

VISUAL AND MATERIAL CULTURE, 1300-1700

Catherine Levesque

Jacob van Ruisdael's Ecological Landscapes

Amsterdam
University
Press

A X
U X
P X

Jacob van Ruisdael's Ecological Landscapes



Amsterdam
University
Press

Visual and Material Culture, 1300-1700

A forum for innovative research on the role of images and objects in the late medieval and early modern periods, *Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700* publishes monographs and essay collections that combine rigorous investigation with critical inquiry to present new narratives on a wide range of topics, from traditional arts to seemingly ordinary things. Recognizing the fluidity of images, objects, and ideas, this series fosters cross-cultural as well as multi-disciplinary exploration. We consider proposals from across the spectrum of analytic approaches and methodologies.

Series editors

Allison Levy is Director of Brown University Digital Publications. She has authored or edited five books on early modern Italian visual and material culture.



Amsterdam
University
Press

Jacob van Ruisdael's Ecological Landscapes

Catherine Levesque

Amsterdam University Press



Amsterdam
University
Press

Cover illustration: Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape near the Ruins of the Old Church at Muiderberg*, ca. 1646-55, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 90 4855 891 9

e-ISBN 978 90 4855 892 6

DOI 10.5117/9789048558919

NUR 685

© C. Levesque / Amsterdam University Press B.V., Amsterdam 2024

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the written permission of both the copyright owner and the author of the book.

Every effort has been made to obtain permission to use all copyrighted illustrations reproduced in this book. Nonetheless, whosoever believes to have rights to this material is advised to contact the publisher.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	7
Acknowledgements	17
Introduction	19
I. Dunes: Man in Nature	35
Dune Landscapes and Pleasant Places	35
Dunes and Wilderness [<i>“Duinen en Wildernissen”</i>]	41
Dunes and Country Roads	49
The Dune Environment	57
II. Grainfields: Making Landscape	73
Technē: Labor and Landscape	73
The Wild and the Sown	78
Processes of Art; Processes of Nature	87
Point of View	98
III. Ruins: Temporality and Transformation	109
Things Fall Apart: Broken Bridges	109
Monumental Ruins	114
Biological Time: <i>The Jewish Cemetery</i>	119
Destruction and Reconstruction	129
IV. Water: Matter in Motion	143
Water Mills and Mill Runs	143
Marine Painting	152
Waterfalls	164



V. Woodlands and Marshes: Art and Nature	183
Woodlands	183
Realizing Vital Form	192
Sylva	203
Landscapes Tamed and Wild	207
Conclusion	219
Index	225

List of Illustrations

1. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with a Waterfall*, ca. 1660–65, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. 20
2. Frederik de Wit (1630–1706), *Kaart van de Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden*, ca. 1670 en/of ca. 1706, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. 24
3. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape near the Ruins of the Old Church at Muiderberg*, ca. 1646–55, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. 27
4. *Ansicht von Muiderberg*, Atlas Blaeu, Band 15:46. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna. 28
5. *Kaart van het hoogheemraadschap van Rijnland: Haarlem*, 1615, Noord-Hollands Archief, Haarlem. 36
6. Jacob van Ruisael, *Dune Landscape*, 1647–49, Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt a. M. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 38
7. Claes Jansz. Visscher, *Plaisante Plaetsen*, 1611–12, contents page, etching, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. 40
8. Claes Jansz. Visscher (after David Vinckboons), *Hare Hunting*, 1612, etching, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. 40
9. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Dune Landscape*, ca. 1655, The John G. Johnson Collection, 1917, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. 43
10. J. F. le Francq van Berkhey, *Sandpit near Katwijk at the Dutch coast*, ca. 1770, in, J. F. le Francq van Berkhey (1729–1812) *Natuurlijke historie van Holland*, volume 2, Amsterdam: Yntema en Tieboel, 1771, KB Nationale Bibliotheek, Den Haag. 44
11. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Dune Landscape with a Blasted Tree near a Cottage*, 1648 © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. 46
12. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with a Brook and Willows*, ca. 1646, Albertina Museum, Vienna. 48
13. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with a Toppled Willow*, ca. 1646, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 48
14. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Dune Landscape*, signed and dated 1646 bottom center, Presidential Palace Paramaribo, Surinam. Photograph Myra Winter/Henry Strijk. 50
15. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Dune Landscape*, signed and dated 1646 right center near the bottom, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum/photo by Aleksey Pakhomov. 51

16. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Hunter with Three Dogs Entering a Wood*, 1646, Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett. Photo: Jörg P. Anders. bpk Bildagentur/Art Resource, NY. 52
17. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Path into a Forest*, ca. 1648–49, Collection Edmond de Rothschild, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 53
18. Jacob van Ruisdael, *A Wooded Landscape with a Man and two dogs on a path, a cottage beyond*, 1647, © 7 July 2022, Christie's Images Limited. 54
19. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Le Buisson*, early 1650s, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 55
20. Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Banks of a River*, 1649, National Galleries of Scotland. Sir James Erskine of Torrie Bequest to the University of Edinburgh 1835, deposited on loan 1845 with the Royal Institution; loan transferred to the National Gallery 1859. 58
21. Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Banks of a River*, 1649, (detail). National Galleries of Scotland. Sir James Erskine of Torrie Bequest to the University of Edinburgh 1835, deposited on loan 1845 with the Royal Institution; loan transferred to the National Gallery 1859. 60
22. Jan Wouwerman (formerly attributed), *Elswout*, 1644–66, Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst. 62
23. Jan van der Heyden, *Elswout Estate in Overveen from the Southeast*, 1667, Frans Hals Museum, photo: Tom Haartsen. 63
24. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Wooded Plain with Grainfields and a View of the Castle at Heemstede*, 1670s, © 5 July 2018. Christie's Images Limited. 64
25. *Kaart van de Heerlijkheid Heemstede. Westen boven; met schaalstok van 150 Rijnlandse roeden; met verantwoording. In een apart cartouche een gezicht op het Huis te Heemstede en in een ander cartouche een paskaart van de Haarlemmermeer met de omliggende plaatsen.* Pen in bruin, penseel in kleuren, gesigneerd en gedateerd 1643–06 [date per archive]. Noord-Hollands Archief, Haarlem. 65
26. Jacob van Ruisdael, *The View of Haarlem with Bleaching Grounds*, ca 1670–75, Kunsthau Zürich, The Ruzicka Foundation. 67
27. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with a Windmill*, 1646, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Marlatt Fund 1967.19, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland. 76
28. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Evening Landscape: A Windmill by a Stream*, ca. 1650, Royal Collection Trust/© His Majesty King Charles III 2023. 77
29. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with Cottage and Trees*, 1646, Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 79

