KLAAS MULLER

MAARTEN RIJCKAERT

Forest Landscape with Hunters

This beautiful painting is a typical example of Maarten Ryckaert's talent for creating atmospheric woodland scenes. The painting presents a dense forest filled with tall trees,a river, rough terrain and rocks. Soft light filters through the branches, creating contrasts between illuminated clearings and darker shadowed areas.

In the foreground, a group of hunters on the left- and rightside accompanied by dogs: their small scale compared to the towering trees highlights the dominance of nature over human activity. The hunters add a sense of narrative and movement to the otherwise peaceful setting.

Ryckaert uses earthy tones such as deep greens, browns, and golden highlights to create a rich and natural atmosphere. Fine details in the foliage, rocks, and tree trunks demonstrate his close observation of nature and his skill as a landscape painter. The scene evokes both tranquility and mystery, inviting the viewer to imagine the sounds and silence of the forest.

The painting reflects the Baroque interest in dramatic natural scenery while also expressing a calm, contemplative mood. Through the balance of light, composition, and detail, Ryckaert transforms an ordinary hunting scene into a poetic vision of the natural world.

Maarten Ryckaert was born in Antwerp and became especially known for his imaginative woodland scenes, rocky landscapes, and peaceful rural settings filled with travelers, hunters, and small groups of figures.

Ryckaert studied painting in Antwerp and was strongly influenced by earlier Flemish landscape artists such as Joos de Momper and Jan Brueghel the Elder. Unlike many painters of his time who focused on religious or historical themes, Ryckaert specialized in landscapes, giving nature the leading role in his compositions. His works often combine realism with fantasy, creating dramatic forests, winding paths, and mysterious mountainous scenery.

Oil on panel, 32.4 x 49.5 cm (12 $^{3}/_{4}$ x 19 $^{1}/_{2}$ inches)

