

“Les regards dards”: Werner van den Valckert’s *Venus and Cupid*¹

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One of Werner van den Valckert’s most engaging paintings, *Venus and Cupid* (Fig. 1), turned up recently on the art market and was sold in 2005 to a collector in the United States.² It is the kind of painting Michael Montias would have loved to possess. I vividly remember Michael’s expression of heightened interest (especially his twinkling eyes) when I explained to him – it must have been in the early eighties – my ideas on how artists structured the viewer’s involvement in many paintings of female nudes in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century.

In the late sixteenth century and the first decades of the seventeenth century, numerous paintings and prints portraying Venus and Cupid were produced in the towns of Holland. However, Werner van den Valckert’s painting of this subject is in many respects different from those painted, drawn, or engraved by such artists as Hendrick Goltzius, Cornelis van Haarlem, Joachim Wtewael, and Jacques de Gheyn II. Those artists were of an older generation, but they were all active in the period in which Van den Valckert painted his *Venus and Cupid*. Several motifs attract our attention immediately in Van den Valckert’s painting: his Venus directly addresses the viewer with an inviting look; she removes for us the clothing that covered her body, a body that does not represent a stylized ideal but seems to have been studied from life and is more voluptuous than usual for this period; and Cupid is about to shoot his arrow at the beholder who enjoys this nude image of Venus. These motifs, which in combination deviate from the usual depictions of Venus, demonstrate Van den Valckert’s ambition to depict this highly traditional subject in an innovative and unexpected way, and to involve the viewer as much as possible.

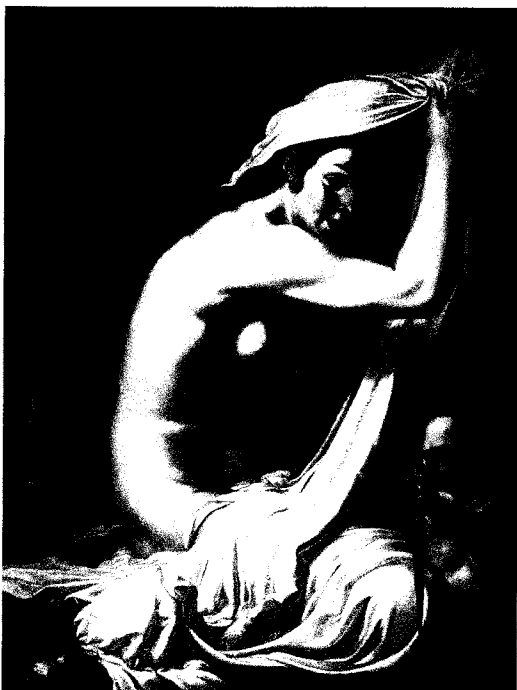


Fig. 1. Werner van den Valckert, *Venus and Cupid*, 1612-14, oil on canvas. United States, Private Collection.

The Pictorial Tradition of Van den Valckert's Venuses

Van den Valckert's *Venus and Cupid* bears no date, but it is probably one of the earliest paintings we know by his hand. This would mean that the artist, who was born, raised, and married in The Hague, and settled in Amsterdam as of 1613, may have painted this panel when still living in the town of his birth, or just after his move to Amsterdam.³ Van den Valckert became an independent master sometime between 1600 and 1605, but his earliest dated works, all of them etchings, bear the date of 1612.⁴ One of these shows a *Sleeping Venus Spied Upon by Two Satyrs* (Fig. 2).⁵ This etching is probably based on a now-lost painting, a picture that would have shared some similarities with our *Venus*, thus suggesting an approximate date. In both works, the shape of the female body is indicated by a sharp outline of the back and hip against a dark background, Venus' side is strongly lit, while the front of her torso is in shadow, and an undulating line that defines the transition from light to dark models her upper body. Other similar elements are these: one of her breasts catches the light, while the other remains in shadow; a strikingly sharp line, dividing light and shade, runs from the ridge of the nose to the eyebrow; a rather deep shadow indicates the rounding of the cheek, suggesting a smile. And



Fig. 2. Werner van den Valckert, *Sleeping Venus Spied Upon by Two Satyrs*, 1612, etching.

finally, both depict the goddess with a similarly voluptuous and somewhat stocky build. In the only other female nude by Van den Valckert known to us, an *Amphitrite* dated 1619, we encounter a very different way of modeling the body, further indicating a dating of around 1612-14 for our *Venus*.⁶

The print of the *Sleeping Venus Spied Upon by Satyrs* – and its likely painted model – might have been produced in competition with a then quite famous, but now lost, work by Jacques de Gheyn II. Van Mander mentioned in 1604 that De Gheyn had just made a painting of “The Sleeping Venus...a life-size figure with a sleeping Cupid lying next to her. At her feet there are two satyrs one of whom timidly ventures to lift up a thin cloth, which covers her lap, or pudendum.”⁷ This could be an indication that Van den Valckert studied under De Gheyn and that this invention is an example of the ambitious pupil aspiring to emulate his renowned master, just as Rembrandt would do with Pieter Lastman one decade later.⁸ The theme of a reclining sleeping nude and one, or two satyrs, who often lift fabric from the woman's almost completely naked body, is often traced to Venice.⁹ The many precedents of a reclining sleeping nude and a spying man include, notably, three engravings by Jacob Matham and two by Agostino Carracci from his famous *Lascivie* series.¹⁰ A comparison of Van den Valckert's print with these prece-

dents indicates his familiarity with the erotic images that were disseminated at that time and reveals his up-to-date interest in prints of the Carracci family.¹¹

