



Willem van Diest (The Hague 1610 ca. - 1663 ca.)

Marine Breeze with Fishing Boats

Oil on Panel - 37 x 45,5 cm.

Signed Work with artist's trace - 1640-45 ca.

To celebrate the arrival of summer, as July picture we have chosen this wonderful "Rough Sea with fishing boats," by the important seventeenth-century Dutch painter Willem van Diest specialized in maritime scenes. Together with the also artists Jan Porcellis and Simon de Vlieger be part of the early school called "gray", but with a more loose way of painting and more movement than their colleagues. Diest was an expert in making small meticulously painting effects so it is very easy to confuse his works with those of Pieter Mulier and Jacob Adriaensz Bellevois, however its calm sea are more reminiscent of those of Jan van de Capelle. His works, as in our table, often signed in small wooden planks drifting. His best pictures are always starring the sea, in calm and rough, with boats located very precisely within a carefully composed, giving great movement to it.

As we have discussed on previous occasions, specialization is a key feature in this period, in this case the marines belong to the genus of landscapes, creating a subgenre themselves very broad. The importance of the sea to Dutch people is unquestionable, was the place that produced the commercial traffic of all kinds of products, making room for overseas communication. The coasts were plagued by fishing boats to supply the great demand in all provinces of the Netherlands. It was the space in which naval battles took place so frequently in the seventeenth century, of which the artists represented are carefully cared, and in fact was in high demand and quoted at the time and in our days, because they are an historical and topographical source.



At our panel we see a perfectly manicured and meticulous brushwork when the artist represents the sea and boats, paying close attention, in the case of these latter to all the details that shape them, as masts, sails, ropes, etc.

Different boats starring the scene, all of them bear at the top the Dutch flag. On the right, in the foreground we see a fishing boat in rough seas fishing, inside there is several crew working, all wearing hats.

In the background are two boats, a sailboat profile and a large ship seen from the stern that the artist has made translating to the smallest detail and can see perfectly the whole network of masts and ropes.

The different shades of ocher with which they are painted sails of this fragment of the composition, against the sky, made of gray, creating leaden clouds.



To the left is another small boat, conceived by the artist in a very elegant, both the view point used, for the treatment of candles and wooden boat hull. It is clear to four characters, three of them left dressed in bright colors. But it is the fourth the most striking, elegant gentleman who is standing on the deck, his back to the viewer, wearing a black coat and hat of the same color, looking at the horizon, creating a sense mysterious to watch carefully as contrasted so it is quite common to find in a marina.

As usual, Diest has painted a city that blends with the background, which we can see the buildings and property of the church tower standing out the rest. Something recurrent among marine artists is to place the horizon line low, which helps provide a great depth to the composition.





To conclude, we note that in the marine paintings are two elements absolutely protagonists. First, the sky, which occupies more than two thirds of the composition. It was the place where Dutch artists were ratified as masters of light and authentic students of different atmospheric effects that result such as abrupt changes in the shapes of clouds. In our case we see a sky full of contrasts, with a wonderful golden light that surrounds all the work, creating the blue of the sky an amazing chromatic game.

Secondly, in this case the most important, the sea, with all the effects of light and shadow that causes the sky above him, swinging movements creating different forms in the waves, with lots of contrasting colors monochrome which are accentuated by the foam that is created when the sea is rough. All this leads us to contemplate wonderful compositions full of movement, transporting the viewer to these North rough seas.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

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PROVENANCE

Private Collection, London.

MUSEUMS

Willem van Diest's works can be found in many museums around the world including: Amsterdam- Rijksmuseum, Maritime Museum of Holland, The Hague- Gemeentemuseum, Greenwich- National Maritime Museum, Poitiers- Fine Arts Museum, Prague- National Gallery, Rotterdam- Maritiem Museum Rotterdam, Wurzburg- Martin von Wagner Museum.