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Galería de Arte

# Soraya Cartategui

Dear friends,

In this month of July the gallery presents you this wonderful seascape, made by Jan Theunisz Blanckerhoof, featured Dutch painter of the seventeenth century.

Best wishes,  
Soraya Cartategui



**Jan Theunisz Blanckerhoof**  
(Alkmaar 1628 – Amsterdam 1669)

*“Coastal scene with boats”*

Oil on canvas

54 x 74,5 cm. (21.26 x 29,33 in.)

Work signed with monogram

1655-60 ca.

Jan Theunisz Blanckerhoof was an important painter of the Dutch Golden Age specialized in seascape. As we have already mentioned on previous occasions, specialization is one of the fundamental characteristics in this period. In our case, the seascapes belong to the genre of landscapes, creating in themselves a very broad subgenre. The importance of the sea for the Dutch is unquestionable, it is the place where commercial traffic was produced, of all kinds of products, giving space to overseas communication. The sea, was the scene of naval battles so frequent in the seventeenth century, of which the artists were interested, in fact they were very demanded and quoted at that time and also in our days, since they suppose a source of historical character and topographic.

According to the documentation, we know that in addition to being a painter, he was also a draftsman. It appears registered in many occasions with the name of Jan Maat. Because of his passion for navies, he was commissioned by the Admiralty to embark on a warship so that he could observe all the details of the naval contests, which he would paint later.

In his compositions, the gray and bluish tones always stand out, as did S. de Vlieger, A. van Everdingen and P. Mulier. He had several disciples, among whom we find Aernout Smits. It is common to find in their works agitated seas with waves breaking on a rocky coast. It often covers the sky with thick clouds over a wide and clear horizon. He made some topographical landscapes of the coasts, both of his native country Holland, and some Italian coastal landscapes, specifically, the port of Genoa. His works are characterized not only by the use of gray tones, but also by the masterful treatment of light and the delicate atmospheric effects. It is not very common for him to sign his paintings, when he did it was with his monogram.



Our painting is a fantastic seascape very typical of Jan Theunisz Blanckerhoof's repertoire, which represents a rough sea with several boats arranged in different planes of the composition.



Blanckerhoof uses a much more careful and meticulous brushstroke when representing the boats, paying close attention to all the details that make them, such as masts, sails, ropes, etc. The boats appear in different positions, as a sign of the great mastery of the painter when it comes to representing different points of view. In addition, the swollen sails and the waved Dutch flags indicate to the spectator the strong winds of the north seas.

As for the sea, it plays a major role in the composition, we observe that it is a tumultuous sea, which is shaken violently, forcing ships to lean vigorously. In the central part, we see the foam formed by the shock of the agitated waters against the coast. The realism when it comes to representing the waves is appreciated in the detail with which he paints all the foam that forms when boats pass by.

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To the right of the composition, we find represented an estuary, where a large boat is stranded and next to it, a small boat with its fishermen fishing in the waters.



We observe the small characters accompanied by their fishing gear, heading towards the shore.



Also, if we look closely at the estuary, we observe a scene of great beauty. A man,

who by his dress we could say that he would belong to the nobility, wearing a wide-brimmed hat, looks at the sea, this small scene is full of romanticism.

To finish, it should be noted that in the seascape paintings there are two elements absolutely protagonists. In the first place, the sky that occupies more than two thirds of the composition, was the stage in which the Dutch artists were ratified as masters of light, being true scholars of the different atmospheric effects, which bring as a consequence those abrupt changes in the shapes of the clouds.



And secondly, in this case the most important, the sea with all the effects of lights and shadows that the sky trigger on it, with its oscillating movements creating different shapes in the waves. The amount of color contrasts, are accentuated by the foam that is created when the sea is frizzy. All this leads us to contemplate wonderful compositions full of movement, transporting the viewer to those rough seas of the North.

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[N. de Rover, \*Old Holland\*, 1, 1963, pgs. 88-91.](#)

- Catálogo *All the paintings of the Rijkmuseum in Amsterdam*, pg 119.

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## PROVENANCE

- Private collection, London.

## MUSEUMS

There are works by Jan Theunisz Blanckerhoof in the museum collections of the following cities, among others: Alkmaar- Stedelijk Museum, Hamburg- Kunsthalle, Amsterdam- Rijksmuseum, Scheepvaart Museum, Bristol- City Art Gallery, Brussels- Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Glasgow - Art Gallery, Hoorn- Town Hall, The Hague- Dienst Verspreide Rijkskollekties.

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