

Alfred Boder

Alfred Boder Five Arts - Painting Five

[Willen von Reist - 5/11/16.]

[19-3]

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES	
LOCATOR	2291.16
BOX	4
FILE	29

WHITFIELD FINE ART OLD MASTER PAINTINGS

180 NEW BOND Street London W1S 4RL

tel. 020 7499 5592 fax. 020 7495 6488 whitfieldfineart.com

WILLEM VAN AELST [Delft 1627 - after 1683 Amsterdam]

A still life with two peaches and bunch of grapes on a silver plate set on a marble slab

Oil on canvas 27.5x32.3cm

Signed and dated bottom right: Aelst. 1664

PROVENANCE:

Peter Brookes, 1980;

Private Collection, Cambridgeshire;

Where purchased by the present owner

Willem van Aelst was the son of the Delft notary Jan van Aelst. At an early age he was apprenticed to his uncle Evert van Aelst, a still-life painter. He entered the local guild as a master in 1643. In 1645 the young artist travelled to France and on to Italy in 1649. Houbraken, who paints van Aelst as an ebullient figure, reports that he 'carried out many pranks' in the company of van Schrieck. Despite these youthful excesses, van Aelst's highly elegant style attracted the attention of Ferdinand II de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and other nobles. Van Aelst always wore with great pride a gold chain and medal that the Grand Duke had given him, and often signed himself with an Italianate flourish 'Guillelmo van Aelst'.

By 1656 van Aelst had returned to the Netherlands and settled in Amsterdam where he continued a spectacularly successful career, which allowed him to live on the Prinsengracht, one of the city's loveliest canals. According to Houbraken, he was less lucky in love: shortly after returning from Italy van Aelst fell in love with the flower painter Maria van Oosterwyck, a deeply religious woman. She put him off by saying that she would entertain his amorous proposal if he worked in his studio for a set number of hours every day for a year. Maria's studio overlooked van Aelst's, so she could see him at work; every time he was not at his easel she made a chalk mark on her window frame. By the end of the year the frame was so covered in chalk that van Aelst gave up his quest, and eventually married a jolly serving maid.

Van Aelst's death date has not been traced, but he must have died in 1683 or shortly afterwards, since his last dated work is from that year. As far as we know, van Aelst painted only still lifes, but in great variety, from small fruit pieces to lavish bouquets and impressive compositions with dead game. Rachel Ruysch worked in his studio from 1679 until his death. He had a substantial influence on still-life painting in Holland and abroad in the second

half of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; among his followers were Ernst Stuven, Jacob Denys, Nicolaes Lachtropius and Hendrik de Fromantou.

The earliest of Willem van Aelst's works is dated 1643. It represents a vase of flowers with some fruit at the base and it strongly reflects his uncle's style. In the course of his career many flower pieces were to flow, gradually developing from the simple, small bourgeois Dutch bouquets of tulips and roses to the elegance of an aristocratic and international allure, which continued to feature tulips and roses as important elements. The work of Willem van Aelst is represented in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; the Dulwich Picture Gallery; the Mauritshuis, The Hague; the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; the Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe; the Museum Boymans-van





