

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Deaths of Maria Henrica (1731-1734) and Johannes Petrus van Brienen (1734-1734)

Wouter Muller (Dutch, 1604-1673)

Date dated 1734

Medium Silver, two cast shells soldered together

Dimensions 2 7/8 × 2 5/8 in. (7.33 × 6.64 cm)

Credit Line Dr. Stephen K. and Janie Woo Scher Collection

Accession Number SCHER.2014.15.931

Currently On View

Second Floor, Room 32, Medals Room

Commentary Memento mori medals were made in great numbers in the Netherlands. Cast from stock models and later engraved with the specifics of the deceased, the medals were made for distribution among friends and family at funerals. The imagery, both grim and hopeful, is replete with symbols of time and serves as a reminder of the transience of life and inevitability of death. Some symbols are familiar to the modern eye (skeletons, hourglasses, scythes); others, less so (the inverted torch of death, transient bubbles, the laurels of Fame, the birdwing for life [day] and batwing for death [night]). To the Calvinist mind, memento mori stressed the importance of putting one's faith in the heavenly and eternal rather than the earthly and ephemeral. Source: Scher, Stephen K., et al. *The Scher Collection of Commemorative Medals*. New York and London, 2019.