30. Jacob van Ruisdael, *The View of Naarden and the Church of Muiderberg*, 1647, © Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. 81
31. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Distant View with Trees, a Grainfield and Dunes*, 1648, Michele and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts, Museum of Fine Arts, The James Philip Grey Collection. 81
32. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Dunes with Sheaves in Grainfields*, late 1540s–early '50s, Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 83
33. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Grainfields near a Road*, late 1650s–early '60s. Getty Museum, Los Angeles. 83
34. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Grainfield in a Hilly Landscape*, early 1660s, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 83
35. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with the Old Church at Muiderberg in the Distance*, early to mid-1650s, Albertina Museum, Vienna. 85
36. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Oak Trees at the Edge of a River*, ca. 1649, Musée Condé, Chantilly. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 85
37. Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Three Oaks*, 1649, etching, National Gallery, Washington, DC. 85
38. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Road through Grain Fields near the Zuider Zee*, ca.1660–62, © Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. 86
39. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Grainfields near a Road*, early 1660s, New York, Metropolitan Museum of art, Friedsam Collection. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 86
40. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Grain Fields near the Zuider Zee*, ca. 1660, Rotterdam, Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum. HIP/Art Resource, NY. 86
41. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Grainfields Flanking a Road*, ca. 1670, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 88
42. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Cottages and Clump of Trees by a Small River*, 1646, etching, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet. 90
43. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Farmstead in the Dunes*, 1646, etching, unique impression, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet. 92
44. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Cottages and Trees on Rising Ground*, 1648, © July 7, 2022 Christie's Images Limited. 92
45. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Grainfield at the Edge of a Wood*, 1648, etching, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet. 93
46. Ottens Map. *Deze Nieuw Kaart van Gooilandt word met schuldige eerbiedigheid aan den wel Ed. Gestr. Heer Den Heere en Mr. Bicker Schepen der Stadt Amsterdam Raadt en Advt Fiscaal ter Admiraliteit aldaar Meestersknaap van Gooilandt enz. enz. enz. opdragen door*

- zijn Ed. Gestr. Onderdanigste dienaars Reenier & Joshua Ottens.
content 1650; published between 1725–34. Archief Eemland, Amers-
foort. 98
47. Claes Jansz. Visscher, “Bergh van de Hr. Ontfanger Witenbogaert”
Het landgoed Kommerrust, Naarden, ca. 1650. Stadsarchief, Amster-
dam. 99
48. *Leeuwen-Berg in Gooiland*, Schoemaker's Atlas van Noord-Holland
in 1727, p. 70. Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek. 100
49. Jacob van Ruisdael, *View of Naarden and the Church at Muiderberg*,
ca. 1667, Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum, ca. 1667.
Photograph and Copyright: Wolfgang Fuhrmannek, Hessisches
Landesmuseum Darmstadt. 101
50. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Farmstead with the Ruins of Brederode*, 1646,
Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kupferstich-Kabinett
(no. C 1277). Museum/Art Resource, NY. 110
51. Jacob van Ruisdael, *High Stone Footbridge*, 1646, Dresden, Staatliche
Kunstsammlungen, Kupferstich-Kabinett (no. C 1284)/Art Resource,
NY. 110
52. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Stone Bridge with a Sluice*, 1647, Collection
Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede (photography Rik Klein Gotink). 111
53. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Wooded River Valley with a Footbridge*, signed
and dated 1652, © The Frick Collection. 112
54. Jacob van Ruisdael, *River Landscape with a Quarry below a wooded
Hill*, 1655–60, Kunsthau Zürich, The Ruzicka Foundation. 113
55. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Ruins and Cottage in a Dune Landscape*, early
1650s, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. 115
56. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with a mill-run and ruins*, ca. 1653,
Gift of James and Diana Ramsay Fund through the Art Gallery of
South Australia Foundation 1985, Art Gallery of South Australia
Adelaide. 115
57. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Ruins in a Dune Landscape*, late 1640s–early 50s,
London, The National Gallery/Art Resource, NY. 117
58. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Ruins in a Wood*, early 1650s, National Museum
in Gdańsk, Gdansk. 117
59. Jacob van Ruisdael, *A Ruined Entrance Gate of Brederode Castle*,
mid-1650s, The John G. Johnson Collection, 1917, Philadelphia
Museum of Art, Philadelphia. 117
60. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Ruins of Egmond Castle at Egmond aan den Hoef*,
ca. 1653–55, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Graphische Sammlung. Photo:
© Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. 118

61. Jacob Ruisdael, *Jewish Cemetery*, mid-1650s, Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 121
62. Jacob Ruisdael, *Jewish Cemetery*, mid-1650s, Detroit, The Detroit Institute of Arts. 122
63. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with a Ruined Monastery at the Foot of a Hill by a River*, late 1640s–early 1650s, London, National Gallery/Art Resource, NY. 123
64. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with a Ruined Cloister*, second half of the 1650s, Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Property of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum Association). Photo: Joerg P. Anders. bpk Bildagentur/Art Resource, NY. 123
65. Jacob Ruisdael, *Landscape with a Ruined Monastery at the Foot of a Hill by a River*, second half of the 1650s, Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 123
66. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Ruined Cottage*, ca. 1655, Thaw Collection. The Morgan Library & Museum. 2017.229. 129
67. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Ruins of the Manor Kostverloren on the Amstel*, ca. 1658, Haarlem, Teylers Museum. 131
68. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Ruins of the Manor Kostverloren*, ca. 1658, © May 25, 2023 Christie's Images Limited. 131
69. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Reconstruction of the Ruins of the Manor Kostverloren*, ca. 1658, Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum. 131
70. Jacob van Ruisdael, *View of the Binnen Amstel at Amsterdam*, 1650s, Szépművészeti Museum/ Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest. 132
71. Joan Blaeu, *Amstelodami Celeberrimi Hollandiae Emporii Delineatio Nova, 1649/50 Kaart van Amsterdam*. 3e uitgave. Schaal ca. 1:7.100. Uitgegeven door Joan Blaeu. Met indeling in 54 burgerwijken aangegeven in kleur. Ingetekend staat een tracé voor de nog te bouwen vestingwal van de vierde uitleg, die in 1662/1663 overigens niet zo aangelegd werd. Zie voor niet geannoteerde exemplaren onder andere SAA: 10035/1325 en 10035/1551. Oriëntatie: zuidzuidwest boven. Datering 1649 t/m 1652. Afbeeldingsbestand. Amsterdam Archief. 133
- 72a. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Amstel-Gesichtjes or Little Amsterdam Views*—Title print, 1650s, etching. Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam. 135
- 72b. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Amstel-Gesichtjes or Little Amsterdam Views—de Meulen by de Blaeu burgh*, 1650s, etching. Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam. 135
- 72c. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Amstel-Gesichtjes or Little Amsterdam Views—de Blaeu burgh*, 1650s, etching. Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam. 135

