

**THE PAINTER'S PRIDE:  
THE ART OF CAPTURING TRANSIENCE  
IN SELF-PORTRAITS  
FROM ISAAC VAN SWANENBURGH TO DAVID BAILLY**

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A large painting by David Bailly from 1651, painted when the artist was already 67 years old, shows a young man sitting at a table on which a huge *vanitas* still life is arranged (**fig. 24**). The young man is obviously a painter: he is holding a maulstick, and a palette hangs on the wall behind him. He addresses the viewer and presents a small portrait of a much older man: Bailly himself. The extraordinary painting by this Leiden portrait and still life painter has received due attention from specialists in the last decades.<sup>1</sup> Most scholars focused on the striking *vanitas* still life as being meant to remind the beholder of the ephemerality of human life and the vanity of earthly beauty. Svetlana Alpers, on the other hand, argued that the painting was primarily meant as a celebration of the artist's craft and as a pictorial meditation on, or rather a kind of "Baconian experiment" with, the relationship between art and craft, picture-making and deceit.<sup>2</sup> Although the approach of Alpers gives

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1. The most important study is Naomi Popper-Voskuil, "Selfportraiture and Vanitas Still-life Painting in 17th-century Holland in Reference to David Bailly's Vanitas Oeuvre", *Pantheon*, 31 (1973), 58-74. A fundamental publication on Bailly's life and work, and one in which this painting was for the first time discussed at some length, is J. Bruyn, "David Bailly", *Oud Holland*, 66 (1951), 148-64 and 212-27. The most recent publication devoted entirely to this painting is M. Wurfbain, "David Bailly's *Vanitas* of 1651", in *The Age of Rembrandt: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*, eds Roland E. Fleischer and Susan Scott Munshower (Papers in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University 3), Dexter, 1988, 48-69 (an essay in which some peculiar and, in my view, misguided ideas are proposed).

2. Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, Chicago, 1983. The painting is discussed on 103-107.

more insight into the character of this painting than the quite reductive view that Bailly's intention was merely to teach a moral lesson, both interpretations tell only part of the story. For a better understanding of Bailly's concerns as a painter and of the image he wanted to present to the beholder, the fact that the painting is in the first place a self-portrait — and one that has many connections with earlier depictions of the self — deserves our full attention.<sup>3</sup>

Among the many different types of Dutch seventeenth-century self-portraits, there is a substantial group of paintings in which the artist shows the attributes of his craft (palette, maulstick and/or brushes) — thus presenting himself as a *painter*.<sup>4</sup> Especially in this category, motifs referring to transience and vanity occur quite often. In contrast, it had become highly unusual in portraits of other people to depict a skull, hourglass or other *vanitas*-attributes. There must have been specific reasons why artists, when representing themselves emphatically as practitioners of the art of painting, added references to vanity and transience and, while doing so, devised with remarkable inventiveness many variations on this theme. Bailly's painting, a high point in this development, includes many motifs drawn from an existing tradition, and which are clever elaborations of concepts which had been visualized before. To throw into relief the specific traits of Bailly's extraordinary contribution, I will first discuss several significant moments in this tradition — a tradition which is particularly well-represented in the art of painters from Leiden.

3. Although my interpretations are quite different in many respects, I could make ample use of the valuable article by Popper-Voskuil, and of the discussion of self-portraits and *vanitas* in Hans-Joachim Raupp, *Künstlerbildnis und Künstlerdarstellung in den Niederlanden im 17. Jahrhundert*, Hildesheim/Zurich/New York, 1984, 266-88, chapter 2.2 "Pictura vana" - der Maler im Zeichen 'vanitas'. Apart from Svetlana Alpers' interpretation, some interesting remarks were also made by Anne-Marie Lecoq in *La Peinture dans la Peinture*, eds Pierre Georgel and Anne-Marie Lecoq, exh. cat. Musée des Beaux Arts de Dijon, Dijon, 1982/83, 190-91. Very stimulating was a seminar under my supervision in 1985, which resulted in the small exhibition *Het Aanzien van de Kunstenaar: Kunstenaarsportretten uit de 16de-20ste Eeuw*, Leiden, Lakenhal 1985/86 (accompanied by a brochure written by students) and an excellent master-thesis by Tom Sijtsma, *Een Beeld van Schilderen: Leidse Ateliervoortellingen en Schildersportretten uit de Zeventiende Eeuw*, 1994 (unpublished).

4. See Raupp, chapter 2.2.

Almost a century before Bailly's picture, in 1568, the Leiden painter Isaac Claesz. van Swanenburgh painted his striking *Self-portrait* (fig. 25). Van Swanenburgh (1537-1614) came from a distinguished Leiden family and held many important positions in the Leiden city council from the 1570s onward (he was appointed burgomaster several times). This was a quite unusual status for someone who was at the same time active as a craftsman: he was by far the most prominent painter in Leiden. During the last quarter of the sixteenth century he even managed to more or less corner the market in painting there.<sup>5</sup>

Van Swanenburgh's self-portrait is one of his earliest known works, painted only a few years after he had finished his apprenticeship with Frans Floris in Antwerp and shortly before he married.<sup>6</sup> One can imagine that for a young artist who wanted to become a successful portraitist, it must have been very opportune to have always at hand in the studio — to be admired by potential clients — such a masterly specimen of one's capacities to depict a likeness. Moreover, as a drawing placed on the table behind the artist represents a reclining female nude, Van Swanenburgh at the same time makes clear that he was an accomplished figure painter as well, able to supply his clients with histories in the "modern" Italian manner.<sup>7</sup>

This nude also indicates that the painter wanted to be valued as a contemporary Apelles, "the prince of painters", who was considered to have been the greatest painter of antiquity. Especially in the second half of the sixteenth century, every ambitious painter aspired to be, and often was, praised as being equal to, or even having surpassed, Apelles, whose name personified the apex of what a painter could strive for. At the same

5. See R.E.O. Ekkart, "Leidse Schilders, Tekenaars en Graveurs uit de Tweede Helft van de 16de en Begin van de 17de Eeuw", *Jaarboekje voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde van Leiden*, 65 (1974), 171-96.

6. He married in 1569, and in the following year he painted a portrait of his wife, probably intended as a companion piece. See R.E.O. Ekkart in *Kunst voor de Beeldenstorm*, eds J.P. Filedt Kok et al., exh. cat. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, The Hague, 1986, 441-42.

7. The little sculpture standing next to the drawing on the table, representing *Moses*, which must be the work of an Italian mannerist artist, seems also to display Van Swanenburgh's knowledge of the most recent developments in Italian art; it might also have been his intention, in reference to the *paragone*-discussion, to prove the superiority of painting (this will be discussed below in connection with the paintings of Dou and Bailly). Raupp's suggestion that it denotes the ancient, and even divine origin of art seems unlikely, considering the obscurity of the sources cited by Raupp.

time Apelles's name evoked pre-eminently images of inimitable female beauty and grace, in which, as Pliny stated, he surpassed all other painters. Moreover, all the well-known anecdotes in Apelles's biography refer to depictions of the nude Venus (like the one about Apelles painting Alexander's mistress, the beautiful Campaspe, as Venus).<sup>8</sup> This is probably the reason why Van Swanenburgh's teacher, the celebrated Antwerp painter Frans Floris (1513/14-1575), was portrayed holding a panel with a Venus-like nude (fig. 26).<sup>9</sup> His contemporary Lucas d'Heere claimed in a laudatory poem that a comparison of a painter to Floris instead of Apelles signified the highest praise, since Floris had silenced through his art Apelles's name.<sup>10</sup>

Van Swanenburgh, posing like his teacher as a contemporary Apelles (while showing quite emphatically his distinguished social status through his coat of arms and his dignified attire), had obviously no objections to presenting himself as a painter at work. In contrast to his Italian colleagues, who generally preferred to avoid all references to manual labour,<sup>11</sup> which would undermine their social status, Van Swanenburgh portrayed himself with palette and brushes in the act of painting. In the Netherlands, the tradition of *St Luke painting the Madonna* — a subject

8. Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* XXXV.79-102 (also see Karel van Mander, *Het Leven der Oude Antijcke Doorluchtighe Schilders*, in *Het Schilder-Boeck*, Haarlem, 1604, f. 77r-82r). For the depiction of "Apellic" beauty and grace (represented by Venus) as the highest goal of *Pictura*, see Eric J. Sluiter, "Venus, Visus en Pictura", in *Goltzius-Studies, Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 42-43 (1991/92), eds R.L. Falkenburg, J.P. Filedt Kok and H. Leeftang, Zwolle, 1993 (=Sluiter 1993a), 337-97, especially 350, and 362-69, where also the connection with depictions of *Apelles painting Campaspe as Venus* is pointed out.

9. Also see Raupp, 193 and 332. Floris was the first to present himself with a depiction of a Venus-like nude; he also painted between 1562 and 1565 on the facade of his house an allegory of *Pictura* painting a female nude. For further references to self-portraits with a depiction of Venus, see note 57. Floris's portrait, engraved by Johannes Wierix, belonged to the first print-series with portraits of Netherlandish painters, published by Hieronymus Cock in 1572 (with texts by Domenicus Lampsonius); for this series, see Raupp, 18-23. It must have been based on a lost self-portrait by Floris from the 1550s or early 1560s; see Carl van de Velde, *Frans Floris (1519/20-1570). Leven en Werken*, Brussels, 1975, 306-307 and figs. 320-22.

