



Hendrick de Meyer
(? 1620 ca. - Rotterdam before 1690)
Beach with Fishermen on Boats
Oil on panel - 70 x 117 cm. - Signed Work - 1660-65 ca.

For the month of April, the gallery has chosen this wonderful panel by the important Dutch painter of the seventeenth century, Hendrick de Meyer. The work features a beach with fishing boats and numerous figures. Meyer specialized in different subjects, but his true expertise is landscapes and coastal scenes. Although there not too many details of the dates of birth and death registration of H. Meyer, it is known that he developed his artistic career in the city of Rotterdam, which was a great center of art production in the Dutch Golden Age.

Within the repertoire of works by Hendrick de Meyer, the viewer can find very beautiful winter landscapes, with clear skies and skaters enjoying the frozen canals. These works follow the the style of Jan van Goyen, whom he greatly admired. Meyer made a series limited pictures, featuring meetings of chivalry and scenes that contained a historical value. There are three examples of these works in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, one of the most important depicts the progress of the Spanish troops occupying the city of Breda on October 10, 1637. His works are usually large format, with monochrome hues, and stage in the purest landscape style of his time.

In our picture we see depicted an everyday life scene, which portrays the common activities of a fishing village. Boats resting in the sand and the sea, and all the bustle of the fishermen engaged in the discharge of their nets, many characters illustrate the scene, the horse-drawn carts that transfer the load, children playing, dogs running around, and bourgeois villagers walking and observing the scene.



As we can see, to get a greater sense of depth in the composition, the artist has used overlapping planes, so that the scenes come one after another.

So on the left we see a fishing boat stranded with a series of characters waiting for the sailors to start selling the daily catch.

As was common among the Dutch artists of the seventeenth century, the work is done in ochre and brown hues, sometimes breaking the monochromatic theme by the use of white and red on the attire of the characters.

Amongst the lower social class crowd, the viewer can see a gentleman riding a beautiful white horse, wearing an elegant red coat and hat with a white feather accompanied by an elegant lady riding a black horse dressed in black. The anecdotal touch is found in the foreground where two dogs are happily playing together.

On the left, there is a close-up, where the viewer can see a beautiful composition with four villagers on a small hill. It is in this exact location where Hendrick de Meyer has placed his signature. The two characters placed in the center are looking into the distance; the one on the left carries what looks like a long stick, but what is most noteworthy is the boy with a huge basket on his back who is wearing a jacket of a gorgeous dark green monochrome. Beside them, the artist has placed two men who are giving their back to the viewer; one sitting and the other reclining looking directly at the sea.



On the right edge, different scenes are happening. On one hand, a group of fishermen are preparing fish, and secondly, a cart pulled by a mule and fisherman carrying merchandise, both on a sea background filled of boats.





As a coastal scene, vessels are essential and in this case Meyer shows his great knowledge by painting each one in great detail and care.



The most significant part of the composition; Meyer uses a common resource amongst Dutch painters of the Golden who specialized landscapes. The technique is placing the horizon line low and making the sky occupy more than three-quarters of the work. This creates a greater sense of depth. In our case a thick cloud covers it completely, highlighting the different birds flying around.

Most importantly, in the foreground, right in the center of the composition we see a number of sea-related objects and fishing gear. This serves as the viewer as a guide to discover and understand the panel's subject matter.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- R. Preston, Seventeenth Century Marine Painters of the Netherlands, 1974, pg. 27.
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- “All the paintings of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, “A completely illustrated catalogue” pg.381, 382.
- E. Benezit, “Dictionnaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs” Vol 9 pg.60.

PROVENANCE:

- Braam, Amsterdam, 1943, lot n.20.
- Alan Jacobs Gallery, London 1974.
- Private Collection Westfalia, Germany.

EXHIBITIONS:

- London, England, Alan Jacobs Gallery “Fine XVII Century Dutch and Flemish Old Masters” 1974, Nr, 7.
- Turin, Italy, November 2012, Galleria Luigi Caretto, “53 Mostra Maestri Fiamminghi ed Olandesi del XVI – XVII Secolo”
- Feriarte Madrid, November 2013, Soraya Cartategui Gallery.

MUSEUMS

Hendrick de Meyer’s Works can be found in many museums around the world including: Amsterdam- Rijksmuseum, Apeldoorn- Rijksmuseum Paleis Het Loo, Copenhagen- Statens Museum for Kunst, Delft- Stedelijk Museum, Dublin- National Gallery, The Hague- Gemeentemuseum, Rotterdam- Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen.