Hidden and Unremembered: The Misattributions of the Seventeenth-Century Works by Judith Leyster, Clara Peeters and Rachel Ruysch

by

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Focusing on the genre painting of Clara Peeters, Judith Leyster and Rachel Ruysch, this thesis will contextualize the misattribution of their works to contemporaneous male painters and explain the ramifications of these misattributions for the field of art history. In some cases, works made by Peters and Leyster, or other female Dutch Baroque artists, are attributed to prominent male artists such as Frans Snyders or Frans Hals. Art connoisseurs and collectors also attributed works by female painters to their husbands or fathers, as was the case for several works by Leyster. Given the likely role of a woman in early modern patriarchal society, I will consider how the gendered subjects of still-life works, which include compositions which feature the interior domestic household, suggest female authorship. To complement the analysis of female artists from northern Europe, this paper also considers some of the gender issues of biography of women, acknowledging figures like Artemisia Gentileschi, an artist whose modern fame derives largely from her biography as a victim of rape. By examining the history of connoisseurship in the seventeenth century—when art dealers cultivated a clientele drawn from the Grand Tour in Europe—my thesis demonstrates

that dealers faced increasing motivation to raise the purchase price of paintings by assigning them to well-known male artists, as buyers were both gullible and indifferent to the details of a work's creation. I then follow connoisseurship practices up to the present, ultimately tracing the connection between connoisseurship and the art historical understanding of the seventeenth-century women artists' role in history. These three women artists, prominent during their time, are under-explored in scholarship as well as the history of their loss in reputation which this paper examines. Seeking to answer why many of these misattributions took so long to come to light, this paper explores the reattribution process for paintings by Peeters and Leyster, considers the possible catalysts for these reattributions, and shows why it is important to bring long overdue recognition to these women artists.

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Introduction

Clara Peeters, Judith Leyster, and Rachel Ruysch were all Northern European still-life painters prominent during the seventeenth century. They worked primarily in the genre of still-life painting, a popular Dutch style characterized by the representation of interior domestic spaces and food items or other objects that were accessible to women artists such as Peeters, Leyster, and Ruysch. During this era, women faced many challenges to receiving an art education and entering the commercial art market. Often, the easiest path for women artists like Peeters, Leyster, and Ruysch was to have a male family member, such as a husband or father, provide their artistic education. Many seventeenth-century genre paintings created by women have been misattributed to men by art dealers. In these cases, dealers or connoisseurs have attributed the works to prominent male artists such as Frans Snyders, Pieter Claesz, or Frans Hals. However, the disappearance of women during the Dutch Golden Age in the art historical canon and the relation to misattribution is under-explored in scholarship, therefore, deserves further examination.

Connoisseurs and art dealers also attributed works by female painters to their husbands or fathers, as was the case for several works by Judith Leyster, who was unknown for almost three centuries. Many still-life compositions from this period also lack clarity and evidence for attribution, leaving many works unattributed or unattributable. These challenges to attribution result in the obscurity of female representation in museum spaces and art historical scholarship. Several women artists were extremely prominent and successful with their still-life compositions during the seventeenth century—a reality in tension with their relative anonymity in subsequent

centuries.[1] Therefore, the search for women painters helps us better understand early modern culture and women's impact on the arts. When not much is known about the life of a female artist due to the restraints of the women's role in the domestic household during the seventeenth-century and museum representation is sparse, their legacy, reputation and contributions to the art world and history eventually fade away.

[1] Elsa Honig Fine, Women & Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th Century (Montclair: Allanheld & Schram, 1978), 24-38.

The European Grand Tour and Connoisseurship

The European Grand Tour, an early modern custom in which wealthy men from Britain and Northern Europe would travel to Italy as part of an educational rite of passage, led to a great cultural change that stimulated both travel writing and art collecting. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, this increasingly popular custom reflected the concept of 'tourism' as known in the modern world. Rome was typically the main destination of Grand Tour participants.[2] The result of a rising travel culture among the upper-class included rampant art collecting as part of the broader learning experience. Collecting allowed young adult men to learn about other cultures and write about their experiences. This phenomenon inspired travel culture for years to come, and arguably, similar cultural practices are still pertinent today.

Art collecting featured prominently in the elite ritual of the Grand Tour. However, these collectors did not pay much attention to the accuracy of attributions.[3] Still-life works were popular among collectors during the seventeenth-century. A possible reason for the popularity of this genre was its comparatively lower cost than some other works available on the art market.[4] From roughly 1610 through the 1630s, foreigners frequently acquired Netherlandish art and then resold the works for a higher rate in areas such as Rome.[5] The Dutch and Flemish regions in Europe were initially not

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[2] John Towner, The grand tour: A key phase in the history of tourism, (Annals of Tourism Research, 1985), 297-333.
[3] Gerrit Verhoeven, Mastering the Connoisseur's Eye: Paintings, Criticism, and the Canon in Dutch and Flemish Travel Culture, 1600-1750, (Eighteenth-Century Studies, 2012), 29-56.
[4] Neil De Marchi and Hans J. Van Miegroet, Art, Value, and Market Practices in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century (The Art Bulletin, 1994) 451-64.
[5] Neil De Marchi and Hans J. Van Miegroet, Art, Value, and Market Practices in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century (The Art Bulletin, 1994) 451-64.

key destinations for travelers of the European Grand Tour. However, this gradually changed during the seventeenth-century as many young men traveled there to collect art.[6] Due to the popularity of art collecting during this period, even middle-class homes would frequently have artworks displayed in them. There was also a variety of methods through which these northern Baroque still-lifes were distributed, as they were commonly traded for goods.[7] However, the level of casualness of distributing artworks varied based on the economic status of an individual.[8] Often, the wealthy European men returned home from the Grand Tour with recreations, forgeries, or falsely attributed paintings.[9]

Accurate attributions became more important for the elite during the nineteenth century. As the field of art history was becoming an established discipline, it brought increased scholarly attention to authorship and the study of individual artists, which in turn fueled the professional practice of connoisseurship. Many forgeries collected during the European Grand Tour were then investigated by museum professionals and connoisseurs, resulting in the reattribution of many works. While the increasing emphasis on connoisseurship revealed a lot of forgeries, the motivation to bluff for more fame, money, and prestige persisted, leading to several difficulties in art authentication in later periods.

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[6] Gerrit Verhoeven, Mastering the Connoisseur's Eye: Paintings, Criticism, and the Canon in Dutch and Flemish Travel Culture, 1600-1750, (Eighteenth-Century Studies, 2012), 29-56.
Alan Chong and Celeste Brusati, *Still-life Paintings from the Netherlands, 1550-1720* (Waanders Publishers, 1999), 87-104.

[7] Alan Chong and Celeste Brusati, Still-life Paintings from the Netherlands, 1550-1720 (Waanders Publishers, 1999), 87-104.

[8] Neil De Marchi and Hans J. Van Miegroet, Art, Value, and Market Practices in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century (The Art Bulletin, 1994) 451-64.

[9] Gerrit Verhoeven, Mastering the Connoisseur's Eye: Paintings, Criticism, and the Canon in Dutch and Flemish Travel Culture, 1600-1750, (Eighteenth-Century Studies, 2012), 29-56.

Even prior to the nineteenth-century, misattributions for the sake of profiteering were often the case with the art markets. As stated by Neil De Marchi and Hans J. Van Miegroet in reference to attributions during the seventeenth-century, "The reputation of the master, then as now, also influenced the price by strengthening the demand for attributed (or attributable) paintings."[10] If the work was attributable to a better-known artist, it was often ascribed to them to enhance the prestige and market value of a painting. During the seventeenth-century, the formal attribution and art authentication process was almost non-existent for art institutions, and with the rampant art collecting that occurred during the Grand Tour, there was an increased motivation for art dealers to bluff. Gerrit Verhoeven brings attention to this as there was a 'boom' in terms of growth with art auction houses during this period that came along with increased travel culture.[11] Additionally, there was not necessarily a formal process for authenticating art that had been sold, and painters did not always sell their works through an art dealer. Even if artists belonged to a guild or their works were sold by an art dealer, some buyers of this genre did not care about obtaining provenance information or the attribution of a given piece, contributing to more cases of misattribution, both intentional and unintentional.[12] This absence of records added to the extreme difficulties during the nineteenth century, which continue even today, when it comes to provenance research and assigning clear attributions.

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[10] Neil De Marchi and Hans J. Van Miegroet, Art, Value, and Market Practices in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century (The Art Bulletin, 1994) 451-64.
[11] Gerrit Verhoeven, Mastering the Connoisseur's Eye: Paintings, Criticism, and the Canon in Dutch and Flemish Travel Culture, 1600-1750, (Eighteenth-Century Studies, 2012), 29-56.
[12] Frima Fox Hofrichter and Egbert Begemann Haverkamp, Haarlem, the Seventeenth Century (Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1983), 24-33.

Connoisseurship and Deception

Starting around the nineteenth-century, connoisseurship emerged as a field, leading to ever more attributions and reattributions of paintings. However, even though the growing interest in connoisseurship brought many forgeries to light, misattributions continued to occur during this period, with specific consequences for women. Judith Leyster is a good example of the continued misattribution of works by women artists. The prominent twentieth-century art historian Cornelis Hofstede de Groot discovered her covered up signature on the piece titled *The Last Drop*, which was falsely credited to Frans Hals for nearly 3 centuries (Fig. 1). The obfuscation of Leyster's signature exemplifies the continued practice of bluffing on the part of connoisseurs and art collectors to inflate the potential monetary value of a given piece.[13] Spencer notes, "Fewer Old Masters are 'owned' by individual scholars or 'expert committees' who pronounce on matters of authenticity than is the case with prominent artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and I like to think that the opinions proffered are carefully weighed and untainted by commercial considerations."[14] The issue of attribution obscures art historical scholarship, and conceivably impacts the remembrance of the various artists today. Many female artists like Leyster are underrepresented in art historical scholarship and museum institutions, and this underrepresentation impacts the placement of women artists within the art historical canon.

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[13] Robert D. Spencer and Victor Thaw, The Expert Versus the Object : Judging Fakes and False Attributions in the Visual Arts, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 3-65.

[14] Robert D. Spencer and Victor Thaw, The Expert Versus the Object : Judging Fakes and False Attributions in the Visual Arts, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 88.

The history of art emerged as a discipline during the second half of the nineteenth-century.[15] Art historians began to study and interpret bodies of works attributed to a given artist. However, these early catalogs often contained inaccurate information. There was, and still is, much disagreement and a lack of communication among scholars when it comes to attributions in catalogs.[16] The issue of attributions and connoisseurship during the nineteenth-century is reflected not only within the history of women painters but also famous male painters such as Titian. For example, *The Tribute Money* by Titian, acquired by the National Gallery in 1852, raised great controversy due to its scant provenance history; many critics during the 1850s were against the sale, stating the work was not by Titian.[17] Decades later, this work was unattributed to Titian and reattributed to his school of followers. As Pezzini Barbara states concerning this controversial attribution, "the fact that when a work is attributed to a more prominent artist its commercial value will certainly increase…. It has placed the connection between market and connoisseurship, within the complex dynamics of art sales as 'tournament of values', and shown how these social competitions, and the pricing resulting from them, can have a direct, significant, and long-lasting impact on an artwork's historiography."[18] Unfortunately, the motivation of art dealers to assign a work to more prominent artists for increased cash during the nineteenth-century is not

[15] Robert D. Spencer and Victor Thaw, The Expert Versus the Object : Judging Fakes and False Attributions in the Visual Arts, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 3-65.
[16] Robert D. Spencer and Victor Thaw, The Expert Versus the Object : Judging Fakes and False Attributions in the Visual Arts, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 3-65.
[17] Barbara Pezzini, Art Sales and Attributions: The 1852 National Gallery Acquisition of the Tribute Money by Titian (Journal of Art Historiography, 2017), 1-23.
[18] Barbara Pezzini, Art Sales and Attributions: The 1852 National Gallery Acquisition of the Tribute Money by Titian (Journal of Art Historiography, 2017), 1-23.

isolated to this event. Due to the lowered cash values of works by women painters, they were and continue to be especially vulnerable to misattributions.[19]

While scholars have published research on attribution bluff during the nineteenth-century in order to increase the fame and monetary value of a painting, there is rarely a mention of women and the impacts of misattributions on their reputations.[20] Instead, much existing scholarship describes travel culture and art authentication that started in the nineteenth-century. In *The Expert Versus the Object: Judging Fake and False Attributions in the Visual Arts*, Robert D. Spencer and Victor Thaw examine the evolving field of connoisseurship and attribution during the nineteenth-century and art bluffing as a means to increase the worth of a painting.[21] For example, Spencer and Thaw wrote, "Accomplished forgers make successful use of old pictures, which they clean radically—often down to the gesso preparation, in order subsequently to superpose their forgery, glazing carefully and treating with the utmost delicacy the craquelure, which they leave exposed."[22] This source also considers Dutch works that had forged signatures during the nineteenth-century. As Gerrit Vergoeven also notes in his article, *Mastering the Connoisseur's Eye: Paintings, Criticism, and the Canon in Dutch and Flemish Travel Culture, 1600-1750*, "This process of amateur connoisseurs

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[19] Women of the Rijksmuseum (Rijksmuseum, 2022). .https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/research/our-research/overarching/women- of-the-rijksmuseum.

[20] Robert D. Spencer and Victor Thaw, *The Expert Versus the Object : Judging Fakes and False Attributions in the Visual Arts*, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 3-65.
Gerrit Verhoeven, *Mastering the Connoisseur's Eye: Paintings, Criticism, and the Canon in Dutch and Flemish Travel Culture, 1600-1750*, (Eighteenth-Century Studies, 2012), 29-56.

[21] Robert D. Spencer and Victor Thaw, The Expert Versus the Object : Judging Fakes and False Attributions in the Visual Arts, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 99-102.

[22] Robert D. Spencer and Victor Thaw, The Expert Versus the Object : Judging Fakes and False Attributions in the Visual Arts, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 42.

scrounging through the academic canon (and aesthetic treatises) so as to forge their own art historical hierarchy is in itself worth examining."[23] Siegel also notes the reattribution period that was having fast growth in the nineteenth-century and the issues of misattributions that rose during this period.[24] While these sources do not aim to consider issues of gender when it comes to art deception in connoisseurship, they offer many insights on the technicalities of art and authentication and an overview of the history of museum and art collecting institutions.

The issue of deceptively misattributing an art piece to another based on the reputation of an artist obscures the credibility of attributions made during this time frame, as several of the works could belong to a different artist. Similar to Spencer and Thaw, Jonah Siegal states, regarding issues of attribution and reattribution during the nineteenth-century, "The reattribution of artworks that resulted from the growing systematization of art history and connoisseurship in the nineteenth century affected the reputation and reception of artists long admired for the creation of objects that had subsequently come under suspicion or had in fact been removed from their canons as the work of others."[25] However, mistakes do often happen and some attributions can be incredibly confusing when there is a lack of documentation and little known about the life of a given artist, such as the case with Peeters, a prominent still-life painter in Antwerp. One must take attributions placed by experts during the mid to late nineteenth-century with a grain of salt as connoisseurship during this period frequently

[23] Gerrit Verhoeven, Mastering the Connoisseur's Eye: Paintings, Criticism, and the Canon in Dutch and Flemish Travel Culture, 1600-1750, (Eighteenth-Century Studies, 2012), 29-56.
[24] Jonah Siegel, Leonardo, Pater, and the Challenge of Attribution (Raritan, 2022), 159-87.
[25] Jonah Siegel, Leonardo, Pater, and the Challenge of Attribution (Raritan, 2022), 159.

led to mistakes in art historical scholarship. Unclear attributions or those that lack evidence must be reexamined by scholars and museum professionals, as this issue of attribution jeopardizes the inclusion of artists in the art historical canon.

Particularly after the start of the cultural phenomenon of the Grand Tour and travel culture, art dealers had an increased motivation to bluff as some buyers had little care for obtaining the provenance details of the master. One of the reasons was that assigning the work to a popular artist increased its monetary value, which in turn greatly benefited the dealer. Jenny Reynaerts, a curator at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, writes "attributions are made by art dealers and art historians who both benefit by naming a more well-known artist; it reflects on their reputation as an art historian and on the prize."[26] Additionally, as misattributions are common during this period, counterfeits and signature forgeries represent the flaws in the history of connoisseurship. Even during the seventeenth-century, counterfeits in the art market became increasingly successful as the trend of still-life painting took hold in northern Europe.[27] For example, art forgeries also became more masterful as seen with seventeenth-century painters such as Van Hoogstraten.[28] Contemporary art historical scholarship acknowledges that historians, museum institutions, and art dealers all had great motivation to bluff or distribute counterfeits in order to receive prestige.

[26] Jenny Reynaerts (Interview by Morning Glory Ritchie, 2022).
[27] Alan Chong and Celeste Brusati, Still-life Paintings from the Netherlands, 1550-1720 (Waanders Publishers, 1999), 87-104.
[28] Alan Chong and Celeste Brusati, Still-life Paintings from the Netherlands, 1550-1720 (Waanders Publishers, 1999), 155-68.

Women Painters in Northern Europe

The popularity of still-life painting in Northern Europe, which was typically reflective of everyday life, trended upward as a form of genre painting during the early modern period.[29] This style of Baroque still-life painting places the inanimate objects into a composition that are often allegorical of the human experience.[30] Prior to the seventeenth-century, Netherlandish still-life painting was not very popular within the art market. Within the hierarchy of subjects, still-life painting ranked below religious paintings and portraits in the early modern period. Still-life compositions first became popular among the art-collecting middle-class in the Netherlands around the 1610s.[31] The shifting popularity of collecting still-life compositions changed in large part due to the Reformation and the distrust of the wealth of the church.[32] This commentary on the hoarding wealth of the Church can been seen in many still-life compositions, which indicated church corruption and ideas of the Reformation by including scattered objects of excess wealth and decaying costly foods into still-lifes.[33] These still-lifes vary in meaning, from religious allegory to non-secular subjects.[34] Nevertheless, these objects can sometimes be interpreted by viewers as not 'still' because the signs of active decay, which showcase the passage of time, are also reflective of the moralizing concept, 'La

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[29] Walter Liedtke, Still-Life Painting in Northern Europe, 1600–1800 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000). http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nstl/hd_nstl.htm

[30] Alan Chong and Celeste Brusati, Still-life Paintings from the Netherlands, 1550-1720 (Waanders Publishers, 1999), 11-15.

[31] Alan Chong and Celeste Brusati, Still-life Paintings from the Netherlands, 1550-1720 (Waanders Publishers, 1999), 87-104.

[32] Elsa Honig Fine, Women & Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th Century (Montclair: Allanheld & Schram, 1978), 24-25.

[33] Walter Liedtke, Still-Life Painting in Northern Europe, 1600–1800 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000). http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nstl/hd_nstl.htm

[34] Walter Liedtke, Still-Life Painting in Northern Europe, 1600–1800 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000). http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nstl/hd_nstl.htm

Natura Morta.'[35] Caravaggio's 1599 painting titled *Basket of Fruit* is an early and famous example of this concept (Fig. 3). Many of these works served as moralizing cautionary tales of the life of a sinner. Still-life painting also reflected the urbanization of northern Europe as well as rising commerce.[36] The interest in commerce is seen in the still-lifes depicting exotic game, fish, vegetables, and other items associated with market scenes.[37] One example of this can be seen in Clara Peeters' 1611 piece, *Still Life with Fish*, which shows a table spread with decaying animals (Fig. 4).[38] Peeters, along with many other still-life painters of the northern Baroque era, often depicted dead game or food gathered from the marketplace, and also frequently included scenes of the kitchen and household interior.[39]

Previously excluded from many circles, women during the Reformation in northern Europe experienced several social shifts which resulted towards some social benefits, such as access to an art education. However, women were still excluded from most artist guilds.[40] Despite the exclusion of women from artist guilds, Judith Leyster and Sara van Baalbergen managed to join the Saint Luke's Guild of Haarlem, which also included other famous artists such as Frans Hals.[41] Women did not necessarily

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[35] Carlo Del Bravo, Lettera Sulla Natura Morta, (Annali Della Scuola Normale Superiore Di Pisa. Classe Di Lettere e Filosofia, 1974), 1591-95.
[36] Walter Liedtke, Still-Life Painting in Northern Europe, 1600–1800 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000). http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nstl/hd_nstl.htm
[37] Walter Liedtke, Still-Life Painting in Northern Europe, 1600–1800 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000). http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nstl/hd_nstl.htm
[38] Alan Chong and Celeste Brusati, Still-life Paintings from the Netherlands, 1550-1720 (Waanders Publishers, 1999), 128-129.
[39] Alan Chong and Celeste Brusati, Still-life Paintings from the Netherlands, 1550-1720 (Waanders Publishers, 1999), 128-129.
[40] Elsa Honig Fine, Women & Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th Century (Montclair: Allanheld & Schram, 1978), 24-25.
[41] Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., Judith Leyster, (National Gallery of Art). https://purl.org/nga/collection/constituent/1485

need to join a guild in order to sell their paintings, but without a guild the monetary value of their work could decrease.[42] Because of the lack of opportunities for European women artists to obtain an art education during the early modern era, the few who were able to receive training had connections, such as a husband or father, who could privately teach them.[43] They also had to be upper class in order to have the household help they needed to allow time for their art practice.

