

Louis XIV at the Siege of Valenciennes

ADAM FRANS VAN DER MEULEN

Sold



Description

Workshop of ADAM FRANS VAN DER MEULEN 1632-1690 Flemish School Louis XIV at the Siege of Valenciennes

Oil on Canvas 105 x 146 cms 41 3/4 x 57 1/2 inches

PROVENANCE: Private Collection, Scotland. A painter of battle scenes, landscapes and genre, Adam Frans van der Meulen was baptised in Brussels on 11th January 1632 and did his artistic apprenticeship under Pieter Snayers, 1592-1666, a painter of hunting and battle scenes. By 18th May 1648, aged sixteen, van der Meulen had become master in the local guild and in 1653, his younger brother Pieter had become his apprentice.

In 1664 he settled in Paris where he collaborated with the important French history painter Charles Lebrun who had begun a major series of tapestries in 1662 depicting "The Story of the King". Van der Meulen produced a hundred preparatory drawings for this series and the ensuing sketches and the large-scale paintings for royal palaces earned him enormous success at court establishing the career for which he is principally remembered.

He married a relative of Lebrun who became his third wife and also collaborated with his step-brother and Brussels landscape painter Adriaen Frans Boudewijns, who had gone to Paris in 1669 to work at the Gobelins tapestry firm painting cartoons.

Van der Meulen returned to Brussels and in 1673 became a member of the Academy where he was recorded as "Peintre des Conquêtes du Roi" and in 1674 he took on Sauveur Le Comte and Jean Baptiste Martin (later known as Martin des Batailles) as his pupils.

Louis XIV loved the ideal of warfare and the conquest of Flanders was compared to a ceremonial march. He took his Queen, his whole Court and his mistresses on campaign with him and enjoyed supervising the leisurely and dignified sieges which were the fashionable mode of waging war. Van der Meulen was in the service of King Louis XIV and often accompanied him on these historic campaigns, recording cavalry engagements and sieges. However, more often he visited the sites after the action had ended and the main body of troops had left. The result of this is that his military campaign paintings are topographically accurate with great attention to detail whereas the depiction of the actual conflict and attendant military events is not always quite so correct. His method of recording a particular site was to execute very precise drawings of the relevant landscape and city on different sheets of paper which he would later re-assemble into large horizontal compositions measuring 220 cms in width. Upon his return to Paris, he would use these drawings to create sketches which in turn formed the basis for the finished large scale paintings. The sketches were then often used by tapestry manufacturers, such as Gobelins for whom van der Meulen often worked, to form the basis for the large woven works which were much in demand at that time.

The finished paintings were then copied by the artist himself or his studio of collaborators so that other royal castles could have a record of the King's exploits. In addition to J B Martin and Sauveur Le Comte mentioned above, Dominicus Nollet, P Scotin and an artist recorded only as Everts worked in his stud...