Alfred Bader

Alfred Bader Fine Arts

[Robillant + Voena]

2006

Attr. JOHANNES MOREELSE
Utrecht ca. 1630, School of Abraham Bloemaert

An old alchemist at the table in his laboratory fanning the fire in the furnace with bellows

Oil on canvas
90.5 x 107.5 cm

The concept as well as the execution of the present piece quite clearly are of excellent quality, so it must have been painted by a first rate artist. Much to my regret it has proved impossible to ascertain the name of its maker. The piece does not fit into any phase of the oeuvre of any artist whose stylistic development is known from the art-historical literature or from the main art-historical photo collections around the globe. I think, however, that the piece's position in time and place can be established fairly precisely, as follows.

The picture reminds a very great deal of the Utrecht painter Abraham Bloemaert (1564-1651). It has to be linked particularly to Bloemaert's oeuvre dating from after he turned 56 in 1620, the year when his erstwhile pupil Gerrit van Honthorst (1590-1656) returned to Utrecht from his stay in Italy. Van Honthorst specialised in candle-light-scenes that were his interpretation of Caravaggio's clair-obscur. The old Bloemaert followed his pupil in a number of works that display Bloemaert's elegantly undulating outlines combined with Honthorst's candle-light effects. You find some of them illustrated in: 1) Benedict Nicolson's Caravaggism in Europe, 2nd edition by Luisa Vertova, vol. 3, figs. 1097-1104; 2) Marcel Roethlisberger, Abraham Bloemaert and his sons, vol. 2, figs. 417-419). One can notice these works' close similarity to the present piece, but also that in the Bloemaerts the bearded elderly man seen in profile represents St Jerome, respectively an apostle, while in this painting the similar figure is an alchemist, which makes the present picture a genre-piece.

A feature of the present painting that does not fit into Bloemaert's oeuvre and nowhere occurs in it, is the extensive still-lifes of the recipe-book and the utensils on the table and of the jars and flasks on the shelf on the wall behind. They seem to indicate, together with the genre character of the piece, a younger, more "modern" artist. It seems most likely to me that the painting is the work of an advanced pupil of great talent in Bloemaert's studio in the 1620s when Bloemaert practised his Honthorstian clair-obscur and must have taught it to his pupils, who were simultaneously open to more contemporary influences. During this period Bloemaert taught various pupils who later emerged as excellent artists in their own right, practicing their own, very different subjects and style. I mention Jan and Andries Both, Jan Baptist Weenix and Nicolaus Knupfer, who all are candidates *ex aequo* for the authorship of this piece (see Bloemaert's pupils listed and discussed in Roethlisberger, Abraham Bloemaert.., vol. 1, p. 645-651).

