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Galería de Arte

Soraya Cartategui

Dear friends,

In this month of February the gallery presents this magnificent mythological scene of the important Flemish painter, Adriaen van Stalbemt.

Best wishes,
Soraya Cartategui



Adriaen van Stalbemt

(Antwerp 1580 – 1662)

“Landscape with Atalanta and Meleager”

Oil on copper

70 x 87,7 cm. (27,55 x 34,52 in.)

1620-30 ca.

Reproduced. K. Ertz, Monographic Catalogue. *Adriaen van Stalbemt*. 2018.

Relevant Flemish painter of landscapes, historical and mythological themes, he also made some genre works and specialized in cabinet painting. In 1585, his family, which was Protestant, settled in the city of Middelburg. In 1609 the artist returned to Antwerp, where he became Master of the Guild of St. Luke. In 1618 he was a member of the Rhetoric Chamber of Violieren, so he actively participated in the intellectual life of the city. His career was very active in Antwerp, where he held a prominent and prestigious position. In 1633 he traveled to London, where his services were required by Charles I, King of England. There he collaborated with J. Van Belcamp (1610-1663). In Antwerp he made numerous collaborations with his colleagues J. Brueghel I (1601-1678), P. Brueghel II (1525-1569), and Frans Franken II (1581-1642). The scarcity of work dated with security, makes it impossible to define an evolutionary style, although several influences can be established in his painting, such as the influence of painters among whom we find G. Van Conixloo (1544-1607), P. Bril (1554-1626), J. Brueghel, H. Met De Bles (1510-1550), and H. Van Balen (1575-1632). On some occasions his figures have been confused with those of Van Balen. His compositions are beautiful and harmonious, he treats the color with great mastery preferring the bright blue and green tones that stand out on more muted backgrounds. The perspective in his landscapes is extraordinary, characterized by a low point of view.

He was truly a great artist already recognized in his time, he had commissions from different dealers such as C. Inmerseel who worked in Seville. In Spain in the seventeenth century there was a great interest in Flemish art and that is why, so many Flemish dealers moved to Spain to trade with this type of painting.



This excellent work by the artist Adriaen van Stalbeem, represents a mythological scene narrated by the poet Ovid in Book VIII of his *Metamorphosis*. We refer to the story of Atalanta and Meleager, who, thanks to their cunning, were able to rid their people of the desolation caused by a huge wild boar. According to Ovid in the book, a giant wild boar sent by the goddess Diana in revenge for not having honored her altars, ravaged the kingdom of Calidonia. Meleager, son of the king and his beloved Atalanta organized a hunt helped by his cousins Castor and Pollux. Finally, all the men set out to capture but Atalanta was the first to hurt the wild boar with one of its arrows and Meleager who finished off the animal with his sword, offering his head and skin as a trophy.



This wonderful copper represents two moments in the history of Atalanta and Meleager. At the bottom of the composition we observe the right moment of the action of wild boar hunting. The characters that are in a lush landscape, run towards the animal accompanied by their dogs that appear in full chase.

The way of painting the movement is exceptional on the part of the author, the costumes of the characters are violently agitated by the race. In addition, the physiognomy of the animals is captured perfectly, the galloping horse lifts its front legs, Pollux riding the animal, prepares its spear to skewer the beast. Beside him, his brother Castor plays an instrument to encourage the hunt.

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territory. The expression of his face denotes bravery and anger, which directs directly the protagonists of the play,



represented with great naturalism and realism. On the animal appears a character of grotesque complexion, about to hit the back with a cane.



The main scene that appears in the foreground represents the moment after the hunt, known throughout Art History as "the fighter's rest". We observe how Meleager comforts her beloved, who is sitting on a log calming down after the hectic hunt. A dog poses its paws on Atalanta's knees for attention and below it we find the bow and arrows with which he correctly shot the depicted wild boar dead at the feet of the characters.

A small winged being, undoubtedly representing some god, stands between the couple and turns his back on the spectator, showing his turned fleshy. Meleager accompanied by his spear offers the head of the great beast to his beloved Atalanta, in which we can appreciate an expression of deep innocence and love.

To the right of the characters we see, with great realism and mastery a colorful parrot that perches on the trunk of a tree, on it, a bird spreads its majestic wings and under them, an imposing deer observes the scene that is happening. The outline of the beautiful animals shows the intense study by the author of their physiognomy. We also found an instrument hanging from the trunk of the tree, this kind of trumpet that was formerly used in hunting, called "hunting horns".



The entire composition is framed in a dreamlike landscape, where the lush trees in the foreground give way to a valley that extends to the horizon. Stambelt creates a magical scene full of color, further

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soft luminosity to the painting and that achieves a pleasant sensation when contemplating it.

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PROVENANCE

- Private collection, Italy.

MUSEUMS

There are works by Adriaen van Stalbeem in the museum collections of the following cities among others: Prado Museum, Madrid (Spain) - Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (Netherlands) - National Museum, Warsaw (Poland) - National Museum, Gdansk (Poland) - Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp (Belgium) - Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne (Germany) - National Gallery, Prague (Czech Republic) - Dahlem Museum, Budapest (Hungary) - Museum of Fine Arts, Dijon (France) - Uffizi Gallery , Florence (Italy) - Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig (Germany) - Museum Staatl., Tongerlo (Belgium); Museum of Fine Arts, Frankfurt (Germany).

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