KLAAS MULLER

DIEPRAAM ABRAHAM

Drinking man

Arnold Houbraken wrote in his biography that he knew Diepraam personally. He describes the Rotterdam painter as a drunkard and barfly and claims that Diepraam sold his works himself in taverns, only to immediately squander the money on drink.

We do not know whether Houbraken was exaggerating or not, but he was certainly no fan of Diepraam's painting and drawing style, which he considered “too loose”. What we do know is that Diepraam was apprenticed to Hendrick Maertensz. Sorgh, also a Rotterdam native who became also famous for his tavern and kitchen scenes. It is believed that Diepraam had contact (or was even a pubil) with Adriaen Brouwer in Antwerp around1638.

Our drawing is one of Diepraam's most important works, not only because of its large size and hids rarity but also because of its high quality (and good condition). The subject and composition are very “Brouwerian”; this drunkard is depicted with great power and lively expression.

Our drawing is listed in the RKD as Diepraam (RKD nr 114451).

Black cray and white heigtenings, 28.3 x 21 cm (11 $^{1}/_{8}$ x 8 $^{1}/_{4}$ inches)



Artist description:

According to Houbraken, Diepraam first learned to paint from Dirk Stoop's father, who had been a skilled glass painter, and then became an apprentice to Hendrik Martenszoon Sorgh. After travelling through France, he returned to the Netherlands and became an apprentice to Adriaen Brouwer, whose style he copied for the rest of his life. He joined the Guild of Saint Luke in Dordrecht in 1648.

Diepraam became a popular painter of small genre works and sold many of them informally in taverns.

According to the RKD, Matthijs Wulfraet was his pupil. His paintings were quite popular and generally depict small interior scenes in taverns with farmers drinking or smoking. Houbraken was much more complimentary about Diepraam in his biography of his pupil Wulfraet, claiming that his works sold well in Arnhem and that he was a good teacher for the young boy.