- 72d. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Amstel-Gesichtjes* or *Little Amsterdam Views—de Jacht-haven*, 1650s, etching. Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam. 135
- 72e. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Amstel-Gesichtjes* or *Little Amsterdam Views—St Anthonis Poort*, 1650s, etching. Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam. 135
- 72f. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Amstel-Gesichtjes* or *Little Amsterdam Views—De Heer Huydecoopers Huis van achteren*, 1650s, etching. Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam. 135
73. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Panoramic View of the Amstel Looking toward Amsterdam*, ca. 1681, Amsterdam Museum. 137
74. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Panoramic View of the Amstel Looking toward Amsterdam*, ca. 1681, © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. 137
75. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Hogesluis*, Museum der bildenden Künste, 1675–81, Leipzig. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 138
76. Jan van Kessel III, *Panorama of Amsterdam*, 1676, Hermitage, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum/photo by Aleksey Pakhomov. 138
77. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Two Watermills and an Open Sluice*, dated 1653, Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum. 146
78. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Two Watermills*, early 1650s, Sotheby's 8 December 2004. 146
79. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Open Sluice at Singraven*, ca. 1653, National Gallery, London/Art Resource, NY. 147
80. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Two Mills*, early 1650s, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Strasbourg. Photo Musées de Strasbourg, M. Bertola. 147
81. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Overshot Watermill*, ca. 1650–55, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. 150
82. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Water Mill at the Edge of a Forest*, early 1660s, Sotheby's 25 January 2007. 151
83. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Sailing Vessel in a Thunderstorm*, late 1640s–early 1650s, p.c. 153
84. Jan Porcellis, *Three Damloppers in a Fresh Breeze*, 1620s, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. 154
85. Jan van Goyen, *Fishing Boats in an Estuary at Dark*, ca. 1643, © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London. 155
86. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Rough Sea with Sailing Vessels*, late 1650s–early 1660s, National Museum Stockholm. 157
87. Jacob van Ruisdael, Marine drawing (from the Dresden sketchbook), 1646, Kupferstichkabinett, Dresden. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 158
88. Allart van Everdingen, *Seascape*, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet. 159

89. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Stormy Sea with Sailing Vessels*, late 1660s, Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen- Bornemisza (no. 1957.2). 160
90. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Rough Sea at a Jetty*, early 1660s, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas. 161
91. Allart van Everdingen, *Snow Storm at Sea*, early 1650s, Chantilly, Musée Condé. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 162
92. Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Storm Off a Sea Coast* or *The Breakwater*, early 1670s, Paris, Musée du Louvre. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 163
93. Roelandt Savery, *Rock Study*, ca. 1606–8, Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam. 165
94. Allart van Everdingen, *Northern Mountain Landscape with Waterfall*, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen. 166
95. Allart van Everdingen, *Scandinavian Landscape*, 1647, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum/photo by Aleksey Pakhomov. 167
96. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with Waterfall*, 1660, The Baltimore Museum of Art. The Mary Frick Jacobs Collection, BMA 1938.199. Photography By: Mitro Hood. 169
97. Jacob van Ruisdael, *A Waterfall*, 1670s, oil on canvas, 98.5 x 83.4 cm, DPG105. Dulwich Picture Gallery, London. 170
98. Allart van Everdingen, *Waterfall*, 1647, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen. 172
99. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Waterfall with a Steep Hill and Cottages*, late 1660s–early 1670s, Courtesy of the Bute Collection at Mount Stuart. 173
100. Jacob van Ruisdael, *A Cottage in a Northern Mountainous Landscape with a Waterfall*, 1665–70, The Morgan Library & Museum. III, 218. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913) in 1909. 174
101. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Park and Fountain with a Country House*, 1670s, Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art. Gift of Rupert L. Joseph, 1960. 176
102. Salomon de Caus, *Les Raisons des forces mouvantes avec diverses machines tant utiles que plaisantes ausquelles sont adjoints plusieurs desseings de grottes et fontaines*, II, Frankfurt: En la boutique de Jan Norton libraire Anglois, 1615, 2r. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives, Washington, DC. 177
103. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Road in an Oak Forest*, 1646, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen. 185
104. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Forest Clearing*, ca. 1646, Gemäldegalerie de Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien/Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Picture Gallery. 185

105. Cornelis Hendricksz. Vroom, *Forest Landscape*, ca. 1640, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado © Photographic Archive Museo Nacional del Prado. 186
106. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Wooded Landscape with a Pond*, late 1640s, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Museum Purchase Funded the Agnes Cullen Arnold Endowment Fund. 2001.80. Photo © The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Thomas R. DuBrock. Houston, Houston Museum of Fine Arts (2001.80). 187
107. Cornelis Vroom, *Landscape with a River by a Wood*, 1626, London National Gallery/Art Resource, NY. 187
108. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Wooded Landscape with an Old Oak*, early 1650s, Cambridge, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Bequest of Edwin H. Abbot, Photo © President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1966.32. 189
109. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Edge of a Forest with a Grainfield*, mid-1650s, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas. 190
110. *Tabulae dominii Groeningæ quæ et complectitur maximam partem Drentiæ/emendata a F. de Wit* Publication details: Tot Amsterdam: by Frederik de Wit inde calverstraet by den dam inde witte Pas-kaert, [zwischen 1659 und 1688] Bern, UB Münster-gasse. 191
- 111a. Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Little Bridge*, 1650–55, etching. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet. 193
- 111b. Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Great Beech, with Two Men and a Dog*, 1650–55, etching. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet. 193
- 111c. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Cottage on a Hill*, 1650–55, etching. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet. 193
- 111d. Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Forest Marsh with Travelers on a Bank*, 1650–55, etching. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet. 193
112. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Marsh in the Wood at Dusk*, mid-1650s, © Arte Ederren Bilboko Museoa—Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao. 196
113. Schelte à Bolswert, after Pieter Paul Rubens, 1635–40, *Forest at Dawn with a Deer Hunt*, engraving. Amsterdam. Rijksprentenkabinet. 197
114. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Marsh in a Forest with a Blasted Oak*, mid 1660s, Basel, Öffentliche Kunstsammlungen. 198
115. Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Forest Marsh*, ca. 1665, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum/photo by Aleksey Pakhomov. 199
116. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Swamp in a Wood with a Beech Tree*, ca. 1660, Madrid, Collection of the Duke of Berwick and Alba. 202
117. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Lily Pond in an Oak Wood with an Old Beech Tree*, second ½ of the 1660s, Gemäldegalerie Staatliche Museen

- Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin: bpk Bildagentur Photo: Jörg P. Anders/Art Resource, NY. 202
118. Jacob van Ruisdael and Thomas de Keyser, *The Arrival of Cornelis de Graeff and the Members of his Family at Soesdijk, His Country Estate*, ca. 1660, Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland. 208
119. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Mountainous Landscape with a River*, late 1670s, © Iziko Museums of South Africa Art, Cape Town. The Old Town House, Max Michaelis Collection (no. 14/53). 211
120. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Mountains and Wooded Landscape with a River*, late 1670s, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum/photo by Aleksey Pakhomov. 211
121. Allart van Everdingen, *River in a Mountainous Valley*, late 1650s, Louvre, Paris. Museum/Art Resource, NY. 212
122. Jan Hackaert, *Glarus*, Atlas Blaue, Band 13:40. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna. 213
123. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Winter Landscape near Haarlem with a Lamp-post*, ca. 1670–80, Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt a. M. Museum. 220





Amsterdam
University
Press

Acknowledgements

This book has been a long time in the making and my debts to the museums, collections, archives, and libraries noted in the text and notes are equally longstanding. My especial thanks to Lawrence Goedde who read and advised on an earlier version of the study, to Michel Conan and Alan Braddock who helpfully commented on the present text, and to Christopher MacGowan who critiqued those versions and all in between. The College of William and Mary's generous subvention made possible the many images so essential to the book, which has also benefited in having Erika Gaffney and Chantal Nicolaes as its editors.



