

Friends of CODART

Newsletter, Summer 2017

Dear CODART Friends,

Connecting and sharing. That is what CODART really stands for. Sharing our common passion for the art of the Old Masters generates new insights and interesting contacts, and helps us to deepen our knowledge. That applies not only to mutual exchanges between curators, but also to the interaction between Patrons and curators. This struck me forcibly once again this year while attending the CODART TWINTIG congress in Warsaw.

CODART does not see the Friends' organization as icing on the cake but as part of its backbone. The Friends make it possible to reduce the members' congress fee by a full €100, which enables more curators to take part in CODART's core activities. The renewed website is indispensable when it comes to gaining fast and clear digital access to collections and museums, and to finding curators, exhibitions, and publications. The Friends' contribution encouraged the Dioraphte Foundation and the Mondriaan Fund to lend the website project their financial support.

CODART makes a valuable contribution to the worldwide exchange of knowledge on the Old Masters of the Low Countries. To safeguard the quality of our activities, we need a more robust financial infrastructure. We are therefore looking for Friends who would like to commit to supporting CODART as Patrons. Are you willing to help? All you need to do is to pass on the name of one potential candidate from your network by e-mail to friends@codart.nl and we will contact the person.

This year we are once again organizing special activities for the Friends of CODART, as you will see in the calendar on the back of this Newsletter. You can also read a report on the most recent Patrons Salon, which took place in Maastricht in March. We were delighted to see so many of you there. We hope to see you again very soon!

Kind regards,

Titia Vellenga
Chair, Friends of CODART Foundation

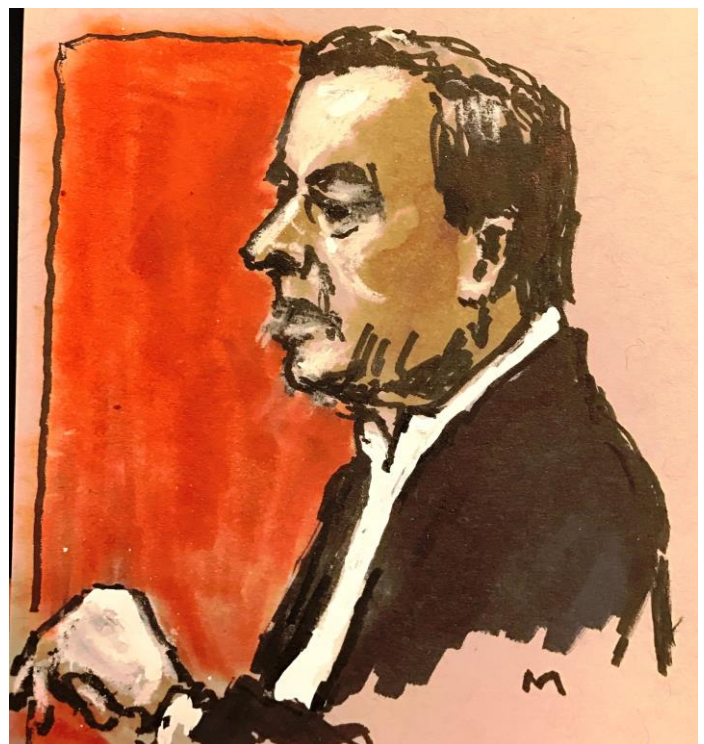
Gerdien Verschoor
Director, CODART



Titia Vellenga

Changes to the Board

As of 21 December 2016 Titia Vellenga took over from Thomas Leysen as chair of the board of the Friends of CODART Foundation. Thomas Leysen served as chair of the board of the Friends of CODART Foundation for six years. Under his chairmanship, the Friends of CODART Foundation developed into a professional organization. Ms Vellenga accepted her nomination with great pleasure: "It is a privilege and a challenge to continue Thomas's wonderful work and to serve as the liaison between CODART's members and the CODART Friends."