10. Cited by Karel van Mander in his biography of Floris. Karel van Mander, *Het Leven der Doorluchtighe Nederlandsche, en Hooghduytsche Schilders*, in *Het Schilder-Boeck*, Haarlem, 1604, f. 243r (English translation H. Miedema, Doornspijk, 1994, 230).

11. See the article of A.W.A. Boschloo in the present volume.

in which, from the second half of the fifteenth century onward, many painters had inserted their own likeness — had been especially popular.<sup>12</sup> This tradition seems to have offered Netherlandish painters sufficient foundation to present themselves with professional pride as holding the tools with which they, like their venerable patron, crafted their art.

Apart from the aforementioned self-portraits inserted in pictures of *St Luke painting the Madonna*, Van Swanenburgh's self-portrait is one of the earliest Netherlandish paintings of an artist with the attributes of his craft. We have earlier ones only from the Amsterdam artist Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostzanen (c. 1472-1533), the first well-known Netherlandish female painter Catharina van Hemessen (1528-after 1587), and the court painter Anthonis Mor (1516/20-1575/76).<sup>13</sup> In their self-portraits these artists stress the idea that we are looking at their reflection in a mirror. Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostzanen depicted himself while painting his wife; however, it appears from infrared-reflectographies that in the original concept the painting was intended to represent the image the artist saw reflected in the mirror: the painter was working at his own likeness on the panel standing on the easel.<sup>14</sup> This is precisely what Catharina van Hemessen is doing in her *Self-portrait* of 1548 (fig. 27). She portrayed herself as starting to paint her own portrait while looking

12. For the tradition of *St Luke painting the Madonna*, see Gisela Kraut, *Lukas malt die Madonna. Zeugnisse zum künstlerischen Selbstverständnis in der Malerei*, Worms, 1986.

13. For Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostzanen and Anthonis Mor, see the exh. cat. *Kunst voor de Beeldenstorm*, 131-35 and 195-97, and 334-37, with further references. For Catharina van Hemessen, exh. cat. *Maria van Hongarije (1505-1508): Koningin tussen keizers en kunstenaars*, Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent Utrecht / Noordbrabant Museum 's-Hertogenbosch, Zwolle, 1993, 169, 202, with further references.

14. For the infrared-reflectography, see the exh. cat. *Kunst voor de Beeldenstorm*, 198-99 and fig. 74b. The authors of the catalogue entry suggest that this painting is not by Jacob Cornelisz., but by his son Dirck Jacobsz., after an earlier *Self-portrait* (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: only the head, dated 1533, the year of his death). However, since the painting was conceived as the painter painting his own portrait in mirror-image, I am convinced that Jacob Cornelisz. himself had begun the painting, and that his son probably finished it. It seems likely that it was left unfinished and that the son painted the portrait of his mother over Jacob Cornelisz.'s mirror-image on the painting in the painting, together with finishing off the whole painting and refashioning it into a *memoria* of both his parents.

in the mirror (in the painting on the easel we see her face once again, in mirror image).<sup>15</sup>

Finally, Anthonis Mor, the celebrated portraitist from Utrecht who worked for the Habsburg court in Brussels and Madrid, depicted himself in 1558 as sitting before an empty panel on which a letter is stuck which is inscribed with a Greek poem by the learned humanist Domenicus Lampsonius.<sup>16</sup> This poem asserts that Mor surpasses Apelles, Zeuxis and all other ancient and modern painters, and that he painted this portrait as he studied himself in a mirror: "Mor, presently speak!" ends the poet.<sup>17</sup>

At first sight it seems that Van Swanenburgh, like Catharina van Hemessen, suggests that we are looking at the image which he saw in the mirror while painting his own likeness (in mirror image). Yet on closer observation we notice that the face he is painting is that of a much older man with a greyish-white beard. However, this face has unmistakably the same features as that of the painter himself; moreover, the position of the head and the eyes constitute exactly the mirror image of the painter's — and this face gazes intently out of the picture: it is his own future face.

In this emphatic visualization of transience, late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century representations of a mirror reflecting a skull seem to

15. She seems to be turning the illusion of this image into a punning reference to its being her "speaking likeness", by inscribing the panel with the words *Ego Caterina De Hemessen Me Pinxi 1548*. Undoubtedly she presents her likeness as an emulation of a famous paintress from antiquity about whom Pliny tells us that she painted herself with the help of a mirror, a story which was elaborated by Boccaccio in his *De Claris Mulieribus*. See Raupp, 304-305. Pliny refers to Marcus Varro as the source: it concerns the Roman paintress Lala of Cyzicus, who was said to have surpassed her contemporary male colleagues in Rome (*Naturalis Historia* XXXV.146-49); Van Mander repeated this anecdote in his lives of painters from antiquity. Boccaccio adapted the story in *De Claris Mulieribus* (already published in a Dutch translation in 1525), but changed her name into Marcia. It is remarkable that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century female painters of some renown painted self-portraits, from Sophonisba Anguissola and Catharina van Hemessen to Maria van Oosterwijck and Rachel Ruysch.

16. For this painting, see especially Joanna Woodall, "Honour and Profit: Antonis Mor and the Status of Portraiture", in *Nederlandse Portretten: Bijdragen over de Portretkunst in de Nederlanden uit de Zestiende, Zeventiende en Achttiende eeuw*, eds H. Blasse-Hegeman et al., *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 8 (1989), The Hague, 1990, 69-89 and Karla Langedijk, *Die Selbstbildnisse der Holländischen und Flämischen Künstler in den Uffizien*, Florence, 1992, 107-111.

17. This is the first time since antiquity that the speech-metaphor, which later became commonplace in poems about portraits, was used.

resonate (fig. 28). To this tradition belongs, for example, the portrait by the Augsburg portraitist Laux Furtenagel (1505-1546) of his fellow townsman, the painter Hans Burgkmair (1473-1531) and his wife; she holds a mirror that does not reflect their two faces, but two skulls (fig. 29).<sup>18</sup> The motto inscribed on the mirror, *Erken dich selbs*, underlines the message of the painting, the awareness of transience and mortality. In the upper right corner of the painting we find written "[Soll]che Gestalt unser baiden was / Im Spiegel aber nix dan das".

For the creation of a self-portrait the mirror has always played a crucial role — the painting being the artist's own reflection captured by himself. This must have incited Van Swanenburgh to incorporate the conventional implications of the mirror as a standard attribute of pride, vanity and ephemerality. By adding his aged mirror image to this self-portrait, Van Swanenburgh — like the couple Burgkmair but in a more subtle and less unpleasant way — holds a mirror up to himself and the beholder.

However, by this contrived motif, he also asserts that painting transcends the fleeting reflection of the mirror: not only is the painter able to capture everything which is visible (but transient), he can also manipulate time and reality by visualizing things which cannot be seen in reality, yet are here before one's eyes. Van Swanenburgh thus not only pictured his own transitoriness, but even more so the exceptional relationship between transience and the art of painting.

The Leiden born Otto van Veen (1556-1629), Van Swanenburgh's pupil in the late 1560s, pictured in a witty way related notions. The learned Van Veen, who would become the teacher of Rubens, made his career in Antwerp after a thorough humanistic education by the earlier mentioned Domenicus Lampsonius and a trip to Italy. In 1584, he drew on a page in his own *Album Amicorum* an ebony-framed mirror reflecting his face, surrounded by scrolls with Latin texts (fig. 30).<sup>19</sup> The mirror hangs by a thin thread and seems just about to crash, since a hand holding scissors is on the verge of cutting the thread. This image was meant to

18. For this motif, see James H. Marrow, "'In desen Speigell'; a New Form of 'Memento Mori' in Fifteenth-Century Netherlandish Art", in *Essays in Northern European Art Presented to Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann on his Sixtieth Birthday*, Doornspijk, 1983, 154-63.

19. For a discussion of this emblematic drawing (with complete texts and translations), see Justus Müller Hofstede, "Rubens und die niederländischen Italienfahrt: Die humanistische Tradition", in *Peter Paul Rubens 1577-1640*, Vol I; *Rubens in Italien. Gemälde, Ölskizzen, Zeichnungen*, exh. cat. Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, 1977, 26-29.

remind the viewer of the thread of life being cut by one of the Fates: his life is as fleeting as his reflection. The texts clarify in a quite laborious way that the reflection in the mirror functions, on the one hand, as reminder of the ephemerality of life — above the mirror is written, like a motto, the Horatian admonition “every day entrusted to you should be utilized as if it were the last”,<sup>20</sup> a warning which was often repeated in art literature. On the other hand, the texts present the reflection as an image which should incite one to contemplate the nature of truth. However, Van Veen’s picture also cleverly shows that the Fates are outwitted by his art: the drawing captured his reflection, while the hand with scissors will for ever be on the verge of cutting the thread.

