

## BOOK REVIEWS

David Bomford, Jo Kirby, Ashok Roy, Axel Rüger, Raymond White

**Art in the making: Rembrandt** (New Edition)

**National Gallery Company London, 2006**

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The first edition of *Art in the Making: Rembrandt*, published in 1988 to accompany an exhibition in the National Gallery, London, was a pioneering publication in the field of technical investigation of Rembrandt's painting technique. A result of interdisciplinary collaboration between a painting conservator, (three) conservation scientists and a curator of Dutch painting, this integrated approach exemplifies what has come to be known as 'technical art history.'

While the 1988 catalogue contains technical and art historical information on 19 of the National Gallery's paintings by Rembrandt, as well as one loan, the *New Edition*, brought out in 2006 to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rembrandt's birth, deals with 27 paintings from the collection. This includes 21 works on canvas and panel by Rembrandt, ranging in date from 1629 to 1669, spanning almost his entire artistic production with the exception of the earliest pictures from 1624–28 not found in the Gallery's collection. It also includes the 1629 picture from the early Leiden period on loan to the Gallery, as well as one re-attributed painting from c.1630, *Anna and the Blind Tobit*, previously thought to be by Rembrandt's first pupil, Gerrit Dou, as well as another 6 works that are described as 'followers of Rembrandt'. Remarkably, in the *New Edition* much of the text from the first edition has remained unaltered, albeit much more comprehensive as it contains pertinent additions as a result of developments in Rembrandt scholarship that took place over the last two decades. Both editions are exemplary in demonstrating the importance of technical findings for questions of attribution, and in furthering our understanding of Rembrandt's painting technique and artistic production. The *New Edition* succeeds even further, by placing the technical findings in a broader art historical context and elaborating on their relation to works of pupils/associates and other contemporary artists, as well as other production centres, particularly the Southern Netherlands.

The new book is essentially divided into two main sections: essays and catalogue entries, preceded by a short introduc-

tion, and followed by (essay) notes, tables, glossary and extensive bibliography. Certainly the absence of notes in the essays in the 1988 edition (with the exception of the section on pigments) made it less useful in this regard than it could have been. In the introduction, the contribution of significant Rembrandt studies is acknowledged, referring to the importance of the work carried by the Rembrandt Research Project, namely the *Corpus* volumes of 1982, 1986, 1989 and 2005, as well as significant studies carried out by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis in The Hague. Strangely both editions do not mention the important early interdisciplinary study, *Rembrandt in the Mauritshuis*,<sup>1</sup> published in English, already in 1978 - some ten years earlier than the first edition of *Art in the Making: Rembrandt*. Being one of the first publications of such interdisciplinary collaboration, it contains extensive technical analyses and insights into the physical structure of 16 pictures by Rembrandt and his followers in the collection of the Mauritshuis.

### Essays

In the *New edition* the order of the essays is more logically organized. The first essay by Jo Kirby deals with studio practice, and much new information is added regarding historic sources, relevance of art theory and the organisation of Rembrandt's studio. Most striking, in the essay on grounds by Ashok Roy, is the use of the historic Dutch word *primuersel* to describe the dull-coloured priming layer applied on top of the ground layer in panel paintings. It is rather odd that there is no note to the primary source to indicate the origin of the word.<sup>2</sup> This in contrast to the discussion by David Bomford, in his essay on paint layers, of the difficulties encountered in the use of the historic term *doodverf*. The author refers to the extensive study elsewhere of Rembrandt's grounds by Karin Groen<sup>3</sup>, but also states that interpretation of the uniqueness of the artist's ground layers remains complicated since the techniques of only relatively few seventeenth-century artists have been comprehensively studied. Strangely enough, no use was made of the analyses of the ground layers of contemporary artists in Groen's article, nor that which has appeared in recent collection catalogues.<sup>4</sup> The chronologically organized table on the structure of grounds contains, like in the first edition, clear information on the build-up, composition and colour of the ground layers of all the catalogued paintings. Generally speaking the early pictures have light grounds (Rembrandt's panel production falls into this category) with darker grounds appearing from the 1640s onwards,

when he started using canvas exclusively (this trend being consistent with a general trend in the seventeenth century towards the use of darker grounds). From the table it is also clear that umber, as well as charcoal black, feature most often in combination with lead white in the upper grounds. That umber was often used, is a result of its good drying properties and warm colour. More could also have been made of some of the difficulties in interpretation since is not always straight forward; Rembrandt's second ground layers/priming are often irregularly applied so that both ground layers are not always included in paint cross-sections.

