

Painters on the Move in Seventeenth-Century Europe

Maarten Prak and Sander Karst

In the early modern period, some artists claimed that they were not ‘mere artisans’.¹ That claim emerged from the observation that art was, ideally, imbued with ideas, and therefore it was fundamentally different from a piece of cloth or a loaf of bread. Artists sometimes refused to be organised into guilds and preferred membership of an ‘academy’. Increasingly, however, art historians and historians of crafts have become aware of the fact that Titian, Rubens and Rembrandt, to whom this argument might apply, were surrounded by significant numbers of painters who lacked the talent or ambition to produce novel or even ‘creative’ work. They were still artisans, though, and the same term might, in the final analysis, even be applied to the Great Masters. Rembrandt was a member of the Amsterdam Guild of St Luke, just like those now-forgotten masters who were also active in the Amsterdam art market but who did not become canonised, either at the time or by later generations.²

Nonetheless, there are two reasons why artists occupy a special place in the history of craft work, and by implication in the role of migration in the world of the crafts. The first is that their products have been signed and preserved. Obviously, not all of them—most paintings have been lost, and probably a majority of the lost paintings was never signed because they had little or no artistic value. Still, enough have been preserved, and enough were signed, to allow us to discuss the role of travelling artists not only in terms of mobility, but also in terms of the products these people made. In other words, the visual arts provide us with a rare opportunity to talk about the role of migrants in changing the nature of the output in their places of destination.

This brings us to the second issue that makes a discussion of travelling artists worthwhile. The arts have often been characterised in terms of geography.³ We talk routinely of ‘Italian’ Renaissance art, or the Northern Renaissance, located

¹ See, for example, Heinrich, *Du peintre à l'artiste*; Ames-Lewis, *The Intellectual Life*; and Smith, *The Northern Renaissance*, ch. 9.

² Sluijter, *Rembrandt's Rivals*. Jager, *The Mass Market*.

³ This paragraph was inspired by Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art*.

in the Low Countries. There was a 'Spanish' and a 'Dutch' Golden Age, both of which had their own artistic features. Although such descriptions were reinforced by the nationalist movements of the nineteenth century, they have a much longer history, going back all the way to antiquity, Ovidius in particular. And they are not completely wrong, because regional variations in painting styles, such as Dutch and French paintings of the seventeenth century, are often easily distinguished, even by the untrained eye. In recent decades, however, we have increasingly become aware that such distinct styles were not necessarily created locally. One of the great painters of the Spanish Golden Age, known by his artist name, El Greco, was a Greek immigrant who had been trained in Venice. The Dutch Golden Age was launched to an important extent by immigrants from Antwerp, who took their pictorial innovations to Holland. As also will be discussed in this chapter, it was often through the interactions between local traditions and international migration that an interesting and economically attractive range of products emerged, which we, with the wisdom of hindsight, now see as 'typical' for certain regions or countries.

In this chapter, we will discuss these stylistic elements, but we want to concentrate on another aspect of the transformation of the visual arts during this period: the emergence of an art market. This phenomenon will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, but in a sentence, it marked a break with a system of exchange where the producer (artist) and his client knew each other, and the client commissioned the painter to produce a specified work for a price that had been agreed in advance. Instead, from the fifteenth century onwards, anonymous markets for paintings emerged in which the producer and the customer were not acquainted. Our question is: did migrant painters create and shape the mass markets for paintings that emerged in north-western Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? To answer this question, we will be looking at Amsterdam and other Dutch towns in the seventeenth century, at London in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and at Paris during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In all three markets, we concentrate on the role of Netherlandish migrant painters; that is, painters who originated from the Habsburg Netherlands or the Dutch Republic. With this, the chapter contributes to the volume's intellectual agenda by investigating not the reasons why artisans chose to leave their places of origin, nor what determined their place of arrival, but how they shaped the markets in those places of arrival, and how in turn their new homes shaped them. Through our comparative analysis, we hope to establish when such migrants were able to change the products in the places they went to, and when they were forced to take over the traditions that they found on arrival. In other words, when were these painters innovators, and when were they adapters?

1 Historical Art Markets and Innovation

According to Samuel van Hoogstraten, in his art theoretical treatise *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst* (*Introduction to the Academy of Painting*), the painters François Knibbergen, Jan Porcellis and Jan van Goyen once decided on a wager about who could paint the best picture in a single day.⁴ The economist-turned-art-historian Michael Montias, who has done much to highlight this aspect of Dutch art of the Golden Age, spelled out some of the implications of this anecdote. In a market where the buyers are unknown to the painter—the normal situation in most markets, but not in the arts—price and brand are the two factors that make a difference. Hence, it makes sense for painters to develop a recognisable style—a style that is, moreover, easy to reproduce, saving time in the process. Other helpful mechanisms are simplification through the use of patterns and other standard elements, as well as the reduction of details, and the limitation of the colour palette.⁵ Knibbergen, Porcellis and Van Goyen no doubt applied several of these to the work they produced to win the bet.

Works of art have been changing hands since they were first produced. In this sense, they have always been commercial products, and by definition art markets have always existed. However, traditionally, most works of art were commissioned by their buyers. What is called ‘patronage’ of the arts creates a very specific type of market, where the price mechanism is severely constrained. In the literature, therefore, the term ‘art market’ is usually reserved for those situations where artists produce ‘on spec’; that is, speculating on demand but without knowing exactly who will be buying their work, while customers, rather than commissioning works of art, will buy ready-made art.⁶ Such markets first emerged in Europe during the Middle Ages in Italy and the Low Countries, Europe’s most urbanised regions, where numerous towns and cities competed with each other. Florence and Bruges are often credited with having had the first such art markets.⁷

Art markets create new challenges for all stakeholders. One important issue is information: where can customers find a painting they might like, and how can they establish its value? In a famous paper from 1970, American economist George Akerlof explained how insecurity about product quality—he used the example of second-hand cars—might ultimately cause the market to

4 Brusati, *Samuel van Hoogstraten's Introduction to the Academy of Painting*, 270–71.

5 Montias, ‘Cost and Value’.

6 See North and Ormrod, ‘Introduction’.

7 De Marchi and Van Miegroet, ‘The History of Art Markets’.

collapse, due to a lack of trust on the demand side in the products offered by the supply side.⁸ One early solution to this problem was the creation of locations where many different works of art were on display, allowing customers to compare both the products and their prices.⁹ In 1460, such a location was created in the grounds of the Church of Our Lady in Antwerp; a similar display area would become available next door to the newly built Antwerp Exchange in 1540.¹⁰ Likewise, in Paris, a lot of artworks were sold from stalls on the Pont Notre-Dame. Some artist guilds would require their members to display works in a guild salesroom. Dealers, with their own premises, would do the same, as would later academies. The emergence of art auctions and exhibitions served a similar purpose.

Emerging mass markets for paintings provided work to a large number of painters who have since been forgotten, because they were not innovative or even interesting—they just made an endless series of mediocre works for customers who could not afford the better, and therefore more expensive, works by Rembrandt and those of his colleagues that we now see in museums. Two independent estimates suggest that, in Holland during the seventeenth century, painters collectively produced several million works—for a population that was only around a million strong.¹¹ These art markets were part of a broader development of consumer culture. There is some debate about whether or not this consumer culture was a development of the seventeenth century, and whether it first happened in Holland. Strong claims have been made for sixteenth-century Antwerp as the cradle of mass markets in paintings, but it could also be argued that Renaissance Italy was actually the first to explore the commercial potential of the mass production of artworks, and mass consumption more generally.¹² Painters from the Southern (or Habsburg) Netherlands, and especially Antwerp, were active in all three markets discussed here—Amsterdam, London and Paris—whilst Italian works of art only reached these markets in very small numbers and Italian painters were rarely active in these three cities.

8 Akerlof, 'The Market for "Lemons"'. For an application to seventeenth-century art markets, see Romein, 'Knollen en citroenen'.

9 Discussed in Prak, 'Painters, Guilds'.

10 Ewing, 'Marketing Art in Antwerp', 558, 579.

11 Van der Woude, 'The Volume and Value of Paintings'. Montias, 'Estimates of the Number of Dutch Master-Painters'.

12 De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution*, ch. 1. Vermeulen, *Painting for the Market*. Blondé and Puttevils, *Antwerp in the Renaissance*. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art*. Jardine, *Worldly Goods*.

Montias assumed that art markets could lead to more excellent painters through sheer numbers. A ‘critical mass’, he argued, was more likely to include exceptionally talented artists. He added that interactions between individual artists and artistic centres could also promote excellence.¹³ These interactions have been given a more sophisticated theoretical twist with the introduction of the concept of ‘clusters’, an idea launched by Alfred Marshall in 1890 and then revived by Michael Porter 100 years later. Allen Scott has pioneered the application of cluster theory to the creative industries.¹⁴ The core idea of a cluster is that significant numbers of practitioners in a certain craft benefit from each other’s proximity by sharing resources, including formal institutions and educational facilities, but also benefit from informal exchanges. In other words, these practitioners are competitors but they also collaborate. Innovation can emerge from this combination of collaboration and competition, but it can be further stimulated by, for example, institutional initiatives. Immigration can be another stimulus, bringing talented outsiders to the cluster, who also bring along new ideas from other cultural contexts.¹⁵

As in other crafts, innovation in the arts usually would be achieved through micro-inventions.¹⁶ These could be novel painting techniques, new materials or new topics. In Holland, for example, a new topic for paintings emerged during the seventeenth century that was known as ‘townscape’. It was essentially a landscape—in itself a novel type developed in Flanders during the sixteenth century—but now moved to an urban setting. In such paintings, people were secondary to the portrayal of a street, a square or even the town’s skyline.¹⁷ Arguably the most famous examples today are Vermeer’s *View of Delft* and the same painter’s *Little Street*, but these were representative of a type of painting produced by other painters all over Holland. On an industry level, painters during the early modern era developed recognisable ‘national’ repertoires, already briefly discussed above: the Dutch school and the French school in the seventeenth century, and an English school during the eighteenth century. Such combinations of style and topic can be seen as collective innovations. They were not inventions of a later period; contemporaries already discussed them and considered such ‘schools’ an important cultural asset.

13 Montias, ‘Cost and Value’, 457–8.

14 Scott, ‘Cultural Economy’.

15 Montias, ‘Cost and Value’, 458. Scott, ‘Cultural Economy’, 123.

16 Davids and De Munck, *Innovation and Creativity*. Also see Silver, *Peasant Scenes*.

17 Van Suchtelen and Wheelock, *Dutch Cityscapes*. On landscape, see Wolf, *Landschaft und Bild*.

2 Migrants and the Rise of the Amsterdam Art Market

In the sixteenth century, Holland, and the Northern Netherlands more generally, were from the point of view of the visual arts a backwater.¹⁸ During the Middle Ages, the Low Countries had emerged as one of Europe's artistic hot-spots, but all the significant developments had been concentrated in the south, in the towns of Flanders and Brabant, where the so-called Northern Renaissance had caught the attention of even the Italians.¹⁹ Netherlandish masters had managed to export some of their works to Italy, a significant achievement because Italy was, and would remain for some time to come, the benchmark of quality in the painting industry.²⁰ As in so many other industries, the Dutch Revolt and more specifically the fall of Antwerp in 1585, would prove to be a turning point.²¹ In the northern provinces, Haarlem and Utrecht had been the traditional art centres. Local artists produced commissioned works for aristocratic and church patrons. From around 1600, a booming art market was to dramatically expand the number of art centres, and increase the volume of paintings even more dramatically.²²

First, let's have a look at the numbers. In Amsterdam, the number of painters per 10,000 inhabitants was 2.9 in 1570, but it rose to 7.1 in 1610. In The Hague, it went from 2.8 to 15.8, in Delft from 2.5 to 11.8, and in Rotterdam from zero to 11.2. Even a traditional centre like Haarlem witnessed significant growth, from 3.3 to 7.8 painters per 10,000 inhabitants. Only Utrecht remained stuck around four. These relative numbers rose despite the very substantial increase in population experienced by all these towns—except Utrecht. Amsterdam, for example, doubled in population between 1580 and 1610, so the absolute number of active painters increased by a factor of five.²³

In Haarlem, Utrecht and The Hague, around 40 per cent of these painters were locals, while the other 60 per cent were migrants, from within and outside the Dutch Republic. In Delft, only 22 per cent had been born locally, and in Amsterdam this applied to a mere 15 per cent. In other words, even in

18 This section relies heavily on Rasterhoff, *Painting and Publishing*.

19 Smith, *The Northern Renaissance*. Nash, *Northern Renaissance Art*.

20 Nuttall, *From Flanders to Florence*.

21 For the Dutch economy in general, see De Vries and Van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*.

22 A richly illustrated introduction to Dutch art from this specific period is provided by this Rijksmuseum exhibition catalogue: Luijten and Van Suchtelen, *Dawn of the Golden Age*. See also Westerman, *The Art of the Dutch Republic*; and North, *Art and Commerce*.

