AMSTERDAM THROUGH THE EYES OF A MINIATURE POPPENHUIS

A thesis submitted to the
Kent State University Honors College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for General Honors

by
Lorianna Clarke-Alexander

May, 2013
Thesis written by

Lorianna Clarke-Alexander

Approved by

______________________________________________________, Advisor

________________________________________, Director, School of Art

Accepted by

_____________________________________, Dean, Honors College
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................. v

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................................... vii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ............................................................... 1

*Het Poppenhuis* ................................................................. 3

II. AMSTERDAM, THE CITY OF MERCHANTS ......................... 7

III. HET POPPENHUIS VAN PETRONELLA OORTMAN ............... 12

IV. KAMERS VAN POPPENHUIS ............................................ 24

*De Kleerzolder* ................................................................. 24

*De Turf-en Provisiezolder* ................................................. 27

*De Kinderkamer* ............................................................... 28

*De Zaal* ........................................................................... 30

*De Voorhuis* ................................................................... 32

*De Krammkamer* .............................................................. 35

*De Pronkkeuken* .............................................................. 38

*De Kookkeuken* ............................................................... 41

*De Kelder* ........................................................................ 42

*De Tapijtkamer en De Bibliotheek* .................................... 43
V. HET POPPENHUIS AS KUNST-UND-WUNDERKAMMER and PERSPECTYKAS

Kunst-und-Wunderkammer
Perspectykas

VI. PHILOSOPHIES OF THE ‘VISBILE WORLD’

VII. HET POPPENHUIS AS ‘MATERIAL CULTURE’

VIII. CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Jan Steen. *Celebrating the Birth* .................................................................67

Figure 2. Johannes Vermeer. *View of Delft*. .................................................................68

Figure 3. Gerard Houckgeest. *New Church at Deft with the Tomb of Willem I* ..........69

Figure 4. Poppenhuis van Petronella Oortman.. ...........................................................70

Figure 5. Poppenhuis van Petronella Dunois.................................................................71

Figure 6. Poppenhuis van Sara Rothé (Frans Hals Museum).........................................72

Figure 7. Poppenhuis van Sara Rothé (Gemeentemuseum)............................................73

Figure 8. Map of Amsterdam in1662.. ................................................................................74

Figure 9. Jan van der Heyden. *View of the dam with Town Hall in Amsterdam* .........75

Figure 10. Johannes Vingboons. Keizersgracht 319.. .......................................................76

Figure 11. Jan van der Heyden. Fire Hose Etching.........................................................77

Figure 12. Jacob Appel. *Het Poppenhuis van Petronella Oortman*..............................78

Figure 13. Table 1: Rooms Listed in Dutch Dolls’ Houses.............................................79

Figure 14. *De Kleerzolder*.. ...........................................................................................80

Figure 15. Detail of brass irons..........................................................................................80

Figure 16. Detail of servants quarters..............................................................................81

Figure 17. *De Turf- en Provisiezolder*.........................................................................81

Figure 18. *De Kinderkamer*.........................................................................................82
| Figure 19. | Walnut Cupboard: *De Kinderkamer* ......................................................82 |
| Figure 20. | Children clothing: *De Kinderkamer* .....................................................83 |
| Figure 21. | *De Zaal* ............................................................................................83 |
| Figure 22. | *De Voorhuis* .......................................................................................84 |
| Figure 23. | Detail of grisailles: *De Voorhuis* ........................................................85 |
| Figure 24. | *De Krammkamer* ................................................................................85 |
| Figure 25. | Detail of the lying-in bed: *De Krammkamer* .........................................86 |
| Figure 26. | Only surviving doll of Oortman’s Poppenhuis ........................................86 |
| Figure 27. | *De Pronkkeuken* ...............................................................................87 |
| Figure 28. | *De Kookkeuken* ................................................................................88 |
| Figure 29. | *De Tapijtkamer* ................................................................................89 |
| Figure 30. | *De Bibliotheek* ................................................................................90 |
| Figure 31. | *Studiolo* of Francesco I de’ Medici ....................................................91 |
| Figure 32. | Painting of Bonnier de la Mososn’s Cabinet .........................................92 |
| Figure 33. | *Perspective Box with Views of a Dutch Interior* ..................................93 |
| Figure 34. | *View of the City of Delft* .................................................................94 |
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Scillia first and foremost for her guidance as my thesis advisor. I would like to thank my defense committee, Dr. Elizabeth Howard, Dr. Leslie Heaphy, and Dr. Molly Lindner for their guidance as well. I appreciate that support I have received from my family and friends through my thesis completion. I am grateful for this opportunity.
Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

During the seventeenth-century, Amsterdam became one of the thriving cities in Europe culturally, economically, and even artistically. Its prosperous reputation and religious tolerance brought an array of people to the city within and outside of Holland. Known as the “marketplace of Northern Europe,” the canal city of Amsterdam became the center for trade and shipping. To break the continuing progress of Spain and Portugal, the Dutch established trade with the East Indies and established the Dutch West India Company.¹ Merchants climbed the social ranks and became some of the wealthiest members of Amsterdam society as a result of the booming trade. Money quickly poured into the city, which invited many patrons of art.²

Compared to the rest of Europe, Holland had a different approach to fine arts in the seventeenth century. It is probable that the Protestantism of the North influenced the arts. There was a fascination with the idea of “home life,”³ which evolved into a genre of painting. An example is Jan Steen’s Celebrating the Birth of 1664 (fig. 1), which shows the function of events as a way to exchange rumors, mainly through women.⁴

³ Protestantism focuses more on the family, and it became a fundamental aspect. In Catholicism, less attention is on the family.
Soon, the fascination moved outside of the home, and depictions of the town emerged. In *View of Delft* by Vermeer (fig. 2), the men and women chatting in the foreground accent the Netherlandish city profile.

Architecture held a sizeable role in Dutch art, which combined both interior and exterior interests. *New Church at Delft with the Tomb of Willem I* by Houckgest (fig. 3) depicts the human interactions inside the new church, while also focusing on the architecture of the church. The building and landscaping projects of the time inform us about the structures and values of seventeenth-century society. Soon, home-life was depicted in three-dimensional form.

Wealthy women in particular joined into this genre craze by creating miniature dolls’ houses. Unfortunately, only a handful has survived, though the survivors are in decent condition. The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam houses two of them, one of Petronella Oortman (fig. 4) and the other of Petronella Dunois (fig. 5), both wives of rich merchants. Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house is considered the most lavish of the survivors. This dollhouse is completely furnished, the components are made to scale, and furniture makers and artists were commissioned for the project. Also, in the eighteenth century, Sara Rothé, also the wife of a rich merchant, owned two dollhouses (fig. 6 and 7) that are now in the Frans Hals Museum and in the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag. These dollhouses were not made for children but rather were a way to show wealth and provided a hobby for the women of the time. In fact, they can be compared to cabinets of curiosity that wealthy men filled of rare objects. These marvels would be kept in

---

curiosities-- cabinets or rooms dedicated to hold a collection of these marvels. Interestingly, both the dollhouses and the cabinets of curiosities were common in wealthy canal houses.\(^6\)

*Het Poppenhuis*

Dutch dolls’ houses are known to be possible miniature replications of 17th-century canal homes. The realism allows for viewers to study the dolls’ house and create a narrative about early modern women because they hold a fascination.\(^7\) Dutch writer Christa Cabo comments on the realist objects in Oortman’s dolls’ house.

…in the real world, brooms are not made of silver so Petronella doesn’t want them in her dolls’ house either. She wants them to be made of wood and bristle. Some of them are even worn down a bit on the sides, as if they’d been used a lot. It all looks so real and that’s exactly why this dolls’ house has become so popular.\(^8\)

The contents inside the dolls’ house reflect the tastes and trends of domestic furnishing and decoration of the time. These objects are historical material that provides an early modern portrait of the broader household community.\(^9\) Art Historian James E. Bryan argues that the dolls’ houses “function as virtual realities; they are representations of

---


\(^7\) Well-known Dutch artist Jeroen Krabbé comments on his fascination with the dolls’ house as a child, feeling as if he was “actually living there.” Adults have a fascination for this child-like structure as well. Broomhall, *Early Modern*, 102.


human environments wherein lives may be imagined, possessions held, and existence shaped in way perhaps unavailable in full scale. The dolls’ house as a virtual reality is appealing because it is in the form of a common object: a toy. At some point, a child or an adult has played with or been exposed to a dolls’ house (or something similar), thus making the creation relatable.

In Sara Rothé’s Haarlem house, there is a scroll that was once in the lying-in room, which reveals a poem from the popular emblem book *Emblemata of Sinne-wreck* by moralist Johan de Brune (First published in Amsterdam in 1624):

> Al wat men hier op Aerden Siet,
> Is poppe goet en anders niet,
> De mensch, al wat hij daar van vint,
> Die speelter mee, gelijk een Kint,
> Hij heeft het life een korten tijt,
> Dat hij het Lief een korten tijt,
> DAT hij daar naar Licht van hem smijt,
> Zoo is de Mensch dan als men vindt,
> Niet tweemaals, maar altijds een Kindt.

---

12 Broomhall, *Early Modern*, 118. ‘All that one sees on earth/ Is doll’s stuff and nothing else./ Man, whatever he thinks about/ He enjoys like a child/ He loves for a short time./ That which he easily throws away later./ Such is a man, as one can see/ Not just once, but always a child.’
The inclusion of this poem indicates two interesting aspects about dolls’ houses: their use as a form of moral instruction, but also the meaning as poppe-goede (doll’s stuff). The poem signaled the house’s capacity both to reflect and to reconfigure contemporary society, whose concerns were often as transient and inconsequential as a child’s whim for a toy. The poem suggests that the dolls’ houses were not just a temporary hobby but rather thought out and planned labors of love.

According to Jeroen Krabbé, these women were collectors for the purpose of “showing off,” while the male collectors valued the importance of the collection for a male’s intellect and artistic identity. Krabbé continues by claiming that the woman would show her dolls’ houses to visitors, while men kept their collections in private. Women are stereotypically known for showing off; however, it is only a certain extent for the dolls’ houses. There are some, such as Koferlin, who showed their creation to many people. Even Rothé and Oortman, after her death, had visitors just for viewing their dolls’ houses; however, Krabbé fails to mention that the dolls’ houses were kept behind sheer curtains. In Jacob Appel’s painting, curtains frame the cabinet, suggesting that it was covered. Furthermore Rothé was known as well for keeping her dolls’ house behind curtains, thus making the creation private. The dolls’ houses were only on view for special occasions.

The women who commissioned these creations had their own wealth, thus they were capable to pay for their dolls’ houses. For example, Petronella Oortman funded her

---

own dolls’ house, as did Petronella Dunois. The dolls’ houses are a feminized version of cabinets of curiosities created by women, thus making them gender specific. The curiosity cabinets of men emphasized symmetry, which is seen in Oortman’s dolls’ house in her decorations and room designs. The dolls’ houses are known to be feminized spaces, providing a look into a private canal home of the wealthy. They contain visual and physical clues as to the importance of that room in a Dutch canal home. Oortman’s dolls’ house is a feminized space, with masculine elements and objects relating to her husband’s occupation as a merchant. Even though dolls’ houses in general appear to be gender specific, Oortman’s combines the female domestic duties with the male marvel interests to create a memorable and versatile collection in her dolls’ house.

This thesis will explore the dolls’ house of Petronella Oortman. The first chapter is a brief history of the Dutch Golden Age, focusing on the main aspects of trade and the arts. The next chapter presents a history of dolls’ houses, along with a description of the owners and their dolls’ houses. Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house is described room by room in great detail. Comparisons of her dolls’ house will be made to curiosity cabinets and to perspective boxes made by both Samuel van Hoogstraaten and Carel Fabritius. Furthermore, Enlightenment theories of the era are related to the doll’s house. Finally, the importance of Oortman’s dolls’ house as an example of “material culture” and as a work of art is reviewed.

