Brand-New-Life
Magazin für Kunstkritik

www.brand-new-life.org
office@brand-new-life.org

Dutch Clouds

Willem de Rooij, Valkenburg, Centraal Museum, Utrecht

Barbara Preisig

Dirk Valkenburg liked to paint game still lifes and portraits of the Amsterdam elite. Around 1800, he spent a few years in Suriname and painted scenes of Dutch plantation colonies there. Willem de Rooij exhibited thirty works by Valkenburg at the Centraal Museum in Utrecht. I was there and asked around.*





Details of different paintings in the exhibition Willem de Rooij, *Valkenburg*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 2025.

These paintings show clouds you cannot find in Suriname.

This exhibition is about what you don’t see.[1] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F1]

In Suriname there are hardly any clouds. The clouds in Valkenburg’s paintings are very Dutch. He paints Suriname as if it were a Dutch landscape.[2] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F2]

> Dutch clouds in the sky over Suriname. Who could have brought them there? Dirk Valkenburg, who adapted the skies of his paintings to the prevailing style of Dutch painting at the time? Was it a matter of composition? Dirk Valkenburg, an Amsterdam-based artist, well connected to the elite of the Dutch empire and known for his hunting still lifes and portraits of high society, spent two years on three sugar plantation in Suriname in the early eighteenth century. He documented the estates and took on various administrative duties. During this stay, he created a number of drawings and paintings, eight of which still exist today.

Valkenburg was among the first Europeans to depict Surinamese plantations. These idealized images conceal the oppression of Indigenous and enslaved people, exposing the ‹white› gaze.

> Did Valkenburg long for the clouds as protection from the sun? Or did he paint them for his patron, the plantation owner and collector Jonas Witsen, in order to make the foreign landscape feel more familiar, more like home?

This exhibition and the accompanying publication project provide the first comprehensive scholarly exploration and presentation of the work.

> November 15, Centraal Museum, Utrecht. It is freezing cold here. And unusually dark in this rearmost, uppermost, last of the many intricately nested exhibition galleries of this museum.
>
> Confusing: the artist of this exhibition is Willem de Rooij, the title is Valkenburg—a theme, a subject, a series of works by de Rooij? What gradually becomes clear while viewing the exhibition is that the artist Willem de Rooij (b. 1969) has selected, arranged, and placed thirty works by the artist Dirk Valkenburg (1675–1721). One could also say that he curated the exhibition.

In my opinion, it’s an exhibition of Valkenburg and at the same time a work by Willem de Rooij. It’s also de Rooij’s way of positioning himself. He has been obsessed with Valkenburg.

That’s also what you see.

> I chose a cold, drizzly November weekend for my visit to the exhibition. As I had imagined, the galleries of the Centraal Museum were bright and filled with streams of visitors—all except for the Valkenburg exhibition. It is tucked away in the attic. Only those who take the right side staircase will find their way there.

In this museum, people are constantly asking themselves: Have I missed something?

> Room 1 is a kind of ancestral portrait gallery.



Willem de Rooij, *Valkenburg*, installation view, Centraal Museum Utrecht, 2025. Photo © Jens Ziehe.

The two paintings on the right belong to each other. They’re future husband and wife. But the painting on the far right, Portrait of Sara Munter with a Green Parakeet, is hanging a little bit lower than its counterpart, Portrait of Jan Wolters. This would freak an Old Masters curator out.

> When paintings of different sizes are hung in a row, they are usually aligned either along their top edge, their bottom edge, or their horizontal centerline.

But why did De Rooij hang her portrait one centimeter lower? Because he aligns these paintings on a horizontal line matching the eye level of the sitters depicted in the paintings. We need to really, really put our Superman eyes on it to be able to see that. And that is exactly what only a contemporary artist, in my opinion, could do. That is where you kind of restructure almost the appearance of these old masters, and they become like your actors in the theatre.

