

LAWRENCE STEIGRAD FINE ARTS



Still Life with a Roemer, Tazza, and Fruit on a Stone Ledge

signed and dated E. V. aelst a^o 1639 on the stone ledge
oil on panel, panel maker G. R., with collector's seal on the reverse
15.35 x 12 inches (39 x 30 cm.)

PROVENANCE

Sammlung aus Altadlingem Besitz – H, Gemälde Alter Meister (old Aristocratic Collection – H, Old Master Paintings),
Rudolph Lepke's Kunst – Auctions – Haus, Berlin, March 21 – 22, 1934, lot 657, where purchased by

v. d. W

Newhouse Galleries, New York, inventory no. 20519

Property of a Gentleman, Sotheby's, London, July 7, 1976, lot 16, illustrated

Brod Gallery, London, 1976

With Franco Samenzato, Venice, October 20, 1985

LITERATURE

Hofstede de Groot fiche, RKD, box 002, card number 1001751

London, Brod Gallery, Old Master Paintings, 1976, pp. 52 – 53, no. 24, illustrated

Erika Gamar – Koeltzsch, Klaus Ertz, & Christa Nitze – Ertz, “Evert van Aelst” in *Holländische Stillebenmaler in 17. Jarhundert*, volume 2, Luca Verlag, Lingen, 1995, pp. 9, 11, no. 2/1 illustrated

Alan Chong, “Contained Under the Name of Still Life: The Associations of Still Life Painting” in *Still Life Paintings from the Netherlands 1550 – 1720*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2000, pp. 11, 12, fig. 1, illustrated

Adriaan van der Willigen & Fred G. Meijer, “Evert van Aelst” in *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still – Life Painters Working in Oils, 1525 – 1725*, Primavera Press, Leiden, 2003, p. 25

Evert van Aelst was the uncle as well as teacher of Willem van Aelst. By 1632 he was a member of the Guild of Saint Luke in Delft. His paintings were quite popular in Delft, and the artist sold quite a number of works during his lifetime.

Fascinatingly and “of great significance is, that the term *stilleven* (still life) was, as far as we know from surviving documentation, first used in connection with Van Aelst, namely in an inventory of 1650 which refers to ‘*een stilleven van Evert van Aelst*’ (a still life by Evert van Aelst)”. [1]

Equally intriguing is John Michael Montias’ supposition that Van Aelst taught Vermeer. “Johannes [Vermeer] may have been regularly apprenticed, perhaps for the first two of his six – years’ stint, with the still life painter Evert van Aelst. Van Aelst owed Vermeer’s father money when the boy was eleven years old, which he could have paid off by instructing him in the art of painting. He is known to have been a successful teacher ... Evert van Aelst enjoyed a reputation for painting the shine and gleams on reflective metals – surely a skill that young Vermeer would have wanted to acquire.”[2]

Besides his nephew other apprentices included Jan Denysz, Adam Pick and in all likelihood Emanuel de Witte. The artist died in poverty but based on the holdings of his estate, it was probably the result of an extravagant lifestyle. Only a handful of his works are known to exist, with the majority of them in small formats. Subjects range from florals, vanitas, and as here displays of fruit and drink.[3] Focusing on a few simple objects through an economy of means Van

Aelst has created a masterpiece. Asymmetrically placed a Roemer, overturned Tazza with a few pieces of fruit are situated across a stone ledge. Light enters from an unseen window in the upper left casting reflections on the glass and sheen of the Tazza. The overall harmony is enhanced by the employment of a few related hues. The preeminence of the Roemer amplified by the upright format of the panel combine to create the impression of monumentality. Further it is Van Aelst’s employment of clarity and restraint that imbue this work with its sense of timelessness.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Sam Segal & Klara Alen, “Evert van Aelst” in *Dutch and Flemish Flower Pieces*, volume I, Brill, Hes & De Graaf, Leiden, 2020, p. 301.

[2] John Michael Montias, *Vermeer and his Milieu: a web of social history*, Princeton University Press, N.J., 1989, p. 103.

[3] Sam Segal & Klara Alen, *op.cit.*, p. 301.