NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS
Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century

Molijn, Pieter

Also known as
Molyn, Pieter
Molijn, Pieter de
Dutch, 1595 - 1661

BIOGRAPHY

Pieter Molijn, born in London of Flemish parents, was baptized on April 6, 1595. It is not known when he left England or where and with whom he studied painting. There is no evidence to support the tradition that he was a pupil of Frans Hals (Dutch, c. 1582/1583 - 1666), although it is quite likely that he received his instruction in Haarlem.

In 1616 Molijn joined the Saint Luke's Guild in Haarlem. Two years later he was in Rome where he left a drawing and inscription in the *album amicorum* of the portrait painter Wybrand de Geest: "Pieter Molijn in Rome 6 June 1618." Although the exact year he returned to the north is unclear, in 1624 Molijn had joined a Haarlem civic guard company, and from 1630 to 1649 he also served as a prominent figure in the administration of the Saint Luke's Guild. He held office as either *hoofdman* or *deken* in 1630, 1633, 1637, 1638, 1645, and 1649. Little else is known of his professional career, except that he seems to have remained in Haarlem until his death in 1661. His pupils included the genre painter Gerard ter Borch the Younger (Dutch, 1617 - 1681) and probably also the landscapist Allart van Everdingen (Dutch, 1621 - 1675).

During the course of Molijn's long career, Dutch landscape painting underwent rapid and dramatic changes. Until 1625 his work was inspired by the mannerist Flemish tradition of landscape painting practiced in the Netherlands by artists such as Roelandt Savery (Dutch, 1576 - 1639). Perhaps through the inspiration of his fellow Haarlem painter Esaias van de Velde I (Dutch, 1587 - 1630), however, Molijn helped forge the way for a new mode of landscape during the latter half of the 1620s with compositions unified by a sweeping diagonal. These small landscape views, executed with a limited palette, anticipate the tonal style refined during the late 1630s and 1640s by Jan van Goyen (Dutch, 1596 - 1656) and Salomon van Ruysdael (Dutch, 1600/1603 - 1670). Molijn was also a talented draftsman and graphic artist.

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