

# *Memory & Imagination*

Dutch Italianate and Contemporary Landscapes

MALL GALLERIES

in collaboration with



DULWICH PICTURE GALLERY



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23 January to 1 March 2013

Mall Galleries  
in collaboration with  
Dulwich Picture Gallery

Mall Galleries, The Mall, London SW1

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# *Memory & Imagination*

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# Contemporary Landscapes

At first glance, an exhibition of 'Italianate' landscapes, painted by a group of 17th century Dutch artists, might seem a strange addition to the Mall Galleries, better known for its programme of contemporary British art. But, what better way can there be to explore some of the connections that working artists still retain with the traditions of great landscape artists of the past?

We are delighted that by hosting this loan exhibition of important Dutch 'Italianate' works from Dulwich Picture Gallery's incomparable collection, we will be helping to turn a spotlight on a genre of Dutch landscape painting, more popular with 17th and 18th century collectors than the 'domestic' school of Dutch landscape artists widely admired by gallery visitors today. However, we are also excited to display them, for the first time, in a strikingly contemporary exhibition space, where alongside them we have hung a small but intriguing collection of works by contemporary artists who continue to create wonderful landscapes, mesmerised by the same forces of nature and inspired by the power of their own imagination.

There are many artists practising today whose work retains a genuine and original relationship with the traditions of the Old Masters. This relationship is not



**Martin Greenland**  
*Even Over Eden* (detail),  
Oil on linen, 2004-11  
Image courtesy of the Artist



**Emily Allchurch**

*Worldscape (after Patinir)*  
(detail),

Backlit transparency, 2008

Image courtesy of the Artist and  
GBS Fine Art

slavish; they are not relying on the recycling of imagery or the reformatting of an Old Master painting to create an original work. Instead, these are artists who have developed a relationship with the Old Masters by using them as a starting point, which they leverage to develop a series of connections. It is somehow reassuring that the values of the past continue to inform work in the present - without restraining either originality or imagination.

Martin Greenland and John Stark are both artists who use the traditional medium of oil painting to create finely crafted but invented landscapes, populated by mythical or imaginary figures. In their treatment of subject and quality of handling, it is obvious they owe much to Dutch and Italian painting of the 17th century. Another of Greenland's works, *Before Vermeer's Clouds*, based extensively on *A View of Delft*, achieved wide acclaim when it won first prize in the 2006 John Moores 24.

Emily Allchurch employs a camera to reconstruct familiar Old Master images, while introducing her own constructed, contemporary vision of the world around us. The starting point for *Worldscape (after Patinir)* is an Old Master painting by the early 16th century Flemish painter, Joachim Patinir. After meticulously reassembling

digital images of her subject, she has overlaid the resulting landscape with an evocative contemporary environmental narrative.

Tom Hunter is an internationally recognised photographer who also exploits potent subject matter from Old Master paintings to reconstruct every day events, often with a menacing truth. As narrative works, they force the viewer to explore the boundary between reality and fiction. Meanwhile, video is the chosen medium for American artist, Jeffrey Blondes, who introduces an altogether fresh approach to the traditional landscape medium. His video entitled *Length of Days* records a single landscape vista, taking the viewer on a journey through a 52-week, 24-hour cycle as the vista expands and contracts according to the seasons.

Lewis McNaught  
Director, Mall Galleries



**Jeffrey Blondes**  
Still from *Length of Days*,  
2011-12  
Image courtesy of the Artist and  
GBS Fine Art



*The Warm South:  
Dutch Italianate Landscapes*  
**Brian Sewell**

There was not much great painting in Holland, the northern Netherlands, before the end of the 16th century, but in 1568 rebellion against Spanish Hapsburg rule began and within eleven years the historic state known as The United Provinces of the Netherlands had been established, and with the new country's sudden prosperity and independence, its emergence as a world imperial power, and its attraction as a refuge from Catholic persecution elsewhere in Europe, painting burgeoned and the market for paintings flourished as much as the markets for tulips from Turkey and cloves and hardwoods from Amboyna. The English diarist John Evelyn, visiting the Rotterdam Fair in 1641, found it awash with pictures, "...especially landskips... 'tis an ordinary thing to find a common farmer lay out two or three thousand pounds... their houses are full of them"; and another English observer noted that butchers, bakers, blacksmiths and bootmakers cluttered their walls with them.



