



Damrak 69, Amsterdam in 1912

# Douwes Fine Art

since 1805

Europe's oldest single-family art gallery  
celebrates its 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



'St. Luke', Antwerp School, c. 1540



The Douwes tradition began with a restoration workshop already in the 1760's! The second half of the 18th century saw the emergence of a rather fashionable Amsterdam and the Douwes forebears tried to meet the desire of those who wanted the beautiful ceilings of their imposing canal houses painted and restored. To this day the firm remains in the same family and has been passed on from father to son for many generations. The present owners of Douwes Fine Art are in effect the seventh and eighth generation. However, according to the official regulations of the St.Lucas guild, abolished shortly after 1808, they prefer to start counting from their entry as an independently registered business on September 5th, 1805. Now in its sixth generation of art dealing and restoring since then, this prestigious art gallery is the oldest of its kind in The Netherlands, and in Europe.

Whoever speaks to Evert Douwes Sr. and Jr. about two hundred years of Douwes Fine Art, is impressed by their passion for art and by their knowledge. Two ingredients that have been providing a rich and wide-ranging life for generations. Wide-ranging, because Douwes is so much more than painting. There is and was calligraphy, topography, writing about history, documenting, restoring, and.... the selling of works of art. But Europe's oldest family art gallery cannot be resting on its laurels. On the contrary, the art market of 2005 is complicated, and has been changing too much.

This did not worry **Hendrik Douwes**, when in 1805 he decided to officially register his own business. Hendrik was the son of a shipwright and restorer called Evert, and the third of seven children. He married Maria de Ruijter, and together they had two children. Of these two, the boy was once again called Evert.

The enterprising twenty-year old signed the 'burgher oath' ('poorter eed') allowing him to set himself up independently and join the artists guild St.Lucas. And an artist and craftsman he was at that time. He practiced crafts that ranged from the painting of theatre decors and boats to the gilding and bronzing of picture frames. The Amsterdam of 1805 was busy developing scientific knowledge and the resulting first tentative technologies.



Many societies began to emerge to exchange that knowledge and experience. They had ringing names such as “*Vlijt is de Voedster der Wetenschappen*” (“Diligence is the foster mother of the Sciences”). Best-known society was “*Felix Meritis*”, which aimed at the promotion of the arts and the sciences. Hendrik must have spent many an interesting evening in the well-known building on the Keizersgracht, and will also certainly have made friends with future customers. The society became a beacon of the new times that were slowly evolving from the traditional into the industrial. Hendrik himself was still working in a purely traditional way, but was also in the meantime cautiously orientating himself towards the art of painting itself, and occasionally canvases of artist friends decorated his walls.

All his amassed knowledge was handed down to **his son Evert** (1809–1869), who followed the road taken by his father, but also expanded the firm. In 1835, he married the Roman Catholic Hendrina Sluyter, and together they had no less than nine children. The family lived over the workshop on the N.Z. Achterburgwal, the present Spuistraat. A frame-making department was added. From the old records, we can infer that a gilded gold leaf frame cost 80 guilders. At present, this would have amounted to 6000 Euros.

Led by Evert’s energetic sons, **Evert** (1843-1896) and **Henri** (1850-1938), it became business in earnest. Aged 26 and 19, they changed the company’s name into “*Gebroeders Douwes*” (“Douwes Brothers”), consisting of an art gallery, a frame-making department, and a restoration workshop, all situated at the Grimburgwal nr.15, in Amsterdam. Henri became a genuine “Amsterdam expert”, and expert in topographic maps of Amsterdam, prints, and contemporary art.

He was married to Francisca M. Engelkamp, and together they had four daughters, and a son Evert Josephus Maria.

The restoration workshop became an even more important part of the art gallery, and throughout those two centuries it remained a thread running through the firm’s history. The well-known restorer and painter of landscapes W.J.Walter became Henri’s tutor. Among other things, he taught him the art of relining. The present Evert Jr. (1953): “My great-grandfather had that drive to want to perfectly master the art of restoring. You can imagine that as a restorer you are also a bit of an artist. What was it the painter intended to convey, what techniques were used? You try to get under the artist’s skin in order to preserve as much as possible of the authenticity of the piece.” Henri’s striking facial features betray his being more of an artist than a dealer. That the business survived at all, was because of his wife, for Henri – called “Paatje Douwes” (“Daddy Douwes”) by the family – often gave customer friends an etching or other work to take home “and see how it looks”. His wife saw to it that it would indeed be paid for.



Evert IV and Hendrina Douwes-Sluyter



Evert V

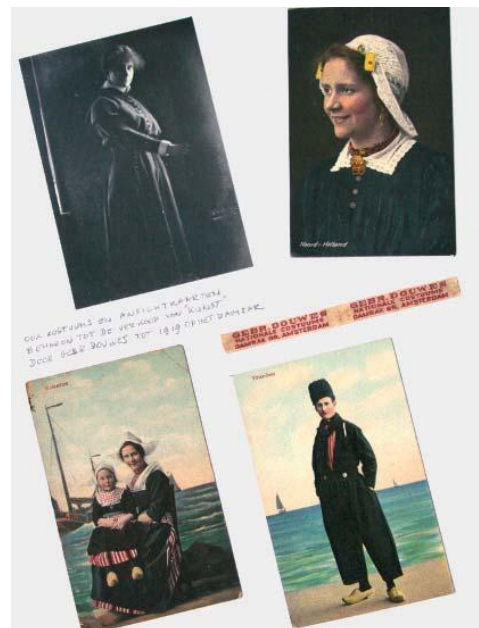


Francisca and Henri Douwes-Engelkamp





Print from our glass negative, c. 1900



Postcards in traditional costumes, c. 1900



Cornelis Vreedenburg



After 1880, photography started to play a significant role in the life of the Douwes brothers. Henri (brother Evert had died in 1896 at the age of 50) was a passionate photographer who, just as his contemporaries Jacob Olie and George Breitner, roamed the town in order to capture the images of Amsterdam. Modern times demanded alterations to be made in the town. Canals were filled, streets widened, and offices built. Photography made it possible to preserve the old and the new town views. The latter can be observed in the watercolour “Horses and the building of Houses” by Breitner, which even in 1923 fetched 1375 guilders. Collecting and trading photographic town views and glass plate negatives became an integral part of the firm.

The 1885 opening of the Central Station gave an impulse to tourism. (Right from the opening of the railway track, Henri had been commuting from Bussum to Amsterdam, and in 1935 was honoured by the Railways as their oldest customer). Henri Douwes responded to tourism by selling brownish picture postcards to the day-trippers for a tiny amount. Americans also started to visit the gallery and bought the entire supply of “Dam-views”. Because of their move to the Damrak in about 1901/1902, where dealing in paintings was starting to become more and more dominant, 28 handcars of prints were auctioned off. But his passion for Amsterdam prints had not cooled. At auctions, Henri was playfully called the “glutton”.

Tourists could even have their pictures taken in traditional costumes. Evert Douwes Sr. (1928) now still remembers costumed dolls in the gallery window. His father and aunt had served as models for the camera, dressed in Volendam or Marken costumes. As a matter of fact, these fishing villages with their populations dressed in traditional costumes were an additional favourite tourist destination.

The Dutch town view was an important subject in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the time of Romanticism. Painters such as Springer, Vertin, and Adrianus Eversen were wandering artists that have recorded and visualised many such a town view. They will undoubtedly have submitted their canvases and panels to Henri, which, after being taken there by handcart, will have graced the walls of the gallery. Henri either bought them or held them on consignment.

