Teacher Information Sheets – Dutch Landscapes: Suggested Activities

ISAAC VAN OSTADE (1621-49)
*Travellers outside an inn*
1647
Oil on panel

This picture shows an Inn as (the artist highlights this by showing the people relaxing outside and a sign over the door) a place where people travelling might stop for the night, such as the couple by the horse drawn carriage. Note the horse being fed after a day pulling the carriage.

The person on the floor appears not to have the use of his legs; he carries himself along using the wooden blocks he is holding in his hands. He seems to be approaching the couple, perhaps thinking they are rich (clues being their clothes – they are much more expensive looking than the other people in the painting e.g. lace around the woman’s shoulders. They can also afford to travel by carriage) he might try to beg some money from them. It is likely he is very poor as at this time he would have been unable to work to pay for food etc.

The artist uses light to highlight some of the activity going on in the painting, for example the people relaxing outside the window, the horse being fed and the two people talking next to the carriage.

This painting features in one of the Royal Collection’s *Dutch Landscapes* eLearning resources: 
http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/microsites/dutchlandscapes/MicroMedia.asp?themeid=2223

WILLIAM VAN DE VELDE THE YOUNGER (1633-1707)
*The Golden Leeuw’ at sea in heavy weather*
1671
Oil on canvas

The Golden Leeuw (Golden Lion) was a Dutch warship built in 1666 (the stern view to the left includes the Golden Lion on its taffrail). The Golden Lion is the Dutch national emblem; the heraldic lion appeared on the arms of many of the Seven Provinces of the Netherlands and became the heraldic emblem of their unity. Warships, now and then, generally have symbolic or patriotic names as can be seen with this example. A galliot, the type of ship used by Willem van de Velde the Elder when following the fleet to make study drawings and sketches, sails between the two ships.

The painting is symbolic of the ship in peril: the crews of both ships are mounting the rigging to take in the sail, several of which are flapping dangerously: the left-hand ship sails against grey clouds in the thick of the storm; the right-hand ship seems to be sailing out of the worst of the danger towards blue skies. The flock of Gannets fishing in the story water adds to the menace.

Van de Velde makes the ships stand out against the background, first light against the dark (the gold of the heraldic lion singing out against the grey); and then the dark against light.

*Suggested Activity*: Suggest clues to discuss with children about the weather in the picture: Stormy weather - indicated by the dark clouds, choppy waves, sails fully filled and the flags being blown fully out by the strong winds.
CLAUDE GELLEE, CALLED ‘LE LORRAIN’ (1604/5-82)

*Harbour scene at sunset*

1643

Oil on canvas

This painting can be said to be an example of a ‘pathetic fallacy’ – where many aspects of the painting reflect the emotions of the people in it. For example, the people appear quite relaxed, maybe happy. Some are walking along chatting; others are leisurely unloading a boat. And one person can be said to be very relaxed! (asleep on the sacks).

The mood of the people is highlighted through:

- The calm waters of the harbour
- The low sun in the sky and late afternoon calmness
- Birds flying in the sky
- The relaxed feel of the ships anchored in the harbour, perhaps bobbing up and down with the small swell (The effect of these small waves lapping on the harbour’s edge may add to this effect.)

*Suggested Activity*: Discuss with the group the idea of a ‘Pathetic Fallacy’, how a painting reflects the mood of the people in it. For example…….. if there was a painting of two people in love do the group think the sky would be painted as a bright sky with fluffy clouds or a dark sky with stormy clouds? What would a painting look like if the people in it were angry?

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KAREL DU JARDIN (1626-1678)

*A Muleteer and two men playing the game of Morra*

1650-52

Oil on canvas

This painting shows the game of ‘Morra’ taking place between two people somewhere in Rome.

The artist was not from Rome, where this is painted, and therefore would have found watching this game quite fascinating. This was a place of different customs in comparison to what the artist was used to. The game is still played today!!

