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Introduction

The last hundred years have seen an enormous increase in interest in still-life paintings from the Northern and Southern Netherlands from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many publications dealing with, or touching upon the subject have seen the light, both scholarly and popular. General esteem and market prices for such paintings have risen substantially and they can count on a steady interest, particularly for visually attractive sub-categories such as flower and fruit still lifes.

An early exhibition on the general subject of still-life painting was held in The Hague in 1926, featuring almost a hundred seventeenth-century examples, and accompanied by a substantial essay 'Het Nederlandsch Stilleven', by Gerhardus Knuttel.[1] Ralph Warner's *Dutch and Flemish Flower and Fruit Painters of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*, published in 1928, a compilation of annotated illustrations of still-life paintings, was another early sign of upcoming interest in the subject, followed by the Brussels exhibition *La Nature-Morte Hollandaise* in 1929, with an introduction by Eugenia Zarnowska.[2] 1933 saw a monster exhibition of over 350 still lifes from past to (then) present at the Goudstikker gallery in Amsterdam.[3] In the same year, Alphons Vorenkamp's dissertation *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van het Hollandsch stilleven in de zeventiende eeuw* appeared.[4] Nico Vroom, in 1945, published his doctoral dissertation *De schilders van het monochrome banketje,* on the (mainly) Haarlem 'banquet' still life, a book which he elaborated upon in 1980.[5]

Ingvar Bergström's dissertation *Studier i Holländskt Stillebenmåleri under 1600-talet*, from 1947, which came out in an English translation in 1956 as *Dutch Still-Life Painting in the Seventeenth Century* provided a first – and still useful – properly illustrated overview of the Dutch production of still lifes of the Golden Age.[6] In the previous year, 1955, Marie-Louise Hairs had published her *Les peintres flamands de fleurs au XVIIe siècle*, and also in 1956, Edith Greindl's *Les peintres flamands de nature morte au XVIIe siècle* appeared.[7] Bergström's book saw a reprint in 1983 (a 'pirate edition' according to the author), of Hairs' study revised editions appeared in 1965 and 1985 and Greindl published a revised edition of hers in 1983.[8] Laurens Bol made valuable contributions to the field in his overviews of Dutch seventeenth-century paintings by lesser known masters, in various exhibitions in his Dordrechts Museum, and in a series of articles, resulting in monographic books, such as those on what he termed 'The Bosschaert Dynasty' and on Adriaen Coorte.[9]

In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, many smaller and larger exhibitions were held that focused on (an aspect of) still-life painting, culminating in the encyclopedic exhibition *Stillleben in Europa* in Münster and Baden-Baden in 1979-1980, which was accompanied by a hefty book of essays, lavishly illustrated, be it mainly in black-and-white, and without a catalogue proper of the exhibited works.[10]

In the last two decades of the twentieth century, a series of exhibitions in the Netherlands, partly with venues abroad, was curated by Sam Segal, initially in collaboration with the art dealer P. de Boer in Amsterdam, on floral still lifes, fruit still lifes, on the 'sumptuous' still life, and again on floral still lifes, the latter only shown in Japan and Australia.[11] In 1988, Claus Grimm compiled his lavishly illustrated *Stillleben. Die niederländischen und deutschen Meister*.[12] Paul Taylor's important contribution to still-life history, *Dutch Flower Painting 1600-1720* was published in 1995.[13] The year 1999 saw a major overview of seventeenth-century Dutch still-life painting in the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum and in the Cleveland Museum of Art, and in 2002 a large exhibition was devoted to Flemish still-life paintings from the seventeenth century in Vienna and Essen.[14] Also, various museums published catalogues of their holdings of Dutch and Flemish still-life paintings, such as Rotterdam, Kassel, Oxford, Schwerin, and Budapest.[15] In 2003, a dictionary of Dutch and Flemish-still-

