



Abraham Jansz Storck (Amsterdam 1635 ca. – after 1704)

Pier with Numerous Boats

Oil on Canvas – 42,9 x 50,3 cm.

Signed Work - 1670-75 ca.

For the month of February we have chosen this wonderful painting entitled "Pier with numerous boats," by the important seventeenth century Dutch painter, Abraham Jansz Storck. Storck specialized in seascapes and landscapes and developed his entire artistic career in the city of Amsterdam. He was a follower of Ludolf Backhuysen, from whom he learned to paint boats in a very detailed manner. Experts have not reached a final conclusion, but it is believed that he was the brother of Jacobus Storck. The artist was a great illustrator, which contributed to his meticulously executed sailboats and frigates that can be seen from shore.

Following the common and typical style of Dutch artists from the end of XVII, Storck used strong grey tones that played a fundamental role in creating lights and shadows. It was common for the artist to paint Dutch dock scenes, in which the viewer can see perfectly recognizable cities such as Amsterdam in the horizon.

The importance of the sea to the Dutch is unquestionable because it was the place where commercial traffic occurred; all kinds of products were transported allowing for the overseas communication. The coasts were infested with fishing boats to supply the great demand throughout the Netherlands. Additionally, the Dutch sea was the location of the famous naval battles of the seventeenth century. Therefore, artists took interest in representing and documenting each battle. These paintings serve as a historical source to better understand naval battles of the time period.



If we look at the work's detail, the viewer can appreciate the composition carried out with an angular effect, letting the viewer have a wide view with several ships painted towards the center right and another boat painted towards the left corner where it is tied up to the pier.

On the left we can see the typical Dutch buildings near the harbor. One can see that the brick facade is completed in stages, with different windows on each of the floors. The artist has paid particular attention to each of the aforementioned structural elements, especially the bricks, which are drawn with great detail. There is also a comical character behind the wall of this property, only showing the top of his head and addressing the view directly.

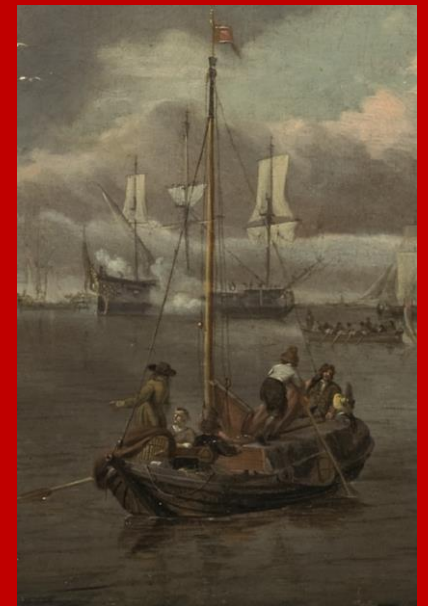
In the foreground an elegantly dressed gentleman with a lady stroll along the seaside. Behind them, a dog observes the scene adding a sense of realism appropriate to that time. Behind the barrels, we see a number of characters walking and helping ships to dock at the port.



Along the coast, we see a boat full of passengers, and beside it, a small boat appears to be approaching to help dock the boat. But if something catches the viewer's eye it is that the first boat's sails are filled with large square shaped patches that contrast the rest of the fabric, showing the wear of the sea. Another boat of similar characteristics, gives way to a horizon littered with boats.

It's amazing how Abraham J. Storck strikes a perfect balance despite introduce as many elements in so little space.

On the right, in the foreground, we see a small boat with several crew members, each dedicated to a different activity as they approach the coast. The sea is entirely still, its stagnation implying the state of the wind, an implication which is supported by the slackness of the ships' sails. The only visible movement, masterfully treated by the artist, are the small waves that gently sway the boats.





If water is a fundamental and essential element in a marina, the sky is the other undisputed star, usually taking more than two quarters of the composition, as in our case. The clouds are characteristic of the Northern countries, constantly changing and continuously moving; the artist displays all his knowledge that the lights and shadows that occur in them, contrasting with the blue of the sky, fill the space with gray and white hues.



Finally, note the location of originality in the artist's signature. At the bottom, on the left, in an excellently painted rectangular block of stone, with a huge anchor and a perfectly coiled rope, alongside his initials "A. Storck".

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Walther Bernt, *The Netherlandish Painters of the Seventeenth Century*, 1969 Vol. 3 pg, 113, plates 1135, 1136.
 - L. J. Bol, *Die Hollandische Marinemalerie des 17 Jahrhunderts*, 1973, pg. 317-323.
- R. Preston, *Seventeenth Century Marine Painters of the Netherlands*, 1974, pg. 46 – 48.
 - F.C. Willis, *Die Niederländische Marinemalerei*, Leipzig, 1911.
 - N. MacLaren, *National Gallery Catalogues, Dutch School*, London, 1960, pg. 408.
 - E. Benezit, *Dictionnaire des Peintres,...*, 1999. Vol.13, pg. 279 y 280.

PROVENANCE

- Appleby Brothers, London, 1963;
- Private Collection, Amsterdam.

EXPOSICIONES

- Turin (Italy), Galleria Luigi Caretto “53 Mostra Maestri Fiamminghi ed Olandesi del XVI - XVII Secolo”, November 2012.
 - Moscow, Moscow World Fine Art Fair, December 2012.
 - Madrid, Feriarte, Soraya Cartategui Gallery, November 2013

MUSEOS

Abraham Janz Storck's works can be found in many museums around the world including: Amsterdam- Historisch Museum, Rijksmuseum, Scheepvaart Museum, Cambridge- Fitzwilliam Museum, Dresde- Gemaldegalerie, Enschede- Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Haarlem- Frans Hals Museum, La Haya- Schilderijenzaal Prins Willem V, Leipzig- Museum der Bildenden Kunste, Londres- National Maritime Museum Greenwich, National Gallery, Maidstone-Art Gallery, Manchester- City Art Gallery, Nueva York- Metropolitan Museum, París- Museo del Louvre, Rotterdam- Boymans van Beuningen Museum, Historisch Museum, Truro- Cornwall County Museum, Utrecht- Centraal Museum, Viena- Harrach.