

explored in the late 1650s, in a painting also at the National Gallery of Art (1937.1.58), a work that Metsu certainly knew.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, one can see enough subtle compositional and thematic reminders of *The Sutor's Visit* in this painting to suggest that Ter Borch's work served as a point of departure for Metsu. Metsu, however, opted for a more anecdotal approach than did Ter Borch: his narrative is more complex, and the gestures and expressions more specific to the situation described. This narrative style, which may well be an outgrowth of Metsu's early attraction to Knüpfer's overtly theatrical compositions, gives his work great sensual appeal, but at a cost. As in this painting, all too often the activities of the moment override the subtle nuances of psychological insight that are at the core of Ter Borch's greatest works.

#### Notes

1. Pigment analysis is available in the Scientific Research department (1 August 1986).
2. See Weale 1889, introduction, regarding the early provenance of this picture.
3. Thomas Baring jointly purchased the Verstolk Collection in 1846 with Chaplin, Milday, Humphrey, and Overstone. That same year he obtained the sole ownership of the painting from the joint purchase.
4. Descamps 1753–1763, 2: 240–241.
5. Josi 1821.
6. Smith 1829–1842, 4: 103. Smith knew the painting well, for he owned it for two brief periods of time between 1830 and 1833. See Provenance.
7. While it is a natural gesture, placing one's foot in a slipper often had sexual overtones in Dutch literary and pictorial traditions. See De Jongh in Amsterdam 1976, 245, 259–260.
8. See Amsterdam 1976, 195.
9. For a related emblem by Jacob Cats (*Spiegel van den ouden en nieuwen tijdt*, The Hague, 1632) Part 3, 147, emblem 45. See De Jongh in Amsterdam 1976, 197, repro. (in reverse).
10. See, for example, *The Hunter's Gift*, c. 1658–1660 (City

of Amsterdam, on loan to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, no. C177), discussed in Philadelphia 1984, 250–251.

11. See Wheelock 1976, 457–458.
12. This painting can be associated with a few other paintings that must date at about this time. Primary among them is the *Cello-Player* (Royal Collection, Buckingham Palace, London), in which a woman wears a costume identical to that worn by the woman leaving the bed. See Robinson 1974, 139, ill. 69. The same model wears the fur-lined jacket of the woman seated at the table in *Oyster Eaters* (Hermitage, Saint Petersburg). See Robinson 1974, 183, fig. 137.
13. Metsu quoted the figure of the suitor in Ter Borch's *The Sutor's Visit* in his own depiction of *The Visit*. Although Metsu's painting is now lost, the composition is known from an engraving by I. Ch. Lingée. See Robinson 1974, 182, fig. 136. A similar figure appears in *Visit to the Nursery*, 1661 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. no. 17.190.20). See Robinson 1974, 178, fig. 130.

#### References

- 1829–1842 Smith, 4 (1833): 102–103, no. 94; 9 (1842): 524, no. 29.
- 1854–1857 Waagen, 2: 183.
- 1857 Thoré (Bürger): 275–276.
- 1860 Viardot: 155.
- 1860 Waagen, 1: 367.
- 1879 Crowe, 2: 399.
- 1889 Weale, 2: 55 no. 74, 202, repro. 30.
- 1907–1927 HdG, 1 (1907): 314–315, no. 190.
- 1909 Kronig: 213–224, repro.
- 1926 Collins Baker: 24, color repro.
- 1941 Duveen Brothers: no. 211, repro.
- 1941 NGA: 134, no. 57.
- 1949 Mellon: 90, no. 57, repro.
- 1963 Walker: 315, repro.
- 1965 NGA: 90, no. 57.
- 1968 NGA: 78, no. 57, repro.
- 1974 Robinson: 56–57, 67, 181, repro. 133.
- 1975 NGA: 232–233, no. 57, repro.
- 1975 Walker: 286, no. 379, repro.
- 1976 Amsterdam: 195, note 3.
- 1985 NGA: 268, repro.
- 1986 Sutton: 310, repro. 463.
- 1991 Ydema: 138, no. 129.

## Michiel van Miereveld

1567–1641

MICHIEL VAN MIEREVELD (or Mierevelt) was born in Delft on 1 May 1567. His father, Jan Michelsz. van Miereveld (1528–1612), was a goldsmith. Although Michiel was to become one of Holland's leading exponents of formal portraiture during the first decades of the seventeenth century, his earliest training was as a history painter, working in the

international late mannerist style. Karel van Mander wrote that Miereveld's first teacher was Willem Willemsz. and that he then studied with "Augustijn at Delft" for about ten weeks before moving on at the age of about fourteen to the studio of Anthonis Blockland (1533/1534–1583) at Utrecht. There he remained for more than two years, and, following

Blockland's death, he returned to Delft and set himself up as a portraitist.