Despite generic similarities with such prints, closer comparison reveals Van den Valckert's reliance on a different type of nude than depicted in these prototypes. Instead of the graceful and relatively slender physique of the women in the above-mentioned prints, Van den Valckert consciously chose a heavier and more solid physical type, with larger breasts and more prominent stomach. A similar body type can be found in an etching by Annibale Carracci representing *Jupiter in the Guise of a Satyr Approaching the Sleeping Antiope*.¹² Van den Valckert seems to have been in search of a type of female nude that would completely break away from the stylized mannerist nudes of the previous decades. Hendrick Goltzius also sought such a nude in his late paintings, as we see in his version of *Jupiter Approaching the Sleeping Antiope*, produced in the same year as Van den Valckert's etching.¹³ It seems to me that this painting was Goltzius' response to the etched invention by Van den Valckert (and possibly the painting by Jacques de Gheyn no longer known to us).

As with his *Sleeping Venus*, in the case of the *Venus and Cupid* (Fig. 1) one may also wonder if Van den Valckert was emulating a painting by De Gheyn, since it clearly relates to a work of around 1604 with the same subject by this master, which was probably owned by Prince Maurits (Fig. 3).¹⁴ This life-size Venus, too, addresses us directly with a slight smile while Cupid is drawing his bow. A remarkably similar feature is the sharp, uninterrupted line from the ridge of the nose to the eyebrow. However, Van den Valckert's Venus has strikingly different anatomical proportions, and apart from the figure of Cupid, she is without the usual attributes of roses, doves, burning heart, apple, pearls around her neck, or embroidered girdle. Van den Valckert's Venus is, above all, a young woman undressing. This is emphasized by the act of her removing, not a generic "classical" drapery, but a white chemise, clearly defined as such by the lace cuff on the sleeve; later Rembrandt employed the same device in many of his depictions of nudes. Such a detail, combined with the fact that she is sitting on a rumpled bed littered with soft cushions and discarded clothing, certainly brings her closer to the world of the viewer than any of the other images of Venus by Van den Valckert's contemporaries. Also the scraps of paper scattered behind her, one of which bears the artist's signature and some other words now illegible,¹⁵ recall little love notes. This seems a far cry from the world of an Olympian goddess.

Van den Valckert would have been very familiar with the many engravings of *Venus and Cupid* after the inventions of Hendrick Goltzius, which were engraved between about 1585 and 1612 by Goltzius himself or, more often, by Jan Saenredam and Jacob Matham (Fig. 4).¹⁶ For any young artist setting



Fig. 3. Jacques de Gheyn II, *Venus and Cupid*, probably 1604, oil on canvas. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

out to depict mythological and religious themes, Goltzius must have been an awe-inspiring figure; his prints offered artists numerous examples to emulate and surpass. To amateurs and connoisseurs as well, his compositions must have served as benchmarks for many subjects. In Goltzius' numerous inventions of *Venus and Cupid* – some showing the figures in full-length, but most in half-length – Venus usually holds an apple, or a burning heart and is surrounded by several standard attributes. Goltzius presented his Venuses as totally naked beauties with only some undefined draperies fluttering around their shoulders and pudenda. These images show a distinct development in Goltzius' idealization of the female body. After his return from Italy, and especially in the early 1600s, the elongated figural type of the 1580s – displaying a small head, long neck, small breasts, elongated diaphragm, rather narrow hips, long legs, and quite pronounced muscles – gives way to proportions that are both more natural and more classical. In a *Venus and Cupid* engraved by Jacob Matham in 1612, we see how the rather distinct and unfeminine musculature of the earlier nudes has disappeared and how much care has been given to the smooth modeling of the torso, suggesting a softness of the body, while the hips and stomach are more emphatic (Fig. 4). The distance between the breasts and navel, however, remains unnaturally long; in several respects Goltz-



Fig. 4. Jacob Matham after Hendrick Goltzius, *Venus and Cupid*, 1612, engraving.

ius retained the stylized proportions that were quite different from the classical statues he drew in Rome.¹⁷

Van den Valckert's approach to his nudes diverges from that of Goltzius, and more emphatically differs from that of his contemporaries who favored smooth and stylized nudes, including Abraham Bloemaert, De Gheyn, and Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem.¹⁸ Van den Valckert's nudes convey a much stronger impression that they were observed from life. However, at the same time, Van den Valckert had a classical example in mind when he conceived his *Venus*. The profile view of the nude with light coming from behind, as well as the outline of her back and nape and the raised arm, show that he studied an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi of the so-called *Crouching Venus*, or *Venus Doidalsas* (Fig. 5).¹⁹ It was an inventive idea to raise the arm a bit more, so that the breasts appear completely in view, and to transform this gesture into a pose of removing her clothing. I assume that connoisseurs, who would have been familiar with this print by Raimondi after a famous antique statue of Venus (a variant of the so-called *pudica*-pose), appreciated this witty variation on the classical source. It presented observers with the opportunity to show off their pictorial knowledge and to recognize the "dis-similar similarity," to use the words of Franciscus Junius.²⁰ One recalls how

