

Nederlandse Vereniging van
ZEE SCHILDERS

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Dutch Society of Marine Artists

They wrote, painted, drank and attracted followers.
They grew like rare plants against the dunes with their
wobbly painters' easels.

Dorthe Nors 'Silent rain in Skagen' from *A Line in the World:*
A Year on the North Sea Coast (En linje i verden), 2021

For **Peter de Rijcke**



FOREWORD

Marine painters are fascinated by water. This fascination for waves, boiling foam, placid and turbulent water comprises looking at what is not so readily visible.

The fascination for water runs parallel to life and death, hope and sorrow. By often painting 'en plein air' and by merging with the moment, an artist's fascination may become palpable for the viewer. Who might almost feel the sighing wind.

Marine painters evidently stand in a long tradition, one that during recent years has also been taken up by photographers and filmmakers.

The Dutch Society of Marine Artists had its origins in the Dutch Royal Navy, an echo of the 17th century Dutch artists embarking to witness strife on and near the sea. What began with the paintings of father and son Van de Velde in the 17th century, continues to inspire subsequent generations.


The Maritime Museum in Amsterdam still collects such fascinations, both in photography e.g. Mischa Keijzer and recently a large watercolour by Hans op de Beeck.

It is important that this publication of the Dutch marine painters has been realized. As a time document it takes its place in the centuries-old tradition, one we must maintain, for our own times as well as for the future.

Michael Huijser, 2023

Director, Maritime Museum, Amsterdam

Left:

 | Hans Op de Beeck, *Waves* (2022), black and white watercolour on Arches paper, Coll. National Maritime Museum, Amsterdam





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Previous pages:
 | J.C.A. Goedhart, *The Royal yacht Britannia is greeted by a squadron of the Dutch Royal Navy* (1958), photo: Royal Collection Trust | © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022, wit permission of the J.C.A. Goedhart Foundation
Left:
 | Hendrik Willem Mesdag, *Calm Sea* (ca. 1860-1900), oils on canvas, Coll. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (detail)



🖼️ | Nicolaas Baur, 's Lands fregat 'Rotterdam' op de Maas voor Rotterdam [The country's frigate 'Rotterdam' on the river Maas off Rotterdam] (1807), oils on canvas, Coll. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Sea and ships have been depicted since the earliest times, but it was not until the 16th century, at the time of the great voyages of discovery, that maritime art emerged as an independent genre. This specialism developed further when European seafaring nations competed among themselves, sending out trading ships, often protected by warships, and establishing colonies. Thus, Dutch maritime art has a long tradition dating back to those illustrious years of merchant shipping and naval wars in the 17th century, the Dutch Golden Age. The economic boom that emerged in the last decades of the Eighty Years' War was due in no small part to successful seafaring, which allowed products from all over the world to be marketed here. The distant shores, modern ships and the countless dangers that threatened seafarers greatly captured the imagination and provided artists with a wide range of maritime subjects.

A black page in the history of Dutch shipping concerns the transport of enslaved people from Africa to the American and Surinam plantations as well as to the Far East. Slavery is not a Dutch invention, but the industrial scale and unprecedented cruelty of this form of 'cargo shipping' were unprecedented until then. In museums, one will look in vain for artistic depictions of this trade, other than the 'cargo diagrams' showing how many decks could hold how many people crammed together.

A lot of money was made during the Golden Age as sales were plentiful. Moreover, administrators, fleet captains and merchants were eager to display the discoveries, the new possessions, the glorious victories and successes in trade to their own prestige. This led

MARITIME ART, A HISTORY



From top to bottom:
🏛️ | Egyptian funerary boat (Middle Kingdom; 2055-1650 BC.), wood and pigment, Coll. Australian Museum, Sydney
🏛️ | Ship's procession in the Akrotiri palace (Minoic Period; 1600 BC.), fresco, Santorini, Greece
🏛️ | Assyrian 'bireme', once on the wall of the Nineveh palace (ca. 700 BC.), Coll. British Museum, London



🏛️ | Flagship of William the Conqueror, detail of the Bayeux Tapestry (ca. 1068-1077), embroidery of wool on linnen, Bayeux City Hall, France



🏛️ | Japanese Samurai attacking a Mongol ship, detail from MoKo Shurai Ekotoba (ca. 1293), handscroll, ink and pigment on paper, Collection of the Imperial Court, Japan

to an ever-increasing demand for (maritime) works of art. Remarkably, despite commissioned with an emphasis on elaborate and precise rendering, the painters of the time fascinate us today because they imbued their work with it.

During the naval wars between England and the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands, marine painter Willem van de Velde the Elder (1611-1693) was commissioned by the Dutch Admiralty to produce artistic records of battles



🖼️ | Willem van de Velde the Elder, *De zeeslag bij Terheide* [The naval battle at Terheide] (1657), ink on canvas, Coll. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

at sea. From a sloop, he made sketches, undoubtedly from a safe distance from the melee. He later used these notes in his studio to give the paintings (drawn in ink on prepared white canvas) as much realism as possible. In all he sailed on six missions with the fleet. This made Van de Velde the first ‘embedded’ artist in the service of the patriotic naval forces, a tradition that continues to this day. Obtaining this honourable commission, incidentally, did not prevent him and his son Willem the Younger (1633-1707) from entering the service of the English court in the Disaster Year (1672) – when the Dutch art market completely collapsed; after all the Van de Veldens were entrepreneursde zeeschilders – where they would be of great influence on the development of British maritime painting.

Painting was the only medium that could accurately show what dramatic heroic events were taking place far away at sea.

But commercial shipping also shared in the attention. For a long time, realistic and sometimes highly detailed portraits of ships were popular, especially among ship owners and captains. In addition, under the influence of Romantic movement in the 19th century, romanticized pictures and later Impressionistic images found their way to the public. Well-known examples are the French painter Théodore Géricault (1798-1863) – who produced one of the most disturbing maritime paintings of all time – and the English painter Joseph Mallord



From top to bottom:
 🖼️ | Willem van de Velde the Younger, *The canon roll* (ca. 1680), oils on canvas, Coll. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
 🖼️ | Théodore Géricault, *The raft of the Medusa* (1818-1819), oils on canvas, Coll. Musée du Louvre, Parijs
 Bottom right:
 🖼️ | Joseph Mallord William Turner, *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth to be broken up* (1839), oils on canvas, Coll. National Gallery, London

William Turner (1775-1851) and Dutch artists Johan Barthold Jongkind (1819-1891) and Hendrik Willem Mesdag (1831-1915).

Certain developments iduring the 19th century caused an increased the public’s interest in the coast, which led to coastal landscapes and life as the focus of interest beside traditional maritime subjects. This led to the foundation of

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ART COLONIES

We might like to think so but it was not primarily artists who discovered the coast. As Martin Hendriksma tells us in his delightful book ‘By the Sea’ in the chapter *The discovery of the sea*: “Here and there along the North Sea, sea and beach are discovered by the bourgeois as a cure. In the Low Countries this happens decades later. First pioneers have to familiarize the population with the blessings of water.” Hendriksma is writing about the time around 1820. In other countries people were already moving to the coast by the turn of the century. Paintings like those of the Hague, Katwijk and Egmond Schools are all dated after mid-19th century. That also goes for the colonies at Concarneau and Beg Meil in Brittany and the colony at Skagen in northern Jutland. There were also important colonies in the UK, including those at Newlyn and St Ives in Cornwall, Staithes in North Yorkshire and Cockburnspath in Scotland. That period also saw the beginning of the migration of artists to Urk and Volendam, at the time both located by the sea. The Domburg colony did not flourish until the end of that century, although artists had been active there around mid-century. All the colonies were more or less active between 1880 and 1914, when the Great War heralded the onset of the decline.

About Domburg it was reported that the colony was within earshot of the Flanders battlefields, and, while penniless, ragged refugees have passed through regularly, not a single work of art created in the years ‘14-’18 draws attention to this.



The discovery and development of the sealable paint tube by American portrait painter John Goffe Rand (first patented in 1841) made it possible for the first time to first paint in the field, ‘en plein air’. The Barbizon School in France is seen as the first of this movement in art. Although painters still turned sketches into finished paintings in the studio, the Impressionists later aquired a status equal to studio produced work with their paintings finished in situ.

The arrival of the railway in the 19th century – the first railway line in the Netherlands dates from 1837 – made the coast more accessible. And not just for the ‘bourgeois’.

Some influential foreign visitors to the Dutch coast include American painters William Merritt Chase (1884-1916), James Abbot McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) and George Hitchcock (1850 - 1913). Chase spent most of the summer of 1884 in Zandvoort, where he painted Dutch Coast. Whistler spent the 1880s in Domburg, where Sunday at Domburg was created in 1883. Hitchcock studied at the Académie in Paris and at the Deutsche Mahlerschule in Düsseldorf. In 1880, he was apprenticed to Hendrik Willem Mesdag in The Hague (in the Netherlands). He was the initiator of The Art Summer School in Egmond in 1890, which culminated in the Egmond School. He died on his boat in Marken harbour in 1913.



Left page:
🖼️ | James Abbot McNeill Whistler, *Sunday at Domburg* (1883), watercolours
Lieft:
🖼️ | William Merritt Chase, *Dutch Coast* (1884), oils on canvas
Boven:
🖼️ | George Hitchcock, *Tulip Culture* (1889), oils on canvas



🏰 | Johan Barthold Jongkind, *De haven van Honfleur [Honfleur Harbour]* (1863), etching, Coll. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



🏰 | Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth is presented with J.C.A. Goedhart's painting in the National Marine Museum of Greenwich, on July 6, 1960, photo Royal Dutch Marine (see page 4-5)

> Continued from page. 13

a number of much talked about artists' colonies, many of which were located by the sea (see page 14).

With the development of photography in the 1820s and 1830s, not only would the place of realism change dramatically, its appearance also changed. George Hendrik Breitner (1857-1923) began to use the camera as a reminder of his cityscapes and it is easy to see that the cropping of his subject matter was influenced by the camera frame.

The decline of nautical activity in the Netherlands and the rise of non-realist art movements between the two world wars caused a diminished interest in the subject. This was regretted in seafaring circles where, especially during the post-World War II reconstruction, people began to miss the visual record of the flourishing merchant navy and the new armed naval forces. This led to a revival of maritime painting. In 1948, for instance, the international exhibition 'La Semaine de la Marine' took place in Paris. Dutch marine painters were also represented at this exhibition, which had not escaped attention in Royal Navy circles. Thus, from 1949 onwards, artists once again boarded navy ships and exhibitions of their work were organised in

the Netherlands. This led to the establishment, in 1953 after one such exhibition, of the Dutch Society of Marine Artists (the ZEESCHILDERS).

The first few years of the ZEESCHILDERS saw a number of national and international exhibitions and events, including a remarkable two-year tour of England. This began in April 1955 at the National Marine Museum in Greenwich and subsequently visited 12 other venues, ending in Stockport in January 1957. Although sales were disappointing, there was no complaining about public interest. Over 100,000 visitors saw the 71 works created by the 10 members the ZEESCHILDERS had at the time. When Queen Elizabeth of England visited the Netherlands in 1958 on her yacht Britannia she was met by a squadron of the Dutch Royal Navy with several members of the ZEESCHILDERS on board. They depicted the meeting of the ships at high



🏰 | David Bareford, *A spanking breeze on a starboard tack* (2001), oils on canvas, Coll. artist, USA. Bareford is a member of the American Society of Marine artists. With kind permission of the artist.



🏰 | David Cobb, *HMS Cleopatra launches an Exocet* (2018), oils on board, © The Estate of David Cobb. Cobb was president of the Royal Society of Marine Artists. With kind permission of www.maritimeoriginals.com.

sea. J.C.A. Goedhart's painting was selected to be presented to the Queen with full ceremony at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich on 6 July 1960. It has been part of the Royal Collection of Windsor Castle ever since.

As prosperity grew in the 1960s, interest in maritime art grew again. Undoubtedly in part a nostalgic response to the modernisation

of shipping. This can be gauged from the favourite instructions of the patrons at the time, from seafaring circles, who still wanted artists to produce a traditional realistic and highly detailed rendering of romanticised reality. This was particularly noticeable in other important seafaring countries with a great maritime painting tradition, such as Britain and the United States.

THE ZEESCHILDERS held frequent national and international exhibitions in the later years of the previous century and in this one. Beside the renowned American Maritime Gallery in Mystic,

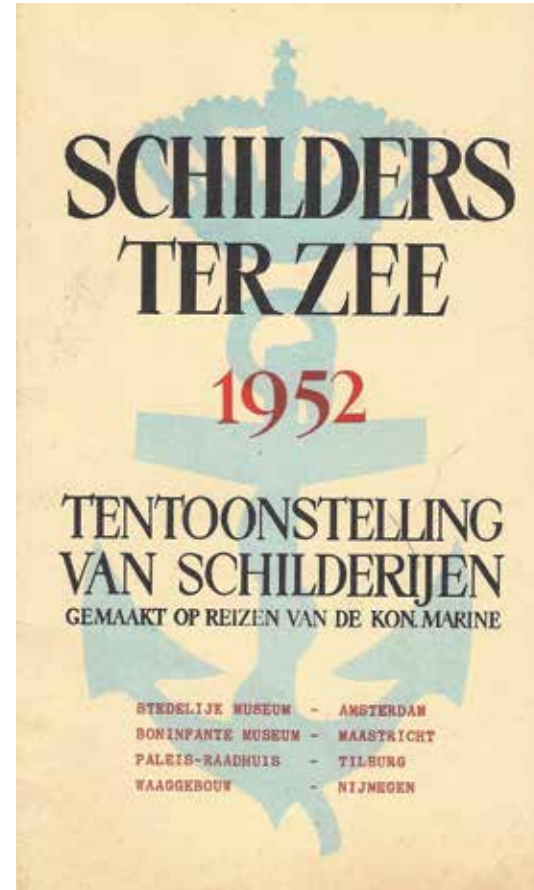
THE ZEESCHILDERS

In September 1953 the Dutch Society of Marine Artists (the ZEESCHILDERS) was founded by a group of artists in accordance with the Dutch Royal Navy. The occasion was the 'Schilders ter Zee' (Painters at Sea) exhibition, shown at the Amsterdam Municipal Museum in 1952*. Press critiques were mixed. While the Navy's initiative was widely praised, comments on the works on display were unfortunately rather sparing. "Not above mediocrity" headlined, for example, the *Algemeen Dagblad* Rotterdam. Nevertheless both the Navy and the participants were enthusiastic to establish a society. Judging by the prices in the catalogue it was a selling exhibition, presumably sales were more than satisfactory.

The Navy has a long relationship with artists, a tradition that goes back to the days when navy and merchant ships took draughtsmen along as cartographer and chronicler. With a brief interruption during the Second World War, that tradition continues to the present day. Since 1948 artists were again regularly taken aboard navy ships, resulting in the 1951 and 1952 exhibitions.

Since its foundation the ZEESCHILDERS have accepted a wide variety of maritime-oriented artists in its membership. During the 1960s and 1970s a change gradually took place as more and innovative practices were shown. By the 1990s the ZEESCHILDERS had taken artistic freedom as an underlying principle within the maritime theme. Beside painters and draughtsmen, sculptors and ceramists also joined the the ZEESCHILDERS.

* The second exhibition in this genre (the first in Den Helder and Vlissingen in 1951) that would travel on to the Boninfpante Museum in Maastricht, the Paleis-Raadhuis in Tilburg and the Waaggebouw in Nijmegen.



🖼️ | Catalogue cover *Schilders ter Zee [Painters at Sea]* (1952), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam



🖼️ | Anders Zorn, *Fiskmarknad i St. Ives* (1888), watercolours (ownership unknown)

these took place in the shipping museums of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the National Navy Museum and the Lifeboat Museum in Den Helder, the Fishing Museums in Scheveningen and Vlaardingen, the Westfries Museum in Hoorn, the Zandvoorts Museum, the Kunsthalle in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, the Northern Schipping Museum in Groningen and the Panorama Mesdag in The Hague, to name a few. the ZEESCHILDERS also took part in exhibitions in New York and Shanghai.



THE ARTISTS

GRONINGEN, FRIESLAND, OVERIJSEL, GELDERLAND

Robin d’Arcy Shillcock

☆ Aalst, 1953
www.robin-darcy-shillcock.com
www.artevisited.com
Groningen

Sonja Brussen

☆ Gaanderen, 1974
sonjabrussen@gmail.com
www.sonjabrussen.com
Lochem

Geurt Busser

☆ Leeuwarden, 1947
www.geurtbusser.wordpress.com
Warffum

Annette Hilterman

☆ Best, 1949
annethiltermann@gmail.com
www.annethiltermann.nl
Groningen

Edith Madou

☆ Helden, 1964
info@edithmadou.nl
www.edithmadou.nl
Deventer

Johan Meeske

☆ Groningen, 1950
jameeske@gmail.com
www.johanmeeske.nl
Zwolle

Margot Olde Loohuis

☆ Almelo, 1973
www.margotoldeloohuis.nl
Deventer

Jan Velthuis

☆ Laren, 1949
www.zeilschipmars.nl
www.schildervakanties.nl
www.janvelthuis.nl
Groningen

Rein de Vries

☆ Leeuwarden, 1944
eeburg@chello.nl
Leeuwarden

Aly van der Wal

☆ Woudsend, 1950
info@alyvanderwal.nl
www.alyvanderwal.nl
Zoutkamp

“For me the greatest artist of the 20th century is Charlie Chaplin”, Australian **Robin d’Arcy Shillcock** says, just to underline that there is more under the sun than painting. He has a keen interest in Japanese prints (which adorn his walls) and in the 19th century Scandinavian and Russian painters and artists like Vermeer and Holbein.

In France he tours the spectacular Stone Age sites such as Peche Merle: “Those horses; how did they manage to do that? So well observed.”

In the 40 years he has operated internationally as an artist, Robin built up a solid reputation as a painter of animals. Works of his are included in museum collections in five countries.

He calls himself an ‘incorrigible realist’: “I have been drawing and painting outdoors, from observation, for 40 years, although emphasis during the covid years lay mainly on drawing outdoors and painting indoors.”

In his cupboard sits a huge collection of travel sketchbooks, in which he recorded his impressions with which he works later in his studio and chronicles his travels and working life.

With his parents he travelled the world and was confronted with different cultures and art. He recalls Diego Rivera’s huge murals in the stairwell of the University of Mexico: “18 metres high!” Being allowed to walk around and touch Mayan and Aztec temples also made an unforgettable impression. “I have also done paintings up to 3 metres and murals up to 10 metres but when travelling, small formats are much more manageable. And for fun I also started making miniatures, works that fit in the palm of my hand.”

He has a studio in a deserted fishing village on the Lofoten archipelago in Norway, which can be reached via an adventurous coastal trail – here firm footing and strong knees are required.

At the Classical Academy of Fine Arts in Groningen, he teaches comparative anatomy (human and animal) and is strict in demanding analytical observation and drawing, not from the screen of the ever-present mobile phone or tablet: “Understanding the subject matter is essential in my opinion”

With Jan Velthuis (p. 50) and Johan Meeske (p. 42), Robin is member of the *Noordelijke Aquarellisten* (Northern Watercolourists). He is the co-founder and board member of *Artists for Nature Foundation* (ANF), and also an author.



🖼️ | Pack ice, Svalbard (Polar bear) | 2016 |
oils on canvas | 50 x 170 cm



🖼️ | In Sweden (Black-headed gulls) | 2020 |
oils on board | 20 x 50 cm



🖼️ | Utopia Europe – If only pigs could fly | 2021 |
oils on board | 24 x 39 cm





🏰 | Europe? | 2020 |
oils on canvas | 40 x 50 cm

🏰 | Cod, Lofoten | 2016 |
oils on canvas | 40 x 50 cm

🏰 | Caraïbe (Skipper Richard) | 2021 |
oils on board | 51 x 51 cm

🏰 | Newfoundland | 2019 |
oils on board | 30 x 30 cm

🏰 | Tour des Cormorants, Vendée, France | 2016 |
oils on canvas | 61 x 82 cm

THE ARTISTS

‘A day not spent painting means a day not lived properly’ could be the motto of **Sonja Brussen**, residing in Lochem. The immediate surroundings in the Achterhoek region are her studio, but she is also an avid marine painter working regularly on Texel (the largest of the Wadden Islands) and in Bergen on Sea. She also participates in the Katwijk and Noordwijk Painters’ Days.

Asked about her heroes, she says, “Anselm Kiefer. Oh, so many... I used to admire Emil Schumacher, but not many people know him. Totally different work from mine. A very long time ago it was also the Cobra group.” Those artworks and Sonja’s don’t seem like a contradiction at all: the same stout handwriting and the same bursts of colour. The names of Isaac Israëls, George Breitner and Karel Appel also come up. And, of course, the Impressionists: Sonja calls herself an ‘impressionist with an expressive touch’.

Her use of colour is immediately recognizable by two shades: blue and yellow. Sonja works exclusively outdoors (summer, winter, day and night) and only from observation. But reality is not always binding: when a disturbing tree is in the way, she simply leaves it out.

You will rarely encounter people in her paintings and most have imposing skies. She looks forward again to the balmy evenings – it is early spring when this interview takes place – when she can go out early to set up her gear and keep working until it gets rdark. “Then the light is always nice.” When asked what she will do on a day like the day of the interview, with a steel-blue sky, she answers with a spontaneous laugh: “That’s when that high horizon kicks in! If the sky is not interesting, I dig deeper, into nature. I paint more close-ups, and choose a high horizon. Or I enclose my subject completely, so it’s all about the plant world.”

We take great pleasure in noting that both Sonja and Maurice Christo van Meijel (p. 88) and myself were welcomed to the ZEESCHILDERS with virtually the same wording. Sonja has been a member of the ZEESCHILDERS since 2016.

About her connection with the sea: “Yes, crazy right?, a marine painter in Lochem. Years ago I discovered the Wadden Sea for the first time at Pieterburen and Noordpolderzijl. I was completely blown away. Also I participated in various festivals such as in Katwijk and

Noordwijk, and at some point you get invited as an artist-in-residence.”

She learned the trade from Jos Klaver, a teacher at ArteZ in Arnhem, and thanks to him she was able to take an upgrade course there. That fitted in well with what she was already doing at the time. Sonja works ‘alla prima’, wet-on-wet, and for that she finds oils the best medium, although logistically it can be a challenge, because she likes to paint on large canvasses.



🖼️ | The living sea | oils on canvas | 30 x 90 cm

The best anecdote: “A while back I was painting on a rather dull day. There was very little light and when a gentleman arrived I had my hood over my head so he could hardly see my face. But he did see my small canvas and said: ‘Ah, that looks like a Sonja Brussen all right!’”



🖼️ | Sonja and Amy near Den Helder



© Ernst Dingemans



🖼️ | Mokbaai | oils on canvas | 80 x 90 cm



🖼️ | Let it flow | oils on canvas | 30 x 40 cm



🖼️ | Duna life | oils on canvas | 30 x 40 cm

🖼️ | At the Wadden | oils on canvas | 80 x 60 cm

🖼️ | First sea | oils on canvas | 30 x 90 cm



After untying the mooring lines in the little port of Lauwersoog, **Geurt Busser** reports us to the coastguard by VHF radio.

In 1988 during, TV-recordings for ‘Van Gewest tot Gewest’ (From Region to Region), the editor asked if he could call him ‘The Wadden Painter’. Geurt considered it a fitting moniker. BNNVARA’s ‘Vroege Vogels’ (*Early Birds*) website says: “As a Wadden painter, Busser is also an uncompromising campaigner for peace and openness for the Wadden Sea, against gas drilling and windmills. With assistance of Queen Beatrix, he negotiated access to the restricted areas of the Wadden Sea to be able to work there in peace. He also championed the preservation of Noorpolderzijl in Groningen, at the time the only ebb-tide fishing harbour in the Netherlands.

Whereas Jan Velthuis (p. 50) ‘casts’ colour in bold shapes, Geurt retreats from both land and colour, resulting in more introverted images. Geurt: “I paint in one wet stroke, everything more or less flows out”

For the large watercolours he spent 20 years practicing an ancient Chinese painting technique, working with a fully loaded brush. On a large brush, he squeezes out smaller brushes to have different tones running down that comes out on the paper side. Thus a curve in the sky or a shadow under a cloud already exists in the brush. On 14 February 2000, he finally managed to make a 110 x 220 cm watercolour in exactly three quarters of an hour.

But he also works on small formats: “If you can hold a small watercolour open then you can certainly hold a large one, the other way round is not necessary.” Geurt is self-taught; he has a driving and a sailing studio. In the latter, 70 to 80 per cent of his work is created, all year round: when it freezes, he adds gin in water. After one harsh winter, recently appointed Minister of the Interior, Johan Remkes, upon leaving his post at the Groningen Port Authority, was offered as a parting gift a Busser watercolour of Delftzijl harbour titled ‘Painted with gin’. Of his favourite brand as it turned out. That afternoon we were treated to many such anecdotes while we watched a documentary (by Bart van Broekhoven) about Busser’s work and upcoming book ‘With the eye and heart’.

Although his boat looks *diy*, everything is in place and in working


order. Like his mobile studio everything is made so that he can work in all conditions. Big work on the aft roof – with Geurt standing on the gunwale – or in the wheel-house with the aft windows wide open and both side doors. Cross bars under the roof of the wheelhouse hold a variety of painting boards. On deck he can handle 110 x 240 cm formats.

He anchors anywhere or settles on a mud flat for a few days. What is striking is the calm routine with which he performs all the routines necessary to sail a small boat by himself. When finally asked about his heroes, the name of Joseph Mallord William Turner immediately comes up.: “I don’t need anyone else.”



 | Boschplaat | summer 2008 | watercolours | 110 x 160 cm



 | Oude Wal (under Schiermonnikoog) | 7-12-2022 | watercolours | 100 x 150 cm





🏠 | Tempest, salt marsh |
2-11-1978 | watercolours |
56 x 76 cm



🏠 | Staatsieportret
Reitdiep, the Hunzebocht,
Waarhuis Aduarderzijl |
14-2-2000 | watercolours |
110 x 220 cm



🏠 | Last ferry to
Schiermonnikoog |
october 2016 |
watercolours |
70 x 100 cm



🏠 | Boschplaat (under Rottumerplaat) | 2007 | watercolours | 110 x 240 cm



🏠 | Boschplaat | 2021 | watercolours | 85 x 150 cm

Annette Hiltermann, like Robin Shillcock (p. 22), has a keen interest in 19th-century outdoor painters: Scandinavian, American and Russian painters. However, their medium and palette were very different. As early as in high school Annette was deeply taken with ‘De bemoste boom’ (*The mossy tree*) by Hercules Segers as well as by Chinese landscape paintings.

She fills folders with favourite images she comes across on the internet. These include works by George Inness (US), Arkhip Kuindzhi (Russia), Vilhelms Purvitis (Latvia), and Prinz Eugen, (Sweden): “Many painters learn the trade by focusing on older examples. But not me, my learning process was different. I only discovered a kinship with other painters after I had already painted a body of work of a few hundred paintings myself.”

She paints her landscapes on the spot with acrylic paint on paper, this allows her to work quickly, sometimes with glazing layers, in one session. “Since I camp wild and have to carry all the gear or strap it to the back of a bike, I ensure that my painting and camping gear is light-weight. Acrylic paint dries quickly, opposed to working with oils you don’t need turpentine with it, water will do, I can get that from a mountain stream or the sea, brushes can be cleaned with plain soap and water, and acrylic is more resistant than watercolour and pastel. That’s an advantage if in case of disaster my stuff would get soaked.”

She usually paints by observation, but in fleeting light (evening reds, twilight and moonlight), she simply looks intensely, soaking up the scenery, using her memory the following day to recreate it.

She travels to various European countries to paint, taking no more gear than she can carry on her back or bicycle, including a tent.

“With prosperity also comes civilisation,” Annette states when the conversation turns to a woman travelling alone, referring to countries where she used to suffer more from unwanted attention from men than nowadays.

Recognisable is her remark that she can take a long time to properly evaluate the quality of a finished work.

Annette exhibits annually in the ‘Onafhankelijke Realisten’

(*Independant Realists Exhibition*) at Museum Møhlmann in Appingedam (province of Groningen). There we can also find Sonja Brussen (p. 26), Edith Madou (p. 38), Robin d’ Arcy Shillcock (p. 22) and Aly van der Wal (p. 58).



🖼️ | West coast Portugal | 2002 |
acrylics on paper on board | 32,9 x 48,3 cm



🖼️ | Surf | 2002 | acrylics on paper on board | 32,8 x 48,2 cm



🖼️ | Ebb | 2007 | acrylics on paper on board | 32,9 x 47,7 cm




🖼️ | Silent sunset, Baltic Sea | 2000 |
acrylics on paper on board | 33,0 x 48,0 cm

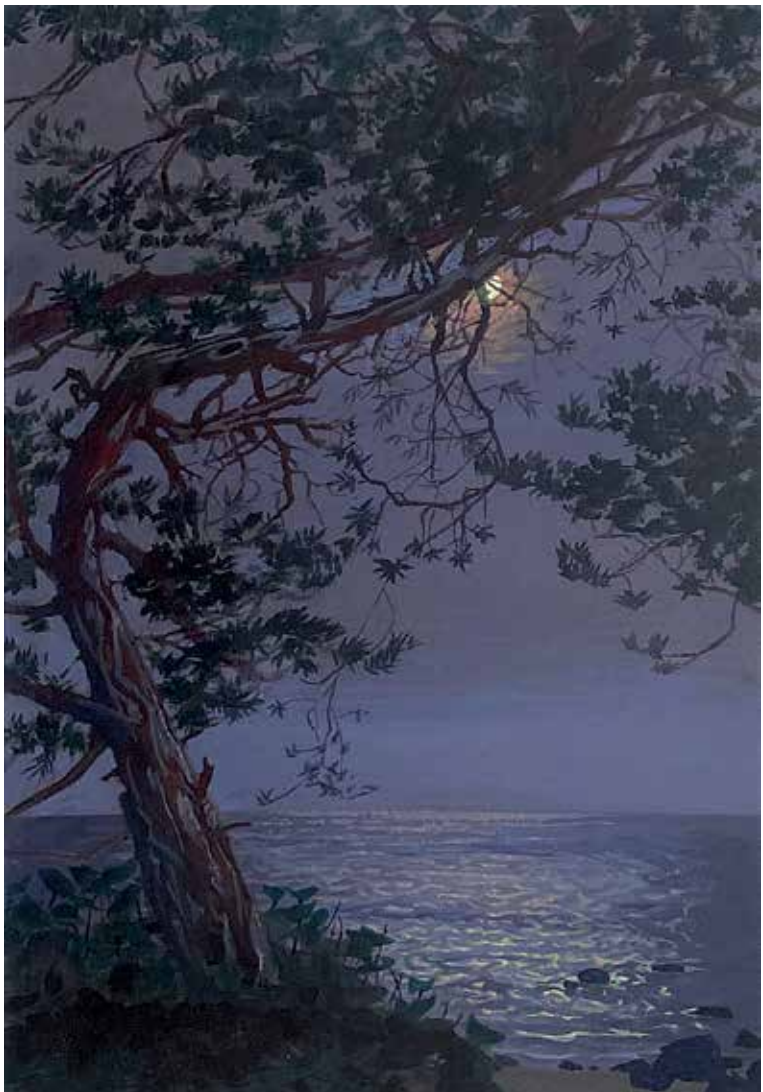





 | Sunset, Baltic Sea | 2005 | acrylics on paper on board | 32,4 x 48,3 cm



 | Evening at the Baltic Sea | 2004 | acrylics on paper on board | 48,2 x 33,0 cm



 | Full moon | 2007 | acrylics on paper on board | 48,4 x 32,9 cm

The ZEESCHILDERS have two Limburgers in their ranks who have both traded bronze-green oakwoods for more northern climes. **Edith Madou** is one of them. Like Maurice Christo van Meijel (p. 88) she received her education in Maastricht, although Edith initially considered going to the Naval Academy, but they did at that time not yet admit women.

As a ceramicist Edith is an one-off in the club, which over the years has been making efforts to include non-painting artists. When asked how, as an inhabitant of Limburg, she ever gets to the sea, the answer is: “I hardly do, actually. So every time I do go it’s an event, a holiday of sorts. Then that inspiration does come in.”

At the academy she was once given an assignment to do something with a market: “So I was walking around there and at a given moment I was standing in front of this fishmonger and I was like, ‘wow, that’s beautiful!’ He had created a tableau from all kinds of fish lying on ice. I immediately thought ‘That’s what I want to do!’”

The sea is now a fixed part in her work: “In all my works the Dutch history lies at the basis; I use old customs and sayings. On the one hand you see in my work seafaring and (herring) fishing, on the other the opulence and perhaps also the Roman Catholic side of life at the time.”

The connection the Dutch have with the sea is deeply interwoven into our language. I try to capture the mood of the past and nostalgia in my work, but with a wink. I give an impetus to a story, which the viewer can fill in himself. My work relies mainly on fantasy in which realistic fish often play the leading role.”

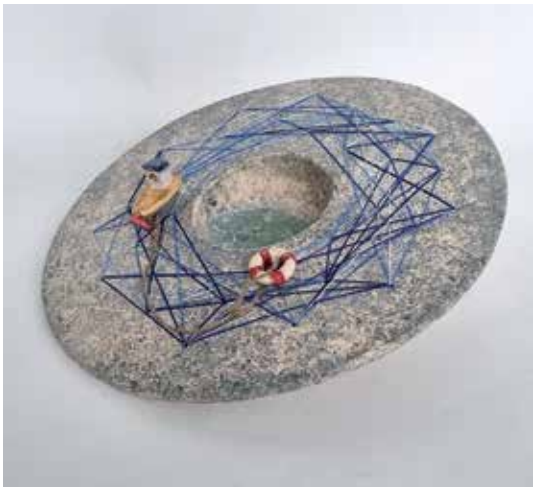
Many of the problems of working with ceramics in combination with other materials she has solved experimentally. For example: ceramics and glass have a different coefficient of expansion and do not shrink at the same rate when cooling. That creates the risk of breakage.

Asked about her heroes, Pablo Rueda Lara’s name comes up, whose use of e.g. clothing in his ceramics she finds especially inspiring. In that respect Edith feels a kinship with painters who tackle such a challenge. In her recent work inspiration from ‘nostalgic’

sources such as 1950s pictures and cookbooks comes strongly to the fore leading to combinations of ceramics and embroidery, as well as familiar maxims.

From home Edith inherited a feeling for technique that makes working with materials and kilns natural. “I actually hardly ever make just ceramics. There has to be a little more to it: wood, string, wire.” She feels a kinship with Ellen van Toor (p. 134), who is also a multi-media artist, and with Ludo van Well (p. 156), even though he uses other materials and larger sculptures. Compared to Ageeth van den Oever’s carving in stone (p. 96), in which the form is ‘liberated’ from the stone, working with clay is exactly the other way around: “Clay allows itself to be moulded into all kinds of shapes. It becomes different each time. This is also something that students I teach often find difficult.”

Edith is a member of the ‘Keramisten Noord Nederland’ (*North Netherlands Ceramics*).



🏠 | Holland fish | ceramics and embroidery | 1 35 cm x h 12 cm

< 🏠 | Sea ways | ceramics glass and embroidery yarn | Ø 32 cm



🏠 | Herring stew | ceramics | 1 33 cm x h 8 cm





🏠 | Kitchen happyness | ceramics and rope | h 68 cm

🏠 | Skippers Ahoy | ceramics, lead and rope |
l 12 cm x h 8 cm

🏠 | Fresh plaice | ceramics and glass |
l 23 cm x h 8 cm



🏠 | Fishing trunk | ceramics, rope, locks and hinges | l 20 x w 20 cm

The second watercolourist is from the east, the town of Zwolle, **Johan Meeske**, is someone you would not pass without noticing working outside. He too has a preference for large formats, bold almost calligraphic fields of colour with a prominent role for the white of the paper in his compositions. Johan prefers to work ‘en plein air’. On the day of our visit it’s raining cats and dogs so there is no chance of going out to see him at work. Too bad, because Johan works on a couple of large planks supported by trestles.

Like the other northerners he was educated at the Academy of Fine Arts Minerva in Groningen. Asked about his heroes: “Who are my heroes? Crisis! I was taught by Jan van Loon who taught watercolours. And Evert Musch, who also taught watercolours, no doubt they will have had an influence.”

Johan mainly prefers expressionist painters. “De Kooning I find very imposing, Karel Appel I really appreciate. If I were to walk into a museum with a Henk Helmantel and a Karel Appel side by side, there’s a good chance that I’d first march to the Appel before seeing the Helmantel. That has to do with feeling and emotion. That touches me, I want to see it. With Helmantel I’d say: ‘ Okay, so how does he do it?’.”

With Johan however, the landscape remains visible, which is not necessarily about the place itself or the light of the moment, but more about capturing an overall impression: “I find the gesture interesting and watercolours has such fluidity. For me it’s about what the pigment does, playing a little with water, and mixing is of course very different from stirring and mixing on a palette with acrylic or oil paints. That spontaneity of the material is what I like best anyway.”

Johan prefers to mix his colours on the paper, letting them flow into each other in a very controlled way. He works with large tubes of paint which also have greater tinting power, necessary on those larger formats, or it becomes too washed out. He applies lines and stains directly to paper, which gradually becomes more important than what is to be seen. The response from passers-by is sometimes surprising: “The other day I was standing on Ameland (one of the Dutch Wadden Islands) – of course, you always gather people around you – ‘oh’, someone said ‘the beginning is there’...” To which Johan responded “And the end too.”

Johan does not give his work titles, because they are never ‘portraits’ of the landscapes. In retrospect he doesn’t think this important either, the image has to be convincing. Initially he was looking more for abstraction, but recently he has also been looking more for colour and a fuller image, something more robust.

Asked about potential problems with drying time: “It can take hours. I sometimes have huge puddles on it, which takes a very long time to dry. So I have sometimes worked with a gas burner. I used to have a gas stove with me and I would quickly turn the watercolour over and hold it above it. And if looking around or chatting to someone it sometimes went up in flames.” Johan prefers to work on one work at a time. Sometimes it’s hard to stay concentrated, especially with people passing by. “Some people almost come and sit on my lap,” he says.

 | In the harbour | watercolours | 110 x 80 cm >


 | Coastal landscape | aquarel | 110 x 130 cm >




 | In the harbour | watercolours | 110 x 80 cm






 | Coastal landscape | watercolours | 150 x 95 cm




 | Coastal landscape | watercolours | 150 x 95 cm



 | Coastal landscape | watercolours | 130 x 110 cm >



 | Coastal landscape | watercolours | 130 x 110 cm >>

THE ARTISTS

During the lunch she offers us, **Margot Olde Loohuis** tells us that she trained as an illustrator in Kampen (now 'ArtEZ' in Zwolle, Arnhem and Enschede). At the final exam in the 1990s, it was no problem to just show paintings: "The teachers weren't difficult about that at all. It was mainly about expressing yourself." Now, a stronger focus on practice makes that unthinkable.

She worked only briefly as an illustrator: "Illustrating wasn't really my cup of tea. You have to communicate so well through an image. I soon wanted to just enjoy seeing what colour and composition do. I just wanted to lose myself more in what I was making."