The painters who portrayed themselves after Van Swanenburgh with palette and brushes in hand were no artists of minor importance. On the contrary, more often than not they were the most successful and ambitious ones. A special case is Bartholomeus Spranger’s self-portrait in an elaborate *in memoriam* for his deceased wife, engraved in 1600 by Aegidius de Sadeler (fig. 31).<sup>21</sup> Bartholomeus Spranger (1546-1611) presenting himself proudly as the court-painter of Rudolph II (as is shown by the gold chain, the emperor’s gift), points to the portrait of his wife Christina Muller. Her young face contrasts with the skull placed right under her portrait in the hands of the mourning putto who stands with one foot on an hourglass which has toppled over. Underneath in the foreground lie Spranger’s palette, maulstick and brushes with which he fixed her youthful likeness for posterity (a painted portrait of her probably served as the model for the drawing Spranger made, to be engraved by De Sadeler).

The texts above and beneath the portrait of Spranger’s wife lament that unfair Death snatched this beauty from life and that the heart of the loving husband tries to follow her soul but cannot reach it. In the middle of the image, Death (about to attack Spranger) is checked by Time. This is underlined in the inscription on the balustrade: it states that Spranger’s time has not yet come, because the arts (assembled behind him) want to make him even more famous. Spranger’s fame as an artist is emphasized

20. *Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum* (Horace, *Epistulae* I.4.13).

21. The inscription under the print reads in translation: “The personal grief of Bart. Spranger has been made public [i.e. engraved] by Egid. Sadeler, because he admired Spranger’s art and loved these lovers; and he dedicated to him the print in sincere affection. At Prague in the centennial year”. See, with translations of the Latin texts, H. Mielke, *Manierismus in Holland um 1600*, exh. cat., Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, 1979, cat. no. 42.

in every possible way: a putto with a laurel wreath in his hand is flying above Spranger’s head and Fame, holding two trumpets, is looking down on him.<sup>22</sup> It is obvious that in a rather self-elevating way the message is put across that Spranger is not only able to triumph over death by way of his art and the fame this engenders, but also that, thanks to his fabulous art, he is able to compete with death by making the image of his beautiful wife live on.

A self-portrait from 1612 by Herman van Vollenhoven (active 1611-1627), a painter from Utrecht about whom very little is known (fig. 32), has some striking similarities with the engraving after Spranger; undoubtedly Van Vollenhoven knew this print. In this case, the artist, turning towards the viewer, points to an aged couple sitting at the right behind a table; he has been painting their portrait which is standing on the easel before him. Probably they are Van Vollenhoven’s parents. A conspicuous motif is the skull in front of the couple, clasped with both hands by the old man. In contrast, this skull is not to be seen in their portrait on the easel, because Van Vollenhoven’s hands with palette and brushes cover the place where it would have been situated.<sup>23</sup> Proudly he addresses the viewer and demonstrates that with the tools of his craft he is able to immortalize the couple’s appearance; thus, he triumphs over death. The importance attached to this immortality through portraiture was eloquently expressed by Constantijn Huygens in the autobiography of his youth from around 1629:

[Portrait-painters] accomplish a noble task, that more than anything else is absolutely indispensable for our human needs, because, through their agency, we do not die in a sense, and as descendants, we may speak intimately with our ancestors.<sup>24</sup>

22. The scroll hanging down from one of the trumpets states that Spranger will live through God’s will and through his name.

23. This witty motif was already noticed by Raupp, 338.

24. “nobiles tamen usuique humano soli maxime necessarii, quod ipsorum opera quodammodo non morimur, et cum proavis atavisque posteris confabulamur”. The Latin text of Huygens’s discussion of the painters was published by J.A. Worp in *Oud Holland*, 9 (1891), 106-36 (the cited lines on pp. 120-21). For a Dutch translation, see A.H. Kan, *De Jeugd van Constantijn Huygens door Hemzelf Beschreven*, Rotterdam, 1971, 75. Many authors elaborated on this notion; Cornelis de Bie does so precisely in a laudatory poem on one of the painters which concerns us here the most, David Bailly; as a matter of fact this poem seems to be more in praise of portrait painting in general; see Cornelis de Bie, *Het Gulden Cabinet van de Edel Vry Schilderconst*, Antwerp, 1662, 270-72.

Van Vollenhoven also emphatically shows the power of his illusionism: although we perceive the old couple as posing to be portrayed, and their likeness on the panel as a painted portrait, both are to the same degree semblances — achieved by paint on canvas. Precisely that which we experience as furthest removed of what it represents — the painting in the painting — is in fact closer to it, because it is painting imitated by paint. Van Vollenhoven enhanced this emphasis on the illusionistic capacities of the art of painting by suggesting that he — the one who presents to us this scene — is sitting on a window-sill, slightly leaning out into our own space. The stone casing of the window seems to constitute the border between the pictured world and the real world.

That Van Vollenhoven considered himself a master in illusionistic effects, seems to be stressed by the cloth which is apparently pushed aside and tied up in the upper right corner. Through this motif the painter asserts that he is a contemporary Parrhasius, the famous Greek artist who won the contest with Zeuxis by depicting a cloth hanging over his painting, which Zeuxis, having entered Parrhasius' studio, tried to push aside. This anecdote, which became so popular in seventeenth-century Holland, several times prompted the depiction of similar contrivances.<sup>25</sup> In the following decades, also in laudatory poems painters were quite often compared with Parrhasius and Zeuxis.<sup>26</sup>

The painting by Van Vollenhoven seems to be brimming with professional pride, arising from his imitative capacities. Simultaneously,

25. For a comparable cloth on Bailly's painting, see below. For the feigned curtains hanging before paintings by Dou and Rembrandt (a motif repeated by many others), see Eric J. Sluijter, *De Lof der Schilderkunst. Over Schilderijen van Gerrit Dou (1613-1675) en een Traktaat van Philips Angel uit 1642*, Hilversum, 1993 (=Sluijter 1993b), 19-20 and 70-71. The wittiest solution is given by Cornelis Bisschop in a *Self-portrait* (Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht) in which he draws away a curtain hanging before a painting: unlike Zeuxis he is able to do this, because he is as much a painted deceit as the curtain and the painting in the painting.

26. In a well-known poem in praise of Dou, for instance, the painter is called "The Dutch Parrhasius", who would deceive Zeuxis once again; in a poem praising Frans van Mieris it is asserted that Zeuxis and Parrhasius, if they had seen Van Mieris's work, would have stopped their contest, and instead would have competed to become the one who was allowed to give him the wreath of honour. See Eric J. Sluijter, "Schilders van 'cleyne subtile ende curieuse dingen': Leidse 'Fijnschilders' in Contemporaine Bronnen", in *Leidse Fijnschilders: Van Gerrit Dou tot Frans van Mieris de Jonge 1630-1760*, eds Eric J. Sluijter, Marlies Enklaar en Paul Nieuwenhuizen, exh. cat. De Lakenhal, Leiden, 1988, 21.

the painting functions as a *memoria* for his parents (and for himself);<sup>27</sup> the painter seems to say: "this is the memento... of my origins: / Have a look! this is my father; that's my mother, of whom I came".<sup>28</sup> These lines come from a poem by Dirck Raphaelszn. Camphuyzen (1586-1627); they are, however, not written in praise of such an attitude, but are part of a violent attack on the art of painting. The strictly religious poet Camphuyzen bitterly derided those who set great store on having portraits of their family. Here we are confronted with negative reactions, which in the case of Camphuyzen found their most vehement and extreme expression.<sup>29</sup>

For Camphuyzen and his friend Geesteranus, whose Latin poem was translated into Dutch verse by Camphuyzen, the art of painting was, to mention but a few of their rich supply of terms of abuse, only a "seductress of sight, spellbound by all that is transient", a "seductive deceit of the eyes", "the art of aping and making ghosts", "the foolish mother of all vanities".<sup>30</sup> As one may expect, the depiction of nudes was the most fiercely vituperated category of painting, but portraits were also severely criticized. Camphuyzen claims that those who want to live on in appearance will only contaminate their descendants by this display of vanity and pride. In his view, honour cannot be passed on by something which is essentially foolish and vain. Those who are proud of their own

27. The first artist to paint a self-portrait with his family, was Otto van Veen (1584; Paris, Louvre); see Raupp, 39.

28. Raphael Dircksz. Camphuyzen, *Stichtelycke Ryemen*, Amsterdam, 1647, 223 (not in first edition of 1624, see next footnote): "'t is 't gedenck... van mijnen stam: / Siet, dits mijn vader; dat's mijn moeder, daer 'k van quam." On Camphuyzen, see H.G. van den Doel, *Daar moet veel strijds gestreden zijn: Het leven van Dirck Rafaelsz. Camphuyzen*, Meppel, 1967.

29. The poem is called "Tegen 't geestigdom der schilderkunst" (a translation in verse of Johannes Evertsz. Geesteranus's "Idolelenchus" of c. 1620); the long poem was added in the 1647 edition of his *Stichtelycke Ryemen*, 215-32, but already in the first edition of 1624 Camphuyzen published a laudatory poem on Geesteranus's "Idolelenchus": "Aen I.G. over sijn Idolelenchus of Beelden-straft" (edition 1647, 212-15).

