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AIR BUBBLES

Bubbles in Northern European Self-Portraits: *Homo bulla est*

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Charles Henry Bennett and William Harry Rogers, *Psalm CXIX. 37. Turn Away Mine Eyes From Beholding Vanity*, 1861 engraving. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Looking at this engraving from 1861, a small figure of a court jester stands within a round frame surrounded by natural decoration. Representing *Psalm CXIX, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity,"* it declares as the young boy seems besotted with the floating orbs surrounding him. Perhaps he is caught up in a reflection of himself. Perhaps he is entranced by how the bubbles reflect the light around him. Liana Cheney examines a similar duality in a pair of Northern European self-portraits in her essay "Bubbles in Northern European Self-Portraiture: *Homo est bulla est (The Individual is a Bubble)*." The paintings by Clara Peeters and David Bailly mix the genres of self-portrait and still life, pairing the artists with various ephemera. With emblems of this period as a lens for these self-portraits with vanitas, Cheney examines the pictorial bubbles in these self-portraits for their multiplicity of meanings: refractors of lights; harbingers of the transitory nature of life; and reflections through which the artists can see themselves. Through examining the items on display and the bubbles that float above the scene, the artists relate attributes of their own, showing off their skill and thus their vanity.

- The Editors

Bubbles in Northern European Self-Portraits: *Homo bulla est* (*The Individual as a Bubble*)

Liana De Girolami Cheney

Northern European depictions of *Homo bulla est* (*The Individual is a Bubble*) derived from two emblematic and literary sources: one classical and one sixteenth century. The classical literary source refers to the moral allusion of *L'Hora passa* (*Time Passes or The Hour Passes*), a proverb about the brevity of life recorded by the Roman poet Marcus Terentius Varro in the third book of his *Rerum rusticarum* (*On Agriculture*): "Ut dicitur si est homo bullas, eo magis senex" (As they say, man [the individual] is a bubble, all the more so is an old man).[1] The sixteenth-century literary source is noted by the Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus, in one of his *Adages*, *Homo bulla est* (*Man [The Individual] is but a bubble*). The lesson of this proverb, Erasmus explained, "is that there is nothing so fragile, so fleeting and so empty as the life of man [the individual]. A bubble is that round swollen empty thing which we watch in water as it grows and vanishes in a moment of time."[2]

Seventeenth-century Northern European painters from the Netherlands and Flanders were visually inspired by these sources. They composed many paintings with imagery associated with the transitory nature of life — due to natural causes, plagues, wars — and with the meaninglessness of life."[3] Human folly, physical and metaphysical limitations, and moral and spiritual confusion prompted the revival of the Socratic dictum, "The unexamined life is not worth living" (Plato, *Apology*, 38a5-6).[4] Some of these still life paintings were called *vanitas* paintings, referring to the evanescence of life as expressed in the biblical text: "Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas" (Vanity of vanities; all is vanity, Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12:8), to Socrates's reflection about immortality (Plato's *Phaedo*, 64a, cf. 67.e), and to the ancient Roman saying *memento mori* (remember death), accompanied by the motto carpe diem (seize the day).[5]

Art historian and iconographer Eddy de Jongh characterized Dutch artists' preoccupation with the meaning of life as the tendency toward moralizing, as seen in *vanitas* portrait paintings, and a part of the mentality of the seventeenth century.[6] In the use of realism and double entendres in their imageries of *vanitas*, Dutch and Flemish artists were assisted not only by biblical references but also by extensive emblematic compendia, which encouraged moral virtue and reminded the viewer of the brevity of life. Included in these compendia were Joannes Sambucus's *Emblemata* (Antwerp 1564, into Dutch 1566), Hadrianus Junius's *Emblemata* (Antwerp 1565, into Dutch 1567), Andrea Alciato's *Emblemata* (translated into Dutch, Leiden 1591), Otto van Veen's *Quinti Horatii Flacci emblemata* (Antwerp 1607), *Amorum emblemata* (Antwerp 1608), and *Amoris divini Emblemata* (Antwerp 1615), Roemer Visscher's *Sinnepoppen* (Amsterdam 1614), Jacob Cats's *Sinne-en-Minnebeelden* (Amsterdam 1627), and Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* translated into Dutch (Amsterdam 1660).

Seventeenth-century depictions of *Homo bulla* were extensive, ranging from genre to religious visualizations and including moral allusions. In the Protestant Netherlands, the moral meaning was visualized in genre imagery, while in Catholic Flanders, the moral message was revealed in religious painting. In genre representations, the theme further expands into still life vanitas paintings and portrait paintings, including self-portraits.[7] This essay focuses on the symbolism of bubbles in two self-portraits of the seventeenth century: the Flemish painter Clara Peeters's *Self-Portrait with Still Life*

of 1618; and the Dutch painter David Bailly's *Self-Portrait with Vanitas* Symbols of 1651 (Figures 3 and 7). The first part of the essay briefly addresses the symbolism of bubbles in Netherlandish iconography, and the second part focuses on the depiction and meaning of the bubble in these two self-portraits from seventeenth-century Belgium and Holland.

Figure 1. Hendrick Goltzius (1558 – 11617), *Quis Evadet?* I, 1594. Allegory of Transience (Homo bulla est), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photo credit: ©Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1951.

Figure 2. Hadrianus Junius, (1511 – 75), *Emblem XVI*, from *Medici Emblemata* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1565). Public domain.

The Complex Meaning of Bubbles in Dutch Iconography

Here I will focus on a historical print by Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), *Allegory of Transience (Homo bulla est)* or *Quis Evadet?* (at the Metropolitan Museum of Art [51.501.4929], Figure 1).[8] The engraving represents a panoramic view of a landscape, where in the background there is a cityscape and in the foreground a rustic natural setting. A nude child, a Herculean putto, ponders with a puzzling expression. He is seated on the ground, resting one arm on a skull and bones, and holding a scalloped shell with water and soap in one hand.[9] With the other hand, the curly-haired putto plays with bubbles held on a wand. As he watches with trepidation the formation of the beautiful clear bubbles floating in the air, he also sees them with disappointment as they burst, evaporate, and disappear on contact with natural air. He also experiences smoke fumes emerging from a burning urn located on a marble pedestal behind him; they too vanish in midair.

Metaphysically, the open sky or the air becomes a recipient of the water bubbles and smoke fumes. Goltzius's humanistic awareness combined the physical elements of air, water, fire, and earth (the landscape, flowers, trees, and the putto), forming natural aspects of the cosmos with metaphysical notions about human life and death (*memento mori*). The spiral or ascending movement of the smoke refers to the *axis mundi*, the "path of escape from time and space."[10] The transformation of the body into ashes, like the soap and water into bubbles and the fire burning into smoke, allude to the natural transformation of life. These phenomena are considered part of the eternal and perpetual recurrence of death and rebirth, like the change of the seasons and the individual biological pattern of the ages of life — childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age.[11] In the Christian religion, the human dilemma lies in accepting one's mortality: that is, the separation of the natural body from the soul, and trusting the transformation of matter into a spiritual essence. Hence the soul traveling through air is purified through fire and water in order to arrive at the celestial realm.[12]

Goltzius's print shows the putto's extended leg pointing to a broken stone or epitaph in front of him, which bears a Latin caption: *QVIS EVADET?* (Who is saved [from death]? or Who evades [death]?). A biblical warning for the putto blowing bubbles alludes to vanitas and the superficiality of living as well as the brevity of human existence, just like the bubble evaporating in midair (Ecclesiastes 1:2).[13] Below the broken stone, in the lower margin, there is a Latin poem at whose end is inscribed the letters F. Estius. A professional friend of Goltzius, the Catholic humanist and Neo Latinist Franco Estius (1545-94),[14] from Haarlem, composed many Latin poems for Goltzius's prints throughout his life, including this one:

> Flos nouus, et verna fragrans argenteus aura
> Marcescit subito, perit, ali, perit illa venustas.
> Sic et vita hominum iam, nunc nascentibus, eheu,
> Instar abit bullæ vanique elapsa vaporis. F. Estius
> (The fresh silvery flower, fragrant with the breath of spring,
> Withers once its beauty wanes;
> Likewise the life of man, already ebbing in the newborn babe,
> Vanishes like a bubble or like fleeting smoke.
> (F. Estius)[15]

The symbolism of the floating bubbles also derives from emblematic books and engravings from this period, for example Hadrianus Junius's *Emblem XVI: Et Tutto Abbraccio, Et Nulla Stringo* (I embrace everything, and hold nothing).[16] The emblem shows many children trying to capture and hold on to floating bubbles in a hilly landscape. Some children, seated on mounds of dirt in front of trees with large fronds, are making bubbles with water and soap from a shell that they are

holding and then are blowing them to the other children who attempt in vain to grasp them (Figure 2). The shell is an ancient traditional symbol of cosmic death (birth, death, and rebirth) associated with the cycle of the moon and water, and purification.[17]

A revival of this subject matter several decades later manifested itself in still life vanitas paintings in which artists included in their self-portraits vanitas imagery, including bubbles. The Flemish painter Clara Peeters's *Self-Portrait with Vanitas* of 1629-30 (Figure 3) and the Dutch painter David Bailly's *Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols* of 1651 (Figure 7) are emblematic of this revival.

A few general remarks indicate some differences between the lives of the two painters. There is limited information about the artistic training, career, and patronage of the Flemish painter Clara Peeters (1584/1594?-1650/1657?); even her birth and death dates are not certain.[18] Peeters came from a devoted Catholic family; she was baptized on May 15, 1584/94 and married to Henricus Joosen on May 31, 1639 in the Church of St. Walburga in Antwerp.[19] here were no children from their marriage. Early in her artistic career, Clara was probably trained and mentored by Jean Peeters, her father, as was traditional in this era,[20] and later by Antwerp painters such as Hans van Essen (1590-1643), Osias Beert (1580-1623), and Jan Breugel the Elder (1568-1625).[21] She worked in Antwerp as well as in Amsterdam (1611) and The Hague (1617), but her subsequent artistic activities are confusing, as is her enrollment or participation in artists' guilds such as the established Guild of Saint Luke in Antwerp, Amsterdam, and The Hague.[22] She excelled in depicting still life paintings with flora and fauna, accompanied by fancy ceramic, glass, and metal objects. Her artistic travels were limited to Belgium and the Netherlands (Amsterdam and The Hague).

By contrast, there is a plethora of biographical data about the artistic career, life, and patronage of the Dutch painter David Bailly (1584-1657).[23] He was born in Leiden to Protestant Flemish parents who moved away from Antwerp, a Catholic center, to the Netherlands, a Protestant community, to achieve religious freedom. He started his artistic career with initial training in drawing from his father, then became an apprentice to prominent artists and dealers in several workshops, namely, Jacques de Gheyn II, Isaac van Swanenburgh, Adriane Verburg, and Cornelius van der Voort. In 1608, he began traveling throughout Germany (Frankfurt, Nuremburg, and Augsburg) and Italy (Venice and Rome). In 1642, he married, late in life at the age of 57, to Agneta van Swanenburgh. They had no children. His high recognition occurred in 1648 when he received admission to the prestigious Leiden Guild of Saint Luke. He died at the age of 73.

Both painters, however, were fascinated with the combination of animate and inanimate objects and their portrayal in a pictorial form (in this context, their self-portraits). Furthermore, both were dedicated to capturing natural and artificial light effects in order to infuse the physical objects they depicted with a metaphysical signification about the intrinsic meaning of life and its transient nature. The following section will deal separately with each self-portrait and its intricacies, focusing on the signification of the depiction of the bubble in their self-images. At the conclusion, there will be a close paragone between their approaches of handling bubbles in their self-portraits.

Clara Peeters's Self-Portrait with Vanitas

Figure 3. Clara Peeters (1584/1594? – 1650/1657?), *Self-Portrait with Vanitas*, 1618.. Oil on panel, 37.2 x 50.2 cm. Private Collection. Photo credit: Public domain. Wikimedia Commons.

Clara Peeters's *Self-Portrait with Vanitas* of 1629-30 is a panel painting of 37.5 cm x. 50.2 cm, now in a private collection. The painting was sold by the Hallsborough Gallery in London in October of 1969 (Figure 3).[24] Throughout this painting, Peeters engaged in a pictorial dialogue between physical and metaphysical paragoni (comparisons) and conceits (emblematic meanings). Her traditional and additional disguised symbolisms enrich the meanings of the displayed objects in the painting and also reveal her ingenious creativity. In the painting, her *clavis interpretandi* is divided into two parts: animate and inanimate objects. On the left side of the painting we see the model and sitter as Clara, the protagonist. The scene opens in a room whose wall is decorated with a flowery tapestry or embossed leather. A large green velveteen curtain is drawn back to reveal an elegantly dressed woman, seated at a table covered with precious objects. Clara is dressed in her finest, unlike the attire she wore in previous self-portraits, e.g., Clara Peeters's *Still Life with Flowers and Gold Cups of Honor* (Wunderkammer), now at the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe (Figure 4) where, reflected in the bubbles on the goblet, she appears in her studio dressed in working clothes, holding a palette and a brush in front of a mirror (Figure 5).[25]

In the *Self-Portrait with Vanitas*, the sitter gazes outside the picture plane, probably at a mirror where she can see her own reflection. The self-image is not of a beautiful or idealized depiction of a female but is a realistic rendition of an accomplished painter. Her round face and wide-open eyes represent an observant person. The pupils of her eyes act as small reflective mirrors, and in them a traditional artist's room can be seen. Similarly, the artist's studio is reflected in the large bubble suspended at mid-point in the center of the painting.[26] Peeters delighted in incorporating objects and painting details to provide for the viewer a visual feast of colors and shapes and, most of all, a myriad of light reflections as well as optical illusions.

A masterful painter, she shows a wooden chair whose head arm is carved with a grim lion's face that contrasts with the sitter's pleasant smile. The smile may be in response to what is reflected in the mirror or may be an ironic smile about what is being painted. The sitter's golden tresses are crowned with a jeweled band of pearls and rubies; a large brooch with a teardrop pearl placed in the center accentuates her large forehead, hazel eyes, aquiline nose, and sensual lips. Her face is round, with high cheekbones; her visible earlobe is ornamented with a dangling gold earring containing a blue stone (sapphire). She is beautifully attired in a dress composed of a bright red skirt with a blue top trimmed with golden lace. The daring cleavage reveals her voluptuous breasts and a string of large pearls. Her shoulder is covered by a fanciful, transparent lamé jacket with white and gold bands and a high lace collar that frames her neck. Golden bracelets composed of pearls, rubies, and ancient medallions accentuate the painter's working hands. In one hand she holds a golden hairpin (an allusion to a painter's brush), and the other holds a magnifying glass in a folding case. Peeters employed this instrument for careful observations and study in her renditions of still life designs, as shown in the many small details depicted in the vanitas painting. The reflections on each side of this opened magnifying glass or bubble locket mirror the colors of the sitter's attire: blue and white colors.