Her work over the past seven years may be typefied by (large) underwater scenes; before that series of swimming pools and graphic paintings: "I went to the pool, took pictures, such fantastic things happened with light and reflections, the transparency and jagged, shifting lines of the tiles." Of course, the name of David Hockney comes up. "But it was the water itself that turned out to be my inspiration. So for a long time I have been someone who just paints water." The names of Francis Bacon and René Magritte also drop during the conversation.

The discovery of Willem Kolvoort's underwater photography was the starting point for her current work. "He is a photographer who takes very beautiful atmospheric underwater photos. I was really taken by them and wanted to figure out if I could translate that into paint. And I haven't stopped doing that since." Margot also takes underwater photographs (in a nearby caddy in the river IJssel) to later peruse freely in her studio. "That's what I love about painting, that you can go into all directions," she says.

She explains why she prefers large canvases: "It's also very nice with something on the canvas to be able to wallow in it a little, as it were. And that's why it has to be quite big."

She once read an interview in the Volkskrant with astronaut André Kuipers, also a keen diver: "People who never look underwater miss half the planet." She then tagged him on Twitter (with that quote and an underwater painting) so that he started following and liking her work. "Long story short, we eventually met and I asked him if he could tell me about the view an astronaut has from outer space. And

eventually I asked him to come and open an exhibition of mine. A very nice relationship developed from that and there is now a painting of mine hanging on his wall."


As a freshwater painter Margot is obviously not a marine painter pur sang, but we close our discussion with the observation that all water flows to the sea. And she flows with it; her favourite coastal spot is Wijk-aan-Zee.

MARGOT OLDE LOOHUIS




 | Silent Summer | oils on canvas |
120 x 160 cm





 | Momentum | oils on canvas |
100 x 160 cm







 | Melancholic |
oils on canvas | 100 x 150 cm

 | Sleeping Lillies |
oils on canvas | 100 x 150 cm

 | Underwater Landscape |
oils on canvas | 100 x 160 cm

 | Silence |
oils on canvas | 100 x 160 cm



 | Floating World | oils on canvas | 100 x 140 cm



🏡 | Moored botters
in Hoorn |
watercolours | 66 x 107 cm



🏡 | Ships on the
Wadden |
watercolours | 73 x 104 cm

Jan Velthuis, like Geurt Busser (p. 30) and Johan Meeske (p. 42), prefers watercolours to capture the atmosphere and endless mystery – as well as its vastness – of the Wadden Sea. They all paint ‘en plein air’, with Jan too, not shunning large formats: 105 x 74 cm, on 600-gram paper. He paints directly on paper without making preliminary sketches.

Jan graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts Minerva in Groningen in acrylics and print making, but when sailing he finds watercolours the most beautiful medium to use. It is the most spontaneous to instantly capture the atmosphere of the world outside. His interest in painters is quite broad, mainly with artists of free work, not slick, focused on abstraction. The overall picture is more important than likeness: tension, composition and a touch of alienation. Jan paints loosely and focuses primarily on colour and atmosphere.

Together with his wife Jan is the proud owner of the almost 100 year old two-masted schooner ‘Mars’, now his 3rd sailing ship with which he combines his artistry with sailing with guests. After many wanderings the ship was converted from a cargo ship to a sailing passenger ship in 1995. Since they have made many sailing trips, with groups and painting and photography enthusiasts. Every year they organize a number of sailing-painting vacations, roaming the Wadden Sea and the Islands.

Unsurprising that the Wadden Sea and the Islands are a recurring subject in his oeuvre. Many works originate ‘plein air’, but in winter are sometimes taken back to the studio to be finished

As heroes he mentions Dutch impressionists like Breitner, German expressionists like Nolde and the later American expressionists and Nicolaas de Staël.

Jan Velthuis, like his wife Riny Bus – who is also a painter – Johan Meeske (p. 42) and Robin d’Arcy Shillcock (p. 22) studied under Jan van Loon at Academy of Fine Arts Minerva. They are members of the ‘Noordelijke Aquarellisten’ (*Northern Watercolourists*), united by their love for this surprising, transparent, sometimes fickle but beautiful technique.




🏡 | The Wadden off Vlieland | watercolours | 50 x 70 cm




🏡 | Clouds above Vlieland | watercolours | 50 x 70 cm




 | Salt marshes | watercolours |
52 x 75 cm




 | Thunder clouds off Borkum |
watercolours | 55 x 75 cm



 | Noorpolderzyl | watercolours |
53 x 75 cm



 | North Harbour Groningen | watercolours | 54 x 75 cm

THE ARTISTS

In his early days as an artist **Rein de Vries** briefly sniffed at sculpting. His first BKR- commission (a scheme in the Netherlands from 1956 to 1987, allowing artists to receive income in exchange for their services or works of art) was a playground. In his own words, ‘a project that cost money instead of me earning something’. Rein: “What used to inspire me was the booklet ‘De reddingboot komt!’ (*The lifeboat is on its way*) with watercolours by Wubbo de Jonge, published by the Rijkspostspaarbank around 1950. An important inspiration to start drawing and painting was also the work of Riete Sterenberg-Gompertz, the wife of my sculpture teacher at the Academy of Fine Arts Minerva, Johan Sterenberg. Their friend Ro Mogendorf, a Jewish painter with an impressive history, also inspired me to draw. I painted a portrait of Riete and sculpted a head of Ro Mogendorf.” Other heroes include Norman Wilkinson, William Turner, Claus Bergen, Albert Brenet, Marin-Marie and Gerardus Johannes Koekoek.

Rein has had a keen interest in the many manifestations of water since childhood. “I have always drawn water: it could be slurry, it could be water split in an aircraft into hydrogen and oxygen in an alternative engine. I have also painted fast boats that are completely empty inside, just going through the water with no engine or anyone inside. Just a hull.” He also talks about water-filled transparent cubes in the surf. Or water that he shakes up and down in a container before drawing it. In doing so, he incites his imagination rather than trying to draw the volatile water by observation. “You can say of surf that it’s all the same, but there are so many little variations in it that you either catch it or not”, he says.


After his academy days Rein taught in various schools for four years and for 30 years in various creativity centers. He currently works in his studio in Leeuwarden on sometimes huge oil paintings in which maritime subjects usually dominate. After a membership of the ‘Waddenkunstkring’ (Wadden Art Circle), Rein became a member of the ZEESCHILDERS some 20 years ago. Rescue operations on the high seas, (war) ships in raging waves, but also very intimate ship portraits photographed in situ and later finely recreated in the studio. In terms of format, he can handle anything between wall size and a postage stamp.


He is also highly concerned by problems threatening our existence

on earth and, from that perspective designs and paints all kinds of solutions for the use of hydrogen and wind as energy sources. His social commitment has common ground with that of Ludo van Well (p. 156). He can also talk about it with unbridled enthusiasm. He worries about the future of art: “What am I going to do now; I,m outdated at my age anyway: young people don’t paint anymore. They don’t have a painting on the wall any more either. They all have other stuff; photoshopped stuff.”



REIN DE VRIES

 | Passaat | 2015 |
oils on linnen | 110 x 50 cm

<  | Statsraad Lehmkuhl | 2020 |
oils on linnen | 50 x 40 cm





🖼️ | Sea station for Maglev track in vacuum tube | 2018 |
pastels on paper | 50 x 65 cm

🖼️ | Self-supporting arks | 2005 |
pencil drawing | 70 x 100 cm

🖼️ | Veere preserved | 2013 |
oils on linen | 80 x 105 cm

🖼️ | Container ship under sail | 2005 |
pastels on paper | 70 x 100 cm



🖼️ | Eemslift Hendrika adrift | 2021 | oils on linnen | 30 x 60 cm

THE ARTISTS

Aly van der Wal has developed her own intaglio technique. When she still had small children, she shied away from working with acid baths for etching. Instead, she developed an intaglio technique in which she make ‘etching plates’ from pre- prepared cardboard into which she built up shapes and cut or tore them out. These she printed on prepared aluminium plates. They are almost monoprints because this technique only allows for a very limited print run of 2 or at most 3 prints due to the large pressure while printing. Stripping off the ink on the high parts of the plate was very hard work, on which she sometime spent a day. “It’s also exciting, because sometimes you’ve spent all day and when you go to print you find it hasn’t turned out as what you wanted. I hate that!” At times the plate also becomes a finished product: “Because the ink has sunk into it so beautifully, you get a very beautiful image.”

The work I make nowadays is printed on prepared aluminium plates. Each print is as different as the impression of the mudflats due to the ever-changing conditions. When light falls on it in the right way it is like real water flowing through the creeks and gullies.

Besides this graphic work Aly also paints with oils, egg tempera and watercolours, draws with charcoal and uses all kinds of mixed techniques to express her ideas. The names of Breitner and Jozef Israëls pop up when asked about her heroes: “Those are the big examples. And also one of my teachers, Matthijs Röling. And Turner too, yes wonderful.”

At the academy Aly also presented Wadden paintings ad nauseam to her teachers. Fortunately, she did not stop doing so. With four children and her own business, going to the academy was not an obvious choice. So she went to the Academy of Fine Arts Minerva in Groningen later in life, first doing the evening course and the day course afterwards. That she was accepted she took as confirmation that she had the necessary talents. She was among ‘youngsters’ there, who were much freer: “You see them doing their thing and you think ‘Gosh, I have to liberate myself too.’”

She never regretted that choice and even went to the Classic Academiylater on, where, unlike the freedom of Minerva, more basic skills like working from observation were taught. She was taught there by Siemen Dijkstra, among others, whose ‘reduction technique’




for his woodcuts certainly played a role in the development of her own printing technique. She was also lucky taking lessons from Sam Drukker: “Such an inspirational person. You can’t find a more enthusiastic teacher!”


ALY VAN DER WAL



 | Lauwersmeer area | mixed media on aluminium | 40 x 120 cm



<  | Winter | oils on canvas | 80 x 30 cm


 | Lauwersmeer | oils on board | 18 x 40 cm




 | Flying over | mixed media on aluminium | 50 x 50 cm






 | Reed | mixed media on canvas |
153 x 73 cm





 | Mirage (detail) |
oils on board | 22 x 22 cm



 | The Wadden | acrylic intaglio |
85 x 40 cm



 | Noord Polderzijl | mixed media on aluminium |
45 x 105 cm

>  | Wind in the sails |
mixed media on aluminium |
70 x 65 cm



THE ARTISTS

Pauline Bakker

☆ Amersfoort, 1966

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Bergen NH

Luk van Driessche

☆ Sint-Niklaas (B), 1953

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facebook & Instagram

Amsterdam

Ewoud de Groot

☆ Alkmaar, 1969

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Egmond aan Zee

Maarten Groot

☆ Velsen, 1956

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Santpoort Noord

Katinka Krijgsman

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Egmond aan den Hoef

Leentje Linders

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De Koog (Texel)

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Peter Smit

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Louis Swagerman

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Hoorn

Erik Tierolf

☆ Renesse, 1963

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Bergen NH

When asked about her heroes Frans Hals is the first name that comes to **Pauline Bakker’s** mind. Of late she has been working more three-dimensional and thus become oriented more to sculpture. Painters such as Turner and the American realist Norman Goodman as well as socialist realist propaganda posters and Soviet sculpture also greatly fascinate her. “They have a graphic quality about them, somewhat stylized and symmetrical, and firmly based on classicism, and a little bit of Art Deco.”

She doesn’t embrace its message, but studies the low vantage point, which makes the figures more impressive. In the process the head is depicted smaller than the body, so automatically the person appears larger. She also uses this in her three-dimensional work. With regards to her paintings the name of Edward Hopper often comes up, but she doesn’t mention him directly.

During the corona crisis she created thirty ‘Time Pictures’, in a kind of masquerade series, in which each mask depicts a theme from that period: contagion, bitcoins, masks, slavery, theatre closures and many others.

Apart from a year at ‘d ‘Witte Lelie’ Academy (*The White Lilly Academy*) and a year at the Free Academy in The Hague, Pauline is self- taught. Figurative painting was not in vogue at the academies at that time, so she first studied painting restoration. A successful exhibition of her free work in a bar in Bergen NH opened the way to art, initially only painting, but since covid she also makes combines that with three-dimensional figures.

Also new is the use of driftwood. ZEESCHILDERS colleagues such as Edith Madou (p. 38) and Ellen van Toor (p. 134) also work with ‘objets trouvés’. She also works self-composed photographs (photoshopping) that form the basis for paintings: “I do like something that gives scale to a canvas, a car, or a figure.” She paints both with oils and acrylics and sometimes gives her works a finish with epoxy resin.

Pauline is a real studio tiger. She restricts herself to some sketches outside on holiday, but more for relaxation than to use in the studio later on: “In my studio I’m totally immersed in my own girl’s room. It’s as if there’s a different air pressure here. Wonderful!”



🖼️ | Panorama sail Den Helder (commissioned) |
oils on canvas | 2 x 10 m



< 🖼️ | Ebb landscape | oils on canvas | 100 x 120 cm



🖼️ | Shrimp fisher | ceramics | w 60 cm



Alongside her art Pauline also teaches twice a week four groups of students.



| Bergen aan Zee | oils on canvas | 80 x 120 cm



| Beach stroll | acrylics on canvas | 80 x 120 cm



| Zwarte Zee (commissioned) | oils on canvas | 100 x 120 cm



| Swimming lessons | mixed media | 70 x 25 cm

THE ARTISTS

Two Belgians are a member of the ZEESCHILDERS, one of whom lives and works in Amsterdam. **Luk van Driessche** retired after thirty years as director of the Amsterdam Wackers Academy. Like Maurice Christo van Meijel (p. 88), he is an artist who primarily works with pastels. Luk walked the path from watercolour to pen and ink – as a cramped camper, he always chose one single material to work with – to oils and eventually pastel crayons.

As a marine painter Luk collects images of painted seas and skies from the Internet and stores them in a folder: Degas, Boudin, Sisley, Turner. It's the only art book he takes with him on vacation. Every year he works for three consecutive weeks on the Côte Fleurie in Normandy (Honfleur) and returns with about 150 drawings. After some time, Luk takes in hand those drawings again and selects about two-thirds of them on which he continues to work in his studio. That post-processing involves a lot of 'translating': "With landscapes I always ask myself 'what is it about', what I have seen is just a point of departure."

Luk is highly organized, because camping leaves no room for excess gear. He cuts sheets of paper to size in his studio, and pastel crayons paper comes along in colours, anything between white and black. When painting with oils he also takes along blocs with a smooth surface on which he can work in thin layers. He also takes with him quick-drying medium.

Luk prefers to work in the same spot all of the time. It saves wasting time to look for something new. Also he is interested to see what light does at different times of day and in the rhythm of light and shadow. "To me it is far more interesting than every time sitting in a different spot to draw the view." Luk prefers drawing or painting an abstracted landscape than an anecdotal one with people, cars and recognizable houses. That he finds too much of a 'story'.

His trips to the Normandy coast are certainly not work, but a vacation. Luk paints there only for fun. "When we're on holiday and a thunderstorm threatens, I won't do the dishes that evening. I'll keep going until it pours!"

In studio work Luk combines portraits with other components on a canvas. Inspired by Max Beckmann, John Bellamy (Scotland),



🖼️ | 2022 | ink on paper | 17,5 x 23 cm

Bernhard Heisig (Leipziger Schule) and James Ensor, painters that used various symbols to evoke new images.

Luk studied in Ghent at the Hoge Sint Lucas Instituut (*now Luca School of Arts*) where he initially trained as a graphic designer – as were Katinka Krijgsman (p.80), Maurice Christo van Meijel (p. 88) and Dolf Middelhoff (p.92) – but painting gradually became more appealing. He

LUK VAN DRIESSCHE



🖼️ | 2020 | ink on paper | 15 x 14 cm

came to Amsterdam in 1980 where, after a series of casual jobs as a teacher and later as director of the Wackers Academy, he continued to develop his art..

At the end of our conversation we shared some experiences about the rigors of plein air painting in all weather conditions and all seasons. Wind, cold, rain, scorching sun and still you're having an extraordinary good time. And the challenge to take home that feeling, which results in different work than when working in the studio.





| 2021 | pastels on paper | 13 x 19 cm



| 2020 | oils on paper | 15 x 23 cm



| 2021 | oils on paper | 16 x 18 cm



| 2021 | oils on paper | 15 x 22 cm

No marine painter lives closer to the sea than **Ewoud de Groot**. Geurt Busser (p. 30) and Jan Velthuis (p. 50) may consider the entire Wadden Sea as their studio when sailing, Ewoud only has to go out the door and cross the boulevard to be on the beach. In spite of two books on the table, the size and weight of paving tiles, on Da Vinci and Michelangelo (“They are just a couple of books for kicks, you know”), Ewoud is the first to mention James Abbott McNeill Whistler. “But actually everything from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Because at that period looser work and Impressionism and Expressionism intersect. I mix a lot, of course. I usually have fairly abstracted backgrounds with a point of interest in the foreground.”

Ewoud has good sales in the USA, where he has built up quite a market for himself. While not all he produces is a marine painting, it very often features water: “Painting water with all those reflections, that fascinates me immensely. I still find that the most exciting thing to do.”

Ewoud is devoted to fly fishing and during our conversation shows me an impressive collection of fishing rods. Abroad he can be found by the flowing brooks in Scotland and southern England. “There water is so beautiful, it’s like a dream. And then there are those big trout...” He also depicted the chalk cliffs in southern England. The colours there are fuller compared to the somewhat greyer light in Holland: “It really is dazzling there.”

Ewoud sails an old shrimp cutter that used to belong to his parents. Together with his brother he gave it a complete overhaul. Our conversation meanders briefly to the gannet colony on Helgoland, a subject also covered by Marc Langer (p. 130). As with Geurt Busser (p. 30) and Jan Velthuis (p. 50), the boat is also a sailing studio. This often results in sketches, but only occasionally in a small painting. While painting he prefers to sit on the floor. In front of his studio, under the balcony, is his ‘splash table’. Ewoud often uses spatter techniques and that doesn’t work if the canvas is on the easel. “A forger cannot imitate my paintings. This is because I often paint a lot of layers over each other.”

Almost all of his paintings contain sand and dog hair. His medium is oils and he prefers square compositions. The ZEESCHILDERS were somewhat at a distance lately, but he feels kinship especially with the

recently deceased colleagues Jaap Ploos van Amstel (p. 168) and Frans Buissink (p. 168), with whom he worked on a lot of illustrations. “Frans is a damn good painter of course. And I learned quite a lot from him.”

Ewoud, as were several of the northern marine painters, was educated at the Minerva Academy of Fine Arts in Groningen alongside such students as Siemen Dijkstra and Karel Buskes. Other academies were discarded because, “I just wanted to learn a trade and not all that conceptual gibberish.”

Because of his commitments in the USA Ewoud wasn’t able to exhibit with the ZEESCHILDERS for some time. That sounds more like luxury than a problem.

🖼️ | Two spoonbills | 2002 | oils on canvas | 100 x 100 cm



🖼️ | Silver plovers | 2018 | oils on canvas | 70 x 140 cm

🖼️ | Roosting eiders | 2007 | oils on canvas | 120 x 120 cm | Coll. Donal O’Brien





🖼️ | Reflecting eiders | 2020 | oils on canvas | 110 x 110 cm

🖼️ | Giant tern | 2014 | oils on canvas | 160 x 160 cm | Coll. National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson, Wyoming

THE ARTISTS

You could say that **Maarten Groot** is a direct descendant of the tradition from which the ZEESCHILDERS sprang. Because Maarten has been sailing part of the year on the three-masted schooner ‘Eendracht’ for 38 years - first as a volunteer, later as watchleader and in recent years as bosun - and combines that with a career as a draughtsman/painter. There was once ‘kooirecht’ (*cabin right*) for the ZEESCHILDERS every year: they could sail on a trip of choice for free (funded by the Piet Hein Foundation). That was how Maarten was introduced to the ‘Eendracht’ (*Harmony*).

