

THE CLOSED DOOR

Chapter 1

Walking In

In brief, you find all things suddenly reversed,
when you open up the Silenus.

—Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, 1511

The Moving Statues of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam is a study of idiosyncratic attractions called *Doolhoven*, or labyrinths, which were unique to early modern Amsterdam. These licensed public houses offered guest lodgings and also tendered alcoholic refreshments and the enjoyment of artful recreations in their gardens and galleries. While early modern curiosity cabinets and private collections have received much scholarly attention as precursors to the museum, less is known about how inns and taverns were used as exhibition spaces. Seventeenth-century guidebooks to the Doolhof sites outline a prescribed route that transported visitors into the realm of ritual.¹ From the street, a green door led into a treed tavern yard,

where travelers and locals could enjoy a drink as well as the play of a spectacular figural fountain of the triumph of Bacchus; the intoxicating powers of the pagan god flowed both from the libations and the hydraulics. A small admission fee was charged to enter the actual doolhof, an intricate hedge maze with forking and twisting paths designed to confound. Within this mythic structure, pleasures and constrictions were experienced with equal intensity. If solved, the labyrinth delivered peripatetic sightseers into a sculpture gallery housing curious creations billed as both ancient and novel. There, the performances of animated mechanical statues struck spectators with wonder, arousing curiosity about ingenious inventions. Equally astonishing were the life-sized wax portraits of European rulers and notorious persons, which vividly channeled the lively presences of significant historical personages into the here and now, denoting the

present moment as a critical age. Visitors also were confronted with intricate clocks and astronomical apparatuses, devices that demanded decisive action in revolutionary times as their moving mechanisms inexorably ushered in the end of the world. Distinctive and renowned in the seventeenth century, these innovative exhibition venues have since fallen into disregard and call for further investigation. Focusing on the peculiar combination of fountains, labyrinths, automata, and waxworks that characterize these sites, *Moving Statues* is structured as a walk through the Doolhof gardens, where drinking, entertainment, and the acquisition of knowledge mingled in emotive encounters with lively displays of animated artifacts.

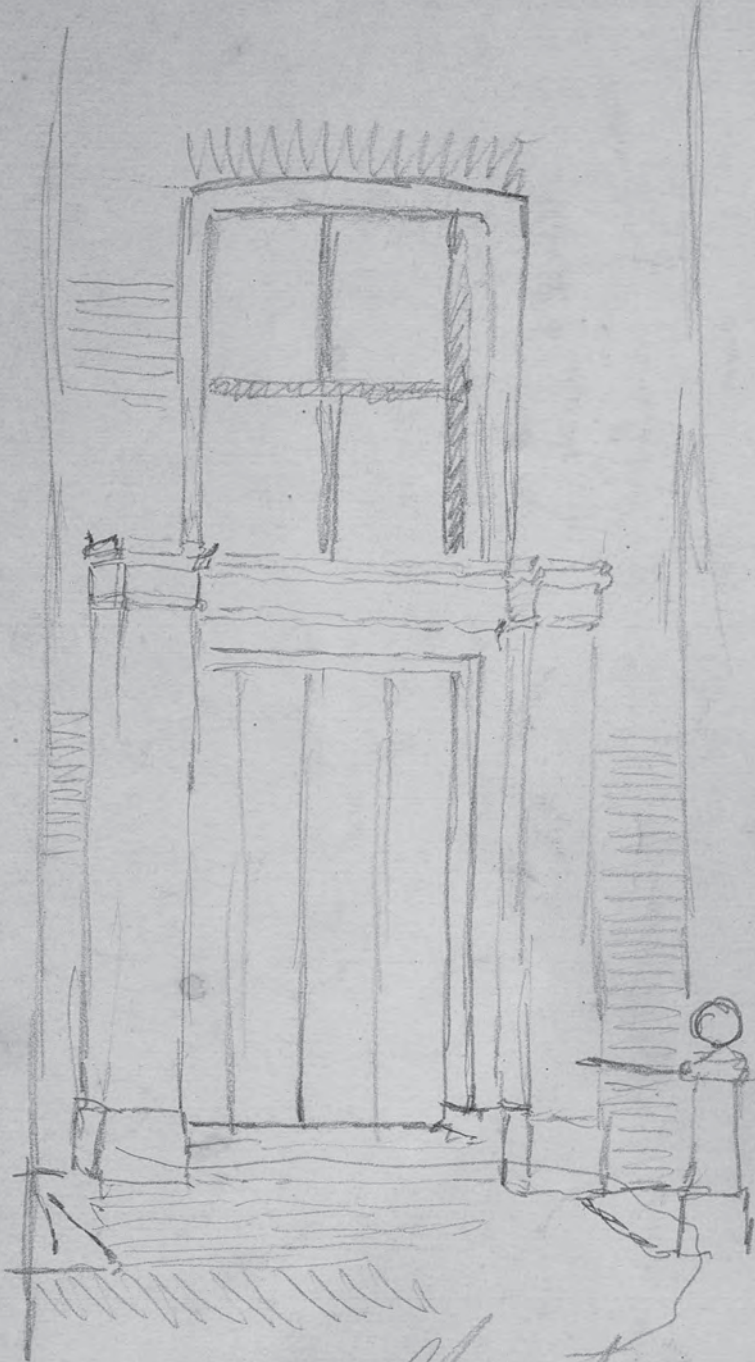
Rough Exteriors

This introductory chapter begins at the entrance to the site by considering nineteenth-century imagery of the Doolhof portal. These images of the front door serve as an opening to my discussion of the historiography of these amusement parks and the methodologies that they provoke. Our starting point is a rough pencil sketch of a closed door, which is preserved in the Amsterdam City Archives (fig. 1). At first glance, it is an unpromising beginning, as the most remarkable thing about this work appears to be the fact that the artist stopped to make it in the first place. There is nothing arresting about the door. The drawing looks hasty and inept, as if the sketcher disparaged his own efforts. The edges of architectural elements—doorframe, window, pilaster, lintel, and transom—are indicated with wavering and broken strokes of the pencil. There are some particularly maladroit passages: the left side of the window

frame is narrow at bottom and bulges out at top, and the delineation of the outer edge of the left pilaster stops midway, leaving a blank area that skews the whole picture. This awkward rendering, together with the long inward-leaning line that runs down the left of the sheet, gives the door and its minimal surrounds a precarious slant. The area of interface between portal and street is filled in with horizontal strokes underlined by a series of parallel lines. These lines might indicate the planes of steps, but the parallel hatching extends too far at the left, confusing the area where we expect to see a post and railing matching the one at right. The drawing is also marred by a trailing line that runs unevenly over its surface: it cuts across the bottom of the left pilaster, over the threshold, overlaps the side and front of the base of the right pilaster, and then drops and cuts across a corner of the footing of the railing post. This meandering stroke looks like a trace of the pencil in motion, as if it had skidded or accidentally was dropped or dragged across the paper. The scrabbling line trails down to the bottom of the sheet and ends by crossing the letter *t* in one of the words scrawled there. The phrase is difficult to decipher, for the artist's handwriting, like his drawing, verges on the illegible. The word crossed by the scribble line might spell *muurtrans* (battlement) or misspell *illustrum* (illustrious). The bottom word is easier to decode: *doolhof* (labyrinth).

This rough sketch does not showcase the fact that its maker, J. G. L. Rieke (1817–1898), was a distinguished antiquarian and skilled draftsman. Rieke's oeuvre includes numerous prints, drawings,

FIG. 1 J. G. L. Rieke, *Oude Doolhof, Entrance Door on Prinsengracht 338*, 1862. Photo: Amsterdam City Archives (010097007130).



Maunstrom
Dorlhof

watercolors, and lithographs of notable sites in and around Amsterdam.² These works are characterized by a meticulous approach to the precise perspectival rendering of buildings, demonstrating the sure technique of an artist trained in architectural drawing. If Rieke was dissatisfied with his clumsy Doolhof door drawing, he undoubtedly had the ability to better it.

The archive surprisingly contains more sketches of this door. An ink-and-watercolor drawing by Amsterdam schoolmaster Jan ter Gouw (1814–1894) depicts the same unexceptional entrance (color plate 1). Ter Gouw, like Rieke, was an antiquarian, and his book *De Uithangteekens*, coauthored with Jacob van Lennep in the late 1860s, still serves as a rich source of information about old Dutch street signs.³ Ter Gouw dedicated himself to the study of Amsterdam's doors—he knew their histories and connected them to a wide range of civic and cultural traditions. Nevertheless, his sketch, like Rieke's, seems awkwardly rendered to convey the uninviting ugliness of the Doolhof entryway. Its coarse wooden boards, painted a muddy bluish green, are scratched and worn. These marks of wear and tear register the passage of time and people, indicating centuries of use and the damage done by countless feet and hands. A graffiti stick figure scrawled on the lower part of the left pilaster is another type of mark made by the anonymous person in the street, as is the mild act of defacement registered by the ripped remnants of a printed broadside that has been torn from the right pilaster. All that remains of this notice is what looks to be part of a letter *D*. A similarly sized, intact advertisement appears on the left pilaster, inexpertly glued so that it folds in, out, and around the wide fluting. If the success of a street poster depends on its ability to attract the attention of

the passerby, then this one, with its solid block of unreadable text, is not much of an eye-catcher.⁴ Serving more as label than enticement, it nevertheless offers a point of access through its only legible words: “Oude Doolhof” (Old Labyrinth).

