

tion by Germans, both intellectuals and ordinary people. Gassner's role as an exorcist is placed into the context of other eighteenth-century figures, such as Mesmer, who were striving ostensibly to conquer disease.

This study explores Gassner's activities and the widespread notoriety they caused in a comfortable narrative style that makes for easy reading. Intellectual history can get incredibly turgid. This book is not such a history. It is interesting reading, well written, and entertaining. It is meticulously researched, but not tediously constructed. Midelfort examines the responses of various critics, such as Lavater and Zimmerman, without battering the reader into a state of mental weariness. The stories of Protestant and Catholic responses to Gassner are presented with clarity and economy of discussion. Before one realizes it, the reader has been immersed in this most interesting aspect of German thought and theology. One is given a tour of the lingering status of older studies of and beliefs in demonology and witchcraft that mark this period. Among the most interesting aspects of this book is Midelfort's discussion of the types of criticism that were brought against Gassner. Humor and ridicule, even the taking of anonymous potshots, were used by Gassner's critics and, presumably, by his supporters as well. This section again shows a fascinating aspect of how the German Enlightenment worked.

It is not necessary for the reader to be an expert on the multiple folds of German intellectual life in the eighteenth century in order to enjoy this book. Midelfort makes clear who the major players were and what positions they took in the controversy. But, if the reader is already familiar with the cast of characters, such as Lavater, Sterzinger, and Gassner himself, the reader will enjoy this excursus all the more.



Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape. Seymour Slive. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005. 288 pp. \$75.00. ISBN 1-903973-24-4.

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This volume is a catalogue for a traveling exhibition of paintings by one of the best Netherlandish seventeenth-century masters: Jacob van Ruisdael (ca. 1628–82). The collected works point out the sublime way Ruisdael painted landscapes. Strangely enough, in the Netherlands Ruisdael is not as famous for his landscapes as he is for his skies. There is even a common saying in Dutch: when the sky is filled with huge and dark clouds contrasting with the blue sunny sky, it is referred to as a *Ruisdael-sky*, or the clouds called *Ruisdael-clouds*. But the skies do need some ground underneath them, and there one will find the landscape.

Renaissance painters did not paint landscapes for the purpose of the landscape itself. They painted historiated, pastoral, arcadian, or Italianated landscapes, with historical, biblical, or mythological figures. Ruisdael generally did not follow suit; his themes were identifiable sites, grain fields, woods and forests, rivers, bridges, sluices, rushing torrents, Scandinavian waterfalls, hills and mountains, views of the countryside with churches, ruins, and lofty castles, as well as modest cottages with ramshackle privies, dunes, country roads, beach and shore scenes, seascapes, windmills, water mills, and even a mud mill. In almost every landscape we can see people, and they are normal people. They are peasants and farmers, travelers, bleachers, lords or coincidental trespassers. Even the hunters in the stag hunt painting (cat. 38) are just hunters; there is no reference to the story of Venus and Adonis or

to Actaeon. That could be why the nineteenth-century Romantic British artist John Constable saw Ruisdael as an inspirational source (an interesting essay in the catalogue is devoted to the relationship between Ruisdael and Constable). Ruisdael never crossed the Alps, and there is no clue that he was ever interested in classical culture. That is a bit strange for a seventeenth-century artist.

How Ruisdael trained to be an artist and any other insight into his education is unknown. His father, Isaac van Ruisdael, was an ebony-frame maker, an art dealer, and a painter; his uncle, Salomon van Ruisdael, was a landscapist. Apparently these two men are the best candidates for his teacher, but we do not know for sure. Common sense says that his father and uncle taught the young Jacob his first steps in sketching and painting. Jacob struggled with etching and he could not achieve any space in his early landscapes (cat. 102–4). Etching is an art he could not have learned from his family, given that neither his father nor his uncle was known as an etching artist. This suggests that Jacob must have gone to another workshop to get the master title. But where? When? With whom? These questions remain unanswered.

By the eighteenth century Ruisdael is seen as the leading Dutch landscapist. But nothing whatsoever has been discovered about what his contemporaries thought of his work or the way his clients acquired the more than eight hundred landscapes he created. It is a guess whether he kept a stock on hand to sell directly to customers or whether he worked through dealers—or perhaps he did both. It is certain that Ruisdael had at least one commissioner: Cornelis de Graeff, lord of Zuidpoelsbroek, Purmerland, and IJpendam, burgomaster of Amsterdam. De Graeff was in the center of politics and culture in the Dutch republic; he was advisor to Johan de Witt, and author Joost van den Vondel dedicated his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* to him. Cornelis de Graeff also was a member of the committee that selected Jacob van Campen as the architect of the new city hall in Amsterdam (now the Royal Palace on the Dam). De Graeff acted like a Renaissance prince, surrounding himself with art and beauty. He worked in Amsterdam, but had a manor in IJpendam and a country estate in Soestdijk. He must have imagined himself as a real modern man with modern ideas. That he ordered paintings by Ruisdael must have been a great honor.

Alas, Cornelis de Graeff is the only name we can connect to Jacob van Ruisdael. It would take until the eighteenth century for Ruisdael's name to appear more frequently in catalogues and inventories. Ruisdael's life and surroundings are filled with riddles and enigmas, and that is a bit of a pity. Nevertheless, the paintings are a must-see, whether or not we know a great deal about the biography of the artist.



Van Dyck: A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings. Ed. Susan J. Barnes. New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2004, xii + 692 pp. \$195.00. ISBN 0-300-09928-2.

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Internationales

This lavish book, presented in a boxed set, was produced for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by the Yale University Press. The aim of this impressive volume “is to produce a Catalogue Raisonné of works in oil by Anthony Van Dyck” (ix); that exercise means gathering many hundreds of paintings. For various reasons, the works of Van Dyck were often copied, and the authors of *Van Dyck: A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings* agreed