



MARIA SIBYLLA MERIAN CONFERENCE 2017



*Changing the Nature of Art and Science
Intersections with Maria Sibylla Merian*

ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

Joris Bürmann

Merian at *l'Église du Seigneur*: A New Light on the Wieuwerd Context

Starting with Merian's alleged fascination for Labadie's spiritual poetries, this paper shows how a close look at the Father's poetic hermeneutic of Scripture can provide new elements for the understanding of Merian's conversion and her own reading of the Book of Nature. Labadist piety and poetry held sway over the work of Merian, both in echoing her own research of that time and forming a stimulating context for her artistic creation. Merian's status and integration inside the community is also questioned through a newly discovered collection of canticles written in Wieuwerd, which helps to redefine the role of members, especially women.

Joris Bürmann is a student at the *École Normale Supérieure* in Paris, majoring in 17th century French literature, and currently part-time at the faculty at Boston College. In 2015–2016, he defended with honours his master thesis at the Université Paris-Sorbonne under the supervision of Olivier Millet, professor of 16th century French literature and specialist of protestant rhetoric. Bürmann's theses worked to shed light on the forgotten poetic works of Jean de Labadie and his followers through a new archival enquiry. In 2016, he was a visiting fellow at the Fryske Akademy and participated in the discovery and publication of the Labadist library catalogue by Pieta van Beek. In order to introduce the Labadist heritage to a wider public, he also wrote articles in the Walloon Churches' journal, *L'Écho Wallon*, and the French protestant cultural periodical, *Foi & Vie*. Alongside poetics and history of religious dissents, he is very much interested in the influence and posterity of the Labadist movement, notably in Sibylla Merian's oeuvre.

Marieke van Delft

Surviving copies of Merian's 1705 edition of *Metamorphosis*

In 1705 Maria Sibylla Merian published the first edition of her major work *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*. She published the book in various appearances: with text printed in Latin or Dutch, and the plates uncoloured, coloured, normal printing and counterproof. It remains unknown how many copies she published. For the publication of the recent facsimile of *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*, a worldwide survey was held to establish the number of copies that survive in public and private collections. Up to the present, 67 copies were found, from Australia to the United States, from Russia to the Netherlands. In my lecture I will give an overview of the known surviving copies and analyse the various appearances. I will also go into the issues encountered by a compiler of such a survey. Results of detailed research of some copies will be presented, leading to a description model for a census of all surviving copies of the 1705 edition.

Marieke van Delft is curator of Early Printed Collections at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the National Library of the Netherlands in The Hague. She studied history and book history at the universities of Amsterdam and Leiden and gained her doctorate in cultural studies at the KU Leuven. Her PhD was published as *Van wiegendruk tot world wide web. Bijzondere collecties en de vele geschiedenissen van het gedrukte boek*. It deals with the history of the book and how a curator can contribute to new research. Van Delft has published on many aspects of the history of the printed book in the Netherlands. In collaboration with Lannoo Publishers she has created facsimile editions of *Atlas De Wit* (2012), *Nederlandsche vogelen* (2014) and Merian's *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* (2016).



Yulia Dunaeva

Using books by Maria Sibylla Merian and her *Studienbuch* to determine zoological specimens from the collection of Peter the Great's *Kunstkamera* in the first half of the 18th century

The earliest printed catalogue of the first Russian public museum, Peter the Great's *Kunstkamera*, was published in St. Petersburg in 1741–1745. The first part of the first volume of this book listed and briefly described the collection's naturalia of animal origin. Compilers of the catalogue had to determine and describe more than 7000 zoological specimens. The zoological part of the catalogue *Musei imperialis petropolitani* contains more than 250 references to the books illustrated by Maria Sibylla Merian and more than 50 references to her *Studienbuch*. This fact demonstrates that Merian's works had not only aesthetic but also scientific importance and were very helpful in the early period of the Russian academic activity.

Yulia Dunaeva was born in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) in 1964. She graduated at the Biological Faculty of St. Petersburg State University in 1990. Since 1994 she worked at the Library of Russian Academy of Sciences as librarian and chief librarian, and since 2013, as junior scientific researcher. Her scientific interests are centered around rare old books in the collection of the Library of the Zoological Institute. Since 2000 Yulia Dunaeva has been working to popularise the works by Maria Sibylla Merian. In 2007, her essay on M.S. Merian was included in the shortlist of the ‘Blogbuster’ Russian literary award.

Kay Etheridge

A Biologist to the Bone

The aesthetic appeal of Merian’s images has led history to label her as an artist who painted and engraved natural history subjects. I will argue that Merian was as passionate a naturalist (biologist in modern terms) as Charles Darwin or Carl Linnaeus, and that her talents and skills as an artist were employed in support of her true focus, the ecology of insects and their plant hosts. Merian as a biologist does not negate Merian the artist, but thinking of her first and foremost as a naturalist shifts how the choices that she made in her life and work may be viewed. Examination of her nearly lifelong study of insects provides much evidence that Merian was impelled primarily by curiosity about nature. Her early artistic training, her religious beliefs and the need to make a living were factors in her life’s path, but her desire to understand nature and to convey information to her readers were central to her work. Using evidence from Merian’s own words and images, I will consider her motivations in the context of her time and place, and discuss her body of work in comparison to that of her near contemporaries working in natural history. Lastly, I will explore possible reasons why Merian’s considerable achievements as a biologist have taken a back seat to her artistic reputation.

Kay Etheridge is Professor of Biology at Gettysburg College and a founding member of the Maria Sibylla Merian Society. Earlier publications in physiology and ecology include studies on tropical bats, manatees, lizards, and salamanders. Her current scholarship centers on the integration of natural history images and the history of biology with a focus on Maria Sibylla Merian. Her upcoming book on Merian will be published by Brill, and she is an editor of the Brill book series *Emergence of Natural History*.

