PAUL J.C. VAN LAAR

A self-driven, hard working technical art historian with a chemistry background. Interested in using an interdisciplinary methodology combining scientific analysis, archival research and experimental methodologies (reconstructions) to shed light on processes of making, knowledge transmission, and the shifting appearance of cultural heritage objects.

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EDUCATION

NOVA Universidade de Lisboa & Cambridge University — **2021-present**
PhD in Heritage Conservation and Restoration
- 4 year funded project on *"painters' smalt and its relation to other cobalt-containing blue glassy materials in the Early Modern Period."*
- Supervised by Prof. Dr. Márcia Vilarigues and Prof. Dr. Erma Hermens.
- Combining chemical analysis of historic objects and archaeological samples, with contextual and archival research, and experimental methodologies (reconstructions).

University of Amsterdam — **2019-2021**
MSc in Technical Art History — *Cum Laude (8.6/10.0)*
- Specialisation of the Conservation & Restoration Master's programme.
- *Fieldwork* position at the Rijksmuseum, focusing on the production and processing of smalt in light of Operation Night Watch.
- Thesis on *Johannes Vermeer and Optics.* Supervised by Prof. Dr. Erma Hermens, and Prof. Dr. Gregor Weber. Conducted research as part of a larger team of Rijksmuseum and Mauritshuis professionals focusing on Johannes Vermeer. Graded 9.0

University College Utrecht — **2015-2018**
BSc in Liberal Arts & Sciences (Chemistry & Art History) — *Magna Cum Laude (3.84/4.00 GPA)*
- An interdisciplinary curriculum in both natural sciences and humanities.
- *Semester abroad* at Queen's University in Kingston ON, Canada. 4.00/4.00 GPA.
- *Roma Caput Mundi.* An extensive interdisciplinary course investigating the multi-faceted history and cultural heritage in Rome. One of 20 admitted from open applications to all Dutch university students.

Sint-Maartenscollege (High School) — **2009-2015**
- Focus on natural sciences, with Ancient Greek and Culture and Music as electives. — *Cum Laude (8.9/10.0)*

EXPERIENCE

ArtMatters: International Journal for Technical Art History — **2021-present**
Assistant Editor
- Responsible for accepting/rejecting submissions, editing submissions, faciliating contact with authors, and setting up peer reviews.

University of Amsterdam — **07/2022 - 09/2022**
Junior Researcher
- Responsible for designing an easy-to-query database with data on ground layers in 16th and 17th-century European painting for the Down to the Ground (DttG) project.

National Research Institute for Mathematics and Computer Science (CWI) & Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam — **01/2022 - 06/2022**
Junior Researcher
- Development of a stand-alone open source tool for the simultaneous inspection of 3D surface scans and CT scans in an interactive environment for museum professionals.

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam — **10/2021 - 01/2022**
Junior Researcher
- Collaborating with Prof. Dr. Erma Hermens on research into the presence and use of ground glass, and glassy pigments (smalt) in 15th-17th c. European painting.

Van 't Hoff Laboratory for Physical and Colloid Chemistry (Utrecht University) — **03/2019 - 07/2019**
Research Assistant

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Articles

- Paul J.C. van Laar, Erma Hermens, and Gregor J.M. Weber, "The Vermeer-Camera Obscura Hypothesis Turned Inside Out: Complexities of Experimental Research." *Proceedings of the 9th symposium of the ICOm-CC Working Group on Art Technological Source Research* (forthcoming, 2024)
- Francien G. Bossema, Paul J.C. van Laar, Kimberly Meechan, Daniel O'Flynn, Joanne Dyer, Tristan van Leeuwen, Suzan Meijer, Erma Hermens, and K. Joost Batenburg, "Inside Out: Fusing 3D imaging modalities for the internal and external investigation of multi-material museum objects." *Digital Applications in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage 13* (2023).
- Maximilian B. Kiss, Francien G. Bossema, Paul J.C. van Laar, Suzan Meijer, Felix Lucka, Tristan van Leeuwen, and K. Joost Batenburg, "Beam filtration for object-tailored X-ray CT of multi-material cultural heritage objects." *Heritage Science 11,* 130 (2023).

Blog Posts

- "Uncovering hidden features inside art objects in an interactive environment." *CWI (Research Institute for Mathematics and Computer Science in the Netherlands) and NICAS* (13 October, 2022)
- "Glass in Paint." *NICAS* (7 March, 2022)
- "The Sea Turtle: a skeleton turned inside out." *Looking Through Art* (May 25, 2020)
- "The turtle's carapace: a curious painting support or a battle shield?" *Looking Through Art* (July 7, 2020)

Selected Conference Contributions

- Paul J.C. van Laar, Dominique M.E. Thies-Weesie, Thijs Hagendijk, Maartje Stols-Witlox, and Gert Jan Vroege, "'The best preparation of smalt'? A lasting honey coating on smalt particles." Poster presented at *Bridging the Gap - Synergies between art history and conservation. Oslo: Nasjonalmuseet. 23-24 November, 2023.*
- Erma Hermens, and Paul J.C. van Laar, "Technical Art History, Turtles, and Mesh works." Lecture presented at *Bridging the Gap - Synergies between art history and conservation. Oslo: Nasjonalmuseet. 23-24 November, 2023.*
- Paul J.C. van Laar, Erma Hermens, and Gregor. J.M. Weber, "The Vermeer-Camera Obscura hypothesis turned inside out: Complexities of Experimental Research." Lecture presented at *Vermeer Symposium. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum. March 29, 2023.*

Honour Awards

Class of 2018 Salutatorian

- Honourary title awarded to the student who excelled most in both academic and extracurricular context.
- Shortlist chosen by 280 fellow graduates in the Class of 2018, final decision made by the Dean of the college.

Lifetime Achievement Award

- Awarded by the student body to the student who contributed most to the student community as a whole.

Languages

Dutch	***English***	***German***	***Italian***
Native Proficiency	Full Professional Proficiency	Limited Working Proficiency	Limited Working Proficiency

Experience with all four languages in reading/deciphering Early Modern archival documents, in both print and handwritten format.

Skills

Python | 3D Scanning | Analytical Chemistry | Public Speaking | Archival Research | Interdisciplinary Collaboration | Paint Reconstructions

Referees

Prof. Dr. Erma Hermens | Director (Hamilton Kerr Institute) | Deputy Director Conservation and Heritage Science (Fitzwilliam Museum) | eh707@cam.ac.uk

Prof. Dr. Márcia Vilarigues | Associate Professor and Head of the Conservation Department (FCT NOVA) | Director (Research Unit VICARTE: Glass and Ceramics for the Arts) | mgv@fct.unl.pt