---

16 Sara Rothé also paid for her dolls’ house; however, there is documentation that her husband also paid for some of her pieces.
17 Albrecht V of Bravaria had a dolls’ house made for his daughter; however, it was never given to her. Thus, it is possible there were a group of men that commissioned dolls’ houses.
Chapter 2

AMSTERDAM, THE CITY OF MERCHANTS

By the time of the Baroque style, the city of Amsterdam evolved from an unappealing area of swamp to one of Europe’s most desirable cities. Its history is just as vivid as the arts that came from the city, from many political changes, from Spanish rule to independence, and to religious quarrels, tensions between the Catholics and the Protestants. But once the Dutch entered their “Golden Age,” the city saw great prosperity in trade, such as the Dutch East India Company, the arts, as seen in the well-loved Rembrandt, and reputation, arrays of people flooding into the city. The Dutch Revolt occurred during this time; however, that did not hinder the prosperous city.\(^\text{18}\) The Dutch proved to skilled in multiple facets, from trade to construction.

The Dutch were skilled with ships and led the way in designing various types of vessels from warships to fast-sailing ships, and their work was very desirable. \textit{Flyts}, “fluteship,” gave the Dutch significant trading advantage because they were both economical and well designed. However, Dutch dominance was most important in purpose built cargo ships.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{18}\) For an in-depth description of the occurrences of the Dutch Revolt, refer to Geoffrey Parker’s \textit{The Dutch Revolt} (Cornell University Press, 1977).
With this success, the Dutch were not only a strong naval force, but also an even stronger trading force. They found that a desire for Mediterranean produce coincided with the desperate need of Italian ports. Even the marble was used in Louis XIV’s famous palace Versailles shipped from Leghorn. The French thus aided in persuading the Sultan to allow the Dutch to trade with Constantinople. As enemies of the Spanish, the Sultan made an agreement that allowed the Dutch the right to trade with all of the Ottoman Empire in 1612.20

Amsterdam ultimately became the “city of merchants,” as the center of trade in Europe. Dutch trade expanded farther than the Ottoman Empire, with establishments of the Dutch East India Company in 1602 and of the West Indies Company in 1621. Although the West Indies Company was a response to the Spanish quarrels, it was unfortunately not as successful as the East Company,21 but it did bring in goods nonetheless.22 By this time, it seemed as if the trade routes of all the continents conveyed in The Netherlands, particularly in Amsterdam.23 The spectacular new trades, skills, capital and financial know-how arrived to Amsterdam, as a result of the fall of Antwerp, were an essential feature of the rise. A large portion of Amsterdam’s wealth was due to its original Baltic trade for most of the seventeenth century.24

20 Haley, The Dutch, 22-23.
21 The West India Company was a disappointment because it was poorly managed and lacked strong leadership. Other cities infringed on the monopoly and showed little acumen. Deric Regin, Traders, Artists, Burghers: A cultural history of Amsterdam in the 17th century (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Comp. B.V.,1976), 19.
22 Regin, Traders, Artists, 19.
23 Haley, The Dutch, 28.
With such wealth came a growing population, which had to be accommodated. At the start of the Golden Age in 1585, there were plans for expansion around the three central canals in the city: Herengracht, Keizersgracht and Prinsengracht (fig. 8). The frontage of the canals were undoubtedly reserved for the business, town houses, and canal houses of the wealthy. More modest homes were located around the intersections of the canals and the streets. Strict regulations were placed on the constructions of these canal homes\textsuperscript{25}; however, the finished product was magnificent.

In the sixteenth century, during the construction of these canal homes, the architecture was influenced by the Italian classicism of Palladio and Scamozzi. By the 1620s, the ornamentation on these homes was limited to classical orders of pilasters, and the façade decoration was in line with the structure of the whole building rather than being considered a separate entity.\textsuperscript{26} This mathematical architectural style can be seen in the Amsterdam Stadhuis, ca. 1650 (fig. 9) and the canal homes on the Keizersgracht (fig.10). Jan van der Heyden, who created the first fire hose system, creates an etching of a canal home to visualize the effectiveness of his hose (fig. 11). Rather than showing the interior of the home from a frontal view, we are looking into the home from a side view, so that every room is visible, thus offering a complete view of the interior architecture of a canal house.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} Haley gives a very detailed description of the rules and regulations of canal homes in The Dutch in the Seventeenth Century, pp. 144-147.
\textsuperscript{26} Konrad Ottenbeyum, "Classicism in the Northern Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century," in Palladio and Northern European Books, Travellers, Architects, ed. Claudio Nasso et al. (Milan: Skira editor, 1999), 151.
\textsuperscript{27} This perspective used by van der Heyden is also used for the dolls’ houses created.
In addition to the architecture, there were Italian influences in painting. The Mannerist and Baroque styles became popular, and many of the Dutch paintings reflected the fullness and fluidity of Italian art. The French also influenced Dutch tastes. In the courts of the House of Orange family, French influence had been strong, and French was the language of choice at court. As the seventeenth century progressed, French language, fashion, and literature became widespread outside of court.\textsuperscript{28} The needs of Dutch trade made it more necessary for Netherlanders than other people to be able to speak foreign languages, and contemporaries admired their facility with language.\textsuperscript{29}

By the mid-seventeenth century, Amsterdam suffered a financial crisis caused by multiple factors. First, overseas commerce was highlighted at the expense of domestic industrial development.\textsuperscript{30} Prior to 1650, money made was invested in commercial activities, but after 1650, the money was used to purchase land. Thus, there was no industrial revolution in Amsterdam. Second, many of the skilled workers saw opportunities to gain higher wages in other places, causing them to leave Holland. Third, taxes were extremely high, adding to the economic issues.\textsuperscript{31} At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the excitement of trade began to dwindle. Trade at this time had grown tremendously, elsewhere and England and France were able to expand their networks in the Indian Ocean, the West Indies, and the Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{32} However,

\textsuperscript{28} Haley, \textit{The Dutch}, 190.
\textsuperscript{29} Haley, \textit{The Dutch}, 190.
\textsuperscript{30} “Amsterdam Bourgeois Baroque Style.”
\textsuperscript{31} “Amsterdam Bourgeois Baroque Style.”
\textsuperscript{32} Haley, \textit{The Dutch}, 183.
Dutch-built ships were still in high demand from foreign owners. This was still the ending of the much-celebrated Dutch Golden Age.

Although the Dutch Golden Age ended during the creation of Oortman’s dolls’ house, her husband was still a wealthy, successful merchant. Her dolls’ house is a reflection of the interests of the Golden Age with trade, through Far East porcelain and exotic depictions in paintings, with architecture, through the style of the dolls’ house as a canal homes, and interest with Italians, though the interior painting’s style and subjects.

33 The next chapter discusses the Oortman family in more detail.
Chapter 3

HET POPPENHUIS VAN PETRONELLA OORTMAN

Dolls’ houses have a long and venerable history, serving diverse functions. The first house-like miniatures were built by ancient Egyptians. Many of these models served as funerary offerings to serve the needs of the departed when they reached the next world. The Egyptians created bakeries and granaries filled with model slaves to prepare the food for their master. One of the best-preserved granaries is from about 1800 BC in the British Museum. The model is made of wood and survives because of the dry atmosphere of the preserved Egyptian tomb.\(^\text{34}\) Its size is 18 inches by 24 inches, and the granary contains a hatch with sliding doors to receive the grain. Other features include: a courtyard with a woman grinding barley, a flight of stairs leading to a shelter on the granary roof, and a watchman or possibly the owner sitting on the roof.\(^\text{35}\) This model shows us a working structure, complete with staff.

The British Museum also owns terracotta toys, dating to around 450 BC, from the Grecian islands of Melos, Crete, and Corinth. Examples of these ancient playthings include a jointed dancing doll, a monkey riding a mule, and seated girls. These toys suggest that there were small houses in which to play with the toys.


\(^{35}\) Jackson, *Dolls’ Houses*, 7.
Because Athenian girls received their education at home, one way to teach them their domestic duties was through miniature houses filled with everyday household items.\textsuperscript{36}

Other early examples of home-models are seen in both Italy and in China. In Italy, the Tarquinia Museum holds an Etruscan model of a house that dates back to 9-10 BC. In the W.R. Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City, Missouri, there is a Chinese Han-dynasty tomb building that dates to approximately 200 BC to AD 220. The British Museum features an earthware funerary model from China of a complex house from around AD 15. This model contains: a courtyard, a reception hall with lattice windows, a granary, a storehouse, and smaller side buildings representing living quarters and kitchens.\textsuperscript{37}

Unfortunately the Middle Ages left behind few traces of children’s’ toys because the plague and pestilence wiped out populations, and belongings were burned to prevent the spread of infections.\textsuperscript{38} However, according to Karl Gröber in his book \textit{Children’s Toys of Bygone Days}, toy domestic utensils were found under the ruins of Osterburg Castle, which was destroyed in 1270.\textsuperscript{39} By the fifteenth century in Europe, craft guilds were forming. Although there were no early guilds for toy making, the trend began in Germany, specifically in Nuremburg, which became the center of the toy industry. Both the 1400s and 1500s the city was famous for goldsmiths, silversmiths, and other metal workers, and by this time miniatures requiring metalwork were becoming popular. The

\textsuperscript{36} Jackson, \textit{Dolls’ Houses}, 7.  
\textsuperscript{37} Jackson, \textit{Dolls’ Houses}, 7.  
\textsuperscript{38} Jackson, \textit{Dolls’ Houses}, 8.  
\textsuperscript{39} Jackson, \textit{Dolls’ Houses}, 8.
rich were now moving into unfortified homes and, to decorate them, were commissioning cabinets to hold little works of art and curios stimulated by the toy industry.\textsuperscript{40}

In conjunction with this miniature phenomenon, doll’s houses were built to hold them. The first representation of an actual dolls’ house appeared in Italy in the thirteenth-century. There was already a strong tradition of crèche\textsuperscript{41}, which may have been related to dolls’ house making.\textsuperscript{42} Crèches are made with great detail, which includes models of real-life items that were very appealing to adults. However, there is no record of any Italian dolls’ houses in existence before the 1700s.\textsuperscript{43} The history of dolls’ house making suggests that they primarily came from Northern Europe. The reason could be due to climate, or possibly because life in the North mainly centered around or in the home. Even though less common in Southern Europe, there was still a very strong crèche tradition. Dolls’ houses are found in greater numbers in Protestant countries sharing the same regional background as the early traditions of the Christmas tree, proliferating in countries where modern ideas of children first developed.\textsuperscript{44}

Dolls’ houses appealed to the wealthy, especially to those of royal or noble blood: princes, princess, dukes and duchesses.\textsuperscript{45} In 1557 or 58, Duke Albrecht of Bavaria commissioned a dolls’ house for his daughter, but once completed, he gave it to a museum. He claimed that the house was too good to be a child’s toy, and an inventory of

\textsuperscript{40} Jackson, Dolls’ Houses, 9.
\textsuperscript{41} A crèche is an elaborate representation of the Nativity.
\textsuperscript{42} Jackson, Dolls’ Houses, 9.
\textsuperscript{43} Jackson, Dolls’ Houses, 9
\textsuperscript{44} Jackson, Dolls’ Houses, 10.
\textsuperscript{45} Jackson, Dolls’ Houses, 6.
it was made in 1598.\textsuperscript{46} In the 1600s and 1700s, dolls’ houses were known as “baby houses” because at the time the name for a doll was “baby.”\textsuperscript{47} They were used to display the wealth of the owners and also to educate young girls to the family duties, so they knew what to expect in the future. The earliest known “baby houses,” like toys was produced in Germany as simple replicas of a house: heavy wooden cabinets divided into rooms with a central staircase.\textsuperscript{48} The earliest surviving one was created in 1611 and is now housed in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg. German women, as well as the Dutch, took great pride in their dolls’ houses. In fact, in 1631, Nuremberg a woman Anna Koferlin made a large house 8 feet 6 inches high which people actually paid to see. Unfortunately for Koferlin, she sold almost all of her belongings to pay for it. Koferlin’s situation indicates how important dolls’ houses really were for the women of the time. Although the women were not in competition, their own pride seems to have contributed to the expensive nature of dolls’ house creations.

