

THE CATALOGUE

The Bard Graduate Center, with Yale University Press, has published a full-color catalogue—consisting of seven essays and entries for all objects in the exhibition—edited by Deborah L. Krohn and Peter N. Miller with Marybeth De Filippis. The essays have been written by some of the leading scholars of Dutch and early American history from the United States and the Netherlands, including Kees Zandvliet (Amsterdams Historisch Museum), Els Koek (Institute for Dutch History), Jaap Jacobs (independent scholar), David W. Voorhees (Papers of Jacob Leisler Project at New York University), Joyce D. Goodfriend (University of Denver), and Ruth Piwonka (independent scholar). The catalogue is distributed worldwide by Yale University Press and is on sale at the BGC and New-York Historical Society.

RELATED PROGRAMS

Lectures, gallery talks, curatorial conversations, workshops, and tours are offered in conjunction with *Dutch New York between East and West: The World of Margrieta van Varick*. Many of these events take place during the exhibition. For further information, please call 212-501-3011 or e-mail programs@bgc.bard.edu.

EXHIBITION TOURS

Group tours of *Dutch New York* are conducted Tuesday through Friday between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., and on Thursdays until 7:00 p.m. Reservations are required for all groups. For further information, please call the Bard Graduate Center Gallery at 212-501-3013 or TTY 212-501-3012, or e-mail gallery@bgc.bard.edu.



LOCATION

The Bard Graduate Center is located at 18 West 86th Street, between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue, in New York City. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The admission fee is \$8 general, \$5 seniors and students (with valid ID), and free on Thursday evenings after 5:00 p.m. For further information about the Bard Graduate Center and upcoming exhibitions, please visit www.bgc.bard.edu.

SUPPORT

Dutch New York between East and West: The World of Margrieta van Varick is made possible in part with support from the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York as part of its NY400 Celebrations.



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IMAGES Cover Pieter Mortier, *N Amsterdam, ou N Iork in Ameriq.*, ca. 1700, colored engraving, New-York Historical Society. **Back cover** (detail) Claes Janzoon Visscher, *Novi Belgii Novaque Angliæ Nec Non Partis Virginiae Tabula*, ca. 1655–77, engraving, hand colored, New-York Historical Society. **Interior flap** *Pair of Jars*, late 17th century, earthenware, New-York Historical Society. **Inside, from left to right** Attributed to Quiringh van Breckelenkam, *Family Group at Dinner Table*, ca. 1658–60, oil on canvas, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. *Bowl with cover*, first quarter 18th century, silver. *Wall banging (kalamkari)*, ca. 1610–1620, painted resist and mordants, dyed cotton, Brooklyn Museum.

Dutch New York between East and West: THE WORLD OF MARGRIETA VAN VARICK

September 17, 2009, to January 3, 2010



The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture



Dutch New York between East and West: THE WORLD OF MARGRIETA VAN VARICK

From September 17, 2009, to January 3, 2010, The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture presents *Dutch New York between East and West: The World of Margrieta van Varick*, organized by the Bard Graduate Center (BGC) in its first collaboration with the New-York Historical Society (N-YHS). The exhibition is part of the quadricentennial of Henry Hudson's arrival in New York Harbor, a citywide celebration. The exhibition has been curated by Marybeth De Filippis, Assistant Curator of American Art at the N-YHS and a BGC graduate; Deborah L. Krohn, Associate Professor and Coordinator for History and Theory of Museums at the BGC; and Peter N. Miller, Dean and Chair of Academic Programs at the BGC. This project is also part of the BGC's museum studies concentration, which allows graduate students to conduct research for the exhibition and make contributions to its catalogue.

BACKGROUND

Dutch New York explores the life, times, and possessions of a fascinating woman and her family. Born in the Netherlands, Margrieta van Varick (1649–1695) spent the better part of her life at the extremes of the Dutch colonial world: in Malacca (now Malaysia) and Flatbush (now Brooklyn). Arriving in Flatbush with her minister husband, Rudolphus, in 1686, she set up a textile shop, having brought with her an astonishing array of Eastern and European goods. We know about the wealth of objects thanks to an inventory, taken in 1696, documenting her personal and

commercial belongings. The groundbreaking research conducted for this exhibition and its accompanying catalogue makes an original contribution to the histories of New York City, Dutch colonial and commercial networks, lives of women in the Dutch overseas colonies, and material culture of New York under Dutch and English rule.

THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition begins with the inventory of 1696—a singular document, now in the collection of the New York State Archives, that presents intriguing challenges for scholars and curators. This record is one of the few means available to navigate the terrain of Margrieta van Varick's life. While the inventory reveals the scope and diversity of objects Margrieta ostensibly owned, little is known of her life. This gap is addressed in a digital film, made by the BGC, featuring the renowned historian Natalie Zemon Davis, author of numerous books, including *Three Women on the Margins*. Davis considers the absence of biographical information by discussing what is known about the world in which Margrieta van Varick, and women like her, lived. This opening section also explores inventories of the period and how they bring insight to historical and curatorial inquiry.

From the overview, the exhibition's next section focuses on New Netherland, introducing visitors to the settlement that would soon be considered “at the center of the world.” Portraits of Peter Stuyvesant, who began his 17-year tenure over the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam in 1647, and Cornelius Steenwyck, regarded as one of the principal merchants and leading public officials in New Amsterdam beginning in the late 1650s, are among the loans that represent the history of the early Dutch settlement in New York.



By the time Margrieta van Varick arrived in 1686, New Amsterdam had become New York. The preservation of a distinct form of Dutch life under English rule is an important frame of reference for the exhibition. This history is explored in the next section, which centers on 17th-century Flatbush: the economic and religious life of the town, the central role of the Dutch Reformed Church, connections with Native Americans, and the political implications for the colony of the Revolution of 1688 in England. Another exceptional loan from the New-York Historical Society in this section is a large storage cupboard (*kas*) similar to the one described in the 1696 inventory and typical of Dutch furniture of the late 17th century.

In the next section of the exhibition, visitors encounter representations of the many goods described in the inventory, a vast array of materials and objects, including furniture, metalwork, textiles, costumes, and ceramics. Since the inventory provides only general descriptions, an unusual curatorial challenge—which is discussed in the exhibition's materials—was to examine why various objects on view might have been in the possession of a minister's wife and shopkeeper residing in Flatbush at the time.

Margrieta van Varick's legacy is the subject of the final section of the exhibition, which focuses on her descendants, including those for whom Varick Street in downtown Manhattan and Willets Point in Queens are named. In 1711 Margrieta's daughter, Cornelia van Varick, married Peter Van Dyck (1684–1750), the acclaimed craftsman who created many unique, beautiful objects of American colonial silver. Margrieta van Varick's connection to Peter Van Dyck highlights the possible impact of Margrieta's possessions on the later history of American decorative arts.

Dutch New York between East and West includes more than 170 objects on loan from public and private collections in the United States and the Netherlands. One-third of the exhibition has been chosen from the New-York Historical Society's collections; the remainder consists of loans from the J. Paul Getty Museum, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, Museum of the City of New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, American Museum of Natural History, and Brooklyn Museum, among others.