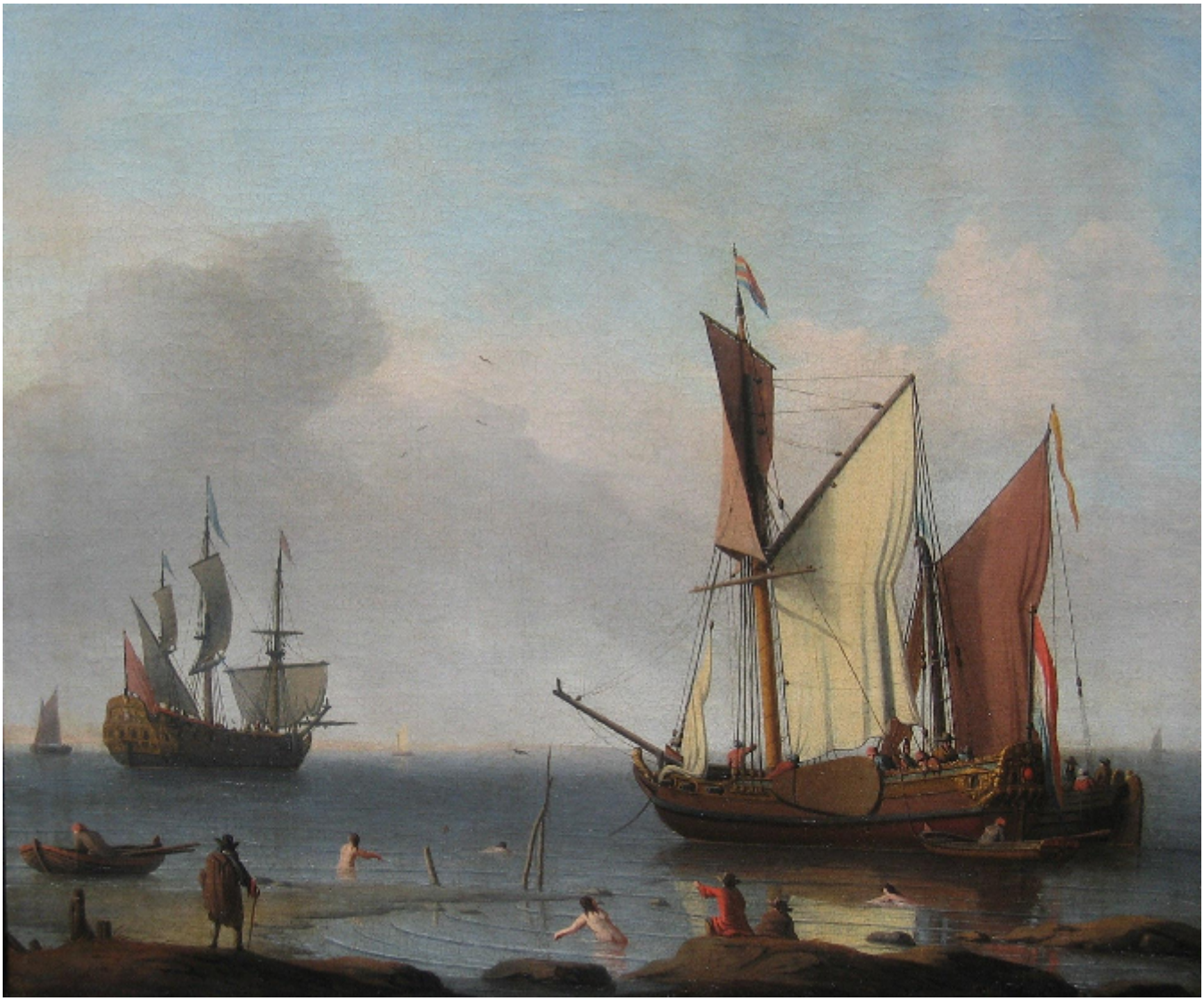
JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

Dutch Tjalks moored off a Beach; A Dutch Admiralty Yacht running out to meet a Man-o'-War

AERNOUT SMIT

Sold



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Description

AERNOUT SMIT 1641 - 1710 Dutch School Dutch Tjalks moored off a Beach; A Dutch Admiralty Yacht running out to meet a Man-o'-War; Oil on canvas, the second signed 33.7 x 39.4 cms13 ¼ x 15 ½ inches Aernout Smit was born in Amsterdam probably in 1641 and was a pupil of the Dutch sea-painter Jan Theunisz Blankerhoff 1628-1669.

Blankerhoff had served on a Dutch warship and his experience was reflected in his attention to detail in his paintings. The grey tonality that he employed is reminiscent also of Simon de Vlieger, Pieter Mulier and Allart van Everdingen, and is noticeable in the early works of Smit as was Blankerhoff's trick of painting heavy banks of cloud over a bright horizon. The master also constructed his paintings very carefully and the pupil clearly learnt to do the same as his pictures have excellent perspective.

Most of Smit's marine paintings were produced between 1667 and 1678 and in the latter part of his career his style tended more towards that of the major and influential marine painter Ludolf Backhuysen 1631-1701. Smit's seascapes had become more colourful with contrasting blues and yellows in the sky. At this time he had also expanded his subject matter depicting southern seas with dramatic cloud effects and even views around Greenland with ice-flows and Polar bears. There is an example of one of these in the Nantes Museum and it is so true to life that it is speculated that it was painted from nature.

This is also the case with "The Africa in Table Bay". The Africa was an armed Merchantman built in Rotterdam in 1673 and was commissioned by the Dutch East India Company for its first voyage where it put into Cape Town on 15th January 1675 and then again on 4th February 1676 on its return journey. It made three other sailings via Cape

Town, the last in 1683, which is the year of Smit's painting, before it sank off Mauritius on 23rd April 1684. The painting is in the William Fehr Collection which is housed in Cape Town Castle and shows the Africa in the Bay with the old fort and the castle and it is regarded as one of the finest depictions of the topography of that period.

Other museums and collections which have examples of Aernout Smit's works in them include: Bonn, Compiegne, Copenhagen, Karlsruhe, Hamburg, Mannheim, Oslo, Schwerin, Darmstadt, Utrecht and the British Government Art Collection.

At the same time there was also an artist in Amsterdam recorded as Andreas Smit and there is an example of his work in the Berlin Gallery, but it is assumed that they are one and the same person.

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