**Between faithfulness and construction: Re-assessing Merian's oeuvre**

Based on recent research, this paper will provide answers to two questions related to Merian's scientific observations and to her workshop: for a long time already it has been assumed that Merian's daughters, Johanna Helena and Dorothea Maria, were their mother's apprentices. However, until now, all attempts for attribution were based on hypotheses without solid proof. Furthermore, the question can be asked whether, from an entomological perspective, there is even more to Merian's pictures than a faithful representation of metamorphosis and parasitism on the respective host plants. New and original research provides answers to both questions. Solid criteria are presented for the attribution of pictures to each of the three artists, the mother and her two daughters. In the course of that research, the additional, novel aspect of Merian's work became evident: her intention to represent the insects' movements, thus going beyond a static representation of metamorphosis and parasitism. The findings are based on the analysis of two series belonging to the St. Petersburg collection, where they are categorised as "preparatory work for a herb book".

Carin Grabowski. After earning degrees in Biology, Geography and Sports from the Freie Universität Berlin she was working as high school teacher in Berlin until 1996. In 1998 she started studies in Art History at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin which she completed in 2016 with a PhD thesis on Maria Sibylla Merian under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Horst Bredekamp.

Anja Grebe**Changing the Discourse of Science. New Insights on Maria Sibylla Merian's Impact on Entomology in Nuremberg and Beyond**

In his "Eulogy" on Maria Sibylla Merian which the Nuremberg theologian and poet Christoph Arnold composed for the first edition of her "Raupenbuch" ("The wondrous transformation of caterpillars and their remarkable diet of flowers"), published in Nuremberg in 1679, Maria Sibylla is compared to some of the most renowned entomologists from different nations in Europe, among them Jan Swammerdam, Conrad Gessner, and Johannes Goedaert. To make Maria Sibylla Merian stand out from these learned men, Arnold declares her a kind of natural wonder, because even as a (young) woman she proved to be able to equal the most distinguished scholars. It has often been pointed out that despite Arnold's assertions (as well as those authored by Salomon Perez for the Latin editions of her books of 1718/19), the response of the (mostly male) scientific community to Merian's publications was not very enthusiastic. Most modern scholars agree that Maria Sibylla's books were regarded as "nice", "curious", and "artful", but they were not fully accepted as scientific literature. However, as printed sources as well

as archival materials mainly from Nuremberg collections show, Merian enjoyed a much larger fame among both contemporary and later scholars as hitherto stated. For entomologists like Johann August Rösel von Rosendorf and others, Merian was not just a source of artistic inspiration but a matter of serious scientific discussion. The paper aims to shed new light on the position of Maria Sibylla Merian in the scientific world of the 17th and 18th centuries both in Nuremberg and beyond.

Anja Grebe is Professor of Cultural History and Collection Studies at the Danube University of Krems (Austria). She has studied Art History, French Literature, and History at the University of Constance (Germany) where she received her PhD in 2000. She has taught Art History at the Universities of Bamberg, Erlangen-Nuremberg, Würzburg, Freiburg and Peking University and worked as an assistant curator at the German National Museum in Nuremberg. Her research focuses on Medieval and Early Modern Art and Culture, Northern Renaissance Art, the History of Collecting, Book Illumination and Book Design, Graphic Arts and the Intersections between Art and Science. Her publications include *Heilige und Hasen. Bücherschätze der Dürerzeit* (Exhib.-Cat. Nuremberg 2008, with Thomas Eser), *Dürer – Geschichte seines Ruhms* (2013), “A Manual for Printing Copper Plates Predating Abraham Bosse’s Treatise of 1645,” in: *Art in Print. The Global Journal of Prints and Ideas* 3/4, 2013 (with Ad Stijnman), “Die Kunst der Insektenforschung. Maria Sibylla Merians ‘Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium’ (1705),” in: *Imprimatur – Jahrbuch für Bücherfreunde*, 24 (2015), 199–220, and *Maria Sibylla Merian. Blumen, Raupen, Schmetterlinge* (Exhib.-Cat. Nuremberg 2017, with Christine Sauer) on Maria Sibylla Merian’s life and work in Nuremberg.

Kate Heard

**‘One of the most Curious Performances ... that ever was published’:
Merian in the Royal Collection**



This paper will present the results of recent research into the works by Maria Sibylla Merian in the Royal Collection, undertaken in preparation for the exhibition *Maria Merian’s Butterflies* (The Queen’s Galleries, London and Edinburgh, 2016–17). These hybrids of printmaking and watercolour can provide important evidence for the production of the *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*. Starting with the works themselves, the paper will ask what they can reveal about Merian’s working practices and the reception of her work in England in the early eighteenth century.

Kate Heard is Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings, Royal Collection Trust. She has a particular interest in northern European print culture and the history of collecting. Kate is the curator of *Maria Merian’s Butterflies* (The Queen’s Gallery, London, 15 April –9 October 2016; The Queen’s Gallery, Edinburgh, 17 March

– 23 July 2017) and author of the accompanying publication of the same name. She is Deputy Editor of the *Journal of the History of Collections* and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

Erik de Jong

Biophilia and Beauty in the work of Maria Sibylla Merian

Reactions of almost anyone to the work of Maria Sibylla Merian is one of fascination, wonderment and being touched by the beauty of what we see. By what are we touched? The artistry of her work, the beauty of nature revealed? How do such observations connect the late 17th-century to our own time? In aesthetic theory the beauty of nature is a complex given. Merian's art may lead us towards better understandings of the issues connected to how we really look at and understand nature. Moreover, nature is just as complex in the diverse roles it plays. In his *Biophilia – The human bond with other species* from 1984, Edward O. Wilson stated that 'Biophilia is the innate emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms' but also suggested that biophilia as a concept 'is relevant to our thinking about the arts and mythopoeia (...)'. By way of introduction to a day when visitors will *in situ* pay attention to the Artis park with its plants, insects and butterflies and where possibilities will be offered to experience botanical art in practice, it seems relevant to discuss where in this present world we stand with regard to the intertwined meanings of both nature and art.

