



Abraham van Westervelt (1620 ca -Rotterdam 1692)
Pair of Landscapes with Figures
Oil on Panel - 73 cm x 59 cm. Signed with Initials 1670 ca.

For the month of September, the gallery has chosen to analyze these wonderful Dutch landscapes by Abraham van Westervelt. The painter's landscapes are known for their wooded large scale compositions which are balanced with dense foliage trees and clear skies with a few moving clouds, and embellished with figures, houses, rivers, and occasionally farm animals.

Color plays a crucial role in all of Westervelt's works; for example, the depth of the wood's trees is emphasized by the contrast of the different tonalities of green, brown and yellow found in the leaves, branches, and runks. These colors are placed against the clear blue sky that has clouds pushed by the strong winds. The artist also took great care in creating the perfect lighting for each work by combining elements such as light, color, and varying shades.

By looking closely at the landscape, the viewer can clearly appreciate that Westervelt's landscapes follow the typical style of Dutch landscapes of the Golden Age. Dutch artists spent a great deal of time outdoors surrounded by nature in order to study the land, vegetation, rivers, woods, and hills. Most artists would make preliminary sketches of what they saw during these walks including all the elements they could perceive such as distant cities in the background and peasants with cattle.

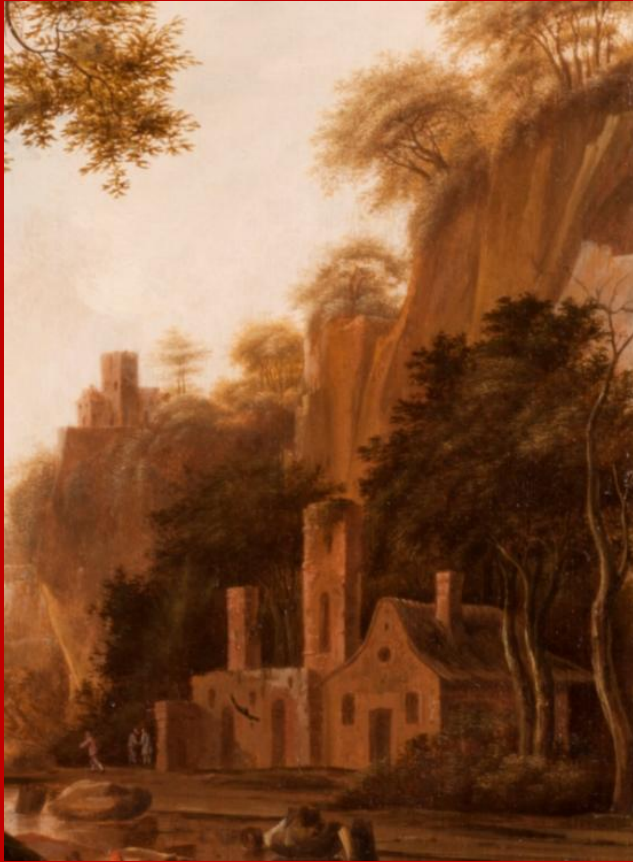


The most significant component of the first painting is the huge oak tree located on the left side. By carefully looking at the branches, the viewer is able to see that each is filled with leaves and created through tiny dark green brushstrokes as well as a yellow brownish tone to show the drier leaves. The dark green and the ocre dark yellow shades combine in a sublime manner and help create a balanced composition. The detailed and careful way this tree is executed emphasizes the artist's talent. For many years he worked for the court of Queen Janusz Radziwill and painted numerous landscapes of the land and cities of the Polish Crown. These landscapes depicted Kiev and the Great Duchy of Lithuania.



In the center of the composition, the viewer can see the river that goes stretches throughout the work. It was very common for artists of the time to paint a river that extended to the horizon as it acts as a visual respite from the dense forest. In the case of this painting, the river is very calm and divides the composition in order to include a valley and more space for the sky. It was very common for the sky to occupy three fourths of the panel in order to achieve great depth and a major sense of perspective.

In the foreground there are several figures. By looking at their garments that are bright red and blue, the viewer can see that they are villagers. Three of them are seated on rocks close to the river and they are enjoying themselves and chatting; there is also a standing figure who is part of the animated group, and a dog that is happily jumping from rock to rock. It was very common for Dutch landscape artists of the XVII century to depict these daily life scenes.

