ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	NATURE AND POWER: THE GAME STILL LIFES OF JAN WEENIX (1641-1719)
	Kathleen Joanna Altizer, Doctor of Philosophy, 2023
Dissertation directed by:	Dr. Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr., Department of Art History and Archaeology

The Dutch artist Jan Weenix (1641-1719) was the most successful game painter of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Specializing in large-scale still lifes that foregrounded naturalistically depicted game arranged before ornate garden views, these innovative images were highly sought after by wealthy merchants, Dutch nobles, and German princes alike. Despite the renown of Weenix's art in his own time and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these paintings have never been the focus of in-depth critical analysis. Scholarship on Weenix has mostly concentrated on his early Italianate landscapes and his wall panels, while interpretations of his game paintings have almost exclusively focused on their place within the long tradition of dead animal painting in Northern art, beginning with sixteenth-century Flemish market scenes.

This dissertation departs from this approach by arguing that Weenix's game paintings are best understood within the dramatic cultural shifts and political upheavals of William III's stadholderate (1672-1702). It was during this period that Weenix first specialized in game

paintings. At this time, estate ownership, hunting, and garden design were becoming newly significant performances of authority, wealth, and power, both among members of the wealthy merchant patriciate and at William III's court. Tracing Weenix's evolution as a game painter alongside the cultural-political history of Dutch hunting practices and gardens, I explore the nuanced ways in which Weenix's art drew from a myriad of contemporary visual sources to stylistically and conceptually promote his patrons' belonging to a community of pan-European elites. I show how merchant collectors sought out Weenix's game paintings as representations of estate ownership, which had become an increasingly significant marker of inherited wealth and dynastic privilege among the merchant class. In the same period, hunting and garden art became invested with new political meanings as Stadtholder William III made hunting a centerpiece of Dutch court life for the first time, while his courtiers developed magnificent gardens to celebrate his military achievements. I prove that Weenix's art directly refers to these activities and spaces, enabling those inside and outside the court to adopt the imagery of political power to promote their own status. Combining a sustained visual analysis of Weenix's game paintings with an in-depth study of his patronage, I demonstrate how Weenix's art reflected and furthered the aspirations of his patrons, and consequently participated in the construction of elite social identities. I conclude that, through Weenix's art, collectors claimed the right to to exercise control over nature, identifying themselves with pan-European nobility and ultimately illustrating their participation in the establishment of cultural and political hegemony over their domains.

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By

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Dedication

For my parents, brother, and husband.

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Introduction

A painting by the Dutch artist Jan Weenix (1642-1719) depicts an exceptionally rare white peacock delicately suspended from a thin branch of oleander (figure 1). Light illuminates the peacock's lifeless body as it rests on a stone step, accompanied by a dead hare and fowl. In the distance is an elegant country garden where peacocks, pelicans, and mallards flock around a basin and classical building, which may be a menagerie, aviary, or summer house. Aristocratic figures enjoy the pleasures of the garden, strolling the avenue of cypress trees towards a fountain and a palace beyond; closer, an evergreen touches the clouds of a departing storm.

A masterclass in painted texture, in this image Jan Weenix's technical virtuosity is on full display. Weenix lends the peacock's long feathers a stiff translucency as blues and greys accentuate its open wings; their rigid bristles contrast with the soft tufts of down on the peacock's breast and neck, which Weenix imbues with a tactile density with deft strokes of yellow and ochre. Above the wings and overspreading the right of the picture plane, the delicate curves of the peacock's tail imitate feathery stalks of wheat.

Weenix's unparalleled ability to create dynamic yet unified compositions and convey minute details of light and texture made him the foremost game painter of the Dutch Republic. Born in Utrecht in 1641, Jan Weenix trained with his father, Jan Baptist Weenix (1621-1659), before beginning his career as an Italianate landscape painter in the 1660s. By 1679 he had moved to Amsterdam, where he became a sought-after portraitist for wealthy merchants. During the 1680s Weenix began to specialize in game still lifes, and by the mid-1690s he was Holland's most esteemed

game painter. Such was Weenix's fame that in 1702 he was appointed court painter to the Prince-Elector Palatine Johann Wilhelm von der Pflaz (1658-1716), who engaged him to produce game paintings for his palace in Düsseldorf and a cycle of monumental wall panelings for his hunting lodge in Bensberg. After Weenix's death in 1719, his game paintings commanded exorbitant prices on the London and Paris art markets and continued to be popular with collectors until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[1]

Despite the great popularity of Weenix's game paintings in his own time and in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, his oeuvre remained largely unexamined by art historians in the twentieth century. This changed in 2018, when Anke van Wagenberg Ter-Hoeven published the first catalogue raisonné on Jan Weenix. Compiling nearly 300 works by Weenix, half of them game still lifes, this volume demonstrated that Weenix's oeuvre is far richer and more complex than previously supposed, and was of great significance in late-seventeenth century art and culture. This dissertation builds on Van Wagenberg Ter-Hoeven's scholarship by situating Weenix's art in context of the social, political, and artistic transformations of the late seventeenth century and demonstrating the ways in which it reflected and furthered the social aspirations of his patrons.

In this dissertation, I argue that Weenix's still lifes catered to Dutch elites increasingly concerned with promoting their cultural identification with pan-European nobility, a desire that was precipitated by the enhanced political influence

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[1] Peter Carpreau, *The Value of Taste: Auction Prices and the Evolution of Taste in Dutch and Flemish Golden Age Painting, 1642-2011* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2017), 141.

of the Dutch nobility under William III and also by the proliferation of French aristocratic fashions as markers of wealth, status, and power across Europe. Weenix achieved this by uniting hunting trophies with garden settings, an innovation in the genre that recalled long standing associations between hunting, estate life, and nobility. In this dissertation, I articulate the multifaceted ways in which Weenix's game paintings elaborate on the social and political symbolism of hunting and garden art in Dutch culture, thereby asserting a patron's belonging to a wealthy and politically powerful elite.

Jan Weenix in Political Context

The desire of Dutch elites to identify with the lifestyles of the nobility is intimately connected to the dramatic political shifts precipitated by Prince of Orange William III's (1650-1702) rise to power after the French invasion of The Dutch Republic in 1672. In that year, which became known as "disaster year" (*rampjaar*), a coalition of European powers led by the French King Louis XIV (1638-1713) invaded the Republic in an effort to break its global trade power. As the French armies quartered across the Province of Utrecht, the government quickly installed William III as Stadholder, a position that had been vacant since the death of his father in 1650.[2] Given full military authority and "extraordinary powers" (*regeringsreglementen*) in government, William III swiftly expelled invading forces,

[2] For a detailed narrative of the *rampjaar* and William III's first years as Stadholder, see Jonathan Irvine Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 796–815.

restoring the Republic and emerging its heroic Protector. He also seized the opportunity offered by the crisis to consolidate power. He installed supporters in positions of power and thereby created a political environment where the Dutch nobility possessed an unprecedented level of political influence.[3] William III's small circle of noble "favorites" advised the stadholder on matters of policy and represented his interests in provincial councils. William III bestowed estates on these favorites, who participated in courtly hunts as part of William III's entourage and built gardens in his honor.[4] It was within this political environment that Weenix's patrons sought out his game paintings, which alluded to the most visible performances of noble power in the Dutch Republic.

Jan Weenix and the Aristocratization of Dutch Art and Culture

Weenix's images reflect an increasing shift towards aristocratic styles and themes in Dutch culture at the end of the seventeenth century. This development reflects a larger cultural shift that was then occurring in the Dutch Republic in which "national culture lost its unique character and was drawn into a more cosmopolitan,

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[3] Israel, 822; see also David Onnekink, *The Anglo-Dutch Favourite: The Career of Hans Willem Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland (1649-1709)*, Politics and Culture in North-Western Europe, 1650-1720 (Aldershot, England ; Ashgate Pub., 2007), 21–22. For a comprehensive study of the cultural identity and changing political role of the Dutch nobility over the course of the seventeenth century, see Conrad Gietman, *Republiek van adel: eer in de Oost-Nederlandse adelscultuur (1555-1702)*, (Utrecht: Van Gruting, 2011).

[4] For a study of patronage and favoritism as a political strategy among the nobility during the Stadholderless Period see Geert H. Janssen and J. C. Grayson, *Princely Power in the Dutch Republic: Patronage and William Frederick of Nassau (1613-64)*, Studies in Early Modern European History (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

French orbit."[5] This transition, which has been called the "aristocratization" of the Dutch bourgeoisie, included the adoption of French modes of dress, manners, and forms of address, while the introduction of French plays, philosophical texts, and forms of verse further brought French culture to the forefront of intellectual discourse.[6] Elites across Europe emulated the styles popularized by Louis XIV at Versailles.[7] As French styles inspired changes in interior decoration and tastes in art collecting across the Netherlands, their influence was especially evident at court, where William III and his advisors adopted the visual language of Louis XIV's court to allegorically assert the ability the Stadholder's ability to confront the power of the French King.

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[5] Wijnand Mijnhardt has noted the irony of this shift: "at the same time the Republic was resisting the military power of France, many of the Dutch elite were capitulating to its cultural tone." "Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, "Dutch Culture in the Age of William and Mary: Cosmopolitan or Provincial?," in *The World of William and Mary: Anglo-Dutch Perspectives on the Revolution of 1688-89* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1996), 219.

[6] For an overview of the adoption of French tastes in Dutch culture, see Junko Aono, "Out of the Shadow of the Golden Age: Recent Scholarly Developments Concerning Dutch Painting of the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Dutch Art of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Wayne E. Franits (London: Routledge, 2016), 286–89. The idea that early modern society underwent a process of "aristocratization" in this period was first introduced by Norbert Elias in 1935 in *The Civilizing Process* (New York: Pantheon Books, Revised edition, 1982). For a succinct Elias's theory, see Steven Loyal and Stephen Quilley, who describe how "certain classes in the developing nation-states of Western Europe came to think of themselves as 'civilized'.…[through] long-term transformations in regimes of manners and behavior codes." Steven Loyal and Stephen Quilley "Towards a 'Central Theory': The Scope and Relevance of the Sociology of Norbert Elias," in *The Sociology of Norbert Elias*, ed. Steven Loyal and Stephen Quilley (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2004), 9.

[7] Chandra Mukerij has examined how Louis XIV's gardens at Versailles reflect a "political culture of territoriality in early modern Europe" and functioned as a microcosm of Louis XIV's absolutist ambitions, showing that "Versailles was a model of material domination of nature that fairly shouted its excessive claims about the strength of French. The great château and gardens were crafted and then represented in printed propaganda and pictures as marvels, wonders of the world, that were testimony to the greatness of the monarch who built them." Chandra Mukerji, *Territorial Ambitions and the Gardens of Versailles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2–3.

The significance of Weenix's incorporation of courtly, pan-European motifs, themes, and styles runs deeper than an emulation of elegant manners and refined tastes of French and European nobility. It actively promoted the political and economic goals of the Dutch merchant elite. During the same period, social mobility among the merchant class became difficult as the urban ruling class became increasingly stratified.[8] Weenix's hunting and garden subjects situated a patron within this elite ruling class, where estate ownership was an important expression of social privilege. Weenix's elegant style connected a patron aesthetically to ideals of French interior design that were associated with Europe's aristocracy and increasingly with the upper echelons of Dutch society. As Wayne Franits has noted of Nicolaes Maes's transition to a more refined approach to portraiture, "his change in style was not merely the result of exposure to pictorial influences, but equally importantly, of his efforts to satisfy the demands of his elite clientele, who sought pictorial expression of their civility and presumed cultural preeminence."[9] In the same way, Weenix's paintings united noble subjects and a refined style to assert a patron's wealth, privilege, and belonging to a pan-European noble social elite.

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[8] For discussions of the decline of social mobility within the merchant class see Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, First edition. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 285; and Marten Jan Bok, "Laying Claims to Nobility in the Dutch Republic: Epitaphs, True and False," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 24, no. 2/3 (1996): 216.

[9] Wayne Franits, "Young Women Preferred White to Brown: Some Remarks on Nicolaes Maes and the Cultural Context of Late Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraiture," *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art / Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 46, no. 1 (1995): 409.

Chapters

Chapter 1 examines the role of Weenix's artistic contacts and environment in his development of a characteristic approach to game painting. Tracing his career from his training with his father, to his experiences with artists and patrons at estates in the countryside around Utrecht in the 1670s, to the artistic milieu of Amsterdam, this chapter reconstructs the artistic context within which Weenix identified the subjects, themes, and compositional strategies that he incorporated into his later game still lifes. The chapter concludes by giving an overview of Weenix's development of the game still life genre and situating that development within changing tastes in art and interior design and over the course of his career.

Chapter 2 explores the significance of estate ownership among Weenix's patrons. The chapter opens with an overview of the history of merchant land ownership and hunting in the Dutch Republic. Situating hunting imagery within this history, this chapter explicates the ways in which Weenix's art alluded to both the long history of land ownership in the Dutch Republic and the long-standing cultural ties between hunting and nobility. The chapter concludes with a visual analysis of paintings owned by Weenix's most prominent merchant patron, art collector and horticulturist Pieter de la Court van der Voort (1664-1739) to demonstrate the ways in which Weenix's game still lifes employed the imagery of an abundant estate to celebrate pride of private land ownership and identify a collector as belonging to an elite social group defined by political influence, hereditary wealth and dynastic longevity rivaled only by Europe's noble houses.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine how Weenix's art represents the intertwined themes of hunting, gardens, and abundance, which were allegorically linked to noble political leadership. Such imagery had a long history of legitimizing and celebrating noble leadership in art and was central to William III's political propaganda. Chapter 3 discusses the ways in which Weenix's art alludes to the specifically *noble* hunt as practiced by William III, who hunted and implemented hunting laws as an assertion of his authority to govern the Netherlands during the many upheavals of his rule. Situating Weenix's art within William III's "monarchical" political regime and the history of the European noble hunt, it demonstrates how Weenix's art presented an abundance of game to serve as a reminder of William III's restoration of the Republic after the *rampjaar*. It also functioned as a justification of his continued military presence as it ensured the continued prosperity of the nation. The chapter concludes with an analysis of Weenix's paintings of "big game," like deer and boar. It demonstrates how some of Weenix's patrons sought out these paintings for their ability to infer military valor and legitimize power over the landscape.

Chapter 4 discusses the correspondence between Weenix's introduction of ornate garden art into his game paintings in the 1690s and the building of magnificent gardens by William III and his favorites in the same period. The chapter then examines Weenix's use of specific garden motifs, which he drew from contemporary courtly gardens. The iconography of these courtly gardens suggested that natural abundance arises out of dominion and a properly ordered social hierarchy, with the nobility and William III at the apex. Together, chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate how Weenix's game still lifes elaborated on courtly themes and noble associations to

enable those inside and outside the court to adopt the imagery of political power to promote their own status.

<u>*Jan Weenix in Art Historical Scholarship*</u>

The earliest biography of Jan Weenix appeared in 1750 in the first volume of *De Nieuwe Schouburg der Nederlantsche Kunstschilders en Schilderessen* by Johan van Gool (1685-1783).[10] Van Gool compared Weenix favorably to his father, Jan Baptist Weenix, and his cousin, Melchior d'Hondecoeter, and praised his ability to imitate nature. Van Gool lists The Elector Palatinate, Johan Wilhelm, and the Leiden art collector Pieter de la Court van der Voort, as Weenix's patrons.[11] Four years later, in 1754, Jean-Baptiste Descamps included Weenix's biography in his *La vie des peintres flamands, allemands et hollandois*. Jan Weenix was subsequently featured in several nineteenth century biographical dictionaries, including the 1855 *De Levens en werken der Hollandsche en Vlaamsche kunstschilders* by J. Immerzeel, the 1877 *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden* by A.J. van der Aa. These were drawn largely from Van Gool's account and contributed no new biographical information.[12]

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[10] Johan van Gool, *De Nieuwe Schouburg Der Nederlantsche Kunstschilders En Schilderessen: Waer in de Levens- En Kunstbedryven Der Tans Levende En Reets Overleedene Schilders, Die van Houbraken, Noch Eenig Ander Schryver, Zyn Aengetekend, Verhaelt Worden* (The Hague, 1750), 78-82.

[11] For a detailed discussion of this text, see Anke van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings,* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 2018), vol. 2, 16.

[12] Jean-Baptiste Descamps, and Etienne Ficquet, *La vie des peintres flamands, allemands et hollandois, avec des portraits gravés en taille-douche : une indication de leurs principaux ouvrages, & des réflexions sur leurs différentes manieres* (Paris: Chez Charles-Antoine Jombert ..., 1753), 165–67; A. J. van der Aa, *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden, bevattende levensbeschrijvingen van zoodanige personen, die zich op eenigerlei wijze in ons vaderland hebben vermaard gemaakt,* (Haarlem: J.J. van Brederode, 1852), 94–95.

The first scholar to survey Jan Weenix's *oeuvre* was Rebecca Ginnings in her 1970 dissertation "The Art of Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix."[13] Ginnings focused on the relationship between Weenix's early work and paintings by his father, but also contextualized his work within the late-seventeenth century artistic culture. Although Ginnings' dissertation contains relatively little discussion of Weenix's game still lifes, it is the only extended discussion of Weenix place within the realm of late-seventeenth century classicism.

Other modern art historians have focused on Jan Weenix's wall paintings and Italianate scenes of the 1660s instead of his game paintings. Wolfgang Stechow's "A Wall Panelling by Jan Weenix," published in *The Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin* in 1969, discussed a series of wall paintings that Weenix produced for Jacques Henriques de Grenada in Amsterdam.[14] Peter Eikemeier's 1978 article "Der Jagdzyklus des Jan Weenix aus Schloss Bensberg" reconstructed the series of wall canvases Weenix painted for the Elector Palatinate Johann Wilhelm von der Pfalz's hunting palace at Bensburg.[15] Christine Skeeles Schloss examined Weenix's early port scenes in a 1983 article, "The Early Italianate Genre Paintings by Jan Weenix."

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[13] Rebecca Jean Ginnings, "The Art of Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix." (PhD Dissertation: University of Delaware, 1970).

[14] Wolfgang Stechow, "A Wall Panelling by Jan Weenix," *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin*, 1969. These paintings, which date to 1697, have a complex provenance. They were purchased from their original location at Nieuwe Herengracht 99 in 1923 by William Randolph Hearst and later dispersed after his bankruptcy and the sale of his collection in 1941. Stechow was aware of only three of the five in the series: one at Oberlin, and two in the foyer of the Carlyle Hotel, New York, where these two paintings remain today. Another painting was discovered in 1990 in prop storage at RKO/Paramount Studios, and was purchased at auction by The National Galleries of Scotland. The fifth and final canvas has yet to be recovered. For a discussion of this provenance, see Anke van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings,* vol. 2, 369-373.

[15] Peter Eikemeier, "Der Jagdzyklus des Jan Weenix aus Schloss Bensberg," *Weltkunst*, 1978.

She was primarily concerned in distinguishing between works produced by the Jan Baptist and Jan Weenix.[16] In a recent 2014 essay, "What Makes a Fable? Jan Weenix and Fables," Lisanne Welper examined two wall paintings at the Galerie de Rive, Geneva, the only surviving paintings by Weenix to draw from contemporary moral literature.[17]

Scott Sullivan's 1984 book *The Dutch Gamepiece* remains the only study to focus specifically on the analysis of Weenix's hunting subjects.[18] Placing Weenix within the tradition of dead animal painting from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries in both the Northern and Southern Netherlands, Sullivan correctly suggested that Weenix's game trophies enhanced the perception of a merchant's social standing by associating a collector with hunting. However, he defined hunting as an exclusively noble activity and incorrectly argued that merchants were legally forbidden from participating in such endeavors.[19] Although Sullivan's book contains some useful descriptions of hunting methods, his discussion of Dutch hunting laws is based on limited sources and is incomplete. Most importantly, his analysis failed to account for the unique geo-political history of the Republic, which introduced a class of hunting, estate-owning merchants and created a noble power dynamic distinct from other European states. Yet, because Weenix's game still lifes have generated little

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[16] Christine Skeeles Schloss, "The Early Italianate Genre Paintings by Jan Weenix (ca. 1642-1719)," *Oud Holland* 97, no. 2 (1983): 69–97.

[17] Lisanne Wepler, "What Makes a Picture Narrative?: Jan Weenix and Fables," *Aspects of Narrative in Art History*, 2014.

[18] Scott A. Sullivan, *The Dutch Gamepiece* (Montclair: Allanheld & Schram, 1984).

[19] Sullivan, 34.

interest from scholars of Dutch art, Sullivan's book has had an outsized influence on the interpretation of the game still lifes in the artist's oeuvre.

The introduction to the catalogue from a 2011 exhibition *Von Schönheit und Tod: Tierstillleben von der Renaissance biz zur Moderne*, at the Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, provides the most up-to date survey of Northern European game painting.[20] This exhibition included six catalogue entries on Jan Weenix, which are useful in their descriptions of some of Weenix's most important works. In their discussions of Dutch hunting culture, however, the authors relied on Scott Sullivan's analysis. They provided no new contextual material in their discussions of the artist.

The most important resource for studying Jan Weenix is the 2018 catalogue raisonné by Anke van Wagenberg Ter-Hoeven, which has been an indispensable resource in the completion of this project.[21] In this richly illustrated volume, Van Wagenberg Ter-Hoeven covers his entire oeuvre, including port scenes, portraits, game still lifes, floral still lifes, and wall paintings. With Van Wagenberg Ter-Hoeven's catalogue, it is now possible to closely study Weenix's development as a game painter. This catalogue also identified several early collectors of Weenix's art, making it possible to analyze new aspects of Weenix's patronage for the first time. A reassessment of the significance of hunting subjects in Dutch culture, however, was not a focus of Van Wagenberg Ter-Hoeven's work, which draws heavily from Scott Sullivan's analysis.

[20] Jacob-Friesen Holger and Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, *Von Schönheit und Tod: Tierstillleben von der Renaissance bis zur Moderne* (Karlsruhe: Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, 2011).

[21] Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings*. Vol. 2.

Finally, several authors have cited Jan Weenix in studies of the philosophical foundations of game painting in the early modern period. Literary scholar Robert Watson's far-ranging book of ecocriticism, *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance*, published in 2006, examined how capitalism, empirical science, and Reformation theology distanced Europeans from nature, thereby creating a "nostalgia" for "unmediated contact" with the natural world, a desire evident in both English literature and Dutch art.[22] Using Weenix's game paintings and others as examples, Watson suggested that such images created sympathy for animal suffering, resulting "in the emergence of something like modern ecological consciousness."[23] Frank Palmeri's 2016 article "A Profusion of Dead Animals: Autocritique in Seventeenth-Century Flemish Gamepieces" argued that images representing an excess of dead game "challenge the celebration of the patron and nobleman's dominion over the animal part of creation" in line with sympathetic views of animal treatment in Erasmus and Montaigne.[24] In their attempt to place game paintings in greater philosophical context, these authors raise important questions about how Jan Weenix's art reflects discourses on the ethics of animal treatment. However, the broad chronological and geographical scope of these studies led their authors to draw

[22] Robert N. Watson, *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 11. Although ecocriticism is not a guiding interpretive model of this dissertation, it is important to acknowledge that ecocritical scholarship will play a role in future research on Weenix's art.

[23] Watson, 192; For a discussion of early modern hunting practices on the ecology of the European landscape, see Martin Knoll, "Hunting in the Eighteenth Century. An Environmental History Perspective," *Historische Sozialforschung* 29, no. 3 (109) (2004): 9–36.

[24] Frank Palmeri, "A Profusion of Dead Animals: Autocritique in Seventeenth-Century Flemish Gamepieces," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 16, no. 1 (2016): 51.

some ahistorical conclusions. Therefore, these texts do not effectively explain the significance of Weenix's game paintings within late seventeenth century Dutch culture.

Scholarship on Hunting and Garden Art in the Netherlands

There has never been a comprehensive scholarly study on the history of hunting in the seventeenth century Dutch Republic, and much historical research is still required to form a complete picture of hunting in the period. [25] An understanding of hunting in Dutch culture has suffered from the fact that distinctions between the two primary types of hunting—the *par force* hunt (the organized chase of a single "big game" animal, such as a deer, stag, or deer, practiced exclusively by nobility) and the trap hunt (the flushing out and snaring or shooting small game, practiced by both merchants and nobles)—have not been made. Differences between hunting on private property and provincial lands have not been assessed, nor distinctions made between Dutch hunting practices and those practiced elsewhere in Europe.