Miereveld registered as a member of the Delft painters' guild in 1587 and served as its *hoofdman* on two occasions, 1589–1590 and 1611–1612. He is not known to have traveled any farther than The Hague, where he worked frequently at the stadholder's court. He was inscribed in that city's Guild of Saint Luke in 1625, but it is not clear whether he ever lived and worked there on a full-time basis. Both his marriages took place in Delft, in 1589 and 1633, and he bought a house there in 1639. He died in that city on 27 June 1641.

Miereveld's work was extremely popular and brought him fame and fortune. At his death, he owned two houses and various pieces of land and belonged "to the wealthiest stratum of the bourgeoisie in Delft."<sup>1</sup> Sandrart claimed that Miereveld painted more than ten thousand portraits. While this figure must be an exaggeration, the artist's oeuvre is indeed very large and is further swelled by numerous repetitions and variations of his compositions executed by pupils and followers. His most notable pupils were Paulus Moreelse (1571–1638) and Anthonie Palamedesz. (1600/1601–1673/1680). His sons Pieter (1596–1623) and Jan (1604–1633) were also portraitists.

#### Notes

1. Montias 1982, 129.

#### Bibliography

- Van Mander 1604: 301.  
Sandrart 1675 (1925 ed.): 171.  
Havard 1894.  
Bredius 1908.  
Montias 1982.  
Haarlem 1986: 131–133.  
Brown/MacLaren 1992: 261.

1961.5.4 (1648)

### *Portrait of a Lady with a Ruff*

1638  
Oil on oak, 70.5 x 57.8 (27¾ x 22¾)  
Gift of the Coe Foundation  
(On indefinite loan to the American Embassy, London)

#### Inscriptions

At right edge below ruff: *AEtatis, 26*  
*A<sup>o</sup> 1638*  
*M. Miereveld*

**Technical Notes:** The cradled support is a single, vertically grained oak board with beveled edges on the reverse. Small checks along the right side follow the grain, and a longer check runs vertically from the bottom edge, right of center. A thin, pale warm brown ground layer was applied, followed by a gray imprimatura under the flesh and ruff.

Paint is applied thinly and smoothly with slightly impasted highlights. Retouching covers scattered small losses and abraded areas of the drapery, flesh, and hair. The background is extensively abraded, particularly at the right. The thick, discolored varnish layer is cloudy and matte in patches.

**Provenance:** Possibly Collection Van der Bogaerde, 's Hertogenbosch. (Possibly sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 23 November 1901, no. 142). (Possibly sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 15 December 1902, no. 80). (Eugene Fischhof, Paris, by 1903);<sup>1</sup> Clement Acton Griscom [1841–1912], Philadelphia, in 1903; (sale, Plaza Art Galleries, New York, 26–27 February 1914, no. 11). Coe Foundation, New York.

TODAY, when considering Dutch seventeenth-century portrait traditions, Michiel van Miereveld has the unfortunate distinction of being the foil against which the stylistic innovations of Frans Hals (q.v.) and Rembrandt (q.v.) are placed. Whereas Hals and Rembrandt introduced a sense of movement and psychological penetration into their portraits, Miereveld maintained throughout his long artistic career a preference for formal and formulaic images. In his portraits, whether full length or half length, he excelled in careful descriptions of external features and costume details but, the criticism goes, provided little feeling for life.

While this *Portrait of a Lady with a Ruff* will do little to dispel the general assessment of his work, it nevertheless has a quiet charm in the understated warmth of the woman's gaze. Miereveld, who painted the portrait in 1638 at the twilight of his career, was by this time too set in his ways to break entirely free of the formulas that had earned him accolades for over four decades. The strength of the tradition he followed and the subtle efforts he made to modify them can be seen in a comparable portrait of an admittedly more attractive young woman painted some fourteen years earlier (fig. 1). While the costume and pose are virtually identical, he has created a more three-dimensional image in the later work through the perspective of the collar and stronger modeling of light and dark.

Although minor changes in Miereveld's style can be detected, it is still quite astonishing that he continued to work in this manner through the 1630s, at a period when so much more lively and penetrating images were being created by his younger colleagues in Haarlem and Amsterdam. In large part he must have continued in this vein because he had a market