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Introduction
Towards an art history of the Dutch Americas

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In 1611, Claes Jansz. Visscher produced a lavish broadsheet to celebrate the wealth and status of his home city of Amsterdam (fig. 1). As the etched scenes and the passages of letterpress text together make clear, the city's and the new Dutch Republic's quick rise to global standing depended upon trade, both domestic and foreign.[1] The Maid of Amsterdam, sitting enthroned at center, balances the city's coat of arms while different constituencies approach her from either side bearing offerings. On the right, three different groupings punctuate the procession at even intervals, standing in for different types of domestically sourced products: fish brought by the residents of Amsterdam's coastal surrounds; game from hunters stalking prey in forests a bit further afield; and eggs, milk, cheese, and other dairy products from the lush grassy regions in the Republic's northern terrains.

Detail of fig. 1

In contrast to this local bounty, the goods brought by the figures processing from the left of center have arrived from the furthest reaches of the globe (fig. 2). The 'first' to arrive to the Maid's side is the 'East Indian', who brings the riches of Asia, listed in the text below as 'pepper, cloves, pearls, precious stones, abundant porcelains, nutmeg (…) birds of paradise, silks, damasks'. Asia's preeminence in this allegorical scene makes good sense. The Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or VOC) had been founded not even a decade before the release of Visscher's print, yet already, the goods and wealth engendered by the Asia trade had transformed Dutch life and, in the process, Amsterdam's material and visual culture.[2]

But this is not the only representative of overseas trade in Visscher's print. Next to Asia, the figure of the *West* Indian strides boldly forward and performs something of a balancing act: an outstretched arm anchors a spindly spear to support a heavy log of brazilwood steady enough for a bird (a quetzal, a green-blue bird of the tropical forests of the Yucatán and highland Guatemala) to sit in repose at its tip. Bare-chested below his cape, sporting a feathered headdress and skirt, as well as long strings of beads, the figure embodies stereotyped representations of the Americas that by this point had circulated in Europe for well over a century following Europe's first 'contact' with the Americas.[3] Visscher's textual legend tells of the treasures that this figure has brought in tow: 'The West Indians bring salt, sugar, pearls as well as costly precious stones, gold, silver, Brazil wood, tobacco, parrots, and many kinds of feathers'.

1

Claes Jansz. Visscher II, ***View of Amsterdam*****, 1611,** engraving, etching, and letterpress, 628 x 1717 mm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

2

Claes Jansz. Visscher II, ***View of Amsterdam,*** **1611,** engraving, etching, and letterpress, detail, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

To pictorially twin the East and West Indies in 1611, as Visscher does here, was a bold, proleptic statement. For while the Dutch had dreams of global expansion in many directions, the West India Company (Geoctrooieerde Westindische Compagnie, or WIC) would not be founded for another decade, chartered officially only in 1621 as a corollary to the by then fully operative VOC. Yet a decade earlier, Visscher has already conceived of these regions and Dutch involvement in them as flip sides of the same coin, positioning the Americas as a key part of Amsterdam's global retinue.[4]

If Visscher's print so evocatively treats the East and West 'Indies' as a tandem – and gives equal visual and descriptive weight to the goods and commodities generated from each of these spheres – art historical scholarship has definitively privileged one figure/geography over the other. Indeed, art historical interest in the 'global' dimensions of the Dutch culture in the past two decades has almost invariably centered connections with Asia, the ways in which VOC-led trade produced a flood of goods that saturated Dutch markets and households, and thereby changed the economic and visual dimensions of life in the Low Countries. Landmark exhibitions have put these trade goods (including porcelain, silk, and lacquerware) on literal display;[5] and scholars now routinely treat the axis between the Netherlands and Asia as a critical facet of Dutch seventeenth-century visual culture in teaching, publications, and museum exhibitions.[6]

In sharp contrast, art historical interest in the Dutch role in the early modern Americas has been circumscribed. To this point, there has been no attempt to holistically treat the geographies of the Americas and their relationship to Dutch visual and material culture. The patchwork nature of the Dutch presence in the Americas no doubt makes the proposition tricky. Over varying intervals from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries, the Dutch have controlled territories in North America (between present-day New York and Virginia), the Caribbean (most importantly the islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, along with areas of modern Suriname and Guyana), and in the South American expanses of Brazil. Those geographies were made profitable, in no small part, through the labor of enslaved persons brought there via Dutch occupation and trade on the west coast of Africa (specifically along the 'Gold Coast' of Ghana and Angola).

These geographic configurations were shapeshifting in the extreme. While Dutch mercantile and colonial endeavors in Asia were no doubt also unstable and contested, this pales in comparison to what resulted from Dutch exploits in the Americas: territorial claims were often short-lived, trade routes were routinely in need of reconfiguration, and the economic dividends rendered by the WIC were inconsistent at best. These historical realities buck the kind of totalizing and homogenizing narratives that have made the histories of the VOC and of Dutch involvement in Asia easier to grasp, narrate, and put on view. While one might find in major museums various objects emerging from or related to the Dutch in the Americas, they have not been integrated into a larger art historical narrative.

Previous art historical studies about the Dutch presence in the Americas have thus tended towards either focusing on singular artists or small groups of artists in extremely delimited geographic and temporal frames. A case in point, perhaps, has been the oversized interest in the work of Frans Post[7] and Albert Eckhout,[8] both of whom served in the entourage of Johan Maurits, the Dutch governor of Brazil from 1636 to 1644. Producing pictures of plantation landscapes and life in short-lived Dutch Brazil, these painters and their work have come to stand in almost exclusively for Dutch cultural production in the Americas. Here we might add the even more delimited artistic production of Maria Sibylla Merian, who traveled to Suriname, where she stayed for just two years at the turn of the eighteenth century to survey the life cycles of the Caribbean's robust array of caterpillars and other tropical insects.[9] Merian's life and career, exceptional in the extreme, are perhaps rightly treated as something of a one-off. Yet the traditionally monographic focus of this art historical literature has offered little help for thinking about the broader contours of the relationship of the Dutch to the Americas and the region's influence on Dutch artistic culture and practice.

Perhaps because they deal more nimbly with change over time, historians of the Dutch Republic (particularly maritime and economic historians) have shown much greater interest in the early modern Americas. Scholars in these fields have been drawn to the region's military history, the importance and instability of Dutch involvement in transatlantic economies, and the inter-imperial rivalries (between the Dutch and the English, Spanish, and Portuguese crowns) that shaped territorial and naval claims across the Americas.[10] And this has tended, as one might expect, to

be a document-driven endeavor, although maps and print history have also played important roles. Archaeologists have worked alongside to recover Dutch settlements – with notable examples of forts and settlements in upstate New York, along the northeastern coast of Brazil, and in Dutch-controlled Suriname.[11] But the materials that these investigations have surfaced (including unimaginable quantities of white bricks and pipe stems forged from IJssel clay and found wherever the Dutch settled) have proved of limited enticement to art historians.

A few artists, then, and scattered remains from a handful of years – these are hardly the riches and rewards that Visscher's broadsheet advertised and what the archaeological and art historical archives suggest. This volume addresses this lacuna and begins to draw the filaments of an art history focused on the broad expanses – both temporal and geographic – of the Dutch involvement in the Atlantic world. We sought to bring together the key geographies of the region, to build a corpus of materials, to answer a range of questions from the seemingly run-of-the-mill to those that were more specific, political, and pressing in order to identify central art historical narratives: How would one describe a transatlantic traffic of raw materials, refined artistic products, and people (both willing settlers and captive enslaved persons), and what effect did this movement have on art produced on either side of the Atlantic? How did the material practices of makers of Dutch, Indigenous, and African communities intersect and to what extent did they impact one another? What role did Dutch artists play in the WIC and within the framework of the young republic's Atlantic ambitions? Were there shared patterns of art collecting, patronage, and consumption among the various Dutch settlers, traders, and sailors living and moving across the disparate American regions controlled by the Dutch? How did Dutch mercantile and colonial experience in the Americas impact domestic visual and material culture in the Netherlands? The contributions assembled here begin to answer these questions. Just as importantly, they illustrate some of the historical, historiographic, and methodological difficulties of doing so.

