

Determining Value on the Art Market in the Golden Age: An Introduction

Introduction

An art historian who assesses the attributions of particular paintings in a scholarly publication knows that this will have consequences for the art market. The art historian in question, however, usually prefers to ignore this because he sees his work as a value-free analysis of certain qualities of the artwork in the service of constructing art historical categorisations. However, the owner of the work will have a different opinion. What a painting is valued at on the art market – especially paintings dating from the last five centuries – mainly depends on the fact whether or not it is considered an autograph work of a certain artist. A *communis opinio* among experts about authorship guarantees a basic market value. The process of canon formation establishes a relative value: X is on average more expensive than Y, but cheaper than Z. These values may vary hugely, depending on the position of the master in the ‘ranking’, while other factors such as subject matter, condition, rarity, provenance, place of an individual work within the oeuvre of a master and temporary phenomena like fashions and trends add to the many imponderables that make the prices of works of art vary tremendously. But when a work loses its aura of being by a certain artist’s hand, it is robbed of its identity and becomes an outcast, even if none of the physical qualities and appearance of the work have changed; the value plummets and becomes even more difficult to assess than an ‘authentic’ work.

Outsiders find these kinds of fluctuations in monetary value on the art market incomprehensible. This is nicely expressed by the Dutch saying, often used in this context, that a work of art is worth ‘*wat de gek ervoor geeft*’ (what the fool will bid for it). When it concerns the value of art – and it applies to the works of the old masters as well as for currently popular artists – the general opinion is that everything depends

on what an individual, based on his own idiosyncratic evaluation, is willing to pay for it. Naturally, also the behaviour of this 'fool' who might pay a price that seems outrageous, is determined by his or her social and cultural environment, economic circumstances and attitude towards market mechanisms.

In his essay 'Pricing the Unpriced' Marten Jan Bok referred to a discussion between the Rotterdam economist Arjo Klamer and a group of contemporary artists about their economic behaviour, in which the artists all emphasise their uncertainty about market value.¹ The essence of their remarks is that there is no standard method for setting a price, but that the name and fame of the artist are decisive and determine the basic level of his or her prices – we are confronted here with a ranking process – and that prices are flexible, depending on the assets of the interested client. One of the artists remarked: 'It depends on what you can get. If I have a price of \$3,000 in mind for a painting and someone comes in who seems to be able to pay \$10,000 I'll ask \$10,000.' But in the end, they all agree, it is a process of trial and error. Remarkably, none of them mentioned the amount of time he or she spent on a work of art, the cost of labour invested, which remains the most common way of earning an income in most other professions. Did something like the attitude towards the art market as described above exist in the seventeenth century, or was the amount of labour involved a determining factor?

Giulio Mancini's words, written between 1617 and 1621, are strikingly similar to the modern artists' views: 'a painting in itself cannot have a definite price' because its value in part 'is linked to the quality of the patron who owns it and the artist who makes it'. Thus, the price depends 'mainly on the taste and wealth of the buyer, and the need of the owner [which might be the artist] to dispose of the work'.² But these are the words of a Roman art lover. Were opinions regarding the assessing of the value of a work of art different in the Netherlands? What were the accepted seventeenth-century practices? Which roles were played by the artists themselves, by connoisseurs, art lovers or art dealers? How was value related to artistic qualities, name and authorship? Who was credited with the ability to appraise and attribute pictures in theory and practice? Did seventeenth-century connoisseurs find it important that a picture was painted entirely by the hand of the master under whose name it was sold? And how did early modern connoisseurship change as the market situation evolved and became increasingly complex? The aim of the essays in this volume, which were generated by a conference on the joint study of the art market and early modern connoisseurship, organised by Anna Tummers and Koenraad Jonckheere (University of Amsterdam, November 2005), is to answer some of those questions.

Over the past two decades, research on the seventeenth-century art market has expanded enormously. However, as De Marchi and Van Miegroet already noted in 1994, these studies 'tended to accentuate the view that art is a commodity like any other'.³ Naturally, art was and is not a commodity like any other, because many immeasurable factors come into play, such as technical, but especially the artistic qualities of the product; such qualities, which are usually considered unique and often perceived quite differently by everyone involved, can, over time, make this peculiar type of commodity much more expensive, but also much less, depending on changes in taste and fashion. Koenraad Jonckheere demonstrated that, in the exchange of art objects, not only commodities changed hands, but also information, favours, reputations, expectations, etc.⁴ How values, ideas and attitudes concerning art, as well as the individual players, are connected with market practices, which are primarily about supply and

demand and the monetary value this engenders, is a question that still needs much more research where the insights of art historians and socio-economic historians must come together. The studies in this volume focus on the interaction between artists, connoisseurs and art dealers in matters of authorship, value and pricing in particular, so that the fairly recent interest in early modern connoisseurship can be integrated into the current research on the art market.

One of the first scholars to examine seventeenth-century views on connoisseurship and judgements about the authenticity of paintings was Jeffrey Muller in his article 'Measures of Authenticity: The Detection of Copies in the Early Literature on Connoisseurship' (1989), in which he primarily examines cases involving the work of Rubens.⁵ More recently, Jaap van der Veen published a very important study in the latest volume of *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* (IV, 2005), titled 'By his own hand. The valuation of autograph paintings in the 17th century'.⁶ In the 1990s, the economist Neil De Marchi and the art historian Hans Van Miegroet approached related questions from the perspective of the art market in two important articles 'Art, Value and Market Practices in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century' (1994) and 'Pricing Invention: "Originals", "Copies", and their Relative Value in Seventeenth Century Netherlandish Art Markets' (1996), while Marten Jan Bok's aforementioned 'Pricing the Unpriced: How Dutch Seventeenth-Century Painters determined the Selling Price of their Works' (1998), examined the artist's side of assessing value.⁷ Recently, Marion Boers-Gooßen's 'Prices of Northern Netherlandish Paintings in the Seventeenth Century' focused on the question of whether public authorities or wealthy patrons paid inflated prices, as has often been assumed. Thought provoking arguments about the effect of developing standards of quality were proposed by Ed Romein in 'Knollen en citroenen op de Leidse kunstmarkt: over de rol van kwaliteit in de opkomst van de Leidse fijnschilderstijl' (Turnips and lemons on the Leiden art market: about the role of quality and the emergence of the Leiden style of fine painting, 2001), while Elizabeth Honig came up with fascinating insights into the new roles of Antwerp's connoisseurs and the cultural value of paintings (1995).⁸ The role of the city elite as a factor in the Antwerp art market in the age of Rubens was assessed thoroughly only recently by Bert Timmermans in his Ph.D. dissertation *Een elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld. Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen* (Leuven 2006).

In the essays published in this volume, the authors introduce new material and ideas, but simultaneously build upon the older publications. These essays also inspired the following introductory notes, which are mainly concerned with the question of how the monetary value of paintings was assessed in continuous interaction between artists and clients/patrons (art lovers, connoisseurs and art dealers).

Valore di fatica

Let us first consider the market behaviour of some seventeenth-century masters. In his magisterial study on Guido Reni, Richard Spear demonstrates that two extremes existed in Italy simultaneously; this is exemplified by the most famous artists of that period – artists who were both trained in the same studio and were fierce competitors: Guido Reni and Guercino. The latter had a straightforward and businesslike attitude towards the market. He determined his price carefully on the basis of the value of labour expended, the *valore di fatica*, and attached fixed prices to the number of painted figures: approximately 100 ducats for each full-length, 50 per half-length, and 25 for

heads. According to Malvasia, Guercino had said that his pricing was determined by 'what was common use and what others charged'.⁹ Moreover Guercino, who ran an efficient studio, strictly differentiated between his own paintings and the studio's. He was very upset once when a copy of an altarpiece by one of his students was sold as an original.

Reni, on the contrary, did not want set prices for pictures and, according to Malvasia, abhorred 'the mention of price in a profession in which, he said, it should be obligatory to negotiate on the basis of an honorarium or gift'. Malvasia recounts that 'it was Guido's practice not to put a price on the works he painted for great personages and men of means but rather to give the paintings to them. In this way he received much more for them than was the custom or than he himself would have asked'.¹⁰ Reni tried to rely on the *valore di stima*, on the estimation of value or worth, not determined by the artist but by the client, the patron or a connoisseur after the painting was completed.¹¹ Another significant contrast to Guercino was that Reni organised his studio in such a way that the distinctions between autograph works, retouched works and good copies were blurred.¹² Spear concludes that Guercino 'by sticking to such firm and old-fashioned notions of pricing, by being so relatively forthright in indicating what is and isn't his, and by not promoting himself through marketing techniques, the artist stifled any speculation that might have arisen around his work. ... By contrast, Reni's attitude foreshadows aspects of our contemporary art market, where demand can outpace supply and be manipulated by clever artists and their agents'.¹³ Regrettably, in the Netherlands there was no equivalent to Malvasia who recorded such a wealth of information about the Bolognese masters, but on the basis of a variety of sources it is possible to inquire whether similar phenomena can be discerned in the Netherlands.

