

century art (a study that now complements Martha Hollander's book on the *doorkijkje*. *An Entrance for the Eyes: space and meaning in Dutch seventeenth-century art*, University of California Press, 2002). In an essay on Ter Borch's paintings that juxtapose drinking young women and sleeping soldiers, she explores how such companion pieces could convey levels of meanings that have less to do with a moralizing admonition than with a witty conceit. She addresses neglected themes which still need more attention. One example is her treatment of old age in Dutch art, particularly in her essay on the role of the father and of old men in Adriaen van Ostade's prints of domestic scenes.

Throughout the past twenty or so years, as Salomon notes in her Introduction, some of her ideas have attracted controversy, especially among some Dutch and English scholars. There were objections, for instance, when she described Vermeer's *Woman with a balance* as pregnant, and when she challenged the accepted idea that Steen's topsy-turvy households were entirely moralizing (see pp. 5 and 7). The minor uproars that issued from some scholars on such points only proves the excitement generated by Salomon's ideas, especially in the case of well-known and much-loved paintings. This book of essays will remain an important and lasting contribution, both for students of Dutch art and for students of methodology.

Wayne Franits. *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting: Its Stylistic and Thematic Evolution*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. viii + 328 pp. + 236 illus. \$60.00. Review by HENRY LUTTIKHUIZEN, CALVIN COLLEGE.

Even though this book does not really offer a new interpretation of seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting, it provides an outstanding synthesis of the best art historical scholarship on the subject over the past three decades. In addition, it has an excellent bibliography and is lavishly illustrated, with over a hundred color plates. Consequently, the book should prove to be helpful for general readers and specialists alike.

In line with much of contemporary scholarship, Franits argues against the notion that genre paintings are simply naturalistic scenes of everyday life. Instead, he advocates the view that these works are highly conventional representations in pictorial traditions established centuries earlier. Franits pays close attention to the complexity of Dutch genre paintings, analyzing their style and

their meaning in relation to their historical context. As he notes, these pictures are frequently not direct or straightforward, but multivalent and ambiguous in meaning. Revealing even greater complexity, Franits reminds us that the term “genre” is itself problematic. Not only is the word French in origin, but it was not employed by seventeenth-century Dutch viewers, who referred to *gezelschappen* (merry companies), *kortegarden* (guardroom pieces) and tavern scenes without the overarching category called genre painting. Despite the apparent lowliness of subject matter, such pictures were quite popular in the Netherlands and could demand high prices.

Franits divides the book into three parts. The first section concentrates on genre painting produced between 1609 and 1648, marking the transition from the beginning of the Twelve-Year Truce with Spain, the *de facto* independence of the seven northern provinces later identified as the Dutch Republic, and the signing of the Treaty of Münster, indicating official recognition of the sovereignty of the United Provinces. Part Two concentrates on the period between 1648 and 1672, the *rampjaar* or year of disaster, when the Netherlands was attacked on multiple sides by a coalition of English, French, and Rhenish forces. Finally, the third piece addresses the development of genre painting during the reign of Prince Willem III as Stadhouder, from 1672 to 1702. Each of these three sections opens up with a brief chapter providing a historical overview of the setting. Subsequent chapters within each part are organized primarily by city, highlighting local circumstances and expectations. This arrangement also enables Franits to highlight the economic competition between cities in close geographical proximity to one another. Only three of the book’s eighteen chapters concentrate on particular artists; Gerard ter Borch, Caspar Netscher, and Jan Steen are credited as artistic innovators, definitively transcending the limitation of local conventions of style and motif.

In Part One, Franits discusses both traditional continuities and innovative changes in genre painting. Despite the political and religious turmoil during the first half of the century, the Dutch economy, fueled by great successes in international trade and finance, flourished. Many highly skilled immigrants, including numerous painters and patrons, from the southern provinces fled north, providing an environment conducive for new artistic developments. In Haarlem, Esaias van de Velde modified the Flemish painting of love gardens, depicting stocky individuals in neatly cultivated settings to suit the sophisticated tastes of a Dutch audience. Other artists, such as Willem

Buytewech and Adriaen Brouwer, employed satirical wit to represent the folly of others. Later, the irony of such ruddy representations would be lost, as they were posthumously deemed vulgar and uncouth, like those depicted within their frames. At the close of the Amsterdam chapter, Franits reminds readers that the tonal style of the early seventeenth century, associated with the work of Pieter Coedde and Willem Duyster, was not simply the result of economic recession but an appropriation of a Flemish technique. Meanwhile, in Utrecht, a Catholic city with tight limits on immigration, Caravaggisti and wealthy patrons account for the local prominence given to genre painting. Although relatively small in population, The Hague served as the Republic's administrative and courtly center, giving it the highest ratio of painters per capita. Even though there was a local market for genre painting, portraiture took precedence within the city.