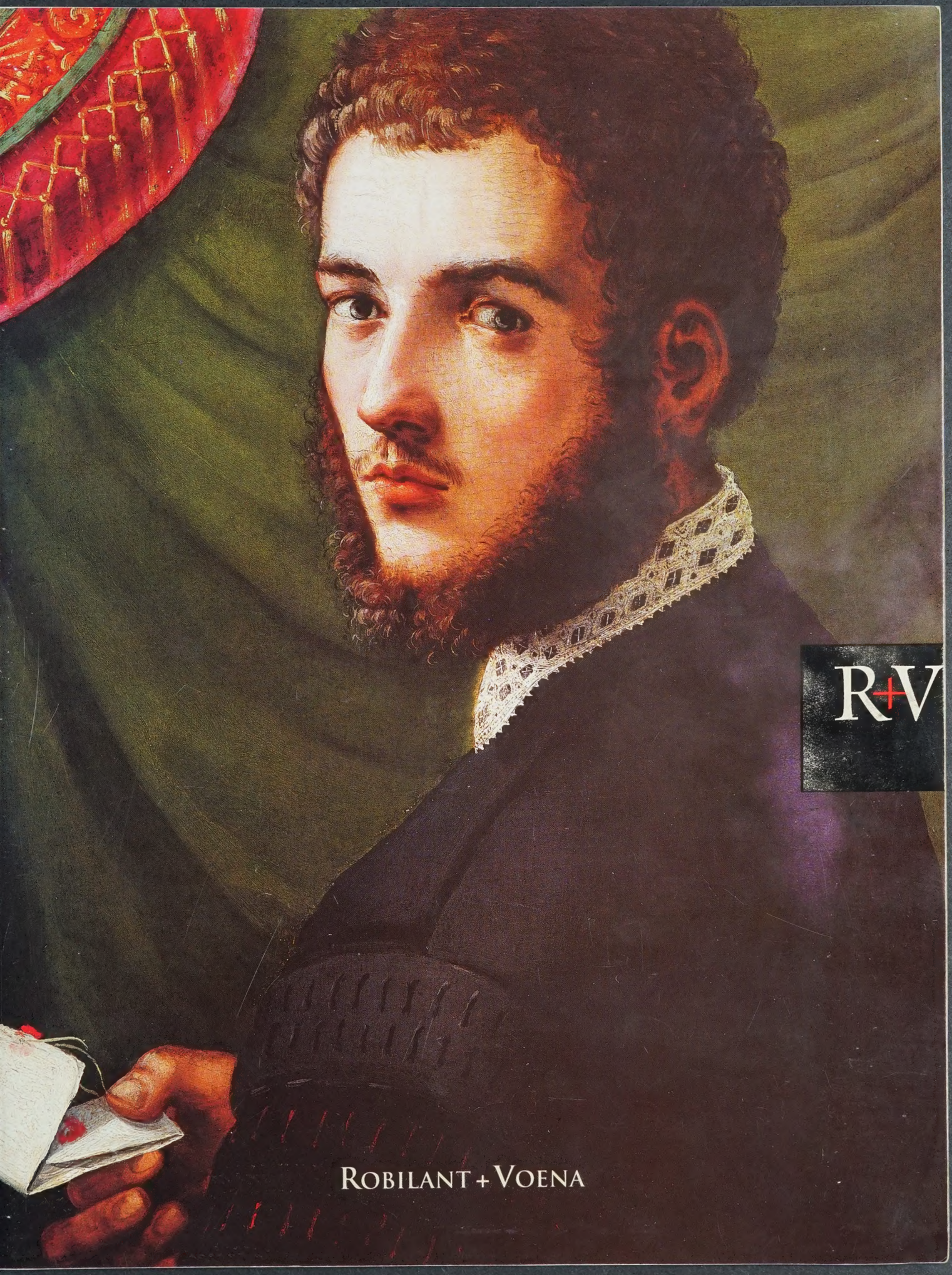
If I were obliged to bet who was the author of the present painting I would go for Johannes Moreelse (after 1602 - 1634), who was of the same generation and who also was in Abraham Bloemaert's orbit, as indicated by the fact that he was in Rome in 1627 in the company of Hendrick Bloemaert (1601-1672) (see M.J. Bok in Blankert & Slatkes, exh. Catal. Nieuw licht op de gouden eeuw, Braunschweig/Utrecht 1987, p. 317). Hendrick was a son of Abraham and another of his pupils, but a considerably less talented one. Johannes Moreelse died young, leaving a small oeuvre of high quality that is documented in Nicolson, edition Vertova, vol. 3, figs. 1199-1206. His two pictures in Chicago display a purely Italian technique, while the pair of philosophers in Utrecht reminds of the work of his father, the well-known portrait painter Paulus Moreelse. Yet the Democritus of the Utrecht pair displays the same arrangement of the figure in space and shows a similar still-life on a shelf on the wall as the present picture (colour illustration in my book Selected Writings on Dutch Painting, Zwolle 2004, p. 124, fig. 103). It may well be that Johannes was Bloemaert's pupil too for a while, during a phase when he possibly painted this present piece. The evidence is too small for accusing Johannes of being the maker of this piece, yet I feel sure that he or one of the other outstanding young talents from the same circle, generation and period should be the suspects.

So in my opinion this excellent Alchemist can best be labelled: "Utrecht artist c. 1630, most probably an accomplished, talented pupil of Abraham Bloemaert, possibly Johannes Moreelse". I am afraid your painting may not be of great interest to name-hunters, which perhaps makes it to a great opportunity for a collector or museum whose primary interest is outstanding quality.

Albert Blankert, August 2006

They are
insanely high
620,000 euros
!!!