The 'craftsmanlike' way of calculating price, largely determined by labour, in other words, the time spent producing a work of art, must have been used by many artists. In a few cases – and these are all 'fine painters' – we are certain they operated in this manner. The best paid artists of the Dutch Golden Age, Gerrit Dou and Frans van Mieris, were among them. Joachim von Sandrart informs us that Dou daily noted the exact number of hours he devoted to a painting and charged 'ein Pfund Flemisch' (a Flemish pound = 6 guilders) an hour, while Houbraken noted that Van Mieris calculated one gold ducat (5 guilders) per hour.¹⁴ Considering the practice recorded in the surviving account books of Adriaen van der Werff, undoubtedly the best paid artist of the following generation, as well as his pupil Hendrick van Limborch, it is entirely plausible that Dou and Van Mieris indeed determined a minimum price in this way, although the figures reported seem exaggerated. That Dou and Van Mieris were able to pocket excessive sums, however, is revealed by the fact that Dou received 4000 guilders from the States of Holland for *The Young Mother*, as part of the Dutch Gift to Charles II, and that Van Mieris was paid 2500 guilders by Cosimo III the Medici for a *Family Concert*.¹⁵ In these cases, it seems that the status and wealth of the client – which was also mentioned by modern artists, as we have already seen – figures into the equation to a considerable degree.

Adriaen van der Werff and Hendrick van Limborch's account books, show that they continued with this method, offering accurate information about how artist calculated the price based on hours worked on a painting. Van Limborch noted with great precision every half a day he spent on an artwork (for history paintings the total number of days could vary between 45 and 160 days; portraits took much less time); regrettably he neither mentions the price for which a painting ultimately sold, nor the sum he

charged per day. Based on circumstantial evidence, Guido Jansen assumed that the latter must have been approximately 10 guilders per day.¹⁶ However, we do know Van der Werff's rates. Marten Jan Bok demonstrated that, whatever his subject, Van der Werff would charge a basic rate of 25 guilders a day; the total number of days would determine the minimum asking price, which served more or less as a bottom line for price negotiations with his patrons. To this he would add additional costs, such as the frame, packing and transportation costs. 'Then he would take a good look at the painting and decide what the market would bear: *maer segge ...*' (but I will ask ...). In this way, he would arrive at a target figure for his negotiations. Sometimes he settled for less, but there were occasions when he received more.¹⁷ Moreover, Van der Werff made a distinction – not for the customer, but for his own calculations – between his own labour and that of his brother and close collaborator Pieter. He calculated Pieter's labour, who did the groundwork for most of his paintings, at 25 guilders a day as well, which means that Adriaen did not differentiate between the price of a picture he painted all by himself – which he rarely did – and a painting he did with Pieter, even if the latter did the largest portion of the work.¹⁸ However, according to Johan van Gool, Adriaen paid his brother only one ducat (5 guilders) a day, which means that Adriaen made an extraordinary profit on Pieter's labour.¹⁹ The above demonstrates that ultimately Adriaen van der Werff guaranteed the quality of all the works that left his studio, pricing them on the basis of his personal reputation, regardless of the contribution made by his brother Pieter. I will eventually come back to this issue.

Bok also tested the relationship between size and labour and it appeared that three-quarters of the difference in invested labour can be explained by the difference in size of the panels. This must have often been the case. For example, we find a landscape by Herman Saftleven in the inventory of baron Willem Vincent van Wyttenhorst for which, according to his own notes, Van Wyttenhorst paid 120 guilders; for a landscape 'halff soo groot als de bovenstaende' (half the size of the one mentioned above), Saftleven was paid exactly half that sum: 60 guilders.²⁰ A painter like Cornelis van Poelenburch probably used a similar method. Van Wyttenhorst's inventory, which was drawn up between 1651 and 1659, contains a large number of paintings by Van Poelenburch (57), most of which were purchased directly from the artist. The prices Van Wyttenhorst recorded having paid vary greatly, from 36 to 464 guilders. The inexpensive ones are recorded as being small landscapes (to which Van Wyttenhorst added that the value had risen, which means that he must have bought them a considerable time earlier and that, in the meantime, the prices for Van Poelenburch's work had increased). The most expensive piece is indeed described as being 'large'. That the price varies more than the difference in size would warrant, is due to the fact that it was a history painting. All the costly works by Van Poelenburch in this inventory are history paintings with numerous figures, such as 'a piece representing the Passion' or 'the martyrdom of St. Lawrence', which took a great deal more time to paint than a landscape containing only a few small figures.

Concerning calculations of monetary value, we do not have information about painters who used a rapid technique, but it seems likely that an artist like Jan van Goyen calculated the price in the same 'craftsmanlike' manner. These painters used a method of working that was geared towards high levels of production while saving labour, which resulted in lower prices per painting and – at least initially – higher profit margins. As far as we can gather from various sources, the prices of a painting by Van Goyen – who, Van Hoogstraten recounts, could produce a painting in one day – would have been approximately 10 guilders for a small painting and 60 for a large one.²¹

His artistry and incredible virtuosity must have been greatly admired by connoisseurs; Huygens mentions Van Goyen in the same breath as Van Poelenburch, while Orlers pays even more attention to him as to Rembrandt and emphasises that his work was greatly valued.²² Van Poelenburch and Van Goyen could probably charge more or less the same daily rate. It seems reasonable to assume that Van Poelenburch, whose paintings appear to be on average about ten times more costly than Van Goyen's, indeed worked about ten times as long on a painting. Guessing from the prices and the time they presumably spent on a painting, I estimate that both calculated approximately eight to 10 guilders a day. This is more or less the same amount that, according to Houbraken, Nicolaes Berchem earned at the time he worked in the service of a certain patron.²³

But what does it mean that the daily rates varied considerably between different artists when using this method of calculating monetary value? With this obvious question we arrive at the cost of the reputation of an artist. How was this reputation determined and how was it translated into hard cash? Also in the seventeenth century it was a matter of 'trial and error', as we shall see. Whenever there was a conflict, appraisers could be appointed by the guild, which means there must have been a certain level of consensus among professionals about the ranking according to reputation and the reflection of this in the daily rates they could charge. Based on the rates mentioned above – Dou and Van Mieris 6 and 5 guilders per hour respectively, Van der Werff 25 guilders a day (while his brother was paid only five), Van Limborch probably around 10 guilders, Berchem 10 guilders – the 3 guilders per hour charged by Caesar van Everdingen when he executed the shutters of the organ of the Alkmaar St. Lawrence church in 1643, may come as a surprise.²⁴ This is similar to the rates charged by mediocre Antwerp painters like Justus Daneels (4 guilders) or Abraham Snellinck (3 guilders),²⁵ while the services of Jan Brueghel II could be had for a rate that was equivalent to 5 or 6 guilders per day.²⁶ Considering Van Everdingen, however, we should not only realise that the rates of Dou, Van Mieris and Van der Werff were excessively high, but also that this low figure undoubtedly has to do with the stage of his career: he was 26 years old and as yet only a local celebrity who executed those organ shutters after designs by Jacob van Campen.²⁷ Another daily rate that we are able to calculate more or less is that of Bartholomeus van der Helst. He received some 10 guilders a day during the period that he worked on two portraits of Van Wyttenhorst and his wife. He worked on the paintings for six weeks and was paid 350 guilders; but he also received bed and board, since he lodged with Van Wyttenhorst, during the weeks he was painting the portraits, as the baron meticulously noted.²⁸

The rates that Dou, Van Mieris and Van der Werff charged seem outrageous, indeed, but, as Marten Jan Bok pointed out to me, it is a common phenomenon in these kind of rankings that it leads to extremes at the high end of the market. Such distributions are found everywhere and seem quite natural (this is certainly the case with present-day soccer players: the best one is paid twice as much as the second best, who is paid two thirds more than the third best, who is paid 50% more than the fourth best, and so on).

That a painter could miscalculate his reputation is evident from another case concerning Van der Helst. From the proceedings of a lawsuit that dates from 1665, we learn how his reputation was expressed in terms of money.²⁹ Van der Helst charged no less than 1000 guilders for a family portrait (representing husband, wife, child and greyhound) and this price was contested. The painting was subsequently valued by two independent appraisers, the painters Dirck Bleecker and Jacob Coolen. They

estimated the portrait was worth 400 guilders. In fact, they appraised it at 300 guilders, but 'considering the good name and reputation of the painter' (*ten respecte van de meester syn name ende reputatie*) 100 guilders could be added to the estimate.³⁰ Hence, Van der Helst's reputation was evaluated at a premium of one third of what they considered the minimum price of such a portrait (in terms of Van Wyttenhorst's payment, this would have meant about five weeks of work). Obviously Van der Helst was of a different opinion, but in this case his 'trial' ended up as a total 'error'. He had hoped to be paid for the *valore di stima*, but had far overrated the value of his name and reputation, and was subsequently punished with a lawsuit and rebuked by the judgement of two respectable colleagues from Haarlem.

Painters often tried to see how high they could go, not unlike the twentieth-century artist who declared that he would put the price at \$10,000 for a painting he valued at \$3,000 if he thought he could sell it for that amount. Vroom's bizarre proposal of charging 6,000 guilders for a large painting of the *Battle of Gibraltar* is well known. It was to be a painting offered as a present by the Amsterdam admiralty to Prince Maurits; Vroom did not receive the commission.³¹ Jacob Jordaens attempted to pocket 800 guilders for a painting in the town hall of Hulst for which, as it turned out, the municipal government had only reserved 100 ducats [c. 315 guilders]; ultimately Jordaens had to settle for 500 guilders.³² Rembrandt seems to have been involved in similar sorts of affairs more often than other painters.

Valore di stima

It seems that Rembrandt tried to have the monetary value of his work determined solely by quality and reputation, the *valore di stima*, as opposed to hours of labour spent, leaving it to the client/connoisseur's judgement what the painting was worth upon completion of the work. Rembrandt often expected exceptional sums – but he did not always succeed – at least not in the cases known to us.³³ This was already the case with his first important commission, the *Passion* series for the stadtholder Frederick Henry – of which he might have made the first painting on his own initiative, offering it (through Huygens) to the stadtholder. He grossly over-estimated the value of the paintings, but simultaneously made it clear that he would adjust the price to whatever the court was willing to pay him ('I shall be satisfied with what His Excellency pays me'). It appears from the well-known correspondence with Constantijn Huygens that Rembrandt initially, in 1636, thought that he 'certainly deserved' 1200 guilders a piece for the first three paintings.³⁴ He eventually received 600 guilders each. In 1639, he believed that the last two paintings 'will be considered of such quality that His Highness will now even pay me not less than a thousand guilders each', but he added: 'should His Highness consider that they are not worth this, he shall pay me less according to his own pleasure'.³⁵ Also for these paintings he was rewarded 600 guilders each, which caused Rembrandt to write the self-assured but bitter words: '... if His Highness cannot in all decency be moved to a higher price, though they are obviously worth it, I shall be satisfied with 600 Carolus guilders each ...'.³⁶ By writing 'they will be considered of such quality ...' Rembrandt makes it clear that he does not want to calculate in terms of labour, but exclusively in terms of the high quality of the paintings and the reputation of its maker, the final decision being up to the client, whom he expects will pay substantially for the works. Rembrandt also wanted it to be understood that the long time he worked on those paintings should not be thought of as time devoted to

manual labour, as was still usually the case; the cause of the prolonged genesis was that 'die meeste ende die natuereelste beweeghgelickheit in geopserveert is' (the most natural motion and emotion has been observed).³⁷ Hence, according to Rembrandt, it was entirely due to the intellectual factor in the process of creation. However, he had far overreached; his reputation at the court and the willingness to pay up for this were not what he expected. However, he ultimately understood that he had to swallow some of his pride and be satisfied with what he could get. As a matter of fact, seven years later, in 1646, he did succeed in receiving 1200 guilders a piece for two additional paintings, but we do not know what he himself was asking for the pieces at the time. Compared to the 500 guilders which painters like Pieter de Grebber, Salomon de Bray, Theodoor van Thulden and Jacob Jordaens probably received for triumphal scenes in the Oranjezaal that were more than two meters high (undoubtedly the price for these works was agreed to in advance),³⁸ the sums Rembrandt received were indeed extravagant for paintings of less than a meter high.³⁹

Delaying the delivery of commissioned works, as Malvasia pointed out in regard to Reni's market strategies, could have been 'a shrewd device for making his works more desirable and consequently more esteemed because they were so difficult to obtain'.⁴⁰ That Rembrandt had a similar attitude seems to be confirmed by Houbraken who remarks: 'His art was so much admired and sought after in his own time, that, as the saying goes, one had to beg and throw in money to boot.'⁴¹ Rembrandt's attempt to offer Constantijn Huygens a large painting seems to be another aspect of this *valore di stima* strategy. Mancini praised this method of 'giving' works of art, because it signalled good will, courtesy and honour, and he added that 'through this [way of negotiating] one sees extravagant prices and compensation in the great generosity of some gracious person or prince'.⁴² Rembrandt's words in his letter to Huygens allow us to infer that the latter had told Rembrandt that the painting was not welcome. Huygens was probably much more frugal than Rembrandt expected,⁴³ and might have been afraid that Rembrandt counted on a princely sum for such a major painting; and/or he simply did not want to feel obligated to continue promoting Rembrandt's career.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, Rembrandt sent the painting (probably the *Blinding of Samson*) 'against my lord's wishes, hoping that you will not spurn [my gift] ...'⁴⁵ As with the other paintings, Rembrandt seems to have greatly misjudged the 'generosity of gracious persons and princes', but he insisted on delivering the painting anyway. The presence of a spectacular and eye-catching work in the house of someone who was as a spider in the web of courtly commissions and probably the key figure in a circle of elite connoisseurs,⁴⁶ was already a good enough reason to take the trouble.⁴⁷

An exorbitant asking price may also have been the cause of Andries de Graeff's battle with Rembrandt, although we cannot be sure what actually caused their disagreement.⁴⁸ Hendrick Uylenburg 'and other good men' acted as arbiters in the case and decided on a payment of 500 guilders, which was still a very high figure. My guess is that Rembrandt simply over-estimated 'the generosity' of this 'gracious person' – a man from the top of the Amsterdam elite – to pay substantially extra for Rembrandt's reputation. In his dealings with Don Antonio Ruffo from Messina, Rembrandt eventually seemed to get his way. He was asking 500 guilders for the *Aristotle*, which he received. For the second painting, the *Alexander* that Ruffo commissioned, he asked the same price, but sent a painting of *Homer*, which Ruffo had not commissioned, along with it. For that one he wanted 500 guilders as well, if Ruffo would allow him to finish the painting. Ruffo complained about ugly seams he noticed in the *Alexander*, because the painting consisted of several pieces of canvas sewn together, and offered

Rembrandt 500 guilders for the two, adding that this was already five times as much as he would pay an Italian master for works of this kind; he maintained that the going rate was 25 ducats per head (62.5 guilders), and 50 (125 guilders) for a half-figure – which were the exact prices that Guercino charged, whom he must have had in mind. Rembrandt did not give in and responded rather impudently 'I believe there must be few connoisseurs (he probably used the word *liefhebber*) in Messina', by which he meant to say: people capable of judging the value of his work. He added: 'I am surprised that your Lordship should lament as much about the price as about the canvas', implying that a prestigious patron should be willing to pay this kind of price.⁴⁹ This is in great contrast to Mattia Preti and Guercino's attitude, who were always ready to please Ruffo. Guercino received 150 guilders for the companion piece to the Aristotle that he had painted for Don Antonio (the *Cosmographer*), which was a bit more than usual because, as he wrote, 'it is of exceptional size for a figure in half-length'. Rembrandt behaved more like the notorious Salvator Rosa who demanded the extraordinary price of 1500 guilders for two paintings of *Pythagoras*, a price which Ruffo tried to bargain down. The artist responded to the patron's agent that he would rather die of hunger than dishonour his reputation.⁵⁰ Don Antonio eventually conceded, as he seems to have done with Rembrandt as well. These were artists who were extremely assertive about the high quality of their art and the monetary value of their name and reputation. In Italy, this might have worked with artists like Reni and Rosa, but in Holland it seems to have been more problematic.

Fascinating documents, discovered only very recently, that record an exceptional commission of two altarpieces for a church in Genoa in 1666/7 fit this image perfectly.⁵¹ The Genoese nobleman Francesco Maria Sauli wanted Rembrandt first to paint two *modelli* (one an *Ascension of the Virgin*) before granting him the full commission. The negotiations were conducted by a certain Gio Lorenzo Viviano, captain of a ship then harboured in Amsterdam, who was assisted by two of Sauli's business agents. Viviano and the agents complained several times in their letters to Sauli that it took Rembrandt an endless amount of time to finish the *modelli*, which he had promised to complete within a month, and that one could not rely on the word of this difficult and eccentric artist. They also thought that Rembrandt asked an outrageous price for the *modelli*, causing them to wonder what the large paintings would cost and how long it would take to finish them! However, Sauli was undaunted by this discouraging information and clearly wanted to move forward with the commission. The price was indeed outrageous. At a certain point, the captain was in despair and wrote that he did not know how to manage Rembrandt, as the paintings were still not finished, and moreover, Rembrandt suddenly wanted 3000 guilders, despite his original request of 1200 guilders. In the end, after eight months of constant pressing and urging of the artist, the paintings were finished; the price they had agreed upon was 1023.15 guilders. In the context of this essay, the most telling part of the correspondence is the agents' report that Rembrandt apologizes for the delay with the contention that he cannot finish the paintings in a shorter time, 'applying himself to this task with the utmost mental commitment.'⁵² To this they added that 'he wishes to acquire fame and honour in our parts.'⁵³ Concerning the substantial compensation, they write that Rembrandt 'wants a lot of money, because he maintains that he is someone who has knowledge of the art of painting and therefore stands his ground.'⁵⁴ The pattern described above is confirmed again by this example. It demonstrates Rembrandt's exceptional conviction about his stature as an artist and the quality and high monetary value of his art, while highlighting his inability or unwillingness to conceal his

contempt for those who disagree with him. He, as a renowned artist, is the one who has true knowledge of art.⁵⁵ The long time it may take to finish the works is due to mental exertion and for this reason, patrons must simply be patient. His goal is to acquire honour and fame, but he tends to overrate the monetary value related to his fame as an artist. His unaccommodating attitude, caused foremost by his strong sense of artistic autonomy, made him a very difficult painter to deal with. Sauli, as a matter of fact, seems to be the kind of patron who was accustomed to this and knew that it was he who had to decide about the paintings' value in the end: 'he [Rembrandt] will have to be satisfied with what is reasonable and we for our part will not deviate from what is customary and from what the work is worth. He will have to explain exactly what he wants when he delivers the models or drawings, and then it will be up to us to respond,' Sauli writes. Italian princely connoisseurs probably knew better how to handle this type of artists than patrons from the Dutch burgher elite.