He made a name for himself with his watercoloured pen drawings of lighthouses, first sketched and photographed from the deck of the ‘Eendracht’. The drawings are framed in a composition incorporating part of a marine chart, coordinates and characteristic flora and fauna. Moreover, at the top invariably flies the flag belonging to the location. The series now consists of 85 artworks and is still growing.

Maarten works very precisely, which works out well for the ship portrait commissions he sometimes gets.

Asked about his heroes, Van der Velde (the Elder and the Younger) are mentioned first: “Of course, they too always draw those little boats with great precision. I feel great affinity with them. When visit the Rijksmuseum or the Scheepvaartmuseum in Amsterdam, I can look at a painting like that for hours.” An uncle of his once sorted out their family tree and came across an illustrator of geographical maps in the 18th century. Another tradition continued, because the work from this ancestor compares one-to-one to his own.

Another source of inspiration was a booklet depicting coastal views drawn at the time of an Anglo-French war by an illustrator in the service of the British Navy, indicating the positions and images of coastal batteries around Brest. These were drawn on long scrolls that emerged years ago from a long chest in the attic of the Admiralty in England. All in shades of green-blue-grey with low horizons. “I always have that little book on my desk.” Drawn rather fleetingly, like Maarten’s own sketches when at sea and passing something that is worth noting. Something like that has to be realised in a minute and must be spot-on in order to continue working with it later in his studio.

Maarten feels he is primarily a draughtsman, the basis for his works. The first step is a pencil drawing, exploring the outline of the composition. Then pen and ink, and when dry comes watercolour.

Most of Maarten’s work is commissioned.

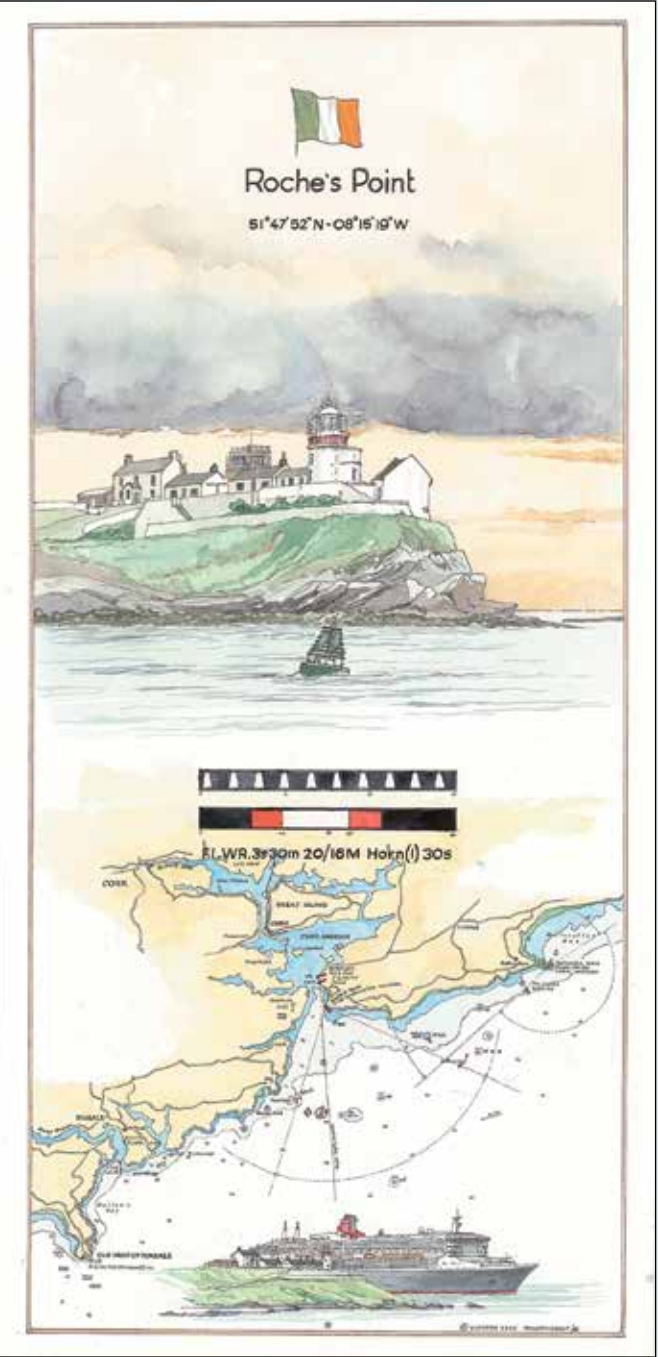
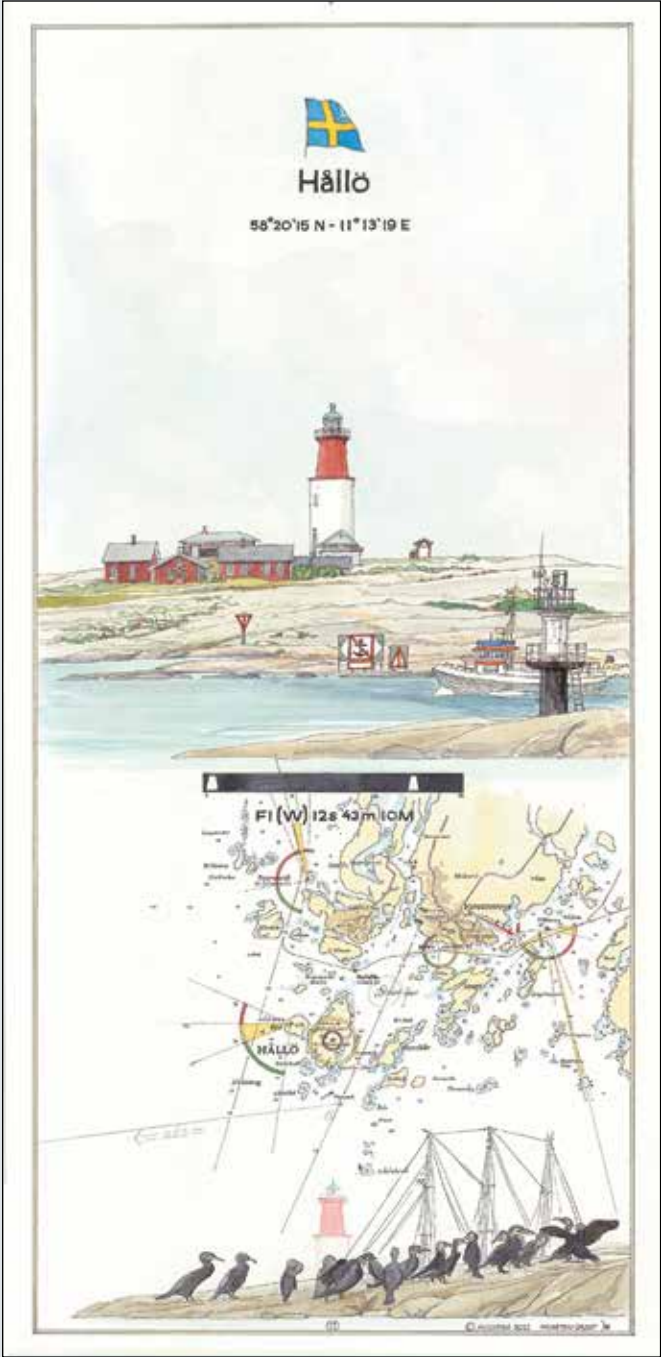
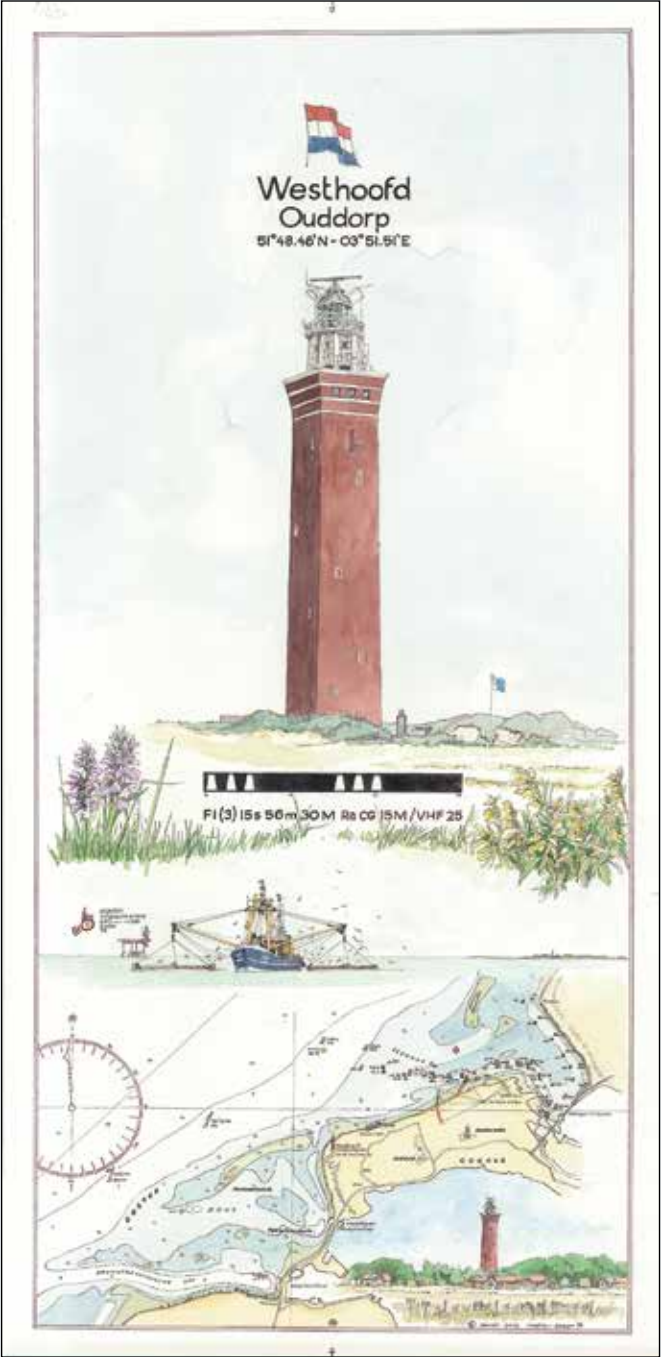
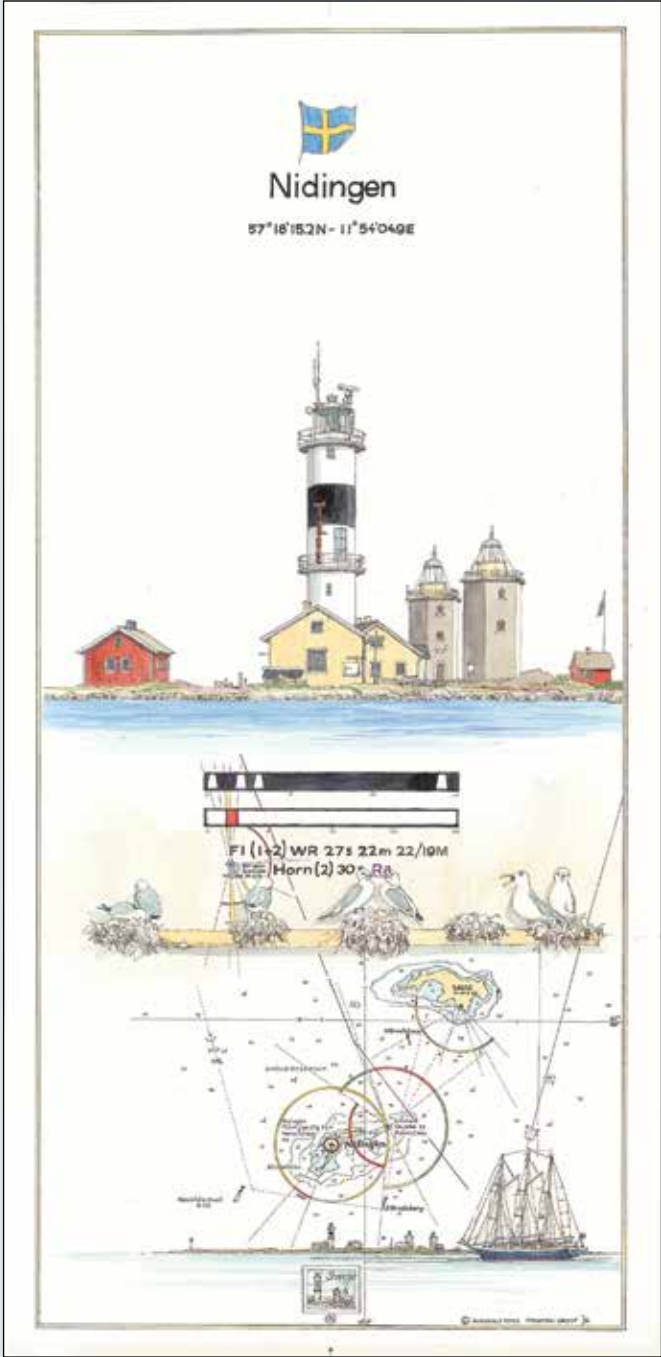
These days that includes ship portraits that replace the artist’s impression generated at a shipyard with the touch of a button. A technique that has supplanted the old ship portraits. Maarten, unlike many of his colleagues at the ZEESCHILDERS, is not looking for ‘beautiful light’ or ‘the right time of day’, he just wants to make a beautiful image. He calls himself a craftsman rather than an artist, but as far as he is concerned that is for others to decide.

MAARTEN GROOT



🖌️ | All works in the lighthouse series are watercoloured pen drawings measuring 70 x 32 cm





Besides conducting a flourishing art practice, **Katinka Krijgsman**, like Luk van Driessche (p.68) and Dolf Middelhoff (p .92), previously ran a practice as a graphic designer. In that capacity she handled previous editions of this book, designs the publicity around joint exhibitions and maintains the the ZEESCHILDERS’ website. She studied set and costume design and theatre photography at the Academy of Fine Arts in Utrecht (now HKU). The influence of this can be seen in her current paintings.

A striking part of her work are the large painted plates. These mostly feature shapely women within a maritime setting. They are a nod to the Dutch tradition of Delftware, in the same blue but much larger. Even though Katinka isn’t really into Delftware: “I thought they were terribly frumpish, those plates, never liked them, I only liked the colour.” She explains that they started as a joke: during the ‘Kunsttiendaagse’ (an annual art festival in Bergen NH), she always exhibits in a pub where such Delft-blue plates usually hang. She then came up with her own enlarged plates with erotic and maritime images: “They were an instant hit.”

She works on a plate for about three weeks, a very craftmanlike way. The plates are made of fibreglass and cotton fabric, which she hardens with a natural hardener. She then covers them with a layer of plaster and than gesso on which oil paints are applied, and finished off with varnish.

She mentions Carravaggio and Rembrandt as sources of inspiration. Among the Expressionists, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (of ‘Die Brücke’) and among the contemporaries ZEESCHILDER Erik Tierolf (p. 108), because of his narrational work with erotic undertones. Katinka nudges this herself by not shying away from curvaceous women. That also goes for her large format paintings of fish, (herring-eating) women, scenes of land and sea, boats and the surf, partly with mixed media.

Her plates also feature eggs sunny-side up, so the conversation turns to Tjalf Sparnaay, who paints food in gigantic size, and also Henk Helmantel; both do well in culinary venues and it turns out she



🖼️ | In the shade of a lobster | 2017 | oils on linnen | 100 x 100 cm

has a lot of work in a restaurant in Egmond aan Zee.

On painting women: “I find painting women most interesting, I can’t say what it is, it’s probably about curves. I used to do that in art school as well doing model studies, I preferred painting women to men. They simply have better curves.” Self-portraits? “Yes, maybe a few.



🖼️ | Fat fish | 2021 | mixed media, Durst Lamdaprint on dibont, finished with plexiglass | 80 x 165 cm

who knows, if I was in the poor house I might even paint the Grim Reaper (burst of laughter).”

Finally, the Egmond artists colony pops up. Katinka’s husband was born in the house where the founder of the ‘Egmond Art Summer School’, George Hitchcock, used to reside.

Katinka is also an avid cyclist and skater, a hobby she shares with Ellen van Toor (p. 134) and Ageeth van den Oever (p. 96).



🖼️ | Fish eye | 2020 | oils on hand-made 3-D plate | 92 x 92 x 9 cm

🖼️ | Head and tail | 2019 | oils on hand-made 3-D plate | 92 x 92 x 9 cm

🖼️ | Snapping fish | 2018 | oils on hand-made 3-D plate | 92 x 92 x 9 cm



🖼️ | Fruits on seaweed | 2022 | oils on hand-made 3-D plate | 92 x 92 x 9 cm



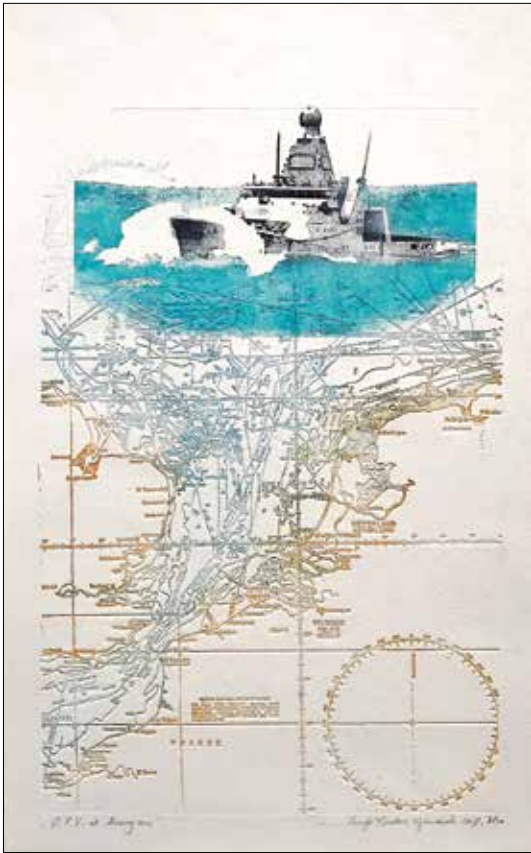
>> 🖼️ | Behind the church | 2022 | oils on hand-made 3-D plate | 92 x 92 x 9 cm

Leentje Linders is the socity’s printmaker and a board member of the ZEE-SCHILDERS. Therefore her list of heroes contains mainly printmakers. During her training at the Free Academy of Arts in The Hague, she first saw people making etchings and this greatly fascinated her, since the work of printmakers Hercules Segers and Lucas van Leyden had captivated her for some time, also because her paternal grandmother’s name was Van Leyden.

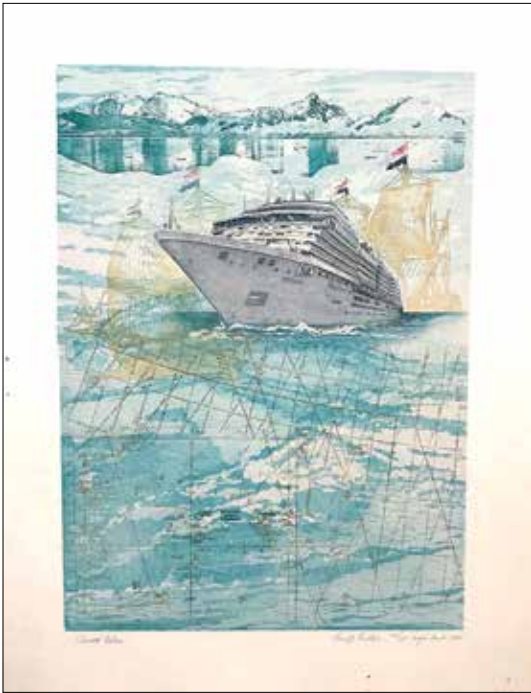
“This is ‘black art’ I thought then at the academy. This is what Hercules Segers did, this I want to learn. Being Dutch one cannot ignore Rembrandt van Rijn either, of course, he was also a great printmaker. He was more famous during his lifetime for his etchings than for his paintings.” In modern art David Hockney is a big example for Leentje, particularly his series with swimming pools inspired her recent works of moving water. Getting that into an etching was quite a challenge: “It took me many years to create water on an etching plate. That’s what I learned from Hockney: it’s all about the light.” Also Maarten Groot’s (p. 76) name pops up: “He makes things I would have liked to make too and also Louis Swagerman (p. 104), for his almost completely abstract work.”

