

Vlieger, Simon de

Dutch, 1600/1601 - 1653

BIOGRAPHY

The marine painter Simon de Vlieger was born in Rotterdam in about 1601, judging from a document dated May 16, 1648, in which he described himself as forty-seven years old.[1] On January 10, 1627, he married Anna Gerridts van Willige. The couple, who would return to Rotterdam throughout their lives, moved in 1634 to Delft, where De Vlieger joined the Saint Luke's Guild on October 18 of that year. Though he may have continued to work in Delft, in 1637 he and his wife bought a house on the Schilderstraat in Rotterdam. De Vlieger's stay in his hometown was brief: on July 19, 1638, he was cited as a resident of Amsterdam, where he became a citizen on January 5, 1643.

De Vlieger's decision to move to Amsterdam was undoubtedly related to a commission he received to provide two designs for the festivities honoring the arrival of Marie de Medici into the city on August 31, 1638. Between 1638 and 1645 De Vlieger also fulfilled commissions from the city of Delft for tapestry designs, as well as a commission to paint the organ doors for the Grote Kerk in Rotterdam, for which he received the considerable sum of 2,000 guilders on January 7, 1645.[2] Although he may have lived in Rotterdam sporadically during these years, in September 1644 he sold his house there. Early in 1648 he received a commission to design the stained-glass windows for the south side of the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam, a project that earned him 6,000 guilders.[3] In January 1649 De Vlieger left Amsterdam and bought a house in Weesp, a small town ten miles southeast of the city. He died there in 1653.

De Vlieger's varied commissions reflect his considerable success as an artist, but they do not sufficiently reveal his place as one of the most important and influential Dutch marine painters of the seventeenth century. His early training remains undocumented, but he is often described as the best-known link between the tonal paintings of Jan Porcellis (c. 1584–1632), likely his first teacher, and the sun-filled, tranquil images of Willem van de Velde the Younger (Dutch, 1633 - 1707), who may well have been his pupil.[4] De Vlieger's interest in the depiction of stormy seas and fantastic rocky sea coasts faded over the course of his career in favor of calmer coastlines with an emphasis on the atmospheric effects of water and sky

along the North Sea. He produced several portraits and genre scenes and was also active as a printmaker.[5]

[1] Abraham Bredius, *Kunstler-Inventare; Urkunden zur Geschichte der holländischen Kunst des XVIten, XVIIten und XVIIIten Jahrhunderts* (The Hague, 1915), 356–358.

[2] Peter C. Sutton, *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting* (Boston, 1987), 511.

[3] Pieter Haverkorn van Rijsewijk, "Simon Jacobsz. De Vlieger." *Oud-Holland* 9 (1891): 224.

[4] Arnold Houbraken, *De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen*. 3 in 1 vols. (The Hague, 1753; reprint: Amsterdam, 1976), 2:325–326.

[5] Peter C. Sutton, *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting* (Boston, 1987), 512.

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