

Jacob Van Ruisdael depicted the Dutch landscape with precision and sensitivity. *In View of Haarlem from the Dunes at Overveen*, van Ruisdael gives the viewer an overarching view of this major Dutch city. The specificity of the artist's image – the Saint Bavo church in the background, the numerous windmills that refer to the land reclamation effort, and the figures in the foreground stretching linen to be bleached (a major industry in Haarlem) – endows the work with a sense of honesty and integrity. Yet this painting is, above all, a landscape. Although the scene is painted in an admirably clear and detailed manner, the inhabitants and dwellings are so minuscule that they blend into the land itself. Further, the horizon line is low, so the sky fills almost three-quarters of the picture space. And the landscape is illuminated only in patches, where the sun has broken through the clouds above. , van Ruisdael not only captured a specific and historical view of Haarlem but also succeeded in imbruing the work with a quiet serenity that seems almost spiritual.



JACOB VAN RUISDAEL, *View of Haarlem from the Dunes at Overveen*, ca. 1670. Oil on canvas, approx.. 1'10" x 2'1". Mauritshuis, The Hague.