

Signalement

Thijs Weststeijn (ed.). *The Universal Art of Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678). Painter, Writer, and Courtier*. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2013. 296 pp. ISBN 978-90-8964-523-4. €79,00.

The fame of Samuel van Hoogstraten, one of Rembrandt's most celebrated apprentices, is mainly due to his posthumous publication *Inleyduning tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst* (Rotterdam 1678), an original compilation of theoretical knowledge on seventeenth century Dutch painting. His work was recently reconsidered through several monographs that shed light on the complexity of Hoogstraten's painting, the importance of his "fiction", his theoretical approach and the synergies between them. The book under review is the result of a symposium held in Amsterdam in 2009. Ten of the greatest specialists in the field discussed the current state of research, which inspired new considerations.

Hoogstraten's oeuvre catalogue, composed by Celeste Brusati in her groundbreaking *Artifice and Illusion. The Art and Writing of Samuel van Hoogstraten* (Chicago 1995), remains largely undisputed. The nine contributions in this edited volume, however, bring in new perspectives.

A wonderful *trompe l'œil* painting of 1663, recently exhibited for the public and displayed in a private collection in Paris, provides the starting point to Celeste Brusati for a new discussion on Hoogstraten's 'meta-pictorial' strategies. Michiel Roscam Abbing takes part in Brusati's debate on the relationship between the 'self-awareness' of Hoogstraten's art and the painter's social

background and ambitions. Furthermore, the *Fondation Custodia* in Paris acquired a new drawing from Hoogstraten's youth, showing the artist at work. This drawing offers Ben Broos the chance to study the years of apprenticeship under the tuition of Rembrandt in Amsterdam. Particularly intriguing are the three strong strokes of black ink at the shoulder and on the arm of the seated figure. Broos argues that these may be corrections carried out by Rembrandt. If Broos' interpretation is true, this means that the Custodia drawing is one of the rare documents attesting to the way the great master considered his young pupils. Hoogstraten shows how he responds to this type of manners in *The Self-Portrait of the Drawing Artist*, dated around 1650, and kept at the State Hermitage Museum of St. Petersburg.

Finally, the book explores his travels throughout Europe, his journey in England (Fatma Yalcin), and how his narrative writings legitimize his status as "the first Dutch novelist" (Thijs Weststeijn). Other contributors to the volume are Jan Blanc, Paul Taylor, Herman Colenbrander and Henrik J. Horn.

The book is beautifully edited and the good quality of the illustrations contributes to the reader's pleasure. The cover displays the very beautiful and too little known *Portrait of a Young Man in a Turban* from the Private Royal Collection of the state of Qatar.

Victor I. Stoichita

Translated from French into English
by Marie Gyger