

Taking Dutch Art Seriously: Now and Next?

Author(s): MARIËT WESTERMANN

Source: *Studies in the History of Art*, Vol. 74, Symposium Papers LI: Dialogues in Art History, from Mesopotamian to Modern: Readings for a New Century (2009), pp. 258-270

Published by: National Gallery of Art

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42622727>

Accessed: 11-04-2020 11:41 UTC

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MARIËT WESTERMANN

New York University

Taking Dutch Art Seriously: Now and Next?

I read the invitation to participate in this symposium with mounting anxiety. We were invited to speak about “current debates in the history of art” in our various fields of expertise. Current debate in seventeenth-century Dutch art, I thought—what debate? But Dutch art studies today could use one, and I thought my pairing with Svetlana Alpers as propitious as it was daunting. She would make sure there would be some. And the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts struck me as an appropriate venue, for the most pressing debate about the character of seventeenth-century Dutch art rose, waxed, and waned during the span of the center’s existence.

Because *then* is usually easier to assess than *now*, let alone *next?*, I will start around 1980, and with Svetlana Alpers’ work. Her feisty interventions of that period—I refer to her articles on the comic character and nostalgic generosity of Pieter Bruegel’s peasants and to the more famous *Art of Describing*—were in large part responsible for converting me from a political historian into a historian of pictures.¹ Like many, I had my doubts about Alpers’ claims about Bruegel and about the character of Dutch art, even though I lacked the knowledge to assess them. What excited me was their daring and ambition, their interdisciplinarity at a time when that word had hardly begun to exercise the academy, and their status as gauntlet, thrown down before what I thought of as a conser-

vative, staid, respectable discipline, something pursued by nice girls from the suburbs, girls not unlike myself.

The gauntlet was taken up by many, both inside and outside the history of Dutch art, and a quick sketch of the debate and the heady controversy that ensued may indicate why, for a spell, it made Dutch art studies central to art history at large. *The Art of Describing* took Dutch pictures seriously as visual art, that is, as works that make aesthetic and epistemological claims on our ocular attention rather than merely condensing and transmitting a prior textual knowledge (fig. 1). The book proposed that the quiddity of Dutch pictures is their descriptive impulse and their concomitant refusal to narrate. This, Alpers argued, makes them fundamentally unsuitable to the sort of iconography perfected by Erwin Panofsky for a classically based Italian art, and transposed by him onto early Netherlandish religious painting under the paradigm of “disguised symbolism.” This argument was pointed, for the reigning, still-young protocol for the analysis of seventeenth-century Dutch pictures was an iconography that considered disguised symbolism, flipped over as “apparent realism,” the operative principle of the ostensibly secular art of the Dutch Republic.²

The tight hold of iconography on the interpretation of these kinds of painting in the 1960s and 1970s may now seem curious.

Gerard de Lairesse, *Apollo and Aurora*, 1671, oil
The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Gift of Manuel E. and Ellen G.
Rionda, 1943 (43.118), photograph
© The Metropolitan Museum of
Art / Art Resource, New York

Iconography's explanatory model was compelling because it challenged a stale habit of seeing such paintings as unvarnished, unselective transcriptions of contemporary life. In the position articulated by Jan Emmens, Eddy de Jongh, and Hessel Miedema, Dutch pictures could literally be *read* as repositories of culturally determined meaning, a meaning that was grounded in textual genres outside painting, most seductively those of the emblem combining word and riddle. To art historians trained in the Warburgian tradition, this method would seem as old as art history itself, but it was a novelty for the historiography of Dutch painting, which had been strongly conditioned by Eugène Fromentin's influential view of this painting as essentially subjectless transcription, as an art for art's sake. The insight that these paintings might function as analogues for high literary texts and staunch moral tracts turned the paintings into quite sophisticated works in one sense—but into simple and decidedly nonvisual puzzles or sermons in another. It was this neglect of style, or, rather of representational aesthetics, I think, that *The Art of Describing* argued against, demanding a return to the visual in an art with an unparalleled commitment to opticality.