Pictures often are compared to open windows: the aim of almost any work of art is to invite the viewer to enter. These sketches, by contrast, operate as closed doors. Each employs ungainliness and reticence as if attempting to be as visually uninviting as possible. Awkwardness of style works in tandem with subject matter: a barred, battered, handleless wooden door frustrates and repels visual access. As artistic strategies go, this is a risky one, since the contradictory objective of these drawings seems to be to convince the viewer that they are unworthy of notice. If the game is visual frustration, then Rieke's badly executed pencil sketch is a particularly skilled player: it comes so close to succeeding that it could easily have been discarded. To fail at this game is to win, and to win is to fail.

If we look at the sketches as deliberate artistic exercises, however, then their pictorial strategies may be conveying something specific about this uninviting door. One way to make sense of these unappealing drawings is to look at them as works of rhopography, depictions of insignificant subject matter. Adapting this classical visual convention, Netherlandish art had a long and particularly inventive rhopographic tradition. Playing with paradox, rhopographers often lavished dazzling technical virtuosity on mundane things that do not normally merit close attention, as with luminous still-life paintings of overturned wine glasses, loaves of bread, and dead fish surrounded by scatterings of cracked nuts,⁵ or the Dutch specialty of depicting domestic interiors in which beams

of sunlight play over commonplace chores like combing lice from children's hair. Another form of rhopography is to employ rough artistic style to depict rough subject matter, as with the streaky brushstrokes and splotchy impasto used to render a dunescape, a peasant's face, or a hut in a bog. For all their ugliness, such works were valued. To give a pertinent example, one of Peter Paul Rubens's most expensive paintings was an unfinished-looking, brushy rendering of an unidealized drunken and corpulent Bacchus.⁶

Matching rough technique with rough motif, Rieke and Ter Gouw are heirs to this well-established visual tradition. If anything, they push it to an extreme, for their labored sketches do not convey effortless effort, the *sprezzatura* virtuosity of a Rubens, a Rembrandt, or a Ruisdael. While their pictorial qualities do not engage, each drawing thwarts complete disregard through the insertion of the written label. "Doolhof" gives the door a hinge, linking mundane portal with mythic place. If this is the entry to a labyrinth, then something intricate, artful, and potentially wondrous or dangerous is coiled inside the uninteresting exterior.

The depictions of an unappealing doorway evoke a variation of rhopography called the Silenus box—something that is unsightly on the outside but contains beautiful and precious things. Rubens was playing on this tradition with his coarse Bacchus painting, and a number of other Netherlandish artists made sophisticated use of the Silenus device in their works.⁷ The influential account of such an art object appears in Plato's *Symposium*. Socrates's student Alcibiades describes "those Sileni you find sitting in sculptors' shops . . . which when opened up are found to contain effigies of gods inside."⁸ Silenus, the satyr associated with Bacchus, usually is represented as old, fat,

flushed, balding, pug-nosed, and drunken. In spite of his repellent appearance, however, Silenus possessed divine wisdom, every virtue, and the gift of prophecy. The term "Silenus box" designates more than just a tricky artifact. A Silenus may look insignificant on the outside, but it opens into sacred mystery. Plato extends the metaphor to Socrates, whose ugly face, foolish behavior, and awkward manner of speech concealed wondrous powers: "His conversations too are just like those Sileni you can open up . . . if you can get through to what's under the surface . . . his arguments abound with divinity and effigies of goodness. They . . . cover absolutely everything which needs to be taken into consideration on the path to true goodness."⁹

It seems a leap to suggest that the Doolhof door contained this kind of promise or that its labyrinth and effigies offered a path to true goodness. However, something of the sort is suggested by yet another picture of the plain portal (fig. 2), this one by Rieke's son, Johan (1851–1899). Notably, Rieke junior records the distinguishing notice above this entry, which both his father and Ter Gouw, the historian of street signs, deliberately left out of their drawings. Between the doorway and transom window is a large curved lintel whose inscription commands the passerby, "Don't just stand in front of this door. Walk in."¹⁰ Fountains, organs, and lively performances are mentioned as specific tantalizers. The incised text promises that walking through the Doolhof door would bring "the purest joy and contentment" to all who entered. The green door is ajar, enhancing anticipation but, disappointingly, not admitting any glimpse of the pleasures inside.

In fact, this door is probably swinging shut rather than open. Although the drawing was made in 1870, the cartouche at the bottom indicates

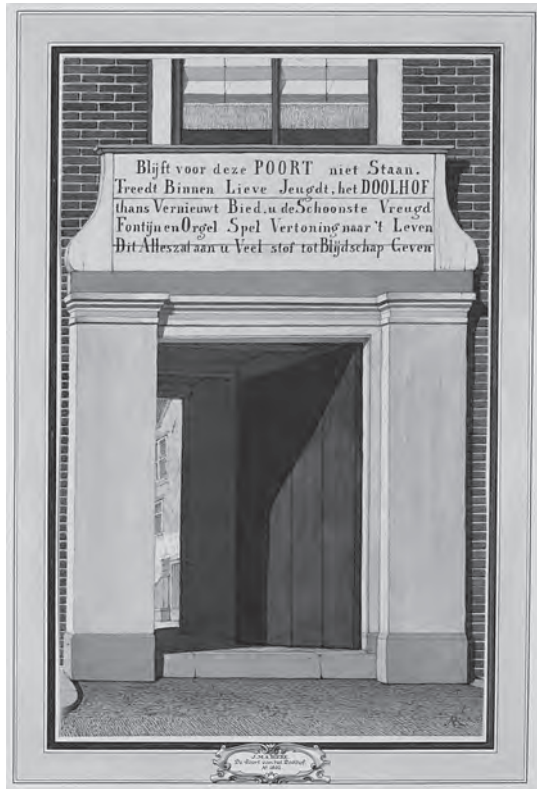


FIG. 2 J. M. A. Rieke, *Door of the Doolhof on Prinsengracht and Looijersgracht*, ca. 1870. Photo: Amsterdam City Archives (010094001704).

1862, a year before the Doolhof closed its door for good. Rieke's picture thus commemorates the closure of a venerable and unique type of civic establishment. No other European city had public urban labyrinth gardens of this sort, whereas in Amsterdam, five exhibition spaces called Doolhoven were established in the first half of the seventeenth century.¹¹ The Oude Doolhof (Old Labyrinth), pictured by Ter Gouw and the Riekes, was at the corner of Prinsengracht and Looijersgracht. It was the longest-lived of the Doolhoven, remaining in operation for close to two hundred and fifty years, from around 1620 until 1863. In

1626, its proprietor purchased an adjacent garden on Looijersgracht and built a Nieuwe Doolhof (New Labyrinth). In 1648, the Nieuwe Doolhof was sold, and the business was updated and moved to a larger site on the Rozengracht, where it remained until 1717. There was also a Roode Doolhof (Red Labyrinth) near the Regulierspoort from 1630 to 1663, and a Franse Doolhof (French Labyrinth) by the St. Anthoniespoort from 1637 to 1679.¹² While highly celebrated in their day, none of the Doolhof inns and very few of their attractions survive. The dearth of extant artifacts, together with nineteenth-century disparagement of amusements that were no longer innovative, has contributed to their obsolescence. The approach advised by Johan Huizinga accordingly inspires this study: "It is not enough to gaze admiringly on the masterpieces that have been preserved; one must consider what has been lost."¹³ Following from this directive, *Moving Statues* is in part an experiment in recovering what can be known about nonextant works and their modes of display.

