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# Soraya Cartategui

Dutch and Flemish XVI and XVII century art

Dear Friends,

The gallery wishes you a happy summer and to celebrate the start of the holiday, we have done a complete study of "*Elegant scene with Figures on the Egmond aan Zee Beach*", a picture by the prestigious Dutch painter Cornelis Beelt. This wonderful work is available, please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to receive more information.

Best Wishes,  
Soraya Cartategui



### **Cornelis Beelt**

(Rotterdam 1602/1612 - Harleem 1664/1702)

*"Elegant Scene with Figures on the Egmond aan Zee Beach"*

Oil on canvas

65 cm x 106,5 cm

Signed work, 1660 ca.

Cornelis Beelt was born in the city of Rotterdam between 1602 and 1612. He was a Dutch artist who specialized in landscapes and genre scenes. According to the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (The Netherlands Institute for Art History) older sources claim he was born in Rotterdam in 1640, though this is impossible because he was engaged to be married in Haarlem 30 March 1630. This places the year of his birth between 1602 and 1612. It is unknown in what year he became a member of the Haarlem Guild of St. Luke, but he is listed in 1661 as one of the 51 better-known painters of the total of 72 painters who paid their 7 stuivers that year. He is known for his signed landscapes between 1651 and 1664. Beelt is listed in Vincent van der Vinne's list of guild members that he knew and his name was marked with a "d" for dead before 1702 as "cor: beelt". His last dated work was from 1664, so he died sometime between 1664 and 1702. Even though Beelt was born in Rotterdam, he made Haarlem his permanent residence and he would undertake all of his artistic production in that city. Haarlem had a sizeable art market during the Dutch golden age. Beelt had a high position within the Guild of Saint Luke, but it is unknown in which year he started participating. Following the trends of the time, the artist portrayed diverse daily life themes in his works. For example, he would paint marine landscapes of the Dutch coast and beaches, as well as winter landscapes, streets and public settings, and workshops representing different craftsmen in minute detail. Beelt tends to introduce figures that he will later on use again in other art works. Each detail is painted delicately and with varied forms, and with a very colorful palette that is awakening and striking. For his interior scenes the artist tends to use lighter tones that help create a dim grey light. Beelt's works might remind the viewer of paintings by Adriaen van Ostade. Beelt has numerous paintings that show figures ice-skating and also beaches with elegantly dressed figures buying fresh fish from fishermen. On many occasions Beelt's works have been attributed erroneously to Salomon van Ruysdael, but they are also similar to the works of W. Kool and E. Van der Poel.



*“Elegant scene with figures on the Egmond aan Zee Beach”* as its name suggests depicts a beautiful beach scene with numerous figures. The painting takes place at Egmond aan Zee Beach, which is located in Egmond aan Zee, a village on the North Sea coast in the Dutch province of North Holland. It is a part of the municipality of Bergen, about 9 km west of

Alkmaar. The fishing village of Egmond aan Zee with its sandy beaches and distinctive church, was a popular excursion site for numerous landscape painters in the 17th century. The church seen in the background of the painting collapsed into the sea during a storm in 1741, as did quite a few houses.

One of the most fascinating aspects of this painting is the quantity of figures represented. In this particular section, the upper class is shown contemplating the sea. One can assume they are bourgeois because of the type of garments they are wearing. The men are wearing elegant boots, hats, and jackets while the women are dressed with fancy dresses. The women's dresses are made in such detail that the viewer is able to see every single pleat in the skirts. Most of the garments are of dark colors such as browns, greys, blacks and ochers. The red jacket of the man riding the horse is without a doubt the most vibrant color found in the painting. It is very refreshing to see a note of color that contrasts beautifully against the other lighter brown hues within the work.

It is likely that the crowds of people are impatiently waiting for a ship that might be bringing back goods or friends and family who were coming back from a long voyage. The man in the middle, who is wearing a black hat with feathers, is holding up a telescope eager to find out when the boat will finally arrive. The two women are waiting excitedly and looking in the distance. The viewer also feels anticipation for the unseen arrival.

