

Art, Honor and Success in the Dutch Republic

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# Art, Honor and Success in the Dutch Republic

*The Life and Career of Jacob van Loo*

*Judith Noorman*

Amsterdam University Press

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This book is dedicated to Mariët Westermann and Eric Jan Sluiter.

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## Introduction

Soon after Jacob van Loo (1614–1670) stabbed a man in the stomach with a knife, a coroner appointed by the city of Amsterdam must have established that the victim died of the injuries Van Loo had inflicted. Such an investigation was needed to convict the Amsterdam painter *in absentia* and banish him for life, which happened a year later. By then, however, Van Loo had already fled the city and was continuing his successful career as an artist in Paris. Should he ever return to the Republic, the legal document stipulated, he would be executed by sword. Despite this serious setback, Van Loo would enjoy artistic success throughout his life. By contrast, the social and financial positions of other prominent artists – including Rembrandt (1606–1669), Frans Hals (1582–1666), Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675), and Jan Steen (1626–1679) – worsened towards the ends of their lives. Van Loo's success even extended beyond the grave: his talented offspring, known as the Vanloo dynasty, would later become hugely successful in French courtly circles. As such, the story of Van Loo's life, with the manslaughter case at its heart, begs the question: how did Van Loo 'get away' with manslaughter?

This book argues that the key to understanding Van Loo's uninterrupted success, or to measuring and understanding the success of any contemporaneous artist, lies in the honor culture that existed in the Dutch Republic. Today, 'honor' implies an inner sense of right and wrong, personal integrity, or admirable conduct. But in the minds of Van Loo and his contemporaries, honor was an external concept rather than an internal condition, and was largely dependent on the opinion of the outside world. For the first time, this book brings together sociological studies on male honor (such as Pieter Spierenburg's *A History*

*of Murder*, 2008) and female honor (including Lotte van de Pol's *The Burgher and the Whore*, 2011), and applies them in an art-historical context.<sup>1</sup> The gendered concept of honor allows us, on the one hand, to reinterpret the manslaughter case (male honor was a physical concept and often revolved around violence), and, on the other hand, gives rise to a new analysis of Van Loo's use of female nude models and specialization in the nude. Taking an interdisciplinary approach allows us to interpret Van Loo's career by contemporary standards, instead of from a modern viewpoint. Focusing on the interrelationship between Van Loo's art, honor and career, this book demonstrates why Jacob van Loo's lifelong success and unblemished reputation were by no means incompatible, as art historians have long assumed, with his specialization in painting nudes and his conviction for manslaughter.

The honor culture is not only significant in relation to the manslaughter case, which is reinterpreted in Chapter 1 as a sign that Van Loo's elite patrons recognized him as a gentleman and as a highly-esteemed artist; Van Loo's persona also matched his artistic identity, as discussed in Chapter 2. He understood what his clients wanted, both from life and from him. With their so-called Van Dyckian (courtly) mode, tailored to an Amsterdam-based clientele, Van Loo's portraits perfectly expressed the social and political ambitions of the urban elite, while his innovative history paintings brought him ample prestige and riches to boot. This portraiture strategy was not unique; Van Loo was one of a number of painters praised by the artist and author Gerard de Lairese

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1 Spierenburg 2008; Van de Pol 2011.

for making burghers appear courtly.<sup>2</sup> But Van Loo's translation of academic practice and his transformation of *welstant* (a preoccupation with grace and decorum when drawing nude models) into an iconographic specialty – the academic, amorous nude – was unique, and distinguished Van Loo as an inventive master. In Paris, where Van Loo moved after fleeing the Dutch Republic, Van Loo found another way to give patrons what they wanted; or rather, what they believed they needed. Within a courtly and diplomatic culture of gift-giving, Dutch diplomats and prominent French courtiers commissioned portraits from Van Loo that were meant to advance their own careers; but these commissions simultaneously ensured Van Loo's success, which lasted until his death in 1670. Taking a broader perspective, the final two chapters consider the more bizarre aspects of Van Loo's career, and explain why his specialization in the nude and banishment for manslaughter did not necessarily negatively affect his prospects. The sensuousness of Van Loo's nudes was not, as one might assume, in direct conflict with Calvinist beliefs, which one might have expected to condemn the proliferation of erotic imagery. Rather, these paintings allowed Van Loo's clientele to present themselves as judges of beauty and to display their mastery of decorum, or 'the art of standing well' (*welstant*). Moreover, the strict rules and regulations that applied to the academic nude tied in perfectly with the social aspirations and higher demands made of the body among Van Loo's intended audience, as described in Chapter 4.<sup>3</sup> And just because manslaughter, the crime for which he was convicted, was punishable by law, this did not mean, as it would today, that the convicted criminal was automatically

*persona non grata* (Chapter 5). In short, the concept of an honor culture allows for a new and more accurate understanding of every aspect of Van Loo's artistic career and life.

