

. AGNEWS .

EST. 1817

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David Teniers the Younger (Antwerp 1610-1690 Brussels)

A grand palace kitchen interior, with a falconer returning from a hunt

Signed (lower right): 'D·TENIERS·FEC.'; and indistinctly dated on the sheet of paper above the fireplace '1674'

Oil on canvas

68 ½ x 63 ⅞ in. (174 x 162.2 cm.)

Painted in the 1674



Provenance

Count Adam Gottlob Moltke (1710–1792), Copenhagen, by 1780 (according N. Hoyen, 1841);
thence by descent to his son, Count Joachim Godske Moltke (1746–1818), Copenhagen;
thence by descent to his son, Count Adam Wilhelm Moltke (1785–1864), Copenhagen;
thence by descent to his son, Count Frederik Georg Julius Moltke (1825–1875), Copenhagen;
thence by descent to his son, Count Frederik Christian Moltke (1854–1936), Copenhagen, by 1885;
his sale, Copenhagen, W. Winkel and Magnussen, 1–2 June 1931, lot 125, to 'Mr. Smith' on behalf of Carl Salomonsen;
probably thence by descent in the family;
by whom probably anonymously sold, London, Christie's 14 May 1965, lot 89, to Dewitt;
Christie's, London, 6 July 1990, lot 89;
with Johnny van Haeften, London, by c.1990;
from whom acquired by the previous owner.

Literature

N.L. Hoyen, *Fortegnelse ober der Moltkeske Maleriesamling*, Copenhagen 1841, no. 16.
Catalogue des tableaux de la collection du comte de Moltke, Copenhagen 1885, pp. 4, 13–14, no. 16.
N. Hoyen and K. Madsen, *Fortegnelse over den Moltkeske Malerisamling*, Copenhagen 1900, no. 16.
A. von Wurzbach, *Niederländisches Künstler-Lexikon*, Vienna and Leipzig 1910, vol. II, p. 696.
A. Fugl, 'Den Moltkeske Malerisamling', in *Samleren*, no. 4, April 1931, p. 55, reproduced p. 51.
J. De Maere and M. Wabbes, *Illustrated Dictionary of 17th Century Flemish Painters*, Brussels 1994, vol. III, pp. 1075 and 1154.

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M. Klinge and D. Lüdke, *David Teniers der Jüngere 1610–1690: Alltag und Vergnügen in Flandern*, exh. cat., Heidelberg 2005, pp. 310–311, no. 102, reproduced.

Exhibited

Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, *David Teniers der Jüngere 1610–1690: Alltag und Vergnügen in Flandern*, 5 November 2005 – 19 February 2006, no. 102.

This grand interior of a palace kitchen is a remarkable example of the types of genre scenes that brought David Teniers the Younger great acclaim. Painted in 1674, the large canvas dates to the Flemish artist's late creative period. Here, Teniers revisits a particular composition he first explored in 1646 in an equally large painting formerly in the collection of Sir Robert Walpole but since 1779 housed in the collection of the Hermitage in St Petersburg (fig. 1).¹ Like his earlier exploration of the theme, the present canvas abounds in lively characters, a vibrant palette, and intricately rendered details, all of which when taken together render a wholly captivating work.

The energy of a bustling and crowded kitchen unfolds across this large canvas. The spacious room, with its soaring ceilings, is defined by a sturdy stone arch that separates the bright, stage like foreground from the more softly lit background, illuminated by the embers of the fireplace and the twilight shining through from an open window. An abundance of fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, game and drinking vessels are strewn throughout the kitchen as several cooks prepare for an upcoming feast. In the lower left corner, a magnificently attired nobleman enters the room, seemingly having just returned from a hunt. Perched upon his left arm is his falcon, and his three hounds, shepherded by a crouching page, stand attentively at his feet. Approaching from the right is a gardener with his spade who pleasingly presents to the master chef a group of three fishermen who carry their catches of the day, including a large sturgeon, perhaps a delicacy to be added to the evening's menu. Dietmar Lüdke points out that these three men might be attending the palace kitchen in order to pay tax to their lord in form of fish (*op. cit.*). The lifeless gaze of the bearded old man who is being led by the gardener might suggest that he is blind. An old woman peers into the scene from an open window above, looking down upon the lively and hectic interior with a faint smile on her face.

¹ Inv. no. ГЭ-586, oil on canvas, 171 x 237 cm.

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While this canvas is clearly signed in the lower right corner, the date of 1674 is embedded within the composition, appearing along the upper edge of a small sheet of paper above the fireplace. Teniers often included such loose sheets of paper in his works, many of which included drawn sketches of figures or soldiers.² In this painting, he includes a sketch of a soldier, jauntily posed in contrast to the standing nobleman in the foreground. This soldier is reminiscent of the figures found in the works of Jacques Callot, whose print of the *Impruneta* fair inspired Teniers to paint his own version of the scene in the 1640s.

In comparing the present painting to the 1646 example formerly at Houghton Hall, one can see how Teniers has refashioned a highly successful composition. He has imbued the kitchen interior here with more immediacy by bringing the vantage point down and by rendering the figures on a larger scale within a more realistic and crowded space. Although Teniers does not include a portrait of himself in the guise of the noble falconer in the present work as he does in the Houghton canvas, like that earlier version, he again subtly weaves references to an allegory of the four elements throughout. Earth is represented by the bounty of foods and meats strewn throughout; water by the fish, rays, and lobster in the foreground; fire by the fireplace and the cooking vessels; and air by the falcon as well as the various other birds both hanging on hooks and on the floor in the foreground.

Note on Provenance

According to the Danish art historian Niels Laurits Høyen, this painting entered the distinguished collection of Count Adam Gottlob Moltke by 1780.³ Count Moltke's immense wealth arose from his position as close advisor to Frederick V, King of Denmark and Norway and Duke of Schleswig-Holstein. Moltke lived in one of the four Royal Palaces at Amalienborg (fig. 2), and the interiors of his quarters were decorated with paintings by Boucher, Oudry and Joseph-Marie Vien. He housed his vast collection, consisting primarily of Dutch and Flemish paintings (including three other paintings by Teniers), in the palace's *Riddersalen*, or

² See, for example, his *Smoker* in the Stockholm National Museum, [inv. no. NM653](#), oil on panel, 42 x 61 cm.

³ An inventory of Count Moltke's collection was made in 1756. Høyen notes in 1841 that by 1780, when another inventory was made, Count Moltke had added to his collection several works of particular value, including the present canvas.

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Great Hall, which eventually opened to the public. This canvas descended in the Moltke collection until sold by Count Frederik Christian Moltke in 1931.



Fig. 1: David Teniers the Younger, *Kitchen Scene*, 1646, oil on canvas, 171 x 237 cm., The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, formerly in the collection of Robert Walpole (1st Earl of Orford), Houghton Hall

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Fig. 2: Odvardt Helmoldt de Lode, *Moltke's Palace in 1756*, Royal Library, Copenhagen



Interior of the Moltke Mansion in Copenhagen where the collection was housed from the beginning of the nineteenth Century, and was open to the public. The collection remained there until sold in 1831.

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