

Recent acquisitions at the Mauritshuis, The Hague, 1997–2005

THE ROYAL PICTURE GALLERY Mauritshuis in The Hague holds one of the finest collections of Dutch and Flemish old-master paintings in the world. However, the Museum is continually enriched by new acquisitions; with the support of benefactors, funds and foundations, as well as the State of the Netherlands and, especially, the Rembrandt Society, the BankGiro Lottery and the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, sixteen paintings and one statuette have been acquired over the past eight years. That the Mauritshuis benefits from private generosity was proved yet again in 2002, when Willem, Baron van Dedem, donated five major works to the Museum (Figs.V–VIII and X). A truly magnificent acquisition has been Rembrandt's *Portrait of an elderly man* (Fig.XVII), one of the finest and best-preserved portraits from the last years of the artist's life. The small but first-rate collection of seventeenth-century Flemish masters has been splendidly augmented by a genre painting by Roelant Savery with figures derived from the work of Pieter Brueghel the Younger (Fig.V); two important and very attractive pendant portraits by Peter Paul Rubens (Figs.III and IV); and, acquired only last year, a rare night piece by Rubens, *Old woman and a boy with candles* (Fig.II). The last three considerably enhance the representation of Rubens's work in Dutch public collections.

No fewer than seven landscapes have been acquired, among them two panels by Salomon van Ruysdael (Figs.VII and IX), including one of his rare winter landscapes; a highly attractive landscape by Roelant Roghman (Fig.XIV); a Brazilian landscape by Frans Post (Fig.VI), its subject closely associated with Johan Maurits, Count of Nassau-Siegen, who commissioned the building of the Mauritshuis. One of Ruisdael's most monumental compositions (Fig.XI) is the most important landscape to enter the collection since 1994, when Meindert Hobbema's *Wooded landscape with cottages* was bought. In addition to Rubens's night piece and Savery's painting, Gerard ter Borch's intimate depiction of a woman sewing (Fig.XV) further enhances the Museum's group of genre paintings. The two exemplary still lifes by Claesz and Kalf (Figs.VIII and X) fill gaps in the collection.

During the last decade many paintings have been lent to the Mauritshuis by private collectors, such as a small but important painting attributed to the studio of Jan van Eyck, possibly in part autograph; four attractive still lifes by Adriaen Coorte; the recently rediscovered *Still life with a resting dog* by Gerrit Dou, signed and dated 1650; Rembrandt's major *Portrait of Aeltje Uylenburgh* of 1632; and several loans from the Fondation Aetas Aurea, including Rembrandt's recently rediscovered *Bust of an old man with a turban* of c.1627–28, and Michael Sweerts's magnificent *Young maidservant*. Major paintings were given on permanent loan by the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, including Sweerts's *Draughts players* of



1. *Johan Maurits (1604–79), Count of Nassau-Siegen*, by Ignatius van Logteren (1685–1732). 1727. Terracotta, 35.4 cm. high. Gift of Robert Noortman, 2000; inv. no.1120. The acquisition by the Museum of a sculpture is exceptional, but for this rare eighteenth-century terracotta statuette there could be no better home than the Mauritshuis, since it depicts the man who commissioned the building.

1652, one of the rare dated pieces by this prolific artist, and a painting by Adam Willaerts, an example of the earliest phase of Dutch marine painting which greatly augments the Museum's collection.



II. *Old woman and a boy with candles*, by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640). c.1616–17. Panel, 79 by 61 cm. Acquired in 2005 from Otto Naumann Ltd, New York, with the support of the BankGiro Lottery, the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, the Mondriaan Foundation, the Rembrandt Society (supported by the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund) and the bequest of Ms A.A.W. Schröder; inv. no. 1150. This exceptional genre painting by Rubens is not only one of the earliest Caravaggesque works in the Netherlands but also a key piece in Rubens's *œuvre*; he treated the theme on various occasions, but this particular panel formed part of his personal collection. It is also the only nocturnal scene by Rubens after which a print was made, the painter being closely involved in the production of the etching.