This introduction works in much the same way. Each section begins with the discussion of a key object that opens onto a theme that we consider crucial to the study of the Dutch Americas. These include the constellation of geographic spaces and the particular forms of Dutch colonialism that were developed between them; the disjointed temporalities of Dutch presence in the Americas and the resulting questions of historical memory, nostalgia, recasting, and imperialism's longue durée; and the matter of 'Dutchness' and how it has adhered to objects, cultural practices, and geographic space and thus how we can now identify sites of Dutch-American entanglement. Much as Visscher's print has helped us set the scene, our key objects that follow point to the fact that these issues – which represent both entry points and roadblocks for art historical research – emerge from objects themselves and from actors of the past who grappled with ideas that, centuries later, have yet to be fully articulated in scholarly literature. This volume's goal is to do just that – to follow the lead of objects and people of the past to work towards the beginnings of an art history of the Dutch Americas, one that still remains to be told.

Alongshore

Around 1630 the Amsterdam-based cartographer and publisher Willem Blaeu produced a so-called *West-Indische paskaert* (fig. 3). The map's visual rhetoric suggests that it was meant to be used, that its rhumb lines and rosettes were geared to aid boats and their captains in crossing the vast Atlantic space it pictures. Indeed, these watery expanses account for the majority of the map's surface, with landmasses and territories pushed out to the edges, offering a frame for the navigational theater of water at center. Most likely, the map's navigational purports were mere rhetoric for the armchair traveler looking to be transported to territories that had, by this point, become critical to the Dutch Republic's global ambitions.

For our purposes, the *paskaert* usefully circumscribes and describes the geographies encompassed in this volume, in period-specific visual terms. That is, the map visualizes the Americas from a particularly Dutch perspective. Rather than, as one might expect, centering the Americas as a pair of continents, the Blaeu *paskaert* pushes landmasses to the edges

3
Willem de Blaeu, *West-Indische paskaert*, c. 1630, engraving, vellum, hand-coloring, 790 x 990 mm, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België / Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique

of the Atlantic. The introduction of large cartouches and emblems that have been inset within their boundaries yet further crowds out the little land that would have remained. Cartographic attention is thus left to be lavished on the coasts of a highly specific sub-selection of geographies: the eastern coast of North America; the Caribbean islands; the upper reaches of South America; and the western coast of Africa.

These are the territories critical to the Dutch Americas. New Netherland (on the east coast of what is now the United States) was the first space in which the Dutch were able to establish an American territorial foothold. Early on, the Dutch also set their eyes on Brazil, controlled by Portugal, to fulfill a global lust for sugar; this territory would be almost as quickly relinquished as it was gained, but the memory of its possession would fuel Dutch thinking about what it meant to control and profit from American territory for decades, indeed centuries, to come. The Caribbean, alternatively, holds the last dominions that the Dutch would cling to; in fact, the Netherlands remain fundamentally involved with the governmental administration of the region. Though this maritime expanse was consistently contested by world powers (most importantly the Spanish, French, and English) and pirates alike, the Caribbean was also where the Dutch established their most enduring plantation economies.

It should perhaps come as little surprise that Africa plays a large role in this story and, accordingly, in this volume. Put simply, there could be no Dutch Americas without the Dutch presence in West Africa. The WIC campaign of capturing Portuguese forts along the so-called Gold Coast enabled the Dutch to both ally themselves with local rulers and capitalize on the trafficking of enslaved people of African origin.[12] These geographies were connected by the particular historical actors that traversed them. Johan Maurits launched military campaigns to capture Fort Elmina (in today's Ghana) in 1637; in 1642-1643, as governor of Brazil, Maurits received diplomatic missions from the African courts of Daniel da Silva, the count of Sonho, and King Garcia II of Kongo at his residence in Mauritsstad (now Recife). But enslaved people of African descent were found not only in Dutch Brazil: these people were also brought to New Netherland as early as 1628, while Curaçao became a key center for the trade later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[13] Enslaved individuals engined a workforce that was critical to plantation life and to the dangerous, labor-intensive process of sugar cultivation; and they played active roles, still too-little understood, in the visual, material, and built cultures of these colonial spaces.

While Africa and people of African origin were essential to the Dutch American project, Africa also sat at physical, logistical, and conceptual remove from the Americas. The WIC held a Dutch monopoly on the traffic in enslaved African persons. But the coast was also a meeting point, as control of territories along the West African coast was key to both WIC and VOC mercantile success and the only point at which their shipping routes significantly overlapped. Territory and bodies there were the purview of the WIC, but the VOC would traverse related shipping routes and, in the process, purchase enslaved individuals to be sent around the

Cape of Good Hope to the Indian Ocean and onward to the South China Sea. The *paskaert*, then, usefully visualizes the space of the African coast as critical to the ambitions of the Dutch Americas, while also emphasizing both geographic remove and the incredibly circumscribed presence of the Dutch within the spaces of the African continent that remain, in Blaeu's depiction, almost entirely unrepresented. The present volume follows this object's model by paying close attention to the integral role of Africa *in* the Americas, while also highlighting the attenuated distances (geographic, temporal, and conceptual) that configured that relationship.

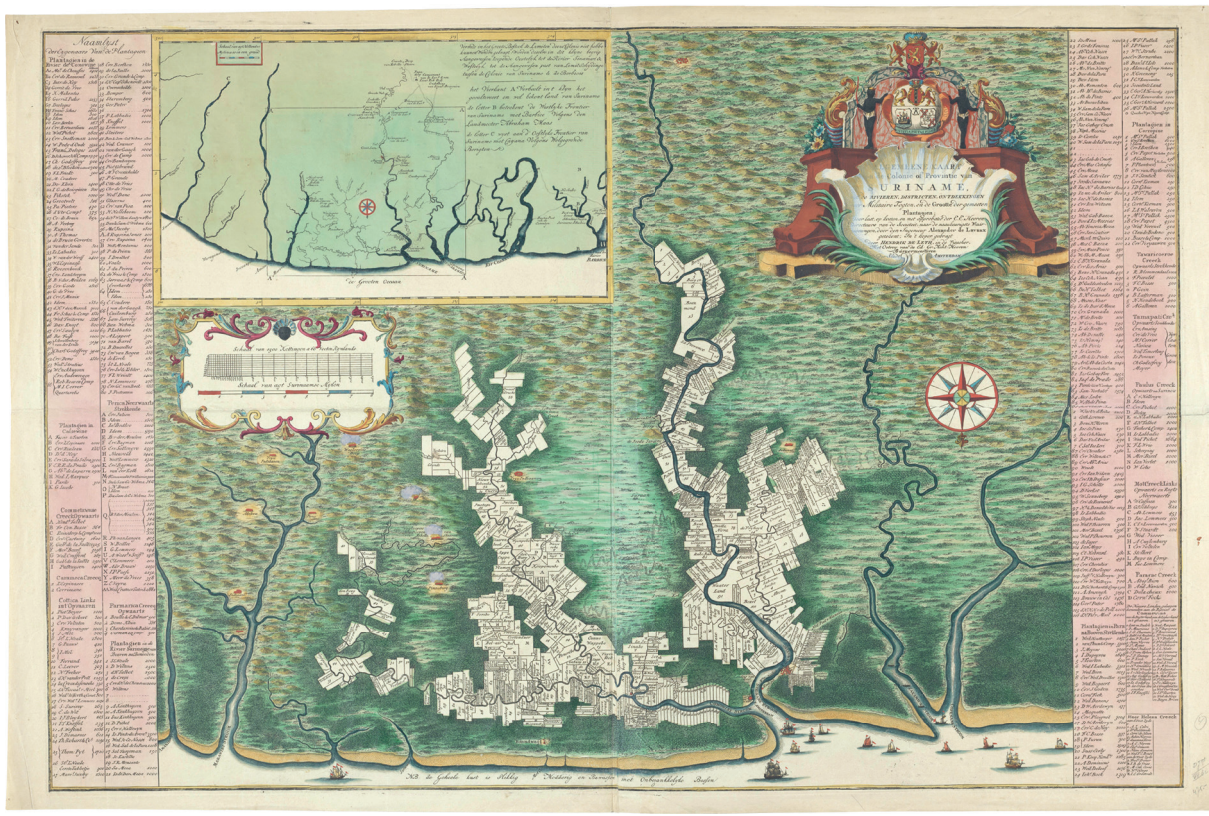
The way in which Blaeu's *paskaert* centers the ocean may, however, make one wonder why we have chosen to focus on the Americas at all. Indeed, the map seems to presage the idea of a 'Dutch Atlantic', as first described in 1999 by the historians Piet Emmer and Wim Klooster.[14] That framework drew upon Paul Gilroy's 1993 book *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and double consciousness* and its explication of African diasporic identity as conditioned by the migrations, exchanges, and violent ruptures of the Atlantic as an oceanic space.[15] This understanding of the Atlantic as a space of movement – of both goods and people – most usefully encouraged historians to reconceptualize national and imperial histories as multi-sited and mobile.[16]

