

# Friends of CODART

## Newsletter, Summer 2023

Dear CODART Friends,

You may have noticed: CODART is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary this year. We look back at how it once began and at what has been accomplished over all these years, but we also look ahead to what awaits us in the future, guided by the theme 'The Curator of the Future'. There are many changes going on in the world, which resonate in the museum sector and have an effect on what is asked of the curator. This year we are exploring what this means for the curator's profession, discussing it with each other and increasing awareness of what a curator does. A multifaceted subject, especially since CODART is an international network. Different developments take place in each country, and what is possible in a large museum is often not so easy to realize in a smaller institution. The profession of curator is in some cases still traditionally conceived and in other cases completely adapted to today's requirements, whatever they may be. It turns out to be an interesting time to explore this subject with each other and to discuss it. On Friday 6 October, we will present the results of the research commissioned by CODART and conducted by Bureau & Maes during a festive anniversary symposium at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. We cordially invite all friends to attend.

In this newsletter you will read about all the other activities we have been able to offer our Friends over the past year, and what is still to come this year and next. For example, we are pleased to have been able to extend our collaboration with art fair PAN. In November, therefore, the Friends of CODART Foundation will once again organize a contribution to PAN Podium. Events at BRAFA and TEFAF will also follow in January and March 2024, as usual. We thank the organizations of the various international art fairs for their continued support.

A highlight this past year was undoubtedly the CODART Congress in Antwerp, which a number of Patrons also attended. Thanks to the Friends of CODART Grant Program, eleven members from museums with a limited budget were able to participate in this momentous gathering, which, for the first time since the COVID crisis, again saw a large number of participants from more than twenty different countries. On our website you can find a short aftermovie which gives a good impression of the event.



Gerard van Honthorst, *The Merry Fiddler*, ca. 1623  
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

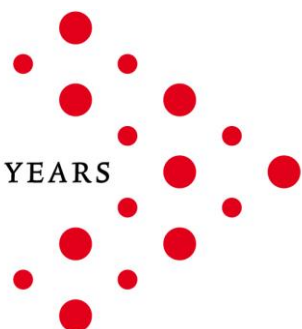
Finally, Patrons will soon receive a special invitation to join us on 24 October for a festive Patrons dinner at Museum Bredius in The Hague. Are you not yet a Patron or Business Sponsor? Then this anniversary year might be a good time to join.

With many thanks for your support,

Manfred Sellink  
Chair of the Friends of CODART Foundation

Maartje Beekman  
Director of CODART

CODART 25 YEARS



# Friends Activities

## 2022-2023

### Friends Afternoon at PAN Amsterdam

In November 2022, CODART partnered with art fair PAN Amsterdam for the first time, resulting in a Friends Afternoon at the fair. We hosted a program on PAN Podium, with the theme 'CODART, Curators, and Collectors'. It included three lectures by CODART members about various projects relating to the theme. Firstly, Iris Ellers and Thera Folmer-von Oven enlightened us about the Liberna Collection and its evolution from a private collection to a public one. Next, Robert Fucci offered a sneak peek to his exhibition at the Ackland Art Museum and Museum Het Rembrandthuis about Dutch drawings from the Sheldon and Leena Peck collection. Quentin Buvelot completed the PAN Podium with a talk about the Mauritshuis' unique collaboration with the Frick Collection in New York. Attendance was overwhelming for all lectures, a great compliment to our speakers! Friends of CODART were invited to conclude the afternoon with drinks, and were offered access to the private evening opening of the fair. All in all, a very successful event!



Quentin Buvelot presenting at PAN Podium

### BRAFA Day for Friends

On 29 January 2023 the fourth edition of the BRAFA Day for Friends took place. After a captivating tour of the fair by BRAFA Ambassador and Patron of CODART Luc Bertrand, our group of Friends joined the audience for Frederica Van Dam's Art Talk about the exhibition *Theodoor Rombouts: Virtuoso of Flemish Caravaggism*, which had opened the week before. The Art Talk was organized by CODART.

### Patrons Salon at TEFAF Maastricht

This year's Patrons Salon was devoted to challenges and dilemmas in conservation practice, and how curators and conservators work together in order to



Friends of CODART during the tour of BRAFA Art Fair

achieve the best result. Which considerations play a role in restoration? And how can a radical restoration change the interpretation of a work of art? On Saturday 11 March, Patrons and Business Sponsors gathered at the CODART Patrons Salon at TEFAF Maastricht to hear three perspectives on this topic.

Firstly, Uta Neidhardt, curator of Dutch and Flemish Paintings at the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden, shared her experiences with the transformative restoration of Vermeer's *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window* (ca. 1657-1659). At the start of this restoration project she and her team had no idea what was in store for them. In 2017 they discovered that the overpaint in the background of the picture, long thought to be by Vermeer himself, was in fact by another hand, presumably done several decades later. When the original paint underneath proved to be in perfect condition, it was decided to remove the overpaint entirely, uncovering an image of Cupid on the back wall. As well as transforming the look of the painting, this discovery also changed the interpretation of the work, bringing the intended symbolic content to light again. The meaning of the image in the background— sincere love overcomes deceit and hypocrisy – can be linked in this sense to the figure of the *Girl Reading a Letter*.

