

TEXTS OF PRESENTATIONS ON MONDAY, 13 MARCH

Dutch art of the 18th century

Paul Knolle, Curator of Old Master paintings, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede

Anyone looking for 18th-century fine and applied arts in Dutch museums more than ten or fifteen years ago would have had a hard time of it. It was only in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam that it was possible, having left the showcase rooms of stunning 17th-century pieces and after some searching, to find a number of rooms with important art from the time of the Enlightenment. Once in a while an exhibition would offer a rare opportunity for those curious about Dutch art in the Regency period. But apart from a few presentations, often with stuffy titles which only served to reinforce the powdered image of the period, there was only one interesting project, in the winter of 1971-2, which was sadly only to be seen in North America. I refer to *Dutch Masterpieces from the Eighteenth Century: Paintings & Drawings 1700 – 1800*, the extensive exhibition which could be seen in Minneapolis, Toledo and Philadelphia. The very informative catalogue was compiled by Earl Roger Mandle and included an essay by J.W. Niemeijer. Oddly enough this exhibition, described by Niemeijer in his introduction as “a triumph of eighteenth-century paintings and drawings that cannot fail to enhance their prestige mightily” appeared neither in Amsterdam nor in any other European city.

The situation has become somewhat rosier since the mid nineties. Many newly independent state museums chose one or two specialist areas in which to distinguish themselves and become better known. Thanks to this development the Rijksmuseum Twenthe in Enschede is able to extend a cordial invitation to the weary in their search for a Rembrandt-free oasis this year.

But just in case we can also cater for the real Rembrandt addict as we have two etchings by the master in storage: *Blind Tobias* and the minuscule *Mountebank*. But these etchings do not form part of the permanent exhibition. We have, after due consideration, decided to forgo an exhibition on the fascinating topic of *Rembrandt in the East Netherlands*. Instead, the visitor will find himself amongst medieval statues and manuscripts, with 16th and 17th-century paintings (including works by Van Cleve, Verspronck, Van Goyen, Steen, Avercamp and Van Ruisdael and Van Ruysdael), with 17th-century silver, works from Monet, Sisley, Redon and Mondriaan, and international contemporary art. What particularly concerns us here are the two rooms devoted to 18th-century fine and applied arts. Since the newly independent museum reopened in 1996, following extensive renovation, the art and culture of the 18th century has been a particular specialization. This area was chosen because the board felt that the art of this period, hitherto rather neglected by museums, was both exciting and progressive. In this way the Rijksmuseum Twenthe has more or less become the ‘Museum of the 18th Century’ for the Netherlands. In addition to the permanent collection there have been special exhibitions which time and again drew attention to the 18th century. In the last ten years the museum has organized exhibitions on such wide ranging themes as: celebrations in the 18th century, the painters Wouter Johannes van Troostwijk and Abraham and Jacob van Strij, book illustrations by the writer Willem Bilderdijk, satirical prints, Wedgwood, 18th-century graphic work from its own collection and 18th-century Dutch architecture. In 2004 the museum was entrusted with the care of the most important 18th-century paintings and a splendid collection of Meissen from the Rijksmuseum, for the duration of its renovation work. This formed the basis for the exhibition *De 18de eeuw in volle schoonheid (The 18th century in all its splendour)*. At the moment an exhibition is running of the portrait artist Tibout Regters and the Dutch conversation piece. If the signs are to be believed, Dutch art of the 18th

century is at last, slowly, receiving the recognition it deserves. But there is always some *terra incognita* to be explored.

In this short introduction I will try to summarize the developments in Dutch art up to 1765 and thereafter from 1765 to 1820 and to illustrate them with the use of some well known and less well known examples.

1680-1765

Around 1700 and for the first half of the 18th century painting in the Northern Netherlands was characterized by many different genres, although, as is well known, the influence of French art and artistic interpretations had been growing in importance since 1670. *Fijnschilderkunst*, already practiced in The Netherlands, became increasingly valued, the number of history painters increased and landscapes in the Italian manner became particularly favored. Rooms were decorated with large paintings on ceilings, wall and mantelpieces. Smaller easel-paintings were displayed in dedicated rooms, so-called *kunstkamers*. So the Dutch art world of the day was peopled not only by painters of decorative pieces, but also by topographical artists, portrait painters and painters of still-life flower pieces.

Some artists, such as Adriaen van der Werff, were employed by foreign royalty. The artists who remained in The Netherlands tended to form local schools, each with their own recognizable style and subject matter. A good example of this is the Leyden school (which I am naturally very happy to mention here), in which followers of Frans van Mieris the Elder and Gerard Dou, such as the artists Matthys Naiveu en Willem van Mieris, were the driving force. All in all classicism with a Dutch accent (wall-sized *grand goût*) and a more traditional pseudo-realism managed a reasonably peaceful coexistence.

Obviously it isn't possible to give a comprehensive summary of the art of a complete century in 25 minutes, but I hope that the examples which follow will whet your appetite and arouse your curiosity. I shall show you a number of paintings which are currently to be seen in the Rijksmuseum Twenthe. Many of them come from the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam), others are from the museum's own collection.

Let us begin with - alongside Gerard Lairesse en Adriaen van der Werff – one of the best known Dutch painters from this time.

- You see here an attractive composition for room decorations by Jacob de Wit, depicting the apotheosis of Aeneas (circa 1723).

Jacob de Wit, apart from being a painter of ceilings, also constructed a number of altarpieces for private catholic chapels. His name is also often associated with so-called 'witjes' or grisailles which served as room decoration. In this sketch a meeting of the ancient gods is depicted in luminous, light colors. The apotheosis, or deification of Aeneas is a seldom painted subject from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This was possibly the design for a ceiling painting intended for the house of the Amsterdam merchant Pieter Pels.

From the hand of Willem van Mieris I should like to show you an example of *fijnschilderkunst*, a painting from the Rijksmuseum Twenthe.

- *Diana with nymphs* (1702) purchased in 1998 by the Rijksmuseum Twenthe.

- Here is an interesting painting by the less well-known artist, Isaac Walraven: *The Deathbed of Epaminondas* (1726).

This painting is exceptional for its subject, which was seldom chosen by Dutch artists. Epaminondas (circa 420-362 AD) was the Greek governor of Thebes. His altruistic character and simple and self-sacrificing love of his fatherland made a great impression on his contemporaries. He fell in a battle against Sparta in which his army was victorious.

Little is known of Isaac Walraven. He trained as a jeweller and goldsmith, but as an adult he became a competent painter. He was from a wealthy family and did not need to paint to earn a living, but kept most of his paintings himself. In this painting we see the dying Epaminondas after he is brought back to his tent, speaking to his friends and those under his command, who are overcome with hopelessness and grief.

By Nicolaas Verkolje, son of the famous portrait painter Jan Verkolje we have

- *Moses found by Pharaoh's daughter* (1740) from the Rijksmuseum Twenthe.

Nicolaas Verkolje worked in Amsterdam from 1700, painting portraits, mythological scenes, genre pieces and ceiling decorations. Of particular interest here is the beautiful variegation of the colors to be seen where the light falls under the parasol.

I find it difficult to simply dismiss painters of floral still-lives or topographical subjects as merely that. To conclude this first section of my story I have chosen two paintings by Cornelis Troost, long regarded as the figurehead of Dutch 18th-century art. First an example from his paintings of theatrical scenes, namely:

- *The Spendthrift* (1741)

This painting shows a scene from *De spilpenning of de verkwistende vrouw* (*The spendthrift or the wasteful woman*) written by Thomas Asselijn. This popular farce was first published in 1693 and again in 1726. We see the extravagant Johanna, selling the expensive clothes she had made for her not two months ago for more than a hundred guilders to two dealers for thirty one guilders and ten pennies, a mere pittance. In fact the two men are her father Augustijn and her husband Gerardus who have disguised themselves as Polish traders. By means of this cunning plan they hope to catch shopaholic Johanna trying to sell her expensive clothes. Troost hasn't remained strictly faithful to Asselijn; the secretary who we see behind Johanna (with his quill and visitors' book) does not actually appear in the play. At the time this painting was reckoned as one of Troost's best works and was to be found in the collection of the Dutch connoisseur Jeronimus Tonneman, a contemporary of Troost's.

- Of a completely different character is *An Amsterdam Town Garden* from around 1743.

Because of its subject this is a unique work in the oeuvre of Cornelis Troost, a 'snapshot' of a summer's day in a walled Amsterdam garden, situated at the rear of a gentleman's residence on one of the canals. Because such gardens were visible from the reception rooms of the house they were carefully tended. An arbor or summerhouse was seldom lacking, where people could enjoy each other's company for leisurely hours in the summertime. In this case the summerhouse is richly decorated, with a bust and two statues of cherubs on the roof. These last two, with a pen and brush in their hands, possibly represent the arts of poetry and painting, and the heads on either side of the sundial Tragedy and Comedy. The gilded figure on the pedestal represents the goddess Fortuna and on either side of the arbor stand imitations of antique statuary. The garden itself is geometrically formal. The man on the ladder, probably the master of the house, is handing a bunch of grapes to the

girl below. The kitchen maid is cleaning cabbage, watched by a parrot. Whether this was a painting of a real garden is not known, but various symbolic messages have been attributed to the scene, though without any unanimous conclusion being reached. Later in the 18th century the painting was in the possession of one of the best known collectors of the day, the timber merchant Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1726-1798). Ploos van Amstel married Elisabeth, one of Troost's daughters.

1765-1820

In the second half of the 18th century many Dutch artists found work in studios making wall coverings. Painted wall coverings featured prominently in the decor of important rooms in the 18th century. Mostly the painting was on linen which was then fitted to a wooden framework. In order to meet the increased demand from mid century onwards, so called 'factories' were set up to produce wall coverings in Amsterdam, Den Haag, Haarlem, Hoorn en Leeuwarden. One painter would paint the landscape, another the details. This was a way in which many artists received their training. At the end of the century these wall coverings largely went out of fashion.

After 1765 there was a considerable change in the nature of the Dutch art world. A discussion began about the standards and the status of the 'Dutch School', which according to some were declining. Some artists, theoreticians and art lovers were of the opinion that the only way to remedy this was to follow the international trend towards (neo)classicism, that is to say, produce more history paintings in a classical style. But an exclusively neoclassical style of painting was never widely practiced in the Netherlands. On the other hand the classical ideal was the guideline in the drawing academies, and after 1770 artists began to visit Italy once more. In short, attitudes were rather ambivalent towards foreign influences.

There were other artists who, in keeping with a growing sense of nationalism, preferred to promote the more traditional Dutch themes of landscape and genre painting. A sort of 17th-century revival occurred, whereby, besides idealism, the hope that such paintings would find a ready market both at home and abroad undoubtedly played a part. Artists referred back to the styles of 17th-century artists such as Hobbema, De Hoogh, Van Ruisdael, Cuyp, Potter and many others. Art academies or societies were set up in many cities with the aim of improving the standard of Dutch art. It is interesting that while once artists preferred to distance themselves from their guilds, or attempted to do so, now artisans and ordinary citizens were welcomed into these academies. In this way craftsmen were encouraged to learn to draw better and design better products, which would be good for exports. Ordinary citizens would likewise develop better taste through learning to draw and being better informed. The more citizens, who were included in this revival and promotion of the arts, the better. The opinion was generally held that art was beneficial in the development of the personality of the individual and for society as a whole. This moral also manifests itself in the paintings of the time. Some genre pieces were clearly intended to promote domesticity, a virtue which led to a better, more balanced personality. The same tendency can be seen in the family portraits of the later 18th century, where the patron is portrayed as a real *family man*. Landscapes celebrated the proud achievements of a nation whose citizens had captured their lands from the sea. Anyone studying the development of landscape painting from 1765 to 1820 will see how artists initially imitated their 17th-century predecessors, then looked, as it were, with 17th-century eyes at the landscape around them and eventually, through personal observation, arrived at a new type of painting, in which a more individual experience of nature can be seen.