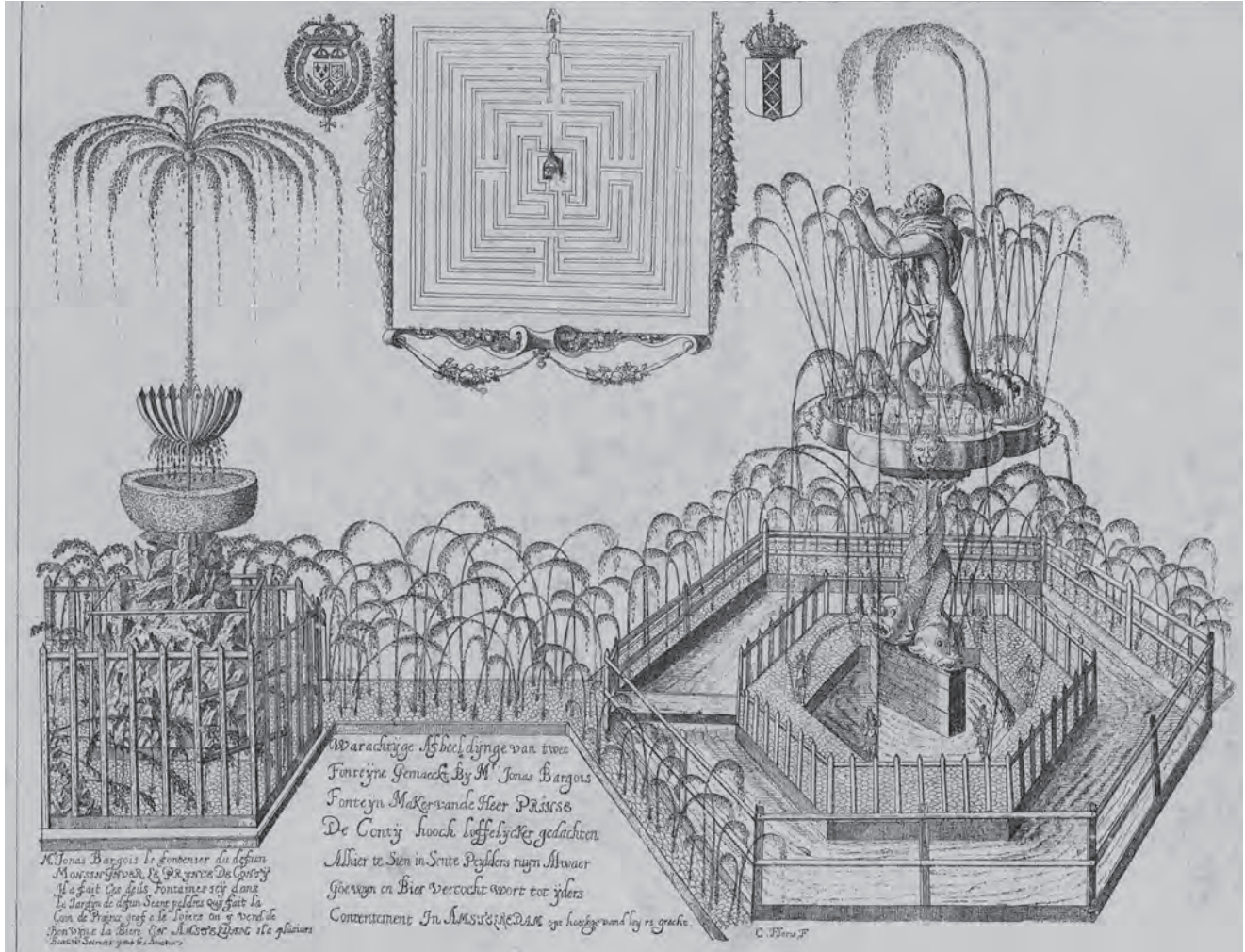
Ever since the closure of the Oude Doolhof, scholars consistently have derided the Amsterdam Doolhoven as marginal spaces of low-class urban entertainment, quirky forms of popular culture that do not merit close analysis. The sites have been dismissed as somewhat primitive ancestors of the theme park or the wax museum.¹⁴ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a number of articles and short pieces were published by historians, antiquarians, and archivists, as if to salvage the memory of a vanished form of Amsterdam street life. These studies summarize specific archival sources and take a folkloric approach, registering strong class, gender, and nationalist biases. Like Rieke and Ter Gouw, the early chroniclers seem to belittle their own efforts,

describing and dismissing the Doolhoven as naive amusements for the *volk*, the common people. The salvage paradigm—an effort to preserve the memory of lost cultural practices—is employed together with another customary approach to folk culture: the safety valve model. The theory is that these fun parks gave the *volk* a bit of rowdy pleasure, allowing them to let off steam, a contained disruption that kept urban populations happy. *Volk* is a capacious category in these early histories of the Doolhoven: it does not denote a specific socioeconomic group so much as a perceived lack of cultural sophistication.¹⁵ The folklorists singled out the types they assumed would most enjoy this kind of low-class entertainment: women, laborers, tradespeople, maidservants, the petty bourgeoisie, farmers, foreigners, youth, and the proletariat. The reiterated conclusion was that these popular urban pleasure parks mainly appealed to mothers, nursemaids, and children. The implication is that—with such an audience—the Doolhoven were places of frivolity rather than serious cultural institutions. One of the earliest articles about the Oude Doolhof, by historian D. C. Meijer Jr., was published in the first issue of the journal *Oud Holland* in 1883. Meijer’s conclusions have perpetuated the predominant view: a Doolhof is a *kinderspeltuin*—a children’s playground.¹⁶ Amsterdam city archivist and art historian Nicolaas de Roever, cofounder of *Oud Holland*, followed up on Meijer’s research with an 1888 article on the Nieuwe Doolhof and an 1890 book chapter about all of the Doolhoven. De Roever sums up the entertainment as “common merrymaking, typically Dutch, perhaps a bit rough, but artless and indecent.”¹⁷ In short, this was coarse fare for uncultured folk.

The aim of my study, by contrast, is to approach the Doolhof courtyards as Silenus boxes: as equally

rough and artful. As Desiderius Erasmus observes in *The Praise of Folly*: “You find all things suddenly reversed, when you open up the Silenus.”¹⁸ We could begin, then, by reversing the conclusions of the folklorists. The obvious starting point is to reconsider the primary sources, which indicate that the Amsterdam Doolhoven were not characterized as rough-and-tumble sites of marginal mass culture in the seventeenth century. To the contrary, they successfully attracted widespread attention in and beyond Amsterdam, as evidenced by numerous prints, posters, drawings, and souvenir pamphlets; by the inclusion of the sites in officially commissioned histories and maps of the city; and by descriptions in the travel accounts of well-educated upper-class international curiosity seekers.¹⁹ While the Doolhoven may have been perceived as childish folk entertainment in the nineteenth century, this clearly was not the case in the seventeenth century.

Among the artists and artisans whose work was exhibited at these sites were Amsterdam’s leading architect and sculptor, Hendrik de Keyser (1565–1621); the engraver and publisher Crispijn van de Passe the Younger (1594/95–1670); the city’s official sculptor, Albert Vinckenbrinck (1604–1665); the Parisian fountain maker Jonas Bargois (1582–1629); and Frankfurt horologists David Lingelbach (1592–1653) and his son Philips Lingelbach (1622–1673).²⁰ As advertised by Doolhof publicity materials, these highly accomplished artists and artisans made “things that have never been seen or even thought of before”²¹—works that were inventive and distinctive rather than artless and common. We need only look again at the list: labyrinths, automata, wax portraits, monumental fountains, clocks, astronomical devices, hydraulic installations, mechanical inventions, and large-scale multimedia sculpture groups. These creations represent some



Warachtige Afbeelding van twee
 Fonteyne Gemackt by M^r Jonas Bargois
 Fonteyn Maeker vande Heer P^rassers
 De Conij Hoogh Loffelycke gedachten
 Alhier te sien in Sente Pzblers tuyn Alwaer
 Goerwyn en Bier Veevocht wort toe jules
 Conventment In AMSTERDAM op hooft wand ley es grake.

M^r Jonas Bargois le fontenier du seigneur
 Monsieur de Vreda le P^rince de Conroy
 Il a fait ces deux Fontaines icy dans
 le Jardin de son Seigneur qui fait la
 Cour de Prusse pres de la Justice ou se vend le
 Bon Vin de la Biere par Amsterdam il a plusieurs
 autres Fontaines y en a plusieurs

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of the most innovative and complex artistic and scientific technologies of the day. In fact, artistry of this type had hitherto been the preserve of elite and courtly gardens and was featured in private collections and cabinets. In other European cities, such inventive arts adorned important public sites like town squares and cathedrals, promoting the cultural accomplishments of centers like Florence, Paris, Rome, Ghent, Venice, and Strasbourg, places with which Amsterdam vied as it strove to establish itself as a cosmopolitan center in the early decades of the seventeenth century.

The earliest surviving Doolhof advertising poster, dated to around 1622, proffers a way into this urban pleasure park (fig. 3). Unlike the unadorned (and probably fictive) poster for the Oude Doolhof depicted in Ter Gouw's image of the closed green door (color plate 1), this seventeenth-century exemplar was designed to intrigue. It pictures two fountains joined by a pebbled path that spouts water jets. Inset above is the detailed plan of a labyrinth. Pendant garlands of fruit hang from the mouths of beasts to frame the diagram, which is flanked by the coats of arms of Amsterdam at right and the Kingdom of France and Navarre at left. There is much to catch the eye here. Unlike Paris, Amsterdam could not boast of any impressive civic fountains in the 1620s. Its low, flat, and boggy terrain made the creation of fountains particularly challenging, as gravity could not easily be harnessed to force water upward into spectacular sprays such as those pictured on the poster. The very unfamiliarity of the depicted fountains poses questions about their hidden workings. For

the person in the street, this poster would have presented astounding feats of engineering and artistry. These waterworks actually were "things that had never been seen or thought of before"—at least in Amsterdam, for they represent the city's first monumental public fountains.²²

The poster's explanatory text is in Dutch and French, soliciting both local and international interest. The skills of the French émigré Bargois are emphasized, and he is identified as the fountain maker to (in larger text) *Monseigneur the Prince of Conti*. The fountain at right, picturing Jonah emerging from the mouth of the fish, must then be Bargois's signature piece, a play on his name. The labyrinth is not labeled or explained: its plan simply offers a visual enigma. The text gives the location of the garden at the corner of Prinsengracht and Looiersgracht, together with the enticement that good wine and beer can be purchased there. The inn's proprietor is also named: Cente Peijlder, the nickname of Vincent Coster, who held the office of civic wine-assayer and also served as municipal treasurer.²³ The alliance of Bargois and Coster is aggrandized by the coats of arms: the combined forces of France and Amsterdam bring you these marvels. There are no allusions to typically Dutch peasantlike merrymaking or kindergartens here.

