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Citizens of the Republic: Portraits from the Dutch Golden Age

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"When any famous deed or exploit is done by any of their [the Dutch] nation, it is represented to the people with all insinuating circumstances, to make them proud of the honor of being subjects in a state where such mighty deeds are done."

— John Ray, *Travels through the Low Countries, Germany, Italy, and France* (London, 1738)

In 1568 the Dutch began a protracted revolt against the Spanish that would become known as the Eighty Years' War (1568 – 1648). In 1579, the nascent Dutch Republic was established when the seven northern provinces (Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelderland, Overijssel, Friesland, and Groningen) unified and later declared their independence from Habsburg rule. The republic, however, was not recognized by Spain until the Twelve Years' Truce in 1609, and not officially ratified until 1648, with the signing of the Treaty of Münster.

In spite of their struggle for independence, the Dutch established governance with strong democratic principles promoting intellectual, religious, and commercial freedom. This culture of tolerance was essential in positioning the Dutch as one of the most powerful and prosperous federations in Europe. Throughout the seventeenth century, known as the Dutch Golden Age, they dominated international trade and were celebrated for their achievements in the arts and sciences. Robust rural and urban economies in all seven provinces intensified the demand for professionals and skilled artisans to construct and fortify the expanding federation. Stalwart Dutch citizens contributed to the republic's development with fine arts, architecture, and numerous innovations including the microscope, fire hose, and submarine. Proud of their accomplishments, the Dutch memorialized the enterprise and ingenuity of distinguished citizens in portraits.

Reflective of the humanist tradition, seventeenth-century Dutch portraits affirmed the significance of the individual and, either publicly or privately, commemorated the life of the subject. Artists received civic commissions for portraits decorating town halls and militia headquarters, and private commissions that remained in a more personal milieu, in palaces and residences. A broadening audience became more interested in these depictions by celebrated masters, and engravers and publishers formed partnerships to meet

left: Jonas Suyderhoff after Rembrandt van Rijn, *Eleazar Swalmius* (detail), late 1600s, engraving, state i / iii (**8**)

the demand for prints engraved after painted portraits. The reproductive nature of these prints made them relatively affordable and more widely disseminated than paintings, and they appealed to a wide variety of Dutch citizens: collectors who commissioned prints to memorialize their acquisitions, scholars who included portraits in their books, and artists who studied masterpieces as a way of informing their own techniques.

Portrait prints reproduce a subject's likeness after notable paintings, drawings, and sculpture. Most often modeled after paintings, the prints' subjects are as skillfully rendered as they were by the originating artist. As a result of the translation from a painted to printed medium, however, variations do exist between the original work of art and the printed portraits — as in Cornelis Jonson van Ceulen's grisaille portrait of the eminent scholar Anna Maria van Schurman and Cornelis van Dalen's engraving of the sitter (1, 2). Although, in this case, Jonson's painting was intended as a prototype for the engraved portrait, it nonetheless illustrates the differences between a painted scheme and a printed outcome. When the two works are viewed side by side, it is clear that the printed composition mirrors the painting (due to the reversal that takes place when the image is transferred from the inked, engraved plate to paper). The painting, like the print, delineates a frame around Van Schurman and a scroll below her, but the painting does not bear a title or inscription. The lettering and dedication were added to the print later in the production process.

While some portrait prints closely resemble their painted counterparts, others exhibit a high degree of invention in instances where the engraver has taken artistic license, inserting a background or modifying the sitter's costume. This is the case in Abraham Blooteling's engraved portrait of Admiral Egbert Kortenaer (11). Blooteling dramatically expands the composition to a three-quarter-length portrait, positioning Kortenaer in front of a raging battle, flanked by two imposing cannons. The original painting by Bartholomeus van der Helst (page 9, top right) is a more restrained, bust-length portrait. The modifications to Kortenaer's portrait create an illustrative quality, aligning the sitter with his profession.

Inscriptions further identified the subjects and their exploits, and frequently included laudatory excerpts from notable prose in honor of the sitter. Publishers often changed the text from one print run to another, creating a new printed state. However, the monograms of the originating artist and the engraver, inscribed at the bottom of the print, were relatively consistent from state to state because they invoked the artistic legacy of masters such as Rembrandt van Rijn, Bartholomeus van der Helst, and Michiel van Miereveld.