the slightly older, learned Rubens (for whom, incidentally, this *Crouching Venus* was a very important source of inspiration) often took classical sculpture as his point of departure. To breathe life into the venerable examples of Antiquity was a crucial element in Rubens' theory of selective imitation.²¹ Like Rubens, Werner van den Valckert did his utmost to present the body of Venus as life-like as possible. Little is left of the pronounced anatomy in which the muscles under the skin protrude, such as we see in Raimondi's print. Van den Valckert modeled Venus' body to suggest soft, flowing forms, delicately transforming Raimondi's solid folds of the stomach into soft creases of the skin. The subtle color and texture of her skin are emphasized through the contrast with the white linen sheet on her legs and the white chemise. Light reflected from the white sleeve hanging down from her hand serves to model the shadowed part of the torso: only the shiny pink nipples of her breasts stand out. To make the shape of the left breast visible against the dark background, part of the white chemise hangs behind it.

A New Manner

It is clear that Van den Valckert belongs to a generation of artists who emphatically distanced themselves from the artificial stylization of the former generation and for whom the suggestion of life-likeness seems to have been of



Fig. 5. Marcantonio Raimondi (after an antique statue), *Crouching Venus*, engraving.

paramount importance. The poet Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero, trained as a painter and of the same generation as Van den Valckert (who may even have portrayed the poet), referred to this trend in the art of painting in his introduction to the *Geestigh liedt-boecxken* (“The Witty Songbooklet”) of 1618.²² Bredero stated that he preferred the everyday, native Dutch idiom rather than the jargon used by learned writers, “for, as a painter, I have followed the *schilderachtig* saying [a saying common among painters] that ‘the best painters are those who come closest to life,’ not those who believe it is witty to strike attitudes alien to nature, to twist and bend limbs and bones, which they often elevate and contort too unreasonably, beyond the bounds of what is proper and fitting.”²³ As a matter of fact, it was only a few years earlier that the news of Caravaggio’s naturalism had first arrived in Holland: Karel van Mander reported in 1604 that the Italian painter – whose “fame, honor, and name” were already great – had said that anything not done from nature was a mere “bagatelle, child’s play, or trifle,” because one should only imitate life in all its diversity. Caravaggio never took up his brushes without having “life” before his eyes, Van Mander noted.²⁴ Van Mander, who must have heard this exciting piece of news from a local artist just back from Italy (in fact, this is the very first printed information on Caravaggio), added that this was all well and good, but first one had to learn to distinguish the most beautiful in nature. Thus it appears that Van Mander was still ambivalent about this extreme standpoint and found that both methods should be combined: working from nature and choosing the most beautiful through studying Antiquity and other artistic precedents.

Our painting of *Venus and Cupid* shows that Van den Valckert certainly studied antique models, but consciously transformed this classical heritage with a distinct naturalism. In other works by his hand, this naturalism could become quite uncompromising, as if he wanted his compositions to be as ungraceful and unstylized as possible. Long before the return from Rome of the Utrecht Caravaggisti, Van den Valckert seems deliberately to have followed a new ideology of strong naturalism, employing large-scale, narrowly framed figures that appear close to the picture plane. We even notice how, in this early work, he modeled the body with strong contrasts of light and dark, making it emerge dramatically from a dark background. Although it is unlikely that Van de Valckert had been in direct contact with the work of artists like Caravaggio and Annibale Carracci, he undoubtedly heard about the new style of painting that these much-discussed artists had introduced in Rome. He may even have seen drawings after their works, brought back by Amsterdam artists who had been in Rome.

Enson?

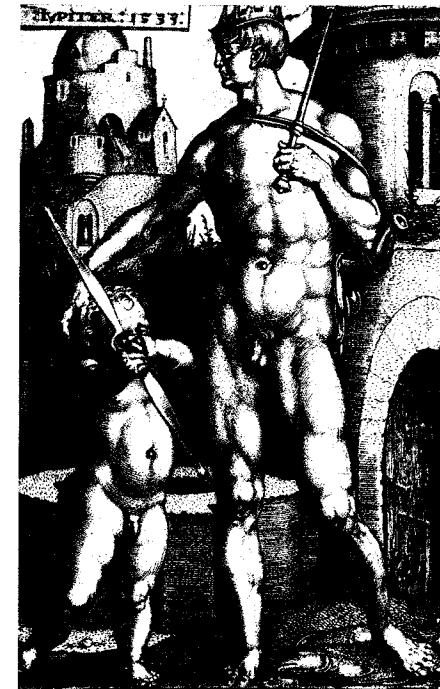


Fig. 6. Heinrich Aldegrever, *Jupiter and Cupid*, engraving.

