

Alfred Baber Fonds

Alfred Baber Fine Arts
- Correspondence

Boston Museum of
Fine Arts 1990-92

QUESTIONS INVENTORY ARCHIVES
LOCATION <u>509515</u>
BOX <u>1</u>
FILE <u>26</u>



ALFRED BADER FINE ARTS

DR. ALFRED BADER

ESTABLISHED 1961

October 5, 1992

Dr. Peter C. Sutton
Curator of European Paintings
Museum of Fine Arts Boston
465 Huntington Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

Dear Peter:

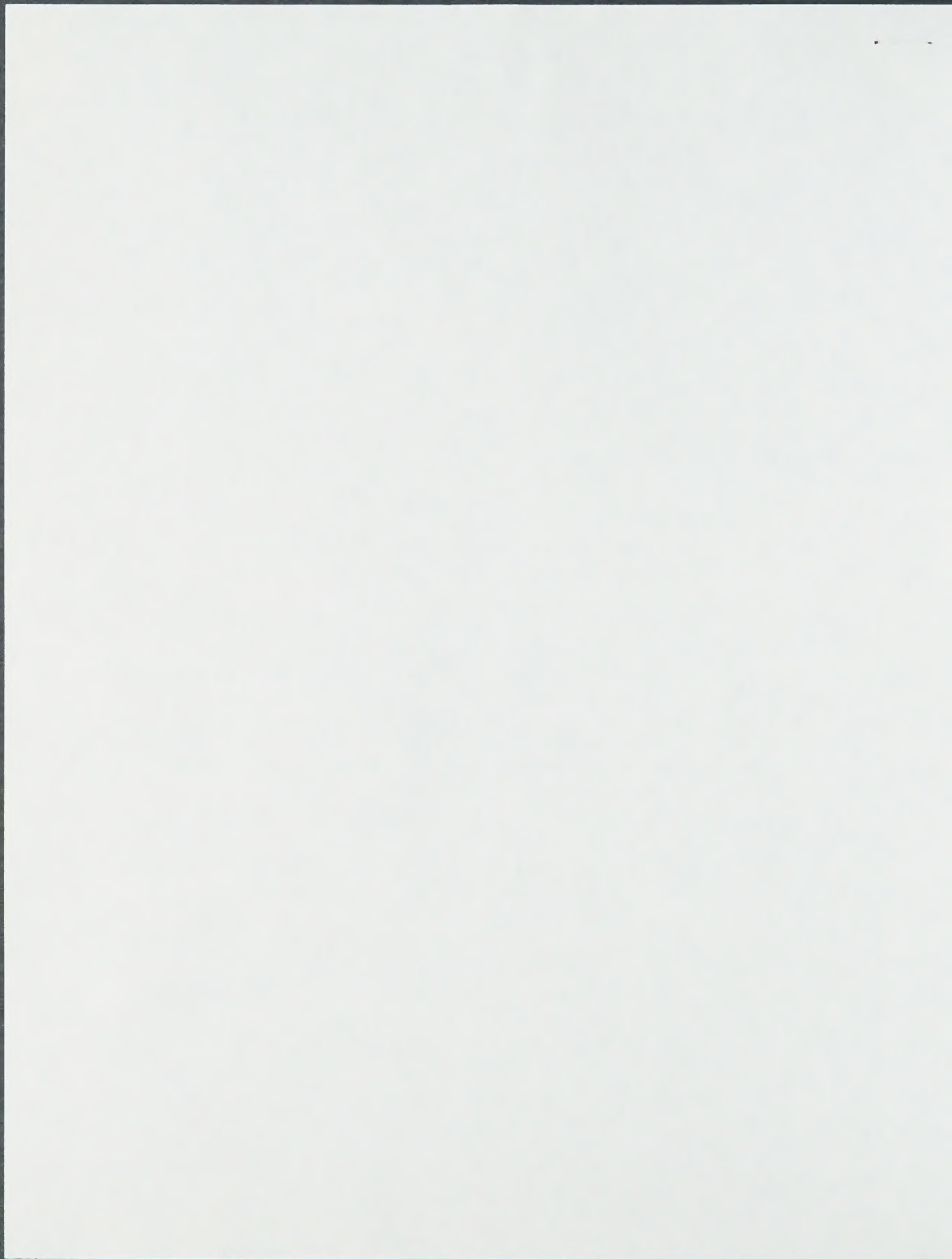
I have just returned from a lecture tour in Spain, and so I am slow in thanking you for the catalog of the Collection of Lord Samuel.

It is a wonderful collection and a truly great catalog. I have only read part of it, but it has already given me hours of pleasure.

Some day you should consider writing a book on what makes collectors tick. Lord Samuel was certainly in a class by himself, in several respects. One, in staying with one dealer and I wonder how Mr. Speelman treated him. Another, in that he concentrated on very fashionable paintings and did little with Rembrandt students and nothing with historical paintings. His collection is much like Carter's, and while I admire both, I really much prefer doing what I am doing.

Best wishes,

By Appointment Only
ASTOR HOTEL SUITE 622
924 EAST JUNEAU AVENUE
MILWAUKEE WISCONSIN USA 53202
TEL 414 277-0730 FAX 414 277-0709





Museum
of
Fine Arts
Boston

465 Huntington Avenue
Boston
Massachusetts
02115
(617) 267-9300

September 10, 1992

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

Dear Alfred,

Many thanks for your kind letter. I'll just have to find some other more fire-retardant snowball to fund my "Age of Rubens" show, if Aldrich is truly out of the art philanthropy business.

Herewith I'm enclosing with my complements a copy of my new catalogue of the Samuel Collection. A selection of pictures will be touring around the U.S. during the upcoming year. Perhaps you can visit us when they come to Boston early next spring. It would be fun to catch up.

For my own part a visit to Milwaukee is long overdue but my editors are screaming for the Rubens manuscript. No rest for the weary.

