Alfred Bader

Art Related Correspondence

Bader Correspondence: Wolfgang Stechow

1998-1999

Stechow

OBERLIN

Oberlin College
Allen Memorial Art Museum
87 North Main Street
Oberlin, Ohio 44074-1161
216/775-8665
FAX: 216/775-8799 & 775-6841

8 May 1998

Dr. Alfred Bader
924 East Juneau, suite 622
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Alfred,

It was just delightful to visit with you and Isabel the other day! Thanks for the lovely lunch, and the volume of essays by Wischnitzer--I've read the one on Menassah Ben Israel before, and am looking forward to dipping into the rest of the volume, not least to learn more about Dr. Wischnitzer herself.

Most of all, thank you for the generous check in support of publishing the volume of essays by Stechow, and for your devotion to this project. As I've mentioned, Stechow is for me not only an exemplary scholar, but a sort of "mentor once removed": someone whom I never met, but who had a profound impact on people whom I admire and who have influenced me personally. I will keep you posted as to the progress on this, especially with regard to Abrams and the Levines.

By the way, I showed the enclosed photos to Charles Mason, our curator of Asian art, and he was able to tell me that the figure represents the Buddhist saint Guanyin (an avatar of Avalokitesvara), the Goddess of Mercy, who is shown here in her "white robed" form. The piece appears to be Chinese and probably 19th century (although it could be 18th century). Such pieces are not terribly rare, although this is larger than most; the damage to the piece compromises its market value.

And finally: I have asked the AAMD for a list of director members, and when I receive that will pass it along to you.

Again, thank you for your contribution. My best to you and Isabel; have a delightful summer in England!

Yours--
Betsy

Marjorie E. Wieseman
Acting Director

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11 June 1998

Dr. Alfred Bader
924 East Juneau, suite 622
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Alfred,

Just wanted to keep you updated on what is happening with the publication of the Stechow bulletin:

- I received permission from Abrams to republish the article on Rembrandt Research that appeared in *Art Studies for an Editor: 25 Essays in Memory of Milton S. Fox*. They will probably charge a small fee (about $200) but apparently that is negotiable.
- I have begun to order photographs, and annotate the texts with footnotes to bring them more up to date.
- And finally, I have written to David Levine and Nicola Courtright to remind them of their promise to submit an introductory essay for the volume. Will keep you posted!

On a completely different matter, I received the list of AAMD members, which I am also sending along to you.

I hope that this finds you and Isabel having a delightful holiday in England. I look forward to seeing you both once you return in the fall.

Yours--

Betsy

Marjorie E. Wieseman
Acting Director

cc: Mrs. Ursula Stechow

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21 October 1998

Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

Dear Alfred--

Thanks for your letters of 16 October and earlier. To give you the update on the Stechow bulletin: the manuscript is currently at the designer, and we are awaiting color transparencies (or failing that, black and white photos) from the Hermitage and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. Our publications editor is trying to contact them on daily basis, so far to little avail. Ordinarily I would consider just eliminating these images, but as you know they are really central to Wolf's arguments and *not* to reproduce them would seriously compromise the publication. So we wait, and keep trying via telephone and fax. If you have any suggestions, I'd be grateful for them.

With regard to the *Sinners and Saints* catalogue: as a part-time editor, I must protest some of your comments on the spelling of Ter Brugghen's name. As you know, it is customary (although not necessarily proper Dutch) to capitalize the prepositional part of a name when the first name is omitted: so Hendrick ter Brugghen, but Ter Brugghen. The spelling of the artist's name as one or two words is less standardized: I prefer two; others one. Nonetheless, it should be consistent, I agree; the exception in the Raleigh catalogue occurs when the author is citing another publication, and he has rightly given the title as it was published, whether or not it agrees with his chosen orthography. The use of apostrophes for plurals (no) and possessives (yes) is a bit confusing but entirely correct grammatically.