To describe all the political developments of the late 18th and early 19th century here would be excessive. Obviously in the Northern part of the Netherlands there was some strife between pro- and anti-French factions. Eventually the Netherlands were annexed by France.

When Louis Bonaparte became king of Holland in 1806, he initiated the management of art at a national level with great enthusiasm. This made the period from 1806 – 1810 one of great importance for the official organization of the arts and sciences. Talented young artists (such as Abraham Teerlink, Anthonie Sminck Pitloo, Josefus Augustus Knip and Pieter Rudolph Kleijn) were given bursaries to make study trips to Paris and Rome – this was the Dutch version of the *Prix de Rome*. The first plans were made for a national academy of the visual arts, which in fact did not open its doors until 1822 under King Willem I. In 1808 the collection from the Nationale Konst-Gallerij which had been set up in 1800 in Huis ten Bosch, The Hague, was moved to Amsterdam where it opened as the forerunner of the present Rijksmuseum. The so-called 'Tentoonstellingen van levende meesters' ('Exhibitions of Living Masters'), which were held from 1808, attracted a huge audience. In the same year the Koninklijk Instituut van Wetenschappen - or Royal Academy - was set up, an organization which also embraced the arts.

Many of the activities initiated by Louis Bonaparte were continued after the accession of Willem I in 1815. So it was that in 1817 the organization of art education was revised by Royal Decree, and thereafter came under the direction of the national government. Artists, craftsmen and dilettanti could all follow appropriate courses of education. Meanwhile the guilds were disbanded. In this way the organization of the visual arts became a national rather than a local matter.

I should also like to show you some examples from this period, particularly of art from just before 1800.

- First the small panel *A writer sharpening his pen* (1784) by Jan Ekels de Jonge. This scene of a young man sharpening his goose-feather quill in an informal setting, although small, represents a highpoint in the art of painting in Holland during the late 18th century. Jan Ekels studied with his father (also called Jan), who was known for his cityscapes. He attended the City Drawing Academy in Amsterdam and from 1776 – 1778 he studied in Paris. During the 1780s he specialized in domestic interiors with one or two figures. He only lived to the age of 34.
- From the last decade of the 18th century comes this painting of *The art gallery of Josephus Augustinus Brentano in his house on the Herengracht in Amsterdam*. Josephus A. Brentano, who came from an Austro-Italian merchant family, was one of the most prominent collectors of his day. He viewed the newly arrived Italian landscapes with his guests in the art gallery, decorated 'à l'antique', at his house on the Herengracht. It is worth noting that about a quarter of his collection of more than 400 paintings consisted of works by living artists from the Netherlands. He further advanced the cause of Dutch art by making his collection available for study by young artists.

I'd like to show you two examples of work, from about 1800, by artists who visited France and Italy.

- This *Italian landscape with parasol pines* painted by Hendrik Voogd in 1807. Hendrik Voogd set off for Rome in 1788, with financial support from the dilettante Dirk Versteegh. He never returned to the Netherlands. He took up with German artists there (such as Joseph Anton Koch and Johann Christian Reinhart). He regularly sent back paintings to his homeland where he enjoyed success, as he also did in Rome.

- Pieter Rudolph Kleyn painted *The entrance to the park at St Cloud in Paris* in 1809.

Pieter Rudolph Kleyn, the son of a well known couple of the time who were both poets, was a pupil in Dordrecht of the brothers Abraham and Jacob van Strij and of the drawing society Pictura. In 1807 he was given a stipend by the king, Louis Bonaparte. In Paris Kleyn studied with Jacques-Louis David and with the landscape painter Jean-Joseph Xavier Bidault. In 1809 he left for Rome. After a further two years study he returned to the Netherlands. This painting is proof of his progress and was exhibited in the 'Exhibition of living masters'.

Now a Dutch landscape:

- *Milking time* by the Dordrecht painter Jacob van Strij, painted in the first decade of the 19th century. Jacob van Strij painted scenes, reminiscent of the work of Aelbert Cuyp, Paulus Potter and other celebrated exponents of 17th-century landscape painting: river and meadow landscapes with cattle peacefully resting in mellow golden light. Sometimes Van Strij can actually be seen 'quoting' Cuyp. He still arrived, nevertheless, at his own style, in which the various elements of the composition were united in a harmonious whole by the diffuse sunlight.

- From Jacob's older brother Abraham van Strij comes *A cherry-seller at the door*, 1816. Abraham van Strij painted portraits, landscapes and principally scenes from daily life. In this he was undoubtedly influenced by the fashion at the time for 'domesticity'. The brothers van Strij were, along with many of their contemporaries, fired by love of their country ('vaderlandsgevoel'), and inspired by the work of their 17th-century predecessors to bring about a new flowering of Dutch art. The settings of Abraham van Strij's works were entirely contemporary. Above all his palette was much more colorful than that of his predecessors. In this painting a well-to-do lady is showing her daughter cherries from the basket of the cherry seller. The articles we see to the right indicate she has a husband who goes hunting.

- *Watercourse near 's-Graveland* by Pieter Gerardus van Os, from 1818 is almost revolutionary. Pieter Gerardus van Os arrived in Amsterdam around 1795, where he became close friends with Wouter Johannes van Troostwijk. From 1800 he busied himself with the painting of landscapes and scenes with livestock which were clearly influenced by Paulus Potter en Adriaen van de Velde. Around 1800 he moved to 's-Graveland, where he remained until 1819. It was there that he produced his most original work, *Watercourse near 's-Graveland*, for the Amsterdam merchant Herman Waller, from whose attic window the scene was probably painted. The almost photographic quality and cutting off of the views of orchard and canal give this masterpiece its modern appearance.

I would like to end with the work of a genius who, if he had not died at the age of 28, would undoubtedly have progressed even further than he already had: Wouter Johannes van Troostwijk.

- First: *The Raampoortje in Amsterdam* from 1809. Less than ten finished paintings by Van Troostwijk are known. He used to travel several times a year to het Gooi, Gelderland or Drenthe where he found the motifs for his scenes of the Dutch countryside. This cityscape is one of his best loved works. The winter scene depicts the Singelgracht in Amsterdam where it meets the end of the Bloemgracht. Looking across the ice we see the city wall with the Raampoortje, or gate, built in 1648 (demolished 1846). Throughout this time it served as access to the fields outside the ramparts, where cloth was dried on wooden frames – or 'ramen' – hence the name of the gate. In the background we can see the Westertoren. The composition demonstrates a strong

geometric structure – with just four small figures – combined with the subtle use of color. What is new here is that the painting is more concerned with the still, wintry atmosphere than with the depiction of impressive architecture. In this the painting seems to be looking forward to the art of the late 19th century.

- And finally: his *Self portrait*, also from 1809.

Van Troostwijk looks steadily at the viewer from this fluent self portrait, painted just a year before his death. In the background stands a cupboard on which a number of plaster casts can be seen. These are painted in an easy, loose manner, in contrast to the precise handling of the artist's face. The artist Jeronimo de Vries, a friend of van Troostwijk's, wrote that the painting was so realistic that, when he saw it in the house of Van Troostwijk's father, he took a step back in surprise.

We can safely say that the arts were flourishing in the Netherlands at the start of the 19th century. Art played a major role in society and had a greater audience than ever before. From 1800 people could visit public art galleries and could join societies where they could study drawing and art theory. Many noteworthy young artists could, after following a course of study in a studio or at one of the art academies, pursue their studies further abroad, exhibit their work in well attended public exhibitions and come into direct contact with important collectors by means of the artistic societies. There was an extremely lively cultural environment producing works which can satisfy even the critical eye of the 21st-century beholder.

Houses of the House of Orange

Johan ter Molen, Director, Paleis Het Loo Nationaal Museum, Apeldoorn

Many of the important art museums in Europe have grown out of the historic collections assembled by royal and noble families. This is very much the situation we have in the Netherlands. In 1774 Stadholder Willem V was the first prince of Orange to open his art collection to the general public, establishing a gallery in the Buitenhof in The Hague. After the French invasion of 1795 and the expulsion of the stadholder and his family, the bulk of these paintings were transferred to Paris. Then, with the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire, they were returned to Holland in triumph, and added to the Royal Cabinet of Paintings, which soon became known as the Mauritshuis, after the building in which the collection was housed. The minor works from this collection, which had been ignored by the French, originally hung on the walls of the Huis ten Bosch Palace. They were later transferred to Amsterdam where they formed the nucleus of the Rijksmuseum. A few years ago Willem V's Gallery of 1774, which is the country's oldest museum, was completely refurbished. Visitors can again have an impression of how the paintings would have been presented to the public in the 18th century.

All in all the works that were in the possession of the Orange family during the late 18th century represent just a small proportion of the art that adorned their palaces over the centuries. There were times when the collection of paintings was considerably larger and more diverse, but sadly these moments lasted no longer than a generation and the vast majority of these works are now dispersed all over the world.

As you might expect, many of the princes and kings born into the House of Orange had only a very limited interest in art. However, among them were also some genuine art lovers who collected avidly and managed to assemble collections of major importance. Apart from their personal interest in visual art, they also wanted to glorify episodes from national history, as well as wishing to support living artists.

I would like to talk briefly about two members of the Orange family who became particularly distinguished collectors and patrons of the arts.

First, there was Frederik Hendrik and his wife, Amalia van Solms. In the second quarter of the 17th century, a period in which Holland prospered both financially and culturally, this couple filled their residences in and around The Hague with large numbers of paintings by important masters. In addition they bought huge quantities of chinaware, oriental lacquer, sets of tapestries, inlaid furniture, silver sculptures, and other precious objects.

The inventory of their paintings shows that the collection was assembled with specific areas of interest in mind: the school of Utrecht (including Bloemaert, Moreelse and Honthorst), the Flemish painters (for example, Rubens and van Dyck), and artists belonging to a slightly older generation (among them Cornelis van Haarlem, Paul Bril and Jan Bruegel). It was Constantijn Huygens, the prince's secretary, who encouraged the couple to acquire the work of two talented young painters in particular: Jan Lievens and Rembrandt.

After Frederik Hendrik's death Amalia van Solms wanted to have the *Oranjezaal* of the newly built Paleis Huis ten Bosch decorated, wall-to-wall, with paintings celebrating the life of her late husband. She invited no fewer than 15 established artists to contribute to this ambitious project. Some came from the Northern Netherlands (including Gerard Honthorst, Salomon de Bray, Caesar van Everdingen), but there were also, interestingly, a number of artists from the Catholic South (for example, Jacob Jordaens, Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert and Theodoor van Thulden).

After Amalia van Solms's death the bulk of this extensive picture collection was divided between the couple's four daughters who were all married to German princes. It is no coincidence that several important works now hanging in museums in Berlin came originally from this estate. To name just a couple of examples: there is a picture of Paradise, by Roelant Savery, and a portrait of King Charles I's children, by Anthony van Dyck. The *Oranische Erbschaft* of one of the daughters ended up in Mosigkau Castle near Dessau, including the wonderful portrait of Prince Willem II as a young boy, also by van Dyck. Only a fraction of the famous art collection remained in the Netherlands, and almost all that was left eventually leaked abroad, through bequests.

