

KLAAS MULLER

R O E L A N T S A V E R Y

Landscape with a Wagon, Sheperds and their Flocks

The importance of Roeland Savery to landscape, still life and animal painting in the Netherlands cannot be underestimated. His family, originally from Kortrijk, fled to Haarlem during the religious conflicts. Roelant was trained by his brother Jacob and moved to Prague in 1604, where he worked at the court of Rudolf II who sent him to Tyrol, among other places, to study the Alpine landscapes. In 1616, Savery returned to the Netherlands and eventually settled in Utrecht.

Our work probably dates from this period and is very typical of the master: the painter uses a bright blue for the background and the foreground consists of rich ochre and brown colours depicting a rich variety of fauna and flora. This time, Savery emphasises domesticated animals: horses, pigs, sheep and cows, fighting bulls and goats are depicted. The focus is on the covered wagon, pulled by two horses, with a shepherd sleeping in the right-hand corner.

All this is rendered with enormous refinement, attention to detail and yet a certain fluidity. Savery manages to create his own mysterious universe on a relatively small scale without resorting to unnecessary anecdotal detail.

Oil on copper, 24 x 34.5 cm (9 ¹/₂ x 13 ⁵/₈ inches)

