

DIRCK JACOBSZ'S ARTISTIC FAMILY LINEAGE AND IDENTITY
IN *JACOB CORNELISZ PAINTING HIS WIFE ANNA*

by

Melody Hsu

Department of Art History and Communication Studies

McGill University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

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Introduction

Between October 1, 2021, and January 16, 2022, the Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam presents an exhibition titled *Remember Me* that brings together more than a hundred portraits painted by well-known great masters to lesser-recognized artists of the 15th and 16th century Italian, Northern-European, and Flemish Renaissance. Beyond the vivid depiction of a person's likeness, portraiture entails the complex histories, identities, social status, desires, memories, and ambitions hidden behind the carefully crafted visual representation of the sitter. The British art historian Sir John Wyndham Pope-Hennessy once stated: "Portraiture, like other forms of art, is an expression of conviction, and in the Renaissance, it reflects the reawakening interest in human motives and the human character, the resurgent recognition of those factors which make human being individual, that lay at the center of Renaissance life."¹ Portraiture could evoke a fictive or an actual narrative of one's love, loss, aspiration, character, lineage, and life that are immortalized by the artists' mastery of portrait production.² As the Rijksmuseum explains, "the desire to remember and to be remembered is a very old and human need. Since antiquity, man has been making portraits, and selfies are now an indispensable part of everyday life... *Remember Me* is about ambition, longing, loss – and how people want to be remembered."³

One of the Rijksmuseum's great highlights of *Remember Me* exhibition is the early sixteenth-century Dutch painter Dirck Jacobsz's (1497-1567) *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife*

1. Katherine Hoffman, "From the Renaissance to the Nineteenth Century," in *Concepts of Identity: Historical and Contemporary Images and Portraits of Self and Family* (New York: Icon Editions, 1996), 25. No indentations and single-spaced for footnotes.

2. Patricia Rubin, "Understanding Renaissance Portraiture," in *The Renaissance portrait: from Donatello to Bellini* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 2-25.

3. The Rijksmuseum, "*Remember Me*," 2021.

Anna (around 1550) – also known as *Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostsanen Painting a Portrait of His Wife* (Fig.1). The portrait was formerly dated to around 1530 and believed to be a self-portrait of Dirck's father Jacob Cornelisz (1470-1533), who owned an important workshop as a painter and woodcut printmaker in late fifteenth and sixteenth-century Amsterdam. Today, with a more evolved technical analysis, *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* is now dated to around the 1550s and it is attributed to Jacob's son Dirck Jacobsz.⁴ The Rijksmuseum labels Dirck's painting with the following description:

“This portrait is by Dirck Jacobsz, a painter who worked in Amsterdam and was among the first to specialize in portraiture. Dirck belonged to a family of painters and learned the craft from his father, Jacob Cornelisz. When he died in 1533, Dirck painted this portrait of him. Unusually, he portrayed his father at work, resulting in the earliest known portrait of a painter at his easel. And this was not all Dirck did. Originally, this picture showed his father working on a self-portrait. Technical analysis has revealed that underneath the head of the woman is an incomplete self-portrait of Jacob. Apparently, Dirck changed his mind, because we now see his painting not as a self-portrait, but as one of his wife Anna, Dirck's mother. The result is effectively a family portrait – of the deceased father, the mother, and the invisible but implicitly present son. Most likely, it was therefore meant for family viewing in a private setting.”⁵

As described, the Rijksmuseum identifies Dirck's *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* as a commemorative family portrait, which has been the most common interpretation of Dirck's painting in recent scholarships of the past two decades. In fact, the Early Renaissance experienced an increasing social and cultural practice to commemorate family identity and lineage through

4. Joanna Woods-Marsden, “Part V: Abbiamo Da Parlare Con Le Mani,” in *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (1st ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 236.

5. The Rijksmuseum's label description for Jacobsz's *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* showcases for *Remember Me* 2021 exhibition.

various means, including expressing family memory through art production such as via portraiture and bust sculpture. As the professor of Renaissance studies at the University of Trento Giovanni Ciappelli stated in his book *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence* (2000):

“From the thirteenth century onwards, the impulse towards the commemoration of the family became at once more diffused and more precisely realized... the tradition of commemoration of the family originated in the model of royal genealogical lists, later adopted by the aristocracy. The nobility [and eventually other middle and lower social classes] elaborated its own models of family memory [such as through the immortalization of one’s likeness via art production]. These were based in one way, on the example of ancestors and the cultivation of groups identity and, in another, yet connected way, on the commemoration of the dead.”⁶

On the same note, family memory expressed through sculpted busts and painted portraiture both evoke a similar duality of meaning; “either they are self-conscious expression by members of the ruling class who want to set a model for their followers in the family, or they are the memorial homage to illustrious forebears, made by their sons.”⁷

It is adequate to consider Dirck’s *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* as a commemorative family portrait based on visual analysis and existing biographical documentation. As mentioned previously, the painting is now dated to around 1550. It was painted around the same time of Dirck’s mother Anna’s death and almost twenty years after Dirck’s father Jacob Cornelisz’s death. The gap between Dirck’s parents’ deaths and the time when this double portrait was painted can be visually observed. In Dirck’s painting, Jacob’s skin looks much more youthful than Anna’s. Dirck’s mother seems to appear as her actual old age when Dirck painted this double

6. Giovanni Ciappelli, “Family Memory: Functions, Evolution, Recurrences.” In *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 33-32.