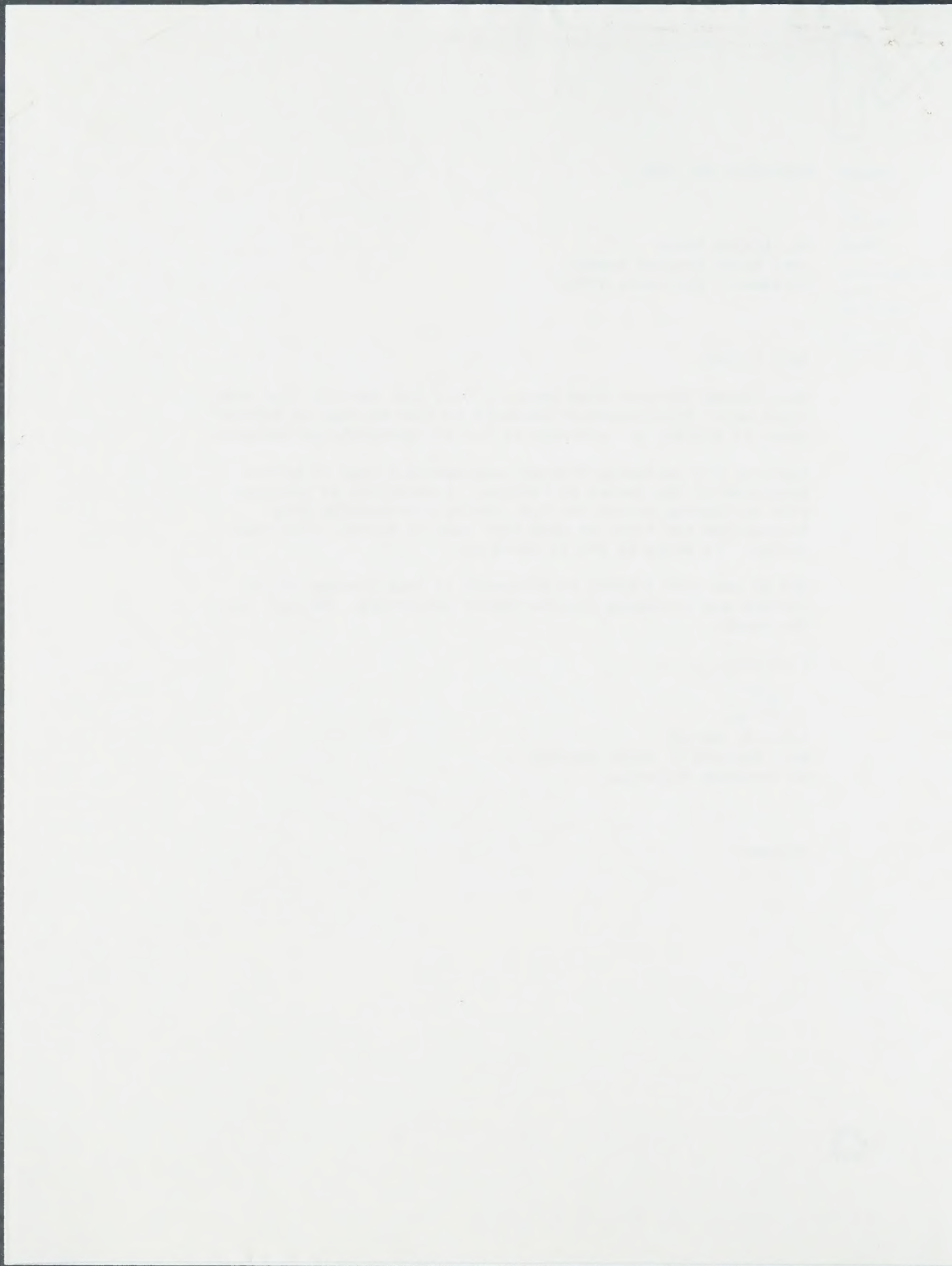
Sincerely,

Peter C. Sutton
Mrs. Russell W. Baker Curator
of European Paintings

PCS/mer



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

September 2, 1992

Dr. Peter C. Sutton
Curator, European Paintings
Museum of Fine Arts Boston
456 Huntington Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

Dear Peter:

Please don't mind that I have taken so long to answer your kind letter of June 23rd, but as you might know, I was in London in July to buy some fine paintings. I must tell you that I was staggered when I heard before the sale that you doubted the authenticity of the Rembrandt which I bought on July 8th. I hope you are mistaken.

As you will see from the enclosed, I was dismissed from Aldrich, and there isn't a chance of a snowball in hell of the company becoming a corporate sponsor of any painting exhibition.