It was not until two centuries later that another member of the Orange family, King Willem II, assembled an art collection of international standing. In the years around 1820 the prince spent much of his time in Brussels and began to collect works by early Flemish painters. These paintings were suddenly attracting renewed interest after a long period of neglect. He managed to acquire two van Eycks, an *Annunciation* (now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington) and the so-called *Lucca Madonna* (now in Frankfurt, in the Städel), as well as panels by Rogier van der Weyden and the famous series of *The justice of Emperor Otto*, painted by Dirc Bouts for the City Hall in Leuven. Willem II was also very partial to Italian art and owned paintings by Giovanni Bellini, Sebastiano del Piombo and Guido Reni, as well as important drawings by Leonardo, Raphael and Michelangelo. Both the Flemish and 17th-century Dutch Schools were well represented, with paintings by Rubens and Teniers, Rembrandt and Hobbema.

As a young man Willem studied for a while in England, where he became interested in the Gothic style. Inspired by the architecture of Christ Church College, Oxford, he extended his palace on the Kneuterdijk in The Hague with a gallery for his art collection. This structure, in a style that is rather unusual for the Netherlands, was completed in 1842 and there are paintings of both exterior and interior by Bart van Hove.

Sadly the Netherlands also lost this magnificent collection. When King Willem II died unexpectedly in 1849, he left debts of millions of guilders, owing money to various people including his brother-in-law, Tsar Nicholas I of Russia, as well as a number of the dealers from whom he had bought pictures.

This meant that the collection, the only one of its kind in the country, had to be sold. The auction, in August 1850, lasted for seven days. The Russian tsar received a number of paintings for what he was owed, and these can still be seen in the Hermitage today.

One residence belonging to the Orange family that has not been mentioned so far is Paleis Het Loo, where the study trip will conclude on Sunday. It was originally built in 1686 as a hunting lodge for Stadholder Willem III, Frederik Hendrik's grandson. A few years later when Willem III had been proclaimed king of England, he decided to have the lodge extended to form a magnificent palace with formal gardens. The interior design and decoration of the palace were largely left to the Frenchman Daniel Marot.

As was customary at the time the palace building included a picture gallery. An international selection of works was assembled to decorate its walls, among them paintings from the English royal family which were brought over by King William for his new residence. There were portraits by Holbein, as well as Italian paintings, and recent as well as earlier works by masters from both the Northern and Southern Netherlands. It is a pity that hardly any of these are still there today.

When Willem III died, childless, in 1702, a long argument ensued over his estate. The works of art from his palaces in The Hague went to the King of Prussia. A number of these paintings are still in the museums of Berlin and Potsdam, among them Honthorst's *Granida and Daiphilo*, and an *Oriental figure* by Lievens, formerly attributed to Rembrandt.

Paleis Het Loo and its valuable contents fell into the hands of the Frisian branch of the family, the Nassaus. Soon after, however, financial problems led to the family selling the entire art collection at auction in Amsterdam in 1713. There was a lot of interest from foreign collectors who seized the opportunity to buy works of exceptional quality. Some of the paintings ended up in private houses where, nearly three centuries later, they can still be found today (Schloss Weissenstein near Pommersfelden is one example). Others were acquired by royal collectors and were later transferred to museums in St Petersburg, Braunschweig and Munich. The Mauritshuis also has several paintings from Het Loo, including an interior by Dou and two works by Holbein.

Today Het Loo has only one or two paintings from the time of Willem III, mostly works that were incorporated in the original paneling, for example an overmantel painting by Hondecoeter with exotic animals.

Quite by chance Paleis Het Loo was able to buy back a painting that used to hang in Willem III's gallery, when it came up at auction in New York in 1989. As it happens, the auction house was not aware of the painting's provenance. The inventory of Het Loo lists a work by Cornelis van Poelenburch the subject of which is relatively rare, Mercury and Herse. However, the dimensions given in this old document seem strangely at odds with the size of most of van Poelenburch's paintings. So it seemed likely that this was a mistake, especially as the Mauritshuis has a painting by van Poelenburch of this subject. The logical assumption was that this much smaller work was in fact the one that appeared in the inventory of Het Loo.

Then suddenly this second *Mercury and Herse* turned up in New York, its dimensions (159 x 109 cm) exactly matching those given in the inventory. With the help of a grant from the *Vereniging Rembrandt* it was possible to acquire the painting, and now it hangs again in its original position.

At the end of the 18th century the French occupiers of the Netherlands transferred a painting by Jan Davidsz. de Heem to France. It was never returned, and it currently hangs in the museum in Lyon. This stolen painting, originally from the collection at Het Loo, is of a sumptuous floral wreath which contains a portrait of King-Stadholder Willem III.

A national campaign organized in honor of Queen Beatrix's silver jubilee last year, enabled us to acquire another splendid work by de Heem, which is an expression of allegiance to the House of Orange. In the center of the still life is an orange, surrounded by various plant motifs and symbolic objects; an inscription on a stone plinth leaves us in no doubt of the painting's message: *Vivat Oraenge*.

Over the centuries Paleis Het Loo has undergone a number of renovations and extensions. Its brick façades, for instance, were covered with stucco, and during the 19th century the formal gardens were relandscaped into a park in the romantic tradition. This can be seen in a painting by Schelfhout, dated 1837.

There has recently been a lengthy and thorough restoration program which has brought both exterior and interior of the building close to their original splendor. At the same time the late 17th-century design of the garden, unique for the period in the Netherlands, has also been reconstructed. When the restoration was finished in 1984 the palace was turned into a public museum. It will be my pleasure to welcome the participants in the study trip this Sunday.

Happy birthday, dear Rembrandt

Gary Schwartz

As recently as March 2005, the director of the tourist board of Graz, Austria, proposed to distinguish his city in the Mozart Year 2006 by turning it into a *Mozartfreie Zone*.¹ Of course he did not get away with this, and if you now go to the website of his service you will see how deeply he has had to humble himself before the ghost of the genius of Salzburg. "Though Mozart never visited Graz, the people of the town loved Mozart even during his lifetime. They were able to see his 'Figaro,' 'Abduction' and 'Don Giovanni' at the theater and, when Mozart's widow Constanze came to Graz in 1796, she discovered a town 'where my husband, who had been torn from me all too early, is exceptionally renowned and esteemed.'" This text is followed by a roster of Mozart events, down to performances of "Eine kleine Nachtmusik" by the local Recreation Orchestra.

I know that many of you would have liked to declare your museums Rembrandt-free zones for the duration of 2006. One museum actually took this as the program for a travelling exhibition a few years ago. In 1999 and 2000 the print collection of the University of Munich was circulated to three venues under the title "Es muss nicht immer Rembrandt sein."

Yet, I am convinced it is a mistake to try to play down Rembrandt this year, and that the museums that have embraced him and have done it right will be rewarded in various ways. I will return to this at the end of my remarks. First, though, I would like to compare the current Rembrandt Year with the previous one. By that I mean 1969, the 300th anniversary of Rembrandt's death. I cannot speak in the first person of the 350th anniversary of his birth in 1956, but I do want to commemorate the fact that in that year I took my first course in art history. As a freshman at Washington Square College of Arts and Sciences of New York University, I took the survey course under Jane Costello and Horst Janson. From Janson I had my first class on Rembrandt. The power of his teaching made me fall in love with art history.

In 1969 I found myself under the spell of another great Horst of Janson's generation, Horst Gerson. For the two preceding years I had been working with him on two major Rembrandt Year projects. In the fall of 1968 his huge book *Rembrandt paintings* appeared, of which I was editor. In 1969 his new edition of Abraham Bredius's catalogue of Rembrandt's paintings came out, the contents of which overlapped in part the catalogue in the big book. For that reason I was also involved with the Bredius catalogue, in collaboration with the editor at Phaidon Press, Keith Roberts.

The spirit of that year was defined for me by the beginning of the great controversies over the attribution of Rembrandt's paintings. Gerson's catalogue reduced the number of paintings that Bredius had accepted as autograph Rembrandts from 620 to 420. In his notes he casts doubt on forty more. On the whole, his deattributions were not controversial in themselves and have since been carried by the field. However, there was one high-profile deattribution in the batch, of a painting that was not only a favorite with the public but also had been highly praised by artists and art historians, *Saul and David* in the Mauritshuis. The basis for this opinion was highly subjective. In Gerson's conception of Rembrandt, the artist was incapable of false sentiment, and he sensed false sentiment – he called it a "larmoyant" interpretation of the story – in the famous painting. Once this judgment had taken hold of Gerson, he found superficialities and weaknesses of all kinds that point to atelier work. The Mauritshuis and others protested vigorously, and a controversy was born that has not been resolved to this day.

¹ *Der Standard*, Vienna, 1 March 2005.

In a review of Gerson's book in *ArtNews*, the American art historian Benjamin Rifkin dared to doubt that Rembrandt painted another sentimental masterpiece, the *Man with the golden helmet* in Berlin. This deattribution does seem to have been accepted by all.

In the corridors at the openings of exhibitions and at Rembrandt Year congresses, these developments were brought into connection with the foundation of the Rembrandt Research Project. In the face of massive shifts in the Rembrandt oeuvre and the uncertainties they brought with them, the RRP announced that it was working as a team on a systematic and scientifically accurate new *Corpus of Rembrandt paintings* that would bring unprecedented new clarity into the question. At a symposium in Chicago in October 1969, Josua Bruyn presented the newly launched RRP to the assembled colleagues. The aim of the Project, he said, was to frame "a precise definition of our observations and of the standards by which we interpret them. Only thus," Bruyn said, "will our opinions become rational judgments."²

Because the CODART website did not yet exist in 1969, it is hard to come up with a list of the 1969 Rembrandt exhibitions like that of the current ones. I do not think there were all that many. There were middle-large loan shows in the Rijksmuseum, including 23 paintings by Rembrandt, and in Chicago, with 21, augmented by drawings and, in Chicago, work by followers. In addition to these encyclopedic loan exhibitions, there were single-collection exhibitions at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest and others. It cannot be said that the 1969 Rembrandt Year gave rise to much new scholarship. In a way, the announcement of the RRP blocked new developments for a long time, as people waited to see what they would come up with.

2006 is a very different kettle of fish. Three volumes of the *Corpus of Rembrandt paintings* have since appeared, in 1982, 1986 and 1989, under the categorical and confident division of the paintings into A (Paintings by Rembrandt), B and C groups. In 2005 volume 4 appeared, where instead of the A, B and C categories we read a disclaimer drafted by two law firms stating that "the opinions expressed in this volume (IV), and the previously published volumes I-III... should be understood as 'opinions' that are meant for academic use only."³ In its own terms, therefore, the Rembrandt Research Project has retreated to the pre-1969 situation, from rational and objective conclusions – the words are Bruyn's – back to the opinions he wanted to leave behind.

How have museums responded in 2006 to this situation and to the expectations of their audiences? Only one exhibition is taking it upon itself to redefine Rembrandt for us for the 21st century: Ernst van de Wetering and Jan Kelch, in the Rembrandt House and the Gemäldegalerie, are mounting *The quest of a genius*, which launches the premise that the *Night watch* was an artistic failure from which Rembrandt did not recover for many years. For the most part, we are being left in peace with our 20th-century conceptions. And not even all of those. Critical theory and gender studies are missing, contextual art history is underrepresented and even the physical study of the art object has not been taken as the central focus of any Rembrandt exhibitions. The National Gallery in London is bringing out a welcome new edition of its *Art in the Making* volume on Rembrandt, but it is not holding a new version of the exhibition that gave rise to it.