23 Unless stated otherwise, numbers in this and the following paragraphs come from Rasterhoff, *Painting and Publishing*, 173 (table 6.1), 174 (table 6.2), 181 (table 6.3), 217 (table 8.1).

the traditional centres, immigrants were 1.5 times more numerous than local painters, while in the other towns they outnumbered the locals by between four and six to one.²⁴

During this period, Amsterdam emerged as the new economic centre of the Northern Netherlands, but now also as Holland's centre for the production of visual arts. For 125 painters who were active in the city between 1580 and 1610, we know from where they originated. A mere twenty-two were locals and another fourteen came from elsewhere in the Dutch Republic. The great majority, eighty-nine in all, came from abroad, with the Southern Netherlands accounting for eighty. Half the foreign migrant painters originated from Antwerp. After this wave of refugees had subsided, Antwerp continued to exert a strong influence, through the importation of works of art after 1609, when the borders opened as a result of the conclusion of a truce (1609–21).²⁵ However, the Amsterdam market had already been prepared for such imports by the migration of artists from the south.

Between 1610 and 1640, the Dutch art market continued to grow almost as spectacularly as it had done in previous decades. In a way, this was even more remarkable, because by 1610 substantial numbers of painters had already settled in many Holland towns. In Amsterdam, the increase was modest, rising from 7.1 per 10,000 inhabitants to 8.9, though still a 25 per cent increase. Much stronger growth took place in The Hague (increasing from 15.8 to 44.8—almost 300 per cent more), Haarlem (7.8 to 24.2, 350 per cent more) and Utrecht (4.1 to 16.7, a 400 per cent increase).

As we can see from Table 12.1, the Amsterdam market remained dependent on immigrant painters until almost the end of the century. Only in the final decade did local talent outpace the immigrants; this was also the first decade when the number of painters was starting to fall substantially. However, whereas the majority of migrants before 1610 originated from outside the Dutch Republic, increasingly painters moving to Amsterdam were now coming from other Dutch towns, and more specifically from the province of Holland, which was becoming an integrated market for paintings and painters. Rembrandt, who was born and educated in Leiden before moving to Amsterdam in 1632, is an obvious example of this pattern.

In Haarlem, we can observe the same trend. In 1615 and 1625, the number of painters from the south and from Holland were evenly matched, whereas in 1635, the Hollanders outnumbered the immigrants by more than three to one.²⁶

24 See also Vermeylen, 'Greener Pastures?'; and De Clippel and Vermeylen, 'Art on the Move'.

25 Sluijter, 'On Brabant Rubbish'.

26 Goossens, *Schilders en de markt*, 49.

TABLE 12.1 Geographical origins of painters working in Amsterdam, 1580–1699

	Amsterdam		Elsewhere		Unknown	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1580–89	6	12.2	33	67.3	10	20.4
1590–99	12	13.3	68	75.6	10	11.1
1600–09	24	16.4	103	70.3	19	13.0
1610–19	52	24.0	127	58.5	38	17.5
1620–29	101	35.3	139	48.6	46	16.1
1630–39	125	38.6	161	49.7	38	11.7
1640–49	157	37.5	230	54.9	32	7.6
1650–59	190	39.3	262	54.2	31	6.4
1660–69	210	39.4	281	52.7	42	7.9
1670–79	205	43.9	236	50.5	26	5.6
1680–89	204	47.2	205	47.5	23	5.3
1690–99	189	53.7	147	41.8	16	4.5

Note: artists are counted in all the decades they were working in Amsterdam and hence can figure in multiple decades.

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM, 'ECARTICO'.

This trend is even better visible in Delft (see Table 12.2), one of the new centres of painting that would ultimately achieve world fame thanks to Johannes Vermeer. Vermeer was a native, but his maternal and paternal grandfathers had both migrated to Delft from Antwerp in the late sixteenth century. Among artists, this was a common pattern at the time, as the data from the newly created Guild of St Luke demonstrate. In 1613, when the guild was established, the number of foreign immigrants matched that of Delft natives among the painters who joined the guild. All of the foreigners came from the Southern Netherlands, including a group of seven watercolour painters. After 1620, the foreigners almost disappeared, but we see a rapid increase in the number originating from other Holland towns. This reflects the expansion of the art market everywhere in Holland. The Delft numbers confirm the trend we saw in Amsterdam: the rise of the art market also created an inter-urban labour market within Holland.

These patterns of migration and the subsequent emergence of a homegrown class of painters were at the same time the cause and consequence of two other changes. The first was that new social groups were entering the market as customers, as suggested by contemporary observations. 'In the beginning of this century, Holland's walls were not as densely hung with paintings as they are

TABLE 12.2 Origins of painter members of the Delft Guild of St Luke, 1613–79

	Delft	Holland	Dutch Republic	Foreign	Unknown	N =
1613	12	7	1	12	15	47
1613–19	7	3		4	2	16
1620–29	26	2	3	1	1	33
1630–39	11	7	1		3	22
1640–49	17	7			10	34
1650–59	13	4	1		3	21
1660–69	7	2			8	17
1670–79	9	3			4	16

SOURCE: MONTIAS, *ARTISTS AND ARTISANS*.

now', wrote Samuel van Hoogstraten in 1678.²⁷ Foreign travellers were equally impressed by the number of paintings they observed in Dutch homes, as well as by the social scope of art ownership. Balthasar de Monconys from France was astonished to see a Vermeer painting on display in a Delft bakery shop.²⁸ By the early eighteenth century, even the poorest households in Delft routinely owned paintings, usually more than one. Artworks had become a truly popular object, despite the fact that the Delft economy was in freefall at the time.²⁹

