

Sample Translation

Studio Secrets

(Ateliergeheimen)

by Mariëtte Haveman, Eddy de Jongh, Ann-
Sophie Lehmann, Annemiek Overbeek

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Studio Secrets

Foreword by the editors

When the *Kunstschrift* periodical was awarded the Prince Bernhard Cultural Foundation Humanities Prize, the editors decided to devote the prize money to producing a book. The book had to answer a question that has intrigued us all, yet is seldom answered satisfactorily in the traditional historiography of art: how are works of art actually made? The answer lies in the material and equipment needed to make a painting, a sculpture or an etching, the procedures and processes involved, the ways in which this knowledge is passed on to later generations, and how this process is depicted and elevated to an art form. This is a book in which the authors have been given the leeway to explore the theme more broadly and more thoroughly than is possible in a bimonthly journal. It is intended to offer readers insight into the secrets of artists' studios of the Netherlands between 1200 and 2000.

Since such a volume did not yet exist, the outcome is a bundling of expertise that fills a lacuna, unveiling studio secrets from the Middle Ages through to the present day before the eyes of the reader. The book is a fitting celebration of the 50th anniversary of the institution to which *Kunstschrift* owes its existence: civic art. Whoever reads it from cover to cover will see how the disclosure of studio secrets was a gradual process, though with the occasional radical shift.

In the introductory essay, Mariëtte Haveman explores the mythologisation of the artist's studio as a *topos* in literature and in the historiography of art. Why in fact are ateliers such secretive places? This is followed by a guided tour through the studios of practitioners of the most important genres in the fine arts. Guided by three specialists unrivalled in their respective fields, the reader can become acquainted with the painter's studio (with Ernst van de Wetering), the workshops of the sculptor (with Frits Scholten) and the printmaker (with Ger Luijten).

The studio secrets are then unravelled chronologically. Taken together, the essays in this section provide insight, kaleidoscopic as well as telescopic, into studio practices: we gain a relatively wide-ranging perspective on the distant past, which sometimes carries us beyond the borders of the Low Countries. As the essays approach the present day, the authors' contributions become more specific and complete, zooming in on the studios of individual artists.

Inversely proportional to this narrowing of the historical aperture is the broadening scope of the real-life material evidence: while from the Middle Ages there is at best a small seashell with traces of paint extant, many studios from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are intact down to the very last prop. Astrid Kwakernaak's contribution provides a description of traditional studio attributes, while Claudine Chavannes-Mazel and Robert Scheller investigate the design and painting practice of the late Middle Ages in their respective essays. Proceeding from the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century tradition of self-portraits at the easel, Ann-Sophie Lehmann endeavours to reconstruct the process of painting. Paul van den Akker describes the function of drawing in the atelier and the training of the apprentice in the studio. Eddy de Jongh examines the immaterial toolbox, in other words how artists arrive at their choice of subject. Arjan de Koomen revisits and reinterprets the genre of 'the studio visit' in the seventeenth century, and Jeroen Stumpel describes the most essential prerequisite for a properly functioning atelier: optical instruments.

Eveline Koolhaas-Grosfeld steps into the eighteenth century, when studio secrets were first made publicly accessible and at the same time became officially protected. The discovery of the studio as a fashion statement in the nineteenth century and its adoption as a desirable domestic style by the middle classes with artistic aspirations is investigated by Ileen Montijn. Hildelien Balk turns her attention to an unusual phenomenon, namely the role of reproductions in nineteenth- and twentieth-century studios. Evert van Uitert scrutinises Vincent van Gogh's studio, and in the closing chapter Carel Blotkamp surveys several contemporary painters' studios and looks back over recent developments.

MARIËTTE HAVEMAN, EDDY DE JONGH, ANN-SOPHIE LEHMANN, ANNEMIEK
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The charm of this structure is that the reader can equally well ignore it,
opening the book at random to dive into a studio from an era or genre of choice.

Contents

Introduction

The Forge of Vulcan

Mariëtte Haveman

Since Ancient times, the works that have emerged from the artist's studio but have been accompanied by tall stories. Anything can happen amidst the darkness, clutter and luminescent colours of the material.

The Painter's Laboratory

Ernst van Wetering

The studio is a bottomless repository of secrets. Every part has its distinctive history and set of instructions. On paints and brushes.

Sculptural Practice

Frits Scholten

Mallet and chisel, masonry drill and compass have long been the sculptor's tools. From the initial sketch via the small maquette and the scale model to the completed sculpture.

Prints in the Making

Ger Luijten

It was wished to preserve images that spawned the art of printing. Many engravers were originally goldsmiths. Printing and engraving remain highly specialised professions.

The Studio, the Easel, etc.