Visually and textually, the prints in this exhibition boldly express individual contributions to the young republic and illuminate Dutch history. Readily distinguishable for this reason, the prints are divided into four categories: Arts and Letters, Defense, the State, and the House of Orange-Nassau.

Unless otherwise noted, the prints in this exhibition were a gift of Peter and Evelyn Kraus. In 2005 the Krauses donated almost five hundred portrait prints to the National Gallery of Art, Department of Image Collections. These prints are part of the department's rare holdings and are available to researchers upon request. The rare books on display are from the National Gallery of Art Library. The Jonson van Ceulen painting and the De Wit engraving are from the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Art.

1 Cornelis van Dalen the Younger after Cornelis Jonson van Ceulen, *Anna Maria van Schurman,* after 1657, engraving, state ii / iii

2 Cornelis Jonson van Ceulen, *Anna Maria van Schurman,* 1657, oil on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Joseph F. McCrindle

Anna Maria van Schurman was a celebrated savant who spoke twelve languages and was the first woman to study at a Dutch university. Attributes surrounding Van Schurman's framed portrait, in both the painting and the print, allude to her intellectual pursuits in the arts and sciences — theology, philosophy, botany, medicine, and linguistics. The abbreviated city view seen from behind the half-drawn curtain includes the Utrecht cathedral, referencing the sitter's place of residence.

Cornelis van Dalen the Younger's portrait print of Van Schurman is based on Cornelis Jonson van Ceulen's 1657 oil sketch. The painting was commissioned as a design for the print and probably commemorated Van Schurman's fiftieth birthday. Van Dalen subsequently executed the engraved portrait, and Clement de Jonghe, a notable print dealer, published the print sometime after 1657.

An inventory of this publisher's personal collection includes a portrait of Van Schurman, which indicates that De Jonghe had an interest in the subject. It is quite possible that De Jonghe commissioned Jonson van Ceulen to paint the sketch of Van Schurman as a model for the final product, an engraved portrait. Alternatively, Jonson van Ceulen may have used the painting as collateral for a loan, which was common practice between artists and publishers in the seventeenth century.

3 After Anna Maria van Schurman, *Anna Maria van Schurman* (detail), engraving in *Alle de Wercken, soo Oude als Nieuwe van den Heer Jacob Cats . . . ,* Amsterdam, 1700, National Gallery of Art Library, David K. E. Bruce Fund

Although this book anthologizes the work of the esteemed author Jacob Cats, it is dedicated to Anna Maria van Schurman in honor of her intellectual contributions to the Dutch Republic. The address at the beginning of the book pays her homage and includes an engraving based on her early self-portrait. This depiction of Van Schurman, when compared with Jonson van Ceulen's (**2**) and Van Dalen the Younger's (**1**) portraits, clearly demonstrates how her self-portrait influenced later compositions.

4 Jacob Houbraken, *Portrait of Anna Maria van Schurman, Rembrandt van Rijn, and Jacob Backer,* engraving, in Arnold Houbraken's *De groote schouburgh der nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen,* vol. 1, The Hague, 1753, National Gallery of Art Library, Gift of C. Deardorff

This volume is part of Arnold Houbraken's masterwork chronicling the lives of artists from the Dutch Golden Age. The series was a product of the partnership between Houbraken and his son, Jacob, who rendered portraits of artists to accompany the text. The engraving shown here, depicting Anna Maria van Schurman and artists Rembrandt van Rijn and Jacob Backer, was included in Rembrandt's biography. Van Schurman is only briefly mentioned in the text but she is given a position of prominence in the print, and an owl, a symbol of wisdom, is perched in front of her.

5 Designed by Christiaan Huygens, engraved by Cornelis Visscher, Constantijn Huygens, 1657, engraving, state iii / iii, in *Koren-bloemen: Nederlandsche gedichten,* The Hague, 1658, National Gallery of Art Library, David K. E. Bruce Fund

This portrait of Constantijn Huygens serves as the frontispiece for his book of poems. The subject's son, Christiaan, designed the rendering and Cornelis Visscher engraved the image. The lettering above Huygens' profile, "Constanter," identifies the poet with the latinized version of his name. The same moniker is visible in Van Dalen's portrait of Anna Maria van Schurman (**1**), below the verse.

As contemporaries, Huygens and Van Schurman were bonded by their intellectual curiosity, and Huygens openly expressed his respect for her work. This may explain why his verse from *De Gedichten van Constantijn Huygens* was included in Van Schurman's engraved portrait.

