

Proposed itinerary for Belgium and Holland
The Baltimore Museum of Art
Friday, September 28, 2012- Monday, October 8, 2012

Day 1: Friday, September 28, 2012 (B,D) Brussels

Arrival in **Brussels** from overnight flight. Transfer to the **Hotel Bristol Stephanie** located on the Avenue Louise.

Afternoon visit to the **Magritte Museum**. Opened in June 2009, the Magritte Museum displays works of the Surrealist artist for which it is named. Located in the heart of Brussels at the Place Royale, the museum is housed in the neo-classical landmark Altenloh Hotel, superbly restored in 1984 with the generous support of the Franco-Belgian group GDF SUEZ and the Magritte Foundation, and it operates as part of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium. Instantly popular, the museum welcomed over 500,000 visitors in its first year of operation.

The museum's multi-disciplinary collection is unrivaled. It contains more than 200 works consisting of oils on canvas, gouaches, drawings, sculptures and painted objects as well as advertising posters, musical scores, vintage photographs and films produced by the artist. The collection is comprised of purchases by the Royal Museums of Fine Arts, which owns the collection, and gifts from the Georgette Magritte estate. Additionally, many private collectors, as well as public and private institutions, loan art to the museum through an ambitious lending program.

In the early evening, we will have a walk along the beautiful Grand Place of Brussels. This beautiful square was destroyed by the French army on August 13, 1695. Only the stone shell of the town hall and a few fragments of other buildings remained standing.



The square was rebuilt in the following four years by the city's guilds. Their efforts were regulated by the city councillors and the Governor of Brussels, who required that their plans be submitted to the authorities for their approval. This helped to deliver a remarkably harmonious layout for the rebuilt Grand Place, despite the ostensibly clashing combination of Gothic, Baroque and Louis XIV styles.

In the late 18th century, revolutionaries sacked the Grand Place, destroying statues of nobility and symbols of Christianity. The guildhalls were seized by the state and sold. The buildings were neglected and left in poor condition, with their façades painted, stuccoed and damaged by pollution. In the late 19th century, mayor Charles Buls had the Grand Place returned to its former splendor with buildings being reconstructed or restored.

The Grand Place continued to serve as a market until November 19, 1959, and it is still called the *Grote*

Markt or *Great Market* in Dutch. Neighbouring streets still reflect the area's origins, named after the sellers of butter, cheese, herring, coal and so on. The Grand Place was named by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1998. After our walk, we will enjoy **dinner** in a local restaurant.

Overnight in Brussels.

Day 2: Saturday, September 29, 2012 (B) Brussels

Morning departure for sightseeing of **Brussels**, the capital of Belgium, headquarters of NATO and the political center of the European Union. We will devote the morning to Art Nouveau and the works of (among others) **Victor Horta**, architect and one of the earliest initiators of Art Nouveau.

We will visit the **Musée Horta**, housed in Horta's former house and atelier, **Maison & Atelier Horta** in the municipality of **Saint-Gilles**. Inside the splendid Art Nouveau interiors, there is a permanent display of furniture, utensils and art objects designed by Horta and his contemporaries as well as documents related to his life and time. This showcase of sinuous decorative lines, curved window frames, elaborate balconies and floral influence is keenly seen where even the light switch panels are works of art. **Hôtel Tassel** is another example of Horta's remarkable pioneering works of architecture of the end of the 19th century. The stylistic revolution represented by his works is characterised by their open plan, the diffusion of light, and the brilliant joining of the curved lines of decoration with the structure of the building. Both buildings were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000. The **Belgian Comic Strip Center** chronicles the history of Belgian comics and exhibits examples of comic strips in French, Dutch and English. Housed in the former Waucquez Warehouse, the historic building was a masterpiece of Art Nouveau by Horta.

Lunch on your own.

Visit the **Royal Museum of Fine Arts** which contains over 20,000 drawings, sculptures, and paintings which date from the early 15th century to the present. The museum has an extensive collection of Flemish painting, among them paintings by Brueghel and Rogier van der Weyden, Robert Campin (*the Master of Flémalle*), Anthony van Dyck, and Jacob Jordaens. The museum is also proud of its "Rubens Room" which houses more than 20 paintings by the artist.

Afternoon visit to a selection of contemporary art galleries and perhaps an artist's studio in the city.

Dinner on your own and evening at leisure.



Day 3: Sunday, September 30, 2012 (B) Bruges, Ghent

Today we will journey to the west to the beautiful town of **Bruges**. Our guide will highlight the long history of the town during our walking tour. The historic town center has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2000. Much of its medieval architecture is notable, including the **Church of Our Lady**, whose brick spire reaches 122.3 meters., making it one of the world's highest brick towers. The sculpture **Madonna and Child**, which can be seen in the transept, is believed to be

Michelangelo's only sculpture to have left Italy within his lifetime. The most famous landmark is the 13th century **Belfry**, housing a municipal carillon comprising 48 bells. The city still employs a full-time carillonneur to give free concerts on a regular basis. In the 15th century, Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, set up court in Bruges, as well as Brussels and Lille, attracting a number of artists, bankers and other prominent personalities from all over Europe. The weavers and spinners of Bruges were thought to be the best in the world, and the population of Bruges grew to 200,000 inhabitants at that time. The new Flemish school of oil painting techniques gained world renown.