The French text curiously includes an extra bit of information, tacked on in smaller print at the end. It is as though the poster whispers to a select group, the readers of French: "Il a plusiurs beaux secreets pour les Amateurs" (There are many fine secrets for amateurs). Almost all Doolhof advertisements appeal to these amateurs. Subsequent posters address "liefhebbers vande konst" (lovers of art) and "alle Heeren, Koop-luyden, Burgers en Liefhebbers" (all gentlemen, merchants, citizens,

FIG. 3 Anonymous drawing, after Cornelis Florisz van Berckenrode, *Fountains in the Oude Doolhof*, ca. 1622. Photo: Amsterdam City Archives (010094004316).

and enthusiasts).²⁴ The terms *liefhebbers* and *amateurs* designate a self-selecting group of discerning connoisseurs, local and international virtuosi in search of artistry advertised as “new,” “rare,” “curious,” “strange,” and “wondrous.” Like *volk*, *liefhebber* is a capacious category. In fact, the terms are binary opposites, related concepts with reversed meanings: *liefhebber* distinguishes the cultured art lover from the uncultured folk.

The poster thus calls up an intriguing array of attractions: an intricate labyrinth, the princely creations of a Parisian fountain maker, a well-known Amsterdam proprietor, good wines and beers, and many fine secrets. It addresses every passerby as well as a select and self-selecting group, educated readers of French and lovers of art, and offers them things that are abstruse and difficult, beyond ordinary comprehension and general public knowledge. By simultaneously promising and withholding, this advertisement indicates that a visit would provide further initiation: access to novel technologies and the challenge of finding that hidden place at the heart of the labyrinth. The poster publicizes secrets, and it is this contradictory approach that ensures its success. It tantalizes viewers with the promise of an exhibition space that is both closed and open, princely and popular, cosmopolitan and local, challenging and accessible, clandestine and convivial.

We thus have to revisit the question of the social status and function of these exhibitions. The advertising strategy of making secrets public indicates the complex cultural dynamics of the sites. Street posters, especially ones that include imagery as well as text, address a public composed of any pedestrian who stops to look or read. As commercial establishments, the Doolhoven obviously attempted to attract as many paying customers as

possible—they were accessible to all who could pay the admission fee. Drawing customers was just savvy business practice: without a doubt, making a profit was a priority. While the publicity throws the Doolhof open to anyone, however, it simultaneously singles out a select group—the art lovers. As innovative and elite artistic forms were made available to a wide audience, divisions were drawn between those with skillful understanding and those perceived to be in need of such training.

In his field-defining studies of early modern popular culture, Roger Chartier has observed that it is impossible to establish exclusive relationships between specific cultural forms and discrete social groups, since the fluid circulation of objects and practices blurs such distinctions. The intermingling of diverse people and things within shared culture—as at the Doolhoven—frequently is countered by assertions about proper and improper uses and understandings, which are a means to inculcate normative responses and reinforce social boundaries.²⁵ The Oude Doolhof poster, which targets a preferred group within the broad audience, represents such an attempt to make distinctions between learned and unlearned visitors, separating out the initiated from the uninitiated, an issue I return to below.

The evidence that we have of the Doolhof displays indicates that the general public was given access to a variety of artifacts and ideas derived from classical antiquity. Labyrinths, fountains, automata, and waxworks were all billed as ancient art forms that had been revived. The Oude Doolhof included large-scale statues of Theseus battling the Minotaur and a fountain of the abandoned Ariadne discovered by Bacchus. Besides sources like Ovid and Catullus, these exhibits specifically reference the vernacular classicism that was being developed

by leading literary figures like Daniel Heinsius and Pieter Cornelisz Hooft. Heinsius's controversial Dutch-language poem *Ode to Bacchus* (1614) probably inspired the Bacchus and Ariadne fountain, which I take up in the next chapter. In one of the few substantive recent studies of the Doolhoven, literary scholar Marijke Spies shows that the theatrical works of Hooft were especially relevant. His well-known play *Theseus and Ariadne* (1614) was performed regularly in Amsterdam in the early decades of the seventeenth century, and its themes were central to these labyrinth sculpture parks, as explored in chapter 3.²⁶ Another of Hooft's popular plays, the pastoral *Granida* (1605), was featured at the Oude Doolhof, where scenes were acted out by automata in a moving mechanical picture show displayed in the sculpture gallery; chapter 7 considers this peculiar use of machinery to animate imagery of a technology-free golden age.

The strong connections with the literary works of Hooft offer a way to understand the civic functions of the Doolhoven. Not only were his plays referenced in many of the exhibits, but Hooft also had personal links to these sites. Antonia Cloeck, proprietor of the Franse Doolhof, was Hooft's niece, the daughter of his sister Jannetje Cornelisz Hooft. Cloeck's grandparents were the Amsterdam burgomaster Cornelis Pieters Hooft and Anna Jacobsdr Blaeu, of the renowned publishing and map-making family. Coster, the first proprietor of the Oude Doolhof, also hailed from this exclusive social circle: he held civic office, and his uncle was a burgomaster.²⁷ The Hoofts, Cloecks, Costers, and Blaeus were among Amsterdam's leading families. They were of the regent class, the oligarchs who served in municipal government. Members of these families held positions on the governing boards of various civic institutions, like the prisons,

orphanages, and old people's homes, as well as the powerful and profitable Dutch East and West India trading companies. As civic leaders, the regent families deliberately shaped the cultural life of the city. The Doolhof concept thus seems to have been the brainchild of Amsterdam's political, cultural, and intellectual elite. These innovative exhibition sites evidently expressed patrician as well as proletarian interests.

To situate the populist aims of the establishments, it is useful to consider a pioneering effort made by P. C. Hooft to disseminate colloquial classicism to the urban populace. Together with fellow playwrights Dr. Samuel Coster and G. A. Bredero, Hooft was one of the founders of the *Nederduysch Academie*, or Dutch Academy. Built on the Keizersgracht in 1617, the academy was Amsterdam's first permanent theater building. More than just a performance venue, it was conceived as a cultural and academic center, with the aim of offering vernacular public instruction in the arts and sciences. The Dutch Academy deliberately distinguished itself from Leiden University, where teaching was in Latin. Two professors, both Mennonites, were appointed to teach at the academy: Sybrandt Hansz Cardinael specialized in arithmetic, and Jan Theunisz taught Hebrew. The academy also differed from Leiden University because it had no official connection to the Reformed church; its Dutch-language instruction focused on classical rather than theological learning. As a contemporary source notes, the academy was "meant for the edification and amusement of everyone."²⁸

The ambitious aims of this civic cultural center were short-lived, however. There were repeated condemnations by Reformed church leaders, who especially complained that its classical curriculum veered rather too far in the direction of paganism.

Moreover, they disapproved of the hiring of non-Calvinist professors. The early decades of the seventeenth century were a volatile period in the religious life of the Dutch Republic, when theological disputes between opposing Calvinist political factions almost erupted into civil war. Although the Amsterdam magistrates rarely took an ultraorthodox stance, they could not afford to take risks, and in 1619 they decided to appease the hardline Calvinists and keep the peace by curtailing the academy's activities. Decades later, the academy was reconfigured—the Amsterdam Schouwburg was established in 1637 for public theater performances, whereas higher learning became the domain of the Athenaeum Illustre (precursor to the University of Amsterdam), inaugurated in 1632.

At about the same time that the Dutch Academy fell under censure, the first Doolhof appeared on Prinsengracht, just a canal away from the academy building on Keizersgracht. Besides their proximity, there are other parallels between the academy and the Oude Doolhof, where the vernacular classicism of experimental works of art, theater, science, technology, and astronomy was presented to the general public. Another connection is Theunisz, the academy's Hebrew instructor, who was the proprietor of a tavern and music house called D'O in de Bruyloft. Theunisz's inn displayed ingenious mechanical and hydraulic works, which I will explore in more detail in chapters 4 and 5. With the restrictions on civic cultural institutions in these decades, it seems that Amsterdam's inns emerged as sites that advanced various forms of community instruction, including the demonstration of artworks, artifacts, curiosities, and new technologies. Other well-known Amsterdam inns included De Blauw Jan and De Witte Oliphant, whose courtyards and outbuildings housed and displayed exotic birds, animals,

and even people from around the world.²⁹ Like the Doolhoven, these public houses attracted international visitors and dignitaries and were frequented by a wide range of local people, which may have comprised servants, laborers, housewives, children, and farmers but also civic magistrates and notable scholars. What is of particular interest about the use of inns and taverns as exhibition sites is their potential to generate new social formations through broad access to shared culture. The public, urban displays of moving statues thus prompt an approach that shifts emphasis from artists and patrons to consideration of the effects of lively images on the diverse audiences who interacted with them.

