

different work because the Washington painting was sold by the Baron de Beurnonville only in 1881.

2. The provenance given in Strohmer's 1943 catalogue of the Liechtenstein Collection and in the 1948 Lucerne exhibition catalogue contains misinformation.

3. See The Hague 1981, 34, and also Kuznetsov 1973, 31–41.

4. Wright 1984, cat. 7.

5. *Landscape with a Footbridge* (inv. no. 49.1.156) and *Landscape with Bridge, Cattle, and Figures* (inv. no. 29).

## References

- 1896 Bode: 99.  
1903 Suida: 116.  
1907–1927 HdG, 4 (1912): 94, no. 295; 129, no. 407.  
1908 Höss: 58, l.14, repro.  
1911 Preyer: 247–248.  
1927 Kronfeld: 184–185, no. 911.  
1928 Rosenberg: 87, no. 252.  
1943 Strohmer: 101, pl. 69.  
1948 Lucerne: no. 175.  
1965 NGA: 119, no. 1637.  
1968 NGA: 106, no. 1637.  
1975 NGA: 316–317, repro.  
1977 Eisler: 146–147, fig. 132.  
1982 Cleveland Museum of Art: 265.  
1985 NGA: 364, repro.  
1986 Sutton: 306.

1960.2.1 (1551)

## Country House in a Park

c. 1675

Oil on canvas, 76.3 x 97.5 (30 x 38¾)

Gift of Rupert L. Joseph

## Inscriptions

Signed at lower left: *J v Ruisdael* (JvR in ligature)

**Technical Notes:** The support, a fine-weight, plain-weave fabric, has been lined with the damaged, yet original, tacking margins retained. A thin, smooth white ground layer was applied overall followed by a warm light brown imprimatura under the foreground and trees. Infrared reflectography shows a brush-applied underdrawing that notes sketchily the position of the fountain and some trees and shrubs. An oval-shaped pentimento is found between the house and fountain, and the roofline of the house was originally higher.

Paint was applied in thin layers with scumbles and glazes. The sky was painted first with reserves left for the foreground and most trees. Scattered small losses exist, mostly confined to the edges, with moderate abrasion found overall, particularly in the sky. The painting was treated in 1993 to consolidate flaking and remove discolored surface coatings and retouchings.

**Provenance:** Savile family, Rufford Abbey, Nottinghamshire [possibly The Rt. Hon. Sir John Savile, 1st Baron Savile, 1818–1896, or his nephew John Savile Lumley-Savile, 2nd Baron Savile, 1853–1931]; George Halifax Lumley-Sav-

ile, 3rd Baron Savile [b. 1919], Rufford Abbey, Nottinghamshire; (sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 18 November 1938, no. 123); Rupert L. Joseph (d. 1959), New York.<sup>1</sup>

**Exhibited:** *Jacob van Ruisdael*, Mauritshuis, The Hague; Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981–1982, no. 54.

DEPICTIONS of elegant country houses came into vogue in the latter half of the seventeenth century as increasing numbers of wealthy Dutch merchants built homes along the river Vecht and in other picturesque locations in the Netherlands. Artists who specialized in architectural painting, among them Jan van der Heyden (q.v.), depicted the houses and gardens in great detail. Surprisingly, however, not all of these seemingly accurate representations portray actual structures; sometimes the scenes were purely imaginary, intended to project an ideal of country existence rather than its actuality (see Van der Heyden's *An Architectural Fantasy*, 1968.13.1). Ruisdael, who painted views of country houses only rarely during his long career, was not an artist who felt constrained to convey a precise record of an actual site, and it seems probable that this view of a country estate is an imaginative reconstruction of one he had seen.

The elegant classicist villa standing beyond the informal, almost wilderness garden in this painting contains architectural elements characteristic of country houses from the period.<sup>2</sup> The façade of the yellow two-story structure in the Washington painting is articulated by pilasters, stringcourse, and balustrade. A triangular pediment, flanked by vases and small dormers, crowns the central bay. While no known structure in the Netherlands or in the western part of Germany is identical, the façade that most resembles this villa is Vredenburg, designed by Pieter Post (1608–1669), and constructed on Frederick Alewijn's estate in the Purmer polder near Westwijk in 1652. Long since destroyed and known today only through a contemporary engraving, the façade of Vredenburg differs in that it has giant pilasters rising the whole height of the building and no stringcourse or balustrade.<sup>3</sup>

Far more important for the composition than the villa, however, is the garden. The tall Norwegian spruces that soar above the other trees would have been seen by Ruisdael's contemporaries as exotic specimens imported from Scandinavia.<sup>4</sup> They have been somewhat randomly placed within a form of pleasure garden, whose natural and artificial components are enjoyed by the various groups of people

