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Galería de Arte

Soraya Cartategui

Dear friends,

In this month of November, the gallery presents this magnificent landscape of David Teniers I "The Older", an important Flemish painter of landscapes, religious and mythological scenes, as well as an art dealer.

Best wishes,
Soraya Cartategui



David Teniers I (The Older)

(Antwerp 1582 - 1649)

"Landscape with mythological scene"

Oil on panel

19.69 x 27.76 in. (50 x 70,5 cm.)

Work signed with the monogram

1620-25 ca.

David Teniers I was an artist well known and appreciated in his time. He would begin his training with his brother Julien, also a painter. Thanks to documentation of the time we know that he traveled to Rome before 1606 and that he lived in Italy for eight years. There he would get in touch with local artists who aroused his interest in his technique and his subjects. One of the artists with whom he had more friendship was with Adam Elsheimer, for whom he was very influenced and whose style imitated clearly. Between 1606 and 1607 he became an independent teacher of the Guild of Saint Luke in the city of Antwerp. A year later, in 1608, he married Dymphna de Wilde with whom he had four sons (David II, Juliaen II, Theodor and Abraham), all of them painters like his father; In fact, his son David II became his pupil for several years and they would collaborate until 1626, we also know that he would attend the Saint-Germain fair in Paris with numerous paintings of himself and his children. In this sense, David I also collaborated with important artists such as J. de Momper II and many of the landscapes of Teniers I with grottos or caves remind us of those made by the latter artist.

His great ambition as an artist led him to try to prove his ability in great sacred, historical and mythological compositions, although he owes his fame to his representations of country life and chromatic landscapes, with his jokes and humorous fairs, treated with a sense of humor and often confused with the early works of his son David Teniers "The Younger". He also painted numerous paintings with traditional scenes and due to his compositions it is presumed that he was in contact with his Dutch contemporaries. In short, we can say that with his peculiar style, he got numerous followers and made many works on request.

Hera would discover the infidelity of her husband to see an area of Argo obscured by a cloud created by Zeus himself to hide from it. The goddess came there at full speed prey to jealousy and when she arrived at the place she found Zeus next to Io who had been transformed by Zeus into a beautiful white veal to hide it from his wife and thus protect her from his wrath. Although Zeus claimed not to have had anything with that girl, Hera did not believe him and asked him to hand over the cow as a gift to which he could not refuse. Immediately afterwards, Hera placed the calf under the watchful eye of the giant of a hundred eyes Argos Panoptes to separate it from Zeus. This one to rescue his beloved, asked for help to Hermes which he guided transformed into a bird to the tree where Argos had the young woman tied. Hermes tried to sleep the guardian with the sweet melody of his flute and just when he closed all his eyes he ended his life helped by a sharp stone.

When Hera found out what happened, and as a reward for her services she put the eyes of Argos on the tail of the peacock, her favorite bird, crying out for revenge.

to flee running around the world aimlessly, still transformed into calf.



Tormented, it crossed the Ionian sea that received its name by the young woman and crossed Iliria, Thrace and the Caucasus where it found to Prometheus chained. He continued his journey through Africa running into the Graya and the gorgons, and crossed the strait of the Bosphorus also giving it a name (the first part of the word would be referring to "ox" and the second to "passage").

Her trip ended in Egypt, where the girl finally found rest and was returned to the status of woman thanks to the caresses of Zeus. On the banks of the Nile was born their son, Épafo, who was caught by some envoys of Hera, whom Zeus murdered for carrying out the orders of his cruel wife. This episode began Io's second pilgrimage, this time in search of his son and already transformed into a woman. Finally I would find him in Syria where he was being cared for by the wife of King Malcandro of Byblos. When he returned with his son to Egypt, he married Telégono, the ruler of that region and whose kingdom he inherited the son of Io and Zeus. Thus, according to the myth, Épafo founded the city of Memphis and was the common ancestor of the Libyans, the Ethiopians and much of the Greek kingdoms. Io, on the other hand, built a statue to the goddess Demeter, which in Egypt was known as Isis and in fact she was recognized by that name herself. She was later deified by her lover Zeus and as a goddess was attributed a great knowledge of medicinal herbs, including that of immortality.