Most discussions of merchant hunting appear in scattered references across analyses of Dutch nobility and estates. The most helpful discussions of merchant hunting rights appear in H. F. K. van Neirop's book *The Nobility of Holland*: *From Knights to Regents, 1500-1650* and Yme Kuiper's essay "Country Houses and Estates

[25] For a wide-ranging survey of the courtly hunt from ancient to early modern times, see Thomas T. Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); for a discussion of hunting treatises in sixteenth century France, see Suzanne J. Walker, "Making and Breaking The Stag: The Construction Of The Animal In The Early Modern Hunting Treatise," in *Early Modern Zoology: The Construction of Animals in Science, Literature and the Visual Arts* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 323–46.

in Dutch Urban and Rural History, 1600-1900," published in *Estate Landscapes in Northern Europe*, both of which established the ability of merchants to hunt on their own land.[26] Scott Sullivan's *The Dutch Gamepiece* dedicates a chapter to a discussion of hunting and Dutch society, and includes useful descriptions of types of trap hunting methods, but he does not specifically discuss the *par force* hunt. In his discussion of hunting laws, Sullivan had access to only a limited number of primary sources, which resulted in an inconsistent and sometimes contradictory assertions: for example, Sullivan incorrectly states that laws were in place restricting the hunt to nobles only, even though he acknowledges elsewhere that all levels of society had the opportunity to participate in birding and hare-hunting.[27]

The sometimes contradictory information found in discussions of Dutch hunting practices can be clarified by examining available primary sources on hunting. Most of the known source materials on hunting discuss laws in the province of Holland. A manuscript by Paulus Merula, *Placate ende ordonnanciën op 't stuck van den Wildernissen*, from 1605, lists laws for the area around The Hague, while the nine-volume *Groot placaet-boek…van Staten Generaal*, instituted laws for Noord-Holland.[28] Jan van der Eyck's 1628 *Corte beschrijvinghe mitsgaders handvesten,*

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[26] Henk F. K. van Nierop, *The Nobility of Holland: From Knights to Regents, 1500-1650*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 37. Yme Kuiper, "Country Houses and Estates in Dutch Urban and Rural History, 1600-1900.," in *Estate Landscapes in Northern Europe* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2019).

[27] Sullivan, *The Dutch Gamepiece*, 34, 38.

[28] Paullus Merula, *Placaten ende ordonnancien op 't stuck van de wildernissen,* (Den Haag: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2020), http://books.google.com/books?vid=KBNL:UBU000011723; Staten Generaal, *Groot Placaet-Boeck, Vervattende de Placaten, Ordonnantien Ende Edicten van de ... Heeren Staten Generael Der Vereenighde Nederlanden, Ende Vande ... Heeren-Staten van Hollandt En West-Vrieslandt Mitsgaders Vande Heeren Staten van Zeelandt.* ('S Gravenhage, Amsterdam, 1581).

privilegien, costumen, ende ordonnantien vanden Lande van Zuyt-Hollandt gives laws for the areas surrounding Dordrecht.[29] *Ordonnantie van de ed mog heeren statens lands van Utrecht op't stuck van de Jacht, ende conservatie van de wilde-bane in selven lande,* published in 1680 and reprinted 1683, restricted the hunt in the province of Utrecht.[30] The great variety of rules found in these sources, which will be discussed in detail in later chapters, indicate the inconsistent nature of hunting policies across the Seven Provinces. Nevertheless, these sources indicate that there was far more access to hunting across the social spectrum than has been previously appreciated, particularly with wealthy merchants who frequently purchased hunting rights along with titled estates.

Only one publication has been dedicated to the hunt at the court of William III, *Het Loo, De Oranges en de Jacht*, published in 1984. This publication surveys the history of the *par force* hunt by the House of Orange-Nassau from Willem I through the twentieth century. Although this slim volume does provide a helpful overview of Orange hunting practices and the history of their hunting lodges, it is unfootnoted, making further research on its claims difficult to undertake.[31]

Even though William III was famous as a hunter, the political significance of his hunting practices has never been discussed. Because of this lacuna, research on the political role of hunting in the Southern Provinces provides a critical framework

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[29] Jan van der Eyck, *Corte Beschrijvinghe Mitsgaders Handvesten, Privilegien, Costumen, Ende Ordonnantien Vanden Lande van Zuyt-Hollandt* (Dordrecht, 1628), 426–30.

[30] *Ordonnantie Vande Ed. Mog. Heeren Staten 's Lands van Utrecht Op 't Stuck van de Jacht En de Conservatie van de Wild-Bane Inden Selven Lande* (Netherlands, 1680).

[31] Louise van Everdingen, *Het Loo, de Oranjes en de jacht* (Haarlem: Enschedé, 1984).

for analysis of the *par force* hunt in the Dutch Republic. Susan Koslow's book *Frans Synders: The Noble Estate,* contains a discussion of how Snyders' larder scenes promote the Archduke's peace policies during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621) by depicting an abundance of game.[32] Luc Duerloo's article "The Hunt in the Performance of Archducal Rule" similarly examined the Archdukes' implementation of hunting laws and reinstatement of the *par force* hunt at court as a means of consolidating power.[33] These studies have shown how the *par force* hunt was a powerful and public illustration of each person's place within the power hierarchy, which created a strong cultural identification of hunting with the nobility.[34] In this dissertation, I will show how, like the Archdukes, Dutch merchants and nobility capitalized on these inherent associations to promote their own agendas.

The literature on Jan Weenix's game paintings has almost exclusively focused on hunting, with no consideration of his garden settings. Fortunately, the last forty years have seen the emergence of a vast literature on Dutch gardens, estates, and *buitenplaatsen* that enable one to assess Weenix's garden settings. Because it is impossible to survey the entirety of this extensive literature here, what follows is a

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[32] Susan Koslow, *Frans Snyders: The Noble Estate: Seventeenth-Century Still-Life and Animal Painting in the Southern Netherlands* (Antwerp: Fonds Mercator Paribas, 1995).

[33] Luc Duerloo, "The Hunt in the Performance of Archducal Rule: Endurance and Revival in the Habsburg Netherlands in the Early Seventeenth Century," *Renaissance Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2016): 116–54. For an analysis of Rubens' hunting scenes as a representation the authority of the noble hunter, see Suzanne Jablonski,"Acts of Violence: Rubens and the Hunt" (PhD Dissertation: University of California Berkeley, 2004).

[34] While this dissertation emphasizes hunting as an expression of economic and political power, many authors have examined the associations between hunting and courtly love. Just one example is Wayne Franits's analysis of the theme of hunting in Dutch art in context of the Petrarchan traditions in literature: Wayne E. Franits, "The Pursuit of Love: The Theme of The Hunting Party at Rest in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art.," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift.*, 1992.

selection of primary sources and secondary literature representing the most recent research on land ownership in the seventeenth century Netherlands.

Many excellent studies have cataloged historic Dutch estates and *buitenplaatsen,* small leisure villas outside of the cities.[35] For the purposes of this dissertation, the most useful of these are two books published in 2005: *Noord-Hollands Arcadia: Ruim 400 Noord-Hollandse buitenplaatsen in tekening, prenten, en kaarten,* by Christian Bertram, and *De Leidse Lustwarande: Geschiedenis van tuinkunst op kastelen en buitenplaatsen rond Leiden,* by Henk Rijken.[36] Listing each *buitenplaats* alphabetically, these volumes compile archival sources on hundreds of Holland's *buitenplaatsen*. Crucially, these studies describe the *buitenplaatsen* owned by several collectors of Jan Weenix's art, information that has never been brought to bear in the literature on Weenix.

Two essays by Yme Kuiper have traced the rise of *buitenplaats* culture among the merchant class. In "The Rise of the Country house in the Dutch Republic: Beyond Johan Huisinga's narrative of Dutch civilization in the 17th century," Kuiper discusses the motivations for purchasing rural land, arguing that the popularity of

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[35] The foundational text on Dutch *buitenplaatsen* is Remmet van. Luttervelt, *De Buitenplaatsen aan de Vecht* (Lochem: De Tijdstroom, 1948). More recent studies have examined estates and *buitenplaatsen* across a greater geographical area. These include E. Munnig Schmidt, A.J.A.M. Lisman, and Chris Schut, *Plaatsen aan de Vecht en de Angstel: historische eschrijvingen en afbeeldingen van kastelen, buitenplaatsen, stads- en dorpsgezichten aan de Vecht en de Angstel-van Zuilen tot Muiden*, (Alphen aan den Rijn: Canaletto, 1997); H. P. Fölting, Robert van. Lit, and Marie Christine van der Sman, *Buitenplaatsen in en om Den Haag*, (Zwolle: Waanders, 1992); René W. Chr. Dessing., *Historische buitenplaatsen.* (Wormerveer: Stichting Uitgeverij Noord-, 2012); René W. Chr. Dessing, *De Amsterdamse Buitenplaatsen: een Vergeten Stadsgeschiedenis* (Utrecht: Stichting Matrijs, 2015).

[36] Christian Bertram, *Noord-Hollands Arcadia: ruim 400 Noord-Hollandse buitenplaatsen in tekeningen, prenten en kaarten uit de Provinciale Atlas Noord-Holland* (Haarlem: Stichting Provinciale Atlas Noord-Holland, 2005); Henk Rijken, *De Leidse Lustwarande: de Geschiedenis van de Tuinkunst op Kastelen en Buitenplaatsen rond Leiden, ca. 1600-1800* (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 2005).

country houses was not as a symptom of cultural decline and complacency, as Johan Huizinga had suggested, but rather as "embedded in a process of economic and political change."[37]

In "Country Houses and Estates in Dutch Urban and Rural History, 1600-1900," published in *Estate Landscapes in Northern Europe,* Kuiper shows how geo-political forces unique to the Netherlands (a relatively weak feudal system, the wide-scale sale of monastic lands after the Revolt, and land reclamation) created a culture where the nobility was in the minority of landholders. Kuiper also surveys the statistics of land ownership in the Republic, showing that, on average, the nobility owned only about 20-30% of the land in each province, and in Holland, they owned less than 10% of the land, strikingly low percentages unknown outside of the Netherlands.[38]

Finally, *Buitenplaatsen in de Gouden Eeuw: De Rijkdom van Het Buitenleven in de Republiek*, a 2015 volume of essays edited by Yme Kuiper and Ben Olde Meirink, examines the sociological and cultural role of *buitenplaatsen* in across each of the Seven Provinces and in Noord-Brabant. [39] Among the most relevant of these

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[37] Yme Kuiper, "The Rise of the Country House in the Dutch Republic: Beyond Johan Huizinga's Narrative of Dutch Civilisation in the 17th Century," in *The Country House: Material Culture and Consumption*, ed. Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (Swindon: Historic England, 2016), 11.

[38] Kuiper, "Country Houses and Estates in Dutch Urban and Rural History, 1600-1900," 204.

[39] Social historian Peter Burke's comparative analysis of elites in Amsterdam and Venice in the early 17th century suggests that social mobility was a defining difference between the two cities. Venice was a more "fixed" society than Amsterdam, with power and wealth based in family and rank, whereas in Amsterdam an individual could achieve wealth and power through individual achievement. This was no longer the case in the final decades of the 17th century in Amsterdam, when the upper ranks of the ruling merchant class became difficult to enter. Peter Burke, *Venice and Amsterdam: A Study of Seventeenth-Century Elites*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994). Although social art history is not a guiding interpretive framework for the present project, it is important to note that this dissertation lays the groundwork for future such analyses. For a classic Marxist analysis of the rise of villa culture

essays to this dissertation is “Amsterdam en Oranje: De Politieke cultuur van kasteel en buitenplaats in Hollands Gouden Eeuw” by Rob van der Laarse. In this essay, Van de Laarse suggests that the purchase of estates by merchants should be viewed in context of the “antagonistic power relations” between city regents and the nobility of the Orange court. Using the Bicker family dynasty as a case study, Van der Laarse shows how the regent class purchased estates in pursuit of “dynastic competition and dominance” as they formed their own political elite in opposition to the House of Orange during the First Stadholderless Period (1650-1672).

The literature on Dutch gardens has similarly emphasized the political nature of Dutch garden design. The first in-depth studies of Dutch gardens appeared in 1988 with the exhibition and catalogue *The Anglo-Dutch Garden in the Age of William and Mary,* by Erik de Jong and John Dixon-Hunt, which focused primarily on the gardens of William III and his circle.[40] This publication was followed in 1990 with a series of essays from a Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium, *The Dutch Garden in the Seventeenth Century*, which similarly focused on courtly gardens.[41] Erik de Jong’s 2000 volume, *Nature and Art: Dutch Garden and Landscape Architecture 1650-1740*, expanded on previous research and remains a foundational text on Dutch garden art and design.[42]

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in Venice, see Reinhard Bentmann and Michael Müller, *The Villa as Hegemonic Architecture* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1992).

[40] John Dixon Hunt and E. de Jong, *The Anglo-Dutch Garden in the Age of William and Mary*, (London: Taylor & Francis, 1988).

[41] John Dixon Hunt, ed., *The Dutch Garden in the Seventeenth Century* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1990).

[42] Erik de Jong, *Nature and Art: Dutch Garden and Landscape Architecture, 1650-1740*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

Vanessa Bezemer Sellers' *Courtly Gardens of Holland: 1600-1650,* published in 2001, examined the earlier period, focusing on the gardens of Frederick Hendrick.[43]

These studies, which compile a wealth of primary source material, have rightly stressed the political dimensions of Dutch gardens (*Hortus batavus)* as emblems of the Dutch nation. They have also shown how these gardens utilized a specific range of iconographic motifs designed to glorify the house of Orange. For example, Bezemer Sellers examined how Honselaarsdijk's garden design adapted Vitruvian and Palladian models, where a garden's ideal proportions illustrated in microcosm the Princely ability to bring harmony and order to nature, and therefore to his or her domain. Bezemer Sellers's essay, "The Bentinck Garden at Zorgvliet," published in *The Dutch Garden in the Seventeenth Century,* as well as De Jong's discussions of gardens at Het Loo and Heemstede in *Nature and Art*, have examined Dutch garden iconography.[44] Their studies have shown that by juxtaposing fertile gardens containing mythological imagery of military heroism and virtue, Dutch garden designers sought to demonstrate that the abundance that the Dutch nation enjoyed resulted from the political leadership of the House of Orange.[45]

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[43] Vanessa Bezemer Sellers, *Courtly Gardens in Holland 1600-1650: The House of Orange and the Hortus Batavus* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura Press, 2001).

[44] Vanessa Bezemer Sellers, "The Bentinck Garden at Zorgvliet," in *The Dutch Garden in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. John Dixon Hunt, ed., Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture: Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture, (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1990).

[45] Saskia Berenek has similarly examined Amalia von Solms' garden at Huis ten Bosch in a similar vein. She showed how the garden utilized Roman iconography to cast Amalia as a modern day Artemesia, protector of the dynasty of the House of Orange during the First Stadholderless Period (1650-1672).Saskia Berenek, "In Living Memory; The House of Orange in the Dutch Republic," in *Women Artists and Patrons in the Netherlands, 1500-1700* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019).

More recently, Elizabeth den Hartog, Carla Tuene, and Catherine Powell-Warren have demonstrated that the smaller merchant gardens of the late seventeenth century were also often politically motivated. They were not only leisure spaces, but they also often functioned as pointed political statements that expressed national pride and solidarity after the destruction of the *rampjaar.* Elizabeth Den Hartog and Carla Tuene's article "Gaspar Fagel (1633-88): His Garden and Plant Collection at Leeuwenhorst" examined the garden of Gaspar Fagel. Fagel, a plant collector and Amsterdam's Grand Pensionary between 1672-1688, created his garden as a propagandistic endeavor that proclaimed the prosperity of the Netherlands under the regime of William III.[46] Catherine Powell-Warren's 2021 dissertation on Agnes Block situated Block's garden at Vijverhof in a similar context. She suggested that Block's horticultural endeavors were a means by which she asserted her own role in the creation of the nation as a thriving *Hortus Batavus.*[47]

These studies draw from a wealth of contemporary print sources on gardens that has provided much valuable comparative material in the preparation of this dissertation. Among these are the prints made by Jan van Aveleen with views of Zorgvliet, published around 1690, and *De zegepraalende Vecht,* in which David Stoopendael illustrated views of forty-four *buitenplaatsen*, with descriptions by Andries de Leth.[48]

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[46] E. d. Hartog and C. Teune, "Gaspar Fagel's (1633-88) Garden and Plant Collection at Leeuwenhorst," *Garden History* 30, no. Part 2 (2002): 191–205.

[47] Catherine Powell-Warren, "Cross-Pollination: Agnes Block (1629–1704) and Her Network of Artists and Botanical Experts," (PhD Dissertation: University of Texas at Austin, 2021).

[48] Andries de. Leth et al., *De zegepraalende Vecht, vertoonende verscheidene gesichten van lustplaatsen, heeren huysen en dorpen, beginnende van Uitrecht en met Muyden besluytende = La triomphante rivière de Vecht, remonstrant diverses veües des lieux de plaisances & maisons*

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This dissertation uses visual analysis of Weenix's paintings as its interpretive starting point. Examining artistic influences, technique, and compositional strategies, and recurring motifs, it traces the artist's development of the game still life genre. It then places this development within the chronology of the political and social transformations of the period to understand the cultural significance of his subjects and style to his patrons.

In its theoretical framing of these topics, this dissertation follows critical perspectives that have shown how art and architecture actively participated in reflecting and constructing social identities and power relationships in the early modern period. Since Stephen Greenblatt's publication of *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* in 1980, many art historians have examined how elites promoted their place in the social order through art collecting and commissions.[49] Among the authors who have examined this idea in the Dutch context, the work of Susan Broomhall, Jacqueline van Gent, and Ann Jenson Adams have informed the approach of this project. Ann Jenson Adams's essay "Competing Communities in the 'Great Bog of Europe' Identity and Seventeenth Century Dutch Landscape Painting" investigated how landscapes by Jacob van Ruisdael and Jan van Goyen, among others,

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seignorales & villages, commençant de Uitrecht & finissant avec Muyden, (T'Amsteldam: Nicolaus Visscher, 1719); Walter Harris, *A Description of the King's Royal Palace and Gardens at Loo. Together with a Short Account of Holland. In Which There Are Some Observations Relating to Their Diseases.* (London, 1699). Jan van Aveleen's engravings of Zorgvliet are in the collection of The Haags Genmeentearchief; for reproductions of these engravings, see Sellers, "The Bentinck Garden at Zorgvliet."

[49] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

participated in the construction of a cohesive national identity for the new Republic.[50] Adams's book *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Portraiture and the Production of Community* similarly examined how Dutch portraiture functioned "not only [as] a cultural product but also an active participant in a cultural process."[51] In these studies, Adams provided a model for how artistic technique, compositional strategies, and choice of subjects relate to the cultural context of the Dutch merchant elite, and how they reinforced aspirations and claims of the merchant class in the construction of a social identity.

Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline van Gent's book *Dynastic Colonialism* similarly examined issues of identity, power, and material culture in the context of the Orange court.[52] This book articulates how the exchange and display of material objects, as well as the development of building programs, promoted the power and dynastic identity of the House of Orange-Nassau. This methodology is applied in chapters 3 and 4 as a means of understanding the significance of the estate landscapes owned by William III and his favorites.

In its emphasis on the relationship between the uses of nature and displays of power, this project also draws on the work of scholars examining issues of colonialism in the early modern period. Numerous authors have recently called attention to the role of nature in the construction of personal and national identities at

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[50] Ann Jensen Adams, "Competing Communities in the 'Great Bog of Europe.' Identity and Seventeenth Century Dutch Landscape Painting," in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 35–76.

[51] Ann Jensen. Adams, *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Portraiture and the Production of Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 25.

[52] Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent, *Dynastic Colonialism: Gender, Materiality and the Early Modern House of Orange-Nassau*, (London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2016).

the intersection of botanical science, landscape, and colonialism in the Dutch seventeenth century. Among many others, Claudia Swan, Julie Berger Hochstrasser, and Londa Schiebinger have demonstrated the myriad ways in which the collection, cultivation, and categorization of *naturalia*, agricultural products, and medicinal and botanical rarities (and images depicting them) displayed the scope of Dutch trade power, becoming emblems of prosperity that emerged as a defining feature of Dutch national identity.[53]

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In the seventeenth century, hunting and garden art were among the most visible performances of wealth and power. By examining the immediate social context of his patrons and the cultural significance of his primary subjects—hunting and garden art—this dissertation examines the multifaceted ways in which Weenix's art co-opted noble imagery to assert a patron's belonging to a pan-European noble social elite and construct a cohesive social identity defined by one's elite economic status. This dissertation contributes to the scholarship on late-seventeenth century art and culture by showing how Weenix's game still lifes utilized that imagery to assert collectors' control over nature, and thereby his or her participation in cultural, economic, and political hegemony over the lower classes and their colonial domains. In this way, Weenix's art demonstrates how the era's political and social

[53] For succinct introduction to this scholarship, see Londa L. Schiebinger and Claudia. Swan, eds., *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). See also Julie Hochstrasser, *Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Londa L. Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Claudia Swan, *Rarities of These Lands: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Dutch Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

transformations had a cumulative effect on cultural attitudes on the relationship of art, humans, and nature.

Chapter 1: Jan Weenix as Artist

Introduction

This chapter describes the artistic environment wherein Jan Weenix identified a distinctive approach to game painting that appealed to merchant and noble classes alike. By examining stylistic influences on his evolution of the genre, this chapter places Weenix firmly within the tradition of game painting in Amsterdam and in context of the era's distinctive artistic culture, which was heavily influenced by French styles. Tracing the evolution of Weenix's game paintings alongside the changing fashions of the period, this chapter demonstrates the ways in which Weenix created a style of game painting that catered to the tastes of his patrons.

This chapter opens with a discussion of Weenix's training and early career in Utrecht. It then explores his artistic contacts in the countryside around Utrecht in the 1670s, illustrating his connection to art made for *buitenplaatsen* owners and for the court of William III at his hunting lodge of Soestdijk. It then discusses Weenix's first years in Amsterdam in the 1680s, showing the formative influence of his contact with artists like Willem van Aelst (1627-1683), Otto Marseus van Schriek (1613-1678) and Matthias Withoos (1627-1703). It then describes the relationship between Weenix's art, garden culture, and French interior design, followed by discussions of his working methods and patronage. The chapter concludes and an overview of the stylistic and compositional developments in Weenix's art from the beginning of his career as a game painter to his final paintings in the years before his death in 1719.

Training and Early Years in Utrecht: 1642-1679

Jan Weenix was born in 1642 in Amsterdam.[54] The following year, his father, the painter Jan Baptist Weenix (1621-1659), left for an extended artistic sojourn in Italy. Jan Baptist spent four years in Rome and was a member of the *bentvueghels*, the society of Dutch and Flemish artists. Jan Baptist was very successful in Rome, with patrons among the aristocracy, including Cardinal Giovanni Battista Doria Pamphilij (1574-1655), later Pope Innocent X.[55] Jan Baptist Weenix returned to Holland in 1647 and soon thereafter moved the family to the city of Utrecht. Jan Baptist Weenix became deeply connected with the city's artistic community and with patrons in the surrounding area. He was elected Dean of the Painter's Guild, and appears to have been especially close with Cornelis van Poelenburgh and Jan Both.[56] According to biographer Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719), Jan Baptist Weenix was one of Utrecht's most sought-after artists, with frequent visitors to his studio.[57] Such was his popularity that in 1656 he moved to a rented house on the property of Ter Mey Castle, near Maarssen, in search of a quiet environment in which to focus on his art-making.

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[54] In this chapter, I draw Weenix's biographical information from the extensive documentation provided in Anke van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven's catalogue raisonné. See Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings*, vol. 1, 61–63.

[55] Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, vol. 2, 24.

[56] Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, vol. 2, 28.

[57] Houbraken called Jan Baptist Weenix a "first rank" artist. See Arnold Houbraken, *Houbraken Translated. The Complete, Fully Illustrated and Augmented Edition in English of De Groote Schouburgh Der Nederlantsche Konstschilders En Schilderessen [...]*, trans. Hendrik J. Horn and Rieke van Leeuwen, RKD Studies 2021, 1718, vol. 2, 52, https://houbraken-translated.rkdstudies.nl/title-page/.

Utrecht was a city with a long history of patronage for Italianate paintings. Ever since the 1610s when the Utrecht Caravaggisti first returned from Rome, Utrecht artists had been associated with Italian styles in art. The bright, lively scenes of Gerrit van Honthorst appealed to Orangist patrons for their courtly pastoralism, while the Italianate landscapes of a later generation of artists, including Jan Both, Cornelis Poelenburgh, and Jan Baptist Weenix conveyed an idealized vision of rural Italian life that Utrecht patrons were then trying to emulate in their homes.[58]

In Utrecht, Jan Weenix apprenticed with his father, along with his cousin, Melchior d'Hondecoeter, who had lived with the Weenix family after the death of his father, Gillis d'Hondecoeter, in 1653.[59] Jan Weenix and Melchior d'Hondecoeter were apparently Jan Baptist's only students. Still a teenager at the time of his father's move to Maarsen, Jan Weenix would have moved with him to the Ter Mey estate to continue his apprenticeship.

During his early years in Utrecht, Jan Weenix would have been exposed to art in a variety of artistic styles from the luminaries of an earlier generation of Utrecht artists, including Caravaggist painters (Hendrick ter Brugghen, Dirk van Baburen,

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[58] The artistic environment of Utrecht and the history of patronage of Utrecht artists by the House of Orange have most recently been examined in Peter van der Ploeg et al., *Princely Patrons: The Collection of Frederick Henry of Orange and Amalia of Solms in the Hague* (Hague: Mauritshuis, 1997), and Bernd Ebert et al., *Utrecht, Caravaggio and Europe*, English edition. (Munich: Hirmer; 2018).