It was in The Netherlands that some of the most elaborate and expensive dolls’ houses were made. Previously, dolls’ houses were essentially used as a means for education and as a plaything; however, for the Dutch, the contents in the houses were too expensive to allow the dolls’ house as a plaything. In the 1600s, the Netherlands was the greatest commercial power in Europe, so dolls’ houses were used to celebrate the richness of material things.\textsuperscript{49} These dolls’ houses became the hobby of wealthy women

\textsuperscript{46} Jackson, \textit{Dolls’ Houses}, 9.
\textsuperscript{48} Jackson, \textit{Dolls’ Houses}, 12.
\textsuperscript{49} Jackson, \textit{Dolls’ Houses}, 29.
who wished to represent their homes in miniature. During this period as well, silver work became popular, and even children of the wealthy played with toys made of silver. Nevill F. Jackson, author of *Toys of Other Days*, explains the extensiveness of silver toys:

In the 17th century silver toys were in very general use amongst the children of the children of the wealthy. Whole services were ordered for special occasions; complete house furnishings were made as well as simple pieces, which were sold separately. Not only was the furniture of the salon, the toilet, the nursery and the kitchen reproduced, but horses, carriages, chariots, cabriolets, sledges, and trucks in miniature, though not always as children’s toys but simply as trinkets and cabinet specimens. Men and women daintily carved in silver were also made that the games of the children should want nothing in the realism.  

The Dutch were known for their skilled silversmiths, and many of silver miniatures were made in Holland and exported to England. Furthermore, the Dutch were also known for trade, and the merchants would bring cargo from all over the world back to the country.  

Along with silverware, porcelain also became popular in both real-life and miniature forms. In Dutch homes, there was a porcelain room, and in miniature form it was duplicated; however, it was normally opaque glass painted to look like Chinese porcelain.

Today, there are four surviving Dutch seventeenth century dolls’ houses. Although they have experienced some damage and are missing objects, they are still well preserved. The dolls’ house of Petronella Oortman (fig. 4) is considered one of the best

---

50 Jackson, *Dolls’ Houses*, 40.
preserved and elaborate of the dolls’ houses that survive. Before the dolls’ house was actually confirmed as belonging to Petronella Oortman, it was believed that it was owned by Christoffel Brants; the ambassador for Czar Peter the Great. The story is that the dolls’ house idea was presented to the Czar; however, he declined because the project would have been too expensive. Thus, Christoffel Brants had the house made, and his initials, “C.B.,” were located in three different places in the cabinet. The first account of this story is found in J. Scheltema’s 1814 work *Peter de Groote in Holland en te Zaandam in 1697 en 1717*. However, it is possible that this story was made up by the Amsterdam art dealer C.S. Roos to increase the sales value of the dolls’ house. Once in the possession of the Rijksmuseum, there was a closer inspection done by the director at the time, Heer Van Notten, and the initials were confirmed as O and B rather than C and B as suggested. Thus begins Petronella Oortman’s legacy with her magnificent dolls’ house.

Oortman, born in 1656, was the daughter of Henry Oortman, a gunsmith and Aeltje Jans Sturgeon. Her family was wealthy, and she lived in Amsterdam with her parents and six other children on the Sigel. At the age of nineteen, she married silk

---

52 Peter the Great arrived in Amsterdam in 1692 to work for the Dutch East India Company. He was keen on learning about modern ship building techniques so that he could prepare a new Russian fleet. Relations between the Czar and the Amsterdammers were respectable. “Tssar Peter de Grote,” Stadsarchief Amsterdam, http://stadsarchief.amsterdam.nl/presentaties/amsterdamse_schatten/vreemdelingen/taar_peter_de_grote/index.nl.html.
54 English translations: *Peter the Great in Holland and in Zaandam in 1697 and 1717.*
56 The ‘O’ is for Oortman and ‘B’ is for Brandt, her husband.
merchant Carel White, from Hamburg, in 1675, and they lived on the Herengracht. Their first child, a daughter, born in 1683, died a year later. Carel White died a year after their daughter did and within seven months, in 1686, Oortman married Johannes Brandt, a silk merchant. The wealthy couple lived on the desirable Warmoesstraat and had four children: Hendrina, Jan, Jacob, and Olivier. The family practiced Lutheranism, and Johannes played a role in the council for the Evangelical Lutheran church. The creation of Oortman’s dolls’ house began in the same year of her marriage to Brandt: 1686.

The cabinet that contains the contents of Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house is a work of art in itself. The cabinet is decorated all over with marquetry of tortoiseshell and finely engraved pewter. It is believed that the cabinetmaker worked for the French court before moving to Amsterdam. Artist Jacob Appel painted the dolls’ house shortly after its completion (fig. 12) and the eighteenth-century printed catalogue of the house shows that the painting is accurate. Although there have been few objects added, two of the areas of the dolls’ house were altered during the eighteenth century: the garden behind the hall has disappeared, the current tapestry room was originally shrouded in mourning. Of all the dolls, only a baby has survived.

---

58 Although it is claimed that the family lived on the Warmoesstraat, there is no documentation to confirm this.
60 It is probable that the dolls’ houses was created as a commemoration of their marriage.
61 Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 8.
63 Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 8.
German traveller, wrote a captivating account of his visit to Petronella’s dolls’ house in 1718, emphasizing how the house was a display full of surprises.\(^{64}\)

Von Uffenbach arrived in Amsterdam on July 8, 1718, eager to see the famous Oortman dolls’ house. Unfortunately, when Uffenbach applied to see the house in 1716, Oortman was on her deathbed, so arranging a visit was difficult. However, luckily for Uffenbach, he was able to get shell collector De Haan to negotiate the visit. On July 19\(^{\text{th}}\), Uffenbach and his party were received by Petronella’s daughter Hendrina at the Warmoestraat home, where they spent three hours viewing the dolls’ house. Hendrina informed them that her mother spent 20,000-30,000 guilders on the dolls’ house, which was enough money to buy a grand home on Herengracht at that time.\(^{65}\) Uffenbach’s descriptions of each of the dolls’ houses rooms will be included in the chapters describing each room in depth.

In the Rijksmuseum, another nicely preserved dolls’ house, the earliest, dating to 1672, belonged to Petronella Dunois (fig. 5) of Den Haag. Dunois was the daughter of a high official at the Stadholder’s court in Den Haag, and, once her parents died, she moved to Amsterdam to live with her sister Maria. At the age of 26, Dunois had her dolls’ house completed with her initials and the date (1672) on a pincushion within her house. It is also believed that her sister owned a dolls’ house as well, but there is no evidence supporting this belief.\(^{66}\)

\(^{64}\) Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{17th-century Dolls’ houses}, 8.
\(^{66}\) Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{17th-century Dolls’ houses}, 30.
Already wealthy, Dunois married Leiden regent Pieter van Groenendijk in 1677, and her dolls’ house received special mention in her contributions to the household. The dolls’ house was handed down the female family line until it was given to the Rijksmuseum in 1934. Dunois’ dolls’ house is built into a cabinet veneered with walnut marquetry in a geometrical pattern of rosettes and stars, and, although doors are currently missing, it is probable that two doors once closed off the dolls’ house. From the inventory of the dolls’ house, it is evident that most of the original contents, including twenty of the dolls, still remain. However, there were small additions in the shape of the seventeenth-century objects, and new ones were added in later years.

Dunois’ dolls’ house is certainly not as grand as Oortman’s, in neither size nor decoration; however, both houses contain essential rooms and items that were important to the Dutch home. Some examples include the linen and the linen room, silver, and porcelain. Dunois dolls’ house is missing one of the most important rooms, the hall, which is the first room that a visitor sees. Also, Dunois’ dolls’ house only has one kitchen, in contrast to Oortman’s two. Unlike Oortman’s dolls’ house, the dolls in Dunois’ house better demonstrate the interactions within the household as well as residents’ duties. The more modest design of Dunois’ dolls’ house appears more inviting

---

70 The Dutch, and German women as well, took great pride in their linen and for wealthy families, their daughter would be given an adequate supply of linen as a dowry. In the dolls’ houses, there are bed-and-table linen and uncut linen ready for making. Clifton-Mogg, *Dollhouse*, 12.
than the grandeur of Oortman’s. There is another dolls’ house of an Amsterdam woman of close grandeur to Oortman’s.

In the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem a well-preserved dolls’ house from the 18th century belonged to Sara Rothé (fig. 6) of Amsterdam. She was born in 1699 to banker and merchant Christoffel Rothé and Sara van Ludick, who lived on the Keizersgracht. In 1721, Sara married merchant Jacob Ploos van Amstel, and although he was not one of the highest earning men in the city, he was still wealthy. The marriage was childless, and the couple lived on the Keizergracht, in present day number 474. Sara’s dolls’ house differs significantly from those of Oortman and Dunois.

In 1743, Sara bought three old dolls’ houses at an auction for around one thousand guilders with auctioneer’s commission and then had them taken apart to make two new dolls’ houses. The dolls’ house at Den Haag contains nine rooms, while the one in Haarlem is slightly larger with twelve rooms. For the Den Haag dolls’ house, which was created first, she ordered a walnut root wood cabinet to hold the rooms.

---

72 Both of the dolls’ houses survive today. As mentioned, one in the Frans Hals Museum and the other at the Gemeentemeusem, Den Haag. The purchased dolls’ house belonged to the widow of leather merchant Jan Wijmershoff, Rachel van Dantsich. The house had five, six, and eight furnished ‘apartments.’ Cornelia van Gon and her husband, painter David van der Plas, previously owned the five and six roomed dolls’ houses that were made between 1680 and 1700. Before marrying van der Plas, Cornelia was married to architect Adriaan Dortman, whom Jet Pijzel-Domisse believes played a role in the design of the houses. In 1704, the dolls’ houses were sold to the Wijmershoff family, who were well-known silversmiths, which could explain the vast pieces of 17th century silverwork in Sara’s finished creation. The origins of the eight room dolls’ house is unknown; however, it is dated from the 18th century. Van Royen-Engelberts, *Sara’s*, 15.
cabinet for the Haarlem dolls’ house was painted black, with gold rocaille decorations on the sides with shell motifs, latticework, and garlands of flowers. On the front doors of the cabinet, artist Jurriaan Buttner painted Greek mythological scenes.

Another element Sara’s dolls’ house that is missing from others is the windowed doors inside of the oak cabinet doors. These doors are painted to resemble rosewood and are painted as the façade of a double-fronted eighteenth-century canal house: three stories high and five windows wide, but there is no cellar or roof. The door and central windows are framed with shell motifs, pilasters, curling acanthus leaves and volutes. The glass panes in the windows are painted to look like sash windows with the glazing bars, which the style was typical of the architecture of the time. Above the green door a monogram reads the letters ‘JPVASR,’ the initials of Jacob Ploos van Amstel and Sara Rothé. It is very clear that Sara aspired to make her dolls’ house as close to a canal home as possible.

