



CORNELIS VREEDENBURGH

Woerden, 1880 – Laren NH, 1946

The Royal Palace and the Nieuwe Kerk on Dam Square, Amsterdam



Additional information:

Oil on Canvas

Signed and dated lower left: C. Vreedenburgh 1927

Size:

61 x 91 cm, Including original frame: 87 x 116 cm



Damplantsoen after the construction of the park. Circa 1927. Collection of the Amsterdam City Archives.

Short description of the painting:

This monumental cityscape shows the main square of Amster, the Dam. The main motif is the Royal Palace.

The Royal Palace of Dam Square is depicted in all its architectural glory as the center of the country's capital, with city life surrounding its stately flanks.

Vreedenburg's flamboyant impressionist technique and The Hague School connection show an appreciation for a colorful palette. This is well illustrated in this work with shimmering details in the background in red and yellow, and with the lush green of a stately park, where the National Monument is now located, in the foreground.

Detailed information painting:

The main motif of this monumental cityscape is the Royal Palace on Dam Square, which, designed by Jacob van Campen, was originally built from 1648 to 1665 as the new town hall. During construction it gained fame as the so-called Eighth Wonder of the World. At the time it was the largest publicly accessible building in all of Europe. It was, of course, immediately a very popular subject for artists.

Specialists in cityscapes, such as Jan van der Heyden and Gerrit Berckheyde cleverly responded to the insatiable hunger for faces on the

beautiful square with the imposing classicist town hall that was then seen as a symbol of the great prosperity of the still young Republic and its status as maritime world power.

The characteristic square with the town hall and, as can be seen here, the gothic Nieuwe Kerk church, also remained a popular subject in later times. When Vreedenburgh immortalized this place in paint in 1927, he continued an established tradition.



The collection of the Rijksmuseum includes an early preliminary study of this painting, in the form of a pencil drawing by C. Vreedenburgh of the Palace on the Dam in Amsterdam.

Rijksmuseum object number: RP-T-1998-64-48 (V)



Construction Damplantsoen, Bouwput 1925, just before the construction of the park. Collection of the Amsterdam City Archives.

Vreedenburgh's painting gives a true and fair view of the mundane life on Amsterdam's largest and most important square during the first decades of the twentieth century. The town hall, Royal Palace since 1808, and the Nieuwe Kerk have now been incorporated into an environment with all kinds of new architecture, including, on the far left, Dam 20, a monumental clothing store built in 1914-17 for the German firm Peek & Cloppenburg, which together form a varied backdrop for a fashionable city life.

We still see people on horseback. But between 1900 and 1906, almost all Amsterdam tram lines were electrified. Electric trams were therefore a familiar sight around 1927. These were lines 4, 14 and 24. The few cars we already see will certainly have been considered a sight.

There are also striking differences with how the square looks today. Thus the entire foreground of Vreedenburgh's face is occupied by a park. This is the Damplantsoen that was constructed in 1925.

The Dam Square had become much larger on this side from 1912 because many buildings were knocked to the ground. Developing this part of the square quickly proved to be a tough task. The site gradually turned into a weed-overgrown, muddy swamp. The park was a temporary solution. Until the German invasion in 1940, numerous plans for this area passed in review.

Vreedenburgh started work around 1917 on a series of impressive paintings with views of Amsterdam. This piece is a strong and typical

example. It is executed in Vreedenburgh's flamboyant Impressionist technique, full of dazzling colors, which suits the theme of the master painting extremely well.

Extensive information about the uniquely depicted Damplantsoen:

The depicted 'Damplantsoen' is a garden in the so-called 'Old Dutch' style: fitting/adjacent to the building, formerly the city hall of Amsterdam, built/designed by Jacob van Campen from 1648 and completed in 1665.

The Damplantsoen was actually a space that had become vacant due to the demolition (1912) of the former Commandantshuis (D'Ailly's Historical Guide to Amsterdam. Edited by H. F. Wijnman. 1968) and the demolition of the west side of Warmoesstraat. There was a plan to build a hotel here, but it eventually got cancelled. The Damplantsoen was intended as a temporary interim solution, uniquely displayed in this master painting.

In the painting the foreground depicts a sunken garden, made up of grass surfaces and rectilinear flowerbeds. The garden is deepened and designed along an axis of symmetry, which connects to the central axis of the palace.

The garden is accessed by a staircase, located in the middle of the transverse axis (in front of the tram) and similar stairs can also be found in the middle of the longitudinal axes around the central arena.

Yews have been planted at the corners of the long beds and in the center of small square beds. The long beds will still have to be filled with flowers, just like the beds on both sides of the first staircase.

