

Alfred Bodur

Alfred Bodur Fine Arts - Drawing Files

Paper Classz - Still Life

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JANSSEN PHARMACEUTICA

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research laboratoria

Beerse (België)

PERSONAL

March 17, 1965.

Dr. Alfred Bader, Ph.D.
Chief Chemist
Aldrich Chemical Company
2371 North 30th Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
U.S.A.

Dear Alfred:

Thank you for your recent letter.

I can see your point of course. Would you please be good enough to send us the Peter Claesz at your earliest convenience. We like the painting very much as you know and are happy to live with it. Our only worry is the price in view of the fact that it is not signed. This however may turn out to be unfounded pessimism. Let us wait and see.

Very sincerely yours,

Dr. Paul Janssen

RECEIVED
MAR 19 1965
ALDRICH CHEMICAL CO. INC.

JULES ROOS

371 REDFERN AVENUE

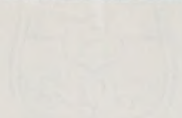
MONTREAL 6

The undersigned has thoroughly examined a painting on wood 68cm high and 82.7cm wide representing a "still life", showing a table with a napkin overhanging, on which a gilded goblet and a ~~crystal~~ ^{crystal} cup with Rheinwine, a cut "roosb-beef" (?), a tin plate with a roll, a beautiful ornamented silver saltbag, a plate with strawberries, an open watch with the year 1643 marked on it, a knife with inlay handle, some opened walnuts. On the right red and white grapes and grape leaves.

The undersigned considers this painting to be a genuine and typical work by Pieter Claesz.

Signed Louis Hoopstede de Geest

Oct '23



DEPT. OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE
CHIEF OF STAFF

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

DATE: [Illegible]

BY: [Illegible]

FOR THE RECORD

[Illegible]

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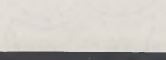
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DEPT. OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D. C.



JULES ROOS

371 REDFERN AVENUE

MONTREAL 6

April 24 1957

Dear Alfred!

I found the "expensise" from Hoppede
de Gros and send it to you encl. with a trans-
lation I made. (Excuse me for having
changed a word wr. "Roastbeef.")

We are leaving Sunday.

All the best, love for both of you

Jules

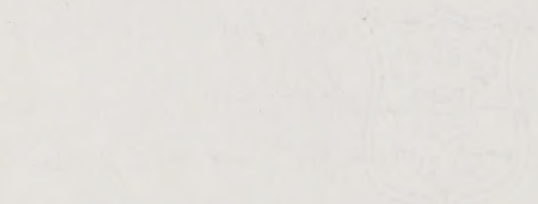
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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March 12, 1957

Mr. Jules Roos
371 Redfern Avenue
Montreal 6, P.Q., Canada

Dear Mr. Roos:

Thank you so much for the photograph of your still-life which looks very nice.

I am curious to know why you attribute it to Peter Claesz. Due to the fact that I own a much smaller panel by Claesz, I have looked at a good many paintings by Claesz and have never seen one that ornate and with metallic figures. I have seen several paintings by Cornelis Kruys which seem to come much closer.

Please do send me the painting, and I will make arrangements to send you the Cuypp; then we can both decide after having seen the originals.

With best personal regards to you and your family, I remain,

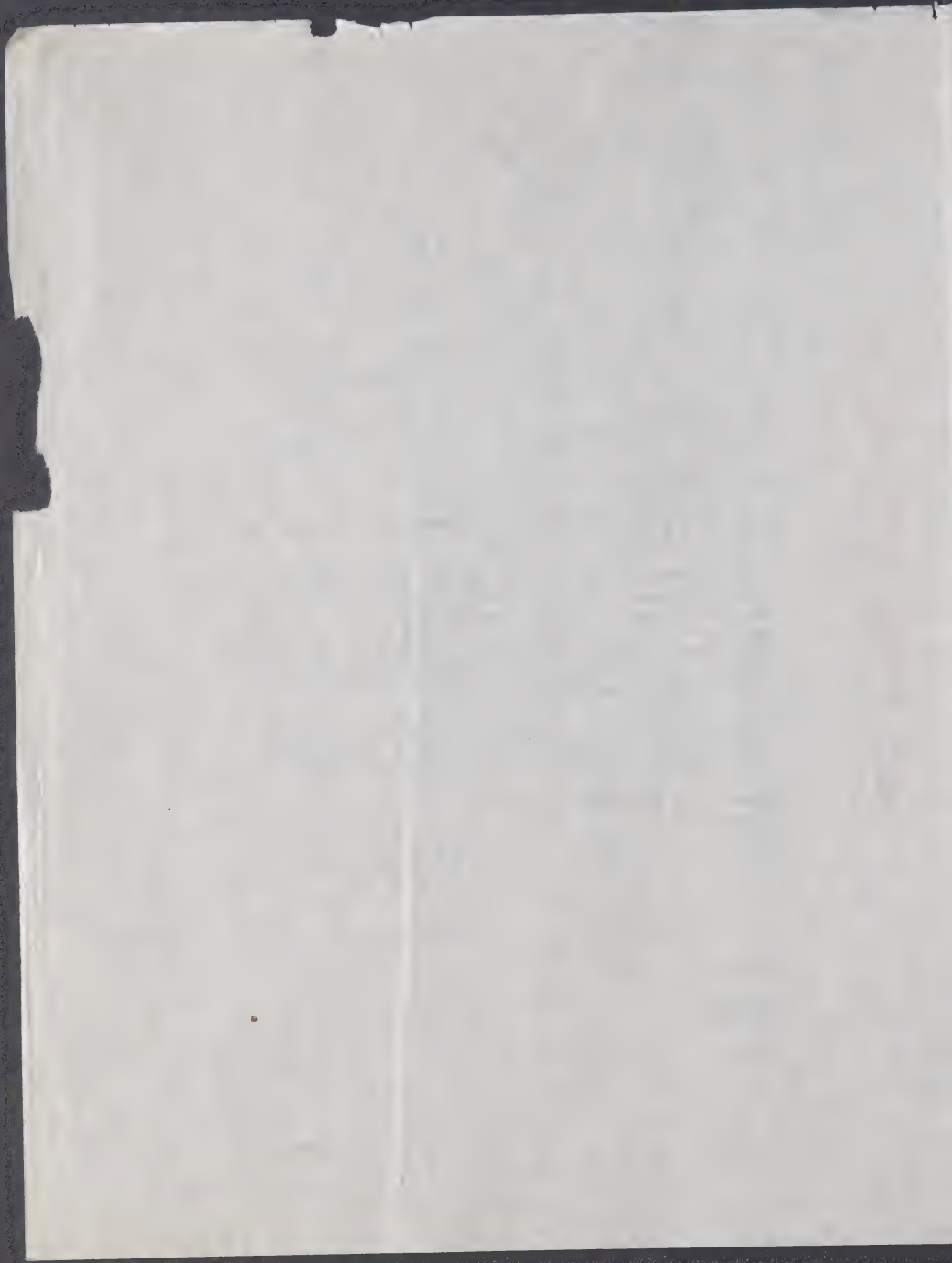
Yours sincerely,

Alfred Bader

AB:lew

Air Mail

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Y



March 8, 1957

Mr. Jules Roos
371 Redfern Avenue
Montreal 6, Canada

Dear Mr. Roos:

Thank you so much for your letter of March 4th.

I look forward to receiving the photograph of the still-life and will let you know shortly after receiving it.

With best personal regards to you and your family from Danny and myself, I remain,

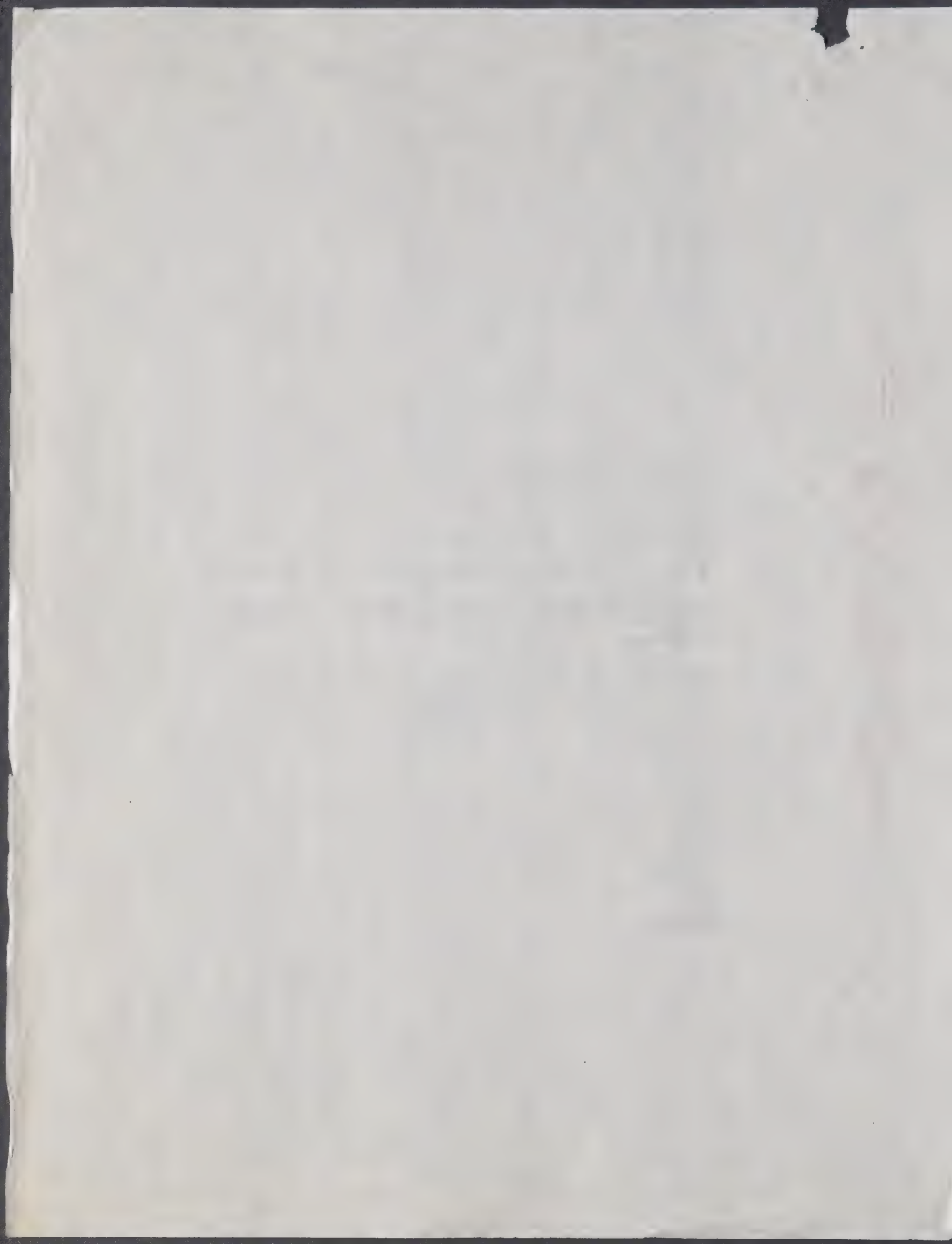
Yours sincerely,

Alfred Bader

AB:lew

Air Mail

C
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P
Y



JULES ROOS

371 REDFERN AVENUE
MONTREAL 6

March 15th 1957

Dr.A.Bader
c.o.Aldrich Chemical Company
3747 N.Booth Street
Milwaukee 12,Wisc.

Dear Alfred,

Thanks for your letter March 12th.

You ask me why -"we"- attribute the painting to Pieter Claesz.
We bought ^{it} as such -considered as such, while we had it for ap-
proximative 30 years; had I think an expertise by Hoofstede de
Groot and really never doubted that it is a Pieter Claesz
We have also seen quite a few P.Claesz in different musea
I would say the painting is by Pieter Claesz.

I know the painting is dated, but I thought you
can also discover a "monogram".

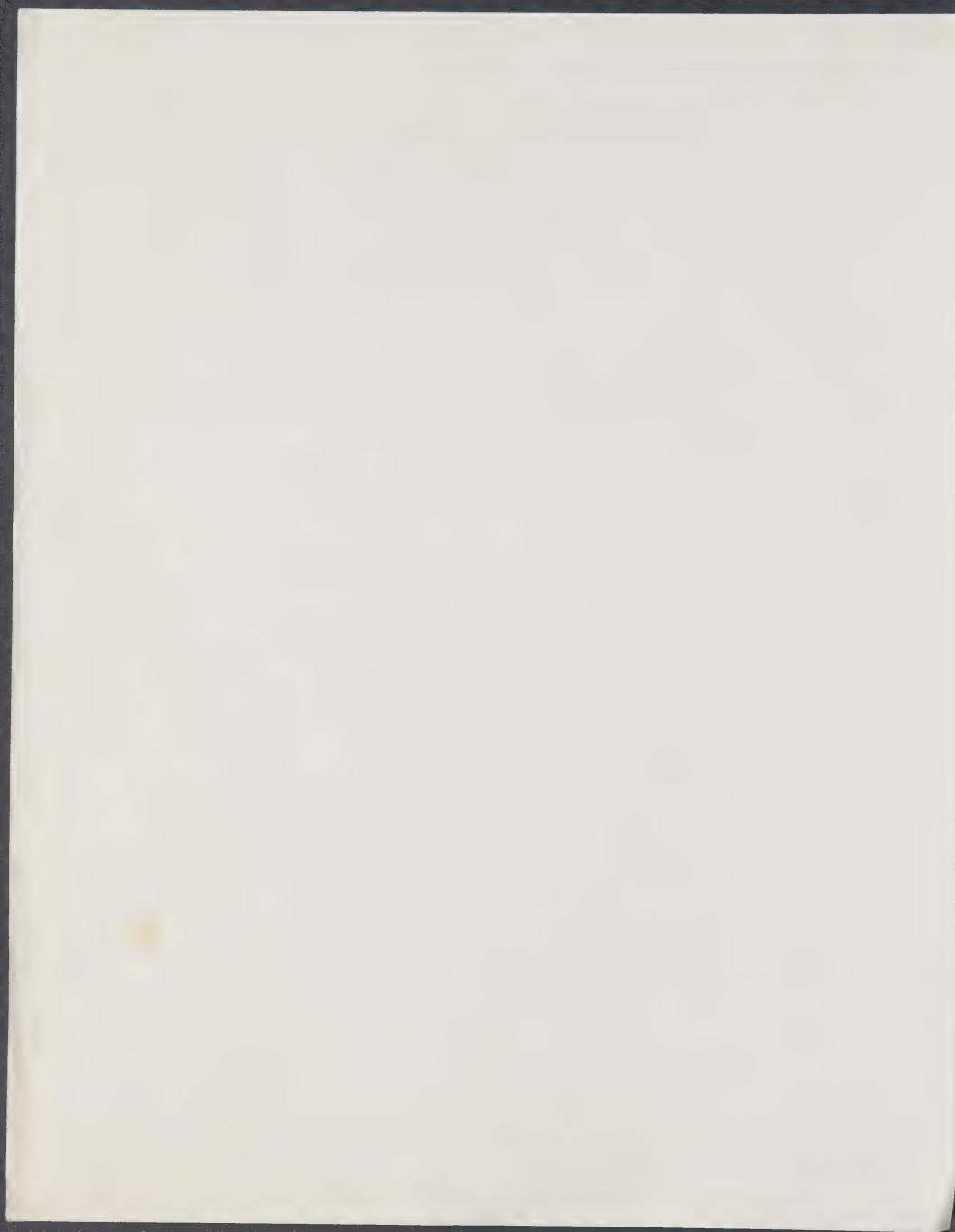
I have today requested Rosenberg & Stiebel Inc.
in New York to send you the painting at the above address
and you decide #s you suggest, after you have seen the pain-
ting.

Wishing you and your dear wife "good Purim" I
send you both our b st regards,

sincerely yours,

Jules Roos

In case you would like to receive
the painting in your private home in-
stead of the above addres, please write Rosenberg & Stiebel, 32 East 57 Str. Ny.22 N.Y.



February 28, 1957

Mr. and Mrs. Jules Roos
Redfern Avenue
Westmount
Montreal 6, Quebec, Canada

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Roos:

First of all I want to thank you for your kind hospitality during my stay in Montreal and for your help with the paintings.

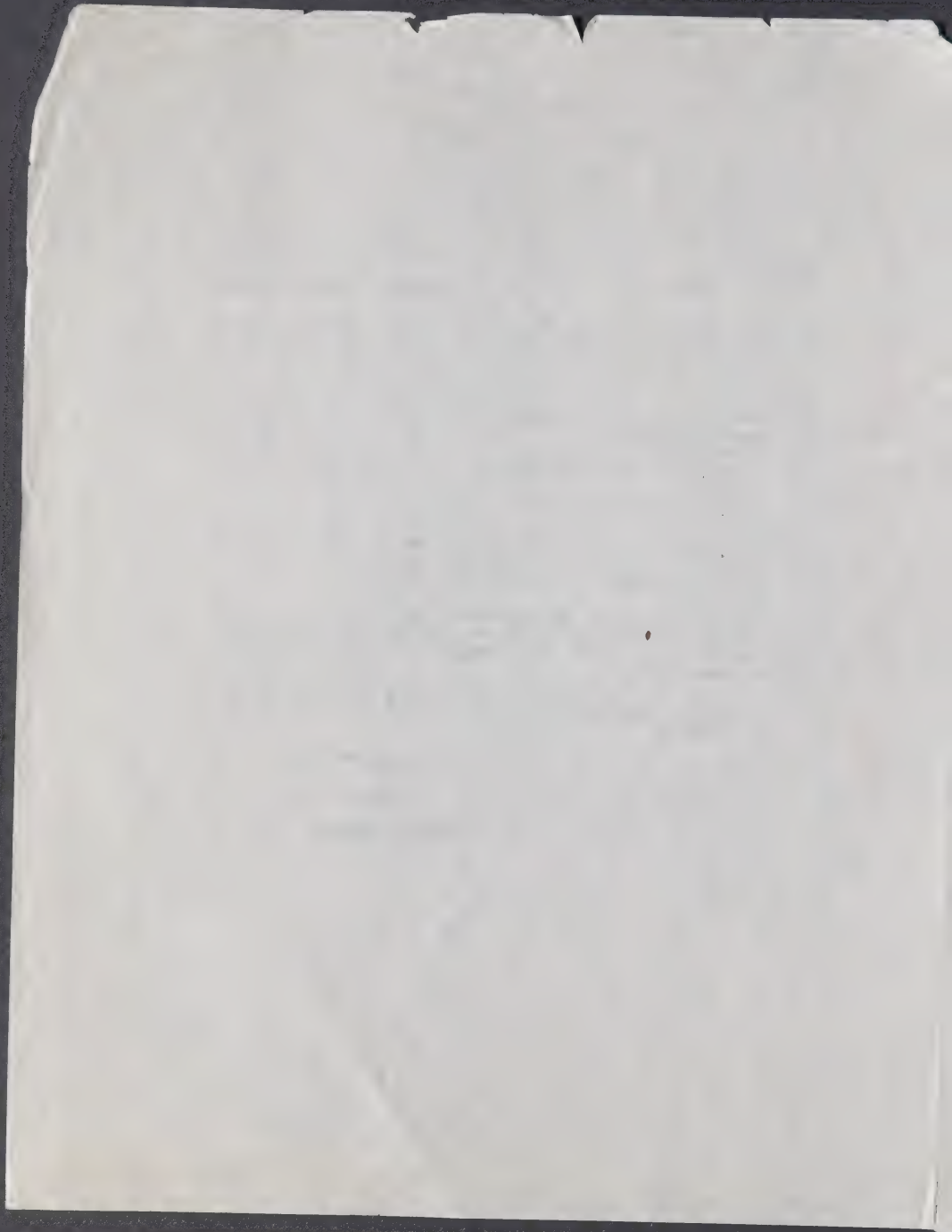
Danny and I much look forward to receiving the photograph and the original of the Peter Claesz, and we shall make arrangements to send you the Albert Cuyt.

With best personal regards from Danny and myself, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Alfred Bader

C
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P
Y



April 26, 1957

Mr. Jules Roos
371 Redfern Avenue
Montreal 6, P.Q., Canada

Dear Mr. Roos:

I am so happy to know that you like the
landscape and want to thank you particularly
also for the expertise of Hofstede de Groot.

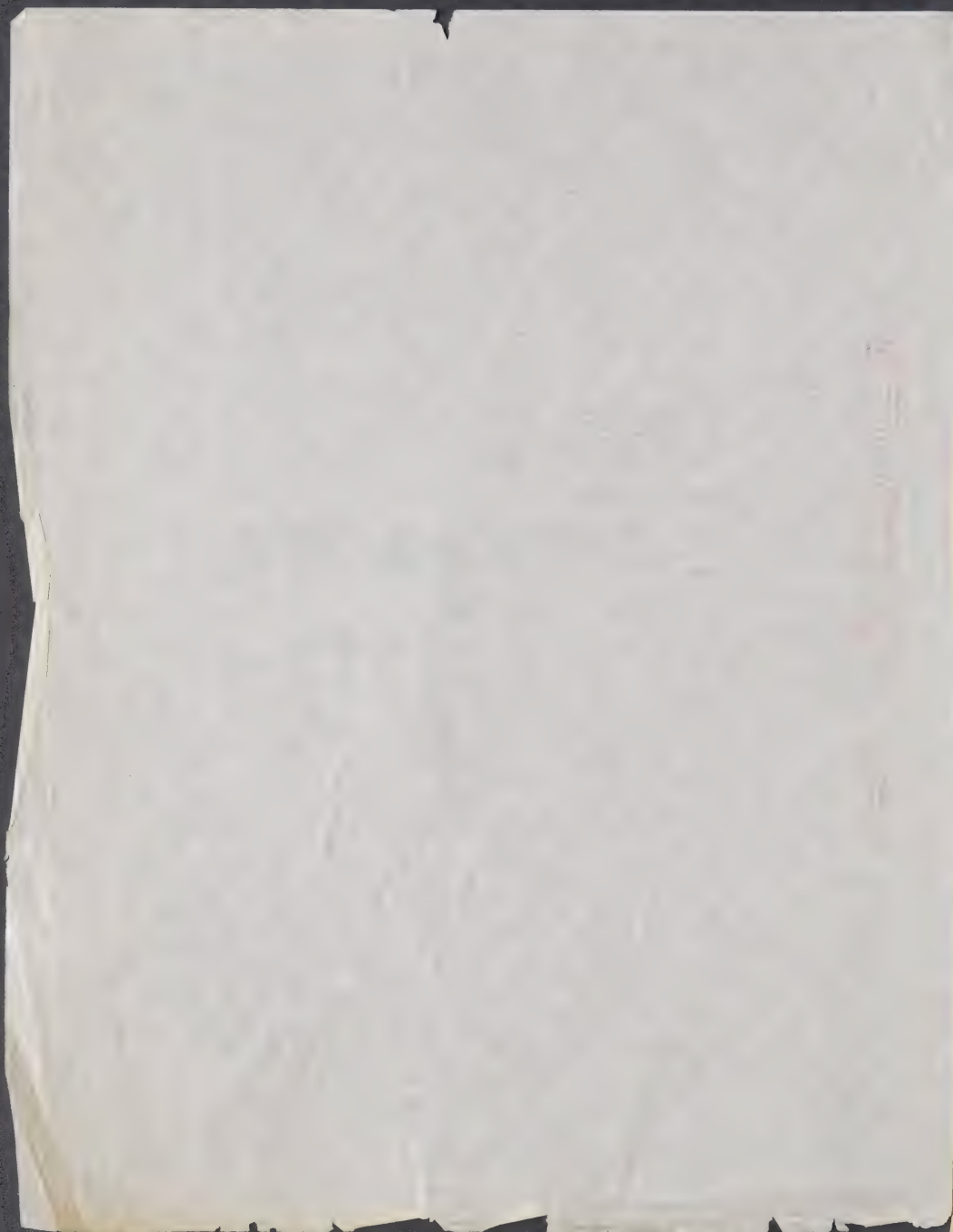
Do have a good trip.

Very sincerely,

Alfred Bader

AB:lew

C
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Y



March 19, 1956

Mr. Alfred Bader
2428 East Webster Place
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

One Dutch Painting handsomely framed	\$ 50.00
One negative and photograph	4.50
	<hr/>
Total	\$ 54.50

Kahlil Gibran
15 Fayette St.
Boston Mass.



JULES ROOS

371 REDFERN AVENUE

MONTREAL 6

April 14th 1957

Dear Alfred,

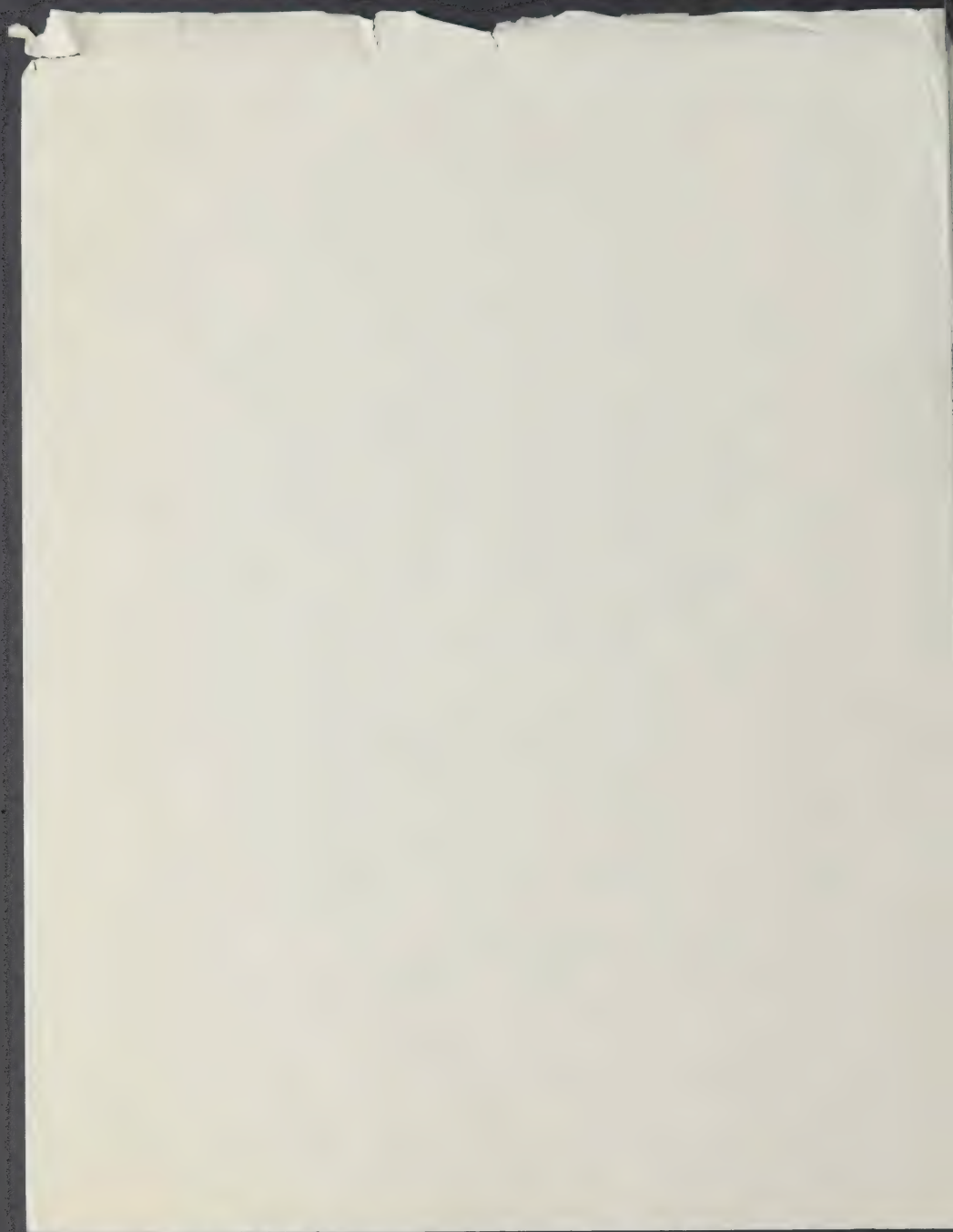
Thanks for your letter March 28th.