7. Giovanni Ciappelli, “Family Memory: Functions, Evolution, Recurrences,” 34.

portrait in the 1550s, which was the same year of her death; whereas Dirck's father appears at his younger age prior to his own death in 1533, an appearance that was immortalized and remembered through Jacob's own *Self-Portrait* painted right before his death in 1533 (Fig. 2). Given the straightforward visual similarities between Jacob's *Self-Portrait* and Dirck's depiction of his father in *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* (Fig. 3), Dirck might have used his father's self-portrait as a reference to capture his father's likeness for his painting. Based on existing findings on Dirck's painting, it is not possible to determine whether the painting was painted before or after Anna's death; yet, it is correct to argue that the portrait serves a commemorative purpose.

Therefore, Dirck's *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* is a family memorial portrait of his deceased father and, probably, of his lately deceased mother too. The double-portrait was possibly installed above his parents' grave. As the art historian Ann Jensen Adams mentioned briefly in her book *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (2009), "it has been plausibly suggested that the portrait was located at the time in a church, as a memorial to Jacobsz's mother Anna."⁸ Gazing directly at the viewer while holding firmly his painter's palette and brushes, Dirck's father Jacob Cornelisz sits confidently in front of his panel painting of his wife Anna placed on his wooden easel. Both Dirck's parents gaze strongly at their viewers; we might ask, who were the originally intended viewers of *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna*? As the Rijksmuseum suggested, the painting is a family commemorative portrait and was plausibly meant for private viewing, which includes intended viewers such as Dirck, Dirck's mother (if the painting was painted before her death), and other members of Anna's and Jacob's lineage. Most

8. Ann Jensen Adams, "The Cultural Power of Portraits: The Market, Interpersonal Experience, and Subjectivity," in *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Portraiture and the Production of Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 31.

arguably, Dirck could be identified as the original intended viewer of this double portrait painted in memories of his deceased parents. Dirck would have positioned himself both as the painter and the viewer. He thus became the subject of his parents' gazes; while vice-versa, his parents became the subject of Dirck's gaze. Hence, Dirck's portrait entails a double-sided viewership that evokes one family's losses, loves, and memories.

Currently, there is little scholarly research on Dirck's *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna*, nor on his life and works. According to archival databases such as the biographical reference works *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, it is known that Dirck came from an artistic family. He is the son of the once-prominent artist Jacob Cornelisz from late 15th – early 16th century Amsterdam, and Dirck likely received his initial artistic training from his father.⁹ However, most archival documentation and works of Dirck, his father Jacob, and other artist members of his family are now lost and limited. Hence, Dirck's works and his family's artistic identity require new research. As discussed previously, the most well-known interpretation of Dirck's *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* is to understand it as a commemorative family portrait that evokes an intimate relationship between the deceased father (who was an artist), the deceased mother (who was a housewife), and their son (who was the painter of this family portrait). Rather than studying Dirck's painting solely as a commemorative family portrait, I am interested to examine Dirck's personal artistic intention when he painted this double portrait of his deceased parents. What are Dirck and his artistic choices trying to convey? Therefore, my research investigates the visual construction of Dirck Jacobsz's artistic family identity – his artistic identity as a son of a portrait

9. P. C. Molhuysen, "Jacobsz (Dirck)," in *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff's uitgevers-maatschappij, 1911-1937), 413-414.

painter – in *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* through an art historical and iconographical lens.

My research aims to identify *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* as Dirck Jacobsz's artistic statement about his identity as a portrait painter and as a son of a portrait painter who successfully mastered/inherited his father's portrait painting skills and techniques, rather than regarding the painting solely as a commemorative family portrait with memorial purposes. First, my investigation of Dirck Jacobsz's artistic identity begins with a biographical and art historical exploration about his father Jacob Cornelisz's artist workshop in Kalverstraat, Amsterdam. The first part of my research examines Dirck's artistic family's lineage, including a discussion of the practices of artists working as a family dynasty across generations during the late 15th and throughout the 17th-century patriarchal Dutch art scene. As the male descendent of an artistic family, Dirck Jacobsz would naturally inherit his father's artistic identity as a portrait painter. The second part of my paper visually analyzes the formal and iconographical features portrayed in *Jacob Cornelisz Painting His Wife Anna*; what do the setting and the painter's objects try to convey? I suggest the possibility to interpret the painting as a commemorative family portrait that celebrates the artistic identity and honors the mastery of portrait paintings and studio practices between two male generations of an artistic family.