6 François-Anne David after Caspar Netscher, *Caspar Netscher with His Family,* 1772, engraving (front cover)

Although this composition has historically been identified as Caspar Netscher and his family, the subjects do not bear resemblance to the Netscher family. At some point the title was assigned to the original painting, and later transferred to the engraving. This ascribed title and the painting's date are clearly noted in the engraved portrait: "Gaspar Netscher / Son Epouse et Son Fils / Peint Par Lui-Même en 1674" (Caspar Netscher, His Wife and Son, Painted by Himself in 1674). The engraving was commissioned nearly a century after the painting's completion in honor of the marquis de Marigny, a French nobleman whose collection included Netscher's painting.

7 Abraham Blooteling after Gerard Pietersz van Zyl, *Govaert Flinck,* late 1600s, engraving, state i / ii (back cover)

With its elegant posturing and elongated form, this portrait reflects the sensibilities of Anthony van Dyck's work. The similarities are likely a result of the artistic exchange between Gerard van Zyl and Van Dyck when both painters worked in London. Abraham Blooteling's engraving is the only remaining record of the painted portrait, which is now lost.

Blooteling's noble rendering affirms Govaert Flinck's position as a distinguished painter. Additionally, the poem below Flinck's portrait, by the playwright Joost van den Vondel, praises the artist. Flinck worked with Jacob Backer and Rembrandt van Rijn early in his career and was recognized as a leading painter of portraits and large-scale public works.

8 Jonas Suyderhoff after Rembrandt van Rijn, *Eleazar Swalmius,* after 1637, engraving, state i / iii

Jonas Suyderhoff masterfully interprets Rembrandt's painting of Eleazar Swalmius in this intimate portrait print. The Calvinist minister gazes directly at the viewer, facing fully forward, his hand delicately resting over his heart. Suyderhoff's meticulous rendering of Swalmius creates a sympathetic portrait and evokes the sincerity of the subject's character.

9 Willem Jacobsz Delff after Michiel van Miereveld, *Jacob Cats,* 1635, engraving, state iii / iii

Willem Jacobsz Delff renders poet and courtier Jacob Cats with exacting detail, emulating Michiel van Miereveld's painted portrait. The inscription below Cats' image references the moralistic message that dominates his poems and emblem books.

Cats' anthology, *Alle de Wercken, soo Oude als Nieuwe . . .* (**3**), is displayed in conjunction with the portraits of Anna Maria van Schurman.

10 Jacob Houbraken after Jan Maurits Quinkhard and Michiel van Miereveld, *Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft,* 1738, engraving in *Vaderlandsche historie*

Jacob Houbraken's engraved portrait of P. C. Hooft reflects the refined style of court painter Michiel van Miereveld. In addition to painting this preeminent poet, historian, and playwright, Miereveld received many commissions from the stadtholder's court in The Hague. The portrait befits Hooft's stature as the son of Cornelis Hooft, mayor of Amsterdam, and founder of the Muiderkring literary society, which included playwright Joost van den Vondel among its illustrious members.

11 Abraham Blooteling after Bartholomeus van der Helst, *Admiral Egbert Kortenaer* (detail), c. 1665, engraving, state iii / iv

Bartholomeus van der Helst, *Egbert Kortenaer, Luitenant-Admiraal van Holland en West-Friesland*, 1658 – 1660, oil on panel, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Bartholomeus van der Helst created striking portraits of his sitters. In both his painting (above, right) and in Blooteling's engraving, Admiral Kortenaer's commanding presence pervades the composition. The sitter projects great confidence despite having lost his right hand and an eye in the Battle of Dungeness. The engraving, even more than the painting, integrates these characteristics into the portrait with the positioning of Kortenaer's right arm akimbo and the difference in shading between his right and left eyes.

12 Michiel Mozyn, *Jacob van Wassenaar,* 1653, engraving, state ii / iv

This portrait of Lieutenant Admiral Jacob van Wassenaar, a distinguished naval commander in the Anglo-Dutch Wars who was ultimately killed in action, was designed and engraved by Michiel Mozyn. The print consists of two parts: the ovoid portrait and the elaborately decorated cartouche bearing an inscription. These components were engraved on two separate plates — one small ovoid plate for the portrait and one rectangular plate with a cutout for the frame, allowing for more flexibility in the printing process. The plates could be interchanged or used again independently of one another. The two small engraved cross marks at the bottom of the oval portrait were used to align the plates in the production of this print.

