



Pieter van Bloemen, called Lo Stendardo

1657 - Antwerp - 1720

A Hunting Party

Oil on oak panel 19.5 x 25 cm

Provenance

Private collection, Germany

A mountainous and woody landscape provides the stage for three horsemen and their dogs hunting a young bull. The animal is being attacked from all sides and tries to ward off the dogs with his dangerous horns. One of the attacking dogs is already hit and lies severely wounded in the foreground.

Pieter van Bloemen was prolific, both as a painter and as a draughtsman. His impressive oeuvre, which includes a wealth of subjects and motifs, still awaits further study and cataloguing.¹ Van Bloemen was an excellent painter of animals, in particular of horses and all sorts of cattle, and with great ease painted extraordinarily dynamic compositions filled with figures, such as the present. His skilfully composed scenes are strongly indebted to works by his tutor Douw (see for him below) and especially to Philips Wouwerman. The present small panel is thus typical for him and many of the motifs shown here recur in other works.² Van Bloemen's paintings often feature similar close-knit groups of horsemen and other animals as the centre of the composition. The technique, however, is unusual. The composition was first drawn in black oil paint and then worked up in colours of very thin oil paint, which leave the under-drawing visible throughout. The passages in lighter colours are executed with somewhat thicker but still translucent paint. No doubt this painting was meant to serve as a design for an artist working in some different medium. A firm chronology for Van Bloemen's art has not yet been established and it is therefore difficult to date this painting.³

Pieter van Bloemen was the oldest brother of the landscapist Jan Frans van Bloemen (1662-1749), called Orizzonte, and the genre and portrait painter Norbert van Bloemen (1670-1746). At age ten he trained in Antwerp with the painter of Italianate landscapes Simon Johannes van Douw (ca. 1630-1677 or later). In 1673 Van Bloemen registered with the Guild of Saint Luke as an independent master. At some point thereafter he travelled to Rome where he together with his younger brother Jan Frans joined the painters' confraternity Bentvueghels (Birds of a Feather), receiving the *nom de plume* Lo Stendardo, probably because he often included banners in his scenes of soldiers and

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encampments. Van Bloemen is recorded in the Eternal City at least from 1685 to 1692. He returned to his native Antwerp in 1694, becoming a dean of the guild in 1699. In Antwerp he led a busy studio where he trained numerous pupils.

Notes

¹ He painted Italianate landscapes, animal scenes, caravan scenes with camps and resting travellers, military and different types of genre scenes set out of door. See for an assessment of his work: A. Busiri Vici, 'Pieter van Bloemen detto Stendardo', *Studi Romani* 8 (1960), pp. 279-287. See also: D. Bodart, *Les peintres des Pays-Bas méridionaux et de la principauté de Liège à Rome au XVIIème siècle*, 2 vols., Brussels and Rome 1970, vol. 1, pp. 455-460.

² Highly comparable is a much larger work (on canvas 67 x 83.2 cm) signed and dated 1718; a bear hunt that was at sale London (Christie's), 13 March 1987, lot 50, ill.

³ Because of the sophisticated compact arrangement of the figures in our painting it could very well be a mature work from Van Bloemen's later period. In this respect it can be compared to the painting of 1718 mentioned in note 2.