Artistic Family Lineage: The Inheritance of Artistic Identity Across Generations

Currently, biographical documentation and surviving works of Dirck Jacobsz and his father Jacob Cornelisz are sparse. Yet, the *Het Schilder-Boeck* (The Book of Painters, first published in Haarlem 1604), written by the Netherlandish art historian and painter Karel Van Mander (1548–1606), mentions briefly Dirck's father Jacob Cornelisz' life, family, and work. Thus, it is a great

primary source that paves a path for the investigation of Dirck Jacobsz's artistic identity as a son of a painter. In *Schilder-Boeck*, Van Mander described Dirck's father Jacob Cornelisz as "the famous, celebrated painter Jacob Cornelisz of Oostsanen in Waterland [...] it is not known who trained Jacob... [As Van Mander wrote,] he arrived at art, even though he was born and bred among peasants [...] he was experienced in art and had children already growing up."¹⁰ Therefore, it is possible to understand that Jacob Cornelisz might not come from an artistic family; rather, he was plausibly a self-made artist. "He may have learned his craft from the Amsterdam Master of the Figdor Deposition, or from a Haarlem painter such as Geertgen tot Sint Jans, or one of his followers."¹¹ Hence, his son Dirck Jacobsz might be the first generation who carried on their artistic family identity that was created/founded/established by Jacob Cornelisz himself.

As a young man in his early twenties, Jacob ran a productive artist studio with his own assistants and students. His independent workshop was strategically located in Kalverstraat, which was "the center of the economic, religious, and cultural heart of Amsterdam."¹² Based on biographical research compiled by Yvonne Bleyerveld from the University of Leiden, it is possible to identify Dirck Jacobsz's father Jacob Cornelisz as a well-established woodcut producer, printmaker, and painter in the early first decades of the sixteenth-century Dutch art scene. As Bleyerveld stated:

"Jacob Cornelisz's success was clear from the fact that in 1520 he was in a position to buy the house beside his workshop in

10. Yvonne Bleyerveld, *Jacob Cornelisz* (Ouderkerk aan den IJssel: Sound & Vision Publisers, 2019), xxii.

11. Henry Luttikhuizen, "Intimacy and Longing: Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen and the Distance of Love," in *Ut Pictura Amor: The Reflexive Imagery of Love in Artistic Theory and Practice, 1500-1700* (Boston: Brill, 2017), 533.

12. Yvonne Bleyerveld, *Jacob Cornelisz*, xxii.

Kalverstraat [...] Jacob's house was diagonal across from the chapel of the Heilige Stede (Holy Place), which stood on the spot where a miracle involving a consecrated host had taken place in 1345 and made Amsterdam a busy place of pilgrimage. As a productive painter of altarpieces, devotional paintings, and portraits, Jacob Cornelisz would have had plenty of callers from among the religious elite and wealthy citizens of Amsterdam and the county of Holland."¹³

Historically, during the Flemish Renaissance and throughout the 17th century Dutch Republic, a man's social identity and status were determined principally by his occupation that was generally inherited from his family. "Class distinctions were made on two bases: on family lineage and on one's profession."¹⁴ For instance, within an artistic family, the male descendants would naturally learn their father's artistic craft, proceed to master their father's artistic skills and techniques, and eventually transmit the artistic practices to their sons. This creates an artistic family identity from one generation to the next, forming the phenomenon of an artistic family dynasty. As Margaret Haines explains:

"The advantages of transmitting the practice of a skill or trade from one generation to the next were a powerful motivation for professional continuity in artisans' families... Training could take place within the family shop, and matriculation fees for guild inscription were waived for direct male descendants. Consolidation of professional activity over more than one generation permitted the development of a shop reputation and the elaboration of family strategies of advancement. If widows and heirs extraneous to the artist's shop found themselves saddles with partly paid, unfinished works and were bound to suffer losses, a shop's passage from father to son could take place almost imperceptibly."¹⁵

13. Yvonne Bleyerveld, *Jacob Cornelisz*, xxii.

14. Ann Jensen Adams. "Family Portraits: The Private Sphere and the Social Order," in *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland: Portraiture and the Production of Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 155.

15. Margaret Haines. "Artisan Family Strategies: Proposals for Research on the Families of Florentine Artists." In *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 167.