The righthand side of the painting includes only inanimate objects placed on the table. A red velvet cloth covers the table, accentuating the still life or vanitas objects displayed. This collection of props has been seen in her previous paintings, e.g., *Still Life with Flowers and Gold Cups of Honor of 1612* (Figure 4);[27] *Table with Still Life (Dainties)* of 1611, now at the Museo del Prado in Madrid;[28] and *Still Life with Flowers Surrounded by Insects and a Snail* of 1612-18, now at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC (Figure 6).[29]

In the foreground of Peeters's *Self-Portrait with Vanitas*, there is a large gold jeweled hairpin next to two gold rings encrusted with precious stones; these are gimmel rings (betrothal rings).[30] Accompanying them are two mesh gold bracelets with exotic clasps. The smaller bracelet in the forefront is folded over on itself. Just behind it is a large gold bracelet that lies open in the shape of the letter "L," a possible reference to the Flemish word "love" (*lief* or *liefde*, a loved one). The pearls or string of pearls that the sitter wears are associated with Venus, the Goddess of Love.[31] Is the glass bubble locket preciously holding a lock of hair or locklove from her lover or husband to be, Henricus Joosen?

On the table are additional vanitas objects. Next to golden bracelets are two ivory dice that together show the lucky number 7 (1+6). A large goblet decorated with intricate serpentine floral designs lies on its side. The gilt goblet separates the jewelry from various types of coins: some of gold (Spanish coins with engraved portraits and incised letters referring to King Ferdinand) and some of silver (Pope Paul III). Next to these coins there is a large floral leaf that leads the eye to a Roemer vase containing flowers such as Anemone coronaria, Helleborus orientalis or lenten rose, grape hyacinth, snakeshead fritillary, heartsease, and a monocots lily.[32]

Figure 4. Clara Peeters (1584/1594? – 1650/1657?), *Still Life with Flowers and Gold Cups of Honor*, (Wunderkammer). Signed and dated Clara P Anno 1612. Panel, 59.2 x 59 cm. Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe. Photo credit: Public domain. Wikimedia commons.
Figure 5. Detail.

Figure 6. Clara Peeters (1584/1594? – 1650/1657?), *Still Life with Flowers Surrounded by Insects and a Snail*, 1612-1618. Signed lower center CLARA P. Oil on copper, 16.6 3.5 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Photo credit: Public domain. Wikimedia commons.

Peeters appropriated the floral arrangement inserted in the Roemer vase from her earlier still life painting, *Still Life with Flowers Surrounded by Insects and a Snail* of 1612-18, signed in the lower center of the table as CLARA P. The small painting is in oil on copper, 16.6 cm x 3.5 cm., now at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC (2018.144.1) (Figure 6). In this painting, there are water bubbles on the leaves of the flowers' stems and a couple of them have dropped on the table. They are still of round shape, holding their water by gravity, and their reflections suggest an immediate moment in time. The bubbles have just dropped onto the table and will soon become a puddle of water. In this small still life painting, Peeters also created several levels of optical illusion. On the borders of the illusionistic mat that surrounds the oval shape of the painting, she added a collection of insects, dragonflies, worms, beetles, and a snail. Curiously, a ladybug (*Coccinella septempunctata)* is placed just below her signature in the frame mat. This is a traditional sign for luck, a good omen for Peeters's creative powers and wisdom, as well as an allusion to immortality.[33] At times, the border of the painting becomes one level of reality, while the painted image in the oval picture is the second projected imagery, but in some other instances the reverse is perceived. Peeters played a visual pun on what is seen as real or reflective or how a painted object can be seen or not seen as a reflected image.

Back to the *Self Portrait with Vanitas*: Some of the luscious hellebore leaves in the Roemer vase hold small drops of water, forming water bubbles just like in Peters's *Still Life with Flowers Surrounded by Insects and a Snail.* The colors of the flowers — red, gold, and blue — match the color of Peeters's outfit. Although some of the flowers are in full bloom, others bloomed earlier and now are droopy or have fallen off the stem, as seen on the table among the goblets and the coins. The transformation of the flowers parallels the transience of natural life, including the natural state of human beings.

Next to the flower vase, in the background, there is a large gilt gold goblet with complex designed patterns of classical egg-dart-motif, floral and plant arrangements. At the top, as a handle, a male figure stands like a soldier, holding a lance and a shield. The image of the soldier with these attributes is a paradoxical allusion to Saint George's *kermesse*, that is, this patron saint's day celebration, which combined a carnival feast and a religious rite, well-depicted in an engraving of Hieronymus Cock, after Pieter Breughel the Elder's *The Fair of Saint George's Day of 1559*, now at the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston in Texas.[34] This Saint George's type of imagery is often depicted in Peeters's still life paintings, e.g. at Karlsruhe, London, and Madrid. Behind this goblet there is a round green bowl filled with nuts and sweets. Two large gold coins, one with an initial "M" and the other with a *fleur-de-lis*, complete the background on the table's displayed vanitas decorations. All of these objects, animate and inanimate, attest to the ambiguity of permanence and the transitoriness of life (*memento mori* and *carpe diem*). The animate objects — flowers, self — will perish through natural causes, or even accidental causes, following the cycle of life. The inanimate objects coveted during a person's lifetime — jewelry, coins, goblets, vase — will eventually be abandoned, destroyed, or discarded even if they endure the vicissitudes of time.

A giant round bubble suspended in midair between Peeters's head and the Roemer vase of flowers further emphasizes the transitoriness of life. In the painting, Peeters composed two types of bubbles: artificial and real in a painted world. The small water bubbles, resting on and sliding down from the leaves of the flowers in the vase, are carefully designed and very real. The circular and oval shapes of the bubbles are like transparent precious stones. As water droplets, they provide immediate life to cut flowers; but as they drip away and evaporate, so will the flowers decay, as shown in the loose flowers and dead leaves on the table. The natural water bubbles are as fragile as the cut flowers: both will vanish, since they are living and natural forms. The oval-shaped glass bubbles at the base of the Roemer vase, designed by a glassmaker, are, in contrast, artificial. They will not naturally vanish. Still they may be shattered if the vase is broken, and it will inevitably decompose, even if in years or centuries. These are bubbles of an inanimate object with a possible fatal fate, but not by natural causes. With an emblematic association to *vanitas*, the biblical verse recalls: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt" (Matthew 6:19-20).

Paradoxically, the large suspended circular bubble partakes of both physical states: artificial and real. The image alludes to different sets of symbols. The air bubble is painted in midair, reflecting an interior room, perhaps the painter's studio, just an illusory place in time and space. It is a fanciful invention and an illusionistic image artificially created by the painter. At the same time, it is real: It is a physically painted object in the form of an air bubble on a surface — the canvas of the painting. The airy, fanciful, and floating quality of this painted spherical bubble differs from that of the small water bubbles resting on the leaves of the cut flowers or the blown-glass bubbles formed in the Roemer vase. Although in all these instances the bubble is an artistic painted device, its type, size, shape, and function as well as conceit and meaning allude to another level of signification. The round air bubble is located behind the round head of the sitter, and together these round forms act as or provide an allusion to a dual face or a dual head: a Janus head, an image looking back (past) and forward (future). The past is projected with the model's turned head facing the viewer and looking outside of the picture, while the air bubble floating away in the distance projects a future, an uncertain aspect of life, as well as the frailty of life (sitter), similar to the temporary transit of the air bubble in midair.

