

PAN

AMSTERDAM

KUNSTHANDEL P. DE BOER BV



WILLEM VAN DE VELDE the Younger

Leiden 1633 - 1707 London

Seascape with the Dutch Fleet At Anchor in Den Helder

Oil on canvas 43 x 52,5 cm

Signed W.V.V. lower left

Provenance

Vienna , Baron Nathaniel von Rothschild(1836-1905)

Vienna bequeathed to Alfons von Rothschild (1878-1942)

Confiscated by the Nazi authorities for the planned Führer Museum in Linz

Restituted to the Rothschild family in 1946

London Leonard Koetser gallery 1963

Private collection

Sale Sotheby London July 2008 where bought by

Johnny van Haefen, Salomon Lilian and Rob Kattenburg

Sold by Kattenburg to the father of the owners

Literature

C. Hofstede de Groot, A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century based on the Work of John Smith, 10 vols., London 1907-1928, VII (1923), p. 141, no. 574

Leonard Koetser, 1963: Tenth Annual Spring Exhibition: Flemish Dutch and Italian Old Masters, London 1963, cat.no. 7 Illustrated.

M.S. Robinson, Van de Velde: A Catalogue of the Paintings of the Elder and Younger Willem van de Velde, 2 vols., London 1990, II, pp.817-18, no 517, illustrated

S. Lillie, Was einmal war. Handbuch der enteigneten Kunstsammlungen Wiens, Vienna 2003, p. 1031, no 852

B. Schwarz, Hitlers Museum: Die Fotoalben Gemäldegalerie Linz: Dokumente zum „Führermuseum“, Böhlau 2004, pp. 114, 243, no IV/33, Illustrated

Felicitas Kunth, Die Rothschild'schen Gemäldesammlungen in Wien, Vienna 2006, p. 222,223

Johnny van Haefen, Dutch and Flemish Old Master Paintings Seventeen, 2009, cat.no. 39

Salomon Lilian, Old Masters 2011, cat.no. 15, pp. 64-69 illustrated

Remmelt Daalder, Van de Velde en zoon zeeschilders, Leiden 2016, p. 87, ill. 48

Exhibited

London Leonard Koetser Spring exhibition 1963 no. 7

Willem van de Velde en zoon, exh. Amsterdam Scheepvaartmuseum 2021-2022

Beneath a magnificent cloud-swept sky various sailing vessels traverse a grey-green sea, while the Dutch fleet lingers on the low line of the horizon. In the center-right of the picture we see the strong vertical of the dark, rich ochre-colored mainsail of a Sloop, whose sailors are hoisting the headsail. The wind coming from the left of the picture, takes them out to join the fleet gathered on the distant horizon. To the left of the Sloop a pleasure Yacht lingers, flying the Dutch flag, while in front of it a small vessel bearing passengers draws towards the shore. In the left foreground a pier juts out into the water, a small Kaag before it: one sailor pushes off from the pier while another wrestles with the lowered sail and their two passengers sit huddled together.

The present seascape belongs to a group of works by Van de Velde the Younger painted around the same time, now in Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Kassel Gemäldegalerie, New York Metropolitan Museum of Art and Paris, Fondation Custodia.

One in a private collection in Los Angeles is mentioned in Robinson (II pp.876-878)

These paintings all share a similar pictorial scheme. Interestingly these last two works can be directly connected with drawings made by Van de Velde during the month of May 1665. Moreover the preparatory drawing for the Los Angeles work, now in the Greenwich National Maritime Museum, carries an inscription giving the exact location

depicted: 'voor de helder, wonsdach den 20 meij 1665'. (in front of Den Helder Wednesday 20 May 1665) During the month of May 1665, the Dutch fleet, under the command of Jacob Baron van Wassenaer Opdam (1610-1665), gathered before the coast of Den Helder and the island of Texel, in the so-called Marsdiep, in preparation for what would soon become the first naval battle of the Second Anglo-Dutch War. The both Van de Veldes were present to make a visual record of the activities.

The relationship between the paintings and drawings made confirm a dating just after 1665 for the present seascape.

Willem van de Velde the Younger and his father Willem van de Velde the Elder were hailed as the leading marine artists of their time in Europe.

Willem van de Velde the Younger was born in Leiden in 1633. The family moved to a house near the river IJ in Amsterdam shortly afterwards. By this time Van de Velde the Elder was already a renowned marine artist, famous for his accurate draughtsmanship and skilled pen sketches. It is thought that Van de Velde the Younger's first teacher was his father and thereafter he studied under Simon de Vlieger. His earliest dated painting is 1651. In 1672/ early 1673 Father and son moved to London where they entered the service of King Charles II and the Duke of York. They enjoyed considerable status and benefited from a studio in the Queen's house at Greenwich. Willem van de Velde the Elder died in England in 1693. Van de Velde the Younger remained in England until his death in 1707. They both were buried in St James's Piccadilly.

When in the collection of the late baron Nathaniel von Rothschild in Vienna (not to be confused with the London based Baron Nathan Rotschild as Robinson supposed), the work was catalogued by Cornelis Hofstede de Groot as 'a fresh breeze - a fine fresh painting' in his 1923 catalogue of Van de Velde's oeuvre. It was subsequently bequeathed to Alfons von Rothschild, son of Nathaniel's brother Albert. After the Austrian Anschluß in 1938, the Rothschild possessions were plundered by the Nazi Authorities. This painting was destined to form part of the Führermuseum in Linz. After the war restitution was made to the Rothschild family.

The restitution of one of the largest collections in Austria went in stages. A part was returned in 1946 other parts later. In the literature there is much debate when what was restituted. The latest data published in the book by Kunth show that this painting, which was meant for the Führermuseum in Linz under nr. 9694, was stored in Kremsmünster during the war and restituted on 25 april 1946. Alphonse de Rothschild had died in 1942 in Bar Harbor USA. His widow Clarice Sebag Montefiore was British.

The family went to England after the war and sold the picture in 1963 to Leonard Koetser.