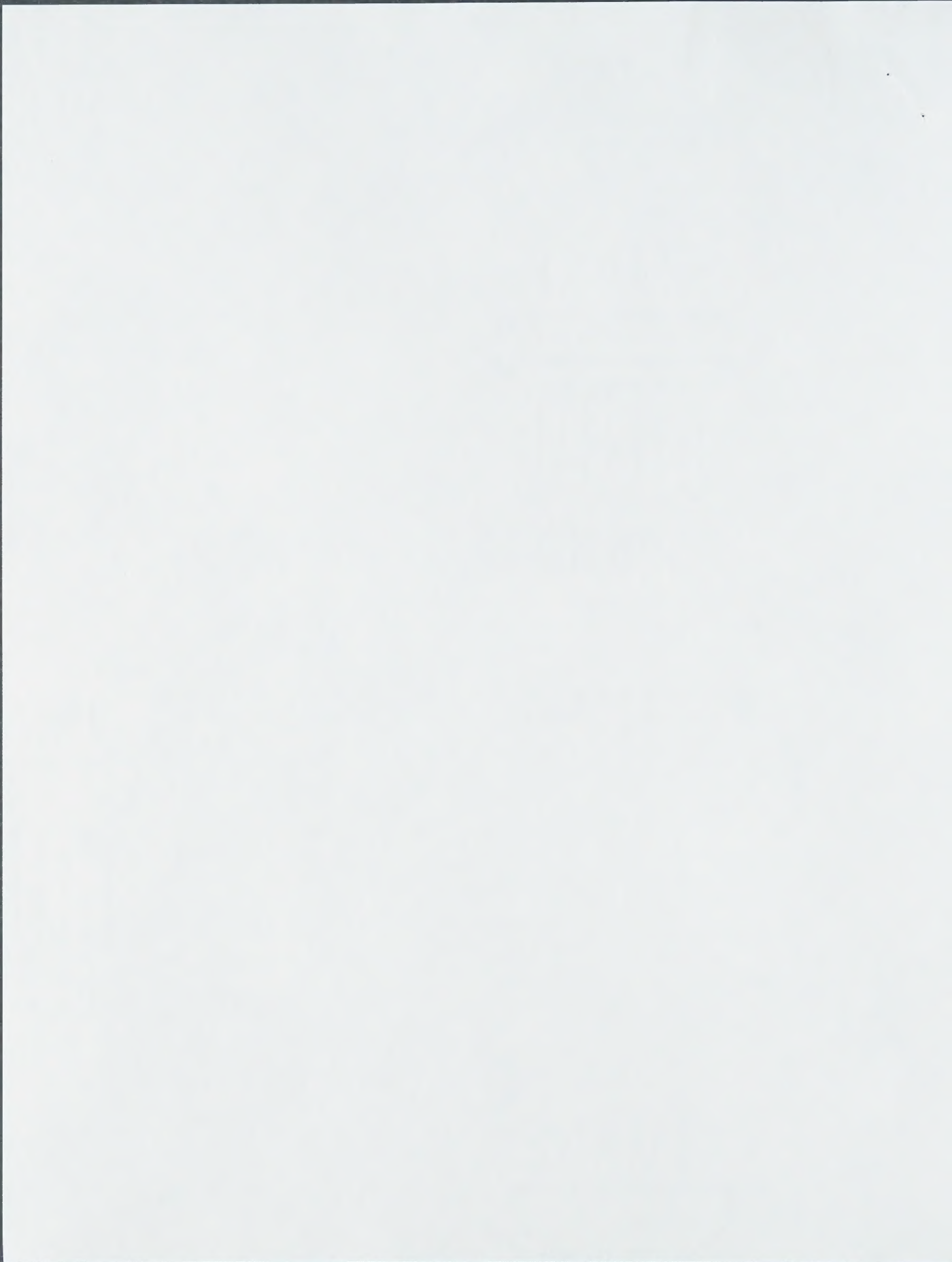
I hope you know me well enough to know that I do not care to live in a fortress, so will certainly not keep the Rembrandt. But, do come and look at other paintings.

Best regards.

As always,

Alfred Bader

Enclosure





Museum
of
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Boston

465 Huntington Avenue
Boston
Massachusetts
02115
(617) 267-9300

June 23, 1992

Mr. Alfred Bader
Chairman
Sigma-Aldrich
P.O. Box 355
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

Dear Alfred,

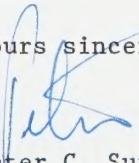
As one of the country's leading collectors you might be interested in visiting the exhibition of private collectors' paintings we have here on view this summer. I'm enclosing a complementary copy of the catalogue. 2

I also wondered if I could pester you for advice. As you'll recall from the enclosed I'm organizing a major Flemish show which will cast its net as ambitiously and broadly as my Dutch genre (1984) and landscape (1987-88) shows did, however it will be the first show of its kind in this country. I'm enclosing a copy of the project description, a thumbnail budget, and a loan list.

I know that you are retiring from Aldrich Chemical Company but do you think they might consider becoming a corporate sponsor? And could you think of any other possible sponsors that I might have overlooked? We've received a wonderful NEH grant (indeed the largest grant that the federal government can award a show) but there still is a sizeable amount of support to raise.

Hope to hear from you soon. Have a restful and prosperous summer.

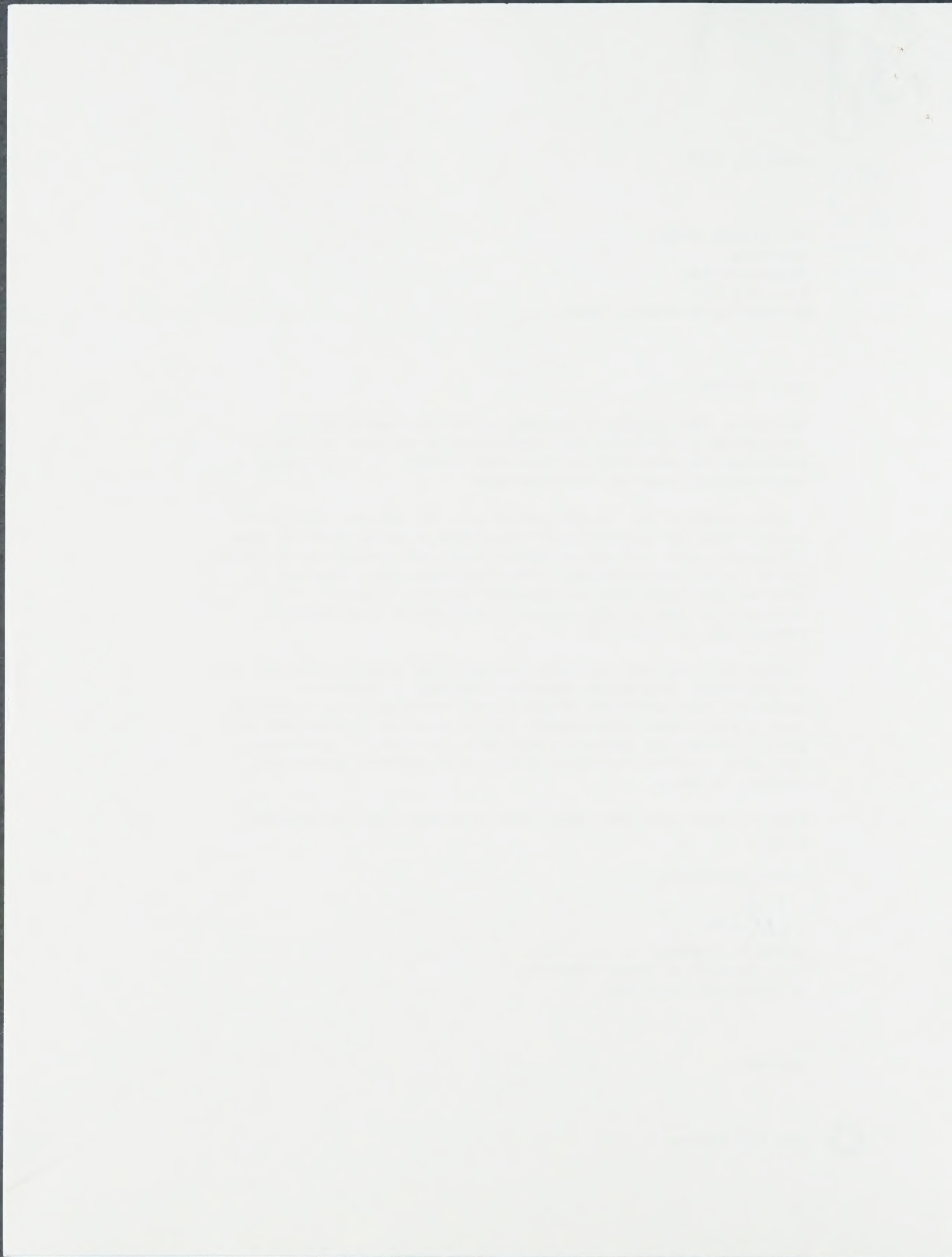
Yours sincerely,


Peter C. Sutton
Mrs. Russell W. Baker Curator
of European Paintings

pcs/mer



cc: Pat Jacoby





Chemists Helping Chemists in Research and Industry

aldrich chemical company, inc.

Dr. Alfred Bader
Chairman

January 22, 1990

Dr. Peter C. Sutton
Curator of European Paintings
Museum of Fine Arts Boston
465 Huntington Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

Dear Peter:

In response to your letter of January 5th, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry about the letter.

I really hadn't known that I belong to "the last generation." I am as active in collecting now as I have ever been. I enclose the photographs which you requested and note, with regret, that these are all of paintings which I have had for many years. Some of my recent acquisitions are at least as good, and I enclose two photographs to tempt you to come to Milwaukee.

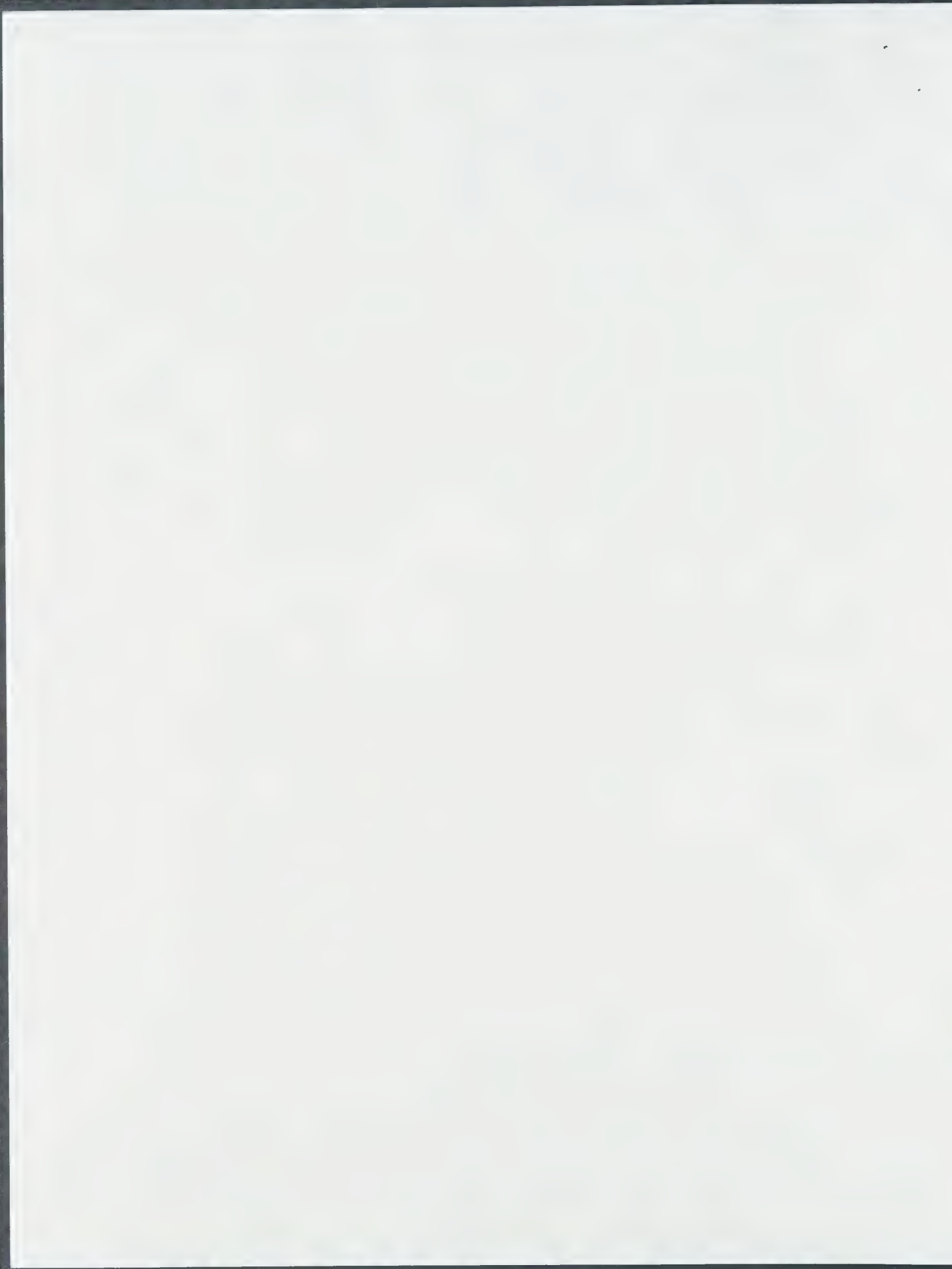
All of the paintings to which you refer are still in our collection in Milwaukee; incidentally, I do believe that The Two Boys with a Skull is by Jan de Bray, and I do not agree with Sumowski's attribution of the Joseph and the Baker to Mair.

