

## *Exhibition Turmoil and tranquility: the sea through the eyes of Dutch and Flemish masters, 1550-1700*

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The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, holds one of Europe's finest collections of Dutch and Flemish marine art, spanning the period from 1550 to 1700. To celebrate the quality of its collection, the Museum will stage a major exhibition under the title *Turmoil and Tranquility: The Sea Through the Eyes of Dutch and Flemish Masters, 1550-1700*, opening in June 2008. The exhibition contains 75 pictures, almost exclusively from the Museum's own holdings, with selected loans from other international museums and galleries. The exhibition will cover the development of marine art from the Low Countries, bringing Dutch *and* Flemish artists together, from its beginnings in the sixteenth-century Flemish tradition to its culmination in around 1700. Artists featured in the exhibition include Andries van Eertvelt, Cornelis van Wieringen, Adam Willaerts, Hendrick Vroom, Jan Porcellis, Simon de Vlieger, Jan van de Cappelle, Bonaventura Peeters, Jacob van Ruisdael, Abraham Storck, Ludolf Backhuysen as well as the van de Velde, father and son, and many others. The exhibition, along with its accompanying catalogue, have stimulated new academic and technical research into the museum's own collection. Advice, contributions and support from various CODART members has been invaluable. A particular highlight of the project is the conservation of Abraham Storck's *Ships on the River Y*, which has been returned to its original shape as an over-door painting. The exhibition will be displayed in Inigo Jones' Queen's House, the Museum's designed art venue. *Turmoil and Tranquility* takes a thematic approach to the subject matter. The exhibition is divided into five key sections. These are:

### *1. The rise of the seascape*

This is an introduction to the exhibition and the artistic phenomenon of the seascape. It will show the emergence of the seascape as an independent motif in the sixteenth century and will feature works of art by Flemish and Dutch masters. It concludes with the first naturalistic or atmospheric depictions of the sea in the art of Hendrick Vroom and Jan Porcellis.

### *2. Turmoil: the allegory of storm and shipwreck*

Here, the exhibition will investigate the potential symbolic and allegorical meanings of seascapes in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Key pictures shown in this room include the highly dramatic *Wreck of the Amsterdam* by an anonymous Flemish artist and Adam Willaerts' *Jonah and the Whale*.

### *3. Tranquillity: national waters*

This section introduces the principal artists working in the Dutch tradition in the mid- to late-seventeenth century. These artists, which include Simon de Vlieger, Jan van de Cappelle, Ludolf Backhuysen and Jacob van Ruisdael took on the legacy of Jan Porcellis and developed a recognizable image of the Low Countries and its surrounding waters.

#### *4. Foreign shores*

During the seventeenth century, the Dutch were a mighty force on the world's oceans. They sailed in ever larger numbers to the East Indies, America and Africa, setting up settlements and trading posts all over the world. At the same time Dutch marine painting was in its heyday. This section of the exhibition will ask if the two phenomena were related.

#### *5. History at Sea*

The final section of the exhibition will investigate the overlap of history painting and seascapes and will show how, through grandiose depictions of battles at sea, Dutch and Flemish painters became extremely successful both in the Netherlands and abroad. In particular, it will introduce the work of the Willem van de Veldes, painters to the court of Charles II in England.

The exhibition is due to open to the public on 19 June 2008. It will be accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue and in November 2008 a conference on Dutch and Flemish marine paintings will be held at the Museum.