[59] The oeuvre of Melchior d'Hondecoeter has been extensively discussed by Joy Kearney. For an examination of D'Hondecoeter's court patronage, see Joy Kearney, "Melchior de Hondecoeter in the Service of William III: Royal Taste and Patronage in the Dutch Golden Age," in *Collecting and the Princely Apartment*, ed. Susan Bracken, Andrea M. Gáldy, and Adriana Turpin, 2011; for a discussion of Hondecoeter's development of bird painting as an appropriate subject for *buitenplaatsen,* decoration, see Joy Kearney et al., *Melchior de Hondecoeter, schilder van buitenplaatsen, te gast op Sypesteyn* (Loosdrecht: Sypesteyn Kasteelmuseum, 2012).

Gerrit von Honthorst) classicizing painters (Abraham Bloemaert, Jan van Blijert), still life painters (Balthazar van der Ast, Jan Davidz. de Heem) and Italianate artists (Jan Both, Cornelis van Poelenburgh). He would certainly have been personally acquainted with his father's colleagues Both and Van Poelenburgh and was likely regaled with stories of their careers in Italy. He also would have known the Italian drawings and sketches and paintings made by his father, replete with examples of sculpture and scenes of Roman gardens, landscapes, and ruins.[60]

Weenix's training with his father also exposed him to the genres of game still life and animal painting. Jan Baptist Weenix produced 19 game still lifes, most of them subdued arrangements of game in a niche in a monochromatic color palette.[61] Jan Weenix and Melchior d'Hondecoeter would have known these paintings and must have received training in the subjects from the older artist.

Jan Baptist Weenix died in 1659, when Jan Weenix was 17 years old. In 1664, he joined the St. Luke's Guild in Utrecht as a specialist in Italianate port scenes (figure 2). During the 1660s, Weenix painted about forty Italianate scenes of this type, which frequently include well-known Italian sculptures, like Simone Moschino's *Apotheosis of Alessandro Farnese* and Giambologna's *Rape of the Sabines,* and the Medici Vase at the Villa Medici in Rome, an indication that Weenix

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[60] Peter Schatborn has identified eight drawings in his reconstructions of Jan Baptist Weenix's Italian sketchbook. See Peter Schatborn and Judith Verberne, *Drawn to Warmth: 17th-Century Dutch Artists in Italy* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2001), 110–13. For discussions of the Italian drawings of Jan Both and Cornelis Poelenburgh, see pp. 57-65 and pp. 88-99 respectively.

[61] Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings*, vol. 1.

knew these sculptures through his father's experiences in Rome between 1643-1647.[62]

It seems that Jan Weenix did not find the same success with his Italianate landscapes as had his father. Sometime around 1670 he almost completely abandoned the genre, emerging in the 1680s as a portrait painter and game painter. Yet the artist's early exposure to Italianate art, game painting, and courtly patronage in Utrecht was formative to Weenix's later style and choice of subjects.

Jan Weenix in the 1670s

A lacuna exists in Weenix's dated output in the 1670s, although primary sources indicate that Jan Weenix was active in the countryside around Utrecht during this period. One of these is Arnold Houbraken's interview with Jan Weenix for the second volume of *Groote Schouburgh,* published in 1719. While Houbraken did not include Jan Weenix himself in the biographies, Houbraken consulted the artist for information about his father, Jan Baptist Weenix, and on Jan Weenix's friend, the painter and printmaker Antoni Waterloo (1609-1690). In this latter interview, Weenix told Houbraken that he had been acquainted with Waterloo for forty-five years. He had frequently visited Waterloo in the countryside outside Utrecht, "in his house between Maarssen and Breukelen."[63] Weenix's language suggests that he collaborated with Waterloo by 1676, when that artist was based primarily at

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[62] For example, see Anke van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings,* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 2018), vol. 2, 109, 114.

[63] Arnold Houbraken, *Houbraken Translated. The Complete, Fully Illustrated and Augmented Edition in English of De Groote Schouburgh Der Nederlantsche Konstschilders En Schilderessen [...]*, 51.

Maarssen. The purpose of these visits, according to Weenix, was to "decorate [Waterloo's] landscape paintings with animals and other natural objects."[64] This comment, which so far has not been examined in the literature, is the only contemporary evidence of Weenix as a collaborative artist.[65]

Born in Lille, Anthoni Waterloo was twelve years old when his family moved to Amsterdam in 1621.[66] Waterloo was a peripatetic artist who had been active in Hamburg, Holstein, and Danzig. He lived in Maarssen twice, first between 1655 and 1658, the same period when Weenix lived in Maarssen with his father on the Ter Mey estate. Waterloo's second residency at Maarssen was between 1660 and 1677. Known today primarily as an etcher and draughtsman, today only two landscape paintings are securely attributed to Waterloo. One of these, which appeared at auction in 2004, is signed by Waterloo (figure 3). The staffage in this painting is not unlike the figures in Weenix's port scenes, and it is entirely possible that this work is an example of a collaboration between the artists.

Houbraken indicates that Waterloo was a well-known landscape painter, but only two oil paintings have been securely attributed to him. Waterloo's contemporary fame as a landscapist likely came from large wall paintings or murals he made for estates and *buitenplaatsen* that are no longer extant. Strikingly, the later years of Waterloo's residency in Maarssen corresponds to the period in which there is a

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[64] Ibid. See also Anke van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings,* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 2018), vol. 2, 22.

[65] Weenix's collaboration with Waterloo opens the possibility that Waterloo could have been responsible for the backgrounds of some of Weenix's game paintings between 1680 and Waterloo's death in 1690.

[66] Biographical documentation on Waterloo drawn from RKD file: https://rkd.nl/explore/artists/83001

relative dearth of dated paintings in Weenix's oeuvre, which suggests that he worked with Waterloo on his large wall paintings. As Nina Wedde notes in her catalogue raisonné on muralist Isaac Moucheron (1667-1744), a popular artist for *buitenplaats* wall murals, such wall hangings were extremely popular along the river Vecht, but "the excessively humid conditions in these unheated residences caused the decorations to deteriorate rapidly….today very little remains."[67] The fact that Weenix eventually produced wall panels at the turn of the century supports the hypothesis that he was well experienced working in large-scale formats, and that he participated in the creation of this type of work for patrons in the countryside around Utrecht.

Another artist with whom Weenix might have collaborated in the 1670s is Weenix's cousin, Melchior d'Hondecoeter, who was also active in the estates in the countryside around Utrecht beginning in the 1670s.[68] D'Hondecoeter's large-scale works, which featured live birds and animals in garden settings, presumably based on the aviaries that were then gaining even more in popularity, were a formative influence on Weenix's later art. For example, in the mid-1670s, while living in Amsterdam, D'Hondecoeter produced a series of wall panels depicting garden views for *Huis Driemond,* the country house of the wealthy Amsterdam confectioner Adolf Visscher (1641-1701), near Weesp.[69] Although these paintings do not depict game, they do include a variety of birds populating elegant gardens, with elements of garden architecture anchoring the compositions to the side and framing views into the

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[67] Nina Wedde, *Isaac de Moucheron (1667-1744): His Life and Works with a Catalogue Raisonné of His Drawings, Watercolours, Paintings, and Etchings*, (Frankfurt am Main; Peter Lang, 1996), 109.

[68] Wedde, 97.

[69] These paintings are now in the Alte Pinakothek, Münich.

distance, a device that would come to characterize Weenix's game still lifes from the 1680s until the end of his career.

Two arched wall panels D'Hondecoeter made for William III's hunting lodge at Soestdijk around 1678 were particularly important models for Weenix's later work.[70] Flanking the doors of Soestdijjk's entry hall, these images depict dead game as a means of glorifying the hunting abilities of the Stadholder William III (discussed further in chapter 3 of this dissertation). Melchior d'Hondecoeter's *A Hunter's Bag on a Terrace* (figure 4), may be one of the first images to depict dead game within the environs of a formal garden, suggesting that concept originated at the court of the Prince of Orange. Weenix emulated D'Hondecoeter's composition in his later game still lifes: the arrangement of the hanging hare, and the overlapping forms of the birds in a pyramidal shape, are reminiscent of his characteristic compositional approach, as is the strategy of framing a view of a garden to one side.

Weenix's known connections with William III's princely hunting estate at Soesdijk date to 1677, the year before D'Hondecoeter's paintings were installed there. In 1677, Weenix and several other individuals were asked to vouch for an acquaintance, one Gillis de Faijs, in a notary document stating that:

> "Jacob de Hennin painter, and overseer of His Highness's hunting and game park at Soestdyck: 48 years, Joan Weenix, approximately 30 years, Dr. Johannes Baptista de Smidt, aged 34 years, at the request

[70] William III purchased Soestijk from the politically prominent De Graeff family in 1673, the year after the *rampjaar*. For a discussion of the political symbolism of this transaction, see Rob van der Laarse, "Amsterdam en Oranje," in *Buitenplaatsen in de Gouden Eeuw: De Rijkdom van het Buitenleven in de Republiek*, ed. Yme Kuiper, Ben Olde Meierink, and Elyze A.C. Storms-Smeets, (Hilversum: Verloren, 2015).

> of Adriano van Goor, that they had known well Sr. Gillis de Faijs, who left for Luik."[71]

It is unknown how Weenix knew Jacob de Hennin (1628-1688), although it is possible they met through Melchior d'Hondecoeter, who were both members of the Confrerie Pictura in The Hague in the 1660s. Sometime after 1673, De Hennin moved to Soestdijk to become gamekeeper at the Prince's new hunting estate, possibly because of his earlier work as a bailiff in The Hague. Through De Hennin, who was gamekeeper at least between 1677 and 1681, Weenix would have gained personal knowledge of the workings of the hunt at court, including hunting practices, hunting equipment, types of game, and seasons. Weenix likely sketched animals that had been killed at Soestdijk and later incorporated these designs into his later game still lifes.

Although the absence of dated paintings makes it difficult to reconstruct Weenix's career in the 1670s, these documents place Weenix at the Orange court at Soestdijk and show that he was active in the area around Utrecht and the river Vecht, where wealthy merchants were developing the gardens and houses of their *buitenplaatsen.* The documents also show that he was close with artists hired to decorate these homes and may have even collaborated with them on their wall paintings.Through Waterloo and D'Hondecoeter, Jan Weenix likely developed a network of patrons and connections with patrons near Maarssen. One such individual was Adriaan de Goor, the merchant who requested Weenix's testimony in the above-

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[71] For a discussion of this notarial document, which is deposited in the Stadsarchief Amsterdam, see Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings*, vol. 2, 22. The text is translated and reproduced in footnote 37 in Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven's text.

mentioned 1677 notary document. In 1686, Weenix received a commission to paint his portrait.[72]

It is possible that Weenix's experiences with artists and patrons around Utrecht and near Maarssen may have hastened his transition from Italianate port scenes to game paintings in the early 1680s. Weenix apparently determined that game painting and estate settings would appeal to owners of country properties, and then adapted the compositional strategies that D'Hondecoeter had developed for his wall hangings. Weenix successfully capitalized on his knowledge of the paintings that his cousin had produced for the court of William III to establish himself as a painter of noble subjects.

Early Game Paintings: Development & Influences in Amsterdam: 1680-1690

At some point in the late 1670s, Weenix settled in Amsterdam, where he would remain for the rest of his life. Although the precise date of his move is unknown, he is first documented there in 1679, when he married Petronella Backers.[73] By the early 1680s he was established as a portrait painter in Amsterdam, producing over 50 portraits between 1680 and 1695. These portraits, which were likely his prime source of income in the 1680s, depict sumptuously attired merchants in refined poses, similar to those in Nicolaes Maes's portraits of the 1670s. These

[72] Anke van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings,* vol. 2, 151.

[73] Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, vol. 2, 21.

portraits show sitters standing before a distant view, usually either a port or hunting park in the case of male sitters, or a garden in the case of his female sitters.[74]

During this period Weenix began to establish himself as an independent game painter, although it is unclear just how many game still lifes ought to be dated to the 1680s. Seven game still lifes bear dates from the 1680s, but as many as 15 additional paintings of his 42 undated works could be placed in this period based on stylistic grounds.

One critical factor in Weenix's development of game painting in the 1680s was his exposure to Amsterdam's thriving artistic community, especially to its painters of still life and *sottobosco* works, like Willem van Aelst, Otto Marseus van Schriek, and Matthias Withoos. All of these artists had spent significant time in Italy in the 1650s, establishing successful careers producing commissions for the leading families of Florence and Rome. After returning to the Netherlands in the 1660s, each of these artists leveraged their Italian experiences to build a substantial clientele among Amsterdam's wealthiest patrons, including those in the scientific community.[75] In Amsterdam, Weenix absorbed ideas from game still life and *sottobosco* painting, incorporating their compositional strategies, techniques, motifs, and even specific objects into his game paintings.

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[74] Weenix's portraiture remains understudied and will be a fruitful topic for future research. For a brief discussion of his portraiture, see chapter 2 of this dissertation.

[75] For discussions of the appeal of these artists' Italian experiences to Dutch patrons, see Tanya Paul et al., *Elegance and Refinement: The Still-Life Paintings of Willem van Aelst* (New York: Skira Rizzoli, 2012), 42; Gero Seelig et al., *Medusa's Menagerie: Otto Marseus van Schrieck and the Scholars*, English edition. (Schwerin: Staatliches Museum, 2017), 31.

Willem van Aelst

In concept and technique, Weenix's early game still lifes most clearly indicate the influence of Willem Van Aelst's *trompe-l'oeil* hunting trophies. Willem van Aelst (1627-1683), who had lived in France between 1645/6 and 1651, and then in Florence between 1651-1656, was Amsterdam's foremost still life painter.[76] Such was his renown that he received commissions from the Medici family, including Cardinal Giovan Carlo and Cardinal Leopoldo.[77]

After his return to Amsterdam around 1656, Willem van Aelst "marketed" his work by signing his name *Guillermo*, a direct allusion to his time spent in Italy and especially his Medici connections.[78] In Florence, Van Aelst had perfected his ability to depict a variety of objects—from rare treasures to naturalia, to everyday items—with an extremely refined, illusionistic technique.[79] In Amsterdam, Willem van Aelst adapted his style to clients eager for art that suggested both the noble elegance of Italy and the heightened sense of realism so prized in The Netherlands. In Amsterdam, Van Aelst began to create images filled with flowers, fruit, and game that were more focused in their compositions than they had been in Italy. He gave them a greater sense of immediacy and energy by placing objects close to the picture

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[76] Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., "Willem van Aelst," in *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*, NGA Online Editions, 2014.

[77] Tanya Paul, "Cultivating Virtuosity," in *Elegance and Refinement: The Still-Life Paintings of Willem van Aelst*, ed. ed. Tanya Paul et al. (New York: Skira Rizzoli, 2012), 16.

[78] Arthur K.Wheelock Jr., "'Guillelmo' in Amsterdam: Van Aelst's Painterly Style in Amsterdam," in *Elegance and Refinement: The Still-Life Paintings of Willem van Aelst*, ed. Tanya Paul et al. (New York: Skira Rizzoli, 2012), 66.

[79] Julie Hochstrasser, "An Uncommon Painter and His Subjects," in *Elegance and Refinement: The Still-Life Paintings of Willem van Aelst*, d. Tanya Paul et al. (New York: Skira Rizzoli, 2012), 56.

plane, brightly lit and emerging into the space of the viewer, imbuing them with a sensuous, rhythmic quality that greatly appealed to Amsterdam's elite patrons.

As Houbaken noted, Willem van Aelst achieved his fame because of his ability to "imitate life so naturally that his brushwork did not look like a painting but life itself."[80] Van Aelst created game still lifes as a means to display this artistic prowess, creating dramatically lit compositions that were studies in the contrast of texture. Van Aelst further ennobled his small, intimate game paintings by introducing noble hunting gear and by utilizing costly pigments such as natural ultramarine.[81]

When Jan Weenix arrived in Amsterdam in the 1670s, Willem van Aelst was arguably the most successful still life painter in Holland. Although no documentation linking the young Jan Weenix with Willem van Aelst has yet been identified, he certainly knew Van Aelst's art and may have personally known the older artist. He may have met Van Aelst through his cousin Melchior d'Hondecoeter, who had moved to Amsterdam from The Hague around 1663. D'Hondecoeter and Van Aelst were certainly acquainted: the artists, along with Otto Marseus van Schriek, were among the artists asked to judge the quality of a selection of Italian paintings offered by Gerrit van Uylenburgh in 1672.[82]

Weenix's early game still lifes indicate his knowledge of Willem van Aelst's art. A comparison of Van Aelst's 1661 *Still Life with Dead Game* at the National Gallery of Art (figure 5) with Weenix's earliest known game still life, the 1675 *Dead*

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[80] Arnold Houbraken, *Houbraken Translated. The Complete, Fully Illustrated and Augmented Edition in English of De Groote Schouburgh Der Nederlantsche Konstschilders En Schilderessen [...]*, vol. 1, 228.
[81] Hochstrasser, "An Uncommon Painter and His Subjects," 56.

[82] Tanya Paul, "Cultivating Virtuosity," 19.

Hare Hanging From its Leg, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (figure 6) shows Weenix emulated the older artist's compositions. In the Van Aelst work, the artist has depicted a rooster, pheasant, and hare suspended with a kingfisher and a common weather along with a pair of falconry hoods. These he has arranged in a pyramidal composition, resting on a blue silk and velvet falconry bag above a stone balustrade with relief. Weenix's *A Dead Hare Hanging From its Leg* follows the basic approach of Van Aelst's painting: he depicts a suspended hare and fowl along with hunting gear, situated in a niche on a marble pedestal. Like Van Aelst, Weenix uses a rich but relatively simple color palette to emphasize the textures of the game and hunting equipment; like Van Aelst, Weenix uses small, delicate brushstrokes to give a tactile sense of the texture of the hare's fur, the velvet hunting bag, and the partridge feathers; like Van Aelst, Weenix foreshortens the foregrounded elements as they protrude over the edge of the pedestal and seemingly into the viewer's space, presenting these objects brightly lit against a dark background, further heightening the sense of illusionism.

It was not until after Willem van Aelst's death in 1683 that Weenix began producing game still lifes in earnest. Perhaps capitalizing on the "gap" in the game still life market left by Van Aelst's death, Weenix soon fashioned himself Van Aelst's successor in the genre. Weenix adapted Van Aelst's technique and compositional ideas with innovations in subject matter adapted to the changing tastes of Amsterdam's elites. Most importantly, he began situating game in estate settings. The 1682 *Dead Hare in a Garden* at the Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, is the first dated painting by Weenix to include a garden setting (figure 7). With minute attention to

details and texture, Weenix depicts the whiskers, fur, and bloody nose of the hare, but also gives a view into a stately garden beyond.

Another early example is a 1689 painting at the Mauritshuis, *Dead Hare Hanging from its Hind Leg* (figure 8), where Weenix combines the niche and landscape elements. Here Weenix presents a hanging hare, partridges and hunting equipment in a stone niche before a landscape.[83] Again, he follows the basic format of Van Aelst's compositions, but instead of presenting the objects before a dark background, he suffuses the entire picture with a warm light and introduces a view of a landscape beyond. As will be discussed in later chapters, the addition of garden and estate settings differentiates Weenix's game paintings from those of his predecessors and is directly related to the renewed cultural cachet of garden design and hunting at the end of the century.

The Mauritshuis *Dead Hare Hanging from its Hind Leg* is also significant as it is the first painting by Weenix to include a distinctive falconry bag that Van Aelst had depicted multiple times throughout his career. A close visual comparison of the falconry bag in Weenix's painting at the Mauritshuis and Willem van Aelst's at the National Gallery shows that both bags have satin and leather straps joined with gold trim; the buckles, depicted from behind, are of the exact same shape; and the heart-shaped metal loops are of the exact same facture, with the same ridges and details. This same hunting bag is depicted in greater detail in a 1691 painting by Weenix at the Wallace Collection (figure 9). Here the bright satin, gold and leather strap is in the

[83] The partridges, which are the same as those depicted in the Houston painting, were likely based on a drawing; in this image, they are hanging from trompe-l'oeil nails unique in Weenix's oeuvre.

immediate foreground, and the metal pieces are clearly visible, their shapes matching the Van Aelst bag exactly. In this painting, Weenix has also depicted the trim of woven gold, apparent in multiple other depictions of the bag by Van Aelst.

Weenix included this falconry bag in about 23 paintings in paintings ranging in date from 1689 to 1718, the year before his death.[84] Willem van Aelst painted it 6 times, between 1660 and 1667.[85] While extant examples of falconry bags from this era are rare, one survives at the Victoria & Albert Museum (figure 10). Dating to the early seventeenth century, this bag is of the same shape as the one depicted by Van Aelst and Weenix, most clearly seen in Van Aelst's circa 1665 *Hunt Still Life with a Velvet Bag on A Marble Ledge* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (figure 11).

Weenix's inclusion of Van Aelst's falconry bag demonstrates that Weenix owned Van Aelst's bag or one identical to it. It is possible that Weenix inherited it or purchased it from Van Aelst's estate after his death: Weenix depicted the bag only in the years after Van Aelst's death, and from numerous angles and positions not depicted by Van Aelst. Furthermore, the same bag appears in a painting by Jan Weenix's sole student, Dirk Valkenburg, indicating that he too knew the object and incorporated it into his game paintings (figure 12).

[84] Willem van Aelst's falconry bag can be definitively identified in 10 paintings by Weenix. It is almost certainly depicted in 13 additional paintings, although in these works only a small portion of the bag is visible, making it difficult to determine with absolute certainty. For a few examples of these bags in Weenix's ouevre, see catalogue entries 106, 121, 124, 128, 137, 144, 151, 137, 172, in Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven.

[85] For some examples of this bag in Willem van Aelst oeuvre, see pp. 130, 145, 147, and 150 in Paul et al., *Elegance and Refinement: The Still-Life Paintings of Willem van Aelst*.

Van Aelst had included elegant items like this falconry bag to enhance the nobility of his pictures, and Weenix likely included it for the same reason.[86] Jan Weenix's addition of Van Aelst's falconry bag may have also functioned as a direct homage to his predecessor, fashioning Weenix as heir to Van Aelst's genius in still life painting, and to his elite clientele. Collectors may have noticed the many visual similarities between, for example, Weenix's 1691 *Dead Hare on a Stone Balustrade* and Van Aelst's 1661 National Gallery painting, including the nose and feet of the hare, along with the strap of the bag protruding off the ledge, and the inclusion of a classical scene. In Van Aelst's painting, the scene is a relief based on a plague by Paulus van Vienen; in Weenix's painting, an unidentified classical scene on an urn. Art connoisseurs would have recognized the bag as the same one Van Aelst depicted.[87]

The presence of the same falconry bag in the oeuvres of both Van Aelst and Weenix indicates a closer connection between the two artists than has been previously identified. Furthermore, the great similarity in the technique of these two artists, as well as Weenix's adoption of the game still life genre so late in life, suggests the possibility that Weenix may have even studied with Willem van Aelst after moving to Amsterdam in the late 1670s. After spending twenty years as a painter of Italianate landscapes and possibly wall paintings, Weenix may have learned techniques for

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[86] See Wheelock, "'Guillelmo' in Amsterdam: Van Aelst's Painterly Style in Amsterdam."

[87] Arthur K. Wheelock Jr, "Willem van Aelst."

depicting textures and surfaces with an extreme degree of naturalism from the older artist as part of a studio.[88]

Whether or not Weenix studied with Van Aelst, he ought to be viewed as Van Aelst's successor: he based his earliest compositional ideas and techniques on the older artist's work, and even added the same objects. But he also pushed the genre in new directions, replacing the dark, indeterminate backgrounds of earlier trompe-l'oeil trophies with views of elegant gardens and parks.

Otto Marseus van Shriek and Matthias Withoos

Another artist with whom Weenix may have been acquainted is Willem van Aelst's colleague, Otto Marseus van Schriek (ca. 1620-1678). Like Van Aelst, Marseus had spent a significant part of the 1660s in Italy. He specialized in forest floor still lifes (known as "sottobosco" paintings) featuring a variety of insects, reptiles, and amphibians, which he frequently shows interacting with each other in the shade of a large plant. He painted these close to the picture plane and from a low point of view. A somber color palette and night-dark backgrounds lend a sinister, uncanny atmosphere to these images, which, notably, place the viewer in the vantage point of the snakes, toads, and salamanders depicted.

The popularization of this low vantage point was one of Marseus's greatest contributions to animal still life: his example was followed by his colleague Mattias

[88] Willem van Aelst's studio practices, and Jan Weenix's involvement with Van Aelst, are rich topics for future research. It is possible that a little-known painter, Louis Michiel (active ca. 1665-after 1681) was also a part of his possible studio: a 1680 hunting still life by Michiel features the same hunting bag and similar composition to Van Aelst's typical works and Weenix's early game still lifes. See Fred G. Meijer, "Louis Michiel (Active c. 1665-after 1681), a Little-Known Painter of Flowers, Fruit and Game Pieces," in *Oud Holland* 111, no. 4 (1997): 11.