life painters was published, and in the course of the last three decades, several monographs on still-life painters saw the light, such as on Alexander Adriaenssens, Pieter Claesz., Willem Kalf, Abraham Mignon, Clara Peeters, and (early) Rachel Ruysch.[16] Some artists had monographic exhibitions devoted to their work, such as Willem van Aelst, again Pieter Claesz., again Adriaen Coorte, and again Willem Kalf and most recently Abraham van Calraet.[17] At the time of wrapping up this study, a monographic exhibition on Balthasar van der Ast, to be held in Aachen in 2016, is in preparation.
In the majority of these publications, the work of Jan Davidsz. de Heem plays a role, small or large. In the art-historical literature, going as far back as Cornelis de Bie's *Gulden cabinet* of 1661, he is featured as a highly important artist. De Bie devoted some four pages to de Heem.[18] He praised his sumptuousness and verisimilitude, as well as the guidance he gave to his son Cornelis to become almost as good a painter as his father. De Bie claimed that '… de snelle Faem […] Die singht gedurichlijck met seer soete stem / De gantse werelt door alleenlijck van de *Heem*'(quick fame … sings continuously in a very sweet voice through all the world only of de Heem). Joachim von Sandrart, in 1675, also called him 'Der berühmte Künstler Johann de Heem' (the famous artist) and states 'daß er hierinnen/ wie männiglich bekant/ in Niderland alle andere weit übertroffen/ und dadurch größes Lob/ Ehr und Ru(m?)en erhalten hat.' (that in this [painting flowers and other still-life motifs], as is well known, he has surpassed all others in the Netherlands by far, and through this has gained much praise, honour, and fame).[19] Samuel van Hoogstraten, in his *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst* from 1678, clearly also considered de Heem top-of-the-bill in the field of still-life painting, even though 'hoe overaerdig eenige bloemen, vruchten, of andere stillevens, gelijk wy 't noemen, geschildert zijn, deeze Schilderyen evenwel niet hooger, als in den eersten graed der konstwerken moogen gestelt worden; al waeren ze zelfs van *de Heem, pater Zegers*, jae *Zeuxis* en *Parrasius*, tot bedriegens toe uitgevoert.' (how very beautiful some flowers, fruit, or other still lifes, as we call this, are painted, those paintings, nevertheless, cannot be rated higher than in the first [= lowest] degree of works of art; even if they were executed by de Heem, father Zegers [Daniel Seghers], or even Zeuxis of Parrasius, to the degree of deception).[20] Van Hoogstraten also quoted de Heem: "Wegens de maeticheyt zoo zal ik u vooreerst raden, dat gy uw werk niet te zeer met onnodige dingen overlast: want *Niet hoe veel*, *maer hoe eel*, schreef de *Heem*. Een menichte van beelden, die geen werk doen, is walchelijk." (Concerning temperance, I will advise you first not to overburden your work with unnecessary things: because *Not how much, but how noble*, wrote de Heem. A multitude of things [or: figures] that have no function is revolting).[21] Arnold Houbraken, in 1718, wrote that de Heem's 'art-sun' (*Konstzon*), once it had risen above the horizon, never went down.[22] He sings de Heem's praise for several pages, but his factual information on the artist is not always fully reliable, as was already signalled in 1729 by Jacob Campo Weyerman, who himself also devoted several pages of his *De Levens-beschrijvingen der Nederlandse Konst-schilders en Konst-schilderessen* to Jan Davidsz. de Heem.[23]

In the art-historical literature of the following centuries, Jan Davidsz. de Heem is often mentioned as a significant source of inspiration for still-life painters, not only in the Netherlands, but also abroad. Already at an early stage, he sold his work internationally and the fact that he worked alternately in the North and in the South Netherlands and found patrons in Antwerp and Amsterdam, among other cities, largely added to his renown.

A monograph and critical oeuvre catalogue on Jan Davidsz. de Heem, who can indeed safely be said to have been one of the leading artists of his time, and long after, in the field of still-life painting, was long overdue. In 1990, the Centraal Museum in Utrecht and the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum in

Brauschweig staged an exhibition titled *Jan Davidsz de Heem en zijn kring / Jan Davidsz de Heem und sein Kreis* (Jan Davidsz. de Heem and his circle). The catalogue of that exhibition was written by Sam Segal, assisted by Utrecht curator Liesbeth Helmus, who contributed mainly to the biographies of the artist, of his sons Cornelis and Jan, and of his grandson David Cornelisz. de Heem. The exhibition included 32 paintings (as) by Jan Davidsz. de Heem, one as a copy after Jan Dz. de Heem, three by Cornelis de Heem, two (including one ex-catalogue) (as) by Jan Jansz. de Heem, two (as) by David de Heem, as well as works by (or attributed to) eleven other painters, a total of 52 paintings.[24] When initiated, the theme of the exhibition was to be the *pronkstilleven* or 'showy still life', but upon Segal's initiative the theme was bent to Jan Davidsz. de Heem and his circle. Incidentally, in my own writing, I abstain from using the term 'pronkstilleven', and the English derivative 'pronk still life', I completely reject.[25] The exhibition in Utrecht and Braunschweig provided the opportunity to study an unprecedented number of works by de Heem and related still life paintings in one place. It was the result of many years of Segal's research on still-life paintings, but the show had been put together at rather short notice. While on the one hand it pretended to be *the* exhibition on de Heem and his circle, Segal also indicated that it was work in progress.[26] While I do not always share Segal's conclusions, I am indebted to the published results of the research he has undertaken.

Jan Davidsz. de Heem was a very versatile artist, who tackled a variety of still-life subjects and motifs and whose style and handling did not cease to develop throughout his career. He trained several pupils, among them his son Cornelis, and attracted a large group of followers and imitators, several of whom produced work of high quality. Over the centuries, de Heem's work was always considered among the best in its genre, and as a result, already early on, paintings by pupils, followers, and copyists were catalogued and marketed as his work, knowingly – for financial gain – or erroneously. This has led to considerable confusion concerning the authorship of many of these works and resulted in a substantially blurred image of Jan Davidsz. de Heem's own oeuvre. Art-historical photo archives such as the Witt Library in London, the Frick Art Reference Library in New York City and, in any case up to the nineteen-eighties, the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD) in The Hague, my home base for the past 35 years, bear witness to this muddle. Already in 1986, I decided that in-depth study and analysis of de Heem's oeuvre was necessary in order to obtain a clear view of the artist's production and development. The aim of my research has been to critically analyse and describe the oeuvre of Jan Davidsz. de Heem in the context of his life and his connections, as well as in the greater scope of the art of still-life painting in the North and South Netherlands during the period of his activity, which spans the full middle five decades of the seventeenth century: de Heem's earliest known painting stems from 1626, when he was 20 years old, and he was probably active until shortly before his death at age 77 in February of 1684, but certainly until the late 1670s. I have decided to present de Heem's oeuvre in chronological order, which should not only allow to follow the artist's artistic and technical development, but also to show how he responded to works by other artists, and how others responded to his paintings