The Moving Image

In what follows, I contend that the Doolhoven shared some of the higher ambitions of the short-lived Dutch Academy: their distinctive brand of colloquial classicism was paired with artistic and scientific experimentation in a manner devised to offer education and entertainment to Amsterdam residents as well as visitors to the city. Given the diversity of the audience, we can assume that not every guest would have been equipped with the same background knowledge, and the evidence indicates that concerted efforts were made to control the reception and understanding of the exhibits. The various artworks were staged as "shows" (*vertooningen*) and explained to audiences by a presenter, likely one of the proprietors. Theatrical modes of display included the raising of stage curtains accompanied by music and various other means to create a multisensory experience of art that was both pleasurable and instructive. Explanatory booklets were sold to visitors, which

serve as key sources for understanding the contents of the exhibits and how they were staged. There are also some firsthand accounts by visitors to the Doolhoven, although these were exclusively written by well-educated European men and so do not give a full picture of the variety of audience reactions. The experiences of women, non-Europeans, and lower-class visitors are more difficult to track—we have to read between the lines of the existing primary sources to get a sense of how nonelites were situated and the types of hierarchies that were created by exhibits designed to change and improve. The instructive impetus of the displays thus signals what I think was the main purpose of the Doolhoven, which was to make inventive and exclusive forms of art and technology accessible to a broad mix of people, in the process attempting to transform them into civil, informed amateurs. The Doolhoven did not just seek to attract virtuosi and art lovers; rather, the itinerary through the sites was a rite of initiation into the secrets of the exhibits. This was the Silenus-like aim of these establishments: to convert those who were perceived as rough volk into refined liefhebbers.

Needless to say, this conclusion verges on the cliché. Seventeenth-century commonplaces about edification and amusement were elevated to a methodological approach by the 1976 art exhibition and catalogue *Tot Lering en Vermaak* (For learning and entertainment).³⁰ An important rethinking of Dutch genre painting, this study argued that the purpose of seemingly trivial or crude scenes of everyday life—domestic interiors, peasant festivities, landscapes, still-life paintings—was to instruct and delight. The emblems of Jacob Cats often are cited as key examples of this method: the visual image of something ordinary may seem incomprehensible, insignificant, or unsophisticated at first

glance, but it contains valuable moral and religious truths. Cats himself explains this approach in the foreword to his first emblem book, *Silenus Alcibiadis, sive Proteus* of 1618.³¹ As the title indicates, an emblem is like Alcibiades's Silenus box, a protean thing with hidden depths. Each emblematic image is given three levels of meaning relating to love, morality, and religion. In this manner, Cats draws on classicism to craft Calvinist culture.

In *Silenus Alcibiadis*, Cats likens the emblem to the apothecary's pot, which looks trifling on the exterior but when opened proffers curative balm. Drawing on the *Symposium*, François Rabelais similarly sums up the promise of the Silenus: "But had you opened that box, you would have found inside a heavenly and priceless drug: a superhuman understanding, miraculous virtue, invincible courage, unrivalled sobriety, unflinching contentment."³² Pot and medicine are pictured on the Cats title print (fig. 4). Beneath the Silenus box in the niche on the left is the Latin phrase *meliora latent*: the secret it contains is betterment. Also depicted are the people in need of this cure: a crowd that ranges from well-dressed burghers to ragged folk. The ideal expressed here is that the protean image delights and instructs in order to change protean people who, while rough on the outside, have inner potential. To muster the capacity of art for social change clearly was an expedient strategy for leading cultural producers like Cats, the supporters of the first Dutch Academy, and the urban patricians who founded the Doolhoven. Cats was notably appointed to one of the Dutch Republic's highest political offices: Grand Pensionary of Holland. His cultural efforts to reform and discipline the populace were more than theoretical notions; they were a form of practical politics, a means of creating an orderly republic.



FIG. 4 François Schillemans, after Adriaen van de Venne, title page from Jacob Cats, *Silenus Alcibiadis, sive Proteus* (Amsterdam: Willem Jansz Blaeu, 1619). Photo: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven.

The idea of combining entertainment and instruction for the betterment of the general population was not invented by Dutch artists and writers; it was a well-established classical technique of persuasion. Classical authors, however, include a third term, which has not received as much art-historical attention. Cicero writes that the best orator teaches, delights, and moves his listeners: “To teach them is his duty, to delight them is creditable to him, to move them is indispensable.”³³ With this, I return to the question of the impact of the Doolhof

displays on their audiences. While the deciphering of symbols and iconographic themes was no doubt one route to moral edification and improvement, it was by no means experienced as a process of detached intellectual contemplation. Interpretation was a mobile, immersive, and transformative process at the Doolhoven, where protean artworks were devised to move visitors emotionally and physically as well as morally. The fountains, automata, and mechanical devices were surprising works, set up to startle viewers with unanticipated sounds

and actions; the labyrinth was an ever-changing bodily experience that created conditions of sensory dislocation and visual uncertainty; and the waxworks, while deathly still, were perceived as “most lively,” in the words of one visitor.³⁴ These garden courtyards engaged audiences in multiple sensory experiences: confounding maze, spraying water, organ music, and Bacchic conviviality together enhanced the collective force of a gathering of strikingly lifelike moving artworks.

This kind of performative, embodied, sensuous, and emotive engagement with animated images has been largely repressed from art-historical methods like iconography, which tend to focus on the intellectual interpretation and contemplation of the work of art in relation to textual sources that convey similar moral messages. Moreover, the types of works that were showcased in the Doolhof exhibits—mechanical inventions, hydraulics, and wax portraits—have largely been excluded from accounts of a period mainly associated with the flourishing of Dutch oil painting. Frequently dismissed as a form of “primitivism,” the lively artwork is most often encountered in popular culture studies or anthropologies of the image.³⁵ This academic compartmentalization explains, at least in part, why the Doolhoven have been relegated to the realm of folklore. Writing in the early twentieth century, art historian Julius von Schlosser aptly sums up the peripheral status of automata and waxworks as artifacts “that had lurked since earliest times on the threshold of art.”³⁶ Bringing forward historical information about the production, display, and reception of experimental works, *Moving Statues* seeks to interrogate the boundaries of Dutch art history by turning to the marginalized objects that skulk there, which significantly alter our understanding

of artistic priorities and cultural practices in the seventeenth century.

A reconsideration of the moving image has the potential to put art history in motion, animating it and dynamically opening it up to a consideration of different kinds of objects, modes of engagement, and methods of analysis. The legacy of *Tot Lering en Vermaak* was to inspire multiple studies of Dutch paintings that searched for hidden moral messages in everyday subjects, matching prosaic visual motifs to the improving texts of emblem literature especially. In her important critique of this approach, Svetlana Alpers emphatically asserts that Dutch art is descriptive, not prescriptive; instead of looking for disguised meanings, we should be more attentive to pictorial qualities.³⁷ Alpers rightly notes that text-based moral readings of artworks often overlook the striking visual and material characteristics of the works themselves, and her intervention productively shifted the field to considerations of vision and visibility and to the significance of images for scientific experimentation and new optical technologies. This turn to visual culture helped usher in the “New Art History” of the 1980s.

In so doing, however, Alpers devises a method that assumes trust in visual images. In her assessment, descriptive art is very close to actual optical experience: “Pictorial and craft traditions, broadly reinforced by the new experimental science and technology, confirmed pictures as the way to new and certain knowledge of the world.”³⁸ Scholars have recently begun to question assumptions about the veracity of descriptive art and of vision itself. Stuart Clark, for instance, in his substantive overview *Vanities of the Eye*, demonstrates that there was widespread skepticism about the reliability of vision in the early modern period. Sensory information was perceived as uncertain,

even deceitful. As Victor Stoichita and others show, much seventeenth-century art is characterized by an idiosyncratic “self-awareness”; artists employed a range of visual devices to draw attention to the illusory tricks—rather than the objective truth—of the mimetic image.³⁹ While Alpers posits a mode of looking at realism that verges on detached scientific observation, descriptive art has proven notoriously difficult to decipher, and the works themselves often repay attentive viewing by withholding information, creating puzzlement, uncertainty, and the suspension of any sure conclusions about meanings, morals, or empirical information. The art of describing thus cannot be apprehended as a way to certain knowledge; contemporaries saw it more as a confounding trap and characterized art making as a form of trickery, albeit an “honorable deception,” in the words of artist and theoretician Samuel van Hoogstraten.⁴⁰

The notion that scientific ways of looking are detached and objective can also be challenged. Alpers’s *The Art of Describing*, with its emphasis on vision, tends to ally the descriptive pictorial mode with the development of scientific instruments, like the microscope and the telescope, and with viewing devices, like the camera obscura. Drawing on Alpers, Jonathan Crary, in his influential book *Techniques of the Observer*, claims that the camera obscura was a dominant metaphor for human vision across Europe in the seventeenth century. In Crary’s account, this viewing technique signaled a new model of subjectivity in which the image is separated from the object and the act of seeing is sundered from the physical body of the viewer: “The observer’s physical and sensory experience is supplanted by the relations between a mechanical apparatus and a pre-given world of objective truth.”⁴¹ Vision, in other words, was decorporealized.

However, alongside the telescope, microscope, and camera obscura, there were other sorts of artistic, scientific, and mechanical devices—automata, mechanical clocks, and hydraulic works, especially—that were equally prevalent in the seventeenth century and also were devised as tools to interrogate the workings of nature. As we will see, these stimulated viewing experiences were profoundly corporeal. If we reconsider the art of describing in relation to these types of artworks, we accordingly should rethink the mode of viewing prompted by highly illusionistic art, which does not simply convey visual knowledge of a pre-given world of objective truth. Many of the works displayed at the Doolhof gardens took mimesis to its extremes. Waxworks and automata, in particular, do more than just imitate nature—they look or even move as if they are alive. By engaging and deceiving the viewer, they pose questions about the contiguity of life and art, an issue explored further in chapters 4 and 6. The Doolhof exhibits also allow for a consideration of the interplay between various types of art objects, their environments, and their viewers. Instead of highlighting the discrete work of art as a locus of meaning or technical virtuosity, these pleasure parks immersed peripatetic visitors in a multimedia experience that unfolded as an engaged process of interaction. The moving image thus calls for a methodological approach that considers the impact of the work of art on viewers who cannot be characterized as detached observers.