Cupid’s Arrow

In contrast to the engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi after the Antique, Van den Valckert gave Venus’ head less pronounced a turn, so that we do not see her *en face*. He did, however, turn the head just enough to enable this auburn-haired Venus to ogle us with one large, shiny eye. By contrast, in the many Venus and Cupid inventions by Goltzius, Venus usually addresses her son, while he holds up one of his arrows. Although none of these prints shows Venus looking at the beholder,²⁵ this feature is present in the painting by De Gheyn II (Fig. 3). By combining her enticing glance at the viewer with Cupid’s pointing of his arrow at this same viewer, instead of holding up an arrow as he usually did, Van den Valckert invented a more seductive and interactive image of Venus.²⁶

By depicting Cupid with his drawn bow in this portrayal of *Venus and Cupid*, Van den Valckert introduced a device that had already been used, but in a different context. Shortly before, in a drawing of around 1610, Jacques de Gheyn had represented a young archer who, with the loving help of a milkmaid, aims his arrow directly at the viewer.²⁷ Van den Valckert would also have known a series of prints of the gods by Heinrich Aldegrever (Fig. 6), in which the king of the gods, Jupiter – so often Cupid’s victim and thus

the paragon of the notion that Cupid is, after all, the true master of the universe – is accompanied by Cupid aiming his arrow at us: *Amor vincit Omnia*.²⁸ (In this series, Venus is represented in the traditional way, while holding the hand of Cupid who looks up at her with bow in hand.)

By combining the frontal archer with a Venus eyeing us, Van den Valckert wittily illustrated the current belief that love flows in rays that come out of the eye and into the eye of another. This was considered a physiological reality: the gaze of a woman could send out a powerful force that entered through the eyes of the beloved, inflaming his heart. For instance, we can read in the Dutch translation of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* that Marsilio Ficino proves "How a fire shoots out of the eyes to the heart," after which follows a long account of how one should imagine this phenomenon, concluding with the words: "no wonder that an open eye, which is intensely aimed at someone, shoots arrows of rays from the eyes into the eyes of the one who looks at those eyes: which rays, shooting through the eyes of the other, penetrate the heart and makes him suffer;...they are wounded in the heart by the arrows issued from the other heart."²⁹ An emblem in Otto van Veen's famous *Amorum Emblemata* of 1608 shows arrows literally coming out of the eyes of a woman and striking the heart of an agonized young man (Fig. 7). The French motto expresses the conceit most wittily: "Les regards dards."³⁰ In Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft's wonderful booklet of love emblems, the *Emblemata Amatoria* of 1611, we read how these "arrows" are received: "A member that I care for, catches me in its snares / Which is the eye: through this wound the arrow hits my heart."³¹ That beauty incites love and lust by entering the body through the sense of sight, the highest but also most dangerous of the senses, was considered self-evident, which we find expressed in numerous variations on the workings of love since Antiquity. As Van Mander wrote: "One found the eyes to be the seat of desire," or in the more poetic words of Hooft: "You [the eye] are the mouth through which we taste beauty. / Love, as well as that sweet lust, which rescues / This mortal race from extinction, gets through you, her greatest power."³²

In Van den Valckert's *Venus and Cupid*, this notion is cleverly expressed by a *painting* of a young woman who kindles love in the viewer. That a depiction of a nude woman – like the reality on which it was based – could have just this effect we find mostly in negative criticism of the day.³³ Well known is Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert's saying: "The mill of thought turns incessantly. Throw in the chaff of paintings with the nude Venus, what else will it grind but fiery unchasteness, burning desire and feverish love," and elsewhere: "Imagine a beautiful nude Venus / What will it make churn in one's mind but an unchaste fire? / Douse this spark before you go up in flames! Swiftly extinguish this fiery image, / Abide firmly by your reason, / Such that it turns your eyes away from lust, / Because the sight of lust breeds evil desire."³⁴ In



Fig. 7. Otto van Veen, "Les regards dards," in *Amorum Emblemata*, 1608, engraving.

both these quotes, Coornhert wittily used the verb "malen," which can mean to grind, to churn, to rave, and – to paint. Many playful variations on this theme can be found in later seventeenth-century poems by Joost van den Vondel and Jan Vos. For instance, in a poem by Vondel lauding a painting of *Venus* by Dirck Bleecker that was owned by Prince William II, the painted image of Venus "speaks" to his wife, the princess, with the words: "If my nudity with its lifelike rays / Pierces His Majesty's heart, this should not pain you. / Finding no hold on paint and life's semblance / He will, inflamed by glowing heat, take revenge upon you. / And if this agrees with you, do not despise me / But rather praise the excellence of the brush."³⁵ The poet, praising the painter by exaggerating the supposed effect on the viewer, played cleverly with current *topoi*. Such conventional usage does not mean, however, that these texts were meaningless. On the contrary, such utterances, the negative ones from moralists as well as the playful erotic poems, all repeat over and over again the same thoughts: commonplace ideas that determined the expectations of the viewer as well as the concerns of the painter. The often formulated awareness that images are capable of arousing desire and the endlessly voiced notion that the eyes are the most powerful "seducers" of the mind make clear that the contemporary beholder would have been highly conscious of the erotic implications of such paintings.³⁶ He could value this negatively, or positively, depending on his religious, social, and intellectual background.