The two main types of offerings are thematic and single-collection exhibitions. Leading the thematic exhibitions is *Rembrandt-Caravaggio*, a joint production of the Rijksmuseum and the Van Gogh Museum. Rembrandt is finally confronted with the artist to whom he has forever been compared.

² Josua Bruyn, "Problems of attribution," in *Rembrandt after three hundred years: a symposium – Rembrandt and his followers, October 22-24, 1969*, Chicago (The Art Institute of Chicago) 1973, pp. 32-48, p. 39.

³ Ernst van de Wetering, *A corpus of Rembrandt paintings*, vol. 4: The self-portraits, Dordrecht (Springer) 2005, p. vi.

I am also looking forward eagerly to the Uylenburgh exhibition in the Rembrandt House. Single-collection shows of great allure have been announced by Fondation Custodia, which is showing most of its 300 etchings, with a catalogue by Erik Hinterding; the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett will finally be exhibiting its Rembrandt drawings; and Kassel, by hanging all its traditional Rembrandt attributions, accepted and rejected, is doing its own version of the Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt exhibitions of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Hamburg and Bremen museums. The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge sets forth its series of etchings exhibitions, with *Rembrandt's Christmas*. I mention this example for two reasons. One is that the Fitzwilliam treats every impression as a distinct art object, with excellent information about the printing, paper, condition and provenance of the plate. Another reason is that it publishes its very informative brochures in complete form on its website, which of course are also linked by the CODART website. An example of best practice.

What is the advantage of which I spoke at the start? Mainly this. I know from experience that anything you say about Rembrandt draws more attention than things you say about other artists. This goes for colleagues as well as for journalists and the general public. When you are dealt the Rembrandt card, you should play it for all it's worth. It will earn you profits that – if you play *those* cards right as well – you can spend later on other projects of your own choice.

There is additional benefit to all of us. The accumulated new information that is coming out last year, this year and next, especially that resulting from the close study of individual objects in single collections, will add up, in combination with other sources, to more than the sum of its parts. The CODART website at this point can only point you to this information. Before long, there will be automatic ways to assemble the information on specific prints or paintings into research dossiers. This should raise the level of Rembrandt scholarship to great new heights, because there is so much more on Rembrandt out there than any other Dutch or Flemish artist.

I hope to greet you again from those heights at the next Rembrandt year, in 2019, when we will meet to commemorate the sad 350th anniversary of the artist's death. Until then, dear Rembrandt, Happy Birthday, with many happy returns of the day.

Flemings and Brabanders in the land of Rembrandt

Axel Buyse, Representative of the Flemish government in the Netherlands, The Hague

Six months ago I was invited by the Ministry of Justice to attend the presentation of an educational video intended for people applying for immigration to the Netherlands. In an attempt to control the influx of immigrants, Immigration and Integration Minister Rita Verdonk wishes to introduce a compulsory exam for potential immigrants in which they have to demonstrate a basic command of Dutch and some understanding of Dutch society. The idea is that they sit the exam, using a voiced computer program, in their country of origin, or in the nearest country with a Dutch embassy.

This video – which was made by a production company with the ominous name “Odyssee Productions” – starts off by giving to potential immigrants the message “Look before you leap.” The Netherlands is not a land of milk and honey, we are warned. Anyone still wanting to make the transition to this cold and chilly region, where tsunamis pose a constant threat, must have a minimal grasp of the country’s national history, its institutions, customs and traditions. Next comes a history lesson, beginning with the struggle between the Catholics and the Protestants – by the latter the film means the entire population of the Netherlands, of course. That creepy Spaniard Philip II tortured the innocent Protestants so ferociously, that they had no choice but to rebel.

Ladies and gentlemen, from time to time I am confronted with popularized accounts – written as well as visual – of the history of Holland’s Golden Age which slightly get at me. And every now and then, I find myself surprised by the comments of deeply serious historians and art historians whose central theme is this period – the Age of Rembrandt. Historical museums, popular books and travel guides, completely ignore the role of the exodus from the Southern Netherlands, which especially after the fall of Antwerp, in 1585, must have taken on massive proportions. Serious books cannot ignore the phenomenon altogether, but they very rarely delve into it more deeply.

There was not a word in the citizenship video about the fact that the Reformation was a phenomenon that spread from Flanders and the province of Brabant. When “Holland” finally manages to drive away the Spaniards, there seems to be an immediate return to prosperity. The video offers potential immigrants the inspiring example of Amsterdam during the 17th century: even then half the population was made up of “foreigners”. What it fails to mention, however, is that these foreigners were mostly well-to-do refugees from Flanders and Brabant.

Of course I understand that a condensed video message can’t tell the whole story. But even so, it’s not just the video. Sure: the idea that the Dutch nation formed itself, on the strength of its merits alone, and regardless of any existing ties with neighboring countries; the idea that it was predestined to become a thriving society modeled according to the principles of freedom and reason, goes back to the 17th century, and grew out of very concrete circumstances. None the less, I find it strange that this image of the Netherlands as the “New Israel among the gentiles” lives on to this day – be it in a secular form – in the way in which it presents itself and its people to the outside world. And since the average Dutch youngster has little or no grasp of geography or history, his or her sense of national identity tends to center around the same old stereotypes. These clichés leave no room whatsoever for any sense of community between present-day Holland on the one hand, and Belgium or Flanders on the other.

We are eagerly awaiting the results of a new cultural and historical “canon”, commissioned by the Minister of Culture, Education and Science, Maria van der Hoeven, on 1 September 2005. This canon which is currently being drawn up by a committee chaired by the literary historian, Frits van Oostrom, will underpin the future development of historical awareness in Dutch schools and universities. I feel confident that this committee of prominent academics will make an excellent job of incorporating the pieces of history and culture “shared” by the Low Countries. The canon is due to be presented later this year.¹ However, the very fact that this country needs such a canon, says something about the historical identity crisis with which it is grappling.

It would be interesting in this context, to devote a more extensive study to the way in which Holland has portrayed itself historically over the last sixty years, and to compare this to the way the Flemings have presented themselves. There is certainly ample material available, from a distant as well as a more recent past. I’m thinking, for example, of the commemoration, not long ago, of the 175th anniversary of the riots in Brussels, which led to Belgian independence. This was the unhappy ending of a second period in history in which the two regions were united under the same rule, an era which very much shaped the way in which the two countries regard each other.

According to the Flemish historian Marnix Beyen, in a review in *Ons Erfdeel*, the recent spate of books from the South has resulted in surprisingly little controversy. This is not so much a sign of a generalized nationalist sentiment among Belgians, but rather of the need, anno 2005, for historical commemorations which will satisfy the general nostalgia. The central focus of these books is not a quest for national identity, but a noncommittal and brief escape from the present. “Paradoxically enough, the cultural-historical change of the past few decades, which has contributed to the unmasking of the nation as a cultural construction, has given (Belgian) historians the space to indulge in national history once again,” writes Beyen.² Recent works about the revolt of 1830, and the subsequent construction of the Belgian state, are characterized by a “mild deconstructivism”.³

Of course, I can see a tendency towards the deconstruction of Holland’s more recent past everywhere – take the Second World War, for example. But I can’t help feeling that large sections of the population still hold to a very traditional view of the Golden Age. A view in which stereotypes dating from the 19th century, the age of nationalistic historiography, live on. The only exception to this is the acknowledgement of Holland’s very substantial share in the slave trade at the time, though the way this has happened is another story. To the average Dutchman the Golden Age is mostly a series of stereotypes, which were recorded for posterity by political historians such as Robert Fruin⁴, who argued that “deep-seated differences in background, national character, history, religion, government, and social conditions” inevitably led to a complete separation between North and South.⁵ Or you could

¹ See the website of the Ministry of Culture, Education and Science: www.ocw.nl – search for “historische canon”.

² Marnix Beyen, “Nostalgie naar een vervlogen natie. Een terugblik op de historische productie naar aanleiding van 125 jaar België”, *Ons Erfdeel*, February 2006, pp. 121-25.

³ In the autumn of 2005 the Noord-Brabants Museum in Den Bosch mounted the exhibition *Broedertwist (Fraternal discord)*, which is currently on show at the Stedelijk Museum in Leuven. The exhibition illustrates the development of Belgium’s new national awareness, as well as the new identity of the offended Netherlands. Pieter Rietbergen and Tom Verschaffel, *Broedertwist. België en Nederland en de erfenis van 1830*, Waanders, Zwolle, 2005, 112 p.

⁴ Robert Jacobus Fruin, *Rotterdam 1823 – Leiden 1899*, Professor of the History of the Netherlands at Leiden University, from 1860 to 1894.

⁵ R. J. Fruin, *Het voorspel tot den tachtigjarigen oorlog*, 1859.

think of the images used by a man of letters such as Conrad Busken Huet⁶, whose cultural historical studies *Het Land van Rubens* (1879) and *Het Land van Rembrand* (two volumes, 1882) launched the “Golden Age” as a concept in Dutch 17th-century art, claiming Rembrandt as its greatest painter, and tracing back to this period the stereotypical cultural differences between the two countries.⁷

Popular summaries of Dutch history such as the “Naar Nederland” video which I mentioned at the beginning, often simply begin with the Eighty Years’ War. Or they touch briefly on what went before, a period in which the histories of North and South largely overlap, but in which the North happened to play a relatively minor part. After this the South is not mentioned again. It is as if a bit of the iceberg has broken off and melted away. And then, out of the blue, we are presented with the United Provinces: free, immensely rich, commercially and intellectually at the top, and with a city like Amsterdam, which miraculously increases its population from 27,000 to 100,000 in the space of a few decades (between 1560 and 1622). The recent bestseller *Een kleine geschiedenis van Amsterdam* (1994), by Geert Mak⁸, devotes literally one page to the subject of this miraculous tripling of Amsterdam’s population, and the influence of “tens of thousands” of immigrants from the southern Netherlands, who arrived in the city in the aftermath of the fall of Antwerp, in 1585, “with their specialist knowledge of commerce, their capital, their trades, artistry, culture, flamboyance and language”. Sure, the moment of their arrival receives due recognition, but no sooner have these southerners arrived, than Mak loses sight of them again. Integration must have been a super quick process in those days.

Since Pieter Geyl – but with more of an open mind from the 1960s onwards – the objective historical view of the Flemings’ contribution to the Golden Age has of course broadened. As far as I know, however, there has been no large-scale, systematic investigation into – for example – that process of integration, which I would expect to produce some interesting insights. In the opening chapters of *The Embarrassment of Riches* – translated into Dutch under the title *Overvloed en Onbehagen*⁹, Simon Schama offers interesting information about dominant Flemish immigrants in the North, and about the fact that it would take almost a whole century before the Dutch would come to accept as their fatherland just the Seven Provinces, Drenthe and the parts of Flanders, Brabant and Limburg directly governed by the States-General. “Even then there were factions among the population, and these were not just Calvinists, who were longing for a ‘reunification’ extending across the river boundaries”, Schama writes.¹⁰ Elsewhere he gives psychologically acute descriptions of the Calvinists from the South, who were true “heavy weights”. Having gained ground against the orthodox Gomarists at the Synod of Dordrecht,¹¹ (1618-1619), they put pressure on the stadholder to reconquer the South from which they had fled.¹² However, Schama is not really inclined to dwell on the collective influence of the southerners.

⁶ Conrad Busken Huet, man of letters, The Hague 1826 – Paris 1886.