In addition, women artists in seventeenth-century Europe were not allowed to work from nude models, which limited their abilities to create various compositions.[44] Therefore, many women artists turned to still-life painting because of the accessibility of subjects.[45] The resulting compositions closely reflect the household interior and commonly featured domestic objects available to the women artists. Referencing painting studios and schools during the eighteenth century, Linda Nochlin states in her famous essay, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?,' "There exist, to my knowledge, no representations of artists drawing from the nude model which include women in any role but that of the nude model itself."[46] Generally, women are the passive objects of desire in early modern painting depicted by male artists and created for male viewers.[47]

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[42] Pamela Hibbs Decoteau, Clara Peeters: 1594-ca. 1640: And the Development of Still-life Painting in Northern Europe (Luca Verlag, 1992), 104.
[43] Clara Peeters, (Sotheby's, 2001). https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/master-paintings-part-i-n09302/lot.18.html.
[44] Once Overlooked, Female Old Masters Take Center Stage (Sotheby's, 2019). https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/once-overlooked-female-old-masters- take-center-stage?locale=en.
[45] A Bouquet of Flowers Ca. 1612 Clara Peeters (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2022). https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/827660.
[46] Linda Nochlin and Catherine Grant, Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? (Thames and Hudson, 2021), 44.
[47] Linda Nochlin and Catherine Grant, Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? (Thames and Hudson, 2021), 44-45.

In addition to depicting domestic subjects, the Reformation influenced the choice of subjects, such as 'scientific naturalism,' which became popular among art patrons.[48] Not only were naturalistic still-lifes lucrative works to acquire during the Reformation, but they were accessible subjects for women artists to gather in their homes to depict. As Svetlana Alpers observes, by focusing on such circumstances, "I mean not only to see art as a social manifestation but also to gain access to images through a consideration of their place, role, and presence in the broader culture."[49] However, recent scholarship has rarely reflected upon Dutch still-lifes and the social contexts concerning women. One exception is Elizabeth Alice Honig, who reflects upon women Dutch "masters" and their difficulties navigating the patriarchal art industry, although she does not focus on the issue of attribution.[50] Nonetheless, since works often concern domestic objects in a household interior, viewers can observe that these pieces often reflect a social and allegorical context concerning the life of a woman artist.

Only a handful of scholars have approached the subject of women Dutch painters during the seventeenth-century.[51] However, Honig explores the creativity of women painters during this period, in particular, Judith Leyster.[52] Honig does not focus on the importance of issues of attribution but does reflect upon the obstacles middle-class women artists faced in the market of the Dutch Golden Age, which contributed to

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[48] Elsa Honig Fine, Women & Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th Century (Montclair: Allanheld & Schram, 1978), 24-25.
[49] Jan Biazostocki and Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing. Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (The Art Bulletin, 1985), 532-536.
[50] Elizabeth Alice Honig, *The Art of Being 'Artistic': Dutch Women's Creative Practices in the 17th Century* (Woman's Art Journal, 2001), 35-37.
[51] Elizabeth Alice Honig, *The Art of Being 'Artistic': Dutch Women's Creative Practices in the 17th Century* (Woman's Art Journal, 2001). 35-37.
[52] Elizabeth Alice Honig, *The Art of Being 'Artistic': Dutch Women's Creative Practices in the 17th Century* (Woman's Art Journal, 2001). 35-37.

Leyster's diminished posthumous reputation. For example, the reality that lower-class women lacked household support meant that they had limited time to pursue an artistic education or career. Parental encouragement was one of the main motivators and often the only way to receive a formal art education. While women artists often painted still-lifes because they were prevented from using models, Honig notes that Leyster broke these conventions and explored a variety of subjects for her works.[53] Additionally, as Honig points out, Leyster is only one of the few women artists who has been rediscovered by scholars.[54] Honig also notes that there are many cases where other 'minor' artists lost their fame after death, despite having prominence during their lifetime.[55] There are still many other works by women artists of the Dutch Golden Age that remain absent from our records.[56]

Existing literature and primary sources for northern European women artists from the seventeenth century are sparse. However, recently, there has been a growing interest in scholarship from museum professionals. For example, Frima Fox Hofrichter who has worked with various institutions, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the National Gallery of Art, and Fred G. Meijer, who works with Sotheby's and the Netherlands Institute for Art History, active art historians specializing in Dutch art history, seek to update and correct the existing scholarly record. These scholars, while responsible for correctly updating the attributions of works to their respective artists,

[53] Elsa Honig Fine, Women & Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th Century (Montclair: Allanheld & Schram, 1978), 31-34.
[54] Elizabeth Alice Honig, The Art of Being 'Artistic': Dutch Women's Creative Practices in the 17th Century (Woman's Art Journal, 2001), 35-37.
[55] Elizabeth Alice Honig, The Art of Being 'Artistic': Dutch Women's Creative Practices in the 17th Century (Woman's Art Journal, 2001), 35-37.
[56] Elizabeth Alice Honig, The Art of Being 'Artistic': Dutch Women's Creative Practices in the 17th Century (Woman's Art Journal, 2001), 35-37.

such as Peeters, Ruysch, Leyster and Alida Withoos, have still have not had many reactions from others in the field, such as museum exhibitions or subsequent research on women artists.

Scholars typically understand that several of the women artists during the Dutch Golden Age specialized in still-life painting because of their lack of access to human models, art studios, and commissions.[57] Many of the objects in this genre relate to cooking and the domestic interior. Clara Peeters is an example of a women master of the still-life genre. She uniquely interprets the interior by inserting reflections of herself onto domestic kitchenware in various compositions. Departing from the cautionary tales of religious allegory that many seventeenth-century still-lifes offer, Peeters breaks away from this motif with a subtle reflection of a portrait of herself. This recalls motifs that other Dutch artists such as van Eyck, and the method of tying the identity of the artist into the work, adding their signature into the composition in a distinctive way.[58] As reflected in compositions such as Ruysch's still-lifes, many works created by women also included floral compositions, as they were one of the few subjects women were encouraged to depict.[59] Additionally, women during the seventeenth century were in charge of running the interior household and thus had more access to still-life domestic objects such as floral compositions or cuisine.[60]

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[57] *Women Artists of the Dutch Golden Age* (National Museum of Women in Arts, 2020). https://nmwa.org/blog/nmwa-ex hibitions/opening-this-week-women-artists-of-the-dutch-golden-age/.
[58] Walter Liedtke, *Still-Life Painting in Northern Europe, 1600–1800* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000). http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nstl/hd_nstl.htm
[59] Peter Mitchell and Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting, 1600-1750: An Exhibition* (Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1996), 80-84.
[60] Elsa Honig Fine, *Women & Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th Century* (Montclair: Allanheld & Schram, 1978), 24-38.

Although art guilds of the early modern period sometimes included women artists, they were primarily run and dominated by male artists. Women were typically excluded from artist guilds in Northern Europe by strict rules prohibiting female membership.[61] The Saint Luke's Guild of Haarlem was a rare exception that admitted a handful of women artists during the seventeenth century. Judith Leyster is the first known woman to join the Saint Luke's Guild of Haarlem, an especially prominent artist guild of her period, adding to her prestige and enhancing the value of her works during her lifetime.[62] Although some scholars speculate that Peeters also joined one of these artists guilds, there is no documentation of her membership in existing Antwerp records.[63] The success of artist guilds were also dependent on the financial outcomes of the city and its government.[64] Joining these guilds in northern Europe required the display of great skill and requirements, especially after the Reformation.[65] The additional hurdles of membership which women encountered highlights the extraordinary skill and accomplishment in the face of adversity of artists such as Leyster exhibited.

[61] Elsa Honig Fine, Women & Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th Century (Montclair: Allanheld & Schram, 1978), 24-38.
[62] Frima Fox Hofrichter, Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age (Davaco, 1989) 13-23.
[63] Alejandro Vergara, The Art of Clara Peeters (Museo Nacional del Prado, 2017), 14-20.
[64] Frima Fox Hofrichter and Egbert Begemann Haverkamp, Haarlem, the Seventeenth Century (Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1983), 29-36.
[65] Frima Fox Hofrichter and Egbert Begemann Haverkamp, Haarlem, the Seventeenth Century (Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1983), 17-23.

Judith Leyster

Judith Leyster, despite falling into virtual obscurity after her death, was one of the most prominent female Dutch masters of her time and one of the first to be rediscovered.[66] Breaking various gender roles, Leyster did not limit herself to still-life compositions as many other women artists were encouraged or forced to do.[67] Instead, Leyster primarily created genre works, such as tavern scenes, portraits with dramatic chiaroscuro, brothels and self-portraits. Born in Haarlem in 1606, her father ran a brewery and it is unknown how she acquired her artistic education.[68] The Saint Luke's Guild of Haarlem also did not keep many records on their registered artists, making it difficult to conduct further research on Leyster.[69] However, she did live a comfortable and wealthy lifestyle, which could have increased her access to formal artistic training.[70] Known for her loose brushwork and genre scenes, Leyster achieved great success during her lifetime in Haarlem. Similar to other genre painters of the area, such as Frans Hals, Leyster adopted motifs of the Utrecht Caravaggisti.[71] Scholars theorize that Leyster shared a studio space with Hals, which is plausible but unconfirmed.[72] This argument hinges on the fact that Leyster produced recreations of

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[66] Elizabeth Alice Honig, The Art of Being 'Artistic': Dutch Women's Creative Practices in the 17th Century (Woman's Art Journal, 2001), 35-37.
[67] Peter Mitchell and Paul Taylor, Dutch Flower Painting, 1600-1750: An Exhibition (Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1996), 80-84.
[68] Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., Judith Leyster, (National Gallery of Art). https://purl.org/nga/collection/constituent/1485
[69] Frima Fox Hofrichter and Egbert Begemann Haverkamp, Haarlem, the Seventeenth Century (Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1983), 24-26.
[70] Frima Fox Hofrichter, Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age (Davaco, 1989), 14.
[71] Walter Liedtke, Still-Life Painting in Northern Europe, 1600–1800 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nstl/hd_nstl.htm
[72] Frima Fox Hofrichter, Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age (Davaco, 1989), 15-16.