The large central rectangular grass area lies within a walking path of flagstones and is closed off by (probably) boxwood edges. The garden design was made according to the Chronology section of the Amsterdam City Archives (Subject: Dam Square as a place of memory) by the municipal garden architect Ir. J.R. King Jr.

The style of design is very reminiscent of Leonard Springer's style. In 1925 (when the work started) he was 70 years old and, even though he announced that he was still not retiring that year, the contract was not awarded to him.

Documentation on this event can be found in the Springer Collection Wageningen Library, including: Haarlems Dagblad by T. de Rijmer, a newspaper article from De Telegraaf (193004-09) and a newspaper photo of the Damplantsoen.

About Vreedenburgh:

Cornelis Vreedenburgh received his first drawing and painting lessons from his father. Later Vreedenburgh took lessons with G.J. Helmsman who made him familiar with the working method of the Hague School. The painters Albert Roelofs and Willem Tholen gave Cornelis all kinds of advice.

His first source of inspiration was the polder and lake landscape around Woerden, where he regularly roamed around with Leo Gestel, a fellow townsman and his peer. Cornelis Vreedenburgh painted, drew and watercolored meadow landscapes, cityscapes, beaches and views of lakes, among other things. He was a versatile landscape painter.



Cornelis Vreedenburgh – 1920 – Larense Heide

Cornelis Vreedenburgh was born in Woerden in 1880. His father had a successful painting business and also worked as a painter. The whole family went out in the summer to draw and paint together in the great outdoors. This gave Cornelis Vreedenburgh the opportunity to further develop his talent.

Cornelis Vreedenburgh did not have any formal art education and was mainly self-taught. Initially Vreedenburgh worked as an amateur. He did get some advice from his good friend, the artist Willem Bastiaan Tholen, with whom he regularly made boat trips on the Loosdrechtse Plassen.

While being taught by the landscape painter Gerard Roermeester, Cornelis Vreedenburgh comes into contact with the Hague School painters and their philosophies. Their way of painting is a great source of inspiration for him.

He quickly gains recognition for his work. In 1904 Cornelis Vreedenburgh received a royal subsidy. A year later he won the Willink van Collen Prize from the artists' society "Arti et Amicitiae", followed by a royal subsidy twice more. In 1907 Queen Emma bought his submitted work "*Landscape with cows*".

In 1912 Cornelis Vreedenburgh married Marie Schotel. She was the daughter of the famous marine painter J.C. Dish and a painter herself. They stayed in Nunspeet for a short time and moved to Hattem in 1915. Here he meets the well-known painter Jan Voerman senior and junior who, like Vreedenburgh, set out to paint IJssel landscapes.

Vreedenburgh makes several trips abroad to further develop his skills. The South of France was an especially popular place to paint, but also Switzerland, Italy and Germany. In 1918 he settled in Laren - at that time a lively artists' village - because he preferred to live closer to Amsterdam and to get in touch with other artists. This is where his beautiful impressionist cityscapes of Amsterdam are created, which brought him great success. He discovered how to accurately depict the liveliness of the city and buildings with the right lighting. He likes to portray the activity in the port of Amsterdam.

In the Netherlands he prefers to depict lakeside views and sunny cityscapes.

In 1937 Cornelis Vreedenburgh held a solo exhibition. It is a great success and many of his works are sold, including two to Queen Wilhelmina.

The Rijksmuseum, Dordrechts Museum and the Singer Museum in Laren, among others, have work by Cornelis Vreedenburgh in their collection.



12 september 1926. The official opening of the Damplantsoen. View of the square

and the palace from the Kransapolsky Hotel. Collection of the Amsterdam City Archives.



Damplantsoen after the construction of the park. Circa 1927. Collection of the Amsterdam City Archives.

Condition report:

This painting is in a very good condition. This work is painted on linen.

The paint layer is very stable. There are some small original bristles underneath. Craquelure is almost impossible to spot. Examination under ultraviolet (UV395) light reveals only a few small touch-ups. However, this is only visible under ultraviolet light.

The old varnish has been completely removed during a recent restoration (July 2020) and a new one was applied, making it very clear, smooth and semi-glossy.

The wooden frame and linen canvas show no lateral warps.

The original ornamental gold woodcut '*bois d'oré*' frame was also completely restored and is in a perfect condition.

This painting requires no treatment or conservation and may be displayed in its current excellent condition.



Perspective with a 185cm/6'1" man.



Provenance:

Kunsthandel Th. Flax, Amsterdam.

Anonymous sales; Christie's, Amsterdam, October 28, 2003, lot 155.

Private collection, The Netherlands

Anonymous auction, London (Christie's), July 7-29, 2020, lot 40

Collections:

Singer Museum, Laren

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

Dordrechts Museum

City Museum Woerden

Royal Collection: purchases by H.K.M Queen Emma and H.K.M Queen Wilhelmina

Price:

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