged from the others. He sought to distance himself from the leadership, claiming that on the Sunday morning in question he had gone to Westphaal's residence at Mingo's request but was drunk from a stoop of rum Mingo had given him. He recalled telling Westphaal, 'If she was not good enough, why did you not sell her?'[30]

After these interrogations, the Governing Council ordered that Wally and Baratham also be questioned. A military detachment was sent to Palmeneribo on 26 July. Initially, the two evaded capture, but they were eventually persuaded – under false assurances – to accompany the soldiers to Paramaribo.

Wally admitted violating the prohibition on leaving the plantation. He described how his beloved from Pina's plantation had visited him one Saturday without permission. When Westphaal learned of it, he went to Wally's house to remove her.[31] Wally barred the front entrance, but Westphaal entered from the rear and seized her by the hand. Wally threw him to the ground to free her and was not punished. He also acknowledged telling Westphaal – in a deliberately disrespectful tone – that if Kees was allowed a rifle, he should be given one as well. Wally said he advised Mingo not to demand compensation for the destroyed *korjaal* and was not present at the outset of the confrontation at the great house. Wally also said that he had made his way to the veranda at Westphaal's residence and that he

had been accosted there by Valkenburg, who said to him, 'You better leave because you have caused enough harm on this plantation'.[32] Upon leaving the gallery, Valkenburg allegedly also harassed Mingo.

Baratham admitted to throwing the dead chicken at the warden, saying, 'Have you shot it? Then eat it'.[33] Soon after, he told several men – Mando, Harry, Prince and Jappy – 'Master Christiaan has shot my hen; it is time we go to the forest.' In the forest, they heard that Van der Beek was now administering the plantation and was willing to meet them. Before agreeing to the meeting, Mingo proposed that if any of them were captured or imprisoned, they would attack and kill the administrator.[34]

Decision

After the final interrogations, Mingo, Wally, Baratham, Charle and Joseph were were sentenced to be slowly burned alive. During the burning, they were to be pinched with glowing pincers until death.[35] It was to be prolonged and painful. Then, the heads were to be separated from the corpses and placed on poles visible to others as an example. (source below as footnote 18) On 18 August, Governor De Gruijter reported that Baratham had been granted clemency because he had 'confessed everything so voluntarily and revealed the truth of the whole matter, as well as another conspiracy on the plantation'.[36]

The governor was fully aware of the plantation's volatile state. In addition to the convicted men, nineteen other residents of Palmeneribo were found guilty of participating in the rebellion. Still at large and presumed to be among the conspirators, they were offered a general pardon in a letter sent to the plantation. De Gruijter later told the Governing Council that upon hearing the pardon read aloud, the workers 'duly returned to work and the plantation is now at peace'.[37] The governor stressed that the rebels had been severely punished as a deterrent, fearing that the unrest might spread to other plantations along the Suriname River.

The uprising was rooted in the loss of privileges and the increase in workload. The abolition of the free Saturday – a benefit granted under Van Scharphuysen – not only curtailed time for tending gardens and raising poultry but also limited visits to relatives and wives and partners on neighbouring estates. This restriction, combined with heavier demands in the cane fields, struck at the core of community and family life. The free Saturday was resented by other planters as much as it was valued by the enslaved.[38]

What emerges from the surviving texts and images is that the revolt was not provoked by the extreme physical brutality often associated with uprisings but by the removal of freedoms that had once allowed for a degree of self-sufficiency and control over time and movement. Mingo's fury after the destruction of his *korjaal* – and his threat of suicide if no remedy was found – reveals the despair of men for whom such freedoms provided one of the few escapes from a monotonous and constrained existence. The sources also suggest that flight into the forest was not undertaken lightly. Without established connections to Maroon communities, survival in the interior was uncertain.

Circumstances had changed dramatically by 8 March 1758, when Aukaner Maroons attacked Palmeneribo at 11 p.m.[39] The director was absent, but a white blacksmith and two enslaved men – likely loyal to him – were killed. The plantation was looted, its property destroyed and nearly all of the enslaved departed with the attackers to their villages in the forest.

Efforts to pursue them failed. The civil captain of the Thorarica division and a military detachment from the Tempatigebied (Commewijne) district found no trace of the escapees, who integrated into the Aukaner community. One sign of possible conciliation came from a letter left in the gallery of the director's house by Adjaka, a Maroon from the Tempati area. Addressed to Dandiran, a captain of the civil militia and Adjaka's former 'master', it was written in English and expressed regret that events had come to such a pass.

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1 On current maps, Palmeneribo and Surimombo are no longer indicated. Waterland and Jodensavanne still exist today. Thorarica was destined to become the main town of the colony but fell into disrepair after the war with the Indigenous communities (around 1680).
2 NA, Sociëteit van Suriname (Suriname Company) 1682–1795, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 234, general lists of the enslaved, 1707.
3 Van Alphen 1963, p. 309.
4 Although Basseliers was known as a hard-working proclaimer of God's word, even with him, that word did not appear to apply to his fellow Africans. On the contrary, the flight of the enslaved and attacks by Maroons on his plantations show that Basseliers was not a positive exception.
5 Van der Linde 1966, p. 73.
6 Ibid., p. 93.
7 Van den Berg 2001, p. 243.
8 Van der Linde 1966, p. 126.
9 Ibid., p. 127.
10 In 1700, the board had established by pledge that for every 20 enslaved, 1 European had to be on the plantation. This meant that at Palmeneribo, with 156 enslaved, at least 7 Europeans had to live there.
11 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 234, 16-18/7/1706.
12 Ibid., 23/6/1707.
13 Schendel 1963, p. 83.
14 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 234, 17-18/7/1707 (my translation).
15 NAS, *Oud-archief Suriname: Raad van Politie*, no. 205, 25/7/1717. NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 22, 8/6/1693, f.3.
16 Dragtenstein 2003, p. 69.
17 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 234, 16/7/1707.
18 Ibid., inv. no. 22, 7/7/1707.
19 Ibid., inv. no. 234, 8-9/8/1707.
20 Ibid., 8-9/8/1707.
21 Ibid., 4/7/1707.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Van den Berg 2001, p. 245.
29 The function of the public prosecutor corresponded to that of the attorney general. He was responsible for the proper execution of the law.
30 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 234, 16/7/1707.
31 Ibid., inv. no. 234, 8-9/8/1707.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., 18/8/1707.
35 Ibid., missive gouv. De Guijter 18/8/1707.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 Van den Berg 2001, p. 244.
39 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 150, not. res. 9/5/1758.

The Standardized Production of Dirk Valkenburg's Trophy Still Lifes

Julie Hartkamp

Hares, cats, dogs, deer, foxes and birds – living and dead – are all recurring subjects in Dirk Valkenburg's oeuvre. In addition to his depictions of living creatures, Valkenburg emerged as a key exponent of the game still life, presenting dead animals as elaborate trophies of the hunt.[1] Valkenburg approached his work through a process of standardization that built on the iconographic framework of his former master, Jan Weenix (1641–1719). This standardization involved the reuse of his master's visual motifs, mixing and matching them with ones of his own creation, arranged within fixed compositional schemes. Refining this method, Valkenburg created repeatable 'templates' for his works that allowed him to balance repetition with variation and invention, thus forming the basis for a recognizable artistic trademark.

As a painter of game still lifes, Valkenburg became well known among the Amsterdam elite and enjoyed many important commissions at European courts. He gained recognition among distinguished art collectors, such as Stadtholder-King Willem III (1650–1702), Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1657–1712) and affluent patricians, like Jonas Witsen (1676–1715). As a merchant, municipal secretary in Amsterdam and plantation owner in Suriname, Witsen owned many paintings by Valkenburg, among which were game and fruit still lifes and animal and landscape paintings.[2] It was Witsen who thus commissioned Valkenburg as the first Dutch painter to journey to the Dutch colonial territories of Suriname in 1706 to document his then newly acquired property.[3]

Although Valkenburg was respected as an artist during his own lifetime, his work was long overshadowed by the legacy of Weenix and has been dismissed as imitative and repetitious by art historians, resulting in limited interest from the nineteenth century onwards. Many of his paintings were even later altered, signed with Weenix's forged signature and sold under this name. The devaluing attitude towards imitation is rooted in the nineteenth-century Romantic concept of the artist-genius, which instead privileges artistic inventiveness. This shaped the normative frameworks that created the canon of works by 'great artists' and continues to guide much research today, thereby distorting the broader art historical narrative.[4] As an artist, navigating the highly competitive early modern European art market demanded strategic self-promotion, entrepreneurial creativity and both process and product innovation in order to establish a recognizable artistic trademark.[5] Within this

context, copying and imitation were not only common but also valued alongside invention as widely accepted artistic strategies.[6]

This essay offers a study of Valkenburg's artistic development as a painter of game still lifes and animal scenes. It focuses on how he achieved commercial success among an affluent clientele through the use of standardized motifs, compositional schemes and production methods and why these strategies positioned him as a suitable candidate for the Suriname commission. Following an introduction to the artistic development of the game still life in the seventeenth century and the social and cultural context of early eighteenth-century Amsterdam, the essay explores Valkenburg's training and subsequent adoption of Weenix's subjects and visual motifs. Finally, drawing on details from Valkenburg's 1721 estate inventory (which offers invaluable insight into his studio furnishings; see 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519) and other contemporary sources, the essay reconstructs the methods and references he used to develop a streamlined, repeatable and thereby standardized approach to production.[7]

The Dutch Game Still Life and the Aristocratic Aspirations of Amsterdam's Urban Elite

In the Northern Netherlands, depictions of dead game in paintings first appeared in kitchen and market scenes in the late sixteenth century. It was only in the 1630s that the game still life emerged as a distinct branch of the still life genre, with Elias Vonck (1604–1652) being one of the first artists to specialize in it. These early Dutch examples typically featured intimate, horizontal compositions in monochrome grey and brown tones, with game displayed on a tabletop against a dark backdrop, occasionally accompanied by vegetables or kitchen utensils (fig. 1).[8] By contrast, at the same time in the Southern Netherlands, art patronage came from aristocratic clientele who sought more monumental compositions to decorate their grand estates. As a result, working in the Flemish Baroque style, artists such as Frans Snijders (1579–1657) and Jan Fijt (1611–1661) developed an imposing style characterized by complex, colourful compositions. These featured a wide variety of dead game accompanied by costly decorations – colourful fruits and draperies – such as in Snijder's *Larder Still life* at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (fig. 2).[9]

It was only after the 1650s that Dutch game still lifes grew more elaborate.[10] With artists like Willem van Aelst (1625–1683) and Melchior d'Hondecoeter (1636–1695), the genre transitioned from horizontal compositions to more dynamic vertical arrangements (fig. 3). With the subject displayed on stone plinths set against monochrome backgrounds, artists began to employ chiaroscuro lighting to increase the dramatic effect.[11] The introduction of new iconographic elements, such as hunting equipment, not only added more colour and vibrancy to the compositions but also altered the character of the game still life, shifting the painting's focus from dead animals as provisions in a culinary setting to being portrayals of trophies in the context of the hunt.

In the 1680s, Weenix's contributions to the genre helped further reshape it, transforming it into an even more elaborate hunting-trophy still life by replacing traditional domestic backdrops with lush, classicist park landscapes and kitchen utensils with an even greater variety of hunting paraphernalia, such as rifles, horns, velvet hunting bags, nets, falconry gear and decoy whistles (fig. 5).[12] Weenix portrayed the scene as if the hunter had just laid their freshly hunted trophy in the backyard of their grand estate, underlining their ownership of the land and all that it cultivated, sustained and harboured. Through these additions, the game still life – set in a landscape reminiscent of an idealized, classicist country estate – emphasized the act of hunting as an embodiment of aristocratic aspirations.

This transformation took place within the broader context of the Dutch Republic's late seventeenth-century patrician culture.[13] Since the early 1600s, Amsterdam's merchant class had grown wealthier due to the profits from international trade companies such as the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company, or VOC) and Geoctrooieerde Westindische Compagnie (Dutch West India Company, or WIC). With their newfound wealth, they began to adopt aristocratic behaviours, such as acquiring city mansions and country estates and pursuing noble titles. They engaged in literature, science and the arts to emphasize cultivated personas. A strong drive for territorial expansion, together with a fascination for all the 'strange' and the 'exotic' that hitherto 'unknown' lands inhabited and suggested, set off a collecting trend.[14] This resulted in public cabinets of curiosities, which included jarred non-native or taxidermied plants, shells, fossils and minerals, artistic or cultural objects, and animals imported from foreign expeditions, as well as aviaries and menageries exhibiting animals and even living people to be admired and discussed.[15] These 'rarities' served to educate and, at the same time, showcase the owner's wealth and knowledge. Many of these 'collectibles' ended up in still life paintings as symbols of power and property.

As hunting became central to the new identity of the rising patricians, it began to symbolize their claims to land ownership.[16] Although hunting activities were legally reserved for the nobility, by the 1660s, members of the urban elite – especially those in positions of governance – started to formally assert claims to hunting rights, arguing that such privileges were inherent to the sovereignty of municipal administration.[17] By 1716, the nobility finally yielded to these demands. In this context, the popularity of the game still life among the urban elite should not be seen merely as a substitute for noble status otherwise acquired through hunting but, rather, as a visual assertion of rights they were determined to secure.[18] In this sense, the painting functions as an agent through which the owner asserts ownership, social distinction and aspirational entitlement.

Valkenburg in Weenix's Workshop

Valkenburg was born in Amsterdam in 1675. According to the Dutch painter and biographer Johan van Gool (1685–1763), Valkenburg began his apprenticeships first with a certain Kuilenburg,

then continued with portrait painter Michiel van Musscher (1645–1705), both in Amsterdam.[19] After that, he apprenticed with the painter and burgomaster Bernard Vollenhove (c. 1633–1694) in Kampen, and finally, joined Jan Weenix's workshop around 1692 or 1693, for which, considering his age and experience, Valkenburg likely signed a two-year contract as a studio assistant in residence.[20]

In his time, Weenix established himself as a leading figure of the game still life.[21] But to begin, together with his cousin, Melchior d'Hondecoeter, Weenix learned the art of painting from his father, Jan Baptist Weenix (1621–1659).[22] Whereas the younger Weenix went on to specialize in the depiction of dead animals, d'Hondecoeter became famous for his vivid representations of living birds, both native and imported. Their respective specializations within the genres of the still life and animal scenes, pursued by only a few artists, catered to the evolving tastes and lifestyles of Amsterdam's patrician class. As demand grew for these kinds of works, both artists streamlined their working process and visual vocabulary.[23]

Accordingly, Weenix developed a systematic approach that, within a specific iconographic framework, combines a consistent repertoire of visual motifs in a compositional scheme consisting of four visual planes that, all together, transform simple dead game into elaborate trophies of the hunt – his 'trophy formula'. *Still Life with Dead Hare and Birds* (1681) (fig. 5) from the Städel Museum in Frankfurt am Main, is an early example where Weenix uses this trophy formula. The composition is characteristic of the type he would explore throughout his oeuvre. The first plane is marked with a repoussoir placed to one side in the foreground. On the second plane, directly opposite, lie dead animals and hunting gear. Behind them, on the third plane, a classical structure or a tree rises, accompanied by plant tendrils or flowers. Finally, the composition opens up onto a fourth plane, a sweeping park landscape, with classicist sculpture and architecture extending into the distance.

During his apprenticeship in Weenix's workshop, Valkenburg could closely study the trophy formula that shaped the work of his master, producing direct variants or new variations to carefully explore its possibilities. Valkenburg's earliest signed and dated work is an animal scene, *Greyhound with Dead Game and Hunting Gear in a Landscape,* dated in 1695 (cat. 1), and may have been created after a lost work by Weenix, of which Valkenburg kept a sketch of in his studio.[24] In comparison, *Still Life with a Dead Partridge, Jay and Other Fowl, with Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape* (cat. 2) is undoubtedly a direct variant, as evidenced by its close adherence to a prototype by Weenix now at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Cuba (fig. cat. 1, p. 285). Valkenburg signed this painting with his name, 'D Valkenburg', on the whistle.[25] Since Weenix's work is dated 1695, it is likely that Valkenburg painted his version during the final year of his apprenticeship. Other known variants after his master's work are cats. 3, 6, 8–11 and 23.

Valkenburg signed the paintings he produced in Weenix's workshop, based clearly on earlier prototypes by his master, with his own name. While signing artworks is generally associated with the status of an independent master enrolled in the Guild of





Fig. 1 Elias Vonck, *Game Still Life with Swan, Hares and Vegetables*, c. 1635-1640. Oil on canvas, 94 × 144.8 cm. Whereabouts unknown.

Fig. 2 Frans Snijders, *Larder Still Life*, c. 1616–1625. Oil on canvas, 118.7 × 173.1 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-379.



Fig. 3 Willem van Aelst, *Still Life with Hunting Equipment and Dead Birds*, 1668. Oil on canvas, 68 × 54 cm. Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, inv. no. 350.

St Luke, Valkenburg's situation was not unique.[26] For example, art historian Angela Jager's study on artist Jacob de Wet's (1610–1675) large-scale production of affordable history paintings for the open market showed that more advanced assistants, or *vrije gasten* (free guest-painters), in De Wet's prolific Haarlem workshop were permitted to produce variants after De Wet's painted prototypes and sign the resulting works with their own names.[27] These assistants, trained and experienced painters who lacked the means to establish their own studios, contributed to the workshop's output while selling their signed paintings through De Wet's shop. The arrangement allowed them to earn their own income while benefiting from the economic and professional stability provided by their master's infrastructure. In return, they helped accelerate the studio's production to meet growing market demand.[28]

Valkenburg likely worked under a similar arrangement, with a contract that allowed him to produce copies or adapted variants of his master's compositions. By signing his work with his own name and selling them through Weenix's shop, he could build a name for himself while profiting from an existing commercial network. Upon completing his apprenticeship, Valkenburg continued his production of trophy still lifes, both drawing upon Weenix's established formula and creating his own artistic trademark, which (much like in De Wet's workshop) gained added value through its association with Weenix's reputation.[29]

A Painter of Trophy Still Lifes in Gelderland, Overijssel, Augsburg, Vienna

According to Van Gool, after two years at Weenix's Amsterdam workshop, Valkenburg left the city around 1695, possibly returning to Kampen as his home base. From there, he travelled to Gelderland and Overijssel to execute chimney and door paintings, likely game still lifes or animal scenes.[30] Van Gool also recounts that Valkenburg continued his practice in portraiture, a skill he acquired during his earlier training with Van Musscher and Vollenhove, and that he received numerous portrait commissions from noble families.[31]

In 1696, intending to travel to Italy, Valkenburg departed for Germany.[32] There, he likely cultivated a German clientele independently of Weenix, who only received his first German commission from Elector Prince Johann Wilhelm von der Pfalz after 1702. Valkenburg's earlier connections to noble families in Gelderland may have helped him establish contacts across the border.[33] Travelling through Nijmegen, Frankfurt and Nuremberg, he eventually reached Augsburg, where he met his future patron, Baron Johann Anton I Knebel von Katzenelnbogen (1646–1725).[34] Knebel, who served as dean and cantor of the Eichstätt Cathedral and later became bishop in 1705, was deeply impressed by Valkenburg's work. Apart from personal taste, his admiration was likely due to the nobility's enthusiasm for hunting and the limited number of German painters specializing in the genre.[35] Valkenburg was invited to stay in Knebel's residence in Eichstätt, where he remained for at least six months, producing paintings of domestic and wild animals as well as a self-portrait.[36]

While in Eichstätt, Knebel introduced Valkenburg to his network of high-ranking figures. In the autumn of 1697, the Baron presented Valkenburg's work to Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden (1655–1707), commander of the Army of the Rhine, who had returned to Augsburg from the Netherlands following the Peace of Ryswick (20 September 1697).[37] Impressed with Valkenburg's paintings, Wilhelm offered him a position as court painter with a significant annual salary of 2,000 thaler (equivalent to 3,000 guilders). However, as Van Gool notes, Valkenburg declined the offer, having committed to continuing his travels to Italy.

Benefitting once again from Knebel's contacts, Valkenburg travelled to Vienna in early 1698, where he entered the service of Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1662–1712).[38] The Prince sought to cultivate a collection that reflected courtly splendor, which explains his interest in Valkenburg's trophy still lifes.[39] He acquired *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Black Grouse and Other Fowl, with a Squirrel, Dog and Hunting Gear in a Landscape* (cat. 13), for 250 guilders.[40]

Again, signed with his name, Valkenburg closely followed a prototype by Weenix that can, with probability, be dated to the early 1690s (fig. cat. 6, p. 314), which is now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.[41] While the close adherence of Valkenburg's version to this work might suggest he created it during his apprenticeship, working directly after the finished painting, it is unlikely he would have brought large canvas with him on his travels to paint from. A possibility is that he owned an oil study of the finished work. An example of such an oil study is *Hunting Still Life with Peacock and Spaniel* (fig. 4), which is directly related to a dated work by Weenix from 1696, now in the Louvre.[42] These oil studies were often initially prepared as a *modello*, a preparatory work for presentation to potential buyers. In the studio practice of both Weenix and Valkenburg, these *modelli* could later serve a secondary function as a *ricordo*, a visual record, used to reproduce variants of paintings that were no longer available for direct reference.[43]

Apart from *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Black Grouse and Other Fowl* (cat. 13), Valkenburg received commissions for three additional paintings of a similar large horizontal format (cats. 14–16).[44] These works depict living animals – birds, dogs and a fox – interacting with dead game laid out on a stone slab. Each scene is set against a classical urn or a squared pedestal, with a vista opening onto a distant landscape. At this point, Valkenburg begins to establish a characteristic painting technique of his own, distinctive from his master, Weenix. His sharper, more defined brushwork – especially evident in the fur of hares and foxes and the feathers of the peacock, heron and goose – allowed him to carefully distinguish between various textures. In the case of the hare's fur, this is achieved by the use of delicate, lighter brushstrokes over a dark underlayer, producing a bristly texture that replicates hare fur more accurately, in contrast to Weenix's softer, fuzzier rendering (see, for instance, fig. 5).

Despite the technical evolution, the works demonstrate Valkenburg's continued reuse of Weenix's motifs, rearranging them within the same recurring four-plane compositional scheme. For



Fig. 4 Jan Weenix, *Hunting Still Life with Peacock and Spaniel*, 1696. Oil on canvas, 21 × 28 cm. Private collection.



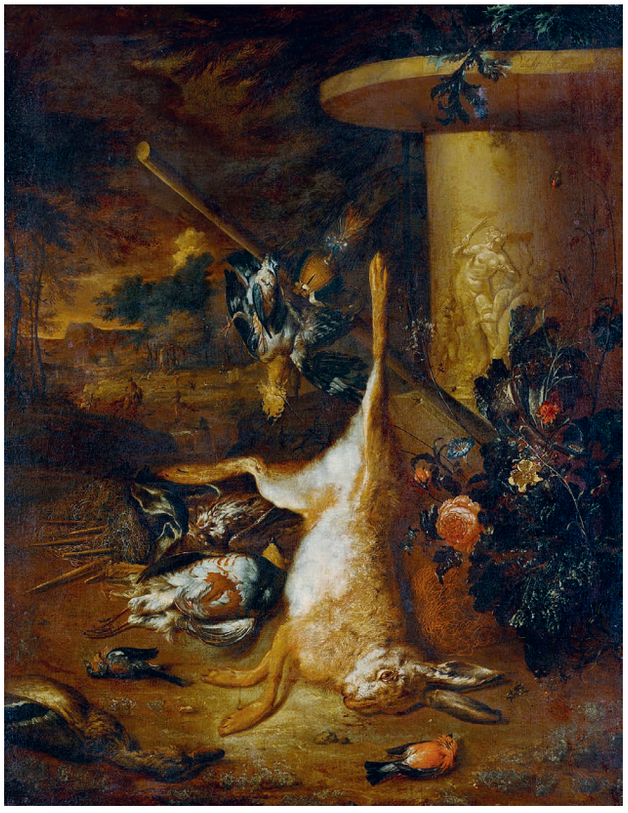



Fig. 5 Jan Weenix, *Still Life with Dead Hare and Birds*, 1681. Oil on canvas, 123.5 × 110.4 cm. Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, inv. no. 863.

Fig. 6 *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges, Duck, Hoopoe and Other Fowl, with Hunting Gear in a Landscape*, 1698 (cat. 4).

Fig. 7 *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges, Duck and Other Fowl, with Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape*, 1713 (cat. 36).

instance, the still life with a dead peacock (cat. 16) closely echoes the compositional arrangement of a work by Weenix (fig. cat. 8, p. 316), now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. It also repeats individual motifs, such as a dove seen from behind, approached by a barking dog. The hare likewise recurs in the same position, though partially visible, with the lower part of its body cut off by the edge of the picture plane. The two remaining Liechtenstein paintings also draw directly from motifs in another work by Weenix (fig. cat. 7, p. 315): the hare with its hind leg piled on top of a dead goose is repeated in cat. 14 and the dog barking at a flying dove in cat. 15.[45] The motif of the jay and partridge in the latter are in turn directly taken from *Still Life with a Dead Partridge* (cat. 2). Notably, Valkenburg reproduces this grouping two decades later in *Still Life with Two Dead Partridges and a Songbird, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape* (cat. 39), painted in 1717.

Valkenburg would continue to reuse this fixed template throughout his entire career, drawing from a consistent repertoire of standard motifs,[46] for instance in *Still Life with a Dead Hare and Partridges in a Landscape* (1698) (fig. 6; cat. 4). Created in Vienna, it is Valkenburg's first known example showcasing a dead hare on a vertical canvas. The painting is a variation of Weenix's still life at the Städel Museum (fig. 5). In front of a classicising garden vase, Valkenburg depicts the hare suspended upside down by a hind leg, seemingly attached to a game pole, alongside a hoopoe and another unidentified bird species. Next to its belly lie two dead partridges, while a dead duck serves as the repoussoir in the lower left corner. Fifteen years later, in 1713, Valkenburg again revisited the composition, carefully including the same motifs, though introducing new iconographic elements – such as additional hunting gear and a classicist park landscape – and further refining his brushwork and colour palette (fig. 7; cat. 36).

Towards a Successful Workshop

Despite his original ambitions, Valkenburg never reached Italy. Around the second half of 1699, he returned to the Netherlands.[47] His activities as an artist in Amsterdam during the following four years remain largely undocumented, but it is known that he would have been unable to officially establish his own workshop before 1703. To independently practice as an artist, one was required to be registered with the Guild of St Luke. This in turn required registration as a *poorter* (official city citizen). Since Valkenburg did not become a *poorter* until 1703,[48] he may have returned to work in Weenix's studio for a period of time, or, by operating outside of the jurisdiction of the Amsterdam guilds, directly received commissions from higher nobility.

Notably, Valkenburg's growing reputation reached the court of Stadtholder-King Willem III. In early 1700, he received a letter from Lord De Marees, general overseer of the royal palaces, requesting decorative paintings for Het Loo Palace.[49] Within eight days, Valkenburg completed a showpiece, possibly *King Vulture and a Dog in a Park Landscape* (cat. 43).[50] This would have been a logical subject

for Valkenburg to present to the Stadtholder-King because, in addition to Willem III's enthusiasm for hunting, Valkenburg was likely aware of the non-native birds and aviaries at Het Loo, imported via Dutch trade routes, and d'Hondecoeter's bird paintings, already housed at the palace.[51] The king vulture was known in old Dutch as the *Koning der Wouwwouwen*, and, at the time, was exceptionally rare in Europe. In the Dutch Republic, it was represented by only one known specimen in Amsterdam, at the Blauw Jan menagerie, while Willem III reportedly kept three in his aviaries at Het Loo, in Apeldoorn.[52] Weenix also depicted the king vulture in an identical pose across four known works, as seen in *King Vulture* and *Exotic Birds in a Park*, respectively held in Vienna and Budapest (figs. cat. 16–17, p. 380).[53] The similar left-reclining depictions of the bird might indicate that both artists shared reference materials or exchanged information.[54] However, Valkenburg's distinct depiction of facial features, feathering in the neck area and spread open wings demonstrate his anatomical understanding of the bird, therefore suggesting he studied a real specimen, which he may have observed among the vultures at Het Loo. [55]

Impressed by Valkenburg's showpiece, Willem III rewarded him 100 ducats and twelve bottles of Burgundy wine and soon thereafter summoned him to discuss the nature and colour of birds to be included in his following commission.[56] However, according to Van Gool, by the time of Valkenburg's arrival at Het Loo, the Stadtholder-King was too occupied with state affairs to grant him an audience. It remains unclear whether Valkenburg executed additional works before Willem's departure for England, followed by his sudden death in 1702,[57] but one possible candidate could be *Birds from Various Continents in a Landscape* (cat. 41), dated 1701.[58]

As Van Gool states, soon thereafter, probably around 1702, Valkenburg's work attracted the attention of King Frederik I of Prussia (1688–1713), who sent his delegate Baron Wolfgang von Schmettau (1648–1711) to meet Valkenburg, offering him an annual salary of 1,000 rijksdaalder as the King's court painter.[59] According to Van Gool, Valkenburg declined the offer, wishing instead to remain in his homeland.

A Recognizable Trademark

After registering as a *poorter* in Amsterdam in 1703, Valkenburg likely established his workshop at the site of his residence on the Kerkstraat.[60] There, he continued to standardize his production process, further elaborating on Weenix's trophy formula. This not only accelerated his production, it also allowed him to focus on producing a marketable, distinctive and recognizable visual trademark. In doing so, Valkenburg positioned himself as an exponent of the trophy still life that had already acquired prestige through its association with Weenix's name.

From 1703 until his departure for Suriname in 1706, Valkenburg produced many trophy still lifes, especially featuring dead hares and partridges placed in niches or on stone ledges (such as cats. 19–22) in vertical formats of standard sizes. In addition to paintings

of hunting trophies, Valkenburg explored other iconographic subjects with the same standardized approach, reusing motifs of animals, hunting gear and classicizing ornaments across various subjects. This is evident in his animal paintings, where Valkenburg draws on bird motifs from d'Hondecoeter's paintings (see cats. 44, 48) and introduced new iconographic subjects, such as a cat protecting dead game from a dog, of which he made at least five variants.[61] Similarly in his portraits, such as of Sara Munter (cat. 89), dated 1717, Valkenburg draws on his visual repertoire, as evidenced by the classicizing park landscape with a Hercules fountain, a motif repeated in three other still lifes (see cats. 2, 16, 36).

Similar to his depiction of game in his fruit still lifes, such as *Still Life with a Coconut, Pomegranate and Other Fruit on a Stone Plinth in a Park Landscape* (cat. 54), dated 1702, Valkenburg presents non-native fruits as trophies, now taken as 'spoils' from foreign lands instead of the hunt. The work's counterpart, *Still Life with a Pumpkin, Grapes and Other Fruit on a Stone Plinth in a Park Landscape* (cat. 55) – mirrored in composition and canvas dimensions – may have been executed as its pendant.[62] These works were likely part of Jonas Witsen's collection, whose estate inventory lists a painting with fruits together with a similar work as its companion piece.[63] Valkenburg's inclusion and skillful depiction of pomegranates, melons and coconuts (see also cats. 24, 53) indicates an early interest in the tropics prior to his travels to Suriname, demonstrating a keen eye for detail that would be essential for documenting the area's flora and fauna. This may have supported Witsen's decision to commission Valkenburg for this journey.[64]

During his sojourn in Suriname (1706–1708), Valkenburg remained consistent in his visual strategies. Combining his observational skills with the use of a template based on earlier ones, he now substituted dead game with pineapples and awara fruit, presenting them as alluring, 'exotic' trophies and symbols of the fertile foreign lands depicted in the background. In *Gathering of Enslaved People on one of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70), he used the same four-plane scheme for depicting hunting trophies to portray enslaved African people in rituals. As art historian Rebecca Parker Brienen has argued, by adopting the same still life compositional scheme to depict people, Valkenburg both formally and conceptually presents these people as commodities.[65] This reading of objectification is further underscored by the fact that Valkenburg's Suriname paintings and drawings were housed by Witsen in his cabinet of curiosities rather than in his cabinet of paintings.[66]

Models and Sources

The recurrence of animals, hunting equipment, classical decorations and other elements in standard arrangements throughout Valkenburg's entire body of work indicates that he had access to a stock of motifs that he could selectively draw from. His estate inventory, compiled after his death in 1721, offers invaluable insight into this visual archive, which provided him with ongoing access to

compositions and motifs by Weenix, complemented with his own studies, for future reference and reuse within his practice.[67]

Valkenburg's stock of motifs contained numerous paintings by Weenix, which facilitated ready access to the latter's compositions. According to the estate inventory, Valkenburg also owned works by other artists, including Peter Paul Rubens, Frans Snijders, Johannes Lingelbach, Frans Hals and d'Hondecoeter. In addition to finished paintings by Weenix, Valkenburg owned a diverse range of his *modellen* (models).[68] These models featured motifs such as falcons, magpies, parrots, monkeys and various flowers that were studied individually and likely executed in oil paint.[69] A model of a seated monkey is still kept at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.[70] Apart from models by Weenix, Valkenburg expanded his archive by creating his own models of various mammal and bird species and flowers and fruits.[71]

While no models survive from the paintings Valkenburg made in the Netherlands, three exquisitely detailed oil-on-canvas models from his time in Suriname exist. These feature fruits, spices and reptiles (cats. 73–75). They provide valuable insight into the precision and level of detail Valkenburg employed.[72] The motif of the ameiva lizard and the cluster of fruits of the Barbados nut, studied on two separate canvases (figs. 8–9; cats. 74–75), recur in a slightly larger scale in his painting *Still Life with Pineapples, and Other Fruit from Suriname in a Landscape* (fig. 10; cat. 72).[73]

The close correspondence between the models and the final painting – in the precision of contours and similarity of details, for example – suggests the use of various preparatory methods, such as linear and precise underdrawings.[74] Traditionally, there were various ways to mechanically transfer existing designs onto canvas at scale, including tracing or pouncing.[75] Valkenburg may have made use of a grid, however, also known as squaring, where both the preparatory drawing and the prepared canvas would have been marked with proportionally identical grids, facilitating the accurate transfer of the composition's lines. For the reuse of individual motifs, a pantograph, a device consisting of four slender wooden slats connected by hinges, could have been employed.[76] This would have enabled Valkenburg to effortlessly replicate his models at varying scales.

In addition to drawing on motifs from painted examples by Weenix or other artists, Valkenburg must have produced models of subjects he studied *naer het leven* (after life). His depictions, meticulous and lifelike, reflect his curiosity and observational skills. In his studio, Valkenburg kept various objects for study and as references to paint from, including lifesize marionettes, which were commonly part of an artist's studio, as well as items more specific to his field of specialization, such as hunting utensils – musket rifles, hunting and powder horns, and likely a hunting belt.[77]

Amsterdam offered rich opportunities for the close study of animals, often imported through the Dutch East India Company and across West Atlantic trade routes.[78] Valkenburg likely spent considerable time at the city's menageries, such as the Blauw Jan (fig. 1, p. 35). According to a series by Jan Velten of beautiful drawings and gouaches of birds and mammals housed there, compiled in an







Fig. 8 *Study of Madame Jeanettes, Barbados Nuts and a Maracuja from Suriname*, 1706–1708 (cat. 75), detail.

Fig. 9 *Study of Cashews, Maracujas, a Tropical Chicken Snake and an Ameiva Lizard from Suriname*, 1706–1708 (cat. 74), detail.

Fig. 10 *Still Life with Pineapples and Other Fruit from Suriname in a Landscape*, 1707 (cat. 72), detail.



Fig. 11 Anonymous, *The Two Old Meat Halls on the Nes at Sint Pieterspoortsteeg 45*, Northern Netherlands, 1665. Engraving, 113 × 135 mm. Amsterdam, Stadsarchief, inv. no. 010097002967.

album between 1695 and 1709, Valkenburg would have been able to observe live imported species, such as the king vulture, northern cardinal, dove, crowned crane, purple swamphen, griffon vulture, red ibis and helmeted curassow, several of which he depicted in *Birds from Various Continents* (cat. 41).[79] Valkenburg likely also studied the eagle-owl there for *Eurasian Eagle-Owl and Pigeon in Flight, with a Dead Hen and Animal Remains in a Landscape* (cat. 50).[80]

For his depictions of dead specimens, Valkenburg must have frequented Amsterdam's Grote and Kleine Vleeshal meat markets, located on the Nes, a walking distance from his home. These halls, from October, when hunting season began, were filled with a rich selection of fresh game, such as hares, deer, partridges and pheasants (fig. 11). Valkenburg's many depictions of dead hares suggest that he studied various specimens there, presented in a similar way, suspended by a rope from their hind legs. Their varying swelling, visible throughout various paintings, can be attributed either to their stage of decomposition (either the putrefaction stage, during which bacteria break down organic material and produce gases that swell the body) or to the length of time they had been hanging upside down.[81] This might account for the thick, rigid neck of the hare in, for example, cat. 31, compared to the slimmer hare of cat. 21. These first-hand observations likely enabled him to refine his sketches into the detailed oil studies that would comprise Valkenburg's extensive visual archive of motifs, described earlier.

Given Valkenburg's established artistic trademark, his clients likely visited his studio with specific requests. In addition to models, his estate inventory lists two *kunstboeken* (albums) containing drawings and watercolours, likely used for his own reference but also in order to present compositional options to potential clients.[82] These may have featured watercolours by Weenix, such as those currently kept at the Rijksmuseum,[83] or possibly a red chalk drawing in the Pushkin Museum showing a suspended hare in a classicizing landscape (fig. cat. 4, p. 296).[84] The chalk drawing's high level of detail and pronounced contours suggest it was copied from a painted prototype. Artists often made drawn copies after finished paintings as a *ricordo*, or visual record, of a finished work for future reference.[85] Notably, the Pushkin drawing is related to a painting by Valkenburg (cat. 6), of which four variants are known (cats. 7–10).[86] Although the attribution of copies is methodologically complex, it is plausible that the Pushkin drawing originated in Valkenburg's or Weenix's studio, intended as a *ricordo* after the painted prototype and serving as a reference for the future production of variants of this particular composition, whose high number of painted versions attest to its success.

Conclusion

Valkenburg's meticulous, life-like depictions reflected an empirical approach that must have resonated with his clients in a period of strong interest in the natural sciences. He demonstrated a keen eye for the behaviors of living animals and paid close attention to the

various stages of decomposition in his depiction of dead game. His ability to create exquisite distinctions in texture, reflecting precision and detail, is evident in his rendering of fur, feathers, skins and other surfaces. These empirical skills must have been a necessary requirement for his Suriname commission to document Jonas Witsen's property '*naer 't leven*', creating depictions that served as a visual guide of his overseas holdings, the fruits and plants it cultivated, the animals it housed and the people who worked these lands tirelessly.

Alongside this observational approach, the success Valkenburg achieved as an artist competing in the Dutch and European art market was created by catering to the demands of an urban elite of wealthy merchants, intellectuals and governing officials in Amsterdam then seeking to affirm their social status through art. Game still lifes and animal pieces served this purpose well, acting as emblems of power and prestige through the presentation of exclusive objects as trophies – whether taken from the hunt or brought from foreign lands. With his depictions of dead and living animals set against backdrops of country estates, collectors could showcase their refined taste for hunting, their fascination with the exotic, and for land ownership and its decorative vectors.

At the root of this success was the standardized production that Valkenburg developed as a pragmatic, commercial and artistic strategy. Through the calculated reuse and rearrangement of standard motifs within a fixed template, he optimized efficiency by minimizing the need to invent new elements for each composition. Building on Weenix's proven formula, with this reduction in variation he established a recognizable format, contributing to a distinctive and commercially successful artistic trademark. Finally, by combining meticulous empirical observation with repetition and standardization, Valkenburg achieved a level of technical artistic precision that invites further reflection on the role of standardization in a society where art acted as a means for systematic and scientific engagement with nature.

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1 Throughout this article, several terms will recur that I will define here. In Dutch and German literature, *jachtstilleven* or *Jagdstillleben*, which translates to 'hunting still life', is used to refer to still lifes with dead game. In English literature, 'game still life' is more commonly used, referring explicitly to the spoils of the hunt rather than to the act of hunting itself (see Sullivan 1984, p. 2). This aligns with the general practice of classifying still lifes by the subject depicted rather than by any associated action. In French literature, *trophée de chasse* is used most frequently, translating to 'trophy of the hunt' (see exh. cat. Bordeaux 1991).

In this essay, I will follow general practice and use game still life or game piece to reference all still lifes with game, regardless of their direct reference to the act of hunting. As a subcategory, still lifes from the 1650s onwards, framing dead game as hunting trophies, will also be called 'trophy still lifes', reflecting a new approach to representing dead game. A trophy, like an object taken as spoil in war, is an item claimed as spoil or booty from the hunt. In the context of this essay, 'formula' denotes a fixed set of iconographical and compositional strategies to achieve a specific artistic outcome. 'Compositional scheme' refers to the structure or arrangement of the internal visual elements of a painting and their organisation in pictorial space. I chose to use 'compositional scheme' rather than 'composition', since it implies a more structured, standardized approach. 'Motif' refers to an individual visual element as part of a composition. A 'model' in the context of this essay is a detailed painted study of an individual visual element in preparation for a larger or more complex work. *Modello* is Italian for 'model' but has a different art historical meaning, intending a highly finished preliminary study in a smaller scale (either two- or three-dimensional) of the final painting or sculpture, made to present to the commissioner to indicate what is intended. *Ricordo* is Italian for 'memory' and is used to refer to a small-scale replica of a painting, created after the completion of the original final work; for reference see Getty Research Institute: *Art & Architecture Thesaurus Online*, accessed on 23 January 2025; *National Gallery London* n.d., accessed on 23 January 2025.

2 Sale: Jonas Witsen (II), Amsterdam, 23 March 1717, lots 42, 43, 48, 49, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 84, 85, 86, 87, 90, 91, 114, 115, 116.

3 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 3369, 24 and 26 February 1706, pp. 1,147–1,149, see also Ponte, in this volume, pp. 31–43. Further on Valkenburg and his contract with Jonas Witsen, see also Kolfin 1997, p. 23; Sint Nicolaas 2018, pp. 55–57. Carel Borchaert Voet was commissioned by Stadtholder-King Willem III to travel to Suriname to create drawings of plants and insects; however, this plan was never realized due to Willem's sudden death. See Fatah-Black 2019, p. 87. Nicolaas or Gerard Edema (1652/56–1700/07) might have also travelled to the Americas, but likely not on commission. See Ponte in this volume, p. 34.

4 On the Romantic concept of the 'genius' and its changing notion from the late eighteenth into the nineteenth century, see, for instance, Wittkower 1965, pp. 143–161; Jaffe 1980, pp. 579–599; Nisbet 1982, pp. 98–107. These articles also cover the ongoing fascination with the concept in the twentieth century. For recent studies on standardized productions, see Jansen et al. 2011; Jager 2018, pp. 67–108; Hillegers 2023, pp. 141–154.

5 On the influence of economic factors on development of style and artistic practice, see Montias 1990, pp. 49–57; Bok 1995, pp. 116–118.

6 For instance, Pieter Breughel the Younger flourished as his father's legitimate successor and copyist (see Currie and Allart 2014, p. 1). Michiel van Mierevelt is known to have systematically copied his own work (see Jansen and Verhave 2014, pp. 67). As an example of an artist who cleverly used repetition, variation and combination as a method to efficiently produce a large number of merry company paintings, see also Kolfin 2002, pp. 112–116, and the case study of Dirck Hals (1591–1656).

7 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519. An older, partial transcription can be found in Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, pp. 428–431.

8 Sullivan 1984, pp. 23–26.

9 On the Flemish game still life, see, for instance, Sullivan 1984, pp. 16–22; Balis 2002, pp. 196–200.

10 Sullivan 1984, p. 18.

11 Ibid., p. 46; on Willem van Aelst, see Berger Hochstrasser 2012, pp. 55–57; on d'Hondecoeter, see Rikken 2008, pp. 13–20.

12 Sullivan 1984, pp. 61–67; Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven 2018, vol. 2, pp. 30–35.

13 On the ennoblement of painting in the Dutch Republic around 1700, see Weber 2007, pp. 51–62.

14 On the collecting trend of art and curiosities in the Dutch republic between 1585–1735, see cat. Amsterdam 1992.

15 For instance, Levinus Vincent's (1658–1727) cabinet of curiosities was open to the public for a small fee. See cat. Amsterdam 1992, pp. 147–148.

16 See also Saß in this volume, pp. 77–90.

17 Kuiper 2021, pp. 188, 192.

18 As argued by Sullivan 1984, p. 40.

19 See Van Gool 1750–1751, pp. 477–478; this Kuilenburg might have been Quirin Gerrits Cuylenburg (n.d.–1700), see Craft-Giepmans in this volume, p. 103, footnote 1.

20 No contract exists. Valkenburg's situation seems to correspond to that of more advanced assistants in workshops under a two-year contract (see De Jager 1990, p. 78).

21 For a monographic overview of Jan Weenix's work, see Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeve 2018.

22 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 20.

23 On d'Hondecoeter's working method and circulation of motifs, see Rikken 2008, pp. 51–57; Rikken 2010, p. 15. For instance the green and dark gray dove entering the scene from above, first introduced by d'Hondecoeter in, for example, *Geese and Ducks* (1680) from the Mauritshuis collection, inv. no. 61, reappears endlessly in works by Weenix (figs. cat. 6–8, pp. 314–316) and later in works by Valkenburg, such as cats. 15 and 50. On copying and imitation in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, see also exh. cat. Berlin 2010, vol. 1, pp. 60–62.

24 Although no similar painted prototype by Weenix has survived, it is likely that Valkenburg based his work on an example by Weenix, as a sketch with a description similar to Valkenburg's painting was listed in the latter's estate inventory. See SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509– 519.

25 Weenix's painting has been erroneously attributed to Hendrick Martensz Sorgh (1611–1670). The work is included in the catalogue by Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeve, omitting the museum in Cuba as its current location (see Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven 2018, vol. 2, cat. 209).

26 To independently practice as an artist, one was required to enroll in the Guild of St Luke (see, for instance, Van Eeghen 1969).

27 Jager 2018, pp. 67–108.

28 Ibid., pp. 96–98.

29 Ibid., p. 98.

30 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 480.

31 Unfortunately, no early portraits by his hand have survived (see Craft-Giepmans in this volume, pp. 91–105).

32 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol.2, p. 480.

33 Craft-Giepmans, p. 123.

34 Van Gool 1750–1751, p. 480.

35 Sullivan 1984, p. 40.

36 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, pp. 480–481. There seem to be inconsistencies in Van Gool's timeline, which might mean that Valkenburg stayed with Baron Knebel von Katzenelnbogen for a longer period. Alternatively, he only arrived in Augsburg in 1697 instead of 1696 (see note 28). There are no extant dated paintings from this period. No painted self-portraits have survived; a drawing of Valkenburg's portrait is in the collection of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (inv. no. RP-T-1940-322). There is insufficient evidence to consider this a self-portrait, and given Valkenburg's age, it is probably of a later date.

37 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, pp. 480–481. Van Gool states Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden returned from the Netherlands in autumn of the same year, referring to 1696. However, this should have been 1697, following the Peace of Ryswick, which was concluded between 20 September and 30 October, 1697. Accordingly, Valkenburg must have stayed with Baron Knebel von Katzenelnbogen for longer than the six months stated by Van Gool. An alternative explanation is that Valkenburg may not have arrived in Augsburg until 1697, rather than 1696, as Van Gool recounts.

38 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 481. Valkenburg received his payment on 7 March 1698. See FLHA 1697/1698, f. 38v, no. 152; for a partial transcription, see Haupt 2012, p. 140, no. 1355.

39 Exh. cat. Vienna 2024, pp. 7–14.

40 Probably the first payment on 7 March 1698, FLHA 1697/1698, f38v, no. 152.

41 A drawing that is directly related to Weenix's variant might also have been available to Valkenburg and is kept in Leiden, University Libraries, PK-T-AW-887. The Houston painting by Weenix is dated c. 1680 by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven dates the painting to c. 1697 (see Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, cat. 127). However, Valkenburg's detailed familiarity with the work implies that he likely studied it during his apprenticeship, thereby suggesting a dating prior to 1695.

42 Paris, Musée du Louvre, INV 1937.

43 For instance, on the use of oil sketches as *ricordi* for future reference by Dirck Hals, see Kolfin 2002, p. 112.

44 Two paintings are still in The Princely Collections, Vaduz-Vienna, inv. no. GE 763, GE 765. Valkenburg received payments for the other three works on 7 June 1698, see, FLHA, 1697/1698, f. 39r, no. 155; on 26 December 1698, FLHA 1698, f. 35r, no. 134; on 17 May 1699, FLHA 1698/1699, f. 48v, no. 177; for partial transcriptions see Haupt 2012, pp. 144, 149, 157, nos. 1400, 1447, 1539. According to the account books, Valkenburg executed two other works, one showing two herons and the other featuring two hares, for which he was paid respectively on 10 December 1698, FLHA 1698, f. 35r, no. 134, and 18 May 1699, FLHA 1698/1699, f. 48v, no. 177, see also Haupt 2012, pp. 149, 157, nos. 1447, 1539. The Prince also acquired an animal piece by d'Hondecoeter prior to 1712 (The Princely Collections, Vaduz-Vienna, inv. GE 760), exh. cat. Vienna 2024, p. 216.

45 Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven 2018, vol. 2, cat. 135.

46 None of the payments to Valkenburg in the Liechtenstein account books (FLHA) match the painting's description, suggesting it was likely commissioned by someone else with connections to the court.

47 He received his last payment from the Liechtenstein court on 18 May 1699, see FLHA 1698/1699, f. 48v, no. 177, see also Haupt 2012, p. 157, nos. 1539–1540.

48 Valkenburg registered as 'Dirck Valckenburg, konstschilder, soon van Gijsbert Pietersz Vackenburgh voorzanger en poorter alhier is etc. belastende etc.' SAA, acc. no. 1700, inv. no. 1706, p. 141.

49 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 482.

50 Ibid., pp. 482–483. The subject matter of the showpiece is not specified by Van Gool, but he notes

that for the subsequent works, Willem III wanted to discuss the nature and colours of the birds to be depicted by Valkenburg.

51 Rikken 2008, pp. 38–45. The two paintings by d'Hondecoeter for Willem III are currently in the collection of the Rijksmuseum, inv. nos. SK-A-170, SK-A-171.

52 The menagerie was located behind an inn, which during Valkenburg's time was operated by Jan Barentsz at Kloveniersburgwal 87–89. See Winters 2017, pp. 11–15, 39.

53 Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. no. 9045, c. 1700; Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 194, dated 1702; Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland, inv. no. NGI.35, c. 1702; Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen – Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 1729, dated 1714; here the model is mirrored.

54 Valkenburg's estate inventory lists a king vulture painting by Weenix, but it is unknown when it came into his possession. See SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124; see also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.

55 Weenix could have also studied a taxidermied bird, of which two are mentioned in a later inventory from the Blauw Jan dated 1727. See Winters 2017, p. 41.

56 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 483.

57 Ibid., pp. 482–483.

58 Formerly known as *West-Indian Birds*.

59 1 rijksdaalder equaled 2.5 guilders. According to Van Gool, the landscape painter Ludolf Bakhuizen was also present at this occasion. See Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 484.

60 Will Dirk Valkenburg, SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8470, 6 September 1719.

61 Valkenburg painted two versions of the cat protecting the spoils between 1699 and 1706 (cats. 46–47) and three more after his return from Suriname (cats. 49, 51–52), all following the same compositional scheme.

62 Moiso-Diekamp 1987, pp. 16–18.

63 Sale: Jonas Witsen (II), Amsterdam, 31 March 1717, lots 90–91.

64 Coconuts especially were rarely depicted in fruit still lifes. See the 'Catalogue Raisonné', pp. 270–506.

65 For the interpretation of cat. 17 as a still life, see Brienen 2008, pp. 257–258.

66 See Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 64–65; Peters 2010, p. 383; Klink in this volume, p. 134.

67 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.

68 The old Dutch word *model* in the context of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch painting refer to examples for a draftsman or painter to work after. Used during this period in art theory or inventories, model may refer to actual objects and people, as well as two-dimensional drawings or oil studies, and three-dimensional art works. See De Pauw-De Veen 1969, p. 105.

69 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509– 519.

70 See Jan Weenix, *A Seated Monkey*, before 1685. Oil on canvas, 29.9 × 25.9 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, SK-A-5053.

71 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.

72 Cat. 74 is the largest canvas, at 40.5 × 48.5 cm. Cats. 73 and 75 have been mounted onto a wooden panel.

73 Using digital overlaying methods, I concluded that the motifs were executed slightly larger in the final painting. In cat. 74, older models reveal themselves through the paint layer in the lower left corner. In the lower left, infrared images taken at the Louvre uncovered a greyhound drinking from a pool with its reflection visible in the water, with further in the back, a horse viewed from the front and a second greyhound. To the right, a landscape with slender trees is visible, and at the top, classical architectural elements, including a porch and a statue. Paris 1970, p. 218.

74 The still lifes in the Menil Collection were analyzed using infrared reflectography, with wavelengths ranging from 880 nm to 980 nm for cat. 71 and 740 nm to 980 nm for cat. 72. The infrared examination did not reveal any evidence of underdrawing. However, this does not rule out the possibility of underdrawing, as the wavelengths used may not have been sufficient to penetrate the paint layers. Alternatively, Valkenburg might have employed a medium other than charcoal, such as Cassel earth or ochre, which would not be detectable using this technique. See correspondence between C. Elliot, J. Craven and J. Hartkamp, 9–22 January 2025, archived at Centraal Museum Utrecht.

75 See, for instance, Wallert and Tauber 2004, pp. 318–319; Faries 1991, pp. 53–54.

76 Wallert and Tauber 2004, p. 324.

77 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.

78 Menagerie de Witte Olifant was located at the Botermarkt (currently Rembrandtplein) and Blauw Jan at Kloveniersburgwal. See Winters 2017, pp. 18–20.

79 This painting was formerly known as *West-Indian Birds*. The birds originate from the following continents: northern cardinal, North America; dove, Europe, Asia, and Africa; crowned crane, sub-Saharan Africa; purple swamphens, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia; griffon vulture, Europe, Asia, and Africa; red ibis (scarlet ibis), South America and the Caribbean; helmeted curassow, South America (northern Andes).

80 Velten 1998, p. 72. The bird is here identified as a brown fish owl, but given its prominent ear tufts and Velten's reference to the Tyrolean mountains, it is more likely a Eurasian eagle-owl that Velten may have observed there.

81 Correspondence with Pepijn Kamminga, Senior Collection Manager Birds and Mammals at Naturalis, Leiden, 25 October 2024, and with Pieter van Meel, poulterer in Amsterdam, via telephone.

82 See SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.

83 See, for instance, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum RP-T-1881-A-135 and RP-T-1898-A-3518.

84 Moscow, Pushkin Museum, inv. no. 7644. The drawing is signed 'Wenix' with brown ink by a later hand.

85 Caspar Netscher had drawings made after his paintings by his pupils to document his work but also to be used for future reference for new works utilizing the same composition (see Wieseman 2004, p. 255). In his article on red chalk drawings after paintings by Adriaen van de Venne, Edwin Buijsen convincingly argues that these were made as records after paintings by Van de Venne in his studio, with the purpose of later reuse. See Buijsen 2005.

86 The five variants were discovered during this research project using the Visual Search digital tool in the RKD Research database. They have been identified as distinct variants through detailed analysis of photographs of the paintings, taking into account differences in quality and focusing primarily on the relative compositional distances between various elements. According to sales catalogues, cats. 8 and 9 were signed and dated with Weenix's name. Cat. 8 depicts a hare with a bristle-like rendering of the fur, characteristic of Valkenburg's technique. Still, the black-and-white photographs of both cats. 8 and 9 lack sufficient clarity to definitively attribute the work to either Weenix or Valkenburg.

Dirk Valkenburg's Hunting Still Lifes in a Colonial Context

Maurice Saß

Dirk Valkenburg's imaginary genre scene *After the Hunt* (cat. 40) reveals much about the social functions and values of hunting in the early modern period. Set on autumn evening in front of a country inn, this eye-catching scene prominently features three noble horses. Their elegant build, shiny coats and colourful saddles mark them as status symbols. They probably belong to the three hunters who, sitting and standing, have positioned themselves in front of the inn's entrance and are being served refreshments. Their clothes look both precious and fashionable. One of them gallantly rests an arm on his leg and the other on the back of the chair. His attention is focused on feeding and caring for the horses, which are looked after by two stable workers. Meanwhile, a cart with fresh hay arrives, which is probably about to be driven into the barn on the right. The whole scene is watched vigilantly by three pairs of hounds, who undoubtedly played a part in the successful hunt, of which the prey is gathered in the left foreground, alongside a hunting servant.

The scene resembles many comparable genre paintings with resting hunters, travellers or other figures in front of a rural inn. It illustrates the social relevance of hunting between the Middle Ages and present as neither primarily based on its economic importance nor on averting (supposed) animal danger, nor even on the pleasure found in it. Rather, hunting served as an excellent means of demonstrating physical and cognitive superiority, as well as the hierarchies that were thereby legitimized as natural.[1] Hunting had what we may call a 'differential function'. It was a vehicle for social distinction: on the one hand, it had an inclusive character as it fostered community among the hunters and served as a tool for defining their collective identity; on the other hand, hunting was an exclusive privilege that strictly limited participation and visualized, sanctified and realized social difference. Valkenburg thus carefully distinguishes between the bright skin colour of the seated hunter and the clearly darker one of the hunting servant in the foreground. Similarly striking is the gender bias between the all-male hunters and the women in the picture, who appear to belong entirely to the domestic sphere (although, in fact, not only women of high nobility regularly went hunting in the early modern period).[2] Furthermore, the view of the Italianized landscape and the path leading into the forest depths are established reminders of the claim to power that hunting was able to exemplify in governed or owned lands.

At the heart of this political iconography and the differential function of the hunt lies the hierarchy between human and non-human animals. Hunting created an 'anthropological difference' in

at least two dimensions: in the relation of humans to their animal companions, whose blind obedience emphasizes the hunter's authority and makes the horses and dogs a legitimate focus of Valkenburg's genre scene; by contrast, the relation between humans and the hunted animals is marked by the animals' deaths, which serve as the ultimate symbol of the hunter's sovereignty.[3] The numerous hunting still lifes that Valkenburg painted throughout his life reflect this understanding of the activity by portraying it (sometimes even critically) as a practice through which binary hierarchies were established, reinforced, and maintained.

The following essay explores how Valkenburg's depictions of both living and dead animals reframed the logic behind these distinctions, thus linking them to other forms of social and ecological inequality. Particular attention is paid to the colonial context in which his hunting still lifes emerged, as this offers a deeper understanding of how they contributed to the generalization of differences generated and legitimized by the hunt as natural asymmetries.

Dead or Alive: Ecological and Social Differences of the Hunt

The involvement of early modern still lifes in the differential function of hunting can be illustrated by two same-sized paintings from a group of four that Valkenburg created for Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1657–1712) between 1698 and 1699 for the remarkable sum of 1,000 guilders. One of the canvases, which has remained part of the Liechtenstein collection to this day, depicts a varied arrangement of dead animals and hunting equipment loosely grouped to the side of a prestigious architectural form (cat. 15). While a dog enters the scene from the left, focussing on a pigeon swooping down from above, the right side of the painting unfolds into a wooded park landscape, criss-crossed by canals, enriched by sculptures and buildings, and bathed in the warm glow of the evening sun. This aristocratic setting, typical of many of Valkenburg's hunting still lifes, not only reflects the social status of his favoured clients but also frames the killing of wild animals as both a privilege and a tool of classist distinction.[4]

Several motifs in the painting vary this differential function. Noteworthy is the heterogeneous composition of the animals, which includes a pheasant, hare and partridge alongside less common subjects for hunting still lifes, such as the Eurasian hoopoe, maybe a yellowhammer, the bullfinch and the Eurasian jay, as well as the great egret, which, until recently, did not breed in Central Europe.[5] This variety of game within the scene reflects aesthetic considerations: it contributes to the painting's chromatic coherence, which is accentuated by a few vibrant colours, with the white plumage of the heron forming a striking counterpoint to the surrounding shadowy areas. At the same time, however, it reflects an aristocratic hunting culture that considered almost any free-living animal worth killing. The zoological diversity underscores a mastery of all three realms of animal life in hunting: on land, in the air (as the pigeon illustrates) and in the water (as the mute swans, which have not been shot, emphasize). Furthermore, the still life can be read as a kind of

summa of hunting practices: the nets allude to the catching of birds, such as partridges, which dwell on the ground and are more likely to run than to fly away; the horn recalls, among other things, the *chasse à courre*, considered the most noble form of hunting at the French royal court and beyond; and firearms were widely used in early modern hunting practices, including stalking, driving and flushing out animals – similarly, dogs performed various tasks such as tracking, chasing and retrieving; lastly, the falcon's hoods and the stick point to falconry, an especially costly and therefore highly exclusive form of hunting.

Valkenburg elevates these various forms of hunting with the fountain sculpture in the background showing Hercules in his heroic fight with the Hydra, which had destroyed the fields and tore apart herds of cattle in the Greek Argolis.[6] Together with other animal kills by the demigod, this incident is one of the primordial myths used to legitimize hunting as the enduring struggle of mankind against animals, of civilization against the wilderness and of culture against nature.[7] However, Valkenburg's still life not only invokes these political semantics of hunting in an abstract manner but also connects them explicitly with the Prince of Liechtenstein. The butt of the wheel-lock rifle on the bottom right is an exact representation of an exquisite weapon from the princely armoury created by Johann Michael Maucher (fig. 1).[8] It is decorated with an ivory carving of Fortuna, which foremost references the vicissitudes of luck in hunting but also symbolizes the power of the princely marksman to determine the animals' fate.

The second picture from the Liechtenstein Collection (cat. 14) echoes many of the features mentioned. Its main visual attraction is a large white goose, surrounded by a cock, bullfinch, Eurasian jay, two ducks and a hare. Between the dead bodies, the gleaming rifle flintlock is suggestive of the hunter's lethal power. A bacchanalian relief and a statue, perhaps depicting Adonis, again cast the culture of hunting in the venerable light of antiquity. As in several other Valkenburg still lifes, the dramatic climax of a chase unfolds in the autumnal landscape in the background, recalling the physical and sporting aspects of hunting and its role as a military exercise.[9] The most dynamic element of the composition, however, is the fox standing above the cock on the left and the dog jumping into the scene from the right. Their aggressive interaction, which contrasts with the tranquillity of the dead animals, characterizes the hunt as part of a natural order of eating and being eaten. For, as the fox's lower position suggests, it is the next legitimate target of the princely hunt, whereas the dog's predatory instincts are tamed and placed in service to the Prince, as symbolized by its broad collar, which bears initials possibly referring to Carnovia and Oppavia, two of Liechtenstein's possessions in Silesia.[10]

Exoticist Taste: Hunting as a Colonial Practice

As far as we know, Valkenburg's journey to Suriname had no significant influence on his still life paintings.[11] Even though Jonas Witsen (1676–1715) had explicitly invited him to study the flora

and fauna of the Dutch colony, his surviving studies from Suriname did not serve as models for his hunting still lifes.[12] Nevertheless, before and after his stay in Suriname, some of his works show that the differential function of hunting could go hand in hand with colonial endeavours and the injustice associated with them. In this respect, his *Still Life with a Dead Guineafowl, Northern Cardinal, and Other Fowl, with a Dog and Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape* (cat. 27) deserves closer examination. It is situated in an expansive park landscape that is defined by water basins extending to the manor house in the background. A small spaniel-like dog jumps into the picture from the left, with two sharp canines flashing in its open mouth and a glittering eye aiming at a target beyond the left edge of the picture. The actual attraction of the scene, however, is the array of dead birds in the foreground. Their plumage is brightly lit, making it stand out vividly from the dusky evening atmosphere. Framed by a horn and a whistle, two birds rarely found in hunting still lifes lie here beside a partridge and a female lapwing: firstly, a helmeted guineafowl, whose distinctive patterning Valkenburg has reproduced just as carefully as its soft neck feathers and its colourful, featherless head. Originating from sub-Saharan Africa, the bird was once introduced to Europe in ancient times but then disappeared.[13] Portuguese sailors brought it to Europe for a second time in the fifteenth century, where it spread rapidly as a fancy as well as tasty bird and was sometimes kept in pheasantries for hunting purposes.[14] Secondly, the helmeted guineafowl is accompanied by a male northern cardinal, whose bright plumage adds a colourful highlight to the image. It is unclear whether Valkenburg studied the bird, which is native to North America, alive or only as a prepared specimen. The shipping of northern cardinals to Europe can be traced back to the seventeenth century, but it was not until the eighteenth century that they were bred in captivity in the Netherlands and France.[15] Because of its rarity, it is highly unlikely to have been hunted at any European court and thus serves primarily to emphasize the costliness and exclusivity of court hunting culture.

Several of Valkenburg's other hunting still lifes similarly reflect the exoticist interest in foreign objects that also characterized contemporary plant, fruit and flower painting and the culture of collecting in general.[16] For example, his later *Still Life with a Dead Gazelle, Heron and Other Fowl, with a Dog, Parrot, Rifle and Coconuts in a Park Landscape* (cat. 24) shows a gazelle on the left, perhaps a mountain gazelle (*Gazella gazella*) from the eastern Mediterranean. While Valkenburg may have seen it in a menagerie, it is an unlikely object for a European hunter of the period. The same painting, like others by the artist, also features a red lory, a bird native to Southeast Asia, perched on a coconut on the right.[17] Meanwhile – as in many of Valkenburg's other paintings – a cultivated park and the fantasy landscape stretching far into the distance generalizes the hunter's success and stages the killing of animals as a synonym for the sovereign penetration of any land, the legitimate rule over its human and non-human inhabitants and the appropriation of the earth and its resources. On the one hand, these non-European animals considered as 'exotic' (literally, foreign)

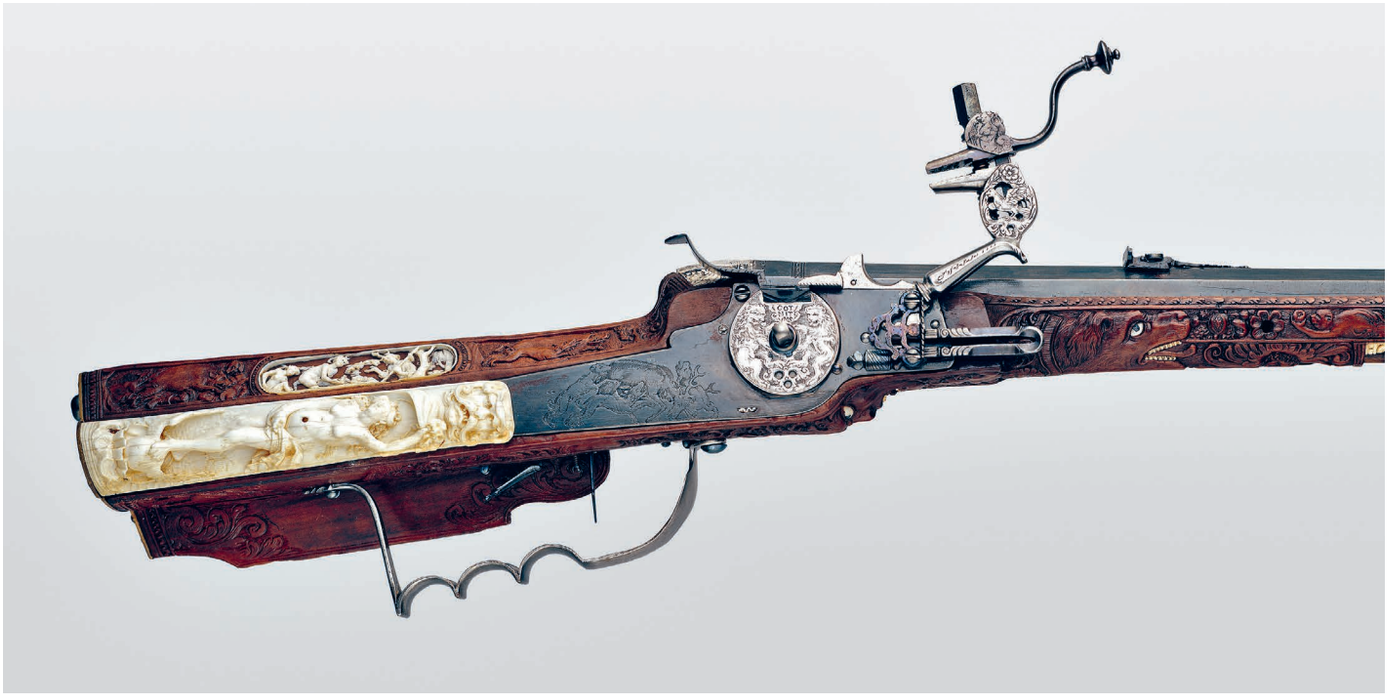




Fig. 1 Johann Michael Maucher, *Wheel-Lock Rifle,* c. 1670, detail. Steel, cherry wood with inlay of ivory and mother-of-pearl, 122 cm (total length), 91.7 cm (barrel length), 13 cm (calibre), Vaduz/Vienna, Liechtenstein – The Princely Collections, inv. WA-859.

Fig. 2 *Still Life with a Dead Heron, Hare, Hoopoe and Other Fowl, with a Dog, Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape*, 1698 (cat. 15), detail of the wheel-lock rifle.





Fig. 3 Jan Weenix, *Portrait of Dirck Schey*, 1692. Oil on canvas, 106 × 90 cm. Vienna, Kunstsammlung der Akademie der bildenden Künste, inv. no. GG-1430.

Fig. 4 Johan de la Rocquette, *Portrait of Philippus Baldaeus with Gerrit Mossopotam*, 1668. Oil on panel, 141 × 176 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-1299.

recall that early modern Holland owed its wealth in part to an often asymmetrical, unfair or even violent maritime trade.[18] On the other hand, they are characteristic of the (visual) marginalization of the labour of disadvantaged people. Such availability of a gazelle, red cardinal or red lory required a previous hunt or live capture, which was usually not undertaken by Europeans.[19] Similarly, the efforts of the court servants to procure, care for and breed guinea fowl, turkeys and other imported birds – including, in the *longue durée*, pheasants and peacocks, which Valkenburg repeatedly depicted – remain invisible.[20]

In this perspective, Valkenburg's still lifes can be placed alongside the many Dutch portraits that literally overshadow people of colour as nameless servants. Intensive research over the last decades into the historical presence of Black people in Europe has not only recognized that they served as 'attributes' (*horribile dictu*) of wealth, power and cosmopolitanism, that is, as a means of enhancing and honouring the *white* upper class; indeed, in several instances, the names and sometimes biographies of these long overlooked and marginalized people have been recovered, shedding light on the significant presence of unfree and free people of African origin or descent in early modern Europe.[21] A notable example among many similar hunting portraits is one by Jan Weenix, which depicts Dirck Schey, the fourteen-year-old son of Dutch Vice-Admiral Gilles Schey, set against the backdrop of an evening landscape (fig. 3).[22] Fashionably and elegantly dressed, he has his right hand gallantly resting on his hip and demonstrates how effortlessly he controls the hunt with the graceful elegance with which he holds the fine crop. While a dog watches over the prey on the left, another dog leaps into the picture from the right, its dynamism emphasizing the controlled calm of the sitter. Finally, a Black servant enters the picture behind him, leading the hunter's horse by the reins. He has reverently doffed his hat and looks up at Schey from below with his eyes wide open and his brows raised. Whether this is a portrait of a specific person is unknown.[23] In any case, the servant amplifies the fiction of sovereignty by visualizing the political, classist and racist asymmetries that correlate with the difference between successful hunter and dead prey, privileged human beings and servile animals, and decent youth and dominated wilderness.

The Black servant in Dirck Schey's portrait offers only an indirect reference to the slave trade's role in the so-called golden age of early modern Holland, as the only biographical connection lies in the naval careers of his father and other relatives. By contrast, there is no lack of comparable portraits of people who were directly involved in colonial endeavours.[24] Philippus Baldaeus, for instance, commissioned a portrait from Johan de la Rocquette after returning from serving as a preacher for the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company, or VOC) (fig. 4).[25] The painting shows him as a hunter presumably together with his translator and servant, Gerrit Mossopotam, who is literally cast in shadow and exoticized by his naked skin. Likewise, Johan de la Faille, whose family owed its wealth to trade on the Mediterranean coast of Western Asia and who continued the cabinet of curiosities founded

by his father with numerous exotica, had himself portrayed by Jan Verkolje (1650–1693) as a distinguished hunter to whom an anonymous Black dog keeper looks up submissively (fig. 5).[26] Lastly, Willem Eversdijck created a similar portrait in which a Black servant, crouched in the shadows, presents a hare to his visually exposed master (fig. 6).[27] The sitter is probably Simon van der Stel, the first governor of the Cape Colony, who may also be depicted as a successful hunter in a painting attributed to Weenix (fig. 7).[28] This painting, destroyed in a fire in 1962, juxtaposes the success of European hunting – with dogs, horses and firearms – against a barefooted group of Indigenous hunters armed with spears. Their behaviour, which seems to have been intended to appear frenetic, contrasts with the composed calm of the *white* hunter, who uses the skills of a servant guiding his dogs and who has taken his young son Willem Adriaan with him, presumably for the purpose of an 'appropriate' education.

The multitude of such images – which can be placed, for example, alongside hunting genre paintings and tronies that served a similar exoticist interest – provides valuable context for understanding the presence of non-European animals in Valkenburg's still lifes.[29] At first glance, the red cardinal and the guinea fowl may only testify to a fascination with the beauty of animals, a naturalistic interest in the visual exploration of foreign flora and fauna, or the financial and social status that hunting still lifes were intended to attribute. Yet, in fact, they also bear witness to the reality of the colonial project, documenting the ways in which the ecological and political dimensions of hunting's differential function can intersect and mutually reinforce one another.

Violence and Meditation: The Ambiguity of Hunting Still Lifes

Valkenburg's hunting still lifes are by and large affirmative of their subject matter and the political instrumentalizations of the killing of animals. This allegiance is hardly surprising given his primary patronage, for whom hunting was a prestigious privilege or an established means of visually emphasizing their status or aspirations for social advancement.[30] Against this background, it comes as no surprise that Valkenburg metaphorically likened his own art to hunting practices. An illustrative example is provided by his *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges, Duck and Other Fowl, with Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape* (cat. 36), which, in its foreground and background, displays a thematic vocabulary that varies from his other still lifes. Interestingly, however, game and hunting equipment are placed in the light of a stone vase with a meta-pictorial scene.[31] Two putti handle a cloth that partially covers a hybrid creature. The mask lying nearby and the mirror held up turn the seemingly innocent game into an enigmatic allegory of concealment and unveiling, masquerade and self-recognition, deception and realization – in short, of illusion and truth. The artist's signature, placed prominently beneath the relief, invites one to read the relief as a reflection on the medial status of the image and its inherent ambiguity between fiction and naturalism. At the same time, the





Fig. 5 Jan Verkolje, *Portrait of Johan de la Faille with Servant and Dogs*, 1680s. Oil on copper, 41 × 31 cm. Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, inv. no. 1982-36, supported by the Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund.

Fig. 6 Willem Eversdijck, *Portrait of an Unknown Man, possibly Simon van der Stel, with Servant, Dog and Hunting Game*, 1660s. Oil on canvas, 160 × 139 cm. Amersfoort, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, Rijkscollectie, inv. no. NK1940.



Fig. 7 Attributed to Jan Weenix, *Double Portrait, possibly of Simon van der Stel and His Son Willem Adriaan, with a Servant, Dogs and Hunting Game*, c. 1650-1675. Oil on canvas, 112 × 167 cm. Destroyed, formerly private collection.

image-within-an-image alludes to the multifaceted experiences of hunting, which relied on mimetic and illusionistic practices, such as the means of the hunter's camouflage, the use of lures, decoys and concealment devices to outwit the animals' keen senses, as well as the simulative methods used to train dogs and birds of prey. Additionally, it gestures towards the broader concepts of animal mimicry and mimesis, underscoring the interplay between human and non-human animals in both hunting and art – as the deceptive behaviour and appearance of animals was a benchmark for the techniques of hunters and artists.[32]

Hunting and art converged in their attempt to pursue, capture and immobilize the living world. The illusionism of hunting provided a broad repertoire of metaphors for the lifelikeness and vitality of art.[33] In Valkenburg's still life, the red net that backs the entire arrangement of animals evokes numerous metaphors of visual attraction. The Dutch poet Jan Vos, for instance, spoke of the 'nets' of painting, and Karel van Mander in the didactic poem of his *Schilderboeck* (1604), of the 'artful work' with which the artist 'can sweetly ensnare people's eyes so that [...] their minds get caught in it'.[34] The 'cunning' partridge, meanwhile, was considered an *Avis fraudulenta*, a deceptive and tricky game bird known for its effective camouflage and deceptive manoeuvres.[35] The famous legend of the lifelike partridges by the ancient painter Protogenes likely refers to this avian mastery of illusion, which made the bird a recurring symbol of illusionistic art during the early modern period.[36] Finally, the stick – traditionally used by falconers and bird trappers to flush out birds, and here employed to present the prey – underlines the painting's deictic character. It bridges the hunter's act of presenting the catch with its representation in the picture.[37]

In more general terms, a fundamental parallel between painting and hunting lies in their shared aim of mimetically capturing life – a theme that underpins many hunting still lifes. In Valkenburg's painting, net, stick, horn and hunting bag visualize the technical prerequisites for the artistic appropriation of animals.[38] It is easier to paint a hare, woodcock, partridge or duck once they are dead. Hunting still lifes, therefore, present themselves latently as artistic prey. Notably, the term 'trophy' entered the language of hunting only through the realms of art.[39] This analogy, however, hinges on a fundamental paradox: hunters seek to take life, while painters seek to give life. Hunting is characterized by rapid movement, as the many living animals in Valkenburg's paintings underline. In contrast, fine painting is a slow process and still life a place of tranquillity. In a nutshell, hunting is lethal, and painting is creative.

Several hunting still lifes address this fatal difference and turn it into a strength of painting. Early modern art literature often notes that pictures possess a second-order vitality, even when they depict dead objects as lifeless.[40] Valkenburg's still lifes, in particular, make use of the familiar strategy of depicting the actually killed prey as though it still retains a semblance of life. The hare's ears are pricked up, its whiskers taut and its front legs are set as if in motion. Most strikingly, a highlight on the hare's moist pupil suggests that it has just blinked its eye – painted with extraordinary precision –

seemingly fixed on the beholder before the canvas. Valkenburg deliberately avoids showing any fatal wound, leaving the hare's body unharmed, as was typical of hunting still lifes until the nineteenth century. The most frequent deviation from this norm is probably the fine trail of blood beneath the hare's head. As in many other of Valkenburg's works, this subtle detail serves as a quiet but poignant marker of death. Rendered with remarkable fluidity and freshness, the blood blurs the boundary between life and death, creating a deliberate ambiguity: it suggests either that the hare's death occurred mere moments ago or that it is still uncertain whether the animal has truly taken its last breath.

This interplay between life and death is a defining characteristic of the still life genre as a whole. In his *Imagines*, Philostratus (c. 160–245 CE) had already highlighted this theme at the start of his description of the xenia (a painting of gifts offered to guests), which later came to shape the early modern understanding of the still life. Central to this depiction were two hares: one caught alive with 'the net', which 'keeps looking with all his eyes'; and a second with 'his belly laid wide open and his skin stripped off over the hind feet'.[41] The ambiguity inherent to these two hares manifests itself in the divergent designations of the genre as either 'still life' or '*natura morta*' and their equivalents.[42] The caught but not yet dead hare and the already dead but still fresh and not yet past – that is, decomposed or eaten hare – form the dialectical poles between which hunting still lifes interweave their motifs and position themselves as meditations on the liminal space between life and death.

In this transgressive characteristic of many hunting still lifes lies a compensatory function that should not be overlooked. Works in the genre often celebrate the death of the animal not merely as a triumph of the hunter or a symbol of strength. Instead, much like various hunting rituals, they open a space for contemplation – on human-animal relationships, the ethics of killing and the transience of life itself.[43] Many of Valkenburg's hunting still lifes feature flowering plants, whose vibrant colours not only enhance the sensual opulence, variety and beauty of the killed animals but can also be understood as symbols of eternal generation and corruption. They rhyme with Valkenburg's rather sparse use of *vanitas* motifs such as overripe fruit, withering leaves or the soft glow of an autumnal sunset. In one of the Liechtenstein still lifes (cat. 14), a sculpted double wreath of leaves adds funerary symbolism, honouring the animals' deaths and transforming the scene into a *memento mori*.[44] The leg of a hare pierced with a branch to hang the animal (cat. 35) is not only unusual in Valkenburg's oeuvre, insofar as the opening of the body and the exposure of the bone visualize the conventionally hidden violence suffered by the hare, otherwise depicted with considerable vitality. Another distinctive feature arises in the *Hunting Still Life with a Dead Red Lori Hanging in a Niche*, formerly attributed to Valkenburg: here, the bird's head rests awkwardly on the stone slab in a bent position rather than hanging freely, as usual.[45] In combination with the frozen feather and the taut string, this suggests a painful impact or, more generally, brings the bird's suffering to the fore.

Another telling motif is the vase in *Still Life with Dead Partridges, with Hunting Gear on a Stone Plinth in a Landscape* (cat. 33), showing the biblical patriarch Lot being seduced by his daughters. The scene, repeatedly depicted by Valkenburg, is paired with a drinking bottle, reinforcing the sexual connotations of its partridges, which were considered particularly libidinous.[46] The motif also resonates with the illusionistic imaginary of nets and decoys, both frequently depicted in moral allegories. Lot's negative example of drunkenness, seduction and, above all, incest thus invokes hunting as a metaphor for the dangers of uncontrolled passions and recalls the need for the reasonable hunter to moderate all beastly affects.

Conclusion

Valkenburg's still lifes emerged from and reinforced a culture in which hunting served an ecologically and socially differential function. His paintings were and are not purely aesthetic objects, inviting admiration for the beauty of fur and plumage, as well as for their painterly virtuosity. Instead, the illuminated depictions of dead bodies manifested a classist privilege, celebrated an extreme material inequality and instrumentalized an exoticist appropriation of the Non-European Other. Their dis-individualizing of non-human animals into mere trophies, symbols and attributes of the *white* nobility is paradigmatic for a hunting culture that opened a path for the human-caused extinction of species.[47] Yet, the significance of Valkenburg's hunting still lifes goes beyond these dimensions. Indeed, his works reflect a relationship with the animate and inanimate world that is increasingly scrutinized today, as well as the promotion of deeply problematic social hierarchies. At the same time, however, they also offer moments of respite, at times challenge common hunting narratives and encourage reflection on the morality of hunting and the values it embodies. If rightly put, Valkenburg's paintings are good to think with.

Acknowledgements

This essay has benefited greatly from my dialogue with Christoph Hinkelmann (formerly of the Ostpreußisches Landesmuseum, Lüneburg). It is thanks to his zoological and, above all, ornithological assessment that numerous animals have been identified – in some cases, even those whose peculiarities would otherwise have escaped my attention.

1 Beck and Saß 2025; Saß 2017; Bates 2013.
2 On female hunters, see Schmidt 2025.
3 For the notion of 'anthropological difference', see Wild 2006.
4 On Valkenburg's clients and patrons, which included Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (see below), Baron Knebel von Katzenelnbogen and Willem III of Orange, who acquired several paintings for his hunting lodge at Het Loo, see Hartkamp in this volume, pp. 61–66.
5 The partly covered bird is difficult to identify. It could also be a European golden plover or a lapwing plover in resting plumage. For a Jan Weenix drawing that may have served as a possible source for the depiction of the egret, see exh. cat Luxemburg 1995, pp. 128–129, no. 94.
6 On the myth, see Salowey 2021. The importance of Hercules for the political iconography of Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein is reflected in Andrea Pozzo's ceiling fresco in the Hercules Hall of the Garden Palace in Vienna.
7 Saß 2024, pp. 18–24.
8 Johann Michael Maucher, *Wheel-Lock Rifle*, c. 1670. Steel, cherry wood with inlay of ivory and mother-of-pearl, 9.5 × 23 × 122 cm. Vaduz, Liechtenstein – The Princely Collections, inv. WA-859; see Ramharter 1996, pp. 240–243 and 298, no. 85.
9 For comparable hunting scenes in the background of other still lifes, see cats. 1, 4, 13, 31–33.
10 Exh. cat. Basel 1987, pp. 254–255, no. 99.
11 On Valkenburg's travel to Suriname, see Ponte in this volume, pp. 31–43.
12 See, for instance, cats. 73–75.
13 According to Ovid and others, Meleager's mourning sisters were transformed into guinea fowls after his death (Metamorphoses V. 526–546; see Grossardt 2001, p. 154). The myth is perhaps echoed in the antique statues of unidentifiable women next to cypresses, which were considered symbols of grief and appear here in a number unusually high for Valkenburg.
14 Springer and Kinzelbach 2009, pp. 115–116; on its hunt, see, for instance, Bechstein 1820–1822, p. 667.
15 Hinkelmann 2020, pp. 15 and 18.
16 See, for instance, Atkins 2023; Kehoe 2023; Bass 2021.
17 See cat. 11 and the formerly attributed work *RKDimages* 56352, accessed on October 14, 2025.
18 See, for instance, Swan 2021; for the notion of the 'exotic' in early modern Holland, see Swan 2015, pp. 626–628.
19 For a comparable case, see Swan 2024.
20 See, for example, cats. 11, 15 and 24 (Pheasant), cats. 3 and 16 (Peacock and Pheasant).
21 For an introduction, see Bindman and Gates 2010; for art historical studies, see i.a. Silver 2022, especially pp. 78–104; Fracchia 2019; Patton and Balanta 2016; Spicer 2012; Kolfin 2008; more generally on independencies in early modern households: Wolfthal 2022.
22 See i.a. Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven 2018, vol. 2, p. 164, no. 68; Blakely 1993, p. 113.
23 A similar servant appears in a later painting by the artist: *The Spoils of a Hunt with a Hunt Servant and a Black Page Holding a Bay*, 1700. Oil on canvas, 183 × 143 cm. Private collection (sold by Jean-Francis Gaud, Paris, https://jeanfrancisgaud.com/oeuvres/scene-de-chasse-animee-dans-un-paysage). He is apparently not the same person as the servant in Weenix's portrait of Dirck Schey's father (see Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven 2018, vol. 2, no. 67, pp. 162–164).
24 For an introduction to the Dutch slave trade, see, Negrón 2024; Onnekink and Rommelse 2019.
25 Beumer 2008 and 1999.
26 See i.a. Van der Veen 2002, pp. 66–67.
27 Bedaux 1988, pp. 10–11.
28 Ibid., pp. 2–3.
29 To give just one example in each case, see Govaert Flinck, *A Young Archer*, c. 1639/40. Oil on oak, 66.2 × 50.8 cm. London, The Wallace Collection, inv. P238; Aelbert Cuyp, Huntsmen Halted, early 1650s. Oil on canvas, 92.7 × 130.8 cm. Birmingham, The Barber Institute of Fine Art, inv. 1959-59-5.
30 On Valkenburg's clients and patrons, see note 4.
31 The same vase can also be found in cat. 17 and (without a hunting context) in cat. 48).
32 Van Eck 2023.
33 Saß 2025 and 2021.
34 For Vos, see Weber 1991, pp. 180–181; Van Mander 1604, fol. 3r-v (Grondt I.27) (my translation).
35 Pfisterer 2004, pp. 175–177.
36 See Degler 2015, pp. 211–214; Hinz 1995.
37 Saß 2024a, pp. 489–495.
38 Ibid., pp. 92–155.
39 Leibetseder and Wipfler 2017.
40 Land 1995.
41 Fairbanks 1931, p. 243 (II.26); on this much-discussed passage (and its emphasis on the hunting context and the affective aspects), see Fehrenbach 2021, p. 377.
42 See, for instance, König and Schön 1996, pp 17–36.
43 The suffering of animals through the hunt has been widely discussed with regard to early modern hunting still lifes. See Palmeri 2016; Cohen 2007; Wolloch 1999; Barolsky 1995.
44 Exh. cat. Basel 1987, pp. 2567, no. 100.
45 *RKDimages* 56352, accessed on October 14, 2025.
46 Saß 2021, p. 157.
47 See Tomasz Grusiecki's book project titled *The Last Aurochs: Art-Making, Zoopolitics, and Early Modern Extinction*.

