

Rule Britannia!



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The British monarchy's abiding connection to the sea during the age of exploration was a critical factor in the establishment of Britain's first colonies in the New World. It is unsurprising, then, that, alongside grand portraiture, a strong tradition of maritime

painting was established in the royal court during the seventeenth century. Rule Britannia explores the rich artistic culture of Elizabethan and Stuart England and the artists who forged their reputations in the alternately violent and decadent circles of some of the last exponents of absolute monarchy. Although trade wars with the Dutch featured large in the period, it was to be Dutch and Flemish artists who dominated the artistic landscape. Lely, van Dyck, Rubens, Willaerts, and the van de Veldes found ample opportunity for patronage from both king and courtiers and some of their finest works are featured here. Paintings from the Royal Collection, the National Maritime Museum, and other private and museum collections in England, Ireland, and the United States bring alive an era of grandeur in which the first tentative steps of imperial expansion occurred.

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