Part Two addresses genre painting during a period of unprecedented prosperity and increased social mobility. As Franits argues, this was a pivotal time in shaping a new understanding of civility. New themes such as domestic virtues and courtly manners were reintroduced into genre painting. Iconographical subtlety and stylistic refinement became the standard, as traditional social hierarchies were reasserted. The high quality of these images can be readily seen in the work of Gerard ter Borch and his pupil, Caspar Netscher. The technical virtuosity of these artists and the pictorial nuances of their paintings reinforce the preoccupation with social elegance and grace. The highly ambiguous character of these tantalizing pictures encouraged sophisticated viewers to delight in the inherent value of such paintings as they imagine ways to unravel their implicit meaning. In the university city of Leiden, Gerrit Dou and Frans van Mieris gained prestige as *fijnschilders*, artists capable of representing nature in meticulous detail, without revealing the handiwork of their brushstroke. Although economically debilitated, Haarlem persevered at an art center. Cornelis Bega and others revised the work of Adriaen Brouwer, representing coarse subjects, but in an elegant manner. In Dordrecht, Samuel van Hoogstraten and Nicolas Maes produced clever paintings aimed to fascinate savvy viewers. Meanwhile, Delft's social elite enjoyed the domestic imagery of Pieter de Hooch and Johannes Vermeer. The "civilizing process" can also be seen in Amsterdam paintings. The merry companies of Jacob van Loo Gerbrand van den Eeckhout evoke notions of gallantry and sweet conversation, reinforcing the call for noble conduit and nonchalance. Wealthy

collectors also took pleasure in seeing the gentility and charm of Gabriel Metsu's figures set in lavishly decorated interiors. While in Rotterdam, Hendrick Sorgh and Jacob Ochtervelt diminish the unsavory qualities of taverns and brothels, preferring to sanitize the represented scene with splendid refinement. Franits saves the final chapter of this section to examine the work of Jan Steen, who bucked the trend by reintroducing risqué frivolity into the tradition of Dutch genre painting.

In the final and most provocative section of the book, Franits challenges earlier dismissals of late seventeenth-century genre paintings as succumbing to French influence. As Franits rightfully notes, Arnold Houbraken and other writers often praised the work of their contemporaries above that of preceding generations. To their minds, the "golden age of painting" was not waning but being harvested. Despite economic hardship and persistence of military conflict, the upper strata of Dutch society persevered. They were able to accumulate greater wealth, separating themselves from the lower classes. In response to growing economic inequality, codes of civility intensified, separating the "haves" from the "have-nots." The appropriation of French pictorial devices was motivated by sophisticated desire for *bonnéteté*. The enthusiasm of art critics such as Gerard de Lairese and Jan de Bisschop for lofty subjects and classical motifs may have fostered suppression of bawdy representation and diminished the range of themes depicted. However, their remarks were not directed against genre painting per se. Undeterred by economic downturn, affluent patrons, although smaller in number, continued to buy genre paintings. In Leiden, Willem van Mieris and others avoided crude display, preferring apparently more noble subjects. The smooth polished contours of their painted figures, cast in dazzling naturalistic light, evoke notions of a renewal of a classical past, while maintaining the *sfijnschilder* technique of the previous generation. By contrast, genre painting in late seventeenth-century Delft, profoundly decimated by catastrophes following the *rampjaar*, catered to the conservative tastes of local patrons, who expected strict adherence to earlier stylistic conventions. Taste for the antique did not come into play. Franits closes the book with a discussion of the work of Godfried Schalcken, Eglon van der Neer, and Adriaen van der Werff, three artists who were internationally acclaimed by their contemporaries for their artistic merit. The quantity of genre paintings may have diminished at the close of the century; however, this did not take away from their quality or

reduce their price.

Although this is an excellent survey of seventeenth-century painting, it would have been better had the author included more material on sixteenth-century Netherlandish market and kitchen scenes, especially those produced in Antwerp. This would have strengthened his point that this imagery is rooted in traditional artistic conventions. Franits also seems to hold the bond between economic and artistic development too tight. Nonetheless, this does not undermine his general point that seventeenth-century genre painting was market driven. In addition and admittedly more distracting, Franits occasionally forecloses the elusive character of genre paintings by curtailing the subtle ambiguity of their meaning. While recognizing multivalent possibilities, the tone of his interpretations of particular works can seem quite didactic and straightforward, emblematic of the desire for civility. Despite these minor criticisms, this book provides the most comprehensive study of seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting and deserves high praise for its reassessment of work produced after the devastations of the *rampjaar*.

Annette de Vries. *Ingelist Werk. De verbeelding van arbeid en beroep in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden*. Zwolle: Waanders, 2004. 304 pp. + 197 illus. 42.50 Euros.
Review by LARRY SILVER, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

One basic truism about Dutch painting is its deep engagement with society, but inevitably the complex issue arises of interpreting these works as cultural images rather than documentary illustrations. Rarely does a historian venture into such a big topic with the necessary sensitivity to the visual. Conversely, art historians have frequently taken up interpretive issues about Dutch genre pictures but usually for conventional art works, featuring decadent behavior by imagined social extremes, whether lower classes in taverns or indulgent, rich “merry companies” (Wayne Franits, 2004). Some specialized aspects of Dutch social representation have already been addressed by economic historians (Basil Yamey on financial images, 1989) or art historians (Linda Stone-Ferrier on textiles, 1985), and Simon Schama’s *Embarrassment of Riches* (1991) made art a fulcrum for assessing Dutch culture more generally. Only one short illustrated catalogue by Gary Schwartz, *The Dutch World of Painting* (1986), attempted a similar task to what Annette de Vries achieves in