30. In the original: "verleid-ster van 't gezicht dat sich verstaart op 't sterffelijk"; "een vleyend' oog bedroch"; "simm' en schimmen-werck"; "der ydelheden alge-meyne malle Moer". Also see Eric J. Sluijter, "Didactic and Disguised Meanings? Several Seventeenth-Century Texts on Painting and the Iconological Approach to Dutch Painting of this Period", in *Art in History / History in Art: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture*, eds David Freedberg and Jan de Vries, Santa Monica, 1991, 188-90.

origins and want to show this through portraits of their parents and ancestors, are conceited idiots who rather have trophies of death hanging on their walls. Besides, Camphuyzen argues, the painting itself is only "more food for moths". This extreme attitude must have been quite rare among the prosperous Dutch burghers from the seventeenth century, as we may conclude from the incredibly large production of portraits in this period. Camphuyzen himself complained that nowadays one sees engravings, drawings, paintings wherever one casts one's eye, as if the world seems to be wrapped up in it.<sup>31</sup> However, Camphuyzen's fierceness demonstrates more clearly what the current opinions were — and the unease this may occasionally have caused.

The awareness that thoughts about vanity and transience were insolubly linked with the essence of the art of painting — particularly an art of painting which was proud of its mimetic accomplishments and its capacity to perfectly capture all earthly attractiveness — is foregrounded even more emphatically in portraits of painters since the 1630s of the seventeenth century, and from that time onward also in depictions of anonymous painters in their studio. The combination of professional pride in the miraculous imitation which painting was capable of (thus "vanquishing" time, deterioration, and death) and the awareness that this is a vain pursuit, is expressed in its most contrived way in *vanitas* still-lives in which the painter shows his own reflection — sitting behind his easel — in a mirroring surface (**fig. 33**).<sup>32</sup> In those paintings, the artist's image — depicted as being only a fleeting reflection — is just one of the objects referring to vanity and transience which are nonetheless captured by his masterful art.

In the many representations of the painter in his studio, which flourished especially in the circle of the Leiden "fine painter" Gerrit Dou (1613-1675),<sup>33</sup> references to vanity seemed to be almost indispensable.

31. Camphuyzen 1647, 212.

32. See the stimulating article by Celeste Brusati, "Stilled Lives: Self-Reflection in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Still-Life Paintings", *Simiolus*, 20 (1990/91), 168-82. The earliest one is by the paintress Clara Peeters (1612; Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe). Also see Eric J. Sluiter, "'Een volmaekte schildery is als een spiegel van de natuer': Spiegel en Spiegelbeeld in de Nederlandse Schilderkunst van de Zeventiende Eeuw", in *Oog in Oog met de Spiegel*, eds Nico J. Brederoo *et al.*, Amsterdam, 1988, 146-63.

33. As mentioned above (note 3), an excellent master-thesis about this subject was written by Tom Sijtsma. In this study, a large amount of well-known and unknown paintings were brought together and discussed perceptively. For Dou, see

This seems to have started when David Bailly added a *vanitas* still life to a portrait which Thomas de Keyzer painted of him around 1627 (**fig. 34**).<sup>34</sup> It depicts the smartly dressed Bailly as sitting beside a table on which, among other things, we may see a skull. The fact that the Leiden painter Bailly, and after him Dou, presented himself emphatically with a skull, was probably due to a print of their most celebrated precursor Lucas van Leyden, the artist who was considered the founder of the art of painting in Leiden. Since the late sixteenth century, an engraving by Lucas representing a young man holding a skull (1519), was erroneously thought to be a self-portrait.<sup>35</sup> By using this motif, which, for the incrowd, must have been an obvious reference to their illustrious Leiden predecessor, Bailly and Dou seem to be claiming a position as his successor.<sup>36</sup>

A few years after De Keyzer's portrait of Bailly, Gerrit Dou emulated this painting by inserting a motif he borrowed from his master Rembrandt: the easel with a panel on it, turned with its back towards the viewer, which makes us want to see what is tantalizingly withheld from us, that is, the front of the painting (**fig. 35**).<sup>37</sup> It is Dou's earliest known painting of an artist in his studio; the young painter looking at us resembles Rembrandt (albeit with somewhat idealized features),<sup>38</sup> in

Sluiter *et al.* 1988, en Sluiter 1993b, with further references.

34. For this painting, see Bruyn, 162-63, who was the first to identify the sitter as Bailly, and Popper-Voskuil, 58-59. The latter also contains a thorough discussion of Bailly's other *vanitas* paintings.

35. See Raupp, 266-67.

36. Dou did so most emphatically much later in his career in a *Self-portrait* of 1658, in which he rests his hand on a skull (Florence, Uffizi; Langedijk, 19-23).

37. See Rembrandt's painting of 1629, *A Painter in his Studio*, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, in fact the earliest painting which has a painter's studio (without any narrative and without a self-portrait) as its subject. In Rembrandt's painting the easel is the main actor in the painter; although this motif was often repeated by Dou and many others, the easel with the panel turned with its back to the viewer never played this extraordinary monumental role again.

38. Compare, for instance, Rembrandt's *Self-portrait* from 1629 in The Hague, Mauritshuis, and the one from around 1630/31 in Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery (*Corpus A 21* and *Corpus A 33*).

whose atelier Dou might have been working when he painted this picture around 1630-32.<sup>39</sup>

By including a motif reminiscent of Lucas van Leyden, by emulating directly the composition of Bailly's portrait by De Keyzer (in which Bailly painted the still life himself), by inserting elements clearly referring to the work of the then already much applauded Rembrandt, and by using the advanced lighting he had learned from his master — and all this in a smooth and highly refined technique already completely his own — the young Dou competed with his most famous townsmen and placed himself in the forefront of the Leiden painting scene.<sup>40</sup>

In this early work Dou shows us a painter as well as his painting on the easel as an extension of the still life, with a skull as its central object, referring to vanity and transience. That this *vanitas* still life consists of objects connotating arts and study (a book, quill and ink, globe, lute, a plaster cast), emphasizes that the painter strives for the same eternal values as the practitioners of those other arts, thus claiming the humanist concept that the pursuit of arts and sciences will lead to virtue and may deliver the honourable fame which survives death.<sup>41</sup>

Dou also demonstrates by including a piece of sculpture in a conspicuous place in the foreground — something he always did in his self-portraits and in his depictions of painters — that the painter is the only one who can eternalize appearances convincingly by way of his art: the sculptor's work will always have the look of stone and will never evoke the same suggestion of lifelikeness that painting can create. The traditional discussion concerning the superiority of painting *versus* sculpture (part of the so-called *paragone*-debate — the comparison of the arts), seems to have led a vigorous new life in Leiden around this time.

39. It is one of the earliest paintings which can with certainty be ascribed to Dou. Ronni Baer, who compiled a complete but as yet unpublished *catalogue raisonné* of Dou's paintings, dated it 1630-1632 (cat. no. 6; she denied, erroneously I think, that the face resembled Rembrandt's). She already noticed that the portrait of Bailly by De Keyzer was a possible source for this painting.

40. For Dou's notions of emulation and competition, see Sluijter 1993b, 37-43. This painting was followed by other paintings with self-portraits or with anonymous painters in their studio together with elements referring to vanity by Dou and his followers. These will not be discussed here. See, for instance, Raupp, chapter 2.2, Sluijter *et al.* 1988, 116-19 and 231-33, and Sijtsma, *passim*.

41. For the importance of neo-stoic ideas in many *vanitas* still-lives of this period, see B.A. Heezen-Stoll, "Een Vanitasstilleven van Jacques de Gheyn II uit 1621: Afspiegeling van Neostoïsche Denkbeelden", *Oud Holland*, 93 (1979), 217-50.

Philips Angel (c. 1608-after 1664), now only known because of the lecture he held on St Luke's day in 1641 for the Leiden community of painters, extensively argued the supremacy of painting over sculpture.<sup>42</sup> This discussion is also reflected in many Leiden depictions of the painter's studio. It got a striking place in David Bailly's elaborate *vanitas* still life with self-portrait to which we will now give our full attention (fig. 24).

Bailly emphatically asks us to compare the small painting of the young woman in the middle of his composition with the sculpted head of a girl next to it. Both have the same tilt of the head and a slight smile on the face.<sup>43</sup> He also demonstrates that painting, apart from being able to imitate sculpture convincingly, can also copy the products of other pictorial arts — drawings and prints — something which is impossible the other way round. But most important of all, he proves that painting is capable of displaying *everything* visible as if it is all there before one's eyes. This was exactly what Angel pointed out in his discussion of the superiority of painting over sculpture.

Angel enumerated extensively all sorts of things that sculpture is not able to represent. In his grand *vanitas* still life, Bailly also seems to catalogue quite exhaustively all materials which painting is able to depict convincingly.<sup>44</sup> Like Angel he lists several kinds of different metals, like gold, silver, copper and iron; we may also notice leather, vellum, paper and wood; furthermore he depicts sand, glass, pearls, bone, ivory, plaster, earthenware, alabaster and marble; and fabrics like linen, cloth, velvet and silk, fragile material like rose petals, liquid matter like wine and volatiles like smoke of the candle and floating bubbles; finally, he also includes living matter, such as the skin and hair of the young man who seems on

42. This lecture was published the next year: Philips Angel, *Lof der Schilderkunst*, Leiden 1642. The passage referred to, is on pp. 23-26. On Angel, see H. Miedema, "Philips Angels Lof der Schilder-kunst", *Oud Holland*, 103 (1989), pp. 181-222 en Sluijter 1993b. On Angel's *paragone*-discussion, see Sluijter 1993b, 21-36. It should be noted that Angel, Dou and Bailly most likely knew each other: in the 1640s they were all more or less actively involved with the formation of a new St Luke's guild in Leiden.