⁷ Although it should be said that Busken Huet also put special emphasis on the cultural unity of the Low Countries before the outbreak of the Eighty Years’ War, see for example, *Het Land van Rembrand*, vol. 1, chap. 6, published on the web: <http://cf.hum.uva.nl/dsp/ljc/huet/>

⁸ Geert Mak, *Een kleine geschiedenis van Amsterdam*, Olympus, Amsterdam, 1999, p. 96 (first edition: 1994).

⁹ Simon Schama. *Overvloed en Onbehagen. De Nederlandse cultuur in de Gouden Eeuw*, Contact, 1987.

¹⁰ Schama, p. 8.

¹¹ Gomarism or Goemaere was born in Bruges (Bruges, 1563, Groningen 1641). For a while he was professor at Leiden University, but when the “moderate” Jacobus Arminius was appointed there, he resigned in protest and became a preacher.

¹² Schama, p. 257; according to Briels (see below) the vast majority of Protestant worshippers were immigrants until the late 1620s. Among preachers in Holland and Zeeland southerners predominate until the beginning of the 17th century.

If Dutch historians err on the side of caution in their treatment of mass immigration, the Flemings have more than made up for it: 2004 saw the publication of the highly readable *1585. De Val van Antwerpen en de Uittocht van Vlamingen en Brabanders* (The fall of Antwerp and the exodus of the Flemings and Brabanders) by Gustaaf Asaert, who is the former Keeper of Public Records in Antwerp.¹³ Before him the Fleming Hugo de Schepper, professor in Nijmegen, and Ludo Beheydt, who teaches at the Universities of Louvain-la-Neuve and Leiden, had given much attention to the relationship between art and culture in the Netherlands, and the influence of southerners on the Golden Age.¹⁴ And let's not forget Dr. Jan Briels, who made the study of emigration from the South his life's work, and who has been overlooked in the Netherlands, in my opinion.¹⁵

Briels focuses on the scale of the mass migration from Brabant, Flanders and the Walloon provinces during the last quarter of the 16th century, and how this affected the extraordinary cultural growth which subsequently took place in the Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands. I mentioned earlier that the traditional "Dutch" historiography on the whole does no more than register this mass influx of immigrants, and in some cases even tries to play it down.¹⁶ This is all the more surprising if you remember that, before the Revolt, the North played only a marginal role culturally and economically within the Netherlands. Even the province of Holland was strictly speaking part of the *hinterland*, as can be inferred from the population figures and tax revenues from the 17 provinces: the Antwerp historian Guido Marnef calculated that for the period 1540-48 the county of Flanders paid 33.80 % of the total inland revenue, while Brabant paid 28.76 %; Holland, on the other hand, provided only 12.69 % and Zeeland a mere 4.37%.¹⁷ The contributions from the remaining future Provinces of the Netherlands were negligible.

Undeniably, the Republic owed its unprecedented expansion first and foremost to the fact that it formed a remarkably open society compared with the rest of Europe in the same period; it was easy to move around freely and the country was led by a liberal-thinking political elite, which seized every opportunity to expand at a wider social or cultural level. However, Briels argues that it was precisely the arrival of these many tens of thousands of southerners which gave the new society, still emerging at the turn of the 16th century, the chance to assert itself economically as well as socially and culturally.

Roughly how many refugees from the South are we talking about? On the basis of extrapolation from the sources, Briels comes up with the impressive figure of 150,000: a group of first- and second-generation immigrants who fled directly to the North, and a group of refugees who arrived via England and Germany. This figure implies that the southerners made up 10% of the North's population. Other

¹³ Gustaaf Asaert, 1585. *De val van Antwerpen en de uittocht van Vlamingen en Brabanders*, Lannoo, Tielt, 2002.

¹⁴ See, for example, Ludo Beheydt, *Eén en toch apart. Kunst en Cultuur van de Nederlanden*, Davidsfonds, Leuven & Waanders, Zwolle, 2002.

¹⁵ The most important work remains: Jan Briels, *De emigratie uit de Zuidelijke Nederlanden omstreeks 1540 – 1621 – 1630*, Haarlem, 1978.

¹⁶ An exception to this is the Amsterdam social historian Herman Pleij, who argues that much of what we regard as "typically Dutch" today, in fact goes back to the "urban culture", which was imported by immigrants from the southern Netherlands, but also partly inherited from the late Middle Ages.

¹⁷ Guido Marnef, "The Towns and the Revolt", in ed. Graham Darby, *The Origins and Development of The Dutch Revolt*, Routledge, London, 2001, pp. 14-15.

historians have questioned Briels's counting method, but Asaert is inclined to go for a similar high number relying on a verification of Briels's calculations through data sampling.¹⁸

In any case, the population figures for Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges bear testimony to the massive scale of the emigration. Between 1584 and 1589, alone, more than 40,000 of Antwerp's 100,000 inhabitants left. In those same years the city of Ghent lost an estimated 15,000 people – one third of its total population. Referring to Bruges and its periphery, in October 1584, the City Magistrate commented: "Plus de trois mille cincq centz maisons et bien principales sont icy vagues .. Et chascun se veult retirer de ceste ville. Depuis trois jours en sont party plus de quatre cent mesnages."¹⁹

In my opinion Briels was able to demonstrate convincingly, by reference to the sources, how important the immigration was for the North, not only politically and commercially but also in the sciences. Here is a quotation from a text of 1585 which Briels uses:

"the pensionary of Vlissingen and the first nobleman of the States of Zeeland are both Flemings, the bailiff of Vere, who is now representative of the States General, and the pensionary of the States of Zeeland and of Middelburg were all born in Brabant, and the same goes for the pensionary of the Gouw, the collector for Noord-Holland and many others, the pensionary of Amsterdam is from Mechlin, and those of Delft and Dort are Flemings. Yes, in the States General even the clerk, the officer, and the bailiffs are all Brabanders, and the secretary of the Council of State was also born in Brabant."

Research has shown that at least 950 merchants from the South were active in Amsterdam around 1600. Refugees from Flanders and Brabant founded both the East India Company and the West India Company, which secured a colonial empire for the Republic. The registration of shares in the East India Company took place in Amsterdam at the house of Dierck van Os, a merchant who had fled from Antwerp, and who with another refugee from Brabant, the ship owner Isaäk le Maire, was among the most important underwriters of the Amsterdam Chamber. While Willem Usselinx from Antwerp was campaigning for the foundation of the West India Company, his brother Hubert stayed behind and made enough money on the Antwerp stock exchange to set up the trading partnership which later founded *Belgica Nova sive Nieuw Nederlandt*, on and around Manhattan.²⁰

The immigration undoubtedly had a huge impact on the developing of the intellectual climate during the Golden Age. In 1600 at least 418 immigrants were employed in the education sector in the North. Between 1578 and 1603, all teaching in Amsterdam's Latin schools was supervised by rectors from the southern Netherlands, and between 1575 and 1630 The University of Leiden had no fewer than 28 professors from the South on its staff, among them the famous Justus Lipsius. Publishing became a thriving industry thanks to a unique climate of intellectual freedom, but also as a result of the large numbers of printers, bookbinders, publishers and book traders – roughly 250 in all – who had come over from the southern provinces. Among them were two well-known men, Christoffel Plantin from Antwerpen (temporarily) and Louis Elsevier from Leuven. The vast majority of university printers as well as many of the municipal printers were from the South. The Dutch are inclined to forget that pivotal figures such as Joost van den Vondel, Abraham de Coninck, Karel van Mander and Jacob

¹⁸ Asaert, p. 47.

¹⁹ Speech by Jan Briels at the presentation of the Visser-Neerlandia Prize, Brussels, 2004.

²⁰ Prof. em. Hugo de Schepper, *Een verhaal over historische identiteit en identiteitsbesef in de Lage Landen*, <http://dutchrevolt.leidenuniv.nl/Nederlands/links>.

Duym all came originally from the South. And there were plenty of other areas in which the southerners excelled. Briels shows that a substantial number of graphic artists and book illustrators working in Amsterdam and elsewhere during the early decades of the 17th century had come from Flanders or Brabant. Even Lieven de Key, who was appointed Town Architect of Haarlem and built the Meat Market (Vleeshalle) there, and who in the 20th century was still regarded as the father of “Old-Dutch architecture”, was a refugee from Ghent. The famous Amsterdam writing master Lieven van Coppenhol, whose praises were sung by Vondel and who was immortalized by Rembrandt, was also a southerner by birth. And then there are the artists, who form a category of their own. Briels traced 228 painters from Brabant and Flanders who took refuge in the North, among them famous names such as Frans Hals, Gillis van Coninxloo, Hendrick Aerts and Roelandt Savery. During the early decades of the 17th century the art trade in Amsterdam was also largely in the hands of immigrants from the South. It would be well worth analyzing the tremendous political and social tensions that arose in the towns where large numbers of southerners settled.

I could go on like this, quoting from the writings of Flemish historians. But what matters here, ultimately, is not the “counting of heads”, nor, for that matter, should the history of the Golden Age become an instrument of some kind of opposite, Flemish nationalism. What is important, however, at least in my view, is that we rectify the idea, still popular in the Netherlands, that the Golden Age was exclusively the product of internal developments – *internal* in the sense of strictly belonging to the territory of the United Provinces. Many fault lines divide present-day Belgium and nobody now believes, à la *Henri Pirenne*, that the Belgian state was always in the stars. Sometimes you get the impression, however, that what little popular understanding of history in the Netherlands remains boils down to the idea that the Netherlands were somehow always predestined as a nation. In fact, historians today agree that the Dutch Republic was largely an artificial creation, the product of war and geographical boundaries.²¹

I read this recently in the handbook of Dutch culture, *The Netherlands in Perspective*, by William Z. Shetter: “An indispensable component in our attempts to understand the Dutch is how they relate to the Dutch-speaking people just south of them.”²² Any historian or art historian with a professional interest in the Age of Rembrandt knows about the emigration from the South. However, our knowledge is often too fragmented, and much of the interaction between the *newcomers* and the *natives* remains completely unknown, even to the majority of well-educated Dutch people. A better understanding of the contribution of Flanders and Brabant to the Golden Age would enhance our general appreciation of that splendid era in Dutch art history

²¹ Darby, p. 6.

²² William Z. Shetter, *The Netherlands in Perspective. The Dutch way of Organizing a Society and its Settings*, Nederlands Centrum Buitenlanders, Utrecht, 2002 (first edition 1990), p. 175.

TEXTS OF MEMBERS PRESENTATIONS ON TUESDAY, 14 MARCH

William Singer and America: Introduction to the exhibition program 2006-2012

Ineke Middag, Director, Singer Museum, Laren

The Singer Museum was founded in 1956 by Anna Singer (1878-1962) in memory of her husband William Singer Jr. (1868-1943). William Singer was an American impressionist painter. The family's steel company in Pittsburgh (Penn.) was sold and the couple left for Paris, where William developed his skills as a painter. In France, they traveled to Barbizon, Pont Aven and other artists' colonies, and then they continued north to the Netherlands, looking for the artistic and topographical roots of the paintings of Hendrik Willem Mesdag and Anton Mauve, Hague School painters they were introduced to at the Carnegie Internationals. The Singer family belongs to the Pittsburgh circle of steel tycoons and collectors like the Fricks and Carnegies.

LAREN ARTISTS' COLONY

They settled in 1901 at the artists' colony in Laren, 15 km east of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. The couple built a villa and started to collect contemporary art, mainly Laren School, Hague School and French art. The villa is now the heart of a beautiful museum and theater complex, surrounded by a lovely garden. As well as housing the collection, Singer Laren presents a lively program of exhibitions and theatrical productions and welcomes 100,000-150,000 visitors a year.