A prominent artist was Klinkenberg. His town views were very clear and lively. To try and sell Johannes’s latest works, he did the rounds using his carrier cycle. At that time, 800 guilders would already have to be paid for his art. Douwes Sr.: “When in 1928 his studio was auctioned off, my father bought a 17<sup>th</sup> century four-door Dutch cabinet, which is now at my son’s.” From 1905 onwards, the works of art that were traded, were photographed. That is how we know that Henri regularly acquired Amsterdam town views and South Holland landscapes from painters like Cornelis Vreedenburg. Or from

lesser-known masters such as Van Prooyen and Rijkelijhuizen. They were bought by passing tourists or art-loving brokers working at the nearby Stock Exchange, who Henri met on his daily train runs. They became good customers.

**Amsterdam and its history were Henri's passion.** He made pictures, collected and traded old town maps, painted town views, and knew everyone that occupied himself in an artistic and historical manner with Amsterdam. In the meantime, his restoration workshop had moved to new premises in the Warmoesstraat nr. 73. The ornamentation business – many an Amsterdam signboard was made here – was sold off because of a diminished demand.

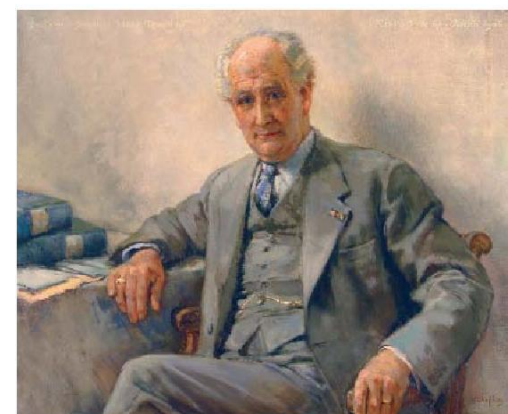
Douwes Sr.: “My grandfather’s heart was with the Amsterdam etchings and prints. He had a vast collection and shared his passion with among others Willem Dreesmann, father of the recently deceased Anton Dreesmann. Willem had various collection fields, just as his father; but his preferences tended towards the Amsterdam town views. In the arts, the two families were closely linked for generations. Catholicism also played its part in this. To all these prints, Henri added descriptions. The lithograph became popular in about 1900, and caused a boom in prints. It was one of Henri’s passions. At one time, I found an original engraving of the Nieuwmarkt (New Market) with the Waag (the Scales). Written on its back, I discovered an elaborate historical description in my grandfather’s handwriting, dated 1923.”

As Senior now says, “Douwes Brothers during **the first one hundred years was art with a small ‘a’**. A small firm, from a good location in Amsterdam dealing on a limited scale in all kinds of matters relating to art and photography.” How did major art dealers of that time conduct their business? Sala, one of the biggest in Leiden, frequented the workshops of the representatives of the Hague School (Haagse School), and sold their works in Scotland, from where they went to Canada. Or Van Wisselingh, who went to the United States to organise selling exhibitions with painters of The Hague School.

One generation later, **art with a capital ‘A’ arrived**, and Douwes could measure himself with the finest of the profession. **The sixth Evert** (1888-1971) in a row who was to see this happen, first went to the German town of Breslau in 1910 before entering his father’s business. It so happened that the renowned art dealer Wenzel from Breslau was in Amsterdam, and Henri asked him if he had an internship for his son. That period of working as a volunteer would introduce Evert to Central Europe and its art. The now rechristened Polish town of Wroclaw (Breslau) was then a distinguished town of science and culture. There, but also in nearby Dresden and Leipzig, members of the Polish and Hungarian nobility bought much of their art. In the end, Evert was to stay there for two and a half years, a period that would give him much knowledge and love for the old masters.



Henri Douwes and his restorers, c. 1915



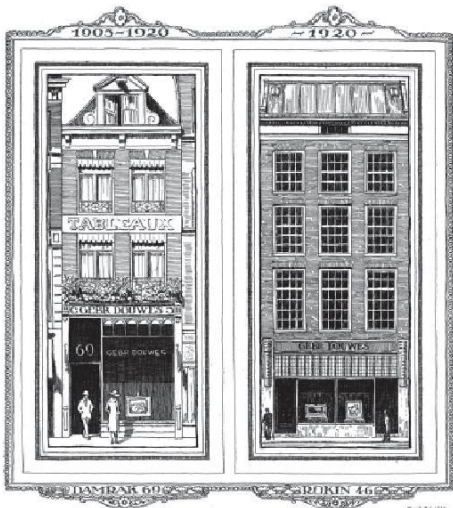
Evert VI by W.G. Hofker, 1956



Hendrick Avercamp



The period that followed, spent in Frankfurt with the world famous Haenfstangel, would prove to be of lasting significance to his interest in documenting art. Haenfstangel was the first photographer to come up with a method of producing perfect reproductions of paintings in larger quantities, the famous brownish prints (carbon transfers). To this end, he went to all the European museums and art dealers, photographing the whole of western art spanning the period from 1200 to 1800. The photos were printed in dark-brown hues on thin paper of approximately A4 size. It fascinated Evert, who saw it as a means of increasing his knowledge. At his departure, he received 10.000 of these photo images as a gift, and they became the basis of the present library. Once again, here was a Douwes generation that made a case for documentation, and would hand it on to the next generation. In 1918, he wrote to a trainee being considered for employment about his future activities: *“Bookkeeping at present is simply structured, but we are lagging behind. Once we have caught up, there will be much time for talking with possible visitors, setting up a card index filing system, and the collection of Old-Amsterdam. I have laid the basis for a technical library (still modest, though) that will serve every member of the firm.”*



**When, a couple of years later, Evert opened his London branch,** he met Sir Robert Witt (1872 – 1952). A passionate man, who collected and catalogued art reproductions of paintings and also of sculptures. Together, they improved and perfected both of their systems. The Douwes archive was in long rows of green boxes containing grey folders. The traditional green boxes later formed the start of the DeWitt Library, a part of the famous London *Courtauld Institute of Art*.



Our gallery sign, c. 1930

In the Netherlands, we have the *Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie – RKD* (‘National Bureau of Art Historical Documentation’). Of this respected institute, too, Douwes was the one who laid the basis. He had met Professor Cornelis Hofstede de Groot (1863-1930), a well-known art historian, publicist, collector, and expert in the field of 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch painting. Already in 1895, the basis for Hofstede’s interest in art documentation was laid when, as an assistant to Mauritshuis director Bredius, he made the museum catalogue. Many years later at Douwes’s, he saw the ‘green boxes’, which resulted in an identical setup of his own art archive. Eventually, in 1926, he donated this archive to the nation, and formed the basis for the founding of the *RKD*. Douwes Sr.: “My father always bought three catalogues when at an exhibition. He kept one, and the remaining two were completely cut up. Thus, of each artist he collected as many pictures of his work as possible. In this way, with the help of the whole family, the library grew to such proportions that, in the eighties, we

sold to the Getty Museum those foreign art movements and art schools that we did not do business in. At present, we focus on archiving only those that we do business in.”

Having worked in Frankfurt for six months, the time for the real work at his father’s in Amsterdam started in 1913. One of the first things Evert initiated was a reduction of the activities not directly related to painting. Costume dolls, photos, and all sorts of ‘bric á brac’, as his son now calls it, left the premises. Meanwhile, father Henri had grown older and considered it just fine that his son wanted to approach things differently. What remained was of course the restoration work, but from now on the frames were to be made elsewhere. There were good Italian frame makers in the Kalverstraat, such as Lurasco and Grisanti, who for centuries had handed down their craft. The art of calligraphy, once started by Evert (V) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was still only practiced to meet the need of making stylish name plaques to go with the paintings.

