

NATURE INTO ART
BOOKLET

RACHEL

RYSCHE



ALTE
PINAKOTHEK



Rachel Ruysch, Michiel van Musscher

Rachel Ruysch, 1692

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RACHEL RUYSCH NATURE INTO ART

In the Dutch Republic, a period of rapid economic growth, profound social change, artistic innovation and a flourishing art market – exemplified by artists such as Rembrandt, Vermeer and Frans Hals – was followed in the late 17th century by economic stagnation, military conflict and dwindling demand for works of art. It was during this era that Rachel Ruysch – who was born in The Hague in 1664 – succeeded in holding her own against her predominantly male colleagues and going down in history as one of the most successful female artists in the Netherlands.

Even during her lifetime, her magnificent, deceptively real still lifes – featuring not just plants and fruits, but also butterflies, beetles, amphibians and reptiles from the most diverse regions of the world – were sought after by connoisseurs, who were prepared to pay dearly for them. As the daughter of Frederik Ruysch – a renowned professor of anatomy and botany – and Maria Post, whose family included painters and architects, Rachel Ruysch was raised in a prosperous milieu characterized by artistic and intellectual pursuits. Her father's wide-ranging activities and his celebrated collection of natural-history specimens must have been vital sources of inspiration for her artistic imagination and practice.

Through her scrupulous studies of paintings by colleagues, close observation of natural phenomena and her natural artistic talent, she brought the genre of the flower still life to a new efflorescence. Her works are characterized by their compositional sophistication, naturalistic rendering of the most diverse textures, pronounced coloristic harmony and exceptional technical finesse.

AUDIOGUIDE

We offer the following tours in our UNFRAMED web app:



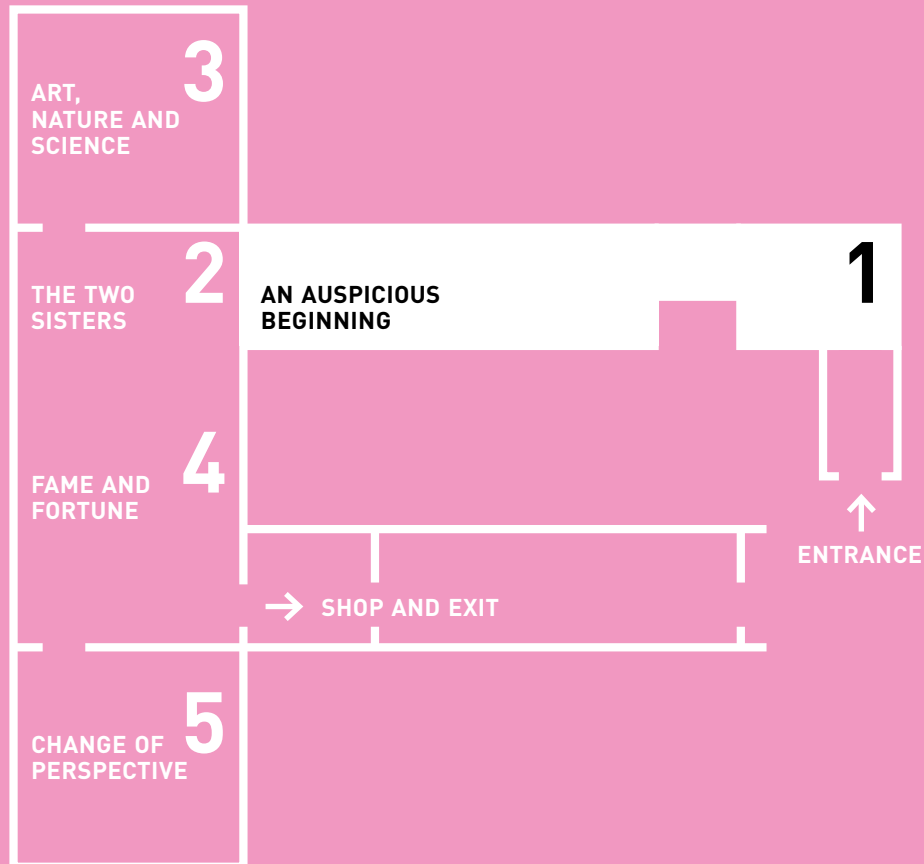
Adults

Music: On this tour you can listen to compositions created especially for the exhibition by students of the University of Music and Theatre Munich.

AN AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING

APPRENTICESHIP WITH WILLEM VAN AELST

Even as a small child, Rachel displayed remarkable talent, which her parents sought to nurture. When she was fifteen years old, they financed an apprenticeship with Willem van Aelst, then Amsterdam's most renowned still-life painter. She spent three years in his studio, remaining until his death in 1683. After a stay in France, van Aelst had spent several years in Italy in the service of Ferdinand II de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany. Van Aelst's floral still lifes are characterized by a cool colour palette and pronounced elegance and vibrancy. The flowers he chooses to depict are artfully arranged in highly reflective glass and metal vessels. His blossoms, leaves and insects are configured not symmetrically, but instead diagonally, following an S-curve that sweeps from lower left to upper right, giving his arrangements a more naturalistic appearance. As a young painter, Rachel Ruysch adopted this approach and perfected it. Before long, art critics remarked that she had far surpassed both her teacher and other contemporaries.



Rachel Ruysch
Festoon with
Flowers and Fruit,
1682
National Gallery
Prague



Rachel Ruysch
Swag of Flowers and
Fruit Suspended
in Front of a Niche,
1681
Private Collection,
Birmingham,
Alabama



Rachel Ruysch
Garland of Flowers
and Fruits, 1685
Kunstmuseum
St. Gallen,
Donation of Maria
and Johannes
Krüppel-Stärk 2018



Willem van Aelst
Still Life with
Flowers in a Glass
Vase and Watch,
1656
Hessen Kassel
Heritage, Kassel



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Piece, ca. 1682
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen
Alte Pinakothek, München



X-Ray Fluorescence Imaging
Elemental mapping showing distribution of mercury.
Rachel Ruysch's palette can be reconstructed by X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy. X-rays are used to excite atoms, producing characteristic radiation (fluorescence), allowing us to determine the use of certain pigments based on the presence of the chemical elements they contain. In this painting, for example, a stone arch was revealed in the background, which was outlined using mercury-containing vermilion. It was abandoned and later overpainted.



Willem van Aelst
Still Life of Fruit, 1683
Kunstmuseum
St. Gallen,
Donation of Maria
and Johannes
Krüppel-Stärk 2018



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life of Fruit
with Insects on a
Marble Ledge, 1683
Private Collection

OTHER INFLUENCES: JAN DAVIDSZ. DE HEEM AND OTTO MARSEUS VAN SCHRIECK

Serving as additional sources of inspiration during the early decades of Ruysch's career alongside Willem van Aelst's works were those by other well-established flower still-life painters. Among her models for the forest-floor still life – a type she would eventually abandon – were the paintings of Jan Davidsz. de Heem. In keeping with widespread practice, Ruysch copied and reinterpreted individual motifs or entire sections of other pictures – consistently however adapting them to her own style and refining them with regard to composition, colour and lighting. Equally influential for her in the 1680s were the forest-floor still lifes of Otto Marseus van Schrieck, who had worked closely with Ruysch's teacher van Aelst in Italy. Apart from individual motifs, she also adopted van Schrieck's unusual technique of pressing dead butterflies into the still-adhesive oil paint and then removing them, allowing numerous wing scales and tiny hairs to remain trapped in the paint layer. In a singular fashion, this combination of painted and actual elements intermingles the real with the imaginary.



Jan Davidsz. de Heem
Forest Floor Still
Life with Flowers
and Amphibians,
ca. 1660
LIECHTENSTEIN.
The Princely
Collections,
Vaduz-Vienna



Rachel Ruysch
Tree Trunk
surrounded by
Flowers, Butterflies
and Animals, 1685
Museum Boijmans
Van Beuningen,
Rotterdam



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Still Life
on the Forest Floor,
ca. 1686
Hessen Kassel
Heritage, Kassel



In the first ten years of her career, Rachel Ruysch painted more variations of still lifes than in any other phase of her career. Have a look and see which pictures you can identify as garlands, fruit pieces and bouquets.



