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PHILIPS WOUWERMAN

1619 Haarlem 1668

A hunter mounting his horse.

Oil on Panel, 24.1 x 32.7 cm.

Signed with the interlinked monogram: *PHIL W*
lower right, on a rock



Provenance: Anonymous sale; Hôtel Drouot, Nantes, 13 June 1996.
with Richard Green, London;
Dimitri Mavrommatis, London;
Sotheby's, London, 5 December 2007, lot 42;
Private Collection, USA.

Literature: *Gazette de l'Hôtel Drouot*, 21 June 1996, pp. 159-160.

This painting first came to light in 1996 but remained unknown to Philips Wouwerman specialist Birgit Schumacher at the time of her catalogue raisonné a decade later. When the painting reappeared at auction in 2007, Schumacher dated it to *circa* 1642-3 on account of its similarities with a slightly larger painting in the Schilderijenzaal Willem V, Mauritshuis The Hague (fig. 1.) (inv. no. 222; see B. Schumacher, *Philips Wouwerman; the Horse Painter of the Golden Age*, I, Doornspijk, 2006, p. 242, no. A181; II, pl. 170). Both paintings depict a small group of figures saddling a horse at the center, with a wooded area to the left and dogs overlooking the landscape to the right. They likewise employ a similar monogram and palette of muted tones. These features can be found in a number of works datable to the early 1640's, including Wouwerman's *Halt of two riders* in the Kunsthau, Zurich (inv. no. 42; see B. Schumacher, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 306-307, no. A340; II, pl. 41 and 312). The greater development of the landscape evident in this painting when compared with those in The Hague and Zurich led Schumacher to suggest that it probably dates to a slightly later period in Wouwerman's career.

Paintings of the early 1640's such as our painting were strongly influenced by the work of Pieter van Laer. Pieter van Laer had travelled and worked in Italy and settled in Haarlem upon his return in 1641 and whose drawings according to Arnold Houbraken, Wouwerman acquired following van Laer's death in 1642. The close resemblance between this very painting and van Laer's work a few years earlier substantiates the early dating of this panel.

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In the present painting we see a huntsman mounting his horse and preparing to set off for a day's hunting. One of his feet is planted on a large stone, used as a mounting block, from which he is launching himself into the saddle. In one hand he is holding his reins and a tuft of mane and with the other he is gripping the back of the saddle. The man, viewed from behind, is pulling on the other stirrup so that the saddle does not slide round. His hunting bag and horn lie on the ground nearby. A shepherd family can be seen resting by the road, with hounds looking towards the distant Italianate landscape.



Fig. 1. Philips Wouwerman, *Hunters at rest*, Oil on panel, 35 x 44 cm. Signed and dated lower left. Mauritshuis, The Hague. Inventory nr. 222.