Withoos (1627-1703), as well as by Abraham Mignon (in *Flowers and Animals in a Casemate* ca. 1675, Darmstadt, Hessiches Landesmuseum), and Rachel Ruysch (in *Still Life with Flowers on the Forest Floor*, ca. 1695, Kessel). This technique also influenced a late still life by Willem van Aelst, an important precursor to Weenix's game paintings. *Forest Floor Still Life with Downed Game Birds*, which dates to ca. 1675 at the Staatliches Museum, Schwerin (figure 13). This painting combines elements of Marseus's forest floor compositions, including a thistle, butterfly, and snail, with a hunting trophy of birds, hunting nets, horn, and falconry hoods. As Gero Seelig noted, Van Aest synthesized his own specialty, the hunting still life, with Marseus's *sottobosco* compositional approach.[89] An example showing Weenix's indebtedness to Marseus is a 1685 painting of a dead rooster with grapes, a pheasant, and kingfisher (figure 14). This painting is unique in Weenix's oeuvre for its inclusion of multiple butterflies, which were a signature feature of Marseus's paintings.

In Amsterdam, Weenix encountered this cutting-edge world of still life and animal painting and incorporated its innovations into his own compositions, and in so doing created a distinctive type of game painting. Weenix's characteristic strategy of placing game on the ground and depicting it from a low vantage point, while also giving a view to a garden or estate setting behind, was an innovative adaptation of Amsterdam's *sottobosco* painters.

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[89] Gero Seelig noted that "it would appear that Van Aelst studied the art of Otto Marseus so intensively that he could incorporate its effective features, like the thistle, in his own works at will." Seelig et al., *Medusa's Menagerie: Otto Marseus van Schrieck and the Scholars*, 202.

Another connection to these *sottobosco* painters is Weenix's inclusion of interacting birds and animals. While Marseus mostly depicted insects and snakes threatening each other, his friend and compatriot Matthias Withoos included flying birds in his compositions. Weenix may have drawn the motif of interacting, flying birds from Withoos.[90]

Aside from the visual similarities in their paintings that connect Weenix with Withoos and Otto Marseus, these artists also had a common patron: Agnes Block (1629-1704).[91] Jan Weenix's most well-known commission for Agnes Block was the portrait he painted of her with her family. Executed around 1684, Weenix depicted Block, her husband, and two unidentified children in the Vijverhof garden (figure 15). A horticulturalist active in the scientific community at Amsterdam, Agnes Block maintained correspondence with Europe's leading scientists. She developed an impressive collection of rare plants at Vijverhof, along with a collection of preserved insects and an aviary filled with rare birds. Through her work raising rare plants for Amsterdam's *Hortus Medicus*, she would have known Amsterdam's most esteemed botanists, including Frederick Ruysch and Jan Commelin. Agnes Block also developed a network of artists to record her famed botanical collections in her *bloemboek*. Among them were Jan and Maria Moninckxs, Maria Sibylla Merian, Alida and Mattias Withoos, Herman Saftleven, and Otto Marseus van Schriek.

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[90] While the dog and bird motifs reinforce the hunting themes in Weenix's art, they may also be connected to late seventeenth-century philosophical ideas of natural sympathy and antipathy between animals. For a discussion of philosophies of natural sympathy in the period, see Christina Mercer, "Seventeenth-Century Universal Sympathy: Stoicism, Platonism, Leibniz, and Conway," in *Sympathy : A History* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

[91] For the most recent analysis of Block's life and work, see Catherine Powell-Warren, "Cross-Pollination: Agnes Block (1629–1704) and Her Network of Artists and Botanical Experts."

Because Block is not known to have hired Weenix to contribute to her *bloemboek,* discussion of Weenix's involvement in her circle has been limited to his portrait commission. However, some circumstantial evidence suggests that this portrait was not Weenix's only commission from her. She may have hired Weenix to paint a series of watercolors depicting the birds in her aviary (figure 16). These watercolors, which are now in the Rijksmuseum and are currently attributed to Weenix, follow a similar format to the watercolors in Agnes Block's *bloemboek.* They are also strikingly similar to the one Block holds in the Weenix portrait. It is entirely possible that Block commissioned Weenix to produce not only her portrait but also watercolors of the birds in her aviary.

Recent interest in Agnes Block as horticulturist and art patron has brought new attention to her *bloemboek* and the artists she commissioned for it. These studies have placed Block within Amsterdam's highly interconnected scientific and artistic world. Catherine Powell-Warren's study of Block's social networks has shown that she was a central figure in this community and that her *bloemboek* ought to be viewed as a site for artistic exchange as artists collaborated together on the volume over the 1680s.[92]

During his first decade in Amsterdam, Weenix absorbed recent developments in game and animal painting by the genre's foremost practitioners. Willem van Aelst's paintings inspired Weenix's detail-focused technique, subject matter, and pyramidal compositions; Otto Marseus van Schriek's paintings provided him a model

[92] Catherine Powell-Warren, 51.

for placing game on the ground close to the picture plane, while Matthias Withoos' works demonstrated how one could depict flying birds interacting with other animals within one's composition.

French Interior Design and Wall Paintings: 1673-1700

One of the defining characteristics of late seventeenth century Netherlandish culture was its shift towards French styles and tastes. Although cosmopolitan attitudes and a certain international style of classical pastoralism had been popular among nobility at the Orange court since at least the 1630s, by the 1670s the influence of French fashions came to extend far beyond the court.[93] As an influx of French Huegenots brought ideas and tastemakers to the Republic, the urban bourgeoisie began to remodel their homes on French lines and to adopt French modes of dress, manners, and forms of address, Dutch art theorists like Gerard de Lairesse (1641-1711) popularized the rules of French classicism among Dutch artists and collectors. Interestingly, Jan Weenix's introduction of urns into his game paintings relates to the recommendation of De Lairesse in his art treatise, *Groot Schilderboek,* that still life painters elevate their compositions by including urns and reliefs depicting fables, allegories, and mythological figures. Weenix began including classical reliefs on urns and balustrades in the early 1690s, more than fifteen years before the *Groot Schilderboek* was first published in 1707, an indication that he was aligned with the classicizing preferences of contemporary tastemakers.

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[93] See Alison McNeil Kettering, *The Dutch Arcadia: Pastoral Art and Its Audience in the Golden Age* (Totowa: Allanheld and Schram, 1983), 123.

Importantly for Weenix, these changing ideas had an impact on interior design. Across the Nethelands, the public rooms of merchant homes were transformed from formal reception areas to social spaces for hosting visitors for coffee, tea, and music.[94] With this style of interior design, large series of decorative canvases by artists like Melchior d'Hondecoeter and Isaac de Moucheron were often inset into walls to complement the decor.[95] Rooms designed with ornate fireplaces matching the sconces, and wainscots, were conceived with a single decorative programme, which often featured pastoral motifs. This style of interior design and decor began to appear in *buitenplaatsen* along the river Vecht and the countryside around Utrecht in the 1670s as a result of the French invasion of The Netherlands in 1672. The decor developed at that time influenced later renovations of country homes and urban dwellings well into the early 18th century. Undated prints of a series of wall paintings made by Isaac de Moucheron for the house of Abraham Mesquita, a Jewish Portuguese merchant, demonstrate the kind of wall paintings popular at the time (figure 17).[96] Later designs by Daniel Marot reveal how flower still lifes were incorporated into overdoor designs (figure 18). One can easily imagine Weenix's

[94] For a discussion of the impact of French social customs on the renovations of townhomes in the late seventeenth century, see C. Willemijn Fock and Diane Webb, "The Décor of Domestic Entertaining at the Time of the Dutch Republic," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 51 (2000): 106–9.

[95] Contemporary patrons viewed these wall paintings as distant relatives of ancient Roman mural paintings. Pliny had discussed how wall painters of his own time decorated the walls of wealthy Romans with scenes of leisurely couples strolling through the countryside. Vitruvius's *Ten Books of Architecture*, the period's handbook for classical architecture, had also referred to how Roman wall paintings depicted Greek scenes. Quoted in Wedde, 97.

[96] See Wedde *Isaac de Moucheron (1667-1744): His Life and Works with a Catalogue Raisonné of His Drawings, Watercolours, Paintings, and Etchings*, 110.

game *tableaux* situated in the gardens De Moucheron depicted in his wall hangings, and Weenix's game still lifes similarly placed above a door or mantelpiece of the kind depicted in Marot's engravings.

Garden Culture, Prints, and Collaboration with Patrons

The gardens that Weenix depicted are not unlike those found in the *buitenplaatsen* around the river Vecht. As seen in the 1719 publication *De Zegepraalende Vecht*, these classical homes and elegantly designed gardens, which were enclosed by hedges and fir trees and featured ponds, fountains, orangeries, and avenues (figure 19).[97] Although some of the views are reminiscent of Weenix's settings, the book was published in the year of Weenix's death, and could not have been a source for the artist. It does show, however, the types of gardens that were being developed during Weenix's lifetime.

As will become clear in chapter 4, Weenix likely incorporated into his game still lifes garden architecture that he had seen himself. Some of Weenix's paintings recall the garden architecture seen in *De Zegepraalende Vecht*. Its views of the *buitenplaats* Petersburg, for example, exhibit views of circular artificial lake similar to one found in Weenix's paintings (figure 20), and, as well, sculptural fountains that the artist depicted (figures 21-22). The great variety and ostentation evident in the views in *De Zegepraalende Vecht* show that Weenix would not have had to travel to

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[97] Orangeries were introduced to the Netherlands in the middle of the seventeenth century. These are distinct from greenhouses, invented in the 1680s, which more effectively circulated heat generated by fires and circulated heat through pipes or brick tunnels. For a detailed discussion of the history of greenhouses, see Marisca Sikkens-De Zwaan, "Magdalena Poulle (1632-99): A Dutch Lady in a Circle of Botanical Collectors," *Garden History* 30, no. 2 (2002): 214.

faraway courts to behold the beauty of such gardens: he only had to traverse the countryside around his native town. Nevertheless, his garden views likely obfuscated the line between fantasy and reality, and reflected ideals of garden design that only the most elite merchants could possess.

Around 1690, a distinct shift developed in Weenix's game paintings, where he began to give prominence to increasingly ornate garden art. The desirability of incorporating such motifs may have been directly inspired by prints depicting Holland's most fashionable gardens that were becoming more opulent in design and decoration.[98] One such publication was Jan van Aveleen's views of Hans Willem Bentinck's garden at Zorgvliet around 1690, which introduced a new level of ornamentation in Dutch garden design. (I will discuss the influence of this publication in more detail in chapter three.)

Despite the growing popularity of botanical illustration in the latter decades of the seventeenth century and Weenix's connections to Amsterdam's community of botanical illustrators through Agnes Block, Weenix rarely focused the viewer's attention on individual plants. Instead, he preferred to include relatively non-descript bowers ornamental flowers, such as roses or poppies, to introduce additional color or reinforce the overall composition of the work.

[98] Weenix may have known of Italian gardens in this style both through prints and through his father's Italian sketches. For a discussion of the gardens of Jan Baptist Weenix's patron Cardinal Giovanni Battista Doria Pamphilij at Villa Doria, see Carla Benocci, F. Catalli, and Mauro. Petrecca, *Villa Doria Pamphilj* (Roma: Editalia, 1996), 117–54. Prints of the gardens in *De Zegeraalende Vecht* are compositionally similar to prints depicting Villa Doria, although less vast than the Italian examples; for example see Giovanni Battista Falda, *Dominico Barrière, Lilii Pamphylii Fons* (Roma, 1670).

In only three game still lifes does Weenix emphasize specific plants: two of these were for horticulturalists. In his portrait Agnes Block, Weenix included images of plant varieties she cultivated at Vijverhof.[99] In circa 1701 painting made for art collector and horticulturist Pieter de la Court van der Voort, Weenix similarly included specific plant species. This painting depicts an iris, rose, *Dictamnus albus*, and, unusually, *usnea* (known colloquially as beard moss), a lichen that is native to the Netherlands.[100] One other work that emphasizes a specific variety of flower is *Still Life with Swan Before a Country Estate* at the National Gallery of Art, which dates to the early 1690s (figure 23). It is the only painting in which Weenix represents a calendula flower ("dodenbloem"), which was associated with death in Dutch culture. With the unique inclusion of a relief depicting St. Mary and St. Joseph with the infant Christ, it is also the only game still life by Weenix to depict religious subject matter.[101] Because of these unusual motifs, this work was almost certainly also a commission, although its patron has not yet been identified.

In all three of these examples, Weenix departed from his typical motifs to suit the taste of his patron. In the case of Agnes Block and Pieter de la Court van der Voort, Weenix included specific plants to highlight their horticultural interests. In the

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[99] Sam Segal has identified the plants in this Block's portrait, which Catherine Powell cites her discussion of the portrait, listing "trumpet vine (Campsis radicans); St. Joseph's coat (Amarantus tricolor); rose of Sharon (Hibiscus syriacus); heliocereus (Heliocereus speciose, a flowering cactus); pineapple(Ananas sativum); morning glory (Convolvulus tricolor); bitter orange (Citrus aurantium); agave (Aloe americana); pomegranate (Punica granatum); bear's breech (Acanthus mollis); and English elm (Ulmus minor)." Catherine Powell-Warren, "Cross-Pollination: Agnes Block (1629–1704) and Her Network of Artists and Botanical Experts," 51.

[100] I am grateful to Victor Shields for his assistance in identifying the *usnea and Dictamnus albus* plants in this work.

[101] Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., "Jan Weenix/Still Life with Swan and Game before a Country Estate/c. 1685," in *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*, NGA Online Editions, 2014.

National Gallery of Art painting, Weenix adapted the genre of game still life to convey a moral-religious message, presumably in line with the wishes of the collector. These examples show the extent to which Weenix collaborated with his patrons in the creation of thematic concepts for commissions, a principle that also applies to his inclusion of specific types of game and elements of garden art.

Working Methods

Very little is known of Weenix's working methods. At least five preparatory works for large commissions show that Weenix used drawings and oil sketches to work out his compositional ideas. One of these is a study for *Hunting and Fruit Still Life next to a Garden Vase* (figure 24), a painting he made for Baron Jacob Emmery van Wassenaer (1674-1742). There also exists an oil sketch on canvas for *A Dead Hare and Pheasant and a Sculpted Vase*, a painting he made for Pieter de la Court van der Voort. Preparatory works also exist for the pendants Weenix made for Elector Johann Wilhelm in 1702: the Rijksmuseum has a sketch in ink and watercolor for *Hunter with Dogs and a Dead Swan* (figure 25), and the Hamburger Kunsthalle has red chalk sketch for *Dead Wolf, Hare, and a Hunter in a Landscape* (figure 26). For this latter work, there also exists an oil sketch on paper at Kronborg Castle, Denmark. The oil sketches for the Elector and for Pieter de la Court van der Voort may have been presentation pieces.

Weenix's repetition of the same arrangements of game indicates that he made sketches of birds and hares that he reused throughout his career.[102] Frequently

[102] Weenix's drawings are a rich topic for further research. Anke van Wagenberg Ter-Hoeven is currently working on a catalogue raisonne of drawings.

recurring arrangements include two hanging partridges, two hanging hares, and partridges resting on the ground.[103] Weenix's use of reference images is confirmed by an oil sketch of a South American squirrel monkey, now at the Rijksmuseum (figure 27), which served as the basis for a monkey that appears in at least eleven game paintings that Weenix executed between 1685 and 1714.

Weenix would have had access to aviaries around Amsterdam and Utrecht where he could a great variety of birds to draw. An inventory of Melchior d'Hondecoeter's possessions lists a gallows among his belongings, which was likely used for holding dead birds in place while painting them.[104] Weenix may have used the same device to paint the flying doves and pigeons that often animate his still lifes.

There is no information about a Weenix workshop. However, the large size of Weenix's wall panels, especially those for the Elector's palace at Bensburg, suggest that he likely employed assistants to complete those works. Weenix's only documented student is Dirk Valkenberg (1675-1721), whose early game paintings closely resemble his teacher's.

Weenix also instructed at least one of his daughters in the art of painting. Both Johan van Gool and Jean-Baptiste Descamps's biographies mention that one of his daughters was an artist. Ten floral still lifes have been attributed to his daughter Maria Weenix (1697-1774) but they are more likely to have been the work of her

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[103] For example of these hanging hares and partridges, see figure 27.

[104] Abraham Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare; urkunden zur Geschichte der Holländischen kunst des XVIten, XVIIten und XVIIIten Jahrhunderts,* vol. 4 (Haag: M. Nijhoff, 1915), 1211.

elder sister, Josina Margaretha Weenix (1684-1724).[105] Four of these paintings bear complete or partial signatures for "J.M.Weenix," the initials of Josina Margaretha. In addition, two floral bouquets by "Juffrow Weenix" were sold in 1706, when Maria was only nine years old, making it far more likely that her older sister Josina, who was then twenty-two years old, was the author of the paintings.

<u>*Display & Patronage*</u>

The large size of Weenix's typical game compositions—often measuring at least four feet in width and five feet in height—suggests most were commissioned works. Weenix also produced some smaller game paintings, which tend to be less complex and contain fewer elements, may have been produced for sale on the art market. Weenix produced both types throughout the entirety of his career.

Even though Weenix painted over 150 game still lifes, fewer than a dozen patrons and early collectors can be identified. Before 1702, Weenix's patrons appear to have been almost exclusively members of the merchant class. Unfortunately, nothing is known of the display of Weenix's game paintings. Most of the patrons that can be identified owned *buitenplaatsen* and expensive townhomes in Amsterdam and Leiden. It seems possible that Weenix's rural subjects would have been thought decorously appropriate to display in a country home. In the cases where they were

[105] Anke van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven attributes all ten paintings to Maria. The RKD suggests that at least two of these ought to be attributed to Josina Margaretha Weenix, and that the others might be by Maria Weenix. Sam Segal attributed the paintings to Josina Margaretha Weenix, but did not list her as Weenix's daughter. Sam Segal and Klara Alen *Dutch and Flemish Flower Pieces: Paintings, Drawings and Prints Up to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 675-676. My research on this topic will be presented in a contribution to the exhibition catalogue for an upcoming 2025 exhibition on Dutch and Flemish women artists at the National Museum of Women in the Arts and MSK Ghent.

displayed in townhomes, Weenix's paintings alluded to the homeowner's access to country lifestyles at their country villas.

As far as we know, Weenix was never commissioned by a member of House of Orange, which fits within the trajectory of Weenix's career. By the time Weenix had established himself as a game painter in mid-1690s, the decoration of the Stadholder-King's palaces was already complete. A portrait by Weenix and an Italianate landscape, which could have been either by Jan Weenix or his father, are listed in a sale of the art collections of William III's favorite Hans Willem Bentinck.[106] The scant descriptions of these paintings make them impossible to identify.

Sometime after 1702, Weenix became a court painter to the Elector Palatinate Johan Wilhelm von der Plfalz (1658-1716). In 1702 he was commissioned to paint two large-scale hunting scenes for the Elector's palace in Düsseldorf, works which may have been "test commissions" for the series of thirteen monumental wall hangings Weenix produced for the Elector between 1705 and 1712. Weenix's appointment as court painter seems to have encouraged other German nobles to collect his work: Frederick Christian von Plettenberg who became Prince-Bishop of Münster in 1688 (1644-1706), Anthony Ulrich, Duke of Brunswick (1633-1714) and Lothar Franz Schönborn, Arch-Bishop Elector of Mainz (1655-1729) all owned paintings by Weenix.

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[106] Sale, London, 1722 Feb 19. Sale Catalog Br-A228, Lugt no. 344, in Getty Provenance Index®. J. Paul Getty Trust.

This noble patronage may have prompted more Dutch nobles to commission works by Weenix: in 1714, Baron Jacob Emmery van Wassenaer, the younger son of William III's favorite Jacob van Wassenaer, commissioned Weenix to paint a game still life with a view of his estate, Rijksdorp, in the distance (figure 28).

Overview of Weenix's Development of Game Still Lifes: 1675-1719

Weenix's first dated game still life is the 1675 *Dead Hare Hanging From its Leg* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. It is probable that the majority of Weenix's 14 total niche paintings date to this early part of his career based on their visual similarity to this work.

In his early game still lifes, Weenix deployed his deft technical skill to emphasize details of texture and light to suggest the tactile qualities of their fur and feathers. In these early works, Weenix includes fine, diminutive details, such as a hare's whiskers, a fly on the body of the hare, blood on its nose, or a stray feather on the ground (figure 7). These early paintings contain fewer elements and give more prominence to the hare in the composition, which is usually suspended from a branch and splayed in a cruciform shape. Before 1690, he frequently utilized a monochromatic color palette, which focuses the viewer's attention on the corporeal, textural qualities of the hare and birds. The naturalism of Weenix's early game paintings place them squarely within the tradition of Willem van Aelst's paintings of hunting trophies.

By about 1690, however, Weenix became increasingly less concerned with the convincing illusion of reality and more interested in conveying an ideal pastoral

world that was full of noble beauty and natural bounty. He began to eschew fine, diminutive details in favor of sweeping, imaginative compositions. He integrated foregrounded game elements more fully with their settings and gave more prominence to garden decoration, such as urns and statuary and reliefs. Although his paintings would become increasingly elaborate over time, Weenix continued the basic compositional approach he developed in the 1680s: hare, fowl, and hunting gear arranged on the ground, with the hare splayed diagonally across the composition, framing the view of the estate in the distance.

Weenix's independent game paintings can be divided into two categories. The first type are vertical compositions in which he included no living animals but only dead game, mostly birds and a hare, although in some of these paintings he only depicted birds. Often, fruit, flowers, and/or hunting *accoutrements* accompany the game. These paintings frequently, though not always, contain an urn or relief. Weenix painted images of this type throughout his career, starting around 1682 with his first game-in-garden work.

The second category consists of large paintings with living creatures. He composed these works in both horizontal or vertical format. Weenix painted fewer of this type of painting than game pieces with only dead game: 23 feature both birds and dogs; 13 portray dogs without birds; 11 include a monkey, all of which he based on the oil sketch in the Rijksmuseum. In these works Weenix often gave emphasis to the scene's background, which generally included grand palatial gardens replete with fountains, artificial lakes, arches, and garden architecture. Sometimes, these paintings provide a view into a hunting park with the *par force* hunt taking place in the

distance. Weenix first began depicting this type of composition around 1687 and continued executing such works throughout his career.

In the last few years of his life, Weenix preferred slightly smaller, intimate compositions, and he occasionally returned to simpler backgrounds. Weenix's color palette also became increasingly lighter, not unlike the trajectory of flower painting in the period, as in examples by Rachel Ruysch and Jan van Huysum in the 1720s.

Weenix's technique and compositional strategies were indebted to an earlier generation of Dutch game painters in Utrecht and Amsterdam. His contacts in a variety of social contexts, including artists working at the Orange court, the scientific community in Amsterdam, and the wealthy merchants living along the River Vecht, provide important contexts for his development of a painting style and subject matter that appealed to the Dutch upper classes. The evolution in his artistic style correlated to changing tastes in interior design and garden decoration, which Weenix knew through his familiarity with the houses and gardens, but also through prints.

Chapter 2: Jan Weenix and the Merchant Class

Introduction

In 1621, at the end of the Twelve Years' Truce, Petrus Hondius published *Hofdicht Dapes inemptae, of de Moufe-schans*, a poem praising the pleasures of country life. In one section, he extolled the delights of *dapes inemptae*, the "unbought meal." Enumerating the diverse yield of birds, game, and produce supplied by a thriving estate, this poem referred to an ideal in Georgic poetry where a self-contained estate provided everything necessary for a noble lifestyle.[107]

In the Dutch Republic, the great popularity of Georgic *hofdichten,* pastoral portraiture, and of country homes reflected an idealization of country life in Dutch culture.[108] They also reflect the long history of merchant land ownership in the Republic, which coexisted with a strong cultural association between hunting, estates, and nobility. From the early part of the seventeenth century, wealthy urban patriciates began to accumulate land in order to expand their influence to rural areas, to demonstrate wealth, and to associate themselves with the lifestyles of European nobility.[109] Over the course of the seventeenth century, pastoral imagery came to

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[107] Petrus Hondius, *Petri Hondii Dapes inemptæ, of de moufe-schans, dat is, de soeticheydt des buyten-levens, vergheselschapt met de boucken.*, 1700. (Leiden: Roels, Daniel, 1621). For an extended discussion of this literary theme, Koslow, *Frans Snyders: The Noble Estate: Seventeenth-Century Still-Life and Animal Painting in the Southern Netherlands*.

[108] As Alison Kettering has stated, "the wealthy magistrates and merchants who dominated the political and economic life of the Dutch Republic often sought, like *nouveau riches* of all times and places, to identify themselves as closely as possible with the old wealth which they were displacing." Kettering, *The Dutch Arcadia: Pastoral Art and Its Audience in the Golden Age*, 123.

