

**Minneapolis Institute of Art**

# **Dutch Art (1600-1672)**

**Art Break July 7 and 10, 2020**

# **Mia**



The Low Lands, which had been ruled by Spain, split into two nations in 1581: The Dutch Republic, the northern Protestant provinces (present day Netherlands), and Flanders, the southern Catholic regions (present day Belgium and Luxembourg).

The 17<sup>th</sup> century is often called the “Golden Age” of art from the Dutch Republic. But it wasn’t so “Golden” for many.

“This age in Western history largely spans the 17th century...where many great things happened, but it also was a time when “poverty, war, forced labor, and human trafficking” were also present.... Using the term invokes feelings of national pride [in the Netherlands], but it should also not be used to ignore the realities that were present during this period.”

Amsterdam Museum no longer uses the term “Golden Age” in their galleries, September 2019. The Rijksmuseum retains the use of the term.

<https://dutchreview.com/culture/history/the-amsterdam-museum-drops-golden-age-rijksmuseum-will-retain-it/>

## Key Ideas:

- As a primary center of trade and industry, the Dutch Republic held a position of strength and power. The success in commerce and colonization caused the rise of a wealthy merchant class who became new patrons of art.
- These new Dutch patrons were interested in secular art: landscapes, still lifes, portraits, and genre scenes.
- Dutch art emphasized realism and ordinary life. Artists were influenced by the style of Baroque Italian artists, but they also were innovative.

For a great free resource on Dutch Painting, check out this National Gallery online publication:

[https://www.nga.gov/content/dam/ngaweb/Education/learning-resources/teaching-packets/pdfs/dutch\\_painting.pdf](https://www.nga.gov/content/dam/ngaweb/Education/learning-resources/teaching-packets/pdfs/dutch_painting.pdf)

Pieter de Hooch, *The Asparagus Vendor*,  
1675–80

What are some  
indicators we are  
looking into a wealthy  
household?



Unknown  
artist,  
Netherlands,  
Vases, 17th  
century

Delftware:  
Tin-glazed  
earthenware



Patronage shifted from the church to Dutch citizens, who delighted in their homes and collected art which reflected their lifestyle, values, and cultural prosperity.

What do you first notice in these portraits?



Paulus Moreelse, *Portrait of Lucas van Voorst*, 1628; *Portrait of Catharina van Voorst*, 1628.

The 17th century was also the highpoint of European Baroque art, a period following the Renaissance and Mannerism. Here are some characteristics we'll see in Dutch art of this time:

- Naturalism, especially noticed in an emphasis on textures.
- Compositions of paintings invite us into the picture, to participate in the scene. Diagonals and recession often add visual excitement.
- Dramatic lighting, with great contrast between light and dark.
- Subject matter evokes emotions.
- Classical influence is incorporated, often as allegory.
- Landscape, genre, and still life emerge as respected categories of painting.

For more on Baroque art and its characteristics: <https://ipevolunteers.org/essential-characteristics-of-baroque-art/>



# **Genre scenes (Scenes of everyday life)**

What aspects of everyday life are captured here?



Egbert van der Poel, *Interior of a Barn*, 1644.



What similarities do you see between these paintings?

Caravaggio (Michelangelo Merisi, *The Cardsharps*, c. 1595, Kimbell Art Museum; Hendrick ter Brugghen, *The Gamblers*, 1623, Mia.

Many Dutch painters from Utrecht, including Hendrick ter Brugghen and Gerrit van Honthorst, spent the early 1600s in Rome where they were influenced by the style and subject matter of Caravaggio's paintings. Once they returned home, these artists reinterpreted Caravaggio's style and genre scenes.



Hendrick ter Brugghen, *The Gamblers*, 1623, Mia.

# Landscapes and Seascapes

Salomon van Ruysdael,  
*River Landscape with a  
Ferry*, 1656.

“Nothing could be more  
Dutch than boats on a  
wide river under a  
cloudy sky: a ferry  
approaching shore, a  
rowboat out for a joy  
ride, a sailboat heading  
to the horizon.”



Paulus Potter, *A Landscape with a Herd of Pigs, The Swineherd Conversing with Another Man*, 1645



Abraham Storck, *The Four Days' Battle*, 1666.

This was a contemporaneous history painting, showing a battle the Dutch won in an ongoing war with England.





# Still Lifes

*Vanitas*: a still-life painting of a 17th-century Dutch genre containing symbols of death or change as a reminder of their inevitability.



Pieter Claesz, *Still life*, 1643, Mia

What conflicting messages come from this still life?



Abraham Mignon, *Still Life with Fruits, Foliage and Insects*, c. 1669, Mia.



# Portraits and history painting

What are some similarities between these paintings?



(Left) Caravaggio, *The Calling of St. Matthew*, 1599-1600, Image from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Calling\\_of\\_St\\_Matthew\\_\(Caravaggio\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Calling_of_St_Matthew_(Caravaggio)) (Right) Gerrit van Honthorst, *The Denial of Saint Peter*, (Utrecht), c. 1623, Mia

Gerrit van Honthorst, *The Denial of Saint Peter*, (Utrecht), c. 1623

“While working in Italy, the Dutch artist Gerrit van Honthorst earned the nickname “Gerard of the Night” for his dramatically lit night scenes.”

*Tenebrism* is the dramatic use of light and dark.



Group portraits were popular in the Dutch Republic, and one of the masters of portraiture was Rembrandt. At 25 years old, a year after he moved to Amsterdam, he painted this portrait of an anatomy lesson for the guild of surgeons. This launched his career.



How is light used in the group portrait?



Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, *Rembrandt in a Slant Fur Cap*, 1631, Mia; *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632, Mauritshuis



Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, *Self-Portrait with Two Circles*, 1665–69. Kenwood House, London; *Lucretia*, 1666, Mia







Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, *Lucretia*, 1664, National Gallery of Art, and 1666, Mia



Have you ever witnessed visitors having an emotional reaction to Lucretia?

How do you explain the story of Lucretia to visitors?

What concerns would you have in presenting Lucretia on a tour?  
How might you address any concerns?



Titian, *Tarquin and Lucretia*, 1571, Fitzwilliam Museum



# Questions?

Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, *Lucretia*, 1666, Mia