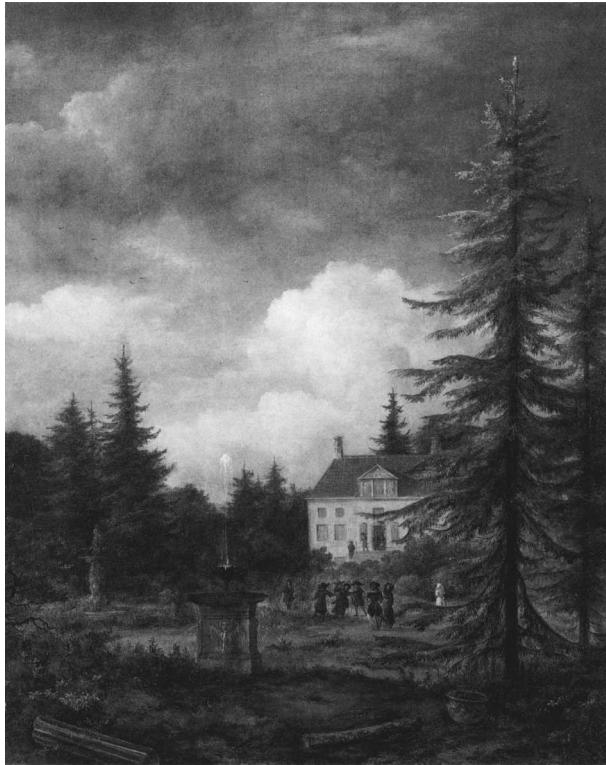


Fig. 1. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Country House in a Park*, late 1670s, oil on canvas, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie

that meander through the grounds. On the far right figures gather near the entrance of a large vaulted pavilion covered with foliage. On the opposite side of the garden three figures gaze at an elaborate fountain, which is surmounted by a small sculpted figure of a *mannekin pis*. An even more dramatic fountain is situated in the right center. Balanced in the water-spout high above the base is a small ball. Just beyond this fountain two figures gesture in surprise as they are suddenly caught within a trick fountain spurting up around them.

While the form of the pavilion and trick fountains were garden elements that existed by the late seventeenth century,<sup>5</sup> Ruisdael does not seem to have based his scene on any particular site.<sup>6</sup> It would be most unusual for formal garden elements, such as pavilions and fountains, to be placed within such a wilderness garden. Wilderness gardens, moreover, were generally not placed adjacent to classicist villas where formal gardens, geometrically designed and meticulously groomed, were to be found at both the front and back of the villa. Indeed, given the existence of the broken pine lying in the left foreground and the architectural fragment, perhaps a broken

cornice, lying in the lower right, it would seem that Ruisdael's intent was more didactic than topographic. These two elements, symbolic of the passage of time and the transience of existence, serve as a framework against which to measure the frivolous activities of the pleasure garden.<sup>7</sup>

In part because the painting lacks the heroic drama of Ruisdael's scenes from the middle of his career and in part because the brushwork is quite restrained, scholars have always placed *Country House in a Park* at the end of Ruisdael's career. The restoration of the painting in 1993, however, has revealed that the brushwork and color tonalities are far more vibrant than had been believed, which suggests that the painting may date from the mid-1670s rather than around 1680 as had previously been thought. The style of the costumes worn by the staffage figures would also be possible for the mid-1670s. The painting, in any event, certainly predates two related, but weaker, late works by Ruisdael, *Country House in a Park* in Berlin (fig. 1) and *Chateau in the Park* (Fisher Gallery, University of Southern California, Los Angeles).<sup>8</sup>

Ruisdael often collaborated with artists who executed staffage figures in his compositions, particularly at the end of his life. Similar figures in other of his paintings from the 1670s appear to have been executed by the Rotterdam artist Gerard van Battem (c. 1636–1684). The figures in this work, however, lack the solidity characteristic of Van Battem's style.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, there is neither technical nor stylistic evidence to indicate that anyone other than Ruisdael executed them.

#### Notes

1. Labels on the stretcher indicate that the painting was lent to the Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska, in 1942 and the Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1948.

2. The type of house and setting, for example, vaguely resemble those in a scene Ruisdael painted in collaboration with Thomas de Keyser around 1660 that depicts *The Arrival of Cornelis de Graeff and Members of His Family at Soesdijk, His Country Estate* (National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin; repro. in *The Hague* 1981, 24). The house in the Washington painting, however, is far more elegant than that at Soesdijk, which, because it is part of a portrait commission, may be considered to be an accurate portrayal.

