

VASARI FINE ART

Herman van Swanevelt (1603 – 1655)



Fig. 1. Herman van Swanevelt, private collection, Belgium (front).



Fig. 2. Herman van Swanevelt, private collection, Belgium (back).

Dimensions : 12 x 12 cm.

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Note :

Born in Woerden, in the Southern Netherlands, in 1603, Hermann van Swanevelt spent most of his life in Rome and Paris. However, he frequently returned to Woerden. In 2007 a drawing was bequeathed to the Woerden city museum, of particular interest in the study of our painting.

Our painting, with a diameter of approximately 120 mm (see fig.1 and 2), can be compared to this drawing (see fig; 3). Trees are painted in the foreground, with brownish figures and a lake in the background.

Herman van Swanevelt is a key figure in the understanding of the generation of painters who perfected landscape painting from the 1630s onward. In 1631, he painted a view of the Roman Forum, the first realistic painting. This painting foreshadowed the "vedutta of cities," which brought success to painters such as Guardi and Canaletto. Herman van Swanevelt's paintings can be compared to those of Paul Bril and Cornelis Poelenburch and are part of a lyrical classicism. They often depict arcadic landscapes with figures and trees in the foreground. The painting illustrated here presents this same composition and can therefore be directly compared to Herman van Swanevelt's drawings. Our painting is particularly interesting because of its size. Small paintings are rather rare and suggest great technical mastery on the part of the artist.



Fig. 3. Herman van Swanevelt in SCHATBORN, P., Signs of warmth, 17th century Dutch draughtsmen in Italy, 2001.

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We have found two other works that can be compared with our painting. I am referring to a work that was sold at Christie's on June 15, 2022, and which comes from the collection of Alexis Gregory, see fig. 4 below.



Fig. 4. Herman van Swanevelt, Christie's sale of June 15, 2022.

And then a painting that is currently in the Glasgow Museum, see fig. 5. As with our work, they are both tondos and we recognize the typical arrangement for this format with figures in the foreground and water in the background of the painting in order to create depth in the composition.



Fig. 5. Herman van Swanevelt from the Glasgow museum in Scotland.

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Bibliography:

- *Herman van Swanevelt* dans SCHATBORN, P., *Tekenen van warmte, 17^e eeuwse Nederlandse tekenaars in Italië*, 2001, p. 77 – 85.
- BLANKERT, A., DE GRAAF F. et KERSTEN M., *Het zuiden tegemoet : de landschappen van Herman van Swanevelt 1603 – 1655 : tentoonstelling Stadsmuseum Woerden van 7 april tot en met 8 juli 2007*, Woerden, 2007.
- RUSSELL, S., « *His great Genius was to make landscapes* » in *The Roman years of Herman Van Swanevelt (1603 – 1655)*., 2019.