

# Northern Italianate Landscape Painters

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Northern artists had long spent time in Italy – hence the work of Pieter de Kempeneer (1503-1580) (Room 9) and Frans Floris (1516-1570) in the sixteenth century, who drew their inspiration from the Antique and contemporary masters.

Landscape painters Paul Bril (1554-1626) and Adam Elsheimer (1574/78-1610/20) (Room 10), settled there from the end of the sixteenth century and were to influence the Italian school profoundly. However, from around 1620, the Northern Diaspora gave rise to a novel way of representing the towns and countryside of Italy.

Cornelis van Poelenburgh (1595/96-1667) went to Rome in 1617 and around 1623 was among the founder members of the *Bentvueghels* “birds of a feather”, an association of mutual support for Northern artists, goldsmiths and “art lovers” – not only Flemish and Dutch, but also Germans and even a few French. He painted shepherds in the ruins and plains of Latium where the harsh light creates strong shadows. Around 1625, the Dutch painter Pieter van Laer (1599-1642 ?), nicknamed Il Bamboccio, invented the *bambocciate*, a different take on Caravaggesque scenes of realism showing moments of contemporary Italian low-life in the open air and bringing a modern feel to the subject matter. The *bambocciate* met with considerable success.

From these two trends – pastoral landscapes suffused with light, and racy at times vulgar scenes of daily life – was to develop a whole chapter in European painting, dominated by Northern artists but also marked by Italians such as Michelangelo Cerquozzi (1602-1660) and French painters like Sébastien Bourdon (1616-1671). This is well documented in the Musée Fabre, thanks to gifts by Valedau and Fabre.

## Room Berchem

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Flemish and Dutch Painting

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### After Poelenburgh and Van Laer : 1630-50

The German Lingelbach (1622-1674) and Jan Asselijn (1615-1652), nicknamed in the Bent association *Krabbetje* (little crab, on account of his crippled left hand), lived in Rome and continued in the same vein as Il Bamboccio. Lingelbach reworked one of his subjects – the *Purgative Source*\* (c.1649-50) in which the landscape is a summary backdrop to the personages in this painting with its crude scatological realism. Conversely, Asselijn’s figures occupy an important place in the foreground of an extensive landscape bathed in bright, cold light and dominated by a tree and hills (*The Lion Hunt*\* c.1640).

Other Dutch artists revived pastoral Italianate landscapes. Jan Both’s (1615-1652) mastery of the effects of backlighting swathe his work in a radiant luminosity (fig.1). Herman van Swanevelt (c.1600-1655) lived in Rome from around 1628 to 1641, then in Paris where he decorated the interiors of the Cabinet de l’Amour at the Hôtel Lambert, alongside Asselijn and the French painter Pierre Patel (1605-1676). His undulating wooded scenes, enhanced by a framing of meticulously-painted foliage, are flooded by soft yellow light reminiscent of the style of Claude Lorrain (1604-1682), his neighbour in Rome in 1628 : *Italian Landscape*\*.



fig.1- Jan Both  
*Italian Landscape*  
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum  
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### The Berchem Generation : 1650-70

In Holland, the impact of the works brought back from Italy by the Italianate artists, or more often painted on their return to their homeland, inspired others including Claes Berchem (1620-1683), Karel Dujardin (1626-1678), Frederik de Moucheron (1633-1686), Adrien van de Velde (1636-1672) and Thomas Wijck (1616-1677).

English translation by Susan Schneider

\* An asterisk indicates that the work mentioned is displayed in the room

Berchem was to invent an almost dream-like world, with his graceful pastoral scenes set in landscapes of whimsical forms brought together and swathed in a warm light. The strange rocky outcrop in the background of *Gathering Sticks\** is inspired by such features in Italy and is to be found in other works (fig.2). The smooth, fluid and sensual nature of his painting – together with the already rocaille appeal of his pastorals – account for his considerable success in Europe in the eighteenth century.



fig.2- Claes Berchem  
*Crayfish Fishermen*  
York, City Art Gallery  
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Dujardin lived in Rome and Venice. He painted *Two Muleteers at the Inn\** at The Hague in 1658, styled on the Italian hostelry scenes of Van Laer and perhaps also those of the French artist Bourdon (Room 11). The open air, sun, vine arbour, wine and mountains are clear signs of an ideal Italy.

A painter of cities rather than countryside, with seaports being his speciality, Wijck captured the backlighting, cool shadows and vibrant brightness of streetscapes. The *View of Ripa Grande\** depicts the lively atmosphere of the famous Tiber-side port in Rome, while the *Privateer and the Jew\**, an architectural fancy based on the Castel Sant'Angelo showing the booty being counted, is a metaphorical reference to the hazards of human existence.

### Later Generations

At the end of the century, just as the Bent was losing its vigour for want of strong personalities, the originality of the Italianate artists was also on the wane – this novel way of seeing, devoid of prejudice, preoccupied with realism and particularly sensitive to natural light, appeared “blasé”. Johannes Glauber (1646-1726), Isaac de Moucheron (1667-1744) and Jan Frans van Bloemen (1662-1749) looked back to the classics Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) and Gaspard Dughet (1615-1675); Hans de Jode (1570-1634) and Jacob de Heusch (1656-1701) to Salvator Rosa (1615-1673). The *bambocciate* were banished to the fringes, despite the success of Pieter van Bloemen (1657-1720).

In his highly studied *Italian Landscape\** of 1698, Isaac de Moucheron shows he is indebted to Dughet (Room 11) even if his sense of drama is reminiscent of Jacob van Ruisdael. Conversely, dating to 1710 with their light milky colours, the *Landscape with Bridge\** and *Landscape with Castle\** by Jan Frans van Bloemen, known as Orizzonte, are a felicitous and hedonistic avatar of Dughet’s work that was to mark the direction of Italian landscape painters decisively (Room 19).

While in Italy, De Jode was struck by the wild and savage character of Salvator Rosa’s expressionist art (fig.3). His *Landscape with Bathers\** painted in Italy reveals subtle reflections in the water and light-fringed forms reminiscent of Asselijn and Both. De Heusch offers a pastiche of Rosa in his *Landscape with Bandits\**, while *Landscape with a Town\** is closer to the *bambocciate* and Dutch vedutisti such as Jan van der Heyden (1637-1712) (Room 8).



fig.3- Hans de Jode  
*Fountain and Figures*  
Frankfurt, Städelschen Kunstinstituts  
© Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main

For his part, Pieter van Bloemen, known as Stendardo or Standaard, continued in the tradition of Van Laer’s equestrian scenes, but in a more expansive and spirited manner (he was to abandon this “Italian” touch upon his return to Antwerp). Trained in the style of Wouwerman (Room 5), he was fond of equestrian scenes and fine white horses set in an idealized Italy with antique relics and welcoming shade, surrounded by cypresses, and peopled with *contadini* and grooms.