Outgoing chair Thomas Leysen as drawn by Patron Bill Middendorf at this year's Patrons Salon in Maastricht

Friends Activities

2016-2017

Presentation of the new website

CODART Members and Friends were invited to the festive inauguration of CODART's new website at the Frans Hals Museum on Friday, 2 December 2016. The presentation took place during the exhibition *Dutch Old Masters from Budapest: Highlights from the Szépművészeti Múzeum*, which featured over 80 works by Dutch Old Masters from one of the finest museum collections in the world. The event concluded with a festive reception.

The 2016 website renewal project was funded by grants from the Mondriaan Fund, the Dioraphte Foundation, and the Friends of CODART Foundation.



Friends and Members enjoying the exhibition at the Frans Hals Museum



The new CODART website was launched by representatives of the Mondriaan Fund, the Dioraphte Foundation and the Friends of CODART Foundation

Patrons Salon Maastricht

"Old Masters - Old Fashioned?" That was the question at the heart of the Patrons Salon that took place on Saturday, March 11th during TEFAF in Maastricht. Bendor Grosvenor (art dealer, art historian, blogger), Stijn Alsteens (former curator of the Metropolitan Museum, New York, now attached to Christie's), and Titia Vellenga (collector and chair of the board of the Friends of CODART Foundation) introduced the subject, after which an animated debate, moderated by Anna Tummers, curator of Old Masters at the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, took place with a packed audience of Patrons and special guests.

How should we reconcile the popularity of Old Master exhibitions to reports that the market for such paintings is on the verge of collapse? And are such reports leading collectors of Old Masters to make different choices? Are their hunting instincts adapting in response to changes in the art market? Do the Old Masters still appeal to the younger generation of collectors? These are the questions that we raised at the Salon.

"'Old' is not a word that works well in marketing," said Bendor Grosvenor: it sounds "pale, male, stale." It is not fair to compare the market for modern art to that of the Old Masters. After all, Rubens does not have an agent. People are very leery about getting into the trade in Old Masters. It's a small, sometimes hostile world. The decline in numbers of art dealers also means that there are fewer and fewer ambassadors. It is high time for us – as art historians, curators, and collectors – to start thinking about how to frame this whole subject differently.

Stijn Alsteens pointed out that the Old Masters is a very dynamic field, with exhibitions that attract huge crowds to museums worldwide. Still, museum professionals do need to ask themselves an important question: how can they bring their collections alive? This is much more of a challenge now that it was fifteen years ago.

To take just one example: the average visitor is not familiar with the Old and New Testament - how do you tell those stories? At the same time, this is also a "gift" for curators. You don't have to confine yourself to displaying stars like Hieronymus Bosch to the public. The Bouts exhibition in Aachen is very unsexy, but from the curatorial point of view very interesting. The same applies to exhibitions like *Dutch Primitives* and *The Road to Van Eyck* at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. Both attracted enormous public interest: visitors apparently find it interesting to go to exhibitions "that open your eyes."

“Masters are timeless,” said Titia Vellenga, and she referred to an article in the Herald Tribune in which the author suggested that the term ‘Old’ was a problem – why can’t we refer instead to the “Great Masters”? Would young people be more likely to feel attracted to the “Great Masters from the Past”?



Bendor Grosvenor

The speakers’ brief statements were followed by lively exchanges with the audience. The debate surrounding the Saenredam [at Sander Bijl’s stand, ed.] proved that the Old Masters are still “hot,” said a member of the public. Ten per cent of the works by Old Masters are still in the art trade, so there is plenty of work to be done. Still, they need to be found, and good stories need to be told about them. There was also a debate on the current trend to add “contemporary interventions” to permanent Old Master presentations or exhibitions, as if we need an excuse to display their work.

The impassioned debate made it clear that the subject selected for the Patrons Salon was one that has certainly lost none of its topical appeal.

The next Patrons Salon is scheduled to take place in Maastricht on March 10, 2018. Save the date!

Find a Friend

We continue to strive to find new persons and companies that might be interested in supporting us and have not discovered CODART yet. We would be delighted if you could recommend the Friends of CODART Foundation to one or two of your closest friends or relations and inform them about the benefits. By joining our organization, they would support the research, exchange, and exhibitions of our Old Masters in museums all over the globe. Feel free to forward this Newsletter or contact us for more information or brochures: friends@codart.nl.

