**DUTCH ART | 1500-1700**

**selley & downman galleries**

**Characteristics of Northern Renaissance** **(15th-16th centuries)**

• intense realism through observation

• unflattering honesty

• complex, irregular composition

• nature for inspiration; scientific research

• detailed, realistic style

* oil paint – deep, luminous color
* symbolism

**Masters**

* The Limbourg Brothers
* Pieter Brueghel the Elder
* Robert Campin
* Jan van Eyck
* Rogier van der Weyden

**Characteristics of Northern Baroque (17th century)**

• dramatic

• humor at expense of others

• middle class patrons, collectors mania, fervor for paintings in houses

• secular subject matter: portraits, landscapes, still-lifes and genre

• theatrical lighting

• caters to the popular tastes, less of religious subject matter

• Protestant Holland, Catholic Flanders

**Masters**

* Peter Paul Rubens – Marie de’Medici series
* Anthony van Dyck – Charles I of England
* Rembrandt van Rijn
* Johannes Vermeer
* Jan Steen

The country was newly and fiercely independent, its citizens proud and strongly individualistic. Without the financial support of crown or church, its economy was market driven and occupations were largely unregulated.

The popular culture was image-driven; words were utilitarian, best used by scientists and speculators.

Family and domesticity figured prominently; so did prostitution, sensuality, public drunkenness, brawling, tobacco, even violence.

An unmistakable moralistic tone drew a sharp line between the virtuous and the sinner, yet the society itself tolerated both with seeming ease.

Like the rest of the economy, the arts were market-driven and thus depended on the needs, tastes, fancies, and finances of the local population. A painter’s livelihood depended as much on how well the tulips did that year as on the excellence of his work.

Many painters became specialists: a minor talent might be more successful if it confined itself to one particular subject, which was then repeated over and over. The net result was a glut of “look-alike” works, a century of painters too numerous to all be individually identified, and scores of misattributions.

**Thomas Willeboirts-Bosschaert, (Belgian, 1613 – 1654), *Venus Mourning the Death of Adonis,* n.d., oil on canvas**

Thomas Willeboirts-Bosschaert was born to a Catholic family in Bergen op Zoom and worked primarily in Antwerp. His style was influenced by Peter Paul Rubens. In this mythological scene, Venus has arrived on the scene as Adonis, the Greek god of beauty, lies dying. His faithful dogs stand nearby and appear to be mourning as well. Tales of Adonis’ death vary, but most relate that Adonis was killed by a wild boar while on a hunt. Venus (Aphrodite) appeared to mourn his death and from his blood she made sprout an anemone, a short-lived flower.

**Marinus van Reymerswaele (Claeszon), Flemish (1495 – 1566), *The Lawyer’s Office*, 1545, oil on wood, Ella West Freeman Foundation Matching Fund, 70.7**

Paintings by masters of Northern Renaissance realism often recorded official contracts or acts, and *The Lawyer’s Office* is a remarkable example of this practice. The papers pinned to the wall in the background of the paining tell us about a 1526 lawsuit begun in Reymerswaele on the North Sea by the heirs of a man who had purchased a salt refinery from another man. The buyer refused to make the initial payment, and a lawsuit was established by the heirs of the seller. By the time that the legal transactions ended in 1538, the property had been destroyed by storms, leaving only the lawyer to profit from the venture through his legal fees.

Marinus van Reymerswaele was known in his day as a painter of genre scenes and satire. This painting exemplifies both of these subjects, depicting a record of everyday life in a detailed and satirical style. The conniving lawyer appears well fed and is dressed luxuriously in his red velvet shirt and brown outer garment with a fur-lined collar. Next to him is his clerk who furiously jots down every word that is spoken. The man in the foreground on the far right empties his bag of its contents, probably all of his money in the world. His thin face tells us that he is poor and has had a difficult life and his clothes are simple and made of wool. The two figures in the background appear hopeful (on the left) and stunned (on the right). The artist tells the story of the legal transaction through costume, facial expression and body language.

**Important Dates in Dutch History**

1384 Philip of Burgundy acquires **Flanders**

1430s Van Eyck Brothers invent **oil** paint

1434 Jan van Eyck paints ***Arnolfini Wedding Portrait***

1474 **Caxton** prints first book in English at Bruges

1505 Bosch paints ***The Garden of Earthly Delights***

1517 Luther posts **95 Theses**, beginning Protestant Reformation

1519 **Charles I of Spain** is elected as emperor of Spain. the Low Countries, Germany, Austria and Italy as Charles V. He rules until 1555

1546 Council of Trent convenes and **Counter-Reformation** begins

1572 **Dutch War of liberation** begins

1576 **Provinces of Netherlands** unite

1583 William of Orange becomes ruler of the **Netherlands**

1595 **Dutch East India Company** is established

1598 Edict of Nantes revoked, sending **Protestants** fleeing France

1609 Spain recognizes **Dutch independence**

1627 Hals paints ***The Jolly Topper***

1642 Dutch explorer Tasman discovers **New Zealand**

1642 **Rembrandt** completes *Sortie of Captain Banning Cocqs... (*a.k.a. *Nightwatch)*

1664 English defeat Dutch in **New Amsterdam** and rename area New York

1665 **Vermeer** paints *The Art of Painting*

1675 Spinoza publishes ***Ethics,*** supporting democracy as most natural form of government

1683 Van Leewenhoek discovers **bacteria**

**Important World Events**

1348 **Black Death** decimates European population

1440 Gutenberg develops the **printing press** with moveable type

1492 **Columbus** lands in Hispañola, he thinks he has found sea route to India

1488 Diaz reaches **Cape of Good Hope**

1495 Leonardo creates ***Last Supper***

1504 Michelangelo completes ***David***

1513 Machiavelli writes ***The Prince***

1520 Suleyman the Magnificent brings **Ottoman Empire** to zenith

1527 **Rome** is sacked by Charles V

1534 **Henry VIII** creates Church of England

1536 **John Calvin** publishes *Institute of Christian Religion*

1540 Ignatius de Loyola founds **Jesuit** order

1541 **Protestant Church** founded at Geneva

1542 Portuguese are first Europeans to settle in **Japan**

1556 **Phillip II** begins reign of Spain

1587 **Virginia Dare,** first British child born in America

1588 British navy sinks the **Spanish Armada**

1590s Shakespeare writes ***Romeo and Juliet***

1606 **Confucianism** introduced as official religion in Japan

1611 Bible appears in the **King James version**

1620 **Pilgrims** land at Plymouth Rock

1632 Building of **Taj Mahal**

1637 Descartes publishes ***Discourse on Method***

1642 Paschal invents **adding machine**

1648 End of **Thirty Years War** in Germany

1651 **Ballet** introduced to Louis XIV

1656 Velazquez creates ***Las Meninas***

1663 Milton completes ***Paradise Lost***

1678 Bunyan completes ***Pilgrims Progress, Part I***