Landscape as a genre of Renaissance painting had developed very slowly as a replacement for the decorative gold grounds or vivid cloths-of-honour that often formed the background planes of votive paintings, but from the very beginning of the Northern Renaissance – that is the art of Burgundy and the southern Netherlands in the 15th century – realism had poked its nose into the backgrounds of subjects of high seriousness, with glimpses of landscape, townscape



**Herman Saftleven**

*View on the Rhine*

Oil on panel, 1656

By permission of The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London  
(detail opposite)

and peasants going about their tasks of survival oblivious to the grander businesses of Adoration and Crucifixion that were the prime subjects of the altarpiece. As more and more painters from Antwerp and Brussels travelled to Italy, the landscape became the subject; to a man from the damp lowlands of what is now Belgium, the cliffs and castles of the Rhine were wonders beyond imagination and must be painted, though the tiny figures of the Pilgrims walking to Emmaus or of the Holy Family fleeing into Egypt might be the titular excuse.

It was Pieter Bruegel in the middle of the 16th century who wrought the great masterpieces of an encyclopedic trend in which everything he knew of winding rivers, rock bluffs and the great pinnacles, turrets and spires that are the architecture of mountains, together with the spikes of age-old pine forests, were woven into world landscapes with infinite horizons. It was this Bruegel too who sat on a rock in the Alps and drew with critical accuracy informed by wonder, the crags and peaks before him, this Bruegel who used the flat polder landscapes of Brabant as the homely settings for his admonitory tales of cut-purses, cowardly shepherds and witless peasant follies, this Bruegel who released the landscape from the tyranny of the Bible and the myth and painted it in all its seasons as the place where ordinary people lived their ordinary lives. In Bruegel was





**Philips Wouwermans**

*Halt of a Hunting Party*

Oil on canvas, early 1660s

By permission of The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London  
(detail opposite)

the man who summed up all the then current trends and laid the foundations for the future.

The formula of the world landscape – everything a traveller had ever seen, piled Pelion on Ossa in immeasurable distances and perhaps framed by a proscenium arch, the viewer's eye compelled to leap from repoussoir to repoussoir across clear bands of brown and green and blue that have scant reference to reality but are the rudimentary clarification of what the painter sees as aerial perspective – encouraged indulgence in extreme and fantasy; but there was another trend, perhaps as much encouraged by Bruegel through the imitative engravings that spread his clear belief that the landscapes of home, the meadow, the polder and the dyke, were as worthy of a painter's attention as the wonders of the Rhine and Alps. Thus Dutch artists of the 17th century went out through the city gates of Haarlem and Amsterdam and painted what they saw – flat vastnesses broken only by the horizontal lines of the draining ditch and the occasional great tree; in these, if distance were to be accurately communicated, they must work in the subtle tonal changes of colour in aerial perspective, observe the shadow of the clouds and not depend on the careful staging of theatrical scenery. They learned to incorporate the sky not as a bright blue backdrop but as a lively element that greyed, yellowed, grew light or dark, and that in some mysterious



**Jan Wijnants**  
*Landscape*

Oil on panel, late 1650s  
(detail above)

By permission of The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London



sense reflected and contained what lay beneath it. These paintings were evocations of distance, light, atmosphere and season at least as much as landscapes of the particular place – not documents of topography, but reality with such an edge to it that our own perceptions, centuries later, are heightened and we see the beauty of the ordinary with the painter’s penetrating eye.

Other artists went to Rome, the great city of the warm south that had become the most celebrated shrine of aesthetic cultural pilgrimage and the crucible of contemporary art, set in the gentle sunlit landscapes of the Campagna where only to set foot was to evoke the bucolic pastorals of Virgil. Even as early as 1604, the year of his biographical dictionary of northern painters, Carel van Mander had called Rome “the city where, before all other places, the painter’s journey is apt to lead him.” “Before all other places” was a shrewd observation; most 17th century Dutchmen kept their brushes in their baggage on the journey, the fantasies of the Rhine landscape and the swooping bird’s eye view worn thin, the tales of awe and wonder no longer worth the telling – Saffleven’s enchanting view of a village landing-stage, dated 1656, must be one of the last of the genre – and of the Alps, Florence, Venice and Bologna, there is hardly a trace (did not one single Dutchman pause in Orvieto to see Signorelli’s nudes?).