43. This head has been identified as a young *Bacchante* after Lucas Faydherbe, a sculptor from the Southern Netherlands; see Bruyn, 191.

44. Alpers, 103, already remarked that Bailly's still life was like a catalogue of materials made by nature and worked by man, which she compared with the "Baconian program" of understanding the world. For a full consideration of the objects as emblems of *vanitas*, see Popper-Voskuyl, 67-71.



the verge of speaking to us — which contrasts with the painted portraits before him. Moreover, most of the materials are crafted into beautiful objects, some of them very expensive: with mere pigments they are reproduced by the painter's craft, so that one may admire and possess those valuable treasures.<sup>45</sup>

Angel proudly asserted that the sculptor's argument that painting is only "semblance without being",<sup>46</sup> should be turned around; in fact, it proves the superiority of painting, since the tangibility and three-dimensionality of sculpture is not a quality of art, but of nature itself: in other words, painting is the highest form of optical illusion and artifice.<sup>47</sup> Bailly also seems to emphasize this in many ways. Like Van Vollenhoven, he demonstrates the deceitfulness of this "semblance without being" by way of presenting portrait paintings in his picture, but in an even more contrived way. The man whom we feel to be a living person and who addresses us, is after all Bailly as he looked some forty years earlier;<sup>48</sup> and this youthful Bailly holds a painted portrait in his hands that he painted at a much later age: it is a self-portrait made when he was about 58 years old (probably dating from the year of his marriage, 1642; see fig. 36),<sup>49</sup> which he copied for this painting almost ten years

45. On such notions, see Brusati, 174-75. For a witty thematization of such thoughts by Dou (and by Jan Brueghel before him), see Sluijter 1993b, 30-31.

46. "schijn sonder sijn" (Angel, 24).

47. For the provenance of Angel's notions and terminology concerning the *paragone* with sculpture (which are of course not entirely original), see Sluijter 1993b, 21 and 79.

48. Bruyn, followed by Popper-Voskuil and Raupp, already identified this young man as Bailly himself. This was later denied by Wurfain (while Alpers also suggested that it concerned another young artist). Wurfain thought to recognize Frans van Mieris, although Van Mieris's familiar face is easily recognizable — always with a distinct cleft in his chin, for one thing — and bears no resemblance. I am convinced that this young man is Bailly himself, and the best argument I can offer is that the groups of unbiased first year students with whom I often discuss this painting in De Lakenhal, always identify the young man on their own accord immediately as being the same person as the older man depicted in the painting-in-the-painting. Precisely that reaction must have been Bailly's aim!

49. The portrait was engraved by Coenraad Waumans for the series *Images des divers hommes d'esprit sublime*, published in Antwerp by Johannes Meyssens in 1649. In the inscription under the print Bailly is characterized as a "fort bon peintre en pourtraicts, et en vie coye". This print was also used for Cornelis de Bie's treatise on painters from 1662, 271.

later, at the age of 67. Like his fellow-townsmen Van Swanenburgh almost a century earlier, Bailly not only literally displays the passing of time and the transience of the human body, he also shows that painting transcends the reflection of a mirror because it can manipulate time and make visible what is not visible. With his two self-portraits Bailly shows that only painting is able to visualize a reality which cannot exist — the young man exhibiting a painting he made at a much later age — and can even reverse what is irreversible, namely, the passing of time. Thus the painter has the power to subject and mould reality to his will: in the proud words of Angel, "in short, we have such unconditional freedom, that 'St George has to stab the dragon, as the painter wants it'", adding that this is a current proverb.<sup>50</sup>

The cloth pushed aside and draped over the right upper edge of the panel — almost exactly as in the painting of Van Vollenhoven (which Bailly seems to have known) — emphasizes that it was Bailly's goal to create a perfect "semblance without being" and to be considered a "Dutch Parrhasius".<sup>51</sup> Angel also voiced something similar when he, after having discussed the successive stages of painting in antiquity, cited the anecdote about Parrhasius and Zeuxis as the highest stage that painting had reached. He concluded: "Thus our art has climbed up step by step."<sup>52</sup>

If Gerrit Dou as a very young man had wanted to emulate in the beginning of the 1630s the portrait of Bailly by De Keyzer (figs 34 and 35), now — twenty years later — the old Bailly seemed to strive for a definitive answer to the many challenges of his much younger — and by now far more famous — fellow townsman. The much earlier paintings mentioned above still resonate in Bailly's painting of 1651,<sup>53</sup> but Leiden connoisseurs would also have noticed that the motif of the painter holding

50. "In korte, ons is sulcken gulde onghelonne vryheyt open, dat, *Soo de Schilder wil, soo moet St. Joris den Draeck steecken*." In the margin: "NOTA Dat dit een ghemeen Spreek-woort is" (Angel, 31).

51. Gerrit Dou was called "The Dutch Parrhasius" in a laudatory poem. See above, note 26.

52. "Dus is onse Konst van trap tot trap op gheklommen" (Angel 12-13).

53. One of the challenges, reflected in Bailly's painting, was undoubtedly Dou's ambitious *Self-portrait* of 1647 as well (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie), in which Dou sits at a table full of objects referring to the arts and study. As a matter of fact, Bailly himself already painted in the 1640s a *Self-portrait with a vanitas still life* in which many elements appeared which were to return in the later painting of 1651. For this work, see Popper-Voskuil, fig. 3. Not to complicate matters, these paintings are not discussed here as they add no crucial information to my argument.

his own work, so wittily inverted by Bailly, referred to a very recent *Self-portrait* by Dou, in which he presents a painting of his parents and brother to the beholder (fig. 38).<sup>54</sup> Dou's invention of the artist pointedly exhibiting a piece of his own work (soon to be repeated by many other painters), will have stimulated Bailly's solution. Initially, Bailly probably opted for a more conventional scheme, which would have been a combination of the portrait by De Keyzer, the emulation of the young Dou and the famous print after Bartholomeus Spranger's invention (fig. 31), which he undoubtedly knew. From radiographs of the painting it appears that the young painter diagonally pointed with his maulstick (like the line of the arrow in Spranger's invention) to an oval female portrait of the same size as his own face, situated at the spot where the flute-glass was painted in a later stage. This portrait must have been painted over by Bailly, but it has surfaced again in later times;<sup>55</sup> that a shadowy face of a woman is visible nowadays, will not have been Bailly's purpose.

Eventually Bailly painted the female portrait on a much smaller scale, reducing it to the same size as the picture with his own self-portrait, next to which it was now placed on the table. Bailly portrayed unmistakably the smiling face of his wife, Agneta van Swanenburgh (cf. fig. 37), but he represented her as the young beauty she must once have been (and which, at this date, she probably had ceased to be).<sup>56</sup> Thus the

54. This new transformation of the tradition of the painter with his family (see above, note 24), was, since Popper-Voskuil's article, always dated after 1651; this meant that Bailly was considered the source for Dou. Obviously it is the other way around. Dou's portrait will have been painted *in memoriam* of his mother and brother; the first died in 1647 and the second in 1649; a date of 1649/1650 for the painting seems most probable. Also on stylistic grounds — and in comparison with his *Self-portrait* dated 1647 in Dresden — the painting should not be dated later than ca. 1650. This date was also argued by Baer in her unpublished *catalogue raisonné* (see note 36), no. 56.

55. This may be the result of the considerable quantity of lead-white in the face of this woman, while the thin layer of dark paint on top would have become more transparent. I follow here the very plausible suggestion of J. Bruyn, cited in Wurfain, 55. In that article the radiograph of this face is reproduced (figs 3-13); on this radiograph one may also observe an oval line which must be the edge of the portrait.

56. The problem that the same face already appeared on the portrait of Bailly by De Keyzer of c. 1627, about 15 years before his marriage with Agneta, is easily solved, because it must have been painted in much later: the woman's hair-style and her dress cannot possibly be much earlier than c. 1650. Wurfain built a complicated

tradition of the artist portraying his own likeness together with that of his wife, was given a particular twist: this beauty, decked with pearls and dressed in a low-cut fancy costume, has the same function as the figure of *Venus* on the panel Frans Floris was holding, as the nude woman on the drawing in Isaac van Swanenburgh's self-portrait, and — much closer (but later) — as Adriaan van der Werff's wife in the guise of *Venus* on the painting by the successful Rotterdam artist Van der Werff (1659-1722) is holding in his well-known *Self-portrait* of 1699 (fig. 39).<sup>57</sup>

The youthful image of the painter's wife represents beauty and grace in person, who inspires the painter and urges him on, the goal every Apelles pursues. At the same time the little mirror (in fact the raised lid of an oval silver box), probably reminded the contemporary connoisseur that this young woman could also be seen as a personification of *Visus* (fig. 40): it is, after all, through the sense of sight, which was considered the strongest seductress of the human mind, that earthly beauty is able to entice us. However, she may also function as the personification of *Superbia* and *Vanity*, all traditionally depicted with a mirror as their main attribute. The smouldering candle placed before her, and the soap bubble above, make clear that she is the epitome of transient, earthly beauty, just like the young woman holding a mirror in an engraving of De Gheyn (fig. 41), or, among others, those in paintings by the genre painters Jan Miense Molenaer (c. 1610-1668) or Jacob Duck (c. 1600-1667), all beautiful young women who constitute the centre of a *vanitas*-image.<sup>58</sup> The conflation of *Venus* and *Visus*, nor that of *Venus*, *Visus* and *Vanity* was altogether new — on the contrary, their images did sometimes merge in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries;<sup>59</sup> but Bailly's combination of such motifs with the rejuvenated portrait of his wife was highly inventive.