III and IV. *Portrait of a man, possibly Peter van Hecke (1591–1645)* and *Portrait of a woman, possibly Clara Fourment (1593–1643)*, by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640). c.1630. Panel, each 114.5 by 90.5 cm. Purchased in 2003 with the support of the Sponsor Lottery, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, the Fund for National Cultural Heritage, the Mondriaan Foundation, the VSB Fund, the Rembrandt Society (supported by the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund), the Jaffé-Pierson Foundation, the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund and the Dr Hendrik Muller National Fund; inv. nos. 1131 and 1132. Until recently, the Mauritshuis possessed only two mediocre female portraits attributed to Rubens. Thus, when these highly attractive pendants, on temporary loan to the Museum since 2000, were offered for sale through Anthony Speelman, it was decided that no efforts should be spared to acquire them. Traditionally identified as Peter van Hecke and Clara Fourment, who belonged to Rubens's intimate circle of friends, the portraits are displayed near two pendant portraits by Van Dyck, thus magnificently representing the two most important masters of seventeenth-century Flemish portraiture.



V. *Peasants dancing outside a Bohemian inn*, by Roelant Savery (1576/78–1639). ?c.1610. Panel, 47 by 61 cm. Gift of Willem, Baron van Dedem, to the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, 2002; inv. no. 1129. This rare genre painting by Savery is an important addition to the Museum's group of Flemish paintings, and forms a good introduction to later Dutch genre painting, which is very well represented in the Mauritshuis.



VI. *Brazilian landscape with a house under construction*, by Frans Post (1608–69). c.1655–60. Panel, 46 by 70 cm. Gift of Willem, Baron van Dedem, to the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, 2002; inv. no.1127. Post's work is intimately connected with the career of Johan Maurits, founder of the historic museum building. In 1636 Post set out for Brazil in the retinue of Johan Maurits, who was taking up his new appointment as governor-general of the Dutch territories in Brazil. This landscape, with its delicate brushstrokes and atmospheric quality, is a particularly fine example of the work Post produced after his return to the Netherlands.



VII. *Winter landscape near Arnhem*, by Salomon van Ruysdael (1600/03–70). 1653. Panel, 56 by 80 cm. Gift of Willem, Baron van Dedem, to the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, 2002; inv. no.1128. This panel is a beautiful example of Salomon van Ruysdael's relatively rare winter landscapes. As such it is an important addition to the group of Dutch winter landscapes already present in The Hague. The painting's attractions lie in its finely painted details, rich palette and the splendidly depicted cloudy sky, in which the ground of the panel has been left partly visible.

VIII. *Still life with tazza*, by Pieter Claesz (1597/98–1661). 1636. Panel, 44 by 61 cm. Gift of Willem, Baron van Dedem, to the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, 2002; inv. no. 1125. This panel of a laid table, painted in a limited range of colours, is a great example of the monochrome banquet still lifes to which Pieter Claesz owes his fame. Thanks to this gift, the Mauritshuis, which already possesses earlier works by Claesz of 1627 and 1630, now boasts a highly representative group illustrating the development of the artist's treatment of still life.



IX. *View of Beverwijk from the Wijkermeer*, by Salomon van Ruysdael (1600/03–70). c.1661. Panel, 41 by 35.5 cm. Partial and promised gift of M. de Clercq to the American Friends of the Mauritshuis, 1999; inv. no. 1117. Both in terms of its subject – identified shortly after acquisition – and its date, this panel is a valuable addition to the small group of this artist's landscapes already in the Mauritshuis.



X. *Still life with fruit and glasses on a silver plate*, by Willem Kalf (1619–93). c.1659–60. 49.3 by 42.9 cm. Gift of Willem, Baron van Dedem, to the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, 2002; inv. no. 1126. This painting, in which Kalf concentrates on a small number of objects, is from the artist's best period and a very welcome addition to the collection, in which this important still-life painter was previously only represented by a lesser work.