She denies not being a painter by pointing out that to depict water on a plate requires a kind of painting: the tones are made with ‘aquatint’, a technique in which instead of lines powder is applied to the plate. Once bitten into the plate this produces a beautiful, painterly tone, strongly reminiscent of watercolour. Hockney paints white swirls in his pools and this showed Leentje that she should start with white when making an etching of water. This too compares with the watercolourists who also have to work around the white of their paper.

A second thread in Leentje’s work are etchings of aeroplanes. She had in fact wanted to become a pilot, but at the time girls could not do that. She comes from a family with strong ties to the armed forces (among them her father) and that points to a third thread: military themes. Through her contacts with the Navy Leentje became a member of the ZEESCHILDERS and must be one of the last members to remember the societey’s Naval past. On a VIP Sailing Day (when the Navy invites civilians on board), she met Ingrid Dingjan (p. 118) and Winnifred Bastian (p. 114), both members of the ZEESCHILDERS.



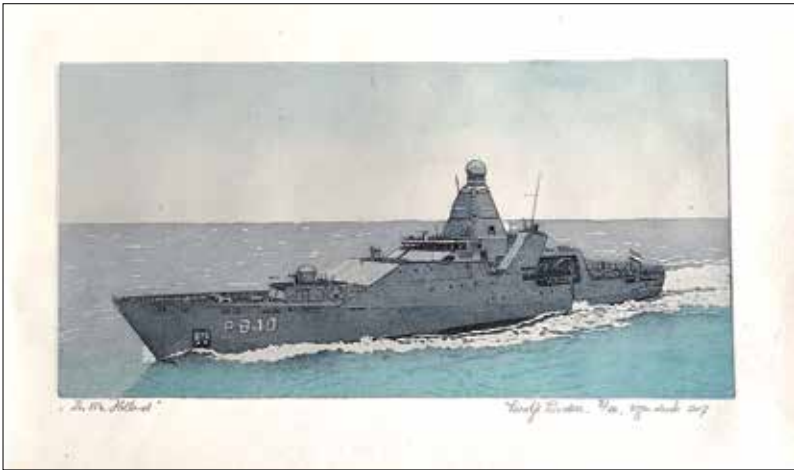
🏠 | OPV at heavy sea | etching | 50 x 30 cm



🏠 | Arctic Route | etching | 75 x 55 cm



🏠 | At sea again | etching | 65 x 50 cm



🏠 | Zr Ms Holland | etching | 30 x 50 cm






 | The Sea#3 | etching | 50 x 56 cm



 | The Sea#4 | etching | 50 x 56 cm



 | Jumping the rainbow | etching | 50 x 54 cm

<  | Columbus' route | etching | 50 x 65 cm

THE ARTISTS

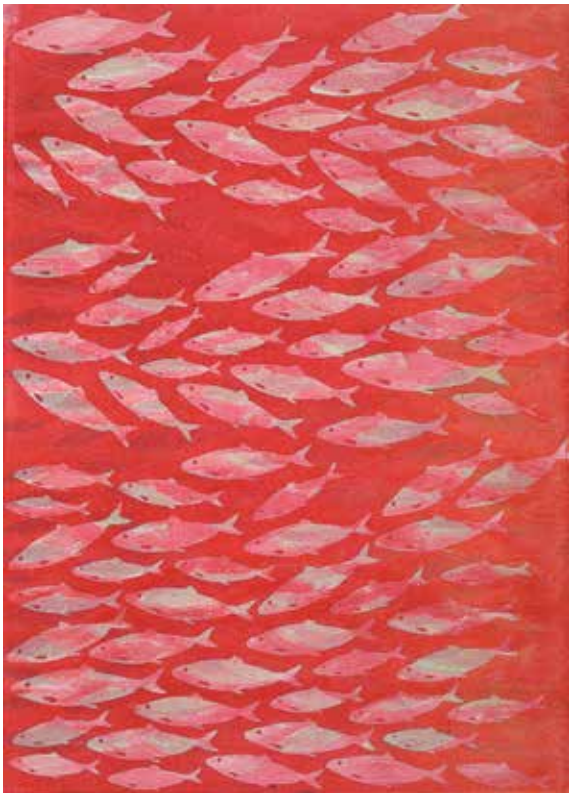
The second Limburger in our midst is **Maurice Christo van Meijel**, who moved even further north than Edith Madou (p. 38) by settling down on Texel (the largest of the Dutch Wadden Islands) 16 years ago where he and his husband run Galerie Posthuys. Some members of the ZIESSCHILDERS are represented there and the society also had a group exhibition there in the past.

One of his two studios is also located there. The second one is on the beach and is available only in June, July and August. From around eight o'clock in the morning Maurice is regularly there producing series of sketches of the surf and the clouds with pastel crayons. By noon it gets too crowded, too hot and the view becomes backlit. That is why Maurice's beach scenes always feature morning light. By noon it's time to go home to see and photograph the results and clean up his beach cart and lend a hand in the flourishing art gallery.

At first Maurice worked in watercolour, but it didn't suit him for outdoor work, so he turned to drawing with pastel crayon, standing up, so he doesn't have to move his head up and down too much while working. Maurice loves his spot on the beach: "It's a unique place and a luxury to have such a small shack where I have my furniture. I'm in the lee and can stand at any side."

At the City Academy of Art in Maastricht Maurice had to drop about working with watercolours and pastel crayons. Initially trained as a teacher he later designed textiles and curtains. Later on he started making quick notes from the train in small sketchbooks. For him there lies the core of his art. To develop a natural handwriting that allows you to draw something as easily as if you were writing a grocery note. "That's why I'm so happy with my beach work. It's so wonderful being there, and amazing what I get to see and experience. That's also why we came to live on Texel."

The day usually starts with some small sketches to check out the light and to see how his energy is that day. Then on to a larger format, even a panorama, usually on tinted paper. Besides his summer beach work Maurice also spends a lot of time decorating ceramics. There too the maritime focus is immediately recognisable in the many fish motifs. With paper artist Marian Smit, who sadly died in 2021, Maurice made paper installations as well as a book.



🖼️ | Red school | 2022 | monoprnt | 40 x 30 cm

Asked about his heroes, Swiss painter Ferdinand Hodler pops up. Maurice travels to Switzerland whenever a retrospective is held. He and interviewer Dolf Middelhoff (p. 92) share their admiration for this artist. Munch and van Gogh are also mentioned, as goals to aspire

MAURICE CHRISTO VAN MEIJEL



🖼️ | North Sea | 2021 | pastels on paper | 32 x 50 cm



🖼️ | North Sea | 2020 | pastels on paper | 24 x 32 cm



🖼️ | North Sea | 2021 | pastels on paper | 23 x 70 cm

to, for the sake of imagination. Maurice also mentions Post-Impressionists painters like Vuillard, Bonnard and Denis.

Maurice concludes the interview in a romantic mood: "I would have loved to have lived at the time when photography was invented and painting would not be the same."



THE ARTISTS

🖼️ | North Sea | 2019 |
pastels on paper | 24 x 32 cm



🖼️ | North Sea | 2021 |
pastels on paper | 24 x 32 cm



🖼️ | North Sea | 2020 |
pastels on paper | 24 x 32 cm



🖼️ | Detail from paper installation |
2015-2018 | watercolours on cut paper |
240 x 90 x 450 cm (in collaboration
with Marian Smit)



MAURICE CHRISTO VAN MEIJEL

Dolf Middelhoff’s career started in the service of the nation, where he made it to Private First Class in twelve months. A necessary intermediate step, because his choice of profession was by no means fixed, not even after fourteen years of toiling at five different schools. “I finally decided to be trained as a graphic designer at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, where I studied photography with drawing and painting as subsidiary subjects. My favourite teacher was Piet Klaasse, from whom I learned the intricacies of working with watercolours.”

Dolf initially painted in a surrealistic style, like Winnifred Bastian (p. 114), Geer Huybers (p. 126), Victor Hoefnagels (p. 122) and Louis Swagerman.

Among his heroes are photographers: Ansel Adams for the ultimate landscape and, of course, in the maritime context, Beken of Cowes. He also has a soft spot for Romanesque architecture and artists of the Italian Renaissance, sculptor Edouardo Chillida, printmaker Siemen Dijkstra, painters Gerrit Benner, Nicolaas de Staël and Ferdinand Hodler. He shares the admiration for the latter with Maurice Christo van Meijel (p. 88). “Moreover, I admire almost all marine painters in the world, then and now, including all colleagues at the ZEESCHILDERS.”

He did not become a marine painter himself until 2005, when he sold his graphic studio in order to devote himself entirely to photography and painting. Under the guidance of Roos Schuring, (former member of the ZEESCHILDERS) he developed his present working method. He works plein-air with oils and watercolours, in his home country by the sea and in the polders and while travelling through Europe. He has a winetr retreat on the Canary Island of La Gomera: “The sea hits the rocks right in front of our little flat. I can look at that for hours; it is always similar and yet it is never for a moment the same. Sometimes I make three watercolours in one morning, just like Maurice Christo van Meijel (p. 88) on Texel.”

In winter, Dolf works on large(er) canvases in his studio, and draws in different media. Painting he mainly does for pleasure, but is pleased when someone decides to show his appreciation by slapping down a couple of bills: “Oils stink, money doesn’t. I am a privileged, because I get to live for it and don’t have to live from it. It is always quite a sweat to get my mobile studio in place and to get my



🖼️ | La Gomera, Alojera Playa | acrylics on canvas board | 25 x 35 cm.

🖼️ | La Gomera, Valle Gran Rey, La Condesa, Surf#6 | watercolours | 32 x 24 cm.

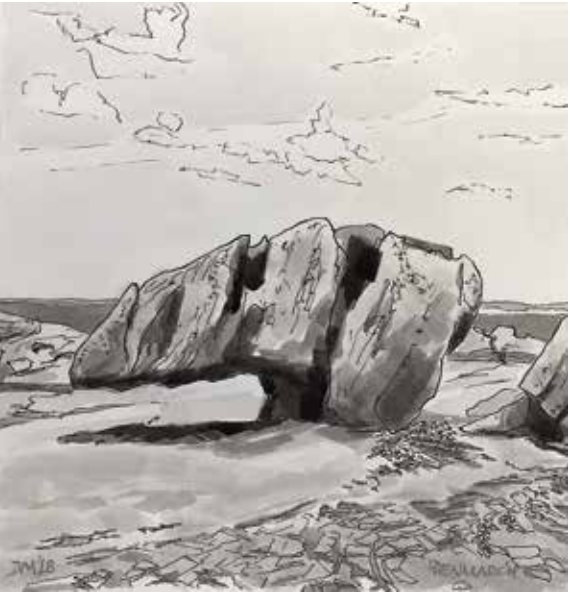


🖼️ | Reflections IJsselmeer#1 | oils on canvas | 50 x 50 cm.

paintings into a protective box without bugs and sand, especially on windy days! And fthen back home, comes the job of thoroughly cleaning the brushes.”

With poet-friend Jurjen Keessen, Dolf organized book projects, with plans to turn some of Jurjen’s maritime poems into a work of art in leporello form.


Like Ageeth van den Oever (p. 96) he is fascinated by the dolmens in his country. A series of ink drawings of stray boulders were named after his musical heroes ‘Rolling Stones’. The dolmens fit in seamlessly in that series. It is a ‘work in progress’: “I want to start drawing and painting all 53 of them. Plein air, of course!”




🖼️ | Rolling Stones, Penmarc’h, Brittany | pen and (washed) ink on paper | 24,5 x 24,5 cm.






 | Katwijk looking towards IJmuiden | oils on canvas board | 50 x 40 cm.



 | Sørgattet, Spitsbergen | oils on canvas | 60 x 30 cm.



 | Zandvoort#1 | oils on canvas | 50 x 40 cm.

THE ARTISTS

In Lutjewinkel we are welcomed among fruit-bearing apple trees overlooking a meadow newly sown with ryegrass stretching to the horizon. “I was at the beach before I was even born,” **Ageeth van den Oever** replies laughing when asked about her connection to the sea. Born in June in Leiden’s hospital she grew up in Katwijk. She is the only ‘real’ sculptor of the ZEESCHILDERS, because unlike Ludo van Well (p. 156), she really carves out her sculptures. Ageeth admires Eugène Dodeigne for his large, rough pieces and is absolutely lyrical about Camille Claudel, Auguste Rodin’s life companion who was later put away by her mother and brother in an asylum for (supposed) mental illness.

She’s also fascinated with the Dutch dolmens, as is Dolf Middelhoff (p. 92). Following the Hondsrug Path – which runs from Groningen to Meppen in Germany – where she can encounter them. She sees them in the work of Ton Kalle, who exhibits large rolling boulders at ‘Beelden in Gees’ (an open-air sculpture garden).

In 1995 Ageeth started working in Italy at Studio Sem in Pietrasanta, named after the founder (and one of her heroes) Sem Ghelardini, a genius when it comes to the knowledge of marble (‘pietrasanta’ in Italian; holy stone). There she came into contact with colleagues like Eppe de Haan and Helaine Blumenfeld. Through Eppe de Haan Ageeth came into contact with Sudio Pescarella where she works to the present day. She also studied Barbara Hepworth: “I believe that something of her work creeps into the fshapes I carve in stone.”

We talk at length about having seen everything before that you make, even if an idea has worked its way out spontaneously. As an example Ageeth mentions a sculpture of a skyscraper (p. 98, left) in which she has incorporated a curved line, which is accentuated by a kind of luxaflex pattern that is at different angles to the left and right of the curved line: “That idea came out of the blue just like that, which is nice. But no doubt I saw that somewhere before.”

She loves the endlessly searching, experimenting, changing. Ageeth calls herself self-taught, although she did model drawing at the Fraa Academy in The Hague. And a little sculpting under the guidance of Jan Snoek and Nout Visser. During two year-long courses in Italy she mastered the technique of hand carving, partly thanks to



🗿 | Nautilus | alabaster

the instructions of men who had worked in the quarries and who taught her the tricks of the trade.

Ageeth still likes manual carving best, and as a finishing touch, she sometimes roughens parts of a sculpture with a pointed chisel. For larger pieces she uses a pneumatic hammer because its power may be tuned. In addition to her sculpture, she also makes burial monuments: “Very rewarding work, people are always pleased.”

“Of course, one cannot ignore Michelangelo when wandering among the white marble in the Tuscan mountains. You reach his quarry along a footpath. The fact that his Pietà came from this quarry feels absolutely magical and sacred to me.”



🗿 | Vault hole | marble



🗿 | Lighthouse | marble

AGEETH VAN DEN OEVER



🗿 | Water creature | alabaster





🏢 | Skyscraper | marble



🏢 | Ripple & Rise | marble



🏢 | Ribs | marble

Peter Smit has a packed studio in the Westerpark region, formerly the Amsterdam’s ‘Staatslieden’ district. He is well versed in a variety of disciplines; from portrait and model drawing to still life. Like Maurice Christo van Meijel (p. 88) on Texel, Peter also has a holiday home, in Groet. Peter is primarily a summer painter at the beach, because his studio activities, commissions, plein air painting at the canals and teaching duties keep him in Amsterdam the rest of the year. He really likes the summer atmosphere: “I love people on the beach and all that’s going on.” Like painter Harrie Kuyten, whom also worked from a studio in Groet and bears resemblance to the Bergen School. Peter tells about Kuijten that the latter was not really counted among the Bergen School because he painted people on the beach, whereas that remained empty with the Bergers. “But the funny thing is that Harrie Kuyten is the only one still traded now!”

Peter also works in and around Domburg where boats go in and out of the Veerse Gat, while the sea at Schoorl is fairly empty. He is fascinated by the kite-surfers going up and down the coast between Camperduin and Bergen and near Katwijk at wind force eight, a spectacle he goes out for to see.

Israëls and Breitner are the first on his list of heroes, a love he shares with Sonja Brussen (p. 26) whom he once taught painting on the beach. Jan Sluijters follows, Harrie Kuyten and Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida is an extremely pleasant surprise. His work reminds of the Danish Skagen School but under a glittering Mediterranean light in Valencia; people, animals, beaches, headlands, gardens.... Rik Wouters and the Belgian Impressionists are mentioned: “I love the Impressionists, I also like Matisse, and Picasso, a wonderful painter. But I am a Dutchman so the light here I understand best.”

Peter also paints cityscapes. Water is always present in these: along the Amstel River, during Sail events or streets in rainy weather. The reflections fascinate him.

Peter took his education at the State Academy of Fine Arts after taking a major in art in the Lutmastraat (now called the Breitner Academy, part of the Amsterdam School of the Arts).

Peter continues to explain how to paint a subject on which the



🖼️ | Summer at last | 2021 | oils on linnen | 50 x 70 cm

light changes position during the painting process. Showing an example Peter explains that it is perfectly credible, despite the fact that the light has crossed almost 90 degrees on the celestial arc. “But this is a nice stretch of the Amstel, a safe stretch too. On this particular streech of the river there is little difference in the light in the morning or in the afternoon. I’ll start at about noon and by 4 PM I put in the light and shadow, when the light is at its best. And at 7 PM I have to leave, because then too much has changed and the light turns increasingly reddish. But of course a whole new, different painting can result from that!”




🖼️ | Domburg at sea | 2019 | oils on linnen | 50 x 70 cm




🖼️ | SAIL Amsterdam | 2015 | oils on linnen | 30 x 50 cm




 | Walkers by the sea | 2022 |
oils on linnen | 30 x 50 cm




 | Summer by the sea | 2018 |
oils on linnen | 24 x 30 cm



 | Kyte surfers by the sea | 2020 |
oils on linnen | 30 x 40 cm



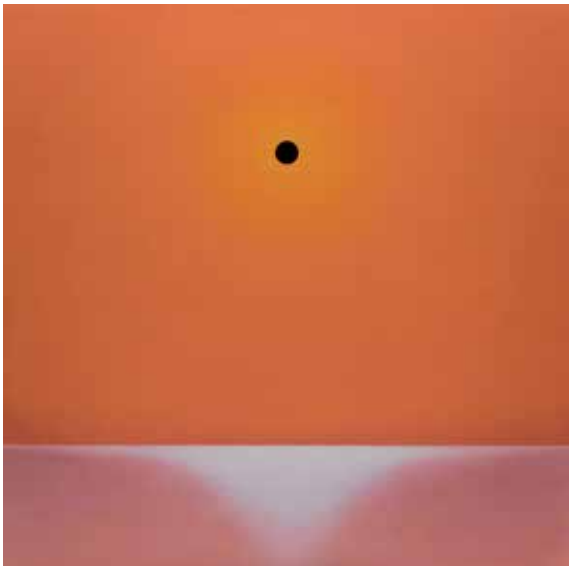
 | Beach pleasure | 2022 | oils on linnen | 30 x 50 cm

THE ARTISTS

The first sources of inspiration mentioned by **Louis Swagerman** are Caspar David Friedrich, William Turner, Odilon Redon, Ferdinand Hodler, Mark Rothko and, in the Netherlands, Constant Nieuwenhuijs in his later period. Louis is self-taught and has been painting since 1972, initially without intending to make it his profession. In the early days, he painted in a surrealist style. This is also the case with Winnifred Bastian (p. 114), Geer Huybers (p. 126) and Dolf Middelhoff (p. 92).