Notably, this prompts us to reassess the now-ubiquitous term *visual culture* and shift to a consideration of multisensorial interactions with artworks. We cannot really bracket out a purely visual apprehension of things from all of the other sensory, cognitive, psychological, and emotive

impressions that come into play. *Moving Statues* therefore contributes to growing art-historical interest in the moving image and experiential viewing. While Alpers's and Crary's narratives have long dominated visual culture studies, art historians have begun to reassess these claims, turning to primary source material as well as theories derived from disciplines such as philosophy and anthropology.⁴² There has been a recent outpouring of studies that evaluate the affective and performative qualities of early modern imagery and reconsider aesthetic experience in terms of emotions, sensations, and embodiment. Important books by Caroline van Eck, Thijs Weststeijn, and Frederica Jacobs have definitively shown that classical and early modern art theory considered the moving and lively qualities of artworks as vital to their impact.⁴³

Regarding approaches to Netherlandish art, a significant rethinking of the field is evident in special issues of flagship journals such as *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* and *Journal of the Historians of Netherlandish Art* dedicated to exploring the importance of the passions and the sublime in encounters with early modern artworks.⁴⁴ There are also volumes devoted to particular reactions and embodied viewing practices like early modern horror, the erotics of looking, and theatricality.⁴⁵ Critical studies of the striking effects of automata and waxworks are appearing with more frequency, as are considerations of the labyrinth as an immersive art form.⁴⁶ What all of this current scholarship demonstrates is that—far from being supplanted—physical and sensory experience was integral to understanding early modern art. The camera obscura metaphor of detached observation therefore does not adequately characterize the period eye. Instead, I would argue that the works examined in this book—automata, waxworks, fountains, and labyrinths—offer more

fitting models for understanding seventeenth-century visual culture as experimental, affective, embodied, and performative.

Seventeenth-century writers about art say very little about emblem-based moral meanings or the objective visuality of the new science. The art theorists also did not tend to oppose Dutch realism to Italianate classicism but developed sophisticated ideas about mimetic painting based on humanist knowledge of classical philology.⁴⁷ Indeed, pictorial realism itself was a form of classicism: the visual traditions of rhopography and the Silenus, as noted, were derived from ancient precedents, a fact that is usually overlooked in art-historical studies and exhibitions of Dutch pictures of everyday life.

Another key concept derived from classicism was *energeia*, used in rhetoric to denote the means of sparking emotional and physical audience engagement. The Dutch term for this process was *beweeglijkheid*. As Weststeijn and others explore, artists believed that every effective work of art should possess this moving quality, which connoted motion as well as emotion.⁴⁸ By persuading beholders that artificial figures could move, breathe, and speak, visual art could consume its beholders, immersing them in an intense illusory experience. Addressing his fellow artists, Willem Goeree summarizes the importance of infusing a work of art with *beweeglijkheid*:

Since it is in the nature of figures depicted that they lack life and movement, this should stimulate us all the more to find the means to create the figures in the scenes in such a way that the spectator forgets all thoughts about canvas and panel, paint and oil, wood and stone and copper, be it cast or modelled, and to give him the idea that he sees before his eyes nothing painted or cast, but living human figures, so that he thinks they walk, move,

speak, shout, fight, hear, see, think, and do all other living actions of living people.⁴⁹

Goeree describes a performative aesthetics in which spectators do not engage in detached observation of erudite iconography or optical effects but become intensely interconnected with living works that appear contiguous with their world.

Skillfully illusionistic realism was transformative because it was performative: it could solicit bodily and impassioned involvement with figures that appear to be “living people.” In the words of one early modern commentator, the beholder thus confronted by the lively artwork “becomes another person.”⁵⁰ The striking visual and sensory properties of art were never only for pleasure or edification: ultimately, the aim of *beweeglijkheid* was to rouse viewers to action. “To move them is indispensable,” as Cicero insists; a work of art can only change people if it is able to move them, and intense emotive engagement with a truly compelling artwork could persuade onlookers to alter their ethical outlook.⁵¹ This is why *beweeglijkheid* mattered. Although scholars have drawn attention to the significance of *beweeglijkheid*, there are few studies that demonstrate how the transformative force of the lively image was mobilized in the Dutch Republic to serve specific political, religious, commercial, and social agendas, a process that is the main focus of this book.

Controlled Confusion

Moving Statues interrogates many of the contentious debates that have polarized the field of Dutch art history by taking into account the complex functions of artworks that could be

both prescriptive and descriptive, empirical and emotional, elite and popular, and even pagan and Protestant at the same time. Central to this approach is an emphasis on the early modern practice of thinking with paradox.⁵² The art of paradox is the ability to hold incompatible opposites in tension. A key insight of the aesthetic theorists was that the fusion of opposing forces in an animated work of art could create a “terrifyingly confused inner struggle” in viewers.⁵³ At the heart of this struggle was the impossibility of reconciling the beneficial and harmful potential of art. The management and control of artworks and art lovers were of vital concern in the Dutch Republic because of the belief that art was dangerous. Protean works could proffer curative balm and deadly poison; they could operate as harmonious instruments as well as damaging weapons.⁵⁴ Authorities could never completely regulate the contradictory capabilities of animated art: it was a formidable tool and thus a locus of conflict.

With ultraorthodox Calvinism on the rise in the early decades of the seventeenth century—when the Doolhoven were first established—the lively artwork came under close scrutiny. The Doolhoven were semipublic sculpture parks, and sculpture was the art form most vilified in the Calvinist war against images. The iconoclasm of 1566 had cleansed the Dutch churches of much of their religious imagery, and statues were particular targets.⁵⁵ It was precisely the moving and lively qualities of the graven image that most offended. As one witness to iconoclastic destruction noted, “They hammer away mainly at the faces.”⁵⁶ If only one part of an image was attacked, it was the eyes, which especially conveyed the lifelike or person-like qualities of the sculpted or painted figure. The iconoclasts struck at the moving image to stop

it from stirring beholders to the false veneration of idols. Such concerns reescalated during the religious and political conflicts of the early seventeenth century. In 1613, to give a relevant example, Amsterdam's civic sculptor, De Keyser, was threatened with discipline by the Amsterdam church council, which claimed that his statues would move people to idolatry.⁵⁷ De Keyser was not the only cultural producer to come under censure. In 1622, Samuel Coster closed the Dutch Academy after it had been declared "anticlerical" at the repeated urgings of Calvinist church leaders.⁵⁸ Heinsius, to note another pertinent case, wrote an *Ode to Jesus Christus* in 1615 to offset the church's criticisms of his hymn to Bacchus, which was condemned by religious authorities because of its celebration of a pagan god.⁵⁹ In a similar move, Cats, too, thought it wise to distance himself from paganism: subsequent editions of *Silenus Alcibiadis, sive Proteus* were simply titled *Sinne- en Minnebeelden* (Images of morality and love).⁶⁰

The Doolhof inns had an important advantage in this repressive context: as private businesses, they could foster cultural experimentation while evading the injunctions of the church. Even so, this was risky business. Eddy de Jongh states that after the iconoclasm, sculptors had to proceed cautiously, for they worked "in the shadow of Daedalus."⁶¹ The legendary Daedalus was antiquity's most cunning artificer. He was credited with the invention of the automaton as well as the labyrinth, making him a fitting figure to preside over the Doolhof displays.⁶² As explored further in chapter 4, early modern interpreters of the tale of Daedalus describe him as an artist who took human creativity to extremes. Renowned as the creator of clever devices, including the wooden cow used by Queen Pasiphaë to mate with the Cretan bull as well as

the labyrinth built to imprison the monster born of this bestiality, Daedalus was famously punished for his transgressive ingenuity when immured by King Minos in the very labyrinth that he had so craftily designed. Francis Bacon's 1609 commentary is particularly eloquent about the paradoxical workings of Daedalus's creations. While he criticizes Daedalus as a "most execrable artist" and Daedalic artworks for their "mischief and destruction," Bacon also points out the social benefits of inventive ingenuity. He concludes that "unlawful arts, and indeed frequently arts themselves, are persecuted by Minos, that is, by laws, which prohibit and forbid their use among the people; but notwithstanding this, they are hid, concealed, retained, and everywhere find reception and skulking-places."⁶³ The Amsterdam Doolhoven, I am arguing, were just such skulking places. These labyrinth gardens contained, protected, and displayed the kinds of "unlawful arts" that had long been associated with Daedalus. Cast out of the churches, living statues were both sheltered and exposed as the "fine secrets" of the labyrinth.