Consequently, if Jacob Cornelisz was not born from an artistic family, it is impressive that he might be a successful self-made artist who established, on his own, an artistic family dynasty – an artistic identity that his sons successfully continued. Based on Jacob Cornelisz's genealogy studied by Bleyerveld (Fig. 4), his children all managed to preserve their family's artistic identity according to the standard social norms and practices of their times. Jacob, with his wife Anna, had two sons and two daughters. The two male descendants, Cornelis and Dirck, both succeeded in their father's profession; they both became painters. As the older son of the family, Dirck's brother Cornelis eventually inherited his father's workshop in Kalverstraat. Dirck, on the other hand, probably established a workshop of his own. According to the *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, after a few years of initial training at his father's workshop, Dirck continued his artistic apprenticeship at the guild, possibly at the renowned painter's guild in Haarlem, as a master painter. Dirck eventually married Marie Gerrits with whom he had two children, a daughter named Marie, and a son named Jacob Dirks Werre, who also became a painter.¹⁶

On the same note, Jacob's two daughters also contributed to the continuity and stability of their family's artistic lineage through marriage ties; indeed, "suitable matches [for young women/daughters] were sought for successive generation of offspring."¹⁷ As Jensen Adams states, "the identity of each family member [was] defined through their membership in that lineage, both through their relationship with their own ancestors and sometimes also with those of their spouses."¹⁸ Jacob's youngest daughter, Anna, "married the Amsterdam goldsmith and assay-

16. P. C. Molhuysen, "Jacobsz (Dirck)," 413-414.

17. Margaret Haines, "Artisan Family Strategies: Proposals for Research on the Families of Florentine Artists," 170.

18. Ann Jensen Adams, "Family Portraits: The Private Sphere and the Social Order," 114.

master Michiel Brugman.”¹⁹ His eldest daughter, whose name is unknown, was “married to Jacob’s assistant Thonis Egbertsz, and one of their children was the painter, printmaker, and cartographer Cornelis Anthonisz (1505-1553). It was recently demonstrated that this grandson had close ties with the Kalverstraat workshop, and very probably trained there.”²⁰

With that said, Jacob Cornelisz’s lineage all respectively continued their family’s artistic identity, workshop practices, and professional/community connections from one generation to the next. Dirck Jacobsz’s artistic identity as a painter was inherited from his artistic family identity as founded by his father Jacob Cornelisz. As the son of a father who owned a renowned workshop located right at the artistic and cultural hub of Amsterdam, Dirck successfully became a male descendant who gave prominence to his family’s artistic identity and honored his family’s artistic lineage. He mastered the painter’s craft first learned from his father, established his own workshop, and gave birth to a son who also became a painter. Dirck was destined to be an artist by birth, and he transmitted his family’s artistic identity from one generation to the next, thus establishing a continuity of the artistic family dynasty.

Dirck’s Artistic Statement in *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna*

Despite being known today mostly for his woodcuts prints (since most of his paintings have been lost or greatly damaged), it is possible to argue that Dirck’s father Jacob must have identified himself primarily as a painter rather than as a printmaker or woodcut designer when he held his prosperous workshop in Kalveerstraat. The professional craft of painting was regarded as more prestigious than printmaking in the social context of his time. As Bleyerveld discusses in her

19. Yvonne Bleyerveld, *Jacob Cornelisz*, xxii.

20. Yvonne Bleyerveld, *Jacob Cornelisz*, xxii.

research, “although we know little about Jacob Cornelisz’s personal life we have a book that he owned. It is a copy of the Delft Bible... It is inscribed in a typical early sixteenth-century hand: ‘Dit bouck hoert two Jacob cornelisz die schilder wonende in die calverstraet’ (‘This book belonged to Jacob Cornelisz the painter, living in Kalveerstraat’), with the date 1502 below. So in 1502, he evidently regarded painting as his main activity.”²¹ As the male descendant of Jacob, Dirck’s artistic identity as a portrait painter and as a son of a portrait painter who successfully mastered/inherited his father’s artistic craft can be visually comprehended through a formal and iconographical analysis of *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna*. As Joanna Woods-Marsden argues, “In a portrait, the relationship between painter and sitter is *the* crucial component informing the work of art, and all portraiture implies a silent dialogue between these two agents.”²²

First, Dirck’s inheritance of his family’s artistic identity as one among the male offspring can be examined through the father-son relationship that is implicitly presented in *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna*. As Woods-Marsden explains in her book *Renaissance Self-Portraiture* (1998):

“Renaissance people believed that the father-son relationship was a pivotal one in society, even after the son was fully grown. Legislation determined that the two formed a ‘community, almost personal unity’ (*communanza, quasi unita personale*), or as Marsilio Ficino put it, ‘the son is mirror and image (*specchio et immagine*) in which the father after death almost remains alive for a long time.’ [...] The son was, in theory, the father’s immortality, enabling his identity to continue. [...] In his *Zibaldone*, Giovanni Rucellai outlined the ideal sequences for the father-son relationship; until eighteen, the son remained ‘obedient and reverent to the father; between eighteen and thirty he and his father ere like brothers; when