I received the painting a few days ago and it was in good condition. I think we are going to like it, the frame really is awful and it will look much nicer - after replacement of the frame and a good cleaning and varnishing. We are so glad you like the Kater Casey and hope you will enjoy all your pictures for a long time to come! If I find out the "expertise" I will send it to you, it may turn out.

This is also our first "swapping transaction" - as long as both parties are happy, I am satisfied.

We are busy with preparing D for G's 21st for our trip, which we hope to start on April 28th.

"Happy Passover" and MVB etc
to both of you from both of us
yours
Jules



AMERICAN S

MILWAUKEE, WIS. M

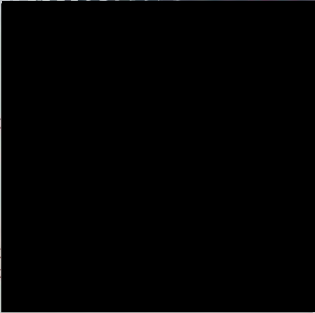
PAY TO THE
ORDER OF

Armed Forces

- Fifty two

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TRUST COMPANY
BOSTON MASS.

TRUST COMPANY
BOSTON MASS.
53-60

PAY TO THE ORDER OF
Any Bank, Banker, or Cashier
WALTON
BANK

Walter F. ...

PAY
OR
T
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AMERICAN

MILWAUKEE, WIS.

PAY TO THE
ORDER OF

Chas. J. ...

Sixty two

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Abbed J. P. P. P. P.



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March 28, 1957

C
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P
Y

Mr. Jules Roos
371 Redfern Avenue
Montreal 6, P.Q., Canada

Dear Mr. Roos:

Thank you so much for your letter of March 15th.

When a painting appeals to us and is obviously from the period, it doesn't make much difference who the artist was though, now that I have just seen the original, I quite agree with you that it looks like a Peter Claesz; on the photograph the metallic objects appeared much more prominent than they actually are. The painting arrived yesterday in good condition. The frame was badly beaten up but that is, of course, not at all serious; and, in any case, the frame of the Aelbert Cuyp isn't much to look at either. If you ever find the expertise by Hoofstede de Groot, please do send it to me.

I am sending you today by Railway Express the landscape by Aelbert Cuyp which I valued for insurance purposes at \$1,200.00, as this is what I paid for it. I hope it arrives safely. The painting, on a panel 24" x 34½", is recorded as No. 705 in Volume II of Hoofstede de Groot, it then being in the collection of Count Bloudeff of St. Petersburg. I have shown it to only one art expert, Professor Erik Larsen, who was certain of its authenticity and gave me the enclosed expertise.

This is the first time that Danny and I have swapped a painting, and it seems like great fun: it is almost like owning two paintings for the price of one! We are just thinking of buying a house and, while we have many paintings for our living-room, we have only one for our dining-room, and your Peter Claesz will look very nice there. Do let me know how you and Mrs. Roos like the Aelbert Cuyp.

With best personal regards to you and your family, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Alfred Bader

AB:lew



JULES ROOS

TELEPHONE WILBANK 0128

~~438 HEDGECOCK AVENUE~~

MONTREAL, CANADA.

371 REDFERN AVE

March 4th 1959

Dear Alfred,

I thank you for your letter and sent
to you a photo of the Lictor Cluszy.

Before I have it sent to you - please write me
once more if you want it. Then - if you want
to keep it - you can send me the address any p.

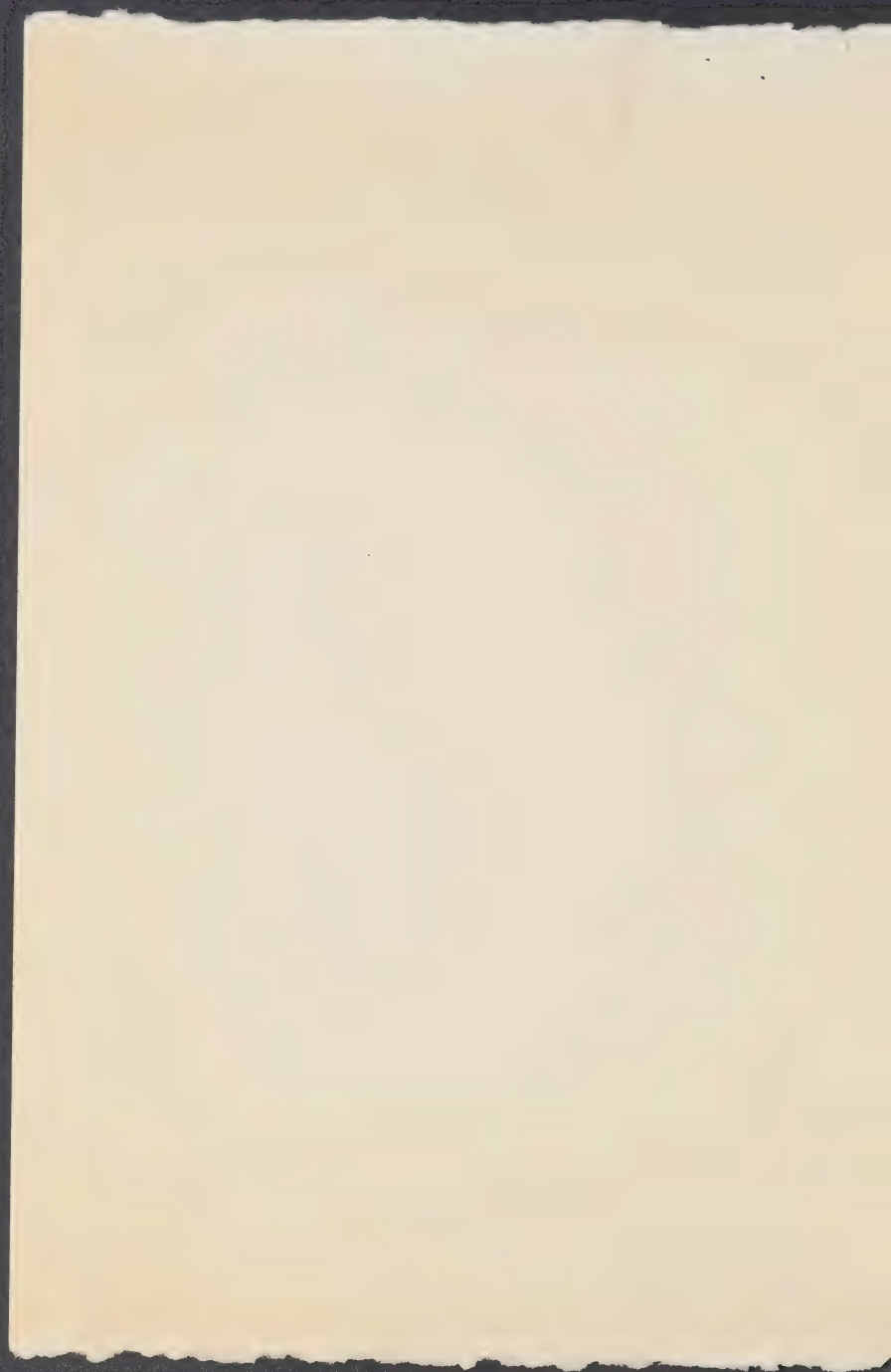
Use the enclosed forms M.A. make them out
in triplo and send them to me.

You can send the lecture per "Express"
and it will be here in a few days.

It was nice seeing you both.

All the best and very best
regards from both of us for both of you.

Yours,
J.R.



UNIFORM SPECIAL CONTRACT

(5029)
(9-53)
(Printed in U.S.A.)

Agents must use this form for all articles covered by Rule 13(c) of the Official Express Classification when the value declared is in excess of \$550.

Agents must fill out THREE COPIES of this contract, ALL of which must be signed by the AGENT AND BY THE SHIPPER BEFORE SHIPMENT.

One copy should be DELIVERED TO THE SHIPPER, ONE RETAINED BY THE AGENT, and the other must accompany the Delivery Sheet.

For shipments of the value of \$550, or less, issue Uniform Express Receipt, and assess charge for value in accordance with Classification rule.

RAILWAY EXPRESS AGENCY INCORPORATED

Special contract for the transportation of carvings, ceramics (pottery and porcelain all kinds), Chinaware, cloisonne, champlave, glass half-tone screens, glass panels, carved or etched, glass photographic color plates, glass photographic negatives, glass photographic positives, glassware, N.O.S., jade ornaments other than jewelry, paintings, pastels, pictures, sculpture, statuary and wax figures, of a value of over \$550.00.

THIS CONTRACT, made at London, Ontario, this 27 day of March, 1957, between Railway Express Agency, (hereinafter called the "Express Company") of the first part, and Dr. Alfred Dader (hereinafter called the "Shipper"), party of the second part, WITNESSETH:

1. The Express Company agrees, subject to the conditions hereinafter set forth and subject to the Classification and Tariffs in effect on the date hereof to forward to the point reached by the Express Company which is nearest or most convenient to destination, and there deliver to consignee or to other parties to complete the transportation, the following property, of which the Shipper declares himself to be the owner or duly authorized agent of the owner, namely:

consigned to Dr. Alfred Dader, Central St., Toronto
at 771 Victoria Avenue, Toronto, Ontario
for the sum of no charge dollars
and no cents, which charge is dependent upon the value of said property, as hereinafter stated.

2. (a) When the declared or released value of any article covered by Rule 13 (c) of the Official Express Classification, Supplements thereto or reissues thereof, weighing 1,100 pounds or less exceeds \$550, the charges for the portion of such value up to \$550 are 18 cents greater for each \$100 or fraction thereof in excess of \$50 on shipments weighing 100 pounds or less, or 50 cents per pound on shipments weighing more than 100 pounds. The charges for the portion of such value in excess of \$550 will be greater for each \$100 or fraction thereof as shown in paragraph (c).

(b) When the declared or released value of any article covered by Rule 13 (c) of the Official Express Classification, Supplements thereto or reissues thereof, weighing more than 1,100 pounds exceeds \$550, the charges will be greater for each \$100 or fraction thereof of such value in excess of 50 cents per pound actual weight as shown in paragraph (c).

(c) Between points where the first-class rate per 100 pounds

Does not exceed	Charge in Cents for Each \$100 or Fraction thereof
\$3.19	42
Exceeds \$3.19 but not \$6.48	49
Exceeds \$6.48 but not \$9.14	59
Exceeds \$9.14 but not \$12.77	66
Exceeds \$12.77	83

3. The Shipper hereby declares the value thereof to be \$3.19 dollars.

4. The Express Company shall not be required to make free delivery at points where it maintains no free delivery service for at any point beyond its established and published delivery limits.

5. The Express Company shall not be liable for loss or damage arising from the condition of the property, or from any defect or fault in packing, crating or boxing, which risks are assumed by the Shipper. The Shipper of said property hereby releases and discharges the said Express Company from all liability for the delay or loss of, or damage or injury to, said property from any cause whatever, unless any such delay, loss, damage or injury shall be proved to have been caused by the Express Company or by the negligence of its agents or employees, and in such event the Express Company shall be liable only to the extent of actual damage sustained, but in no event to an amount in excess of the value declared above.

6. All the stipulations and conditions in this contract contained shall inure to the benefit of, and extend to, each and every connecting carrier, railroad company, express company, forwarder, or person to whom the Express Company may entrust or deliver said property for transportation, and shall define the responsibility and liability therefor of any such company or person for the acts or negligence of their several agents or employees.

7. Upon the arrival of said property at destination, the Shipper, owner or consignee shall forthwith receive said property and pay any charges due thereon, and any sums besides charges to be collected from consignee, according to terms of shipment; and if he or they shall fail or refuse to duly receive the same, and pay any such charges and other sums, or after 48 hours (exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays) from mailing of notice to consignee of arrival of shipment, the Company's liability shall be that of warehouseman only and said Express Company, or other carrier, as the agent of such Shipper, owner or consignee, may thereupon have said property put in some suitable place at the cost and risk of such Shipper, owner or consignee, and at any time or times thereafter may sell the same, or any portion thereof, at public or private sale, with or without notice, as said agent may deem necessary or expedient, and apply the proceeds arising therefrom, or so much thereof as may be needed, for the payment of any freight and charges that may be due, and other necessary and proper costs and expenses; or said Express Company or other carrier may, at its option, return said property to Shipper, the Shipper to pay charges for transportation both ways, and all other expenses.

8. As conditions precedent to recovery claims must be made in writing to the originating or delivering carrier within nine months after delivery of the property or, in case of failure to make delivery, then within nine months and fifteen days after date of shipment; and suits shall be instituted only within two years and one day after the date when notice in writing is given by the carrier to the claimant that the carrier has disallowed the claim or any part or parts thereof.

9. All the conditions of this contract shall apply to any reforwarding or return of said property.

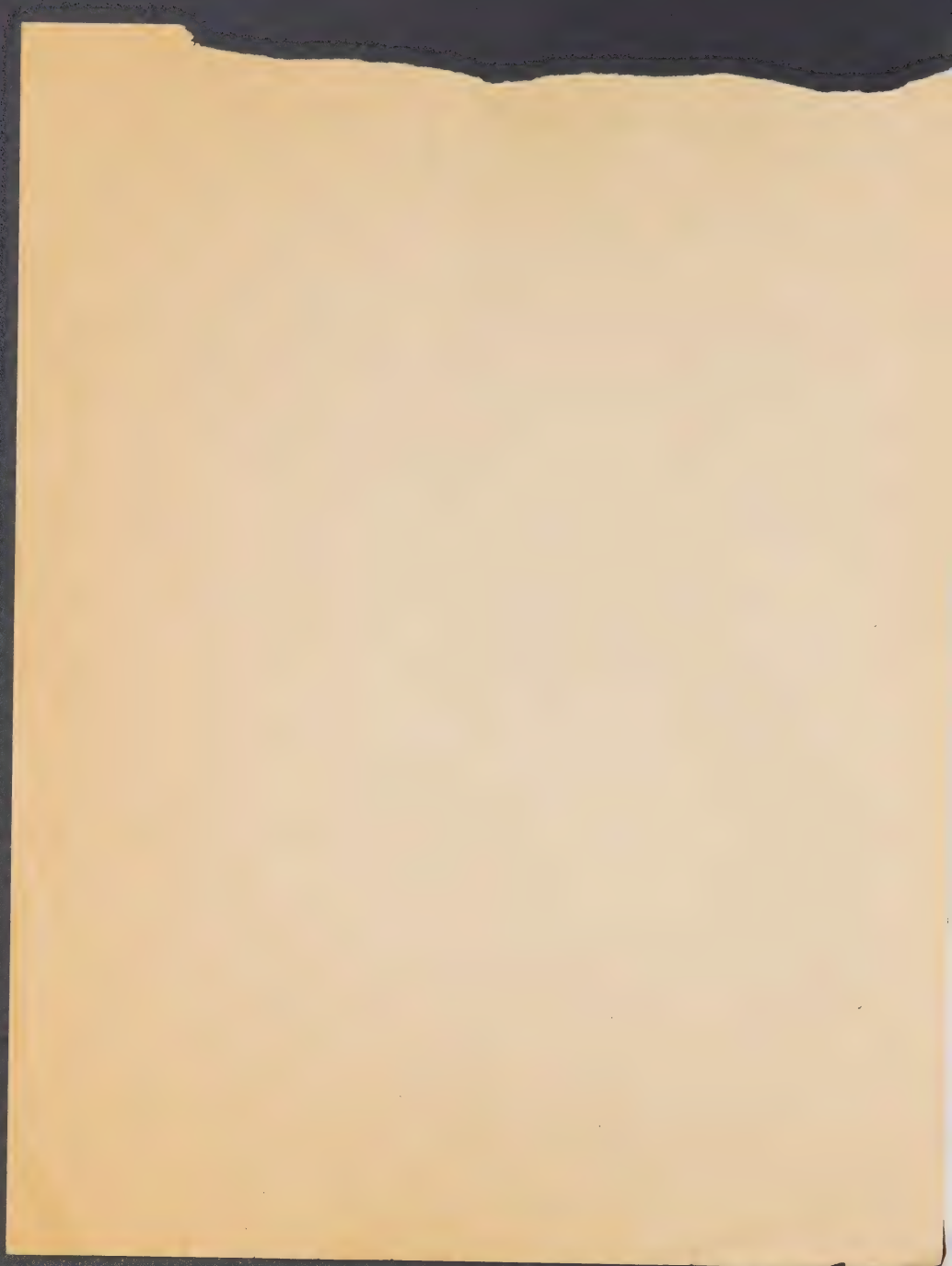
Signed in triplicate.

FOR RAILWAY EXPRESS AGENCY, INC.

Dr. Alfred Dader

Shipper

Agent



ALFRED JAKSTAS
Conservation of Works of Art
391 SCHOOL STREET
BELMONT 78, MASSACHUSETTS

BELMONT 5-3286

March 6, 1956

Mr. Alfred Bader
2423 East Webster Place
Milwaukee 11, Wisconsin

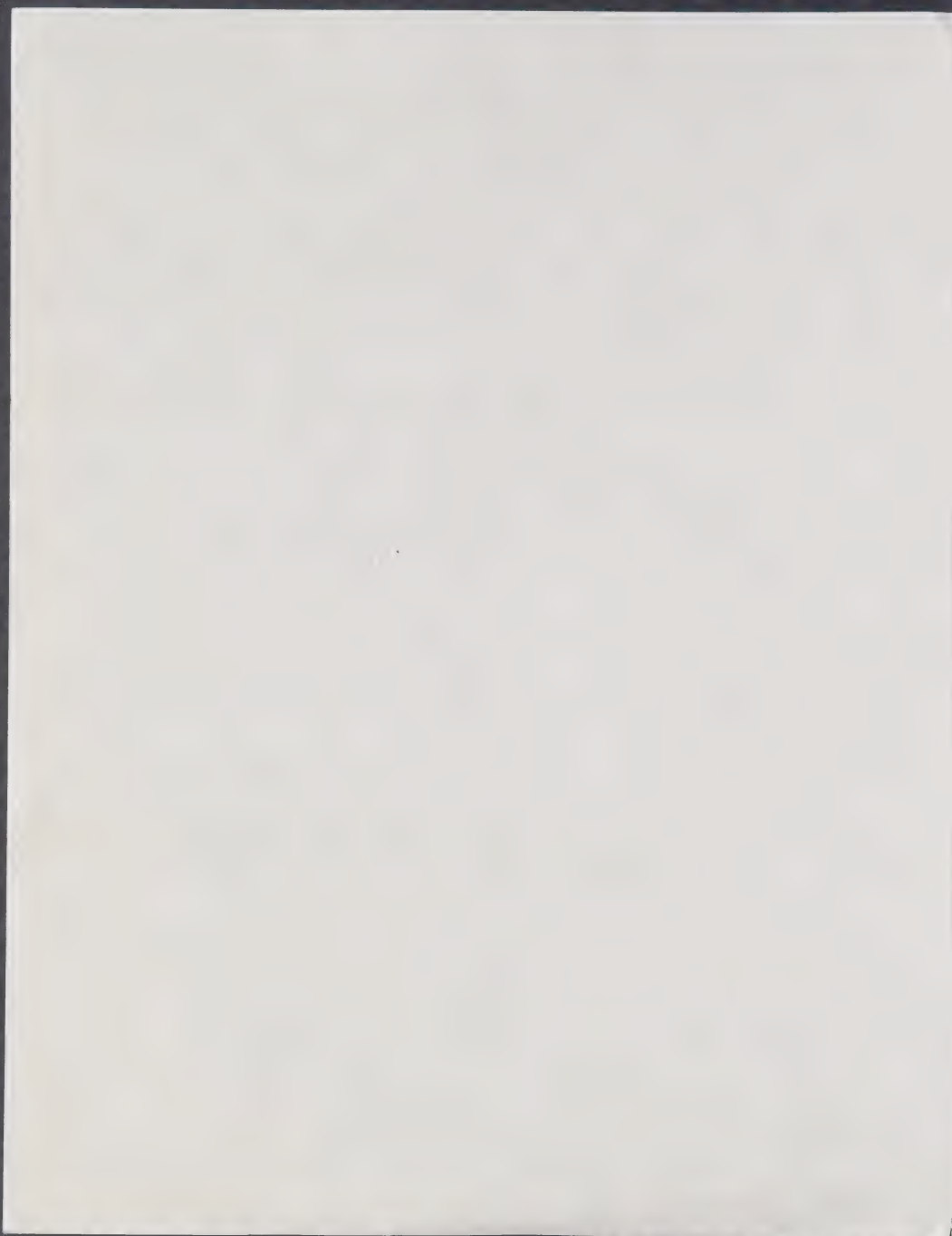
Dear Mr. Bader,

Your still life painting is covered with a thick yellow surface film. There are two faults in the panel in the lower left corner; these have raised a bit causing a slight disfigurement but there is nothing to be done about this. The painting has been rubbed in the background at the right, this is probably what Dr. Rosenberg referred to as "thin" paint. Removal of the varnish, inpainting of the abrasions, and recoating with a synthetic resin will cost one hundred twenty-five dollars.

Your reference to work on a painting several years ago is not to the point. The work then was of a minor character calling for only minor corrections in some rubbed areas. The above is a major treatment requiring a good deal of time and skill. However, the painting is presentable as it now stands, and treatment could be postponed if you so desire.

Sincerely yours,

Alfred Jakstas



Martina Brunner
Nikolaus Fey-Str. 24
D - 87 Würzburg

6. November 1978

Herrn
Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Separd Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

Sehr geehrter Herr Dr. Bader,

Zunächst recht herzlichen Dank für Ihr freundliches Schreiben vom 9. Oktober, für den Katalog und das Foto Ihres schönen Pieter Claesz-Stillebens.

Aus dem Foto geht hervor, daß Ihr Bild in seiner lockeren Malweise für die Zeit um 1645/50 ganz charakteristisch ist. Sie bieten mir freundlicherweise an, ein Farbfoto Ihres Bildes für mich anfertigen zu lassen. In der Tat würde dadurch eine stilistische Beurteilung wesentlich erleichtert. Ein Farbfoto in der Größe Ihres schwarz/weiß Fotos wäre natürlich besonders schön.

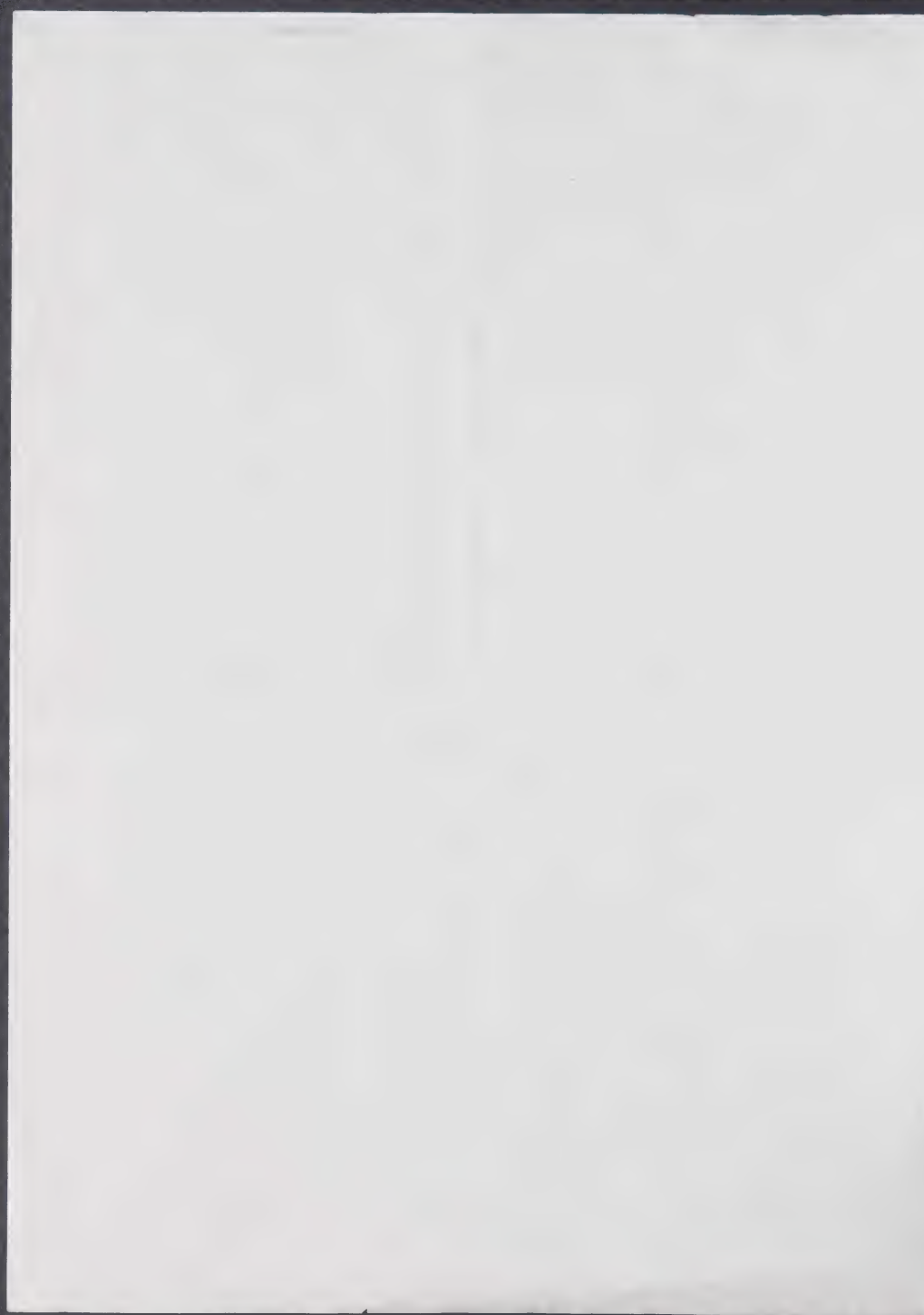
Bitte teilen Sie mir außerdem mit, ob ich das Bild unter der Angabe: "Milwaukee, Slg. Dr. Bader" veröffentlichen darf.