The essay on the paint layers (Bomford) is more complete, including mention of Rembrandt's debt to Titian and some discussion on the sort of pentiments one encounters in Rembrandt's paintings. With regard to the paint layers much is to be found in the individual entries.

The section on Rembrandt's palette by Roy and Kirby is significantly expanded with much new information regarding identification, nomenclature, degradation and methods of manufacture of the most commonly encountered pigments used by Rembrandt: lead white, chalk, lead-tin yellow, earth pigments including Cassel earth, red and yellow lakes, bone black, charcoal black, azurite, smalt and vermilion. Within these groups, several sorts/grades with their own inherent hue and texture were available which allowed for great variation. Some pigments were not used as much for their own colour, as for their tinting, textural, and drying properties. Rembrandt, who made great use of transparent pigments, even would mix various lakes together in elaborate mixtures with earth pigments, black and smalt in order to achieve his characteristic translucent paints. The identification of previously unidentifiable organic lakes, particularly red Brazilwood and yellow Buckthorn lakes is significant. Smalt, a blue/grey (potash glass) pigment, is another pigment where there is significant new information regarding degradation phenomena - largely as a result of studies by Jaap Boon et al.<sup>5</sup> This pigment which is much used by many seventeenth-century painters, has several functions in Rembrandt's paintings: as a blue or grey pigment, for bulking, texturing, and added translucency, particularly in his late pictures, but also to enhance drying. The formation of lead soap aggregates in lead-tin yellow is discussed; though no mention is made of their formation in lead white paint layers even though the appropriate articles are found in the bibliography.

Clearly the most significant finding in the section on Rembrandt's binding medium is that Rembrandt and the circle of painters associated with him, used linseed oil almost exclusively. There is no evidence to suggest he used

additives of any sort to modify the handling and optical properties of his paint, but rather relied on the inherent properties conferred by the pigments added to the oil. It is also notable where egg was reported as part of the binding medium, that this result is now understood to be due to the presence of metal soaps as a result of saponification processes in smalt-rich paints. This means that complementary analytical techniques, such as Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) should be carried out, as well as gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) to aid in the identification of the binding medium.

### Catalogue entries

The catalogue entries of the Rembrandt paintings (cat. nos. 1-21) followed by the three paintings by the artist's followers (cat. nos. 22-27) are organized chronologically and are much more comprehensive, providing the reader with a clear grasp of the complexity and subtlety of Rembrandt scholarship. It is noteworthy that every entry contains a full page X-radiograph, however only in a few cases are Infrared images included as well. Since the latter often provide complementary information to that of X-radiographs, it is usually instructive to look at both, as for example in *A Woman Bathing in a Stream* from 1654. Numerous cross-sections from each painting - as many as 6 per picture - provide clear documentation of the paint layers. Illustrations of related paintings or drawings, either by Rembrandt himself, pupils/associates or related pictures by other artists that could have served as sources of inspiration, are also included. For instance, the entry on the *Self Portrait at the Age of 34* from 1640 is illustrated with compelling self-portraits by Dürer, Titian and Raphael, and points to the difficulties in establishing clear formal sources, since Rembrandt never directly copies but rather uses other works as a point of departure. In the entries one also finds relevant discussions of the physical structure and art historical context, which have led to new attributions and re-interpretations. As a result *Anna and the Blind Tobit* of c.1630 is now re-attributed to Rembrandt. Ernst van de Wetering's idea regarding the function of some paintings as oil studies, has recently led to the reassessment of several pictures, including the bust length *Portrait of Margaretha de Greer* of 1661, which can now be considered an oil study for the larger, more carefully constructed *Portrait of Margaretha de Greer* from around the same time.<sup>6</sup> The presence of the chalk-rich ground in this picture, which had been considered something of an anomaly in the entry in the first edition, is no longer considered unusual given similar chalk-rich grounds layers were found by Groen in other late pictures.