In 1975 Swagerman went to work on the Isle of Wight to investigate whether he would like to make art his profession. This turned out to be the case. To acquire skill in technique, Louis rang Carel Willink’s doorbell to ask if he might become an apprentice. Willink recommended purchasing Max Doerner’s book ‘Materials of the artist and their use in painting’. “I went through this book thoroughly. It turned out to be a lot of reading, with very few pictures. I learned how to make egg tempera, how to prepare paint, prepare canvases and all kinds of old painting techniques.” So Swagerman really honed in on technique and found his own way without further help.

After travelling through America, Louis found a living-working space in Enkhuizen upon his return to the Netherlands, where he could develop his art further. Inspired by clouds, at first with a



🖼️ | Reflexion – Lux in Tenebris VII | oils on canvas | 90 x 90 cm

horizon, then with only clouds and these then became mountains and caverns with architecture. Here he had his first exhibition in ‘De Drommedaris’ (*The Camel*), a cultural centre in a former town gate.



🖼️ | Lake of Silence | oils on canvas | 105 x 105 cm

“At some point something changed quite abruptly and I turned, as it were, and looked down from the tops of those mountains, from those heights, down to the sea and its horizon. This then became a new and very essential source of inspiration”. Louis’ vast surroundings, with the IJsselmeer (now the largest lake in the Netherlands, originally open sea) right around the corner, was important for that change.

Asked about the spiritual side in his current work, Louis says, “I don’t actually paint landscapes, but the soul of the landscape. What I value in life as a human being, an inner focus, is expressed through my work.” Back to Caspar David Friedrich, who painted to the honour and glory of the Creator. Louis feels completely at ease with that: “Man has in him a divine spark and is a child of the Creator. As a result, man possesses possibilities of perceptions that are unrivalled”.

LOUIS SWAGERMAN

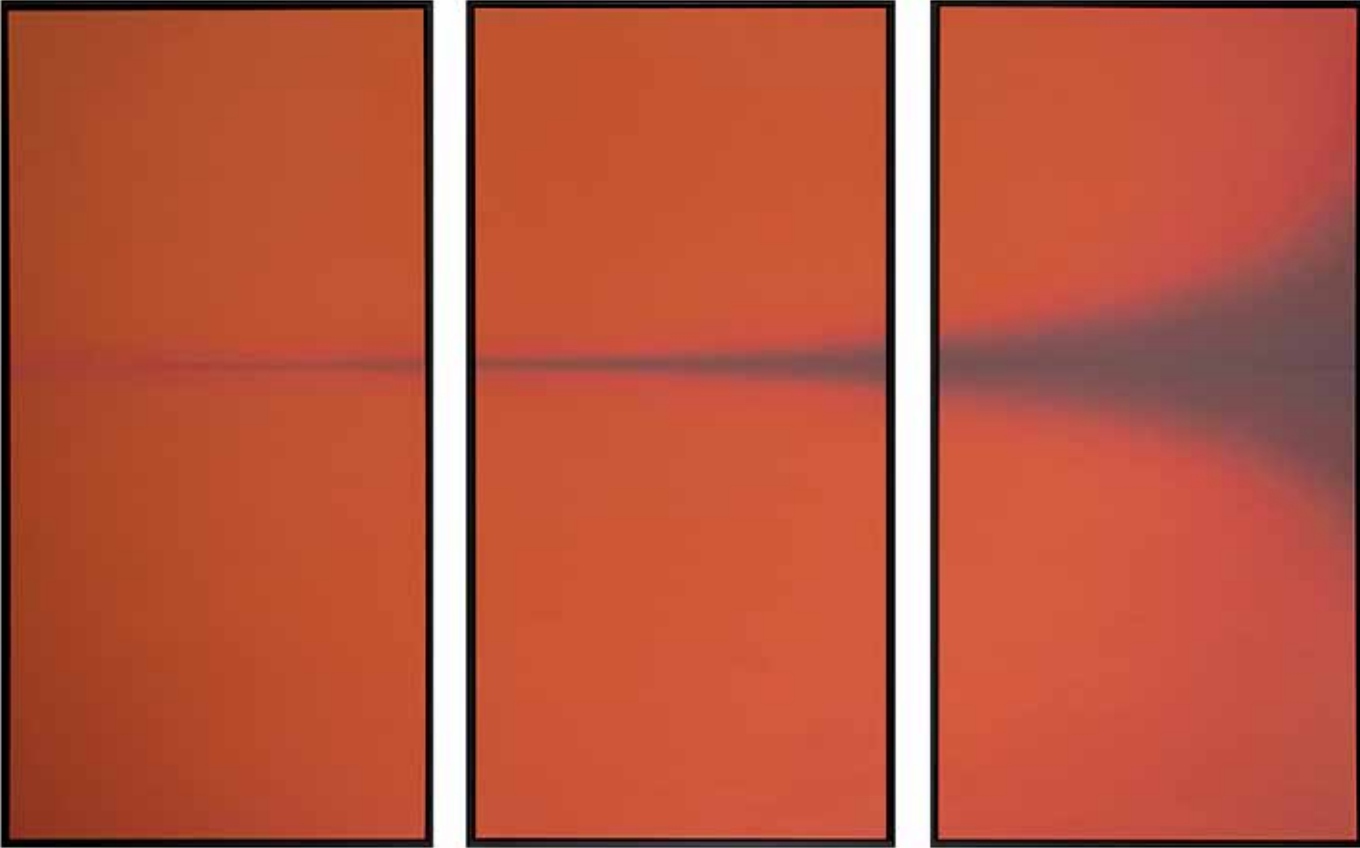


🖼️ | Sea gate | oils on canvas | 70 x 70 cm





< 🖼️ | At the lake | oils on canvas | 65 x 100 cm



< 🖼️ | Meeting (Melancholia) | oils on canvas | 50 x 150 cm

🖼️ | Horizon | oils on canvas | 160 x 258 cm



The prize for the most untraceable studio goes to **Erik Tierolf**: from a garage square a narrow back alley runs between two high fences to three concealed studios with fine northern light. The neighbours are rehearsing for an upcoming performance. In the 1970s a philanthropist scattered nine such studios in Bergen. Where could you find that these days?

Erik is in varying contact with his heroes, depending on his mood. He mentions the name of American Eric Fischl first, then Frenchman Daniel Enkaoua, and of the better known artists Max Beckman. From the ZEESCHILDERS he mentions Robin d' Arcy Shillcock (p. 22), Pauline Bakker (p. 64), Katinka Krijgsman (p. 80) and Leentje Linders (p. 84). The names of Pat Andrea, Neo Rauch, Daniel Richter and Klaus Versteegen follow: "I could go on endlessly." Of the likes of Neo Rauch, Erik is only interested in his use of colour, with Beckman it's about the surface texture, but since you can't see that in reproductions, you need to see the actual work. It doesn't necessarily have to do with his own way of painting.

Pauline Bakker (p. 64) and Ewoud de Groot (p. 72) drew his attention to the ZEESCHILDERS: "A long time ago, twenty years or so." Back then, he exhibited in the Katwijk Museum and worked on charcoal drawings for a book on the history of Katwijk. "At the time I made a lot of paintings of the sea", he says.

Erik trained at the AKI in Enschede and only discovered the sea when he moved to Alkmaar. There the sea is always a backdrop, often with a lot of women in the foreground, if not exclusively: "That's what sticks in people's minds, but I think the ratio of paintings with and without women is about fifty-fifty." He also takes commissions, from portraits to seascapes, with or without the client in front or in it. To do this he uses dozens of photos that he combines in the studio to create a composition. He finds working from observation difficult: "I have done that, but it's hardly practical. A model has to be here for all of a week, then both of us go berserk. That's no fun at all."

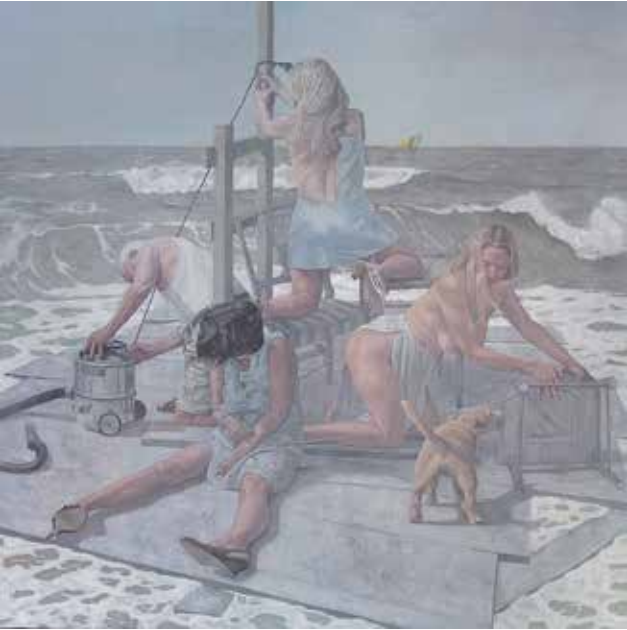
Friend Robert Vorstman sometimes pulls him out of his 'cubby hole' but, "That's not for me, painting outside. All that sand messes up my paintings. And I have to work too fast". With oils Erik works very patiently, layer over layer. First the underpainting followed by five or six layers. A painting will therefore easily take a month to finish,

which is why he works on several pieces at a time.

Erik once worked for the sheikh of Qatar: "They were really quite crazy. They wanted to build a museum in the middle of the desert with all the paintings based on Lawrence of Arabia. So we all had to paint a scene from that film with the sheikh as the hero." The painting project never took off due to scheming and family disputes. In the end Erik did not go to Qatar. Kees Wieringa – ex-director of the Kranenburgh Museum in Bergen NH – was supposed to head that megalomaniacal project but was kicked out in a mess of idiocy, corruption and intrigue. The museum did come though, 'enriching' the world with another useless project.

< 🖼️ | Lago Nero | oils on canvas | 180 x 220 cm





🖼️ | Raft | oils on canvas | 210 x 210 cm



🖼️ | Airbed | oils on canvas | 50 x 140 cm



🖼️ | Message in a bottle | oils on canvas | 70 x 100 cm



🖼️ | Sloop Theo | oils on canvas | 40 x 30 cm



🖼️ | Lars in the sea | oils on canvas | 40 x 345 cm



🖼️ | Parade | oils on canvas | 80 x 120 cm

THE ARTISTS

Geer Huybers

☆ Rijswijk, 1947
www.geerhuybers.nl
Den Haag

Marc Langer

☆ Plaats, 19xx
www.zeeschilders.com
Voorburg

Ellen van Toor

☆ Vlaardingse, 1958
www.ellenvantoor.nl
Den Haag

Cassandra van Veen

☆ Gouda, 1964
www.cassandravanveen.nl
info@cassandravanveen.nl
Scheveningen

Coob Zeeman

☆ Bussum, 1955
coobzeeman@gmail.com
www.coobzeeman.nl
Leidschendam

Winnifred Bastian

☆ Rotterdam, 1946
www.winnifredbastian.nl
Voorburg

Ingrid Dingjan

☆ Voorburg, 1951
www.maritiemschilder.com
Pijnacker

Victor Hoefnagels

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Den Haag

THE ARTISTS

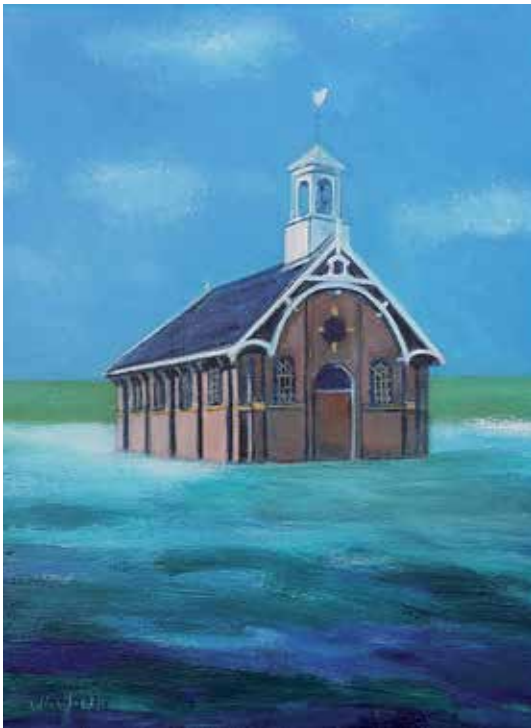
“My story is about the rising sea-level and churches,” **Winnifred Bastian** begins our conversation. “And I’ll be working on that theme for some time to come.” Proud that she was selected from 2,250 painters to participate in the ‘Climate Expo ‘22’ at Museum De Fundatie in Zwolle, held in late 2022. “I too, am concerned about climate change. Those churches with wet feet reflect my own perception of faith, I see the decline in interest all around me. “Everything will go under if global warming continues and so will those churches.”

She was already painting inundated churches before climate change was an issue. The first was the ‘Nieuwe Kerk’ (in The Hague), in it you can see the water almost up to the threshold. In De Fundatie she showed the St. Nicolaaskerk in Amsterdam, a painting in which only the towers were visible (p. 117).

Her first painting ever was a seascape – she was ten years old at the time. A recurrent theme. When a child in Rotterdam, she often played at her grandmother’s on the Schiedamse Dyke and near the harbour. She was taken by her grandfather to a ship launch at the Nederlandse Droogdok Maatschappij.

Winnifred took lessons at the Free Academy in The Hague, where she ended up with lithography and painting, after doing a fashion course. Her grandfather and an uncle also painted. She lived in London for two years and in Qatar, where she painted maritime subjects for four years. Paintings of ‘dhow’s, the traditional Arab fishing boat with its distinctive shape, date from the Qatar years. She was the driving force behind the establishment of an artists’ association in Qatar for expats – because they could not join Qatari societies.

Winnifred has been a member of the ZEESCHILDERS for over 30 years and also the figurehead of the exhibition committee about as long. She took over that task from Coob Zeeman at the time (p. 142). Asked about her heroes, she firmly replies, “No, not at all. Weird huh? I paint because I like to. I don’t think I have any real heroes.” The French realists and surrealist Carel Willink pop up after some prodding. There is a connection between her slightly surrealistic church paintings and Willink’s surreal cityscapes. “I even went through a whole surrealistic period but that was long ago.”



🖼️ | Huisduinen chapel | oils on canvas | 40 x 30 cm

This also goes for Geer Huybers (p. 126) and Victor Hoefnagels (p. 122), Dolf Middelhoff (p. 92) and Louis Swagerman (p. 104).

Winnifred is a long standing board member of the ZEESCHILDERS.



🖼️ | Bouniagues, Dordogne | oils on canvas | 40 x 30 cm



🖼️ | Lesparre, Médoc | oils on canvas | 50 x 40 cm

WINNIFRED BASTIAN



🖼️ | Church of Saint Martin, Voorburg | oils on canvas | 80 x 60 cm





🏰 | Westerkerk, Amsterdam | oils on canvas | 60 x 80 cm



🏰 | Church of Mozes and Aäron, Waterlooplein | oils on canvas | 24 x 18 cm



🏰 | Church of Saint Nicolas, Amsterdam | oils on canvas | 60 x 80 cm

Ingrid Dingjan shows up with a bulky book by British graphic artist Ralph Steadman; large, ferocious, gestures and ink blots, sometimes colour added. Besides watercolours and mixed media, Ingrid draws in black ink, and in these Steadman's influence is striking. Her own style has the same bold, robust quality to it: "Nice to be messing about. No bland little watercolours, but nice, gnarly things." Rough, brutal and straightforward.

Ingrid trained at the Royal Academy in The Hague. After a short career in primary education she made the switch to fine art. At the academy boats and seascapes were a no-go-area, as we heard from other marine painters. Ingrid too, conformed to the requirements of the curriculum – be innovative, be inquisitive – and put off painting boats and the sea for five years: "And yet I did learn something because I now look at the paintings from a different angle." She developed her skills later on her own.

She shows us some old, well-used brushes she is very attached to and has been working with for years. She made no maritime paintings at all after her years at the academy. She shows a rather abstracted 'Carnival' which shows nothing of her current work.

She and her husband used to occasionally rent a sailboat-with-instructor: "In those days having a meal after a trip was much more important than the sailing itself." Becoming a hand became an option, on sailing boats, cutters, and recently to Sweden with a friend on a container ship. Gradually she learned the ropes. She started reading about it: "To find out what sailing gear is called, how it works and what I must do with it."

Still, water was in her blood from a young age with a skipper-grandfather. "It's a juicy subject, I love it. In all techniques." Her main concern is to capture the dynamics: "I don't like painting a well-behaved sailboat on a wave and a thingy here and a cloud there and a seagull." In the studio she starts by drawing with a pencil for half an hour. "That's how I get into the mood. I then throw away those doodles and take off, I'm set and fired up."

She feels asome kinship with colleagues like Johan Meeske (p. 42), and remarkably with Ellen van Toor (p. 134) also: for the joy the work gives her. Ingrid has often been along on navy ships in the past, but

she now focuses on sailing boats. Although sat ease with several media, the biggest attraction is work in black ink because only three things are necessary: two pens, a chinese brush and raven-black, permanant ink.

Beside brush drawings she also incorporates nautical charts for commissions, given by her sailing customers. Like Maarten Groot (p. 76), who incorporates chart fragments into his lighthouse compositions, she uses these charts – in her case as a ground to paint on .

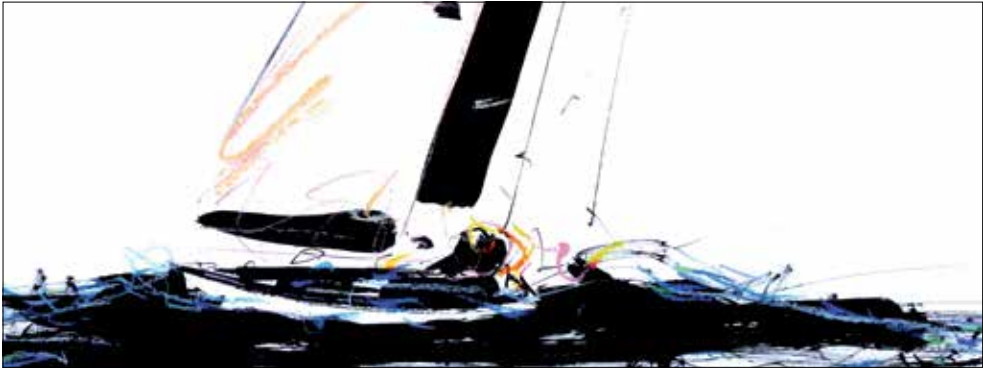
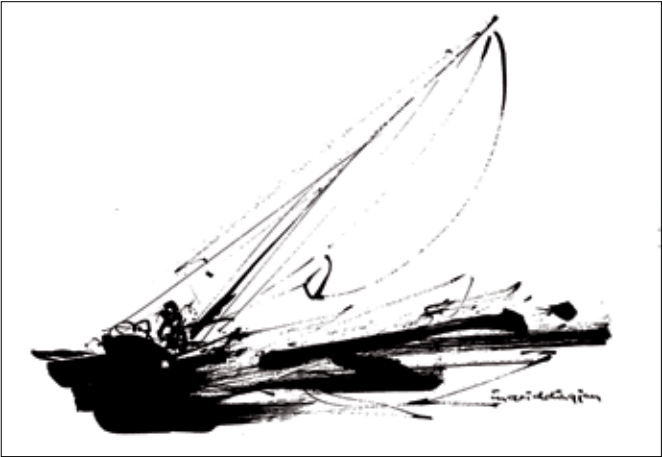


Brush and ink | 30 x 20 cm



Brush and ink | 50 x 65 cm





<< 🖌️ | Top 4 images: brush and ink | 20 x 30 cm



🖌️ | Brush and ink | 50 x 65 cm

< 🖌️ | Brush and ink, pastels | 50 x 65 cm (detail)

THE ARTISTS

Some people have multiple lives, just like cats. **Victor Hoefnagels** is experiencing his third. One day, heading with his yacht towards Scheveningen harbour in a strong blow when a coaster sailing out forced him off course. A huge wave overturned his yacht and threw him overboard. “So that is it,” was his first thought and felt an unreal serenity come over him. Fortunately, a miracle, a second wave lifted his yacht back up and he was able to clamber back on board. He then began his second life. The third began in 2015 after a similar lucky escape off Calais where, in favourable conditions, a sudden storm forced him to take down the genoa jib on the foredeck and he suddenly lost his footing and found himself in the swirling deep. When he surfaced, he was able to instruct his wife to make a man-overboard manoeuvre which she performed this flawlessly; again Victor was able to scramble back on aboard.