Hals' genre-works, including some of his portraits such as his 1626 work *The Jester* (Fig. 5).[73]

Leyster's work was often misattributed to similar male artists, such as Frans Hals, or her husband Jan Miense Molenaer. Several factors contributed to these attributions, including similar brushwork and shared studio space.[74] Additionally, many artists of the Saint Luke's Guild of Haarlem worked in very close proximity, sometimes even using the same paint palettes.[75] Thus, these artists formed a community and often produced copies of each other's works. Even during her lifetime, after marriage, Leyster's work was attributed to other male artists who painted in a similar style.[76] According to Nicole Cook, Leyster did not produce nearly as many works after she got married, which some scholars such as Reynaerts and Cook argue further contributed to her waning prominence in the artistic record.[77] Although there is evidence of her creating works after marriage, many of these have been not been found or attributed to Leyster.[78] One of the factors that led to her loss of fame after her death was that the works of Molenaer and Hals were worth significantly more in the art market than Leyster's compositions. Because the works of male artists were and are still significantly higher in monetary value, artists like Leyster were more vulnerable to be

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[73] Frima Fox Hofrichter, Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age (Davaco, 1989), 37.
[74] Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., Judith Leyster, (National Gallery of Art). https://purl.org/nga/collection/constituent/1485
[75] Frima Fox Hofrichter and Egbert Begemann Haverkamp, Haarlem, the Seventeenth Century (Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1983), 29-35.
[76] Rediscovering Judith Leyster (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2021). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O52DIb2R30.
[77] Nicole Cook (Interview by Morning Glory Ritchie, 2022).
Jenny Reynaerts (Interview by Morning Glory Ritchie, 2022).
[78] Women Artists of the Dutch Golden Age (National Museum of Women in Arts, 2020). https://nmwa.org/blog/nmwa-exhibitions/opening-this-week-women-artists-of-the-dutch-golden-age/.

passed off as the works of a male artist. Additionally, none of Leyster's preliminary sketches are known, as she did not sign them.[79] This added to her loss of fame after death as preliminary sketches can serve as proof of authorship of a given work, leaving her oeuvre to be even more at risk of misattributions. Despite these circumstances, many of Leyster's works have been rediscovered in the past century and are slowly starting to gain more attention by art historians and museum professionals.

One example of a rediscovery of Leyster's works is *The Jolly Toper*, which was misattributed to Frans Hals for the past few centuries (Fig. 6).[80] The work was only reattributed to Leyster in 1927 after her 'JL' signature was discovered along with the date. Currently in the collection of the Rijksmuseum, the work was acquired by the Frans Hals Museum where it resided until its reattribution to Leyster by Juliane Harms.[81] Although this reattribution and Leyster's authorship of the work was discovered during the 1920s, Leyster remained almost invisible in art historical scholarship until Linda Nochlin and Frima Fox Hofrichter brought her back into discussion.[82]

Leyster still has not received scholarly appreciation equivalent to male Dutch masters. Solo exhibitions of the artist are scarce, and her works continue to carry significantly lower monetary value than male painters from the same artist guild in Haarlem. For instance, Judith Leyster works average around 200,000 to 500,000 USD at

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[79] Frima Fox Hofrichter, Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age (Davaco, 1989), 37-75.
[80] Rediscovering Judith Leyster (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2021). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O52DIb2R30.
[81] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco, 1989), 39-40.
[82] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco, 1989), 39-40.

auction houses while Frans Hals works typically average 1,000,000 USD or more.[83] Misattributions of Leyster's works to Frans Hals have likely added to his prestige among art historians and dealers, further enhancing the already high monetary value of his works.

Another work by Leyster that was misattributed to Frans Hals was *The Last Drop*, which was reattributed to Leyster in 1893 by historian Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, who discovered her 'JL' signature (Fig. 1).[84] The 'JL' signature, in the visual form of a star, was a clever way in which Leyster often signed her artworks—Leyster translating to 'a leading star' or 'pole star.'[85] This motif made her paintings at higher risk of being misattributed to other artists since it was not well-known to the public. Leyster was sometimes inconsistent with her signatures, yet this one is the most recurring motif within her known oeuvre. Additionally, Hofrichter confirmed this attribution to Leyster in her publications on the artist.[86] The complexity of this composition and the misattribution has recently received widespread attention following Nicole Cook's exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art which featured this work and that of other selected Dutch women painters.[87] Cook has stated that *The Last Drop* could be Leyster critiquing her male artist peers, since the male subjects are portrayed as nonsensical and immature. However, much of the composition was touched over, as

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[83] *Once Overlooked, Female Old Masters Take Center Stage* (Sotheby's, 2019). https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/once-overlooked-female-old-masters- take-center-stage?locale=en.
[84] *Rediscovering Judith Leyster* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2021). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O52DIb2R30.
[85] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco, 1989), 13-14.
[86] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco, 1989), 42.
[87] *Rediscovering Judith Leyster* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2021). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O52DIb2R30.

even the skeleton was covered by pigments, thus making previous observations of the work difficult (Fig. 2).[88] This work was recently restored by Hofrichter, but was not truly appreciated by the public for what it really is until Cook's exhibition, 'What Can Paintings Tell Us.'[89]

The Carousing Couple by Judith Leyster is a third work that was also misattributed to Frans Hals (Fig. 7).[90] While it is debatable whether many of Leyster's works were misattributed on purpose or accident, *The Carousing Couple* shows an example of deception with connoisseurship. On this painting, Leyster's iconic 'star' signature was covered up with a forged one of Frans Hals and the painting was then sold to the Louvre in Paris.[91]

As with *The Last Drop*, *The Carousing Couple* was reattributed to Leyster by Cornelis Hofstede de Groot. In total, Hofstede de Groot attributed seven works to Leyster during the 1890s.[92] Leyster's works were no longer misattributed to Frans Hals after 1892, which was likely in large part due to de Groot's publication on the artist.[93] Juliane Harms, a 20th-century art historian, further uncovered Judith Leyster's contributions.[94] Following Cornelis Hofstede de Groot's work, Harms attributed 35

[88] Nicole Cook (Interview by Morning Glory Ritchie, 2022).
[89] Nicole Cook (Interview by Morning Glory Ritchie, 2022).
[90] *Rediscovering Judith Leyster* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2021). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O52DIb2R30.
[91] *Rediscovering Judith Leyster* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2021). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O52DIb2R30.
[92] Sarah Moran, *Bringing the Counter-Reformation Home: The Domestic Use of Artworks at the Antwerp Beguinage in the Seventeenth Century* (Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art, 2015), 144-58.
[93] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco, 1989), 31-32.
[94] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco, 1989), 32-33.

additional paintings to the artist.[95] More recently, 20th-century art historian, Seymour Slive also attributed several more works to Leyster's oeuvre, further amplifying her prominence within the history of Dutch painting.[96] However, in part due to the inconsistency of her signatures, the absence of large documented commissions, and her common use of loose brushstrokes and chiaroscuro, correctly attributing works to the oeuvre of Leyster continued to be difficult for scholars.[97]

Complementing the reattribution work of Hofstede de Groot, Juliane Harms and Seymour Slive have also conducted art historical research which examines Leyster's role within the Dutch art world. A prime example of reattribution work concerning Leyster is the scholarship of Frima Fox Hofrichter. With many reattributions and scholarly publications, Hofrichter has contributed significantly to the recent and richly-deserved recognition of Judith Leyster. Inspired by Linda Nochlin and the lack of recognition of women artists, Hofrichter dissects the history of Leyster's loss of fame that began during her lifetime, despite once being prominent in the seventeenth-century art market.[98] Although Hofrichter unattributed almost a dozen works from Leyster, she also discovered and reattributed several of the works back to this artist. As Hofrichter notes, not all of Leyster's works were misattributed to Hals. Instead, many of them were listed as 'anonymous,' despite the visible presence of her signature.[99] Because of

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[95] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco, 1989), 33-34.
[96] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco, 1989), 33-34.
[97] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco, 1989), 33-34.
[98] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco, 1989), 29-37.
[99] Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Judith Leyster: A Woman Painter in Holland's Golden Age* (Davaco, 1989), 29.

Hofrichter's scholarship, Leyster has gained recognition in recent years. Many other women artists have been disenfranchised due to misattributions or unclear ones. *The Last Drop* exemplifies how misattributions and unclear authorship trouble the discipline of art history, and furthermore, highlights the importance of women artists from this particular period.

Rachel Ruysch

Another example of a forgotten woman artist of the Dutch Golden Age is Rachel Ruysch. Like Peeters and Leyster, Ruysch was accomplished during her lifetime. Ruysch's works exemplify the Baroque interest in still-life painting of flowers in household interiors that flourished in northern Europe during the Baroque period.[100] Like Artemisia Gentileschi, Ruysch received her artistic education from her father. Ruysch's works were positively received by art collectors during and after her time as she rarely created works that were not floral still-lifes. Her choice of subject conformed to contemporaneous gender expectations, which held that women artists should tackle subjects that were associated with femininity, such as flowers.[101] Being able to achieve heightened realism, subtle moralizing details such as insects and elements of decay, showcases Ruysch's mastery and suggests professional training. Signatures on silverware and portraiture on reflections were sometimes the way that woman artists inserted themselves into their works.[102] In the case of Peeters and Ruysch, their reflections are often casted onto the domestic object.[103] Although women were expected to run the household, Ruysch's wealth afforded her the opportunity to employ household help. Thus, women of wealth, like Ruysch and Leyster, had more free time to work on their painting as opposed to women from lower socio-economic backgrounds.[104]

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[100] Alan Chong and Celeste Brusati, *Still-life Paintings from the Netherlands, 1550-1720* (Waanders Publishers, 1999), 281-2.
[101] Peter Mitchell and Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting, 1600-1750: An Exhibition* (Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1996), 80-84.
[102] Celeste Brusati, *Stilled Lives: Self-Portraiture and Self-Reflection in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Still-Life Painting* (Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art, 1990), 168.
[103] Celeste Brusati, *Stilled Lives: Self-Portraiture and Self-Reflection in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Still-Life Painting* (Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art, 1990), 168.
[104] Virginia Treanor (Interview by Morning Glory Ritchie, 2022).