Art historians have misunderstood Van Loo's career as a painter up until now, especially with regard to the homicide and the damage that this was assumed to have done to Van Loo's reputation. In 2011, David Mandrella wrote that Van Loo's reputation suffered after the manslaughter, whilst also acknowledging that he became successful very soon after his arrival in Paris.<sup>4</sup> We are thus missing a precise understanding of the historical context in which the manslaughter was committed. Indeed, Mandrella's study is one in a long line of art-historical publications whose sole aim is to describe the master's work. In the early eighteenth century, the biographer Arnold Houbraken (1660–1719) was the first to describe Van Loo's nudes.<sup>5</sup> He was followed by Michel-François Dandr -Bardon (1700–1785), a pupil of Van Loo's grandson Jean-Baptiste Vanloo (1684–1745),<sup>6</sup> and a wide range of surveys and handbooks on European artists.<sup>7</sup> The twentieth century saw the publication of several articles discussing individual

4 Mandrella 2011, pp. 13, 37.

5 Houbraken knew that Van Loo was renowned for painting nudes, especially women (Houbraken 1718, p. 172). He had seen two of the artist's works in the house of Nicolaes van Suchtelen, burgomaster of Hoorn, and informs us that Eglon van der Neer (c. 1635/1636–1703) was Van Loo's pupil. Van der Neer is the only pupil of Van Loo whose name we know (Houbraken 1718, vol. 1, p. 172). Also see: Schavemaker 2010, especially pp. 19, 20, 37, 39, 51, 67, 81, 85, and 133.

6 Bardon 1765, volume 2, p. 127.

7 The large number of literary mentions can be explained by the popularity of the Vanloo dynasty in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France: Fiorillo 1805, volume 3, pp. 311–324; Burtin 1808, vol. 1, pp. 281, 301, 371; vol. 2, pp. 104, 118, 238–239; Van Eynden/Van der Willigen 1816–1842, vol. 1, p. 134; Nagler 1839; Immerzeel 1842, pp. 184–185; Gault de

2 De Lairese 1712, seventh book, p. 5.

3 Roodenburg 1995; Roodenburg 2004.

paintings by Van Loo,<sup>8</sup> an art-historical overview of Van Loo's entire oeuvre,<sup>9</sup> and a number of exhibition catalogues that contained at least one painting or drawing by Van Loo.<sup>10</sup> The manslaughter case was addressed directly in only one publication: in 'Why Jacob van Loo left Amsterdam', Abraham Bredius published the most important documents relating to Van Loo's time in Amsterdam, but he did not relate these documents to

Van Loo's artistic output.<sup>11</sup> In short, Van Loo's work plays the starring role in art-historical accounts, while the manslaughter case and Van Loo's iconographic specialty sit uneasily within the narrative.

In the light of new developments in sociology, legal studies and anthropology, it recently became possible to study Van Loo's art, honor, and success on his own terms. By taking a broader approach, this book supplements the existing literature by providing an interdisciplinary framework within which to reinterpret Van Loo's entire career, including its seemingly 'bizarre' aspects. To accommodate a wide readership with a range of interests, each chapter can be read as a self-standing account. Whilst this book is primarily an art-historical study, it offers a relevant context for many other fields within early modern studies, by relating the career of Van Loo to themes such as criminology, the urban cultures of Amsterdam and Paris, honor culture, and patronage. Those who read the book cover-to-cover may notice that some of the main points of the overarching argument are repeated in places.

In Chapter 1, Jacob van Loo is presented as a highly-esteemed artist and as a sophisticated, courteous, and well-connected gentleman. This new biography is based on several newly-discovered archival documents, such as the Huydecoper journal and a travel journal by an anonymous author, in which the authors document one or more encounters with our painter.<sup>12</sup> Personal journals such as these are extremely rare, and yet, with the new additions, we now know of no fewer than five

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Saint-Germain 1858, vol. 2, pp. 100–101; Kramm 1859, vol. 4, p. 1009; vol. 6, p. 1675; Michiels 1865–1876, vol. 10, p. 22.