They are all wearing the same stuff, exactly the same clothing, probably they even use the same hairbrush!



Willem de Rooij, *Valkenburg*, installation view, Centraal Museum Utrecht, 2025. Photo © Jens Ziehe.

I was completely unaware that artists, when they had a successful subject, would repeat that subject: the animals, the clouds, the background landscape.

The artists organized themselves in shared workshops. Around 1692, Valkenburg joined the workshop of his teacher, Jan Weenix. During this period, Weenix developed his ‹trophy› formula.”

This painterly approach to the game still life had a specific iconographic framework and would become the signature style not only of Weenix, but of all the artists from his workshop.

> No one is taking a selfie.
>
> Here, it is the hares’ eyes that form a line.

The second rabbit from the left is the only work in the exhibition that belongs to the Centraal Museum. It was purchased in the 1950s, mistaken as a work by Jan Weenix. Many of Valkenburg’s paintings that remained after his death were deliberately signed and sold as works by Weenix, because the artists from the workshop knew you could make more money with a painting by Jan Weenix than by Valkenburg. The Centraal Museum would never have acquired a Valkenburg painting, because Valkenburg was based in Amsterdam, and as per exhibition policy, artists in the collection need to have a connection to Utrecht.



Dirk Valkenburg, *Hunting Still Life*, ca. 1700. Utrecht, Centraal Museum.

One of these four paintings is indeed a Weenix. Can you figure out which one?

It is the one on the far right. It’s actually from a German collection. But you see how similar they are, right?

> How does the exhibition resonate with our present time, 2025, with the museum, with Utrecht, the visitors, the November fog?
>
> The exhibition visitors. If anyone can make the works present, it is them. With every exchange of glances, the dead hares and shotguns are dragged into the present. And then—what are they doing here, in a future completely unknown to them? And the visitors? Are they, conversely, being dragged back into the past?

The presentation seems a bit random with all the dead animals.

> Hardly anyone takes photos here at all. The only person taking photos today tells me that she is not really taking them, she explains. She photographs the works and uses Google Image Search to look up information about the artist. Otherwise, you would not know what it is, she says.

I don’t like this (the rabbits) and I don’t eat this!

I have no problem with this depiction of dead animals. Back then it was natural to hunt. Compared to factory farming today, I think these animals had a good life. And at least people knew where the meat on their plates came from.

How can an artist invest so much care into the painting of dead animals? There’s a strange relationship between care and cruelty in these works.

> If I stand here long enough, will the hares start talking to me?

Those are rabbits, not hares. You can tell by their short ears. And that’s a falcon, very important for hunting.

What’s this?

It’s decoration. Maybe moss, yes, it must be moss.

It looks like a net, for fishing.

Or for the hares. Back then, they used the net to catch all kinds of different animals.

That’s a flute. And that’s a partridge.

Are you yourself a hunter?

No, no, but I see things.

Is it always the same hare?

No, look, the fur is always painted differently. Very carefully.

> Absent: the hunters

What are the interests that lie behind these paintings?

How did Dutch elites use art to justify colonialism?

> Are these artworks historical documents? Are they artifacts created for specific reasons and with specific intentions? What about the ‹originality›–the idiosyncratic force—with which, as is so often claimed, art allows us to see the world with different eyes? I am looking for that idiosyncrasy.

First you see only dead animals and then you see the richness of details.

Every time I look at the paintings, I discover new things, like the birds. They are not from here.

> Absent: the female hunters

We are not really chatting, we are analyzing the paintings.

> The exhibition is a sequence of rooms. A long corridor offers branching paths into each gallery. It is an exhibition I can visit without really looking at most of the works. Turn off into the dark rooms of Dutch history—or keep walking?

It depends on which side you enter the exhibition. If you start from the east, the first thing you see are the wealthy patrons, the rulers of the Dutch empire. But if you start from the west, you look at the paintings of enslaved people first.

