Tracing the artist's intent

Combining micro- and macroscopic analysis with art technological sources to study 17th-century paintings

De Keyser, N.

Publication date
2025

Tracing the Artist's Intent

Combining Micro- and Macroscopic Analysis with Art Technological Sources to Study 17th-Century Paintings

Nouchka De Keyser

TRACING THE ARTIST'S INTENT

Combining Micro- and Macroscopic Analysis with Art Technological Sources to Study 17th-Century Paintings

Nouchka De Keyser

Tracing the Artist´s Intent: Combining Micro- and Macroscopic Analysis with Art Technological Sources to Study 17th-Century Paintings

Nouchka De Keyser

UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

Universiteit Antwerpen

'De doctoraatsonderzoeker en promotor(en) verklaren dat het doctoraatsonderzoek werd uitgevoerd volgens de principes van de wetenschappelijke integriteit, zoals vermeld in het algemeen doctoraatsreglement en algemeen charter van de doctorandus van UAntwerpen en het integriteitscharter voor doctorandi en promotoren verbonden aan de Universiteit Antwerpen.'

ISBN: 978-94-6496-407-3

Cover design & Lay-out: Nouchka De Keyser

The cover image was designed using two images: Philippe de Champaigne's *Still-Life with a Skull* (c. 1671) and Pierre Joseph Redouté's Rosa foetida, (syn. Rosa eglanteria) from "Les Roses", Volume III, 1835.

Tracing the Artist´s Intent: Combining Micro- and Macroscopic Analysis with Art Technological Sources to Study 17th-Century Paintings

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. ir. P.P.C.C. Verbeek
ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde commissie,
in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Aula der Universiteit
op donderdag 12 juni 2025, te 14.00 uur

door Nouchka De Keyser
geboren te Deinze

Promotiecommissie

Promotores:	prof. dr. K. Keune	Universiteit van Amsterdam
	prof. dr. K.H.A. Janssens	Universiteit Antwerpen
Copromotores:	prof. dr. G. Van der Snickt	Universiteit Antwerpen
	prof. dr. H.H.M. Hermens	University of Cambridge
Overige leden:	prof. dr. A. Wallert	Universiteit van Amsterdam
	prof. dr. M.R. van Bommel	Universiteit van Amsterdam
	prof. dr. F. Grijzenhout	Universiteit van Amsterdam
	prof. dr. J.C. Tummers	Universiteit Gent
	prof. dr. D. Schryvers	Universiteit Antwerpen
	dr. S. Saverwyns	KIK-IRPA

Faculteit der Natuurwetenschappen, Wiskunde en Informatica

Dit proefschrift is tot stand gekomen binnen een samenwerkingsverband tussen de Universiteit van Amsterdam en de Universiteit Antwerpen met als doel het behalen van een gezamenlijk doctoraat. Het proefschrift is voorbereid aan de Faculteit der Natuurwetenschappen, Wiskunde en Informatica van de Universiteit van Amsterdam en aan de Faculteit Wetenschappen van de Universiteit Antwerpen.

This thesis was prepared within the partnership between the University of Amsterdam and University of Antwerp with the purpose of obtaining a joint doctorate degree. The thesis was prepared in the Faculty of Science of the University of Amsterdam and in the Faculty of Science of University of Antwerp.

“Notwithstanding the deep-rooted notion, even among the majority of painters themselves, that time is a great improver of good pictures, I will undertake to shew, that nothing can be more absurd.

Having mention'd above the whole effect of the oil, let us now see in what manner time operates on colours themselves; in order to discover if any changes in them can give a picture more union and harmony than has been in the power of a skilful master, with all his rules of art, to do.

When colours change at all it must be somewhat in the manner following, for as they are made some of metal, some of earth, some of stone, and others of more perishable materials, time cannot operate on them otherwise than as by daily experience we find it doth, which is, that one changes darker, another lighter, one quite to a different colour, whilst another, as ultramarine, will keep its natural brightness even in the fire.

Therefore how is it possible that such different materials, ever variously changing (visibly after a certain time) should accidentally coincide with the artist's intention, and bring about the greater harmony of the piece, when it is manifestly contrary to their nature,

for do we not see in most collections that much time disunites, untunes, blackens, and by degrees destroys even the best preserved pictures.”[1]

[1]William Hogharth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 1753, p 118-119.

Contents