**Aelbert Cuyp**

*A Road near a River*  
Oil on canvas, 1660

By permission of The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London  
(detail opposite)

In Rome these *Bentvueghels*, as they called themselves, this band of brother painters who had flown so far from home, more or less penniless, settled in a slum, carefree, to live, work, eat, drink and lust together, even establishing a *Schildersbent*, a guild of Dutch painters of which the local Italian Academy did not altogether approve. Some, responding to the melancholy pleasure of ruins, painted ancient Rome; some all but forgot these ancient monuments of urban grandeur and employed them only as background and setting for their preferred human subjects whom Salvator Rosa dubbed the flea-ridden scum of society, those who shit, piss and pick their noses without embarrassment or shame – these painters were nicknamed *Bamboccianti* by their peers, after the filthy ugly children whom they chose to paint. Other *Bentvueghels* wandered off into the Campagna to be enchanted by views perhaps so ennobled by an ancient church or castle keep, by a baroque fountain or the wing of a grand villa, or by the arch of a bridge that once may have borne the weight of Caesar's legions, that they felt compelled to endow even the peasants with unconscious classical grace.

From these a third genre developed, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps driven by a market weary of landscapes too familiar – that of the nowhere landscape to be found in neither north nor south, ideal and decorative, serene and



**Nicolaes Berchem**  
*A Road through a Wood*  
Oil on canvas, late 1640s

By permission of The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London  
(detail above)



perfect; in these, that which might be northern is warmed by a southern sun and that which might be southern cools in a northern dusk or dawn. It is in this genre that Pynacker concentrated with the power of hallucination on the silver bark of birch trees against the shafting light of evening in a sylvan glade (the huge leaves of a wild weed in the foreground only accidentally contribute to the effect, for their startling blue was not intended but has come about through the fading of a yellow pigment), and Wouwermans set his elegant hunting parties. Less exalted, plodding Wijnants, with the dunes of Haarlem, invaded an invented rolling hinterland with mountains its horizon. As for Aelbert Cuyp – with so many examples to follow he had no need to make the Roman journey, but could invent a perfect sunlit world of landscapes recording what he had been told of the road to Italy.



In a handful of paintings by Dutchmen determined to reach the Eternal City we have something of a record of their journey. It begins with Berchem's *A Road through a Wood*, his concentration fixed on stalwart trees in which every leaf must be described with an appropriate brush (they were called "leafers", trimmed to achieve particular leaves with a single dab); it feels thoroughly Dutch, though at a point where the flatlands of the northern Netherlands gave way to forested Germany. The journey ends, again with



**Nicolaes Berchem**

*Roman Fountain with Cattle and Figures (Le Midi)*

Oil on panel, 1645-46

By permission of The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London (detail opposite)

Berchem, at a *Roman Fountain* in the Campagna, its water shared by cattle and a washerwoman, a milkmaid standing by, yoke discarded, adopting a classical contrapposto very close to that of the Cesi Juno (Capitoline Museum), even adapting to peasant dress her much admired drapery. The contrast between these two paintings perfectly encapsulates the “before and after” of the Roman journey. Swanevelt’s *Arch of Constantine* could not have been painted in 1645, four years after leaving Rome for Paris, had he not made scrupulous drawings of it specifically to be repeated to satisfy a by then well-established market for topographical records. The *Landscape with Figures* attributed to Anton Goubeau is as shadowed and menacing as any Bamboccianti subject, though the ruffian bravo and his courtesan are a social class or two above the slum dwellers of the Via del Babuino; there is, perhaps, some forgotten implication in the bravo’s action, for the shotgun, to a Dutchman of the 17th century, was a symbol of the penis and bawdy in their pictures was never far away.



