



Jan van der Heyden  
Dutch, 1637 - 1712

## *An Architectural Fantasy*

c. 1670

oil on oak panel

overall: 49.7 x 70.7 cm (19 9/16 x 27 13/16 in.)

framed: 69.2 x 90.1 x 6.3 cm (27 1/4 x 35 1/2 x 2 1/2 in.)

Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund 1968.13.1

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### ENTRY

This painting evokes the pleasures of elegant country life. Gentle sunlight illuminates the façade of a handsome Palladian villa situated on a small rise in a park. Passing through the magnificent classical gateway, a master and his servant approach a waiting beggar woman with a child on her back. In front of the gate a man seated on a fragment of antique sculpture adjusts the collars of two sleek hunting dogs. The casual poses of the other figures—the two men who in eager discussion lean against the garden balustrade, the servant who lounges in the doorway of the villa, and the various dogs who sniff, urinate, or curl up and doze—contribute to the liveliness of the scene. Much of the painting’s appeal arises from the contrast between the easy informality of the figures and the restrained formality of the setting. Although the painting is not signed, its attribution to Jan van der Heyden is not in doubt; the broad areas of light and shadow, the minute detail, and especially the brick walls are hallmarks of his style.

While best known for his cityscapes, Van der Heyden was also the foremost Dutch painter of country houses.[1] His depictions of these houses and their surrounding gardens reflect the importance of country estates in Dutch culture after mid-century. By then many, if not most, wealthy city dwellers owned land in the country.[2] A number of Amsterdam burghers owned estates near the river Vecht, some of which Van der Heyden painted in the 1660s and 1670s. He also painted views of country estates in other areas, for example, Elswout outside of Haarlem, one of the grandest nonaristocratic properties in Holland [fig. 1]. Elswout was unusual not only for its elegance and its architectural design, but also because it was built on a high dune.[3] In the late 1660s, Van der Heyden painted the Huis ten Bosch, a small palace outside The Hague built for Amalia van Solms, the Princess

of Orange.[4]

The identification of the country estate in the National Gallery's painting has long been a matter of discussion. Smith and Hofstede de Groot both considered the subject to be the Castle of Rozendaal near Arnhem, but the villa bears no resemblance to the building represented in numerous views of Rozendaal.[5] Recent scholars have rightly concluded that the scene, as is so often the case with Van der Heyden, is a fanciful construct, imaginatively created from motifs he had seen in real life and from printed architectural sources.[6]

This assessment is supported by an analysis of the building's architectural elements. The Palladian-style villa is striking for the apparent classicism of the building and the abundance of architectural and freestanding sculpture.[7] While many features of the building are consistent with Dutch classical architecture after mid-century,[8] the extensive sculptural elements are not. These, particularly the sculptured panels on the basement level of the façade, derive from decorative architecture such as tombs, designs for triumphal arches, and, above all, fantastic architectural compositions in book frontispieces.[9]

The combination of paired pilasters and a triangular pediment enclosing an arched opening, used on the villa's façade and repeated in the gateway, may also have been drawn from decorative architecture. A similar combination of elements is seen in an engraving depicting one of the stages erected in Amsterdam in 1642 at the time of the visit of Queen Henrietta Maria of England.[10] This stage setting, with minor alterations, was used again in 1648 on the Dam, the city square, for the celebration of the Peace of Münster [fig. 2].[11] Finally, the concept for the gateway may well be derived from one of Serlio's designs.[12]

Like most of Van der Heyden's works, this painting is difficult to date precisely. The architectural character of the scene compares closely with his depictions of the Huis ten Bosch, one of which bears the date 1668.[13] Huis ten Bosch is a similarly classical building with a projecting central block situated in the midst of an elegant garden decorated with marble statues. The general compositional arrangement—a sunlit villa in the background, a gateway in the middle ground, and figures in the foreground—resembles Van der Heyden's *Harteveld on the Vecht* from about 1670 [fig. 3]. Finally, the setting for Elswout could have been the source of Van der Heyden's idea to site the house on elevated ground.

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The staffage figures have been traditionally, and probably rightly, attributed to Adriaen van de Velde (Dutch, 1636 - 1672), an artist with whom Van der Heyden frequently collaborated. It should be noted, however, that they do resemble figures Van der Heyden drew for his book on his invention of water pumps, *Beschrijving der nieuwlijks uitgevonden en geotrojeerde Slangbrandspuiten*, published in 1690, eighteen years after Van de Velde's death, so it is not inconceivable that they were painted by Van der Heyden himself.<sup>[14]</sup> The figures, in any event, were painted after the landscape was completed. Another interesting issue is whether the beggar woman and other staffage figures have thematic implications. Schama has proposed that the beggar woman near the archway provided commentary on the social responsibility of the rich to the poor.<sup>[15]</sup> The architectural fragments upon which is seated the man tending the dogs may allude to the mutability of earthly possessions.

Arthur K. Wheelock Jr.

April 24, 2014

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## COMPARATIVE FIGURES



**fig. 1** detail of, Jan van der Heyden, *Elswout*, c. 1660, oil on panel, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem



**fig. 2** Engraving of a stage erected in 1648 on the Dam in Amsterdam to celebrate the Treaty of Münster, Atlas Van Stolk, Rotterdam



**fig. 3** Jan van der Heyden, *Harteveld on the Vecht*, late 1660s, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photo © RMN / Art Resource, NY. Photographer: Hervé Lewandowski

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## NOTES

- [1] Helga Wagner, *Jan van der Heyden, 1637–1712* (Amsterdam, 1971), lists 152 views of Dutch and foreign cities and 28 views of country palaces.
- [2] Land was not only a safe investment, but on even a small plot one could raise one's own fruit and vegetables and other household provisions. Furthermore, landholdings, from small vegetable plots to large country estates, provided retreats in nature away from the tensions of city life. Finally, landownership in itself had a certain prestige, for during earlier periods it had been the prerogative of the nobility.
- [3] Behind the house was a sunken garden carved out of the dune.
- [4] Helga Wagner, *Jan van der Heyden, 1637–1712* (Amsterdam, 1971), nos. 133–138.
- [5] See, for example, the anonymous pencil drawings of *Het Huis Rozendaal, bij Arnhem*, dated 1707, Album L3, Museum Nairac (neg. RKD Top. L. 1670 in the collection of the Afdeling Topografie of the RKD), which show the castle

in its medieval state before it was remodeled in the Palladian style. Its appearance after remodeling can be seen in an engraving by Peter Schenk, pl. 9, in the collection of engravings titled *Nederland*, in the Dumbarton Oaks Garden Library collection. This small palace with extensive formal gardens is now destroyed, but it would have been well known in the eighteenth century.

- [6] In a letter dated June 13, 1968, J. van der Klooster, keeper of the Topographical Department, RKD, stated that a villa like the one in *An Architectural Fantasy* never existed in the Netherlands (in NGA curatorial files). See also letters in NGA curatorial files from Eric Forssman, director of the Kunstgeschichtliches Institut of the University of Freiburg (February 8, 1981); Wilhelm Diedenhofen (August 12, 1981); and Guido de Werd, director of the Municipal Museum of Cleves (August 8, 1981). Helga Wagner, *Jan van der Heyden, 1637–1712* (Amsterdam, 1971), 39, suggests that the villa is based on an engraving or an architectural project for a French château. She entitles the painting “Französisches Gartenschlosschen.” The villa differs from seventeenth-century French châteaux in three important respects, however: the gentle pitch of the roof, the absence of dormers and chimneys, and the façade consisting of only three blocks. In contemporary French châteaux, the façade was usually more complex, consisting of five or more blocks, with the central pavilion complemented by projecting end pavilions. See plates in Louis Hautecoeur, *Histoire d’architecture classique en France* (Paris, 1948), 2: parts 1 and 2.
- [7] I would like to thank Sally M. Wages for her research into the architectural character of this château, which has formed the basis for this entry.
- [8] The façade reflects the new concept of a building as a symmetrical organization of blocks. Giant orders, statues at the roofline, urns of carved fruit, and panels with festoons were motifs widely adopted by Dutch builders. They were prominently displayed on the Amsterdam Town Hall. While deeply projecting central blocks were rare, they were used on the side façades of Amalia van Solm’s country residence, the Huis ten Bosch, and on the front façade of the Amsterdam Town Hall. See Helga Wagner, *Jan van der Heyden, 1637–1712* (Amsterdam, 1971), nos. 133–138 for the Huis ten Bosch and nos. 1–4 for the Amsterdam Town Hall. Other architectural elements in the painting, while found in Italian treatises, were not common in Dutch buildings of the time. Steeply pitched roofs with dormer windows and chimneys were still standard in northern Europe. The gently pitched roof without dormers and chimneys here corresponds to Palladio’s designs suitable for a mild climate. The stringcourse that continues behind the pilasters was not adopted by Dutch builders, but is a frequent motif in façade elevations by Palladio and his compatriots. See Andrea Palladio, *I Quattro Libri dell’ Architettura Universale* (Milan, 1615; facsimile ed., 4 vols., Milan, 1968), 2:iii, 14; Sebastiano Serlio, *I Sette Libri dell’ Architettura*

(Venice, 1584; facsimile ed., 2 vols., Bologna, 1978), 2: book 7:xlii–xliii, 103, 105; Vincenzo Scamozzi, *L'idea della Architettura Universale* (1615; facsimile ed., 2 vols., Ridgewood, N.J., 1964), part 1, 2:viii, xiv, 126, 281.