Erik A. de Jong has held the Artis-chair for Culture, Landscape and Nature, Faculty of the Humanities at the University of Amsterdam since 2009. He is also main advisor to the master plan of the Dutch Royal Zoological Society *Natura Artis Magistra*. He was professor of Landscape Studies at the Bard Graduate Center in New York, Senior Harvard Fellow Landscape Studies Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University and also taught History and Theory in Landscape Architecture at Wageningen University. His teaching, research and publications concern the relationship between man and nature, issues in natural history, the history and meaning of garden and landscape, and heritage issues in the field of natural history and landscape. At the moment, he is working on several design and art projects with representatives of other disciplines on nature, technology and art and cooperates regularly as an advisor and researcher in projects on landscape heritage.

Peter Kristiansen

The Merian drawings at Rosenborg Castle in Copenhagen

In the collection of Rosenborg Castle are 50 drawings of flowers by Maria Sibylla Merian, two of them carrying her signature. The 50 drawings are present in the oldest inventory of the castle of 1696. Thus they are probably the only drawings made by Merian known to be part of a collection, when she was still alive.

Some of the motives of the drawings are reproduced in *Der Raupen wunderbare Verwandlung...* from 1679–83. This raises the possibility that Rosenborg's Merian drawings actually could be the originals for the illustrations of the book. The paper will also deal with the context of the drawings in Rosenborg and some speculations of how they may have come to Copenhagen.

Four of the drawings have been shown on the Merian exhibition in the Rembrandthuis in Amsterdam, 2008 and are thus known to the public. The full collection of drawings have not yet been properly published. Today 26 of the 50 drawings are on permanent display in the Rosenborg Castle.

Peter Kristiansen is curator of The Royal Danish Collection, Rosenborg and Amalienborg; research, administration, statistics etc. He earned his masters degree in 1988 from The Architect School of The Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen as an architect, and specialised in architectural history and building archeology. Between 1988 and 1991 he was employed as a curator at the National-museum of Denmark, working with antiquarian supervision on medieval church buildings in Denmark.

Since 1992, he has been curator at The Royal Danish Collection. Special interests are princely and royal heraldry, princely and royal genealogy, renaissance and baroque woodcarvings, medieval and early modern architecture, museums in historic houses, etc.

Margot Lölhöffel



Maria Sibylla Gräffin, née Merianin — Starting a Career in Nuremberg?

In 1668, Johann Andreas Graff moved with his young wife, Maria Sibylla, and their first baby-daughter, Johanna Helena, to his hometown of Nuremberg, where he owned a spacious house. He was from a family of good reputation, and his own skills as a painter and copperplate etcher/engraver were well regarded there. Maria Sibylla could profit from a network of educated citizens with many private book and art collections. Hundreds of gardens were the pride of their owners, an art academy had recently been founded, and academic teachers in the natural sciences and philosophy were famous. After the Thirty Years' War, the city prospered. Even women were allowed to develop their skills in crafts industries. Maria Sibylla was accepted by the Nuremberg citizenry: she was stimulated and supported, could show and improve her talents as well as contribute to the family

income. In Nuremberg, a centre of printing workshops at that time, three series of her copperplate prints (*Blumenbücher*) and her first *Raupenbuch* were published (Graff acting as editor), and her second *Raupenbuch* had already been printed, when the family returned to Frankfurt because the family father, Jacob Marrell, had died.

Margot Lölhöffel. After studying social sciences at the University of Göttingen (exam: dipl. disc. pol.), I did econometric research for the German Research Foundation (DFG) and worked as a consultant for local communities establishing plans for their future development. After further studies in languages at the University of Erlangen/Nuremberg, I graduated as a translator/interpreter and worked in the Office of International Affairs in the City Council of Nuremberg. Our guests were interested in the history of our old Imperial Town, and they were astonished to hear how many women have contributed to its social, cultural and economic development over the centuries. The most important and internationally well-known woman who had lived part of her life in Nuremberg was Maria Sibylla Merian. Therefore, I have tried for years to detect new details related to her years in Frankfurt and Nuremberg in archives, museums and libraries.

Henrietta McBurney

The Influence of Merian's work on the art and science of Mark Catesby

This paper will discuss the various ways in which Mark Catesby's *Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands* (1731–1747) was shaped by Merian's *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*. It will seek to analyse and illustrate Merian's influence from a number of angles, including her example as a naturalist/explorer who travelled abroad to study aspects of the natural world in the field; her observation of the interaction between fauna and flora in its native habitat; her use of knowledge gained from indigenous peoples of the medicinal and useful properties of flora and fauna; her collection methods; and her working up of her field studies into spectacular large format plates, engraved and coloured by herself, and published together with accompanying text describing her direct observations.

Henrietta McBurney is an art curator and art historian whose interests include early natural history illustration, the history of collecting, early materia medica cabinets, and portraiture. She has curated art collections at the Royal Library, Windsor; Eton College; and the Garrick Club, London; and is currently curator of collections at Newnham College, Cambridge. Previously Assistant General Editor of *The Paper Museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo*, she has published widely on the drawings in the Paper Museum, most recently the volume on ornithological drawings in the multi-volume Cassiano Catalogue series *Birds, Other Animals, Minerals and Natural Curiosities* (2017). Other publications include *Mark Catesby's*

Natural History of America: The Watercolours from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle (1998), *The Florilegium of Alexander Marshal at Windsor Castle* (2000), *Wall Paintings of Eton* (2012) and *The Image of Venice: Fialetti's View and Sir Henry Wotton* (2014). She has a particular interest in the intersection of art and science and is currently completing a book on the art and science of Mark Catesby, the result of a Senior Research Fellowship at the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art (2013–14) and a Visiting Scholarship at the Yale Center for British Art (2014).