Evert Douwes Sr.: ‘I remember how my old restoration tutor Minne Bakker, employed by us for 69 years, had to go to Wynand Focking’s (Amsterdam distillery) bar. On those occasions, he went to fetch for restoration the old round bottles with their lavish, multi-coloured inscriptions. Already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, calligraphy was used by my great-uncle to decorate those bottles. At present, they are still in the bodega, as ornamental bottles. Eventually, the Douwes calligraphy resulted in the Amsterdam script letter, still being taught at art colleges. “Johann Wilhelm Beekmann Sr. (1867-1918), employed by my grandfather during 25 years until 1906, trained his son Johann (1895-1986) who became the famous letter writer. He beautified this script letter, which can still be seen on the name plaques of the many paintings in the Frans Hals Museum at Haarlem.”

**World War I erupted, and Evert had to take up arms.** He was quartered in Fort Kadijk, in the province of North Holland. Though he came home regularly for the weekends, business for that reason could not yet be pursued vigorously. During the war (1914-1918), the art trade slumped. It was made even worse when in 1916 the government slapped a ‘luxury tax’ of 3% on the possession of art. Father Henri, though, continued to run the gallery, and was still busy writing the history of Amsterdam. After two years, Evert was allowed to leave the military early, because he had to provide for two families. From then on, the old masters were gradually introduced into the gallery. Bought at Dutch auction houses and sold only to Dutch customers, because the war had caused the market to become very domestically orientated.

After the war, Evert approached business on a grand scale, and in 1919 they moved to a large building at Rokin 46, in which all disciplines could now be housed. Evert Douwes Sr.: “I still remember, as a small boy of five, the little ferry



Minne Bakker, 69 years with Douwes



Johann Beekmann (1895-1986)



Inventory log-book, c. 1920's



Gerard van Spaendonck



Willem van de Velde the Younger



Evert VI with 'Paatje and Maatje' Douwes



Vincent van Gogh

that crossed the Rokin, which at the time was still a canal”. Douwes was one of the first to settle there. Antique dealer Delaunoy, and art dealer Van Wisselingh already had. In the prosperous twenties, the Rokin, with its approximately twenty-five fine art and antique dealers, became the art boulevard of the Netherlands. From that time onwards, Douwes focused on purely 17<sup>th</sup> century Flemish and Dutch masters, the Hague School, and Romanticism. His first foreign customers after WW1 were predominantly Germans that he had acquainted when working with Wenzel in Breslau. Laurens van Dam was such a customer. A Jewish collector from Berlin, who – just as many of his kinsmen – was very interested in art. They, too, became Evert’s customers and could add a Dutch master to their collections, when in Amsterdam.

On the new premises, the first selling exhibition was organised in 1920.

In 1925, Evert Jr.’s grandfather had gone to hotel Huis ter Duin in Noordwijk, where, in the adjacent coach house, he exhibited for the ‘cream of the crop’, then spending their holidays there. In general, however, the paintings stayed put in Amsterdam, and there was little going on tours.

Owing to the recovering economy, the Dutch art world was very active in the aftermath of WW1. The period from 1920 to 1928 turned into an important art market with many international buyers. In that time, with the arts prospering, there were a number of Amsterdam lead players. Auctioneers Frederik Muller, as the only quality auction house, played an important role. (Douwes had succeeded in buying all of their old catalogues, which are an important part of the present library). In 1911, the ‘*Vereniging van Handelaren in Oude Kunst* – *VHOK*’ (‘Dutch Art and Antique Dealers Association’) was established, and in 1919, Evert was one of the founders of the “*Nederlandse Kunstkopersbond – NKB*” (‘Dutch Art Buyers Association’). This association, purely intended for art dealers in contemporary art, aimed at promoting the art from 1850 to 1919 and beyond, and organised exhibitions to this end. Other members were a.o. Sala, Du Bois, Elbert Jan van Wisselingh (on the Rokin), Buffa (in the Kalverstraat), art dealer C.M. van Gogh (on the Rokin) - called ‘uncle Cor’ by the painter Vincent - and Caramelli & Tessaro. Douwes Sr.: ‘my father was always on the board, and even I have for a long time been their secretary. I believe it is now in a dormant state.’”

There was the passionate collector Frits Lugt (1884-1970), who, even before finishing secondary school, was already employed by Frederik Muller and acquired a vast knowledge while there. In addition, using his keen eye and excellent visual memory, and together with his wealthy wife, he built an imposing collection of paintings and drawings. Eventually, he housed his collection in the Fondation Custodia, part of the Institut Néerlandais in Paris. In the seventies,



Douwes Gallery exhibition, Huis ter Duin, Noordwijk 1925



Amsterdam, the Rokin with ferry-boat, c. 1930



Frans van Mieris



Rokin, 'Spiegelzaal', c. 1930



George Hendrik Breitner

**Hendrik S. A. Douwes overleden**

Een meekwaartige verzamelaar van historische prenten.

Hierbij van die familie voor Dordrecht.

De heer S. A. Douwes is overleden op 17 maart 1938, na een ziekte van enkele maanden. Hij was 72 jaar oud. Hij was een van de meest bekende verzamelaars van historische prenten in Nederland. Hij had een uitgebreide verzameling van prenten uit de 17de en 18de eeuw. Hij was ook een verzamelaar van oude boeken en manuscripten. Hij was een zeer liefhebber van zijn verzamelingen en had ze vaak tentoongesteld. Hij was een zeer belangrijk figuur in de wereld van de prentenverzameling in Nederland.

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Obituary of Henri Douwes, 1938

Evert Douwes Jr. was to make descriptions of a part of this art collection, which he also studied to improve his knowledge.

Douwes maintained close ties with another Amsterdam art gallery, namely that of Jacques Goudstikker. The man, whose heirs now demand the return of his paintings, was the third generation of their art gallery. Between the two was a lively exchange of paintings. The name Goudstikker frequently appears in the buying and selling records dating from the early twenties. In 1922, for example, Douwes sold to him a church interior from Emmanuel de Witte for 1.750 guilders, acquired in 1921 for 1.542 guilders. In 1923, he sold him a Davis Bles, 'Ora et Labora' for 350 guilders, which he had acquired in 1921 for 300 guilders.

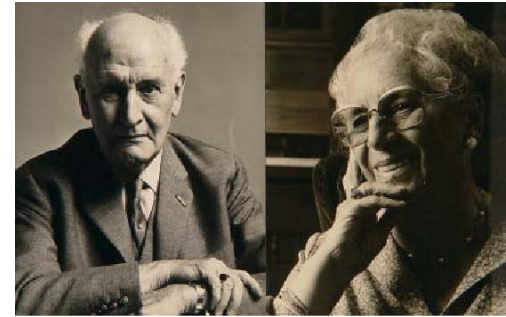
Goudstikker also focused on early Italian art, a school still not so well known in the Netherlands. He approached business on a grand scale, and, after buying Nyenrode Castle, he organised gorgeous exhibitions there, with lavishly illustrated catalogues. Douwes Sr.: 'He was probably influenced by the art dealer Duveen, who was earning richly in New York and spending it in circles of rich industrialists such as Randolph Hearst.

Goudstikker was the man of the grand gesture, and could easily be wide off the mark. My father cautioned him once when he wanted to sell a Hercules Seghers still life for a lot of money. Later, it turned out to be part of a bigger canvas by an Italian painter”.

In 1922, a newcomer with 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch and Flemish masters, spoken of highly by both father and son Evert, was the Pieter de Boer art gallery, established at Herengracht 512. They shared an interest in the same period of painting, and they, too, learned from each other. De Boer was the first to organise an exhibition of Dutch still lifes, including among others paintings by Willem Claesz. Heda. Evert Douwes in turn also acquired the most beautiful work of his lesser-known son Gerrit Heda, now in the collection of the Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts. Douwes Sr.: “What I admire in De Boer is that, even in times of crisis, he continued to organise exhibitions. He was perhaps inspired by Goudstikker, who organised regular exhibitions, a.o. one of winter landscapes in 1932.”