Fostered by urban patricians, who were more invested in civic and commercial interests than the strictest doctrinal orthodoxy, the Doolhoven served as resourceful means to stimulate artistic and technological inventiveness in spite of religious prohibitions. The need for cultural innovation was particularly urgent in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in the wake of the image wars. During this period, Amsterdam experienced its swift ascendancy to a major world trade center, largely due to the defeat of Antwerp in 1585 and the founding of the hugely profitable East India Company, the VOC, in 1602. The early decades of the seventeenth century were characterized by the large-scale immigration of merchants, intellectuals,



artists, and craftspeople, especially from the southern Netherlands and Germany. This influx of a foreign cultural elite, together with sudden economic dominance as Amsterdam eclipsed Antwerp in global trade, transformed the city in a remarkably short span of time. The population grew from thirty thousand in 1585 to one hundred and twenty thousand by 1632 and two hundred thousand by the late 1660s, an explosive pattern of growth exclusively due to immigration. Suddenly Amsterdam was the third largest city in Europe, after London and Paris.⁶⁴ The metamorphosis of Amsterdam from fishing town to overpopulated metropolis necessitated new cultural strategies to celebrate and make sense of—but also keep up with—the new situation.

The Doolhof exhibition sites were distinctive to the context of a republican city dominated by Calvinism whose wealth derived from mercantile capitalism and global trade. As an ambitious early attempt to picture Amsterdam's new place in the world, Claes Jansz Visscher's printed city profile of 1611 gives us a sense of the city's aspirations (fig. 5). The crowned Amsterdam Maid is seated in a small fenced garden at the center of the crowded composition, and the explanatory text proclaims that she is an empress who commands the whole

FIG. 5 Claes Jansz Visscher, *Profile of Amsterdam*, 1611. Photo: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

FIG. 6 Claes Jansz Visscher, *Profile of Amsterdam*, 1611, detail. Photo: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Verkeerde en onbegrijpene Begrippen van de werelde
 De werelde is een groot geheel, dat uit vele deelen bestaat, en dat men niet kan begrijpen, indien men niet alle deelen kent, en de verhouding daarvan weet.

A. de Wereld	B. de Wereld	C. de Wereld	D. de Wereld
E. de Wereld	F. de Wereld	G. de Wereld	H. de Wereld
I. de Wereld	J. de Wereld	K. de Wereld	L. de Wereld
M. de Wereld	N. de Wereld	O. de Wereld	P. de Wereld
Q. de Wereld	R. de Wereld	S. de Wereld	T. de Wereld
U. de Wereld	V. de Wereld	W. de Wereld	X. de Wereld
Y. de Wereld	Z. de Wereld		

Cherich van de werelde
 De werelde is een groot geheel, dat uit vele deelen bestaat, en dat men niet kan begrijpen, indien men niet alle deelen kent, en de verhouding daarvan weet.

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world. On her left are the traditional Dutch volk, bringing their contributions to civic prosperity: fishers, hunters, and farmers who carry the bounties of land and sea to the Maid. At her right are the peoples of the world, a long list that includes Spaniards, Frenchmen, Germans, Englishmen, Poles, the Amsterdam Jews, Danes, Swedes, Muscovites, Russians, Laplanders, Hungarians, Greenlanders, East Indians, West Indians, Guineans, Tartars, Persians, and the Chinese. They offer the abundance of their lands: spices, porcelain, Brazilwood, ivory, gemstones, grain, pearls, textiles, and many more commodities, which are pictured and inventoried by the print. The fiction of this image is that these astonishing riches are bestowed as gifts to the Maid. In return, she brings religion and law, represented by the rod of justice and the open Bible, and imparts learning and the arts, pictured as a globe, a quill, a painter's palette, two books, and some musical notation (fig. 6). The text explains that the Maid offers wisdom and knowledge to foreigners and residents; the city is "a common school for all people, as was formerly the city of Athens."⁶⁵

It must be remarked that the Maid's offerings look rather paltry in contrast to the bounteous treasure she receives. In fact, this paean to Amsterdam comes up rather short when listing places where people could actually access the city's stores of learning, art, and wisdom. A library housed in the Nieuwe Kerk is mentioned, as are the city's map and print shops (promoting Visscher's own business). However, the Dutch Academy, Schouwburg Theater, and Athenaeum Illustre were not yet established at this time, nor was the New Town Hall, which later became an important expression of Amsterdam's cosmopolitan status. Artistic treasures that had formerly filled the churches had been removed or destroyed during and after the

iconoclasm. In brief, there were few public places for the exhibition of art. Indeed, the accolades of Visscher's city profile may have seemed rather inflated in 1611. While Amsterdam was fast becoming a powerhouse global trade emporium, it had not achieved world dominance in the realm of culture. The Visscher print thus highlights, albeit unwittingly, what must have been a significant challenge for the urban elite: how to transform Amsterdam into an impressive global storehouse of learning and the arts in spite of considerable religious opposition to certain forms of cultural production, notably pagan classicism and potentially idolatrous graven images.

Visscher's elaborate printed profile stands near the beginning of a long tradition of civic panegyrics that flourished as Amsterdam continued to grow in size and status over the course of the century. Later city descriptions reiterated the claim that Amsterdam was a school for all peoples and directed readers (especially foreigners) to an expanding number of public places where they could access the arts and learning that the city offered. Notably, the Doolhoven are featured prominently in such publications. As the authority of the ultraorthodox Calvinists lessened, particularly around midcentury, Doolhof publicity began to proliferate more openly, advertising astonishing things for curiosity seekers. For instance, Caspar Commelin's civic history devotes a full chapter to four of the Doolhoven, describing various exhibits in detail and stressing that the sites offered "fine things for foreigners such as fountains, the

FIG. 7 Crispijn van de Passe, title page from *Dool-hof, Staende op de Roose-Gracht* (Amsterdam: voor Philips Lingelbach, 1660). Photo: Allard Pierson, University of Amsterdam Library Special Collections, OTM O 60-2758.

DOOL-HOF,

Staende op de Rooſe - Gracht, by de derde Brugh,

Alwaer vertoont worden verſcheyden ſeer konſtige Wercken,
ſoo van Fonteynen als Aſtronomiſche Uurwercken . uybeeldende eenige wonder-
lijcke Geſchiedeniſſen: oock Herders Kluchten, met haer Beweging en Ver-
roeringe, doende elck Beeldt ſijn Actie of het leefde, tot Verwonde-
ringhen Vermaeck der Aenſchouwers, gepractiſeert door *Mr. David*
Lingelbach van *Franckfort*, als mede door ſijn Soon
Philips van Lingelbach.



Voor Philips Lingelbach, Woonende op de Rooſe-gracht, by de derde Brugh.

2 1660

performance of many moving histories, and many other similar things to see.”⁶⁶ The sources proclaim that one of the main civic functions of these exhibition sites was to surprise and impress the city’s many immigrants and foreign visitors with distinctive and inventive things that they could only see in Amsterdam, an audacious assertion that is interrogated further in chapter 5. In this sense, the Doolhof publicity substantiates the claim made by Visscher’s print: Amsterdam was a new Athens, a center of learning for all the peoples of the world. The aim of educating civic populations was thus extended to the global populace. In this context, the republican city’s art-exhibiting inns were important gathering places where travelers and locals could experience an esoteric collection of unusual artifacts. Situated as points of intersection in rapidly expanding networks of global transit, these distinctive venues mediated cultural diversity and knowledge exchange through pleasure and entertainment.

Further evidence that links the Amsterdam Doolhoven to the ideal classical culture of ancient Athens is found on the title page of a *Nieuwe Doolhof* pamphlet (fig. 7). The text introduces the “various artful works” displayed there, which include fountains, clockworks, and wonderful moving histories. These are described in terms of their *beweeglijkheid*: “Each image moves and acts as if it lives, for the wonder and delight of onlookers.”⁶⁷ The frontispiece pictures Athena or Minerva, patron of Athens and goddess of wisdom, craft, and artistic practices. In Athena’s left hand is her famous shield. Obliquely, we make out the Gorgon’s snaking hair, open mouth, and wide staring eyes. The slanting view protects us, because this artful shield is a formidable weapon:

the Medusa’s gaze is so horrific that it petrifies those who look at her directly. Athena’s shield is a particularly apt motif for the title print, since it is the moving image par excellence. The Gorgon’s sinuous movements and petrifying stare can change humans into immobile stone statues. This Medusa effect is a reversal of usual viewing dynamics, as the animated work of art turns its beholders into inanimate artworks. A similar mode of viewing, involving the arresting effects of active artworks, was articulated in descriptions of visitors to the Doolhoven being “struck with wonder” by moving images so that they “could not even understand . . . but only gazed in wonder.”⁶⁸ The blows of the iconoclasts seem to be reversed as reanimated graven images strike back.

This ability raises a key question about *beweeglijkheid* and the cultural strategies of the Doolhof displays. If the power of moving images was to transform viewers for the betterment of society, how exactly was this accomplished? It seems that the serpentine movements of the labyrinth led spectators into a place filled with lively artworks—a sort of lair where monstrous works could strike at them. If moving statues were mobilized to arouse strong passions like terror, desire, and wonder, would this not create chaos, confusion, and even idolatry rather than social order? The answer to this conundrum lies in the contradictory dynamics of passion and dispassion, motion and stillness, that characterized these exhibition sites and seventeenth-century aesthetic theory more broadly.