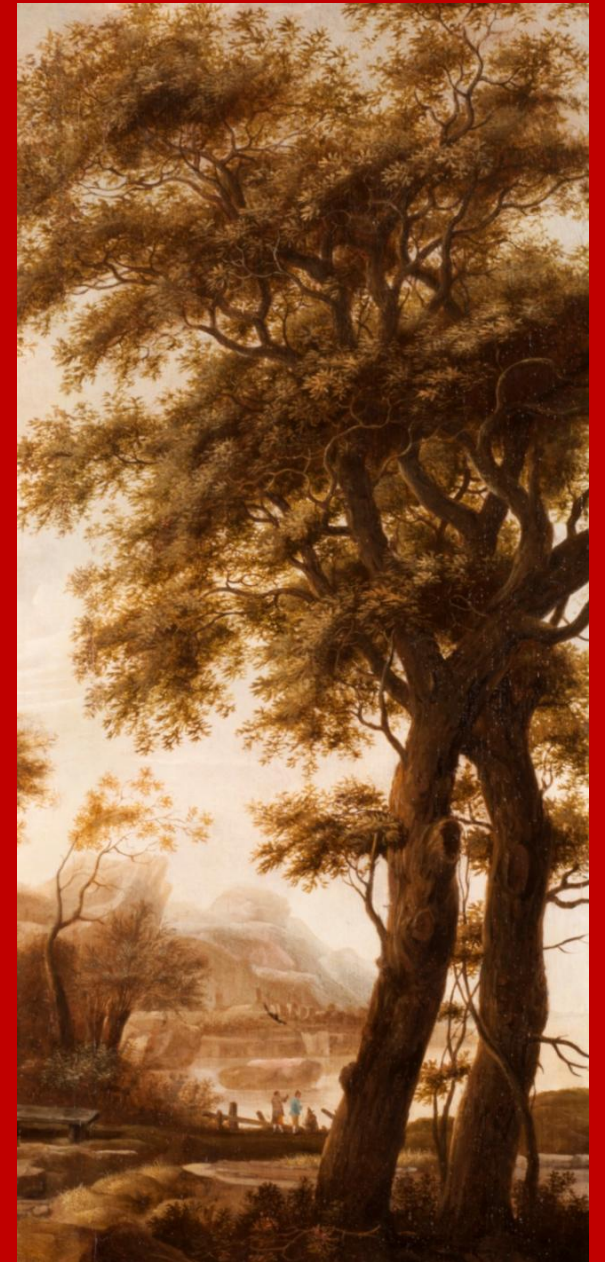


On the other side of the river, there is hill with houses around it. This is just an impulse of the artist, and without a doubt an idea and inspiration brought from artists who travelled abroad to countries such as Italy and brought back new techniques as well as new compositional ideas from other countries.



In the second pair, the forest acts as the prominent feature. To the right in the foreground, the viewer can see two strong intertwined trees. These trees show the course of the river leading to a rocky shoreline in the background. On the shore there are fishermen who embellish the scene.

Towards the left there is a dense forest with tall trees that frame this beautiful landscape, next to figures of villagers who are animatedly chatting, and to the far back there is a hunter returning home from a successful hunting journey with his catch over his shoulders.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Walther Bernt, *Die Niederlandische Maler des 17 Jahrhunderts*, 1979, Vol. 3, plates 1465-1466.
- Zygmunt Batowski, “Abraham van Westervelt Pintor Holandés del Siglo XVII y su trabajo en Polonia”, *Visión general de la Historia del Arte*, Nº 3-4, ed., Academia Polaca de Ciencias, Cracovia 1932.
- H. Gerson, “Een landschap van A. van Westervelt”, *Kunsthistorische mededelingen van het Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische*, Documentatie 1, 1946, pág. 30-31
- R.B. Prud'homme van Reine, “De zeventiende-eeuwse zeeheldenportrettenreeks van Abraham Westervelt”, *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum*, 41, 1993, pág. 3-15
- A. Blankert, *Museum Bredius*, 1978
- E. Benezit, *Dictionnaire des peintres ...*, Tomo 14, pág. 565.

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, England.

EXHIBITIONS

Turin, Luigi Caretto Gallery, November 2012. “53 Mostra Maestri Fiamminghi ed Olandesi del XVI_XVII Secolo”

Madrid, Feriarte 2013, Soraya Cartategui Gallery

MUSEUMS

Abraham Westervelt's works can be found in many museums around the world including: Amsterdam- Museo Maritime Museum of Holland, Baltimore (Maryland-USA)- Walters Art Museum, The Hague- Bredius Museum, Kiev- National Museum of Art.