Nevertheless, the young woman is in the first place the portrait of Bailly's wife in her youthful glory (like Christina Muller in Spranger's

argument on the peculiar identification of this woman as being Anna Maria van Schurman (and in the shadowy face Anna Roemer Visscher).

57. Since the little daughter, in the guise of Cupid, is going to paint on a panel before her, she seems to represent *Pictura* as well. For other pictures of painters with a depiction of *Venus*, see Sluijter 1993a, 368, 390; for the conflation of *Venus* and *Pictura*, *ibid.*, 362-66.

58. For depictions of young women before a mirror, see Eric J. Sluijter, "Een stuck waerin een juft. voor de spiegel van Gerrit Douw", *Antiek*, 23 (1988), 150-61.

59. See Sluijter 1993a, 350-55.

invention), who was captured in paint for posterity. As the painter says in a poem by Jacob Cats, cited by Angel:

This pleasant image of your youthful days  
I will pass on, by way of my art,  
To the age which follows ours.  
So that your beautiful radiance, also after a thousand years,  
Will still be known in our kingdom;  
And that your fresh youth will still  
Be seen and worshipped by all neighbouring towns;  
So that you will live for ever through my art,  
Although your time of life has long been gone.<sup>60</sup>

Thus spoke Cats's painter when he had to demonstrate the superiority of his art, defending it against other suitors (in the first place a poet), who were all competing for the hand of a beautiful maiden.

In this passage, part of the long story of Rhodope in Cats's *Trou-ringh* and cited *in extenso* by Angel,<sup>61</sup> the painter argues that his art should be rated higher than poetry. His most important piece of evidence is that he is paid well for his art. The poet cannot make a living out of praise and laurels, he says mockingly, but the painter is capable of earning a lot of money with his art, and he can even conduct trade like a merchant. Obviously, the poet Cats meant this as biting satire; from the point of view of the liberal arts, only honour counted, while pursuing profit was considered base. Angel, on the other hand, understood this emphasis on financial gain in a positive sense;<sup>62</sup> for him this image of the painter was entirely acceptable.

Indeed, for many Dutch painters in this period this ancient ideology of the liberal arts, still strongly defended in this same period by, for instance, Franciscus Junius in his learned treatise *The Painting of the*

60. "Ick sal dit aerdich Beelt van uwe jonghe daghen, / Aen d'Eeuwe die ons volcht soo konstich overdragen. / Dat uwe schoone glans, oock over duysent jaer, / Aen al het Coninckrijck sal wesen openbaer: / Dat uwe frisse jeucht door al de naeste steden / Sal werden aenghesien, sal werden aenghebeden; / Soo dat ghy door de Kunst als eeuwich leven sult, / Schoon dat u levens tijt sal langhe sijn vervult." (Angel 1642, 29; from Jacob Cats's *Proef-steen van den trou-ringh*, Dordrecht, 1637; see J. Cats, *Alle de werken*, Amsterdam, 1712, II, 196).

61. Angel, 27-30. See Sluijter 1991, 177-79 and Sluijter 1993b, 24-26.

62. "See there, a poet himself has placed the art of painting above poetry!", Angel exclaims at the end of this passage. We will never know if he misunderstood Cats on purpose or that he really did not catch Cats's scathing irony.

*Ancients* (1638), will have held little significance.<sup>63</sup> They generally came from a quite prosperous milieu of craftsmen and worked in a thriving urban society in which financial gain was the most secure way to a higher social standing.<sup>64</sup> In other parts of Angel's long speech, we also see a remarkable emphasis on financial success: he constantly links the honour and fame of painters from the past with the large sums of money they earned or the costly gifts they received. Angel proudly ends the passage about the honour showered on painters, by giving us the example of his young fellow townsman Gerrit Dou. Angel claims that Dou demonstrates, by being so highly paid for his work, that also in his own time, even within the walls of Leiden, the art of painting is greatly honoured.<sup>65</sup> In the same year, the Leiden burgomaster Jan Orlers, writing the first biographies of seventeenth-century Leiden painters (among them Bailly and Dou) in his *Description of the City of Leiden*, also emphasizes admiringly that Dou's works are being sold for very high prices.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, it should not surprise us that David Bailly demonstrated in this painting that he was a thriving artist who had fared well: in front of his portrait he painted a pile of gold and silver coins.

With the painting of 1651 Bailly presented in his old age a remarkable memorial for himself and for his art. Apart from painters who were directly influenced by this painting, like the Leiden artists Pieter van Steenwyck (c. 1615-after 1654) and Edwaert Collier (c. 1640-after 1706),<sup>67</sup> there were other painters who demonstrated a striking pride in their abilities and their career (compared with whom Bailly seems even modest); one may compare, for instance, a *Self-portrait* by the marine painter Ludolph Backhuysen (1631-1708) (fig. 42), who depicted himself

63. For the discussion concerning honour and profit in contemporary art literature, see, *inter alia*, Sluijter 1993b, 25 and 79; J. Emmens, *Rembrandt en de Regels van de Kunst*, Utrecht, 1968, 161-74, and J. Woodall.

64. Unlike Van Swanenburgh and Otto van Veen, whose fathers were from the urban elite, Bailly's father was a writing master (but also worked as printer, print-seller and fencing master), and the father of Dou a thriving glazier. The fact that Bailly and Dou both became officers of the civic guard, seems to point to the fact that they managed to penetrate a higher social stratum.

65. Angel, 23.

66. J.J. Orlers, *Beschrijvinge der Stad Leyden*, Leiden, 1641, 380.

67. In a *Self-portrait* by Collier, dated 1684 (private collection), which is clearly derived from Bailly's composition, the message is made more obvious by adding the words *Vita brevis ars longa*.

when he was even two years older than Bailly (sixty-nine). Sitting beside a table with objects referring to transience (an hour-glass and extinguished candle), he puts his hand on a drawing with his own portrait, which seems to be on the point of slipping from the table. On this drawing, which was published two years later as an engraving by Jan Gole, we can read a laudatory poem in Latin:

In rivalry with mighty nature, the hand of Backhuyzen  
— the artist of living colours —  
After having finished all his pictures,  
Has placed here his own likeness [engraved] in copper as the  
crowning glory of his work.<sup>68</sup>

The words with which Philips Angel concludes his encomium to the art of painting were visualized by these painters: "By our art we shall wrestle ourselves free from the voraciousness of mortality, and triumph in spite of the neck-breaker of all things (which is death), and flourish from one century to the next".<sup>69</sup> This sentence, as well as the paintings, include the notion that the painter's art conquers mortality by capturing all things transient, as well as that the painter himself overcomes death by his fame. And it was Bailly in particular, who elaborately informed us with justified pride what his art was capable of. Naturally, the painter was aware that a painting could not last for ever, but then again, as Angel stated: "painting can last several hundreds of years, and that is enough".<sup>70</sup> However, Bailly made abundantly clear that he was deeply conscious of the fact that painting is after all a "semblance without being" — pictorial deceit, nothing more than pigment on panel or canvas — and that this should be a source of pride as well as modesty: in the end the painter's endeavours are also vain. "Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas", is written on the paper (in the right hand corner of the painting) which bears Bailly's elegant signature and the date 1651.

68. "Aemula naturae, Bakhusia dextra potentis / Vivi coloris artifex / Picturae postquam implevit genus omne Tropaeum / in Aere se ponit sibi". See B. Broos *et al.*, *Ludolf Bakhuyzen 1631-1708*, exh. cat. Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum Amsterdam, Amsterdam/Emden, 1985, nos S 36 and T 23. The print is by Jan Gole and the poem by Jan van Broekhuizen. The conspicuous statue of Neptune refers of course to Bakhuyzen's specialization as a marine painter.

69. "Wy... sullen de verslindinghe der sterflickheyt door onse Konst ontwarstelen, ende in spijte der breeck-neck aller dinghen (de doot) overwinnen; ende van eeuw tot eeuw onverwelckelick bloeyen" (Angel, 58).