The candid entries on Rembrandt followers are a valuable

addition; particularly the inclusion of arguments used in the past in support of their attribution/de-attribution. Although the bibliography listed at the end of each entry is selective, this is made up for by the annotated bibliography at the end of the book compiled by Kirby and handily divided into 4 sections: primary sources, unpublished seventeenth-century sources, scientific and technical reports, as well as a general bibliography.

### Concluding remarks

While intended for the (educated) public, the book's greatest appeal and value must lie with students, connoisseurs and professionals in the field wanting a clear overview of the material.

For the non-specialist, such an abundance of technical information might suggest that this new publication contains everything there is to know about Rembrandt.

However, to those in the field, the conclusions presented are really about interpretation of technical data - a process quite aptly described in the introduction of the *New Edition* as connoisseurship of technical images, since in reality much of this information is subject to interpretation, deduction and technical advances in the same way as any other academic field is.

On a practical note, the different lay out of the *Second Edition* allows for more white on the page making reading easier on the eye, though in my opinion the three columns of the first edition, made the information easier to locate. It

is also notable that the term 'Technical description' is no longer used, but rather 'description of the painting technique' or 'physical description'. Unfortunately some of the images in the second edition appear slightly out of focus, which combined with the matt paper means loss of definition and contrast compared to the images in the first edition. This is particularly the case with the X-radiographs.

The clear and readable editorial tone that we have become accustomed to in the annual *National Gallery Technical Bulletins* makes these kind of technical studies compelling reading; unfortunately technical studies are often considered too dry (or worse, not significant enough) by many museum curators to be included in exhibition or collection catalogues. The valuable contribution to the Rembrandt literature of *Art in the Making: Rembrandt (New Edition)* must surely lie with its ability to assimilate technical findings in a cogent and intelligent art historical context and the insight to comprehend the implications of these findings. On both accounts, the National Gallery's *New Edition* succeeds admirably, the entries as well as the data it presents in the form of images, X-radiographs, tables, cross-sections, provide invaluable documentation and a clear overview of the complexity of Rembrandt scholarship for the connoisseur and non-specialist alike.

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### Notes

1 A. B de Vries, M. Tóth-Ubbens, W. Froentjes, *Rembrandt in the Mauritshuis*, (The Hague, 1978).

2 Karel van Mander (1604) used the term to apply to both ground and priming layers. Fols. 226r, 216v, ed. H. Miedema, (Doornspijk, 1994). See J. Wadum 'Primuersel or imprimatura?', *KM*, 13 (1995), 22-24. For the term *imprimatura*, see N. van Hout, 'Meaning and Development of the Ground Layer in Seventeenth Century Painting', in E. Hermens et

al. eds., *Looking through Paintings*, Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek, 11 (London/Baarn, 1998), 199-225.

3 K. Groen, 'Grounds in Rembrandt's workshop and in paintings by his contemporaries', E. van de Wetering, *Corpus IV*, (Dordrecht, 2005), 318-334, Tables II-VII, 660-667. Table VII lists grounds of contemporaneous artists.

4 For descriptions of ground layers see: *Dutch Painting in the National Gallery of Art*, ed. A. Wheelock, (Washington DC, 1984), as well as in

*Catalogue of the Dutch School 1600-1900*, Vols. 1&2, N. MacLaren, ed. C. Brown, (London, 1991). Microscopic and (often) chemical analyses of the ground layers was carried out on all seventeenth-century portraits in the Mauritshuis, see individual entries in B. Broos and A. van Suchtelen, *Portraits in the Mauritshuis 1430-1790*, (The Hague/Zwolle, 2004), also Table of Methods and Results, 334-335.

5 J.J. Boon, K. Keune, J. Van der Weerd, M. Geldof, and J.R.J. Van

Asperen de Boer, 'Imaging microspectroscopic, secondary ion mass spectrometric and electron microscopic studies on discoloured and partially discoloured smalt in cross sections of 16th century paintings', *Chimia*, 55, 952-960.