In the division of the painting there is also a second classification: the depiction of things that are alive and will die — such as a human being, flowers, and bubbles — contrasts with human-made objects — coins, jewelry, goblets, vase, curtain, tablecloth, tapestry wall, and wooden chair — which are objects that lack metaphysical transitory qualities. The suspended single bubble in the painting suggests a transient moment. Suspended in time and space, it will pass; it will evaporate or burst, just as the flowers will wilt; indeed some are already doing so. As too the female, the sitter: her youth will pass, she will decay and pass away as part of being a mortal, thus following the natural causes of life.[35]

Peeters, however, provided further insight in her complex painting. Although it is a *vanitas*, *memento mori*, and still life painting — including as well some aspects of the allegory of the five senses such as touch (her hands holding objects), smell (the flowers), sight (all the various reflections in the still life objects) — it is also a ceremonial or a commemorative painting, a celebration of marriage or a wedding gift. Her elegant and formal attire, with a pearl necklace, hairdo crowned with pearls and precious jewelry, all the precious objects on the table, the large bracelet with the insignia "L" for love and, in particular, the two gimmel rings (symbols of marriage) are testimonies of her dowry and of love. In the past, other female artists had painted a celebratory picture or gifted such an offering to the spouse to be, e.g., Lavinia Fontana's *Self-Portrait at the Spinet* of 1577, now at the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca in Rome.[36]

In Clara Peeters, Pamela Hibbs Decoteau attributed the painting to the Circle of Clara Peeters.[37] Curiously, her complex argument for not attributing the painting to Clara Peeters herself provided a strong argument that the painting was, in fact, by her. The recent acquisition by the National Gallery of Art of Peeters's *Still Life with Flowers Surrounded by Insects and a Snail*, signed in the lower center CLARA P, depicting the same still life of a Roemer vase with flowers seen in Peeters's *Self Portrait with Vanitas*, supports in great part the argument that it is a painting by her. Another suggestion for dating the painting much later, probably around 1630 and after 1618, is based on the sitter's physiognomy, an adult female of an approximate age of 36 or 46, and not 24, depending upon calculations of Peeters's birth date. Hence, in view of the age of the sitter and the displayed objects depicted on the table previously seen in earlier paintings — the glass locket and gimmel rings or wedding rings — this self-portrait should be dated to around 1629 or 1630 in connection with the date of her marriage to Henri Joosen.

But most of all, Peeters created the painting not just as a permanent record of herself in a special moment in real time and space but for posterity, a masterpiece of her artistic achievements in a suspended magical reality in time and space; hence challenging the ephemerality of *vanitas*, *l'hora passa* or *homo bulla est*.

David Bailly's Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols

Figure 7. David Bailly (1584 – 1657), *Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols*, 1651. Oil on panel, 65 x 97.5 cm. Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden, The Netherlands. Photo credit: Public domain. Wikimedia Commons.

David Bailly (1584-1657) completed his *Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols* in 1651, an oil on panel, 65 cm x 97.5 cm, now in the Museum De Lakenhal in Leiden, The Netherlands (Figure 7). Unlike Clara Peeters and her Self-*Portrait with Vanitas*, there is no dearth of scholarship on this rich and complex painting.[38] This short essay cannot discuss or summarize the major eloquent iconographical descriptions of the *vanitas* objects and portrait identification made by recent scholars (Brusati, Bruyn, Voskuil, Wurfbain, and Martin) in Bailly's painting. But a few iconographic observations will be briefly considered, mostly addressing relationships between Bailly's and Peeters's self-portraits and the inclusion of bubbles in them.

Bailly's *Self-Portrait* typifies Dutch vanitas allusions as noted on a piece of paper in the painting: *vanitas vanitum et omnia vanitas* with the signature and date of the artist: *David Bailly pinxit*, A. 1651. This type of self-portrait (a single portrait that depicts the painter) combines elements derived from group portraiture (with the inclusions of ancestors) with allegorical portraiture, and the fusion of *memento mori*, *vanitas*, and still life elements. Bailly, like Peeters, engaged in the duality of natural and inanimate conceits — life and death, present and past, artificial and real, solid versus liquid — as well

as with the collection of *paragoni* in the arts — drawing versus painting; print versus picture; painting versus sculpture; ivory/stone versus silver/brass or wood; and, music versus painting. For Bailly, the *vanitas* self-portrait is a remembrance of his past loved ones, in particular his wife, who is depicted twice in the picture. First she is depicted in a painting in an oval frame placed on the table next to his second self-portrait as a mature man.[39] In front of the portrait of his wife sits a smoking candle, whose smoke plumes guide the viewer to look into the dark background of the painting where an image emerges — a possible second portrait of his wife, but as a ghost (deceased Agneta).[40] Recent X-rays[41] indicate Bailly's *pentimento* in pointing his maulstick (lying near the back of the table) toward a woman's face in the background of the painting, the present ghost image that still shows. Historical and visual observations are confusing. It is unclear when Agneta died. She was very ill and composed a will in 1644. Ten years later, in the Spring of 1657, Bailly also was ill, unable to sign his will. He died shortly thereafter. There is a confusing claim that his wife was involved in compiling this will, suggesting that she was still alive.[42] The pictorial fact that Bailly left part of his *pentimento* of a visible female's face similar to his wife's portrait in his final painting suggests, however, that she was deceased and that her image was a *memento mori*.

In Bailly's painting, the movement of the three air bubbles leads the viewer to the *clavis interpretandi* of the imagery. On the left side of the painting, the first bubble moves away from the self-portraits of the painter: from when he was a young artist and toward when he is an older established master. This second image appears in an oval-shaped frame. The portrait images of when Bailly was young and old are connected by the placement of his own hands: one holds a maulstick, indicating the artist's tool as a painter, and the other rests on the frame of the older image of himself, showing the span of time in an artistic world. This first floating air bubble is gazed at by an older bearded man drawn on a piece of paper pinned to the wall. The gray drawing portrays an aging man wearing monastic clothing; perhaps it is the Apostle Paul, a converter, who addressed Philippians about the perspective on life and death (Phil. 1:18-26).[43] Perhaps the image of an Evangelical figure, a converter of Catholics to Protestants? The second floating air bubble is larger. It follows the smoke plumes of the candle, rising above the portrait of Bailly's deceased wife and leading toward the background where there is an emerging shadow with a ghost of the dead wife, her second portrait.

The third gliding air bubble, of a smaller size, moves toward the bust statue of a *Bacchante* created by the Flemish sculptor and architect Lucas Faydhere (1627-97).[44] The *Bacchante*'s female image contrasts with the adjacent painted female image in the portrait of Agneta. Curiously, Bailly composed a series of *paragoni* between the painted portrait and the bust sculpture, demonstrating the painter's ability to capture liveliness (though the sculptor lacks this ability) while eloquently conveying the expression of inertia. Both women are portrayed tilting their heads in the same direction. The painted portrait shows a lively expression of a beautiful woman with open eyes and a gentle smile gazing toward the viewer (or the painter, in this instance her husband) while the *Bacchante*'s blinded or unpainted eyes show the inability to see or connect with the maker. The *Bacchante*'s smirk is a false gesture of a smile. Agneta in the oval painting is beautifully dressed, wearing a string of pearls around her neck, and her hairdo is decorated with a crown of pearls, contrasting with the *Bacchante*'s awkward himation held by a strap and revealing her undeveloped breasts. The ridge around her neckline shows a faulty anatomical connection between her shoulder and head, as if the bust combined two separate fragments of an ancient sculpture. Her hairdo is crowned with her tresses forming a taeniae or a flower placed atop her heard. This bubble travels to show the transformation of time: a living image depicted in a portrait versus the painted shadow of the image in the background, and also a comparison between the different conceptions in portraying a female beauty, a lady of stature, and loved one versus a fleeting lover, a bacchante. According to Plato's *Ion*: 534 (*On Poetry*), a bacchante or maenad, who was a follower of Dionysus or Bacchus, the God of Wine, carried a thyrsus (a staff with wine leaves) to strike the streams of the earth so that springs of wine would bubble up.[45] In Bailly's painting, next to the *Bacchante* is a glass flute containing white wine... and a bubble. Or is it a reflection of the bubble floating about the *Bacchante*'s head? With the inclusion of the *Bacchante* and its association with Platonic refences (*Symposium* 197a, *Phaedrus* 244)[46] about the frenzied action, divine mania, or poetical

inspirations during the feasts or Dionysiac reveries, Bailly parallels the furor poeticus with the furor artisticus in a painter when creating and composing a painting, as in his *Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols*.