Dirk Valkenburg as a Portrait Painter: Education and Network

Sabine Craft-Giepmans

Only seventeen portraits can be directly attributed to painter Dirk Valkenburg – roughly fifteen per cent of his total known work – yet estate inventories and auction records suggest his portrait production was substantially more prolific. A fresh look at Dutch writer Johan van Gool's (1685–1763) book *Nieuwe Schouburg der Nederlantsche Kunstschilders en Schilderessen* from 1750–1751 reveals that Valkenburg trained primarily as a portrait painter during his apprenticeships. However, his early portraits survive only through written descriptions, meaning all known works date from the final decade of his life.

Studying Valkenburg's portraits not only offers insights into the likenesses of their subjects, it also sheds light on the social circles of his patrons and their families who rose to the leading social class in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century.

From Student to Master

As we know, Dirk Valkenburg's first lessons as a young boy began at home, where he was taught calligraphy and drawing by his father. Valkenburg displayed talent and was eager to learn, so around 1685, his father decided to bring him to the workshop of a certain Kuilenburg.[1] According to Van Gool's accounts, the young Valkenburg was unhappy in this workshop and complained to his father that his master was incompetent and focused more on 'the large brush than the paintbrush and the drawing pen'. Valkenburg returned home disappointed after about a year and a half.[2]

Following this, Valkenburg 's father arranged an apprenticeship under his friend, the genre and portrait painter Michiel van Musscher (1645–1705). Van Musscher, following in the footsteps of his own masters from Leiden, specialized in finely painted genre scenes and small portraits[3] and grew to become one of the most sought-after portrait painters in Amsterdam, particularly during the last twenty years of the seventeenth century.[4] At the time of his apprenticeship with Van Musscher, Valkenburg was still very young, probably only twelve years old or so. His role in Van Musscher's studio is not precisely known, making it difficult to determine how much influence Van Musscher had on Valkenburg.

Along with tasks such as tending to his master's palette and paintbrushes, rubbing pigments to prepare paint and to prime the painter's canvases, Valkenburg would have also received instruction in the trade. At the time, the extent of artistic training depended on the terms of the apprenticeship contract; generally, the more

expensive the agreement, the greater the offer of drawing and painting lessons.[5]

Through his training, Valkenburg became acquainted with Van Musscher's meticulous attention to detail, which is evident specifically in his rendering of materials, such as oriental carpets, satin gowns and lace collars. Examples of portraits that Valkenburg most likely saw up close during his apprenticeship include those of the husband and wife Johannes Hudde and Debora Blaeuw, from 1686 and 1687,[6] and that of Hudde's cousin, the mayor Nicolaas Witsen (1641–1717) from 1688 (fig. 1). The powerful, almost frontal portrait of Witsen was until recently known only through a preliminary drawing – possibly a personally executed copy – and countless print reproductions.[7] The scene depicts the mayor at a table over which an oriental carpet is draped and, on top, a letter with salutations, making it possible to identify Witsen. The painting is a peerless example of Van Musscher's technical mastery, particularly in his ability to capture the nuances of materials, such as the finely illuminated strands of the wig, the sheen of the Japanese-style silk gown, the so-called *japonse rok*, the matte surface of the brocade waistcoat and the crisp lace of the knotted cravat.[8] It is precisely this subtle expression of the fabric and attention to materiality that will later become characteristic of Valkenburg's work.

During his apprenticeship, Valkenburg's early exposure to a distinguished Amsterdam clientele was of equal – if not greater – importance than the technical skills and knowledge of works acquired in the workshop. Thanks to Amsterdam's economic prosperity, the tremendous growth in wealth of these patrons allowed them to lead lavish lives and often commission portraits.[9] Thus, it was likely that Valkenburg established foundations with the Witsen family through the workshop that ultimately led to securing the significant commission to depict Jonas Witsen's (1676–1715) Suriname plantations (see cats. 57–75).

Shortly before 1690, Valkenburg's apprenticeship under Van Musscher ended unexpectedly for unknown reasons after only two years. This coincided with the move of the Valkenburg family to Kampen, where his father took a position as the town schoolmaster and later became the cantor of the reformed church, the Bovenkerk. In 1692, his mother also received an appointment as a midwife.[10] Valkenburg's artistic training continued in Kampen, where he was taken under the wing of Bernard Vollenhove (c. 1633–1694), the former mayor of Kampen.[11] The transition from a professional workshop catering to a demanding urban elite to supervision by an aging amateur artist in a provincial town must have been a cultural change. Vollenhove came from an old Overijssel line of mayors and ministers and was destined for a career as a civil servant. However, in addition to his official duties, he always continued to paint. He certainly did not do so without merit because, in 1672, Vollenhove, then still sheriff of Kamperveen, was appointed guild master of the artists and artisans Guild of St Luke, in Kampen.[12] A representative and well-preserved portrait of an unidentified woman painted by Vollenhove in 1670 demonstrates his special attention to fashionable clothing, hairstyle and jewelry (fig. 2).[13] Although it is unclear

whether Valkenburg was still being trained in this style by the late 1680s, it is evident that Vollenhove was a skilled portrait painter with an excellent mastery of his paintbrush.

Vollenhove maintained contacts, both administrative as well as private, in the capital, Amsterdam. From 1681 to 1684, Vollenhove was made *Gecommitteerde Raad ter Admiraliteit te Amsterdam* (Counsellor to the Admiralty of Amsterdam) to Elisabeth Braems. Braems was Vollenhove's second wife, who owned a number of properties in Amsterdam as well as shares in the Amsterdam chamber of the Geoctrooieerde Westindische Compagnie (West India Company, or WIC) at the time of their marriage.[14]

Possibly more relevant for understanding Valkenburg's future network is that Vollenhove, as an amateur poet, had written a 'powerful verse' that was included in the book *Verward Europa* by Petrus Valkenier,[15] one of the first books about the disastrous year of 1672.[16] This publication is regarded as a prelude to Valkenier's position as a diplomat for the Dutch Republic, with appointments in Germany and Switzerland. If Vollenhove and Valkenier had kept in touch, the latter could have made very interesting introductions for Valkenburg at various royal courts in Germany, of which more of later.

According to Van Gool, Vollenhove instructed the young Valkenburg out of the pure love of art. He gave Valkenburg all the necessary tools, taught him the principles of mixing paint and had him copy portraits.[17] Valkenburg remained under Vollenhove's tutelage for about one year. The latter actually lacked the time to train him seriously, resulting in Valkenburg returning to Amsterdam on his own in the early 1690s.

Back in Amsterdam, from around 1692 or 1693 until 1695, Valkenburg continued his training with still life and portrait painter Jan Weenix (1641–1719), in whose home he also lived for two years. It was not until he entered Weenix's workshop that Valkenburg began focusing on painting animal scenes and game still lifes. It is noteworthy that there are no known portraits by Valkenburg that in any way resemble the portraits painted by Weenix: full-length portraits of men, women and children, with or without hunting spoils, in an idealized landscape. A striking example from around 1694, probably created during Valkenburg's apprenticeship with Weenix, is the family portrait of Agnes Block with her second husband, Sybrand de Flines, and her two children in their country seat, Vivero, where Block had created a botanical garden. Exemplary herein is Weenix's attention to all manner of additional details, such as the pineapple on the far left, a fruit that was imported from Suriname in 1680, flowers, birds and works of art (fig. 3).

Van Gool writes that upon leaving Weenix's workshop, around 1695, Valkenburg immediately travelled to Gelderland and Overijssel, where he painted chimney and upper-door pieces and portraits of many prominent individuals.[18] In order to obtain commissions, he may have utilised the contacts of his former teacher Vollenhove and his parents in the region of Kampen. Unfortunately, portraits by Valkenburg from this period (c. 1694–1696) remain unknown. However, a description of a portrait of a boy, 'full-size,

by a fountain in a landscape', auctioned from the property of the Van Pallandt van Eerde family from Overijssel, corresponds perfectly with the surviving/ known portraits made by Weenix and could possibly be the piece that Van Gool referred to.[19]

Travels Abroad

Valkenburg's ambitions were boundless, and in 1696, the young painter decided to travel in the direction of Italy.[20] During this trip, he managed to garner the attention of the very highest European nobility. One possible intermediary was the diplomat Petrus Valkenier, from Bernard Vollenhove's network. After serving as commissioner and extraordinary envoy in Regensburg, Bavaria, from 1673 to 1690, Valkenier maintained particularly strong ties with the German rulers.[21]

According to Van Gool, Valkenburg's professional advancement began during a stopover in Augsburg, in southern Germany, where he spent half a year working for Baron Johann Anton I Knebel von Katzenelnbogen, the canon of Augsburg and the later Prince-Bishop of Eichstätt.[22] Valkenburg painted his portrait, which can no longer be traced, and created several animal and hunting scenes for him. Knebel von Katzenelnbogen had become an important patron and major art collector and introduced Valkenburg to friendly rulers such as Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden, who unsuccessfully offered him a position as court painter,[23] and Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein in Vienna, for whom he carried out several major commissions (cats. 13–16). Despite the Prince of Liechtenstein's very generous offer to remain at his court in Vienna, Valkenburg decided to travel back to Amsterdam without having visited Italy, in around 1700.

As mentioned previously, despite written evidence, no additional portraits from Valkenburg's early working period have been identified. However, an almost life-size portrait of a young man in Leipzig currently attributed to Weenix might be considered a work by Valkenburg (cat. 76).[24] Its composition, a half-figure set in a painted oval, does not correspond with Weenix's known portraits. Moreover, the subject's clothing, a loose-fitting red brocade robe over a shirt with a modest lace collar, and his mid-length hair suggests a dating that corresponds to the last decade of the seventeenth century. The period, choice of life-size format, composition with a view of an idealized landscape and broad brushstrokes are closely aligned with the half-length portraits Valkenburg frequently painted later in his career. Given these arguments, the portrait can likely be attributed to Valkenburg.

In 1701, upon his return to Amsterdam, Valkenburg was approached by a 'De Marees',[25] Overseer-General of the royal palaces, to work on the decoration of Het Loo Palace. However, the commission never materialised due to the unexpected death of the Stadtholder-King Willem III in 1702. Valkenburg's estate inventory from 1721 does include a reference to a portrait of King 'William' in his 'painting room', though it remains unclear whether he painted it himself.[26]





Fig. 1 Michiel van Musscher, *Portrait of Nicolaas Witsen*, 1688. Oil on canvas, 54 × 48 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, SK-A-5016.

Fig. 2 Bernard Vollenhove, *Portrait of an Unknown Woman*, 1670. Oil on canvas, 75.7 × 61.5 cm. Oelde, SØR Rusche Sammlung.



Fig. 3 Jan Weenix, *Agnes Block (1629–1704), Sybrand de Flines (1623–1697) and Two Children at the Vijverhof Country Estate*, c. 1684. Oil on canvas, 84 × 111 cm. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum, SA 20349, acquired with the support of the Vereniging Rembrandt.

No physical evidence exists that Valkenburg painted portraits during his time in Amsterdam, from about 1700 to 1706, but based on entries in his estate inventory, there must have been *some* portraits created during this period, such as *Portrait of an Unknown Man* (cat. 76) ('by the Deceased in earlier times painted in an large oval Frame').[27] This must, indeed, have been an important work to Valkenburg because, just like the portraits of his father and mother, the painting received pride of place in his main house.[28]

Furthermore, Valkenburg will most likely have painted the portrait of his wife, Margaretha Cleijnman, whom he married in 1702, at the beginning of their turbulent marriage,[29] as well as a portrait of an unknown child[30] that might be his godchild, Gijsbert Valkenburg, his brother Pieter's eldest son, who was baptized in Haarlem in 1703.[31]

No portraits from Valkenburg's sojourn in Suriname from 1706 to 1708 are known, although individuals may be identified in his painting *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70). However, a pair of small oval portraits of a young African woman and man were auctioned as works attributed to Valkenburg but are inconsistent with his oeuvre (figs. 4–5).[32] These are likely not realistic portraits but, rather, part of a seventeenth-century tradition of imagined pastoral scenes, where Black boys holding bows and arrows represented hunters, and Black girls with feathers on their heads represented courtesans.[33]

Portrait Commissions from Amsterdam's Urban Elite

When Valkenburg returned from Suriname in 1708, he was ill and weakened. According to Van Gool, after recovering, Valkenburg focused primarily on painting 'natural and powerful' portraits.[34] The 1712 pendants of Joan van Akerlaken (1672–1712) and his wife Petronella Merens (1673–1748) are the earliest dated and identified portraits following Valkenburg's return from the tropics (cats. 77–78).[35] Van Akerlaken was the son of Christoffel van Akerlaken, merchant and chief accountant of the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company, or VOC) in Amsterdam. Following his father's death, Akerlaken's mother remarried Cornelis de Groot, a magistrate of Hoorn, and relocated there with her eight--year-old son, Joan.[36] Through his stepfather Cornelis de Groot, Van Akerlaken became part of Hoorn's elite. After studying law in Leiden, he married Petronella Merens, the mayor of Hoorn's daughter. Van Akerlaken was both administratively and financially very successful. He held the positions of alderman and mayor and, in 1690, was appointed substitute secretary of the Board of the Admiralty of West-Friesland, also known as the Admiralty of the Noorderkwartier (Northern Quarter).[37]

The portraits that Valkenburg painted of the husband and wife reinforce the image of a successful and wealthy couple who belonged to a new type of urban gentry.[38] The spouses are both dressed according to the latest fashion and wear powdered wigs on a shaven skull, while Meerens wears jewelry with precious stones. As was the case with other mayors and regents of Hoorn, Van Akerlaken and

Meerens's wealth was largely earned as administrators and investors of the two colonial trading companies.[39] In a slightly later portrait of Adriaen van Bredehoff (a contemporary and fellow regent of Van Akerlaken) by the Amsterdam painter Nicolaes Verkolje (1673–1746), the social success of this lucrative trade becomes particularly apparent (fig. 6).[40] Aside from being clothed in the latest fashion, Bredehoff is flanked by his servant, Tabo Jansz,[41] and points to his country estate, with a rifle and dog as hunting symbols. Hunting was traditionally a right that belonged exclusively to the nobility but, in the seventeenth century, could also be bought when acquiring a seigniory. The portrait perfectly reflects how the newly wealthy from the urban elite presented themselves as old, landed gentry, showcasing their financial and social status.

There is no archival evidence that Valkenburg painted the portraits in Hoorn or that he temporarily worked in the Northern Quarter. However, he was certainly not the only painter from Amsterdam to have been commissioned by Hoorn's elite; the aforementioned Verkolje also had a solid client base in West-Friesland.[42]

Another individual who lived north of Amsterdam to have his portrait painted was professor Bernard Nieuwentijt (1654–1718), who was also mayor and town doctor of Purmerend,[43] whose likeness was reprinted many times for the title page of the bestselling book *Het regt gebruik der wereltbeschouwingen* (fig. cat. 21, p. 488). This publication on the existence of God was reprinted multiple times from 1715 onwards.[44] Nieuwentijt's portrait must therefore have been painted before 1715, but both the particularly sumptuous wig and type of portrait – a so-called bust piece without hands – differs from Valkenburg's other portraits from the period between 1712 to 1720 and suggests a slightly earlier dating (cat. 83).[45]

According to the 1721 estate inventory, Valkenburg kept the original painting of the well-known professor Nieuwentijt and, after his death, bequeathed it to Joan van Vliet (1682–1750), who acted as executor of his estate, along with Nicolaes Abeleven, merchant and verger of the Oude Kerk,[46] and Willem Hengst.[47] Apparently, the portrait of Nieuwentijt was also highly esteemed by Van Vliet that he specifically listed it in his will twice, first in 1726, when he bequeathed it to his good friend, Hengst, along with all of the other portraits painted by Valkenburg.[48] He subsequently revoked this in a revised will to earmark the portrait of Nieuwentijt for his nephew Nicolaas Sweers.[49] His loyal housekeeper was given a large portrait of Van Vliet painted by Valkenburg, and his good friend Willem Hengst was, again, bequeathed a series of three equally sized portraits by Valkenburg depicting the testator, Van Vliet; Hengst himself; and Valkenburg, the painter.[50]

Thanks to a note in Valkenburg's estate, it is known that he painted two self-portraits, one large and one small.[51] Valkenburg left the small one to Van Vliet. Combining the aforementioned details, it can be concluded that the series, of which Valkenburg's self-portrait was a part, were all three produced on a smaller scale. Due to Valkenburg's far-reaching standardization of his canvas sizes, almost all of the surviving portraits fluctuate around a fixed size of about





Fig. 4 Anonymous, *Portrait of an Unknown African Woman,* Northern Netherlands, c. 1650–1700. Oil on canvas transferred onto panel, 23.2 × 17.2 cm. Whereabouts unknown.

Fig. 5 Anonymous, *Portrait of an Unknown African Man,* Northern Netherlands, c. 1650–1700. Oil on panel, 23.2 × 17.2 cm. Whereabouts unknown.



Fig. 6 Nicolaes Verkolje, *Portrait of Adriaan van Bredehoff (1672–1733), with Tabo Jansz*, 1727. Oil on canvas, 60 × 51.5 cm. Hoorn, Westfries Museum, inv. no. 13307.

85 cm in height by 70 cm in width.[52] A noteworthy exception is a portrait of an unidentified gentleman behind a lectern, which is only 73 cm high by 57 cm wide and, therefore, probably belongs in the aforementioned series of three 'friends' (cat. 90).[53] Based on the portrait drawing of Valkenburg in the Rijksmuseum (fig. 1, in De Rooij and Fatah-Black, p. 13), we can rule out that this is the small self-portrait. The face differs too much in the shape of the eyebrows, eye colour and mouth. Additionally, the presence of a lectern references a lawyer rather than a painter, but in the absence of supplemental provenance details or a reliable portrait of Hengst or Van Vliet, a definitive identification can not be made.

The series of three portraits of identical size suggests a close friendship between the three men. Based on the names of those portrayed in Valkenburg's estate inventory, Van Vliet in particular appears to have played an important intermediary role in securing portrait commissions in the final years of Valkenburg's life (c. 1715–1721). Through Van Vliet, Valkenburg had access to the Amsterdam lawyer's family and professional network, a group of Amsterdam residents who had almost all amassed their fortune through work for the VOC.

Van Vliet and Valkenburg lived within approximately five minutes walking distance from each other, [54] were more or less peers and, to some extent, shared a colonial past: Valkenburg, thanks to his travels and work in Suriname, and Van Vliet, due to his birth on Ambon. Both Van Vliet's father and grandfather held prominent positions within the VOC.[55] Van Vliet studied law in Leiden, where he also resided for several years before marrying Adriana Muykens in 1706, who also had family ties in Batavia.[56]

Valkenburg's estate inventory lists various portraits of the Van Vliets' relatives through marriage, such as Professor Dr Theodors Muyskens from Groningen and David Everhard Godin, with his wife Adriana Arnoldina Muyskens from Utrecht.[57] Van Vliet's possible professional contacts included the Amsterdam notary Cornelis van Alder Weerelt, whose portrait appears in Van Vliet's estate,[58] and notary Pieter Kerckhoven, whose unfinished portrait remained in Valkenburg's workshop after his death.[59] It seems likely that Van Vliet, through his own family background in the Dutch East Indies, as well as through his relationships with members of the Muyskens family who still lived in Batavia, also put Valkenburg in touch with other patrons who had made their fortunes through the VOC.
A name that stands out in this context is that of Jan Jacob Braems (1683–1743), who commissioned Valkenburg to paint his portrait, which was later 'paired' with a portrait of his wife, Maria Uylenbroek (–1717) (cats. 79–80). Braems was born in Batavia to the chief accountant Daniel Braems and his second wife, Maria Paviljoen.[60] Valkenburg likely also painted the portraits of Clara Sara Braems (c. 1680–1750) and Johan van der Burgh (–1743) around the same time, of which currently only the male portrait is known (cat. 84).

Valkenburg and Joan van Vliet possibly crossed paths during the preparations of the wedding of Jan Wolters (1683–1757) and Sara Munter (1691–1758) for which one 'J. van Vliet' wrote an

occasional poem and where Valkenburg painted their wedding portraits (cats. 88–89).[61] Both spouses are richly dressed and coiffed according to the latest fashion and stand self-consciously in an imagined landscape. Noteworthy is the green parakeet on Sara's hand, which might have been imported for her from Suriname. This commission from 1717 appears to be the start of at least three consecutive commissions for double portraits that can be linked through family relationships. This time, the contacts do not appear to have been through Van Vliet's VOC network but, rather, via WIC channels. Of course, it remains speculation how Valkenburg was awarded these portrait commissions, but Cornelis Munter, the father of the aforementioned Sara, could certainly have known the artist's name. Indeed, Munter was administrator of the WIC from 1698 to 1708, director of the Suriname Company and, in his final years, also commissioner of the Hortus Medicus (fig. cat. 24, p. 501). In this capacity, he must certainly have known Valkenburg through the commissions the latter carried out for Jonas Witsen.

Valkenburg's estate reveals that after his death, the portraits of Sara's sister, Margartha Munter (1689–1737), and her brother-in-law, Gerrit Corver (1690–1756), were ready in his workshop.[62] Earlier, in 1719, Valkenburg completed the portraits of Corver's brother, Jan Corver (1688–1719), the founder of the senior's home Het Corvershof, and his second wife, Sara Maria Trip (1693–1721). The portraits of the latter four are known exclusively through copies by Jan Maurits Quinkhard (1688–1772) (figs. cat. 26–29, pp. 505).[63]

One of the latest examples of commissions by the Amsterdam elite are the pendant portraits of Dirck Alewijn (1682–1743) and his wife Bregje van Loten (1692–1760), both executed in 1720.[64] The portrait of Alewijn, with an impressive wig, was last seen in 1935 (cat. 91).[65] Alewijn was born to a wealthy family of textile traders who held important roles in the board of the *hoofdingeland* (water authority) in Beemster, where the family owned the homestead of Vredeburg. Alewijn studied law at Leiden University and joined the city council in several roles, while his son, also named Dirck, became director of the VOC.[66]

Finally, there are two portraits that are exclusively known as printed reproductions. Neither concern likenesses of individuals from Amsterdam's (financial) elite but, rather, feature portraits of individuals representing their profession, here, writers and ministers. The portrait of the engraver and amateur poet Jan Goeree (1670–1731) appeared on the title page of the poetry book *Mengelpoëzy* (fig. cat. 31, p. 506).[67] An earlier printed version or proof already existed that had been used by Arnout van Halen before 1720 for his *Panpoeticon Batavum,* a collection of small portraits of poets mounted on plates that were kept in a curiosity cabinet.[68] Valkenburg's estate inventory also includes a portrait of the Lutheran minister Johannes Hermannus Manné (1679–1733) from Haarlem, which can unfortunately no longer be traced.[69] However, a portrait of him in print designed by Jan Wandelaar (1692–1759) is known, with the inscription at the top left that the person depicted was forty years old in 1719, when it was made (fig. cat. 30, p. 506).[70]

Because this print differs greatly from Wandelaar's other portraits and because the imagery with the expressive hand gestures so closely matches Valkenburg's style, it may be assumed that a portrait painted by Valkenburg could have served as the basis for this.

In conclusion, despite the limited number of surviving portraits, it can be argued that Valkenburg played an important role as a portraitist of wealthy, mainly Amsterdam citizens, particularly after his homecoming from Suriname in 1708. Valkenburg depicted his sitters in the latest fashion as a new type of successful urban gentry, confirming their new social roles. For his portraits, he worked in a largely standardized manner in which he depicted the size, shape as well as the poses and even the clothing of the portrayed in an almost identical manner.

Aside from the physically surviving portraits, the names of those depicted in Valkenburg's estate inventory and the mention of portraits in old estate inventories or auction catalogues offer insight into the network within which Valkenburg operated and in which the notary Joan van Vliet appears to have played a prominent part. Van Vliet seems to have been the spider in the web of Amsterdam portrait commissions by recommending Valkenburg's work to the contacts in his own network.

1 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 477. He might be identified as the Haarlem city glass painter Quirin Gerrits Cuylenburg (active 1662–1700); see Huygens Instituut: *Ecartico*, 'Quirin Gerrits Quylenburg'.
2 Ibid., p. 478. Contracts for minor apprentices were usually drawn up for a period of one to seven years, and according to the rules of Amsterdam's Guild of St Luke, the apprentice had to have been apprenticed for at least two years before he could establish himself as a master. In practice, apprenticeships lasted at least three to four years. De Jager 1990, pp. 69–70.
3 Exh. cat. Amsterdam 2012, pp. 6–7.
4 Ibid., p. 17.
5 De Jager 1990, p. 74.
6 Bikker 2012, pp. 43–51.
7 Gerhardt 2015, p. 139.
8 Ibid., p. 141, fig. 4, 5.
9 Exh. cat. Amsterdam 2012, p. 6.
10 SAK acc. no. 199, inv. no. 470. Valkenburg's sister Anna remained in Kampen and baptised two children, Jan and Hilletje, with her husband, Hendrik Tangena, at the De Gereformeerde Bovenkerk (Dutch Reformed Church) on 14 January 1703 and 9 August 1705, respectively. SAK, acc. no. 00016, inv. no. 309 [24-09-1701 – 24-07-1712], ff. 38 and 64.
11 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 478; Ruys 1917, p. 162.
12 Although Van Gool writes that Vollenhove was apprenticed to 'P. Koninck' in Amsterdam, by which he meant Philips Koninck (1619–1688), this was refuted by J. Nanninga Uitterdijk, archivist of Kampen in the nineteenth century, in favour of his nephew, Salomon Koninck (1609–1656). Ruys 1917, p. 162 and Rouffaer 1887, p. 297.

13 The work fits well with Philips Koninck's work from the 1650s, the period that Vollenhove was apprenticed to him; compare, for example, the portrait of one of the Van der Burch brothers, 1656 (current whereabouts unknown); see *RKDimages* 4132, accessed on 28 December 2024.
14 Ruys 1917, p. 173.
15 This direct link between Vollenhove and Valkenier also seems like an important indication of the Amsterdam mayoral Valkenier family's enduring family ties between Amsterdam and Kampen, where an early branch of the family settled as merchants in the late sixteenth century. Elias 1903–1905, vol. 1, p. 410.
16 In this book, Valkenier writes about the 'confusion' of Europe over Louis XIV's cunning expansionism. See Klerk 2010.
17 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 479.
18 Ibid., p. 480.
19 'A boy in a fine costume, standing beside a sandstone fountain with a magpie and whippet and a park with monuments in the background', in comparison. Ph.[ilip] Baron van Pallandt van Eerde, sale: Amsterdam (Mak), 13 November 1923, lot 41.
20 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 481.
21 De Lange 2010, pp. 34–35.
22 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 481, and about Knebel von Katzenelnbogen, see *Süddeutscher-Barock* n.d.
23 From 1697, Von Baden sought artists for the reconstruction and furnishing of his palace in Rastatt, which had been destroyed by Louis XIV's troops in 1689; see *Baden-Württemberg Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten* n.d., accessed on 30 December 2024.
24 Cat. Leipzig 2012, p. 325, no. 355.
25 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 482.
26 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, see also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519. Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, p. 429, no. 37.
27 Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, p. 428, no. 15.
28 Ibid., no. 1; an unfinished portrait of his sister (Anna or Sara) was still in his workshop. Bredius 1916, p. 428, no. 18.
29 Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, p. 430, no. 57.
30 Ibid., p. 428, no. 19.
31 Son of Valkenburg's brother, Pieter Valkenburg (b.–1673), and Margarita Quickenburg. Witnesses: Valkenburg and Margaretha Cleijnman, Haarlem 31 January 1703, see NHA, acc. no. 2142, inv. no. 30; in Haarlem, 27 June 1710, Dirk Valkenburg once again witnesses the baptism of the third Gijsbert[us] from the aforementioned marriage, this time no longer with his wife but with his sister, Sara. See NHA, acc. no. 2142, inv. no. 32.
32 Anonymous, *Portrait of a Young African Woman and a Young African Man Holding a Bow* (pair); auction New York (Sotheby's), 30 January 2014, lot 271 as attributed to D. Valkenburg.
33 Kolfin 2020, p. 34 and pp. 32–33, figs. 25a and 25b for possible examples in print.
34 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 485.
35 At auction Amsterdam (J.T. Cremer), 9 June 1925, lot 67, erroneously dated 1707.
36 Anna Voordij remarried Cornelis de Groot on 1 October 1688 in Amsterdam. See SAA, acc. no. 343, inv. no. 568.
37 Kooijmans 1985, p. 289. After his death in 1712, his widow managed a capital of over 180,000 guilders. See Kooijmans 1985, p. 116.
38 Their identity is confirmed by family crests that were added later on; they do not fit well in the composition, and furthermore, Valkenburg never painted heraldic arms in any other portrait.
39 Van Stipriaan and Hoefte 2023, p. 16
40 Nicolaes Verkolje, *Portrait of Adriaen van Bredehoff*, Hoorn,Westfries Museum, inv. no. 13307.
41 For the story of Tabo, see Van Stipriaan n.d., accessed on 30 November 2024.
42 Ekkart 2002, p. 42.
43 Bernard Nieuwentijt was the son of Emanuel Nieuwentijt, minister in Westgraftdijk, and Sarah d'Imbleville; in November 1684, he married Eva Moens, and on 29 March 1699, he was married for a second time, to Elisabeth Lams; both marriages remained childless, see P. J. Blok and P.C. Molhuysen 1924, pp. 1,062–1,063.
44 The book is an argument against Spinoza's thinking and advocates for the existence of God. See Nieuwentijt 1720.
45 Another 'bust piece without hands' that may be attributed to Valkenburg concerns a portrait of an unidentified man from 1699, in Cantor Arts Center (Stanford University), inv. no. 1963.25. This was kindly pointed out by David ten Napel, June 2024. The available scan and the lack of comparable material do not allow for a solid attribution.
46 Dudok van Heel 2008, vol. 1, p. 478.
47 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8470, 6 September 1719, p. 186: Dirk Valkenburg's will. Note that these three men must have been very close acquaintances because their names frequently appear together in Amsterdam archival records. See, for instance, SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8494, 23 August 1728, Willem Jacobsz's will. At that moment, Hengst is living with Nicolaas Abeleven, rector of the Oude Kerk, and Van Vliet is one of his beneficiaries.
48 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8487, 22 March 1726: Joan van Vliet's first will. Herein, Van Vliet, residing on Keizersgracht, leaves portraits depicting himself, his good friend Willem Hengst and Valkenburg, all painted by Valkenburg, as well as three other paintings from the painter's estate, to Hengst.
49 SAA, acc. no. 5077, inv. no. 8552, 5 August 1743: Joan van Vliet's second will. His nephew Isaak Sweers is given the choice to select the complete works of two authors from the testators library as well as the portrait of the famous Dr Bernardus Nieuwentijt.
50 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8552, 5 August 1743: Van Vliet leaves three small portraits of the same size

depicting the painter himself, the testator and Willem Hengst to Hengst; in addition, Hengst is given the choice to select three other paintings from the estate. Van Vliet leaves his large portrait in a square black frame, painted by Valkenburg, to Susanne Rovers, his faithful housekeeper, who served him for over 37 years. The will expressly states that after her death, the portrait may not fall into the hands of anyone who does not show 'proper regard' for it, otherwise it must be passed on to his nephew, Isaak Sweers.

51 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, see also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519. The large size is probably identical to the self-portrait by Valkenburg in sale: Johan van der Marck, Amsterdam, 25 August 1773, lot. 468; see *RKDexcerpts* 568596 and *RKDexcerpts* 56859.

52 According to Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, there was one outlier, a large oval portrait of Dirck Alewijn, 110 × 90 cm in size, seen in 1935 in Antwerp in the collection of Count Thierry de Renesse, no. 234, see *RKDexcerpts* 568585. These dimensions are very likely incorrect and were probably measured to include the picture frame. Note that Valkenburg portrayed Dirck Alewijn and his wife in 1720 in a 'standard' size (89 × 69 cm). See *RKDexcerpts* 568598.

53 Sale: London (Christie's), 4 December 2019, lot 142; Sale: Chicago (Freeman's | Hindman), 11 February 2025, lot 156.

54 Valkenburg lived on Kerkstraat, between Leidsestraat and Spiegelstraat; see his will, SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8470, 6 September 1719. Van Vliet lived on Keizersgracht, between Hartenstraat and Wolvenstraat; see SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8486, 22 March 1726.

55 Joan was the son of Jeremias van Vliet, superintendent in Ambon, and Johanna Padtbrugge; his grandfather, also Jeremias van Vliet (c. 1602–1663), was director of the VOC Trade Office in Ayutthaya, the capital of the Thai kingdom Ayutthaya, and is still known as the first historian of the kingdom of Siam. See *Biografisch Portaal van Nederland* n.d., accessed on 18 March 2025. His other grandfather was Robertus Padtbrugge (1637–1703), a medic and merchant in the service of the VOC. He worked in Ceylon, among other places, and then served as governor of Ternate (1677–1682) and Ambon (1682–1687). He was Council of the Indies in Batavia in 1687 and 1688. *Wikipedia* n.d., accessed on 18 March 2025.

56 EL, acc. no. 1004, inv. no. 28, p. 202: betrothal 16 April 1706 of Adriana Muykens, Dr Bernardus Muykens (former surgeon in Colombo); Van Vliet attended the baptism of Jan Arent Abeleven together with his wife on 8 February 1715; other witnesses included Johannes Abeleven, member of the Judicial Council in Batavia and Catharina Muykens; Dudok van Heel 2008, vol. 1, p. 478.

57 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, see also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519. Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, p. 429, nos. 24 and 26, of which, according to Valkenburg's will, *Portrait of Prof. Muykens* is to be left to Van Vliet.

58 Auctioned in Amsterdam on 16 December 1750, no. 28; *RKDexcerpts* 568584.

59 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, see also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519. Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, p. 429, no. 28.

60 Daniel Braems lived in Batavia for over thirty years, last as bookkeeper-general of the O.I.C. He returned with his entire family to Amsterdam as commander on the return fleet of 1688 and was buried there in 1689.

61 See KB Gel Ged Pl 161.

62 The portraits were bequeathed to the Hoeftt Velsen family and were examined there in 1932 by Dr G.D. Gratama; the current whereabouts are unknown; see RKD, IB, nos. 14349 and 14350 and also Van de Put 1992 (unpublished).

63 Same inheritance as before. Sara Maria Trip's portrait was destroyed in the Second World War (RKD, IB, no. 14349); the whereabouts of Jan Corver's portrait is unknown.

64 Sale: Alewijn, Amsterdam, 16 December 1885, lot. 104: *RKDexcerpts* 568591 and *RKDexcerpts* 568598, canvas, 86 × 69 cm, signed and dated.

65 Collection Count Thierry de Renesse, Antwerp 1935, no. 234: *RKDexcerpts* 568585, canvas, 110 × 91 cm, signed (likely including the frame when measured).

66 Elias 1903–1905, vol. 2, p. 796.

67 Koopmans 2003.

68 A collection of 198 portraits of Dutch poets; see *Schrijverskabinet* n.d. A, and *Schrijverskabinet* n.d. B, both accessed on 6 December 2024.

69 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, see also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519. Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, p. 428, no. 4; this piece was important to Valkenburg because it was not in the painting room but was part of his own collection.

70 Note that a later copy is preserved in the Noord-Hollands Archief in Haarlem with Aet. 50 and dated 1729, as well as differences in the biblical text, without the name of the engraver but with the address of the printer: Samuel Schoonwald, Amsterdam.

Appraisal

The History of Renaming and Reinterpreting Dirk Valkenburg's Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname

Rebecca Parker Brienen

This essay focuses on Dirk Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname*, a signed but undated work that was made between 1706 and 1708 (cat. 70).[1] This painting's history – as a created, collected, exhibited, represented and continually renamed object – provides fascinating insights into the shifting interpretative paradigms regarding images of slavery and enslaved people in historical and art historical narratives.[2] Although the painting, now in the collection of the Statens Museum for Kunst, National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen, was painted in the early years of the eighteenth century, this essay focuses on the work's critical reception and exhibition histories, primarily between 1975 and 2025.

The date 1975 is not arbitrary; rather it represents the opening of the blockbuster exhibition *The European Vision of America*, created to celebrate the bicentennial of the United States.[3] By including Valkenburg's painting, then titled *Black People Making Merry in Suriname*, this exhibition marked the work's first introduction to a broad and large-scale audience outside of Denmark. Although the work has been loaned internationally multiple times since the 1970s, it is worth noting that *Gathering of Enslaved People* has been included in no fewer than four high profile exhibitions since 2018 alone, each deploying the work in complicated and often ideologically inflected ways. 2025 marks the finalization of the structure and content of this exhibition, the first devoted to the life and work of Valkenburg. As such, it presents an important opportunity to critically reposition this painting as both a work of art and, increasingly, as a cultural icon.

By reviewing the public presentation and academic discourses around this painting over a fifty-year period, it becomes clear that to best understand and interpret this work of art, it is essential to include insights from both art historical and historical perspectives, which exemplify the tension between the ethnographic and the artistic. A review of these rich but sometimes conflicting narratives not only demonstrates the continuing power of this painting but also exposes areas of analysis and scholarly responsibility that warrant further discussion.

Description of the Painting[4]

Valkenburg's painting presents a formally realistic and vividly rendered scene of enslaved men, women and children on a sugar plantation in the Dutch colony of Suriname. Over thirty figures, most of whom are depicted with minimal clothing, form the primary subject matter; the background, which includes a thatched roof dwelling, a body of water and other small outbuildings in the distance, simply provides the colonial location. The composition has been carefully created, with two main figures in the foreground, a clothed woman with a baby sitting close to the edge of the canvas and a standing, largely unclothed man wearing a European hat to her far right. The rest of the figures are distributed across the tableau behind them, largely placed in small, interactive groups. Despite the tropical outdoor location, it is an unnaturally clear and cool light that illuminates their bodies, highlighting their glossy skin. The artist has paid special attention to the representation of skin, which ranges in colour from a deep, dark brown – nearly black – to a light reddish brown. Other carefully observed details include the patterns of scarification on the stomach, arms and chest of the woman with a red headdress standing on the right edge of the canvas. The glassy eyes and trance-like appearance of the young drummer kneeling near the painting's centre and the pendulous breasts of the woman on the far left, whose genitals are fondled by her younger male companion, suggest both voyeurism and a desire to include seemingly authentic details as a means of achieving a documentary effect. That these could be portraits of particular individuals is suggested by the painter's careful attention to each countenance and expression, which makes it clear that these are not meant to be types. The painting highlights dancing, drinking and sexual encounters among the men and women present, but action is suppressed in favour of the painter's largely static and almost sculptural rendition of their healthy, muscular bodies.

Naming and Renaming: Shifting Perspectives

It is worthwhile noting early in this essay that the titles applied to Valkenburg's painting have changed over time, representing shifting interpretive perspectives and functioning as a powerful tool to influence reception and engagement. It is unlikely the work was given a formal title by Valkenburg, and the first so-called title, in a 1790 auction catalogue discussed below, is better understood as a description of content. At each moment in the long and complicated history of this work of art, collectors, curators and scholars have adopted or rejected the work's existing title based on their observations and scientific knowledge, as well as personal biases, additionally influenced by the cultural context in which they lived. At the National Gallery of Denmark, the following titles for the painting are listed in the archives but are no longer used: *Negerlystighed i Suriname* (translated as Negro Merrymaking in Suriname in 1951); *Slaver "spiller teater" på en sukkerplantage i Surinam* ('Slave Play' on a Sugar Plantation in Suriname); and *Rituel slavefest på en*

sukkerplantage i Surinam (Ritual Slave Party on a Sugar Plantation in Suriname).[5] The 2024 retitling of the work to *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of the Plantations of Jonas Witsen in Suriname*, edited in summer 2025 to *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname*, invests the individuals depicted with greater agency and represent an important change in the way enslaved individuals are talked about in public and scholarly discourses.[6] To be named a slave is to have one's entire being and historical presence reduced to a condition of servitude. It obliterates individuality and agency. To be enslaved is to have had that condition thrust, unwanted, upon you, leaving your humanity intact. By being more mindful of how we talk about enslaved people in the past, we can better acknowledge the deep and long impact of slavery into the present.

Painting and Collecting from 1708 to 1790

To frame a critical discussion of this work of art, one must establish basic information about the painting's creation and subsequent collection and display, first in the rarified spaces of private Dutch collections in Amsterdam in the eighteenth century and then sometime before 1840 as part of the Danish royal collection, from which the National Gallery of Denmark was formed.[7] Dirk Valkenburg was both the painter and first viewer – but not the owner – of this extraordinary work of art. *Gathering of Enslaved People* was likely completed by Valkenburg between 1706 and 1708, his period of residency in Suriname.[8] Unlike Frans Post (1612–1680) and Albert Eckhout (c. 1610–1664/66), Dutch painters active in Brazil from around 1637 to 1644 and to whom Valkenburg is often compared, Valkenburg was a highly accomplished painter with elite patrons who included Stadtholder-King Willem III before he was contracted by Amsterdam patrician Jonas Witsen (1676–1715) to travel to Suriname and work there for four years as a *boekhouder of schryver en Constchilder* (accountant and fine painter) on Witsen's plantations.[9] Following the death of his first wife in 1702, Witsen inherited the Waterland, Surimombo and Palmeneribo plantations in Suriname as well as the hundreds of people of African descent who laboured on them, with over 150 enslaved individuals on Palmeneribo alone.[10] We are fortunate that the agreement between Witsen and Valkenburg survives and provides additional detail about what Witsen wanted from the artist. In their February 1706 contract, Valkenburg was specifically directed by Witsen to make paintings '*naer 't leven*' (after life) of Witsen's plantations and '*raare Vogels en gewassen'* (rare birds and plants).[11] Although Valkenburg was an accomplished still life and portrait painter, images of people are not specifically mentioned in the contract, and they also form a very small part of the extant works from Valkenburg's period in Suriname.[12]

Valkenburg did not remain in Suriname for the four-year period stipulated in his contract but, rather, returned after only two. In part, persistent ill-health may have been a reason, but it is also possible that unease due to the June 1707 uprising among the

Palmeneribo plantation's enslaved population (more on this later) made him seek an earlier departure date.[13] Upon his return to Amsterdam, Valkenburg and his Suriname works parted ways, with the sketches and completed oil paintings entering the collection of his patron, Witsen, who was not only a plantation owner but a well-known connoisseur of fine art and beloved nephew of the statesman, collector and insatiable member of the scientifically 'curious' Nicolaas Witsen (1641–1717).[14] Jonas Witsen died in 1715, followed by his wife in 1716, and most of their paintings were sold at auction in 1717, among them at least eighteen works by Valkenburg, but none from his Suriname period. Indeed, Witsen's widow Isabella Maria Hooft took special care that the works produced in Suriname were preserved for their eldest son, also named Jonas Witsen (1705–1767), who in turn bequeathed them to his son, *also* named Jonas Witsen (1733–1788). The catalogue for the 1790 auction of his possessions lists thirteen works by Valkenburg, of which ten were produced in Suriname, based on their descriptions. Of the six views of the Palmeneribo plantation listed in the inventory, one is called *Plegtigheid onder de Neegers* (*Ceremony of the Blacks*). It was noted to have included many people and children and is generally thought by scholars to refer to *Gathering of Enslaved People*.[15] Although *Plegtigheid* may be translated into English as celebration, ceremony is more accurate in this case, although neither word sufficiently explains the depicted occasion, which anthropologists now identify as a 'play', meaning a 'dance/drum/song performance'.[16] Valkenburg did not officially title this work, and we lack information about how the Witsen family referred to it, so this auction catalogue entry represents the first historical title applied to the painting. The grouping of artworks in this catalogue suggests that the collection was kept together, with the paintings of Suriname possibly hung in dialogue with each other, stacked or positioned side by side, not as groups of two but as a complete installation. Beyond similarity in size, there is no evidence that Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People* and the Rijksmuseum's *Plantation in Suriname* were intended to be pendant images.[17] Although Valkenburg's drawings formed a key part of this thematically distinct group, they may have been kept in the closed drawers of a cabinet and are not listed among the framed and glazed drawings in Witsen's collection.[18]

Auction records provide glimpses of how Valkenburg's works from Suriname moved into and out of private European collections in the late eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the six drawings now in the Rijksprentenkabinet purchased in 1904 for the Rijksmuseum and *Plantation in Suriname* following in 1962. Records also suggest that several works have been lost, including one similar to the painting in Copenhagen. *Een Negerplegtigheid in Surinamee* (*Ceremony of the Blacks in Suriname*), described as 'masterfully painted' and dated 1707, as well as *Een Gezigt in Suriname, met badende negers* (*View of Suriname with Bathing Blacks*) were auctioned in 1846.[19] This later painting, presumably by Valkenburg, has received little attention in the literature, not only because it has been lost and was not specifically

attributed to Valkenburg but possibly also because of its lack of obvious 'documentary' content and clear connection to an established visual tradition in Western art.

According to Danish museum catalogues consulted by art historian Arthur van Schendel when he was conducting research for his 1963 article on Valkenburg, *Gathering of Enslaved People* entered the National Gallery of Denmark around 1840 from the royal collection in Fredensborg as a work by Willem Buytewech, presumably purchased as part of the campaign to add more Dutch paintings to the royal collections. The attribution to Buytewech is puzzling, although the idea may have been to make a connection to his merry companies, and misattributions of this kind are hardly unusual for the period. Exactly how the painting was installed – in the royal collection or in the newly public venue – whether it was even exhibited at that time, and what title it was known by, are largely unknown. However, there is evidence that it was displayed in a library at Fredensborg around 1800, possibly in a cabinet.[20] Today, Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People* is the only work by the artist currently on display in the National Gallery of Denmark, and it has been hung in gallery 211A for at least twenty years as part of a collection focused on Netherlandish art from 1600 to 1700 (fig. 1). More specifically, it has been displayed in dialogue with Balthasar van der Ast's *Fruit Still Life with Two Parrots* since at least 2015 as part of a grouping of Dutch paintings under the heading Merchants and New Worlds that emphasizes exotic objects and overseas trade.[21] In 2015, it was titled *'Slave Play' on a Sugar Plantation in Suriname.* It is worth noting, if only in passing, that although Eckhout's paintings from Dutch Brazil were also part of the Danish royal collection, they were not categorized as fine art. Instead, they were placed in the ethnographic section of the National Museum of Denmark, also in Copenhagen, where they may be seen today.

Setting aside Danish display of and engagement with *Gathering of Enslaved People in Suriname*, let us now turn to how art historians, anthropologists and historians have understood the work and how it has been presented to international audiences since the 1970s.

International Exhibitions from 1975 to 1992

Exhibitions in Europe, the United States and Australia in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s all positioned Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People* as a visual product of Dutch colonization and overseas expansion, frequently installing it alongside works of art produced by Eckhout and Post in Dutch Brazil and with other Suriname-themed paintings and drawings by Valkenburg. Over a period of almost twenty years, these exhibitions set up an unresolved tension between the 'scientific and the aesthetic', demonstrating varying degrees of critical engagement. While it is true that *Gathering of Enslaved People* was included as only one of many objects and works of art in each of these exhibitions, most of the catalogues that accompanied these exhibitions reproduce the painting both full-page

and in color, highlighting its importance and its undeniable, albeit largely unaddressed aesthetic appeal. As installation images or videos, exhibition text and audience responses beyond published reviews are unavailable for these exhibitions, here I rely on exhibition catalogues as my primary source of information.

As indicated in the opening of this essay, in 1975, *Gathering of Enslaved People* – then titled *Black People Making Merry in Suriname* (in French, as *Divertissement des Noirs à Suriname*) – was part of a travelling exhibition intended to both mark and celebrate the bicentennial of the United States.[22] Before the 1970s, the Dutch word *Neegers* was commonly translated into English as negros, but in the 1970s, Black, often with a capital B, was preferred, later replaced by African American in the 1990s.[23] From 1975 to 1977, this work travelled to multiple venues in both the United States and France, reaching a substantial viewing audience in the hundreds of thousands.[24] In the accompanying catalogue, art historian Hugh Honour asserted that the painting presented an idealized view of life among the enslaved in Suriname, stating '[i]t is more than a little ironic that this happy picture should be set in Suriname, a colony made notorious for the maltreatment of slaves by Aphra Behn in her story *Oroonoko* (1678) [...] and in Captain Stedman's *Narrative*'.[25]

The exhibition nonetheless presented the painting near representations of Indigenous Brazilians by Eckhout, which were characterized as ethnographically accurate, with the highly skilled realism of Valkenburg's painting, inviting a similar interpretation despite Honour's skeptical assessment of the 'merry making' highlighted in the image. In *Terra Australis: The Furthest Shore*, the 1988 exhibition in honour of Australia's bicentennial, *Gathering of Enslaved People* was displayed as *Slave 'play' on the adjoining plantations of Palmeneribo and Surimombo, Suriname* in the section of the exhibition dedicated to the 'Dutch West India Company and Terra Australis'. The new title and its use of the term 'slave play' references historian and anthropologist Richard Price's 1983 seminal book on Afro-American culture among the Maroons in Suriname, *First-Time: The Historical Vision of an Afro-American People* (1983, 2002), in which he asserts that the painting, titled *Slave 'play' on the Dómbi Plantation*, includes portraits of enslaved people who would later escape and become the original *Dómbi* Maroons.[26] Ernst van den Boogaart's catalogue description offers an unresolved reading of the image, identifying two main protagonists (the seated woman and standing man in the foreground), whose relationship to the others he deems 'enigmatic'. He ultimately argues that '[t]his group portrait is hard to interpret'.[27]

The 1992 Amsterdam Historical Museum exhibition *De wereld binnen handbereik* focused on the culture of Dutch collecting from 1585 to 1735 and offered a similarly limited reading of this painting. *Gathering of Enslaved People*, here titled *Negerfeest in Suriname* (*Black Celebration in Suriname*) was presented as one of the few examples of works of art that were created specifically by sending a painter abroad in the service of a particular wealthy individual, in this case Jonas Witsen, as a means of expanding his collection.[28] Given the exhibition's focus on collecting, the work



Fig. 1 Installation view, permanent collection, March 2025, Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst.

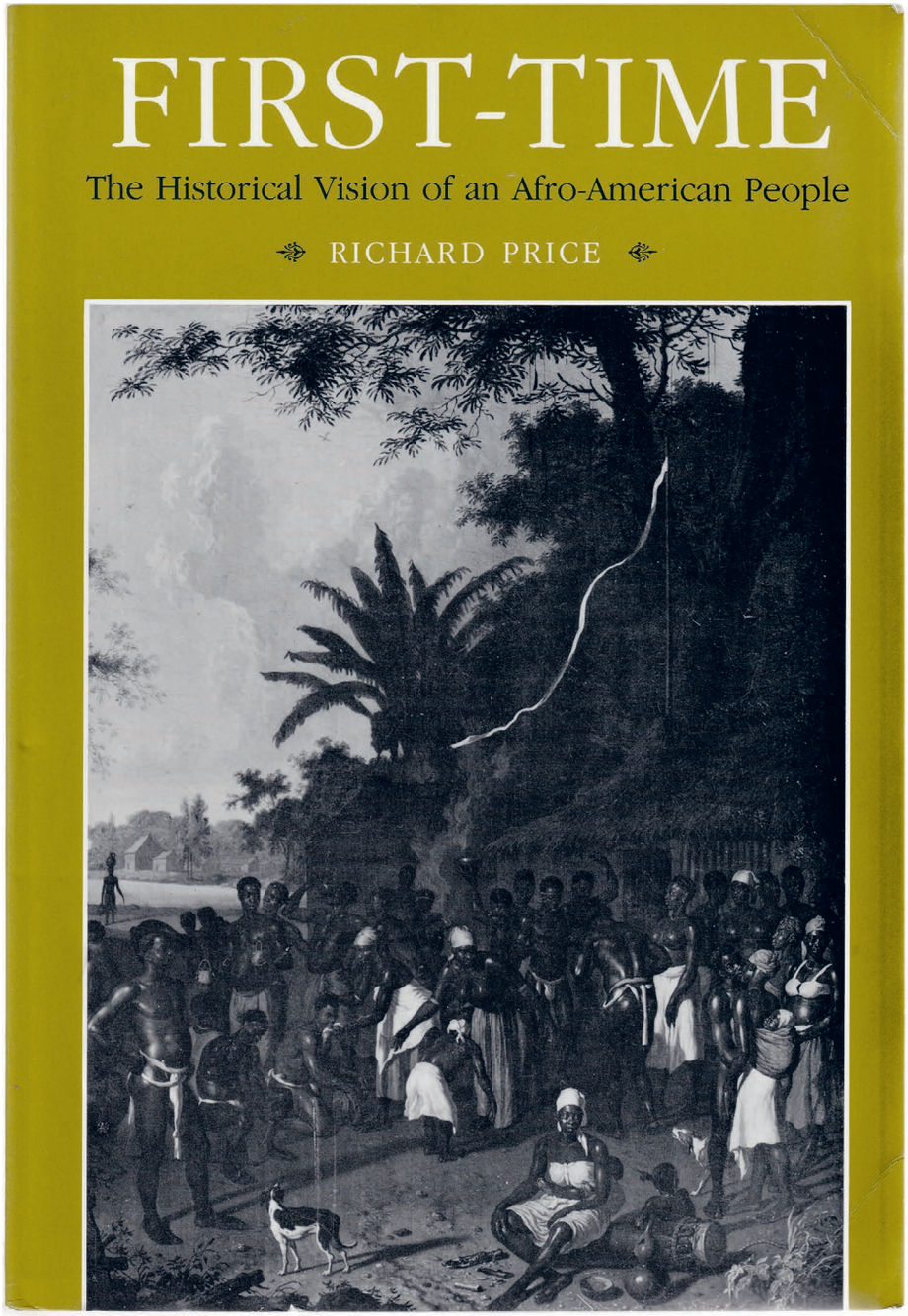


Fig. 2 Book cover of Richard Price, *First Time*, Baltimore, 1983.

was displayed alongside one of Valkenburg's Suriname plantation paintings and illustrations of exotic *naturalia* by other artists, again investing the image with a documentary status by association and limiting the discussion to the European context, admittedly the focus of the exhibition.[29] Finally, the wide-ranging and ambitious 1992 exhibition *America: Bruid van de Zon* (*America: Bride of the Sun*) at the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen (Antwerp Royal Museum of Fine Arts) also included *Gathering of Enslaved People*, here titled *African Slaves' Feast in Suriname* (*Negerplechtigheid*), and presented the most critical analysis of the work among these exhibitions to date. Created not as a celebration of Columbus's 'discovery' of America but rather as a critique thereof, this exhibition was a self-conscious investigation of the creative and tumultuous 500-year relationship between the Americas and the Low Countries. Here, Valkenburg's painting was exhibited in a section titled Wingewesten (The Conquered Land) alongside other representations of enslaved peoples involved in sugar cane production in Brazil and Cuba. Discussions by Van den Boogaart and Paul Vandenbroek in the catalogue set out markedly different readings of the work, with the former noting Valkenburg's incorporation of accurate details of Afro-American social and cultural practice but ultimately arguing that 'Valkenburg does not seem primarily concerned with making an "ethnographic" study of slave life'.[30] Vandenbroek's characterization of the painting is highly negative, seeing it as a fundamentally ethnocentric and racist manifestation of the 'stereotype of the carefree, merry-making "savage"' and connecting it to the visual tradition of peasant festivals in early modern European art.[31] He states, '[T]he whole picture is characterized by poverty [...] unrestrained pleasure, drunkenness and sexual appetite', arguing that it represents a fully European construction of the Other, 'stemming from an elitist contempt for the reprehensible pleasure-seeking nature of a lower order' and not reality of life among the enslaved in Suriname.[32] Of the two entries, the one authored by Van den Boogaart more likely formed the basis for the wall label in the public exhibition, whereas Vandenbroeck's discussion addressed a more limited audience of art historians and theoretically-inclined specialists.

Between Ethnographic Text and the Art Historical Analysis

As the 'earliest known painting with plantation slaves as its main subject', *Gathering of Enslaved Peoples* occupies a special place in the history of slavery both in and beyond the Dutch Atlantic.[33] This work was first reproduced on the cover of a book in 1983 with the publication of Richard Price's *First-Time: The Historical Vision of an Afro-American People* and later reproduced on the covers of the French (2013) and Sa'amaka tongo (2013) translations of this work's second edition (fig. 2).[34]As noted above, Price re-titled the work *Slave 'play' on the Dómbi Plantation* and suggested that it 'almost certainly depicts some of the very people who just a few years later become the original Dómbi maroons', giving it additional significance for including portraits of enslaved peoples, whose

likenesses were almost never made or have rarely survived.[35] In 2013, Sally and Richard Price asserted that by reproducing *Gathering of Enslaved People* on the cover of *First Time*, Price 'launch[ed] a set of commentaries that attempted to read the painting as ethnographic text'.[36] In making this assertion, the Prices singled out the work of historian Natalie Zemon Davis and art historian Elmer Kolfin, who also used the painting on the cover of his 1997 book, discussed in greater detail later in this essay.

In her rebuttal of Vandenbroek's 1992 analysis of *Gathering of Enslaved People*, Davis argues that Valkenburg's painting is not a European construction but instead includes important, historical and ethnographically specific information. She identifies the ceremony as a *winti* dance 'in which some of the participants are possessed by their gods'.[37] Although she questions whether Valkenburg could have seen the kissing he depicts in the painting, she suggests, albeit somewhat romantically, that the 'dignified' standing male figure in the foreground could be a 'captive prince' and suggests he was the 'kind of man who might lead his fellows in escape', referencing later events at the plantation also addressed by Price.[38] In Davis's later study of colonial Suriname, Valkenburg's 'captive prince' becomes a *basya*, or Black driver, a person of authority on a plantation and often the one who punished individuals from the enslaved community on behalf of the white overseer.[39] In her 2011 caption for the painting, it reads 'The *bassia* (Black driver or *zwartofficier*) surveys a slave dance at Palmeneribo plantation'.[40] While there is no doubt that *basya* were indeed present on Witsen's plantations, this is an interpretation without evidence. Additionally, while it seems highly likely that 'play', as defined by Price, forms the primary subject of Valkenburg's painting, specifying that it is a *winti* dance has not been widely adopted by other scholars. Nonetheless, in contrast to how historians often uncritically reproduce paintings as one-dimensional illustrations in their texts, Davis's close study and engagement with the work is a welcome change.[41]

Just as art historians criticize historians for inadequate analysis and ignorance of visual traditions and artistic practices, historians and anthropologists have their own biases about the value of art historical work. This is evident in Richard and Sally Price's 2013 discussion of Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People* in their review of the publication *Image of the Black in Western Art* (2011).[42] Price notes, correctly, that while the illustrations in this long awaited volume are excellent, 'the accompanying texts [...] are often out of date'.[43] But they go further, stating that the text is also 'strongly biased toward Western art history (rather than the history of ethnography, often needed to make full sense of the paintings)'.[44] The Prices complain that the authors, who translated the 1790 title as *Negro celebration, packed with many figures and children* for *Gathering of Enslaved People*, missed entirely or inadequately incorporated key historical and anthropological studies, such as his own work and that of Davis.[45] But the same charge could be made of the Prices, who similarly missed, ignored or undervalued art historical contributions to the understanding of this painting, which

I would argue are equally necessary to make 'full sense' of this complicated work of art. I will return to this assertion at the end of this essay.

Art Historical Interpretations from 1997 to 2008[46]

There have been several important art historical studies of *Gathering of Enslaved People* since 1997, each offering new insights into the work of art but generally framing the discussion from a European point of view by highlighting its function and reception in the Netherlands as a constructed and collected artwork. Of the three studies discussed here, Elmer Kolfin's study of representations of slavery in Suriname most fully engages with the history and representation of slavery in this country. Like Davis, Kolfin also argues against Vandenbroek's interpretation of *Gathering of Enslaved People* and instead places it within a visual tradition that includes works like Zacharius Wagener's *Slave Dance*, painted in Dutch Brazil c. 1641. Kolfin turns our attention back to Valkenburg's original contract, with its emphasis on documenting not simply the plantations owned by Witsen in Suriname but also the exotic wonders that could be encountered there. Additionally, Kolfin notes that the enslaved men and women are at leisure; for Kolfin, this image displays the enslaved men and women as human beings and not caricatures.[47]

In contrast, Charles Ford's extensive analysis of the painting, which he titles *Plechtigheid onder de Neegers*, following the 1790 auction catalogue, offers a self-consciously Marxist reading of the work, arguing that the 'slaves are property, they are commodities'.[48] Although his article offers many excellent observations, Ford nonetheless reduces the figures in Valkenburg's canvas to 'cattle whose gloss and reproductive efficiency is a tribute to the enlightened self-interest of their master'.[49] In my 2008 analysis of this painting, I offered an alternative view of Valkenburg's work by tying it to the visual tradition for representing enslaved people in the Americas, seventeenth-century Dutch still life paintings and the culture of collecting. Rather than seeing the enslaved men and women as cattle, or suggesting that they were objects of disgust, I offered a more positive reading of Blackness and the bodies of Africans, connecting the high gloss of their skin not to the auction block but to complimentary descriptions of Africans in contemporary travel accounts and other sources. My goal was nonetheless not to engage with the work as ethnographic evidence or text but, rather, to highlight its self-conscious construction and aesthetic qualities as related to the contemporary culture of collecting.[50] I was especially concerned with 'Valkenburg's "overvaluation" of skin and use of the still life formula', which I argued 'allowed early eighteenth-century viewers to negotiate the beauty and troubling desirability of these dark African bodies'.[51]

While there is value in these approaches and scholarly work, they also make it easy to lose sight of the real individuals who almost certainly sat for Valkenburg in his plantation house studio in Suriname and were later reconfigured into the 'play' we can identify

as forming the primary subject of his painting. What of their histories and stories? It is perhaps not surprising that questions like this have been taken up in recent scholarship and gained importance in the exhibitions since 2018 that have also included Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People*.

2018–2025: From Colonial Subjects to Fully Realized Human Beings[52]

As mentioned at the beginning of this essay, in just the last few years, Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* has reached an almost iconic status through its inclusion in a number of high-profile exhibitions that engage with the complicated subjects of trans-Atlantic slavery, the history of Suriname, and Afro-American history and culture more generally. These exhibitions include *Histórias Afro-Atlânticas/ Afro-Atlantic Histories*, a vast traveling exhibition (June 2018 to October 2018; 2021–2024); *The Great Suriname Exhibition* at De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam (October 2019 to February 2020); *Slavery: Ten True Stories of Dutch Colonial Slavery* at the Rijksmuseum (February 2021 to May 2021); and most recently, *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance* at the Fitzwilliam Museum (September 2023 to February 2024). Ideologically distinct from the exhibitions discussed earlier, they represent a more unified attempt to move beyond colonial and enslaved subjects historically denied agency or ignored in many art historical analyses. Instead, they represent a commitment to the recovery of what Price has called 'sovereign citizens'. Although these exhibitions were finished or already in advanced planning stages before the murder of George Floyd in 2020, it is difficult to not see their reception, contributions and sociopolitical engagement through the lens of the Black Lives Matter movement, which has brought international attention to anti-Black racism and police brutality.

As the first in this group, the curators of *Histórias Afro-Atlânticas* self-consciously sought out 'art that makes sense of humanity amid torment', making *Gathering of Enslaved People*, here titled *Ritual Slave Party on a Sugar Plantation in Surinam*, an excellent fit for this type of interpretation. Co-organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Museu de Arte de São Paulo in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., this wide-ranging exhibition with over four hundred objects was divided into multiple subsections, including Portraiture, Rites and Rhythms, and Everyday Lives. *Ritual Slave Party* was included in Everyday Lives, which was dedicated to highlighting 'art work that captures the daily lives of black people in their own communities'. It was placed, somewhat uneasily in my opinion, next to Haitian artist Seneque Obin's colourful and joyous *Carnival* (c. 1956). Curator Kanitra Fletcher acknowledged the work's many layered complexities by characterizing Valkenburg's painting as 'a beautifully executed but problematic portrayal of Black bodies'.[53]

Celebration was also a major theme of *The Great Suriname Exhibition*, whose exhibition space was filled with sound, light and





Fig. 3 Installation view, *Great Suriname Exhibition*, 5 October 2019 – 1 March 2020, Amsterdam, De Nieuwe Kerk.
Fig. 4 Installation view, *Slavery Exhibition*, 12 February – 29 August 2021, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

fineart america

SHIPPING ADDRESS
Rebecca Brienen

BILLING ADDRESS
Rebecca Brienen

Invoice # : 3741367

Description	Price	x	Extend
Ritual Slave Party On A Sugar Plantation In Surinam by Dirk Valkenburg Coffee Mug – Small (11 oz.)	$9.95	1	$9.95



#6332571

Subtotal: $39.39
Sales Tax: $2.09
Shipping: $16.00
Total: $57.48

Fig. 5 Fine Art America invoice of lifestyle products printed with Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname,* 1706–1708 (cat. 70).

colour. It is curious therefore that the installation of *Gathering of Enslaved People*, here titled *Ritual of Enslaved People on Palmeneribo Sugar Plantation in Suriname*, appeared so anti-modern by contrast. With its ornate nineteenth-century gold frame, placement behind glass and juxtaposition with objects of material culture (*winti* religious objects) and illustrations of enslaved people, its display suggested a cabinet in a nineteenth-century anthropological museum (fig. 3). The painting was the key image for the section Life on the Plantation, highlighting more positive, idealized representations of enslaved people in Suriname, such as examples from the 1850 work of Théodore Bray and H.D. Herlein's 1718 image of an enslaved man and woman placed next to but not working in a sugar field.

The *Slavery* exhibition at the Rijksmuseum went even further, with its dedicated focus on telling the stories of individual men and women from the Dutch colonial past. Here, Valkenburg's paintings were arranged to tell the story of Wally, who lived and laboured on Palmeneribo until his execution in 1707. Valkenburg's painting, here titled *Gathering on one of the plantations of Jonas Witsen* stood in as a powerful group portrait of individuals such as Wally and his brothers, Baratham and Mingo, who would be cruelly put to death as a result of their participation in a 1707 rebellion that included their escape and eventual return to the plantation (fig. 4). It is ironic that this painting, which creates a fully human representation of enslaved people in Suriname, should have been created by Valkenburg, who bore witness against Wally in the criminal proceedings.[54] In a similar vein, the exhibition *Black Atlantic* also offered a critical view of slavery and its subjects. Taking the University of Cambridge Museums as their starting point, the curators asked 'new questions about how enslavement and empire shaped' the museum. The exhibition, using a Black Atlantic framework, emphasized the 'creation and transmission of cultures by people of the African diaspora'. Curators described Valkenburg's painting, titled *Ritual Party of Enslaved People on a Sugar Plantation*, in a wall text in largely positive terms, and instead of a painting of mere property, it became an image of powerful individuals on the verge of rebellion:

> Enslaved people of all ages celebrate their own culture on a plantation in the South American Dutch colony of Surinam. The artist, Dirk Valkenburg, depicts each figure as an individual [...] Shortly after painting this picture, these enslaved people rise up against oppression. Valkenburg testifies against the rebellion's leaders, and quits Surinam soon after.[55]

Conclusion: Shifting Names, Meanings and Frameworks

Over three-hundred years after Valkenburg painted *Gathering of Enslaved People*, it remains an important and sought-after work of art for both the public and scholars alike. Commercial websites allow consumers to configure the *Gathering of Enslaved People* into whatever they want, from a T-shirt, to a wall hanging, to a coffee mug (fig. 5).[56] For historians, art historians and anthropologists, the stakes are self-consciously higher, although they, too, have reframed and reinterpreted the painting numerous times over the last fifty

years. It is no longer simply a 'merry' celebration of the enslaved but something more serious. Art historians understand that Valkenburg, as a highly skilled Dutch painter, did not paint an unmediated version of everyday life among the enslaved peoples on Jonas Witsen's Suriname sugar plantation, no matter how convincing it appears. This is not a *plein-air* painting but a carefully constructed work of artifice, likely based on multiple drawings of individuals who could not refuse a summons to the painter's plantation studio. And yet, there is violence done to these same individuals if we ignore their lives, culture and historical circumstances in an effort to limit our analyses to established traditions and practices. This painting continues to entice the viewer with its admittedly beautiful depictions of Black bodies, and a critical assessment of that attraction and potential for re-objectification is long overdue.

1 This is the painting's current title. Wim Klooster and Gert Oostindie offer no evidence for their assertion that Valkenburg painted this work in the Netherlands around 1709. See Klooster and Oostindie 2018, pp. 220–221.

2 As recently as 2016, the tombstone was 'Dirk Valkenburg, "*Slave Play" on a Sugar Plantation in Suriname*, 1706–08, National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen. Gallery 211A.'

3 *The European Vision of America: A Special Exhibition to Honor the Bicentennial of the United States* was organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art with the collaboration of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and the Reunion des musees nationaux, Paris.

4 This description borrows in part from my earlier work. See Brienen 2008, pp. 244–245.

5 See cat. Copenhagen 1951, p. 389. At that time, the painting was attributed to a 'Dutch artist with monograph DVB'. I thank Michèle Seehafer, curator and senior researcher at the National Gallery of Denmark, for sharing these titles with me in her email from 12 February 2025.

6 The Statens Museum for Kunst, National Gallery of Denmark changed the title to *Gathering of Enslaved People on one of the Plantations of Jonas Witsen in Suriname* in 2024, when the *Black Atlantic* catalogue was published, where the painting is referred to as *Ritual Party of Enslaved People on a Sugar Plantation in Surinam*. The current preferred title (summer 2025) is a lightly edited version of the previous English translation.

7 Much of this information was first established in 1946 by Christiaan Pieter van Eeghen and later expanded on by Arthur van Schendel 1963. I draw on these works and the original sources they refer to throughout this section.

8 Valkenburg seems to have self-consciously turned away from this 'exotic' subject matter in favour of more traditional hunting pieces and portraits upon his return to Amsterdam, and no works with Surinamese subject matter were among his possessions at death.

9 For a bibliography of key works on the artists active in Dutch Brazil, see Brienen 2025.

10 Dragtenstein 2004, p. 214.

11 Bredius 1916, pp. 432–433.

12 Several scholars have mistakenly asserted that representations of people were part of Valkenburg's officially assigned subject matter.

13 Dragtenstein 2004, p. 214.
14 Witsen was not simply a major political player, he was also a curator of the Amsterdam botanic garden, a member of the English Royal Society, a patron of artists, a published expert on shipbuilding and Tartary (which includes present day Siberia) and creator of one of the last great universal collections, which included a wide variety of human-made objects and natural history specimens from around the globe. On curiosity and the 'curious', see Daston 1995.
15 '*gestoffeert met een meenight lieden en kindern*' (populated with a large group [or crowd] of people and children). See sale: Jonas Witsen (IV), Amsterdam, 16–18 August 1790 p. 28, lot 79.
16 There are multiple examples of the use of the word *plegtigheid* in eighteenth-century Dutch publications. Please see the DBNL database, DBNL - Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren. 'Play' described occasions of dance, drumming and other festivities. See Price 1983, p. 169. Play is a term that was employed by enslaved people in the Caribbean.
17 This was obliquely suggested by Van Schendel and repeated by Charles Ford as fact in his 2001 essay 'People as Property' and in the 2011 discussion of this work in *Image of the Black in Western Art*.
18 See sale: Jonas Witsen (IV), Amsterdam, 16–18 August 1790.
19 See Van Schendel, notes on p. 84. The following works, no artist named, were auctioned by DeHarde Swart in Amsterdam on 16 November 1846. Lot 286: *Een Negerplegtigheid in Surinamee* ('very finely executed and masterfully painted in 1707' [editor's translation]). Lot 287: *Een Gezigt in Surinamee, met badende negers*. Lot 288: *Een landschap in Surinamee* ('dated 1707' [editor's translation]). Van Schendel notes that these works were from a French private collection, and nothing is known of their present whereabouts.
20 I thank Michèle Seehafer, curator and senior researcher at the National Gallery of Denmark, for her email from 12 February 2025 in which she provided important historical information about the painting from the museum's archives. Seehafer notes that the painting is labelled a work by Willem Buytewech (a specialist in merry companies) – as lot 278 in Abildgaard's catalogue (1799/1800) of Fredensborg. Its location was noted as 'Bibliothek i grov… kabinet…'. She further notes: 'It was displayed for the first time at the National Gallery of Denmark on our current location on Sølvgade, Copenhagen in 1969, but I haven't been able to find a photograph of the installation. It was in the museum's storage facility in 1947. It seems like the painting was moved from Fredensborg Palace in 1840.'
21 See Room 210–211: The Netherlands 1600–1700 Merchants and New Worlds. 'In the 17th century the Netherlands experiences a period of pronounced cultural growth that saw the emergence of many new talented artists and new themes being addressed in art. This was linked to very pronounced economic growth promoted by Amsterdam's new status as the centre of ocean trade. Goods from the colonies were unloaded here and sold with huge profit margins to the many merchants who held shares in the Dutch East and West India Companies. The import of goods and general affluence is reflected in e.g. still lifes depicting exotic fruits and flowers and in lavish pieces of applied arts created out of ivory, gold, and gemstones…' *Waybackmachine* n.d., accessed on 26 December 2024.
22 *The European Vision of America* was curated by British art historian Hugh Honour (1927–2016) and organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and the Reunion des musees nationaux, Paris. At the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the exhibition ran from 7 December 1975 to 16 February 1976 and occupied c. 4,500 square metres. *National Gallery of Art* n.d., accessed on 29 December 2024. Other venues included the Cleveland Museum of Art (28 April – 8 August, 1976) and the Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris (17 September 1976 – 3 January 1977).
23 For a historical discussion, see Bennett et al. 1969. See also Martin 1991.
24 At the National Gallery alone, there were over 100,000 visitors.
25 Exh. cat 1975, p. 111. Honour praises Eckhout for his 'detached, objective observation of primitive people' (see p. 7); he calls Eckhout's drawings '[t]he first ethnographically valid portraits to be made of any Amerindians' (see p. 99).
26 Price 2002, p. 110.
27 Exh. cat. Sydney 1988, p. 116, description of catalogue entry 87.
28 Exh. cat. Amsterdam 1992, p. 58.
29 See *Een der plantages van Jonas Witsen aan de Surinamerivier*, Amsterdam Historisch Museum.
30 Exh. cat. Antwerp 1992, p. 350. As noted by art historian and head curator Paul Vandenbroek, 'The idea of organizing an exhibition to mark the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the America is not very original. Moreover, the significance that we attach to Columbus landing in America is ethnocentric, in that it proceeds from a European point of view', p. 15.
31 Vandenbroek 1992, pp. 350–352.
32 Ibid., p. 352.
33 Van den Boogaart 1992, p. 350.
34 Although Robin Blackburn did not address images in his 1997 *Making of New World Slavery*, it was reproduced on the book's dust jacket. A snippet of a centrally seated woman from Valkenburg's painting was also incorporated into the spine of the 1998 paperback edition of this hefty volume.
35 Price 2002, p. 110.
36 Price 2013a, p. 295.
37 Davis 1995, p. 194.
38 Ibid., p. 191.

39 Ibid., p. 194.
40 Davis 2011, p. 950.
41 See, for example, Blackburn's *The Making of New World Slavery* (1997, 1998) and as illustrations in Fogelman 2013 and Burton 1997.
42 See Bindman and Gates 2011.
43 Price 2013b, p. 112.
44 Ibid., pp. 112–113.
45 Ford et al. 2011.
46 This paragraph draws on Brienen 2008, pp. 246–248.
47 Davis 1995, pp.190–191. Kolfin 1995, p. 25.
48 Ford 2002, p. 8.
49 Ibid.
50 In a similar manner, the 2008 *Black Is Beautiful: From Rubens to Dumas* exhibition also offered a more positive reading of the Black presence in Dutch art, and Valkenburg's painting would have been included in this exhibition had the Statens Museum agreed to the loan. Esther Schreuder, curator, makes this assertion in her blog: 'But until De Great Suriname exhibition, all loan requests were rejected. This was also the case for another exhibition in the Nieuwe Kerk: *Black is beautiful. Rubens to Dumas* in 2008, which I curated.' Schreuder 2021, accessed on 29 September 2024.
51 Brienen 2008, p. 261.
52 Price discusses the work of Clifford Geertz and changes in anthropology as a discipline in a new preface to the 2002 second edition of his book *First Time*. Price states: 'One of our collective grandfathers, Clifford Geertz, commented aptly on these new challenges, which came both from within and beyond the discipline'. Quoting Geertz, Price notes: 'There had been a "transformation," he wrote, "of the people anthropologists mostly write about, from colonial subjects to sovereign citizens," which had "altered entirely the moral context within which the ethnographical act takes place".' Price 2002, p. xi.
53 *Youtube* 2022, accessed on 31 December 2024.
54 Dragtenstein 2004, p. 227.
55 I thank Dr Jake Subryan Richards, assistant professor of history, London School of Economics, for sharing the label text with me. See also Richards 2023.
56 The work was featured on the *Walmart.com* site in December 2024, and illustrated as an appropriate decoration for one's home. It has since been removed. Other businesses have filled the void, including *fineartamerica.com*.

The Market Appreciation and Provenance of Dirk Valkenburg's Oeuvre

Matthies Klink

The market appreciation of Dirk Valkenburg's work has changed considerably over the past three centuries: his game still lifes and animal scenes were initially highly appreciated, but from the late eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, many of his game still lifes were misattributed to his master, Jan Weenix (1641–1719), and multiple of his Suriname paintings and drawings came to be misattributed to other artists. In this essay, I first discuss Valkenburg's network and reputation during his lifetime. Then, I examine the geographic dispersal of his work in the following centuries. Subsequently, I consider the appreciation of his work in the eighteenth century. Finally, I consider later historical misattributions of parts of his oeuvre.

This research started with the examination of art historian Cornelis Hofstede de Groot's (1863–1930) provenance index cards at the RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History in The Hague. These cards contain copied entries from auction and collection catalogues, often including the sale price of a work (fig. 1). Two other sources used in this research are provenance entries in the *Getty Provenance Index* and auction records online at *artprice*.com. Also consulted are the auction and collection catalogues to which the sources refer.[1] These sources and art-historical literature provide an image of the appreciation and geographic dispersal of Valkenburg's oeuvre over the centuries. All provenance data copied from these sources was systematically organized by date, location, price and type of work. This enabled an analysis from which the current text is the result. This essay is the first to focus on the market appreciation and provenance of Valkenburg's oeuvre. Regarding the auction prices of Valkenburg's works, only information from the eighteenth century is shown and analyzed. Due to the limitations of the provenance sources consulted, the period between 1850 and 1900 is not covered in the discussion on the geographic dispersal of Valkenburg's oeuvre.[2]

Valkenburg's Reputation and Network

Valkenburg primarily painted commissions for the aristocracy and urban elite rather than for the open market. This is affirmed by the fact that in the first half of the eighteenth century, paintings from his small oeuvre entered the art market only when the collections of his recently deceased patrons were auctioned.[3] The limited market

presence of his works is also echoed by eighteenth-century artist biographer Johan van Gool, who, in his book *De nieuwe Schouburg der Nederlantsche Kunstschilders en Schilderessen* (1751), writes that the first time he heard of Valkenburg's work was at the auction of lawyer Joan van Vliet's (1682–1750) estate in 1750, almost three decades after the artist's death.[4]

Van Gool, in *De nieuwe Schouburg* [...], and the French artist biographer Jean-Baptiste Descamps, in his book *La vie des peintres Flamands, Allemands et Hollandois* (1764), provide a chronological overview of Valkenburg's wealthy patrons, who appreciated Valkenburg's work and were in contact with each other internationally about it.[5] The artist found new wealthy patrons through this network of his existing patrons.

After completing his apprenticeship with Weenix, from whom he learned the genre of game still lifes (see Hartkamp in this volume, pp. 55–76), Valkenburg embarked on his first independent journey, to Gelderland and Overijssel. There, he painted numerous portraits of 'distinguished individuals' and created chimney and door pieces 'with all kinds of subjects'.[6] In 1696 he set off for Germany, where he received commissions from Baron Johann Anton I Knebel von Katzenelnbogen (1646–1725), a key patron to Valkenburg.[7] Through Katzenelnbogen, Valkenburg came into contact with Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden (1655–1707) in Augsburg, who asked Valkenburg to become his court painter – an offer the artist declined.[8]

With a recommendation from Katzenelnbogen, Valkenburg travelled to Vienna, where in 1698 to 1699, he painted a series of game still lifes for Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1657–1712).[9] According to other sources, it is likely that Valkenburg also worked on commissions for Count Ferdinand Bonaventura I von Harrach and Rohrau (1636–1706) during those years.[10] Upon returning to the Netherlands, Valkenburg's growing reputation had reached Stadtholder-King Willem III (1650–1702), to whom he sold one painting and who commissioned him to paint exotic birds for Het Loo Palace. However, this commission was never realized due to the Stadholder–King's untimely early death.[11] Subsequently, Friedrich I (1657–1713), King of Prussia, offered Valkenburg the position of court painter in Berlin through his envoy – an offer he also declined.[12] Van Gool also mentions a man who had great regard for Valkenburg's 'person and art' and commissioned the artist to work for him in Suriname.[13] Other sources reveal that this was Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), at whose behest Valkenburg stayed at his Suriname plantations from 1706 to 1708 as his 'bookkeeper or writer and painter'.[14]

In the periods between his travels to Germany and Suriname, and after his return from Suriname, Valkenburg made commissions for and sold his paintings directly to members of the network of the Dutch West and East India Companies in Amsterdam (see Craft-Giepmans in this volume, pp. 91–105). The *Getty Provenance Index* supports this point, listing one painting in the 1718 estate inventory of Paulus Huntum, a plantation owner in Suriname and shareholder in various colonial trading ships.[15]

The Geographic Dispersal of Valkenburg's Oeuvre

Until about 1750, most of Valkenburg's works were located in Amsterdam, where he lived and worked for most of his career, and Vienna, where he painted for the nobility. Although no primary sources from the period of Valkenburg's life are known concerning the works he made during his travels in Germany, his paintings must have also entered collections there.[16] The earliest known dispersal of Valkenburg's artworks to other countries can be detected in sources concerning the presence of four of his paintings in Danish collections. In 1755 and 1761, art dealer Gerard Morell (c. 1710–1777), also curator of the Danish Royal Art Chamber, acquired two paintings for the Danish king's collection: *Still Life with a Dead Gazelle, Heron and Other Fowl, with a Dog, Parrot, Rifle and Coconuts in a Park Landscape* (cat. 24) and *Fight between a Bear and Dogs in a Landscape* (cat. 42). Morell's 1756 catalogue of Count Adam Gottlob Moltke's (1710–1792) collection also records the presence of Valkenburg's *Still Life with a Dead Hare and Partridges, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear on a Stone Plinth* (cat. 5).[17] Further noted in 1767 is another work by Valkenburg, *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70), located at Fredensborg Castle in Copenhagen.[18]

Dutch art dominated the Parisian auction market between 1750 and 1850. By 1800, both Paris and London had become two of the most important centres for Dutch and Flemish art outside the Low Countries.[19] Valkenburg's paintings were thus likely already present in France by around 1750.[20] However, only one work by Valkenburg can definitively be traced to France in the 1700s. This is evidenced by Jean-Baptiste Pierre Le Brun's book *Galerie des peintres flamands, hollandaise et allemands* (1792), which, in addition to artist biographies, included engravings of paintings formerly part of Le Brun's Paris trading stock.[21] In this publication, next to a page with Valkenburg's biography, Le Brun included an engraving after *Still Life with Dead Hares and a Partridge, with a Dog and Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape* (cat. 29, fig. cat. 10, p. 346), which had been made specifically for this publication by J.L.L.C. Zentner, likely in 1788.[22] The *Getty Provenance Index* lists only two other paintings attributed to 'D. Valkent' that were auctioned in Paris in 1775 as pendants.[23] However, between 1800 and 1850, more paintings attributed to Valkenburg are known to have been auctioned in the French capital. For this period, the Hofstede de Groot index cards and *Getty Provenance Index* document twenty-three instances of works attributed to Valkenburg put up for auction.[24]

While Valkenburg's works surfaced in France, evidence of his paintings located in England during the 1800s is more limited. Of his currently known oeuvre, only two paintings can be proven to have been in England during this time: *Still Life with Dead Ducks, a Kingfisher and Other Fowl, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Landscape* (cat. 34) and *Still Life with Grapes, Peaches and Other Fruit on a Stone Plinth in a Park Landscape* (cat. 56).[25] However, between 1800 and 1850, the Hofstede de Groot index cards and

Getty Provenance Index list eighteen instances of works attributed to Valkenburg appearing at auction in London.

