

# Dutch: 17th-century paintings on view

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## Inspired by Italy

The 17th century in the Netherlands is called the Dutch Golden Age, when the Dutch East India Co. was the largest commercial enterprise in the world, and the economy, arts and sciences all were flourishing.

The Dutch Italianates, as they were later dubbed by art historians, specialized in landscapes inspired by Italy, the epicenter of the Renaissance and home of so many master painters, sculptors and architects, Klos said.

Throughout the century, Dutch artists took the arduous trek to Italy, either over the Alps or by sea. Most waited until they had returned to Holland to create their paintings; others never traveled to Italy but took inspiration from the work of artists who had. They filled their canvases with Italy's warm light, ancient ruins and rugged mountains, quite a change of scene from the Netherlands' cloudy skies and flatlands.

"These paintings were somewhat exotic to the Holland market," Klos said. "The Dutch were traveling the world and controlling the trade. ... So this idea of exoticism in a way is a form of nationalism, because they're proud to buy these landscapes depicting other



Aelbert Cuyp, "A Road Near a River," late 1660, from "The Dutch Italianates: 17th-century Masterpieces from Dulwich Picture Gallery, London." The exhibit opened Thursday at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art. COURTESY OF THE DULWICH PICTURE GALLERY

worldly places."

But the paintings also retained a certain element of their homeland, with the artists portraying peasants, hunters and shepherds, usually dressed in Dutch clothing.

"The landscapes tend to look a little bit more Italian, but if you look closely at the figures and sometimes the animals, they will actually appear much more Dutch," she said.

## Falling out of favor

When Sir Peter Francis Bourgeois, a painter and art dealer, and Noel Desenfans, his business partner,

received a commission in 1790 from the king of Poland to put together a great art collection, the Dutch Italianate painters were famous names.

In 1795, Poland was partitioned between Russia and Prussia, and the king was exiled. When Dulwich Picture Gallery, the first public art gallery in England, was founded in 1811 through Bourgeois' bequest, the collection included the Dutch Italianate works.

While the images remain, their popularity proved less enduring.

"Nicolaes Berchem was

one of the great gods of art, and nowadays people haven't heard of him. That always fascinates me. I think it's one of the most interesting things, the his-

**ON EXHIBIT**

**"The Dutch Italianates: 17th-century Masterpieces From Dulwich Picture Gallery, London"**

- > **When:** Through Jan. 3.
- > **Where:** Oklahoma City Museum of Art, 415 Couch Drive.
- > **Information:** 236-3100 or [www.okcmoa.com](http://www.okcmoa.com).

**ONLINE**

To see a slide show of paintings from the special exhibit, go to Today's Paper on NewsOK: [NEWSOK.COM/THEOKLAHOMAN](http://NEWSOK.COM/THEOKLAHOMAN)

tory of taste, because things go in and out of fashion. They are seen as million-pound paintings one minute, and nobody wants them the next," Ian DeJardin, director of Dulwich Picture Gallery, said in an interview with Klos.

## Framed in history

Oklahoma City is the final stop for the first touring exhibit of the London gallery's Dutch Italianates collection. Not only are the paintings stylish for their

time, they are surrounded by the ornately carved and gilded wooden frames the gallery founders had made back in the late 18th century.

"They would have commissioned a frame maker in London to make the frames for the pictures in the current taste and fashion of the time," said Tom Proctor, the gallery's frame conservator, in a phone interview. "They're a perfect example of framing in England of that period."

## Museum to host 6th annual Art on Tap

BY BRANDY MCDONNELL

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Along with celebrating the opening of a new exhibit, the Oklahoma City Museum of Art will present its sixth annual Art on Tap beer-tasting event from 7 to 10 p.m. throughout the museum's ground-floor lobbies and on its roof terrace.

Art on Tap will feature about 80 domestic and imported beers. Hors d'oeuvres will be available from local restaurants, including the Museum Cafe, Adobe Grill Gourmet Mexicano, McNellie's Public House and Old Germany Restaurant. Bruce Benson will provide live

music on the roof terrace at the Stella Artois Rooftop Beer Garden, sponsored by Premium Beers of Oklahoma.

The museum's galleries will be open for viewing, including the first-floor special exhibitions gallery, where "The Dutch Italianates: 17th-century Masterpieces From Dulwich Picture Gallery, London" opened Thursday.

Tickets are available in advance only and can be bought before 5 p.m. today at the museum's admissions desk. Tickets cost \$45 for museum members and \$50 for nonmembers.

For information, call 236-3100, ext. 237, or go online to [www.okcmoa.com](http://www.okcmoa.com).

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