2006: THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY *LOVING ART: THE WILLIAM & ANNA SINGER COLLECTION*

The concept is a reconstruction of the Singer collection in 2006 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the museum. The ambition is to present the richness of the complete collection of this American couple of collectors. Their collection of paintings, works on paper, sculpture, Asian pieces and applied arts contains ca. 3000 objects that have been divided over four different locations in the US, Norway and the Netherlands. The two main sites are the museums founded by the couple: in 1931 Washington County Museum of Fine Arts opened its doors in Hagerstown (MA), Anna Singer's birthplace. In 1956 Anna founded the Singer Museum in Laren in the Netherlands, the village where the couple had lived for many years. Besides these two places, the Singers spent half their life in Olden, a small village in Norway, where they also built a villa. Part of the art collection left in Olden after William's death in 1943 and Anna's in 1962 remained in the village, with some of it going to the West Norway Museum for Decorative Arts in Bergen.

EXHIBITION *LOVING ART: THE WILLIAM & ANNA SINGER COLLECTION*

13 September 2006 – 7 January 2007, Singer Laren

21 January – 29 April, Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Hagerstown

Reconstruction of the original complete Singer Collection with loans from the sister institutions in Norway, the USA and the Netherlands.

PUBLICATION

Loving Art. The William & Anna Singer Collection, Helen Schretlen, with a contribution by Jean Woods. 260p. full-color, 1 September 2006, Dutch and American editions. Waanders Publishers, Zwolle, Netherlands (USA distr. ACC)

WILLIAM SINGER RETROSPECTIVE IN 2008

The ambition is to present this American painter in the context of his American contemporaries and his artistic background. American impressionist painters are not widely known in the Netherlands and Europe. Eurocentric art historians have traditionally seen them and William Singer as an echo of French impressionism and they have been neglected in exhibition programs. Turn-of-the-century American art does not form an integral part of the usual art-history programs at the universities either. If there is *one* museum that is qualified to introduce this specifically American art to the Dutch public, it is the Singer Museum Laren.

William Singer's ambitions as a painter began when he was still living in the USA. He visited the artists' colonies of Old Lyme and Monhegan Island. Singer Laren researches his artistic sources and inspirations and would like to present them to the Dutch and American public. In doing so, we hope to provide Singer, the artist for whom our museum is named, with a context that makes him more understandable. The first retrospective of the paintings, pastels, etchings and sketchbooks of this American impressionist will give insight into his oeuvre, his development and the influence of his American and Paris education, art colleagues, the Paris years, the Dutch artist's colony of Laren, and, finally, the Norwegian landscape. A top selection of his works and of his fellow artists is the first requirement. We anticipate skepticism towards early 20th-century American art. A convincing selection of artists and paintings could change that attitude and offer the public a new domain to enjoy. It will also counteract the one-sided image of American art in the Netherlands as a mainly postwar phenomenon.

SINGER LAREN 2006-2014

Singer Laren sees these two projects as a starting point for developing its role in introducing turn-of-the-century American art to the Dutch (and European) public. Singer Laren wants to incorporate American art into its permanent field of interest and exhibitions program. The Netherlands is generally unaware of great American impressionists such as Walter Griffin, Frederic Carl Friesseke, Richard Miller, Childe Hassam, Willard Metcalf and John Twachtman, some of whom were close friends of the Singers. These artists are all closely linked to the Singer collection but almost completely unknown in the Netherlands. We could also present William Merit Chase, John Alden Weir, Robert Vonnoh, John Breck, Theodore Robinson, Robert Blum, and both Frederic William MacMonnies and Mary MacMonnies. Even artists like Mary Cassatt, Winslow Homer and John Singer Sargent have not widely been presented over here! In addition to these artists, we can imagine a wide range of appealing themes and subjects once we have introduced American art as our focus and "unique selling point". American artists' colonies, for example, or the so-called Holland Mania, the discovery of late 19th-century Dutch art by American artists, The Ten, the Ashcan School, or American realism. Whereas William Singer mainly dedicated himself to the Norwegian landscapes in an American impressionist style, we can imagine staging exhibitions of American landscapes.

2006: *Loving Art. The William & Anna Singer Collection*

2008: *The William Singer (1868-1943) retrospective exhibition*

2009: *Dutch Utopia. American artists in Holland, 1880-1914* (In cooperation with The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA, and Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, GA)

FURTHER OPTIONS

2010: *American Impressionists*

2012: *American Artists' Colonies*

The Espigas Foundation and Dutch and Flemish art in Argentina

Angel Navarro, Professor of art history, Universidad de Buenos Aires

The Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, founded at the end of the 19th century, is the principal center of Dutch and Flemish art in Argentina. Its rather small collection, comprised mainly of donations, includes some good-quality works dating from the 16th to the 20th century. These include a landscape attributed to Patinir, two Rubens *bozzetti*, a *Landscape with the ruins of the abbey of Rijnsburg* by Aelbert Cuyp, and two landscapes with Diana and nymphs, one by Jasper van der Lanen and the other by Jan Bruegel and Hendrik van Balen. Among artists from the 19th and 20th centuries, there is *Le Moulin de la Galette* by Van Gogh, the only work by the artist in a public collection in Argentina. The Hirsch Gallery, given to the museum in 1983, deserves special mention: it contains works by Henri met de Bles, Isenbrandt, Adriaen van de Velde, Moreelse, Govaert Flinck y Aert de Gelder and an interesting Rembrandt female portrait from the beginning of the 1630s, which I believe to be the result of a collaboration between the master and his assistant Flinck. The museum collection also contains a small number of drawings and engravings.

The Museo Nacional de Arte Decorativo in Buenos Aires also has some Dutch and Flemish paintings, including a *Family portrait* by both Cuyps, Jacob Gerritsz. and Aelbert. In Rosario, Argentina's second city, the Museo Municipal de Bellas Artes Juan B. Castagnino and the Museo Municipal de Arte Decorativo Firma y Obdulio Estevez also own some Dutch and Flemish paintings; the latter museum owns Eeckhout's *Granida and Daifilo*, which was reproduced as the cover of our book *Dutch and Flemish art in Argentina*.

Art dealers began importing European art into Argentina in the 19th century. In 1828, the Spaniard Jose Mauroner arrived with a group of paintings that included works by Dutch and Flemish artists. But it was from 1880 onwards, when the country became politically organized, that European galleries, such as Bernheim, began to open branches in Buenos Aires, increasing the interest in collecting art. To satisfy the local tastes, they offered paintings from the Italian, Spanish and French schools, together with a few Dutch and Flemish pieces.

In the 20th century, dealers such as Frederic M. Vermorcken (born in Brussels in 1862) organized shows that included paintings from the Low Countries. Frederic C. Müller, who arrived in Argentina as the curator of the German section at the Centennial International Exhibition of 1910, remained in Buenos Aires, first dealing in German contemporary artists and, later, Old Masters and contemporary artists from Holland and Belgium. From 1930 onwards, he organized a series of engraving exhibitions targeted not only at collectors, but also at the public at large. These exhibitions were held in Buenos Aires and also in Rosario and Santa Fe, two other large cities in Argentina.

In 1943, Paula de Koenigsberg arrived in Buenos Aires to sell a collection that included paintings from the Low Countries. There were only a few collectors who concentrated on old Dutch and Flemish paintings, the most important of them being Alfredo Hirsch, who gave his name to the previously mentioned Hirsch Gallery.

Regarding local artists, some of them, such as Carlos Alonso, took Rembrandt as an inspiration for their drawings and paintings and others learned and applied painting techniques from the 17th century.

The Dutch artist Jacques Witjens also became a local artist. Born in The Hague in 1881, he moved to Buenos Aires in 1920, and remained in Argentina for the rest of his life.

A number of exhibitions have been held to celebrate Dutch and Flemish art in Argentina: in 1941, in 1950/51, in 1964, in 1965 to celebrate the visit of King Baudoin and Queen Fabiola of Belgium, a Rubens exhibition in 1977, and exhibitions in 1983 and 1990 commemorating Van Gogh. More recently, in 2002 and 2003, Rembrandt was the focus of attention, with works from the Rembrandthuis being exhibited not only in Buenos Aires, but also in Neuquen, a city in Patagonia. In 2003, the wedding of Prince Willem Alexander to Maxima Zorreguieta was the subject of an exhibition that featured a selection of Dutch paintings from private collections in Buenos Aires. Other Dutch artists have had exhibitions devoted to them, as was the case with the 1999 Erik van der Grijn exhibition at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. An essay in the catalogue discusses his work and states that he does not live in Buenos Aires. Last year, however, there was a new exhibition of his work and he bought an apartment in Buenos Aires.

The reception and appreciation of Dutch and Flemish art was the subject of a project developed under my direction at the Fundación Espigas, a center devoted to collecting and cataloguing documents concerning art history in Argentina. Director Mauro Herlitzka talked to me about this subject some six years ago, but the project only became reality in November 2004 thanks to the support of institutions such as Stichting Cultuur Inventarisatie and its director, Lia Gorter.

This project was completed last November. We added 805 new entries to the Espigas database, and created a book that includes some 70 articles from exhibition catalogues and local or international periodicals, selected with the idea of creating a corpus to be used in schools and art academies. The book also includes an essay examining the subject. The essay confirmed some suspicions that we had about the reception of Dutch and Flemish art in Argentina: firstly, the significant impact of the art of the Low Countries upon cultural activities and artistic training in Argentina, and secondly, the existence of a marked preference for contemporary works of art.

We should also mention that activity in art galleries and local collections has helped to increase the knowledge and appreciation of Dutch and Flemish art, as it has been possible to focus on techniques that are not always understood by the public, such as engraving and etching.

Projects have also been set up to establish connections and influences between Dutch and Belgian artists and local artists through works created as a team or by a Dutch or Belgian artist providing guidance and instruction, as was recently the case with the Dutch artist Pat Andrea.

The sparkling light of Willem Kalf

Peter van den Brink, Director of the Aachen City Museums, Suermondt-Ludwig Museum, Aachen

The Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen in Rotterdam and the Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum in Aachen have decided to stage the first monographic exhibition on Willem Kalf (Rotterdam 1619–1693 Amsterdam). The exhibition will open in Rotterdam in November this year, with the Aachen venue following at the beginning of March 2007, just before TEFAF. The idea for the exhibition came from Sylvia Böhmer, our curator of paintings, and it was not very difficult for her to convince me that this was a wonderful idea.

My first museum job, in 1988, was as an exhibition coordinator at the Delft Prinsenhof during the exhibition *A prosperous past*, a beautiful overview of the Dutch pronk still life in the 17th century. Many of you who remember that exhibition will confirm that the climax came at the end of the show with the one room containing five Willem Kalf still lifes: one from a private collection, the *Drinking horn from the Guild of St. Sebastian* from the National Gallery in London, two beautiful paintings from Indianapolis and Cleveland, and, of course, Willem Kalf's most famous painting, the *Still life with nautilus cup and Chinese cup* from the Thyssen collection, now in Madrid.

Both Jeroen Giltaij and Friso Lammertse reacted very enthusiastically to our proposal that we stage the show on Willem Kalf together. As well as the three museum curators, Fred Meijer was asked to help us make a final selection of paintings and also to act as author. Although he was very busy finishing his monograph on Jan Davidsz de Heem, Fred immediately reacted positively and they are already very busy writing.