The *Nieuwe Doolhof* title print image shows Athena ringed with the Latin axiom: *Labor et Constancia facit Artem* (Labor and constancy make art) (fig. 7). The phrase resonates with civic ideals, specifically the practical implementation

of Neostoic philosophy in urban life. A pivotal work was the 1583 treatise *De Constantia* by Leiden University professor Justus Lipsius. Described as a “practical guide to the art of living,”⁶⁹ this book revived interest in ancient Stoic philosophy across Europe and was extremely influential in the Dutch cities, where it was taken up as a working model for public life.⁷⁰ Neostoicism was widely adopted by the Dutch Republic’s civic and political leaders as well as its foremost intellectuals, including playwrights and artists.⁷¹ Lipsius counseled that public evils, especially the violence, upheavals, and uncertainties of war, were inescapable, and the only way to attain peace was by changing the self. The cultivation of immovable strength of mind calms the internal chaos that results when human emotions are stirred by unpredictable external events,⁷² an insight succinctly expressed in the dictum of Michel de Montaigne: “Not being able to rule events, I rule myself.”⁷³

The Neostoic recommendation was to seek out the experience of strong passions with the aim of examining and moderating their potent effects. By learning not to be governed by fleeting emotions, the transformed person could meet every public evil with stoic constancy, dignity, and self-control. The difficult (if not unattainable) goal was to reach a dispassionate state of composure and contentment called *apatheia*. Heinsius, who was Lipsius’s colleague at Leiden University, applied these ideas to aesthetic theory. In his important engagement with Aristotle’s *Poetics*, Heinsius advises that the utility of emotionally stirring theater performances was to excite the passions in order to purge them, reducing them to the right measure and forcing them into order. Like Lipsius, Heinsius recognizes the futility of trying to use reason to completely

overcome or suppress irrational emotions and advocates channeling passion’s potent forces.⁷⁴ This approach resonates with the concept of *beweeelijikheid*: a performative work of art should have a forceful impact on viewers, stimulating physical motion, powerful passions, and ultimately transformation to a calm and balanced state of *apatheia*.

In keeping with the principles of Neostoicism, visitors to the Doolhof exhibits did not just attentively look at or study visual representations of classical myths. While the moral messages offered may have been similar to those discovered while probing emblems and paintings for deeper iconographic meanings, these labyrinth gardens solicited a fully embodied, eventful, and participatory understanding. Through their motions and emotions, participants physically took part in the narratives, at times even performing the actions, sensations, and decisions of characters like Theseus, Ariadne, Bacchus, and the Minotaur. By actively exploring ancient lore, audiences were challenged to examine and improve their own behavior and, ideally, to attain the equanimity of *apatheia*. This goal is what was promised by the inscription above the Doolhof door, which assured that lively performances, fountains, and music would reward visitors with “the purest joy and contentment” (see fig. 2).

Theories about scientific observation and learning also followed Neostoic precepts. In chapters 4 and 5, I will explore how philosophers like Aristotle and René Descartes advocate that emotive encounters with strange inventions can stir passions and arouse curiosity, moving viewers to philosophical contemplation and the acquisition of new knowledge. In a sense, then, the viewing of strikingly illusionistic and experimental works

of art could potentially create the detached and objective observers that Alpers and Crary describe. If this was the goal, however, then it is important to recognize that in seventeenth-century aesthetic theory, the process of arriving at disengagement involved intensely engaged combat with the formidable emotive energy aroused by art.

Moreover, the position of the detached observer was one of rank and privilege. Neostoic cultural exercises have been described as emancipatory; instead of top-down political and religious control, entertainment and pleasure were employed to encourage individuals to assume active responsibility for the ethical cultivation of the self.⁷⁵ However, in what follows, we will see that Neostoic practices driven by Protestant zeal also produced a disciplinary apparatus intended to change others, especially the nonelite groups frequently disparaged in assessments of the Doolhof audience: women, youth, peasants, the urban poor, and non-European foreigners. Emotive, uninhibited, and embodied viewing practices were commonly associated with these groups, while calm, objective observation was most often posited as the cultural achievement of educated European gentlemen.

Moving Statues is structured in three parts. The first part introduces the proposed ritual route through the exhibitions, where drinking and art appreciation stimulated the arousal of passions, which were then curbed by the frustrating and difficult trial of the labyrinth, preparing peripatetic visitors for an intense encounter with the moving inventions inside the sculpture gallery. Chapter 2 begins with the first monumental artwork that visitors would have encountered at the Oude Doolhof: a multimedia sculptural fountain representing the *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*. Situating this work in relation to innovations in hydraulic

technology emphasizes its novelty; it was advertised as a triumph of Amsterdam. The intended functions of the work are assessed in relation to the classical accounts of Ovid and Catullus, which are put into dialogue with Heinsius's illustrated poem *Ode to Bacchus* as well as festive understandings of drinking and creativity. Primary sources indicate that engagement with the figural fountain in the tavern yard had the power to affect viewers so that they enacted some of the transformations that occur in the tale of Bacchus and Ariadne. Female visitors, for instance, were especially singled out and mocked for becoming like Ariadne in their sensuous submission to the wine god.

Spirited arousal was preparation for the next part of the itinerary, and chapter 3 follows the prescribed route into the labyrinth. Here we decipher how the challenging exercise of walking the maze was designed as a rite of passage that activated Calvinist understandings of original sin. The confrontation between courageous Theseus and the brutish Minotaur was experienced as an inner struggle to overcome the beastliness that lurks within every person, a battle that ideally stimulated self-awareness and an ethics of active participation in civic life. A consideration of the depiction of the Doolhof labyrinths on maps of Amsterdam suggests the place of these civic mazes within a wide-ranging program of urban reform, as the ambitious expansion and redesign of the city worked in tandem with disciplinary attempts to tame its populations. In this context, comparison to Amsterdam's prisons highlights what was distinctive about the Doolhof's maze gardens, which seductively used artistic invention and aesthetic pleasure as forms of correction.

The second part focuses on the Doolhof automata shows. Their particular modes of display

are related to theories about bodies, passions, and machines articulated by philosophers like Aristotle, Bacon, and Descartes, all of whom specified how the exhibition of automata provoked strongly emotive reactions in order to stimulate thought and refine human behavior. With this understanding in mind, chapter 5 turns to Doolhof advertising that explicitly encouraged foreigners to visit these potentially transformative displays. Analysis of the publicity materials shows how foreign-looking automata were likened to slaves and how their foreign viewers were likened to automata. The forceful effects of the moving statue were thus deployed in support of the fiercely competitive and exploitative mercantile practices that brought about Amsterdam's precipitous rise. The chapter then introduces a case study that shows how early modern artistic invention was activated by the global mobility of people and moving art objects. The main focus is the inn of the scholar Theunisz, who honed his language skills and cultural knowledge in conversation with international visitors, including a Muslim diplomat from Morocco. I link the inventions displayed at this tavern with the innkeeper's access to rare Arabic manuscripts about making automata. These various interactions expose what the inns did not publicize: how their technological innovations were indebted to transcultural encounters and how foreign guests made significant intellectual contributions to the cultural life of the Dutch Republic.

The third part considers the Christian paganism of the exhibits. Chapter 6 turns to the display of waxwork portraits of Protestant leaders and infamous enemies. Like labyrinths, fountains, and automata, wax sculpture was an ancient and significant cultural form embedded in meaningful social, religious, and political rituals. The ability

of wax to mimic life allowed it to channel the animated presence of historical personages into the present moment. Emotive responses to lifelike wax portraits were a means to provoke passionate political actions. Trading on the animated powers of wax portraiture and its previous ritual practices, the Amsterdam pleasure parks created a new kind of public ritual space for this highly efficacious form of political imagery, especially in order to generate active support for the Protestant cause in the religious wars that divided Europe.

The final chapter takes up the elaborate astronomical clocks and mechanical moving pictures that prophesized the coming domination of Protestantism over all the earth. Focusing on the clockwork created by Frankfurt immigrants David and Philips Lingelbach at the Nieuwe Doolhof, chapter 7 opens with the complex mechanized shows that performed the Old Testament prophecy of Daniel. Viewing these moving pictures, audiences could watch the rise and fall of various world religions and the eventual triumph of Protestant Christianity unfold in sequence. This visionary clockwork did not just represent or remind viewers of the end of time—their advanced technologies actively ushered it in. Presentations of ingenious inventions urged Reformed visitors to take decisive action in a critical age and to persuasively convert foreigners to Protestantism. Examining the connections between mechanical arts and evocations of a golden age, we come to understand how the Doolhof's clockwork was designed to play an apocalyptic role in imposing religious conformity throughout the world. In the manner of a labyrinth, the epilogue of *Moving Statues* returns to its beginning by assessing the global ambitions of these extraordinary exhibitions in terms of their failure and obsolescence.

The symbol of the labyrinth is a pictogram of controlled confusion, which best signifies the dynamic workings of a Doolhof. More than just taverns where art was displayed, the Doolhoven were designed as ritual spaces that revived pagan sculptural forms and cultural practices in an experimental program of Protestant reform. The rustic door of these Silenus-like pleasure parks opened into a realm of Bacchic excess designed to elicit squeals of terror, gasps of surprise, lascivious

shouts of laughter, drunken stumbling, and the stunned silence of amazement as well as conversations and encounters among diverse peoples and inventions exhibited to foster specific Reformed ideals of social, political, and religious improvement. Surely among the most contradictory cultural experiments of early modernity, these were beer gardens for the cultivation of a Protestant self.