6 E. van de Wetering, 'Rembrandt's oil studies: new light on an old problem', in E. van de Wetering, *Rembrandt The Quest of a Genius* [exh.cat., Museum Het Rembrandthuis, Amsterdam] (Zwolle/Amsterdam, 2006), 179-207.

Anna Bartl, Christoph Krekel, Manfred Lautenschlager, Doris Oltrogge  
**Der »Liber illuministarum« aus Kloster Tegernsee. Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar der kunst-technologischen Rezepte.**

Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005/Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg  
ISBN 3-515-08472-X  
Hardcover, 833 pages, €64,00

Art technological source research is an important and much needed contribution to the understanding of art production in the past and present. The ATSR working group (on probation ICOM-CC) is one of the initiatives supporting this kind of research, which so far has resulted in two symposia (Amsterdam, 2004, and Madrid, 2006) with accompanying publications, and acting as a stimulant for further research in this fascinating field.<sup>1</sup> Technical treatises, manuals, ledgers, artists' correspondence, personal dairies, artists' interviews etc. can provide insights in the artists' practice and use of materials, it can reveal particularities in workshop production and collaboration, but also support a correct interpretation of the artist's original intent. Therefore it plays a significant role in present day conservation practice as well as art historical research; it is also an important part of the relatively young research area of technical art history.

Publications of painstaking transcriptions of these often hard to decipher and not easy accessible documents are therefore invaluable. In many cases however, these transcriptions, sometimes with translation in 'modern' language and even though of great use, are sparsely annotated, which makes a correct interpretation of the contents difficult as terminology can be obscure and have various meanings. Yet, with the publication of the medieval recipe collection *Liber illuministarum* also known as the Tegernsee manuscript by Anna Bartl, Christoph Krekel, Manfred Lautenschlager, and Doris Oltrogge, the authors have delivered a tour de force, resulting in an exemplary edition of an art-technological text, using a formula, which will hopefully be followed by others.

The *Liber illuministarum pro fundamentis auri et coloribus ac consimilibus collectus ex diversis* is part of a manuscript collection from the Benedictine Monastery in Tegernsee that came to the Bavarian State Library in Munich in 1803 (Sign. Cgm 821). The 213 folios contain art technological recipes with a, slightly later, addition of technical, alchemical, medical, mathematical, pyrotechnical and household recipes. The *Liber illuministarum*, as its full title suggests ('A book for the book illuminator, on grounds for gold, colours

and similar collected from various [sources]'), is in principle – although a systematic structure is lacking – an instruction manual for the book illuminators and scribes workshop. The art-technological section contains over 750 recipes representing the practice of a scriptorium, with extensive descriptions of the preparation and dyeing of parchments and leather, preparation of pigments and dyestuffs, as well as painting and gilding/silvering techniques. The recipes, derived from a variety of sources on contemporary materials and techniques, were compiled and copied by the Tegernsee Monks, and especially by the monastery's librarian Konrad Sartori, in the second half of the fifteenth century.

The main focus of the authors /editors was to edit all the art-technological recipes of the *Liber*, including the whole spectrum of artisan techniques such as those of gold and silver smiths, metal workers, and textile and leather dyers, glass-stone and wood workers. The art-technological recipes are presented in full with an annotated translation in modern German (printed on the facing page), thus making these often obscure texts accessible, and disclose them both in a linguistic as well as technical manner. Other non-art-technological recipes occupy a separate section, all represented by their Incipit and with a short mention of relevant ingredients and methods, with of a small number the full text if they have some kind of relation to the art-technological recipes, or focus on pyrotechnical aspects. For example, the alchemy recipes, especially instructions on the preparation and use of chemicals and other materials that are mentioned in the art-technological section, are reproduced in full.

The present 833 page publication provides the first complete and very thorough edition of the art-technological recipes of which so far only 'example' recipes were published. The edition starts with two introductory Chapters 2-3; the first a fascinating account by Manfred Lautenschlager of the genesis of medieval recipe compilations/texts. In the second chapter Doris Oltrogge discusses in a detailed and insightful way the sources for the *Liber*, the structure and tradition of such medieval recipe compilations, and the way information was passed on. It also provides concordances with five other contemporary manuscripts.