Ruysch receives problematic portrayals and interpretations of her works in art historical scholarship as she is commonly approached through the analysis of her 'feminine' floral compositions, further perpetuating the gendered dynamics that constrain women artists. For example, art historian Paul Taylor references Gerard de Lairesse, a seventeenth-century male painter, and the problematic interpretation of Ruysch's and other women artists' floral paintings.[105] Gerard de Lairesse states, "It is notable that, of all the many choices that are open to the painter, none is more feminine, or more suitable for women, than this. The reasons for which are so obvious, as to need no explanation."[106] Lairesse fails to acknowledge the lack of access to art education and model subjects for women artists in early modern society. While Lairesse wrote this during the seventeenth-century, it does reflect upon some of the societal attitudes imposed on women artists that could also influence subject matter. As Taylor notes, it makes sense that Dutch women painters were more likely to create compositions of flowers or domestic objects and that these were more positively received by the highly patriarchal society.[107] Ruysch achieved great success on the art market during her lifetime, but her fame and the recognition of her contributions sharply decreased after her death. One example is Ruysch's work, *Roses, Tulips, a Poppy, Nasturtiums, Marigolds and other Flowers in a Vase, and a Tortoiseshell Butterfly on a Partly Draped Marble Ledge,* which was misattributed to the male painter Willem van Aelst, (Fig. 8), a prominent male artist and a member of the Saint Luke's Guild in Haarlem

[105] Peter Mitchell and Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting, 1600-1750: An Exhibition* (Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1996), 80-84.
[106] Peter Mitchell and Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting, 1600-1750: An Exhibition* (Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1996), 80.
[107] Peter Mitchell and Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting, 1600-1750: An Exhibition* (Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1996), 80.

who created similar floral compositions.[108] Comparable to Leyster's legacy and the circumstance of the *Last Drop*, this work also contained the false signature of a male artist. In this case, "Aelst" covers the signature of Ruysch.[109] This process of re-signing shows that Ruysch was another woman artist who was a prominent still-life painter during her lifetime but lost fame after death, partly due to misattributions and deception from art dealers.[110]

[108] Adriaan Van Der Willigen and Fred G. Meijer, *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-life Painters Working in Oils* (Primavera Press, 2003), 208-209.
[109] Adriaan Van Der Willigen and Fred G. Meijer, *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-life Painters Working in Oils* (Primavera Press, 2003), 208-209.
[110] Christiane Weidemann, Petra Larass and Melanie Klier, *50 Women Artists You Should Know*. Munich (Prestel, 2016), 34.

Clara Peeters

In addition to Judith Leyster and Rachel Ruysch, Clara Peeters provides a third example of a female still-life painter who displayed mastery of 'Dutch style,' but whose fame sharply declined after death. However, unlike Leyster, this was not mainly due to the loss of her oeuvre of works or of her misattributions, but in large part to the lack of scholarly attention and representation of the artist.[111] Not only were works of similar artists often misattributed to Peeters, but several of her works were also misattributed to male painters. Peeters has been known since the late nineteenth-century, but scholars and museum institutions only began to take interest in her in the during the twenty-first century. This lack of scholarly interest could have contributed to the dearth of records about her life. Peeters was a seventeenth-century painter from Antwerp, yet not much is known about life details of the female artist. Additionally, the date of Peeter's death is unknown to scholars. However, some scholars have estimated that she was born between 1588 to 1590.[112] There is no record that she joined the Antwerp painter's guild, which adds to the difficulty of reconstructing her biography.[113] Peeters was a master of realistic still-life painting, and clearly received a formal art education; even so, it is unknown from whom she learned these painting techniques. Some scholars have theorized that the male artist Osias Beert may have served as her teacher due to the similarity in their styles, but this has not been proven, nor have scholars convincingly

[111] Pamela Hibbs Decoteau, *Clara Peeters: 1594-ca. 1640: And the Development of Still-life Painting in Northern Europe* (Luca Verlag, 1992), 11.
[112] Alejandro Vergara, *The Art of Clara Peeters* (Museo Nacional del Prado, 2017), 6.
[113] *Women Artists of the Dutch Golden Age* (National Museum of Women in Arts, 2020). https://nmwa.org/blog/nmwa-ex hibitions/opening-this-week-women-artists-of-the-dutch-golden-age/.

established Peeter's connection to Antwerp.[114] Additionally, the works identified as Peeter's come from a very short time period of 20 to 30 years and only a body of 40 works are currently attributed to her.[115]

Clara Peeters was a woman artist who is better known for her artworks than her biography.[116] Peeters embodies a style that was thriving during the Dutch Golden Age, and her works are stylistically distinctive. Unlike Leyster or Ruysch, Peeters was likely not wealthy, as she married later in life at the age of 45. It is therefore probable she had trouble maintaining a career as an artist.[117] Peeters often paints her reflection on the silverware or household objects that are present in her still-life works. One prominent example is her 1612 work *Still life,* which includes flowers and elaborate objects, one of which has extremely subtle reflections, cast onto a singular object in the composition (Fig. 9).[118] This painting by Peeters was misattributed to the male artist, Jacob van Es until 1984, but shows her mastery of inserting herself into her works.[119] Similar to Leyster, Peeters found other ways to incorporate her signature, such as adding her name onto a butter knife in the painting, as seen in her 1611 work, *Table with a cloth, salt cellar, gilt tazza, pie, jug, porcelain dish with olives, and roast fowl* (Fig. 19).[120] However, many of works were not attributed to her until recently. Fred G. Meijer has

[114] *A Bouquet of Flowers Ca. 1612 Clara Peeters* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2022). https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/827660.
[115] Alejandro Vergara, *The Art of Clara Peeters* (Museo Nacional del Prado, 2017), 67-123.
[116] Pamela Hibbs Decoteau, *Clara Peeters: 1594-ca. 1640: And the Development of Still-life Painting in Northern Europe* (Luca Verlag, 1992), 104-109.
[117] Elsa Honig Fine, *Women & Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th Century* (Montclair: Allanheld & Schram, 1978), 29-30.
[118] Celeste Brusati, *Stilled Lives: Self-Portraiture and Self-Reflection in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Still-Life Painting* (Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art, 1990), 168.
[119] *Clara Peeters or after Clara Peeters* (RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2022). https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/recordquery=Clara%2BPeeters&start=1.
[120] Alejandro Vergara, *The Art of Clara Peeters* (Museo Nacional del Prado, 2017), 72-73.

attributed many works to Peeters and is updating this information in catalogs for the public as part of his research on Dutch and Flemish women artists.[121] Scholars often confuse Peeters with other artists such as Frans Snyders who used a very similar technique.[122] Peeters' technique closely resembles the work of Snyders in several ways, along with heightened naturalism, decay, and invading animals in a still-life. As Pamela Hibbs Decoteau notes in her 1992 publication *Clara Peeters: 1594-ca. 1640: And the Development of Still-life Painting in Northern Europe*, two of Peeters works have had false signatures and works are still being added to her oeuvre.[123] Peeters' oeuvre, like that of many other women artists of her time, has a history of confusing attributions, which are made difficult to untangle due to a lack of historical records. Although underrepresented in art history today, Peeters was likely an extremely accomplished artist of her era.[124]

Several of Pamela Hibbs Decoteau's attributions of Clara Peeters remain confirmed by the Meijer today at the RKD in the Hague.[125] In his scholarship, Meijer stresses the importance of updating the knowledge of recent attributions and contributions to the Dutch Golden Age.[126] Meijer creates a catalog of definite attributions titled, *The Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-life Painters Working in Oils, 1525-172*, which serves as a resource of updated attributions for art historians to

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[121] *Clara Peeters or after Clara Peeters* (RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2022). https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/recordquery=Clara%2BPeeters&start=1.
[122] *Clara Peeters or after Clara Peeters* (RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2022). https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/recordquery=Clara%2BPeeters&start=1.
[123] Pamela Hibbs Decoteau, *Clara Peeters: 1594-ca. 1640: And the Development of Still-life Painting in Northern Europe* (Luca Verlag, 1992), 188.
[124] Alejandro Vergara, *The Art of Clara Peeters* (Museo Nacional del Prado, 2017), 19-20.
[125] *Clara Peeters or after Clara Peeters* (RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2022). https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/recordquery=Clara%2BPeeters&start=1.
[126] Adriaan Van Der Willigen and Fred G. Meijer, *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-life Painters Working in Oils* (Primavera Press, 2003), 10-11.

consider when researching Dutch still-life painting.[127] When approaching Peeters, Meijer states that several of Peeter's works were confused with the male artists Pieter Claesz, famous during the 1890s, and Frans Snyders.[128] Like Claesz, Peeters also includes imagery of fish and seafood in her compositions and shares similar painting techniques. These similarities added to the confusion of the attributions to the female artists along with few scholars approaching her oeuvre of works, including Hibbs-Decoteau and her 1992 catalog of the artist. Since scholars such as Meijer have undertaken groundbreaking work in order to determine the actual works by artists such as Clara Peeters and other women Dutch masters, it is time for art historians and museum professionals to respond to this resource and take steps to more accurately represent these artists.

Meijer has continued to reattribute misattributed works back to Clara Peeters such as her 1610 *Still-life*, a floral composition with a rodent threatening the flowers (Fig. 10).[129] Prior to Meijer's discovery, this work was misattributed to the male artist Jan Baptist van Fornenburgh. This painting was not the only floral composition misattributed to Fornenburgh. *Still-life with Flowers*, created by Peeters in the 1610s, was also misattributed to him before Meijer (Fig. 11).[130] Peeters often includes cats in her compositions, such as *Still-life with Fish, Poultry, Vegetables, Kitchen Utensils and a Cat*, a work created around 1625, which was misattributed to male painter Alexander

[127] Adriaan Van Der Willigen and Fred G. Meijer, *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-life Painters Working in Oils* (Primavera Press, 2003), 10-11.
[128] Adriaan Van Der Willigen and Fred G. Meijer, *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-life Painters Working in Oils* (Primavera Press, 2003), 97-119.
[129] *Clara Peeters or after Clara Peeters* (RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2022). https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/recordquery=Clara%2BPeeters&start=1.
[130] Clara Peeters or after Clara Peeters (RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2022). https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/recordquery=Clara%2BPeeters&start=1.