Contemporary negative reactions to paintings of nudes were certainly more

numerous than positive ones.³⁷ However, given the substantial production of nudes in paintings and prints, there must have been a considerable public that appreciated them highly and had no qualms about the supposedly “dangerous” erotic power of such images. For them, representations of the nude Venus were part of a lighthearted and erudite play that had its place in the context of courtship and marriage. Prints with *Venus and Cupid Worshipped by Young Men and Women* are to be found on the title pages of songbooks and amorous emblem books that were highly popular among the youthful urban elite precisely in this period. Beautiful examples are the title prints of Hooft’s *Emblemata Amatoria* (1611) and of Bredero’s *The Great Fountain of Love* (“*De Grootte Bron der Minnen*”), part of his *Great Songbook* (“*Groot Liedboek*”), containing not only many lighthearted love songs, but also quite flippant marriage poems in which Venus and Cupid are the main actors.³⁸

For this audience, a certain amount of erotic playfulness with corresponding sexual innuendos was permitted in special circumstances, even publicly. In the literature of the time we find this wonderfully exemplified in poems by Bredero, an Amsterdam poet and playwright, who probably moved in the same circles as Van den Valckert. In many of his marriage poems, Bredero felt free to use sexual metaphors and allusions that would have been unthinkable under other circumstances. Among Bredero’s poems made for weddings, we do find very serious, edifying, and pious verses, but for quite a different segment of the Amsterdam elite he produced merry and erotic marriage poems full of jokes alluding to the wedding night. In the latter, Venus and Cupid are the leading characters.³⁹ In many cases, the bridegroom has been suffering up to that point because he was unremittingly hit by Cupid’s arrows: “This [Cupid], Mr. Bridegroom, is the same loose child / That has its domicile in the lovely eyes / Of your beloved bride. / There he hid, since I saw him last. / This, Mr. Bridegroom, is what caused the fire in your breast, / About which you are sighing, but not dare to speak of.”⁴⁰ After this passage, the bride is urged by the poet to cure the pain of the gruesome wounds that have been struck in the heart of the groom. She has been pretending long enough, the poet says, and now she will die this ultimate sweet death; after having experienced this, for nothing in the world would she want to have back her virginity. So, let us all kiss her, so that she can go to bed; the rest will be dealt with by the bridegroom, the poet says.

It is within this artistic and literary world that a painting like the *Venus and Cupid* of Werner van den Valckert should be considered. The image of Venus, the goddess who secures procreation, would have been a fitting present for a marriage. “Would I turn my back on the human race / No men would be fired by lust anymore, no woman would give birth. / And the world would be empty of people before one realizes,” Venus proclaims in a little play that Hooft made for the occasion of a marriage around 1606–07.⁴¹ In

connection with sixteenth-century Italian paintings of Venus and Cupid, it has been argued convincingly that such works were often intended as marriage presents. A well-known example is the startling painting of *Venus and Cupid* by Lorenzo Lotto in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which is bursting with sexual symbols.⁴² To conceive a child when seeing a beautiful and arousing image of Venus would increase the chance, presumably, of generating beauty in the offspring. In the early seventeenth century, Giulio Mancini summarized the function of “lascivious pictures” in the bedroom, “because once seen they serve to arouse one and to make beautiful, healthy, and charming children.”⁴³

From the many songbooks, love emblems, love poetry, and epithalamia, it becomes clear that the figures of Venus and Cupid must have been very familiar to the urban elite, especially in this period; no wonder that the subject was also popular in paintings of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Viewing this popularity in the context of elite culture concerning courtship, marriage, and procreation also makes the emphatically golden tip of Cupid’s arrow aimed at the viewer more meaningful. Ovid, emphasizing the omnipotence of Cupid in the story of Apollo and Daphne, wrote: “He [Cupid] took from his quiver two darts of opposite effect: one puts to flight, the other kindles the flame of love. The one which kindles love is of gold and has a sharp, gleaming point; the other is blunt and tipped with lead.”⁴⁴ Bredero expressed the same thought in a marriage poem when he wrote: “Two arrows sharp and pointed, but with different powers / The one kindled love in those he hit / The other would cause a terrified fleeing from love in those who were shot with it.”⁴⁵

In an inventive, witty, and amusing way, Van den Valckert brought together several known motifs in his depiction of *Venus and Cupid*, which resulted in an innovative solution to a traditional subject. Van de Valckert presented a life-like young woman eyeing us as we behold her removing her clothes for us. The painter made sure that the “lively rays” coming from Venus’ eyes would pierce our hearts, seeing to it that we will be irretrievably lost, because Cupid, her mischievous accomplice, wounds us with the golden tip of his arrow. However, we have fallen in love with paint on panel – “life’s semblance” only – which will cause us to “praise the excellence of the painter’s brush.”⁴⁶

1 “Les regards dards” is the French motto for an emblem in Otto van Veen’s *Amorum Emblemata* (Antwerp, 1608), p. 150, fig. 8. It plays on the noun “dard” (“spear, javelin”) and the verb “darder” (“to hurl [a javelin], to shoot [an arrow], as well as to cast a glance”).

