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JACOB VAN RUISDAEL

Haarlem circa 1628 - Amsterdam 1682

Landscape with cornfields and a thatched barn.

Oil on Panel, 28 x 34.9 cm
Signed lower right



Provenance: Private Collection, Germany.

This is a view on the edge of the dunes looking inland, their landward edge marked by the bank in the foreground crossed by a path, revealing the sand beneath the scrub. The undulating land beyond descends to flat countryside divided by hedges between small fields of ripening grain and closing off a track leading to the large thatched barn known as a langhuis to the left. The better-drained soil closer to the viewer is ideal for oaks which grow in clumps on the shallow slopes while other trees, perhaps willows, grow in the flatter terrain in the distance. As in many early works by the artist, the accomplished meteorologist Ruisdael sets his scene in fine weather, with high summer cirrus clouds drifting in from the sea that lies behind us and to our right.

This hitherto unknown early landscape by Jacob van Ruisdael is a recent discovery. It was painted circa 1647–48, one of the earliest of his paintings to combine his favoured motifs of cornfields and oaks. His first dated work in which he did this is an etching of 1648 (fig. 1).¹ Several of his other early works however are set where the dunes sheltering his native Haarlem from the sea meet the flatter country inland, at the point where freshwater streams flow from the base of the sand. The motif of a wagon wheel resting on the bank in the right foreground occurs in another early Ruisdael of oaks, corn and a farm building, the landscape dated 1647 formerly at Aske Hall.² A similar hump-backed thatched barn to the one seen to the left occurs in another landscape of 1647 known from photographs.³

¹ S. Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael*, New Haven and London 2001, pp. 600–01, no. E8, reproduced.

² Formerly the Marquess of Zetland, Aske Hall, Yorkshire; see Slive 2001, p. 127, no. 105, reproduced.

³ Formerly Munich, Jürgen von Quernheim; see Slive 2001, p. 428, no. 608, reproduced. From the photograph Slive questioned the handling of the barn, but the present work shows that it appears as Ruisdael intended.