[109] See Kuiper, "The Rise of the Country House in the Dutch Republic: Beyond Johan Huizinga's Narrative of Dutch Civilisation in the 17th Century," 15.

symbolize one's access to a level of inherited wealth and dynastic privilege traditionally associated with nobility. In this chapter, I describe the ways in which Jan Weenix's art refers to and expands on this visual tradition to emphasize a patron's ownership of private property. By emphasizing ownership of private property and the exclusive nature of the hunting and garden activities it allowed, Weenix's art highlighted differences of social class while also aligning a patron with the lifestyles of pan-European nobility. In so doing, I will show how, in their representation of abundant game and flourishing gardens, Weenix's paintings participate in the fashioning of a patron's familial identity by defining it in terms of inherited wealth and dynastic privilege.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the history and significance of merchant land ownership and hunting practices in the Dutch Republic. It then examines examples of hunting portraiture from the1650s to show the ways in which estate imagery could be employed to infer a family's possession of a level of rural influence, landed wealth and dynastic longevity traditionally associated with European nobility. It then concludes with a visual analysis of Weenix's art with documented merchant patrons, each of whom owned country properties and were recipients of significant hereditary fortunes that had been amassed by their grandfathers and great-grandfathers. Focusing on art made for collector and horticulturist Pieter de la Court van der Voort (1664-1739) as a case study, I show how Weenix adapted the imagery of an abundant estate to celebrate pride of private land ownership and identify a collector as belonging to an elite social group defined

by political influence, hereditary wealth and dynastic longevity rivaled only by Europe's noble houses.

The History of Merchant Land Ownership in the Dutch Republic

The history of merchant land ownership in the Dutch Republic is complex and not well understood in the art historical literature, a confusion amplified by the inconsistent use of terms to describe several distinct types of rural land owned by nobles and merchants. These types of land can be divided into three categories: "high and free" seigneuries (large, prestigious feudal estates traditionally owned by "high" nobility, which came with many privileges, including magisterial rights to exercise authority over the inhabitants of an area, even on lands one did not own), manors (smaller feudal estates traditionally owned by "lesser" nobility, which came with some legal rights, including the right to hunt on one's own property), and *buitenplaatsen* (small, merchant-owned leisure villas located on the outskirts of Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Leiden, which did not come with legal rights).[110]

After the Revolt, many high seigneuries and manors, formerly owned by monasteries and exiled pro-Hapsburg nobles, passed to provincial control. Provinces periodically sold these high seigneuries and manors at auction, which were purchased

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[110] Yme Kuiper has described the three levels of nobility in the Dutch Republic. First were the "high nobility (*hoge adel*), who went by the titles of *prins, hertog,* and *graaf*. These families had strong connection to the Southern Netherlands. In the seventeenth century, the House of Orange-Nassau and their extended family were the only members of the *hoge adel* in the Netherlands. The lords of the lesser nobility also had feudal rights and estates, but were less wealthy than the members of the *hoge adel*. The lowest level of nobility were landed squires from old families without titles (*jonkheren*). Kuiper, "Country Houses and Estates in Dutch Urban and Rural History, 1600-1900," 201.

by merchants, civic institutions, and nobles wishing to increase their landholdings. For example, in 1679, the town of Middelberg sold almost all its manors at once; these were bought by merchants and regents, thereby "creating a kind of Arcadia on the island of Walacheren for Zeeland's elite."[111] Nobles, who frequently owned multiple manors, could sell a property to raise funds. Some estates also became available for purchase when a noble family died out, as became increasingly common over the course of the century, mostly due to intermarriage.[112]

The prevalence of merchant land ownership varied by province. In provinces where international trade was limited and the nobility were therefore most powerful, like Gelderland, Twenthe, and Overijssel, the nobility mostly retained their feudal landholdings and privileges. In the maritime provinces, where international trade created immense wealth among the merchant class, wealthy burghers bought estates as investment properties and to expand their political influence to rural areas. In Holland, nobles were in the minority of landowners: in total, the nobility owned less than 10% of the land, and it is estimated that around 1650, about one-third of estates were in the hands of merchants.[113] Other than the wealthiest and most politically influential urban families, such as the Bickers, De Graeffs, Hoofts, and Huydecuypers, very few merchants were able to purchase high seigneuries or amass

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[111] Kuiper, 215.

[112] Jaap Geraerts has described this phenomenon in his study of the marriage strategies of Catholic Dutch nobility. Jaap Geraerts, *Patrons of the Old Faith: The Catholic Nobility in Utrecht and Guelders, c. 1580-1702* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

[113] Kuiper, "Country Houses and Estates in Dutch Urban and Rural History, 1600-1900.," 204.

estates on a large scale. Many more merchants purchased small manors, which gave a landowner a title and a steady income in the form of farm rents and tolls.

Merchants without the desire or means to purchase an estate could emulate this practice by purchasing *buitenplaatsen*, small leisure villas located on the outskirts of Amsterdam, Leiden, and Utrecht.[114] Although *buitenplaatsen* existed from the very early seventeenth century, they became especially fashionable in the mid-1670s. These properties were often located along the canals and waterways, and generally easily accessible to cities like Amsterdam. The River Vecht, between Amsterdam and Utrecht, was especially popular: by 1700, there were about 500 country houses in this area.[115] Typical *buitenplaatsen* were too small to produce agricultural income and did not come with titles, noble privileges, or hunting grounds. Unlike manorial estates and farmland that required continuous management of tenants and natural resources, *buitenplaatsen* were primarily leisure spaces to which busy merchants could retreat with their families on weekends or holidays. *Buitenplaatsen* offered a relaxing respite from the responsibilities of business for the urban elite. As is amply illustrated in the engravings published in *De Zegepraalende Vecht* in 1719, the fine houses and costly gardens of these *buitenplaatsen* resembled those of noble estates.

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[114] These properties were mapped at the turn of the eighteenth century. See Nicholaes Visscher, *Nieuwe Kaart van Mynden, En de 2 Loosdrechten [...]* (Amsterdam, 1702).

[115] Kuiper, "The Rise of the Country House in the Dutch Republic: Beyond Johan Huizinga's Narrative of Dutch Civilisation in the 17th Century," 215.

The History of Merchant Hunting Practices in the Dutch Republic

With the purchase of a high seigneury or manor, merchants bought the right to hunt on their own properties. Merchant access to hunting on lands that were under *provincial* jurisdiction, however, were inconsistent throughout the land. Henk F. K. van Neirop has shown that in the maritime provinces of Holland, Friesland, Groningen, and Zeeland, where noble land holders were in the minority and were forced to share power with the urban elites, access to hunting grounds was an issue of frequent negotiation.[116] In Holland especially, the nobility's exclusive right to hunt on provincial lands became "subject to continual erosion" as the merchant class gained in rural influence through their purchases of land and titles.[117] The nobility in Holland traditionally had the exclusive rights to hunt birds and hares in the "wilderness" of the dunes along the coast of the North Sea, but after 1583 it had to share those rights with high-ranking provincial officials.[118]

By the middle of the century, the number of merchants with purchased titles and estates had increased dramatically, and it became necessary to restrict their access to provincial lands. Laws enacted in 1666 and 1674 clarified that only hereditary nobles could hunt in these areas.[119] Again, it is important to note that these laws

[116] Nierop, *The Nobility of Holland: From Knights to Regents, 1500-1650*, 37–39.

[117] Nierop, 38.

[118] Nierop, 37.

[119] Staten Generaal, *Groot Placaet-Boeck, Vervattende de Placaten, Ordonnantien Ende Edicten van de ... Heeren Staten Generael Der Vereenighde Nederlanden, Ende Vande ... Heeren-Staten van Hollandt En West-Vrieslandt Mitsgaders Vande Heeren Staten van Zeelandt.*, 608–9.

applied only to lands under provincial jurisdiction and did not preclude one from hunting on one's own estate.

Ordinances instituted in 1623 in Zuid-Holland prove that, in some areas, merchant hunting rights on provincial lands were legally protected. This law, which applied to the region around Dordrecht, "expanded hunting privileges to owners of estates and to citizens who had an annual income of 100 guilders."[120] Another example of lenient hunting laws occurred in 1680, when the residents of Zutphen voted to open hunting to those who could pay a sizable annual fee.[121] Although Dordrecht and Zutphen are just two examples of the formal legalization of merchant hunting rights outside of their estates, further research is likely to show that lenient rules were similarly adopted elsewhere in the maritime provinces.

Even with the purchase of hunting rights, merchants were limited in the type of quarry they could hunt. Their hunting rights did not extend to big game, like deer and boar, the hunting of which were the exclusive right of the nobility. Deer were hunted during a *par force* hunt (the organized chase of a single animal by a hunting party), a style of hunting that was associated with the court and appears to have been only very rarely, if ever, practiced by merchants.

Merchants practiced the "snare" or "trap" hunt, which took many forms and was apparently widely utilized for catching hares and birds.[122] Most types of the snare

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[120] Alan Chong, "Aristocratic Imaginings," in *Aelbert Cuyp*, ed. Arthur K. Wheelock (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2001), 36. The manuscript describing these hunting laws is held at Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague: Paulus Merula, *Placaten ende ordonnancien op 't stuck van de wildernissen* 38–39.

[121] Conrad Gietman, *Republiek van adel: eer in de Oost-Nederlandse adelscultuur (1555-1702)*, (Utrecht: Van Gruting, 2011), 248.

[122] Sullivan, *The Dutch Gamepiece*, 36.

hunt involved the use of nets since ground-feeding birds like partridges, grouse, and quail could be caught in low nets held in place by stakes. Hares and larger birds could be shot with hunting rifles or caught in hand-thrown nets when startled out of their burrows and nests by a hunting dog. Birds could also be caught with the assistance of a decoy whistle (made of bone and folded leather) which imitated birdsong to lure birds into the hunters' nets.

No fewer than 34 paintings by Weenix depict firearms.[123] Weenix most frequently almost exclusively included flintlock rifles, which used a relatively recent innovation in the firing mechanism to enhance the ease of reloading the gun. While there had been a tradition of gun making in the Republic ever since the revolt, by the 1680s, "the better Dutch gunmakers were very much under the influence of French fashion."[124] Although Weenix clearly depicts the firing mechanism used in flintlock rifles, none of the firearms Weenix depicted correlate exactly to extant guns or to models in gun design books, which tended to depict elaborately decorated gun designs that would not be used in hunting.[125]

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[123] Arne Hoff's 1978 volume is still considered the standard text on Dutch guns in the seventeenth century: Arne Hoff, *Dutch Firearms* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1978). For discussions of Dutch foundaries an military weapons, see H. L. (Henk L.) Visser and De Witt. Bailey, *Aspects of Dutch Gunmaking* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1997); J. B. Kist, J. P. Puype, and R. B. F. van der Sloot, *Musket, Roer en Pistolet 17e-eeuws Wapenhandwerk in de Lage Landen* (Den Haag: Gaade, 1974). For the historiography of Dutch gun making, see Mathieu Willemsen, "Dutch Muskets, Aspects of Eighteenth Century Firearms and Gunmaking in The Netherlands," *Arms & Armour* 18, no. 2 (2021): 184–207.

[124] Hoff, *Dutch Firearms*, 108.

[125] See Elena Aleksandrovna I͡Ablonskai͡a et al., *Dutch Guns in Russia: In the Moscow Kremlin Armoury, Moscow Historical Museum, Hermitage St Petersburg, Gatchina Palace Museum* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum , 1996).

The Significance of Merchant Land Ownership in the Dutch Republic

The purchase of a seigneury or manor lent a merchant an air of prestige by allowing them to participate in rural activities traditionally associated with nobility, like hunting and managing an estate. Yet the possession of a seigneury or manor did not grant a merchant entry into the ranks of the nobility. In the seventeenth century Netherlands, the line between the merchant and noble classes was clearly delineated in society. Noble status was defined by possession of two qualities: access to a noble lifestyle through the possession of a hereditary estate, and a well-documented noble lineage.[126] Wealth enabled merchants to acquire an estate, but it could do nothing to give them this ancient heritage. Attempts to manufacture a noble lineage through the invention of heraldic arms and fabricated genealogies were met with scorn by contemporaries.[127] Neither could they gain access to the nobility through marriage, as inter-class unions were widely stigmatized and therefore extremely rare. Furthermore, strict laws forbade titled merchants from having seats on the *ridderschap* (a provincial council composed entirely of nobles), which represented the non-voting towns and countryside in the States-General.[128]

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[126] Nierop, *The Nobility of Holland: From Knights to Regents, 1500-1650*, 34.

[127] For a succinct discussion of this phenomenon, see Adams, *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Portraiture and the Production of Community*, 155. S.A.C. Dudok van Heel has examined fabricated genealogies in his monograph on merchant portraiture. Sebastien A. C. Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse burgers tot Europese aristocraten : hun geschiedenis en hun portretten: de Heijnen-maagschap 1400-1800* ('s-Gravenhage: Koninklijk Nederlandsch Genootschap voor Geslacht- en Wapenkunde, 2008); see also Bok, "Laying Claims to Nobility in the Dutch Republic," 209–11.

[128] This was the case for the *ridderschappen* in Holland and Utrecht; specific practices varied across the other provinces.

Limited in their ability to enter the noble class, merchants were primarily motivated to buy estates as symbols of wealth.[129] First, and most obviously, the means to purchase rural land was an indicator of one's fortune: one had to be wealthy enough to pay the cost of purchasing such a property. One also had to be wealthy enough to maintain it, paying servants, housekeepers, gardeners, cooks, stewards, game keepers, and others to care for the property. They could also be lucrative investments, providing steady income from farm rents, tolls, and agricultural sales. Most merchants built or renovated their country houses on classical models popularized by architect Philips Vingboons (ca. 1607-1678), which they filled with art and fine furnishings.

Merchants, however, did not buy estates merely as assets or spaces for conspicuous display of wealth. Over the course of the seventeenth century, estate imagery became an increasingly powerful visual means to express one's belonging to that elite social class where, as in Europe's old noble houses, wealth would be inherited with the land for generations. Possession of an estate implied that the trade-based wealth of the *nouveau riche* could be transformed into land-based wealth.

Power, Dynastic Identity, and the Family Hunting Portrait: 1650-1690

Hunting portraits from the middle of the seventeenth century illustrate the ability of art commissions to express the ambition for land-based wealth and dynastic longevity. With these portraits, sitters asserted their ownership of an estate and

[129] Kuiper, "The Rise of the Country House in the Dutch Republic: Beyond Johan Huizinga's Narrative of Dutch Civilisation in the 17th Century," 12.

claimed the rights to hunt on their property. This development aligns with Ann Jenson Adams' analysis of merchant portraiture from this period, which has shown how merchants drew on "one of the major functions of earlier family portraits, particularly of aristocrats and members of the nobility, [which situated] the individual in a dynastic lineage, thus asserting—even authorizing—social position and particularly legal rights."[130]

An important mid-century example of such a painting is a portrait of Cornelis de Graeff and his family, with figures by Thomas de Keyser and landscape by Jacob van Ruisdael (figure 29). In this image, the family is seen arriving at its estate of Soestdijk, the most symbolic of the family's landholdings. Cornelis de Graeff had purchased this estate, which was forty miles southeast of Amsterdam, near Amersfoort, in the early 1650s. Around 1655, he began building a house on the property, which is visible in this image. In focusing on the *arrival* of the family, presumably from their Amsterdam residence, the painting evokes their participation in both urban and rural worlds: the world of Amsterdam—the VOC, the *vroedschap*, the Dam—and the leisurely world of country gardens, mansions, and hunting parks. In this image, urban power enables rural respite, and urban wealth enables rural power. By depicting the large family within the environs of the estate, the painting suggests that it is in part through these landholdings that this power and wealth will be inherited by future generations. Among the wealthiest landowning families of the mid-17th-century, and one of the few to possess a high seigneury, the

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[130] Adams, *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Portraiture and the Production of Community*, 114.

wealth and prestige of the De Graeff family suggested by this portrait is emblematic of a level of power to which many merchants aspired but few achieved.

Another example of such a painting is Bartolomeus van der Helst's 1654 portrait *Jochem van Aras with his Wife and Daughter* in the Wallace Collection (figure 30).[131] Van Aras made his fortune as a baker and merchant in Weesp. In 1639 he married Elisabeth Claes Loenen, the daughter of a Weesp burgomaster.[132] In 1648 the couple purchased Tetro's Bosch, an estate in the village of Overveen just outside Haarlem that had been traditionally the possession of lords of Brederode.[133] In Bartholomeus van der Helst's portrait, Van Aras directs his hunting dogs as he looks towards his richly dressed wife, who, gazing out at the viewer, presents a hare, presumably the trophy of her husband's hunt. Beside them, the couple's daughter holds a basket of fruit, the bounty of Tetro's Bosch and its gardens, which are clearly visible in the distance.

Van der Helst's portrait emphasizes that Van Aras possesses sufficient wealth to own and maintain a thriving estate, which, under his purview, furnishes all the fruit and game necessary to the noble "unbought meal." Situated on the dunes not far from the North Sea, the property would have been adjacent to the plentiful hunting grounds of the dunes (as Judith van Gent noted, Van Aras purchased the hunting rights when he acquired the property.)[134] The hunting dog and hare, as well as the estate and

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[131] Anke van Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven attributes the hare in this painting to Weenix's father, Jan Baptist Weenix.

[132] Judith van Gent, *Bartholomeus van der Helst (ca. 1613-1670): een studie naar zijn leven en werk* (Zwolle: W Books, 2011), 238.

[133] Gent, 239.

[134] Gent, 239.

dunes in the distance, are reminders of these purchased privileges, and the wealth necessary to maintain huntsmen, dogs, and hunting equipment. The fruit suggests the presence of well-stocked orchard and gardens, and a team of gardeners to maintain it.

This portrait expresses a desire for dynastic continuity in its representation of the relationship between parents and daughter. In contrast to many children represented in Dutch family portraits, this composition emphasizes the daughter's role within the family. The three figures are arranged in a triangular composition, seated so close together that their forms coalesce, visually suggesting the cohesiveness of their family unit. Maria's importance within that family unit is suggested by prominence in the image and her direct eye contact with her father as he addresses her with an instructive gesture. That Maria will carry on the family line is suggested by her basket of fruit, a common symbol of female fertility. In keeping with Dutch inheritance laws, Maria would inherit Tetro's Bosch, a reality that came to pass upon the death of her father in 1662.[135]

Portraits of the Pompe van Meerdervoort and Pompe van Slingeland families of Dordrecht similarly promote familial identity in the contexts of land-based wealth. Around 1653 Aelbert Cuyp (1620-1691) painted *Michiel and Cornelis Pomp van Meerdervoort with Their Tutor*, which depicts the two boys proudly astride their powerful steeds (figure 31). They are shown being mentored in the art of dressage and the hunt by their tutor, who points to the *par force* hunt in the distance. In their self-assured poses, these boys seem to already command their domain. They are

[135] Judith Van Gent, "A New Identification for Bartholomeus van Der Helst's Family Portrait in the Wallace Collection," *The Burlington Magazine* 146, no. 1212 (2004): 165.

presented as rightful heirs to their family's estates, which Cuyp symbolically suggests with the distant castle and landscape. Similarly, around 1655 Jan Mijtens (1614-1670) portrayed the boys' uncle, Matthijs Pompe van Slingeland, returning from the hunt (figure 32). As in the Van Aras portrait, Pompe van Slingeland is accompanied by his wife, elegantly attired in flowing satins, and his daughter, who holds a basket of flowers. Shown holding a bittern and gun, and surrounded by hunting dogs, the landowner asserts his right to hunt on an estate abundant in game and agriculture. Alan Chong has suggested that the great popularity of merchant hunting portraits in Dordrecht can be explained by the area's lenient hunting laws.[136] They also fit within a larger tradition of mid-seventeenth century Dutch portraiture wherein the merchant class co-opted the imagery of landed wealth to assert their belonging to a social class whose wealth and influence rivaled that of European nobility.

The ambition for land-based wealth and dynastic longevity is a tradition Weenix inherited and expanded upon in his own portraiture. Between 1680 and ca. 1695, Weenix made approximately 53 portraits, almost half of which depict their sitters in garden settings (20) or with hunted game (10). Some twelve of these paintings are pendant portraits. As far as we know, Weenix's portrait sitters were entirely of the merchant class, although many sitters remain unidentified.

In these pendant paintings, female sitters are portrayed in elegant country gardens, with fruit, flowers, fountains, and rare birds; male sitters are either supervising business in a foreign port or returning from the hunt. Weenix's pendants depicting Anthony de Sadelaer and his wife Margaretha de Versijl from 1686,

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[136] Alan Chong, "Aristocratic Imaginings," 150.

Silvester van Tongeren and Maria Cornelisz from 1693, and Dirk Schey and his sisters, Lodewina and Elisabeth Schey from 1692, 1693, and 1695 all follow this format.[137]

By showing these sitters in gardens and hunting parks, commanding servants, and enjoying the abundance of their estates, these portraits promoted their identity as social elites in control of their domains. They also do this in their representation of labor. By depicting their social "inferiors" in service to them, these portraits emphasize a patron's own superior status. Interestingly, such pendant paintings point to hunting as a gendered activity representative of male virility, and gardens as potentially gendered spaces that signified fertility and further promoted familial identity. Finally, the elegant poses and aristocratic style of Weenix's portraits catered to the desire to demonstrate belonging to the elite social class. At a time when "parallels were evoked between refined behavior and style in art," the grace and decorum of these images illustrated a sitter's possession of those qualities, and their role at the apex of the social order.[138]

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[137] See catalogue entries 54, 55, and 68-72 in Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings*, vol. 2.

[138] Franits, "Young Women Preferred White to Brown: Some Remarks on Nicolaes Maes and the Cultural Context of Late Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraiture," 403. As Elizabeth Honig has noted of market scenes, representing an abundance of game could be "a means of naturalizing a social order by denying the possibility of its economic instability." Elizabeth Honig, *Art and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp*. New Haven: Yale, 1998, 166.

Merchant Patrons of Weenix's Game Still Lifes

The vast majority of Weenix's game still lifes depict the small game that merchant landowners had the legal right to hunt on their own properties. Of the approximately 120 game still lifes Weenix painted, 108 almost exclusively depict the small game—hares, grouse, partridges, quail, and other birds—that merchant landowners had the legal right to hunt. They also reference merchant hunting methods by depicting the gear for the trap hunt. Nets and stakes appear Weenix's game still lifes no fewer than 34 times between 1679 and 1717. Decoy whistles also appear throughout his game still lifes. Weenix's game still lifes were suggestive of merchant estate ownership since most of them depicted the most common quarry and hunting methods available to merchant estate owners.

Of the six merchant patrons of Weenix I have identified, four of these owned *buitenplaatsen*: Agnes Block (1629-1704), Pieter de la Court van der Voort (1664-1739), Jacob van Orsoy (1670-1751), and Jacob Cromhout (1651-1708).[139] The only two other known early merchant collectors of Weenix's work, Pieter van der Lip and Johanna Tijlers, are not listed in the registers of *buitenplaats* owners, although further research may find evidence that they owned rural property.

Weenix's patrons Jacob Cromhout, Jacob van Orsoy, and Pieter de la Court van der Voort share important characteristics: aside from owning country properties, all three were recipients of significant hereditary fortunes. In addition, none of these

[139] Agnes Block is the only patron of Weenix to have a *buitenplaats* described in *De Zegepraalende Vecht*.

patrons possessed properties with hunting rights. Even without actual possession of hunting rights, by commissioning game paintings by Weenix, these patrons co-opted the pastoral imagery associated with estate ownership in order to promote their own identities as recipients of intergenerational wealth.

Case Study: Pieter de la Court van der Voort (1664-1739)

Pieter de la Court van der Voort (1664-1739) was a wealthy Leiden gentleman-scientist of the prominent De la Court family.[140] He inherited the De la Court family fortune, along with their flourishing textile and banking ventures. He retired from these businesses at age 49 to concentrate on his dual avocations of art collecting and horticulture. Perhaps best-known as a patron of the Leiden *fijnschilder* Willem van Mieris, De la Court van der Voort amassed a vast collection of paintings, which he assembled jointly with his son Allard and his daughter-in-law Catherina Backer. The De la Court van der Voort family owned no fewer than four game still lifes by Jan Weenix, all of them depicting game in estate settings.

De la Court van der Voort's inheritance included the family estates of Meerburg and Allemansgeest, the latter with an impressive garden.[141] In 1700 he purchased an opulent canal house in Leiden on the Rapenburg and set to work

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[140] His father, Pieter de la Court, (1618-1685) had been born to a textile family in Leiden but moved to Amsterdam to pursue a political career; he was a supporter of Johan de Witt and an author of anti-Orangist treatises; it seems his son avoided the political sphere entirely, instead choosing to focus on his horticultural interests.

