Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Ludolf BAKHUIZEN (Emden 1631 - Amsterdam 1708)

Coastal Scene with Shipping

Pen and brown ink and grey wash, with framing lines in two shades of brown ink.
Laid down on a 17th century mount.
Signed L: B: Fecit at the lower left of the mount.
118 x 169 mm. (4 5/8 x 6 5/8 in.)

Prolific as a draughtsman, Ludolf Bakhuizen produced, in the words of one recent scholar, 'swift and lively sketches in pen and brown ink and gray wash, which sometimes served as preparatory studies for paintings' - of which the present sheet is a fine example - as well as more finished drawings, which were sold to collectors as autonomous works of art, and were highly valued. In his drawings, Bakhuizen was particularly fond of the compositional device of a large ship in the foreground at one side of the composition, with other shipping in the middle ground and far distance. (According to Houbraken, he often worked from a boat, the better to capture the effects he was after.) Due to the fact that his style as a draughtsman remained relatively unchanged throughout his career, it is often difficult to place undated drawings within Bakhuizen's oeuvre.

Artist description:

Born in Germany, Ludolf Bakhuizen (sometimes Bakhuyzen or Backhuysen; over the course of his career the artist changed the spelling of his surname several times) had by 1649 settled in Amsterdam, where he worked as a calligrapher and bookkeeper for the important merchant Guglielmo Bartolotti. The biographer Arnold Houbraken states that Bakhuizen began making drawings of ships and marine subjects soon after arriving in Amsterdam, despite having relatively limited training as an artist. Some of his earliest works were elaborate pen drawings on prepared canvas or wood; known as 'penschilderij', these seem to have been inspired by similar works produced by Willem van de Velde the Elder.

Drawing seem to have been something of a hobby for several years, however, and Bakhuizen did not join the Guild of St. Luke in Amsterdam until 1663. By this time he had also taken up painting, after receiving instruction from Allaert van Everdingen and the marine painter Hendrick Jacobsz. Dubbels. By the 1660s Bakhuizen was established as one of the leading marine painters in the city, receiving numerous commissons and enjoying the patronage of several important patrons, including Czar Peter the Great of Russia. After 1672, when Bakhuizen's main competitors as marine artists, Willem van de Velde the Elder and Willem van de Velde the Younger, moved to England to work for Charles II, his output increased significantly. As well as numerious marine paintings and drawings, Bakhuizen also

produced around twenty etchings.