



Paint Family: The De Brays : Masters of 17th Century Holland

Friso Lammertse, Pieter Biesboer, Fred Meyer



Jan De Bray and his father Salomon are the greatest history painters that Haarlem ever produced. The two artists also determined the face of Harleem Classicism. Both Salomon and Jan were universally gifted, not only as painters but also as architects, poets and art theorists. It is small wonder that Salomon - just like the slightly younger Pieter de Grebber - was commissioned to decorate Paleis Huis ten Bosch that Amalia van Solms had built in honor of her recently deceased husband Frederik Hendrik. Jan carried out many commissions for Haarlems governing nobility, including three mantel paintings for the town hall and several regent portraits for various Haarlem institutions. The artist was an eminent portrait painter and following Frans Hals death became the favored portraitist of Haarlems elite. Many of his clients had themselves portrayed in the guise of a biblical or mythological figure for a so called portrait historie, a genre in which Jan excelled. His brothers Dirck and Joseph were active as still-life painters.

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