Apropos your question mark adjacent my Rembrandt's portrait of his father, Julius Held called me recently to tell me that he is quite convinced that this really is a portrait of Rembrandt's father by Rembrandt, and that he will include a discussion of this in a republication of his 1969 Rembrandt essays; note the enclosed confirmation.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,

Alfred Bader
AB:mmh
Enclosures



JULIUS S. HELD
81 Monument Avenue · Old Bennington, Vt. 05201
(802) 442-3164

January 10, 1990

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

Dear Dr. Bader:

What an interesting and instructive exhibition you (and the other authors) have brought together; let me thank you warmly for the catalogue and the photographs which you sent under separate cover.

As you can imagine I turned the pages with considerable interest, occasionally with amusement, once or twice with a question mark, but I am so deeply involved in two projects (one is the new printing, with additions, of the Rembrandt essays of 1969) that I can not go into details. Still, I am sure the exhibition must have been an eye-opener for many of the visitors.

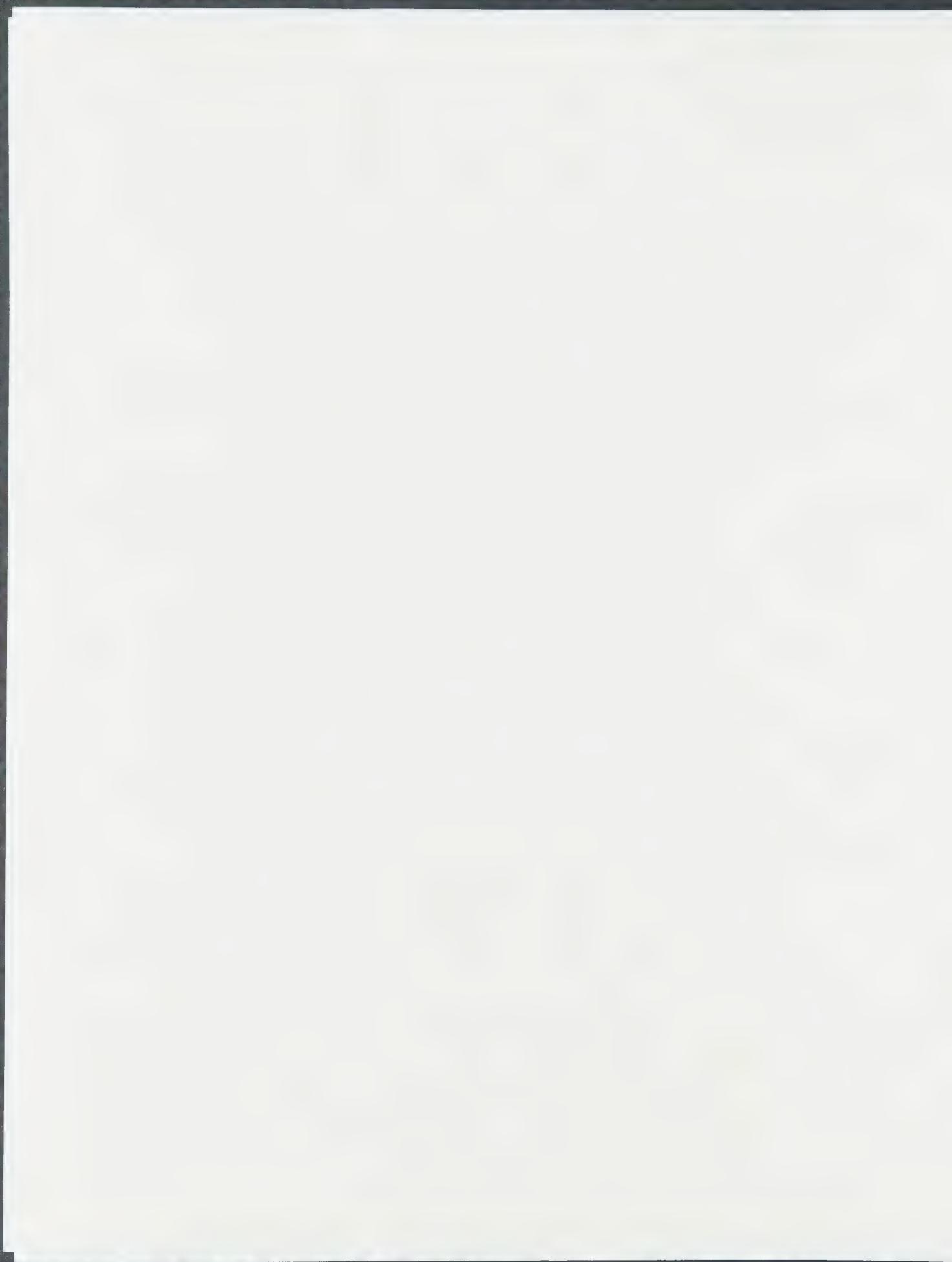
There is, however one item in the catalogue which has some special significance for me - the painting of an old woman by Jacob van Campen. I don't know if you are aware that I have mentioned that picture in a footnote of an article I wrote for Master Drawings, 1985, p.53, note 21. One of my colleagues - I don't remember who - had shown me a photo and its similarity with the print is indeed striking; whether my, admittedly tentative, attribution of drawings to van Campen will find acceptance remains to be seen. (By the way, if you read the Author's Note at the end of the text, please correct the word "regulated" to what I had written: relegated; it is close to the end.)

