

JOHNNY VAN HAEFTEN

OLD MASTER PAINTINGS

CS0366

DAVID TENIERS, the Younger
(Antwerp 1610 – 1690 Brussels)

**An extensive rocky Landscape with Shepherds
tending their Flocks**



Signed, lower left: *D. TENIERS*
Oil on canvas, 46 x 51 ins. (117 x 129.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Max Kann, Paris

With Sedelmeyer Gallery, Paris, 1900, Cat. No. 43, illustrated
Collection Charles Sedelmeyer, Paris

Troisième Vente Galerie Sedelmeyer, Paul Chevallier, Paris, 3-5 June 1907, lot 54

Sale, Henri Baudoin, Paris, 21 April, 1910, lot 62

Sale, Charpentier, Paris, 27 March 1933, lot 29

Collection of the actor Paul Henreid (1908-1992), Los Angeles

Sale, Christie's, London, 24 March 1972, lot 70

Private collection, Brussels

Sale, Dorotheum, Vienna, 11 October 2020, lot. No. 80

Private collection, Belgium, until 2021

NOTE

Dr. Margret Klinge dates this painting to the late 1650s.

Together with Adriaen Brouwer (1605/6-1638), David Teniers the Younger was the most important seventeenth-century Flemish painter of low-life genre scenes. Unlike Brouwer, who was short-lived and whose oeuvre is correspondingly small, Teniers produced an extensive body of work in a career spanning some fifty years. He was enormously versatile: low-life subjects were his speciality, but he also painted high-life, guardroom, religious and mythological scenes, landscapes, allegories, portraits, gallery paintings and monkey satires.

After a somewhat inauspicious start in life as the son and pupil of an often insolvent painter, Teniers rose rapidly to the top of his profession. In 1633, he became a master in the Antwerp guild of St. Luke and by 1645 was appointed dean of the guild. Both his marriage in 1637 to Anna Brueghel, the seventeen-year-old daughter of Jan Brueghel the Elder, and his association with Rubens, who was a witness at their wedding, aided his ascent. From the late 1640s, he enjoyed the patronage of prominent individuals, including the Archbishop of Bruges and the art-loving Archduke Leopold William, Governor of the Southern Netherlands, to whom he became court painter in 1651. His success brought him great wealth, and his paintings remained popular long after his death.

Teniers painted a wide range of peasant themes during the course of his career. In the 1630s, he painted mostly interior scenes, influenced by Brouwer, but from around 1640 onwards, he increasingly drew inspiration from the landscape around his native city and the everyday lives of its inhabitants. Simple scenes of peasants going about their daily work, or enjoying themselves with games or dancing, entered his repertoire, as well as large, multi-figured depictions of village festivals, and peasant weddings. His interest in such themes was likely stimulated by his association with the Brueghel family. Through his marriage to Anna Brueghel he had come into possession of drawings and paintings by various members of the Brueghel family. During this period, he also made regular excursions into the countryside around Antwerp to sketch from nature. His drawings of country houses, local sites, figures and animals, many of which have survived, provided him with a rich stock of motifs for his painted compositions.

In this tranquil landscape, which Dr. Margret Klinge dates to the late 1650s, Teniers presents an idealised view of rural life. In the background, a rocky hillside slopes down to a river which snakes its way into the distance amid gently undulating terrain. In the foreground, two shepherds tend their flocks: one is seated with his dog by a rock, while the other leans nonchalantly on his crook. Overhead, slanting rays of sunlight break through the clouds, bathing the landscape in afternoon sun. The golden light, fluent painting technique and transparent colours in delicate shades of green, brown, beige, gold, and pale blue enhance the Arcadian atmosphere.

The pastoral character of this landscape is typical of Teniers's mature work. In contrast to his early peasant scenes that focused upon the coarse, uncouth behaviour of his subjects, paintings of this type bear witness to a very different vision of the common man. This new interpretation projects an altogether more positive view of the rural classes, stressing the virtues of simple, country life. The prominence given to such themes in Teniers's later work no doubt reflects the contemporary fashion for pastoral literature as well as the tastes of the artist's courtly clientele.

BIOGRAPHY

Baptised in Antwerp on 15 December 1610, David Teniers was the son of a painter and art dealer of the same name. He first studied with his father, becoming a master in the Antwerp guild of St. Luke in 1632/33. On 22 June 1637, Teniers married Anna Brueghel, daughter of the celebrated painter, Jan Brueghel the Elder. Since the latter's death in 1625, Rubens had been Anna's guardian and was also a witness at her wedding. This alliance brought wealth and status to Teniers and, in 1642, the young couple took up residence in Brueghel's former home, 'De Meireminne' (The Siren) in the Lange Nieuwstraat.

In 1644/45, when Teniers was elected dean of the Antwerp Guild, his fame was reaching its peak. During these years he enjoyed the patronage of the art lover and connoisseur, Antonius Triest, Bishop of Ghent and it was through his influence that, in 1647, Teniers received his first commission from the newly appointed Governor of the Southern Netherlands, Archduke Leopold Wilhelm. In 1650, Teniers moved to Brussels to take up a position in the archduke's service, as his *ayuda de camera*, or chamberlain. In 1651, he travelled to London to purchase paintings from the former collection of Charles I and painted a series of interior views of Leopold Wilhelm's gallery of paintings. He also embarked upon an ambitious project to produce an illustrated catalogue of the Italian pictures in the archducal collection. To this end, he painted small-scale copies of the Archduke's paintings which served as *modelli* for the 243 engravings, eventually published at the artist's expense in 1660, four years after Leopold Wilhelm's return to Vienna. Teniers continued to serve as Court Painter to his successor, Don Juan of Austria, until 1659. His other royal patrons included Philip IV of Spain, Queen Christina of Sweden, James II of England and William of Orange.

In 1656 Teniers's wife Anna died. Less than six months later he married Isabella de Fren, daughter of the secretary of the Council of Brabant. In 1655, Teniers had been granted the right to bear a coat of arms, but following his marriage to Isabella, a lady of superior social rank, he petitioned Philip IV to grant him a noble title. In 1662, he was able to acquire a country estate, "Dry Toren" (Three Towers), at Perk, close to Rubens's former residence, "Steen". In 1663, Teniers was instrumental in the founding of the Academy in Antwerp, based on the Roman and Parisian models. He continued working well into old age - the latest dated painting is of 1683 - and died in Brussels in April 1690.