Many, particularly in the Dutch academy, were unwilling to relinquish the hard-won intellectual status and moral agency of seventeenth-century Dutch painting for what struck them as a return to Romantic orthodoxy. To others, most notably Peter Hecht, Alpers' views overintellectualized painting and painters. On the basis of market evidence and scant art criticism of the period, they argued that painters such as Gerrit Dou simply recycled motifs geared to the display of virtuosity. He frequently prefaced scenes of vastly different character with a telltale pile of armor, for example—a motif he had borrowed from the young Rembrandt, who was his teacher (figs. 2 and 3). This view disallowed Dutch art the capacity for articulating moral precepts, protoscientific thought, or forms of subjectivity—or at least saw any such functions as secondary or tertiary to competitive market interests.

Yet others who were sympathetic to Alpers' views, including myself, objected to the encompassing character of her model of Dutch picturing. They worried over the



1. David Bailly, *Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols*, 1651, oil on panel
Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden; photograph Erich Lessing / Art Resource, New York

2. Gerrit Dou, *Painter Writing by His Easel*, c. 1630, oil
Private collection

3. Rembrandt van Rijn, *History Painting*, 1626, oil on panel
Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal, Leiden



standing of Rembrandt and Jan Steen, central and successful Dutch painters not easily accommodated in a nonnarrative, anti-textual pictorial regime (fig. 4). It was in Steen, in fact, that I found *my* problem, in this painter for whom meaning seemed so much on the surface, on the one hand, but whose painting could not well be considered to be all about describing, either. Steen appeared to me a deliberate, latter-day Bruegelian, and just what that meant for his painting is what I set out to study, taking my initial cues from Alpers' articles on the historical situation of Bruegel's comic stance.³

All these public disagreements stimulated much new research and insight through the 1980s and early 1990s, yielding valuable studies of art and science in Vermeer, of Rembrandt's self-portraits, of a Netherlandish slant to Karel van Mander's art theory, of Hendrick Goltzius and the competition between older and newer media, of Samuel van Hoogstraten's illusionism.⁴ There were fine exhibitions on the competitiveness and reflexivity of Dutch *Feinmaler*, and many studies of the ways in which the Dutch luxury market shaped and mustered process

and product innovations.⁵ Not all of this exciting productivity through the 1980s and early 1990s was precipitated by *The Art of Describing*, but Alpers' arguments and their reception encouraged many younger as well as established scholars in the field to tackle fundamental questions about the character of Dutch painting.

Taking stock now, I regret that these robust discussions lacked a dialectic that yielded a position from which the field might tackle anew a central problem raised in different ways by Alpers, De Jongh, Hecht, and others. That problem is the status and function of the art image in the Netherlands after the iconoclasm of the 1560s and the political rise of a Calvinist church that was foundationally suspicious of the seductive powers of the image. Although the Calvinist proscription of images was doctrinally limited to their uses in devotion, in popular tracts it extended to all manner of paintings that might work temptation through the eyes, as Eric Jan Sluijter has shown.⁶ It remains a paradox of the Dutch Republic that a culture so publicly distrustful of visual knowledge and the seductions of sight should



4. Jan Steen, *A Village Revel (Diogenes)*, 1673, oil
 Buckingham Palace, London;
 photograph The Royal Collection,
 © 2008, Her Majesty Queen
 Elizabeth II

have fostered such a voluminous and varied pictorial production, and one so dedicated to the apparent transcription of things seen, to the creed that “seeing is believing.” This contradiction motivated much of the debate, though it was not often articulated in the heated bickering over this picture or that footnote. I would posit that the vehement defense in the Netherlands of iconography as the most trustworthy interpretive model for this art, phrased by one Dutch scholar as its ability to give us the “readable content” of a painting, is a late product of centuries of iconoclastic suspicion.⁷ That unease about taking the visual and aesthetic claims of this painting seriously extends to the term *art*: the author of a leading Dutch textbook on seventeenth-century painting prefers to refer to painters as painters, rather than artists, and emphasizes the contrast between the courtly status of artists in Italy and Central Europe and the relatively old-fashioned guild character of painting in many Dutch towns.⁸

In a brief excursion to the southern Netherlands, I would note that the efficacy

and valence of the post-iconoclastic image is a central problem for historians of early modern Flemish art as well. While historians of Dutch painting were engaged in the discussions I have just outlined, David Freedberg and Keith Moxey gave significant impulses to this field of inquiry in the south.⁹ Their work helped create the renewed sense of gravitas for the history of Netherlandish art that engendered studies such as Elizabeth Honig’s account of the market as a modern theme and motive in Flemish painting.¹⁰