3. See Kuyper 1980, 159, 219, fig. 321.

4. Norwegian spruce, however, had been used in Dutch gardens at least since the 1640s. Constantijn Huygens, for example, had them at his country estate, Hofwijck, which was built about 1640. (See Kuyper 1980, 20: 153, fig. 314. The engraving there illustrated was probably made after drawings by Pieter Post and published about 1653.) By the latter decades of the seventeenth century, Norwegian spruce can be found in a number of representations of Dutch gardens. One of the most interesting of these is a print made by



Jacob van Ruisdael, *Country House in a Park*, 1960.2.1

I. Moucheron of a bird preserve on a large estate in Heemstede where a number of spruce trees can be seen. This print is included in a bound collection of prints at Dumbarton Oaks called *Nederland*. I would like to thank Sally Wages for bringing this print to my attention.

5. J. van der Groen, *Le Jardinier Hollandois* (Amsterdam, 1669). As gardener for the Prince of Orange, Van der Groen was quite influential in the Netherlands. Plate number 10 in his book depicts a comparable fountain in which a copper ball is suspended in the waterspout. Around the base of the fountain in the plate, moreover, waterspouts are shown spouting out of a rocky path. The accompanying text explains how these devices work and how they can be set off to "surprendre les spectateurs." I would like to thank Sally Wages for bringing this reference to my attention.

6. Gorissen 1964, 102, no. 62, and Dattenberg 1967, no. 312, associate this scene and Ruisdael's related view of a country house and garden in Berlin (fig. 1) with Prince Johan Maurits of Nassau's Villa Vreugdenberg (Haus Freudenberg) near Kleve. This proposition, however, cannot be supported by any documentary evidence. Since Johan Maurits' country house burned down in 1669 and the painting dates from the late 1670s, the image could only represent the house after it was rebuilt in 1678, the year before the prince's death. An engraving of the site, executed about 1685 (Gorissen 1964, fig. 68), however, includes neither buildings nor a roofline

that can be related to either the villa in the Berlin painting or that in *Country House in a Park*. Although the gardens surrounding Johan Maurits' villa contained tiered fountains, Roman ruins, and spruce, they were not found together at one site.

7. These associations with transience are also noted by Walford 1991, 168.

8. The relationship was noted by Slive in *The Hague* 1981, 151. The Berlin painting is on canvas and measures 65 x 51 cm. The Fisher Gallery painting is on canvas and measures 47 x 54.5 cm.

9. See, for example, *The Hague* 1981, cat. 55.

## References

- 1907–1927 HdG, 4 (1912): 256, no. 819.  
1928 Rosenberg: 67, no. 520.  
1964 Gorissen: under no. 62.  
1965 NGA: 119.  
1967 Dattenberg: 283, no. 312.  
1968 NGA: 106, repro.  
1975 NGA: 316–317, repro.  
1976 Walker: 294, no. 392, repro.  
1981 *The Hague*: no. 54.  
1981 Schmidt: 75, pl. 22, repro.  
1985 NGA: 364, repro.  
1991 Walford: 167–168, repro.

## Pieter Jansz. Saenredam

1597–1665

PIETER JANSZ. SAENREDAM was born in the village of Assendelft on 9 June 1597. His father, Jan (b. 1565), an important late mannerist engraver and draftsman, died young in 1607, after which the family moved to nearby Haarlem. There Pieter began his artistic training in the studio of Frans Pietersz. de Grebber (1573–1649) on 10 May 1612. After a ten-year apprenticeship, he became a master in the Saint Luke's Guild in Haarlem on 24 April 1623. He was an officer in the guild in 1635 and 1640, and a *deken* in 1642.

Although Saenredam is not recorded as ever having studied with a specialist architectural painter, his interest in architecture may have been encouraged by various painter-architects active in Haarlem, most notably Salomon de Bray (1597–1664), Pieter Post (1608–1669), and Jacob van Campen (1595–1657), who subsequently designed both the Mauritshuis in The Hague and Amsterdam's Town Hall. A further contact that must have been important to the young artist was the mathematician and surveyor Pieter Wils. Soon after his apprenticeship, Saen-

redam began to produce the precise and restrained architectural compositions for which he is famous. De Bie wrote in 1661 that from about 1628 the artist "devoted himself entirely to painting perspectives, churches, halls, galleries, buildings and other things from the outside as well as the inside, in such a way, after life, that their essence and nature could not be shown to a greater perfection." The date that De Bie mentions in this passage is also that of Saenredam's earliest surviving dated church interior.

The two main churches of Haarlem—Saint Bavo and the Nieuwe Kerk—were among Saenredam's favorite subjects, although he also painted churches and cathedrals in a number of other cities, including 's-Hertogenbosch, Assendelft, Alkmaar, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Rhenen. His representations of these and other buildings have a portrait-like quality. They were based on preliminary drawings made at the site and elaborate construction drawings made subsequently with the help of straight edges and compasses. In these drawings Saenredam worked out the proportions of columns and arches and the