Ich möchte Ihnen nochmals sehr herzlich für Ihr großzügiges Entgegenkommen danken und sehe Ihrem Schreiben mit großer Freude entgegen.

Mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung

Alfred Bader

P. S. Bei Erscheinen meiner Arbeit werde ich Ihnen natürlich sofort eine Xerokopie mit den Textstellen zu Ihrem Bild als Belegexemplar zusenden und Ihnen gleichzeitig mitteilen, wo das Buch erhältlich sein wird.



Herrn
Dr. Alfred Bader
2961, North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211
U. S. A.

Sehr geehrter Herr Dr. Bader,

im Zuge meiner Dissertation über das Frühstücksstilleben bei Pieter Claesz erhielt ich bei der Sichtung des Materials im Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie in Den Haag Kenntnis von Ihrem Claesz-Gemälde (datiert 1646, 41 x 56 cm). Dabei wurde mir freundlicherweise auch Ihre Adresse mitgeteilt.

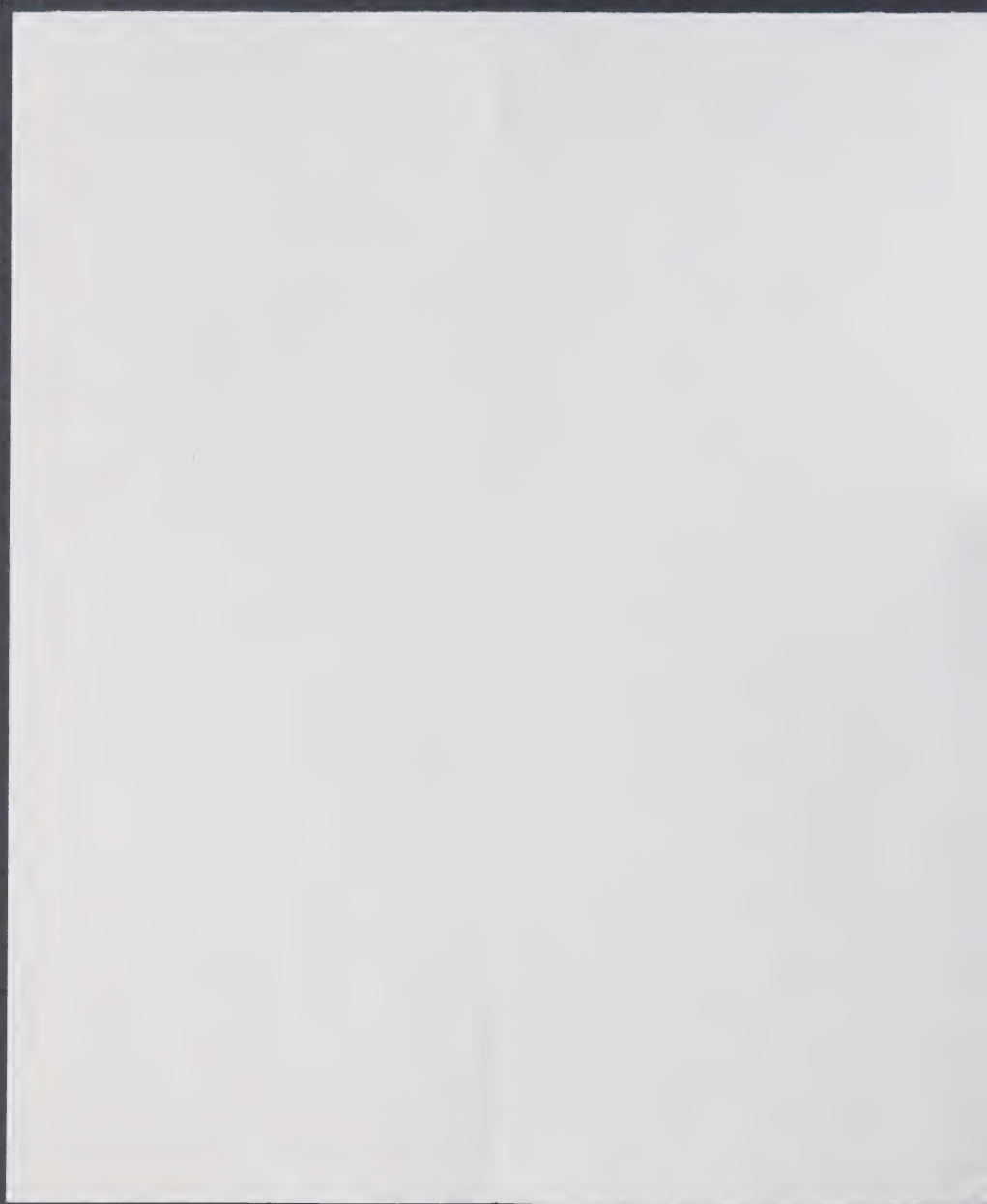
Ich beabsichtige im Anschluß an meine Dissertation ein Oeuvre-Verzeichnis der Stilleben des Pieter Claesz zu erstellen. Sofern sich das Bild noch in Ihrem Besitz befindet, wäre ich Ihnen sehr dankbar, wenn Sie mir ein Foto und eventuell ein Farbdiagramm zur Verfügung stellen könnten. Ich werde die Kosten dafür gerne übernehmen. Auch für Hinweise zur Provenienz und zu entlegener Literatur wäre ich Ihnen überaus dankbar. Selbstverständlich werde ich Sie gerne über meine Arbeitsergebnisse unterrichten.

Ich würde mich sehr freuen, von Ihnen zu hören und danke Ihnen sehr herzlich für Ihre freundlichen Bemühungen.

Mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung

Walter Dillmann

*Bekannt mit mir
in Zusammenhang mit 1978*



Martina Brunner-Bulst

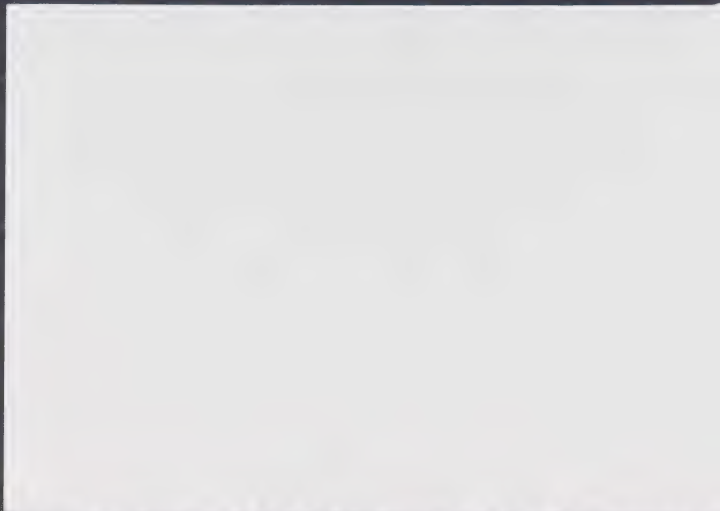
Kunsthistorisches Institut

Via G. Giusti 44

I - 50121 Firenze

Italien

Private Telefonnr.: 0039 / 55 / 409518



1986

Old Master Pictures

4 July, London

The highlight of this sale was a pair of views by Canaletto of the Venetian Waterfront with the Doge's Palace and the Salute. The only pair of paintings by the artist on copper to have appeared on the market since the artist's lifetime, these were sold for £5,800 in 1953 and on this occasion for £594,000.

Another Venetian painting, *A page boy with a whippet* by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, probably painted just over a decade later than the Canalettos, was bid to £118,800 by a private collector. Also of approximately the same date was a particularly fine *Capriccio view of Rome* by Giovanni Paolo Panini which was purchased by a private collector for £75,600.

The most exciting of the Northern pictures was a still life of smoking utensils by Pieter Claesz, which had been acquired at Christie's in 1953 for 600 gns. Despite its small size and simple composition, this made a world record auction price for the artist at £226,800.

The works of Pieter Brueghel the Younger have been in great demand in recent sales and one of many versions of his *Adoration of the Kings* sold above estimate for £102,600.

The most exceptional of the French paintings in the sale, a coastal scene in the early morning by Lacroix de Marseille, fetched the high price of £64,800.

English and Continental Silver

9 July, London

The final silver sale of the season contained some curiosities as well as examples of the grandest of English silver from what used to be termed 'the best period', that is before what were seen as the extravagancies of the Rococo rendered English silver a shadow of its French counterparts. Amongst the curiosities, the most surprising was an inkwell formed as a possum climbing over a tree trunk. Much interest had been expressed from the Antipodes but after fierce bidding the piece was secured by a London dealer for £9,180 or four times the pre-sale estimate. A large silver and glass honey pot was sold for £5,400; it had been bought by the vendor at the sale of Elveden Hall in 1984 for what then seemed the very high price of £3,200. An interesting claret jug by George Fox of 1877, a copy of Vienna porcelain jug in the Victoria and Albert Museum, was acquired by the Museum as a fitting demonstration of the Victorian vogue for Historicism. However, silver from two now dispersed collections was strongly competed for. On the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne in 1837, her uncle Ernest Augustus, fifth son of George III, succeeded to the kingdom of Hanover. In order to maintain his status as a monarch the new king equipped himself with silver, much of it from the Royal Collection. A set of four candlesticks by the Osnabruck goldsmith, J.W. Voigt, circa 1740, engraved with the King's monogram made £21,600, whilst a pair of silver-gilt kidney-shaped dishes of 1807 made £10,260; both figures being almost double the pre-sale estimate. Another whose property is much in demand today is George Booth, 2nd Earl of Warrington, a collector with an almost obsessive interest in silver. A pair of salvers by David Willaume II, 1743, made £56,160 whereas a ewer by the same goldsmith from the previous year fetched £45,360. The salvers appear in the Earl's manuscript *The Particulars of my Plate and its Weights* among thirteen used for serving dessert and the ewer was one of seven supplied for the bedrooms at the Earl's seat 78 Dunham Massey. The sale made £485,299 with just 9 per cent unsold.



Pieter Claesz. *Still Life*, £226,800. A World record auction price for a work by the artist. London 4 July.

English Pictures

11 July, London

Heroic images tended to dominate this sale. Among a large group of sporting pictures, the most important was *Pharaoh's Horses* by John Frederick Herring, Sen., dated 1848, which fetched £297,000. It showed the heads of the horses as they careered at full speed, pulling the Pharaoh's chariot. Although the picture's whereabouts had been unknown for many years, it had in fact been in the collection of the Salomons family of Broomhill, Kent. Equally dramatic in its way was Benjamin West's *The Bard* of 1809, which sold for £172,800. One of the artist's most important works, the picture illustrated Thomas Gray's Pindaric ode of the same name, composed between 1754 and 1757, and inspired by the Welsh legend that King Edward I, after conquering Wales, ordered that all Bards should be put to death. Having been offered by the artist to the Pennsylvania Academy in the year it was painted, and again by his sons to the United States in 1826, it was eventually sold in his studio sale held at Robbins, a rival firm to Christie's, in May 1829.

But the sale was not all histrionics. It also included several remarkable portraits, including a small full-length likeness by Louis Gauffier of Prince Augustus Frederick, later Duke of Sussex, the 6th son of King George III and Queen Carlotta (£205,200). This gem-like picture was painted in Rome in 1793, the year of the sitter's marriage to Lady Augusta Murray, and showed him wearing full Windsor uniform.

Among the landscapes was a unique view of the Chelsea reservoir and waterworks, with Westminster Abbey in the distance. The waterworks formed part of a scheme devised in the early 1720s for a network of canals and reservoirs joining Chelsea to Hyde Park. Painted circa 1725, possibly for the scheme's proprietors, the picture showed the works in St. James's Park under construction, before the pumping stations had been built. It fetched £47,520.

Evening Concerts at King Street

This autumn's series of Evening Concerts have been organised for the benefit of the International Musicians Seminar.

The IMS was founded by Sandor Vegh at Prussia Cove, Cornwall, in 1972 and has since achieved world-wide recognition amongst professional musicians as a centre where the traditions of European music-making can be handed down. In April each year, experienced players and younger colleagues take part in Master Classes and three weeks each September are devoted to Open Chamber Music, in which performing musicians are scheduled in different ensembles.

Sandor Vegh studied with Hubay and worked with Bartok, Kodaly and Casals. He believes that the obsessive search for technical prowess and perfection today, particularly in America and the Far East, can lead to rigidity of interpretation and paralysis of inspiration in performance of music. Prussia Cove, in its emphasis on style, ensemble and interpretation, keeps alive a tradition of music-making which is in danger of being lost or diluted.