Although this debate has died down, its competing theorizations of Dutch painting have not yielded resolution. Their concomitant art historical methods now rest uneasily alongside each other. In our teaching and writing, we tend to acknowledge lamely that there are just different ways of looking at the pictures, usually without offering sustained historical justification for their polysemousness. This tolerance makes for warmer collegiality, but it is an unsatisfactory platform from which to examine the relevance of these pictures to a larger understanding of the trajectory of art from the

Middle Ages to modernity, as much fun as we may have with our various research projects. Some questions that have occurred to me: Is polysemousness interested in finding out *what* pictures mean, or *how*? Does it license us to pursue any and all thought by any and all method at hand, and is that a good thing? And might it allow for the idea that art need not *mean* at all, in the senses we commonly attribute to that word—that art could just *be*, from time to time? The very instability of signification in pictures by artists such as Johannes Vermeer and Gerard ter Borch, their protocinematic inconclusiveness, is among their most distinctive interests (figs. 5 and 6), and yet this quality does not make them polysemous.

Our refusal to ask what might be locally distinctive about Dutch painting has much to do with an understandable allergy, especially virulent in the Netherlands, to inquiries into the “Dutchness” of Dutch art. Any claims to Dutch specificity are suspect after

5. Johannes Vermeer, *Woman with Water Pitcher*, c. 1662, oil
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Marquand Collection, Gift of Henry G. Marquand, 1889 (89.15.21); photograph © The Metropolitan Museum of Art



a century of violence perpetrated in the name of national identity, not least because such institutionalized violence was often legitimized by tendentious accounts of national history, character, and art. Seeing seventeenth-century Dutch art as continuous with its prenatal, late medieval past and in keeping with its more prestigious European counterparts is more soothing than asking how its difference and modernity might have been facilitated or demanded by the formation of a protonational state, or how it might have helped shape that entity.

This hesitation to see the significance of Dutch art in its novelties has had its happy scholarly results. Over the past three decades, art historians in the Netherlands and abroad have fruitfully recovered the wide variety of art produced in Holland that does not fit the realist label. Landmark studies and exhibitions have been dedicated to the cosmopolitan aspect of Dutch art, much of which was glamorous in its time and had self-conscious roots in the arts of France, Italy, and Central Europe. Seventeenth-century Dutch art looks richer, sexier, more complicated now, encompassing Caravaggesque painting, Italianate landscape, classical allegories, fanciful pastorals, portraits in the Van Dyckian mode, and slick pictures of the nude and the fashionably semidressed (figs. 7 and 8).¹¹

Nevertheless, the question of what in Dutch art constituted rupture with the local past and the European present can be rephrased in ways that do not require a commitment to essentialist understandings of Dutchness. The undeniable pluralism of Dutch artistic production does not absolve us from asking how these prestigious alternatives to Dutch “realisms” may have been shaped in conscious distinction to them. Pictures such as *Diogenes Looking for an Honest Man* (in a very Dutch marketplace) by Cesar van Everdingen, and *Alexander the Great and Diogenes* by Hendrik Heerschop, force us to ask how Dutch painting in the antique manner *differed* from its southern, classicizing counterparts (figs. 9 and 10). Difference is asserted here in part, especially by Van Everdingen, by absorption of the home-grown pictorial ploys of what Dutch art theory came to call “modern” painting, in contradistinction to what was called the



“antique.” To clarify this modern-antique distinction in shorthand, we may compare paintings by Gerard ter Borch and Gerard de Laresse (figs. 6 and 11). In the terms articulated by de Laresse himself in his treatise on painting of 1707, his own *Death of Germanicus* would represent the antique mode, and Ter Borch’s the inferior modern.¹²

Sustained examination of the “modern” and the “antique” in seventeenth-century Dutch painting might reopen the question of what options painting had, once its devotional functions were exhausted. In painting, or in any other cultural production for that matter, the “antique” referenced engagement with the unquestionably prestigious heritage of Greece and Rome, but it was not restricted as yet to our Winckelmannian “classical.” In its diachronic course through the seventeenth century, it could legitimately encompass an astonishing range of pictorial modes, including such stylistically distinct pictures as Pieter Lastman’s *Triumph of Sesostris* and Cesar van Everdingen’s *Parnassus* (figs. 12 and 13). And this plural-