Within a generation or so the Bamboccianti died out and, though the Bentvueghels and the Schildersbent continued until well into the 18th century, later Dutch painters of landscape abandoned their often closely observed naturalism and surrendered to the pervasive influence of Poussin, Claude and Gaspar Dughet. The Dutch Italianates



**Herman van Swanevelt**  
*The Arch of Constantine*  
Oil on canvas, 1645

By permission of The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London (detail opposite)

thus divide into three main groups – the generation born in the last years of the 16th century, of whom Breenberg and Poelenburch are examples, with Saffleven and Swanevelt as transitional figures, the group we have just discussed, working in the mid 17th century, and those at the end of it and beyond whom we might describe as International Claudians. There were, of course, more transitional figures; just as Cuyt stayed at home, content with borrowed sunshine, so too did Wijnants and Wouwermans – there was a point in the history of Dutch landscape painting at which, to be Italianate, the months of journeying south were no longer necessary, and they had reached it.







Attributed to **Anton Goubau**  
*Landscape with Figures*

Oil on copper, 17th century

By permission of The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London  
(detail opposite)

# Exhibition works

## **Emily Allchurch**

British; born 1974

*Worldscape (after Patinir)*, 2008

Backlit transparency, 124 x 137 cm

Private Collection, London

## **Nicolaes Berchem**

Haarlem 1620-1683 Amsterdam

*A Road through a Wood*, late 1640s

Oil on canvas, 119 x 89 cm

*Roman Fountain with Cattle and Figures (Le Midi)*, 1645-46

Oil on panel, 37 x 49 cm

## **Jeffrey Blondes**

American; born 1956

*Length of Days*, 2011-12

Real time. High definition (HDV 1080i)

24 hour loop, 129 x 77 x 9 cm

Courtesy of GBS Fine Art

## **Jan Both**

Utrecht 1615-1652

*Road by the Edge of a Lake*, 1638-41

Oil on panel, 58 x 52 cm

## **Aelbert Cuyp**

Dordrecht 1620-1691

*A Road near a River*, 1660

Oil on canvas, 113 x 168 cm

*View on a Plain*, 1644

Oil on panel, 48 x 72 cm

Attributed to **Anton Goubau**

Antwerp 1616-1698

*Landscape with Figures*, 17th century

Oil on copper, 21 x 30 cm

## **Martin Greenland**

British; born 1962

*Even Over Eden*, 2004-11

Oil on linen, 91 x 122 cm

## **Jan van der Heyden**

Gorinchem 1637-1712 Amsterdam

*Two Churches and a Town Wall*, 1660

Oil on panel, 23 x 34 cm

**Tom Hunter**

British; born 1965

*Swan Song*, 2002

Cibachrome print, 153 x 122 cm

Courtesy of Purdy Hicks Gallery

**Adam Pynacker**

Schiedam 1620/1-1673 Amsterdam

*Bridge in an Italian Landscape*, 1653-54

Oil on panel, 44 x 53 cm

*Landscape with Sportsmen and Game*  
1665

Oil on canvas, 138 x 199 cm

**Herman Saffleven**

Rotterdam 1609-1685 Utrecht

*View on the Rhine*, 1656

Oil on panel, 43 x 58 cm

**John Stark**

British; born 1979

*Aurora (Goddess of Dawn)*, 2007

Oil on panel, 55 x 46cm

Private Collection, Dublin

**Herman van Swanevelt**

Woerden 1600-1655 Paris

*The Arch of Constantine*, 1645

Oil on canvas, 90 x 116 cm

**Jan Wijnants**

Haarlem 1631/2-1684 Amsterdam

*Landscape* late 1650s

Oil on panel, 16 x 19 cm

*Landscape with Cow Drinking*, late 1650s

Oil on panel, 15 x 19 cm

**Philips Wouwermans**

Haarlem 1619-1668

*The Return from Hawking*, 1660/65

Oil on panel, 48 x 65 cm

*Halt of a Hunting Party*, early 1660s

Oil on canvas, 56 x 83 cm

# Mall Galleries

The Mall Galleries is a registered charity which champions new contemporary figurative art by living artists. Our aim is to promote, inspire and educate audiences about the visual arts.

The Mall Galleries in Central London function not only as a venue, with three main galleries, a bookshop and a cafe, but also as the home of the Federation of British Artists.

The Federation of British Artists (FBA) consists of eight of the UK's leading art societies, all of whom hold their Annual Exhibition at the Mall Galleries. A unique national resource, the FBA has over 500 artist members and serves as a national focal point for contemporary figurative art by living artists.