I am still very much interested in van Campen and may be able to ^{attribute} a truly important work to him (though the collector who owns it has much grander ideas for it). I wonder therefore if I could get a photo of your painting, and while I am at it, could I also get from you a photo of the print of Laurent Coster, after van Campen, reproduced on p. 82 of the catalogue?

The next issue of Master Drawings has a few more such head studies, mainly by deCraeyer.

Once more my best thanks, also for the permission to publish the painting of Rembrandt's father (about which I have no doubts),

Sincerely yours
Julius S. Held





January 5, 1990

Dr. Alfred R. Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53211

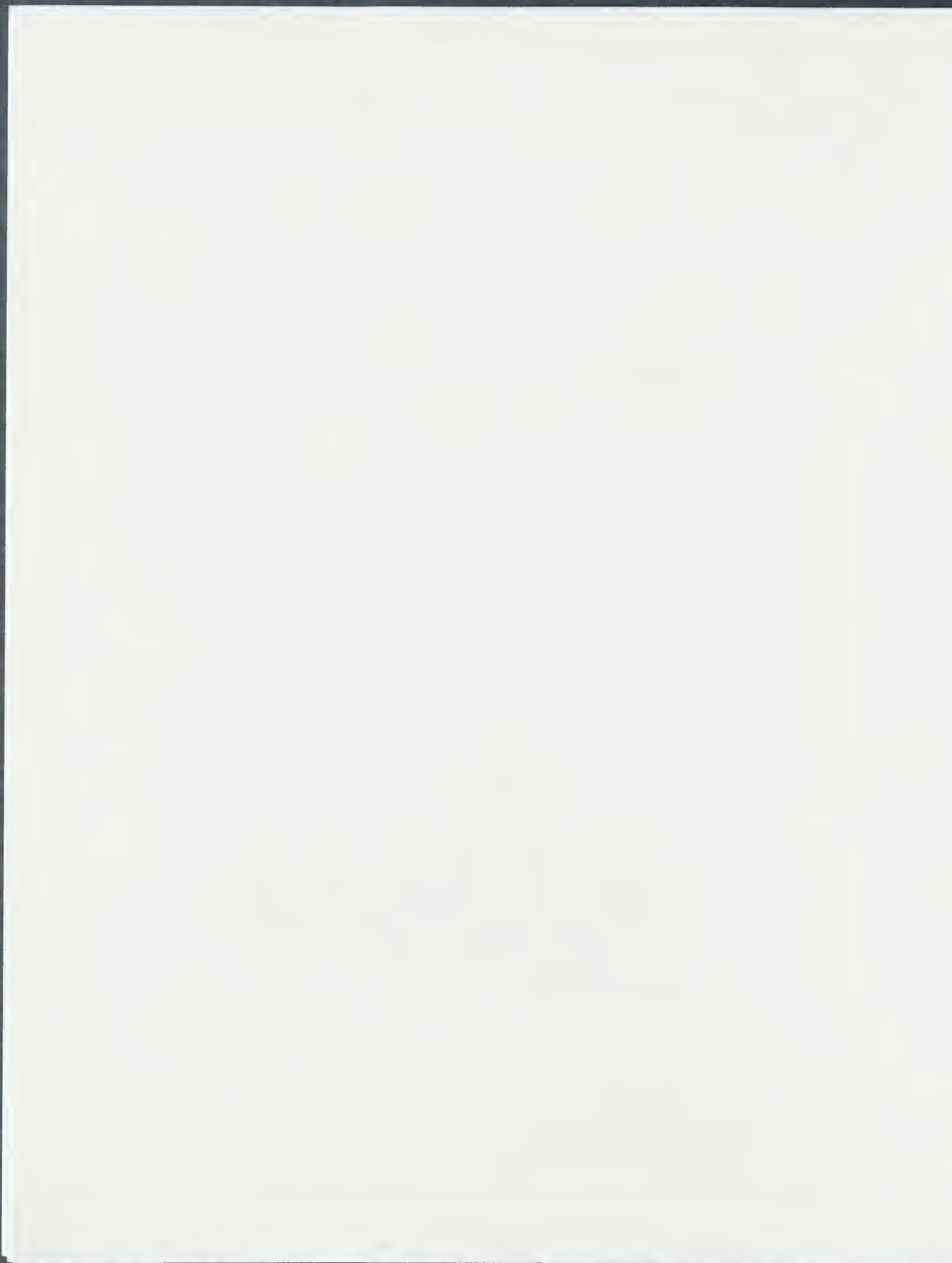
Dear Alfred,

I'm sorry that it's been so long since I've been in contact with you.

I could plead indecision since I have yet to come to a firm conclusion about your very interesting painting of Christ and the Woman of Samaria at the Well. Manoth's idea that it could be by Pieter de Grebber is clever but ultimately hinges on the resemblance to the Raising of Lazarus of 1632 by de Grebber in Turin, the artist's most clearly Rembrandtesque painting. I don't find the stylistic similarities between the two especially compelling but plan to visit Turin again this summer and will look at their picture carefully with yours in mind.

In the meanwhile, and as usual, I've been badly neglecting de Grebber to look after pressing exhibition projects - Monet's "series" paintings here in Boston and the Mauritshuis' show of "Dutch Art in America" to open in San Francisco this fall. Have you heard about the latter show? My involvement partly results from my work on my guidebook. I've agreed to write a short essay for the catalogue about the collecting of Dutch art in this country during roughly the last twenty years.