The third floating bubble transits toward the ivory sculpture of *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* of 1650 (Figure 8), attributed to Artus Quellinus I (1609-68), a well-established Flemish sculptor from Antwerp who worked as well in the Netherlands. During 1646 and 1657, his noted sculptural program was for the City Hall (Stadhuis) in Amsterdam.[47] The selection of this saint, Sebastian (256-88), is based on his traditional Christian popularity as healer of maladies and plagues in seventeenth-century northern Europe. Hence the saint's association with Agneta, who was believed to have survived or died during a plague.[48]

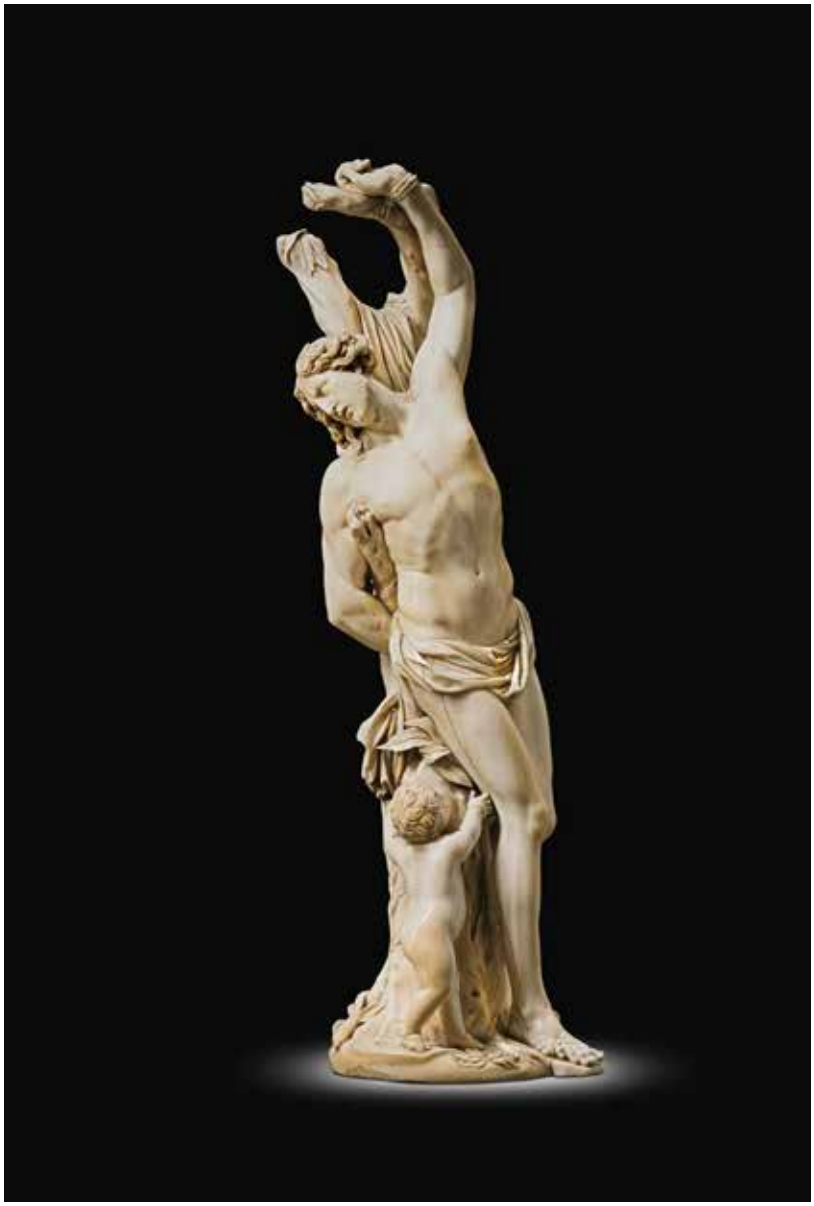

Figure 8. Artus Quellinus I (1609 – 1680), attr. *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, 1650. Ivory, h. 42.5cm. Private Collection. Photo credit: © Courtesy of Sotheby's London, July 2, 2013.

Bailly's *Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbols* is a masterful depiction of physical and metaphysical conceits, like Peeters's. His inventive juxtapositions of chroma — brilliant and varied color versus grisaille techniques — creates an illusory metaphysical space for his autobiographical reference and artistic mastery.[49] The dominant purple coloration (roses, curtains, tablecloth) and silvery shades and tints (silver jewelry, prints, shadows, and sculpture) suggest an uncanny material reality, perhaps an illusion of a séance, where the artist performs as medium, partaking with viewers in a session with the past. Unlike Peeters's *Self-Portrait with Vanitas* that contains only one large floating bubble, Bailly expanded the number of air bubbles from one to three. All are floating almost at the top of the painting, while one additional bubble emerges from the white wine contained in the tall fluted glass, a clever *trompe l'oeil* effect. Peeters also engaged in this playful technique when she painted the small water bubbles dripping from the foliage. The element of smoke does not appear in Peeters's painting, perhaps because women did not have a habit of smoking pipes in public. In Bailly's painting, smoke is paralleled to the evanescence and transience of an air bubble. In a previous small vanitas drawing, *Quis evadet* of 1624, from *Album amicorum van Cornelis de Glarges* (f. 116ir) at the Royal Library of The Hague (Figure 9), Bailly designed a skull accompanied by an hour glass, a smoking pipe, and a rolled-up parchment with the Latin inscription, "*Quis Evadet*"[50] and a personal notation: "Ter liefden en t'sijnen versoecken van mijnen groten vriendt / Jonckheer Cornelis D. Glarges heb ick t'sijner ghedachtenisse / dit alhier ghestelt den 16. giulii A.° 1624" (Out of love and on the request of my close friend Jonckheer Cornelis D. Glarges I have made this [drawing] for his remembrance on 16 July 1624).[51] The handwritten inscription above the drawing provides a human touch. For the viewer, it provides an insight into the gentle personality of this painter.

The skull in Bailly's drawing, like in Goltzius's *Homo bulla*, alludes to the ancient *memento mori* motto: "Today me, tomorrow you"; the smoking pipe suggests the biblical reference of "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" (Genesis 3:19, 18:27; and Ecclesiastes 3:20). As well, as the smoke plume recalls the biblical warning: "My days are consumed like smoke" (Psalms CII:3). The smoke plume recalls the smoking action from the Dutch emblematic motif of the humanist and poet Roemer Visscher in his book *Sinnepoppen*, with the motto "X: Veel tijds wat nieuws, selden wat goets" (Often something new, seldom anything good). The emblem illustrates a seated man smoking tobacco while puffing a large clay pipe.[52]

Figure 9. David Bailly (1584 – 1657), *Quis evadet*, 1624. Drawing from *Album amicorum van Cornelis de Glarges*, f. 161r. Royal Library (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague) Photo credit: Public domain. Wikimedia commons.

Summary

Both painters, Peeters and Bailly, were fascinated with still life and *vanitas* paintings, which provided them an artistic challenge in depicting animate and inanimate objects in their self-portraits, as a collection of personal memorabilia. In addition, both painters strove to capture natural and artificial light effects in order to bestow upon the objects' physicality a metaphysical signification about the transitoriness of life. In their self-portraits, both Peeters and Bailly used the bubble to communicate the frailty and ephemerality of human essence. There are two ways in which this object, the bubble, is depicted in both of these artists' self-portraits: naturally, as a water bubble or as an air bubble; and artificially, as bubbles formed in the design of glass and metal objects.[53] Water bubbles rest on foliage or drip from the leaves of flowers in a Roemer vase, as seen in Peeters's *Self-Portrait with Vanitas*. The air bubble or air bubbles in these painters' compositions float in midair: in Bailly's *Self-Portrait with Vanitas Symbol*, three air bubbles provide the transitory movement through the painting; but in her painting, Peeters only depicts one air bubble, suspended next to her head. These types of bubbles are created to form *trompe l'oeil* effects of reflective and refractive illuminations. The painted air bubble is portrayed to show the light effect of refraction as the light passes through the object and then bends inside the object, e.g., the floating air bubble that shows inside its sphere the artist's studio with windows. This type of light effect is seen in the air bubbles of both self-portraits.

Perhaps the most intriguing metaphorical and pictorial aspect of the bubble design is found in the artist's eyes. The round eye (iris and pupil) designed in the shape of a bubble experiences the two light effects as well.[54] As the painter gazes into a mirror to visualize the self, the eye physically responds to the light indications. At the same time that each artist captures the image with the eye, they apply it or depict it on a surface, drawing paper, or canvas, as seen in these *Self-Portraits*. However, these artists may have taken liberties in capturing what they saw, perhaps even distorted a perceived image as the reflective image inside the bubble. In these *Self-Portraits*, the image inside the bubble is an imprecise view of the painter's studio: in Bailly's there are no human figures, just a sketchy, vacant room with large windows; while Peeters depicted a furnished area with windows, perhaps with a figure seated at an easel. Other circumstances may have also created distortions, e.g., the employment of another reflecting instrument such as a mirror or a camera obscura or the time when the picture was painted — during the day with natural light or in the evening by candlelight. Hence, the lack of or intended distortion in the painted bubble.[55]

These painters, Bailly and Peeters, in their different artistic milieu, experienced the same creative spirit or *furor poeticus* that led them to invent a complex imagery for posterity about art and love. Ingeniously, Peeters composed a painting honoring and celebrating a special moment in real time and space in her life, her betrothal, while Bailly celebrated perhaps an anniversary with (or at least a remembrance of) his great love, Agneta.

In their *Self-Portraits*, both painters considered metaphysical conceits about artistic quests, the historical impact of their pictorial image, and family recollections as well as the mutability of life. Although the human desire for immorality is conveyed in their self-imaging, so too is the knowledge that their actions and depictions are all but *vanitas*. These self-portraits with *vanitas* conceits are suspended magical realities, just like the bubbles. They challenge the natural formation of time and space and triumph over the mortality of *l'hora passa, quis evadet* or *homo bulla est*. Bubbles that float and burst in midair will be the past, but cultural conceits in a painting will be suspended in time and space for the future, granting immortality to the painter, *l'hora non passa ... ma continua...* Artists as human beings are aware of their own mortality and transience of life, metaphorically similar to the nature of a bubble. Yet they hope through their endeavors to add culture and historical continuity. Their paintings, as inanimate objects, need physical care and preservation as well. Their historicity needs to be cultivated through time; if not, they will perish like painters or evaporate like bubbles.

Notes

1. W. Stechow, "Homo bulla," *Art Bulletin* 20, no. 2 (1938): 227-28, esp. 227; H.W. Janson, "Putto with Death's Head," *Art Bulletin* 19, no. 3 (1937): 423-49; 432, n. 37; and 438, for an image of an anonymous German woodcut of 1530s representing a putto resting on a skull in a pictorial landscape. See also J. Seznec, "Youth, Innocence and Death," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 1, no. 4 (1938): 298-303; and Jeannie Labno, *Commemorating the Polish Renaissance Child: Funeral Moments and Their European Context* (New York: Routledge, 2016), Section on "Reframing the Putto-and-Skull Motif: Derivation, Dissemination and Formative Influences," np. For images, see: https://www.akgimages.co.uk/Docs/AKG/Media/TR3_WATERMARKED/1/2/6/2/AKG286325.jpg. (accessed July 15, 2020); Liana De Girolami Cheney, "Dutch Vanitas Paintings: The Skull," in *The Symbolism of 'Vanitas' in the Arts, Literature, and Music: Comparative and Historical Studies*, ed. Liana De Girolami Cheney (New York/London: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 113-76; and Liana De Girolami Cheney, "The Symbolism of the Skull in *Vanitas*: Homo bulla est," *Journal of Cultural and Religious Studies* 6, no. 5 (May 2018): 267-84.

2. William Watson Baker, ed., *The Adages of Erasmus* (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 2001), II.iii.48. See also Naomi Popper Voskuil, "Selfportraiture and Vanitas Still Life Painting in 17th Century Holland in Reference to David Bailly's *Vanitas* Oeuvre," *Pantheon* 31 (January 1973): 58-74; Wayne M. Martin, "Bubbles and Skulls: The Phenomenological Structure of Self-Consciousness in Dutch Still Life Painting" (2005), esp. n. 3, for a discussion on a Cartesian approach to Dutch still life paintings and what is not seen the painter's self-consciousness; see text online: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.405.2460&rep=rep1&type=pdf (accessed July 5, 2020) and expanded in Wayne M. Martin, "Bubbles and Skulls: The Phenomenology of Self-Consciousness in Dutch Still Life Painting," in *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*, ed. Hurber L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathal (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 559-84.

3. Karolien De Clippel, "Dutch Art in Relation to Seventeenth-Century Flemish Art," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Dutch Art of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Wayne Frantis (London: Routledge, 2016), 390-405.

4. See *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Harold North Fowler, intro. W.R.M. Lamb, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/ London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1966).

5. See Plato's *Phaedo* (64a, cf. 67.e) on the trial and death of Socrates, who commented about the concept of immortality and the proper practice of philosophy: "Those who truly grasp philosophy pursue the study of nothing else but dying and being dead"; see Matthew Dillon, "Dialogues with Death: The Last Days of Socrates and Buddha," *Philosophy East and West* 50, no. 4 (October 2020): 525-58. And the anecdotal event about a servant commenting on the successful parade of his general with these Latin words: "Respice post te! Hominem te esse memento! Memento mori!" (Look behind you! Remember that you are but a man! Remember that you will die!). The Latin term *carpe diem* was first employed by the lyric poet Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65-8 BCE) in *Odes*, Book I.

6. Eddy De Jongh, "Iconographical Approach to Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting," in *The Golden Age of Dutch Painting in Historical Perspective*, ed. F. Grijzenhout and H. Van Veen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Eddy De Jongh, "The Interpretation of Still Life Paintings: Possibilities and Limitations," in *Questions of Meaning: Theme and Motif in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Painting*, ed. Michael Hoyle (Leiden: Primavera, 2000), 129-48; Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987; pbk. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 214; and Rukshana Edwards, "Portraits as Objects within Seventeenth-Century Dutch Vanitas Still Life" (MA Thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2015), esp. 48-51.

7. It is not the intention of this short essay to address the polemics about the classification, meaning, and origin of terms *still life*, *trompe l'oeil*, *vanitas*, *memento mori* or *dance macabre*. See Julie Berger Hochstrasser, "Still Lively: Recent Scholarship on Still Life Painting," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Dutch Art of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Wayne Frantis (London: Routledge, 2016), 43-72; Celeste Brusati, "Stilled Lives: Self-Portraiture and Self-Reflection in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Still Life Painting," *Simiolus* 20, no. 2/3 (1990): 168-82; Ingvar Bergström, *Dutch Still Life Painting in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Yoseloff, 1956); Ingvar Bergström, *Still Lifes of the Golden Age* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Washington, 1989); Sam Segal, *A Prosperous Past: The Sumptuous Still Life in the Netherlands 1600–1700* (Cambridge, MA: Fogg Art Museum, 1989); Sam Segal, *Flowers and Nature: Netherlandish Flower Painting of Four Centuries* (Amstelveen: Hinjk International, 1990); Alan Chong, Wouter Kloek, and Celeste Brusati, *Still Life Paintings from the Netherlands 1550–1720* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 1999); and above note for further literature on these complex topics.

8. Some of these concepts were considered in Cheney, "The Symbolism of the Skull in Vanitas."

Engraving on laid paper. For image, see: https://www.metmuseum.org-/art/collection/search/363640 (accessed July 5, 2020). See also *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, 1450–1700* (Rotterdam: Sound & Vision Interactive, 1996), no. 128; and Walter L. Strauss, *Hendrik Goltzius, 1558–1617: The Complete Engravings and Woodcuts*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam:

Abaris Books, 1977). Many of Goltzius's prints were copied by himself or other artists in painting, e.g., Hans von Aachen's *Homo bulla est* of 1628 (Christie's Lot Finder: entry 5309550), for the image, see: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kreis_des_Hans-_von_Aachen_-_Homo-_bulla_est.jpg (accessed July 15, 2020); after Otto Octavius van Veen's *Homo bulla est* of the 1630s (Artnet Auction), for image, see: http://www.artnet.com/artists/otto-octavius-van-veen/homo-bulla-est-a-vanitas-still-life-with-a-child-PWMqVjo1g9y4zMacx95emkg2; and after Goltzius's *Homo bulla est*, for the image, see: http://www.artnet.com/artists/hendrik-goltzius/homo-bulla-est-0PGuHtqlng1KRlOAi9E1ZA2 (accessed July 15, 2020).

9. The scallop shell is also a symbol of pilgrimage referring to the journey of the human soul to achieve eternal salvation while traveling on Earth. See J.C. Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), p. 152.

10. Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, p. 154.

11. Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Blackwell, 1994), p. 841.

12. Edward Grant, *Science and Religion 400 B.C. to A.D. 1550* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); and Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, p. 154 and 188.

13. Translated according to the King James Bible as "Vanity of vanities, said the Preacher, Vanity of vanities! All is vanity"; or in the Jerusalem Bible as "Vanity of vanities, said Ecclesiastes: vanity of vanities and all is vanity." See Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, 430-80, about Dutch living habits and wordily temptations.

14. The collaboration between poet and artist was established when Estius composed poems and Latin inscriptions for Goltzius's engravings in several publications. For example, in 1583, Estius and Goltzius started their teamwork with the publication of *Remertus Dodonaeus and Godelscalus Stewechius* in Leiden. In this volume, Goltzius contributed a portrait of Stewechius and Estius with an inscription. See Julie L. McGee, *Cornelius Corneliszoom Van Haarlem (1562-1638): Patrons, Friends, and Dutch Humanists* (Niewekoop: De Graaf Publishers, 1991), 229 and 301. In 1585, with the publication of *Flavi Vegei Renati De re militari libri quattour*, they connected again. See Walter L. Strauss, *Hendrik Goltzius (1558-1617): The Complete Engravings and Woodcuts* (New York: Abaris Books, 1977), no. 178. Their association continued in 1586 with the publication of *The Roman Heroes*, a volume dedicated to the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II (1552-1612). See A. J. van der Aa, "Franco Estius," *Biographisch Woordenboek Der Nederlanden* (Haarlem: J. J. van Brederode 1859), entry.

15. Goltzius's motto derived from Franco Estius's poem as noted by the initials at the end of the inscription. See Rudiger Klessmann, *Die Sprache der Bilder* (Braunschweig: Aco Druck GMBH, 1978), 127, 175-77; and Elizabeth A. Sutton, *Early Modern Dutch Prints of Africa* (London/New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), p. 139.

16. Hadrianus Junius, *Medici Emblemata* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1565), for the image see: https://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/books.php (accessed July 25, 2020). In Emblem XVI there two mottoes: the motto in the title says: "Cuncta complecti velle, stultum" (To want to be master of every subject is folly), while the motto in the pictura says: "E tutto abbraccio et nulla stringo" (I embrace everything, and hold nothing).

17. See Pamela Hibbs Decoteau, *Clara Peeters: 1594–ca. 1640: And the Development of Still Life Painting in Northern Europe* (Lingen: Luca Verlag, 1992), 7–11; Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 871; and J.C.J. Metford, *Dictionary of Christian Lore and Legend* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983), p. 226.

18. Alejandro Vergara, *The Art of Clara Peeters* (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2017), exhibition catalogue; Decoteau, *Clara Peeters*, 7-11; esp. 7, nn. 3 and 4, discussing the uncovering of two important documents; however, there are questions about the recording of some of the dates. The two records are about her baptism May 15, 1594? by her father Jean Peeters, cited in Edith Greindl, *Les peintres flamands de nature morte au XVIIe siècle* (Brussels: Elsevier, 1956), 37 n. 40. Perhaps the date should read 1584, a possible error in document citation or transcription at the Church of St. Walburga in Antwerp. The second record is about her late marriage to Henricus Joosen (thought to be a fellow artist) on May 31, 1639, in the same church, citation from Greindl, *Les Peintres Flamands*, 37 n. 42. Perhaps an error in recording date 1639 instead of 1629?

19. Vergara, *El Arte de Clara Peeters*, 13-17; and 461, n. 62.

20. For example, Catharina van Hemessen by Jan Sanders van Hemessen, Barbara Longhi by Luca Longhi, Lavinia Fontana by Prospero Fontana, Artemisia Gentileschi by Orazio Gentileschi; and Fede Galizia by Annunzio Galizia.

21. Laura Fraganillo Lobara, "Clara Peeters, una artista por descubrir," *MITO Revista Cultural*, p. 46 (May 2014): np.

22. Decoteau, *Clara Peeters*, 8-10.

23. Voskuil, "Self-Portrait and Vanitas Still Life Painting," 58-74; Brusati, "Still-Lives," 168-82; J. Bruyn, "David Bailly," *Oud Holland* 66 (1951): 212-27; M. Wurfbain, "David Bailly's *Vanitas* of 1651," in *The Age of Rembrandt-Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*, ed. Roland Fleischer and Susan Scot Munshower (Papers in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University, 1988), 47-69; Michele Emmer, "Soap Bubbles in Art and Science: From the Past to the Future of Math Art," *Leonardo* 20, no. 4 (1987): 327-34, unclear why Bailly's image has been reversed, see Fig. 1.

24. Liana De Girolami Cheney, "The Baroque Power, Vision and The Self," in *Self Portraits by Women Painters*, ed. Liana De

Girolami Cheney, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: New Academia, 2009), Chapter 5, esp. 88-89; Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Mirrors of Skill and Renown: Women and Self-Fashioning in Early-Modern Dutch Art," *Mediaevistik* 28 (2015): 325-52, esp. 328-29; and Decoteau, *Clara Peeters*, 51, attributed the painting to a Circle of Clara Peeters.

25. Brusati, "Still-Lives," 172. This noted self-portrait is reflected in the globular surface of the second gilt goblet in the painting.

26. Peacock, "Mirrors of Skill and Renown," 329, suggests that another self-portrait is included in the painting, "a dark-haired young woman found in the vessels at the right of the painting ... which represents the virtues of industry and skills."

27. See Decoteau, *Clara Peeters*, 20-21; and Brusati, "Still-Lives," 168-82, esp. p. 172-73 n. 8.

28. Signed and dated CLARA P. A. 1611, oil on panel, 52 cm x 73 cm. See Decoteau, *Clara Peeters*, 20-21; and Brusati, "Still-Lives," 168 n. 1. For the image at the Prado Museum, see: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Clara_Peeters_-_Mesa_(Prado)_01.jpg (accessed July 24, 2020).