[141] Lisa Johnson, "Pieter de La Court van Der Voort and Innovations in Pineapple Cultivation in Early Eighteenth Century Gardens," *Garden History* 47, no. 1 (2019): 24. Meerburg was in Zoeterwoude and Allemansgeest was in Voorschoten. He sold both in 1716.

creating a garden that would become so renowned that even Peter the Great visited it. Such was De la Court van der Voort's expertise in horticulture that the Russian Emperor later corresponded with him for advice on his own cultivation of tropical plants in St Petersburg. In 1737, two years before his death, De la Court van der Voort compiled and published his horticultural expertise in *Byzondere aenmerkingen over het aenleggen van pragtige en gemeene landhuizen*, a guide to growing fruits, vegetables, and flowers, with instructions on building and using greenhouses to cultivate plants, including tropical varieties.

In 1696 Pieter de la Court van der Voort commissioned *A Dead Hare and Pheasants, Fruit, and Hunting Gear with a Sculpted Vase* (figure 33), one of the most ornate game still lifes in Weenix's oeuvre. With this work, Weenix depicted a private leisure garden in one of his most extravagant garden settings, with a vast artificial lake, follies, arches, and fountains. The garden contained a bounty of game including a hare, pheasant, and partridges lying on the ground with a game bag, nets, and hunting horn. The composition is balanced on the right by an abundance of grapes, peaches, and plums. A small lap dog, a squirrel, a red parrot, and two flying pigeons animate the painting. The abundance of game and fruit points to a thriving natural environment under the care of the land owner, while grandeur and artifice of contemporary garden art emphasizes human intervention in nature, recalling De la Court van der Voort's own efforts to cultivate the plants in his own gardens. Dated 1696, the work predates the purchase of the Rapenburg house. That this painting was an important commission for Weenix is evidenced by the existence of a rare oil sketch for the work at the Herzog Anton-Ulrich Museum. De la Court van der Voort

may have commissioned it for the estate at Allemansgeest, where he built an orangery and began experimenting with the cultivation of tropical plants.

De la Court van der Voort acquired the three remaining paintings by Weenix after the purchase of the Leiden townhome on the Rapenburg in 1700. A floorplan of this house is unusual for its division of private and social spaces, with living quarters behind the main house and divided by a garden walkway.[142] De la Court van der Voort displayed his famous art collection in the street-facing section of the house, but there is no record of how it was displayed. Records of the layout of the garden are also lacking, although we do know that in 1703 Willem van Mieris designed four cast lead urns to be displayed there, each one depicting one of the four seasons. Today these urns grace the gardens of Windsor Castle (figure 34).

One game still life Weenix made for the Rapenburg house, the 1707 *Dead Swan, Peacock, and Other Birds* (figure 35), is the correct size to have been displayed over a fire-place mantel or doorway, although nothing is known about where it hung. Included in this work are renderings of a swan, peacock, hunting dog and other birds before a garden. The classical urn featured in this painting, with its relief of dancing nymphs, is the same urn depicted in the 1696 painting. The reappearance of this urn in these paintings suggests that Weenix may have based it on an actual urn at Allemansgeest, although, unfortunately, no descriptions or illustrations of the garden's decoration exist that would substantiate that hypothesis. The urn's design is remarkably similar to the design of the urns found in the late 1680s at Zorgvliet, the

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[142] For a discussion of the Rapenburg townhome and reproduction of its floorplan, see Fock and Webb, "The Décor of Domestic Entertaining at the Time of the Dutch Republic," 129–30.

estate of Hans Willem Bentinck (figure 36). The urn may well have been inspired by those in Bentinick's garden, which was less than 20 kilometers away from Allemansgeest. Like the earlier painting, this work depicts a private estate and a plethora of game and fruit. This imagery symbolized access to a level of inherited wealth and dynastic privilege traditionally associated with nobility and highlighted the bounty of nature that results from proper dominion over nature.

The two remaining paintings by Weenix in the De la Court collection, which are nearly the same size, are almost certainly pendants. Among the smallest works by Weenix, these measure just over two feet in width and height and likely date to 1706. In the painting at the Mauritshuis, *Bird Still Life with Pheasant*, (figure 37) Weenix placed a pheasant at the center of the composition, along with two dead partridges. They rest against a green hunting bag, gun, decoy whistle, and horn bugle. Above the game a parcel of hunting stakes and nets are nestled in a bower, from which emerge roses, an iris, and clematis. In the background, a *par force* hunt is underway, with riders coursing towards the greyhounds and downed stag.

The likely pendant to this painting is now lost (figure 38). This work bore a date of 1706 and depicted grapes, peaches, and flowers with a white rooster and what is probably a common moorhen, both of which would have been bred to supply an estate kitchen. Weenix placed these elements before a vast garden with an artificial lake and sculptures. The overall compositions of these paintings, with the gently sweeping curve of the birds framing views to the left and right, suggests that they probably hung side by side. Conceptually, these pendants represent the complementary subjects of the bounty of an estate's hunted game and cultivated

garden. In the Mauritshuis painting, allusions to the *par force* hunt and the snare hunt refer to the plentiful game supplied by an estate, while the fruit cultivation and domesticated fowl featured in its pendant refer to the abundance of its gardens and aviaries. Together, these two works are a representation of the unbought meal produced by a thriving estate, *dapes inemptae*.

Weenix's commissions for Pieter de la Court van der Voort demonstrate that he could adapt his subject to suit the taste of his patrons, and may have collaborated with them to design the overall concept of the works. In keeping with Pieter de la Court van der Voort's horticultural pursuits, Weenix's paintings for him placed more emphasis on elaborate garden settings (figure 33), on flower anatomy (figure 37) and cultivated fruit (fig 38) than seen in his typical compositions. The wealth of the estate gardens in these images finds a parallel in De la Court van der Voort's horticultural activities: the cultivation of tropical fruit was a fabulously expensive endeavor and a clear signal of one's wealth.

Fascinatingly, these works also demonstrate how Weenix could adapt his technique to the desires of a patron. This ability is especially evident in the Mauritshuis painting, which has a gem-like quality. Its high level of finish and detailed technique would have been well-suited to the tastes of a collector with a preference for Leiden *fijnschilders*.[143] On the heads and bodies of the pheasant and partridge, Weenix alternated relatively loose, painterly strokes with fine, hair-thin lines to suggest the textural variety of soft down and dense bristles in the birds'

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[143] Quentin Buvelot, "Self-Portrait" in Fanciful Dress," in *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, ed. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr and Lara Yeager-Crasselt, 3rd ed. (New York, 2020).

feathers. Light glints off the cracked, wooden stakes, the hard edges of metal firing mechanism of the flintlock rifle, and the metal ends of the horn bugle, heightening the illusionistic sense of these objects' three-dimensionality. The flowers that crown the composition are perhaps the most closely observed of any of Weenix's game still lifes. He carefully depicted fine details of the plants, like the brown spots and sharp edges of the rose leaves and the variegated stripes on the delicate, ruffled petals of the iris. In what is perhaps the work's most unique element, Weenix rendered a clump of stringy, translucent beard moss (*usnea*), a lichen native to the Netherlands, with the stakes and nets. The refined technique of the Mauritshuis painting, which excels that of any other of Weenix's work, can only be explained in connection to Pieter de la Court van der Voort's preference for the high level of finish exhibited by the Leiden *fijnschilders*.

Conclusion

Weenix's commissions for Pieter de la Court van der Voort exemplify the ways in which game paintings reflected and furthered the social aspirations of merchant elites. By co-opting pastoral imagery associated with landed families, Weenix's game still lifes participate in the self-fashioning of an elite merchant class that was increasingly concerned with identifying with the security and longevity of hereditary, and landed, wealth of the urban patriciate and nobility. In these images, estate imagery foregrounded human intervention and personal ownership of nature in ways that were associated with Europe's aristocracy. In this way, Weenix's art highlighted differences of social class and promoted a patron's personal identity

within an elite social group defined by cultural connections to a pan-European echelon of powerful social elites.

Chapter 3: Jan Weenix and the Noble Hunt

Introduction

The late seventeenth century Netherlands saw a marked political transformation under the Stadholder William III. After his installation as Stadholder in 1672, William III consolidated power to become arguably the most powerful Stadholder in the history of the Republic.[144] The Stadholder's "monarchical" style of governing, especially his reliance on personal advisors, mostly nobles, created a government marked by favoritism, which, in turn, enhanced the political status of the nobility on the national stage.

Under William III, the noble associations of hunting and garden design gained new political importance. After 1673, William III and his courtiers went on frequent hunting expeditions in the countryside around Utrecht, an area that had been occupied by invading French troops during the *rampjaar* only a year before. William III and his courtiers also developed extravagant gardens with iconographical elements that explicitly lauded the achievements of the Stadholder.

Not coincidentally, at that same period Jan Weenix began to depict noble quarry and hunting gear situated in courtly-style gardens in his game still life. Weenix's paintings reflected the hunting practices of William III's court and its associations with political control. By showing nature flourishing within the context of noble hunting and courtly garden design—in the form of abundant game, flowers,

[144] Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806*, 817.

fruit, and fountains—these paintings suggest that under Orange supervision the *hortus batavus* of the Republic would thrive in safety and prosperity.

In this chapter I will show that, when viewed in context of Orangist politics, Jan Weenix's game paintings aligned their collectors with William III's demonstrations of noble power. For these collectors, Weenix's paintings could serve as a reminder of hereditary privileges and, as well, allude to their own participation in William III's hunting parties. They also justified noble power by highlighting the prosperity of the landscape under Orange control. For merchants, too, Weenix's imagery of natural bounty could suggest alignment with William III's war policies despite their negative effects on Dutch trade, particularly those resulting from the Glorious Revolution (1688) and the Nine Years' War (1688-1697). Furthermore, these paintings associated a merchant collector with the culture of a court composed of increasingly powerful nobles.

In Jan Weenix's game paintings, the interrelated themes of dominion and abundance glorified the person of William III and promoted his identity as the Preserver of the Republic. In this chapter, I will discuss how Weenix's hunting subjects recalled traditional associations of hunting with nobility while also reflecting its changing political significance in the Dutch Republic. This chapter will subsequently provide an overview of the political changes that occurred in the Dutch Republic after 1672. It will then discuss the history of the courtly *par force* hunt and William III's use of hunting to illustrate his political dominance. I will then show how Weenix's game still lifes specifically engage noble hunting motifs to suggest that nature's abundance is the result of noble order.

Political Overview: 1672-1702

Since the death of William II in 1650, Holland had been without a Stadholder. This "first stadholderless period" came to an end in 1672, when a French-led coalition of English, Swedish, and German states, spurred on by their inability to compete with Dutch trade, moved to invade the Republic. Calls for the restoration of the stadholderate became increasingly urgent as the French captured town after town in the lower Rhine in 1672. As enemy forces quartered across the southern and eastern provinces, and Overijssel and Utrecht fell to French control, the Dutch citizenry believed the Republic to be on the brink of collapse. So high were domestic tensions that in August of 1672 an angry mob attacked the Grand Pensionary Johann de Witt and his brother at the Binnenhof in The Hague, fatally stabbing both. Soon thereafter, the States General voted to repeal the Perpetual Edict of 1650 and to install William II's son, William III, as stadholder, investing him with "extraordinary powers" (*regeringsreglementen)* to take military action.[145]

William III immediately expanded the army and coordinated an offensive strategy against the French. He vigorously purged the civic *vroedschappen* (city councils) of their staunchest Republicans and replaced them with his own supporters. In the province of Holland alone, William replaced 130 out of 460 regents formerly loyal to De Witt. Gaspar Fagel, Secretary of the States General and supporter of William III, was made Grand Pensionary. Now backed by civic governments and the general public, William began to push the French out of the southern and western

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[145] David. Onnekink, *The Anglo-Dutch Favourite: The Career of Hans Willem Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland (1649-1709)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 21–22.

provinces. In 1673, when the navies of England and France joined forces against the Dutch, Admiral de Ruyter won decisive victories. The Dutch successes at land and sea effectively rebuffed enemy troops and positioned William III as the defender of the Republic.

The dire situation in the Netherlands during the *rampjaar* allowed William III to expand the powers of the stadholdership. By the late 1670s, William III had "largely mastered much of the political and diplomatic machinery of the state."[146] Once the immediate threat of invasion had passed, however, the cities regretted investing the Stadholder with such comprehensive powers. The early years of his stadholderate were plagued by tensions with civic governments resistant to William's strong-armed approach to governing.[147] Despite these difficulties, William III would learn to cooperate with Amsterdam's civic government over the years, most notably the coordination involved in his invasion of England during the Glorious Revolution (1688).

William III's style of governing gave the Dutch nobility a greater presence on the stage of national politics. As the foremost member of the *hoge adel*, or "high nobility" in the Republic, William III's consolidation of power enhanced the political influence of the noble class.[148] Although the Dutch nobility had always been a small but wealthy and locally powerful minority through their rural landholdings, their

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[146] Jonathan Israel, "The United Provinces of the Netherlands: The Courts of the House of Orange c.1580-1795," in *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics and Culture under the Ancien Régime, 1500-1750*, ed. J. S. A. Adamson (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 135.
[147] Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806*, 822.

[148] See Onnekink, *The Anglo-Dutch Favourite: The Career of Hans Willem Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland (1649-1709)*, 19.

influence had been primarily felt on the provincial level, with relatively little impact on decision-making on international policy. This situation changed with William III's rise to power. Where earlier stadholders had coordinated with the city regents and provincial councils to make policies, William III, primarily relied on a small group of noble personal advisors while excluding the States General from key decisions.[149] He installed these "favorites" in positions of power, where they could sway key decisions in his favor. As David Onnekink has explained in his biography of William III's most esteemed favorite, Hans Willem Bentinick, "the rise of [Bentinick] and the small circle of confidants around the Orange court were indicative of the quasi-monarchical nature of Wiliam III's court."[150] This approach, which "depended on a mixture of informal and formal power, authority, and relations," was viewed by his opponents as more authoritarian and "quasi-monarchical" than any previous Dutch government.[151]

After the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when William was made King of England in addition to being the Dutch Stadholder, Dutch nobles retained their influence in the Netherlands through their personal connections to the King and through their positions in his government. As Stadholder-King, William III spent most of his time in England and on military campaigns, but he was nonetheless a prominent figure in the popular imagination of the Dutch as evidenced by the

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[149] Onnekink has described the international nature of William's court, which was not only comprised of Dutch nobles but international European aristocrats: "William's entourage was formed by an international aristocratic circle, which not only held material interests in various countries but served a dynasty rather than a nation. This was certainly the case for Portland, but also for men like the Prince of Waldeck and the Dukes of Schomberg and Leinster." Onnekink, *The Anglo-Dutch Favourite : The Career of Hans Willem Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland (1649-1709)*, 263.

[150] Onnekink, *The Anglo-Dutch Favourite: The Career of Hans Willem Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland (1649-1709)*, 7.

[151] Onnekink, 7.

circulation of hagiographic tracts and art glorifying his achievements. He periodically returned to his hunting seat at Het Loo, which was expanded in the 1690s to accommodate his expanded kingly entourage.

Under William III's reign, hunting gained renewed significance as an emblem of noble power in Dutch culture. Through the activities of the stadholder and his courtiers, hunting came to represent William III's political dominance and identity as Protector of the Republic. In the following section I will also show how specific types of hunting, like the *par force* hunt, were representative of William III's power and one's connection to the stadholder.

Hunting and the Nobility

In Europe, hunting had been associated with the highest orders of society since late medieval times. As agriculture and subsidence farming replaced hunting-gathering across feudal Europe, hunting was no longer necessary to support a community and took on a largely symbolic role, with highly structured traditions developing around hunting and its place in courtly life.[152] These traditions can be traced back at least to Carolingian France, where Louis I, in peacetime, developed courtly hunting rituals to demonstrate his military prowess and legitimacy as heir to his father Charlemegne.

[152] Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History*, 2.

Although specific hunting traditions and practices differed in the medieval and early modern periods, certain generalizations can be made about the significance of hunting across Europe. The *par force* hunt—wherein an elite group of hunters chase a specific quarry, usually a stag, deer, or boar—was a highly ritualized activity that displayed a ruler's wealth and his ability to wage war. A ruler usually also restricted other types of hunting, such as the "beater" hunt and the "trap" hunt, more informal methods of hunting which involved the capture or shooting of roused game.

The expertise required for the hunt correlated to horsemanship and marksmanship, which were essential skills for a king and his nobles in wartime.[153] In addition, the bureaucracy necessary to organize the hunt also demonstrated the ability to marshal labor in the administration of war. A court often hosted visiting dignitaries at a hunt's festivities, providing the opportunity to display to foreign powers the king's martial prowess while glorifying his wealth and administrative capabilities, and therefore his ability to defeat enemies in the field.

The hunt demonstrated the power of a ruler over subjects and natural resources. As the head of the hunt and arbiter of hunting privileges, the king tightly controlled the hunt's participants, hunting methods and seasons. The lower orders were restricted from hunting the ruler's game, while hunting rituals at court included highly structured roles granted to a ruler's favorites, providing opportunities for establishing hierarchies at court. A noble's inclusion in the courtly hunt gave a measure of informal access to the ruler, and thereby an opportunity to influence

[153] Duerloo, "The Hunt in the Performance of Archducal Rule: Endurance and Revival in the Habsburg Netherlands in the Early Seventeenth Century," 128. See also Jablonski, "Acts of Violence: Rubens and the Hunt."

decisions. The king's hunting ordinances ensured the maintenance of game populations for the ruler's sport, like deer, as well as reducing the populations of destructive animals, such as wild boar. Often, the hunt took place in the open countryside in full view of villagers and townspeople, a reminder of both the ruler's control over the use of natural resources, protection of his or her subjects from external threats, and their ability to nurture a peaceful and prosperous society.

Hunting as a Performance of Power: The Southern Netherlands

As Luc Duerloo has suggested in his analysis of the hunting policies in the Southern Netherlands under Archdukes Albert and Isabella, the ability of the hunt to picture a ruler's control over and care for his or her domain and subjects was particularly resonant in times of political and economic instability. Because of the lack of any extended analysis of the noble hunt in the Northern Provinces, Duerloo's study provides an invaluable framework for understanding the propaganda value of hunting in the seventeenth century.

In 1611, three years into the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621), the Archdukes implemented comprehensive hunting ordinances across the entirety of their domain and reinstituted the hunt at court. Duerloo has described how the implementation of these hunting laws was a departure from the traditional approach to hunting management in the Low Countries: historically, each Netherlandish province had its own hunting laws, without centralized rules governing practices across the region; in the Southern provinces, as in the North, traditional hunting regulations varied from province to province, with nobles, civic bodies, and squires

holding longstanding feudal rights. During the Revolt, however, such hunting practices diminished. War across the region wreaked ecological devastation on the countryside. The decimation of crops, forests and animal populations lead to a scarcity of food and natural resources. Hunting rituals at court were suspended for the duration of the Revolt.

The hunt served as a visual demonstration of the Archdukes' power as they enacted their physical protection of their domain and subjects after the Revolt. As Luc Duerloo has stated, "the domination expressed by the performance of the hunt….was of particular attraction to a regime seeking to repair the damage done by civil war."[154] Coursing across the countryside and in specifically designed deer parks, the Archdukes and their courtiers hunted in full view of the peasant folk, some of whom were conscripted into the more dangerous roles of the hunt.

For the Archdukes, the hunt functioned as a propagandistic counter-narrative to the ecological and economic devastation caused by the Dutch Revolt. The new hunting rules resulted in a new abundance of game and the restoration of forests. The restoration of the countryside promoted the Archdukes' vision of the Southern Netherlands as a place of natural and economic bounty and highlighted their own ability to bring about prosperity. Through the reinstitution of the hunt at court and the regularization of provincial hunting laws, the Archdukes effectively affirmed the optimism that came with the adoption of the Truce, promoting their ability to engender a Golden Age of peace and prosperity through their policies.

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[154] Duerloo, "The Hunt in the Performance of Archducal Rule: Endurance and Revival in the Habsburg Netherlands in the Early Seventeenth Century," 147–48.

More than fifty years later, William III would use the performance of the hunt to the same end in the Northern provinces. In the following section, I will show how William III used the *par force* hunt and the implementation of hunting laws to promote his identity as military leader of the Republic and suggest that the bounty of the Republic was the result of a properly ordered social hierarchy.

Hunting as a Performance of Power: William III

William III utilized the propaganda of the *par force* hunt far more directly than had his Orange predecessors. His great-grandfather, William I, Prince of Orange (1544-1584), had been a fine sportsman, and, as Charles V's ward, he had frequently joined the Emperor's hunting parties. After the Revolt began, the pressures of war left the Prince no time to pursue the hunt. This also seems to have been the case with his son, Prince Maurits (1567-1625). Hunting activities were apparently not a prominent feature of court life for Prince Frederick Hendrick (1584-1647) and his consort Amalia von Solms (1602-1675) since hunts are rarely mentioned in the diaries of Frederick Hendrick's personal secretary, Constantijn Huygens (1597-1687).[155] We do know, however, that Frederick Hendrick was particularly fond of falconry, and he accompanied the exiled Elector Palatinate Frederick V and his wife, Elizabeth of Bohemia on hunting expeditions. Although the *par force* hunt was unlikely to have been a regular activity at Frederick Hendrick's court, the couple did develop a deer

[155] Everdingen, *Het Loo, de Oranjes en de jacht*, 23.

park at Honselaarsdijk, which suggests that they did aspire to have deer hunts at that residence.

In contrast to his Orange predecessors, William III was a frequent and avid hunter. Constantijn Huygens the Younger (1628-1697), William III's personal secretary, frequently remarked on the Prince's eager enjoyment of sport in his diaries and recounted the hunting activities of various courtiers on the Prince's lands around the province of Utrecht and the Veluwe.[156] William III was an excellent rider, had trained in the art of dressage, and enjoyed both the *par force* hunt and the beater hunt.[157]

The courtly *par force* hunt was especially important under William III, who led the hunt in designated hunting parks, open countryside and forests. In William III's time, the *par force* hunt involved the identification of a specific deer by a professional hunter in service of the Prince, who chose an animal for the next day's hunt. On the day of the hunt, the hunter kept contact with the hunting party by calling specific fanfares on a hunting horn; the group pursued the quarry in a long chase. The hunt ended when the dogs and nobles surrounded the deer, which was then ceremonially killed by a sword, and the dogs were given its entrails.[158] A panoramic painting by Dirk Maas (1659-1717), shows William III with his courtiers surrounding a stag at the end of once such hunt (fig 23).

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[156] Rudolf. Dekker, *Family, Culture and Society in the Diary of Constantijn Huygens Jr, Secretary to Stadholder-King William of Orange*, (Leiden ; Brill, 2013), 132.

[157] Everdingen, *Het Loo, de Oranjes en de jacht*, 88.

[158] Everdingen, 92.

In 1673, just a year after his instatement as stadholder, William III acquired the hunting estate of Soestdijk, located in the province of Utrecht. Situated in the center of the province, Soestdijk was William III's earliest and most strategic property acquisition. During the French invasion the year before, Utrecht had quickly capitulated to the armies of Louis XIV. During their occupation, the French had decimated much of the countryside, burning homes and felling forests, while also destroying crops and consuming game and livestock.[159]

Less than a year after Utrecht's easy surrender, William was hunting in the same countryside that had been subject to the brutal occupation of the French. After William's liberation of the province from the occupying troops, the province found its loyalty in question, William III ruled Utrecht "almost absolutely" and submitted the States of Utrecht to strict rules.[160] The States of Utrecht gave William III the "free and high lordships" of Soest, Baarn, Ter Em, and others as "repentance for all our manifold sins and iniquities" which was given for his "hunting amusement" "to help the Prince of Orange relax after his 'glorious restoration' of the state.[161]

William III's activities at Soestdijk became "symbols of William III's political presence in Utrecht."[162]According to Erik de Jong, William III's hunting estate at Soestdijk was "part of a program of political propaganda" that included numerous anti-French pamphlets as well as prints and art celebrating the achievements of the

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[159] Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806*, 808.

[160] Rob van der Laarse, "Amsterdam en Oranje," 85; Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806*, 808.

[161] Staten van Utrecht, *Resolutie* 13.09.1674, cited in Rob van der Laarse, "Amsterdam en Oranje," 86.

[162] De Jong, *Nature and Art: Dutch Garden and Landscape Architecture, 1650-1740*, 45.

Stadholder. William III's chief propagandist, Romeyn de Hooge, produced numerous pamphlets, political cartoons, and illustrations aimed at promoting William III as Defender of the Protestant faith in Europe.[163] Hunting game in areas that only recently had been under French control touted William's military victories over Louis XIV and became a highly visible public statement of the Stadholder's control over the area. With his purchase of the old castle of Het Loo in 1683, William expanded his hunting entourage. Conceived as a hunting retreat, Het Loo was built on the grounds of a medieval castle northwest of Utrecht and just north of the Veluwe, a forest heavily populated with wild boar and deer. Het Loo became the base for both the *par force* and beater hunt at court; Constantijn Huygens Jr.'s diary records that he sometimes pursued the *par force* and beater hunt on alternating days.[164] Receipts for payments and salaries indicate that there were 16 huntsmen permanently on retainer at Het Loo.[165] William III created a new hunting palace, complete with game parks and an extensive garden complex. Het Loo became Stadholder's primary hunting estate until his elevation to the English throne in 1688, although he continued to take hunting trips to Het Loo throughout his reign.

