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DAVID TENIERS THE YOUNGER

Antwerp 1610- 1690 Brussels

Peasant with a top hat in profile.

Oil on Panel, 12.5 x 10.6 cm

Signed with the Monogram: *DT. f*



Provenance: M. Schulthess, Basel 1967;
Private collection, Basel;
Dorotheum, Vienna 2003.

Engraved: Pieter de Mare, 1768-1796.

Following inspection by Mrs Klinge who doubted the work, it has now been established that this painting comes from the same wood panel as Teniers' *Monkeys having a meal in a kitchen* in Aschaffenburg (Klein 2020).

David Teniers II became a member of the Guild of Saint Luke in 1632 after studying under his father, David Teniers. He married Anna Brueghel, the daughter of Jan Brueghel. In 1651 Teniers was appointed court painter in Brussels for Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, Governor General of the Southern Netherlands. He moved from Antwerp to Brussels in 1656. There, at the request of the Archduke, he started working on his *Theatrum pictorium*, which is assumed to be the first illustrated catalogue of paintings. After a lengthy period of preparation, Teniers founded an art academy in Antwerp in 1664, modelled after those in Paris and Rome (Klinge 1991, pp. 13-14).

Teniers was an innovator in a range of genres such as history painting and portraiture, but also landscapes and still lifes. He specialized particularly in lively taverns, indoor scenes with alchemists or witches, satires with monkeys, and outdoor scenes with farmers and hermits. He painted his own works, but was also known to collaborate with his contemporary artist painting the figures in their paintings. He was a very prolific artist: more than 1,000 original compositions are known (Jonker/Bergvelt 2016, p. 244).

The early phase of Teniers' oeuvre closely follows the style of his predecessor Adriaen Brouwer. In particular, Brouwer's head studies – or tronies – became an important inspiration for Teniers in terms of composition, technique, and the use of color and light. An impressive early example of this emulation is *Peasant with top hat*, which Teniers must have painted in Antwerp in the early 1640s (Klein 2020). The tronie in profile, painted in a loose, thin style,

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had been previously attributed to Joos van Craesbeeck (Dorotheum, Vienna 22-06- 2010, lot 173). Indeed, Van Craesbeeck, Teniers' contemporary, also started to copy Brouwers' style – especially his famous studies of peasants (Vlieghe 2011, p. 14). Yet the typical signature 'DT.f', painted wet in wet, undoubtedly refers to the hand of the master: 'David Teniers fecit' (Kramm 1863, p. 1612). Notably, the oak panel is made of the same tree as Teniers' *Monkeys having a meal in a kitchen* in Aschaffenburg (Klein 2020).

Menno Jonker – 8 Nov 2021



Pieter de Mare after David Teniers II, *Peasant with top hat*, 1768-1796, pen in brown, black and red chalk on paper, 13.3 x 10.7 cm, Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 17-11-1980.

Pieter de Mare after David Teniers II, *Peasant with flat cap and peasant with top hat*, 1768-1796, etching and engraving, 16.2 x 28.2 cm, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-P-OB-22.958.

Teniers painted his *Peasant with top hat* in profile in front of an undefined wall that contrasts effectively with the silhouette of the man. This remarkable light effect and the monochrome tonality must have made Teniers famous from the beginning. Even Arnold Houbraken wrote that "he had a drawing-like and smooth brush and was able to confer a lively touch on his pictures." (Houbraken 1718/1721, p. 346). It is true that Teniers' work was not only highly valued, but resulted in a large number of copies and prints distributed throughout Europe in the centuries to follow (Kramm 1863, p. 1611). The engraver Pieter de Mare even made an exact drawing of Teniers' *Peasant with top hat* (including the monogram) that he likely saw in his hometown of Leiden in the late eighteenth century. He probably made the drawing in preparation for a print, which also includes a copy of Teniers' original and now lost pendant – a peasant with a flat cap. The couple fits perfectly into the tradition of depicting two opposite characters, emotions, or notions such as the senses or the seasons that were omnipresent in the oeuvre of David Teniers.

In this context are two vivid drawings of similar importance, made in black chalk on parchment. Teniers signed them evenly with the monogram 'DT.f' suggesting that these were intended as autonomous works, not as preparatory sketches (Klinge 1991, p. 315). The smiling man holds a smoking pipe and reserves a second pipe in his hat. He seems to interact with his opponent, who toasts him with a tall glass of beer (cf. RKD, nos. 290145, 290146, 18366). With his characteristic pointy nose, he is undoubtedly the same model as the man in the painting. These smoking and drinking types became perfect models for Teniers' tiny interior scenes, especially for dimly lit taverns. Sometimes they silently and introspectively smoke their tobacco, at other times they participate in a lively conversation around a table.



David Teniers II, *Two smoking peasants*, 16.1 x 13 cm, Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, inv. 1225. David Teniers II, *Smoking men in an inn*, 32.9 x 28.9 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. SK-A-399.

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