Chapter 4 introduces the manuscript with a detailed description of its physical appearance and composition, the paper used, the handwriting etc. Chapter 5 gives the transcription, including all the peculiarities of the various hands of copyists, typical copyists' mistakes and cancellations. Notes added in the margin by the copyists are also

reproduced and are all clearly indicated as such. The modern German translation has added words between square brackets to improve understanding. A 'G' added indicates that the term is explained in the Glossary. In the accompanying 'Kommentar' at the bottom of each (original text) page, specific jargon is explained and the corresponding section numbers in Chapter 6 (the full comment on the manuscript) are indicated. Individual recipe comments are placed in footnotes with the translation (facing page).

The extensive explanatory comments are put together in Chapter 6, with sections on: gilding and silvering, preparation of colours, preparation of binding media and dyestuffs, painting technique, ink, dyeing, leather and parchment preparation, encaustic painting, metal technique, as well as on labouring of glass, horn and ivory. The separate sections are accompanied by clear and useful Tables, which list all the original terms with in the next columns the composition of the materials indicated and their use. For example, in the Table on gilding and silvering techniques the columns following the chapter number and the original medieval German or Latin term are: Fillers/colorants; Binding medium; Additives; Ground layer; Type of gilding; Application.

This whole chapter with comments on the recipes in the Liber is exemplary, very clear and extremely informative, making this publication almost a 'manual' on medieval artist- and artisan techniques, and providing many new insights in this so far often obscure matter.

The problems of the interpretation of the terminology used and the function of the recipes are also discussed. Terms can have more than one meaning, have become obsolete, or need decoding; the instructions/descriptions are often limited, enigmatic or sometimes simply nonsense. One should also note that copyists make mistakes, which can result in transmitting wrong information. Also, contemporary raw materials are often dissimilar to what they would be today, all depending on the source they came from. Plant names are especially problematic and in Chapter 6 and the Glossary, ample attention is paid to them in particular. All these aspects need to be taken into account when interpret-

ing historical technical texts. Medieval terminology is therefore also problematic for translations in modern jargon but the authors have done a tremendous job blancing translation and use of original jargon and the translation reads well.

The excellent and illuminating Glossary (Chapter 7: 170 pages long!) which provides an interpretation of the Latin or medieval German terms used, based on extensive linguistic and contextual evidence, is extremely useful not only for readers of this book but for anyone researching similar material. This is followed by Chapter 8 where medieval measures and weights are explained, an extensive bibliography and index.

Part of the recipes has been published before by, among others, Ludwig Rockinger (1873), Ernst Berger (1897), Charles Eastlake (1841) and Emil Ernst Ploss (1962). More recent publications discuss the use of press brocade and gilding techniques.<sup>2</sup> However, the present publication, which is the result of a research project running over many years and published by the Franz Steiner Verlag in collaboration with the Germanisches National Museum, is the first full edition of the art-technological recipes in the Liber, providing its readers with a treasure chest of information on artistic production of this particular period. Dedicated to Thomas Brachert, one of the founders of Art-technological research at the National Museum, it is the most complete edition in terms of comments and added research of an art-technological manuscript so far (to my knowledge). The extensive comments, explanatory chapters and glossary could almost function independently as a comprehensive text on medieval studio practice. Although in terms of practical use, the 'technicalities' of the edition require an effort by the reader, this is an exemplary book, which model should be followed for future editions of other important recipe collections and technical treatises. There is only one thing to regret: the fact that it is in German will restrict access to this excellent and extensive source of information.

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#### Notes

1 M. Clarke, J. H. Townsend and A. Stijnman eds., *Art of the Past - Sources and Reconstructions*, (London, 2004); ATSR Madrid conference papers, forthcoming 2008.