Amsterdam
University
Press



Amsterdam
University
Press

Introduction

Jacob Ruisdael (1628/29–82), more than any other Dutch painter of his time, shows a complex response to the environment. That he was able to do so was made possible by what George Kubler has called a “good entrance”; the son, nephew, and cousin of artists, he was born in, and as a young man grew up in, Haarlem, a center of landscape painting and a city whose environs were noted for their beauty.¹ Moreover, he subsequently lived and was active in Amsterdam at the peak of Dutch prosperity. Ruisdael was painting in the Dutch Republic at a time when Dutch reclamation projects, agricultural improvements, technological innovations, and even the liquidity of landed property were the envy of their European neighbors.² Since Ruisdael’s paintings are rooted in that context, this study also reaffirms this place and period as foundational, in Western Europe and beyond, for later attitudes towards landscape as property and investment as well as a place for retreat and recreation. That Ruisdael, who painted at a time when understanding nature was often linked to its control and improvement, constructed scenes which provide an alternative vision acknowledging and, at times, privileging uncultivated even waste land suggests that he and those who appreciated his pictures had a complex attitude toward the environment. At the very least, that vision of landscape which included the worked, waste, and wild, was a reminder of a balance easily lost in the world beyond his paintings. Consequently, Ruisdael’s complex response to those achievements and attitudes in paintings that were popular with his contemporaries is of considerable importance for our understanding a key transitional period for landscape—in paintings and in the lived environment.

No doubt pride in the land and an assumption that it provided evidence of God’s providence shaped the attitudes towards landscape of both the artist and those who bought his works, but it is the precondition of Ruisdael’s response to the lived landscape that is my subject.³ My focus is on the way his sensitive and accurate representations

1 Kubler, 6–8.

2 Davids, 400–410 specifically points to the Dutch attitude towards property (taken broadly) as important to their economic success in this period. See also: Reinert, 20–34. Adams, 47–60 specifically addresses the role of commerce and land improvement for developments in Dutch landscape painting. For a general overview in English of the Dutch transformation of the land and its valuation see: Lambert, 179–228.

3 Jorink, “Reading the Book of Nature” 45–68; Jorink, *Reading the Book of Nature in the Dutch Golden Age* and Bakker, *Landschap en Wereldbeeld* address these issues. See also, De Bièvre, for a comprehensive view of particular Dutch communities and the entwining of their histories and geographies.



1. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape with a Waterfall*, ca. 1660–65, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

portray diverse living forms within complex environments that minimize but do not preclude the human presence. It is a type of depiction that Ruisdael achieved with considerable attention to the world around him and much labor to render it with such nuance. In this attention to the complexities of particular environments he presents a viewpoint that we would today characterize as ecological.⁴ Parsing Ruisdael's "selective naturalism," to use Samuel van Hoogstraten's apt term, reveals carefully constructed

4 The German zoologist Ernst Haeckel first used the word ecology in 1866 to describe the "economies" of living forms. Nonetheless, the work of historians of the environment such as Petra van Dam, Verenna

fictive landscapes that portray distinctive types of places as a complex palimpsest of entangled environments.⁵ Moreover, Ruisdael's choices of what to portray and his means of depicting these subjects not only manifest his preoccupations as an artist but also something of the Dutch perspective on the environment in his day.

In the Ashmolean *Waterfall* (figure 1), one of the infrequent instances where Ruisdael shows a draughtsman at work within a landscape, the artist not only has his back to us but also looks away from the scene that appears in the painting.⁶ In this instance Ruisdael makes clear the double vision that is tacit in all his landscape paintings. He asserts both his attention to the environment he has painted and his construction of the painting we see.⁷ He stands in both worlds—nature and art—and mediates between the two for an observer of the painting. That he situates the draughtsman within the picture on a rough scruffy bit of land is entirely typical of his interest in that type of terrain. Moreover, even though the artist within the landscape does not look at the waterfall, Ruisdael's technique in depicting the living force of water makes certain that the viewer is aware of his presence as maker. Finally, too, the viewer is oriented from this dual perspective to both a believable, if general, geography as well as to focus on the specific processes of nature—in this case falling water—within that environment. My study examines Ruisdael's art with all this in mind; it considers his choice of locales and his meticulous attention to natural forms and phenomena, as well as his labor across media to capture their living and generative force within the wider context of a society that appreciated his outlook.

Given his dual perspective, Ruisdael's landscapes call for an approach that carefully analyses his choice and construction of distinct environments as well as his labor to realize the processes of nature in his work. Consequently, this book has benefited from the current work in both ecological art history and visual and material culture.⁸ Analysis of the interplay between landscape representations

Winniwater, Peter Hoppenbouwers, and Dagomar Degroot have shown the importance of developments in the early modern Netherlands for understanding what we would today call ecological concerns.

5 Van Hoogstraten, 237–38 on selective or discriminating naturalism.

6 Slive, *Ruisdael: Complete Catalogue*, 222, cat. 250. For other scenes which include an artist see: *View near Bloemendaal*, p.c. Oberägeri, Switzerland (Slive, 83, cat. 58); *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Fields*, Zurich Kunsthau (Slive, 93–94, cat. 70); *Ruins in a Wood*, Gdansk, Gemäldegalerie (Slive, 387, cat. 534); *Entrance Gate Brederode Castle*, Museum of Art, Philadelphia (Slive, 41–2, cat. 28); *Dresden, Landscape with a Ruined Monastery*, (Slive, 388, cat. 535); *Waterfall with Two Large Spruce Trees*, Baltimore Art Museum (Slive, 160, cat. 146); *A Waterfall*, London, Dulwich Picture Gallery (Slive, cat. 212); and *Mountainous Landscape near a River*, Michaelis Collection, Cape Town, The Old Town House (Slive, 340, cat. 462).

