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Editors' Greeting

H. Perry Chapman, Jacquelyn N. Coutr  , Bret Rothstein, Joanna Woodall, Alison M. Kettering

While the ground layer is an essential feature of an early modern painting, it is largely hidden from view and has thus remained understudied. Painters of the time prepared their panel or canvas support with a ground in order to have a base layer suitable to hold the paint. Although early Netherlandish painters typically used white grounds, in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, artists in the Netherlands turned increasingly to colored grounds, using colors ranging from light grays and tans to dark reds and browns. These grounds could act as an effective and expeditious backdrop for the paint layers that reinforced painterly effects. The colored grounds exposed by Rembrandt's late, open brushwork are well known, but many other painters visually exploited colored grounds, to varying degrees, in their quest for naturalism. "Down to the Ground. The Impact of Colored Grounds on Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Painting," a special issue of the *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, is devoted to investigating the rise, use, and visual impact of colored grounds. This issue's substantial introduction and eight articles reveal the subtle revolution of colored grounds.

We would like to thank all ten authors of the essays for their contributions and for sharing their insights into colored grounds. This special issue is guest edited by two colleagues from the University of Amsterdam: paintings conservator and technical art historian Maartje Stols-Witlox and art historian Elmer Kolfin. It originated in an interdisciplinary research project that was sponsored by the Dutch National Research Council (NWO) titled [Down to the Ground: A Historical, Visual and Scientific Analysis of Coloured Grounds in Netherlands Paintings, 1550–1650](#). We are enormously grateful to Maartje and Elmer for bringing this project to *JHNA* and for their generosity and collegiality as guest editors. We also thank them for helping to support the issue with funds from the *Down to the Ground* research project.

Down to the Ground is much longer than a usual *JHNA* issue. It could not have been produced without the dedication and heroic efforts of Moorea Hall-Aquitania, contributor and assistant to the Amsterdam guest editors; Jessica Skwire Routhier, who takes copy editing to a higher level; and managing editor Jennifer Henel, whose digital imaging magic makes *JHNA* the standard-setting art history journal. Thank you.

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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](#).

With your help as readers and authors, *JHNA* will remain one of the leading journals for the early modern art of the Netherlands and neighboring regions.

H. Perry Chapman, University of Delaware, Editor in Chief
Jacquelyn N. Coutr , Art Institute of Chicago, Associate Editor
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Joanna Woodall, The Courtauld Institute, Associate Editor
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