13 Aert Schouman and Jacob Houbraken after Pieter Nason, *Joan Maurits, Prins van Nassau,* mid-1700s, engraving

Joan Maurits was a captain in the Dutch army who, early in his career, participated in the military campaigns of his cousin Frederik Hendrik, prince of Orange, and later served as the Dutch colonial governor of Brazil. Over a century after his death, Maurits' residence in The Hague became the illustrious royal picture gallery known as the Mauritshuis.

14 Hendrick Bary after Jan de Bisschop, *David Vlugh,* after 1667, engraving and etching, state iv / iv

Jan de Bisschop's preparatory drawing served as the model for this engraving. Adeptly capturing his refined manner of draftsmanship, Hendrick Bary produced a number of engravings after drawings by De Bisschop. The subject, Admiral David Vlugh, commanded the Dutch navy in the Anglo-Dutch Wars. In this three-quarter-length portrait, an assured Vlugh looks directly at the viewer; he is positioned in front of a tapestry depicting ships off England's coast. The attributes in the fore-ground — a cannon, an anchor, and highly stylized fish — reference Vlugh's naval career. See no. 15 for further discussion.

15 Daniel Stopendael, *Battle of Plymouth,* engraving, in Geeraert Brandt's *Het leven en bedryf van den heere Michiel de Ruiter . . . ,* Amsterdam, 1687, National Gallery of Art Library, David K. E. Bruce Fund

This book documents the life and exploits of Lieutenant Admiral General Michiel de Ruiter. Recognized for his valiant leadership in the Anglo-Dutch Wars, he is one of the most famous naval figures of the seventeenth century.

The warring ships depicted here represent the short Battle of Plymouth on August 26, 1652, and are identified by name in the key at the bottom. De Ruiter led the Dutch navy to victory in this battle against the English. Many of the naval figures in this case defended the Dutch Republic in the Anglo-Dutch Wars, including Admiral David Vlugh (**14**).

16 Anonymous, *Cornelis Tromp,* 18th century, mezzotint

Like his father, Cornelis Tromp was an officer in the Dutch navy. He served in the Anglo-Dutch Wars — for a period of time under Lieutenant Admiral General Michiel de Ruiter — and later became a lieutenant admiral. Tromp posed for many portraits throughout his life in an effort to ensure his legacy.

Different from the other prints in this exhibition, Tromp's portrait is a mezzotint. The mezzotint process involves using a tool to roughen the surface of the plate with tiny dots that, when inked and printed, create a tonal, atmospheric quality.

Cornelis Tromp Grave van Sijllisbury

17 Jacob Houbraken after Ludolf de Jongh, *Aerd van Nes, Luitenant-Admirael van Holland en Westvriesland,* mid-1700s, engraving

Aerd van Nes was distinguished for his heroic and lengthy service in the Dutch navy. The son of a naval captain, he went to sea at age eleven. He quickly ascended in rank, becoming a captain during the First Anglo-Dutch War. He ultimately became a lieutenant admiral, and served as a deputy to Lieutenant Admiral General Michiel de Ruiter.

AERD VAN NES,
Luitenant-Admirael van Holland
en Westvriesland.

18 Willem Jacobsz Delff after Michiel van Miereveld, *Florent II, Count of Culemborg, Baron of Pallandt,* 1627, engraving, state ii / ii

19 Willem Jacobsz Delff after Michiel van Miereveld, *Catharine, Countess of Culemborg, Baroness of Pallandt,* 1636, engraving

Florent II, count of Culemborg, was ambassador from the Dutch Republic to France, served as a legislative representative for the province of Gelderland in the States-General, and was considered to be one of the wealthiest nobles in the country. Here, he is costumed in rich attire that the engraver describes in great detail — from the texture and appearance of the intricate lacework to the fine fabrics and precious metals. Delff modified Florent's appearance slightly from the first state of the print to this second state. Florent has a shortened beard, a wart by his right tear duct, crow's-feet around his eyes, and a furrowed brow. His general appearance is more aged than in the first state.

The engraving of Florent's wife, Catharine, countess of Culemborg, is considered to be a pendant to Florent's portrait despite having been produced nine years later. The inscriptions below both Florent's and Catharine's portraits record, in roman numerals, their dates of completion, 1627 and 1636 respectively. Despite the years — nearly a decade — separating the execution of these portraits, the subjects are comparably framed and positioned to face each other. Even their accessories undulate in a similar manner across their forms.