The southerners also changed the composition of supply. In the sixteenth century, Antwerp painters had developed a range of new topics, which they now introduced on the Amsterdam market. These topics included landscape, still life, merry companies and village festivals. Landscapes, essentially the promotion of a painting's background to its main subject, would prove to be especially popular in the decades to come. In Amsterdam probate inventories, they made up around 20 per cent of the works with a known subject matter in the second quarter of the century, and 26 per cent in the third quarter.³⁰ Still life originated as flower pieces, expensive arrangements of spectacular and exotic flowers, such as the newly discovered tulips. In Amsterdam, the range of topics was subsequently widened to hard cheeses and glasses of wine and beer. Merry

27 As translated in Brusati, *Samuel van Hoogstraten's Introduction to the Academy of Painting*, 270.

28 Blankert, Montias and Aillaud, *Vermeer*, 211.

29 Wijnsbeek, *Achter de gevels van Delft*, 208.

30 Montias, 'Works of Art', 350–1.

companies and village festivals both displayed groups of people celebrating with music, dance and food—in the former, the company consisted of upper-class youngsters, and in the latter they were farmers. In Antwerp, Pieter Bruegel had pioneered several of these topics in the mid-sixteenth century, but now his pupils, imitators and successors brought them to the north.³¹

Institutionally, these changes were accompanied and supported by a resurgence of the guilds of St Luke that brought together various types of artists.³² In 1579, the painters of Amsterdam established their own guild, and in 1585 the same thing happened in Middelburg, where many painters from Antwerp had settled. In 1609, painters' guilds appeared in Gouda and Rotterdam, and in 1611 also arose in Delft; in the latter year, the painters' guild in Utrecht received a new set of regulations. All of these guilds were trying to come to grips with the emerging art market—in the Utrecht regulations, eight of its twenty-eight rules were devoted to this topic.³³ Joining a guild was compulsory for all masters, but migrant painters could do so on terms that were very similar to those that applied to locals. As guild members, they could accept apprentices who would be fully licensed if they completed the course.³⁴ In the absence of a royal patron, no national academy of painting was created in the Dutch Republic, as would happen in France in the seventeenth century and in England during the eighteenth century.³⁵

Around 1600, therefore, a mass market for paintings started to emerge in Amsterdam. This market was underpinned by rising incomes, but the most important element in the dynamic was the immigration of both producers and customers.³⁶ A large number of immigrants from Antwerp and its hinterland came to Amsterdam in the decades after 1585, after Antwerp had already pioneered the mass production and consumption of paintings during the earlier sixteenth century, its Golden Age. These migrants also introduced new topics for paintings, thus transforming the art market in quantitative and qualitative ways. In the next generation, the dynamic was taken over by painters who had been educated locally; that is, in Amsterdam itself as well as in other Holland towns. Instead of a receptacle for migrant painters, Amsterdam and the rest of Holland became a source of export, of paintings as well as painters. All of these

31 Silver, *Peasant Scenes*.

32 Survey in Hoogewerff, *De geschiedenis van de St. Lucasgilden*. See also Prak, 'Painters, Guilds'.

33 Prak, 'Painters, Guilds', 152–3. See also Taverne, 'Salomon de Bray'.

34 On these apprenticeships, see Bok, "Nulla dies sine linie". See also Prak, 'Painters, Guilds', 154–8.

35 Miedema, 'Kunstschilders, gilde en academie'.

36 Bok, 'The Rise of Amsterdam'.

developments cumulated in the emergence of a Holland school of painting in the first half of the seventeenth century.³⁷

3 Painters from the Low Countries in Seventeenth-Century London

In sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England, the visual arts were remarkably underdeveloped. Whereas most continental countries boasted significant indigenous visual traditions, the English only had their 'limners'—painters of finely detailed miniature works. Nicholas Hilliard was their best-known representative. For portraits and other large-format works, the English were dependent on artists educated on the Continent. The most important among these was, of course, Anthony (originally Antoon) Van Dyck, Rubens's most talented pupil. Van Dyck single-handedly created a new style of portraiture in which the sitter was rendered in quick brushstrokes, suggesting movement and, by implication, life. The English upper classes who were Van Dyck's customers, not least his patron Charles I, loved it and made Van Dyck a wealthy man.³⁸

Van Dyck, however, had other ambitions. He hoped to establish a reputation as a history painter, like Rubens before him. Unfortunately, in general English customers had very little understanding of art and thus no heart for 'high art' such as 'history painting'; they wanted more portraits. On top of that, the small circle of collectors at the court of Charles I who did have a solid understanding of art were mainly interested in collecting the works of Italian old masters. Conditions did anything but improve with the collapse of the court in the 1640s. The absence of an 'educated taste' among the English patrons of the arts was of some concern to contemporaries, who observed that civilised countries used to collect and produce significant works of art. Van Dyck was a product of the Low Countries art world, and after his death in 1641 he was immediately succeeded as England's most popular portraitist by a painter with a similar background. Peter Lely had been born in Germany to a family of Dutch civil servants. He took his apprenticeship in Haarlem, one of the foremost centres of painting in Holland. Lely was not an innovator, like Van Dyck had been, and not quite as talented either. He rather followed in Van Dyck's footsteps, but that sufficed to give him a great reputation among contemporaries, at least

37 The best survey is Haak, *The Golden Age*.

38 Brown and Vlieghe, *Van Dyck*.

in England, where he would spend the rest of his life and where he received a knighthood in 1679.³⁹

Nominally, the London art world was overseen by a local guild called the Painter Stainers Company. It had been formally incorporated in 1581, but painters had been organised since the late thirteenth century.⁴⁰ In the absence of an indigenous tradition in the visual arts, the Painter Stainers Company's membership was heavily concentrated in house-painting. In the arts, it provided very little competition to the migrants who, moreover, enjoyed the patronage of the high and mighty. With very few indigenous artists, the Painter Stainers Company was not offering an arts education either. The English art market therefore had to rely on the importation of skills, and the Low Countries were the main supplier of those skills.⁴¹

David Ormrod has traced the size of the artist community of London and demonstrated how it declined under James I (reigned 1603–25) from an estimated thirty artists to perhaps half that number. This included not only painters but also furniture-makers, architects and sculptors, as well as gold- and silversmiths producing creative work. During the reign of Charles I (1625–49) the arts became fashionable again and the artist community expanded to well over fifty. The English Civil War was a dismal blow to the community of artists, which almost completely disappeared, but the Restoration restored the fortunes of the arts and the community of artists would remain above fifty for the rest of the century.⁴²

We should beware of taking these numbers at face value because they come from a limited number of sources, but nonetheless they tell us two things. First, even at its zenith, the community of artists in London seems to have been small compared with those of Amsterdam and Paris. Second, a remarkable percentage of this community were immigrants. Across the whole of the seventeenth century, only around half the artists were born in England. Among the immigrant artists, moreover, the Low Countries supplied by far the largest share—after the 1660 Restoration, there were almost as many as the English artists.⁴³ The dominance of Netherlandish artists is confirmed by the contents of art sales catalogues from the 1680s and 1690s. In a representative subset of ten such catalogues, 40 per cent of the paintings are attributed to a

39 Millar, *Sir Peter Lely*.

40 Englefield, *The History of the Painter-Stainers Company*. Borg, *The History of the Worshipful Company*.

41 Ormrod, 'Cultural Production'.

42 *Ibid.*, 216 (graph 10.1).

43 *Ibid.*, 217 (graph 10.2).

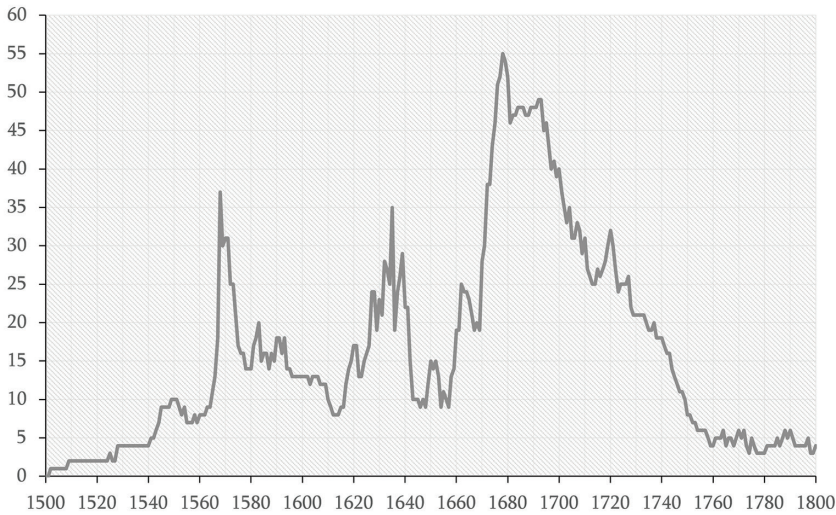


FIGURE 12.1 Number of painters from the Low Countries working in Britain, per year, 1500–1800
SOURCES: RKDARTISTS, WITH ADDITIONS FROM OTHER SOURCES BY SANDER KARST

painter by name. Half of these had been produced by living artists from the Low Countries working in London: 48 per cent were Dutch and another 5 per cent were Flemish. Other immigrant artists accounted for another 5 per cent, and British artists similarly for 5 per cent. On top of that, another 8 per cent of the paintings had been produced by artists who had been working in London but who were deceased by the time of auction.⁴⁴

Ormrod's chronology is confirmed by another, more recently compiled dataset containing only painters from the Low Countries (See Figure 12.1.). Strikingly, the number of painters in this dataset comes close to Ormrod's total of all artists, independent of their origin, across all art forms.

In the sixteenth century, substantial numbers of Netherlandish artists had already crossed the North Sea. In 1568, shortly after the start of the Dutch Revolt, no fewer than thirty-seven painters were recorded in London, but this spike was short-lived. After the Fall of Antwerp, in 1585, another refugee crisis erupted in the Southern Netherlands, but this time a large number decided to go to the rebel territories in the north, rather than to London. However, the political stabilisation under the early Stuart monarchs created a new demand at court for continental-style paintings that could not be produced locally. Migrant painters from the Low Countries once again filled the gap.⁴⁵

44 Karst, 'Off to a New Cockaigne', 34. Karst, *Schilderen in een land zonder schilders*, 86–7.

45 For this and the information in the following paragraphs, see Karst, *Schilderen in een land*.

The Restoration, as stated, would prove a genuine turning point. In the first place, the Restoration brought the royal family back to London, and with them the court and its conspicuous consumption. Lely was embraced as the foremost living painter in England, and he was given a £200 annual pension by Charles II. Second, the Great Fire of London in 1666 and the subsequent rebuilding campaign created a strong demand for newly-produced artworks. And third, the Holland art market began to stagnate around the same time, limiting the opportunities for local painters; England was beckoning. Fourth, moreover, the English economy was starting on a trajectory of vigorous growth. According to the most recent estimates, real income per capita increased by some 40 per cent during the second half of the seventeenth century, unleashing the sort of spending power that had helped launch the Dutch art market around 1600.⁴⁶

The absence of a strong indigenous group of visual artists also made it easier for London art dealers to introduce auctions as a sales channel. In Holland, these had been contentious because they were perceived as undercutting the sales monopoly of local Guilds of St Luke. In the absence of such established opposition, art auctions could proliferate very quickly in London during the 1690s. This can be seen from the number of sales catalogues, but also from newspaper advertisements. From a handful per annum in the 1670s and 1680s, the number of these catalogues exploded to several dozen in the first half of the 1690s, before returning to around ten from 1696. The spike in the announcement of auctions suggests that, all of a sudden, the market was coming into its own, and had become established and routinised within a few years.

