

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS



Joris van der Haagen (1615 - 1669)

An extensive coastal landscape with a traveller resting on a path

oil on canvas,
indistinctly signed lower right

The panoramic view was a particularly Dutch form of landscape painting. Level fields and hamlets stretch out to low horizons with most of the picture given over to vast skies. Throughout the seventeenth century the concept of the sweeping panorama, whether topographically real or imaginary, underwent stylistic changes. Often painters would incorporate pictorial props, tree stumps and stands of trees in the foreground, on one or both sides of the composition. They acted as 'stage wings' with the clouds following the sweep of the trees as seen in the present painting.

A painter of woodlands, townscapes and panoramas, van der Haagen most likely studied with his father, Abraham, before moving to the Hague in 1639 where he joined the Guild of St. Luke in 1643. His delicate drawings form an important part of his artistic output and are proof of extensive painting trips in the southern Netherlands, Rhineland and France. Views and recurring motifs from the landscapes of Kleve, Arnhem and Maastricht in particular feature in many of his paintings. View of the Swanenturm, Kleve

(Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv.c.138) is one of his best known pictures. A tall, willow oak tree frames the right half of the view as a river meanders back to a hilltop castle in the far left. With its low-lying hills receding all the way to an estuary and tall ships, our rather poetic painting, complete with maypole dancers in the middle ground, is certainly an imaginary view but seems to borrow the far off headland from one of his numerous views of Arnhem and Rijnpoort (the best example being the picture in the Historisch Museum, Arnhem). Van der Haagen did not paint his own staffage, and the figure of the traveller resting under the trees was most likely added at a later stage.

Provenance:

private collection - South Africa