Between 1900 and 1940, paintings and drawings by Valkenburg were regularly auctioned in Amsterdam, London and Cologne and, to a lesser extent, in Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Munich and Paris.[26] The *Lost Art Database* lists three works attributed to Valkenburg that were illegally appropriated between 1933 and 1945.[27] In the United States, the first records of Valkenburg's works date from after the Second World War.[28] Since then, eight works by Valkenburg have appeared at auctions in New York.[29]

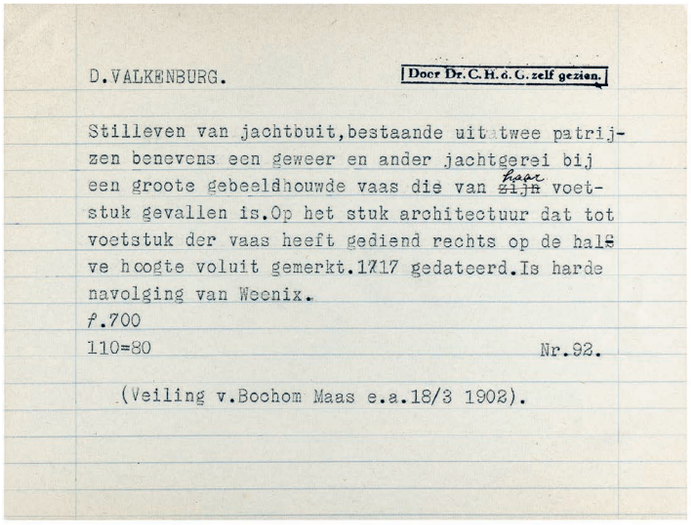
Although Valkenburg's oeuvre is today dispersed across Europe and North America, most of his works in public institutions remain in the Netherlands. From 2000 to the time of this essay's writing in 2024, his works have appeared only occasionally at auction, primarily in London (five instances), New York (four instances) and Vienna (five instances, though two works were put up for auction twice).

Compared to his still lifes and animal scenes, Valkenburg's portraits have seldom surfaced at auction during the past three centuries, likely because they have remained with the descendants of the depicted individuals and, therefore, stayed longer in family collections. Many of these portraits are still housed in institutions closely tied to their original commissioners. For example, the portraits of Jan Wolters and Sara Munter (cat. 88 and 89) are in the Poll-Wolters-Quina Foundation in Zeist, while paintings by Jan Maurits Quinkhard (1688–1772), based on Valkenburg's portraits of Jan Corver, Sara Maria Trip, Gerrit Corver and Margaretha Munter (figs. cat. 26–29, p. 505), are at the Corvershof in Amsterdam. There are likely many other portraits by Valkenburg that are part of unknown private collections.

The Appreciation of Valkenburg's Work in the 1700s

An overview of auction prices for Valkenburg's work in the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic (fig. 2) reveals that all prices from 1700 to 1750 concern works sold at auctions from the estates of Valkenburg's patrons, acquaintances or their family members.[30] As shown in the graph, works were sold at the auctions of the estates of Valkenburg's second teacher Michiel van Musscher (1645–1705), his patron Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Witsens's nephew Lambert Witsen (1681–1746), and Valkenburg's estate executor Joan van Vliet (1682–1750).[31] Only after 1750 do works appear at auctions with no clear connection to his network. As shown in the graph, in 1790, the remains of Witsen's collection were sold at the estate auction of his grandson, Jonas Jonasz Witsen (IV) (1733–1788).

Considering the prices fetched by works sold individually – rather than as a pair or group – it becomes evident that Valkenburg's game still lifes and animal scenes were the most highly valued of his works in the Republic during the 1700s.[32] His portraits, Suriname paintings and other works sold individually for considerably lower prices. Artist-biographer Jean-Baptiste Descamps, although writing from France, confirms this assessment in *La vie des peintres* [...].



D.VALKENBURG. Door Dr. C. H. de G. zelf gezien.

Stilleven van jachtbuit, bestaande uit twee patrijzen benevens een geweer en ander jachtgerei bij een groote gebeeldhouwde vaas die van ~~zijn~~ haar voetstuk gevallen is. Op het stuk architectuur dat tot voetstuk der vaas heeft gediend rechts op de halve hoogte voluit gemerkt. 1717 gedateerd. Is harde navolging van Weenix.

f. 700

110=80 Nr. 92.

(Veiling v. Boohom Maas e.a. 18/3 1902).

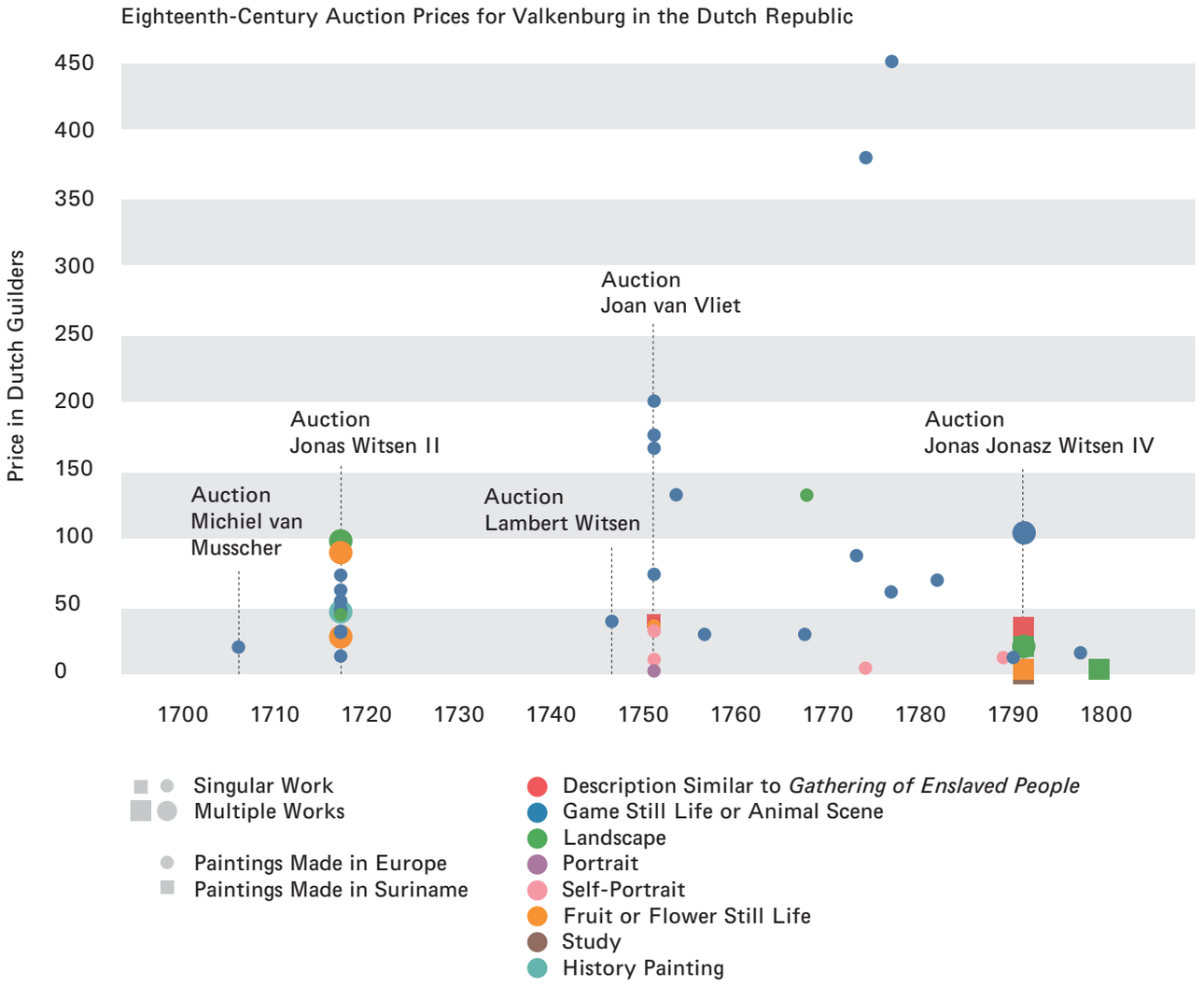


Fig. 1 Hofstede de Groot index card mentioning the 1902 sale of *Still Life with Two Dead Partridges and a Songbird, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape* (cat. 39).

Fig. 2 Prices for works attributed to Valkenburg at eighteenth-century auctions in the Dutch Republic, in Dutch guilders (HFL). Graph created by Matthies Klink and Helmut Völter.

Valk_final_02.indd 131 14.01.26 10:46



Fig. 3 Photograph taken before the 2015–2016 restoration by Atelier van Wassenaer, showing a later-added signature reading 'Weenix' in the lower left corner, positioned between two distinct layers of varnish. *Eurasian Eagle-Owl and Pigeon in Flight, with a Dead Hen and Animal Remains in a Landscape* (cat. 50), detail.

Fig. 4 Photograph taken during the 2015–2016 restoration by Atelier van Wassenaer, revealing an abraded surface where the painting was once signed 'Valkenburg', a signature that was later scraped away. *Eurasian Eagle-Owl and Pigeon in Flight, with a Dead Hen and Animal Remains in a Landscape* (cat. 50), detail.

After discussing Valkenburg's portraiture, he states, 'His master's genre [game still lifes] made his reputation, and it is because of this that he occupies a place here'.[33] The high appreciation for Valkenburg's game still lifes and animal scenes stemmed from the stylistic and iconographic similarity of his works to that of his master, Weenix, in these two genres. However, Valkenburg's work customarily sold for lower prices than Weenix's. According to art historian Frans Grijzenhout (2022), Weenix's work sold for an average of 223 Dutch guilders at auctions from 1740 to 1768.[34] Only two of Valkenburg's paintings surpassed this average: one in 1773 and another in 1776, just a few years after the period Grijzenhout researched.[35]

Although eighteenth-century Dutch auction catalogues occasionally mention whether a work by Valkenburg is of good quality – sometimes stating it to be as good as a work by Weenix – they do not provide detailed assessments of his paintings' artistic qualities.[36] Gerard Morell's writings do, however, and they describe both the aspects of Valkenburg's work that he admired and those he did not, while also comparing Valkenburg's work to those of his master. In his catalogue of Count Adam Gottlob Moltke's collection, Morell wrote about *Still Life with a Dead Hare* (cat. 5), stating that Valkenburg 'loses' from his master because of his 'too bright colours' and 'extremely finished manner of working' yet 'wins' in terms of the 'rarity of his works'.[37] This comment confirms that Valkenburg's work appeared less frequently on the art market than Weenix's. Morell's reference to 'too bright colours' likely alluded to the unusually orange fur of Valkenburg's hare. In his 1767 catalogue of the New Royal Danish Gallery of Art, Morell opined that Valkenburg's *Fight between a Bear and Dogs* (cat. 42) was not as 'diligently' executed as two paintings attributed to Weenix in the same collection. One of them was in fact *Still Life with a Dead Gazelle* (cat. 24) by Valkenburg, which was attributed to Weenix at the time.[38] Yet, Morell praised Valkenburg for his 'masterful and free brush', noting that the subject 'requires spirit and fire, which is not lacking either in the heated and lively movements of the animals, with which they fight furiously'.[39] Thus, while Morell considered Weenix as artistically superior, he nonetheless appreciated Valkenburg's work for its unique characteristics.

Incorrect Attributions of Game Still Lifes and Animal Scenes to Jan Weenix

Over the centuries, Valkenburg disappeared into the shadow of his master, Weenix, as many of his game still lifes and animal scenes were attributed to Weenix – both out of ignorance and on purpose. Morell (1767) and Le Brun (1792) write that without proper knowledge, one might mistake Valkenburg's work for that of Weenix.[40] Ironically, Morell himself made this mistake. In 1755, he first sold *Still Life with a Dead Gazelle* (cat. 24) to the Danish king as a work by Valkenburg, yet in 1767 he described the same painting as a work by Weenix.[41] This confusion may have arisen following the purchase of Valkenburg's *Fight between a Bear and Dogs* (cat. 42) in 1761.

Given its lower quality, Morell may have assumed that *Still Life with a Dead Gazelle* was by the 'better' artist, Weenix. To reinforce this attribution, a false Weenix signature was added for clarification.[42]

Several other works by Valkenburg bore – or still bear – false Weenix signatures.[43] Most of these were likely added in the nineteenth century, when the growing international art market and the emergence of national museums fueled a high demand for authentic paintings by Old Masters. As the high demand could not be met, forgeries filled this gap in the art market. Highly prized paintings were copied, and anonymous paintings were given the forged signatures of Old Masters and sold as authentic pieces.[44] Adding a forged signature of the highly regarded Weenix to paintings by the lesser appreciated Valkenburg was not an unusual practice in the nineteenth-century art market. Even works signed by Valkenburg were susceptible to forgery. During the restoration of Valkenburg's *Eurasian Eagle-Owl and Pigeon in Flight, with a Dead Hen and Animal Remains in a Landscape* (cat. 50) in 2015–2016, a forged Weenix signature was removed and a scratched-away, original signature by Valkenburg was revealed (figs. 3–4), demonstrating an attempt at the deliberate erasure of Valkenburg's authorship.[45]

With growing misattributions and forgeries, the art world's knowledge and appreciation of Valkenburg's style gradually disappeared. A striking example appears in an entry in an auction catalogue from 1873, which described an animal scene offered as a Valkenburg: 'This is a very good piece by the painter, given that his works are usually sold under the name of his master, Jan Weenix.'[46] Ironically, the work was not a painting by Valkenburg but, judging from the engraving made after it, by Abraham Busschop (1670–1729/30) (fig. 5).[47] The misattribution shows that the author of the catalogue knew Valkenburg only as Weenix's pupil and had no actual knowledge of Valkenburg's style.

Incorrect Attributions of Suriname Works to 'David Wilhelm Buytenweg' and D. Verburg

The paintings and drawings Valkenburg made in Suriname were often later misattributed to other artists. Until the end of the 1700s, most of these works remained together in the collection of Jonas Witsen (II)'s family in Amsterdam. Witsen's collection was divided into a cabinet of curiosities and a cabinet of paintings.[48] Valkenburg's Suriname paintings were kept in the cabinet of curiosities, which Witsen's wife, Isabella Maria Hooft, later bequeathed to her eldest son, Jonas Witsen (III)[49] The cabinet of curiosities was subsequently inherited by Jonas Jonasz Witsen (IV), whose estate was auctioned in 1790. Nearly all the Suriname paintings known today are identifiable in the event's auction catalogue and were then still attributed to Valkenburg. The drawings that Valkenburg made in Suriname were not present at the auction.[50]

Although a work with a similar description to *Gathering of Enslaved People* (cat. 70) was sold at the 1790 auction, the painting was an exception to the shared provenance and was already located in Copenhagen by 1767.[51] In that year, Morell writes: 'Through this



Fig. 5 Guillaumot fils, after Abraham Busschop, *Hen Protecting her Chicks*, (before) 1873. Engraving in auction catalogue, Paris (Rochebousseau), 5 May 1873, lot. 211. The Hague, RKD, inv. no. TEMP201014573.

[trip to Suriname] it is understood how he [Valkenburg] was able to paint a Moorish slave amusement so excellently according to their customs and their country's way of life, as people can see in the piece in Fredensborg which cannot be praised enough, where these people are depicted perfectly in their doing and the division of the different regions of their birthplaces.'[52] However, Valkenburg's authorship of this painting was forgotten in just one generation: in the handwritten 1799/1800 Fredensborg collection catalogue, Nicolas Abildgaard, followed by his successor Niels Laurits Høyen , misread Valkenburg's monogram as 'DWB' and incorrectly attributed the painting to 'David Wilhelm Buytenweg'. It is likely they were referring to Rotterdam painter Willem Willemsz Buytewech II (1624/25–1670).[53] By 1875, the work was catalogued as anonymous, a classification that persisted in the 1904 catalogue of the royal painting collection.[54] The 1904 catalogue also mentions that Cornelis Hofstede de Groot had suggested the work be attributed to Rotterdam landscape painter Dionys Verburg (1636/37–1722).[55] Hofstede de Groot likely based this attribution on the fact that Valkenburg's Suriname drawings were at the time considered to be by Verburg and had been for a long time.

In 1800, twenty-one of Valkenburg's drawings were auctioned under D. Verburg's name as part of collector and artist Cornelis Ploos van Amstel's (1726–1798) estate.[56] The drawings were auctioned under this name several other times during the next century. The drawings all bear inscriptions with the name D. Verburg, in many cases followed by 'f. 1708'.[57] All these inscriptions are in Ploos van Amstel's handwriting.[58]

Ploos van Amstel, one of the largest collectors of drawings in the Republic, was director of the Stadstekenacademie and organized art auctions as a broker.[59] He added monograms to drawings by various artists several times but made many incorrect attributions.[60] Ploos van Amstel's mistake could be due to the similarity between the names Valkenburg and Verburg. It remains unclear, however, how he was made aware of the drawings' approximate production year of 1708. Nevertheless, Ploos van Amstel's incorrect attribution caused a clouding of Valkenburg's legacy.[61]

This attribution to Verburg continued during the first decades of the 1900s, until C.P. van Eeghen proved in 1946, based on archival material – including Witsen's commission to Valkenburg – that the drawings discussed above and the painting *Gathering of Enslaved People* were by Valkenburg.[62] In 1962, the Rijksmuseum acquired *Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation in Suriname* (cat. 69), at that time the only painting by Valkenburg from Suriname known to be signed with his full name.

Conclusion: Recognition Today

Although the confusion with Verburg was resolved in 1946, attribution issues between Valkenburg and his master, Weenix, regarding game still lifes and animal scenes persist to this day. During the research for the catalogue section of this publication , the question 'Valkenburg or Weenix?' arose repeatedly. The

recognition of Valkenburg as the rightful author of his Surinamese works in 1946 provided a crucial foundation for further research into these colonial paintings. This publication, *Dirk Valkenburg*, is therefore the first comprehensive effort to document Valkenburg's full oeuvre and address both historical and ongoing misattributions of his works.

Acknowledgements

For the creation of this article, I would like to express my gratitude to Sabine Craft-Giepmans, who supervised my research at the RKD, and Julie Hartkamp, with whom I researched Valkenburg's works over many months. My appreciation also goes to Yvonne Bleyerveld for reading along during the writing process and Daantje Meuwissen for her valuable advice. Finally, I would like to thank Michèle Seehafer from the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen for sending numerous scans and photographs of primary sources and transcribing them, as well as Gero Seelig from the Staatliches Museum Schwerin for translating and transcribing multiple German documents.

1 The sources were used to reconstruct the provenance of each artwork in this publication's 'Catalogue Raisonné', p. 269. Hofstede de Groot's provenance index cards contain copied entries from auction and collection catalogues. The cards are known as the Hofstede de Grootfiches. They are sorted by artist and can be viewed online in the *RKDexcerpts* database. The cards were largely created by Hofstede de Groot and later supplemented by RKD staff until the end of the 1960s. For more information on the index cards, see Garthoff 2018, p. 120. The descriptions on the sheets in the RKD's image documentation (accessible online through *RKDimages Lite*) also played an important role in reconstructing the provenance of each artwork. On the provenance sources part of the *Getty Provenance Index* and their distribution between different time periods and locations, see *Getty Research Institute* n.d., accessed on 13 December 2024. The *Getty Provenance Index* does not include sales catalogues from the period between 1850 and 1900. As a result, the period is less present in the total amount of sources used for this research. The *Lost Art Database* was also consulted for this research on illegally appropriated works from 1933 to 1945. All sources have been consulted in 2024. Therefore, new updates with new provenance data (through, for example, the *Getty Provenance Index*, *Artprice* and the *Lost Art Database*) are not taken into consideration for this essay. Brill's *Art Sales Catalogue Online* was the primary source for information from auction catalogues before 1900. Auctions can be traced in this database (and other library collections) by their date and location or by their Lugt numbers. See Artmarket: *Artprice*; Brill: *Art Sales Catalogues Online*; Economie: *Looted Art WII Belgium*; the Lost Art Foundation: *Lost Art Database*; Getty Research Institute: *Getty Provenance Index*; and RKD Research: *RKDexcerpts*, *RKDimages Lite*.

2 See footnote 1.

3 See the subsection of this essay, 'The Appreciation of Valkenburg's Work in the 1700s'. Regarding the period before Valkenburg's death, Hofstede de Groot's index cards list one owner, Adam de Raadt, who cannot be placed with complete certainty in Valkenburg's network, see Hofstede de Grootfiches via *RKDexcerpts* 568719. The index card is a copy of Bredius's transcription of the taxation of De Raadt's paintings. See Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 4, pp. 1,251–1,252.

4 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 477.

5 Although Descamps based most of his text about Valkenburg on Van Gool, both writers are referenced here because they heavily contributed to the image that was created about artists in the eighteenth century. About Descamps's sources for his text, see Maës 2009/2010, pp. 232–233.

6 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 480 (my translation). Descamps notes that, at this time, his portraits, like his game still lifes and animal scenes, were in great demand. Descamps 1764, p. 185.

7 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 480. Descamps specifies that Knebel von Katzenelnbogen paid well. Descamps 1764, p. 186.

8 Van Gool states that 'Prins Louis van Baden', who can be identified as Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden (1655–1707), offered Valkenburg the position of court painter for 2,000 'daalders' a year. Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 481; Descamps 1764, p. 186.

9 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 481; Descamps 1764, p. 186. Descamps specifically mentions that Katzenelnbogen wrote in Valkenburg's favour, while Van Gool mentions that Valkenburg left for Vienna on his advice. Valkenburg made six paintings for Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein. Four paintings, for which the Prince paid 250 Rhenish guilders ('fl. r.' according to Haupt 2012, p. 7, likely functioning as a unit of account) per piece, form a cohesive series. According to Van Gool and Descamps, Valkenburg recently finished or was still working on one of these four at the moment of his first contact with the Prince. The other two works were not part of this series because of the different prices Valkenburg received for them; one work was a painting with two herons and the other, of two hares. For the series of four paintings, see Fürstlich Liechtensteinisches Hausarchiv 1697/1698, f. 38v, no. 152, f. 39r, no. 155; FLHA 1698, f. 35r, no. 134; FLHA 1698/99 f. 48v, no. 177. For the two other pieces, see FLHA 1698, f. 35r, no. 134 and FLHA 1698/99 f. 48v, no. 177. For partial transcriptions of these documents, see Haupt 2012, p. 140, no. 1355, p. 144, no. 1400, p. 149, no. 1447, p. 150, no. 1457, p. 157, no. 1539 and no. 1540.

10 According to cat. Rohrau 1960, p. 78 and Van Leeuwen 2013–2024, vol. 3, §7.5, footnote 2, Valkenburg made or sold five paintings, including cat. 17, for/to Count Ferdinand Bonaventura I von Harrach and Rohrau (1636–1706). This information cannot be confirmed with complete certainty. Indeed, the original inventories of Von Harrach's collection, 'Mein Gemäll' and 'Specification über die Mallerey', are no longer present in the Harrach family archives, according to cat. Rohrau 1960, p. 9 and Lindorfer 2009, p. 126. Four of the paintings were likely sold sometime after 1926, while cat. 17 was sold from the Harrach collection at the Auction British Rail Pension Fund, London (Sotheby's), 5 July 1995, lot 13.

11 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, pp. 482–483; Descamps 1764, p. 187.

12 The King of Prussia offered Valkenburg the position of court painter in Berlin for 1,000 rijksdaalders. Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, pp. 483–484; Descamps 1764, p. 187.

13 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 484 (my translation). Descamps writes that Valkenburg, in Suriname, found refuge from his wife, to whom he was unhappily married. Descamps 1764, p. 188.

14 See the transcription of Valkenburg's contract with Witsen: Van Eeghen 1946, p. 62 (my translation).

15 Getty Research Institute: *Getty Provenance Index*, 'N-870', accessed on 30 April 2025, 0004. See also Huntum's 1718 estate inventory for more about his plantation and shareholdings: Amsterdam Stadsarchief 6671.

16 There are, however, late eighteenth-century records of paintings by Valkenburg in German collections. Paul von Stetten mentions in 1779 that a fine painting of dead animals is located in the cabinet of the Freiherr of Reischach. See Von Stetten 1779, p. 339. Also, cat. 4, dated 1698, comes from Valkenburg's travel period. Its provenance can be traced back to German collections at the end of the eighteenth century.

17 For the paintings in the Danish Royal Art Chamber, see provenance cat. 24 and cat. 42. For the painting from Count Moltke, see provenance cat. 5.

18 On this, see footnote 51. For the work's provenance, see cat. 70.

19 Spieth 2018, p. XVIII.

20 Ibid., p. X.

21 Le Brun 1792, p. 60.

22 Le Brun mentions that the engraving was made in the Netherlands, where the work was located at the time. This suggests that the painting was therefore back in the Netherlands before or in 1788. Le Brun 1792, p. 60 (my translation). On the dating of the engraving see Atwater, vol. 3, 1988, pp. 1,428–1,429. The engraving could have also been made after a drawing located in the Netherlands of the painting in France. In that case, the painting would have been moved to the Netherlands after the engraving was made. However, the fact that Le Brun mentions both details in one sentence suggests it is more likely that Zentner made the engraving in the Netherlands because the painting was there.

23 Auction Venant du Pays Etranger, Paris, 23/24 March 1775, no. 45. See Getty Research Institute:

Getty Provenance Index, 'F-A373', accessed on 20 November 2024, 0045.

24 This number (and all subsequently mentioned in this paragraph) includes unsold works. Works that were offered together under one lot count separately.

25 Valkenburg's *Still Life with Dead Ducks* (cat. 34) was located at Nostell Priory as early as 1851 and was mentioned and described by art historian Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1797–1868). The painting is described in Waagen 1854, vol. 3, p. 336; it is presumable Waagen saw the work in 1851 because he did not have the time to visit Nostell Priory during his travels in 1835. See Waagen, 1838, vol. 2, p. 429. Valkenburg's *Still Life with Grapes* (cat. 56) may have been part of Beriah Botfield's collection at Norton Hall in Northamptonshire in 1848 but was described as 'a flower piece' in his collection catalogue. Cat. Northamptonshire 1848, p. 55. It should be mentioned that in his book on the history of Augsburg in 1779, Paul von Stetten mentions that several works by Valkenburg were in art collections in Germany, the Netherlands and England. He presumably based the notion that works were in England on his own statement that Valkenburg himself travelled to England, which was likely a misinterpretation of the fact that Valkenburg worked for Stadtholder-King Willem III. Von Stetten 1779, p. 339.

26 The Hofstede de Groot index cards and *Getty Provenance Index* document the following instances when works attributed by Valkenburg were auctioned in these cities between 1900 and 1940: Amsterdam: sixteen, London: six, Cologne: six, Berlin: five, Frankfurt am Main: four, Munich: three, Paris: three.

27 German Lost Art Foundation: *Lost Art Database*, '410002', '420292', '420293'. 410002 was confiscated by the National Socialists during the German invasion of Poland in 1939. 420292 and 420293 were part of the Ducal collection of Sachsen-Anhalt, which suffered many losses and was dispersed due to multiple looters during this period. The precise circumstances of the disappearance of these two works remain unclear. The author presumes these two works are the same seen by Cornelis Hofstede de Groot himself; see Hofstede de Grootfisches via *RKDexcerpts* 568706. Further research is needed to ascertain whether more works were unlawfully appropriated between 1933 to 1945. At the request of the RKD, Perry Schrier and Annelies Kool, provenance researchers at the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (RCE) searched their databases for works by Valkenburg. Although several works by Valkenburg have provenance records indicating ownership by Jewish or other collectors listed in the *Cultuurgoederen Tweede Wereldoorlog* database (see cats. 31, 43, 45–46), no corresponding information on these works was found in the RCE databases; see correspondence between P. Schrier and M. Klink, 1 November 2024, archived at RKD. Further research may reveal whether works may have been appropriated under Weenix's name.

28 *Still Life with Awara and Other Fruit from Suriname* (cat. 71) and *Still Life with Pineapples and Other Fruit from Suriname* (cat. 72) have been part of the Menil Collection in Houston since 1982. *Cat and Dog, with a Dead Cock, Knife and Fruit in a Park Landscape* (cat. 52) has been at the Speed Art Museum in Louisville Kentucky since 2005. *Study of Madame Jeanettes, Barbados Nuts and a Maracuja from Suriname* (cat. 75) was acquired by the Toledo Art Museum in Ohio in 2022 and is still part of its collection.

29 This number also includes auctioned works found through the database Artmarket: *Artprice*.

30 From the period between 1700 and 1750, only one auction outside the Dutch Republic was found where a painting attributed to Valkenburg was auctioned. This was a sale in London and therefore not included in fig. 2. The consigners of the sale do not have a clear connection to Valkenburg and thus form an exception to the argument. See sale: Barons of Vicq at Brussels and Brughes, London, 17–18 January 1749, lot 115; Lugt no. 695; Getty Research Institute: *Getty Provenance Index*, 'Br-A425, accessed on 10 November 2025, 0115.

31 Joan van Vliet lent Valkenburg considerable sums of money: 1,123-1-8 Dutch guilders. At the time of his death, Valkenburg had not yet repaid this debt. See Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, p. 432. Note that in this essay, I use the term 'Dutch guilders' if it is clear that a source refers to Dutch guilders, even when only the Dutch word '*gulden*' (e.g., the publications by Van Gool and Grijzenhout), the French word '*florins*' (e.g., Descamps) or '*fl.*' (e.g., Bredius) is used.

32 Van Gool, 1751, pp. 486–487; Descamps, 1764, p. 188. Van Gool and Descamps describe a general high level of appreciation of Valkenburg's work, which is apparent from their mention of the sale of two of his works for 1,000 Dutch guilders in Amsterdam. The auction prices found for his work were never that high in reality (fig. 2). Although Van Gool and Descamps perhaps write about a non-auction sale, this still does not explain the large difference between their mentioned price and the actual auction prices shown in fig. 2 because auction prices in general are pushed up higher due to competition between potential buyers.

33 Descamps 1764, p. 188 (my translation).

34 Grijzenhout 2022, p. 202.

35 *Cock, Hens, Ducks, Alexandrine Parakeet and Other Birds* (cat. 48) and *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Chaffinch, with Hunting Gear in a Landscape* (cat. 31) fetched 380 and 450 Dutch guilders, respectively. See sale: Johan van der Marck Aegidiusz, Amsterdam, 25–28 August 1773, lot 336, sold to Pothoven for 380 Dutch guilders; Lugt no. 2189); see Hofstede de Grootfiches via *RKDexcerpts* 568620. Sale: Huybert Ketelaar, Amsterdam, 19 June 1776, lot 246, sold to Spaan for 450 Dutch guilders; Lugt no. 2564; see Hofstede

de Grootfiches via *RKDexcerpts* 568635.

36 Value judgements in Dutch auction catalogues from the eighteenth century are brief. Comparisons with Weenix are occasionally made, ranging from 'the best disciple of Weenix' to 'as pretty, natural and good as if it was painted by Weenix' (my translation). See Hofstede de Grootfiches via *RKDexcerpts* 568634, 568635, 568620, 568707 and 568728. Terms such as '*Capitael stuk*' are also sometimes used, which implies that a piece is of high quality.

37 Morell Ms. 1756, no. 31 (my translation).

38 For the other Weenix, also still located at the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen, see Van Wagenberg-Terhoeven 2018, vol. 2, no. 136, p. 242; KMSsp621.

39 Morell Ms. 1767, no. 17 (accompanying text on Valkenburg). I thank Gero Seelig for transcribing and translating this document for me, which is referenced in this essay multiple times. An older transcription, with some errors, can be found in North 2012, pp. 155–156.

40 Morell Ms. 1767, no. 17 (accompanying text on Valkenburg; translated by Gero Seelig). Le Brun 1792, p. 60 (my translation).

41 Wahl Ms. 1755a, p. 40, no. [5]; Wahl Ms. 1755b, no. 16; Morell Ms. 1767, no. 17 (accompanying text on Valkenburg). North, pp. 155–156.

42 This is my hypothesis. Further research will demonstrate whether this theory is correct.

43 Cats. 7, 30–32, 35, 50–51.

44 Briefl 2006, pp. 3–5.

45 Valkenburg also signed his *Birds from Various Continents in a Landscape* (cat. 41) on the tree depicted. The restoration of *Eurasian Eagle-Owl* (cat. 50) was carried out by Lara van Wassenaer of Atelier van Wassenaer on behalf of art dealer Salomon Lilian. I thank Jasper Hillegers from Salomon Lilian and Lara van Wassenaer for permission to use the restoration images in this publication. For more about the restoration, see cat. 50.

46 Sale: Marquis de La Rochebousseau, Paris, 5 May 1873, lot 211 (my translation); Lugt no. 33985; Hofstede de Grootfiches via *RKDexcerpts* 568627. Purchased by Vatel for the high sum of 3,350 francs. 'Vatel' most probably refers to Charles Vatel. See *The British Museum* n.d., accessed on 14 December 2024.

47 The attribution to Abraham Busschop was made by Fred G. Meijer and Christina J.A. Wansink.

48 Van Eeghen 1946, p. 64. There were also paintings not kept in both of these cabinets but in other rooms of the house. On the estate of Isabella Maria Hooft and the difference between the cabinets, see Amsterdam Stadsarchief 7845, pp. 252–256.

49 Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 64–65; Peters 2010, p. 383.

50 Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 64–67.

51 Although Van Eeghen identified one of the three paintings sold together under lot 79 at the auction as *Gathering of Enslaved People* (cat. 70), this identification is incorrect because the latter was already in the Danish capital in 1767. *Gathering of Enslaved People* had left the Witsen estate earlier during the century and was possibly sold at Joan van Vliet's auction in Amsterdam, 16–17 December 1750, lot 22 (Lugt: 745). Sale: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 16–18 August 1790, lot. 79 (Lugt: 4620); Hofstede de Grootfiches via *RKDexcerpts* 568728; see Van Eeghen 1946, p. 65. Van Eeghen's identification is also recounted in Van Schendel 1963, p. 83. The unknown work from the 1790 auction was auctioned again in 1820, likely with the same two works as earlier, sale: Barend Kooy, Amsterdam, 20 April 1820, lot 99–101 (Lugt: 9773); Hofstede de Grootfiches via *RKDexcerpts* 568612, 568613 and 568614. These paintings were then sold again in 1847 as unattributed to any painter, sale: B. de Harde Swart et al., Amsterdam, 16–18 November 1847, lots 286–288; Lugt no. 18777; Hofstede de Grootfiches via *RKDexcerpts* 568733. At the 1847 auction, the three paintings were split up. One of them, lot 288, can perhaps be identified as cat. 69. Note: Van Schendel 1963, p. 84, wrongly states 1846 as the year of this auction.

52 Morell Ms. 1767, no. 17 (accompanying text on Valkenburg). The provided image of the original document for transcription was cropped on the right side; an attempt was made to interpret the words (or parts of) that were not visible because of this. I thank Gero Seelig for transcribing and translating this document for me, which is referenced in this essay multiple times. An older transcription, with some errors, can be found in North, pp. 155–156.

53 For Willem Buytewech (II), see RKDartists 14585, accessed on 16 December 2024. Abildgaard Ms. 1799 a, no. 278; Abildgaard Ms. 1799 b, no. 278; Høyen and Abildgaard Ms. c. 1815–1919, pp. 66–67, no. 278.

54 Cat. Copenhagen 1875, p. 101, no. 459. Cat. Copenhagen 1904, p. 41, no. 96.

55 Cat. Copenhagen 1904, p. 41, no. 96.

56 Sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, vol. 1. KbK CCC., p. 269, lot 19; Lugt no. 6031; Hofstede de Grootfiches via *RKDexcerpts* 568747.

57 See cats. 57–61, 63–65, 67. Inscriptions on four of the drawings in the Rijksmuseum, and the drawings in the Kröller-Müller, the Fondation Custodia, Frits Lugt Collection and Noro Foundation are followed by the year f. 1708.

58 Exh. cat. Otterlo 2021, pp. 212, 220, notes 32 to 34.

59 Plomp 2001, p. 113.

60 Ibid., p. 114.

61 The attributions to Verburg were backed up in 1938 by H.C. Hazewinkel, who stated how the lack of archival material regarding Verburg's presence in Rotterdam between 1703 and 1710 confirms his trip to Suriname. Hazewinkel 1938, p. 220.

62 Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 58–69

Tropics

Histories and Historicities: Beyond the Picture Frame

Renzo S. Duin, Philip Dikland, Agir Axwijk

Setting the Scene

The colony of Suriname can be understood as a palimpsest, where plantations by European colonizers were layered over territories once inhabited and managed by Indigenous Peoples. From 1595 onwards, successive periods of colonization by the Dutch, English, and Sephardic Jews (re)used and altered the landscape. In 1686, Governor Cornelis van Aerssen van Sommelsdijk, on behalf of the Sociëteit van Suriname, entered into a peace treaty with the Carib (*Karaïben* in Dutch), Arowak and Warrau Indigenous Peoples, following over a decade of resistance against European colonizers.[1] This resistance from the original inhabitants of Suriname, as well as the enslavement of Indigenous Peoples in the colony of Suriname during the eighteenth century, has not received sufficient attention hitherto. Today, the Carib, who self-identify as Karina, and the Arowak, who self-identify as Lokono, are the largest Indigenous communities in north Suriname. They never abandoned this region throughout the colonial era, and to this day, continue to inhabit and manage the very same landscapes depicted by Dirk Valkenburg in and around 1707. In this essay, we explore the dialogue between Valkenburg's Suriname paintings and drawings with archival sources and oral histories, focussing on the Indigenous histories, historicities and genealogies that are intertwined with the plantations and surrounding landscape he painted (fig. 1).

Throughout these colonial landscapes, Indigenous presence continues to echo, as seen in names like Paramaribo, Palmeneribo and Surimombo. The suffix *-rebo* means 'landing place' in the Arowakan language of the Lokono. According to Indigenous oral history, the village of paramount chief Para moro (Paramure in the Cariban language of the Karina) once stood on the site of what is now Palmentuin, in Paramaribo. The modern name Paramaribo[2] is derived from Para moro rebo, the Indigenous name for the landing place of paramount chief Para moro.[3] Palmeneribo also ends with the suffix *-rebo*, and by analogy, Palmeni may have been the name of the Indigenous leader whose village once stood at the site of this plantation. It is also possible that Palmeneribo marks the location of paramount chief Para moro's new settlement after the colonists established what became Paramaribo.[4] Surimombo, by comparison, derives from the Cariban language of the Karina Peoples. In combining *suri*, meaning undercurrent, with the suffix *-mbo*, meaning

former, the name refers to a 'former place along the Suriname River'. These toponymic traces confirm the continued presence of Indigenous histories in the landscape. In contrast, the name Waterland is of Dutch/Anglo-Saxon origin.

European Colonists Living between Control and Fear

Waterland was situated in a bend in the Suriname River halfway between Paramaribo and the Surimombo and Palmeneribo plantations (fig. 1). Over the course of its history, the plantation oscillated in size between about 430 hectares and over 2,000 hectares.[5] Not all of this land was continuously cultivated, as is demonstrated by historical maps identifying fields as *Capuweeries* (*kappewerie* is a Surinamese term for secondary tree growth on previously cleared land), such as the 1724 map by surveyor and map-maker Jacob Hengevelt (fig. 2). Discernible on this map are key architectural features of the plantation's sugar factory, including a building containing both the tidal mill and boiling house, and a *woonhuijs van steen* (the main house built of stone), which most certainly are the main buildings in Valkenburg's work painted some fifteen years earlier (cats. 66, 68). This 1724 map confirms that Valkenburg's proposed viewpoint of Waterland (cat. 68) was just east of the neighbouring Roorak plantation's main canal outlet.[6]

The Dutch are known for wanting to control their environment, and their approach to water management is exemplary. Valkenburg made a precise drawing of a *sluis* (sluice or water lock) (cat. 65),

and in his painting of Waterland, one can observe the outlet of the main mill canal connecting with the river after having passed the sugar mill. On the left, we see a *sluis* at the inlet mill canal (see also cat. 67). This water inlet led to the main mill canal, which led to the water mill.[7] The main mill canal was filled with river water at springtide through a separate water lock located beyond the picture frame. At low tide, the water from the main mill canal drove the mill. Valkenburg made an additional drawing of the water mill and boiling house from a different location (cat. 66), and in this drawing, he wrote that this view was obtained when standing in front of the kitchen, which was located next to the main house. This main house and kitchen were located due east of the water mill. A *dram huijs* (distillery) and *Neger huijs* (a dwelling for enslaved Africans) – spatially separated from the main house by the *vaartrens* (the main mill canal) – are clearly visible in Valkenburg's drawing (cat. 66), though barely visible in his painting of Waterland (cat. 68).

According to the archives of the Sociëteit van Suriname, during Valkenburg's time in Suriname, four *Blanken* (white adults), sixty-six *Roode en Swarte Slaaven boven 12 jaar* (Red and Black adults, enslaved or born into slavery), and eight *Roode en Swarte Slaaven beneden 12 jaar* (Red and Black children under twelve, born into slavery) were listed at Waterland in 1706.[8] This archival document does not distinguish between 'Red' and 'Black slaves' – enslaved Indigenous and African people, respectively. A 1684 inventory of Surimombo listed, though not named, two Indigenous men, three Indigenous women, one Indigenous boy, and two Indigenous girls.[9]



Fig. 1 Alexander de Lavaux, published by Hendrik de Leth, *Algemeene kaart van de Colonie of Provintie van Suriname* [...] (General Map of the Colony or Province of Suriname), c. 1737–1757, north is down. Etching and engraving, hand-coloured, 62.7 × 94 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. NG-478.



Detail of fig. 1 *Algemeene kaart van de Colonie of Provintie van Suriname* [...], showing the Waterland, Surimombo, and Palmeneribo plantations and other key geographical markers, north is down.

a) Cassipora Creek
b) Jodensavanne
c) Auca
d) Surimombo
e) Palmeniribo
f) Free Indigenous People
g) Acaribo
h) Waterland
i) Para Creek
k) Path of Wanica
l) Saramacca River
m) Paramaribo
n) Commewijne River
o) Suriname River

Other archival sources reveal that Indigenous people continued to be enslaved in Suriname after the aforementioned 1686 peace treaty.

Valkenburg arrived in Suriname in 1706, twenty years after the peace treaty with the Caribs, Arowaks and Warrau. This peace treaty followed a long period of Indigenous resistance, which had increased in the 1670s. In his otherwise succinct and pragmatic description of Suriname, Thomas Pistorius, policing and criminal justice council member and planter, described an attack by Indigenous men on the Acaribo plantation in 1680.[10] This exhaustive and personal account by Pistorius – in which his uncle lost his life due to a poisoned arrow – reflects the colonists' fear of plundering, burning and murder by Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, this attack took place in 1680, demonstrating that this story had already been handed down as oral history for over 80 years before it was written down by Pistorius in 1763. As Acaribo bordered Waterland, Valkenburg most certainly must have heard the story of this fearsome attack.

In addition, Pistorius mentioned remembering how, as a child, he experienced the uncovering of a rogue conspiracy in 1679, where an attack on Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname, by thousands of Indigenous men was foiled. Pistorius wrote of this event as having taken place in '1697', which may have been a typographic error. According to the archival sources, this attack actually occurred in early December 1678, less than two years before the previously-described attack on Acaribo. Archival sources in the Zeeuws Archief contain transcripts of the interrogation of Anthonij Barbier,[11] who had been apprehended and imprisoned at Fort Zeelandia, Paramaribo. The interrogation was conducted between 13 to 15 December 1678 but was signed in 1679.[12] The following information is derived from our research in these archival sources, though it is not a comprehensive transcription and further research on this event and its context is ongoing.

According to the information provided by Barbier in 1678, during a large Indigenous gathering in a village at Pararwie Creek (possibly Peruvia Creek) on the Coppename River, a major attack on Paramaribo was organized. Four *capteijnen* (village leaders) – Awariar, Ipomabo, Jannij and Kaikoesie, the latter being the principal warlord – were chosen to lead the attack, along with over a dozen *ondercapteijnen* (lieutenants). Together, the group commanded an estimated eight to nine thousand warriors from the four corners of the colony and beyond: the largest party came down the Para Creek (fig. 1) and would join the party coming from above the plantation of Samuel Nassy, located on the Cassipora Creek (fig. 6), the party from the Saramacca River (and beyond), would approach Paramaribo from behind the house of the governor – most certainly via the Sommelsdijkse Creek – and the fourth party would come from the Perica and Commewijne Rivers. The planned attack was to occur on a single night, shortly before dawn. The attack would consist of burning down all the houses and killing as many residents as possible. After a first attack, the plan was to regroup in the village of Chief Jarakarij, located on the Coesewijne River, and after a few days, return to Paramaribo for a second attack. Moreover, Barbier confessed that three canoes with large numbers of Arowak warriors

had arrived in the Corantijn River, with whom the Caribs had made an alliance to first attack and kill the Christians in Berbice (a former Dutch colony in present-day Guiana) and subsequently the Christians in Suriname. He declared that all the Indigenous Peoples of these rivers were aware of the upcoming attacks. This, and additional information professed in the interrogation reports, offers a glimpse into the organization strategy of the Indigenous Peoples and that various Carib and Arowak communities communicated across vast tracts within the limits of the colony of Suriname and beyond. These accounts and related archival sources, which still have to be brought to a coherent whole, have received little to no attention in historical research, yet provide insight into the organization of Indigenous resistance as well as the colonizers' fear.

Considering that the largest party came down Para Creek, and archival records mentioning other attacks occurring in 1678 – including the burning and destruction of most sugar plantations in Para Creek[13] – a *redoute*, or stone house, of fifty feet long and fifty feet wide with shooting slits and armed with four canons was built at the mouth of Para Creek. Further, on 7 March 1685, it was decided that a fort at the meeting of the Cottica and Commewijne Rivers would be established. This fort, with its five earthen bulwarks, was named Sommelsdijk in honour of Governor Van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck, who had established the peace treaty with the original inhabitants of Suriname.

With this in mind, let us revisit Valkenburg's works: Valkenburg had drawn the main house and kitchen at Palmeneribo from various angles (cats. 62–64). Observable is that the kitchen was an especially heavy stone building, like a strong house or guardhouse. This is not surprising as this plantation was located far from Paramaribo, the colonial stronghold, and beyond the reach of immediate military assistance in the event of an attack. Palmeneribo was located near the southern frontier of the colony of Suriname, and the military cordon later designed to protect the colony would only be constructed in the early 1770s, more than 60 years after Valkenburg visited. During times of attack, the residents of Palmeneribo thus could withdraw to this heavy stone building. Even with peace established with the Indigenous Peoples, the colonists continued to live in fear of attacks, and stone buildings, such as the Palmeneribo kitchen, were silent reminders in the landscape of past Indigenous resistance.

A Rariteitencabinet *(Cabinet of Curiosities) and a Line of Coconut Palms*

Valkenburg arrived in Suriname in 1706 at a time when conditions were ideal for creating a romantic picture of the colony. A peace treaty with the Indigenous Peoples had been established twenty years before, and the 1712 invasion by French Admiral Jacques Cassard – which would spark the widespread escape of enslaved Africans from plantations – was still six years away. That year, plantation owner Jonas Witsen (1676–1715) hired Valkenburg as an accountant/writer and painter for a period of four years, offering



Fig. 2 Jacob Hengevelt, *Accurate afteekening van de Plantage Waterland, geleegen inde Rivier Zuriname aan de regterhand int opvaaren* [...] (Accurate Depiction of the Waterland Plantation, Located on the Suriname River on the Right Side Going Upstream), 1724, detail of the map of the Waterland Plantation, indicating the proposed viewpoint from which Valkenburg depicted the plantation across the river, north is up. Map, pen, ink and watercolour on paper, 59 × 64 cm. Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, inv. no. 102.14.07.

a) a water lock at a mill canal inlet
b) the mill canal (*vaartrens*) or the sugar transportation canal
c) a water lock at the inlet mill canal
d) the mill and boiling house
e) the main house and kitchen
f) the mill canal outlet beyond the water mill
g) a water lock at a mill canal inlet
h) living quarters for the enslaved
i) Valkenburg's viewpoint of Waterland (cat. 68)

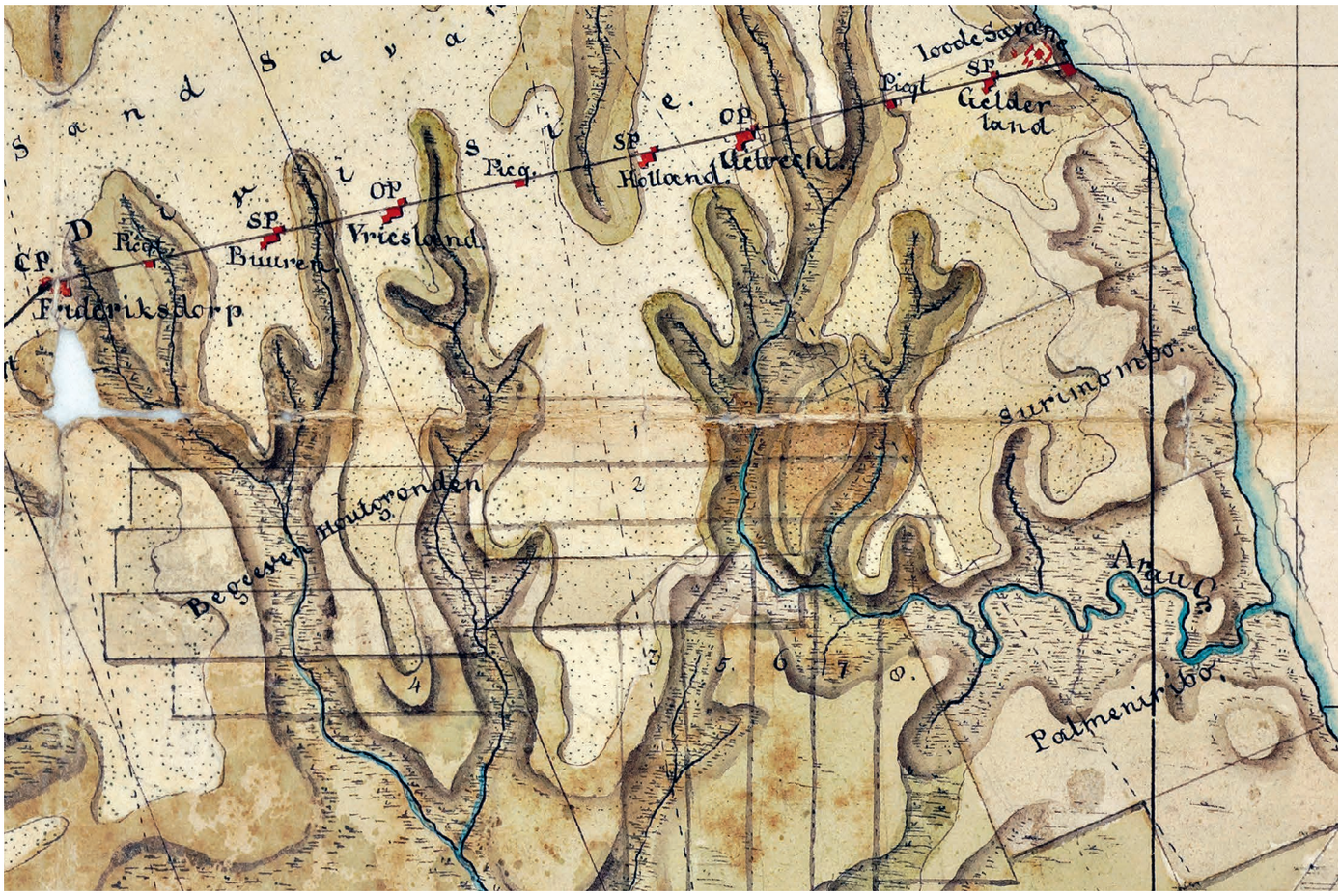


Fig. 3 Johann Friedrich Ferdinand Wollant, *Generaal Plan der begeeven en gecultiveerden landen, aen de Oostkant der Colonie van Surinaame enz.* [...] (General Map of the Lands Cultivated on the Eastern Side of the Colony of Suriname), c. 1780, detail showing the Surimombo and Palmeneribo plantations, north is down. Pen, ink and watercolour on paper, 152 × 99 cm. The Hague, Nationaal Archief, inv. no. 4.VEL, 1671.

him a generous salary of 500 florins per year (roughly 6,000 euros in 2023).[14] This was a noble sum: by comparison, accountant and writer Jan van Voorst, hired in 1705 also for four years, earned only 100 florins per year. Under these conditions, Valkenburg might be considered an 'artist in residence' *avant la lettre*.

Thirteen years before Valkenburg's arrival in Suriname, colonist Jan Reeps – who, after being shipwrecked at the mouth of the Amazon River and failing to establish a new colony – made his way to Suriname, where he wrote a brief account of the colony and its plantations and produce.[15] Of particular relevance to Valkenburg's works is Reeps's 1693 visit to Palmeneribo, Surimombo and Waterland. He described Waterland as 'of particular beauty, with a heavy, large and suitable water mill and a lovely house'.[16] Of Palmeneribo, he noted that the houses were located on high ground, whereas the fields were located on low lands. He discussed the functioning of the sluice system and the flow of water, as well as the sugarcane processing in the boiling house.[17] Reeps further mentioned that both Waterland (the 'new' plantation) and Palmeneribo (the 'old' plantation) were owned by Joan van Scharphuysen, then governor of Suriname.[18] He recounted spending the night in the arched cedar wood room of the main house, specifying that:

> [T]his plantation has two mills; one is water driven and one is horse driven. The houses are located on high grounds, gracefully behind a line of coconut palms. In the back is a garden and in the lower grounds is a water pond, or *etang*. The main house houses a cabinet of curiosities with birds, insects, and other animals worthy to witness.[19]

Thirteen years later, no mills are visible in Valkenburg's drawings of Palmeneribo (cats. 62–64). By contrast, a mill can be identified in two separate drawings of Surimombo (cats. 58–59). Neither plantation is depicted with the line of coconut palms as described by Reeps (cats. 58, 64). However, a single coconut tree is visible behind the residential complex at Palmeneribo (cat. 63). The *etang* (pond) Reeps referred to may be the *watervang*, or swampy lower grounds, behind the residence, through which the Arau Creek flowed – today called Palmeneribo Creek (fig. 2).

Of particular interest in the discussion of Valkenburg's paintings is Reeps's mention of a 'cabinet of curiosities with birds, insects, and other animals'.[20] In Valkenburg's study of fruit and reptiles from Suriname, *Study of Cashews, Maracujas, a Tropical Chicken Snake and an Ameiva Lizard from Suriname* (cat. 74), he depicted a tropical chicken snake (*Spilotes pullatus*, or *saparasneki* in Sranan Tongo, the common language of Suriname) and the South American ground lizard (*Ameiva ameiva*, *lagadisa* in Sranan Tongo, commonly known as the Amazon racerunner). Although the chicken snake and the ground lizard are fairly common in residential areas in the *binnenlanden*, or 'inland uplands' of Suriname, it would have been extremely difficult to paint life specimens in the field as they move very fast. Furthermore, the very same specimen in *Study of Cashews, Maracujas, a Tropical Chicken Snake* (cat. 74) – with the exact same position of the head, arms, legs and tail – appears in Valkenburg's study of pineapples and other fruits in a Surinamese

landscape (cat. 72). Moreover, the ground lizard in the paintings lacks its typical green and blue hues. This lack of colour further suggests that Valkenburg may have painted a taxidermied specimen from the cabinet of curiosities mentioned by Reeps.

Caribs (Karina) from 'Surrey-Membo' (Surimombo) on Display in Amsterdam in 1883

In 1684, during the time that Pastor Basseliers resided in Surimombo, archival records list two Indigenous men, three Indigenous women, one Indigenous boy and two Indigenous girls.[21] As mentioned earlier in this essay, these records do not provide their names. Two decades later, Valkenburg documented an *Indiaans huijs* (a house for Indigenous people) in his drawing of Surimombo (cat. 58). As this house was not built in the characteristic style of local Indigenous Peoples, it could only be identified as such due to the legend in Valkenburg's drawing. It is unknown if the Indigenous people residing in this *Indiaans huijs* were related or potentially the very same people listed in the 1684 Surimombo inventory. Nonetheless, this is evidence that Indigenous people were residing *on* the Surimombo plantation, even if somewhat removed from the main residence, kitchen, mill, boiling house and storage rooms, and beyond the canal and *sluijs* – potentially near the southern border of the Palmeneribo plantation. The presence of Indigenous People – enslaved or free – on plantations in Suriname is documented in archival sources and in Valkenburg's works. More research is needed to fully understand the role and position of Indigenous people during the era of Dutch colonialism and slavery.

In the 1793 Almanac of Suriname, Surimombo is absent. In the 1821 Almanac, the plantation is described as 'deserted land'. As with most old plantations, the soil on Surimombo became exhausted over time, yet was it really abandoned? On Johann Friedrich Ferdinand Wollant's map from about 1780, *houtgronden* (logging concessions) were outlined behind Surimombo and Palmeneribo (fig. 2, for full map, see fig. 3 in Stipriaan, p. 189), and the timber industry continued to be an important source of income for the area (as mentioned in a moment). In one of Valkenburg's drawings (cat. 60), two wooden trestles are clearly visible. Such wooden trestles were needed for the use of a whipsaw or framesaw, with one person standing below and one on top of the beam or plank to be sawn. Conceivably, in addition to sugarcane, the plantation also produced beams and planks for buildings and shipbuilding.

A century after Wollant's map, Indigenous People continued to reside on or near Surimombo. Of the fifteen Carib and Arowak Indigenous People recruited and transported across the Atlantic Ocean and displayed in Amsterdam in 1883 during the *Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling* (*International Colonial and Export Exhibition*), thirteen were inhabitants of the village of 'Surrey-Membo' (Surimombo).[22] The accompanying map places this Indigenous village at or near the eponymous Surimombo plantation. This is however not the place to discuss the specifics of the human zoo at the 1883 Suriname Pavilion, located at present-day



Fig. 4 Friedrich Carel Hisgen, *Group Portrait of the Ka-Ja-Roe Family at the Colonial Exhibition, Amsterdam*, 1883. Photomechanical print, 94 × 163 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-F-1994-12-5.



Fig. 5 J.F.A. Cateau van Rosevelt and J.F.A.E van Landsberge, *Kaart van Suriname* [...] (Map of Suriname), 1882, detail showing plantations along the Suriname River. Carolina's Hoop is located between Ajo and Namrek. Lithography, 148 × 263 cm. The Hague, Nationaal Archief, inv. no. 4. VELH, 584.

Museumplein, Amsterdam, in front of the Stedelijk Museum. The colonial initiative nevertheless gives us the opportunity to see the faces of the inhabitants of Surrey-Membo and learn their names.[23] For example, Miharoe (whose Dutch given name was Pierre), forty-five, went to Amsterdam with his eleven-year-old daughter, Kolleté (likewise, Anna), his twenty-eight-year-old sister, Alihakama (Sara), and her husband, the fifty-year-old Kajaroe (Jean-Baptiste), and other family members. The rather rudimentary temporary shelter constructed in Amsterdam in 1883 (fig. 4) bears resemblance to the construction painted by Valkenburg in cat. 69, which further supports our interpretation that Valkenburg did not paint an Indigenous village here.[24] Present-day inhabitants of Pierre kondre (Pierre's village) – locally known as Kumbassi, an Indigenous village located at the southern limit of the former Surimombo plantation – confirm their village is named after the aforementioned Miharoe (Pierre) of Surrey-Membo. Furthermore, they are most probably descendants of the Indigenous people residing on the eponymous plantation that had been drawn and painted by Valkenburg over 300 years ago.

Entangled Family Histories

New social dynamics developed in Suriname after the abolition of slavery in 1863. While many formerly enslaved people were able to freely travel, many settled in locations around Palmeneribo and Surimombo, working in the timber industry. Two family histories illustrate these new social dynamics.

Agir Axwijk, co-author of this essay, traces his paternal lineage to Surimombo and Palmeneribo, as well as to the settlement of Jodensavanne. His grandfather, Edgar Axwijk, was born in Carolina, a village founded by Abraham Garcia Wijngaarde (1823–1915), director of the La Diligence timber plantation, owned by the La Parra family, and captain of the armed civilian militia of upper Suriname. Carolina was founded on Carolina's Hoop, a plantation located within the limits of Surimombo plantation on the west bank of the Suriname River. Edgar's father, Julius Axwijk (1895–1967), was born in Gelderland, a military stronghold of the cordon located next to the Jodensavanne settlement (fig. 5).[25] He later settled across from Gelderland at the Ajo (Ayo) plantation, located next to Carolina's Hoop, where he worked in the timber industry. Julius's father, Flodes Philippus Axwijk (1862–1937) was born in Paramaribo. Julius's mother, Roosje Tjawaramoe (1862–1920),[26] was an Indigenous woman who, through oral accounts transmitted within the family, stated that she originated from Pierre kondre (Kumbassi), though archival records are lacking.

The database of the *Suriname Vrijgelaten Slaven Manumissies 1832–1863*, the so-called slave registers at the Dutch National Archives, provide further insight into Flodes Philippus Axwijk's mother and her family history.[27] Wilhelmina Elisabeth Axwijk (1824–1891) – the grandmother of the great-grandfather of co-author Agir Axwijk – was born into slavery in Paramaribo in 1824. She had been given the *slavennaam* (slave name) Bebé. She was later

listed as a *huisbediende* (domestic servant). Her mother, Philida (1807–1859), was also born into slavery, and at the age of seventeen, Philida gave birth to Bebé. In the registers, Philida's mother's name is listed as 'unknown'. On 1 June 1852, Bebé, together with her son John (born 1848), both listed as 'owned by' William Humphreys, were *gemanumiteerd* (manumitted). Philida died five years before the abolition of slavery in Suriname in 1863.

A second example illustrating these new social dynamics is the family history of Christina (born c. 1885, Mopinti, Upper Suriname River), an Indigenous woman. As she was without a last name, she appears in the 1921 census under the description *Indiaansche vrouw* (Indigenous woman).[28] In 1924, she married Gustaaf Jacob Druiventak (1870–1957, Jodensavanne).[29] Druiventak was the son of Winst Druiventak (born c. 1845, Ajo), who was a son of Cornelia Druiventak, a personal servant in Jodensavanne who, in 1863, was listed as a *privé-slaaf* (private slave) in the estate of Annaatje van la Parra.[30] Both the Wijngaarde and Druiventak families are linked to the Sephardic Jewish La Parra family – the names 'Wijngaarde' (vineyard) and 'Druiventak' (grape branch) being a reference to '*parra*' (meaning 'vine' or 'vine bower trellis' in Catalan and Galician).

Of particular interest are entries from the 1921 census listing Christina as *niet erkend* (unrecognized), *Natieloos* (without nationality), unmarried and without a surname. On the census records, '*(Indiaan)*' is written in parentheses, as this was an ethnic designation rather than a proper family name. In 1921, Christina lived at the Overbrug plantation with Jacques Meinersak, who was born in 1874 on the Estherlust plantation. Estherlust was located three plantations downstream from Palmeneribo, and Overbrug was located across the river (fig. 5). This record lists Meinersak as Dutch, belonging to the Evangelische Broedergemeente (the Moravian Church), recognized and unmarried. The 1921 census records list Christina's six children – four boys and two girls – all classified as *niet erkend*, *Natieloos* and *(Indiaan)*. The first three sons were born on the De Goede Hoop (Good Hope) and Toevlucht (Resort) plantations; the former, located a little downstream from Overbrug, and the latter, a little upstream. The fourth son and two daughters were born on Palmeneribo in 1912, 1916 and 1918, respectively. Still today, many people carry 'Indiaan' as a surname, a remnant of the Dutch colonial past and the 'need' to enter a last name into the census records.

Both family histories demonstrate how individuals originating from different sides of Suriname's multi-faceted colonial history – Indigenous Peoples, enslaved Africans, Dutch colonists, Creoles and Jews – came together, survived and contributed to the development of the region after the abolition of slavery, though under continued Dutch colonial control.

We Are Still Here

Indigenous Peoples have long lived in the general area around Surimombo and Palmeneribo before the Europeans arrived, and they continued to live there after Valkenburg's time, up until today.



Fig. 6 Certified copy by Maurits Walraven, *Map of the Suriname, Commewijne, and Cottica Rivers with Adjacent Plantations*, 1715, detail, north is down. Pen, ink and watercolour on paper, 64 × 80 cm. The Hague, Nationaal Archief, inv. no. 4.VELH, 590.

This includes present-day Indigenous villages such as Pierre kondre (Kumbassi), which self-identifies as a Carib settlement, Cassipora and Powakka, which self-identify as Lokono settlements, and Redi Doti, which self-identifies as a combined Carib and Lokono settlement. Individuals who self-identify as Carib reside in Lokono villages, and vice versa. Next to the aforementioned Druiventak and Wijngaarde families, the Sabajo, Swedo and other Indigenous families continue to reside in this area. The Swedo family – in the past also known as Swenano – together with the Stuger and Tawjoeram families, are at the heart of Redi Doti, located between Jodensavanne and the former Palmeneribo plantation.

During an interview conducted in November 2024, Max Eugene Swedo, an Indigenous person from the area, was shown Valkenburg's paintings, which prompted numerous memories. He recalled the deep connection of the Indigenous Peoples to this land and its history. During the interview, Swedo narrated the history of his family in this area and the broader region, including how they travelled by boat up the Para Creek to reach their agricultural lands. He told how he originated from the Indigenous village of Lakoeka, along the eponymous Irakoeka Creek running through the Quamabo plantation, located across the river from Jodensavanne – even if this Indigenous settlement has not been named on historical maps, such as those seen in figs. 5–6.

Indigenous settlements in this area have, however, been indicated on the so-called Labadisten Map (fig. 6). In 1683, members of this religious community travelled through the colony of Suriname.[31] Governor Van Aerssen van Sommelsdijk's three sisters belonged to this religious community movement, as did the artist Maria Sibylla Merian and her daughter, who visited Suriname at about the time Valkenburg visited. On this map, the first capital of Suriname, Thorarica (Torarica), located on the west bank of the Suriname River, halfway between Waterland and Palmeneribo, was marked, as was Jodensavanne, the Jewish settlement, and its synagogue.[32] Amidst the numerous plantations, we can observe Pastor Baselier's plantation (Surimombo), Van Scharphuysen's plantation (Palmeneribo) and Samuel Nassy's plantation on the Cassepoere (Cassipora) Creek. The aforementioned Irakoeka Creek is incorrectly labelled as Ararikika Creek. This map labelled the Indigenous settlements on the upper Suriname River and Cassipora Creek with the pejorative colonial term *Wilden* (Savages) or *Wilden Carbet* (the House of the Savages), instead of with their proper name or the name of the respective village leader.

During Swedo's interview, he emphasized how Indigenous families adjusted their lives for survival during the colonial era and how the many creeks in this area, including the one running through Palmeneribo, were essential for sustaining Indigenous lifeways. Swedo further discussed encounters between Indigenous Peoples and the Troepenmacht in Suriname (TRIS), the Dutch colonial troops in Suriname, before the independence of Suriname in 1975, as well as the impact of the Binnenlandse oorlog (the Surinamese Interior War) between 1986 and 1992, which forced many Indigenous Peoples to leave the area and severely affected the local infrastructure.[33]

The Indigenous or Native Peoples – the original inhabitants of Suriname – have sustained many centuries of colonialism, ethnocide, conflict and forced displacement; yet, they continue to return, reside and live on their ancestral lands. Moreover, many Surinamese individuals, including people presently residing in Paramaribo or in the Netherlands, can trace their family history and ancestral roots back to this very region. The Indigenous People today continue to remember the location of their ancestors' villages, located along the various creeks in the region, including but not restricted to the Cassipora Creek and the Palmeneribo Creek traversing the eponymous former plantation painted by Valkenburg.

The histories of the Indigenous People who continue to reside on or near Surimombo and Palmeneribo are intrinsically interwoven with the colonial and slavery past depicted by Valkenburg, even if most of the Indigenous lifeways existed beyond the picture frame. Due to a lack of funding, the envisioned pedestrian ground-truthing survey to complete the triangulation between Valkenburg's work, archival sources, oral histories and the reality of the field remains to be conducted. The Surinamese Indigenous histories of the eighteenth century have not yet received sufficient attention and are often entirely neglected. May this contribution open the way to further study and attention to the histories of Indigenous Peoples during this fated era and its impact today, of which we have barely scratched the surface.

Acknowledgements

We thank Max Eugene Swedo for being open to an interview regarding his memories of the areas around the Palmeneribo and Surimombo plantations. Because interpersonal interaction is of utmost importance when discussing these sensitive topics, we extend our gratitude to Elton Richenel Swedo for conducting the interview, as we could not be on site ourselves. And we thank Julie Hartkamp and Mark Soo for their editorial support to render our manuscript into this final form.

1 Hartsinck 1770, p. 649; Wolbers 1861, p. 63; Dragtenstein 2002; Jagdew 2014; NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 215. At some point – possibly as early as the mid-eighteenth century –the original copy of the 1686 peace treaty was removed from this archival source and placed in a portefeuille (document folder). The current whereabouts of this portefeuille and/or the original treaty between the Sociëteit van Suriname and the Indigenous Peoples of Suriname remains unknown.
2 In Van Westhuysen's 1667 pamphlet, it is written as 'Pirmeriba'.
3 The shift between 'i' and 'e' in transcriptions from Indigenous names and words is fairly common. This also explains the spelling variations of the name Palmeneribo.
4 The shift between 'l' and 'r' is common in the transcription of Indigenous words. In phonetics, this kind of consonantal sound is called a flap. This is also the reason why some write 'Kalina' and others write 'Karina'.
5 According to a warrant (title deed) from 1770, the Waterland plantation was 1,000 *akkers* (acres), with a width of 15 to 20 *kettingen* (chains). 1 *akker* equals 10 square chains, or 0.4 hectares. 1 chain equals 66 *rijnland* feet, or 20,714 metres.
6 Middelkoop in cat. Amsterdam 2008, pp. 166–167.
7 The water mill was a tide mill, whereby 'the difference between the high tide and low tide is approximately 2.5 to 2.75 meters, which is sufficient for operating a water wheel'. Dikland et al. 2017, p. 105.
8 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 234. For all archival sources, here and throughout: our transcription and translation.
9 Ibid., inv. no. 212.
10 Pistorius 1763, pp. 24–25.
11 Anthonij Barbier, born in Sint Eustatius, was about 26 years old at the time of the interrogation. He resided amongst the Caribs of Suriname. He had been apprehended in Paramaribo on the afternoon of 13 December 1678 after he had arrived in a canoe together with four Caribs, purportedly to visit a friend, though later heading to the river to give a signal for the attack.
12 ZA, acc. no. 307, inv. no. 2035.2.
13 Ibid.
14 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 3369, 24 and 26 February 1706, pp. 1,147–1,149. *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis* n.d., accessed on 21 May 2025.
15 See Duin 2017 for a facsimile with an English translation of Reeps's unfortunate voyage. See The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, inv. no. 131 C 14.
16 Duin 2017, pp. 42–43.
17 Ibid. See also Dikland, Fokké and Van Hest 2017.
18 In 1699, five years after Reeps's visit and after the death of Van Scharphuyzen, these two plantations were inherited by Elisabeth Basseliers, the daughter of Van Scharphuyzen's late sister, Sara, and Johannes Basseliers. For more information on the Basseliers family, see Dragtenstein in this volume, p. 46.
19 Duin 2017, p. 44 (my translation).
20 Ibid.
21 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 212.
22 Prince Roland Bonaparte 1884. His *Les Habitants de Suriname* includes photographs and descriptions.
23 Duin 2023.
24 See Duin and Axwijk in this volume, p. 167.
25 On the Jewish settlement known as Jodensavanne, see Sijlbing and Fokké 2017.
26 NA, acc. no. 2.10.19.01, *Eerste Algemene Volkstelling Suriname* (1921).
27 See database Nationaal Archief: *Suriname Vrijgelaten Manumissies 1832–1863*, 'Wilhelmina Elisabeth Axwijk', accessed on 25 June 2025. Also in NA, Slavenregister, inv. no. 25, f. 547.
28 NA, acc. no. 2.10.19.01, *Eerste Algemene Volkstelling Suriname* (1921).
29 *Suriname. Koloniaal nieuws- en advertentieblad* 1924, 23 September 1924.
30 Annaatje Wijngaarde, a woman of 'double blood', born as Van La Parra. Abraham Garcia Wijngaarde (1832–1915), the founder of the village of Carolina, on the Carolina's Hoop plantation, was the son of Annaatje Wijngaarde and Abraham Garcia de la Parra (1776–1832), a Sephardic Jew buried on the Beth Haim cemetery next to the Jewish settlement Jodensavanne.
31 Knappert 1926.
32 On Thorarica and Jodensavanne, see Sijbling and Fokké 2017.
33 Axwijk 2025.

Traumascapes, or When Dirk Valkenburg's Landscape Paintings Are Seen from the Perspective of the Subaltern

Renzo S. Duin and Agir Axwijk

Meaning is there to be *discovered* in the landscape, if only we know how to attend to it.[1]

Introduction

Dirk Valkenburg's paintings of landscapes and still lifes with exotic fruits from Suriname, created around 1707, have often been professed to be romanticized depictions of life on the plantation. We will analyze Valkenburg's artwork not in terms of style, composition or aesthetic effect. Instead, building on our extensive community-based research with Indigenous and Maroon communities in Suriname, French Guiana and the Netherlands, together with our ongoing archival and oral history research, we discussed Valkenburg's works with members of these respective communities, descendants of ancestors who resisted colonial forces on the plantations portrayed by Valkenburg. By amplifying these previously unheard voices, we offer renewed perspectives and dialogue between Suriname's oral histories and the landscapes and peoples there depicted by Valkenburg.

Valkenburg's works are much more than mere backdrops to the Dutch colonial and slavery past; for heritage communities whose ancestors were socially, politically and geographically excluded from decision-making positions in the imperial colony's hierarchy of power, these works serve as an *aide-mémoire* to physical sites of violence, suffering and loss. In listening to stories from self-emancipated African and Indigenous communities and, above all, to the silences, the agency of Valkenburg's paintings is unmistakably yet little-understood when only perceived from a mere art historical perspective. Even if they are representations of physical places, these landscape paintings appear to be deeply implicated in individual and collective processes of remembering, grieving and meaning-making. We anticipate that our contribution may start a conversation about the enduring suffering and loss resulting from this era of Dutch history, albeit not manifestly visible in Valkenburg's work. As emphasized by Hedi-Kabiten Mutu Poeketi, chairman of the council of Sa'amaka village leaders and representative of the Surinamese Maroon communities in Europe: 'What you see is not always reality. There is more to it that is not being said.'[2] Continuing, he said: 'When I look [at these paintings], I have a different perspective.'

The Waterland Plantation: A Sa'amaka Matjáu Perspective

In order to generate a shift in perspective from a traditional art historical analysis, we discussed Valkenburg's work with members of both Indigenous and Maroon communities, encouraging a deeper connection with the landscape paintings and with the scenes and anonymous figures depicted in these landscapes. When presenting Valkenburg's painting of the Waterland plantation (cat. 68) and his drawing of the mill, boiling house and *Neeger huijs* (a house for enslaved people) (cat. 66) to Hedi-Kabiten Mutu Poeketi, there was a prolonged silence. In order to understand this silence and his aforementioned words, 'There is more to it, that will not be said', we have to listen to Sa'amaka oral history.

During his ethnographic fieldwork with the Sa'amaka in Suriname in the 1970s, the American historical anthropologist Richard Price recorded oral histories offering a vivid account of the Matjáu-*lo*'s origins and the events that took place at Waterland. To the Maroon community – particularly to the members of the Sa'amaka Matjáu-*lo*, to which community or clan Hedi-Kabiten Mutu belongs – Valkenburg's painting of Waterland evokes the collective processes of remembering of a place marked by pain, loss and violence, engendering a deeply traumatic landscape, or 'traumascape', in the sense of Maria Tumarkin,[3] which may become a starting point to gain awareness of historical responsibility and of our communal journey of healing.

> Ayakô was made overseer [*basya*] of Plantation Waterland. He was in charge of all the slaves. It was at the time they were marching the slaves each day to dig the canal at Para. [...][4]
>
> Ayakô had a sister (called Séési) on the same plantation [Waterland]. One day she was at work, with her infant son tied to her back [fig. 1; cat. 70]. The child began crying, but the white man didn't want her to sit down to nurse it. The child kept crying. Then the white man called her: 'Bring the child here and I'll hold it for you.' So she took the baby off her back, handed it to him, and returned to work. He grasped the child upside down by the legs and lowered its head into a bucket of water until he saw that it was dead. Then he called the woman and said (gruffly): 'Come take the child and tie it on your back!' So she did so. She returned to work until evening, when they released the slaves from work. The child was dead, stiff as a board.
>
> Well, Dabitatá (Ayakô) saw this and said: 'What sadness! My family is finished. My sister has only one child left, and when she goes to work tomorrow, if the child cries, the white man will do the same thing again. I'll be witness to the final destruction of my family.'[5]

Price wrote that, at this point in the narrative, the Sa'amaka historian Kála began pouring a libation of rum, praying to the ancestors for several minutes, asking for their indulgence to speak to him of these events. Then he continued:

> He (Ayakô) ran off with his sister (Séési) and her baby daughter. [...][6]



Fig. 1 *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname*, 1706–1708 (cat. 70), detail of a woman sitting on a long drum, identified as a *zangklimbu doong*.



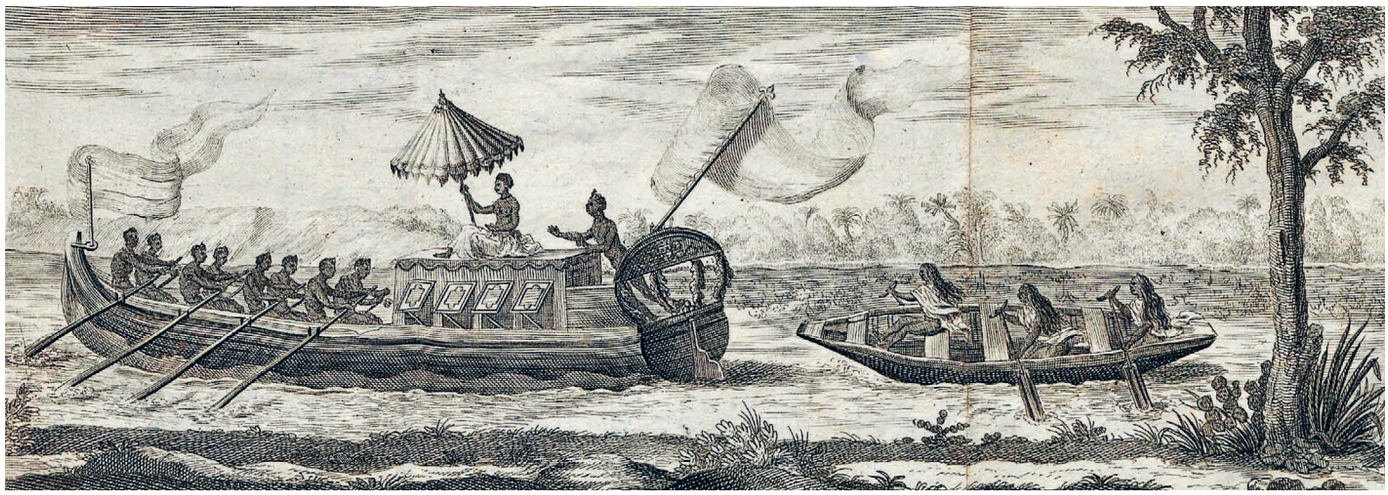


Fig. 2 *Indigenous, Enslaved and European People Navigating the Suriname River in Front of the Waterland Plantation, Suriname*, 1706–1708 (cat. 68), detail of a canoe with Indigenous men, women and children.

Fig. 3 *Rowing the boat. A Dutch tent boat propelled by eight enslaved rowers, followed by a canoe with Indigenous People*, Northern Netherlands, before 1763. Engraving in T. Pistorius, *Korte en zakelijke beschrijvinge van de Colonie van Zuriname*, Amsterdam 1763, plate 4. Leiden, Leiden University Libraries.

Ayakô ran away to seek his older brother, Lánu. He found him and saw that he had been well taken care of by the Indians [Indigenous Peoples], that he had done well there. He, too, found many things to eat there. [...][7]

> Ayakô (Dabitatá) had a wife, Asukúme. She travelled with him always [...]. They had a son named Dabi.[8]
>
> After they escaped, they lived for a long while at Matjáu creek before coming further upriver. The Indians [Indigenous Peoples] had helped Lánu and Ayakô near here. [...][9]
>
> From there (Matjáu creek), Ayakô returned for a second time to their old plantation to liberate people. Lánu again prepared him. There had been a great council meeting in the forest. You see, the white man who had whipped Lánu didn't own just one plantation. [...] They attacked. It was at night. They killed the head of the plantation, a white man. They took all the things, everything they needed, and then they sacked the plantation, burned the house, and ran. [...][10]
>
> [Lánu's] wife (they called her Osima of Dahomey), worked in the white man's house. Once she gave her husband a drink of water. (Whispering: But they tell me that it was really sugar cane juice, because that was the 'water' the white man normally drank.) And they whipped her. They beat the woman until she was dead. Then they carried her to him and said, 'Look at your wife here.' Then they whipped until he lost consciousness, and they left him on the ground.
>
> He arose suddenly and ran into the forest. [...] When Lánu went into the forest, he ran this way, and that, calling out to his wife, trying to find her. [...] Finally, the forest spirit (*apúku*) named Wámba called out in reply [...] and brought him directly to where some Indians lived. These Indians welcomed him [Lánu], took care of him, and gave him food. And he lived there with them.[11]

Rather than discussing the architecture and past lifeways on the plantation with Hedi-Kabiten Mutu, the conversation became more animated when discussing the various boats depicted in the painting. The composition of river-going vessels visualizes a network, capturing the activities of a community over generations. Rather than being a snapshot, it seems this scene on the river is a composition with various types of boats, much like a still life. Hedi-Kabiten Mutu shared his insights on the boat with a tent depicted in the shadows of the foreground. He called this vessel a *boto oso* (boat house). Until recently, these boats were used to transport materials, and the freighters would sleep on these house boats during long trips. Hedi-Kabiten Mutu specified that he has seen these freighters and that travelling between the Upper Suriname River and French Guiana could take up to four to five weeks. These boats could also serve to return the bodies of deceased family members to their communities. The *boto oso* was thus crucial for transportation between villages and to bring materials to and from the plantations.

Hedi-Kabiten Mutu remarked that the boat in the centre of the scene – a pinnace propelled by oars – must be transporting a dignitary or government official in comfort and shaded from the

tropical sun because it is flying the Dutch flag. He referred to this boat, too, as a *boto oso*, as this boat had a small 'house'. He added that the trailing canoe was an escort to this boat (fig. 3).

Alongside this large canoe trailing behind the pinnace flying the Dutch flag, Valkenburg's painting features smaller canoes, each paddled by a single person (fig. 2). Still today, every well-to-do man in the interior of Suriname is expected to own a canoe. In Suriname, a dug-out canoe is called a *korjaal*. The Karina (Carib) Indigenous term for the smaller canoes is *kuriala*, whereas their larger sea-faring canoes are called *kanawa*. These canoes, and the large canoe in particular, bring us to another perspective, namely that of the Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Peoples in Valkenburg's Work

When discussing the above painting of Waterland (cat. 68) with Indigenous people or individuals with Indigenous roots, their eyes immediately drift to the large canoe with people that are unambiguously Indigenous (fig. 2). This canoe, occupied with fourteen men, women and children, stands in stark contrast to the pinnace with the Dutch flag, both painted in great detail (albeit the enslaved Africans rowing this pinnace are painted as faceless blobs). From an Indigenous perspective, this frictional interplay is a stark reminder of the disruption caused by Dutch colonialism; yet, it also serves as a reminder that their ancestors, the original inhabitants of Suriname, navigated these waters long before European colonists settled on the banks of the Suriname River. It further demonstrates to Indigenous Peoples that their ancestors resisted serving European colonists and refused to row the boats for the Europeans. The faceless figures in the painting embody the European colonial view of Indigenous Peoples erroneously labelled 'Indians'; even the historical classifications 'Carib' and 'Arowak' are an oversimplification resulting from colonial impositions.[12] The question of if this large canoe with fourteen Indigenous men, women and children was an escort to the pinnace flying the Dutch flag or if this large canoe might represent several households moving between Indigenous villages or, as they head upriver, are perhaps returning from a visit to the capital, Paramaribo, remains (fig. 3).

One of Valkenburg's paintings, *Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation in Suriname* (cat. 69), raised the question whether Indigenous people resided near or on the plantations during Valkenburg's visit, as it is generally assumed that Indigenous people were no longer enslaved by around 1700. In his drawing of the Surimombo plantation (cat. 58), Valkenburg identified an *Indiaans huijs* (house for Indigenous people) on the plantation grounds, albeit somewhat removed from the main residence, kitchen, mill, boiling house and storage rooms. Twenty years prior, archival records pertaining to Surimombo registered the presence of two Indigenous men, three Indigenous women and three Indigenous children there in 1684.[13] Later, eighteenth-century archival records give evidence that Indigenous people continued to be enslaved in Suriname, though exact numbers remain unknown because the archives of the

Sociëteit van Suriname aggregated the number of enslaved Africans ('Black Slaves') and enslaved Indigenous persons ('Indian or Red Slaves'). Even when Indigenous People were considered free (*Vrije Indianen*), the plantations and its colonial architecture always lurked on the horizon.

Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation in Suriname (cat. 69) depicts a typical central Suriname savannah landscape, with patches of awara palms (*Astrocaryum vulgare*). The scene shows three Indigenous adults and two Indigenous children in what appears to be a *kampu* (fig. 4; cat. 69). The semi-permanent structure does not have the quality of a house built in a village but rather of a provisional shelter built on a *kostgrond* (agricultural field), a practice Indigenous People continue today. It remains undetermined if an individual can be distinguished in the shadows inside this structure. One adult is sitting sideways in a hammock temporarily slung under a slanting pole, placed for that purpose. This person keeps a long, narrow object clamped under his or her right arm, while peeling or splitting it. Is it a sugarcane stem? The children appear full of expectation. Lacking is the detail to clearly identify the specific items painted. Is this a family? What activities are they engaged in? They are clearly not involved in typical plantation activities. Is it possible that the adults were working in the fields or hunting and fishing to supply the plantation with game and fish? Perhaps they were assets in the timber industry, necessary for their knowledge of the forest and the ability to navigate vast tracts of the plantations and *houtgronden* (timberlands). This painting represents not a static, stereotypical image but a lively and living testament to Indigenous cultural practices that persisted despite colonial efforts to suppress them. Notably, the three adults in the scene have their backs turned to the painter, which could symbolize their resistance to colonial authority or, simply, because they did not want Valkenburg to paint their image, in the same way as Indigenous People today who do not like their picture being taken.

Importantly, there seems to be no clear boundary between this scene with the Indigenous people and the colonial plantation buildings in the background (fig. 4; cat. 69). While the exact relationship between the Indigenous people and the colonial structures remains uncertain, the mere existence of this painting highlights the reality that Indigenous people were still enslaved in Suriname in the first half of the eighteenth century – a fact that can no longer be denied in present discussions on the Dutch colonial and slavery past.