21. Yvonne Bleyerveld, *Jacob Cornelisz*, xxiv.

22. Joanna Woods-Marsden, “Part I: The Intellectual, Social, and Psychic Contexts for Self-Portraiture,” in *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (1st ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 25.

the father became older, ‘he should want to become the son, and the son should take the father’s place and run everything’.”²³

Based on Woods-Marsden’s studies, it is possible to interpret Dirck’s portrayal of his father as a reflection of himself, thus evoking a self-portrait of Dirck that embodies a father-son relationship. As discussed in the introduction, Dirck’s painting is currently dated to around the 1550s. And so, Dirck was in his fifties when he painted this portrait of his father Jacob, whose likeness was plausibly portrayed by referencing his father Jacob’s *Self-Portrait* that was painted before 1533 when he was also in his late fifties and sixties. Hence, when Dirck painted *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna*, Dirck was around the same age as his father when he passed away in 1533. The son and the father thus became the mirrored image of each other, evoking Dirck’s artistic legacy. On the same note, Dirck was plausibly the original intended viewer of this double portrait painted in commemoration of his deceased parents. The painting evokes a double-sided viewership that entails an intimate familial relationship between the father, the mother, and the son. Yet, the father-son relationship is presented with greater prominence: Dirck’s father Jacob appears as an actual living figure; whereas his mother Anna appears as an image painted by his father. The father and the son could be understood as the primary active participants of this portrait in which the identity of the father and the son fuse as one. Dirck naturally inherits his father’s painter identity as the male descendant of his family. But the mother, like Mary, receives honor and veneration as the “subject” of the painting.

Second, Dirck’s artistic statement about his successful mastery of his father’s portrait painting skills and techniques is visually presented in his painting. *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* is painted with oil on a wood panel, which is a portrait painting practice that is

23. Joanna Woods-Marsden, “Part V: Abbiamo Da Parlare Con Le Mani,” 236.

identically portrayed in Dirck's painting. Jacob holds his painter's palette filled with precise colors (flesh colors no less) of oil paint while sitting in front of his unfinished oil on panel portrait painting of his wife Anna that lays on a wooden easel. Through this scene, it is possible to read Dirck's painting as an artistic demonstration of his successful mastery of his father portrait painting's techniques that symbolizes the ability of painting to bring people back to life in living color. Both Jacob and Dirck plausibly mastered the craft of oil portraiture on wood panels at the local Guild of St. Luke in Haarlem, which was the most important community of artists, including painters, sculptors, and gold- and silversmiths. The oil on panel painting technique was most likely from the *schilders* (translate) community. Indeed, at the painter's Guild of St. Luke, there were two painters communities: "*schilders* and *cleederscrivers*. The first term was applied to artists whose primary occupation was the painting of panels... *Cleederscrivers*, on the other hand, [...] is used in the guild registers to refer to artists known to have worked on cloth."²⁴ Hence, it is possible to read Dirck's painting as his method to showcase his perfect mastery and application of the artistic craft learned from his father. Dirck showcases himself as a clever modern artist who mastered the naturalism and illusionistic play across generations of traditional craft of painting. practice.

Furthermore, it is possible to suggest that Dirck showcases his perfect mastery of portrait painting in *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* by examining his distinctive portrayal of his father's artistically trained hand. In the *Remember Me* exhibition catalog, the author name here mentions Dirck's "strong emphasis on the profession of his deceased father; his right hand is exceptionally large, and he is holding his painter's palette in his left hand."²⁵ I suggest Dirck's

24. Diane Wolfthal, *The Beginnings of Netherlandish Canvas Painting, 1400-1530* (Cambridge, CB: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 6.

25. The Rijksmuseum, "*Remember Me*," 2021.

careful portrayal of his father's hands can be understood as a statement about the artistic intellect that he had fruitfully inherited as the son of a portrait painter. In fact, the Renaissance art scene stressed an important emphasis on painters' hands. Renaissance artistic communities believed that talent in art cannot be learned, rather there was an "inborn talent or creative power needed to conceive the work in the first place."²⁶ As Joanna Woods-Marsden explained:

"The hand was to be understood as an *extension* of the mind, as in Alberti's claim that his objective in his treatise was to 'instruct the painter how he can represent with hand [*mano*] what he has understood with his talent [*ingegno*]... Vasari sustained that only a 'trained hand' could mediate the idea born in the intellect, or, as Michelangelo put it in a famous sonnet, 'the hand that obeys the intellect' (*la man che ubbidisce all-intelletto*) – in other words, the 'learned hand' (*docta manus*)..."²⁷

On the same note, Dirck's strong emphasis on his father's hands in *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* can also be interpreted as his statement about his own proud identity as a successful portrait painter possessed of intellectual and manual or technical talent. As the *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek* stated, Dirck was especially famous for painting hands. According to Van Mander's writings, his artist? friend Jacob Raevaeart once offered a large sum of money to Dirck to have his hands painted exclusively by Dirck in a portrait.²⁸ Therefore, Jacob's large hands in Dirck's painting might be Dirck's subtle design to visually display his outstanding and well-celebrated hand painting skills.