Often, visitors don't find the exhibition and if they find it, they don't understand it because they miss the booklet that explains the exhibition. There is a video in which the artist explains the work. It should be at the very beginning of the exhibition.

When people tell me they come for the De Rooij exhibition, I always advise them to take the booklet. But this only happened once today.

Because this is a highbrow exhibition. The target audience are people who are professionally involved in art. You can't attract large crowds to an exhibition like this. We are aware of this at the museum and we accept it. We have many other exhibitions in the museum that are very popular.

Meaning is there to be discovered in Valkenburg's landscape paintings, if only one knows how to attend to it.[3] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F3]

I like that this exhibition is sitting on top of the museum's permanent collection.

I find it a bit dry. The booklet is very well written, but the paintings would need a bit of extra, a bit of juice. Because I think Valkenburg was not the best artist. But I am maybe not the average visitor. I am a curator.

It's a pity that you're not writing about another exhibition. There's so much to say about the Nature exhibition on the first floor.

> De Rooij did not hang the paintings directly on the walls, but on large freestanding panels. They give the space a sort of storage-room feel – a tidy, highbrow attic.
>
> I understand the message of this gesture as follows: Be aware, this is not just a conventional exhibition; the panels are reflective, spatialized intermediate levels. Some of them are placed slightly askew in the room, creating a space behind them—a blind spot. Look behind the paintings," the panels seem to tell me. Don't be taken in by these images.»
>
> Before I can speak with the people, they are already gone again.

People who don't know about the background of the exhibition just pass and don't really look at what the works depict. They think they're some random Dutch old paintings and that's the end of the story.

> Old Masters want to be contextualized within time, understood in their historicity. And then go from there.
>
> Today it smells of mashed potatoes and gravy. As if the temperature had risen a few degrees and a hint of life had crept under the fur of the dead rabbits.

Absent: the animal rights activists.

An older group explores the heavy golden frames and eventually discovers the name Valkenburg on them.



Dirk Valkenburg, *Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname*, 1706–1708. Oil on canvas, 58 x 46.5 cm. Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst.

This painting, probably produced between 1706 and 1708, has undergone several title changes since its creation. It is unlikely that Valkenburg gave the work a formal title. The first so-called title appears in a 1790 auction catalogue as Black People Making Merry in Suriname. Since then, collectors, curators, and scholars have adopted or rejected its existing title based on their observations and expertise, as well as their personal biases, which were additionally influenced by the cultural context in which they lived. The most recent title of the work

Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname invests the individuals depicted with greater agency. This represents an important change in the way enslaved individuals are discussed in public and scholarly discourse.[4] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F4]

> No other work is discussed as intensively in the publication accompanying the exhibition.

This painting is special because it was produced explicitly for the owner of the plantations. It gives insights into how early modern Dutch colonialists wanted to be seen.[5] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F5]

In 1707, the Witsen plantations had a total of 321 African enslaved people.[6] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F6]

Due to the lack of slave lists from that period, most of them are not known by name. This does not apply to the men who appeared in judicial records due to the well-known 1707 Palmeneribo rebellion. They included the brothers Mingo, Wally, and Baratham, and furthermore, Charle, Kees, Mando, Harry, Prins (Prince), Jappy, Joseph, Artas, Yems (James), Claas, La Fortuyn, Mingiuel (likely Miguel), Jack, Tam (Tame), Andries, Toonie, Jobbe, Joris, and Naro, all belonging to the Palmeneribo plantation, and Dorinda, a woman from the Surimombo plantation. Part of the process of enslavement included the imposition of a new identity upon the enslaved. An enslaved African could no longer autonomously determine their own identity; everything, including their name, was dictated by their owner. Only a first name was given, akin to the naming of a domesticated animal.[7] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F7]

> The uprising of enslaved workers in Palmeneribo in 1707 is well documented historically. Several workers were able to escape into the rainforest afterward.

