

Verbeeck, Cornelis

Also known as

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Verbeeck, Cornelius

Dutch, 1590/1591 - 1637

BIOGRAPHY

Originally from Amsterdam, Cornelis Verbeeck spent the majority of his life in and around the city of Haarlem. The earliest documentation pertaining to Verbeeck appears in a statement the artist gave to a Haarlem notary on April 2, 1609, in regard to his involvement in a tavern brawl. The statement provides his place of residence as just outside of the city walls and his age as eighteen.[1] In December of the same year, Verbeeck married Haarlem native Anna Pieters.[2] The couple had two daughters, Elgen, born on October 20, 1613, and Janneke, born on April 7, 1619.[3]

In 1628 Haarlem chronicler Samuel Ampzing described Verbeeck as “very fine and exquisite in ship painting.”[4] The artist had, however, already been active for many years in Haarlem, where he first appeared in the records of the Saint Luke’s Guild in 1610, and again in 1634 as a master painter.[5] Verbeeck’s name also frequently appears in the archives in Haarlem, mostly in connection with tavern brawls. Only two weeks after his marriage, Verbeeck inflicted a “simple flesh wound under the diaphragm, or midriff” on a bleacher named Pieter Bossu.[6] The Bossu matter continued in the courts until 1611, with another incident occurring on May 8, 1610, when Verbeeck threatened Bossu with a knife.[7] On October 31, 1612, Verbeeck was sentenced on two charges for inflicting serious injuries, stab wounds, and lacerations on the brothers Huybert and Jan Huybertsz.[8] And again, in 1628, the artist was banished from a tavern with a warning not to “offend, injure or molest” the proprietor.[9]

Despite his many run-ins with the law, Verbeeck enjoyed success as a painter in Haarlem. He primarily created small-scale scenes of naval battles, ships floundering off rocky coasts, and beach scenes, as well as a few large-scale paintings of historical events.[10] Although there is no evidence that Verbeeck studied with the Haarlem marine painter Hendrick Cornelis Vroom (Dutch, c. 1563–1640), he was clearly influenced by him, especially in his treatment of choppy

waves with white, hairlike spray and deep troughs. Verbeeck's later paintings move away from Vroom's influence and include more complex compositions and a naturalistic rendering of waves. Verbeeck's seascapes fetched some of the highest prices among that genre and his paintings appear in multiple inventories of middle- and upper-class patrons in Haarlem.

[1] Laurens Johannes Bol, *Die holländische Marinemalerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Braunschweig, 1973), 47. There was another Cornelis Verbeeck living in Haarlem at the time who was the father of the horse painter Pieter Verbeeck. See also A. Bredius Archive, Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), The Hague.

[2] Laurens Johannes Bol, *Die holländische Marinemalerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Braunschweig, 1973), 47. The Haarlem marriage register lists Verbeeck as “a bachelor from Amsterdam.”

[3] Laurens Johannes Bol, *Die holländische Marinemalerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Braunschweig, 1973), 48.

[4] Samuel Ampzing, *Beschryvinge ende lof der stad Haerlem in Holland* (Haarlem, 1628), 372.

[5] Adriaan van der Willigen, *Les artistes de Harlem; notices historiques avec un précis sur la Gilde de St Luc* (Haarlem and The Hague, 1870), 20; Hessel Miedema, *De archiefbescheiden van het St. Lukasgilde te Haarlem: 1497–1798*, 2 vols. (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1980), 2:419.

[6] Jeroen Giltaj and Jan Kelch, *Praise of Ships and the Sea* (Rotterdam, 1996), 137. See note 3 in Giltaj and Kelch, which cites the A. Bredius Archive, Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), The Hague: “Een aantal Chirurgyns moeten de wond onderzoeken. Het is een simpele vleyswonde onder de diaphragma ofte middelriff.”

[7] Jeroen Giltaj and Jan Kelch, *Praise of Ships and the Sea* (Rotterdam, 1996), 137.

[8] Jeroen Giltaj and Jan Kelch, *Praise of Ships and the Sea* (Rotterdam, 1996), 137.

[9] Laurens Johannes Bol, *Die holländische Marinemalerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Braunschweig, 1973), 48; Jeroen Giltaj and Jan Kelch, *Praise of Ships and the Sea*

(Rotterdam, 1996), 137.

[10] One of these paintings, Cornelis Houghtman's Fleet Setting Sail for the East Indies, 1623, Cheltenham Art Gallery, is his only dated work. Verbeeck signed his paintings in various ways, including: "CVB," usually located on a ship's flag; "Kornelio," which Giltaij (Jeroen Giltaij and Jan Kelch, *Praise of Ships and the Sea* [Rotterdam, 1996], 138) suggests is the Italian version of the artist's name; "Cornelis VB H," the H presumably standing for Haarlem; and "CVB H."

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April 24, 2014

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To cite: Lara Yeager-Crasselt, Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., "Cornelis Verbeeck," *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*, NGA Online Editions, <https://purl.org/nga/collection/constituent/15072> (accessed May 16, 2024).