8 Cat. no. 42. On Van Loo's painting of a woman stepping into a bed (cat. no. 1941–5), see: J. Cailleux, 'Jacob van Loo, Greuze et Porporati: A Propos d'un Dessin du Musée des Beaux Arts de Lyon,' *Bulletin Musée et Monuments Lyon* 1 (1960), pp. 289–297; René Jullian, 'Le "Coucher a l'Italienne" de Jacob van Loo,' in: Roberto Longhi (ed.), *Proporzioni: Studi di Storia dell'Arte*, III, Firenze 1950, pp. 199–203. Edouard Michel discussed Van Loo's oeuvre in relation to a painting now attributed to Nicolaes Maes (*Bathing children*, Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. M.I. 937); E. Michel, 'La "Baignade" de la collection Schlichting. Jacob van Loo ou Nicolas Maes?,' *Bulletin des Musées de France* 1933, May, no. 5, pp. 68–71. In 1976/7, Willem van de Watering, who studied Van Loo for many years, published an article on a portrait of a woman that is no longer attributed to Van Loo: the *Portrait of a woman* in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (inv. no. 72.78); W.L. van de Watering, 'On Jacob van Loo's "Portrait of a young woman",' *Minneapolis Institute Art Bulletin* 63 (1976–1977), pp. 32–41. Here the painting is not attributed to Van Loo, but it does appear in Mandrella's catalogue as an attributed work (Mandrella 2011, cat. no. PA 7).

9 Von Schneider 1925–1926.

10 Among the exhibitions that featured paintings by Van Loo are 'Gods, Saints, and Heroes. Dutch painting in the Age of Rembrandt' (Washington/Detroit/Amsterdam 1980, cat. no. 51); 'Masters of seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting' (Sutton 1984, cat. no. 64); 'Het gedroomde land. Pastorale schilderkunst in de Gouden Eeuw' (Utrecht/Frankfurt/Luxembourg 1993, cat. nos. 37, 38); 'Hollands classicisme in de zeventiende-eeuwse schilderkunst' (Rotterdam 1999, cat. no. 26).

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11 Bredius 1916.

12 The other new documents are an inventory of a frame-maker and a reference to Heyndrick van Loo, a painter in Middelburg. Furthermore, the second deposition, drawn up after the manslaughter, was retrieved from the Amsterdam City Archives by Machiel Bosman. With thanks to Marten Jan Bok, Angela Jager, and Inge Broekman, new transcriptions have been added as Appendix C to this book.

recorded visits to Van Loo's studio.<sup>13</sup> Together, these documents offer a clear picture of Van Loo's personality and reputation, his conduct towards others, and his place in society, both in Amsterdam and Paris. Such consistency has long been lacking in art-historical biographies of Van Loo; the painter's life has always been presented as a random and, at times, bizarre sequence of events, caused in large part by a tendency to overlook important references to Van Loo's honor and reputation in contemporary documents.<sup>14</sup> Set against the background of an honor culture, Chapter 1 paints a detailed picture of an artist who, thanks to his background, upbringing, and personality, enjoyed success among his peers and became a respected and well-connected member of society, both before and after the manslaughter case.

Chapter 2 reexamines Van Loo's artistic output. In his in-depth study, Arthur Schneider attempted to account for Van Loo's diversity by categorizing the surviving paintings according to the artist's geographic whereabouts, distinguishing Flemish, Dutch classicist, and Parisian phases.<sup>15</sup> He thereby presented an image of an artist who did not hold firm to a set of ideas, but passively conformed to his environment. Mandrella's characterization of Van Loo's oeuvre as 'eclectic' and his emphasis on 'influence' similarly suggests that Van Loo's oeuvre cannot be characterized by a single paradigm or even consistent decision-making.<sup>16</sup> Following Eric Jan Sluijter's analytical model,

this book is based on the premise that the notion of artistic 'influence' obscures, rather than clarifies, our understanding of the art-making process.<sup>17</sup> It is more important to study how artists positioned themselves in relation to each other and *vis à vis* the artistic traditions and contemporary developments in their art. Indeed, Van Loo consciously and actively distinguished himself from his peers and predecessors through his *handeling* (style), academic practice, subject matter, and type of composition. This is demonstrated in Chapter 2, in which Van Loo's main visual sources are identified and Van Loo's adaptation to existing ideas are discussed in comparison with those of his competitors on the art market.