Otto Marseus van Schrieck
 Forest Floor Still
 Life with Butterflies,
 ca. 1673
 Hamburger
 Kunsthalle



Rachel Ruysch
 Still Life with
 Flowers and
 Insects, 1682
 Universität
 Rostock



Rachel Ruysch
 Flowers and
 Animals,
 ca. 1685/87
 Gemäldegalerie
 Alte Meister,
 Staatliche
 Kunstsammlungen
 Dresden



Rachel Ruysch
 Forest Floor with
 a Classical Façade
 Beyond, ca. 1687
 Private Collection,
 Connecticut, USA

“Under the tutelage of this good master, our artistic heroine of genius advanced so far within a few years that she quietly overtook him in her chosen field and left her period of apprenticeship behind her. Nature itself was her teacher and model, and through tireless study and practice, she succeeded in imitating it so naturally and skilfully.”

Johan van Gool, 1750

FLOWER AND FRUIT STILL LIVES OF THE 1690s

On 12 August 1693, Rachel Ruysch married the portrait painter Juriaen Pool. It appears to have been a union of love: Pool was the son of an impoverished goldsmith who had been raised in Amsterdam’s Burgerweeshuis (an orphanage for the burgher class). He does not seem to have brought either assets or social prestige to the marriage. In contrast, Ruysch had already established herself as a painter before the marriage, and continued her successful career even after bearing no fewer than ten children. During the 1690s, she turned away from the forest-floor still life, devoting herself henceforth to flower and fruit pieces. One specialty was the small-format composition featuring a small number of flowers consisting primarily of aromatic cultivated or wild varieties arranged on a stone slab. Prior to 1700, Ruysch concentrated on small pictures in ‘cabinet format’, and began executing pendants that juxtaposed floral bouquets with arrangements of fruits.



Rachel Ruysch
 Flowers, 1696
 Musée Thomas
 Henry, Cherbourg-
 en-Cotentin



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Still Life,
1691
Hamburger
Kunsthalle



Rachel Ruysch
Flowers in a
Glass Vase,
ca. 1690/95
Private Collection



Rachel Ruysch
Posy of Roses,
Marigolds, and
Larkspur, with
Insects and a
Bumblebee, 1695
The collection
of Joan and
Marc Sherman



Rachel Ruysch
Flowers in a Vase,
ca. 1698
The National
Gallery, London.
Bequeathed by
Alan Evans, 1974



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life with
Flowers in a Vase
on a Ledge with
a Dragonfly,
Caterpillar, and
Butterfly, 1698
Private Collection



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life with
Fruits, 1698
Property of
the Swiss
Confederation,
Federal Office of
Culture, Bern



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Piece, 1700
Kulturstiftung
des Hauses
Hessen, Museum
Schloss Fasanerie,
Eichenzell



For a short time, Rachel Ruysch dated her works in Latin rather than Arabic numerals. These can be found in the bottom right-hand corner of the Hamburg flower still life. The numbering is reminiscent of illustrations in contemporary scientific publications.

MARIA VAN OOSTERWIJCK

In contemporary art theory, the flower still life was regarded as a relatively unchallenging specialty and was thus supposedly particularly well suited to female artists. Figural painting – and the study of the nude associated with it – was reserved for their male colleagues. But in the late 17th century, changes in taste elevated the flower still life to one of the most sought-after genres. This development allowed a small number of female artists to become well-established in the art market. Until she was outshone by Ruysch, Maria van Oosterwijck was the leading member of this group. Her considerable income enabled her to occupy a home on the prestigious Keizersgracht in Amsterdam – directly across from Willem van Aelst. Since the painters' guild did not permit female artists to train assistants, van Oosterwijck tutored her maidservant, who became her studio helper and a painter in her own right. Van Oosterwijck's works were much sought after by the European nobility, but, unlike Ruysch, she never occupied a court position, and concluded her career just before turning 60, without ever marrying.

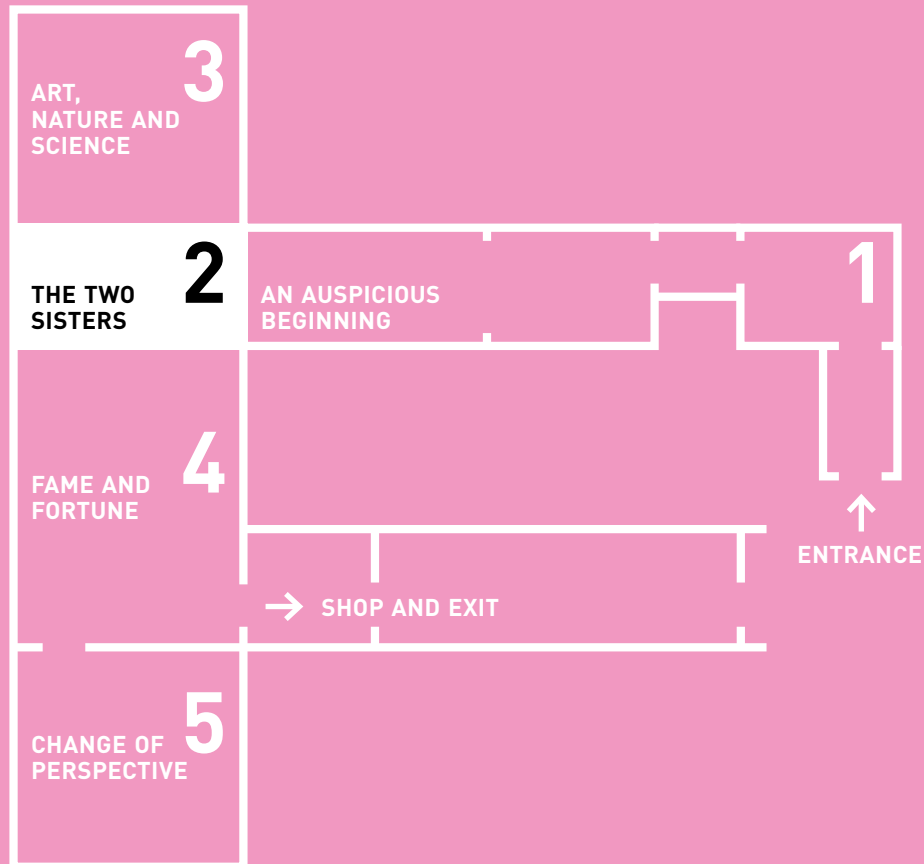


**Maria
van Oosterwijck**
Flower Still Life,
1667
Kunstsammlungen
und Museen
Augsburg

THE TWO SISTERS

RACHEL AND ANNA

The paintings of Rachel Ruysch and her sister Anna are so similar that they are readily confused. It is believed that Anna – who was two years younger than Rachel, and is still virtually unknown today – acquired her painting skills from Willem van Aelst together with her sister. At that time, it was costly to study with an eminent painter, and since women could rarely look forward to a professional career, they tended to receive training from their own families – but not so the Ruysch sisters. In contrast to Rachel's larger oeuvre, only approximately twenty works by Anna are securely known to us, and she seems not to have been active professionally. In 1688, she married the paint dealer Isaak Hellenbroek, taking over the business after his death. Similarities in choice of motif, colour scheme and framing, together with their technical precision ('fine painting' – the absence of visible brushstrokes), often make it difficult to determine which sister produced a given work. The floral bouquets attributed to Anna are characterized by their more dynamically meandering flower stems, widely opened calyxes and generally cooler colour schemes.