Towards the left corner, Beelt has included two greyhounds that are wandering around and following the people. One of them has a cinnamon coat while the other is dark brown.





Above, the viewer can see an image of Egmond aan Zee beach from the 17th century and on the right a current image of the same beach.



Dutch shipping began to emerge as a significant sector during the fifteenth century. Stemming from the inaction on the part of merchants from the Southern Netherlands to participate in seaborne transport, the towns of Zeeland and Holland began to serve the shipping needs of the commercial towns of Flanders and Brabant (particularly Antwerp). The Dutch, who were already active in the North Sea as a result of the herring fishery, began to compete with the German Hanseatic League for Baltic markets by exporting their herring catches, salt, wine, and cloth in exchange for Baltic grain. The Dutch were very skillful navigators. In fact, the Dutch had more ships than England, France, Germany, Portugal, Scotland, and Spain combined as the Dutch built ships more cheaply, more quickly and better than did any of their rivals.

In this other scene, the viewer can see that this group of people is also awaiting the arrival of the ship. They have a horse carriage, which might indicate that they have travelled to the beach from a nearby village. In this crowd, there is a combination of villagers and upper class. Some of the characters might not be waiting for the goods coming from abroad but

simply curious to know what was happening. Most of them are looking out to the horizon, giving their back to the viewer. Consequently, we are able to see and appreciate the fashion of that time period. Wealth factors can be determined by looking at the style of the hats and shoes. Some hats are more complex and have been created by craftsmen and even include a colorful feather (such as the hat worn by the man riding a horse, which has a white feather).



Although most of the painting deals with the expected arrival of a boat, this portion shows a more active scene. The horse rears up and the gentleman riding it is having a conversation with the other man with a red jacket riding another horse. Beelt paints the horse in a realistic manner which allows the viewer to see the muscles and veins in each leg. The horse's expression and posture gives the painting movement and without a doubt brings excitement to this artwork. Despite having many figures, this man with a feather in his hat catches the eye of the viewer immediately. Next to him, we can observe several villagers that appear to be curious as to what is going on. One can assume that they are not waiting for the boat but simply snooping around and gossiping between each other. They are sitting on the beach and observing the lively sunset. Towards the background we can see the peasants pointing towards the sea and chatting amongst each other.



The sky was a very important aspect for Dutch XVII century painters. It usually dominated the composition and took a big portion of the work. In the case of this painting, the sky, clouds, and sunset take up almost half of the panel. Beelt was very skillful when it came to drawing the horizon because he created moving clouds by using fast and small brushstrokes. The darker clouds on the right top corner suggest there will be rain or storm is approaching while the orange colors in the horizon show a beautiful and soothing sunset. Below the clouds, there are ships in the sea and one can see their sails moving with

the wind.

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#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Walter Bernt, *The Netherlandish Painters of the Seventeenth Century*, Phaidon, Londres, 1970. Vol I, pág 7. Plates 63 y 64; Catálogo *All the paintings of the Rijkmuseum in Amsterdam*, pág 105; H.U. Beck, *Kunstler um Jan van Goyen*, 1991, pág 25-31; E. Benezit, *Dictionnaire des peintres ...*, Tomo 2, pág 11; Christopher Wright, *Dutch panting in the Seventeenth Images of a Golden Age in British Collections*, pag. 167.

#### **PROVENANCE**

Private Collection, Amsterdam

#### **EXHIBITIONS**

Galleria Luigi Caretto, Turin , Italy

Feriarte 2013 , Madrid Galeria Soraya Cartategui

#### **MUSEUMS**

Cornelis Beelt's works can be found in many museums around the world including: Amsterdam - Historich Museum, Rijksmuseum, Edimburg - National Gallery of Scotland, Gateshead - Shipley Art Gallery, Haarlem - Frans Hals Museum, The Hague - Museum Bredius, Gemeentemuseum, Rotterdam - Maritiem Museum "Prins Hendrik", San Petersburgo - Hermitage, Sheffield - Graves Art Gallery. Gateshead "Shipley Art Gallery" Sheffield "Graves Art Gallery"

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