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## EDITORS' GREETING

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In the Summer 2024 issue of the *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, three articles provide new insights into visual culture, in the fullest sense of that term. Our contributors examine the ability of images to spur interpretation and to shape it; efforts to embed discourses of image-making within pictorial narratives; and assertions of artistic self-awareness.

Two further essays treat early modern difference in contrasting ways. Barbara A. Kaminska discusses the careers of prelingually deaf painters—Hendrick Avercamp, for example—and the conceptualization of deafness and muteness in the historiography and theory of Dutch art. In looking at one of the era's most famous works from the perspective of difference, Aneta Georgievska-Shine provides new insights into Rembrandt's *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer* in the contexts of the early modern perception of the philosopher's "foreignness" vis-à-vis other classical thinkers.

First, in an essay about Jesuit and Jesuit-inspired Flemish emblem books that codified the imagery of the sacred heart, Walter Melion explores how Jesuit emblematisers treated spiritual conformation as a pictorial process and construed exercitants as skilled artisans whose expert manipulation of various materials secures the Lord's likeness on their hearts. Then, Eric Jan Sluijter and Michael Zell, in essays on individual paintings by Rembrandt van Rijn, remind us why Rembrandt's thinking about the social and intellectual weight of picture making has figured so prominently in subsequent theorizing about the larger significance of art. Sluijter interprets *The Standard Bearer* of 1636 as a theatrical self-portrayal of Rembrandt as a comedian-painter, provocatively satirizing the image of the conceited standard bearer and displaying Rembrandt's virtuoso handling in rivalry with that of Frans Hals. Zell's study embraces as purposeful the indeterminate status of *A Woman Bathing in a Stream* of 1654 as an informal study or finished work, and its ambiguous subject as a genre scene or narrative representation. He argues that Rembrandt renders the metaphor of painting as mirroring as inadequate for his virtuosic art and, in the process, challenges gendered and poeticized tropes central to Dutch art and theory.

While this issue offers work by three senior historians, we would like to close with a word of encouragement for those of you who are new to our field. In Summer 2024, many of our readers participated in the Historians of Netherlandish Art Conference. Held in London and at Cambridge, the conference's workshops, keynotes, sessions, and concluding roundtable were a tremendous success, offering an almost dizzying array of stimulating and fascinating papers. That success was due as much to ambitious new researchers as it was to established scholars. With that in mind, the HNA board, officers, and president Walter Melion, and the conference organizers, Meredith Hale and Lizzie Marx, made a special point of welcoming, and easing access for, emerging scholars and new members; first-time participants were identified by asterisks on their badges.

In that same spirit, *JHNA*'s editors would like to invite submissions from young scholars and those who have not published with us before. As all of our authors can attest, *JHNA* pursues the highest level of rigor while also recognizing that academic work is ultimately a shared endeavor. We therefore take a hands-on approach to publication, pushing our authors to produce their best possible work not only through double-anonymous peer review but also—and perhaps more important—through close work with authors as they address the resulting reviews. In addition to its outstanding digital image capabilities and open access, *JHNA* connects articles to the [Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus](#). This structured vocabulary for describing and indexing the visual arts and architecture is a means of contextualizing articles and expanding their readership. With your help, *JHNA* will remain one of the leading journals for the early modern art of the Netherlands and neighboring regions.

As always, we owe special thanks to the two colleagues who are indispensable to the production of *JHNA*, Managing Editor Jennifer Henel and copy editor Jessica Skwire Routhier.

The Journal welcomes article submissions at any time. We also welcome proposals for *JHNA* Perspectives state-of-the-field essays, *JHNA* Conversations roundtables, and inquiries about special issues. Please consult our [Submissions Guidelines](#).

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