2 L. Rockinger, 'Zum Bayerischen

Schriftwesen im Mittelalter, in *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philolog.-Histor. Kl. XII*, 1.2. (Munich, 1872-1873); E. Berger, *Quellen und Technik der Fresko-, Öl- und Tempera-Malerei des Mittelalters*

von der byzantinischen Zeit..., (Munich, 1897); Sir Ch. Eastlake, *Materials for a History of Oil Painting*, (London, 1841); E.E. Ploss, *Ein Buch von alten Farben*, (Munich, 1962); B. Hecht, 'Betrachtungen über Pressbrot', *Maltechnik-Restaur*,

86.1 (1980), 22-49; J.M. Nadolny, *The Techniques and Use of Gilded Relief Decoration by Northern European Painters, ca. 1200-1500*, [unpublished diss. Courtauld Institute of Art], (London, 2000).

## PROJECTS

### The Impact of Oil

The Universities of Amsterdam and Utrecht have recently started a new research project called: the *Impact of Oil*. This rather ambitious project aims to study the history of the introduction, dissemination, and development of the use of oil mediums in panel painting in the Low Countries, from 1350 to 1550.

Arguably, no other invention than the development of oil painting contributed so much to the specific identity of the visual arts in the West, and to the privileged position painting managed to acquire among those arts. In this respect it was found surprising that the origins and subsequent history of oil painting in the Netherlands, its effects, and its reception in art theory, have never been the subject of integral research and historiography.

The *Impact of Oil* aims to address these fundamental questions. To do this a number of issues need to be resolved, such as:

The history of the emergence of oil painting, and its relevant history before van Eyck; the technical and stylistic innovations in oil-painting in the works of the Van Eyck and contemporaries – 1420-1450; and the general evolution of the technique during the fifteenth century; and its spread from Flanders to other regions in Europe until 1500, in particular in the Northern Netherlands.

Also the dissemination of a number of iconographical motifs associated with this migration, and the rise of an iconography of the studio, and the changing image of the painter as well as the consequences of oil paint for art theory, such as the emergence of the seminal *colore-disegno* debate, will be subject of attention. The changes in technique and working methods in the Low Countries, ca. 1510-30, and the general evolution of the technique etc. until 1550 will also be studied.

These questions will be addressed in a range of smaller ‘sub’- projects:

- The painter’s workshop and the craft of Early Netherlandish painting
- The role, meaning and importance of oil as a medium in the period before Van Eyck; the significance of oil paint in the oeuvre of Van Eyck
- The evolution and implementation of the oil technique in the Netherlands, 1430-1490
- The evolution and implementation of the oil technique in the Netherlands, 1490-1550

- The dissemination of oil techniques in various regions in Europe, 1400-1550.
- The impact of the success of oil paint on other visual media, 1400-1550
- The impact of oil on international art theory, 1430-1600.

The team presently consists of scholars and scientists from the university and the museum world: Prof. Jeroen Stumpel, University of Utrecht, Prof. Jan Piet Filedt Kok, University of Amsterdam, and senior curator of Early Netherlandish Paintings, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Dr. Ann-Sophie Lehmann, University of Utrecht, Dr. Aric Wallert, curator scientific research, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, and Dr. Mark Clarke, University of Cambridge. The execution of the project requires studies that range from scholarly work on historical technical documentary evidence, to (re) examination of paintings and analyses of old and new sample materials with a large variety of scientific methods. Therefore structural collaboration has been planned with curators, painting restorers and researchers in Antwerp, Rotterdam and other Dutch and Belgian museums, in particular with the important project on Pre-Eyckian art by the KIK/IRPA, directed by dr. C. Stroo.

For further information on the project J.P. Filedt Kok ([j.filedt—kok@rijksmuseum.nl](mailto:j.filedt—kok@rijksmuseum.nl)), J. Stumpel ([Jeroen.stumpel@let.uu.nl](mailto:Jeroen.stumpel@let.uu.nl)), or A. Wallert ([a.wallert@rijksmuseum.nl](mailto:a.wallert@rijksmuseum.nl)) can be contacted.

### Van Gogh’s studio practice in context

In-depth research into Van Gogh’s works and his correspondence has been carried out at the Van Gogh Museum since 1994. Numerous related projects have been started including research into the composition and the degradation of the paint in Van Gogh’s French works in particular; research into suppliers, manufacturers and patent formulas relating to the painting and drawing materials used by the artist. This has yielded a broad spectrum of information and added, for example, to our knowledge of the literature he read in order to master his craft. All these projects have as their focus the life and work of Van Gogh, and when they are completed the results will give a profound insight into his working methods and his studio practice.

