

ARTY Cats

Roelandt Savery, The Netherlands
by GREG BALAGIAN



Lion in Front of its Den, by Roelandt Savery, is on a 2016 stamp from Romania.

Roelandt (or Roelant) Savery (1576-1639) was a Dutch painter during the Golden Age and one of the brilliant representatives of the Mannerism style in European art.

The Mannerism style (ca. 1520-1580) favors an artificial quality, rather than the balance and clarity of earlier Renaissance painting that "emphasized proportion, balance, and ideal beauty. Mannerism exaggerates such qualities, often resulting in compositions that are asymmetrical or unnaturally elegant."

Savery was born into a family of painters in the Belgian city of Kortrijk in the Flemish province West Flanders. Around 1585, the family relocated to the Dutch city of Haarlem where he was taught painting by his elder brother Jacob and the Flemish painter Hans Bol.

In 1604, Savery settled in Prague where he became court painter of the Emperor Rudolf II. By 1616, he moved to Amsterdam.

Savery painted mostly landscapes and still lifes. His works were embellished with many meticulously painted animals, flowers and plants usually representing mythological or Biblical themes.

Romania issued a set of four stamps on January 6, 2016 commemorating Flemish

art from the collection of the Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu, Transylvania titled, "Love Art! The Brukenthal National Museum."

The 7.70 lei stamp depicts Savery's oil on wood panel painting, *Lion in Front of its Den*, which is small, only 14.5 by 22.4 inches. A resting male lion is outside its den and a cub or two can be seen inside.

Savery was especially famous for large and intricate paintings with a large number of animals, and one of those paintings, *Paradise*, is depicted on the 1967 souvenir sheet issued by the tracial state Aden, Qu'aiti State in Hadhramaut.

Pairs of lions and leopards and other animals are depicted on this painting in the collection of the National Gallery in Prague, Czech Republic.

One of the most successful painters of his time, Savery had many pupils. In 1638 he went bankrupt due to heavy drinking and died a year later. 🐾

*Gombrich, E.H. *The Story of Art*. Phaidon Press, 1950.