Astrid Kwakernaak

Within the Monastery and Beyond

Claudine A. Chavannes-Mazel

The monastery's scriptorium was the first artistic workplace. Sizeable studios were established during the fifteenth century. Until then, artists had travelled around, thereby propagating their ideas and recipes. The earliest sources are their written formulae.

Travelling Scenes

Robert Scheller

A small worktable with a tabletop lectern, a sheet of parchment, a selection of pens and brushes and various paints were the tools the medieval illuminator used to do his work. There was one more essential component of the inventory: the model-book drawings.

The Innate Touch: the Artist at Work

Ann-Sophie Lehmann

The many depictions of painters at work reveal little detail about what went on in the old studios. More helpful are the treatises about pulverizing, mixing and blending, and about the most troublesome of all patinas, the human skin.

Drawings on the Floor

Paul van den Akker

The portfolio of drawings was an essential resource in the art of composition was. Every artist possessed one and they were consulted intensively. They were valuable collections, often subject to theft and the covetous eye of collectors.

The Iconographic Storeroom

Eddy de Jongh

In the seventeenth century, intellectual property was an unknown concept. Everyone could draw on the storerooms of tradition. Costumes, exotic artefacts and books were included in the inventory of many a studio.

Reflections in the Studio

Jeroen Stumpel

The studios of the past are to a large extent shrouded in obscurity. Glazed windows came much later and were small. For centuries, optical instruments were available, though scarce and expensive.

The Studio as Training Ground

Paul van den Akker

Draughtsmanship was an important part of the studio apprentice's skill. Though our knowledge of this is fragmentary, fifteenth-century sources are fortunately richer than those of earlier times.

Pictive Visitors

Arjan de Koomen

The urge towards self-aggrandisement was a distinguishing feature of the artists of the Dutch Golden Age, reflected in an unusual genre of painting: the studio scene.

Pigments and Colours

The Studio of the Enlightenment

Eveline Koolhaas-Grosfeld

The eighteenth-century Encyclopedists asserted that secrecy curbs mankind's development, thus throwing open the doors to the artist's studio.

The Easel in the Boudoir

Ileen Montijn

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the painter's easel found its way into the homes of the middle classes: every salon had its artistic corner. Artists themselves began to style their studios as rooms for flaunting their art.

Van Gogh's Studios in The Hague

Evert van Tuitert

All the rooms that Van Gogh used as studios were of a Spartan simplicity, as represented in his drawings and correspondence.

Better to have a reproduction

Hildelies Balk

Between 1889 and 1940 the reproduction started to supplant the great mentor of centuries past: they were always present and available. Artists exchanged them and regarded them as their greatest capital.

The Studio as Self-portrait

Carel Blotkamp

Since the invention of photography and film we know more than ever about the artists' working environment. Both moving images and photographs have had their impact.

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About the Authors

Paul van den Akker is a lecturer in art history at Amsterdam's Vrije Universiteit and an editor of *Kunstschrift*.

Hildelies Balk gained her PhD from the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam in 2004 for her thesis, *De kunstpaus. H.P. Bremmer 1871-1956* (The Art Tsar: H.P. Bremmer, 1871-1956). The trade edition was published by Thoth Publishers (Bussum, the Netherlands) in 2006.

Carel Blotkamp is an art critic and Professor of the History of Modern Art at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam.

Claudine A. Chavannes-Mazel is Professor of the History of Medieval Art at the University of Amsterdam (UvA).

Mariëtte Haveman is editor-in-chief of *Kunstschrift*.

Eddy de Jongh is Emeritus Professor of Iconology and Art Theory at Utrecht University and an editor for *Kunstschrift*.

Eveline Koolhaas-Grosfeld is preparing a PhD dissertation on the Amsterdam print publisher Evert Maaskamp (1769-1834).

Arjan de Koomen is attached to the Institute for Art History of the University of Amsterdam (UvA).

Ann-Sophie Lehmann gained her Ph.D. from Utrecht University in 2004 for her dissertation on *Jan van Eyck und der Nackte Körper in der Frühniederländischen Malerei* (Jan van Eyck and the Naked Body in Early Netherlandish Painting). She is an editor of *Kunstschrift*.

Ger Luijten is Head of the Print Room (Rijksprentenkabinet) at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

Robert Scheller is Emeritus Professor of the History of Medieval Art at the University of Amsterdam (UvA).

Frits Scholten is Head of the Sculpture Department at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and an editor of *Kunstschrift*.

Jeroen Stumpel is Professor of Iconology and Art Theory at Utrecht University

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Evert van Uiter is Emeritus Professor of Modern Art at the University of Amsterdam (UvA).

Ernst van Wetering is Emeritus Professor of the History of Seventeenth-Century Art at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and leader of the Rembrandt Research Project.