

Image



Eva Besnyó, Paintress Anneke van der Feer, beach Westkapelle, Zeeland 1933. © Eva Besnyó/MAI.

This is Zeeland

Seaside Resorts

In imitation of the first English seaside resorts, Zandvoort and then Domburg become refuges for the rich and famous in the summer months. The fresh air, therapeutic seawater and nearby woods for rambling are recommended as the ultimate recipe for good health. The idiosyncratic doctor and pioneer of physiotherapy Johann Georg Mezger begins frequenting Domburg in 1885, resulting in a steady flow of wealthy visitors. They are driven into the sea in so-called 'bathing machines', from which they descend into the sea via steps.

Artists

Attracted by the wealth of the new guests, at the beginning of the 20th century a group of artists begin spending the summer months in Zeeland. The first of them is Jan Toorop. From 1903 he goes to Domburg every year with his wife, Jannie, and daughter, Charley. A group of artists assembles around him, including Piet Mondrian, Mies Elout-Drabbe, Jacoba van Heemskerck, Ferdinand Hart Nibbrig and Jan Heyse. Each of the members of this so-called Domburg School has their own style and they all find inspiration in the light, the dune landscape, the woods and the local people.

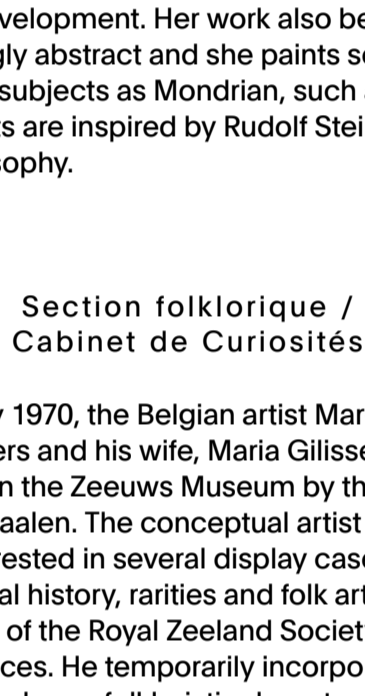
In addition to Domburg, many artists are also attracted to Westkapelle and Veere at the beginning of the 20th century.

Piet Mondrian



Piet Mondrian, Blue Apple Tree with Wavy Lines I, ca. 1908 (oil on paper). Collection Zeeuws Museum, acquired with support of the Rembrandt Association and the Province of Zeeland. Photo Ivo Wennekes.

Piet Mondrian spends the whole of the summer of 1909 in Domburg. This is a period in which his work is changing drastically. Until 1907 Mondrian has painted realistic landscapes in naturalistic colours. He now begins representing colours as he experiences them. The blue apple tree is part of a series of paintings of trees. For the first time, Mondrian treats his motif simply as repetitions of horizontal and vertical lines, divorced from their context. Like his series of paintings of the lighthouse at Westkapelle, the blue apple tree shows Mondrian's development towards the completely abstract style for which he will become famous.



Piet Mondrian, Lighthouse at Westkapelle, c. 1910 (oil on canvas). Collection Gemeentemuseum Den Haag.

Jacoba van Heemskerck



Jacoba van Heemskerck, Wood in Summer, 1909 (oil on canvas). Collection Zeeuws Museum. Photo Ivo Wennekes.

Jacoba van Heemskerck undergoes a similar artistic development. Her work also becomes increasingly abstract and she paints some of the same subjects as Mondrian, such as trees. Both artists are inspired by Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy.

Section folklorique / Cabinet de Curiosités

On 11 July 1970, the Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers and his wife, Maria Gillissen, are received in the Zeeuws Museum by the director, Piet van Daalen. The conceptual artist is especially interested in several display cases filled with natural history, rarities and folk art from the collection of the Royal Zeeland Society of Arts and Sciences. He temporarily incorporates this motley display as folkloristic department within his fictional museum, the *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* (Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles). Some time later, he presents Piet van Daalen with a souvenir in the form of a needlework sampler with the text *MUSEE MUSEUM Les Aigles*, embroidered by his seven-year-old daughter, Marie-Puck.



