

LAWRENCE STEIGRAD FINE ARTS



Apples, Grapes, Apricots, and Berries in a Basket with a Pineapple, Grapes and other Fruit on a Marble Ledge

signed and dated J. Vandael an.x on the ledge in the lower left
oil on canvas
24 x 19 3/4 inches (61 x 50.1 cm.)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Connecticut until 2002 from whom acquired by
Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts, New York, from whom purchased by
Private Collection, New Jersey, 2003 – until the present time

LITERATURE

The Affordable Face and Other Recent Acquisitions, Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts, New York, 2003, no. 26, illustrated

Signed and dated x, this work by Jan Frans van Dael was executed in Paris in 1799. The x is indicative of the tenth year of the French Revolutionary calendar. There is an exact replica of this painting in the Hermitage Museum of Saint Petersburg which Van Dael is believed to have painted at the same time. Dr. Fred G. Meijer wrote regarding these two works "Of our painting, a second version of the same size and similarly signed and dated, is in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg (inv. No. 5347). We must assume that van Dael painted both works simultaneously, since it is difficult – if at all possible – to tell which is the prime version." [1]

Van Dael first studied architecture at the Academy in Antwerp where in 1784 and 1785 he was awarded first prize for his designs. In 1786 he moved to Paris where he worked for Louis Stanislas Xavier, later King Louis XVIII and his wife Marie Joséphine of Savoy. He was commissioned to produce paintings for the castles of Saint – Cloud, Bellevue and Chantilly. He first painted interiors, portraits and religious works, but most likely under the influence of his friend Christiaan van Pol and the advice of Gerard van Spaendonck who would become his master, he turned to fruit and flower still lifes in oils, watercolor and black chalk. Subsequent patrons included Napoleon Bonaparte and his consort Joséphine de Beauharnais as well as King Charles X. He also furnished designs for Sèvres porcelain. [2]

"A paradox of the revolution is that while all the official voices (including the critics) were extolling the virtues of large – scale historical painting drawn from antiquity in order to influence public morality, the artists were in fact painting what they could sell." And what the public wanted were works of a smaller scale, meticulous finish and dazzling color – "jewels to feast the eye on". [3] Such traits were evident in the Netherlandish tradition of flower painting to which Van Dael adhered, making his precise rendering of both the common place and exotic in paintings such as this irresistible.

[1] In a written communication from Fred G. Meijer signed and dated October 14, 2002.

[2] Sam Segal & Klara Alen, "Jan Frans van Dael" in *Dutch and Flemish Flower Pieces*, volume II, Brill, Hes & De Graaf, Leiden, Boston, 2020, pp. 850 – 851.

[3] Antoine Schnapper, "Painting During the Revolution 1789 – 1799" in *French Painting 1774 – 1830: The Age of Revolution*, Detroit Institute of Arts, 1975, pp. 115 - 116.