

# Jacob Adriaensz. Bellevois

1620/1622–1676

THE MARINE PAINTER Jacob Adriaensz. Bellevois was born about 1620 or 1622 in Rotterdam. His teacher is not known, but the influence of Julius Porcellis (1609?–1645), who worked in Rotterdam, seems apparent in the monochrome tendencies evident in his style. Bellevois presumably lived and worked in Rotterdam at least until after the death of his first wife, Cornelia Vythoecs, in 1653. Three years later he married Maria 't Hert from Gouda. A

document indicates that he was living there in 1671. Around 1673 or 1674 he is mentioned as being in Hamburg. He was buried in Rotterdam on 19 September 1676.

## Bibliography

Rijsewijk 1891.

Bredius 1915–1922, 5 (1918): 1648–1650.

Bol 1973: 192–196.

## Circle of Jacob Adriaensz. Bellevois

1947.3.1 (890)

### *Dutch Ships in a Lively Breeze*

probably 1650s

Oil on canvas, 122.5 x 147.8 (48¼ x 58¼)

Gift of Mrs. Robert Giles

**Technical Notes:** The picture support is comprised of two pieces of fabric sewn with a horizontal seam just below the center. All tacking margins were removed when the picture was lined, but cusping at the edges suggests that the original dimensions have been retained. The fabric support sustained damage in the form of a long tear in the upper right, in the sky. A thin, reddish brown ground was laid overall. The sky, the most thickly painted area of the picture, was painted first, followed by the water, then the boats. The paint used for the water and boats is thinly applied. The paint is in fairly poor condition, with extensive abrasions and much repaint. Overpaint covers several centimeters on either side of the seam and the tear, as well as extending beyond the perimeters of the several small, but significant losses in the sky. The varnish is very discolored.

**Provenance:** Mrs. Robert Giles, Washington.

**Exhibited:** *Inaugural Exhibition: European Paintings*, Art Museum, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, 1969–1970, no cat.

UNDER THE BILLOWING CLOUDS of an expansive sky, a large three-master, carrying the Amsterdam coat of arms on its stern, sails in brisk winds through crowded shipping lanes. While no land is visible, the

mixture of both large and small vessels sailing in a variety of directions suggests that the setting may be one of the broad river estuaries along the coast of the Netherlands that were so important for fostering the Dutch mercantile empire. Nevertheless, given that the ships seem to be generic in character rather than identifiable, it would appear that the scene is a fanciful construction conceived in the artist's workshop.<sup>1</sup>

The attribution of this painting is difficult to determine, in large part because the condition is poor and the surface is heavily overpainted. A more essential problem, however, is that the quality of the work is not very high, indicating that the artist was not a master of the first rank. Ships are ill-drawn and do not sit comfortably in the water, the waves are not convincingly rendered, and the composition lacks focus and a sense of cohesion.

When the painting was accepted at the National Gallery in 1947 it was attributed to Abraham Storck (1635–1710), presumably on the basis of an old label that was once attached to the back of the original canvas that read: "Storck Dietsch 1696—Shipping in the Scheldt." Storck, however, was a rather talented marine painter, whose style is quite different. Instead of the elongated, insubstantial forms of the vessels found in this painting, he gave his ships a physical presence. Both through his dense brushwork and effective modeling, for example, he could convey the weight and mass of the sail in a way not remotely suggested by the artist of this work.<sup>2</sup>

The attribution to Storck was changed in 1964