7 Until the nineteenth-century invention of tin oil tubes, oil paintings—unlike drawings—were done in the studio.

8 Braddock, "Introduction: Implication" for an excellent overview of art and ecology, and Göttler and Mochizuki (eds.), *Landscape and Earth in Early Modernity* for a more focused examination of environmental concerns in the art of Early Modern Europe.

and the lived landscape provides a means—albeit imperfect—to understand the role of images as part of a larger dynamic of human engagement with the historical environment. It recasts any assumption of the artist representing a normative landscape type and concentrates instead on his treatment of landscape as a dynamic environment. At the same time, my focus on Ruisdael's work across media and his repetition of particular themes makes clear the consistency of his concern with *technē* and process and explains his ability to enable viewers to see through his paintings the representation of an unrepresentable vitality.

As the subsequent chapters will show, this study has also relied on the publications of the many scholars who have worked or are currently working in Dutch historical and cultural ecology and the history of science.⁹ Of course I have also depended on the work of art historians. Seymour Slive's magisterial catalogue raisonné, John Walford's perceptive book, George Keyes on the etchings, and Jeroen Giltaij on the drawings provided the crucial foundation for this book as did the many studies on more specific facets of Ruisdael's paintings, prints, and drawings.¹⁰ These resources—particularly rich for a student of seventeenth-century Dutch culture—have enabled my two-pronged approach, to examine his choices of subject matter and technique with acknowledgement of how his preoccupations fit within the wider Dutch culture of his day, and to view both within an ecological framework. This approach has revealed a telling pattern of Ruisdael's choice and treatment of landscape themes throughout his working life, a pattern that reveals his sensitivity to environmental concerns.

From Ruisdael's earliest dated works in Haarlem until the end of his life about thirty-six years later, the interplay between nature unworked and nature transformed by human labor is the most consistent theme in his paintings. This study examines his preoccupation with this subject through five central themes—dunes, grainfields, ruins, rushing water, and woodlands—that recur throughout his career. I argue that his choice of these entangled environments, what I am calling the “waste” (or unworked) and the “worked,” together with his careful rendering of the morphology of trees, brush, and plant life; the types of soil and patterns of erosion; and the transient phenomena of water, wind, and weather, can all be rewardingly considered from an ecological perspective. Ruisdael's approach to these diverse entities displays an equally intense scrutiny of each type. It is as if he were uniquely attuned to the pictorial problems raised by painting country roads through dunes, mixed landscapes of grain and waste, bosky woodlands with flowing water, forested marshlands or crashing waves and waterfalls. In every case he works to convey

9 Berkel, especially chapter 7; Rennes, “Historic Landscapes Without History?” 1–11.

10 Slive, *Ruisdael: Complete Catalogue*; Walford, *Jacob van Ruisdael*; Keyes, “Les eaux-fortes de Ruisdael,” 7–20; Giltaij, “De tekeningen van Jacob Ruisdael,” 141–208.



the quiddity of natural phenomenon, their individual characteristics, and their particular vitality. Moreover, he considered each phenomenon or entity—clouds, wind, water, vegetation, trees, and soil—as part of a wider environment. Nor, even in pictures with few or no figures, does he forget the human context. Sometimes the doings and structures of humankind are all but subsumed in nature. Nonetheless, in those instances, as elsewhere in his work, his subtle construction of place—as in the Ashmolean picture—guides the relationship between the onlooker and the landscape.

My study of the different versions of these landscape subjects, together with Ruisdael's drawings and prints, reveals his concern with investigating the processes of art to convey the processes of nature. His paintings show that while looking at a landscape representation presupposes a spectator's critical distance, it also presumes engagement with what is shown and how it is represented. Indeed, his preoccupation with depicting the specifics—soil, water, vegetation—of a characteristic environment would have been shared by artisans and natural philosophers, entrepreneurs who owned and speculated on property, and even people who enjoyed day trips out into the countryside. The demand for Ruisdael's paintings suggests that his preoccupation with portraying the particulars of landscape both reflected and cultivated an audience that appreciated his ability to depict such details. His evocation of places where he lived or traveled, both familiar and less familiar scenery, must also be seen in relation to his patrons. Such town or city dwellers, though they may have had country houses, made summer trips, or taken excursions out into the countryside, were not traditional inhabitants of the land. Moreover, though day trips and travel were common in the western provinces in the seventeenth century, they only became somewhat popular east of the IJssel in the course of the eighteenth.¹¹ Indeed, pictures such as Ruisdael's may have had some influence on this later development.¹²

Ruisdael's choice of locales is thus significant. Attention to the places where he lived and traveled (figure 2)—whether Haarlem where he spent his early years and where his father continued to live, or the Gooi where he had family, or in the Veluwe, Overijssel, and Bentheim where he journeyed—shows him as taking considerable trouble to seek out unfruitful and rough terrain.¹³ He sought out such places as provided him the opportunity to explore the complicated relationship between the waste or wild and the cultivated, and at the same time between closely observed nature and carefully constructed art. His interest in wasteland, evident in his early

11 Verhoeven, "Aan de rand van Hollands gouwen," n.p. [2–5].

12 Koolhaas-Grosfeld, 69–70.

13 Frederik de Wit (1630–1706), *Kaart van de Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden*, ca. 1670 en/of ca. 1706, Rijksmuseum RP-P-AO-1-49B. <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-AO-1-49B>.



2. Frederik de Wit (1630–1706), *Kaart van de Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden*, ca. 1670 en/of ca. 1706, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

paintings of dunes and country roads, is of a piece with his choice to travel through the eastern part of the Dutch Republic. Even in the eighteenth century these lands beyond the IJssel, unlike those to the west, did not have well-traveled waterways and were difficult of access, with land routes that remained limited, dirty, and rugged.¹⁴ Reconstructing the environment of the Haarlem dunes, the Gooi, the Veluwe (Gelderland), and Overijssel through historical maps and ecological studies demonstrates Ruisdael's use of these distinctive locales, but also shows how he reconfigured such terrain to his own ends. Significantly, though he conveyed the characteristics of these environments and paid close attention to the specifics of

14 Horsten, 42–43, 47–50; 112–16; Verhoeven, "Aan de rand van Hollands gouwen," n.p. [3–5] and Verhoeven en Hoyle, "Over de IJssel," 8–10; Hermsen en Haveman, 160–64 for land routes to Ootmarsum and Bentheim.

the indigenous scene, he mostly ignored the actual ongoing transformation taking place, a transformation occurring through the significant removal of sand dunes and peat as the land was carved out for the rerouting of streams and embankments and for the making of country homes, gardens, and land for cultivation or grazing. Rather, as fictive spaces Ruisdael's paintings re-present and re-define such views.