Rachel Ruysch
Flowers in a Glass Vase, 1686
Kunsthalle Bremen – Der Kunstverein in Bremen



Anna Ruysch
Flowers in a Glass Vase on a Partially
Draped Marble Ledge, ca. 1686
Heirs R. Baron van Hövell tot Westerflier



Anna Ruysch
Woodland Still Life with
Flowers, Snail and Lizard,
ca. 1685
Private Collection, by courtesy
of the Hoogsteder Museum
Foundation, The Hague



Abraham Mignon
Wild Flowers with Birds,
ca. 1665/78
Bayerische Staatsgemälde-
sammlungen
Staatsgalerie Ansbach



Anna Ruysch
Forest Floor with Flowers and
Animals, ca. 1685
Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Piece, ca. 1685
Martin von Wagner Museum
der Universität Würzburg,
Gemäldegalerie



Anna Ruysch
Still Life of Flowers on a
Marble Table Ledge, 1685
Private Collection,
Birmingham, Alabama



Anna Ruysch
Still Life of Flowers in a Glass
Vase on a Stone Table Ledge,
ca. 1690s
Krannert Art Museum
University of Illinois Urbana-
Champaign, Museum Purchase
John N. Chester and Richard M.
& Rosann Gelvin Noel Funds



Anna Ruysch
Flowers in a Vase, ca. 1700
LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections,
Vaduz-Vienna



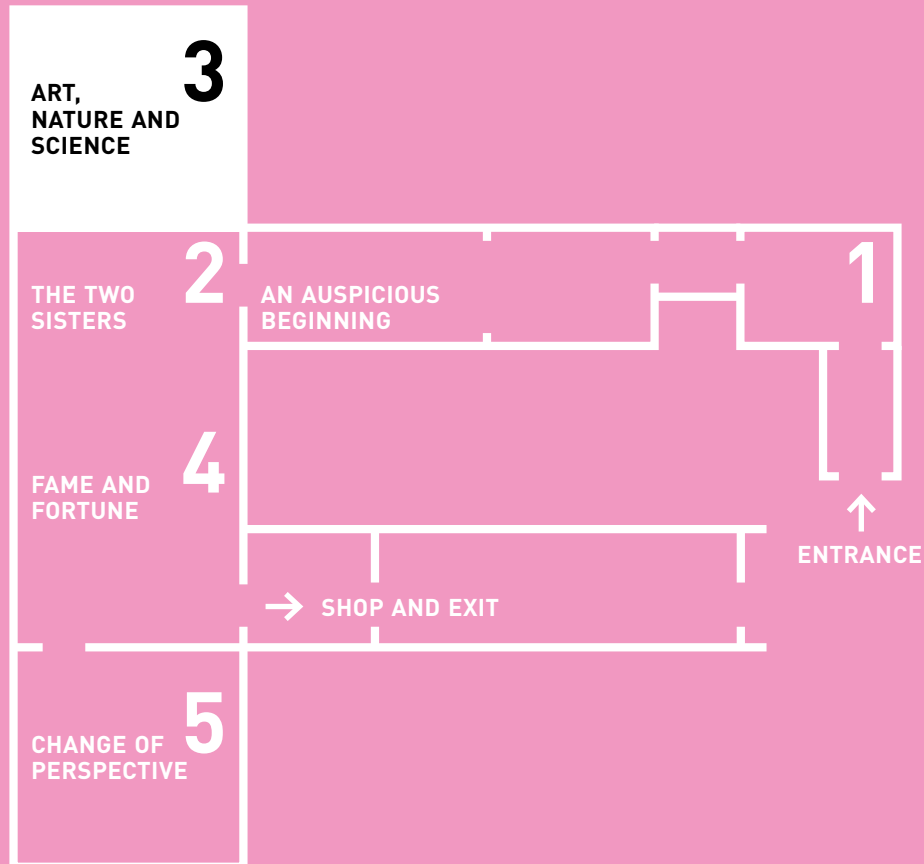
Compare the flower pictures of Rachel with those of Anna.
Do you notice any other differences than those mentioned so far?

ART, NATURE AND SCIENCE

CROSSING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE DISCIPLINES

In the 17th and 18th centuries, art and natural science were closely related. Artists made in-depth studies of the natural world and the human body, so that they could depict their subjects in a convincing manner. At the same time, scientists documented their observations of humans, animals and plants in faithfully detailed drawings and paintings, and disseminated their findings in aesthetically pleasing publications.

Frederik Ruysch, father of Rachel and Anna, professor of botany and anatomy, surgeon, superintendent of midwifery for the city of Amsterdam, and director of the city's Botanical Garden, was himself also a draughtsman and painter. An apothecary by training, he made his name with his embalming technique, which he used not merely to preserve dead bodies, but to imbue them with a fascinatingly lifelike appearance. He injected tallow, wax and cinnabar into the vascular system of his specimens and preserved them in alcohol and black pepper – a procedure which demanded great skill.



Juriaen Pool II
Portrait of
Professor Frederik
Ruysch, 1702
Museum Boijmans
Van Beuningen,
Rotterdam
Gift A.J. Lamme



Amstelodami celeberrimi Hollandiae emporii delineatio nova, 1657 and/or 1682–ca. 1704, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

1 Home of Rachel Ruysch (1664–1750), still life painter
Wolvenstraat (1693–1750)
She lived here with Juriaen Pool since their wedding in 1693

2 Home of Frederik Ruysch (1638–1731), anatomist and botanist
Nieuwezijds Achterburgwal (from 1667 onwards)
In 1673, he rented additional rooms in an annex for his naturalia collection

3 Home of Frederik Ruysch
Bloemgracht 15 (from 1685 onwards)
In 1700, parts of the private rooms served also for the Museum Ruyschianum, Frederik's naturalia collection

4 Theatrum Anatomicum
Nieuwmarkt 4, in the Waag ("weigh house")
Housed the painter's guild, the surgeon's guild and the anatomical theater where Frederik Ruysch performed dissections

5 Hortus Medicus (later Hortus Botanicus)
Plantage
In 1685 Frederik was appointed professor of botany and functioned therefore also as superintendent of the Botanical Garden

6 Home of Anna Ruysch (1666–1754), still life painter and paint dealer
Damrak
From 1749, after the death of her husband Isaak Hellenbroek, she continued the family's paint business with her son Frederik

7 Home of Willem van Aelst (1627–1683), still life painter and teacher of Rachel Ruysch
Nieuwe Keizersgracht (from 1676 onwards)

8 Home of Maria van Oosterwijck (1630–1693), still life painter
Nieuwe Keizersgracht (from ca. 1666/70 onwards)
Lived across the street of Willem van Aelst

9 Home of Alida Withoos (1662–1730), artist
Anjelierstraat
Later home: Prinsengracht

10 Home of Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717), artist and botanist
Kerkstraat (from 1666 onwards)

11 Home of Johanna Helena Herolt (1668–ca. 1723/30), artist
Nieuwe Spiegelstraat (1692–1711)
Daughter of Maria Sibylla Merian. Emigrated 1711 to Suriname

12 Home of Jan van Huysum (1682–1749), still life painter
Prinsengracht (from 1746 onwards)

13 Home of Otto Marseus van Schrieck (1619/20–1678), still life painter
Nieuwe Prinsengracht

14 Home of Jan Moninckx (1653/57–1708/09), artist
Prinsengracht, on the corner of the Leidsestraat (from 1686 onwards)

15 Home of Agnes Block (1629–1704), botanist and collector
Herengracht 162 (from 1668 onwards)

16 Home of Nicolaes Witsen (1641–1717), collector of naturalia and mayor of Amsterdam
Herengracht 440

THE WONDEROUS WORLD OF FREDERIK RUYSCH

Frederik Ruysch opened his collection of human, animal and botanical specimens to the public. Contemporaries reported that the specimens showed no sign of decay. The sprawling collection was published in a catalogue running to several volumes – the so-called ‘Thesauri’. Attracting fellow scientists, aristocrats and tourists alike, the Museum Ruyschianum was even visited by the Russian Tsar, Peter the Great, who was so impressed that he purchased the entire collection in 1717 for the considerable sum of 30,000 guilders.