- [9] For tombs, see Erwin Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture: Four Lectures on Its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini*, ed. H. W. Janson (New York, 1964), esp. fig. 331. For wall decorations see Douglas Lewis, *The Drawings of Andrea Palladio* (Washington, D.C., 1981), fig. 60. For triumphal arches see Joannes Boschius, *Descriptio publicae gratulationis spectaculorum et ludorum, in adventu Sereniss. Principis Ernesti Archiducis Austriae* (Antwerp, 1602), and Jean Gaspard Gevaerts, *Pompa Introitus Honori ... Serenissimi Principis Ferdinandi Austriaci Hispaniarum Infantis* (Antwerp, 1641; facsimile ed., London, 1972), pls. 15, 56, 90, 91. For frontispieces see J. Richard Judson and Carl van de Velde, *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, Part XXI: Book Illustrations and Title Pages*, 2 vols. (London, 1978), 2: pls. 26 and 55.
- [10] Reproduced in Dirck P. Snoep, *Praal en Propaganda: Triumfalia in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1975), fig. 34. Another unusual architectural component found in this building and in one of the arches for Queen Henrietta Maria's visit to Amsterdam is the stringcourse that continues behind the pilasters. Dirck P. Snoep, *Praal en Propaganda: Triumfalia in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1975), figs. 38 and 40, reproduces the design of the stages in Samuel Coster's *Beschrijvinge* (Amsterdam, 1642).
- [11] Dirck P. Snoep, *Praal en Propaganda: Triumfalia in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1975), 78, figs. 42 and 43. The two side stages in fig. 42 incorporate the motif of crossed palms encircled by a wreath, a device that also ornaments the basement of the villa in *An Architectural Fantasy*.
- [12] Sebastiano Serlio, *I Sette Libri dell' Architettura* (Venice, 1584; facsimile ed., 2 vols., Bologna, 1978), 2: book 6, fols. 4 *recto*, 7 *recto*, 19 *recto*, 20 *verso*, 26 *verso*. Serlio employs this combination of elements for the centerpiece of only one villa façade, book 7:xvii, 41, which is remarkably similar to that in *An Architectural Fantasy*.
- [13] Helga Wagner, *Jan van der Heyden, 1637–1712* (Amsterdam, 1971), nos. 133–139.
- [14] The earliest record of this painting, the 1816 Paris auction catalogue, states that the figures are by Adriaen van de Velde. Helga Wagner, *Jan van der Heyden, 1637–1712* (Amsterdam, 1971), 101, accepts this attribution.
- [15] Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York, 1987), 573.

## TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The support consists of a single piece of oak, with a horizontal grain.[1] The back of the panel bears the inscription *van der heyden*, undoubtedly by another hand at a later date. The wood is covered with a thin white ground. Infrared reflectography at 1.1 to 1.8 microns reveals broad rapid brushstrokes.[2] It is presumed that these correspond to the ground, since they are not visible in the paint layer. Infrared reflectography also shows a faint, precise drawing. No changes are evident in the drawing, but the ruled lines often extend past the architectural elements that they demarcate. The paint was applied fairly smoothly. It appears as though van der Heyden blocked in the colors and then applied the details wet-into-wet into each other on top of the dry base layer. Van der Heyden may have used a printmaking technique to create the brickwork. The paint does not bear any brushstrokes, nor do the lines taper, as strokes made with a brush typically do. In addition, the very fine lines in the architectural elements appear as though they were made with a ruling pen. Van der Heyden created the leaves in the trees by stippling. The figures were painted last, as evidenced by the fact that the brickwork extends under the figures.

In general, the painting is in fairly good condition. The panel has developed a moderate concave warp both along and across the grain. There are a number of fairly small cracks in the wood, including one about 10 centimeters long in the lower left corner, three smaller ones along the top edge, and another near the center of the bottom edge. In general, the edges of the panel have suffered minor damages, and the extreme top left corner is missing. Small losses of paint and ground associated with the damages to the support have occurred. There is extensive inpainting from past restorations throughout the sky. In some areas, particularly along the edges, these cover abrasion, wear, and small losses. In other areas, the retouching appears to be covering small horizontal, linear areas of abrasion along the raised parts of the woodgrain. Much of the retouching covers areas of original paint, and in the sky it is for the most part heavy, opaque, and discolored. Extensive strengthening has been carried out in certain areas, for example, in some of the clouds and in the balustrade. The surface of the painting is covered with a number of layers of aged, glossy varnish. No restoration on the painting has been undertaken since its acquisition.