As one of the most distinguished collectors of the last generation, you rightfully should be included in this brief review. Could I therefore trouble you for photos of several works in your collection (namely, N. Maes' Sacrifice of Isaac, Sweerts' Self Portrait with a Skull, Rembrandt's Portrait of His Father (?), the anonymous Joseph and the Baker, and the Haarlem School [Side/Bray] Two Boys with a Skull). With your permission, I would illustrate a selection of these in my essay. Also, can you tell me whether these paintings have now been given to Queens University? I know you've been very generous to them - a commendable instinct in this less-than-generous age!

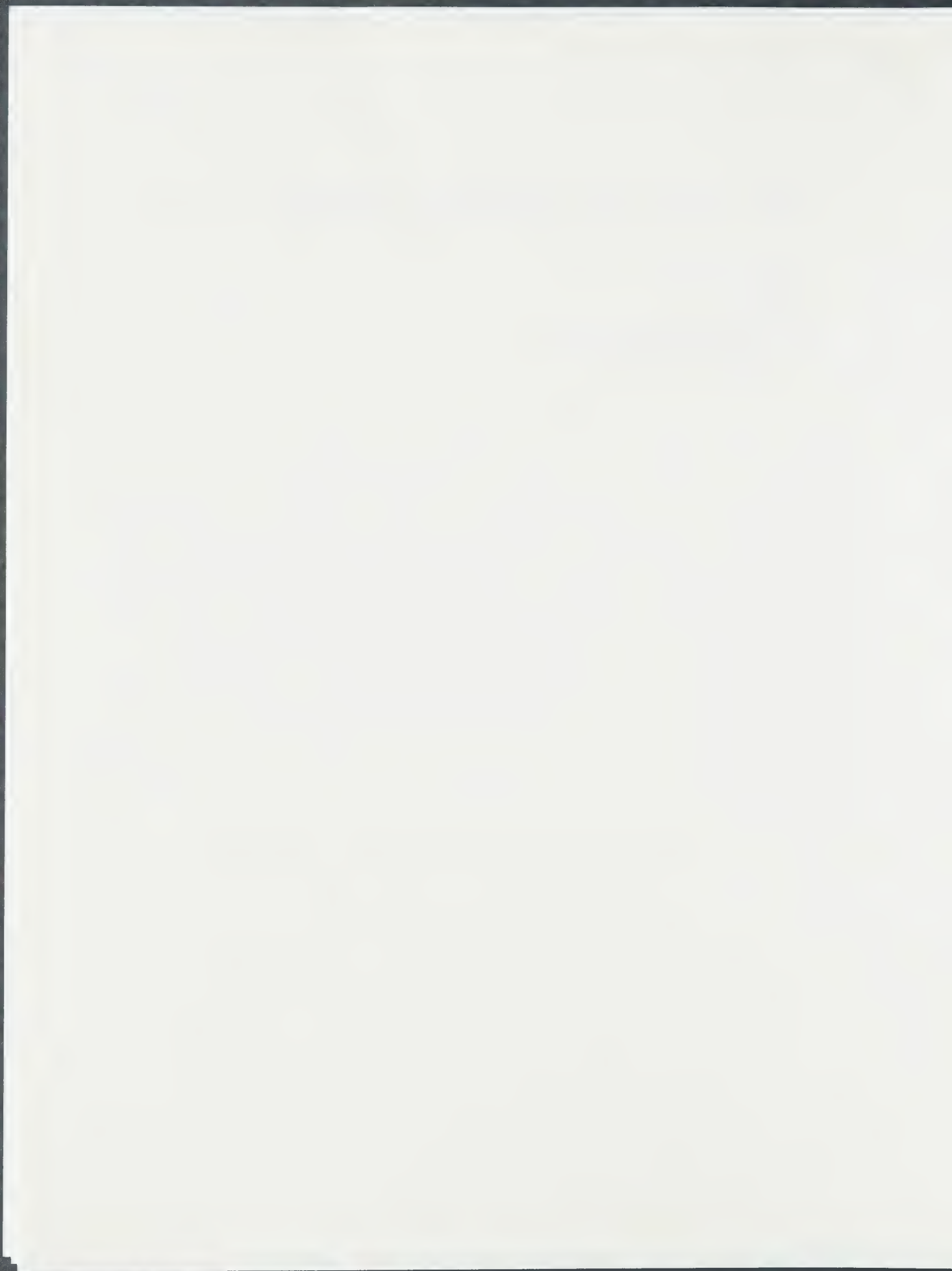


I keep promising to return to Milwaukee but if you get to Boston sooner, I trust you'll come see me. It would be good to catch up.

All the best,



Peter C. Sutton
Mrs. Russell W. Baker Curator
of European Paintings





Chemists Helping Chemists in Research and Industry

aldrich chemical company, inc.

Dr. Alfred Bader
Chairman

February 1, 1990

Dr. Peter Sutton, Director
Boston Museum of Fine Arts
465 Huntington Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

Dear Peter:

By the time you finish reading this letter, you will either be quite angry at me or thankful, and I hope sometime to find out which.

I have just had a chance to read carefully through your essay on the recent U.S. trends in private collecting, and I find just about everything you write to be correct and interesting.