A Revised Interpretation of Valkenburg's Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname*:* Apuku*,* Busi Ingi*, and* Basya *Claas*

One of the masterpieces featured in the *Grote Suriname-tentoonstelling* exhibition in Amsterdam between 5 October 2019 and 1 March 2020 was Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70). Later that year, on 25 May 2020, George Floyd, a Black American man, was murdered by a white police officer. This tragic event raised global

awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement. In this context of growing awareness, the title of Valkenburg's painting was changed; yet, what remains is the interpretation of a sense of rustic harmony representing an idealization by the artist. Once again, our discussion with Hedi-Kabiten Mutu Poeketi came to a halt: he clarified that he was appalled by the scene in the foreground, as it is very disrespectful for a person who is not a drummer to be leaning or sitting on a drum. He emphasized that no Sa'amaka person would ever sit on a drum like this. He was deeply troubled by this scene, calling it 'a perversion' and questioning whether Valkenburg had even witnessed such a scene firsthand. Hedi-Kabiten Mutu further critiqued the portrayal of the enslaved Africans as 'animals', barely clothed with a few rags and without shoes. He emphasized that Sa'amaka culture does not display public affection, contradicting the interactions depicted in the painting. This painting seems to have depicted the people on the plantation very much as a wealthy white landowner would have viewed them: as the anonymous tenders of his fields and the enslaved African women as objects of desire. Nevertheless, it is this very same drum depicted in the foreground that is key to a new interpretation of this scene, previously titled *Slave Dance*.

The Sa'amaka are one of six self-emancipated African communities in Suriname, who maintain a vibrant religious and cultural heritage rooted in Central and West-African origins. Sa'amaka society consists of a dozen communities or clans, including the aforementioned Matjáu-*lô*, as well as the Luango-*lô* referred to in this section. The latter name refers to its Loango roots in the districts of Central Africa. This is not the place to discuss in detail Maroon religion and ritual practice or to decode the internal logic of its symbolism,[14] and the scene painted by Valkenburg may well depict a dance or a religious scene rooted in African origins. Then again, following French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's seminal work *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, this theoretical framework allows us to relate this scene to 'the conditions in which it functioned and [how] the means it used to attain them are defined' and, thus, generate a new interpretation of this scene.[15]

Firstly, a direct link between Palmeniribo and Central Africa is established through archival documents that place a certain Joseph, who stated that he was a '*Congo Neger*' by birth, in Palmeniribo in 1707.[16] Secondly, the conditions in which this dance functioned was the setting of a colonial plantation around 1700. Regarding this framework, it is the long-drum that is key: after some study of this detail of the painting (fig. 1; cat. 70), Hedi-Kabiten Mutu identified this long-drum as a *zangklimbu doong*, based on the attachment of the drum head. The *zangklimbu doong* is the main drum in a ceremony of the *apuku* (or *ampuku*).[17] The interpretation of this long-drum as a *zangklimbu doong* being used for the ceremony of the *apuku* allows us to further explore the scene depicted by Valkenburg and to provide a novel interpretation of the scene depicted.

The anthropologists Melville and Francis Herskovits suggest that the term *apuku* originated from the West-African Yoruba-Dahomean term *apiku*, referring to the 'little people of the bush', who are



Fig. 4 *Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation in Suriname*, 1707 (cat. 69), detail of the site with Indigenous adults and children, undetermined if they are free, enslaved or born into slavery.



Fig. 5 *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname*, 1706–1708 (cat. 70), detail of two drummers, two dancers and a *basya* (overseer).

'thought of as good spirits, but mischievous, and capable of evil when disturbed. The natural clearings in the bush are places where the *apuku* gather to hold council at night, and may never be worked, or entered by humans.'[18] The Yoruba-Dahomean people and language are located in present-day Nigeria and Benin. Furthermore, the name *apuku/ampuku* echoes with *Mpungu*, meaning 'Creating God' in the Loango and Kacongo districts of Central Africa. *Mpungu* is also the local name for the gorilla.

Today, the Sa'amaka still perform the ceremony of the *apuku*. This combination of drumming, singing and dancing is a religious ceremony and manifests prayers to the gods, requesting the gods of the forest to support the prayer to the Almighty Gaan Gadu (the Creator God) for protection and guidance. The full meaning of this song, as part of the Sa'amaka religion, remains knowledge that is safeguarded by the Sa'amaka community.

During their fieldwork among the Sa'amaka in Suriname between 1928 and 1929, the Herskovits' recorded numerous songs, including the song 'Mi Kulcu Zambi', which they specified was sung by the men of the Sa'amaka Luango-*lô*.[19] This song is not simply a form of musical expression but invokes Zambi, the Great God of the Loango Kingdom (located in what is now the western part of the Republic of the Congo), that is, the very same region the aforementioned Joseph in 1707 stated he was born.

At this point, it is important to consider an early twentieth-century account by the Dutch colonial official *posthouder* (postholder) Willem Frederik van Lier of a ceremony intended to drive away the *apuku* spirit. The ceremony took place after weeks of preparation with herbal baths and *gado* dances. Drums were played in the coded drum-language known as *apinti*, instructing others that no boats were permitted on the river after 6 p.m. in order to allow the *apuku* free passage.[20] The dances continued all night, and the drums were played intensively. Around 3 a.m., the *obiaman* (shaman) called out that the *apuku* was leaving. The crowd followed the *apuku* to the river and threw calabashes with mixtures of herbs after him. Van Lier observed this event on the Tapanahoni River, yet there are some remarkable elements that resonate with Valkenburg's painting: literally foregrounded are a water container made from a bottle gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*), a drinking bowl made from a calabash (*Crescentia cujete*) and a bundle of unidentified herbs (fig. 1; cat. 70). The long shadows in Valkenburg's painting indicate late afternoon. Van Lier stated that the *apuku* may materialize as a small child with a large head,[21] which may lead us to think that the smaller individual dancing in front of the drums may symbolize the spiritual essence of the *apuku*.

Furthermore, even though the individuals depicted in the scene are barely clothed, the colour of their clothing is of utmost importance. Blue cloth relates to the Busi Ingi, the spiritual beings that are the guardians of the forest and who provide protection to those venturing into the forest. Songs performed during the dance of the Busi Ingi narrate the bravery required and dangers encountered and overcome. The Busi Ingi have been referred to as *Caraïbische winti* because the voice of this *winti* (spiritual force) resembles the lan-

guage of the Carib Indigenous People.[22] Resonating with the spirit of the Carib People, the Busi Ingi is short-spoken, direct and concise, which may appear blunt and even aggressive. The Roman Catholic missionary Cornelius van Coll specified that male and female dancers come to the scene to call upon the help of the *Caraïbische winti* – that is, the Busi Ingi – if the priest of the *apuku* causes too much harm. The Busi Ingi's role as protector of the forest reflects the duality of the *winti*: they are both nurturing and fierce, guiding those who respect the forest, while punishing those who transgress its boundaries. Furthermore, Maroon oral history, as cited earlier, reminisces about Indigenous Peoples welcoming and taking care of the enslaved Africans who had succeeded in fleeing the plantations.

Perhaps not insignificant here is that one of the drummers in Valkenburg's painting is of a lighter complexion (fig. 5; cat. 70). Was this drummer of double African and Indigenous blood? The two largest of the six self-emancipated African communities in Suriname each have a community or clan tracing their origins back to a female progenitor: among the Sa'amaka, this is the Watambii-*lô*, and among the Ndyuka (Okanisi), this is the Ingi bee, literally meaning 'from the belly (*bee*) of an Indigenous woman (*Ingi*)'.

The white ribbon is another important symbol in the ritual context of the African diaspora community: it holds connotations of respect for ancestors, indicating places where they are honoured, and it represents a connection between the living and the dead, a reminder that the ancestors continue to influence and protect the living. The white ribbon thus marks a threshold that should not be crossed lightly. Still today, white ribbons may be tied to poles or placed at sacred sites to mark important locations, such as burial sites or places where rituals are conducted.

The *zangklimbu doong*, mentioned earlier, not only provides a specific connection to the ceremony of the *apuku*; this drum also brings us further to the conditions in which this ceremony functioned and the means it used to attain these connections. Most drums are mere instruments of rhythm. Nevertheless, these instruments allow for communication through the use of *apinti*, a coded drum-language, and are subsequently referred to as *apinti doong* (talking drum). A dedicated professional drummer could – and still can – make a drum speak and provide instructions for all to come together and to listen closely; it takes someone who understands the *apinti* drum-language to decode these drummed messages. Although it is not common to play the *apinti* on the *zangklimbu doong*, a few *apinti* strokes are played on the *zangklimbu doong* at the beginning of the ceremony of the *apuku*, which allows us to bring the *apinti* drum-language into our analysis of the scene painted by Valkenburg.

Maroon oral history recalls how, during such dances, instructions were given in the *apinti* drum-language about upcoming revolts and escapes. What better venue than the ceremony of the *apuku* to ask the spirits of the forest for protection and guidance, as well as to provide instructions to escape from the plantations into the woods. After the moment during the late afternoon painted by Valkenburg in *Gathering of Enslaved People*, this dance could have continued all night. During this gathering, messages about an



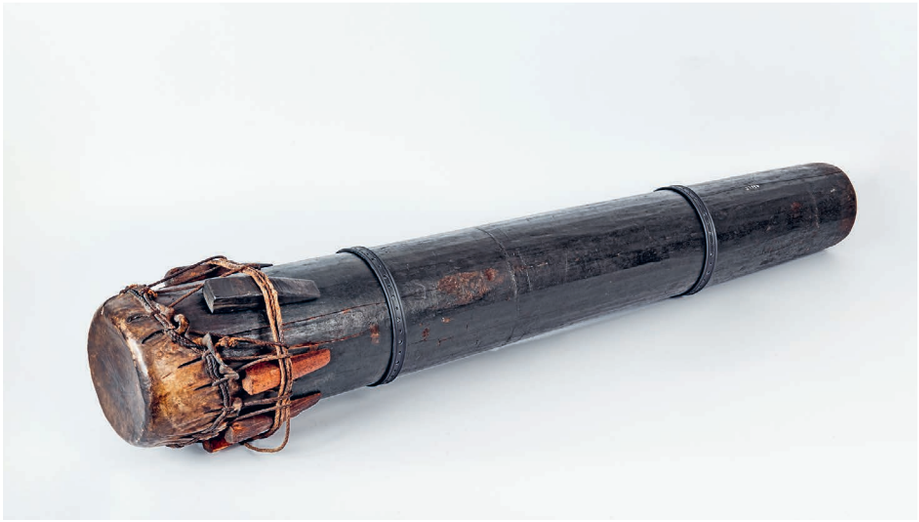


Fig. 6 Friedrich Carel Hisgen, *Johannes Kojo with Drums and Canoes on Display in the Suriname Pavilion at the Colonial Exhibition, Amsterdam*, 1883. Photomechanical print, 92 × 164 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-F-1994-12-35.

Fig. 7 A long drum called *zangklimbu* or *tumao*, c. 1889. Wood, leather, fiber, c. 126 cm. Leiden, Collectie Wereldmuseum, inv. no. TM-A-6325, supported by the Koninklijk Zoölogisch Genootschap Natura Artis Magistra.

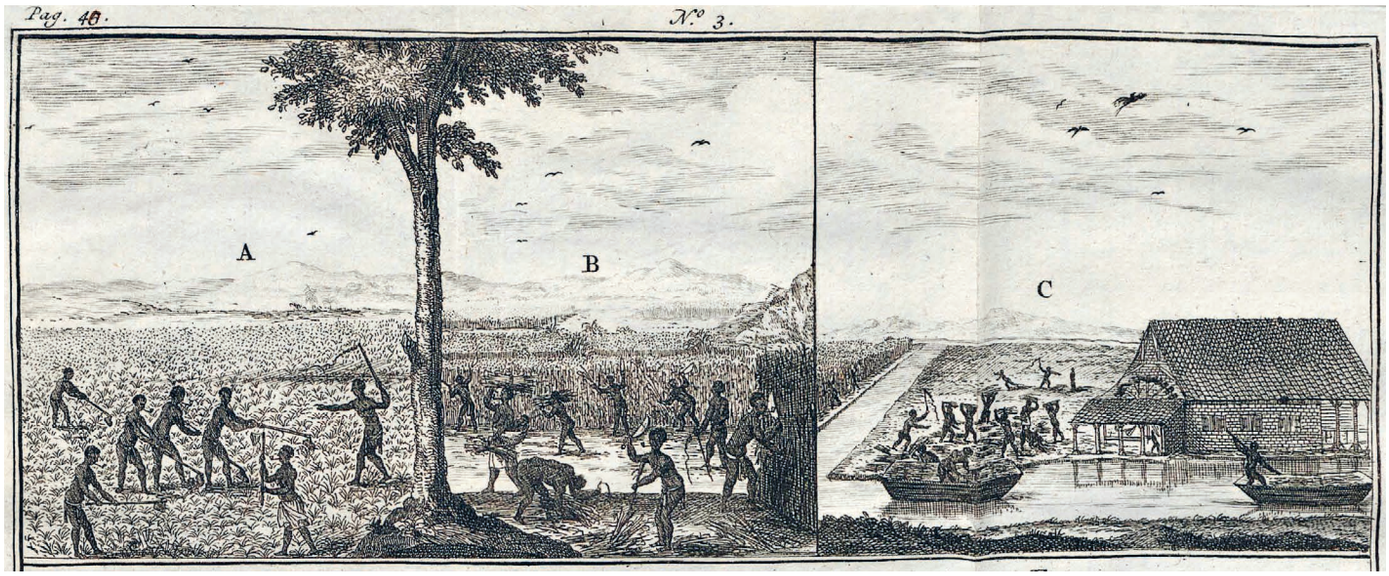


Fig. 8 *Enslaved Africans Working on the Sugar Cane Fields*, Northern Netherlands, before 1763. Etching in T. Pistorius, *Korte en zakelijke beschrijvinge van de Colonie van Zuriname*, Amsterdam 1763, plate 3. Leiden, Leiden University Libraries.

upcoming revolt or escape from the plantation on the *zangklimbu* as a 'talking' drum could have been encoded in the *apinti* drum-language. We advocate that the ceremony of the *apuku* is the condition and genesis of the scene painted by Valkenburg.

In this context of *Gathering of Enslaved People* and its very real conditions of colonialism and slavery, any characterisation of the scene as being 'joyful' is questionable. The overall composition of the scene – including the dancing women with outstretched arms, the special bandana worn by some women and the blue cloth visible on several individuals (fig. 5; cat. 70) – aligns more closely with the *apuku* ceremony, to which the *zangklimbu* is specifically dedicated. The ceremony of the *apuku* thus functioned as a spiritual gathering as well as a strategic space for the communication of plans for escape and freedom. It allowed enslaved people to organize and resist without arousing suspicion from overseers. In this ritual, the community comes together to seek protection from evil, to ask for healing during times of sickness and to request divine assistance during times of danger or crisis. In a broader sense, the *apuku* are considered to be protectors in the forest who safeguard the community from pandemics and other forms of harm. Instead of a 'joyful' dance, the ceremony of the *apuku* was serious business, especially with an upcoming revolt or escape into the forest.

This brings us to the person standing on the left side of the scene, ostensibly overseeing the above discussed ceremony (fig. 5; cat. 70). We are not the first to suggest that this person may be a *basya*, an overseer with African roots, and archival records pertaining to Palmeniribo mention a *basya* by the name of Claas.[23] The *basya* was a figure of authority within the plantation system, a supervisor who enforced the rules of the colonial regime.[24] Regarding the complex role and position of the *basya*, we bring to mind the aforementioned Ayakô, one of the overseers at Waterland, who one day decided to escape the plantation system to save his family.[25] In the painting, was this *basya* surveying the ceremony? Did he take part in the resistance movements within the enslaved community? Or both? Over his white loincloth, he has tied a blue belt (regarding significance of the colour blue, see earlier in this essay under *Busi Ingi*), and although barely visible in the painting, this person is wearing a black brimmed hat. In 1769, enslaved people, both Black and Brown, were prohibited by law from wearing stockings, shoes or brimmed hats. Breaking this law brought the penalty of corporal punishment.[26] In 1777, this prohibition was re-established, with the addition that it also applied to enslaved Indigenous Peoples.[27] It is unknown if the act of wearing a brimmed hat was already illegal in 1707, at the time Valkenburg painted this scene, or if wearing a brimmed hat was a privilege of the *basya*.

We have barely scratched the surface of the layered complexity of life at the plantations and, in particular, of Valkenburg's painting of it. For example, the above discussed *basya* has secured a smoking clay pipe under his blue belt. In the background, behind the dancers, a second clay pipe can be seen, secured under a blue belt, and a third clay pipe is lit with a red-hot piece of wood. A fourth clay pipe is laying on the ground in the foreground next to the

woman sitting on the long-drum, with pieces of firewood laying on the ground on her other side. The clay pipe and smoking in the pictorial art of the seventeenth century was a symbol for moral decay, sinfulness and immoral behaviour,[28] as is evidently displayed around the central scene. Or should these smoking clay pipes be interpreted from a vanitas-perspective in that 'life is but vain smoke'?[29] And as these smoking clay pipes (some extinguished) surround the central scene, does this symbolize the shortness of life? Or was it a seventeenth-century symbolic underlining of the foiled revolt at Palmeniribo in 1707?

In short, the ceremony of the *apuku* is more than a mere religious observance; during the colonial and slavery past, it created a critical space where enslaved people originating from different places in Central and West Africa could come together, perform rituals that affirmed their connection to the spiritual world – both of African origin and the reality of the Suriname forest – as well as activate their cultural practices to organize and communicate resistance. The drums, songs and dances were a means of invoking the protection of the spirits of the forest as much as they were a means of organizing, transmitting encoded messages and ensuring that the struggle for freedom and self-emancipation continued.

Silencing the Past

Heritage communities do praise Valkenburg for his eye for detail. Both his still lifes and landscape paintings appear to be composites of various elements that Valkenburg observed during his time in Suriname. Regardless of whether Valkenburg's work can be considered a factual representation or a moment of retrospective meaning, Valkenburg was, himself, actively engaged in creating a romanticized and sanitized image of Suriname in 1707. Our endeavor to discover new meanings in Valkenburg's landscape paintings and drawings was guided by the British anthropologist Tim Ingold's theoretical framework, what he coined the 'dwelling perspective'.[30] Thus, instead of an art historical analysis, Indigenous and Maroon perspectives guided us through Valkenburg's work. Initially, we focused so much on Valkenburg's paintings and drawings that we could not point out what was missing – even though we felt that something was missing. It was the decolonizing theoretical framework advocated by the Haitian American anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, what he coined 'Silencing the Past', that provided us the necessary insight to voice what was missing in Valkenburg's work.[31]

In his outline of what he coined 'dwelling perspective', Ingold analyzed Pieter Breugel the Elder's landscape painting *The Harvesters* (1565). Ingold stated that the harvesters are depicted the way a wealthy landowner would have viewed them: as anonymous tenders of his fields.[32] He continued, saying that 'any landowner would have had cause for satisfaction in such a fine crop, whereas the hands who sweated to bring it in may have had a rather different experience'.[33] As argued earlier, Valkenburg, too, depicted the Indigenous and African Peoples the way a wealthy landowner would have perceived

them: as anonymous tenders of his fields. In a similar vein, the people who slaved at the plantations to tend and harvest the sugar cane or other produce would have had a rather different experience than the landowners, the accountant or the painter. Nonetheless, there is a striking difference between Breugel's *The Harvesters* and Valkenburg's work: it is the very act of *harvesting crops* that is violently absent from Valkenburg's work.

Valkenburg's work depicts the mill, boiling house and sluices in minute detail;[34] yet, there is no drawing or painting that depicts the enslaved Africans harvesting crops: cutting the sugarcane and transporting the cuttings by boats to the mill and boiling house, where the sugarcane is pressed and the extracted sugarcane juice is boiled. This omission stands in stark contrast, not only to Breugel's *The Harvesters* but also to planter Thomas Pistorius's detailed descriptions of the colony's produce and the accompanying illustrations published some fifty years after Valkenburg's work (fig. 8).[35] Valkenburg thus silenced the harsh labour during the colonial and slavery period from the landscapes he created. Neither his landscape paintings and drawings nor his still lifes show the actual produce of plantation labour: sugarcane, coffee and cotton.

Notwithstanding that Valkenburg silenced the harsh conditions of harvesting at the plantations, his works hint at the presence of Indigenous people on the plantations in 1707. This gives us the opportunity to address the point that Indigenous individuals were still being enslaved in Suriname in the first half of the eighteenth century, as well as that Indigenous Peoples were not passive bystanders to the colonial endeavour but actively resisted.[36] With our contribution, we have amplified the muted voices that can still be heard through archival records and oral histories, if only one knows how to listen carefully. We have demonstrated that meaning is there to be discovered in Valkenburg's landscape paintings if only one knows how to attend to it.

Listening to the voices of people descended from the enslaved,
and in Suriname, of the self-emancipated Africans and
Indigenous Peoples depicted in Valkenburg's work as anonymous,
subaltern and often faceless figures.
Listening to the oral histories passed down through generations.
Listening to the silences...
Revealing the hardship, violence, resistance and survival
of the colonial system.
Valkenburg's detailed depictions may be valued for their accuracy
in capturing colonial architecture and exotic fruits;
yet, they also served to veil the complex, painful history
of the people who suffered through it and the active
agency of both subtle and overt resistance.
Nevertheless, Valkenburg's landscapes and still lifes provide
windows to the traumascapes resulting from
the colonial and slavery past.
These depictions of spaces of existence, endurance
and violence, albeit silenced, may offer opportunities to overcome
the effect and impact of this past in the present.
In foregrounding the stories of enslaved
Africans, self-emancipated Africans and of Indigenous Peoples
– both enslaved and free – we accentuate
the violence and the resistance to this violence that hitherto
have not received sufficient
attention in the art historical analysis of
Dirk Valkenburg's work.

Acknowledgements

We thank Hedi-Kabiten Mutu Poeketi for agreeing to an interview about Dirk Valkenburg's paintings and drawings. Due to sensitivities around certain religious themes, some information could not be shared. In these instances, we supplemented the narrative with twentieth-century sources, though these may be incomplete or flawed. We thank the many people who, over the years, have supported us in gaining insight into the immaterial Indigenous and Maroon cultural heritage. Some are left anonymous by request. We especially thank the editors for their feedback and for allowing these long-muted voices to be amplified.

1 Ingold 2000, p. 258.
2 '*Wat je ziet is niet altijd dat het de werkelijkheid is. Er zit meer achter wat niet uitgesproken wordt*,' interview with Hedi-Kabiten Mutu Poeketi, August 29, 2024 (my translation). In 2005, the Sa'amaka chieftain *granman* Belfon Aboikoni installed Mutu Poeketi as Hedi-Kabiten (chairman of the council of Sa'amaka village leaders) and representative of the Surinamese Maroon communities in Europe. The Sa'amaka are one of the six self-emancipated African communities in Suriname. Because Hedi-Kabiten Mutu is a member of the *Traditioneel Gezag* (Traditional Authority), we make reference to the interview with him about Valkenburg's work; however, other individuals may have conveyed similar information. For a summary of Maroon socio-political organization and terminology, see Duin 2023.
3 Tumarkin 2005, 2019.
4 Tebini, 11 July 1978, in Price 1983, pp. 48–49.
5 Kála, 5 July 1978, in Price 1983, p. 47.
6 Ibid., p. 48.
7 Otjútju, 13 August 1976, in Price 1983, p. 49.
8 Tebini, 28 July 1976, in Price 1983, p. 54.
9 Otjútju, 3 August 1976, in Price 1983, p. 51.
10 Ibid., 12 August 1976, in Price 1983, pp. 51–52.
11 Ibid., 13 August 1976, in Price 1983, p. 45.
12 Whitehead 1999.
13 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 212.
14 On the decoding of the internal logic of the symbolism of Maroon religion and its Gaan Gado (Supreme Being, God), brought from Africa to Suriname, see Van Velzen and Van Wetering 1988, Van Velzen 2024, and Van Lier 1940.
15 Bourdieu 1977, p. 114.
16 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 234.
17 The ceremony is called *apuku* in Sa'amaka tongo (the language of the Sa'amaka) and *ampuku* in Okanisi tongo (the language of the Okanisi). Hereafter, we will refer to the ceremony as *apuku*.
18 Herskovits 1936, p. 87.
19 The lyrics are published in Herskovits 1936, p. 569.
20 Van Lier 1940, pp. 229–230.
21 Ibid., p. 192.
22 Van Coll 1903, pp. 567–568.
23 See Dragtenstein 2004, p. 229, and in this volume, pp. 45–54. NA, 1.05.03, inv. no. 234, f. 355.
24 For a critical treatise on the role and position of the *basya*, see Balai 2024, pp. 93–101.
25 Otjútju, 13 August 1976, in Price 1983, p. 49
26 De Smidt and Van der Lee 1973, p. 820.
27 Ibid., pp. 926–927.
28 Lozano Parra 2012.
29 Psalms 39:4–11.
30 Ingold 1993, 2000.
31 Trouillot 1995.
32 Ingold 1993, 2000.
33 Ingold 2000, 2022, p. 251.
34 Duin, Dikland and Axwijk 2025.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.

Slavery as an Aquatic Still Life
Alex van Stipriaan

It cannot be a coincidence that the first Afro-Surinamese deity mentioned in the colonial sources is a powerful water goddess named Watramama. Her appearance resembles that of a mermaid, and she was believed to reside in the rivers and creeks where the plantations were located. She was a very powerful goddess who was to be respected and obeyed at all times – even when under the threat of illness or death – or else one would risk being taken to her underwater palace. For example, she could command people not to work on certain days and demand that a white hen be sacrificed to her to seek her blessings. Among the colonial observers of the time, dancing for Watramama was known as a devilish and dangerous activity and was thus forbidden by law. The consensus about Watramama's background, as several references point out, is that enslaved peoples from what is known today as Benin and Togo are said to have brought this goddess with them to Suriname.[1] In the period prior to Valkenburg's arrival in Suriname, the region of Benin was the second largest source of enslaved Africans to the colony.[2]

Whether Valkenburg knew of Watramama is unknown, but he was certainly aware of the omnipresence and importance of water in this slave colony. Water is thus rarely absent in his Surinamese works. Often, it is the river flowing past a plantation or a trench or canal on such an estate. The plantations Valkenburg depicted – Palmeneribo, Surimombo and Waterland – were all owned by the wealthy Amsterdam merchant Jonas Witsen. These will be referred to hereafter as the Witsen plantations. One sketch, however, features another plantation – the Brugman plantation, likely Roobank – located midway between the three Witsen plantations.[3]

From Africa to Suriname

The prominence of water in the lives of the enslaved began with their forced crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, a vast expanse most had never seen before. Packed tightly into the dark, foul-smelling, airless and disease-ridden holds of enormous ships, also unknown to them, they endured months of trauma. Unexpected whippings and sexual violence from men who looked terrifyingly different from them were common. On average, one in seven did not survive the journey.

Arriving in Suriname, life did not improve. On the plantations of their purchasers, mortality remained high due to the brutal treatment and unhealthy climate, rife with diseases like malaria. Every year, an average of four to five percent more enslaved Africans died than were born. Palmeneribo and Surimombo were slightly less unhealthy due to their location in a savannah-like area of slightly higher elevation. Waterland, however, was situated just

south of Paramaribo in a low-lying bend of the Suriname River (fig. 1, in Duin, Dikland and Axwijk, p. 145–146).

Waterland had 61 enslaved adults and 9 enslaved children under twelve years of age during Valkenburg's time. The neighbouring plantations, Palmeneribo and Surimombo, located on opposite sides of the Suriname River, housed 130 adults and 26 children, and 82 adults and 13 children respectively.[4]

Plantations

Once purchased and after their arrival in Suriname, the African men, women and children were transported in large rowboats along the Suriname River to their final destinations, which most would never leave. All Surinamese plantations were located along rivers or creeks, with the Suriname and Commewijne Rivers being the most important. These waterways provided fertile soil and served as easy transport routes to and from Paramaribo, the colony's connection to the rest of the world. Consequently, significant roads were rarely built, and boats with rowers were far more important than carts with horses, even within the plantations themselves.[5]

Most plantations were essentially polders – reclaimed low-land areas – created in swampy land frequently flooded by overflowing rivers and heavy rains during the two annual rainy seasons. As a result, plantations had to be diked and intersected with drainage ditches.[6] Larger plantations also had transport canals for flat-bottomed vessels. Each plantation thus had an intricate water management system, including dikes, ditches, bridges, sluices and culverts, which imposed extreme labour demands, unknown in most other Caribbean plantation colonies.

All sugar plantations had a mill, most water-powered, to crush harvested sugarcane and extract the juice, which was then boiled and distilled. Water mills were much more powerful than mills with animal traction. Since tidal differences from the ocean are felt far inland in Suriname's rivers, this natural phenomenon was used to power the water mills. When water levels were high, the sluice in the mill trench was opened for a few hours, allowing water in until the relatively broad canal was full. At low tide, the sluice was opened again, this time to let water out, which moved the blades of the water wheel hanging in the trench, setting the mill in motion. In fact, the rhythm of the river tides also determined the rhythm of labour on the plantation. Because tides are continuous, the work continued day and night during harvest time.

The construction and maintenance of this complex water management system was one of the main tasks that the enslaved were burdened with, day in and day out. Remarkably, Valkenburg, as far as is known, did not paint such a tidal water mill, perhaps because it was also a well-known phenomenon in the Netherlands.

Water Management

For the optimal operation of a plantation's water system, sluices were of vital importance. Each plantation had one or more so-called



Fig. 1 Willem de Klerk, after a drawing by Alexander Ludwich Brockmann, *View of the Coffee Plantation Marienbosch in Suriname*, 1829–1876. Oil on canvas, 75 × 97.5 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-4087.



Fig. 2 *Still Life with Pineapples and Other Fruit from Suriname in a Landscape*, 1707 (cat. 72), detail showing a transport canal with a pontoon, two Indigenous people in a canoe and an Indigenous man returning from hunting or fishing.

sluice keepers. These were older men no longer fit for field labour but capable of operating and monitoring the sluices, who often lived in a small house near the sluice. The drawing of a house on the Brugman plantation might depict such a watchman's cabin (cat. 57).

Valkenburg must have been fascinated by the water management system, particularly the sluices, as they appear in several of his paintings and drawings. He even dedicated a separate pen drawing to them, depicting an entirely wooden structure (cat. 65). In his time, these wooden sluices were increasingly being replaced by more durable stone ones (fig. 1). The sluices consisted of two vertical 'pillars' with a rotating axle between them. Stone sluices were also covered with a shingle roof. Both ends of the axle had four levers, resembling a windmill, which could be used to turn the axle. A chain attached to the axle was connected to the wooden sluice gate. Unlike Dutch sluices or locks, Surinamese sluices had only one gate, which was opened or closed vertically.

Just before major improvements were made to Waterland's water management system, Valkenburg had painted its simple wooden sluice. Shortly thereafter, a large and small drainage sluice and a large intake sluice made of stone were installed. Each had a heavy wooden gate reinforced with planks. The largest sluice was nearly eight meters long, three meters wide, and stood about three meters above the ground.[7]

The embankments flanking the sluices, known as wings, were reinforced with wood or stone and often connected by a footbridge. The trench bed beneath the sluice gate, as well as under the water wheel, was covered with stones to prevent erosion. Large stone sluices, with their wings and brick linings, required as many as 100,000 bricks, which were often brought from the Netherlands as ship ballast. These costly installations required constant maintenance. Wooden sluice gates had to be regularly greased with a fatty substance, and the stonework needed to be inspected regularly for moisture damage. Neglecting this maintenance could lead to collapse, endangering workers' lives and flooding the plantation.[8]

The impact of water in general – and water management and sluices in particular – in the lives of the enslaved is also evident in Afro-Surinamese oral traditions. Until today, there are, for example, many proverbs (*odo*) referring to this theme. One such proverb, written down during slavery by an observer, reads: *Ala de alen fadon gi liba, oten liba sa fadon na alen?* (Every day the rain falls into the river, when will the river fall into the rain?), meaning, you can always call on me, when can I call on you?[9]

Another telling example from these oral histories centres on the Groot Marseille plantation, known to its enslaved inhabitants as Jakubi, where a particularly cruel director presided, with the people working under the threat of death. Over time, the plantation's sluices began breaking regularly. Ananka, the head *basya* (Black overseer) there, informed the director that the situation was becoming unbearable. The director responded by threatening that if they did not stop the complaints he would punish Ananka and his labour gang every Sunday for six weeks with a *Spaanse bok*, a most cruel form of whipping where the victim was tied around a post.

Meanwhile, so the story continues, Ananka had discovered that the spirits of individuals murdered at the plantation were breaking the sluices in revenge. He told the director that these spirits could be appeased with a substantial offering and that a guard should be placed at the sluice. The director mockingly drank the alcoholic part of the offering himself and killed Ananka's daughter, throwing her body into the trench with the remark that her spirit would now guard the sluice. It was said that, consequently, no one dared to go near the sluice, fearing the angry spirit. The director, refusing to believe in spirits, went to investigate one evening. At the sluice, he saw a woman and shot at her. However, she was a *yorka* (spirit of the dead) who struck him down and threw him into the trench. He did not drown but eventually went mad, ran into the forest, and never returned. The story ends with this phrase, '*Na en payman di a ben abi, dati a kisi*' (He received the punishment he deserved), framing the director's fate as a culturally resonant form of retributive justice.[10]

On plantations, only a portion of the entire area was utilized. Over time, however, in response to (temporary) soil exhaustion, sugarcane fields were abandoned, and a new part of the plantation land, often further removed from the river and the complex of buildings, was impoldered. For the enslaved men, this meant constructing new dikes and dams, drainage trenches and transport canals by moving tons of heavy river clay under the burning sun – all done by hand with wooden shovels. No figures are known for the Witsen plantations of that time, but the total length of transport canals for five sugar plantations in the same region along the Suriname River expanded between the second and last quarter of the eighteenth century from an average of 3.3 kilometers to almost 8.9 kilometers.[11] These canals were about one and a half meters deep and three to five meters wide (figs. 1, 3). Additionally, cultivated fields were equipped with small drainage ditches that emptied into larger trenches, also dug by the enslaved men, that eventually drained into the river (fig. 2).

The larger plantations had two separate watersystems, one for drainage and one for transport, both of which needed to be dredged once or twice a year to prevent silting. This grueling and repetitive labour was among the most detested tasks for enslaved people. To this day, oral traditions of the Maroons – descendants of those who fled plantations and started new lives in the remote forests of Suriname's interior – specifically recount this work. An eminent researcher of Maroon oral history concluded: '[T]hese stories stand as collective witness to the perception by slaves that this particular form of supervized gang labor – moving tons of waterlogged clay with shovels – was the most backbreaking of the tasks they were called upon to accomplish'.[12] This work was a major motivation for escaping the plantation.

Plantation Residents

Each plantation housed a few white men, usually the director, one or two so-called white officer overseers, and sometimes one or a few free European craftsmen. In Valkenburg's works, none of these

figures are visible except, perhaps, for an odd man sitting with his back to the viewer, gazing over the river near the residence at Surimombo. On the plantations, there were also several enslaved Indigenous people. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, this was the case with one-third to one-half of the plantations. How many enslaved Indigenous people there were on the Witsen plantations during Valkenburg's time is unknown. Twenty-five years prior to Valkenburg's stay, Surimombo had two Indigenous men, three women and three children under the age of twelve. During Valkenburg's time, the plantation still held an 'Indian house', where Indigenous people presumably lived (fig. 4; cat. 58).

In 1707, the Witsen plantations had a total of 321 African enslaved people. Due to the lack of slave lists from that period, most of them are not known by name. This does not apply to the men who appeared in judicial records due to the well-known 1707 Palmeneribo rebellion (see Dragtenstein in this volume, pp. 45–54). They included the brothers Mingo, Wally and Baratham, and furthermore, Charle, Kees, Mando, Harry, Prins (Prince), Jappy, Joseph, Artas, Yems (James), Claas, La Fortuyn, Mingiuel (likely Miguel), Jack, Tam (Tame), Andries, Toonie, Jobbe, Joris, and Naro, all belonging to the Palmeneribo plantation, and Dorinda, a woman from the Surimombo plantation.

Part of the process of enslavement included the imposition of a new identity upon the enslaved. An enslaved African could no longer autonomously determine their own identity; everything, including their name, was dictated by their owner. Only a first name was given, akin to the naming of a domesticated animal. The name Tam, for instance, given to a man or boy on Palmeneribo, underscores this dehumanizing process. Some retained African names (for example, Mingo and Naro), likely because the white namer's imagination was poor. Most, however, received European names, and some, quite bizarre. For the enslaved, these names were meaningless sounds, for they still identified themselves with the names given in their African birthplace. Amongst themselves, they used their original African names and/or names after the day they were born or nicknames they developed in their creole languages.[13]

Enslaved Africans thus created their own reality. To survive, they had to adapt to the new conditions of plantation life, from hard labour to hierarchical and violent power dynamics. This adaptation also included learning to navigate a new ecological environment, unfamiliar flora and fauna, new dietary practices and different climate conditions. They had to interact with others from different African cultural regions, speaking different languages and practicing diverse religions, customs and music. Additionally, they had to interact with Indigenous people and Europeans. Adaptation for survival gave rise to processes often described as creolization, the blending of diverse African identities within a new context influenced by European and Indigenous elements. This resulted in new languages, with Sranan Tongo becoming the lingua franca, a more or less common Afro-religion called Winti, and other cultural elements such as cuisine, technology, medicine, dance, oral literature and social norms.[14]

However, even as Africans developed a common culture, their ethnic and cultural distinctions did not disappear. Many observers of the time noted that Africans with similar cultural backgrounds tended to group together and sometimes avoided or clashed with others. A plantation director, referring to the Watramama dance, noted: 'Because they belong to different nations who do not trust one another, this dangerous dance – always performed in secret – is never attended by the entire [slave] force; only a portion is present'.[15] Another observer, referring to a different ethnic group, noted that 'Loango-dancing [...] was performed by the Loango Negroes, male and female, and not by any others'.[16] Therefore, it is uncertain whether those depicted in Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70) represent a cross-section of the Palmeneribo population or primarily belong to a similar ethnocultural group. Of the 156 enslaved individuals on Palmeneribo in 1707, only 36 are shown participating in the festivities in Valkenburg's painting. Additionally, one of the two drummers has lighter skin, possibly indicating a white father or grandfather,[17] making him different from the others, not only in terms of origin but also, undoubtedly, with a more privileged position in the plantation hierarchy. However, he clearly knows what to play, and a woman takes care of him by refreshing his mouth, so he obviously appears to be part of the group. The same applies to the woman with the white cloth covering her breasts all the way to the right, with scarification on her upper body and arms. None of the others have such cultural-ethnic markers. Still, she is part of the group. The presence of these two individuals, obviously differing from the others, might indicate the painting reflects the diversity of the enslaved population, but it is hard to tell in a conclusive manner.

The system of slavery was built on a combination of violence and divide-and-rule policies. In this way, the small but dominant group of Europeans used every possible cultural, ethnic, social and other difference within the enslaved African majority to keep them subordinated. Treason was stimulated and groups as well as individuals were pitted against each other. For instance, those of mixed European and African ancestry were given superior positions in the hierarchy. They often became artisans or house servants and were exempted from the hard fieldwork.

At the same time, resistance and rebellion persisted throughout the slavery era. Acts ranged from subtle sabotage to open revolt. Frank Dragtenstein's contribution to this volume vividly illustrates this, and Valkenburg himself played an active role in the 1707 Palmeneribo uprising, which resulted in four executions. Though that specific rebellion failed, a few years later, a group managed to escape Palmeneribo and Surimombo and joined the Maroons, forming the basis of the Dómbi-*lô*, one of the twelve clans of the Saamaka Maroons.[18] Those depicted in *Gathering of Enslaved People* (cat. 70) may include the founders of the Dómbi-*lô*.[19] Similarly, Ayakô, one of the founding fathers of the Matjáu-*lô*, can be linked to the Waterland plantation.[20]

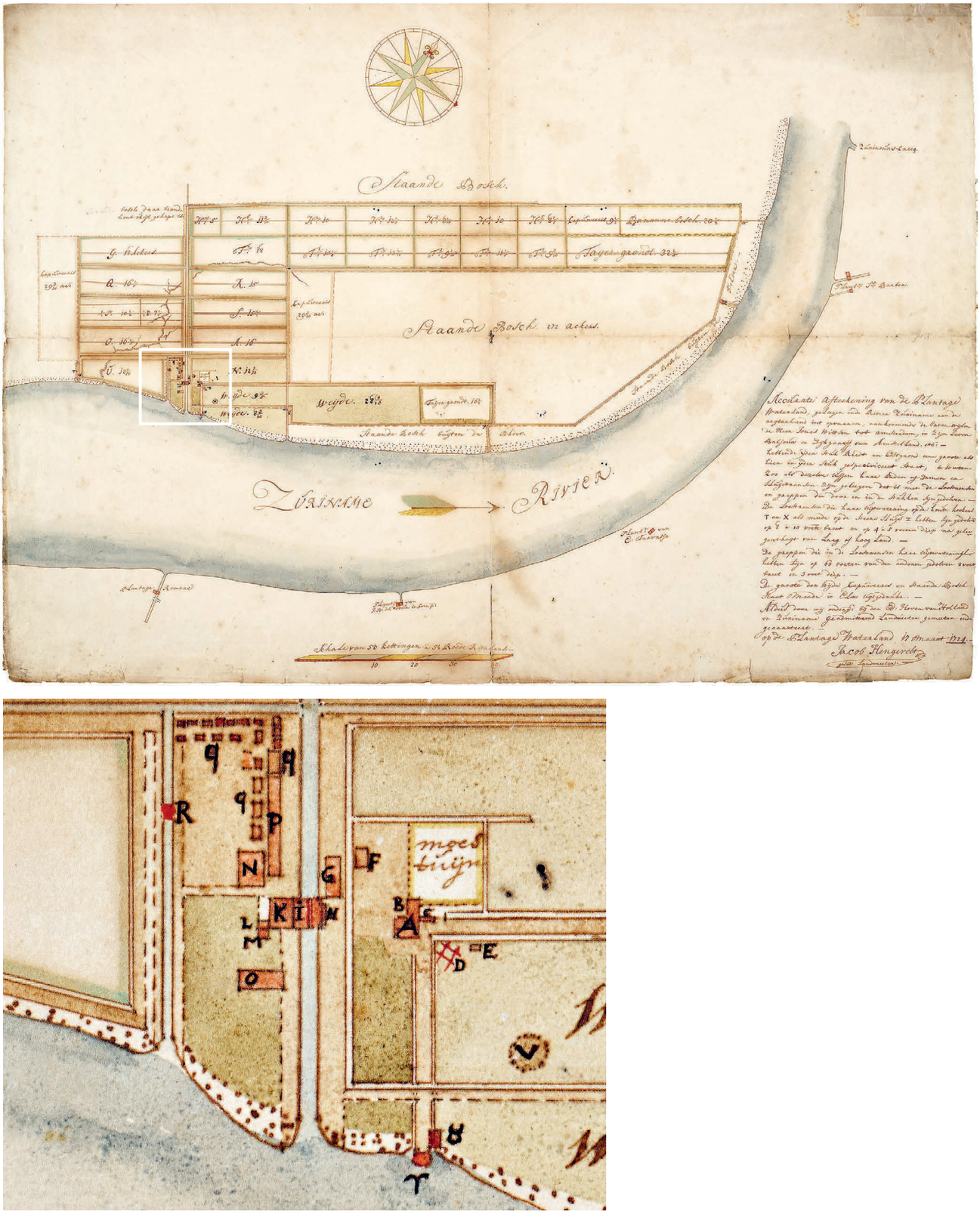


Fig. 3 Above: Jacob Hengevelt, *Accurate afteekening van de Plantage Waterland, geleegen inde Rivier Zuriname aan de regterhand int opvaaren* [...] (Accurate Depiction of the Waterland Plantation, Located on the Suriname River on the Right Side Going Upstream), 1724, in the area under cultivation, the thick lines are transport canals, north is up. Map, pen, ink and watercolour on paper, 59 × 64 cm. Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, inv. no. 102.14.07.

Below: Detail of the complex of plantation buildings along the watermill canal.
A (on the right): the plantation house
K, I (middle, partly built over the canal) the sugarmill and boilinghouse
Q (in the back): slave cabins
R (to the left): sluice

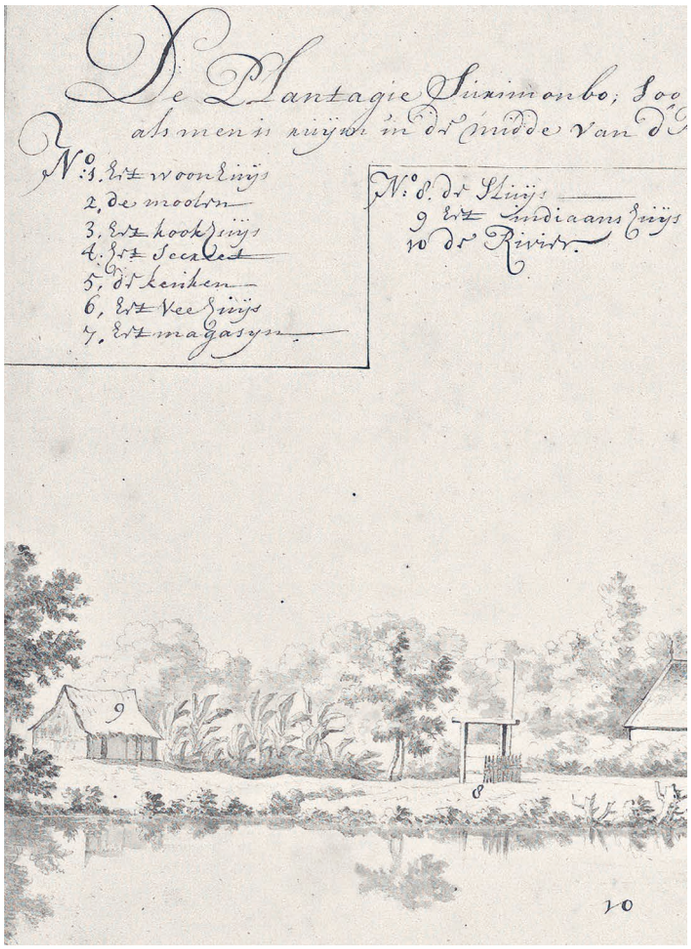




Fig. 4 *People Navigating the Suriname River in Front of the Surimombo Plantation, Suriname*, 1708 (cat. 58), detail showing, on the left, '*het indiaans huijs*' (the Indian house), listed in the legend under number '9'.

Fig. 5 *View of the Main Residence and a Barn on the Surimombo Plantation, Suriname*, 1708 (cat. 61), detail showing a man from behind wearing a hat, likely a European person, sitting next to the residence.

On the Water

Valkenburg's *Plantation Waterland* painting (cat. 68) depicts various watercraft, highlighting the river's central role in Surinamese transport. It shows four types of water transport. On the far left, in the shade, is a *pont* or *pondo* with two rowers and a helmsman with an oar. Such pontoons were used to bring goods to the city or other plantations, such as molasses or raw rum (*dram*), which sugar plantations provided to other plantations. These two products were treats given to the enslaved when overseers were satisfied with their work. The pontoon is covered with a tarpaulin in case of rain.

Next to the pontoon is a *korjaar*, and on the opposite shore is another one. This was a hollowed-out tree trunk made by Indigenous or African people used for transporting people and their cargo. In this case, there is one man visible in each, probably carrying fruit or vegetables. They are likely heading to a loved one on a nearby plantation. This is the type of boat that Mingo, one of the enslaved associated with the 1707 Palmeneribo rebellion, had made, which was later destroyed in anger with an axe by Palmeneribo director Christiaan Westphaal (see Dragtenstein in this volume, p. 49). Farthest right is a larger boat with twelve Indigenous adults and two children. Such a large group in a boat without overseers or soldiers shows that they were clearly not enslaved Indigenous people and could freely travel across the river to and from their villages.

In the centre is a so-called tent boat, essentially a kind of carriage on water, with a finely crafted stern and a small cabin. Because water was the main transport route in Suriname, tent boats were the luxury transport of the colonial elite. Every plantation had at least one such boat. The cabin was often beautifully decorated and furnished with upholstered benches. The windows were usually covered with shutters to protect passengers against the sun, but they could also be left open for cooling.

Since rowing had to be done in rhythm, especially when four to eight rowers had to work together, this was one of a variety of (rhythmic) activities during slavery, like pounding coffee beans or cutting sugar cane, where singing often occurred – not as an expression of joy but to make the work easier. At the same time, singing strengthened the sense of community and was a way to express emotions and send messages in song form to fellow enslaved people on passing plantations. A lead singer (*trokiman*), such as the helmsman, would create the song, often on the spot, and the rowers would respond with a verse as confirmation. However, on occasions when rowers passed places where spirits were believed to reside, such as the locations of drowned people or, possibly, the home of the water goddess Watramama, they would suddenly fall silent and row slowly. No matter how much the plantation managers might urge them to row, they would not continue – for the rowers, respect for the spirits and gods came first.

Too Good to Be True

Valkenburg's Suriname paintings are as much about what is not shown as what is. For instance, not a single white person is depicted

in his paintings and drawings, except, perhaps, for the depicted near the residence at Surimombo (fig. 5; cat. 61). This absence underscores the apartheid on which slavery was based. The same applies to violence, one of the other basic components of the slavery system, combined with divide-and-rule-tactics. While several paintings and drawings depict enslaved people, they seem to be simply walking around or hanging out, with children by their side – everything looks harmonious and peaceful. In three instances, a woman can be observed walking with a jug or basket on her head, either to or from the water (cats. 64, 70–71). Except for the rowers, no one is working, even though the essence of slavery is hard labour.

And nowhere is the great silk cotton tree depicted, with its large iron ring, that visitors to Palmeneribo in the 1920s were shown, accompanied by the statement that ancestors were tied to it to be whipped – the ring was still there at that time.[21] Nowhere is there any depiction of the sexual exploitation of Black women, though the prominent breasts in *Gathering of Enslaved People* (cat. 70) and *View of the Main Residence, Kitchen, and Cattle House on the Palmeneribo Plantation, with Enslaved People on the Walkway, Suriname* (cat. 64) could be an indication of the lust with which white men viewed Black women. All the bodies in *Gathering of Enslaved People* appear healthy and well-fed. None of the shiny, smooth bodies show any scratches, not from hard fieldwork, moving through thorny nature, nor from the whip or slave brand. There is also no hint of enslaved people resisting their fate or fighting against slavery, even though Valkenburg himself played a role in the uprising at Palmeneribo, which resulted in four death sentences.

What *Gathering of Enslaved People* (cat. 70) and, in fact, all Valkenburg's plantation paintings show are still lifes of the white man's dreams that, however, never come true. Witsen wanted an image of his exotic possessions in Suriname, something he could frame and hang in the cabinet of curiosities in his Amsterdam city palace to show off. That's exactly what he got from Valkenburg, but it had little to do with reality, especially the lives of the African inhabitants of the plantations. It has often been claimed that *Gathering of Enslaved People* is at least a special ethnographic illustration of slave culture at that time.[22] But even that is not true. As mentioned, only a small number of the enslaved people are shown. Who is missing? The depicted individuals are mostly young and in the prime of their lives. Who is not depicted? For the depth and liveliness of the image, the woman in the foreground works well, but in Afro-culture, it was unthinkable for a woman to touch a drum, let alone sit on it, and with a child leaning on it, too.[23] The drum is a means to communicate with the gods and spirits, not just a decorative instrument.

On the right, a young man and woman are kissing openly while her baby is strapped to the woman's back, and his hand is, invisibly, at her crotch. On the far left, a young man is publicly touching a woman's large hanging breasts and her crotch. But such public intimacies, from kissing to touching, were considered highly inappropriate in Afro-culture.[24] And except for the woman with the hanging breasts, all the other women's breasts are exaggeratedly

prominent, though some are covered with a kind of brassiere or cloth. Almost everyone is young, beautiful, and has a taut, shiny body. On the one hand, taken together, it creates an image of the primitive 'Other', who lives shamelessly and is oversexualized; on the other hand, it primarily shows white lust.

A rhythm is being struck on the drums, but very unusually, no one is singing; a few people seem to be dancing, but most are engaged in other activities or with each other. Everyone is beautifully dressed in colourful clothes, bead necklaces, earrings and arm amulets, but this only seems to highlight the glossy Black nudity. Also, the men seem to be presented as sexual objects, as the three most visible are painted from behind, frontally and in profile with no more than a rolled-up piece of cloth between their buttocks and a small piece of cloth around their genitals, so their entire body can be displayed in all its strength and beauty. Again, Valkenburg emphasized the primitiveness, sexuality and, in Western eyes, almost animal-like strength of the 'Other'. He naturally knew exactly what his client wanted and what Witsen's guests in his Amsterdam canal house wished to revel in. It is even thinkable that he paid – in kind – a group of enslaved people to dance for him in order to create this 'cheerful' painting so that his client could see how satisfied the enslaved on his plantations were.

Of course, various ethnographic elements can also be observed. For instance, the white banner from the building, the raised calabash and the smoke in the background could suggest an offering at a shrine, with the drums calling on the gods. However, religious dances were usually performed at night, and of course, Valkenburg needed daylight for a lively painting. Maybe this was another sign that this performance was deliberately staged. Moreover, this scene is still too peaceful, too harmonious, almost too clean. It doesn't evoke the feeling of hearing the drumbeats or smelling the sweat, let alone of people who are getting into a state of ecstasy, dancing for their gods. Despite its apparent movement, it is actually a static painting, a still life of shiny Black bodies.

With this in mind and knowing that Valkenburg's oeuvre consists mostly of still lifes, it is not hard to see his other Surinamese plantation paintings and some drawings as still lifes as well. In definitions of the still life, the word *inanimate* is always present. That is exactly what Valkenburg shows: an inanimate depiction of a dreamt reality. The abundant nature primarily serves as the backdrop. The other drawings are mainly technically descriptive in nature. Where Valkenburg – probably unconsciously – does touch upon the reality of a life in slavery is in the omnipresence of water in the lives of those who were the permanent residents of the plantations.

1 See Van Stipriaan 2007, pp. 280–286.
2 Ibid., p. 281. The largest group came from the area of Gabon, Congo and North Angola.
3 At the end of the seventeenth century, Roobank was half owned by a man named Brugman and his brother-in-law or son-in-law. See Suriname Heritage Guide: *Suriname Heritage Guide Database*, accessed on 15 November 2024.
4 NA, acc. no. 1.05.03, inv. no. 235, scans 66 and 67; Van der Linde 1966, pp. 75–76; Kapper 2010.
5 Lack of wind and strong currents hindered transport by sail boats.
6 *Loostrenzen* in Surinamese-Dutch.
7 NA, acc. no. 1.05.11.14, inv. no. 253, pp. 342–370. Waterland plantation inventory, 1780.
8 De Eensgezindheid 1804 , pp. 103–104, 137–139.
9 Oostindie and Van Stipriaan 1995, p. 89.
10 De Drie 1985, pp. 39–47.
11 Plantation inventories of L'Espérance, Vredenburg, Maagdenburg, Bleyendaal and Woutvliet/Livorno in 1720–1753 and 1774–1786: NA, acc. no. 1.05.11.14, inv. no. 155, pp. 125–126; inv. no. 704, pp. 205–206 ; inv. no. 692, pp. 222–223; inv. no. 267, pp. 60–61; inv. no. 161, pp. 73–74; inv. no. 702, pp. 175–176; inv. no. 171, pp. 177–178 ; inv. no. 241, pp. 649–650; inv. no. 189, pp. 263–264; inv. no. 701, pp. 390–391.
12 Price 1983, p. 48.
13 See Van Stipriaan 2008.
14 See Van Stipriaan 2002.
15 Blom 1787, p. 389 (my translation).
16 Stedman 1988 (1790), p. 292.
17 White men systematically abused enslaved women; Black men who had intercourse with white women were sentenced to death.
18 See Van der Molen 2018, accessed on 15 November 2024.
19 Price 1983, p. 108.
20 Ibid., pp. 57, 108–111.
21 Junker 1922–1923, p. 473.
22 Brienen 2008, pp. 246–248.
23 See Hedi-Kabiten Mutu Poeketi's response to seeing this scene, in Duin and Axwijk in this volume, p. 168.
24 See Winkels 2007–2008, pp. 38–39.

Meta Race Play and Historical Rescue

Will Furtado Fredo

What would you be doing on the eve of a rebellion? Would you be quietly waiting for the get-go, or would you be trying to dissimulate your internal fear, rage, hope and excitement? In the picture *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70), the figures seem oblivious to the painter's gaze; no one looks at the viewer, and the only acknowledged gaze is Valkenburg's voyeurism. English critic John Berger suggested that every image involves two people: the person who creates or presents it, and the person who views it.[1] In this sense, every picture is unfinished, and every new viewer adds another 'touch'.

Driven by the desire to immerse myself in my own Afro-Indigenous ancestry – factual and fabulated – my research has led me to the coasts of Africa and Latin America. I have visited Gorée island, where a large number of enslaved people were shipped from, as well as San Basilio de Palenque, the Maroon town in Colombia that was the first locality on the American continent to gain independence from a European crown in 1691.[2] In Brazil, I learned about the Maroon communities called *quilombos* and their African origin. Where there is oppression, there is resistance. So wherever the slave trade was present, there were Maroon communities: in Suriname, Mexico and so on. Beatriz Nascimento, the Brazilian historian, poet and activist, contextualized Maroon communities as 'alternative social systems organized by Black people'.[3] Hence, all Maroon communities shared aspects from their oppression, as well as resistance strategies.

An example of some of these strategies included capoeira, the Afro-Brazilian martial art created by enslaved people who disguised it as a dance. Other strategies included carnival, the popular celebration that takes place across Latin America, especially in the Caribbean and Brazil. Originating during the colonial era, these festivities evolved as acts of defiance against oppressive systems, blending African traditions with European customs in bids to circumvent colonial restrictions of self expression. In Trinidad and Tobago, Calypso music emerged among enslaved people, who used it to communicate with each other while mocking the slave masters.[4] These strategies went on to influence Black radical thought today, for instance, with the concept of fugivity (the practice and philosophy of escape, evasion and resistance to captivity, surveillance and domination), whereas Caribbean theorist Édouard Glissant theorized the right to opacity and to not being understood.[5] This camouflaged refusal to comply with imposed frameworks, systems and demands of recognition or participation in oppressive structures is what could

most likely be seen in the moments before slave revolts. These concerns went on to influence the motto of the legendary Brazilian Maroon town of Quilombo dos Palmares: 'Grouping, organization, distribution, and love.'[6]

What Valkenburg saw and depicted is not the same as what the enslaved people saw, nor what I, to a certain extent, see. However, the picture Valkenburg painted doesn't only refer to what he saw on the surface, on the material level, but also to what he felt deep inside, on a subjective level. Looking at this dynamic from a queer lens, Valkenburg's choice of gestures, positions, body parts and their shapes also point to a gaze of desire and the subsequent construction of eroticism. Moreover, if we think through the theorist Tina Campt, we can add a third person to the dynamic of every picture: the subject being depicted, including their interiority.[7] What were these soon-to-be Maroons thinking? Were they simply drinking and dancing to disguise their escape plans, or were they simultaneously celebrating their upcoming escape, or something else unrelated? Was the man on the right simply making out with his lover, carrying their child, or was he kissing her goodbye, or was he whispering in her ear how she herself could follow him once the child has grown older?

Glistening black skin, sweat, bare breasts, muscular bodies, physical touch: given the sensuous elements of the image, we have to speculate on the interiority of the image-maker. Very likely, the painter himself perceived the erotics of the scene he later depicted, which he did with more or less imagination. In the end, this painting was never revealed alongside his other paintings. Instead, it was relegated to a Wunderkammer. And we can speculate that part of the reason was because, upon setting eyes on the painting, the viewer would also feel in themselves the erotic charge. And we have to question why they were so afraid of it. We can't bypass the history of the oversexualization of the Black body. Yet, simultaneously, we can face directly the transgression such an encounter engenders in the image-maker and the viewer – *transgressive desire*. However, these are not neutral images, and neither is this arousal. The sexualization of Black bodies was placed in the colonial binary whereby, to the white gaze, Black bodies were supposed to be simultaneously abject and overly sexual; untouchable, yet readily available.

The Spanish philosopher Paul B. Preciado suggests that no dogma can resist the ordeal of the crossing.[8] Yet, dogmas are precisely what colonialism has tried so hard to maintain and so successfully to this day. When racial borders are crossed, it is most pertinent to provide an answer to the question of what happens inside of us, in the sense of what subjectivities may arise from that crossing. Some of the subjectivities that arose from racial crossing in the historical context depicted in this painting may be 'race play' (the enactment of racial dynamics in sexual contexts) and bondage, discipline, dominance and submission, and sadomasochism (BDSM). So here, I read this painting in the context of race play, and I place these potentially transgressive transformations in the context of the 'historical rescue'[9] that Nascimento emphasized was necessary in the reconstruction of Black identity by revisiting history from the perspective of Black subjects.



Fig. 1 François-Auguste Biard, *The Slave Trade (Slaves on the West Coast of Africa)*, c. 1833. Oil on canvas, 162.5 × 228.6 cm. Kingston upon Hull, Wilberforce House Museum, inv. no. KINCM:1935.1.





Fig. 2 Headshot of a white museum visitor with a winged cupid in leather gear floating near his ear. Still from Isaac Julien, *The Attendant*, 1993.

Fig. 3 Headshot of a Black museum attendant wearing a security guard cap, with a winged cupid in leather gear floating near his ear. Still from Isaac Julien, *The Attendant*, 1993.





Fig. 4 A Black male museum attendant in a black uniform walking past a scene featuring several men in BDSM leather gear, framed in a classical golden frame. Still from Isaac Julien, *The Attendant*, 1993.

Fig. 5 Two white men in full black leather and four semi-naked Black men in BDSM gear, looking at a semi-naked Black man lying with his eyes closed on a sofa. Still from Isaac Julien, *The Attendant*, 1993.





Fig. 6 A Black male museum attendant lying on the floor with his trousers down to be whipped by a semi-naked white male museum visitor in BDSM gear standing in front of two drawings by Tom of Finland. Still from Isaac Julien, *The Attendant*, 1993.

Fig. 7 A semi-naked white male museum visitor in BDSM gear lying on the floor to be whipped by a Black male museum attendant in a black uniform standing in front of two drawings by Tom of Finland. Still from Isaac Julien, *The Attendant*, 1993.

The journey of this type of crossing is the subject matter of Isaac Julien's short film *The Attendant* (1993). The film starts with a shot of *Slaves on the West Coast of Africa* (fig. 1), a painting from 1833 by French painter François-Auguste Biard (1799–1882), a known abolitionist. The work depicts a slave market scene. Yet, it does so with ravaging eroticism in an orientalist style – a style known for its exoticising and sexualizing white gaze. In it, a topless, muscular white man oversees the traffic, where a white sailor in a turban grabs the arm of a topless Black woman in bondage in order to mark her, topless Black men are being whipped, and a passive and melancholic dark-skinned woman wearing beautiful jewelry and a head scarf bears her perky, naked breasts.

Julien's film picks up on the erotic charge of the painting. In *The Attendant*, the eponymous protagonist is an older, Black male museum guard who, upon inspecting a bag of kinky paraphernalia carried by a young, white museum visitor clad in black leather, unlocks reciprocal desire. This desire is depicted in the form of cupids in BDSM gear circling around their heads (figs. 2–3). In the following scene, we see Jamaican-born British sociologist and theorist Stuart Hall walking past the aforementioned painting, which points to the incoming decolonial reading – the historical rescue – of the painting. In the next scene, the attendant walks past a framed image of men in BDSM leather gear and chains (fig. 4). Inside the frame is a live tableaux of Black men and white men dressed in leather, frozen in time, looking down at a fallen Black man wearing a leather harness. The composition of the picture is classical and painterly (fig. 5). The performance of the actors points to a history that is alive and a history that can be reclaimed and reinterpreted today.

Regarding race play between Black and white people, in the contemporary context, the theorist Ariane Cruz says that 'race play elucidates how race plays us in multiple ways. Race is imagined as a stable, sovereign truth, when in fact, it is a dynamic and fluid site of demarcation'.[10] Regarding historical images, what's interesting is to speculate on the play that happens between the viewer, the painting and the painter. In another film scene, we see the white museum visitor, now only in leather gear, whipping the Black attendant, who lies on the floor (fig. 6). On the wall hang two framed pictures of Tom of Finland's images featuring interracial erotic scenes. In the scene that follows, the setting remains but the roles are inverted – the Black attendant whips the white visitor, who is lying on the floor, partly naked, in full BDSM gear (fig. 7). Julien's images have the potential to finish what Valkenburg's images potentially started – to rescue history through racialized erotics and through the subjectivities it rouses. Here, I specifically talk about racialized erotic images that allow for new interpretations that disturb colonial dynamics. For instance, it could be argued that these subjectivities led to the notion of consent in BDSM and in sexual relations at large or that race play is primarily a form of queer pleasure.[11]

The Hegelian master-slave dialectic insists that the master needs the slave for the master's own recognition of being in a position of power. However, Black queerness disrupts that reading and proposes

that when you erase the border between master and slave on a sexual level, there is no longer a need for that recognition. Yet, I argue here that for this racial transgression to be *actually* queer, there must be the production of subjectivities that challenge the exact system that deemed the act a transgression in the first place.[12] Here, queer is not the act itself but, rather, about how the act can change us as people, in how it can aid us in challenging dominant structures and, consequently, how that can change the world – the exact thing colonialism and capitalism suppress by attempting to crystallize history.[13]

Race play makes fun of racism. It has the potential to expose its façade, debunking its claims as fallacy and showing race for what it is: a construction in flux in a game of power. This parody of racism is perhaps the reason why Valkenburg's painting was relegated to the Wunderkammer in an attempt to suppress the subjectivities that can arise from racial crossing and the embrace of the abject, in the eyes of the colonial project. The sensuality of Valkenburg's painting asks what happens *inside* of us when race play happens *to* us. This way, *Gathering of Enslaved People* is an open invitation to a meta race play between the painter, the painted and the viewer that is activated by the racialized erotics of the picture.[14] Ultimately, the play of race in the painting's race play is a mechanism through which we have the chance – not to rewrite history but, rather, to rescue history (the painting included) from the colonialism that produced it.

1 Berger 1972.
2 Escalante 1996, pp. 79–80.
3 Nascimento 2021, p. 109.
4 *World-Wide Dances* n.d.
5 D'Souza 2024.
6 Nascimento 2021, p. 220.
7 In *Listening to Images*, Tina Campt proposes a method of image analysis based on listening to their rhythms, vibrations and silences. Rather than merely looking at an image and seeing oppression, Campt teaches us to perceive subtle gestures of resistance.
8 Preciado 2020.
9 Pinn 2022, pp. 133–150.
10 Cruz 2016, p. 75.
11 Ibid., pp. 116, 137.
12 In *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, José Esteban Muñoz argues that true queerness does not fully exist in the now because this world is structured by heteronormativity, capitalism and racial exclusion. For him, queerness is something we strive towards, a future possibility where radical freedom and non-normativity can flourish, where we've dismantled the systems that deny queerness today. Muñoz sees queerness as a form of hope, something we are always moving towards. He insists that queerness is not just about identity or desire but about a radical way of imagining life outside of dominant structures.
13 bell hooks articulated that queerness transcends one's sexual partners, emphasizing it as a state of being that challenges and redefines societal norms. She described being queer as 'not about who you're having sex with – that can be a dimension of it – but queer as being about the self that is at odds with everything around it and has to invent and create and find a place to speak and to thrive and to live'.
14 This 'viewer' can also be a reader or listener.

Visual Culture

Dirk Valkenburg's Coconuts

Benjamin Schmidt

Introduction: Coconuts on Plantations

Of the two comparably-sized Suriname paintings by the Dutch artist Dirk Valkenburg – one in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, measuring about 53 by 46 centimetres, titled simply (by the museum) *Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation in Suriname* (cat. 69); the other in the Statens Museum for Kunst, National Gallery of Denmark, a mildly larger circa 58 by 47 centimetres, recently retitled (again, per the museum) *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Surinam* (cat. 70)[1] – the first registers as a quietly serene landscape, with an air of calm drifting above a site of lush greenery, while the second is a veritably cacophonous and far more animated scene, a boisterous crowd of revellers pulsating across the middle portion of the canvas. The two paintings, however, also share certain features, apart from their similar proportions: most obviously, plantation houses, in both cases discreetly set in the background, and, perhaps less obviously, coconut trees, in both cases centrally planted in the very heart of the compositions. The colonial buildings would seem to be par for the course – Valkenburg had been tasked by his patron, the plantation owner and art collector Jonas Witsen, expressly to paint his properties in South America. Yet why the coconut trees? One simple explanation is that they may have grown there – quintessential tropical flora in the Surinamese tropics. Yet coconut palms were not, in fact, indigenous to equatorial America and not necessarily central to the vistas of Witsen's properties.[2] Another justification is that they were, or by this time had become, quintessentially exotic things, at least in the eyes of Europeans, the intended audience for these paintings. For coconuts had come to signify the colonial world for Valkenburg and his patrons; and the staging of that world – in the form of paintings, in this case, though also in prints, drawings, decorative maps, and the numerous other genres of fine and applied arts enlisted to represent the non-European world – reflexively included exotic props, the coconut tree being among the most preeminent of these.

This essay seeks to situate the Suriname paintings of Dirk Valkenburg in their art-historical and cultural-historical context in order to gain a better understanding of the ways early modern Europeans, and the Dutch in particular, presented and perceived the colonial world. This took place notably through visual media and also through material objects, and coconuts, it turns out, featured prominently in this process. It would be truly impossible to describe all of the ways Europeans displayed, looked at, and consumed the non-European spaces that they had seized and claimed as their own

in this age of overseas expansion and colonial empire. Valkenburg, moreover, contributed to a regime of representation that was well underway by the time he painted Suriname in the early eighteenth century. He deployed established motifs and conventional forms, and he adopted well-established genres and recognizable styles to his work. Coconuts, in all events, were front and centre – not only to Valkenburg's paintings, where they serve as the framing device, for example, for *Indigenous Inhabitants* (cat. 69) but also, and more broadly, to the task of showcasing the colonized tropics for European consumers. They functioned as a kind of metaphor or metonym for those colonial spaces – places from which coconuts often derived and places where coconuts were commonly cultivated to feed and support the plantation workforce. And they served as a way to embellish, or decorate, landscapes of harsh and exploitative labour. The ubiquitous coconuts in these colonialscapes (to coin a term) rendered the scene more pleasing to the European viewers (and patrons) of these visual artifacts, an audience less interested in glimpsing grim plantation labour, depicted genuinely 'after life' – *naer het leven*, as Valkenburg's contract explicitly stipulates – than in seeing 'objects of aesthetic delectation' (as the art historian Rebecca Parker Brienen has referred to the subject matter of Valkenburg's Suriname paintings).[3] They facilitated the reception of plantation scenes, rendering them more amenable to commissioning patrons, who were naturally disinclined to showcase their overseas properties as loci of toil and abuse.

Highlighting the coconuts of Dutch Suriname – both of the painted variety and the actual material artifacts, not uncommonly sculpted into decorative cups for wealthy collectors such as Jonas Witsen – offers a way to think about early modern European strategies of representing the non-European world and the discomfiting realities of settler colonialism. Valkenburg presents a case study, and coconuts a productive angle, for understanding Europe's assimilation of those colonial regimes they operated at a distance. Paintings of coconut-festooned landscapes, along with tangible, actual carved coconuts – often illustrated, in their sculpted imagery, with plantation vignettes that depicted coconut palms – grant insight, as well, into an early modern European style that might be called 'decorative colonialism'. Coconut trees not only frame and centre plantation *scenes*; they also facilitate their viewers' assimilation of the plantation *regime* by rendering a site of enslaved labour into something more overtly tropical, pastoral and bucolic. Insofar as coconuts had long circulated in premodern Europe as an exotic specimen – treasured for their rarity, often embellished by narrative carvings, also mounted in intricately worked silver and ultimately collected for the princely *Kunstkamer* – they also registered as a material art. Seen in this broader context, coconuts reframe the colonial economy as something quasi decorative – thus, 'decorative colonialism'. Valkenburg's paintings were not unique in their representation of Europe's colonies and the economic system that supported them. They do stand out, however, for being early representations of plantations produced explicitly for the owner of the plantations and, in that sense, furnish keen insights into how

early modern Dutch colonialists – their own requests for authentically *naer het leven* images notwithstanding – wished to be seen.

From Wonder to Workhorse: The Itinerario of the Premodern Coconut

A Surinamese coconut is a red herring, botanically and geographically speaking, as the specimen in question is neither a nut nor remotely native to Suriname. The fruit of the palm *Cocos nucifera* has earned a reputation as the Swiss Army knife of the plant kingdom for its remarkable versatility; in one neat package, it furnishes food and water, fuel and utensil. In its natural state, it can even serve as a flotation device, and the coconut is still used in various maritime settings for its natural buoyancy. Yet it is not a nut. Phytologically speaking, the coconut is a drupe – a stone fruit, akin to a cherry or peach – the seed of which (technically, the fruit's endosperm) develops edible cellular layers; these constitute the white, so-called meat of the coconut. The rock-hard, chocolate-brown endocarp that shields the meat (and can be carved into a decorative cup) is itself surrounded by an inedible fibrous mesocarp, or coir, which has long been woven by traditional cultivators of the coconut into ropes of remarkable durability.[4] Perhaps most valued is the interior liquid, the so-called water of the young, green coconut (technically the endosperm, albeit not yet solidified), which simultaneously provides fluid nourishment and ensures the fruit's buoyancy – hence the coconut's long-established value as maritime fodder and nautical device.[5]

These traditional uses, it bears emphasizing, had no place in the American tropics, since coconuts are not native to the Western Hemisphere and certainly not to the beaches of the Atlantic. Coconuts were first cultivated on islands in Southeast Asia and, perhaps also, on the adjacent Southeast Asian continent. In the Indian Ocean, the southern periphery of India also hosted early sites of coconut cultivation, yet plant geneticists have demonstrated the priority of the more easterly (Southeast Asian) subpopulation of the fruit.[6] In all events, coconuts did not reach the Western Pacific until Austronesians conveyed them about a thousand years ago. And they landed on Atlantic shores only in the sixteenth century when the Portuguese brought them, first, to the coasts of West Africa and, later, to Brazil, in both cases with the goal of seeding their colonial settlements with this valuable, multi-purpose crop, which would soon be enlisted to feed the labour that kept their plantations humming. The coconut, that is to say, became by the second half of the sixteenth century a quintessential colonial crop, transplanted expressly – just as breadfruit would be in the eighteenth century, under the auspices of Sir Joseph Banks and the British empire – as a form of imperial provender.[7]

Before it became a mainstay of the tropical plantation and a critical ingredient in the stew of European colonialism, however, the coconut spiced up the *Wunderkammern* of Renaissance collectors and, before that, medieval church treasuries.[8] In these settings, the

far-fetched coconut cup registered as a wonder: an exotic object (in the technical sense of *foreign*: cf. the Greek ἐξωτικός) identified as rare on account of its foreign provenance. It was typically recorded in the archives as an 'Indian cup' – the name 'coconut', from the Portuguese and Spanish *coco*, or bugbear, a reference to the ghostly, face-like appearance of the base of the coconut shell, came into regular usage only in the sixteenth century[9] – and the vessel formed from a hollowed-out coconut shell was understood in this earlier period to possess miraculous powers. It could, for instance, neutralize poisoned wine imbibed from the cup. These wondrous 'nuts' of obscure foreign origin, roughly associated with a distant 'India', were, moreover, exceedingly rare. Only 33 coconut goblets have survived from the period circa 1250 to 1520.[10] Their rarity and singularity commanded special treatment, and medieval goldsmiths were habitually enlisted to enhance a cup's appearance and status with exquisitely wrought mounts of gold and silver.

By the early sixteenth century, in the wake of Vasco da Gama's sea voyage to the Malabar Coast (today Kerala), coconuts began to arrive in European ports with greater frequency, and the meaning of the *Cocos nucifera* expanded, accordingly. While observers continued to marvel over the 'Indian nut', as it was still commonly categorized – Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), for example, expressed astonishment upon witnessing a full six of these '*calikutishe Dinge*' (Calicut things) in Antwerp – they also began to admire the manifold uses of this botanical workhorse.[11] Ludovico di Varthema (c. 1470–1517), who traveled across Asia in the early sixteenth century, drew special attention to what he regarded as 'the most fruitful plant' in all of South Asia, the amazingly productive coconut, and he judiciously enumerated for his readers 'ten useful things' derived from this stalwart species.[12] Indeed, the coconut's remarkable utility became a trope in the literature, especially among those who passed through Portuguese colonial factories scattered across Asia. This group included the Portuguese physician-cum-ethnobotanist Garcia da Orta, whose *Colóquios dos simples e drogas da India* (1563) circulated widely in Europe, notably in the illustrated Latin translation by the Flemish scholar Carolus Clusius (1605) and the Dutch merchant-adventurer Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, who underscored in his famous *Itinerario* (1596) the tremendous commercial potential of the coconut, describing its several applications for industry as well as nourishment.[13]

For Van Linschoten, the species in question might still go under the label 'Indian' nut (although he did sometimes refer to it as a 'Coquos' nut) and remained affiliated with South and Southeast Asia.[14] Yet the tides were shifting, both rhetorically and colonially speaking, as more and more coconuts were being transported and cultivated across the Atlantic, particularly in the western outpost of the Portuguese empire that was Brazil. The durability of its prior, pre-colonial meaning – a wondrous 'Indian nut', collected for the princely *Wunderkammer* – only underscores the swiftness of the coconut's reconfiguration in the European imaginary. It also highlights the tactical use of the coconut, both in terms of its cultural meaning and its colonial utility – two things not unrelated. Van





Fig. 1 Frans Post, *Brazilian Landscape with a House under Construction*, c. 1655–1660. Oil on panel, 46 × 70 cm. The Hague, Mauritshuis, inv. no. 1127, gift of Baron Willem van Dedem.

Fig. 2 Albert Eckhout, *Still Life with Coconuts*, c. 1640. Oil on canvas, 93 × 93 cm. Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet, inv. no. N.96.



Fig. 3 Albert Eckhout, *Woman and Child of African Descent*, c. 1641. Oil on canvas, 282 × 189 cm. Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet, inv. no. N.38.a8.

Linschoten himself noted the mobility of this colonial *Johannes Factotum*, or jack of all trades: 'These Cocus[,] being yet in their husks, may be carried over the whole world', he observed, noting the fruit's myriad productive benefits.[15] Yet his knowledge of the coconut's Western habitat was based more on hearsay than bona fide travel, the globetrotting Van Linschoten having written about, yet never actually set foot in, America.

Cocology, or Picturing Coconuts in America

All of this would soon change. European travel to, prose descriptions of and, not least, direct colonial engagement in America would intensify over the seventeenth century, and with these shifts came a reorientation of the coconut. For despite its exotic, easterly provenance and its relatively late introduction to the Western Hemisphere, coconuts became, by the mid seventeenth century, a pervasive presence in the equatorial Atlantic – or, at least, in European estimations of that space – and a reliable symbol of tropical American colonialism. Indeed, coconut palms appear ubiquitously in the representational arsenal generated by European media to showcase and advertise the colonial Atlantic. They became a pivotal prop, more particularly, to the theatre of Brazil and Suriname, where they served as an omnipresent backdrop to colonial vistas. The theatrical metaphor here is deliberate: coconut palms appear not only in the innumerable representations of South America that were churned out, from the mid seventeenth, by European painters, engravers, weavers, carvers and so on; they also play a tactical role in how the region was staged for, and thus perceived by, European audiences. They serve as fundamental framing devices (to shift metaphors slightly). This took place, not surprisingly, in plentiful textual form – nearly all accounts of the so-called New World included descriptions of its flora, and nearly all accounts of American flora included descriptions of coconut trees.[16] Yet the impression made by the coconut in visual media is perhaps even more remarkable. To take painting as an example: there is hardly a landscape painting from this period depicting the American tropics that does *not* include a coconut palm; they are veritably omnipresent, for example, in the oeuvre of Frans Post (1612–1680). The *Cocos nucifera*, meanwhile, receives prominent placement, as well, in the portraits and still lifes executed by Albert Eckhout (c. 1610–1664/66), who, along with Post – and, later, Valkenburg – counts as the rare European artist to have actually visited tropical America.

Again, the staging is significant. Consider the role of the coconut for the two most significant predecessors to Valkenburg in the business of painting America, Post and Eckhout. In Post's fairly typical *Brazilian Landscape with a House under Construction* (c. 1655–1660), a majestic coconut tree frames the painting on the left, towering over the titular 'house under construction' and the gathering of enslaved Africans and Indigenous Brazilians in the painting's centre (fig. 1).[17] Singled out by its careful placement, which anchors the canvas's left flank, and distinguished also by the fine brushstrokes and detailed finish of the palm fronds, the coconut

tree draws the viewer's eye up from the Indigenous Brazilians and Africans, mingling in the middle foreground, to the rising plantation house perched above, which, even while set in the background, governs the compositional messaging: the *casa-grande* reigns. Eckhout fully spotlights the fruit and inflorescence of the coconut palm in his meticulously detailed, no less atmospheric, *Still Life with Coconuts* (fig. 2).[18] The painting deconstructs the coconut, as it were, laying out for the viewer its nutritional white meat, its combustible shell ('charcoal in the greatest perfection'), its fibrous coir (used to make cords and mats), and so on – all of which is set literally on a pedestal.[19] Eckhout also enlisted the coconut to stage his impressive portraits of Dutch Brazil. In the larger-than-life *Woman and Child of African Descent*, for example, a coconut palm occupies a deceptively subtle spot on the canvas (fig. 3).[20] The child's corn cob points *not* (at least, not directly) at the woman's groin, the erotic semiotics of the painting notwithstanding, but at the twinned coconut trees (above to the left), the fruits of which hang strategically just below the overflowing basket of produce. Here, the tree's fertility speaks to the fecundity of the Afro-Brazilian woman (posing, it should be noted, with a male child, who would be understood in the context of the sugar-driven economy of the colony as a future source of involuntary plantation labour). And jumping ahead a few decades and just up the Atlantic coast, in Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70), a painting that plainly trains the eye towards the pulsating action in the foreground, a coconut tree serves to lure the viewer's attention, nonetheless, to the background, drawn not only by the palm's central placement but also the device of the flapping white banner, which deftly points to the pendulous cluster of coconuts – and, further afield, to the plantation houses discreetly set in the distance.[21] Productivity, in all cases, would appear to be on display, whether this derives from the coconut trees, the plantation houses or the coupling bodies of the so-called slave party.[22]

Examples can be easily amplified – Post alone painted over 150 Brazilian landscapes, a corpus richly studded with coconut trees – yet, in the meantime, two key points can be readily extrapolated, which help to contextualize the widespread representation of coconuts in Europe's early modern tropical Atlantic. First, the presentation of coconuts tends to be affiliated with images of colonial labour – sometimes forthrightly, as in the depiction of enslaved people in Valkenburg's painting, yet also as background 'décor' to various scenes of plantation life and, more broadly, colonial production. Rare is a plantation scene painted by Post that does *not* feature a coconut palm. Typically, the coconuts adhere to the plantation house itself in a plainly legible form – as in Post's *Brazilian Landscape with Plantation House*, where the juxtaposition of tree and house is front and centre (fig. 4).[23] In some instances, alternatively, coconut trees can serve as background to a gathering of enslaved populations, whose link to plantation life is more loosely insinuated. In Eckhout's oeuvre, the placement of coconuts can often be more subtle, if also more revealing. In his *Tupi Woman and*



Fig. 4 Frans Post, *Brazilian Landscape with Plantation House*, c. 1655. Oil on panel, 46.3 × 62.9 cm. Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, inv. no. M.2003.108.3, gift of Mr and Mrs Edward W. Carter.



Fig. 5 Manufacture Royale des Gobelins, *Les Tentures des Anciennes Indes: Les Deux Taureaux*, 1708-1710. Wool and silk, 470 × 511 cm. Valletta, Palace of the Grand Masters.

Child (c. 1641) – one of a series of large-scale portraits dedicated to the various inhabitants of colonial Brazil, in this case featuring an indigenous Tupinambá mother with child, whose dress and accessories are meant to indicate her partial acculturation to European ways[24] – the coconuts appear not above but below, in the carefully cultivated rows of palms that stretch out neatly in front of a colonial manor, delineated in the lower-left background (fig. 2, in Schwarcz, p. 235).[25] Coconuts here stand *before* the plantation house, yet coconuts also stand *for* the plantation, whose groves are peacefully tended – so the composition would like to imply – by Indigenous Brazilian labour, which, like the Tupi woman herself, has ostensibly been domesticated.

Post and Eckhout, who accompanied the Dutch governor-general, Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, to South America (1636–1644), each left a substantial body of work related to Brazil, including paintings and drawings, along with the prints that derived, more or less, from these images. [26] Neither worked directly with material arts, although Eckhout's large-scale paintings, many of which were gifted by Johan Maurits to Louis XIV of France, are associated with a set of large-scale tapestries manufactured in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, *Les Tentures des Anciennes Indes* (fig. 5).[27] More generally, it is the case – the second point – that coconuts appear in several visual contexts related to the representation of America and its colonies, which were produced across multiple media. They inhabit numerous prints, of course, published in books and on their own, sometimes as maps; and they also appear in plentiful paintings spanning various genres. Along with landscape and still life, coconuts routinely crop up in genre scenes of the tropical and especially Atlantic world, as well as in portraiture – for example, the stately *Portrait of Dina Lems* (c. 1660), which depicts the daughter of a former WIC governor of Brazil and wife of a WIC director-general of Guinea in a three-quarter profile, posing in front of a conspicuous forest of *Cocos nucifera* (fig. 6).[28] Less noticed perhaps (certainly in the art-historical scholarship), yet of considerable significance in terms of circulation, are the coconuts that commonly turn up in the material arts: painted onto Delftware, etched into glass, woven into tapestries and, not least, sculpted into coconuts – the latter form effectively producing a *metacoconut*, namely a coconut cup unto which is carved an image of a coconut.