What were the people in the painting thinking? Were they simply drinking and dancing to disguise their escape plans, or were they simultaneously celebrating their upcoming escape, or something else unrelated? Was the man on the right simply making out with his lover, carrying their child, or was he kissing her goodbye, or was he whispering in her ear how she herself could follow him once the child is older?[8] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F8]

Even though the individuals depicted in the scene are barely clothed, the color of their clothing is of utmost importance. Blue cloth relates to the Busi Ingi, the spiritual beings that are the guardians of the forest and who provide protection to those venturing into the forest. [9] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F9]

The white ribbon traditionally marks places where ancestors are honored, and it represents a connection between the living and the dead, a reminder that the ancestors continue to influence and protect the living. The white ribbon thus marks a threshold that should not be crossed lightly. Still today, white ribbons may be tied to poles or placed at sacred sites to mark important locations, such as burial sites or places where rituals are conducted.[10] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F10]

> The white ribbon flutters from the tree to the center of the picture, where it kisses the smoke from the fire.

The whole picture is characterized by poverty, unrestrained pleasure, drunkenness, and sexual desires. It says something about the cliché that poor people are pleasure-seeking. It says nothing about the actual reality of life for slaves in Suriname. It is a completely European construction of the Other.[11] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F11]

> Isn't there something shy in the painter's gaze, a reluctance to be present at this gathering, which had nothing to do with him? Or is that my shyness?
>
> I would rather let others talk about this painting. I don't feel comfortable being part of this scene. I don't belong here.

The painter blocked out the harsh labor during the colonial and slavery period. His paintings and drawings do not even show the actual produce of plantation labor: sugarcane, coffee, and cotton.[12] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F12]

The sexualization of Black bodies was placed in the colonial binary whereby, to the white gaze, Black bodies were supposed to be simultaneously abject and overly sexual; untouchable, yet readily available.[13] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F13]

But didn’t Valkenburg depict black people in all their beauty? Just look at the full muscles, strong bodies, shiny black skin.

> Today on the way to the museum: Many decorated boats with people in costume are moving up the Oudegracht in Utrecht. Drum rhythms mingle with pop music coming from large speakers. Crowds line the banks. I think of Carnival or the Swiss Guard in the Vatican. Everyone is wearing almost identical costumes.

We are celebrating the arrival of Sinterklaas! According to legend, in mid-November he arrives by steamboat from Spain. He will be on the roofs of the city until the actual Sinterklaas feast takes place on December 5. During that time kids place their socks by the chimney and Sinterklaas fills the socks with presents. But this early arrival has mainly commercial reasons, and the thing with the chimney is an American invention. And you see that all these costumed people on the boats wear black face paint. They all show up as Black Petes. I don’t know if you’ve heard about Zwarte Piet. In the Netherlands he’s the helper of Sinterklaas and traditionally blackfaced. But in the last decades this blackfacing has become controversial. Some, mainly young folks and people of color, say it is racist and that it goes back to slavery. So that is why today the Piets are not wearing large gold earrings, afro-style wigs, red lipstick anymore. And, as you can see, they replaced the black faces with sooty faces (referring to the chimneys).

> These sooty faces have nothing in common with the proud people in Valkenburg’s painting.



Arrival of Sinterklaas in Utrecht, November 16, 2025.

> But Zwarte Piet was always blackfaced in this tradition?

Yes. What about the tradition in Switzerland?

> We have Schmutzli, helper of Samichlaus. They come and leave on December 6. Schmutzli is traditionally wearing a dark brown costume, similar to a monk’s habit, but I never saw a blackfaced Schmutzli in Switzerland. Still, he’s a dark figure. He never says a word, but he would put kids in his huge bag if they wouldn’t behave, as our parents told us.

I would characterize the Zwarte Piet the same way.

> But was he traditionally a black person?

No, no. There is no connection to slavery.