But it <u>is</u> nice



ROBILANT + VOENA

PARIS

XXIIIe BIENNALE DES ANTIQUAIRES
15 - 24 September 2006

Cover:
MICHELE DI RIDOLFO
1503 - Florence - 1577
Portrait of a Young Gentleman
Oil on panel; 22 x 18 $^{3}/_{4}$ in / 57.1 x 46.4 cm

Attr. JOHANNES MOREELSE
Utrecht ca. 1630, School of Abraham Bloemaert
An old alchemist at the table in his laboratory fanning the fire in the furnace with bellows
Oil on canvas; 35 $^{5}/_{8}$ x 42 $^{1}/_{8}$ in / 90.5 x 107.5 cm

ROME

COLLEZIONISMO INTERNAZIONALE A PALAZZO VENEZIA
20 - 29 October 2006

MILAN

MINT, MILANO INTERNATIONAL ANTIQUES AND MODERN ART EXHIBITION
22 - 26 November 2006

LUCA GIORDANO
1634 - Naples - 1705
Philosopher with book and compass
Oil on canvas; 47 x 37 ½ in / 119.5 x 95.5 cm

Ralph Toledano

Antonio Joli

ARTEMA

ANTONIO JOLI: TRAVELS AROUND EUROPE
15 November - 15 December 2006

On the occasion of the upcoming publication of the catalogue raisonné of Antonio Joli's oeuvre by Dr. Ralph Toledano, **ROBILANT + VOENA** are delighted to announce the first monographic exhibition dedicated to the artist.

The exhibition will feature some thirty works, kindly lent by private collectors in Europe and the UK, many of which have never before been seen in the public domain. These paintings and a very rare drawing will epitomise the breadth and quality of Joli's genius.

Antonio Joli was an Italian view painter and scenographer whose illustrious patrons included the Duke of Modena, Charles III of Spain, the King of Naples, Sir William Hamilton, The Duke of Richmond and Lord Spencer. Influenced by Canaletto, Carlevarijs and Marieschi, he painted *vedute*, as well as topographical decorative schemes and theatrical stage sets. Amongst his numerous commissions were the decoration of Villa Patrizi, Rome, and stage design at theatres in Venice, the King's Theatre at Haymarket, London, and the Teatro del Buen Retiro, Madrid.

Joli's travels throughout Europe were extensive and will be amply illustrated in this exhibition. **ROBILANT + VOENA** will show views of Venice, Rome, Florence, London, Dresden, Naples, Sicily, Madrid and Malta amongst others. Lenders to the exhibition include His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Montague of Beaulieu, the Juan Abelló Collection, Madrid, and private collectors from Italy, France and the UK.

Edmondo di Robilant established the Dover Street Gallery in 1989, having previously been a Director of P&D Colnaghi. He has been dealing in Old Master and Nineteenth Century paintings for over twenty years, specializing in the Italian and French schools.

Marco Voena, based at his Milan premises for over ten years, deals in fine art ranging from Old Masters to Classic Modernism and Contemporary Art. Their new London gallery at 38 Dover Street opened in January 2005.

They have been partners for the past nine years, and have presented a number of exhibitions together, amongst which - "Bologna and Ferrara: Two Centuries of Emilian Painting", New York 1999, "Fine Old Master and Nineteenth Century Paintings", New York 2003, the 2004 "Viaggio in Italia - Italian vedute from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries" and the 2005 "The International Caravaggesque Movement - Dutch, French and Flemish Caravaggesque Paintings From the Koelliker Collection". In 2005 they presented Julian Schnabel's first London show for over 6 years.

They exhibit regularly at the major international art fairs, including TEFAF Maastricht, Palm Beach, the Paris Biennale, the Milan Antiquariato and the Florence Biennale.