26. Joanna Woods-Marsden, "Introduction: The Social Status of the Artist in the Renaissance," in *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (1st ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 4.

27. Joanna Woods-Marsden, "Introduction: The Social Status of the Artist in the Renaissance," 4.

28. P. C. Molhuysen, "Jacobsz (Dirck)," 413-414.

Conclusion

Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna is a fascinating surviving work of Dirck Jacobsz, whose work, life, family lineage, and identity require new research. The acknowledgment of Dirck's artistic identity is an ongoing inquiry. Rather than interpreting Dirck's double-portrait of his parents as a commemorative and memorial family portrait, thus, in a religious context, I suggest re-evaluating Dirck's painting as a visual presentation of his artistic identity as a portrait painter and as a proud son of a portrait painter who successfully mastered/inherited his father's portrait painting skills and techniques. Building on existing research, archival documentation, and iconographical analysis, it is possible to propose *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* as an artistic narrative that entails Dirck's artistic family lineage, successful mastery of his father's studio practices, and self-identification as a prominent portrait painter.

For further investigation, it would be interesting to question Dirck's portrayal of his mother in *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* through a feminist lens. Why is Anna depicted as an image painted by Jacob? What do Dirck's artistic choices try to convey? What was the woman/mother's place in her husband's studio/workshop? I suggest that one of the ways to begin this investigation would be to examine the historical Dutch concept of conjugal virtue as embodied by? the father, the male head, of an artistic family. In fact, "love was considered a fundamental virtue for the Dutch [male] artist."²⁹ Historically, "the theme of love as a principal source of artistic creativity was commonplace in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Netherlandish literature as a whole, an idea expressed in the popular motto 'Love brings forth art'.... The painting was

29. Erin Griffey, "Pro-Creativity. Art, Love and Conjugal Virtue in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Artists' Self-portraits," *Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies* 28, no. 1 and 2 (2004): 27.

personified by the female figure of *Pictura*... Painters were frequently said to ‘love’ painting and sometimes even said to have ‘married’ her.”³⁰ Therefore, Dirck’s mother Anna’s presence as an image/subject in *Jacob Cornelisz painting his wife Anna* evokes her identity as the wife and the artistic muse of Dirck’s father Jacob. Anna is literally presented as the *Pictura*, thus evoking her embodiment of femininity, virtuosity, and beauty?? idealized in the male-dominated artistic production. Hence, Anna’s embodiment as the *Pictura* can be understood as a tool used by Dirck to highlight his painter father Jacob as a virtuous husband and family man, a heroic or honorable? male figure who plays “on his dual role as both a creator of artworks and a procreator of children.”³¹ As Erin Griffey explains:

“The morality of conjugal love [underlined] the artist’s social status as a worthy member of Dutch society. As a way of celebrating this relationship, artists are presented – and [increasingly] present themselves – not only as lovers but also as husbands and family men in their portraits... Art literature encouraged the artist’s love of art, even his figurative marriage to *Pictura* and the procreation of exemplary works of art. These self-images play on the artist’s professional role as a creator of paintings because love was considered the ideal basis of artistic and natural production... [painters’ participation in the discourse of conjugal love in their self-portraits] allowed the artist to participate metaphorically in both the heroic male virtue of artistic creation and the traditionally female virtues of procreation.”³²

30. Erin Griffey, 28-34.

31. Erin Griffey, 29.

32. Erin Griffey, 27.

Appendix

Figure 1. Dirck Jacobsz. *Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostsanen Painting a Portrait of His Wife*, around 1550. Oil on wood panel, 62.1 x 49.4 cm. Toledo Museum of Art, United-States. Currently in view at the *Remember Me* exhibition of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.