But what about Rubens? After listening to someone praising Rubens's great wealth, style of living and grand image, Guido Reni would have declared, according to Pietro da Cortona, that he, Reni, painted 'for glory and immortality, whereas Rubens busied himself painting for lowly interests and hankering for worldly gain'.⁵⁶ Natasja Peeters in her article in this volume, in which she analyzes how Rubens determined the prices of some 30 altarpieces created by the master and his workshop, demonstrates that things were not that simple. Although Rubens himself had written that 'one evaluates pictures ... according to their excellence, their subject and number of figures', and Jan van Vucht, in a letter to Balthasar Moretus, insisted that '... for 200 or 250 florins, he does not do much, unless you are content with a composition with one or two figures', which in turn reminds us of Guercino's pricing strategy, Peeters shows that there were remarkable differences in price between altarpieces that were seemingly similar in size and in the number of figures. She concluded that with the pricing, intangible factors, such as personal relations and the wealth of the patron, also played a large role. She did not find any correlation between pricing and the number of figures in the case of these altarpieces. Rubens's prices for altarpieces, which doubled in the later years of his career, had more to do with his reputation and his 'excellence' than numbers of figures or size, Peeters contends. The 'connoisseurial' appreciation of his 'excellence' certainly had a price. Rubens, according to Balthasar Moretus, even sent less competent connoisseurs to a lesser and cheaper artist (cf. Natasja Peeters essay in this volume, pp. 97-124).

By the master's own hand

A daunting issue that inevitably comes into play when discussing the value of seventeenth-century paintings, is the extent to which a painting is actually by the master's own hand, or a collaborative work, a copy, or a copy retouched by the master. Peeters assumes that the level of studio participation could also account for some of the lower prices in her sample of altarpieces, but it seems impossible to assess to what degree. In the case of retouched workshop 'products', there is a bit more clarity, because of the fascinating and well-known correspondence between Rubens and Sir Dudley Carleton. The letter in which Rubens explains rather precisely what he did entirely himself and what was done by collaborators or pupils, is extensively discussed in Anna Tummerts's article in this volume (pp. 31-66), where she demonstrates, among other things, that in earlier discussions of Rubens's comments in connection with the question of what

authenticity meant during that period, one often arrived at conclusions that were not entirely correct. She infers from the letters that not only Rubens, but also his client Carleton were not that concerned whether a painting was entirely by Rubens's own hand.

In their groundbreaking article on 'Pricing Invention', De Marchi and Van Miegroet also referred to this correspondence to point out the differences in prices between extensively retouched studio copies and paintings that were, according to Rubens, done entirely by his own hand.⁵⁷ However, and this is in line with Tummerts's argument, I would like to add that, in contrast to what De Marchi and Van Miegroet maintained, it seems more remarkable how almost negligible those differences actually are. De Marchi and Van Miegroet set out to demonstrate that in the seventeenth century 'invention' became an important economic factor, reason why a '*principaal*' (a work that is not a copy) is more expensive than a copy – even if the copy is by the hand of the master himself. To this purpose they adduce the fact that Rubens recommends all the paintings he offers Carleton for sale as being 'by his own hand', but that the prices of the works he described as copies retouched by him – and which were, according to Rubens as good as the works that were entirely autograph – were priced considerably lower. However, I would argue that other conclusions are possible if one examines the list carefully.⁵⁸ 'A Sebastian, nude, by my own hand' of 7 x 4 foot, had the same price tag as the only slightly larger 'Susanna, done by one of my pupils, but then entirely retouched by my hand' of 7 x 5 feet, (both 300 guilders). The authors argue that a retouched copy of the *Last Judgement* was much less expensive (1200 guilders) than the original and they attribute this to the fact that in this case one did not have to pay for the invention.⁵⁹ However, Rubens described this work as 'begun by one of my pupils, after one which I did in a much larger size for the Most Serene Prince of Neuburg, who paid me 3500 florins cash for it; but this one, not being finished would be entirely retouched by my own hand, and by this means would pass as original.' A simpler explanation is that the original was, first of all, considerably larger, as Rubens himself explicitly points out, and secondly, that the incredible price he received for that painting – which Rubens undoubtedly mentioned to show Carleton that he was giving him a bargain – must have been an inflated price paid by a prince-connoisseur. But more importantly, it would take Rubens much less of his costly time to touch up a copy painted by a pupil than to paint an original. Remarkably, the 13 x 9 foot painting was still by far the most expensive that Rubens offered Carleton, more than twice as much as a 'Daniel among many lions ... Original, entirely by my hand' of 8 x 12 foot. For Rubens, it must have been of paramount importance that these retouched paintings looked as good as his originals – a difference in quality would not have been discernible. On the surface the paintings would reveal the inimitable hand of the master and they were, as much as the 'originals', his intellectual property. When he pointed out that 'well-retouched copies ... show more for their price', he merely meant that these were less expensive because it had taken him much less time to produce, not that retouched paintings would necessarily be of a lower quality. A connection between 'original' and 'invention' does not seem to be an issue here.

The fact that Jan Brueghel II charged half the price for copies which were made by himself and not by an assistant, as is recorded in his diary, plays an important role in De Marchi and Van Miegroet's argument that invention became an economic basis for a distinction between original and copy. However, it seems to me that this cannot be inferred from these examples. A more likely reason is that the number of days spent on a copy (Brueghel calculated 5 to 6 guilders a day) is considerably less than what he

needed for painting a *'principaal'*. Apart from the fact that a *'principaal'* was more expensive because it could be used for 'exclusive' copying,⁶⁰ the difference in price with a copy was, in my opinion, not so much due to a clear distinction between the origination of the creative individual (invention) and the manual execution, but largely to costs involving the talent and reputation of the artist who had to work much longer on a new painting.⁶¹ Remarkably, copies were sometimes valued as highly. An interesting case is the following entry by the previously mentioned Van Wyttenhorst about a copy after Cornelis van Poelenburch: 'the Magi, at first very accurately copied by Steenbergen and afterwards totally overpainted by Poelenburch; first paid 36 guilders for copying and afterwards one 100 guilders for the overpainting'.⁶² This painting, a copy by an assistant and overpainted by Van Poelenburch, was one of Wyttenhorst's most expensive paintings. It must have been the hand of the master himself that determined the price. That it was not a new invention does not seem to have mattered. If a copy was by a renowned master, as we know from famous copies by Andrea del Sarto after Raphael, Ludovico Carracci after Parmigianino, Rubens after Titian or Mignard after Reni,⁶³ they could have been as expensive or even more. We find this same situation also in Van Wyttenhorst's inventory, where he describes two copies by Cornelis van Poelenburch after landscapes with biblical scenes by Adam Elsheimer, in both instances, adding: '... is valued more highly than the *principael*.'⁶⁴

The master's touch plays a considerable role in discussions about early modern attitudes towards authenticity and authorship, a subject on which scholarly opinions differ widely. Anna Tummers examines the many problems connected with this challenging topic in the above mentioned essay in this volume (pp. 31-66), in which she analyzes the available evidence. She introduces previously overlooked primary sources and places these in a broader perspective, examining how important it was for seventeenth-century painters and connoisseurs that a painting was done entirely by the master under whose name it was sold. A painter could consider works that were not entirely painted by himself as being 'by his own hand'. As we have already seen, for Adriaen van der Werff, to name just one example, the fact that his brother Pieter actually had a large share in the production of a particular painting and not the other, did not make any difference in the selling price. In each of these cases, Adriaen van der Werff painted the finishing touch and guaranteed their quality. Tummers argues that it was the quality that counted, which means that a painting did not need to be entirely autograph. She demonstrates that the master's touch was considered of great importance for the connoisseur in discerning good paintings from copies and studio productions. But she also shows that they were not that preoccupied with the question of whether or not the painting was entirely autograph. In many cases, they would have assumed that the less important parts were done by assistants anyway, which called for a 'hierarchical' way of looking at the works, where one had to focus on the key elements in a painting.