Friends of CODART Foundation

CODART, the international network of curators of Dutch and Flemish art, connects over 700 curators from more than 300 museums in almost 50 countries. Dutch and Flemish art is valued and collected all over the world. Royalty, individuals and businesses have served as patrons of Dutch and Flemish art throughout the world. Our cultural heritage has always flourished well beyond the borders of the Low Countries thanks to private benefactors.

You can participate in this rich tradition by joining the Friends of CODART Foundation. We offer our Friends contact with a unique global network of museum curators. Our network meetings offer the opportunity to become acquainted with curators from New York, Amsterdam and St. Petersburg; exchange thoughts with our members from Antwerp, Havana and Paris; and receive advice from our specialists from Bruges, Warsaw and Berlin. Naturally, our friends can count on the personal attention of CODART’s director, board and staff.

The Friends of CODART has supported this international network of museum curators since 2007. Thanks to its Friends, CODART can maintain its prize-winning website www.codart.nl. They also underwrite important international gatherings as well as grants that allow curators from financially challenged countries to be involved in the network.

Board of the Friends of CODART Foundation

Titia Vellenga, Owner of Artara and Former PR & Marketing Manager at TEFAF (chair)

Till-Holger Borchert, Director of Musea Brugge, Bruges

Bob Haboldt, Director of Haboldt&Co. and Pictura, New York, Paris and Amsterdam

Norbert Middelkoop, Curator of Paintings, Prints and Drawings, Amsterdam Museum

Rob Vellekoop, Collector, Rotterdam

Find more information about the activities of the Friends of CODART Foundation on www.codart.nl/friends

CODART Friends

Patrons for Life

Bijl-Van Urk B.V.
Michel Ceuterick
Coll y Cortés
Bob Haboldt
Fergus Hall
Hoogsteder & Hoogsteder
Thomas Leysen
Marnix Neerman
Elsbeth van Tets
Rob Vellekoop

Business Sponsors

Salomon Lilian Dutch Old Master Paintings
TEFAF (The European Fine Arts Fair)

Patrons

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Joost en Françoise Commandeur-Duynstee *New*
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Collection R. Mauricio Sanzana *New*
Jacques Schraven
Axel Vervoordt
Floris van Wanroij Fine Art
Matthew and Susan Weatherbie
The Weiss Gallery
Bernard Wientjes and Titia Vellenga

Partner

RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History

These museums support **CODART** as institutional member:

Centraal Museum, Utrecht | Denver Art Museum, Denver | Drents Museum, Assen | Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris | Glasgow Museums, Glasgow | Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge | King Baudouin Foundation, Brussels | Mauritshuis, The Hague | Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York | Musea Brugge | Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden | Museum Het Rembrandthuis, Amsterdam | Nationalmuseum, Stockholm | Patrimonio Nacional | Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam | Het Scheepvaartmuseum, Amsterdam | Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest | Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam | Vlaamse Kunstcollectie (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, Groeningemuseum Brugge, Museum Schone Kunsten Gent)

CODART Calendar

2017

22-24 October

CODART focus Amsterdam

In-depth study visit to the Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam Museum, Museum Van Loon and the Royal Palace on the occasion of the exhibition *Ferdinand Bol and Govert Flinck: Rembrandt's Master Pupils*

28 October

CODART Patron Stein Berre invites Patrons for a get-together in New York during TEFAF New York Fall

December

Friends museum visit

An afternoon organized especially for all Friends of **CODART**, in conjunction with the Foundation C. Hofstede de Groot/ Friends of the RKD.

2018

10 March

Patrons Salon

An exclusive lecture or exchange of expertise in the field of the Old Masters, during TEFAF Maastricht

11-13 March

CODART 21 congress Bruges

The yearly **CODART** congress in 2018 will be organized in conjunction with Musea Brugge.

Do you also want to support **CODART**? Please send an e-mail to friends@codart.nl or enlist via www.codart.nl/friends