

KLAAS MULLER

JAN COSSIERS

Children playing with Firecrackers

Jan Cossiers was a student of Cornelis de Vos. In 1628 he became a member of the Guild of Saint Luke, of which he was dean from 1639-1641.

His style was first influenced by his teacher but also -of course- Peter Paul Rubens (together they worked on projects such as the Torre del Parada series).

This painting however, is a typical later work by Cossiers: his colors become darker (more earthy) and his brushstrokes are somewhat hazy, wider (without losing their strength). The influence he experienced from Rubens (and Cornelis De Vos) diminished, the influence of Caravaggist painters increased.

The rare and unusual subject matter is almost cinematic: we witness the moment just before the explosion (presumably a homemade gunpowder mix is lit). The children react differently: from concentrated and focussed to frightened and waiting. By depicting this moment (the moment just before), the painter only heightens the tension. Only the dog is not aware of anything.

The work is painted very fluently, almost wet-on-wet and quite spontaneously. Yet the painter manages to work out the tension and the psychology between the figures to the maximum and captures the momentum. He elevates an everyday scene to something theatrical and monumental in a caravagisque way.

Oil on Canvas, 99,6 x 116,8 cm

