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Preface

Dear Reader,

It gives me great pleasure to present the first issue of our bulletin to be published in English. Since 1953 the *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* has been fortunate in having a large and loyal readership. In recent years, however, it has increasingly been felt that the journal deserved a greater and more international circulation and broader recognition. We believe that publishing the bulletin exclusively in English, the worldwide language of scholarship, will enable us to reach a wider and more international audience of readers and authors. The content, format and design will remain essentially the same but, starting with issue 1, 2009, the title has changed. Henceforth it will be called *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin*.

We open this first issue with a special contribution focusing on Rembrandt's *Night Watch*. Bas Dudok van Heel's years of research into Rembrandt's masterpiece have culminated in two articles that contain a great deal of new information about this world-famous



painting. His first essay examines the significance of the composition, what prompted the painting of the work, and its original position in the great hall of the musketeer's guild, the Kloveniersdoelen. The second article is a catalogue of all the figures who feature in the *Night Watch*, their identities and their social status.

In this issue the time-honoured Acquisitions column is devoted to a very important and exceptional donation – eleven 16th- and 17th-century Dutch drawings and a terracotta statue, all from the estate of Professor I.Q. van Regteren Altena.

I trust that *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* can count on your continuing support and enthusiasm, and I am confident that you will derive great enjoyment from the articles and illustrations in the volumes to come.

Wim Pijbes
General Director