Each chapter of this study examines the ways that Ruisdael constructs environments that mix waste and worked land, analyzes his choice of motifs and his handling of materials as he works out variations within a theme, and considers how his choices might relate to concerns shared by his contemporaries. Two threads weave throughout Ruisdael's treatment of the five themes considered: first, the play between the ordered landscape of human use and that which is wild and waste, and second a consistent probing of how things work. Whether the operation of machines, the vivacity of organic form, or the flow of water, he was consistently preoccupied with how to convey that which cannot be conveyed: time, duration, motion, and especially the vitality of living things. His continuous labor to achieve these ends show him to be an artist of rare "understanding."¹⁵ Using varied media and techniques, he worked and reworked his subject matter with variations on themes that explore diverse effects showing his preoccupation with conveying the processes of phenomena, as well as the specifics of forms. Though Ruisdael was a painter not a natural philosopher, his probing vision and continuous labor to depict the unpicturable bears similarities to what in his day was becoming a more common approach to investigating nature.¹⁶ Consequently, appreciating his preoccupation with understanding and portraying the processes that underlie his subjects is central to understanding his paintings.

It is in Ruisdael's sensitivity to the web of nature—the close attention to natural entities, their relation to each other, and between the human and non-human—that his landscape pictures can be considered ecological. His attention to the entanglement of living things within a carefully delineated environment, and to the

15 By this I mean understanding generally but also as the word appears in the art theory and literature of Ruisdael's day. For the most important examples and relevant discussion see: Van Mander, 361(G II 3f) and Miedema, *Commentary* 392–95 on understanding (*verstant*); Weststeijn, especially chapter II, 83–115. Hoogstraten's work was published in 1678 near the end of Ruisdael's life and the lives of the two men overlap, 1627–78 for Hoogstraten and 1628/29–82 for Ruisdael. Consequently, Hoogstraten's important articulation of ideas current in his day is especially pertinent for Ruisdael. Notably, too, Houbraken, 51 mentions that Ruisdael's father had him taught Latin in his youth.

16 For picturability see Berkel, 173–84. See also, Wunenburger, 231–40 and Blair and Grafton, 535–40. The relationship between things and words was a long-standing preoccupation among humanist teachers, most especially Juan Luis Vives and Jan Amos Comenius. The nature of Ruisdael's connection with the medical community remains an open question, but his vitalist treatment of living things suggests a shared perspective. For more on this see: Slive, *Ruisdael: A Complete Catalogue*, 693–94 and Walford, 11.

particular morphology of each entity within that place, distinguishes his work.¹⁷ These well-recognized characteristics of Ruisdael's paintings deserve more attention as ecologically significant. As important, though, considering his imagery from an ecological point of view accounts for the human presence and the social context of his landscapes. These landscapes inform our understanding of historical ecology in that they provide evidence, albeit indirect, about human action in and on the land at a pivotal time and place.

As Amos Funkenstein has argued, "the study of nature in the seventeenth century was neither predominantly idealistic nor empirical. It was first and foremost *constructive*, pragmatic in the radical sense," and it follows that such an approach would lead to the conviction "that only the doable, at least in principle, is also understandable."¹⁸ Ruisdael's landscapes—though fictive—show a pattern that reveals something of this relationship between construction and understanding. In short, the meaning of his works cannot be separated from their making. Throughout his working-life he played out variations on distinct environments, themes, and motifs. The dunes, grainfields, ruins, rushing water, and woodlands that form the focus of my chapters are among his major subjects and themes. This focus on each environment and associated phenomena shows Ruisdael working through specific pictorial problems over time; taken together they convey something of his demanding and methodical procedure as he sought to achieve pictorially the force, vitality, and motion of nature. For the most part humanity is de-centered and frequently measured against that which is beyond human control. Finally, too, wonder in these paintings is the wonder of attempting to understand the phenomena of the world created by God and as made manifest by the artist rather than wonder as astonishment at the miraculous and unknown.

All the themes examined in this study are combined in Ruisdael's *Landscape near Muiderberg* (figure 3) from the early 1650s.¹⁹ This painting, which exemplifies the consistency of Ruisdael's interests and his dogged working out of their possibilities, is at once of an identifiable place but also obviously constructed. The familiar monument, the church ruin at Muiderberg which allows for identification of the locale, is small and distant. Comparison with a more topographical view from the Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem (figure 4), with Geertruydt Roghman's etching, or with his own drawing (figure 49) in Darmstadt makes clear just how much Ruisdael has

17 Ashton et al., "Ruisdael's Trees," 2–31. For Ruisdael's clouds and use of light see the excellent series *Weg zur Kunst: Naturwissenschaft und Kunst*: Bens et al., "Jacob van Ruisdael: Aufziehendes Gewitter," 1–2; Bens et al., "Jacob van Ruisdael: Dunes and Scattered Light," 1–4 and Ossing, "Haarlems Wolkenkronen," 1–9; and Ossing and Brauer, "Erfundene Realität," 1–5; and Ossing, "Realities in the Skies," 1–8.

18 Funkenstein, 178.

19 Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape near the Ruins of the Old Church at Muiderberg*, Oxford, Ashmolean (no. A 875). Canvas, 66 x 75, monogrammed lower left. Slive, *Ruisdael: Complete Catalogue*, 102–3 (77).



3. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Landscape near the Ruins of the Old Church at Muiderberg*, ca. 1646–55, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

reworked the scene.²⁰ His choices, to add contrasting landscape types, to include distinctive motifs, and to foreground the rough terrain, tangled woodland, and a waterfall obstructed with a large broken branch, provide a perspective that allows for a more complicated understanding of the natural environment. Though a fiction, this painting creates a complex ecology where generative nature is central and the works of man, the distant ruin and the country house at the far left, are marginal. Moreover, Ruisdael's careful and accurate execution of the dead beech branch, the wayfarer bush, the flow of the water, the tussocky grasses, and the trees show his attention to the specifics of growth and decay. Nonetheless, telling details such as

20 *Ansicht von Muiderberg*, Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem, vol. 15:46, fol. 102–3, (45), Österreichische Bibliothek (1559–1694). The Austrian National Library gives Laurens van der Hem's (1621–78) death date as a *terminus ante quem*. See also Geertruydt Roghman, *The Old Church at Muiderberg*, etching, *Plaisante Lantschappen ofte vermakelijke geteekent door Rolant Roghman* (Hollstein 20, 57–59, nos. 9–22) and Ruisdael, *View of Naarden and the Church at Muiderberg*, Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum (no. Hz 8735), black chalk, grey wash. Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael: A Complete Catalogue*, 524 (D42).



4. *Ansicht von Muiderberg*, Atlas Blaeu, Band 15:46. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

the rush of water as it falls over a slight drop and crashes into the beech branch, or the tree that clings to the eroded hillock, are familiar from other of his works. This persistent reworking of themes and motifs across media is a consistent element in his oeuvre, and taking account of these variations on a theme provides insight on the importance for Ruisdael of process, in art and in nature. At the same time, though, each picture is a unique composition that reconfigures key elements and takes account of such variables as changing illumination and the movement of clouds and water. In every case Ruisdael conveys the direct experience of a place, but also makes clear that we are looking at a constructed artifact that nonetheless seeks to show nature as a generative force.