The exhibition programme for 2013 includes contemporary landscape exhibition, *The British Scene* and the annual exhibition of *The Royal Society of Portrait Painters*.


# Dulwich Picture Gallery

Just 12 minutes from Central London (London Victoria or London Bridge) by train lies England's very first purpose built public art gallery. Visited by the likes of Van Gogh and Monet, Dulwich Picture Gallery was founded in 1811 and designed by Regency architect Sir John Soane. The stunning enfilade and exhibition spaces are arranged as a series of interlinked rooms illuminated naturally through skylights, a concept that has had an enduring influence on art gallery design.

The Gallery houses one of the country's finest collections of Old Masters, especially rich in French, Italian and Spanish Baroque paintings and in British portraits from Tudor times to the 19th century. Famous works include those by Rembrandt, Gainsborough, Poussin, Watteau, Canaletto, Rubens, Veronese and Murillo amongst many others.

The Gallery also hosts a yearly programme of world class temporary exhibitions. 2013's programme includes *Murillo & Justino de Neve: The Art of Friendship*, *Nash*, *Nevinson*, *Spencer*, *Gertler*, *Carrington*, *Bomberg: A Crisis of Brilliance* and *Whistler in London: Battersea Bridge and the Thames*.

The Gallery boasts a dynamic programme of education and community outreach initiatives that help change the lives of over 35,000 participants a year through art.



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Dulwich Picture Gallery is offering 2 for 1 entry to its current exhibition: *Murillo & Justino de Neve: The Art of Friendship*. Simply present a valid Mall Galleries exhibition ticket at the ticket desk in the Gallery.

**Bartolomé Esteban Murillo**

*'Spring' (?) as a Flower Girl, 1665-70, Oil on canvas*

By permission of The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

# Acknowledgements

*Memory & Imagination* would not have been possible without the support of many people. We are indebted to the Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London for their generous agreement to loan the Mall Galleries fifteen major works from their collection. In particular, we would like to thank Dr. Xavier Bray, Arturo and Holly Melosi Chief Curator at Dulwich, for his help in making this exhibition possible and for his assistance selecting the works; we would also like to recognise Lucy Findley, Curatorial Collections Manager at Dulwich, for all her support and time organising the loan. We hope the exhibition will encourage our visitors to explore further the rich and stunning collection of Dutch 'Italianates' on permanent display at Dulwich Picture Gallery.

We are also grateful to the private collectors who have loaned works to this exhibition and for the assistance we have received from Rebecca Hicks at Purdy Hicks Gallery Ltd., Giles Baker-Smith at GBS Fine Art Ltd. and Zavier Ellis at Charlie Smith London Ltd. for helping to arrange these loans.

No major exhibition is possible these days without the financial assistance of an enlightened sponsor. We would especially like to acknowledge the support we have received from Buzzacott LLP, who have supported the work of the Mall Galleries over many years and whose financial support to *Memory & Imagination* is greatly valued. We would also like to thank William Waters at Laithwaite's Wine for his company's sponsorship of the opening and Brian Sewell, art critic of the *Evening Standard*, for his essay entitled *The Warm South*.

Finally I would like to thank my own team and, in particular, Liberty Rowley for marketing support and for producing this booklet; special thanks are also due to John Deston for arranging all exhibition logistics and for liaising with Arts Council England over the Government Indemnity Scheme.

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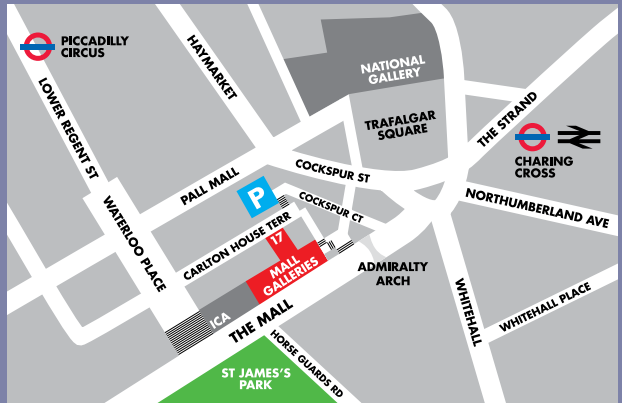
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Cover image: Adam Pynacker, *Landscape with Sportsman and Game* (detail).  
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