[1] The wood was analyzed and determined to be oak by Dr. Peter Klein, Universität Hamburg. He performed dendrochronology on the panel and concluded that the earliest creation date for the painting is 1655 (see report dated February 17, 1987, in NGA Conservation department files).

[2] Infrared reflectography was performed with a Santa Barbara focalplane array InSb camera fitted with H and K astronomy filters.

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## PROVENANCE

Woltgraft family, Kampen.[1] Catellan family, Freiburg im Breisgau, before 1816; (sale, by Laneuville and Chariot, Paris, 16 January 1816, no. 6);[2] Maurice Rubichon for Charles-Ferdinand de Bourbon, duc de Berry [1778-1820], Paris;[3] by inheritance to his wife, Marie-Caroline-Ferdinande-Louise de Naples, duchesse de Berry [1798-1870], Paris; (De Berry exhibition and sale, Christie & Manson, London, April-June 1834, no. 112, apparently bought in);[4] (De Berry sale, by Bataillard and Charles Pillet, Paris, 4-6 April 1837, no. 72); Hazard.[5] Charles Heusch [c. 1775-1848], London, probably by 1838;[6] by inheritance to his son, Frederick Heusch [1809-1870], London; acquired 1855 with the entire Heusch collection by Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild [1808-1879], London;[7] by inheritance to his son, Alfred Charles de Rothschild [1842-1918], London and Halton House, near Wendover, Buckinghamshire; by inheritance to his nephew, Lionel Nathan de Rothschild [1882-1942], Exbury, Hampshire; by inheritance to his son, Edmund Leopold de Rothschild [1916-2009], Exbury; sold 1968 to (Thos. Agnew and Sons, Ltd., London); purchased 12 June 1968 by NGA.

[1] The coat of arms on one of the two wax seals affixed to the back of the panel displays a stork with an eel in his beak and three stars in the chief. This has been identified by C.W. Delforterie (subdirector, Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, The Hague) as that of the Woltgraft family of Kampen, Overijssel (letter, 25 May 1981, in NGA curatorial files).

[2] John Smith, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish and French Painters*, 9 vols., London, 1829-1842: 5:396, records that the

seller in 1816 was "Madame Catalan," a claim that is reinforced by the design of the second wax seal on the back of the panel, which shows a golden castle in a field of gules, surmounted by a crown. Walter Angst, senior conservator, Smithsonian Institution, has confirmed in conversation (10 June 1981 and 15 January 1982) that this coat of arms is consistent with that of the noble family of Catellan, of Freiburg im Breisgau, and so it seems reasonable to assume that the painting was in their possession sometime before 1816. (For reproduction of the Catellan arms see Johannes Baptist Rietstap, *Armorial général illustré*, 3rd ed. by Victor and Henri Rolland, Lyon, 1953: 2:pl. 40.) In addition, the title page of one of the copies of the sale catalogue in The British Library, London, is inscribed "de Catalan."

On the other hand, Frits Lugt, *Répertoire des catalogues de ventes*, 4 vols., The Hague, 1938-1964: 1:no. 8797, gave the seller's name as "Le Rouge," which is also written on the copy of the sale catalogue in the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (RKD), The Hague. Several other copies of the sale catalogue are inscribed with variations of the same name; see the description of Sale Catalog F-610 in The Getty Provenance Index Databases. This is possibly the dealer Nicolas Le Rouge; see Patrick Michel, *Le Commerce du tableau à Paris dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle*, Villeneuve-d'Ascq, 2007: 55-56. No evidence yet exists to substantiate Le Rouge's ownership of *An Architectural Fantasy*.

[3] Ink notation in copy of the 1816 sale catalogue at the RKD, The Hague; the picture is described as "La vue d'un superbe château..."

[4] The catalogue describes the collection as "...Dutch and Flemish pictures of his late royal highness the Duke de Berri [*sic*]: which formed the celebrated cabinet of l'Elysée Bourbon: and now exhibiting for sale by private contract..." Helga Wagner, *Jan van der Heyden, 1637–1712*, Amsterdam and Haarlem, 1971: no. 151, 101, lists this exhibition and sale as simply an exhibition at the British Institution, London. The 1834 British Institution exhibition, however, did not in fact contain any paintings by Van der Heyden. Marijke C. de Kinkelder from the RKD, The Hague, explained the confusion by providing information about the 1834 exhibition and sale (see her letter of 16 December 1987, in NGA curatorial files) .

[5] Ink notation in the NGA library copy of the sale catalogue, in which the subject

of the painting is described as "La maison de plaisance." The collection being sold was described as the "Ancienne Galerie du Palais de l'Élysée."

[6] Smith 1829-1842, 9(1842):675, no. 21, describes the painting as a "View of a handsome Chateau" and calls this entry an "improved" version of his earlier text, 5(1834):396, no. 87. In the expanded version, Smith mentions the telling detail of a man seated on an architectural fragment, "putting a collar on a dog," which allows the picture he describes to be conclusively identified as *An Architectural Fantasy*. In 1834 he lists the painting as in the collection of the Duchesse de Berry, and by 1842 it is owned by Heusch. It should be noted, however, that by 1842 there was already confusion about the identity of the painting, which appears in the literature under a variety of titles--confusion that must be at least partly due to Van der Heyden's habit of reusing the same genre elements in different works and of painting several versions of the same scene. Smith suggests that his 9(1842): no. 21 is "probably" the same as his 5(1834): no. 21. The latter, titled by Smith *A View of the Château of Rosindal*, corresponds closely to *An Architectural Fantasy* in its dimensions and genre elements, in so far as they are described, but it has a different provenance that Smith traces through sale catalogues. According to the earliest of these (Blondel de Gagny, Paris, 10 December 1776, 59, no. 154), *La vue du Château de Rosindal* was painted on copper. *An Architectural Fantasy*, on the other hand, is painted on wood, and the building in it bears no resemblance to the Château of Rosindal as it was depicted in numerous drawings and engravings. Compounding the confusion, Charles Heusch exhibited a painting entitled *Château de Rosindal* at the British Institution, London, in 1838 (no. 91; see Algernon Graves, *A Century of Loan Exhibitions, 1813-1912*, 5 vols., London, 1913-1915: 4[1914]:1471). While the painting in Heusch's collection may have been the above-mentioned painting on copper, it may equally have been *An Architectural Fantasy* mistitled based on Smith's 1834 entry. Later, Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century...*, 8 vols., trans. from the German edition, London, 1907-1927: 8:426, no. 227, proposed that a third entry in Smith 1829-1842, 5(1834):385, no. 49, was a variant description of Smith nos. 21 and 87, undoubtedly because similar genre details, including the gentleman giving alms to a beggar, were described in all three entries. However, Hofstede de Groot's proposal can be rejected, firstly because Smith no. 49 was a vertical painting measuring 18 x 16 inches, and secondly because examination of the sale catalogues Smith lists under his nos. 49 and 21 clearly demonstrate that these were two separate paintings, and both were

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different from Smith no. 87, the NGA painting. Smith nos. 49 and 21 are now apparently lost and are not included in the catalogue raisonné by Helga Wagner, *Jan van der Heyden, 1637-1712*, Amsterdam and Haarlem, 1971.

[7] The description in Charles Davis, *A Description of the Works of Art Forming the Collection of Alfred de Rothschild*, London, 1884, no. 34, is a verbatim copy of Smith 1829-1842, 9(1842):675, no. 21. The Rothschild provenance information through the 1968 sale to Agnew was kindly provided by Michael Hall, curator to Edmund de Rothschild; see his "Rothschild Picture Provenances" from 1999 and letter of 27 February 2002, in NGA curatorial files, in which he cites relevant documents in The Rothschild Archive, London.

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## EXHIBITION HISTORY

1838 Possibly British Institution, 1838, no. 91.

1886 Exhibition of Works by the Old Masters. Winter Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1886, no. 83, as View of a Château.

1952 Dutch Pictures, 1450-1750, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1952-1953, no. 469, as The Gate of a Palace.

1966 In the Light of Vermeer, Mauritshuis, The Hague, 1966, no. 31, as Chateau in a Park.

1969 In Memoriam, Ailsa Mellon Bruce, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1969, unnumbered checklist.

2006 Jan van der Heyden (1637-1712), Bruce Museum of Arts and Science, Greenwich, Connecticut; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2006 -2007, no. 24, repro.

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- 2003 Waagen, Gustav Friedrich. *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*. Translated by Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake. Facsimile edition of London 1854. London, 2003: 2:256.
- 2006 Sutton, Peter C. *Jan van der Heyden: (1637-1712)*. Exh. cat. Bruce Museum, Greenwich, Connecticut; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. New Haven and London, 2006: 164-166, no. 24.

**To cite:** Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., "Jan van der Heyden/*An Architectural Fantasy*/c. 1670," *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*, NGA Online Editions, <http://purl.org/nga/collection/artobject/50883> (accessed April 24, 2014).