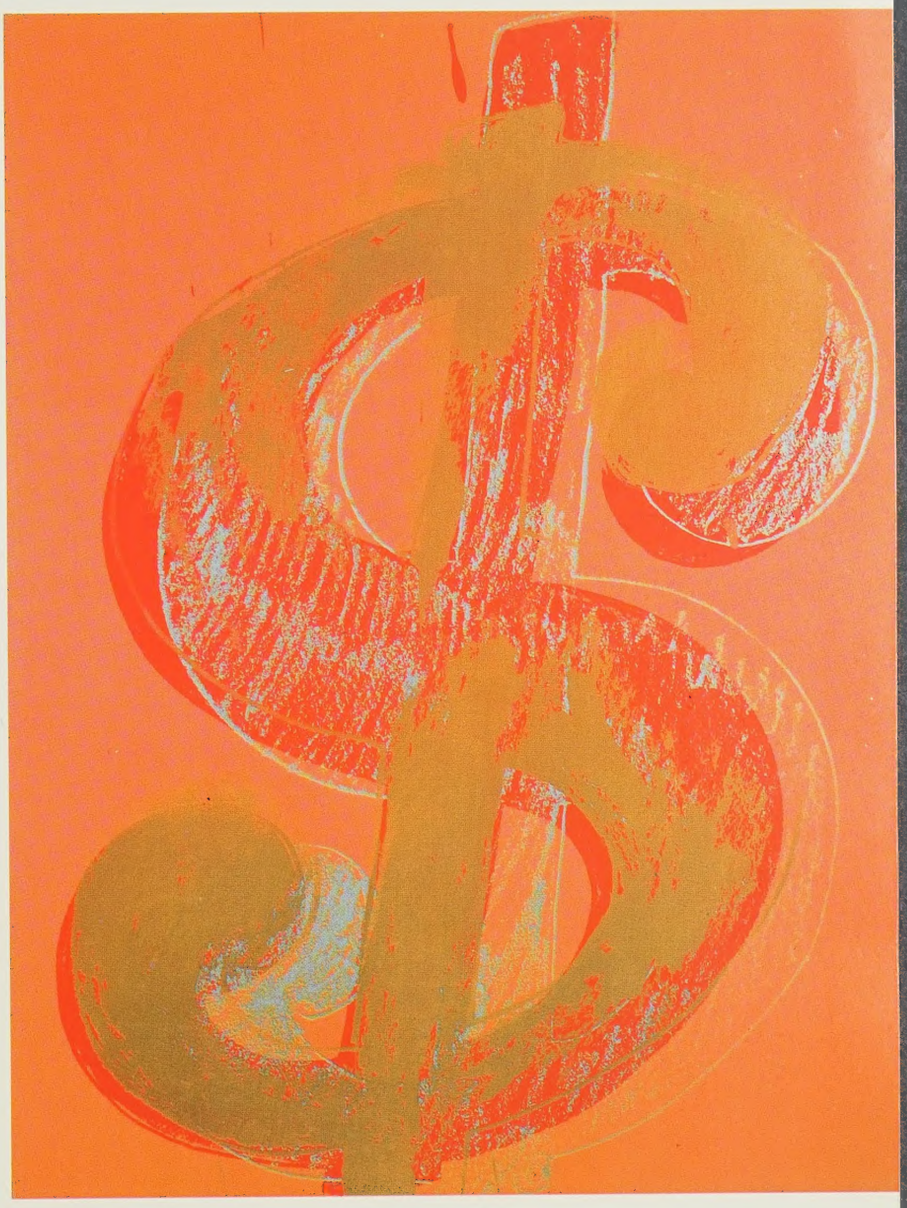
Over the years, they have worked with a number of important institutional clients which have purchased works of fine art from the gallery, including Tate Britain, the National Gallery of Scotland, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Cleveland Museum of Art, Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, Galleria Sabauda, Torino, Galleria Nazionale, Parma and the Museum of Fine Arts, Nantes.

ROBILANT + VOENA offer their clients over forty years experience on the international art market, considerable scholarly expertise and a fully comprehensive service helping both private and institutional clients build and develop their art collections.

NICOLAS RÉGNIER
Maubeuge c. 1590 - 1667 Venice
Carnival Scene
Oil on canvas; 38 $^{1}/_{8}$ x 51 $^{1}/_{2}$ in / 97 x 131 cm
Private collection

JULIAN SCHNABEL
b. 1951
Portrait of Gary Odlman, 2005
Oil, wax, resin on canvas; 87 $^{1}/_{2}$ x 81 $^{7}/_{8}$ in / 222 x 208 cm
Private collection

A view of the London gallery



ANDY WARHOL
Pittsburgh 1928 - 1987 New York
Dollar Sign
Synthetic polymer paint, silkscreen ink on canvas, 90 x 70 in / 229 x 178 cm
Private collection

FALL 2006

SEPTEMBER

XXIIIe BIENNALE DES ANTIQUAIRES
Paris, Grand Palais
15 - 24 SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

COLLEZIONISMO INTERNAZIONALE
Rome, Palazzo Venezia
20 - 29 OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

ANTONIO JOLI: Travels around Europe
London, Robilant + Voena
15 NOVEMBER - 15 DECEMBER

MINT, Milano International Antiques and Modern Art Exhibition
Milan - Superstudio Più
22 - 26 NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

ANTONIO JOLI: Travels around Europe
London, Robilant + Voena
THROUGH 15 DECEMBER

ROBILANT + VOENA

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