---

74 Rocaille is ornamental combinations characteristic of the Rococo period, consisting of rock, shell, and plant forms.
75 Van Royen-Engelberts, Sara’s, 20.
76 Buttner, a native of Germany, also did some paintings and sketches inside of the dolls’ house, along with a portrait of Sara and her husband. Van Royen-Engelberts, Sara’s, 20.
77 Van Royen-Engelberts, Sara’s, 24.
78 Acanthus is used as ornamentation and it is the foliage of a plant with large, elegantly curling leaves. Van Royen-Engelberts, Sara’s, 78.
79 A volute is the ornamentation in the form of a scroll. Van Royen-Engelberts, Sara’s, 79.
80 Van Royen-Engelberts, Sara’s, 24.
81 Van Royen-Engelberts, Sara’s, 24.
The dolls’ houses are similar in structure and they all share the basic rooms; however, each dolls’ house had unique rooms as well. Figure 13 is a table with each dolls’ house owner and the rooms of their creations. Rothé, who was interested in the humanities, included an art collectors room and curio room in her Haarlem house. Furthermore, in her Den Haag house she included a music room, as she was an avid piano player. Dunois’ dolls’ house has basic rooms, but none specifically for the arts. Oortman’s includes two kitchens, and has a hidden cellar and library (missing from the chart). Although Oortman’s dolls’ house does not include specific rooms for the humanities, each room holds contents relating to the arts and travel.

---

82 Basic rooms include: the kitchen, the lying-in room, the hall, the nursery, and the linen room.
Chapter 4

KAMERS IN HET POPPENHUIS VAN PETRONELLA OORTMAN

The dolls’ house of Petronella Oortman was considered, by Jet Pijel-Dommisse, to be one of the wonders of the 1700s. Each room is filled with miniature curiosities that relate not only to the Dutch lifestyle, but also to the interests of the era. Viewing the painting of Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house by Jacob Appel in 1710 in conjunction with the physical house, we notice there were changes made through the century. Both the painting and the dolls’ house offer a more in-depth view of items that would typically be found in a 1600s canal home, along with a glimpse of the culture of the time.

De Kleerzolder

The first room in the upper left-hand dolls’ house is de Kleerzolder, (fig. 14) or the linen room. As previously noted, the Dutch were keen on their linen, as it was a way of showing wealth. In fact, under the sloping roofs of the tall Amsterdam houses would be various attic rooms, one of which was devoted to the linen that was sent for washing and bleaching. On the ceiling here, there are loosely laid rods where damp tablecloths, sheets, and shirts were hung to dry.

---

Currently, there are napkins hanging from the linen cupboard located in de Kraamkamer, the lying-in room, that are covered in the initials B and O. These napkins were made specifically for the dolls’ house.\textsuperscript{84}

On the left side of de Kleerzolder sits a miniature ironing table with a soft woolen under cloth, on which the laundry-maid would smooth the linen\textsuperscript{85}, shown in Appel’s painting (This doll is now missing). The two intricate irons that rest on the table, are made of brass with iron soleplates and wooden handles, typical materials for irons of the time\textsuperscript{86} (fig. 15) Von Uffenbach, made note of these very minutely designed irons in his journal, most likely because Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house is the only one from the seventeenth-century that contained irons made of brass.\textsuperscript{87}

In the tray towards the front of the room lie freshly ironed linens, while the heavy linen press in the back holds sheets and table linens. There are baskets throughout the room, both with and without lids that would be used to carry or store the freshly washed linen. On the right wall hangs a large oval basket with a high back, a swaddling seat, used by either the dry or wet nurses. The nurse would sit on the floor by the fire, legs stretched out, so she could feed the baby then wipe its bottom on her lap in the days before a chest of drawers was used for the purpose.\textsuperscript{88} Finally, in the back of the room, there are doors to

\textsuperscript{84} Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 10.
\textsuperscript{85} Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 10.
\textsuperscript{86} The two irons were the type that would be filled with glowing charcoal. Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 10.
\textsuperscript{87} Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 10.
\textsuperscript{88} It was more common to see this saddle seat in the lying-in room rather than the linen room. Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 10.
two bedrooms designated for the servants (fig. 16). Each room has its own box-bed curtained with a floral print with a chair and a chamber pot beside it.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{89} Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{17th-century Dolls’ houses}, 10.
De Turf- en Provisiezolder

The *Turf- en Provisiezolder*, the peat and provisions loft (fig. 17), is to the right of *de Kleerzolder* in the dolls’ house (fig.4). The loft is split into different storage areas by a floor and a dividing wall. The upper level, which is accessed by a ladder, is the peat loft where peat and bundles of split wood are stacked behind the bars. Under the loft is the provisions storage; the dividing wall and door have a fretwork scroll decoration that is similar to the design on the outside of the dolls’ house.\(^90\) Inside the provisions loft, under the oval window, there are a few storage jars and a rattrap that remain; however, Von Uffenbach notes that there is now a missing waffle iron.\(^91\)

Overall, the main purpose of this attic room in a canal home is to store objects that are not in use in at the moment, such as a table. On the right wall in the dolls’ house, there hangs a flat basket that is decorated with embroidery on the bottom; by the ladder stands an extra brazier used in the nursery and lying-in room for keeping a bowl of pap warm and for drying or airing wet napkins and clothes.\(^92\) At the bottom of the brazier, there would be a tin pan holding glowing charcoals, and the damp items would be placed over the cover. Normally, during the summertime, the Dutch stored their many foot-warmers in the loft. Also, the spinning wheel was often housed in the loft in many seventeenth-century homes. With its finely turned ebony struts, it offered the turner a prime opportunity for displaying his craftsmanship in miniature.\(^93\)

---

\(^90\) Pijel-Dommisse, *17th-century Dolls’ houses*, 12.
\(^91\) Molen, “A Visit,” 169.
\(^92\) Pijel-Dommisse, *17th-century Dolls’ houses*, 12.
\(^93\) Pijel-Dommisse, *17th-century Dolls’ houses*, 12.
De Kinderkamer

Unfortunately the Kinderkamer, the nursery (fig. 18) contains only a few objects that suggest its use as a nursery. The main hint is the covered cradle located on the floor in front of the canopied child’s bed. The bed, located in a central position, is one of the highlights of the room. Suspended over the bed is a round, tent-like canopy made of yellow silk with pale blue trimming. The trimmings on the canopy are inspired by the French term falbala, which refers to the gathered ruffle or flounce a fashionable decoration of women’s dresses during the 17th century. On the bed, there is a blanket made of painted Indian chintz designed with stripes and stylized motifs of shells, flowers, and cubes. The pattern on the blanket is also a reflection of the fashion in Holland, which consisted of stripe and simple pattern designs.

Another indication that this room is the nursery lies within the walnut cupboard slightly hidden behind the chimney. Inside this lavish cupboard (fig. 19), there are remains of children’s clothes: a nightshirt, a pair of trousers, and two pairs of stockings (fig. 20). On top of the cabinet, there are five bottles that Von Uffenbach claims are ‘fine East Indian porcelain; however, the ‘porcelain’ is actually simulated. As revealed in the first chapter, it was extremely common for the porcelain in the dolls’ houses to be made

---

95 The same trimming is also used for the cushions on the chairs, the table cover, and the rocking cradle cover. Jet Pijzel- Dommisse, *Het Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis: Interieur en huishouden in de 17de en 18de eeuw* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 200), 278.
96 Chintz is painted multicolored cotton fabric with a glazed finish. Normally imported from India.
from opaque glass painted blue to imitate Chinese porcelain; Oortman’s nursery follows this trend.

This nursery is extravagantly decorated, enhanced by artwork located in every corner of the room. The ceiling is a gem, painted with acanthus scrolls, buckled straps, and thin leaves with berries in yellow, white, and gray tones against a reddish background. There are three framed paintings in the room: one over each doorway and one above the fireplace. The two over the doorways are counterparts of one another; the one on the left is titled *De koopvrouw, The Saleswoman*, while the right is *De Kwakzalver, The Quack*. Both paintings are genre of peasants created by artist Cornelis Dusart. The third painting on the chimney, entitled *Jupiter*, and features Jupiter with thunderbolts and a gilded eagle.

Over the windows behind the canopy bed, there are four painted sashes: wooden frames covered by silk painted with sitting and flying parrots. Below the sashes are two pairs of shutters painted with festoons. The festoons are symbolic of the four seasons: flowers for spring, sheaves of corn for summer, grapes and apples for autumn, and citrus for winter. There are some changes that have occurred in the nursery. For example, in Appel’s painting, the walls were painted blue; however, in the dolls’ house,

---

100 In this instance ‘quack’ would mean a charlatan or an imposter.
101 Dusart was a native of Haarlem who specialized in everyday scenes of the Dutch peasants.
103 Unfortunately, there are no full-scale sashes that have survived. Pijel-Dommisse, *17th-century Dolls’ houses*, 14.
104 Festoons are a chain or garland of either flowers, leaves, or ribbons that are hung curved as decoration.
they are painted white.\textsuperscript{106} Also, in the painting there are two children shown, one was seated on the lap of a peasant in Waterland costume.\textsuperscript{107} In the next room, De Zaal, dolls were once housed in the room as well.

\textit{De Zaal}

De zaal, also known as the \textit{beste kamer} (the best room or salon) is located below \textit{de Kleerzolder} (fig.4). It was considered the grandest room in a home during the second half of the seventeenth-century (fig. 21), and Oortman’s room follows this trend. The entire room is enveloped with costly floor-to-ceiling paintings of cloudy skies and birds in a panoramic landscape by Nicolaes Piemont.\textsuperscript{108} This illusion of being in the middle of a non-Dutch scene is quickly broken by the heavy fireplace, the folding table, the rows of chairs, and even the mirror that hangs in the back. Each of the mural paintings are titled: the rear, \textit{Italiaans landschap met omgeknakte boom} (Italian Landscape with Turned Snapped Tree), the right side, \textit{Italiaans landschap met muilezeldrijver} (Italian Landscape with Muleteer) and the two-part left side, \textit{Italiaans landschap met reizigers} (Italian Landscape with Travelers). The murals are evidently of Italian character, showing mountainous landscapes with a lake, tower ruins, and a winding road for traveling.

\textsuperscript{106} This could have been for decorative purposes or the walls could have originally been painted blue.
\textsuperscript{107} The dolls are sadly missing, however, the Waterland costume doll poses an issue regarding his role. It is possibility that he was a manservant, but also there is a possibility that he could be the husband of the nursemaid. Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{17th-century Dolls’ houses}, 14.
\textsuperscript{108} Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{17th-century Dolls’ houses}, 14. Previous to his work in the dolls’ house, Piemont, an Amsterdam native, worked in Rome for several years where he specialized in landscape painting. Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis}, 285.
Wolkenlucht met vogels (Cloudy Sky with Birds) is the ceiling painting that was initially attributed to painter Gerard de Lairesse; however, Piemont’s signature does appear with the work.  

The chimneypiece, Vogels in een park (Birds in a Park) is attributed to Willem van Royen; the painting shows chickens and a parrot in a park-like setting, following the nature theme of the room. Van Royen also created the flower piece located at the base of the fireplace and the similar parrot-and-flowers tea table in the back corner of the room. The black background, reminiscent of Oriental lacquer, and the black and gold decoration on the stand reflect the exotic character of tea drinking which was still highly unusual then.  

De zaal was used for evening entertainments, which included music making, game playing, and refreshments. In Appel’s painting, two male dolls are seated playing backgammon and smoking pipes while an elegant couple looking on. The backgammon board, which von Uffenbach refers to as a ‘draughts board,’ doubles as a chessboard. Some of the game pieces survive along with ‘Muscovy coins,’ silver kopecks used in Russia in the seventeenth-century, which here are cut and stamped out of flattened silver wire. Von Uffenbach pays close attention to one of the seated dolls, which is identified as a doctor. According to Oortman’s daughter, Hendrina, the doll was made by a poor woman who modeled her doctor as means of payment to him. The man was Dr. Jean

---

110 Born in Haarlem, van Royen became a still life and flower specialist that also created works for Petronella de la Court’s dolls’ house.
111 Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 16.
Daniel Bilger from Strasbourg, who previously spent time studying under famous physicians in Leiden, Amsterdam, and elsewhere after qualifying in his hometown. In front of the game table are two spittoons, which are from Japan and made of flawless porcelain painted in the Kakiemon style. In reality, once visitors left, the game and the game table would be stowed away, and the furniture would be neatly arranged around the walls.