Cornelius Huijberts
Memento Mori
In: Frederik Ruysch, Thesaurus anatomicus, vol. 3, Amsterdam 1703
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München



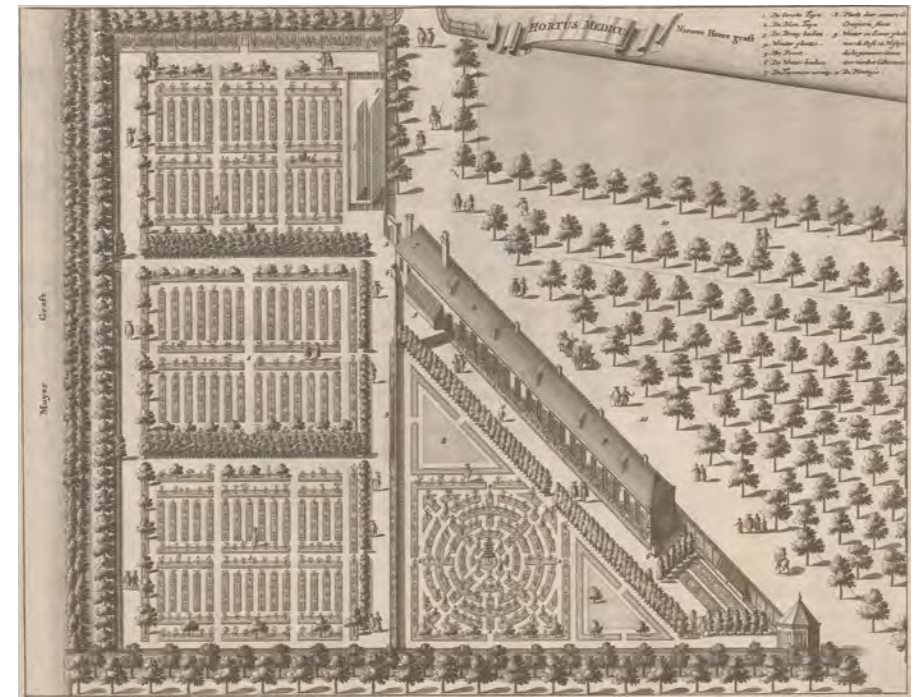
Cornelius Huijberts
Museum Ruyschianum
Thesaurus animalium, Amsterdam 1710
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München

“His museum, or repository of curiosities, contain’d such rich and magnificent variety, that one would have rather taken it for the collection of a King than the property of a private man.”

Bernard de Fontenelle, 1731

THE WHOLE WORLD IN A GARDEN: THE HORTUS BOTANICUS IN AMSTERDAM

In 1685, Frederik Ruysch became the director of the Botanical Garden in Amsterdam, which was founded in 1638. Initially cultivated as a ‘physic garden’, it originally served purely medicinal purposes. However, due to the global trading networks of the Dutch East India and Dutch West India Companies, plants from other parts of the world began to find their way to Amsterdam, above all from Dutch colonies such as Mauritius, Batavia, Ceylon, Bengal and Suriname. It must have been in the Botanical Garden that Rachel Ruysch studied these often hitherto unknown plants and their different stages of development.



Caspar Commelin
Hortus medicus

In: Caspar Commelin, Beschryvinge van Amsterdam, Amsterdam 1693
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München

“This [garden] is the most beautiful I have ever seen!”

Charles de Montesquieu, 1729

THE FASCINATION OF METAMORPHOSIS

Suriname, a former Dutch colony, is home to the *Pipa pipa* or Suriname toad, an animal that was a source of considerable fascination for European scientists because of its reproductive behaviour. During an underwater courtship, eggs are ejected by the female and fertilized by the male. The male then tramples the eggs into honeycomb-like depressions in the female's back, where a skin membrane grows over them. After 12 to 20 weeks, the young toads emerge from their mother's back. The artist and naturalist Maria Sibylla Merian was one of very few people to see these fascinating toads in their natural habitat.



Rachel Ruysch
Nature Piece with
Surinam Toad, 1690
Musée du Grand
Siècle, Saint-Cloud,
Département des
Hauts-de-Seine,
Donation Pierre
Rosenberg



Pieter Sluyter
Surinam Toad
In: Maria Sibylla
Merian, *Metamor-
phosis insectorum
Surinamensium*,
Amsterdam 1705
Bayerische
Staatsbibliothek,
München

“In Holland, however, I saw with great amazement the beautiful creatures imported from the East and West Indies, particularly when I was granted the honour of being permitted to view the valuable collection of the distinguished Dr Nicolaas Witsen, Burgomaster of the City of Amsterdam and Chairman of the Dutch East India Company, and also [...] the collection of Mr Fredericus Ruysch.”

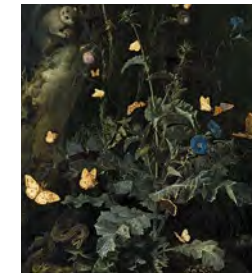
Maria Sibylla Merian, 1705

THE TECHNIQUE OF CONTRE-EPREUVE

In some of her paintings, Rachel Ruysch used a special 'trick of the trade' which she learned from Otto Marseus van Schrieck. For her depictions of butterflies and moths, she sometimes used real Lepidoptera wings, which she pressed into a layer of still-wet and thus adhesive, white underpaint. When she removed the wings again, the insects' tiny scales remained stuck to the paint layer, transferring the wing pattern to the painting. Even the most delicate veins and hairs can be seen. As it was impossible to have all the scales adhere to the paint, the missing details had to be painted in, as well as the body, head and antennae. Today, very few butterfly impressions remain completely intact, because the scales are so fragile. Nevertheless, if one looks closely, one can still see some scales on the insects' silhouettes. Occasionally, Ruysch may even have used butterfly specimens that her father had acquired from van Schrieck's estate. Then, as now, the public must have been fascinated to discover real pieces of wing in the painting.



**Otto Marseus
van Schrieck**
Columbine
surrounded by
Butterflies
Bayerische
Staatsgemälde-
sammlungen
Alte Pinakothek,
München



**Otto Marseus
van Schrieck**
The large Thistle,
ca. 1670
Bayerische
Staatsgemälde-
sammlungen
Alte Pinakothek,
München



Matthias Withoos
Forest Floor Still
Life with Thistle and
Lizard in Front of a
Southern Landscape
Bayerische
Staatsgemälde-
sammlungen
Alte Pinakothek,
München

FOREST-FLOOR STILL LIVES

Forest-floor still lifes are the most unusual type of painting in Rachel Ruysch's oeuvre. Their mood is sombre, often almost sinister. Amphibians, reptiles and insects move about in shadowy undergrowth or on tree stumps and wild plants, while moss and dark pools create a swamp-like atmosphere. The behaviour of the animals is also striking: they menace or even devour one another. In her early period, these works owed a strong debt to Otto Marseus van Schrieck, who invented the genre. From 1685 onwards, however, as she gradually freed herself from her role model, her interest clearly turned to the zoological and botanical prepared specimens of her father, Frederik Ruysch. Although the flora and fauna are depicted precisely and naturalistically, they are embedded in artificial settings; the richly coloured flowers, insects and reptiles are not usually shown in their natural habitats.



Rachel Ruysch
Arrangement of Flowers by a Tree Trunk, ca. 1683
Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow,
Archibald McLellan Collection, purchased, 1856,
lent by Glasgow Life Museums on behalf of Glasgow
City Council



Rachel Ruysch
Forest Recess with Flowers, ca. 1686
Private Collection, Prague



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Bouquet with Butterflies,
ca. 1692/96
LVR-LandesMuseum, Bonn

“Snakes and lizards lose their ugliness, or at least their natural repellence, when painted by the brush of the famous Rachel Ruysch.”

Hieronymus Andreas Mertens, 1783



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Piece,
about 1700
Gemäldegalerie
der Akademie der
bildenden Künste
Wien



Matthias Withoos
Vanitas Still Life,
1673
Bayerische
Staatsgemälde-
sammlungen
Alte Pinakothek,
München



Alida Withoos
Alpine Bells and
Butterflies
Herzog Anton
Ulrich-Museum,
Braunschweig



Alida Withoos
Indian Thornapple
(Datura metel)
Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam



**Johanna Helena
Herolt**
Passion Flower,
1698
Herzog Anton
Ulrich-Museum,
Braunschweig



**Hermann
Henstenburgh**
Hercules Beetle
Herzog Anton
Ulrich-Museum,
Braunschweig

THE OPTICAL REVOLUTION: IN THE REALM OF MICROBES

In around 1600, new worlds were revealed by Galileo Galilei's telescope, which brought previously unknown celestial phenomena within range of the human eye. In the next few decades, the development of the microscope allowed another hitherto invisible world to be studied: the world of things too small for the naked eye to see. Bacteria were observed for the first time in 1676, when cloth merchant and naturalist Antonie van Leeuwenhoek trained his microscopes on them. Specimens were fixed to a pin, adjusted by means of a screw, and viewed against the light through the round lens clamped between two metal plates. Over the course of his life, van Leeuwenhoek constructed over 500 microscopes, but he kept the secret of his lenses a carefully guarded secret. He shared his discoveries, not in books, but in over 300 letters, mostly written to the Royal Society of London.