Art history, however, has its own historiographies and resulting pressures to respond to. Historians have always, perhaps definitionally, recognized that all parts of the world have a history; their challenge has been to conceptualize their relationality. In contrast, art history has historically been highly selective about the geographies it has been willing to consider, the cultural production that falls under the rubric of 'Art'. The Netherlands, certainly and always; the Americas, much more recently and in more limited ways. Our framing of the Dutch Americas asks art historians to take seriously the idea that there are essential things to learn about Dutch art by focalizing attention on American spaces, that critical aspects of 'American' visual culture are Dutch-derived, and that Dutch art of the vaunted seventeenth century (and beyond) could not have looked as it does without the contributions – material, artistic, conceptual, and so forth – of people and things that either originated in or circulated through North America, South America, and the Caribbean.

Blaeu's *paskaert* is additionally useful for suggesting a disposition towards those geographies that is both particular and particularly Dutch. It was certainly not every imperial vantage point in the seventeenth century that would willingly relinquish so much representable land to oversized (and even blank!) cartouches. With its insistence upon coastlines, island territories, and the watery routes between them, the map powerfully visualizes Donna Merwick's notion of a Dutch empire constructed 'alongshore'.[17] While the possession and exploitation of land was critical to the Dutch enterprise, these territories nevertheless comprised relatively narrow bands bordering the Atlantic and Caribbean. Such an alongshore model of colonial possession stands in stark contrast to the territorial claims of more familiar imperial superpowers in the Americas – the Spanish and Portuguese and, later, the French and the English – who coveted immense geographic spans.[18]

Even at their most land-oriented – in regions where colonial extraction entailed the establishment of plantation settlement and farming – the Dutch tended to be anchored along coasts, rivers, and other major waterways. An eighteenth-century map of Suriname produced by Alexander de Lavaux visualizes something of this orientation to the American landscape (fig. 4). Heightened by the hand-coloring of this particular printed impression, lush forests of green give way to geometric precision along the undulating Suriname and Commewijne Rivers. Rigidly rectangular plantation plots have been carved out of an overgrown landscape: an abstract fantasy of wilderness tamed through perfect partitioning. But seen from above and from a vantage point far removed, these slim units end up projecting less colonial authority than a type of anxiety about the interior. These Dutch holdings seem to huddle together and cling to the safety of the rivers' shores. De Lavaux's map is explicit about the power dynamics that would undergird such a stance. Small fires burn from clearings in the brush – and these are labeled as settlements of 'maroons and rebel slaves' (*Wegloopers Dorpen van Rebelle Slaaven*) and encampments of 'free Indians' (*Vrye Indiaanen*). In a landscape so difficult to traverse and so hospitable to lurking surprises for Dutch residents, it was seemingly best to keep to the shore. Produced in no small part as a response to maroon uprisings in these colonial spaces, the map registers something of the Dutch anxiety about possession and existing as such a vulnerable minority in expansive American spaces.[19]

4
Alexander de Lavaux, *General map of Suriname*, 1737–1757, etching, engraving, hand coloring, 627 x 940 mm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum



In sum, the geographies of the Dutch Americas were at once sprawling and circumscribed. And, as we will see, the trade routes that connected these areas were variable in the extreme. Such thin, shapeshifting geographies hardly prove hospitable ground for art history. Indeed, the discipline has generally been forged around stable urban centers, and most art historical methods still depend upon such geopolitical configurations and the attendant economic, documentary, and social substrates that they offer to narrate history. Yet whatever methodological impasses the Dutch Americas throw up, they also offer great historiographic potential. Working with visual and material culture across these geographies allows the art historian to see, to gauge, and (hopefully) to describe the shapes and forms of this quite particular brand of early modern colonialism.

(Dis)contiguous histories

The publication of De Lavaux's map in 1737 also reminds us that the Dutch involvement in the Americas was not limited to the so-called 'Golden Age' but indeed extends well beyond the seventeenth century. Even more critically, Dutch occupation of the Americas was characterized and punctuated by a series of (false) starts and stops. This question of time, of histories being both non-linear and out of sync, was so intense and so intensely perceived by period actors that it itself became a constitutive theme of artistic production. Consider, for instance, Frans Post's 1662 *View of Olinda* (fig. 5). The picture is typical of Post's oeuvre, offering a sweeping, rather generic Brazilian landscape that is particularized through

5
Frans Post, *View of Olinda*, 1662
oil on canvas, 107.5 x 172.5 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

the recognizable façade of Olinda's cathedral, with the detailed inclusion of flora and fauna in the foreground that Post ostensibly studied from life during his time in Dutch-occupied Brazil. A pineapple, a frog, an armadillo – these tropical novelties, from a seventeenth-century Dutch perspective, give us the impression that we are staring over the artist's shoulder.

This canvas, however, was painted more than 20 years after Post returned from the Americas to the Netherlands and nearly a decade after Portuguese rule in Brazil had been reinstated. Despite this geopolitical reality, Post would never stop producing such pictures of the South American landscape. He was not alone in clinging to a once-Dutch colonial space that had been forfeited. Although the Brazilian colony only lasted a few decades, this nostalgic representation of Dutch Brazil took place alongside a continued publication of books and maps about the region, publications that contributed to the still emergent project of Dutch nation-building, long after these American territories had been ceded.[20]

The complicated, retrospective, and recurrent temporalities of the Dutch perspective on the Americas, as much as the lived experience of the region, is allegorized at the center of Post's picture and his handling of Olinda's cathedral. At the building's right edge, the contiguous convent complex seems to erode before our eyes. The crumbling masonry now plays host to the beginnings of dense vegetation that sprouts from the roofline and encroaches on the church from all sides. Inspecting more closely, we might notice two friars who welcome people of African descent into the church's interior. This is not a vision of Dutch inhabitation, then, but one of a subsequent possession by Portuguese forces and the Catholic ministers that were brought in tow. The Dutch may have left the Catholic building to decay, but it has been reoccupied. Olinda's cathedral thereby allegorizes the very idea of Dutch Brazil, which had itself been turned into ruin, a mere historical memory.

Palimpsestic imperial histories of this sort had material corollaries in real-world spaces. Another example from Recife – named Mauritsstad by the Dutch and made capital of their colonial enterprise in Brazil – gives a sense of the vibrancy of colonial residues. The Dutch brought distinctive Delft tiles with them to the Americas, both to Brazil and to other regions once under Netherlandish control. Featuring vases of flowers, frolicking animals like dogs and stags, horse-rider combinations, even windmills, these blue-and-white tiles adorned the walls of Dutch merchant homes. Once Recife was returned to the Portuguese, these tiles were slowly removed and gathered up only to then be installed in large panels, each featuring a collection of tiles with similar motifs, in the interior of the Franciscan Convento de Santo Antônio at some point in the eighteenth century (fig. 6).[21] Much more elaborate, religious scenes composed of imported blue-and-white tiles of *Portuguese* manufacture were installed around the same time on the ground floor of the convent. The building's two stories of ceramic architectural decoration now spatially literalize – both reflecting and reenacting – the layers of the city's colonial history.

These are the stratigraphic and protracted material histories that emerge from the start-stop, forward-backward endeavors of the Dutch in the Americas. The WIC was founded in 1621 as latecomer to the global game where Dutch efforts were concerned. By the time the Dutch earnestly

6
Tile installations in the interior of the Franciscan Convent of Santo Antonio
Recife, Brazil

involved themselves in the American sphere, Spanish and Portuguese presence in these regions had been well established for over a century, and the English and French had been active there for decades. The Dutch would have to contend with all of these forces in order to gain colonial possessions and secure routes for their own maritime trade.