6. Gerard ter Borch II, *Lady at Her Toilette*, c. 1660, oil
Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, Eleanor Clay Ford Fund, General Membership Fund, Endowment Income Fund, and Special Activities Fund; photograph © 1995 The Detroit Institute of Arts

7. Gerard de Laresse, *Apollo and Aurora*, 1671, oil
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Manuel E. and Ellen G. Rionda, 1943 [43.118]; photograph © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, New York

8. Bartholomeus van der Helst, *Anna du Pire as Granida*, 1660, oil on canvas
National Gallery in Prague; photograph © 2008 National Gallery in Prague



9. Cesar van Everdingen, *Diogenes Looking for an Honest Man*, 1652, oil on canvas laid down on panel
Royal Cabinet of Paintings
Mauritshuis, The Hague

10. Hendrik Heerschop, *Alexander the Great and Diogenes*, 1661, oil on canvas
Private collection



istic, often textually based antique did not limit itself to smooth nudes, bright and local color, and clear, sculptural outlines.

Throughout his career, Rembrandt re-enacted the feats of the great painters described by Pliny, but in ways that look anything but classical in our modern sense. Take, for example, the gleaming pile of armor that serves as conspicuous repoussoir in his *History Painting* of 1626 (see fig. 3). Its fine

display of the reflections of light off different types of metal recalls the textural mimesis of Zeuxis, whose grapes fooled birds, and especially that of Parrhasios, whose illusionistic cloth over a painting deceived even Zeuxis. As we have seen, the prominent shield in *History Painting* became a standard bit of virtuosity in the works of Gerrit Dou, Rembrandt's first pupil, who took his master's efforts in textural veracity to such heights of refinement that he became known in his time as the Dutch Parrhasios (see fig. 2).

The choice of shield may have metaphoric significance as well. In practice as in legend, the shield held primary artistic significance in the warlike culture of ancient Greece. Homer's description of the shield of Achilles, forged by the god Hephaestus himself, can be read not only as ekphrasis but also as a prompt to the visual arts, challenging picture makers to encompass all that is within their pictorial fields.¹³ A few years before his death, Rembrandt impersonated the old Zeuxis in one of his most curious self-portraits—and one whose motif and texture could not be more remote from the deceptively smooth grapes and the idealized maiden for which Zeuxis had gained fame (fig. 14).¹⁴

It should be possible to write a comprehensive and diversified history of the Dutch pictorial antique, or rather antiques—an analysis of the Dutch Parnassus, as a versatile circle of Amsterdam writers identified itself at midcentury. Such a project would tell us much about early Dutch processes of identification for artists, their private and institutional customers, and the nascent Dutch nation-state. A narrative of this kind would analyze the role of the new Dutch realisms in the transculturation of antique material to suit contemporary needs and interests. It would situate rather than exclude Rembrandt's performative version of the antique and the picturesque real he represents.

The point is not to argue that Dutch painters really *did* know antiquity—of course they did—but rather how they drew on it as a fount of nascent modernity. Dutch artists were selective about the antique tropes they transformed for their own purposes, often with a radical disregard for their forms seldom seen in the south. The antique offered



11. Gerard de Lairesse, *Death of Germanicus*, c. 1675/1680, oil on canvas
Gemäldegalerie alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kassel



12. Pieter Lastman, *Triumph of Sesostris*, 1631, oil on panel
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Philip N. Lilienthal Jr., 44.16



13. Cesar van Everdingen, *Four Muses and Pegasus on Parnassus*, c. 1650, oil on canvas
Royal Collection, Huis ten Bosch, The Hague

14. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait as Zeuxis*, c. 1663, oil on canvas
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne; photograph Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz / Art Resource, New York

painting challenges that could lend it new and necessary functions: the articulation of a republican ethos and civic morality; the promotion of the House of Orange or its opponents; the postprandial entertainment; and eventually, the forging of a proto-Winckelmannian classicism that extended well beyond painting and eventually deeply into the educational structure of the modern Dutch state (as of many others). But the antique also offered painting reassurances beyond these instrumentalist aims, reshaping the idea of painting as support for thought, secular, quiet, and mirrorlike, and stimulating a new discourse of painting

about painting, self-reflexive and deeply hopeful of its transhistorical identity with the pictorial art of the ancients.¹⁵