Your other points--regarding Wolf's departure from Germany and his role in the formation of the Oberlin collection--are well taken. Matters of nuance perhaps, but they do create a misleading impression.

To give you a more complete idea of what we're up to here at Oberlin, I'm enclosing a copy of our CD-ROM catalogue, together with a printout of the entry on the aforementioned Ter Brugghen. I hope you enjoy exploring the collection via this modern-day version of cryptic ancient runes: "very decorative, but what does it do?"

Much love to you and Isabel, and hope to see you soon,

Yours,

Betsy

Marjorie E. Wieseman
Curator of Western Art before 1850

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Yours,

Betsy

Marjorie E. Wieseman
Curator of Western Art before 1850

10
30776
Fig. 2b

Canvas, 127 [illegible]

[illegible]

4.7

30776

Fig. 26

Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

A Chemist Helping Chemists

Dear Betsy:

Just a hurried note before leaving for ten days to Canada, to thank you for your letter of October 21 and the CD Rom which we will enjoy.

Thanks for comments about Ten Brugghen I tend to be too Germanic. "Gott steckt im Detail", aber der Teufel auch.

Will you have much about Wolf's life in the Stechow bulletin? If so, you might like to pass it by Ursula. Her mind is wonderfully sharp.

Will the enclosed photograph help? Note Wolf's inscription on the back! I earlier got a photograph from the Hermitage either, and needed it for

my paper in the Bull. Wolf and I disagreed about the meaning of this painting, and sadly, I never had a chance to spend an evening with him to discuss. I still think it is David leaving Saul – it is possible to be convinced and mistaken!

Please return photo – to regain so many helpful letters from Wolf.

Could Egbert help with the other photo? Or the Frick or RKD?

Best wishes

Quirinder

Jane

24 X 98.

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5 May 1998

Wolfgang Stechow bulletin (AMAM *Bulletin*, Summer 1998)

Cost estimate

24 double-spaced pages of text
45 photographs, including full-color 4 page center insert and full-color cover (front & back)
8.5 x 11" perfect bound
80# gloss text and cover
Print run: 1,500

design: Christopher Hoot, HootDesigns	$1,000
printing: Herald Printing	$6,289
photographs and reproduction rights (45 b/w @ $50/ea; 4 color @ $125/ea)	$2,750
TOTAL	$10,039

the publication will appear in 1998

Marjorie E. Wieseman
6 may 98.

I am giving you $8000 — to-day and will give you a second check for up to $2039 — when you know final cost.

Jerrold Ross

May 6 98.

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28 April 1998

Dr. Alfred Bader
924 East Juneau, suite 622
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Alfred,

I've just returned from several days in London--the latest in a long series of trips this spring!--and just wanted send off a brief note to let you know how much I am looking forward to seeing you here in Oberlin next week! At that time I hope to have estimates for the cost of publishing the small volume containing the two essays by Wolfgang Stechow with (hopefully) the introduction by David Levine and Nikki Courtright. I have written to Abrams and am waiting to hear from them about permission to republish the essay on the state of Rembrandt research. I also thought I would like to include a few (perhaps 3-4) color reproductions in the volume, perhaps focusing on those works which are discussed in both essays--the *David and Saul* in the Mauritshuis, *Jacob Blessing* from Kassel and *Haman* from the Hermitage, for example.

But we can discuss this at greater length next week! My best to you and Isabel,

Yours,

Betsy

Marjorie E. Wieseman
Acting Director

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the publication will appear in 1998
Wayne E. Wiesemann
6 may 98.

OBERLIN

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24 April 1998

Rights and Reproductions
Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers
100 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10011

Fax: 212 645 8437

Dear colleague,

I would like to have permission to republish an essay by Wolfgang Stechow, "The Crisis in Rembrandt Research," which was originally published in the volume *Art Studies for an Editor: 25 Essays in Memory of Milton S. Fox* (Abrams, 1975). The essay would appear in a volume of the Allen Memorial Art Museum *Bulletin* devoted to Wolfgang Stechow, who was closely associated with the museum during his lengthy tenure at Oberlin College. The issue will also include an unpublished essay by Stechow, and an analysis of his contribution to the scholarship of Northern European art (by Nicola Courtright and David Levine). The *Bulletin* is scheduled to be published this year (1998), with a print run of approximately 1500 for regular subscribers, library exchange partners and limited outside sales. We would like single rights, for publication in English only. The Allen Memorial Art Museum of Oberlin College is a non-profit institution.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Marjorie E. Wieseman

Marjorie E. Wieseman
Acting Director

Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

Lieber Herr Professor Strachan

Ich hat mich so gefreut, dass Sie Ihre Operation gut überstanden haben

Die beiliegende Illustration aus der Piatenbibel zeigt, dass ich nicht ganz der einzige bin, der sich mit dieser Epoche befasst hat.

(interessant [Kenner] als Piatenbibel zeigt, dass ich nicht ganz der einzige bin, der sich mit dieser Epoche befasst hat.)

Fanny und ich verbrachten einige Tage in San Francisco und konnten leider keinen einzigen alten Holländer – nur zwei Italiener und einen Franzosen finden. Hier in Milwaukee aber tauschte ich einen Holländer – Photo beiliegend – gegen einen meiner kleinen Italiener.

Das Bild ist doch sicher spät – ca 1670-80? – aber sehr gut erhalten, und doch recht lustig. Nur muss ich vorsichtig sein, da ich doch sicher biblische Bilder überschätze. Es ist links unten voll signiert, nur bin ich nicht sicher dass ich die Signatur richtig lese Neck. Dieser bin ich

muss wohl J v H sein

des CK am Ende. Könnte das Jan van Neck, der Schüler Backer's sein? Ich kenne nur das einzige Werk in Bern, und von diesem allein hätte ich bei meinem Bilde nicht an Jan van Neck gedacht.

Es ist interessant, dass die alten Holländer immer meinten, dass die Brüder Joseph verkauften, obwohl es doch aus dem Text klar ist, dass die Brüder nur planten, ihn zu verkaufen, aber dass tatsächlich die Midianiter ihn aus der Grube zogen und an die Ismaeliter verkauften. Es ist natürlich nicht das einzige Bibelmissverständnis der Holländer.

es waren sie, sicht Flavius Josephus nur vor allem Genesis 37, 36!

Herzliche Grüsse

von Haus zu Haus

Ihr alter

Arnold Baer

PS. Gerade war ich bei einem Antiquitätenhändler. Kein einziges Bild, aber eine Zeichnung und zwei alte Drucke. Falls Sie das eine oder andere für Oberlin interessieren sollte, bitte mir eine Zeile zu senden. Hoffentlich existenzsicher, soweit man eben kann (Rentner?)

Kann Lene [illegible] 10/8

10. X. 70.

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Beste Grüsse

von Haus zu Haus

Ihr alter

Arnold Baan

P.S. Gerade war ich bei einer Auktionsvorbesprechung. Kein einziges Bild, aber eine Zeichnung und zwei alte Drucke. Falls Sie das eine oder andere für Oberlin interessieren sollte, bitte mir eine Zeile zu senden. Hoffe erstaunlicherweise, soweit man über Raum (Rotterdam?) kann sagen vielleicht sein??