The discussion of Van Loo's artistic output in Chapter 2 is based on a new list of works (Appendix A) that deviates from previous scholarship on Van Loo.<sup>18</sup> First, some of the

13 Those who documented their encounters with Van Loo are: Christiaan Huygens, Joan Huydecoper Junior, Willem Schellincks, Willem Frederik, and the anonymous author of the travel journal.

14 Von Schneider 1925–1926; Mandrella 2011.

15 A. von Schneider, 'Jacob van Loo', *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 59 (1925–1926), pp. 66–78.

16 Mandrella describes Van Loo's oeuvre in terms of 'influences', 'inspiration', and 'évolution' (Mandrella 2011, pp. 45, 50, 90).

17 Eric Jan Sluijter recently reappraised his views in his in-depth study of history painting in Amsterdam between 1630 and 1650, which includes Van Loo's early work: 'If one thinks in terms of influence, a work of art is approached from the wrong side, and the artist who is making a work of art is turned into nothing more than a passive recipient of that influence. It gives us no insight into the pursuits and possible intentions of the artist that is "influenced". I also avoid the use of "inspiration", which as a term relating one artwork to an earlier one has perhaps been even more popular than "influence" in more recent art historical literature. It is, however, indeterminate and similarly denies the artist's agency.' Sluijter 2015, pp. 3–4.

18 Art historians generously attributed paintings to Jacob van Loo throughout the twentieth century. In the absence of a *catalogue raisonné*, it was possible to suggest attributions without limit. In an attempt to attribute as many anonymous portraits to known masters as possible, Sturla Gudlaugsson, connoisseur and former director of the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), singlehandedly broadened the spectrum of styles and techniques associated with Van Loo. The name, or rather



nudes previously attributed to Van Loo have been reattributed to Dirck van der Lisse,<sup>19</sup> Jan van Neck,<sup>20</sup> and Abraham van Cuylenborch (plates 1–3.).<sup>21</sup> It seems that the label ‘Van Loo’ was applied too broadly to a wide range of painted nudes in the past, no doubt due to his specialization in this field. Second, the list includes three paintings that have surfaced on the art market since 2011: *Raising of Bacchus*, *Venus mourning Adonis’ death*, and a *Portrait of a young woman* (see Appendix A, nos. 81, 53, and 3).<sup>22</sup> Another authentic and previously

monogram, of S.J. Gudlaugsson appears abundantly on RKD documentation concerning paintings that cannot be attributed to Van Loo.

19 The painting of Lot and his daughter, attributed to Van Loo by Mandrella, is by Dirck van der Lisse (Mandrella 2011, cat. no. P76). Compare, for instance, another version of *Lot and his daughters* by Van der Lisse: the nudes are very similar and the uniquely shaped vase is identical to that in another painting of the same subject by Van der Lisse (Staatliches Museum Schwerin, inv. no. G 354). The painting was also reproduced in the exhibition catalogue (The Hague 1998b, p. 196).

20 The copy after a reclining nude, attributed to Van Loo, may have been made by Jan van Neck, based on a comparison with the latter’s signed painting of *Venus and Cupid* (last seen at the art dealer C. Benedict, Paris, 1957, as signed ‘J.v.Neck f.’). Van Neck owned several paintings by Van Loo at the time of his death (see Appendix B) and may well have copied one of them. Mandrella attributes both the work attributed to Van Loo and the copy by Van Neck to Van Loo (Mandrella 2011, cat. nos. 62 and 63).

21 The painting of a *Woman before a mirror* (Mandrella 2011, P 66) is attributed to Van Cuylenborch, based on its similarities with the *Venus and Cupid* at the Centraal Museum in Utrecht (Utrecht 1952, p. 32, no. 71).

22 Two other paintings that surfaced on the art market and were attributed to Van Loo, but are not considered authentic works by ‘our’ Van Loo here, are: *A Man and a young boy warming their hands*, possibly an allegory of winter, oil on canvas, 89 x 76 cm, Kunsthandel P. de Boer Ltd 2018 (as attributed

unknown painting – *Interior with a couple and a spinster* – in the National Gallery in Prague was brought to my attention by Stefan Bartilla (see Appendix A, no. 38). Finally, the selection of authentic works by David Mandrella proved to be too generous, and all of the unconvincing and unsubstantiated attributions have been weeded out. For the criteria applied in this study, see the section on ‘Authenticity’ (pages 52ff). With this more selective reconstruction of Van Loo’s artistic output, his production already appears to have been slightly less ‘eclectic’.<sup>23</sup> There may be a little less Van Loo, but what remains allows for a more accurate analysis of his original art production and place on the art markets of Amsterdam and Paris.