Figure 2. Jacob Cornelisz. *Self-Portrait*, around 1533. Oil on panel, 37.8 x 29.4 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

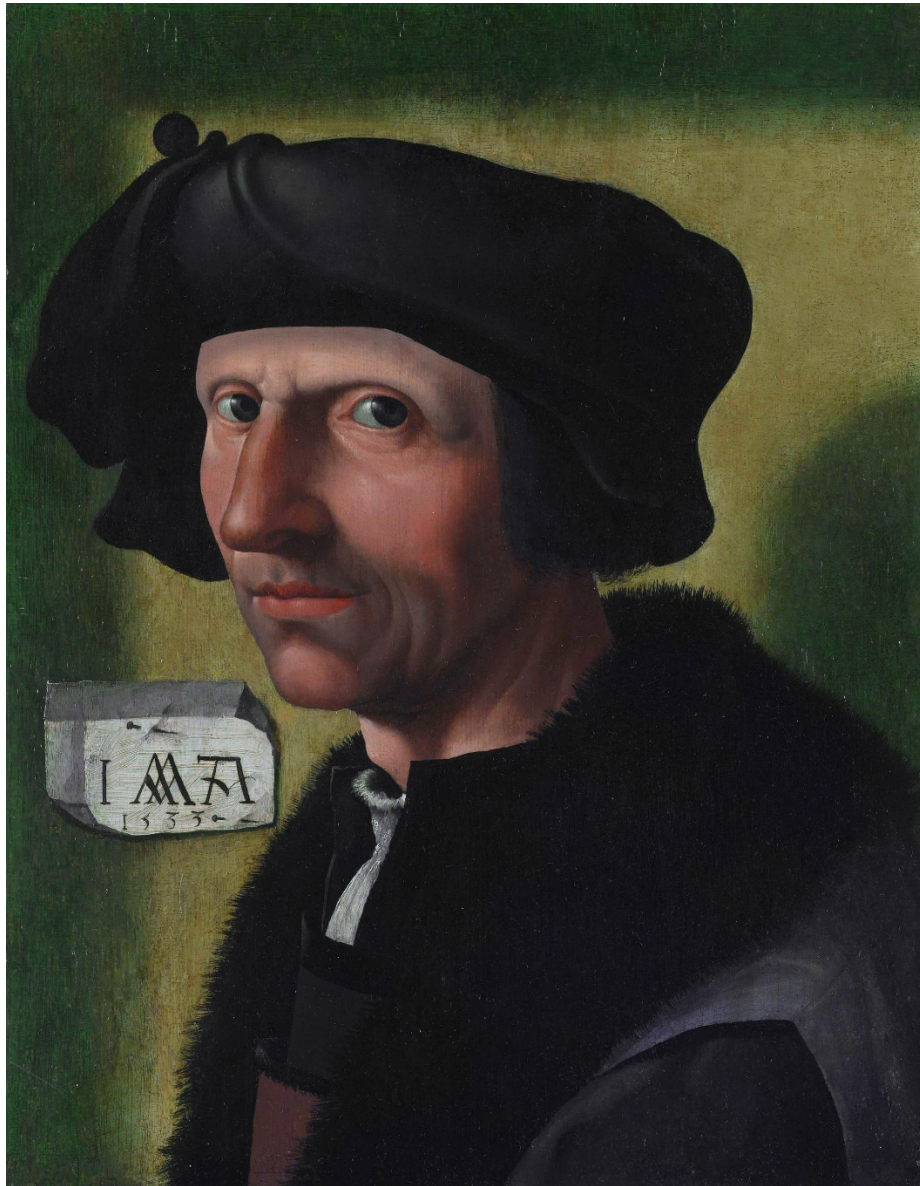


Figure 3. Visual similarities between Dirck Jacobsz's portrayal of his father Jacob Cornelisz in *Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostanen Painting* (on the left), and Jacob Cornelisz's self-portrayal in his *Self-Portrait* (on the right).

