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Galería de Arte

Soraya Cartategui

Dear friends,

For this month, we have chosen this marvelous genre scene realized by the important seventeenth-century Dutch painter Hendrick de Meyer, specialized in different themes, but which would stand out above all for its landscapes and coastal scenes. Despite the few details on the dates of birth and death registration of Hendrick de Meyer, we know that he developed his artistic career in the city of Rotterdam, which was a great center of art production in the Dutch Golden Age, where different artists specialized in different themes converged.

Best wishes,
Soraya Cartategui



Hendrick de Meyer

(1620 ca. – Rotterdam before 1690)

“Scheveningen beach with fisher market”

Oil on panel

91,5 cm x 156 cm. (36,02 x 61,41 in.)

Work signed and dated

1650–55 ca.

Meyer had a great role in Netherlands of his time being an admired and loved artist. Most of his works are beach landscapes with a multitude of characters and boats that arrive at the coast after a long day of fishing. Also in its repertoire we find winter landscapes of very beautiful brushstroke, with clear skies and skaters enjoying the frozen ducts, in the style of Jan van Goyen which he admired a lot. He made a series of paintings, although less numerous, on encounters of cavalry and scenes that collect a historical fact as are the three works that are in the Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam, one of the most outstanding is the march of the Spanish troops of occupation from the city of Breda on October 10, 1637. His works are usually large format, monochromatic tones following the purest landscape style of his time. It is curious to find enough pictures signed and even dated by the artist.

In our panel we see represented that kind of scenes of everyday life that liked at that time, in which portrays the common making of a fishing village. Boats that already rest in the sand on the seashore, and all the work of the fishermen engaged in the unloading and sale of fish, numerous characters illustrate the scene, also the horse-drawn carriages are appreciated, as well as dogs scampering, villagers and bourgeois walking and observed the future of each other. One of the things that stands out are the two flags of different colors. As we can see, in order to achieve a greater sense of depth in the composition, the artist has used the overlap of scenes, in such a way that the scenes follow one after the other.



In the center of the work we see a busy sale of fish where seated men and women are busy selling to the parishioners, both gentlemen and peasants, who come to see the product.

As was common among Dutch artists of the seventeenth century, the work is done in ocher and brown tones, which is broken sometimes with the color white, blue and red of the attire of the characters and the color of the flags.

Among the peasants who fish with the fish we are impressed by a woman, dressed in a striking red blouse and a white cofaina on her head, who stares at us. In this way, Meyer makes us part of the scene. The anecdotal touch is found in the two boats behind that wave two different flags but both represented Netherlands: the one on the right, the Prinsenvlag, would lead to the one on the right, the current flag of Netherlands.

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In the sixteenth century, when Netherlands revolted against King Philip II of Spain, after the imposition of the Duke of Alba, Fernando de Toledo, as governor. The rebels were grouped around William the Taciturn, Prince of Orange and that's why they fought with their colors: orange, white and blue. The tricolor flag would become the symbol of the Prince of Orange and was named Prinsenvlag ("the Prince's flag"). Although it is not known exactly when it was deployed for the first time, it appears in illustrations dating from the beginning of the War of Independence. After 1630, the orange stripe was replaced little by little by a red one, as it can be seen in pictures of the time. Considering that there was no political reason to remove the orange, the explanation may lie in the fact that orange and light blue are two muted colors and much more difficult to distinguish at sea than red and navy blue. However, the orange, white and blue flag continued to be used, as was shown by some ships' paintings.



At the top of the hill on the left we can see the silhouette of a city characterized by a large tower, which places us geographically on the famous beach of Scheveningen, as the title of the panel indicates. It was common for artists to paint real cities and in many cases you can identify the exact place, as in this case with the tower, since there are still some architectural or topographical elements.

Going down a winding road we see different carts and peasants on foot chatting animatedly

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leaving the road aside. However, this route is much steeper and therefore some sit quietly while a light breeze caresses them while moving the herbs.



On the shores of the sea we can see many peasants walking carelessly from one improvised fish stall to another. At their side we can see a group of horses pulling a coach of gentlemen, it is clear that it is someone noble by the detail with which he has made the hooks that hold the roof covering. In addition, you can see the great difference with the front carriage, much humbler, probably a public transport and hence we see several passengers inside there are only some wooden parts to shelter from the inclement weather, hence the face of sadness of its occupants. These faces contrast with the cheerful greeting that the two knights are engaged in and the animosity with which the dog in the foreground is directed towards its owner.



As a coastal scene, boats are essential, in

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with which he paints them. His knowledge also reaches the fishing nets that were used in the boats and that we can see in some of them perfectly identifiable.



But it is the sky that takes an absolute leading role in the composition, using a very common resource among the Dutch painters of the Golden Age specialized landscapes, locating the very low horizon line, thus occupying the sky more than three quarters of the work, thus giving a greater sense of depth. In our case thick clouds cover it completely, highlighting on them different birds flying over the coast.

It is curious that in a close-up, right in the center of the composition we see a series of objects related to maritime vessels, thus guiding the viewer on the matter dealt with in the panel.



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PROVENANCE

Private collection Westfalia, Germany.
Soraya Cartategui, Fine Arts, Madrid, Spain

EXHIBITIONS

Londres, Inglaterra, Alan Jacobs gallery *“Fine XVII Century Dutch and Flemish Old Masters”* 1974, Nr. 7.
Turín, Italia, Noviembre 2012 Galleria Luigi Caretto, *“53 Mostra Maestri Fiamminghi ed Olandesi del XVI – XVII Secolo”*.
Feriarte Madrid, Noviembre 2017 Galeria Soraya Cartategui.

MUSEUMS

Hendrick de Meyer’s works can be found in many museums around the world including: Amsterdam- Rijksmuseum; Apeldoorn- Rijksmuseum Paleis Het Loo; Copenhagen- Statens Museum for Kunst, Delft- Stedelijk Museum; Dublin- National Gallery; The Hague- Gemeentemuseum; Rotterdam- Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen.

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