Actually, there is a connection to slavery. This is why Zwarte Piet is nowadays called colored Piet.



J. G. Kesler, illustration from the songbook Sinterklaas en Pieterbaas by S. Abramsz, ca. 1911 (third edition, 1926).

Glistening black skin, sweat, bare breasts, muscular bodies, physical touch—given the sensuous elements of Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen's Plantations in Suriname, we can only speculate about the interiority of the image-maker. Very likely, the painter himself perceived the erotic charge of the scene he would later depict with more or less imagination.[14] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F14]

Looking at this dynamic from a queer lens, Valkenburg's choice of gestures, positions, and body parts and their shapes also point to a gaze of desire and the subsequent construction of eroticism.[15] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F15]

This painting was never revealed alongside his other paintings. Instead, it was relegated to a Wunderkammer. And we can speculate that part of the reason was because the viewer would also feel in themselves the erotic charge. And we have to question why they were so afraid of it.[16] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F16]

I disagree. Witsen hung the painting in his cabinet of curiosities rather than in his painting gallery because it was created purely for its documentary value.[17] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F17]

Do you see the coconut trees in the middle of the composition? Yet why the coconut trees? Couldn't they have grown there? A tropical flora in the Surinamese tropics? In fact, coconut palms were not native to equatorial America. But by this time coconuts had become exotic things, at least in the eyes of Europeans, the intended audience for these paintings.[18] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F18]

Also, the presence of coconut trees had a positive impact on the reception of plantation scenes. The owners were not interested in showing their properties in foreign countries as places of hard work and mistreatment. Seen in this broader context, coconuts reframe the

colonial economy as something quasi decorative – thus, ‹decorative colonialism›.[19] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F19]

Once, a mother explained this picture with the enslaved to her child. She said that the other people portrayed in the exhibition became rich by enslaving these people. That made a big impression on me.



Jan Verkolje, *Portrait of Johan de la Faille with Servant and Dogs*, 1680er Jahre. Oil on copper, 41 x 31 cm. Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art.