Visit the **Memling Museum** to see some of this Flemish Primitive master's greatest works of art. The museum is part of the St. John's Hospital complex.

Leisure time will be given to explore the town, enjoy lunch on your own, and visit the many shops before returning to Brussels. En route back to Brussels, we will stop in **Ghent**. Upon arrival, visit **St. Bavo's Church** to view the masterpiece by **Hubert and Jan van Eyck**, two brothers, illuminators and painters, founders of the school of Bruges and consequently of all the schools of painting in the north of Europe. The most important work of the brothers Van Eyck, and the one that places their names forever among the great masters of painting, is the famous altarpiece, "**The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb**".

Evening at leisure back in Brussels.

Day 4: Monday, October 1, 2012 (B,L)

Brussels



Morning program in Brussels. A special visit and guided tour will be made to the **David and Alice van Buuren Museum**.

David Van Buuren was born in Gouda, Holland, in 1886. He settled down in Brussels in 1909 and entered the banking business. During his financial career, the great political and economic events of the 20th century were taking place. He married the Belgian Alice Piette (1890-1973) and began a period of 30 happy years at the center of Brussels' cultural life at their Art Deco house. Van Buuren sponsored several charities and cultural activities which Alice continued. In 1970, she formed a Private Foundation and she bequeathed her house, works of art and gardens... all of which constitutes the present museum.

Lunch will follow.

Late afternoon free time. Overnight in Brussels. Dinner on your own.

Day 5: Tuesday, October 2, 2012 (B,L)

Brussels/Antwerp/ The Hague

Morning departure from Brussels for drive to **Antwerp**. We start off our tour in Antwerp exploring the historic center of the city with visits to the Rubens House, the Cathedral of our Blessed Lady (a Gothic masterpiece housing three huge Rubens paintings,) and to the van Meighem Museum to learn about this 19th century Antwerp artist. **Lunch** in a charming place.

After lunch, tour the **Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp**, a neoclassical art temple constructed between 1884 and 1890. It houses a collection of paintings by Flemish masters that is second to none in the world. There are more Rubens masterpieces in this museum than in one place anywhere else.

Continue to **the Hague** for check in at the **Park Hotel**.

Dinner on your own.

Day 6: Wednesday, October 3, 2012 (B) The Hague

Morning sightseeing tour of the Hague with visit to the **Gemeentemuseum**. The Mauritshuis (another great museum in the Hague) is embarking on a unique collaboration with the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag. From April 24, 2012, approximately 70 highlights from the Mauritshuis collection will go on display at the Gemeentemuseum for a period of about two years. The paintings include *View of Delft* by Johannes Vermeer, *The Bull* by Paulus Potter and *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* by Rembrandt van Rijn. The collaboration is the result of the Mauritshuis's plans for expansion and renovation, which is due to take place from April 2012- mid 2014.

Mauritshuis Director Emilie Gordenker is delighted about the collaboration. "We have always said that the core of the collection would remain on display in The Hague during the Mauritshuis's renovation. We are very happy that this will be at the Gemeentemuseum – two Hague museums combining forces so they can offer the public a magnificent combination of art."

Benno Tempel, Director of the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag: “As a result, The Hague will be home to Europe’s most beautiful museum.”

In the afternoon we’ll visit a **private collection** in Wassenaar just outside of the Hague.

Afterwards, visit an artist’s studio (name of artist to be determined.)

Overnight in the Hague.

Day 7: Thursday October 4, 2012 (B) Rotterdam

Depart for sightseeing in **Rotterdam**, a city that is famous for its modern architecture and eye-catching skyline with the Erasmus Bridge across the river Maas. We shall see cutting-edge buildings by Renzo Piano, Piet Blom, and Rem Koolhaas.



Most modern architecture is clustered in the south, such as the life-size green light emitting matrix at Toren op Zuid (South Tower), the hypermodern New Luxor Theatre and Montevideo, the tallest residential tower in the Netherlands. The city is thus home to many architectural and design firms, some of which are among the most progressive in the world and involved also in the design of famous buildings and bridges in other major cities.

Aside from its cutting edge architecture the city is home to some of the country’s most progressive designers. This morning we’ll visit a selection of artists’ studios and collections in the city.

The extraordinary collection of **Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen** houses unique masterpieces by artists from Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Dürer, to Rubens, Rembrandt and Titian, but also Kandinsky and Magritte. We will tour this wonderful museum.

Return to the Hague.