Chapter 2 reveals, for the first time, Van Loo’s dual market strategy, which secured him a niche in the competitive and volatile art markets in France and the Netherlands. The revised list of works reveals that Van Loo always chose what he, most of his clients, and some of his colleagues would have considered the noblest option. First, he probably studied with court artists in The Hague; a new thesis, presented on pages 43–47. And as a history painter, Van Loo chose the most prestigious category – history painting – as his specialty, and he was ambitious, bringing

to Van Loo at Tefaf 2018); *Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus*, oil on canvas, 139 x 153 cm, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 20 June 2018, no. 33 (as attributed to Van Loo).

23 Some claims about the ‘eclecticism’ of Van Loo, as well as the diversity of his classicism, are based on paintings that are not in fact by Van Loo. *The flute player* (Mandrella 2011, cat. no. P32) may resemble works by Jan van Bijlert and Van Bronckhorst, but it is not, in my opinion, by Van Loo. The claims regarding Van Loo’s dependency on Backer are based on two works that are not considered secure attributions here (Mandrella 2011, cat. nos. P8 and P31). The ‘Backerien’ elements of Van Loo’s *Venus* in the J.B. Speed Art Museum in Louisville are unclear and continue to elude me (Mandrella 2011, p. 62).

innovation to the field by incorporating academic nudes, or nudes drawn from life. As a portraitist, however, he followed established traditions, rather than inventing new ones. With diverse contributions in each specialty, Van Loo was aiming for prestige as well as a steady income, and thus to avoid the kind of disgrace suffered by many of his financially less-successful colleagues. As such, this reexamination of Van Loo's artistic output explains the supposedly 'eclectic' nature of his work: he was diversifying his product range. Moreover, Van Loo developed his specialization in the nude in a way that was tailored to the social ambitions of the urban 'elite', thereby allowing his audience to distinguish themselves from inferior classes by demonstrating proper decorum.

Chapter 3 shows that Van Loo's clientele is exceptionally well documented compared to that of his colleagues. This book introduces thirteen new patrons and early owners of his works, including Samuel van Huls and Hendrick van Merck, burgomasters of The Hague and Dordrecht; Pieter Buttinga, one of the directors of the Dutch East India Company (VOC); and Gabriël Marselis, a merchant for the King of Denmark (Appendix B, also see pages 59, 76–77). Based on a systematic list of Van Loo's patrons (Appendix B), Chapter 3 concerns Van Loo's clientele and the way in which he associated with them. Tellingly, Van Loo mixed with the same social circles before and after his conviction for manslaughter. Judging from the journals, correspondence, and recorded studio visits, Van Loo's relationships with his clients were close and unusually longstanding, in comparison to some of his colleagues.<sup>24</sup> The

24 On the artistic success and clientele of some of Van Loo's colleagues in Amsterdam, see: Sluijter 2015 (Amsterdam history painters between 1630 and 1650) and Kok 2015 (on Jacob Backer, Joachim von Sandrart, Govert Flinck, and Ferdinand Bol).

description of Van Loo's rapport with his clients is based on an extraordinarily rich trove of historical documents on his patrons, divulging a consistent picture of his personality, social conduct, and place in society. No fewer than five visitors to his studio recorded their interactions with the artist. On Wednesday 6/16 December 1648, Van Loo entertained none other than the Frisian stadtholder, Willem Frederick (1613–1664), with gallant conversation while the latter sat for his portrait.<sup>25</sup> That evening, the stadtholder recorded the event thus in his journal: 'I arrived in Amsterdam at noon, ate there, had myself painted at master Van Loo.'<sup>26</sup> The next morning at eight thirty, Willem Frederick returned to continue the session. This time, Van Loo spoke about the lesser-known religious communities living in the city and recounted the story 'that Judas unknowingly married his mother.'<sup>27</sup> Willem Frederick, who met and spoke with a great number of learned and important people on a daily basis, did not usually record the topics of conversation.<sup>28</sup> Van Loo's art of conversation was apparently noteworthy, and Willem Frederik paints a picture of a gentleman painter. Moreover, Van Loo's efforts to attract appropriate audiences were distinctive among his peers; he used his social graces and hospitality to establish and maintain enduring

25 Willem Frederik used 'double dates' in his journals, distinguishing between the Gregorian calendar of Holland and the Julian calendar of Friesland.

