



**Jan le Ducq**

(The Hague 1629 - 1676)

*Loth Family Portrait with Landscape*

Oil on canvas

135,1 cm. x 110,2 cm.

Signed and Dated work in 1660

For the month of November we have chosen this magnificent family portrait made by the prominent seventeenth-century Dutch painter Jan le Ducq, specializing in portraits and landscapes. Thanks to the documentation of the time we know that also was a renowned printmaker and draftsman, achieving fame and renown to others to be merchant and soldier. Spent his entire artistic activity in the city of The Hague, where is recorded in 1656 as co-founder of the Fraternity of Painters. He was a pupil of Paulus Potter, which inherited the painting like animals, especially dogs. He was also a student of Karel Dujardin who learned the art of landscape.

His works were directed to the new emerging social class at that time, the bourgeoisie. In the seventeenth century, there was a renewal in the Netherlands within the social strata, with the development of trade and economic prosperity, as well as the nobility, the aristocracy and the clergy, a new class with high purchasing power, the bourgeoisie. That's why many artists focused his artistic production to a specific audience, representing scenes in which this powerful establishment appeared as the protagonist, often flaunting their wealth.

In his compositions have the most important figures, delighting especially in their clothes and usually placed as a backdrop Italianate idyllic. In this sense, the shades used for the clothing of the characters are very vivid colors in the landscape change is done in shades of ocher and green, creating a great contrast.



The portrait was one of the most requested genres, something caused mainly by economic prosperity through which thousands of people wanted to be immortalized in portraits they commissioned artists, they could be individual, couple or as in our case of family. Le Ducq has shaped the five components of the Loth family in the foreground, on a wooded enclave, with beautiful scenery as a backdrop. The arrangement of the characters is clearly pyramidal compositional device used between the edges very specialized figures to leave no room for doubt hierarchical status of the portraits.

Compositionally, the most striking is the contrast between the background color full of vegetation in green and brown, and live rich colorful clothing that is dressed with the whole family, to be immortalized in such an important time. The artist has been able to represent perfectly the different tissues of each of the suits, such as the gentleman is elegant velvet dresses instead of his wife and daughters are brilliant and costly wild silk taffeta, only available to the wealthier classes, color flooding the entire work.



The absolute protagonists of the picture are distinguished bearing father and his oldest daughter, with an elegant dress salmon. Le Ducq wanted to emphasize the family hierarchy placing in the center of the composition to the householder and his future heir. As we know if it had been a male offspring, immediately had usurped all rights of inheritance to the firstborn, but in our case it is not, since all their offspring are female.



On the right we see the mother with the youngest girl on his lap, in solemn attitude dressed in a very elegant, especially the small, wearing a yellow dress and a colorful headdress.

And to the left we see the third sister, median, playing with the dog and turns to look directly at the viewer pointing with his left hand a flower about to sprout which is lying on the ground, as symbolism of freshness and youth, as an allusion to his imminent entry into adulthood. Like any self-respecting Dutch picture, you see a dog as a family member.





As mentioned above, in the background we found a wooded landscape with a river and corresponding cascades that is lost in the distance. The sky, so important in landscape compositions of that period, occupies about half of the table, and have those thick clouds so typical of Northern European skies.

Loth Family is accompanied by the fountain with the statue of Diana the Huntress, goddess of the hunt and the moon, and protector of nature, which we identify through the crown crescent shape that is on her head, bow and arrows



and greyhound that appears next to him. Refers to the strength, confidence and intuition of women. This is a smart finishing touch by the artist to accompany the Loth family, consisting of five members, four of whom are women, in clear reference to the important role they play within the family hierarchy.



Finally, note that the painting is full signed and dated 1660 lower right of the canvas, Jan Le Ducq performed at the age of 31, four years after participating as co-founder of the Fraternity of Painters the Hague, which would bring together the most important artists of the city.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- K. Mullenmeister, *Meer und Land im Licht des 17 Jahrhunderts*, 1978, Band 2, pg. 60.
- E. Buijsen, *Haage Schilders in de Gouden Eeuw. Het Hoogsteder Lexicon van alle schilders werkzaam in Den Haag, 1600-1700*, 1998, pg. 301-302.
- E. Benezit, *Dictionnaire des peintres....*, tomo 8, 1999, Pg. 416.

## **PROVENANCE**

Direct Commission of the Loth Family to Le Ducq.

In heritance to his grandson, husband of Francois Hoyer, Amsterdam.

In heritance Hendrik David M (e)ispelblom Beyer, Haarlem, from 1907 (as it can be seen on the label placed in the back of yhe work), it has been passed on to other generations within the family.

Private Collection, New York.

## **EXHIBITIONS**

Moscow, Rusisa, Moscow World Fine Art Fair, December 2012.

## **MUSEUMS**

Existen obras de Jan Le Ducq en las colecciones de los museos de las siguientes ciudades entre otras: Arkel- Stadhuis (legado del Gemeentemuseum de la Haya), Copenhague- , Edimburgo- , Kassel- Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, La Haya- Habisch, París- Musée du Petit Palais, Viena- Liechestien.