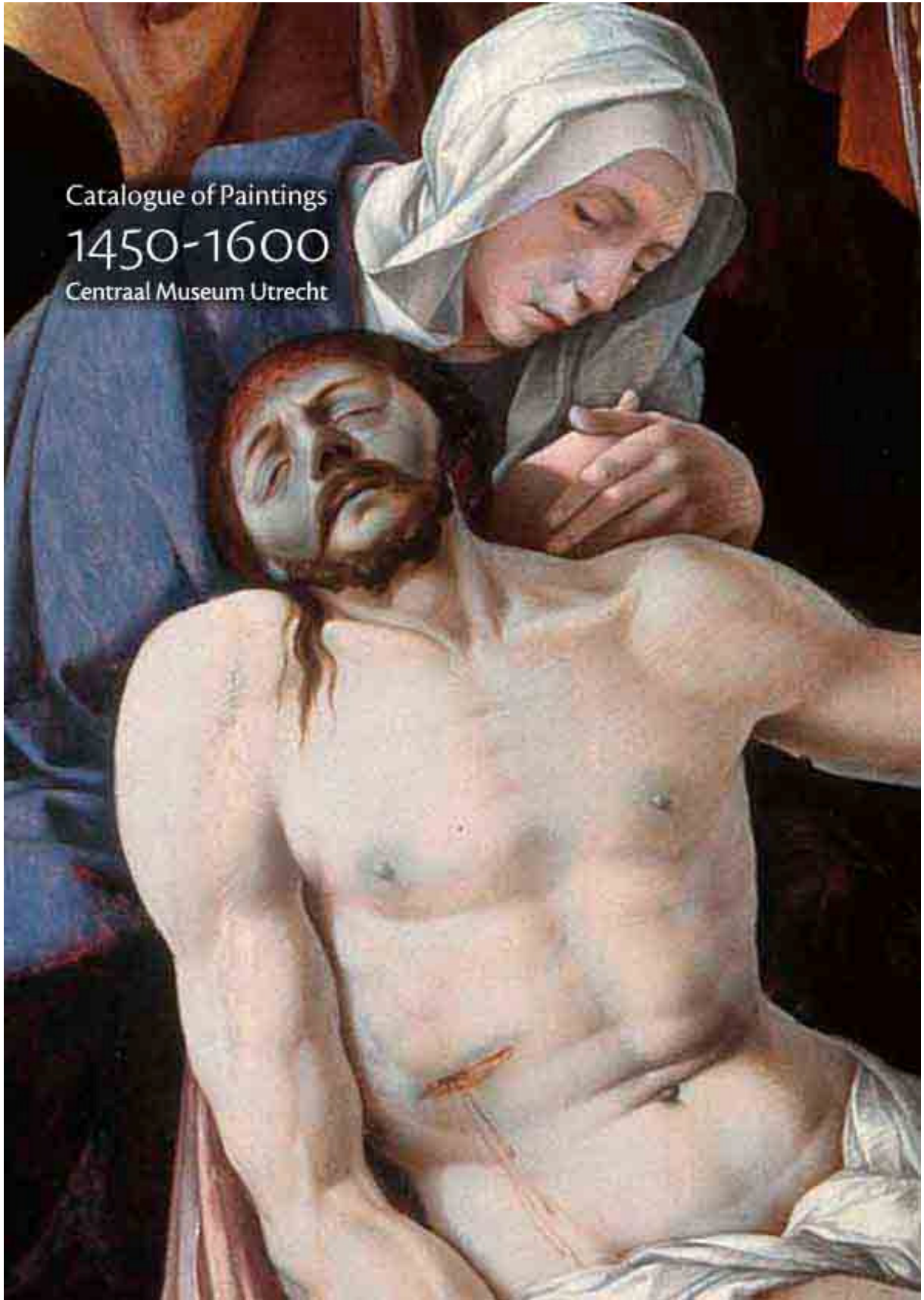


Catalogue of Paintings  
1450-1600  
Centraal Museum Utrecht



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Molly Faries (MF), Liesbeth M. Helmus (LH) en Dorien Tamis (DT)

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## Foreword

In 1999 the Central Museum published *Schilderkunst tot 1850 (Painting Until 1850)*, a summary catalogue that presented the overall collection to the public and, in addition, laid the basis for further research. Of the circa one thousand paintings included in this catalogue, fifty-five date from the period 1450-1600. A large number of key pieces from this period have always belonged to municipality, whose collection was exhibited for the first time in the upper rooms of the Utrecht City Hall in 1838. These came from Utrecht's religious institutions and were, after the Iconoclasm, either confiscated or ceded willingly to the city. The collection up to 1850 exemplifies the tradition of Utrecht painting to a remarkable degree, and this applies in particular to the paintings that date before 1600. The central core of the collection is formed by the paintings of Jan van Scorel, who had a large workshop in Utrecht with a number of apprentices and assistants from circa 1535 until his death in 1562. Scorel is considered the pioneer of north-Netherlandish painting, for he was the one who brought the style of the Renaissance to the Netherlands after a stay in Italy for several years that ended around 1525. From its foundation, the Central Museum has had the responsibility of caring for the world's largest and most important collection of Scorel's works, and, in recent years, has been successful in enlarging this collection through acquisitions and gifts. In 1997 the museum purchased an appealing *Virgin and Child*, and, in 2002, acquired on long-term loan the best version of a *Crucifixion* from Scorel's shop.

It was always hoped that the research done on these early paintings for the 1999 catalogue could be expanded, not only art-historically, but also technically. Much of the work had already been done. The Central Museum has had a long association with the technical investigation of paintings and has been, since its inception, the actual locus of significant developments in this field of study. An X-ray survey of early paintings, instigated in 1967 by the then-director, M.E. Houtzager, was groundbreaking. In the early 1970s, J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer (Professor Emeritus, University of Groningen), began to apply the new technique of infrared reflectography, a method he developed to detect underdrawings in paintings; and Jan van Scorel's paintings were selected as the basis of a pilot project. The 1977 exhibition and publication, *Jan van Scorel in Utrecht. Altaarstukken en schilderijen omstreeks 1540. Documenten. Technisch Onderzoek*, in Utrecht and Douai, France, was the result of years of intensive study. This research was continued by the Scorel scholar Molly Faries (Professor Emeritus, Indiana University/Bloomington and the University of Groningen), who initially collaborated with van Asperen de Boer and then succeeded him as professor in Groningen. They worked together in 2000 on the exhibition, *De Madonna's van Jan van Scorel 1495/1562. Serieproductie van een geliefd motief (The Madonna's of Jan van Scorel 1495/1562, Serial Production of a Cherished Motif)*, and this publication is now regarded as another of the museum's highly-respected educational and scholarly catalogues.

In its effort to round out and finish the research on the 1450-1600 collection of paintings, the museum applied in 2003 for support from the Mondriaan Foundation, which approved a three-year research grant. A group of researchers worked together from this point, Molly Faries, Dorien Tamis, and myself, in the scholarly interpretation of the early paintings. The contributions of J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer and Peter

Klein (Professor, Universität Hamburg) were indispensable. Thanks are also due K. Schaffers of the Iconografisch Bureau in The Hague (now an affiliate of the RKD) and Ad. J. de Jong, both of whom helped with the heraldic descriptions.

The catalogue as now presented is a pre-publication of the eventual English catalogue that will appear in print in 2008. The decision to put an advance version on the internet stems from our desire of making the information available at the earliest possible moment. This is, after all, the basic impetus behind our endeavor: making the results of the research known to the public.

Liesbeth M. Helmus, curator  
June 2007

## colophon

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