George McGavin



Endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful

Maria Sibylla Merian was a true scientist and an influential entomological pioneer. She was ahead of her time and her spirit lives on inside anyone who sets out to explore or asks a question of nature. But the natural world has changed a great deal in the last few centuries. The biological diversity Merian saw in the forests of Surinam must have been intoxicating and overwhelming. For much of the 19th and 20th Century it was imagined that we would be able to discover, name and categorise every living species – initially to reveal the genius of the Creator but latterly to understand and tease apart the processes and mechanisms of evolution. Sadly that task will never be completed, not just because it is truly immense and needs the attention of an army of specially trained people but because natural habitat – wilderness – is being lost at such a rate that the majority of the Earth's species will become extinct before we even knew they existed. Since Merian's day more than half of all wilderness has been lost. Maria Merian would be rightly horrified but she would be pleased to know that much of what is known about genetics, physiology, behaviour and ecology comes from the study of insects. She would be absolutely delighted that the secrets of insect metamorphosis and the intricate biochemical mechanisms orchestrating the process have been unraveled but especially that her lifetime passion had become a mainstream academic pursuit.

George McGavin was born in Glasgow and educated at Daniel Stewart's College in Edinburgh. He studied Zoology at Edinburgh University, followed by a PhD in entomology at Imperial College and the Natural History Museum in London. After 25 years as an academic at Oxford University he became a television presenter. George is an Honorary Research Associate of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History as well as a Fellow of the Linnean Society and the Royal Geographical Society and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology. His program credits include Expedition Borneo, Lost Land of the Jaguar, Lost Land of the Volcano, Lost Land of the Tiger, The Dark: nature's night-time world, Prehistoric Autopsy, Miniature Britain, Planet Ant, Ultimate Swarms, Dissected: the incredible human hand and foot, Monkey Planet, The Secret Life of your House (ITV) and the multi-award winning documentary After Life: the strange science of decay. His most recent program *The Oak: Nature's Greatest*

Survivor was shown on BBC4 in October 2015 and won a Royal Television Society Award and a Grierson Award. George is a regular presenter on BBC's *The One Show* and has written numerous books on insects and other animals.

Liesbeth Missel



Alida Withoos and a female network of plant collectors and floral artists

In this paper the botanical network of women during the Golden Age in the Netherlands will be explored by looking at Alida Withoos, a female colleague artist of Maria Sibylla Merian. Although the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century was frequently at war, and subject to fierce political and religious upheaval, the country was flourishing both economically as well as culturally. The booming of trade, sciences and art was intertwined and making new ways of social activities for women possible both for the elite as for the working class. Agnes Block and other women from the rich mercantile class took part in the latest fashion of building leisure estates, growing exotic plants there, and collecting all kinds of objects in curiosity cabinets. When Agnes Block was the first in Europe to grow a nearly ripe fruit of a pineapple in 1687 she asked Alida Withoos to paint it for her. Alida and Merian were one of several women who worked for her. She also worked at the Hortus Medicus in Amsterdam, just like Rachel Ruysch. Looking at the artists working with Alida Withoos, and the people she worked for, can we discover a female network of both professional and amateur plant collectors and floral painters?

Liesbeth Missel is curator of the Special Collections of Wageningen University & Research Library. At the Special Collections she participated – among others – in research in the history of gardening in the Netherlands, and the use of garden plants in different periods, using the collections of old natural history books, botanical illustrations and garden architectural images. Among them the *Konst-boeck* of Simon Schijnvoet that holds 6 drawings of Alida Withoos, and several editions of the works of Maria Sibylla Merian.

While working at the Special Collections she studied history at Utrecht University where she focused on the social and artistic actors regarding the usage, lay-out, perception and representation of landscape in general, and the Dutch landscape in particular. She finished her study with a thesis on the work of Alida Withoos.

Berit Møller

The techniques of Merian: A close study of 50 Merian paintings depicting European flowering plants in the Royal Danish Collection

During the conservation and restoration in 2012–2013 of 50 paintings by Merian it became possible to closely study the painting technique of Merian. Furthermore, the damages to the paintings caused by the materials she used were identified.

The study revealed a number of inscriptions that shed new light on the collection as a whole. Among them are Merians signature, numbers and notes on a number of plants/flowers. The number inscriptions gave thoughts to some ideas on how the collection was put together by Merian herself revealing the original flow and chronology of the collection. In fact, the collection depicts the flowers of the seasons: spring, summer, early autumn.

After studying this large collection it became evident that Merian after having finished each painting organised them into a certain selection and finished each painting according to a certain size and graphic style, so the 50 paintings in the large fixed collection, which was sold to the Danish King, presented a uniformed expression.

The study also showed that the paintings when they arrived in Denmark were mounted in frames. However the mounting technique was not always the same.

Berit Møller is a paintings and paint layer conservator educated in The Royal Danish Academy, School of Conservation in 1982 (BA) and 1994 (Master of Science).

She worked freelance for a number of years before she in 1995 was employed by the Danish Royal Household, Hofmarskallatet as a conservator of paintings and paint layers (furniture and frames). In 2007 her position was transferred to the Royal Danish Collection (Rosenborg and Amalienborg Palaces). Her special interests are conservation and restorations of paintings and frames, archaeological paint research (APR), collections in historic houses and digital reconstruction of paint layers on works of art. She is a censor at the School of Conservation.