XI. *View of Bentheim Castle*, by Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/29–82). c.1652–54. Panel, 51.9 by 67.7 cm. Acquired in 2005 at Sotheby's, London, with the support of the State of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Fund for National Cultural Heritage, the BankGiro Lottery, the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, the Rembrandt Society (supported by the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund), Noortman Master Paintings, the VSB Fund, H.B. van der Ven, ING Group and the Mondriaan Foundation; inv. no. 1151. The Stadholders' collection of paintings, which forms the core of the permanent presentation at the Mauritshuis, lacked any work by Ruisdael, a lacuna that was partially filled in 1827 with the acquisition of his magnificent *View of Haarlem with bleaching grounds*. However, an example of a monumental composition by Ruisdael was still desirable and, with this work, which was rediscovered a few years ago, the Museum has gained one of the most splendid and best-preserved works from the heroic phase of Dutch landscape painting.



XII and XIII. *Arcadian landscape with a bust of Flora* and *Arcadian landscape with the healing of the crippled man by Sts Peter and John*, by Jan van Huysum (1682–1749). 1724–25. Each 52 by 71 cm. Gift of Mrs C.C.M. de Bièvre-Duijndam to the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, 1997; inv. nos. 1113 and 1114. These well-preserved Arcadian landscapes, combining a pagan and a Christian theme and first published in 1992, date from a long-neglected period in art history; they provide the Museum with a fuller picture of Dutch painting after 1700.

XIV. *Mountainous landscape with waterfall*, by Roelant Roghman (1627–92). c.1660–70. 83 by 102.3 cm. Partial and promised gift of Mr and Mrs De Koster-van Rijckevorsel, 2000; inv. no.1124. The loose technique and the contrasts of light and dark in this mountainous scene recall landscapes by Rembrandt, who was a friend of Roghman, now better known as a draughtsman and etcher. This beautiful example from his painted *œuvre* is the first work by the artist to enter the Mauritshuis, which can now provide a fuller picture of the artists in Rembrandt's immediate circle.



XV. *Woman sewing near a cradle*, by Gerard ter Borch (1617–81). c.1655–56. 46.5 by 38 cm. Bequest of J. Nienhuys, 2004; inv. no.1133. This painting of a woman busy with her needlework while her maid stirs a pot behind her was made at the height of Ter Borch's career. Despite the sparse indication of details, the depiction of the space is entirely convincing. Marked by a superb rendering of textures and refined effects of light, this scene of daily life is a welcome addition to the Museum's group of paintings by Ter Borch.



XVI. *The adoration of the shepherds*, by Jan de Bray (c.1627–97). 1665. Panel, 63 by 48 cm. Purchased in 1997 by the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, with substantial support from H.B. van der Ven; inv. no.1110. This is the first history painting by De Bray to enter the collection. This intimate work by the Haarlem master is both a major addition to the small number of paintings by Dutch classicist artists and a welcome addition to the collection's choice group of history paintings.



XVII. *Portrait of an elderly man*, by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69). 1667. 81.9 by 67.7 cm. Purchased in 1999 with the support of the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Fund for National Cultural Heritage, the Sponsor Lottery, the VSB Fund, the Rembrandt Society, the Prince Bernhard Culture Fund, ING Group, Prof. Dr A.C.R. Dreesmann, the Dr Hendrik Muller National Fund and private individuals; inv. no. 1118. Rembrandt painted this moving portrait of an elderly man almost at the end of his career, but nothing about it suggests the painter's advanced age. The combination of acute observation, brilliant painting technique, the work's remarkably good condition and the fact that no Dutch collection possesses a similar piece, made the museum decide to purchase this painting from the collection of Lord Cowdray. This striking portrait may represent Rembrandt's long-time business partner Lodewijck van Ludick (c.1606–69).