Musicians who have taken part in Prussia Cove's activities include Pina Carmirelli, Gyorgy Pauk, Eli Goren, Bruno Giuranna, Nobuko Imai, Georges Janzer, Peter Schidlof, Johannes Goritzki, Christopher Bunting, Ralph Kirshbaum, Alexander Baillie, Marius May, Steven Isserlis, William Pleeth, Andras Schiff, Peter Frankl and Louis Kentner.

The first concert in the series, on October 6, will be given by Prussia Cove Music and has been organised by IMS. It consists of Schubert's Piano Trio in E flat and Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor.

The remaining concerts have been organised by Christie's. The second in the series, on October 20, features Beethoven's Piano Quartet in E flat and Robert Schumann's Piano Quartet, played by the Domus Piano Quartet, the members of whom originally came together at Prussia Cove.

The third concert, on November 3, consists of Schubert's Octet, performed by Serenata, whose patron is Murray Perahia.

The final concert, on November 10, is given by the Vienna Ensemble, who are members of the Vienna Philharmonic. They will be playing Waltzes, Polkas, Dances etc. by Schubert, Lanner and the Strauss family, and also Schubert's "Trout" Piano Quintet, in which they will be joined by the Polish pianist, Krystyna Borucinska.

The concerts take place at King Street, starting at 6.45pm. and are followed by a reception. Tickets are £7.50 and can be obtained from Jonathan Price or Patricia Knights.

PROGRAMME

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, AT 6.45 P.M.
Prussia Cove Music

SCHUBERT — Piano Trio in E flat (D929)
CLARA SCHUMANN — Piano Trio in G Minor
(Op 17)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, AT 6.45 P.M.
Domus Piano Quartet

BEETHOVEN — Piano Quartet in E flat (Op 16)
ROBERT SCHUMANN — Piano Quartet in E flat
(Op 47)

Monday, November 3, at 6.45 p.m.
Serenata

SCHUBERT — Octet in F (D803)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, AT 6.45 P.M.
Vienna Ensemble

with Krystyna Borucinska (Piano)
SCHUBERT — Piano Quintet in A (D667)
"The Trout"

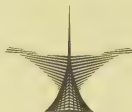
SCHUBERT, LANNER, the STRAUSS family
— Waltzes, German Dances, Polkas, etc.

Piano by

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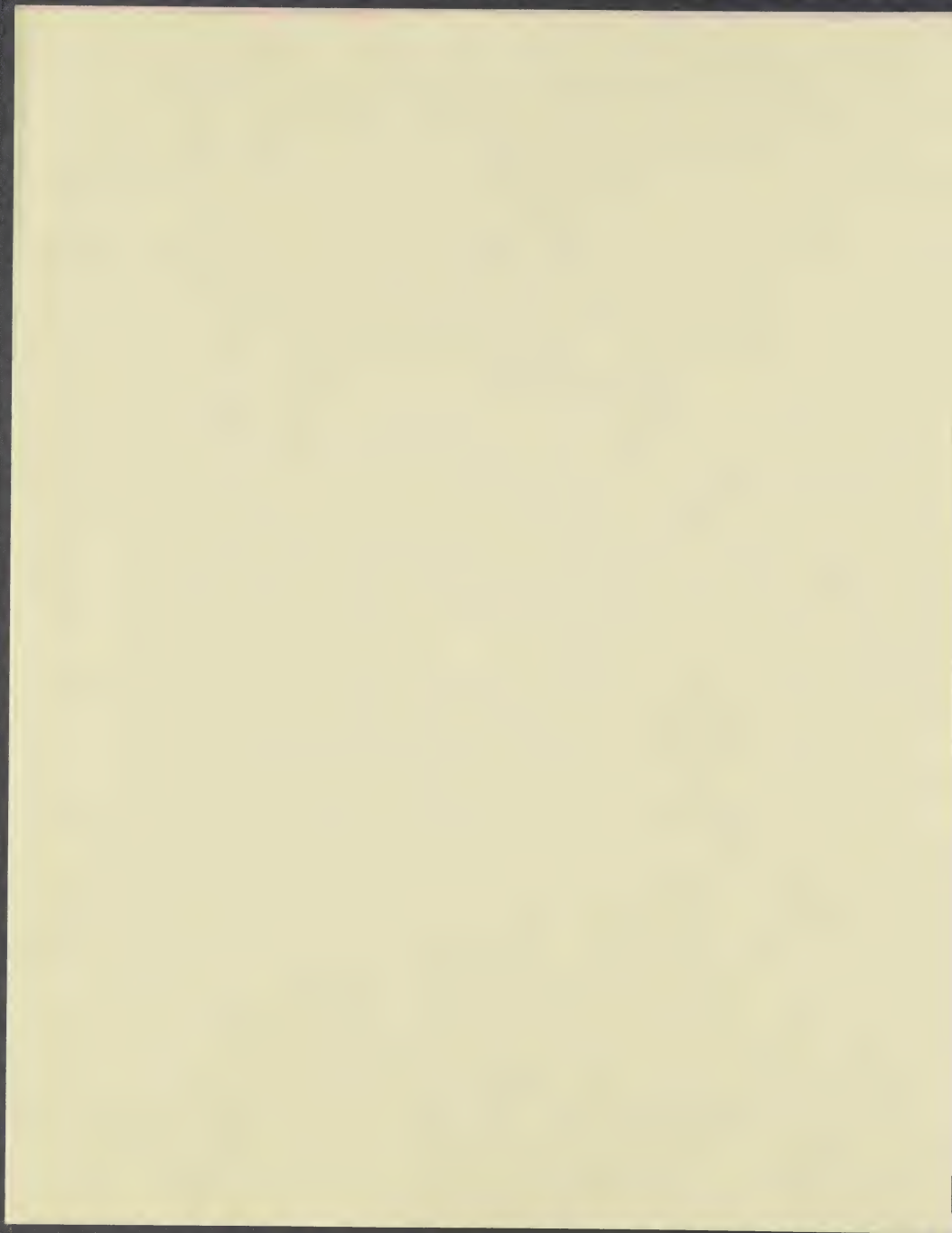
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Dr. MARTINA BRUNNER-BULST

Florenz, 20. Januar 1988

Dr. Alfred Bader
2961 North Shepard Avenue
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Sehr geehrter Herr Dr. Bader,

Seit unserer letzten Begegnung in Florenz im Sommer 1986 ist nun schon wieder eine Zeit verstrichen. In der Hoffnung, daß Sie und Ihre Frau wohlauf sind, möchte ich Ihnen heute eine gute Nachricht mitteilen und sie zugleich mit allen meinen guten Wünschen für 1988 verbinden.

Im Januar vergangenen Jahres habe ich nun endlich meine Dissertation eingereicht und konnte schließlich im Sommer die ganze Promotionsprozedur mit allen mündlichen Prüfungen erfolgreich abschließen. Derzeit bereite ich die Drucklegung meiner Arbeit vor, aus der ja nun eine Monographie mit kritischem Oeuvrekatalog geworden ist.

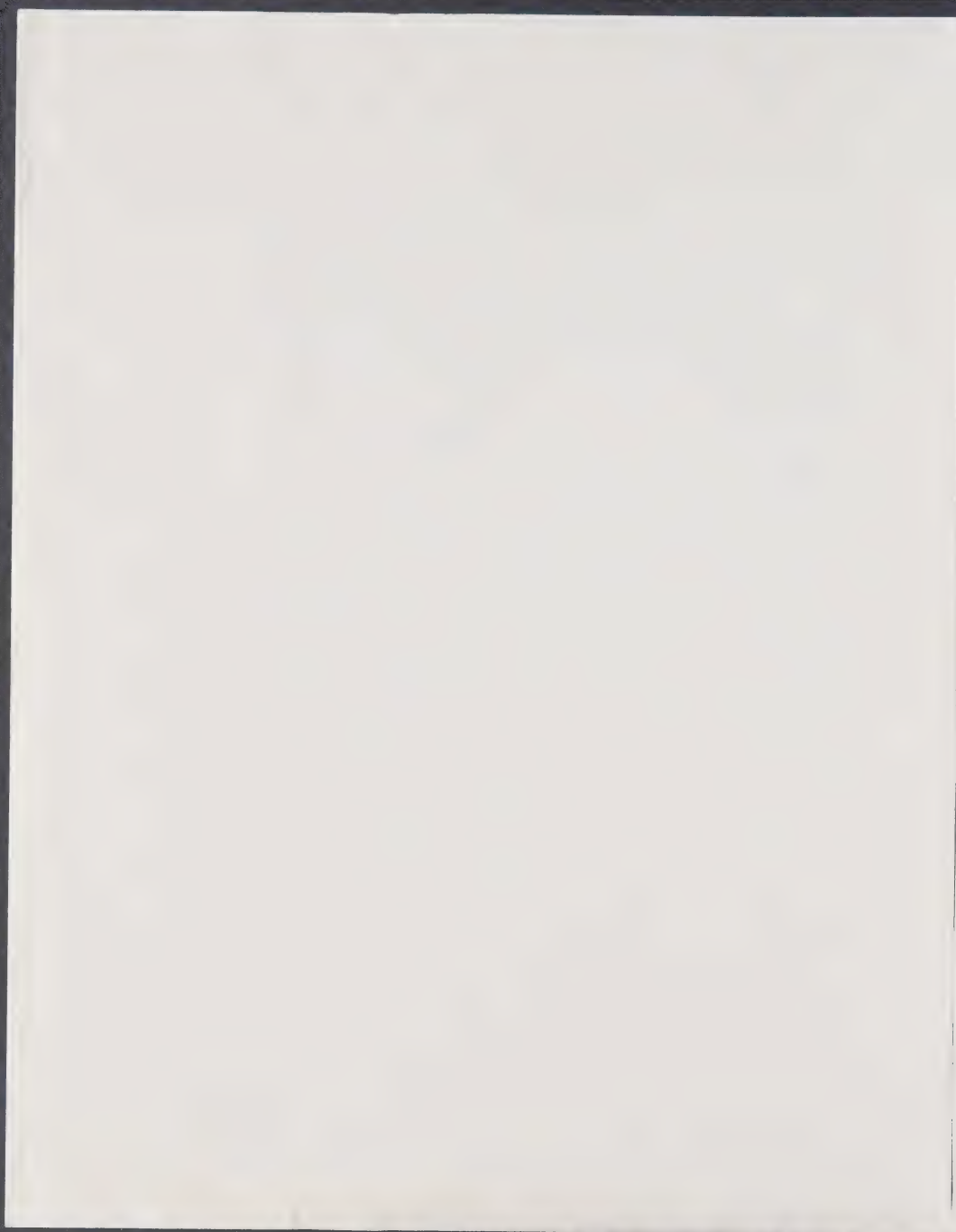
Voraussichtlich im Herbst/Winter 1988 wird das Buch beim Luca Verlag von Dr. Klaus Ertz in Freren erscheinen. Von alle angesprochenen Kunstverlegern hatte Dr. Ertz schon seit längerem das größte Interesse gezeigt und von ihm und seinem Verlag ist auch das größte Engagement zu erwarten. Denn nach meinen bisherigen Erfahrungen bin ich sehr froh, in Dr. Ertz einen Verleger gefunden zu haben, der Offenheit und Sinn dafür hat, daß solche jahrelangen Bemühungen mit einem gut ausgestatteten Buch belohnt werden müssen.

So soll das Buch eine stattliche Anzahl an Farbtafeln erhalten, unter denen ich mir natürlich auch Ihr schönes Stilleben von Pieter Claesz gedacht habe. Deshalb möchte ich Sie fragen und zugleich bitten, ob es Ihnen möglich wäre, eine Finanzierungshilfe von 1200 DM für die farbige Reproduktion Ihres Gemäldes zu gewähren? Ingeheim hoffe ich natürlich auf Ihre Unterstützung, da der Verlag selbst bereit ist, die Finanzierung von 30 Farbproduktionen für Bilder aus Museumsbesitz zu übernehmen, wenn ebenfalls 30 Privatsammler für die Finanzierung der Farbproduktionen ihrer Gemälde aufkommen.

Darf ich Sie bitten, mir bis 1. März 1988 Nachricht zu geben, da ich Mitte April mein gesamtes Manuskript an den Verlag senden muß. Alles weitere würde dann der Verlag regeln.

In der Hoffnung, daß Sie mein Anliegen gut und als nicht allzu unbescheiden aufnehmen, grüße ich Sie und Ihre Frau - auch von meinem Mann - sehr herzlich, bis vielleicht auf ein Wiedersehen in Florenz.

Mrs. Martina Brunner-Bulst



Dr. Alfred Bader
Chairman



February 11, 1988

Dr. Martina Brunner-Bulst
Kunsthistorisches Institut
Via G. Giusti, 44
I50121 Florence, Italy

Dear Dr. Brunner-Bulst:

Your letter of January 20th reminded me of our happy meeting in Mrs. Middeldorf's home, now almost two years ago.

I am so glad to know that your book on Pieter Claesz will appear soon. It is really badly needed: there are so many still lifes masquerading as Claesz.

However, I see a great danger in making color reproductions dependent upon the owner's willingness to pay for them. What should determine your choice is the beauty/importance of the work. Carried ad absurdum, books will be published to illustrate some particular painting, preferably on the book's cover, for which a collector or dealer is willing to pay; as you surely know, this has already happened in Italy.

Unfortunately, Dr. Ertz is not alone; just recently, Davaco asked me for \$500 to illustrate one of my de Gelders. I declined.