70. Angel, 25.

A year later Gerrit Dou presented with remarkable wit his unconcealed pride in the "deceit" he was able to produce, but this time without any references to the other side of the coin. In his famous *Quack doctor*, the painter himself, leaning out of a window with palette and brushes in hand, addresses the viewer with an amused expression on his face (fig. 43).<sup>71</sup> He shows us a charlatan who deceives the simple-minded, something which is stressed by the boy luring an innocent little bird at the left side of the group, and by another boy robbing a peasant woman at the right; they visualize the quack's goals. The image of the mother (placed right under the quack) who is cleaning the buttocks of her baby, makes clear that the sweet talks of the quack are just crap. Dou posits himself, with the tools of his art, next to the quack and invites us to compare the two of them. While addressing an educated public which amuses itself with the ignorance of the lower classes displayed in this painting, Dou demonstrates that he also sells illusion. But his is a "pleasant and harmless deceit".<sup>72</sup> If the quack knows how to bamboozle the ignorant out of their money, Dou's deceptions are meant for sophisticated art lovers who are prepared to pay dearly for such breathtaking specimens of "semblance without being". In the words of Johan de Brune the Younger:

to gape at things which are not there, as if they were there, and to be led on in such a way, so that, without any harm, we make ourselves believe that these things exist, how can that not be helpful to entertain our mind? Certainly, anyone is immoderately diverted, when he is deceived by the false likeness of things.<sup>73</sup>

71. This painting was interpreted by Emmens and De Jongh in a very different, emblematic, mode; E. de Jongh, *Tot Lering en Vermaak*, exh. cat. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 1976, 86-89. Later it was also discussed by Ivan Gaskell (*Oxford Art Journal* 5 [1982], 15-23) and Svetlana Alpers (116-18); their interpretations are closer to my approach. For a more extensively argued account of my interpretation, see E.J. Sluiter, "Hoe Realistisch is de Noordnederlandse Schilderkunst van de 17de Eeuw? De Problemen van een Vraagstelling", *Leidschrift*, VI/3 (1990), 28-33.

72. J. de Brune de Jonge, *Alle Volgeestige Werken*, Harlingen, 1665, 317: "genuchelik en onschadelik bedrogh."

73. "want aan dingen, die niet en zijn, zich zo te vergapen als ofze waren, en daar zoo van geleit te worden dat wy ons zelve, sonder schade, diets maken datze zijn; hoe kan dat tot de verlusting onzer gemoederen niet dienstigh wezen? Zeker, het vervroolikt yemand buite maat, wanneer hy door een valsche gelikenis der dingen wort bedrogen" (De Brune, 317).

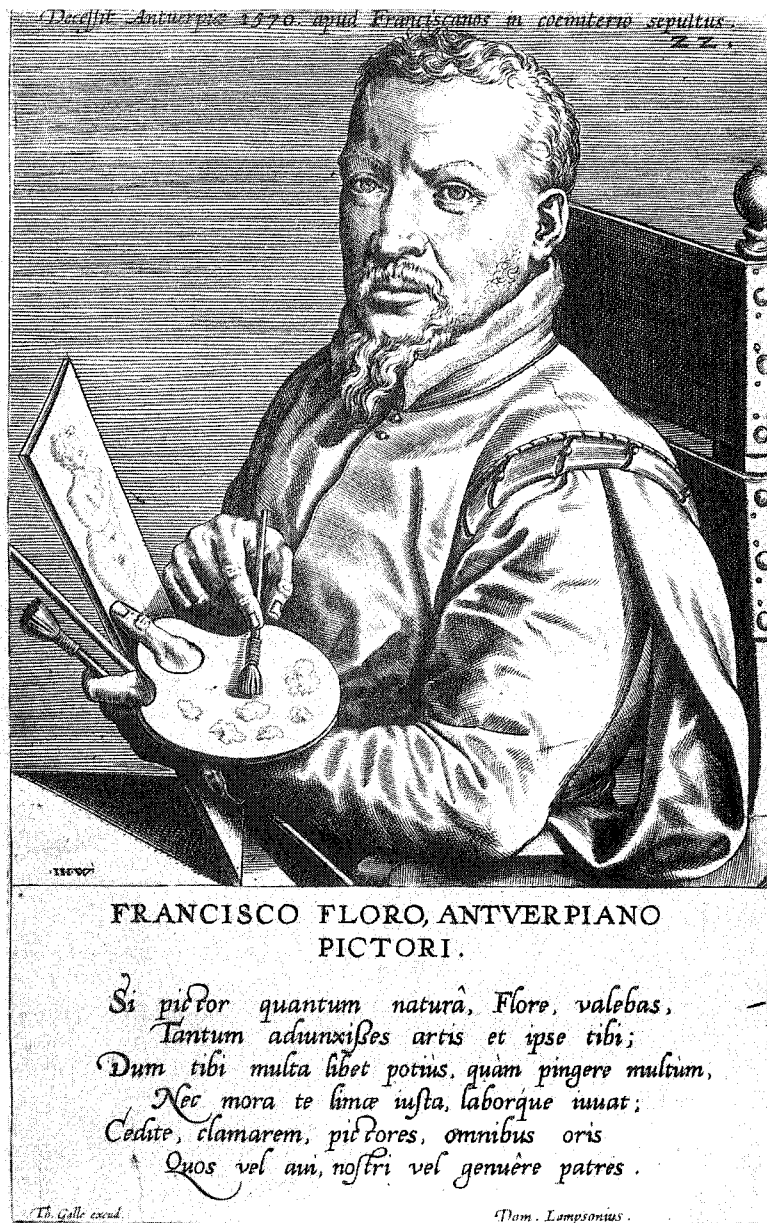


24. David Bailly, *Self-portrait with Vanitas Still Life*, Leiden, Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal. Panel 89.5 x 122 cm.



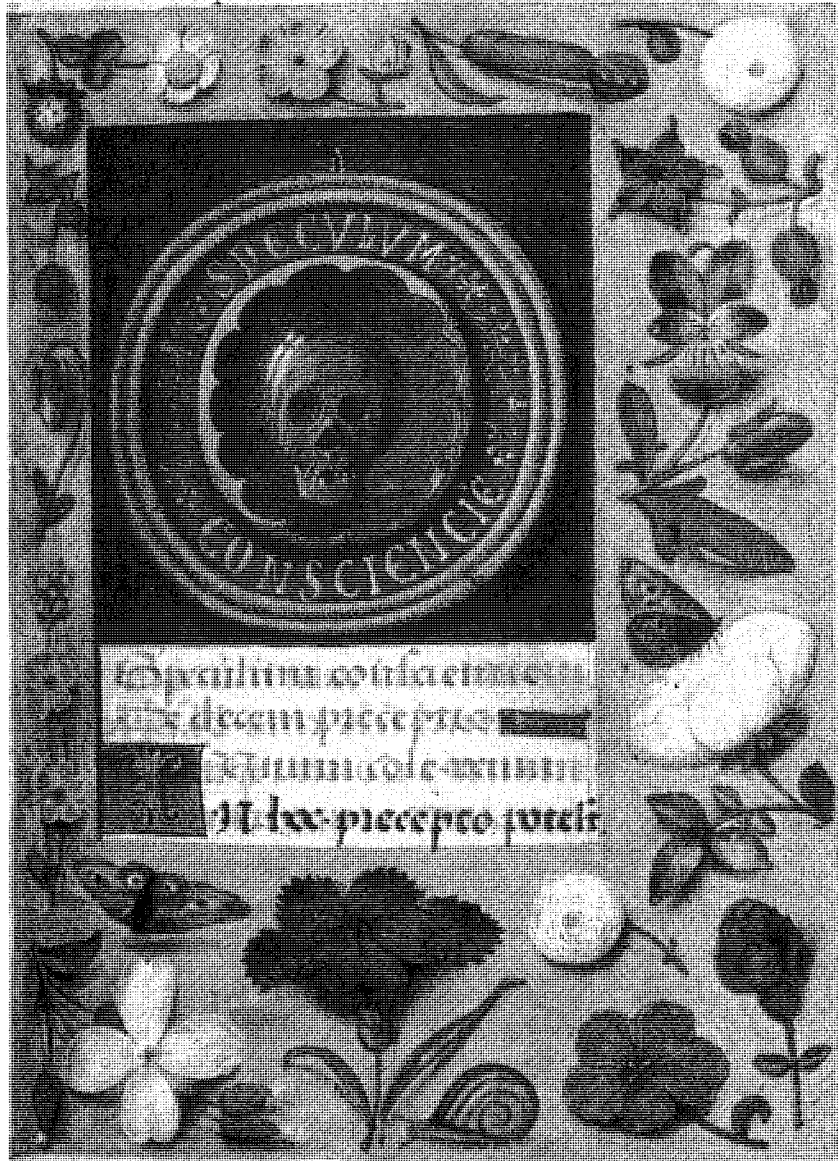
25. Isaac Claesz. van Swanenburgh, *Self-portrait*, Leiden, Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal. Panel 94 x 71.5 cm.





26. Johannes Wierix after Frans Floris, *Portrait of Frans Floris*. From: *Pictorum... Aliquot Effigies* (editio princeps Antwerp 1572 by Hieronymus Cock), 4th edn Th. Galle. Engraving 225 x 230 mm.

27. Catharina van Hemessen, *Self-portrait*, Basel, Öffentliche Kunst-sammlung. Panel 31 x 25 cm.



28. Anonymous artist, *Skull Reflecting in Mirror*. Illumination in: *Book of Hours of Juana la Loca*, British Library, London.



29. Laux Furtenagel, *The Painter Hans Burgkmair and his Wife*, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Panel 60 x 52 cm.

