

Attractions

In addition to the exhibition, the Laurenskerk has many different historical attractions.

The choir screen

The Laurenskerk's copper choir screen has been at the rear of the chour since the church was rebuilt after the Second World War. It is the only remaining part of the original choir screen that was constructed somewhere between 1712 and 1715. Records of notes from 1593 by then-churchmasters regarding replacing the wooden choir screen with a 'monumentaal brass choir screen' were found in 1710. In 1711, sculptor François Douwe was commissioned to create a richly-decorated choir screen. In preparation for the design, Douwe made a number of trips to Antwerp, Mechelen, and Amsterdam to aid him in creating a definitive drawing of a marble and copper choir screen. Following approval from churchmasters, the copper work was put out to tender on the well-known yellow foundry Quirijn de Visser-Willemsz on 20 September, 1712, for the sum of 19 pennies and 6 tokens per pound at a so-called Rotterdam light weight. A detailed specification provided an accurate description of the casting method, dimensions and figures, and the type of copper. François Douwe himself cut the wooden models for the copper casting and carved many of the marble decorations. The entire work was completed in 1715 and placed in the choir between the second row of pillars. A large part of the choir screen was severely damaged in the bombing of May 1940. The least-affected parts, including the copper doors, were moved to their current location after the church was restored.

Gravestones

A number of gravestones are built into the floor of the Laurenskerk, in the chapels in both the north and south aisles. While only clergymen could be buried inside the church at first, the burial of non-clergymen was permitted as early as before the restoration. However, this practice only became popular after the restoration. By 1623, there were already more than 900 gravestones in the Laurenskerk, some of them richly-decorated with embellished ornaments and weapons while others were more sober or displayed nothing more than a tomb number. The last burial, of 71-year-old Wilhelmina Wagemaker, took place on Monday 27 August, 1832, bringing the total to around 1360 gravestones. Paintings from the 17th century, depicting the interior of the Laurenskerk at the time, provide an accurate idea of the enormous number of gravestones in the Laurenskerk before 1940. Unfortunately, most of these gravestones did not survive the great fire and accompanying collapse of parts of the church as a result of the May 1940 bombing. Those still in a salvageable condition were restored and placed in and around the Laurenskerk during its restoration. Not only was this perceived as the right thing to do, it also helped avoid using more of the cemetery space surrounding the church.

The Schout bij Nacht monument

The monument to Johan van Brakel is situated in the chapel adjacent to the north-west wall of the north transept. Born in Rotterdam in 1618, van Brakel joined the Staatse Vloot at the age of 22. In 1666, he distinguished himself during the Four Days War by conquering an enemy ship from a sloop after his own ship had perished. He continued to make a name for himself over the next few years due to his courage and tenacity in various naval battles. In 1688, van Braken accompanied Prince Willem the 3rd to his coronation as King of England. On July 10, 1690, then 72-year-old van Brakel died in a battle against the French at Beachy Head.

Grave monument of Egbert Kortenaer

Egbert Meussen Kortenaer's tomb is located against the north-east wall of the north transept. Born in 1604 in Groningen, Kortenaer came from a simple background. In 1653 he served as a captain under Admiral Tromp, who handed the Admiral flag to Kortenaer after he (Tromp) was wounded in the St James' Day Battle. During the Norwegian war, Kortenaer fought against the Swedes alongside the

Danish king. Following his participation in the battle, he was promoted to Vice Admiral and elevated to the Order of the Elephant by the Danish king. In 1665, he was appointed Lieutenant Admiral at the Admiralty of the Maze in Rotterdam. Kortenaer died in the battle of Lowestoft in 1665, during the second English war.

Mausoleum of Witte Corneliszoon de Witte

Witte de With (1599 - 1658), born in Den Briel, has an important place in national history for two reasons: his exceptionally difficult character and his exceptionally exceptional courage. Despite his conflicts with superiors, which nearly earned him the death penalty in 1647, he maintained his position. Participating in the conquest of Jakarta, the Silver Fleet, and the Battle of Duins, among others, his courage, seamanship, and sense of duty were both praised and feared. Witte de With died in 1658 on his ship, *de Brederode*, during the Norwegian war. According to the inscription carved into the heavy stone of his tomb, the enemy king "out of noble admiration for his opponent's bravery, sent the body - embalmed at significant cost - back to the homeland".

'de Liefde' ship model

The 'de Liefde' ship model is located near Admiral Kortenaer's tomb, high up on the wall near a window. This late sixteenth-century ship model is not, as was customary in earlier times, a thank you to a saint for a safe journey. The placement of 'de Liefde' should instead be seen as a representation of shipping, trade, and the navy, and as the symbolic presence of the absent. It also has a fascinating history. In 1598, a fleet of five ships embarked on a trade expedition to Chile, Peru, the Moluccas, and - if possible - Japan. After the first ship was forced to return home due to a storm in the Strait of Magelhaen and another was captured in Peru, while two more fell into Portuguese hands at Tidore, remaining ships 'De Liefde' and 'De Hope' set sail for Japan. 'The Hope' is thought to have perished in a severe storm in 1600, but 'De Liefde' finally reached the island of Kioesie on 19 April, making it the first European ship to reach Japan. The fatally-ill crew, however, were forced to leave the ship, at which point locals emptied it. Only the stern image of 'De Liefde' - a wooden figure of Erasmus, after whom the ship was originally named before it was renamed *De Liefde* - was preserved in Tokyo's Imperial Museum. In 1962, a Japanese delegation from Tokyo offered a replica of this image to Rotterdam. This gift was reciprocated with a ship model of 'De Liefde', of which the model in the Laurenskerk is a copy.

The doors of Manzù

The doors of the Laurenskerk were donated by a large Rotterdam-based company on the church's 150th anniversary in 1968. The doors are works by Giacomo Manzoni, better known as Manzù. Born in Bergamo in 1908, this artist was also behind the doors of the Dom in Salzburg (theme 'Love', 1958) and St. Peter's in Rome (theme 'Death', 1964). The doors of the Laurenskerk can be seen as the crowning glory of this series. The exhibition's theme is 'War and Peace', likely inspired by a series of Passion scenes from 1938 to 1939. These scenes are set up in such a way that, when the doors are opened, the 'War' theme that covers the width of both doors disappears from view. When entering through open doors, only the 'Peace' theme - located in an arched tympanum above the doors - is immediately visible. A silent hanging drape, in the middle between the doors and the arch, connects both parts of the performance.