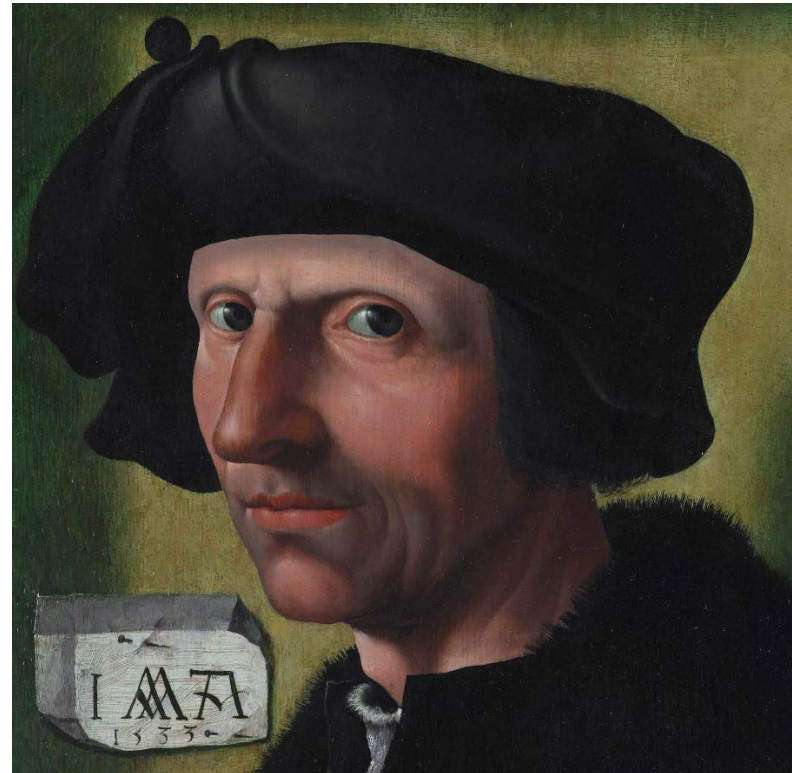
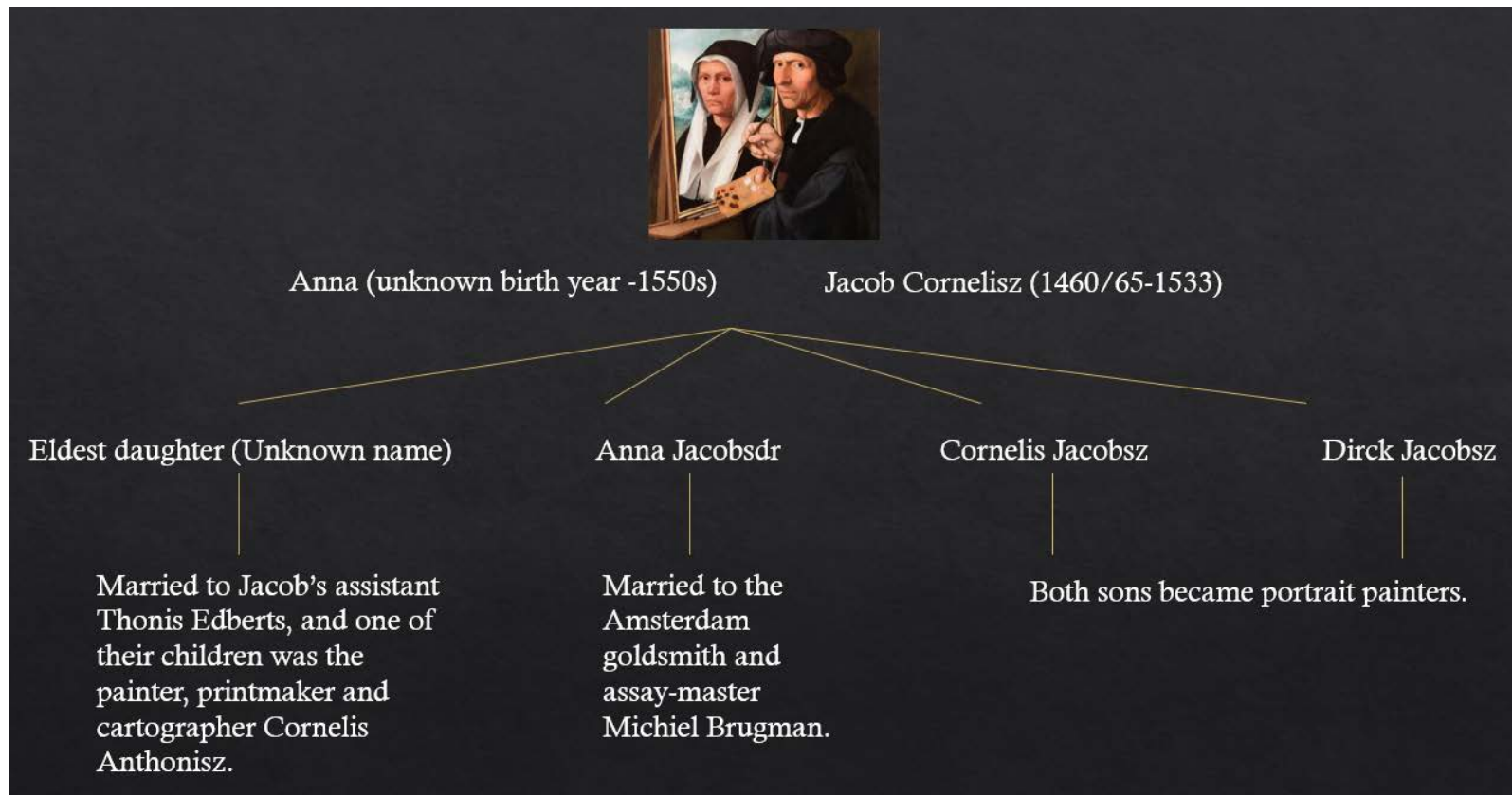


Figure 4. Genealogy of Jacob Cornelisz's lineage according to Yvonne Bleyerveld's biographical research (Sound & Vision Publishers 2019).



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