With few territorial claims outside of New Netherland in the first third of the seventeenth century, it seemed better to outmaneuver Spanish and Portuguese fleets on the high seas than to go toe-to-toe on land. This stance was painfully reinforced by early efforts against the Portuguese in Brazil. A 1624 Dutch capture of Salvador (Bahia) was quickly overturned, and the rapid surrender of the Brazilian city back to the Portuguese tempered Dutch expectations around quick transatlantic victories.[22] In its early years, then, the WIC undertook a campaign of privateering aimed in equal parts at disrupting Spanish and Portuguese trade and gleaning rich rewards. The most convincing victory was without doubt Piet Hein's capture of the so-called Silver Fleet from the Spanish off the shores of Cuba in 1628.

It was, to a large extent, Spanish silver that funded the WIC's broader endeavors and enabled the taking of territory in Brazil to begin with. And these kinds of refracted knock-on consequences across geographies defined Dutch maneuvers in the American sphere. Established between 1624 and 1625, New Netherland was the first Dutch colonial territory across the Atlantic. These lands would eventually be ceded to the English in 1667. The Dutch Republic infamously agreed to this land exchange for spices – a small nutmeg-rich island in the Banda Sea – but the WIC was also offered control of territories in South America, present-day Suriname and Guyana, that would become critical for control of the Caribbean. The Dutch would regain New Netherland in 1673 only to then hand it back a year later following the Treaty of Westminster. That same year, in 1674, the WIC folded under a claim to bankruptcy. But it was allowed to immediately reconstitute as a 'new' company with an updated charter.

When it did, the WIC cast backward to the foundational myths of Piet Hein and his military prowess on the high seas, most notably the capture of Spain's Silver Fleet. Hein's pirated silver had not only financed the Dutch campaign to seize Brazil but was also commemoratively reforged into objects recalling the initial victory or avidly collected for having been part of this famous haul. This silver sat alongside an even broader array of commemorative prints, medals, and other decorative objects.[23] Half a century later, upon the dissolution and then refounding of the WIC in 1674, these commemorative endeavors reinforced the Company's renewed territorial ambitions for a projected ideal future. WIC ships began to once again harass Spanish forces in the Caribbean, while – at the very same time – providing Spanish territories with enslaved labor via Curaçao that was critical to Spanish productivity deep into the eighteenth century. In West Africa, the Dutch fought the English, as well as the Danish and Portuguese, to establish fortified bases along the coast for the export of enslaved men and women to the Americas.

This brief history of territorial occupation and shifting military strategy is meant to illustrate a key point: in contrast to other European colonial and imperial powers, the Dutch Republic's involvement in the Atlantic and Caribbean trade relied on constantly shifting territorial claims that complicate linear temporal narrative of historical events. In attempting to study and describe the Dutch Americas, then, the issue of overlapping and refracted geographic relationships gives way to discontinuous timelines and histories. This is not just a conceptual issue but also one that pushes at much more pragmatic limits. The longue durée of Dutch commercial and colonial interests in the Americas, coupled with these geopolitical shifts, means that the corpus of objects related to the Dutch Americas often falls outside of the temporalities and materials most familiar to historians of early modern Dutch art, whose training and focus tend to lie in the seventeenth century.

Yet working across temporalities is essential both to adequately represent the cultural heritage of the Dutch Americas and to reassess now-canonical seventeenth-century objects and practices. We might begin, for instance, with a carved calabash, representative of a large corpus of objects produced in Suriname that mostly survive from the nineteenth and early twentieth

7
Unknown maker, *Carved calabash*, 1823–1824, calabash, cotton, kaolin, 10 x 9,5 x 9,7 cm, Amsterdam, Wereldmuseum (formerly Tropenmuseum), (Collection Wereldmuseum Coll.nr. TM-H-2553)

centuries (fig. 7). Its incised bands of patterning, which give way to a scene of vegetation and heavenly stars, have been offset through the application of white kaolin clay. In the combination of its materials and its decorative motifs, the carved calabash reflects a local practice that emerged from the intersection of African and Indigenous residents of Dutch-controlled Suriname.[24] Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century objects made by Indigenous and African-descendant communities in Dutch-controlled territories rarely survive; there is thus a necessity of working with objects created much later – across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – in order to think about how to recover and foreground Indigenous and African artistic agency within the spaces of the Dutch Americas. Temporal back-casting of this type – while widely practiced in fields like anthropology – is fairly uncomfortable for scholars with more strictly historicist inclinations, yet so are the colonialist practices of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that seemingly saw little need to collect and document such materials.

Centering these later extant objects, however, allows us to more clearly see objects from earlier moments of Dutch involvement in the Americas and to gauge the artistic impact of African and Indigenous communities. This kind of gourd vessel was pictured, for instance, by the Dutch painter Dirk Valkenburg, who had been employed by Jonas Witsen, city secretary of Amsterdam, to document life on Witsen's Suriname plantation. In the foreground of his gathering of enslaved individuals, Valkenburg has laid two calabashes next to the feet of the lone woman with child who stares out of the picture (fig. 8). One uncarved and oiled, the other cut across to its base to serve as a drinking vessel, these gourds find echoes in the rest

of the painting – in the two men in the middle ground who hold calabash cups up into the air, and in the background, where the form of the water carrier's ceramic container suddenly seems gourd-inspired.

The woman next to the gourds sits upon a long wooden drum, which points to another category of Afro-Indigenous-made thing that has come down to us from colonial spaces. Two men straddle such instruments in the middle ground, tapping upon their stretched hides. It is on that animal skin of the drum in the foreground that Valkenburg chose to sign his name, inscribing the hide with a monogram akin to a brand or merchant mark.[25] That was a bold choice. The painter has defined his own authorship and creative act via or, at the very least, in relation to those of the enslaved, diasporic community he pictures. And he restages that type of Dutch-Afro-Indigenous twinning with the gourds as well. Just to the left of the two vessels in the foreground, one finds a long-handled white clay pipe, perhaps the most prototypically Dutch object of the seventeenth century.

Valkenburg was not the only artist to define Dutch authorship in such a way. In Post's 1662 *View of Olinda* with which this section begins, the painter pointedly chose to figure his signature as an inscription carved into the gourd (this one still growing) above the tortoise in the left foreground. And Post would deploy this device throughout his career. Valkenburg likely knew Post's pictures and may have even turned to them in preparing for his own 'documentary' voyage across the Atlantic; but in the end both artists notably ended up responding to local American material practices. Placing the inscriptions of Post and Valkenburg back into dialog with forms of ornamentation practiced in the Americas – particularly those emerging from Indigenous and diasporic African communities – reveals a longue durée of thinking about mark-making on both sides of the Atlantic during the seventeenth century and well beyond.

We might then find this kind of relational, even recursive, history pushed back yet further into the Dutch experience in the Americas. On 10 July 1657, a group of Lenape signed a deed ceding the entirety of what would come to be known as Staten Island – to them, Eghquaons – to Lubbertus van Dincklage, attorney of Henrick van der Capelle (fig. 9). The event partakes of many features that would become poignant, painful tropes of colonial dealings. While they might have been valued far more intensely than we now perceive, the thin stack of metal and textile goods the Indigenous men received – '50 axes (…) some knives (…) 2 pieces of Duffel' – nevertheless hardly seem like a fair deal. On the signatory page, in reverse direction of the text, the notary sketched an impression of the scene, picturing three native men with fantastically formed heads/headdresses and bearing staffs or spears who stand next to a Dutchman, his weapon traded for the almost equally long-stemmed smoking pipe.

Above/below (depending upon one's orientation), the signatures themselves also bear the traces of a transatlantic exchange, but here at a semiotic level. The 20 Lenape signatories have not so much added their names as agreed with symbols that represent them. The notary has glossed each, such that the names of these individuals are rendered both in graphic marks and in alphabetic script that has been used to phonetically transpose their names. Such symbolic stand-ins for these men have few pre-Dutch

8
Dirk Valkenburg, ***Gathering of enslaved people on one of the plantations of Jonas Witsen in Suriname,*** **c. 1707,** oil on canvas, 58 x 46.5 cm, Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst

corollary practices in the Lenape tradition.[26] Rather, they emerged in the manner of Dutch merchant marks to both render and authenticate identity within legalistic formulae and structures that had been imported from across the Atlantic.