Alicia Montoya

Maria Sibylla Merian's Eighteenth-Century Readers: The Evidence from Library Auction Catalogues (1700–1800)

A survey of several hundred eighteenth-century catalogues of private libraries auctioned in the Netherlands between 1700 and 1800, revealed that the works of Maria Sibylla Merian were present in one out of five of these libraries. This suggests that her works enjoyed an unprecedented popularity among contemporary readers – one that still remains to be fully understood. The

catalogues of these libraries, however, provide us with some preliminary clues that may help explain her works' appeal to contemporary readers. In this paper, I propose to link Merian's works to other works commonly found in these same libraries, including most notably other works of entomology (Goedaert, Swammerdam, Réaumur) but also works of natural theology (Burnet, Derham, Ray, Pluche), insecto-theology (Lesser) and even treatises on the education of children (Leprince de Beaumont, Genlis). What is the relation of these various works to one another (aside from their statistical correlation in the library catalogues) and how can these works be related to larger questions that engaged readers during the Enlightenment? I will demonstrate that one of the central images common to all these works – that is, the image of caterpillars, butterflies and flowering nature – incited readers to ask important questions about man's place in Creation, the role of human agency, and their implications for the Enlightenment ideals of education and human perfectibility.

Alicia C. Montoya is Professor of French Literature and Culture at Radboud University, The Netherlands. She is the author of *Medievalist Enlightenment: From Charles Perrault to Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Cambridge 2013), *Marie-Anne Barbier et la tragédie post-classique* (Paris 2007, winner of the Keetje Hodson Prize of the Royal Dutch Society for Arts and Sciences) and the co-editor of several volumes, including *Lumières et histoire / Enlightenment and History* (Paris 2010). In 2017, she was the recipient of the KNAW-Ammodo award for fundamental research in the humanities. She is currently the PI of the ERC-funded DH project *MEDIATE (Middlebrow Enlightenment: Disseminating Ideas, Authors, and Texts in Europe, 1665–1820)*, which seeks to map the circulation of books in eighteenth-century Europe.

Hans Mulder



Who printed the texts of *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* and *Der rupsen begin, voedzel en wonderbaare verandering*?

In the facsimile of *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* (Lannoo, 2016) Marieke van Delft and I wrote the following: “It is highly unlikely that Merian had her own press for printing text of books. In the late eighteenth century a new printing press costed 250 guilders, the annual salary of a skilled artisan at the time. She would also have had to buy type, another major investment. For the books that Merian published in Amsterdam – *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* (1705) and *Der rupsen begin, voedzel en wonderbaare verandering* (1713–1717) – she would have needed at least two complete sets of letters, since they are printed in different type. We can safely assume that Merian's rate of book production did not justify the purchase of her own printing press, particularly as there is no indication that Merian printed books for other people. In any case, printing, the setting of type in particular, required thorough training. There is nothing to suggest that either Merian or one of her daughters had been trained in it.”

So if not Merian then who did print the texts of her books? In my presentation I will discuss possible candidates and argue which one of them printed *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* and *Der rupsen begin, voedzel en wonderbaare verandering*.

Hans Mulder (1961) is curator of the Artis Library of the University of Amsterdam and is also a founding member of the Maria Sibylla Merian Society. He teaches and publishes on the history of natural history and the history of the printed book, and also publishes frequently on these subjects. Mulder studied history at Utrecht University and worked as keeper of printed books at Utrecht University Library. He chaired the Dutch Book Historical Society, was Secretary General of the Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (Red Cross for Cultural Heritage) and chaired Blue Shield Netherlands. Hans Mulder co-hosted the 2014 symposium on the life and work of Maria Sibylla Merian and co-edited the facsimile of Merian's *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* 1705 (Lannoo, 2016).

Jadranka Njegovan

Life next to us

Jadranka Njegovan will talk about her ongoing project and present film fragments of observations of the behaviour and the metamorphosis of some insect groups. As an active member of the Insect working group of the KNNV in The Hague she has been making photographs of insects for a long time. Four years ago she started making films, of which the results immediately grabbed her. Although an artist, Njegovan does not see her films as an art project or a scientific research: they are observations of micro life happening all the time next to us. In her home in improvised terraria she grows insects found in her garden. With help of a camera and a micro lens (and armed with curiosity, patience and fascination for life forms and processes) she witnesses the intimate moments of metamorphoses and insect behaviour.

Jadranka Njegovan (1959, Zadar, Croatia) studied horticulture at the University of Zagreb and worked as field-trial researcher in vegetable crops at the Research Centre of Agriculture in Zadar. In 1990 she moved to the Netherlands and worked in several laboratories (routine jobs) and later as selector in plant-breeding till 2001. She finished her studies of arts on the Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague in 2000 and has been working since then as artist, freelance illustrator and graphic designer. Her interest in entomology dates from her young age and from the time she studied Horticulture at the University of Zagreb. She lives in The Hague and is a member of Insects-workgroup of the KNNV (Royal Dutch Natural-history Society).

Redmond O'Hanlon



Maria, the jungle and bird eating spiders

The Artis Library of the University of Amsterdam keeps a manuscript in which the unknown author writes that he, referring to Maria Sibylla Merian, finds it very unsuitable for a 'gentle woman to crawl through bushes and shrubbery searching for little animals... in a place where even an armed man would have had it very difficult to remain calm when being confronted with a tiger (sic).' It is clear that Maria Sibylla Merian and her daughter Dorothea Maria, let us not forget her, went through terrible ordeals to do their research. But it was worth it. When looking at the breath taking results of their work we have to acknowledge that the *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* was made by a naturalist who was also the greatest botanical and insect painter that ever lived. In my presentation I will illustrate the difficulties an early eighteenth century naturalist must have encountered, using my own experiences and those of Henry Walter Bates who in the middle of the nineteenth century substantiated Merian's description of the bird eating spider.