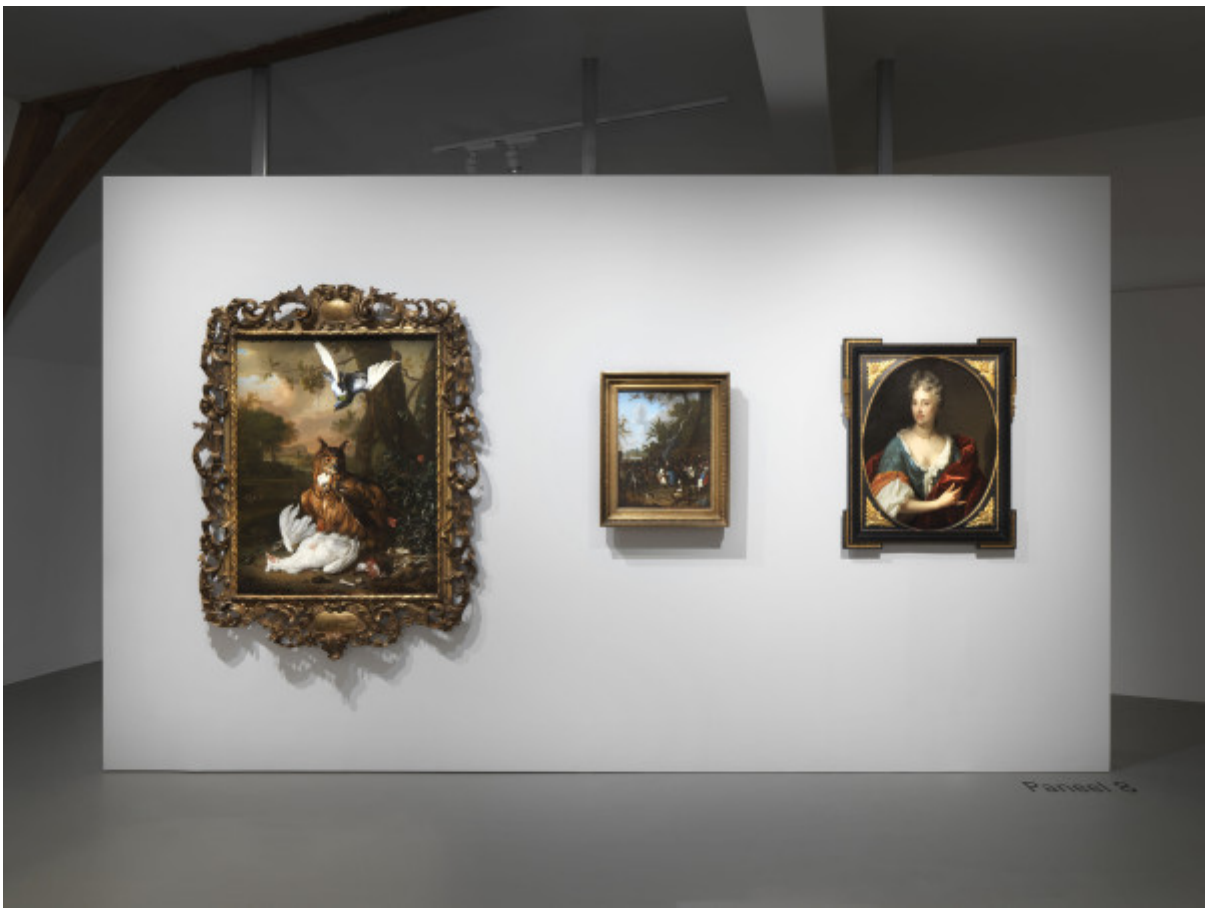


J. (aged 12) asks me what I am reading. I show him the exhibition catalogue. We look at the illustrations together as we scroll through the pages. His gaze stops at Jan Verkolje's painting *Portrait of Johan de la Faille with Servant and Dogs*. J. hands me the pen I am using to mark passages of text. He colours the picture and brings it into his presence. Johan de la Faille — referred to by J. as the 'Gucci Guy' — whose family owed their wealth to trading on the Mediterranean coast of Western Asia, is portrayed here as a respected hunter. He is looked up to submissively by an anonymous black dog handler.

We white Dutch people can identify ourselves with the white people in the portraits. And we see them posing and being proud of their wealth. And we also see the distanced gaze towards the enslaved Surinamese people in this painting. And at the same time, people of color will

identify automatically more with the colored people in this picture. So these relationships are all still there, right?

> In this exhibition, I don't really know where to look the whole time, let alone who I should identify with.



Willem de Rooij, *Valkenburg*, installation view, Centraal Museum Utrecht, 2025. Photo © Jens Ziehe.

In preparation of the exhibition, we also worked with a group of sensitivity experts, like artists or academics with a Suriname background, to discuss what we were doing and to listen to their feedback. And what stays with me forever is when someone asked, «Why do we have this enormous scale of brutal still lifes and dandyesque portraits and why are the paintings depicting my country Suriname squeezed into these tiny frames»?

So, why do you want to show this?[20] [/b-n-l/dutch-clouds-en-us/pdf#F20]

There was also a lot of alertness, like «Hey why is there a white artist dealing with this subject?»

Whose alertness was that?

It came from us as a museum but also from outside. The moment we posted the first things on this exhibition we immediately got this response.

> To whom does history belong?
> Which history?
> To whom which?

I’m visiting this exhibition because I just spent my vacation in Suriname. But here I cannot find a lot of the Suriname I visited. Some of the houses in the drawings you can still find in

Suriname these days. Not many, most of them are gone. Some of them now have different functions. We've visited one that is now used as a museum.