2 Signed *W.v. Valckert pinxit*. 103 x 76.5 cm. Provenance: Sale, Berlin, 11 February 1902,

- lot 16. Collection G.C.V. Schöffer, Amsterdam, from 1906-22 on loan to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. no. C792; cat. 1912, no. 2357a); sale, Amsterdam, 14 June 1949, lot 184; Jack Kilgore & Co and Otto Naumann, Ltd. New York.
- 3 For the most complete - albeit scant - biographical data on Werner van den Valckert's life, see the authoritative article on the artist (with a full catalogue of his works) by Pieter J.J. van Thiel, "Werner Jacobsz. van den Valckert," *Oud Holland* 97 (1983): 128-95.
 - 4 On the early works in The Hague, see Van Thiel 1983, pp. 131-38. Van Thiel dated the painting around 1612, and Hudig had already pointed out that it should be dated around the same time as the etchings of the *Sleeping Venus* and the *Holy Family*, but read the dates of both mistakenly as 1615. See F.W. Hudig, "Werner van den Valckert," *Oud Holland* 54 (1937): 54-66, without further substantiating the dating. Van Thiel assumed that the painting was produced in The Hague in 1612. However, although close in date to the prints, it might as well have been painted slightly later.
 - 5 Van Thiel 1983, no. E 6.
 - 6 Van Thiel 1983, no. 3.
 - 7 Karel van Mander, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, vol. 1, trans. and ed., Hessel Miedema (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1994), pp. 436-37 (fol. 294v.).
 - 8 Ernst van de Wetering, "Rembrandt's Beginnings: An Essay," in *The Mystery of the Young Rembrandt*, exh. cat., Staatliche Museen Kassel, Kassel, and Museum het Rembrandthuis, Amsterdam, 2001-2002, pp. 22-57, esp. pp. 41-49.
 - 9 For the Venetian provenance of this theme, see Millard Meiss, "Sleep in Venice: Ancient Myths and Renaissance Proclivities," in *The Painter's Choice: Problems in the Interpretation of Renaissance Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 212-39. For a concise discussion of the impact in the north, see Eric Jan Sluijter and Nicole Spaans, "Door liefde verstandig of door lust verteerd? Relaties tussen tekst en beeld in voorstellingen van Cimon en Efigenia," *De Zeventiende Eeuw: Cultuur in de Nederlanden in interdisciplinair perspectief* 17, no. 3 (2001): 74-106.
 - 10 One of the engravings by Matham, after the German artist Johann Rottenhammer (B. 193), shows three satyrs secretly watching the sleeping Venus. The other two are inventions of Matham himself, one of them representing another voyeuristic subject: *Cimon Watching the Sleeping Efigenia*. Cimon is also trying to draw a thin cloth away from Efigenia's body. For *Cimon and Efigenia*, see Sluijter and Spaans 2001, *passim*. For the Carracci prints, see Diane DeGrazia Bohlin, *Prints and Related Drawings by the Carracci Family: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1987), nos. 176-190, esp. nos. 184-185.
 - 11 The pose of Van den Valckert's sleeping Venus is based on motifs in two different prints by Agostino in which a satyr approaches a sleeping nymph (B. 128 and B. 131). In one print, the satyr urges us to be silent, thus making the viewer an accomplice. Van Thiel 1983, pp. 135-36, 139, refuted the impact of Italian examples, earlier proposed by Hudig 1937; Van Thiel saw more of a relationship - especially the same mentality - with the artists of the Haarlem School. He termed Van de Valckert "a late adept" of the Haarlem School, and pronounced his style "conservative academic." I do not agree with this view.
 - 12 DeGrazia Bohlin 1987, pp. 450-51, no. 17. Van de Valckert would have been interested in this print not only for the depiction of the nude, but also for its experimental etching technique.
 - 13 Art historians have pointed to similarities between Van den Valckert's paintings and those of Goltzius from the same period; on this basis, it has been proposed that he was a pupil of Goltzius. Van Thiel (1983), for instance, saw Van den Valckert's style as mainly based on Goltzius' late work. However, the similarity in manner is superficial and seems more a matter of striving after comparable goals. It is highly unlikely that Goltzius had pupils around 1600, the time that Van den Valckert would have been an apprentice. Goltzius had just started to paint and was still training himself to be a painter. For Goltzius' beginnings as a painter who most likely learned the craft of painting from the much younger Frans Badens after the latter's return from Italy, see Eric Jan Sluijter, "Goltzius, Painting and Flesh; or, Why Goltzius Began to Paint in 1600," in Marieke van den Doel et al., eds., *The Learned Eye: Regarding Art, Theory, and The Artist's Reputation. Essays for Ernst van de Wetering* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), pp. 158-77. Moreover, the two artists had distinctly different techniques of depicting flesh, and the consistently transparent softness of Goltzius' shadows is quite unlike the relatively heavy chiaroscuro of Van den Valckert in this period. I was able to ascertain this when I saw the *Venus and Cupid* after it had just been cleaned by Nancy Krieg; I was accompanied by Nica Gutman, conservator of the Kress Collection, who is making a study of Goltzius' technique of depicting flesh. On Goltzius' *Jupiter and Antiope* (which also has the motif of a satyr urging silence from the viewer) and related works, see Eric Jan Sluijter, "Venus, Visus and Pictura," in *Seductress of Sight: Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2000), pp. 156-59 (hereafter as Sluijter 2000a). See also Albert Blankert, *Dutch Classicism*, exh. cat., Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, and Städtisches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt, 1999-2000, pp. 64-67.
 - 14 I.Q. van Regteren Altena, *Jacques de Gheyn: Three Generations*, 2 vols. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1983), vol. 1, p. 109; vol. 2, no. P6. See also Kees Zandvliet et al., *Maurits van Oranje*, exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2000, pp. 144, 298-99.
 - 15 Below the signature, there seems to be another name in a slanting Gothic handwriting, now illegible (that of the patron?): one is tempted to read it as *Jan Govertsz.*, who was an important patron of Goltzius, and who appeared in several of his paintings (including, as one of the Elders, in his *Susanna and the Elders* of 1607) and drawings.
 - 16 See, for example, B. 51, 57, 63, 66, 68; B. 25, 153, 160, 161, 295, 299; B. 257. For other examples, see Sluijter 2000a, figs. 100-106.
 - 17 For reproductions of those drawings, see E.K.J. Reznicek, *Die Zeichnungen von Hendrick Goltzius. Mit einem beschreibenden Katalog*, 2 vols. (Utrecht: Haentjens Dekker & Gumbert, 1961), vol. 2, figs. 165, 166, 168, 169, 180, 181. Many of these are reproduced in Sluijter 2000a, figs. 100-106; compare also figs. 91, 92, 96, 107-09.
 - 18 See, for example, Cornelis' many paintings of *Venus and Cupid*: Pieter J.J. van Thiel, *Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem* (Doornspijk: Davaco 1999), figs. 85 (1592), 202 (1610), 267 (1622), 283 (c. 1624), 315 (1628), fig. 735.
 - 19 B. 313. For the statue, see Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth O. Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources* (London: Harvey Miller, 1986), pp. 62, no. 18. The most famous specimen, which was in Rome in the beginning of the sixteenth century (at the time that Raimondi made the print) and later in the century in Mantua (where Rubens drew it), is now in the British Museum. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there were several other copies in Rome.
 - 20 Franciscus Junius, *De Schilder-konst der Oude* (Middelburg: Zacharias Roman, 1641), p. 29. Junius maintained that the best artists are those who know how to add a new argument to the great art of the past and who have the wit to charge their paintings "with the pleasant amusement of a dissimilar similarity."
 - 21 See Jeffrey M. Muller, "Rubens' Theory and Practice of the Imitation in Art," *Art Bulletin* 64 (1982): 229-47.
 - 22 For Bredero's portrait, engraved by Hessel Gerritsz., see Van Thiel 1983, pp. 156-57; Van Thiel argued convincingly that it might have been based on a prototype by Van den Valckert.
 - 23 Garnt Stuiveling, ed., *De Werken van Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero: Boertigh, amoreus, en aendachtigh groot lied-boeck* (Culemborg: Tjeenk Willink/Noorduyn, 1975), pp. 17-18 (the