The present study is the result of many years of collecting and analysing photographs and data and of studying as many as possible of the Jan David de Heem's paintings in person. By the time of writing this, I have had the opportunity to personally inspect more than 75% of the currently known and accepted paintings by Jan Davidsz. de Heem that are included in the catalogue raisonné of his works that accompanies this study. Over the years of my research, I have already published several shorter essays on de Heem and (aspects of) his work, as well as various entries on paintings by him for museum and exhibition catalogues.[27]

Not many paintings by Jan Davidsz. de Heem have been submitted to technical analysis.[28] I have not initiated technical research, but I have made use of what was or became available and the condition, state of preservation as well as the results of interventions in the paintings over time have weighed substantially in my assessment of them. Jan Davidsz. de Heem's style and technique developed and changed continuously and they have been an important guideline in the analysis and discussion of the works.

This study consists of two main parts, which themselves have been divided into chapters. The first and smallest part consists of two chapters, in which Jan Davidsz. de Heem's name and effigies are discussed, and in which his biography is laid out. As an aid, particularly in connection with the biography, an appendix (Appendix 1) has been included in which, in chronological order, the various documents and archival references pertaining to the life of Jan Davidsz. de Heem are listed and described, and in part have been transcribed. Appendix 2 lists and illustrates, again in chronological order, some 60 signatures of the artist, taken from paintings as well as from documents, showing a distinct development.

In the second and most substantial part, all the 270 currently known paintings (and one drawing) by Jan Davidsz. de Heem are analysed and discussed, as far as possible in chronological order. This was instigated by the fact that it appeared to be possible to reconstruct a distinct chronology for de Heem's oeuvre, at least up to 1655. In-depth analysis of style, handling and contents of the paintings in immediate relationship to and interdependence with other works within the oeuvre, as well as analysis of their relationship to works by artists from de Heem's (close and wider) circle have resulted in a clear picture of the development of de Heem's oeuvre. Such a detailed approach, which, as far as I know, is unprecedented will hopefully be insightful to the users of this study and inspire compilers of future monographs to analyse the interdependence of the paintings they are studying when tracing developments in an artist's oeuvre. The four main chapters follow the four subsequent locations of activity of the artist, Utrecht, Leiden and (probably) Amsterdam (1625-1635), Antwerp (1636-1658), Utrecht (1658-1672), and again Antwerp (1672-1683). The first three cities have been retained within one chapter, as the artist did not produce any known work in early years in Utrecht, and his Amsterdam sojourn still remains hypothetical. This first chapter opens with a brief overview of still-life painting in the Netherlands before 1626, in which year Jan Davidsz. de Heem painted his first extant still lifes.

Directly connected with this discussion are the catalogues (Catalogue A, D and D R) of the known paintings I accept as works by de Heem, of the one accepted drawing by de Heem, and of the rejected drawings. In the near future, I hope to publish this study with additional catalogues of paintings that I reject as de Heem's work, lost or missing paintings (known from descriptions or via copies only) and of paintings that are otherwise closely related to de Heem's paintings, if not uncertain attributions.[29] Over time, I have succeeded to identify, with some degree of certainty, several paintings from old references such as inventories and auction catalogues, with existing works. The problem with such references to still life paintings is that the works are often described only superficially, that data concerning measurements and support are incomplete or missing, and that data such as signatures and dates are often not provided, which unfortunately leaves the paintings in hundreds of such references permanently unidentified.[30]

In the catalogues included here, physical data of the works are provided, together with the available data on their history, exhibitions, and literature references, all of which I have tried to provide as completely as possible. Literature and exhibitions are given in abbreviated form, full titles,

authors, and places and dates of publication are listed in the bibliography. The size of the images of the paintings in the catalogue is relative to the measurements of the paintings (1:10, with the exception of a few extremely large works, which are slightly reduced), so that the reader gets an immediate impression of the scale of the work. At the end of this study, a third Appendix, 'Images only' has been included in which all the paintings are shown in the same order as in catalogue A (= chronologically) and in relative sizes for quick reference, as a visual index of de Heem's work. An important deficit of most art-historical literature, to my mind, is that works of art are usually illustrated in juxtaposition without any respect for their relative scales. Images in my texts also follow the principle of scale relationship, but have been restricted to a minimum height of five centimetres and a maximum height of eight centimetres.[31] All the paintings and the drawing from the catalogues are also illustrated in the text.

In the concluding observations, next to a summary observation of de Heem's painting career, I also pay attention to aspects such as patrons, contemporary prices for his work, technical aspects, and studio practice.