If you come to Suriname as a Dutch tourist today, people are very friendly and welcoming. That was astonishing considering the cruel history. They say, «We very much suffered under the Dutch empire, and we will never forget about that, but we have to move forward.» And they have a very high opinion of the Netherlands. They know everything about Dutch culture and history and even watch Dutch television.

We are connected to histories, and we should be aware that we are connected to histories. And sharpen our thinking about what we are in contemporary world. In recent years we've been in a quite right-wing situation that I, as someone who grew up in the Netherlands, could never imagine happen here. And I think the exhibition mirrors so much of our time. We should mirror our history the whole time.

Today, many people in the Netherlands think we have an immigration problem. But the reason why the Netherlands has such a culturally rich and mixed population reaches further back in time. When in 1975 Suriname became independent from Dutch colonies, their citizens had to chose between Surinamese or Dutch citizenship with the option to emigrate up to 5 years after independence. Lots of people took this one-time opportunity. In 1975 alone, 40,000 Surinamese moved to the Netherlands. This led to a huge Surinamese diaspora in the Netherlands with one of its centers being in the Bijlmer, a neighborhood of Amsterdam.

In the exhibition we kept this link to the present deliberately out. I was kind of hoping that people in the Netherlands with connections to Suriname would pick up on that themselves. At the end of this month, we celebrate 50 years independence of Suriname. And that was a big debate. Can you kind of put that at the beginning of the exhibition? But then again, it is maybe problematic if a Dutch artist, white, living in Berlin, appropriates this history in that way. Certain aspects that are not necessarily connected to you as an institution, definitely not to you as a person.

> The retirees speak readily and are in no hurry. There are many of them in the museum. They also take their time studying the works. I also talk with fellow professionals – curators and art historians. They, too, look closely and are therefore more approachable than those who hurry through the rooms.

We want to attract a younger audience. These days, 80% or 90% of visitors to the Centraal Museum are aged 65 and over. We want to get that number down to 60% and have 40% younger people, which takes a lot of effort.

During the week you have these school classes coming to the museum, where less than half is white. And we should be there for everybody.

As it happens, no public programs are scheduled for this exhibition.



Willem de Rooij, *Valkenburg*, installation view, Centraal Museum Utrecht, 2025. Photo © Jens Ziehe.

> Enter Petronella. Every time I pass by her, she holds me. Something in her gaze captivates me. I cannot explain it. A larger image, perhaps?



Dirk Valkenburg, *Portrait of Petronella Merens (1673–1749)*, 1712. Oil on canvas, 83 x 65 cm. Hoorn, Westfries Museum.

She is holding back. Fearfully? I can see fear in her gaze.

Fear, fame, fake. My smile is staged.

> What kind of ring is that, and why is it on her little finger?Soon she'll drop the cloak cape!

I do not know you and I do not trust you. I am a lady. You will never get me. And if you do, you will never really get me.

> She holds on to the cloak.

She looks as if she has no patience for this portrait sitting. Any moment now she will stand up and leave the scene.

I can be nasty. I can seduce you.

That is an Amsterdam coat of arms.

Today I bought hair curlers.



Willem de Rooij, *Valkenburg*, installation view Centraal Museum Utrecht, 2025. Photo © Jens Ziehe.

Scary, Petronella's neighbors, aren't they? In the background, the same poplars over and over again, along with antique statues and opulent park and palace grounds.

Look at the décolleté of Petronella and then look at the chicken's breast. Do you see any resemblance?

In the foreground of the painting lie knives and rakes – the human counterpart to the cat's teeth and claws. A kind of parable and a demonstration of the natural order. There are those who eat and those who are eaten. Humans and cats eat. Petronella and the chicken do not belong to those who eat.

Do you think De Rooij wanted to suggest this comparison by placing the pictures in this way?

In these hunting scenes, the hunters are absent. In their place appear animals that hunt other animals.