Here are they rules – *(tip - search for “Morra” on YouTube)*. There are many variations of Morra, but most can be played with two, three, or more players. In the most popular version, all players throw out a single hand, each showing zero to five fingers, and call out loud (not too loud if you are in the gallery!) their guess at what the sum of all fingers shown will be. If one player guesses the sum, that player earns one point. The first player to reach three points wins the game. In another version one person is designated the "odds" player while the other is labeled "evens". Players hold one hand out in front of them and count together to three (chanting "One, two, three, SHOOT!"). On "shoot", both players hold out either one or two fingers. If the sum of fingers shown by both players is an even number (i.e. two or four) then the "evens" player wins; otherwise the "odds" player is the winner. Since there are two possible ways to add up to three, both players have an equal chance of winning.
JOHANNES LINGELBACH (1622 – 1674)

*Figures before a Locanda, with a View of the Piazza del Popolo, Rome*

c.1645 – 50  Oil on Canvas

This painting, featuring a location outside a *locanda* (hostel) highlights an area of Rome the artist lodged in during his first years there. During that time he would have become accustomed to the sights, characters and different way of life that he would have been used to back in his native northern Europe. The painting features a number of different street traders: a *ciambella* (ring-shaped cake) seller, who also runs a *girella* (a type of roulette wheel banned in Rome at this time). An old man mends a boy’s shoe whilst he sits in the dirt and a blind musician plays a guitar, whilst sat in the hostel doorway.

**Suggested Activity:** Interesting features – How can we tell the musician in the doorway is blind? (is the stick next to him the only clue?). Can you spot the child behind the group of gamblers? Do you think he or she is interested in the game or the basket of bread/cakes underneath (note: this character does not even have shoes on).

ADAM WILLAERTS (1577-1664)

*The Embarkation at Margate of Elector Palatine and Princess Elizabeth*

1623  Oil on Canvas

This is an interesting painting in that it does not feature Holland (even though the horizon is dotted with windmills), but Margate in England (yet it was painted by a Dutch artist). The painting features King James I in 1613 (can you find him?), seeing off his daughter Princess Elizabeth and her husband Frederick, Elector Palatine. The couple are about to board the *Prince Royal*, a ship built in 1610 for Henry Prince of Wales.

One interesting aspect of the painting is the awkward composition and use of proportion. Much of the painting does not ‘look right’. For example the oversized guards to the left of the picture and the people on horseback on the beach. This is a great example to show children that even the best artists do not ‘get it right’.

**Suggested Activity:** Find out about Prince Henry – what happened to him? Can the pupils spot the *HP* Monograms, Prince of Wales feathers and figurehead of St. George on a horse on the ship intended for the prince?

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ALBERT CUYP (1620 – 1691)
*A Page with Two Horses*
Late 1650s
Oil on Canvas

This painting provides a number of interesting discussion points. The location is difficult to pin down, as it is almost certainly made up. The artists is trying to suggest the landscape in this painting is perhaps in a southern region of Europe, perhaps Italy but he has not been to these places himself. Instead he uses the architecture of old Roman towns close to where he lives as inspiration for his painting.

The Page in the middle of the painting is very well dressed in rich clothing, perhaps provided to him by his master. The man in the black clothing (perhaps the boy’s master) appears to be very rich, highlighted by the amount of lace he is wearing and the gold threading on his clothes.

*Suggested Activity:* Bearing in mind the characters in the painting, who do you think the artist has focussed on as the main character? Is the boy really a slave? Ask the children to look at the clues in the painting and consider what job he might have.

JACOB VAN RUISDAEL (1628/9 – 1682)
*Evening Landscape: A Windmill by a Stream*
Mid to late 1650s
Oil on Canvas

This is an almost stereotypical image of the Dutch landscape, with the windmill in the foreground and the low lying countryside in the background. The painting focuses the viewer’s eye on the windmill, they symbol of the Dutch Republic which played a significant role in the country’s new industry and resulting wealth. In addition to the production of flour the windmills pumped water through the drainage ditches of the lowlands allowing the reclaimed land from the sea to be used.

To the left of the windmill people are working in the ‘Bleaching Fields’ where newly produced linen and cloths were laid out in the sun.

*Suggested Activity:* Research the importance of the windmills for Dutch people at this time. How and what were they used for? Could anything be learnt from them or applied to today’s industry or need for renewable power sources?