Antoni van Leeuwenhoek
Microscope, ca. 1700

Deutsches Museum von Meister-
werken der Naturwissenschaft
und Technik, München

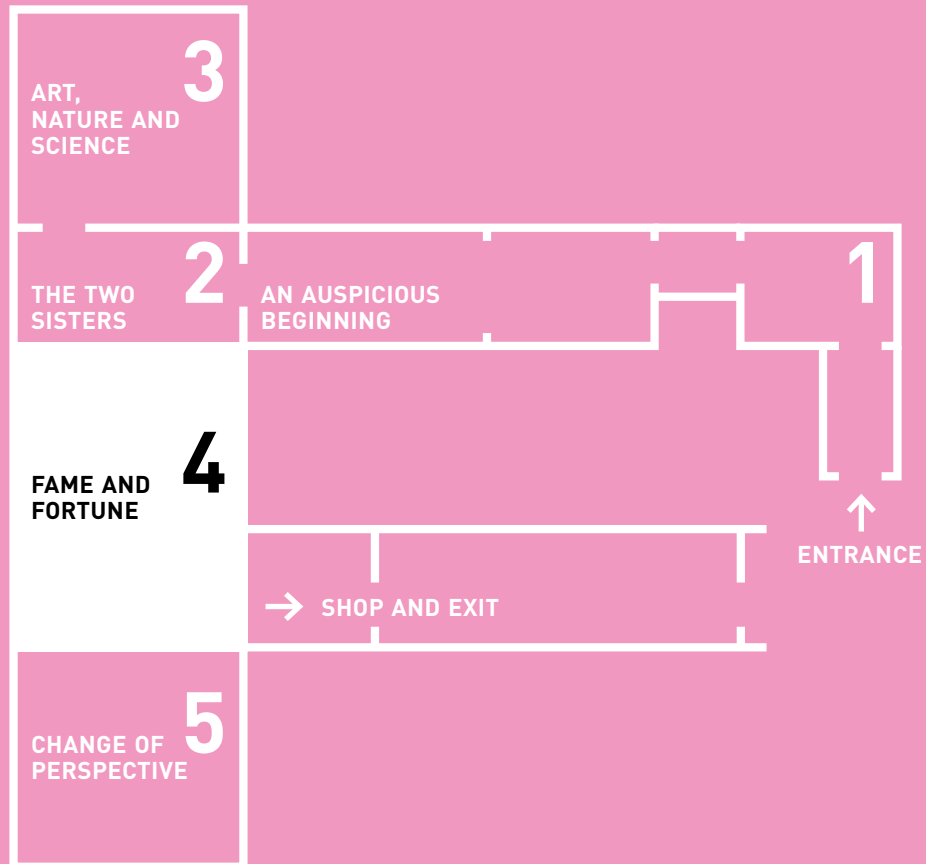


Rachel Ruysch's pictures are full of creeping and crawling creatures. All the specimens on display in this room can also be found in her paintings. Can you discover which ones?

FAME AND FORTUNE

BLOSSOMING CAREER

The turn of the century marked the start of the most successful and productive period of Rachel Ruysch's career, and her most important creative phase. Appearing now were the brilliant, splendidly colourful and mimetic flower bouquets with fruit and insects – the works that bought her international fame. In 1701, she became the first female to be admitted to the renowned society of artists, the Pictura in The Hague. Demand increased for her paintings and their invisible brushwork. Her manner of painting was so fine that in her own words she was only able to produce three or four still lifes a year. Well-known collectors took notice, paying premium prices for her canvases – among them the successful textile merchant Pieter de la Court van der Voort, who had commissioned a pair of pendants dated 1710 for the handsome price of 1500 guilders. Through art dealers and the representatives of the ruling houses of Europe, her works started appearing also in the collections of various princely and royal courts.



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Still Life,
1690s
Verein Tiroler
Landesmuseum
Ferdinandeum,
Innsbruck



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Still Life,
ca. 1700
Verein Tiroler
Landesmuseum
Ferdinandeum,
Innsbruck



Rachel Ruysch
Vase with Flowers,
1700
Mauritshuis,
The Hague



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life with
Flowers and Fruits,
1703
Akademie der
bildenden Künste
Wien, Gemälde-
galerie



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life of Flowers
in a Glass Vase on a
Marble Ledge, 1710

The National
Gallery, London.
On loan from the
collection of Janice
and Brian Capstick



Rachel Ruysch
Fruit Piece, 1710
Private Collection



Rachel Ruysch
Bouquet of
Flowers, 1706

Kunsthistorisches
Museum Wien,
Gemäldegalerie

“We were fortunate to find two pieces by the wife, for usually it is very seldom that she has any finished works, everything she paints being ordered up to a year in advance. These two pieces were for Mr la Court in Leiden, for which he had paid her fifteen hundred guilders. One of them was of flowers, the other of fruit. They were both very beautiful, and the brushwork was particularly refined.”

Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, 1711

COURT PAINTER

Rachel Ruysch’s most important client and patron was Johann Wilhelm, Elector Palatine in Düsseldorf, a member of the Wittelsbach dynasty. He may have viewed her paintings for the first time in 1695 when visiting the collection of Ruysch’s father, Frederik, in Amsterdam. In 1708, the Elector – an aficionado of both the arts and the natural sciences – appointed her a court painter, awarding her a considerable annual income and showering her with expensive gifts. In return, Ruysch was expected to deliver one canvas annually. Additional commissions – including one for a pair of pendants for the Elector’s father-in-law Cosimo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany, in Florence – were remunerated separately. She was exempted from any obligation to reside at the court in Düsseldorf. As a token of esteem, the Elector – together with his wife Anna Maria Luisa de’ Medici – became the godparents of the youngest son of the Ruysch-Pool family, personally attending his baptism in Amsterdam. Then the highest-ranking of all princes within the Holy Roman Empire, Johann Wilhelm assembled at his court a painting collection that was among the finest in Europe.



Rachel Ruysch
Bouquet of
Flowers, 1708

Bayerische
Staatsgemälde-
sammlungen
Staatsgalerie im
Neuen Schloss
Bayreuth



Rachel Ruysch
Fruit Piece, 1709

Bayerische
Staatsgemälde-
sammlungen
Alte Pinakothek,
München



Rachel Ruysch
Flowers in a
Basket, 1711

Gallerie degli Uffizi,
Firenze

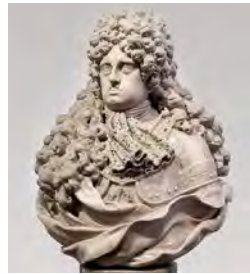


Rachel Ruysch
Nature Piece with
Fruits, 1711

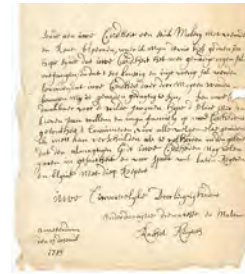
Gallerie degli Uffizi,
Firenze



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life with Flowers, 1709
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, promised gift of Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo, in support of the Center for Netherlandish Art



Paul Strudel
Johann Wilhelm, Elector Palatine
Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, München



Rachel Ruysch
to Johann Wilhelm, Elector Palatine, 13 December 1715
Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv München



Johann Selter
Medallion of Johann Wilhelm, Elector of the Palatine
Staatliche Münzsammlung München



Jan Frans van Douven
Johann Wilhelm, Elector Palatine
Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, München



Jan Frans van Douven
Anna Maria, Electress Palatine
Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, München



Christian von Mechel
View of the Elector Palatine's picture cabinet in Mannheim with two works of Rachel Ruysch, 1731
BStGS, München



Jan Philips van der Schlichten
Picture Cabinet of Karl III. Philipp, Elector Palatine in Mannheim, 1731
Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Paris

THE RUYSCH FAMILY AND THE WITTELSBACHS

Frederik Ruysch conducted a lively correspondence with Johann Wilhelm II, Elector Palatine, and supplied him with insect and plant specimens. These were just as much in demand at the Düsseldorf court as Ruysch's zoological, botanical and anatomical expertise. Rachel's appointment as court painter was the result, not least, of a successful marketing campaign by her father. Frederik constantly praised his daughter's work in letters to the court. The letters between Amsterdam and Düsseldorf provide insights into the relationship between the Ruysch-Pool family and the princely couple. They also mention paintings for the Elector on which Rachel Ruysch was working at the time. Many of these are documented in drawn interior views of the Düsseldorf and Mannheim galleries of Johann Wilhelm II's Wittelsbach successors, Karl III Philipp and Karl Theodor.