- introduction was first published in the third edition of the *Geestigh liedt-boexcken*. The English translation is quoted from Boudewijn Bakker, “‘Schilderachtig’: Discussions of a Seventeenth-Century Term and Concept,” *Simiolus* 23 (1999): 152.
- 24 Karel van Mander, “Het leven der moderne, oft dees-tijtsche doorluchtighe Italiaensche schilders,” in Karel van Mander, *Het Schilder-boeck* (Haarlem: Passchier van Wesbusch, 1604), fol. 191r.
- 25 Remarkably, the same is true of the paintings of *Venus and Cupid* by Cornelis Cornelisz., Wtewael, and Bloemaert.
- 26 One of the earliest examples of a Venus with Cupid holding up the arrow is Lucas van Leyden’s beautiful engraving, dated 1528, with the inscription, “Venus la tresbelles deesse damours”; B.138. The motif of Cupid shooting his arrow at the viewer appears two decades later in a work of Guercino: *Venus, Mars, and Cupid*, dated 1633 (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC). It also occurs in the 1620s in a work by Alessandro Turchi, *Allegory of the Power of Love* (Rijksmuseum Paleis Het Loo, Apeldoorn; on loan from the Mauritshuis, The Hague).
- 27 De Gheyn’s invention was probably engraved by Andries Stock. For this print, see Eddy de Jongh and Ger Luijten, *Mirror of Everyday Life: Genreprints in the Netherlands 1550-1700*, exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1999, pp. 129-32, no. 21. Around the same time, David Vinckboons drew the subject as well: an archer shooting at the viewer and a milkmaid. Pieter Serwouters engraved, after Vinckboons, a kneeling archer aiming his arrow at the viewer (De Jongh and Luijten 1999, figs. 3-4). De Gheyn seems to have been inspired by an anonymous German print of a soldier aiming at the viewer (De Jongh and Luijten 1999, fig. 1), while images of death pointing an arrow at the beholder are to be found in German art of the sixteenth century, culminating in the *Last Judgment* of Hermann tom Ring, presently in Utrecht; see Angelika Lorenz, *Die Maler tom Ring*, exh. cat., Westfälischen Landesmuseum, Münster, 1996, vol. 2, pp. 310-13.
- 28 B. 78.
- 29 Quoted in Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, *Emblemata Amatoria* (1611), with introduction and commentary by Karel Porteman (Leiden, 1983), pp. 166-68. Porteman referred to this passage in the Dutch version of Ripa’s *Iconologia* in connection with Emblem XIV of the *Emblemata Amatoria*.
- 30 Porteman referred to this emblem in his edition of Hooft’s *Emblemata Amatoria* (see previous note): see Otho Vaenius, *Amorum Emblemata* (Antwerp, 1608), facsimile edition (New York and Hildesheim: Olms Verlag, 1978), pp. 150-51.
- 31 Hooft 1611, Emblem XIV (pp. 104-05).
- 32 Karel van Mander, “Den Grondt der Edel vry Schilder-const,” in Van Mander 1604, fol. 24v. (chap. 4, verse 26). For Hooft, see F. Veenstra, *Ethiek en moraal bij P.C. Hooft* (Zwolle: Tjeenk Willink, 1968), p. 147. Veenstra quoted extensively the famous doctor Laurentius, who discussed as a physiological phenomenon the way in which love enters the body through the eyes and in the end incites sexual desire in the liver. The quoted lines by Hooft are from *Dankbaar Genoegen* (Appendix, p. 15), verse 178, written after Leonora Helleman’s refusal of Hooft’s proposal of marriage. For many other examples of this thought, which stems from Antiquity, see Eric Jan Sluijter, *De “heydensche fabulen” in de schilderkunst van de Gouden Eeuw* (Leiden: Primavera Press, 2000), pp. 160-62 (hereafter Sluijter 2000b); Sluijter 2000a, pp. 118-20.
- 33 For many examples, see Sluijter 2000b, pp. 157-60; Sluijter 2000a, pp. 120-23 (esp. in the footnotes).
- 34 Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert, *Zedekunst dat is Wellevenskunste* (1589), ed. B. Becker (Leiden: Hes Publishers, 1982), p. 31. The other quotation is in G. Brom, *Schilderkunst en literatuur in de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Utrecht and Antwerp: Het Spectrum, 1957), p. 90.