Next, independent paintings conservator Caroline van der Elst presented a case study of the restoration of *The Crucifixion* (ca. 1425) by the Master of the Lamentation of Lindau, in the collection of Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht. During the recent restoration, it was discovered that the blue (azurite) background was originally gold - the overpaint was applied in the sixteenth century. This prompted the question whether this layer should be irreversibly removed, as it is not part of the original appearance, or if it should be maintained as a part of the panel's history. A decision is yet to be made. She also discussed considerations such as how much blood drops, now covered by the blue overpaint, to repaint.

Lastly, Anne van Oosterwijk, Director of Collections at Musea Brugge, shared the restoration process of the Bruges masterpiece *The Death of the Virgin* (ca. 1440-1482) by Hugo van der Goes. This painting was thoroughly researched and restored in preparation for the exhibition *Face to Face with Death*, in which it was the focal object. After removing the varnish and patches of old glue and dirt, the restorer removed old overpaint. This uncovered remnants of a curtain in the upper left and bottom right corners, which have now been reconstructed. It indicates the scene may once have been enclosed by a canopy with curtains, although this remains uncertain, as the panel was once trimmed down on two sides.

The Q&A and discussion was skillfully moderated by Manfred Sellink, chair of the Friends of CODART Foundation and director of MSK Gent. A remark by Bob Haboldt, longtime Patron of CODART, made clear these issues are not exclusively relevant to curators and museums, but art dealers, too, have to deal with these complicated questions regarding restoration, unfortunately often without the teams of experts that museums turn to for advice.



Manfred Sellink, Caroline van der Elst, Uta Neidhardt and Anne van Oosterwijk at the Patrons Salon

### Friends of CODART Curators Stipend via the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund

To mark CODART's 25th anniversary, in 2023 the Friends of CODART Foundation finances one Curators Stipend via the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund. This €25.000 stipend allows a museum to hire a junior curator for the duration of six months, in which the senior curator can devote him or herself to research, or can receive support from the junior in another project. At the same time, a junior curator is enabled to gain experience working in a museum. A win-win situation! The deadline for application was 1 July. In September the Advisory Committee of the Culture Fund will convene to discuss all proposals and a grantee will be announced in the fall. To be continued!

### Coffee with a Curator - Vermeer

Anticipating the great Vermeer exhibition, in the fall of 2022 we hosted two *Coffee with a Curator* sessions focusing on the artist. Pieter Roelofs of the Rijksmuseum spoke about the preparations for the blockbuster show, and Alexandra Libby of the National Gallery of Art in Washington shared the story and research behind the de-attribution of the museum's *Girl with a Flute*.

All recordings of *Coffee with a Curator* are available for viewing at [vimeo.com/showcase/8855172](https://vimeo.com/showcase/8855172) and the password 'friends'.

### Changes on the board

In March, the Board of the Friends of CODART Foundation appointed Bas van Rhijn as a new board member. He succeeds Michiel Scherpenhuijsen Rom, who had served as secretary-treasurer since 2020. We thank Michiel for his valuable efforts in the last few years and look forward to working with Bas.

## CODART Calendar

2023

6 October

**CODART Anniversary Symposium, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam**

Public symposium in celebration of CODART's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, addressing the theme '*The Curator of the Future*'

24 October

**CODART Anniversary Dinner for Patrons, Museum Bredius, The Hague**

23 November

**Friends Afternoon at PAN Amsterdam**

2024

28 January

**BRAFA Day for Friends**

9 March

**Patrons Salon at TEFAF Maastricht**

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

16-18 June

**CODART 25 congress Stockholm**

The congress is organized in conjunction with the Nationalmuseum. A limited number of places is available for Patrons and Business Sponsors

Please consult [www.codart.nl](http://www.codart.nl) for up-to-date information about CODART events.

# CODART Friends

## Patrons for Life

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The Weiss Gallery  
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Ineke Wolf

## Donors

A full list of Donors is available on our website:  
[www.codart.nl/friends](http://www.codart.nl/friends)

## Business Sponsors

BRAFA Art Fair  
Nicholas Hall  
Galerie Lowet de Wotrenge, Antwerpen  
Salomon Lilian Dutch Old Master Paintings  
Sotheby's  
TEFAF (The European Fine Arts Fair)  
Tomasso

## These museums support CODART as institutional member:

Amsterdam Museum | Centraal Museum, Utrecht |  
Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht | Drents Museum, Assen  
| Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris | Frans  
Hals Museum, Haarlem | Fries Museum, Leeuwarden |  
Glasgow Museums | Groninger Museum, Groningen |  
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Museum, Los Angeles | King Baudouin Foundation,  
Brussels | Kunsthaus, Zürich | Kunsthistorisches  
Museum, Vienna | Mauritshuis, The Hague |  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York | M Leuven |  
Musea Brugge | Musée National d'Historie et d'Art,  
Luxembourg | Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen,  
Rotterdam | Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht |  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston | Museum Hof van  
Busleyden, Mechelen | Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden |  
Museum Prinsenhof, Delft | Museum Het  
Rembrandthuis, Amsterdam | Museum Het Valkhof,  
Nijmegen | Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Gent |  
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Oude Kerk, Amsterdam | Patrimonio Nacional |  
Philadelphia Museum of Art | Prentenkabinet  
Universiteit Leiden | Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam |  
Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede | Royal Łazienki  
Museum, Warsaw | Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels |  
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Museum Schwerin | Städel Museum, Frankfurt | Het  
Scheepvaartmuseum, Amsterdam | Stedelijk Museum  
Alkmaar | Stedelijk Museum, Breda | Szépművészeti  
Múzeum, Budapest | Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam |  
Vlaamse Kunstcollectie | Wadsworth Atheneum  
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## Board of the Friends of CODART Foundation

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