Juriaen Pool II
Rachel Ruysch
Juriaen Pool II with Rachel Ruysch and their son Jan Willem Pool, about 1716
Stadtmuseum Düsseldorf



Rachel Ruysch
Bouquet of Flowers, 1715
Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe



Rachel Ruysch
Fruit Still Life with Stag Beetle and Nest, 1717
Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Piece, 1715
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen Alte Pinakothek, München



Take a closer look at the bouquet in the portrait of Rachel Ruysch and Juriaen Pool, which can be seen to the left of the artist. The resemblance to the bouquet from Karlsruhe is astounding!



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life with
Flowers and Fruits,
1714

Kunstsammlungen
und Museen
Augsburg



Rachel Ruysch
Flowers in a
Glass Vase with
Pomegranates,
1716

Gallerie degli Uffizi,
Firenze



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life of Fruits
with Butterflies,
ca. 1710

Kulturstiftung des
Hauses Hessen,
Museum Schloss
Fasanerie,
Eichenzell



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Piece,
ca. 1710

Kulturstiftung des
Hauses Hessen,
Museum Schloss
Fasanerie,
Eichenzell



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life with
Flowers on a
Marble Tabletop,
1716

Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam,
purchased with
the support of
the Vereniging
Rembrandt



Rachel Ruysch
Flower Still Life,
ca. 1716/20

Toledo Museum
of Art



Jan van Huysum
Fruits and Flowers,
ca. 1724

Bayerische
Staatsgemälde-
sammlungen
Alte Pinakothek,
München



Jan van Huysum
Basket with
Flowers, ca. 1724

Bayerische
Staatsgemälde-
sammlungen
Alte Pinakothek,
München



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life with Fruit,
Flowers,
Reptiles and Insects,
1716
Gallerie degli Uffizi, Firenze

THE LOTTERY PRIZE

On 26 August 1723, there was official confirmation: as owners of ticket no. 60623 Rachel Ruysch, Juriaen Pool and their son George had won a major prize in the lottery of the States of Holland. The ticket had cost 10 guilders; the pre-tax value of the prize was 75,000 guilders – equivalent to the buying price for several Amsterdam houses.

Lotteries had been a widespread phenomenon in Europe since the 17th century. They helped to bolster state coffers and support charitable causes, such as building almshouses or providing aid for disaster victims. In the Netherlands the draws were popular public spectacles, with prizes including not only money but also works of art. The Ruysch-Pool family were regular lottery players: Rachel Ruysch had already won 200 guilders in 1713. The large win in 1723 may help to explain why there are so few known works by the artist from the next few years. If not before, she was now certainly financially independent.



Rachel Ruysch
Flowers in a Terracotta Vase,
1723
Kelvingrove Art Gallery and
Museum, Glasgow, Archibald
McLellan Collection, purchased,
1856, lent by Glasgow Life
Museums on behalf of Glasgow
City Council



Rachel Ruysch
Posy of Flowers, with a Beetle on a Stone Ledge, 1741
Kunstmuseum Basel, Gift of the Prof. J.J. Bachofen-
Burckhardt-Stiftung 2015

THE LATE YEARS

Rachel Ruysch's late period, from 1735 onwards, took a surprising twist, with the artist embarking on a bold change of style when she was already over 70 years of age. The dense, luxuriant bouquets now gave way to smaller, looser and more delicate floral arrangements, acknowledging the advent of French Rococo. Furthermore, the dark backgrounds of the earlier works were replaced by a lighter colour palette, more in accord with prevailing taste. No doubt she was influenced by the still lifes of Jan van Huysum, who set the standard for flower painting in the 1720s and 1730s. As a visible token of pride, not only in her advancing years, but in the undiminished confidence of her brushwork, Ruysch now inserted her age after her signature. We know of around 15 paintings by her hand from this late period. The earliest, a floral still life from around 1735, is impressive both for the unique variety of species it depicts and for its distant view of a park landscape. Ruysch may have painted it in memory of her father Frederik.

“Amongst the works I was shown were flowers she was said to have painted as a seven-year-old girl, and others painted at the age of 70. These two pieces were similar and revealed the childlike soul of this endearing artist.”

Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein, 1772/73



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life of exotic Flowers on a Marble Ledge, 1735
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, Donation James und Virginia Moffett



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life with a Bird's Nest, 1738
Private Collection



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life of Flowers in a Glass Vase on a Marble Tabletop, in Front of a Niche, 1742
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Rachel Ruysch
Vase of Flowers with an Ear of Corn, 1742
National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin



Rachel Ruysch
Still Life with Flowers on a Marble Ledge, 1745
Private Collection, Connecticut, USA



Rachel Ruysch
Posy of Flowers, with a Tulip and a Melon, on a Stone Ledge, 1748
Private Collection

HOLLAND'S ARTISTIC MARVEL

In 1750/51, Johan van Gool published a collection of 190 lives of famous Dutch artists entitled 'De nieuwe Schouburg'. One of the longest biographies therein – spanning no fewer than 24 pages – was devoted to Rachel Ruysch. First-hand information had been provided by the artist herself during a meeting with van Gool in 1748, when she was 84 years old. Printed at the end of the biography were selected poems reproduced from an extensive collection of laudatory verse in her honour, which had been published two years after the meeting, just a few months before her death. Never before had such an accolade been accorded to a Dutch painter, let alone a female one. The poets' praise was lavish: Ruysch was celebrated as an “artistic heroine of genius”, “Holland's artistic marvel” and an “immortal Minerva”. When van Gool had visited Ruysch in her studio, he had been accompanied by the artist Aert Schouman, who painted her portrait. In the end, however, an earlier portrait was chosen to illustrate the biography, showing her at around the age of 50 with her since-deceased husband.



Aert Schouman
Portrait of Rachel Pool-Ruysch, 1749
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, purchased with the support of the F.G. Waller-Fonds



Jacob Houbraken, nach Aert Schouman
Portrait of Juriaen Pool and Rachel Ruysch, 1750
© Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

“So shall my artistic heroine [...] shine in full glory like the largest of the sparkling orbs, in the golden heaven of sacred art!”

Johan van Gool, 1750



The still life from 1735 shows a particularly large number of different species of flora. Can you tell how many?
Answer on page 48.

CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE

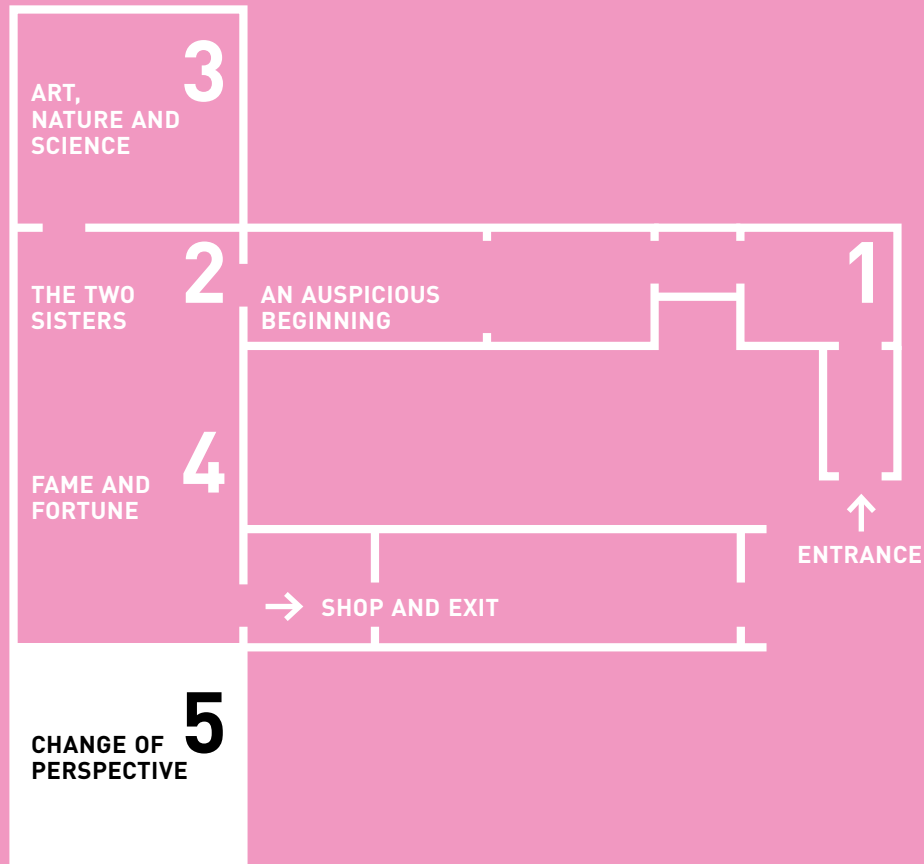
RACHEL RUYSCH GOES 3D

How can we gain a better understanding of Rachel Ruysch's working methods, her choice of motifs, and the way she arranged them on the canvas? This was the question tackled by students at three colleges: the CreatiF Center at the Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film and the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, both in Munich, and Sheffield Hallam University in the UK. Working with the artist Margarita Berger, they came up with the idea of transferring elements from Ruysch's paintings into a three-dimensional format – a creative twist that opened up new perspectives on the art of this Old Master, making it accessible to the public in an utterly new way.

DIVE INTO THE WORLD OF RACHEL RUYSCH!

Want to have a go at conjuring up your own fabulous world of flowers and insects? Then immerse yourself in Rachel Ruysch's flower paintings and create your own still life. Arrange your very own bouquet in hologram form and have your picture taken alongside it in the small pavilion. Or join other people in the large pavilion to create AI-generated compositions with your movements, combining animated images with atmospheric sounds. Or use AI to turn your own drawings into an exciting story based on the artist's life. And after all that, you can chill out in the lounge area while admiring Margarita Berger's paper creations and exploring the life of a remarkable artist in our activities booklet, suitable for young and old alike!

All activities and events on offer can be found here:



DISCOVER MORE WORKS WITH A CONNECTION TO RACHEL RUYSCHE IN THE UPPER GALLERY OF THE ALTE PINAKOTHEK!



Frans Post
Brazilian Landscape with Anteater, 1649
Displayed: Upper Gallery, 20



Even Rachel Ruysch's great-uncle, Frans Post, was already a renowned landscape painter. On behalf of the Dutch West India Company, he travelled to the former colony in northeast Brazil and captured his impressions in idealised landscapes.



Ludolf Backhuysen
The Seaport of Amsterdam, 1697
Displayed: Upper Gallery, Room XI



Jan van Kessel
The Four Continents: Europe, 1664
Displayed: Upper Gallery, 8



**Jan Bruegel d. Ä. with
Pieter van Avont(?)**
The Holy Family, ca. 1620/23
Displayed: Upper Gallery, 9



**Jan Davidsz.
de Heem**
Flower Still Life
with Skull and
Crucifix, ca. 1645
Displayed: Upper
Gallery, 23



**Peter Paul Rubens
with Jan Bruegel
d. Ä.**
Madonna in a
Garland of Flowers,
ca. 1616/18
Displayed: Upper
Gallery, Room VIII

ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

WILLEM VAN AELST (1627–1683)

Willem van Aelst grew up in Delft, the son of a notary. He was trained in still-life painting by his uncle, Evert van Aelst, and became a member of the Delft Guild of St Luke (the painters' guild) in 1643. Two years later he travelled to France, where he spent the next few years, before finally making his way to Florence in 1649. Here he and Otto Marseus van Schrieck were employed as painters at the court of Ferdinando II de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany. Van Aelst returned to the Dutch Republic in 1656 and a year later settled permanently in Amsterdam. He achieved fame through his ornate still lifes depicting fine glassware, costly silver goblets and cups, fruit and flowers. In 1676 he moved to a house on the Nieuwe Keizersgracht, opposite the still-life painter Maria van Oosterwijck. Among his last pupils, still apprenticed to him when he died in 1683, were Rachel Ruysch and possibly also her sister Anna.

JAN DAVIDSZ. DE HEEM (1606–1684)

Jan Davidsz. de Heem was born in Utrecht in 1606, the son of a musician. From 1625 to 1636 he lived in Leiden, where he married Aletta van der Weede. The marriage produced three children. In 1636, he moved to Antwerp, where he was admitted to the Guild of St Luke. In 1644, following the early death of his first wife, he married Anna Ruckers, with whom he had a further six children. Although Antwerp was where he spent most of his life, he travelled to Utrecht on several occasions during the 1660s, where he ran a studio and became a member of the Guild of St Luke there. One of his most famous pupils was Abraham Mignon. In 1672, de Heem returned to Antwerp for good and remained there until his death in 1684. His extensive oeuvre, comprising more than 250 paintings, includes fruit, flower and forest-floor still lifes, and the type of ornate still life known as the Pronkstilleven.

JOHANNA HELENA HEROLT (1668–C. 1723/30)

Johanna Helena Herolt, née Graff, was born in Frankfurt in 1668, the eldest daughter of the famous painter and naturalist Maria Sibylla Merian. The family moved to Nuremberg in 1670. Trained by her mother, Herolt also specialised in the depiction of flora and fauna. When her parents separated, she joined a West Friesian sect with her mother and sister. In 1691, the family moved to Amsterdam, where a year later Herolt married the merchant Jacob Hendrik Herolt. In Amsterdam, Herolt was employed as a painter of botanical watercolours by both the collector Agnes Block and the botanical garden. In 1711, her husband received a position in Paramaribo and the couple emigrated to Suriname. The exact date of her death is unknown, but it must have been between 1723 and 1730.

JAN VAN HUYSUM (1682–1749)

Born in 1682 in Amsterdam, Jan van Huysum was trained as a painter by his father Justus. He specialised in flower and fruit pieces, but also painted landscapes. During his early years as an independent artist, he struggled financially, but in 1716 he made his professional breakthrough, at home and abroad. From then on, he was among the best-paid artists of his time, with clients including princes and noble families from Prussia, Poland and England. Around 1720, inspired by French models, van Huysum began to brighten his palette and lighten the backgrounds of his motifs. Fearing imitators, he worked alone in his studio, with only one documented pupil, Margareta Havermann. Van Huysum died in Amsterdam in 1749.

MARIA SIBYLLA MERIAN (1647–1717)

Maria Sibylla Merian was born in 1647 in Frankfurt am Main. She was taught to draw and paint by her stepfather, Jacob Marrel, when she was only eleven years old, and later completed her training under his pupil, Abraham Mignon. Following her marriage to Johann Andreas Graff in 1665, she moved to Nuremberg. Her interest, both artistic and scientific, in the metamorphosis of insects found expression in a volume of 50 etchings entitled 'Caterpillars, Their Wondrous Transformation and Peculiar Nourishment from Flowers', published in 1679. Having separated from Graff, she moved with her daughters first to West Friesland to join a sect, and then to Amsterdam, in 1690. In 1699, she embarked on a two-year journey to Suriname. 'Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium', published on her return, established Merian's reputation in her own lifetime as both an artist and a naturalist. She died in 1717 in Amsterdam.

