

WILLEM VAN DE VELDE THE YOUNGER

(Leiden 1633 – Westminster 1707)

A Calm - Three-deckers, a kaag and a smalschip in calm shallow waters near a Dutch shore

Oil on panel, 24 x 30 cm
Signed with initials: W.V.V.
Dated: c. 1660

PROVENANCE

The painting was in the collection of Archduke Viktor of Austria (1842 – 1919), the younger brother of Emperor Franz Joseph. The work was sold in his posthumous sale at the Dorotheum from 30 May – 3 June 1921 as lot 189. Germany, private collection

An excellent example of the mastery of Willem van de Velde the Younger, from a group of marines that consists of his best works.

Willem van de Velde the Younger and Willem van de Velde the Elder (1611 - 1693) were the most important marine artists of the seventeenth century. Willem van de Velde the Younger was the founder of English marine painting and they all worked in his style, except for perhaps Turner.

The earliest dated painting by Willem van de Velde the Younger is from 1651. It must have been clear from the outset that he had a remarkable talent. A letter to a foreign patron dated March 1652 indicates that he was then working independently, and by the early age of 18 he was already well known as ‘a very good painter ... of oil paintings of seascapes and battles’.

The immense importance of the Van de Veldes lies not only in the development of marine painting; they were key chroniclers of historical events. They were unequalled in their accurate portrayal of ships, rigging and the like, and made the most painstaking and accurate studies from life.

Willem van de Velde the Younger set the tone for a new development in marine painting, incorporating atmosphere and the effect of light in combination with a sunlit coloration.

His subjects range from small pieces intended for private collections, simple and clear in their design, to large or very large historical and spectacular pieces with more complex compositions. It was mainly individuals and institutions with ties to the navy that ordered the larger paintings. Admirals and other naval officers were keen to have a picture in their homes of their exploits or of the ships they had commanded.

The painting ‘*A Calm -Three-deckers, with a kaag and a smalschip in calm shallow waters near a Dutch shore*’ can be dated around 1660 and was made by Willem van de Velde the Younger in his Dutch period, which is the most admired. On the left side of the painting there are a few three-masters lying at anchor.

A *kaag*, a flat-bottomed vessel with leeboards – one of which is clearly visible on the starboard side – was a type of ship that could be found throughout the Netherlands, on

the inland waterways, the estuaries, the Zuiderzee and the Waddenzee. In the foreground there is also a *smalschip* a true inland cargo carrier, a vessel commonly used to load and unload goods.

The paint surface permits an especially vivid appreciation of Willem van de Velde’s refined technique and his unique ability to render light and atmosphere. In this example, the artist captures the essence of a still, bright summer’s day on the water.

Typically, a large portion of the painting is devoted to the sky, in which Van de Velde demonstrates the full extent of his mastery of painting clouds. Against a blue backdrop, airy, voluminous, cumulus clouds are depicted variously in light and shadow to dazzling effect with their reflections subtly caught in the mirror-like water below. Although the ships appear to have been arranged randomly, their specific positions and character have been worked out with clear and careful deliberation in order to create an effortless sense of recession into the distance and an overriding sense of spatial harmony.

The initials of Willem van de Velde the Younger can be seen on the beach.

A brief biography

Willem van de Velde the Younger was born in Leiden in 1633. Shortly afterwards the family moved to a house near the IJ Sound in Amsterdam. His father had by then achieved fame as a skilled and accurate naval draughtsman and maker of pen paintings. Willem van de Velde the Elder was the leading artist in this fascinating technique. It was probably his father taught the son how to depict a ship accurately.

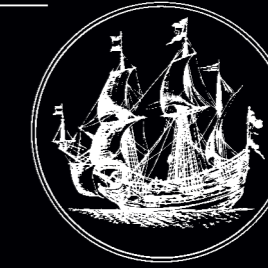
The son subsequently became a pupil of the famous Simon de Vlieger (1600/01-1653) and learned the art of painting. At the age of 18 he was working independently-his earliest dated painting bears the inscription 1651 but from 1652 onwards father and son worked together. The immense importance of the Van de Veldes lies not only in the development of marine painting; they are also significant as compilers of historical records.

In 1672 father and son decided to try their luck in England in the service of King Charles II. The king and his brother James, Duke of York, were so delighted to have gained the services of the two leading marine artists of the day that they gave them a large house in Greenwich and built a studio for them in the Queen’s House there. His paintings of the English fleet hung on the walls of the royal court. He was soon considered the greatest naval painter of his time in England. His works were very expensive and he amassed a considerable fortune as a result. The English bought up as many of the works he had made in Holland and elsewhere as they could. This made them so rare that they doubled in price in one year. His later works set the tone for English naval painting in the 18th century.

Van de Velde the Elder continued to work until his death in 1693. Willem the Younger remained in England after his father’s death, although he visited the Dutch Republic from time to time. He died in 1707 and, like his father, was buried in St James’s, Piccadilly.



The Most Eminent Dutch Marine Artist to Their Majesties King Charles the Second and King James the Second



Dutch Old Master Marine Paintings,
Drawings & Prints



Reinier Nooms
A 'kaag'
Etching 20.5 x 30.0 cm
Rob Kattenburg Collection



Reinier Nooms
A 'smalschip'
Etching, 20.5 x 30.0 cm
Rob Kattenburg Collection

*The painting is a joint acquisition of
Gallery Rob Kattenburg and Bijl- Van Urk Master paintings*

Rob Kattenburg BV
Oosterzijweg 124
NL-1851 PS Heiloo
The Netherlands
phone +31725895051
info@robkattenburg.nl
www.robkattenburg.nl
By appointment only



ROB KATTENBURG

Bijl-Van Urk BV
Sander Bijl
Kennemerstraatweg 174
NL-1815 LE Alkmaar
The Netherlands
phone +31653425432
sander@bijlvanurk.com
www.bijlvanurk.com

MASTER PAINTINGS
Bijl-Van Urk



*A Calm by Willem van de Velde the Younger
The Greatest Marine Painter of the Seventeenth Century*