A set of 132 auction catalogues permits the identification of the thirty Dutch artists who were represented with multiple paintings in the auctions. One of the best-known was Godfried Schalcken, who worked in London for five years from c.1692 before returning to the Dutch Republic, where he spent the last ten years of his life. Four of Schalcken's works were sold through auction. Given his standing as a prominent painter, mingling in court circles, we can safely assume that he used other channels to reach his audience. At the other end of the quality distribution was Egbert van Heemskerck II, who arrived in London c.1680 and stayed there until his death in 1704. A whopping 883 works attributed to Heemskerck were auctioned in London. The painters mentioned between 200 and 300 times in the auction catalogues were Abraham Hondius (hunting scenes); Leendert Knijff (landscape, still life); Willem van de Velde the Younger (seascapes, naval battles); Adriaen van Diest (seascapes); Simon, Cornelis and

⁴⁶ Broadberry et al., *British Economic Growth*, 205.

Willem Verelst (flower still lives); and Willem de Ryck (history and genre paintings). With the exception of the latter, they had all been apprenticed in Holland. The London market preceded a similar change in other regions. In Kent households, the number of paintings increased dramatically during the 1720s and 1730s.⁴⁷

One striking aspect is that many of the migrant painters who travelled to London had either been educated or otherwise worked for a time in The Hague. The Hague was not the Dutch Republic's capital, because the country had none, but it was the seat of government and hence the residence of foreign diplomats. Moreover, it was also the location of the court of the Orange stadtholders, who were the country's informal heads of state, as well as its commanders in chief. The latter position implied that the court attracted army officers, who were often foreigners of noble descent. The art world of The Hague was therefore catering to an aristocratic taste that was much less in evidence in most other Dutch centres of the arts, with the possible exception of Utrecht.⁴⁸ The Hague may have been an outlier in the Dutch art world, but it made for a neat fit with the English situation.

The preferred subjects of the painters who were popular in England exemplify how no particular type of painting dominated the London auction market. On the one hand, this shows that the burgeoning market was absorbing a wide variety of works—exactly as had happened in Holland in the early seventeenth century. On the other hand, we are likely to be misled by the nature of the source material. We know from other sources how Dutch painters in London maintained a lively business copying or imitating the works of better-known colleagues. Simon Dubois, from Haarlem, was 'a great mimick of Italian masters', and he boasted that he never sold works under his own name because 'the world would not do him justice in the value of his performances if they were done by him'.⁴⁹ He therefore sold his works either anonymously, or under the name of his examples. From other sources, we know there was also a substantial demand for commissioned works, especially portraits but also pictures capturing the country estate, or even the horses and hounds, of the patron. Such pictures were unlikely to be auctioned off, but they kept many immigrant painters in business. Portraits—of people, homes and pets—were for a long time the preferred types of painting in London, and immigrant painters had to adapt to these English tastes. Only with the emergence of a genuine

47 Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, 111–13.

48 De Bièvre, *Dutch Art*, chs. 1, 7. Buijsen, *Haagse schilders*.

49 As quoted in Karst, 'Off to a New Cockaigne', 57.

market, during the 1690s, do we see an increasing demand for other types of art, and hence new opportunities.

The emergence of an art market in turn stimulated the rise of an indigenous school of painting. This, however, took a long time to emerge—remarkably long, in fact, because there were deliberate attempts in England to stimulate various crafts in order to create economic growth. During the 1660s, the recently established Royal Society launched its so-called History of Trades program. The idea was to collect practical knowledge about the production of various industrial goods, knowledge that would be harvested from practitioners as well as books and digested into manuals for future generations.⁵⁰ Paintings were one of the products selected for such an investigation, and Sir Peter Lely, England's foremost painter at the time, was interviewed for this purpose. However, nothing happened.⁵¹

Besides the fact that the committee from the Royal Society never produced its final report, the most likely culprit was probably the legally ambiguous position of migrant artists in London. To become a member of the Painter Stainers Company, migrant painters would either have to fork out substantial amounts of money (in the order of a year's wages) or complete another apprenticeship. The latter option was a non-starter, because the company had no members who might teach painting skills. Instead, it allowed foreigners to work in London in return for a relatively modest annual contribution, as 'foreign brothers'.⁵² But this did not necessarily help in cultivating locally trained talent, for these 'foreign brothers' were not allowed to register apprentices.⁵³ British youngsters who wished to tap into the emerging market and learn the trade from one of the many migrants in London had to arrange this independently of the guild, something that happened more and more frequently by the end of the seventeenth century as the influence of the guild waned. Important steps in the direction of non-guild-based art education were the drawing academies founded in London. One of the earliest known was led by the aforementioned Peter Lely. The first academy of which membership lists and regulations have been preserved is the so-called Great Queen Street Academy, founded in 1711 by another immigrant, Godfrey Kneller.⁵⁴

Kneller had been born in Lübeck, Germany, in 1646, as Gottfried Kniller. He was educated in Amsterdam by Rembrandt and Rembrandt's pupil Ferdinand

50 Ochs, 'The Royal Society'.

51 Karst, *Schilderen in een land zonder schilders?*, 163–67.

52 *Ibid.*, 173–75, 181, 270 n126.

53 *Ibid.*, 181.

54 For the two academies mentioned, see Bignamini, 'George Vertue', 61–82.

Bol, before moving in 1674 to London, where he became the official court painter in 1689, after Lely's death. Private academies, such as those led by Lely and Kneller, offered young artists additional training and at the same time provided a platform for discussion and promotion of the visual arts in England. The formation of these societies was an important step towards the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768.

Contemporary authors agreed that, around 1600, England had no indigenous school of painters and also lacked an appetite for paintings. During much of the seventeenth century, what demand there was for paintings was met mostly by immigrant painters, who overwhelmingly originated from the Low Countries. By the late seventeenth century, a mass market for paintings emerged in London, fuelled by the rising prosperity of the English middle classes. Initially, this demand, too, was met, and shaped, by immigrant painters. In the course of the eighteenth century, however, a supply of indigenous artists came on stream, supported by new institutions for the promotion of, and education in, the arts.

4 Painters from the Low Countries in Seventeenth-Century Paris

As a capital city, and one of Europe's largest urban centres to boot, seventeenth-century Paris almost inevitably was an important centre for the arts. It boasted, moreover, an indigenous school of painting, spearheaded by the internationally renowned Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain, both of whom worked in the great tradition of 'history' paintings. Also, the Painters' Guild had received its statutes in the city in 1391, and by the seventeenth century, a tried-and-tested system of apprenticeship was in place. Of the apprentices, 62 per cent were recruited in the city and another 7 per cent came from the region around Paris. Apart from the nobility, all social classes produced painters, but half of all Parisian apprentice painters were recruited among the shopkeepers and artisans. After apprenticeship, there followed a compulsory period of *compagnonnage*, in which the painter would gain additional experience, possibly by also travelling to other towns and cities, including those of Italy.⁵⁵

Halfway through the seventeenth century, in 1648, the Paris art world received an important boost with the establishment of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture. The academy was an elite society whose primary aim was to ensure that the court would be supplied with works from certified

55 Richefort, *Peindre à Paris*.

painters. In 1661 it was installed in the Palais Brion, which was part of the royal palace. Its most important activity was the education of excellent painters. This consisted not so much of practical training because pupils had to demonstrate their skills, which they had picked up in apprenticeships outside the academy, before they were accepted. The academy's lectures were mostly theoretical, although students also were encouraged to copy the paintings and sculptures on display on the premises. On top of that, academy members might offer further practical training in their own workshops. From the beginning, the academy awarded several prizes to young talents in another bid to improve the quality of artworks. It also stimulated the art market by organising exhibitions: in 1667, 1669, 1671 and 1673. From 1737, the annual salons, with selective participation, gave the public even greater access to works of art that carried the academy's seal of approval.⁵⁶

Other painters would be registered as masters in the Guild of St Luke (*Communauté des peintres et sculpteurs*), because to sell works of art to ordinary clients in Paris, guild membership was a requirement. The guild's relationship with the academy was one of partnership and competition, often at the same time. From the academy's launch in 1648, its members had been forbidden to run a shop or display a sign in the street to alert the public to their presence. The resulting constraint on commercial activities was an important reason for a merger with the guild in 1651, reducing the academy to a separate section within the guild. This collaboration, however, collapsed after only four years.⁵⁷ The guild would set up its own Académie de St. Luc in 1723.⁵⁸ This happened in obvious rivalry with the more prestigious academy, but it was also part of that Europe-wide debate about the status of the artist.⁵⁹ The original academy had been founded with this claim of more-than-craft in mind, and now the guild masters were staking the same claim.

It is difficult to assess the size of the painting industry in seventeenth-century Paris. Antoine Schnapper published a list of over 2500 painters who were active between 1600 and 1715, but this is a comprehensive survey of everyone ever mentioned in relation to painting, rather than a reliable number of the group who painted for a living.⁶⁰ We also know that, in 1764, the Paris guild

56 Michel, *The Académie Royale*, 243, 288, 300–7.

57 *Ibid.*, 18–19, 112.

58 Guichard, 'Arts libéraux et arts libres', 57, 60.

59 Scott, 'Hierarchy, Liberty and Order'.

60 Schnapper, 'Répertoire de peintres actifs'. See also Schnapper, *Le métier de peintre au Grand Siècle*. Another count for the seventeenth century, by Passeron and quoted in Heinich, *Du peintre à l'artiste*, 40, lists 1803 painters, a quarter of these being rather painter-sculptors, painter-goldsmiths, painter-engravers and so on.

of St. Luke had 687 members listed as painters. However, an *Almanach historique ... des architectes, peintres (etc.)* from 1776 only mentions 165 active guild masters working as painters. Another fifty-five painters were members of the academy in 1764, while in 1776, seventy-nine academy members were living in Paris. An unknown number of painters worked outside the corporate framework. Calculated per 10,000 inhabitants, and using the higher numbers from 1764, the number of painters comes to 11.9, still significantly below the ratios reached in Holland towns in the first half of the seventeenth century.⁶¹

Nonetheless, Paris had a substantial community of painters in the second half of the seventeenth century, and certainly in the eighteenth century. This contrasted with the sixteenth century, when there were perhaps a couple of dozen painters active in the French capital, despite its already substantial population of between 100,000 and 200,000. It seems that the most significant increase happened halfway through the seventeenth century.⁶² By the second half of the eighteenth century, but possibly much earlier, substantial numbers of paintings were being traded in Paris through auction sales, again suggesting a significant art market.⁶³

Many Parisian painters worked on commission. That is, they knew, before putting a brush to canvas, who would be buying the results of their efforts and what the customer desired.⁶⁴ However, paintings were also sold in Paris during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that had been imported from the Low Countries.⁶⁵ Dealers from Antwerp had an important foothold in Paris, where they sold many of their products through the St Germain fairs, and on the Pont Notre-Dame. Increasingly, they were accompanied by painters, who helped supply the dealers' customers with work that was produced locally but in the visual traditions of the Low Countries. The presence of painters from the Low Countries accelerated in the 1620s and 1630s due to changes in marketing techniques.⁶⁶ This is confirmed by the list of founding members of the Académie Royale in 1648. Among the two sculptors and twenty-two painters who initiated the academy, thirteen came from Paris and six from the

61 Tauziède Espariat, 'Peintres et sculpteurs', 46 (n. 44, 45). Williams, 'Artists and the City', 119, 123.

62 Szanto, 'The Pont de Notre-Dame', 86–7.

63 Guichard, 'Small Worlds'.

64 Richefort, *Peintre à Paris*, ch. IV.

65 The rest of this section relies mostly on Levert, 'Étrangers'.

66 Szanto, 'Antwerp and the Paris Art Market'. See also Szanto, 'The Pont de Notre-Dame'.

French provinces. The five who originated from abroad all came from the Low Countries: three from Antwerp, one from Liège and one from Leyden.⁶⁷

While painters from the Southern Netherlands had been predominant among the immigrant painters during the sixteenth century, the emergence of a Holland school of painting brought increasing numbers from the Northern Netherlands to Paris (see Table 12.3). From 1610, we see the emergence of the Dutch Republic as a source of painterly skills in Paris. Haarlem, an old centre, was still particularly significant for the training of migrant painters. The southern centres remained active far into the seventeenth century, but were gradually overtaken, in sheer numbers, by painters of northern origin. What seems most significant here, however, is that the number of migrant painters in Paris started to decline when efforts to raise the quality of local training were intensified with the establishment of the Académie Royale. In other words, the institutional reforms created a larger, and presumably better, supply of local artists, reducing the demand for foreign artists. If we accept as correct Schnapper's number for the total population of painters during the seventeenth century, the immigrants from the Low Countries constituted around 10 per cent of the painting industry's workforce.