ABRAHAM MIGNON (1640–1679)

Abraham Mignon was born in Frankfurt in 1640. His family had fled the reimposition of Catholicism in the Southern Netherlands under the Habsburgs. At the age of ten, Mignon was apprenticed to the flower painter Jacob Marrel and later taught his stepdaughter, Maria Sibylla Merian. Mignon probably accompanied his master on several business trips to the Dutch Republic before settling in Utrecht in 1664. From 1669 to 1672 he worked as an assistant in the workshop of Jan Davidsz. de Heem and continued to run it when de Heem returned to Antwerp. Like de Heem, he specialised in flower and fruit still lifes, but also painted works in the forest-floor genre. Mignon continued to practise his parents' Calvinist faith, serving as a deacon in the Walloon community in Utrecht from 1672 to 1677. He died there in 1679.

JURIAEN POOL (1666–1745)

Juriaen Pool was born in 1666 in Amsterdam, the son of a silversmith. Following his parents' early deaths, he grew up in an orphanage, where he was apprenticed to a painter. In 1688, he embarked on two years of travel in Germany, before settling down in Amsterdam as a portrait painter. In the summer of 1693, he married Rachel Ruysch, with whom he went on to have ten children. In 1701, the couple joined the brotherhood *Pictura* in The Hague, and in 1708, both entered the service of Johann Wilhelm, Elector Palatine, in Düsseldorf. Pool owed many of his commissions to the contacts of his stepfather, Frederik Ruysch, as well as those of his Wittelsbach patron. For the latter, he painted a family portrait of himself, Rachel and one son, Jan Willem, the Elector's godchild. Following Johann Wilhelm's untimely death, however, the painting remained in the possession of the family. Pool died in Amsterdam in 1745.

MARIA VAN OOSTERWIJCK (1630–1693)

The still-life painter Maria van Oosterwijck was born in 1630 near Delft, where her father worked as a lay preacher. Little is known about her training, but she may have been taught by Jan Davidsz. de Heem while living in Utrecht from 1660 to 1666. In 1666, she moved to Amsterdam, where she had a studio across the road from Willem van Aelst. As a woman, van Oosterwijck was not permitted to employ apprentices, but she is believed to have taught her maid, Geertje Pieters, to prepare paints and even the art of painting itself. Her breakthrough came in 1668, thanks to commissions from royal collectors, and she went on to become one of the most commercially successful female flower painters of her time. She retired at the age of almost 60 and moved to Uitdam, where she died in 1693.

CORNELIA DE RIJCK (1653–1726)

Cornelia de Rijck, a specialist painter of birds and a drawer of insects and butterflies, was born in Delft in 1653. Very little is known about her early training. In 1688, she married Gerrit van Goor, a portrait and genre painter. The artists' biographer Johan van Gool reported that her husband's apprentice elected to continue his training under de Rijck after van Goor died. Through her second marriage to Simon Schijnvoet, de Rijck probably also became involved in the pigment trade. Very few paintings can be securely attributed to her, but a catalogue of 116 drawings of Surinamese butterflies and insects survives. She may have had access to the specimens through Schijnvoet, who amassed one of Amsterdam's largest cabinets of natural curiosities. De Rijck died in Amsterdam in 1726.

ANNA RUYSCH (1666–1754)

Anna Ruysch, the second daughter of Frederik Ruysch and Maria Post, was born in The Hague in 1666. That same year, the family moved to Amsterdam, where her father had received a new position. It is thought that both Anna Ruysch and her sister Rachel were pupils of the still-life painter Willem van Aelst. At the age of 21, Anna Ruysch married pigment merchant Isaak Hellenbroek. Unlike her sister, Anna seems to have relinquished the prospect of a painting career when she married. On her husband's death, when she was already 83, she took over the running of the pigment business with her son Frederik Hendrik. Anna Ruysch died in 1754.

FREDERIK RUYSCH (1638–1731)

Frederik Ruysch was born in The Hague in 1638. He was apprenticed to an apothecary and went on to study medicine in Leiden. In 1666, five years after his marriage to Maria Post and following the birth of their first children, he moved to Amsterdam to take up the post of praelector (lecturer) at the Amsterdam surgeons' guild. In 1672, he became the city's municipal obstetrician, charged with the instruction of midwives. In 1685, he was made Professor of Botany, a position which included the directorship of Amsterdam's botanical garden. He achieved international fame, above all, for his spectacular embalming techniques and his extensive natural history collection, which he opened to the public as the *Museum Ruyschianum*. Having sold the collection to the Russian Tsar Peter the Great in 1717, he at once began forming a new one. The objects were scientifically documented and published in several volumes under the title 'Thesauri'. Frederik Ruysch died in Amsterdam in 1731.

RACHEL RUYSCH (1664–1750)

Rachel Ruysch was born in The Hague in 1664. As the daughter of the famous anatomist and botanist Frederik Ruysch and his wife Maria Post, she grew up in an artistic and scientific environment. In 1666, the family moved to Amsterdam, where, at the age of about 15, she was taught by the still-life painter Willem van Aelst. In 1693, she married the portrait painter Juriaen Pool, with whom she had ten children. At the time, women were barred from membership of the Amsterdam painter's guild, but in 1701, Rachel Ruysch received the honour of becoming the first female member of the brotherhood *Pictura* in The Haag. In 1708 Johann Wilhelm, Elector Palatine, appointed her as court painter, while allowing her to continue working from Amsterdam. The Elector died in 1716, but even after the loss of her most important patron, she was not short of commissions and continued working into her old age. She died in 1750 at the age of 86.

OTTO MARSEUS VAN SCHRIECK (1619/20–1678)

Otto Marseus van Schrieck was born in Nijmegen in 1619. Very little is known about his life. From 1642 to 1648, he and the painter Willem van Aelst are thought to have visited the court of Marie de' Medici in Paris. He then left for Italy with his colleague Matthias Withoos to work for Grand Duke Ferdinand II de' Medici. In 1663, he returned to Amsterdam. Van Schrieck is credited with inventing the forest-floor still life, a close-up depiction of an area of forest floor, swarming with insects, reptiles, amphibians and other creatures. The realistic impression is heightened by the inclusion of real butterfly wings. Van Schrieck died in Amsterdam in 1678.

ALIDA WITHOOS (1662–1730)

Alida Withoos was born in Amersfoort in 1662, the fourth child of the painter Matthias Withoos. In 1672, the French occupation forced the family to flee to Hoorn. With her siblings, Alida was taught to draw and paint by her father. She specialised in still lifes, flowers, plants and insects and, among other things, worked with Maria Sibylla Merian for the collector Agnes Block. She also collaborated with Maria Moninckx and Johanna Helena Herolt on drawings for the 'Moninckx Atlas', which is filled with 420 watercolours of plants from the Amsterdam botanical garden. She moved to Amsterdam following her marriage to the painter Andries Cornelisz in 1701. She may have ended her career on marrying, as no signed works are known from after this date. Alida Withoos died in Amsterdam in 1730.

MATTHIAS WITHOOS (1621/27–1703)

Matthias Withoos was born in Amersfoort. His exact year of birth is unknown but is assumed to have been between 1621 and 1627. In 1647, after serving an apprenticeship with Jacob Pietersz. van Campen, Withoos was admitted to the Amersfoort Guild of St Luke as a master painter. In 1648, he travelled with Otto Marseus van Schrieck to Florence and Rome, via Paris. Returning to Amersfoort, he married Wendelina (Weinmpje) van Hoorn in 1653. The couple had eight children, one of whom also became an artist. Withoos was famous, above all, for his still lifes of flowers, plants, insects and small animals set in Italianate landscapes, and for vanitas still lifes with ancient ruins and sculptures. In 1672, when Amersfoort was occupied by the French, Withoos fled with his family to Hoorn, where he lived until his death in 1703.

EXHIBITION IMPRINT

RACHEL RUYSCH – NATURE INTO ART

Alte Pinakothek 26. November 2024 until 16. March 2025

Director General Bernhard Maaz

Director of Collections Alte Pinakothek
Andreas Schumacher

Curator and Head of Dutch and German Baroque Painting Bernd Ebert

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