26 Idem.

27 'Ick quam te twaelf uir te Amsterdam, adt daer, liet mij schilderen bij meester Van Loo. ... Ick ginck om half negen bij den schilder, hij vertelde mij, dat-ter soo veel armyniaenen wahren, oock sociniaenen, die veel mit de armyniaenen oovereenquaemen. Mijn jacht wierdt afgedanckt. -Oock dat Judas onwetende zijn moeder had getraut.' Frederik 1995, p. 609.

28 Willem Frederik had himself painted by another portraitist on 18/28 July 1648, but Willem Frederik did not mention this artist's name or the topics they discussed, if any (Frederik 1995).

relationships with clients. Several accounts of studio visits, scattered throughout Van Loo's active years in Amsterdam and Paris, reveal that Van Loo consistently managed to create an atmosphere in his studio where art lovers could converse, socialize, and acquire history paintings on the spot. Van Loo understood how to play up to and profit from the social demands and aspirations of his clientele, in addition to their esthetic and artistic preferences.

Chapter 4 describes how Van Loo's specialization in the nude was shaped by the emergence of academies (i.e., life-drawing classes) in Amsterdam. The academic drawings of Van Loo and his Amsterdam-based colleagues have received attention in recent years.<sup>29</sup> For

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29 One important earlier publication on drawings of nude models is Peter Schatborn's exhibition catalogue on Dutch figure drawing (Amsterdam 1981), which contained several examples of academic drawings made in Amsterdam, such as cat. nos. 53–55 (Rembrandt), 49 (Flinck), 5 (Backer), 95 (Van de Velde), and 100 (Zomer). Individual drawings were also included in the following exhibitions: 'Drawings for Paintings in the Age of Rembrandt' (Washington/Paris 2016), 'Ferdinand Bol and Govert Flinck' (Rembrandt House Museum/Amsterdam Museum; Amsterdam/Amsterdam 2017), and 'Drawings by Rembrandt and his Pupils. Telling the Difference' (J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010; Los Angeles 2010, pp. 3–4, 9–19, 25, cat. nos. 3.1, 3.2, 21.1, 21.2, 41.1, 41.2, 42.1, 42.2, 43.1, 43.2). With the exception of those by Rembrandt, academic drawings by Amsterdam-based painters only appear in monographs, where they receive little attention. On Flinck, see: Von Moltke 1965; on Bol, see: Blankert 1980; on Backer, see: Amsterdam/Aachen 2008; on Van Loo, see: Mandrella 2011; on Van de Velde, see: Schatborn 1975, Robinson 1979 and 1993. I am currently preparing an article on Van de Velde's commitment to academic practice and contribution to classicist history painting circa 1650. Still, only a small number of academic drawings by artists from Amsterdam, hundreds of which survive, have been published.

example, the academic drawings, all on blue paper or in red chalk, are discussed as counterparts of Rembrandt's art in Eric Jan Sluijter's pivotal *Rembrandt and the Female Nude*.<sup>30</sup> My own postdoctoral research at the Morgan Library and Museum served as the scholarly basis of the exhibition *Rembrandt's Naked Truth* at the Rembrandt House Museum in 2016.<sup>31</sup> The essay recounts in detail how Rembrandt and artists such as Van Loo responded to each other when drawing nude models, pushing themselves to reach unprecedented artistic heights. Building on that publication, Chapter 4 explores the scope of academic practice and discourse in Amsterdam around 1650, offering insight into the specific preferences and practices of Van Loo and his 'academic' colleagues, such as Rembrandt, Jacob Backer (1609–1651), and Govert Flinck (1615–1660). When drawing or painting the nude, Van Loo and his like-minded colleagues aimed to achieve *welstant*, an esthetic and behavioral ideal upheld by the urban elites of Amsterdam and Paris.<sup>32</sup> Finally, this chapter demonstrates that Van Loo invented a new academic mode, and that his nudes offered his clientele an opportunity to distinguish themselves from inferior classes by 'standing well' themselves.

