

**89. Miniature Tankard**

Dutch Republic, last quarter of the 17th century
Silver

Silver

2 x 1¼ x 7⁄8 in. (5.1 x 3.1 x 2 cm)

Marks: none

Foundation Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
KA 4195

**90. Miniature Oil Lamp**

Dutch Republic, 18th or 19th century
Silver

1½ x 1⅜ x ⅝ in. (3.8 x 3.3 x 1.6 cm)

Marks: alloy mark [sword]

Foundation Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
KA 4979

**91. Miniature Bed Warmer**

Last quarter of the 17th century
Attributed to Hendrik van der Star

Silver

½ x 3⅝ x 1⅜ in. (1.3 x 9.9 x 3.3 cm)

Marks: maker's mark [star in circle]

Foundation Amsterdams Historisch Museum, KA 4112

Margrieta van Varick's inventory of 1696 apportioned to her children a variety of precious metal objects, including coins, jewelry, silver boxes, dishes, and cups. Among these were a vague category of eighty-three items described as either pieces of "children toys silver" or "silver playthings or toys." The inventory does not offer detailed accounts of these objects, making them difficult to identify precisely; and while it is presently associated almost exclusively with children, the word "toy" once referred to any small plaything or curiosity made to amuse and delight. But the napkin-wrapped bundles Margrieta left Johanna, Marinus, Rudolphus, and Cornelia likely contained at least a few miniatures such as those gathered here.

Miniature objects constituted a significant category of Dutch silver craftsmanship in the seventeenth century. At its height, the trade supported over forty specialized miniature-makers in Amsterdam alone, some of whom sustained businesses over generations.¹ Their products ranged from elaborately detailed machines with movable parts like carriages, windmills, and cannon, to common tableware and domestic goods, such as the tankard (*drinkkan*; cat. no. 89), oil lamp (*snotmeus*; cat. no. 90), and bed warmer (*beddepan*; cat. no. 91) seen here.

The form of oil lamp shown is known as a *snotmeus*, literally "snot-nose," for its tendency to drip. Typically made of earthenware in the seventeenth century, this form

continued to be made well into the nineteenth century. It could stand on its funnel-shaped end or be hung on a wall from the hook at the side. The flame flickered from the projecting spout, where a wick drew oil out of the cylindrical container; the channel beneath caught stray drops. In design this miniature may resemble the "old lanthorn" listed in the household goods section of the Van Varick inventory.

Another object related to lighting in the inventory is a "dubbell brasse Candlestick Snuffers & Extinguishers." Snuffers were used to trim the excess wick off a candle or lamp, or to extinguish a flame altogether.² Their basic scissor shape would remain relatively constant, though their decoration,

**92. Miniature Snuffer and Stand**

1721

Frederik van Strant I (1678–1727)

Silver

2⅝ x 1¼ x 1¼ in. (6.5 x 3 x 3 cm)

Marks: Amsterdam city mark, maker's mark "FvS" [in rectangle], 19th-century tax mark

Foundation Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
KA 5124

material, and accessories changed to keep pace with consumer taste. The stand with curved handle in this miniature snuffer set (*snuiter in standaard*; cat. no. 92) was just such an innovation. Encountering a similar object in 1668, the English diarist Samuel Pepys drily questioned the purpose of its stylistic novelty: "a new-fashioned case for a pair of snuffers... is very pretty; but I could never have guessed what it was for, had I not seen the snuffers in it."³

Two other household items are represented in miniature. Bed warmers bore hot coals safely between the chilly sheets to make a bed cozy. This miniature version (cat. no. 91) displays a lavish attention to detail, from the working hinge and decorative perfora-

**93. Miniature Cooking Pot**

Haarlem, last quarter of the 17th century

Silver

H. ⅜ in. (1 cm), Diam. ¼ in. (1.8 cm)

Marks: maker's mark [rose] (unknown maker)

Foundation Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
KA 4264

tions of the lid to the delicately turned handle. Another ubiquitous form in the late seventeenth century, but unusual today, is the cooking pot (*kookketel*; cat. no. 93). Bearing a simple pattern of incised lines and a moving handle, the pot renders a typically utilitarian iron vessel in precious metal, thus elevating its culinary service almost to a rite.

Because of their small size and the fast-changing assay standards at the time of their production, early silver miniatures rarely bear the documentary hallmarks of larger silver pieces, making them difficult to attribute positively. The snuffer set, bed warmer, dish, and rattle are rare in part because they can be associated with known miniaturists. The snuffer set bears the mark of Frederik

**94. Miniature Box with Lid**

Dutch Republic, ca. 1700

Silver

H. ¼ in. (1.8 cm), Diam. 1⅝ in. (2.7 cm)

Marks: 19th-century tax mark

Foundation Amsterdams Historisch Museum,
KA 4193.1/2

van Strant I, an Amsterdam silversmith celebrated for his miniature tableware. He was related to other identified miniature-producers of the eighteenth century, including his son, Frederik van Strant II, maker of the rattle (cat. no. 100).

Some diminutive boxes (*doosje met deksel*; cat. no. 94), unlike many other miniatures, can still perform their essential function even in their reduced size, concealing contents that may or may not relate to those held by their life-size counterparts. The cosmetics containers of a miniature toilet set might bear tiny samples of powders and elixirs, or something entirely unexpected, such as a piece of jewelry or a love note. Margrieta van Varick left many small boxes,