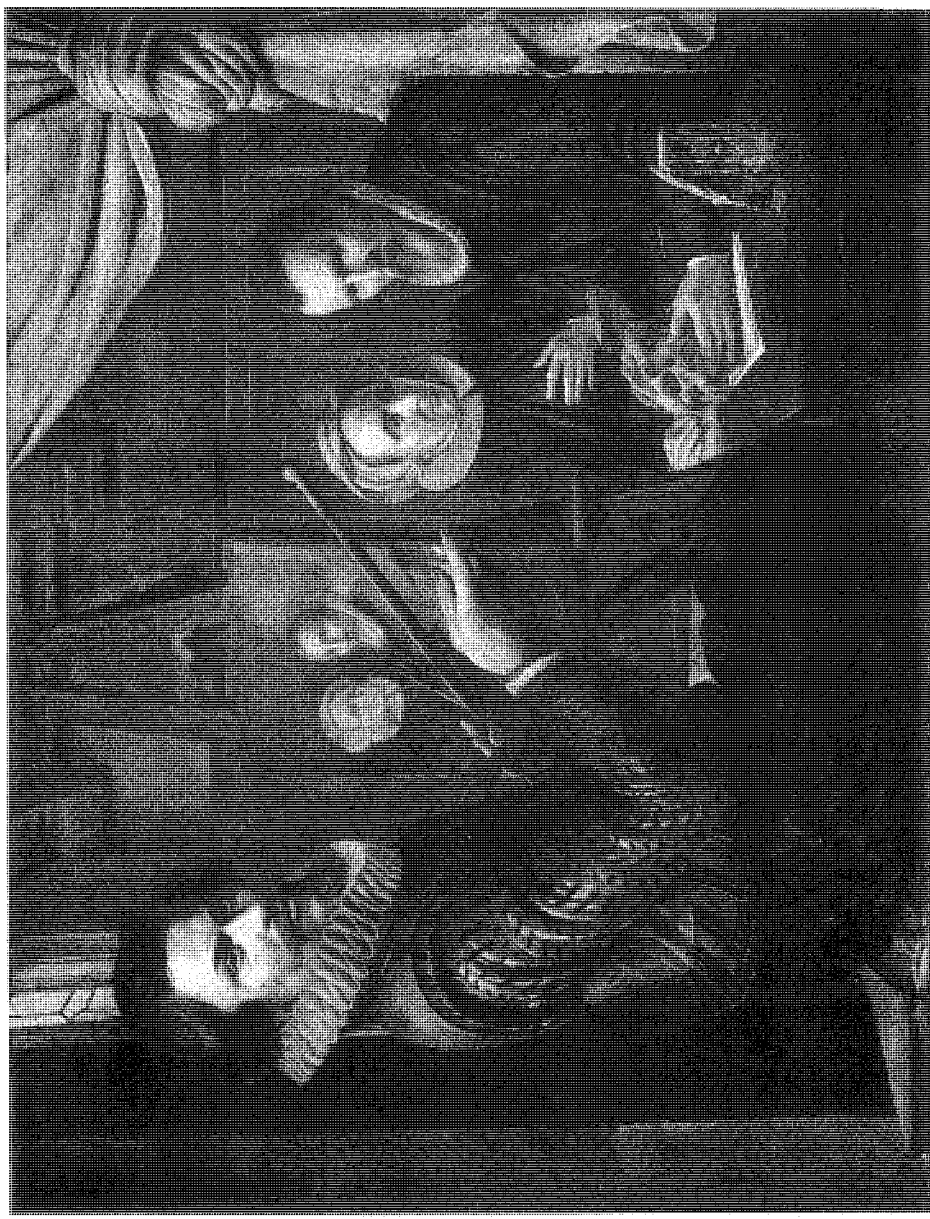


30. Otto van Veen, *Self-portrait in Mirror*. Brussels, Royal Library Albert I. Drawing in pen and ink in *Album Amicorum* of Otto van Veen, 1584.

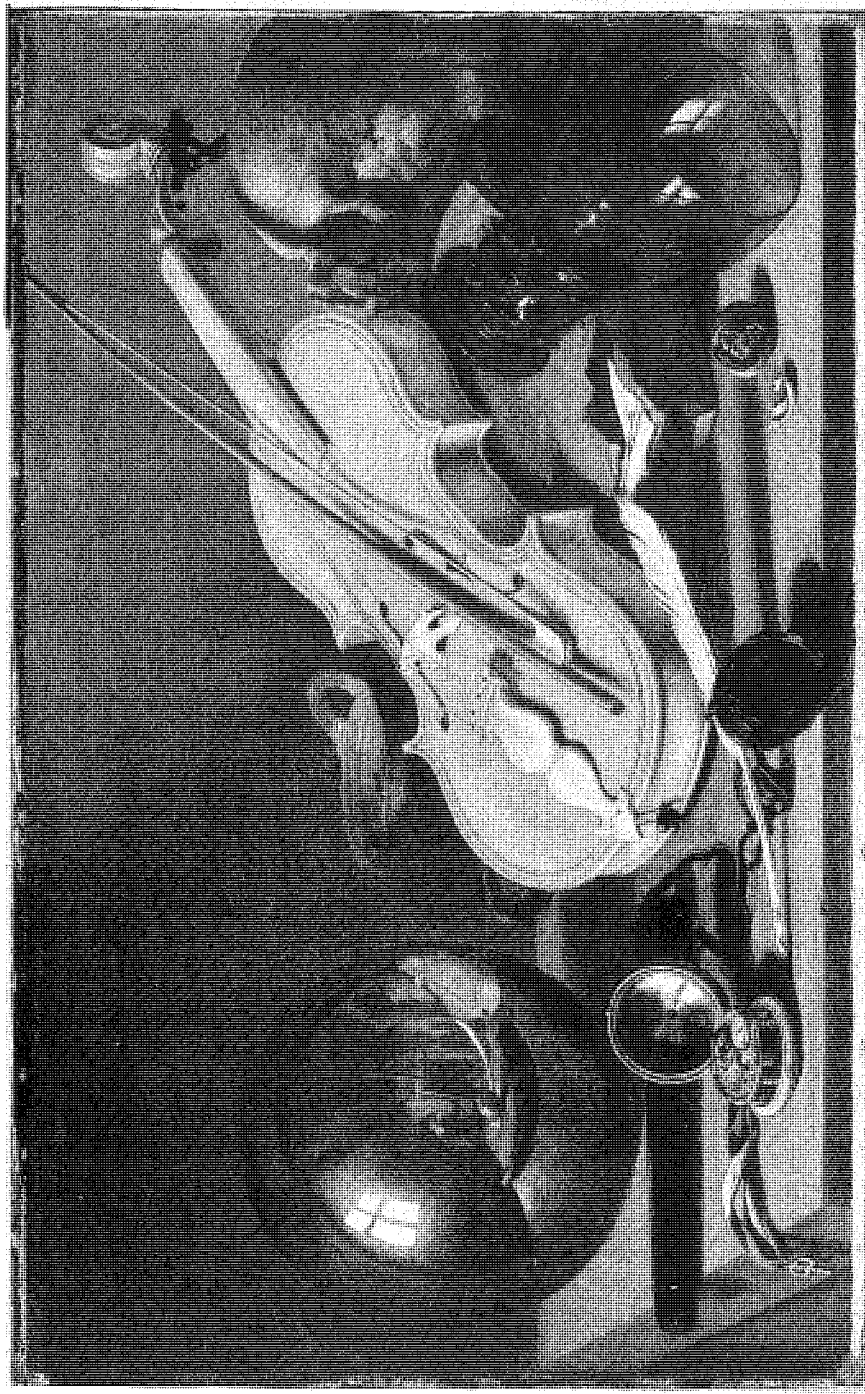


31. Aegidius Sadeler after Bartholomeus Spranger, *Bartholomeus Spranger and his Deceased Wife Christina Muller*. Engraving 294 x 416 mm.





32. Herman van Vollenhove, *Self-portrait with Elderly Couple*, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Canvas 89 x 112 cm.



33. Pieter Claesz., *Vanitas Still Life, with a Reflection of the Artist*, Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum. Panel 36 x 59 cm.



34. Thomas de Keyzer, *Portrait of David Bailly with a Vanitas Still Life* (by Bailly). Private coll. Panel 73.5 x 53.5 cm.



35. Gerrit Dou, *Young Painter in his Studio, with Vanitas Still life*. Private coll. Panel 59 x 43.5 cm.



36. David Bailly, *Self-portrait*. Private coll. Panel 37.5 x 29 cm. (Companion piece of fig. 37)



37. David Bailly, *Portrait of Agneta van Swanenburgh*. Private coll. Panel 37.5 x 29 cm. (Companion piece of fig. 36)





38. Gerrit Dou, *Self-portrait with Portrait of his Parents and Brother*. Brunswick, Herzog Anton-Ulrich-Museum. Panel 27 x 23 cm.



39. Adriaen van der Werff, *Self-portrait with the Portrait of his Wife and Daughter as Venus and Cupid*, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Canvas 81 x 65.5 cm.





42. Ludolf Bakhuizen, *Self-portrait*, Amsterdam, Amsterdams Historisch Museum. Canvas 190 x 150 cm.



43. Gerrit Dou, *The Quack Doctor*, Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen. Panel 112 x 83 cm.