In examining five seminal areas within Ruisdael's artistic production from an ecological perspective it is not my intention to cover all the subjects he treated. Rather, this approach establishes some major themes and motifs that interweave throughout his work, traces their subtle system of resonances, and analyzes his carefully considered choice and exploitation of the different media, techniques, and processes of art making that make manifest his vision. His choice of themes and motifs reveal close observation of particular places—the Haarlem dunes, the Gooiland, the Veluwe, and Overijssel—as a base and inspiration to reconfigure for his own composed scenes. The five chapters of this study explore environments based on these places.

The first chapter, “Dunes: Man in Nature,” considers the way Ruisdael distinguishes distinct types of soil, not only various sands and clays but also the sorts of mires and boggy soil characteristic of particular patches within the dunes, as well as the crofts built on such unfruitful soil. This chapter also looks to Ruisdael’s drawings in relation to these paintings to examine his labor in recording such specifics. Finally, too, Ruisdael’s choice and treatment of this locale is considered in the light of its transformation through land sales and removal, as well as its transition from hardscrabble farmland to a desirable spot for country houses that ranged from farmsteads to landed estates.

“Grainfields: Making Landscape,” chapter two, looks at Ruisdael’s treatment of the boundary between barren and fertile land, as well as his own practice as an artist. His choice of motifs shows human craft and labor within a landscape. These, together with his own evident artistry, suggest an interest in *technē*, that is, maker’s knowledge. His experimentation with etchings in which he explores the vital forms of botanical life in borderlands reveals this interplay of mind and hand. These concerns with making, labor, and the transformation of the land would have been appreciated by his likely patrons. Moreover, his preoccupation with the indigenous landscape would have had a particular significance for those with knowledge of and interest in “foreign” places and vegetation.

“Ruins: Temporality and Transformation,” chapter three, examines the ways in which the ruins and derelict structures that are an important component in many of Ruisdael’s landscape paintings suggest a key role of the man-made within the natural world. Chapter three considers the works of man within the natural environment. It examines just how ruins in landscapes convey a sense of temporality, which I call “biological time.” That is, each living thing follows its own course in time; a concept that appears in contemporaneous medical literature. This chapter analyzes the way ruinous buildings are set off by elements—vegetation, rushing water, clouded skies, and light effects—that make manifest different stages of transience and endurance. Ruisdael’s views of Amsterdam from its scruffy outskirts provide another perspective on this theme.

Chapter four, “Water: Matter in Motion,” looks at Ruisdael’s depictions of flowing water in mills and mill streams, marine paintings, and waterfalls. The pictorial problem posed by all these subjects is that of painting water, especially water flowing or pounding against a surface. Ruisdael was famous in his own day for his ability to deal with this difficulty. This chapter investigates the pictorial means by which he succeeded. It also considers how the problem of analyzing and picturing flowing motion is one that preoccupied experimental philosophers and mechanics and what his approach shares with theirs. The works considered here exemplify Ruisdael’s labor and imagination in his close observation of specific effects, as well as his attention to the traditions of painting to achieve the varied effects of flowing water.



The fifth and final chapter, “Woodlands and Marshes: Art and Nature,” considers works which embody Ruisdael’s preoccupation with generative nature. Trees and woodlands were central to his work from his earliest years. But only from the mid-1650s does he place more emphasis on trees as wildwood in various stages of growth and decay in or near marshland. Notably, this is a period in his career when Ruisdael again experimented with printmaking, producing a series of four etchings of wooded settings in which he develops a newly expressive and powerful technique. His innovative etching technique explores the varied textures, rich tone, and vibrancy of line that carry over into his painted landscapes of the 1660s. The mediation of the artist, so explicit in the etchings, is also an important aspect of these paintings, where he seems to depict nature in its natural state. The ability to differentiate the structures, states, and textures of living things, referred to in the history of science as a probing gaze, is especially applicable to Ruisdael the etcher. Finally, too, these heroic woodland marsh paintings, where water mirrors trees and sky, exemplify the relationship between the observation and construction of landscape. My analysis considers the term “schilderachtig” in relation to these paintings where Ruisdael asserts the difference between a picture and a landscape even as he explores the relationship between them.

The pattern that emerges from Ruisdael’s works, especially when they are considered ecologically and thematically across time, is of the human world embedded in the larger environment of the nonhuman. Moreover, the phenomena of nature are shown by the artist as having their own vitality and force. Humans and their works have a place, but nature is privileged. Most of the pictures show an equilibrium, some are weighted to the waste and wild, only a very few foreground human culture. In all his works, though, Ruisdael’s construction of place, choice of motifs, technical finesse, and carefully chosen point of view establish a direct relationship between the onlooker and the landscape, sometimes implied and sometimes explicit, as in the Ashmolean waterfall. His landscape paintings’ double perspective provides cues to approach each scene as a prospect, but at the same time to recognize the artist’s construction and arrangement of motifs and his handling in its depiction. Moreover, the pictures reflect an interplay of the familiar and the unknown, a world reconfigured or re-presented by the artist. They display the vitality and living force of nature, epitomized by that which is waste and wild. This emphasis on the beauty and power of nature in relation to and sometimes beyond human control would be an especially important reminder in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, with its clear emphasis on the manipulation of the natural force of flood water, desire for agricultural improvement, and awareness of the market value of property. Though no doubt of a piece with the pleasures of country house life, summer sojourns, daytrips, and armchair travel, Ruisdael’s pictures also had the potential to provide new ways of looking at the



world and perhaps by so doing encourage a more active and reflective interaction with the environment.

In his landscapes Ruisdael invites the viewer to both look at and enter the places he created, the perspicacity of his vision and the power of its realization in his pictures encourages the sort of attentive looking that makes tangible the pleasures of painted views, but also the power of landscape. His paintings mix close and informed observation with invention, and so require an active response to art that might invite a like response to the environment. Viewers who would have appreciated Ruisdael's ability to match his understanding of the processes of art with the processes of nature would also have admired works in which the emphasis on the labor of crafting land and its representation is balanced with loving attention to the world, including the wasted, unimproved, and uncontrollable. For them to recognize and take pleasure from the play between the familiar and the fictive, between the land controlled and uncontrollable, and between the worked and the waste, required discernment. Such landscape paintings might elicit nostalgia for the past or pride in the present, an escape to the undeveloped countryside while enjoying urban comforts, an awareness of poetic associations, a reminder of man's place in the world and of God's providence, or (most likely) all of these. But they also represent a view of the world that allows the freedom to redefine reality and even to reinvent it. The guidance provided by Ruisdael's pictures to look carefully and try to understand the visible world around us and even to view alternative possibilities of the human relationship with the land is no small ecological achievement.