Redmond O'Hanlon was born in 1947 in Dorset, England. He was educated at Marlborough College and then Oxford University. After taking his M.Phil. in nineteenth-century English studies in 1971 he was elected senior scholar, and in 1974 Alistair Horne Research Fellow, at St. Anthony's College, Oxford. He completed his doctoral thesis, *Changing scientific concepts of nature in the English novel, 1850–1920*, in 1977. From 1970–74, O'Hanlon was a member of the literature panel of the Arts Council of Great Britain. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1984 and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1993. For fifteen years he was the natural history editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*. O'Hanlon has become known for his journeys into some of the most remote jungles of the world, in Borneo, the Amazon basin and Congo. He has also written a harrowing account of a trip to the North Atlantic on a trawler. Between September 2009 and May 2010, Redmond O'Hanlon was a guest and co-presenter in the programme *Beagle: In Darwin's wake* for both Canvas in Belgium and VPRO Television in the Netherlands. In the programme, the clipper *Stad Amsterdam* re-traced the route that Charles Darwin took aboard HMS Beagle (1831–36), a journey that played a seminal role in his thinking on evolution. In November 2011 VPRO Television began broadcasting *O'Hanlons helden* (English: *O'Hanlon's heroes*). In this eight-part series O'Hanlon introduces the viewer to his heroes of the nineteenth century. The programme was awarded with the prestigious Dutch television award, *De Zilveren Nipkowschijf*. A second eight-part series of *O'Hanlons helden* was broadcasted in the winter of 2013–2014.

Leslie K. Overstreet

The editions of Merian's *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*

Merian's classic book on the metamorphosis of the insects of Surinam was first published in Amsterdam in 1705; she and her daughters oversaw the publication, soliciting subscribers, arranging the printing, and colouring the 60 engraved full-page illustrations based on her original watercolour drawings. After Merian's death in 1717 the daughters authorised a second edition (Amsterdam, 1719) with 12 additional plates, and subsequently the engraved coppers were sold on to other publishers for further editions of the work over the course of the 18th century. When they survive as bound volumes, the plates in these editions can be identified by the accompanying text, but when sold as individual prints they can easily be mis-identified as to date and the presence of the author's hand. My talk will attempt to identify and describe each of the 18th-century editions of Merian's work and to provide information that can help to distinguish prints from each of them.

Leslie K. Overstreet earned a B.A. in English Literature from Reed College (Portland, Oregon) in 1971 and held jobs as a teacher and a writer/editor before joining the Smithsonian Libraries (SIL) in 1980. Initially staffing the anthropology and zoology libraries in the National Museum of Natural History, she earned an M.L.S. degree in rare-books librarianship at the University of Maryland (1988) and has worked in SIL's Special Collections Department since 1988. As the Curator of Natural-History Rare Books she heads SIL's Joseph F. Cullman 3rd Library of Natural History. Her primary research has focused for many years on the printing of Mark Catesby's *Natural history of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands* (London, 1731–1743).

Florence Pieters

Maria Sibylla Merian's additions to *alba amicorum* (friendship albums)

The contents of all hitherto known inscriptions by M.S. Merian in *alba amicorum* are discussed, especially those in the *Stammbuch* once owned by the renowned engraver and publisher Petrus Schenk (1661–1715), and the extensive album held by the famous paper-cutting artist Joanna Koerten (1650–1715). Interesting conclusions can be drawn about M.S. Merian's character, her piety, celebrity, and her work for Rumphius's *d'Amboinsche Rariteitkamer*.

Florence F. J. M. Pieters studied biology and philosophy of science at Radboud University Nijmegen (Netherlands). In 1969, after a period of college teaching, she was appointed as scientific librarian of the Artis Library, University of Amsterdam, where she later became curator. From 1974 up to 2000 she also acted as managing editor of the scientific journal *Contributions to Zoology*. At the Artis

Library, which has an outstanding collection of natural history works, she became fascinated with the work of M. S. Merian. Being one of the last pupils of Prof. Dr. Hendrik Engel (1898–1981), she developed a growing interest in the history of early Dutch collections and collectors of natural history. Together with Prof. Engel, she studied Maria Sibylla Merian's research notebook, the *Studienbuch*, that was published for the first time in 1976.

Although retired, she continues her investigations into the history of early Dutch collections and collectors of natural history, working as guest researcher at the Artis Library. She is a founding member of the Maria Sibylla Merian Society and has been an active member of the Society for the History of Natural History for 40 years. Most of her recent publications are available at www.dare.uva.nl.

Amanda Pipkin



God's Handiwork: Searching for Herbs and Insects on the Moors of Friesland

This project illuminates the overlapping religious, scientific, and artistic fields that formed the backdrop for the impressive endeavours of Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717). In spite of its dramatic demands for constant pious behaviour as well as frequent prayer, singing, and Bible study, Pietism (a movement whose members for the most part remained loyal to the Reformed Church) provided many seventeenth-century women with the opportunity to engage in religious or intellectual pursuits. Included in this number is Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678) in whose footsteps Merian followed when the latter joined the pietist Labadist community in Wieuwerd, Friesland from 1685 up to 1691. Although Merian's stay with this unorthodox group of Pietists was not permanent, an examination of this period sheds much light on Merian's religious motivation and the capacity of Labadism to encourage and limit scientific inquiry.

Amanda Pipkin is Associate Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She received a BA from Wake Forest University, an MA at the University of Leiden, and a PhD from Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey. Her book *Rape in the Republic, 1609–1725: Formulating Dutch Identity* (Brill 2013) reveals the significance of sex and gender in the construction of Dutch identity during the period of the Revolt of the Netherlands and beyond by examining depictions of rape in pamphlets, plays, poems, and advice manuals. She has also published articles on seventeenth-century Dutch culture in the *Journal of Early Modern History* and in *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*. Her new book-length project, tentatively titled: *Dissenting Daughters: Early Modern Dutch Women's Engagement in Political and Religious Disputes*, looks at the surprising ways women took on some of the most volatile topics of their day. This project focuses on women who participated in Reformed Pietist networks primarily during the seventeenth century.