The Dutch Parnassus happens to be my current interest, but it is only one of many projects that get us back to fundamental questions about art in an early capitalist culture that was at once iconoclast and iconophile, and that give us terms for the transhistorical import of that art. Other such books and dissertations have recently been completed, are just under way, or could be conceived.¹⁶ Svetlana Alpers and I agreed, however, that we should not be too bossy here about the *next* in the history of Dutch art. Coordinating PhD dissertations in the manner of European schools of research is anathema to the pluralism of the Anglo-American academy, and I believe that, for all its drawbacks, this open system produced the kinds of interventions that made the 1980s a terribly exciting time to enter our field.

It may be so again, and if it is, some of the credit belongs to the study of visual culture, even though I am not enthusiastic about it as a discipline, any more than I would be about a field called auditory culture. It seems to me that art history has taken the challenges of visual culture quite seriously, whether by absorption or contradiction, not



so much because art history has always been about visual culture, as some would have it, but rather because visual culture studies stepped in to fill a lacuna in our own discipline at a particular time. That lacuna is the hesitation on the part of art historians to acknowledge and account for the aesthetic power of our objects of study, a reluctance alien to founding fathers such as Alois Riegl and Aby Warburg but readily identifiable in Panofsky's later work. In its early formulation by W. J. T. Mitchell and others, visual culture studies challenged art historians to identify the shifting, blurry zone in culture where oral or written production ends and the visual begins, where culture meets and challenges biology, and vice versa.¹⁷

The visual-culture enterprise has forced us to ask how visual works of art speak in ways unavailable to verbal objects. I believe that this is what *The Art of Describing* tried to do, without, I grant my interlocutor, needing any external impulse. But the reception of the book also indicates that most art historians in our field were not so self-motivated and benefited from the nudge. In its strongest manifestations, the study of visual culture has not compromised empirical rigor; it has not caused the de-skilling lamented by many or the complete leveling of the critical or philosophical valence of all visual products. In the United States, departments that have been serious about making art history talk to visual culture are producing work that depends on commitment to field research and an art history that analyzes the roles and charges of images we might yet call art.¹⁸

NOTES

1. See the following by Svetlana Alpers: "Bruegel's Festive Peasants," *Simiolus* 6 (1972-1973): 163-176; "Realism as a Comic Mode: Low-Life Painting Seen through Bredero's Eyes," *Simiolus* 8 (1975-1976): 115-144; and *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago, 1983).
2. For further consideration of the debate about *The Art of Describing* and its effects on Dutch art studies, see Mariët Westermann, "After Iconography and Iconoclasm: Current Research in Netherlandish Art, 1566-1700," *Art Bulletin* 84, no. 2 (June 2002): 351-372.
3. Mariët Westermann, *The Amusements of Jan Steen: Comic Painting in the Seventeenth Century*, *Studies in Netherlandish Art and Cultural History*, 1 (Zwolle, 1997); Alpers 1972-1973; Alpers 1975-1976.
4. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., *Vermeer and the Art of Painting* (New Haven and London, 1995); Ben Broos and Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., *Johannes Vermeer* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art] (Washington, 1995); Ivan Gaskell and Michiel Jonker, eds., *Vermeer Studies*, National Gallery of Art, *Studies in the History of Art*, vol. 55 (Washington, 1998); Walter Liedtke, *A View of Delft: Vermeer and His Contemporaries* (Zwolle, 2000); Walter Liedtke et al., *Vermeer and the Delft School* [exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art] (New York, 2001); Philip Steadman, *Vermeer's Camera: Uncovering the Truth behind the Masterpieces* (Oxford, 2001); H. Perry Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Identity* (Princeton, 1989); Christopher White and Quentin Buvelot, eds., *Rembrandt by Himself* [exh. cat., National Gallery] (London, 1999); Walter S. Melion, *Shaping the Netherlandish Canon: Karel van Mander's Schilder-Boeck* (Chicago, 1991); Walter S. Melion, "Love and Artisanry in Hendrick Goltzius's *Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres* of 1606," *Art History* 16 (1993): 60-94; Walter S. Melion, "Self-Imaging and the Engraver's Virtù: Hendrick Goltzius's *Pietà* of 1598," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 46 (1996): 105-143; Celeste Brusati, *Artifice and Illusion: The Art and Writing of Samuel van Hoogstraten* (Chicago, 1995).
5. Eric Jan Sluijter et al., *De Leidse fijnschilders: Van Gerrit Dou tot Frans van Mieris de Jonge, 1630-1760* [exh. cat., Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal] (Leiden, 1988); Peter Hecht, *De Hollandse fijnschilders: Van Gerard Dou tot Adriaen van der Werff* [exh. cat., Rijksmuseum] (Amsterdam, 1989); Eric Jan Sluijter, "Over fijnschilders en 'betekenis': naar aanleiding van Peter Hecht, *De Hollandse fijnschilders*," *Oud Holland* 105 (1991): 53-55. For a brief introduction to the many recent studies of reciprocal interactions between market, artist, work, and consumer (particularly the foundational research of J. Michael Montias), and for recent new work in this vein, see Reindert Falkenburg and Mariët Westermann, eds., *Art for the Market*, vol. 50 of the *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* (1999).

