

JAN BREUGHEL the Elder

Flemish school, 1568 - 1625

This artist, sometimes known as "Velvet Breughel" because of his fondness for painting fine materials, was born in Brussels, the second son of Pieter Breughel the Elder. He studied in Antwerp under ^{Pieter} E. Goetkind, who died in 1583. He went to Italy early; there are drawings of his dated as done in Rome in 1593 and 1594. In 1596 he is recorded in Milan, working for the Cardinal Borromeo, with whom he developed a life-long association. The next year he became a member of the ^{Jacob} St Luke's Guild in Antwerp and subsequently took up citizenship there in 1602. He made many subsequent trips to Germany: he was in Prague in 1604 and Nuremberg in 1616. He became wealthy and gained unusual honors, being named painter to the Governor of the Netherlands and working also for Rudolph II. He had a close friendship with Rubens and often collaborated with him, particularly as a specialist flower- and landscape-painter. He also painted landscape settings or flowers for works by von Balen, Rottenhammer, Frans Francken II and Joos de Momper. Apart from landscape, flower and animal pieces, he also did genre and history paintings; and many engravings were made from drawings of his. On his death in Antwerp on January 12, 1625 Rubens created the inscription and a portrait of him for his tomb. His son Jan Breughel II followed in his steps, along with Daniel Seghers and Lucas de Wael.

Canal Scene

oil on canvas, 15 x 24 ins.

Signed and dated left center "Breughel 1612"

Provenance

Jakob de Wit, Antwerp (before 1710); Königlichen Gemäldegalerie, Dresden (1710 - 1920 or later)^v; Duke of Sachsen-Meiningen; Newhouse Galleries, New York. Acquired by Dr Clowes in 1959.

Literature

Verzeichnis der Königlichen Gemäldegalerie zu Dresden, 1880,
no.813 ; 1887, 1912 and 1920 eds., no.888 ; Le Siècle de Rubens,
Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Oct.-Dec.1965, cat.no.21.

Exhibited

Ind., 1959, no.10 ; Brussels, 1965 (see lit.)

Versions

1. Sutterley Hall colln., River Scene, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 12$ ins (photo
in Witt Lib.). Has figures at the bottom right, otherwise
identical.

2. Christies, May 14, 1965, lot 90. $10\frac{1}{4} \times 13\frac{3}{4}$ ins.
Another variant, also with figures at the bottom right.

This painting, which was in the Dresden Gallery for
over two hundred years, is a typical example of the river scenes
with deep perspective that Jan Breughel produced in quantity.

Notes.

1. 1722 inventory, no.708 (this number appears at the lower right
here).