A year afterwards, when sleepless nights began to haunt him, his career as a marine painter began. Before, he had done all kinds of things. Like painting abstracts for a while, then portraits and models cloaked in plastic. Another theme was ‘Dark Places’, abandoned nooks in the city, under bridges and in buildings.

He worked as an illustrator for years, still to be seen in his handwriting. The list of his heroes is understandably diverse: Francis Bacon, Picasso for his versatility, Basquiat (a friend of Andy Warhol, initially a graffiti artist), Anselm Kiefer, Richard Serra.

Victor trained at the Royal Academy in The Hague. In his paintings with waves he deliberately chooses a low vantage point, as low as the gangway. It makes his seas extra impressive. He paints them from memory and his experience as a sailor. “When I start painting, it’s almost abstract. I then continue with the shapes that emerge and the details come naturally. That is when visual memory suddenly kicks in.”

Victor is hugely taken by the play of light on and through the waves. One of his paintings adorns the banner displayed in front of the ZEESCHILDERS exhibitions. He used to work in themes that did not include the sea. His first maritime work consisted of a wall-sized painting of a raging, almost abstract sea painted on top of another painting. The man who had commissioned the bottom painting decided to buy the sea anyway, thus getting two works for the price of one. His wife Jaqueline, his saving angel in Calais,



🖼️ | Lace of breaking waters | 2021 | acrylics on canvas | 30 x 120 cm



told him then, “And now you must go on.”

It is fitting that his home and studio sits in the middle of The Hague’s Zeeheldenkwartier (*the Sea Heroes Quarter*).

< 🖼️ | Vortex | 2022 | acrylics on canvas | 60 x 60 cm



🖼️ | Three Waves | 2022 | acrylics on canvas | 60 x 120 cm





🖼️ | Pastel Sea | 2022 | acrylics on canvas | 120 x 100 cm



🖼️ | Dark Clouds | 2018 | acrylics on canvas | 120 x 100 cm



🖼️ | Two Waves | 2022 | acrylics on canvas | 60 x 50 cm

🖼️ | The Gift (series) | 2022 | acrylics on canvas | 152 x 85 cm



THE ARTISTS

“I’ve just been painting for 55 years, so I have quite a few about,” Geer Huybers explains that he sometimes over-paints old canvases when they have lost their raison d’être. “That creates space”.

Geer went through the Free Academy in The Hague which entailed some doing before he got there. His father wanted the little rebel to learn a trade. When he was 14 he was sent away from secondary school to work for the postal company. Later he went to the intermediate technical school. At his own request he spent his military service in the Navy, where he learned the intricacies of navigation, something that would serve him well as a sailor later on. While still in the service he managed to get himself transferred to Valkenburg Air Base near Leiden so that he could attend the Free Academy evening course. There he was welcomed with open arms. “It felt like coming home, literally, with people who understood me and I understood them.” He enjoyed the absolute freedom to pick from what was on offer and what could help him develop as he saw fit. With two others he had his own room as a studio and there he could do whatever he wished: “It’s the best thing that happened to me.”

Geer had had a rather rigid upbringing and shook it off completely while at the academy. As heroes he mentions the director of the Free Academy, George Lampe and tutor Ber Mengels: “I got on really well with Ber, he was so to speak my ‘painter’s daddy’. From him I really learned a lot.” Georg Hadelar was his printmaking teacher. When asked which painters he admires now: “Not a clue!” In the academy days it was Surrealism, Dalí and Magritte and especially Matta and the whole surrealist group, who had gone to the USA before and during the war. “I remember: 1971 - I had no money but I bought a very thick book on Surrealism for 91 guilders. The bookseller bowed me out.” He still has it, and is able to dream up its contents.

After the academy he began a long quest for essence, form and colour and to learn to draw better through *écriture automatique*. Over the years several research series were undertaken.

After a turbulent period in his life Geer bought a sailing boat when



| Elena's flight from Aeolus (detail shipwreck) | 2021 | pigments and pastels on board | 60 x 132 cm

50 years old and has been painting the sea ever since. He looks at it from a sailor’s perspective, as does Victor Hoefnagels (p. 122), but Geer’s work is more broad and panoramic. “In every painting I try to do better, to tighten up, to clarify, to make more full, to get to essence.” He will always continue to do research. Geer often paints the sea from memory, but he also photographs it all the time. When not on his boat you may find him at the beach: “Always with this question at the back of my mind: ‘is there a painting in there?’ ”

GEER HUYBERS



| Winter sea | 2019 | oils on canvas | 100 x 200 cm



| Surf South Harbour pier | 20217 | oils on canvas | 60 x 150 cm

Beside his maritime work Geer is still steadily building his ‘state of the mind’ series, black-and-white drawings in which thinking is avoided as far as possible and the subconscious given a chance. The words can be abstract or representational and sometimes in between.

Geer is a board member of the ZEESCHILDERS.





🖼️ | Wind at sea | 2022 | oils on canvas | 60 x 90 cm



🖼️ | Wave | 2021 | oils on canvas | 60 x 90 cm



🖼️ | Rolling over | 2022 | oils on canvas | 60 x 90 cm



🖼️ | Girl in the sea | 2021 | oils on canvas | 130 x 160 cm

Marc Langer spends a lot of time in the Danish and German Wadden Sea. His goal is to one day have visited all the islands. With 33 counted and 10 to go he has come a long way. In his paintings the typical German beach chairs with their canvas covers in local colours play a striking role. A part of his clientèle live in Germany and he has the fortune making good deals with them. He also praises their friendliness and helpfulness when travelling there.

His studio is in the attic of a stately Rotterdam building in which two childhood friends run a business. One of them gives regular feedback on his work, which also hangs in their offices. Marc lives in Voorburg but loves working in Rotterdam because it gives him a nice daily bike ride to his studio where he can sometimes hear the harbour. However, Rotterdam does not feature in his oeuvre: “I see too many other fine motifs.”

He camps light because he travels by bike, so on the road he takes photos that he edits in the studio – sometimes leaving things out, adding is not his favorite job – to incorporate them on (large) canvases: “I can make paintings with those photos for ten months and go on holiday for two months and then I have the holiday feeling for twelve months.” When Marc has not shot enough detailed material along the way, he posts a call on Facebook asking for detail shots. In no time, he gets them sent.

Marc first spent five years as a sailor in The Royal Navy where his fascination for the sea was kindled. He was educated at the Free Academy in The Hague and has no special heroes. He remarks that he hardly ever visits a museum, not even Museum Voorlinden in his home town.

Although his work is quite realistic he feels no kinship with the Hyperrealists. His medium is acrylics because he wants to be able to work in layers and needs the paint to dry quickly. Moreover to strengthen the image he works from dark – a black ground – to light. At first impression the detailed realism soon turns out not to be the different, because Marc has a ‘sloppy’ style as he himself says, to keep it painterly and lively. “People in my work look as if they have spent two or three weeks in Greece. I do like to make ‘warm’ paintings, the weather has to be a good.” Striking are the hard blue skies with rarely clouds and which lack the typical gradation from light (on the horizon)

to dark (in the zenith). This makes a Marc Langer at once recognisable from a distance.

We share our admiration for Helgoland, an island which has had a bizarre history because of the Second World War. We also discussed this with Ewoud de Groot (p. 72).

Marc is really a summer person an when teaching in Voorburg has two rules: “The horizon has to be straight and no more winter landscapes after February 1st, because I hate those so much!”

Marc is a board member of the ZEESCHILDERS.



| Sankt Peter-Ording 01 | 2021 | acrylics on canvas | 95 x 200 cm





| Helgoland, Hummerbuden | 2020 | acrylics on canvas | 60 x 200 cm




© Marc Langer (selfy)




 | Helgoland Basstölpel | 2020 |
acrylics on canvas | 60 x 60 cm

 | Wangerooge 01 | 2013 |
acrylics on canvas | 60 x 60 cm



 | Wangerooge 06 | 2013 |
acrylics on canvas | 100 x 100 cm

 | Süddorf Amrum | 2020 |
acrylics on canvas | 115 x 115 cm

 | Sankt Peter Ording 02, Strandbar 54° Nord | 2022 | acrylics on canvas | 100 x 90 cm >



Entering **Ellen van Toor**’s studio is like walking into a bazaar: piles of stuff everywhere and objects hanging on the wall. Her own work, horse heads from India, leaves from a nearby park, pieces of paper, bits of cloth and chunks of metal. Ellen goes ‘magnet fishing’ and retrieves the craziest things from the water. She often fishes in harbours between boats. She once saw little boys fishing with a magnet on a length of rope and dredging up rusty iron objects which, she realised, she could put to good use. Things stand or lie about for a while, sooner or later an idea for work emerges.

Her titles are often poetic puns, like ‘Sea Level’. She has made several of those. And ‘Travelling light’ for a toy locomotive with a handle on top. “It looks a mess but I know what I want to do with the material”. Everything she processes had a story, but by putting things together she creates her own new story.

Ellen was trained at the Royal Academy in The Hague. Graduation work consisted of collages, which in turn became starting points for her etchings and paintings.

Collage-making took off playfully in the loft of the ‘Van Toor’ distillery in Vlaardingen, where as a child she played with the labels. She never stopped. Ellen uses a simple visual idiom. The titles add reference and depth.

Ellen’s heroes are different from the usual painters; particularly Kurt Schwitters and Paul Klee. Her big sea painting hero is Geer Huybers (p. 126) and she greatly appreciates the maritime work of Ewoud de Groot (p. 72). Her own imagery and humour have much in common with Edith Madou (p. 38) and she much appreciates the work of Ingrid Dingjan (p. 118) and Annette Hiltermann (p. 34). Ludo van Well’s Caudicaria project (p. 156) inspired her to make a number of collages

The Van Toors used to live on the Maasboulevard in Vlaardingen and it is there where the sea, ships and boats crept under her skin. She often tells her story using fish, her sign of the zodiac being Pisces. Ellen is a real studio tiger. Long ago for the ‘Haagse Courant’ newspaper, she used to sketch in the bars of The Hague, but that pretty much sums up her in situ activities.



🖼️ | Sea of flowers | 2021 | collage | 20 x 20 cm



🖼️ | Journey | 2022 | collage | 30 x 80 cm



🖼️ | Sea daisy | 2022 | collage | 25 x 25 cm





🖼️ | Mirror of the sea | collage | 2020 | 95 x 95 cm



🖼️ | Mirror of the sea | 2020 | collage | | 35 x 35 cm



🖼️ | The 10.000 things | 2022 | collage | 50 x 150 cm



🖼️ | Mirror of the sea | 2019 | assemblage | 41 x 51 x 10 cm

Since 2016 **Cassandra van Veen** has been swimming in the sea every morning. In summer, after the plunge, she sets up her easel and begins painting on the beach. In winter, she crosses the promenade to her studio right behind in old Scheveningen to warm up and start working. She tries to avoid the word ‘cold’ when talking about that experience. “It’s about perception. If you remove the word ‘cold’, then only the experience remains.” She notes wind speed, air temperature and water temperature and writes short 11-word poems she called ‘elfjes’ (*literally* ‘elevens’). These accompany almost all her paintings.

She came to Scheveningen in 1990 without knowing anything about the sea: “I came from Utrecht, from the polders. So for me, the sea was nothing more than a huge puddle of water. I didn’t know at all what I should do.” She ‘conquered’ the sea slowly through the trees, the dunes, the shore: “Gradually I ended up on the beach. There I stood and now I swim in what I imagined. It’s getting closer and closer.” Her favourite spot is between the pier and the northern jetty, a quieter part of the beach. If the weather becomes too rough, she finds a retreat in the port.

She always paints from the same spot, but the shifting time and changing atmospheric conditions make for variety every time. She works with oils three days a week and makes a watercolour just about every day: “My equipment is always ready at home where I have a little studio of 1 square metre where I can jot down something really quickly and directly.” In her larger studio she keeps two huge stacks of blocs filled with watercolours.

Cassandra was a plein-air painter for the first 20 years, but since taking to the sea each day, she alternates: “That’s because of swimming in the sea. In winter I get so chilled and cold – well, yes, cold (laughter), that I do need to warm up again.”

Munch’s name comes up, she’s a great admirer: “Every now and then I come across a painting of his in a corner of some museum and then I can’t help myself. Such beautiful work! And also Turner, I’m a great admirer of his work too.”

Painting by the sea causes sand to be blown upon her paintings. She used to pick it out but now leaves it, because the light is so nicely



| **Rainkiss** |
T- 14°C | ZWT- 11°C | WK- <1 |
2017 | oils | 30 X 40 cm

refracted by the grains of sand. Her work looks as if made at breakneck speed and that she confirms. It’s very direct, almost slapping it down without touching it again. That way she captures the essentials of light and time of day. Yet she can also work through the day building overlapping ‘layers’ onto the painting. This then becomes a registration of the whole day instead of the moment.

Cassandra went to the Academy of Fine Arts (HKU) in Utrecht and afterwards to Den Bosch to the Academy for Arte and Design (A&D-Sint Joost). “I actually started with sculpture. During the half-yearly optional courses I chose working outside. That was wonderful but I wasn’t allowed to take an exam in that. So I graduated in sculpture and took to working outside as soon as I left the academy.”



| **Endless** |
T- -2°C | ZWT- 5°C | WK- <1 |
2016 | oils | 24 X 30 cm




| **Cloud breeze** |
T: 10°C | ZWT: 11,7°C | WK: 6 |
2016 | watercolours | 36 X 51 cm



| **Shower sky** |
T- 8°C | ZWT- 11°C | WK- 3 |
2017 | oils | 40 X 50 cm






 | **Mackerel sky** |
T- 17°C | ZWT- 12°C | WK- W2 |
2022 | oils | 40 X 50 cm



 | **Wispy rays** |
T- 20°C | ZWT- 18°C | WK- 3 |
2016 | watercolours | 36 X 51 cm



 | **Blinding** |
T- 15°C | ZWT- 13°C | WK- W3 |
2016 | watercolours | 36 X 51 cm

Asked about her heroes, **Coob Zeeman**, like many others, mentions Monet. Especially for the way he painted water and the way he captured phases of change. She discovered that he must have been a nasty man, a tyrant, but also a great artist: “He made the most beautiful things.”

Twice she visited his gardens in Giverny. Her first trip brought her in front of a closed gate, the second time she managed to get in and in spite of the crowd was impressed by his creation of the garden and his diverting a stream through it. She also liked the nearby museum featuring the American Impressionists. Although a completely different character, Kandinsky features on her list for his use of colour.

When travelling by boat, Coob mainly hangs over the side looking at reflections and mysterious vistas in the water. At one of the first SAIL events, it was pointed out to her that in her art she looked only down and never up at all the splendour in the rigging of the wind-jammers. “But don’t you see how wonderful that is; beautiful reflections of colour on recognizable shapes that take on a completely different appearance.” That is where it actually started for Coob.

In her work she is a thorough investigator of such phenomena. A fascination that had its origins in the swimming lessons she had as a youngest of five, alone in a nature pool at seven in the morning, among the pikes. Later, the view from the aft deck of her own sailboat captured her focus, first a ‘Valk’ and nowadays a ‘New Classic 700’, a small cabin yacht of 7.30 m.

Coob uses acrylics on canvas: “I like that. Lovely that you can paint over it quickly, layer on layer. Because that I really like, painting in layers. Then you can represent that transparency.” She also paints with watercolour. She photographs aboard ship and works from her photos in the studio.

‘Macular degeneration’, a disastrous condition for an artist, forced her to focus more on photography. It means an uncertain future, perhaps to an entirely new style, where use of colour is more dominant than shape: “Monet also lost his sight later in life and started painting more roughly. And Matisse turned to cutting paper”, she consoles herself. The anger has passed and she is having fun again.

Coob has been secretary of the ZEESCHILDERS for years. She was educated in Amsterdam, training to become an art teacher in the Lutmastraat and then at the State Academy of Fine Arts (in Amsterdam). She was close friends with honorary member Jaap Ploos van Amstel (p. 168), from whom she also took lessons.

🖼️ | Sea sails | 2007 | oils on canvas | 125 x 100 cm



🖼️ | The chase | 2004 | acrylics on paper | 40 x 50 cm





🖼️ | Backlight 1, the Wadden off Ameland | 2021 | acrylics on paper | 24 x 30 cm



🖼️ | Calm in bustling harbour | 2007 | acrylics on canvas | 62 x 93 cm



🖼️ | Bella Bianca | 2014 | acrylics on canvas | 53 x 63 cm



🖼️ | Coastline at twilight | 2014 | acrylics on canvas | 54 x 63 cm

🖼️ | Mooring pole, red reflection | 2019 | watercolours | 40 x 50 cm



🖼️ | Brown jib | 2006 | acrylics on canvas | 77 x 60 cm

THE ARTISTS

Ronny Moortgat
☆ Niel a/d Rupel, 1951
www.zeeschilders.com
ronny.moortgat@gmail.com
Schelle

Diederik Stevens
☆ Rotterdam, 1960
www.diederikstevens.com
info@diederikstevens.com
Den Bosch

Ludo van Well
☆ Breda, 1950
www.vanwelldesign.nl
www.gallerymaritime.nl
Colijnsplaat

HONORARY MEMBERS

Robbert Das
☆ Haarlem, 1929
www.zeeschilders.com
Frankrijk

Wim Vaarzon Morel
☆ Veere, 1931
www.zeeschilders.com
Oostzaan

The second Belgian in the ranks of the ZEESCHILDERS is **Ronny Moortgat**. He lives in Schelle, nearly half an hours’ drive from Antwerp. Walking into his house is a feast of recognition: model boats, trains and cars everywhere, in all shapes and sizes. The centerpiece is by the front door: a 3.5-inch model steam locomotive in full working order; water, coal, steam, and around the corner, in his tiny studio, a second one!

On the walls maritime art by some of his heroes such as Douglas Gray, Russ Kramer, David Curtis, Marin-Marie, Albert Brenet, Derek M Gardner, Montague Dawson, Charles Dixon, John Singer Sargent, Don Demers, Chris Blossom and Keith A Griffin and more. Most of them are lesser known contemporary colleagues.

Ronny finds contacts with other club members very fruitful so he enjoys exchanging information and experiences. He is self-taught having had to learn a trade first (where have we heard that before?) until he was laid off due to reorganization of the technical drawing workshop where he worked. That turned out to be a blessing in disguise: because it opened the way for full-time artistry. He enjoyed attending evening courses at the academy to come to grips with basic techniques. Visiting museums gives Ronny as much inspiration and pleasure because – he is especially interested in minutiae – he sometimes gets so close that the alarm goes off. Ronny is well versed in 18th- and 19th-century ships and wants to get every detail exactly right.

