



From stage to stage: Royal De Gruijter has an exclusive cooperation agreement with the world-famous Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra



Business switch: International and national removals took over from transporting wood, linen and zinc objects as the mainstay of Royal De Gruijter

# DUTCH MOVERS, BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT

Once a packer of goods like wood and zinc, **De Gruijter & Co Royal Dutch Moving Company NV** became a company that moved art on behalf of the Netherlands' royal family, as well as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. It celebrated 135 years in business this May, and **Desiree Mulder** found out more about the firm's history



Wencke Klunder, Manager Arts and Orchestra Logistics at Royal de Gruijter



Paula Havenaar, Account Manager at Royal De Gruijter, looks after non-art moving work

**D**e Gruijter & Co was founded in 1881 by L. C. B. de Gruijter, a bookkeeper who lived in The Hague, and O. Smislaert. At the beginning, the company packed all kinds of goods – such as wood, linen and zinc objects – for transportation within The Netherlands and overseas. Later on, national and international removals took over as the biggest part of the business.

Aside from the traditional horses and carriages, special linked road trucks were used that could be placed on a train. By this time, the company also had offices in Amsterdam and Arnhem. The warehouses at the three locations held personal belongings of the people who repatriated from *Nederlandsch Indië* – the Dutch East Indies colony. They also stored valuable collections of paintings, art and furniture.

On 13 September 1920, Queen Wilhelmina of The Netherlands recognised De Gruijter & Co for its years of service to the Dutch royal family by awarding the firm the right to use 'Royal' before its name. The first transport for King Willem III – from 's-Gravenhage (Den Haag/The Hague to the Royal Palace in Apeldoorn – was carried out by De Gruijter & Co in its founding year, 1881.

During the 20th century, other members of the royal family were served by De Gruijter & Co. In 1932, the company transported personal paintings and drawings on behalf of the Queen of the Netherlands from the Royal Art Exhibition Hall to the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

While serving multinationals, embassies and private customers from 1881 onwards, De Gruijter & Co resumed the special art handling and transport in 2011. In that year, an exclusive cooperation agreement was signed with the world-famous Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, with the company handling the entire logistics chain for the orchestra, from stage to stage around the globe.

Five years on, the De Gruijter Art and Orchestra Logistics division is supporting numerous orchestras and museums with their specific moving requirements. Specially trained art handlers meticulously carry and pack delicate and irreplaceable objects, mindful of the differing standards of temperature and humidity required to keep them safe.

One of the company's biggest art projects of the past few years has recently finished. The Fries Museum, in Leeuwarden, moved its entire art depot – which holds more than 200,000 objects – to a new location. De Gruijter & Co packed and transported all of these items.

While De Gruijter & Co has been on a corporate journey of its own, it has – over the same period – safely and securely taken the possessions of many customers on their own journeys.

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