Coconuttiness: Coconuts on Plantations, Plantations on Coconuts

What can sculpted coconut cups, produced in the context of tropical colonialism and collected by early modern (and later modern) connoisseurs, tell us about Dirk Valkenburg's oeuvre? A good starting point for these matters might be one of the most renowned samples of the coconut-inscribed coconut cup, the so-called Humboldt Cup (fig. 7). Crafted in the mid-to-late seventeenth century and affiliated since the late eighteenth century with its globe-trotting Prussian owner, Alexander von Humboldt, the elegantly sculpted cup in question presents, most basically, a decorative accessory for a

festive libation: a ceremonial goblet cleverly carved from a tropical, presumably American, coconut.[29] The egg-shaped shell (technically, the fruit's endocarp) is encased in a chased silver mount of, likewise, mid-to-late seventeenth-century vintage, which incorporates an intricately designed base bearing floral motifs and a matching, finial-capped cover. (And, while the silverwork may have been added by a later owner, there is no reason to believe that it did not belong to the ensemble as constituted in the late eighteenth century, when Humboldt originally acquired it.) The coconut's rounded sides are divided by the mount's silver straps into three proportional panels, each meticulously sculpted in low relief, and this delineates three distinct, readily readable, visual vignettes. In one section, for example, the carver represents, on the left, a man bearing a typical Brazilian (Tarairiú) wooden club in one hand and a pair of slender spears in the other. He wears a headdress of parrot feathers and what one scholar delicately calls a 'small bandage' on 'his manhood' – or, more forthrightly, a vegetal cord that serves as a form of practical clothing.[30] On the right side of the panel stands a woman with an equally striking cover-up: a belt of bark and leafed branches, which conceals her groin. Meanwhile, in her right hand she holds a severed human hand, and in her basket, borne by a dainty head strap of plant fibre, sits a disembodied foot. The couple are meant to be cannibals. The viewer would be forgiven for stopping there, for the finely-muscled male body and the woman's casual regard for the severed human limbs she carries is arresting enough. Yet this would miss the central subject of the panel, framed by the Indigenous pair and dominating the picture – a majestic coconut tree in full ripeness – and the telling background scenery, which includes European-style houses (centre left, by the base of the tree) and several open-air work sheds (centre right, between the woman and the tree) that are meant to represent, in the carver's shorthand, a European colonial settlement. The cannibals inhabit a plantation.

The coconut tree is central in more ways than one. A carved coconut cup displaying a fully blooming *Cocos nucifera* presents the viewer with a coconut within a coconut – the quintessence of coconut. Or a *metacoconut*, to riff on W.J.T. Mitchell's concept of the metapicture: a picture that reflects upon or doubles itself, thus underscoring its picture-ness.[31] In this case, a coconut amplifies its coconut-ness, thereby drawing attention to the materiality of the cup no less the meaning of *coconut* in these various contexts. A coconut-embellished coconut cup produced, perhaps more than any of the other material forms that served to depict the layout and landscape of the colonial tropics, an intense engagement with coconuts and their meanings. It encouraged a particularly close, lucid and tactile experience with the coconut and its sculpted motifs. One was meant to clasp the coconut (with two hands, one imagines, owing to the shell's natural girth); one was meant to bring the coconut to one's face and lips in order to drink from it; and one was meant, ineluctably, to gaze directly and intently at the coconut's design – at Indigenous peoples, in this case, posing before a European plantation and the regime of enforced labour it implied. The decorative coconut cup induced a haptic and embodied experience



Fig. 6 Daniel Vertangen, *Portrait of Dina Lems*, c. 1660. Oil on canvas, 128.3 × 102 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-4970.





Fig. 7 Anonymous, *Humboldt Cup*, c. 1648–1653. Carved coconut with chased silver mount and cover, 29 cm (h). Essen, Olbricht Collection, Wunderkammer Olbricht, inv. no. WK128.

Fig. 8 Anonymous, *Coconut Cup*, c. 1653–1656. Carved coconut with fire-gilt silver mount and cover, 34.7 cm (h). Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Grünes Gewölbe, inv. no. IV 325.

of the coconut – indeed, of colonial iconography – unlike any other, or at least unlike the experience of a wall-size tapestry, a weighty tile tableaux, a discreetly hung oil painting and so on. It asked the early modern consumers of these artifacts, simultaneously from and of the American tropics, to interact directly, intimately and – by purpose – *pleasurably* with the material and motifs, the medium and message, of a decorative colonial coconut.

And here it is worth recalling that coconuts not only made for good drinking vessels; they also provided a high-calorie food, potable water, fibre to be spun into rope, a hard shell that could serve as charcoal, etc. Moreover, as a non-native species that the Portuguese had strategically transported in the sixteenth century from Asia to their America colonies, coconuts served a critical role in the support of European settlements in the Atlantic world. They were, in many ways, the exemplary colonial product. Coconuts provided nourishment, no less profit, for the plantation, and this implicates both the *subjects* delicately carved into these cups – the Indigenous Americans, who laboured under duress on European-imposed plantations, where coconuts were often cultivated – and the *consumers* ultimately handling these finely finished collectibles – those very Europeans who profited from the plantation economy.

The Humboldt Cup turns out to be one of several such 'coconutty' artifacts that share a representational interest in the colonial spaces of America and showcase, more particularly, the tropical plantations and Indigenous peoples over whom Europeans enacted colonial regulations and enforced regimes of labour that, regulatory nuances notwithstanding, effectively amounted to slavery. Similar cups depicting similar scenes – coconuts, Indigenous people, plantations – are strewn across historical collections of the early modern period. In Dresden, the elector of Saxony acquired an impeccably sculpted coconut cup, which enters the princely *Kunstkammer* in 1656 (most likely already outfitted with the fire-gilt silver mount and cover that currently adorns it) (fig. 8). This variant showcases, in one panel, Eckhout-inspired Indigenous people under the shade of coconut trees and, in another, a figure that blends elements of the *Tupi Woman* with features of Eckhout's *Mameluke Woman with Flowers* (c. 1941, a portrait of a mestizo woman) set against a background of coconut palms and colonial-style haciendas.[32] Another cup landed in the ducal collection of Ferdinand Albrecht of Braunschweig, brother of the illustrious patron Anton Ulrich von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel; it presents three Indigenous people carved in a more streamlined style, which has suggested to some scholars the possibility of an Indigenous artist.[33] Still another cup, presently in the Historisk Museum, Bergen (it likely passed through the hands of Denmark's Frederick III, boasts a trifecta of Tapuya – so labeled by the artist/carver directly on the cup – including an Indigenous fisherman, standing before a colonial fortress, and one remarkably harried mother cannibal, minding a pair of children (fig. 9).[34] And a coconut cup recently auctioned by Christie's appears to be formally identical to the Humboldt Cup (only the latter's crack distinguishes the two),

suggesting that early modern ateliers produced multiple runs of these popular *objets d'art*. The carved colonial coconut cup, in other words, was much in demand.[35]

On the Christie's and Humboldt cups, a single *Cocos nucifera* fills the centre of a panel, with two Indigenous people and their accoutrements on either side. The magnificent tree serves as visual ballast to steady the composition – as it does in Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People* (cat. 70), where the tree, with its fanned-out fronds, effectively links the space between the foreground revelers and the background plantation houses. In the Dresden cup, meanwhile, twin coconut trees frame the Indigenous figures passing through the centre of the cup's vignettes. In the background of one of these panels, a keen eye detects two European-style buildings – these resemble the plantation houses lurking, ever so subtly, in the distance of Valkenburg's *Indigenous Inhabitants* (cat. 69). In all cases, images of coconut trees function at multiple levels: to locate the scene depicted in the tropics; to affiliate the Indigenous and African figures portrayed, in a broadly geo-ethnographic sense, within this 'coconutty' milieu – they dance, they hunt, and they carry on with their daily business in the locale of a tropical plantation; and to lend what is essentially a colonial pastiche an air of pastoral repose. The coconut trees, in short, decorate the colony.

Dirk Valkenburg's Coconuts and the Staging of Suriname

It would be hard to argue that coconuts, even if conspicuously present in some of his key compositions, also in a smattering of his still lifes (cats. 24, 53–54), are a central subject of Dirk Valkenburg's tropical American oeuvre (as they arguably are in Albert Eckhout's and Frans Post's paintings, done just a few decades earlier). Yet coconuts do play an important role in Valkenburg's Suriname paintings; and they establish, furthermore, a context for understanding not only the work of this particular painter and his modus operandi but also the ways early modern Europeans staged their tropical colonies. Dutch Suriname was, in fact, a site of harsh labour and exploitative colonial practices; yet Dutch Suriname was, in myriad forms of visual art (and, of course, in textual sources, too), a landscape of tropical fecundity and abundant decorative coconuts – or so, at least, it was presented to European colonialists. Coconuts – painted, carved, woven, etched – came to define early modern Europe's tropical American plantations, even while they, paradoxically, presented a genus of flora that was only recently foreign to the American tropics – technically speaking, an exotic species.

Be that as it may, the coconut became a ubiquitous presence in early modern Europe's vision of America, a signifier of the tropics, a key to the plantation economy and a critical device to 'decorate' exploitative colonialism. Whether enlisted to embellish an ethnographic portrait by Albert Eckhout; painted into a pastoral landscape by Frans Post; etched onto a commemorative wine glass to celebrate 'The Prosperity of Siparipabo' (as is the case with a so-called toasting glass, blown circa 1725, which depicts a stately plantation





Fig. 9 Anonymous, *Coconut Cup*, Netherlands, c. 1650. Carved coconut with gilded silver mount and cover, 17.4 cm (h). Bergen, University of Bergen, Cultural History Collections, inv. no. B 513.

Fig. 10 Anonymous, *Toasting Glass, ''t Welvaren van Siparipabo'*, c. 1725–1750. Glass with wheel engraving, 17.8 (h) × 7.1 (diam) × 7.4 (diam) cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. NG-2010-133.



Fig. 11 Frontispiece to J. D. Herlein, *Beschryvinge van de volk-plantinge Zuriname*, Leeuwarden 1718. Leiden, University Libraries, inv. no. RP-34.

house, a working sugar mill, and an enslaved labourer, all shaded by a graceful *Cocos nucifera*, fig. 10)[36]; or engraved onto the cover of perhaps the most important source on Suriname: in all of these scenes and scenarios, coconuts prevail. The coconut trees that inhabit the engraved frontispiece of what is arguably the most influential early modern text on Suriname, J.D. Herlein's *Beschryvinge van de volk-plantinge Zuriname* (1718) – a volume published only a few years after Valkenburg's return from South America – shows just how centrally the coconut featured in the Netherlands's narrative of the colonial world (fig. 11).[37] The engraved image roughly replicates the vignettes carved on the coconut cups: a male and a female figure on either side of the *Zuriname* composition stand beneath a heavily laden 'tree' that subsumes the centre of the pastiche, with two plantation buildings in the background.[38] The Herlein frontispiece revises a few significant details, however – for example, swapping out Indigenous figures (who had been made to work on Suriname's plantations up until the practice was legally restricted in 1686, not long before Valkenburg's South American sojourn) for African figures, who now performed the overwhelming majority of labour on the sugar plantations. Furthermore, the 'tree' is actually a grass, a monstrously thick-stalked sugarcane, which closely resembles a coconut tree in its form and size, its rotund pails (affixed to the plant to capture its sap) cannily replicating the shape of coconut fruit. In the rear of the engraving, in all events, are a pair of bona fide coconut palms, which serve to spotlight the plantation houses that reign over this putatively pastoral prospect. Yet again, thus, coconuts anchor the scene, albeit by dint of an artistic sleight of hand. The coconuts have the effect, moreover, of normalizing the circumstances of the colonial economy: the fruits of the enslaved labour – represented in the Herlein frontispiece literally by the basket of fruit held by the woman (and, perhaps more allusively, by the male child, conceivably produced by the bare-breasted woman and well-muscled man, whose labour is insinuated by the shovel he grips) – are as casually represented in this rustic landscape as the now domesticated *Cocos nucifera*.

Valkenburg's coconuts simultaneously reflected and contributed to an early modern regime of representation that rendered the colonial world more palatable to its European patrons. His American canvases exemplified a kind of 'decorative colonialism' by which painted coconut trees (and, in the case of the mounted cups, carved and embellished coconuts themselves) rendered the colonial scene arguably *less* documentary, or *naer het leven*, and distinctly more decorative than it truly was – compare, for example, Valkenburg's Suriname paintings to the more austere documentary drawings he made of Witsen's plantation properties, which lack nearly any scent of coconut (see cats. 57–67).[39] Valkenburg's paintings present a form of engagement with the tropics that reconfigured the Dutch colonies and their labouring 'staffage' in ways that facilitated their consumption and allowed their Dutch and European audiences to imbibe them more readily. It was a mode of representation that enabled patrons and collectors to absorb their colonies as 'art', brutal though the paintings' subject matter may have been.

Coconuts made colonialism and its perniciously assertive, exploitative and acquisitive nature more pleasingly bucolic, prolific and exotic. Valkenburg's contribution to this visual economy was neither qualitatively nor quantitatively exceptional – he painted but a few South American canvases that we know of. Yet Valkenburg served the Dutch colonial system, all the same, by adopting the decorative coconut tree, transporting it from Brazil to Suriname, and replanting it in the soil of Witsen's plantations, where it would flourish – the staggering harshness of plantation life notwithstanding – for years to come.

1 The painting, until fairly recently, had been labelled by the museum *Ritual Slave Party on a Sugar Plantation in Suriname*. This title was changed in the spring of 2024 by a newly appointed curator of the SMK, Michèle Seehafer, to reflect a more accurate understanding of the scene depicted and a shift in how we perceive and describe colonial imagery – a topic to be discussed further in this essay.

2 Coconut trees do not appear conspicuously, if at all, in the meticulous drawings that Valkenburg made of these buildings. The single exception is an ink and chalk image of Witsen's residence in Palmeneribo, which carefully reproduces the adjacent, large-scale flora. Indeed, what is taken to be the original drawing of the residence mislabels the coconut tree: compare the Rijksmuseum's *View of the Residence on the Palmeneribo Plantation* (1708) with a variant of this depiction held in the Collection Frits Lugt, Fondation Custodia, Paris (cats. 62–63). See also the 'Catalogue Raisonné' in this volume, pp. 424, 425, 428–429.

3 Brienen 2008, p. 258.

4 The mesocarp/coir has been used, in fact, even more extensively and productively across several Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian cultures, which have incorporated it into myriad useful products: for making twine, fishnets, rugs, matting, etc. See Rammohan 2008.

5 To clarify: coconut meat (also called flesh) is the solid form of the endosperm, while coconut water is the liquid form of the endosperm.

6 Research into the coconut's DNA and its ancient migratory routes are summarized by Lutz 2011. Early coconut cultivation in Southeast Asia can be located in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Melanesia, while the Indian Ocean evidence derives from Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Laccadives.

7 The imperial correlations and serendipitous connections between the coconut and breadfruit are rich and richly ironic. Banks's original attempt in 1789 to transfer breadfruit trees from Tahiti to the Caribbean, where he hoped to transplant the Southeast-Asian crop to feed Britain's West Indian colonies, was captained by none other than William Bligh, the commanding lieutenant of HMS Bounty. It was over his private supply of coconuts, which Bligh believed had been maliciously raided, that the ship's commander (Bligh) accused Lieutenant Fletcher Christian of misbehavior; and this provocation turned out to be the final indignity that moved Christian to mutiny against Bligh. Thus, a British botanical mission to transplant breadfruit failed when the stock of coconuts, likewise a colonial transplant, went missing. (Banks's second attempt to transplant breadfruit, launched in 1791, was more successful.)

8 For the medieval backstory, see Flood and Fricke 2024, pp. 87–109.

9 See the Oxford University Press: *Oxford English Dictionary (OED),* q.v. 'coconut', online edition, accessed on 19 December 2024, which cites several historical instances of the word from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including those that blur the distinction between 'cocos nut' and 'Indian nut'.

10 Spiess 2010. See also Kennedy 2017, which takes a more capacious approach to the medieval coconut and posits that it was a 'relatively common [luxury]', at least (and perhaps improbably) in medieval England.

11 Dos Santos Lopes 2021. Note that Calicut, the name used by early modern Europeans, refers to Kozhikode, in the state of Kerala, in southwest India.

12 Varthema 1510, for which see the modern English translation in Varthema 1863, p. 164.

13 Orta 1563, which circulated most widely in Clusius 1605; and Van Linschoten 1596. Note, as well, the full-page 'Fürbildung der Indiansche Cocus [...]' (Illustration of an Indian Cocus), which appeared in the de Bry edition of Van Linschoten, in this case in German: Van Linschoten 1598a, Annex XI.

14 See the *OED*, q.v. 'coco', online edition, accessed on 19 December 2024, which reviews early usages of the word and its alternatives, including the variants deployed by Van Linschoten and his English translator, William Phillip, c. 1596–1598.

15 Van Linschoten 1598b, i. lvi. 101/1 (in the Dutch edition, the word is *Coquos*). An 'absolute Johannes Factotum', or jack of all trades, is a contemporary expression taken from Greene 1592, where the original reference is to none other than the actor-playwright William Shakespeare.

16 See, for one of several indicative examples, the popular and widely circulated text – published first in Dutch and translated swiftly into English and German – in Montanus 1671.

17 The painting is discussed in the most recent catalogue raisonné by Corrêa do Lago and Corrêa do Lago 2007, pp. 180–181, which gives a full bibliography.

18 Buvelot 2004, pp. 92 and 94. Note that Eckhout painted other tropical still lifes that include coconuts: see, for example, Buvelot 2004, pp. 86 and 88. And coconuts also appear in still life paintings by Valkenburg, albeit less forcefully and centrally than in Eckhout's oeuvre: see cats. 24, 53 and 54.

19 A coconut's 'perfect' potential as charcoal is remarked upon by Varthema: Varthema 1863, p. 164.

20 Buvelot 2004, pp. 76–78 and passim.

21 The literature on Valkenburg is surprisingly meager. For *Gathering of Enslaved People* (and the ambivalent titling by the painting's past curators at the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen), see the discussion in Schmidt 2015, pp. 173, 340 and 356.

22 There are many more cases of coconut-laden paintings, of course, and further visual sources that could otherwise be cited. These examples were selected for their appearance in the publicity materials for a project that – not at all about coconuts – highlights Atlantic slavery and the visual arts, a serendipitous, if highly revealing, overlap. See the program material for the workshop *Research Center for Material Culture* n.d., accessed on 19 December 2024.

23 Corrêa do Lago and Corrêa do Lago 2007, pp. 158–159.

24 The portrait series, which includes eight life-size paintings of men and women of Tapuya (Tarairiú), Tupi, Black, and Mestizo/Mulatto background (four pairs total), is meant to work comparatively. While the Tapuya woman, for example, is clad with only a belt of green branches and bears human limbs in her rudimentary head pack, the Tupi woman wears a skirt of European cloth and carries a more elaborately ornamented basket with a hammock and sophisticated (from a European perspective) bottle gourds. The Tupi represent, by the logic of the series, a higher level of social and cultural development than the Tapuya and thus a closer alliance to the Dutch colonial system. See Van den Boogaart 1990 and Brienen 2006.

25 Buvelot 2004, pp. 72–74 and 16, also noting the orange groves that run alongside the coconut palms. Of course, the most important crop in colonial Brazil, cane sugar, is not always the most prominent crop depicted in colonial-era painting – perhaps yet another strategy to camouflage the conditions of forced labour on European plantations.

26 On the Mauritian-commissioned paintings and prints, see Corrêa do Lago and Corrêa do Lago 2007 and Buvelot 2004; on Dutch-Brazilian art production, more generally, see Whitehead and Boeseman 1989 and Van den Boogaart et al. 1979. For an important alternative perspective – a revisionist study that draws attention to Johan Maurits's role in the African slave trade, thus affording a counter point to the earlier and prevailing scholarship that highlights the prince's cultural achievements – see Monteiro and Odegard 2020.

27 The tapestries are discussed in Buvelot 2004, pp. 35–37, 39, and passim. Note that a second series, the *Nouvelles Indes*, dates from 1740.

28 Examples are plentiful. For prints, see the leading natural history on Brazil – Piso, Marcgraf, and de Laet 1648 – which features coconuts literally front and centre, namely on the frontispiece (there are several in-book illustrations, as well); and see also – to shift genres – the stupendous printed map of Brazil by Joan Blaeu (based on drawings by Frans Post and Georg Marcgraf), *Brasilia qua parte paret Belgis* (1647), the astonishing vignettes of which are peppered with coconut trees (the map itself is framed by garlands of coconuts: two festoons sit top left and top right). As for painting, see, among the multiple examples to appear in the genre scenes by Valkenburg, the Rijksmuseum's *Indigenous Inhabitants* (1707), a composition dominated by

coconuts trees in the foreground, which subtly delineate the telltale, titular plantation tucked strategically in the background (cat. 69).

29 Now in private hands but once owned by the renowned German naturalist, the cup was recently sold by Kunstkammer Georg Laue, Munich: see Spenlé 2011. It is worth noting that, over the course of the century and a half preceding Humboldt's ownership, the cup likely had other, possibly more famous owners, as was the case with most similarly produced and collected early modern colonial artifacts, which typically inhabited princely Kunstkammern. Humboldt, in other words, gave an illustrious name to a cup that likely had one or more previous, likewise illustrious, owners.

30 Buvelot 2004, p. 68, also citing Zacharias Wagener.

31 Mitchell 1994.

32 Cf. Buvelot 2004, plates 52 and 57; and, for the Dresden cup, see Greve 2006, which cites an archival inscription from the Dresden Kunstkammer's inventory indicating how tightly the cup was associated with Brazil ('*seyend Braßilianische Bilder*'). Note that the cup could have entered the Kunstkammer either under Johann Georg I or Johann Georg II, both of whom reigned in the year 1656.

33 See Schütte, 1997, p. 200. Once again, archival evidence demonstrates the close affiliation drawn between the coconut cup and Brazil, in this case also elaborating on the enforced labour of the Indigenous people. The cup originates, according to an inventorial note, with 'Fruits called "cocus," worked by savages [*wilten*] so called cannibals, or Cabus, in their language' (cited in Schütte, Kostbarkeiten, 200). As for the possibility of Indigenous artists, see De Rochefort 1665, p. 83, where the author notes (and the publisher offers an engraving illustrating) that Caribbean Indigenous peoples also carved coconuts into cups. De Rochefort's commentary aside, it is all but certain that the Braunschweig coconut and the other Brazilian-motif cups discussed in this essay were carved in Europe, likely the Netherlands, as they all adopt motifs from European sources – namely, Eckhout and Post paintings and the prints that derived from them.

34 The Bergen cup is discussed in Schmidt 2015, pp. 309–312; see also Bergvelt and Kistemaker 1992, p. 158.

35 Sale: London (Christie's), 27 September 2007, lot 88. Altogether, there are ten 'Brazilian' coconut cups that can be readily traced, which would constitute a small fraction of the total produced. Along with the Dresden, Braunschweig and Bergen cups noted here; two recently-sold Christie's cups (for which see the sale on 27 September 2007 together with 'A Dutch Silver-Mounted Carved Coconut Cup', sale: London (Christie's), 10 May 2006, lot 28) and the Humboldt cup (the last three-listed cups are all, presumably, in private hands); there is also a cup in Munich's Bayerisches Nationalmuseum and one in the Kunstmuseum Den Haag (the former Gemeentemuseum), both of which are detailed in Fritz 1983, p. 121 and 123, respectively. Two more cups have passed into private collections, one described in Fritz 1986 and another reproduced (and perhaps also acquired) by the British media conglomerate Alamy. See 'Coconut Cup, c. 1630. Carved coconut, probably The Netherlands; silver mount, probably England, 17th century. Carved coconut in silver mount; overall: 18.9 cm (7 7/16 in.)', *Alamy*, accessed on 19 December 2024.

36 Anonymous, *Toasting Glass, ''t Welvaren van Siparipabo'*, c. 1725–1750. Glass with wheel engraving, 17.8 (h) × 7.1 (diam) × 7.4 (diam) cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. NG-2010-133.

37 Herlein 1718.

38 The image also shows the influence of Eckhout's ethnographic portraits, for example, *Woman and Child of African Descent* (1641), where a likewise incongruously bejeweled Black woman – implicitly enslaved – bears a basket of fruit and stands by the fruits of her womb, a male child implicitly to be enslaved.

39 The single exception that proves this rule, Valkenburg's *View of the Residence on the Palmeneribo Plantation* (cat. 63), is detailed in note 2.

Edenic Tropics and Decadent Humanity

Lilia Moritz Schwarcz

An Exotic 'New World'

Over the course of the last four centuries, slavery, shamelessly imprinted on the maps and in the allegories that accompanied the so-called Era of the Navigations has become a definition of the Americas. In the words of historian Alberto da Costa e Silva, colonialism reduced the Atlantic Ocean into a 'river' – such was the quantity of technologies, philosophies, aromas, cuisines, fabrics and forms of government ferried back and forth along this geographic and political space, determining and altering the internal characteristics of its affected territories.[1]

Yet, the Atlantic could just as well be considered a river in the thought of ethnologist and Candomblé *Babalorichá* Pierre Verger.[2] His well-known phrase 'flux and reflux' defined the scale and recurrence of these forced intercontinental exchanges, showing how the 'trade in souls' expanded the very idea of geographic and cultural space.[3] Additionally, sociologist Paul Gilroy's concept of the Black Atlantic deepens this insight and points beyond human trafficking to the interconnected experience and culture of the captured peoples forced from their homelands to work in far-flung places.[4] It was a fluid space with no specific frontier or time, where African matrices infiltrated and occupied cultures and territories in the Americas, the Caribbean, and Europe and where the ocean became a liminal territory that challenged national frontiers. For Gilroy, the ship, as the main symbol of travel, becomes a 'a living, micro-cultural and micro-political system in motion'.[5] For both, the slave trade created a political, cultural, social and symbolic space.

However, this kind of material (of people and artefacts) and immaterial (of philosophies, cosmologies, and knowledge systems) circulating in the Afro-Atlantic circuit was never socially and culturally homogeneous. Quite the opposite; it resulted in the growing economic and political predominance of Europe and the corresponding subordination of indigenous people and captive African peoples, who could be seen depicted on maps or in their marginalia but also in drawings, engravings and paintings that fed the burgeoning European curiosity for the exotic. Together, these (visual documents, records and accounts served as mutually reinforcing strands in a web, produced by European travellers who arrived in the tropics full of prejudice and fixed ideas about the locals, laced with fantasy and ignorance concerning the peoples they purported to represent but actually glossed over with moral and physical stereotypes. They often accentuated distinctive physiognomic traits – the exoticism of

a humanity whose skin tone was different to that of the European – but also, habits and behaviours they considered entirely strange. These people were there to be 'dominated' in the name of a supposed European superiority that operated according to the logic of Narcissus, a structure in which Europeans found ugliness in everything that was not a mirror of themselves.

Maps, tapestries, paintings and allegories strove to 'naturalize' references to the violence of their system: on one hand, there was the kidnapping and imprisonment of African peoples; and on the other, there was the enslavement and subjugation of indigenous people of the Americas. Fundamentally, at the same time as these images underscored a false sense of global harmony, they endeavoured to enshrine the differences that set the 'Old World', with its 'higher' customs, apart from these (literally and actually) 'remote', 'new' continents. History joined geography in setting this temporal boundary, pitting the old against the new and newer, as measured by a European metric and scale.

Words and images are, therefore, highly revealing of broad imaginary processes, and the European countries did not simply document the world; they fabricated it in a way that reflected and reproduced their own desires and biases. 'Old Word' did not refer only to time or periodization. It referred to a certain Eurocentric depiction. Visually, they created a world that matched the perception they had of themselves and of the peoples they subjugated in the name of civilization. By this process, the 'unknown' was transformed into the 'new': the New World. After all, this was a world that needed to be tautologically new for the Europeans. New, because it was 'unexplored' for them; new, because it was 'recently discovered' by them – a social euphemism that sought to render an account of this drive towards expansion, domination, framing it in terms of a 'mission' – a Western burden.[6] Rather than the description of a violent process of colonization, what the designation most conveyed was a telluric formation of the Americas.

What is certain is that, at this time, conditioned by so much exploration, the geographic and allegorical representations showed the core of what Europeans thought they knew about these people from different parts of the world, illustrating a New World hatched from the fused ideas of difference and subordination. From one side, the exotic and beautiful land, which must be observed; from the other, degenerate human nature, which must be controlled. These people were transformed into 'universal natives', in the terms of the anthropologist Marshal Sahlins. Europeans could not see differences among them and created this idea of 'primitive workers' that would 'voluntarily' be at the disposal of colonial expansion.[7]

This conception is grounded in an old cognitive Eurocentrism, one that is difficult to undo, at least in the common sense. That is why maps and allegories bear clear social and ethnic indicators. As the geographer Jacques Lévy explains: 'Space is, therefore, and indeed mainly, a social dimension.' And it was in this (mis)alignment that borders and margins, both real and symbolic, were drawn on this large, diverse territory, unified only by European colonial voracity. The Old-World colonial powers were the unclassified

classifiers: creators of norms that never seemed to apply to them.[8] There is a lot of vagueness surrounding the naming of these places, and in the European imagination, they were ever in search of marvels and lands lost upon the oceans.[9]

Dutch Expansion and Dutch Artists

In response to the rich trade that flourished at the time and the demand for surplus tropical produce, European nations took to the seas. Holland built powerful trading companies, establishing overseas colonies and possessions, which they simultaneously documented in books, art and maps. As one can see in Claes Janszoon Visscher's (1587–1652) map, *Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Geographica Ac Hydrographica Tabula Autore* (fig. 1), the world's frontiers were already well defined in 1652, though still with some 'unknown' pockets: For example, while present-day Australia appears among the 'terrae incognitae', Brazil is shown with established borders and the names of local cities clearly marked.

However, this map became especially well-known for what appeared along the margins of the document (fig. 2). The document, illustrated with decorative vignettes, was one of four that Visscher created between 1614 and 1652. It was infamous as much for what appeared in its margins as for the primary plate illustration. Painted in the top and bottom margins are Roman emperors in battledress, mounted on horseback. The map's common name, the Twelve Caesars Map, alluded to Rome as the 'cradle of civilization'. In the side margins are six panels representing the continents, each containing two or three figures depicting the styles of dress and life in regions spanning Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, South America and Melanesia.

Visscher was born in Amsterdam and lived there between 1587 and 1652 during the so-called Dutch Golden Age – a remarkable period for the Netherlands, mainly in art, science and trade, which also saw the Netherlands invade the provinces of Bahia and Pernambuco, in Brazil.[10] Visscher was a draughtsman, engraver, editor and cartographer, but his livelihood came from map making, and the company he founded went on to become a successful family business devoted to designing, printing and selling this type of visual aid.[11] Learning the trade from his father, Visscher, in turn, passed it on to his descendants. As the Visscher firm was handed down through the generations, they steadily honed their craft and expanded their map distribution network.[12] The firm started off making Biblical maps, complete with saints and landmark regions. With time, and European invasions of the Americas, they switched their focus to maps. Claes produced 200 such plates, adding new national and geographic borders as they were updated by advancing European expeditions, including those by his own native Holland.

In the *Nova Totius* map specifically, the engraver and draughtsman elevated what was by then already an artistic and cultural convention by depicting the four continents of the earth in allegorical vignettes. The vignettes feature female figures, usually mounted on local or imaginary animals, dressed in garments vaguely

suggestive of traditional regional dress. The map maker also reflected the idea that the various seas and oceans were, by this stage, overrun with caravels, symbolizing European dominance and suggesting that the globe was all but fully 'colonized'. The map illustrated the ocean, with few monsters breaking the surface, and merchant ships, sailing under company flags, such as that of the powerful Dutch West India Company.

The *Nova Totius* map's margins contain further illustrations depicting the lives of various people on their native continents.[13] Peoples of Asia appear right below those of Europeans countries, wearing headgear and accessories considered typical of their cultures, striking up a dialogue between the figures in the allegorical vignettes. The images combine well with Edward Said's notion of Orientalism, the term for a Western style of viewing, representing and understanding the Middle East and Asia, often characterized by stereotypical and inaccurate depictions.[14] In the map, the populations of the so-called Old World are always shown as white-skinned and richly dressed, complete with hats, boots and swords; their clothing denotes nobility and culture; and they also dialogue as equals – note the way the figure on the right extends his hand – indicative of a more organized form of society in comparison with the others depicted. The land is also extolled through meadows and fields alive with flowers and vines in an allusion to the Land of Cockaigne, a mythical place of limitless abundance, even in its more arid regions.[15]

In the map's lithography, peoples of Africa are shown bare chested, or in what might be considered tribal garments: cloaks and typical headdresses. The skin of African peoples is rendered comparatively so much darker than that of the Europeans as to make it difficult to discern eyes or facial expressions. Everything is excessive in this visual document: color, bodies, customs. All three figures in the document are barefoot, and the person on the left appears to be a woman, or so we can assume from the slightest suggestion of breasts. She is wearing earrings, a necklace and ankle bracelets. The central figure, who seems to be a chief, is carrying a spear. The African allegory features just below this trio, depicting an empty land, devoid of people. What little housing is shown serves as a further reminder of colonial domination.

On the lower right-hand part of the plate, we see a representation of Melanesia. Comparatively, this seems to be the most sketch-like of the illustrations, evincing the lack of information about the place. The people are depicted almost unclothed, and their features are imprecisely rendered, again indicating European ignorance for this corner of the earth.

Dwelling a little longer on the map's representations of peoples of the Americas, one can observe a man in a skirt carrying an oar, or *borduna*, over his shoulder. He seems to be negotiating with a white man, who points at him as they talk. What draws one's attention here is the figure in the background shown lying in a hammock, a symbol of leisure often associated with the supposed laziness of life in the tropics.[16] Her colour suggests she might be an enslaved woman. At the same time, further back, a campfire burns, though the poor perspective of the composition makes it look as though the



Fig. 1 Claes Janszoon Visscher, *Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Geographica Ac Hydrographica Tabula Autore*, 1652. Sydney, Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales, inv. no. Z/Cb 65/14.



Detail of fig. 1, *Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Geographica Ac Hydrographica Tabula Autore*, showing the margins depicting stereotypes of Asia, Europe, Africa, Melanesia and North America.

flames are 'cooking' the figure. What we are seeing here is a visual association and broadened imaginary of cannibalism, a topic in depictions of the Americas at this time. It is also important to note that the map mentions Pernambuco as the location depicted, which was a Dutch possession up until 1654. Synthetic in approach, the representation in question attempts to deliver everything in the same small vignette: cannibalism, slavery and a reference to war. Besides this, attention is called to how the hand-coloured picture about the people of the Americas is bordered, top and bottom, by two places – Havana and Pernambuco – maybe evoking the British capture of Havana in 1762 and the Dutch invasion of Pernambuco in 1630.

Due to its more decorative nature, *Nova Totius Terrarum* also functioned as an evocation of relations – based on 'us' (the Europeans) versus 'them' (the 'others'). Seen as a whole – including the central map and the illustrations along the margins – the representation appears to confer a sense of 'reality' to what were mere travellers' observations, accounts by curious onlookers and travel diaries, all selected through a Eurocentric lens, heavily marked by an external perspective on other peoples.

The sociologist Ruth Frankenberg says that whiteness can be defined in terms of what it means to be white in a racialized world. For her, it is a structural position from which white subjects see themselves and others: an unnamed, relational position of power that is experienced as a 'social geography'.[17] As such, if the perspective on others is always based upon race – Asian, Black and Amerindian peoples all carrying their own characteristics – white people are not identified by any such distinctive traits. They are the norm: the colour of the artist, the colour of Europe, the colour of civilization. And as these identities are only constructed in relation to the European group, the defining characteristics of these 'others' acquire greater visibility. The result is a sort of naturalization of Westerners, set against the excessive visibility of other peoples, for whom colour combines with stereotypes of phenotype and origin. This kind of depiction became a convention appearing not just in maps but paintings and visual culture of the time.

Dutch colonial ambitions brought the Dutch painter, landscapist and naturalist Albert Eckhout (c. 1610–1664/66) to Brazil in the early seventeenth century, roughly seventy years before Valkenburg. The artist was part of a mission accompanying Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, the nephew of the Dutch stadtholder, who arrived in Brazil in 1637. Eckhout remained in the Americas for seven years.[18] During this time, he produced a prolific oeuvre that spanned maps, scientific drawings and portraits. This was characteristic of the so-called travelling artist, who produced technical documents intended to inform European metropolises through visual means, as well as artistic works, that were displayed in palaces or noble residences as symbols of domination and power.

Eckhout's painting *Índia Tupi* (1641) features a foreground occupied by an indigenous woman carrying her child (fig. 2), surrounded by natural elements such as the palm tree and a frog, while a sugar mill appears in the background, emphasizing the colony's productive role.

Even if we can't confirm whether Valkenburg heard about or saw Eckhout's works, some visual elements suggest a shared or common vocabulary – highlighting the exoticism of the tropics, with their peculiar fruits, roots, crawling animals, and the vibrant colours and light of the American colonies.[19] Between 1641 and 1643, Eckhout finished eight large canvases about 'Brazilian couples': *Homem negro* / *Mulher negra* (Black Man / Black Woman), *Homem mulato* / *Mulher mameluca* (Mulatto Man / Mameluca Woman),[20] *Homem Tupi* / *Mulher Tupi* (Tupi Man / Tupi Woman), *Homem Tapuia* /*Mulher Tapuia* (Tapuia Man / Tapuia Woman).[21] It was very different from the rest of his work, and in this case, Eckhout portrayed men and women of each race on separate canvases, which were intended to be displayed side by side. Originally, the artist's works were meant to adorn the interiors of Van Nassau-Siegen's palace in Recife, the capital of the Dutch colony in Pernambuco. However, because the canvases proved too large for this purpose, Nassau-Siegen took them with him when he returned to Holland. New research has provided different insights, supporting the idea that they might have been intended as models or cartoons for the making of tapestries. Also, the fact that one painting was never finished supports that they were probably not meant for the Vrijburg palace in Recife but made with the intention of being copied in other media. Nevertheless, back in Europe, he gifted them to Frederik III, King of Denmark.[22]

Even though these paintings are well-known for their refined composition, they are far from 'true to life' and certainly not ethnographically accurate. While Eckhout did draw to some extent from lived experience, he also infused his works with imagination. As writer Teju Cole observes, when speaking about art: 'Every artwork is evidence of the material circumstances under which it was produced. The best works of art are more than just evidence. In a single notable painting, complicity and transcendence coexist.'[23]

Both Eckhout's painting and Valkenburg's *Still Life with Awarra and Other Fruit from Suriname in a Landscape* and *Still Life with Pineapples and Other Fruit from Suriname in a Landscape* (cats. 71–72) and studies of other tropical fruits and reptiles (cats. 73–75), highlight the European exoticism of the tropics – featuring fruits, unusual tubers, and creeping fauna, as well as lizards and snakes – and the exuberant light characteristic of the American colonies. Eckhout's same process of 'translation' and 'naturalization' of the tropics can be seen in the landscapes Valkenburg painted in and about Suriname (cats. 68–69). With blue skies, tropical flora and numerous reptiles, Suriname is depicted as a vast, sprawling, uninhabited and cultivable terrain, save for some distant huts, which merely serve as reference to the colony's made-for-export agricultural output. In these compositions, the human presence is minimal when compared to both the natural environment and the material traces of European colonization.

Let us introduce the work of another Dutch painter: Frans Post (1612–1680), who arrived in Brazil as part of Van Nassau-Siegen's entourage in 1637. He was immediately disoriented by the tropical landscape, which contrasted starkly to his native Leiden's flatlands



Fig. 2 Albert Eckhout, *Tupi Woman and Child*, c. 1641. Oil on canvas, 274 × 163 cm. Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet, inv. no. N.38.a4.





Fig. 3 Frans Post, *Landscape with Anteater*, c. 1660. Oil on canvas, 56 × 79 cm. São Paulo, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, inv. no. MASP.00224, gift of Antenor Recende.

Fig. 4 Agostino Brunias, *Dancing Scene in the West Indies*, c. 1764–1796. Oil on canvas, 50.8 × 66 cm. London, Tate Britain, inv. no. T13869.

and temperate climate. The artist arrived as part of a true colonial enterprise, as the Dutch – challenging the territorial division imposed by the Spanish and Portuguese – invaded Pernambuco, which by then was Brazil's most prosperous province. From 1580 to 1640, the empires of Spain and Portugal found themselves unexpectedly allied through the Iberian Union, a response to the then vacant Portuguese throne. Portugal, which had pursued a pacifist policy, at least on the level of international diplomacy, ended up inheriting Spain's enemies, including Holland, which was fighting for its political independence. The consequence was the expulsion of the Dutch West India Company from Brazilian territory and its exclusion from the sugar trade it had monopolized to great effect.

The severing of relations between Portugal and the Dutch had disastrous consequences for the former, one of which was the Dutch occupation of Recife for 24 years (1630–1654). More than just a military 'invasion', they changed the structures of governance, as well as existing cultural and religious institutions.

But the initial feeling, upon their arrivals, was not very easy for artists such as Eckhout and Post. Indigenous customs were all very different than those of their home country, the food unfamiliar, and the habits strange. Moreover, the Brazilian sky was too blue (at least for Post's familiar, muted tones), the colours too strong, and the sun shone over everything, distorting the most obvious tonalities of the artists' palettes. In this sense, it is interesting to draw a parallel between Valkenburg's faded blue tones, in *Indigenous, Enslaved and European People Navigating the Suriname River in Front of the Waterland Plantation, Suriname* (cat. 68), and Post's own aesthetic – his admitted difficulty in capturing the colours and light of Brazil. In Post's work *Landscape with Anteater* (fig. 3), for example, one can see the difficulties he faced in painting the strong blue colours of Brazil's sky, preferring the pale blue – the same that he used in Europe.[24]

Peacefulness tends to reign in Post's paintings, with slavery appearing in a scaled-down, orderly form packed away neatly in a background overshadowed by the lush nature. In the over thirty landscapes Post painted, the African peoples depicted seem to be having the time of their lives – dancing and chatting – despite the ever-present colonial control and violence, intrinsic of a system based on a person as property, owned by another.

But let us introduce another painter. During a slightly later period, Agostino Brunias (c. 1730–1796) also created images depicting a dance ritual in the West Indies. Brunias was born in Rome, around 1730, and was a student at the Accademia di San Luca. He followed the traditional steps of a European academic painter: he participated in salons, received prizes and took part in the Grand Tour from 1754 to 1756. It was during this kind of philosophical and artistic peregrinate that Brunias met the British architect Robert Adam, who employed Brunias in his Rome workshop. Brunias accompanied Adams in the latter's return to Britain in 1758, working in London as a draughtsman and painter.

At the end of 1764, Brunias left London for the British West Indies. This opportunity provided him with new painting subjects,

including indigenous life and African cultures. He completed many sketches, watercolours and oil paintings in the Caribbean. Like many artists working in the Americas, Brunias returned to Britain around 1775 to promote and sell his works. He then returned to Dominica in 1784, remaining there until his death in 1796. And not by a coincidence, he was particularly adept at documenting festivals, dances, markets and other related cultural traditions – a kind of work that pleased European clients.

Although Brunias was mainly commissioned to depict the families of white planters in the Caribbean, his works soon assumed a kind of subversive political role there. To many, his depictions of Caribbean life appeared to endorse a free West Indian society absent of slavery. Other historians have argued that Brunias's images of these communities romanticized the harsh realities of life on plantations. Bryan Edwards, who wrote about the history of the West Indies and was an enthusiastic pro-slavery activist and great opponent of abolitionism, used his engravings.

Brunias's works are controversial and ambiguous – as most of these colonial paintings. But even so, one can easily see how he took part in a visual convention of his time. On one side, European artists always exaggerated what they would define as 'barbarous rituals'. On the other hand, they depicted American colonies as very peaceful and 'exotic places'.

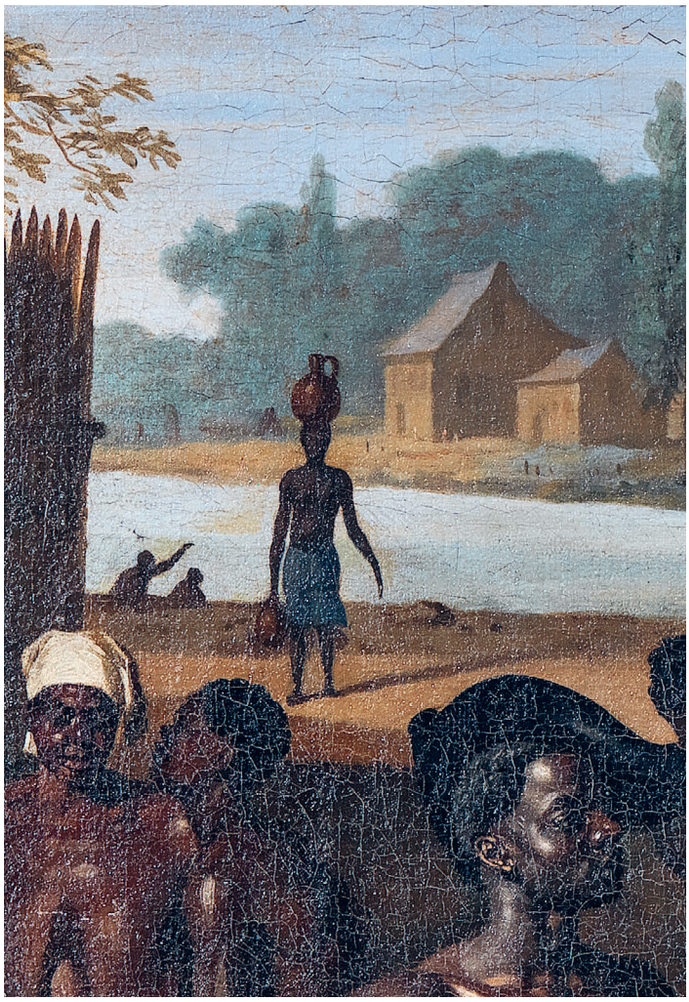
Dirk Valkenburg and His Difficult Tropics

In Valkenburg's canvases and drawings, the experience of living in the tropics features strongly. Just as the other travellers and artists discussed in this essay, Valkenburg fully captured the exuberance of Suriname's tropical nature and its 'exotic humanity'. In fact, that was a kind of 'artistic and cultural form' that circulated in this Afro-Atlantic axis.

As mentioned earlier, there is an interesting parallel between Valkenburg's faded blue colour palette and Frans Post's pictorial problems when depicting the Brazilian sky. Valkenburg and Post were separated by regions in America but perhaps had the same kind of formal education, and certainly, they possessed a similar cultural imagination. For example, in creating a new version of the landscape of the Americas, Post and Valkenburg painted a flat landscape that probably reminded the artists of Dutch geography, which was free of the major mountains or rocky terrain they encountered in the tropics.

Like Eckhout, Valkenburg enjoyed mixing different sources: Suriname's tropical fruits and animals with European ones. In one of his paintings, we see a pineapple sharing the scene with a lizard; in another, a snake, and in others still, there is passion fruit, figs and acerola cherries.

Indeed, Valkenburg seemed very interested in 'translating' and representing the tropics through an Edenic lens that also showed how productive Suriname was. Like Eckhout and Post, he also made a point of including, in the background of his landscapes – as seen in *Indigenous, Enslaved and European People Navigating the Suriname*



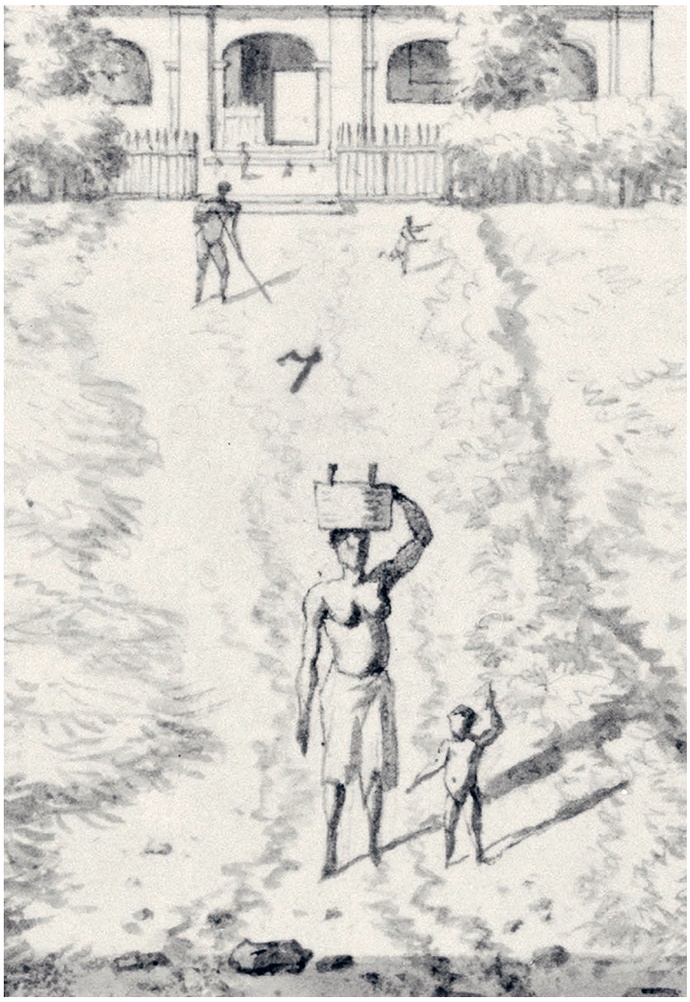


Fig. 5 *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname*, 1706–1708 (cat. 70), detail of a woman carrying a jug on her head.

Fig. 6 *View of the Main Residence, Kitchen, and Cattle House on the Palmeneribo Plantation, with Enslaved People on the Walkway, Suriname*, 1708 (cat. 64), detail of a woman carrying a basket on her head.



Fig. 7 Jean-Baptiste Debret, *Scène de Carnaval*, c. 1835. Engraving, hand-coloured, from *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil*. Paris 1834–1839, pt. 1, pl. 33, 502 × 335 mm. New York, New York Public Library, inv. no. b10086131.

River and *Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation in Suriname* (cats. 68–69) – the region's sugar mills. With a vast blue sky and tropical plants in the foreground, the painting also revealed the agricultural export economy and the sugar mill activity present in the Dutch colony.

When compared with Brunias's *Dancing Scene in the West Indies* (fig. 4), Valkenburg's representation of humanity also appears more frightening in his *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70), which brings the originality of placing Africans in the foreground. In the background, as usual, we see only the silhouette of the sugar mill complex. But what stands out in Valkenburg's painting is a particular focus on representing the enslaved people amid their rituals. With their bared torsos and 'shining' black skin, they are captured in a kind of African celebration. A drum (*atabaque*) and a gourd (*cabaça*) – symbolic African instruments – are particularly noticeable. The bare earth, evoking rusticity, matches the bare feet of the participants in what was likely a festivity held in the slave quarters (*senzala*). Everything suggests that the labourers are portrayed during a moment of leisure – certainly rare within a regime of forced labour, yet common in colonial representations.

Further in the background, on the left, one can make out the silhouette of a Black woman carrying a vessel on her head – an allusion to the kind of exoticized visibility produced by the colonial gaze from the metropoles. Other figures conform to a sort of European visual convention about slavery – such as a Black mother nursing her child in the foreground, while another carries a child with a *pano da costa*: an African wrapper cloth. A Black man in the foreground has his athletic body on display. All of them appear detached, immersed in this 'strange' ritual, where men are seen with bare torsos, women with exposed breasts or wearing colourful turbans. Their dark skin contrasts with the white garments of some and the vivid colours of others.

A century later, Brunias portrayed another ritual scene. In the painting *Dancing Scene in the West Indies* (fig. 4), however, attention is drawn to the carefully dressed women and the child in the lower right corner, all of whom are fully clothed. Their attire contrasts with that of the men, who are also depicted with bare torsos – yet another way of exoticizing foreign customs.

What the two paintings share is, first, a certain sensualization of enslaved women, whose clothing reveals their well-formed bodies, along with the cultural convention of including dogs to suggest the domestication of nature; and second, the omnipresence of sugar mills, which appear as a detail in the upper part of both compositions. The sugar mill and the master property are symbols of white power and allegories of vigilance.[25]

Nevertheless, there is something different in Valkenburg's painting. The ritual seems not to be so controlled or even peaceful, as it appears in Post's paintings or even Brunias's works. Here, African peoples act in a way that could be seen as more independent, mainly when compared with the 'well behaved' enslaved peoples depicted by the other painters. In Valkenburg's painting, the African

people appear more like 'savages', with their bodies fully absorbed in the ritual. On the other hand, the simplicity of the setting seems intended to represent a *senzala* – the place where the enslaved slept and held their festivities. The artist, then, imagines them during the night, in a moment of leisure, certainly rare under the regime of slavery, yet quite common in colonial representations.

In the background, on the left, one can make out the silhouette of a Black woman carrying a vase on her head, another exotic colonial motif, popular in the European imagination. There are other examples of Black women carrying objects on their heads in Valkenburg's works. One of them can be seen in a little detail in the background of the painting *Gathering of Enslaved People* (fig. 5; cat. 70), packed with many figures and children and in a drawing, *View of the Main Residence, Kitchen, and Cattle House on the Palmeneribo Plantation, with Enslaved People on the Walkway, Suriname* (fig. 6; cat. 64). Animals and the enslaved are depicted in front of houses, allegorically showing those who used to work in these distant places.

Other figures also play to European visual conventions, such as the Black mother breastfeeding her baby in the foreground, while another one carries her child 'land-style' in a sling. Again, black skin contrasts starkly with white or brightly colored clothing, and with bare-chested men, topless women and turbaned heads; all of them serving the European gaze and its stereotypes.

Caught between Curiosity and Fear

In the hand-coloured engraving *Carnaval* (1821) (fig. 7) by French artist Jean-Baptiste Debret (1768–1848), we see the popular *entrudo* festivities, during which Black figures paint their faces white and throw lemons. The background is a credible depiction of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's capital at that time, with the streets bustling with the enslaved. However, while this painting is separated from the others in time and space, they all share the same approach to representing Afro-descendants in a 'barbarous ritual'. These were visual strategies and art conventions for normalizing violence and highlighting the supremacy of the masters. It is interesting to point out how, from Valkenburg to Debret, travelling from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, and from Suriname and the West Indies to Brazil, there was a kind of 'common form', a visual convention, which included a paradisical nature, expressed through animals, fruits and plants; a diverse humanity, portrayed in its rituals and customs; and a representation of power inscribed in the architecture of the plantations. By analyzing different paintings created by Europeans about their American colonies, it is possible to affirm that a certain artistic form circulated throughout the Afro-Atlantic circuit, producing and reproducing social inequality – but also the richness of African cultures. This was also a way to recount a colonial history in which supremacy was legitimized by the customs of the 'other' or 'the more other others' and by the transparency of whiteness, which does not actually feature in the works. Perhaps that is why European dominance only appeared, if at all, as a

presence in the background, perhaps merely the suggestion of the all-powerful manor, gazing down at the slave quarters.

To conclude, colonial artworks, like those by Valkenburg, tend to convey the seductive appeal these Black bodies, toned by work, seemed to hold for these artists, who took great care to render their forms, clothing and accessories. But if there is desire, there is also fear before the 'unknown' – so often imagined by Europe. While the Old World exploited 'its' others, it was also afraid of them.

In these Americas, there is a sort of 'tropicalism' at work, analogous to Said's Orientalism.[26] Both, nature and humanity – despite their opposing representations of edenic idealization and degradation – became subjects to be exoticized by European imagery. All of this took place at a time when Europe was journeying from East to West, aiming to exploit the 'wealthy' American colonies and dominate both indigenous labourers and people who had been kidnapped from Africa. That is why the depiction of the sugar mill was so frequent, even if often relegated to the background. After all, power is exercised in this way: through invisible surveillance, and thus more effectively. They represent the order that rules supreme and 'bridles' with the unpredictability by which this other humanity is defined – a humanity, at once, that could fear but can also be an object for admiration. Those were difficult tropics – very ambiguous ones.

1 Silva 2003.
2 A *Babalorichá* might be considered a kind of high priest.
3 Verger 2021.
4 Gilroy 1995.
5 Ibid., p. 43.
6 Raminelli 1996.
7 Sahlins 1998, pp. 1–51.
8 Schwarcz 2024.
9 Holanda 2002.
10 For an excellent take on Low-Country interest in Brazil, see Mello 2011.
11 Schilder 1984.
12 Van der Krogt 2007, p. 1,342.
13 The buyer could opt to obtain the map with ornamental borders. On this, see Pedley 2005, pp. 205–221.
14 Said 1995.
15 See, among others, Franco Junior 2021.
16 See Schwarcz 2024.
17 Frankenberg 1995.
18 Alpers 1999.
19 Sutton 2015.
20 *Mameluca* refers to a person of mixed White and Indigenous descent.
21 Tapuia was a Tupi term used to designate indigenous peoples who did not speak old Tupi.
22 The works are still on display at the National Museum of Denmark's Ethnographic Collection. For the new research, see Abbing 2021.
23 Cole 2023, p. 72.
24 See Corrêa do Lago and Corrêa do Lago 2007.
25 Foucault 1995.
26 Said 1995.

Labouring Bodies: Dirk Valkenburg's Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname *in Context*

Sarah Thomas

Between the sixteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, some eleven million African people survived the Middle Passage, most of whom were forced to labour on plantations producing provisions and cash crops.[1] Yet rarely over that period do we find the details of plantation life portrayed in oil paintings. In contrast, a vast array of European works on paper – pencil sketches, watercolours, photographs (after 1839), and prints (that circulated internationally within books and pamphlets) – portrayed slave societies on and around the plantation. Today this corpus is housed in museums and libraries across the globe. Such imagery, largely for a white European or colonial audience, served various disparate purposes. Chief among these was the mission to attract and reassure potential or absentee planters that plantation slavery was manageable, lucrative and had a future (particularly in the face of abolitionist opposition). In abolitionist hands, by contrast, such imagery was deployed to remind viewers of the violence that underpinned slavery and to harness paternalistic Christian piety for people whose very humanity was denied. While purporting to 'document' plantation life, this European visual oeuvre must be handled with scholarly caution and with an appreciation that, ultimately, it reveals much more about European fears and aspirations than it ever can about the life of enslaved people.

Dirk Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (1706–1708) (cat. 70) is a highly unusual work within this corpus: a painstakingly detailed oil painting that appears (despite its title) to be highly attentive to the social lives of Suriname's local inhabitants, a 'fly on the wall' glimpse of uninhibited conviviality. It shows an apparently harmonious group engaging in simple human pleasures – dancing, drumming, kissing, fondling, drinking and socialising. The art historian Svetlana Alpers has referred to seventeenth-century Dutch painting as an 'art of description': 'rich and various in [its] observation of the world, dazzling in [its] display of craft, domestic and domesticating in [its] concerns.'[2] In this sense, Valkenburg was a man of his time and place, applying his Dutch training in still-life painting to imitating life (as he saw it) in Suriname over his two-year residence there

between 1706 and 1708. The women in *Gathering of Enslaved People* wear loose skirts around their waists, head-scarves, and some have bead necklaces, arm-bands or earrings; one wears what today we would call a bra. The men are adorned simply with loin cloths, except for one, who wears a loose pair of trousers. Two babies are swaddled on their mothers' backs in cloth wraps, and a child reclines casually on the back of the foreground drum. Utensils include a large earthenware jug carried on the head of a man in the upper left corner. A bowl is held aloft in the painting's centre, another to its left is used as a drinking vessel, while a third is positioned in the right foreground. Two smaller drinking vessels are encased in basketry and carried by the man in trousers. A knife is tucked into the loin cloth of one of the drummers (fig. 5, in Duin and Axwijk, p. 170). In the foreground lies a white clay pipe (another is tucked into the loin cloth of the man standing in the left foreground), the distinctive hourglass shape of a gourd (a common drinking vessel), wooden implements that appear to have been burnt, and an elongated drum (one of three), on which the woman in the foreground sits (fig. 1, in Duin and Axwijk, p. 163).[3] Behind the group are their simple living quarters (thatched huts), while other plantation buildings can be discerned in the background across a stretch of water (most likely the Suriname River). A narrow white banner is animated by a gust of wind, providing a charged visual counterpoint to the gleaming white fabric, which catches the eye as it delineates the muscularity of the Black bodies on view. For a small painting, *Gathering of Enslaved People* 'describes' an impressive number of material objects from which, arguably, we can learn much about everyday life on the Palmeneribo plantation at the dawn of the eighteenth century.

While Valkenburg's painted details reflect the painted subjects' Afro-Surinamese origins, the theme of the painting and its composition are firmly rooted in the artist's Dutch training. His broad theme (labourers at rest) and close attention to material culture align *Gathering of Enslaved People* with Dutch genre painting of the period, such as Jan Steen's (1626–1679) *Prince's Day* (fig. 1). By emphasizing the Dutch context of Valkenburg's Surinamese subject, we are reminded of the essential artifice of pictures. They have social agency and, in this period, were often commissioned. As such, they were required to fulfil the expectations of a patron. Valkenburg's patron was Jonas Witsen, the Amsterdam-based owner of Palmeneribo and two other Surinamese plantations inherited on the death of his wife. An avid art collector, Witsen already owned eighteen paintings by Valkenburg when he commissioned him to visit Suriname as his bookkeeper, writer and artist in order to paint 'all three plantations from life, as well as other rare birds and crops'.[4] The artist returned to the Netherlands two years later with his paintings and drawings. Witsen hung *Gathering of Enslaved People* in his cabinet of curiosities rather than in his painting gallery, thus supporting the view that it was created purely for its documentary value, its 'inspective gaze'.[5]

Dutch art specialist Elmer Kolfin has rightly warned of the dangers of reading too close an alliance between the moralising of



Fig. 1 Jan Steen, *Prince's Day*, c. 1660-1679. Oil on panel, 46.0 × 62.5 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-384.





Fig. 2 Thomas Vivares (engraver) after George Robertson, *A View in the Island of Jamaica, of Roaring River Estate belonging to William Beckford Esq. near Savannah la Marr*, 1778. Engraving, hand-coloured, 410 × 516 mm. London, Government Art Collection, inv. no. 3401.

Fig. 3 Thomas Hearne, *Parham Hill House and Sugar Plantation, Antigua*, 1779. Pen and ink, watercolour on paper, 372 × 538 mm. London, British Museum, inv. no. 1872,0511.531.

Dutch genre painting with Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People*, which has none of the comedic or satirical tones that characterize innumerable contemporary paintings of the peasantry 'merrymaking'.[6] Yet it is worth remembering that the aestheticized treatment of enslaved people dancing would become, later in the eighteenth century, a powerful if dangerous visual trope in European imagery, one that was often commissioned by the planter class as the future of slavery came under increasing threat from abolitionist resistance. One British planter, William Beckford of Somerley, invoked Dutch genre painting as he extolled Jamaica's potential as a subject for the painter, writing in his *Descriptive Account of Jamaica* (1790):

> A negro village is full of those picturesque beauties in which the Dutch painters have so much excelled; and is very particularly adapted to the expression of those situations, upon which the *scenes of rural dance and merriment may be supposed with the greatest conveniency to have happened*. The forms and appearances of the houses admit of every variety which this particular species of rural imagery requires; and the surrounding objects of confined landscape, with the *vulgar adjuncts* of [...] baskets, chairs, and stools, are always at hand to fill up the canvass [*sic*], *and to give sense to nature, and truth and novelty* to the representation of the scene.[7]

Beckford's use of the term 'picturesque' to describe enslaved people in the West Indies has a well-documented if unsettling history, both in literature and visual culture.[8] When visiting Jamaica to inspect his plantations in 1774, he was accompanied by the landscape painter George Robertson (1742–1788), who produced a series of paintings of the island that have been called 'monuments of the Jamaican picturesque'.[9] Despite his patron's interest in Dutch genre painting, Robertson was far more interested in the Northern landscape tradition, envisioning Jamaica through the prism of Rubens and his contemporaries, while miniaturising the enslaved figures who wander leisurely through the island's lush valleys herding animals, washing by the river or carrying baskets. *A View in the Island of Jamaica, of Roaring River Estate belonging to William Beckford Esq. near Savannah la Marr* (fig. 2) is a typical example. While a world away from Valkenburg's earlier attentions to ethnographic detail and rich, saturated 'close looking', Robertson's pastoral landscapes have one thing in common with the Dutch oil: a distinct lack of interest in the plantation and the brutalities of its enforced labour practices.

Such pictorial absences divert attention away from slavery altogether, conveying an impression of a self-contained Indigenous society at its leisure, a people at peace with their lives and part of a natural order, seemingly untouched by European 'civilization'. Indeed, were it not for the mention of the enslaved in its title (see Brienen in this volume, pp. 109–126), *Gathering of Enslaved People* might be described in just the same way, despite the obvious pictorial differences between the two paintings. Yet, evidence tells us, in the words of the late historian of slavery, Trevor Burnard, that 'brutality, violence, and death were not mere by-products of the extremely lucrative early modern plantation system but were

the *sine qua non* of that plantation world'.[10] European visual representations of such violence are strikingly rare, particularly in oil paintings, although notable exceptions are found in the prints and drawings of artists such as John Gabriel Stedman (1744–1797), and particularly, in the Brazilian oeuvre (Jean-Baptiste Debret (1768–1848), and Johann Moritz Rugendas (1802–1848), for example.[11]

Far more common in the European visual archive are scenes that served to naturalize the landscape and its enslaved inhabitants via familiar pictorial conventions, showing the plantation (if at all) as a space of disciplined productivity. *Parham Hill House and Sugar Plantation, Antigua* (fig. 3) by British artist Thomas Hearne (1744–1817) is a good example of this 'colonial picturesque' trope, with its distinctive palm tree serving as a *repoussoir* (framing device) in the right foreground and meandering paths leading the eye into a scene of gentle labour. In the middle ground, sugar cane is harvested by enslaved men and women, who are overseen carefully by a manager on horseback, a ubiquitous figure in such views, designed to reassure the planter class. The watercolour, most likely a composite created from a range of sketches for the plantation's absentee owner, shows several stages of sugar production, including the raw produce being transported in hogshead barrels to the right. Prominently situated in the foreground is an enslaved couple and their child: they wander leisurely, their time and bodies apparently their own. As we shall see, the health and fertility of the enslaved – often evidenced in scenes of coupling and flirtation – is a common motif in the European iconography of enslavement, particularly within the context of growing abolitionist sentiment, where the future of slavery was at risk.[12]

It is in scenes of the enslaved dancing that this interest in their health and happiness is perhaps most visible. There are many examples, both in visual culture and literature, that date to at least the early seventeenth century. Zacharias Wagener (1614–1668) was a German mercenary for the Dutch West India Company. His watercolour, made in northeastern Brazil, *Divination: Ceremony and Dance, Brazil* (1634–1641) has been discussed elsewhere as a forerunner to *Gathering of Enslaved People*, although its naïve and simplistic style distinguish it sharply from Valkenburg's more sophisticated treatment, in which the richness of detail brings the subjects more vividly to life.[13] A more contemporary printed image of music-making by the enslaved in Brazil was created by Johannes Nieuhof (1618–1672), a widely travelled employee of the Dutch East India Company and official in India and Ceylon. His engraving *Negroes Playing Calabashes*, from the book *Gedenkweerdige Brasiliaense Zee-en Lantreize* (1682), is more stylized than Valkenburg's oil but shares his interest in ethnographic detail (fig. 4). The plate was republished in the celebrated 1704 English translation, predating Valkenburg's visit to Suriname by only two years, and given the volume's wide circulation, the Dutch artist may well have been familiar with it.[14] Nieuhof's decision to centre his two engraved figures dominantly within the composition (using the distinctive palm tree as a framing device) and his discernible interest in 'ethno-

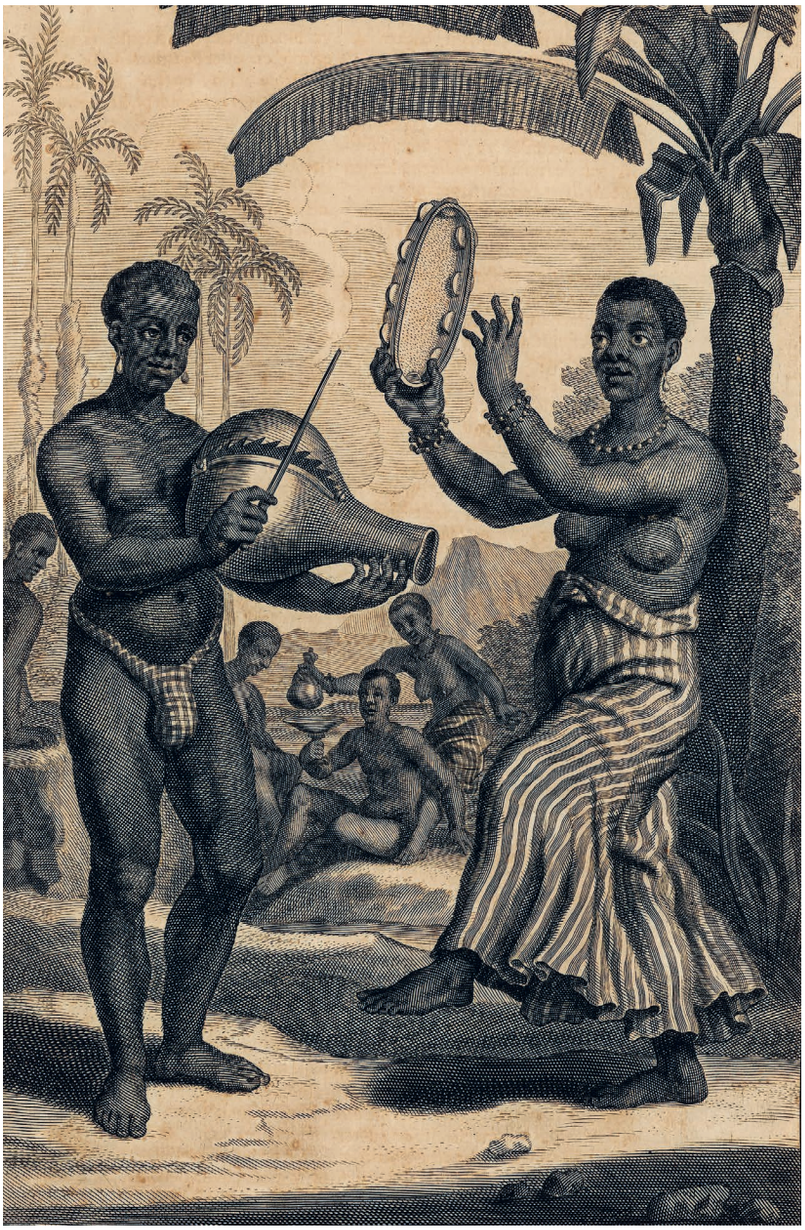


Fig. 4 Johannes Nieuhof, *Negroes Playing Calabashes*, c. 1682. Engraving from *Gedenkweerdige Brasiliaense Zee-en Lantreize*. Amsterdam 1682. Dimensions unknown. Providence, John Carter Brown Library.





Fig. 5 J. Villeneuve and E. Lepoitevin (lithographers) after Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Danse Batuca*, c. 1835. Lithograph from *Voyage pittoresque dans le Brésil*. Paris and Mulhouse 1835, pt. 4, pl. 16, 215 × 283 mm. Glasgow, University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections, inv. no. SG Coll RX 29.

Fig. 6 Richard Bridgens, *Negro Dance, Trinidad*, c. 1836. Lithograph from *West India Scenery, with Illustrations of Negro Character*. London 1836, pl. 23, 365 × 277 mm. New Haven, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

graphic' objects reveals a greater debt to the tradition exemplified so notably by Albert Eckhout (c. 1610–1664/66) in his influential series of paintings from Dutch Brazil created earlier in the seventeenth century, such as *Woman and Child of African Descent* (fig. 3, in Schmidt, p. 210). Nevertheless, there is a greater dynamism in Nieuhof's engraving, which appears to mimic the lively musicality of the subject matter, and by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this had become a common feature in many European images of enslaved groups dancing. In print culture, these are particularly prevalent in the 1830s, and include Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Danse Batuca* (fig. 5); Richard Bridgens (1785–1846), *Negro Dance* (fig. 6); and Isaac Mendes Belisario (1795–1849), *French Set-Girls* (fig. 7).[15]

Belgian artist Pierre Jacques Benoit's (1782–1854) *The Dou or Great Slave Dance Festival* (fig. 8), one of forty-nine lithographic plates from his lavish volume *Voyage à Surinam: description des possessions néerlandaises dans la Guyane* (*Journey through Suriname: Description of the Dutch Possessions in Guyana*, Brussels, 1839), deserves special mention in relation to Valkenburg's oil, which precedes it by over a century. Benoit was a strident opponent of abolition, believing that Europeans remained reliant on enslaved labour as the only feasible means of producing plantation crops to scale. He mobilized a common pro-slavery argument of the period: that planters treated their enslaved workers with humanity and compassion.[16] For some of the artists who chose to portray the enslaved dancing and at their leisure, such as Benoit and Bridgens, the subject not only offered a lively and distinctive genre scene to please the armchair traveller back in Europe but could also provide assurance that enslaved societies were not as harsh as the abolitionist lobby was by now arguing. Many such images circulated globally as book illustrations and were 'read' alongside text. Benoit's commentary described in some detail the performance of the *dou*, during which time the enslaved 'forget both the spade and the whip'.[17] Despite choosing not to illustrate the brutal punishment and harsh labour regimes that lay at the heart of plantation life in Suriname, Benoit nevertheless acknowledged this in his text, viewing the dance as a form of escapism from harsh realities. His image is filled with light, a joyous celebratory and rather polite affair which, like so many others in the same volume, highlighted some of the rich cultural traditions of the enslaved in Suriname. Together the images in the volume convey the impression of an orderly, harmonious and hierarchical society in which both enslaved and Indigenous people maintained cultural traditions whilst living in harmony with their imperial oppressors. Evidence tells us, however, that Suriname was a plantation colony infused with violence, one 'firmly set in the American space of death'. The story of the harsh events that took place at Palmeneribo in which Valkenburg was personally involved (see Dragtenstein in this volume, pp. 45–54) confirm this darker reality.[18]

Benoit's *The Dou or Great Slave Dance Festival*, so typical of a great deal of European printed imagery from the same period, makes a stark contrast with Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People*

from over a century earlier. Gone is the refined air of celebration. For the artists of the 1830s, this had served to assure European viewers that enslaved people were not only satisfied with their lives but also that they behaved with probity and dignity, as signified by such 'polite' dance gestures.[19] By contrast, *Gathering of Enslaved People* is a dark and somewhat sombre painting whose subjects appear pensive, perhaps apprehensive, lost for the most part in their own thoughts. With the exception of the seated woman and her child in the foreground, the painting's tight composition emphasizes the group as a social unit. Previous commentators have noted the distinctive qualities of the individuals' polished ebony skin – the 'glossy trophies of humanity' – that distinguishes them from the muted gloom of their landscape setting.[20] For seventeenth-century Dutch painting specialist, Charles Ford, this unambiguous emphasis on human beings as commodities made them 'grotesque *pronk stilleven*, advertising their master's ownership of themselves'.[21] This was the cold language of commodity capitalism, what Saidiya Hartman has called the 'racial calculus' of Black life.[22]

I find this reading compelling and wish to extend the argument further, despite its discomforting implications. While difficult to understand today, the fact that enslaved people could be personal property was broadly accepted by most Europeans as a banal reality of life for over three hundred years. Valkenburg knew this when he set off for Suriname in the employment of his patron. But when it came to making artistic choices about the painting, the artist decided not only to emphasize that Witsen's enslaved chattel were healthy and happy but, so too, that they had a sustainable future. Like the works I considered earlier, I argue that *Gathering of Enslaved People* also holds a fascination with fertility and reproduction. [23] While much of the landscape and figure group is steeped in darkness, the eye is drawn to the brilliant white clothing that, for the most part, adorns the women portrayed (fig. 9; cat. 70). A pregnant woman with a red skirt and white 'bra' (right hand side) is shown just behind a baby being carried on the back of another woman kissing; the woman in the foreground also carries a baby on her back, her breasts covered, too, in a white garment. On the far left, the genitals of an older woman with pendulous breasts, wearing a white headscarf and skirt, are being fondled. There is an erotics at play here, but this is not the scathing sexual satire that we see in Dutch genre paintings or in the modern moral subjects of British artist William Hogarth, for example.[24] Rather, Valkenburg's picture contained an important message for his patron about the health and happiness of his enslaved 'property'. This was not driven by humanitarian motives but, rather, because it offered reassurance to the planter that a future would come when he would be able to cease spending money on newly imported African labourers.

In the years leading to Valkenburg's visit to Suriname, the number of enslaved workers in the country was growing at a rapid rate due to the expansion of the plantation system.[25] Between 1683 and 1713, the quantity of sugar plantations rose from fifty to almost two hundred, a rise largely facilitated by the increased number of enslaved people imported from Africa.[26] In the years immediately





Fig. 7 Isaac Mendes Belisario, *French Set-Girls, Jamaica*, 1837. Lithograph, hand-coloured, from *Sketches of Character, in Illustration of the Habits, Occupation, and Costume of the Negro Population in the Island of Jamaica*. Kingston (Jamaica) 1837-1838, 273 × 375 mm. New Haven, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

Fig. 8 Pierre Jacques Benoit, *The Dou or Great Slave Dance Festival, Suriname*, c. 1839. Lithograph from *Voyage à Surinam: description des possessions néerlandaises dans la Guyane*. Brussels 1839, pl. XIX, 460 × 310 mm. Providence, John Carter Brown Library.





Fig. 9 *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname*, 1706–1708 (cat. 70), detail of women wearing white clothing.

Fig. 10 Agostino Brunias, *A Negroes Dance in the Island of Dominica*, 1779. Stipple etching on paper, hand-coloured, 30.3 × 37.5 cm. New Haven, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

prior to Valkenburg's visit, between 1702 and 1705, tensions had erupted amongst the planters and the Dutch West India Company directors over their monopoly of the slave trade; planters' efforts to increase their enslaved workforce were frustrated by increasing prices and limitations on the supply of workers. High mortality rates were adding to the problem and enslaved people were increasingly risking their lives by escaping.[27] One planter wrote in 1706 that 'this land devours Negroes at a rate [...] that the importation can barely keep up with the losses due to death and runaways'.[28] The resistance of the tormented workers at Palmeneribo during Valkenburg's residency (described elsewhere in this volume?) was thus part of broader tensions in the region. Despite the increased numbers of Africans being imported during the period, the Suriname population saw only a small increase in growth, and at times, it declined. Planters were not yet able to purchase enslaved labourers with sugar, and maintaining an adequate workforce to meet growing demand was costly.[29]

In her important study of slavery in the seventeenth-century English Atlantic world, historian Jennifer L. Morgan has written about the connections between 'hereditary racial slavery and slaveholders' understanding of the reproductive futures of the women and girls they purchased'.[30] The rise of pro-natalist policies as a means of swelling enslaved workforces coincided with abolitionist movements, which threatened the viability of the Atlantic slave trade.[31] Morgan cautions us, however, against overlooking the 'foundational importance of reproduction in producing hereditary racial slavery as a logical means of controlling enslaved people economically and socially'.[32] Elsewhere she writes:

> Slaveowners appropriated [women's] reproductive lives by claiming children as property [...] Whether laboring among sugar cane, coffee bushes, or rice swamps, the cost-benefit calculations of colonial slaveowners included the speculative value of a reproducing labor force [...] women's work and women's bodies are inseparable from the landscape of colonial slavery.[33]

Enslaved women were thus doubly dehumanized, their value as both labourers and breeders cruelly accounted for.

At the time Valkenburg was painting in Dutch Suriname, the solution to a dwindling plantation workforce was considered to be an expansion of the slave trade. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to speculate that Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People* must surely have been well received by his planter patron on the artist's return to Amsterdam because, for him, it was imbued with a message of optimism. While undoubtedly inviting a voyeuristic curiosity, the painting would also have sent a reassuring message about the health and sustainability of Witsen's enslaved workers, whose muscular physiques and abundant capacity to bear children boded well for his future prosperity.

The capacity for paintings of enslaved people dancing to serve as reassurance to anxious planters reoccurs significantly towards the end of the eighteenth century in the British West Indies in the work of Anglo-Italian artist, Agostino Brunias (c. 1730–1796). Like Valkenburg, he too had an influential planter patron, William Young

(first baronet, 1724/25–1788), who advocated for treating enslaved Africans and their descendants with benevolence; crucial to this, he argued, was the physical and psychological health of his enslaved charges.[34] Brunias was highly focussed on the sociability of enslaved communities in the British West Indies, and he returned often to the subject of the dance in his idealised scenes of life in the Ceded Islands in the late-eighteenth century. Given Young's views on the treatment of the enslaved, his images of dancing as a polite form of courtship take on an added significance. The engraving *A Negroes Dance in the Island of Dominica* (1779) (fig. 10) is a typical example, centred on a dancing couple whose eyes are locked as they engage in a courtly and demure ritual. The woman's belly and breasts are plump and alluring. Other figures congregate around them: the familiar figure of the drummer in profile, a woman playing a tambourine, others conversing, and a young girl holding a parasol in the foreground. Behind the dancers stands a tree laden with fruit.[35] The bucolic tableau is one of untroubled merriment, social cohesion and plenitude. More importantly, its focus upon the flirtatious engagement between the two central figures, the inclusion of a child, the dancer's swollen belly, and the prominence of a ripe fruiting tree are all powerful allusions to fertility and fecundity. Women outnumber men by a ratio of two to one. The future of West Indian slavery – without the need for the African trade – appears secure.

While Brunias's emphasis on refinement and polite gesture links his print more closely with Benoit's Surinamese *Du* scene than with *Gathering*, his pictorial affirmation that the future and sustainability of plantation slavery was secure, obviating the necessity to import enslaved Africans, resonates across both works despite their temporal and geographic disparities. By avoiding scenes of plantation labour, discipline and punishment, and emphasizing instead the happiness, self-sufficiency, robust health, and fertility of enslaved communities, both artists offered profound reassurance to their anxious planter patrons. Enslaved people across the Americas *were* given short periods of time away from the plantation for the purpose of socialising, during which they engaged with a rich array of African and creole musical traditions. There is no doubt, too, that such festivities served as welcome opportunities to escape the harsh and often brutal realities of plantation life. Yet, it is important to note that the reoccurrence of pro-natalist themes across cultures and periods during the time of slavery was often accompanied by the concurrent erasure of violent realities.

Gathering of Enslaved People is an exceptional painting in many ways, not only within the Dutch oeuvre of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries but within the European painting tradition more broadly. Its prurient attention to the intimate details of an enslaved community socialising on the Palmeneribo plantation in the early years of the eighteenth century, with no hint of satire or moralizing, distinguishes it from a much larger range of imagery that so often idealises and sanitises such plantation scenes for a polite European audience. *Gathering of Enslaved People* had a more intimate destination in Witsen's cabinet of curiosities, and it was surely

painted with the planter patron squarely in mind. Valkenburg had spent the first part of his career as a still life painter portraying death. In *Gathering of Enslaved People*, he ruminates on life, emphasizing the commodification and fungibility of his enslaved subjects while at the same time demonstrating their very humanity. It is this paradox that makes the painting so compelling.

1 Behrendt 2008, accessed on 25 November 2024.
2 Alpers 1983, p. xxi.
3 On the distinction between a gourd and a calabash, see Price 1982, p. 78. The red-brown vessel in the foreground of Valkenburg's painting appears to be from the *Lagenaria siceraria*, or 'tree-gourd vine', with its distinct neck at the stem end.
4 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 3369, 24 and 26 February 1706, pp. 1,147–1,149. Cited by Sint Nicolaas, 2021, p. 96, footnote 19, p. 312.
5 Van Eeghen 1946. Cited by Sint Nicolaas 2018. p. 57, 250 footnote 15. 'Inspective gaze' is quoted from Sint Nicolaas in the same volume, p. 55.
6 Kolfin 1997, p. 24; Brienen 2007, p. 246, footnote 3.
7 Beckford 1790, vol. 1, pp. 227–228 (my italics). See also pp. 339–340.
8 Quilley 2003, pp. 109–10; Bohls 2014, pp. 27–35; Thompson 2009, pp. 39–42.
9 Barringer 2007, p. 43.
10 Burnard 2020, p. 202.
11 For more on this, see Thomas 2019, pp. 168–69.
12 Thomas 2019, esp. chapter 3, pp. 59–98.
13 For example, Brienen 2007, p. 251.
14 Nieuhof et al. 1682, republished in Churchill et al. 1704–1732, vol. 2, pl. opp. p. 246.
15 For the close ties between Afro-Surinamese dances and the broader Caribbean context, particularly the Jamaican sets, see Dewulf 2023.
16 De Groot, 'Summary', in Benoit et al. 1980, p. 87.
17 Benoit 1839, p. 23.
18 Price 2003, accessed on 26 November 2024.
19 Johns 1991, p. 114.
20 Brienen 2007, p. 261. See also Thompson 2015, pp. 232–234; Brienen 2007, esp. pp. 244–248.
21 Ford 2002, p. 8.
22 Hartman 2021, p. 6.
23 Here, I extend a point that Rebecca Parker Brienen has made in her discussion of Valkenburg's *Gathering of Enslaved People*, which notes his focus on men and women in 'the prime of their childbearing years.' Brienen 2007, p. 251.
24 While Hogarth attempted to disassociate his work from 'low' Dutch art, his modern moral subjects were deeply satirical along similar lines. See, for example, the groping Black figure in the left of *Noon* from *The Four Times of Day* series, 1758.
25 Postma 1990, p. 182; Sint Nicolaas 2018, p. 45.
26 Sint Nicolaas 2018, p. 45.
27 Postma 1990, pp. 184–185. Postma notes that the first Maroon village was established in 1709; Maroon numbers have often been exaggerated for the early eighteenth-century period.
28 Tweede West-Indische Compagnie, ARA (The Hague), vol. 1,138, doc. 5. Cited by Postma 1990, p. 184, footnote 18.
29 Fatah-Black 2013, p. 163.
30 Morgan 2021, p. 188.
31 This applies both in the antebellum South as well as in the British Caribbean colonies. There is a growing literature in this area. See for example Morgan 2021, Beckles 1999 and Djelid 2024.
32 Morgan 2021, p. 188.
33 Morgan 2004, pp. 1, 3 and 136.
34 Young 1764, esp. pp. 45–46. For a longer discussion of Brunias within the context of 'amelioration' and the subject of the enslaved dancing, see Thomas 2019, ch. 3, esp. pp. 59–88; also Thomas 2018.
35 The fruit may be a mango. These had been imported from India via Brazil earlier in the eighteenth century. See *Dominica Botanic Gardens* n.d., accessed on 20 December 2024.

Afterword

The Meaning of a Flag
Karin Amatmoekrim

On the stretch of land along the river where the Surinamese plantation of Waterland once stood centuries ago, the inexorable Amazon forest has all but swallowed up the wooden buildings that were there. I saw a video of the site, one time, shot with a phone. The images were blurred, the hand that moved the camera unsteady, but I immediately recognized the timeless image of the dark, wide river and the endless greenery crowding its banks because it was a typical Surinamese image. The water was rippling and brown. From the angle of the person operating the camera, there was no reflection of the trees or high clouds in the water.

