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Preface [to *Leonaert Bramer, 1596-1674: A Painter of the Night*]

Curtis Carter

Marquette University, curtis.carter@marquette.edu

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Preface

The realization of the exhibition, *Leonaert Bramer (1596–1674): A Painter of the Night*, is the culmination of a growing interest in Bramer's work which began in 1981 when the Haggerty Museum acquired its first Bramer painting (cat. 18) and continued as the Museum acquired additional works by Bramer (cat. 7, 10, 57) in 1984, 1989, and 1991. The concentration of Bramer works at the Haggerty Museum, together with those held by private Milwaukee collectors, including Dr. Alfred Bader, William and Sharon Treul, and Mr. and Mrs. Eckhart G. Grohmann, suggested Milwaukee as an appropriate location for a Bramer exhibition in the United States.

Further enthusiasm for the work of Bramer was kindled by the study of Heinrich Wichmann's monograph, *Leonaert Bramer* (Leipzig, 1923) and the opportunity afforded by then curator Arnauld Brejon to review the Bramer file at the Louvre in the mid eighties. Several years passed before the project was initiated by the Haggerty Museum with a search for a curator to undertake the project.

In 1989, Jane ten Brink Goldsmith was invited to curate the exhibition which was intended to offer a selection of representative paintings, drawings, and prints, focusing primarily on works in American collections, with a smaller selection of works to be included from European collections. As Goldsmith's research focused primarily upon the works in European collections, the Museum decided to invite the participation of the Stedelijk Museum "Het Prinsenhof" in Delft, Holland, to join the project with a parallel exhibition focusing on the Bramer works in European collections, with a joint catalogue. Goldsmith withdrew from the project in 1991, and the joint project was abandoned.

These circumstances allowed for a fresh approach to the Haggerty Bramer project, focusing on Bramer in American collections and augmented by a selection of artists contemporary with Bramer, such as Adam Elsheimer, Frans Francken II, and Pieter de Hooch.

Frima Fox Hofrichter was appointed curator of the project in the fall of 1991 and assembled a new team of scholars to carry out the project, which included Walter Liedke, curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Leonard J.

Slatkes, professor at Queens College, CUNY, and Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr., curator at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., whose essays, along with Hofrichter's, comprise the catalogue for the exhibition.

Mounting even a small exhibition of old master works is a task that requires great care and substantial cooperation of both institutional and private lenders. Museums, private galleries, and individual collectors have in this instance been most cooperative in assisting Dr. Hofrichter and the staff of the Haggerty Museum with all aspects of the exhibition. The Haggerty Museum is indebted particularly to Mr. and Mrs. Eckhart G. Grohmann, William and Sharon Treul, and the Cava Ross Estate whose gifts provided the nucleus of Bramer paintings in the Museum's collection. Loans from the Richard L. Feigen Gallery form an essential core of the exhibition. The cooperation of the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University and the Yale University Art Gallery in assembling works facilitated the preparation of the exhibition.

The exhibition is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. I would like to thank especially Mr. Andrew Oliver, director of the Museum Program, for his and the Endowment's assistance with this project, as the support was essential to the realization of this project.

Members of the Haggerty Museum staff including Curator Johann J.K. Reusch, Assistant Director for Administration Marcia Eidel, Curator of Education Kit Basquin, Registrar Xiuqin Zhou, Preparator/Technician Jim Mazur and assistant Brad Killam, Administrative Assistant Wendy Salomon, Communication Assistant Marilyn Meissner, and former staff member Irene Juckem have contributed to all aspects of the project.

It is our hope that the exhibition, catalogue, and accompanying symposium will result in a new awareness and appreciation of Leonaert Bramer's contributions to the history of art. As well, we anticipate that the scholarly efforts represented in the catalogue and discourse attending the exhibition will offer some new contributions to the scholarship of Dutch art.

Curtis L. Carter
 Director