Jan van Goyen

1596-1656

BORN ON 13 January 1596, Jan Josephsz. van Goyen began training as an artist in his native city of Leiden at the early age of ten. The series of teachers with whom he studied included, according to Orlers' near-contemporary account, Isaac van Swanenburgh (c. 1538–1614). Orlers also says that Van Goyen spent a year in France before going to Haarlem, where he is known to have been a student of Esaias van de Velde (c. 1591–1630) in 1617. His early works closely resemble those by Esaias.

By 1618, Van Goyen had returned to Leiden, where that same year he married Annetje Willemsdr. van Raelst. His name occurs frequently in Leiden documents between 1625 and 1632. In 1625 he bought a house on the Sint Peterskerkstraat, which he sold in 1629 to the marine painter Jan Porcellis (c. 1584–1632). Probably in the summer of 1632 he moved to The Hague, becoming a citizen two years later. Although he also worked in Haarlem in 1634, at the house of Salomon van Ruysdael's brother Isaack (1599-1677), he is thereafter only recorded in The Hague. He bought a house there on the Wagenstraat in 1635 and built another the following year on the Dunne Bierkade, where Paulus Potter (q.v.) is known to have lived from 1649 to 1652. Although a prolific and successful painter, Van Goyen engaged throughout his life in various business ventures, usually unsuccessfully; these included art dealing, auction sales, and speculation in real estate and tulip bulbs.

During the 1630s, Van Goyen, along with the Haarlem artists Pieter Molijn (q.v.) and Salomon van Ruysdael (1600/1603–1670), developed a new approach to the representation of landscape that focused on local subjects and utilized a tonal palette, initiating what has come to be recognized as the golden age of Dutch landscape painting. Van Goyen was a highly respected figure in the artistic community of The Hague. In 1638 and 1640, he was chosen to be *boofdman* of the painters' guild, and received further official recognition in 1651, when he was commissioned to paint a panoramic view of the city for the burgomaster's room in the Town Hall. In 1649, both his daughters were married to artists, Margaretha to Jan Steen (q.v.), and Maria to the still-life painter Jacques de Claeu (d. after 1665). Despite his artistic success, he died insolvent in The Hague on 27 April 1656.

Bibliography

Orlers 1641: 373.
Houbraken 1753, 1: 166, 170; 2: 111, 235; 3: 13.
HdG 1907–1927, 8 (1927): 1–323.
Van de Waal 1941.
Beck 1972–1973.
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Amsterdam 1987: 317–332.
Beck 1987–1991.
Brown/MacLaren 1992: 143–144.

1978.11.1 (2720)

View of Dordrecht from the Dordtse Kil

1644 Oil on oak, 64.7 x 95.9 (25 x 37¾) Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

Inscriptions

On the stern of boat at center: VGoyen 1644

Technical Notes: The support is a thin oak panel composed of three horizontally grained boards of equal width joined horizontally. The support has been mounted onto another thin panel and cradled, with a slight dislevel along the upper join of the original panel. Paint is applied over a thin white ground with low, fine brushmarking, in thin semi-transparent darks and thicker opaque lights. In the sky and light areas of water, the buildings and boats were painted over a thin, pale underpaint layer. A thicker, more opaque upper layer was then applied, passing around the boats and town-scape.

Small amounts of repaint cover the panel joins, edges, and areas of slight abrasion. In a prior restoration, four undamaged areas in the central sky were overpainted to make the clouds appear denser.

Provenance: (Possibly E. Glaenzer, New York and Paris, by 1906). Baron V. de Gunsburg, Paris; by inheritance to his family; (Heim Gallery, Paris, by 1978).

ON A CALM DAY with overcast sky a sailboat stops across from the city of Dordrecht to take passengers from a rowboat. This sailboat, heavily laden with travelers, served as a ferryboat, one of a number of types of boats that transported people along the