The buyer's opinion

Naturally, clients took it for granted that the master's work was of higher quality than the assistant's, even if the 'identity' of a great artist was not yet an issue. This easily led to potential tension between the interests of producers or sellers and clients. In early contracts for altarpieces we find already stipulations that the master had to paint it 'with his own hand' and thus without the assistance of pupils – the first case Liesbeth Helmus records is a contract from 1498.⁶⁵ In another contract it is stipulated that the

master who received the commission should do the most important parts himself, such as 'all the naked parts [i.e., faces, hands, etc.] and the most important sections' (*alle de naecten ende 't principael werc*). In 1520, this led to a lawsuit because the painter of an altarpiece, Albert Cornelis, disagreed with his patrons about what this meant. He had done the faces with his own hand, saying that he was obliged 'to produce only the faces with his own hands, because here lies the most art' (*zelve metter handt te makene dan de aenzichten, daar de meeste const an licht*).⁶⁶ In fact, this is not so different from the seventeenth-century customer who felt cheated because he bought a painting for 17 guilders, after having been told by a dealer that it was an excellent work by a certain master, but was then informed by the artist himself – who was later consulted by the apparently suspicious buyer – that it concerned a painting by his humblest pupil, and that he sold it to the dealer for only 5 guilders and would never have let it pass as a work of his own.⁶⁷ In both cases, it is the hand of the master himself that guaranteed the best quality for the customer, but in this last case, the owner of the painting was obviously not an expert capable of making a judgement about such matters. However, this client was lucky that he could still return to the painter of the work. When a work of art was by an artist who was dead, one had to rely on one's own knowledge and experience or on that of an expert or dealer. Jonckheere's book *The Auction of King William's Paintings* contains numerous examples of foreign collectors who relied completely on the knowledge and expertise of their agents in Holland when buying 'Old Master Paintings'.⁶⁸ Others, however, did their research and consulted independent connoisseurs, as Jonckheere argues in his essay in this volume (pp. 69-95).

Contracts for fifteenth and sixteenth century altarpieces often included stipulations that a committee of guild members would upon completion judge whether the price was justified by the quality of the altarpiece. However, those who did the assessing of the quality and value of paintings (and the aspects that contributed to that value), changed significantly over the course of the sixteenth century – and this happened first in Antwerp – a period in which religious and secular panel paintings became commodities in an increasingly market-oriented society, commodities to be appreciated and enjoyed by burghers as decorations for their private homes. The tensions that arose between Amsterdam guild members and art dealers who had come from the Southern Netherlands in the early seventeenth century, seems to have been part of this process of change. In 1608, shortly before the signing of the Twelve Years' Truce, and continuing during the next few years, a large number of paintings from Antwerp apparently flooded the Dutch market and was sold at auctions.⁶⁹ The established painters demanded that the city council immediately enact measures to contain this influx from the south. They complained that these paintings were being sold for much more than their value through 'cunning and ungodly importunity', because the 'majority [are] poor copies'. Stimulated by profit, they contended, these interlopers obtain as many paintings as possible in Antwerp and the surrounding area, 'such that a multitude of paintings is presently at [their] disposal, in order to be sold here in the above-mentioned manner'. The Amsterdammers were convinced that 'in a short time this city, yea, the entire country will be filled with rubbish and inferior apprentices' work', adding that 'the good burghers here, who by and large have little knowledge of painting, [are being] deceived'.⁷⁰ In a petition dating from 1613, the sellers were said to withdraw the better works when bids were too low, 'such that the country was being inundated mostly by copies and other worthless rubbish occasioning the ridicule of all distinguished art lovers and the noticeable disrepute of art'. Although the guild members cited the inferior quality of the works as the main reason for their concern,

capitalising on customers' fears relating to the unwitting purchase of copies instead of an 'original' (*principaal*), their real objection (and panic) had, in my opinion, to do with the fact that the intruders were successful. Evidently, there was no shortage of customers for the imports from Antwerp. These paintings sold readily for prices the Amsterdam guild members felt were far too high. In other words, they were in great demand – despite the disparaging judgement of the dean and headmen – by a public that was willing to pay more than they were worth, at least, according to local painters, who wanted to protect their own production.

The question is whether the quality of the imported paintings was, indeed, as inferior as their critics would have us believe. They were inexpensive compared to the paintings that established local painters tended to produce, and undoubtedly, that was a significant enough threat. The paintings were probably cheaper because they were made using different production methods, for example, by means of less time-consuming and labour-intensive techniques. This alone was enough for the Amsterdam guild members to label them as rubbish, apprentices' work and copies; this was the most obvious vocabulary for expressing scathing censure.⁷¹ Moreover, when these works sold for prices higher than the guild members deemed appropriate based on criteria of technical execution and time invested, the traditional way in which they assessed prices was entirely overturned. For those who imported this 'Brabant rubbish', apparently 'what the fool was willing to bid for it' was all that mattered. Suddenly the artists themselves were no longer determining the price based on conventional rules of thumb; it was now the dealers and their clients who determined the monetary value of works of art and they did so on much more imponderable grounds such as subject matter and '*handeling*' (manner of painting), factors which became dependent on trends and fashions in taste. And one wonders whether the buyers were indeed mostly burghers 'who by and large [had] little knowledge of paintings'. There were plenty of knowledgeable individuals in attendance at the auctions, which probably only further incited the fierce response of the guild. The same names appear over and over again, especially of Amsterdammers of Southern Netherlandish – usually Antwerp – origin, who were often registered as painters, but were presumably primarily active as dealers.⁷² They probably sold the works chiefly among their own circle – that is to Southern Netherlandish immigrants, who were now in a position to purchase a type of art that was already familiar to them. In this way, new standards for quality and value were established for new types of paintings by new audiences. From this time onward, competing notions about who had the expertise to actually judge paintings – practising artists or art lovers/connoisseurs – would continue to rage. In her second article in this volume (pp. 127-147), Anna Tummers examines this fascinating discussion, analysing such issues in theoretical sources and connecting the diverging opinions to practices on the art market; in both cases, the amateur-connoisseurs became more prominent as the century progressed.

Karel van Mander was already somewhat uncomfortable with the phenomenon that new parties were able to establish the value of paintings, which went hand in hand with the increased popularity of various emerging genres of paintings. This is especially apparent when he begins describing the life of David Vinckboons with a peculiar exhortation in which he states in a rather roundabout way that, because 'his own understanding or judiciousness might not be good enough in itself to write with discrimination and proper discretion about the practitioners of our art or their works', he makes it a habit, when he enters the houses of art lovers, 'to take heed and note which artful works and by whose hand have been gathered and been valued there as

being special and excellent'. Thus, he not only follows his own understanding, but also 'the consensus of the connoisseurs', and for that reason, he cannot, he notes, omit David Vinckboons.⁷³ Especially when discussing the painters specialising in the new genres – from Pieter Bruegel and Gillis van Coninxloo, to Jacob Grimmer, Pieter Baltens, Cornelis Molenaar, Hans Bol, Hendrick van Steenwijck and David Vinckboons – Van Mander emphasises that they were popular among art lovers. Apparently, it was the appreciation of art lovers that determined their reputation; thus, Van Mander felt compelled to hide behind their assessments when he discussed Vinckboons.

The assessments of art lovers, who were often also 'amateur dealers' must have been crucial for the many young painters beginning their careers in the early seventeenth century. To be 'held in great esteem by art lovers' (*bij den liefhebbers in grooter weerden ghehouden*)⁷⁴ – which also meant being able to command higher prices – must have become imperative. A few decades later, in 1642, it seems obvious to Jan Orlers, himself an art lover, that the admiration of art lovers and the value they attached to a painter's work were the criteria that one should use to select a painter as an important asset to the fame of the city, and to be praised in his prestigious *Description of the City of Leyden*.⁷⁵ To Orlers, it was fairly evident that Jan van Goyen was the greatest landscape painter of his time, since his renown 'can be evidenced by many paintings which are held in high value by all art lovers'; and the greatness of Gerrit Dou can be affirmed because 'his work is highly valued by art lovers and is sold for high prices'. In that same year, Philips Angel made clear that the criteria of what made a good painter were the things that art lovers liked to see and found attractive.⁷⁶

It is obvious that these art lovers needed knowledge to discern the differences in quality, or they needed the help of reliable middlemen who could provide the necessary insight. The fear of buying a lemon must have intensified as the prices of reputed masters diverged more significantly from those of second- and third-rate masters, and as more mediocre and bad copies entered the market. This fear was expressed by the St. Luke's Guild in The Hague, which, in 1632, filed a complaint with the city government about art dealers who were not members of the guild and who 'deceitfully sell art to a lot of people, cheating them with works that are often copies and rubbish, but selling these as excellent art'.⁷⁷ Whether they were right about the inferior quality of the works sold by those dealers – naturally it was their purpose to protect their own membership – is of less importance than the fact that they zeroed in on this fear, just as the Amsterdam guild had done a few decades earlier. After all, prices could vary wildly, not only between the paintings of reputable masters and the works of less reputable masters or even anonymous paintings, but also between the works of one and the same master; the range could be incredible. No wonder that art lovers who forked over large sums for works of well-known masters, became increasingly anxious about being swindled with copies or works by pupils or imitators.

Neil De Marchi and Ed Romein both apply the economic theory of Akerlof who observed the used car market to demonstrate that increased uncertainty among the buyers regarding quality because the sellers fail to share certain information with buyers, can have the effect of bad products driving good products off the market, which can eventually lead to a collapse of the market.⁷⁸ Ed Romein went so far as to argue that, because of uncertainties about quality in the Leiden art market in the 1630s, caused by an incongruity of information between buyers and sellers of paintings and consumer anxiety regarding bad paintings, the art market stopped functioning properly (many painters left Leiden during this period)⁷⁹ and was in need of criteria of

quality, which the traditional guilds were no longer able to supply. A new organisation – which they called eventually a St. Lukes guild – was established in 1644, which, according to Romein, was meant to stimulate the sharing of information and augment the interaction between artists, dealers and art lovers. During this same period, a selective canon of good painters against which others could be gauged was established by Jan Orlers, while Philips Angel created a set of criteria to assess good paintings, criteria that were grounded in the shared judgements of connoisseurs. Both Orlers and Angel related quality to the appreciation of the market and advocated Gerrit Dou's fine and 'mannerless manner',⁸⁰ thus stimulating the emergence of the Leiden 'fine painters'. Although I am not entirely convinced that it all fits together so neatly, Romein made some very intriguing points in this area.