After remembering the legend we can perfectly identify the scene that David Teniers I brilliantly presents us on this occasion. As we can see, there are only four characters represented, two human figures and two animals. The man who appears seated covered of waist down with only a fabric in red color and with a crown

on his head would be the god Zeus whereas the woman who appears next to him with another crown, of a design similar to the one of the God, It would be his wife, Hera. For its part, the beautiful white veal that appears next to them would be the young Io already transformed. This is already showing us that we are just at the moment when the jealous goddess discovers Zeus with his lover and he protects her by turning her into a cow, but Hera, still suspicious, asks her to give him the beef to leave her to charge of the giant of a hundred eyes. However, Teniers I presents a detail that allows us to affirm with greater certainty the moment we are observing, the peacock. As we can see, the tail of the peacock

These four characters are made with a great technical quality of the great artist who made them. On the one hand, it emphasizes the anatomy of the back of the god and the folds of the fabric that covers part of the body, red fabric referring to its divine nature. The god, who appears seated on a rock, looks at his wife while pointing to the cow, surprised that he specifically wants that calf as a gift. Meanwhile Hera appears dressed in a splendid dress in dark blue with small touches in a lighter shade that allow the artist to create volume mainly in the area of the sleeves. On the dress she wears a roman toga fabric in a yellowish color that contrasts in a very harmonious way with the dress, this complement allows Teniers I again to play with the lights and shadows through the folds.



The goddess appears looking at her husband while holding the cow by the head and pointing, indicating that he wants to be given away. As we see, with very few details the painter manages to convey all the greatness of both gods.



As for the animals, the magnificent white veal in which Io has been transformed is made with great delicacy. All its anatomy appears represented in a proportionate and harmonious way, even marks the bones of the upper extremities and the hip arriving to endow it with an incredible realism.

Finally, the peacock is painted with great majesty although it appears almost camouflaged with the trunk of the tree, barely illuminated by the light. The colors of a peacock do not appear prominent in this work, perhaps because it can not yet be considered a peacock since it has not yet acquired its characteristic "eyes" in the tail.



This mythological scene is framed by a beautiful landscape full of vegetation typical of the Flemish painters. Observing the work we appreciate how this landscape occupies almost the whole of the work while the lower left corner is reserved for the representation of the characters. If we stop to analyze carefully the trees we see how their leaves seem to be made one by one but at the same time the general view of the forest is that of quite leafy trees.

Teniers I help from the trunks of the trees to create different planes and provide greater depth to the entire composition, we just have to look at the trunk on which the peacock is placed. The old and twisted branches that appear in the center of the painting are also striking, which, despite what may seem, help a lot to balance the composition so that the step of the left side, full of elements, is more harmonious, on the right side in a much more remote and deep plane.

As we have just mentioned, in contrast to the left part of the picture full of trees, we see in the other half of the painting a large opening that presents what looks like a lake with a path just on the edge, where a character goes through horse, and that is lost on the horizon. On this country scene appears a sky with dark clouds that seem to announce storm, however if we remember the mythological legend, these clouds would be representing the cloud that created Zeus to hide from his wife Hera while he was with Io.



This mythological theme will be repeated again by David Teniers I in the year 1638, several years after having made our painting, in a pair of paintings found in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. In one of the works he will repeat a composition very similar to the one he proposes in our work, representing the moment in which Hera asks Zeus to give him the calf, while in the second oil he will represent the moment in which Hermes is playing the flute to the giant Argos to put him to sleep and rescue Io.



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MUSEUMS

There are works by David Teniers the Elder in the museum collections of the following cities, among others: Aachen, Suermondt-Ludwig Mus .; Antwerp, Belgium, Church of St. Paul, Maagdenhuismus; Berlin, Germany, Staatl Museum; Budapest, Czech Republic. Szépművészeti Muz .; Cambridge, Great Britain, Fitzwilliam Mus .; Dendermonde, Belgium, Parish Ch .; Dresden, Germany, Staatl.Kunstmgl. Gg .; Florence, Italy, Uffizi .; Göttingen, Denmark, Kunstmgl. Der Univ .; Leuven, Belgium, Stedelijk Mus. Vander Kelen-Mertens; Lier, Belgium, Mus. Wuyts-Van Campen in Baron Caroly; Madrid, Spain, Prado Museum; New York, USA, Met. Mus .; Paris, France, Louvre Museum; Stockholm, Sweden, Statens Konstmuss .; Tokyo, Japan, Mus.of Western Art; Tourcoing, France, M.B.A .; Vienna, Austria, Kunsthist. Mus.

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