6. Eric Jan Sluijter, "Didactic and Disguised Meanings? Several Seventeenth-Century Texts on Paintings and the Iconological Approach to Northern Dutch Paintings of this Period," in *Art in History, History in Art: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture*, ed. David Freedberg and Jan de Vries (Santa Monica, Calif., 1991), 175–207.
7. In response to Alpers' work on Bruegel, Hessel Miedema wrote: "The over-valuation of sensual observation, of everyday events, and of experiencing the object emotionally, has led to a suppression of the decipherable content. It is an over-valuation which ignores the fact that the visual arts of the first decades of the seventeenth century display an overwhelming preference for the expression of ideas, for underlining the importance of salvation, and for an intellectual comprehension of the subjects depicted." Hessel Miedema, "Realism and Comic Mode: The Peasant," *Simiolus* 9 (1977): 205–219; for a more extensive statement of the presumably ahistorical modernity of an aesthetic reading of past art, see Hessel Miedema, *Kunst historisch* (Maarssen, 1989). For more specific arguments against trusting the evidence of our eyes in the case of Frans Hals and in the absence of textually verifiable meaning, see P. J. Vinken and E. de Jongh, "De boosaardigheid van Hals' regenten en regentessen," *Oud Holland* 78 (1963): 1–26. The case for trusting the evidence of our viewing pictures, with historical checks and balances, is made by Svetlana Alpers in "Taking Pictures Seriously: A Reply to Hessel Miedema," *Simiolus* 10 (1978–1979): 46–50.
8. Bob Haak, *The Golden Age: Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Elizabeth Willems-Treeman (New York, 1984). In 1977, Miedema criticized "the present over-valuation of the phenomenon 'art'" over "the intellectual comprehension of the subject" and argued that the concept of *art* was "poised for a sharp and fully justified fall in appreciation" (Miedema 1977, 206).
9. See the following by David Freedberg: "The Representation of Martyrdoms in the Early Counter Reformation in Antwerp," *Burlington Magazine* 118 (1976): 128–138; "The Hidden God: Image and Interdiction in the Netherlands in the Sixteenth Century," *Art History* 5, no. 2 (1982): 133–153; *Iconoclasm and Painting in the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1566–1609* (New York and London, 1988). See also Keith P. F. Moxey, *Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer, and the Rise of Secular Painting in the Context of the Reformation* (New York, 1977).
10. Elizabeth Alice Honig, *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp* (New Haven, 1998).
11. Albert Blankert, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Italianate Landscape Painters*, rev. ed. (Soest, 1977); Albert Blankert et al., *Gods, Saints and Heroes: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art] (Washington, 1980); Alison McNeil Kettering, *The Dutch Arcadia: Pastoral Art and Its Audience in the Golden Age* (Montclair, N.J., 1983); Albert Blankert et al., *Nieuw licht op de Gouden Eeuw: Hendrick Terbrugghen en tijdgenoten* [exh. cat., Centraal Museum] (Utrecht, 1986); Anne W. Lowenthal, *Joachim Wtewael and Dutch Mannerism* (Doornspijk, 1986); David A. Levine and Ekkehard Mai, eds., *I Bamboccianti: Niederländische Malerrebellen im Rom des Barock* [exh. cat., Wallraf-Richartz Museum] (Cologne, 1991); Peter van den Brink and Jos de Meyere, eds., *Het gedroomde land: Pastorale schilderkunst in de Gouden Eeuw* [exh. cat., Centraal Museum] (Frankfurt, 1993); Albert Blankert et al., *Dutch Classicism in Seventeenth-Century Painting* [exh. cat., Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen] (Rotterdam, 1999); for this last exhibition, see also my review in *Burlington Magazine* 142 (March 2000): 186–189.
12. Lisa Vergara, "Antiek and Modern in Vermeer's *Lady Writing a Letter with Her Maid*," in Gaskell and Jonker 1998, 235–255; Mariët Westermann, "Vermeer y la imaginación interior," in Alexander Vergara, ed., *Vermeer y el interior holandés* [exh. cat., Museo Nacional del Prado] (Madrid, 2003), 59–93 (English trans., 219–234), especially 87–91, 231–233; Mariët Westermann, *Johannes Vermeer: Rijksmuseum Dossier* (Amsterdam, 2004), 49–56.
13. Homer, *Iliad*, 18. The gigantic shield is more than a masterpiece of metalworking—although Homer makes clear that it was certainly that, consistently referring to Hephaestus as "the famous crippled smith" as if to underscore the marvel of his artful strength. In Homer's verse it becomes a cosmic field of representation rimmed by the Oceanus River, the stream that, to the Greeks, represented the end of the known world and the border between lands of the living and the dead. Within, the shield harbors earth, sky, and sea, the sun and the moon, and all the constellations above. And there are finely wrought images of two noble cities full of men, one at peace and one at war. A wedding and a civil judgment are conducted in the one, detailed in the rituals of dance and jurisprudence; despair and violence reign in the other, besieged and war-torn. All around are well-plowed fields and lush meadows, vineyards, and orchards, worked by young men and women, grazed by cattle and sheep. The lovely rustic scenes are disturbed occasionally by human and animal violence, but on balance the shield's panoramic vision reminds its bearer—and Homer's listeners—of the greater goods of peace and of war's lesser honor. Although Homer is careful to remind his listeners that all this was shown in gold, silver, and tin, the scope of the shield of Achilles evokes monumental painting in full color, of a kind the Greeks had but of which nothing now survives except its reductions in vase painting. The accomplishment of Hephaestus in hammered metal becomes a model for painting and its mimetic purpose.
14. Albert Blankert, "Rembrandt, Zeuxis and Ideal Beauty," in *Album amicorum J. G. van Gelder*, ed. Josua Bruyn et al. (The Hague, 1973), 32–39.