One of the results of the prestigious city descriptions by authors like Jan Orlers, Samuel Ampzing and Theodoor Schrevelius, in which renowned painters – living or dead – of a city were celebrated even more extensively than great scholars and theologians were,⁸¹ was that their names – even in their lifetime – became canonised, a process which had been started in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries by Vasari (1550) and Van Mander (1604). Reputation by name must have become more and more important in the course of the 17th century, which went hand in hand with identifiability by genre, subject matter and 'manner of painting' (*handeling*). Inventories and sales from the early part of the century do not reveal many names; however, in the larger cities of Holland this increased rapidly.⁸² By the 1650s, one notices an amazing increase in the need and ability to name works of art. Hendrik Bugge van Ring, to name an art lover who owned a huge number of paintings and must have been present when his inventory was made (1667), was able to name no less than 98 different artists by whom he had paintings hanging in his house; he was also precise in naming copies and attributions he was not sure of.⁸³ It was important not only for the truly talented artists to distinguish their work from that of others, but also among the humbler artists we can observe many painters pursuing their own recognisability in subject matter and manner, rather than merely imitating better-known artists, the result of which was that an immense variety of work could be seen in the art market. Toward the middle of the seventeenth century, there were numerous painters with limited gifts who created their own niche by way of signed paintings with specific subjects in a characteristic manner that were available for low prices. We still know an amazing number of well-defined oeuvres developed by relatively minor artists working during this period.

Thus, this market situation meant that painters, in the words of De Marchi and Van Miegroet, had to make 'creative moves to secure some (temporary) differential advantage'. It seems that 'successful artists ... in addition to having talent, had a sophisticated, positive understanding of the market as a forum for experimentation, rather than seeing it as a threatening place ...'.⁸⁴ To be the pupil of a famous master, must have been a good start toward the acquisition of a reputation. Malvasia's remark that 'the very fact of having such a great master bestowed good fortune on Reni's pupils', probably was also true for many of Rembrandt, Bloemaet, Dou or Van Poelenburch's pupils, to name a few. If they were ambitious, these pupils, after leaving their master's studio, had to find a way to show off their prestigious backgrounds while simultaneously developing a recognisable style of their own.

The talent and skill with which painters were able to suggest a convincing lifelikeness and the inventiveness with which they made their work identifiable through a certain range of subjects, motifs and manners, including a personal touch of the brush, constituted an important part of their 'capital'. It sounds entirely believable

that Frans Hals, as Houbraken recounts, used 'to paint the underlayers of his portraits in a meltingly soft way, after which he brought in the touch of the brush, saying: 'And now the characteristic touch of the master has to be added.'⁸⁵ But for connoisseurs, it was not just a specific handling of the brush that was an important guide for distinguishing quality. As Romein argued, developing a 'fine' technique, in which the brushstroke was invisible, was another possible strategy to pursue. Art lovers then had to use criteria such as correct anatomy, perspective, colouring (especially of flesh), powerfully organised light and shadow, differentiation in reflection of light on surfaces to suggest materials, and the measure of refinement in a smooth and meticulous rendering of the wealth of 'illusionistic' details, without interference of a particular way of handling the brush. According to Angel, who enumerated these criteria, the standards for this style were set by Gerrit Dou, who, in his view, knew how to apply this technique with a curious looseness, never lapsing into stiffness and unnaturalness – still an acute and apposite observation.

Regrettably, in the Netherlands, one-liners like Reni's, that he was a better artist than Guercino because he sold better and had more followers, were not written down. However, painters like Rembrandt, Dou, Van Poelenburch and Van Goyen, must have also been very much aware that they were the market leaders who created a hallmark style that became highly popular among certain groups of art lovers. They were the ones that attracted many followers supplying the same type of paintings for a lower price or making copies of their works. Unlike Dou and Van Poelenburch, the fashion Van Goyen created did not last: while the prices of second-hand Dous and Poelenburchs soared after their deaths, the value of Van Goyen's paintings, as did the works of all paintings by artists of the 'monochrome' trend, declined rapidly.⁸⁶ In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Van Goyen's name would almost completely disappear from the art market (the works themselves did not, however, since they are still around in large numbers). Trends and fashion – during the painter's lifetime as well as after – would have been powerful incentives for increase or decrease prices. As Jan de Bisschop wrote when he disapprovingly referred to the 'naturalistic' trend in Dutch art: 'every age ... has its fashions [he uses the word *mode*], which are introduced by one or more masters held in high esteem at the time and therefore capable of making an impact'.⁸⁷ This is, I believe, what the amateur and economic theorist Bernard Mandeville meant by 'time of his age' – the period in which an artist worked – when he enumerated the criteria that define art market prices for second-hand paintings.⁸⁸ The other criteria he mentioned are already familiar: the name of the master, the prestige of those owning the works and the length of time the works have been in the possession of 'great families', as well as the scarcity of the artist's works.

The second-hand market

For art lover-connoisseurs and dealers this meant that, especially when selling or buying second-hand works, they not only needed to be able to put names on works of art, but also to rank them in terms of name, reputation and quality on the basis of experience and knowledge of alternatives while using criteria that were current to a certain period of time.⁸⁹ However, the goals of these two groups were different. In his article in the present book, Koenraad Jonckheere (pp. 69-95) focuses on auctions in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a period in which the market for second-hand paintings by 'dead' masters expanded enormously and became far more impor-

tant than that of living masters. He emphasises the conflicting interests of art dealers, on the one hand, and connoisseurs, on the other, and examines how dealers, auctioneers and connoisseurs attributed works of art, demonstrating that there was a marked difference between their respective attitudes towards attribution and the practices they applied. The sellers, not bothering with authenticity and more precise information, used 'brand names' to categorise in order to better guide amateurs through the vast art market. They left it up to the elite amateur-connoisseurs to assess a work's quality and challenge attributions. The latter group gathered and shared information – in which a good provenance played an important role. Thus, to understand the value of attributions in late seventeenth-century or early eighteenth-century catalogues it is important to make distinctions between art dealers/auctioneers and amateur-connoisseurs, he argues.

De Marchi and Van Miegroet (pp. 149-174) in their essay focus on the period immediately following the one discussed by Jonckheere. They observe that, in the course of the eighteenth century, new relations and new roles for art dealers and connoisseurs began to take shape in an increasingly complex art market. Examining the dealings in seventeenth-century Netherlandish art on the eighteenth-century Paris art market, they focus on the art dealers Gersaint and Lebrun, who, they argue, assumed both roles: that of the auctioneer/dealer and that of the connoisseur, endeavouring to satisfy both connoisseurs and new collectors. The dealers made themselves knowledgeable and obliterated the knowledge gap between connoisseurs and art dealers, and made the sales far more transparent than before, revealing information and knowledge about attribution, condition and provenance. This is exactly the opposite of what happened on the Dutch art market around 1700 where auctioneers kept their knowledge secret, as Jonckheere argues.

Together, the following articles demonstrate that the study of changing practices on the art market in relation to the artist's, dealer's and art lover's ideas and attitudes toward evaluating works of art yield many new insights, while simultaneously stimulating new areas of research.

* I am grateful to Marten Jan Bok who made many valuable comments and whose expertise greatly enriched this essay.

1 Marten Jan Bok, 'Pricing the Unpriced: How Dutch Seventeenth-Century Painters determined the Selling Price of their Work', in: Michael North and David Omrod (eds.), *Art Markets in Europe, 1400-1800*, Aldershot 1998, pp. 102-111, esp. p. 104.

2 Richard E. Spear, *The "Divine" Guido: Religion, Sex, Money and Art in the World of Guido Reni*, New Haven and London 1997, p. 212; for the second quotation, see also the article in this volume by Anna Tummers, pp. 31-66. From: Giulio Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, A. Marucchi and L. Salerno (eds.), Rome 1956-1957.

3 Neil De Marchi and Hans Van Miegroet, 'Art, Value and Market Practices in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century', *The Art Bulletin* 86 (1994), pp. 451-464, esp. p. 451.

4 See Koenraad Jonckheere, *Kunsthandel en*

diplomatie. De veiling van de schilderijenverzameling van Willem III (1713) en de rol van het diplomatieke netwerk in de Europese kunsthandel, Dissertation, Universiteit van Amsterdam 2005, pp. 199-206. (English edition: Koenraad Jonckheere, *The Auction of King William's Paintings (1713). Elite international Art Trade at the End of the Dutch Golden Age*, *Oculi: Studies in the Arts of the Low Countries*. 11, Amsterdam 2008.)

5 Jeffrey Muller, 'Measures of Authenticity: The Detection of Copies in the Early Literature on Connoisseurship', in *Studies in the History of Art, National Gallery of Art* 20, 1989, pp. 14-151.

6 Jaap van der Veen, 'By His Own Hand, The Valuation of Autograph Paintings in the Seventeenth-Century', in: Ernst van de Wetering et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, Dordrecht 2005, vol. 4, pp. 1-41.