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, British nobility was already buying a lot of art, among them many Dutch old masters. Of the 17<sup>th</sup> century ‘fine’ painter (“fijnschilder”) Godfried Schalcken is known that he sold his paintings directly in England. In the twenties, London, with its prominent auction houses, became the source of old masters. That is why in 1922, Evert decided to open a London branch and went to live there, while father Henri took care of the business in Amsterdam. At a later stage, a partner, Hein Hoes, who was in charge of sales in

Amsterdam, joined the firm. Evert married Allegonda Vogt, and together they had three sons and a daughter. In an interview on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, he reminisced: “I also went to London in 1927 on our honeymoon. I had promised to forget about paintings for a fortnight. We went into hiding in a small hotel, and yet somebody tracked me down. The end of the story was that I came home with two Saenredams, and one Jan Steen.” With Jan Steen, Evert was very familiar. “That is because of Bredius, who taught me much about him. In the prime of my life, I knew more about Jan Steen than most of my colleagues put together.”



Evert VI and Gonny Douwes-Vogt

**Between the two world wars**, London was the Mecca for art dealers. Every week was certain to bring a ‘discovery’. A canvas or panel offered in a dirty unrecognizable condition would turn out to be a great master. That discovery was sometimes only made in Amsterdam, after Evert, who lived in London for nine months a year, with his load of paintings had left for the Rokin by boat and train. Another possibility was that he thought he had bought a Van Goyen, the signature ‘came off’ and it turned out to be a Schoeff. Nowadays, this would be a financial disaster, but at that time the damage remained limited due to the minimal investment. Douwes Sr.: ‘one could as it were still find a Van Goyen every week.’ Another restorer of our firm, Jan Schutte, who was with us for 53 years, had an instinctive feel for and knowledge of 17th century painting. Evert Sr.: ‘...my father regularly invited him to London to do the sales together and discuss the quality of the pictures offered for sale, in order to pick the better ones for our collection...’.



Sale at Christies, London, c. 1920's

At present, thanks to our improved knowledge, they would no longer all be considered Van Goyens. Market development was not then a priority, so the ten odd Jan van Goyens were not bought in order to stash them away for investment purposes. After all, on average they would cost 300 guilders a piece. No, you bought only the very best, for around 1.200 guilders. In addition, a lesser master in the same genre would cost just 200 guilders less. The difference between a Jan van Goyen and a Jacob Woutersz. Knijff was 120 guilders. Whenever my father considered the Knijff to be better, he would buy that one. He always bought the top segment of the lesser-known masters, and the time came when he did indeed have many customers for them. You have to educate people. Many people prefer to buy a bad painting of a great master before a quality painting of a lesser master. He did his buying not only in London, but travelled the length and breadth of Britain and Ireland. For example, he found a Holbein portrait in Ireland, sold it to the textile magnate Van Heeck. At present it is in the Rijksmuseum Twente (National Gallery of Twente), in the Dutch town of Enschede.”



Jan Schutte, 53 years with Douwes

He must have told many a fascinating tale about his ‘discoveries’ in the London of that time. When putting that question to (the present) Evert Douwes Sr., he tells somewhat ruefully that at the start of the sixties he had failed to record his



Jan steen



Frans Hals

father's stories. He does still remember some of the family's 'discoveries', though. For example, one of the most beautiful Saenredams, the one of the Maria Church in Utrecht; an important Frans Hals portrait and a Rembrandt landscape; a Jan Steen sold to the Rotterdam shipowner Goudriaan and now in the Metropolitan in New York; two Aert de Gelder paintings, which are in Melbourne (Australia) and in the J.P. Getty Museum in Malibu (USA); one of the most beautiful Hendrick Avercamps now in Toledo, donated by a Canadian banker they once sold it to; important still lifes by Willem Heda and Pieter Claesz., acquired by the amiable US Senator John Heinz, are now on loan at the National Gallery in Washington. The contents of the acquisition and sales records of the twenties, which fortunately do indeed still exist, would be the dream of each and every art dealer living in 2005. A selection: *'Summer landscape'* by B.C. Koekkoek, bought in 1923 for 975 guilders, sold in 1923 to one Dreesmann for 1.500 guilders. A *'Summer landscape'* by Andreas Schelfhout, bought from Frederik Muller in 1921 for 352 guilders and sold in the same year for 650 guilders. A *'Merry company'* by Jan Steen, bought in 1921 for 16.104 guilders and sold in 1921 for 25.000 guilders. A watercolour by Jacob Maris, *'View of a harbour'*, bought for 203 guilders and sold for 300 guilders. *'Work at the farm'* by Jozef Israëls, bought in 1921 for 1450 guilders and sold in 1923 voor 2.880 guilders. A panel by Peter Paul Rubens, *'Christ as gardener'*, bought in 1922 for 12.250 guilders, sold in 1923 for 19.000 guilders.



Barend C. Koekkoek

It paints a picture of the world of the father of Douwes Sr. "There was a massive supply, you travelled a lot, and with a lot of knowledge made many discoveries. In those times, my father knew more than most of the others. I myself now know more than he did. I would have loved to work in his period of time with my present knowledge. I would have made a lot of money."



Johan B. Jongkind

The 'crash' of 1929 forced the closure of the London branch in 1932. The family returned to Holland and settled in Bussum, where in the meantime father Henri had also moved. In Amsterdam too, times were hard, with occasionally slim profit margins. Douwes Sr.: "In 1928, my father bought a magnificent Aert van de Neer for 10.000 guilders, and in 1937 he was offered 2.000 guilders for it, which he accepted because it enabled him to at least pay his employees. Some twelve years ago, I sold it on behalf of the owner's son for 300.000 guilders." Those who kept buying were the physicians. In the crisis years, they were taxed only twenty percent. A group with a lot of affinity for art, culturally grounded, and still able to build a collection. With a sense of nostalgia, Douwes Sr. speaks of the time of collectors such as Ten Kate, Van Heeck, Heldring. And of the affinity for art and culture which has become so much less, the taste that has also become much more internationally oriented. 'I remember an important sale in 1934. To one of our loyal customers, my father sold five paintings for 18.000 guilders.



Jubilee exhibition, 1955

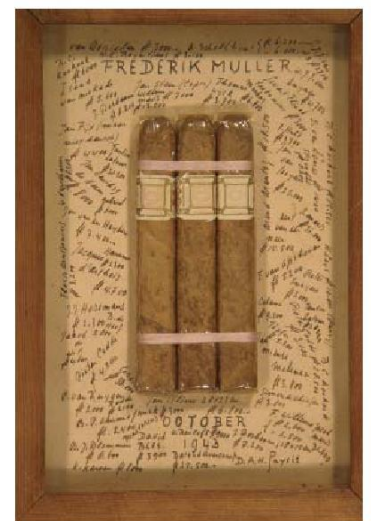
One of those five was a Van Goyen, and the other a Jan Steen. Later, I saw pictures again of these two paintings; just the two of them would now fetch 600.000 to 700.000 Euros.

In the second half of the thirties, Douwes and de Boer had many German customers who avoided the Jewish Goudstikker, because of the already latent German anti-semitism. When WW2 erupted, trading with the regular German art dealers went on till about the first half of 1942. Douwes Sr.: 'Most of the important art dealers initially still traded with their regular German colleagues such as Plietsch and Hofer, until they got wind of the fact that the paintings were in turn sold straight to the ranks of the German high command. From then on, they notified each other whenever German art dealers came to Amsterdam. Then it was up to you; my father took care not to be in the gallery and stopped doing business. During the war, food became a problem. My father solved it in part by exchanging his paintings. I remember a beautiful painting of the 17<sup>th</sup> century painter Frans Sniijders in our house. It was exchanged for a bale of sugar and many other food items. Relatives, too, had to eat to stay alive, and it meant that in May 1945 the gallery stock had been reduced from a few hundred to eventually eight paintings. After the war, we were not involved in selling former confiscated Jewish art possessions. On the contrary, our large safe was filled with paintings entrusted to us by two Jewish owners. Everything was returned to them or to their families. In addition, together with the directors (Roëll and Sanberg) of the *Rijksmuseum* ('National Art Gallery') and the *Stedelijke Museum* ('Amsterdam Municipal Art Gallery'), my father was also active in the foundation *Nederlands Kunstbezit* ('Dutch National Heritage Collection'), which tracked down Dutch works of art in German possession.

In 1948, at the request of the Ministry of Justice, Evert wrote a report on the art trade during the war years. In 1943, six times as much as in 1940 was paid for works of the Old Masters, and even eight times as much for paintings from the Romantic School period. After 1944, however, prices declined sharply. In about 1947, they had dropped some 70% for the Old and Romantic Masters, and 40% for the Moderns.

In 1947, during the courtcase dealing with forgeries by Han van Meegeren, Gebr. Douwes with photos and written records was instrumental in proving that the underlying painting of the so-called *Last Supper* - bought by D.G. van Beuningen, and now in the museum Boymans-Van Beuningen, Rotterdam - was in fact a pristine, large canvas by Abraham Hondius *Tableau of a Hunting scene*. X-ray publications showed the underlying image, which is identical to the plate of the original painting by Hondius.

Brotherly spirit in the inner circle of art dealers during the time of war can best be illustrated with the joint visit of Evert (1888) and his colleague D.A.Hoogendijk



Winning his bet in 1943



A. Hondius, underpainting of Van Meegeren



Evert VII with Ochtervelt, 1963



Opening Delft Art Fair, 1964



Delft Fair exhibitors, 1964



Evert VII, by L. van Dijk, 1969

to an auction of Fredrik Muller's in 1943. Both professionals placed a bet on the exact result of its sales proceeds. As it turned out, Evert was right on the mark and won it. Soon afterwards, he was presented with a symbolic token of their esteem: three of the finest cigars together with a framed document handwritten and signed by the losers of this bet.

**The 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1946 was the day Evert Douwes Sr. entered his father's employ.** About this he says, "After the crisis and the war period, we were flooded by restoration work. My father said 'come and join me right after school to learn the craft.' It was not my number one wish, but the restoration work fascinated me to such an extent that I did it for ten years. Restoring was and is important to us, because you make new contacts. People need a valuation, or want to sell the painting after its restoration, or give it on consignment. The latter is interesting, for the art trade prefers to purchase works of art from private collections and in the auction room that have not circulated too widely. Since 1991, we also have a restoration studio in Friesland, where my son Erick (1956) works."

It did not stop at restoration, because once every fortnight during more than three years, Douwes Sr. was privately tutored in the history of art by the well-known professor Willem Vogelsang. Vogelsang was known in the art trade because of his valuations, handwritten for 25 Euros. Signature or brushstroke were thus scientifically validated, and professors were able to supplement their meagre salaries. Practical experience abroad was acquired in London and Paris, whenever father and son did the rounds of the auction houses and the dealers. In 1947, he spent much time with his godfather Karel Duits, a well-known art dealer, whose family had settled in London in the twenties.

In 1952, he married Nelleke Huf, niece of the famous Dutch photographer Paul Huf (1929-2002). Together, they had three sons (Evert-Jules, Erick-Hans, and Peter), and a daughter (Pia).

In the early fifties, Douwes Sr., who had after all fallen in love with London, really tried to establish himself in there. He did restoration work for a year, but then duty called him back to Amsterdam. His help was needed in the preparation of the 1955 Jubilee exhibition.

After celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary – "we made a retrospective of what we had sold in those 150 years" –, Douwes Sr. was asked to take over from his father. On this, he says: "at a certain moment my father said to me 'I have seen it all'. In retrospect, I can now understand this. He had had a splendid time from 1918-1930, followed by the crisis and then WW2. This meant that he had hardly been able to do anything between 1930 and 1945. So, how do you continue from there? A reputable business, knowledge, and a number of paintings. What else can you do but to start all over again?"

Immediately after WW2, he attempted to get the business going again and in the process was asked to fill various board memberships. Buying abroad was not allowed. The Dutch art trade was forced to turn national for some years. The trade bought and sold amongst themselves, with the auction house as an important source. Paintings from private individuals were of course always being offered, or people wanted to exchange one painting for another. Trade by barter is a phenomenon of all times. Heirs less happy with the choice of their parents came and are still coming regularly to hand in objects and exchange it for something else more suited to their tastes. Douwes Sr.: 'My father negotiated intensively with the ministerial departments to obtain foreign currency for the art trade that would enable them to buy abroad, and in which he succeeded in 1948. The art trade received foreign currency to the tune of 213.820 guilders, to be divided among those firms that were internationally the most active. The *Adviesbureau voor den Kunsthandel* ("Consultancy Office for the Art Trade") was founded with its offices on my father's premises. All it did was to distribute the currencies and register the acquisitions. My father was so absorbed by this that he partly neglected his own firm.

Of course, I substituted for him during that time, but was also fully occupied doing restorations. A regular customer was the late E.J.van Wisselingh art gallery on the Rokin, for which we have done all of their restoration work during fifteen years after the war. Van Wisselingh conducted business in many French post-, pre-, and impressionists, which all of them I saw 'pass by'. This is how I acquired my knowledge of and interest in the French masters. I was longing for something different from the 19<sup>th</sup> century 'snapshots', and about 1960 I started buying my first French pre-impressionists. What fascinated me most were the precursors of the impressionists, the 'école de Barbizon'. Inspired by the Dutch 17<sup>th</sup> century landscapes of Ruysdael and Hobbema, they had gone 'outside' ('en plein-air'), to Barbizon, a hovel in the woods of Fontainebleau, south-east of Paris.' Douwes Sr. became friends with a London art dealer, Herbert Terry-Engell, from whom he bought a lot. Together they went to Swiss auctions, where many French impressionists were sold.

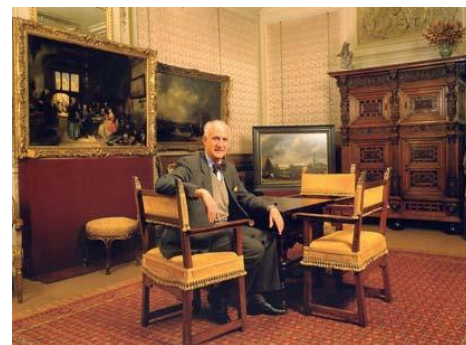
**In the sixties**, Douwes Sr. saw prices rise through greater prosperity and an increase in knowledge; the connoisseur paid ever more for quality. In the seventies, art as an investment started to play a role. The big names became rare and more expensive, with demand increasing and the buyer becoming more critical. Prices of lesser masters also went up, as did prices of Old Dutch and Flemish drawings, another love of Douwes Sr.. The market for drawings is much smaller than for paintings, and the big collectors live in the States. They are also the ones that have driven up prices in the past decennia. Douwes at present has a beautiful 17<sup>th</sup> century Saverij drawing costing



Evert VI, photo Paul Huf, 1956



Rokin, by W.G. Hofker, 1974



Evert VII at the Rokin, c. 1990



H. Terry-Engell and Nelleke Douwes



Prince Bernhard visits TEFAF, 1982



Opening Douwes in London, 1979

Kunsthandel Gebr. Douwes  
 Kunsthandel Gebr. Douwes, Museumstraat 100  
 Kunsthandel Gebr. Douwes, Museumstraat 100  
 Kunsthandel Gebr. Douwes, Museumstraat 100