20 Hendrik Pothoven and Jacob Houbraken after Rembrandt van Rijn, *Frans Banning Kok,* c. 1779/1780, engraving

Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Night Watch* (detail), 1642, oil on canvas, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Frans Banning Kok is the central figure in Rembrandt's famous group portrait *The Night Watch* (above, right). The painting is alternatively titled *Company of Frans Banning Kok and Willem van Ruytenburch* in honor of the militia captain. Engravers Hendrik Pothoven and Jacob Houbraken used Rembrandt's painting as a model for their bust-length portrait. They delineated a frame around the sitter and created the appearance that his outstretched hand extends beyond the picture plane.

21 Willem Jacobsz Delff after Michiel van Miereveld, *Bonifacius de Jonge van Oosterland,* after 1619, engraving, state ii/ii

The inscription at the bottom of this engraved portrait, by poet and scholar Daniel Heinsius, salutes Bonifacius for his devotion to the province of Zeeland, where he served as a pensionary, the modern equivalent of a senator.

22 Jacob Houbraken, *Cornelis de Graeff, Burgemeester en Raad der Stad Amsterdam,* late 1700s, engraving

Jacob Houbraken engraved this portrait for Jan Wagenaar's *Vaderlansche historie* (National History). As one of the patriots memorialized in the series, Cornelis de Graeff is recognized for his role as mayor of Amsterdam and regent after the death of William II, prince of Orange.

23 Gerard Valck after Adriaen Van der Werff, *William I, Prince of Orange,* early 1700s, engraving

William I, also referred to as William the Silent, is considered to be the father of the nation and the founder of the House of Orange-Nassau. He repudiated the authority of Philip II, king of Spain, and led the revolt against the Spanish Crown. Gerard Valck's stately engraving depicts William I in armor, as a protector of the nation. The coat of arms above his portrait is a reminder of his noble lineage, and the pistol and bullets below allude to his assassination at the hands of one of the king's loyalists.

24 Jan Brouwer after Cornelis Visscher after Gerrit van Honthorst, *Portraits of Princes and Princesses of Orange-Nassau,* late 1600s, engraving

This family tree begins with Count Adolph, later king of Germany, an early representative of the House of Nassau. The lineage continues with Counts Hendrik III of Nassau and his son, René de Châlon, prince of Orange. William I then inherits the title of prince of Orange from his cousin, René, who dies without any heirs, and establishes the House of Orange-Nassau. William's sons, Philip William, Maurits, and Frederik Hendrik, all become princes of Orange, but only the latter two serve as stadtholder, official heads of state.

The Dutch Golden Age is often attributed to the successful tenure of Frederik Hendrik and his wife, Amalia van Solms, which may explain why the couple appears at the center of this print. The republic was strengthened by Frederik's military success and Amalia's patronage of the arts. In turn, their progeny, William II, became stadtholder when Frederik died, but the republic began to experience a decline in power under him and his descendents.

25 Anonymous, *The Marriage of William II and Mary Stuart,* engraving in Isaac Commelin's *Histoire de la vie & actes memorables de Frederic Henry de Nassau Prince d'Orange,* Amsterdam, 1656, National Gallery of Art Library, David K. E. Bruce Fund

In an effort to strengthen the Dutch Republic's standing in Europe, fourteen-year-old William II, son of Frederik Hendrik and Amalia van Solms, was married to nine-year-old princess Mary Stuart, daughter of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, in 1641. This marriage formed an alliance between the Dutch court and England's royal family, a union clearly illustrated in this engraving. The ceremony symbolically bonded William II and Mary Stuart, and involved Charles I and Henrietta Maria, elevated on the left, and Frederik Hendrik and Amalia van Solms, on the right. This print is included in a biography commemorating the life of stadtholder Frederik Hendrik.

26 Aert Schouman and Jacob Houbraken after Michiel van Miereveld, *Fredrik Henrik, Prins van Oranje*, mid-1700s, engraving

See no. 24 for a discussion of Frederik Hendrik's life.

27 Published by Frederik de Wit, *Amalia, Wife of Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange,* c. 1650, engraving, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection

Amalia van Solms is positioned in front of a diminutive cityscape of Wesel, Germany. The background depicts the Siege of Wesel in 1629 when the Dutch captured the city, positioning themselves favorably on the Rhine river. This print was probably produced as a pendant to a portrait of Frederik Hendrik.

Selected Readings

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