

Zuiderzee Museum: Volendam artists' village

The legacy of the Hotel Spaander

The Zuiderzee Museum opens the winter season on 27 November, with an art-historical exhibition about Volendam, the colourful fishing village on the former Zuider Zee. The exposition shows this country's best-known fishing village through the eyes of various artists and of portrait photographer Koos Breukel. The works are on show until 14 March 2010. It is the first exhibition under the management of Michael Huyser, director of the Zuiderzee Museum since 1 April 2009.

In the late 19th century, Volendam had grown to become one of the biggest artists' villages in Europe. The focal point was the Hotel Spaander, run by a married couple named Leendert and Aaltje Spaander. The Spaanders' forward-looking vision and marketing abilities turned the traditional Dutch 'brown café' into a lively artists' hotel, attracting artists from the Netherlands, and many more from other countries, to take up residence there. And thus Volendam came to be a symbol of Holland.

Volendam, 1881-present

The exhibition comprises over 400 paintings, watercolours, drawings, caricatures and photographs. The artworks were all either made in Volendam or take Volendam as their subject and span the period from 1881 to the present day. They display a wide range of themes and styles, including Expressionism, Impressionism, Fauvism and the Romantic school. The compositions come from the Hotel Spaander collection, local private collections, art dealers' collections and the Zuiderzee Museum.

Masterworks

Two exceptional pieces in the exhibition are the portrait of Leendert Spaander by George Clausen and the portrait of Aaltje Spaander by George Sherwood Hunter. The Zuiderzee Museum obtained these two portraits, dating from 1878 and 1893 respectively, through a bequest. This will be the first time that these privately owned paintings from the Spaander estate are shown to the general public.

The Zuiderzee Museum will also be exhibiting the 1916 painting *Volendammers* by Georg Hering from its own collection. It is one of the few paintings depicting men sitting in the characteristic squatting position adopted by Volendam fishermen of the time.

Before the Eyes of Job

Also on display is a photographic exhibition entitled *Before the Eyes of Job* by Koos Breukel, one of the best contemporary portrait photographers in the Netherlands. He is chiefly known for his photographs of people who are 'damaged', in more than one way. For this exhibition he contacted parents of children buried in the Volendam churchyard – victims of the café fire on New Year's Eve 2001, but also children who met their deaths in other ways. *Before the Eyes of Job* is a subdued collection of portrait photographs that offer a poignant picture of Volendam in 2009.

Publications

For each exhibition there is an accompanying book. In *Volendam. Kunstenaarsdorp aan de Zuiderzee (Volendam: Artists' Village on the Zuiderzee)*, Brian Barrett and André Groeneveld describe the immense power of attraction Volendam holds for artists from all over the world. The book is illustrated with beautiful colour photographs of over a hundred works.

(Published by d'junge Hond, approx. 160 pages, €24.95).

In *Voor het Oog van Job (Before the Eyes of Job)*, parents speak candidly about the child they had and then lost, about their other children, about each other, and about Volendam. The words are by Pieter van den Blink, and the photographs by Koos Breukel (published by Augustus, approx. 144 pages, €25).

Gone with the Wind

During the build-up to the *Volendam* exhibition, the fashion exhibition *Gone with the Wind* will be shown in its entirety until 25 October. The exhibition will then be gradually taken down in stages to make way for the *Volendam* exhibition. The museum will remain open to the public throughout this period.

About the Zuiderzee Museum

The Zuiderzee Museum presents Dutch art, fashion, design and heritage at the interface of land and water. All year round, exhibitions and events are organised both within and outside the museum, forging links between the collection and modern developments in art and culture. Contemporary and traditional subjects are approached in an unexpected way and examined from a variety of angles. www.zuiderzeemuseum.nl

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