CORNELIS SPRINGER  
 (1817-1891)  
 Schilderijen, aquarellen, tekeningen

Dordrecht Museum  
 Museumstraat 100, 3312 NP Dordrecht, telefoon 0512 - 330400  
 Dordrecht Museum, Museumstraat 100, 3312 NP Dordrecht, telefoon 0512 - 330400

Rijksmuseum Twente  
 Luitpoldstraat 25, 7514 RP Enschede, telefoon 053 - 238001  
 Rijksmuseum Twente, Luitpoldstraat 25, 7514 RP Enschede, telefoon 053 - 238001

Cornelis Springer  
 Cornelis Springer, Museumstraat 100, 3312 NP Dordrecht, telefoon 0512 - 330400

Cornelis Springer exh. at Douwes, 1984



Our library, Stadhouderskade, 2001

46.000 Euros. In the sixties, it would have cost 10.000 guilders, just a tenth of its present value. There was even a time when drawings cost a few guilders, as the following anecdote relates: “Though ‘uncle Joh’, who took all the time in the world for his study of the classical languages, did not go into the business, he did have a keen eye for it. In 1923 he came home one day carrying a drawing by Esaias van de Velde dated 1628, for which he had paid 12 guilders. My grandfather became angry, “you focus on your studies”, and bought the drawing from his son. About 30 years ago, I came across the drawing and sold it to a German industrialist for 18.000 guilders. Nowadays, that Van de Velde would be worth 65.000 Euros.”

In 1976, entirely in keeping with his father’s tradition of always buying the top of the smaller 17<sup>th</sup> century masters, the first exhibition of just French paintings followed, ‘Paysage de France’, with mainly lesser-known French masters, among them many ‘école de Barbizon’ painters. The show with over a hundred paintings was entirely sold out.

This ‘école de Barbizon’, with well-known painters such as Daubigny and Rousseau, became the specialty of Douwes Sr.. Throughout the seventies, he built a considerable market for it. Yet, within the total Douwes supply, this French movement has always remained of limited size. “The genuine collectors did not come to me, but bought directly in Paris or from Van Wisselingh. In the meantime, in nearly a century, the latter had already built a worldwide reputation in the field of French great masters. Nowadays, you would go to Noortman. But for a Ruysdael, you would go to de Boer or to Douwes.”

To maintain this reputation, Evert Douwes Sr. organised regular exhibitions. Senior considers the still life exhibition of 1968 one of the highlights of his career. “I had made a wonderful shop window with objects from a Steenwijk painting of 1660. The painting with the objects ranged in front of it drew crowds of viewers.”

**Thirty-five thousand slides of paintings** are the result of shots taken since the sixties. Two-thirds is 17<sup>th</sup> century, half of which still lifes, the rest is 19<sup>th</sup> century. The library and multi-media section are famous at home and abroad. Many students find their way to them, and many a curator or museum director drops by. Douwes Sr. in fact continues what his great-grandfather started in 1905, and what the latter’s son continued with an initial 10.000 carbon transfers. Senior takes about seven exposures per painting. “Putting these in a row next to each other, you can see right away whether something is good, has been restored, or is a fake, but especially can one study the ever so important brush technique. My slide collection is some sort of a hobby. I also take pictures with colleagues at fairs and such, in order to collect as much material as possible. I want to record for later generations the knowledge I have acquired. When my son wants to buy a flower still life and thinks, “is it a David de Heem or a Cornelis de Heem”, he



In 2005, fifth & sixth generation Douwes Fine Art: Evert VII and Evert VIII.  
(courtesy of More Than Classic, photo Freek Esser)

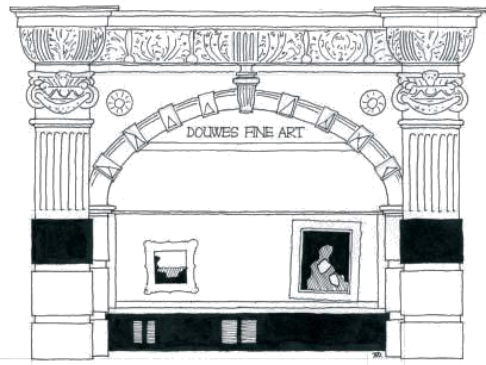
can then go upstairs and project a number of paintings by both, and by then it should be clear to him.”

**It is not usual or natural that a son follows in his father's footsteps.** Evert Douwes Jr. tells about his doubts and hesitations when in secondary school in the late sixties and early seventies, and about the fact that studying medicine and psychology also attracted him. When visiting customers with his father and grandfather, he did however realize that psychological insight into people and their decision-making processes did certainly play a role. Art and psychology could thus be happy partners. Evert Jr.: “I was the eldest, and as a juvenile I already sensed the presence of a background I couldn't just shake off; a background for which I already felt a sense of responsibility. My father has always left me free to make up my own mind. I had strong ties with my grandfather, a scholarly man, who told me much of his knowledge and experiences. He taught me to become aware of how much pleasure it gives to gather knowledge about art. He himself was still working in the library. My father has a phenomenal knowledge which he has handed down to me, and which he still hands on to others. He has the rare and passionate gift of wanting to share his knowledge. Armed with the insights of two generations, you then ask yourself: “how can I contribute?” It became Art History.

But first, he was enlisted in the Dutch Army, and gradually was assigned to that small army unit responsible for the protection of the Dutch national heritage. This task allowed him to familiarize himself with the hidden treasures in museum depots and private collections in some of the Royal palaces. He now continues in the Army Reserve, at present with the rank of Major.

After his studies, Evert Jr. did an internship with Eberhard Kornfeld in Bern. An outstanding firm, a combination of art gallery, auction house, and publishing company, all under the same roof. Kornfeld, an intellectual academic, was one of the greatest connoisseurs of the classical modern art of painting, a movement stretching roughly from Goya and Delacroix to Picasso and Sam Francis. In his younger years, as an interneer, he had been secretary to Chagall and Picasso. Evert learnt a lot about this movement, as yet little known in the Netherlands. “Kornfeld also gave me an insight into the etchings and drawings of Rembrandt, and into modern graphics. Later on, I often went back to work for them for short periods, to prepare auctions. At a given moment, the situation was such that I lived and worked simultaneously in London and Amsterdam, and also worked in Bern for longer periods of time. At the end of the eighties, they employed me every second week. Rather hectic, but I learnt so much there!”

The next internship was once again a matter of just gathering knowledge: studying the collection of Frits Lugt in the Institut Néerlandais in Paris. Evert stayed with



38 Duke Street, St. James's, London



Evert VIII in London, 1980



Douwes Fine Art opens in London, 1979



Douwes restoration, St. Nicolaasga, 1992

the well-known Belgian art dealer Leegenhoek. With him, he made his first deal after making a ‘discovery’. It so happened that he found a 17<sup>th</sup> century painting by David Teniers, which Leegenhoek was willing to buy from him. With the commission money earned, he could pay for his stay in Paris, and he learnt that looking closely at the collections of colleagues could be profitable. Where he really had his eyes popping was in the English country houses and stately homes during a one-year course at Sotheby’s in London, which came next. Apart from the theory, the fifty students together with three experts went to English country homes laden with art. “Where normally speaking there would be stretched rope barriers, we could step over them and handle everything.”

**In July 1979**, the Douwes firm took over the lease from an old acquaintance that wanted to retire from his art dealing business. In Duke Street, they were “back in town” after 47 years. Evert Jr.: “My father had always wanted to return to London, but the roots were in Amsterdam, after all. It thrilled him to bits that we were ‘back’. It produced new business and new collectors from all over the world. Germans, for example, who until the nineties had been avid collectors, had the idea that ‘if you made your choice in London as the art centre, then you would have made the best choice possible. Or private individuals, who offered a painting exclusively to you, because they had a distant Dutch relative somewhere along the line.”

In 1986, Evert Jr. for the first time saw a Russian art exhibition. That certainly was not an everyday happening in London, but in the Soviet Union of Gorbachev ‘glasnost’ was the order of the day, and thus the world could get to know social realistic art, a movement that reached its pinnacle in the period 1940-1970. “I was amazed at the quality, the colours, and the humour of these paintings. I had thought that the ‘grey communism’ would also be visible on these canvases. The opposite was true, and I was sold forthwith. The prices were very interesting and ranged from 500 to 5000 pounds sterling. Not much later, I bought my first Russian painting at an auction. Through this acquisition, I came into contact with British people married to Russian wives or having other links with Russia, and thus succeeded in building a network enabling me to buy good Russian art.

**Each generation of our firm has added something new**, and for me it was ‘the Russians’. How the market would develop I did not know at the time, but before long I had an international clientele for this art. It is funny to see that the customer always comes off best; it is he who has ‘time’ on his side. At the moment of buying, it may be a hefty sum for them, but twenty, thirty years later they come and thank me for having sold it to them.”

The Grosvenor House Art and Antiques Fair, held for the first time in 1934, was the model for the *Vereniging van Handelaren in Oude Kunst – VHOK* when

## Boerinnen in pasteltinten

Lenin, arbeiders en soldaten, maar ook boerinnen en naaktjes met fore deerrites – in Amsterdam worden zondag 220 schilderijen van Russische impressionisten geveild.

Door GEBJA TERWENDE  
Het licht – dat is het eerste dat opvalt in de schilderijen van Russische impressionisten. Opvallend veel witte accenten zijn erin, die mensen dragen het rode, gele of blauwe jassen en slaats, ze werken in veldjes, korenvelden of aan in veldjes in een veld. Al zijn er schilders met een donkerder afdak, in het voorbeeld overboort de schilderij.

De kunst is jaren verspreid op de markt van 20ste eeuw te Rusland. In kunstzinnige op de westerse kunstmarkt, in Nederland onder meer door roedel van handelaar Gombare. Daarvoor: Frits van Gombare en Jacques Monasch van Gallery en 'in alle delen in Amsterdam. De kunstwerken zijn goedkoop geveild en daarom voor een groot publiek beschikbaar. Het M&M ook uit de schilderijen op de veiling. Monasch presenteerde bij Gombare in Amsterdam, waar zondag 220 schilderijen en tekeningen van diegenen werden verkocht. Ze zijn in vijf prijsklassen ingedeeld – de goedkoopste met richtprijs onder de 5000 euro, de duurste boven de 1000 euro.

Bijna de helft van de veiling bestaat uit de collectie van vermaakte en gallerijhouder Gombare. Hij woonde in de jaren 70 in de Verenigde Staten, maar meer dan 100 jaar geleden in Amsterdam met Monasch. Daar, maar meer dan 100 jaar geleden, had Monasch met een groep van mensen al in de veiling van de schilderijen. “Het is een heel mooi werk, op de kunstmarkt zijn wereldwijd en veruit de meest belangrijke werken, veelal best de veiling. Ook de kunstenaar van de veiling, die zijn werken verkocht, “de Monasch heeft de prijs van een paar honderd euro.”

Het aanbod op de veiling wordt een groot deel van het aanbod van de veiling. Het is een unieke kans om te zien hoe de kunstmarkt van de veiling. Het is een unieke kans om te zien hoe de kunstmarkt van de veiling. Het is een unieke kans om te zien hoe de kunstmarkt van de veiling.

Grigori A. Gombare 'Kleinste A. Gombare' 1987 Richtprijs 4-6000 euro  
Boerinnen', maakt een stilleven in een van zijn werken uit zijn serie 'Het technisch ritme van die andere kant in de veiling.

Newspaper clipping NRC, Dec. 2004



Waldorf-Astoria exh., New York, 1982



Douwes gallery at Stadhouderskade, 1997



Evert VII & VIII with Erick-Hans



Evert VIII with a Joos de Momper



Erick-Hans restoring in Friesland



Restoration studio in Amsterdam, 2004



At the gallery on Friday afternoon

organising their first fair at the Prinsenhof in Delft in 1948. This *Oude Kunst en Antiekbeurs* ('Art and Antiques Fair') would eventually grow into a fair of high quality enjoying an excellent reputation at home and abroad. In the end, the location proved an obstacle to its further growth. In 1974, a small group of young art dealers, among them Douwes Sr., started actively looking for another location. At the insistence of the old guard, it had to be at a distance of 200 kilometres from Delft. This resulted in the first Pictura in Maastricht in 1975, an event that Douwes Sr. and his extensive network had played a major role in. He is now justifiably proud of the fact that as a co-founder, he was at the birth of The European Fine Art Fair, the prestigious annual TEFAF.

Together, father and son witnessed and supported the launch of the Dutch art magazine *Tableau* in the late seventies. And to broaden their international client base, together with five other Dutch dealers, they were the first to show their own presentation of first class art and antiques in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, in 1982 and 1983.

Evert Jr.: "I view the ever greater role played by the auction houses as market places of the art world, as an important aspect in the thirty years that I have been active so far. I have witnessed from nearby the coming into existence of the PAN (Dutch National Fair in Amsterdam) in 1986, and the great success of the TEFAF. They provide a counterbalance to the big international auction houses that, on a worldwide scale and with a great deal of public relations, absorb everything. Fairs will always remain important, as they were in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. To maintain their high quality, much of the knowledge of the art galleries is needed. But much of the knowledge accumulated by former generations is gradually disappearing. Expertise is being handed down, but too little. What we are already witnessing is that the next generation now go to University, absorb a lot of theory, but (sometimes) lack the practical knowledge resulting from frequently and actually handling the paintings. The very important paintings are simply no longer offered for sale. In the sixties, my father could buy two Van Goyens a month, in the seventies hardly one a month, and if I now come across two in a year, I can count myself lucky if I am able to buy one."

He remembers an anecdote about his father buying a rare and early Jan van Goyen abroad, monogrammed and dated 1623. "During the late fifties and sixties, my Dad travelled throughout Europe by car. When he returned with his discovery and crossed the Dutch border, the very first car he passed had the incredible number plate of 'VG-16-23'. He laughed so hard, this just could not be a fluke .... now could it!"

Evert Jr. married his first wife, Ingeborg, in London in 1988. Sadly, she later died of cancer at the age of 38. Together, they had two daughters (Alexandra and

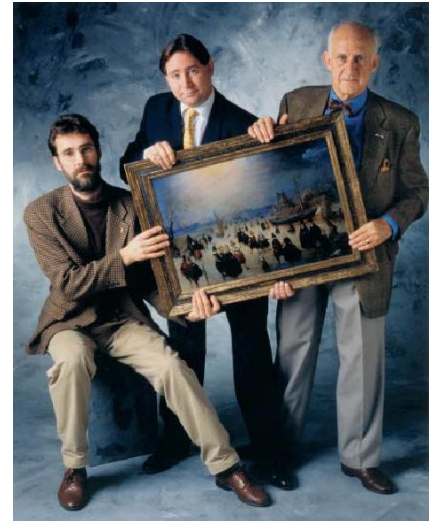
Olivia), and a son (Evert-Anthony). Recently, Evert Jr. married Ingeborg's younger sister Jeanneke, thus once again making the family complete.