7 Bok, *Pricing the Unpriced* (note 1); De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Art, Value and Market Practices* (note 3); Neil De Marchi and Hans Van Miegroet,

'Pricing Invention: 'Originals', 'Copies', and their Relative Value in Seventeenth Century Netherlandish Art Markets, in: Victor Ginsburgh and P.-M. Menger (eds.), *Recent Contributions to the Economics of the Arts*, Amsterdam 1996, pp. 27-70.

8 Ed Romein, 'Knollen en citroenen op de Leidse kunstmarkt: over de rol van kwaliteit in de opkomst van de Leidse fijnschilderstijl', *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 17 (2001), pp. 75-94; Elizabeth A. Honig, 'The beholder as a work of art: A study in the location of value in seventeenth-century Flemish painting', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 46. *Beeld en Zelfbeeld in de Nederlandse kunst* (1995), pp. 253-297.

9 Spear, *The "Divine" Guido* (note 2), p. 213.

10 Quoted by Spear, *The "Divine" Guido* (note 2), p. 212.

11 As Marten Jan Bok pointed out, it is often worthwhile to realise the original meaning of a word. Implicit in the word 'honorarium' is 'honour'; the concept is closely related to the culture of honour among the nobility. For a gentleman it was dishonourable to work for money. To consider painting as a liberal art, rather than a handicraft, is linked to this world of honour, exchange of favours, gifts, etc. See Marten Jan Bok, 'Familie, vrienden en opdrachtgevers', in: J. Huisken et al. (eds.), *Jacob van Campen: het klassieke ideaal in de Gouden Eeuw*, Amsterdam 1995, pp. 26-52, esp. p. 46.

12 Spear, *The "Divine" Guido* (note 2), p. 242.

13 Spear, *The "Divine" Guido* (note 2), p. 221.

14 Joachim von Sandrart, *Academie de Bau-Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste* (ed. A. R. Peltzer), München 1925, p. 196; Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, Amsterdam 1718-1721, 3 vols., vol. 2, p. 4; Eric Jan Sluiter, *Leidse Fijnschilders. Van Gerrit Dou tot Frans van Mieris de Jonge 1630-1670*, Leiden (Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal) 1988 (exh. cat.), p. 26 and 27.

15 O. Naumann, *Frans van Mieris the Elder*, Doornspijk 1981, cat. no. 192, Sluiter. *Leidse Fijnschilders* (note 14), p. 27.

16 Guido M.C. Jansen, 'De Notitie der gelijxe schilderoeffening van Henrik van Limborch (1681-1759)', *Bulletin van het Rijkmuseum* 45 (1997), pp. 27-67, esp. p. 32-33. For the transcription of Van Limborch's account book, see pp. 46-67.

17 Bok, *Pricing the Unpriced* (note 1), p. 108. For Van der Werff's account book (only over the years 1716-1722), see Barbara Gaethgens, *Adriaen van der Werff. 1659-1722*, Munich 1987, pp. 442-444.

18 Only one painting made in the years recorded in this account book was entirely done by Adriaen. In the other paintings Pieter's share of the work varied between 20 and 60 percent (in many cases around 25 percent).

19 Johan van Gool, *De nieuwe schouburg der Nederlantsche kunstschilders en schilderessen: waer in de levens- en kunstbedryven der tans*

levende en reets overleedene schilders, die van Houbraken, noch eenig ander schryver, zyn aengeteekend, verhaelt worden, The Hague 1750-1751, vol. 1, p. 237. Van Gool explicitly mentions that 'he [Pieter] had finished his work, the knight [Adriaan] painted over it in wet' (schilderde ... het in 't nat over).

20 For a complete transcription and a valuable and exhaustive analysis of Wyttenhorst's exceptionally precise inventory, see Marion Boers, 'De schilderijenverzameling van baron Willem Vincent van Wyttenhorst', *Oud Holland* 117 (2004), pp. 181-243, esp. pp. 198-208 on the prices.

21 Eric Jan Sluiter, 'Jan van Goyen als markeerder, virtuoos en vernieuwer', in: C. Vogelaar (ed.), *Jan van Goyen*, Leiden (Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal) 1996 (exh. cat.), pp. 38-59, esp. pp. 39-48. In a few cases involving large commissioned paintings, Van Goyen worked in a more elaborate style, which means that the result was more expensive. Sluiter, *Jan van Goyen* (note 20), pp. 44-45.

22 Jan Jansz. Orlers, *Beschrijvinge der stad Leyden. Inhoudende 't begin, den voortgang, ende den wasdom der selver: de stichtinge vande kercken, cloosteren, gasthuysen, ende andere publicque gestichten, etc. [...]*, Leiden 1641, pp. 373-74 (Van Goyen), p. 375 (Rembrandt). See Sluiter, *Jan van Goyen* (note 21), p. 39.

23 Quoted by Boers, *De schilderijenverzameling* (note 20), p. 208; Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh* (note 14), vol. 2, pp. 112-113. His pupil Justus van Huysum provided Houbraken with this information.

24 Marion Boers-Goosens, 'Prices of Northern Netherlandish Paintings in the Seventeenth Century', in: A. Golahny et al. (eds.) *In his Milieu. Essays on Netherlandish Art in Memory of John Michael Montias*, Amsterdam 2006, pp. 59-73, esp. p. 63.

25 Quoted by De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Pricing Invention* (note 7), p. 59 from Katlijne Van der Stighelen, 'De (atelier-)bedrijvigheid van Andries Snellinck (1587-1653) en co', *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1989), p. 305.

26 De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Pricing Invention* (note 7), pp. 54-56. The documents on Jan Bruegel II were published by J. Denucé, *Brieven en documenten betreffend Jan Bruegel I en II*, Antwerp 1934, p. 93.

27 Van Everdingen received his first commission in 1641: a militia piece of the officers of the Old Civic Guard (Oude Schutterij) in Alkmaar; see Paul Huys Jansen et al. (eds.), *De zestiende en zeventiende-eeuwse schilderijen van het Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar*, Alkmaar 1997, no. 23.

28 Boers, *De schilderijenverzameling* (note 20), p. 227.

29 Boers-Goosens, *Prices of Northern Netherlandish Paintings* (note 24), pp. 64-65.

- 30 Boers-Goosens, *Prices of Northern Netherlandish Paintings* (note 24), pp. 63-64. For the documents, see Jan Jacob de Gelder, *Bartholomeus van der Helst*, Rotterdam 1921, p. 144, doc. 87. Also in A. Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare: Urkunden zur Geschichte der Holländischen Kunst des XVIIten und XVIIIten Jahrhunderts*, The Hague 1915-1921, vol. 1, pp. 299-301.
- 31 Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare* (note 30), vol. 2, pp. 671-79.
- 32 Quoted by Boers-Goosens, *Prices of Northern Netherlandish Paintings* (note 24), pp. 63, from De Nora de Poorter, 'Seriewerk en recyclage: Doorgedreven efficiëntie in het geroutineerde atelier van Jacob Jordaeus', in: H. Vlieghe (ed.), *Concept, Design, and Execution in Flemish Painting. 1500-1700*, Antwerp 2000, pp. 229-30.
- 33 About Rembrandt's troubles with clients, see especially Paul Crenshaw, *Rembrandt's Bankruptcy: The Artist, His Patrons, and the Art Market in Seventeenth-Century Netherlands*, Cambridge 2006, chapter VI.
- 34 H. Gerson, *Seven Letters by Rembrandt*, The Hague 1961, p. 30. Rembrandt demanded 200 pounds, without specification. However, this would have been 200 Flemish pounds (=1200 guilders).
- 35 H. Gerson, *Seven Letters* (note 34), p. 46.
- 36 *Ibid.* (note 34), p. 62.
- 37 *Ibid.* (note 34), p. 34.
- 38 It is not certain that they received 500 guilders; this figure is the 'estimate' (raminge) which Jacob van Campen made of the expenses (Friso Lammertse in A. Blankert, *Hollands Classicisme in de zeventiende-eeuwse schilderkunst*, Rotterdam and Frankfurt a/M 1999, p. 95; See for the document D.F. Slothouwer, *De paleizen van Frederik Hendrik*, Leiden 1945, p. 315.)
- 39 One would think that Houbraken's wry remark that, in the period when Flink was his pupil, everyone had to paint in Rembrandt's manner if one wanted to please the world – in other words, that Rembrandt's style was high fashion – would have been valid for the 1630s only. Indeed, the number of followers diminished after the mid 1640s, when other styles became more fashionable, but his reputation was at this time obviously still on a remarkably high level.
- 40 Spear, *The "Divine" Guido* (note 2), p. 211.
- 41 Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh* (note 14), vol. 1, p. 269.
- 42 Spear, *The "Divine" Guido* (note 2), p. 212.
- 43 Inge Broekman will demonstrate in a chapter of her dissertation on Huygens as connoisseur and collector that Huygens himself rarely seems to have bought expensive paintings.
- 44 On the symbolic value of gifts, see Michael Zell, 'The Gift Among Friends: Rembrandt's Art in the Network of His Patronal and Social Relations,' in: A. Chong and M. Zell, *Rethinking Rembrandt*,

Boston (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum) 2002 (exh. cat.), pp. 173-194, esp. p. 182.

