



Editorial

Drawings for European Decorative Arts

The collection of drawings for European decorative arts that is being formed with the support of the Decorative Art Fund, established within the Rijksmuseum Fonds by private benefactors in 2013, is growing apace. Its beginnings were expounded in *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* in 2016 (pp. 99-119 and 140-91), and now, four years on, the collection features once again in the section devoted to acquisitions, and in an article by Achim Stiegel. In the interval, its size has grown to over a thousand drawings – this is a generous count, including all those contained in albums – and its character has become progressively better defined. The focus continues to be exclusively on depictions of objects, whether in part, in their entirety or even within a larger setting. The collection thus complements the Rijksmuseum's holdings of decorative arts as a visual record of functional innovations and stylistic developments. More specifically, it is maturing as an instrument for the study of the role drawings played in the process of making works of decorative art, from an initial sketched design to a record of the finished work made for selling or marketing purposes.

The drawings presented in the acquisitions section are a case in point. By restricting the selection to the field of domestic furniture, this survey, although necessarily limited in scope, demonstrates how comparisons within the collection itself may clarify the nature and function of each individual sheet, and how certain progressions in time are becoming apparent. Comparable selections could already be made of drawings for church furniture, ecclesiastical and secular goldsmiths' work, and, to a lesser extent, for other categories in the decorative arts. Achim Stiegel's article on the remarkable group of early nineteenth-century drawings made in Berlin by the cabinet-maker Carl Wilhelm Marckwort illustrates the rewards of a detailed, in-depth study, as well as showing the relevance of the context provided by the Rijksmuseum's fast-growing collection.

On a broader level, design drawings are becoming an increasingly important part of the Rijksmuseum's DNA. In the 2018 exhibition on the auricular, *Kwab: Dutch Design in the Age of Rembrandt*, drawings had a greater presence than would have been the case if we had not become so actively engaged with them. And in the article by Kurt Wettengl and Katharina Schmidt-Loske on Frans Post's *View of Olinda, Brazil* in the present issue, a drawn study of a lizard is interpreted as a crucial argument for attributing the frame's design to Post himself. Looking through recent issues of the *Bulletin*, this is by no means an isolated case. Drawings for objects are being woven into the fabric of investigating works of art: how they were conceived, made, acquired and enjoyed.

We are deeply grateful to the many individuals who through their continued support and enthusiasm are helping this exciting initiative along. Some are mentioned as donors in the entries on individual acquisitions, but their number is much larger, and forever on the increase. Thank you very much!

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