

RICHARD GREEN

FINE PAINTINGS • ESTABLISHED 1955

WILLEM KOEKKOEK

Amsterdam 1839 - 1895 Nieuwer-Amstel (Amstelveen)

Ref: BY 121

A Dutch street in summer



Signed lower left: *W Koekkoek*
Oil on canvas: 17 ¼ x 23 ½ in / 43.8 x 59.7 cm
Frame size: 25 ½ x 31 in / 64.8 x 78.7 cm

Painted *circa* 1880s



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Provenance:

The Estate of Mrs ID Brookland;
Sotheby's London, 19th April 1978, lot 15 (as *A Dutch town scene with figures on the way to market*);
Richard Green, London;
private collector, USA, acquired from the above

Exhibited:

London, Richard Green, *Dutch Romantic Paintings*, 1979, no.44, illus. in colour

Willem Koekkoek was a member of one of the best known and most highly regarded families of realist painters in nineteenth century Holland. Born in Amsterdam, he was the grandson of Jan Hermanus Koekkoek (1778-1851), the son of Hermanus Koekkoek the Elder (1815-1882) and the brother of Johannes Hermanus Barend Koekkoek (1840-1912). Willem studied art with his father, a marine artist, and soon became one of the most distinguished painters in the country, best known for his extremely detailed town scenes that were inspired by his numerous trips to The Hague, Utrecht, and Nieuwer Amstel throughout the 1880s. Although he sometimes painted topographically accurate views, Koekkoek also executed imaginary streetscapes which found a successful market among the affluent middle class in the Netherlands and Great Britain, particularly London, where he moved in 1888.

This canal scene has a timeless quality which is inspired by the urban scenes of Golden Age painters like Gerrit Berckheyde (1638-1698). Koekkoek lovingly recreates the textures of weathered brick, cracked plaster and the traditional, green-painted doors and shutters of the tall, seventeenth century houses. Housewives and workmen provide a sense of community. A man wheels a handcart, for centuries the easiest way to transport goods around the narrow, cobbled streets.



Willem Koekkoek, *View of Oudewater*.
Oil on canvas: 25 ½ x 33 ¼ in / 64.8 x 84.4 cm.
The National Gallery, London.

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Willem Koekkoek was the second son of the marine artist Hermanus Koekkoek, Senior (1815 – 1882), but unlike his father he specialised in townscapes peopled with figures painted during summer and winter. These included imaginary streets and specific towns such as Gouda, Enkhuizen, IJsselstein, Breda and Bruges. Born in Amsterdam in 1839, Willem trained with his father and then travelled extensively in Holland, living at the Hague in 1878, Amsterdam in 1880 and Nieuwer-Amstel from 1885 onwards; he is also recorded as visiting London in 1888. He exhibited at Leeuwarden in 1859 and in Amsterdam, the Hague and Rotterdam between 1865 and 1894. He died at Nieuwer-Amstel, south of Amsterdam, in 1895.

The work of Willem Koekkoek is represented in the Amsterdam Museum and the Toneelmuseum, Amsterdam; the National Gallery, London; the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal.