

LAWRENCE STEIGRAD FINE ARTS



Roses, Peonies, Lilies and Other Flowers in an Urn on a Pedestal Before a Stone Niche

signed in the lower right gasper.pedro. Verbruggen f.
oil on canvas
49 3/4 x 41 3/8 inches (126.5 x 105 cm.)

PROVENANCE

"F. B. Greenstreet, Esq., London (died 1926)

Lewis & Simmons Inc, London, New York, Paris, circa 1926 - 1929

Alice Warder Garrett, (1876 - 1952), Evergreen House, Baltimore, from whose collection sold by

Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, December 2, 1976, lot 250

J. Nackemsohn, London, by 1977

Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, New York, January 30, 2015, lot 467 where purchased by

LITERATURE

Ralph Warner, "Gaspar Peter Verbruggen" in *Dutch and Flemish Flower and Fruit Painters of the XVII and XVIII Centuries*, Mills & Boon, Limited, London, 1928, pp. 218-219, plate 104b, illustrated (from the collection of the late F. Greenstreet, London)

Marie – Louise Hairs, *Die Beiden Verbruggen*, F. Pallamar, Vienna, 1975, p. 68, no. 52

Marie – Louise Hairs, "Gaspar Pieter Verbruggen le Jeune" in *Les Peintres Flamands de Fleurs au XVIIe Siècle*, volume 2, Lefebvre et Gillet, Brussels, 1985, p.57

Alain R. Truong, "Gaspar Pieter Verbruggen" *Old Master Paintings*, January 12, 2015, illustrated at www.alaintruong@truongalain

EXHIBITED

Pittsburgh, Carnegie Institute of Art, no. 59, (loaned by Lewis & Simmons Inc, New York, circa 1926 – 1929)

Dr. Fred G. Meijer after viewing this painting has confirmed it to be a work by Gaspar Peeter Verbruggen II.

Gaspar Peeter Verbruggen II was the son and pupil of his father the flower still life artist Gaspar Peeter Verbruggen I. He was only thirteen when he joined the Antwerp guild in 1677. By 1691 he had been elected dean of the guild and between 1694 and 1702 would serve in that position four more times. His apprentices included Pieter Frans Casteels, his half brother Balthasar Hyacinth Verbruggen and his cousin Hieronymus Galle among others. He lived extravagantly until 1703 when he had to flee his creditors, first to Amsterdam and later to The Hague. In 1708 he became a member of the Confrerie Pictura in The Hague and remained there until 1723. He then returned to Antwerp for his remaining years.[1]

Verbruggen's intent was to create ornamental and highly decorative works for interiors that were literally showstoppers as exemplified by this painting. On display are a wide variety of flowers that abundantly spill across the canvas surrounding a molded garden urn on a pedestal in front of a stone niche. Characteristic traits of the painter are flowers that are often large and round as well as Parrot Tulips that are shown partially or fully open.[2] When Ralph Warner published this painting in his *Dutch and Flemish Flower and Fruit Painters of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*, one of the earliest books done on the subject, he particularly noted "There is crispness of touch and delicacy in the shadows which is rarely seen".[3] Other signed flower pieces by Verbruggen are in Musée Rupert de Chièvres, Poitiers; The Art Museum Riga Bourse, Latvia; and the Staatliches Museum, Schwerin that own pendants.[4]

The earliest provenance known for this Verbruggen is its ownership by the dealer F. B. Greenstreet of Duke Street, St. James's, who upon his death was described by *The Connoisseur* magazine as "one of the most genial and popular of dealers".[5] It was next acquired by the dealership Lewis & Simmons who had entered into partnership in 1860 specializing in French furniture and old masters. They had galleries in London, Paris and New York, but by 1929 the business had been dissolved. It was their firm that sent the Verbruggen to the Carnegie Institute of Art, Pittsburgh for an exhibition.[6]

The commanding presence of this painting was certainly matched by the lifestyle of the next known owner, the philanthropist and collector Alice Warder Garrett. She was the wife of the wealthy career diplomat John Work Garrett. His posts included The Hague, Luxembourg, Berlin, and Rome. In 1920 they inherited Evergreen a 48 room mansion with 26 acres of gardens and woods in Baltimore. Fifty-one servants worked in the house, stables and grounds. Alice turned it into an architectural showplace and a mecca of high culture. She surrounded herself with writers, artists, dancers, diplomats, critics, and musicians. The house also had its own theater where she occasionally performed for her guests. On one notorious night she was dancing the flamenco so abandonly with the well-known interior designer and Baltimore native Billy Baldwin that she tripped and fell on him breaking his leg.[7]

When Alice died in 1952 she bequeathed Evergreen and its contents to John Hopkins University for use as a museum which is now open to the public six days a week. From 1975 - 1976 in a series of sales Evergreen House sold paintings and works of art at Sotheby Parke Bernet in New York. The Verbruggen was included in a sale on December 2, 1976. By 1977 the Verbruggen had returned to London where it was recorded in the collection of J. Nackemsohn by Marie-Louise Hairs in her 1985 landmark book on Flemish seventeenth century flower painters. Later it was included in a sale at Sotheby's New York on January 30, 2015 minus most of the fascinating provenance and devoid of its important scholarly references.

[1] Biographical information taken from Adriaan van der Willigen & Fred G. Meijer, "Gasper Peeter Verbruggen II" in *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-life Painters Working in Oils 1525 – 1725*, Primavera Press, Leiden, 2003, p. 203; and Sam Segal & Klara Alen, "Gasper Peeter Verbruggen II" in *Dutch and Flemish Flower Pieces*, volume I, Brill, Hes & De Groot, Leiden, 2020, p. 590.

[2] Sam Segal & Klara Alen, *op.cit.*, p. 590.

[3] Ralph Warner, *op.cit.*, p. 219.

[4] Sam Segal & Klara Alen, *op.cit.*, p. 591.

[5] "In the Salesroom", in *The Connoisseur*, vol. LXXXVII, January – April 1927, London, p. 173.

[6] "Lewis & Simmons" on *Antique Dealers: the British Antique Trade in the 20th Century*, University of Leeds, at antiquetrade.leeds.ac.uk.

[7] Biographical information taken from Brooke Gunning & Molly O'Donovan, *Baltimore's Halcyon Days*, Arcadia Publishing, 2000, p. 109; James Karmon, ed., *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers*, vol. III, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2015, p. 517; and "High Art & Deep Pockets on Big Old Houses on bigoldhouses.blogspot.com, June 18, 2024.