



CICERONI
T R A V E L

REMBRANDT & VELÁZQUEZ DUTCH & SPANISH MASTERS

TUESDAY 7 – FRIDAY 10 JANUARY 2020 (4 DAYS)

LECTURER: TOM DUNCAN

£1595

- **Opportunity to see one of the ‘must visit’ exhibitions of 2019/20**
- **Rembrandt & Velázquez explored in direct comparison with one another**
- **Both artists also seen in conjunction with the work of contemporaries such as Hals, Vermeer, Ribera and Zurbarán**
- **Guided visits of the Rembrandthuis Museum, plus The Hague’s Mauritshuis included**
- **Excellent 4* hotel in historic city centre**



Rembrandt, Isaac and Rebecca, Known as ‘The Jewish Bride’, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

OVERVIEW

The visual arts in the seventeenth century are often said to be dominated by Italy – Caravaggio, Bernini, the Carracci workshop and their many students and imitators all helped create the Baroque style which was so all pervasive. Nonetheless, equally strong personalities emerged to challenge this Italian dominance, above all the towering figures of Rembrandt and Velázquez.

As part of 2019: *The Year of Rembrandt*, celebrating the 400th anniversary of his birth, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, in conjunction with Madrid’s Prado Museum, have organised an exhibition which will examine the work of both these painters seen in the company of their major contemporaries – an unprecedented bringing together of works from both these world class collections never before attempted; first in Madrid and then in Amsterdam.

Rembrandt and Velázquez lived together with many other painters, all of whom enjoyed great reputations at that time. Apart from masterpieces by both men, other featured artists will include Ribera, Zurbarán and Murillo from Spain with Hals, de Hooch and Vermeer from the Netherlands. In the exhibition, paintings by these highly-renowned masters will be displayed in pairs, combining two works by each country, to explore for the first time stimulating, and indeed surprising dialogues that inevitably arise between the works. Paintings on exhibition will cover all the major genres from ancient and biblical history to still life and genre, with portraiture the inevitable and dominant presence. Opening in Madrid in June 2019, the exhibition will transfer to Amsterdam in November, where we shall reserve tickets before the exhibition closes in late January.

The seventeenth century is considered the Dutch Golden Age; a time when social change, economic development and the sciences and arts were part of a cultural blossoming of unprecedented vigour. This came after a long struggle between the Habsburgs, the traditional rulers of the Low Countries, and their recalcitrant Calvinist subjects who fought to free themselves from Spanish rule. Finally achieved after decades of war, with the Peace of Westphalia signed in 1648, this consolidated an already developing Dutch prosperity based on trade with the wider world, especially the Far East, reflected most visibly in painting and the decorative arts.

Spain was, on the other hand, entering its long period of decline. The huge wealth derived from its territories in Europe and the New World was diminishing and its ability to control these widely dispersed territories was under severe pressure. Nonetheless, the court in Madrid continued to be the dominant cultural force with Phillip IV, his family and courtiers all captured with startling directness by his court painter Velázquez, the first true genius of Spanish painting.

On arrival in Amsterdam we shall have a guided introduction to the city by canal boat, the perfect way to see the city. Our first visit to the Rijksmuseum will be a guided introduction to the overall collection, setting the context for the exhibition, which we will return to see in detail on the following day. We shall also visit the Rembrandt House exhibition and you will have a free afternoon to explore the city at leisure. On our final day we will visit The Hague to see the newly restored and rehung Mauritshuis with its superlative Dutch and Flemish paintings.

The tour is limited to an absolute maximum of twenty participants, guided by Tom Duncan, assisted by our preferred local guide. We stay at the 4* Estherea Hotel, ideally situated on the Singel Canal and close to the exclusive '9 Streets' shopping district. The hotel is either within easy walking distance, or a short tram ride, of all we shall visit, with excellent restaurants nearby.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Tuesday 7 January – We fly from London Heathrow to **Amsterdam** on BA, arriving early afternoon. We transfer immediately into the city centre and join our canal boat for a guided **Introduction Cruise**, charting the city's evolution and history. Our luggage will be transferred to our hotel rooms while we enjoy this cruise. Later that evening there will be a group dinner in a local restaurant close to our hotel.

Day 2: Wednesday 8 January – We take a local tram for our first guided visit of the **Rijksmuseum**, the city's unparalleled collection of Dutch and European art. All the major (and some of the minor) masters of the Dutch school are represented, newly redisplayed in rooms full of decorative arts of the highest quality. After some free time for lunch (not included) in the Museum's excellent café, we take the tram to visit the **Rembrandhuis Museum**, the former home of the Golden Age's most remarkable artist. We return to our hotel and the evening will be free.

Day 3: Thursday 9 January – We return to the **Rijksmuseum** to visit the exhibition '**Rembrandt & Velázquez: Dutch & Spanish Masters**' where we shall spend the morning. You will then be free to have lunch (not included) and the rest of the afternoon will be free for you to explore the museum and city independently. Details of other museums and exhibitions will be given to participants in advance. We meet again later in the evening for our final dinner in a local restaurant close to our hotel.

Day 4: Friday 10 January – Leaving our hotel by coach we drive to **The Hague**, seat of the Dutch government and home to the country's Royal family, the House of Orange. We spend the morning at the **Mauritshuis**, the splendid mansion which houses the Royal Picture Gallery and which contains masterpieces such as Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* and Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp*. After a leisurely group lunch, we continue to Amsterdam Airport and the return flight to Heathrow.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £1595 **Without Flights** £1435 **Deposit** £295

Single Supplement £195 (Double/Twin Room for Sole Use)

Hotels 3 nights with breakfast at the 4* Hotel Estherea, Amsterdam

Hotel Upgrade £120 **Canal View Room** (price per room) – only 5 Canal View Rooms available

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA434** Depart London Heathrow T5 **1055**, arrive Amsterdam **1320**

Return: **BA441** Departs Amsterdam **2010**, arrive London Heathrow (T5) **2025**

Price includes 2 dinners & 1 lunch with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, City Tax, entry fees & gratuities, services of Tom Duncan, our local guide in Amsterdam and Stephen Brook as tour manager

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 1 dinner & 2 lunches



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