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Galería de Arte

*Soraya Cartategui*

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Dear friends,

For February we have chosen this wonderful genre painting made by the important seventeenth-century Flemish painter Joos van Craesbeeck specializing in everyday scenes of life in villages, who in some of his works has signed with the monogram CB or JVCB.

Best wishes,  
Soraya Cartategui

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**Joos van Craesbeeck**

(Neerlinter 1605 - Brussels 1660)

*“The surgeon of the village”*

Oil on panel

48 cm. x 35 cm. (18.89 x 13.77 in.)

Work signed with monogram CB

1640 ca.

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Son of a baker, in 1630 he settled in Antwerp and a year later he married the daughter of the baker of the citadel for whom he worked. It was there where he met his great master Adrian Brouwer in 1633 and the art career of Craesbeeck emerged from this encounter. That same year he became a free teacher in the Guild of San Lukas in Antwerp and later, in 1651, in the Guild of archers. The influence that Adrian Brouwer exerted on the work of J. van Craesbeeck is very strong, in the style and in the subject of his compositions, for that reason, in some occasions both works get confused. We can also see some similarity with other genre artists such as G.V. Tilborgh and M.V. Helmont. A constant feature of his style is the symmetrical, clear and clear light management, which revives the brown, brown and greenish monochromatic tones, giving them a great vividness. In his paintings he shows us how the villagers and the lower strata of society lived. In addition, the realism and rawness with which he represents his characters endows them with a great strength, which is no longer only visual for the viewer, but surpasses the sense of emotion.



The importance of this type of painting, which emerged in the seventeenth century Holland, is that it reflects the secularization of a society. In the rest of Europe, in countries such as France, Italy or Spain, the Catholic religion had a great role and an important weight in life, this fact is reflected in the art and it's resulting in a large production of religious, mythological and classical art works. At the same time, in the Netherlands, there was a very interesting phenomenon: a strong, active and wide art market, to which all of society had access, which was represented in it. This contrasts with the rest of the European countries, where the art market remained a privilege of the aristocracy and the upper bourgeoisie. The representation of the daily life of a society so complex and in continues transformation has provided us with an incalculable historical document that invites us to the sociological analysis of seventeenth-century Holland.

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whiter than it should be. In contrast to the sick sufferer, a child in the shade takes his hand with a worried face, the same one that is shared by the dog that has approached to his master when he heard the lamentations. It is very common find animals in these types of paintings because they bring a homey and endearing touch to the scene. In this case, we also find an ironic touch because despite how corpulent the sufferer is, his feet do not touch the ground so he needs to support them on a ledge.

Meanwhile the supposed surgeon is focused on his task, which is possibly to remove an abscess of fat because at first sight we can see that it is a superficial operation, without much blood. This is appreciated; because the doctor is older and does not see too well, because of that his eyes are half-closed trying to focus on the intervention he is practicing. It also catches our attention his face tired of the effort.



In the background we can see three peasants chatting animatedly through the window. In fact, the couple behind the surgeon seems more interested in the news that the young man brings from outside than in the pain of the patient. Also the man who is right next to the doctor seems to be more attentive to the cage hanging from the ceiling than to his fellow citizen; he is probably wondering why there is not a bird inside.



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In the foreground, the assistant is in charge of disinfecting the surgical utensils by putting them on the fire. Normally, the stove was used by Flemish artists of the seventeenth century to symbolize the cold outside, so that it was identified with a winter season despite being representing an indoor scene. In this case the stove would have a double symbology, both to disinfect and to indicate the season in which they were.

We can get an idea of the amplitude of the room thanks to the characters and the furniture that occupy it, such as the shelf that can be seen behind the cage and the rack that holds a curious pink hat. In this way, we realize that the ceiling is not very high and the room is not very wide, even though the little furniture there is not much more space.



On the other hand, the dirty pots and clothes that are scattered on the floor give us a feeling of distrust towards the hygiene with which the operation is carried out, because we only see a broom in the background as a cleaning utensil. This scene contrast with our days, due to the great sterilization of the hospitals to which we are accustomed, but this was normal at that time.

Finally, the depth is provided by the open door that shows us a possible waiting room for this improvised "consultation", where a man who turns his back on us

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those moments.




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## PROCEDEENCE

Private Collection, France.

## EXHIBITIONS

Feriarte, November 2017, Madrid, Soraya Cartategui Fine Art Gallery.

## MUSEUMS

J. Van Craesbeeck's works can be found in many museums around the world including: Suermondt Museum of Aachen (Germany); Fine Arts Royal Museum of Antwerp (Brussels); Gemaldegalerie of Berlin (Germany); Fine Arts Royal Museum of Brussels (Belgium); Tiroler Landesmuseum of Innsbruck (Austria); Prado Museum (Spain); Alte Pinakothek of Monaco; Louvre Museum of Paris (France); Doria Pamphili Gallery of Rome (Italy); Ermitage of St. Petersburg (Russia); Akademie der Bildenden Kunste of Vienna (Austria).

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