From the outset we decided to limit ourselves to Willem Kalf and only to include European loans wherever possible. All in all, the exhibition will feature 35 paintings. Of these, 13 are early interiors that Willem Kalf painted in the years he was working in Paris, between 1642 and 1646. These interiors, quite often barns occupied by vegetable sellers, with strong light contrasts, remained extremely popular in France and many of Kalf's paintings were collected by fellow artists, like Jacques Linard, or, much later, Francois Boucher or Jean-Baptiste Siméon Chardin, who actually reworked some of his early paintings. Willem Kalf remained in Paris for many years, but painted his early barn interiors on Antwerp panels, as Anna Koopstra, our assistant curator, was able to demonstrate in her research on panels by Kalf. And not only did Kalf paint exclusively on Antwerp panels, he only made use of panels by the Antwerp panel maker Melchior de Bout (ca. 1604-58). Of course, De Bout worked for Antwerp painters, like Pieter Gysels, but it is rather remarkable that his mark was found on the reverse of panels by French painters, like Philippe de Champaigne, or painters who were active in France, like Willem van Aelst and Strasbourg painter Sebastian Stosskopf. It therefore seems justified to state that De Bout was active on the French market.

In Paris, Willem Kalf already started to create spectacular still-life paintings, in which silverware was the dominant factor. Two of these paintings were the main focus of a small dossier exhibition in Cologne, one of them in the Dutch art trade, the other in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum. In fact, the Cologne painting was presented at this exhibition as a copy based on the Amsterdam painting. Both paintings are now regarded by Fred Meijer as copies, the original being in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen. The most spectacular large early still life can be found at another French museum, in Le Mans. Recently, a second and a third version of this huge work (200 x 170 cm) came onto the market,

this time, however, including a possible self-portrait. The Cologne and Rouen paintings, as well as the large Le Mans still life, will be on display at both museums.

Of course, the most spectacular paintings Willem Kalf is famous for are the still-life paintings he produced in Amsterdam. Making a choice from his vast oeuvre proved quite difficult. Willem Kalf's Amsterdam still lifes are most often painted with a vertical arrangement, showing exclusive objects in silver or glass, combined with Chinese porcelain and exotic fruits, like lemons, oranges or peaches. Some of these luxury objects, like the drinking horn from the Amsterdam Guild of St. Sebastian, or the so-called "Holbein Schale", were only portrayed once or twice, certainly as specific commissions; other objects, similarly exclusive, were used more often, and were probably part of Kalf's own inventory. In contrast to many of his fellow still-life painters, Kalf limited himself in the number of objects he portrayed in his paintings. Using fruit, porcelain and glass as basic ingredients, often combined with silver, enabled this remarkable painter to play with the texture of his objects, a game that others, like Willem van Aelst, loved to play as well. However, Kalf made use only of dark, almost black backgrounds, and installed his subtly combined objects before this darkness. And it is this facility, this aspect of Willem Kalf's still-life paintings, that enables us to enjoy his brilliance. Willem Kalf is able to paint the most difficult thing there is: transparent glass against a dark background. He can paint the invisible texture, just by a single reflection of light on glass, which is enough for us, the viewers, to produce a form in our minds. That is the absolute genius of Willem Kalf, the still-life painter.

You will understand that the physical condition of these still-life paintings is a crucial factor in making the right choice for both venues. Jeroen Giltaij, Sylvia Böhmer, Fred Meijer and I traveled to inspect as many paintings as possible, since it is no secret that all Willem Kalf canvases have been relined. In many cases the addition of a supporting canvas has led to pressed paint layers and, with paintings where thin layers of almost transparent paint are crucial for the magic illusion, this has sometimes led to disaster. In various cases, too, cleaning has been done too harshly, taking away the brilliance of Willem Kalf's magic brush. The final choice of paintings from this section, fifteen to be exact, was therefore the most difficult one. You will understand, therefore, that we are really extremely lucky to have had such a positive response from those museums that have the most beautiful and best Willem Kalf still-life paintings and I would especially like to mention the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Berlin Gemäldegalerie, and the National Gallery in London for being such gracious lenders.

Getting back to the Suermondt Ludwig Museum, one of the Aachen museums I have headed as director since one year ago, I can add that the monographic exhibition on Willem Kalf fits the profile of the museum very well. Primarily known in Aachen for its exhibitions on local artists and classic photography, in Germany for its amazing collection of late medieval wooden sculpture (indeed, one of the best in Germany), it is primarily unknown outside these borders. Of course this needs to be changed dramatically, which is not very easy in a city that is close to bankruptcy. Nevertheless, I have started to remodel the galleries, by having direct light installed for the paintings – the painting galleries did not have direct light before – and changing the scenery step by step. Key words are quality and taste, because fundamentally it is a very tasteful ambiance and a wonderful collection of paintings. Both, however, have suffered incredible neglect over the last 15 years. For that reason we started a huge offensive in every possible way; a master plan for conservation has now been developed and in the coming six years no fewer than one hundred paintings will be restored. This project is supported

by the Landschaftsverband Rheinland and the Kulturstiftung der Länder, and many, many individuals. This will enable us to present our collection in a way that will make us proud.

Another step is the fact that our first catalogue of the painting collection has just recently been published; it is, of course, devoted to the Dutch and Flemish paintings, and is written by Thomas Fusenig. Some of you were at the opening of our new galleries, last week on March 8. For me this was a crucial day, since I needed to provide a clear insight into the steps I have taken to put the museum on the map. I particularly have to thank two people for making sure it was a successful opening. Firstly, Bernd Lindemann, whom you all know, the director of the Berlin Gemäldegalerie, who immediately after my start in Aachen, proposed that we set up a partnership. Like the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Berlin Gemäldegalerie takes the mobility of collections very seriously. Twenty-one Dutch and Flemish paintings from the Berlin study collection are now presented in the Suermondt-Ludwig Museum in Aachen for four years. In 2010, 25 others will be welcomed, and the same will happen in 2014 and 2018. The second person I would like to thank is Professor Irene Ludwig, who has stood by me over the last twelve months and who has given me an important head start in Aachen, by handing over her 1632 Rembrandt portrait to the Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum. So, what can I say? We are well under way.

The museum as a forum of knowledge

Martina Sitt, Head of department of paintings, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg

In the cultural dialogue in the city of the future, museums will increasingly be challenged not only to present themselves through exhibition activities, but also to fulfill their role as the expert in the field of art and art history and as the institution with the responsibility for conveying this information to the public. There is, therefore, a growing need for projects that will transform the museum into a hub of (knowledge-) activities with an impact on the city's cultural and educational landscape.

Two such projects by the Hamburger Kunsthalle are setting new trends: the continuing practical course and the coordinating knowledge forum. This presentation focuses on possible changes in the role of the museum and its future opportunities.

Based upon the idea of "the museum as a forum of knowledge", there are five areas in which the museum of the future can be seen as a center of excellence. It is a center in the cultural sphere and can shape opinions; it is capable of being a center of information exchange; it can function as a moderator in cooperative projects; it may be seen by outsiders as a model for quality management and quality awareness; and it can act as a pool of ideas. All of these five functions can be very effective in two areas: on the one hand, in training young art historians for possible roles in museums of this kind, and on the other hand, in improving connections with the public.

The most obvious cooperation partners for such new projects are, of course, universities, but also churches and consulates, for example, and cultural institutions that are affiliated to these consulates. Even large consulting firms, which decorate their offices with art collections, are increasingly turning to the Kunsthalle for advice.

In the field of training, I would like to discuss the "Museum" practical course, which has been offered at the Hamburger Kunsthalle since 2002. This course is organized in cooperation with the Hamburg Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe (Museum of Arts and Crafts). It runs for a period of two months at a time and gives eight trainees the opportunity to gain a special insight into museum work. This unique course is publicized nationally. We believe that it is particularly important to devote close attention to students from the seventh semester onwards who have not yet gained a qualification that entitles them to perform a particular role. Unlike study courses such as Museology or Museum Management, this practical course focuses on the significance of creativity, knowledge of the collection and work with that collection. We teach all the skills required to run a museum – administration, budgeting, project management, and so on – but place special emphasis on the fact that the future of museum work cannot consist primarily of these abilities. A successful museum always relies on the curators' knowledge of the collection and their ability to present it in a new and relevant light. This plays a particularly important role in times of decreasing funding.

The Hamburger Kunsthalle has successfully initiated a pilot project within the educational landscape of Hamburg, thereby increasing public awareness of the museum's work. The purpose of this project is the documentation and examination of the demolition of the Hamburger Dom 200 years ago. This medieval cathedral (whose construction began in around 1035 and consisted of a number of phases) was torn down in 1806 on the orders of the senate. Some of its works of art were destroyed; other parts of the collection were given away and divided amongst different churches. For example,

following its restoration by the Hansestadt in 2000 and its presentation as a loan at a large Kunsthalle exhibition, the "Marienaltar", the Dom's most famous altarpiece, has been returned to the Polish National Museum in Warsaw.

The aim of this project is to gather findings on the question of the former Hamburger Dom and to present them publicly in a joint exhibition. The Hamburger Kunsthalle is serving not only as a center of knowledge for the treatment and presentation of exhibits, but is also responsible for the management of the project and the process of imparting knowledge. Moderated by Dr. Martina Sitt at the Kunsthalle, five academic institutions from Hamburg are cooperating on a joint project for the first time. As part of a joint seminar, students from the university; from the Hochschule für bildende Künste (the art academy)/HafenCity University; the Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften (HAW, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences); and the Hochschule für kulturelles Management (University of Cultural Management) will work with the Hamburger Kunsthalle to investigate the subject of the demolition of the Hamburger Dom and the question of its original shape and its decoration with artworks in the Middle Ages. Whilst the university students are more concerned with research into the history of the art and architecture of the building, the aim of the HAW students is to create a modern computational reconstruction, which could be used as an impressive means of bringing the building back to life. Students from the Hochschule für kulturelles Management are viewing the exhibition content in terms of advertisement and marketing. During the first joint meetings, it became clear that combining these completely different approaches and motivations would give considerable impetus to the discussions.

The initial results of this pilot project will be on display as early as 6 October 2006 at the Hamburger Hauptkirche St. Jacobi, in a small exhibition on the demolition of the Dom and the surviving artworks. More extensive research will form the basis of a 2008 exhibition, in which new knowledge about the art of Hamburg around 1400 will be presented, focusing particularly on Master Francke and his contemporaries.

This idea of combining areas of interest with partners from different backgrounds will be increasingly necessary for museums in the future and will enable them to become firmly anchored within the cultural landscape of the city.

The Brukenthal Museum Sibiu: an update

Maria Ordeanu, Curator of prints and drawings, National Brukenthal Museum

The Brukenthal Museum has a long and eventful history. In 2001 I had the privilege of introducing the Brukenthal collection to CODART VIER participants in Cologne. The following study trip to Romania familiarized many of you with its actual contents. *Courant 7* (December 2003) included another brief presentation of the historical and political background that led to the nationalization of the museum in the early days of the postwar period. Now, another major change is about to affect the status of the Brukenthal Museum. On 28 December 2005, an agreement was signed by the Ministry of Culture and the Bishop of the Lutheran Church with regard to the restitution of the Brukenthal Museum to its owner, the Evangelical Church of Sibiu. The core of the European art collections, including the ca. 450 Dutch and Flemish paintings, as well as the prints, is to be handed over. Other collections registered after 1948 will remain the property of the state. This will not change the status of the museum as a public institution: the Brukenthal Museum will continue to function under the same name, funded by the state, only its management will involve representatives of both parties to the agreement. This is a new development in the life of Romanian museums and we are going to experience it really soon. Due to this situation, some of the curatorial projects are on a "waiting list", until appropriate mechanisms are in place and the new board of management has taken charge of all the operations.

