

LAWRENCE STEIGRAD FINE ARTS  
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**WILLEM BARTEL VAN DER KOOI**  
**(Augustinusga, Friesland 1768 - Leeuwarden 1836)**

***Portrait of Dr. Gooitje Stinstra***

with a later inscription on the reverse: Gooitje Stinstra, Pieters zoon N????, Doctor, geboren den 5 Maart 1772, den 18 April 1813, na den dood geschildert door B. van der Kooi  
oil on an unlined canvas  
32 ½ x 26 inches (82.55 x 66.04 cm.)

**PROVENANCE**

Private Collection, Aachen, Rhineland – Westphalia from whom consigned to  
Kunsthdlgung Anton Creutzer, Aachen, November 12, 1930, lot 121  
Neumann & Vettin B.V., Amsterdam, from an old label on the stretcher, which is stamped  
Rosenbach Company, no. 166 (possibly The Rosenbach Company, Philadelphia, who sold  
paintings prior to 1943)  
Private Collection, Southern United States  
Hopewell, New Jersey Collection, circa 1994 until 2023

**LITERATURE**

C. Boschma, *Willem Bartel van der Kooi (1768 – 1836) en het tekenonderwijs in Friesland*, De Tille BV, Leeuwarden, 1978, p. 281, no. B218, (as location unknown)

The neoclassical painter Willem Bartel van der Kooi spent most of his career in Friesland where he received his most important commissions. Although he painted genre, the majority of his work was portraiture. Born into a prominent family, he was interested in art from an early age and at 12 apprenticed to a local firm of painters and decorators. Further study followed at the Koninklijke Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam; the Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent; and the University of Franeker. His masters included Harmen Wouter Beekkerk, Wessel Pieter Ruwersma, Frans Jurjens Swart and Johannes Verrier.<sup>1</sup>

By 1798 Kooi was himself a lecturer in the Art of Drawing at the University of Franeker. There he was held in high regard by his many pupils, and the influence of his French neo-classical style on the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century Frisian School of painting is undeniable. A teacher of both men and women, notable pupils include Otto de Boer, Cornelis Bernardus Buijs, Anna Charlotte Didier de Boncoor, Gabinus Fellingma, Wijtze de Haan, Douwe Hansma, Wilhelmina Geertruida van Idsinga, Jan Rijk Matthijssen, Jan Hendrik Nicolaij and Albert Gerrits Swart among others.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Biographical information from C. Boschma, op.cit., pp.101 – 102; “Willem Bartel van der Kooi” at *Rijksmuseum* on *rijksmuseum.nl*; and “Willem Bartel van der Kooi” on *rkd.nl* (*RKD Explore*) website.

<sup>2</sup> C. Boschma, op.cit., pp. 101, 103 - 104; and “Willem Bartel van der Kooi” on *rkd.nl*, op.cit.

In 1808 he exhibited at the first national art – exhibition in Amsterdam overseen by King Louis Napoleon and won the prize for best “tableau de genre” with *Lady Being Handed a Letter by a Servant* also called *The Love Letter* now in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. After which his work came to be in constant demand. Portrait commissions that followed included several of King Willem I (a full length by the artist is in Paleis Het Loo Nationaal Museum, Apeldoorn) and Queen Wilhelmina, as well as government officials, fellow artists from Amsterdam, and his social circle in Friesland.<sup>3</sup>

Other museums in which Kooi’s work formed part of the permanent collections include the cities of Brussels, Franeker, Groningen, Harlingen, a large grouping in Leeuwarden, Leiden, Kampen, Middleburg, Rotterdam, and Zwolle among others.

Noted for an individualistic approach to his sitters, Kooi’s portrait of Dr. Gooitje Stinstra is particularly remarkable. Born in Franeker on March 5, 1772, he worked as a physician in Harlingen. His parents were Pieter Gooitjens Stinstra and Neeltje Schellingwou. In 1799 he married Anna Huidekoper. His death was recorded in Harlingen on April 18, 1813. Although little else is known of Dr. Stinstra his portrait is quite revealing. Close in age to Kooi, one feels as if the painter felt a certain kinship to his sitter. Devoid of all accoutrements, set against a stark background, we are presented with an image of a “modern” man with his enigmatic smile and extended right hand animating the portrayal. The simplicity of his dress, a black frock coat, grey waistcoat with high collar, white jabot, and his own hair pulled back in a black ribbon comprises his understated elegance.

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<sup>3</sup> C. Boschma, op.cit., pp. 102 - 104.