Dirk Valkenburg's representation of the same plantation is very different. He painted *Indigenous, Enslaved and European People Navigating the Suriname River in Front of the Waterland Plantation, Suriname* (cat. 68) between 1706 and 1708, more than three hundred years before the *YouTube* video. In Valkenburg's version, the river is as smooth as glass. The still-intact plantation buildings, trees and high clouds are reflected in it, all captured in sober brown-green shades. The riverbank is quiet, but the river itself is dotted with various boats and canoes: Black people in different rowing boats, and a long dugout-canoe carrying what seem to be Indigenous people. Virtually everything is reflected in the still water of the river: boats, people, trees, clouds, houses – a reflection that gives extra depth to the image and that conveys a sense of peace and tranquillity. Perhaps the most striking thing about the painting is the Dutch flag that flutters at the stern of the middle boat. The brilliant red-white-and-blue contrasts sharply with the subdued shades of the surroundings, as though Valkenburg had wanted to emphasize the importance of the tricolour. A strange detail is that the flag is the only thing that is not reflected in the water. This gives the impression that Valkenburg added it later, perhaps at the request of his client and the owner of the plantation, Jonas Witsen (1676–1715) of Amsterdam.

In 1702, Witsen had inherited three Surinamese plantations from his deceased wife, who had herself inherited them from her uncle, Joan van Scharphuysen. Van Scharphuysen had decreed during his lifetime that the enslaved people who worked on his plantations should be exempt from working on Saturdays and Sundays so that they could grow vegetables on their own small plots of land and sell the produce for their own profit. When Witsen became the owner, he revoked the rules. Hired to record the plantations for his boss, Valkenburg had been there on 19 June 1707 when the enslaved inhabitants of Palmeneribo revolted against the new owner's strict rules. Partly because of statements later made by Valkenburg, the leaders of the revolt were 'condemned to be slowly burned alive.

While being burned, they had to be pinched with red-hot pincers until they died. It had to be long-lasting and painful. Then the heads had to be cut from the bodies. Those heads had to be placed on sticks as an example for others to see'.[1]

It is not known what Valkenburg, who would go down in history as a painter of idyllic scenes of plantation life in Suriname, thought of the cruel treatment of Black people. That the painter was a child of his time, and should thus be seen in this context, feels like an incomplete interpretation. After all, moral views on humanity are timeless and universal. Valkenburg's contemporary, Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717), who stayed in Suriname between 1699 and 1701 to research plants and insects, did denounce the abuse of enslaved people in her notes.[2] Valkenburg is not known to have had objections to slavery.

Looking at Valkenburg's work, I cannot help being aware of the moral stance taken by the painter during his lifetime. The flag he painted here is a symbol of appropriation, and one could say that Valkenburg's tricolour is typical of how white people demonstrated their mastery of the appropriation of countries and peoples throughout history. Like all symbols, though, it remains a symbol with a limited meaning in the sense that it means little to people who are unfamiliar with the cultural context. After all, what would this flag, had it really hung on the boat and not been added later by Valkenburg, have meant to the Indigenous people and Africans? A Western folly, perhaps – something to which white people assigned value but that was of no significance to anyone else.

Perhaps it is difficult for a Western-educated person to imagine that a flag could be of no significance. The converse is easier to grasp: namely, that the meaning of 'exotic' symbols is not self-evident. I am thinking of the way in which another painting by Valkenburg was exhibited at a major exhibition on Suriname in Amsterdam's Nieuwe Kerk in 2020. The painting, *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70), said to give an intimate insight into the rituals of enslaved Africans, was exhibited in a display case together with objects used during Winti rituals, such as an engraved gourd and beaded necklaces. But no matter how artfully the gourd was decorated or how magnificently the necklaces were strung, their meaning was too obscure for the average visitor to comprehend. I, too, lacked the context to understand what I was looking at and how and why I should appreciate it. When it came to the painting by Valkenburg, on the other hand, I could say without hesitation that it was excellent. This is not so much an objective observation as the result of many years of art education at primary and secondary school and years filled with visits to museums where masters like Valkenburg are venerated in places that explain to visitors why the light in such paintings is so remarkable and how ingeniously the artist has positioned his subjects so that a certain dynamism is created on the canvas. After all, an understanding of value and beauty is not so much naturally innate as gradually created, as a story that we tell each other – over and over again. Thus, we are used to 'reading' works of art like Valkenburg's. But we lack the tools to understand



Fig. 1 Documentation of Otto Schulz-Kampfhenkel's 1935-1937 expedition, from the publication *Rätsel der Urwaldhölle*, Berlin 1938.

African or Indigenous cultural expressions, including those from Suriname. And if the context is missing, the object itself becomes meaningless. In this way, the flag on the boat on the Surinamese river would have meant nothing to the majority of the Brown and Black people there.

The image of Valkenburg's Dutch flag reminded me of an obscure black-and-white photograph I once came across in a book by Renzo Duin about the work of anthropologist Lodewijk Schmidt.[3] Schmidt was a Sa'amaka, a Maroon descended from Africans who had escaped slave labour on the plantations in Suriname. These Africans established their own communities in the impenetrable rainforest, whereby they preserved their pride and their humanity. Schmidt had converted to Christianity and spoke fluent Dutch and German as a result. He was one of the first anthropologists to record the customs of deeply isolated Indigenous communities.[4] Schmidt, being a Black man, while holding such an important position in the field, was particularly remarkable because slavery had only been abolished in 1873, sixty years before Schmidt originally published his writings. In his translation of Schmidt's research, Duin describes the circumstances in which this Black anthropologist carried out his work. The historical context, itself exceptionally layered, was further complicated when Schmidt was tasked in 1937 by a German team to research the Indigenous territories on the border between Brazil and Suriname. The research was paid for by the National Socialist Workers' Party, the NSDAP, and led by Otto Schulz-Kampfhenkel, a German geographer and 'fierce national-socialist'.[5] In a surviving photo of the expedition, Schulz-Kampfhenkel can be seen surrounded by Black boatmen on a dugout canoe, against the backdrop of a wide river and the extensive, ever-present rainforest, so typical of Suriname. The wooden boat has a flagpole displaying a flag with a swastika (fig. 1).[6]

It is a strange image: the Nazi symbol against the background of the rainforest. And after the first forms of recognition – the swastika, the rainforest, the boats and the river – it struck me that everything would have meant something to the Brown and Black people in the photo, except for the flag. After all, what would it have mattered to them, or to Schmidt, that they were consorting with Nazis? A white man is a white man, and the Germans, just like the Dutch, also had certain views on the superiority of white people to others. I cannot imagine that the Nazis would have treated the Surinamese worse than the Dutch had.

Schulz-Kampfhenkel undoubtedly hoisted his Nazi flag with the same proud conviction that Valkenburg depicted the Dutch flag on the painting of the Waterland plantation. But did it matter to the Surinamese in 1706 that the Dutchman was proud of his flag and his victory, his occupation of the country? Did it matter to Schmidt that he was working with a Nazi? Although I do not know, I can imagine that the only thing that really mattered was the occupation and the oppression, regardless of who was carrying it out. To be so proud of one's own conviction that one decorated it with a flag was, as the English put it so well, to add insult to injury. The symbol itself is only significant to those who know and accept the context.

For the others, the harsh reality beyond the reach of interpretation is the only thing that matters. Perhaps that is the reason why the Dutch tricolour is not reflected in the water in Valkenburg's painting: Suriname does not accept this symbol. The flag, and those who fly it, laud themselves alone. Suriname refuses to echo this self-congratulatory story.

1 Dragtenstein 2004, p. 230.
2 Etty 2001.
3 Duin 2020.
4 Schmidt 1942.
5 Duin 2020, p. 21.
6 Ibid., p. 21, fig. 3.

CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ

Introduction

Julie Hartkamp with
Sabine Craft-Giepmans
and Matthies Klink

This catalogue raisonné offers the first overview of works signed by Dirk Valkenburg, as well as their attributions, both tentative and confirmed.

Methods and Restrictions

Together with a first list of works initiated by Willem de Rooij between 2006 and 2024, the RKD's visual documentation archive – containing over five million photographs and reproductions of artworks from institutional and private collections dating from 1400 to the present – served as a starting point for compiling Valkenburg's oeuvre. The archive enabled the identification of numerous works that are now lost or held in unknown private collections but were documented through past public sales records, preserved at the RKD. Using the digital tool *Visual Search*, variants of paintings that would have otherwise gone unnoticed could be identified. In addition to their appearance in this catalogue raisonné, all works have been added to the *RKDimages* online database, enabling the present findings to be reviewed and expanded in future research.

This study of Valkenburg's oeuvre relied primarily on high-resolution image reproductions of works. This approach was necessary for two reasons: first, more than one third of the works were physically inaccessible, either held in private collections or whose whereabouts are unknown; second, limitations in time and funding restricted travel and in-person examination. When reproduction quality did not allow for a definitive assessment, the work was classified as 'possibly' by or 'attributed to' Valkenburg, reflecting a level of certainty that also considers the availability of archival and biographical information.

Notes to the Catalogue Structure

The catalogue raisonné's structure seeks to reflect the fluid and collaborative nature of artistic production rather than solely questions of authorship. It consists of 92 works organized into five thematic sections, 'Game and Hunting Scenes', 'Animal Scenes', 'Fruit Still Lifes,' 'Works Made in Suriname', and 'Portraits', in addition to a sixth section, 'Copies after Lost Portraits'.

Each thematic section opens with an introduction discussing style and iconography within the broader context of early modern

Netherlandish painting. The sections are broadly sequenced according to the chronological progression in which, based on extant dated works, Valkenburg introduced different subjects throughout his career: his earliest known signed and dated works are game still lifes and animal scenes, followed by fruit still lifes and works produced during his time in Suriname, from 1706 to 1708. Lastly, dated portraits, by contrast, are known only from the final decade of his life. However, following accounts by Johan van Gool (1685–1763), it is known that Valkenburg was already active as a portrait painter early in his career, and this section includes one portrait tentatively attributed to Valkenburg, likely dating to this early period.

Roughly half the works in Valkenburg's oeuvre are signed, though, throughout his career, signatures have varied in spelling, form and format, including the use of full name, initials and monograms. Notably, only one still life (tentatively attributed) is signed with a monogram. All other monogrammed works were produced in Suriname. Although the artist typically used calligraphic script, the signatures on his Surinamese works were rendered in block capitals.

The compilation of Valkenburg's works is based on a close comparative analysis of signed and unsigned paintings, with attention to iconography and stylistic and technical elements, such as colour palette, composition and brushwork, all considered within the context of biographic and archival information. His oeuvre is closely intertwined, both in style and iconography, with that of his mentor, Jan Weenix. Further technical research into works by both artists would significantly contribute to better insight into the processes and methods central to their artistic exchange. In order not to obscure these dynamics of mutual exchange, no separate section for doubtful attributions is included.

Signed works and those attributed through general academic consensus are classified as 'Dirk Valkenburg'. Works supported by similar evidence yet not widely discussed or established in scholarship – often due to the early stage of research – are labelled 'attributed to Dirk Valkenburg'. Works where attribution is uncertain are categorized as 'possibly Dirk Valkenburg' or, where relevant, 'Dirk Valkenburg or Jan Weenix'.

Only twenty per cent of Valkenburg's paintings are dated. Within each category, the dated works are presented chronologically to provide temporal anchor points. What is most characteristic of Valkenburg's artistic practice – the consistent reuse of motifs and compositions across his entire oeuvre – is also what complicates efforts to date the rest of his work. The variability in his signatures also offered little certitude in establishing a chronology within his oeuvre. Further material and technical analysis could contribute to a better understanding of the development of his painting technique and assist in establishing a more reliable chronology. Accordingly, based on the available methods and the current state of research, we decided not to assign tentative dates to the works in case no original dating by the artist or other circumstantial evidence was available. Instead, a general sense of early and later production is conveyed by arranging the undated works in an indicative, relative chronological order within each category, in relation to the dated paintings.

Notes to Artwork Titles

Most of the paintings and drawings in this catalogue have, on this occasion, been assigned new titles. Valkenburg did not title his works, and over the centuries, various collectors and institutions have attributed widely divergent titles to his paintings, either long and descriptive or short and generic. Consequently, these previous titles reflected the curatorial or collection-based contexts in which the works were situated, rather than being interpreted within the iconographic and stylistic framework of Valkenburg's broader oeuvre. In the course of this research, new titles were introduced to reflect the repetitive character of his still lifes and animal paintings, while at the same time underlining the distinctions between individual compositions. Titles have been made consistent according to a descriptive rather than interpretative approach. Wherever possible, we have limited ourselves to naming the visible elements, figures and settings depicted in the work without imposing narrative readings or inferred actions. Many of the titles of his Suriname paintings and drawings have also been updated to provide a more inclusive description of the depicted sites and people. All previous titles assigned by museum collections are included under notes to the entries. Previous titles of works outside of public institutions can be found in the RKD Research database.

Notes to Catalogue Entries

Each entry includes technical information, inscriptions or marks when accessible,[1] provenance history, references and, occasionally, supporting notes. The titles include identifications of most elements depicted; when not specified in the title, further classifications of flora and fauna can be found in the RKD Research's database of online entries. Exceptions are a few studies and still lifes created by Valkenburg in Suriname, where supporting notes provide identifications of fruits and reptiles. Dimensions follow the metric system, listing height followed by width. All provenance research is based on information obtained from RKD visual documentation (*RKDimages Lite*), the Hofstede de Groot index cards (*RKDexcerpts*), Brill's *Art Sales Catalogues Online* and the *Getty Provenance Index*.
In case information was acquired through other means, sources are mentioned in the footnotes. For auction catalogues issued after 1900, references include the name of the auction house in parentheses. Public sales prior to 1900 are cited by the name of the seller. Currency is noted in original currencies. Descriptions of artworks in auction catalogues are cited if there is uncertainty relating to the provenance information. Here, artworks are often measured in *duim*, where 1 unit is equal to 2.57 centimetres.[2] Technical, restoration and conservation issues, if known, have been included under the notes. For inscriptions, marks or citations from auction catalogues, interpretations are provided in brackets.

1 When visible, collectors' marks are identified by their Lugt reference number. See Fondation Custodia: *Frits Lugt. Les Marques de collections de dessins & d'estampes*, accessed on 28 June 2025.
2 Meertens Instituut: *De oude Nederlandse maten en gewichten*, accessed on 6 September 2025.

Game and Hunting Scenes
Julie Hartkamp

Among the 40 works included in this section centralizing the theme of the hunt, the majority are game still lifes. During the second half of the seventeenth century, influenced by French taste of the time, the Dutch game still life became more elaborate, colourful and monumental.[1] The earlier, more monochrome game pieces of Elias Vonck (1605–1652) and Cornelis Lelienbergh (1626–1676) featured well-balanced, intimate compositions along a horizontal axis, set against modest domestic backdrops (fig. 1, in Hartkamp, p. 59). However, with artists such as Willem van Aelst (1625–1683) and Melchior d'Hondecoeter (1636–1695), these works became increasingly complex, shifting from a balanced horizontal format to a more dynamic vertical composition (fig. 3, in Hartkamp, p. 60). Van Aelst and d'Hondecoeter introduced new decorative elements that replaced the depiction of domestic kitchen utensils – previously contextualising game as provisions in a culinary setting – with colourful brocaded hunting bags, ornate rifles and hunting horns, thereby shifting the focus to the act of the hunt. This more opulent style reached its pinnacle in the 1680s in the work of Jan Weenix (1641–1719) and was further developed by his then apprentice and assistant, Dirk Valkenburg.[2]

The first and last works in this group of 40 are exceptions to the still life genre, included specifically due to their direct connection to the act of hunting. In the first painting, Valkenburg's earliest signed work, *Greyhound with Dead Game and Hunting Gear in a Landscape* (1695) (catalogue no. 1, hereafter abbreviated as 'cat.'), a dog presents the spoils of the hunt to the imaginary hunter. Apart from the occasional presence of unidentifiable hunting figures in the background of his still life paintings, throughout Valkenburg's oeuvre, the presence of the hunter remains, though typically absent from the scene. It is only in the last work in this section, *After the Hunt* (cat. 40), that the hunter is revealed as the main subject, likely just returning from their activities.

In terms of visual motifs and composition, *After the Hunt* recalls many seventeenth-century genre paintings depicting hunters, travellers or other figures resting in front of a rural inn, set against the backdrop of a mountainous Italianate landscape, such as *Halting Cavaliers Outside a Tavern* (fig. cat. 1.14) by Barent Gael (c. 1630–1698). Specifically, the subject of hunters at rest was popular in early modern Netherlandish painting and was an often-recurring motif in works by artists such as Philips Wouwerman (1619–1668) and his apprentice, Gael. As known from his inventory, Valkenburg made paintings after examples by Wouwerman.[3]

In Valkenburg's game still lifes, the subject of the hunt is conveyed not only through the presence of killed game, the immediate

result of the hunt, but also through attributes that reference the act itself being an endeavour linked to the privileges of a specific social class, concepts of hierarchy between humans, animals and nature, as well as cultural traditions and seasonality. Withered foliage evokes the arrival of autumn, signalling the opening of the hunting season. With hunting paraphernalia, most notably the rifle, the hunter's power and dominance over nature is underscored. Various dog breeds, each participating for their unique skills – from high-speed pursuit to scent tracking – illustrate the specialized character of the hunt. Classicist sculptures featuring scenes, such as Hercules fighting a hydra, often featured in the background, further reinforcing connections with heroism and humanity's domination over nature.

In this way, Valkenburg, following his mentor Weenix, further moved the game piece away from its traditional domestic settings – typical of earlier seventeenth-century game still lifes – and repositioned it as a trophy of the act of hunting, set within lush, idealized landscapes. Classical elements such as urns, columns, statues and facades evoke a stage-like atmosphere, reminiscent of a country estate. Reflecting the aristocratic aspirations of affluent patricians in the early modern Dutch Republic, these contextual references to the hunt served to signal the refined taste of the owner, closely tied to the privileges of his social standing.

Valkenburg's game pieces vary between the depiction of solely dead game and scenes where living animals interact with those slain. Most of his still lifes are executed on standardized, vertical, medium--scale canvases, typical for domestic interiors of elite homes in the early modern period. The most frequently recurring subject is the dead hare, often accompanied by one or two partridges and other bird species, arranged in similar poses throughout his body of work. Valkenburg's earliest painting of a dead hare, dated 1698 (cat. 4), follows Weenix's *Still Life with Dead Hare and Birds* (1681), from the Städel Museum (fig. 5, p. 64). This composition, featuring a dead hare hanging from a hind leg, would become a repeated motif throughout his career. Variations in composition and colour scheme were achieved by reusing and rearranging different fowl species, hunting gear and other embellishments, drawn from a repertoire of predesigned motifs, all within a fixed, repeatable compositional framework.

This approach to standardization involving reuse and repetition complicates efforts to establish a clear chronology within his oeuvre. However, in his early work, made before 1699 (excluding the variants and copies based on Weenix's prototypes), a distinct approach to three-dimensional space can be observed when compared to his later paintings, which may aid in tracing a tentative chronology within his work. For instance, in his Liechtenstein paintings, Valkenburg constructs a sense of three-dimensionality by stacking individual elements within the pictorial plane, thus generating relative spatial relationships among individual elements rather than a sense of gravity by convincingly integrating them within their spatial environment. A similar approach is visible in works such as cats. 12 and 17. Only in his paintings after his return from Vienna in 1699, such as *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Starling and Snipe, with Hunting Gear*

in a Niche (cat. 21), dated 1704, and even more so in his Suriname works, did Valkenburg achieve a more convincing sense of three-dimensionality through the creation of a unified pictorial space.

It is only when living creatures enter the scene that Valkenburg turned to larger formats and horizontal compositions, allowing more space for the animals to perform a dynamic role within the arrangement. Representative of these vertical compositions are four large canvasses commissioned by Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1698–1699) (cats. 13–16), along with a large work currently housed at the Statens Museum for Kunst (cat. 24). These works demonstrate Valkenburg's search for chromatic balance, especially in *Still Life with a Dead Peacock, Pheasant and Hare* (cat. 16), achieved by juxtaposing the blue-chested peacock with a red pheasant and an eye-catching yellow goldfinch, all set against the soft, warm tones of a dusky landscape. The Liechtenstein work with a dead heron (cat. 14), on the other hand, illustrates the artist's meticulous attention to detail and deep understanding of the visible physiological differences between a living and deceased animal. For instance, the quills and soft plumes of the heron appear dulled and ragged, with the edges of the wings tinged with blood, giving the plumage a lifeless appearance, which contrasts the dove in flight with its shiny vibrant green and blue feathers. This aim to render a variety of textures is characteristic of Valkenburg's approach, through which he sought to distinguish materials with precision by combining visual and tactile observations.

1 On the development of the Dutch game piece in the seventeenth century, see Sullivan 1984.

2 For a full overview of the body of work of Jan Weenix and his contribution to the genre, see Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven 2018, vol. 2.

3 His estate inventory lists '*Een stukje na P. Wouwerman*' (A small painting after P. Wouwerman), SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519. For an earlier partial transcription of Valkenburg's estate inventory, see also Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, pp. 427–436.







Cat. 1

Dirk Valkenburg
Greyhound with Dead Game and Hunting Gear in a Landscape
1695
Oil on canvas, 57.1 × 49.5 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed and dated, lower right:
D Valkenburg [...] 1695

Provenance: ...; sale: London (Christie's), 20 December 1940, lot 208, 1-1-6 Lsd,[1] to 'Holton'; ...; sale: London (Robinson & Foster), 16 January 1941, lot 30; ...; sale: London (Sotheby's), 9 May 1951, lot 108; ...; sale: London (Christie's), 6 November 1970, lot 92, 1,760 USD, to 'Miles'; ...

References: *RKDimages* 313025

Notes: This is Valkenburg's earliest signed and dated work. Following the date, it is likely he made it during his time working as an assistant in Jan Weenix's studio, between 1693 and 1695. A sketch by Weenix representing a dog and hunting gear was later kept by Valkenburg in his own studio and might have served as his reference.[2]

1 This formatting is written in the pre-decimal British currency (£sd system).
2 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.

Cat. 2

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Partridge, Jay and Other Fowl, with Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 88 × 71 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed, lower left, on the whistle:
D Valkenburg

Provenance: ...; collection: Johann Melchior von Birkenstock (1738–1809), Vienna; sale: Johann Melchior von Birkenstock, Vienna, March–April 1811, lot 427, not sold; by inheritance, collection: Johanna Antonie Brentano-von Birkenstock (1780–1869), Frankfurt am Main; sale: Johanna Antonie Brentano-von Birkenstock, Frankfurt am Main, 4–6 April 1870, lot 71, 280 HFL, to Frau von Rauch; ...; sale: Munich (Karl & Faber), 4 June 2002, lot 46; ...

References: Von Frimmel 1913, vol. 1, p. 165; *RKDimages* 113665

Notes: Valkenburg signed his work on the whistle depicted in the lower left corner of the painting. An earlier variant of this composition by Jan Weenix, now held at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Cuba, Havana (fig. cat. 1), likely served as its prototype.[1] Weenix's painting is dated 1695, suggesting that Valkenburg might have created this work during the final year of his apprenticeship to Weenix.[2]

1 At the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Cuba, this artwork is attributed to Hendrik Martensz Sorgh.
2 See Hartkamp in this volume, p. 58.





Fig. cat. 1: Jan Weenix, *Still Life with Fowl in a Park Landscape*, 1695. Oil on canvas, 91 × 76.3 cm. Havana, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Cuba, inv. no. 90-3387.

Fig. cat. 2: Jan Weenix, *Still Life with a Dead Peacock, Pheasant, Partridge and Other Fowl, with Hunting Gear in a Landscape*, c. 1693–1695. Oil on canvas, 118 × 96 cm. Whereabouts unknown.

Cat. 3

Possibly Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Peacock, Pheasant, Partridge and Other Fowl, with Hunting Gear in a Landscape
Oil on canvas, 115 × 98 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Provenance: ...; sale: Amsterdam (Muller), 16–17 April 1901, lot 161, as Jan Weenix; ...; sale: Amsterdam (Muller), 30 April–2 May 1907, lot 194, as Jan Weenix, 245 HFL; ...; sale: The Hague (Van Marle & Bingell), 27–29 June 1944, lot 112, as Jan Weenix; ...; sale: Düsseldorf (Pongs), 17 October 1953, lot 81, as Jan Weenix; ...; sale: The Hague (Van Marle & Bingell), 20–23 March 1956, lot 139, as Jan Weenix; ...; sale: The Hague (Van Marle & Bingell), 21 May 1963, lot 123; ...; collection: M. Schulthess, Basel, reported 1962;[1] ...

References: *RKDimages* 312628

Notes: This painting is a copy of an earlier, undated prototype by Jan Weenix (fig. cat. 2).[2] Valkenburg and Weenix remained in close contact and Valkenburg may have studied the prototype either during his apprenticeship with Weenix or later in his career.

1 RKD Research: *RKDimages Lite* 262579.
2 Last reported at the Zurich auction (Koller), 16 March 2000, lot 98





Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges, Duck, Hoopoe and Other Fowl, with Hunting Gear in a Landscape
1698
Oil on canvas, 134 × 104 cm
Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 5775

Signed and dated, upper right:
Valckenburg / 1698

Provenance: …; probably collection: Joseph Eucharius, Baron of Obermayr (1724–1789); probably sale: Joseph Eucharius, Munich, 7 January 1790, lot 266, as '*Ein Haas nebst unterschiedlichen Federwildbrat, auf Leinwat. H 4 S. 7 Z., B 3 S. 7 Z.*';[1] …; possibly collection: Charles II August Christian, Duke of Pfalz-Zweibrücken (1756–1795);[2] possibly sale: Charles II August Christian, Mannheim, 10 August 1797, lot 247, as '*Ein Hase und todte Vögel, auf Tuch*.', not sold; collection: Gemälde-Galerie im Königlichen Schlosse zu Schleissheim, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, 1799; collection: Alte Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, after 1914

References: Cat. Schleissheim 1905, p. 197, no. 921; Bassermann-Jordan 1907–1910, vol. 3, p. 20, no. 921, fig. 10; Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 739; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; cat. Schleissheim 1914, p. 244, no. 3921; Sullivan 1984, p. 66, fig. 132; *RKDimages* 285180

Notes: This painting, titled *Jagdbeutestillleben mit totem Hasen* (*Game Still Life with Dead Hare*) and held at the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, represents the earliest known signed and dated work by Valkenburg to feature a dead hare in a vertical format. The large dimensions of the canvas, deviating from the smaller scale typical of his other vertical works, suggest that it was executed for a specific commission and painted either in Germany in the early months of 1698 or later, in Vienna, as indicated by the artist's first recorded payment from the Liechtenstein court in March of that year.[3] In its composition, it closely follows *Still Life with Dead Hare and Birds* (1681) (see fig. 5, in Hartkamp, p. 64) by Jan Weenix.[4] Valkenburg would revisit the arrangement in 1713 in *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges, Duck and Other Fowl* (cat. 36).

1 'Höhe 4 Schuh 7 Zoll, Breite 3 Schuh 7 Zoll' converts to 134 × 105 cm.
2 Many works from the Zweibrücken gallery were acquired by the Alte Pinakothek; therefore, it is plausible that this painting corresponds to the one described under lot 247.
3 See cats. 13–16.
4 See Hartkamp in this volume, p. 65.

Cat. 5

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare and Partridges, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear on a Stone Plinth
Oil on canvas 108 × 92 cm
Germany, private collection

Signed, lower centre: Dirk Valkenburg

Provenance: …; collection: Adam Gottlob Moltke (1710–1792), Copenhagen, 1756; by inheritance, collection: Joachim Godske Moltke (1746–1818), Copenhagen, reported 1818; by inheritance, collection: Frederik Christian Moltke (1854–1936), Copenhagen; sale: Copenhagen (Winkel & Magnussen), 1–2 June 1931, lot 133, 2,600 DKK, to Carl Salomonsen on behalf of Mrs Smith; collection: Mrs Smith, London, 1931; …; sale: London (Christie's), 14 May 1965, lot 124, 1,235 USD, to Collin; …; collection: Salomon Lilian Old Master Paintings, Amsterdam / Geneva, before 2005; private collection Germany, after 2010; …

References: Morell Ms. 1756, no. 37; Weinwich 1818, pp. 25–26, no. 14; cat. Copenhagen 1885, p. 53, no. 101; cat. Copenhagen 1913, p. 36, no. 101; Gammelbo 1960, pp. 158–159, no. 242; Burgemeister 2005, p. 50, no. 16; *RKDimages* 311744

Notes: Compositionally, this work stands out within Valkenburg's oeuvre for the placement of the various hunting elements and the inclusion of large architectural elements in the background. The enlarged architectural column, rifle (highlighting elaborately detailed metal inlay work) placed vertically behind the hare and bright green tassels of the velvet hunting bag are all distinctive elements that do not appear in his other known still lifes.

The painting is signed 'Dirk Valkenburg' on the stone plinth. The inclusion of his full first name is highly unusual. In fact, this first part of the signature appears to be a later addition, as it is not painted in a manner that imitates an inscription carved into stone – a characteristic feature of Valkenburg's signatures, as seen in the rendering of his last name.











Cat. 6

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges and Kingfisher, with Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas
78.8 × 70.4 cm
United Kingdom, private collection of John Hatt

Provenance: ...; collection: 'A.M.', Count of Schönborn, Pommersfelden, according to label on the reverse; sale: Paris, 17–24 May 1867, lot 128, as Jan Weenix, FRF 1,050, to Richard Seymour-Conway; collection: Richard Seymour-Conway, fourth Marquess of Hertford (1800–1870), London, 1867; ...; collection: J.M. Broekman, The Hague, according to label on the reverse; ...; collection: Kunstzalen Bennewitz, The Hague; purchased by anonymous before 1940s; sale: by the descendant of the anonymous owner, Amsterdam (Sotheby's), 9 May 2006, lot 47, 12,000 EUR, to John Hatt, United Kingdom

References: *RKDimages* 311834

Notes: *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges, and Kingfisher in a Park Landscape* is an early work by Valkenburg, likely made either during his apprenticeship with Jan Weenix or shortly after, during his travels through Gelderland, Overijssel, Germany and Vienna. The hare's pose and brushwork in the rendering of its bristly fur is close to the hare seen in the Liechtenstein works (cats. 14–15). The present painting is one of five known variants, all of which are currently held in private collections. Weenix's *Still life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Pheasant, with Hunting Paraphernalia* (1690) (fig. cat. 3) may have been accessible to Valkenburg during his apprenticeship and could have served as a reference.[1] A red chalk drawing (fig. cat. 4) directly related to these five variants is held at the Pushkin Museum, Moscow.[2]



Fig. cat. 3: Jan Weenix, *Still life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Pheasant, with Hunting Paraphernalia*, 1690. Oil on canvas, 91 × 76 cm. Whereabouts unknown.

1 Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven 2018, vol. 2, p. 296, no. 175. Collection: Richard Green, London, reported in Maastricht, TEFAF, March 1999.
2 See Hartkamp in this volume, pp. 71.



Fig. cat. 4: Dirk Valkenburg, Jan Weenix, or later follower, *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges and Kingfisher in a Park Landscape*, c. 1693-1750. Red chalk, framing line in pen in brown ink on paper, 215 × 183 mm. Moscow, Pushkin Museum, inv. no. 7644.

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges and Kingfisher in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 92 × 75 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Bears signature, upper left: JWF[1]

Provenance: ...; sale: Zurich (Koller), 3 October 2002, no. 3022, as Dirk Valkenburg; ...; sale: Bern (Stuker), 2–12 December 2018, no. 121, as Dirk Valkenburg; ...

References: *RKDimages* 312113

Notes: This work is tentatively attributed to Valkenburg. Due to the limited material available and the inaccessibility of the physical artwork, a definitive attribution cannot be made.

1 According to sale: Bern (Stuker), 2–12 December 2018, no. 121.

Cat. 8

Dirk Valkenburg or Jan Weenix
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges and Kingfisher, with Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 94 × 77 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Bears signature and date, upper left:
J. Weenix f. 1691[1]

Provenance: ...; collection: Karl Konstantin Baron of Fechenbach (1836–1907), Laudenbach am Main; sale: Karl Konstantin Baron of Fechenbach, Cologne, 29 May 1889, lot 86, as Jan Weenix, 2,910 Mk, to Eduard Friedrich Weber;[2] collection: Eduard Friedrich Weber (1830–1907), Hamburg, 1889; sale: Berlin (Lepke), 20–22 February 1912, lot 326, as Jan Weenix, 2,600 Mk; ...

References: Cat. Düsseldorf 1904, p. 157, no. 401, as Jan Weenix; *RKDimages* 342296

Notes: This work has not previously been associated with Valkenburg. The 1889 Cologne auction references a signature by Jan Weenix, although this is illegible in the available photographic documentation (numerous works by Valkenburg were later inscribed with inauthentic Weenix signatures).[3] Moreover, the brushwork appears sharper and more defined, differing from Weenix's typically softer, more diffuse rendering, particularly in details such as fur and feathers. Based on the currently available material, a definitive attribution cannot be made.

1 According to sale: Berlin (Lepke), 20–22 February 1912, lot 326.
2 Here, the signature is transcribed as 'J. Weenix F. 1694'.
3 See, for instance, *Eurasian Eagle-Owl and Pigeon in Flight, with a Dead Hen and Animal Remains in a Landscape* (cat. 50).

Cat. 9

Dirk Valkenburg or Jan Weenix
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges and Kingfisher, with Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas 94 × 74 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Bears signature and date: J. Weenix f. 1690[1]

Provenance: ...; collection: G. van Veen, Alkmaar; sale: G. van Veen, Cologne (Lempertz), 15–16 December 1910, lot 193, as Jan Weenix; ...

References: *RKDimages* 342294

Notes: Similarly to cat. 8, this work has not previously been associated with Valkenburg. The 1910 Lempertz auction in Cologne references a signature by Jan Weenix, although this is illegible in the available photograph (numerous works by Valkenburg were later inscribed with inauthentic Weenix signatures).[2] Moreover, the brushwork appears sharper and more defined, differing from Weenix's typically softer, more diffuse rendering, particularly in details such as fur and feathers. Based on the currently available material, a definitive attribution cannot be made.

1 According to sale: Cologne (Lempertz), 15–16 December 1910, lot 193.
2 See, for instance, *Eurasian Eagle-Owl and Pigeon in Flight, with a Dead Hen and Animal Remains in a Landscape* (cat. 50).

Cat. 10

Possibly Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges and Kingfisher, with Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas
89.9 × 74.9 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Provenance: …; sale: London (Christie's), 19 April 1996, lot 122, as Jan Weenix, with a companion piece (cat. 11);[1] …

References: *RKDimages* 311837

Notes: This piece was first reported on 19 April 1996 at a Christie's auction in London as a companion piece to *Still Life with a Dead Pheasant and Hen, with a Red Parrot and Fruit in a Landscape* (cat. 11). The latter is a variant of a version by Jan Weenix (fig. cat. 5).[2] The similar dimensions of both cats. 10 and 11, along with their matching colour palette and compositions and appearance of being carefully balanced in relation to each other, suggest they were originally intended by the artist as pendant pieces.

1 The provenance in the auction catalogue is incorrect.
2 Sale: Stockholm (Bukowski), 8–11 November 1972, lot 228.











Possibly Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Pheasant and Hen, with a Red Parrot and Fruit in a Landscape
Oil on canvas, 89.9 × 74.9 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Provenance: ...; sale: London (Christie's), 19 April 1996, lot 122, as Jan Weenix, with a companion piece (cat. 10);[1] ...

References: *RKDimages* 312668

Notes: This piece was first reported on 19 April 1996 at a Christie's auction in London as a companion piece to *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges and Kingfisher, with Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape* (cat. 10). Although it remains uncertain whether the two works were originally conceived as pendants, as noted under cat. 10, similarities in stylistic and compositional elements and dimensions suggest that the artist may have intended them as such. *Still Life with a Dead Pheasant and Hen, with a Red Parrot and Fruit in a Landscape* is a copy of an earlier version by Jan Weenix (fig. cat. 5).[2] It is conceivable that Weenix's painting likewise initially had a pendant piece showing a dead hare and that Valkenburg reproduced the two as a pair.



Fig. cat. 5: Jan Weenix, *Still Life with a Dead Pheasant and Hen, with a Parrot in a Park Landscape.* Oil on canvas, 94.2 × 76.2 cm. Whereabouts unknown.

1 The provenance in the auction catalogue is incorrect.
2 Sale: Stockholm (Bukowski), 8–11 November 1972, lot 228.

Cat. 12

Probably Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Goose and Other Fowl, with a Dog in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 136 × 123 cm
Private collection

Bears illegible signature and date[1]

Provenance: ...; collection: Mrs M.J. Lindsay, United Kingdom; sale: Mrs M.J. Lindsay, London (Sotheby's), 13 December 1978, lot 256; ...; collection: A. Oakshott, United Kingdom; sale: A. Oakshott, London (Sotheby's), 11 July 1979, lot 330a; ...

References: *RKDimages* 311670

1 Sale: London (Sotheby's), 13 December 1978, lot 256. It is not specified how the work is signed or dated. The painting was sold as a Valkenburg, an attribution likely made based on the signature.

Cat. 13

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Black Grouse and Other Fowl, with a Squirrel, Dog and Hunting Gear in a Landscape
1698–1699
Oil on canvas, 135 × 178 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed, lower centre, on the stone plinth:
Dk: Valckenburg. Fecit

Provenance: Collection: Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1657–1712), Liechtenstein – The Princely Collections, Vaduz/Vienna, 1698; collection: Dr Herzig, Galerie Sanct Lucas, Vienna, 23–26 November 1954; ...; sale: Zurich (Koller), 19–24 September 2016, lot 3049, 40,000 CHF; ...

References: Nagler 1904–1914, vol. 21, p. 549; Parthey 1863, p. 672, no. 6; cat. Vienna 1873, p. 136, no. 1175; cat. Vienna 1885, p. 105, no. 784; Höss 1908, pp. 14–15; Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 739; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; cat. Vienna 1931, p. 157, o. 784; Gerson 1942, p. 286; Gerson 1983, p. 286; Haupt 2012, nos. 1355, 1400, 1457, 1539; *RKDimages* 312976

Notes: This work was acquired for 250 guilders by Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein in 1698 or 1699 as part of a series of four paintings. For related works, see cats. 14, 15 and 16.[1] The vertical composition resembles a work of comparable dimensions by Jan Weenix in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (fig. cat. 6). The Museum of Fine Arts dates the painting c. 1680, whereas Anke van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven (2018) suggests a date of c. 1697.[2] Valkenburg's detailed familiarity with the work implies that he must have studied it during his apprenticeship (1693–1695), suggesting a dating of Weenix's version prior to 1695. However, to produce his variant of the work in Vienna, Valkenburg may have brought with him an oil study (comparable to fig. 4, in Hartkamp, p. 63) for the Houston painting, which could have been easily transported on his journey.[3] The painting, then titled *Stilleben* (Still life), was sold from the Liechtenstein – Princely Collections in 1954.



Fig. cat. 6: Jan Weenix, *Still Life of Game Including a Hare, Black Grouse and Partridge, a Spaniel Looking on with a Pigeon in Flight*, c. 1690. Oil on canvas, 157.2 × 182.2 cm. Houston, Museum of Fine Arts, 2006.528, museum purchase funded by the Alice Pratt Brown Museum Fund.

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Goose, Hare and Other Fowl, with a Fox, Dog and Rifle in a Landscape
1698–1699
Oil on canvas, 136 × 181 cm
Vaduz/Vienna, Liechtenstein – The Princely Collections, inv. no. 763

Signed, lower right, on the stone plinth:
D. Valckenburg / Fecit

Provenance: Collection: Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1657–1712), Liechtenstein – The Princely Collections, Vaduz/Vienna, 1698

References: Nagler 1904–1914, vol. 21, p. 549; Parthey 1863, vol. 2, pp. 672–673, probably no. 12 or 13; cat. Vienna 1873, pp. 133–134, no. 1154; cat. Vienna 1885, p. 102, no. 763; Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 739; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; Höss 1908, pp. 14–15; cat. Vienna 1931, p. 154, no. 763; Gerson 1942, p. 286; Gerson 1983, p. 286; Baumstark 1980, pp. 240–241, no. 121; exh. cat. New York 1985, pp. 296–297, no. 188; exh. cat. Basel 1987, pp. 254–255, no. 99; exh. cat. Luxembourg 1995, pp. 72, 112, no. 93; exh. cat. Jerusalem 1995, p. 48; Haupt 2012, nos. 1335, 1400, 1457, 1539; exh. cat. Bern 2016, no. 182; Van Leeuwen 2013–2024, vol. 3, §7.5; exh. cat. Vienna 2019, p. 195, fig. 50.1; exh. cat. Vienna 2024, p. 230, no. 166; *RKDimages* 287607

Notes: This work was acquired for 250 guilders by Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein in 1698 or 1699 as part of a series of four paintings. For the related works, see cats. 13, 15 and 16.[1] As part of the Liechtenstein – Princely Collections, it is titled *Jagdbeute mit Jagdhund und Fuchs* (*Hunting Spoils with Hunting Dog and Dove*).

1 Valkenburg received his first payment for one of the works on 7 March 1698 (see FLHA 1697/1698, f. 38v, no. 152), followed by payments for the other three works on 7 June 1698 (see FLHA, 1697/1698, f. 39r, no. 155); 26 December 1698 (see FLHA 1698, f. 35r, no. 134); and 17 May 1699 (see FLHA 1698/1699, f. 48v, no. 177). For partial transcriptions, see Haupt 2012, pp. 140, 144, 149, 157, nos. 1355, 1400, 1447, 1539.
2 See Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven 2018, vol. 2, cat. 127.
3 See also Hartkamp in this volume, p. 62.

1 For more about the payments, see note under cat. 13.

Cat. 15

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Heron, Hare, Hoopoe and Other Fowl, with a Dog, Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
1698–1699
Oil on canvas, 136 × 181 cm
Vaduz/Vienna, Liechtenstein – The Princely Collections, inv. no. 765

Signed, upper left, on the vase:
D. Valckenburg / Fecit

Provenance: Collection: Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1657–1712), Liechtenstein – The Princely Collections, Vaduz/Vienna, 1698

References: Nagler 1904–1914, vol. 21, p. 549; Parthey 1863, vol. 2, pp. 672–673, probably no. 12 or 13; cat. Vienna 1873, p. 134, no. 1156; cat. Vienna 1885, p. 103, no. 765; Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 739; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; Höss 1908, pp. 14–15; cat. Vienna 1931, p. 154, no. 765; Gerson 1942, p. 286; Gerson 1983, p. 286; exh. cat. Baden-Baden 1979, p. 253; Baumstark 1980, p. 241, no. 121; exh. cat. New York 1985, pp. 297–299, no. 189; exh. cat. Basel 1987, pp. 256–257, no. 100; exh. cat. Luxembourg 1995, pp. 72, 113, no. 94; exh. cat. Jerusalem 1995, p. 48; Haupt 2012, nos. 1335, 1400, 1457, 1539; exh. cat. Bern 2016, no. 183; Van Leeuwen 2013–2024, vol. 3, §7.5; *RKDimages* 287610

Notes: This work was acquired for 250 guilders by Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein in 1698 or 1699 as part of a series of four paintings. For the related works, see cats. 13, 14 and 16.[1] Notably, the rifle in the lower right is a collector's piece, gifted by the Holy Roman Emperor, Leopold I, to the Prince (fig. 1, in Saß, p. 81), who must have instructed the artist to include it in the composition.[2] As part of the Liechtenstein – Princely Collections, it is titled *Jagdbeute mit Jagdhund und Taube* (*Hunting Spoils with Hunting Dog and Dove*).



Fig. cat. 7: Jan Weenix, *Hunting Still Life with Goose*, 1686. Oil on canvas, 154.5 × 181.5 cm. Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Staatsgalerie im Neuen Schloss Bayreuth, inv. no. 556.

1 For more about the payments, see note under cat. 13.
2 Blair 1979, p. 50; Baumstark 1980, pp. 240–241; see also Saß in this volume, p. 79.

Cat. 16

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Peacock, Pheasant and Hare, with a Dog, Dove and Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
1698
Oil on canvas, 134 × 179 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed and dated, lower centre:
D.Valckenburg. Fecit / Ae 1698

Provenance: Collection: Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1657–1712), Liechtenstein – The Princely Collections, Vaduz/Vienna, 1698; acquired by an anonymous Viennese art dealer, Vienna, September 1955;[1] …; sale: New York (Christie's), 15 April 2008, lot 355, 73,000 USD; unknown private collection, 2016; …

References: Nagler 1904–1914, vol. 21, p. 549; Parthey 1863, vol. 2, p. 672, no. 8; cat. Vienna 1873, p. 134, no. 1175; cat. Vienna 1885, p. 105, no. 782; Höss 1908, pp. 14–15; Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 739; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; cat. Vienna 1931, p. 157, no. 782; Gerson 1942, p. 286; Gerson 1983, p. 286; Haupt 2012, nos. 1335, 1400, 1457, 1539; *RKDimages* 214570

Notes: This work was acquired for 250 guilders by Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein in 1698 or 1699 as part of a series of four paintings. For the related works, see cats. 13, 14 and 15.[2] The painting, then titled *Toter Pfau* (*Dead Peacock*), was sold from the collection in 1955.



Fig. cat. 8: Jan Weenix, *Still Life with Goose and Game before a Country Estate*, c. 1685. Oil on canvas, 142.9 × 172.4 cm. Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 2004.39.1.

1 HAL, inv. no. 1255-S.
2 For more about the payments, see note under cat. 13.

Cat. 17

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Marsh Harrier, Duck and Other Fowl, with a Dog, Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
1698–1699
Oil on canvas, 101 × 126.5 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Left centre, on the stone plinth:
D. Valckenburg / Fecit

Provenance: Possibly collection: Ferdinand Bonaventura, Graf von Harrach and Rohrau (1637–1706), Vienna; collection: Graf Harrach'sche Familiensammlung, Vienna/ Rohrau; sale: Graf Harrach'sche Familiensammlung, London (Sotheby's), 12 December 1990, lot 39, not sold; sale: Graf Harrach'sche Familiensammlung, London (Sotheby's), 5 July 1995, lot 13, 45,500 GBP; ...

References: Cat. Vienna 1856, pp. 15–16, no. 85; Parthey 1863, vol. 2, p. 672, no. 2; Waagen 1886, vol. 1, p. 323, nos. 83–87; cat. Vienna 1889, p. 10, no. 11; cat. Vienna 1897, p. 12, no. 11; Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 739; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; cat. Vienna 1960, p. 78, no. 22; cat. Vienna 1962, p. 2, no. 22; Van Leeuwen 2013–2024, vol. 3, §7.5; *RKDimages* 3339

Notes: This painting was likely part of a series of five paintings that Valkenburg executed for Count Ferdinand Bonaventura von Harrach and Rohrau.[1] The other four works, unidentified to this date, were sold from the Graf Harrachs'che Familiensammlung after 1926, while the present work was sold in 1990.[2]

1 Parthey 1863, vol. 2, p. 672, nos. 1–3, 10, 11; Waagen 1886, vol. 1, p. 323, nos. 83–87.
2 Cat. Vienna 1926, pp. 6, 7, nos. 12–15; cat. Vienna 1960, p. 78; Van Leeuwen 2013–2024, vol. 3, §7.5.




D. Valkenburg







Cat. 18

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare and Fowl, with a Rifle on a Stone Plinth
1701
Oil on canvas, 79 × 65 cm
Parma, Collezioni d'Arte Fondazione Cariparma, inv. no. F 326, gift of Andrea Cozza.

Signed and dated with monogram, lower left: DVf 1701

Provenance: ...; collection: Vittorio Dotti, Bologna; collection: Andrea Cozza, Parma; collection: Fondazione Cariparma, Parma, 1993

References: Consigli 1987, p. 221, no. 214, fig.; cat. Parma/Piacenza 1994, pp. 15, 50–51, no. 45; Pietrogiovanna 1997, p. 315; *RKDimages* 344323

Notes: The work is signed with the monogram 'DVf' in calligraphic script, suggesting an attribution to Valkenburg. However, in his extant still lifes, Valkenburg consistently signed his name in full only in calligraphic script. Only two known works from his Suriname period bear monograms, both reading 'DVB' and written in capital letters.

In composition and brushwork, the painting appears atypical within Valkenburg's oeuvre. The handling appears notably less refined than, for instance, his works for the Liechtenstein collection. However, this may also result from surface abrasion, as suggested by the reddish-brown ground showing through the paint layer. Furthermore, given Valkenburg's habitual reuse of compositional elements across his paintings, the absence of any recurring motifs from the rest of his body of work is noteworthy. The inclusion of a variation of the Medici Vase is particularly remarkable. Dating back to the late first century BCE, the Medici Vase was among the most celebrated vases of antiquity. The vase was frequently copied, both in sculptural form and in print, and it is likely that such examples also circulated at the Liechtenstein court, where Valkenburg may have drawn his inspiration. Still, further research is required to establish a more definitive attribution. The work is titled *Natura morta con selvaggina, fucile e vaso mediceo* (*Still Life with Game, Rifle and Medici Vase*) at the Collezioni d'Arte Fondazione Cariparma, Parma.

Cat. 19

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with Two Dead Partridges, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear on a Stone Plinth in a Landscape
1703
Oil on canvas, 99.5 × 82.2 cm
Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste, inv. no. 1590, on permanent loan from the Maximilian Speck von Sternburg Stiftung

Signed and dated, lower right, on the stone plinth: D. Valkenburg. / 1703

Provenance: …; collection: Reuss-Köstritz family, Germany, with a companion piece (cat. 20); …; acquired by Maximilian Speck von Sternburg (1776–1856), Lützschena, 1814, 200 Rt.;[1] collection: Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig, 1945; restituted to Wolf-Dietrich Speck von Sternburg (1935–), 1994; on permanent loan to Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig, 1996

References: Speck von Sternburg 1826, p. 12, no. 40; cat. Leipzig 1889, p. 76, no. 134; Becker 1904, no. 32; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; cat. Leipzig 1967, p. 206, no. 1590; cat. Leipzig 1995, p. 198, no. 1590; exh. cat. Leipzig/Munich 1998, p. 355, no. I/135; cat. Leipzig 2012, p. 307, no. 311; *RKDimages* 311608

Notes: This work has long been considered as a companion piece to *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Woodpecker, with Hunting Gear in a Niche* (cat. 20), an attribution first rejected by Jan Nicolaisen in 2012.[2] The painting is titled *Jagdstillleben* (*Game Still Life*) at the Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig.

1 Exh. cat. Leipzig/Munich 1998, p. 187; cat. Leipzig 2012, p. 308.
2 Cat. Leipzig 2012, p. 307.

Cat. 20

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Woodpecker, with Hunting Gear in a Niche
Oil on canvas, 98 × 82 cm
Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste, inv. no. 1591, on permanent loan from the Maximilian Speck von Sternburg Stiftung

Signed, lower left, on the stone plinth: D. Valkenburg Pinxit

Provenance: …; collection: Reuss-Köstritz family, Germany, with a companion piece (cat. 19); …; acquired by Maximilian Speck von Sternburg (1776–1856), Lützschena, 1814, 200 Rt.;[1] collection: Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig, 1945; restituted to Wolf-Dietrich Speck von Sternburg (1935–), 1994; on permanent loan to Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig, 1996

References: Speck von Sternburg 1826, p. 12, no. 41; cat. Leipzig 1889, p. 76, no. 133; Becker 1904, no. 32; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; cat. Leipzig 1967, p. 206, no. 1591; exh. cat. Bordeaux 1991, p. 94, no. 19; cat. Leipzig 1995, p. 198, no. 1591; exh. cat. Leipzig/Munich 1998, p. 355, no. I/134; cat. Leipzig 2012, p. 308, no. 312; *RKDimages* 311605

Notes: The work has long been considered a companion piece to *Still Life with Two Dead Partridges, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear on a Stone Plinth in a Landscape* (cat. 19), dated 1703, an attribution first questioned by Jan Nicolaisen in 2012.[2] In its composition, painting technique and colour palette, this work is closely related to paintings dated to the period between Valkenburg's return from Vienna (1699) and departure for Suriname (1706), the only period from which dated examples of hares in niches have survived. This work is titled *Jagdstillleben mit totem Hasen* (*Game Still Life with Dead Hare*) at the Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig.

1 Exh. cat. Leipzig/Munich 1998, p. 187; cat. Leipzig 2012, p. 308.
2 Cat. Leipzig 2012, p. 307.

Cat. 21

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Starling and Snipe, with Hunting Gear in a Niche
1704
Oil on canvas, 86.7 × 74.2 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed and dated, lower right, on the stone plinth: D. Valkenburg / 1704

Provenance: ...; collection: Johann Friedrich Morgenstern (1777–1844), Frankfurt am Main; acquired by the Städelschen Kunst-Institut, Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, 1 November 1818, 350 HFL; sale: Frankfurt am Main (Bangel), 24–25 April 1923, lot 173, 4,000,000 Mk; ...; collection: Erich Bienert, Frankfurt am Main; acquired by anonymous buyer in 1970s; sale: Hamburg (Hauswedell & Nolte), 12 June 2010, lot 684; ...
References: Cat. Frankfurt am Main 1835, p. 76, no. 213; cat. Frankfurt am Main 1858, p. 105, no. 264; cat. Frankfurt am Main 1879, p. 154, no. 328; cat. Frankfurt am Main 1900, p. 350, no. 328; Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 739; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; *RKDimages* 311537

Notes: This work was previously titled *Ein toter aufgehängter Hase nebst einigem kleinen Geflügel* (*A Dead Hanging Hare with Some Small Fowl*) at the Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main.

Cat. 22

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges, Snipe and Chaffinches, with Hunting Gear in a Niche
1705
Oil on canvas, 98.5 × 84.5 cm
Graz, Universalmuseum Joanneum, Alte Galerie, inv. no. L85 on loan from the Kaiserschild-Stiftung

Signed and dated, lower left, on the stone plinth: Dk Valkenburg. Pinxit. / 1705

Provenance: ...; probably collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788); probably sale: Jonas Witsen (IV), Amsterdam, 16–18 August 1790, Catalogus van Schilderyen, lot 75, as '*(D.) Valkenburg. Hoog 39, breed 33 duim. Doek. Dit stuk verbeeld in een steene Nis, een dóode Haas, hangende met zyn Agterlooper aan een yzere Haak, en leggende gedeeltelyk op de rand der Borstweering, waar op een koppel Patrysen, Netten en ander Jagt-tuig, is geplaast; alles is uitvoerig behandeld, kragtig en natuurlyk gepenceelt.*', with a companion piece (probably cat. 56), under lot 76, 105 HFL (for the pair), to 'Coclers'; possibly collection: Louis Bernard Coclers (1741–1817) or Bernard Coclers (1770–1817), Liège, 1790; ...; collection: G.M.T. Foljambe (1934–2021), United Kingdom; sale: London (Christie's), 9 December 1988, lot 102; ...; private collection: Mr and Mrs Jimmy J. Younger, reported 1989;[1] ...; Kaiserschild-Stiftung, Vienna

References: Exh. cat. Houston 1989, p. 30; *RKDimages* 312281

Notes: This work was likely sold as a companion piece to *Still Life with Grapes, Peaches and Other Fruit on a Stone Plinth in a Park Landscape* (cat. 56) at Jonas Witsen's (IV) estate auction in 1790. This work is titled *Jagdstillleben mit Hase* (*Still Life with Hare*) and held at the Universalmuseum Joanneum, on loan from the Kaiserschild-Stiftung.

1 Exh. cat. Houston 1989, p. 30.

Cat. 23

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Swan, Roe Deer and Black Grouse, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear on a Stone Plinth in a Landscape
Oil on canvas
72 × 86 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed: Valkenburg[1]

Provenance: ...; sale: Berlin (Lepke), 8–9 April 1913, lot 34; ...

References: *RKDimages* 312665

Notes: This work is attributed to Valkenburg, based on a 1913 mention of a signature that is no longer legible. However, due to the limited available material and the inaccessibility of the original work, a definitive attribution cannot be made. The painting is a close copy after *Dead Swan* by Jan Weenix (fig. cat. 7). Valkenburg's version is reduced proportionally by a factor of c. 3.4 cm versus the original, measuring 245.5 × 294 cm.



Fig. cat. 9: Jan Weenix, *Dead Swan*, c. 1695–1719. Oil on canvas, 245.5 × 294 cm. The Hague, Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen Mauritshuis, inv. no. 206, on long term loan to Rijksmuseum Twente.

1 According to sale: Berlin (Lepke), 8–9 April 1913, lot 34. In the photograph, a 'V' on the stone plinth is legible.

Cat. 24

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Gazelle, Heron and Other Fowl, with a Dog, Parrot, Rifle and Coconuts in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 140 × 191 cm
Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, inv. no. KMSsp622

Bears signature, lower right: J. Wenincx

Provenance: ...; collection: Gerhard Morell, as Dirk Valkenburg, Copenhagen and Hamburg;[1] acquired by an intermediary, possibly Johann Salomon Wahl, for 400 Rt. for the Royal Art Chamber, later Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, 1755

References: Cat. Copenhagen 1827, pp. 386–387, no. 622, as Jan Weenix; cat. Copenhagen 1875, pp. 94–95, no. 396, as Jan Weenix; cat. Copenhagen 1904, p. 170, no. 381, as Jan Weenix; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52, as Dirk Valkenburg; cat. Copenhagen 1946, pp. 318–319, no. 731, as Dirk Valkenburg; cat. Copenhagen 1951, pp. 327–328, no. 731, as Dirk Valkenburg; Gammelbo, p. 243, as Dirk Valkenburg; North 2012, p. 57; *RKDimages* 256403

Notes: This work was titled *Vildt og frugter* (*Game and Fruit*) at the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

1 Wahl Ms. 1755a, p. 40, no. 5.









Cat. 25

Dirk Valkenburg or Jan Weenix
Still Life with the Head of a Deer and Fowl in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 84 × 67 cm
Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 2103

Bears signature, lower right: J. Weenix f

Provenance: …; collection: Staatlichen Galerie, Mannheim; collection: Gemälde-Galerie im Königlichen Schlosse zu Schleissheim, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, 1799; on long term loan to Alte Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, after 1914

References: Cat. Schleissheim 1905, p. 195, no. 911, as Jan Weenix; Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 848, as Jan Weenix; Bassermann-Jordan 1907–1910, vol. 3, fig. 38, no. 911, as Jan Weenix; Bassermann-Jordan 1914, no. 3911, as Jan Weenix; Ginnings 1970, no. 225, as Jan Weenix; Schweers 2008, pt. 1, vol. 3, p. 1748, as Jan Weenix; Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven 2018, vol. 2, p. 305, no. 186, as Jan Weenix; *RKDimages* 312644

Notes: This painting has been continuously attributed to Jan Weenix since the early twentieth century and was ascribed to Valkenburg as an early work by Fred G. Meijer at an unknown date.[1] The work is titled *Erlegtes Wild* (*Slain Game*) at the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich.

Cat. 26

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with the Head of a Deer and Dead Partridge, with an Axe and Other Hunting Gear in a Niche
Oil on canvas, 71.5 × 58.5 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed upper right: D. Valckenburg

Provenance: …; sale: New York (Christie's), 16 April 1986, lot 140, with a companion piece (cat. 27), 11,000 USD; private collection, New York; …; collection: Jean-Max Tassel, Paris, reported with a companion piece (cat. 27) at The Burlington House Fair, London, 9–20 September 1987, …; sale: Vienna (Dorotheum), 18 October 2016, lot 105, with a companion piece, not sold; sale: Vienna (Dorotheum), 2 March 2017, lot 145, with a companion piece, 17,000 EUR; …

References: Exh. cat. Paris/London 1987, no. 15; *RKDimages* 312582

Notes: Since its first appearance on the art market, this painting has been presented as a companion piece to *Still Life with a Dead Guineafowl, Northern Cardinal, and Other Fowl, with a Dog and Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape* (cat. 27). However, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that this pairing was conceived by the artist. The practice of creating pendant pairings was widespread among eighteenth-century collectors and dealers, often motivated by decorative or commercial considerations.

1 *RKDimages Lite* 277371.

Cat. 27

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Guineafowl, Northern Cardinal, and Other Fowl, with a Dog and Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 71.5 × 58.5 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Provenance: …; sale: New York (Christie's), 16 April 1986, lot 140, with a companion piece (cat. 26), 11,000 USD; private collection, New York; …; collection: Jean-Max Tassel, Paris, reported with a companion piece (cat. 26) at The Burlington House Fair, London, 9–20 September 1987; sale: Vienna (Dorotheum), 18 October 2016, lot 105, with a companion piece, not sold; sale: Vienna (Dorotheum), 2 March 2017, lot 145, with a companion piece, 17,000 EUR; …

References: Exh. cat. Paris/London 1987, no. 15; *RKDimages* 312615

Notes: Since its first appearance on the art market, this painting has been presented as a companion piece to *Still Life with the Head of a Deer and Dead Partridge, with an Axe and Other Hunting Gear in a Niche* (cat. 26). However, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that this pairing was conceived by the artist.

Cat. 28

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with the Head of a Deer, with a Knife on a Stone Plinth in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown
Whereabouts unknown

Provenance: …; probably sale: Amsterdam, 10 June 1789, lot 26, as '*Op een steene Baluster left een doode Hartekop, waar nevens een Net, Kruythoorn, en groot Jagtmes, het verschiet vertoont een Tuyngezigt met Standbeelden, Geboomten en verder bywerk; natuurlyk en kragtig geschilderd op Doek, door Valkenburg, zoo schoon als door J. Weenix.*', 11 HFL, to Cocquler; …

References: *RKDimages* 313140

Notes: This work is attributed to Valkenburg based on stylistic and compositional comparison with signed works, as well as the 1789 auction description that closely matches the composition and names Valkenburg as the artist. However, due to the limited availability of material and the inaccessibility of the original work, a definitive attribution cannot be made.









Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with Dead Hares and a Partridge, with a Dog and Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 100 × 82 cm
Saint Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. no. GE 2785

Provenance: Possibly collection: Dirk Valkenburg, Amsterdam;[1]...; collection: Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Le Brun (1748–1813), Paris, at least before 1788;[2] ...; collection: Catherine Mikhailovna of Russia, Grand Duchess (1827–1894); her gift in memory of her mother, Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna (1784–1803), to Pyotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky (1827–1914), St. Petersburg, between 1873 and 1894; bequeathed by him to the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, 1914

References: Saint Petersburg 1906, p. 232, no. 586, as Jan Weenix; Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, p. 428, no. 17; cat. Saint Petersburg 1981a, pp. 39, 174, fig., no. 101, as Jan Weenix, as signed, upper left corner, 'J. Weenix 16[...]'; cat. Saint Petersburg 1981b, p. 116, fig. 57, no. 3079, as Jan Weenix, as signed 'J. Weenix A 1686'; exh. cat. Tokyo 1983, no. 43, as Jan Weenix; exh. cat. Ann Arbor 2003, pp. 98–99, no. 30; exh. cat. Saint Petersburg 2006, pp. 70–71, no. 24;[3] no. 24; cat. Saint Petersburg 2015, pp. 169, 212, 213, 215; *RKDimages* 238187

Notes: This painting became associated with Jan Weenix while in the collection of Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky.[4] Fred G. Meijer reattributed the work based on an etching (fig. cat. 10) by J.L.L.C. Zentner (active c. 1780–1804), which reproduces the original and credits Valkenburg as the inventor of the composition. The reproduction was made for the catalogue of collector Jean Baptiste Pierre Le Brun.[5] The work is titled *Hunting Trophies* at the Hermitage, Saint Petersburg.



Fig. cat. 10: J.L.L.C. Zentner, *Hunting Trophies*, 1788. Etching, 234 × 194 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-1944-397bis.

1 This work may correspond to one listed in Valkenburg's estate inventory: 'Een stuk met twee haasen patrijs jagthond & bywerk' (A piece with two hares, partridge, hunting dog and surrounding elements), SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.
2 The earliest known dated impression of the etching produced for Le Brun's catalogue was printed in 1788. See Atwater 1988, pp. 1,428–1,429, no. 1781.
3 See for more Russian references that were inaccessible during this project.
4 Exh. cat. Ann Arbor 2003, p. 99.
5 Le Brun 1792–1796, vol. 1, p. 60.

Cat. 30

Probably Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Other Fowl, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Landscape
Oil on canvas, 112 × 93 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Bears signature, lower left, on the stone plinth: J. Weenix[1]

Provenance: ...; collection: Otto Pein, Berlin; sale: Otto Pein, Cologne, 29–30 October 1888, lot 88, as Jan Weenix, 6,700 Mk, to Haniël; ...

References: *RKDimages* 311655

Notes: This work is attributed to Valkenburg in the RKD's visual documentation, which seems plausible given the similarities of the pose of the left hare in *Still Life with Dead Hares and a Partridge, with a Dog and Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape* (cat. 29), the canvas dimensions (cats. 32–34) and the similar approach to composition, recognisable in his paintings in vertical formats.[2] However, based on the currently available material, a definitive attribution cannot be made.

1 According to the sale: Otto Pein, Cologne, 29 October 1888, lot 88.
2 *RKDimages Lite* 277363.

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Chaffinch, with Hunting Gear in a Landscape
Oil on canvas, 99.5 × 81.7 cm
Utrecht, Centraal Museum, inv. no. 7162, acquired with the support of the Vereniging Rembrandt

Provenance: …; collection: Huybert Ketelaar, Amsterdam; sale: Huybert Ketelaar, Amsterdam, 19 June 1776, lot 246, 450 HFL, to Spaan; probably collection: Jan Spaan (1744–1820), Amsterdam; …; collection: Cord Heinrich Schwagermann, Schiedam, 1933;[1] on permanent loan to Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 9 August 1933; acquired by Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 11 May 1934, with the support of the Vereniging Rembrandt

References: Exh. cat. Utrecht 1941, p. 65. no. 224, as Jan Weenix; exh. cat. IJzendijke 1953, p. 9, no. 46, as Jan Weenix; cat. Utrecht 1952, p. 153, no. 336, fig. 54, as Jan Weenix; exh. cat. Delft 1964, p. 29, no. 53 as Jan Weenix; Houtzager 1967, pp. 272–273, as Jan Weenix; Ginnings 1970, p. 313, no. 278, fig. 241, attribution to Jan Weenix rejected, with no proposed alternative; exh. cat. Bordeaux 1991, pp. 44, 96, no. 20, as Dirk Valkenburg; Hijmersma 1983, p. 139, as Jan Weenix; cat. Utrecht 1999, pt. 2, p. 1449, no. 640, as Dirk Valkenburg; *RKDimages* 17357

Notes: In 1967, the painting was examined by X-radiography, which revealed a dispersed, coarse-grained concentration of lead white in the preparatory layer (fig. cat. 11).[2] A signature reading 'J. Wenincx', likely added at a later date, was once visible in the lower right corner of the painting. The work was first reattributed to Valkenburg by Johannes Nieuwstraten in 1985.[3] Stylistically, the painting aligns closely with works dated to 1710, particularly in its colour palette, the dramatic chiaroscuro effect that accentuates the main subject against a dark ground and the foliage that is sharply silhouetted against the sky. See, for example, *Still Life with Dead Ducks, a Kingfisher and Other Fowl in a Park Landscape* (cat. 34).



Fig. cat. 11: X-ray of *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Chaffinch, with Hunting Gear in a Landscape* (cat. 31), showing a detail of the lower central area, including the hare's paws, a chaffinch and a pipe.

1 The name Schwagermann appears in the *Cultuurgoederen Tweede Wereldoorlog* database, but not related to a work by Valkenburg. See correspondence between P. Schrier and M. Klink, 11 November 2024, archived at RKD.
2 Houtzager 1967, pp. 272–273.
3 See the letter from Johannes Nieuwstraten (RKD), 20 May 1985, in the Centraal Museum archive.

Cat. 32

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Songbirds, with a Dog, Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Landscape
Oil on canvas, 112 × 94.5 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Bears signature, lower centre, on the stone plinth: J. Weenix f

Provenance: ...; collection: D. Vaarties, Rotterdam, reported 1931; ...; probably collection: Mariska Alberts van Smirren, reported 1990;[1] ...

References: *RKDimages* 311660

Notes: Stylistically, the painting corresponds to works dated after Valkenburg's travels to Suriname, particularly in its well-balanced composition and the sharply silhouetted foliage set against the sky. See, for example, *Still Life with Dead Ducks, a Kingfisher and Other Fowl in a Park Landscape* (cat. 34), which has almost identical measurements.

1 Mariska Alberts van Smirren sent the RKD a reproduction of the artwork in November 1990.





Cat. 33

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with Dead Partridges, with Hunting Gear on a Stone Plinth in a Landscape
Oil on canvas, 110 × 95.5 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed, lower right: Dk. Valkenburg. Fecit.

Provenance: ...; possibly collection: Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine (1758–1835), Paris; possibly sale: Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine, Paris, 17 January 1810, lot 172, as '*Diverses ustensiles de chasse, des perdrix attachées par une patte, et différents oiseaux posés sur table de marbre. On ne connaît rien de plus parfait ni de plus vrai dans ce genre.*', with a companion piece (possibly cat. 34), 131 FRF, to Guillaume-Jean Constantin; possibly collection: Guillaume-Jean Constantin (1755–1816), Paris, 1816; possibly sale: Guillaume-Jean Constantin, Paris, 18 March 1816, lot 78, as '*Deux pendans offrant différents gibiers, entourés d'ustensiles de chasse, et placés sur des tables de marbre. Ces deux tableaux sont du plus précieux fini.*', with a companion piece (possibly cat. 34), 61 FRF, to 'Cogniet'; ...; sale: Paris (Mathias, Ribeyre et al.) 27–28 June 2014, lot 50, 90,000 EUR; ...

References: *RKDimages* 313284

Notes: This painting was likely sold as a companion piece to *Still Life with Dead Ducks, a Kingfisher and Other Fowl in a Park Landscape* cat. 34 at auctions held in Paris in 1810 and 1816.

Cat. 34

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with Dead Ducks, a Kingfisher and Other Fowl, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Landscape
1710
Oil on canvas, 111.8 × 94 cm
Nostell, Nostell Priory, National Trust, inv. no. NT 959493

Signed and dated, lower centre:
D. Valkenburg 1710

Provenance: ...; possibly collection: Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine (1758–1835), Paris; possibly sale: Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine, Paris, 17 January 1810, lot 173, as '*Autre tableau dans le même genre; il représente un canard et autres oiseaux suspendus; il ne le cède en rien au précédent pour le mérite.*', with a companion piece (possibly cat. 33), 131 FRF, to Guillaume-Jean Constantin (1755–1816); possibly collection: Guillaume-Jean Constantin (1755–1816), Paris, 1816; possibly sale: Guillaume-Jean Constantin Paris, 18 March 1816, lot 78, as '*Deux pendans offrant différents gibiers, entourés d'ustensiles de chasse, et placés sur des tables de marbre. Ces deux tableaux sont du plus précieux fini.*', with a companion piece (possibly cat. 33), 61 FRF, to 'Cogniet'; ...; The St. Oswald Collection (National Trust), Nostell Priory, Nostell, 1851

References: Waagen 1854, vol. 3, p. 336, as 'in the manner of Van Aelst'; exh. cat. Leeds 1868, no. 772; Brockwell 1915, no. 290; *RKDimages* 312664

Notes: This painting was likely sold as a companion piece to *Still Life with Dead Partridges on a Stone Plinth in a Landscape* (cat. 33) at auctions held in Paris in 1810 and 1816. The painting is titled *Still Life of Dead Game* at the National Trust, Nostell.









Cat. 35

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Snipe and Chaffinch, with Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 82.7 × 66.1 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Bears signature, lower right: J. Weenix 1664

Provenance: …; collection: Deschamps, Ghent; acquired by Joseph Duncombe of Copgrove, 1817, according to label on the reverse; by inheritance, collection: Ramsden family; by inheritance, collection: Sir Roland Thomas Nugent, first Baronet (1886–1962); …; sale: by anonymous seller ('The Property of a Lady'), London (Sotheby's), 12 April 1978, lot 11, as Jan Weenix, 10,000 GBP, to Paul; …; sale: London (Sotheby's), 5–6 July 2017, lot 133, as Jan Weenix, 68,382 EUR; …

References: Exh. cat. Belfast 1961, no. 139, as Jan Weenix; *RKDimages* 311741

Notes: This painting was copied by Hermanus Numan (1744–1820) in watercolour on paper (fig. cat. 12).[1]



Fig. cat. 12: Hermanus Numan, *A Dead Hare and Some Dead Birds, after a Painting Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg* 1759–1820. Watercolour on paper, 503 × 403 mm. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum, inv. No. TA 10732, bequeathed by C.J. Fodor.

1 Cat. Amsterdam 1999.

Cat. 36

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridges, Duck and Other Fowl, with Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
1713
Oil on canvas, 125 × 98 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed and dated, centre right, on the garden vase: Valkenburg / Fecit 1713[1]

Provenance: …; probably collection: Antoine Delacoux de Marivault (1771–1846), France; probably sale: Antoine Delacoux de Marivault, Paris, January 1806, lot 68, as '*Un Lièvre, un Canard sauvage, des Perdrix et autres Oiseaux morts; des Ustensiles de chasse. Le fond de ces deux Tableaux, peints sur toile, représente un Parc orné de Statues, Vases et Fabriques. Ils portent la date de 1709. Les Tableaux de Valkenburg sont rares et très-estimés.*', with a companion piece (probably cat. 49), under lot 69, not sold; probably sale: Antoine Delacoux de Marivault, Paris, 10–11 June 1806, lot 54, as '*Un groupe de gibier mort, où l'on remarque un lièvre, un canard sauvage, des perdrix et autres oiseaux: divers ustensiles de chasse. Le fonds est terminé par la vue d'un beau parc, où l'on aperçoit une fontaine et un joli lointain.*', as dated 1709, with a companion piece (probably cat. 49), under lot 55; …; probably collection: Frédéric Quilliet; probably sale: Frédéric Quilliet, Paris, 28 March 1816, lot 100, as '*Gibier parmi lequel on admire un lièvre dans l'un, dans l'autre un chat tenant dans ses griffes un coq et entouré de quelques autres animaux. Ces productions, la plus belle facture, ne le cèdent en aucune manière à aucun tableau de ce genre, et l'on ne croit pas trop se hasarder en énonçant l'espoir qu'on a de voir le Musée en faire l'acquisition. Sur toile, h. 47. l. 37.*', with a companion piece, (probably cat. 49), under lot 101, 1,499.95 FRF (for the pair), to Claude-Louis Chariot for Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine; probably collection: Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine (1758–1835), Paris, 1816; …; probably collection: Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Philippe de Félix, Count of Muy (1751–1820); probably sale: Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Philippe de Félix, Paris, 16 November 1820, lot 55, as '*Un très-beau tableau par cet habile peintre, offrant sur le devant, près d'un tronc d'arbre, un lièvre attaché par une patte à un gros bâton auquel sont suspendus plusieurs oiseaux de diverses espèces; des perdrix, des instruments de chasse et d'autres accessoires sont sur le terrain; le fond représente un grand parc. T. h. 44, l. 36.*', with a companion piece (probably cat. 49), under lot 56, 830 or 430 FRF, to Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine;[2] probably collection: Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine (1758–1835), Paris, 1820; …; collection: Achille Fould (1800–1867), France, 1860; …; Noortman Master Paintings, Maastricht, reported at TEFAF, Maastricht, March 2004 and March 2005; …; sale: London (Sotheby's), 4 December 2008, lot 224, 23,562 EUR; …

References: Schavemaker and Gerritsma 2005, pp. 152–153, no. 42; *RKDimages* 196778

Notes: This painting was likely sold as a companion piece to *Cat with a Dead Cock and Hen, with a Knife in a Park Landscape* (cat. 49) at various auctions held in Paris in 1806, 1816 and 1820.

1 See Schavemaker and Gerritsma, pp. 152–153. Note on current state: date is no longer visible on the photograph.

2 Getty Research Institute: *Getty Provenance Index*, 'F-1075', accessed on 29 May 2025, records Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine as the buyer of lot 55 only, not lot 56. Although the two works were offered as pendants at auction, this suggests they may have been separated from this point onwards.

Cat. 37

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Jay, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
1716
Oil on canvas, 99 × 77.8 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed and dated, centre right: Valkenburg / Fecit 1716

Provenance: ...; probably collection: Barend Kooy (d. 1820), Amsterdam; sale: Amsterdam (Kooy), 20 April 1820, lot 97, as '*Valkenburg. (D.) / Hoog 38, breed 30 duim, doek. / In een prachtig Hofgezigt, ziet men een doode Haas, hangende aan een stam van een Boom, daarbij staat een Jagtgeweer ter zijde liggen twee Patrijsen en eenig Jagtgereedschap. Dit Schilderij is van eene zeer uitvoerige behandeling en allerfraaist geschilderd.*', 230 HFL, to 'Poortermans'; ...; sale: London (Sotheby's), 11 December 1996, lot 179, 48,723 EUR, to Rafael Valls Limited; collection: Rafael Valls Limited, London, 1996; acquired by unknown private collection, 1998; ...

References: Cat. London 1997, no. 33; exh. cat. London (Rafael Valls), 1997; *RKDimages* 12947

Cat. 38

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Kingfisher, with Hunting Gear on a Stone Plinth in a Landscape
1717
Oil on canvas, 100 × 80 cm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-2097

Signed and dated, lower centre, on stone plinth: Valkenburg / 1717

Provenance: ...; private collection, Leiden;[1] ...; collection: Arnoldus des Tombe (d. 1902), The Hague, first reported in 1890; bequeathed by him to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1903

References: The Hague 1902, no. 65; Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 739; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; cat. Amsterdam 1976, p. 555; Sullivan 1984, pp. 66, 93, fig. 133; *RKDimages* 17354

Notes: *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridge, with a Dog in a Niche in a Landscape* (fig. cat. 13) is a close variant of this work.[2] The painting is possibly a later copy, as suggested by slight anatomical inconsistencies in the depiction of the hare, most notably, the disproportionately large head and the relatively thin paws in relation to the torso. Digital overlay analysis reveals significant deviations in the outlines compared to the Rijksmuseum version, suggesting that mechanical transfer methods, such as a grid or pantograph, were not employed. The copy was therefore likely executed freehand. This contrasts with Valkenburg's practice, as evidenced by the closely matching contours of recurring motifs throughout his oeuvre. The original canvas of the Rijksmuseum painting was extended at the upper and lower edges at an unknown date, probably to fit an architectural space above a chimney. The dimensions cited above correspond to the original support. This work is titled *Stilleven met dode haas en patrijzen* (*Still Life with Dead Hare and Partridges*) at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Fig. cat. 13: Anonymous, *Still Life with a Dead Hare, Partridge and Kingfisher, with a Dog and Hunting Gear on a Stone Plinth in a Landscape*, Netherlands, eighteenth century. Oil on canvas, 100 × 80 cm. Whereabouts unknown.

1 *RKDexcerpts* 568684; *RKDexcerpts* 568724.
2 Last reported, M. Wolff, Amsterdam, before 1938. See *RKDimages Lite* 277390. According to the current state of provenance research at the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, the present painting has not yet been located, as per the correspondence between P. Schrier and M. Klink, 11 November 2024, archived at RKD.



Cat. 39

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with Two Dead Partridges and a Songbird, with a Rifle and Other Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
1717
Oil on canvas, 100 × 80 cm
Singraven, Stichting Edwina van Heek

Signed and dated, centre right: Valkenburg / Fecit 1717

Provenance: ...; probably collection: Barend Kooy (d. 1820), Amsterdam; probably sale: Barend Kooy, Amsterdam, 20 April 1820, lot 98, as '*Dezelfde.* [Dirk Valkenburg] *Hoog 38, breed 30 duim, doek. Een dito Hofgezigt, op de voorgrond liggen twee doode Patrijzen, verder Wild en een Jagtgeweer en andere Stoffagie; niet minder als de voorgaande.*', 100 HFL, to Poortermans; ...; sale: Amsterdam (Roos), 18–20 March 1902, lot 92, 700 HFL, to Roos K.; ...; sale: Amsterdam (Muller), 26–27 May 1914, lot 355, 1,350 HFL; ...; collection: W.F.J. Laan; collection: Stichting Edwina van Heek, Singraven, 1956

References: *RKDimages* 102949

Cat. 40

Dirk Valkenburg
After the Hunt
Oil on canvas, 73 × 85 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed, lower left: D. Valkenburg pinxit[1]

Provenance: ...; sale: Vienna (Dorotheum), 29 November–2 December 1977, lot 139, not sold; ...; sale: London (Christie's), 18 May 1979, lot 168, 4,500 GBP; ...; sale: Ahlden (Kunstauktionshaus Schloss Ahlden), 26 October 2008, lot 1889, 12,500 EUR; ...

References: *RKDimages* 313086

Notes: Aside from *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname* (cat. 70), *After the Hunt* is the only extant work that depicts multiple figures within a landscape. Auction catalogue descriptions, however, suggest that Valkenburg painted more landscapes with figures and animals. Based on these descriptions, it is not possible to determine whether those figures were engaged in hunting-related activities.[2]

1 According to catalogue sale: Ahlden (Kunstauktionshaus Schloss Ahlden), 25 October 2008, lot 1889.

2 For instance, Jonas Witsen owned three landscape paintings featuring horses and other animals. See sale: Jonas Witsen (II), Amsterdam, 23 March 1717, lots 77–79. At the Nijmegen auction (Altrogge), 10 June 1812, lots 203 and 204 were listed as two paintings with animals and figures in a landscape, both described in the auction catalogue as being as beautifully painted as by Nicolaas Berchem. See Klink in this volume, pp. 127–140.



Fig. cat. 14: Barent Gael, *Halting Cavaliers Outside a Tavern*, c. 1650–1698. Oil on canvas, 48.5 × 62 cm. Private collection.

Animal Scenes
Julie Hartkamp

Dirk Valkenburg's animal paintings distinguish themselves from his game still lifes by shifting the focus from the depiction of dead animals to the dynamic interactions among living ones, thereby demonstrating his familiarity with the tradition of animal painting. His engagement with the work of Melchior d'Hondecoeter (fig. cat. 18) is particularly evident in paintings such as cats. 41, 44, 48 and 50. Like d'Hondecoeter, Valkenburg succeeds in creating animated scenes of tension and interaction between species, as exemplified by *King Vulture with a Dog in a Park Landscape* (cat. 43). In this work, the striking vulture, beak open and wings spread, seems to attempt to ward off the barking dog.[1]

Although many of the explicit references to the hunt – such as hunting gear and often even the presence of dead game – are omitted from the composition, the theme of hunting remains central in Valkenburg's animal paintings. With the removal of the hunter's gear, the emphasis shifts from the human act of the hunt to interspecies dynamics of dominance, threat and submission, clearly visualized in, for instance, *Eurasian Eagle-Owl and a Pigeon in Flight, with a Dead Hen and Animal Remains in a Landscape* (cat. 50).

Another example in which this dynamic is explored is a noteworthy painting within Valkenburg's oeuvre, *Fight between a Bear and Dogs in a Landscape* (cat. 42), dated 1703 and one of his largest known paintings. While the composition adheres to the structural principles of his still lifes, it stands apart iconographically within his oeuvre. The rare subject of a bear attacked by dogs had been depicted by Abraham Hondius (1631–1691), albeit on a smaller scale. While Valkenburg may have been familiar with Hondius's work, it is more plausible that he drew inspiration from a now-lost painting by David de Coninck (1643–1701), once part of a series of four hunting scenes in which a bear similarly confronted five dogs (fig. cat. 15). The large-scale, triangular composition and the emotive expressions of the animals in Valkenburg's version show strong similarities with De Coninck's work, and it is likely that the two artists were acquainted with one another – De Coninck, originally from Antwerp, worked in Vienna between 1694 and 1699, coinciding with Valkenburg's employment by Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein.

Following his return from Vienna, Valkenburg introduced cats as active protagonists. In these scenes, the cat appears to guard spoils of the hunt from a dog or an invisible intruder (cats. 46–47, 49, 51–52). By placing the cat in this role, Valkenburg challenges the dog's expected dominance, disrupting conventional hierarchies in which the dog typically prevails by virtue of its size, strength and established role within the human act of hunting. Unlike the more

passive or marginal depictions of cats in seventeenth-century Northern and Southern Netherlandish still lifes by artists such as Frans Snijders (1579–1657), Clara Peeters (1594–1657), Adriaen van Utrecht (1599–1652) and Jan Fijt (1609–1661), where they often remain in the background as silent intruders eyeing food, Valkenburg's cats take on a confrontational and territorial role.[2] This motif was rare in the Northern Netherlands, with parallels found only in work of Antwerp-based artists like De Coninck and Nicasius Bernaerts (1620–1678).[3] In particular, *Cat and Dog at Spoil in a Park Landscape* (fig. cat. 19), attributed to Bernaerts, shares Valkenburg's focus on the cat's defensive posture and the park landscape setting.[4] Valkenburg further developed this motif by enriching the scenes with classicist architecture and decorative elements, aligning with the refined tastes of his affluent Amsterdam clientele. The motif clearly resonated with buyers; one of these paintings was sold for the notable sum of 200 guilders at the 1750 estate auction of Joan van Vliet.[5]

1 See also Hartkamp p. 66 in this volume.
2 See the works of Frans Snijders, *Still Life with Huntsman*, c.1620–1640, The Hague, Mauritshuis, inv. no. 258; Clara Peeters, *Still Life of Fish and Cat*, c. 1620s, Washington, D.C., National Museum of Women in the Arts; Adriaen van Utrecht, *Kitchen Still Life with Fish, Lobster, Vegetables and a Cat*, c. 1640, sale: Cologne (Lempertz), 17 November 2001, lot 1161 (a), see also *RKDimages* 48812, accessed on 30 May 2025; Jan Fyt, *Game and Hunting Gear Discovered by a Cat*, c.1650–1650, Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. MI 922.
3 For instance, see David de Coninck's *Dog and Cat Fighting about Spoil*, c. 1665–1699. Sale: London (Christie's), 18 April 1996, lot 273; *RKDimages* 11799, accessed on 30 May 2025.
4 For more, see *RKDimages* 12185, accessed on 30 May 2025. Attributed to Nicasius Bernaerts by Fred G. Meijer.
5 Sale: Joan van Vliet, Amsterdam, 16–17 December 1750, Schilderyen, lot 6.



