

Dutch and Flemish drawings in the Uffizi, an update

Wouter Kloek, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

In June 2008 an exhibition of Dutch and Flemish drawings will be hosted in the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi by its director Marzia Faietti, as a part of the program organized for the 50th anniversary of the Istituto Universitario Olandese di Storia dell'Arte in Florence. The exhibition will show about 90 master drawings from the collection of the Uffizi print room and will be curated by Wouter Kloek – author of the *Handlist of Dutch and Flemish Drawings in the Uffizi*, published in 1975, and currently curator at the Rijksmuseum – and Bert Meijer, director of the Dutch Institute in Florence and holder of the chair in artistic relations between Italy and the Low Countries during the Renaissance, at Utrecht University. The drawings are selected from a group of more than 900 by artists from the 15th up to the 19th century. The catalogue, to be published by Leo Olschki of Florence, will be written by a group of specialists and friends of the Dutch Institute. In the fall of this year, the exhibition will also be on show at the Institut Néerlandais in Paris.

To a certain extent the exhibition will be a reprise of the 1964 exhibition, also held in the Gabinetto Disegni, with a lovely catalogue by Emile Reznicek. In the last 40 years views have changed, there has been the occasional discovery and new insights have been gained. Most important is the change in attitude towards provenance. The main source of the Uffizi drawings collection are the acquisitions made by Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici, whose monumental collection of over 12,000 works was integrated into the Uffizi holdings after his death in 1675. As Cardinal Leopoldo's secretary, Fra Filippo Baldinucci acted as the first curator for his master's collection of drawings. A list of artists of 1663 and subsequent inventories of the drawings made by Baldinucci provide a remarkable insight into the character of Leopoldo's collections. The second source is the donation to the Uffizi of more than 12,000 drawings, among them quite a number of Dutch and Flemish, made by the Florentine sculptor Emilio Santarelli in 1866.

But something will also be said about the nature of the collection, which has important holdings of artists born in the Netherlands but living and working in Italy; on happy discoveries as well as awkward results from serious research, and on the comparison with, for instance, the second collection of Dutch and Flemish drawings in Italy: those in the Biblioteca Reale in Torino. Visits to the exhibition in Florence and to the Torino print room will be part of the CODART trip of June of this year.