If one is willing to think and work in discontiguous geographic and temporal frames, these are the kinds of refracted histories that could be productively built out. The colonial logic of brands and merchant marks might, at first glance, seem like they have little to do with calabash-carving and artist signatures – but placing them together we see a rich tapestry of colonial mark-making that sutured Netherlandish, Indigenous, and diasporic African identities and were the very means by which that identity was routinely communicated. The legacies of the Dutch Americas, however, necessitate thinking forward as much as backward. Dutch presence in American spaces, particularly the Caribbean – Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius, Saba, Guyana, and Suriname – was (and still is) enduring. Suriname would gain independence only in 1975; and it was as late as 2010 that Curaçao became an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

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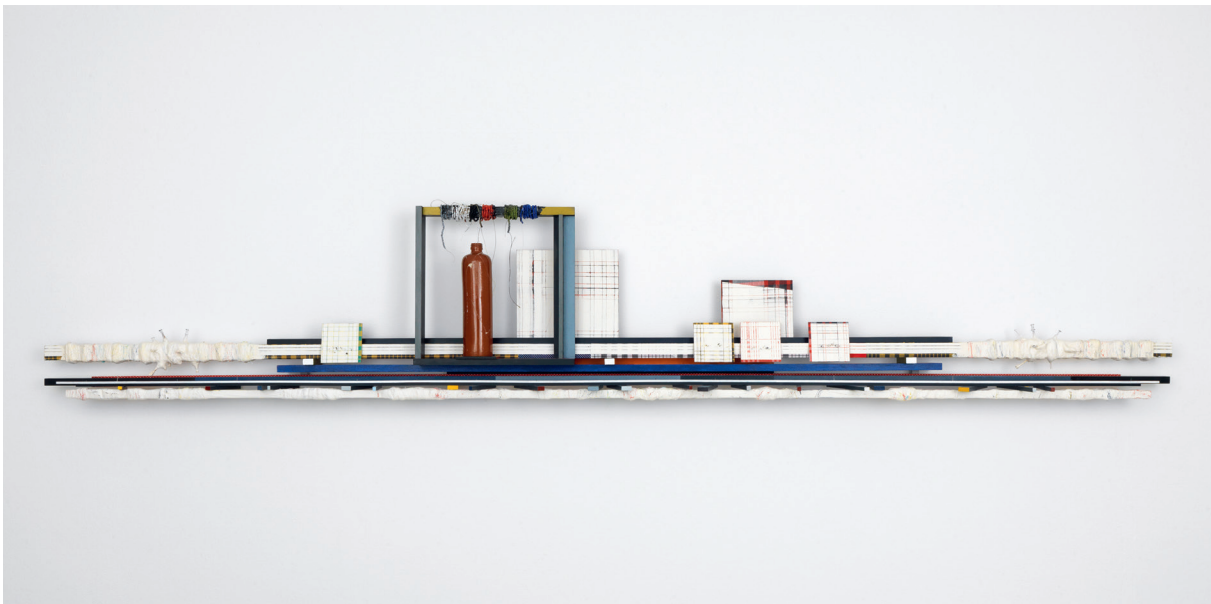
Deed to Staten Island, **1657,** ink on paper, 220 x 330 mm, New York State Archives, Albany

That is, centuries of Dutch colonial rule are not a matter of historical recovery but are still potently present. If plantations (*landhuizen*) in such regions are no longer operative, converted instead into hotels and museums, contemporary artists have also tried to reclaim and activate these spaces in order to wrangle with ongoing legacies of Dutch colonial extraction, Indigenous dispossession, and the exploitation of enslaved labor. Within the Netherlands too, museums have commissioned curators and artists to work towards integrating histories of enslavement and colonial exploitation into the public national consciousness.[27] A central difficulty in reconstructing the histories of Dutch colonialism and slavery, and thereby accounting for the historical agency and subjecthood of the enslaved, has been in navigating the many lacunae of material and textual archives, which reflect practices of recordkeeping and collecting that deliberately obfuscated or excluded these perspectives. Not uncommonly, curators have turned to contemporary art and experience to, if not stand in, then to compensate for a paucity of viewpoints from certain kinds of historical actors.

Contemporary work can indeed produce powerful commentary on the complex temporalities of Dutch-occupied spaces and on the ways that colonialism has shaped both regions of the Americas and the Netherlands. Take, for instance, Remy Jungerman's *Horizontal Obeah MAAU* (*LA LLORONA*) of 2020 (fig. 10). Staged in a gallery in the Netherlands, the piece might easily slip into a modernist legacy with early twentieth-century roots in *De Stijl*. Indeed, the oppositions of vertical and horizontal lines along with the various presentations of the grid seem to beg for that interpretation. But the starkness of that modernist vision gives way to the material specificity of execution. The gridded rectilinear planes are made from the clever application of white kaolin clay (typical of the northern reaches of South America and applied to objects of Indigenous facture,



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Remy Jungerman, *Horizontal Obeah MAAU* (*LA LLORONA*), 2020, cotton textile, kaolin (pimba), gin bottle, tar, beads, nails, yarn, acrylic, wood (yellow poplar, plywood, mdf), 48.3 x 284.5 x 20.3 cm, New York, Courtesy of the artist and Fridman Gallery; photographed by Aatjan Renders

as we have seen) on checked fabric, a common trade good of the WIC to African territories and typical clothing of enslaved individuals in Dutch colonial spaces.[28] Blue, green, red, yellow, black, and white – colors that visually evoke in this configuration nothing more obviously than the work of Piet Mondrian – are here fashioned from long strings of beads, the most important trade good for the Dutch with both African and Indigenous populations of the Americas.

Born in Suriname, Jungerman often incorporates in his work such material evocations of the country's maroon populations – individuals descended from enslaved Africans who had escaped from plantation life. Some have seen such compilations as most evocative of an altar for offerings; and Jungerman's titling (here 'obeah' invoking maroon spellcasting or healing traditions) invites such reading. For instance, the clay gin bottle has been framed as if just placed down with reverence. But gin drunk by sailors on the high seas, along with the formal thrust of the piece's long attenuated horizontal lines punctuated by smaller verticals – at once akin to the smokestacks of a steamship and the fabric sails attached to a grouping of masts – pushes the assemblage to equally evoke maritime transit. The diasporic identities that cohere in the artist's chosen materials came to exist precisely as a result of such trafficking across the seas. In turn, Dutch formalism yields to, or is shown to be made up of, the materials that define diasporic identities in what were once spaces held by the Dutch. But even more to the point, Dutch modernism is shown to be contingent upon Dutch colonialism, and forms emblematic of utopian visions from the twentieth century are forced into dialog with materials whose temporalities elide such teleological progression. That is, the untidy, recursive time of the colonies undoes the forward march of progress upon which modernist dreams rely.

The Dutchness of the Americas

The relatively simple form of a silver beaker made for a merchant in the Hudson River Valley belies the incredibly complex entanglements of identities that were constructed around and through its creation (fig. 11). Passed down for generations in the Sanders (shortened from the Dutch Sandersen) family before being donated to the Yale University Art Gallery, the beaker is inscribed with the name of its first owner, Robbert Sandersen, and the year 1685. This date, paired with documentary evidence, makes clear that the beaker was presented to Sandersen as a gift from the Scottish Robert Livingston in recompense for Sandersen's aid and translation services, which proved essential to negotiating the 'purchase' of lands outside of Schenectady (in present-day upstate New York) from the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) residents.[29] The amount of information about this beaker's commission and the cultural density of this origin story are complemented by a maker's mark – allowing one to anchor this worked silver to the oeuvre of Cornelis Vanderburgh, a smith active in this same area at the end of the seventeenth century.

From the earliest publications, the beaker has been heralded as an 'impressive piece of early American silver', and its maker as the 'earliest

11
Cornelis Vanderburgh, *Sandersen beaker*, 1685, silver, 20.3 x 12.2 cm, New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery

native New York silversmith thus far recorded'.[30] These framings of the beaker and its maker would come to define the object's reception and historiography. The object has been the subject of scholarly writing no less than 20 times over the course of the century, and it has invariably been positioned as a new beginning and thus mobilized in the service of narrating the achievement of metalwork in the colonial and, in turn, independent United States. Perhaps predictably, it has not in turn featured in any texts or textbooks devoted to Dutch art of the seventeenth century. The date of 1685 plays a role at once historical and, just as critically, methodological. After all, the Dutch had finally, and completely, ceded New Netherland to

the British in 1674, never to return. The beaker is thus firmly positioned in a teleology in which British-occupied lands would eventually yield to a new nation, the United States.