I have been fighting the other extreme in art historians' efforts to obtain photographs for their publications. Many museums, particularly in this country, have adopted the surely unreasonable practice of demanding one book free of charge for each photo supplied. This is fine when a reprint from The Burlington Magazine is involved; absurd with expensive books.

I, myself, receive one or two requests a week for photographs of my paintings, and I have never charged anything yet. But I refuse on principle to pay for color reproductions. Please return my color transparency. If you wish to illustrate my painting, I will be happy to send you a black and white photo at no charge.

The silver lining to all this will be that art historians who will know my painting from your black and white illustration, and then see the original, will say: this is so surprisingly beautiful in color.

SIGMA-ALDRICH

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Dr. Martina Brunner-Bulst
February 11, 1988
Page Two

Isabel and I look forward to visiting Mrs. Middeldorf in June and would really enjoy meeting you again.

Best personal regards to you and your husband.

Sincerely,

Heinrich Lipp

Alfred Bader

Alfred Bader
AB:mmh













Pieter Claesz (1597-1661). Stilleben 1631

Original im Martin von Wagner Museum
der Universität Würzburg, Residenz/Südflügel
(Eingang neben der Hofkirche).

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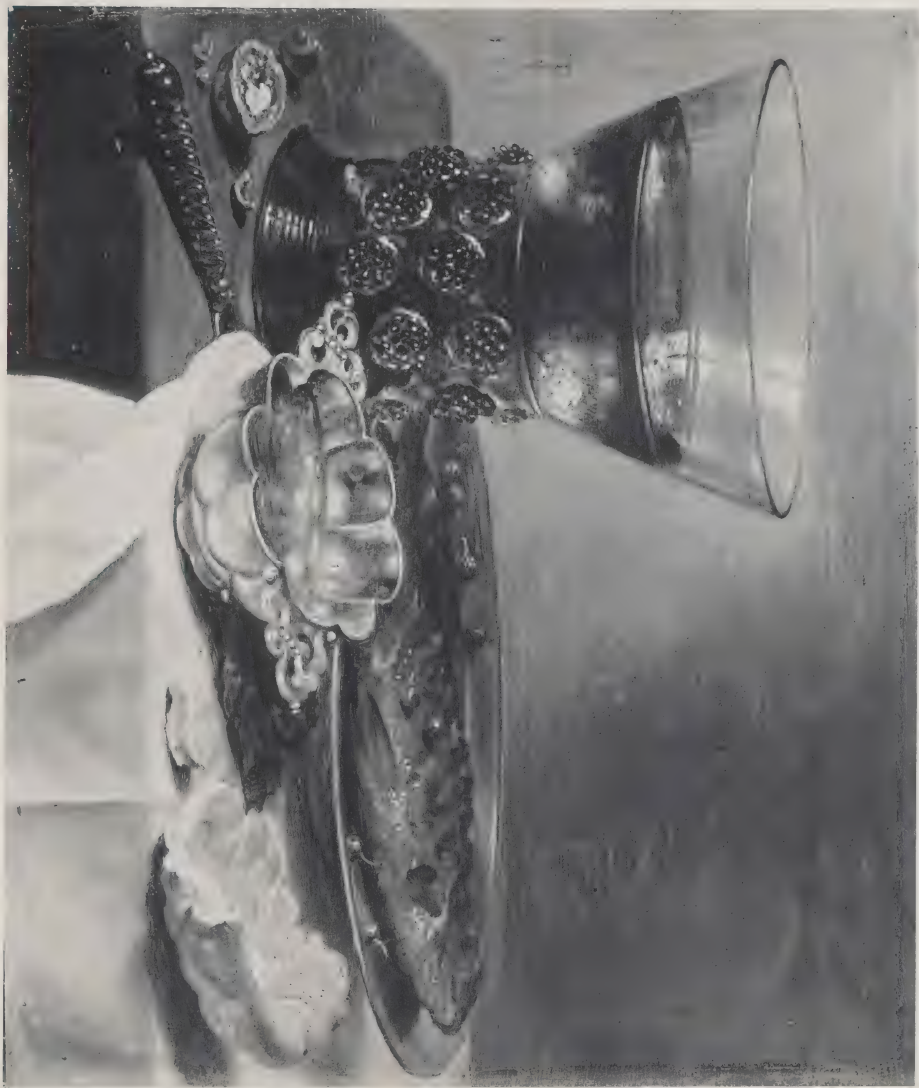
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EXHIBITION:

ITEM: Claesz Still Life (owned by Dr. Alfred Bader)

DATE/INITIALS/CONDITION _____

8/23/02 T. White

Support: The support is a wood panel with several slight distortions/cracks.

Media: The media is oil paint applied in a paste vehicular with visible brushwork and low impasto.

Condition: The painting is in generally stable condition. There are cracks/distortions in the panel support which are noted on the photocopy. There is not currently any paint loss associated with these distortions. There are possible previous retouches in the top left area of the painting. There is a scratch or light colored accretion on the leaves at center. Several brown spatter stains occur on the white table cloth at the bottom left. There is a minor paint loss at the top right corner and a retouched scratch at the bottom left on the table.

Varnish: There appears to be a cohesive, even varnish layer applied over the painting.

Frame: The frame is a Dutch style frame of black painted wood with a gold leafed fillet. The frame is in stable condition. The painting is held into the frame with six bell clamps and foamcore pads. There are mat board spacers to keep the panel secure in the frame. There is no backing and the reverse of the painting is dusty.

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ART

CLOSE READING

Leftovers Worth Looking Over 4 Centuries Later

ALIVELY still-life painting may seem like a contradiction in terms, but in the hands of the 17th-century master Pieter Claesz, the tableau is anything but static. With cracked and scattered nuts, half-peeled lemons, crumpled napkins and an elaborate pie with wings arranged in an overlapping jumble, Claesz's "Tabletop Still Life With Pigeon Pie and Delftware Jug" invites the onlooker to a feast that seems well in progress.

"You feel like there's involvement of the viewer in the scene," said Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., curator of "Pieter Claesz Master of Haarleem Still Life" at the National Gallery of Art, the first international exhibition of Claesz's work.

The 1626 oil-on-panel, one of 28 still lifes by Claesz in the show, is typical of his work in this phase of his career. Historians say that just a year earlier he had decidedly changed his style of composition, abandoning the more orderly "on display" presentation of objects within a scene.

Instead, he often depicted banquets of rolls, lemons, wine goblets and some sort of meat, fish or poultry pie half-eaten or in a state of disarray, suggesting life in action even with no human figures.

In many works from this period, he applies his skills to the classic "vanitas" (Latin for "vanity") still life—arrangements of objects like human skulls, mirrors, burning candles and poetry shards that symbolize the fleeting nature of earthly pleasures and life itself. Such tabletop settings also celebrated the prosperity of the Netherlands in the 17th century, when trade and travel flourished. Whether with lemons, flowers or Chinese porcelain, the rich merchants who commissioned still-life paintings were eager to flaunt their good fortune.

In addition to his inventive compositions, in which elements like the lemon peel and white cloth napkin jut out of the picture plane to engage the viewer, Claesz, who died in 1660, is noted for his innovative use of light and atmosphere.

"There's a subtle shift here from the darker background on the left to the lighter background on the right," Mr. Wheelock said. He pointed to the interplay of varied light and textures, from the "wonderful reflection of the glass on the white tablecloth" to the soft, fluid quality of the fabrics on the pigeon pie to the hard sheen of the ceramic jug. For Dutch painters of the 17th century, such subtle effects were prized as a virtuoso display of skill.

"We have to see him as an innovator in this whole field," Mr. Wheelock said.

J. D. BIERENDOORFF

PIETER CLAEZ: MASTER OF HAARLEM STILL LIFE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
Constitution Avenue between Third and Seventh Streets, NW
Washington, Through Dec. 31



LEMON

In Pieter Claesz's "Tabletop Still Life With Pigeon Pie and Delftware Jug," the curly lemon peel and the metal tray balanced on the table's edge enhance the sense of space. Lemons, imported from Asia, suggest the Dutch prosperity of that era and challenge the painter's prowess at depicting a range of textures.

KNIFE

The diagonal angle of the knife leads the eye into the center of the picture. On a symbolic level, the knife's placement between the ornate pigeon pie and the more humble cracked walnuts and bread roll highlights the contrast between wealth and simplicity. The artist's initials ("PC") appear as a monogram on the knife blade just above the handle.

PIGEON PIE

Game-bird pies decorated with head and feathers were frequent subjects for Claesz; this one has a delicate flower in its beak. A pin bearing a small medallion, possibly of significance to the painting's buyer, is stuck into the center of the flower. "This one has the feeling of a commissioned work, with that very fancy jug, which is quite specific, and that medallion," Mr. Wheelock said.

JUG

In addition to flaunting Claesz's flair for light, whites and shadow, the used lines napkin offers a sense of messy human engagement.

PIE

Fashioned in Delft, the jug anchoring the right side of the composition has a bird pattern inspired by imported pottery from China's Wan Li period (1573-1620). The bird in the middle of the lower portion echoes the table's crowning glory, the pigeon in the pie.

Gershwin Gets His Shot

Continued From Page 7

But his Boston performances of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" were always huge events. Following the advice of his New York manager, he omitted the work from his repertory list.

The pianist Alexander Toradze reports a similar experience. After defecting to the United States from the Soviet Union in 1980, he concluded performing the Concerto in F. Two American managers told him that to do so would harm his professional standing.

To Russia, if you could improve and play Gershwin, your reputation went up, not down," Mr. Toradze said.

When Dmitri Shostakovich heard "Fory and Bos" in Moscow in 1945, he called it magnificent and compared Gershwin to Beethoven and Mahler. In the United States the composer and critic Virgil Thomson, reviewing the work's premiere in 1933, found it "crooked folklore and highway opera."

For that matter, eminent European-born musicians enjoyed Gershwin for decades without the qualms typically expressed by emigrant American musicians. Franz and Arnold Schoenberg befriended him. Otto Klemperer and Sergei Rachmaninoff advised him from a distance. Jascha Heifetz, who transcribed tunes from "Fory" for a Gershwin violin concerto. On hearing the Concerto in F, the Paris-born musicologist Carl Engel sent Gershwin a note reading, "You must whisper softly still when you dare suggest that at last America has a music all its own."

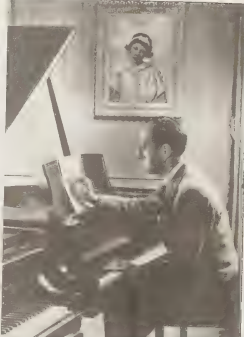
Alluding to the American Copland and George Antheil, the important German-born Boston composer Charles Martin Loeffler wrote to Gershwin in 1927: "It is needless to say that I have pinned my faith on your delightful genius and on your future. You also seem to express charm, fire and invention among the composers of our time. Where the Antheils and Coplands set their quest will be forgotten, but certainly, you, my dear friend, will be recorded in the Anthologies of coming ages."

And the influential European admirers of American jazz were Isidor Feinstein Brown, Howard Chandler Christy, William H. Young, Joseph P. Kamp, and others. Like Stravinsky and Bartok gravitating to Harlem bands, not to the Conservatory-sanctioned symphonists, made Gershwin and jazz the more threatening to the sacred American symphonic enterprise.

So it is both paradoxical and appropriate that this week's Gershwin festival in Boston is a Freshman Speaking from the West Coast recently. Mr. Thibaudet, a product of the Paris Conservatory, said that as far as he was concerned, Gershwin was "always part of the mainstream repertoire."

"I heard the Concerto in F and 'Rhapsody in Blue' when I was 14 years old," he added. "These pieces are very well known in pianists. Philippe Entremont, Pascal Rogé, and Hélène Grimaud are also very good at them."

Mr. Thibaudet was incredulous when informed that his Boston performances would be his Gershwin landmarks. He was also told that in San Francisco "I will be giving the first Concerto in F on subscription in 50 years," he said. "I thought they



AP/WIDE WORLD

Antipathy and loathing dogged Gershwin in the elite music world.

In Boston he is promoted from the Pops to the serious stage.

were joking."

As for criticism of the concerto's structure, he added: "How many people think about that when they're listening? And who cares? Look at how Ravel was inspired. He was completely crazy about Gershwin. I think that's a symptom of his intelligence, really. I think other composers were simply jealous."

In 1931 he had composed a singular homage: his Piano Concerto in G, music inaccessable without Gershwin's help. He had earlier penned one of the most elegant tristes ever expressed by one composer or another: writing to Nadia Boulanger, from whom Gershwin had asked for composition lessons. Ravel declared: "There is a music here endowed with the most brilliant, most enchanting and perhaps the most profound talent George Gershwin. His worldwide success no longer surprises him, for he is aiming higher. He knows that he lacks the technical means to achieve his goal in reaching him; those means, one might raise his talent. Would you have the courage, had those wouldn't dare have, to undertake this awesome responsibility?" (Boulanger declined Gershwin's request.)

One moral of this tangled Gershwin tale is that America's classical music culture — with a late start in the parent culture in Europe — has over-

pedigree. Now that everyone has relished about that (even classical music is not immune to such cultural excursions across untrodden cultural boundaries), it becomes easy, too, to acknowledge the genius of a favorite native composer: on the outskirts of high-cultural respectability.

Roy Harris, who rejected jazz, was most called "the great white hope" of American music. With the wisdom of hindsight it can appreciate today that the great interwar hope for American classical music was an interpreter who could seamlessly connect the world of Beethoven with the popular genres that made American music world famous: with Tin Pan Alley, Broadway and Hollywood, and Paul Whiteman and Duke Ellington.

