

phalia with Spain in 1648 was merely the formal acknowledgement of an independence that had in actual fact been obtained much earlier. The art of the period displayed a national character, the painters chose their subjects from their own time and environment. They usually devoted themselves to one genre, such as portraits, landscapes, scenes from daily life or still life.

rooms 210-212

Both the groups by Werner van den Valckert, in room 210, of the GOVERNORS AND THE LADY GOVERNORS OF THE LEPER ASYLUM, are representative of portrait painting in Amsterdam at the beginning of the 17th century. This is also the case with the large corporation piece by Thomas de Keyser in room 211. Here, and in the next room, are examples of landscapes from this period. Remarkable are a LARGE WINTER SCENE by Hendrick Avercamp, peopled with numerous figures, and a sober river scene, THE FERRY-BOAT, by Esaias van de Velde (212).

Pieter Saenredam showed a preference for urban scenes and church interiors. THE OLD TOWN HALL OF AMSTERDAM, in extremely delicate colours, is his work. In room 212 the superb portraits of Frans Hals can be admired. This gifted artist characterized his models with a few quick strokes of the brush. THE MERRY TOPER is one of his best-known pieces.

rooms 213-215

In room 213 a few smaller canvases are on view. Jacob van Ruisdael is considered the greatest landscape painter of the 17th century. In the MILL AT WIJK BY DUURSTED and in a magnificent VIEW OF HAARLEM he depicted the impressive expanse of the plains of Holland beneath grey clouds and endless skies. These, and other landscapes by this artist, are in room 214.

A large picture in room 215 shows us the BANQUET OF THE CIVIC GUARD, held to celebrate the conclusion of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). Here we can admire the virtuosity of the Amsterdam painter Bartholomeus van der Helst as a portraitist, in his treatment of materials and objects, and in the lively arrangement of a large group.

rooms 216-219

Room 216 contains several works by Jan Steen, witty observer, and, above all, a great artist, who is very well represented in the Rijksmuseum. His depiction of the reactions of the children in the typically Dutch FEAST OF S. NICHOLAS is amazingly true. In room 218 hangs a picture in which he

portrayed his wife, Grietje van Goyen, at her toilet. She was a daughter of the painter Jan van Goyen, whose majestic LANDSCAPE WITH TWO OAKS is one of several landscapes by him in room 216.

Room 217 is devoted to the Dutch landscape painters who travelled to Italy in search of motifs. Here also hangs the HARBOUR OF AMSTERDAM, by Willem van de Velde the Younger, who is known particularly for his paintings of naval battles.

Other works by this artist, as also Jan van der Heyden's THE DAM IN AMSTERDAM and a SELF PORTRAIT by Jan Steen, are to be found in rooms 218 and 219.

REMBRANDT (1606-1669)

Rembrandt van Rijn is generally considered one of the greatest artists of all times. We may call him the painter of man because he always emphasized the human element, not only in his portraits, but also in his biblical and historical pictures.

He worked in his native town Leiden till ca. 1631. This period is represented by several pictures in room 220, e.g., JEREMIAH LAMENTING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM and REMBRANDT'S MOTHER. His predilection for strong light effects is already manifest in these paintings.

Room 221 contains work of a later period. From Leiden Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam, where he worked until his death in 1669. Outstanding masterpieces are THE STAALMEESTERS, THE JEWISH BRIDE, S. PETER'S DENIAL and PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF AS S. PAUL, all painted in the last period of his life, between 1660 and 1665. He had by then long since exchanged the precise technique of his Leiden period for a broader treatment, in which light and shadow intermingle and the colours have a deep, warm glow.

Rembrandt was by no means the unrecognized artist which later generations made of him. Proof of this, for example, is the fact that he was in great demand as a teacher. Among his best-known pupils were Govert Flinck, Ferdinand Bol, Nicolaes Maes and Aert de Gelder. Despite the obvious influence of their master, these artists displayed their own style. Some of their work is shown in rooms 222 and 223; among others, AN OLD WOMAN SAYING GRACE by Nicolaes Maes.

From room 228, moreover, we have an amazing view of the most famous corporation piece in the history of painting: Rembrandt's NIGHT WATCH. This work was originally placed in the Guild

rooms 220-224