In several ways, however, the beaker speaks of the enduring influence of Dutch traditions rather than to a rupture or new beginning. The beaker owes its form, for instance, directly from Dutch precedents. Its tall, sloping, slightly flared sides are most readily comparable to Dutch ecclesiastical examples. In fact, the most direct precedents and comparanda might be two silver beakers famously produced for the First Dutch Reformed Church of Albany – one made in the Netherlands and imported, the other fabricated in response in the Dutch-controlled territories of New York.[31] And while Vanderburgh was indeed born on American soil that had been handed over to English colonists, he was himself of Dutch-German heritage and worked in a community of silversmiths established decades earlier and dominated by Dutch-descended masters, one that still welcomed transatlantic migrants from the Netherlands.

All of these 'Dutch', rather than Anglo-American, facets of the beaker's character are reinforced by its decorative program. The incised animals that ring its form were carefully copied from a series of engravings designed by Adriaen van de Venne to accompany a collection of aphorisms and emblems by the Dutch poet Jacob Cats. First published in 1618, these engravings would be rereleased several times, including for the collected works of Cats that was released in 1655, which inaugurated the poet as one of the Dutch Republic's chief literary figures and cultural commentators in the seventeenth century. On the 'front' view of the beaker, a stork has grabbed a lizard, which in turn has caught a spider; but the bird, we soon realize, will not get away with its prey as a snake has wrapped stealthily around its legs. Extracted from an even more complicated engraved scene in which the ensemble is stalked by a dragon, which is in turn followed by a group of armed hunters, the vignette illustrates the idea that there is always a force higher up the food chain and that prudence should guide the exercise of power. This is but one of the emblematic allegories on the beaker, but its prime position below the beaker's dedication – 1685, along with the name of its recipient – renders it a chilling commentary on the colonial power relations that led to its production.

The ease with which the Sandersen beaker has, nevertheless, been cast as part of an 'early American' rather than 'late Dutch colonial' legacy speaks to the general lack of interest that scholars of Netherlandish art have shown vis-à-vis the territories and traditions of the 'other side' of the Atlantic. Surveys of early North American furniture and silver may reference Dutch forms or makers, and they might also note the use of American woods for Dutch-style furniture, but these Dutch-American forms are rarely considered as part of a broader phenomenon.[32] This flies in the face of art historical realities. It was in North America that the Dutch themselves mounted perhaps the most fervent campaigns to implant a sense of Dutchness outside of the Dutch Republic. There, some of the largest tracts of American territory were settled by the Dutch in a system of patroonships, a quasi-feudal model designed to actively encourage settler colonialism. Early depictions of New Amsterdam

featured windmills, church spires, and step gables – actively selling this colonial space as a simple extension of life in the Netherlands.[33] And more than anywhere else, Dutch household goods – from tiles to furniture to painting collections – were both sent with would-be colonists or imported for their comfort after the fact.

The historical and historiographic frameworks that have been alternatively erected around the Sandersen beaker remind of how seldom Dutchness, if one might consider such a totalizing concept, has been pulled out to explain or undergird American identity.[34] This is perhaps particularly true for the territories eventually constituting the United States; or it strikes us particularly as two scholars who grew up on the west coast of that country before being educated in the east. In New England – as its current nomenclature makes evident – the formation of the United States in a transatlantic crucible and in opposition to the English is the narrative on offer. In California and much of the southwest United States, the Spanish colonial heritage makes itself felt in everything from language politics to middle-school visits to former Catholic missions. The Dutch do not figure in that matrix, and this despite the fact that many canonical US places (we have already mentioned Schenectady and Staten Island) feature Dutch names; that no less a president than Maarten van Buren and no less an American icon as Sojourner Truth both spoke Dutch as their first language; or that so many objects, like the beaker now at Yale, bespeak the Dutch influence on material culture. While our subject position may make us feel such dynamics specifically, these same narratives can and should be extended hemispherically.

At the same time, it is critical to underscore that 'Dutch' identity in the Americas was far from homogeneous, such that reclaiming Dutch contributions in these spheres also means centering groups and histories that one might not at first glance 'read' as Netherlandish. The earliest histories of New Netherland illustrate such slippages and instabilities. It was the English captain Henry Hudson, after all, who was first hired by the VOC to find the fabled Northwest Passage and who sailed up the North American river that now bears his name. A few years later, in 1613, Juan Rodriguez – an Afro-Portuguese man from Santo Domingo employed by the Dutch as a translator – decided to leave his post on the Dutch ship *Jonge Tobias*; he arguably became first non-Indigenous resident of Manhattan, where he would eventually serve as a translator of yet other languages when the Dutch returned to the region.[35]

Neither Hudson nor Rodriguez was Dutch by birth or citizenship, but each had a Dutch employer and played roles in establishing a Netherlandish foothold in the Americas. The Dutch approach to colonialism, driven by state-backed trading companies, was somewhat different than the English or the Spanish imperial projects, foregrounding trade as opposed to large-scale landgrabs with accompanying projects of religious conversion and enforced cultural hegemony.[36] The West India Company eagerly employed French Huguenots, Germans, Swedes, and English sailors and merchants. Dutchness was thus a quite fluid category and can be difficult to recover and describe. In this volume, we consider the 'Dutch' in the Americas as an expansive and relational category. As in the case of the Yale beaker,

'Dutchness' might read as English at first blush; and Dutch history is also undergirded by Indigenous, African, Jewish, and alternatively diasporic identities.

Understanding the 'Dutch' impact on visual and material practices is trickier, however, than noting these historical realities. Yet when one pushes at the filaments of migration and trade history, one can glean their traces at the very heart of canonically 'Dutch' visual traditions. We might turn to, for instance, the wide-brimmed felt hats that typified Dutch middle-class identity and that feature in some of the most enduring portraits produced across the seventeenth century. The ready supply of beaver pelts – whose furs were pelted into sheets for these hats – was the very reason that the Dutch coveted and controlled New Netherland as long as they did.[37]

Pelts could be won directly from trapping, but the material qualities of these fresh hides paled in comparison to those that could be procured from Indigenous communities in exchange for trade goods like glass beads of the types discussed by Carrie Anderson in this volume. Indigenous groups capitalized on Dutch desire for specific material qualities and thus often sold fur that had been worn for at least a season, if not more; the heat, sweat, and friction of the body caused pelts to shed their coarser hairs, leaving behind only the downy undercoat, whose shorter fibers were far superior for felting.[38] If we thread trade histories into the art historical record in this way, we find embodied, haptic histories of the Indigenous Americas in quintessentially Dutch objects, and we can connect bodies who wore the same furs – albeit in quite different forms – on both sides of the Atlantic.

People also moved in ways that were only possible because of the Dutch control of American territories. And their diasporic identities have produced visual legacies marked by and marking 'Dutch Americanness'. Perhaps no group traversed the Americas more than Sephardic Jews, who, having been expelled from the Iberian Peninsula, were allowed to settle and practice religion in the comparatively tolerant Dutch Republic. Portuguese language skills made them a key population in Dutch Brazil, where they joined up with *converso* Jews who reclaimed their Judaism after Dutch occupation. This community played a critical role in the urban planning and infrastructure of Mauritsstad, where the first synagogue in the Americas, Kahal Zur Israel, was eventually founded in 1636.

