

**A1 Ludolf Bakhuizen (1630 Emden - Amsterdam 1708), *Ships for a rugged coast***



<b>Category of object</b>	17th century Dutch paintings
<b>Other title</b>	A tempest scene
<b>Medium &amp; support</b>	oil on canvas
<b>Dimension</b>	height: 56 cm = 22 in. width: 86 cm = 33 7/8 in.
<b>Dimension (frame)</b>	height: 78 cm = 30 3/4 in. width: 107 cm = 42 1/8 in.
<b>Signature</b>	signed, lower right (on the small sailing boat in the foreground): <i>L. Back</i>
<b>Location of client</b>	residence (1) (Breukelen, the Netherlands)
<b>Catalogue notes</b>	Near a rocky coastline with a fortified harbour sitting amidst steep rising hills, the rough sea extends. Various vessels of differing type and size are scattered across the scene. In the immediate foreground is a small sailing boat in which three sailors do their best to control the billowing sail while the boat already fills with water. The vessel is only just able to hold its ground as it struggles between the dangerously sweeping waves. From the horizon, clearly defined cumulus clouds stretch up. Diffuse shapes of other massive cloud formations take up the right and upper part of the sky. Ludolf

Bakhuizen is the unmistakable master of tempest marine scenes. A born dramatist, he set out to create daring compositions with asymmetrically sinking and lifting horizons which make the beholder search for something to hold on to. Some of his tempest scenes are dismayingly huge canvases of more than three meters in width. The present port scene is datable to the early 1660s and thus belongs to the painter's early period. His admiration for his forerunner, the innovative Simon de Vlieger, is evident in the silvery palette. When Bakhuizen painted this, he was, however, already a highly respected marine specialist in his own right. The present painting is a very important piece of exceptional beauty, which merits a place in a museum or choice private collection.

Ludolf Bakhuizen was a Dutch painter, draughtsman, calligrapher and printmaker of German origin. He was the son of Gerhard Backhusz. (Backhusen) of Emden, and he trained as a clerk in his native town. The unusual seascapes in pen and ink by fellow townsman Willem van de Velde the Elder, inspired Bakhuizen to compose his own pen drawings on panel, which he continued to produce until the 1660s, some depicting recognisable ships and existing views, such as his *Ships Leaving Amsterdam Harbour* (Amsterdam, Kon. Collection Zeemanshoop), others depicting unidentified locations, as in the *View of a Dutch waterway* (Amsterdam, Nederlands Historisch Scheepvaartsmuseum). Bakhuizen was also producing colourful seascapes in oils, and became a master of the technique. This marked the beginning of a tempestuous career.

The exhibition *Backhuysen at the helm* at the Royal Palace, showcased the talents of this versatile artist. The artist was director of what is believed to have been the first art gallery in Amsterdam, in the town hall, which is now the Royal Palace. Besides exhibiting the work of contemporary masters for sale, the city's first gallery contained a number of art treasures which painters could copy and learn from. Backhuysen and the painter Michiel van Musscher were engaged 'to safeguard the condition of the Commendable Paintings'. The art gallery and the drawing academy associated with it have been largely overlooked by art historians.

This painting is registered at the Rijksbureau voor

Kunsthistorische Documentatie RKD, The Hague, under n° 31497, illustration n°s 00068163 and 00064527.

**Provenance**

- Acquired at Rob Kattenburg, Breukelen, 26/02/1997

**Exhibited**

- Kobe, Kobe City Museum, *Glorious past of the Netherlands and Japan*, 24/07/1993-19/09/1993 , n° 26 and Tokyo, Tobacco & Salt Museum, 09/10/1993-28/11/1993
- Amsterdam, Stichting Koninklijk Paleis, *Backhuysen aan het roer! Zeeschilder 1630-1708*, 01/07/2004-12/09/2004

**Literature**

- Pauline W. Kruseman and Christiaan J.A. Jörg, *Glorious past of the Netherlands and Japan*, Kobe City Museum, Kobe, 1993, cat. n° 26
- Gerlinde de Beer, *Ludolf Backhuysen (1630-1708), sein Leben und Werk*, Uitgeverij Waanders BV, Zwolle, 2002, ref. n° 11, ill. pl. 44
- Gerlinde de Beer, Eymert-Jan Goossens and Bart van de Roemer, *Backhuysen aan het roer! Zeeschilder en directeur van de Kunstkamer in het Paleis, Backhuysen at the helm! Marine painter and director of the art gallery in the Royal Palace (1630-1708)*, Stichting Koninklijk Paleis, Amsterdam, 2004