De Voorhuis

In the seventeenth-century, de Voorhuis, the hall (fig. 22), was spacious, with arches leading to a narrow corridor and staircase behind it, which is suggested in Oortman’s dolls’ house although the staircase is absent. De Voorhuis located below de Turf-en Provisiezolder in the dolls’ house (fig. 4). Because visitors entered the room first in a wealthy merchant’s home, it was designed and decorated with costly materials. The design is Italian inspired, with the impeccable flooring of white Italian marble. On the ceiling, there are two paintings: De Dageraad (The Dawn) by Johannes Voorhout in the front room, and Mercurius (Mercury) by Jan Cornelisz in the far room. Aurora, the personification of dawn, is shown holding a burning torch and sitting on a cloud against a backdrop of a glowing orange sun; around her hover three putti with flowers, an arrow, an arrow.

---

114 Kakiemon is a Japanese style developed in the early seventeenth century with sparse asymmetrical designs on a white background. Pijel-Dommisse, Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis, 289.
115 Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 16.
116 Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 18.
and a circle. 117 The figures in the painting are Italian inspired, with full bodies and flowing drapery. The image is framed with painted laurel leaves in yellow tones, concave corners, and spandrels filled with a white shell and leaf ornament. This presentation of dawn is based on the most common iconographic handbook of the seventeenth-century entitled Iconologia of uytbeeldinge des Verstands by Cesare Ripa.118

On the white walls, paintings in gray tones are positioned to suggest niches containing marble sculptures and reliefs, which was very common in the Italian Baroque style. This method of painting in a gray monochrome to imitate sculpture is called grisaille (fig. 23). The large mural on the right wall is Prudentia (Prudence), and on the left Sapientia Divina, (Divine Wisdom). Both sides contain two small murals of Allegorische voorstellingen (Allegorical Representations); which all the grisailles are accredited to Cornelisz. The six paintings together depict personifications of virtues and allegories. Prudentia is easily recognizable with her mirror with intertwined snakes and Sapientia Divina is recognizable with a lamp and a book with seven seals. The four smaller murals, however, are not as easily interpreted. In the front right niche, a woman is depicted with a child holding the antlers of a deer; the deer could possibly be the third attribute of Prudentia. In the next niche, a woman with bare breast holds a child who points to a potted plant. On the left side, the first niche features the same woman and child with attention drawn to a text scroll; both this representation and that of the potted plant can be portrayals of education. The back left niche is of the woman with her right arm in a circular object above the child who now kneels, and there is also a third figure.

117 Pijel-Dommisse, Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis, 292.
118 Pijel-Dommisse, Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis, 292.
present. To gain a better understanding of the purpose of these murals, Appel’s painting needs to be referenced. In this room, two dolls are depicted in his painting, of a nanny with a child on a leash. The symbols depicted in the murals with the dolls, suggests the interpretation that education leads to various forms of wisdom.119

In the lower area behind the arches, grisailles on the two doors depict “life-size” figures. The figures are Constantia and Diligentia, attributed to Cornelisz. They symbolize the two virtues: Diligentia, diligence or hardworking, whose attribute is a beehive, and Constantia, or fortitude, with a column attribute.120 The ceiling painting in the room, also created by Cornelisz, is of Mercurius or Mercury, the god of trade and protector of merchandise. He clearly relates to the office above this area, the ‘comptoir,’ where the master of the house conducted his business.121 The last grisaille painting in the room, at the bottom panel of the central door, Wandtafel met kom (Console Table with Bowl), is a decorative trompe-l’oeil of a console table on three heavy claw feet surrounded by vines.122

Above the arches are two painted sashes of parrots sitting on branches and a vase with a bouquet of flowers and two birds. The paintings are similar to those on the sashes in the Nursery. Two finely carved benches and two gueridons furnish this lavish hall. Furthermore, two very small statuettes in the portal, from China Kangxi period (1654-

119 Pijel-Dommisse, Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis, 293.
120 Pijel-Dommisse, Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis, 293.
121 Pijel-Dommisse, Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis, 293.
122 Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 18.
123 The painting technique of trompe-l’oeil was very popular during this time. It is used by painters van Hoogstraten and Frabritius, whom will be discussed later.
1722), are decorated directly with enamels, known as the *enamel sur biscuit* technique. These statuettes replace six oriental dolls that were originally here. Behind the portal in Appel’s painting, a formal garden is clearly depicted. This garden, now missing, was constructed in a separate book and could be inserted behind the hall. Von Uffenbach was fascinated with the garden, likely because he made a note about how remarkable the fountain was as it spouted real water.

*De Krammkamer*

*De Krammkamer*, the lying-in room (fig. 24), located next to *de Voorhuis* (fig. 4), was one of the most important rooms in a Dutch home during this time period. This room was designated for the birth of a child. Once the baby arrived, the dry nurse neatly swaddled it and smartened up the mother, while visitors were welcomed as well. Dolls’ houses are an important source of information about the arrangement of such a room.

The lying-in room is extravagantly decorated with marble floors, a continuation of *de Voorhuis*, an impressive fireplace, paneling, and intricate ceiling decoration. The color of the ceiling fits the color scheme of the room: the lists are decoratively painted in yellow grisaille against a red background, and the edges are trimmed in pink; the frame around the central representation shows a beautifully evocative painting, spiraling leaf rank, and the twisting of red acanthus volutes on an olive green mounted ground. In the

---

124 The Kangxi period is known for their ceramic/porcelain work.
central oval, there is a figurative representation painted by Johannes Voorhout. The ceiling piece, *Mozes met de Tafelen der Wet* (*Moses with the Tablets of the Law*), and the chimney piece, *Farao's dochter vindt Mozes* (*Pharaoh's Daughter Found Moses*) are both appropriate biblical subjects for the room. The Pharaoh’s daughter finds Moses in the wicker basket, and then he is shown holding the tables of law, which the child is to be raised. According to Von Uffenbach’s description, Voorhout was paid 100 guilders for the ceiling painting, an outrageous amount for one piece; however, Voorhout completed two other paintings in the doll’s house so it is very plausible that the 100 guilder payment was for all his contributions.

Inside the alcove in the back of the room stands the lying-in bed (fig. 25), which is an upholstered four-poster bed with a beautifully embroidered coverlet, a top sheet of transparent linen, a bolster and pillow with lace-trimmed covers. The bed curtains are made of red watered silk and are trimmed with tassels and braids of both red and yellow silk. Throughout the room, the same material and trimming is used for the cradle.

---

129 Voorhout was a renowned history painter in Amsterdam who also painted the chimney piece in the dolls’ house. Pijel-Dommisse, *Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis*, 298.
133 The coverlet also coincides with the decoration of the room, as it is made of yellow silk and embroidered with red silk. It is embroidered with a symmetrical pattern of vines and scrolls, which the flowers and leaf ornamentation mirrors the central monogram with the letters ‘BO.’ This embroidery was similar to that of the large decorative blankets of about the 18th century. Pijel-Dommisse, *Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis*, 303.
cover, table cover (under the white muslin cloth), and the cushions of the chair. This material along with the rich red velvet walls unifies the room.\footnote{Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{17\textsuperscript{th}-century Dolls’ houses}, 20.}

\textit{De Kramnkamer} includes a number of fine silver pieces. On the table, which is actually a chest of drawers, sits an urn and a kettle on brazier flask, and on the walls there are four sconces; all pieces were created by Christiaan Warenberg. Each sconce is decorated with a wide border of vines framing an oval medallion, with a bust depicting one of the four seasons: Spring-- a woman with a wreath of flowers in her hair, Summer—a woman with a wreath of ears of corn, Autumn-- a woman with grapes, and, finally, Winter-- an old man with a fur hat.\footnote{Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis}, 306.} The silver pieces on the table are miniatures of the designs that were popular during the eighteenth-century. These intricate pieces are accompanied with ‘porcelain’ pieces of cups, a bowl, and a teapot.

An important feature of a lying-in room is an invalid chair and a folding screen, which was used to protect the mother and her child from drafts. The screen in this room impressed Von Uffenbach, and the invalid chair is completely covered with softly padded cushions. The only doll that currently remains in Oortman’s dolls’ house is a baby, seated in the invalid chair (fig. 26). The swaddled baby is in a baptism diaper, dressed in a pink silk jacket with long sleeves, trimmed with a light blue ribbon at the back and closed with three blue ribbons.\footnote{Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis}, 307.} In Appel’s painting, two additional dolls are depicted (possibly of the dry nurse and mother of the child), but those are, unfortunately, lost.
De Pronkkeuken

*De Prokkeuken* literally translates as the “best kitchen,” (fig. 27) which is distinguished from the *de Kookkeuken* or the “cooking kitchen.” This room, in Dutch homes, served two purposes: one for cooking, and the other as a family gathering room. In small Dutch homes, *de Prokkeuken* was a place for sleeping, eating, and gathering. During the seventeenth-century, there grew a need for a separate cooking kitchen in addition to the better-furnished room for eating and displaying the fine kitchenware, although the latter was still called the ‘*keuken*’ (kitchen).\(^{138}\)

In this instance, *de Prokkeuken* is furnished as a cooking space, dominated by an ornate *porsleinkast*\(^ {139}\) filled with a vast collection of porcelain and glass pieces. Furthermore, there are more references to the exotic interests of the Oortmans with more “Chinese” painted sashes and a parrot cage. On the ceiling, there is a *trompe-l’oeil* painting as well. Although the cabinet fills the majority of the wall space in the room, the rest of the walls are tiled from floor to ceiling as they would have been in real Dutch homes. In fact, in the 1690s, there were various tile factories in Amsterdam, and the style became a must for many of the wealthy.\(^ {140}\) The tiles in the room are of actual size; however, they have been painted to appear as if they were small replications.

Although the fireplace appears to be less ornate than the others in the dolls’ house, it still proves to be lavish. The mantle is decorated with an ornamentation that mirrors the cabinet, with porcelain plates lining the top. Furthermore, within the fireplace,

---

\(^{138}\) *Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses*, 22.

\(^{139}\) A *porsleinkast* is the equivalent to today’s china cabinets.

\(^{140}\) *Pijel-Dommisse, Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis*, 308.
wreathed pilasters flank a centre panel with floral motifs, each covering four tiles.\textsuperscript{141} Additionally, a silver fire back, accompanied by, lies on the hearth a porcelain extinguisher. The ceiling does not appear as decorative as the others in the house; however the presentation offers a different view from other ceilings. The trompe l’oeil on the ceiling is of a dome with glass windows with a central rosette. The fields are painted with symmetrical acanthus volutes that mirror the porcelain cabinet. The corner squares are further enlivened by colorful flowers that are of the same type as the porcelain cabinet.\textsuperscript{142}

Above the porseleinkast, there are four painted sashes that completely fill the windows. The paintings are ‘chinoiseries,’ exotic representations from a series of prints by Petrus Schenk Sr. in, \textit{de Picturae Sinicae ac Surattenae}, which was published in 1702 in Amsterdam.\textsuperscript{143} The entire back wall is covered by the porseleinkast with glass doors. The ornamentation on the exterior of the cabinet is similar to that of the mantle of the fireplace and the ceiling. In the interior, the cabinet is painted in a dark color, and the color benefits the porcelain by making it appear a purer white. The shelves have grooves to hold the dishes and are painted in a dark color with gold. In Appel’s painting, it is evident that Oortman emphasized symmetry with the placement of the dishes inside of the porseleinkast.