When the Portuguese recaptured the region, a large portion of this Jewish community resettled in Suriname, New Amsterdam, and Curaçao.[39] In Curaçao that presence is felt acutely at Mikvé Israel-Emanuel, a sand-floored building that boasts of being the oldest continually operating synagogue in the Western Hemisphere.[40] A building is hardly difficult to spot, but some traces of Jewish-Dutch identity require digging below the surface. Archaeological work in Suriname around areas inhabited by Jewish groups beginning in the seventeenth century led to the designation of the Jodensavanne Settlement and the Cassipora Creek Cemetery as UNESCO world heritage sites in 2023.[41]

The 1682 will of Asser Levy – born in Poland and a resident of Amsterdam before he settled in New Amsterdam in 1654 – illustrates the ways in which early modern Dutch identity transgressed geopolitical and

even confessional borders. The same year Levy arrived in New Amsterdam, he successfully advocated for the admission of Jewish refugees from Dutch Brazil to the colony, against Director General Peter Stuyvesant's own express wishes to WIC directors to limit Jewish emigration.[42] Levy's will, executed close to a decade after the English took control of the Dutch colony, is written in English but includes many Dutch words (*platels*, *dochter*, *tot*, *chist* [kist]). It documents debts to a large number of Dutch residents of New York,[43] and its contents again suggest the continuation of 'Dutch' material culture in New York, long after the dissolution of New Netherland as a Dutch colonial holding.[44]

Such diasporic mobilities as Levy's were crucial to the mercantile ambitions of the WIC and also to the personal histories of family and a community that came to stretch, much like Dutch identity itself, across several oceans. In a seeming nod to the role diasporic networks played in these territories, the Jewish community of Amsterdam drew upon the material wealth of the Americas in furnishing the Amsterdam Esnoga, a synagogue built in 1675. The Torah ark and *bimah* were hewn from warmly hued Brazilian rosewood, or *jacaranda*, implanting a material manifestation of the Americas within the spiritual home of the community in Europe.[45] If one interrogates where one chooses to locate 'Dutchness', that is, it is just as important to ask where one goes to look, where one keeps an eye out, for 'Americanness'.

Methods, models, and materials of the Dutch Americas

This introduction has attempted to lay out some of the thematics – and attendant historical and methodological challenges – that we find critical for what will hopefully be a continued art historical interest in the Dutch Americas. Yet other avenues are presented by the essays gathered in this volume. To close, we briefly introduce these contributions in order to pull out and to underscore the historiographic interventions that we understand them to be making both individually and in concert.

The contributions of essays centered on New Netherland are perhaps the easiest to gauge. With the notable exceptions of two important exhibitions – the 1988 *Remembrance of patria* and the 2009 show on Margrieta van Varick's Dutch New York – there has frankly been little sustained art historical attention in this region.[46] Two authors take bold leaps into this scholarly territory, addressing key monuments of the early Dutch presence in and around Albany (upstate New York). They work with material remnants of history that remain in remarkably different ways, pointing to the methodological flexibility that will be required to flesh out a fuller art historical picture of New Netherland. Jeroen van den Hurk aims to provide the first synthetic study of the First Dutch Reformed Church, a building that is no longer extant. Mining epistolary correspondence about the planning for this building and considering the relationship between structures built in New Netherland and the architectural styles and techniques in the Dutch Republic, he is able to offer a remarkable window into this and other multi-use colonial buildings. Placing that reconstruction into dialog with contemporary travel accounts helps

shore up the way that people saw and thought about 'Dutch' things in this colonial space.

Some of the stained-glass windows survive from Beverwijck (Albany), from another colonial church that is no longer extant. Margot Steurbaut analyzes the remains of this armorial glass program by situating it within the techniques and technologies that made such glass a global Dutch phenomenon and the social structures of New Netherland as a space of display. Doing so allows her to suggest the ways that pictorial formulae of these windows were geared to emergent forms of class mobility that were particular to the Dutch North American colony. Together with Van den Hurk, then, she points to the social world in which New Netherlandish culture, whether extant or not, can be reimbedded.

The archival traces corresponding to the Dutch in the Americas are variable in the extreme. While the WIC kept robust records, many of these have been destroyed, and much of daily life – to say nothing of artistic practice – escaped Company attention in the first place. Add to this the fact that post-colonial spaces of the Americas have their own logics of preservation – ones not always hospitable to the traces of former colonial regimes – and the archival picture becomes scattered and partial. Two essays in the volume address archival absences, erasures, and constructions head-on. Carolina Monteiro marshals an exhaustive survey of WIC records, particularly in Brazil, in attempting to recover the artistic contributions of enslaved individuals to the material culture of Dutch Brazil. She uses these records to center not only the labor but also the material ingenuity of enslaved people of African origin and, in the process, relocates attention to objects associated with Johan Maurits's court, with an eye towards recognizing the contributions of the enslaved.[47]

Working from a much more private, family-oriented archive, Adam Eaker rereads the traces of the Atlantic world that accrued around the figure of Gesina ter Borch. An Indigenous word slipped into an inventory of her possessions, a fantastically imaged watercolor of her niece in Curaçao, a portrait of two young Black boys made 'nae 't leven' in her hometown of Zwolle – Eaker uses these discrete vignettes to show how the Americas permeated the life of this affluent woman in the Dutch Republic. And he does so while revealing moments in which national projects of archival construction actively sought to shed colonial residues, thereby fracturing the material and documentary traces of the Dutch Americas yet more forcefully. Both Eaker and Monteiro thereby urge us to not simply mine the archive but also attend to its own forms of historical creation (and erasure).

Yet art historians know well that material practices often leave little documentary evidence in their wake. Indeed, many of the essays in this volume model a kind of careful triangulation of the material record against fragmentary, piecemeal, or wholly absent written evidence, making good on art history's claim of working directly from objects themselves. Perhaps no Dutch material left more residue in the Americas than glass. Trade beads of colored glass are found by the bucketful in archaeological sites across areas once traded in by the Dutch and where Indigenous residents eagerly acquired them from Dutch colonists and Company men.[48] Carrie Anderson triangulates Dutch, Indigenous Brazilian, and African responses to glass

beads, and positions these against unforthcoming documentary records. Doing so reveals Dutch traders carefully calibrating their supplies to the consumer demands of Indigenous American and African traders; and the material responses to both Dutch beads and fake gems in the Americas help offer up a reassessment of Dutch values about costume, material ornamentation, and visual deception.

Hannah Prescott similarly considers how glass, along with brass and textiles, acted as a material surrogate via which the Dutch sought to secure mercantile ambitions. Indeed, in Prescott's accounting these materials became so emblematic of maneuvering in the transatlantic sphere that they could act, despite their relatively low monetary valuation for Europeans, as a prized piece of booty. Prescott traces the disrupted trajectory of an English crown made from these materials for the African ruler of Ardra. Captured by Dutch privateers and presented to the Amsterdam Admiralty, the purloined diplomatic gift comes, through this materially focused accounting, to reflect both Anglo-Dutch competition and competing notions of value that emerged through colonial trade in both Africa and the Americas. In centering these understudied mobile materials, ones perhaps easy to underestimate, these essays alternatively expand and challenge previous art historical models that have focused on the reflection of transoceanic commodity flows in canonical Dutch art[49] or that focus exclusively on high-value, exotic rarities and diplomatic gifts.[50]

All this said, the volume – across many submissions – still suggests that there is much to be gained in reassessing artists and careers that we might think we know well. The Brazilian landscapes of Frans Post, painted by the dozen, are hardly now a surprise – and we have already drawn attention to the need to think about the moments 'after', about the nostalgia that pervades the late works of an artist looking back across the Atlantic. Margaux Shraiman focuses instead on the journey taken, by carefully describing the understudied sketchbook drawings executed by Post while onboard the *Zutphen* bound for Brazil. In their moody mist and their careful avoidance of markers of territorial claim and settlement, these stark sheets reflect, Shraiman suggests, the particular nature of the Dutch colonial power, which was often exercised more comfortably at sea than on land.

Angela Vanhaelen centers not so much new material as an alternative lens through which to see the oft-discussed figure of Albert Eckhout's *African woman*. Drawing from Black feminist studies, Vanhaelen centers her own discomfort in looking anew at what she thought she already had seen. Rather than the tropes of racial miscegenation that the figure is so often mobilized to rehearse, she foregrounds the African woman's displacement and racialized gendering. Working through the possibilities for restoring subjectivity to this figure allows an even broader reflection on the work that historians do (or might do) in confronting enslaved subjects in the art historical record.