10. X. 72.

10/18

REMBRANDT DEMOKRITUS (Art Quarterly, 1944)

Unter den späteren Selbstportraits nimmt das Bildnis im Wallraf Rochartz Museum in Köln (früher in der Car stanien Sammlung) einen einzigartigen Platz ein (Abb .) Es hat viele Forscher verblüfft und gefesselt und einige von ihaen auch verleitet, falsche Schlüsse zu ziehen. Andererseits sind die gründlichst durchdachten Ausführungen darüber an einer recht unauffälligen Stelle erschienen. Sie stammen von der Feder eines der feinfühligsten Rembrandt forscher und -kenner, des verstorbenen F. Schmidt-Degener, der durch eine ganze Reihe grossartiger Ausstellungen im Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam einen unvergänglichen Dienst geleistet hat, an Bewunderern und Forschern, die sich mit dem Werk des grössten aller Holländischen Maler befassen. Im Katalog der Rembrandt Ausstellung von 1932 beschreibt er das Gemälde folgendermassen:

> LACHENDES SELBSTBILDNIS, ca. 1663
> Vor seiner Staffelei stehend ist Rembrandt hier in ein ganz eigenartiges Lachen ausgebrochen, das dieses Bildnis unter seinen späteren Selbstspiegelungen zur Ausnahme macht. In einer merkwürdigen Aufmachung steht links eine gemalte Figur mit dem ironisch anmutenden Profil eines Caesar. Es ist gut möglich, dass Rembrandt sich hier in der Rolle des lachenden Demokritus sah, dem die gemalte Statue des ernsten Heraklit gegenüber stehen sollte. Das gelbe Licht auf seiner Schulter erinnert an dem Homer in der Bredius Samm.ung.

Soviel ich weiss, ist bisher niemand Schmidt-Degeners Versuch zu einer Deutung nachgegangen; doch scheint sie mir die einzig stichhaltige Erklärung zu bieten.

Werner Wiesbach, dem wir zu Dank verpflichtet sind für die umfassende Übersicht zu dem Thema DER LACHENDE UND DER WEINENDE PHILOSOPH in der Kunst hat dieses Werk zu erwähnen versäumt, obwohl er in der Tat Bezug genommen hat auf die Deutung als Demokrit, die einem früheren Rembrandt Portrait eines lachenden Mannes im 17. Jahrhundert gegeben worden ist. Jedoch enthält sein Artikel wertvolles Material für eine Untersuchung zu der Stichhaltigkeit des Schmidt-Degener Vorschlags. Ich möchte auf folgende Punkte hinweisen:

Erstens: Das Thema wurde häufig dargestellt vonsolchen Holländischen Vorläufern und Zeitgenossen Rembrandts wie Cornelis van Haarlem, Hendrick Terbrugghen[4], Jan Bylert (Abb. 2) und Judith Leyster. Schon um 1600 hatte Cornelis Ketel davon nicht weniger als drei Fassungen gemalt (die eine sogar mit den Zehen !); und eine von diesen hatte Rembrandts Freund, Jan Lievens im Alter von 13 Jahren kopiert[5].

May 14, 99

Dear Baden,

This rather incomplete bit of text, was among papers in my own handwriting. It may be 'old hat' to you; perhaps you have even read that Art Quarterly article (of 1944) or have access to the thing in toto. I remember - know only how much this question was a thrilling sort of puzzle - to Wolf and so it comes as a tid-bit to you

with my greetings and with such lively memories of our togetherness two weeks ago. I found myself amused also, when the address of Lise Oehler (Kassel) fell out of a stack of notes. Wolf had quite a battle with her, I believe, over an adamant denial on her part of a Rembrandt, meanwhile, I think, fully restored to recognition. My own "run-in" with her was at a Händel concert in Göttingen - for which the usher had accidentally given her the seat to which I had the ticket. But she had not kept any chips on her "displaced person" shoulder when I saw her next, much later.

These days now, Göttingen is gearing up for this year's Händel festival, from which various echoes will reach me, no doubt.

I am so glad you met our (John Singer Sergeant) Nicola and her family. She is an ever-thoughtful daughter, who thinks with her heart, always; Wolf would be so proud of all she is to so many! — And my own somewhat tottery days now are eased immeasurably by her active thoughtfulness. And it is a special treat to me to see her children appreciating her and her John so wholeheartedly.

Thank you again and again for all you have done for us and for "the cause".

I do have a wonderful summer.

Yours, Lenore