In the 17th-century, these cabinets were important in Holland because they provided a way to show the householders’ collection. Although all the pieces in

\textsuperscript{141} Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{17\textsuperscript{th}-century Dolls’ houses}, 22.
\textsuperscript{142} Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis}, 308.
\textsuperscript{143} Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{Hollandse Pronkpoppenhuis}, 309.
Oortman’s *porseleinkast* appear to be beautiful, much of her collection is not Asian porcelain. The real miniature Asian porcelain pieces were especially made for her dolls’ house by sending models to China and Japan. Decoration of the dishes distinguish the Chinese miniatures from the Japanese. The Chinese dishes are decorated with a duckling in a riparian landscape in the center, surrounded by a border with flowers, bows, and symbols that reflects the style of cracking porcelain from the early 17th century. On the underside, the dishes are painted with flower sprays in boxes. Of the Japanese dishes, a few different designs appear. Several of the dishes are adorned with phoenixes with the cracking trimming, whereas some of the others are multicolored with tree and whimsical blossom branch adorations in the Kakiemon style. Also, there are a few dishes with an excessive decoration with a lion, a woman with a fruit bowl and blossoms. The imitation porcelain is easy to identify because it is decorated mainly with dots, stripes, and floral motifs. The main purpose is to impersonate the oriental porcelain that was shipped to Holland. Located at the bottom of the cabinet is glassware that imitates the simple but expensive glass used during the time period by wealthy families. It decorated with white and blue colored glass, and created in the ‘façon de Venise.’

---

144 Petronella Oortman’s porcelain collection specifically in the cabinet is around 71 pieces.
148 The imitation porcelain within Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house was made in Haarlem or Amsterdam.
De Pronkkeuken is filled with additional exotic treasures. There is a cage suspended beside the fireplace made for a parrot. There are also black lacquered trays with the same ornamentation as the porseleinkast and the ceiling, which enhances the exotic nature of the room.\textsuperscript{150} Originally, there were three dolls in the room, two children and a nursemaid. In Appel’s painting, the nursemaid is sewing a pillow; her sewing pillow, sewing box, and scissors remain on the table, and her sewing basket is on the floor. One of the children is looking on, while the smallest child is playing on a stool which has a chamber pot under the hole in the seat. All of these dolls are unfortunately missing.\textsuperscript{151}

De Kookkeuken

Located beside de Prockkeuken and below de Voorhuis (fig. 4), this kitchen (Fig. 28) is entirely devoted to the preparation of food in contrast to the other kitchen. There are no signs of cooking in the room. The ceiling is of wooden beams, the walls are whitewashed, and the cupboards are painted a moss green.\textsuperscript{152} There are no signs no cooking in the room. The fireplace in the back corner of the room contains a brass popular throughout of Europe (outside of Venice). The techniques used were those that the Venetians perfected.

\textsuperscript{150}Pijel-Dommisse, 17\textsuperscript{th}-century Dolls’ houses, 22.
\textsuperscript{151}Pijel-Dommisse, 17\textsuperscript{th}-century Dolls’ houses, 22.
\textsuperscript{152}Pijel-Dommisse, 17\textsuperscript{th}-century Dolls’ houses, 24.
extinguisher to put out any smoldering peat. A jack, a basket of fresh peat, and a pair of bellows await further activity.\textsuperscript{153}

Within the room, there are a number of utensils of the seventeenth century, through today, only a few life-size survive. Including the brass market buckets, a set of indoor brooms, a spoon rack, and some baskets, one of which is filled with very small forks and knives.\textsuperscript{154} There is a glimpse of \textit{de Prokkeuken} and \textit{de Kookkeuken} on the draining board under the window, which features fruits and preserves on the dishes from \textit{de Prokkeuken}. The brass pump nearby was able to pump real water out of the tank under the sink.\textsuperscript{155} Above the right doorway, five “porcelain” tankards that are hanging; they are, however, imitations. Exotic taste is present in \textit{de Kookkeuken} in the back window, where there is a sash with the depictions of a bird with a fox in the Chinese style.

\textit{De Kelder}

Behind the end of the draining board, there is a trap door over the steps leading to a cellar below (fig. 28), which is built into the middle drawer of the stand of the cabinet.\textsuperscript{156} To get an adequate view of the cellar, half of the floor of \textit{de Kookkeuken} must be pulled forward; however, it can also be viewed through a peephole by the removal of the drawer. The floor is painted to resemble the brown and green flagstones that would be found in Dutch cellars. The duckboards, located on the floor, were essential on the damp

\textsuperscript{153} Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{17\textsuperscript{th}-century Dolls’ houses}, 24.
\textsuperscript{154} Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{17\textsuperscript{th}-century Dolls’ houses}, 24.
\textsuperscript{155} Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{17\textsuperscript{th}-century Dolls’ houses}, 24.
\textsuperscript{156} Pijel-Dommisse, \textit{17\textsuperscript{th}-century Dolls’ houses}, 26.
cellar floors of the canal house for keeping tubs of butter and other commodities dry.157

Behind the grille, there is a stock of wine and beer; two of the beer barrels still have their
taps. Empty bottles, some with their original corks stand on the shelves above the…. Cooking pots, coal pans, jars, and jugs that would have been made of earthenware are made
of green, yellow, and white glass.158 The buckets and tubs present are ready for
substantial cleaning jobs along with a long-handled scrubbing brush, two brooms, and a
scrubber made of bundles of faggots.

De Tapijtkamer en de Bibliotheek:

The last two rooms in Petronella’s dolls’ house are de Tapijtkamer and de
Bibliotheek, the tapestry room and the library (figs. 29 and 30). In Appel’s painting, the
zigzag embroidery dominates the room (located next to the right of de Kookkeuken in
fig.4). This pattern, known as Irish stitch, is embroidered in silk with gradated shades of
green, yellow, and pink.159 Throughout the seventeenth century, this style was popular,
but none of these wall hangings survive from actual canal homes. The ceiling is ornately
painted in nuanced colors to match the decoration of the room. The boxes on the ceiling
are painted in variegated colors on a brown background, and the four corner squares
show grey and yellow acanthus leaves and kinked bands symmetrically arranged around a

158 Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 26.
159 Pijel-Dommisse, 17th-century Dolls’ houses, 28.
Furthermore, the two square fields at the center, front, and rear show golden acanthus scrolls around a shell motif.

The painting on the fireplace chimney, *Christus laat de kinderen tot zich komen* painted by Voorhout, is a biblical reference to Christ letting children come to him, which is appropriate since the room was where dead children were laid out.¹⁶¹ In the fireplace, there is a *trompe l’oeil* sculptural painting of a semi-circular niche in grey, white, and red-brown; however, the relationship between the painting and the room has not been established.¹⁶² On the far wall, there is a *kunstkabinet* (curiosity cabinet) filled with a collection of shells. The exterior of the cabinet is an East Indian decoration consisting of cranes, rocks, and blossom branches, whereas the interior is painted in red and gold flakes. Some of the shells found inside are believed to have been from the East Indian coast, with others found form in the West Indies or West Africa.¹⁶³

To the left of the *kunstkabinet* there is an opening that leads into *de Bibliotheek*. This room has a floor-to-ceiling curtained bookshelf, containing a collection of about 84 miniature books with colorful parchment and leather bindings. The subjects of these books are vast, but a majority of them contain prints of townscapes, coats of arms, maps,

and portraits. Finally, on a lectern stands a Bible of 1750 finely bound in gold and velvet.

Pijel-Dommisse, *17th-century Dolls’ houses*, 28. More specifically, there were French prints, books specializing in weaponry and military strategies, and a book of Pope portraits.

Chapter 5

HET POPPENHUIS AS KUNSTS-UND-WUNDERKAMMER AND PERSPECTYKAS

Kunst-und-Wunderkammer

Dolls’ houses are closely related to the cabinets of curiosities that were popular in the homes of the wealthy. The origins of cabinets of curiosities begin as far back as the popularity of relics in the Catholic Church. In fact, collections of relics in the treasuries of medieval churches were the precursors to these curiosity cabinets. Relics were holy and held curative powers. At first, relics were associated with Christ and his disciples, such as pieces of the True Cross or fragments of apostles’ bones; however, soon collecting evolved into saint skeletons as equal treasures. The St. Denis Abbey near Paris had one of the largest collections of relics in Europe.166 The treasures of St. Denis offered ‘the image of an ordered universe in miniature, with the most prominent relics placed at the centre and surrounded by those of secondary importance.’167 This arrangement follows the aim of early cabinets, which was: accumulation, definition, and classification.168 The St.Denis collection was an ideal model of the ordered world for other collector

167 Mauriès, Cabinets of Curiosities, 25.
168 Mauriès, Cabinets of Curiosities, 25.
There are various types of curiosity cabinets, ranging in size, elaborateness, and collection; however, there are *raisons d’être* that all the cabinets possess. The cabinets appropriate the chaos of the world and impose upon it systems of symmetries and hierarchies through the arrangement of frames, niches, boxes, drawers, and cases.\(^{169}\) Additionally, there is an aspiration to create a connection between art and nature, and, ultimately, a balance of nature and art emerges. This balance alludes to the harmony of creation, emphasized by associations of the many bonds that existed between the twin spheres rather than stressing differences.\(^{170}\) However, most importantly, cabinets of curiosity are the projection of the infinite for both the collector and the viewer.

During the Renaissance, another movement developed called *studiolo*. The *studiolo* was a retreat for the elite class of men for studying and relaxation. These rooms held works of art and books for their private viewing. By the late sixteenth century, the *studiolo* evolved into curiosity cabinets that occupied an entire room. An example was created by Francesco I de’ Medici in the Palazzo Vecchio located in Florence (fig. 31). The *studiolo* has painted decoration that covers the doors of the cabinets as well as the ceiling of the chamber to provide a series of visual clues or keys to the conceptual basis of the installation and to the contents and significance of each cabinet.\(^{171}\) Francesco’s chamber is the embodiment of two important aspects of curiosity cabinets: symmetry and organization. The symmetry is seen in the number and location of the cabinets, the number of allegorical paintings, and the architecture and decoration of the room.

\(^{169}\) Mauriès, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, 12.


\(^{171}\) MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment*, 12.
Although the room is ornately decorated with paintings, there is no overwhelming quality because the objects of his collection are, in fact, hidden.

Though Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house is not nearly the size of Francesco’s chamber, the concepts are still the same. Each room can be viewed as a “mini chamber,” containing clues as to the importance of each room in a Dutch home. Furthermore, the dolls’ house is an architectural model in miniature that contains the elements of furnishings of cabinets of curiosities, which in turn are arranged symmetrically.\(^{172}\)

Throughout Oortman’s dolls’ house there is an emphasis on symmetry in the design of the rooms and the decoration. A prime example of symmetry is the porseleinkast in de Pronkkeuken. The porcelain is neatly arranged by type and size of the porcelain, thus causing harmony for viewing pleasure. Another example is de Voorhuis, the central room of the dolls’ house, bearing an ornate carved wood piece with the BO monogram. Each side of the room has exactly the same amount of furniture, grisailles and architectural enhancements, such as windows and doorways.

Symmetry is an ideal way for the viewer to admire the collection and the cabinet construction without becoming overwhelmed from utter clutter. Joseph Bonnier de la Mosson created an array of cabinets in the eighteenth century that emphasized the importance of the décor. The dominant impression was created by the architecture and decorative scheme of the cabinets including: the scale and proportions, elegance of lines, design of the woodwork, and the grace of scroll and arabesque designs.\(^{173}\) However, unlike Oortman’s collection, de la Mosson’s cabinets only contained naturalia and

\(^{172}\) Maurières, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, 12.

artificialia thus limiting the collection. Nevertheless, de la Mosson’s collection proved to be intriguing, like Oortman’s, so a painting was created of his cabinets (fig. 32). The popularity of cabinets of curiosities expanded to both Northern and Southern Europe.