The fifth and final chapter concerns the male side of honor culture: violence. In the well-regulated society of Holland, manslaughter was

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30 Eric Jan Sluijter has made a significant contribution to our understanding of Rembrandt's depictions of the female nude and the significance of life drawing, most recently in *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* (Sluijter 2006). Parts of the book were published earlier as articles, essays, etc.: Sluijter 2001b; Sluijter 2000a; Sluijter 1999; Sluijter 1998; Sluijter 1986.

31 As the guest curator, I organized the exhibition and co-edited the exhibition catalogue with David de Witt (Amsterdam 2016).

32 Roodenburg 2004.



the ultimate test of any artist's social position. Van Loo passed this test with flying colors: with a little help from his friends, he escaped the death penalty and continued to enjoy a successful career. The previous assumption that Van Loo lost his good reputation after he was banished is thus disproved for good.<sup>33</sup> Instead, as argued in this chapter, some of Van Loo's clients, who held powerful positions in Amsterdam, were in a position to support him and his career. Set against the history of crime, honor, and the justice system in the Dutch Republic, the manslaughter narrative reinterprets a major turning point in Van Loo's career, while addressing questions about the kind of everyday behavior that was expected and accepted from artists in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.

Whilst this book presents Van Loo as an honorable man, before and after the manslaughter, one should be careful not to overestimate his social status in relation to his clients. Luuc Kooijmans' book *Vriendschap en de kunst van het overleven in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (1997), which is often taken as a point of departure by art historians, studied friendship in a strictly familial context, equating it with *maegschap* (blood relations).<sup>34</sup> Kooijmans argued that such relationships performed an important social and economic function, providing support and protection in times of need, much like today's pensions and social security. Friendship was, as Kooijmans described it, a matter of life and death. Erna Kok took this idea of social, moral and economic interdependency and developed it into a new social-economic model: the economy of

reciprocity.<sup>35</sup> With the exception of Jacob Backer, the artists discussed in this book – Joachim von Sandrart, Govert Flinck, and Ferdinand Bol – married into and truly belonged to the closed social circles of their clients. But whilst Van Loo's life and career illustrate the importance of social networks in seventeenth-century life as a way to improve one's career and station in life, Van Loo never belonged to the same network as his clients, and remained on the outside. Indeed, for sociologists, the difference in standing between patron and client is one of the characteristics of patronage.<sup>36</sup> Van Loo thus provides a new and perhaps more representative example of an artist who merely delivered services and commodities to his socially superior clients.

For many years, the life of Van Loo was a metaphorical knot that could, as demonstrated in this book, only be untangled in an interdisciplinary context. Suspecting that Van Loo was an eccentric, possibly even a social outcast, art historians hesitated to credit Van Loo with having fathered a dynasty of painters, as mentioned at the outset of this introduction. Some even doubted the accuracy of this claim. Reinterpreted in the context of an honor culture, however, the foundations of this prestigious achievement no longer seem improbable. Aside from the obvious practical factors – Van Loo's migration, his choice of France, the family studio – Van Loo's hospitable character and keen business sense not only ensured his own success, but also advanced the social and professional success of his offspring. Although one

33 '[d]ès octobre 1660, l'artiste souffrait déjà de sa mauvaise réputation,' Mandrella 2011, p. 13.

34 Kooijmans' definition of friendship is broader (Kooijmans 1997, pp. 14–19), but the book as a whole is about 'friendship' in a familial context.

35 In Dutch, this model is called the 'economie van dienst en wederdienst' (Kok 2013). Similarly, in the field of literature, Nina Geerdink has discussed and defined the nature of the relationship between patrons and poets (Geerdink 2012, pp. 42–44, 73).

36 Marshall 2011; Kettering 1986; Wolf 1966.

should not overlook Van Loo's artistic talent, of course – a prerequisite for professional success – unlike Rembrandt, Hals, Vermeer, and Steen, Van Loo consistently achieved professional success throughout his life. As demonstrated by the manslaughter narrative, much of this was due to his ability to establish lasting relationships and use them to overcome hardship.

The most obvious source of the Van Loo dynasty's success is thus to be found in Van Loo's ability to meet life's challenges with grace and an unblemished reputation. Still, its founder could not have foreseen its future success: the Van Loo dynasty continued to flourish into the nineteenth century, something that would surely have exceeded Van Loo's expectations.