- 45 Gerson, *Seven Letters* (note 34), p. 50.
- 46 On Huygens as a member of a circle of elite connoisseurs, see: Herman Roodenburg, 'Visiting Vermeer: Performing Civility', in: A. Golahny et al (eds.), *In his Milieu. Essays on Netherlandish Art in Memory of John Michael Montias*, Amsterdam 2006, pp. 385-394.
- 47 The emulative reference to Rubens's gruesome Prometheus, which could be found for some time in The Hague in Sir Dudley Carlton's collection might have been a calculated strategy to show The Hague connoisseurs that he was able to surpass Rubens in the representation of extreme passions (see Eric Jan Sluiter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude*, Amsterdam 2006, p. 260). However, also in this respect, he might have misjudged Huygens: sending a painting with such an atrocious subject as a present to a gentleman, might have been taken as an offence.
- 48 See Crenshaw's outstanding discussion of all the possible reasons for this dispute: Crenshaw, *Rembrandt's Bankruptcy* (note 32), pp. 111-120.
- 49 *Ibid.* (note 32), p. 132.
- 50 *Ibid.* (note 32), p. 131.
- 51 The new documents, discovered by Lauro Magnani, were presented at a small symposium at the Rembrandthuis on June 13, 2008, and they were published in: L. Magnani, '1666. Een onbekende opdracht uit Genua voor Rembrandt', *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis* (2007), 2-17 (published June 2008).
- 52 Magnani, '1666', p. 6: 'pur applicando tutto il suo spirito all'opera non può perfettionarla in quella brevità [che] si desiderebbe'. In the article by Magnani this is translated with 'although he has thrown himself into the work heart and soul'. However, this translation is too superficial for contemporary language; it only says that Rembrandt worked with great dedication. In my opinion, Rembrandt informed them that he is using all his mental powers as an artist while working on these new and important inventions and that this takes a great amount of time.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 6: 'vuol in questa occasione acquistare in cottesse parti lode et honore.'
- 54 *Ibid.*, p. 5, 'Pretende molto denaro però si rimesso in persona intelligente di pittura per stare a suo giudizio.'
- 55 See also Crenshaw, *Rembrandt's Bankruptcy* (note 32), chapter 6.
- 56 Spear, *The "Divine" Guido* (note 2), p. 213.
- 57 De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Art, Value and Market Practices* (note 3), pp. 40-41.
- 58 For an English translation, see Ruth Saunders Magurn (ed.), *Letters of Peter Paul Rubens*, Evanston 1991, pp. 60-61.
- 59 De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Art, Value and*

- Market Practices* (note 3), p. 58; they also ignore the great difference in size when they calculate the ratio between original and copy.
- 60 As Marten Jan Bok pointed out to me, the word 'principaal' comes from accounting and refers to the 'principal money' from which interest is harvested. In painting, the 'principaal' is worth more, because it could be used for 'exclusive' copying as long as the distribution of the image could be controlled by the owner, and because better copies could be made from a 'principaal' than from a copy.
- 61 Interestingly, Guercino even charged the same amount for copies he made himself as for the originals, but much less for copies by assistants; in his efficient manner of pricing, there was obviously no place for invention; See Spear, *The "Divine" Guido* (note 2), p. 215.
- 62 Boers, *De schilderijenverzameling* (note 20), p. 217.
- 63 Spear, *The "Divine" Guido* (note 2), pp. 263 and 269; Muller, *Measures of Authenticity* (note 5), p. 145.
- 64 *Ibid.* (note 2), p. 217.
- 65 Quoted in Liesbeth Helmus' dissertation on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century contracts for altarpieces in the Northern Netherlands, which will be published in 2008 (Liesbeth Helmus, *Schilderen in opdracht. Noord-Nederlandse contracten voor altaarstukken 1450-1570*).
- 66 About the complicated genesis of this altar, see Dorien Tamis, 'The Genesis of Albert Cornelis's "Coronation of the Virgin" in Bruges', *The Burlington Magazine* 172 (2000), pp. 672-680.
- 67 It concerns a painting by Isack van Duijnen (1686); see also Anna Tummers' article in this volume pp. 31-66. For the document, see Van der Veen, *By His Own Hand* (note 6), doc. 28.
- 68 Jonckheere, *The Auction of King William's Paintings* (note 4).
- 69 For the following case, see more extensively: Eric Jan Sluiter, 'Over Brabantse voddens, economische concurrentie, artistieke wedijver en de groei van de markt voor schilderijen in de eerste decennia van de zeventiende eeuw', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 50. *Art for the Market 1500-1700* (1999), pp. 113-144, especially pp. 118-121 (see for English translation: <http://home.medewerker.uva.nl/e.j.sluiter/>)
- 70 Fr.D.O. Obreen (ed.), *Archief voor Nederlandsche Kunstgeschiedenis*, Rotterdam 1877-1878, vol. 3, pp. 164-165.
- 71 See also Neil De Marchi, 'The role of Dutch auctions and lotteries in shaping the art market(s) of 17th century Holland', *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 28 (1995), pp. 203-221, esp. pp. 206-212. De Marchi took this literally and assumed that it concerned indeed rubbish, copies

- and works by pupils. For this reason, he applied Akerlof's theory concerning the fear of 'lemons' (see below, note 73). However, the success of the auction sales and the probable expertise of the buyers (that is to say, the buyers at the sales mentioned below – we do not know if there were other illegal sales), apart from the fact that the market did not collapse but started to grow rapidly, points in another direction.
- 72 Montias, J. Michael, *Art at Auction in 17th century Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 2002, pp. 41-51 and Sluiter, *Over Brabantse voddens* (note 64), p. 140 and note 46.
- 73 Karel van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck*, Haarlem 1604, fol. 299r.
- 74 Van Mander wrote this about, for instance, Jacob Grimmer, Cornelis Molenaer (Schele Neel [Cross-eyed Neel]) and Joos van Liere (Van Mander, *Schilder-Boeck* (note 68), fol. 256v and 257r. Orlers would write something similar several decades later about Van Goyen. See Orlers, *Beschrijvinge der stad Leyden* (note 21), p. 373. With regard to strategies of innovative behaviour on a competitive art market, see De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Art, Value and Market Practices* (note 3), pp. 451-464. Also see: Marten Jan Bok, *Vraag en aanbod op de Nederlandse kunstmarkt, 1580-1700*, Utrecht 1994, p. 190. For the concept of 'liefhebber (art lover)', idem, p. 73-75
- 75 Eric Jan Sluiter, *Verwondering over de schilderijenproductie in de Gouden Eeuw*, Amsterdam 2002, pp. 16-17.
- 76 For the relevant passages, see passages in Angel's text, see Eric Jan Sluiter *Seductress of Sight. Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age*, Zwolle 2000, p. 9 and 223-258.
- 77 Romein, *Knollen en citroenen* (note 8), p. 77.
- 78 De Marchi, *The role of Dutch auctions* (note 66), pp. 203-221 and Romein, *Knollen en citroenen* (note 8) pp. 79-82.
- 79 Dudok van Heel argued that many artists left Leiden in the early 1630's because of the oppressive political and economic climate: S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, *De jonge Rembrandt onder tijdgenoten: godsdienst en schilderkunst in Leiden en Amsterdam*, PhD Dissertation Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen 2006, pp. 195-197.
- 80 Angel thought of Dou's work as not having a recognizable 'manner' (see Sluiter, *Seductress of Sight* [note 71], p. 245).
- 81 Sluiter, *Seductress of Sight* (note 71), pp. 210-205. Sluiter, *Verwondering over de schilderijenproductie* (note 70), pp. 13-15.
- 82 A good example would be the Leiden inventories selected by Willemijn Fock (she only selected the ones that included a lot paintings, 12 inventories from every ten years). C. Willemijn Fock, *Kunstbezit in Leiden in de 17de eeuw*, in: Th.H. Lunsigh Scheurleer, C.W. Fock and A.J. van Dissel (eds.), *Het Rapenburg. Geschiedenis van een*

Leidse Gracht, vol. Va, Leiden 1990, pp. 3-36. As a matter of fact, this is not true for cities outside the province of Holland: see the recent study of Leeuwarden by Piet Bakker, *Gezicht op Leeuwarden. Schilders in Friesland en de markt voor schilderijen in de Gouden Eeuw*, Amsterdam 2008. See also below, p. 38.

83 Eric Jan Sluijter, "All striving to adorn their houses with costly peeces". Two Case Studies of Paintings in Wealthy Interiors', in: Mariët Westermann (ed.), *Art & Home: Dutch Interiors in the Golden Age*, Denver (Denver Art Museum) 2001 (exh. cat.), pp. 102-127, esp. p. 119.

84 De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Art, Value and Market Practices* (note 3), pp. 459-460.

85 Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh* (note 14), vol. 1, p. 92.

86 See the list of maximum, minimum, average and median prices paid at auction for these painters in the 1676-1739 period in Jonckheere, *The Auction of King William's Paintings* (note 4), appendix A2, pp. 229-233.

87 Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* (note 47), p. 197.

88 De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Art, Value and Market Practices* (note 3), pp. 454-455. They assume that it refers to the period within an artist's oeuvre.

89 De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Art, Value and Market Practices* (note 3), p. 460.