In the North, there was much involvement with curiosity cabinets and the theories behind them. In the Netherlands, there was a large group of individuals who participated in this craze for collections. The country was well endowed with collections during the period when Dutch merchants dominated the sea routes to Southeast Asia. Oortman’s dolls’ house’s contents reflect the interest in Asia with her vast collection of Chinese and Japanese porcelain and blankets from India. Within the Dutch middle-class as well, there are instances of growing collections of Far East items. Jacob and Jan Swammerdam, both apothecaries and physicians, had interests that extended into the East and West Indies, having collected items of porcelain and artificial curiosities from the areas. Austrian art historian Julius von Schlosser explains the difference between the Northern cabinets and those of Italy. In the North, the cabinets are expressions of a primarily local spirit linked to the idea of marvels, whereas Italian cabinets contrast a coherent image of the world, inherited from antiquity, with anticipation of the modern worldview. Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house embodies von Schlosser’s ideas regarding both Northern and

---

174 It was common to have cabinets of just naturalia and artificialia; however, there were many collections with a wide mixture of objects to enhance the collections. Many of these more elaborate collections belong to individuals with royal or noble blood.  
175 Artist Jacques de Lajoue created a Rococo dream-like atmosphere when painting de la Mosson’s cabinet, which both heightened the contents of the collection and the mystery lying within the collection. The painting differs greatly from the very modest creation of Appel because de Lajoue created the painting during the time that Rococo was the choice of style for portrayal.  
176 MacGregor, Curiosity and Enlightenment, 12.  
177 Mauriès, Cabinets of Curiosities, 24.
Italian cabinets of curiosities. Possessing the marvels of the Far East that were of interest at the time, Oortman expanded her doll’s house by placing the marvels in a familiar setting, marking the beginning of a coherent image.

Johann Paulus Dimpfel of Regensburg had a unique Kunstkamer in the late seventeenth century that not only reflected his interests but also his business concerns. Inside, there was a model cannon, suit of armor, and his interests: globes, shells, clocks, Chinese porcelain, antique bronzes, pictures, and books.\(^{178}\) German author Samuel Quiccheberg coined two terms Kunstkammer and Wunderkamer in the 16\(^{th}\) century. A Kunstkammer is a closed chamber filled with objects fashioned with art (\emph{quod est artificiosarum reum conclave}), and a Wunderkammer is a collection of marvelous things (\emph{id est miraculosarum reum promptuarium}).\(^ {179}\) By the late sixteenth century, there was a convergence of these two words in the neologism Kunst-und-Wunderkammer.\(^ {180}\)

Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house is an ideal representation of a Kunst-und-Wunderkammer. Her vast miniature collection features both domestic items and items from foreign places, all made to her requirements. Viewing her collection causes awe that engulfs the body that could easily turn into envy. This awe is enhanced by the decoration of the exterior and interior of the cabinet, because each chamber is covered floor to ceiling with ornamentation. There are allegorical paintings that reflect her interest in the Italian Mannerist and Baroque painting styles and subjects, and the architecture and

\(^{178}\) Mauriès, \textit{Cabinets of Curiosities}, 34.  
\(^{179}\) Mauriès, \textit{Cabinets of Curiosities}, 34.  
\(^{180}\) Mauriès, \textit{Cabinets of Curiosities}, 34.
decorations of the rooms reflect that of a canal home. Oortman’s dolls’ house presents art, spectacular objects, and wonder that satisfies the desires of the viewer.

Perspectykas

Depictions of Dutch interiors were a phenomenon during the Golden Age. This eagerness led to new ways of illustrating interiors, including the perspective box. Also known as Perspectykas, perspective boxes contain single, multifaceted image projected and painted over the discontinuous surfaces of the box’s interior.¹⁸¹ These boxes are pictorial experiments and are seen as both children’s amusements and ‘mere curiosities;’ however, they are not toys but experimental art. The interest in perspective boxes a model of investigating nature and representing “nature knowledge.”¹⁸² They offer the viewer concrete explanations of the natural phenomenon depicted with and stimulate the intellectual curiosity of the beholder, creating a desire to discover the secrets of nature revealed in their making.¹⁸³ Samuel van Hoogstraten and Carel Fabritius, both students of Rembrandt, are the most well-known Dutch perspective box creators.

Van Hoogstraten’s most famously praised perspective box, Perspective Box with Views of a Dutch Interior (fig. 33), is considered his most complex creation. The approximately two-foot high rectangular cabinet is about three feet wide and two feet

¹⁸² Brusati, The Art and Writing, 172.
deep. Light is admitted through the open front face, which was originally covered with some kind of translucent paper and is now fitted with a clear plastic panel.¹⁸⁴ On opposite sides of the box, there are two small openings that are the viewing holes. Through either of these orifices, the beholder peers into the domestic scene, which, with open doors and windows, actually presents for nine separate rooms and spaces.¹⁸⁵ The Perspective Box with Views of a Dutch Interior is distinctive because it presents hidden self-representations of Van Hoogstraten. A self-addressed letter lies on the floor under the chair at the left front end of the box. In addition, a portrait bearing the Van Hoogstraten family crest is visible to the left of the bedroom door, and, above the table beyond the bedroom, his wife’s family arms is depicted in the form of a stained glass window.¹⁸⁶ Perspective Box with Views of a Dutch Interior domesticates the painted kunstkamer tradition, turning the pictorial description of the visible world van Hoogstraten encompasses into a miniature representation of his home and possessions.¹⁸⁷ This perspective box creates a relationship between the observer and the world depicted.

Although the viewing properties differ, the Oortman dolls’ house shares features with van Hoogstraten’s perspective box. Van Hoogstraten presents a view of his space, but the amount that is given to the viewer is limited. On the other hand, Oortman offers a full exploration of her interior, with self-representations of her family through the BO monograms hidden throughout the dolls’ house. Both the perspective box and the dolls’ house present curiosities but in contrasting forms. Van Hoogstraten offers only a glimpse

¹⁸⁴ Brusati, The Art and Writing, 173.
¹⁸⁵ Brusati, The Art and Writing, 173.
¹⁸⁶ Brusati, The Art and Writing, 173.
¹⁸⁷ Brusati, The Art and Writing, 173.
into his world, which leaves the viewer inquisitive and mystified about the non-visible characteristics of the interior. On the contrary, the curiosities of Oortman’s dolls’ house are in the functions of the rooms and the objects presented.

Carel Fabritius’ perspective box offers a yet different view from that of van Hoogstraten and Oortman. *View of the City of Delft* (fig. 34) is a panoramic view of the city center of Deft, along with a figure, a lyre, and viola da gamba. The painting is inside a triangular style perspective box, the normal style of the Dutch boxes. Fabritius gives an exterior view and, unlike van Hoogstraten, the church is the central focus and the rest of the scene is formed around it. In Oortman’s dolls’ house, there is no identified center, but *de Voorhuis* can be considered the centered visually. While her remaining chambers envelope this room, that was the first room visitors’ saw when entering the home.

Function wise, *de Pronkkeuken* would be considered the center because that is where the family gathered. Both Fabritius and Oortman have central foci, but that focus does not hinder the perspective of the whole scene.

Van Hoogstraten and Fabritius use *trompe l’oeil* in one of the tradition ways. Some paintings in Oortman’s dolls’ house are *trompe l’oeil*, for example *de Pronkkeuken* ceiling piece, and these paintings connect the dolls’ house to both artists. However, as a whole, the dolls’ house does not follow the standard procedure. In the three-dimensional cabinet, it is difficult to create optical illusions to trick the eye. Instead, objects and two rooms are hidden, which tricks the viewer and adds the element of surprise.\(^{188}\)

---

\(^{188}\) Van Hoogstraten also surprises his viewers by offering a glimpse into the multiple rooms that he depicts.
Chapter 6
PHILOSOPHIES OF THE ‘VISIBLE WORLD’

The Enlightenment was a movement of intellectuals that questioned society by offering new ways of thinking and reform. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, their works and philosophies swept across Europe conveying topics from religious practices, and governmental rule, to scientific inquiry. However, some philosophers pondered on the cultural and artistic practices of the time. The Enlightenment educated readers while still entertaining principles.\textsuperscript{189}

Psychological anthropologist Roger Caillios studied the philosophy of games in the twentieth century and divided them into four categories: \textit{agon}, those in which competition is the main feature; \textit{alea}, all games of chance; \textit{illinx}, the creation of vertigo by scrambling ordinary perceptions; and finally \textit{mimicry}, activities in which alternative realities are created.\textsuperscript{190} The last two categories are a great foundation for studying cabinets of curiosities, perspective boxes, and dolls’ houses. Although the creation of vertigo is not a guarantee, ordinary perceptions are in disorder with the perspective boxes, which could, in fact, cause a sensation similar to vertigo because of the change. \textit{Mimicry} is the most appropriate term to describe these architectural creations.

\textsuperscript{189} Barbara Maria Stafford, \textit{Artful Science: Enlightenment and the Eclipse of Visual Education}, (Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1994), 29.
\textsuperscript{190} Stafford, \textit{Artful Science}, 29.
The dolls’ house is the ultimate alternate reality, holding the perspective and interior emphasis of the perspective boxes, and the architectural and mysteries of the cabinets of curiosities. There is the pleasure of curiosity through this ideal mimicry. In this alternate reality, there are certain ways to view the objects.

Charles Rollin, a French educator and historian in the early eighteenth century, suggested ways of viewing such objects. His aesthetic approach is based on “admiring” the “different beauties of objects,” but without searching into their secret cause. Though Rollin’s approach revokes any sense of searching of meaning, the admiration of beautiful objects is still important when viewing dolls’ houses and cabinets. Rollin thus continues with the theory of perspective as “a recreation” and a “diversion,” which are both characteristics of dolls’ houses.

Samuel van Hoogstraten became involved with the movement by writing his own art theory in 1678. Inleyding is the ‘overarching concern with the illusionistic and imitative aspect of pictorial representation.’ Although much of his writing focuses on painting, he presents concepts that can relate to the whole idea of the ‘visible world.’ Hoogstraten believed that there is ‘some grace in everything,’ and that the insignificant has an essential place in the depiction of the entire visible world. Petronella Oortman’s collection of miniatures is vast; however each object contributes to the overall vision of a seventeenth-century canal house. Additionally, van Hoogstraten believed that imitation

---

192 Stafford, *Artful Science*, 23. In this particular case, diversion refers to amusement
should not focus on imitating as the work of art, but reconstructing the original reality. It is unknown whether Oortman’s dolls’ house is an exact replication of her home on the Warmoesstraat; however, it is plausible that the dolls’ house decoration is similar to the decoration of her home. To be a successful imitation of the world, there must be a spectacle on all sides.\textsuperscript{194} From floor to ceiling, in every chamber of the Oortman dolls’ house, there is either an object or painting to be viewed and studied.

\textsuperscript{194} Stafford, \textit{Artful Science}, 237.
Chapter 7

HET POPPENHUIS AS ‘MATERIAL CULTURE’

Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house proves to be an important example of material culture. The dolls’ house presents a relationship between the miniature contents and culture and social relations. The relationship is extended to presenting the concentrations of the time in art, architecture, and theory. Oortman’s dolls’ house is a collection that aims not only to display riches but also to educate.

The Oortman dolls’ house, and dolls’ houses in general, provide a look into a private canal home of the wealthy. The home is neatly organized and spotless, a reference to the Dutch obsession with cleanliness. In fact, there was a popular household manual De Ervarene en Vertandige Hollandsche (The Experienced and Knowledgeable Holland Householder), which contained a chapter completely devoted to strict cleaning rituals.\(^{195}\)

It is plausible that the manual at one point was included in Oortman’s miniature Bibliotheek. The Dutch were as obsessed with the cleanliness with the interior of their home as they were with the exterior. Every day of the week there was a task designated, whether it was cleaning linen, dusting, or mopping one of the kitchens. This emphasis of cleanliness is not completely portrayed with the physical house,

in part because of missing dolls’ and objects. In his painting, Appel depicts the cleanliness; for example, in the linen room, we see a maid ironing. There is an interesting arrangement of the dolls in his painting: adults accompany all the children. The Dutch also believed that children brought dirt into the home. The accompaniment of the adults suggests the need to watch the children so they do not cause a mess. The domestic nature of the dolls’ house is related to the view of women during the time as well.