29. Signed lower center CLARA P, in oil on copper, 16.6 cm x 3.5 cm, now at the National Gallery of Art (2018.144.1), Washington, DC, sold by Sotheby's London on July 4, 2018.

30. Diana Scarisbrick, *Rings, Symbols of Wealth Power and Affection* (New York: Abrams, Inc., 1993).

31. Hans Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism: Cultural Icons and the Meaning Behind Them* (New York: Meridian Books, 1994), p. 260.

32. I am grateful to Dr. Brendan Cole, Independent Scholar from South Africa, for his assistance in accurately identifying this bouquet of flowers. See also Susan Donahue Kuretsky, "Het schilderen van bloemen in de 17de eeuw," in *Flora & Pictura*, Kunstschrift Openbaar Kunstbezit (1987): 84-87; Segal, *Flowers and Nature*, and Paul Taylor, *Dutch Flower Painting, 1600-1750* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1969).

33. Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 145, the ladybug is traditionally associated with the ancient Egyptian scarab, symbol of self-creating powers.

34. For image, see: https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/the-fair-of-saint-george-s-day-after-pieter-bruegel-the-elder/eQGde-E7qu1Cyg?hl=en (accessed July 24, 2020).

35. Richard A. Etlin, "Aesthetics and the Spatial Sense of Self," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 56, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 1-19.

36. Cheney, *Self-Portraits by Women Painters*, 58, where I wrote about the iconography of the coral knot as a symbol of a love and betrothal. In her *Self-Portrait at the Spinet*, Fontana embellished herself with many coral love-knots in her hair, necklace, and earrings; one is even placed next to the keyboard of the spinet. She painted this self-portrait with all these love signs as a gift to her husband to be, Gian Paolo Zappi of Imola.

37. Decoteau, *Clara Peeters*, p. 51.

38. See n. 23. (repletion here:)Voskuil, "Self-Portrait and Vanitas Still Life Painting," 58-74; Brusati, "Still-Lives," 168-82; J. Bruyn, "David Bailly," *Oud Holland 66* (1951): 212-27; M. Wurfbain, "David Bailly's *Vanitas* of 1651," in *The Age of Rembrandt-Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*, ed. Roland Fleischer and Susan Scot Munshower (Papers in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University, 1988), 47-69; Michele Emmer, "Soap Bubbles in Art and Science: From the Past to the Future of Math Art," *Leonardo* 20, no. 4 (1987): 327-34, unclear why Bailly's image has been reversed, see Figure 1.

39. Martin, "Bubbles and Skulls," 559-84, esp. 581 n. 25, citing the different theories about the identification of Bailly's self-portraits and his wife's portraits. The most convincing views are postulated by Bruyn and Voskuil: the two self-portraits are Bailly's idealized self-portraits, and there are two portraits of his wife—on the table and in the background of the painting.

40. Martin, "Bubbles and Skulls," 581 n. 27. The identification of Agneta, Bailly's wife, in the painting has also been disputed. I follow Bruyn's argument that Bailly's wife died before him. Because of her illness, she composed a will in 1644. As noted by scholars (Martin, Voskuil, and Chong and Kloek), the *vanitas* objects such as the *bezoir*, a Dutch medical device for containing medicines, and the flute wine glass employed at funeral allude to the death of Bailly's wife and his remembrance of her in the painting.

41. Douwe Draaisma, *Why Life Speeds Up as You Get Older: How Memory Shapes Our Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 270; Martin, "Bubbles and Skulls, 559-84, esp. p. 575.

42. Draaisma, *Why Life Speeds Up*, 269.

43. For a comparative image of the Apostle Paul, see the 1620 engraving *Portrait of Saint Paul with Bible and Sword* by the Swiss/Dutch artist Christoffel van Sichem the Younger (1581-1658). For the image, see: http://cultured.com/image/9012/Christoffel_van_Sichem_II_Portrait_of_St_Paul/#.XyH3YC3Mxyo (accessed July 30, 2020). See also Irwin A. Busenitz, "The Reformers' Understanding of Paul and The Law," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 16, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 242-59, on Luther's reception of Paul and the Protestant Reformation interpretation of his laws.

44. Voskuil, "Self-Portrait and Vanitas Still Life Painting," 67 n. 37; Bruyn, "David Bailly," p. 217.

45. C.K. Ogden, *Possession: Demoniacal and Other* (London: Routledge, 1999), 341 n. 8.

46. E.N. Tigerstedt, "Furor Poeticus: Poetic Inspiration in Greek Literature Before Democritus and Plato," *Journal of History of Ideas*

31, no. 2 (April-June 1970): 163-78.
47. Voskuil, "Self-Portrait and Vanitas Still Life Painting," 67 n. 38, claimed that Bailly was inspired by the sculpture of the Venetian Alessandro Vittoria. But at home in the Netherlands, Artus Quellinus was a famous local sculptor. The ivory statue of Saint Sebastian was auctioned by Sotheby's London, on July 2, 2013, for the image, see: http://www.alaintruong.com/archives/2013/06/29/27532163.html (accessed July 20, 2020). For the Amsterdam City Hall sculptural program, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artus_Quellinus_the_Elder (accessed July 20, 2020).
48. Sheila Barker, "The Making of a Plague Saint," in *Piety and Plague*, ed. Franco Normando and Thomas Worcester (Worcester, MA: Truman State University Press, 2007), Chapter 4.
49. Richard A. Etlin, "Aesthetics and the Spatial Sense of Self," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 56, no. 1 (Winter, 1998): 1-19; esp. p. 2-3.
50. Bergström, *Dutch Still Life Painting in the Seventeenth Century*, 159-61, 173-74; Voskuil, "Self-Portrait and Vanitas Still Life Painting," 73 n. 35.
51. I want to express my gratitude for the assistance of Dennis van Dijk, Service and Public Department at the Royal Library of The Hague, and Dr. Brendan Cole, Independent Scholar in South Africa. In particular, I am very grateful for the translation and personal interpretation of Yvonne Bleyerveld, PhD, Senior Curator Drawings and Prints at the Royal Library of The Hague. Dr. Bleyerveld also suggested an ambiguity in the translation of "ter Liefden"; hence the passage could be interpreted in two ways: "Bailly made his drawing out of love for his friend," or "because his friend Cornelis asked him to do so out of his (Cornelis's) love for the art."
52. Willem Iansz published the book in Amsterdam in 1614. The engraver of the etchings for the book was Claes Jansz Visscher. Digitized by the Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse letteren (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1949), p. 132.
53. F. Behroozi, "Soap Bubbles in Paintings: Art and Science," *American Journal of Physics* 76, 1087 (2008); https://doi.org/10.1119/1.2973049 (accessed August 25, 2020).
54. Leonard Shlain, *Art and Physics: Parallel Visions in Space, Time, and Light* (New York: William Morrow, 1993); Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990); and Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr. "Carel Fabritius: Perspective and Optics in Delft," *Nederlands Kunsthisorisch Jaarboek* 24 (1973): 63-83.
55. It is not part of this study to examine, even if in a non-scientific manner, these artists' self-portraits with respect to visual reflections and distortions caused by employing a mirror or a camera obscura. For a scientific study, see Patrick Cavanagh, Jessica Chao, and Dina Wang, "Reflections in Art," *Spat Vis* 21, no. 3-5 (2008): 261-70; https://dx.doi.org/10.1163%2F156856808784532581 (Accessed August 25, 2020). This article, written by neuroscientists, focuses on some artists depicting a mirror in a painting and distorted reflections. They concluded: "No matter how talented an artist is, a reflection can never be perfectly portrayed because a painting is flat, the images on a canvas cannot move with us, and any reflecting surface, parallel to the front plane of the picture, must show us, the viewers, as we stand before the painting itself. However, depictions of reflection in art are often very convincing... even glaring optical errors are ignored."

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