

## Note

Christi M. Klinkert and Yvonne Bleyerveld (eds.). *Caesar van Everdingen (1616/1617-1678). Schilder met een vleiend penseel*, Zwolle, Waanders & De Kunst, Alkmaar, Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar, 2016. 208 pp. ISBN 978-94-6262-093-3 (Dutch), 978-94-6262-108-4 (English).



The artist Caesar van Everdingen occupies a strong position in the present-day canon of Dutch art. His contributions to the magnificent Oranjezaal in Huis ten Bosch saved him from oblivion anyhow while other works *hors catégorie*, notably the painted organ shutters in Alkmaar's Grote Kerk, also helped to keep his memory alive. His fame with the general public was only nurtured in more recent times, with the Rijksmuseum's purchase of an allegory of winter in 1991 as an important milestone. The presence of many works by Van Everdingen's hand in the 1999 show on Dutch Classicism held in Rotterdam and Frankfurt kept the torch burning while another recent acquisition by the Rijksmuseum of *A Woman with a Broad Brimmed Hat* in 2009 gave fresh

impetus to interest in the artist.

Van Everdingen received his scholarly due in the catalogue of the aforementioned classicism exhibition, followed in 2002 by Paul Huys Janssen's monograph with catalogue raisonné. Although a monument, such a book is for specialists and not the final word. The Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar is not only the most appropriate place to honour the artist before a broader audience, an exhibition is a rare interactive opportunity to address unsolved problems and put the limelight on lesser studied parts of the artist's oeuvre. The publication under discussion is the fruit of that collaborative effort.

The team gathered up to provide the texts for this book is a choice company of all the right scholars with Christi Klinkert, the museum's curator, and Yvonne Bleyerveld as editors at the helm. The concept of the exhibition and book is Van Everdingen as a classicist artist, focussing on his idealizing style and his smooth painting technique. The other

themes are harmoniously grouped around this central idea in such a way that the book becomes a comprehensive, multifaceted monograph.

The first part consists of four essays with one or two shorter notes appended to each of them that offer a closer view on a specific aspect of the topic dealt with in the essay or putting it in context. Klinkert wrote the essay on the artist's life, career and critical reception, and devoted a short piece to Caesar's brother Allart, the landscapist. A short note by Quentin Buvelot elaborates on Everdingen's connection with the architect Jacob van Campen. Jeroen Giltaij's essay discusses Van Everdingen as part of the development of classicizing figure painting in the Netherlands and the restorer Lidwien Speleers contributed a text on the artist's paintings for the Oranjezaal. The essay on the portraits is by Rudi Ekkart with a short note on headgear in Caesar's work by Sabine Craft-Giepmans. A long essay on Van Everdingen's use of materials and technique is written by the restorer Caroline van der Elst. Two smaller texts by her are case studies and contain some new insights resulting from the recent restoration of two civic guard company portraits.

The second part is the catalogue in which the exhibits are discussed in short entries. The authors include a host of scholars, the foremost of them being Albert Blankert, the Nestor of classicist Dutch art, the already mentioned specialist on Van Everdingen Paul Huys Janssen, and Gregor Weber, Head of Fine and Decorative Arts of the Rijksmuseum. This squadron of scholars effectively lead by Klinkert and Bleyerveld has covered new terrain, especially concerning Van Everdingen's working methods.

Still, there are questions to answer: how can we account for the fact that the artist's preserved output is so small – a meagre sixty paintings and one drawing – in view of his long career spanning more than four decades, while his estate inventory lists about 70 paintings, the majority by his own hand? A project such as this, on an artist who painted quite a few portraits, would have benefitted from the structural involvement of a costume historian. Small errors would have been avoided. For instance, Buvelot dates a man's portrait (cat. 30) to 1665-70 on dress historical arguments, comparing it to a 1666 dated man's portrait by Karel Dujardin in the Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum. However, in keeping with the fashion of the late 1660s Dujardin's sitter wears a much shorter doublet displaying a much larger portion of his white linen shirt and his collar is a later folded type with different and typical patterns in the lace trimming. Van Everdingen's portrait is to be dated to the late 1650s on the basis of the dress, in particular the collar, cuffs, the patterns in the lace and his silhouette.

The book is richly illustrated and the images are of superb quality. The design is beautiful and thought-through, although the sans serif font will not be to everyone's liking. The editors deserve to be praised for producing a book that is both a scholarly contribution and digestible for a larger audience. In a time when museum directors are prone to dumb down the public instead of enlighten it, this publication will hopefully set a standard in the genre.

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