Cat. 41

Dirk Valkenburg
Birds from Various Continents in a Landscape
1701
Oil on canvas, 150 × 176 cm
Amersfoort, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, inv. no. B708

Signed and dated, upper right, on the tree trunk: Valckenburg / Pinxit / 1701

Provenance: …; collection: Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen Mauritshuis, The Hague, 1808; acquired by the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1885; Amersfoort, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, B708

References: Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 739; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; cat. Amsterdam 1909, p. 127, no. 371; cat. Amsterdam 1920, p. 410, no. 2347; Van Eeghen 1946, p. 65, note. 5; cat. Amsterdam 1976, p. 554, no. A 1240; *RKDimages* 313013

Notes: Beginning from the upper left corner and moving from left to right, Valkenburg depicts a northern cardinal, dove, crowned crane (in the background), two purple swamphens, griffon vulture, two red ibises and a helmeted curassow – species native to five different continents. This work was formerly titled *West-Indische Vogels* (*West-Indian Birds*) at the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed in Amersfoort.

Cat. 42

Dirk Valkenburg
Fight between a Bear and Dogs in a Landscape
1703
Oil on canvas, 138 × 202 cm
Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, inv. no. KMSsp678

Signed and dated, lower right: Valkenb. 1703[1]

Provenance: …; possibly collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam; possibly sale: Jonas Witsen (II), Amsterdam, 23 March 1717, lot 177, as '*Een Honde en Beere Gevegt, door Valkenburg*', 31 HFL; …; possibly collection: Joan van Vliet (1682–1752), Amsterdam; possibly sale: Joan van Vliet Amsterdam, 16–17 December 1750, lot 7, as '*Kapitale Beeregevegt, van den zelven* [Valkenburg]', 72 HFL; …; probably sale: Dirk Dalens, Amsterdam, 25 April 1753, lot 27, as '*Drie Honden die teegens een Beer vegten in een Landschap, wonderlyk uitvoerig, door D. Valkenburg*', 131 HFL, to Ietswaert voor Waarde; …; acquired for 150 Rt. by Gerhard Morell for the Royal Art Chamber, later Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, 1761[2]

References: Cat. Copenhagen 1827, pp. 420–421, no. 678; cat. Copenhagen 1875, p. 90, no. 374; cat. Copenhagen 1904, p. 158, no. 354; Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 739; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; cat. Copenhagen 1946, pp. 318–319, no. 731; North 2012, p. 155, no. 17; *RKDimages* 312623

Notes: Valkenburg likely drew inspiration from a now-lost work (fig. cat. 15) by David de Coninck, formerly part of a series of four hunting scenes.[3] This work was titled *Bjørn i kamp med hunde* (*Bear Fighting with Dogs*) at the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

1 According to the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, internal collection database. Currently illegible from photograph.
2 Cat. Copenhagen 1904, p. 158.
3 Formerly in the collection of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, A73, but lost since the Second World War. See *RKDimages* 15556, accessed on 16 June 2025. See also p. 370.



Fig. cat. 15: David de Coninck, *The Bear Hunt*, c. 1660–1690. Oil on canvas, 190 × 196 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-73, destroyed in 1943.





Cat. 43

Dirk Valkenburg
King Vulture on a Stone Plinth, with a Dog in a Park Landscape
Oil on Canvas, 100 × 126 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed, lower centre, on the stone plinth:
D. Valckenburg

Provenance: …; probably collection: Pieter de la Court van de Voort (1668–1772), Leiden; probably sale: Pieter de la Court van de Voort, Amsterdam, 26 August 1772, lot 26, '*Valkenburg, Discipel van Wenix. In dit Tafreel vertoont zich een Vogel, genaamt de Koning der Wouwen, staande op een steene Drempel, met uitgespreide Vlerken. Hy beschermt zyn Aas, 't welk hy onder zyn Poot houd, tegens een Engelsche Hond, die hem schynt aan te blaffen; zeer uitvoerig en fraay op doek geschildert hoog 38, breed 49 duim.*', 86 HFL (crossed through), to De Winter; …; collection: Nijstad Antiquairs, Lochem / The Hague, according to two stamps on the reverse;[1] …

References: *RKDimages* 312982

Notes: Jan Weenix also depicted the king vulture in several works, consistently reusing the same model (figs. cat. 16–17).[2]





Fig. cat. 16: Jan Weenix, *King Vulture*, c.1702. Oil on canvas, 117 × 98 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, GG_9045.

Fig. cat. 17: Jan Weenix, *Exotic Birds in a Park*, 1702. Oil on canvas, 116.5 × 142.5 cm. Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum / Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 194.

1 The Jewish name Nijstad appears in the *Cultuurgoederen Tweede Wereldoorlog* database, but not related to a work by Valkenburg. According to the current state of provenance research at the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, the present painting has not yet been located. See correspondence between P. Schrier and M. Klink, 11 November 2024, archived at RKD.

2 See also Hartkamp in this volume, p. 66. Other works by Weenix featuring the king vulture are at the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, inv. no. NGI.35, c. 1702, and the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen – Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. no. 1729, dated 1714.

Cat. 44

Dirk Valkenburg
Fight between a Hen and Cock, with a Dog in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 74.2 × 100 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed, centre left: D. Valkenburg fecit

Provenance: …; possibly collection: Nicolaas van Berkum Bysterbos (1807–1869), Kampen; possibly sale: Nicolaas van Berkum Bysterbos, Kampen, 28 October 1869, lot 12, Tableaux Anciens, as '*Combat de coqs et un chien en repos, par M. de Hondekoeter. H. 72. L. 99. Cadre noir.*'; …; collection: Hendrik Alexander Diggelen, reported 1946;[1] …; sale: Amsterdam, 23–24 June 2015, lot 27, 26,000 EUR; …

References: *RKDimages* 312932



Fig. cat. 18: Melchior d'Hondecoeter, *A Rooster and Turkey Fighting*, c. 1680. Oil on canvas, 137.2 × 166.4 cm. Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art, inv. no. 1986.59, supported by the John L. Severance Fund.

1 *RKDimages Lite* 276760.




Valckenburg

Cat. 45

Marten with a Dead Cock, Hen and Songbirds in a Landscape
Oil on canvas, 74.5 × 87 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed, upper centre, on the stone:
D [...] Valk [...] g

Provenance: ...; collection: M. Wolff, Amsterdam, reported before 1938;[1] ...

References: *RKDimages* 312667

1 See *RKDimages Lite* 277389. The Jewish name Wolff appears in the *Cultuurgoederen Tweede Wereldoorlog* database, but not related to a work by Valkenburg. According to the current state of provenance research at the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, the present painting has not yet been located. See correspondence between P. Schrier and M. Klink, 11 November 2024, archived at RKD.

Cat. 46

Dirk Valkenburg
Cat and Dog with a Dead Goose, Other Fowl and Hunting Gear in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 61 × 56 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed upper left, above the relief:
D. Valk[...]b [...]rg

Provenance: ...; collection: Galerie van Diemen & Co., Berlin / The Hague / Amsterdam / New York;[1] ...

References: *RKDimages* 312587

1 *RKDimages Lite* 277387. The Jewish-owned gallery was forcibly closed in 1935, and the collection was auctioned by Paul Graupe. However, no works by Valkenburg have been traced in the Berlin auctions (Graupe) of 25–26 January or 26–27 April 1935, nor is Valkenburg mentioned in the archive of Galerie van Diemen & Co. at the RKD, see *RKDarchives* NL-HaRKD-0262.



Fig. cat. 19: Nicasius Bernaerts, *Cat and Dog at Spoil in a Park Landscape*, c. 1663–1678. Oil on canvas, 89 × 117 cm. Spain, private collection.

Cat. 47

Dirk Valkenburg
Cat and Dog with Dead Ducks, a Hen, Cock and Other Fowl in a Landscape
Oil on canvas, 66 × 63 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed, centre left, on the stone pedestal: Valckenburg. Fecit.

Provenance: ...; collection: Colonel Sir Ralph Stephenson Clarke, K.B.E, (1892–1970), United Kingdom; sale: Colonel Sir Ralph Stephenson Clarke, London (Sotheby's), 4 April 1962, lot 90, 200 GBP, to 'Leger'; ...; sale: Munich (Ruef), 20–22 March 1974, lot 5356/1; ...; sale: London (Christie's, 14 February 1975, lot 80; ...

References: *RKDimages* 312621







Cat. 48

Dirk Valkenburg
Cock, Hens, Ducks, Alexandrine Parakeet and Other Birds at a Pond in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 132 × 99 cm
Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland, inv. no. NGI.625, bequeathed by Mr W.S. Gubleton

Signed, centre right, on the stone urn:
D. Valckenburg / Pinxit

Provenance: ...; collection: Johan van der Marck (1707–1772), Leiden; sale: Johan van der Marck, Amsterdam, 25 August 1773, lot 366, 380 HFL, to 'Pothoven'; ...; collection: Pieter Locquet (d. 1782), Amsterdam; sale: Pieter Locquet, Amsterdam, 22–24 September 1783, lot 368, 77 HFL, to Delfos; collection: Abraham Delfos (1731–1820), Leiden; sale: Abraham Delfos, Leiden, 28 April 1804, lot 5, 108 HFL, to A. Delfos; collection: Abraham Delfos, Leiden; sale: Abraham Delfos, The Hague, 10 June 1807, lot 72, 24 HFL, to 'Tomas'; ...; collection: W.S. Gumbleton of Belgrove (1840–1911), Cork; bequeathed by him to the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, 1911

References: Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; cat. Dublin 1986, pp. 158–159; *RKDimages* 312622

Notes: This work is titled *Birds with Urn in a Landscape* at the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

Cat. 49

Dirk Valkenburg
Cat with a Dead Cock and Hen, with a Knife in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 127 × 100 cm
Amsterdam / Geneva, Salomon Lillian Old Master Paintings

Signed, upper centre, on the stone pedestal:
D:k Valkenb:g / Pinxit

Provenance: ...; probably collection: Antoine Delacoux de Marivault (1771–1844), France; probably sale: Antoine Delacoux de Marivault, Paris, January 1806, lot 69, as '*Un Chat tenant entre ses griffes un Chapon mort, un Coq et autres accessoires. Le fond de ces deux Tableaux, peints sur toile, représente un Parc orné de Statues, Vases et Fabriques. Ils portent la date de 1709. Les Tableaux de Valkenburg sont rares et très-estimés.*',[1] with a companion piece (probably cat. 36), under lot 68, not sold; probably sale: Antoine Delacoux de Marivault, Paris, 9–10 June 1806, lot 55, as '*Un autre groupe de gibier où l'on voit un chat tenant entre ses griffes un chapon mort, un coq et autres accessoires, tels qu'un panier de jonc, un couteau et un rateau: il est aussi terminé par la vue d'un parc. Ces deux beaux ouvrages ne le cèdent en rien à son maître, qui a porté ce genre au plus haut point de perfection. Hauteur 46 pouces, larg. 37* p. 6 *lig., T.*', with a companion piece (probably cat. 36), under lot 54, not sold; ...; probably collection: Frédéric Quilliet; probably sale: Frédéric Quilliet, Paris, 28 March 1816, lot 101, as '*Gibier parmi lequel on admire un lièvre dans l'un, dans l'autre un chat tenant dans ses griffes un coq et entouré de quelques autres animaux. Ces productions, la plus belle facture, ne le cèdent en aucune manière à aucun tableau de ce genre, et l'on ne croit pas trop se hasarder en énonçant l'espoir qu'on a de voir le Musée en faire l'acquisition. Sur toile, h. 47. l. 37.*', with a companion piece (probably cat. 36), under lot 100, 1,499.95 FRF (for the pair), to Claude-Louis Chariot for Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine; probably collection: Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine (1758–1835), Paris, 1816; ...; probably collection: Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Philippe de Félix, Count of Muy (1751–1820); probably sale: Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Philippe de Félix,

Paris, 16 November 1820, lot 56, as '*Un autre tableau faisant pendant du précédent, offre sur le premier plan deux corps morts qu'un chat convoitise; un monument d'architecture et un jardin terminent le fond; ces deux beaux morceaux réunissent à la beauté du coloris un pinceau moelleux et un précieux fini dans tous leurs détails; ils feraient honneur à la plus belle galerie de l'Europe. h. 44, l. 36.*', with a companion piece (probably cat. 36), lot 55, 700 or 100 FRF;[2] ...; collection: William Waldorf Astor II, third Viscount Astor (1907–1967), United Kingdom; sale: William Waldorf Astor II, London (Christie's), 23 June 1967, lot 15, 735 USD, to Stein; ...; sale: London (Christie's), 13 December 1996, lot 298, not sold; sale: London (Christie's), 31 October 1997, lot 34; unknown private collection, Europe; sale: Vienna (Dorotheum), 8–9 June 2021, lot 287, 22,000 EUR, to Salomon Lilian Old Master Paintings; collection: Salomon Lilian Old Master Paintings, Amsterdam / Geneva, 2021

References: *RKDimages* 18888

Notes: This work is titled *A Cat with Dead Chickens in an Elegant Park Landscape* by Salomon Lilian Old Master Paintings, Amsterdam / Geneva.

1 According to Schavemaker and Gerritsma 2005, pp. 152–153, no. 42, cat. 36 is dated 1713. Although the signature is clearly visible, the date is illegible in the available photograph. It is therefore possible that either 1709 or 1713 has been misread.

2 Getty Research Institute: *Getty Provenance Index*, 'F-1075', accessed on 29 May 2025, records Pierre-Joseph Lafontaine as the buyer of lot 55 only, not lot 56. Although the two works were offered as pendants at auction, this suggests they may have been separated from this point onwards.

Dirk Valkenburg
Eurasian Eagle-Owl and Pigeon in Flight, with a Dead Hen and Animal Remains in a Landscape
Oil on canvas, 127 × 101 cm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-C-1821, on loan from Broere Charitable Foundation

Provenance: ...; sale: Paris (Métayer Mermoz), 20–23 November 2015, lot 143, 60,000 EUR, to Salomon Lilian Old Master Paintings; collection: Salomon Lilian Old Master Paintings, Amsterdam / Geneva, 2015; sale: Salomon Lilian Old Master Paintings, New York (Sotheby's), 28 January 2021, lot 18, not sold; acquired directly from Salomon Lilian Old Master Paintings by Broere Charitable Foundation, Amsterdam, 2021

References: Exh. cat. Amsterdam / Geneva 2016, pp. 80–83, no. 13; *RKDimages* 312619

Notes: Originally, the painting was signed by Valkenburg on the tree trunk but was removed at a later date, likely by a collector (fig. 3, in Klink, p. 164). A new signature, 'Weenix', was added to the lower left corner of the painting (fig. 4, in Klink,p. 164). This information was recovered during a restoration by Atelier Van Wassenaer in 2021.[1] Prior to restoration, only the inauthentic Weenix signature was visible. The treatment involved the removal of yellowed varnish and surface dirt. After the removal of the first layer of varnish, the Weenix signature appeared to be situated between two distinct layers of varnish, confirming the claim of its later addition. During treatment, an abraded area was uncovered on the tree trunk, indicating Valkenburg's original signature had been deliberately scraped away. The restoration further entailed the levelling of the craquelure, followed by the application of a temporary varnish. The painting was then retouched and finished with a final protective varnish. The work is titled *Een oehoe met andere vogels in een landschap* (*A Eurasian Eagle-Owl with Other Birds in a Landscape*) at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

1 Correspondence between L. van Wassenaer and J. Hartkamp, 29 April–21 May 2025, archived at Centraal Museum, Utrecht.





Cat. 51

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Cat and Dog, with a Dead Cock, Knife and Fruit in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, relined, 79 × 92 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Bore signature: Jan Weenix 1715[1]

Inscriptions: Verso, on the stretcher, two labels: 'Hund og kat, en død hane og frugter'. [...] Køb... Jacob Scavenius auction d. 26 nov. 1925 / Mr. J. Koumantaros Hotel King George Constitution Square ATHENS GREECE[2]

Provenance: ...; probably collection: Lambert Witsen (1681–1746), Amsterdam; probably sale: Lambert Witsen, Amsterdam, 25 May 1746, lot 28, as '*Een Kat die een Haan Vermoort, met fraai bywerk door Valkenburg, h. 2 v. 9 d., br. 3 v. 2 en een half d.*', 38 HFL; ...; possibly collection: Edward Solly (1776–1844), United Kingdom; possibly sale: Edward Solly, London, 7–8 June 1819, lot 92, as '*A Cat and Dead Fowl; a Lap Dog and Fruit in a Garden Scene.*', 31–10 GBP, to James Meyer; ...; possibly sale: London, 20–22 November 1833, lot 85, as '*Fruit, & c. with a Cat looking on.*', 0–7 GBP, to 'Clark'; ...; collection: Jakob Frederik Scavenius (1838–1915), Copenhagen; sale: Jakob Frederik Scavenius, Copenhagen, 14 December 1894, lot 15;[3] by inheritance, collection: Julius Frederik Scavenius; sale: Copenhagen (Winkel & Magnussen), 26 November 1925, lot 44, to Zimmerman Becker, Consul General; collection: C.P. Jacobsen, Klampenborg; ...; sale: London (Christie's), 31 October 2013, lot 124; ...; collection: Gierhards, Düsseldorf, reported at TEFAF, Maastricht, March 2014; sale: Berlin (Grisebach), 28 November 2019, lot 357; ...

References: Gammelbo 1960, p. 158, no. 241, as Jan Weenix; Maastricht 2014, p. 251, as Dirk Valkenburg; *RKDimages* 312618

Notes: According to a label on the reverse, the work once bore a signature, 'Jan Weenix 1715', which is no longer visible. Analysis of style, iconography and brushwork supports an attribution to Valkenburg.

1 Gammelbo 1960, p. 158.
2 Transcribed as such in the auction catalogue, Berlin (Grisebach), 28 November 2019, lot 357.
3 Gammelbo 1960, p. 158.

Cat. 52

Dirk Valkenburg
Cat and Dog, with a Dead Cock, Knife and Fruit in a Park Landscape
1717
Oil on canvas, 101.3 × 80.6 cm
Louisville, The Speed Art Museum, inv. no. 2006.528

Signed and dated, lower centre:
D:k Valkenb.g / Fecit 1717

Provenance: …; sale: 'Smit', Amsterdam, 22 April 1809, lot 132a, as '*Dit fraaije Schilderij verbeeld in een Hofgezicht een Siepersche Kat, welke een Haan onder zijne pooten heeft, blazende tegens een Hondje, verder op de voorgrond eenige Druiven, Persiken en andere Vruchten; delicaat gepenceelt, door D. Valkenburg, op Doek, hoog 39, breed 32 duim.*', 160 HFL, to 'Roos'; …; possibly collection: Edward Solly (1776–1844), United Kingdom; possibly sale: Edward Solly, London, 7–8 June 1819, lot 92, as *A Cat and Dead Fowl; a Lap Dog and Fruit in a Garden Scene*, 31–10 GBP, to James Meyer; …; possibly sale: London, 20–22 November 1833, lot 85, as *Fruit, & c. with a Cat looking on*, 0–7 GPB, to 'Clark'; …; sale: Windsor (Nadeau's), 21 September 2002, lot 125, 45,000 USD; …; sale: New York (Christie's), 24 January 2003, lot 146, not sold; …; collection: Speed Art Museum, Louisville, 2005

References: Cat. Louisville 2007, p. 89, fig.; *RKDimages* 107782

Notes: This work is titled *A Cat Protecting Spoils from a Dog* at the Speed Art Museum, Louisville.

Fruit Still Lifes
Matthies Klink and Julie Hartkamp

Fruit still lifes comprise only a small portion of Dirk Valkenburg's overall oeuvre. In the seventeenth century, artists who specialized in the genre, including Jan Davidsz de Heem (1606–1684), Willem van Aelst (1627–1683) and Abraham Mignon (1640–1679), generally arranged their fruits and flowers in rather centralized compositions, often placed on a stone table top or within a stone niche. Reflecting the general development of still lifes at the end of the seventeenth century, Valkenburg takes a step towards the multi-axial composition of the eighteenth century. Closely adhering to his approach of standardized artistic methods in game paintings, Valkenburg utilized a system of compositional templates applied to similarly scaled canvases, introducing a comparable sense of visual dynamism into his fruit still lifes through the use of opposing dynamic lines, as well as a sense of physical monumentality.

In particular, *Still Life with Grapes, Peaches and Other Fruit on a Stone Plinth in a Park Landscape* (cat. 56), in its vertical arrangement, is illustrative of how Valkenburg employs the same approach as his game pieces. Clusters of grapes, accompanied by peaches, plums, apples and pears, are arranged diagonally in an interplay with a vine shoot on a stone plinth. Recurring elements are the classical urn and column emerging from behind on one side of the picture plane, while a park landscape unfolds in the background on the opposite side. The work fits perfectly into the eighteenth-century style of still lifes: draperies have disappeared, but foliage has deliberately been given importance.[1]

In *Still Life with Fruit and a Coconut on a Stone Plinth in a Park Landscape* (cat. 54), dated 1702, and its possible pendant, *Still Life with a Pumpkin, Grapes and Other Fruit on a Stone Plinth in a Park Landscape* (cat. 55), imported fruits are seemingly presented as trophies, now taken as 'spoils' from foreign lands, instead of the hunt.[2] Valkenburg's inclusion of fruits such as pomegranates, melons and coconuts (see also cats. 24, 53), in works made prior to his travels in Suriname from 1706 to 1708, indicates an early interest in the 'exotic'. Interestingly, coconuts are rarely encountered in fruit still lifes prior to those of Valkenburg. Contemporary to Valkenburg, Jan Mortel (1652–1719), who was the official painter of the Botanical Gardens of the University of Leiden, included a coconut in one of his fruit still lifes in 1703.[3] In fact, apart from Albert Eckhout (c. 1610–1664/66), who travelled as a member of Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen's (1604–1679) artistic entourage to Brazil between 1637 and 1644 and painted *Still Life with Coconuts* (fig. 2, in Schmidt, p. 209), no other Dutch example prior to Valkenburg has

come to our attention.[4] Eckhout depicted green coconuts, recently harvested from the tree. Valkenburg portrays coconuts with rough, brown fibrous husks – a result of the process of maturation during its long journey across the Atlantic – which reflects the typical European perception of the fruit.[5]

The coconut appears on several occasions in Valkenburg's work: twice, both with and without its husk, as an additional embellishment within larger compositions of dead game (cat. 24), and more prominently as the focal subject in *Still Life with a Coconut, Grapes, Peaches and Plums in a Park Landscape* (cat. 53). The coconut is still encased in its thick husk but partially opened and surrounded by peaches, plums, red grapes, hazelnuts and medlars. The fruits, similar to *Still Life with Melon* from the National Gallery in Prague by Jan Weenix, are arranged on the ground with classicist architecture rising in the background.[6] The bristly, dry texture of the coconut husk contrasts the soft, velvety surfaces of the peaches and the shiny plums, underscoring Valkenburg's aim to render a variety of textures and material qualities that also characterize his game still lifes and animal scenes.

1 Segal 1983, p. 82.
2 These works were possibly auctioned at sale: Jonas Witsen (II), Amsterdam, 31 March 1717, lots 90–91.
3 Dutch private collection, see Segal 1983, p. 133, no. 65.
4 On coconuts and Albert Eckhout, see Schmidt in this volume, pp. 211–212.
5 See also Schmidt in this volume, pp. 205–226.
6 See Van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven 2018, p. 355, no. 239.









Cat. 53

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Coconut, Grapes, Peaches and Plums in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 59.8 × 54.4 cm
Amiens, Musée de Picardie, inv. no. M.P.Lav. 1894-54

Signed, lower left, on a small stone[1]

Provenance: ...; probably collection: Dirk van Dijl (1742–1814), Amsterdam; probably sale: Dirk van Dijl, Amsterdam, 10 January 1814, lot 155, as '*Valkent. hoog 23, breed 21 duim. Bij Boomstammen en Planten, leggen onderscheiden Vruchten, als perziken, druiven, mispels, een cocusnoot en anderen, in het verschiet een Hofgezigt, fraai van schildering.*', 17–10 HFL, to 'Brands'; ...; collection: MM. Olympe and Ernest Lavalard, Paris; their gift to Musée Picardie, Amiens, 1890

References: Cat. Amiens 1894, p. 15, no. 54; cat. Amiens 1899, p. 186, no. 55; Bredius 1901, p. 9; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; cat. Amiens 1911, p. 116, no. 55; Foucart 1977, p. 40, no. 55; exh. cat. Amiens 2001, p. 198; *RKDimages* 312821

Notes: This work is titled *Nature morte avec des fruits et une noix de coco* (*Still Life with Fruit and a Coconut*) at the Musée de Picardie, Amiens.

1 According to Pinette 2001, p. 198, the signature reads 'M. [...] D.[...] DV[...]en[...]'. As a result of accumulated surface deposits and degradation, traces of the signature remain visible but are currently illegible.

Cat. 54

Still Life with a Coconut, Pomegranate and Other Fruit on a Stone Plinth in a Park Landscape
1702
Oil on canvas, 80 × 95 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed, lower right, on the stone plinth:
D. Valkenburg / 1702

*P*rovenance: Possibly collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam; possibly sale: Jonas Witsen (II), Amsterdam, 23 March 1717, lot 90 or 91, as '*Een Capitaal Stuk met Vrugten, door Valkenburg. / Een dito, zynde een Weega van dezelve* [Dirk Valkenburg]*.*', 90 HFL (for the pair), lot 115 or 116, as '*Eenige Vrugten, door dezelve* [Dirk Valkenburg]*. / Een dito, door dezelve.*', 28 HFL (for the pair); ...; collection: Rupert William Leigh, fourth Baron Leigh (1908–1979), Stoneleigh; sale: London (Christie's), 5 April 1963, lot 63, 882 USD, to 'Brasswell'; ...

References: *RKDimages* 313092

Cat. 55

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with a Pumpkin, Grapes and Other Fruit on a Stone Plinth in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 83 × 98 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed: Valkenb. Pinxit[1]

Provenance: Possibly collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam; possibly sale: Jonas Witsen (II), Amsterdam, 23 March 1717, lot 90 or 91, as '*Een Capitaal Stuk met Vrugten, door Valkenburg. / Een dito, zynde een Weega van dezelve* [Dirk Valkenburg].', 90 HFL (for the pair), lot 115 or 116, as '*Eenige Vrugten, door dezelve* [Dirk Valkenburg]. */ Een dito, door dezelve.*', 28 HFL (for the pair); ...; sale: Potrelle, Paris, 11–16 March 1805, lot 32, as '*Valkent. Un Melon, des Raisins, des Prunes, des Pêches & d'autres fruits ; grouppés sur un Plat d'argent, près d'une Corbeille & d'un Vidrecom rempli de vin, posés sur une table de marbre; un Fond de jardin termine ce Tableau. Hauteur 30 puces largeur 36 pouces. T.*', 88 FRF, to 'Caillar'; ...; collection: Chateau de C., France; sale: Chateau de C., Louviers (Prunier), 13 May 2001;[2] ...

References: *La Gazette Drouot* 2001, p. 114; *RKDimages* 313087

Cat. 56

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with Grapes, Peaches and Other Fruit on a Stone Plinth in a Park Landscape
Oil on canvas, 98 × 84 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed, lower right on the stone plinth:
DK. Valkenburg

Provenance: ...; probably collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788); probably sale: Jonas Witsen (IV), Amsterdam, 16–18 August 1790, Catalogus van Schilderyen, lot 76, as '*Door denzelven* [Dirk Valkenburg]. *Dito hoogten en breedten* [39 duim × 33 duim]. *Op de rand van een steende Baluster, leggen verscheide zoorten van Vrugten: als witte en blauwe Druiven, Persikken, Pruimen, Nooten, en anderen; daar neevens is een fraay gewerkte steene Vaas, en Colomme; verder een Hofgezigt en Beelden; in alles niet minder als de voorgaande behandeld, zynde een wederga.*', with a companion piece (probably cat. 22), under lot 75, 105 HFL (for the pair), to Coclers; possibly collection: Louis Bernard Coclers (1741–1817) or Bernard Coclers (1770–1817), Liège, 1790; ...; collection: Beriah Botfield (1807–1863), Northamptonshire, in or before 1848; by inheritance, collection: Henry Frederick Thynne, sixth Marquess of Bath and Viscount Weymouth (1905–1992); sale: London (Sotheby's), 4 October 1944, lot 133; ...; collection: Gallery Lasson, London, reported at the exhibition of sixteenth-, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Old Masters, London 29 May–26 July 1968; ...; sale: Amsterdam (Christie's), 11 November 1996, lot 42, 138,384 HFL; ...

References: Exh. cat. London 1848, p. 55; *RKDimages* 15168

1 No longer visible in the photograph. See *La Gazette Drouot* 2001, p. 114.
2 *La Gazette Drouot* 2001, p. 114.

Works Made in Suriname
Julie Hartkamp

After signing a contract in late February 1706 with Jonas Witsen, the Dutch merchant municipal secretary in Amsterdam, Dirk Valkenburg sailed with the first vessel departing that season for Suriname, where Witsen owned three sugar plantations on the Suriname River: Waterland, Surimombo and Palmeneribo.[1] The contract stipulated that Valkenburg was to paint the plantations and other rare birds and plants '*naer 't leven*' (after life).[2] Accordingly, Valkenburg created highly detailed drawings and paintings of these plantations and surrounding lands, the cultivated fruit and vegetation and the people who performed forced labour on these estates. While the act of labour itself is conspicuously omitted from these works, the artworks served as a visual guide for his commissioner, the landowner, offering a comprehensive overview of his property in the broadest sense of the word. Interestingly, upon Valkenburg's return from Suriname, Witsen kept the works in his cabinet of curiosities rather than in his cabinet of paintings, underscoring the primacy of their documentary value over their artistic nature.[3]

Eleven of the drawings that Valkenburg made in Suriname – meticulously executed in pen and ink and grey wash, often over black chalk – have survived to the present day. He must have made at least ten more because it is known that Amsterdam collector Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1726–1798) owned a group of 21. By the time they entered Ploos van Amstel's collection, however, Valkenburg's name had already become separated from his work, as the collector assigned them to Dionys Verburg (1636/37–1722) and inscribed Verbung's name on their reverse, together with the date of 1708.[4] Most of the drawings, serving a documentary purpose, above all, are accompanied by legends through which Valkenburg identifies various fruit trees growing on the land, as well as the settlements and mechanical structures on the sugar plantations.

Based on these detailed visual guides of the plantations, geographic locations in his paintings have been identified. In *Indigenous, Enslaved and European People Navigating the Suriname River in front of Waterland Plantation* (cat. 68), Valkenburg presents a view of the Waterland plantation as seen from the Roorak plantation across the Suriname River.[5] On the far left, a sluice is depicted, with the mill and the boiling house at the centre and the plantation director's residence on the right. A drawing of the same plantation reveals that behind the boiling house, the *dramhuijs* and the lodging for the enslaved labourers were situated. In *Indigenous Inhabitants near a Plantation in Suriname* (cat. 69), Valkenburg portrays the Lokono, the region's Indigenous inhabitants, near their homes amidst awara trees.[6] In the background, the scene includes a view of the plantation's European-style brick buildings, juxtaposing local and colonial architecture.

Valkenburg's painted works include both finished paintings and oil paint studies, depicting models of a variety of native Surinamese fruit and reptiles (cats. 73–75).[7] As his studies reveal, Valkenburg spent considerable time observing his new subjects and surroundings, with the high level of detail attesting to his intent to 'accurately' document the 'unfamiliar' fruit and fauna of Suriname. Reflecting both the empirical nature of his artistic approach, as well as the approach to standardization characteristic of his entire oeuvre, Valkenburg studied these models after life, likely documenting what he saw in detailed drawings and thereafter reproducing them in oil-painted models in his studio. These models subsequently allowed him to reuse these motifs at different scales in his finished works, such as *Still Life with Pineapples and Other Fruit from Suriname in a Landscape* (cat. 72).[8]

Apart from small-scale inclusions of figures that can be identified as West African or Indigenous people, the only still existing painting that gives the people that worked on Witsen's plantations a tangible presence is *Gathering of Enslaved People* (cat. 70). In this painting, Valkenburg does not portray them engaged in their daily, dehumanizing labour. Instead, he depicts them in front of their lodgings with a grand bootlace tree, or *walaba* in Sranang Tongo (*Eperua falcata*), rising from behind, participating in rituals and festivities.[9]

1 For more about the contract, see SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 3369, 24–27 February 1706, pp. 1,145–1,149; first transcribed in Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, pp. 432–435; see also Ponte in this volume, pp. 31–43. On Valkenburg's time in Suriname, see Sint Nicolaas 2018, pp. 55–57, and Ponte in this volume, pp. 37–40. On Jonas Witsen and the lives of the enslaved West Africans and Indigenous Lokono at Surimombo, Palmeneribo and Waterland, see for instance Sint Nicolaas 2018, pp. 55–57; exh. cat. Amsterdam 2021, pp. 86–104.

2 Van Gool 1750–1751, vol. 2, p. 484. Y. Bleyerveld in exh. cat. Otterlo 2021, p. 212.

3 Van Eeghen 1946, p. 64; Peters 2010, p. 383; see also Klink in this volume, p. 134.

4 Cornelis Ploos van Amstel attributed these drawings to Dionys Verburg, inscribing Verburg's name on their reverse (often alongside the date 1708). The drawings were only reattributed to Valkenburg by Van Eeghen in 1946. See Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 58–70; see also Klink, p. 136 in this volume. Following Van Ploos' death, the drawings were auctioned as part of Kunstboek CCC on 3 March 1800. See sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19. Currently, six drawings are held in Amsterdam, at the Rijksmuseum. See cats. 59–62, 66–67. One is in Paris, Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, (cat. 63), and two are in the collection of John and Marine van Vlissingen Fine Arts, Leiden, see cats. 58 and 64. Another one is in the Kröller-Müller collection, see cat. 57. It depicts another plantation, identified as Brugman, based on an inscription on a strip of paper underneath the drawing that reads 'Een gesigt op de Plantagie Van Brúgman'. See Y. Bleyerveld in exh. cat. Otterlo 2021, p. 212. Cat. 67 is in a Dutch private collection.

5 The plantation was identified by N.E. Middelkoop. See Waterlant in cat. Amsterdam 2008, pp. 166–167.

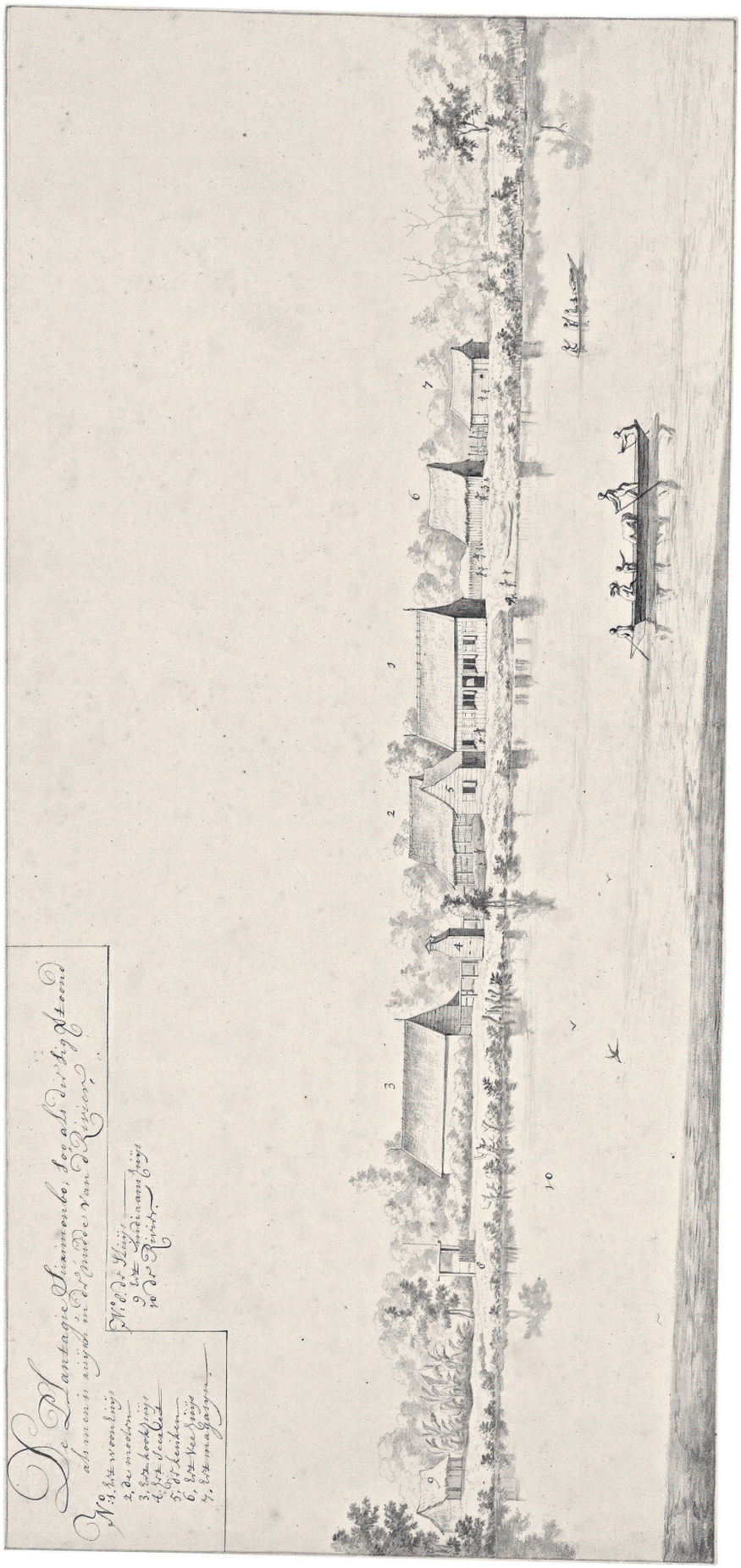
6 For more about this painting, see Van Schendel 1963.

7 All the flora and fauna depicted by Valkenburg have been identified with the invaluable assistance and expertise of botanists Eliza Zschuschen and Dorothy Traag, Heads of the National Herbarium of Suriname, and anthropologist Renzo Duin. See cats. 71–75.

8 See Hartkamp in this volume, p. 68.

9 Identified by botanists Eliza Zschuschen and Dorothy Traag, Heads of the National Herbarium of Suriname, and anthropologist Renzo Duin.




De Plantagie Suximonbo, 800 als dit sig Stoond
als men is ruijsch in dr midde van d'Rivier,
N.o 1. Ert woonenijs
2. de moolen
3. Ert hoek ruijs
4. Ert Scaal
5. dr keuken
6. Ert Vee ruijs
7. Ert magasyn
N.o 8. dr Sluijs
9 Ert Indiaans ruijs
10 dr Rivier.

Cat. 58


N° 1 De moolen op Surimonbo.
2 Eet kookhuijs aldaar.
3 Eet dram huijs.
4 de kaen tras Bergh.
5 de Weijde.
2
1
3
4
5

Cat. 59

Cat. 57

Dirk Valkenburg
View of the Brugman Plantation, Suriname
1708
Pen and grey ink, grey wash and black chalk on paper, framing lines in pen and brown ink, 247 × 194 mm
Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, inv. no. KM 107.495

Inscriptions: Verso, centre left, handwriting of Cornelis Ploos van Amstel in chalk or graphite: D. Verburg f 1708 / h. 9 1/2 d / b 8 d
Below, right of centre, Kröller-Müller Museum collector's mark: [L.2249a]
On a strip glued to the lowest part of the sheet, unidentified handwriting, in pen and brown ink: Een gesigt op de plantagie van Brúgman
Lower right, handwriting of H.P. Bremmer, in graphite: D. VERBURG F. 1708.

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; possibly by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; ...; collection: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1727–1798), Amsterdam; sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19, as Dionys Verburg, 3–15 HFL, to 'Boddens'; ...; probably collection: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam; probably sale: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam, 26 October 1807, Kunstboek G, lot 53, 54 or 55, 9–5 HFL, to Jan IJver; probably collection: Jan IJver (1747–1814), Amsterdam, 1807; ...; probably collection: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Utrecht; probably sale: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Amsterdam, 3–4 May 1882, lot 314, as one of '*D. Verburgh. Diverses vues des plantations Palmeribo et Surinombo, à Surinam, en 1708. – 15 Dessins. A l'encre de Chine.*', 12 HFL, to 'Van Pappelendam'; ...; collection: Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, 1930

References: Cat. Otterlo 1981, p. 126, no. 0469; cat. Otterlo 2021, pp. 212–213, fig.; *RKDimages* 305077

Cat. 58

Dirk Valkenburg
People Navigating the Suriname River in Front of the Surimombo Plantation, Suriname
1708
Pen and grey ink, grey wash and black chalk on paper, framing lines and inscriptions in pen and brown ink, 196 × 416 mm
Zeist, John & Marine van Vlissingen Fine Arts

Inscriptions: Recto, upper left, handwriting of Dirk Valkenburg in pen and brown ink: De Plantagie Surimonbo; soo als die sig vertoond / als men is ruijm in de midde van d'Rivier. / No: 1. het woonhuijs / 2. de moolen / 3. het kookhuijs / 4. het secreet / 5. de keuken / 6. het veehuijs / 7. het magasyn. / (outside the framing lines) No: 8. de Sluijs / 9 het indiaans huijs / 10 de Rivier., with corresponding numbers at multiple sites across the drawing
Verso, lower left, in graphite: D. Verburg f 1708 / h 7 b 16[1]

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; possibly by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; ...; collection: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1727–1798), Amsterdam; sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19, as Dionys Verburg, 3–15 HFL, to 'Boddens'; ...; probably collection: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam; probably sale: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam, 26 October 1807, Kunstboek G, lot 53, as one of '*Zes stuks Gezigten op de Plantagie Surimonbo naar het leven; meesterlyk geteekend met zwart kryt en O.I. inkt, door D. Verburg.*', together with lots 54 and 55, 9–5 HFL, to Jan IJver; probably collection: Jan IJver (1747–1814), Amsterdam, 1807; ...; probably collection: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Utrecht; probably sale: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Amsterdam, 3–4 May 1882, lot 314, as one of '*D. Verburgh. Diverses vues des plantations Palmeribo et Surinombo, à Surinam, en 1708. – 15 Dessins. A l'encre de Chine.*',

12 HFL, to 'Van Pappelendam'; ...; collection: Haboldt & Co, Paris/New York, reported at TEFAF, Maastricht, March 1997; collection: John & Marine van Vlissingen Fine Arts, Zeist, 1997

References: Exh. cat. Haarlem 2000, pp. 144–145, no. 67; *RKDimages* 313435

1 Exh. cat. Haarlem 2000, p. 144.

Cat. 59

Dirk Valkenburg
View of the Mill, Boiling House and Distillery, with Livestock on the Surimombo Plantation, Suriname
1708
Pen and grey ink, grey wash and black chalk on paper, framing lines in pen and brown and grey ink, 182 × 360 mm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-T-1905-105

Inscriptions: Recto, upper left, handwriting of Dirk Valkenburg in pen and brown ink: *No 1 De moolen op Surimonbo. / 2 het kookhuijs aldaar. / 3 het dram huijs. / 4 de kaentras Bergh. / 5 de Weijde.,* with corresponding numbers at multiple sites across the drawing
Verso, lower left, handwriting of Cornelis Ploos van Amstel in chalk or graphite, later retraced: h. 7 d / b. 16 d / D. Verburg f 1708
Lower right, collector's mark Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum: [L.2228a] / 05.105

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; possibly by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1633–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; ...; collection: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, (1727–1798), Amsterdam; sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19, as Dionys Verburg, 3–15 HFL, to 'Boddens'; ...; probably collection: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam; probably sale: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam, 26 October 1807, Kunstboek G, lot 53, as one of '*Zes stuks Gezigten op de Plantagie Surimonbo naar het leven; meesterlyk geteekend met zwart kryt en O.I. inkt, door D. Verburg.*', together with nos. 54 and 55, 9–5 HFL, to Jan IJver; probably collection: Jan IJver (1747–1814), Amsterdam, 1807; ...; probably collection: MJ.M. Vreeswijk, Utrecht; probably sale: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Amsterdam, 3–4 May 1882, lot 314, as one of '*D. Verburgh. Diverses vues des plantations Palmeribo et Surinombo, à Surinam, en 1708. – 15 Dessins. A l'encre de Chine.*', 12 HFL, to 'Van Pappelendam'; ...; sale: Amsterdam (Muller), 19 January 1904, lot 383, as Dionys Verburg, 31 HFL, to Rijksmuseum; collection: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1904

References: Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 58–69; Van Schendel 1963, pp. 80, 86, fig. 6; exh. cat. Amsterdam 1963, no. 264c; exh. cat. Haarlem 2000, p. 144, note 5; cat. Amsterdam 2008, p. 287, note 4; Sint Nicolaas 2018, pp. 57–58, fig. 3.8; exh. cat. Amsterdam 2021, p. 343; *RKDimages* 313430

Notes: This work is titled *Gezicht op drie huizen op de plantage Surimombo* (*View of Three Houses on the Surimombo Plantation*) at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Cat. 60

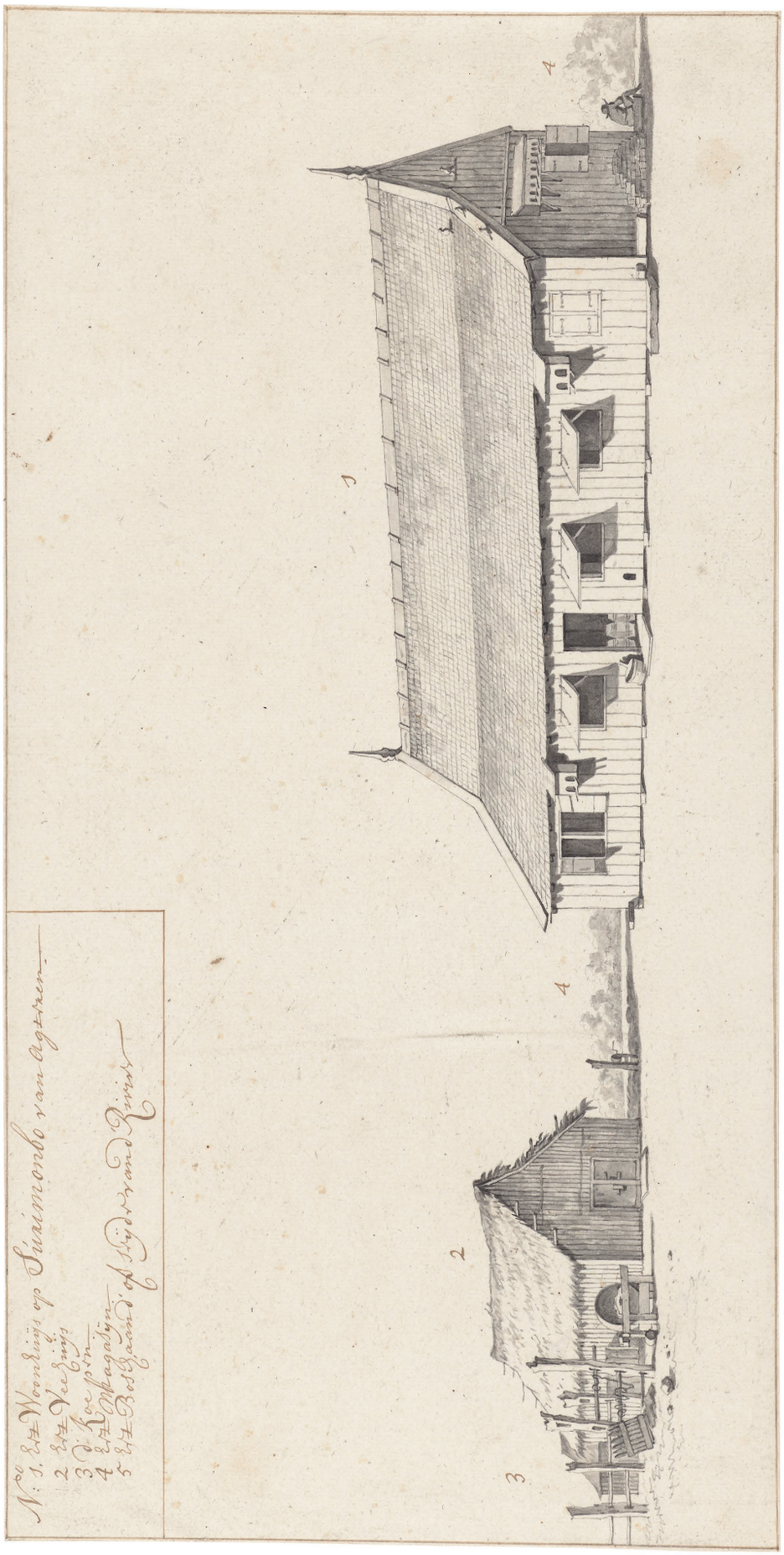
Dirk Valkenburg
View of the Surimombo Plantation, Suriname
1708
Pen and grey ink, grey wash and black chalk on paper, framing lines in pen and brown ink, 180 × 255 mm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-T-1905-104

Inscriptions: Recto, lower centre, currently on a separate caption area, unidentified handwriting in pen and brown ink: Een gesigt op de Plantagie Surimombo, als men voor't woonhuijs staat
Verso, lower left, handwriting of Cornelis Ploos van Amstel in chalk or graphite, later retraced: D. Verburg f 1708 / h. 7 ½ / b. 9 ½
Lower right, collector's mark
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum: [L.2228a] / 05.104

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; possibly by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; …; collection: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1727–1798), Amsterdam; sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19, as Dionys Verburg, 3–15 HFL, to 'Boddens'; …; probably collection: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam; probably sale: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam, 26 October 1807, Kunstboek G, lot 53, as one of '*Zes stuks Gezigten op de Plantagie Surimonbo naar het leven; meesterlyk geteekend met zwart kryt en O.I. inkt, door D. Verburg.*', together with lots 54 and 55, 9–5 HFL, to Jan IJver; probably collection: Jan IJver (1747–1814), Amsterdam, 1807; …; probably collection: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Utrecht; probably sale: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Amsterdam, 3–4 May 1882, lot 314, as one of '*D. Verburgh. Diverses vues des plantations Palmeribo et Surinombo, à Surinam, en 1708. – 15 Dessins. A l'encre de Chine.*', 12 HFL, to 'Van Pappelendam'; …; sale: Amsterdam (Muller), 19 January 1904, lot 383, as Dionys Verburg, 31 HFL, to Rijksmuseum; collection: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1904

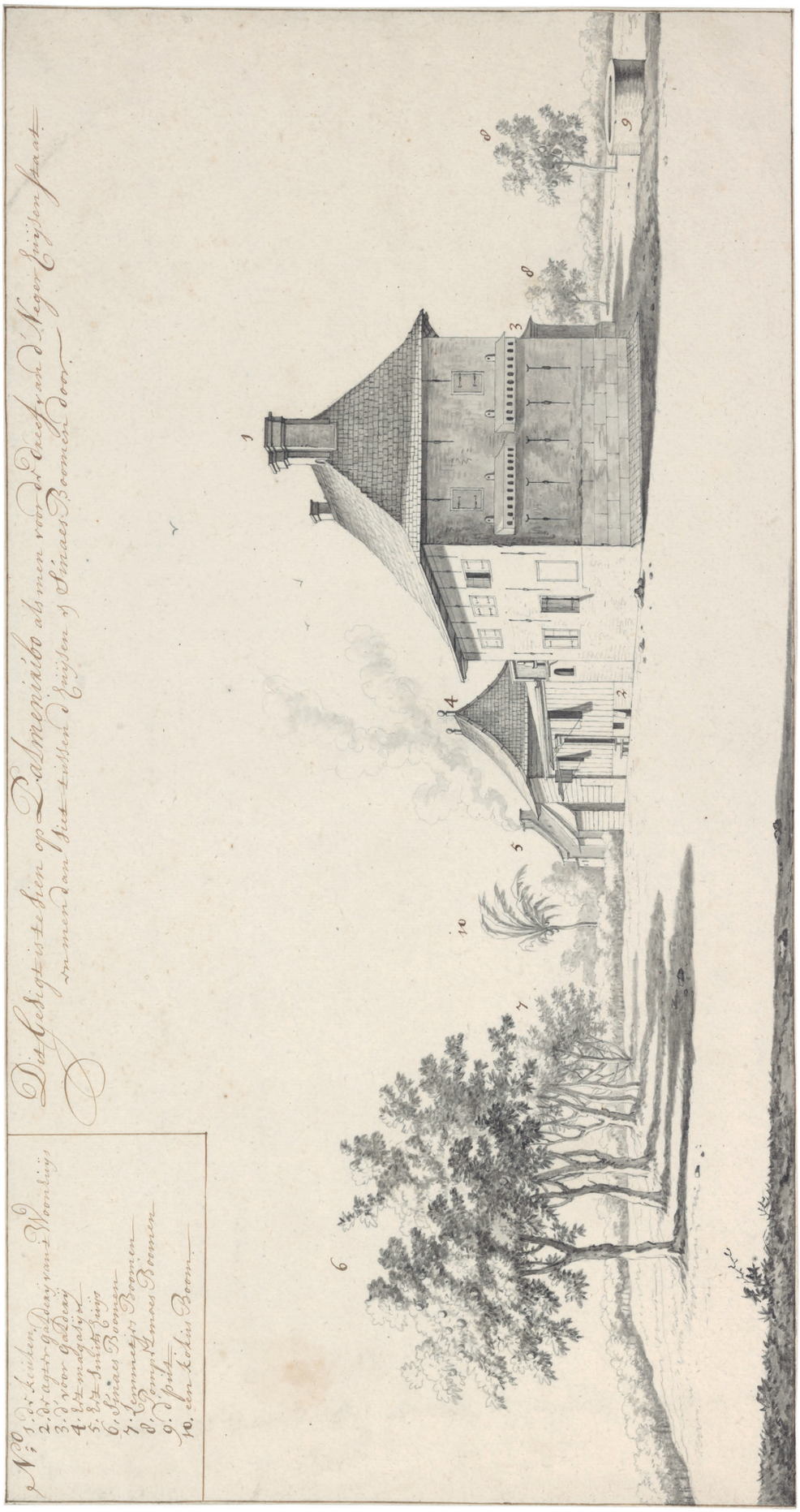
References: Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 58–69; Van Schendel 1963, pp. 80, 86, fig. 7; exh. cat. Amsterdam 1963, no. 264d; exh. cat. Haarlem 2000, p. 144, note 5; cat. Amsterdam 2008, p. 287; Sint Nicolaas 2018, pp. 57, 59, fig. 3.9; exh. cat. Amsterdam 2021, p. 343; *RKDimages* 313432

Notes: This work is titled *Gezicht op de plantage Surimombo* (*View of the Surimombo Plantation*) at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.


N.o 1. Ett Woonhuys op Suriamonbo van Agteren
2 Ett Veehuys
3 d. Koe pen
4 Ett Magatyn
5 Ett Bos Zaand op Stydt van d Rivier


Dit Gebigt is te sien op Palmenribo als men voor de Dreef van de Neger Cuijsen staat
en men dan siet tussen de Cuijen & Sinaes Boomen door,
1 de Keuken
2 de agter Galdrij van 't Woonhuijs
3 de voor Galdrij.
4 Ert mahasijn.
5 Ert snuis Cuijs.
6 Sphaers Boomen
7 Lemmetits Boomen
8 Pompelmoes Boomen
9 de Pit.

Cat. 62


Dit Gedigt is te Sien op Palmeniribo als men voor dr Dreef van d'Neger Eiijsen staat
en men dan siet tussen d'Eiijsen & Sinaes Boomen door.
No 1. dr keuken
2. dr agtr Galdery van 't WoonEiijs
3. d'voor Galdery
4. Ert Smits Eiijs
5. Ert Smits Eiijs
6. Sinaes Boomen
7. Lemmetjes Boomen
8. Pomp & Smoes Boomen
9. d'put
10. een kokus Boom.


Dr Plantagie Palmenixibo soo als dit sig stoond als men is kuijmt alf weg ert pad
tussen ert Woonhuijs en Landingh plaats.
N.o 1. ert Woonhuijs,
2. d'kriken
3. ert Vee huijs, seggr ert magasijn.
4. ert Vee Huijs,
5. ert Secaeet,
6. dr Weijdr
7. ert pat nad Landing Plaats.

Cat. 64

Cat. 61

Dirk Valkenburg
View of the Main Residence and a Barn on the Surimombo Plantation, Suriname
1708
Pen and grey ink, grey wash and black chalk on paper, framing lines in pen and brown ink, 176 × 348 mm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-T-1905-108

Inscriptions: Recto, upper left, handwriting of Dirk Valkenburg in pen and brown ink: No: 1. Het Woonhuijs op Surimonbo van agteren. / 2 het Veehuijs / 3 d' Koe pen. / 4 het Magasijn. / 5 het Bosch, aand' op seijde van d' Rivier [with corresponding numbers at multiple sites across the drawing]
Verso, lower left, handwriting of Cornelis Ploos van Amstel in chalk or graphite, later retraced: D. Verburg f 1708 / h. 7 d / b. 14
Lower right, collector's mark Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum: [L.2228a] / 05.108

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; possibly by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; ...; collection: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1727–1798), Amsterdam; sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19, as by Dionys Verburg, 3–15 HFL, to 'Boddens'; ...; probably collection: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam; probably sale: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam, 26 October 1807, Kunstboek G, lot 53, as one of '*Zes stuks Gezigten op de Plantagie Surimonbo naar het leven; meesterlyk geteekend met zwart kryt en O.I. inkt, door D. Verburg.*', together with lots 54 and 55, 9–5 HFL, to Jan IJver; probably collection: Jan IJver (1747–1814), Amsterdam, 1807; ...; probably collection: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Utrecht; probably sale: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Amsterdam, 3–4 May 1882, lot 314, as one of '*D. Verburgh. Diverses vues des plantations Palmeribo et Surinombo, à Surinam, en 1708. – 15 Dessins. A l'encre de Chine.*', 12 HFL, to 'Van Pappelendam'; ...; sale: Amsterdam (Muller), 19 January 1904, lot 383, as Dionys Verburg, 31 HFL, to Rijksmuseum; collection: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1904

References: Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 58–69; Van Schendel 1963, pp. 80, 86, fig. 8; exh. cat. Amsterdam 1963, no. 264d; exh. cat. Haarlem 2000, p. 144, note 5; cat. Amsterdam 2008, p. 287; Sint Nicolaas 2018, pp. 57–58, fig. 3.7; exh. cat. Amsterdam 2021, p. 343; *RKDimages* 313424

Notes: This work is titled *Woonhuis en een schuur op de plantage Surimombo* (*Residence and a Barn on the Surimombo Plantation*) at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Cat. 62

Dirk Valkenburg
View of the Main Residence on the Palmeneribo Plantation, Suriname
1706–1708
Pen and grey ink, grey wash and black chalk on paper, framing lines in pen and brown and grey ink, 207 × 369 mm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-T-1905-107

Inscriptions: Recto, upper left, handwriting of Dirk Valkenburg in pen and brown ink: [N]o 1. de keuken / 2 de agter galderij van't Woonhuijs / 3 de voor galderij. / 4 het magasijn. / 5 het smits huijs. / 6 Sinaes Boomen / 7 Lemmeties Boomen / 8 Pompelmoes Boomen / 9 de Put., upper centre: Dit Gesigt is te sien op Palmeniribo als met voor de dreef van de Neger huijsen staat / en men dan siet tussen de huijsen en sinaes Boomen door [with corresponding numbers at multiple sites across the drawing]
Verso, lower left, unidentified handwriting in graphite: D. Verburg
Lower right, collector's mark
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum: [L.2228a] / 05.107

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; possibly by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; ...; collection: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1727–1798), Amsterdam; sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19, as Dionys Verburg, 3–15 HFL, to 'Boddens'; ...; probably collection: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam; probably sale: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam, 26 October 1807, Kunstboek G, lot 54, as one of '*Vier stuks Gezigten op de Plantagie Palmeniribo, met dito* [black chalk and ink], *door D. Verburg*', together with lots 53 and 55, 9–5 HFL, to Jan IJver; probably collection: Jan IJver (1747–1814), Amsterdam, 1807; ...; probably collection: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Utrecht; probably sale: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Amsterdam, 3–4 May 1882, lot 314, as one of '*D. Verburgh. Diverses vues des plantations Palmeribo et Surinombo, à Surinam, en 1708. – 15 Dessins. A l'encre de Chine.*', 12 HFL, to 'Van Pappelendam'; ...; sale: Amsterdam (Muller), 19 January 1904, lot 383, as Dionys Verburg, 31 HFL, to Rijksmuseum; collection: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1904

References: Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 58–69, fig. 1; Van Schendel 1963, pp. 80, 85, fig. 4; exh. cat. Amsterdam 1963, no. 264a; exh. cat. Haarlem 2000, p. 144, note 5; cat. Amsterdam 2008, p. 287, note 4; Sint Nicolaas 2018, pp. 55–56, fig. 3.5; exh. cat. Amsterdam 2021, pp. 102–103, fig. 10; *RKDimages* 313425

Notes: This work is titled *Gezicht op het woonhuis op de plantage Palmeneribo* (*View of the Residence on the Palmeneribo Plantation*) at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Dirk Valkenburg
View of the Main Residence on the Palmeneribo Plantation, Suriname
1708
Pen and grey ink and grey wash on paper, framing lines in pen and brown ink,
211 × 395 mm
Paris, Fondation Custodia, Frits Lugt Collection, inv. no. 1998-T.10

Inscriptions: Recto, upper left, handwriting of Dirk Valkenburg in pen and brown ink: No; 1. de keuken. / 2. de agter galderij vant Woonhuijs / 3. d'voor galderij / 4. het magasijn / 5. het smits huijs / 6. Sinaes Boomen / 7. Lemmetjes Boomen / 8. Pompelmoes Boomen / 9. d' put / 10. een kokus Boom.; upper centre: Dit Gesigt is te sien op Palmeniribo als men voor de dreef van d' Neger huijsen staat / en men dan siet tussen d' huijsen en Sinaes Boomen door. [with corresponding numbers at multiple sites across the drawing]
Verso, lower left, handwriting of Cornelis Ploos van Amstel in chalk or graphite: D. Verburg f 1708 / h. 8 d / b. 15 d / f

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; possibly by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; ...; collection: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1727–1798), Amsterdam; sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19, as Dionys Verburg, 3–15 HFL, to 'Boddens'; ...; probably collection: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam; probably sale: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam, 26 October 1807, Kunstboek G, lot 54, as one of '*Vier stuks Gezigten op de Plantagie Palmeniribo, met dito* [black chalk and ink], *door D. Verburg*', together with lots 53 and 55, 9–5 HFL, to Jan IJver; probably collection: Jan IJver (1747–1814), Amsterdam, 1807; ...; probably collection: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Utrecht; probably sale: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Amsterdam, 3–4 May 1882, lot 314, as one of '*D. Verburgh. Diverses vues des plantations Palmeribo et Surinombo, à Surinam, en 1708. – 15 Dessins. A l'encre de Chine.*', 12 HFL, to 'Van Pappelendam'; ...; sale: Paris (Tajan), 25 April 1997, lot 227; private collection, France; collection: Haboldt & Co, Paris/New York, reported at Salon du Dessin, Paris, April 1998; collection: Fondation Custodia, Paris, 1998

References: Exh. cat. Haarlem 2000, p. 144, note 5; cat. Amsterdam 2008, p. 287, note 4; *RKDimages* 313576

Notes: This Fondation Custodia drawing is a variant of cat. 62 and likely represents a second version. It shows greater precision and sharper line work than the version held by the Rijksmuseum and notably lacks any visible traces of black chalk, a material consistently used in all six drawings in the Rijksmuseum collection. The absence of black chalk suggests that this may be the second version, as Valkenburg, having already developed the composition in an earlier iteration, no longer required a preparatory drawing for this version.

Another indication that the Fondation Custodia drawing represents a second version is the correction found in the legend. In this version, Valkenburg includes an additional number, '10,' identifying a coconut tree (*kokos boom*) to the left of the residential buildings. In contrast, the earlier version at the Rijksmuseum mistakenly labels the same tree with the number '9' – a number also used to refer to a well (*put*) in the far right of the composition.

Cat. 64

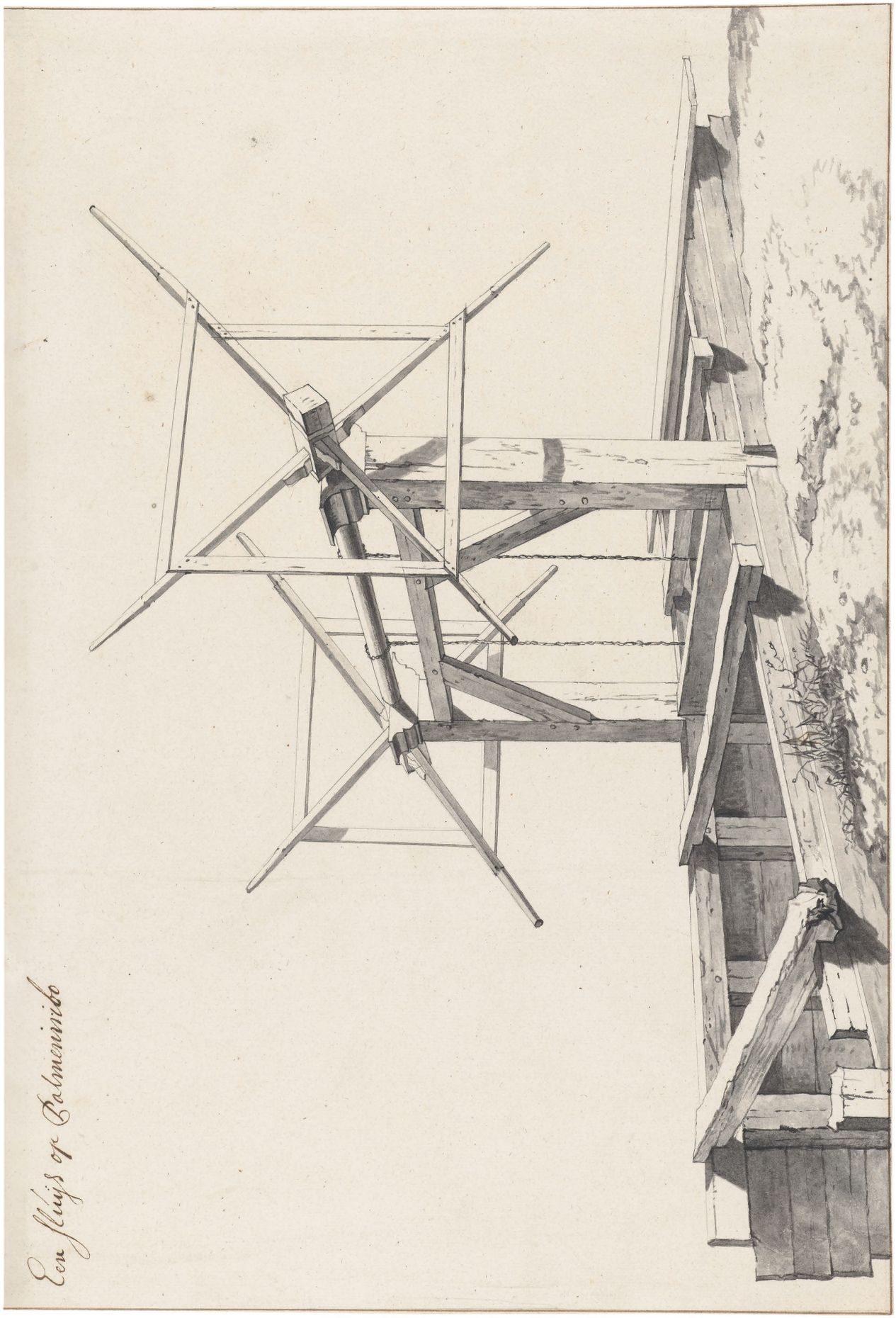
Dirk Valkenburg
View of the Main Residence, Kitchen, and Cattle House on the Palmeneribo Plantation, with Enslaved People on the Walkway, Suriname
1708
Pen and grey ink, grey wash and black chalk on paper, framing lines in pen and brown ink, 217 × 369 mm
Zeist, John and Marine van Vlissingen Fine Arts

Inscriptions: Recto, upper left, handwriting of Dirk Valkenburg in pen and brown ink: De Plantagie Palmeniribo so als die sig vertoond als men is ruijn half weg het pad / tussen het woonhuijs en Landings plaats. / No: 1. het Woonhuijs. / 2. d' keuken / 3. het Veehuijs segge het magasijn. 4. het Veehuijs. / 5. het Secreet. / 6. de Weijde. / 7. het pat na d' Landing Plaats. [with corresponding numbers at multiple sites across the drawing]
Verso, lower left, in graphite: h. 8d / b 14d / D. Verburg f 1708
Upper right, in graphite: No. 1[8]1[1]

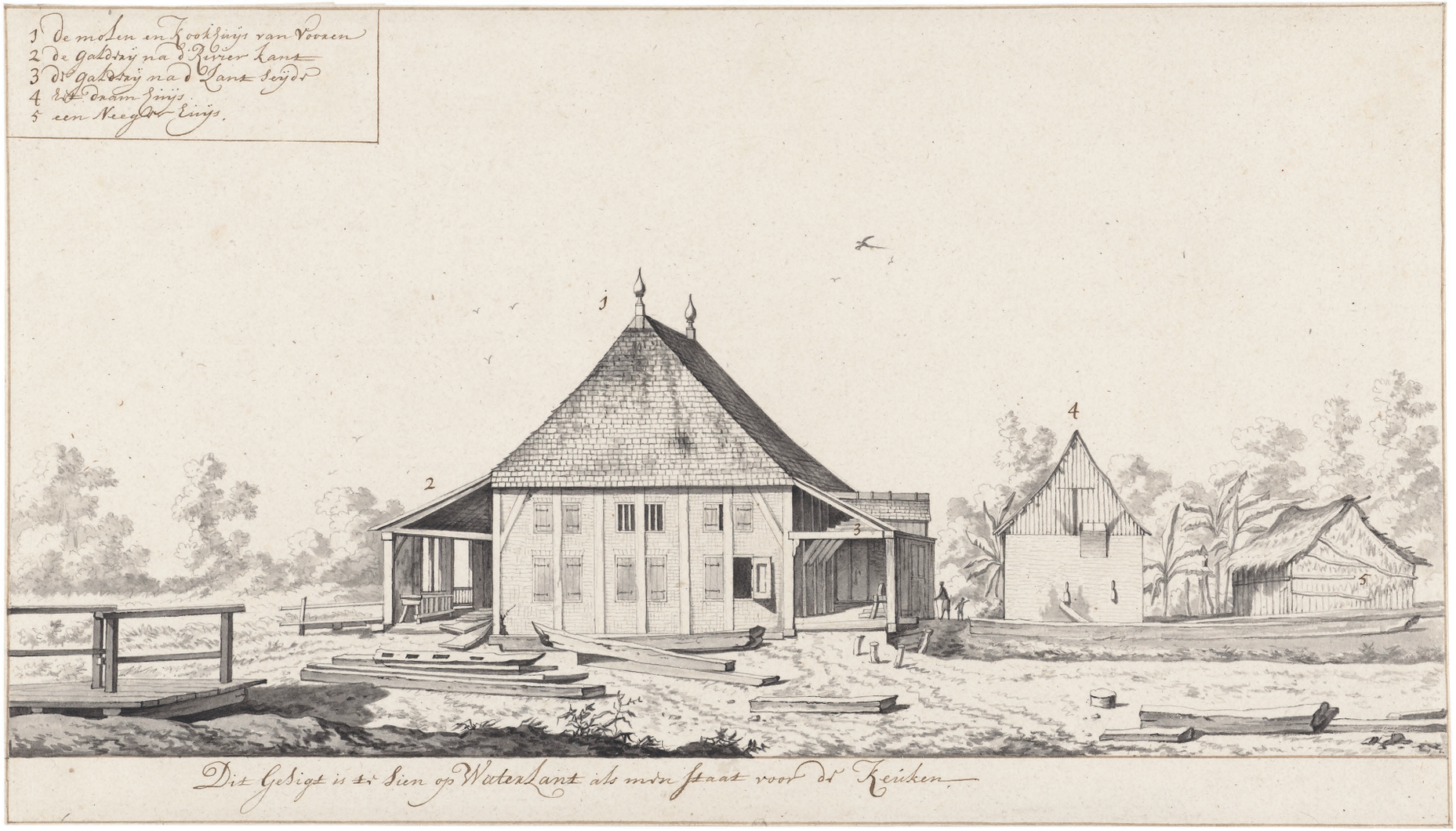
Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; possibly by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; ...; collection: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1727–1798), Amsterdam; sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19, as by Dionys Verburg (1636/1637–1722), 3–15 HFL, to 'Boddens'; ...; probably collection: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam; probably sale: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam, 26 October 1807, Kunstboek G, lot 54, as one of '*Vier stuks Gezigten op de Plantagie Palmeniribo, met dito* [black chalk and ink]*, door D. Verburg*', together with lots 53 and 55, 9–5 HFL, to Jan IJver; probably collection: Jan IJver (1747–1814), Amsterdam, 1807; ...; probably collection: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Utrecht; probably sale: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Amsterdam, 3–4 May 1882, lot 314, as one of '*D. Verburgh. Diverses vues des plantations Palmeribo et Surinombo, à Surinam, en 1708. – 15 Dessins. A l'encre de Chine.*', 12 HFL, to 'Van Pappelendam'; ...; collection: Haboldt & Co, Paris / New York, reported at TEFAF, Maastricht, March 1997; collection John and Marine van Vlissingen Fine Arts, Zeist, 1997

References: Exh. cat. Haarlem 2000, pp. 144–145, no. 66; *RKDimages* 313437

1 Transcribed as such in exh. cat. Haarlem 2000, p. 144.



Cat. 65


1 de molen en Kookhuijs van Vooren
2 de galdery na d'Rivier kant
3 de galdery na d'Lant seijde
4 Eet dram huijs
5 een Neeger huijs.
1
2
3
4
5
Dit Gesigt is te Sien op Water Lant als men staat voor de Keuken.

Cat. 66

Dirk Valkenburg
Sluice on the Palmeneribo Plantation, Suriname
1708
Pen and grey ink, grey wash and black chalk on paper, framing lines in pen and brown ink, 239 × 358 mm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-T-1905-106

Inscriptions: Recto, upper left, unidentified handwriting in pen and brown ink: Een Sluijs op Palmeniribo
Verso, lower left, handwriting of Cornelis Ploos van Amstel in chalk or graphite, later retraced: h. 9 d / b. 14 d / D. Verburg f 1708
Lower right, collector's mark
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum: [L.2228a] / 05.106

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; possibly by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; ...; collection: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1727–1798), Amsterdam; sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19, as Dionys Verburg, 3–15 HFL, to 'Boddens'; ...; probably collection: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam; probably sale: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam, 26 October 1807, Kunstboek G, lot 54, as one of '*Vier stuks Gezigten op de Plantagie Palmeniribo, met dito* [black chalk and ink], *door D. Verburg*', together with lots 53 and 55, 9–5 HFL, to Jan IJver; probably collection: Jan IJver (1747–1814), Amsterdam, 1807; ...; probably collection: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Utrecht; probably sale: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Amsterdam, 3–4 May 1882, lot 314, as one of '*D. Verburgh. Diverses vues des plantations Palmeribo et Surinombo, à Surinam, en 1708. – 15 Dessins. A l'encre de Chine.*', 12 HFL, to 'Van Pappelendam'; ...; sale: Amsterdam (Muller), 19 January 1904, lot 383, as Dionys Verburg, 31 HFL, to Rijksmuseum; collection: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1904

References: Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 58–69; Van Schendel 1963, pp. 80, 85, fig. 5; exh. cat. Haarlem 2000, p. 144, note 5; cat. Amsterdam 2008, p. 287, note 4; Sint Nicolaas 2018, pp. 56–57, fig. 3.6; exh. cat. Amsterdam 2021, p. 343; *RKDimages* 313426

Notes: This work is titled *Sluis op de plantage Surimombo* (*Sluice on the Palmeneribo Plantation*) at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Dirk Valkenburg
View of the Mill and Boiling House on the Waterland Plantation, Suriname
1706–1708
Pen and grey ink, grey wash and black chalk on paper, framing lines in pen and brown ink, 196 × 341 mm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-T-1905-103

Inscriptions: Recto, upper left, handwriting of Dirk Valkenburg in pen and brown ink: 1 de molen en Kookhuijs van Vooren / 2 de galderij na d' Rivier kant / 3 de galderij na d' Lant seijde / 4 het dram huijs. / 5 een Neeger huijs.; lower centre: Dit Gesigt is te sien op Waterlant als men staat voor de Keuken. [with corresponding numbers at multiple sites across the drawing]
Verso, lower left, unidentified handwriting in graphite: h. 7 ½ / b 13 ½ / [...]a D. Verburg
Lower right, collector's mark
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum:
[L.2228a] / 05.103

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; possibly by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; ...; collection: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1727–1798), Amsterdam; sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19, as Dionys Verburg, 3–15 HFL, to 'Boddens'; ...; probably collection: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam; probably sale: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam, 26 October 1807, Kunstboek G, lot 55, as one of '*Vier stuks dito op de Plantagie Waterland; met dito*, [black chalk and ink] *door denzelven* [Dionys Verburg].', together with lots 53 and 54, 9–5 HFL, to Jan IJver; probably collection: Jan IJver (1747–1814), Amsterdam, 1807; ...; probably collection: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Utrecht; probably sale: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Amsterdam, 3–4 May 1882, lot 314, as one of '*D. Verburgh. Diverses vues des plantations Palmeribo et Surinombo, à Surinam, en 1708. – 15 Dessins. A l'encre de Chine.*', 12 HFL, to 'Van Pappelendam';[1] ...; sale: Amsterdam (Muller), 19 January 1904, lot 383, as Dionys Verburg, 31 HFL, to Rijksmuseum; collection: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1904

References: Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 58–69; Van Schendel 1963, pp. 80, 83, fig. 3; exh. cat. Amsterdam 1963, no. 264b; exh. cat. Haarlem 2000, p. 144, note 5; cat. Amsterdam 2008, p. 167, fig, 287, note 4; Sint Nicolaas 2018, pp. 57–58, fig. 3.7; exh. cat. Amsterdam 2021, pp. 90, 95, fig. 5; *RKDimages* 313433

Notes: This work is titled *Gezicht op de molen en het kookhuis van suikerplantage Waterland* (*View of the Mill and the Boiling House of the Waterland Sugar Plantation*) at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

1 Both auctions in 1882 and 1904 describe the group of drawings as part of these lots as views of Surimombo and Palmeneribo. However, the 1904 auction also included View of the Mill and Boiling House on the Waterland Plantation (cat. 66), then acquired by the Rijksmuseum. It is therefore plausible that the fifteen drawings in the 1882 auction also included views of Waterland.

Cat. 67

Cat. 67

Dirk Valkenburg
View of the Waterland Plantation across the Suriname River, Suriname
1708
Pen and grey ink, grey wash and black chalk on paper, framing lines in pen and brown ink, 243 × 392 mm
The Netherlands, private collection

Inscriptions: Recto, at multiple sites across the drawing, from left to right, handwriting of Dirk Valkenburg in pen and brown ink: 5 / 4 / 2
Verso, lower left, handwriting of Cornelis Ploos van Amstel in chalk or graphite: D. Verburg f 1708 / h. 9 ½ / b. 14 ½ / f
Upper right, unidentified handwriting: No. 18[?]1

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; possibly by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; ...; collection: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1727–1798), Amsterdam; sale: Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Amsterdam, 3–6 March 1800, Kunstboek CCC, lot 19, as Dionys Verburg, 3–15 HFL, to 'Boddens'; ...; probably collection: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam; probably auction: Joseph Vallette, Amsterdam, 26 October 1807, Kunstboek G, lot 55, as one of '*Vier stuks dito op de Plantagie Waterland; met dito* [black chalk and ink], *door denzelven* [Dionys Verburg].', together with lots 53 and 54, 9–5 HFL, to Jan IJver; probably collection: Jan IJver (1747–1814), Amsterdam, 1807; ...; probably collection: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Utrecht; probably sale: M.J.M. Vreeswijk, Amsterdam, 3–4 May 1882, lot 314, as one of '*D. Verburgh. Diverses vues des plantations Palmeribo et Surinombo, à Surinam, en 1708. – 15 Dessins. A l'encre de Chine.*', 12 HFL, to 'Van Pappelendam';[1] ...; collection: Haboldt & Co, Paris/New York, reported at TEFAF, Maastricht, March 1997; ...

References: Cat. Amsterdam 2008, pp. 166–167, fig.; *RKDimages* 313503

Notes: The notable cropping of the composition on the right side and the absence of the numbers '1' and '3' within the drawing suggests it was originally part of a larger composition that had been cut in to two or more sections.[2] However, the framing lines in brown ink, along with the continuation of the paper beyond this line, confirm that the composition was intended as such by the artist. The absence of a legend and additional numbering may indicate that the artist produced another version of this view of Waterland, including the information that is missing from the present drawing. Its identification as the Waterland plantation is based on similarities in the architectural structure visible on the right, corresponding to cats. 66 and 68.[3]

1 See also note cat. 66.
2 Middelkoop in cat. Amsterdam 2008, p. 167.
3 Ibid., pp. 166–167; see also Duin, Dikland and Axwijk in this volume, p. 144

Cat. 68

Dirk Valkenburg
Indigenous, Enslaved and European People Navigating the Suriname River in Front of the Waterland Plantation, Suriname
1706–1708
Oil on canvas, 31.5 × 47.5 cm
Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum, inv. no. SA 35413

Signed with monogram, lower left: D.VB

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; probably by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; possibly sale: Jonas Witsen (IV), Amsterdam, 16–18 August 1790, Catalogus van Schilderyen, lot 79,[1] as one of '*(D.) Valkenburg. Drie Stuks Gezigten te dito* ['Paramaribo'],[2] *een derselve verbeeld een Plegtigheid onder de Negers, gestoffeert met een meenigte lieden en kinderen, fiks geschilderd*.', 35 HFL, to 'Van de Sluys'; ...; collection: David Koetser Gallery, Zurich / New York; collection: Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam, December 1973

References: Exh. cat. Amsterdam 1992A, p. 63, no. 296; exh. cat. Amsterdam 1992B, pp. 145–146, no. 296; cat. Amsterdam 2008, pp. 166–167; Sint Nicolaas 2018, pp. 53–54, fig. 3.4; exh. cat. Amsterdam 2021, pp. 96, 98–99, fig. 7; Van der Molen 2018, accessed on 9 April 2025; *RKDimages* 6156

Notes: The location depicted in this painting has been identified as the Waterland plantation, based on architectural similarities with that shown in cat. 66. The way the plantation is framed from this viewpoint suggests that Valkenburg based it on studies made from the opposite side of the Suriname River, at the Roorak plantation.[3] This work is titled *De suikerplantage Waterlant in Suriname* (*The Waterlant Sugar Plantation in Suriname*) at the Amsterdam Museum.

1 The description of lot 78 aligns more closely with the subject depicted in cat. 68: 'Drie stuks Gezigte, te Paramaribo langs de Rivier naar de Plantagien te zien, gestoffeert met Wooningen, een Beeldjes in Vaartuigen, natuurlyk behandeld.' However, the description of the scene begins with 'Dito hoogten en breedten.', referring to lot 77, which measures 27 × 24 duim, equalling 69.4 × 61.7 cm.

2 Identification of the location is as stated in this sale's previous lot (78).

3 Cat. Amsterdam 2008, pp. 166–167; see also Duin, Dikland, Axwijk in this volume, p. 144.





Cat. 69

Dirk Valkenburg
Indigenous Inhabitants Near a Plantation in Suriname
1707
Oil on canvas, 52.5 × 45.5 cm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-4075

Signed and dated, lower left: Valkenburg. Surin: 1707

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; probably by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; possibly by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; possibly sale: Jonas Witsen (IV), Amsterdam, 16–18 August 1790, Catalogus van Schilderyen, lot 79, as one of '*(D.) Valkenburg. Drie Stuks Gezigten te dito* ['Paramaribo'],[1] *een derselve verbeeld een Plegtigheid onder de Negers, gestoffeert met een meenigte lieden en kinderen, fiks geschilderd.*', 35 HFL, to 'Van de Sluys'; ...; possibly sale: De Harde Swart et al., Amsterdam , 16–18 November 1847, lot 288, as '*Een Landschap in Suriname, met het jaartal 1707.*', 3–75 HFL, to 'A. Wolf'; ...; collection: Jean-François Heim, Paris/Basel; from whom it was acquired for 27,015.50 HFL by Mr J. Post for the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1962

References: Rijksmuseum 1962, pp. 150–153; exh. cat. Amsterdam 1963, no. 263; Van Schendel 1963, pp. 80–86, fig. 1; exh. cat. Washington/Cleveland/Paris 1975, pp. 100, 110, no. 83; exh. cat. Washington/Cleveland/Paris 1976, pp. 78, 86, no. 83; cat. Amsterdam 1976; pp. 554–555, no. A 4075; Ford 2002, p. 5; cat. Amsterdam 2008, p. 251; Boom 2014, p. 8, fig. 3; Sint Nicolaas 2018, p. 52, fig. 3.2; *RKDimages* 4825

Notes: This work is titled *Plantage in Suriname* (*Plantation in Suriname*) at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

1 Identification of the location is as stated in this sale's previous lot (78).

Cat. 70

Dirk Valkenburg
Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname
1706–1708
Oil on canvas, 58 × 46.5 cm
Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, inv. no. KMS376

Signed with monogram, lower right: DVB

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; probably by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; ...; possibly collection: Joan van Vliet (1682–1752), Amsterdam; possibly sale: Joan van Vliet, Amsterdam, 16–17 December 1750, lot 22, as '*Heidensche Sermonie, van Valkenburg.*', 40 HFL; ...; collection: Fredensborg Castle, Fredensborg, reported 1767;[1] as Willem Buytenwegh II (1624–1670), transferred to the Royal Art Gallery, later Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, 1840

References: Abildgaard 1799–1800, no. 278, as David Wilhelm Buytenweg (1624–1670); cat. Copenhagen 1875, p. 101, no. 459, as signed 'D.VB'; Gebhard 1881–1882, vol. 2, pp. 388, 434; cat. Copenhagen 1904, p. 41, no. 96, as a Dutch artist, signed 'D.VB'; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 230, as Dionys Verburg; cat. Copenhagen 1922, no. 496; Martin 1935–1936, vol. 2, p. 468, as Dionys Verburg; Gerson 1942, p. 556, as Dirk Valkenburg; cat. Copenhagen 1946, p. 378, no. 888, as a Dutch artist; Van Eeghen 1946, pp. 65–67, fig. 2, as Dirk Valkenburg; Van Schendel 1963, pp. 82–83, fig. 2; exh. cat. Paris 1970, p. 218; exh. cat. Washington/Cleveland/Paris 1975, pp. 100, 111, no. 84; exh. cat. Washington/Cleveland/Paris 1976, pp. 78, 87, no. 84; Gerson 1983, p. 556; Price 1983, pp. 108–110; Haak 1884, p. 59, fig. 66; Kopplin 1987, pp. 39, 41; exh. cat. Stuttgart 1987, pp. 320–321, fig. 4, no. 2.13; exh. cat. Sydney 1988, pp. 116–117, no. 87; exh. cat. Antwerpen 1991, pp. 350–352, no. 144; exh. cat. Amsterdam 1992A, pp. 57–58, no. 293; exh. cat.

