HISTORY OF THE DUTCH WINDMILL

In the 19th century, there were about 9,000 windmills in Holland (show picture of fortified Holland with windmills). They imparted a special character to the country and made an unforgettable impression on the foreigners sailing into Dutch waters. Does anyone know what windmills were used for? Originally windmills were built by the lords of the manors to ensure “free wind” and were used to harness the wind to grind corn. They were erected on the outside walls of the walled towns so as to catch the wind.

Windmills began being used for various industrial purposes from oil mills, paper mills, sawmills, water mills, etc. The natural form of energy from the wind, which was freely available every day, was utilized by the Dutch on a huge scale and because of this, the construction of windmills was raised to a high degree of mechanical perfection.

Here is an example of the interior of a tower mill with a stage that is often seen in the old towns (show windmill cut-away). The miller and his family lived in the lower part of the mill and the grain was stored in the floors above the family. Everything that went on in the village attracted the attention of the miller and the mill formed a centre of village life.

So how are Rembrandt and the windmill related? His father was a miller and owned his own mill!

For example, the position of the “sails” speaks its own language. The sails move counterclockwise, right to left. The miller expresses JOY by arranging the sails in a position just vertical of the 45 degree line shown. (show picture of Joy and Sorrow). What would signify JOY? birth of a child, marriage, important birthday milestone. When the sail is put past the 45 degrees, it means SORROW- a funeral procession. If a windmill is not used for a long period of time, the sails are put in the 45 degree angle shown by the line.

So when you draw your windmill, pay attention to your sails!
Windmills in History
Rembrandt Etching
Mechanics of Windmill
Cut-Away of Windmill