Marcel Broodthaers and Maria Gillissen are guided through the Zeeuws Museum by Piet van Daalen in July 1970. Photo Maria Gillissen.

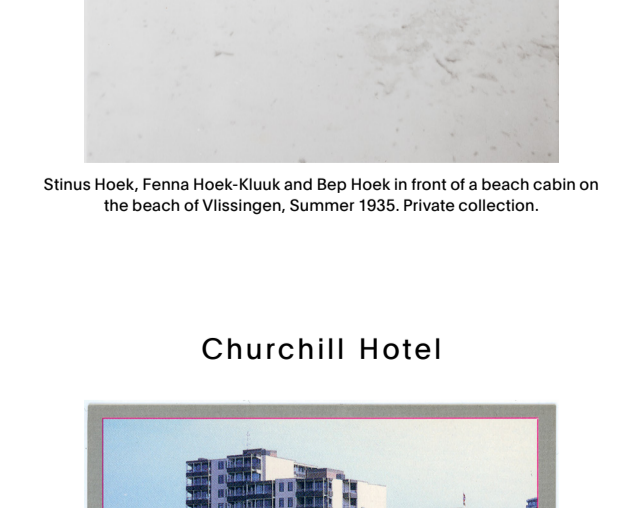


Marie-Puck Broodthaers, Musée - Museum Les Aigles, 1970 (embroidery). Collection Zeeuws Museum. Photo Ivo Wennekes.

Mass Tourism

The first seaside pavilion in Vlissingen is built in 1872. Holidaymakers arrive on the newly laid railway line and via steamboat from England. At first there is a trickle of visitors, but slowly but surely the number of tourists increases.

Mass tourism develops in the 1960s. People have ever more leisure time. The introduction of the 'reisspaarkas' (travel saving scheme) allows Dutch people to save for their holidays. As early as the 1950s, many Germans also spend their holidays in Zeeland, but many of them pretend to be Swiss: the war is still too fresh in the memory. Tourism becomes one of Zeeland's most important sources of income.



Jaap Scheeren, Noordzee residence, 2017 Collection Zeeuws Museum

North Sea Residence

Besides economic prosperity tourism also brings inconvenience to Zeeland. The Zeeuws Museum has invited photographer Jaap Scheeren to have a look at one of the many uniform bungalow parks. Armed with sidewalk chalks, stickers and other attributes, he transforms one of the impersonal holiday homes into an exuberant and festive squat, thus reclaiming public space from the advancing 'white fungus' that affects the coastal areas.

National Geographic

Wilhelm Tobien, Bathing women Martina Geldof-Wisse and Cornelia (Kee) Bos with three bathing men on the beach of Domburg, 1931.

Summer 1931. Martina Geldof-Wisse and Cornelia (Kee) Bos work as bathing servants on the beach of Domburg. They are photographed with three male bathing servants by a German painter from Berlin, Wilhelm Tobien. Two years later the picture is published in National Geographic Magazine. Tobien is one of the first photographers to make colour photographs for this American magazine.

Henk Hilterman, Holiday cottages in holiday camp "t Zeepe", Haamstede, 1971. Nationaal Archief/Collectie Spaarnestad/Henk Hilterman.

Oasis

The peace, the dunes, the forests and the beautiful beaches have attracted visitors to Zeeland for more than two hundred years. However, as a region with a shrinking population it has more to do with an ageing population and diminished opportunities for work. For this reason, the government and the business community promote the image of Zeeland as an oasis of calm. This is accompanied by the rapid construction of large-scale recreation facilities to accommodate the masses of tourists from the Randstad, Flanders and Germany.

The Bathrobe of Lien Hoek

Stinus Hoek, Fenna Hoek-Kluuk and Bep Hoek in front of a beach cabin on the beach of Vlissingen, Summer 1935. Private collection.

Churchill Hotel

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