

S P H I N X F I N E A R T



Wouter Verschuur (Amsterdam 1812 - Vorden 1874)

A Moment of Rest

signed and dated 'W . Verschuur/1847' (lower right)

oil on panel

30 x 41 cm (11 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ in)

A Moment of Rest by Wouter Verschuur depicts a scene of rural simplicity and charm. A bare-footed peasant, riding a horse and leading another alongside, stops to speak with two labourers. Ahead of them is an expansive landscape, bathed in the soft pink glow of the setting sun. Distant details such as the horse and plough in the fields and the cottages with smoke drifting from their chimneys give the scene a sense of order and gentle productivity.

Verschuur, a member of the last generation of Dutch Romantic painters, was particularly inspired by the work of [Philips Wouwerman](#). Like Wouwerman, Verschuur was interested in both genre and landscape elements and his compositions harmoniously balance the two. In *A Moment of Rest*, the figures and horses in the foreground of the painting are the viewer's initial point of interest; however, the surroundings are given equal painterly attention and complete the picture. Verschuur's favourite subjects were horses, and in the present picture the two draught horses form a dignified and docile pair, with the last of the sun's rays reflecting off their muscular flanks and thick manes. Their forms and faces are depicted with great detail and in a more convincing manner than those of the labourers who stand nearby. The woman dressed in a simple bodice and skirt and a Dutch bonnet, and the man next to her in a green cap leaning against a wheelbarrow appear less significant by comparison to these majestic and magnificent creatures.

Verschuur's delight in painting work horses in rustic surroundings also extended to his interior scenes, such as [Interior of a Stable with Horses and Figures](#) in the Rijksmuseum. In this painting the tranquil pastoral setting of the present picture is replaced by a rough and chaotic stable scene filled with horses, men, dogs, and chickens. The nobility of the horses, however, is again striking and their well defined bodies and glossy coats and manes are expertly translated onto the canvas.

Verschuur was the son of an Amsterdam jeweller and studied under a number of artists, notably Pieter Gerardus van Os and Cornelis Steffelaar, who specialised in painting landscapes and cattle. He

showed talent from an early age and won gold medals in competitions in 1831 and 1832 at the Felix Meritis Society in Amsterdam. In 1833 he was appointed a member of the Akademie voor Beeldende Kunsten and of the Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut in Amsterdam. He joined the artist's society, Arti et Amicitiae, in 1839. During his career, he worked in The Hague, Doorn, Brussels and Haarlem as well as Amsterdam. From 1840, Verschuur began making a name for himself as a painter of horses both nationally and abroad. One of his entries in the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1855 was bought by Napoleon III. Verschuur sometimes collaborated with other artists such as Cornelis Springer, Peter Christ and Cornelis van Bolt. He had many students, of whom the most important was Anton Mauve, who often incorporated depictions of draught horses and livestock similar to those of Verschuur into his compositions.

Artist description:

Wouter Verschuur Snr was a Dutch painter of equestrian scenes. He delighted in the beauty of working horses in rustic locations such as farmyards and stables and was a great follower of the Old Master painter, Philips Wouwerman.

Verschuur studied in Amsterdam under Pieter Gerardus van Os and Cornelis Steffelar and worked later with Cornelis Springer, Peter Christ and Cornelis van Bolt. Between 1842 and 1868 he lived in The Hague, Doorn and Amsterdam.

His work was regularly exhibited between 1828 and 1872 at the Living Artists Exhibitions in Amsterdam, Leuwarden and The Hague. In 1831 and 1832 he was awarded the Felix Meritis prize and became a member of the Royal Academy of Amsterdam in 1833, then in 1839 the Arti et Amicitiae group.

Collections

Vershuur is represented in the following collections: Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Rijks museum Twenthe, Enschede; Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem; Gemeente Museum, Kampen; Rijks museum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo; Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Stedelijk Museum, Zutphen, amongst others.