Adriaenssen. This work reflects her mastery of depicting both live animals and decay in a singular composition (Fig. 12 & 13).[131] Like Leyster and Ruysch, many of Peeter's works were misattributed to men after her death, including Peter Binoit (Fig. 14).[132] Questioning all unclear attributions and works lacking provenance, Meijer has also unattributed works to Peeters in order to ensure these catalog raisionnès are accurate as a resource for future art historical research.

Scholars and museum professionals continue to debate Peeter's attributions. For example, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston has a painting still listed by Clara Peeters, while the Hague in Amsterdam has unattributed the painting from the artist (Fig. 15).[133] Some scholars, such as Meijer, believe that *Still Life with Crab, Shrimps, and Lobster* could be from the circle of Peeters but may not be by the artist herself.[134] Peeters did not always sign her works. Of 80 possible works, only 30 bear her signature. *Still Life with Crab, Shrimps, and Lobster* does indeed include objects and foods that are recurring in several of her compositions. For example, the cheeses and knife closely resemble other works by the artist.

Several factors make reaching a consensus about Peeters' oeuvre of works difficult. For instance, knowing little about her life makes provenance research on the woman artist very difficult, as the only definitive record found on Peeters is her baptism

[131] *Clara Peeters or after Clara Peeters* (RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2022). https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/recordquery=Clara%2BPeeters&start=1.
[132] *Clara Peeters or after Clara Peeters* (RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2022). https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/recordquery=Clara%2BPeeters&start=1.
[133] *Still-Life* (The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2022). https://www.mfah.org/blogs/inside-mfah/still-life-smorgasbord.
[134] *Clara Peeters or after Clara Peeters* (RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2022). https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images/recordquery=Clara%2BPeeters&start=1.

in 1594 in Antwerp.[135] Inconsistency with signatures can complicate the authentication of Peeter's works, a fact amplified by a shortage of works with which to compare these motifs. Additionally, with heightened realism, the trends of still-life painting rising, and the selling of paintings without needing documentation or authentication during this era, attributing a painting becomes extremely difficult. Jean Bastiaensen has also theorized that Peeters changed her name after marriage and that her previous name was 'Clara Lamberts.'[136] The change of name along with the fact that she was married and likely did not create as many works afterwards, may be another factor why her oeuvre has difficult to reattribute to her. Unclear attributions, along with several other similar works by artists of this period, make it strenuous for art historical scholars to approach this painting in the context of women painters.[137]

Clara Peeters has long gone without proper recognition in art historical scholarship and museum spaces. The majority of her works were only recently attributed to her as a result of Alejandro Vergara curating her first solo exhibition at the Museo del Prado National in 2016.[138] This was also the first ever solo exhibition of a woman artist in the history of the del Prado. Vergara's reattributions included *Still life with Sparrow Hawk, Fowl, Porcelain and Shells*, which had no attribution up to this point.[139] Since Peeters only has 40 known works that are definitively attributed to her and attributions to her are an ongoing process, there is sparse scholarship on the artist.

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[135] Christiane Weidemann, Petra Larass and Melanie Klier, *50 Women Artists You Should Know*. Munich (Prestel, 2016), 22-24.
[136] Pamela Hibbs Decoteau, *Clara Peeters: 1594-ca. 1640: And the Development of Still-life Painting in Northern Europe* (Luca Verlag, 1992), 7.
[137] *Still-Life* (The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2022). https://www.mfah.org/blogs/inside-mfah/still-life-smorgasbord.
[138] Alejandro Vergara, *The Art of Clara Peeters* (Museo Nacional del Prado, 2017), 6-9.
[139] Alejandro Vergara, *The Art of Clara Peeters* (Museo Nacional del Prado, 2017), 92-93.

Additionally, much of her known work resides in private collections. Several of Peeters paintings were auctioned off in recent years by Sotheby's or other auction houses, and when works reside in private collections, provenance research and visual analysis for scholars becomes extremely difficult.[140] Even though little is known about Peeters, it is evident through Vergara's reflection of her circle of followers that she was a talented and prominent painter of her era, and she deserves more scholarly attention and representation in museum institutions.[141]

The representation of Peeters showcases a substantial issue of women and their representation in museum and gallery spaces. Even though biographical information on her is sparse, she had at least a small collection attributed to her during the 1950s and an entire body of 35 definite attributed works and 25 works in process of being attributed to her name prior by 1991.[142] A total of 30 of Peeter's works have her signature very clearly as 'CLARA PEETERS, ' 'CLARA,' 'CLARA P' or 'CLARA P.A.'[143] Scholars have reflected that Peeters was a prominent artist during her lifetime and even had a circle of followers. Many of the works created by followers of Peeters have been misattributed to the woman artist and are now listed as 'unknown artist.'[144] This is also the case with artists such as Judith Leyster, who has been recognized in scholarship

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[140] *Once Overlooked, Female Old Masters Take Center Stage* (Sotheby's, 2019). https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/once-overlooked-female-old-masters- take-center-stage?locale=en.
[141] Alejandro Vergara, *The Art of Clara Peeters* (Museo Nacional del Prado, 2017), 13-20.
[142] Pamela Hibbs Decoteau, *Clara Peeters: 1594-ca. 1640: And the Development of Still-life Painting in Northern Europe* (Luca Verlag, 1992), 7.
[143] Pamela Hibbs Decoteau, *Clara Peeters: 1594-ca. 1640: And the Development of Still-life Painting in Northern Europe* (Luca Verlag, 1992), 180-194.
[144] Pamela Hibbs Decoteau, *Clara Peeters: 1594-ca. 1640: And the Development of Still-life Painting in Northern Europe* (Luca Verlag, 1992), 63-66.

since the 1970s by Hofrichter and Nochlin's publications. However, museum institutions rarely created exhibitions of the artists until recently. Despite the difficulty of attributing still-life works with little provenance and inconsistency of signatures from a given artist, it is important to represent the works that do have substantial evidence for the attribution, and to further investigate unclear works.

Nochlin and Women in the Art Historical Canon

Leyster, Peeters and Ruysch are examples of women artists who disappeared in the art historical canon, an issue that Linda Nochlin explored in her scholarship. In 1971, Nochlin wrote her famous essay 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' which brought attention to the issues of scholarship concerning women in art along with contributing factors of society and museum institutions.[145] This essay also critiques terms commonly used when referring to artists such as 'greatness,' or 'masters' and explains what ways women artists have made history and in what ways they have been suppressed by society. Nochlin states, "Women's experience and situation in society, and hence as artists, is different from men's… bodying forth a group consciousness of feminine experience might indeed be stylistically identifiable as feminist, if not feminine, art."[146] Nochlin notes that it is not her intention for scholars to react by trying to find 'great' female artists. However, this essay does bring the discussion of women into art history in a novel way. Nochlin prompts readers to redefine the term 'great,' and notes that women artists had different experiences which adds to their uniqueness in the art historical canon.

Nochlin notes that misattributions have led to misplaced recognition in scholarship. For instance, several of Judith Leyster's works that have been misattributed to Frans Hals have enhanced his reputation as one of the great Dutch Masters. Nochlin mentions the issues of deception, discussed above, but her criticism does not

145 Linda Nochlin and Catherine Grant, Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? (Thames and Hudson, 2021), 20-82.
146 Linda Nochlin and Catherine Grant, Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? (Thames and Hudson, 2021), 26-27.

specifically focus on the period issue of women during the Dutch Golden Age.[147] Nochlin seeks to critique the artistic institution as a whole, and while she mentions a misattribution of the work of a woman artist to a man, these misattributions are not her focus. However, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' may have catalyzed the ongoing reattributions of works actually created by women artists. After the publication of this article, many scholars sought to rediscover women artists and credit their contributions. Nochlin, against her own initially stated intentions, also joined these scholars in creating and playing a role in rediscovering women in art, bringing 'great' women artists back into gallery and museum art spaces.[148] However, Nochlin's scholarship on the issue is over 50 years old now, and there is still a lot of work to do to further credit women artists of all areas and disciplines, not only the fine arts.

As pointed out by Nochlin, women artists specifically have long endured issues of biography that impede their recognition in modern scholarship, including artists who maintained their reputation after death such as Artemisia Gentileschi. Additionally, Nochlin emphasizes that the lack records of women artists reflects upon the social structure of museum institutions and scholarship in terms of the inequality of preserving their legacies.[149] As Nochlin and Honig point out, Artemisia is far better known for her traumatic rape and trial than for her artistic accomplishments during the Italian Baroque period.[150] Like many women artists of the early modern era, Artemisia received an art

[147] Linda Nochlin and Catherine Grant, *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* (Thames and Hudson, 2021), 34-42.
[148] Evelyn Welch, *Engendering Italian Renaissance Art — A Bibliographic Review* (Papers of the British School at Rome, 2000), 201-16.
[149] Linda Nochlin and Catherine Grant, *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* (Thames and Hudson, 2021), 24-27.
[150] Linda Nochlin and Catherine Grant, *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* (Thames and Hudson, 2021), 24-27.

education from a family member, which in this case was her father, Orazio Gentileschi. Artemisia was able to produce several Caravaggesque works with heightened realism that were highly desired by patrons of her time. Being the first woman to be accepted to the Accademia del Disegno, Artemisia was an accomplished and talented painter who received many commissions during her lifetime.[151] One of her most famous works, *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, shows robust women, horrified facial expressions, and chiaroscuro that brings attention to the horror of the scene. Demonstrating her interest in Caravaggio's style, some scholars believe that she improves and updates the subject matter in her own compositions.[152] Scholars could also approach her works by considering the role of women painters during the Counter-Reformation. However, this is typically not the case, as she and her paintings are commonly viewed through the lens of being a rape victim.

Even though Artemisia's fame did not diminish after her death, a variety of her works were misattributed to her male contemporaries. While the 1970s and 80s were decades when feminist theory became prominent in art history, this was not the case with Italian Renaissance scholarship.[153] As Nochlin points out, the few women artists who maintained their fame and prominence in the art historical canon had close connections to a male artist. However, this dependance on male colleagues was sometimes another cause for disenfranchising the woman artist.[154] Artemisia's 1610

[151] Christiane Weidemann, Petra Larass and Melanie Klier, *50 Women Artists You Should Know*. Munich (Prestel, 2016), 18-22.
[152] Marjorie Och, *Artemisia Gentileschi in a Changing Light* (Early Modern Women, 2019), 214-18.
[153] Evelyn Welch, *Engendering Italian Renaissance Art — A Bibliographic Review* (Papers of the British School at Rome, 2000), 201-16.
[154] Linda Nochlin and Catherine Grant, *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* (Thames and Hudson, 2021), 24-27.

painting titled *Susanna and the Elders* is a famous example of this tendency having been misattributed to her father, Orazio Gentileschi (Fig. 16).[155] Father and daughter did work in the same painting studio and shared many techniques, however, Artemisa surpasses the skills of her father, and deserves to be recognized for works such as *Susanna and the Elders* that reflects upon her mastery. Due to the similarity of their styles, attributing further works and adding to the oeuvre of Artemisia is difficult and must be done carefully.[156]

[155] Linda Nochlin and Catherine Grant, *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* (Thames and Hudson, 2021), 24-27.
[156] Marjorie Och, *Artemisia Gentileschi in a Changing Light* (Early Modern Women, 2019), 214-18.

Modern Attribution

The methods for modern attributions have allowed for the search of the women artists such as Leyster, Peeters and Ruysch, to be determined with more accuracy than ever before. The attribution process today is far different than in the nineteenth-century, as technology and access to provenance research has advanced. However, it is still extremely difficult to give all early modern still-life paintings with questionable attributions another look. Not all surviving early modern still-life compositions are accompanied with provenance records, signatures, or other existing documentation, thus making the attribution and distribution of a given artwork incredibly risky.[157] Art authenticators examine works in a similar manner to how signatures are authenticated.[158] Today, CAT scan and X-ray technology can also examine cases of retouching or covering up of a signature, such as in the case with Judith Leyster's work, which was forged with Frans Hals' name. However, not every museum institution has access to these expensive machines that investigate retouching on a canvas. As Meijer states: "When we allow attributions to well-known names to proliferate, we rob ourselves. Respect for the greatest artists is reinforced when major exhibitions can be pruned of mediocre works presented under their names, that were in truth painted by other hands."[159] Therefore, it is important to start looking for the works of women artists from this era in order to have more accurate representation in scholarship and museum institutions.

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[157] Robert D. Spencer and Victor Thaw, *The Expert Versus the Object : Judging Fakes and False Attributions in the Visual Arts*, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 3-65.
[158] Robert D. Spencer and Victor Thaw, *The Expert Versus the Object : Judging Fakes and False Attributions in the Visual Arts*, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 3-65.
[159] Adriaan Van Der Willigen and Fred G. Meijer, *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-life Painters Working in Oils* (Primavera Press, 2003), 12.

Leyster, Peeters, and Ruysch are not alone in being forgotten in scholarship due to misattributions or lack of biographical information. In addition, many women artists have had their entire oeuvre of works misattributed to other male counter-parts or left as 'unknown artist' in museum or private collections. Several museum institutions today are reexamining past attributions due to works that are missing provenance information, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Rijksmuseum, the Museo National del Prado, the National Museum of Women in Arts, and several others.[160] Some museum collections contain works with unclear attributions or curators sometimes encounter attributions without supporting evidence, and therefore state that on the object file. Often what prompts a closer examination, and a reattribution is when there is evidence lacking that there is a given artist and not enough information on the provenance. When examining a seventeenth-century Dutch still-life in the collection of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA), attributed to Juriaen Van Streeck, Elizabeth Larew who works in the collections stated that the museum staff could not find proof that Streeck actually 'created' the work (Fig. 17).[161] Additionally, the work was likely attributed before arriving to the JSMA collections. As former JSMA Curator of European Art Johanna Seasonwein stated, "researched [the painting], but the findings were inconclusive, and provenance information is spotty at best."[162] Furthermore, the work appeared to have been previously retouched. However, due to lack of provenance information available to the JSMA, it cannot be determined who and where this was

[160] Jenny Reynaerts (Interview by Morning Glory Ritchie, 2022).
[161] *JSMA Collections*, (Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, 2022). https://jsma.uoregon.edu/jsma-collections.
[162] *JSMA Collections*, (Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, 2022). https://jsma.uoregon.edu/jsma-collections.

done. This demonstrates an unclear attribution due to a lack of provenance information and history of retouching available on the piece. However, the JSMA does not confirm an unclear attribution to Streeck, but rather notes that this attribution is inconclusive, an example other museum institutions should, but don't always, follow.

Although the history of connoisseurship and art historical scholarship has suppressed the contributions of these Northern European women artists, several museum professionals and institutions today seek to remedy these past wrongs. For example, Jenny Reynaerts continues to work to make sure the galleries reflect the women artists of the early modern period.[163] As Reynaerts states: "I enjoy the challenge but am also amazed at the slow pace the idea that women were a force in the art world is taking hold. We are now the third generation claiming this, so it is time to get the work done."[164] Reynaerts brings a lot of attention to the issue of recognition with the artist Judith Leyster. The Rijksmuseum now has an ongoing five-year project for the representation of Dutch women in art history that is planned to run through 2024.[165] Reynaerts and the Rijksmuseum act upon an issue that directly impacts many Dutch women artists. Still, even though groundwork has been done to prove the issues between misattributions and the connections to women painters, the issue persists.

Virginia Treanor, a curator at the National Museum of Women in the Arts also tackles this issue of inequality in gallery spaces. Treanor states that scholarship and groundwork is being done, and it is time for more representation of women artists. As

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[163] *Women of the Rijksmuseum* (Rijksmuseum, 2022). https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/research/our-research/overarching/women- of-the-rijksmuseum.
[164] Jenny Reynaerts (Interview by Morning Glory Ritchie, 2022).
[165] *Women of the Rijksmuseum* (Rijksmuseum, 2022). https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/research/our-research/overarching/women- of-the-rijksmuseum.
Jenny Reynaerts (Interview by Morning Glory Ritchie, 2022).

Treanor states: “There is wonderful scholarship being done on women artists and museums should take the opportunity to highlight this work as well as to take a hard look at their own collecting practices.”[166] The National Museum of Women in the Arts recently curated an exhibition in 2020 titled *Women Artists of the Dutch "Golden Age,"* which features various women artists such as Clara Peeters, Judith Leyster, Rachel Ruysch, and Maria Sibylla Merian.[167] This exhibition reflects upon the success and prominence these women had achieved during their lifetime and brings them into conversation about the role of women during the Dutch Golden Age. Treanor also states, “Many women artists were, in fact, written about and well-regarded during their lifetimes. Unfortunately, for many of them, they were forgotten after their deaths and left out of subsequent history books. Also, museums did not make a practice of collecting art by women--still a problem today.”[168] Treanor seeks to bring more representation of these women painters from this period, as many achieved success during their lifetime and therefore further recognition today would only offer a more accurate reflection of the northern Baroque period.

Similar to Reynaerts and Treanor, Nicole Cook, a curator from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, strives to bring recognition to these women artists.[169] Cook takes a great interest in Judith Leyster’s work that was misattributed to other prominent male counterparts, specifically, her painting titled *The Last Drop*, which was misattributed to

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[166] Virginia Treanor (Interview by Morning Glory Ritchie, 2022).
[167] *Women Artists of the Dutch Golden Age* (National Museum of Women in Arts, 2020). https://nmwa.org/blog/nmwa-ex hibitions/opening-this-week-women-artists-of-the-dutch-golden-age/.
[168] Virginia Treanor (Interview by Morning Glory Ritchie, 2022).
[169] *Rediscovering Judith Leyster* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2021). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O52DIb2R30.

Frans Hals (Fig. 1).[170] Hofrichter and her art historical scholarship had inspired curators, as Leyster was nearly unknown to the public until the publishing of dissertation in the 1970s.[171] Although work has been done to prove an oeuvre of works to artists, male counterparts are still celebrated more than the female Dutch masters. Even though they are a selected few of the small number of women artists celebrated today, Judith Leyster, Clara Peeters, and Rachel Ruysch are all artists prominent in their time but who lack biographical information and scholarly attention. However, a handful of art historical scholars are undertaking efforts to help them receive the recognition they have long deserved. Many works of seventeenth-century women artists are unknown, therefore the known works of Leyster, Peeters and Ruysch must be celebrated further in popular art history, and the search for the works of others is principal for an accurate examination of this period. Although women artists experienced many obstacles in order to obtain an art education, admissions to artist guilds, and finding time to create works in the domestic interior, many persevered and were very prominent and influential during their time. Therefore, more exhibitions and museum collections must follow this example in order for these artists not to be forgotten again.

[170] *Rediscovering Judith Leyster* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2021). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O52DIb2R30.
[171] Kristen Frederickson, Sarah E. Webb and Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Light in the Galaxy: Judith Leyster* (University of California Press, 2015), 36-47.

Conclusion

Judith Leyster, Clara Peeters and Rachel Ruysch were all accomplished women painters of their time who lost their places in the art history canon after their death. The attribution process of seventeenth-century genre still-life painting is an evolving field in which museum professionals are currently engaging. As Spencer states, "Each generation is, however, the victim, or maybe the beneficiary, of a fresh historical and aesthetic perspective on and interpretation of the Old Masters which can on occasion render older views quite baffling. That similar feelings will be entertained about us by our successors is a sobering thought."[172] It is important for works to be correctly attributed to the true artist so that the oeuvre reflects the artist's actual art historical contributions to history, especially when these contributions provide corrections to this historical record. In the case of women artists, proper attribution of works to painters like Peeters and Leyster demonstrates that there were several active women painters during the Baroque era, contrary to traditional art historical narratives. Clara Peeters and Judith Leyster were monumental for the still-life and genre imagery and achieved strong recognition during their lifetime, which faded after their deaths. Considering the difficulties that seventeenth-century women faced in the art industry, and the history of connoisseurship that has suppressed the contributions of women artists, it is clear that there are still obstacles and steps to be taken in museum institutions and art-historical scholarship today. As Hofrichter notes, not only is the reattribution of these works to the correct artist important, but understanding the artist in their historical context must also

[172] Robert D. Spencer and Victor Thaw, The Expert Versus the Object : Judging Fakes and False Attributions in the Visual Arts, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 3-65.

be done; correcting misattributions and looking for the works of women artists is only the first step.[173] Although much groundwork has been laid, there is still more to do. It is time to start searching for women artists and provide fair representations in scholarship and exhibition spaces. The various early modern women who persevered during a difficult time to obtain an art education should receive their long overdue recognition and appreciation instead of being at risk of fading away.