- 35 J.F.M. Sterck et al., eds., *De werken van Vondel*, 10 vols. (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1927-40), vol. 8, p. 639.
- 36 On the perception of images as “living” when they arouse sexual feelings, see David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), chap. 12, “Arousal by Image.” Many texts, from art-theoretical to poetical, make clear that the viewer wanted to see the things represented in paintings as a “virtual reality,” which was thought to have the same impact on the mind as seeing the same things in reality (see my forthcoming book on Rembrandt’s nudes, chap. 5; and Thijs Weststeijn, *De zichtbare wereld. Samuel van Hoogstratens Kunsttheorie en de legitimering van de Schilderkunst in de zeventiende eeuw*, Amsterdam 2005, Ph.D. diss, pp. 109-30).
- 37 See, for instance, Karel Porteman, “Vondels gedicht ‘Op een Italiaensche schildery van Susanne,’” in G. van Eemeren and F. Willaert, eds., *’t Ondersoek leert. Studies... nagedachtenis van L. Rens* (Leuven and Amersfoort: Uitgeverij Acco, 1986), pp. 313-14; Gregor J. Weber, *Der Lobtopos des “lebenden” Bildes: Jan Vos und sein “Zeege der Schilderkunst,” von 1654* (Hildesheim/Zürich/New York: Olms Verlag, 1991), chap. 8, no. 4: “Die Erweckung der Affekte der Begierde und Liebe.”
- 38 The print in Bredero’s *Groot Lied-boeck* (published posthumously in 1622) is by Pieter Serwouters after Michel le Blon. See Pieter J.J. van Thiel, “De illustraties van Bredero’s Liedboek,” in Garnt Stuijveling, ed., *De werken van Gerbrand Adriaens. Bredero: Boertigh, amoreus, en aendachtigh groot lied-boeck* (Leiden: Nijhoff, 1983), vol. 2, p. 108. The title print of Hooft’s *Emblemata Amatoria* (1611) is attributed to Hessel Gerritsz.; see also the beautiful title print by C. de Passe of the *Nieuwen Jeeucht Spiegel* (1617). Goltzius also made a drawing, engraved by Jan Saenredam, of *Venus Worshipped by Amorous Couples*. For these prints, see Sluijter 2000a, pp. 116, 134, 128, figs. 95, 111, 107.
- 39 See, especially, Maria A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, “Hochzeitsdichtung und christlicher Glaube: Einige Epithalamia niederländischer Dichter,” *Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik* (Series A) 8, no. 4 (1980): 31-37.
- 40 Bredero, *Lied-boeck*, pp. 91-94 (“Bruyd-lofs-gedicht, ter eeren Dirck Pietersz. Voskuyl, ende Aafgen Willemsdr.”).
- 41 Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, “Paris Oordeel,” in Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft, *Alle de gedruckte werken 1611-1738*, vol. 3, *Gedichten in Amsterdam 1636*, eds. W. Hellinga and P. Tuynman (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1972), p. 178.
- 42 Keith Christiansen, “Lorenzo Lotto and the Tradition of Epithalamic Paintings,” *Apollo* 124 (1986): 166-75.
- 43 Quoted by David Rosand, “So-And-So Reclining on Her Couch,” in Rona Goffen, ed., *Titian’s “Venus of Urbino”* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 48, who argued that the *Venus of Urbino*, too, is a marriage picture. See also Rona Goffen, “Sex, Space, and Social History in Titian’s ‘Venus of Urbino,’” in Goffen 1997, pp. 63-91. Alberti had already recommended that in the bedroom of the master of the family and his wife one should only hang images of “dignity and handsome appearance: for they say that this may have a great influence on the fertility of the mother and the appearance of future offspring.”
- 44 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book I, 467-472, quoted from *Ovid in Six Volumes*, vol. 3, *Metamorphoses*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. by F.J. Miller (Cambridge, MA, and London: Loeb Classical Library, 1977), p. 35.
- 45 Bredero, *Lied-boeck*, p. 232 (in “Bruylofts-gedicht, ter eeren Guillebert de Flines, ende Anna Cornelis van Grootewal,” pp. 230-35).
- 46 See Vondel, as in note 35 above.