There are, in this exhibition:
Dead hares: 4
Dead chickens: 3
Dead ducks: 1
Other dead birds: 19

Killing dogs: 2
Killing owl: 1

Killing cat: 1



Dirk Valkenburg, *Eurasian Eagle-Owl and Pigeon in Flight with a Dead Hen and Animal Remains in a Landscape*. Oil on canvas,
127 x 101 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Maybe the birds symbolize female beings. They are free and wild, because they can fly!

Or do you see any resemblance between Petronella and the cat?

I see this crazy reflection in the owl's eyes. Awesome!

I see fantasies of power and wealth, sexual availability, violence, status, conquest.

With what eyes did Valkenburg see the world? Who was responsible for bringing these images into the world?

With what eyes did Petronella see the world? What was the position of women at the ruler‘s court?

What eyes, what world?

Although this exhibition demands a certain kind of alertness, we hope that it hits people in the heart. And that they, in turn, can translate that experience for broader audiences.

*My thanks go to all museum visitors and staff at the Centraal Museum who were willing to engage in conversation with me about the exhibition.

[1] Willem de Rooij, documentary film about the exhibition, Centraal Museum, Utrecht 2025.
[2] Iris Kensmil, documentary film about the exhibition, Centraal Museum, Utrecht 2025.
[3] Renzo S. Duin and Agir Axwijk, «Traumascapes, or When Dirk Valkenburg’s Landscape Paintings Are Seen from the Perspective of the Subaltern,» in *Willem de Rooij, Dirk Valkenburg*, ed. by Willem de Rooij and Karwan Fatah-Black (Amsterdam University Press, 2026) 177.
[4] See Rebecca Parker Brienen, «Dirk Valkenburg’s ‹Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen’s Plantations in Suriname›: A History of Renaming and Reinterpretation,» in *Willem de Rooij, Dirk Valkenburg*, ed. by Willem de Rooij and Karwan Fatah-Black (Amsterdam University Press, 2026) 109–111.
[5] See Benjamin Schmidt, «Dirk Valkenburg’s Coconuts,» in *Willem de Rooij, Dirk Valkenburg*, ed. by Willem de Rooij and Karwan Fatah-Black (Amsterdam University Press, 2026) 206–207.
[6] Alex van Stipriaan, «Slavery as an Aquatic Still Life,» in *Willem de Rooij, Dirk Valkenbur* g, ed. by Willem de Rooij und Karwan Fatah-Black (Amsterdam University Press, 2026) 187.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Will Fredo Furtado, «Dirk Valkenburg’s ‹Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen’s Plantations in Suriname›in Suriname: Meta Race Play and Historical Rescue,» in *Willem de Rooij, Dirk Valkenburg*, ed. by Willem de Rooij and Karwan Fatah-Black (Amsterdam University Press, 2026) 196.
[9] Duin and Axwijk, «Traumascapes,» 171.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Paul Vandenbroek quoted in Brinen, «Renaming and Reinterpretation,» 117.
[12] See Duin and Axwijk, «Traumascapes,» 177.
[13] Furtado, «Meta Race Play,» 196.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] See Sarah Thomas, «Labouring Bodies: Dirk Valkenburg’s ‹Gathering of Enslaved People on One of Jonas Witsen’s Plantations in Suriname› in Context,» in *Willem de Rooij, Dirk Valkenburg*, ed. by Willem de Rooij and Karwan Fatah-Black (Amsterdam University Press, 2026) 246.
[18] See Schmidt, «Coconuts,» 205.
[19] Ibid. 206.
[20] Kensmil, documentary film.

BARBARA PREISIG

Barbara Preisig is an art historian and art critic whose research focuses on contemporary artistic practices and their social and political contexts. In exploring translocal, transdisciplinary, and nonacademic ways of writing and thinking, she addresses a range of subjects including artistic research, feminism, institutional studies, and the politics of authorship. Barbara Preisig is co-editor of Brand-New-Life.

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