

### PUBLIC FACES AND PRIVATE IDENTITIES IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY HOLLAND

During the seventeenth century, Dutch portraits were actively commissioned by corporate groups and by individuals from a range of economic and social classes. They became among the most important genres of painting. Not merely mimetic representations of their subjects, many of these works create a new dialogic relationship with the viewer. In this study, Ann Jensen Adams examines four portrait genres – individuals, family, history portraits, and civic guards. She analyzes these works in relation to inherited visual traditions; contemporary art theory; changing cultural beliefs about the body, sight, and the image itself; and current events. Adams argues that as individuals became unmoored from traditional sources of identity, such as familial lineage, birthplace, and social class, portraits helped them to find security in a self-aware subjectivity and the new social structures that made possible the “economic miracle” that has come to be known as the Dutch Golden Age.

Ann Jensen Adams is associate professor of art history at the University of California, Santa Barbara. A scholar of Dutch painting, she curated the exhibition *Dutch Paintings from New York Private Collections* (1988) and edited *Rembrandt's "Bathsheba Reading David's Letter"* (1998). She has contributed essays to numerous exhibition catalogues and essay collections including *Leselust. Niederländische Malerei von Rembrandt bis Vermeer* (1993), *Landscape and Power* (1994), *Looking at Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting: Realism Reconsidered* (1997), *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday* (1999), and *Love Letters: A Theme in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting* (2003) and published articles in *The Art Bulletin* and the *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*. She has received fellowships from The Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation; Ministry of Education and Science, The Hague, The Netherlands; The J. Paul Getty Trust; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Getty Research Institute; and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

*P*ublic Faces and Private Identities in  
Seventeenth-Century Holland

PORTRAITURE AND THE PRODUCTION  
OF COMMUNITY



**ANN JENSEN ADAMS**

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