



Editorial

The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam was given that name two hundred years ago. Before that it was called the Nationale Konstgalerij (1800-08) and from 1808 the Koninklijk Museum – names that reflect the turbulent times at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The *Nationale* Konstgalerij was founded during the Batavian Republic, when democratic forces were strong and the party known as the Patriots governed. The word *Koninklijk* (royal) from 1808 onwards refers to Napoleon's brother Louis Bonaparte, who was the first King of Holland – if only briefly (1806-10).

It is also two hundred years since the epic Battle of Waterloo, which ended those twenty troubled years of political upheaval and Napoleonic wars. It was a defining moment, a watershed in European history, creating a backdrop for the development of the nation state and the rule of monarchies, some of which are still on the throne to this day.

A huge painting by Jan Willem Pieneman in the Rijksmuseum collection depicts the battle, with officers of the British army gathered around the Duke of Wellington as the tide of battle turns. In the foreground soldiers carry the wounded Prince of Orange, hailed in the Netherlands as the hero of Waterloo because of his bravery in combat. In this anniversary year, the Rijksmuseum commemorates the Battle of Waterloo by focusing on eyewitnesses of that long and extremely bloody fight. One of them was Wexy, the Prince's horse, which has survived it all – albeit stuffed.

This Bulletin has been given over to Waterloo and its aftermath. Michael Putter has investigated the background to the painting and has written a fascinating article about the marketing strategies of Pieneman and other artists in the early nineteenth century. Jolien Gijbels has researched the growth of Waterloo tourism and the sometimes gruesome hunt for battlefield souvenirs. She explores what these finds tell us about the decades-long memory cult of Waterloo. Jenny Reynaerts has studied the new monarchy of the House of Orange by analyzing state portraits of Willem I. Though ostensibly an obvious kind of propaganda tool, these portraits provide insight into the invented tradition of the early nineteenth-century monarchy.

This editorial is also new. From now on the editors of the Rijksmuseum Bulletin will introduce the articles and relate them to events in the Rijksmuseum and elsewhere.