According to Dr. van Beverwijck, women were anatomically designed for “inner” domestic work, their flesh being softer and muscles weaker than those of men. Furthermore, in *Vrouwe*, the differentiation between men and women is clarified:

The husband must be on the street to practise his trade
The wife must stay at home to be in the kitchen
The diligent practice of street wisdom may in the man be praised
But with the delicate wife, there should be quiet and steady ways
So you, industrious husband, go to earn your living
While you, O young wife, attend to your household.

Women indeed were in the home as they were in charge of the household; however, they were intelligent. Women were often financially savvy and, in their wills, left money to their children so that the children would not be punished for any debts acquired by the husband. Examples include Rembrandt’s wife leaving her wealth to their son Titus, and

---

196 Though the room is still hidden from complete view, the cellar contains cleaning products.
197 Dr. van Beverwijck was a practicing physician in Dordrecht; however, he was interested in the Humanities and was known for writing poems.
Maria Thins (Vermeer’s mother-in-law) distributing her money equally among her grandchildren. Women may have appeared as frail creatures; however, they possessed a strong mentality that showed in society.

Most importantly, dolls’ houses in the Netherlands were a unique, feminine form of curiosity cabinets specifically created for a small group of wealthy women. According to art historian Shirley Glubok, ‘[t]he dollhouse reflects the solid comfort of a wealthy burgher’s house on one of Amsterdam’s canals in the late seventeenth century.’ Indeed the dolls’ houses lavishness shows no sign of any struggles with living in such a home. The contents of the dolls’ house give insight to the perspective of women during the time. One of the most lavishly decorated rooms in Oortman’s dolls’ house is the lying-in room, referring to Oortman’s maternal role. Foot-warmers are also seen in all of the dolls’ houses. These devices were specifically made for females because, at the time, the women traditionally sat furthest away from the fire. Thus, the idea of gender spaces appears.

In fact, Petronella doll’s house is the epitome of a “feminized “ cabinet. Interiors of cabinets with “feminine” paintings, statuettes, porcelains, mirrors, jewelry, and

---

200 Rembrandt petitioned bankruptcy, and Vermeer died, leaving his wife to declare bankruptcy as well.*


203 Other women’s’ dolls’ houses included the lying-in room; however, Petronella Dunois and Sara Rothé were childless.

shells sensualized the interior. “Feminine” paintings are in the style of Rococo, and, within Oortman’s dolls’ house, one sees some beginnings of Rococo ornamentation.

There are no statuettes in the dolls’ house, nevertheless the grisailles painted in de Voorhuis gives the illusion of figures, thus making them acceptable substitutes for statuettes. The feminization of the dolls’ house is continued with Oortman’s vast collection of porcelain, both real and imitated.

An interesting aspect of Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house is her emphasis on mirrors; nearly every room in her house has one. The mirror is related to vanitas. Literally translating to vanity, vanitas were popular still life genre in painting in the seventeenth century that included symbols referring to death and vanity. It is possible that the mirrors remind the viewer that the luxuries and riches of life are temporary, and that one should live by the modest religious traditions. The Oortman family was Lutheran, and Oortmans’s husband was very involved in the Lutheran church. Possibly, the modest way of living refers to living by the Bible, since in de Bibliotheek she did have a miniature Bible on display. Indeed, the Bible could very well be a symbol of Petronella’s devotion to her faith.

Just outside of de Bibliotheek is de Tapijtkamer, which houses a miniature cabinet of curiosity filled with shells. Oortman’s cabinet has the masculine architectural structure

---

205 Shells are known for having the feminine principle, specifically of nurture. Also, shells are known for being a symbol of the vulva.
207 The Baroque style is a precursor to the Rococo style, thus possibly making it feminine as well.
208 It could be very possible that every room in the cabinet had a mirror but they were either lost or broken.
of the curiosity cabinet; however, it is filled with “feminine” treasures and surrounded by a completely feminized dolls’ house. Throughout Oortman’s dolls’ house there is a mixture of interests of both males and females. Oortman’s husband, the silk merchant, had ties to the Far East, and her collection of porcelain can be a reflection of his occupation. Thus, there are subtle references of the importance of trade in the Oortman family.

Forming a collection was an activity fundamental to the development of understanding. John Locke compared furnishing a cabinet with the creation of human intellect: ideas are introduced into an initial void, given names and characterizations, and are structured so as to facilitate discourse. The dolls’ house of Petronella Oortman brings together an assortment of objects into a cabinet and arranges them in such a way that calls for interpretation and discussion. Oortman’s dolls’ house is a theatrum mundi (“theater of the world”), presenting the art of memory through creating a miniature replication of history. This collection is part of the economic and social history of distant goods mobilized to ship home, requiring a human center. In addition, the collection also demonstrates the material ingenuity of crafty artisans and the skill of sportive nature.

Petronella Oortman’s collection is a mixture of both female and female interests. Furthermore, a complete view of family life comes from this combination. Rather than the dolls’ house being a complete narcissistic view of herself, Oortman gives references to the family as a whole. Through her collection, it is evident that she greatly valued the family traditions that were so important to the Dutch during the time.

209 MacGregor, Curiosity and Enlightenment, 56.
210 Stafford, Artful Science, 221.
Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

The first time I viewed Petronella Oortman’s dolls’ house in the Rijksmuseum, I was instantly fascinated; that was the first time I viewed a cabinet of that caliber. The image was stamped in my head, and, I embraced the opportunity to learn more through this Honors Thesis. Throughout my research, I was surprised by my findings relating to dolls’ house culture. I not only discovered the detailed collections, but I also gained more knowledge about seventeenth-century Dutch woman. Previous to my research, I had only a basic understanding of Dutch history and culture. Now, I understand why The Netherlands are so fascinating; they were different from the rest of Europe. Much of my medieval art history studies has been devoted to studying Italian art, and though it influences Dutch art, there is still an individuality to Netherlandish art.

I was put into the shoes of a wealthy Dutch woman of the time period. I learned of domestic duties, of foreign interests, popular literature, and traditions of the home. Rather than just getting a view from a painting, I was completely engrossed by the popular Dutch interior. In addition to the dolls’ houses, I gained knowledge of curiosity cabinets and perspective boxes, which I had never researched previously. It is interesting how the popular dolls’ houses and cabinets of curiosities have carried into culture today. At one point, most modern children have a dollhouse, of course not of the same caliber as Oortman’s, to educate about the home. Additionally, we all have a collection of objects,
whether it is on display or not, thus referencing our need to gain more knowledge and to admire the nature of the world.

Though my research has gone very well, there are still some aspects that remain a mystery. For one, there is no clear documentation that men were involved in the women’s doll’s house, so I would like to conduct more research to uncover any information regarding their influence. Also, I would like to make a comparison between the Dutch and German doll’s houses regarding the rooms and objects presented. Finally, I would like to get into the technical aspects of the objects, the process of making the miniature objects.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


MacGregor, Arthur. *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the


http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/Amsterdam_1.html.


FIGURES

Figure 1: Jan Steen. *Celebrating the Birth, ca. 1664*. Oil on Canvas. 89 cm X 109 cm. Wallace Collection, London.
Figure 2: Johannes Vermeer. *View of Delft*, ca. 1661. Oil on canvas. 96.5 X 117 cm. Mauritshuis, The Hague.
Figure 3: Gerard Houckgeest. *New Church at Delft with the Tomb of Willem I*, ca. 1650. Oil on panel. 125 X 89 cm. Hamburger Kunsthalle.
Figure 4: Het Popenhuis van Petronella Oortman, ca. 1686-1710. H 255.0cm × b 190cm × d 78cm × d 28cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Figure 5: Het Popenhuis van Petronella Dunois, ca. 1676. H 200cm × b 150.5cm × d 56cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Figure 6: Het Poppenhuis van Sara Rothé. Late seventeenth century. 227.5 x 173 x 72.5 cm. Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.
Figure 7: Het Popenhuis van Sara Rothé. Late seventeenth century. 227.5 x 173 x 72.5 cm. Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag.
Figure 8: Map of Amsterdam in 1662.
Figure 9: Jan van der Heyden. *View of the Dam with Town Hall in Amsterdam*, ca. 1667. Oil on canvas. 85 X 92 cm. Uffizi Gallery, Florence.
Figure 10: Johannes Vingboons after Philips Vinbooms, Amsterdam, Keizersgracht 319, Façade, ca.1648. Engraving. 45 X 28 cm. Private Collection, Utrecht.
Figure 11: Jan van der Heyden. Etching from van der Weyden’s *Fire Hose Book*, ca. 1690. Etching. 36.5 X 46.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Figure 12: Jacob Appel. *Het Popenhuis van Petronella Oortman*, ca. 1710. Oil on canvas. 87 cm X 69 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Date</th>
<th>Ground</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Petronella de la Court c. 1674 | Kitchen  
Lying-in room  
Garden | Reception room  
Merchant’s office  
Hall | Store room  
Nursery  
Bedroom  
Art gallery  
Linen room |                                  |
| Petronella Dunois c. 1676 | Cellar  
Kitchen  
Dining room | Lying-in room  
Reception room | Peat loft  
Linen room  
Nursery |                                  |
| Petronella Oortman c. 1686–1705 | Best kitchen  
Cookroom  
Reception room | Reception room  
Hall  
Lying-in room | Linen room  
Peat loft  
Nursery |                                  |
| Sara Rothé, The Hague c. 1743 | Lying-in room  
Garden  
Kitchen | Music room  
Hall  
Art collectors’ room | Curio room  
Linen room  
Nursery |                                  |
| Sara Rothé, Haarlem c. 1743 | Kitchen  
Dining room | Reception room  
Hall  
Doctor’s room | Music room  
Reception room  
Lying-in room | Laundry  
Storage area  
Nursery |
Figure 14: De Kleerzolder, Het Popenhuis van Petronella Oortman.

Figure 15: Detail of brass irons in *de Kleerzolder*. 
Figure 16: Detail of servants quarters in *de Kleerzolder*.

Figure 17: *De Turf- en Provisiezolder*, Het Popenhuis van Petronella Oortman.
Figure 18: *De Kinderkamer*, Het Popenhuis van Petronella Oortman.

Figure 19: Walnut Cupboard in *de Kinderkamer*.
Figure 20: Children’s clothing: in *De Kinderkamer*.

Figure 21: *De Zaal*, Het Popenhuis van Petronella Oortman.
Figure 22: De Voorhuis, Het Popenhuis van Petronella Oortman.
Figure 23: Detail of grisailles in *De Voorhuis*.
Figure 24: *De Krammkamer*, Het Popenhuis van Petronella Oortman.

Figure 25: Detail of the lying-in bed in *de Krammkamer*.

Figure 26: The only surviving doll of Petronella Oortman’s Poppenhuis.
Figure 27: *De Pronkkeuken*, Het Poppenhuis van Petronella Oortman.
Figure 28: De Kookkeuken, Het Poppenhuis van Petronella Oortman.
Figure 29: *De Tapijtkamer*, Het Popenhuis van Petronella Oortman.
Figure 30: *De Bibliotheek*, Het Popenhuis van Petronella Oortman.
Figure 31: *Studiolo* of Francesco I de’ Medici, ca. 1570-75. Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.
Figure 32: Jacques de LaJoüe. Painting of Bonnier de la Mason’s Cabinet of Curiosity, ca. 1734.
Figure 33: Samuel van Hoogstraten. *Perspective Box with Views of a Dutch Interior*, 1655-60. Oil and egg on wood. 58 x 88 x 60.5 cm. National Gallery, London.
Figure 34: Carel Fabritius. View of the City of Delft, ca. 1652. Oil on canvas. 15.4 cm X 31.6 cm. National Gallery, London.