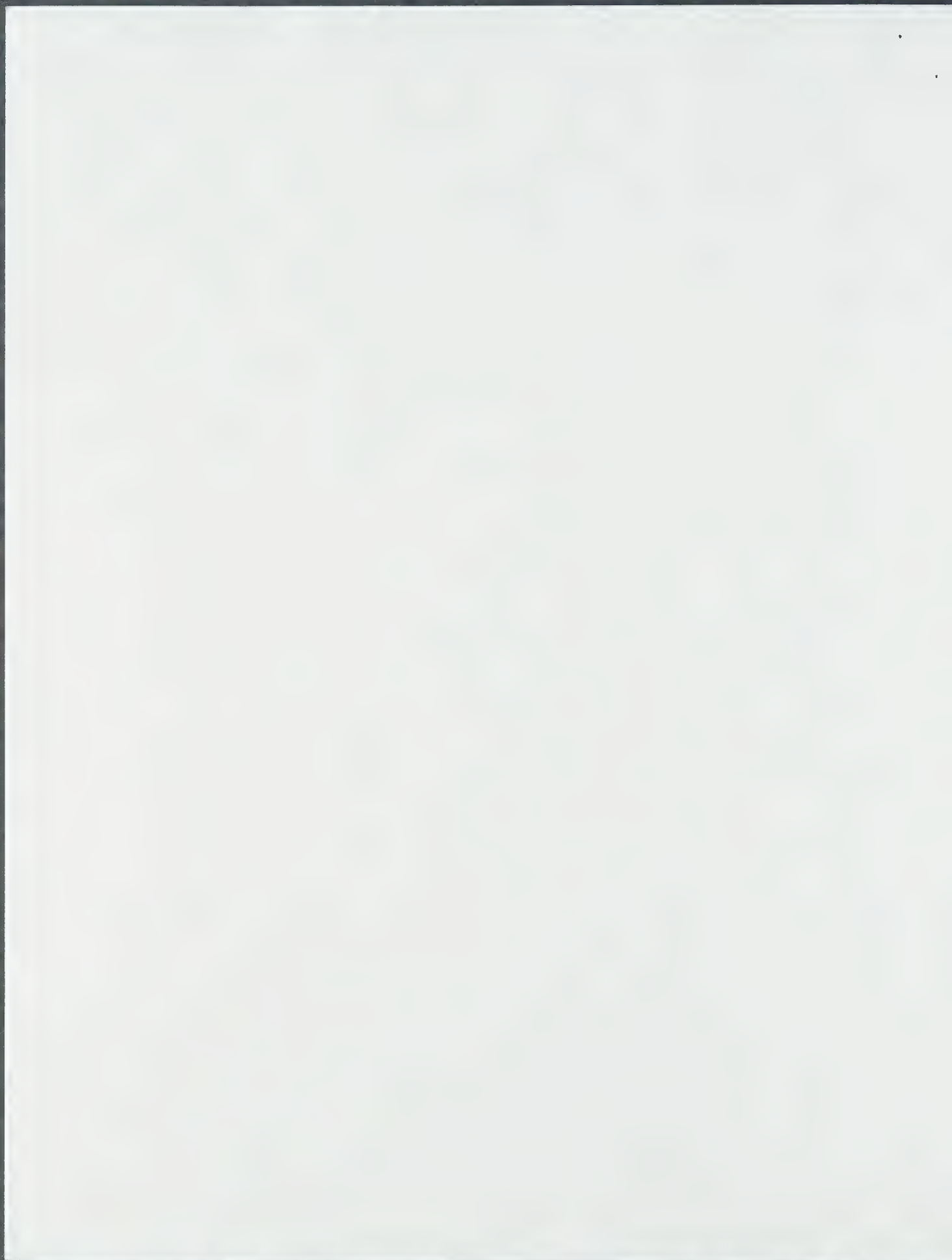
But I wonder whether an art historian of your competence should write as hurtfully to some people as you do. You are an art historian and not a reporter for some tabloid. Let me give you a couple of examples.

You write of Norton Simon canvassing scholars' opinions "intrusively." I have heard of this also, and yet why say something which is bound to hurt Mr. Simon so very much?

Similarly, you mention Mr. Guterman's son's bar mitzvah on the Queen Elizabeth II. What on earth does that have to do with his collecting? The fellow must have suffered enough, and you and I must be thankful to him for one painting each in our collections.

On a different note, some people may wonder about your judgment in picking some paintings and not others. I have never heard about the Peter Eliot Collection in New York, probably because I live so far from the beaten path. But, I can't help wondering whether even the most excellent of all of Jan Miense Molenaer's paintings could deserve to be mentioned in such an essay.

Everything you say about Isabel's and my collection is correct, although I have already written to you that I am sad to know that you are many years behind the times. What you also may not realize is what my "unabashedly" using the Aldrichimica Acta and our catalogs to publish our collection has done for Aldrich. It hasn't cost Aldrich one penny, yet has set our



Dr. Peter Sutton
Boston Museum of Fine Arts
February 1, 1990
Page Two

publications apart from those of our competitors. Go into any chemical laboratory in the Boston area, and you will find our catalog with an old master painting on its cover. We don't even put Aldrich's name on the front cover; if it's a fine old master, chemists have learned that this is the Aldrich catalog. Thus, it has been very good for Aldrich and has taught chemists a good deal of art history. You would be amazed and amused to see how many comments I receive about our covers.

Hence, I am sending you, enclosed, a complete set of the Aldrichimica Acta and some announcements of catalogs which you might like in your museum library.

Best personal regards,

Alfred Bader

AB:mmh

Enclosures

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Dr. Alfred Bader
Chairman



October 24, 1990

Dr. Peter C. Sutton
Curator, European Paintings
Museum of Fine Arts Boston
465 Huntington Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

Dear Peter:

Thank you so much for your letter of October 10th and your fascinating essay for the Maruitshuis show. It is very well written; just keep away from Norton Simon. The only collection I really miss in the text is that wonderful one assembled by the greatest art historian I have ever known, at Oberlin.

There are a couple other sketches by de Gelder for the series in Aschaffenburg.

I'll certainly have a look at the picture with Rafael Valls when I visit London in mid-November. To me, £ 18,000 seems like a high price, particularly as I have three other de Gelder's each of which was much cheaper and which I like better. Still, this sketch could really be quite charming in the original, and Valls is flexible in price.

I bought a beautiful Flinck from him, unabashedly described on the enclosed, for a very much lower price. Of course it was then very dirty and not called Flinck.

All good wishes.

Sincerely,

Alfred Bader
AB:mmh
Enclosures

SIGMA-ALDRICH

P.O. Box 355, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201 USA, Telephone (414) 273-3850, Cable Aldrichem TWX 910-262-3052, Telex 26-843, FAX 414-273-4979