15. For early modern painting's awareness of its history and reflection on its identity, see Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (New Haven and London, 1983); Stephen Bann, *The True Vine: On Visual Representation and the Western Tradition* (Cambridge and New York, 1989); and, with particular reference to Netherlandish painting, Victor I. Stoichita, *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Meta-Painting*, trans. Anne-Marie Glasheen (Cambridge and New York, 1997).

16. See, for example, Mia Mochizuki, "The Reform of Devotion: Art in the St. Bavo Church before and after the Reformation" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2001); Frits Scholten, *Sumptuous Memories: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Tomb Sculpture*, *Studies in Netherlandish Art and Cultural History* 5, (Zwolle, 2003); Elmer E. P. Kolfin, "Een geselschap jonge luyden: Productie, functie en betekenis van Noord-Nederlandse voorstellingen van vrolijke gezelschappen 1610-1645" (PhD diss., Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, 2002). H. Perry Chapman has launched a research project into the Netherlandish artist's studio as pictorial theme and as site of art production and constitution of artistic identity.

17. W. J. T. Mitchell, "What Is Visual Culture?" in *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Views from the Outside. A Centennial Commemoration of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. Irving Lavin (Princeton, 1995), 207-217; W. J. T. Mitchell, "Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture," in *Art History, Aesthetics, Visual Studies*, ed. Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (Williamstown, Mass., New Haven, and London, 2002), 231-250.

18. I am thinking particularly of the University of Chicago, the University of Rochester, and the University of California-Irvine, where art history and visual culture have been linked programmatically in varying ways, and to productive effect.