**At the start of the nineties**, the market stagnated, and once again Evert Jr. decided to join the family firm fulltime. He shouldered the entire organisation of moving the firm from the Rokin to the Stadhouderskade. In 1994, in this accessible property, all disciplines once again regained their own proper surroundings. On its walls still hang 500 years of painting, the same that junior's predecessors also dealt in. Can it continue like this, unchanged and in a difficult art market, with high prices for rarely available art? Evert Jr.: "Loyal collectors have become less in number, because of lack of time, the influence of interior decorating, the accessibility of auction houses, and the knowledge factor helped by fast means of communication. People choose on colour and for decoration purposes, and no longer choose a painting with an interesting iconography. Ten, twenty years ago, there were still enough people in Holland who were genuinely collecting. They took the time to drop by. For two hours, you relished the joy of discussing and viewing a number of paintings. And then, you would sell one of them."

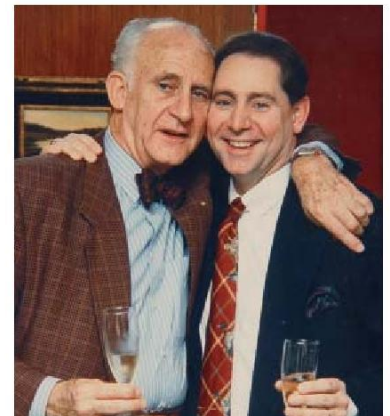
Evert: "Why continue? Is tradition important? Is that a reason to stay on? Can I myself go on with it, just as ten, thirty, fifty years ago? After all, aren't we a kind of institution? With a restoration workshop as an important component of our business, a wide-ranging documentation system and library, and five centuries of painting? A two centuries old company is not something to discard just like that. We have always been there for the art, the craftsmanship, and the passion. We want to be able to sell art for everybody. It means we are more intensely occupied with our trade, and also do not always have the means to buy that great name.

Evert can be jealous of his father's period, from about 1955 to 1975. "There was still sufficient supply, and you did not yet have to make choices from those five hundred years of painting that the firm houses. The present market situation is different. As a result, some art dealers have changed course and chosen to focus on just the great names. Or, on just the French impressionists and the old masters, both groups enjoying international interest. But, in an old firm such as ours, the passions of our predecessors with their contemporary art or topography have been handed down to us.

So, when some of our colleagues have problems hanging a 17th century Hendrick Maartensz. Sorgh next to a 19th century Corot, because they think it is unorthodox, we do indeed still return home with a gorgeous Cornelis Bega, a Maris or an Eversen, which we are perhaps able to buy once a year, and which



Family photo by Paul Huf, 1998



Evert VII decorated, 1998



Three generations 'Evert' in the field



Stadhouderskade 40, c. 1885



Evert VIII during Vetting



Evert VIII and Jeanneke, 2005



Rembrandt revival, 2005



Douwes, neighbour of the Rijksmuseum

we cannot let pass, because it so happens that we may have decided to buy only great names such as Jan Davidsz. de Heem, Jongkind and Springer, now can we?

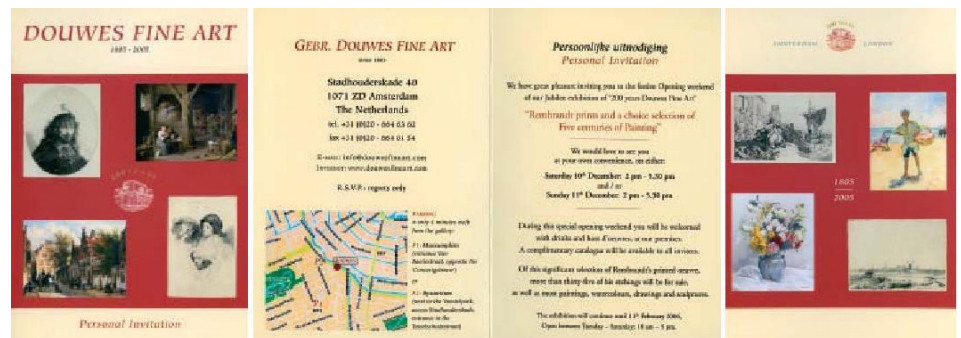
That is what we are juggling and wrestling with. Personally, I feel that good and artistic qualities in Art are of all ages. They just need time to prove themselves. And, in my opinion, once the following generations have confirmed these important qualities, there are hardly any boundaries between the different periods and they can indeed be combined together.”

**How do you chart a new course so that a next generation can in turn earn its keep?** There is a growing role to play for the Internet. A steadily growing number of people visit the Douwes site, and ask for information. More and more, even China is looking our way and it is funny that the market provided an answer here: participate in the Shanghai Art Fair of 2005.

Evert Jr.: “The Chinese are not yet ready for the old Dutch and Flemish masters, but they are for the lesser French impressionists. We still stock them, despite much hard thinking on the subject. They also appreciate our Russian social realistic art; a movement that has been well received in the Netherlands, but with much less spontaneity than abroad. It is affordable, and matches our aspiration to have works of art for everybody. From an international perspective, my expectations are high here. With these Russian paintings, we hope to tap a new generation of art buyers, and at the same time, with our experience spanning two centuries, we want to show the good examples of five centuries of painting.”

Rembrandt is a great love of Douwes Jr.: “when I studied abroad in the seventies, I was nicknamed after him. I remember coming from the ‘in’ place of Amsterdam looking like a hippy with long hair and a beard, making drawings in the marvellous Victoria & Albert Museum in London. My fellow students and professors felt I looked like him. We even share the same astrological sign”.

But his catching interest really goes back to the days of his internship with Kornfeld in Bern. As a result, an extensive network has gradually grown enabling him to organise a Jubilee exhibition of Rembrandt prints.



Invitation to our Jubilee exhibition 200 years Douwes Fine Art, Dec. 2005 - Feb. 2006

During the past decade the world has been confronted with the 9/11 disaster in New York, the banking crisis in 2008, social media and faster communication in general. The public has become more selective and knowledgeable via internet. The present Douwes generation is aware of these changes and will anticipate the future. As a board-member of the newly founded ArtBreda art and antiques fair, Evert VIII tries to actively support the art market in general creating a joint-stage for colleagues to be able to reach their supportive and new clients.

Beyond his unique yet intense profession Evert jr. spends much time to support the charity he started together with his first wife, the Ingeborg Douwes Foundation, focusing onto psycho-social care for cancer patients and their surrounding family and friends. With this so-called 'green energy label' he helps improving the quality of life, together with an expert field of dedicated professionals!

### **BRIEF VERSION OF THE DOUWES FAMILY TREE**

- Walraven Jansz. Douwe - wine merchant (born in Antwerpen) grandfather of Evert Abr. Douwdesse
- Abraham Evers - wool-carder (born 1661 in Leiden) father of Evert Abr. Douwdesse
- Evert Abrahamsz. Douwdesse (born 1685 in Leiden) named after his grandfather and father, whom baptized this Evert together in the 'Hooglandse kerk' in Leiden
- Evert Douwes II - shipwright and restorer (born 1708 in Leiden)
- Evert Douwes III -shipwright and restorer (born 1760 in Amsterdam)
- Hendrik Douwes -restorer and art dealer (born 1784 in Amsterdam) registered the Douwes Fine Art Gallery in 1805
- Evert Douwes IV - art dealer (born 1809 in Amsterdam)
- Evert Douwes V - art dealer (born 1843 in Amsterdam) established Douwes Brothers in 1875, together with his younger brother Henri
- Henricus Douwes - restorer and art dealer (born 1850 in Amsterdam) established Douwes Brothers in 1875, together with his older brother Evert V
- Evert Douwes VI - art dealer (born 1888 in Amsterdam)
- Evert Douwes VII - restorer and art dealer (born 1928 in London)
- Evert Douwes VIII - art dealer born (1953 in Amsterdam) together with his younger brother Erick-Hans, they again make the next pair of 'Douwes Brothers' since 1982
- Erick-Hans Douwes - restorer (born 1956 in Amsterdam) as a restorer, he joined his older brother in the family business in 1982
- Evert-Anthony Douwes IX - a future generation !! (born 1991 in London)

200 YEARS