In 2007, Sibiu will share with Luxembourg the status of European Capital of Culture. Many cultural events are planned throughout all of next year. Unfortunately, the ownership transfer agreement and its implications left little if any chance for closer cooperation with our European partners. Therefore, we focused our projects mainly on the collections of the Brukenthal Museum. A new display in the European art gallery will highlight the gems of the collection in a fresh context. This will feature for the first time since 1948 the paintings of Jan van Eyck, Brueghel, Jordaens, Teniers and Wouwermans, which are to be returned by the National Museum of Art in Bucharest. A catalogue of the paintings on display and a virtual reconstruction of the 18th-century gallery are now a work in progress. However, this represents only the start as far as the cataloguing of the entire collection of the Dutch and Flemish paintings is concerned. It would be a major step forward if the project first launched on the CODART website by Pieter van den Brink, and successfully continued by Wietske Donkersloot, were to be put in motion, with the support of CODART members. The interactive catalogue of the Brukenthal collection of 16th- to 18th-century Dutch and Flemish pictures will include the 1909 edition of the catalogue, with digital images. Comments, questions and additions by those interested would be most welcome. This catalogue could be linked with the database started by the Instituut Collectie Nederland, the conservation studio of the Mauritshuis and the ICOM Committee for Conservation.

The team of curators of Dutch and Flemish art at the Brukenthal Museum is very grateful for the continuing support of the CODART board and members. I would like to take this opportunity to make a plea to you to contribute to this important CODART initiative: your ongoing commitment and enthusiastic help would make the long-awaited catalogue of the Brukenthal collection possible.

The friendly CODART network has facilitated not only professional contacts, but also important book donations, so necessary for our research. We are very grateful to the RKD in The Hague, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and to our colleagues from Munich, Braunschweig, and Brussels for their generous gifts. Another, more unusual result came in the form of a major unrestricted donation of 16th-

and 17th-century Dutch and Flemish prints made by the CODART associate member Jan de Maere to the Brukenthal Museum. At the end of 2005, 142 prints were registered and these are now being researched and processed. They include series of prints by Lucas van Leyden, Phillips Galle, Crijspin and Simon de Passe, Cornelis Galle I, Schelte Adams à Bolswert, Pieter van Sompelen, Paul Pontius, Alexander Voet, Jan and Casper Luyken and the German “Little Masters” Georg Pencz, Hans Sebald Beham and Heinrich Aldegrever.

At the end of his Haarlem period, Phillips Galle (1537-1612) engraved a series of prints illustrating the Acts of the Apostles. The prints were based on the drawings made by Maarten van Heemskerck shortly before his death; these are signed and dated 1571 to 1573 (fig. 1a-b). First published in 1575, the series was completed by Ph. Galle and his workshop, with new prints and a title page, after the drawings provided by Johannes van der Straet, published in Antwerp in 1582 (fig. 2a-b). The donation comprises 18 sheets out of the 34 of this series; they are copies after the third state published in the 17th century by Joannes Galle (1600-76). Whether this is a fourth state or a copy not mentioned in the literature is a matter for further research. A large demand for mannerist engravings prompted publishers to reissue many of the late 16th-century plates, right into modern times.

Another donation was a series of 47 prints of illustrations for Virgil's *Georgics*, by an unknown 17th-century artist from the Low Countries. I have identified the masters: the Dutch printmaker Crispijn de Passe (1565-1637) for most of the plates, and his son Simon (ca. 1595-1647). The latter signed three of the donated plates in monogram, and they seem to be among his earliest known works, engraved at the age of 17. The series engraved by De Passe are illustrations of the selected works of Virgil (fig. 3), published in 1612, the first great undertaking of Crispijn de Passe after he left Cologne and settled in Utrecht. They include the title page of *Compendium Operum Virgilianorum*, five illustrations of the *Eclogues* (fig. 4a-b) and four of the *Georgics* (fig. 5a-b), printed by Herman van Borculo, with verses by Aernout van Buchell, and sold by Jan Janszoon in Arnhem. Then there are thirteen plates of Virgil's *Aeneid*, published by Jan Janszoon in the same year of 1612 (fig. 6a-b). Another series of prints engraved by De Passe are 24 illustrations of Homer's *Iliad*, published in 1613 (fig. 7a-b). All these prints are currently being studied in order to establish the states, and they will be presented in future thematic exhibitions, along with paintings, books and prints from our collection. We are interested in a partnership with other museums. It would be a great satisfaction if we could complete the series and bring the drawings and related paintings to the attention of the public.

I have saved the most intriguing piece in the donation for the end. This is a *Christ carrying the cross*, by Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533), signed with monogram and dated 1521 (fig. 8). Whether this is a modern impression of the reworked plate, a deceptive copy of Jan Harmensz Muller (1571-1628) or a state of the original plate is still to be decided. So please do not hesitate to comment – all opinions are most warmly welcomed by yours truly!

I would not end my brief presentation without expressing once more the gratitude of the Brukenthal Museum and its curators to Jan De Maere for the generous donation and to CODART for its role in generating this donation and for being a framework that enables research and cooperation.

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Fig. 1b Phillips Galle (1537-1612), after Maarten van Heemskerck (1498-1574), *The Acts of the Apostles*, pl. 16: *St. Paul escaping from Damascus by night*

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Fig. 4a Crispijn de Passe I (ca. 1565-1637), illustration for Virgil's *Eclogues*, 8 and 9: *The shepherd Damon in love*

Fig. 4b Crispijn de Passe I (ca. 1565-1637), illustration for Virgil's *Eclogues*, 10: *The lovelorn Gallus comforted by gods and shepherds*

Fig. 5a Crispijn de Passe I (ca. 1565-1637), illustration for Virgil's *Georgics*, 2: *Bacchus, the god of wine, and Pallas Athena as the patroness of olive growing*

Fig. 5b Simon de Passe (ca. 1595-1647), illustration for Virgil's *Georgics*, 3: *Pales, the guardian spirit of herdsmen and flocks*

Fig. 6a Crispijn de Passe I (c. 1565-1637), illustration for Virgil's *Aeneid*, 3: *Aeneas fleeing the Cyclops*

Fig. 6b Crispijn de Passe I (c. 1565-1637), illustration for Virgil's *Aeneid*, 5: *Dido takes her own life*

Fig. 7a Crispijn de Passe I (c. 1565-1637), illustration for Homer's *Iliad*, 10: *Jupiter calms Juno and Venus*

Fig. 7b Crispijn de Passe I (c. 1565-1637), illustration for Homer's *Iliad*, 20: *The gods help both sides in the struggle*

Fig. 8 Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533), *Christ carrying the cross*

Sypesteyn: a collector's-house museum

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Sypesteyn Castle in Loosdrecht is a small castle with a fine collection of the arts and applied arts. It is a so-called house-museum situated in a beautiful garden in Loosdrecht, southeast of Amsterdam, and northwest of Utrecht. It is relatively unknown, as the collections are not well publicized. Conny Bogaard, the previous curator, received a grant from the Mondriaan Foundation to study Dutch house museums, of which Sypesteyn is one of the most interesting representatives. In 2002, Bogaard published the paper "Sypesteyn Castle: a special kind of collector's house in The Netherlands" in *Open Museum Journal*, vol. V (July 2005). At the CODART congress I would like to introduce her new study *Bepaald maar niet beperkt*, which is devoted to a specific type of house-museum, the so-called "collector's house". This book will be published next December.

SYPESTEYN CASTLE (1927)

In 1902 the Dutch nobleman "jonkheer" Catharinus Henri Cornelis Ascanius Van Sypesteyn (1857-1937) established the Van Sypesteyn Foundation. The foundation's statutes define its primary aim: "to gather, keep, maintain and extend the family archives and portraits, coat of arms, valuables and rarities and all other objects related to or proceeding from the Van Sypesteyn Family, all in a wider sense." Van Sypesteyn, an enthusiastic private collector, wished to honor the Van Sypesteyn family, of which he was the last male descendant. It was also his intention to unite the family possessions with his private collections in order to display them to the public. In 1884 he devoted himself to reacquiring the former family property at Loosdrecht. He built a castle-museum on the "Ter Sype" site, where the family was thought to have owned a medieval stone house – Sype-steyn. Between 1911 and 1922, a neo-gothic castle arose, surrounded by a park and formal gardens; four years later, in 1926, the museum opened to the public. Van Sypesteyn believed he had created a reconstruction of a Dutch manor house as it might have been built around 1600.

Although the Van Sypesteyn family claims to originate from the mediaeval noble house of the same name, which was honored by Count Floris V in the 13th century, this cannot be documented. The family was, in fact, ennobled only in 1815. The family line of the last Van Sypesteyn can be traced back to the 15th century. As well-to-do merchants, the family adopted aristocratic manners during the seventeenth century. And like many other patrician families of that time, they spent great fortunes on stately homes and country houses, as well as on the arts.

The family's collecting habits are best illustrated by the 18th-century Cornelis Ascanius IV (1694-1744), mayor of Haarlem. He owned a considerable collection of paintings and coins, along with a curiosity cabinet. Cornelis Ascanius IV represented the typical 18th-century collector-connoisseur, his collecting and involvement in other cultural activities demonstrating excellent taste and good judgment. His son, Cornelis Ascanius V (1722-83), was also an important patron of the arts. This co-founder of the well-known Teyler Foundation in Haarlem, which promotes the arts and sciences by means of a public museum and stimulating scientific research, was deeply influenced by the ideals of the Age of Enlightenment.

In the first half of the 19th century, several important Dutch collections were assembled. Private collectors like Van Sypesteyn and Van Gijn represent this tradition. However, the essence of their collections differed from those of earlier connoisseurs. Notions of national identity encouraged the collection of objects that were both nostalgic and idealistic. Collections were not only assembled for

aesthetic reasons. Both Van Sypesteyn and Van Gijn emphasized the educational value of visual material in illustrating local history.

Educational ideals also inspired Van Sypesteyn in his design for his park and gardens. His belief that a garden was made by man as well as by nature was emphasized by his inclusion of a collection of architectural fragments and decorative objects in the landscape. Van Sypesteyn's fervent wish was to bring about a perfect symbiosis of house and garden, inspired by local history. His ambition to provide an historical interpretation of his collection is also evident in its presentation, for which he designed a series of period rooms. He made no distinction in his collection between artistic pieces and historical objects and documents.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a group of collector's houses evolved, within the genre of the Dutch collector's-house museum. They followed international museum trends of the time, by adopting encyclopedic collecting traditions and evocative forms of presentation in order to promote education. The collectors who pursued these ideals not only wished to perpetuate their family names but were also striving for a better society. It is precisely this mix of personal creativity and idealistic notions, demonstrated in the display of the collection, that distinguishes this type of museum.

Sypesteyn Castle pays tribute to Dutch traditions in private collecting and museological developments during the late-19th and early-20th century. The assertion that public education was an integral part of the museum program means that Sypesteyn has developed to become more than a collector's-house museum; it is, in fact, a "collector's museum". Van Sypesteyn specifically intended his home to become a museum for public education.

This coherent presentation of a private collection in a domestic interior has recently become the focus of interest for several restoration projects in Dutch collector's houses. For the discussions on restoration matters and collection display it is essential to understand the artistic philosophy that lay behind this form of presentation. Primary sources, such as inventories and architectural plans, and documents such as diaries and letters, have become even more significant in the interdisciplinary study. The history of private collecting and that of the historic interior are now integrated into general studies on domestic culture as a whole.

Bogaard's book will focus on the Dutch collector's museum of Sypesteyn as set apart from contemporary collector's-house museums in maintaining its specific character and presenting a unique conceptual vision of the whole complex of castle, museum interior and landscape gardening that is unrivalled in the Netherlands.