Works Cited

- Adams, Ann. "Competing Identities in the 'Great Bog of Europe': Identity and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting." In *Landscape and Power*, edited by W. J. T. Mitchell, 35–76. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Ashton, Peter Shaw, Alice I. Davies, and Seymour Slive. "Jacob van Ruisdael's Trees." *Arnoldia* 42, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 2–31.
- Bakker, Boudewijn. *Landschap en Wereldbeeld: van Van Eyck tot Rembrandt*. Bussum: Uitgeverij Thoth, 2004.
- Bens, Oliver, Achim Braur, Stanley D. Gedzelman, and Frans Ossing. "Dünen und Streulicht." *GZF Helmholtz-Zentrum Potsdam*, 1–4. http://bib.gfz-potsdam.de/pub/wegezurkunst/Ruisdael_MdBK/dueneundstreulicht.pdf.
- Bens, Oliver, Achim Braur, Stanley D. Gedzelman, Frans Ossing. "Jacob van Ruisdael: 'Aufziehendes Gewitter', Alte Pinakothek, München." *GZF Helmholtz-Zentrum Potsdam, Jahr der Geisteswissenschaften* (2007): 1–2. http://bib.gfz-potsdam.de/pub/wegezurkunst/AP_Ruisdael/AP_Ruisdael_AufzGewitter.pdf.



- Bens, Oliver, Achim Braur, Stanley D. Gedzelman, Frans Ossing. "Jacob van Ruisdael: 'Dunes and Scattered Light', Alte Pinakothek, München." *GZF Helmholtz-Zentrum Potsdam, Jahr der Geisteswissenschaften* (2007): 1–4. http://bib.gfz-potsdam.de/pub/wegezurkunst/Ruisdael_MdBK/dunesandscatterlight.pdf.
- Berkel, Klaes van. *Isaac Beeckman on Matter and Motion: Mechanical Philosophy in the Making*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013.
- Blair, Ann and Anthony Grafton. "Reassessing Humanism and Science." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53, no. 4 (1992): 535–40.
- Braddock, Alan. *Implication: An Ecocritical Dictionary for Art History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.
- Dauids, Karel. *The Rise and Decline of Dutch Technological Leadership: Technology, Economy and Culture in the Netherlands, 1350–1800*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- De Bièvre, Elizabeth. *Dutch Art and Urban Cultures*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.
- Funkenstein, Amos. *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Giltaij, Jeroen. "De tekeningen van Jacob Ruisdael." *Oud Holland* 94, nos. 2–3 (1980): 141–208.
- Göttler, Christine and Mia Mochizuki, eds. *Landscape and Earth in Early Modernity: Picturing Unruly Nature*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023.
- Hermesen, Ivo & Edith Haveman. "Op spoor van de Holterweg: archeologisch en historisch onderzoek van, onder en lage de Holterweg in Colmschate (gemeente Deventer)." *Rapportages Archeologie Deventer* 25 (2009): 3–248.
- Hoogstraten, Samuel van. *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst: Anders de Zichtbaere Werelt*. Rotterdam: Fransois van Hoogstraten, 1678.
- Houbraken, Arnold. *De Grootte Schouburgh der Nederlandtsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen*, vol. 3, edited by P. T. A. Swillens, Maastricht: Leiter-Nypels, 1953 (facsimile, original Amsterdam: Gedrukt voor de Weduwe des Autheurs, 1721).
- Jorink, Erik. *Reading the Book of Nature in the Dutch Golden Age, 1575–1715*. (Volume 191 of Brill's Studies in Intellectual History). Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Jorink, Erik "Reading the Book of Nature in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic." In *The Book of Nature in Early Modern and Modern History*, edited by Klaas van Berkel and Arjo Vanderjagt, 45–68. Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2006.
- Keyes, George [mistakenly as Roger]. "Les eaux-fortes de Ruisdael." *Nouvelles de l'Estampe* 36 (November–December 1977): 7–20.
- Koolhaas-Grosfeld, E. "Van de tuin naar de wildernis. Over de waardering voor de natuur en het landschap in Nederland in de achttiende eeuw." In *Langs velden en wegen. De verbeelding van het landschap in de 18de en 19de eeuw*, edited by W. Loos, R.-J. te Rijdt, en M. van Heteren, 47–70. V+K Publishing: Amsterdam, 1997.
- Kubler, George. *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962.
- Lambert, Audrey M. *The Making of the Dutch Landscape*. London: Seminar Press, 1971.

- Mander, Karel van. *Den grondt der edel vry schilder-const*, 2 vols, edited and commentary by Hessel Miedema. Utrecht: Haentjens Dekker & Gumbert, 1973.
- Ossing, Franz. "Haarlems Wolkenkronen. Zur Meteorologie in Jacob van Ruisdaels Haarlemmpjes." In (Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, (Hg.) "LUFT") *Schriftenreihe Forum* 12, (Bonn 2003): 1–9. https://gfzpublic.gfz-potsdam.de/pubman/item/item_229883_1/component/file_229882/kahruidael.pdf.
- Ossing, Franz. "Realities in the Skies: A Comment on John Walsh's article 'Skies and Reality in Dutch Landscape Painting.'" *GZF Helmholtz-Zentrum Potsdam* (1991): 1–8. <http://bib.gfz-potsdam.de/pub/wegezurkunst/Comment%20on%20Walsh/realities%20in%20the%20skies.pdf>.
- Ossing, Franz and Achim Brauer. "Erfundene Realität: Wetter und Geologie in Jacob van Ruisdaels Gemälde 'Ansicht von Ootmarsum.'" *GFZ Helmholtz-Zentrum Potsdam, Wissenschaftssommer und ESOF, München* (2006): 1–5. http://bib.gfz-potsdam.de/pub/wegezurkunst/ootmarsum/Ootmarsum_D.pdf.
- Reinert, Erik S. "Emulating Success: Contemporary View of the Dutch Economy before 1800." In *The Political Economy of the Dutch Republic*, edited by O. Gelderblom, 19–39. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Rennes, Hans. "Historic Landscapes Without History? A Reconsideration of the Concept of Traditional Landscapes." *Rural Landscapes: Society, Environment History* 2, no.1 (2015): 1–11.
- Slive, Seymour. *Jacob Ruisdael: A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings, Drawings, and Etchings*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Stechow, Wolfgang. *Dutch Landscape Painting of the Seventeenth Century*. New York: Hacker Books, 1980 (first edition, London, 1966).
- Verhoeven, Gerrit. "Aan de rand van Hollands gouwen: Overijssel in de ogen van binnen- en buitenlandse reizigers (16de–19de eeuw)." *Overijsselse Historische Bijdragen* 128 (2013): n.p. [introduction].
- Verhoeven, Gerrit and Mickey Hoyle. "Over de Ijssel: Lang de randen en rafels van Nederland (late zeventiende eeuw)." *Overijsselse Historische Bijdragen* 128 (2013): 7–13.
- Walford, John. *Jacob van Ruisdael and the Perception of Landscape*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Weststeijn, Thijs. *The Visible World, Samuel van Hoogstraten's Art Theory and the Legitimation of Painting in the Dutch Golden Age*. Trans. by Beverly Jackson and Lynne Richards, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008.
- Wunenburger, Jean Jacques. *Philosophie des Images*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997.