Over the years, however, an increasing need was felt to view the information gathered in a wider context. Bringing together our knowledge of his studio practice offers an ideal starting point for this: it is not only a question of how

Van Gogh worked, but also where he got his knowledge and ideas from, and how his way of working compared with those of his contemporaries.

To accomplish this goal the Van Gogh Museum initiated the 'Van Gogh's Studio Practice in Context' project in 2000 (managed by Sjraar van Heugten, Head of Collections, and Ella Hendriks, Head Conservator). As a result of the complexity of the study, collaboration with other institutes has been sought. The ICN (Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage) Shell Nederland and The Courtauld Institute, London, are all participating in the realisation of the project.

In the context of Van Gogh's contemporaries, the study concentrates on the painters he actually had dealings with, such as Anton Mauve, Anton Van Rappard, Emile Bernard, Louis Anquetin, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Paul Signac, Georges Seurat and Paul Gauguin, and on those whose work he knew well at first hand and whose methods he was familiar with, such as Adolphe Monticelli, Eugène Delacroix and Jean-François Millet, either from studying the paintings or from reading the literature about them. The study broadly follows the chronology of Van Gogh's career. Within the technical research sub-studies, for example, the technical analysis of certain grounds, pigments or media, the study will also focus on technical aspects which are highly specific to a particular group of works by Van Gogh and his circle, but which are not necessarily running as a theme throughout his oeuvre.

The range of insights will provide a new view on nineteenth-century studio practice, and will make it possible to reconstruct the way in which these artists worked. The outcome of this project will be described thoroughly but accessibly in a publication written by the specialists involved. An exhibition will offer a clear overview for a wide audience.

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**Forthcoming Publication**

Butterworth-Heinemann, an imprint of Elsevier LTD plans to publish a multi-author 300,000-word book, *The Conservation of Easel Paintings*, edited by Joyce Hill Stoner and Rebecca Rushfield. *Conservation of Easel Paintings* will be a major comprehensive text on the history, philosophy, and methods of treatment of easel paintings and will integrate theory with practice. A guide to necessary background knowledge in technical art history, artists' materials, scientific methods of examination, and documentation will precede sections that present varying approaches and methods for treatment. The international team of fifty-nine authors will submit chapters in 2007, and the editing and cross-checking will take place over the next several years.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, a cadre of paintings conservator-scholars has emerged who have written research papers on technical art history, identification and history of painting materials, mechanisms of deterioration, histories of conservation approaches and methods, and new methods and materials for cleaning, lining, consolidation, tear mending, and varnishing. Many of these scholars will make substantial contributions to the multi-author text. During this same period, the number of international programs that teach paintings conservation on a graduate level has increased substantially. The faculty members for these programs have produced curricula and other instructional materials that fill gaps in the published literature and will be included in the book.

*Conservation of Easel Paintings* will be of use in the training of conservation students and will provide practicing paintings conservators and interested art historians, curators, directors, collectors, dealers, artists, and students of art and art history with useful information. The editor-compilers have over 30 years experience editing and writing for the international publication *Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts* and interviewing pioneer conservation practitioners for the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation oral history project founded in 1975.

ArtMatters-Netherlands Technical Studies in Art presents a series lavishly illustrated articles on technical art history, combining the expertise of art historians, conservators and conservation scientists.



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Petria Noble, Jaap J. Boon, Jørgen Wadum

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Arie Wallert, Kees van den Meiracker

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Changing perceptions of the young Vermeer's painting technique**