In addition to making the province of Utrecht a base for his frequent hunting trips, William III updated hunting laws in the province multiple times in the 1680s. These laws, published under the title *Ordonnantie van de ed mog heeren statens lands*

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[163] See Meredith McNeill Hale, *The Birth of Modern Political Satire: Romeyn de Hooghe and the Glorious Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[164] Everdingen, *Het Loo, de Oranjes en de jacht*, 92.

[165] Everdingen, 92.

van Utrecht op't stuck van de Jacht, ende conservatie van de wilde-bane in selven lande, were published in 1680 and reprinted 1683. These rules, which have never been brought to bear on the history of Dutch game painting, restricted hunting in Utrecht's game habitats (like the forests to the east and south of Utrecht and the Veluwe) due to the "excesses and disturbances" being committed by "the many hunters that have crept in."[166] These ordinances mostly concern hunting in the province's forests and other hunting grounds, but they also implemented rules regarding seasons and hunting methods on private property. They codified rules limiting the forest hunt to members of the nobility and military officers and laid out fines for breaking the laws. According to the ordinances, only "qualified persons" could hunt in pine forests and only with special consent (section III); it also limited the use of guns (section IV).

The Stadholder restricted all hunting of big game in the province: "no man, of any quality or condition, shall be allowed to hunt, catch, or shoot any big game, like harts or roe deer, with dogs, snares, nets, bows, or any other instruments" (section VIII). This edict similarly applied to small game: no one, "no matter what quality or station he be, or what privileges [he has]" would be allowed to hunt "hares, rabbits, pheasants, partridges" with dogs, snares, nets, bows, or any instruments" (section IX). It specified that no one was allowed to hunt in snowy or icy conditions; hounds had to be neutered, and wolves could not be hunted without special consent. Disturbing

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[166] *Ordonnantie Vande Ed. Mog. Heeren Staten 's Lands van Utrecht Op 't Stuck van de Jacht En de Conservatie van de Wild-Bane Inden Selven Lande* (Netherlands, 1680), 2. Translation mine.

swan's nests was not allowed, and no one could disturb the forests by removing sod, shrubs, bushes, or branches.

It is likely that these ordinances were part of an effort to rebuild game populations after the destruction of the province by the French. But the institution of these ordinances was more than a measure to preserve game for the Stadholder's own sport; it was emblematic of a flourishing state. Bountiful game could thrive only in a secure, well-defended land where the economy and agriculture were thriving. As in the Southern Netherlands, abundant game was a symbol of prosperity for the entire nation.

The laws were also a show of his political power in the province of Utrecht. They demonstrated William III's influence over the province's States-General, which was responsible for publishing the laws. If William's power in the region was not already manifestly evident through his frequent hunting in Utrecht's countryside, he made it abundantly clear by pushing for the institution of laws that explicitly excluded many of the lawmakers themselves.

Finally, the institution of these laws reinforced the elitism that William III fostered at court and in his style of governing. Personal advisors and favorites were at the center of political decision-making, often to the exclusion of the regent governments. The exclusivity of William III's hunting parties were emblematic of this power dynamic.

Showing one's political alignment with the Stadholder-King was just as important after the Glorious Revolution and William III's assumption to the English throne in 1688 when the interests of the United Provinces, and especially its trade

cities, became subservient to those of England. Although William III's status as Stadholder-King enhanced the Republic's prestige on the international stage, the Dutch cities found trade deprioritized as William III focused almost wholly on the Nine Years' War, "preserving the [interests] of the whole of Europe" at the expense of Dutch concerns.[167] Even though some lawmakers lamented over the Republic's reduced status after 1688, William III was a popular figure among the general public. There arose a "cult of Orangism" fueled by a steady stream of propagandistic literature, much of it by Romeyn de Hooghe, which celebrated William III as the Protector of the Protestant faith in Europe. Even with William spending more of his time in England, the connection between hunting and noble Orangist power remained.[168]

Although more historical research is necessary to paint a full picture of Dutch hunting practices, the evidence suggests that the hunt was more than William III's personal hobby: it was an effective propaganda tool that promoted his control over the Dutch landscape and his identity as Preserver of the Republic. At the Orange court, hunting functioned as a performance of military strength and political power, just as it had in courts from medieval France to the seventeenth century Southern Netherlands. For William III, hunting was an enactment of his power over a part of a country that had recently been ravaged by occupying forces. It was within this

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[167] Onnekink, *The Anglo-Dutch Favourite: The Career of Hans Willem Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland (1649-1709)*, 263.

[168] For an description of William III's hunting practices as King of England, see Emma Griffin, *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain Since 1066* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 105.

political context that hunting imagery became associated with the power of the Orange court.

Hunting Imagery as a Justification of William III's Policies

Like the practice of the hunt itself, game imagery could represent the correlation of natural abundance to proper political leadership. Throughout the seventeenth century in both the Northern and Southern Netherlands, game motifs in a variety of genres suggested ideas of political strength, peace, and renewal. The tradition of game imagery in courtly contexts is foundational to understanding how Weenix's images of natural abundance could support Orangist policy.

During the Twelve Years' Truce, Archdukes Ferdinand and Isabella implemented a campaign in the visual arts in the Southern Netherlands. They commissioned artists to paint mythological scenes, hunting pictures, larder scenes, and still life to promote their agendas. For example, many works that Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), Jan Brueghel the Elder (1601-1678), and Frans Snyders (1579-1657) produced for the court celebrated the Southern Netherlands as a place of peace, prosperity, and cultural flourishing. Jan Brueghel the Elder depicted the Archdukes at their hunting Palace of Mariemount sometime around 1611, the very period in which they reinstituted the courtly hunt (figure 39). Mythological paintings, allegorical images, and still lifes incorporated motifs that suggested a new Golden age, including abundant gardens, trade goods, game, and myriad references to classical figures

including Diana, the goddess of the hunt.[169] As Susan Koslow has pointed out about the Frans Snyder's evolution of the larder scenes around 1609, such ideas also extended to still life painting in the Southern Provinces:

> "the emergence of the larder type coincides with a major political event, the signing of the Twelve Years Truce (1609-1621). As a consequence of the treaty, Netherlanders could look forward to a lengthy period of tranquility and anticipate a lasting peace after the truce's expiration. An expectant, joyful mood reigned in the land, and larder scenes reflect this optimism. They picture abundant, select victuals that only a countryside in peacetime could furnish, and only during peacetime would a table bear such a copious supply of fresh game."[170]

According to Koslow, Snyder's representation of natural abundance, including larders stocked with freshly hunted game, promoted the Archdukes' economic and domestic policies by representing the fruits of a peaceful domain. The bounty of Snyder's larder scenes amounts to a "vindication of the Archdukes' peace policy," a visual rejoinder to critics of the Archdukes' rule.[171]

Even though they themselves may not have made a frequent practice of hunting, Frederick Hendrick and Amalia von Solms certainly promoted hunt imagery in the decoration of their homes and palaces. In part inspired by the Archdukes' program of artistic patronage in the South, the Princely couple commissioned

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[169] See Duerloo, "The Hunt in the Performance of Archducal Rule: Endurance and Revival in the Habsburg Netherlands in the Early Seventeenth Century," 149.

[170] Koslow, *Frans Snyders: The Noble Estate : Seventeenth-Century Still-Life and Animal Painting in the Southern Netherlands*, 91. Here Koslow also notes that "hunting and peace were seen as interdependent at this time."

[171] Koslow, Snyders, and Liedtke, 91.

numerous works in a large-scale redecoration of their apartments at the Binnenhof and at their palace at Honselaarsdijk. Frederick Hendrick and Amalia von Solms, who were especially fond of classicizing Utrecht artists like Abraham Bloemaert and Gerrit van Honthorst, encouraged a visual language of classical pastoralism in their houses and gardens that promoted the prosperity of the Republic under their rule.[172] They commissioned paintings from scenes in epic poems, like Bloemaert's *Theagenes Receiving the Palm of Honour from Chariclea*, and Anthony van Dyck's *Rinaldo and Armida.* In the environs of The Hague, courtiers commissioned Gerrit van Honthorst to portray themselves in pastoral guise. Under the direction of the secretary to the Prince of Orange, Constantijn Huygens, the architects Pieter Post and Jacob van Campen redesigned the Stadholder's houses with classicizing hunting and garden motifs. At Honselaarsdijk, an overmantel piece by Peter Paul Rubens centered the image of Diana surrounded by dead game and wild animals. In this image, which was the focal point of Honselaarsdijk's decorative programme, Diana is surrounded by a superabundance of wild game native to the Netherlands and her new colonial domains. What this great variety of images have in common is the evocation of a pastoral Golden Age, full of noble virtues like courtesy and heroism, where shepherds and nymphs frolic in a peaceful and fruitful landscape.

At Soestdijk, as at Honselaarsdijk, the goddess Diana was a prominent motif. A painting of Diana hunt above the mantel in Queen Mary's bedroom, and Gerard de Lairesse painted an enormous five-part ceiling, now at the Rijksmuseum, depicting

[172] See Ploeg, Vermeeren, and Broos, *Princely Patrons: The Collection of Frederick Henry of Orange and Amalia of Solms in the Hague*. See also Rebecca Tucker, "Inside the Dutch Garden: Prince Frederick Hendrik and Honselaarsdijk," *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes* 26, no. 3 (2006): 209–36.

the goddess and her companions to adorn the entrance hall. Not surprisingly, William III's hunting palace of Het Loo also contained images of the hunt: most important were the two panoramic scenes by Dirk Maas of William III engaging in the *par force* hunt (figure 40).

An important connection between Jan Weenix and the artistic programmes at the Orange court are the commissions that Weenix's cousin, Melchior d'Hondecoeter, received for Soestdijk.[173] D'Hondecoeter painted two large game pieces, which hung in arched niches in the entrance hall below the De Lairesse's trompe-l'oeil ceiling. In *A Hunter's Bag Near a Tree Stump* (also called *The Contemplative Magpie*), a goose, ducks, and a heron are arranged in a landscape with a trap and nets (figure 41). In its pendant, *A Hunter's Bag on a Terrace,* game is displayed in a terraced garden (figure 4). Here a hare, a heron, partridge, and pheasant are arranged with a hunting horn and green tasseled hunting bag. Two living peacocks observe the scene, while a blackbird flies overhead. In the background is a North American turkey, which, with the peacocks, is likely a denizen of the garden's aviary. Above the scene is a sculpted urn holding an orange tree whose fruit is a clear reference to the Princely House of Orange.

In D'Hondecoeter's paintings, the bounty of the countryside is placed in context of the Stadholder's power. The paintings, which depict ten species of birds, highlight the great variety of game in the Utrecht countryside, while the ample pile of

[173] The reason that it was D'Hondecoeter, and not Weenix, who was commissioned by the court is likely one of timing: by the time Weenix had established himself as a famous game painter (ca. 1695), William was already in England, and most of Bentinck and William III's homes had already been decorated.

dead game arranged in the foreground of these paintings testifies to the hunters' skill. The decorative program that combined these paintings with Gerard de Lairesse's ceiling paintings featuring *Diana* juxtaposed mythological and local hunting themes to suggest William III's near-supernatural control over the landscape.

<u>*Weenix's Orangist and Noble Patrons*</u>

Because so few of Weenix's early collectors have been identified, it is difficult to securely confirm which paintings might have been commissioned or owned by Orangist collectors. To date I have found only two: Baron Jacob Emmery van Wassenaer, the younger son of a prominent member of William III's entourage, and Louis Adriaan van Kretschmar, an army officer who rose to become Lieutenant-General. Baron Jacob Emmery commissioned Weenix to paint a game still life with a view of his estate at Rijksdorp in 1714 (figure 28).

In addition to these two Orangist patrons, much circumstantial evidence connects Weenix to Orangist circles. As discussed above, he is linked to William III himself through the court's commissions of his cousin, Melchior D'Hondecoeter, and by his documented presence at Soestdijk in 1677. Weenix's ties to Amsterdam's Jewish Portuguese community, many of whom were fervent Orangists and owned properties in Maarsen, are also suggestive of Orangist ties: in 1697 Weenix installed a series of five wall paintings in the home of Jewish merchant Jacob Henriques de Grenada.[174]

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[174] Hale, *The Birth of Modern Political Satire: Romeyn de Hooghe and the Glorious Revolution*, 10. Isaac de Moucheron and Romeyn de Hooghe were both frequently commissioned by the Orange Court,

After becoming court artist to Elector Johann Wilhelm von der Pfalz around 1702, Weenix began to enjoy the patronage of other German nobles. Lothar Franz Schönborn, Arch-Bishop Elector of Mainz (1655-1729) owned four works by Weenix and was possibly a patron of the artist. Frederick Christian von Plettenberg who became Prince-Bishop of Münster in 1688 (1644-1706), and Anthony Ulrich, Duke of Brunswick (1633-1714) also owned works by Weenix.[175] These nobles likely received paintings by Weenix as diplomatic gifts from the Elector. Except for Von Plettenberg's painting by Weenix, which depicts a mastiff with a wolf and a silver fox, all the other paintings owned by these German nobles depicted small game.

Small Game: Hares & Birds

Available provenance data suggests that, before 1702, Weenix worked almost exclusively for members of the merchant class. During this period, he generally painted small game, like hares and birds, and elite fowl like swans, pigeons, and ducks. As discussed in chapter 2, this imagery reminded viewers of the rights of game hunting, swan drift, pigeon flight, and decoy hunting that came with a seigneury, whether purchased or inherited. Before 1702, Weenix painted only four images

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counted this Orangist Portugeuese-Jewish community among their most loyal patrons;. Hale has suggested that it is very likely that Romeyn de Hooghe's work for these patrons gave him entry to the Orange court.

[175] Frederick Christian von Plettenberg sided with William III in the Nine Years' War; in 1703 he purchased Nordkirchen Castle and transformed it into "the Versailles of Westphalia," a project completed by his successor, Ferdinand von Plettenberg, Prime Minister of the Electorate of Cologne (1690-1737). It is theoretically possible that Ferdinand commissioned the work by Weenix, which is undated, although he would have been only a teenager at the time.

including noble big game, like deer and boar; after 1702, he painted eight images containing big game.

The relative absence of big game in Weenix's *oeuvre* before the death of William III in 1702 shows just how far the practice of the *par force* hunt was seen as a prerogative of the Orange Prince. Despite the ability to hunt on their own land, there is no evidence that merchants practiced the *par force* hunt in the seventeenth century.

The *par force* hunt is nonetheless a very present theme in Weenix's art, even paintings depicting small game that he likely created for merchants. The horn bugle, which was used by huntsmen to alert a noble hunting party to the location of the selected quarry, appears no fewer than 41 times in Weenix's game still lifes. Fourteen game still lifes depict a hunting party engaging in the *par force* hunt in the distant background. Paintings depicting the *par force* hunt in the distant background, like *A Dead Hare and Partridges on a Balustrade* from 1691 (figure 9), situate dead game in hilly, wooded hunting parks. This type of landscape is reminiscent of William III's favorite hunting grounds in the craggy hills of the Veluwe, located on at the border of the Provinces of Utrecht and Gelderland. This locale, coupled with the selection of game presented in *A Dead Hare and Partridges on a Balustrade,* reminds one of the dictum articulated in *Ordonnantie van de ed mog heeren statens lands van Utrecht*, 1680, that only the nobility was allowed to hunt partridges and hares in the province. Whether the owner of this painting was a resident of Holland or Utrecht Province is not known, but the image has definite political implications. It's character not only reflects the Stadholder-King's displays of power through hunting and implementation of hunting laws, but also alludes to the legal right to hunt on one's own land.

References to the *par force* hunt reminded viewers of William III's hunting activities. This motif, coupled with a visual tradition that associated abundant game with Princely power, recalled William III's restoration of the Republic after the *raampjaar* and continuing protection of the nation. Almost without exception, Weenix's still lifes present the viewer with an abundance of game that is only possible in a secure, well-governed land. The noble elements of his paintings—the falconry hoods and bugle—identify this governance as located in the Dutch nobility and specifically in the person of the Stadholder-King. This positive view of the hunt continued even though William III was frequently in England after 1688, a period during which the Republic was forced to contribute taxes to his ongoing military campaigns during the Nine Years' War against France. The imagery of abundant game reminded viewers that it was only through William III's protection that the Dutch Republic remained prosperous and safe from foreign aggression.

Noble Game: Deer and Stag

Weenix's first known composition to depict deer is known through two versions: an undated painting at the Ackland Museum of Art, Chapel Hill (figure 40), and a work dated 1689 that was destroyed in Dresden during the Second World War. Weenix produced this painting when William III's frequent public hunting outings and the implementation of restrictive hunting laws. The noble character of Weenix's image would have been highly suggestive of the the power of the Stadholder and the enhanced political status of the nobility.

The Dead Swan, another painting by Weenix that depicts a dead deer, was a large wall panel that was installed in the former *Handboogdoelen* in Amsterdam in the 1690s (figure 43).[176] Formerly a practice range for the longbowmen of Amsterdam's civic guard, the building was transformed into an inn after 1672. The innkeeper likely commissioned Weenix to paint this wall panel at a time when the inn was popular with wealthy visitors and diplomats. In this work, a dead deer, swan, hunting nets and a bugle hang from a balustrade decorated with cupids and a Roman-style herm. A gun, falconry bag, and falconry hoods, a black grouse and a finch rest on a stone step overlooking a panoramic view. The deer, swan, and *par force* chase in the background allude to the noble hunt and would have reminded visitors to the inn of the ways in which the current Stadholder, the Prince of Orange William III, had ensured the protection of the Republic and of Europe from the Catholic aggression of Louis XIV.

After the death of William III in 1702, Weenix painted a deer and boar a number of times, often for military and noble patrons. One of the pendants made for Elector Johann Wilhelm von der Pfalz depicts a gutted deer in a garden surrounded by game, a huntsman, two greyhounds and a Drenthe partridge dog. Its pendant depicts a wolf guarded over by a mastiff before a scene of the *par force* hunt. The dual settings of garden and hunting park filled with abundant game asserted the Elector's rights to control the natural resources of his domain, and therefore his power to rule its inhabitants. A stag appears in three works dating between 1605-1708. One of these was in the collection of Jan Albert Sichterman of Groningen (1692-1674). It is

[176] Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings*, vol. 2, 376.

possible that the painting was commissioned by his father, Galenus Sichterman, who was a member of William III's army.[177]

Another image to depict a dog guarding a deer is *A Dog with Dead Deer, Heron, and Dead Hares* (figure 44), which was owned by Colonel Louis Adriaan van Kretschmar (d.1750), an officer in the Orange army. In this painting, a fearsome mastiff guards the spoils of the hunt—a stag and heron, which lie next to a rifle and velvet hunting bag, along with two hares that hang beside hunting nets and a pair of pistols. To the right, a boy sounds a bugle, while in the distance, riders chase a bounding deer. Weenix further animated the still life elements with the alert pose of the mastiff as it responds to the sound of the bugle call and the hunt behind, integrating the scene in the foreground with the action of the background. This painting, perhaps more than any other by Weenix, correlates the skill of the hunt with military prowess. This painting was made a year before Kretschmar's appointment as Lieutenant-General in the Dutch army in 1709. The prominence of the mastiff as it guards its prey—along with the depiction to the *par force* hunt—create a parallel between military campaigns and the successful hunt, a visual motif appropriate to Kretschmar's role as an army officer. In such instances, military patrons commissioned works by Weenix to highlight personal valor that was associated with both military campaigns and the hunt. Such paintings recall William III's achievements on the battlefield and imply that the collector participated in those military successes.

[177] Christiaan J.A. Jörg, "Jan Albert Sichterman. A Groninger Nabob and Art-Collector," *Itinerario* 9, no. 2 (1985): 178–79.

Conclusion

Almost without exception, every one of Weenix's game still lifes conveys the theme of abundance. Between 1682 and his death in 1719, Weenix firmly places this abundance in context of activities that were most performative of noble power in the period: hunting and the courtly garden. With the *rampjaar* still a present and painful memory, the inherent implication of these paintings is that under Orangist leadership, the Dutch landscape has become once again fecund and prosperous. One could co-opt the imagery that had become a potent symbol of Orangist power to illustrate one's own political or social aspirations. In this regard, they reflect Daniel Beaver's assertion that

> "as a mode of violence, the hunt and forest regime made symbols of difference in a hierarchic order, dividing gentle and common qualities in social, political, and spatial terms. The power to shed the blood of a noble animal was instrumental in the differentiation of rank and in the constitution of order."[178]

Weenix's game still lifes are intimately connected to the noble politics of the era. Paintings that included specific noble motifs, like deer, boar, herons, hunting dogs, and falconry equipment had noble connotations that were ingrained in European culture and reaffirmed by William III's hunting practices and law-making. For arguably the first time in Dutch history, William III had made the hunt the very centerpiece of court life; the members of the Orange court, who were also members of William III's hunting entourage, were a prominent presence in diplomatic and military decision-making. The intertwined themes of hunting and abundance had a

[178] Daniel C. Beaver, *Hunting and the Politics of Violence Before the English Civil War*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 154.

long history of legitimizing and celebrating noble leadership in courtly art. Weenix's game still lifes drew from and elaborated on those traditions, enabling those inside and outside the court to adopt the imagery of political power to promote their own status.

Chapter 4: Jan Weenix and the Noble Garden

Introduction

On the horizon beyond the dunes, the sun is setting on the North Sea. At Rijksdorp, the day's hunt is done, and the hunters' spoils have been laid aside. Two hares and a wide array of fowl attest to the day's successful sport. Grapes, pomegranates, figs, apricots, and plums overflow a humble reed basket, furnished by the gardens and orchards that surround the house in the distance. The view is framed by two antique sculptures and an urn, which are decorously suited to the classicism of the noble house. Along with the trophies of the hunt are two doves, which seem to have escaped the estate's dovecot, and two pets, a lap dog and monkey, the latter mischievously raiding the basket of fruit.

Such is the view we encounter in Jan Weenix's *Rijksdorp at Wassenaer* (figure 28) from 1714, the only game still life by Jan Weenix to depict a specific estate. Commissioned by Baron Jacob Emmery van Wassenaer, the owner of Rijksdorp, it is also the only work by Weenix that can be securely connected to a commission from a Dutch noble. The oldest noble family in Holland, the Wassaenars were wealthy and well-connected to the Orange court. Jacob Emmery's father, Jacob van Wassanaer, was an influential noble in William III's circle who had accompanied the Prince to England in the Glorious Revolution in 1687-8.[179] Jacob Emmery's oldest brother had married Anna Margaretha Bentinck, the daughter of William III's closest confidant and favorite, Hans Willem Bentinck.

[179] Fölting, Lit, and Sman, *Buitenplaatsen in en om Den Haag*, 71.

In this work, the abundance of the estate beyond is foregrounded before a classicizing urn and sculpture that refer directly to the gardens of William III and his entourage. As has been argued in this dissertation, Weenix's introduction of game in estate settings was not a purely decorative choice but was intimately connected to the garden culture of the Netherlands in the late 17th century. Weenix began introducing ornate elements of garden art into his game still lifes in the early 1690s, at a time when prints of the elaborate Orangist gardens at Zorgvliet, Zeist, and Heemstede were being widely circulated. These prints spread the fame of these gardens and reinforced the connection between ornate garden art, national security, and the power of the Stadholder-King. Weenix's game paintings contain direct references to these gardens. They contain elements that refer directly to the Republic's most famous gardens and traditions of Orangist iconography that celebrate the Stadholder-King as the author of the Republic's renewed prosperity.

The Politics of Dutch Gardens: 1673-1700

The years immediately following the *rampjaar* saw a resurgence of garden design in the Netherlands. Elizabeth den Hartog and Carla Tuene, who have analyzed this popularization of Dutch gardens among the merchant class in the 1670s, described it as a nationalistic activity. Many of the most famous *buitenplaatsen* were situated in the province of Utrecht along the river Vecht, in an area whose homes, agriculture, and forests had been decimated by the invasion of French troops in 1672. According to Den Hartog, Dutch gardens in this area and across Holland functioned

as a "public-spirited campaign" to promote the idea of a thriving Republic, a compelling contrast to the devastation caused by the *rampjaar*.[180] In essence, these gardens effectively functioned as political propaganda: "the threat of war having by no means passed, turning the collective mind to gardening and the collecting of unique species of plants seems like a defiant statement, made to announce that the Republic would not only survive, but flourish and expand."[181] As Catherine Powell-Warren has similarly discussed in the context of Agnes Block's collection of rare plants, a *buitenplaats* garden not only illustrated the restoration of security, stability, and peace necessary for a gardens' flourishing, it also demonstrated a garden owner's participation in the flourishing of the *Hortus batavus*.[182] In these gardens one could display the global trade network that brought rare plants to The Netherlands. In essence, a *buitenplaats* garden was a living proof that the Republic was thriving economically, militarily, and politically.