Joos van der Plas

How Merian's legacy influenced my art work

When I started my research into Merian, I could not have guessed how enormous the impact of her work would be on my art. By travelling to Surinam in June 2005, I followed in Merian's footsteps. I wanted to see this country and I wanted to visit all the places where she had worked for her *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*. And above all, I wanted to see Merian's butterflies in real life. The butterflies that she had portrayed so exquisitely in her masterpiece. When I returned to my studio in Holland I decided that I wanted to know a lot more about the period Merian lived in, and about all the contemporary artists/naturalists of that era. I had to interrupt my work in the studio for longer and longer periods during which I visited museums, libraries and butterfly-gardens all over Europe. In doing so, I arrived in Wiesbaden where the Museum Wiesbaden gave me the opportunity to carry out extensive research on the insects from the Gerning Collection, some of which allegedly originated from Merian's collection. This research had a profound impact on my art. To my surprise, dare I say it, I have become a more up-to-date artist, thanks to Merian. I started breeding caterpillars and I studied their metamorphoses in detail. Besides painting, drawing and photographing this process, I also started filming it. As a matter of fact, in the past years filming has actually become my main artistic practice. Not just because of the fact that I like the medium film, but also because in filming, I really can add a new dimension to the bulk of knowledge of butterflies. And above all filming is a way to show you in detail all the beauty that has been gathered since Merian's time. With this presentation I invite you to be my companion on my journey.

Joos van de Plas is a visual artist. She studied drawing and painting in Tilburg and Maastricht. Since the turn of the century her work has been more and more inspired by the way art and science developed together in the seventeenth century. Joos van de Plas has done extensive research on botanical and entomological illustrated books and insect collections in The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and the United Kingdom. This has culminated in a five-year period of research in the Gerning Collection of Museum Wiesbaden. Currently her work focuses on the metamorphoses of butterflies and moths which she breeds in her studio. These processes are the subject of her art video's. Her work is represented in museums and private collections in Europe and the USA.

Jaya Remond

Seeing Nature Up Close: Composing Exotic botanical imagery in northern Europe ca. 1600–1700

My paper proposes to look at the emergence of new representational templates in early modern botanical imagery, focusing on the depictions of exotic (particularly

New World) plants in the Netherlands and France in the long seventeenth century. My study examines principally the prints and drawings produced by image-makers as diverse as – among others – Maria Sybilla Merian and her contemporary French botanist Charles Plumier. I concentrate especially on pictures offering zoomed-in, up close views of flowers and ferns. In such pictures, techniques of cropping, cutting, and focusing do not only direct the viewer's attention to relevant part of the plants: they also reveal innovative, expressive modes of viewing and depicting nature. Drawing upon my ongoing research on discourses and practices of botanical image-making, I hope to shed some light on the operations that turn the act of observation into a graphic act: how prints and drawings seek to capture nature's imprint.

Jaya Remond is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the Max Planck Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte in Berlin. She holds a PhD in the history of art from Harvard University, and is presently completing a monograph on art primers in northern Europe during the long sixteenth century. Her research investigates the creation and circulation of artistic knowledge as well as questions of pictorial literacy at the intersection of art and science in the early modern period. She has also begun work on a new research project, which explores the production of botanical imagery in northern Europe ca. 1500–1750, with a focus on the representation of exotic plants. She has received grants and fellowships from the Graduate School of Art and Science at Harvard University, the Kress Foundation, the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg, the Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte in Paris, and the Gerda Henkel Stiftung.

Bert van de Roemer

Merian's Network in Amsterdam

When Merian arrived in Amsterdam in 1691 she found an exuberant metropolis vibrating with commerce, art production and scientific research. As her preface of the *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* stresses, she met a lot of naturalists and collectors, fostering her interests even more. In the various cabinets she studied insects and caterpillars, and this eventually encouraged her to leave for Surinam to study the animals in their own biotope. It is estimated that in her time there were more than seventy distinguished private cabinets in Amsterdam containing exotic naturalia. Many of these collections are known by the name of the male owner, but often the wives played an important and active role behind the scenes. This paper will discuss some of the relationships Merian had with the women and men that were active in the same intersecting fields of art and science. It will also dwell on the relationship between the aesthetic and the scientific in the work of Merian, against the background of the practices of contemporary collectors and naturalists.

Bert (G.M.) van de Roemer is an assistant professor in the Cultural Studies department of the University of Amsterdam and a founding member of the Maria Sibylla Merian Society. His fields of interest are the history of collections, museology, the relationship between the visual arts and the natural sciences, and cultural life in Amsterdam in the early modern period. He has published on subjects including the Dutch collectors Simon Schijnvoet (*History of Science* 2004), Frederik Ruysch (*Journal of the History of Collections* 2012) and Levinus Vincent (*Public Domain Review* 2015).

Christine Sauer

Painting flowers with needles

This paper presents results of an exhibition shown in Nuremberg (*Maria Sibylla Merian. Blumen, Raupen, Schmetterlinge*, January-April 2017). It introduces *libri amicorum* as a neglected source for the broad reception and the longtime success of the *Blumenbuch* as a model-book for needle-working women.

Christine Sauer is head of the department of manuscripts and old prints at the Stadtbibliothek im Bildungscampus Nürnberg. Sauer has a B.A. from the University of Delaware, Department of Art History; Ph. D. Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich, Department of Art History. Employment: 1991–1995 Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart: catalogue of illuminated manuscripts. Since 1997: Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg, Head of the Department of Manuscripts and Old Prints.

Katharina Schmidt-Loske



Pupa, chrysalis and cocoon

As an artist Maria Sibylla Merian documented a huge number of insect life cycles. They were published in her *Raupenbücher* (1679, 1683 and 1717) and her *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* (1705). In Amsterdam she had seen a lot of dried specimens of butterflies and moths as part of insect collections from the Dutch colonies. As she was curious to find out about the stages of an exotic butterfly's life cycle that precedes adulthood (imago), she undertook a costly journey to Surinam. Merian's illustrations and descriptions of pupa, chrysalis and cocoon were analysed from a biological point of view, giving an impression of her careful observations. In my analysis of these, I will also explain the historical context.

Katharina Schmidt-Loske is the Head of a research centre of historical biology – *Biohistoricum* – at the Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig,

Leibniz-Institute for Animal Biodiversity, Bonn. She studied biology in Münster, Bonn and Frankfurt/Main and earned her doctorate from the University of Bonn with a dissertation project entitled *Die Tierwelt der Maria Sibylla Merian (The Fauna of Maria Sibylla Merian. Species, descriptions, illustrations)*. In her recent scientific work she analysed floral and animal depictions in the *Tenture des Indes*. At the crossroads between science and art, the *Tenture des Indes* is among the most famous tapestry series of the Baroque period. She is also a founding member of the Maria Sibylla Merian Society.

Cindy Snow

Merian's art as inspiration for modern artists and novelists

Cindy Snow will read from her work "Let the Small Creatures," a manuscript of poems on the life and work of Maria Sibylla Merian. The poems focus on close examination of cocoons and birds, embroidery patterns, religious community life, Arawak legend, Maroons, and the challenges of conducting science, making art, running a business, and raising a family. Many of the poems are ekphrastic in nature, inspired by specific works ("Branch of Apricots with Banana Quit," "Passionflower," etc.). Each poem is written from the imagined perspective of Merian, her daughters, the subjects she depicted and studied, and/or those who worked near her. I propose to read with a backdrop of slides of Merian's work that inspired the poems. While the manuscript is primarily creative, the poems are the result of an extensive research

Cindy Snow's writing has appeared in the *Massachusetts Review*, *Peace Review*, *Worcester Review*, *Crannóg*, and elsewhere. She has been a writing fellow at Cill Rialaig, Ireland, a Platte Clove Artist in Residence, and the recipient of a Vermont Studio Center Writing Residency. Her poetry has been nominated for a Pushcart, and she holds an MFA in Poetry from Drew University. Her chapbook, *Small Ceremonies*, is just out from Slate Roof Press. Cindy teaches and supervises writing tutors at Greenfield Com

Rose Marie Tillisch

Garden of Eden – Depicted by Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179) and Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717).

Time separates them: 550 years. Landscapes and the study of God's creation bring them together: they were born some 100 km from each other in the landscapes of the middle Rhine. Hildegard connected theology with studies of nature; Merian lived out her faith in science and in art. With Hildegard begins a proto-scientific approach in writing down and describing nature as part of God's creation. This

way of perceiving the world is still fully present in Merian's works. The gardens of Hildegard von Bingen were the gardens of her monasteries and the Garden of Eden. In Hildegard's interpretation Adam falls when he refuses to smell and taste the flower of perfection in the Garden of Eden. In her books: *Causae and Curae* and *Physica* she describes the inherent powers and abilities of flowers, herbs, plants, trees, fish, mammals, and stones. The powers, when studied with responsibility, will enable humanity to reestablish a heavenly harmony between nature and man as it was before the Fall.

The gardens of Maria Sibylla Merian were immense; they were the gardens of Europe and the landscapes of Suriname, all created by God. She describes them in *Der Raupen wunderbare Verwandlung* and in *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*. By publishing her studies of plants and insects she made them accessible for a broader audience and increased the understanding of nature's interconnected systems. Merian managed to create representations of the Garden of Eden in a way that still gives the beholder a sense of hidden beauty.

Rose Marie Tillisch, born 1954, MA in Theology (2003), Ph.D. in Church History (2014). Now affiliated to the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, she is working as a full time pastor. Earlier in life Tillisch worked as an artist, actor and author. The last four decades she has studied in parallel both Hildegard von Bingen and Maria Sibylla Merian, concerning the relationship between man and woman and the relationship between man and nature. She has written three books on Hildegard von Bingen (1992, 1993, 2000). In 1994 she curated an exhibition and organised a seminar on Maria Sibylla Merian in Helsingør (Denmark). Tillisch traveled in Merian's footsteps in Suriname in 1996. She is also a founding member of the Maria Sibylla Merian Society.

Anita Walsmit Sachs

Science meets Art, Art meets Science

An introduction to how a scientific botanical drawing and a botanical watercolor are produced from dried material and living material. The presentation shows step by step the process from dry plant material to be drawn to a complete scientific plate. The sketches, the composition and the final drawing, the same steps have to be followed by making a scientific watercolor painting. In my opinion a scientific drawing has to be interesting to look at, this is to be obtained by a nice composition and the possibility of clarity in reading the drawing. All the specific plant features have to be shown. A drawing can show more detailed information as a photo of the same item.

Anita Walsmit Sachs recently retired from the position of head of the Art department and scientific illustrator of the National Herbarium Nederland, University of Leiden, and now Naturalis Biodiversity Center. She initiates exhibitions and courses in the Netherlands and abroad, France and Belgium

and the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Indonesia. Her work is held in many private and Royal collections, the Hunt Institute of Botanical Documentation, the New York State Museum, Albany USA, and Teylers Museum Haarlem. She contributed work to *The Highgrove Florilegium* and to the *Transylvanian Florilegium* of the HRH Prince Charles Foundation and the Florilegium of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. In 2006 she founded the “Dutch Society of Botanical Artists”, now 200 members. Walsmit Sachs is a member of the Linnean Society, London.

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The Maria Sibylla Merian Society