The Dutch Americas loomed in the lives and imaginaries of historical actors far more local and far less mobile than Post and Eckhout. Many of the essays gesture towards the ways that goods, curiosities, and works of art produced in the Americas ended up in the homes and lives of residents of

the Dutch Republic's urban centers. As Eaker's contribution reminds, this was also true beyond major cities, saturating to a perhaps surprising degree the intimate lives of those living in areas we might presume were less cosmopolitan. Michiel van Groesen looks yet further afield, considering the appeal of the Dutch Americas, particularly the contested coastlines of Dutch Brazil, for audiences outside the Dutch Republic entirely. He focuses on maritime scenes produced in Antwerp by the artists Gillis I (1612-1653) and Bonaventura I (1614-1652) Peeters. The two Flemish painters never traveled to Brazil but produced, nonetheless, works that treat Dutch experience in these colonial spaces and that, in their thematics, track the changing fortunes of the Dutch colonial project. While these works were definitionally purchased for a far broader segment of consumers than Post or Eckhout's more famous pictures of Brazil, they have received little scholarly treatment. They powerfully point to the fact that the colonial experience of European powers registered beyond the bounds of emergent nation-states and could be imagined and deployed to ends at once knowing and subversive. In treating these pictures, Van Groesen importantly reminds us of the need to think beyond the empire as a frame for art historical research.

In a closing contribution, Rebecca Zorach points to the importance of considering the Dutch Americas in terms of both Indigenous epistemologies and post-colonial ramifications that run through the contemporary moment. Zorach does so by focusing our attention to the figure of the beaver. The beaver might be taken, this essay suggests, as a source from which both Dutch and Indigenous concepts of worldmaking derived or a screen onto which they were projected. While this animal was also seen by both camps as a commodity to be extracted and traded, they registered different metaphors for the creation of shared worlds. Drawing from Indigenous studies scholarship and contemporary Indigenous theorists, Zorach dwells on the questions of loss and care embodied by these animals and their traces, in order to finally indicate some of the less obvious ways that the Dutch colonial project continues to reverberate for artists and historians alike.

Like the pictured offerings on Visscher's 1611 print with which we began, the essays here stand for a much broader conceptual and territorial realm. As a result, this volume of the *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* is far from a comprehensive account and much more an initial and partial endeavor. Notably, for instance, there are no essays here focused on the material, built, and visual cultures of Suriname or Curaçao; and the Dutch Caribbean, more generally, is a clear geographical lacuna, if its presence is felt obliquely in several contributions. We hope that future scholars may investigate cross-regional thematics alluded to here, but not fully explored: the contributions of the Sephardic Jewish diaspora, for example, or the role of the Calvinist Church as patron in the Americas. And we hope that the field will push towards models and questions not yet visible on our scholarly horizon at all. We see this volume as a necessary and humble first step in bringing the Dutch Americas into focus, in offering a diversity of materials, methods, and models for future scholars and students alike.

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Notes

1 On the trade iconography of Visscher's print, see Kolfin 2011 and Swan 2021, 38-45.
2 Cat. Amsterdam & Salem 2015.
3 Boone 2017.
4 On this early moment of northern entanglement with American geographies, see Stols 1971 and Jacobs 2004, 7-44.
5 Cat. Amsterdam 2011; cat. Amsterdam & Salem 2015; cat. Los Angeles 2018; cat. The Hague 2017; Jackson & Jaffer 2004; Zandvliet 2002; cat. Amsterdam 1972; Blussé & Falkenburg 1987.
6 See the only two essays dealing with the Americas in *NKJ* (Blackwood 2016 and Porras 2016), as well as Weststeijn 2020, Swan 2021, DaCosta Kaufmann & North 2014, North 2010, and Zandvliet 2002, 178. Some studies with a primary focus on Dutch-Asian relationships have, to a lesser extent, incorporated a section on the Americas; see Brook 2008 and Hochstrasser 2007.
7 On Post, see Larsen 1962, Sousa-Leão 1942, cat. Munich 2006, Buvelot *et al.* 2007, Van den Boogaart 2011, Oliver 2013, Schmidt 2014, Ferraz Barbosa & Moragas 2016, De Bruin 2016, and Vieira 2019.
8 On Eckhout, see cat. Copenhagen & São Paulo 1991, cat. Copenhagen 2002, Buvelot 2002, and Brienen 2006.
9 For just recent studies, which feature reference to further literature, see Etheridge *et al.* 2022 and Von Kries 2017. We await the forthcoming book on Maria Sibylla Merian by Catherine Powell-Warren (expected in 2025).
10 Schmidt 2001; Klooster 2016.
11 See Van Oers 2001, Santos Pérez 2015, Hulsman 2015, De Cabral & Santos Pérez 2009, and Santos Pérez 2009.
12 Ribeiro da Silva 2011.
13 See Postma 1990 and Nimako & Willemsen 2011. On Curaçao's links to French and Spanish trade in enslaved people, see Klooster 2014 and Rupert 2012. On New Netherland's dependence on enslaved labor, see Mostermann 2021.
14 Emmer & Klooster 1999; Klooster & Oostindie 2018; Klooster 2016.
15 Gilroy 1993.
16 Bailyn 1996; Bailyn 2005; O'Reilly 2004; Pietschmann 2002, 11-54; Games 2006.
17 Merwick 2013, 5-8.
18 For historical grappling with how to describe these dynamics and comparisons, see Emmer & Klooster 1999, 48-69; Klooster & Oostindie 2018; Antunes 2018; and Romney 2016.
19 Sint Nicolaas 2018, 72-77.
20 On the legacy of Dutch Brazil, see Van Groesen 2014 and Brienen 2014.
21 Dos Santos Simões 1959. On the related issue of Dutch tiles made for export and use in Portuguese Brazil, see Weststeijn 2005.
22 Van Groesen 2016.
23 We explore these themes in a forthcoming essay: A.M Hyman & S. Porras, 'Recasting the Silver Fleet, or The propaganda of piracy in the age of global extraction', forthcoming.
24 Meulenberg 2011; Price 1982.
25 This was first brought to our attention in a conference paper by Adam Eaker, 'Suriname on display', presented at the College Art Association annual conference, New York, 18 February 2017.
26 On the intersection of Indigenous and colonial mark-making in the Americas, see Gaudio 2008.
27 Cat. Amsterdam 2020; cat. Alkmaar 2023; cat. Amsterdam 2021; cat. The Hague 2019.
28 On the use of cloth in WIC trade, see Anderson & Kehoe 2025.
29 The beaker was explored to earliest and perhaps greatest effect in Hastings 1935.
30 See Hastings 1935, 52. See also Yale University Art Gallery online catalog entry: https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/5286.
31 The beakers are dated 1660 and 1678; see cat. Albany 1988, nos. 13 & 14, 55.
32 The only synthetic study of the Dutch visual and material culture in North America is the exceptional catalog cat. Albany 1988. Literature on objects made in New Netherland or by Dutch descendant makers can be found in cat. New York 1962, cat. New York 1991, and cat. New York 2009.
33 Sutton 2015.
34 For a provocation about the global implications of 'Dutchness', see Kehoe 2023.
35 Jacobs 2004, 13.
36 For an alternative reading of this history stressing the importance of the Calvinist mission, see Noorlander 2023.
37 This has been famously explored by Brook 2008.
38 Writing in the 1640s and 1650s, Adriaen van der Donck described that 'the worn beaver pelts are much in demand. Coats made by the Indians of beaver skin, worn on the bare body for a time, and made dirty from sweat and greasiness, work well and yield good hats'. See Van der Donck 2008, 118. Our thinking about beaver fur and pelts owes a great deal to our student Tali Gorodetsky.
39 Israel 2014.
40 For a comprehensive historical guide, see Emmanuel & Emmanuel 1970.
41 Ben-Ur & Frankel 2012; Goldstone 2022.
42 Oppenheim 1909, 5.
43 Hershkowitz 1990.
44 Gorodetsky 2024.
45 On the synagogue, with several treatments of the wood, see Vlaardingerbroek 2013.
46 Cat. Albany 1988; cat. New York 2009.
47 For more standard accounts of Maurits's court, see Odegard 2022 and Cabral de Mello 2006. On Johan Maurits as a patron of the arts, see a number of the essays in Van den Boogaart *et al.* 1979, Boeseman & Whitehead 1989, and Hochstrasser 2014.
48 See, for instance, the collections found at Albany's Fort Orange; Hayes 1983.
49 Hochstrasser 2007.
50 Viallé 2014; Swan 2021; Um 2018.

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Detail of fig. 3

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L IS.
Overmits de Americaensche kusten van R. de Plata aen d'oostzyde en van La Concepcion aende westzyde zuydwaert, in dese kaert aen een vervolgens niet vertoont konden worden zyn die hier in een besonder tafelken vervaet.
Tropicus Capricorni