His paintings of contemporary ships are first sketched in pencil along the Scheldt from the pier in Terneuzen or Breskens. There the big ones pass by, sometimes accompanied by heavy tugs. His outside sketches he transfers to canvas in the studio, because the ships pass by too quickly. He also spends a week every year in Venice, and the French Opal Coast is only two and a half hours away, making it good for day visits. He also enjoys painting in Veere, Zeeland.

He is at home in all fields, depending on need and circumstances he paints with watercolours (sometimes as a preliminary study for an oil), acrylics (mostly outdoors, but also in an underpainting for oils) and oils. “I learned a lot about spontaneity during my stay in China – there I saw watercolourists create a beautiful little painting in no time. I discovered the power of spontaneity. I try to emulate them

during plein air painting: I’ll have a landscape in front of me, but will add things of my own.” Ronny’s excursions with the Belgian Navy and the Royal Dutch Navy also produced spontaneous series of quick sketches that were later elaborated in the studio.

In addition to being a member of the Dutch Society of Marine Artists he is also member of the Belgian Marine Painters and for many years of the Royal Society of Maritime Artists in the UK.



🖼️ | Pollux P902 | 2015 | watercolours | 30 x 50 cm



🖼️ | Sally MAERSK in Hong Kong | 2013 | oils on canvas | 80 x 100 cm



🖼️ | On station | 2014 | watercolours | 40 x 60 cm



© Martine Verbruggen



🖼️ | The Glorious 1st of June | 2019 | oils on canvas | 100 x 200 cm



🖼️ | Eagle at Golden Gate | 2016 | watercolours | 40 x 60 cm



🖼️ | HMS Leopard vs USS Chesapeake | 2019 | oils on canvas | 60 x 80 cm



🖼️ | Mariette at Cowes | 2011 | watercolours | 60 x 80 cm

In the former cigar factory of Willem II, **Diederik Stevens** prepares us an opulent welcome with a exquisite glass of Bordeaux wine. ‘Size matters’ to Diederik, evidence the many large canvases in the studio. He led a multifaceted life until he took up art. He started as an officer in the Marines, then became export manager of the Grolsch brewery in Enschede and then started a shoe business with a friend, the brand called ‘Yellow Cab’. Diederik then became a writer and painter. His latest publication ‘Ezel in Parijs’ (*Easel in Paris*) sketches the life of Dutch artists in Paris in the 20th century.

In 1999 Diederik thought he could start painting ‘from the hip’ as an autodidact: “But I decided otherwise, because I really wanted to get my ass kicked. Self-taught, you have to rely on those around you and that doesn’t help you much, so I enrolled in the Académie des Beaux Arts in Paris summer classes, a couple of months. I then went to the Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp for a year, just an hour’s drive away a few times a week. And then, also about 20 years ago, I treated myself to three months in Rome at the Accademia di Belle Arti. There I was encouraged to finally quit staying within-the-lines and to ‘enter my own imaginative world’. Mind you, a delightful kick in the butt!”

At the suggestion of Geer Huybers (p. 126), whose work he saw in the ZEECHILDERS’ group exhibition at the Zandvoorts Museum in 2020-2021, he joined the ZEECHILDERS two years later. When the names of Karel Appel and Jan Cremer are mentioned, he latter is characterises the latter as a clone of the former and of Bram Bogart, a naturalised Belgian. With Appel Diederik shares the interest in matter. “What can I do with it? How do I achieve my own colours? Appel, but also Anselm Kiefer, Cy Twombly and Joan Mitchell, I do have a lot of affinity with them.”

Diederik’s recent work shows deviation from his earlier, he seems to be exploring new angles in interpreting his favourite ‘virginites’, including his sea scapes: “Yes, in the sense that I feel the need for my paintings to become a bit more light-hearted.” De Kooning is lightness perhaps? “No, not so much Abstract Expressionism, but figuration that is allowed to ‘dance’. I rarely follow Appel’s paint slamming, but on the other hand piddling about is not at all my working method either. Everything you see is made with my hands and with big brushes. Palette knife less and less. It is made in a rush, like in a

trance. Three-quarters of the time I’m just looking. It’s always hard to say ‘now I’m done’ “ His advice to colleagues is to occasionally turn their works back to front so the images are not staring back at them. To detach themselves from the subject and be able to asses them with a fresh eye.

Diederik’s love of the sea dates back to his sailing days in the Marine Corps. Anyone who has crossed the Marsdiep in an LCRM (Landing Craft Rubber Motorized) in Beaufort 7 knows that arriving alive on the other side is far from evident: “And on open sea the heaving waves 12 metres high! Menacing, too and here the contradiction: I’m madly in love with such seas. The sea is so elusive. I ask myself ‘How can I grasp that?’ ”

🖼️ | North Coast-het Oerd | 2020 | acrylverf op linnen | 120 x 120 cm



🖼️ | Celtic Coast | 2018 | acrylics on canvas | 80 x 70 cm



🖼️ | Seaside Sorrento Lunch | 2022 | acrylics and oils on canvas | 150 x 150 cm

< 🖼️ | Ocean Sun Rise | 2022 | mixed media on Dracon tissue | 100 x 80 cm





🏠 | Côte Normandie | 2021 |
acrylics and oils on canvas |
180 x 140 cm



🏠 | Changing of the Guards |
2020 | acrylics and oils on
canvas | 150 x 110 cm

THE ARTISTS

Ludo van Well follows in the footsteps of his ancestors. In the daily practise of art he still uses years of passing on knowledge and skills from his grandfather and father. His gallery in Colijnsplaat is exclusive in being the only gallery dedicated to maritime art in the Netherlands. Since the beginning of the millennium it almost exclusively represents members of the ZEESCHILDERS.

In both Ludo is firmly supported by his partner Dimp Nelemans who takes care of the business and organisational side of work. Important exhibitions abroad of the ZEESCHILDERS' in New York, China and Curaçao have been successful in large part due to her efforts.

When asked 'who are your heroes', Ludo replies, "It varies from people who have sailed solo around the world, designers of extraordinary ship concepts, to artisan sculptors." Ludo is a versatile artist: designer, designer and developer of boats and artist.

As an inspiration he mentions Belgian sculptor Oscar Jespers, who resembles Zadkine, and in design British Uffa Fox, born and raised in East Cowes on the Isle of Wight, where the maritime photographer Beken of Cowes also originated. Later in our conversation he mentioned his friend and role model: ZEESCHILDERS member Robbert Das (p. 160): "Understandig eachother's creative way of thinking makes that we need very few words."

He sailed several sailing yachts himself around the world: "But such long ocean-going journeys become less attractive as you get older".

Ludo has been sculpting from a young age, beside yacht design work: "I reacted to difficult customer requests by going to my studio to cut something in stone." He stopped working with chisels in stone fairly recently, nowadays he opts for composite materials which he has gets pressed to his own specifications of material density.

Ludo's work always has a double meaning. "Sculpture is symbolism. It's meant to be symbolic. The deeper layer leads to a response from the viewer: 'it's a weird ship, but it is right'." Then Ludo is satisfied. Especially lately there has been many references to environmental awareness. This he shares with Rein de Vries (p. 54).

A high-profile project in 2020 was the reconstruction of the

Roman cargo ship 'Caudicaria Navis'. Three hundred and thirty soil samples near Colijnsplaat (Ludo's hometown in the province of Zeeland) from the Roman period point to a seaport from which ships crossed the North Sea to London. It is a reconstruction in composite material that sits next to the Nehalennia Temple at Colijnsplaat harbour since 2021. As follow-up a life-size seaworthy reconstruction of the ship is planned in order and sail to London, to offer living proof that merchant shipping from the Dutch coast has existed for 2,000 years.



🗿 | Roman cargo ship Caudicaria | one off sculpture | composite/metal



🗿 | Fish of the future | one off sculpture | composite/metal



🗿 | Back and Forth boat | one off sculpture | composite/metal





🗿 | Fish catches boat | one off sculpture | composite/metal

> 🗿 | We need more lifeboats | one off sculpture | composite/metal



With his identical twin brother Rudolf, **Robbert Das** developed a keen interest in 3D drawing at an early age. Stimulated by father Das who, among other things, was a furniture designer for the Pander furniture firm. He had the boys fill large rolls of wallpaper during the Second World War. Ships seen from all sides were entrusted to paper in black pencil. Leaving higher vocational education the brothers decided to start a drawing studio together instead of continuing their father’s business.

In 1963, they became world news: they published an exploded view of a secret British fighter plane. The news was distributed through Polygoon cinema news. The drawings were so accurate that the Das brothers were accused of espionage. What had happened? Using unclassified drawings from the designers of a previous aircraft design, the duo drew a convincing prediction of the secret aircraft design with a hefty dose of imagination and skill. This global news story became the flying start of their design studio Gebroeders DAS (*Das Brothers*).

New clients arrived – Fokker and DAF – forcing the studio to expand, and their name and fame as ‘futurists’ was established. After this many magazine clients came forward to have 3D drawings included in their pages, such as Elsevier, AD national newspaper and AVIA-Vliegwereld magazine and the for-all-ages popular science magazine KIJK (WATCH). This were followed by Waterkampioen (*Water Champion*) and others, which placed posters with 3D drawings of sailing yachts by Robbert Das as a centrefold, boosting his fame as a 3D artist of ships and the maritime world.

In retrospect it is clear how often Robbert Das, with his foresight, was able to predict the future of the world and its marine issues. In the book ‘Ocean Pioneers’, he introduced the role models for today’s world circumnavigators. In it he sketched and wrote the stories of the pioneers who, in very small vessels crossed the oceans, from the 1860’s onwards. After 1970, Robbert went ahead on his own and settled in the south of France. As a sailor of his own yacht ‘Ros Beiaard’, he became increasingly renowned as a 3D illustrator of



Xora | pen and watercolours

sailing yachts, which put him in the sight of the German magazine ‘Die Yacht’. On his recommendation it started testing new sailing yachts, the results of which were published in 3D artwork by Robbert in the magazine. Besides ‘Die Yacht’, he worked for the French ‘Nautique’, the Dutch ‘Spiegel der Zeilvaart’ and many other magazines.

In 2018 the National Maritime Museum (Amsterdam) acquired thirty-one 3D drawings from his oeuvre after the research committee



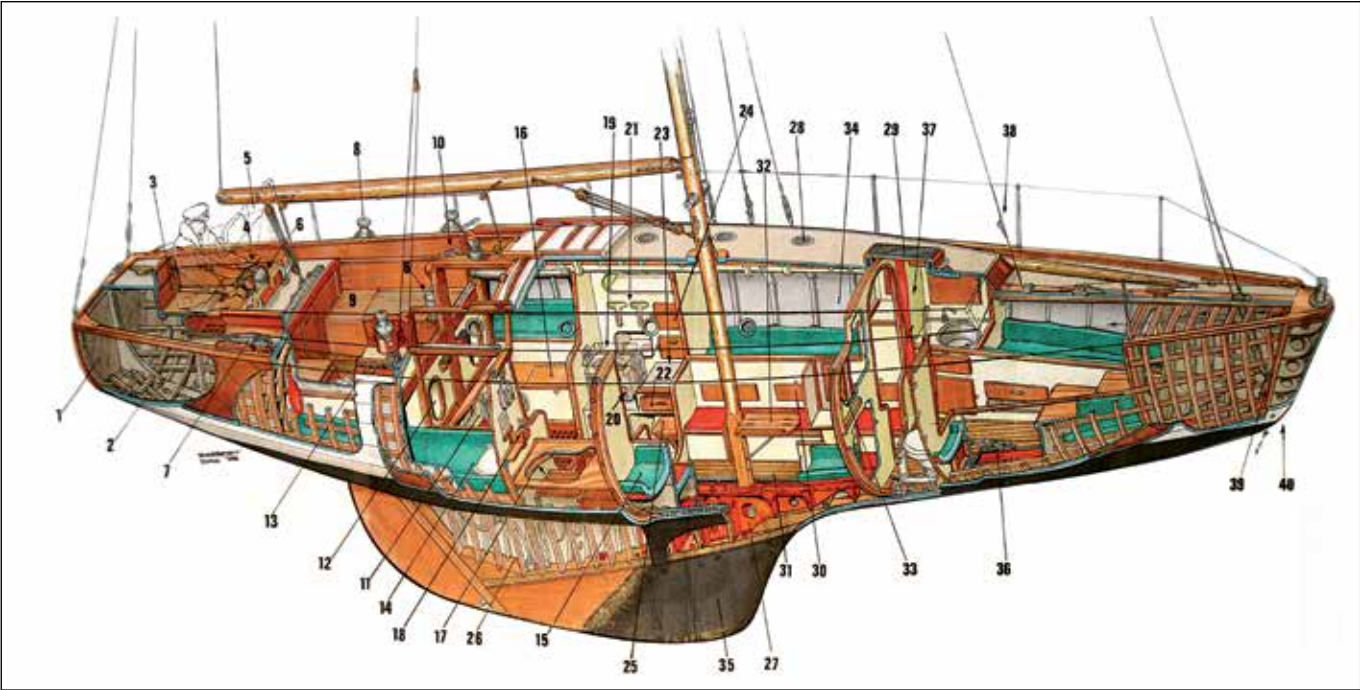
Hestia | pen and watercolours

determined that Robbert’s expressive uniqueness was to be preserved as Dutch Nautical Heritage and would have to be included in the collection. Robbert Das still lives in France; his twin brother Rudolf died in January 2020.

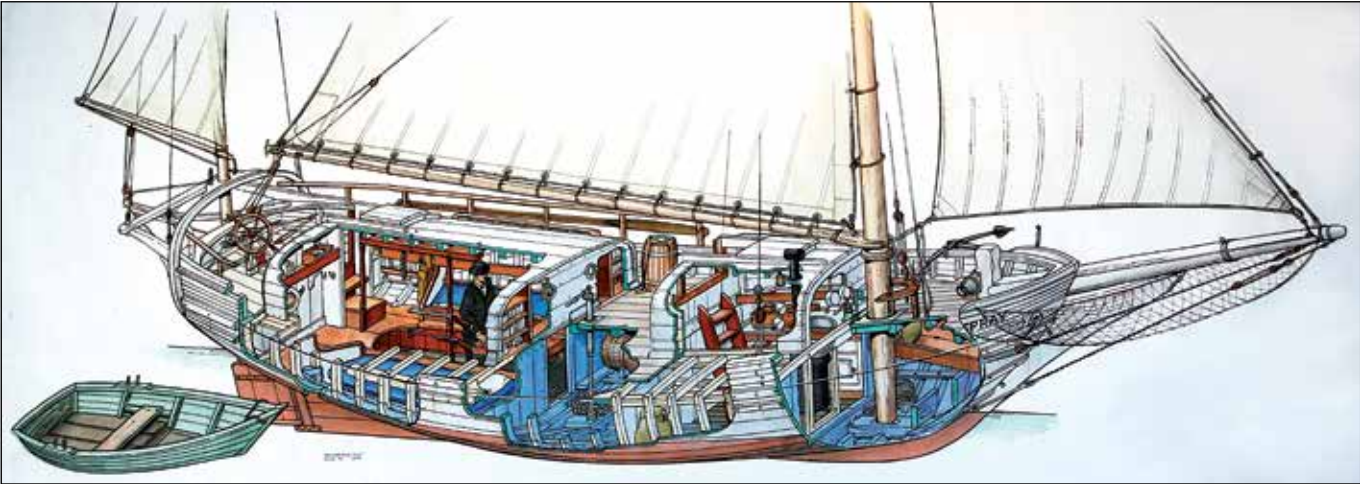
Because of the importance of his legacy to the nautical world, Robbert was offered an honorary membership by the ZEESCHILDERS in 2020. In May 2023, his work featured in a one-man exhibition at the National Maritime Museum.



© W. Loos 1992



Myth of Malham | pen and watercolours



Spray | pen and watercolours



Malabar | gouache

HONORARY MEMBERS

Sitting opposite me in the Lishof in Oostzaan are a frail **Wim Vaarzon Morel**, his son Marc - also a painter - and his colleague at the Samenwerkende Oostzaanse Kunstenaars (*Cooperating Oostzaan Artists*), Marion Zeilstra. With the latter two I make frantic attempts to put Wim at ease and open the right hatch to his memory. He is still quite at home in the past, but needs some help and guidance.

Wim is distinguished from the others in a family of painters with the suffix ‘jr’. His is a rich artist family, dating back to the 17th century. Wim is the elder son of Willem Vaarzon Morel sr. and the grandson of Willem Ferdinand Abraham Isaac Vaarzon Morel, who first taught him to draw and paint. His painter aunt Nel also contributed to his early education.

After the Second World War Wim attended higher vocational education and then six months drawing lessons at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris. He completed his military service in the navy’s diving team defusing war mines. Wim was 22 at the time of the 1953 flood disaster, and during this time in the service he helped clear carcasses of drowned horses. His hometown Veere was still a seaside town at the time. Unique are Wim’s renderings of the



underwater world made during his service years.

After his military service he went on to study at the State Academy in Amsterdam and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. His apprenticeship with grandfather (‘Père’) and aunt Nel allowed Wim to enter without an entrance exam. For a time, he was lecturer and director of the former institution.

Wim’s memories of his relatively short stay in the Royal Navy dominate the conversation rather than the many decades he spent working in every place imaginable. Drawings and watercolours predominated in his work, but he also used oils, depending on weather and season. His touch is remarkably the same in both painting techniques. He used to paint directly, ‘en plein air’, in ports, cattle markets and in the field: “I could paint very quickly, it’s all spontaneous.”

In the ports of Vlissingen, Veere, IJmuiden, Den Helder, Den Oever and Harlingen he was a frequent visitor, but also the entire coastline from Norway down to Spain caught his fancy. Fairly soon after its establishment he became a member of the ZEESCHILDERS - Wim recalls 1960 – and is an honorary member since November 2011.

Wim names the Impressionists and their precursors as a great source of inspiration, but he admires Claude Lorrain (who was also an inspiration to Constable and Turner) and Emil Nolde.

According to son Marc, Wim seems to accept his limitations in a rather cheerful way. While in prime he sailed a Zeebrugge two-masted cutter.

WIM VAARZON MOREL



🏡 | Vlissingen Sail#2 | watercolours | 36 x 51 cm



< 🏡 | Vlissingen Sail#1 | watercolours | 36 x 51 cm



🏰 | Schipwreck off Petten | watercolours | 36 x 51 cm



🏰 | Hvide Sande, Denmark | watercolours | 36 x 41 cm



🏰 | Harlingen Harbour | watercolours | 38 x 49 cm

COLOPHON

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Dolf Middelhoff wishes to express his gratitude to the artists for their time and hospitality and reached his appointments in time, alive and kicking, and returned home safely due to treasurer Sjoerd Hoekstra Bonnema. Sjoerd came riding many a mile!

A special thanks to Robin d'Arcy Shillcock for his editorial comments and much needed editing of this translation.

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THE SET-UP OF THIS BOOK

The choice to visit and interview all members of the ZEESCHILDERS in their studios led to the set-up of this book, which resulted in a journey through the Low Countries from the far north in the province of Groningen to Antwerp in Belgium. Sjoerd Hoekstra Bonnema, treasurer of the ZEESCHILDERS, took part in most of the interviews.

IN MEMORIAM

In the past four years the ZEESCHILDERS lost three much loved members.

On January 28, 2019 Frans Buissink passed away at the age of 75. He was a member since 2004.

On May 1, 2022 Jaap Ploos van Amstel died at the age of 95. Jaap was a member of the ZEESCHILDERS since 1980 and a honorary member since 2015.

On August 25, 2022 Peter de Rijcke passed away due to Covid 19. Peter lived to be 77 years. Having joined the ZEESCHILDERS in 1985, he became a board member in 2002 and had a seat in the commission that would produce this new members book. We would have loved to see him enjoy the result!

Nederlandse Vereniging van
ZEESCHILDERS