Gershwin's early death — in 1937, at 38 — rubbed us of the string quartet he had begun. Of the concerto he might have given his friend Heifetz, of an American opera to build on "Fory." These are losses that cannot be recouped. But "An American in Paris," "Rhapsody in Blue" and the Concerto in F can be properly reclaimed.

"Of course Gershwin called it a 'concerto,' and some people think that the word 'concerto' dictates a certain European form," Mr. Parnemann, the pianist, said. "But those criticisms are simply not germane. You know, the person who first recommended this music to me was my teacher Rudolf Serkin. Maybe you'd like Gershwin's concerto," he said. "It's a wonderful piece." As for "Rhapsody in Blue," he added: "I was thrilled and happy when they hear it, from beginning to end. It always has that effect. I think it's probably one of the best-loved music in the entire con-

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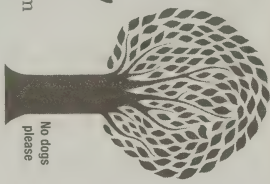
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NEWS ANALYSIS

Is the Idea of a Cultural Presence Gone at Ground Zero?

Continued From Weekend Page 31

difficult ingredient in the erosion of culture at the site. By putting the development cooperation in charge of choosing the cultural groups, the state failed to enlist an enthusiastic and philanthropic, some arts executives say.

So when they got in trouble, no one was willing to stick their neck out against the families," said Tom Healy, president of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

"The arts are critical to ground zero," Mr. Healy said. "There was a process. Maybe the process needs to be looked at, but it certainly shouldn't be abandoned."

In an interview yesterday, Mr. Libeskind said he believed culture must remain part of the master plan to foster activity and to act as a "buffer

given that the designated architect is Frank Gehry, and a Gehry building would cost eight times that amount. The commitment is a drop in the bucket.

Raising the rest seems like a tall order. The two groups designated for the building, the Joyce Theater and the Signature Theater, are modest in size and relatively little known.

What's more, the Memorial Foundation has made clear that it intends to put its muscle behind memorializing the victims.

"The design process is in limbo. We have not had any contact at all," Mr. Gehry said in a recent telephone interview, adding, "I can see that it's precarious."

The Joyce, which presents dance, and the Signature, an Off Broadway theater, continue to hone their proposals without any sense of whether they have a real shot at a new home at ground zero.

Nonetheless, Gretchen Pykstra, president of the World Trade Center Memorial Foundation, said yesterday. "The commitment to the performing arts level is strong and deep."

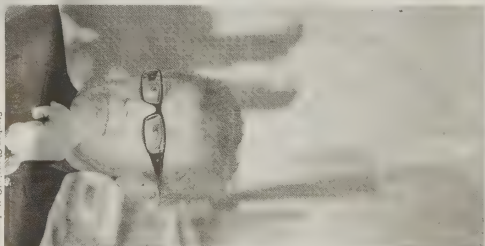
On a broader level, the public has only the haziest notion of what cultural groups will reside at the site, given the current plans for a World Trade Center Memorial Museum, a Memorial Hall, and contemplation and family rooms.

And some are asking what remains of Mr. Libeskind's master plan. This state of affairs is a far cry from the 2002 Blueprint for the Future of Lower Manhattan, in which the development corporation called for "a diverse mixed-use magnet for the arts, culture, tourism, education and recreation."

Of Governor Pataki's 2003 invitation to Governor Bush to establish a cultural business district, which he called the arts "an essential element to creating a thriving urban environment in Lower Manhattan.

Of a February 2004 report in which the development corporation quoted Matthew Arnold. "Culture is acquiescing ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit."

In remarks before the Association for a Better New York last November, Governor Pataki said the planned cultural buildings would stand as symbols of the enduring "grace and goodness of humanity."



Stephen Chinnery/ Getty Images

The architect Daniel Libeskind in January 2004 at the unveiling of the design chosen for the World Trade Center memorial.

commitment was fading came in April, when John C. Whitehead, the development corporation's chairman, said the performing arts center was effectively on the fund-raising back burner. A \$900 million capital campaign that was supposed to benefit the memorial, and both cultural buildings would now exclude the performing arts center, which would instead be part of a "second phase."

Then came a June 8 op-ed article in *The Wall Street Journal* in which Debra Burlingame — who serves on the memorial foundation's board, and whose brother was killed on 9/11 — called the Freedom Center a "multi-million-dollar insult."

The attack surprised those who had initially feared that the Freedom Center would be simplistically partitioned, because of its name and because Tom A. Bernstein, the founder of the center, is associated with Roland W. Bets, a close friend of President Bush. Mr. Bernstein and Mr. Bets are partners in Chelsea Piers, and both are former owners with Mr.

reported that the Drawing Center had once displayed a work obliquely linking President Bush to Osama bin Laden and another showing a hooded victim of American abuse at Abu Ghraib prison. In an editorial that day, the paper demanded, "Show these people the door."

In a July letter to the development corporation, Mr. Bernstein tried to defend the Freedom Center. "We will not blame America or attack champions of freedom," he said. "Any suggestion that we will feature anti-American programming is wrong. We are proud patriots."

Some saw this pledge as an outright capitulation. Eric Foner, a Columbia University history professor, quickly resigned as an adviser to the Freedom Center.

From then on, a contingent of victims' families steadfastly denounced the Drawing Center and the Freedom Center as unpatriotic distractions.

Governor Pataki felt the pressure. With a potential presidential race looming, he had staked his legacy on the rapid reconstruction of Ground Zero. On July 24, he issued an ultimatum — "We will not tolerate anything on this site that degrades Americans — insisting that cultural institutions guarantee their presentations would not violate the sanctity of that site."

The Drawing Center quickly realized it was finished, what art organization could retain its identity without being able to show what it wants? The development corporation gave the center \$150,000 to conduct feasibility studies on locating elsewhere.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg voiced disappointment this week that officials did not find a way to make their peace with the Freedom Center. He has otherwise stayed out of the controversy, a noticeable absence given his widely known commitment to culture. But the mayor long ago made a bargain with Mr. Pataki to let the governor take the lead at ground zero in exchange for a free hand in planning the future of the Far West Side.

Madeley Wis, a development corporation director, said yesterday, "I'm deeply disappointed that we could not have worked out a way to have the Freedom Center on the site."

Mr. Gehry said of the squabbles,

Without powerful advocates, the arts find themselves cast as World Trade Center interlopers.

between commercial, memorial and retail space."

"This is not just an empty site of sadness," he said. "There has to be something that heals." He added that he supports the governor's decision.

Weeks earlier, another cultural institution on the state of four, the Drawing Center, was driven from the site by victims families and New York Times accounts asserting that some of the center's exhibitions had been anti-American.

That leaves the museum building at the northeast corner of the site, designated by the Norwegian firm Shoheta, with neither of its original tenants. It was designed specifically to accommodate the Freedom Center and the Drawing Center. The talk now is that it will house a visitors center and some kind of permanent 9/11 exhibition.

The master plan's other major cultural component, a performing arts

ART REVIEW

Within Images of Excess, A Glint of Moral Theater

By HOLLAND COTTER

WASHINGTON — "We are very rich, and the world is ours to have." If art could speak for its owners, that is what 17th-century Dutch still-life paintings might say. And they might add something else: "We are very afraid."

You can hear those bold and nervous voices speaking in "Pieter Claesz, Master of Haarlem," a chamber-music-piano lead rooms at the National Gallery of Art. Or rather you can see their conflicted emotions playing out in paintings of flatware, beakers and food.

Here, for example, is a table set for a simple but sumptuous breakfast, with a fresh hard roll, a plump mince pie, a glass of wine

Age. And both are exercises in art as moral theater. With their shared cast of inanimate characters, they might be the first and last acts of a tragedy, one that begins with a scene from a prosperous, get-ahead, everyday life, and ends with a scene of that same life brought fatefully low.

Both paintings, along with 23 others in the show, are by Pieter Claesz, an artist who gained a degree of fame in the era of Rembrandt, Frans Hals and Jacob van Ruisdael, but about whom we know little.

He was born in 1696 or 1697 in the village of Berchem, near Antwerp, where still-life painting had an early vogue, and where he probably trained as an artist. Around 1621, perhaps in search of a less competitive market, he moved to Haarlem. There he was twice married and twice a widower, raised a family (a son, Nicolaes Berchem, became a landscape painter), and seemed to have lived until his death in 1660.

At the time Claesz settled in Haarlem, the Dutch Republic was hugely rich. It controlled grain supplies on which its much larger neighbors depended, and had developed a lucrative international market in trade. It also purposedly distinguished itself as a Calvinist nation of sober, serious, hard-headed, God-fearing people, one whose wealth was a badge of grace, one's promise mark of decadence and satanic temptation that could be withdrawn in a twinkling.

And for the burghers of Haarlem, hungry for tangible signs of grace to fill their homes, Claesz's still lifes were just the ticket: subdued in scale and jewel-like in execution and judiciously edifying.

In some cases, a moral message was subtly disguised. But in the type of picture known as the "vanitas," which Claesz excelled at, it was hardly hidden. There is no mistaking, for instance, the mortal import of a 1628 painting of a skull surrounded by a smoldering lamp, a worn-down quill pen, and a tipped-over goblet.

Even in the more positively early, straightforward work, however, Claesz isn't content with a simple lineup of symbols. Instead, he choreographs a witty and macabre little dance of feather end and the quill ticks the skull's cheek. The skull leans against the base of the tipped-over glass, like someone self-etching through a wall. The glass itself reflects the light-filled windows of a room, presumably the one where the painter

What we do know is that the tabletop still life as a genre grew ever more elaborate toward mid-century, as social proscriptions on the showy display of wealth weakened. The sort of decorous, near-monochromatic breakfast scenes that established Claesz's Haarlem reputation bled into pagoda-like depictions of banquet tables, feasts crowded with game, shellfish, fruit, pastries and beakers of wine and beer.

At the same time, vanitas-type images became cataclysmic. In a painting from 1637, Claesz shows a laden table in chaotic disarray with, center stage, a skinny rooster capon lying like a sacrificial victim, a knife protruding from its breast. With its air of decay in progress, the picture is like a snapshot of a flooded and abandoned city after the waters have begun to subside.

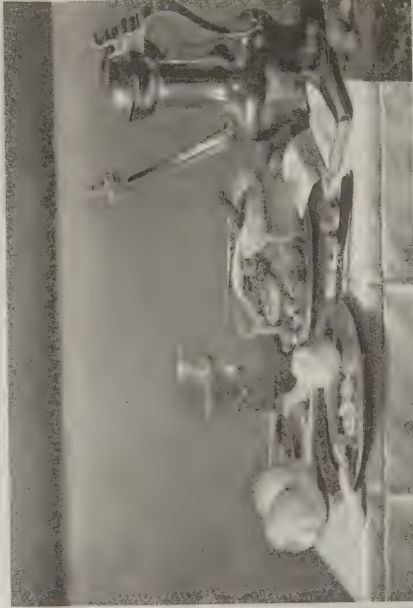
Unsurprisingly, as Dutch taste for extravagance continued unchecked, interest in a conscience-pricking art declined, as did Haarlem's economic fortune. The market for paintings crashed, maybe that explains why, after Claesz's death, his twin daughters had to be sent to a city orphanage.

Certainly the admonitory impulse in his painting feels quaint, at best, in the context of our own materially fixated culture. For most viewers the virtuosity of his symbolism — technical finesse, its uncanny ability to depict details of his world that are also details of our world, the sheen on ripe fruit, the glint of gold, light welling up from a half-filled glass.

Even devotees of modernist abstraction will find Claesz rewarding. Viewed close up, an expanse of white tabletop in one of his pictures is almost identical, in its restrained but vivacious brushwork, to passages of white in a Mondrian and surely Mondrian himself scrutinized Claesz's compositions, monumental in their ordered probity, but also inventive, varied, never rigid.

The mention of Mondrian blesses the question of moral purpose in art. Mondrian's art is utopian, utopias are auspicious. They are about yes or no, right or wrong. They are based on an idea of perfection. Perfection requires control, states domination, believes in its own election. While a sense of election fueled Dutch Republic in the 17th century, and will continue to fuel, for a little while, the superpower United States of today.

Claesz's paintings, even with their Calvinist roots and formal perfection, offer a different vision: unimpaired, merdly realistic. tragic. They speak of power and the contingency of power, of mortality and the vulnerability of material of absolutes. Their the absolute law of consistency of change. Their voices, in almost certainly fall on deaf ears, but in Washington is a place they should be heard.



Photographs from National Gallery of Art
 "Vanitas Still Life With Writing Implements," top, and "Still Life With Pewter Pitcher, Mince Pie and Almanac" are among the 25 paintings in the Pieter Claesz exhibition.

— and what about personal content? Is Claesz's art the work of a religious man?

(Surviving documents suggest he may have been Roman Catholic.) A realist? A patriot-pleaser? A melancholic? The individualistic pulse of a Chardin may be beating in his work, but if so, it is muffled under layers of period artifice.

— and the viewer — is sitting.

Interpreting such pictures, with their slippery conventions and halucatory reality, is a chancy business, easily overdone. Scholars disagree on what means what, and where moral or religious significance ends and plain old over-the-fireplace decoration begins.



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PETER QUESZ
SMITH. 1. 12. 12

David de Witt, 20 August 2001 / 18 Feb 2003



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