TABLE 12.3 Painters from the Low Countries active in Paris, 1550–1700, according to their geographical origins

	Southern Netherlands	Northern Netherlands	N =
<1610	31	13	44
1610–29	24	25	49
1630–49	25	18	43
1650–69	17	22	39
>1669	9	20	29
Total	106	98	

Note: The year of arrival has been set at twenty-five years of age, which was the median age of arrival.⁶⁸

SOURCE: LEVERT, 'ÉTRANGERS', 307–15.

The turning point coincided with the rise of a French school of painting in the second half of the seventeenth century, which was dominated by the 'history' topics propagated by the academy. Its most important foreign influence

67 Heinich, *Du peintre à l'artiste*, 240.

68 See Levert, 'Étrangers', 17.

was, and continued to be, Italy. Painters from the north had an impact on niche subjects, especially still life.⁶⁹

Paris was a centre of painting during the seventeenth century, and it was in the second half of the century that a mass market for paintings emerged. Numerical indicators suggest that the Paris market did not reach the same size and depth as that in Holland, however. Paintings were still rare in Parisian homes, even in the eighteenth century; tastes were dictated by the court. Painters from the Low Countries were able to cater to that taste, but not to change it. Hence, their impact was limited, both in terms of numbers and in terms of product characteristics.

5 Conclusion

In 1678, shortly before his death, Samuel van Hoogstraten published his art-theoretical treatise, *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst (Introduction to the Academy of Painting)*. Although Van Hoogstraten in his treatise praises the artistic output in the Dutch Republic and the various talented history painters it had brought forth, he also expresses his admiration for the merits of the academy in Paris.⁷⁰ It could even be argued that his book was, in fact, a substitute academy.⁷¹ In 1716, Dudley Ryder, a British art lover, staked the claim that James Thornhill's work inside the cupola of St Paul's cathedral, which he clearly admired, would allow the British 'to vie ... with Paris for history painting which we have been so deficient in before'.⁷² These two examples demonstrate how artists and art lovers in Europe looked across borders to assess the quality of artworks internationally. The movement of artists was partly motivated by such high-minded concerns, but at the same time also by the material issue of business opportunities. Whatever motives they had, the decision to move potentially had a substantial effect on the arts in the cities where migrant painters settled down. If and how that happened is the question we have been trying to answer in this chapter.

During the seventeenth century, mass markets for paintings emerged in Amsterdam, Paris and London. The changes in Amsterdam and London took place during the decades, in the early and late seventeenth century respectively, when these cities were experiencing an acceleration of their economies

69 Allen, *French Painting*, ch. 2, 152.

70 Brusati, *Samuel van Hoogstraten's Introduction to the Academy of Painting*, 289, 353.

71 Weststeijn, *The Visible World*, 41.

72 Ryder, *The Diary of Dudley Ryder*, 307.

and simultaneous political upheavals.⁷³ It is not the purpose of this chapter to speculate about the chain of causality. We can observe, however, how migrant artists played a pivotal role in these transformations. In Holland, the sudden influx of refugees from the Southern Netherlands, and Antwerp in particular, created a sophisticated demand for works of art. Such a mass market for paintings had already emerged in Antwerp during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and for Amsterdam this created a supply of new products as well as skilled workers who knew how to make them. The initial wave of migrants gave way to a generation of homegrown painters, who continued in the same vein but also added their own inventions to help a further expansion of the market. We can observe the same processes on the supply side in London during the final decades of the century, when painters from Holland, where the market was becoming much less dynamic, made their way across the North Sea. They helped create a mass market for paintings while at the same time laying the foundations for the emergence of a homegrown school of painters in the eighteenth century, not unlike the role of French and Flemish migrants in the London porcelain industry during the middle decades of the eighteenth century (see Matthew Martin's chapter in this volume). The arrival of migrants engendered in both cities two types of innovations: fundamental changes in the marketing of art, as well as in the nature of the product.

This influx of migrant artists had an immediate impact in Holland, where a local school of painting emerged very rapidly. In London, on the other hand, such consequences took much longer to become evident. The best explanation for this seems to be the institutional arrangements that were available locally. In Amsterdam, and in other Holland towns, painters' guilds absorbed newcomers and allowed them to start training apprentices in their workshops in the same way that foreign furniture-makers in Paris shared their skills with French apprentices (see Chapter 6 in this volume, by David Garrioch). These apprentices would not only become skilled in the art of painting, they would also be licensed to practise their craft. In London, the Painter Stainers Company did not accept migrant painters as members, although they tolerated their presence. At least some of the migrant painters are known to have educated local painters, but these apprenticeships—if that is what that training amounted to—could not provide a licence to practise the craft independently. It took several decades for skills to transfer to local artists, and an English school of painting only emerged well into the eighteenth century.

73 Cf. O'Brien, 'Reflections and Meditations', 15–16.

Paris provides an interesting variation. In the first place, it had an indigenous tradition, connected to patronage of the arts by the royal court and the nobility. In the second place, it had been well served by imports from the Southern Netherlands. In terms of population, there was potential demand in Paris, too. The city's population grew as rapidly as those of Amsterdam and London during the key decades.⁷⁴ Crucially, however, it was an institutional intervention that created a new dynamic: the launch of the académie in 1648. This not only set new standards for painting, and offered the training opportunities to achieve them, but it also created a rivalry with the guild masters. In this process, immigrant artists, mainly from the Low Countries, were participants, but not leaders, as they had been in Amsterdam and would be in London. As a result, innovation in the Parisian painting industry was, and remained, mainly homegrown, with relatively little impact from immigrants.

Migration was an element in the painting industries of all three cities. But how significant it could be very much depended on the circumstances prevailing in the places where these migrant painters settled down. We have identified, as does Nieto Sánchez in his chapter, the organisation of training, and the access to training facilities, as crucial variables for that impact.⁷⁵

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74 See data in De Vries, *European Urbanization*, 270, 271, 275.

75 More on this topic can be found in Prak and Wallis, *Apprenticeship in Early Modern Europe*, with chapters on Holland (Schalk), England (Wallis) and France (Crowston and Lemercier). See also Nieto Sánchez's chapter in this volume.

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