Elmer Kolfin, Carol Pottasch, Ruth Hoppe

**A travel experience:**

**The Corot painting box, Mathijs Maris, and 19th century tube paints**

Erma Hermens, Astrid Kwakernaak, Klaas Jan van den Berg, Muriel Geldof

Book reviews

## Artmatters 2

### Reflections on J.-F. Millet's *Agar et Ismaël* Technical analyses of an unfinished painting

René Boitelle, Marion Bosc and Klaas-Jan van  
den Berg

### Stained burr veneer on early 18th century Dutch long-case clocks

J.J. Boonstra, I. Joosten and M.R. van Bommel

### Van Gogh's Antwerp and Paris picture supports (1885-1888) reconstructing choices

Ella Hendriks and Muriel Geldof

### New Insights into Rembrandt's *Susanna* Changes of format – smalt discoloration – identification of vivianite – fading of yellow and red lakes – lead white paint

Petria Noble and Annelies van Loon

### Short Communications

· A remarkable signature of Theodoor van  
Thulden  
Lidwien Speleers

· A Note on Technical Peculiarities in a Portrait  
by Carel Fabritius  
Gwen Tauber

· Prints and paintings

A note on the use of Andrea Mantegna's  
Entombment print  
Erma Hermens and Sandra Weerdenburg

Book reviews

## Artmatters 3

### Original Gilding on Auricular Frames Unusual gilding techniques practiced in Holland, 1640s – 1670s

Hubert Baija

### Pieter de Grebber and the Oranjezaal in Huis ten Bosch

#### Part I: the *Regulen* (1649)

Margriet van Eikema Hommes

### Pieter de Grebber and the Oranjezaal in Huis ten Bosch

#### Part II: variations in painting technique

Margriet van Eikema Hommes and Lidwien  
Speleers

### Painting techniques of Pierre-Auguste Renoir: 1868-1919

Aviva Burnstock, Klaas Jan van den Berg and  
John House

### A technical examination of Odilon Redon's paintings from the Bonger Collection, Van Gogh Museum

René Boitelle, Klaas Jan van den Berg and Eva  
Goetz

### Many Hands make Light Work: The seventeenth-century Antwerp Interior with figures before a picture collection

Maartje Witlox

### A preliminary study on Paulus Potter's (1625-1654) painting technique

Ige Verslype

### An investigation of organic red pigments used in paintings by Vincent van Gogh (November 1885 to February 1888)

Maarten van Bommel, Muriel Geldof and Ella  
Hendriks

### Earth Matters

### The origin of the material used for the preparation of the *Night Watch* and many other canvases in Rembrandt's workshop after 1640

Karin M. Groen

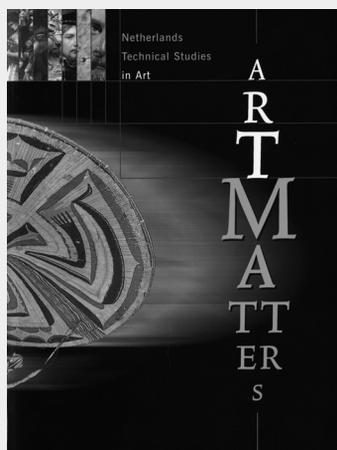
Short communications, announcements and  
book review

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a strongly fluorescing glaze in Anthony  
van Dyck's *Head of a Young Man*  
Barbara Schoonhoven

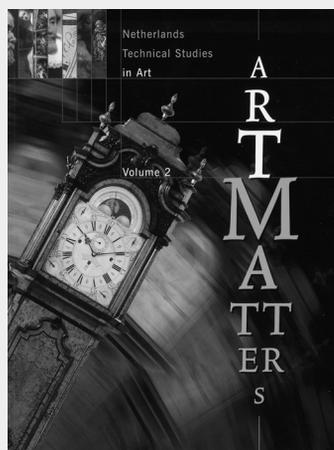
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The reconstruction of Cuypers  
Anne van Grevenstein

Book reviews

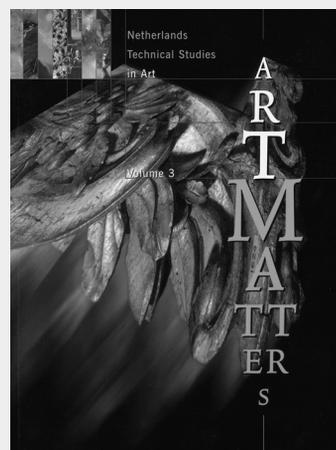
ArtMatters 1



ArtMatters 2



ArtMatters 3





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