Amsterdam, 1992B, p. 145, no. 293; Eisler 1995, pp. 116–117, no. 87; Kolfin 1997, p. 24, fig. 7; exh. cat. Frankfurt am Main 1997, p. 191; Ford 2002, p. 4, fig. 2; Dragtenstein 2004, pp. 217–218; Brienen 2006, p. 140, fig. 46; Gauvin 2007, p. 118; Brienen 2008, pp. 242–264, fig. 3; Dian Kriz 2008, p. 60, fig. 27; Medendorp and Sint Nicolaas 2008, p. 72; Zemon Davies 2011, p. 950; Sint Nicolaas 2018, pp. 62–63, fig. 3.11; exh. cat. Amsterdam 2021, pp. 97, 100, fig. 8; Van de Roemer et al. 2022, pp. 122–123, fig. 2; exh. cat. Cambridge 2023, pp. 30–32, fig. 11; *RKDimages* 294500

Notes: For more on this painting in this volume, see Brienen, pp. 109–126; Duin and Axwijk, pp. 161–179; Fredo Furtado, pp. 195–202; and Thomas pp. 245–258. As part of the collection of the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, this painting has been formerly titled *Sammenkomst af slavegjorte på en af Jonas Witsens plantager i Surinam* (*Gathering of Enslaved on One of the Plantations of Jonas Witsen in Suriname*), *Negerlystighed i Suriname* (*Negro Merrymaking in Surinam*), *Slaver "spiller teater" på en sukkerplantage i Surinam* (*'Slave Play' on a Sugar Plantation in Suriname*) and *Rituel slavefest på en sukkerplantage i Surinam* (*Ritual Slave Party on a Sugar Plantation in Suriname*).[2]

1 The painting is mentioned by Morell in his description of *Fight between a Bear and Dogs* (cat. 42). See Morell Ms. 1767, no. 17.
2 See also Brienen in this volume, pp. 109–126.











Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with Awara and Other Fruit from Suriname in a Landscape
1707
Oil on canvas, 69.2 × 61 cm
Houston, Menil Collection, inv. no. 1982-11.01
DJ

Signed and dated, lower right:
D. Valk [...] Surinam / 1707

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; probably by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; probably by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; probably sale: Jonas Witsen (IV), Amsterdam, 16–18 August 1790, Catalogus van Schilderyen, lot 77, as '*Door denzelven* [Dirk Valkenburg]*. Ieder is hoog 27 duim, breed 24 duim. Doek. Twee stuks, verbeeldende West-indische Landgezichten, op de voorgrond gestoffeert met verschillende zoorten van Vrugten, Bloemen, en andere Gewassen. Meesterlyk fraay gepenceelt.*', with a companion piece (probably cat. 72), 4 HFL, to Spaan; probably collection: Jan Spaan (1744–1820), Amsterdam; ...; sale: New York (Christie's), 19 January 1982, lot 137, with a companion piece (cat. 72), to the Menil Collection, Houston; collection: Menil Collection, Houston, 1982

References: Exh. cat. Paris 1984, p. 329, fig.; exh. cat. Antwerp, p. 400, fig.; Brienen 2008, pp. 243, 245, fig. 2; *RKDimages* 313089

Notes: This painting may have been intended as a companion piece to *Still Life with Pineapples and Other Fruit from Suriname in a Landscape* (cat. 72). The composition, set in a Surinamese landscape, from left to right, top to bottom, shows a Malabar chestnut pod, or *watra kakaw* in Sranan Tongo (*Pachira aquatica*); a cluster of awara fruits, or *awara* (*Astrocaryum vulgare*), with one of its black seeds to the left; wild or mountain soursop, or *bergi sunsaka* (*Annona montana*); on top of which is a cluster of annatto, or *kusuwe* (*Bixa orellana*); followed by a star apple, or *ster appel* (*Chrysophyllum cainito*); moco-moco, or *moko-moko* (*Montrichardia arborecens*); with a gourd flower, or *kalebas* (*Cucurbitaceae*); in front of which is a branch with masusa fruit, or *masusa* (*Renealmia alpinia*); in the foreground to the left is an open annatto seedpod, or *kusuwe* (*Bixa orellana*), with an opened guava, or *guyaba* (*Psidium guajava*) and two masusa fruits to the right, one of which is opened.[1]

The work has been examined by the Menil Collection with the support of technical imaging. Analysis included normal light photography, infrared reflectography and ultraviolet-induced visible fluorescence photography. Infrared reflectography in the 880–980 nm range did not reveal any underdrawing.[2] The painting was formerly titled *Still Life with Fruit in a Landscape, Surinam* at the Menil Collection, Houston.

1 With special thanks to the expertise of botanists Eliza Zschuschen and Dorothy Traag, Heads of the National Herbarium of Suriname, Anton de Kom University and anthropologist Renzo Duin for sharing their expertise on Surinamese flora and fauna in identifying the fruits and reptiles depicted.

2 Correspondence between C. Elliot, J. Craven and J. Hartkamp, 9–22 January 2025, archived at the Centraal Museum Utrecht.

Cat. 72

Dirk Valkenburg
Still Life with Pineapples and Other Fruit from Suriname in a Landscape
1707
Oil on canvas transferred onto an aluminum panel, 70.5 × 60.6 cm
Houston, Menil Collection, inv. no. 1982-11.02 DJ

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; probably by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; probably by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; probably sale: Jonas Witsen (IV), Amsterdam, 16–18 August 1790, Catalogus van Schilderyen, lot 77, as '*Door denzelven* [Dirk Valkenburg]*. Ieder is hoog 27 duim, breed 24 duim. Doek. Twee stuks, verbeeldende West-indische Landgezichten, op de voorgrond gestoffeert met verschillende zoorten van Vrugten, Bloemen, en andere Gewassen. Meesterlyk fraay gepenceelt.*', with a companion piece (probably cat. 71), 4 HFL, to Spaan; probably collection: Jan Spaan (1744–1821), Amsterdam; ...; sale: New York (Christie's), 19 January 1982, lot 137, with a companion piece (cat. 71), to the Menil Collection, Houston; collection: Menil Collection, Houston, 1982

References: Exh. cat. Paris 1984, p. 329, fig.; exh. cat. Antwerp, p. 400, fig.; *RKDimages* 313088

Notes: This painting may have been intended as a companion piece to *Still Life with Awara and Other Fruit from Suriname in a Landscape* (cat. 71). In this composition, reading from left to right, top to bottom, the artist presents pineapples, or *nanasi* in Sranan Tongo (*Ananas comosus*), with two Madame Jeanette red peppers, or *redi pepre* (*Capsicum annuum*) and a Barbados nut clusters, or *sketnoto* (*Jatropha curcas*), in the foreground; to the far right, a fruit of the Wilkens bitter, or *Wilkins bita*, with its prickly husk (*Allamanda cathartica*), and below, an ameiva lizard, or *lagadisa* (*Ameiva ameiva*).[1]

At least before 1982, the painting was wax-resin lined onto an aluminum panel, presumably to provide additional structural support given its compromised condition, especially compared to *Still Life with Awara and Other Fruit from Suriname in a Landscape*.[2] The work has been examined by the Menil Collection with the support of technical imaging. Analysis included normal light photography, infrared reflectography, and ultraviolet-induced visible fluorescence photography. Infrared reflectography in the 740–980 nm range did not reveal any clear underdrawing.[3] This work was formerly titled *Still Life with Pineapple in a Landscape* at the Menil Collection, Houston.

1 With special thanks to the expertise of botanists Eliza Zschuschen and Dorothy Traag, Heads of the National Herbarium of Suriname, Anton de Kom University and anthropologist Renzo Duin for sharing their expertise on Surinamese flora and fauna in identifying the fruits and reptiles depicted.

2 Correspondence between C. Elliot and J. Hartkamp, 11 April–3 July 2025, archived at the Centraal Museum Utrecht.

3 Correspondence between C. Elliot, J. Craven and J. Hartkamp, 9–22 January 2025, archived at the Centraal Museum Utrecht.

Dirk Valkenburg
Study of Nipplefruit, a Malabar Chesnut, and Maracujas from Suriname
1707
Oil on panel, 36.5 × 47.5 cm
Quimper, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Quimper, inv. no. 873-1-186

Was once signed and dated: Valkenburg 1707[1]

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; probably by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; probably by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; probably sale: Jonas Witsen (IV), Amsterdam, 16–18 August 1790, Catalogus van Schilderyen, lot 80, as '*Door denzelven* [Dirk Valkenburg]. *Twee Stuks Modellen met verscheide Surinaamsche Vrugten, Slange en Hagedisch; alles natuurlyk en meesterlyk behandeld.*', with a companion piece (probably cat. 74), 1 HFL, to Spaan; probably collection: Jan Spaan (1744–1820), Amsterdam; ...; collection: Jean-Marie-François-Xavier, Count of Silguy (1785–1864), Quimper; bequeathed by him to the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Quimper, Quimper, 1864

References: Cat. Quimper 1873, no. 458; Bredius 1905, p. 81; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; Gerson 1942, p. 556; exh. cat. Paris 1970, p. 218, no. 211; exh. cat. Washington/Cleveland/Paris 1976, pp. 87–88, no. 84b; Gerson 1983, p. 556; exh. cat. Quimper 1987, p. 63, no. 57; cat. Amsterdam 1992B, p. 145, no. 295; cat. Quimper 1993, p. 25; *RKDimages* 152

Notes: Reading from left to right, top to bottom, in this study, Valkenburg shows detailed models of what is a peach palm fruit, or *palepu* in Sranan Tongo (*Bactris gasipaes*), on the left, next to an open yellow nipplefruit, or *nyunwenkebobi* (*Solanum mammosum*), which reappears in a clustered arrangement in the background. A malabar chestnut, or *watra kakaw* (*Pachira aquatica*), occupies the centre, and just below it, to the right, is a maracuja, or *markusa* (*Passiflora nitida*). The fruit on the far right remains unidentified.[2]

The paint layer of this work exhibits two distinct sections, each characterized by a different craquelure. The central section with the painted Surinamese fruits shows a craquelure typical for paintings on canvas, whereas the craquelure of the adjacent areas deviates from that norm. Moreover, the craquelure of the central section does not extend into the adjacent areas.[3]

Notably, in contrast to cat. 74, both cat. 73 and 75 have been mounted onto panel. In cat. 73, the striking, linear outlines that follow the craquelure of the central section with the fruits suggst it was cut out of the original canvas support and mounted onto the current wooden panel. Subsequently, the adjacent areas must have been painted in order to complete the painting as a whole.

It seems plausible to assume that this must have taken place long after the completion of the study – possibly to present it as a more finished work – as the central section displays a pattern of aging cracks typical for older paintings on canvas that have been subjected to mechanical stresses during aging of the picture layer. This work is titled *Fruits du Surinam* (*Fruits from Surinam*) at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Quimper.

1 Signed and dated according to cat. Quimper 1873, no. 458; Bredius 1905, p. 81; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; exh. cat. Paris 1970, p. 218; exh. cat. Washington/Cleveland/Paris 1976, pp. 87–88, no. 84b. As of 1987, the date 1707 could no longer be seen. See cat. Quimper 1987, p. 63, no. 57.

2 With special thanks to botanists Eliza Zschuschen and Dorothy Traag, Heads of the National Herbarium of Suriname, and anthropologist Renzo Duin for sharing their expertise on Surinamese flora and fauna in identifying the fruits and reptiles depicted.

3 Based on an initial visual assessment of the painting, carried out on 5 September 2025 with paintings conservator Lisa Elbers.

Dirk Valkenburg
Study of Cashews, Maracujas, a Tropical Chicken Snake and an Ameiva Lizard from Suriname
1706–1708
Oil on canvas, 40.5 × 48.5 cm
Quimper, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Quimper, inv. no. 873-1-185

Provenance: Collection: Jonas Witsen (II) (1676–1715), Amsterdam, 1708; by inheritance, collection: Isabella Maria Hooft (1680–1716), Amsterdam, 1715; probably by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (III) (1705–1767), Amsterdam, 1716; probably by inheritance, collection: Jonas Witsen (IV) (1733–1788), Amsterdam, 1767; probably sale: Jonas Witsen (IV), Amsterdam, 16–18 August 1790, Catalogus van Schilderyen, lot 80, as '*Door denzelven* [Dirk Valkenburg]*. Twee Stuks Modellen met verscheide Surinaamsche Vrugten, Slange en Hagedisch; alles natuurlyk en meesterlyk behandeld.*', with a companion piece (probably cat. 73), 1 HFL, to Spaan; probably collection: Jan Spaan (1744–1820), Amsterdam; ...; collection: Jean-Marie-François-Xavier, Count of Silguy (1785–1864), Quimper; bequeathed by him to the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Quimper, Quimper, 1864

References: Cat. Quimper 1873, no. 459; Von Wurzbach 1906–1911, vol. 2, p. 739; Thieme-Becker 1907–1950, vol. 34, p. 52; exh. cat. Paris 1970, p. 218, no. 211; exh. cat. Washington/Cleveland/Paris 1976, pp. 87–88, no. 84a; exh. cat. Quimper 1987, p. 62, no. 56; cat. Amsterdam 1992B, p. 145, no. 294; cat. Quimper 1993, p. 25; *RKDimages* 151

Notes: This oil study depicts a variety of detailed models of Surinamese fruits. Reading from left to right, top to bottom, an open maracuja or *markusa* in Sranan Tongo (*Passiflora nitida*) appears in the upper left, accompanied by three other maracuja fruits and a guava, or *guyaba* (*Psidium guaiave*). Below, a tropical chicken snake or *sapakara sneki* (*Spilotes pullatus*) enters the picture plane. In the centre lower area, red and yellow fruits of the cashew tree, or *kasyu* (*Anacardium occidentale*) are shown, with their characteristic nuts visible. On the lower right, an ameiva lizard, or *lagadisa* (*Ameiva ameiva*) is depicted.[1] In this painting, older models have become visible through the paint layers. In the upper left, what seems like an architectural structure is depicted, which, based on infrared images taken at the Louvre, has been interpreted as a classical arch and statue.[2] In the lower left, a running greyhound enters the picture plane, and a horse is seemingly depicted from behind; right below, another greyhound is drinking from a pool. As revealed by the infrared images, to the right, a landscape with slender trees emerges. The nature of their subject – reminiscent of motifs used in Valkenburg's animal scenes and game still lifes – suggests that might have brought older visual stock material made in Amsterdam with him on his journey to Suriname, where he subsequently overpainted them, possibly because he was short on supplies. This work is titled *Fruits du Surinam et Reptiles* (*Fruits from Surinam and Reptiles*) at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Quimper.

1 With special thanks to botanists Eliza Zschuschen and Dorothy Traag, Heads of the National Herbarium of Suriname, and anthropologist Renzo Duin for sharing their expertise on Surinamese flora and fauna in identifying the fruits and reptiles depicted.
2 Exh. cat. Paris 1970, p. 218, no. 211.

Dirk Valkenburg
Study of Madame Jeanettes, Barbados Nuts and a Maracuja from Suriname
1706–1708
Oil on canvas mounted onto panel,
22.5 × 28 cm
Toledo, Toledo Museum of Art, purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, inv. no. 2022.91, gift of Edward Drummond Libbey

Once bore the signature, lower right: D. Heem[1]

Inscriptions: Recto, at multiple sites across the painting, from left to right, top to bottom: 8 / 6 / 7

Provenance: Possibly collection: Dirk Valkenburg, Amsterdam, 1706–1708;[2] …; collection: Maître Yves Manson, France; sale: La Flèche (Hôtel des Ventes), 21 November 1999, lot 145, to Johnny van Haeften; collection: Johnny van Haeften (1952–), London, 1999; collection: Derek Johns, London, 2000, reported at TEFAF, Maastricht, 2015; sale: Derek Johns, New York (Christie's), 15 October 2020, lot 23, not sold; acquired through private sale via Christie's, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, 2022[3]

References: *RKDimages* 313091

Notes: In this study of Surinamese fruits, from left to right, top to bottom, the black seeds of the Barbados nut, or *sketnoto* in Sranan Tongo (*Jatropha curcas*), appear scattered near a cluster of its fruit right below, which is shown again in the background on the right. In the centre, Madame Jeanette red peppers, or *redi pepre* (Capsicum annuum), are prominently depicted, while in the right foreground, an open maracuja, or *markusa* (*Passiflora nitida*), is shown.[4]

As indicated by a reproduction of this painting that featured on the front cover of the 1999 auction catalogue in La Flèche, where the painting was offered for sale, the composition then included additional leaves and branches (fig. cat. 20).[5] In this condition, the work was acquired by Johnny van Haeften, who had it restored in 2000.[6] During cleaning, later overpaint was removed, revealing the numbers 8, 6 and 7 (from left to right), together with the irregular outline of the composition.

The outline of the preserved paint layer closely resembles the outline that separates the two sections with distinct craquelure in cat. 73. Based on the examination of that work's painted surface, it seems plausible to consider that a comparable intervention was carried out on cat. 75, resulting in the present shape of the painted surface.[7] At a later stage, the fruits and spices might have been cut out of the original canvas support and mounted onto its present wooden panel. Subsequently, likely to present it as a finished work rather than a study, the surrounding areas must have been painted. Due to the removal of these paint layers in 2000, it is no longer possible to determine when this last intervention took place.[8]

1 According to the catalogue of sale: La Flèche (Hôtel des Ventes), 21 November 1999, lot 145.
2 Catalogue of sale: New York(Christie's), 15 October 2020, lot 23.
3 Correspondence between D. Johns and M. Klink, 23–27 July 2024, archived at the RKD, The Hague.
4 With special thanks to botanists Eliza Zschuschen and Dorothy Traag, Heads of the National Herbarium of Suriname, and anthropologist Renzo Duin for sharing their expertise on Surinamese flora and fauna in identifying the fruits and reptiles depicted.
5 Catalogue of sale: La Flèche (Hôtel des Ventes), 21 November 1999, lot 145.
6 Correspondence between J. van Haeften and M. Klink, 17–18 July 2024, archived at RKD.
7 For comparison see cat. 73.
8 Catalogue of sale: New York (Christie's), 15 October 2020, lot 23, suggested that transport damage might have been the cause of the irregular shape. The auction catalogue further suggests that it may correspond to one of the 'two models of fruit' listed in his estate inventory. However, Valkenburg likely produced other fruit studies that may correspond to the ones listed in his inventory. 'twee modelletjes van vrugten' (two fruit models), SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.



Fig. cat. 20: *Study of Madame Jeanettes, Barbados Nuts and a Maracuja from Suriname,* (cat. 75) prior to the restoration of 2000. This reproduction featured on the front cover of the Hôtel des Ventes auction catalogue, La Flèche, 21 November 1999.

Portraits
Sabine Craft-Giepmans

At present, seventeen canvases by Dirk Valkenburg, predominantly portrait pairs of prominent Amsterdam citizens from 1712 to 1720, are included in this catalogue raisonné.[1] Nine of these attributions are based on the inclusion of Valkenburg's signature.[2] These works are by far the least known part of his oeuvre and have not been examined in their entirety until now, revealing that the artist was far more versatile than was previously thought.

In his portraits, Valkenburg built on the work of artists Nicolaes Maes (1634–1693) and Caspar Netscher (1639–1684), both of whom elegantly immortalized many Amsterdam residents in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Their portraits exemplify a polished, international style characterized by the use of colourful yet ambiguous dress, as well as the suggestion of movement achieved by turning the head in a different direction from the torso. This approach was influenced by foreign portrait painters such as France's Pierre Mignard (1612–1695) and Flanders's Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641).[3] A clear illustration of this style is visible in Maes's small oval pendant portraits of Cornelis Munter and Maria Piso, who appear in formalized attire dominated by decorative drapery (figs. cat. 24–25).

Over thirty years later, Valkenburg painted portraits of Munter and Piso's daughter, Sara Munter, and her husband Jan Wolters (cats. 88–89). These portraits echo Maes's earlier examples through their oval shape and compositional similarities, each depicting half-length figures set against idealized landscapes. However, Valkenburg gives these works a greater sense of monumentality by working on a larger scale and through a firmer touch in a bright palette. He also placed greater emphasis on contemporary costume elements, as is most evident in the detailed depiction of Wolters's frock coat.

Valkenburg typically painted his patrons approximately life-sized, half-length, and in an upright oval format. His surviving portraits are largely standardized in terms of size and composition – such as in their hand gestures. Some portraits, such as those of Petronella Merens and Maria Uylenbroek, are nearly interchangeable in posture, costume and hairstyle (cats. 77, 79). These 'template portraits', featuring a variety of endlessly repeatable standardized poses, gestures and dresses, were differentiated only by each sitter's head and were common practice and also observable in the works of Maes and Netscher.[4] While both earlier painters relied extensively on studio assistants – often limiting their own involvement to painting heads and hands – there is no evidence that Valkenburg employed assistants or apprentices. We may, however, assume that Valkenburg relied on a set of established examples: his estate inventory includes a book of portrait prints, two albums containing drawings and paint

sketches, as well as a life-size wooden mannequin.[5] Valkenburg's polished finish thus resulted from a deliberate strategy of standardization and repetition.

Valkenburg's biography by Johan van Gool (1685–1763) indicates the artist painted portraits consistently throughout his life, suggesting that he created far more than the fifteen portraits known today.[6] This higher output is corroborated by his estate inventory, which lists over twenty portraits that were kept ready in his workshop.[7] Among these are two self-portraits, a portrait of his sister and two likenesses of his parents – all known through the inventory. Moreover, records from auction catalogues and wills of individuals in Valkenburg's immediate circle identify at least ten additional portraits, further expanding our understanding of his oeuvre.[8]

Valkenburg's distinctive oval canvases featuring life-size half-figures in wigs rival those by Arnold Boonen (1669–1729), the leading Amsterdam portrait painter of his time, who also completed many oval half-length portraits (fig. cat. 23). It is clear the two artists knew each other, as Valkenburg's inventory mentions a portrait of him painted by Boonen.[9] Between approximately 1715 and 1720, both artists portrayed wealthy Amsterdam residents dressed in fashionable powdered wigs, soft, lustrous gowns, glossy frock coats and elegant lace jabots. The similarity in style between these two painters was so pronounced that their works have sometimes been misattributed. A notable example is the portrait of Leiden art dealer Jan Berkhey (1668–1736) in the Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden, which was previously catalogued as a Boonen but was convincingly reattributed to Valkenburg based on recent research (cat. 87).[10]

Valkenburg differs from Boonen, however, in his more vigorous use of colour and a firmer, almost rugged painterly touch that appears somewhat old-fashioned by early eighteenth-century standards.[11] While Boonen's approach firmly aligns with eighteenth-century tastes in colour and refinement, Valkenburg's portraits remain rooted in the late seventeenth-century European court style, similar to work of the Rotterdam artist Adriaen van der Werff (1659–1722). Van der Werff, who worked at the court in Düsseldorf for some time, employed similar life-sized oval half-figures, as seen in his *Portrait of Adriaen Brouwer* (fig. cat. 22). Although Valkenburg's courtly influences may have faded ten years after his return from Vienna and journey to Suriname, the resemblances between his portraits and Van der Werff's continue to cause confusion regarding attribution. For example, in a 2020 Munich auction, a portrait of an unknown man was mistakenly sold as a work by Van der Werff (cat. 85). Subsequent comparison with Valkenburg's *Portrait of Joan van Akerlaken* (cat. 77) strongly supports attribution to Valkenburg.[12] The portrait shares near identical dimensions, posture, costume and painterly touch.

Valkenburg was an accomplished portrait painter whose consistent high quality was largely due to his standardized approach. The systematic study of his complete oeuvre for the first time has now more clearly defined his fixed portrait format, enabling more accurate future attributions.

1 Attributions to Valkenburg of two small pendant portraits, possibly representing Jan Nollekens and Marguerite de St Geney, held at the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, inv. no. AA95 and AA96, have been rejected. The portrait of Marguerite de St Geney bears a signature of which only 'D.V [...]' is still legible. Still, stylistically and in terms of canvas size, these works stand too far from Valkenburg's recognisable 'template portraits'. Two other small portraits of D. van Houten and G. Elcoma from Leeuwarden are mentioned in the files of Hofstede de Groot as by D. Valkenburg and S. van der Does; see *RKDexcerpts* 568588. However, the dimensions, the use of panel rather than canvas, the geographical background of the sitters, and this collaboration between artists whose careers followed an entirely different trajectory make the attribution unlikely within Valkenburg's oeuvre.
2 These signed works also include pendant pairs, of which usually only one is signed with his name.
3 Ekkart 2007, p. 47.
4 Blankert 1966, pp. 263–266.
5 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.
6 See Craft-Giepmans in this volume, pp. 91–105.
7 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.
8 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv.no. 8486, 22 March 1726, will from Joan van Vliet, mentioning small portraits of Willem Hengst and Joan van Vliet, and a small self-portrait by Valkenburg.
9 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.
10 Many thanks to David ten Napel, who generously shared his research on this. Another commission from a Leiden sitter is the currently untraced portrait of Frans Smits van Leyden; Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, p. 429, no. 27.
11 'They are solid portraits of an already somewhat old-fashioned robustness for that time'; see Van den Donk and Ekkart 2015, p. 60.
12 See also notes by C. Hofstede de Groot regarding his study of two portraits by Valkenburg (most likely cats. 78–79), then in the collection of Mrs Van de Mandere, The Hague 1908: 'strongly resembling Pieter van der Werff [brother and follower of Adriaen van der Werff] and such masters'; see *RKDexcerpts* 568599.















Cat. 76

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of an Unknown Man
Oil on canvas, 76.1 × 64.4 cm
Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste, inv. no. 1072

Provenance: ...; collection: Alfred Thieme (1830–1906), Leipzig, 1897; collection: Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig, 1916

References: Thieme and Bode 1900, p. 76, no. 85, as Jan Weenix; cat. Leipzig 1919, p. 26, as Jan Weenix; exh. cat. Berlin 1976, p. 95, as Jan Weenix; cat. Leipzig 1979, p. 257, no. 1072, as Jan Weenix; cat. Leipzig 1995, p. 206, as Jan Weenix; cat. Leipzig 2012, p. 325, no. 355, as Jan Weenix; *RKDimages* 342911

Notes: This half-length, full size scale composition, set within a painted oval and formerly attributed to Jan Weenix, differs from his known portraiture; it is instead reminiscent of Valkenburg's portraits. The sitter's loose-fitting red brocade robe, modest lace-collared shirt and mid-length hair point to the final decade of the seventeenth century. As recounted by Johan van Gool, Valkenburg could have painted this portrait after his time in Weenix's studio (1692/93–1695), when he was working in Gelderland, Overijssel or Germany, continuing his practice in portraiture.[1]

1 See Craft-Giepmans in this volume, pp. 94, 97.

Cats. 77 and 78

Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of Joan van Akerlaken (1672–1712)
1712
Oil on canvas, 83 × 65 cm
Hoorn, Westfries Museum, 01470

Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of Petronella Merens (1673–1749)
1712
Oil on canvas, 83 × 65 cm
Hoorn, Westfries Museum, inv. no. 01471

Signed and dated, centre left:
Valkenburg / Fecit [...]

Provenance: ... sale: Amsterdam (Muller), 28 November 1911, lot 87, as companion pieces, as signed and dated 1712, 420 HFL, to F. Muller; probably collection: Frederik Muller, Amsterdam; ...; collection: H.B. verLoren van Themaat (1884–1924), Utrecht; sale: H.B. verLoren van Themaat, Amsterdam (Mak), 9–11 June 1925, lot 67, as companion pieces, signed and dated 1707, to Johan Philip de Monté verLoren (1901–1974), Zeist; ...; collection: Westfries Museum, Hoorn

References: *RKDimages* 46915 and 46916

Notes: Joan van Akerlaken, the second son of Christoffel van Akerlaken, chief bookkeeper of the Dutch East India Company, or VOC, and Anna Voordij, was baptized on 27 March 1672 in Amsterdam.[1] Following Christoffel's death, Anna was remarried in 1688 to Cornelis de Groot, the mayor of Hoorn and a widower of Maria Teding van Berkhout.[2] Through this marriage, Joan became affiliated to the small circle of regent families in Hoorn. His position, along with the preservation of the capital of the De Groot family, was further secured through his marriage to Petronella Merens, a niece of his stepfather, Cornelis de Groot.[3] After studying law in Leiden, Joan pursued a distinguished career, serving as an alderman, councillor and mayor of Hoorn. On 8 January 1711, he was appointed secretary of the College of the Admiralty of West-Friesland, which may have prompted him to commission Valkenburg for a portrait of himself and his wife. He was

buried in Hoorn's Grote Kerk on 22 August 1712.[4] His widow survived him by more than 35 years and was buried next to him on 11 March 1748.[5]

1 SAA, acc. no. 2001, inv. no. 107, 27 March 1672, p. 14.
2 SAA, acc. no. 5001, inv. no. 517, 10 September 1688, p. 248.
3 Petronella was the daughter of Meyndert Merens, the mayor of Hoorn, and Brigitta de Groot, the only sister of Cornelis de Groot.
4 Westfries Archief (WA), acc. no. 1471 (collection Akerlaken), 1619–1894, inv. no. 06–46, 22 August 1712.
5 Westfries Archief (WA) DTB Hoorn 83. Burial Registrations, Grote Kerk, 1688–1759, grave number 312.

Cats. 79 and 80

Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait Jan Jacob Braems (1683–1743)
Oil on canvas, 85 × 68.2 cm
Arnhem, Geldersch Landschap & Kasteelen, Huis Zypendaal, inv. no. 06874

Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of Maria Uylenbroek (d. 1728)
1714
Oil on canvas, 85 × 68.2 cm
Arnhem, Geldersch Landschap & Kasteelen, Huis Zypendaal, inv. no. 06875

Signed and dated, centre left: D Valkenburg / Fecit 1714

Provenance: Collection: Clara Sara Braems (c. 1680–1750), married to Johan van der Burgh, Amsterdam (cat. 84); by inheritance, collection: Sara Johanna van der Burgh (1758–1790), Utrecht; by inheritance, collection: Sara Johanna Balthasarina van der Upwich (1790–1873), Loenen; by inheritance, collection: Sara Johanna Ignatia Sybille Coenen van 's Gravensloot (1812–1883), Utrecht; by inheritance, collection: Sara Adriana Isabella van der Mandere (1846–1910), The Hague; by inheritance, collection: Louisa Christina Frederika Gregory (1885–1965), The Hague; by marriage, collection: Willem van Ittersum (1880–1973), Den Haag; on loan from private collection to Geldersch Landschap & Kasteelen; gifted to Geldersch Landschap & Kasteelen, 2002

References: *RKDimages* 135588 and 135589

Notes: Jan Jacob Braems and Maria Uylenbroek married in Amsterdam in 1717.[1] This was Uylenbroek's second marriage, as she was the widow of Reverend Adrianus Beuckelaar. The portrait of Uylenbroek is dated 1714. As the provenance of the portraits is rather straightforward, we might assume that the portrait of the husband was added at a later date to pair his wife's portrait, a practice that was rare but not uncommon. Jan Jacob Braems made his last will in 1743. He died childless, so the portraits were inherited by his sister and only heir, Clara Sara Braems, who was married to Johan van der Burgh (cat. 84).[2]

1 SAA, acc. no. 5001, inv. no. 554, 18 November 1717, p. 211.
2 See Clara Braems's will in SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 9603, 7 January 1749.

Cats. 81 and 82

Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of an Unknown Boy
1714
Oil on canvas, 85 × 68.2 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of an Unknown Woman with a Dog
1714
Oil on canvas, 85 × 68.2 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed and dated, centre left: Dk: Valkenburg / Fecit / 1714

Provenance: …; sale: London (Sotheby's), 9 March 1966, lot 61, as companion pieces, 360 GBP, to 'H. Sabin'; …; sale: London (Sotheby's), 27 April 2006, lot 31, as companion pieces, 25,200 GBP; …

References: *RKDimages* 174483 and 174484

Notes: The sitters in these portraits remain unidentified. Their earliest known provenance dates to 1966, when they were sold as companion pieces at a Sotheby's auction in London. The strikingly similar colour palette in both paintings, along with their identical canvas dimensions, suggests they were likely created as a pair and possibly represent a mother and son.











Cat. 83

Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of Professor Bernard Nieuwentijt
(1654–1718)
Before 1715
Oil on canvas, 87.5 × 70 cm
Amsterdam, Universiteit van Amsterdam,
Collection Allard Pierson, inv. no. 000.063

Provenance: Collection: Dirk Valkenburg, Amsterdam;[1] by inheritance, collection: Joan van Vliet (1682–1750), Amsterdam, 1750; by inheritance, collection: Isaac Sweers (d. 1777), Amsterdam;[2] possibly by inheritance, collection: Gale Isaac Gales (1736–1810), Amsterdam; …; a gift from Mr Gales to the Universiteit van Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 1783

References: Moes 1987–1905, vol. 1, no. 5381; Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, p. 428, no. 3; Van Regteren Altena and Van Thiel 1964, pp. 223–224, no. 63; Van Eeghen 1974, p. 223; *RKDimages* 39688

Notes: The sitter can be identified as Professor Bernard Nieuwentijt, who was born in Purmerend on 10 August 1654 and died there on 30 May 1718. The portrait by Valkenburg was reproduced numerous times for the title page of the bestselling book *Het regt gebruik der wereltbeschouwingen* (fig. cat. 21). This treatise on the existence of God saw multiple reprints, beginning in 1715. The portrait of Nieuwentijt must therefore have been painted prior to that year.[3] Remarkably, for unknown reasons, Nieuwentijt's portrait remained in Valkenburg's possession, as listed in his estate inventory in 1721.[4]



Fig. cat. 21: Pieter van Gunst after Dirk Valkenburg, *Portrait of Bernard Nieuwentijt* (1684–1718), before 1715. Engraving, 228 × 168 mm. Haarlem, Noord-Hollands Archief, inv. no. 587–356.

1 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8470, 6 September 1719.
2 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8486, 22 March 1726; SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8552, 8 August 1743.
3 See also Craft-Giepmans in this volume, p. 98.
4 SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519.

Cat. 84

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of Johan van der Burgh (d. 1743)
Oil on canvas, 88.5 × 70 cm
Private collection

Provenance: Collection: Johan van der Burgh (d. 1743); by inheritance, collection: Gerard van der Burgh (1714–1754), Amsterdam, 1743; by inheritance, collection: Sara Johanna van der Burgh (1758–1790), Utrecht, 1754; by inheritance, collection: Sara Johanna Balthasarina van der Upwich (1790–1873), Loenen, 1790; by inheritance, collection: Albert Coenen van 's Gravensloot (1809–1859), Utrecht, 1873; by inheritance, collection: Elisabeth Adriana Henriette Coenen van 's Gravensloot (1843–1898), Utrecht, 1859; by inheritance, collection: Johanna Cornelia Elisabeth Adelheid Calkoen (1870–1928), Arnhem, 1898; by inheritance, collection: Victoria Emilie Rudolphine Dittlinger (1902–1978), Zelhem, 1928; by inheritance, collection: Irene Henriette de Fremery (1927–1990), The Hague, 1978; private collection

References: De Jong and Brokken 1985, p. 45; *RKDimages* 143820

Notes: Johan van der Burgh was a broker on the Keizersgracht in Amsterdam. He married eighteen-year-old Clara Sara Braems, daughter of Daniel Braems, General Bookkeeper of the Dutch East India Company, or VOC, in Amsterdam on March 19, 1699. She was born c. 1681 in Batavia and was the half-sister of Jan Jacob Braems (cat. 79). The portrait of Clara Sara Braems is most likely lost. In the past, the portrait of Johan van der Burgh was identified as the Gouda jurist Adriaan de Grande (1682–1763),[1] but through research by Egbert Wolleswinkel, curator at the Iconographic Bureau, into the shared provenance of this portrait with the portraits of his brother-in-law and sister-in-law in the Coenen van 's Gravensloot family collection, the sitter of this portrait should be identified as Johan van der Burgh.[2]

1 RKD, IB, no. 72905; see also HUA, 92 Family Coenen van 's Gravesloot, 1.4. Van der Burgh family; De Jong and Brokken 1985, p. 45.
2 RKD, IB, no. 72905.

Cat. 85

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of an Unknown Man
Oil on canvas, 86 × 66 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Provenance: ...; sale: Munich (Hampel), 3–4 December 2020, lot 429, as Adriaen van de Werff; ...

References: *RKDimages* 342896



Fig. cat. 22: Adriaen van der Werff, *Portret van Adriaen Brouwer* (1605–1638), 1718. Oil on canvas, 79.5 × 67.5 cm. Rotterdam, Museum Rotterdam, 76052-A-B.

Cat. 86

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of an Unknown Man
Oil on canvas, 85 × 67 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Provenance: …; sale: Namur (Salle de Ventes Rops), 12–23 October 2023, lot 6204, not sold; …

References: *RKDimages* 342940

Cat. 87

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of Jan Berkhey (1668–1736)
Oil on canvas, 85.5 × 68.5 cm
Leiden, Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal, inv. no. S 37

Bears signature, centre right, along the edge: Arnold Boonen

Inscriptions: Verso, lower left: Portret / van Jan Berkhey / Kunsthandelaar/ te / Leiden
Lower right: door / A. Boonen

Provenance: …; collection: Brouchovenhof, Leiden; on long-term loan to collection Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden, 1892

References: Moes 1897–1905, vol. 1, p. 61, no. 505; cat. Leiden 1908, p. 8, no. 25; cat. Leiden 1918, p. 8, no. 25; cat. Leiden 1925, p. 10, no. 37; cat. Leiden 1949, p. 20, no. 37; cat. Leiden 1983, p. 76, no. 37; *RKDimages* 342891

Notes: Jan Berkhey, the son of Cornelis Cornelisz Berchey, a textile worker (*grein-werker*), and Annetgen Jansdr van der Velde, was baptized in the Loodskerk in Leiden on December 16, 1668. He worked as an art dealer and married twice, first in 1697, in Leiden, to Judith Landeloos, who was buried with her fourth child in 1704, and then to the widow Maria Hardey.[1] Berkhey was buried on 26 November 1736 in Leiden in the Hooglandse Kerk. Berkhey might have been acquainted with Valkenburg via the Leiden-based surgeon Bernardus Muyskens, whose daughter Adriana married Valkenburg's benefactor Joan van Vliet in 1706.[2]

This portrait was long misattributed to Arnold Boonen due to a signature later shown to be inauthentic. In 2024, David ten Napel reassigned the attribution to Valkenburg.

1 *Ons voorgeslacht* n.d., accessed on 30 April 2025.
2 EL, acc. no. 1004, inv. no. 28, p. 202.



Fig. cat. 23: Arnold Boonen, *Portret van Pieter van de Poel* (1654–1710), 1705. Oil on canvas, 82.5 × 65.5 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, SK-C-1602.







Cat. 90





Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of Jan Wolters (1683–1757)
1717
Oil on canvas, 89.5 × 74 cm
Zeist, Van de Poll-Wolters-Quina Stichting, inv. no. 6

Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of Sara Munter (1691–1758)*, with a Green Parakeet*
1717
Oil on canvas, 89.5 × 74 cm
Zeist, Van de Poll-Wolters-Quina Stichting, inv. no. 7

Signed and dated, centre right: D. Valkenburg / Fecit. / 1717

Provenance: Collection: Jan Wolters and Sara Munter, Amsterdam; probably by inheritance, collection: Cornelia Jacoba Wolters (1726–1795), Amsterdam; by inheritance, collection: Jacobus van de Poll (1724–1807), Amsterdam, 1795; by inheritance, collection: Jan Wolters van de Poll (1759–1826), Amsterdam, 1807; by inheritance, collection: Sara Maria van de Poll (1748–1831), Amsterdam, 1826; by inheritance, collection: Harmen van de Poll (1774–1834), Amsterdam, 1831; by inheritance, collection: Harmen Jan van de Poll (1809–1870), Amsterdam, 1834; transferred to, collection: Frederik van de Poll (1780–1853), Amsterdam/Utrecht, 1852; in temporary safekeeping, collection: Jan Jacobus van de Poll (1754–1863), Utrecht, 1853; transferred to, collection: Frederik Harman van de Poll (1823–1909), Doesburg/Zeist, 1855/1856; by inheritance, collection: Frederik van de Poll (1860–1937), Zeist, 1909; collection: Van de Poll-Wolters-Quina Foundation, Zeist, 1935

References: Van Haaren 1997, p. 34, fig. 35; Van den Donk and Ekkart 2015, pp. 60, 62–63, figs. 56–57, p. 123, nos. 67 and 68; *RKDimages* 125660 and 147735

Notes: Jan Wolters and Sara Munter married in Amsterdam on 29 November 1715.[1] Wolters was the son of Louis Wolters and Cornelia Quina. In 1720, he was appointed alderman of Amsterdam and became director of the Dutch West India Company (WIC) in 1732 and subsequently of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1735. Munter was a daughter of Cornelis Munter and Maria Piso (figs. cat. 24–25). Her sister, Margaretha Munter, also had herself portrayed by Valkenburg (fig. cat. 29).

1 SAA, acc. no. 5001, inv. no. 552, 29 November 1715, p. 91: marriage certificate of Jan Wolters and Sara Munter.





Fig. cat. 24: Nicolaes Maes, *Portrait Cornelis Munter* (1652–1708), c. 1680s–1690s. Oil on canvas, 54.5 × 42.5 cm. Private collection.
Fig. cat. 25: Nicolaes Maes, *Portrait of Maria Piso* (1650–1729), c. 1680s–1690s. Oil on canvas, 54.5 × 42.5 cm. Private collection.

Cat. 90

Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of an Unknown Man, Possibly Joan van Vliet (1682–1750)
1719
Oil on canvas, 73.3 × 57.8 cm
Germany, private collection

Signed, centre right: Valkenburg / 1719

Inscriptions: Recto, as found on a label on the frame: Dirk Valkenburg / Ecole Hollandaise 1675–1721

Provenance: …; sale: London (Christie's), 3–4 December 2019, lot 142; …; sale: Chicago (Freeman's / Hindman), 11 February 2025, lot 156, 108,800 USD; private collection, Germany, 2025

References: *RKDimages* 342899

Notes: The sitter of this portrait can possibly be identified as Joan van Vliet.[1]

1 See Craft-Giepmans in this volume, p. 101.

Cat. 91

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of Dirk Alewijn (1682–1742)
Oil on canvas, 86 × 69 cm
Whereabouts unknown

Signed[1]

Provenance: Collection: Dirk Alewijn, Amsterdam; …; sale: Alewijn, Amsterdam, 16 December 1884, lot 104; …; collection: Count Thierry of Renesse, Brussels, reported 1935; …

References: Cat. Antwerpen 1935, edition 3, p. 62, no. 234; *RKDimages* 342889

Notes: In 1885, the Alewijn family portrait collection was sold in Amsterdam, including two pendants of the couple Dirk Alewijn (1682–1742) and Brechtje van Loten (1692–1760) by Valkenburg.[2] After the auction, their paths parted and the portraits landed in different collections. Alewijn's portrait resurfaced in Brussels in 1935; the whereabouts of Van Loten's portrait is still unknown.

1 According to cat. Antwerpen 1935, edition 2, p. 62, no. 234, not transcribed.
2 Ibid.; Meijer 1986, p. 338.

Cat. 92

Attributed to Dirk Valkenburg
Portrait of an Unknown Woman
Oil on canvas, 84.1 × 68 cm
Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. no. 1943-F, a gift from Vrienden van het Museum voor Schone Kunsten

Provenance: …; collection: Pierre Bezine, 1927; sale: Pierre Bezine, Brussels (Fernand Fievez), 21 October 1942, lot 155, to Vrienden van het Museum voor Schone Kunsten; their gift to the Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent, 1943[1]

References: *RKDimages* 342905

Notes: As part of the collection of the Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent, this portrait was long attributed to an unidentified painter. However, *Portrait of an Unknown Woman* is here attributed to Valkenburg based on the recognisable half-length, three-quarter pose of the woman, similar canvas dimensions, distinctive colour palette and rugged, painterly handling of the dress (in contrast to the more polished finish of the flesh tones).

1 Internal archives: Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent. The names Pierre Bezine and the auction house Fievez do not appear in the database Economie: *Looted Art WII Belgium*, accessed on 14 May 2025. The Museum voor Schone Kunsten is conducting ongoing provenance research on this painting.

Copies after Lost Portraits
Sabine Craft-Giepmans

Painted Copies

Dirk Valkenburg painted pendant portraits of Jan Corver and Sara Maria Trip, as well as of Gerrit Corver and Margaretha Munter, all of which are now lost.[1] Their existence is documented through painted copies made by Jan Maurits Quinkhard, who reproduced the first pair (figs. cat. 26–27) in 1744 and the second pair (figs. cat. 28–29) in 1757 for the Corvershof.[2]

Copies on Paper

Two other lost portraits by Valkenburg are known through copies on paper. One is a portrait of the Lutheran minister Johannes Hermanus Manné (fig. cat. 30), possibly based on a lost painting by Valkenburg, as the print by Jan Wandelaar differs from his other works featuring hand gestures characteristic of Valkenburg's style.[3] The other is an engraving of Jan Goeree (1670–1731) (fig. cat. 31), made by Jacob Houbraken (1698–1780) after a lost portrait by Valkenburg, as inscribed in the lower left: 'Valkenburg Pinxit'.

1 Valkenburg's portraits of Gerrit Corver and Margaretha Munter are listed in the artist's estate inventory. SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473, 25 April 1721, no. 124. See also 'Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription' in this volume, pp. 509–519. See also Bredius 1915–1921, vol. 2, p. 429, no. 25. In 1945, the originals were last recorded in an inventory of the Hoeufft van Velsen collection, compiled by G.D. Gratema, with the exception of the portrait of Sara Maria Trip, which is noted as destroyed during the Second World War; see RKD, IB, no. 14349, inventory of the Hoeufft van Velsen collection, compiled in 1945 by G.D. Gratema. For the original portraits of Jan Corver and Sara Maria Trip, see also RKD, IB, nos. 14349 and 14350. For the copies after the portraits of Jan Corver and Sara Maria Trip, see Moes 1897–1905, vol. 2, p. 478, no. 8007-1 (only the portrait of Sara Maria Trip); Van de Put 1992, pp. 13, 23–31, nos. 2 and 3. For the copies after the portraits of Gerrit Corver and Margaretha Munter, see Van de Put 1992, pp. 13, 23–29, 31–32, nos. 4 and 5.

2 For more information about the role of Jan Corver, Sara Maria Trip, Gerrit Corver and Margaretha Munter in the foundation and further development of the Corvershof, see Van de Put 1992.

3 See Craft-Giepmans in this volume, p. 103.









Fig. cat. 26: Jan Maurits Quinkhard, after Dirk Valkenburg, *Portrait of Jan Corver* (1688–1719), 1744. Oil on canvas, 85 × 75 cm. Amsterdam, Het Corvershof, Protestantse Diaconie.

Fig. cat. 27: Jan Maurits Quinkhard, after Dirk Valkenburg, *Portrait of Sara Maria Trip* (1693–1721), 1744. Oil on canvas, 82 × 72 cm. Amsterdam, Het Corvershof, Protestantse Diaconie.

Fig. cat. 28: Jan Maurits Quinkhard, after Dirk Valkenburg, *Portrait of Gerrit Corver* (1690–1756), 1756–1757. Oil on canvas, 82 × 72 cm. Amsterdam, Het Corvershof, Protestantse Diaconie.

Fig. cat. 29: Jan Maurits Quinkhard, after Dirk Valkenburg, *Portrait of Margaretha Munter* (1689–1737), 1756–1757. Oil on canvas, 83 × 72 cm. Amsterdam, Het Corvershof, Protestantse Diaconie.



Fig. cat. 30: Gilbert Schouten, after J. Wandelaar, possibly after Dirk Valkenburg, *Portrait of Lutheran Minister Johannes Hermanus Manné* (1679–1733), 1719 or after. Etching, 170 × 120 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-1898-A-21445, gift of C. Schöffer.



Fig. cat. 31: Jacob Houbraken, after Dirk Valkenburg, *Portrait of Jan Goeree* (1670–1731), 1734. Engraving, 169 × 129 mm. The Hague, RKD, IB, no. 2019471.

Dirk Valkenburg's Estate Inventory: A Transcription

This is a transcription of Dirk Valkenburg's estate inventory, drawn up by notary Isaak Angelkot and sworn assessor Catharina Maria Muilman on 25 April 1721; see Amsterdam, SAA, acc. no. 5075, inv. no. 8473.

All text enclosed in brackets indicates editorial interpretations of details from the original document. The formatting of currency amounts in Dutch guilders follows the original document and preserves any inconsistencies.

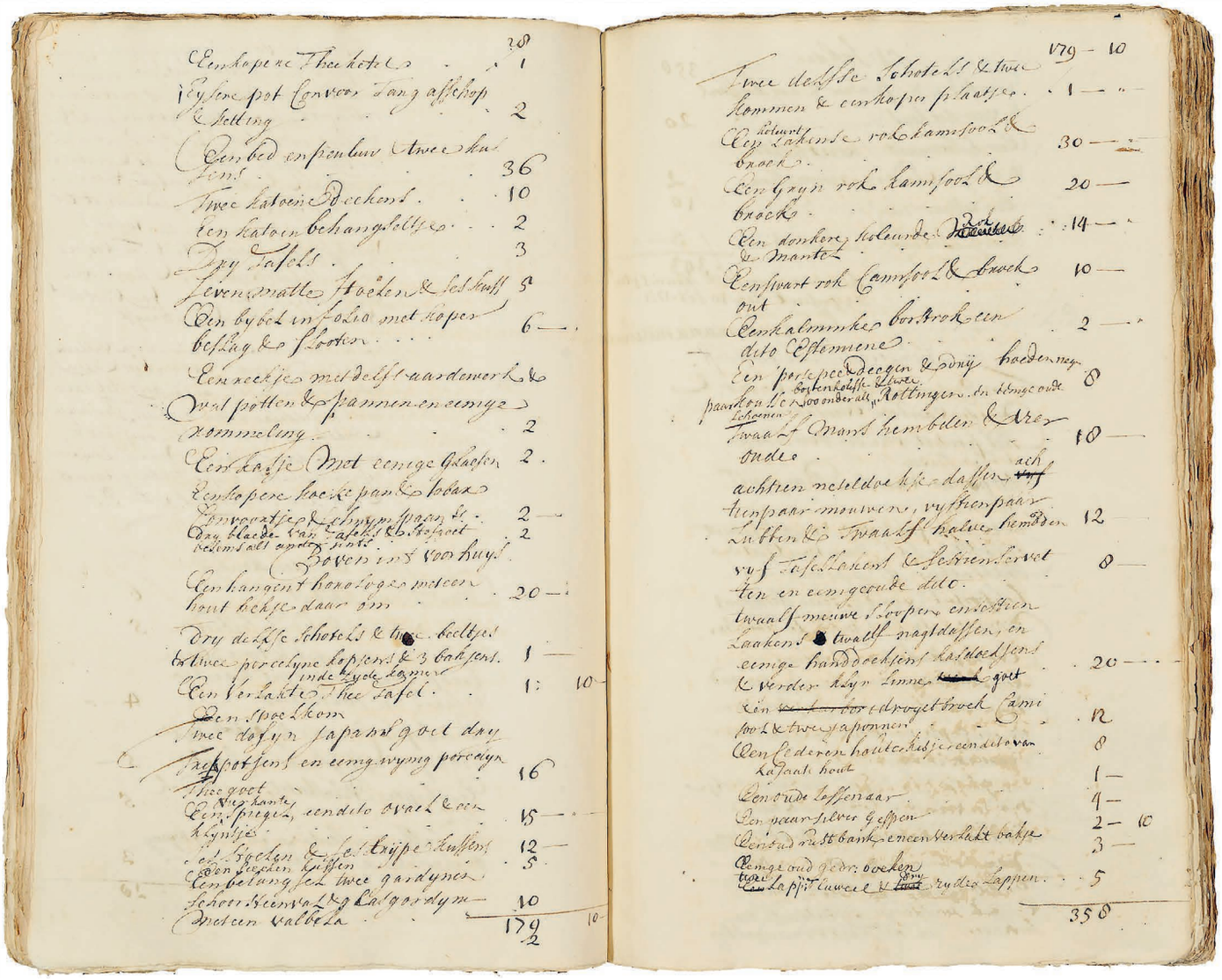
***

25 april 1721
Inventaris van de nagelaaten boedel van Dirk Valckenburg

[*folio*: *right page*]
Inventaris van alle de goederen middelen, penn[ingen] en effecten, mitsgaders schulden & lasten niets uijtgesondert meter doot ontruijmt & nagelaeten, bij wijlen Dirk Valkenburg in zijn leven konst & pourtret schilder binnen deese stad gemaakt & beschreeven bij mij Isaak Angelkot openbaar notaris bij den Ed[ele] Hove van Holland geadmitteert tot Amsterdam resideerende, den 10 feb & volgende daegen des jaers 1721. Ten versoecken mitsgaders volgens op & aangeven van de heeren mr Joan van Vliet ad[vocaa]t, Nicolaas Abeleeven & Willem Hengst als bij testamente van den zelve Dirk Valkenburg op den 6 september 1719 voor mij not[ari]s & sekere getuijgen alhier gepass[eer]t aangestelt tot executeurs & redderaars van deszelfs testament, sterfhuijse & boedel, & zijnde meubilen huijsraat & imboedel door Catharina Maria Muijlman geswooren schatster deeser steede getaxeert & gepriseert soo als agter ijeder post uijtgedrukt staat

In de beneden keuken

Drij Tinneschotels	*f* 6
Twee aschetjes & ses tafelborden	5
Een tinne waterpot & twee tinne trekpotjens	
mosterpot twee kan delaars en inktkokers	4 –
Een kopen convoor & vijsel stamper strijkijser &	
snuijter	5 –
Een kopere vleeskeetel met een deksel	5 –
Een koffie meulentje en eenig wijnig blikwerk &	
een messekokertje	3
	f 28



Estate inventory of Dirk Valkenburg 510

[*folio*: *left page*]	28		
Een kopere theeketel	*f* 1		
1 Eijsere pot convoor tang asschop & ketting	2		
Een bed en peuluw thee kussens	36		
Twee katoene deekens	10		
Een katoen behangseltje	2		
Drij tafels	3		
Seven matte stoelen & ses kuss[ens]	5		
Een bijbel in folio met koperbeslag & slooten	6	–	
Een reckje met delfs aardewerk & wat potten & pannen en eenige rommeling	2		
Een kasje met eenige glaesen	2		
Een kopere kokepan & tobax convoortje & schuijmspaan [?]	2	–	
Drij blaede van tafels & stofgoet besems als ander sints	2		
Boven int voorhuijs			
Een hangent horologe met een hout hekje daar om	20	–	
Drij Delfse schotels & twee beeltjes en twee pocelijne kopjens & 3 bakjens	1	–	
In de zijde kamer			
Een verlakte thee tafel	1	: 10	–
Een spoelkom			
Twee dosijn Japans goet drij trekpotjes en eenig wijnig porcelijn theegoet			
Een vierkante spiegel, een dito ovael & een klijntje	16		
Ses stoelen & ses trijpe kussens	15	–	
Een siecken kussen	12	–	
Een behangsel twee gardijnen schoosteenval & glasgordijn met een valbela	5 10		
	179	10	–
	2		

[*right page*]	179	– 10	
Twee Delfse schotels & twee kommen & een koper plaatje	1	–	–
Een koleurt lakense rok kamisool & broek	30	–	–
Een grijn rok kamisool & broek	20	–	
Een donkere koleurde rok & mantel	14	–	
Een swart rok camisool & broek	10	–	
Een kalminke borstrok een dito estemiene	2	–	
Een portepee & deegen & drij hoeden negen paar koussen soo onder als boven koussen & twee rottingen en eenige oude schoenen	8		
Twaalf manshembden & zes oude	18	–	
Achtien neteldoekse dassen, achtien paar mouwen, vijftien paar lubben & twaalf halve hembden	12	–	
Vijf taffellaken & sestien servetten en eenige oude dito	8	–	

Twaalf meuwe sloopen en sestien laakens twaalf nagtdassen, en eenige handdoekjens kasdoekjens & verder klijn linne goet	20	–	–
Een drogetbroek camisool & twee japonnen	12		
Een cederen houtekistje een dito van kajante hout	8		
Een oude lessenaar	1	–	
Een paar silver gespen	4	–	
Een oud rustbank en een verlakt bakje	2	–	10
Eenige oude gedr[ukte] boeken	3	–	
Twee lappen fluweel & drij zijde lappen	5		
	358		

[*folio*: *left page*]	358		
Op solder			
Een bedje & peuluw & drij kussens & vier deekens	20		
Een kleermant, keerstokken & eenig verdere rommeling	2		
Een restant turf	10		
Een glasraemen een koekoek	3	–	
	f 393		

Aldus na mijn beste kennis getax[eert] & gepriseert
den 10 feb 1721 Catarina Maria Muilman

Schilderijen & Schilderkunst

Twee portretten zijnde de vader &moeder van den overledene
Het portret van den overledene t klijn leeven
Het portret van den Burgerm[eeste]r Nieuwentijt
De voorsz portretten zijn gelegateert aand hr & mr Joan van Vliet & sulks alhier pro memorie
Het portret van de heer Hermanus Mannee Lutersse praed[ican]t te Haarlem
Een kopstuk van Rubbens
Een schilderij verbeeldende een oud man sittende in zijn Comptoir zijnde een copie na Douw door den overledene geschildert
Een schilderije zijnde een eijereetertje met een vrouwtje en eenig bijwerk
Een dito verbeeldende de praediking van Johannes in de woestijne
Een dito zijnde een boer & boerin
Een stuk schilderije verbeeldende een seehaven, na de trant van Lingelbag

---

[*right page*]
Een klijn schilderijtje verbeeldende een seetje gemerkt J.V.R.
Een stukje na P. Wouwerman
Een dito zijnde een landschapje met een Ruijter
Een schilderije zijnde een seehaeven door Bagijn
Een swemment hart en honden [etc.] door F. Snijders

Een portret van een man door den overledene in vroegertijd geschild[er]t
Een groote ovaele gesneede lijst

Op de schilderkamer
Een schilderije zijnde een haas en patrijs door hem zelf geschildert
Een stuk met twee haasen, patrijs, jagthond & bijwerk
Het portret van de suster van den overleden onvoltooyt
Een portret van een kind onbekent
Drij klijne vierkante modelletjes 2 van paarden om na te schilderen
Twee modelletjes van vrugten
Een landschap met beesten door den overleden ontworpen
Het Portret van den Overledenedoor Boone geschildert
Het portret van de professor Muijkens tot Groningen. Toekomende aand heer Jan van Vliet
De twee portretten verbeeldende de hr Gerrit Corver schepen & collonel alhier
& vrouwe Margaretha Munter egtelieden met Landschapjes
Twee portretten verbeeldende de hr Capitijn Everard Godijn & vr Adrianne Arnoldina Muijkens tot Uijtrecht

---

[*folio*: *left page*]
Een klijn ovaal borststukje verbeeldende monsr Frans Smit tot Leijden door den overledene geschildert
Het portret van Pieter Kerkhooven woonagtig alhier zijnde onvoltooijt, door den overleden geschild[er]t
Twee vierkante schilderijen verbeeldende fruijtstukjens
Twee dito grooter
Een stuk schilderijen zijde een stilleeven door Kalf
Een stuk schilderije van haanen & hennen door den overleden geschild[er]t
Een stuk schilderije zijnde een reekopje door den overleden geschildert
Nog een reekopje door hem begonnen
Een schilderije zijnde Silenus met een troep kinderen
Het portret van Philip Marinus door den overledene geschildert toebehoorende aan den overleden
Het portret van Koning William
Twee modellen zijnde een van persicken, en een van roosen
Twee landschapjes van den ouden Weeninx int graauw geschildert
Een model van valcken & exters & aapen van Weeninx
Bloemen model van denzelve
Een vierkant schilderije zijnde een vaas met bloemen door den overledene geschildert
Een schilderij zijnde een luijtspeelster [etc.]
Een schilderije zijnde sonnenblommen van Weeninx

[*right page*]
Een schets van Weeninx verbeeldende een hond &e jagt gereetschap
Een stukje zijnde knollen & wortelen

Een begonnen ordonnantie van Haassen & gevogelte
Een stuk schilderije van Hondekoeter
Zijnde een landschap met Aapen & gevoogelte
Een vrouwe portret van Frans Hals
Een stuk met modellen van gediertens en bloemen door den overledene &e aan dandere zijde van papegaeijen
Exters [etc.] door denzelve
Een stuk schilderije van een Paauw door Weeninx verder gestoffeert met
Landschap gediertens [etc.] door den overledene
Een stuk schilderije zijnde de koning van de wouwouen [etc.] door Weeninx
Het portret van een onbekende Heer door den overledene geschildert
Het portret van Gijsbert Hol door den overledene geschildert om aan denzelve Hol te vereeren
Een vrouwe portret
Een model van parquitjens & aapjens van Weeninx
Het portret van der overledenes gesepareerde huysvrouw
Twee klijne ronde vergulde lijstjens met een portretje
Een schilderijte een hout panneel zijnde een turxe seehaaven

[*folio: left page*]
Een houte leeman leevens grootte
Een strooman
Een boek met kunstprinten van portretten als andersints
Een kunstboek met teekeingen & verwen geschildert
Nog een dito
Een schilderije zijnde de val van Phaeton door Weeninx
Twee schilder eesels en een draey eesel
Eenige reaemen lijsten & doeken ongeschildert
Een snaphaan en dito klijnder
Eenig jagtuijg van hoorens, kruijthorens, swijnsprieten &[onder andere] om na te schilden [sic]
Een pakket oude printen & wijders eenige papieren & verder allerhande schilder gereetschap

In de lessenaar gevonden
Aan contant geld ƒ 47 : 18
Een goude segelring
Een goude ring met een groene steen dog vals
Een paar swaere silvere gespen
Een dito klijn hand gespje
Eenige papieren brieven & quitantien [etc.]

In een cederen kisje
Een bonte muts met fluweel
Een dito chitse
En voorts eenige linnen plunjen & lappen van wijnig waarde

In de koffer
Eenige teekeningen & prenten mede op de catalogus gebragt

En een papier daar in eenige ouwerwetsche kante dassen & klijnigheeden

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[*right page*]

De overledene hadde te goet

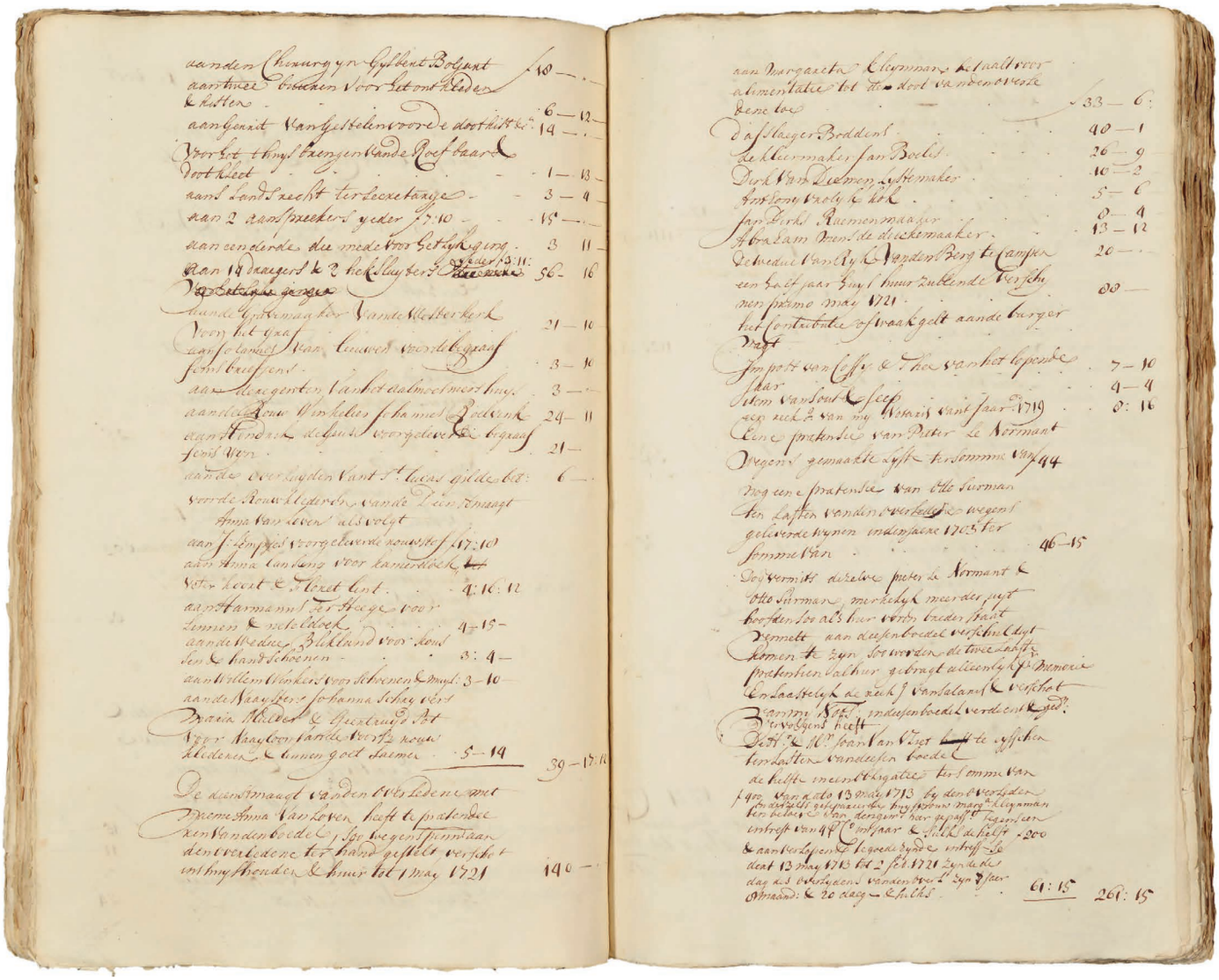
Wegens twee pourtretten van de heer Schepen Gerrit Corver & mevr. deszelfs huijsvrouw			
Twee pourtretten van der heer & mevr Godijn tot Uijtrecht			
Een half gedaan pourtret van Pieter Kerkhoven			
Voor het pourtret van ds Mannee tot Haarlem			
Wegens een seker gecopiert pourtret ter discretie gestelt zijnde is ingekomen		25	
Wegens het pourtret van mr Gijsbert Hol pro memorie seekere schult ofte praetensie ten lasten van Pieter le Normant ter somme	ƒ	52	
Een geformeerde reekening ten lasten Van Otto Surman voor een gemaakt conterfeijtsel ter somme van		80 –	–

Dootschulden & verdere schulden & lasten des boedels soo als dezelve zijn bevonden & opgekomen

Voor een sieckenkussen met het beste dons	ƒ	15 –	–
Aan den hr Doctor Casparus Commelin		11 –	–
Aan den Apothekar van Hommerig samen met een restant		24	

[*folio*: *left page*]

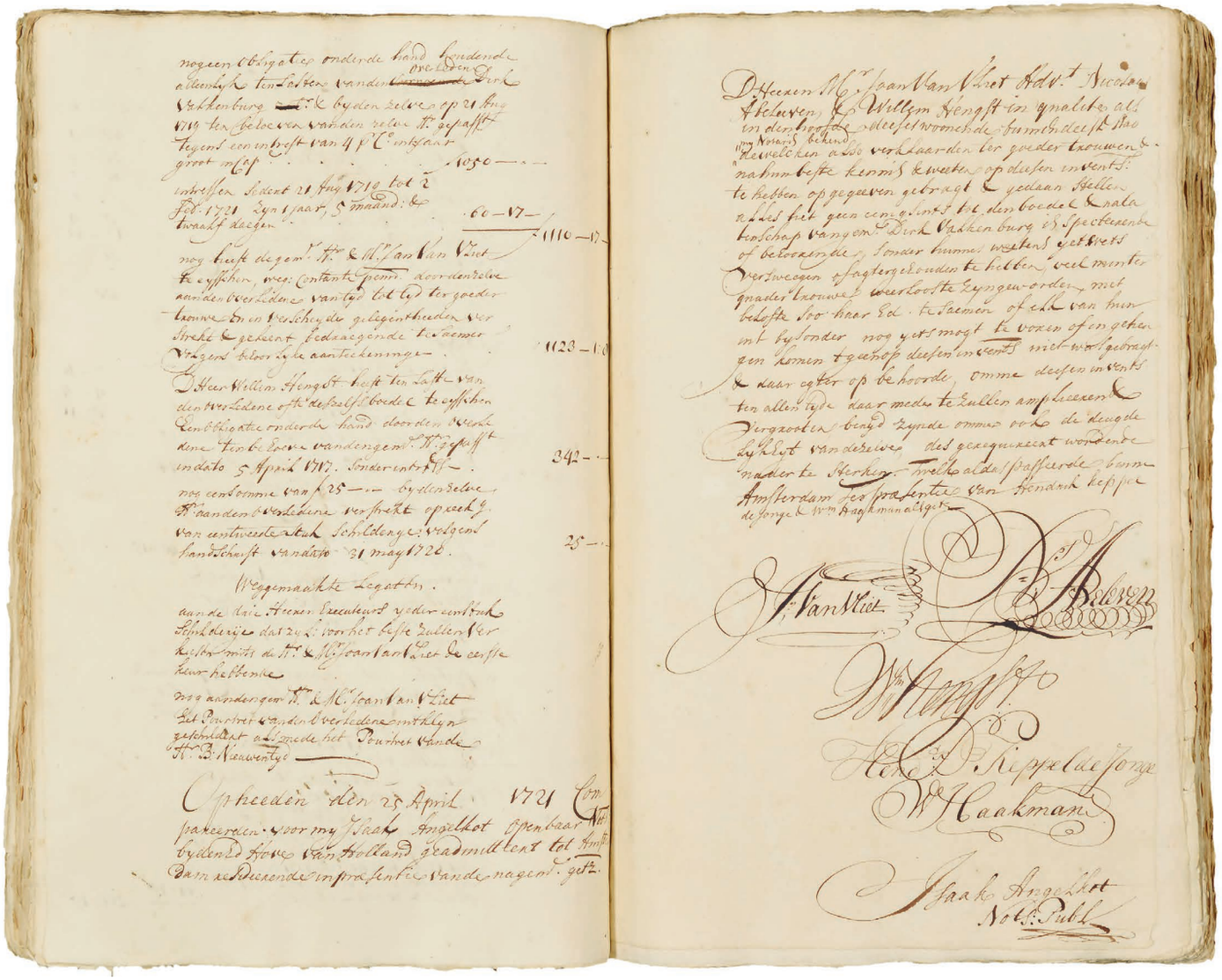
Aan den chirurgijn Gijsbert Bogart	ƒ	18 –		–
Aan twee buuren voor het ontkleden & kisten		6 –	12	–
Aan Gerrit van Gestelen voor de dootkist [etc]		14 –		–
Voor het thuijs brengen van de roefbaar & dootkleet		1 –	13	–
Aans landsrecht ter secretarije		3 –	4	–
Aan 2 aanspreekers ijeder ƒ 7 : 10		15 –		–
Aan een der die mede voor het lijk ging		3	11	–
Aan 14 draegers & 2 heksluijter ijeder ƒ 3 : 11 :		56 –	16	
Aan de gravemaaker van de Westerkerk voor het graf aan Johannes van Leeuwen voor de begraaffenis briefjens		21 –	10	–
aan de regenten van het aalmoesweeshuijs		3 –	10	–
aan de rouw winkelier Johannes Roelvink		3 –		–
Aan Hendrik de Geus voor geleverde begraaffenis wijn		24 –	11	
Aan de overluijden vant St Lucas gilde bet[aald]		21 –		
Voor de rouwklederen van de diensmaagt Anne van Loven als volgt aan J. Lempjes voor geleverde rouwstof	ƒ	17 : 18		
Aan Anna Lansing voor kamerdoek veter koort & floret lint		4 : 16	:12	
Aan Harmanus ter Heege voor linnen &				



neteldoek	4 – 15 –		
Aan de wedue Blikland voor koussen & handschoenen	3 : 4 –		
Aan Willem Winkers voor schoenen & muijl:	3 – 10 –		
Aan de naaysters Johanna Schrijvers Maria Mulder & Geertruijd Potvoor naaijloon van de voorsz[egde] rouwklederen & linnengoet saemen	5 – 14		
		39 – 17 : 12	
De diensmaagt van den overleden met naeme Anna van Loven heeft de praetendee ren van den boedel, soo wegens penn[ingen] aan den overledene ter hand gesteld veschot int huijshouden & huur tot 1 maij 1721		140 –	

[*right page*]

Aan Margareta Kleijman betaalt voor alimentatie tot de doot van overledene toe		f 33 – 6 :	
D afslaeger Boddens		48 – 1	
De kleermaker Jan Boeles		26 – 9 –	
Dirk van Diemen, lijstemaker		10 – 2 –	
Anthonij Volijk kok		5 – 6 –	
Jan Dirks raemenmaaker		8 – 4 –	
Abraham Mens de doeckemaaker		13 – 12 –	
De wedue van Rijk Van den Berg te Campen		20 – –	
Een half jaar huijs huur zullende verschijnen primo maij 1721		88 –	
Het contributie of waakgelt aan de burgerwagt			
Impost aan coffij & thee van het lopende jaar		7 – 10	
Idem van sout & seep		4 – 4	
Een reek[enin]g van mij notaris vant jaar 1719		8 : 16	
Een praetensie van Pieter le Normant wegens gemaakte lijste ter somme van	f 44		
Nog eene praetensie van Otto Surman ten lasten van den overledene wegens geleverde wijnen in den jaer 1705 ter somme van		46 – 15	
Dog vermits dezelve Pieter le Normant & Otto Surman merkelijk meerder uijthoofden soo als hier voren breder staat vermelt aan deesen boedel verschuldigtkomen te zijn soo worden de twee laatste praetentien alhier gebragt alleenlijk pro memorie en laatstelijk de reek[enin]g van salaris & verschot van mij not[ari]s in deesen boedel verdient & ged[aa]n. Vervolgens heeft de hr & mr Joan van Vliet te eijsschen ten lasten van deesen boedel de helfte in een oblibatie ter somme van f 400 van dato 13 maij 1713 bij den overleden en deszelfs gesepareerde huijsvrouw Marg[aret]a Kleijnman ten behoeve van dengene heer gepass[eer]t tegens een intrest van 4 [procent] int jaar & sulks de helft f 200			



& aan verlopende tegoede zijnde intrest sedert
13 maij 1713 tot 2 feb 1721 zijn de de dag des
overlijdens van den overl zijn 7 jaar 8 maanden &
20 daeg & sulks 61 : 15

261 : 15

[*folio*: *left page*]
Nog een obligatie onder de hand houdende
alleenlijk ten lasten van den overleden
Dirk Valkenburg & bij denzelve op 21 aug
tegens een intrest van 4 [procent] int jaar groot
in cap[itaa]l ƒ 1050 – –
interessen sedert 21 aug 1719 tot 2 feb 1721 zijn
1 jaar, 5 maanden & twaalf daegen 60 – 17 –

ƒ 1110 – 17 –

Nog heeft de gem[elde] hr & mr Jan van Vliet te
eijsschen, weg[ens] contate penn[ingen] door
denzelve aan den overledene van tijd tot tijd ter
goeder trouwe en in verscheijde gelegentheeden
verstrekt & geleent bedraegende te saemen volgens
behoorlijke aanteekeningen 1123 – 1 : 8

D heer Willem Hengst heeft ten laste van den
overledene ofte deszelfs boedel te eijsschen een
obligatie onderde hand door den overledene ten
behoev van den gem[elde] hr gepass[eer]t in dato
5 april 1717 sonder intrest 342 – –

Nog een somme van ƒ 25 – – bij den zelve hr aan
den overlede verstrekt op reek[enin]g van een
tweede stuk schilderije volgens handschrift van
dato 31 maij 1720 25 – –

Weggemaakte legaten

Aan de drie heeren executeurs ijeder een stuk schilderije dat
zijl[uiden] voor het beste zullen verkiesen mits de Hr & Mr Joan van
Vliet de eerste keus hebbende
nog aan den gem[el]de hr & mr Joan Van Vliet het Pourtret van den
overledene int klijn geschildert alsmede het pourtret van de hr B:
Nieuwentijd

Op heeden den 25 april 1721 compareerden voor mij Isaak Angekot
openbaar not[ari]s bij den Ed[ele] Hove van Holland geadmitteert
tot Amsterdam resideerende in praesentie van de nagen[oem]de
get[uigen]

[*right page*]
De heeren mr Joan van Vliet adv[ocaa]t Nicolaes Abeleeven &
Willem Hengst in qualite als in den hoofde deeses woonende binnen
deese stad mij notaris bekend de welcken also verklaarden ter goeder

trouwen & na hun beste kennis & weeten op deesen invent[ari]s te hebben opgegeeven gebragt & gedaan stellen alles het geen eenigsints tot den boedel & nalatenschap van gem[elde] Dirk Valkenburg is specteerende of behoorende sonder hunnes weetens getwets[?] versweegen of agter gehouden te hebben, veel min ter quader trouw weerloos te zijn geworden, met belofte soo haar Ed[ele] te saemen of elk van hun int bijsonder nog ijets mogt te voren of in geheugen komen tgeen op deesen invent[ari]s niet was gebragt & daar egter op behoorde, omme deesen invent[ari]s ten allen tijde daar mede te zullem amplieeren & vergrooten benijd zijnde omme ook de deugdelijkhijt van dezelve des gerequireert wordende nader te sterken. Twelk aldus passeerde binnen Amsterdam ter praesentie van Hendrik Keppel de Jonge & Wm. Haakman als get[uigen]

J Van Vliet
N^{s} Abeleven
Wm Hengst
Hend^{k} Keppel de Jonge
W Haakman
Isaak Angelkot
Not[ari]s Publ[iek]

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SABINE CRAFT-GIEPMANS is head of Research & Development at the RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History in The Hague. She studied art history at Leiden University. Her research focuses on seventeenth-century Dutch portraiture. She has held various positions at the RKD and now leads the Research & Development department, where she works to bridge traditional art-historical research and technical art history with digital humanities.

PHILIP DIKLAND obtained an engineering degree at the Delft Technical University in 1980. In 1982, he moved to Suriname, and in 1985 he founded the architectural firm KDV. His specialization in the restoration of historic buildings involves archival and field research. He is deeply interested in the history of Suriname and has made many trips to former plantations to discover remnants of the past. He has served as a member of the Monument Committee of Suriname, and as an architect, he is actively involved in monument preservation and the restoration of many of Suriname's historic buildings.

FRANK DRAGTENSTEIN is a historian specializing in slavery and colonial history (Africans in diaspora). He is co-founder of the National Institute for Dutch Slavery Past and Heritage (NiNsee) and was a senior scientific researcher there.

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WILL FURTADO FREDO is a non-binary artist, writer, editor and educator exploring biopolitics and power dynamics at the intersection of technology, blackness, indigeneity and queerness. Will Fredo received a BA from the University of Northampton and an MFA from the Academy of Media Arts Cologne. Their work has been published in magazines including *frieze* and in books and monographs by institutions including the Centre d'Art Contemporain Geneve. In their artistic practice, Will Fredo works with image, text, body and object to expand on the ideas of queer futurity and examine the connections between body, mind, nature and technology. Born in Portugal of Guatemalan and Cape Verdean heritage, Will Fredo is based in Berlin, Germany. Since 2017, Will Fredo has formed part of Contemporary And (C&), an art platform for international perspectives, and is currently the editor-in-chief of the Latin American magazine edition (C&AL).

JULIE HARTKAMP is junior curator at the Mauritshuis, The Hague. As an art historian, she focuses on early modern visual culture in Italy and the Netherlands. She graduated cum laude from the Arts of the Netherlands master's programme at the University of Amsterdam in 2021. Her most recent article in *Burlington Magazine* (2025) examines miraculous and devotional imagery in Bologna, exploring the relationship between materiality, meaning and the Renaissance engagement with medieval heritage. With a strong interest in technical art history, her current research engages with topics such as early modern studio practice in the Dutch Republic and Dutch painters who worked across the Atlantic.

MATTHIES KLINK is an art historian focusing on early modern Dutch art from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He completed his BA in art history at Utrecht University, with extensive research on the paintings in the Grand Hall of Slangenburg Castle in Doetinchem, the Netherlands. He is part of the research project on Dirk Valkenburg at the RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, under the supervision of Sabine Craft-Giepmans. Klink has previously contributed to the augmented reality exhibition *De Kunst van het Binnenhof* (2022) by the Stichting Document voor een Monument, The Hague. He is currently pursuing a Research Master's in art history at Utrecht University.

MARK PONTE is a historian and curator at the Amsterdam City Archives. He researches migration and slavery in Amsterdam and the Dutch Atlantic. Ponte is currently writing a biography of Amsterdam's seventeenth-century Black community and is organizing an exhibition on jazz and migration in 1930s Amsterdam. He regularly writes for the popular history magazine *Ons Amsterdam*. Recent co-curated exhibitions include *Famiri/Family Surinamese-Amsterdam stories from 1611 onwards* (2023–2024), Amsterdam City Archives and the National Archives of Suriname; *Plantation Alkmaar, Alkmaar in Suriname, 1745–now* (2022–2023), Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar; *HERE: Black in Rembrandt's Time*, Rembrandt House Museum; and *Amsterdammers and Slavery*, Amsterdam City Archives.

WILLEM DE ROOIJ (Beverwijk, 1969) creates temporary installations that analyze the politics of representation. Drawing on his experience with time-based media, he uses montage to combine appropriated objects. His collaborations with leading academics foster research in global art history and visual anthropology. A member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Willem de Rooij teaches at the Städelschule (Frankfurt a. Main) and Rijksakademie (Amsterdam). In 2016, he co-founded BPA// Berlin program for artists. Awards and residencies include the Bâloise Art Prize (2000), Robert E. Fulton III Fellowship at Harvard University (2004), and DAAD Fellowship in Berlin (2006). With Jeroen de Rijke (1970–2006), he represented the Netherlands at the 2005 Venice Biennale. Recent exhibitions include Akademie der Künste, Vienna; Portikus; 17th Jakarta Biennale; and 10th Shanghai Biennale. His work is included in collections such as MoMA, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź.

MAURICE SASS is professor of art history at the Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences. He has authored several books and articles on early modern gender politics, the history of art theory, and animals in early

modern art. His most recent publications include a monograph on the historical intersections of art and hunting (*Jagdgründe der Kunst*, Böhlau 2024) and the co-edited volume *Hunting Troubles: Gender and Its Intersections in the Cultural History of the Hunt* (Palgrave Macmillan 2025). His current research is primarily concerned with exploring how early modern art history might contribute to addressing the ecological challenges of our time.

BENJAMIN SCHMIDT is the Jon M. Bridgman Endowed Professor of History at the University of Washington, Seattle. He has published widely on early modern cultural history, art history and the history of science, including *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World*, winner of the Renaissance Society of America's Gordan Prize and the Holland Society's Hendricks Prize (Cambridge University Press, 2008); *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World*, finalist for the Kenshur Prize of the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); and, most recently, *The Globalization of Netherlandish Art* (with Thijs Weststeijn; Brill, 2025). His work has been supported by the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton; the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin; the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (KNAW); the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and other major European and American granting foundations.

LILIA MORITZ SCHWARCZ is an art and political historian, curator, and anthropologist, a full and senior professor at the Department of Anthropology at the University of São Paulo, and a global scholar / visiting professor at Princeton University. She is the author of several books, including *Spectacle of Races* (Hill & Wang Inc, 1999) and *Images of Whiteness: The Presence of Absence* (2024), and was a co-curator at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) from 2015 to 2023, with exhibitions including *Afro-Atlantic Histories* (2018) and *Forms of Democracy* (2023). She has written several art catalogues and books, including *Imperfect Pearl: The Histories of Adriana Varejão* (Cobogó, 2014), and *Dalton Paula: The Kidnapper of Souls* (Cobogó, 2023). Schwarcz is a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters (ABL), Humans Right Watch and the Brazilian Presidential Council (2023–2026).

ALEX VAN STIPRIAAN is an emeritus professor of Caribbean history and culture at Erasmus University Rotterdam, where he began his tenure in 1986. Between 2005 and 2014, he was also a curator at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, now known as the World Museum. There, he curated exhibitions on Maroon art and culture, as well as the widely discussed exhibition *Black & White*, which explored 150 years of interethnic relations in the Netherlands since the abolition of slavery. His academic research focuses on the history of Suriname, cultural heritage in the Dutch Caribbean, processes of creolization in the Black Atlantic, and contemporary Caribbean art. His book *Rotterdam in slavernij* (*Rotterdam in Slavery*, Boom uitgevers 2020) won the Dutilh Prize in 2022. Van Stipriaan was a co-founder of the national Slavery Monument and the slavery institute NiNsee in Amsterdam. He is currently involved in helping to establish the National Slavery Museum.

SARAH THOMAS is senior lecturer in the School of Historical Studies at Birkbeck, University of London. Her book, *Witnessing Slavery: Art and Travel in the Age of Abolition* (Yale University Press, 2019) was published by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. She has published widely on the art history and museology of the British empire. She is currently completing a book called *Chattel: Art, Slavery and the British Collector, 1768–1833.* Thomas's research has been supported by a range of major UK funding bodies, including the Paul Mellon Centre, The Leverhulme Trust, the British Academy and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

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Valkenburg

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Willem de Rooij
Valkenburg

Centraal Museum, Utrecht
13 September 2025 – 25 January 2026

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Panel 8



Amsterdam painter Dirk Valkenburg (1675–1721) produced some of the earliest depictions of Indigenous and enslaved people on Surinamese sugar plantations – idealized images that conceal the violence of colonialism. He also painted ornate hunting still lifes and portraits of patrons whose wealth derived from colonial trade and slavery. Through this very variety of genres, Valkenburg's paintings demonstrate the workings of the 'white gaze'. Edited by Willem de Rooij and Karwan Fatah-Black, this volume joins the first catalogue raisonné of Valkenburg's work – developed in collaboration with the RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History in The Hague – and a critical reader of newly commissioned essays by leading international scholars. Uniting voices from art history, anthropology, postcolonial and queer studies across Europe and the Americas, it contextualizes Valkenburg's oeuvre through interdisciplinary and transcultural dialogue. Conceived as a pendant to De Rooij's installation *Valkenburg* at the Centraal Museum Utrecht (2025), the book and exhibition together invite reflection on how eighteenth-century Dutch elites used visual culture to normalize colonial ideology.

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