For some garden owners, the Prince of Orange was the one responsible for this flourishing of the Netherlands. Gaspar Fagel's garden at Leeuwenhorst, near Noordwijkerhout, developed in the 1680s, was one such individual. As Grand Pensionary and key supporter of William III in Amsterdam, the flourishing of the Republic (and his own political success) was linked to the Stadholder's political regime. As Den Hartog suggested, his garden "portrayed or, better, staged the Republic as a *Paradisus batavus*, a paradise on earth, that, having survived the

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[180] Hartog and Teune, "Gaspar Fagel's (1633-88) Garden and Plant Collection at Leeuwenhorst," 192.

[181] Hartog and Teune, 205.

[182] See discussion in introduction to this dissertation. Catherine Powell-Warren, "Cross-Pollination: Agnes Block (1629–1704) and Her Network of Artists and Botanical Experts."

ravaging of the country by the French, was again flourishing under the newly appointed stadholder William III."[183]

Garden Art and Orangist Iconography

As early as the 1610s, Frederick Hendrick and Amalia von Solms had "recognized the royal character and propagandistic potential of garden art."[184] Grand in iconographic conception and in scale, their gardens at Honselaarsdijk displayed Roman busts and statues of Hercules and river gods, which conveyed ideas of military valor and sea power. Through these associations with heroes and gods, such imagery highlighted the military strength of the House of Orange and its control over the landscape. These gardens also propagated Vitruvian models of garden design. By following Vitruvian rules of ideal proportions, garden designs could illustrate in microcosm the Princely ability to bring harmony and order to nature, therefore the right to rule his or her royal domain.[185] During the First Stadholderless Period (1650-1672), Amalia von Solms continued to use garden art to promote the dynastic legacy of the Orange Princes at Huis ten Bosch. Saskia Berenek has shown that the garden at Huis ten Bosch made use of Roman sculpture types, including trellis obelisks and

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[183] Hartog and Teune, "Gaspar Fagel's (1633-88) Garden and Plant Collection at Leeuwenhorst," 244.

[184] De Jong, *Nature and Art: Dutch Garden and Landscape Architecture, 1650-1740*, 42.

[185] See Bezemer Sellers, *Courtly Gardens in Holland 1600-1650 : The House of Orange and the Hortus Batavus*, 259.

arches that referenced the tomb of William I, dynastic references that promoted Amalia position as preserver of the lineage of the house of Orange.[186]

In the late seventeenth century, views of the homes of the Princes of Orange were circulated in the popular gardening manual *De Nederlandse Hovenier*. Gardener to the young Willem III, Jan van der Groen dedicated this volume to the Prince of Orange when he published it in 1669. The publication's opening pages featured views of the Orange estates of Honselaarsdijk, Rijswijk, and Huis ten Bosch.

Not surprisingly, William III's courtiers created gardens whose iconography lauded the Prince of Orange. The two most important examples are the gardens of Hans Willem Bentinck at Zorgvliet and that of Willem Adriaan van Nassau-Odijk (1632-1705) at Zeist, both of which were conceived as tributes to William III. Zorgvliet was replete with references to the gardens of Frederick Hendrick and Amalia von Solms. Its classical imagery cast William III alternatively as Hercules, Zeus, and Roman military hero.[187] At Zorgvliet,

> "Decorative garden elements were considered an excellent means of adding personal and allegorical themes of glorification. Most people of his circle would have understood Bentinck's direct tribute to his master and, by extension, to himself."[188]

Nowhere is the correlation between military success and a beautiful garden made more explicit than in this poem. These lines, which draw from the traditional

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[186] This is the central idea discussed in Saskia Berenek, "In Living Memory; The House of Orange in the Dutch Republic."

[187] See Jong, *Nature and Art: Dutch Garden and Landscape Architecture, 1650-1740*, 146; Bezemer Sellers, "The Bentinck Garden at Zorgvliet," 114.

[188] Lucas Rotgans, *Wilhem de Derde door Gods genade, koning van Engeland, Schotland, Vrankryk en Ierland, beschermer des geloofs, enz. […]*, (Utrecht: F. Halma, W. vande Water, 1698), translated and quoted in De Jong, *Nature and Art: Dutch Garden and Landscape Architecture, 1650-1740*, 93.

image of the Republic as *Hortus batavus,* present Van Velthuysen's garden as a symbol for the Republic. The "beautiful view" of the garden, with its flowing fountains, fruitful flower beds and orangeries, is a reminder of a Netherlands "liberated," first from the Spanish and then from the French through the valor generations of Princes of Orange in their "bloody expeditions of war." In both Van Velthuysen's garden in Heemstede and Rotgan's heroic poem, William III's military heroism is intricately linked to the prosperity of The Netherlands.

As these examples have shown, a trend emerged in garden design between the mid-1670s and 1700 where the location and iconography of a garden could imbue it with nationalistic and political significance. In some cases, such gardens were statements of Dutch solidarity and prosperity after the *rampjaar.* In other cases, garden ornaments and sculpture specifically emphasized allegiance to the Orangist cause and the link between prosperity and Orangist rule.

Weenix and Noble Garden Art

From about 1690 until his death in 1719, Weenix included a range of references to specific architectural elements found in contemporary courtly gardens. The types of garden art Weenix most frequently included in his backgrounds were urns, freestanding figural sculptures, and fountains. To these he sometimes added trellis obelisks, triumphal arches, and artificial lakes. All these features of art and architecture had precedents in contemporary Dutch gardens, specifically in those of William III and his circle.

Urns

The most prominent garden art motif Weenix included in his works was the classical vase or urn. Throughout the 1680s, he began to use the urn to orient the compositional elements, with the urn to one side and the game cascading in a cornucopia-like curve across the lower half of the composition. Weenix seems to have invented this compositional device, which would become a defining characteristic of his game still lifes. Of about 120 game still lifes Weenix produced between 1682 and 1719, forty-five feature a classical urn, almost all of which are decorated with mythological bas-reliefs and use the urn as a prominent compositional feature. Usually, an urn functions as a large *repoussoir* object, from which dead hares and fowl are suspended, that frames a view into a garden or park.

At least six works by Weenix from the 1680s (figure 45) feature the same garden ornament: an urn that Melchior D'Hondecoeter had previously displayed in *A Hunter's Bag on a Terrace*, a painting that he executed around 1678 for William III's hunting estate at Soestdijk (figure 4).[189] The urn, may be based on one no longer extant but formerly at Soestdijk. Weenix continued to occasionally include this urn in still lifes until the end of his career.[190]

In the mid-1690s, Weenix began depicting even larger urns, complete with ornate lids and mythological bas-reliefs. Weenix began to add urns of this type to his

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[189] For examples, see Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Weenix: The Paintings,* catalogue entries 116, 124, 169, 172, 174, 181, and 169.

[190] I have not found any prints or additional visual sources for this urn, suggesting that Weenix knew it either from D'Hondecoeter's painting or from the grounds at Soestdijk. While it is unclear whether all viewers of Weenix's paintings would have been aware of the connection to Soestdijk, it is likely that many did, and that this pictorial element would have lent the garden still life additional cachet.

game paintings in the years immediately following the 1690 publication of Jan van de Aveelen's views of Zorgvliet, the garden created by Hans Willem Bentinck between 1674 and 1685. In Bentick's Zorgvliet garden, the urns, like the Column of Trajan, the Hercules statue, the Ganymede Grotto and the Parnassus, explicitly commemorated William III's military successes (figure 36). This publication included two of the Zorgvliet vases, one of which survives today at Zorgvliet (figure 46). Adapted from models at Versailles by Le Brun and Berain, such vases were not common features of an ordinary garden.[191] The ornate decoration on this type of urn, especially the reliefs, required specialized craftsmanship and were usually made to the design of a garden architect, such as Daniel Marot or Romeyn de Hooghe. In fact, the Zorgvliet urns, considered "extraordinary" by contemporaries, were probably unique in the Netherlands until urns were installed in the Het Loo garden in the late 1690s. Zorgvliet's remarkable vases were worthy of comment in the diaries of Constantijn Huygens the Younger, who recorded a conversation with Bentinick regarding Zorgvliet's garden statues and "pots with bas-reliefs."[192] Commissioned specifically to commemorate William III's military achievements, these urns were placed throughout the garden and featured reliefs depicting triumphal processions, Roman militias, and dancing nymphs, and satyrs.[193]

[191] The Borghese Vase and the Medici Vase were the most renowned models for urns in the period; there were copies of both in the gardens of Versailles. See Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 315–16.

[192] Bezemer Sellers, "The Bentinck Garden at Zorgvliet," 122.

[193] Bezemer Sellers, "The Bentinck Garden at Zorgvliet," 122.

A painting where Weenix included this urn is *A Dead Hare and Pheasant, Fruit, Hunting Gear and a Sculpted Vase* (figure 33). One of Weenix's most ornate pictures, in this work sculpture, game, fruit, birds, and a lap dog frame a view into a fantastical leisure garden with an artificial lake, mausoleum, freestanding sculptures. Weenix's urn and the Zorgvliet urns are nearly identical in proportion, and feature similar decorated lids with bas-reliefs decorating the entire body of the urn. The dancers depicted on the vase in Weenix's painting are similar to those on the Zorgvliet vase. Weenix also depicted the Zorgvliet urns in an undated family portrait by Weenix (fig 47).[194]

Triumphal Arches, Trellis Obelisks, and Freestanding Sculptures

While urns were often the most prominent feature of garden art in Weenix's paintings, he often also included other types of courtly garden architecture. For example, a painting dating to 1695, *Dead Partridges on a Ledge, Gun and Quail* (figure 48), gives a view of one such a garden, replete with freestanding sculptures,

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[194] For a book of urn designs dating to the middle part of Weenix's career, see Simon Schynvoet, *Schynvoets Voorbeelden der lusthof-cieraaden, zynde vaasen, pedestallen, orangiebakken, blompotten en andere bywerken & e.* (Amsterdam: H. de Wit, 1701). This volume was commissioned by Christoffel van Brants (1664-1732), a wealthy grain merchant involved in trade with Russia, who became friends with Emperor Peter the Great. His estate, which he named Petersburg in honor of the Russian Czar, is illustrated in *De Zegepraarlende Vecht.* Simon Schijnvoet (1653-1727) was a Dutch printmaker, landscape architect, and antiquities and *naturalia* collector. He was married to Cornelia de Rijk (1653-1726), was a bird painter in the manner of Melchior d'Hondecoeter. An album of 116 illustrations of Suinamese insects by Cornelia de Rijk is held by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm. The style and subjects of De Rijk's art suggests the possibility of a connection between de Rijk, D'Hondecoeter, Weenix, Schijnvoet, Agnes Block, and Maria Sibylla Merian. My research by on De Rijk will be presented in contributions to the exhibition catalogue for an upcoming 2025 exhibition on Dutch and Flemish women artists at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., and MSK, Ghent.

an arch, and a trellis obelisk. Many copies of this painting exist, suggesting that it was a popular and influential work.[195]

Triumphal arches occur several times throughout Weenix's oeuvre.[196] Arches like the one depicted in *Dead Partridges on a Ledge, Gun and Quail* commemorated military victories because of their association with Roman triumphal entries. (In 1691, when William III first returned from his successful invasion of England, an elaborate entry was planned, including the creation of a monumental triumphal arch designed by Romeyn de Hooghe.)[197] Because of this association, arches were a relatively common feature of courtly gardens. In fact, the scale and decoration of the arch in *Dead Partridges on a Ledge, Gun and Quail* is not unlike one found in the garden of Zorgvliet (figure 49).

Another notable feature of garden art in *Dead Partridges on a Ledge, Gun and Quail* is the trellis obelisk. These objects were popular features of garden art popularized engravings of Versailles ca. 1670 by Gabriel Perelle (1604-1677) in the ca. 1670 volume *Recueil de Vues de Paris*. Views of the *buitenplaatsen* in *De Zegepraalende Vecht* show that trellis obelisks appeared frequently in gardens near the Vecht. They may have been popularized by illustrations in *Den Nederlantsen hovenier,* first published in 1670 (figure 50).[198]

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[195] Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings*, vol. 2, 237.

[196] For examples, see catalogue entries 126, 145, 168, 175, 184, 208, 223 in Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings,* vol 2.

[197] Joseph B. Dallett, Tatyana Petukhova. LaVine, and Andrew. Weislogel, *Romeyn de Hooghe: Virtuoso Etcher* (Ithaca: Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, 2009), 82–85.

[198] Jan van der. Groen, *Den Nederlantsen Hovenier.* (Amsterdam, 1679) Np.; For an early example of trellis obelisk in courtly garden art, see Saska Berenek's discussion of Amalia von Solms's garden at Huis ten Bosch, where trellis obeliks commemorated the accomplishments of her husband and

Dead Partridges on a Ledge, Gun and Quail also features numerous freestanding statues, another motif that occurs frequently throughout Weenix's oeuvre. Like obelisks, urns, and obelisks, and other types of garden art, garden owners displayed these expensive statues to show their erudition and knowledge of the classical tradition. They were also prominent features at the gardens of the Orange court. At Het Loo, sculptural representations of Apollo, wood and field goddesses, and naiads and nymphs populated the garden, while the Rhine, Zuiderzee, the IJssel, and the Grift were all personified as river gods.

Most of Weenix's statues are faintly indicated and appear to represent the idea of a classical sculpture rather than specific prototypes.[199] One possible exception is Weenix's inclusion of what may be a sculpture modeled on the Farnese Hercules. This sculpture occurs in at least four paintings, the earliest being Pieter de la Court's van der Voort's 1696 painting *A Dead Hare and Pheasant, Fruit, and Hunting Gear and a Sculpted Vase* (figure 31).[200] It is also a prominent feature in Jacob van Emmery van Wassenaer's *Still Life with Rijksdorp* (fig 27). The Farnese Hercules, which was displayed in its own room at the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, had been famously depicted in Hendrick Goltzius's 1595 engraving, which contributed to the

promoted her own role in securing the Oranges' dynastic legacy. Saskia Berenek, "In Living Memory; The House of Orange in the Dutch Republic."

[199] Most of the freestanding sculptures in Weenix's backgrounds are loosely depicted and cannot be traced to a single antique model. Some of Weenix's sculptures appear to depict goddesses, and may refer to the Farnese Flora, which had been drawn by Marten van Heemskerk during his Roman sojourn between 1532-1532. See Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900*, 218.

[200] For examples, see catalogue entries 122, 140, 159, 190 in Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings,* vol. 2.

sculpture's fame in Holland.[201] In Weenix's time, a copy of the Farnese Hercules made by Jean Cornu between 1684 and 1686 adorned the King's Gardens at Versailles. Weenix's inclusion of this sculpture provided a visual link between the Dutch garden and those of France and Italy.

Weenix's possible reference to the Farnese Hercules is made more likely by its special place in the iconography of the House of Orange. The motif identified the Prince with the strength and virtue of Hercules as "a conqueror of discord."[202] A famous statue of Hercules and Cacus had been the centerpiece of the garden at Honselaarsdijk, and Bentinck acquired a copy of this sculpture for Zorgvliet in the 1670s. Weenix was aware of the Hercules-Caucus sculpture, as is evident by its appearance in the artist's portraits and port scenes as early as 1667.[203]

Hercules was also a guiding feature of the garden design at Het Loo: at the center of the garden was a fountain with the figure of Hercules, the centerpiece of the garden's iconography which, "in conjunction with the imperium urns from the same period, the importance of the Dutch Hercules for the renewed prosperity of the country was clearly visualized."[204] The identification of William III with Hercules

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[201] There was also a copy in the garden at the *Rubenshuis.*

[202] For a discussion of the significance of Hercules mythology for William III, see De Jong, *Nature and Art: Dutch Garden and Landscape Architecture, 1650-1740*, 62. The story of Hercules's acts of heroism had long been used to glorify the strength and virtue of rulers, with examples at the courts of Cosimo de Medici, Charles V, and Louis XIV, and would continue to be a common feature of royal decorative programmes until the 18th century. For an explination of the Hercules motif in Italian gardens of the sixteenth centuries, see David R. Coffin, *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 99.

[203] See catalogue entry 1 in Wagenberg-Ter Hoeven, *Jan Baptist Weenix and Jan Weenix: The Paintings*.

[204] De Jong, *Nature and Art: Dutch Garden and Landscape Architecture, 1650-1740*, 62.

was widely circulated in Romeyn de Hooghe's propaganda, where it was a favorite means of glorifying the person of the Stadholder-King. By including the Farnese sculpture in some images, Weenix was drawing from a long history that associated the strength and virtue of Hercules with royal power.

Fountains

Fountains, ponds, and artificial lakes are another frequent feature of garden art found in Weenix's game still lifes. Water features like the one Weenix depicted in *Dead Partridges on a Ledge, Gun and Quail* appear throughout the views in *De Zegepraalende Vecht*, showing that they were popular elements of *buitenplaatsen* gardens at the end of the seventeenth century. While ponds required less skill to implement, fountains were notoriously difficult to install and were highly dependent on the surrounding terrain. The most famous fountains of the period were at Versailles, and the successful installation of a fountain commonly incited comparisons to Versailles by visitors.[205]

Fountains became emblematic of the successful manipulation of water, always symbolically significant in Dutch culture as a point of national pride. Het Loo's fountains, each crowned with a unique sculptural design, were intended to point to the Stadholder-King's power over nature. As De Jong argues, "the use of mythology and personification elevated the local character of the local scenery in the Veluwe and the talents of William III to a supernatural level."[206] The contrast of Het Loo's fountains

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[205] Erik de Jong has noted how "William III wanted to exhibit his control over natural springs by means of a great diversity of waterworks at Het Loo." De Jong, 56.

[206] De Jong, 56.

and lush gardens with the surrounding marshland further correlated the Stadholder's political power with the landscape, where "the hard conditions of the wild had been here conquered and transformed by means of art to show the Veluwe's hidden potential wealth and fertility: only royal power could have made this possible."[207]

In design and ornamentation, courtly gardens highlighted the peace and fecundity William III had brought to the surrounding landscape, imagery that ultimately conveyed the Stadhouder-king's political and military achievements. For William III, the iconography of the garden—and the act of bringing the powers of nature under his control—demonstrated that the house of Orange possessed political power, military strength and dynastic legitimacy commiserate with that of Europe's monarchs, especially Louis XIV. [208]

Conclusion

In the seventeenth century, nowhere was the reciprocal relationship between dominion and abundance more successfully illustrated than in a flourishing garden. Thriving in elaborate parterres, urns, orangeries, and greenhouses, an abundance of flowers and fruit proclaimed the gardener's ability to cultivate the earth through the successful ordering of nature. Weenix's settings reflect the increasingly ornate tastes in garden design evident in prints and in gardens across the Dutch countryside, which themselves incorporated elements from French and Italian courtly gardens. In their

[207] De Jong, 53.

[208] "William III made this natural abundance possible, cultivating the uncultivated wild nature of the Veluwe and bringing it to growth in the same way that he defeated his political opponents in his battle against other base powers." De Jong, 266.

reliance of courtly garden motifs, Weenix's gardens minimize the distinctive features of the Dutch landscape in favor of styles in garden decoration recognizable across Europe, thereby aligning patrons with a wealthy politically powerful pan-European elite.

In their reliance on motifs drawn from contemporary gardens, Weenix's settings go beyond the promotion of the Republic as a restored *Hortus batavus.* By linking gardens with game subjects, they suggest that natural abundance arises out of dominion and a properly ordered social hierarchy, with William III at the apex. In these paintings, hunting and garden design function as an analogy for military strength and political control, ideas that were especially important in times of political instability. In their allusions to courtly gardens, like their references to the noble hunt, such images celebrated the Stadholder-King as the Protector of the Republic and propagandistically supported his policies.

Conclusion

Almost without exception, every one of Weenix's game still lifes conveys the theme of abundance. Between 1682 and his death in 1719, Weenix firmly placed this abundance in context of activities that were then the most performative of noble wealth and power: hunting and the courtly garden. The intertwined themes of hunting, gardens, and abundance had a long history of legitimizing and celebrating noble leadership in courtly art. With the *rampjaar* still a present and painful memory, the inherent implication of such imagery was that under Orangist leadership, the Dutch landscape would become once again fecund and prosperous. The members of the Orange court, who were a prominent presence in diplomatic and military decision-making, were also members of William III's hunting entourage. They created elaborate gardens with iconography celebrating the person and achievements of the Stadholder-King. Weenix's game still lifes drew from and elaborated on those visual traditions, enabling those inside and outside the court to adopt the imagery of political power to promote their own status. With Weenix's paintings, one could co-opt the imagery that had become a potent symbol of Orangist power to illustrate one's own political or social aspirations.

In their emphasis on the spaces and activities associated with land ownership, Weenix's paintings helped fashion a patron's familial identity by defining it in terms of inherited wealth and dynastic privilege. Estate ownership, hunting, and the creation of an elaborate garden were activities that required immense wealth. Part of Weenix's appeal was that his paintings affirmed a patron's elite social identity through the representation of nature. His paintings demonstrate how, as Denis Cosgrove has

noted, landscape could "[represent] a way in which certain classes of people have signified themselves and their world through their imagined relationship with nature, and through which they have underlined and communicated their own social role and that of others with respect to external nature."[209]

In its representation of private ownership of land, Weenix's art promoted a new cultural perspective on the relationship between humans and nature in Dutch society. The extent to which his paintings represent a shift in cultural attitudes is evident when one compares them with those of earlier Dutch landscape artists such as Jan van Goyen, Meindert Hobbema, and Jacob Ruisdael. Where Weenix's game paintings emphasize the possession and cultivation of nature, earlier landscape artists show a more communal attitude towards nature that is consistent with that era's political attitudes and ideal of national identity.

Jacob van Ruisdael's ca 1670 painting *Wheat Fields* (figure 51), at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Jan Weenix's *The White Peacock* portray very different relationships between the viewer and the natural world. In *Wheat Fields,* Ruisdael invites the viewer to travel up a well-worn road into the windswept landscape of the Dutch Republic. Immediately before the viewer, this road extends directly through warm fields of grain toward a copse and the village nestled in its trees. Monumental clouds stretch overhead toward the horizon and past the trees, their winds moving the arms of a windmill on a distant hill, and beyond, it a view of the sea and Dutch trading vessels. A man, small and unidentifiable, strides toward the viewer, while a woman and child stroll towards the village even further up the path.

[209] Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 20.

To the left and right, fields of wheat flourish in the late summer sun. Ruisdael's painting pulls us into the pictorial space by placing the road along the entire lower edge of the picture plane, as though inviting the viewer to enter the peaceful tranquility of the scene.

Ann Jensen Adams has theorized that Ruisdael and Van Goyen's landscape paintings participated in the construction of a cohesive national identity for the new Republic, which, without a single feudal ruler, had always been fragmented into provinces and city loyalties. For Adams, these landscape paintings celebrated the communal projects that made the Dutch landscape, and the Dutch nation, distinctive: its extensive system of canals, and its land reclamation efforts. Both projects required intra-province and intra-city cooperation, all in service of the public good.[210] In representing a landscape made safe, accessible and agriculturally productive through Dutch ingenuity and cooperation, these paintings created a shared sense of communal national identity. Furthermore, as Adams explains, such depictions elided the many political and religious differences that threatened to fracture the new Republic, eschewing potentially fraught motifs in favor of the dunes, trees, and fields of the shared landscape. In essence, landscape paintings "offered a communal identity" and "overlooked social disruption."[211] Dutch landscape paintings, moreover, also downplayed class differences: no matter one's social class, each person was an equal participant in the making of, and ensuring the prosperity of, the Republic.

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[210] Ann Jensen Adams, "Competing Communities in the 'Great Bog of Europe.' Identity and Seventeenth Century Dutch Landscape Painting," 65.

[211] Ann Jensen Adams, 66.

In contrast, the garden architecture of *The White Peacock* suggests that the owner could control and bring order to nature. At the center of the composition, a wild oleander tree, now carefully cultivated, grows in an austere classical urn. In the distance, an avenue of fir trees has been planted into an evenly spaced avenue leading towards the house, while the fountain suggests the containment and successful manipulation of water. Human intervention in nature is reinforced by the composition: as with almost all Weenix's game still lifes, man-made gardens, architecture, and game parks line the horizon. The entire setting appears to be the creation of the landowner, placing the viewer within the bounds of private property. Such limited access to the scene infers the exclusion of specific classes of people from the enjoyment of its pleasures, implying the existence of a social hierarchy--with the property owner at its apex.

Unlike Weenix's composition, which conveys a sense of containment and exclusion, Ruisdael's image evokes openness, freedom, and access to any who might wander past. In Ruisdael's image, nature welcomes and encompasses the viewer. Ruisdael's paintings, as well as those of Van Goyen, Hobbema, and others, emphasized community, freedom, and the accessibility of nature, whereas Weenix featured privacy, enclosure, and nature ordered by human design. This contrast points to a shift from an atmosphere of communal, national prosperity to an emphasis on private property and an atmosphere of magnificence and familial wealth.

Rather than promoting a shared national identity and minimizing class differences, Weenix's art highlighted differences of social class and promoted a patron's personal identity within an elite social group, which was defined by cultural

connections to a pan-European echelon of powerful social elites. In so doing, these images reflect the changed dynamics of power in the Republic, and, ultimately, a shift in the Dutch imagination of its own national identity.

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