[173] Kristen Frederickson, Sarah E. Webb and Frima Fox Hofrichter, *Light in the Galaxy: Judith Leyster* (University of California Press, 2015), 36-47.

Appendix

Figure 1. Judith Leyster, *The Last Drop*, 1639, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, (Previously misattributed to Frans Hals).

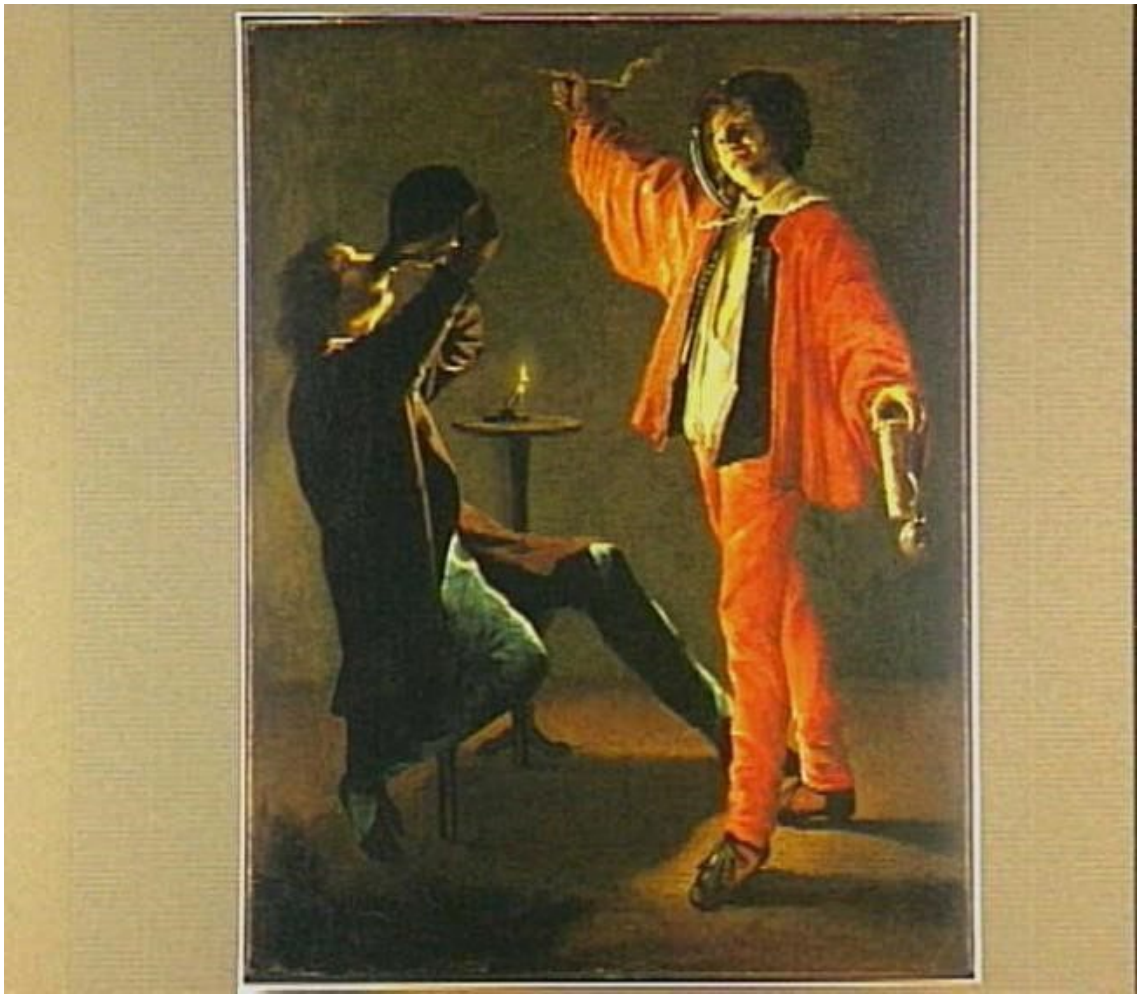

Figure 2. Judith Leyster, *The Last Drop*, 1639, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, (Previously misattributed to Frans Hals). (Prior to uncovering retouching).

Figure 3. Caravaggio, *Still-Life with Basket of Fruit*, Michelangelo Merisi, 1573-1610, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

Figure 4. Clara Peeters, *Still-Life with Fish*, 1611, Rijksmuseum.

Figure 5. Judith Leyster, *The Jester*, 1626, Musée du Louvre. (Previously misattributed to Frans Hals).

Figure 6. Judith Leyster, *The Jolly Toper*, 1629, Rijksmuseum. (Previously misattributed to Frans Hals).

Figure 7. Judith Leyster, *The Carousing Couple,* 1606-1660, Musée du Louvre. (Previously misattributed to Frans Hals).

Figure 8. Rachel Ruysch, *Roses, Tulips, a Poppy, Nasturtiums, Marigolds and other Flowers in a Vase, and a Tortoiseshell Butterfly on a Partly Draped Marble Ledge*, 1664-1750, Private Collection. (Previously misattributed to Willem van Aelst).

Figure 9. Clara Peeters, *Still-Life,* 1612, Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle. (Misattributed to Jacob van Es).

Figure 10. Clara Peeters, *Still-Life*, 1610, Private Collection. (Previously misattributed to Jan Baptist van Fornenburgh).

Figure 11. Clara Peeters, *Still-life with Flowers,* 1610s, Private Collection. (Previously misattributed to Jan Baptist van Fornenburgh).

Figure 12. Clara Peeters, *Still-life with Fish, Poultry, Vegetables, Kitchen Utensils and a Cat*, 1625, Philadelphia Museum of Art. (Previously misattributed to Alexander Adriaenssen).

Figure 13. Clara Peeters, *Still-life with Fish,* 1608-1657, Philadelphia Museum of Art. (Previously misattributed to Alexander Adriaenssen).

Figure 14. Clara Peeters, *Flowers in a Basket*, 1615-1619, Private Collection (Previously misattributed to Peter Binoit).

Figure 15. Rejected Attribution by RKG (Clara Peeters), *Still Life with Crab, Shrimps, and Lobster,* c. 1635–40, Museum of Fine Arts Houston.

Figure 16. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Susanna and the Elders*, 1610, Schloss Weißenstein. (Previously misattributed to Orazio Gentileschi).

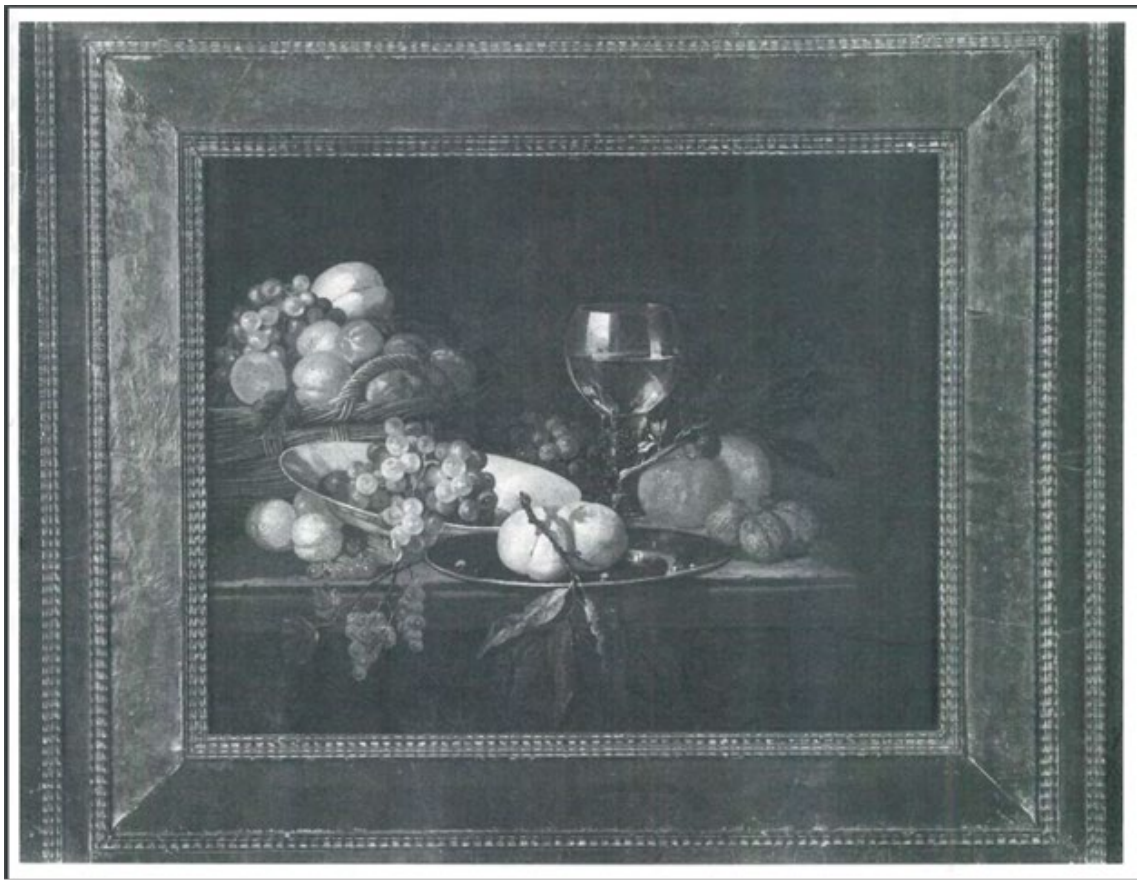

Figure 17. Attributed to Juriaen van Streeck, *Still-life*, 1632-87, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art.

Figure 18. Clara Peeters, *Table with a cloth, salt cellar, gilt tazza, pie, jug, porcelain dish with olives, and roast fowl*, 1611 Museo Nacional del Prado.

Figure 19. Clara Peeters, *Table with a cloth, salt cellar, gilt tazza, pie, jug, porcelain dish with olives, and roast fowl*, 1611 Museo Nacional del Prado.

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