Day 8: Friday, October 5, 2012 (B,L,D) The Hague, Haarlem, Amsterdam

Morning departure from the Hague and drive towards Amsterdam. Stop en route in **Haarlem**. Our first visit will be to the **Teylers Museum**, built in 1768 by Pieter Teyler, a wealthy local merchant. The museum is the oldest and one of the most charming in the Netherlands. We will visit areas of the museum **closed to the public** such as the Library with its 18th century atlases, and have a private showing by the curator of prints and etchings currently not on display. We will see the museum’s wonderful collection of Rembrandt etchings and drawings.

Lunch in a local restaurant. After lunch, we will visit the **Frans Hals Museum**, also in Haarlem, for a tour of the collection.

Afterwards, meet the organist from **St. Bavo’s Cathedral** for a short organ recital on the famous Muller-Organ and a brief tour to see this fascinating instrument. Before continuing to Amsterdam, enjoy a visit to a private collection (*to be confirmed*). Continue to **Amsterdam** for hotel check-in at the **Ambassade** boutique hotel. **Dinner** in a local restaurant.



Today we explore some of the most wonderful museums and galleries of **Amsterdam**. We first visit the **Rijksmuseum**, considered one of the most breathtaking museums in the world, to view its outstanding collection of paintings. The Rijksmuseum, or ‘State Museum’, has existed for more than 200 years. In 1800, the museum first opened its collection to the public as the Nationale Kunstgallerij (National Art Gallery). Since then, it has moved several times before being established in Amsterdam in 1808 as the Royal Museum by the decree of the King of the Netherlands, Louis Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon. In 1815, the Dutch King Willem I gave the museum its present name and in 1885, the Rijksmuseum moved to its present beautiful building, designed by the Dutch architect Petrus J.H. Cuypers. It was built in the then fashionable Dutch neo-Renaissance style, using historical neo-Gothic elements in its form and decoration.

The highlights of the collection, including the famous **Nightwatch** by **Rembrandt** and other 17th century masters such as Vermeer and many others are on view in the Philips Wing while the Rijksmuseum is being restored. The museum went through many transformations and remains even now, an attraction which should not be missed.

Next, a visit to the **Van Gogh Museum** is an unforgettable experience. The permanent collection includes more than 200 paintings, drawings and letters by **Vincent van Gogh** and provides the viewer an intimate glimpse into the artist's life, experiences and artistic developments. Besides the work of Van Gogh, the museum has a rich collection of other 19th century art, including Impressionism and Post-Impressionism.

Lunch on your own.

After lunch, enjoy a cruise of the **Canals of Amsterdam**. Amsterdam, capital of the Netherlands, is called the "Venice of the North" for its canals totalling more than 90 islands and 1,500 bridges. The crescent-shaped rings of man-made waterways built around the old heart of town during the Dutch Golden Age, known as the **Grachtengordel**, form concentric belts around the city. The 17th century canal ring area, including the **Prinsengracht**, **Keizersgracht**, **Herengracht** and **Jordaan**, are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Its main attraction is the rich architectural heritage of this neighborhood. In the 17th century, the merchant-based oligarchy that ruled the trading city of Amsterdam, built canal houses and mansions in the most prestigious locations, especially along the main canals. This zone includes the 16th century **Singel** canal, hotels of all sizes, restaurants, antiques shops and museums. The vista of elegant gabled mansions fronting long, tree-lined canals forms the image most often associated with Amsterdam. This cruise will serve as an introduction to the history and layout of the city.

In the late afternoon, we will explore the **contemporary art and design scene** in Amsterdam. We'll make visits to a selection of artists studio's and galleries ending with a reception at one of these locations.

Dinner on your own.

Morning departure from the hotel and drive to the **Hoge Veluwe National Park**. Here, we will tour the



collection and sculpture garden of the **Kroller-Muller** museum. Located in Holland's largest national park, amidst the scenic woodland of the Hoge Veluwe, visitors feel the Kröller-Müller Museum is a continuation of their walk in the garden and woods. The focal points of the museum are the extensive range of works by Vincent van Gogh and the large scale sculpture garden.

The museum is particularly known for its fine collection of over 275 van Gogh paintings plus the French Impressionists. Guests will find works by Seurat, Redon, Braque, Picasso, Juan Gris and Piet Mondrian. The museum is surrounded by one of the largest sculpture gardens in Europe. Visitors will be delighted by the display of works by Marta Pan, Hepworth, Rodin, Bourdelle, Lipchitz, Marini, Paolozzi, Moore and many others. The Kröller-Müller Museum and the Hoge Veluwe National Park, the legacy of Mr.& Mrs. Kröller-Müller, form a monumental ensemble of art, architecture and nature.

Afterwards, enjoy **lunch** just outside of Apeldoorn, followed by a visit to **Palace Het Loo**, the beautifully restored palace dating from the end of the 17th century constructed by King William III.

Late afternoon return to Amsterdam. Overnight at Ambassade Hotel.

Dinner this evening at a wonderful Amsterdam restaurant.

Day 11: Monday October 8, 2012

Check out of hotel. Transfer to airport as a group. Conclusion of tour.

(Art Horizons reserves the right to make changes and amendments to this program.)