

Ruysdael, Salomon van

Also known as

Ruisdael, Salomon van

Dutch, c. 1602 - 1670

BIOGRAPHY

The Haarlem landscapist Salomon van Ruysdael, who was born in Naarden, was the youngest of four sons and one daughter born to Jacob Jansz de Gooyer, a Mennonite joiner from Blaricum. After his father's death in 1616, Salomon and two of his brothers, Isaack and Jacob, changed the family name to Van Ruysdael after the country estate 'Ruysdael' (or Ruisschendaal) near Blaricum.[1] Salomon, along with his brother Isaack and his nephew Jacob van Ruisdael (Dutch, c. 1628/1629 - 1682),[2] established themselves as artists in Haarlem, while Pieter, the only brother to keep the De Gooyer name, settled in Alkmaar as a cloth merchant. Jacob Jacobsz continued his father's cabinet-making business in Naarden. Salomon married Maycke Willemsdr Buyse sometime before 1627; the couple had four children, one of whom, Jacob Salomonsz (1629/1630–1681), also became a painter.

Although Salomon van Ruysdael's training is unknown, his early paintings were influenced by Esaias van de Velde I (Dutch, 1587 - 1630), who worked in Haarlem from 1609 to 1618. Ruysdael joined the Saint Luke's Guild in 1623, and not long thereafter produced his earliest dated painting, from 1626.[3] As early as 1628 he was already praised for his abilities as a landscapist by the Haarlem chronicler Samuel Ampzing.[4] In 1637 Hendrick Pietersz de Hont became his apprentice, and Cornelis Decker is mentioned as a pupil in 1646.[5] Ruysdael may also have been responsible for the training of his son and his nephew. He remained active in the guild throughout his career, serving as a *vinder* in 1647, a *deken* the following year, and a *vinder* again in 1669. Later in his life, he became involved with civic affairs, serving as district master on the Kleine Houtstraat from 1659 to 1666.

Aside from being a painter, Ruysdael was also involved with several other activities during his career. He dealt in blue dye for Haarlem's bleacheries and was a member of the Guild of Cloth Merchants from 1658 to 1670. A document from 1657 also mentions him as being a participant in a tanning mill in Gorinchem. Furthermore, as Houbraken chronicles, Ruysdael even invented a process for

creating imitation marble.[6] Such varied activities, in addition to his career as an artist, brought him considerable wealth; he owned several houses in Haarlem throughout his lifetime.

Like his father, Ruysdael was a Mennonite, and in 1669 he was listed among the members of the United Mennonite Church of Haarlem when he was living on the Kleine Houtstraat.[7] His faith prohibited him from bearing arms, and as a result he had to pay an annual fee to be excused from his civic guard duty.

Although Ruysdael lived and worked in Haarlem throughout his life, his paintings, which depict views of various cities, including Alkmaar, Arnhem, Dordrecht, Leiden, Nijmegen, Rhenen, and Utrecht, suggest that he made several trips throughout the Netherlands. Along with Pieter Molijn (Dutch, 1595 - 1661) and Jan van Goyen (Dutch, 1596 - 1656), Ruysdael became one of the leading landscape painters of his generation, ushering in the remarkable “tonal” landscapes that are the hallmark of early Dutch realism. He often depicted river views, in which light and atmosphere pervade the scene. His paintings of the 1640s helped lay the foundation for the “classical” period of Dutch landscape painting that followed, led by a generation of artists that included his nephew Jacob van Ruisdael, Meindert Hobbema (Dutch, 1638 - 1709), and Aelbert Cuyp (Dutch, 1620 - 1691). Aside from his river views and landscapes, Ruysdael also painted seascapes and still lifes. He died on November 3, 1670, and was buried in Haarlem’s Saint Bavo’s Church.

[1] The De Gooyer family may have been tenants of one of the houses on the Ruysdael estate. See Neeltje Köhler and Pieter Biesboer, *Painting in Haarlem 1500–1850: The Collection of the Frans Hals Museum* (Ghent, 2006), 291, note 4.

[2] Jacob was the only member of the family to spell his name differently.

[3] Hessel Miedema, *De archiefbescheiden van het St. Lukasgilde te Haarlem 1497–1789*, 2 vols. (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1980), 2:420. In that year, however, Salomon still registered as “Salomon de Gooyer” (see 2:1039).

[4] Samuel Ampzing, *Beschryvinge ende lof der stad Haerlem in Holland* (Haarlem, 1628), 372.

[5] Hessel Miedema, *De archiefbescheiden van het St. Lukasgilde te Haarlem 1497–1789*, 2 vols. (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1980), 2:455, 933, 1033, 1041.

[6] Arnold Houbraken, *De Grootte Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen*. 3 vols. (The Hague, 1753; reprint: Amsterdam, 1976), 2:124, 3:66.

[7] Peter C. Sutton, *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting* (Boston, 1987), 466–467.

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