Alfred Bader fonds

Chemistry and Art
More Adventures of a Chemist Collector

Adventures II -
Liss Lost

A Liss Lost

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CHRISTIE'S

Dr Alfred Bader
Alfred Bader Fine Arts
Astor Hotel Suite 622
924 East Juneau Avenue
Milwaukee
Wisconsin 53202
USA

London, 3 February 2005

Dear Alfred,

Thanks for your letter of 6 January regarding your chapter on the Liss and just to say I don't see any mistakes and recall the incident pretty much as you describe it.

It was good to see you in London, albeit briefly.

With very best wishes,

Yours sincerely.

Nicholas Lambourn
Director, Topographical Pictures Department, London
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+44 7770 665 372 (mobile)
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Milwaukee Wisconsin
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USA 53202

Your Ref AB/az

Our Ref A 508/20/102

2 March 2005

Dear Dr Bader

Thank you for your letter of 15 February about your treatment by the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art (RCEWA) in 1995.

All members of both the Reviewing Committee and its secretariat have changed since 1995, so it is difficult for me to comment. I have looked at the file and see that Simon Mitchell wrote to you on 2 February1995, explaining that Diana Forbes-McNeil had informed Christie's and Vulcan International Services of the change of venue and had felt sure they would pass this information on to you. On 7 March 1995, Jonathan Scott, then chairman of the Reviewing Committee, wrote to you apologising that you were inconvenienced by the change of venue and explaining why the Reviewing Committee had recommended that *Repentant Sinner turning away from temptation* by Johann Liss met the Waverley criteria. On 3 August and 4 August 1995, Simon Mitchell wrote again explaining the reasons behind the wording of the draft Annual Report for 1994-5 and to clarify the handling of the case after it was considered by the Reviewing Committee. I have nothing to add to their comments.

As you have named the former Chairman, Jonathan Scott, by name, I am sending him a copy of this letter, your letter of February 15, and the accompanying extract from your autobiography, in case he wishes to contact you about what you have written.

Yours sincerely

Helen Loughlin

Helen Loughlin
Secretary
Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art

FLAT 8, 25 QUEEN'S GATE, LONDON SW7 5JE
Tel: 020 7589 3566 Fax: 020 7589 4623

Mr. Alfred Bader
Alfred Bader Fine Arts
Astor Hotel Suite 622
924 East Juneau Avenue
Milwaukee
Winsconsin
USA

9 March 2005

Dear Mr. Bader,

The current secretary of the Export Reviewing Committee has sent to me a copy of the extract of your book. I no longer have any connection with the Committee but I am disturbed that you have unhappy memories of your treatment.

As I explained in the letter which I sent to you on 7 March 1995, all correspondence is sent by the Committee secretariat to the licence applicant and, if the applicant, your shipping agent, failed to pass on the information about the change of venue, the Committee could not be held responsible.

As regards the Committee's proceedings, the Liss in question is of the highest quality – a point that you do not deny – even if its importance had been largely unrecognised in its country house setting. It therefore inevitably deserved to be 'stopped' under the second Waverley criterion as being of outstanding aesthetic importance. I do not think there were any arguments that you could have adduced to make the Committee change its decision and, in our opinion, a further lengthy debate would not have altered our views. As you saw, the next case was already on the stocks and it would have been discourteous to the next applicant to have spent longer on the Liss case.

I am sorry that the procedures of the hearing of the case still distress you.

Yours sincerely

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Alfred - See my comments. Obviously, I think you let Hobart off too lightly.

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that he

his "inside information,"

respected dealer sued for his commission, and the judge accused Mr. Hobart of "blatant lying and devious actions." But of course we did not know of his reputation and believed him when he told us that a museum was interested. at that time

seriously

Had the Reviewing Committee told me on April 8th that no museum is interested, we would not have accepted Mr. Hobart's offer, made on behalf of Sir Graham Kirkham.

In July the Reviewing Committee sent me a draft for their 1994-5 Report alleging that "the representative for the applicant contended that the painting was not of outstanding aesthetic importance due to alterations and damage." Of course I objected immediately, because Mr. Tabor was not my representative; I would not have made that silly argument and, had I not been misled to Cockspur Street, would have made a more cogent argument. My objection was brushed aside. Simon Mitchell, the Committee's Secretary ended his summary dismissal ~~brush-off~~ of August 3rd with "I can assure you that the Reviewing Committee makes every effort to deal fairly as between all parties and we will endeavour to ensure that if any of your paintings are referred to the Committee in the future, the cases proceed smoothly."

but relatively modest

been truthful *

Commercially Otto and I did well: a quick profit ~~of over a quarter of a million pounds.~~ But had the Reviewing Committee kept its promise, and Mr. Hobart ~~had not lied to us~~, this painting would now be in one of the world's great museums. Of course it has been accepted as one of Liss' greatest masterpieces and is on the cover of Rüdiger Klessmann's catalogue raisonné published in 1998. 9

What I have learned is that one cannot rely on the fairness of the Reviewing Committee, and of course I no longer look forward to meeting with them. Every time I think of it, I feel pained by the Reviewing Committee's ill treatment.

not true

words of a stranger,

* Softer pleasing — just so this ass does not sue you.